

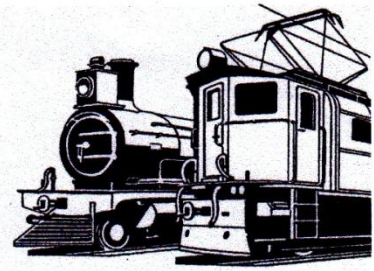
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Bulletin No. 115 February 2013



A class 16D loco reverses across Adderley Street at the Monument Station level crossing. Note the man with the flag to the left of the three wheeled vehicle.

Editorial

Our stock of articles, for publication in the Bulletin, has increased, since Bulletin was published and for the foreseeable future, we will be publishing Bulletins at monthly intervals instead of six weekly.

November this year will mark the ninetieth anniversary of the running of the first Union Limited and Union Express trains and, consequently we are working on material for publication to commemorate this. We will be covering the forerunners and successors to these trains. This will include the Rhodesian Railways Train De Luxe, The CSAR train of the same name, Rhodesian Railway Zambezi Express, the NGR Corridor Express and the Blue Train. Once we know how much material we have, we will decide on how we will publish it. It could take the form of a longer than usual Bulletin, or it could be published as a booklet. If you have any material about or photos of any of these trains please forward it to us. Ley Kempthorne drew our attention to this anniversary and we have stated work early so as to avoid a last minute rush.

Union Carriage and Wagon works has been sold by Murray and Roberts, the previous owners. Get all of the details at:

<http://engineeringnews.co.za/article/empowered-rail-group-to-pursue-localisation-workflow-2013-02-08>

Alternatively, do a Google search on: Engineering news union carriage.

Follow Up on Bulletin No. 114

Harold Lincoln has written as follows:

Maybe being a little pedantic but since I believe that the "Bulletin" should be (and is) a source of accurate information the following should be noted:

On page 5 reference is made to "Hollandse Aanneming Maatskappy". This is an Afrikaansism, the official name of the company popularly known as HAM is "HOLLANDSCHE AANNEMINGS MAATSCHAPPIJ".

And on page 2 it is stated that "Confusingly the Sheba Mine railway is sometimes referred to as "The Sheba Tramway" with an inference that tramways did not operate steam locomotives. This is not the case and in fact many steam locomotives are referred to as tram locomotives. There is, e.g. a photo on page 16 of Allen Jorgensen's book on the 150th anniversary of railways in South Africa of a steam tram loco used by the Port Nolloth Railway. Page 126 of "The Pictorial Encyclopedia of Railways" has an entry on "Steam Tramways".

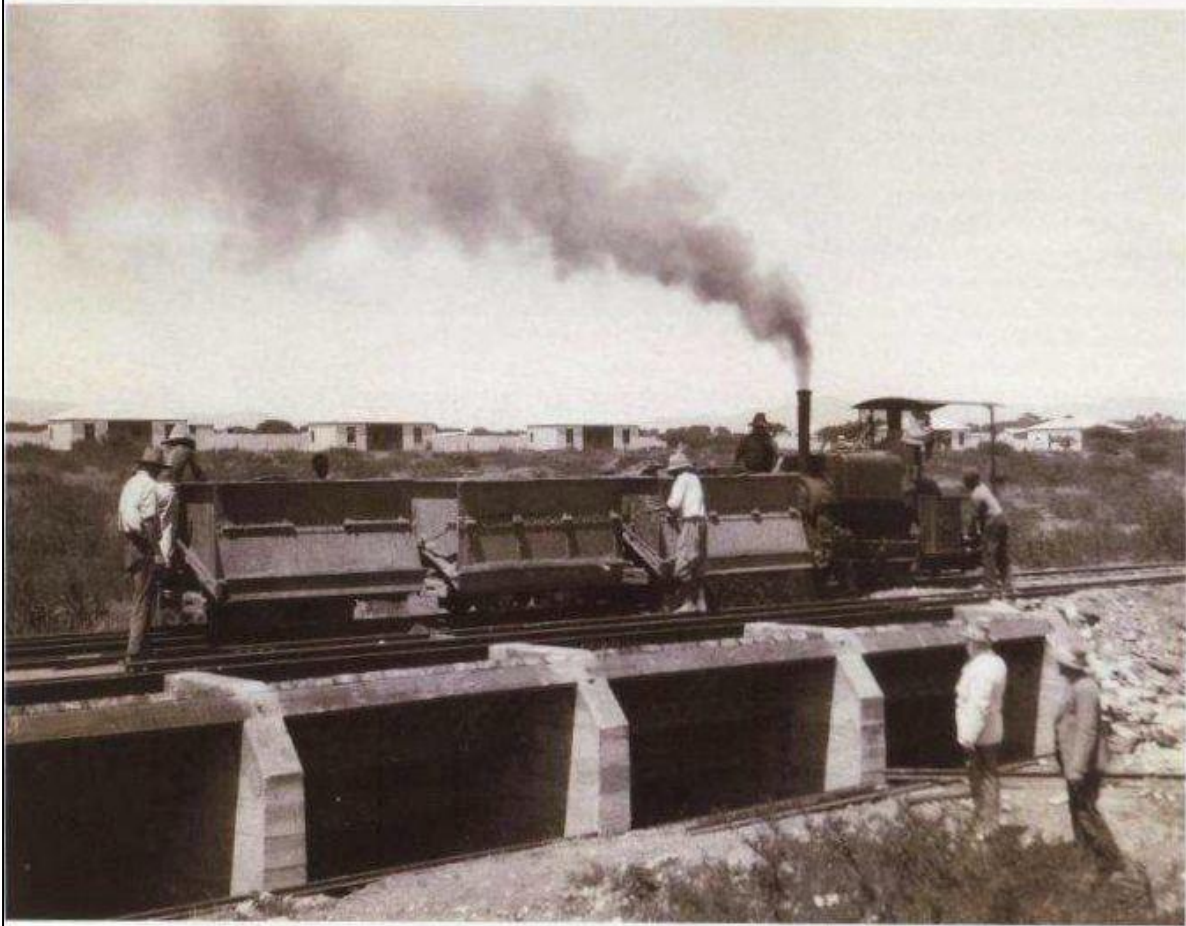
John Middleton replied:

Fair comment on HAM - the companies that worked on the Table Bay Contracts are still not entirely clear and require further research. I do not know if a local Afrikaans company was set up with the HAM initials - Harold may be right that this is just an Afrikaansism. Note that the loco actually carried a plate "HNW 69" and we are still not sure what HNW stood for - possibly Harbour New Works, but why "69" ?, possibly a plant number.

On Sheba, I only said "confusingly" because the line is referred to as both, many of the early steam worked mine lines were described in contemporary literature as tramways, there was no inference intended. The first NZASM line was called the "Rand Tram". Indeed some of the mine rope worked lines were referred to as "wire trams" which some have interpreted as overhead wire electric locomotive worked which is incorrect. In South African mining the moving of underground ore wagons is still today known as "tramming".

**ANGLO AMERICAN:
ESTABLISHED 1917**

Ore being delivered to a concentrator in the late 1920s at Potgietersrust Platinum's Limited's (PPL) opencast operation, the forerunner of Anglo American Platinum's Mogalakwena mine on South Africa's eastern Bushveld Complex. The platinum reef Hans Merensky had identified at Potgietersrus was regarded as the most convincing of any platinum strike in the world at the time, and was the basis for the formation of PPL in 1925, with Anglo American as a major shareholder. In 1931, PPL merged with Waterval Platinum to form Rustenburg Platinum Mines Limited, which would become the world's major platinum producer and eventually be absorbed into Anglo American's Platinum business.



The above scan of a page from the December 2012 issue of Anglo Amreican's publication "Optima" was sent by John Middleton.

In his email, John wrote:

WOW!!!

I almost fell of my chair when I saw this that appeared in Optima and then got put in the Reef Branch Newsletter.

Now, I have known for a long time that RPM had at least four early steam locos but Wren's have not been on the "possibles" list. I feel that it must likely be one of the mysterious trio of KS 4013-15 as the dates are about right, we know the RPM system opened in 1926 and had two HC 0-6-0WT but at least two other locos. One of these was possibly one of the Natal Ammonium OK's (two of their locos were for sale at a

Jo'burg dealer in the early 20s) and we know OK supplied a new boiler (12959 of 1937) to RPM. Now the big question is - did RPM get this Wren from perhaps the Brits - Hartbeespoort Dam Railway ???

Wren Locos

By Robin Lake in South Africa

There are a couple of tenuous leads pointing to the possibility of Kerr, Stuart & Co Ltd "Wren" class locomotives being used on the fourteen kilometre long 60 cm gauge service line laid from Brits West to Hartbeespoort Dam during the building of the latter over 1918-1925.

In 1921 the Director of Irrigation reported that in March of that year two steam locomotives were secured "from the Air Force Authorities" for use on the line.

