



WELCOME to the April newsletter

We have had a few e-mails commenting on the bad news / good news ratio in our newsletter. I think it is important that SIA remains realistic and if there is genuine good news we will certainly applaud it. If there are delinquencies or if people are responsible for allowing South Africa's Railway Heritage to be destroyed then we should deal with that issue. Read Business Day or the Farmers Weekly and look at their ratios. More concern than happiness right now!

SIA is not a club or a Section 21 Company. It is purely a lobby group but it has the ability to name and shame if that is necessary. To some extent we perform the same function as the media and in line with global Internet trends, particularly through blogs, the Internet is a growing force for change.

A quick review of good news vs. not so good news.

Good news.

- 1) Has anyone been to the fabulous new Railway museum in Maputo? John Middleton has just been to visit. His report appears below. Congratulations to CFM Mozambique Ports & Railways. See Mozambique Update below.
- 2) Reefsteamers completed a successful steam test on 15F, No. 3046. During April they also reorganized and constituted a new effective Board with a number of experienced corporate individuals now at the helm. (See photograph right)
- 3) Zimbabwe seems to have recognised the potential of Steam Rail Tourism (see article below).
- 4) Since our last newsletter GMAM No. 4074 has re-entered service as a working steam locomotive in Natal. Congratulations to Dudley Smith, Umgeni Steam Railway, Keith Stevens and all involved. (See photographs bottom left)
- 5) The Sandstone Heritage Trust unveiled NGG16, No. 88 and a 1910 BSA Rail Car during April 2010. (See photograph bottom right)



GMAM No. 4074 has re-entered service as a working steam locomotive in Natal



This Month's Edition

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Reefsteamers completed a successful steam test on 15F, No. 3046. Photograph supplied by Lee Gates.



The Rail Car being loaded in Pretoria after being upholstered prior to its departure for the Eastern Free State.

Not so good news.

- 1) The authorities continue to remain silent on critical issues like the future of the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe, what they have ultimately decided to do with Millsite, and the future of lend/lease locomotives.
- 2) Humewood Road. The site is being cleared but certain of the heritage items are being moved to the nearby diesel depot. Effectively Humewood Road is no more and the buildings are going to be demolished.
- 3) Rovos Rail had a very unfortunate and serious accident in Pretoria during April. This obviously has raised question marks over rail safety in SA on the SA main line. However, hats off to Rohan Vos and his team for continuing to operate trains to schedule.
- 4) Deserving clubs like Steamnet 2000 and many others struggle to protect their locomotives due to lack of funding.
- 5) SANRASM continues to insulate itself from the world while the many interesting locos in their custodianship continue to deteriorate.

There are small positive steps being taken every month and many areas of the country are growing from strength to strength. These include Natal, the Eastern Free State, and Gauteng. The Cape is very quiet. Considering it is South Africa's tourist Mecca we would like to see more rail tourism being developed in the Province.

Three steam locomotives returned to steam during April 2010, which is an outstanding achievement.



Paul Willemse from Bennet Brooke Railway, Perth, Australia doing what he loves best. Driving an NG15 Kalahari. He is pictured here driving NG15 No. 17 in the Eastern Free State.

Photo by Aidan McCarthy

What stance does SIA take?

During the last month key members of SIA debated in-depth where we are going and what we are likely to achieve. The biggest problem that has always existed for SIA is personified in two key issues:

- A) The refusal of Transnet to discuss anything or to reply to correspondence other than on a superficial basis.
- B) The lack of transparency that exists regarding Transnet's deliberations over South Africa's Rail Heritage. Although they have a public sector representative in the form of HRASA the limited HRASA membership means that it isn't actually representative of the wider body of supporters of South Africa's Rail Heritage potential. That is not to say that HRASA does not try hard but the MOU referred to above keeps HRASA firmly in its place with very strong legal language which prohibits them from communicating information that would under any normal circumstances be shared openly and enthusiastically with those people that are trying to make a positive contribution. In fact normal HRASA members are not routinely briefed on the many meetings that have taken place over the past few years.

The problems that bedevil the Heritage division of Transnet are no different to those that afflict the whole of Transnet, the whole of Eskom, or in fact all the parastatals in South Africa.

There is a growing realisation that the lack of experience and less than satisfactory performance by the Civil Servants employed by these parastatals has a very specific bearing on the under performance of the organisation as a whole. At the moment Eskom is being used as the most visible example of what happens when a historically competent organisation starts to mismanage its affairs.

Transnet is a similar example and that is the one that we have to deal with.

A recent article was published last week in Business Day by Anton Eberhard (professor at UCT's Graduate School of Business) and Grové Steyn (Independent infrastructure and regulatory economist) entitled :

'Improving the performance of SA state-owned utilities'

The full article is attached but we quote as follows.

