

**APRIL  
2012**

# information

Newsletter of the Cape Western  
Railway Society.  
(Branch of the Railway Society of  
Southern Africa)

## Notice Board by Mavis Ridgard

The next Atlantic Rail trip to Simon's Town is on 29 April. Even though the train is fully booked, there is still space in the lounge car for Society members at the reduced fare.

Just a reminder to all members that the AGM has been delayed this year to 08 May 2012. Members are urged to attend. Come and voice your opinion. It is a forum for airing your thoughts about the Society.

Our librarian, Daniel, has decided after many years of faithful service, to call it a day. If there is someone out there who would like the job, feel free to approach any member of the committee for details.

Just a reminder that your subs are due. Your membership card is valid until 31 March, but you have a month's grace.

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## Preservation March 2012 by Keith Robertson

**The Site** : As usual the site needs a cleanup but looking to be bad. We still await news of our shed. News Flash : The thief caught breaking into our site repeatedly last year was sentenced to only 12 months in jail and 6 months on some other charge - so he will be out of circulation for 18 months. **PUG** : Denton to start repairs soon - some parts have to be made up. **Coach 290** : Progress being made on roof repair almost complete, then work will start on the other side of the coach which needs mouldings replaced. **Coach 1825** : Repaired tarpaulin has been fitted onto this coach roof as winter approaches. **6J 641** : Wooden window frames being replaced and varnished. Engine still to be covered up. **OZ Wagon** : Still some planks to be replaced on this wagon - work to start soon. **Coach 1555** : No progress to report **EC Rees** : No change. **THF Locos** : These engines to be shunted around soon as 3 of them will go to the Bay Steamers site. CWVr has decided to keep the 15A no. 1970 as she is considered to be the best of the bunch. It will also be pushed onto the work shop line as it will be easier to work and paint.

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## Malcolm's' This And That

I recently went on holiday to the Great Fish River Lighthouse. On the way we made a stop at Knysna both on the way up and on the return trip. A wonderful time was had by all.

However, what is of interest to our members, is a meeting we had with a group of enthusiasts in Knysna who are dedicated to opening the railway line once again. I was accompanied by my wife Mavis and Diana Kester, who arranged the meeting. The Chairman and two members represented "friends of The Choo-Tjoe".

The venue was a restaurant at the Waterfront with the lagoon as a backdrop. It was a typical Knysna balmy evening, conducive to open conversation. They told us of their plans and all the tribulations they had to face from power players within certain sections of the community. And of course the biggest hindrance of them all, Transnet, They bring up their favourite hobby horse yawn-yawn, core business! If you want to see the Knysna line once more shiny from use, give your support to these dedicated people.

You heard it said many times before : what does the Society do for its members? Well how about this : we can save you money! If you are keen to ride the rails to Simon's Town, it will cost you R220, but if you are a member that becomes R110. So subtract membership fee of R100, you save R10 (do the maths). But here

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### **NEXT BRANCH MEETING : TUESDAY 8 MAY 2012**

Opinions expressed or information supplied, are given as accurately as possible and producers and subscribers of this newsletter do not hold themselves responsible for any misinformation or errors whatsoever.

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is the good news. The second trip will still only cost R110, so you save yourself R110! That applies to every trip thereafter.

What is good about this whole scheme is that everyone wins. The members saves money and the Society boosts its membership! So next time someone says to you : What is the Society doing for me, explain this to them (with a sigh).

**Decking Over Braamfontein** : Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) CEO Lucky Montana has announced ambitious plans to construct an all-over concrete deck across the extensive coach stabling sidings in Braamfontein. This would effectively link the busy area north of the railway with Fordsburg to the south, and create some 43 hectares for “mixed use” development.

The railway systems in countries like Germany and Hong, Montana points out, derive sizeable percentages of their revenue from exploiting property assets. By following a similar course, Prasa hopes to reduce its reliance on government for operating subsidies, though it will never be possible to eliminate these altogether.

