

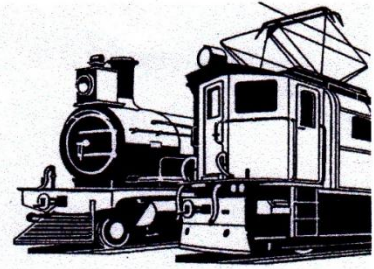
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Boksburg Station in the NZASM days. Note the lever frame on the platform.

Editorial

The derelict signal cabin on Muizenberg station was due to be demolished, until a local resident, Cobus Joubert, approached Transnet with a view to leasing the signal cabin, renovating it and operating a coffee roastery and coffee shop. Renovations are due to start soon and the business will open in about August. Access will be from the car-park on the sea side of the station.



Muizenberg signal cabin while still in use.

The award of Transnet's tender for 1064 electric and diesel locomotives is running very late. For full details do a search on: BEE snarl-up delays Transnet's locomotives project.

With effect from this Bulletin, we are reverting to publishing every six weeks, instead of monthly. Contributions have dropped off, recently, and we need to conserve the material that we have on hand.

RAILWAY ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE GREAT KAROO : DWYKA – ANTJIESKRAAL – KETTING

Part 2 - By AllenDuff





Above : CGR track-bed at the Dwyka bridge going south over the ridge to Blood River.
Below : CGR/SAR & SAR alignment climbed the ridge on the south side & crested the ridge through a cutting. CGR/SAR alignment on the right



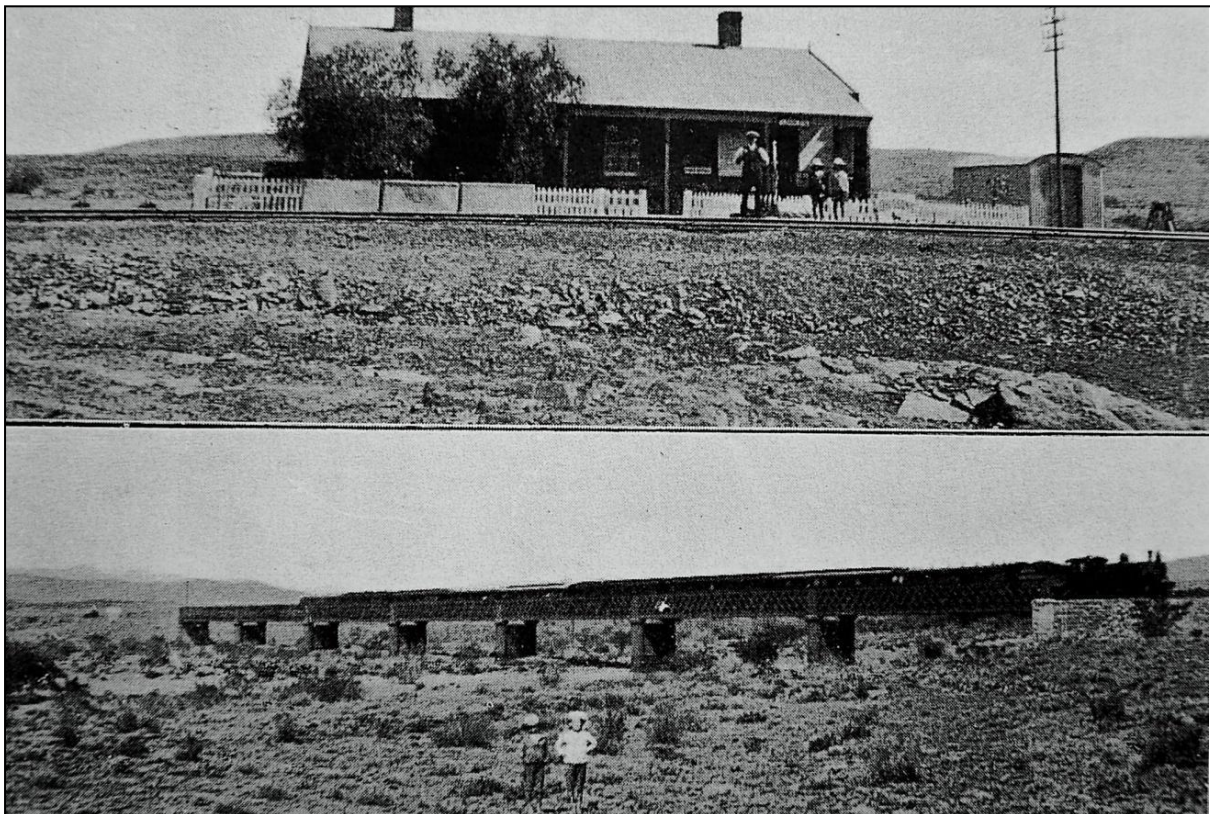
The CGR/SAR realignment followed the contour on the south side of the ridge until near the crest where the alignment continued west through a cutting before curving round over an embankment (middle of photo) to join the CGR alignment at the northern entrance to Blood River station. Of interest is the use of concrete instead of stone for the culverts. The use of concrete in railway construction in South Africa dates from this period e.g. 1912 concrete arched bridge near Topping on the railway over the Outeniqua Mountains.

