

Sleeper theft derails steam loco



THE theft of 50 timber sleepers on a main line resulted in the derailment of a steam special in South Africa on June 22.

The accident occurred at Cullinan, east of Pretoria, when a charter headed by preserved 15F class 4-8-2 No. 3117 hit the sabotaged section on a sharp curve. Fortunately, the train was travelling slowly at the time and the line was in a shallow cutting, which partly broke the locomotive's fall. It landed on its side with steam escaping from the boiler and the leading two vehicles also came off the line, although none of the 600 passengers or crew was injured.

The loco's owners, Friends of the Rail, are now appealing for funds to repair the loco, which had only just been restored. (www.friendsoftherail.com).
Picture: JOHN ASHWORTH.