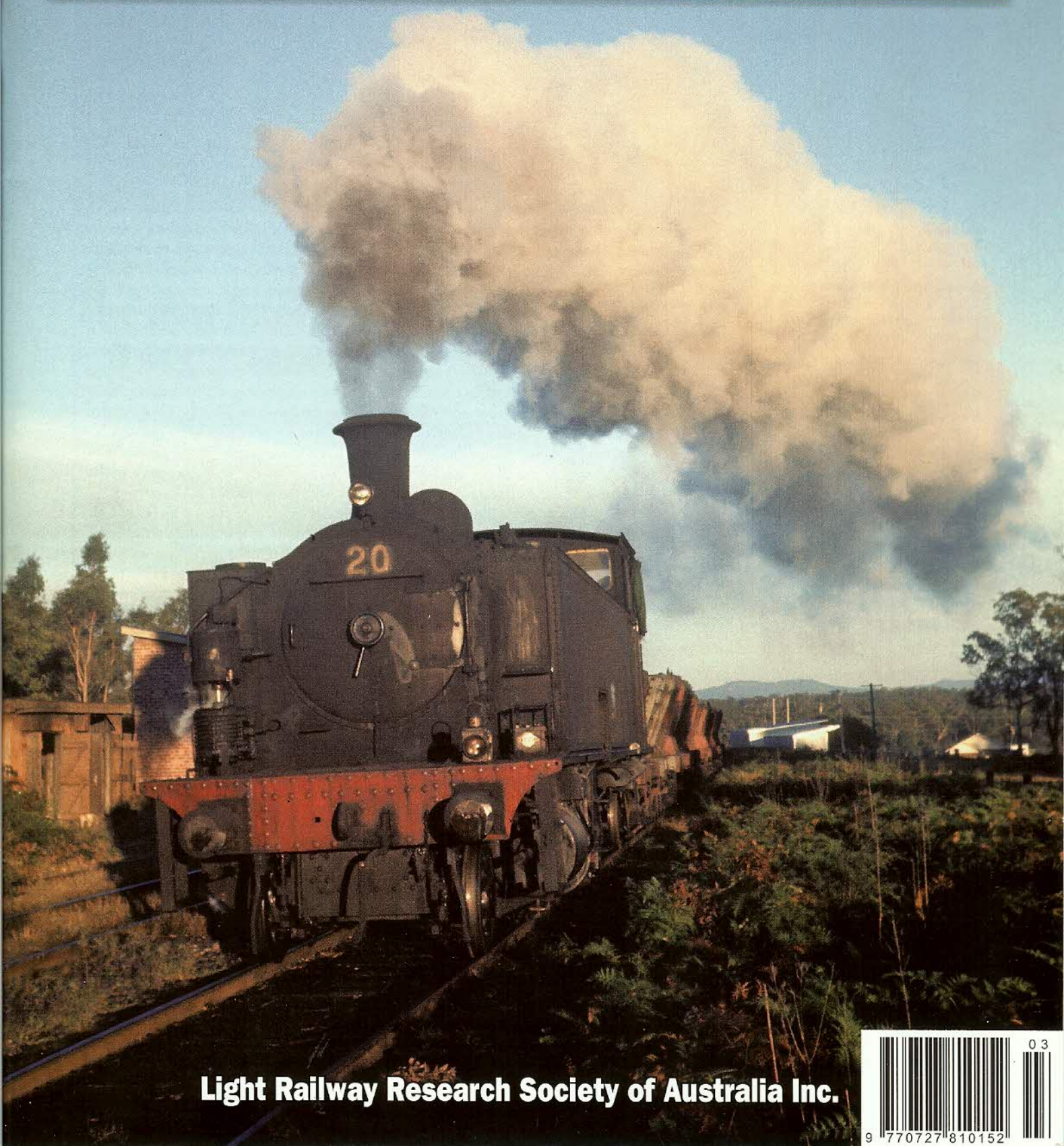


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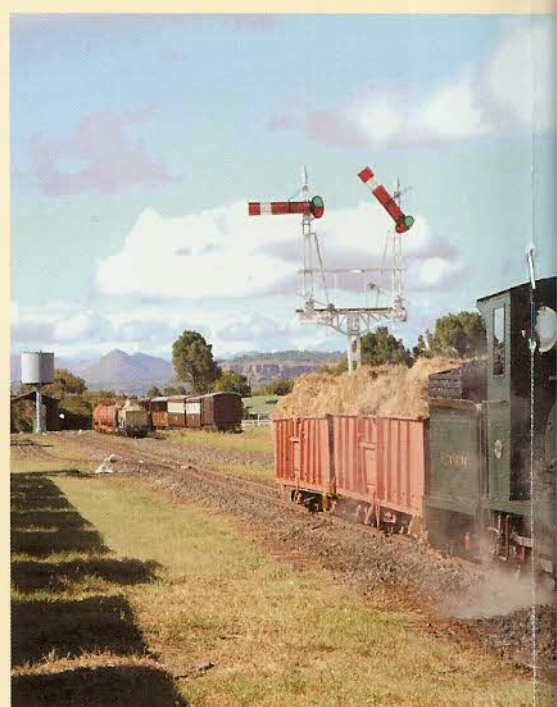


Sandstone Gala, March-April 2012

Sandstone Estates is an agricultural property in the eastern Free State in South Africa, right on the Lesotho border, owned by Wilf Mole. His Sandstone Heritage Trust has saved a significant portion of Southern Africa's 2ft gauge rail heritage and a 25km railway has been built for the collection to operate on.

A large number of 2ft gauge steam locomotives have been returned to working order, both from South African Railways and from a variety of industrial railway operations including in Angola and Mozambique. The Sandstone workshop within the railway complex at Bloemfontein continues to