



### WELCOME to the May newsletter

We were gratified by the strong response we received to our individual e-mails to SIA members asking them to comment on the newsletter in particular. There are so many sound recommendations and endorsements that in the interests of transparency we will make every single response available to readers. Going through them is a big job but we certainly believe members should do so in order to stimulate the dialogue and to strengthen the lobby. If you have not commented please do so... warts and all!

Because responses are still coming in we will publish a second batch in a PDF in the next newsletter.

At the time of going to press with our newsletter the Transnet strike was still very much underway. It has been an unpleasant affair that has caused great inconvenience to commercial customers, tour operators etc.

### Letter to government by Western Cape Fruit Growers

[http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/Minister\\_of\\_Public\\_Enterprises\\_Barbara\\_Hogan.pdf](http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/Minister_of_Public_Enterprises_Barbara_Hogan.pdf)



*'That should be enough. Make sure you get it all on your mobile.'*

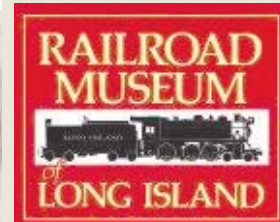
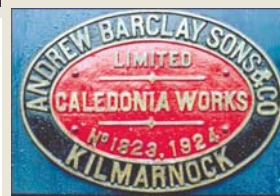
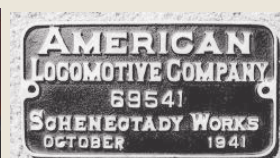
This cartoon, which is unrelated to the South African affair, appeared in The Spectator dated 15 May 2010 and seems appropriate.

Talking about strikes, perhaps the government should rely on the dynamics of the private sector to help them out when traction is needed. Peter Odell has suggested that the Preservation community should have been asked to provide emergency traction during the crisis. We suggest that HRASA makes a formal offer to the authorities confirming how many steam locomotives are available in South Africa for future emergencies.

We have had a number of members ask us if there is such a word as **ferroequinology**. In fact it is a mock classical term for enthusiasm about railroads and is indeed a very useful word. Perhaps the dictionary should remove the word 'mock' and just call it a classical term for the interest category occupied by railway enthusiasts.

### This Month's Edition

- Editorial
- Joint SIA / HRASA meeting
- Summary of projects that SIA has concentrated on and which continue to require attention
- Concessioneing of branch lines by Transnet
- Membership
- Club and Operator News
- The fate of Heidelberg Station
- Zimbabwe update
- Members' Feedback
- Archives



SIA maintains a database of railway images. If you have a logo, a good photograph of a railway plate, or any other railway signage, please e-mail it to us, preferably in high resolution, and we will add it to our database. Examples appear above.

## JOINT SIA / HRASA MEETING

Two members of SIA attended a meeting with HRASA at Friends of the Rail's smart new facility at Hermanstad near Pretoria on 15th May 2010.

Congratulations to Friends of the Rail for this brave venture which will, funds permitting, provide a very excellent base for their operations in the future. However, there is every likelihood that this meeting will herald a new dawn in relations between SIA and HRASA which should strengthen the Rail Preservation community overall.

In broad terms it was agreed that HRASA would remain on its present course and will pursue its agenda as the Diplomatic arm of Rail Preservation in South Africa. HRASA has almost no resources but it does have the right to hold discussions with Transnet. As SIA has stated on many occasions HRASA is the accredited body that Transnet wishes to communicate with as regards policy issues which affect the entire Rail Preservation community. HRASA is the first to admit that it is a difficult job and Transnet's responses to initiatives put forward by HRASA are not particularly positive or enthusiastic. Nonetheless HRASA is keen to protect their right to remain the exclusive mouthpiece of Rail Preservation when it comes to dealing with Transnet.

SIA's basic reaction to the above is that they accept the status quo but are not enamoured of the wording of the MOU that governs the relationship and are not impressed with the lack of progress on issues like Millsite, the finalization of the fate of the locomotives covered by lend/lease agreements, and many other key issues. It was also pointed out by SIA that many of their members have one-on-one relationships with many different government bodies, parastatals, and divisions of Transnet etc. It would be very difficult for HRASA to insist on full compliance of the basic understanding that members of the Rail Preservation sector should not be talking to the authorities other than through their own diplomatic channels. Nonetheless it was agreed that a process would be worked out whereby communications to Transnet were firstly cleared through HRASA and if HRASA choose to take up the matter on behalf of an HRASA member then so be it. On the other hand SIA confirmed that they did not have unlimited patience and if things didn't happen within a reasonable time frame they did reserve the right to pursue other creative, dynamic programmes to get the attention of the people who make decisions.

SIA acknowledges that HRASA has a potentially thankless task. We were reminded that all the people who sit on the HRASA Board are volunteers and by and large they pay their own expenses. We believe it is a travesty that the government should appoint an organisation like HRASA to carry out functions on their behalf and not, like in Britain and other countries, provide them with an administrative subsidy to allow them to go about their business in the most professional way. Transnet is a multi billion Rand corporation that has banked hundreds of millions of Rands a result of the scrapping of Heritage locomotives and other important rail artefacts. It is unacceptable that none of this funding is re-invested in programmes which would give this country respectability in the eyes of the world and bring about a situation where future generations of not only South Africans but people from around the world can benefit from the work that should be happening right now. We sympathise with HRASA in this regard and we ask them not to lose heart, notwithstanding the fact that they are operating under difficult circumstances. SIA has pledged to assist them wherever possible but the onus is on HRASA to be specific and to come back with requests for assistance.

To summarise therefore although HRASA felt very bruised at SIA's ongoing criticism progress was made. There were elements in HRASA that agreed that SIA had a role to play and acknowledged that amongst its constituent members SIA has considerable intellectual and financial resources to bring to bear on the stagnation that now exists in the relationship between the Government and the Private sector. SIA agreed that they would do more to boost HRASA's image and reputation and would not use their communications expertise to discredit HRASA. However, it was made clear that this is a results driven process and that if after another period of, say, 6-months little or no progress has been made with respect to the key issues, which are again summarised in this newsletter, then SIA would have to reconsider how best it goes about achieving its objectives of lobbying for a better, more dynamic, more transparent, and a better coordinated Rail Preservation programme for the whole of Southern Africa.

