



INTERNATIONAL *Stars of Sandstone News*

EVENT DATES:
4 — 14 APRIL 2019
www.starsofsandstone.com

Dateline June 2018
No. 5



There is an interesting quotation, “People walked away from a simple life we had in the '20s and '30s, and I am glad that I am able to touch that period with the shows that I do.” - Andy Griffith.

Many people, whether it be in literature, art, show business or film production, use different periods in human history to entertain and to remind us that it probably was a simpler life back in those days. However, the simple life experience needs to be accompanied by interaction with the very things that those people back in the '20s and '30s regarded as normal.

A visit to the Sandstone Heritage Trust Narrow Gauge Railway and associated working collection provides people, young and old, with an ability to appreciate what life was like

for farmers, train passengers, engineers, labourers and many other functions in days gone by. Life is all about people and machines working together doing their job in Transportation, Military, Mining, Agriculture and Industry. At Sandstone we bring the machines and the people together but in so doing we do not offer a single experience. We offer thousands of micro experiences which when one reflects on them holistically provides a very good idea of what the actual puzzle of life looked like 70 or 100 years ago after all the pieces of the jigsaw have been put in place.

This is what *Stars of Sandstone 2019* is all about, and we hope to see you there!



Bookings for Stars 2019 & The Blue Train | Unforgettable Sandstone | The Sandstone Railway | Military Matters
Preservation Items | Classic Cars | Modern Farming | Flora & Fauna | Industry News | Klipdale | Visitors | Media Links

The procedure for booking via our international agent, Geoff's Trains, is slightly different from booking directly with Sandstone as a Southern African Resident. However, any guests who wish to be active participants, particularly rail crews who already know their way around the country, are welcome to contact us direct. Please contact Dave Richardson by e mail daver@sandstone.co.za

International Bookings:

If you wish to indulge in a full package tour with all flights and land arrangements included, please book via the Geoff's Trains website, <http://www.geoffs-trains.com> or the **Stars of Sandstone** website under International Enquiries, <https://bit.ly/2LDEJbH> which are then routed to Geoff's Trains for processing.

No International bookings or enquiries will be processed by Sandstone.

On receipt of a booking form, Geoff's Trains will issue an invoice; once accepted, a deposit of US\$100 is requested. Should any optional extras be required a further invoice will be issued. Final payment is requested no later than two months prior to the event.

Bookings for Southern African Residents:

Only via the **Stars of Sandstone** website : <http://bit.ly/2rj6ocu>

We accept that these bookings will work to slighter shorter lead times than the International ones. Once an enquiry is received, you will receive details of pricing and, if you have identified dates and the number of people, we will issue a formal quote. You will be asked to confirm this quote at your earliest convenience. Reminder mails will be sent where no response has been received. Once confirmed, an invoice will be issued with a 50% deposit required by the end of October 2018. Final payment is required no later than two months prior to the event.

Southern African Residents will be required to confirm their identity number or passport number by way of a copy of such document on final confirmation prior to invoicing.

International visitors accompanying Southern African Residents will be required to pay the appropriate International rate.

Our pricing is structured to enable affordability for both local and international visitors as per common practice in the tourism industry in South Africa.



BOOKINGS FOR THE EVENT AND THE BLUE TRAIN

Registrations for **Stars 2019** are coming in steadily. Be sure to reserve your place and your local Free State accommodation in good time via our website.

Diarise the dates: 4 to 14 April 2019

The Blue Train to Stars of Sandstone 2019

The iconic Blue Train will be making a special trip to **Stars of Sandstone 2019**, departing Pretoria on 3 April 2019. Guests will enjoy two days at the **Stars of Sandstone** event on (4 and 5 April), with the train staged at Vailima Siding at Sandstone. Departure is on the evening of 5 April, with arrival in Pretoria on Saturday, 6 April.

The trip includes entrance to Sandstone and transfers from the Blue Train to the event, and of course all the Blue Train extravagances.

This once in a lifetime experience of travelling on the Blue Train to visit Stars of Sandstone 2019 is being rapidly booked and space will soon be limited. If you do not want to miss out on this great adventure you are urged to contact us now to avoid disappointment. The luxury suite options in fact, have already been booked.

Full details of this grand tour can be found on the Stars of Sandstone website:

<http://www.starsofsandstone.com/> or
contact Dave Richardson on e mail,
daver@sandstone.co.za

UNFORGETTABLE SANDSTONE



There is truly nowhere else on earth quite like this — a large agricultural estate in the Eastern Free State with its own 26km private railway line and the largest collection of 2ft Narrow Gauge steam locomotives in the world. There are more than 50 restored and unrestored locomotives, of which 25 are fully operational.