The governance of SA's state-owned enterprises is being reviewed. Key areas that will need attention are clarifying roles and responsibilities, smarter performance contracts, more effective monitoring and regulation, more transparent and relevant information, and fostering mixed-capital enterprises in a way that strengthens stakeholders with an interest in improved performance.

We have drawn attention to two issues raised by these eminent academics which are relevant to Heritage. Transnet is being urged to engage more with the private sector and to be more transparent. Exactly what SIA has been advocating for some time now. However, we have not really achieved that much because Transnet seems unable to take on board the fact that amongst the 920 odd SIA members, all of whom are Railway enthusiasts, there is considerable intellectual and commercial acumen and potential access to capital.

The fact that business proposals have been sent to Transnet which include offers of direct investment in various Heritage programmes and the fact that these same offers have been completely ignored is indicative of the fact that the Heritage department of Transnet has not apparently considered the benefits to South Africa's Rail Heritage of a process which involves many of the recommendations embodied in this report. We therefore leave SIA members with the following thought.

Should SIA continue to be patient and wait indefinitely for some internal intellectual renaissance to take place which might persuade the officials to talk more openly to the private sector or should we do everything in our power to support a much more broadly based initiative which goes along with the realities of our times?

Should we continue to urge Transnet to be more open, to be more constructive, and at least in the case of Rail Heritage to take on board the fact that they have real moral responsibilities to future generations of South Africans and South African supporters from around the world. These issues will obviously be discussed with HRASA at the forthcoming meeting on 15th May.

The full article reads as follows.

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/SA's_state-owned_utilities.pdf

Summary.

Many visitors to South Africa ask why there is not a truly representative National Railway Museum which would capture the best of the best of South Africa's world renowned Rail Heritage background. That is a good question. This issue has been raised in discussion with Transnet over the past 10 years by various bodies and in fact proposals have been put forward to Transnet to establish the equivalent of a National Railway Museum as a private sector initiative. No response has been received. Let's hope that Transnet takes note of the fact that greater cooperation with the private sector and greater transparency is something that would benefit not only their own organisation but the country as a whole.

If the recommendations that are being made as to how to reform organisations like Transnet and Eskom are successful then perhaps many of these proposals which have long since disappeared from sight could be located, dusted off, and reconsidered?



Resulting from our point that HRASA members were not being allowed access to the MOU between HRASA and Transnet we were eventually able to view a copy. It is somewhat uninspiring and in our opinion makes HRASA the servant rather than the partner of Transnet. HRASA members who are also SIA members are currently in a dialogue with HRASA leadership regarding the way forward. A meeting is being held with HRASA next week.

We receive words from HRASA but no proof that tangible progress is being made. To underline this point an e-mail was received from HRASA pointing out that great progress was being made in Zimbabwe with regard to Steam Rail Tourism. The e-mail appears below. We immediately took up with HRASA our concern that they appeared to not have the open door access to Transnet that is their right as the private sector representative partner of Transnet. The language of this document indicates that they are locked out and are going to try and find a way to talk to the authorities about something that is important, and as far as Transnet is concerned potentially embarrassing. Zimbabwe as a country is a basket case and yet they are promoting Steam Rail Tourism with government support and seem to have some very interesting plans in the pipeline.

From: Elize Lubbe [mailto:elize@finsettle.co.za]
Sent: 28 April 2010 06:48
To: Chris Janisch
Subject: National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ)

An interesting article below on Zim railways. Now if we can only convince TFR to think the same way! Chris can we not try and meet with TRF using the below article as a motivation?

Kind regards,
Elize

HRASA Board member

HRASA

From Chronical 27th April 2010

Steam locos to start operating in two weeks

Chronicle Reporter

THE National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) will on 9 May start running steam trains between Bulawayo and Plumtree while the programme for the Bulawayo-Victoria Falls route will be announced at a later date. The move is meant to attract tourists and steam enthusiasts. In an interview, NRZ public relations manager Mr Fanuel Masikati said the steam train runs were in preparation for the parastatal's bid to offer the service during the forthcoming Fifa World Cup in South Africa between June and July.

"We have three steam locomotives but we are planning to refurbish other locomotives to make them 10. We will start using the steam locomotives next month," said the NRZ spokesman. Mr Masikati said the company was refurbishing other locomotives to meet the demand to transport bulk goods. He said the NRZ was committed to transporting raw materials for companies striving to turn around the economy.

SIA comment: We understand that one steam hauled train will be operating to Plumtree in May 2010. This is considered a test of the infrastructure and for the locomotives. Similar trips to Victoria Falls are being considered. For steam tours to Zimbabwe members can contact Geoff Cooke at Geoff's Trains (geoff@geoffs-trains.com). <http://www.geoffs-trains.com/>

Ironically in SA itself we are not being kept abreast of any developments or plans to do anything, and although we hear the odd rumour we are not being brought up-to-date with any specific initiatives driven by either Transnet or HRASA which would move this process forward. Of greater concern is the fact that it is the 150th Anniversary of the introduction of Railways to South Africa. What an amazing opportunity that represents. We challenge HRASA to grasp the mettle here.

