

On Track

**RAILWAY SOCIETY OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA
REEF BRANCH NEWSLETTER
September 2014**

Dates

There are two important dates you must diarise, they are Saturday the 13th September 2014 and Wednesday the 1st October 2014. Regarding the 13th September, the Reef Branch has organised a visit to Koedoespoort (Pretoria) works of Transnet engineering to view the building of the dual voltage class 20E electric locomotives.

Any paid up member can attend

but the must send their names and ID number and car registration number to Tony Attwell at e-mail tony@alacc.com or sms to phone number 083 639 8732 before Monday 8th September

The visit will start at 9 AM and last for +- 3 hours. The meeting place will be the entrance to the works on Koedoespoort Road in Pretoria.

For this with computers just look up Koedoespoort on Google Maps for those without travel on the N1 and take the Stormvloed off ramp and turn east, take the first right turn and keep right at the wye junction and follow the road to the gate.

See you there

The second date i.e. Wednesday the 1st October is the new date for the Reef Branch meeting. This change of date is due to the last Wednesday of September (24th) being a public holiday. The meeting will be the annual photo competition.

David Benn is judging

5 first choice slides and / or digitals and 5 second choice of each, if desired. Organisers may remove the second choice entries, should there be too many submissions to get through during the evening.

Digital entries are to be reduced to keep the file size down and then emailed to David Benn by Monday 29th September, titled for RSSA competition (file 1 and 2 etc.): david@shrinks.co.za

Friends of the Rail (Calendars)

As usual Trainman (Nathan Berelowitz) has done a brilliant job of the 2015 Calendar. Jean Dulez has stock and it is available from at our meetings or directly from Nathan at Cell number: 073 2444 962. Work: 012 3866248 and is also fax number in office hours. E-mail: nbtrainman@gmail.com

Sandstone

Sandstone is holding another Stars of Sandstone on the 2-12th April 2015.



This is another mega event for Sandstone and deserves to be well supported by the local enthusiasts.

Reopening of Branch lines

Last month there was a statement by Transnet that they were investigating the re-opening plus minus 20 branch lines. No further details were forthcoming from Transnet but the idea started a large amount of interest and correspondence on the SAR-list

Having noted Paul's probably accurate comment that railways should be run by businessmen and not railfans, here is my no doubt "romantic railfan" take on how passenger services on secondary lines in SA could be restored and operated to the best interest of all concerned...which will in all likelihood only serve to confirm Paul's opinion!

Firstly, I believe that the Namibian model, where there are virtually no dedicated passenger trains - only mixed trains - would be ideal for secondary routes in this country. The division of Transnet and PRASA has done immeasurable damage to the efficient operation of trains on such routes. To work properly, these two entities need to put their differences aside and work together specifically on routes which have marginal passenger and/or freight demand.

On these lines, a short seven coach passenger set, consisting of say three sifter coaches (one being a GH type with a compartment for security personnel), a single catering vehicle (along the lines of the combined sifter/sleeper diner NRZ uses - or used - on the Bulawayo - Victoria Falls train), two sleeper coaches and a staff baggage van, would be attached to the rear of a scheduled goods train, which would run at least three times a week - irrespective of the goods load offering. This would provide accommodation for approximately 150 sitting and 50 sleeping passengers and would need a staff complement of about six or seven, excluding loco crew.

Hopefully this sort of operation would make existing marginal goods routes more attractive to potential freight clients as there would now be a guaranteed regular service, whilst passengers could also rely on a scheduled regular train operation. It would certainly be far more cost-effective than each operator running its own train over the same route.

These trains would initially be vacuum-braked, but as freight trains eventually convert to fully air-braked operation, so the passenger set/s would also have to follow suit.

Here are some of the routes over which such trains could arguably be run (assuming someone would be prepared to reinstate some of them!):-

East London - Port Elizabeth;
Port Elizabeth - George - Cape Town;
Durban - Ladysmith - Bethlehem - Ficksburg - Bloemfontein - Kimberley;
Johannesburg - Mafeking - Kimberley;
Cape Town - Malmesbury - Bitterfontein;
East London - Umtata;
Port Elizabeth - Graaff-Reinet - De Aar - Upington;
Durban - Empangeni - Golela;
Johannesburg - Bethal - Ermelo - Waterval Boven - Nelspruit;
Pretoria - Polokwane - Tzaneen - Nelspruit - Pretoria;
Johannesburg - Balfour North - Bethlehem;
Johannesburg - Klerksdorp - Kroonstad - Welkom;
Durban - Pietermaritzburg - Kokstad/Matatiele;
Pretoria - Rustenburg - Thabazimbi

Any other suitable routes?

Of course these could no longer be the all-stations "milk trains" of the past - this traffic would have been aggressively usurped by the minibus taxi. These trains would only stop at places that have relatively sizeable populations which would hopefully help to expedite the journey. Minibus taxis would then transport passengers to/from the more far-flung settlements. However, where necessary, time would need to be allowed to permit the shunting on or off of goods vehicles.

Connections with existing passenger train services should also be considered - unlike the present arrangement where "same day" connections are actively discouraged.

