

## Newsletter – NOVEMBER 2019

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### **2019 Chairman’s Report – November 2019**

By Glynn Chamberlain

Hello again fellow EMRIG’ers,

Dare I say, Christmas is just around the corner.

The main news of this month is the successful maintenance day we had on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. However, a bit disappointing was the number of volunteers who participated. In the end, working on the layout was Colin TT, Brian Dawson, John Burkardt and myself. And helping with the container was Kobus (even after a day at the West Rand Swap meet), Terrence and Jan.

Suffice to say, the container is now empty and returned, so there are no further payments being made there.

The great news, though, was the success achieved during the maintenance day. Wiring issues on Soweto Halt as well as Piet Pheiffer’s modules were completed very successfully. John Burkhard alone rewired Piet’s module, together with Colin and myself working on Soweto Halt.

Brian, working under Colin TT’s guidance, sorted out the DC / DCC selection on the small switching layout, as well as dusting a large amount, if not the whole, of the DCC layout on his own. However, I fear I may be stealing his thunder, so let me stop here...



The great success however was sorting out the issue with the crossover on Colin's right hand module. The existing relays were removed, and new ones fitted. During test runs, I must say, they worked flawlessly! Also, I have not heard of any issues, and I hope I am not tempting fate.

Next maintenance day / clinic will be on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and again, I feel Brian is elaborating more in this newsletter, so suffice to say, diarise it and we will get out more info as to what will be happening closer to the time.

I am sorry to say, but that is pretty much it for this month. Next month we have our last swap meet of the year and, I am sure, in the next newsletter and via WhatsApp and email, more info will be divulged.

So, 'til next time,

Happy railroading.

Glynn Chamberlain

## **Other Club News**

By Brian Dawson

### ***Reporting Layout Issues (reprinted from last month – for those who didn't read it previously)***

We have a Maintenance Register at the club, where all layout maintenance issues that are discovered should be written up. The idea was that, if there was an area on the layout that was particularly problematic, you could use Jimmy's "yellow dot sticker" idea, plak a yellow sticker at the offending point on the layout, write in the register what the issue is at that position, and write the number of the corresponding maintenance report on the appropriate yellow sticker. This procedure should still be followed, please.

But, in addition to the above (which physically identifies WHERE the issue is located), Glynn has requested that you ALSO send an email describing the issue, to him at [info@emrig.co.za](mailto:info@emrig.co.za) (or alternatively mention on the Whatsapp chatgroup), as he and Colin don't often get around to looking in the Maintenance Register, and may otherwise be oblivious to the existence of "The Issue". That way, the issue is more likely to get attended to...

### ***Club Workshop on 26<sup>th</sup> October***

Okay – so there is a little bit of overlap here... 😊😊😊 The latest Workshop took place on 26<sup>th</sup> October. And there weren't a lot of us there to do the work part of it!! In fact, there were only four of us there for the "workshop part", which happened during the morning – Glynn, ColinTT, JohnB and BrianD. Glynn and Colin between them first re-wired the Soweto Halt module, and then installed the new relays made up by Colin, for the faulty cross-over points on Colin's station yard. John wired up the airfield module (which did not have any bus-wires on it), and Colin and Brian changed the wiring on the HO Shunting layout so that it can



now accommodate both DCC **and** analogue DC running. Brian did some dusting of the structures on the DCC layout, as he could not be trusted with any of the wiring work (having not attended the soldering workshop!), carried things around, and also made tea / coffee, and sorted what he needed to for his shunting puzzle article. But it was actually a very productive workshop, although Glynn and Colin did have to come back on Sunday morning to finish off a bit on the relays.

When it came to clearing out the storage container in the afternoon, a few extra faces showed up at the container yard – Jan (with the key to the container), Kobus (with his “truck” for moving the stuff we needed to move – dankie, Kobus!), Terrence (who came to take some modules away), and Glynn’s son John (called in to help lift and carry and provide some extra muscle power when Glynn saw how few of us were there, and ended up with having half the stuff put into HIS container!). So our container is now empty, the rental has been cancelled, and we are no longer incurring that cost. Jan is hoping to be able to accommodate the HO Exhibition Layout (the main bulk of what needs to be stored) somewhere at the RynPark retirement complex, and will know within a month or two if that can be done. If it happens, then anyone wanting to run DC trains is welcome to go and run on that layout at Rynpark. And if it can’t, Mark has arranged that we can share a storage container with the school where he is involved, at a significantly reduced rental. Meanwhile, the stuff (less a few more pieces brought back to the club) is now sitting in John Chamberlain’s container...