A place where traditional Afrikaner oxen are bred, trained and actually earn their keep by pulling wagons and ploughing the land. At Sandstone one can find a magnificent cross-section of almost 300 items of agricultural equipment dating back to the late 1800s. Included are steam traction engines and the earliest of early vintage tractors, ranging from the huge Emerson Brantingham Big 4-30, right down to the diminutive Massey Harris Pony.

There is a collection of nearly 500 farm implements, a huge collection of old combine harvesters and threshing machines and, to top it off, a fleet of vintage earth moving machinery that we use constantly to improve Sandstone's infrastructure.

A new Stationary Engine Museum has recently been completed which showcases man's ingenuity in pumping water and generating electricity for well over 100 years.

All this will be showcased at ***Stars of Sandstone 2019***.

Whatever your interests, you will find something to fascinate you. The owners, directors and staff of Sandstone Estates cherish their landscape and work hard to give it the vibrancy that a biological approach to farming inevitably provides. A 400 ha chemical-free zone has been declared around the main complex and that trend towards self-sufficiency without the use of invasive chemicals in agriculture will continue.

It's a big place and an exciting event with much to see and do!

Read on...

TO BE SEEN AND DONE 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
- Flips in vintage aircraft
- 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
- Tour to our 3'6" Bloemfontein Workshops
- On site Food Village and Bar
- Become involved as an active participant in the event

Over the next few newsletters we shall be showcasing these experiences for *Stars of Sandstone 2019*.



THE SANDSTONE RAILWAY: 2ft NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY NEWS



Above, construction of the Royal coach is well under way.
Below, L-4 Coach 52 from 1902 and L-4 Coach 65 from 1907.



THE ROYAL LOUNGE CAR

The Sandstone Railway, being a 2ft Narrow Gauge railway, has never had access to a wide variety of coaching stock, simply because very few survived into the 21st Century on any South African Narrow Gauge railway.

We are fortunate in having two original coaches from 1902 and 1907 of the L-4 type, which are genuine and authentic original passenger coaches from the Port Elizabeth to Avontuur line.

There is a dining car and also a lounge car, but we are now creating an extra special Royal Coach, as mentioned in Newsletter 2 in January this year.

It is just for fun, but we love entertaining our good friends from around the world who visit us regularly, and we thought that we would take advantage of the fact that we have a huge inventory of high quality 2ft Narrow Gauge wagons which — with sufficient dedication, application and activity — can be turned into interesting items of rolling stock.

We look forward to seeing you aboard!

HOW AUTHENTIC ARE WE?

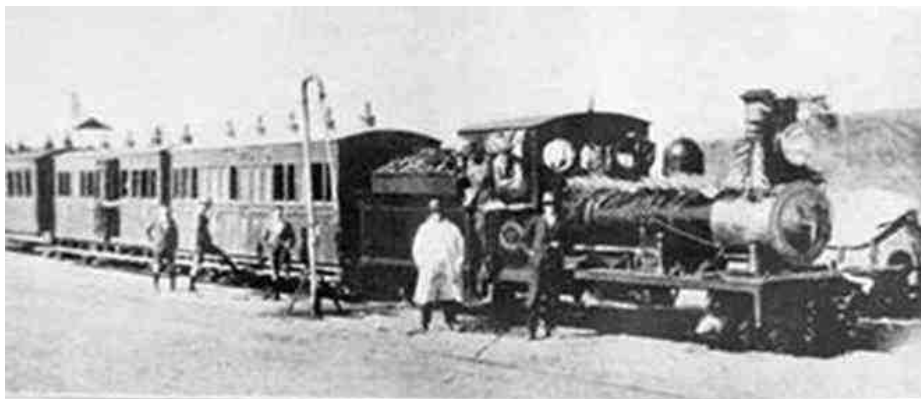
There are a number of questions which we ask ourselves about our activities at Sandstone Estates in the Eastern Free State in South Africa. The first is, how authentic is our railway?

This article is interesting because it effectively deals with that issue. We have outstanding original locomotives built in the 1800s. They started life on a railway for which they were designed but 3 years later the line closed and then the fleet was separated and each loco migrated through different chapters in their lives by working on specific railways throughout Southern Africa. The railways did not survive, but the locomotives did — more through luck than anything else. Recognising their historical importance, not to mention their charisma, we married them to a rural agricultural railway, very similar to that which they would have enjoyed working on in years gone by.

