steam in action
south africa

EDITION 24

KEEPING TRACKS

Membership Total as at 25th November: 874.

NOVEMBER 2009

WELCOME
to the November newsletter

The mood is increasingly upbeat in South Africa regarding Rail Preservation. The dramatic drop in the scrap price from R1750 per ton down to below R1300 a ton over the past several weeks always helps and tends to deflect people's attention away from the value of high quality steel as represented by steam locomotives, railway line etc.

SIA believes that it is very important to maintain the initiative with respect to the key issues. This month we asked HRASA to detail what they consider to be their primary objectives and to highlight where they are concentrating their efforts. Their report is included below.

From an SIA standpoint we remain committed to preventing decay or dereliction of responsibility for safeguarding locomotives by organizations or individuals that were fortunate enough to come into possession of items that are significant in the context of our Rail Preservation history. SIA was really born out of the Millsite situation which is currently stable but which increasingly needs a final decision on the future of the locomotives that are trapped there. The SANRASM issue is developing momentum. The Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe programme is stable because of the high level of publicity and the authorities are pre-occupied with it. SIA has a concern that it is going to be difficult to find a private operator who can put forward a coherent business plan to actually make money out of the use of the line, particularly due to the fact that George-Kynsna section for which the line was famous simply does not exist anymore. We have long maintained that the authorities must face up to the fact that they need to restore this magnificent section of scenic railway line (often billed as the best in the world) if any private operator was to take their overtures seriously. The other line that we feel has been to some extent sidelined and which needs a lot of attention is the magnificent 2-ft Narrow Gauge line stretching 300-kms from Port Elizabeth to the small town of Avontuur in the Eastern Cape. We have raised our profile significantly with respect to the Avontuur Line and our first feedback report is included below.

May we once again urge our SIA members to participate in this whole process. We need your comments, we need background information, and above all we must convey to the authorities the fact that South Africa's Rail Heritage does not interest a small handful of 'steam nuts'. These are railways which have the potential to thrill and entertain millions of people in the future. Those millions of people represent hundreds of millions of Rands worth of revenue to a country whose mining income is in decline and which will increasingly look to Tourism to bolster its foreign exchange reserves.

As far as the ongoing SIA/HRASA debate is concerned we certainly enjoy a much improved relationship with the HRASA directorate. They work hard to keep SIA informed but as always we would like to see some tangible results on various projects that require real action to bring them to fruition. The recent census carried out on lend/lease locomotives country wide on behalf of THF remains a secret. Dozens of requests for the allocation of locomotives, the purchase or locomotives or even clarification as to who the true owner of the locomotive is remain unanswered. We have even brokered requests from Government departments, such as the South African National Defence Force, for locomotives for use as regimental display items without success.

Way back in October 2007, which was not far away from SIA's date of birth, we addressed an e-mail to the then Chairman of HRASA. We are of the opinion that although we could be accused of raking up the past the fact is that very little of these issues have ever been addressed. Furthermore it does highlight the fact that from the beginning we have been willing to work with HRASA rather than against them.

This Month's Edition

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We will continue until HRASA fulfills its mandate. We have become a critic, ombudsmen, policeman and auditor. In short the conscience of Steam Railway Preservation in South Africa. HRASA is the operational body that is out there to actually influence policy, make things happen, issue documents and approvals, and generally get on with the job. With the previous management of HRASA there was no interest in cooperation at all. With the current management there is significant interest in cooperating but we hope to see more results. We remain optimistic.



"Moving locomotive, 1977". Photograph: Dave Parsons

What is the true state of locomotive availability in South Africa today?

Ever since we started SIA we have never really stopped to ascertain how many operational locomotives there are. However, our members keep track of things and Dick Manton in a letter to Dudley Smith has been very succinct on the subject.

Dear Dudley,

I have just finished reading your report on the Railway Heritage Conference which appeared in the last SIA newsletter which was most interesting. I would like to pick up on the comparison you made between the 87 operating steam locos mentioned by Dave Rodgers in his recent article and the total fleet of 35 running steam locos identified in the recent Transnet audit which I think flatters the current situation considerably.

In fact the 87 THF serviceable locos in the 1990's referred to by David Rodgers were not in the George museum - they were scattered around the country in working order at sheds such as Millsite, Germiston, Bloemfontein, Dal Josephat, Masons Mill, Voorbaai and Port Elizabeth. These locos, the vast majority of which were 3' 6" gauge, were serviceable with valid boiler certificates available for use to operate both day's trips and country wide long distance tours. THF themselves ran regular day trips out of Jo'burg and Cape Town and almost weekly longer distance tours out of Cape Town. There were also several UK operators running annual long distance tours typically of two weeks duration.

The comparison with today is sobering! Quite where the current figure of 35 "running steam locos" in the Transnet audit came from I am not sure. By my calculation, and ignoring the wonderful collection of operating 2 ft gauge locos at Sandstone, I can count only around 16 working 3 ft 6" gauge locos with current boiler certificates. These are at Reefsteamers Germiston - 3 currently, FoTR Capital Park - 2/3, Rovos Rail - 2/3, Umgeni Masons Mill - 1, Cape Town - 1, Bloemfontein -1 recently restored Sandstone 19D and THF at Voorbaai/Gorge with around 5 I think. To this can be added two SAR 2 ft gauge locos - one NG15 in PE and one NGG11 in Ixopo.

In fact the total of locos available for tours is much less than this as the THF locos at Voorbaai are only used for the Choo Tjoe operation and no longer available for tour operators to use over Montagu and into the Little Karoo as they were in the past. And the ROVOS locos are not available for tour operators other than as part of a full ROVOS train.

One can of course argue that keeping serviceable 87 locos was never sustainable as facilities and skills for operating steam diminished. However we are now in a position where the steam clubs are struggling to maintain what they have let alone restore further locos to the operating pool. This means that there is not a critical mass of locos needed to sustain interest and variety for longer distance tour operators.

Let's hope that your efforts in Natal and within HRASA to promote steam tourism will bear fruit and help to reverse the trend.

Kind Regards,
Dick

Dudley replied as follows:

As I understand it the 87 locomotives referred to in David's article were as you mentioned distributed throughout the country and the 37 in the recent audit include the Sandstone and Rovos collections. I noticed in your list you did not include our 19D or shortly our GMAM.

OUTENIQUA CHOO-TJOE



October 1980. A tour train hauled by 3 x 24's having crossed Kaaimans River Bridge and approaching Wilderness. Photograph: Dick Manton. See comments on following page.

SIA members are aware that an invitation to submit bids to operate the Mossel Bay to George section has been released. We sent out a special bulletin on that. However, SIA has sought clarification on the availability of documents and Price Waterhouse has responded as follows:

As per the advert "call for expression of interest", released by Transnet on 10 November 2009, the procurement process currently undertaken with respect to the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe steam train service pertains only to the George-Mossel Bay section of the service. The George-Kysna route will be subject of a separate process.