Some buildings owned by Prasa are to be leased on a long-term basis for university residence purposes. The Rotunda at Park station is to become a low-cost hotel

*From : Railways Africa*

**Pietermaritzburg Express** : KwaZulu-Natal premier Zweli Mkhize, speaking in his state-of-the-province address, said rail should become the backbone of public transport. An important initial project is to be a “Business express” between Pietermaritzburg and Durban. It is hoped to launch the project, which is costing R30 million, in April 2012. According to Metrorail’s Thandi Mkhize, only one intermediate stop will be made, at Rossburgh. “The express will aim at government workers and business people. It will have business and executive class coaches, conference and dining facilities.” Rolling stock, the track and the three stations are being suitably revamped

*From : Railways Africa*

**Windhoek-Keetmanshoop Railway Turns 100** : During the year 1910, work began on constructing a railway from Windhoek to Keetmanshoop in Deutsche Süd Wes-Africa, now Namibia. The contractors were the Betriebskonsortium Bachstein & Koppelfrom and Deutsche Kolonial Eisenban Bau- und Betriebsgesellschaft. One company started from Keetmanshoop and the other in Windhoek, the two meeting at Narib, 210km from Windhoek and 295km from Keetmanshoop. Altogether more than 5,500 people were employed on the project. The completed line was opened on 3 March 1912.

Construction included the provision of 16 stations, equipped to supply the steam locomotives with water and coal. The stations were named Aris, Leutwein, Bergland, Rehoboth, Heide, Tsumis, Kalkrand, Narib, Salzbrunn, Mariental, Orab, Gibeon, Asab, Brukkaros, Tses and Itzawisis. Over the years, towns developed around some of these, notably Mariental, Rehoboth and Kalkrand. The completion of the line meant that there was now a continuous rail network from the port of Lüderitz in the south to Otavi in the north, as well as the connection to Swakopmund, also on the coast.

Steam traction lasted until 1959, when diesel-electrics were brought in. Until the nineteen-eighties, through main-line sleeping-car trains operated between Windhoek and South Africa’s De Aar, from where connections were available to most parts of the country

*From : Railways Africa*

**More On The New MetroRail Fleet** : Announcing the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) programme for ordering new Metrorail rolling stock, CEO Lucky Montana said the 20-year procurement process for the design, build and “shared maintenance: of the rolling stock is to be split in two, the first ten-

year contract running from 2015 and the second from 2025. Strict BEE component provisions will apply. A technical transfer of skills to Prasa is required, and successful bidders must establish factory and local supply chain facilities in South Africa.

The new fleet to be acquired in the first ten-year contract is to be split between Gauteng (2,400 coaches), the Western Cape (1,800), eThekweni (936) and the Eastern Cape (228). The tender process is to begin during March, the aim being to close contracts with successful bidders by June 2013. It is hoped that delivery of new coaches will begin in 2015.

According to Montana, the Metrorail coach fleet currently totals 4,666, of which a third are out of service "owing to reliability issues....Some are between 47 and 52 years old."

Paid passenger trips are expected to rise from the current less-than-500-million people a year using the Metrorail service, to a billion passenger trips a year.

*From : Railways Africa*

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**Glencairn Station Rebuild** : Paul Kilfoil reports : "I went past Glencairn station on Wednesday 21 March and saw that the station building (a very simple structure) has been gutted and in its place a quite extensive structure is being built. I can't imagine what for – the station is used by only a handful of commuters. Perhaps some commercial venture will be using the space? It is an ideal location, with uninterrupted views north, east and south across the sea."

*From : Railways Africa*

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**Koedoespoort Eyes The World** : Transnet Rail Engineering (TRE), with headquarters east of Pretoria at Koedoespoort, is looking to exploit its excellent working relationship with the General Electric (GE) locomotive building concern in the USA. Possibilities, says CEO Richard Vallihu, include supplying motive power to other users of the 1,067mm gauge, such as Queensland in Australia, and also Nigeria. GE Transportation CEO Lorenzo Simonelli told Business Day that Sub-Saharan Africa is seen as an important region, with potential for expanded business.

*From : Railways Africa*

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**Second Healthcare Train Launched** : On 12 March, South African public enterprises minister Malusi Gigaba officially unveiled Transnet's second state-of-the-art healthcare train, Transnet Phelophepa II, at Mount Ruth Station in Mdantsane near East London.

