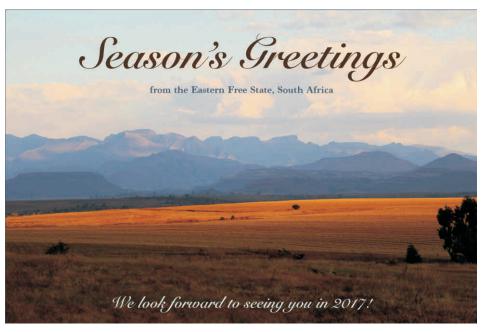
NEWSLETTER NO: XIII | AROUND 100 DAYS TO GO

 30^{TH} March -9^{TH} April 2017



The Eastern Free State where Sandstone Estates is located, is true high altitude African savannah. A truly undiscovered part of the world for most people. These are Cosmos & natural Poppies growing wild at Sandstone



WORKING WITH NATURE

For nearly 20 years, the Sandstone Heritage Trust has done its best to try and save, restore and utilise Heritage assets across a broad spectrum of items so that at any point in the future, one can look back and reflect on what used to be. Our basic motto is "saving the best of the past for the future" and we are continuing to do that. However, it is becoming apparent that the very ground that we live on and the environment which surrounds us, is in itself, in danger. Therefore, no Heritage project, farm or anything for that matter on the planet is going to have infinite continuity if the planet itself is placed in jeopardy. We have therefore declared, as a start, a 400 ha zone around our main complex as a chemical free zone, i.e. essentially organic. We will follow the procedures to bring that about. In the interim, we have frozen all activity in that area which may compromise our soil health. Without toxic chemicals being used for anything, the invertebrates, the microorganisms and the visible creatures above the ground, such as birds, mammals and wildlife in general will stand a better chance of survival.

We are concerned that the broader agricultural community is not necessarily in tune with our philosophies here. However, many of our visitors are keenly interested in the environment and like not only to talk to us about it, but to provide us with guidance and advice. Sandstone will become much more environmentally aware in the future and we will be doing many things such as recycling, producing compost and, where possible, adapting our farming practices to achieve a more natural order of things.

Nature is resilient and our basic belief is that if man confronts nature head on, man will actually lose. There might be some other casualties along the way, but essentially we should never confront nature but must work in harmony with our surroundings.

No one is immune to the vicissitudes of nature.

The importance of sustainable agriculture is clearly revealed in the very recent report on the web, read it at this link online: http://www.prweb.com/releases/2016/11/prweb 13880224.htm





MODERN FARMING

Weather conditions have been tight with our crops beginning to experience severe heat stress in the first week of December. However, we have had 35 to 55mm of rain on the farm since then, which has been a huge relief to us.

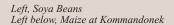
Visitors to Sandstone essentially see mature crops from the railway, and obviously we are hoping for good rains this summer so that the Sandstone experience is even further enhanced.

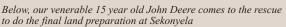
Although we have had reasonably encouraging early summer rains, our dams are still in a very poor state. The dam featured here dried up after the previous season's drought and is still almost empty, obviously affecting the wildlife it supports. Far left: the same dam in better rainfall years.



After a period of hot, dry weather we had good rain in the last week which boosted germinating crops and enabled us to finish planting.









Maize planting goes on around the clock



The wheat planted in July is ready for harvesting. We expect a quality crop, but one never really knows until it is in the silos.





LIVESTOCK

The bulls are not holding back. Grazing and dam water levels have improved immeasurably in early December 2016





CLASS 91 DIESEL

Railway Preservation is fortunate in having a huge archive globally of railway photographs and historical data which is made available as a direct result of work done by individual enthusiasts.

A good example is our Class 91. In researching it, we were able to access a picture of Class 91 002 on its first run on the Avontuur Line in 1973, which was supplied by Leith Paxton. A picture like this gives us an opportunity to correctly simulate the entire train.

Photo credit: Leith Paxton

Class 91s in their heyday. Although this picture was only taken 10 years ago, it does show how quickly things can change. The bulk of these locomotives have been distributed and no longer constitute a fleet.



16CR 821 LOCOMOTIVE

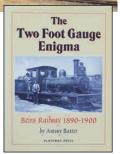
Leith Paxton has been extremely supportive of Sandstone with archive information and pictures of our locos. Recently he sent us this snippet on No 821, currently under restoration:

"I have been following with interest the restoration of the class 16CR No 821 and wondered whether you knew that she was one of two that were converted to 5'-3" driving wheels. The other was No 825 which operated on the PE - Uitenhage suburban line in the 1970s. One could tell them apart by the spacers between the running board and the splashers. With the extra wheel diameter, I once asked the regular driver of No 825 whether she was any faster, but he replied, "not really, but she was a little top heavy and tended to sway at speed."