From: Chris Janisch [mailto:janisch24@gmail.com]

Sent: 17 May 2010 19:48

Subject: Re: SATURDAY'S MEETING

Thank you for your attendance on Saturday. It was a most worthwhile debate.

Although progress was made, many questions remain unanswered.

I attach a copy of my chairman's report delivered at the meeting.

Regards

Chris

[http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/HRASA\\_CHAIRMAN\\_REPORT\\_15052010.pdf](http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/HRASA_CHAIRMAN_REPORT_15052010.pdf)



NGG16 no 88 heads an MG Car Club Special at the Sandstone Heritage Trust, Eastern Free State. Photograph by Patrick Polo.



# SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

THAT SIA HAS CONCENTRATED ON AND WHICH CONTINUE TO REQUIRE ATTENTION

## The fate of the locomotives at Millsite

Millsite of course is only one location and with the assistance of members we will be working to draft a list of all stranded locomotives belonging to Transnet and currently suffering from the moratorium on their movement which appears to have been imposed. This is an opportunity for SIA members to revert to us with information to supplement that which we already have.

One initiative that needs to be resolved is the Millsite funding debate. When Mark Robinson of HRASA announced that he had received clearance to save the locomotives at Millsite SIA put out an appeal that was very successful. Corporate contributions and contributions from members amounted to nearly R500,000 which would have cleared approximately ten locomotives from the site had we been allowed access. We made it clear to HRASA that many members gave us a donation with a specific proviso that if they saw progress and if locomotives could be saved they would be more than happy to come

back with further contributions to finish the job. We believe it is disingenuous of HRASA to suggest that the SIA initiative was unsuccessful. We did not have the keys to the gate and we once again appeal to HRASA to deal with the issue so that these locomotives can be saved. It should be noted however that Millsite does form part of the disposal process and will be dealt with by HRASA in consultation with Transnet within the greater framework. Our question to HRASA is give us a timeframe for this. We have no doubt that SIA members will respond but SIA will certainly not put out another appeal unless they are 100% certain that all legal and security obstacles have been overcome. It is as big a waste of our time as it is for HRASA. SIA is also only managed and supported by volunteers who also pay their own expenses. Unlike HRASA we are unlikely to receive financial support from the government and therefore we look to the private sector for our moral and fiscal support.

## Saving our buildings as well

Strenuous efforts have been made to save the buildings at Humewood Road. Documentation was issued 2-years ago by HRASA effectively giving authority to remove the buildings but rather like Millsite when SIA attempted to get the logistics in place the programme was blocked by Transnet and the final security approval was never made available.

Humewood Road is now being cleared of all buildings, locomotives etc., i.e. it will cease to be a railway station / junction and there are presumably some other plans in place for its development.

Our attention is therefore switched to the surviving 2-ft Narrow Gauge loco shed in Port Shepstone which is in a parlous state but which is still standing. We have written to HRASA asking if this particular building can be saved and could we use their good offices to facilitate this.



Photograph by Peter Bagshawe

## SANRASM

During the month we received a communication from Lorna Ndlela advising that the matter of the hugely historic and significant locomotives on loan from Eskom to SANRASM has now been passed to Eskom's Legal Department. She kindly provided details and SIA is now engaged with the Legal Department to ascertain why the situation has been allowed to continue. A document which has reached SIA clearly indicates that SANRASM are not compliant with the spirit of the agreements entered into at the time that they took the locomotives into care on Eskom's behalf.

We once again appeal to the SANRASM Board of Directors, and indeed the SANRASM members, to start talking to the Rail Preservation community rather than to force us to communicate with the actual loco owners whose assets are being compromised as a result of SANRASM's lack of care and poor security arrangements.

We have studied various comments and read some correspondence from various SANRASM members. None of it adds up to anything

significant. The plight of the locos is always ignored in the face of obfuscation, obviously designed to confuse the issue rather than improve the outlook for the locomotives.

When people are faced with difficult decisions they can either open their minds to different solutions, hide under the cover of zero responses, or like so many different officials around the world plead for more time without saying how much time they actually need to bring about the changes that are required.

Men and women charged with the responsibility for national assets should act with courage and conviction to honour their commitments. They owe it to all of us to guarantee that these valuable and iconic items are being looked after in the best possible way. Anything less than that is unacceptable. Both Eskom and SANRASM will continue to receive our close attention until someone actually has the courage to take on board what is really happening in their midst.



## The Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe

Tammy Evans, on behalf of Alan Winde, MEC and the DA working to re-establish this Cape based tourist icon, is definitely sounding frustrated at yet another long, frozen period of silence from Transnet.

Why do we get the feeling that the relevant parastatal lacks the courage to make the right decisions for South Africa?

To Alan, Tammy, and their team, do not give up. Renew your endeavours but above all set a deadline for a response because in our experience the people who procrastinate are not in the business of burning the midnight oil to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

We have always believed that the original tender contained unrealistic expectations of what the private Sector would be prepared to do... let's see?

*We have large numbers of SIA members who live along the Garden Route. Could we ask them to keep us informed of developments on the ground. We have a number of e-mails from people around the world asking what is the current state of the line and the locomotives at Voorbaai.*

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

From: Tammy Evans [mailto:Tevans@pgwc.gov.za]

Sent: 17 May 2010 09:15

Another month has gone by, and I am still not able to provide you with any news about Transnet. We are as anxious as the public is for the results of the bidding process for the George to Mossel Bay line, and also for feedback on our application to take over the operations of the Knysna line.

As soon as I hear anything, I will be in touch!

On another note, we have had several interesting applications for tourist train routes between smaller towns in the Western Cape. It seems that there is a revival of interest in train tourism here in general. Of course, we will do all that we can to support the applicants.

Best wishes,  
Tammy



*Pictures show storm damage to the George-Knysna line. Images courtesy of sar-L Yahoo group. [www.photobucket.com](http://www.photobucket.com)*

## CONCESSIONING OF BRANCH LINES BY TRANSNET

This issue has been on the table for over 10-years. We have received various commitments from different officials, both in Transnet and the Department of Transport that lists will be made available of Branch Lines that they wish to privatise etc. No solid information has come to hand. However, we intend to keep this as a permanent item on the SIA agenda.