Rail Safety

The Chairman of HRASA, Chris Janisch, sent the following memorandum to all operators. We commend him for the initiative. The contents are valid and SIA fully supports a review of safety procedures for all operating steam locomotives in SA.

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/HRASA_OPERATOR_MEMBERS_260410.pdf

HRASA / SIA COOPERATE WITH RESPECT TO ESKOM DISCUSSIONS



*"Peckett No. 2161, ex Sena Sugar Mozambique, does service in the Eastern Free State for a photographic special."
Photograph supplied by Hannes Paling*

A decision has been taken to call for a joint meeting between Eskom, HRASA, SIA and SANRASM if they will attend to discuss the fate of the Heritage locomotives which have for all practical purposes been abandoned by SANRASM on a number of sites in the Krugersdorp area.

Once again we encourage SANRASM to step forward and communicate with us. Every effort can be made to avert a situation that does not currently look promising.

HRASA have invited an SIA representative to meet with them at their monthly Board meeting on 15th May at 10h00 in Pretoria. The invitation has been accepted.

SANRASM

SIA is starting to receive feedback from SANRASM members who are disgruntled by the approach adopted by the SANRASM supremo Lawrence Posniak. The members themselves are conscious of the continuous destruction of the assets and the fact that the locomotives are so vulnerable. We sympathise with SANRASM who spend more than R10,000 every month on security. The problem is that security of the type that they use is both inadequate and suspect in its own right. SIA members have been able to gain access to the locomotives quite easily without the security guards being particularly troubled. To be fair they can obviously differentiate between scrap metal thieves and SIA members but nonetheless it is not the type of uncompromising security that guarantees the protection of the assets.

SIA has communicated directly with SANRASM on 4 occasions but in all cases the correspondence has been ignored. We have now taken responsibility for communicating with the donors of the locomotives because many of these locomotives were not handed over unconditionally. It is not too late however for SANRASM to call a round table meeting between SIA, HRASA and themselves in order to discuss these problems in a very mature and even handed basis. There are many SIA members who are prepared to provide safekeeping facilities for SANRASM locomotives. In fact offers have actually been made to bring locomotives back into working order at no cost to SANRASM but inexplicably they have said they would rather see them rot than run again. A surprising number of people have indicated to SIA that they could be prepared to adopt a locomotive or even provide funding for the locomotive to be kept safe but SANRASM seems to prefer to remain completely insulated from the global world preservation scene.

This is an obvious mistake bearing in mind the treasure trove of locomotives in their care. Full marks for saving them but an awesome responsibility rests on their shoulders (members please note) to ensure they don't die a slow death due to neglect.

There is no question that the days of quiet diplomacy are practically over but if there are SANRASM members of stature out there who are reading this newsletter then they will want to actively intervene. Change must come from within.

During the month we again approached SANRASM for a meeting. We have had no response to the e-mail below:

From: Mike Myers [mailto:mikem@sandstone.co.za]
Sent: 19 April 2010 10:20 AM
To: 'Lawrence Posniak'

Dear Mr. Posniak,

I refer to our previous correspondence concerning the possibility of assisting SANRASM. We have had quite a number of SIA members (some of whom are SANRASM members) who urged us to enter into a dialogue with you to see if something could be done about the state of the SANRASM assets.

Bearing in mind that we are about to receive a major announcement concerning the new Transnet Heritage initiative we are conscious of the fact that your assets fall outside the scope of that and therefore are not likely to receive any immediate relief.

We suggest that a group of SIA members meet with yourself and senior SANRASM members to discuss issues that are now becoming of concern to an ever widening circle of people.

Assuming you agree in principle to this I will contact your secretary to arrange dates etc.

Regards,
Michael C. Myers

ROVOS RAIL RUNAWAY

This unfortunate accident was very widely covered in the international media and we are sure that there are no SIA members who are not familiar with what happened. Like most accidents this was very unfortunate.

We received the following statement from Rovos Rail:

From: info@atta.travel [mailto:info@atta.travel]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2010 6:23 PM
Subject: ATTA Newswire: 3056 - Rovos Rail Statement

From Rovos Rail

At 10h30 on Wednesday 21 April, a Rovos Rail train en-route from Cape Town to Pretoria stopped at Centurion Station to change locomotives. The electric locomotives then uncoupled whilst our steam loco stood by to move on to the main line. The signalling system was temperamental and delayed this process by 45 minutes. While the steam loco was waiting for a signal change, the train started moving alongside it.