The new train, operating simultaneously with the award-winning Phelophepa I that started in 1994, provides on-board primary healthcare including dental, optometry and psychological treatment.

Phelophepa is a flagship project of the Transnet Foundation – Transnet's specialist unit for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Phelophepa I made history when it became the first sustainable South African CSR initiative to receive the prestigious United Nations Public Service Award for excellence in public service delivery and has received numerous accolades in South Africa and around the world.

The introduction of Phelophepa II more than doubles the number of people who benefit from the facility, taking the total to an estimated 370,000 individuals annually. Transnet Phelophepa's extensive community outreach programmes include health, oral and vision screening programmes, basic health education courses and community counselling workshops.

Commenting on the introduction of Phelophepa II, public enterprises minister Gigaba says: "What started off 18 years ago as a modest three-coach eye clinic has become an internationally well-known beacon of hope, providing healthcare throughout South Africa, especially in rural areas. The launch of Phelophepa II allows us to reach the communities that need it most and demonstrates how public-private sector

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partnerships can be used to transform the lives of communities through social entrepreneurship.

"We have repeatedly committed to ensuring that state-owned enterprises entrusted to us in the Department of Public Enterprises will lead the rest of corporate South Africa as agents of change. In this regard, I challenge the private sector to match or even better this commitment."

Each train has 20 permanent staff, 16 contracted security officials and 40 students on board. They function as training institutions for South African and international final-year professional health students, not only providing practical experience for nursing, dental, optometry, psychology and pharmaceutical students, but also attracting catering students needing an opportunity to practise their skills.

The trains will run from January to September every year. When the trains are not running, they will be housed at Transnet Rail Engineering's (TRE) Salt River workshop where they undergo regular maintenance and upgrading.

The R82 million Phelophepa II project was engineered and built at TRE's facility in Salt River, Cape Town. The train boasts advanced technology such as the use of fibre optics as a network medium – a first for any train in South Africa. The cost of the second train is in addition to the R150 million Transnet spends on social investments annually.

Swiss-based pharmaceutical company, F Hoffmann La Roche, a major external sponsor of both trains, sponsors the trains' primary healthcare clinics and pharmacies, while Colgate-Palmolive partly sponsors the dental clinic. The two partners have been with Phelophepa since the project was started 18 years ago.

Phelophepa II will be visiting communities in the Eastern Cape province until May 2012; the Northern Cape from May to July; North West in July and August and Limpopo in August and September.

*From : Railways Africa*

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### **This Way And That On Transnet's Freight Lines : 6.30am, Voorbaai Rail Yard**

DAN Pienaar, driver of 1174, the weekday freight from Mossel Bay to Worcester, is champing at the bit. It's going to be hot and, with a pair of ailing 46-year-old diesels up front, anything can happen.

Pienaar and train assistant Leandré Eksteen will meet train 1173, the daily eastbound freight, at Karringmelk, a typical Cape rail siding. There they will swap trains with the eastbound's crew and bring it on to Mossel Bay.

A little after 7am, our train is hustling upgrade from Mossel Bay, its wagons trailing along obediently behind. Today's load is just 447 tons - a handful of loaded petrol tankers and some empty gondolas. Other times, the load might be timber wagons or chemical traffic, or loaded wheat hoppers.

Along with fruit containers from Ashton and Robertson, there is enough traffic, says Transnet, to guarantee one train each way on weekdays, roughly 500000 tons a year. If truckers paid the real cost of their use of the country's road infrastructure, the line would be instantly competitive.

Transnet regards the Worcester-Voorbaai link as a core route. It is the shortest east-west link between Cape Town and the Eastern Cape. But it is a mountain railway, picking its way along the foot of the Langeberg, and train speeds average 50-60km/h. On the long straight after the Mossgas refinery, we race trucks on the parallel road. Everybody waves at the train, even truckers.

"That's the problem," says Pienaar. "It takes the train 12 hours to get to Worcester, the trucks go straight to Cape Town in six." The line is an example of how single-wagon load freight has been lost from rail to road since deregulation of the road-freight industry in 1985. Now Transnet Freight Rail is trying to persuade local shippers to come back to rail. It will be a tough fight - many of the private sidings that once served online customers have long been closed.