And so the NEXT Workshop session will take place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, where we hope to do some more general cleaning and maintenance. Please **make a diary note of that date NOW!!**

### ***N Gauge Action...***

Glynn has drawn up a diagram showing what he has in mind for the N Gauge layout – basically to introduce two sets of points into one of the balloon loops, allowing for running from either direction off into a modular branch-line which would then come off at right angles, and can be extended across the room, curved around, split off into two directions..., whatever we want to do with it. The extension would all be built on modules for ease of construction and flexibility when it comes to future moves, and we can then develop industries and sidings on them to make things more “interesting”. We can have the module bases (boxes) produced for us, and then interested members can do the track-work and scenicking according to their own imagination, but sticking within prescribed Freemo standards for compatibility at the module ends.

### ***Swap Meets (At Northmead And Elsewhere)***

The last Swap Meet, hosted by Xroads Hobbies, was held in Krugersdorp on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October (clashing with our Workshop! – so maybe that’s where all of you went to, instead of attending the workshop??). Or maybe not..... One of the traders, when asked how it went at that swap meet, commented that it was a “bring your own customers” affair (followed by an emoticon with hands held over the face in dismay!!). It seems that not a lot of people attended it!

The next swap meet (there’s nothing in November!) is on 7<sup>th</sup> December, hosted by PMTC in Pretoria, just a week before ours, and hopefully, for the sake of the traders, it will be better attended than the last one. And then **OURS happens on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December**. Please make a diary note that all club members

should be at that one, not only to support the traders, but also to assist as usual with the setting up and taking down afterwards.

### ***Club Communications Media (our regular monthly reminder)***

These are our newsletter, our Website, our Whatsapp Group, and our Facebook page, and occasional general Email correspondence...

The **Website** address is [www.emrig.co.za](http://www.emrig.co.za).

The **Newsletter** is uploaded to the club's website each month, and a link to the website location is emailed to members once the latest newsletter is available. Members who have requested such, are emailed a copy of the newsletter. Printed copies of all recent newsletters are also housed in the club library.

The **Whatsapp Chatgroup** is administered by Niel Wilson. To be added to the group, you need to be an active paid-up member of the club. Send Niel a message at 078-305-5248, and he will add you to the group.

The **Facebook page**... Type "EMRIG" in the searchbox at the top of your Facebook homepage (this assumes you are on Facebook). This will bring up the club's page. And if you like it, "Like" it!!! ;-)

**Emails** are sent to club members when there is something important that you need to be notified about.

## ***Are You Happy Just Going Round And Round? Or Would You Like to Do Something A Little Different?***

By Brian Dawson

I guess it's a case of "different strokes for different folks" ... ..

The other day I was entertaining myself at the club, solving a small shunting puzzle that I had set up for myself in the HO Shunting Room, in Doug Langford's delightful little Douglasdale Station. Often, if there are other members making use of the "main" HO layout, then I will choose to go through next door and do something a little "different"...

Within the three modules that comprise Douglasdale, with its two platform lines and various sidings, I have identified nine points at which wagons can be dropped off, appropriate to their identifiable (or assumed) loads. Fortunately I have quite a collection of little old British freight wagons, more than enough to be able to allocate wagons to each of the drop-off points, and an old British shunting loco or two, so it all fits in rather nicely with Doug's "Olde English"



theme at Douglasdale.

When I started playing there, I would just drop off any old wagon at each of the points, doing whatever happened to be the easiest option. But recently I have made things a little more difficult (and



“more interesti

ng”) for myself! I have placed little numbered stickers at each of the drop-off points to identify them. And I have also placed corresponding numbered stickers on the freight



wagons that I feel are appropriate to be consigned to those points. The numbers on the drop-off points are essentially sequential from East to West, 1 through 9. So when I make up my “mixed goods” train in Brunton (Bob’s little passenger station off at the end of the right hand [western] branch-line) I make up the train as randomly as possible – but still sticking to certain basic rules or conventions of railroading, such as that livestock wagons are placed close to the brake-wagon; a fuel tanker (if I include one) is never placed next to the loco, or the livestock wagons, or to other flammable loads; heavily loaded wagons are placed towards the front of the