One of the interesting challenges we have had over the last 20 years was to be very wide awake to what happened with the world acclaimed 2ft Narrow Gauge railways that were so much in evidence in Natal, the Eastern Cape etc. As these railways started to disintegrate, we had to grapple with liquidators, scrap dealers and even thieves in order to make sure that these genuine assets were saved. The end result means that the signals, the line, the sleepers, the water tanks and everything about the railway is genuine and what is arguably not genuine is the fact that this particular railway does not go back 100 years. However, an analysis of the demise of the Banana Express, the Cabbage Express, the closure of the Port Elizabeth to Avontuur line all represent the many pieces which we have had to fit together to create a representative 2ft Narrow Gauge railway.



A Lawley at work on the Beira-Umtali line in 1899



Sandstone's Lawley NG97 at the opening of the Uppington –Kakamas branch in 1924

THE LAWLEY LOCOMOTIVES

Acknowledged as the jewels of the Sandstone collection, these two locomotives restored as Beira Railway BR7 and South African Railways NG97, began their life in Mozambique and also worked in industry in South Africa in their 123-year careers.

In 1892, construction began of a 2ft gauge railway between Beira and Umtali (now Mutare) in the then Rhodesia. Pauling & Co. who were the builders, subcontracted the work on the 370 km line to Alfred Lawley. Forty-two locomotives were ordered of the F2 (numbers BR4 to BR9) and slightly more powerful F4 class (numbers BR10 to BR35) from Falcon Engine and Car Works of Loughborough, England although D. Drummond and Sons of Glasgow built the final batch, numbers BR36 to BR45. They were nicknamed “Lawleys” after the contractor.

They were not particularly successful in service and when the line was regauged to 3'6" in 1900 to link with the Umtali to Salisbury (Harare) line the entire fleet was staged at Bamboo Creek, now Villa Machado.

From research done by Leith Paxton, John Middleton and others, it is believed that there are only six examples of the original Beira Railway Lawley locomotives still in existence.

Two are in Zimbabwe at the Bulawayo Centenary Park (either BR5 or BR8) and NRZ Museum (shown as BR27 but believed to be BR23), two in the UK at the Rampton Trust (BR27 and BR28) and two here at Sandstone Heritage Trust in South Africa (BR7 and BR25). There were thought to be two further examples at Buzi Sugar in Mozambique, but these are now confirmed as scrapped, having been staged since around 1970.

The two examples at Sandstone have been positively identified, whilst the identities of the others have always been in question, although only the two examples in the UK were never SAR engines.

Sandstone's two locos BR7/NG106 (Falcon 233/1895) and BR25/NG97 (Falcon 263/1897) are of the F2 and F4 types respectively. The F4 having larger cylinders as well as other detail differences.

BR7 & NG97 both worked for a relatively short period on the Beira Railway until it was re-gauged in 1900 and would most definitely have been shed mates at some time during this period. When the class was stored at Villa Machado they may well have been in close proximity, but both left their bush surroundings around 1913 and were classified SAR Class NG6.

Continues next page...



A Lawley at Zebediela Citrus Estates in the 1930s in northern South Africa



Sandstone's Lawley NG97 during construction of the Uptington – Kakamas branch in 1924



Together again in 2007 — Sandstone Estates

BR7, becoming NG106, was sent to Durban for repair and worked at Umlaas Road in 1916, but ended up in storage again in 1923 as the class was not viewed as a very satisfactory performer. NG97, however, was sent to the Salt River workshops along with 96 & 98, for repair and in 1915 was at work on the Hopefield line. Within a year, however, the poor performance of the class saw 97 back at Salt River in storage.

It was not until late 1924 that the two locos were to be working together again when they were sent, along with 101, to work on the newly constructed Uptington to Kakamas branch, where they seem to have coped well with the traffic.

The arrival in 1930 at Uptington of three Class NG9 locos from the Avontuur line, saw 97 sold and dispatched to Zebediela Citrus Estates in the now Limpopo Province while 106 was now sent to work the Fort Beaufort to Seymour branch, where it remained until 1934.

Fate was to bring 106 back together with 97 as she was also sold to Zebediela Citrus and the two locos were together again for the fourth time until around 1959 when 106 was sold to Dryden Engineering and subsequently presented to the Rand Society of Model Engineers from whence she was sold to Sandstone in 2001. 97 was discovered at Zebediela Estate by James Hall when researching material for a proposed Museum and in 1962 was placed in the newly established James Hall Museum of Transport in Johannesburg. Although some kilometers apart, 97 & 106 were to remain in reasonable proximity for some 30 years.

In December 2007, 97 was moved to Sandstone's Bloemfontein workshop for a fast track restoration and was put back into service at Sandstone on June 28th alongside sister BR7/106.

