



# INTERNATIONAL *Stars of Sandstone News*

EVENT DATES:  
4 — 14 APRIL 2019  
[www.starsofsandstone.com](http://www.starsofsandstone.com)

Dateline Feb 2019  
No.12



We have received a substantial number of bookings for **Stars 2019** and the few places left on the Blue Train are being taken quickly. The addition of two more coaches has provided us with additional De Luxe Suites, so if you are contemplating joining this unique experience from Pretoria to Sandstone Estates and back during **Stars 2019**, now is the time to act.

We have had a very good response to our Earth Moving appeal for information as to where we might be able to acquire old Earth Moving plant. We are fortunate in having a very experienced team of CAT specialists visiting us from the Caterpillar Club in Australia and they have also offered us technical support. The potential for international cooperation

between South Africa and many other developed countries is very tangible, very useful and very rewarding.

Thank you to everyone who has stepped forward and offered us their support.

We do receive very good feedback on our newsletter. We try to keep it broadly based so it covers the widest range of interests. However, if you feel there is something we should be covering or which interests you particularly please do not hesitate to contact Louise Norton at E: [tourism@sandstone.co.za](mailto:tourism@sandstone.co.za).

So, enjoy our newsletter and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.



*Photo by David Benn*

Stars 2019 event information & features | The Sandstone Railway | Military Matters, Aviation & Stationary Engines  
Modern Farming | Livestock | Wildlife | Earth Moving | Visitors | Photo Gallery

## ACCOMMODATION

All guests registering for the event will have received the following link to Safari Now for accommodation during the period of the show.

<https://www.safarinow.com/destinations/eastern-free-state/hub.aspx>

We have not received any queries about lack of accommodation for attending the event but if you are experiencing any problems we may be able to assist from the second week of February with some accommodation becoming available in the area.

Also don't forget we do have first class camping facilities at Sandstone with pre-paid electricity available on all sites. The Camp Ground is filling up fast but sites are still available.

For further information on accommodation and Camp Site availability and bookings contact Dave Richardson on e mail: [daver@sandstone.co.za](mailto:daver@sandstone.co.za)

## EVENT ENTRANCE PROCEDURE

We have had a number of enquiries from our booked guests as to the entrance procedure to the *Stars of Sandstone 2019* event.

We do not issue tickets, but once you have confirmed and paid for your visit you will receive, by e mail, Indemnities that need to be signed by the members of your party and returned to Sandstone. Once this has been done you are then listed with our security system at Sandstone. You will then be issued with an Entry Permit which constitutes your ticket.

On arrival you will be asked to confirm your details and gain admission. For those booked for camping they should proceed to the Sandstone Main Office to confirm their arrival and obtain details of their site. Pre-paid electricity cards can also be purchased at the office at the same time.

For visitors staying off site, the procedure is repeated for the other days of your visit. It is a short process and no delays should be expected.

If you choose not to book and pay in advance, the process takes slightly longer to complete the indemnities required and pay the entrance fee.

If you have any queries please contact Dave Richardson on e-mail, [daver@sandstone.co.za](mailto:daver@sandstone.co.za)

## INTENSIVE ACTIVITY AS STARS 2019 RAPIDLY APPROACHES



The build-up to *Stars 2019* involves an enormous amount of logistical coordination.

Normal farming activities continue around the clock as dictated by Mother Nature. We are busy haymaking in the shadow of the Maluti mountains, our livestock to look after and of course, to train for their *Stars* appearances. Our 2ft Narrow Gauge Railway infrastructure needs constant maintenance and upgrading.

Our big trucks travel far and wide to collect items or to take them to specialists for attention. This big 1901 Fowler B5 Road locomotive dating back to the Anglo-Boer War has been to Johannesburg for engineering work which has been carried out and completed by specialists. Our big John Deere 9400, which has been retired from active farming day-to-day work because it is rapidly becoming a classic, has nonetheless been assigned to pull a big water tanker to keep the dust down on the many different dirt roads at Sandstone during the event. This 22000 litre tanker was put together from scrap material by the engineers on the farm. When fully loaded, it requires a tractor of the gravitas of the 9400 to pull it.