From KS records we know that four Wrens were consigned to "SAR Delagoa Bay" (no date given but before 1930), namely works numbers 4006, 4013, 4014 and 4015. This is gleaned from a manuscript entry alongside these numbers in the KS engine register. However, the KS shipping specification ledgers bear no evidence of such a consignment. This suggests that some party other than KS arranged the export of these four Wrens.

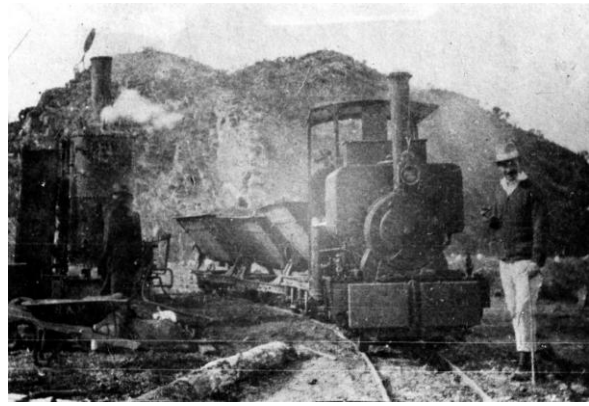
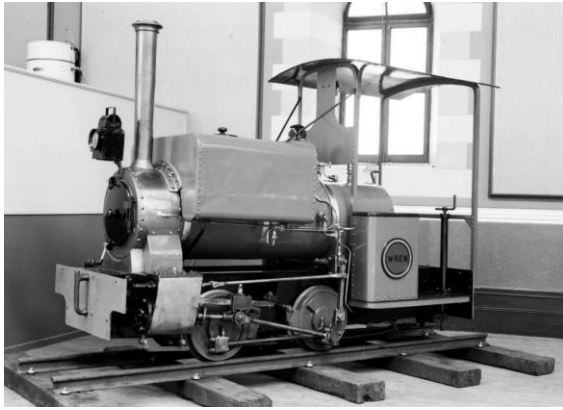
4006 was one of a batch built for the British Ministry of Munitions and ordered in July 1918 to be followed a month later by an order for another batch which included the other three mentioned. All four were intended for work at the British Air Ministry (by then) aircraft repair depot at Greenhill, Sheffield.

Because of favourable port dues and other expenses it was not unusual for goods destined for South Africa to be sent via Mozambique. The meaning and significance of the "SAR..." (South African Railways?) are left for the reader to determine.

Was the Director of Irrigation referring to the British Air Ministry or to the South African Air Force founded in February 1920? In support of the latter we can have regard for what became known as The Imperial Gift being surplus post WW 1 aircraft and other material given to the British Dominions to assist with the setting up of their fledgling national air forces. The South African portion of this comprised 100 aircraft, hangars, complete workshops, trucks, trailers and numerous other items (no full listing seen). Is it too far fetched to surmise that this included the four Wrens which worked at Greenhill? It is interesting to note that at least 17 Wrens appear to have been ordered for use at air establishments in Britain. The first batch of aircraft arrived in South Africa in September 1919.

In their issue of October 1922 The South African Irrigation Magazine reported that two locomotives had been supplied by the Irrigation Department to assist with the building of Grassridge Dam near Cradock (1920-1924), one from stock and the other from the works at Hartbeespoort Dam. The January 1923 issue reported that a third locomotive was due to be sent from Hartbeespoort to Grassridge.

Whilst the obvious channels of research into the Grassridge locomotives were explored, with no luck, the name of an old-timer who grew up on a Grassridge farm came to light. He apparently had a great interest in vintage tractors, engines and things mechanical. He advised that the Grassridge locomotives (locomotive?) went to Lake Mentz and this was backed up by two friends, one in water affairs at Uitkeer near Somerset East, the other at Lake Mentz. He provided a copy of an article about the restoration of "Little Bess" maintaining that she was one of the locomotives. A case of identifying a look alike but not the *persona* in question? In actual fact "Little Bess" is the Wren originally restored by the Railway Enthusiasts Society, Port Elizabeth and was supplied in November 1919 by KS as new to the Sundays River Irrigation Board for Lake Mentz construction (1918-1922) and bearing works number 4031.



Makers photo of a Wren. Leith Paxton Collection KS 4031 at work at Lake Mentz. Leith Paxton Collection

One question is whether a Wren would have been able to cope on a 14 km line with a ruling gradient of 1 in 28.6. It is interesting to note that although most Wrens were specified for 61 cm (two foot) gauge it may not have been necessary for any adaption to 60 cm gauge. One of the sources referred to below makes the point that the wheel profiles were arranged so that running was possible on both gauges being a rather slack fit on the broader and slightly tight on the 60 cm gauge.