Having now been suitably irresponsible by sticking my neck out to put this insane idea out there, I'll strategically retreat to comparative safety and await the barrage of reasons why this could never work...!! :-)

Ashley Peter

I have raised the matter repeatedly at Transnet briefings and I get the same reply: "We will make an announcement soon".



Acting CEO Chris Wells briefed me about the branch line initiative on the day the 2010 World Cup started. Not a single thing has happened since then save that many of the various lines have been looted.

I know of various would-be rail tourism operators who are still waiting for a response to numerous letters, faxes, emails, proposals etc.

Many of the initiatives on offer are low-key - this is not steam-hauled George-Knysna stuff, which no-one can afford to do anyway - and would require little from Transnet but permission, followed thereafter by a visit from the Rail Safety Regulator. (And then let the games begin ...)

The truth is, Transnet has no idea what to do with these lines. They are economic basket cases from a freight point of view. After speaking to branch line and short line experts in the US, this is the reality.

1. Many of those lines were built for vote-catching reasons, at a time when the farming vote was all important and when freight transport was regulated in favour of the state railway.
2. Agriculture's contribution to GDP has shrunk dramatically, and the railway's share of that business has collapsed anyway.
3. Many of the branch lines are in isolated parts of the country, far off the beaten tourist trail.
4. Maintenance of a safe, 25km/h railway could cost around \$4000 per kilometre per year. That's R40 000 per kilometre. And that's just track. Now, show me the tourist railways in the world that make the kind of revenue to cover that cost? I have a list of four in the US that generate enough revenue from tourist trains to cover their expenses and have money left over for other projects. (Interestingly, they are all run by hard-nosed business people and not rail fans.)

Now let's look at the potential "list of 20" and you tell me - given SA's tourism numbers - which ones have a smoking chance of success. (This is my own opinion, after a couple of years of trawling through the land and looking at places as a tourist).

1. George-Knysna. Defunct, with a huge liability cheque waiting to be cashed
2. Aliwal North-Barkly East. Closed. Off the tourist trail but perhaps with better potential than many others
3. Grahamstown-Port Alfred. Not bad. Expensive bridge, though
4. Nelspruit-Graskop. Rotten track, and locals (foresters etc. who loathe steam locomotives. Good tourism nearby
5. Hercules-Magaliesburg. Defunct, track stolen, skelm landlords occupying the right of way ... Lots of potential riders. Also fine views of informal settlements. And TFR want to reopen the line to as short cut for coal from Botswana to Pretoria. Don't hold your breath
6. Sterkstroom-Maclear. Amazingly, the track is still largely in place, albeit blocked in many places by fences. Would make a fantastic railbike operation for hardy tourists wanting to see the "real" South Africa. In the heart of one of the country's most economically devastated regions
7. Springfontein-Koffiefontein. Track in place, although fences are spread. But dull, and far from anywhere. And nothing you would want to see at each end - although trundling down the street in Fauresmith might be fun
8. Izotsha-Paddock. I believe something is happening here. This should have been the country's premier narrow gauge tourist railway. And who closed it? Transnet
9. Port-Elizabeth-Avontuur. A pity the section from PE to Van Stadens is so sketchy. Operator should run from Loerie or Assegaaibosch. It's the most beautiful line of the lot. And close-ish to major tourism routes.
10. Oudtshoorn-Calitzdorp. Someone tried this with Wickhams. The then owner of the station at Calitzdorp complained. End of Herrie Trein. Scenically unremarkable

11. Paarl-Franschhoek. No point. If you see how the tram operation has been castrated at birth ... Good luck getting the wine estates to change their minds...

12. Wolseley-Prince Alfred Hamlet. Probably the best option in the entire Western Cape. And has been well-cared for

13. KZN branches. Well, the track is rotten and various players already present. I think it difficult to lure tourists away from the Midlands/Durban

14. Bethlehem-(Ladybrand). Is it going to carry freight? Or isn't it? At least it's open, which is saying something. Beautiful country. But will the average British traveller and his family make the 4-hour schlep from OR Tambo International over increasingly kak roads to ride a train in the Free State?

As for the rest ... Calvinia, Vrededorp, Stormberg, the Free State branches, Vaalwater etc ... Well you gotta get the people to go there first. And the track on many of them has walked off in the night, so good luck raising finance to have it put back. Because I bet you one thing: Transnet ain't gonna repair it for you

Wheeltapper

Gautrain

Murray & Roberts spent R200 million on earlier, unsuccessful attempts to stem water leaking into the Gautrain tunnel.

Late in 2013, South Africa's Arbitration Tribunal ruled that, as the amount of water seeping into parts of the tunnel over a specified period was higher than that provided for in the contract, this shortcoming was to be corrected by the Bombela consortium at its own cost.

Murray and Roberts, which has a 45% share in Bombela, says it is making an early provision of R300 million to cover the likely expected cost. The company emphasised in November 2013 that "functionality and safe operation of the [Gautrain] system is not threatened by the inflow."

