



# NG EXPRESS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF

THE APPLE EXPRESS STEAM ASSOCIATION PORT  
ELIZABETH - SOUTH AFRICA

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[www.apple-express.co.za](http://www.apple-express.co.za)

**August 2004**

## **NEW HOPE FOR THE APPLE**

In the up and down saga of the Apple Express train, the news in this newsletter is much more positive than was reported in the last issue. Since four months ago when I last wrote about the woes of the train, things have taken a dramatic turn for the better. At the last moment, when we thought that all was lost and we would never see the train running again, Spoornet, within a week, did an about turn in their thinking and even pushed for the outstanding contracts and agreements to be signed as soon as possible. The details that were agreed upon between the AE Company and Spoornet were contained in the minutes of the meeting of the 10 July 2004 between the AE Association and the AE Company. The minutes were recently emailed to members. (If you did not received a copy let me know and I will email it.) So now with everything signed and sealed, the AE Company is once again reorganising itself, scheduling trains, marketing and most importantly trying to secure more finance for restoration etc. I hear that they are also applying to the National Lottery Fund for help. So on a positive note we see the "weeds of despair" being once again trampled by the busy feet of the loco shed staff .

## **WEBSITE SUSPENDED**

Because the train has been inactive, the sponsors of the Apple Express website have temporarily shut down the site until things get back to normal again.



Fixing a rusted ash pan

## **THE GREAT TRAIN RACE**

August is the month that the world renowned Port Elizabeth to Loerie Great Train Race takes place. In this the race teams of athletes pit their running strength against the train. The train has to obey all the laid down railway regulations concerning stops and speed constrictions on its way to the village of Loerie. Because the AE Company find themselves a bit short of money, the Apple Express Association has decided to use its funds to get the train "roadworthy" for the race. This exercise will probably deplete most of the Association's funds but with careful control of expenses we should be able to manage it.

## **THE ASSOCIATION A.G.M.**

The Association's A.G.M. that was held on the 29 May 2004 was reasonably well attended by members who confidently voted in the same committee that did duty during 2003.

CHAIRMAN – Dave Neal

VICE CHAIRMAN – Bruce Strang

SECRETARY – Clive Fife

TREASURER – Clive Fife

MEMBERS – Rob Lowis, Sandra Strang, Alan Buttrum.

## **LOCOMOTIVE NEWS**

Because of all the recent problems regarding the signing of agreements and contracts, restoration of NG 15 no. 119 was put on hold but is definitely not forgotten. Now that the AE Company has been given the go ahead to operate once again, no.119 will probably be looked at again and as soon as enough money becomes available, work on restoring this locomotive will begin. A backup locomotive is becoming an urgent necessity seeing that the ageing Garratt is due for a boiler inspection at the end of the year and her boiler is cause for concern. Major work may need to be done which has been exacerbated by the fact that the loco has been standing idle for the past five months.

## **COACH NEWS**

Spoornet NG have been instructed by the Rail Safety Regulator, to bring back the four passenger coaches that they have been using in the Langkloof. The coaches have been vandalised and are in a terrible condition. The unfortunate part is that two of the coaches are valuable heritage pieces being unaltered from when they were built in 1905. Hopefully they will also be restored as per original.

**TRAIN SCHEDULE** Provisional dates for train trips are:-

28 August – GRT	25 September	02 October – A Corporate booking
23 October	27 November	11 December
12 December	16 December – Public holiday	18 December
19 December	22 December	29 December
31 December	08 January	09 Januar

It was decided that because it is now historically low season for tourists, train trips would only be scheduled for the last Saturday of each month until the end of November 2004 or unless a large group of passengers requested a specific date.

It is very likely that more trains will be scheduled during December but will depend on demand.

### **MEMBERS WORKING PARTY**

Because the Humewood Road station area has been standing idle for nearly six months, the buildings and grounds are looking rather run down, grubby and untidy. A clean up day has been organised for Saturday 14 August for members to get together socially with spade and rake and to spend the day sprucing up the area a bit. After the work is done, members can enjoy a bring and braai.



Vandalised carpenter's store room

Clive Fife

Hon. Secretary/Treasurer

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