work on restoration projects. There is also a large collection of rolling stock and some vintage internal combustion locomotives.

A special gala event, "Kalahari Sunrise", was held from 23 March to 1 April 2012, bringing together enthusiasts from throughout the world, including a number of LRRSA members.



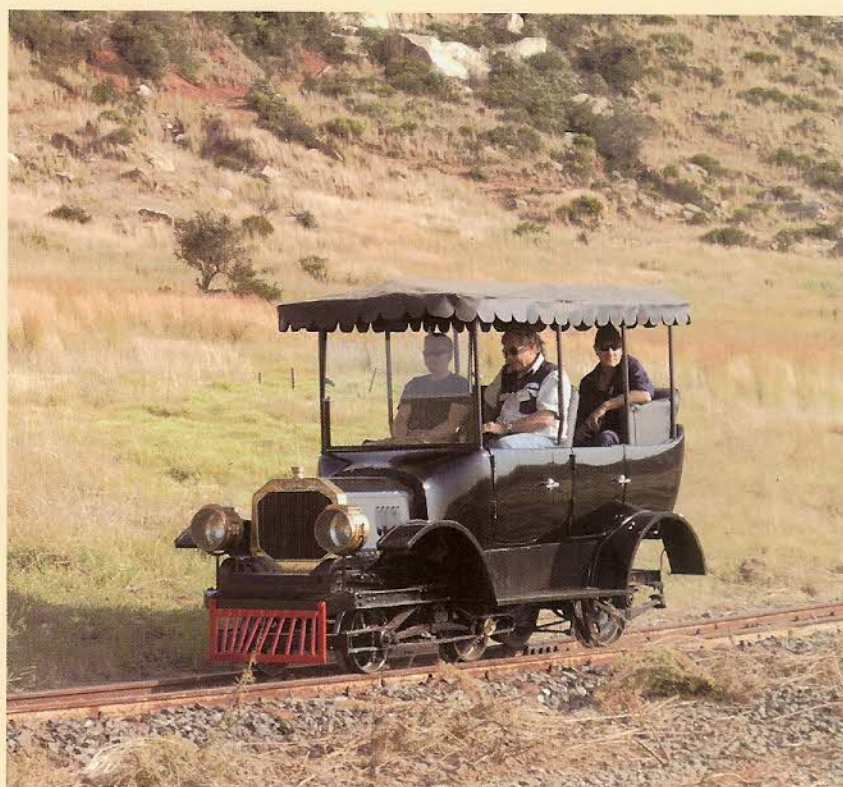


Australians featured prominently among the volunteer train crews, including a number from the Bennett Brook Railway in Perth. The cost to guests of around \$620 included three meals a day for the ten day period. Eighteen steam locomotives were in operation in various combinations throughout the event, and a variety of rolling stock was in use every day. An optional excursion to Bloemfontein was also available.