Interested parties should note, however, that Transnet has taken the decision not to repair the line following the August 2006 storm damage. The decision has been taken in view of the high repair costs of the route, continued risk of further damage, and the non-core nature of the service with respect to Transnet's corporate strategy.

All information pertaining to the George-Mossel Bay section of the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe steam train service is contained in the EOI information document which will be made available to you after you have signed a Non-disclosure agreement and returned it to me. Please note that the R5000 non-refundable deposit is payable upon submission of the EOI response, therefore only Respondents who have decided to submit a response to the EOI will pay the non-refundable deposit. I trust this adequately addresses your questions.

If you are interested in acquiring the George-Mossel Bay section of the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe steam train service, please sign the attached Non-Disclosure Agreement and the Respondent Registration Form. Please complete both and return the signed documents by e-mail or fax to:

Ms. Hombisa Mbokotho
E-mail address: hombisa.mbokotho@za.pwc.com
Fax: +27 (11) 209 5915

In the first documentation on the SIA site on the subject it said that the new operator would pay access charges to TFR so they would still own the line. As it is still a freight route we believe it would stay that way unless it is closed in the future as a freight route. It is the route from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth. There are not many trains however as they can go via De Aar and Noupoort. If TFR closed this line down there could be a big expense in maintaining the line for two tourist trains a day.

Dave Richardson

To view the latest Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe Newsletter click here:

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/Choo_Tjoe_News_6.pdf

Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe continued

For those SIA members who lack background on what a magnificent line the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe used to be, particularly between George and Knysna, we have attached some photographs from SIA member Alan Coe, together with his cover note.

I attach some George/Knysna line photos for your consideration.

First one is at Sedgefield before the pine trees were harvested. This is of a class 24; I believe to be 3632, taken 16th march 1988. She has removed the freight wagons from the front of the passenger mixed train from George, and put them into the loop line for unloading. The pine trees provided a great back-drop for photographs, unlike the stumps and barren land that later remained

The other photo depicts the building of the Knysna turntable prior to the imminent sale of the land, to waterfront developers, that contained the triangle. The goods shed platform was then being used as a passenger terminus while the original Knysna station was being reconstructed.

I just hope and pray that this line is reborn, as it is a national treasure.

Alan



Photograph: Alan J. Coe.

Dick Manton is a knowledgeable and authoritative SIA member and he sent us the following comments:

Interesting pictures of the Knysna turntable being built - not many years ago either. Not sure if you are looking for more pictures of the line? I have many from the line in SAR days but the attached may be of interest. It was taken in October 1980 and shows a tour train hauled by 3 x 24's having crossed Kaaimans River Bridge and approaching Wilderness. This was part of a series of tour trains organised by the SAR Travel Bureau which travelled the whole country almost exclusively behind steam. Whilst re-opening of the whole line through to George may not be feasible due to the high costs involved it does show what was possible prior to the 2006 washaways.

Dick Manton



Photograph: Alan J. Coe.



"Sandstone's GMAM No. 4079 based at Reefsteamers is known as Lyndie Lou. She was named at a ceremony at Randfontein Estates Gold Mine more than 10-years ago. Dennis Mitchell has pointed out however that there was another Lindy Lou (spelt differently), namely 25NC, No. 3431. Photograph taken in Spytfontein in October 1974."



"15CB Witbank Coal fields, 1981". Photograph: Dave Parsons

THE AVONTUUR LINE

News from the PE-Avontuur Narrow Gauge Line

The Eastern Cape Department of Roads and Transport (ECDORT) has embarked on a process to ensure that the PE-Avontuur Narrow Gauge Line remains open and operational. The Department started the process by convening a very successful 2-day workshop, which was attended by representatives from ECDORT, TFR, TFR Properties and Transnet Property, local government (both local and district municipalities), tourism bodies, economic development in government, development agencies, heritage bodies and the private sector.

The comprehensive workshop programme, led by Nkululeko Poya, ECDORT's Deputy Director General: Road, Infrastructure, Public Transport & Traffic Management, resulted in the formation of a Route 62 Corridor Development Working Group and fully committed to ensuring that the line remains operational and is developed to its full potential – delivering freight, passenger, tourism and community services.

The Route 62 Corridor Development Working Group is scheduled to meet in Port Elizabeth during the first week of December, where recently-appointed TFR Chief Operating Officer, Nozipho Sithole, will deliver an address on the TFR Branch Lines Policy.

TFR is currently in charge of the PE-Avontuur line, with buildings and facilities along the line either falling under TFR Properties or Transnet Properties.

Based on the TFR presentation at the workshop, their plan is to concession the line. However, ECDORT is adamant that a concessionaire will be hard-pressed to carry the burden alone and that they are looking to take over the line and maintain the infrastructure so that private operators may operate on the line. Further plans include district and local municipalities taking responsibility for maintenance along the line, with their economic development portfolios and development agencies setting community economic development and job creation projects into motion.

Currently TFR runs a combined total of five timber trains a week – in both directions – as well as infrequent material trains. The PE Apple Express Section 21 Company operates the *Apple Express* tourist train on average 2-3 times per month, with three trains weekly over the December/January period.

The Patensie section is not closed – it is just not in use by TFR. Although the line's disuse (according to TFR) is the lack of freight traffic caused by the farmers investing in trucks and building their storage facility away from the line, local business has indicated that if refrigerated trucks and regular service on rail can be guaranteed they will take their produce off the road and commit to rail.

Then there is, of course, the question of transporting seasonal workers up and down the line, which is currently undertaken by a fleet of busses in the early hours of the morning. The seasons run from March to June/July and September to December/January, with an average of 5 000 workers moving up and down the line daily.

ECDORT says it is fully behind moving anything (and everything possible) off the road and onto rail. The road will be upgraded to be used solely as a scenic tourism route.

The *Apple Express* is currently the only operator on the line, besides TFR, and has the full run of the line – from PE to Avontuur. The bottom-line for ECDORT is that the line runs – successfully, regularly and offering a full range of services that will impact economic development, job creation, poverty alleviation and community development. Daily passenger services – to counter the unacceptably accident-rate on the road – as well as delivery of community services, such as library, health, social and small business services, are just two options worth considering.

The condition of the flood-damaged sections are unchanged, but have been inspected independently with the consensus reached that the costs to repair are a lot less than what has been bandied about. The *Apple Express* pulling out all the stops to get the section between Assegaaibos and Louterwater open and operating before Geoff Cooke's 2010 Narrow Gauge tour.

SIA response.

