

Friends of the Choo-Tjoe

The Loop

Editor, Julie Jenkins.

friendsofthechootjoe@telkomsa.net 58 Fraser
St, Sedgefield, 6573, South Africa

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Those of you who have access to local newspapers may have picked up on a statement by Lauren Waring, the municipal manager of Knysna, concerning the Economic Development Strategy. The preamble details the way in which Knysna has been suffering in recent years from a lack of inward investment. It goes on to suggest various reasons why this is so and suggests ways in which the municipality and outside bodies can work together to stimulate the economy. So far as we are concerned, there is a statement on transport and it is worth repeating here. “The transportation of people and goods needs to be upgraded and so the municipality is investigating possibilities such as an improved public transportation system and **a modal shift for the transportation of timber and waste from road to rail.** This can only be a step in the right direction and we wish the municipality well in its endeavours.

The chairman attended a presentation at George museum on 11th October and a report is attached below.

Julie Jenkins

Those people who live locally or who are members of various social media groups will have seen the reports of the reopening of the our line. You will also be aware that the announcements made were premature. As you will see from the editorial, Knysna municipality is embracing the concept of getting freight back on to the railway as are several other municipalities. Classic Rail is the group which has put forward a business plan to enable this to happen and the Friends will support this initiative in any way it can. HOWEVER, we must remember that this line belongs to Transnet and it will be they who make the final decision as to whether the line reopens or stays closed. The following statement is interesting as it shows that Transnet is not shutting the door on our line, provided certain criteria can be met.

So keep on being positive!

Colin Jenkins

Postal address:

PO Box 846, Sedgefield, 6573 Republic of South Africa

e-mail:

friendsofthechootjoe@telkomsa.net

Website:

www.friendsofthechoo-tjoe.co.za

Mike Asefovitz, senior manager of communication and media for Transnet Freight Rail (TFR), said "TFR regularly receives enquiries and passionate pleas from interested parties regarding the reinstatement and tourism application of the George-Knysna line, which requires a substantial amount of money to repair, and the company is and remains amenable to initiatives to attract freight traffic back to rail."

In August, TFR's CEO Syabonga Gama stated that Transnet would invest R312-billion over the next seven years and that the company hoped to attract R100-billion from private investors to establish more effective and cost-effective supply chains in rail transport. This seven-year market demand strategy requires TFR to shift road freight to rail-friendly freight traffic. Gama also said that TFR planned to replace some of its ageing stock with 1 400 new locomotives within the next four years. According to Gama TFR had identified 20 branch lines, including the George to Knysna line, which could possibly be developed for tourism.

Diaz Express.

Our trolley now forms part of a three unit train which will be operating between Mossel Bay and Hartenbos. Trials and acceptance trips are due to be carried out shortly and then the train will go into service. Once the timetable and fare structure are agreed, we will send out a newsflash to advise our readers. Paid up members will be eligible for a 25% discount on tickets on production of a membership card. Cards will be issued to paid up members with this newsletter.

Colin Jenkins



Trolley repainted



Ex Damrail trolley in preparation

Report from George museum.

On Saturday, October 11th, Mr Kobus Volschenk of George Transport Museum gave a talk to the Outeniqua Railway Society. Below is summary of that presentation.

He started by explaining the setup of Transnet (State owned company) Ltd.

Transnet SOC Ltd is fully owned by the Government but is operated as a corporate entity aimed at both supporting and contributing to the country's freight logistic network.

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It aims at developing South African industry, reducing costs of doing business, while at the same time operating efficiently and profitably.

PRASA is responsible for passenger rail services as well as commuter services.

South African Airways now operates independently of Transnet.

Transnet Foundation (TF) is a specialised unit within Transnet responsible for heritage, and corporate social investment covering health, education, evp, sport and containers.

Under Heritage preservation comes the managing of the George and Kimberley Transport museums, the identification of heritage assets and securing a safe storage facility to accommodate said assets.

All heritage activities are executed in close cooperation with the South African Heritage Research Agency (SAHRA) and in line with the heritage policy and heritage asset management strategy (HAMS)

SAHRA's objectives are the formulating of a system for the identification and declaration of heritage objects, permitting restoration or repair work to be done on specifically declared objects, monitor such objects to ensure their wellbeing according to best practice and to ensure compliance with the NHRA Act 95 of 1999. (according to the act, heritage objects form part of the national estate as is defined as a place or object to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of it's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period, it's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons and it's strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa.