At the time our train manager and a group of guests were waiting on the platform at the front to observe the locomotive change. On noticing the movement, the manager and loco staff applied handbrakes to three carriages, which was not enough to stop the momentum on the significant decline out of Centurion Station towards Pretoria. The train then proceeded for 10 km down to Pretoria Station where it derailed due to excessive speed across the points leading into the station. The occurrence is being investigated.

On a very sad note three of our staff members died in the accident, while two were hospitalised. At this time one passenger is in hospital in a serious but stable condition, and six others are being treated for fractures.

There were 19 carriages on the train of which 15 are damaged beyond repair. Clean-up activities are in progress and all vehicles are expected to be removed from the track by midnight tonight.

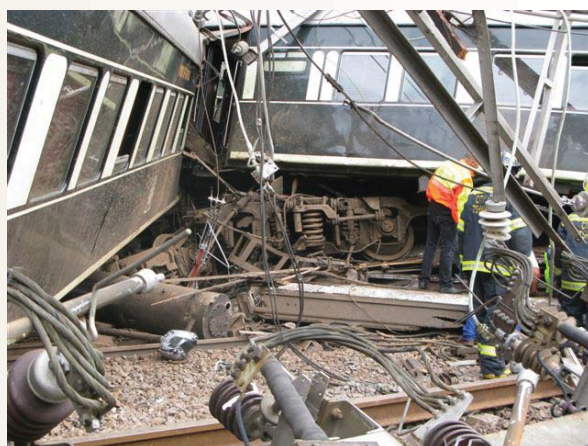
The operation of the business will continue as usual with the Victoria Falls service having departed this morning and Cape Town departing tomorrow afternoon. The loss of the rolling stock is being assessed but all trains will be departing as planned.

We thank you for your kind support.

For further information or enquiries please contact:
Rovos Rail Head Office
Tel +27 (0) 12 315 8242
info@rovos.co.za

For further information refer to their web site: www.rovos.com.

We have been in touch with Rovos Rail and expressed our condolences for the loss of life.





REGIONAL NEWS

It is not necessary for SIA to repeat what is already on the Club web sites or what has been circulated to members.

Natal

We have received the Railway Society of Southern Africa Natal Branch newsletter which is full of good information. For further information contact Ashley Peter (apeter@metrorail.co.za). We quote from the editorial: "Let us not forget that the major refit for GMAM No. 4074 is nearing completion at Masons Mill and provided all goes according to plan she should be heading out to Creighton on a delivery trip on Saturday, 17th April."

Congratulations are in order for all concerned in this massive undertaking, probably the largest single loco overhaul ever attempted by a local preservation volunteer group.

SIA comment: The loco is safely in Creighton and we have just received a very detailed update from Andy Anderson of Umgeni Steam Railway which is very timely and greatly appreciated.

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/GMAM_4074RESTORATION.pdf

Umgeni Steam Railway

See www.umgenisteamrailway.co.za.

Railway Society of Southern Africa

See www.umgenisteamrailway.co.za/RSSA_KZN_Membership.html.

Gauteng

Friends of the Rail

See www.friendsoftherail.com.

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/FOTR_Newsletter_April2010_006.pdf

Reefsteamers

Reefsteamers have been particularly outstanding in their reporting of late and Lee Gates does a great job. Here is his latest Depot Report.

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/FP_3046_Steam_Test_4_2110_M04_09.pdf

A Summary of Class 15F No. 3046 Steam Test can be viewed at:

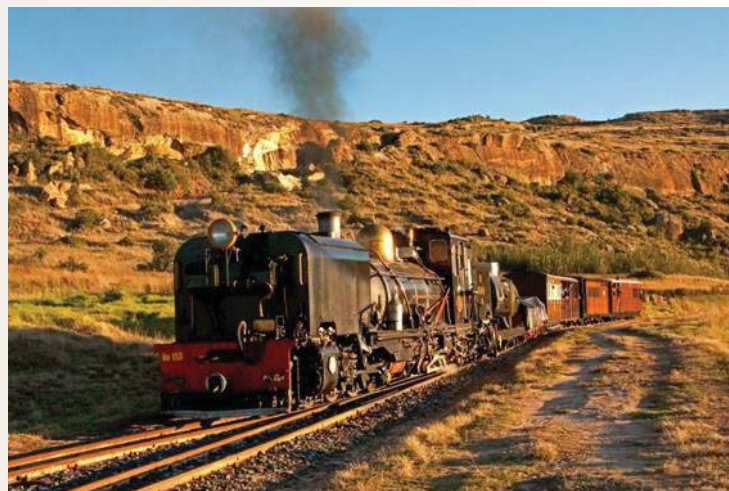
<http://www.2fpt.com/css/News/Reefsteamers/2010/April/FP-3046%20Steam%20Test%204%20-%202110-M04-09.pdf>

Free State Province

Sandstone Heritage Trust

A decision was taken to steam every locomotive in the Sandstone Running Shed during the week of 19th April 2010. This was achieved. For further details of the week's activities go to:

<http://www.sandstone-estates.com/index.php/railway-heritage/2ft-narrow-gauge/938-sandstone-steaming-week-19th-25th-april-2010>.