Engineering News

PRASA

South African minister of transport Dipuo Peters has disclosed details of the Gibela Consortium, recently awarded a R51 billion rolling stock supply contract by the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa). Clarifying in reply to a question tabled in parliament, she said France's loco and rolling stock manufacturer Alstom holds 61% of Gibela. The black economic empowerment (BEE) partners are Ubumbano Rail (30%) and New Africa Rail (9%). Ubumbano Rail consists of three commercial joint ventures – Elgin-Identity Rail Corporation, Khiphunyawo Rail and Community Rail. An employee trust and an educational trust hold 10% and 3% in Ubumbano Rail respectively. Gibela has committed to spend about R950 million on skills development over 19 years, in the course of building and maintaining the new commuter trains. In addition, the consortium has undertaken to train some 19,527 workers. Gibela has sent 25 South African engineering staff members to Alstom plants in France and Brazil for training in train manufacturing. The directors of New Africa Rail are Monde Vusumuzi Africa and Sesinyi Malope Seopela. Khiphunyawo Rail, the minister explained, has been "active in the rail industry" for ten years. Headed by Thami Gwala and comprising South African Freight Logistics and Autism South Africa, it holds 8% of Gibela. Elgin-Identity Rail Corporation, which holds 7% of Gibela, has "investment and advisory experience, as well as heavy fabrication expertise". Community Rail, holding 2%, is new to the rail sector. Answering specific questions that had been raised, minister Peters listed the directors of Elgin-Identity Rail Corporation as S Sebotsa and M Nyanteh. Sipho Sikhosana is CEO of Community Rail Services.

Railways Africa

Editor's Note It appears to me the a large amount of "good will" has been spread around the well connected

Orex Line

JOHANNESBURG (miningweekly.com) – The entire 861 km section of Transnet Freight Rail's (TFR's) export iron-ore line, which operates between Sishen, in the Northern Cape, and Saldanha Bay, in the Western Cape, will undergo its yearly shutdown from August 12 for planned maintenance works.

The ten-day shutdown, during which specialised infrastructure maintenance and upgrade projects would be conducted, was expected to be concluded on August 21 and would likely cost in the region of R114-million.

The iron-ore line's contribution to TFR's volumes was a sizeable 58-million tons of iron-ore and two-million tons of manganese a year.

Transnet Freight Rail



The crew preparing to disembark from a very long night, 4 class 30 locomotives on hire to Transnet Freight Rail from RRL Grindrod, is being shutdown with its train of 103 empty ore wagons, Due to a hook up this train has been standing here from about 03 am and the crew van had arrived to return the crew to Pyramid South depot

Editor's note. As I reported last month these locos are on hire to TFR. Why? That is a question

Around and About

3'6" news from this area. Work is virtually finished on the re-opening of the Klipplaat – Rosmead line i.e. over the Lootsberg pass. Most of the wooden sleepers are being replaced with concrete. The direct main line north out of PE is to be completely closed for 3 weeks in September to be regraded in places, have various curves eased and have sections of rail replaced. This is advance work necessary for the new hyper-long ore trains planned from the Sishen area to Coega harbour. Because these new trains will occupy sections for a long time, the number of trains daily will be reduced, so some traffic north out of PE will be diverted via the Lootsberg line. I understand that VW have stated that one of their car trains to Jo'burg scheduled for September cannot be delayed, so it is all-ready scheduled to run via Lootsberg.

The Klippatt-Outdshoorn section seems secure (having been threatened for a long time). Fibre optic cables are being installed.

Guys, having followed the Lootsberg development over the last months, I wonder how many trains will use the pass during the PE-line's closure...

The Algoa passenger trains will be replaced by bus, but how many freight trains will actually detour via Lootsberg? All trains on the PE mainline are far too long and too heavy to be pulled over Lootsberg with its gradients and curves. I can't imagine that the regular PE traffic is all split up into smaller chunks and then hauled via Lootsberg?! It would mean a massive increase in motive power allotment somewhere along the line (Rosmead, GR, PE?). A job for the GMAMs... if they would still exist.

The other question that aroused some days ago was whether some of the intermediate stations will be staffed again?

Peter

There is really no reason why goods trains of 40 wagons, possibly even more, could not be successfully worked over Lootsberg Pass - provided sufficient Class 34 or more powerful locos were stuck on the front.

Towards the end of the emergency working on the Natal Old Main line during the 1987 floods, goods trains of 40 - 50 wagons were seen to be worked up the 1:30 gradients and 90m radius curves, usually behind four of five Class 6E1 units. A similar number of 34's would easily handle these sort of loads over the 1:40 grades of the Lootsberg.

Insofar as opening stations is concerned - I'm afraid that is something of the past. With the current Radio Train Order (RTO) and Track Warrant method of operation, one Train Control Officer (TCO) would sit in Port Elizabeth and control all train movements from Uitenhage to Rosmead.

Ashley Peter

Stolen Track

Apparently the line to UCW has seen very little use in recent history, which is the reason the thieves managed to get away with it. They probably used the same method that was used by the gang that stole large portions of the Pretoria to Magaliesburg line. The method used here was to work only at night using army surplus tents (very thick canvas) erected over the section that was being cut, thereby preventing anyone seeing the oxyacetylene torches in use.