Our thanks to Nerina Skey for this detailed update. Despite a lot of talk surrounding the PE to Avontuur Line, the fact is that it is in grave danger. These pictures are all that is left of the excellent freight handling facility at Chelsea. Reports received in the last week indicate that the local population has started to lift this section of line.

Through our newsletter we appeal to people to preserve the asset so that there is a line to use. Once they have done that, they can talk for as long as they like. If they turn their backs it will disappear. The attitude always seems to prevail that it does not really matter if bits of it are stolen because there are still bits left. Which is of course the wrong attitude to take.



"The current state of the siding at Chelsea. The scrap dealers have been and gone" Photograph: Gert Jubileus.



"The same section of the line a year ago" Photograph: Shaun Ackerman

Feedback from members on the Port Elizabeth to Avontuur Line:

I have not travelled on any of the recent long trips up the line although I do know it quite well. I visited it many times in steam days and in October 1980 I spent most of a week at the top end of the line photographing the apple traffic which at that time was all steam above Assegaaibos. Around 8 NG15's were out stationed at Assegaaibos for the duration of the Apple traffic with several trains per day running up to Louterwater and Misgund. I will attach a photograph of Assegaaibos loco depot from this time. I also spent a number of days on the Patensie Branch in the 80's photographing the Citrus traffic which often necessitated double heading of the NG15's. In fact this is traffic which has only been lost to rail relatively recently.

It would obviously be great from an enthusiast perspective if the whole line can be saved for occasional long trips up to Louterwater and even Avontuur. My main point in the previous email was that the line is too long for the average tourist who just wants a steam train ride and has typically only a day or half day to spare. Tourist, as opposed to enthusiast trips are probably better concentrated on the bottom section of line from PE through to Humansdorp and Patensie in my view. I could also envisage engines out stationed at Loerie and working half and full day trips to Patensie and up the bank to Thornhill given the right leadership and marketing as this is close to a big B&B tourist area as you know.

I look forward to hearing progress in saving the line which hopefully will be less drawn out than the Choo Tjoe!! I think key to this could be purchasing the line from Transnet if only they could be persuaded that this was the right way forward rather than just letting it rot which has happened with so much of the Rail network in South Africa. In private hands or even with a PPP it may even be possible to get the Citrus and other freight traffic back on the line.

I have had some correspondence with Charlie Lewis who was Civil Engineer for the region covering this line based in Port Elizabeth during the 80's. His comment re the current condition of the line was as follows:

"Assegaaibos has a complete loco servicing facility with coal stage and turntable that could be useful. Perhaps the most relevant is that the whole line was rebuilt between 1974 and '84 with new 60lb material that would make maintenance costs relatively low."

Dick Manton





Far left. *October 1980, Assegaaibos loco depot. Photograph: Dick Manton*

Left. *I am not 100% sure about the picture but the Diaz Express used to run from Port Elizabeth (Campanile) to Kings Beach, a 13 minute journey. In the Christmas and Easter holidays there were 4 round trips daily. This was in addition to the Apple Express to Loerie. I think it was Alan Clarke who was curator of the Humewood Road Museum site (?) around that time who got the Diaz Express started. Dick Manton.*

SIA comment: We bet many readers did not know that this branch line even existed.

LATEST NEWS FLASH

The Route 62 Corridor Development Working Group is meeting on 2nd December to ensure the process stays on track and moves forward, with Nozipho Sithole - one of the two new Chief Operating Officers at TFR - will be addressing that gathering regarding TFR branch line policy and specifically the PE-Avontuur line and its future. The programme also includes indentifying tasks, allocating resources (human and infrastructure) and responsibilities. I can prepare a synopsis on the outcomes of that meeting, which I believe will be even more enlightening than what has been achieved to date.

Nerina Skuy

Sia comment. Nerina continues to impress with her tenacity

The Apple Express

Nerina Skuy, who has been a real dynamo when it comes to keeping us updated, has supplied the following information:

We have been running weekend away (departing Friday 08h00 and returning Sunday 17h00) since May 2008. The only time we don't run weekends is over the December season. In fact, we have a weekend trip to Assegaaibos from 27-29 November and the Assegaaibosch Country Lodge was fully booked for this weekend three months ago. However, there are a number of other destination options, I have attached the schedule (as available on our website) to view the choices. We still have space available on the trip.

The first weekend for 2010 is planned for 26-28 February.

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/APPLE_EXPRESS_JUNE 2009_FINAL.pdf

A significant amount of useful data on the Apple Express is available on the following link:

http://www.sandstone-estates.com/interim/Steam_Reports/Once_Upon_a_Time/index.html.

SANRASM

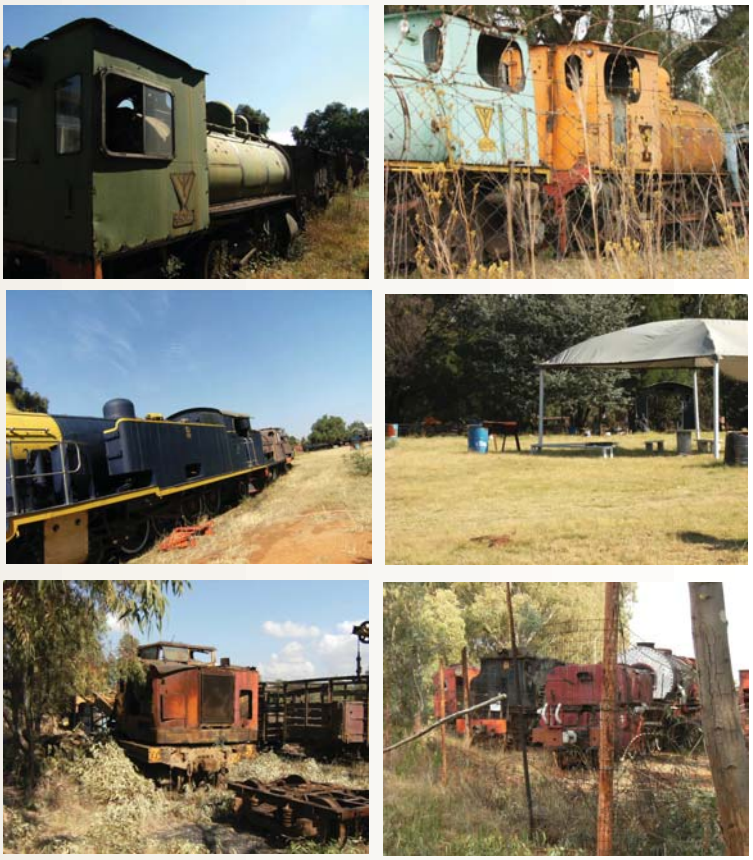
Mike Myers, on behalf of SIA, has been engaged with Eskom throughout the past few weeks discussing the fate of their rare locomotives at SANRASM. Eskom are dealing with this matter internally to find out why these locomotives which were handed to SANRASM in terms of certain specific conditions have been allowed to deteriorate to their present state. We have been promised a formal statement from Eskom shortly. In the meantime Eskom had a major management crisis with both the Chairman, Bobby Godsell, and the CEO, Jacob Maroga, resigning during the month.

