



# 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)

**July 2004**

## **APPLE EXPRESS INTEREST GROUP MEETING**

**EDWARD HOTEL 10 JULY 2004 AT 2.30PM**

### **PRESENT:**

Lesley Lowe, Dave Neal, Clive Fife, Bruce and Sandra Strang, Peter and Barbara Burton, Eric Kirk, Lynda Connellan, Rob Lowis, John Peace, Bruce Brinkman, Clive Nel, Chris Jeffery.

### **APOLOGIES**

Keith Mitchell, Alan Buttrum.

The meeting was called by Lesley Lowe to inform all concerned of the latest developments with regard to getting the train legally moving again.

On behalf of the Apple Express Association, Peter Burton thanked Lesley Lowe for her enthusiastic and energetic efforts, against enormous odds, to keep the train from being permanently neglected.

### **Points raised were:-**

The Humewood Road property lease agreements have been signed for the period 1 May 2003 – 30 April 2006. The rental cost agreed upon is R500.00 per month. An option to renew the agreement for 2 periods of 3 years was agreed upon.

The old carpenters shop and adjacent open shed and railway lines are not included in the agreement as NG Spoornet require these for the conversion of 80 NG trucks to carry containers.

The Apple Express Company is also required to submit a maintenance programme for the buildings under its control.

The AE Company would have to pay rates and taxes for the area occupied and for electricity and water consumed.

The access agreement has been signed for a period 1 July 2004 – 31 December 2004 with an option to renew. A more permanent agreement would have to be negotiated through the

Heritage Railway Association of South Africa.

In future the HRASA would be the entry point of all contact between Steam Railways and Spoornet. This to include all operation problems, accidents etc.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with Interlink, a Spoornet Department, through which all scheduled train trips are to be organized and not through Spoornet Narrow Gauge as in the past. Interlink have subsidized trackage costs by R4.00/km i.e. the AE Company will in future pay R1.00/km instead of R5.00/km. They have also agreed that the diesel locomotive hire costs be R250.00 per day plus cost of diesel fuel plus cost of Spoornet footplate staff.

There is a push to have the narrow gauge line declared a heritage line which would prevent the line from being lifted, having trackage costs reduced to a minimum and ensure that historical buildings would retain their original identity. There is some resistance to this issue within the PE Municipality as the Humewood Road and harbour area is being earmarked by the Municipality for redevelopment into an upmarket accommodation and tourist area.

Future developments envisaged along the line are a hotel, cultural village, conference complex and a railway station to be built opposite the PE Airport, possibly to be known as Botani Gate.

An adventure world complex is planned for a site overlooking the Van Stadens River gorge and narrow gauge railway bridge.

**Other points discussed and earmarked for feedback were:-**

The feasibility of an occasional shorter train trip to enable the train to run at least twice a day.

Fund raising.

Marketing.

Advertising.

Scheduling of trains for the rest of the year.

Theme trains.

Website problems.

The Great Train Race

A feedback meeting will be held on Saturday 24 July 2004 at the Edward Hotel at 2.30pm