Les Smith

Modern Steam

The Railway preservation movement in the UK is recreating classes of locomotives that did not escape the scrapyards in considerable numbers.

Some years ago working replicas of early machines such as Wylam Dilly, Rocket and the 7 ft gauge Iron Duke were built and now the process is growing in momentum.

Website <http://newbuildsteam.com/> is the main source of this detail with 15 projects starting to look like engines.

The amounts of money being spent on these projects is mind blowing.

At Didcot the Great Western Society built the 7 ft gauge Firefly that runs on a demonstration line (and has been recently accompanied by the Iron Duke for the first time).

The Saint class 4-6-0 2998 Lady of Legend (that has been converted from a Hall with new frames and larger wheels, reversing the process by which the Halls came about) is to be complete in 2014 if all goes well.

1014 County of Glamorgan 4-6-0 is mainly complete with the running gear and will get an LMS 8F boiler, again with a 2014 target.

Parts from other Barry engines (cylinders and motion, wheels etc) are being used with new frames for the new build of 4709 at Llanollen, a large 2-8-0 mixed traffic machine, showing the advantages of Churchward's standardisation policy.

The group that built the successful pacific A1 'Tornado' have just started with the frames for 2007 'Prince of Wales' as the 10th member of the Gresley Cock o' the North 2-8-2 P 2 class and estimate about £5 Million (R 87 Millions) to complete in 2018. The next project will be either a K 3 2-6-0 or a V3 2-6-4T but only after completing the P2.

Another group has cut the new frames (the first one were wrong) for a Clan Class BR standard pacific 72009, although why is difficult to see as there are two Britannias, 70000 and 70013 in main line service.

The cylinders for an LMS Patriot are being cast for 45511 'The Unknown Soldier', and the main frames are wheeled at Tyseley to go back to Llangollen for assembly. A set up of frames, smokebox and buffer beam are used to keep the funds rolling in.

LNWR Bloomer 2-2-2 is looking like a loco with tender at Tyseley.

A GWR power bogie for a railmotor is also in build at Tyseley

LNWR Gorge the Fifth 4-4-0 project has some parts built including the splashers and cabsides with number and name plates to be 'Prince George'.

LBSCR Atlantic 32424 is a set of wheeled frames with an ex GNR boiler and tender parts at Bluebell

GWR Grange 6880 Betton Grange is at Llangollen with frames on the wheels and boiler work in progress

BR standard 2-6-2T 82045 is at the wheels and cylinders stage

BR standard 2-6-2T 84030 is at Bluebell using 78059 2-6-0 ex-Barry that did not have a tender 1789 NER 0-4-4T Worsdell G5. Major parts including frames boiler and cab complete at Shildon.

Cost just under £ One million

The Brecon Mountain line in Wales has started on not one but two Baldwin locos based on the ex-Eastern Province Cement loco that is their flagship