The locomotives were now together again for the fifth time and double headed a number of trains over that weekend. After such a long association it is fitting that 97 and 106 are sharing the same safe environment. Questions have been asked as to whether they ever did double head in their previous lives, who knows? What is important is that they have returned to each other after a long association in Mozambique, two diverse parts of South Africa and finally relative peace and quiet in the safe haven of the Eastern Free State.

Both NG97 and BR7 will be “Stars” of Sandstone in 2019.



History: The first coach under construction and then being loaded for transfer and fitting to the frames at Willow Dam in 1982.



History: Ready to run and the first trip after the Mayor of Uitenhage cut the ribbon on August 4th 1983.



One of the completed coaches stands next to another Sandstone built vehicle, a "Ratanga" conversion from a narrow gauge G type wagon.

A manual braking system was designed in-house and fitted to each coach. No brakes seem to have been fitted originally. Meanwhile the interiors were completely redesigned with longitudinal seats and a handbrake next to the guard's position. The original doors next to each seat row were dispensed with and a single door is used on each side of the coach. Finally the coaches were painted in an attractive green with yellow roof, fittings and underframe. As an added touch one coach has even been fitted with a skylight roof!

The two coaches have been thoroughly tested prior to entering service and are certainly a far cry from their origins in the Eastern Cape.



Sandstone's short railway experience, Seb's Railway, will be well served with coaching stock after the rebuild of two small coaches that have an interesting history.

The story begins with the discovery in 1974 of a small locomotive in a wooded area near Port Elizabeth. The locomotive, now in the Sandstone collection, was *Little Bess*, a 1919 built Kerr Stuart Wren Class, originally used by the Sundays River Irrigation Board.

A group of local enthusiasts decided to rebuild the locomotive and construct a small oval track at Willow Dam near Uitenhage to run trips at weekends under the auspices of the local Round Table. The Lions Club of Uitenhage designed and built two coaches suitable for their short line, using sets of frames and bogies from some redundant 2ft Narrow Gauge rolling stock - very old early Narrow Gauge. After the rebuild of *Little Bess*, trips began in August 1983.

Bertie Slack, who was involved in the original project, supplied us with a host of material on the construction of the coaches and their first trip on the line. They had a simple steel framework clad in sheeting with seats across the frame with individual doors for each row.

The Willow Dam project ended in the late 90s and the loco fell into disrepair. However, Sandstone acquired *Little Bess* and the coaches in 2003. The locomotive underwent a complete restoration, and the coaches saw use on the Sandstone system, particularly with the smaller locomotives in the fleet.

By 2014, they were beginning to show signs of fatigue and were taken out of service, pending a decision on their future. Having no through-braking system, they were really not suitable for every day use at Sandstone, as the railway had expanded its coaching stock and route mileage where continuous brakes were required. The advent of the new Seb's Railway has opened a new future for them, where the use of small locomotives with no vacuum braking was to be the operating norm.

The existing bodies were stripped from the frames and, as they were suffering from quite serious corrosion, it was decided to build completely new bodies on each frame.

The frames were lifted from the bogies and refurbished, as were the bogies themselves, while Gert Jubileus and his Steam Team constructed new bodies not dissimilar to the old ones from the outside, but slightly longer to extend to the full length of the frame.

Our thanks go to Bertie Slack for the extensive archive information he supplied from the original *Little Bess* project. We are sure the original team will be excited to see *Little Bess* reunited with the coaches some 35 years after they were first built.

FERRET SCOUT CAR

Another Ferret Scout Car recently became available from a local farm. We have no idea how these things end up where they do, but we are very happy to provide them with long term continuity.

FERRET RESTORATION

Progress on the existing restoration by Andy Selfe can be seen on his blog:

<https://sandstoneferrets.blogspot.co.za/>

THE OKAPI

Sandstone has developed an excellent relationship with OTT Technologies. Some years ago we acquired a fully refurbished Ratel MK2, which is one of the jewels in our military collection. Since then, we have also acquired a Samil 100 Gun Tractor and a Duiker military water tanker. Recent negotiations have been successful and we have acquired a most interesting South African military vehicle, an Okapi.”

The Okapi is a 6-wheel drive command and fire-control vehicle developed by Truckmakers and Reumech in the 1980s to support the SA Artillery G6 self-propelled gun. With only 9 examples built, it is a rare unit. The Okapis were fitted with an Electronic Warfare System (EWS) developed by Grintek System Technologies, but, for obvious reasons this has been removed.