NGG 16, No. 153 hauling up from the Vailima School late afternoon 22nd April.
Photograph by David Benn



NGG 16, No. 88 on one of its inaugural runs at Sandstone Estates during a private steaming week on 21st April.

Photograph by David Benn



Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe

SIA requested an update on the resurrection of the Choo-Tjoe. Reply herewith:

I am so sorry, but I cannot provide one as this is a Transnet process.

The Provincial Government is awaiting an announcement from them.

Best wishes,

Tammy Evans

Media Liaison Officer to Minister Alan Winde Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism

Editor's comment: Tammy has been outstanding in the way she has kept us informed to the best of her ability.

Choo-Tjoe takeover bid

THE Western Cape government has asked Transnet for permission to take over the George/Knysna line with a view to restoring the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe's operations between the two Garden Route towns.

Western Cape Finance, Tourism and Economic Development MEC Alan Winde yesterday said the takeover would include rolling stock, land and buildings.

There are very few locations that have views as beautiful as those from the windows of the Choo-Tjoe, and if Transnet agrees to our request we will immediately begin to look for ways to use the Choo-Tjoe as a draw-card to attract tourists and enthusiasts to our province."

Winde, long an advocate of maintaining Africa's last commercial steam train, said they wanted to restore the line to its former glory.

He said there were financial constraints but he would do everything he could to see the heritage icon restored to its former glory.

The train stopped operating between Knysna and the Transport Museum in George after massive damage to the bridges and railway line at Kaaiman's Pass outside Wilderness when floods caused landslides in 2006 and 2007. It was estimated at the time that repairing the line and overhauling the coaches would cost over R100-million.

A Choo-Tjoe steering committee was set up to find ways of saving the train service and suggested a number of ventures, including a line between Knysna and Wilderness, stopping short of the damage at Kaaimans until funding could be found to repair the line.

Winde said the government was "open to the idea" of building other tourist ventures alongside the line.

"We must remember how important it is to preserve the heritage that has been passed down to us. I will continue to fight for what rightfully belongs to future generations."

Transnet currently runs the Choo-Tjoe between Mossel Bay and George but is considering expressions of interest for the operation to be taken over because the parastatal wants to focus on its core business, rail freight.

"Unfortunately Transnet has yet to make an announcement on the bidding process for the George to Mossel Bay line.

"We are expecting news in this regard soon," Winde said.

From E Cape Herald - 19 April 2010

Latest release from Alan Winde's office

http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/Choo_Tjoe_News_9.pdf

MOZAMBIQUE UPDATE

From: John Nicholas Middleton [mailto:jmiddleton1@ifc.org]

Sent: 01 May 2010 11:24

To: joannewest@btinternet.com

Subject: Mozambique News

CFM, Maputo - The station here always seems neat and clean but a pleasant surprise found on Sunday 18 April was the construction of a CFM Railway Museum, although this has not yet opened. The museum is being created on the four bay platform tracks at the west end of the station, all four tracks are under the overall roof with the inner two within a building. Various hoardings have been erected describing the work and the overall impression is of a well thought out project. So far the only large exhibits are three magnificently restored teak bodied coaches (A11 and A12 built by La Croyere in 1911 and A1 built by Clayton in 1924) and a van DF2. Staff at the station indicated that locomotives would also be included and this probably now explains why Henschel Garratt 972 was brought down from Gondola to Maputo. Standing outside the museum was a complete Hitachi railcar ACZvb122 and possibly this is an intended exhibit as the descriptions talk about CFM up to the present day. It is to be hoped that CFM put the effort into rescuing the Mallets at Moatize so that at least one could be

preserved in the museum. Dubs 4-6-0T No. 9 and little 750 mm gauge GAZA remain in beautiful condition on their plinths.

Also at Maputo station were quite a number of the UCW 1991 built former Botswana Railways air conditioned coaches, several recently repainted into CFM Green and Cream livery.

CFM Moatize - The rebuilding of the 550 km Sena line from Beira to Moatize by RITES of India has reached Moatize. The track has been laid into the station area but requires tamping and alignment. Earthworks for the rapid loading loop at Vale's Moatize coal mine (which branches off the main line about 5 km before Moatize) have been completed but track has not been laid yet. First coal trains are expected before the end of 2011.