SIA will continue to pursue this matter with the appropriate amount of diligence and is in fact now talking to other SANRASM contributors about the state in which their locomotives also find themselves in.

SIA members have really rallied around this issue and we are receiving numerous photographs, comments and much criticism regarding the state of the affairs at SANRASM. Apart from engaging with Eskom we have now engaged with Iscor.

Two of our photographs show ex Iscor fireless locomotives. The other photographs cover the general state of affairs at SANRASM.

Phil Girdlestone, one of South Africa's top engineering specialists and a steam railway engineer and a person with considerable experience of the Wardale principle, has pointed out that 19D, No. 2644 was donated to and languishes at SANRASM. This is an important locomotive in its own right.



Locomotives at SANRASM donated by Iscor. Photographs: Francois Oosthuizen."

HRASA

EXTRACT FROM HRASA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2009

INTRODUCTION

It gives me pleasure to report that the revised HRASA structure and the commensurate roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors has bedded down, and is delivering the desired results. The Board meeting held on 31 of October in Cape Town at the Station Lodge, equally provided evidence of a new Board perspective leading to constructive debate on issues facing the Heritage Railway Industry in South Africa.

As indicated in a press release on 31 October 2009, Mark Robinson tendered his resignation from his position as Financial Director, effective 31 October 2009. The Board unanimously expressed its appreciation to Mark for his contribution to HRASA during the early days of HRASA, and wished him well in the future.

Len Smuts was elected onto the Board effective 31 October 2009, and will take on the responsibility for the Financial Portfolio. Len brings a wealth of financial experience with him, and is well positioned to provide the Board with professional financial support and guidance in these challenging economic times.

To view the complete HRASA October Newsletter click here:

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/HRASA_Newsletter_October_2009.pdf

SIA member comments on HRASA/SIA relationship:

As you say you draw strength from our support, here's a little more of that.

I think we are all pleased that the bad relations that existed between SIA and HRASA are now a thing of the past.It seems that , with somebody new at the helm at HRASA, you have both slotted into new roles of cooperation and that this will be to the benefit of rail preservation in South Africa. I don't think that with this new clarity between your two organizations, SIA's importance has diminished – in fact the contrary as your independence ensures another perspective at times and this will strengthen the preservation lobby.

I wish you well in your new relationship with HRASA.

Pierre de Wet

MAIN LINE STEAM IN SOUTH AFRICA 2010

Steam in Action was pleased to report some time ago that there were definite plans to run a Steam special in South Africa in 2010. Geoff Cooke who is a real pioneer with regard to these tours has had the courage to announce his tour notwithstanding the lack of enthusiasm from the authorities. Geoff is to be commended for pressing on regardless.

South African Steam 2010 Update

It took longer to finalise prices for the May 2010 South African tour than had been anticipated. There have been a few factors that have affected this, the most important being my wish to make sure that you get the best possible value. South Africa has relatively high inflation and the Rand has appreciated against Sterling over the past year. Combined, these factors have driven up the cost of the tour and I have done as much as possible to keep it down.

There are three different options that you can book.

Option 1: The Cape Gauge and Sandstone tour, staring in Johannesburg on 21 May and ending back in Johannesburg on 31 May.

The prices for this option are:

£2,654 per person sharing.

£132 single room supplement.

£100 supplement for a two berth luxury (en-suite) compartment on the Reefsteamers train. (The single berth coupes are all fully booked)

Option 2: Starts after Sandstone when we motor to Port Elizabeth for four days on the Avontuur line. The tour ends at Port Elizabeth on 05 June.

The prices for this option are:

£1.063 per person sharing.

£101 single room supplement.

Adding Options 1 and 2 together covers the full tour.
If you have sent in a booking form and received a confirming invoice for Option 1 but would also like to include Option 2, please let me know so that I can add this to your itinerary.

Option 3: Book the narrow gauge part only, motoring from Johannesburg to Sandstone on 28 May and ending in Port Elizabeth on 05 June. This includes Sandstone and the Avontuur Line, an excellent narrow gauge trip. If this is not clear, or if you have any queries or suggestions, please contact me.

The prices for this option are:

£1,728 per person sharing.

£122 single room supplement.

Click here for booking conditions and extra tour information.

Apple Express update

Our trip up the Langkloof will use two NG15 locomotives. Approval has been given to split the train in two on some sections. The first train will be a passenger with the Apple Express coaches. The second will be a mixed train in authentic SAR colours. We will ride out to photographic locations on the first train and rejoin the second one, making possible a maximum number of photographs. This arrangement should be repeated on all four days. Apple Express remain optimistic that we will be able to run as far as Louterwater, and that the Patensie Branch will be accessible. A 10 seat minibus will be available for occasional off-train photographic excursions.

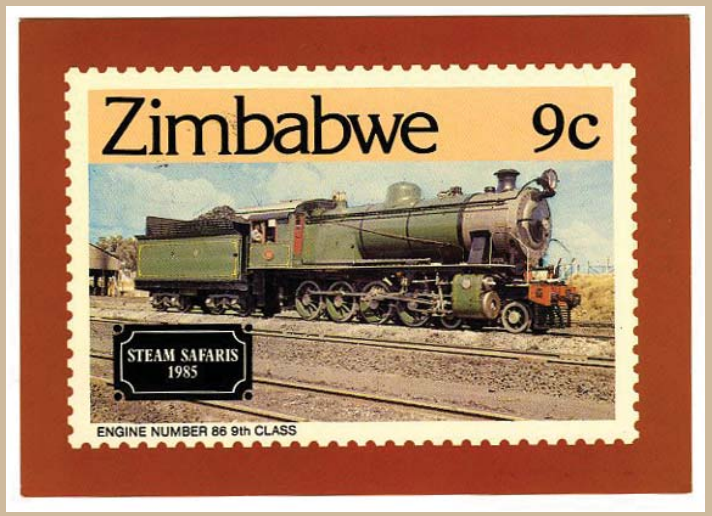
If you would like to join us in May and June 2010, please let me know as soon as you can. The earlier we receive adequate bookings to confirm that the tour will definitely run, the better it is for everyone. It is normally possible to get the best flights by booking early, but these are generally non-refundable and so should not be booked until the tour is confirmed. The tour is fully reserved by people declaring their wish to travel. However, many have not sent in their booking form and if this includes you, you may find that your reservation has been lost if no action is taken soon.