The vehicle has a monocoque all welded armour plated steel hull which can provide protection from 5.56 x 46mm NATO ball ammunition at a range of 30 metres and 7.62 x 51mm NATO ball from 30 metres. The armour also provides protection against air burst splinters. As with most South African wheeled armoured vehicles, a very high protection is provided against anti-tank land mines.

The engine is mounted in the front of the vehicle with the driver and commander being seated above and to the rear. In front of them is a large bullet proof windscreen. Both the driver and commander have a front opening door with a bullet proof window and a hatch above each position. On the commander's side a 7.62mm machine gun can be mounted.

The right side of the hull contains the auxiliary power unit (APU) which is separated from the crew position by a bulkhead. The sides of the hull have bullet proof windows, as does the single rear door.

Air conditioning is standard, as is power steering on the front two axles. A 200 litre drinking water tank is also a standard fitment.

The Okapi required a crew of four, plus the driver and commander.



Another Ferret arrives at Sandstone



OKAPI Technical Specifications

The Okapi is a huge vehicle, being just over 8 metres long, nearly 2.5 metres wide and 3 metres high. Drive to each wheel is by hub reduction gearing with differential locks. Ground clearance is 480mm.

The weight of the Okapi is 22 tons and it is powered by a 294kW engine which gives it a maximum road speed of 100km/h and a range of 900 km.

Interesting fact: Two mines can be placed under the hull or three mines under any wheel without injury to the occupants.

We will be welcoming this very rare vehicle to the Sandstone military vehicle collection as soon as we have NCACC clearance on the acquisition.



Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies - details unknown



Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies No. 14084



*The Marshall Sons and Co. Ltd
No. 79009 and plate*

PORTABLE ENGINES

New machinery – a triple bonus for agricultural portable engines newly arrived at Sandstone

A friend of Brian Collinge, who is a very good friend of Sandstone, was travelling in the area of the Merensky Singisi Sawmill in Weza, Kwa-Zulu Natal some 50kms east of Kokstad, when he happened to notice two portable steam engines standing at the sawmill gates and decided on the spot to find out more about them. He met Sean Brown who told him that they were destined for the scrap heap but that if he could find someone to take them he would far rather see them preserved.

Brian was put in touch with Sean and between them they put a plan together to save the engines.

Sandstone is always on the lookout for heritage items under threat and it was with great delight that we received a letter via Brian from Sean Brown of Singisi Forest Products advising that Merensky would be donating the two old portable steam engines to Sandstone which were collected by us.

We will in acknowledgement of the donation affix plaques to the engines recording that they were donated by Merensky.

At this moment in time we only have the type and age of one of engines, the details of the other are unknown as it has no plates but we are looking into this. If anyone can provide any information on both engines we would like to hear from you

A third engine which is in very good condition and complete was recently acquired by Sandstone on an auction in Belfast, Mpumalanga Province: A Marshall Sons and Co. Ltd - No. 79009 built in 1925. We are also looking for more information on this engine.

WATERLOO BOY ON DISPLAY AT NAMPO 2018



John Deere celebrates its Centenary in 2018, and one of the earliest examples of a John Deere tractor in South Africa, is Sandstone's 1924 Model N, Waterloo Boy. This was loaned to John Deere for the duration of the largest agricultural show in South Africa (NAMPO) and was on display at their stand at the 2018 event in Bothaville in the Free State.

Sandstone is a major user of John Deere equipment and wishes John Deere another successful 100 years.



Reprieve for 12-ton Tilly

Tilly, a 41-year-old steamroller, is set to take to the roads again after a long retirement.

Mr Philip Wragg (left) of Halfway House and Mr Harry Clare of Randburg, seen with the 12 ton beauty, are members of Resteamers, a group of steam-vehicle enthusiasts which intends restoring Tilly to her former glory.

Mr Jimmy Tait of Benoni, a road surfacing contractor in the 1930s, donated the 1935 Fowler DH 1 to Resteamers because he could not bear to see her scrapped.

He said Tilly was responsible for making most the roads around the East Rand gold mines and was the star of a children's television programme screened last year.

Resteamers has invited the public to take a Magaliesburg steam train trip to help raise funds to restore Tilly. Those interested can phone Mr Wragg at 825-3110 after 6 pm.

● Picture by Ken Oosterbrook.

THE FOWLER ROLLER AND THE BIRTH OF REEFSTEAMERS

As often happens in a collection like ours, you get very important categories that just slowly fall off the radar. The reason is that they are so rare that no one knows much about them and we also do not always know their full history.

Occasionally though, we get a breakthrough as has happened here.