Other long term projects at planning or small amounts of components

LNWR Footballer B 17 61662 Manchester United

LNWR Sandringham B 17 City of Sandringham Cost something over £3 millions

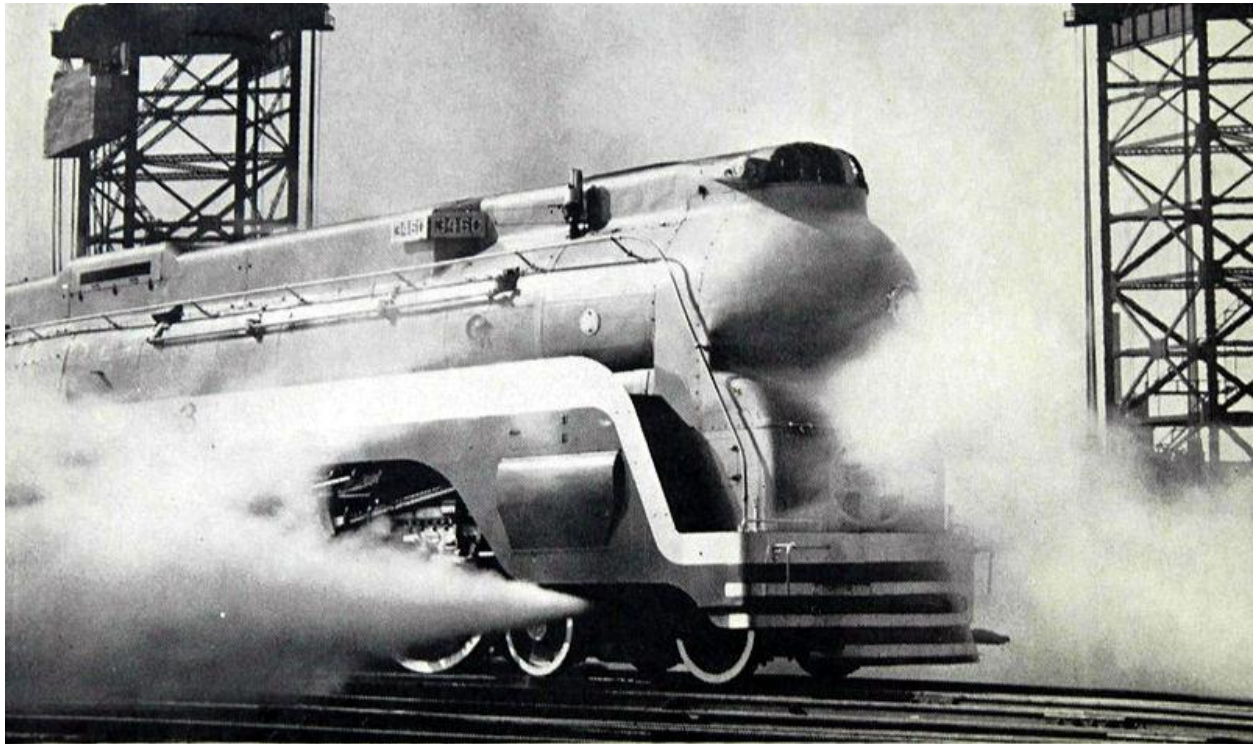
BR standard 2-6-0 77021

5AT advanced loco to Porta and Wardale principles

GER Claud Hamilton 8783

Other news from the USA

After the celebration of its 75th anniversary last year, Mallard's speed record for steam traction could be under threat if a group in the USA is able to bring its plans to fruition. A group called the [Coalition for Sustainable Rail](#) intends to develop a steam locomotive to match the performance of two diesel electric passenger engines, running at 130mph, by deploying the modern steam expertise developed by Porta and Wardale. The project is controversial, however: it intends not to build a locomotive from scratch, but to use a pre-existing engine as a test-bed. The machine in question is the last survivor of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad's 3460 class of six 4-6-4 locomotives built in 1937 for services between La Junta, Colorado and Chicago, Illinois. The locomotive, 3463, has apparently been on static display since its withdrawal in 1953, and a legal challenge may be brewing to prevent the proposed modifications, which will include streamlining and conversion to coal firing, from taking place – although the CSR argues both that these are in line with how the class might have been developed had it been in service longer, and that any changes can be easily reversed.



Thanks to John Parker for this information

Namibia

Have just been up to Windhoek to do some filming - 47 year old class 33 diesels are still keeping the railway going.

We also had a talk to the chief engineer at the locomotive depot, who was interviewed in this Windhoek newspaper (Mr Joe van Zyl). Whilst rows of derelict class 33s are scattered around the depot, TransNamib are least managing to get many back into service, since spares can still, after all these years, be sourced from GE, either locally or from the US.

This is not the case for the rows of also dumped Chinese diesels. The four from Ziyang

(mentioned in the newspaper) were a poor design choice for the harsh local conditions in the first place, and this \$42m investment will likely only yield a few hundred thousand \$ in scrap value, since they cannot be repaired and put back into service.

The newer, more suitable type SDD6 from CSR Sifang works showed more promise, and 17 were delivered to TransNamib back in 2007. However, by this time, only eight years on, a shocking figure of two of these locomotives were currently still in service!

The depot has thus many derelict SDD6s lying around. Although three were noted as damaged from a head on collision, and probably been cannibalised for spares, the others cannot be repaired at present owing to the unavailability of new spare parts from CSR.

The same story was given to us when we visited ARTS in Pretoria last year with their two SDD2s they had also obtained from Sifang- no spare parts from China - they had to source from independent suppliers in Europe. .

Mr van Zyl also mentioned that no lesser high profile visitor to Namibia than the CEO of TFR, Siyabonga Gama himself, a week or so back, had personally seen the sad situation at the depot. This should prove rather concerning to Transnet at present, given their substantial new locomotive contracts with the Chinese. He apparently is on record as having stated that the same situation won't be allowed to happen here in SA and the Chinese will be obliged to honour their contractual and maintenance commitments. Let's hope he is indeed right.

Whilst the first CSR electric locomotives delivered and assembled here to date, the class 20Es, have performed well, it may be a different story with the 250+ diesels ordered from CNR. The reliability problems with Chinese diesels in overseas countries is by no means unique to Namibia; the same type of issues have surfaced with locos supplied to New Zealand, Madagascar and other African countries.

It is expected that only time will tell - whilst the GE portion of the diesel contract was a logical choice, given the good performance of the new class 43s, one wonders if it would not have been more prudent to have split the entire diesel contract, as had been the case traditionally on the SAR in the past, between GE and EMD (whose equally reliable products have been completely excluded within this contract) and awarded the Chinese with only a portion of the electric contract only, which may have seen to have been a much safer course of action under these current scenarios

Jean Dulez

Editor's note The TFR order for diesel locos was placed on CNR, while the dual voltage electric locos will come from CSR. So let's hope the Chinese CNR will make a better job than the previous Namib supplier,

Zimbabwe

TWENTY-TWO passengers escaped with injuries on Saturday night when a Harare-bound passenger train derailed at Heany Junction 30 kilometres from Bulawayo.