This tour promises to be a great success, and will probably be the only major South African steam tour in 2010. Don't miss out on this chance to see some of the largest cape gauge and two foot narrow gauge locomotives in action.

Regards,
Geoff Cooke
Geoff's Trains

To read more click here:

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/SIA_Newsletter_contribution.pdf



"The loco is Class 9B # 115. It is an exhibit in the Bulawayo museum. More pics can be seen at:
http://www.geoffs-trains.com/Museum/number115.html

The loco was used until around 2005, and should be runnable after limited attention. The postcard is one of a set supporting stamps issued by the Post Office in 1995 at the time of a TEFS Enthusiast tour. I can dig out a set for you if they are of interest." Geoff Cooke

THE RED DEVIL

After an SIA member pointed out that the locomotive was not being looked after we investigated it but the situation looks quite reasonable.

SIA sent the following e-mail to HRASA concerning the Red Devil, which is arguably South Africa's most famous locomotive:

SIA tried to raise awareness for the plight of the Red Devil some time ago. There was definitely interest by SIA members in subscribing money for a cosmetic restoration to at least keep the Red Devil 'ticking over'. Can SIA put the following questions to you:

1) ***Is it completely safe where it is notwithstanding its poor condition?***

2) ***Would HRASA be interested in recommending that it be relocated to somewhere like Reefsteamers so that funds could be raised for it to be cosmetically restored? I know it is a long way from Cape Town so the transportation or haulage could be an issue but you might have enough pull to persuade Transnet to support the haulage of the locomotive. There is certainly nowhere in Cape Town that I am aware of that could do the work that is necessary to bring this locomotive up to a reasonably good standard. I have no doubt that once we get phase one behind us phase two will be quite easy, i.e. progress towards a full restoration.***

Nothing could demonstrate that new HRASA's new effectiveness better than actually getting something off the ground here. I have been banging on about the plight of the Red Devil for 15-years now and no one has ever taken much notice.





Both photographs above were taken on 13 Dec 1991, south of Kimberley on the last passenger revenue earning train for 3450, The Orange Express, during the last Kimberley Steam Festival. Driver was Geoff Hall. Photographs: Dave Richardson

Chris Janisch responded as follows:

The Red Devil is not in a poor condition. It was repainted a few years ago and has most of its cab fittings. It is under proper security surveillance too. A good clean and polish would do wonders.
It can be returned to service but the cost estimate is around R100 000. Unfortunately such a locomotive will have very little work to do since no steam is permitted on main lines, and it is relatively expensive to operate being large.
It can be towed up here, but the cost will be huge. I cannot see TF funding this move. It would be wonderful to have her restored and operating, but reality does not dictate this at present.
I am sure that funds could be raised for such an event, and HRASA would support its restoration. However, we would need clarity on the exact future of the loco, and where she could be economically used, and how she could be a revenue-puller.
In essence, this is another example of the need for Transnet to support heritage rail, for without that there are hard times ahead for all preservation projects.

Chris Janisch

We have also had the following input from Dennis Moore:

It was in the old Monument (excursion station) at the side of Cape Town station, together with 3 other locos and a set of coaching stock. (15F, 25NC, 24) It was very grubby and covered in dust and grime, but - as far I could see it was completely intact with all cab fittings in place, even number plates if I recall correctly. There was an active security presence - even at 0600 on a Sunday morning - who watched me closely all the time I was prowling around.

Movement by rail at commercial costs will be horrendous, but hopefully Transnet can be persauded to do this pro bono [given the loco's iconic status], as a very visible contribution to the 150th anniversary of railways in 2010. (Does it not feature on one of the (proposed?) special postage stamp issues for 2010? Maybe not.)

If this happens , I'll gladly pitch in with some contribution to a cosmetic restoration and I hope a hundred or so others will do likewise.

I have no idea what it's mechanical / boiler state of health is.... no drama as far as I know, but I rather lost touch with it once it departed for the Western Cape.

We still maintain that this locomotive should not languish near the coast because much as it might look in good order there is probably significant deterioration taking place due to the corrosive atmosphere in which it is currently stored.

If SIA members would like to support a project to bring this locomotive back into use we would love to hear from them.

REGIONAL NEWS

Reefsteamers

The Cherry Festival.

The train was a roaring success! Everybody went home happy.

We had the usual Transnet problems like leaving Boksburg East nearly two hours late on the Friday morning, due to the non-availability of electric traction. We were also delayed for several hours at Bethlehem on the outward journey due to a diesel hauled train failing in the section ahead of us. This was enjoyable as we then travelled the steam hauled section from Bethlehem to Ficksburg in total darkness and in pouring rain, eventually arriving in Ficksburg at 22H00; some 7 hours late. Our Chairlady organised a make shift meal of curry & rice to feed our hungry passengers at Bethlehem station, knowing that we would only arrive at Ficksburg after everything had closed down.

The weather on Saturday was far kinder, and all our passengers enjoyed visiting the Cherry festival show grounds.

The return journey on Sunday morning was also commenced an hour or so late, due to a misunderstanding with TFR regarding the actual departure time. We did have a slight problem with one of the axle boxes on our D.Z. running warm. With a little bit of Reefsteamer's magic we were on the move again after about another hour's delay.

We passed our "Comments" book around to our passengers as we neared home, and got only positive comments; with many expressing a desire to join us again on next year's Cherry festival train.

It is to be noted that both locomotives, 25NC No. 3472, Elize, and the 12AR No. 1535, Susan, performed perfectly.



Locos are 3472 - Elize and 1535 - Susan. Photograph: Les Smith



Reefsteamers 12AR no 1535. On a film shoot recently.
Photograph: Shaun Ackerman

LINKS:

Click here to read the November issue of the Reef Steamers Waybill:
http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/RS_Waybill_No.5_Nov_2009.pdf

Click here to view SIA & Reefsteamers Boiler Replacement Appeals:
http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/LTTR_15F_and_15CA_Appeals.pdf

Click here to view New Membership application form:
http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/FRM_RS_Tiered_Membership_2009.pdf

Friends of the Rail

This month we insert a link to the Friends of the Rail newsletter.
http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/FRIENDS_OF_THE_RAIL_November_2009_newsletter.pdf

RSSA Natal

The RSSA Natal has sent us their programme for December.
http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/RSSA_NATAL_BRANCH_PROGRAMME.pdf

ZIMBABWE

SIA is focused on the whole of the SADCC region so from time-to-time we are pleased to bring you news of what is happening in other countries. This interesting press release from the National Railways of Zimbabwe provides an interesting comparison in terms of approach and attitude to that being adopted by our own Railway authorities who have decided that the 150th Anniversary of the birth of railways in South Africa is not worth recording.

