



Happy Passengers and Crew our very successful New Years Train to Magaliesburg

Welcome to the first Reefsteamers newsletter of the year. January is a quiet month with no trains scheduled. It gives the members the opportunity of fixing up all those little and big jobs that have been 'in the job jar' for the last few months.

This is the time of year when we really need your help and your hands, so please find a free Saturday or Sunday or any weekday to pop down and lend a hand. There are a myriad of jobs to be done. As you read on in the news letter, you will see what is currently in progress and where you could help.

Depot Report

The Dikkop birds that were nesting at the far end of the drop pit shed have now gone. It appears that they raised two chicks and have flown away.

Motive Power Report

Class 15F 3046 is progressing nicely. The locomotive is complete apart from the brick arch within the firebox and the smoke box fittings. A pressure test on the boiler has identified that there is an element or two that are leaking. This is a bit of a set back, but Lappies and Victor are on the job and busy removing the superheater elements to test them and find where the faults are.

The labour intensive job of cleaning and polishing the locomotive is underway and it will look stunning when it emerges on its first revenue earning trip, hopefully next month.

Sandstone Estates' GMAM No.4079 'Lyndie Lou' is being still worked on for overhaul of the steam regulator as reported in last month's Waybill. Boiler inspection (For recertification) is pending.

The 12AR No.1535 'Susan' is nearly ready to run again with just the superheater elements to be installed and the smokebox reassembled. One of the superheater elements has been found to be leaking. Once this has been sorted out, the locomotive will have to be moved to the lower shop so the strip-threaded locating bolt on the right side intermediate underkeep can be repaired. To do this repair the wheel-set will have to be dropped to get clearance over the spring. In addition, the front bogie wheel bearings need to be inspected as two of them are running hot.

James, our specialist turner, has completed the second spare steam turbo generator and has now turned his attention to mechanical stoker donkey engines. The plan is the make one or two good spare units from a number of old units that are in stock. The pictures show the numerous parts that have been stripped out of one unit.

See pictures overleaf.



Partly Dismantled Stoker Motor



The inside bits



A 99% Complete Turbo Generator



Internal bits from a regulator

Rolling Stock Report

The generator car that was damaged in the recent shunting accident is now working and has been attached to the last trains of 2009. However, some work still needs to be done to replace the firewall between the generator compartment and the kitchen with a new insulated (sound and heat) wall.

The Sandstone Sleeper Coach No.28332 is having its bogies overhauled and the one that is out from the coach has been red oxide painted and is just waiting on a set of new wheels. To be donated from a scrap coach



Painting in progress on the Coach Bogie



The centre pivot of the bogies were found to require new self lubricating bushes and James is busy turning them on our big lathe.



James on our Big Lathe turning a new Bush for the Coach Bogie

The NZ coal wagon No. 94854857 that gave trouble on the Cherry Festival trip is to have its rusted brake gear stripped de-rusted and reassembled.

Trips

The new year's overnight trip to Magaliesburg was a roaring success and will be repeated this year. It was strange to note that despite clear information being give to all passengers to be there no later that 15h30 for a 16h00 off at Maraisburg by 16h10 when the train actually departed there were still 4 groups that had not turned up.

There are no trips in January and below are the February ones to Magaliesburg.

Saturday 06 February 2010.

Saturday 13 February 2010. Private charter to Magaliesburg.

Saturday 27 February 2010.

From the Board – report on Shunting Accident :

On the 24 November 2009, an unusual series of shunting related accidents occurred at the Reefsteamers Depot. There have since been rumours and conjecture as to what happened and whether the incident had been properly filed. Thus, upon instruction by the Chairman, I (Lee gates) am including a description of the event, based upon the report that was properly filed in our archives and also all documents that were properly filed with the Rail Safety Regulator.

The chain of incidents started when coaches were being shunted into their usual order for day-trip trains and for storage after being used on the Cherry Festival train. Six coaches had already been arranged and were standing in the carriage shed, while the diesel shunter was being used to haul three coaches around the turning 'balloon' track to finish the job.

The Reefsteamers' turning balloon is not a level track. The entrances at both the east end of the yard (by the loco storage track) and the west end of the facility (behind the coal dock) are higher than the track in the centre of the balloon. Thus, the turning track dips in the centre from both directions. Furthermore, vision into the dipped section of track from the west end is initially obscured by buildings and then by a grassy bank.