Apart from the new line laid into Moatize station the derelict and stored locomotives and rolling stock do not appear to have been touched. The two 1912 ALCO built Mallets (CFM 100 and 101) are where they were in 1997. The loco shed was not visited (due to time constraints and colleagues losing patience) but is securely fenced and nothing seems to have been moved so the other four steam locos are assumed to still be there. The survival of the Mallets is remarkable and given the scrapping of all SAR Mallets, they should be preserved, the perfect

place being the new CFM Museum. When they arrived at Moatize does not seem to be known but by the late 1960's when the first enthusiasts arrived they were already long withdrawn and were in use as stop blocks in the yard. Today, it is not possible to tell which is which but one loco is perched astride the top of the embankment which formed the head shunt beyond the station yard. It appears that at some point it was hit by runaway wagons (its main frame is bent under the cab and bears signs of a heavy collision). This impact swung it around so it now lies at 90 degrees to the track bed. The embankment is about 30 feet high at this point so the only way to remove it will be by crane. For many years this seemed impossible but with the development of the Vale (CVRD) Moatize coal mines close by there is now heavy equipment available. The second loco has been pushed off the triangle that lies behind the shed. Its front end has sunk into the ground and it has a large termite mound that almost fills the cab. Both locos are missing their tenders but as the locos are identical to early SAR Mallets which had standard tenders and therefore finding appropriate replacements in SA should not be difficult.

The locos, whilst rusty, are remarkably complete given their probable 50 year plus survival beyond withdrawal and apart from the bent frame on the head shunt loco, appear restorable.

Regards

John
SIA comment.

We are in touch with CFM regarding the future of these Mallets.



THE EASTERN FREE STATE LINE

This postcard was produced when there was real optimism about the possibility of using the wonderful Eastern Free State line as a tourist attraction by running steam trains the full length of the Bethlehem-Bloemfontein line. This has been an ongoing issue for many years with many proposals being put on the table. No progress has been made over that period and of course the line has been subjected to severe attrition. The entire asset is in a frowsy condition. One only has to go and stand on Bethlehem platform to see that. What is interesting is the fact that Geoff Cooke Tours reports that due to the very high cost of running on that line (bearing in mind that the locomotives have to come from Reefsteamers Germiston) it is not practical to offer it as part of a Steam Safari in South Africa. This seems ironic bearing in mind that the Sandstone Heritage Trust has a 19D restored to brand new condition, stranded in Bloemfontein.

There surely must be some way to get support from Transnet, HRASA, Reefsteamers and Sandstone to combine together to actually do something on the Eastern Free State line. It has been a long time since a steam hauled passenger train ran across the bridge in this postcard.



Wheel flanges sing as the fourteen coach Bethlehem – Bloemfontein passenger eases around the 40 kph curve and crosses the bridge at Meulspruit, South of Ficksburg. 3420 is on the head end and the big 4-8-4 roars into life as the driver cracks open the regulator for the long slop to Owanty. Photo by Mike Carter

MEMBER'S FEEDBACK

Peter Gray has written a very hard-hitting letter to John Dlodlu of Transnet resulting from a request in last month's newsletter as follows:

Dear John

FEEDBACK ON BUSINESS DAY LETTER

1. Your letter in BUSINESS DAY dated 24 March 2010 refers.
2. You make a number of interesting claims in your letter, some of which I would like to deliver comment on:
 - a. In the opening sentence of your letter: "...c9 punts the same tired Cassandra warnings about Transnet's alleged failings. They are, as usual, without foundation."
 - b. Later: "Transnet is not perfect; it faces many challenges. Over the past few years however, it has bravely confronted these challenges and made considerable progress."
 - c. Sill later: "In the past few years, it has invested R74bn – all of which was cost-effectively financed off our own balance sheet and some R5bn came from off-shore investors...'c9"
 - d. Yet later: "With this in mind, I had previously extended an open invitation to our most hostile detractors. There were no takers."
3. Let's take them one at a time.
4. Your first sentence seems to infer that you are not committing "alleged failings". Due to the nature of my work I travel regularly (by road) between Pretoria and Oudtshoorn, travelling through Kroonstad, Bloemfontein, Colesberg, and then either via Noupoot, Middelburg, Graaff-Reinet, Aberdeen, Willowmore and De Rust, or via Hanover, Richmond, Three Sisters and Beaufort West. I also regularly travel between Oudtshoorn and Cape Town via Calitzdorp, Ladismith, Barrydale, Montagu, Ashton, Robertson, Worcester and Paarl. I can provide you with first-hand proof that Transnet does have failings. Allowing its infrastructure to deteriorate to the extent where it would conceivably be dangerous to travel by train to any of these towns (and cities), or even between them is one of them. You are welcome to accompany me should you so choose. The accident which took place a few years ago in the Eastern Cape supposedly due to a signal fault is an example of what could conceivably happen again. Another example is the lack of fencing and gates alongside thousands of kilometres of railway, which are simply accidents waiting for a place to happen.
5. Your claim that Transnet is confronting its challenges. I believe that this can be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand this is a claim, or a statement. On the other hand it can be interpreted as an apology. I do not believe however, that Transnet is "bravely confronting its challenges". As an example: Oudtshoorn is a town with an incredible potential for tourism. Not only the Ostrich farms and the Congo Caves,

but of late the KKNK (Little Karoo National Arts Festival). The standing attractions mean that there is potential to transport passengers to and from Oudtshoorn, but then the infrastructure must be in place. On 03 December 2009, there were two articles in the local newspaper known as the HOORN. I refer you to the two website addresses, so that you can read the articles yourself, first hand:

a. The first, the report on the decrepit and dilapidated state of the Oudtshoorn railway station buildings, at <http://www.diehoorn.co.za/2009/12/03/%e2%80%98niemand-gee-om-nie%e2%80%99/>.