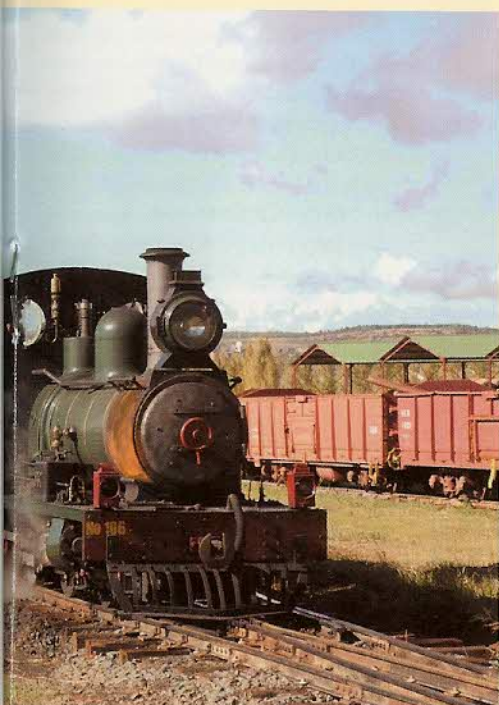
In addition to the railway exhibits there is an enormous heritage collection that was available for inspection including vintage farm machinery, tractors, steam traction engines, transport vehicles, military vehicles, cars and buses. Many items were in operation, along with Sandstone's bullock team.

This was an excellent event hosted in person by Wilf Mole. Sandstone is easily accessible to international travellers, and suitable accommodation is available in the immediate area. Keep on the lookout for further events as a visit is a highlight not to be missed.

John Browning



Clockwise from above left: Framed by eucalyptus, German World War I 'Heeresfeldbahn' 0-8-0T 498 (Henschel 13779 of 1915) at the Grootdraai loop with the mountains of Lesotho in the background. □ NGG16 class 2-6-2+2-6-2 Beyer-Garratt 153 (Hunslet Taylor 3898 of 1968) reaches Vailima summit with an afternoon passenger train. □ This beautifully reconstructed inspection car which originated in South-West Africa has Wilf Mole at the controls as it follows the passenger train at Vailima. □ Ex-sugar mill Avonside 0-4-0T SEZELA No.3 (1936 of 1924) emerges from Grootdraai loop with a SAR ballast hopper to pass a traditional wagon hauled by bullocks. □ Built for the Beira Railway as its number 7, Falcon 4-4-0 'Lawley' 232 of 1895 shunts hay wagons at the Hoekfontein farm complex. □ A much altered Andrew Barclay 0-4-2TT, 1459 of 1916, takes water from the impressive facilities at Hoekfontein before undertaking its next duty. This locomotive also originally operated at a Natal sugar mill. Photos: John Browning





Clockwise from top left: Kerr Stuart 'Darwin' class 0-4-2ST TAMARA (4063 of 1924) climbs the grade to Mooihoeck. □ Rescued from Angola, Decauville 0-4-0T BATHALA (302 of 1899). □ A far cry from driving Pilbara iron ore trains for John Lys and John Mere. □ Dave Rollins takes a tea break on NGG16 class Garratt 113 (Beyer Peacock 6923 of 1939). □ The 'show time' of the gala was a quintuple headed train. Ascending Pandora bank is NG15 2-8-2 'Kalahari' 17 (21905 of 1931) with NGG13 49 (Hanomag 10599 of 1928) and NGG16 153, 113 and 88 (Cockerill 3268 of 1937). □ Even more diminutive than BATHALA, Kerr Stuart 'Wren' class 0-4-0ST LITTLE BESS (4031 of 1919) assists with shunting at Hoekfontein. Photos: John Browning