When the diesel shunter was pushing the three coaches downhill towards the dip, the driver and shunter saw that the dipped section of the turning track was occupied by the six coaches that had already been stored up at the carriage shed. Those six coaches had started moving on their own, traversed the main yard past the water tower and ran through the eastern yard gate by gravity. The six coaches were stationary, having settled by gravity into that dip. Unfortunately, the diesel shunter's driver, although he did his best, was unable to brake his loco and three-coach train in time to avoid a collision. The driver was injured when he was thrown around the cab and the shunter sustained bruises when he left his train.



After the driver was taken away to a hospital to be attended to, one of the contracted staff members decided to try and help out. He is not a locomotive driver. He managed to start the diesel shunter and uncoupled one coach from the now-nine coach train and started uphill to start clearing the tracks. He paused his locomotive on the uphill section and sent another staff member ahead to check and change the points. The diesel shunter was then out of gear and the locomotive and the single coach then began to roll back down into the dip again.

The diesel shunter's primary gearbox is hydraulic, but the original, now secondary, gearbox is mechanical – operated by radial dog clutches. As the locomotive was moving and he was unable to apply the brake, he was also unable to put the non-synchromeshed locomotive back into gear for engine assisted braking or to apply opposing traction. The locomotive and coach rolled back down the dip towards the waiting train and there was a second collision. The staff member concerned jumped from his locomotive before the impact and sustained no injuries apart from scrapes and bruises.

The second impact was harder. The interior shelving of the power car, already loosened, came tumbling down. The diesel tank for the day-train's generator had already fallen over from the first impact and now shelving and equipment fell onto the generator's engine. The large generator set was torn loose from its mountings and shifted forward right through the firewall of the newly built kitchen area. Four couplers were damaged within the train and there was crockery damage in the kitchen coach, as well as liquor bottles that were smashed in the bar storage area when the display fridge toppled over. The locomotive sustained no damage and no vehicles were derailed.

In the analysis, the first part of the accident was caused by assumptions made by the shunting crew. During the investigation, the handbrakes on the six coaches that ran away were all found to be off and all the handbrakes were found to be functioning properly. By the shunter's own admission, no 'scotch blocks' had been applied to the original six coach train. It must be mentioned that this was not our usual shunting team, as one of the usual members was on leave at the time.

Rules were violated concerning the loading of the diesel locomotive. It does not have vacuum brakes and only weighs roughly 20 tons upon four wheels, half the weight of a typical coach. On a dry day with clear tracks, the diesel is only allowed to take two coaches around the turning balloon. If the track is covered in weeds or the rails are wet, only one coach or vehicle may be moved at a time. The three coach train was too heavy even under ideal circumstances. On this day, the turning track was sprouting a fresh crop of weeds since our last weed picking session. Weeds and foliage growing around rails are crushed by a train's wheels and the leaking sap makes the railheads slippery. Thus, the 20 ton locomotive had inadequate braking force to make an emergency stop with a 125 ton train – especially on a slope.

The second incident was caused by a man with good intentions, but is not a trained locomotive driver and is not familiar with the equipment. When the locomotive was examined after the incident – it was found to be 'out of gear' as claimed. However, the hand operated brake wheel was found to have been turned completely OFF. The 1951 built Hunslet Taylor machine has a modified brake stand and as a result, the horizontally mounted brake wheel is unintuitively turned anti-clockwise to apply the brakes ... not clockwise as is normally the case with SAR standard handbrakes. The lack of brakes was caused by the staff member panicking, and not through any mechanical defect in the locomotive.

The situation has been resolved and remedial measures have been put into place. These measures have been recorded on our files. The three individuals have admitted their guilt and have learnt their lesson as have the rest of us. We are grateful that there were no serious injuries. This is the first incident of this kind in well over a decade and normally our shunting crews are very conscientious about using hand brakes and scotch blocks.

If you have any questions about the incident, Engineering Manager Andrew King, who also oversees the safety of working procedures in and around the workshop, was the investigating officer for the incident and has also conducted the remedial measures.

Contrary to the rumours going around, all the necessary documents HAVE been filed and the requirements of the Rail Safety Regulator HAVE been met.

By Lee Gates – on behalf of the Board.

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