



Friends of the Choo-Tjoe



## **NEWSLETTER NUMBER 27 – FEBRUARY 2018**

### **Editorial**

This year promises to be one of progress. Following the announcement by Transnet that the George – Knysna line was to be reopened with a view to running a service (albeit not the full line at this stage), a new spirit of optimism seems to be in the air.

Although no physical work has taken place on the line, we understand that much behind the scenes activity has been taking place.

So it is with high hopes that we enter 2018.

**Julie Jenkins**

### **Membership**

Because this last year has been very sparse on information, the committee has decided to hold over membership renewals for 2018. Therefore all paid up members for 2017, will automatically be members for 2018.

All lapsed or new members will however still pay an annual sub of R50. and a membership application form is included with this newsletter.

### **Apple Express**

Over the holiday period, the Apple Express ran a very successful series of trains from Kings Beach, Port Elizabeth to the airport. This was a joint venture involving Nelson Mandela Bay municipality, Transnet and the Apple Express. It is now branded as the Nelson Mandela Bay Steam Train. A spokesman for the municipality said that as they had paid R2.5 million to fix the line, they might as well carry the brand. The next step would be to extend to Baywest.

The fact that the train was able to run at all is due to the hard work and dedication of the team of volunteers who have put in many hours at their Humewood depot to repair, restore and renovate the locomotives and rolling stock to a condition where it could operate day after day. Hats off to them! Not only did the volunteers restore the train, but they also operated it over the holiday season.

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Passengers at King's Beach



Changing the defective bearing



The last train of the day

I paid a visit just before Christmas. The train looked superb and everybody seemed to be enjoying their day out; the trains were certainly full. Unfortunately, 119 had run a hot box on the tender and was out of action for a couple of the trips. It is not easy to get at the axleboxes on these tenders as they are set well back from the tank sides and there is very little space to operate in. Eventually, the defective bearing was replaced and the loco was moved to the depot for a checkup. It was back in time to work the last train of the day.

If you want to know more about the Apple Express, visit their website at [www.appleexpresstrain.co.za](http://www.appleexpresstrain.co.za)

**Colin Jenkins**

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## Voorbaai.

Work has been going on with several locos going through a refurbishment programme. First up was 3321 Jessica, one of Ceres Rail's locos. It came in for a 15M overhaul. This entailed a complete strip down of the bottom end. Much machining and rebushing was required to eliminate all the knocks and bangs. The top end had been done on a previous occasion and all that was required was the replacement of one large tube.

Once completed, a trial trip to Groot Brak was organized. The trip was a success with just a couple of adjustments carried out along the way. So Jessica was ready to return to Ceres.



An early morning start



Arrival at Groot Brak



Time for a checkup

A special train was organized from Ceres using 3322 Dominique to collect Jessica. 3322 was the third loco overhauled for Ceres. The idea was that the train would be double headed back to Ceres but unfortunately, 3322 had problems with the Bissel truck and the decision was taken to leave it at Voorbaai to carry out similar work to that which 3321 had received.





3322, Dominique arrives at Riversdale



3322, crossing the Gouritz River bridge



Saturday afternoon. Fishing or working? What a choice! Replacement Bissel truck



3321, Jessica departs from Hartenbos. Passing Voorbaai depot



The train left Voorbaai on the Sunday morning and those of us at the depot could hear it for ages as it worked hard up the bank out of Voorbaai.



Remetalling the slippers for Jessica's crosshead



The dismantled crosshead



Rebushing the motion

Another loco that has been receiving attention at Voorbaai is class 24 No 3655. This owned by a private individual who has paid for the work to be done thus keeping the team at the works employed. The loco has been retubed and many of the stay caps have been changed. This has meant a lot of work for Cecil machining up the blanks and fitting them to the loco. The boiler inspector declared himself happy with the boiler and a hydraulic test was carried out. A number of leaks showed up and these dealt with. When the boiler inspector returned, the pressure was increased to about a third over pressure with no leaks. Smiles all round.

The likelihood is that it will return to Cape Town along with Dominique.

**Colin Jenkins**

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Preparing the large tubes for 3655



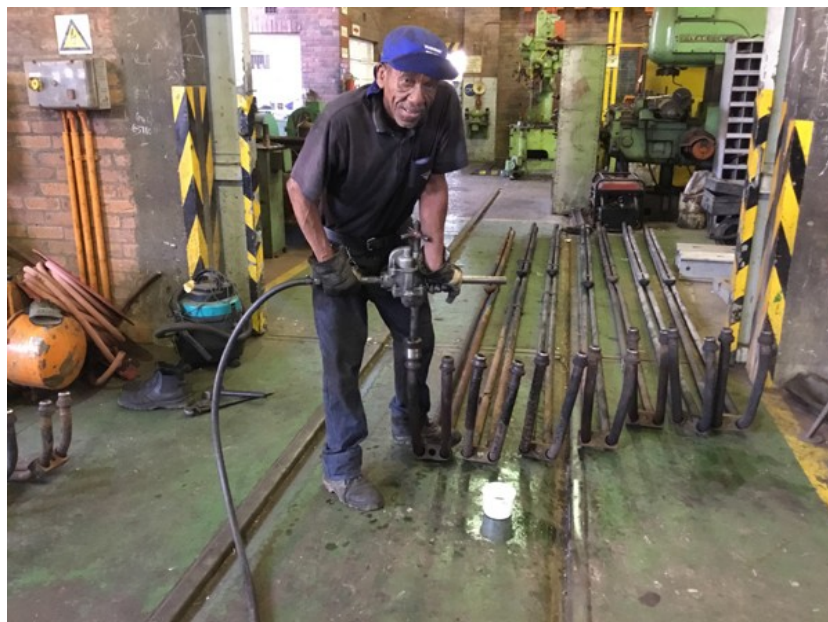
Retubing 3655



New stay caps



Replacing and tightening stay caps



Fettling the ends of the superheater elements



And finally, the Christmas braai!



## **AGM**

Advance notice of the AGM which will be held at Knysna library hall on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March at 15:30. The agenda and previous minutes will follow shortly

**Kees Estie**



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