"I believe Hendrie designed a 4-6-2 similar to the 16C with 5'-3" driver, but none were built." Leith also sent us this picture of No 821 at Pretoria in 1966, in which the spacers on the splashers can clearly be seen. With No 825 no longer with us, 821 is truly a unique locomotive.



NG97 celebrates its first day in steam in over 50 years, on June 28th 2008. The loco behind her, is her older sister, BR7. Photo credit: SHT



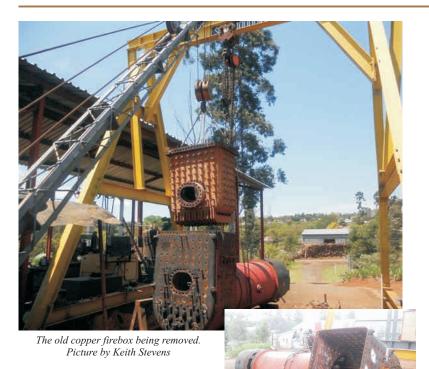
OUR LAWLEYS ... TWO ELDER STATESMEN IN STEAM

Perhaps the two most iconic locomotives in the Sandstone collection are the two Lawleys (BR7 1895/NG97 1897).

Originally built for the construction of the Beira Railway from 1895 to 1897, the design shows the classic lines of a 19th Century steam locomotive with a long low boiler and tall chimney. The two Sandstone examples have slight differences, with No BR7 being of the F2 type and NG97 (ex BR25) being of the F4 type, with detail differences and larger cylinders.

Lawleys were designed and built by Falcon Engineering Works in Loughborough, UK, under a purchase order from Cecil Rhodes for 42 to be deployed on the Beira - Umtali line which was built in order to gain access to the hinterland of Southern Africa. There is a superb book published in 1998 by Plateway Press, which details the construction of the line, entitled "2ft Gauge Enigma. Beira Railway 1890-1900", written by Anthony Baxter.

There is not sufficient scope in our newsletter to develop the full story, but it is one of the most fascinating railway historical adventure stories which took place prior to the Anglo Boer War.



RESTORATION OF NEW LAWLEY FIREBOX

Lukas Nel and his team fully restored Lawley No NG97 in 2008. It had a copper firebox, which unfortunately was damaged due to inexperience by train crews who did not realise that managing a copper firebox is different to a conventional steel one. This has resulted in us having to spend a considerable amount of money rebuilding the firebox.

Working on steam engines is extremely complicated and time consuming. It is not work for the faint hearted. The picture (left) depicts the complete removal of the old firebox.

Keith Stevens, our specialist boiler maker, is awaiting the profiles for the new firebox. The templates for these profiles were delivered to his supplier recently. It normally takes 2-3 weeks for the plates to be certified and all the necessary paperwork to be completed. In the meantime, Keith has stripped out the old firebox and de-scaled all the inside of the remaining outer firebox section. All tubes have been removed. The foundation ring has been drilled and all the broken studs removed, welded and re-drilled into the firehole ring. They will shortly be making up the rivets along with the required firebox stays and girder

Keith restores and manufactures boilers the way it was done when these locomotives were originally manufactured which gives our entire fleet a high level of authenticity.

The boiler with the firebox removed. Picture by Keith Stevens

Soul of A Railway.

by Les Pivnic and Charlie Lewis

n era the SAR was divided into nine systems as follows

- Cape Midland, based in Port Eliza
 Cape Eastern, based in East Lond
- ed in Bloemfonteir
- ange Free State, passa. atal, based in Durban Transvaal, based in Johannesbi

What you can expect to find as the site's front page

A GEM OF A READ: SOUL OF A RAILWAY

South African Railways is rich with history and was acknowledged as one of the best railway systems in the world. As regular steam operations ended in 1991, we are fortunate that there are many photographic records available to enthusiasts. The most impressive of these is the **Soul** of a Railway website compiled by Charlie Lewis and Les Pivnic, with the assistance of Leith Paxton and other knowledgeable people. Using their own images and those from other photographers they have covered the South African railway system from the late 19th century to the end of the steam era including appropriate images from today's very different railway.