Our Steam Rollers are very enigmatic. Many older people remember them clearly rolling the road outside their houses. Every Municipality had them and they did sterling work. In fact they still do, and Sandstone uses them quite often when we are doing our own road building programme.

Sandstone has two Rollers: a Marshall and a Fowler, and here is some history of the latter:

We found this clipping from South African daily newspaper *The Star* dated the 2nd of September 1986 about *Tilly* that was being restored at the then fledgling Reefsteamers in Germiston — known at the time as Re-Steamers.

Philip Wragg did restore *Tilly*, but subsequently left South Africa to take up residence in the UK. *Tilly* is now in the Sandstone road steam collection as one of the "Stars" of Sandstone.

Coincidentally, our fabulously competent PRO, Tilly Smith Dix, has been handling our PR work for many years, but there is no connection.



The Fowler at Stars of Sandstone 2015. Picture by Paul Stratford

CLASSIC VEHICLES AT SANDSTONE

MERCEDES-BENZ 312

Another special item from the Belfast auction was a Mercedes-Benz 312 truck.

These units were produced between 1953 and 1961, and from the chassis number we have deduced that this is probably a 1957 model. The engine number indicates that a later type 352 engine has been fitted, which were produced between 1963 and 1970. This is a larger capacity six cylinder engine of 5675cm³ compared to the original 312 type of 4580cm³. Power output is quoted at 100hp.

The unit has been started but the engine is quite smoky and the gearbox needs attention. Our mechanical workshop at Sandstone will be taking a good look at the Mercedes and we hope to have her running for *Stars of Sandstone 2019*.

We are also in contact with Mercedes-Benz SA's Truck Division to enquire a little more about the history of this vehicle.





Sandstone's silos are in the background with additional bunker storage in the foreground. The trucks parked near our entrance are waiting to enter the complex to be loaded with maize from the 2016/17 season.



800 ha of Wheat has been planted for harvesting in January 2019



*Above, bringing in the Soya harvest
Right, maize almost ready for harvesting*



Lucerne baling is complete

Since our last newsletter we have almost completed the harvesting of our sugar beans, soya beans and sunflowers as well as baling our lucerne, eragrostis and soya bean hay. The next step is to tackle our maize, which is looking very good.

Maize harvest in South Africa can be anywhere from 3 tonnes per hectare to perhaps 10-11 tonnes on average. This year we are looking at a 10 tonne crop. The late rains made a huge difference and because of the way in which it rained (no flooding), we are looking at a good end result.

We got off lightly with our sunflowers because sunflowers do not enjoy the constant moisture levels that they were subjected to and we had some outbreaks of Sclerotinia. However, now that the combines have been at work and have brought in the crop, it appears that although there was some damage, it is not nearly as bad as we thought.

Arable farmers in South Africa are very much subjected to the vagaries of global commodity prices and the impact of the Rand on the actual price of the commodities. The fact that Sandstone has its own silo complex holding about 20,000 tonnes of commodities, gives us tremendous freedom and allows us to take full advantage of the free market system that now exists for agricultural commodities. The fact that we got our bean crop off early by being very creative and the fact that we also have a bean drying plant to reduce them to moisture levels that are acceptable to the market, meant that we were able to achieve some excellent premiums.

Our thanks go to Henry Bateman of Curries Post Trading (Pty) Ltd and his team for the way in which they worked with us to take advantage of early deliveries to a market that was troublesome for most farmers.

Lucerne was probably the first crop to be cultivated for hay. It is indigenous to Mesopotamia. It came to South Africa from South America in 1861 and was first grown in the Worcester district. From there it spread to the Little Karoo and Karoo, mainly as grazing for ostriches.

Lucerne is today the most important fodder crop grown under irrigation and because of the high yields obtained, its palatability and high feeding value, it is known as the King of fodder crops.

On Sandstone it is also used as one of the crops to feed the cattle during the winter times. About 40 ha is currently planted and during the rainy season it is possible to harvest it at least three times.

The harvesting of the Lucerne must be done in a certain sequence and at the right time.



These gentle Akrikaner giants are every day draft animals at Sandstone but also are the wonder of our guests when put to work to pull an authentic Voortrekker (Pioneer) Ox Wagon



Sandstone Cosmos providing a sea of colour

OUR FAMOUS OXEN

We set ourselves a target of in-spanning 34 oxen (17 pairs) because our research indicated that this was the maximum number that appeared to ever have been in-spanned. Newsletter 2 featured a letter from Lt Hobbs to his mother during the Boer War in this regard.

Obviously the 1800s was the pinnacle as far as animal-drawn achievement in South Africa is concerned, and we are working towards achieving an almost identical experience.