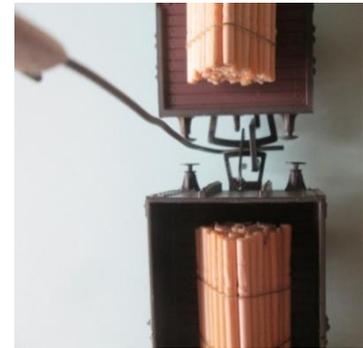


train, and empty wagons towards the back.... Within these constraints I then try to randomise the rest of the wagons as far as possible, to intentionally make my life difficult!

I use a couple of open gondolas, four boxcars, two livestock wagons, a couple of coal wagons and a sand-loaded wagon, or an oil tanker. As there are two separate coaling bunkers, the two coal wagons go to different points, with one of them, plus the oil tanker or the sand wagon, going to the engine maintenance shed. There is enough space for the two livestock wagons next to the sheep loading pens, and then there are two general freight areas on different sidings where the boxcars and gondolas are appropriately consigned.



The physical problem that I encountered is that my locos and wagons all have Bachmann couplings, which means that they do not uncouple easily. (And some of you will probably remember that I was the one who REMOVED the uncoupling magnets that Bob Brunt had placed at strategic places within Douglasdale, to assist with uncoupling at those points! Oh dear!!) So I



invariably had to lift a wagon off the track and twist it to free it from the next wagon in line. But this I saw as a minor obstacle, compared to the pleasure I get from tackling and solving the shunting puzzle! I have now made myself a little lifting hook, to slip in under and lift the couplers, and will see if that now solves my “uncoupling challenge”...

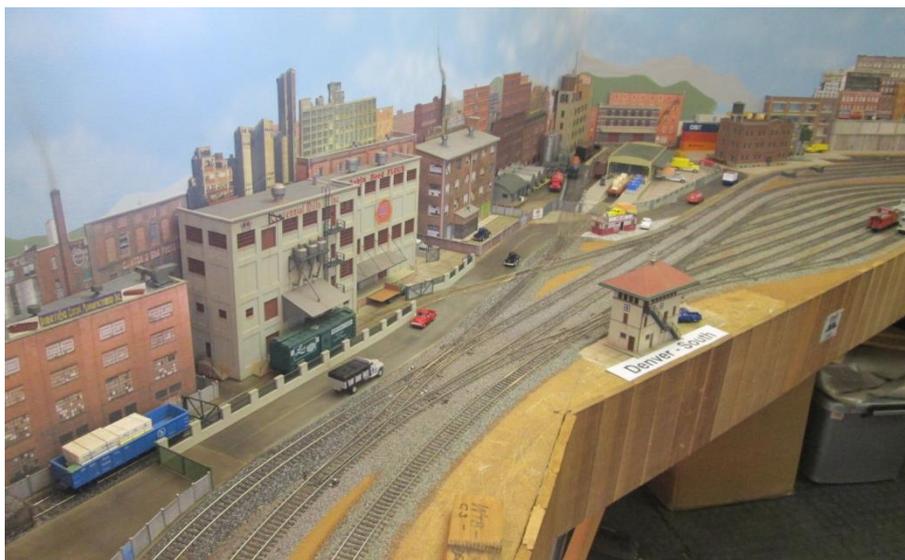
But to get back to my opening statement.... While I was having fun there a couple of weeks back, one of our members, who may remain nameless, came through and watched me “at work” for a few minutes. He just could not understand why I was going to all that trouble, (clumsily) unhooking particular wagons at particular points, going backwards and forwards, having to run my loco around particular wagons to be able to push them in certain directions to get them in position in the dead-end sidings in a particular sequence. His comment to me was – “that’s much too fiddly for my liking”, and he walked away. He is one of the club members who, it seems, is quite happy to “just go round and round”, and I am sure that there are many others like him in the club. And that’s okay – really, it is!!

Then, a while later, Niel Wilson came wandering through to see what I was up to, and immediately recognised what I was trying to achieve (and could have suggested ways in which I might have made my moves more efficiently, but politely didn’t bruise my ego by saying so!). Instead, he suggested that “you could make this even more interesting for yourself if you first placed some additional wagons on those sidings, which need to be removed before you start with your drop-offs”. And that’s exactly what I am going to do next time I am there having fun...!!