If any of our readers have any updates on this we would appreciate receiving information. In the meantime an e-mail has been addressed to Mr. Vuyo Kahla of Transnet reminding him that he did promise us such a list over 2-years ago.

## MEMBERSHIP

Steam in Action's credibility is directly related to its constituency of members. The more people who join SIA; the more people take notice of it and ultimately we believe the more successful it will be as a lobby group.

Because SIA is relatively new we have not gone out of our way to demonstrate what its capabilities are when dealing with government officials, NGO's etc. However, we will be doing that shortly.

We are only 70 members short of 1,000 members so we would ask our existing members to consider networking with like-minded people to encourage them to join SIA. We appreciate your assistance.



## CLUB AND OPERATOR NEWS

### Sisonke Stimela Railway, Natal.

**Official press release, 10 May 2010**

#### Sisonke Stimela steams through Alan Paton's "beloved country"

Alan Paton in the novel 'Cry the beloved Country' said: "There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it."

This vision, painted by Alan Paton, has been brought to life with the launch of the Sisonke Stimela train, and the people who live in this breathtaking part of the country stand ready to welcome the world to experience its culture, heritage and beauty.

The Sisonke Stimela – a magnificent, luxury steam train powered by a fully-restored historic Garratt locomotive (GMAM 4074) – is the realization of a vision supported by all tiers of the public and private sectors in the region as well as the communities along the line.

Jabu Dlamini and Alex Shazi, directors of October Wind Trading and owners of the product, are excited about the possibilities that Sisonke Stimela opens for the region and its people.

"At last this wonderful area and its people have a real opportunity to bridge the gap between themselves and the rest of the world and we are excited to be part of it. Sisonke Stimela is the key that has opened the door for the world to come and experience our wonderful history, unique art and cultural heritage as well as its beauty," said Jabu Dlamini.

"This experience is about much more than just a train ride," he continued. "The off-train experiences include the Trappist Mission, Sani Pass and the many other attractions, both historical and natural, and a local restaurant that will serve traditional foods from the region."

The 3-day Sisonke Stimela train journeys will run from Pietermaritzburg to Underberg, where the train stays overnight. The next morning guests are treated to a tour up the Sani Pass before continuing to Creighton – its second overnight stop. The following morning includes a trip to the Centocow Trappist Mission Station – the base for Abbot Frans Pfanner and the birthplace of Gerard Bhengu, son and artist of Africa. The mission is the proposed site of art gallery housing over 200 of Bhengu's original works.

The journey through these magnificent rolling hills, interspersed with traditional Zulu villages, where glimpses of African life seem to be suspended in time, is the backdrop to wonderful natural history, such as being one of the most spectacular and rewarding areas in the world in which to bird or view the renowned flowers of the Sani Pass.

However, Sisonke Stimela is also an opportunity for the youth of the region to be trained in technical aspects of its operation according to Alex Shazi.



*Pictured at Indaba 2010 are (left to right) Jabu Dlamini and Alex Shazi with a canvas print of the Sisonke Stimela train. Photograph by John Lamberti.*



*On track alongside the Umzimkhulu River. Photograph by John Lamberti.*



*Open-air "Observation" car. Photograph by John Lamberti.*

“We are committed to using the local community in this project. We intend to identify youth with the potential to be trained in technical occupations for the operation of the train. We are looking at 16-18 permanent on-train jobs, while the off-train activities will see at least 30 new jobs created in the formal sector. Local communities will be part of the experience by offering services such as tour guides, taxi operators and laundry services. Then, of course, there is the supply of arts and crafts by the informal sector to promote and market their heritage,” said Alex.

“The agreement with local municipalities is that the train will operate in the area at least once a month – in that way we ensure the vision is kept alive and delivers on the commitment to bring the world to this special corner of heaven.”

Sisonke Stimela comprises eleven beautifully refurbished accommodation coaches for 42 guests in luxury suites – each suite finished in handsome wood paneling, fully air-conditioned and a lounge area with Edwardian furniture; Dining coach and two Lounge coaches, with one including a very popular open air “Observation” car.

For more information contact Dudley Smith, LED Manager, Ingwe Municipality  
Cell +27 79 495 6434



Lounge Car. Photograph by John Lamberti.



Dining Car. Photograph by John Lamberti.

## Reefsteamers, Gauteng

Shaun Ackerman of Reefsteamers confirms that they had a triumphant day on Friday the 21st May when their brand new 15F no. 3046 was steamed for the first official time, her boiler fully certified and actually moved out of the shed under her own steam

The paintwork definitely compliments the loco!



### A new Board is in place at Reefsteamers as follows:

- Lex Wehmeyer - Chairman
- Elize Lubbe - Vice chairman
- Dennis Edgar - Secretary and logistics
- Stewart Currie - Engineering
- Andre van Dyk - Finances
- Coen Pretorius - Safety
- Les Smith – Marketing.



## The Apple Express, Port Elizabeth

The Geoff's Trains Limited tour of South Africa which concentrates on Narrow Gauge and Cape Gauge should be in Port Elizabeth enjoying the amenities of the Avontuur Line about the time that this newsletter comes out. The Sandstone Heritage Trust was requested to make an NG6 Lawley available urgently and this was duly done with the locomotive delivered by road on one of Sandstone Heritage Trust's heavy vehicles.

A full report will follow in the next newsletter.

A breakdown of the Avontuur Line showing what a magnificent Narrow Gauge railway it really is, is below.

<http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/Avontuur-N.pdf>

### Peter Burton reports...

I would like to bring you up to date with the activities of our Apple Express. During the past end of year holidays we were running two trains a week out to Loerie, a round trip day run of 144km. Early in December we were running steam with NG 15 No.119 when we started a small trackside fire, reported by the farmer to TFR, so all steam was then stopped. Due to the very severe drought here in the E Cape there has been no chance whatsoever for any more steam to date.