In October 1901 six Boers including Deneys Reitz, trudged northwards over this ridge and the CGR alignment. They had been separated from Smuts's commando. In his book "Commando" Reitz wrote that they could see the two Dwyka River blockhouses in the distance.

It was probably in the 1950s when the Class 25s started working this line that a third alignment was constructed. This alignment took off from the CGR/SAR alignment near the western end of the ridge on the south side. It runs through a deep cutting and over a high embankment to Antjieskraal. This alignment was electrified in 1961.

In September 1901 the ill Boer War commando leader, Gideon Scheepers, was captured on the farm Kopjeskraal on the Dwyka River about 25 kms south of the railway. The prisoner was entrained at Blood River (Antjieskraal) for transportation to Matjiesfontein and later to Beaufort-West.

Probably also in the 1950s, about 500m west of Antjieskraal, a straight shallow cutting was blasted to do away with a long curve round a rise. Thereafter directional changes to the alignment between Antjieskraal and Ketting were marginal though the elevation of the tracks was raised a metre or two.



Ketting station office & staff house & later CGR bridge over the Blood River. [SAR Magazine 1916]
Blood River (looking south) : CGR concrete-strengthened pillars & SAR Warren Truss bridge.



Blood River (looking south) : CGR concrete-strengthened pillars & SAR Warren Truss bridge. About 750m west of where the Ketting passing-loop was, is the bridge over the Blood River/Bloedrivier. The CGR's bridge (725ft) of flat girder spans was replaced with box girders by 1908 : the original pillars were retained. To strengthen this bridge, the round metal support pillars were encased in concrete in 1924. Probably in the 1950s this bridge was replaced with an adjacent 5-span Warren Truss girder bridge. The abandoned CGR pillars and cross-supports were left *in situ* along with the dressed sandstone abutments. As the railway from Cape Town to the interior in the Boer War was the British army's supply line, this was also an important bridge. It was guarded by a military camp (on the west bank) until a blockhouse was later built (on the east bank).



Legend has it that Rudyard Kipling wrote his poem “Bridge-Guard in the Karoo” after overnighting at the British army camp at Ketting.

Access to Ketting is via a secondary gravel road turning west off the N1 to Gembok station. [Don’t take the service road next to the track.] The gravel road, with gates at the level-crossings, continues from Ketting to Antjieskraal. Access to Dwyka from Antjieskraal is via the track-side service road which requires a vehicle with a high clearance and an adventurous driver. There is a gravel road from Antjieskraal to the N1.

My thanks to Ron Conyngham and Bruno Martin for their comment.