What I am doing, while “having fun” in the Shunting Room next door to the main layout, is like a mini “Ops Session”, or at least the shunting portion thereof. Prototypical trains don’t just run around and around in a closed loop. They move from certain places to other places, with a particular purpose, moving freight or passengers from point A to point B, or moving to a designated point to go and collect freight or passengers in order to move them, and then returning. And that’s what we try to model in our Operations Sessions...



I have been privileged to be included in the Operations Group that makes use of Glynn’s and John B’s home layouts once a month (both of which have been specifically designed with “operations” in mind), to “operate” trains (as opposed to just playing with them). Some of those trains too, in reality, do also just go “round and round”, because of the looped nature of one of the layouts (Glynn’s) and the practical difficulty of turning trains around if they need to travel in the opposite direction. But in



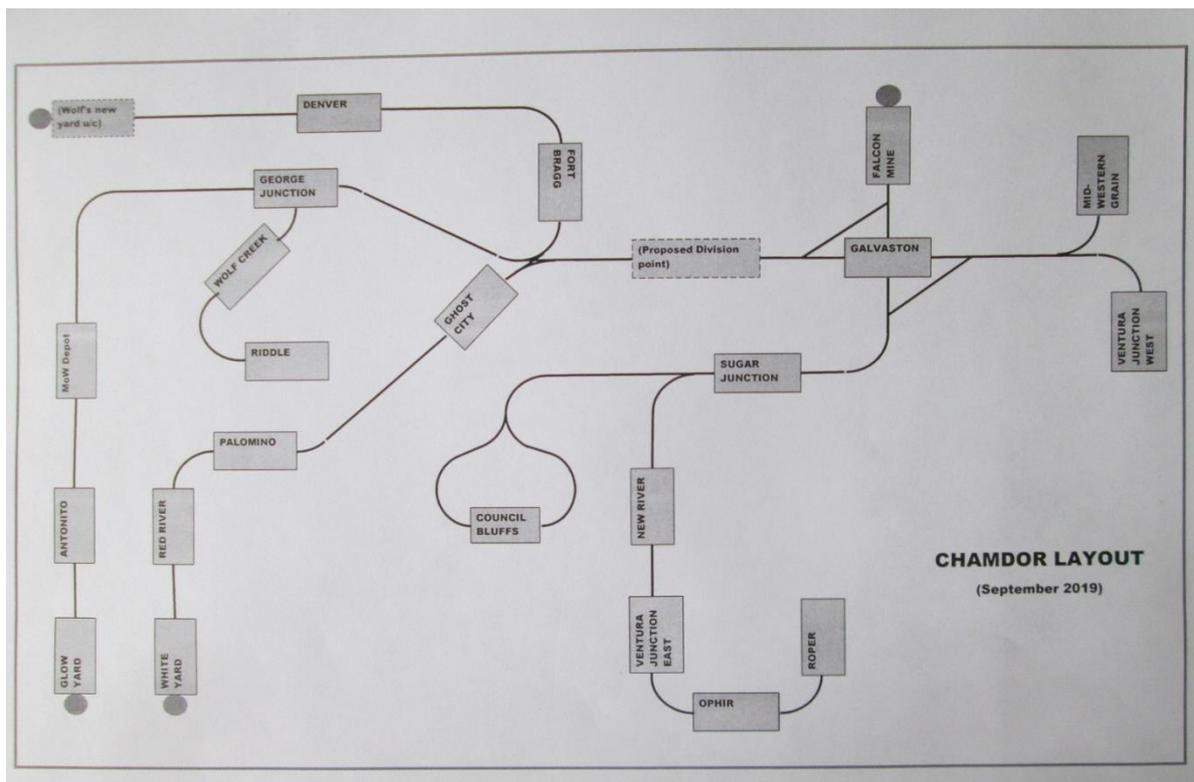
Glynn’s case there are numerous sidings and industries for dropping off and picking up freight wagons along the way. John B’s layout is an end-to-end “folded dog-bone” format, with turning loops at each end so that the trains, once they have reached their destination, are turned back around in the correct orientation for their return journeys). But all those trains

travel according to a timetable schedule, on single tracks where there is stopping and starting because there are other trains present in the section ahead, while certain trains (the freighters) stop at designated points to have some wagons removed and others added to the train in their place. And then the “local” trains take the wagons that have been brought in from a distant yard, and take them to local destinations and shunt them into position at the industries to which they are consigned.