b. The other the report a about how the reporter of the HOORN attempted to contact somebody from Transnet to deliver comment on the state of the buildings and the infrastructure, and the lack of assumption of responsibility on the one hand, and a total lack of interest and feedback on the other hand, at <http://www.diehoorn.co.za/2009/12/03/op-soek-na-transnet/>.

6. As a matter of interest, apparently somebody from your Johannesburg office visited the Oudtshoorn railway station at some point after the attempts by the newspaper to obtain feedback, and again, nothing has been done.

7. As regards your claim that Transnet has "invested R74bn", my question is "on what?" The damage inflicted to the railway line between George and Wilderness in the Southern Cape, the apparent lack of funds to repair this line, and the subsequent loss of rail transport to this part of the Southern Cape impacts directly on the effective railway system between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. If the claims that there is an attempt to revive the railway system in South Africa are true, then you are busy undermining your own efforts by allowing this railway line to fall into disuse and disrepair.

8. John, out of my own part of the country I can provide you with examples of how Transnet is not only failing in its core business, but also in other aspects of its work. I believe that this is true for most other parts of South Africa. I thus believe that your last claim, that "hostile detractors" have not taken you up on your offers (of what?), I believe that it is probably more out of a sense of helplessness and exasperation, than a silence of critics without a cause.

9. I would add that I am a steam enthusiast, albeit a very minor one, but that is an issue which requires a much longer letter all on its own.

10. By the way, I would appreciate a note of acknowledgement, but know and understand the workings of big business: while I am not a potential customer, I am not regarded as an issue – and will thus not receive a reply. At least however, you understand how I feel, and that there are some of us who believe that you are most certainly barking up the wrong tree.

Yours faithfully
Peter Gray

----- Original Message -----

From: Fraser & Sandy Howell
To: ANDY SELFE
Sent: Tuesday, May 04, 2010 9:28 AM
Subject: Newsletter

I don't think my desire for the future of the rail heritage scene in SA is really any different to yours or many, many others. My part in this is very small but I think we smaller players all need to step up to the plate if we are to be successful in 'imitating' anything like the success shown by Sandstone in saving, renovating, preserving and running heritage in all its forms in this country. Number 88 will be a further feather in Sandstone's cap!

It seems to me that here in SA, until SIA was formed, we lacked a centralizing force that wanted to be a "leader" that could inform, rally and motivate the rank and file enthusiast fraternity to the nub of important issues.

There are several organisations that have got part way there but, to me, none have yet demonstrated that they wish to take up the mantle to the point where success is proven. For instance, we do not have a vibrant railway press as does UK which has several well known and respected national monthly railway heritage publications. SIA has in the past two years taken on that leadership role and succeeded in attracting, for this country, an unprecedented level of support and interest. There has been some dissent regarding strategy and tactics but this is to be expected; none of us has an identical outlook on all subjects. The important thing is we must always play the ball and not lose sight of the ultimate goal.

I was however disappointed when it was decided to stop collecting donations and SIA offered the return of donations. The financial muscle made the efforts of SIA even more potent. Could the cash appeal be reinstated?

The news that Province has requested Transnet for George - Knysna assets to be transferred to WCPG is very good news. I wonder how long it will take to accomplish this, if indeed it does actually happen!

If it does happen in my lifetime I could get very busy with heritage rail in my own back yard: I won't have any excuses not to get my hands dirty then!

Regards
Fraser

From: Garratt Bucher [mailto:garrattbucher@hotmail.com]
Sent: 30 April 2010 19:30
Subject: Union Pacific 844

Union Pacific brought the 844 down our way a few weeks back for a special rail tour. It was hard to get any descent photos as the number of people out trying to chase it was insane.

Sincerely,
Garratt Bucher
USA



Credibility and the integrity of individual SIA members.

We have had something of an uproar regarding the letter published in our last newsletter on page 13 under Member's Feedback. In SIA's defence we cannot vouch for the honesty and sincerity of every single member. We have an open membership policy and statistically at least if one has hundreds of members there will be people of different persuasions amongst its ranks. We are reliably informed that statistically there will be a small percentage of such a membership group who are downright dishonest. SIA has better things to do with its time than to perform a screening process and we simply do not intend to do that. However, we are grateful to our members who draw attention to members with dodgy credentials who are likely to bring not only SIA but the movement in disrepute as a result of their activities.