Sources:

Personal research

Horsman in The Industrial Railway Record Nos 5 and 6

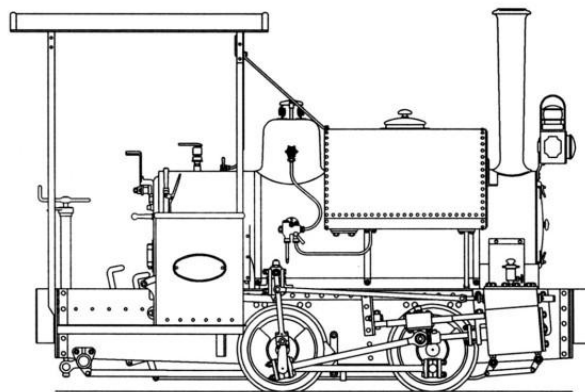
Plant in The Industrial Railway Record No 37

Jux – Compilation of Kerr Stuart & Co Ltd Locomotive Works List

The Internet

Department of Irrigation Reports

South African Irrigation Magazine



Kerr. Stuart No 4031/19 for Sundays River Irrigation Board

*Drawn by L.Paxton © 2005
from Kerr.Stuart Drg No 25778*



KS 4031 as discovered at Lake Mentz in 1973.

Leith Paxton

Restoration of Sundays River Irrigation Board "Little Bess" 0-4-0ST Kerr Stuart 4031/1919

One of the smallest locos in the collection, next to the Decauville, number 4031 is of the "Wren" class. The origins of this type can be traced back to an 0-4-0ST, number 850, supplied to the Southern Gas Company in 1903. Two further units were supplied to Spain, known as the "Buya" class. The locomotive type was developed over the years and 163 were produced before Kerr Stuart closed in 1930. Hunslet acquired the drawings and production rights and produced a further four. The true Wren type had modifications to the boiler and frames for 2ft or 60cm gauge, in fact the majority (132 plus the Hunslet 4) were built to this gauge.



Little Bess at Sandstone.

Hannes Paling



Loading at Little Bess at Uitenhage

Philip Maurer

There were two basic types: the “old” type up to number 2423 which had Stephenson Link Motion between the frames and the “new” type from number 2458 with outside Hackworth valve gear. Nevertheless six “old” type were built after number 2458, probably as repeat orders for customers who wanted identical locomotives to their current ones. The “new” type also incorporated a higher pitched boiler, inclined cylinders and various other detail differences and appeared in 1915.

Wrens were a very popular loco type and were delivered all over the world to such countries as Brazil, Borneo, Malaya, Aden, New Zealand and even the Falkland Islands. The last example, built in 1941, went to the National Smelting Company at Avonmouth near Bristol but was sadly scrapped in 1955. Few survive to this day but “Little Bess” is one of them. After service with the Sundays River Irrigation Board, “Little Bess” was abandoned until being discovered in a wooded area in 1974 by a group of Eastern Cape enthusiasts.

The Eastern Cape branch of the RSSA acquired the locomotive and it was restored to working order. “Little Bess” then found a home at Willow Dam near Uitenhage where she hauled two small wooden coaches on a 300m oval track. This lasted until the late 90s when the service stopped and the loco was staged. Vandalism was soon rife and parts were stolen. She was acquired on loan from the RSSA by the 2ft Preservation Trust and well known Port Elizabeth enthusiast, Roy Mitchell, began restoration of “Little Bess” and stripped the loco to its component parts. Following Roy’s tragic death in 2003, the project ground to a halt. In the meantime Sandstone had moved the two small coaches to Hoekfontein for safe keeping and to use them at the Sandstone Heritage Fair in 2003. Following negotiations with the 2ft Preservation Trust, who were now based in Switzerland, it was agreed to move “Little Bess” to Sandstone to complete the restoration. Initially work began in Pretoria but the loco was transferred to Bloemfontein and completed by Lukas Nel and his team in time for her first appearance at the Sandstone Winter Steam event in June 2005. “Little Bess” is painted green.

As with the Decauville, her diminutive size and limited range keeps her to the Hoekfontein area but she is used for demonstrations and footplate experiences as well as light shunting duties.