I also joined the Gauteng Freemo Group (GFG) nearly two years ago, and through that membership I have access to the Chamdor Freemo Group (CFG) which



started up as an offshoot of GFG. GFG and CFG run American trains (all with the same [Kaydee] coupling system), on a single main line layout with many branches, with passing loops, and with NUMEROUS yards and sidings and industries around the layout, again with the express purpose of picking up and dropping off freight (freight wagons) at specific industries.



**Chamdor Layout schematic drawn by Mike Richardson**

From time to time I will go out to Chamdor on a Tuesday, when a couple of the CFG members are there working on the layout, or else on a Saturday when more of them are there, I pay my R50,00 “running fee” (as I am not a member of CFG), and I then spend the WHOLE day there moving train loads around. The last time I was there, I took a train out of Roper Yard, had drop-offs and pick-ups at Ventura East, New River,

Sugar Junction, George Junction, and Antonito, on my way to Glow Yard. That took me ALL morning. In the afternoon I ran back out of Glow Yard, with drop-offs and pick-ups for Antonito, George Junction, Palomino and Red River, and ended up at White Yard. On a previous occasion, I took all day to run from Council Bluffs to Mid-Western Grain, and then from there down to Roper. And I haven't had so much fun in a long time!! CFG/GFG have monthly running sessions on designated Saturdays, when there can be upwards of 10 of us operators all running trains simultaneously. It's a nice big layout, with plenty of room for all of us!

Car Type	BOX CAR
Road Name	ROCK ISLAND
Car Number	147789
Colour	BROWN
Return Empty to	

WAYBILL	1
Car Type	BOX
Ship To	NEW RIVER
For	NEVADA TRADE
Lading	FERTILIZER
Lading	EMPTY
For	
Ship To	WHITE WARD
Car Type	BOX
WAYBILL	2

At CFG there are some 290 freight wagons on the layout, each of which has a car card and waybill, as Glynn has described in his Operations Adventures series. At Douglasdale, I only have 11 wagons (well, there'll be 22 when I also place those that Niel has suggested), and the numbered stickers on the wagons are actually a simplistic form of waybill. But the principle remains the same – particular wagons go to particular specified destinations.

At EMRIG we have spoken a number of times over the few years that I have been in the club, about the desirability of holding Operating Sessions for all the other club members. There have been logistical obstacles – the fact that we are a very “free and easy” club, where members can run a variety of different trains (different nationalities, and different makes), with many different coupling types (some even mixed within a train set). And our loop layouts, with minimal sidings, are not really conducive to freight movement. The previous layout in Shop 23 was a bit more suitable, when we had the industrial branch-line included, but our current layout in the office suite is unfortunately now even less amenable to operations. And yet, we believe that there will be at least some of our members out there who ARE more “operations-inclined,” and not just content to go “round and round”...

... And so we are looking at options to encourage more of an “operations mind-set” where we can. One of the possibilities that the committee recently discussed was to build a number of new modules to add to the current branch-line setup, in place of the existing straight-line modules, thus providing some additional “industries” either side of Douglasdale, with more scope for pick-ups and drop-offs. An even more adventurous suggestion was to develop a new modular layout, similar to the GFG system, which we can quickly assemble in a local school hall during holidays, in order to run Operations Sessions there as well.

But I guess before we spend a lot of time and effort in building new modules or layouts, we need to establish how many of our members would be interested in being more “operations-minded”, rather than just running their trains “round and round”....