Today track gangs are out in force, replacing old rail and swapping steel sleepers for concrete. Better rail means higher track speed, vital if the line is to compete with trucks. The locomotives, however, are on

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their last legs. The two diesels on our train were built in 1966 and are plagued by chronic mechanical troubles.

It is 33°C when we roll into Karringmelk and, as we continue west, it only gets hotter. The new crew discover I am to visit the Ore Line, one of Transnet's crown jewels and the beneficiary of a sizeable chunk of the company's R38.4-billion capital investment programme. Naturally, there is rivalry. "They have air-conditioning and computers in those locomotives," says driver August Koenze. "I don't think an ore line driver could come here and do what we do." He laughs. "I am the computer here."

**11am, Loop 3, Sishen-Saldanha ore line :** A loaded ore train stands in the loop, its last wagon invisible 4km back in the haze. Up in the air-conditioned cab of the brand-new 15E leading locomotive, Wikkie Kruger, a 42-year veteran railwayman, sits at a console, looking at the three computer screens that tell him what his train is doing.

A green signal beckons. Kruger radios the control room in Saldanha, nudges the throttle forward and the train, imperceptibly, begins to move. Apart from a muffled whine from the locomotive and the hum of the air-conditioning, there is almost no sound. It is difficult to comprehend that there is 40000 tons of train - 342 wagons, each carrying 100 tons of red ore, and eight locomotives - coupled behind.

Kruger soon has the train running at a steady 55km/h, the line's track speed. You don't fool around with 40000 tons of train, says Norman van Wyk, one of the line's operations managers. "Energy-wise, you don't want to stop this train until you reach the port," he says.

The ore trains use distributed power - four locomotives up front, four engines placed in pairs at intervals throughout the train and one pushing from the rear. Kruger controls all the locomotives - a mixture of electric and diesel - from the lead engine. The system is a work of art - just getting electric and diesel locomotives to "talk" to one another was a complex feat.

The track is heavy continuous-welded rail - ironically, it is imported - set in deep stone ballast. It is like riding on silk and a world away from the bone-jarring ride of the Voorbaai line.

The dangers on the Voorbaai route are prosaic, such as car drivers jumping level crossings and pedestrians on the track. Here, with heavy trains and extremes of heat and cold, keeping the track in good shape is a challenge. "The biggest danger we have is broken rails," says Van Wyk. Following a massive derailment last year, an inspection trolley follows every loaded train to check the track.

There is much at stake. The line may have only a handful of customers but they are mining companies with clout. More locomotives are on order as the company aims to increase the schedule to 39 loaded trains per week.

By early afternoon we are approaching Saldanha. Kruger slowly brings the train to a halt in the yard at Salcor. From here the hoppers are shunted to the wagon tipplers and the red ore flows down conveyor belts, into ships or onto the stockpile.

Since boarding their train at 3.30am at Loop 10, the halfway point, it has taken Kruger and train assistant Thando Saule 11 hours to bring their 40000-ton train safely to Saldanha. Looking towards the sea, I remark that he has one of the best office views in the world.

"Ja," he says, "but I don't always get time to enjoy it."



SMOOTH OPERATOR: One of the brand-new Ore Line locomotives at the head of a 40 000-ton ore train north of Saldanha. The new trains boasts air-conditioning and state-of-the-art computers

**Plans For Outeniqua Cableway Revived** : A viability study, including an environmental impact assessment, is under way for the building of Africa’s highest and longest cableway, from George up the Outeniqua Mountains

PLANS are back on track to build Africa’s highest and longest cableway, from George up the Outeniqua Mountains. A viability study, including an environmental impact assessment, is under way for the ambitious project.

The cableway will stretch more than 5km, from the base of the southern Cape mountains to Cradock Peak, 1573m above sea level — about 500m higher than Table Mountain. Garden Route Cableway director Alwyn van Rensburg and co-director Pierre Poolman are talking to the Eden District and George municipalities, Transnet and Cape Nature about the project.