The site is certainly a magnum opus for Charlie and Les and is still under construction. The site is divided into different systems on the network with sub categories of specific operating areas. In a word, it is magnificent and rail enthusiasts worldwide can be grateful that these two gentleman have produced this wonderful legacy of a once proud railway. Even non rail enthusiasts will marvel at the day-to-day scenes depicted in the South Africa of days gone by.

You can find Soul of a Railway at: https://sites.google.com/site/soulorailway/home



WHICH LOCO COULD THIS BE AND WHERE IS IT?

We received this picture recently from one of our supporters in the UK. As you can see it is a Class NG10, similar to our own No 61 currently under restoration, but the number plate does not appear to be 61.

And where is this strangely isolated piece of track? Please write to us if you have any idea!



Resplendent with her number plates fitted before splitting for brake rectification. Picture by Lukas Nel



The rear engine unit of 52 split from the boiler to access the steam brake cylinders between the frames. Picture by Dave Richardson



The NG10 frames showing the damage to the smokebox saddle which is repairable. Picture by Dave Richardson



The NG10 boiler tubes after swaging the ends. Picture by Lukas Nel.



The new tender tank complete with period replica tool boxes at the front. A large toolbox has still to be fabricated for the rear of the tender. Picture by Lukas Nel

BLOEMFONTEIN WORKSHOP REPORT

It has been a busy 2016 for Lukas Nel and his team at Sandstone's Bloemfontein facility. Most work has been concentrated on NGG11 Garratt No 52.

With the number plates fitted, No 52 is almost complete, but work is still required to rectify some excessive side play and misalignment of the connecting rods close to the piston heads.

Both steam brake cylinders for No 52 have been sent out for a total overhaul, and once all these items are returned, the locomotive will be

To facilitate this task, the locomotive had to be split again from the engine units to access the brake cylinders. The cylinders are expected towards the end of January 2017 and when installed, No 52 will be transported to Sandstone for final steam testing and certification. No 52 will undergo a number of load trials at Sandstone prior to the Stars event in April 2017.



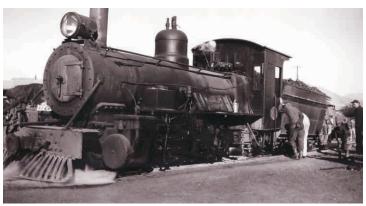


Although the major effort has been concentrated on completing NGG11 No 52, the Bloemfontein team has also been hard at work with the NG10 locomotive after a decision was made to go ahead with the restoration, initially not thought to be feasible.

Almost 200 boiler tubes have been prepared and swaged prior to delivery to Keith Stevens' KZN workshop, where the boiler is undergoing major repairs.

A complete tender tank has been fabricated and work will soon begin on the tender frames and the locomotive frames, which are in very poor condition after some 40 years in the Port Elizabeth salt air.

There is a Nel family connection with the NG10, as Lukas Nel's father, Christiaan, took this black and white picture (below) at Usakos, in then South West Africa, in the early 1950s, of an unidentified NG10 (either NG63 or 64) after a derailment. Rerailing the loco was Christiaan Nel's first job on the railway!



Picture courtesy of Lukas Nel

MILITARY MATTERS

Unrestored South African Military vehicles: Hippo (top) and Zebra (below)



HOW FAR BACK DO WE GO?

We do not have any time line on whether an item is too old or too recent to enter the Heritage arena. We are fortunate that in the early part of the 21st Century, we can reach back and gain access to items which were invented the Century before last. Cannons and guns, horse-drawn vehicles and steam traction engines from the Anglo Boer War, are as interesting to us as iconic WW2 Sherman tanks, Canadian Ford Trucks or British 25-Pounders.

There is much work to do, and we are currently looking at the evolution of Mine protected vehicles developed in South Africa in the period following WW2. Compared to the vehicles of today, they look antiquated because they were in fact nothing more than converted commercial trucks. Good examples would be a Hippo Mk2 prototype, Ribbok, Hippo Mk1, Zebra and Hyena.

The extent to which we can bring these vehicles back into full working order is a function of manpower, availability, expertise and funding.

We would certainly like to hear from people who might like to be involved with projects like this in some way or another at *Stars of Sandstone 2017*.



SHERMAN IN THE MOVIES

Our Mark IV 1944 Sherman tank has just completed a 2000 km round trip to appear in a film shoot where it caused the appropriate amount of chaos.

Sandstone appreciates the revenue our equipment earns for us from the film industry.