Photos taken by (2010 & 2011) & text written up by Allen Duff (October 2012).

“BRIDGE-GUARD IN THE KAROO” by Rudyard Kipling [Shortened]

Sudden the desert changes,
The raw glare softens and clings,
Till the aching Oudtshoorn ranges [Swartberg Mountains]
Stand up like the thrones of Kings –

The twilight swallows the thicket,
The starlight reveals the ridge.
The whistle shrills to the picket --
We are changing guard on the bridge.

(Few, forgotten and lonely,
Where the empty metals shine --
No, not combatants-only
Details guarding the line.)

We hear the Hottentot herders
As the sheep click past to the fold --
And the click of the restless girders
As the steel contracts in the cold –

And the solemn firmament marches,
And the hosts of heaven rise
Framed through the iron arches --
Banded and barred by the ties,

Till we feel the far track humming,
And we see her headlight plain,
And we gather and wait her coming --
The wonderful north-bound train.

(Few, forgotten and lonely,
Where the white car-windows shine --
No, not combatants-only
Details guarding the line.)

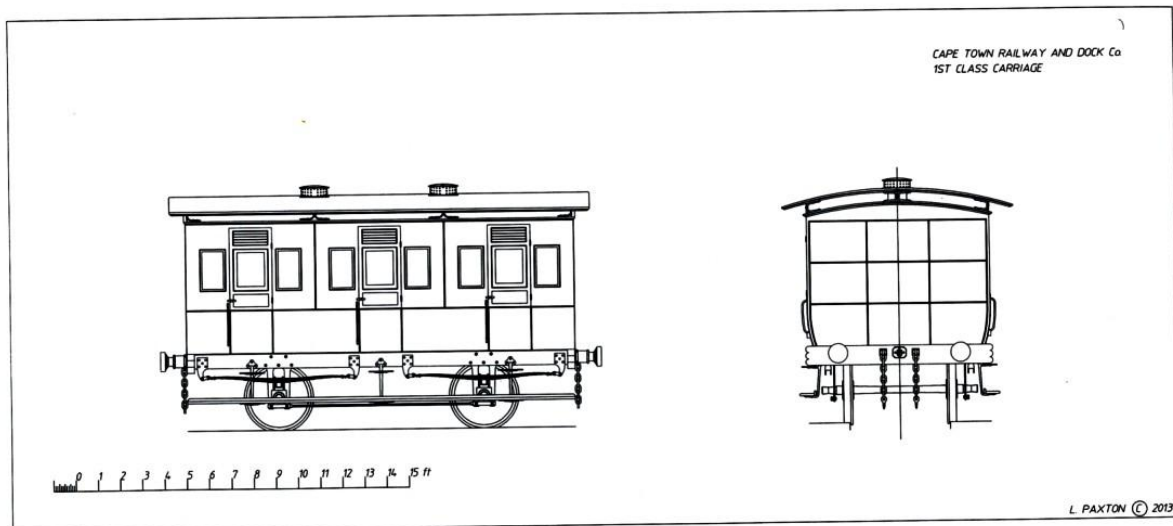
So we return to our places,
As out on the bridge she rolls;
And the darkness covers our faces,
And the darkness re-enters our souls.

Quick, ere the gift escape us!
 Out of the darkness we reach
 For a handful of week-old papers
 And a mouthful of human speech.