After the holiday period we have continued running at least 3 – 4 trains a month, with reasonable loadings out to Loerie which is our

turn-round point ( and I might say has the first of the 3 N G Turntables in action here). Despite having had some rain and an improvement at trackside we still cannot use steam due to the state of the dams feeding Port Elizabeth being so low that there are now very strict regulations imposed on residents limiting them to 500l per day, TFR have also forbidden the use of steam here seeing that we use some 30 000 litres of water for the 144 km. trip. Steam will not be permitted until there is some major re-filling of the dams supplying P.E.

There being one glimmer on the horizon for steam where there will be a relaxation when we run the Geoff Cooke Tour from 1st June to 5th where we will be using NG 15 No.119 with a mixed train and plenty of photo run-by's each day. Our basic programme will be, Day 1 the run out to Loerie and over night there, Day 2 a run back to Van Stadens and return to Loerie, Day 3. Loerie to Assegaaibos and overnight. Day 4 Assegaaibos to Humansdorp and back, when the Tour Group leave us. The 5th day will be the run back to Port Elizabeth.

Peter Burton  
PORT ELIZABETH APPLE EXPRESS  
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Cell: 083 – 773 5247.  
E Mail: [peter.burton@absamail.co.za](mailto:peter.burton@absamail.co.za)

To view the official newsletter of the Port Elizabeth Apple Express click here:

[http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/NG\\_EXPRESS\\_May\\_10.pdf](http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/NG_EXPRESS_May_10.pdf)

## News from the Western Cape

From: Atlantic Rail [<mailto:info@atlanticrail.co.za>]  
Sent: 20 May 2010 03:31 PM  
Subject: RE: Trip / Trips

Right now the line between Fish Hoek and Simonstown is closed for repairs. Looks like that will be 5 more weeks.

The MINUTE it is open, we are back in business.

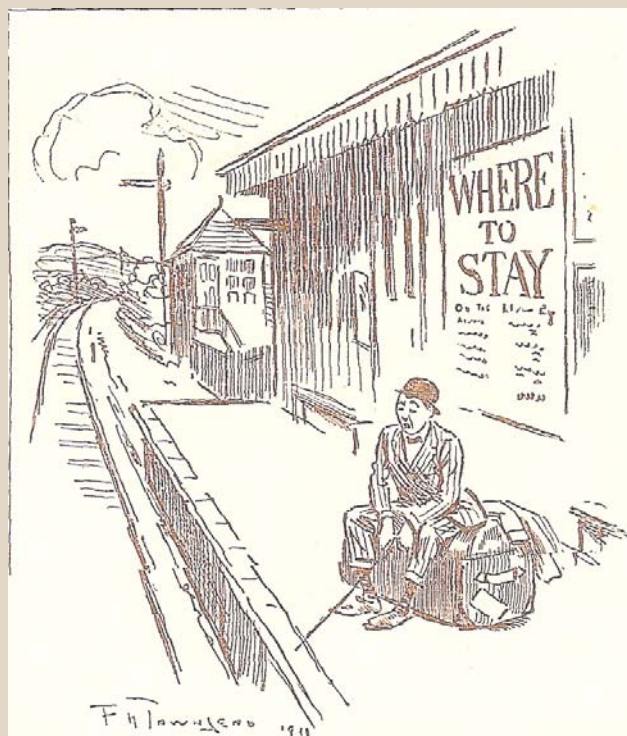
Day trip schedule will be on the site about three minutes after that

Sarah

Useful link: <http://capeinfo.com/>



*Derelict locos at Porto Amboim, Angola. SIA is working on this. If you would like to assist in any way please e-mail us.*



THE HOLIDAY PROBLEM AUTOMATICALLY SOLVED BY THE RAILWAY STRIKE.

Punch. August 23, 1911



## 'Friends of the Rail.

Due to the Transnet strike, FOTR were unable to take Geoff Cooke's tourgroup up to Cullinan on 22 May as planned. Nevertheless, we saw the positives in the situation and decided to steam all 3 working locos- 15F 3117, 19D 2650 and 24 3664. We provided a full day of stupendous photography at Capital Park for our guests, broken by a pleasanr midday braai at Hermanstad. Different combinations of locos with loads were provided for variety, and the day was concluded with the night photo session which FOTR have become famous for.

Thanks to all involved and to Geoff for bringing his people here. Long may it last!

Submitted by Chris Janisch



*Photograph by Eugene Armor*



*Above photographs by Chris Janisch*



## THE STATE OF HEIDELBERG STATION

Heidelberg Station used to be a motor museum which was relocated to Franschoek in the Cape. However, the locomotive and a carriage remain in situ. A group of enthusiasts are working hard to open the museum again. Here is a report from Stafford Currin:

Here in Heidelberg, Gauteng CUE's aim is still to acquire the former transport museum. There are several issues, political and other that we have to contend with. We are now finalising a business proposal to the Lesedi Municipality stating amongst other reasons of national and local heritage, to acquire a long term lease the station. This has to be handed in by the end of May for review.

We shall keep you all informed of developments in this regard.

Best regards

Stafford Currin

shjcurrin@lantic.net

For and on behalf of Community Unity Effort Association, Heidelberg Gauteng

***Editor's comment: The following items were donated to the Heidelberg Museum:***

- **16CR No 816 (NBL 22719/1921) Loco**
- **166 Illovo A-18 Dining Car**
- **167 Liesbeek A- 18 Dining Car**
- **737 C-16 1st Class Balcony mainline**
- **1044 D-15 1st & 2nd Class balcony mainline**
- **4233 K-36 mainline articulated van**

## ZIMBABWE UPDATE

Here are two pictures of 16A class Garratt at Bulawayo.. The shed staff were very helpful. As a Brit it was good to see a steam loco covered in workaday grime - all ours gleam unnaturally. You will have seen this no doubt: .

The regular Vic Falls steam train wasn't running the days we were there.

I hope the Cooke tour is a success. If Sandstone carries on developing you'll be an African Henry Ford Museum.

Alan Middleditch

alan.middleditch@ntlworld.com



***Editor's comment: We would appreciate more information on steam at Victoria Falls.***

## MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

From: Richard Sabatini [mailto:Richard.Sabatini@dpw.gov.za]  
Sent: 19 May 2010 07:25

You have asked for comments as to SIA and the newsletter, so here goes.