Sandstone is being recognised as a very interesting and holistic site to film because so much is in one place. Sometimes we like to think of ourselves as the Wild West of Preservation where anything can be made to happen.

Should you be interested in utilising any of the Sandstone facilities for a film shoot. Contact Mike Myers, E: mikem@sandstone.co.za



BY THE TRAINLOAD

One of the great attractions at our *Stars of Sandstone 2017* event is the ability to bring together Heritage items from different categories.

A classic combination would be Lawleys from our Narrow Gauge division transporting Military equipment from the Sandstone/ SA Armour Museum collection as part of our joint venture. What is so magical about this, is our ability to create a completely different mood, simply by the way we configure these items.

Railway enthusiasts can often be purists and they do not like anything which deviates from the norm. However, what *is* the norm? There were so many millions of kilometres covered by Narrow Gauge Railways in Southern Africa that no one could have captured everything that they did. Although we do not always know what the railways were used for, we can use our imagination to compensate. By merging old technologies, we create a completely different picture which may never have been captured before and if it is the first time it has ever happened in the history of man, then that is also fine as far as we are concerned. Our pictures speak for themselves.

We are working closely with Rod Hering, who is working on some creative ideas so that photographers at *Stars of Sandstone 2017* will have many opportunities to capture original images. Please let Rod know if you wish to join the group E: rodhering@gmail.com



AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE





JOHN DEERE 620 ORCHARD TRACTOR

Some years ago, as reported in a previous newsletter, an Avontuur farmer sent two orchard model John Deere tractors to Sandstone. One, a Model A, was returned fully restored, and in return the other, a 620, was to form part of the Sandstone's collection. It remained now to bring this 620 into first class condition; and this has been carried out at Lions River, KZN. As with the "A", the comprehensive streamlined panels, designed to protect fruit trees when working in the orchards were mostly all present, although needing extensive panel beating.

Upon removal, several unexpected problems were discovered. Firstly, the engine was seized, which proved to be from water ingress years ago. This of course can be highly destructive. Since the carburettor was badly corroded, water must have found its way in through the inlet system.

Eventually, the pistons were removed, new rings were fitted, valves recut, and on assembly the engine seemed to have good compression.

A major internal and external clean-up and inspection of the whole tractor showed a healthy transmission, at least. Clutch & brakes were badly worn, but relatively easily overhauled. Steering woes were similarly repaired with a new bearing in the steering box.

The old carb was pretty much beyond repair, and a good used was taken and overhauled.

Many other repairs have been carried out, and the 1958 2-cylinder John Deere now runs and looks the part.

Just a reminder that Chris Wilson will be coordinating all our vintage tractor activities. We have a large number from which to choose, and we will deploy as many as we can depending on the number of volunteers who step forward to drive tractors and to assist Chris.

Contact Chris on E: katbr@worldonline.co.za



SOUTH AFRICAN VINTAGE TRACTOR & ENGINE CLUB

We are also working closely with SAVTEC (South African Vintage Tractor & Engine Club) who are liaising with their members to support us at Stars of Sandstone 2017. SAVTEC will have their own tent and display and visitors are encouraged to go and talk to them about this fascinating hobby, and the amazing work they do in rebuilding these ancient agricultural machines.

For details contact Les Maker on E: lcmaker@mweb.co.za



LANZ BULLDOG TO BE AT STARS 2017

A very enthusiastic supporter who will be at Stars of Sandstone 2017 with his wonderful Lanz Bulldog, is Brian Calitz featured here on the right, with Lanz specialist, Rudolf Wilsenach. We greatly value the presence of people like Brian and Rudolf, who bring such expertise with them to our events.

> A reminder as to what state these machines often are when we discover them

AVIATION AT SANDSTONE





Gavin Brown who is the coordinator of our Aviation activities at *Stars of Sandstone 2017* is hard at work putting his plan together. Aviators who are planning to fly in for the event should contact him on e-mail at gavin@watex.co.za

Reminder: Sandstone has a 1000m grassed airstrip near Ficksburg in the Eastern Free State. Fly in to S28 50' 36" E028 00' 18".

The aircraft which are booked so far and which are anticipated to be at Stars 2017 are as follows: Harvard, Tiger Moth, Chipmunk, Auster AOP6, Stearman and Cessna 185.

Top left: Chipmunk Bottom left: Auster

WW2 Harvard with Model A Ford. Photo credit: Julian Wills



CLASSIC TRUCKS







Trucks aren't as glamorous as many other Heritage items, but they are the real work horses of agriculture and industry.