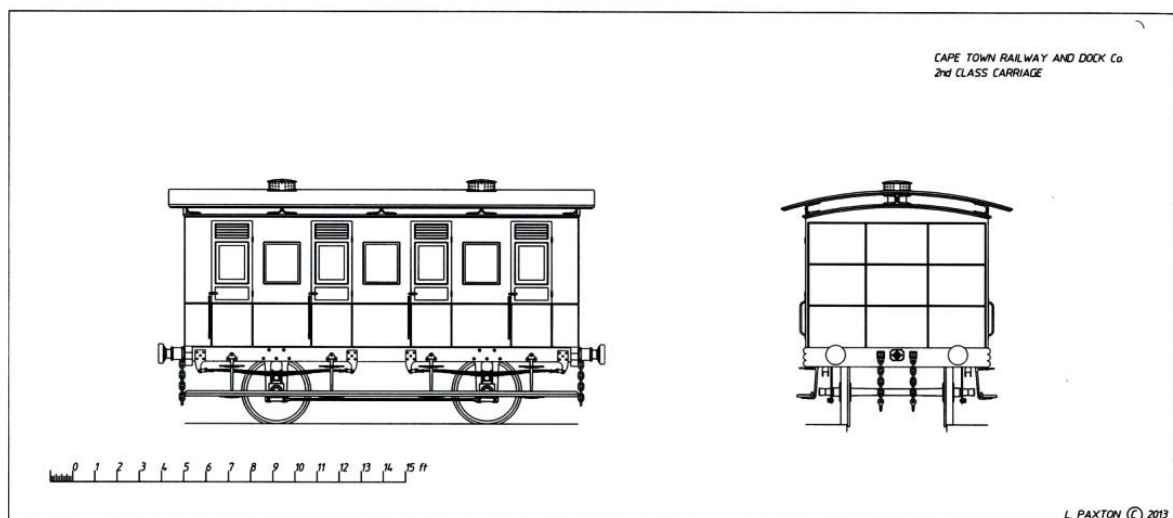
More than a little lonely
 Where the lessening tail-lights shine.
 No - not combatants - only
 Details guarding the line

Cape Town - Wellington – 150 years

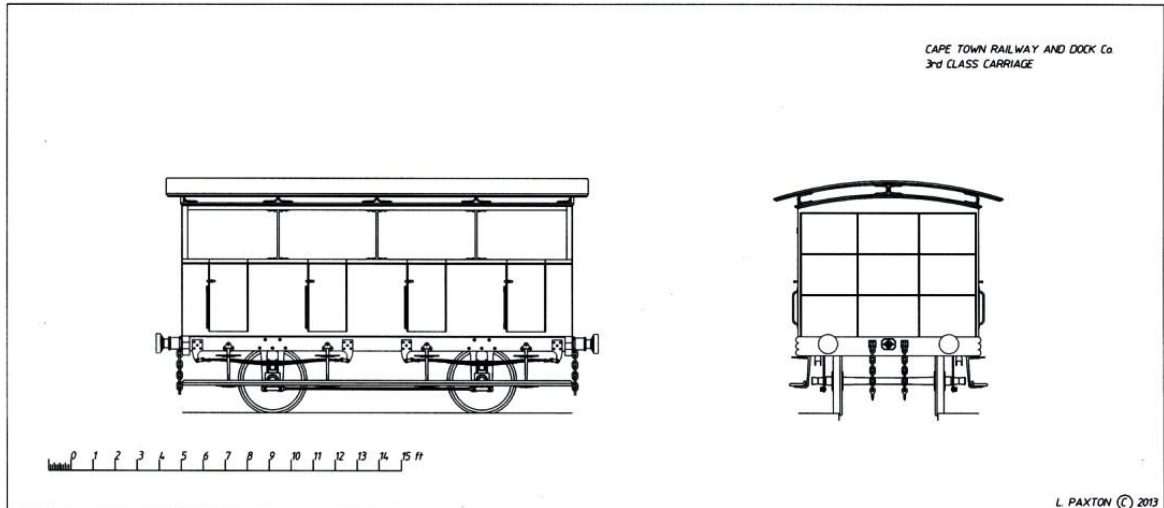
This year is the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Cape town – Wellington Railway. A group of local residents decided to celebrate the occasion (see below) and, through Lionel Penning appealed for assistance. An online search, of the Cape Archives catalogue, revealed the existence of eight drawings, by John harkshaw, dated 1859 of passenger coaches and goods wagons, for this line. Leith and Wally visited the archives and viewed the drawings. They are in remarkably good condition, but are bigger than the Archives' A3 scanner. After a lot of persuasion, they agreed that the drawings could be scanned in sections. Using these, Leith was able to redraw them on CAD. The passenger coach drawings are reproduced below.