Transnet's heritage policy is to define heritage preservation within the Transnet environment according to South African law, promote good governance, high standards and best practice in Transnet HF, regulate the identification, preservation, allocation and restoration of heritage assets across Transnet as per current legislation, preserve and allocate heritage assets having a cultural, environmental, historical, natural, scientific and artistic significance to the benefit of present and future generations and finally, govern the disposal of heritage objects and assets across Transnet, with or without cultural significance within the confines of the NHRA in conjunction with SAHRA.

Transnet heritage asset management strategy is to draft a conservation management plan (CMP) for each heritage object or asset to ensure compliance to legislation. It will discover the current condition of an object or asset and determine what needs to be done, how, when and what the ongoing maintenance will be to ensure the object or asset's preservation. It will oversee the establishment of a heritage committee within Transnet to oversee the progress made and to intervene when required. It will be the responsibility of each Operating Division/Specialised Unit to manage their objects or assets in accordance with HAMS policy.

Mr Volschenk then went on to talk about heritage of railway items in general and the future of George museum in particular. In general, movable items such as locomotives, carriages and wagons are distributed all over the country. A number of items are in the care of "steam clubs" and some of these are not really taken care of. This could be because of a lack of

funds or a lack of volunteers to work on them. Any future loans will have to take account of HAMS policy and there will be a review of all lease/lend agreements currently operating.

There is a need to identify and secure a storage site for all rolling stock with heritage significance. Some items have already been relocated. These include one locomotive from Witbank and one locomotive from Krugersdorp to George museum, one narrow gauge diesel from Humewood (PE), class 26 No 3450 (Red Devil) to Transnet engineering (Salt River, CT) plinthed in a secure area in front of the main building, and a class B from Waterval Boven to Bloemfontein. Loan agreements have been signed with the South African Armour museum in Bloemfontein for 7 class No 981, the Big Hole museum in Kimberley for class 6 No 462 and the War museum in Bloemfontein for the display of the furniture used for the negotiations between South African Republic president Paul Kruger and the British High Commissioner, Lord Milner. The failure of these talks led to the South African war of 1899-1902.

Moving on to the museum, improvements have included a 72 metre wall display, a series of roof banners showing a time line of air travel, ports and railways and electronic boards showing the history of various items. There is a proposal to improve the current exhibitions and to move more locomotives inside.

There was also a request for members of the Outeniqua Railway Society to be more involved in maintaining exhibits. A suggestion was also put forward to get the power van to stop at the botanical gardens instead of Power. It seems it is difficult to maintain the facilities at Power whereas the botanical gardens has a tea room and toilets available.

So what does this mean in practice? So far as railways are concerned it means that a panel of experts has come up with a list of locomotives and other rolling stock which is divided into three categories, A, B and C.

Rolling stock on the A list is considered to be of historical significance and application will be made to SAHRA to have them declared. If they are declared, then it falls on Transnet to properly look after them. Rolling stock on the B list is still worth retaining for loan to selected bodies. Rolling stock on the C list is not considered worthy of preservation and is therefore to be disposed of. However, before anything is disposed of, permission from SAHRA must be obtained.

Any items loaned in future will be subject to the guidelines laid down in HAMS. This will include a secure site for the item, a plan for the restoration of the item taking into account finance, timescale, who will do the work and future upkeep. It will also include regular inspections by SAHRA to ensure that work is being carried out in the best possible manner.

On the museum side, the proposal is to remove the carriages on the office siding as these have no historical value and to move the locomotives currently outside onto that road.

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Carriage restoration continued.

With the carriage on site, the next job was to level it. This was achieved by jacking up the body and placing it on wooden sleepers followed by thinner pieces of wood as required.



Carriage levelled



Rotten bottom rail removed.