They come in many different shapes and sizes, and some of them have immense character. We have a large number of unrestored trucks, particularly big Diamond T's, Scammell, Foden and others.

If anyone is interested in talking to us about Classic Trucks, we would be delighted to hear from them. Please contact Chris Wilson, E: katbr@worldonline.co.za, C: +27 (0)84 556 1117. Please direct all Classic Car enquiries to Dave Richardson, E: daver@sandstone.co.za or C: +27 (0) 82 447 9167

The 1951 Ford V8 pick up, in a very highly original condition recently needed attention to the engine. A rattle had developed, and investigation showed wear in the main bearings. This has been attended to and it is now out and about again, seen here at the recent Cherry Festival event, and performing well.

If you own an old truck or car, why not bring it and show it off at Stars of Sandstone 2017?

MARRYING THE OLD WITH THE OLD

This month we feature our two Diamond T mechanical horses.

The first one, a 1950s Diamond T horse, prepares to set out on a delivery with four classic vintage tractors aboard the trailer.

Like many of our machines, we like them to be in ordinary working clothes, i.e. not overpainted or over shiny, but just natural the way they have always looked.

Left, another one of our wonderful old Model Ts — ex-Transvaal Public Works Department, Pretoria, with an Army low bed and a WW2 Dodge Power Wagon on board.

THE MEN BEHIND THE SCENES







INTRODUCING SEUN KOEN

Seun Koen is one of our most valuable Heritage assets. Not only does he look like someone from the past, but he has the sublime nature and good manners that one does not come across that often these days.

Seun's primary job is to show visitors around the complex, which he does with great patience. Many of the people that have spent time with Seun have written back with comments such as "mindboggling", "Beter as enigiets wat ons in die buiteland gesien het", "unbelievable" and "speechless".

Visitors can also book rail trolley and Ox Wagon rides, and for bigger groups, steam hauled or diesel hauled trains configured to suit the requirement.

We are upgrading and revising the way we do the walking tours and they will be better and more extensive in 2017..





For a brochure on our Walking Tours, please e-mail Alina Halafu on E: alinah@sandstone.co.za

UPGRADING THE CATERING INFRASTRUCTURE



Visitors who have previously been to Sandstone will notice a huge change in the infrastructure.

We will have a brand new cafeteria in operation at Stars of Sandstone 2017 and our main kitchens and catering facilities are being expanded. Because of the expansion of the event and the increased number of visitors who are registering, we are going to bring in professional chefs to take over the responsibility for the many meals that we will have to provide.

Please remember that we have both the catering and non-catering options, and if you do not wish to sit down to three formal meals a day, then you can take advantage of the independent catering facilities on the farm in the food village, i.e. it is essentially a pay as you go situation.

For bookings, please see our website www.sandstone-estates.com







Sandstone is fortunate to have a number of natural wetlands but most of them are fed by springs, with some run off taking place. The severe drought of 2015/16 has set these back quite severely and we are hoping that the much higher-than-average summer rains this year will restore them. Wetlands have long been regarded as life support systems for nature in general.

Vlei or wetland are the areas comprising marshes and swamp-like areas of naturally flowing or standing water, including water streams and dams, weirs, ponds and water reservoirs. Depending on the location and type of wetlands, various societies of organisms adapted to the permanent or temporarily water-logged soils have been evolved.

The following grass-like plants may be encountered in a wetland: the plant families included are all monocotyledons and include the Cyperaceae (sedges), Eriocaulaceae (eriocaulons), Juncaceae (rushes), Poaceae (grasses), Prioniaceae (palmiet), Restionaceae (restios), Typhaceae (bulrushes) and the Xiridaceae (yellow-eyed grasses).

Other plants seen in wetlands include: Water lily (Nymphaea capensis), White arum lily (Zantedeschia aethiopica), Lemon bush (Lippia javanica), Vlei bluestem (Andropogon appendiculatus), Red hot poker (Kniphofia spp) and Common reeds (Phragmites spp.).

The herbs used by traditional healers are White Willow (Salix Alba) which is the precursor of aspirin, and is also used in skin care products. Sundews (Drosera spp.) have proved useful in homeopathic and pharmaceutical treatments for bronchial complaints. Labrador tea (Leduc palustre) is used against many illnesses and as a mosquito repellent.