Eight coaches at the back of the train which had 11 coaches derailed and fell on the side. Twenty-two passengers on the train that had 120 people, were injured and rushed to United Bulawayo Hospitals where one of them is reported to be in a serious condition. Some were treated and discharged.

National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) director of operations Dennis Nyoni and acting director, technical services Thomas Kurebwaseka were at the scene yesterday leading work on the repair of the damaged line.

The two officials confirmed that the train derailed soon after it had left Heany Junction around 9PM.

One of the survivors, who is admitted at United Bulawayo Hospitals, Vanencia Mapurisa, 36, sustained injuries on the head, back and leg.

Speaking from her hospital bed yesterday Mapurisa said she was on her way to the capital to start a new job as a domestic worker today.

"I still don't understand what happened. I woke up as I was thrown off my seat. I was confused and in shock. I just crawled about trying to find my way out and couldn't," she said.

15th class 414 was in steam at the shed this morning (5th August) and was due to work the Cement Ballast...however no crew available and same applies tomorrow. The loco is due to work the Heroes Day charter to Figtree this coming Sunday.

No sign yet of 14A No 519 being despatched on lease to Hwange Colliery...this is not likely to happen until after the coming long weekend.

On the diesel front, a DE 6 again worked the International Mixed to Plumtree yesterday.....the loco was reported as struggling with the load...presumably no DE 10 available.

Chas

A report earlier this week in the Herald confirmed that the Bulawayo-Beitbridge passenger service has been temporarily suspended.....reason given was that pw work on the Esigodini-Mbalabala section is ongoing and the service should be running again in 6 weeks.

I was at the station yesterday and watched the weekly Chicualacuala mixed train leave (on time) behind a grubby DE 10 (1059). The train was quite heavily loaded with eight loaded coal wagons, a fair number of Economy class coaches, twin diner 668/669 and 3x Second Class sleepers.

NRZ staff told me that the train is scheduled to get to Chicualacuala at 0600hrs (Thursday) and starts the return journey 8 hours afterwards. C is in Mozambique so this working could be described marginally as an "international train"

Robin Taylor and myself are planning to ride this train within the next two months so if anyone on the list has travelled on this route in recent years, we would be interested to hear experiences.

Chas

Jacque's Journey

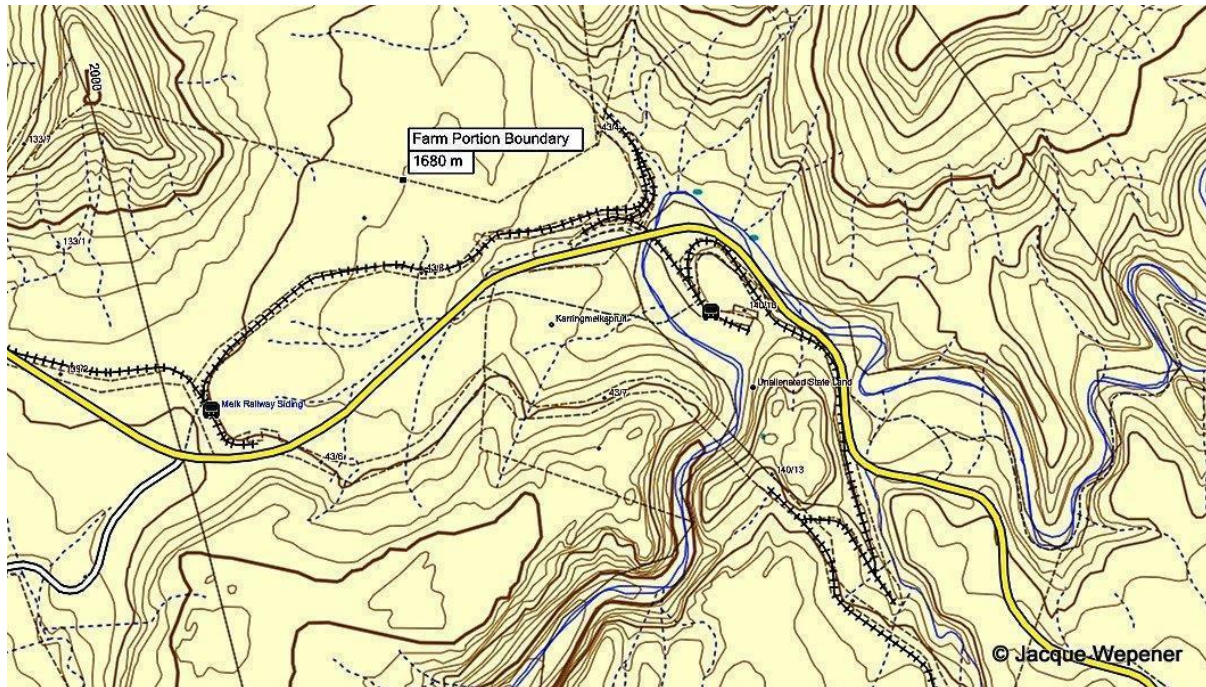


We are now on the way to Lady Grey and into the mountains and the cold!