Sunday Mail 15th November 2009
NRZ unveils Rail Leisure for 2010

Business Editor

THE *National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), in partnership with a local hospitality concern, plans to introduce a safari train service that will ply the Harare-Johannesburg route during the month-long 2010 world soccer jamboree.*

Plans are now at an advanced stage with trial runs between Harare and Johannesburg expected next month. The train service, Rail Leisure Premier Class, comes with service at par with that of a three-star hotel.

NRZ public relations manager Mr Fanuel Masikati told The Sunday Mail Business that the parastatal, together with its partner, intend to increase transport between Harare and host country South Africa.

"We are introducing a train from Harare to Johannesburg in conjunction with a player in the hospitality industry. We are presently refurbishing and upgrading our coaches for this programme. We have the capacity and the expertise in this business and we will be on track to unveil Rail Leisure come the 2010 World Cup.

"We are not new in this business. We presently have a safari train locally but the Harare-Johannesburg route will cater for visitors to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The NRZ promises three-star treatment to passengers who will board the luxury trains.

Added Mr Masikati: "The trains will offer services equal to those of three-star hotels but the difference is that this will be a hotel on wheels. That is real leisure. We have highly trained staff that will be manning the trains. They have been extensively trained by the Bulawayo School of Hospitality."

He added that the steam locomotives, which had been disbanded at the height of economic challenges, are also set to be re-introduced early next year as these are an attraction with tourists. "We are re-introducing steam locomotives again on our tracks. The steam trains are an instant hit with most foreign tourists since Zimbabwe is probably the only country in the world that still has them," added Masikati.

The Fifa World Cup comes to Africa for the first time next year and is expected to see an influx of tourists into the Southern African region where South Africa's neighbours are battling to lure participating teams and their bands of supporters.

"We are aware that some people coming for the World Cup will be coming here (Zimbabwe) from South Africa and we want these trains to complement transport demands."

NRZ is also rehabilitating rail infrastructure to ensure safe travel. Tourism and Hospitality Industry Minister Walter Mzembi has made a passionate appeal to those that can provide transport to do so as a matter of urgency.

"Fifa 2010 is by the corner and Zimbabwe must reap maximum benefits from this football extravaganza," said Minister Mzembi at the launch of Pathfinder Coaches, a bus company that has already taken the initiative to introduce five-star world-class coaches in the region. The company, which is new on the market, introduced the Irizar PB coach, which was voted Coach of the Year in Europe and is the same coach being used by Barca FC, the England national team and the Brazil national team, amongst others.

"As you are aware, most of these teams travel with their supporters and these also need quality service either in transport, accommodation, food and general hospitality," said Minister Mzembi. In 2007, Zimbabwe unveiled a national 2010 World Cup strategy and transport development was cited as one of the key strategic issues that the country was focusing on in terms of preparations for the 2010 games. However, a travel and tourism competitive report of 2009 compiled by the World Economic Forum (WEF) paints a grim picture of Zimbabwe's ground transportation system that covers coaches/ buses, car hire and taxis. According to the report, Switzerland and 2006 World Cup hosts Germany are first and second respectively while Zimbabwe ranks a lowly 131 out of 133 countries, only ahead of Panama and Paraguay. In Africa, Gambia ranks number 38, Malawi 47 while South Africa is at 126, making northern neighbour Zambia the strongest competitor in terms of quality ground transportation system in the Southern African Development Community (Sadc) region.Poland has already confirmed its interest in camping in the country once it qualifies. This would open up potentially difficult to fill opportunities in the transport sector.

For the 2006 World Cup in Germany, Mexico took along 35 000 supporters and has guaranteed 10 000 supporters to Zimbabwe once they qualify. Ten thousand passengers require about 200 buses, making the NRZ initiative commendable.

One of our members in commenting on this press release from Zimbabwe states the following:

I do not think there is an operator, train or available steam.

I am aware that Africa Sun Hotels are, or have been, talking to NRZ about running a train, but I have not heard about any coaches being refurbished and doubt that NRZ have suitable equipment or workshop capacity for this. If a train goes to Harare, it will certainly not be steam.

It is hardly practical to refurb a train and then run it for just one month! Also, they do not have experience in running such trains - their clients (like ourselves and Shongololo) do.

I think there is talk going on, but the NRZ PR Manager has been a little inventive about what is proposed - it is not the first time Masikati has been guilty of this..

The significant issue is that NRZ remains willing to talk about private train operations, and steam. They are well positioned to take advantage of South Africa's frustrations if the political situation improves.

For obvious reasons he wishes to remain anonymous.

MEMBER'S FEEDBACK

I received an email from SIA stating that one of their members Vincent Ward had seen an artist's drawing on the new Cape Town Station development website. The picture shows the locomotive "Blackie" as being placed outside of the main concourse of the new Cape Town Station.

At the moment, the locomotive has been moved offsite and is in safe storage. I contacted Regina Isaacs of South African Heritage Resources Agency. I have a very good working relationship with her and they recognise HRASA as the official advisory institution as far as railway heritage is concerned.

Regina Isaacs has spoken to the developers of Cape Town station and expressed her (our) concern as to the proposed positioning of the locomotive. She has asked them to forward detailed plans to her. When these are received, she will contact me and the HRASA (West) liaison committee will study these plans in conjunction with Regina before any approval will be granted as to the final placement of the locomotive.

Regards,
IAN PRETORIUS



May I introduce myself. My name is Philippe Tolstoff, 60, I am a longtime member of one of the major French railway preservation societies (AJECTA) that preserves 14 steamers, near Paris. Last month, while surfing on different South-African sites, I found on your site a letter from Richard Niven relating the beautiful Story of the Locomotive of His Life, I mean the 4-8-4 # 3488 "Enchantress".

Quite impressed and emotioned by this story, that sounds like a railroad tale, I have realized, some days later, I could write a narration of it in French and submit it to a French railway magazine. The job is now over and yesterday I contacted an editor who said being interested in publishing this story. This is why I would be very grateful if SIA and Richard could give us permission to do it. If your agreement should be assorted to the payment of copyrights, please let us know.

We would be also indebt if you could provide or allow the using of pictures of # 3488 to illustrate the article.