With the body level, the next job was to remove the floor along the sides to expose the bottom rail and the gusset plates (triangular pieces of steel designed to hold the cross rails and the bottom rails together). For the same reason, the steel panels on the side of the carriage were removed. The Great Western Railway used Polish oak for most of the framing on its coaching stock, but because (one assumes) Poland had been overrun and the Germans were not about to supply oak to Britain, (the carriage was built in 1940) this particular carriage, and doubtless others, had teak side framing. The bottom rail and the cantrail (top rail) were made of some very dodgy timber and had almost disintegrated in the area where the carriage had stood under the trees. Again, being wartime, the steel sheets on the side of the carriage were not galvanized but were mild steel. None of these were reusable and were only useful as patterns for the new sheets. The one amazing piece of luck was that the screws (where they had gone into teak) were the original 1x10s and screwed out with no problems at all. In fact, I was able to reuse most of them, a thing you would not normally do. Most of the knee irons (triangular pieces of steel designed to hold the uprights to the bottom rail) were beyond saving and a large quantity of new ones were made.

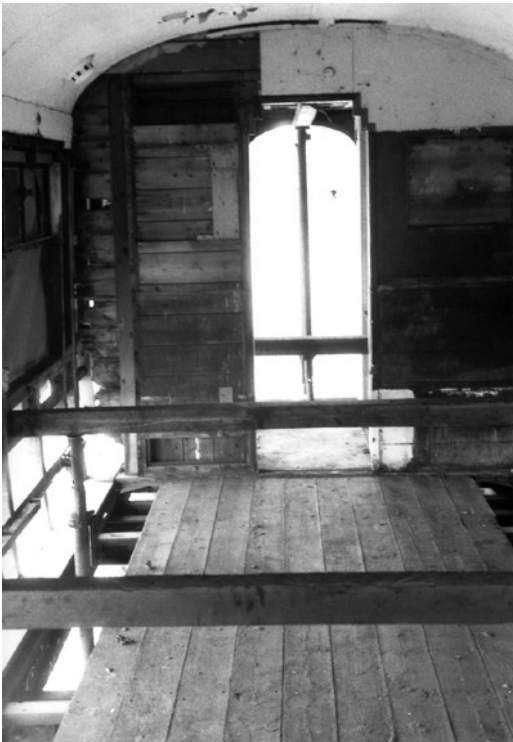
The next task was to replace the cantrails and the bottom rails along with one end rail. To do this, wooden beams were passed through the carriage below where the windows were, to a point half way down the length of the sides. Then, by the use of a number of Acrow jacks, (long screw jacks) the sides were lifted one at a time until the body was 3 inches clear of the floor. At this point, it was possible to remove the rotten bottom and end rails. Meanwhile back at the workshop, new rails had been shaped and cut to length. These were sent down the line on the last train of the day and passed over the factory fence. The position of the mortices were marked and cut out by hand using a selection of augers and chisels. Once completed. They were slid into position and the body was lowered. The new gusset plates and knee irons were attached making the body rigid. The cantrail was tackled in a similar fashion, only this time, the roof was raised allowing the rotten timber to be replaced. Using

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the old sheets as patterns, new ones in galvanized steel were cut and delivered in the same way. These were attached to the sides to provide a measure of protection against the elements.



<Acrows in place

Ready to take new rail

The running gear had not been neglected either. A set of bogies of the correct pattern had been acquired from a scrapped vehicle in Bristol and transported to the workshop. These were overhauled with parts being machined and replaced.



Bogie overhaul



New pins and bushes

A set of brake cylinders received the same treatment and a set of brake rigging was similarly machined and provided with new pins and bushes. During this period, I had some help with the centre castings.(the part that attaches the body to the wheels) Because they had come off another carriage, they did not quite line up. So several journeys were made between the

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workshop and the site to get them to fit. This involved crawling into a space about 12 inches high with a heavy piece of metal, offering it up to the steel frames, taking it down, going back to the workshop and milling a small amount off and repeating the whole performance until they both fitted. They were then attached to the frames. As it happens, this was a job that needed doing as not long afterwards, the factory closed down and I had to move the carriage.



New toilet walls installed



Body lowered onto new rail



Section of new rail

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Now that I had a set of bogies to put the carriage on, I was able to move it to the railway. So one morning a crane turned up and loaded it on to an extendable lorry. It was offloaded straight onto it's bogies the same day and at last the carriage was rail bourn again.



Moving day!



Arriving at the railway



Back on the rails

To be continued

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