We are still short of original yokes and riempies and if anyone has these lying around, please let us know.

This recent photograph shows 32 oxen in-spanned and working well. Great work!

OUR COSMOS

Sandstone Estates has an interesting history when it comes to its very well renowned ability to bring a blaze of colour to the Free State landscape through Cosmos.

The history of our Cosmos is that it was developed in Zimbabwe by farmers and plant breeders in order to export the seed to the Dutch flower market. This was very successful, but as a result of the land reform programme initiated by Robert Mugabe where farms were physically taken away from farmers, the industry collapsed. Most of the farmers involved emigrated to Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the world.

Sandstone received a gift of some surviving seed nearly 20 years ago, and from that seed we have bred very substantial stocks of seed which we use to add some colour to our landscape. We enjoy the Cosmos tremendously but we know our guests appreciate it as well. We now plant Cosmos in fields along the main road past the farm and we even have wedding parties taking pictures in the Cosmos.

We are going to make an extra special effort with the Cosmos for spectacular vistas and more beautiful photography at the ***Stars of Sandstone 2019*** event.



Nottingham Road Station - 2002. Photo by Craig Duckham



The station in flames. Picture by James Martin

NOTTINGHAM ROAD STATION

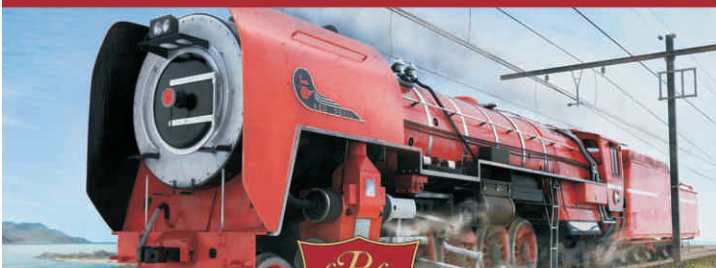
Sad news from late February was the destruction by fire of Nottingham Road railway station in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Midlands.

Built around 1883, the station was a landmark in the town but had been disused for more than 10 years. Transnet, the owners, had not been able to find a tenant and it is believed that vagrants were living in the building. The South African Police Services, however, believe that the fire was deliberate arson and are searching for a “known” suspect.

The Howick fire brigade was on the scene rapidly, but the building was destroyed very quickly.

It is most unfortunate that another heritage building has been lost. This continues to happen but due to the efforts of preservationists the rate at which our Heritage, particularly our Railway Heritage, is disappearing has been partly arrested.

RED DEVIL | 13 - 15 JULY



OPTION A

13 July - Cape Town to Robertson
15 July - Robertson to Cape Town

A return trip from Cape Town to Robertson on the famous one-of-a-kind Red Devil.

EXCLUDES accommodation, all meals, day trip & transfers

R1000

OPTION B

14 July - Day Trip around Robertson

A day trip around Robertson with visits to various wine estates & numerous photographic run pasts.

INCLUDES lunch and 2 x wine tastings

R950

THE RED DEVIL DUE TO RIDE AGAIN

After a very rapid four month restoration in Worcester in the Cape Province, the unique South African Railways Class 26 No 3450, known around the world as *The Red Devil*, is almost ready to ride again.

The Red Devil will haul its first revenue-earning train since 2003 with a Ceres Rail trip to Robertson from Cape Town from 13 to 15 July. Not to be missed if you can make it!

Well done to the Ceres Rail team under Bobby Rudman for making this happen and the vision of Ceres Rail founder, Derick du Toit.

You can also read up on an upcoming 4-day trip that Ceres Rail is offering from 21 to 24 June 2018 in the Overberg (Cape Province), here:

<https://bit.ly/215LS9f>

OLD LADIES STEPPING OUT — SEE ‘EM ALL

PLANES, TRAINS & AUTOMOBILES

2018

KRUGERSDORP FLYING CLUB **REEFSTEAMERS ASSOCIATION** **VINTAGE & VETERAN CLUB**

TRAINS, PLANES & AUTOMOBILES

This exciting annual event run by Reefsteamers Association is set for Saturday, 23 June 2018 — Park Station Johannesburg to Magaliesburg. Be a passenger or take photos along the way; either way, the procession of vintage vehicles is sure to entertain.

All photo enquiries to Ian Morison photo@reefsteamers.com and train bookings to bookings@reefsteamers.com

by Andy Selfe

On Saturday, 9 June, a small group of volunteers went to Sandstone Heritage Trust's Klipdale Yster- en Staalwerke with several tasks to complete. Klipdale is in the Western Cape.