There is a misconception that visitors to *Stars of Sandstone* must spend many days with us, or may only attend on the Open Days at the end of the event. We realise that times are tight and would like to reassure prospective visitors that DayTickets will be available throughout the event and not only for the Public Days. So, if you are on a smaller budget, you can still enjoy the experience of *Stars of Sandstone 2019*.

To clarify: the Public Days at the end of the event on the weekend of 13 and 14 April are priced at a lower rate to allow the local community to come and enjoy themselves. The attendance on that weekend has always been greater than in the preceding week, but all the attractions will be available for visitors to enjoy.

For those on limited budgets, our camp site is open throughout the event at only R340 per stand per night. Each stand has an electric point by means of a pre-paid card that can be purchased at the Sandstone Office.

The *Stars of Sandstone* is designed to suit everyone's pocket and budget.

Gates will be open daily from 05h30 for the photographers participating in the exclusive early morning photo sessions, and from 08h30 for other visitors. Blue Train passengers will be able to catch an old fashioned train ride directly from where the Blue Train is parked at Vailima Siding.

## SOUTH AFRICAN RESIDENTS

Bookings can be done via the *Stars of Sandstone* website <https://bit.ly/2rj6ocu>

Full information will then be sent to you to confirm your booking. Full payment is required on receipt of invoice.

Visitors to *Stars 2019* are welcome to bring a genuine classic or vintage vehicle which will allow them to follow the trains on the farm roads. For any enquiries, please contact Dave Richardson directly on [daver@sandstone.co.za](mailto:daver@sandstone.co.za)

## ACCOMMODATION

This is always at a premium during *Stars* events and you are advised to secure your place to stay as soon as possible. Camping is available on site, but for those of you who prefer a guest house, please use the following link which features over 270 guest houses in the surrounding area: <https://bit.ly/2JgQyUZ>

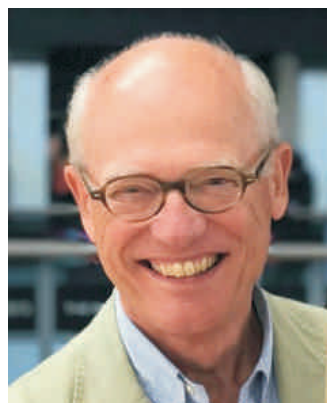
## INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Our international booking agent, Geoff Cooke of Geoff's Trains in the UK has been very active in promoting *Stars of Sandstone 2019* all over the world.

Geoff's Trains' latest Newsletter featuring *Stars 2019* is now online: <https://bit.ly/2LXYUIU>

Prospective international visitors should book now as Geoff has many packages and options for guests who may be visiting us or even Africa for the first time, take a look, you won't be disappointed!

## THE BLUE TRAIN EXPERIENCE



Your Host Martyn Hurst on  
*The Blue Train Special to  
Stars of Sandstone 2019*



Passengers on the Blue Train, travelling to and attending Stars of Sandstone 2019 will have the company of two experienced Stars representatives during the whole journey and the event itself.

Martyn and Melanie Hurst, both British, but well-travelled throughout Southern Africa, will be on the train to assist and make sure the whole experience for all Blue Train guests is smooth and seamless.

Martyn was involved in the very first international event at Sandstone, the *Great 100 Working* event in 1999, and both he and Melanie were also on the management team for the *Great 400 Working* in 2002.

They will make a point of introducing themselves to everyone on embarkation at Pretoria and will do all they can to make the event enjoyable for everyone. They will also be returning on The Blue Train to Pretoria.





*NGG13 number 49 at dawn. Picture by Dave Richardson*



*Vailima Vista by David Benn*



*The attraction of trains, planes and cars promises a unique lifetime adventure that will not be easily forgotten. For all bookings please contact Drakensberg Ballooning on the following link: <https://www.drakensbergballooning.co.za/sandstone/>*

### Something special for photographers

Sandstone is a photographer's paradise. Good weather, great scenery and a proliferation of interesting subjects will keep your camera shutter clicking all day long. To maximise photographic opportunities for more serious photographers or amateurs, a special package has been created at an additional daily fee, which gives access to a railway photo session between sunrise and breakfast with selected locomotives and a specialist run-past organiser.