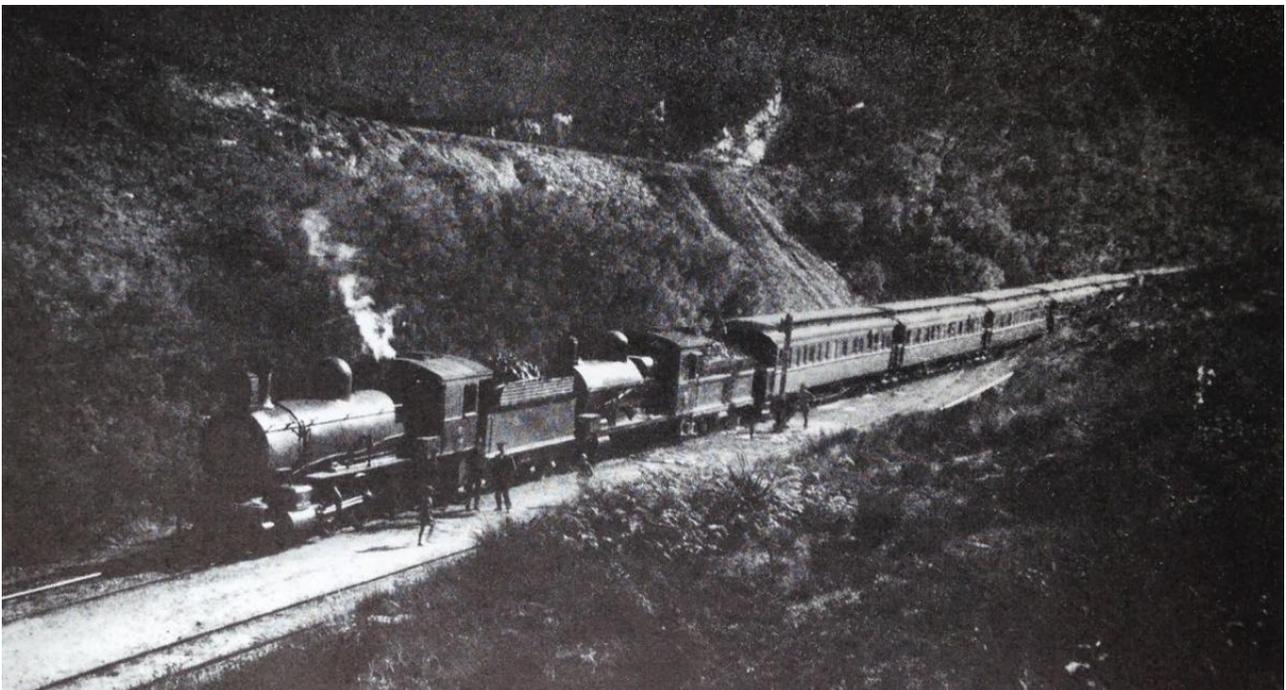
The HO Shunting Layout has recently been re-connected so that it can now handle either DC or DCC locos (through a simple plug selection). I'm going to take the risk of leaving my little numbered freight wagons, and a cheap DC loco (if I'm around, I'll be happy to loan you my DCC one), on the Shunting Layout... with a challenge to all of you guys to go in there and try it out – see whether you are up for and enjoy that challenge, and, if you do, how efficiently you can solve the shunting puzzle! And if you are up for it, we do seem to be needing a few additional operators at our monthly Operations Group sessions... and that would be the next step to take, if you don't want to just go round and round!!

## ***Montagu Pass - The Final Link***

Article by Peter Ball, copied from the RSSA's "On Track" Magazine, September & October 2019 editions