First class carriage - 4'8 ½" guag.



Second class carriage.



Third class carige. Note lack of windows.

SPECIAL 150-YEAR TRAIN TO PAARL & WELLINGTON

on May 21, 2013 in [South Africa](#)

On 18 May, the Wellington branch of the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (ATKV) organised a special event to commemorate the 150th year of the railway from Cape Town reaching the town. A special train left Cape Town's main station at 07:40, stopping at Bellville at 08:30, and Klapmuts at 09:00. A country fair and fun events were arranged in the grounds of the Wellington Winery, opposite the station at Wellington. From 11:00, shuttle trips were run from Wellington to Malan, the next station. The weather was perfect and great fun was had by all who participated (at a very reasonable return fare of R30.00).

From Railways Africa News Express.

The Sevenths in the Sudan

By Ray Ellis

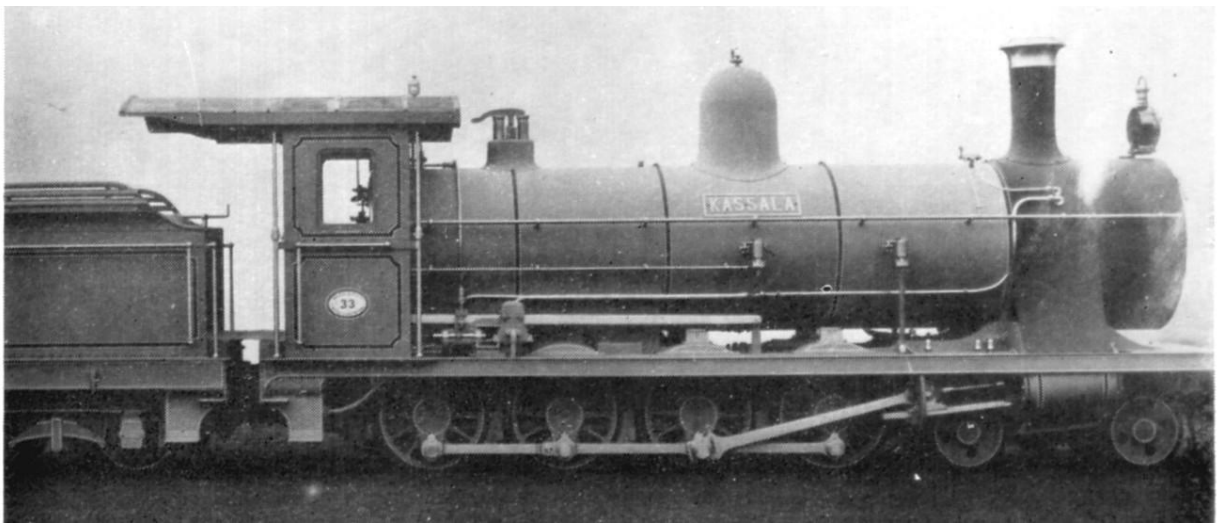
The Railway History Group has already published (in 1997) the excellent booklet by Reg Pattison on the Southern African 7th class 4-8-0. This included locos of that type for the pre-Union railways, as well as examples built and sold to Rhodesia, the Congo and Mozambique. What is not generally known, but included in the booklet, is a chapter on eight 7th class 4-8-0s which were sent to the Sudan in North Africa.

These engines were somewhat different to the "standard" 7th class, in that they were fitted with equipment for pushing, as well as pulling, their own tenders!!

When so operating, the cab of the 7th had gates so that the loco crew wouldn't end up biting the sand in the desert!!