I enjoy receiving the newsletter as it contains many items of information that would not be communicated otherwise. Let me expand on this. SA Rail has developed over the years into an excellent magazine that covers all forms of rail transport throughout Southern Africa, and indeed, on occasions, the world. If there is a downside, it is that it is only issued quarterly, thus first hand information is not always available. SIA is published monthly, and thus readers are informed timeously of events, which is important.

However, SIA also tackles issues which confront the current preservation scene in South Africa. Some of these issues are highly contentious, and as a result sometimes individuals are on the receiving end of considerable criticism. I know, I have been in this situation on the receiving end! But be that as it may, the burning issues have to be addressed, either now or later. Naturally some issues cannot be held over for later, and so really need to be tackled now. SIA is not afraid to raise these issues, such as concerns with the safety of SANRASM's collection. As an early supporter and member of SANRASM, I too share these concerns, but it must be remembered that every organisation is made up of people, and people have differing personalities. Thus from my perspective, it really boils down to: how best to deal with these differing personalities.

Each situation should be dealt with, if possible, using the most suitable means. Sometimes a head on confrontation will succeed, and sometimes it might not. Obviously dialogue is the best way of communicating, but some people are not good at communication. It appears that railway preservation seems to attract this type of person in some numbers! Thus when trying to work with some individuals, it can be extremely frustrating and difficult. You cannot change these people; this is just the way they are. Unfortunately, every organisation is only as good as the people within the organisation, and as individuals cannot be changed, maybe the approach is to see if the organisation itself can change.

Dealing with Transnet is a completely different situation, as large organisations can hide behind layers of bureaucracy to avoid all contentious issues. This is without taking into consideration, the organisational layers of incompetence and stupidity! So if Transnet does not wish to communicate it won't! Thus I can sympathise with HRASA who have been tasked with liaising with Transnet, as with the best will in the world, HRASA will always be subservient to Transnet in the negotiations, because Transnet wants it this way. As Transnet appears to be a law unto itself, this is also unlikely to change, unless Government forces it to, but this too is unlikely given government's own approach and performance!

Success stories are well covered in SIA, but as pointed out, negative issues outweigh positive ones. This is the current situation and thus we must live with it.

As for success as a lobbying group, perhaps the success here is that SIA voices the concerns of at least 80 to 90% of preservationists in South Africa. You will never reach 100% due to the divisive nature of preservation itself.

I do not regard myself as an armchair enthusiast just yet although I am fast approaching that situation, so when something of interest transpires I shall endeavour to keep the editorial committee informed.

One final point, is SIA achieving anything? Yes, for South Africa, in my humble opinion, would be a poorer place without the SIA's interventions, proposals and newsletters.

Kind regards,  
Oscar

From: Derek  
[mailto:rustydog@westnet.com.au]  
Sent: 14 May 2010 16:53

I am the Locomotive Manager of Bennett Brook Railway, Western Australia which own among other locomotives two NG15 locomotives (NG15 118 and 123). It is with great interest that I receive your newsletter and just how well you communicate what is happening in and around the heritage rail scene and this is a great credit to you. In our state of Australia on the main rail system there are no heritage rail allowed to run to any great extent which is a great pity but in your country I believe you can run heritage tour operations and have locomotives still stored which are capable of being restored to working order. What a luxury, I also work in the rail industry (Trade Trainer) and have a number of South Africans, Zimbabweans, English and Australian tradespersons who talk about what the rail scene is like in many parts of your country. Please keep up the good work.

Kind Regards

Derek Ruston  
Locomotive Manager  
Bennett Brook Railway

"Ever since I can remember  
I've loved steam engines.  
I must have been born with  
a kind of virus— a virus that  
affects many other people  
who are otherwise sane"

Leopold de Rothschild 2005

"There is something  
emotional about a  
steam locomotive  
— it lives!"

Leopold de Rothschild 2005

*Two quotes from Leo de Rothschild at Exbury Garden Railway which will resonate with many SIA members*



From: John Bush [mailto:jbush@npdodge.com]  
Sent: 17 May 2010 14:30  
THANKS for your note! Thanks for all you do.

I so know what you mean in connection with the nagging feeling that you're not sure the things you've done and do mirror the desires of, at least, the majority of members. If it will assist, I have been on the boards of a number of not-for-profit groups and I believe this perception pervades such entities. I have just concluded a series of terms on the BoD of Union Pacific Historical Society. I can assure you that no amount of surveys has provided what that panel would really like to know. I'm sure you're aware of the degree of responsiveness gained by such efforts. It's dismal, plainly and simply. So, we were largely left to the opinions of those attending our annual conventions, which run from something approximating 125 to over 400 members year in and year out. The problem with asking these people how we're doing, what they would like to see in our quarterly magazine "The Streamliner", etc., is that the majority of those who attend the conventions are formed of a certain core of members. Therefore, to quite a large extent we're asking the same people the same questions again and again. I'll add something else I've learned about surveys. Even with the use of email you had better make them very brief and easy to complete and return. If you don't, you may as well not expend the effort.

I will tell you that I believe the onset of email has improved this scenario and we continue to try and pull together as many member email addresses as we can. A bit more in connection with this below.

UPHS has about 2,100 members world-wide and we've stayed about this number for many, many years despite the usual comings & goings. We have a basically full-time paid staff member and are one of if not the only such among all RR historical groups like ours in the country. We have a contracted magazine editor who is extremely good and also acts in such capacity for both the AT&SF and Southern Pacific societies. We're lucky to have him! Frankly and honestly, our magazine comes off very well in comparison with any other similar publication I know of. Among the many things editor John Signor brings to our table is his ability to take even the most scattered of information provided by one or more persons and create an article

from it. We continuously work to let members know they needn't be polished authors in order to produce an article for "The Streamliner", and their name will still appear as such and they'll be paid, too.

Anyway, back to your group and the feelings you've expressed below. I believe you are doing just fine unless you perceive some sort of groundswell in the reverse. If that happens you quickly sit up and take full notice and do so with your eyes open. I'm betting you haven't experienced anything like this, thus you're doing very well.

