



## MILLSITE UPDATE 03 July 2008

Dear Steam in Action Members,

As yet we have no official release documents from HRASA or Transnet and no indication of when this will be forthcoming. This is playing havoc with our plans as diesel has increased by 10% this week and coal by 18,52%, already eroding our funds. In addition we can make no plans to prepare for movement without a target date. This is a sad sorry state of affairs.

As you all know Transnet will only deal with HRASA and we appeal to them to please engage with Transnet and formulate a resolution. The extended deadline of 31 July remains.

In the meantime, the respected UK steam journal, "Steam Railway", has published this article highlighting the Millsite issue. SIA would like thank Chris Janisch from FOTR for his efforts in making this happen.

Dave Richardson  
Executive Director  
Steam in Action

### HEADLINE NEWS

THE BIGGEST NEWS GETS THE BEST COVERAGE IN STEAM RAILWAY

# 1968? 1978? No.... May 2008

Scrapping of South Africa's national collection suspended by enthusiast action - but only until the end of June

BRITISH-built steam locomotives, including examples set aside by South African rail operator Transnet at its Millsite depot near Johannesburg, are being scrapped. Previously considered safe, scrapping activity at the depot began in early May without warning.

Enthusiast organization Steam in Action (SIA) had previously been told that no locomotives marked 'R' for 'Retain' would be destroyed, but four locomotives marked for preservation, class '23' Nos. 3286 and 3311 and 'GMAM' Nos. 4061 and 4086, have been torched.

After an SIA representative was told by sources at scrap metal company Reclam that everything, including all the locomotives marked for preservation, was to be cut, a concerted publicity campaign was mounted. As a result Transnet Heritage Foundation (THF) has offered the remaining locomotives to Heritage Railway Association of South Africa members for free, clubs needing only to pay for removal and storage. However, THF set a May 30 deadline for interest to be registered, with locos to be moved by June 27. To move a locomotive out of Millsite to safe storage at Klerksdorp by road will cost

around R100,000 (£7,000). Millsite depot became a base for SAR's Museum Heritage Foundation and tour trains in the mid 1980s. The whole operation moved to Cape Town in 1997 at which point SAR left behind 36 national collection locomotives of 31 classes, about 14 of which are sole class survivors, all with spares. The remnants include five classes of 'Garrett', five 'Pacifics', and one of two of the last 'condensers'.

SIA's Chris Janisch visited Millsite on May 16. He told *Steam Railway*: "We spoke to the foreman from scrap metal company Reclam, who said that they had about 6,000 tons of steel to scrap. We found the remains of two 'GMAMs', a '23', some '15Fs' and a '15CA', some of these locos having been originally set aside for preservation."

During Mr Janisch's visit the breakers were hard at work, with '15F' No. 2921 being cut along with a '25NC' originally destined for preservation, No. 3414 Carol. On an adjacent track being stripped was '23', No. 3286.

Mr Janisch added: "A rare GEA Garratt, welded to the tracks, had already received attention from the merchants despite its designation as a retained

locomotive. At the museum compound we came across valuable artifacts: van Schoor tablet machines, broken station armchairs...the list goes on. Crude jacks had been used to extract white metal from axleboxes - this was not what was envisaged back in 1972."

Following Mr Janisch's visit, a publicity campaign was mounted leading to an outcry from the enthusiast community. The HRASA, having apparently negotiated future disposals with Transnet for a number of months, was on May 15 issued with a letter instructing it to identify and remove key assets from the compound by June 27.

After that date the remaining locomotives will be put up for tender. In a statement, Transnet said: "These assets, some of which are in a complete state of disrepair, present a serious risk, health and environmental issue, while presenting an image problem to Transnet."

SIA has been co-ordinating the public response and channeling its concerns to Transnet. Mr Janisch said: "The biggest problem is funding. Transnet is not prepared to donate anything towards the removal and restoration of its heritage. An appeal is thus being

issued to all steam enthusiasts around the world to assist by sending letters of concern to Transnet and the Heritage Resource Agency."

As *Steam Railway* went to press a 'Berlin Airlift' style rescue of spare parts and locomotives was being mounted with 'Reesteamers' nearby depot at Germiston being the depository. To find out how you can get involved in saving South African steam email: ■ HRASA: [crea@absamail.co.za](mailto:crea@absamail.co.za) ■ SIA: [Steam\\_in\\_Action.com@mail.vresp.com](mailto:Steam_in_Action.com@mail.vresp.com)

**STOP PRESS: NBLP launch appeal for '1488'...**  
THE North British Locomotive Preservation Group has launched an urgent appeal to save one of the locomotives caught up at Krugersdorp. North British-built '3BR' 4-8-2 No. 1488 was donated to the NBLPG by Vaal reefs Gold Mines in March 1990 and has been in store at Millsite shed, near Krugersdorp, for many years. The group's attention has been focused on the repatriation of its '24' No. 3647. The group has been in negotiation with Transnet to transfer No. 1488 to South Africa's National Collection. NBLPG is working to try to move it to a safer location.

Chris Janisch assesses the charred remains of a Drakensberg Express coach surrounded by priceless debris. R KOVACS



Above: Cylinder block from '23' class No. 3311, one of only four left from a class of 136, and once destined for preservation. C JANISCH

Below: It's an appalling sight, but it is happening today and it's happening to a British built locomotive. '15F' No. 2921 has its heart ripped out on May 14. CHRIS JANISCH

