

Preservation is A Vital Part of The Picture

By John Batwell

Hilton Steam Heritage Association, KwaZulu-Natal

The Hilton station revival project started in February 2011, following complaints from the community police forum and the police regarding the deteriorating site, vagrants, drinking in public and general urban decay.

An e-mail was sent out on the local ratepayers' database and there was a resounding call in response to save the station, locos and heritage. A public meeting was called and hosted by the local Hilton Hotel.

A unanimous decision was taken to save the assets and preserve the area and its history. A committee of nine, including three people previously involved in the preservation arena, opted to create a Public Benefit Organisation. As a community-driven project, this stands a better chance of obtaining funding for job creation and sustainability than a group confined to steam enthusiasts trying to save a dying history. The committee envisages developing the station area into a tourism site and museum, embodying commercial activities to generate income and enable the venue to open seven days a week. In fact, the railway artefacts and trains would be a secondary, supporting attraction. A board of directors has been appointed and a business plan submitted to the local municipal mayor, who is supportive of the scheme.

At this stage there are six locomotives available for preserving. To date, a few volunteers have made it possible to get boiler certificates for the North British Tank (ex-ERPM no 6) as well as the Cowan Sheldon crane. A coat of fresh paint has been given to class H2 no 314 and class 1 no 1276. Other locos will be rejuvenated as time and money permit. These are class H2 tank no 329, class 19AR no 696, class 19B no 1402 and class 15AR no 1963.



One of Hilton Museum's locomotive assets is ex-SAR class 19B no 1402.

Ex-SAR Locomotives on Welsh Highland Railway

Work is in progress on ex-SAR class NG15 'Kalahari' 2-8-2 no 134. In June, it was reported that the cylinders had been re-bored; the loco drag box had the rivets knocked out and was ready to be

removed and a completely new drag box was to be attached. Work was at an advanced stage on no 134's tender. During work on the frame, the tender box was temporarily transferred to that of sister no 133. Locomotive no 134 was built by Franco-Belge in 1952.

Winter Steam Safari - Zimbabwe

Privately-owned class 14A no 512 was in use for Geoff Train's winter tour in early June. Sporting a fresh paint-job, the 2-6-2 + 2-6-2 completed pleasing runs over the Victoria Falls bridge into Livingstone.

NRZ's class 14A no 519 ran faultlessly for about 90% of the trip eastwards out of Bulawayo but experienced serious trouble on the last steep embankment towards Cement station. The Garratt did manage to get into the station, but had to be towed back to Bulawayo by a diesel. Class 16A no 611 was found in steam at the Bulawayo steam shed but did not haul a train. Sister loco no 613 put on a good performance with a 600-ton train from Bulawayo to Plumtree and back. Class 15 Garratt no 395 ran north faultlessly from Bulawayo with a 764-ton maximum load to Matetsi. Water issues at this point however resulted in the 4-6-4 + 4-6-4 arriving at Victoria Falls with slight problems.

On the Hwange Colliery system, ex-NRZ class 15 Garratt no 11 (NRZ no 423) was in service with two excellent photo sessions conducted (day and night); no 12 (NRZ no 370) is to be used as a stationary boiler and no 10 (NRZ no 392) was officially under repair, but this is a long-term exercise.



Westgate, Bulawayo – a different class 14A Garratt of NRZ, no 519, participated in the winter steam safari programme of 2012. Photo: G Cooke.

Summer Tour

The tour scheduled for November is to travel over rarely used track in Mashonaland, north of Harare, and will also visit Mutare. The branch to Masvingo will be covered too, making possible a call at the ancient city at Great Zimbabwe, before continuing to Bulawayo.

The coaches will, on occasion, be attached to scheduled local passenger trains, and at other times run as a charter, possibly with local freight attached. Locomotives will be diesel-electric, either American General Electric or General Motors units supplied to the former Rhodesia Railways and National Railways of Zimbabwe,

between the period of the 1960s and 1980s. This unique tour is ideal for anyone wanting to enjoy rare track and the opportunity to explore Zimbabwe with expert guidance. Geoff Cooke will be the tour host. For more details, e-mail UK operator Geoff's Trains at: geoff@geoffs-trains.com

Wall Calendar 2013 Railways South Africa

30cm x 20cm in landscape format. Colour photos depicting all types of traction, including industrial, Metrorail sets and the Gautrain. Also preserved steam locos and a host of nostalgic scenes such as class 25 condensers on Kimberley-De Aar, 19Bs on Lootsberg, GMAMs on Mafeking-Vryburg, and 19Ds on Maclear-Sterkstroom. Each double-page spread features an eye-catching single colour plate, the other page two months with smaller photos.

The calendar compiled by Nathan Berelowitz and Chris Janisch; design by Miemie Smit.

R60 including packaging and postage in South Africa. Details for ordering (also corporate endorsing of calendars if required) from the publishers:

Railways South Africa

P O Box 35965, Menlo Park, 0102;
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Reefsteamers' Sunrise Photo Shoot

A photo shoot for winter-hardy enthusiasts took place at Reefsteamers' Germiston depot on the morning of 14 July 2012. Class 15F 4-8-2 no 3046 and class GMAM 4-8-2 + 2-8-4 Garratt no 4079 were steamed up for the occasion.



Class 15F no 3046 in steam for the winter photo shoot at Reefsteamers. Photo: A McCarthy.



Sandstone's preserved class GMAM Garratt no 4079 was lit up for the mid-July photo shoot at Reefsteamers' depot in Germiston. Photo: A McCarthy.



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