



# NG EXPRESS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF

THE APPLE EXPRESS STEAM ASSOCIATION PORT  
ELIZABETH - SOUTH AFRICA

Postnet Suite 124, Private Bag 13130, Humewood, Port Elizabeth

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

**January 2004**

## **A GOOD SUMMER SEASON**

The peak summer holiday period has come and gone and the annual holidaymakers who trek to the coast are now back at work with just memories and photographs to remind them of the good time that they had relaxing at the seaside. And as usual the Apple Express train was one of many local attractions that benefited from the free spending holiday makers. Eight trains ran during the holiday period, all being fully booked. Unfortunately due to the dry December conditions and local fire regulations, only three trains were steam hauled. There were a couple of complaints from passengers who were steam enthusiasts but the majority of passengers were just happy to enjoy a train ride into the country. It is not yet known if the Apple Express Company made a good profit but we hope that it did, to ensure the future of the train. The hiring of diesel locomotives plus footplate staff and the high cost of trackage puts a big squeeze on profits. Let's hope that the soon to be held Company feedback meeting will produce some positive news on the future of the train.

## **NEW STAFF**

Last month's newsletter mentioned the possible disruption of train schedule dates due to the shortage of footplate staff. A crisis was averted mainly because of the forced hiring of the diesel locomotives from Spoornet. Pierre, the regular steam driver was also able drive when needed as

it just so happened that his full time work did not interfere with his driving duties. We are also happy to report that the AE Co. has acquired the services of "donkey" Nel, a retired narrow gauge driver, who is at the moment undergoing a refresher course to renew his driver's licence. The AE Co. is also negotiating with an ex Spoornet stoker to become part of the footplate team.

## **NG CALENDAR**

The Railway Society of Southern Africa in conjunction with Sandstone Steam Railway have produced a two year (2004/2005) calendar featuring photographs of locomotives past and present of the narrow gauge operation on the Sandstone line as well as the Avontuur line. The calendar folds out to A3 size and is for wall hanging. Each photograph covers a three month period with sufficient space next to the date for personal notes. Each page also has a brief history of the locomotive represented in the main picture. Being a two year calendar at R60.00

it is very good value for money.



### **LOCOMOTIVE NEWS**

NG 15 No.119 has been moved from the diesel depot to the steam loco shed in preparation for some refurbishment work as well as the replacement of the boiler tubes. The tubes are still to be ordered, so it will be quite a few months before this locomotive will be seen on the track again.



NG 15 No.119 Waiting Attention

The loco shed staff have acquired a high pressure steam cleaner and have recently been happily cleaning everything in sight.

The shed area has been in need of this piece of equipment for a long time, not only for shed cleaning but also for getting rid of excess oil and grease from the locomotives.

### **GENERAL**

Little Bess the little steam locomotive that used to run in a recreational park in Uitenhage, is well on its way to being fully restored. This little loco belongs to the 2ft Preservation Trust and was the baby of the late Roy Mitchell. Sandstone Railway undertook to fully refurbish the boiler which is now in perfect condition. The little loco is to be moved to Pretoria for reassembly.

The Baldwin NG10 No.61 which used to be part of the fleet of locomotives housed at the

Humewood loco shed has been stripped at the Sandstone Railway workshops. Apparently it is not in very good condition but the staff at Sandstone are confident that she will be fit for steaming sometime in the future.

### **FINALLY**

To date we have not been notified of the dates for scheduled trips over the next few months. Dates will probably only be finalised at the upcoming Apple Express Company meeting.

Clive Fife

Hon. Secretary/Treasurer

[cfife@absamail.co.za](mailto:cfife@absamail.co.za)

# **THE APPLE EXPRESS STEAM ASSOCIATION**

## **GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESENT** : 7 members

**DATE** : 13 August 2003

**TIME** : 14h00

**PLACE** : 1820 Settler Association Headquarters

### **WELCOME:**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

### **APOLOGIES**

Bruce Strang, Sandra Cooper

### **MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Having been circulated were taken as read and passed as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Eric Kirk

Seconded: John Peace

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:**

1. Listing of all telephone calls made from the office phone has been introduced and the effect on the account will be seen when the next account is received.
2. It was suggested that a “floating” key for the Tavern stockroom be introduced to make it easier for the loading of the Tavern before trips.
3. It seems that two gas bottles are missing.
4. Peter B. mentioned that Sandstone Estates had formed a close alliance with the Welsh Highland Railway.
5. Eric K. said that the Jefferies Bay company that was to do the embroidery for the caps required a software program for the job. This being too costly, the process was stopped. It was mentioned that Sandra C. could arrange for a local company to do the job cheaper.
6. Practical training of train managers was continuing.

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Newsletters received from other steam associations and clubs.

### **FINANCIAL:**

The Treasurer reported that the Associations bank account was in good order with a balance of about

R20 000.

### **GENERAL:**

1. Clive F. mentioned that the station buildings were looking a bit grubby and was in need of a good washdown. He would speak to Sidney about installing a tap for attaching a hosepipe. The Humewood Road station sign board was also looking shabby.
2. Peter B. would let the Chairman have a list of emergency telephone numbers so that a sign can be made for display in the Tavern.
3. Following a question, it was felt that volunteer train staff arrive at the station one hour before the train departs and the Tavern staff two hours before departure time.
4. Alan B. queried the whereabouts of historical trucks that were standing at Greenbushes station and are now missing. Eric K. said that he was certain that the trucks had been moved to the Chelsea siding.
5. It was mentioned that the conveyor machine standing at the Humewood diesel depot was about to be scrapped. Sidney T. had indicated that he would make inquiries if it could be moved to the steam shed to be used for loading coal.

6. Concern was voiced about the apparent disinterest into the running of the Apple Express by the Section 21 company.

There being no further matters to discuss, the meeting closed at 15h30.

**The next General Members Meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Saturday, 31 January 2004 at a venue to be advised.**