



# Apple on Track

*The official Newsletter of the Apple Express*



## Circular 1, January 2014

Since our first meeting in February 2013 as the Apple Express Volunteers, time has definitely flown by, and great strides have been taken in bringing back the Apple Express. "Apple on Track" is intended to be a monthly newsletter reflecting on what has been achieved, as well as the goals for the future.

### CHAIRMEN'S ROUNDUP

Now that we are about to welcome 2014, it is a good time for a resume our achievements thus far and where we hope to be headed in 2014.

#### Work done to date

- NG15 No 119
  - Tested the boiler and found the problems
  - Established what remedial work requires to be done
  - Removed smoke box internals; spark arrestor, blast pipe etc
  - Removed the dome and blanked off the regulator.
  - Removed all the superheater elements
  - Removed brick arch
  - Needle gunned fire box and smoke to assess metal thickness
  - Moved her into the new shed.
- Coaches
  - Worked up detailed restoration project plans
  - Priced materials and estimated man hours
  - Moved first three coaches into the new shed (82,83 and 78)
  - Commence stripping external cladding
  - The damage to the weather-side of the coaches 73 and 82, which we have partially stripped, show that the damage to the structure is minimal.
- General preparation of the site for the restoration and maintenance work
  - Lifting of the steel plates covering the maintenance bays
  - Removing the limestone aggregate which was used as infill.
  - Sweeping out the whole shed
  - Cleaning the rooms ready for use as Stores and Workshops.
  - Removed most of the spares from the dungeons.
  - Moved most of the tools and equipment into the new shed

### Continuing short-term work projects

- Continue with work on the shed, including extending the roads available for rolling stock.
- Continue work on the steam loco – estimated 3 months work
  - Removal of the small boiler tubes (10 off) will take place when the gasses arrive.
  - Removal of the super heater header will take place in January
- Continue work on the coaches – we have a short list of six coaches, the majority of which already the new type bogies which will be required on all the coaches in the future, which will be restored first. The rest will follow in turn.
- The first six coaches should be completed within two months

### Operations – Near Term Objectives

With the washaway at the cemetery not repaired there are those who will maybe ask: *“What’s the point of all this work?”*

The members of Apple Express Volunteers are determined that within the next six months at the very latest we will have steam passenger trains running. Although support from Local and Provincial Government has been in principle to date, this will definitely prove that they need to invest in this vital heritage icon for the tourism image of both Nelson Mandela Bay and the Eastern Cape.

### Long-term goals

Eventually, we aim to have all the coaches restored along with our other locomotives, NGG16 No 131 and NG15 No 124.

The restoration of all the coaches should be completed by the end of 2014, but we should have a consist of 12 coaches available by mid-year. Locomotives 131 and 124 are longer term projects, probably 2015, or beyond, before they are in service. Eventually though, the aim is to return to the weekly day trips. That is just the start as Apple Express Rail and the Apple Express Volunteers are committed to the return of the tourist train day trips and longer weekend trips into the Langkloof. However, we have to realistic and acknowledge that the tourist operation is not capable of supporting the line on its own and other sources of funding are required , with the most obvious being revenue generating freight operations. This is not within the remit of Apple Express Rail or Apple Express Volunteers, but it is very exciting to consider that this line tremendous potential – we must see the regeneration of the PE-Avontuur narrow gauge line as a four-legged stool and the development of services on the NG line could include the following;

- The steam-hauled heritage tourist operation.
- Local passenger commuter services
- Community Services Train
- Freight Services

### The Way Ahead

Sometimes we can become disheartened at the seeming lack of progress at times. But then inevitably it all comes together – seemingly all at once – as it did just before Christmas. Suddenly we seemed to go from stumbling along to having three coaches in the new shed as well as No 119.

We desperately need volunteers to continue to turn up for the Saturday morning work parties and anyone at a loose end during the week is welcome to come along. Just check with Gilbert that they are going to be on site.

We can all help in raising the profile of the ***Apple Express*** by telling our friends about it. Better still, an action we can all take is to raise the subject with local MPs and councillors and tourism authorities will help to push the narrow gauge line up the agenda. One sure thing is that we cannot do this alone – we need to get the private and public sectors as well as the community to participate.

You can see from the above that the PE-Avontuur Narrow Gauge line and the *Apple Express* train has not been abandoned AND that there are committed people still working to bring a get the whole operation back to their former glory.