"We are the third group to attempt the project and although we have looked at the other ideas, we are starting from scratch," Mr van Rensburg said yesterday. "The environmental impact assessment is a process that you can't predict and we realise that Cape Nature is very serious about preserving the natural beauty of the mountain. We are still in the very early stages of the project but if everything goes to plan, it would be a bonus to have the cable car up and running in three years."

There are also plans to include a rail tourism experience, linking the small town of Herold behind the mountain to George. The area has hops and wine farms, rock paintings and historic buildings.

Mr Van Rensburg said it was difficult to estimate what the project would cost, or how much it would eventually turn over. The company is awaiting quotes from international experts for the construction of the cableway, and investors will be approached.

A similar project fell through two years ago when cableway expert Claude Pretorius died aged 85. He had designed and installed the cableways at the Pretoria Zoo and Hartebeespoort Dam. He envisaged that the George cableway would create 9000 jobs during the construction phase and generate R50m a year.

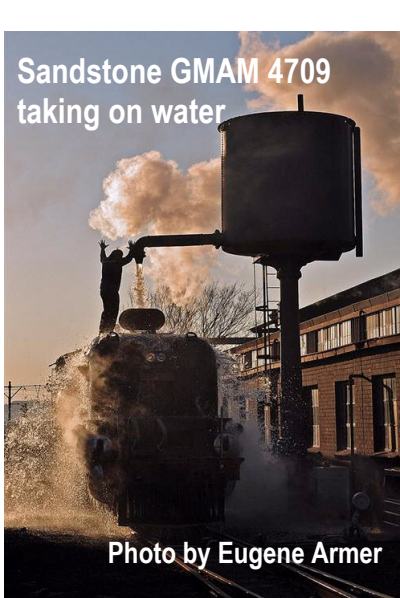
*From : BusinessDay - 3 April 2012*

**This Months Chuckle :**

I asked God for a bike but I know God does not work that way. So I stole one and asked Him for forgiveness.

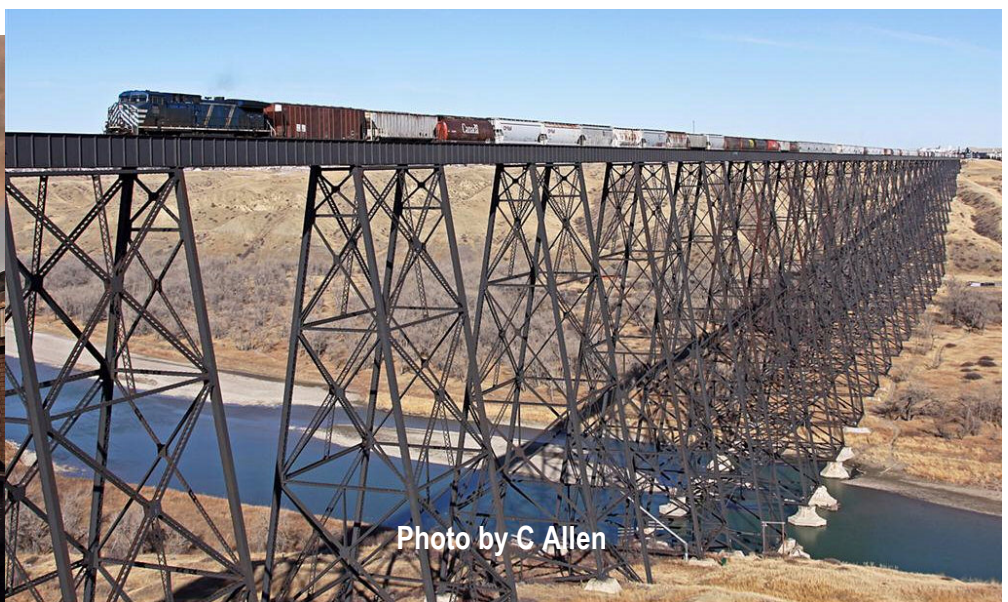
**Interesting Pictures** : Two bluebirds (GE AC4400CW) power this grain train across the mile long High Level Bridge, 314 feet above the Oldman River, in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. The 102 year old trestle is the largest of its kind in the world. .

*Pictures from : RailPictures.Net*



**Sandstone GMAM 4709 taking on water**

**Photo by Eugene Armer**



**Photo by C Allen**