

NBL Preservation Group

Honorary President Professor Dugald Cameron OBE

February 2022 Newsletter



JANUARY STEAM

(photo : Peter Rogers)

This heartening photo from Peter Rogers shows North British 19D No 3322 (NB 26042) heading a Ceres Rail Company special from Cape Town to Elgin on 8th January 2022. The diesels are coupled inside the loco for use on the return journey. Ceres Rail ran these very successful trips from 2018 to the start of lockdown in March 2020. Services resumed on 11th December 2021, and this was the 8th train run so far. Bookings are at full capacity, despite some restrictions still being in place. 3322 is now an oil-burner and is fitted with a short tender in place of the original Vanderbilt type.

Ceres Rail are currently operating these 160 km round trips from Cape Town every Saturday and Sunday, the destination being the Art Deco Railway Market at Elgin. The journey departs from Harbour Bridge Platform (near the Cape Town International Convention Centre) and runs through Cape Town and its surrounds until reaching the historic Sir Lowry's Pass. Arriving at the foot of the pass, the train then embarks on an epic climb up one of the steepest railway gradients in South Africa. After cresting the peak the journey continues through the fruit orchards of the Elgin Valley before arriving at the Market. Full details of the trip can be found on the Ceres Rail website at : <https://www.ceresrail.co.za>

Staying in South Africa, last month's meeting to finalise the move of the Hendrie 1A 4-8-0 was delayed due to one of the team contracting coronavirus. The individual concerned is in good shape however and recovering well so hopefully a revised date for the meeting can be set before too long. Ironically, I did say last month that there can be many a slip – hopefully there will be some good news soon about the 1A soon.

IN MEMORY

(photos from the late Shaun McMahon)

We are deeply saddened to report the recent untimely death of locomotive engineer Shaun McMahon at the age of just 57. It is understood that he died in Buenos Aires from complications associated with Coronavirus. The photo below shows Shaun, 2nd left, with some of his colleagues at Ayacucho where he had been working on the restoration of Argentinean Class 8A 2-6-2T No 3351 (NB 17293).



Shaun began his railway career on the Ffestiniog Railway, joining the permanent staff there as a trainee technician engineer in 1984. In 1994 Shaun became Assistant Mechanical Engineer to Phil Girdlestone on the Alfred County Railway in South Africa, continuing there until 1999 when he moved to Argentina as Technical Manager for the Argentine railway development company Tranex. In his early years in Argentina, Shaun benefited from the guidance of Livio Dante Porta and was frequently charged with getting Porta's ideas translated into hardware, particularly on the FCAF railway.



In recent years, Shaun had been working on the restoration of 1906-built No. 3351 and he had been busy supervising the restoration of two of the Rio Turbio 2-10-2's which he planned to return to Rio Turbio to haul tourist trains. Shaun was a regular contributor to our Newsletter sending monthly reports updating us with his team's progress on No 3351 and he will be sadly missed by all. He was also a founder Member of the Advanced Steam Traction Trust and a fitting tribute to him can be found on their website : <https://www.advanced-steam.org/ast-news/shaun-mcmahon-1964-2022>

NZ HISTORY

(photos JM Creber)

Two more golden oldies from the JM Creber stable this month courtesy of Wilson Lythgoe. First up, on Saturday 13th November 1965 is Jb 1218 (NB 24541), looking a little worse for wear, heading north on the scenic coastal section between Nuhaka and Waikokopu with R-2 goods bound for Gisborne.

The J class were primarily designed to provide a mixed traffic locomotive more powerful than the A^B class that they replaced. They were capable of running on the lighter secondary lines of the New Zealand Railways network, but were equally capable of running express passenger trains on the main routes.



Meanwhile, on Tuesday 22 January 1957, J1201 (NB 24524), in much better external condition, passes through Croydon Road with 21 Goods. Three of the J class 4-8-2's lasted until the end of NZR steam-hauled services on 26 October 1971 and three of the forty Glasgow-built locomotives have been preserved.





As mentioned last month, Sandstone’s Cape Gauge locomotives are all now safely on site and we are very grateful to Sandstone’s Dave Richardson for kindly providing these amazing photos. The superb line up in the top picture shows GMAM 4114 (NB 27772) GMAM 4079 (BP 7677) 15F 3052 (NB 25591) and 25NC 3488 (NB 27348). These join Sandstone’s incredible collection of more than 40 two-foot gauge locos and numerous other ex SAR and Industrial Cape Gauge steam and diesel engines. The first view below gives some impression of the vast scale of the Sandstone Estates, set in the glorious Free State countryside.



Our last two photos show 24 Class No 3688 (NB 26400) and GMAM 4114 (NB 27772) still on their trailers having just arrived on site. Sandstone’s amazing collection, including Locomotives, a working railway, Agricultural Machinery, Military Equipment and Historic Vehicles makes it a must-see destination for visitors to South Africa. Full details can be found on their website at : <https://www.sandstone-estates.com>



We are indebted to Aaron Oxford for the use of this photo from his collection showing NBL Pilot Scheme Type 4 Diesel-Hydraulic No D601 'Ark Royal' pausing at Truro with an Up Express in the summer of 1960. D601 (NB 27661) was one five 'Warships' built by NBL in 1957-58, all named after Royal Naval Vessels. Being amongst the very earliest main line diesels in Britain, many aspects of their design were experimental but they lasted until the end of December 1967 when all five were withdrawn in favour of diesel electric types. 'Ark Royal' survived in Barry scrapyard until 1980 after a preservation attempt failed to save her.

Work is progressing well on the re-streamlining of NBL-boilered Merchant Navy No 35011 'General Steam Navigation' at the Swindon & Cricklade Railway. The North British boiler, which was originally fitted to No 21C8 'Orient Line', has been lifted from the frames so the overhaul of the bottom end can commence. It has been decided to return the loco to its' 1959 condition with full Bulleid air-smoothed casing, wedge shaped cab and modified smoke deflectors. Full details can be found on the 'General Steam Navigation' website at : <https://35011gsn.co.uk>

If you would like to comment on any of the items in this Newsletter or discuss anything related to North British Locomotives, please email ken.livermore@btinternet.com or phone me on 07990 575 103. Photos and news items for future Newsletters can be emailed to me or posted directly onto our NBL Facebook page at : <https://www.facebook.com/NorthBritishLocomotives>

**Thank you all once again for your continued support, stay safe out there !
More news to follow next month, Best Regards, Ken**

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