Stephen Sokolic had been working on the last part of the Globe Planer, the compound slide for the automatic downward feed. He had to re-attach a central boss through which the bevel gears transmit the drive, which had broken off perhaps 100 years before, as it looks as if this machine never worked here!

It was great starting the line-shafting up and seeing it now working completely as it should! Next project is the Shaper.

The rest of us had the project of marking out the exact places for the old American Edger saw and the Daimler-Benz engine which will drive it.

Keith Wetmore and I did the measuring and drawing, then broke through the rather thin concrete floor and dug as much as we think is necessary, while Noel made the box for the concrete block for the engine which will stand high above ground level. The tall saw needs to be as low as possible so its block will be level with the floor, which meant digging out 600mm of ground.

Nico Swart and I repositioned my Petter Fielding engine so that the starting handle can be swung and we manoeuvred a steel framework under it, which will be bolted to the floor and attached somehow to the chassis which the engine is mounted on. This engine will soon provide power for the whole workshop and make the electric motor unnecessary.

We also had to dig out the base of a 'leg-vice' which was in the way, and make a new hole with the paving breaker we'd brought along.

We were well tired at the end of the day!



Above, the Petter-Fielding engine which will drive the whole workshop, and the frame under it which will secure it to the floor

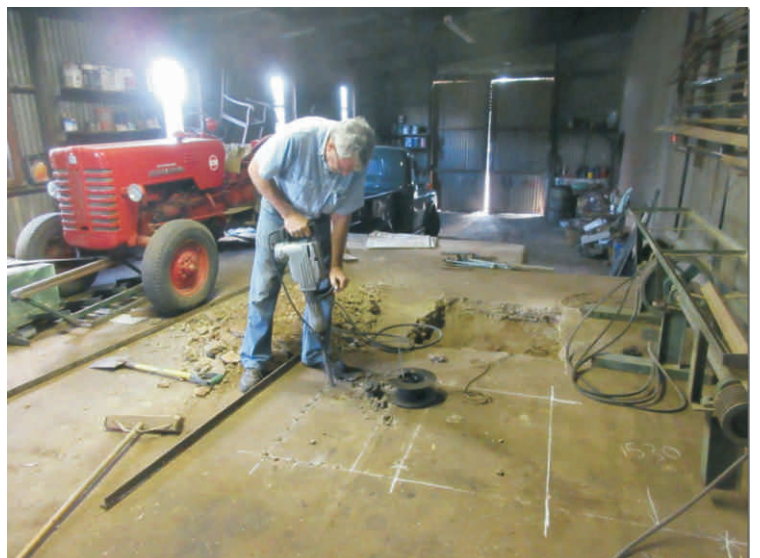
Left, Stephen is re-attaching the boss to the compound slide of the Globe Planer



Above, Keith brought planks down from Somerset Timbers and Nico was happy for Noel to use his saw to make the casting box for the engine's plinth



Below, placement, measuring and digging, digging, digging!





NEW HORIZON COLLEGE

One of the joys of Sandstone is hosting visitors, and especially the younger people of South Africa.

Recently we hosted the New Horizon College of Bethlehem for a morning excursion and a train ride to Grootdraai with a special attraction being the sunflowers in full bloom. The visit was organised by Lani Jubileus, the wife of our loco foreman, Gert Jubileus, as part of our community upliftment programme.

As our gallery shows, there were smiling faces all around as the children experienced the sights and sounds of days gone by, especially the sight of the Sandstone oxen team, plus a diversion into the sunflowers which encapsulated the enjoyment of the pupils at their special day out.

Should you wish to organise a visit to Sandstone Estates, whether it be for a group or just a walking tour for a family, please contact Leigh Sanders

T: +27 (0)51 933 2235 or

E: leighs@sandstone.co.za

MEDIA LINKS

Gert Jubileus at the Sandstone Railway Running Shed produces an outstanding technical bulletin every fortnight or so, covering the work that they do. Since our last newsletter, Read Gert's latest Steam Report here:

14 May 2018: <https://bit.ly/2MdjCxW>

With regard to the *Stars 2019* event, the following links are pertinent:

On SAfrica 24: <https://bit.ly/2JLm00k>

On Find All News: <https://bit.ly/2HDwWlp>

On IOL: <https://bit.ly/2jHBkg2>

On Traveller 24: <https://bit.ly/2LIQFZV>

On Travel Life Magazine:
<https://bit.ly/2Mg0TBT>

Times of Malta: detailed article:
<https://bit.ly/211dsoe>

Railways Africa: an article on Seb's Railway (p36/7): <https://bit.ly/2JupuVK>



The sun sets on another magnificent day in the Eastern Free State

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

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