At 14:50 we arrived at Lady Grey. As you can see the station and goods shed still stand, perfectly intact! The station was locked up and is used for something, in the goods shed the local farmer has got his workshop set up, also the old railway houses are occupied by families that do not want to destroy them.

Just a pity the rails have almost vanished under the gravel and weeds...

So now we are heading to the reverses, well at least 1-6 and the tunnel.



We took our first pic is just before Melk / 1st Reverse. Then looking towards 2nd reverse (4652a & 4654), 3rd Reverse (4658), across the bridge and into 4th Reverse. If you look above the water tank at a 45 degree angle into the mountains, you can spot the tunnel at 6th Reverse.



Then we parked the vehicle and started our hike up from 4th Reverse into 5th Reverse (4670) and then into 6th Reverse and the tunnel. The line to 7/8th Reverses and Barkly East can be seen. The line still looks quite intact and damage free, at least so far into the mountains very few people know about the reverses and this keeps them safe.



A piece of 1914 rail was noticed on the way to 6th Reverse,
 What a pity the tourism benefit of this line can't be seen by the powers that be...
 In June 1989 we left Aliwal North on the daily Barkly East train at around 6 in the morning. A TX van was attached as the guard told us there would be a group of overseas tourists joining us. At Lady Grey the tourists never arrived and so we travelled first class all the way to Barkly East and return. Unfortunately a wagon for the farmer at Barkly East had to stay behind for tomorrow's train. A 20 minute stop order was arranged for us at the tunnel.
 I can still remember the 35 class' swinging left and right and growling up and down the reverses quite clearly, back and forth, back and forth...
 Having arrived at 6th Reverse we now hiked down into the tunnel. Quite an ice cold wind was blowing through it. The weather became misty and over cast. We saw cattle grazing near 6th Reverse and judging by the amount of cow manure on the tunnel floor, the cattle are kept in the tunnel at night used as a kraal.



A look across the valley and down to 4th Reverse, also the cutting can be seen where the line was to go had the bridge arrived. Also notice the white points handle. In the view from the tunnel the water tank could be seen.



Oddly almost all of the name boards have been removed / destroyed. The hike up the reverses took about 45 minutes. We left around 16:00.

Next stop - Barkly East

At 16:50 we arrived at Barkly East and we could see the station is now used as a tavern. It was already late in the afternoon, so no way to get any closer, as the "station staff" were intoxicated by now... Again all the tumblers off the points were gone.

It started raining and was getting cold. Anyway - off to the town to find the plinthed 19D, luckily the gate was unlocked.

At about 18:00 we booked into a guest house. Something that has also disappeared from today's life is the sound of the church bell at every hour, through the night this was heard and the ghost of reverses past came to visit during the cold night, couldn't help but think about the loco standing there in town - never to turn a wheel again.

Tomorrow - onwards to Elliot and beyond.

We left Barkly East 07:20 in the mist. Barkly Pass was covered in mist for most of the way. The first snow of the winter had also fallen, no wonder it was so cold!

Elliot's station building is used by a private firm and thus still stands intact. The rails and yard area are covered in grass, here I almost walked into a rail push trolley lying in the veld.

At Nuka drift, here the farmer has decided that he is above the law and has lifted the rails under the road bridge to give him easier access to his silos...

Laker ne?



Next visit was Guy, same as the others...

We left Guy at about 09:00 and arrived at Maclear about 20 minutes later.

Part of Maclear station is being used as housing by the locals. There was also a tuck-shop in the one corner.

The rest of the station has lost its roof. The rails are still there but disappearing under the vegetation. Funny how the old Government built the stations close to the locations in many of these small towns.

The river that runs just behind Maclear station, on the way to Mt Fletcher and Mt Fletcher itself. The

roads are quite good through this area.

We arrived in Matatiele just after 11:00. The station is being used at offices for local businesses. The goods shed still stands intact but you can hardly see the rails, no triangle here.

Next was Cedarville, not much left.

We have now arrived at Kokstad at 12:40. Imagine when last a weed killer train came past here!! The station building is still neat and used for something other than railway. The railway houses are occupied and neatly kept. A Citi-liner bus was idling in front of the station, destination PMB. The goods shed is still standing, once again venturing across the tracks would have caused hours of Khaki bos removal. If you look straight down the platform you can see an orange Departmental DZ, forgotten at the end of the line...

The stoep looks polished, wonder why?? The last photo is of the balloon at Kokstad, again no triangle. There are house built inside the balloon - why could I not have live in a house like that with plenty of trains passing...

Onwards to the mountains. The railway part of this tour is staring to get less now.

To be continued

Letters

Cab sides from SA are getting daft prices in the UK, GDA 2258 fetched £3,200 at auction + 10% commission. (At Rate of exchange £ = R 17.60, a total of R 61,952!!)

There was a Jubilee 45700 that carried two names *Britannia* and *Amethyst* at various times. Both plates at auction sold for £13,000 + commission.

In the next auction a King nameplate did not reach reserve at in excess of £35,000 at a July auction that would buy a house here.

There's an awful lot of money available for such things in the UK.

