



# NG EXPRESS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT ELIZABETH APPLE EXPRESS

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## THE STEAM TRUMPET

The following is an extract from the "The South Western Gazette" of June 1<sup>st</sup> 1893.

The origin of the railway whistle is somewhat peculiar. In the beginning of the year 1833, the engine 'Samson' running on the railway between Leicester and Swanington\* came into collision with a cart and horse. The cart was loaded with beetroot and eggs for the Leicester market. The engine driver could only use the horn he held in his hand as a means of warning and the consequence was the cart overturned.

The accident caused some confusion and Mr. Ashlett Bagster, the director of the railway, went the very same day to Alton Grange where George Stephenson resided to consult with him. Bagster asked whether a whistle could not be placed on the engine which would let off the steam.

Stephenson replied that the idea was a good one and worth trying. The first whistle was made by a musical instrument manufacturer and gave such good results that the Board of Directors decided to establish similar whistles on all the company engines. As the company had to pay for the horse and cart, 50 lbs of beetroot and eighty dozen broken eggs, we may say that the whistle has its origin in 960 broken eggs.

After this, regulations were enforced which forbade the circulation of locomotives which were not furnished with a steam whistle or as it might well be called in those days, a "steam trumpet". Whistles as we know them now were introduced into England in 1836 and into France in 1837 on the first railway of St Germain. We are told that Mr. Fyffe, Director of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was the first to introduce the present day whistle in 1835. The early whistles consisted of a cylindrical bell of great height with a flat bottom very like the deep sounding sirens on steam boats. Later on, the cylindrical bell was replaced by a hemispherical one with a sharp sound. The old form of whistle is sometimes to be met with on American locomotives.

\*Note. Leicester and Swanington Railway opened on the 4 July 1832 and was absorbed into the Midland Railway in August 1845.

The above incident is purported to have occurred at Bagworth on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1833 but no written evidence exists and the story must remain part of railway legend.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Since the demise of steam on the narrow gauge railway here in the Eastern Cape and the 'take over' by the Class 91 diesel locomotives, a number of the steam locomotives that were working on the Avontuur line have, over the years, been sold to overseas buyers. Here is a list of where they are now.

LOCOMOTIVE	MNFG.	WHERE NOW
1. NG 15 No. 18	1931	Texas USA Bob Boucher.
2. NG 15 No. 118	1938	Bennett Brook Railway, Perth, Australia.
3. NG 15 No. 120	1949	Welsh Highland Railway
4. NG 15 No. 121	1949	Peter Rampton, Surrey, UK
5. NG 15 No. 123	1949	Bennett Brook Railway
6. NG 15 No. 133	1952	Welsh Highland Railway
7. NG 15 No. 134	1952	Welsh Highland Railway
8. NG 15 No. 135	1952	Was with Exmoor Steam Railway, Devon, UK.
9. NG 15 No. 136	1952	Schinzacher Baumfchunbahn, Switzerland.
10. NG 15 No. 146	1957	Brecon Mountain Railway, Wales, UK
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11. NGG 16 No. 50	1928	Texas, USA, Bob Boucher
12. NGG 16 No. 60	1928	Schinzacher Baumfchunbahn, Switzerland.
13. NGG 16 No. 77	1928	Brecon Mountain Railway, Wales, UK
14. NGG 16 No. 78	1928	(Reported sold to Hanomag and in their museum in Hanover.)
15. NGG 16 No. 82	1928	Peter Rampton, Surrey, UK
16. NGG 16 No. 87	1936	Exmoor Steam Railway??
17. NGG 16 No. 109	1939	Exmoor Steam Railway ??
18. NGG 16 No. 115	1939	Exmoor Steam Railway ??
19. NGG 16 No. 129	1950	Puffing Billy Railway, Australia.
20. NGG 16 No. 130	1950	Exmoor Steam Railway ??
21. NGG 16 No. 138	1958	Welsh Highland Railway.
22. NGG 16 No. 140	1958	Welsh Highland Railway.
23. NGG 16 No. 143	1958	Welsh Highland Railway.

Although not all the above locos are operational, they will eventually be restored and be brought back into service in their respective countries. (Report – Peter Burton)



NG 15 No. 123 Bennett Brook Railway

## LOCOMOTIVE NEWS

The boiler tubes for NG 15 No. 119 have finally arrived. The two sets of tubes, one set for No.119 and another for No. 124 were recently delivered to the workshops at the Humewood Road depot. This is the first step toward getting these two Kalahari's back on the tracks. The tubes will in the near future be sent to the steam workshops in George to be swaged. Road trucks move fairly frequently between Humewood Diesel depot and George, so it shouldn't be too long before work can recommence with the rebuilding of loco No.119.



Boiler Tubes

With Garratt No. 131 being out of commission, it is great to know that in the not too distant future we will be able to see steam traction, at the head of the train, once again. It looks like it will be a very long time, though, before we see the Garratt in action again. At least we still have video available to remind us of her glory days. (See [www.sa-transport.co.za](http://www.sa-transport.co.za) for a short video of the Garratt in action.)

## COACHING NEWS

Work on the coaches has come to a temporary standstill due to, Clive Nel, our coach builder's, illness.

## THE COUNTRY SCENE

Being a "country train" with its day trip terminus a small village far from the bustle of city life, there is always a surprise or two awaiting the passengers at the Thornhill Station. For instance the locals, especially the little ones, are always there to welcome the train.



A welcoming committee

Then occasionally it is not only humans that are around to welcome the train but also our four legged friends wander by to say hello.



Farmyard Scene at Thornhill

During the fruit season one is sure to find the odd local trader arriving to try and tempt the tourist with their juicy wares.



Prickly pears for sale.

Then in the village itself it is not only motor cars that move down the 'main' street.



Goose stepping down Main Street

These are but a few of the happenings that the Apple Express passengers are bound to encounter when taking a day trip on the train.

## LOERIE TRIP

On 17<sup>th</sup> June, Fathers Day, the train journeyed all the way to Loerie station instead of doing the shorter trip to Thornhill. The Loerie run is always enjoyable, mainly due to the magnificent views passengers have of the Loerie valley as the train slowly meanders down the hillside toward the town. It was a wonderful sunny day and the capacity crowd of passengers; thoroughly enjoyed the day's outing.

## IN MEMORIAM



It is with deep regret that we report on the recent tragic death of Andre Steyn (Junior Manager – Learning and Performance, Spoornet) . Andre was one of the Apple Express's most staunch supporters. He was always ready to assist whenever there was a problem that needed solving. Like all of us, he was a lover of steam and was, on many occasions, seen riding the footplate of a locomotive, the only place on the train he enjoyed being. He will be sorely missed by us all.

Rest in peace, Andre.