One thing groups like ours encounter, to use what I believe is purely an American phrase, is the "good ole boys" syndrome. That is, the perception by members that those on the board are some sort of clique who run things to and for their own benefit. During my time on the UPHS board I found this more than a little troubling because in fact the opposite is true. The UPHS BoD has worked hard to try and prevent this perception. Some members will say things like this among one another, but will they seek a seat on the BoD? What do you think? Naaaaaaah, no way. Some also feel members of the board are more or less "in for life" and such serves to drive their "clique" notion. Well, in fact, the actual problem is that is that all too-frequently few members want to step up and make the commitment brought by a term on the BoD. At UPHS, three of the ten member board have retired over the past two years for reasons running from health to having felt they had put more than their fair share of time into the organization. As you might imagine, this has been nothing but healthy. We had four people running for two seats on the board last year, so things are looking up in that sense. Still, had two of us not retired we'd have been re-elected. It's too easy for people to vote for a guy they either know or are familiar with. Incumbency is powerful! One need only look at American politics to experience that.

Best to the three of you and thanks again from one who deeply appreciates not only the "depth" of the problem you face in connection with the extent to which Transnet and the various authorities have allowed the preservation situation to decline from what I'd perceived the future to hold in the early 1990's, but also for all you are doing and have done.

John

From: Marcel BARTHEL [mailto:Marcel.BARTHEL@cfl.lu]

I own a new build, free replica of a Decauville 020T locomotive. It was built five years ago on my request by a Belgian workshop near the town of Charleroi by my friend Pol Karpinski. For the moment being the same guy is building a replica of the Mayumbe-Garratt originally built at St. Leonard's in Belgium as well!

Pictures of the 020T can be seen on: [www.rail.lu/felddunndol](http://www.rail.lu/felddunndol)

Congratulations for the wonderful preservation-work being done!!!!

Marcel Barthel • Chef de Projet CRM  
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Dear Joanne,

Well of course I feel I've got to know the worthy gentlemen who produce the SIA newsletter - even though I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting them.

It is my view that the SIA Newsletter is always an interesting, refreshing and well put together, articulate comment on what is happening on the heritage rail scene in RSA. Your photography is to die for.

Of course I am very much involved with the world heritage railway scene and talk regularly with interested parties about it. We just had the FEDECRAIL Conference in Budapest, where I was invited to address them on the economic aspects of heritage railways - and nailing the economic contribution, and making sure the news of that is broadcast, is a current, hot topic. I am not an economist, I make videos and take photos - but I got into all of this from fundraising for the WHR restoration.

And of course the WHR is where South Africa comes in. We wouldn't have a practical railway without NGG15s, and if we are able, we shall have a couple of NG15s to supplement the Garratts. So I would say that there's a latent, if not active interest in the RSA scene, that can be built on if you'd like to. The photos, and the tales of excellent times to be had at Sandstone maintain much interest.

These are the good bits. However it appears that the news that comes out of Africa is not all good. In Europe, from colonisation to the present day, we manage to get Africa wrong. So what we think and what we say to you is often with the fairies. Obviously there's a lot I think that PC prevents me from being able to say. The problem is that bright ideas and unassailable logic in Europe can be worthless in RSA. Looks like there's a mindset within the new regime that makes it difficult to work with. This doesn't mean that we should stop trying to find a way, or that we cannot think out of the box. But if railway enthusiasm is seen to be firmly fixed outside one culture and inside another - and it cannot be tempted to move, then one of the great assets of our movement - that (like the church) it eclipses and bridges the class divides - is inoperative. And that's a problem.

There is speculation about RSA here - will it head for the depths of Zimbabwe or the heights of Botswana? We talk about these things with little knowledge, except we are assailed with the view that Africans want to do things any other way but the white European way - and this doesn't sound hopeful if you are a white European. Our problem when we read about what looks like active and deliberate neglect of heritage rail items in RSA is that we are fixed into a European economic model. Even in the dark depths of communist Europe money spoke clearly in every language. Today when advising Bosnians setting up a new heritage rail line a couple of weeks ago we were clear that more visitors, more spending = more jobs, and that leads to prosperity, which brings with it the choices we all seek. Despite recent war and strife, they get that concept and go with it. Even though we all know that a lot of the issues are not 'settled' yet. But talking with Dudley Smith about his problems and opportunities, and being bystander to the Choo-Tjoe (that doesn't choo-choo), the normal commercial inducements don't appear to operate in your context and we have no means of knowing if this is really the case.

The problem is that faced with issues of this kind, the average European rail enthusiast will not be vocal, will not cross PC boundaries and will not say what they think. They will turn away and avoid being controversial, and do something uncontentious.

So how can we help? What can we do? You have at Sandstone some powerful persuaders. I am sure regular visits are a likely prospect and that these can pay for themselves, generating income and interest. Some loco exchanges perhaps could be considered. What about a Lawley

through the Aberglaslyn Pass, or an FR loco paying a visit to you, and perhaps working on Avontuur. The economics for this would rely on 200 people paying £100 per head to see it/ride behind it being able to generate income to cover the expenses. I know there is an engineering problem to be overcome of 610 -v- 597mm gauges, so all this may be wild speculations, daft ideas - but if you want attention from the thousands of people in Europe who could help you, we could look for ways like this to motivate them.

With kind regards,  
Gordon Rushton.



From: Chuck Blardone [mailto:cblardone@comcast.net]

I edit magazines and books for the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society, and am well familiar with operating in a vacuum of little to no feedback.

Even being continents away from South Africa I look forward to your newsletters. They allow me to keep up to date with what's going on in SA without having to sort through the confusion of the Internet.

Your last issue was of particular interest. Six members of my family and I are booked on Geoff Cooke's Zimbabwe Steam in July-August, which begins and ends in Jo'burg. This was a "fall back" trip that we booked after the Zambesi Steam Express was cancelled by Rovos when an operator for the return trip from Victoria Falls could not be found.

I was encouraged by your news that Zimbabwe is thinking of encouraging steam tourism. I was concerned that, with the political uncertainties, how the folks in Bulawayo would be able to conduct their Garratt operation. I wish to interview some of the staff as to the practicalities of maintaining a steam fleet with no foreign exchange or parts supply, all this for publication in our quarterly, The Keystone, which, although dedicated to the Pennsylvania Railroad, publishes peripheral articles on the operation of steam locos throughout the world.