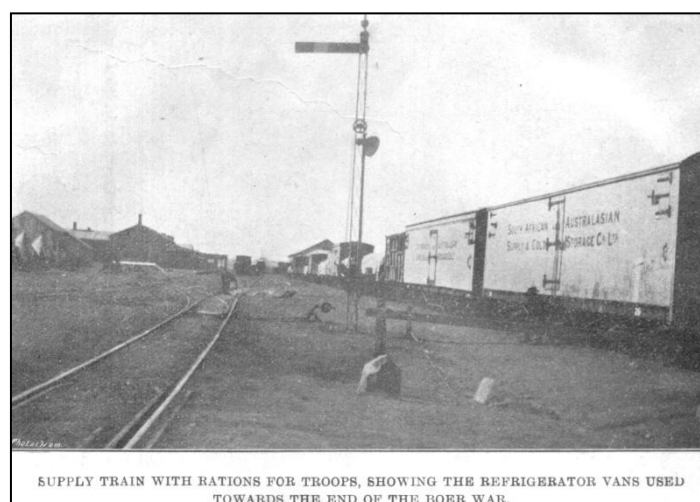
From The Sandstone Heritage Trust website

Thanks to John Middleton, Robin Lake, Leith Paxton, Wifred Mole, Hannes Paling and Philip Maurer.

Refrigerated Vans in the South African Boer War

By Ray Ellis

The below photo has been lurking in my South African goods stock file for some time, and I thought I would try and find out something more about the refrigerated vans in the photo.



I don’t know the location, but it is likely of a northbound train (note the loaded wagons in the train), headed for the Army in the Orange Free State or Transvaal. I suspect it is from a *Railway Magazine* article of the period. The loco (not visible) could very well be a CGR 6th class 4-6-0, as they were more or less standard on such trains, and often double-headed with the larger & heavier supply trains.

The two refrigerator vans in the train are lettered for the *South African & Australasian Supply & Cold Storage Co. Ltd.* Unlike the US railroads of the period, which had many privately-owned reefers at the time, they were unusual in South Africa, and disappeared with Union in 1910, when the SAR took over all such operations. Meat, which included both beef and mutton, was sourced from Australia, New Zealand, and even Argentina in South America.

Despite the name, I was not familiar with such a company in my Boer War railway studies, so went in search of something more substantial.

The company was a subsidiary (there were over a hundred of them!!) of the well-known Imperial Cold Storage & Supply Co., based in Cape Town. It was the brainchild of South African entrepreneur David Graaff (later Sir) who was both a very successful businessman and politician in the Cape. The company was founded in 1899, and grew into one of the largest meat processing & distribution companies in the world. It had close connections with the Union Castle Line of steamships, and Graaf was one of the founders of the large Consolidated Diamond Mines of South Africa (later part of Anglo American).

Graaff made a lot of money out of supplying the British Army in the Boer War, but he also made large donations to help in alleviating the pain and suffering of Boer prisoners-of-war, and their women and children in the so-called “concentration camps.” (these latter were the concept of the steely Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, a ruthless man when it came to his “enemies”). Graaff went on to personally finance much of the South African war effort in World War I, and took part on the post-war Peace talks, which earned him a knighthood. His company lasted into modern times (the company is still well remembered by many), and did not finally become defunct until 1998. Graaff himself had died in 1931, but his family continued the business, until it eventually became part of the Tiger Brands.

South African railways did not embrace the refrigeration concept until the Boer War, when the need to supply the Army made it a necessity. The vans shown below, show them likely to be wooden vertical plank vans (the same as later SAR wooden reefer vans). CGR stock figures show two such vans in October 1900, suggesting these vans post-dated then. They were likely built in 1901-1902 in the latter stages of the war. It would be interesting to know if they were imported from Britain or built locally. There must have been at least 30 of the them (the van on the right is numbered 26, so a logical number sequence would be at least 1 – 30, or higher). Note the vans are different, and both have single reefer doors.



Below, an example of the later SAR bogie 15 ton refrigerator vans, this one No. 10674 of the early 1920s. This one has double doors. There were also 4-wheel refrigerator vans, as shown lower down.



15-ton Refrigerator Wagon, South African Railways.



So, if anyone can provide any photos, or add any further details of these interesting vans, their numbers, and where they were built, the editor would be pleased to hear from them. Apologies for the clarity of the early photos; there is only just so much a home scanner can do!!



Class 5B No. 523 shunting at Esplanade on 6 May 1963.

Peter Cooper



Class 8X No. 894 at Cradock, 24 June 1944.

Neville Fields