These morning sessions happen before the festival opens at 09h00 and will only be accessible to pre-booked participants. The sessions will be managed by well-known International Rail Tour operator, Geoff Cooke, with all the locations having been scouted in advance for the best lighting and positioning of the photographs. The key to great rail photography in a group is discipline and cooperation, Geoff has honed this skill at managing such groups over many years so that everyone has an equal chance for that master shot.

Bookings are limited to 50 photographers per session to enable a great experience for all. For full information and pricing contact Dave Richardson on e-mail, [daver@sandstone.co.za](mailto:daver@sandstone.co.za)

### THE TRANQUILLITY OF A HOT AIR BALLOON FLIGHT

We are delighted to advise that hot air balloon rides will be available at **Stars 2019**.

It is early morning in the Eastern Free State. The weather is cool and calm. The fields and pastures stretch away to the horizon, giving a feeling of space.

Lying on its side, is a wicker basket, with a stream of vibrant fabric laid out in front. The hum of a motorised fan begins and within a short time the colourful, elliptical shape of the balloon becomes partially inflated. With all ground crew in position, the pilot takes up his position behind the powerful burners. With a burst of naked flame from the burner, the hot inflation process begins and soon the envelope and basket are in an upright position.

After the pre-flight checks are completed, the passengers are invited into the basket. Safety procedures are outlined, the quick release is activated and with a burst from the burners, a gentle ascent begins. Thereafter, a slow drift across the farmland, with the sandstone buttresses in the surrounding areas, offers an experience not to be missed.

After landing, a traditional glass of sparkling wine is enjoyed to bring the flight to a close.





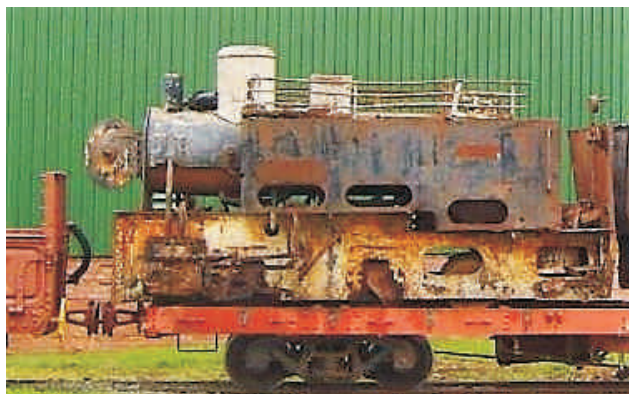
*Narrow Gauge steam locomotives don't get more classic than this NG 10 nearing completion by Lukas Nel and his team in Bloemfontein*



*NGG16 No 113, the first in a long line. Picture by Carl Gootzen*



*Lawley NG97, delivered in April 2008. Picture by Carl Gootzen*



*BEFORE Ex Angola Arn Jung No 847 as retrieved from the Angolan bush in 2007, and AFTER in service at Sandstone in February 2013 (picture by Hannes Paling)*

## TRIBUTE TO LUKAS NEL

With the NG10 almost complete, it's time to reflect on what has been achieved over the last 16 years by the Sandstone team under Lukas Nel. NG10 No 61 is the 24th locomotive to be restored since February 2003 when NGG16 No 113 emerged from Bloemfontein after a full overhaul.

NGG16 No 153 and Barclay No 1 had been overhauled at the turn of the 21st century at Sandstone itself, but No 113 was the first of many that would emerge from the magic workshop in Bloemfontein.

In reality, only a small number of ex-SAR locos were included with the majority being industrial examples returning from the grave. They were not only from South Africa, but from Angola and Mozambique after intricate rescue operations that more than often had an element of risk. Transport to South Africa also proved to have its own challenges with the Decauville being transported from Angola to Namibia on the back of a Unimog which finally broke in half at the Namibian border. A number of locos from Sena Sugar in Mozambique left as they had arrived many years before, by boat, with a short trip down the Zambesi and then through the Indian Ocean to Beira where Sandstone's road transport collected them.