Please keep up the good work and the best of luck in keeping the steam heritage alive in South Africa

Cheers,  
Chuck Blardone

Lancaster, Pa., USA



From: Derric Webster [mailto:derricwebster@btinternet.com]  
Sent: 17 May 2010 22:00

Thank you for your email. I follow the SIA Newsletter with great interest. I congratulate those who compile the newsletter on both content, presentation and the quality of the photographs.

Believe me, if I have anything useful to say I will add my voice to the others. I am a comparative newcomer to the South African Heritage railway scene and so I'm learning as I go along. My membership of SIA came about through my long standing friendship with Philip Mortimer (Senior) and his purchase of NGG16A 141 in which I have an interest (not financial, I hasten to add!). However, I do admire the work you are doing and I am appalled at the apathetic attitude of some of the organisations with which you are dealing.

I have one item that might be of some interest - in March 1954, when I was 3rd Officer on the maiden voyage of the "Tantallon Castle" we carried four Henschel 4-6-0 locomotives and their tenders from Hamburg to Beira for Nyasaland Railways (as it was then). They were numbered incorrectly when built so I do not know what numbers they were given after their arrival in Beira on the 4th May 1954. I often wonder what happened to them, I expect they have been scrapped by now.

Keep up the good work!!

Kind regards,  
Derric

Editor's comment: Any hint as to what happened to the Henschels?

Sent: 17 May 2010 22:47

Thanks for the opportunity to present my views.

In essence I agree & support what SIA is trying to accomplish – namely acting as a lobby group although this can cover a lot of ground. What lobbying means to me is that you hope to link up with groups who hold similar aims, to try and co ordinate your actions and assist each other where possible and perhaps more importantly, to try and raise awareness with the “outside”, e.g. Transnet Government States and Local Authorities. The message to them is likely to be not so much national heritage but rather that if they are prepared to provide some support, SA Steam can attract tourists / generate jobs.

Two other things I would say about lobbying

- 1 Acting as a lobby group can often be a thankless task – it can be like working in the wilderness in that you receive little response or occasionally upset particular groupings or views.
- 2 Don't shoot the messenger i.e. SIA.

The vital thing is that these matters are reported (good and/or bad) and people are aware of what is happening. i.e. In my opinion SIA provides an accurate, up-to-date – i.e. monthly, perspective of what is happening with SA Steam nationally. I believe these reports do reach a wider audience and could help to ultimately influence and coordinate actions but it takes time.

I am aware of a number of groups who are active locally – such as Reefsteamers / FotR / Umgeni / PCNGR & Apple Express who produce excellent information on their particular activities. However, in my opinion SIA provides a national view of what is happening in SA. To my mind this is what SIA is about – certainly as an overseas person.

I am from the UK. Over the last 15 years or so I have had the opportunity

to travel on SA railways. A great sadness is the loss of the Banana Express which I was fortunate to visit over 6 years. This year (March/April) I made a return trip on the CPT - PE Premiere Classe and revisited the Umgeni Steam Railway in Durban, which was my first introduction to SA Steam and which I am a member of.

As an overseas visitor I think SA Railways offer great potential. The frustrating thing is that despite the efforts of individuals, local groups and SIA this potential is being lost.

If I could make a suggestion – do not give up, continue to publish on a monthly basis - the good, the bad (& the ugly), keep writing to Transnet et al, try to ensure that your publication reaches all the “movers and shakers” and try to arrange meetings with them & talk to the media.

Thanks again – all the very best.

Paul Yates  
(London UK)

From: Richard Clark [mailto:ricclark@telkomsa.net]  
Sent: 14 May 2010 14:02

The efforts that people are making for "the cause" are utterly heroic, particularly when one considers the intractable barriers that are laid in every path. Your newsletters are excellent in content and detail, and leaves the general reader like myself with very little to add. As I said in the past, my grandfather, William Clark, bridge engineer, came to South Africa at the request of the British Government at the end of the Anglo-Boer war, initially, to be involved in the restitution of the war damage to the railway infrastructure. His son, Marshall Clark, was general manager of the SAR&H up to 1948, receiving an OBE for the railway built between Haifa and Beirut during the 2nd world war. We have regular contact with Raimund Loubser, whose father was "the brains behind the 19-D loco", said to have been one of the most successful engines on our network. Although my career was as a research chemist, the family spirit of the railways remains in my heart; and we were loyal patrons of Boon and his "Bosveld Trein Safaris" until Spoornet bureaucracy closed his business. I was so heartsore to see the chaos at Port Shepstone Station at the time when the Narrow Gauge operation there was declared bankrupt. We have walked the track between Wilderness and Victoria Bay and have viewed the damage along the route. The Kaimans River Bridge now carries huge water mains on it, some indication that this will be its new purpose, instead of being a railway bridge. The derelict route between Lady Grey and Barkly East takes you through the most beautiful scenery, and the most spectacular railway engineering. And all this continues to rot away.

Keep up the good work. The silent majority remains with you.

Richard C Clark

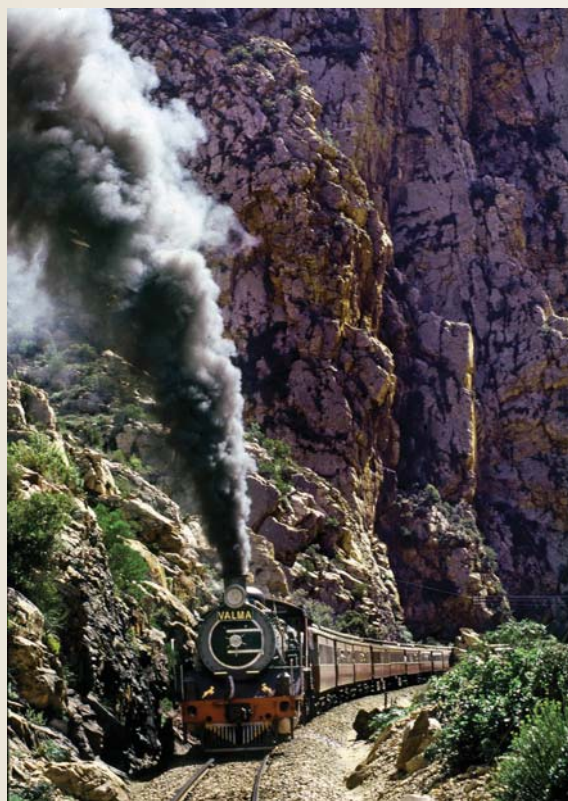
***UK based Richard Niven, a member, has been very supportive with articles and comments on relevant issues. He has written a special story for SIA which we think you will enjoy.***