The composition of animals is also manifold. In the mountain areas, wetlands are frequently covered by willow and other tree species spreading from the surroundings.

Wetlands are important hatching sites for the amphibians. The wetlands of international importance are protected by the Ramsar Convention on wetlands. However, protection is also needed for the wetlands of national, regional and local significance.

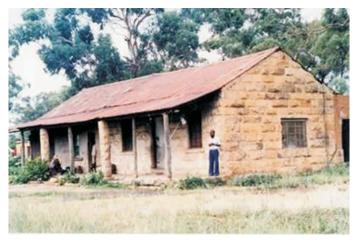


PLANTING TREES

The Eastern Free State is not tree-friendly but we have persevered for many years now, and slowly we are getting somewhere.

The biggest problem is continuity of moisture for these trees. When you have as big an area as we do to cover, you cannot easily water them and one's hope is to get them established to the point where they can cope.

Our nursery produces trees all year round which we plant, but it is very hard to nurture an avenue that is a long way from a water source.



EASTERN FREE STATE ARCHITECTURE

Since Sandstone acquired the farm in 1996, we have kept very good records of everything that was there. A lot of our outlying buildings came under great pressure as a result of the theft of building materials. Here is one that lost its roof and had to be demolished.

Len Huxham, who does most of the building work on site, says he can reconstruct it exactly as it was — and that is what we intend to do.

There is a good possibility this will be under construction during *Stars of* Sandstone 2017 so that people can see the age old craft of building with sandstone as a building material.

USEFUL MEDIA LINKS





You can meet Sandstone's Lillian Kepa and Leigh Sanders at Stars of Sandstone 2017, and perhaps even a ground sauirrel or tame meerkat



RUNNING SHED REPORTS

In addition to this regular Stars of Sandstone Newsletter, our Running Shed on the farm produces an outstanding technical bulletin every fortnight or so, covering the work that they do. It is for serious-minded railway enthusiasts, mechanical engineers and people who are interested in machinery.

Here are links to recent reports:

http://www.sandstone-estates.com/images/pdf/STEAM_Report_24Nov2016.pdf

http://www.sandstone-estates.com/images/pdf/gert/5_Dec_2016_P1.pdf

http://www.sandstone-estates.com/images/pdf/gert/5_Dec_2016_P2.pdf

http://www.sandstone-estates.com/images/pdf/gert/5_Dec_2016_P3.pdf

If you would like to be put on the mailing list to receive it, please e-mail Louise Norton at E: tourism@sandstone.co.za

We stay closely in touch with many other Heritage organisations in South Africa. Here is a blog regarding the dynamic development programme that is underway at the Villiersdorp Tractor & Engine Club: http://villiersdorptractorandengineclub.blogspot.co.za/

The Centurion Society of Model Engineers are strong supporters of Stars of Sandstone 2017. Click on this link for their latest newsletter: http://sandstone-estates.com/images/pdf/CSME_newsletter_Dec2016.pdf

INFORMATION ON THE EVENT: STARS OF SANDSTONE 2017

http://www.sandstone-estates.com/images/pdf/Last_survivor_set_to_steam_again.pdf

https://www.gate5.co.za/read/76148/qv/45714897/138447090/5598/j

http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=90d01d5de09b258e285637f21&id=a47aca3677&e=afa9fd23f9

http://www.heatherhook.com/2016/11/sandstone-estates-awarded-gold-tourism-2016/

http://mypr.co.za/full-steam-ahead-for-stars-of-sandstone-2017-in-south-africa/

http://www.ebizradio.com/sandstone-estates-awarded-gold-for-tourism-2016-ebizwires-mike-myers/



CALL FOR PAPERS FOR STARS OF SANDSTONE 2017

At the Stars events, we traditionally have key speakers talking about issues that are of interest to Preservationists, particularly in the Rail arena.

If any of our visitors are in a position to give an hour and a half talk supported by slides etc. we would be happy to hear from them.

We only have eight slots available, three of which have already been taken. In the past, our guests have thoroughly enjoyed many of the presentations given.

All submissions and enquiries to Dave Richardson, E: daver@sandstone.co.za or C: +27 (0) 82 447 9167

Left: An early picture of NGG13 No 49, before she carried her SAR number, as she heads out of Hoekfontein Station with a late afternoon freight working to Vailima.

From all of us at Sandstone — THAT'S ALL FOR THIS ISSUE! Just over 100 days to go...

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Please click on the logo to visit the Sandstone Heritage Trust website