Kind regards,

Gilbert Jessop and John Birch

Co-Chairmen – Apple Express Volunteers

### THE GREAT SHUNT

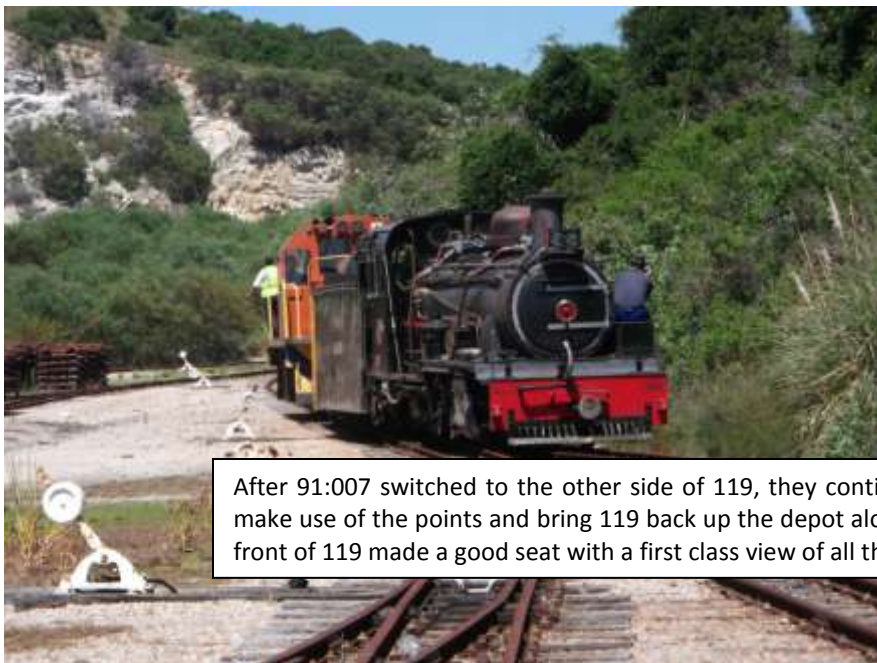
On the 19 December 2013 the Humewood Diesel depot was brought to life again with the roar of a class 91 diesel electric rumbling down the valley. It was the day the Apple Express Volunteers had been waiting for, a day for shunting!



91:007 was the lucky loco to be used for the shunt, thanks to Hennie Van Rooyen and Mark Ruddy for keeping these locomotives batteries charged so that it could be utilised for the shunt. They started the engine at least once a week to keep it in a operational condition. The weather was perfect for shunting, and 91:007 awoke to a typical PE summers day.



The first duty of the day was to collect Ng 15 no 119 “Lesley” and relocate it to the shed which has been allocated for use by the Apple Express. There was a number of failed attempts to couple 119 to 91:007, but after Mark Ruddy made use of his karate skills to place the coupler in the right position, the shunting could continue.



After 91:007 switched to the other side of 119, they continued down the depot. They would then make use of the points and bring 119 back up the depot along the correct track. The tool box on the front of 119 made a good seat with a first class view of all the action.



Ng 15 no 119, was safely pushed into her new home, where all the repairs needed will take place to get this locomotive back into operation. The next shunting job of the day was to bring in some passengers coaches, so that work could start on the fleet, as well as protect them from further damage from the elements of nature. Coaches NG 73, 82 and 83 were chosen to be brought in.



Here 91:007 carefully shepherds her short consist into the large shed directly ahead.



But all this shunting would not have been able to take place without the help from the following people:



From left to right

- Hennie Van Rooyen
- Jacques Van Zyl
- Percy Harmse
- Andrew
- Mark Ruddy
- Willie

### SPOT THE DASSIE...

NG 15 No 117 has now become the home of a family of dassies. Unfortunately this cannot be their permanent home as 117 is due to be relocated into the Apple Express shed in the near future.



On the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2013 the Apple Express Volunteers held a braai, to celebrate and reflect on a hard years work. Enjoyment was had amongst all in attendance.

We hope to see more volunteers in the future at the next social!



#### APPLE EXPRESS CAR SHOW STAND

For any organisation fundraising is always a problem. But for every problem, there is a solution, and our co-chairman Gilbert Jessop managed to organise a stand at the annual car show in Port Elizabeth to bring in much needed funds, as well as exposure.

The show was a success, bringing in a good sum of money for our tin, and even bringing a few new faces to the Apple Express Volunteer Team!



Our stand at the car show.

### APPLE EXPRESS BOARDROOM

The Apple Express volunteers have recently launched the Apple Express Boardroom. This room is intended to be a meeting place for volunteers as well as a small museum. Volunteers are encouraged to bring items which represent the Apple Express that can be put on display for the enjoyment of volunteers and for future education of the interested public.



### “NAME THE NEWSLETTER” COMPETITION

In December the Apple Express Volunteers ran a competition on Facebook to find a new name for the Apple Express newsletter. We received almost 100 names from various sites, but at the end of the day there can only be one winner.

Mike Smith won with the name “Apple on Track”. He won a copy of the book “24 inches apart”. Thanks to John Birch for this donation.

Our runner up was Douglas Ritson, and he won himself souvenirs worth R100 from the Apple Express Boardroom.

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Anybody wanting to become a part of this exciting initiative, please contact the Apple Express membership secretary: Justin Wood  
Email : [justinmarkwood@gmail.com](mailto:justinmarkwood@gmail.com)

This newsletter was compiled by : Justin Wood

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