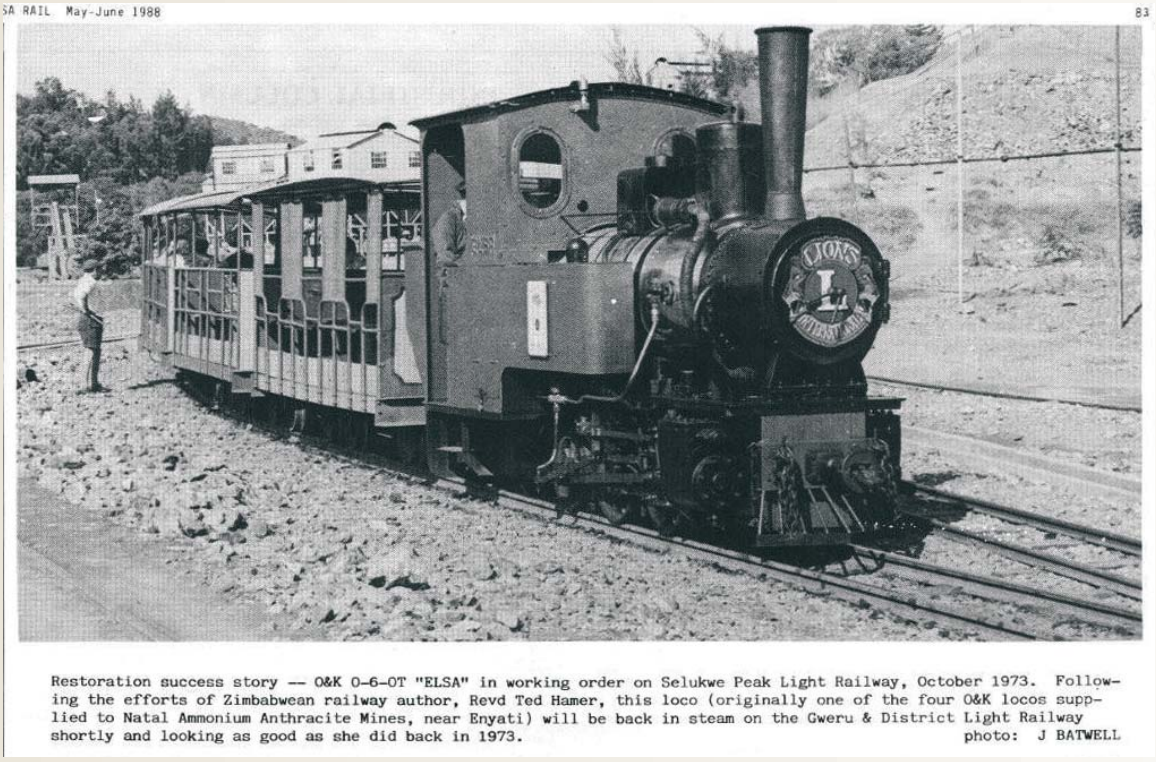
With congratulations for all your efforts to keep Steam alive in South-Africa.

Best regards

Philippe Tolstoff,
PALAISEAU, France

SIA comment: This is being coordinated and the article will appear in French shortly. Any members who would like a copy of the article in French can e-mail Joanne West (joannewest@btinternet.com) and she will forward it onto them.

WHERE IS IT NOW?



Restoration success story — O&K 0-6-0T "ELSA" in working order on Selukwe Peak Light Railway, October 1973. Following the efforts of Zimbabwean railway author, Revd Ted Hamer, this loco (originally one of the four O&K locos supplied to Natal Ammonium Anthracite Mines, near Enyati) will be back in steam on the Gweru & District Light Railway shortly and looking as good as she did back in 1973. photo: J BATWELL

SIA comment: Our investigations reveal that Ted Hamer took the locomotive to the UK when he left Zimbabwe and we understand that it is somewhere in the South East of England.

MEDIA - LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL

Our thanks go to David Payling for supplying a copy of this article which appeared in the top line publication Steam Railway magazine.

Railtrail 2010

RAILTRAIL has announced its programme of trips for 2010. Starting with Austria over the New Year it continues with steam in February in Poland and eastern Germany, with three separate trips that can be combined into one.

There are then opportunities to sample Californian and Australian steam in March and April. Also in April Railtrail gives two options to visit the German Plandampf based around the Moselle, when there is expected to be more than 100 trains hauled by steam.

In late April there is a unique opportunity to travel from Rotterdam to Zurich with German Pacifics, including a visit to the Bebra steam festival en route. Visit *www.railtrail.co.uk* or ring 01538 382323 for more details.

Choo-Tjoe is back - but it's diesel

A CELEBRATION was held on October 19 2009 to mark the operational return of South Africa's Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe railway, which had been closed since June 30 2009 after funding of the route was reduced. Railway spokesman Ms Mgijima said: "Today demonstrates Transnet's commitment to preserving the future of the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe." However, the fact that the re-opening special was diesel-hauled brings fears for the future of steam on the trouble line.

Mr Morne Hoogbaard, Acting Municipal Manager for Eden District Municipality, expressed a commitment to making sure that "the train will blow out steam". So watch this space.

Mr Alan Winde, Minister of Finance, Economic Development & Tourism, thanked Transnet for being committed to the preservation of this heritage rail icon despite it no longer forming part of their core business. The Minister said: "The Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe is an icon that is known around the world, and we must make sure that we preserve it for our children and our children's children."

It was revealed that a private funder for the service is still being sought. Mr Winde said he would be visiting the UK in November, and was in the process of scheduling meetings with key vintage railway stakeholders to gain experience for implementation in South Africa.

The Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe Train left from the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe Transport Museum over the picturesque Kwang River, snaked over the Great and Little Brak Rivers and ended its trip outside the Diaz Museum in Mossel Bay.



Arriving at Valmondos station on Saturday October 3 is the AJECTA organised excursion with ex Est 1-4-1TB at the head end. PETER LOVE

1-4-1 TB in fighting form

SATURDAY October 3 saw AJECTA stage its autumn steam excursion from the Gare du Nord, with Est region 1-4-1 No. TB407 at the head.

This powerful push pull tank locomotive was one of a large fleet that ran into Gare du Est (eastern region) until 1969.

No. TB407 ran through stations to the outer suburbs of Paris at Valmondois, for the narrow gauge fair. After a stop of two hours the excursion continued to Beauvais and Creil, where an afternoon excursion was taken by bus to Château Chantilly.

Scheduled to arrive at Gare du Nord at 9.30pm, a 9.20pm arrival was proof of an excellent turn of speed over the journey. Unfortunately a fight broke out between some of the French railway photographers as TB407 stood in the station.

AJECTA had been running under a cloud following a fire that destroyed some of the roof at its depot in the outskirts of Paris in September.



1873 Mason Fairlie 0-6-4 still working for its keep at the Greenfield Village Railroad in 2009. PETER LOVE

Henry Ford museum

IN THE Dearborn area of Michigan, near Detroit Airport, the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village Railroad operates a 2.5-mile trip around the extensive village, featuring a number of stations and stops.

The steam-operated railway uses an 1873 Mason Fairlie 0-6-4 tank that worked with a number of others of this type for Calumet & Hecla Mining.