All the locomotives were 2ft gauge as befits the Sandstone system but ex Lorraine Gold Mine, ex SAR 19D number 2654 was the lone 3'6" example. In fact, Lukas Nel had brought many SAR locos back into service for the then Transnet Heritage Foundation for the National Collection. 2ft gauge was certainly new territory for him with the nearest lines being at least 600 kms away from the Free State. Steam is steam, however, and nothing stopped the production line.

At *Stars of Sandstone* in April 2019 we plan to stage a parade of all the 2ft narrow gauge engines that emerged from the magic workshop in a tribute to a master of his craft, Lukas Nel.

Don't miss it!





### Interesting new vehicle joins the collection

On the left is a picture of a Bedford truck, circa 1950s, which has been stylised along the lines of the vehicles used by the Long Range Desert Group in World War Two in North Africa.

These very successful units which operated behind enemy lines, were essentially the forerunner of what is now the SAS. We do not have sufficient provenance on this vehicle to verify its exact history, but we are working on that.

We certainly invite comment on this type of vehicle. One of the genuine Long Range Desert Group vehicles is shown in the old and yellowed image here..



## AVIATION MATTERS



*ZS WZI is undergoing a service at Classic Flying Collection*

### The Cessna 185A, the collection workhorse

Classic Flying Collection, who arrange our aviation displays via Gavin Brown, will be bringing one aircraft which does not have the glamour or spectator appeal of the Harvards or Tiger Moths.

This is the Cessna 185A, also known as the *Skywagon* (ZS WZI). This is the workhorse of the fleet, and is used for fetching and carrying and any emergency rescues that are (hopefully not) required during the event.

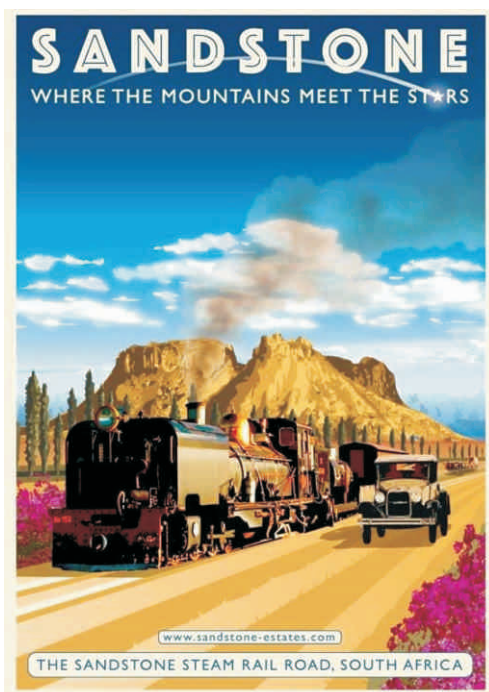
The Cessna 185 *Skywagon* is a six-seat, single-engined, general aviation light aircraft manufactured by Cessna. It first flew as a prototype in July 1960, with the first production model completed in March 1961. The Cessna 185 is a high-winged aircraft with non-retractable conventional landing gear and a tailwheel. Over 4400 were built with production ceasing in 1985.

So don't ignore this workhorse of the aviation world, it is also not a youngster and performs an essential role during the event.

## STATIONARY ENGINES

Danie Pretorius, who runs our Stationary Engine group, is one of a number of very enthusiastic Stationary Engine collectors in South Africa.

A very recent article on their activities in SA has appeared in the latest edition of Stationary Engine Magazine – read the article here: <https://bit.ly/2DcNgpJ>



*This magnificent period style A1 Poster is available from the Sandstone Shop at the event for just R100 including VAT. It can also be ordered direct from Sandstone by contacting Leigh Sanders on e-mail, [leighs@sandstone.co.za](mailto:leighs@sandstone.co.za). There is a small charge for postage and packing.*

*The poster will look good in your workshop or man cave or your home pub. Drawn by a celebrated British artist, it will be a great memento of your visit.*





## The importance of cover crops

This is something that hasn't been developed or exploited particularly in Southern Africa but is common in Europe. Essentially it means that your fields are never left without a purpose. In-between the primary crops that one might be growing like wheat, maize etc., one can utilise these fields for other purposes. Legumes, for example, planted for silage or cattle feed or to simply be ploughed back are an excellent example of a system which has huge advantages. The biomass itself represents green manure which enhances the organic matter in the soil. The legumes add nitrogen, and of course these areas can be grazed often in times of the year when cattle feed is in short supply.