The locos were order for the Sudan Military Railway (or "Soudan" as it was called in those days), which was planned to run across the desert to avoid rapids on the Nile River, from Wadi Halfa to eventually reach Arbara, later headquarters of the Sudan Government Railways, which absorbed the lightly laid military railway into its system. Two characters involved with this railway were Herbert Kitchener (later to find infamy in a later conflict), and a brilliant Canadian, Percy Girouard, who was the "father" of the Imperial Military Railway, and later the Central South African Railways. Both were high ranking military officers, both received DSOs, and were later knighted for their efforts.

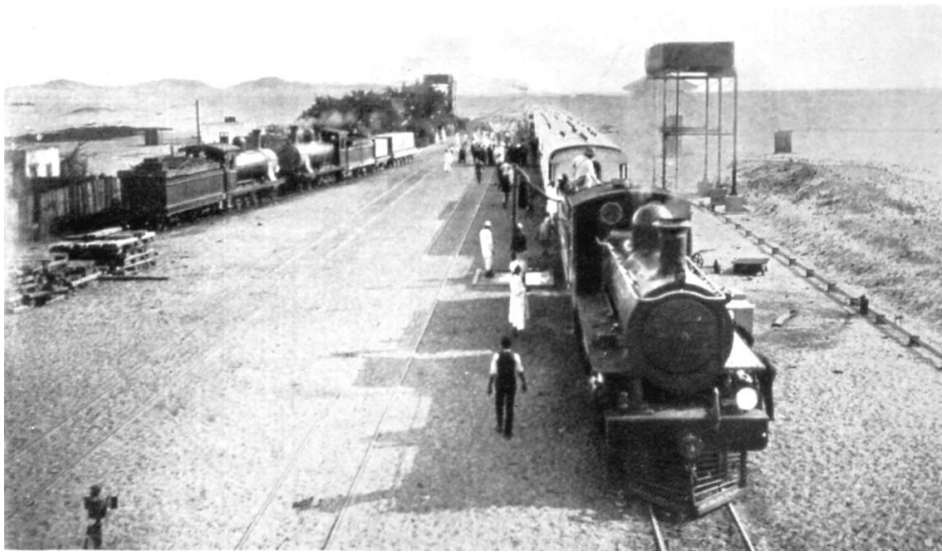
Scottish builder, Neilson & Co., of Glasgow, built the eight locos in three batches (N 3232-3234/1897; N 5280-5281/1897; N 5345-5347/1898) to the Cape 7th II design (later SAR 7A) which became Sudan Railways Nos. 26-30 & 33-35. For some reason, that is not apparent, these locos, which were firm favourites in the southern half of the continent, did not find favour at all in the Sudan, and had short lives. All were withdrawn from service by 1914.



Works photo of Sudan 4-8-0 No. 33 "Kassala" (N 5345/1898). Most of the early Sudan locos were named, as this example shows. Note also the extended cab roof.

Photos of these locos in the Sudan are rare, but Leo Weinthal's *The Story of the Cape to Cairo Railway and River Route, from 1887 to 1922* (Vol. 2, p.308) produced

the following photo:



At No. 6 Station (many stations were numbered, not named), a watering stop in the bleak deserts of the Sudan, between Wadi Halfa and Atbara, in the early 1910s. The train on the right is a Mail Train, hauled by one of the railway's "Atlantic" 4-4-2s. Note the white train disc on the loco's buffer beam, reminiscent of the English London, Brighton & South Coast Railway, and latter day Southern Railway, which indicated where the train was headed.



In a blow-up of that photo, are two of the 7th class 4-8-0s, the one on the right being in steam and hauling two wooden auxiliary water tanks wagons, a four-wheeler and a bogie one, very necessary in this part of the world.

Sources:

As mentioned above, and *Sudan Transport* by Richard Hill (Oxford University Press, 1965).