John Parker

The Great Model Train Expo

The N Gauge (that's small) Guild of South Africa is holding this expo on the Saturday and Sunday 11th and 12th of October at the Hoerskool Randburg

More can be viewed on their web site www.nggosa.co.za

Angola

Rehabilitation of the 1,344km Caminhos de Ferro de Benguela (CFB) began in 2007. Train services ceased during the lengthy Angolan civil war, in the course of which the line was virtually totally destroyed. A celebration was held on 13 August 2014 to mark completion of the rebuilt line from Benguela and the port at Lobito to Luau near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The project, reportedly costing \$US1.83 billion, was financed by the Chinese government and carried out to a high standard by a construction company from China. Train service was restored from Benguela as far as Huambo in 2011 and to Kuito the following year. Locomotives and rolling stock have been supplied by China. - See more at:

Railways Africa

A Ditty

The guard is the man
The man in the van
The van at the back of the train
The driver in front
Thinks the guard is a c***
While the guard thinks the driver's the same.

Seen written on the wall of the guard's compartment of a Southern Railway (UK) electric multiple unit train (4-SUB) at Wimbledon about 1959.

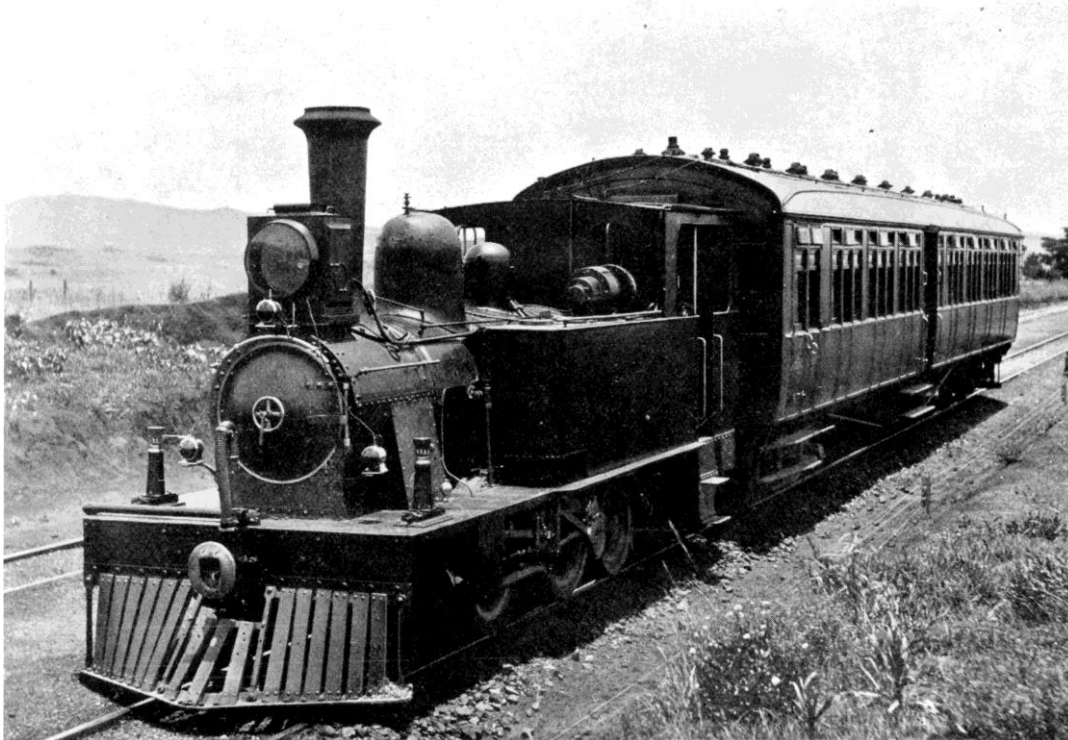
RSSA Reef Branch

Last month's meeting was a movie show of downloaded movies from YouTube of Extreme Railways in India and local running of the 16DA in Cape Town and the SA Steam Festival. Next month's meeting will be the annual photographic competition to be held on the **1st October**

Teaser

Last month's teaser was a picture I took in 2008 of a Baldwin Locomotive in Quelamane in Mozambique. Les Smith had the nearest saying it was in Mozambique. I am sorry but despite intensive researching I can find no further info on this loco

This month's teaser is an interesting picture who can tell me more?



Picture from Leith Paxton's collection

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The picture below is of the fourth batch of these monster 8 axle Locos owned by Brazilian mining giant VALE, coal trains will be operated by CLN a JV which is 80 % Vale and 20 % CFM, ordinary traffic is run by CDN which is 51 % Vale / 49 % CFM. Coal export (mostly coking coal) will go to Brazil. Whole Nacala Corridor project is costing Vale some \$ 4 billion including commercial and development bank funding. That's on top of the cost of the mine. The corridor has 680 km of upgraded existing line and about 230 km of brand new line linking Nacala system with Beira - Moatize line. There are 87 of the locomotives on order. They are being shipped ten at a time. Image shows the fourth shipment heading to the docks on the Norfolk & Southern Railway