At Sandstone Estates we often use the natural regrowth to achieve exactly the same objective. This land which had sunflowers in in the 2017/18 planting season refreshed itself without any assistance from us whatsoever. The cattle are taking advantage of it and having grazed it, this field will be planted with oats in February.

Weeds have a bad name but it is a very broad term for a vast number of plants which if better understood would almost without exception add value to the farm if managed correctly.

## Weather conditions

Sadly, since this picture was taken in December, which shows some of our horses cooling down in a farm dam, we have had almost no rain. The crops are struggling on and we hope that by the time this newsletter is released we would have had some relief.

The biggest problem for us is we have not been able to get our cosmos to germinate. It has been planted, but it is too dry. The first decent shower of rain will hopefully start the process whereby we have fields of cosmos flowering at ***Stars 2019***. For the first time in many years, this whole issue has been taken out of our control.

Our maize, speckled sugar beans and soya crops are struggling due to the fact that it did not rain at all in January. It would not be inappropriate to say a few prayers.

*"Please  
make it rain  
in the  
Free State"*







*Eragrostis hay being baled on one of the many areas set aside for the growing, baling and storing of over winter cattle feed*



## Arable land

With such a diverse cross-section of farmland to deal with, it is often not easy for visitors to appreciate exactly where the crops are produced.

While we have some big arable lands along the river, as you go further inland, we have to rely much more on contours in order to farm successfully in this rolling landscape. This aerial picture is taken from *Berlin*, looking towards *Lagerplaats* in the background.

## Good Neighbourliness

In our last Newsletter we wrote about baling winter feed stocks. Because of the very dry weather, we are in fact supplying large amounts of cattle fodder to neighbouring Lesotho, who seem to be struggling at the moment. We are currently baling eragrostis, wheat straw, lucerne and good quality vlei grass. It is obvious that the people of Lesotho love their cattle and go to great lengths to ensure their well-being.

## The last throw of the dice

Although we do not normally plant sunflowers until after the 15th of January, we took a gamble and planted some 200 hectares of sunflowers during the last week of the month. Conditions were not too bad, with reasonable ground moisture and we are pleased to advise that they have germinated, came up well, and have now had a modest amount of rain which is all sunflowers need, as they are the most drought-resistant of crops.

## Getting it all out at harvest time

Farming never stops. One of our most experienced operators, Tumelo Mohala, is never shy to take advantage of the correct weather conditions to continue to bring in the harvest or to bale or to plant.

They say there is only 10 days difference between a good and a bad farmer. Timing is everything. Tumelo has been with the farm since it was purchased over 20 years ago.

## Soya on the go

Depending on the soil depth and the location of the fields, we have survived quite well despite the lack of rain. These soya beans planting in a low-lying area of Kommandonek are a good example.

However, as an indication of how the ground moisture levels have dropped, this particular piece of land was a waterlogged vlei 10 years ago.



## LIVESTOCK



We replace all our bulls every 2 years. After having reviewed our options, we have decided to purchase Bovelder bulls this year. This provides a unique new set of livestock genetics to our beef herd and allows us to stay with a breed that is 100% South African by origin.

Here are two of the Bovelder bulls we purchased recently from a big mixed cattle and arable farming operation at Val near Standerton

Times are hard for farmers and they need to be very flexible in the way in which they operate. Rain tends to solve all problems, but until it comes, one has to be expedient.

Our cattle can be seen here grazing on wheat stubble which was harvested at the end of December. Anticipating a poor rainy season, we have left our wheat fields untouched.

Nature normally provides a bounty in the form of sweet grass (*soetgras*) which is very nutritious and which the cattle enjoy. Although we have a lot of cattle, we also have extensive wheat lands, so for the time being all is well.

### A message from our oxen

Do come and visit us sometime. Me and the other blokes are relaxing here after breaking the World Record for the maximum number of oxen ever to have pulled one wagon. In the meantime, we will be doing some training, some chilling and some foraging before we meet up with you again.