[http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/A\\_train\\_story.pdf](http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/A_train_story.pdf)

***For those who have time on their hands here is PDF number one covering the first batch of comments received from SIA members. We will publish them all.***

[http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/2nd\\_Draft\\_Circular\\_Reponses.pdf](http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/2nd_Draft_Circular_Reponses.pdf)

# ARCHIVES



One of the spots that I dreamed of getting a shot was Toorwaterpoort, after seeing shots here, by the great South African photographers, like the late great A.E.DURRANT, Alan Jorgensen and Charlie LEWIS.

Trouble was, the pass went through at night, the freight was a bit unpredictable, it was fairly inaccessible (especially for "uitlanders" who didn't really know where they were going), plus there were greener fields elsewhere when your time is limited.

When we realised the Trans Cape Limited was to traverse this we were excited, but when we heard "Jorge" was going to cancel the photo stop we were dismayed, and Stuart Lovell from Great Britain and myself appealed to John Middleton and Jorge, on behalf of the foreign fans, saying words along the lines of "While it was a matter of fact thing for the South Africans, it was a once in a lifetime thing for us and we didn't care if the sun was in the wrong position, we wanted to try the shot."

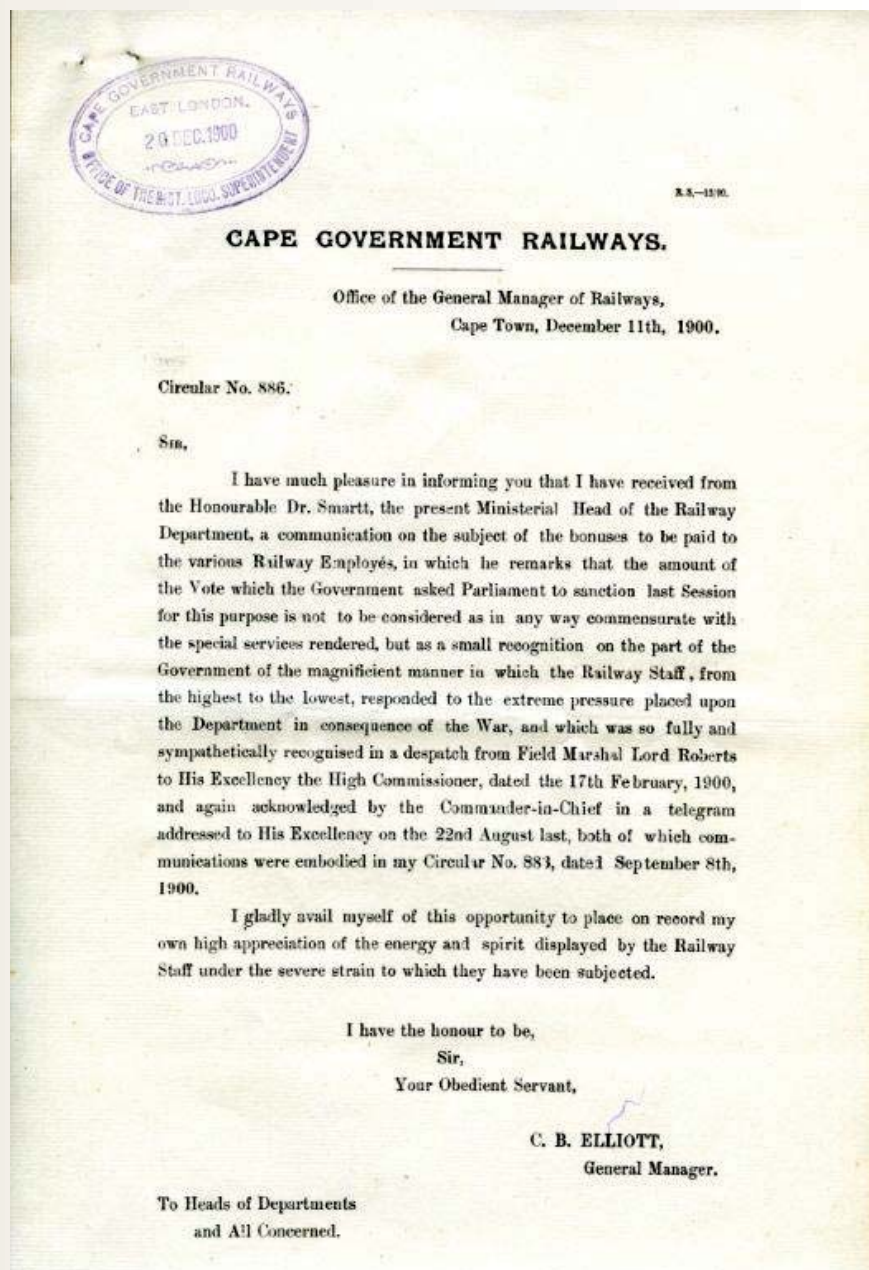
Eventually our pleas were listened to, and A.J.J. at the photo line was heard to say "it's not a bad shot after all." It was a fantastic trip, and this was one of many highlights.

Dennis Mitchell

Peter Scott, an SIA member, contacted us to say that he had found some amazingly well preserved documents in the loft of his elderly mother's house. It seems that his grandfather had been in the Railways and obviously these fascinating documents have been kept, treasured, and preserved since the Anglo Boer War and are dated 1901. Peter kindly made them available to us to be copied. For history buffs, railway enthusiasts, or archivists, we have no doubt that you will find the attached of interest.

To view all the documents click here:

[http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/Cape\\_Government\\_Railways\\_Docs.pdf](http://www.steam-in-action.com/pdf/Cape_Government_Railways_Docs.pdf)



This newsletter was produced by Eloise du Preez, with the assistance and support of Joanne West, based on inputs from dozens of 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](mailto:joannewest@btinternet.com).

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