The line's roundhouse is based on a structure that belonged to the Detroit, Toledo & Milwaukee Railroad in Marshall, Michigan, and today carries out repairs and major boiler work. 2009 traffic is said to be good - reflecting the experience of many British preservation sites.

2-8-0 set to steam in 2010

MONTICELLO Railway Museum near Rantoul, Illinois, has been in existence since 1966 and today operates a 50-minute round trip over the former Illinois Central and Illinois Terminal trackage. It starts at the former Wabash depot in downtown Monticello and features an excellent engine shop and lineage of equipment.

The line's own ex-Southern Railway 1907 Baldwin 2-8-0 H-4 401, which lasted in mainline use until 1953, is making great strides. A complete boiler assembly has been made and fitted, and fully tested. A new tender has also been fabricated, and it is hoped that the engine will be moving under its own power in 2010.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Once again we are able to offer our SIA members a glance at what happens in other parts of the world. Philippe Tolstoff sent these photographs and captions:



AJECTA, Longueville Depot : ex-SNCF, nee former Eastern Railway, 1913 built 2-8-2T no 141 TB 407 ; 09/2007



AJECTA, Steam Special with ex-SNCF, nee Etat Railway, North British built 1916 2-8-0 no 140 C 231 ; 11/1988



CFBS, Noyelles Station : ex-Département de l'Aisne Transportation Board, Corpet-Louvet built 1906 2-6-0T No 1 ; 04/25/2009



CFBS, Noyelles Station : ex-Sugar Beet hauler, Buffaud-Robatel built 1909 0-6-2T No 3714 ; 08/15/2008



CFBS, Saint-Valery Port terminal : ex-Sugar Beet hauler, Haine Saint-Pierre built 1920 2-6-0T no 15 ; 08/15/2008

USEFUL LINKS

Hannes Paling on behalf of the modeling community has provided some excellent links which will lead SIA members to an in-depth inventory of photographs of SA Steam.

My main interest has always been steam trains in all shapes and sizes, when I was younger I started in HO gauge electric trains in which I am still active, here is a link to my HO gauge layout, http://www.flickr.com/photos/alfav8/sets/72157610588950449/

The last decade or so my interest changed to narrow gauge of which there was quite a bit in this country, all gone now except Sandstone Estates who have acquired a collection of narrow gauge equipment second to none in the world, over the last decade or more. I have had the good fortune to be able to visit them on many occasions and take thousands of pictures, some of which you can see at http://www.flickr.com/photos/alfav8/sets/72157616790629682/ next year there will be a major event named Mega Power 2010, more details on their website.

I am currently building a model of one of the Sandstone engines built in 1895, the Lawley, you can follow construction as I progress at http://www.flickr.com/photos/alfav8/sets/72157611605711680/ I add pictures regularly as I progress.

Previous project pictures at http://www.flickr.com/photos/alfav8/sets/72157612827610727/

I am also interested in and have restored various classic cars, Alfa Romeo's being the main interest of which the crown jewel is My Alfa Romeo Montreal one of only 9 in this country, pictures at http://www.flickr.com/photos/alfav8/sets/72157605603243774/

In case you are not familiar with opening these links, double click on the link, a new page will open with thumb nail pictures on the right of the page, click on any thumb nail, it will open showing the picture on the top left of the page, above the picture is a option bar, select "all sizes" which will open the pictures full screen.

The Elgin project is proceeding, albeit slowly. It has been frustrating at times but we seem to be moving in the right direction.
If you have time please take a look at my website : www.fullsteamahead.co.za

Mike Carter

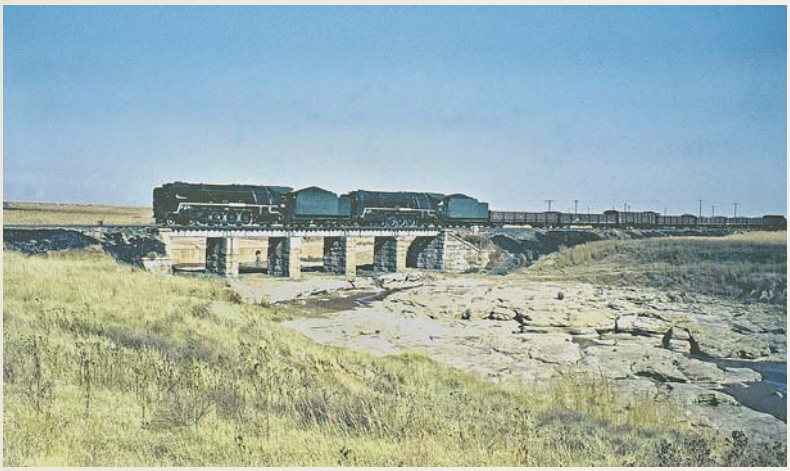
ARCHIVES

Once again we are indebted to Dennis Mitchell for providing us with the following photos and captions:

This is the up morning passenger from Bloemfontein to Kroonstad [at least] behind 23 class 4-8-2 3268 on the approach to Glen station on 8/10/1974.



These BIG 4-8-2 s and their close cousins the 15Fs monopolised the Kroonstad - Bloemfontein line until electrics took over in March 1976. It was probably the busiest steam worked line in the world at that time; with 100-120 trains a day, many double headed, but all with 15F or 23 .





The main differences were; 15F 5'0" Drivers to the 23s 5'3" ; the slightly larger chimney on the 23s, and of course , the big 12 wheel tender on the 23s from their days in the Karoo desert before the 25 condensers arrived in 1953/4; however; Bloemfontein loco by this time was swapping the tenders around between the two classes so you could have a long tendered 15F or a short tendered 23 !! The 23 s were a smidge more powerful at 48,300 lbs tractive effort against the 47,800 lbs of the 15F s but they were allowed the same loads [1 ,250 tons] per single loco and with a combined total of nearly 400 locos, they were together a most numerous breed.

Whilst the 15Fs were around until the end of steam; the electrification of the Bloemfontein line , was the death knell of the 23s and while some found work on the Kroonstad - Bultfontein wheat trains and even a couple on the Bloemfontein - Kimberley passengers, as their time for major overhaul came they were stored for the strategic reserve at Beaufort West, and then scrapped in about 1987. Only less than a handful remain.





The second Loco is No. 2 and was ex SAR 7B 1050 (NR 5833/1900), I have the boiler record - boiler 5948 of 1912 which SAR records show as a 7B so not sure why anyone would think it was from an 8th. A bit of mystery surrounds this loco as it was sold to Albion in 1950 but its Government Mining Engineer boiler number 26686 is in the Natal series and numbers in that range were being issued around 1930 but we have no record of it working in Natal. Possibly it was sold to industry then returned to SAR - this did happen to a few locos.

Photograph: Dennis Mitchel

For the record your Advisory Board members are as follows:

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www.steam-in-action.com