



Friends of the Choo-Tjoe



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 1 – APRIL 2011

Welcome to this, the first edition of “THE LOOP”. We will be publishing an edition every three months in order to keep everybody up to date with what is happening in Friends of the Choo-Tjoe.

Most of you will be pretty well up to date having read the Chairman's report from the last General Meeting held on 10th March at the Sedgefield Arms. But for those new members here is a quick recount. Your committee decided to purchase an inspection trolley from the Free State. Five members put up the R12000 to purchase it (excl of vat) and then provided a further R10000 to move it (excl of vat). The trolley duly arrived, transported by Knysna Motor Strippers who also gave it a quick steam clean before offloading it at the premises of Bodge Engineering where it is being overhauled. Our thanks go to member Ron Hollis for making space available.

We also spent a Saturday morning weeding Knysna station. Some twenty odd people turned up and what a difference at the end of the session. The following week, Transnet's roving contractor finished the job and now the station has a lived in look.

We intend to have a display at Sedgefield station during the Slow Festival, 22nd to 27th April and member Colin Burgess is organizing this. He is in need of a gazebo, some tresle tables and some willing volunteers to man the stand . He has filled a number of slots already but some more help would not go amiss. If you would like to help out and promote our railway, please contact him on 044 343 2387.

Also on the subject of volunteers, we have arranged to hold regular working parties on the trolley on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. No skill required as there will always be someone on hand to show you what to do. If you would like to help, contact Fraser Howell on 044 382 4012.

Fraser gave a talk to the Knysna Historical Society about the Friends and it's aims. It seems to have been well received and resulted in several new members joining us.

We still await the news that Transnet has made the line over to Province. We should then have a much clearer picture of what we can do to assist in the reopening of the line. We keep in touch with the Minister's office and occasionally receive reports from that office. It does now seem as though something may happen as Transnet now have a new CEO (and someone to deal with). As soon as we hear anything, we will let you know.

We would like to start a “letters to the editor” section, so if anybody has an axe to grind or an interesting story to relate, please get in touch with the editor, Julie Jenkins, at julie.j@cytanet.com.cy or 58 Fraser Street, SEDGEFIELD 6573.

Allan Waterson has been busy setting up a website for the Friends and as soon as this is up and running, you will be advised.

Message from Fraser Howell

At the Committee Meeting held on 18th March, 2011 it was resolved that Julie Jenkins be seconded to write a regular progress report which has been given the name “The Loop”.

We wish to welcome Julie to the team and would like to urge all members to submit original material, including suitably captioned pictures to her for publication. The Loop is an important link between the Membership and the Committee and it is intended to keep everyone up to date on the progress of Friends of the Choo-Tjoe together with any other relevant news that may become available.

The “Loop”, together with relevant pictures, that Julie produces will be published on our website. This will involve considerable time and effort from Julie (and our webmaster) and your Committee wishes to thank her for offering to carry out this important function. Please help Julie to make this project a success.

An engineering team has been put together to examine those parts of the line that will require major remedial works to bring it up to a safe operating state. The team will not, at this stage, concern itself with the general upgrade of rail and sleepers but this will need to be considered before the line is reopened. Initially, the team will concentrate their efforts on the Knysna to Sedgefield section. The information and solutions that are produced by this team will be for FCT's own use, specifically to ascertain the costs of flood damage, and will not necessarily be used by whoever becomes responsible for the reopening of the line.

The volunteer team consists of Murray Douglas, Rob Burford, John Rogers, Mike Fowler and Fraser Howell. Their working backgrounds were in civil engineering and in architecture. It is hoped to make a start as soon as the transfer takes place.

Message from Colin Jenkins

Will those people who wish to be paid up members, and have not yet done so, please complete and return their membership application forms to me, together with proof of payment, at julie.j@cytanet.com.cy or 58 Fraser Street, SEDGEFIELD 6573. Thank you.