Once we have received convincing evidence that someone's very presence in the movement is counterproductive we will simply delist them so that they do not use SIA for their own ends.

MEDIA - LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

The latest Financial Mail has provided a very well written and factual summary of the current state of the South African Rail industry. For those members who do not subscribe to the Financial Mail we have attached a link to the article.

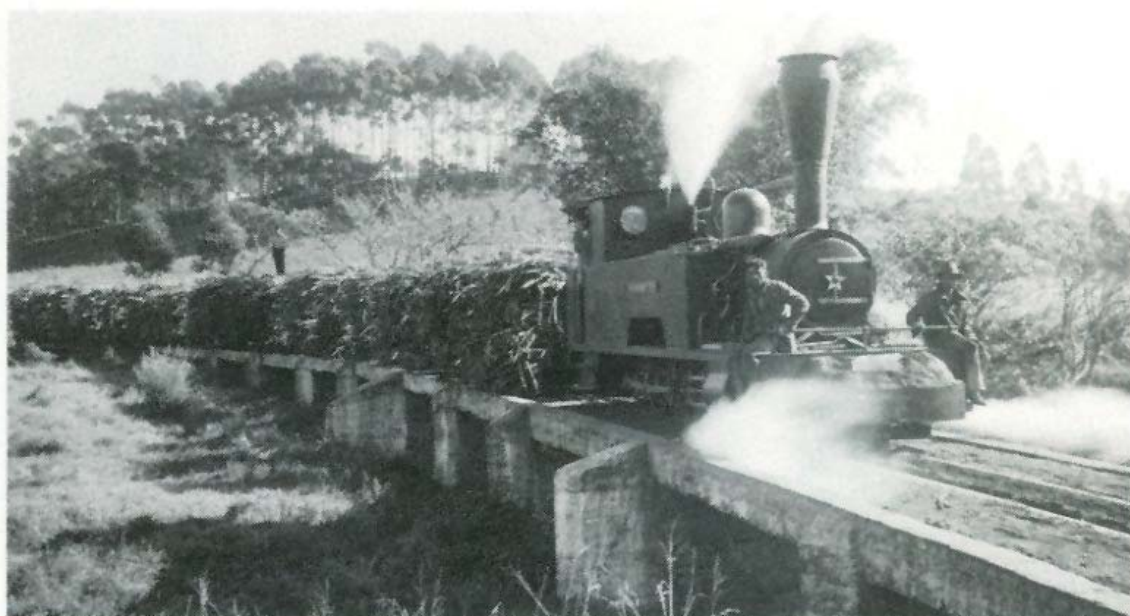
<http://www.fm.co.za/Article.aspx?id=107003>



ARCHIVES

We tend to forget how many locomotives have left South Africa. It is interesting that there didn't appear to be any objection by members of the Preservation community at the time that it was happening, notwithstanding the fact that in so many cases locomotives of great interest and great rarity were exported with the full cooperation of the local people involved. At least they are safe and in many cases bringing joy to many people but it would have been better had there been a strategic and properly implemented South African government policy on the subject. It is interesting that Classic cars over a certain age etc. are subject to various export restrictions but not Steam locomotives.

135. W J MIRRLEES, works number 2599, with a full head of steam and a trailing load of 70 tons, in the shape of 21 fully laden sugar cane wagons, on the Tongaat Sugar Estate 2'0" gauge railway system in Natal, South Africa. Delivered new in August 1939, she was one of 14 locomotives to this basic design, see plates 60-1. Cylinders were 10"x15", wheels 2'6" and the fixed wheelbase 3'6". Three engines from this system have been preserved, and one of them has returned to this country, works number 2820 of 1945, originally EGOLOMI, but now carrying the name ROBERT ARMSTRONG; today she can be found at the Warwickshire Railway Society site at Toddington Goods Yard in Gloucestershire.



A general shot of Port Shepstone, [I think in 1977] with NGG16s? and 137 and NGG13 49 at the right. I think 49, at Port Shepstone, and 59 /78 at Escourt were the only "13s" still running at this time. Certainly the Port Elizabeth garratts had finished; with the NGG 16s transferred to Natal and the NGG13s 80-83 had been stuffed and mounted at Joubertina, Misgund, Patensie and one to the U.S.A. Any opposing views welcome!!

An earlier shot of Port Shepstone in 1974, the S2s from memory, were 3723 and 3799, the NGGs.

HAPPY STEAMING
Dennis Mitchell

This newsletter was produced by Eloise du Preez, with the assistance and support of Joanne West, based on inputs from more than a dozen SIA members. All SIA members should consider themselves members of an 'Advisory Board'. Please feel free to communicate with us and send your contributions to joannewest@btinternet.com.

Reminder: Our website is live and our membership subscription service is operating. Please spread the word.