## WILDLIFE



The plains animals of the Eastern Free State move around freely, and we are often blessed with a visit from them. They enjoy the natural vegetation and stick to the valleys and wetland areas between the crops.

Sandstone Estates is very wildlife friendly, and somehow they are aware of this. They are the most self-sufficient of nature's creatures.

One of the mountains on the farm which is actually next to the famous Soutkop outcrop, is called *Marebeng*, which means *The place of the Puff Adders*. The dry hot weather seems to have brought these snakes out in abundance. Apparently if one walks this mountain, one will see dozens of them.





## EARTH MOVING



We are working hard to put together an interesting demonstration of working Earth Moving machinery. It is predominately Caterpillar.

Our D8H engine was sent in for an overhaul last year but the company went insolvent and most of the parts have disappeared. This meant that we lacked a big Dozer to complete the line-up.

We were able to acquire a D7G which is in sound working order.

We are aware that quite a number of CAT enthusiasts and collectors will be visiting *Stars* and so they will have an opportunity to get their hands dirty by assisting us with the things that they really like to do, both as operators or in order to carry out mechanical upgrades.

## VISITORS TO SANDSTONE ESTATES



### The John Deere Collection

The farm recently hosted a group of British visitors, which included two experienced John Deere-trained technical personnel. They were intrigued by the great diversity of John Deere equipment on the farm, from a 1915 Waterloo Boy right up to a 2018 John Deere 6150.

Although we could never have put them all in the picture, we did assemble a picture of some of our modern equipment with a John Deere Model A on steel wheels representing their heritage family at Sandstone.

### A long way from the sea

Amongst some of the more interesting things in our collection, is a huge pneumatically operated brass bell.

Our guess is that it must have come from a lighthouse — but if anyone could comment on this, we would like to hear from you.



# EXPERIENCE ALL THAT SANDSTONE HAS TO OFFER AT STARS 2019



A list of what you can see and do at *Stars of Sandstone 2019* during the event from 4 to 14 April 2019:

- Steam train rides and photography
- Steam footplate experiences
- Vintage Aircraft Displays
- Tractor and vintage bus rides
- Military and Classic vehicle rides
- Ox wagon rides
- Modern farming tours
- Vintage agricultural machinery
- Traction engine displays
- Heavy armour military displays
- Battle re-enactments
- Special photographic sessions for the rail enthusiast, as well as numerous photographic opportunities on the farm and with the exhibits
- On site Food Village and Bar
- Become involved as an active participant in the event

Book now to enjoy these experiences at *Stars of Sandstone 2019*.



**Not yet booked for Stars of Sandstone 2019?**

Our short video of what you can do and see at the event in April 2019 should persuade you! Be convinced here: <https://youtu.be/ziGauvrVDIA>

*From all of us at Stars'19 — that's all for now!*



Preserving the best of the Past for the Future  
Please click on the logo to visit the *Stars of Sandstone* website

## THE SANDSTONE TEAM

**Event Matters & Newsletter Editor:**  
Dave Richardson | [daver@sandstone.co.za](mailto:daver@sandstone.co.za)  
**Newsletter Production:**  
Claire at Eschie Graffix



@SandstoneHerit



@SandstoneEstates

**Curator, Narrow Gauge Railway:**

**Gert Jubileus**

[gertj@sandstone.co.za](mailto:gertj@sandstone.co.za) | T: +27(0)82 811 0254

**Curator, Military Collection:**

**Raymond Hohls**

[raymondh@sandstone.co.za](mailto:raymondh@sandstone.co.za) | T: +27(0)82 990 5640

**Curator, Agricultural Heritage:**

**Chris Wilson**

[chrisw@sandstone.co.za](mailto:chrisw@sandstone.co.za) | T: +27(0)84 556 1117

**International Enquiries:**

**Louise Norton**

[tourism@sandstone.co.za](mailto:tourism@sandstone.co.za) | T: +44(0)1747 820499

**South African Enquiries:**

**Leigh Sanders / Alina Halafu** T: +27(0)51 933 2235  
[leighs@sandstone.co.za](mailto:leighs@sandstone.co.za) | [alinah@sandstone.co.za](mailto:alinah@sandstone.co.za)