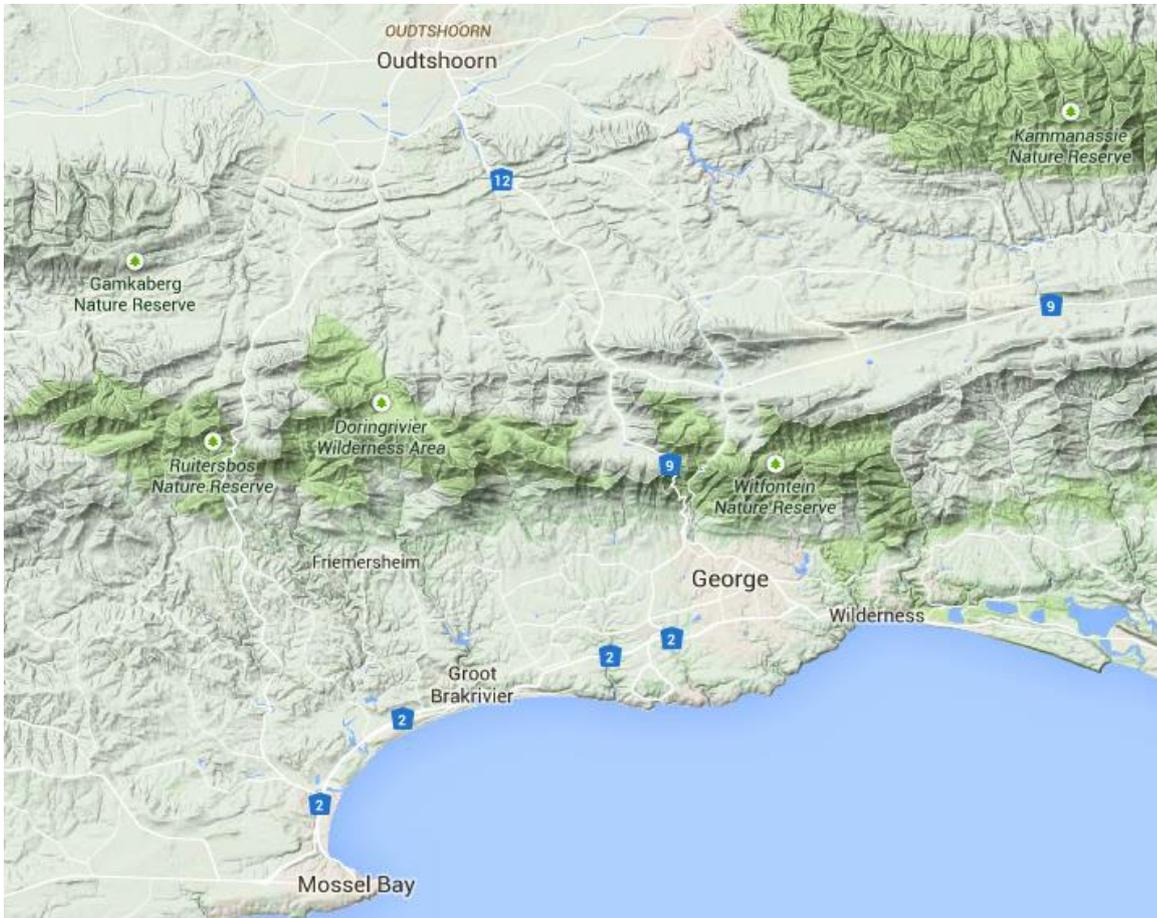
**Editor's Note:** *I spent twelve wonderful years of my life working on National Roads – either for Dept. of Transport, or as a consultant advising them on rehabilitation methods used for vegetation establishment to stabilise the roadsides, and most of those were spent working on the Cape roads that were under construction or being up-graded at the time, especially those in the Southern Cape (remember the Kaaimans Estuary and Knysna Bypass controversies of the 1980s?). I kept a caravan at the Roads Dept. in George, used to stay in the caravan park at Victoria Bay as my local base, and travelled all over the Southern Cape from Mossel Bay to East London... and so the mention of the roads and railroads in that area brings back many good memories for me! Hence my fascination with the area. So when I come across railway stories about that area, I have a very good appreciation for just how difficult it must have been to build and operate railways there!! This article was produced, in two parts, in On Track, the magazine of the RSSA, which is kindly sent to me monthly by Jean Dulez (in lieu of writing articles for us!).*

Peter Ball continues his epic History of Southern African Railways series with this superb piece on the line from Mossel Bay to Oudtshoorn. He sets the historical context, highlights the incredibly difficult terrain for railway building and concludes that it is remarkable that the line was built at all.



The Outeniqua Mountains run parallel to the coast in the region we now call the Garden Route. They separate the coastal strip from the valley of the Olifants River, which is better known as the Klein Karoo. The mountains were a natural barrier to those who wished to venture inland beyond the coastal shelf, and the

native people of the Cape, the Khoikhoi, were the first to discover ways over them, by following animal tracks.



Terrain Map (Google Maps)

When the Dutch East India Company (or VOC) established a victualing station at Cape Town (in 1652) for its ships sailing to and from the Spice Islands it never intended to colonise the region, however it did send out expeditions for the purpose of trade with the Khoikhoi. One such expedition took place in 1689 and was led by Ensign Isaq Schrijver who was sent eastwards over the Hottentot-Holland Mountains, along a track which would become the old Cape Wagon Road.

His journey took him and his column of men through the Overberg and further onto a shimmering bay having a backdrop of mountains. This sheltered bay was well known to the Portuguese sailors as an anchorage and they called it “Aguada de Sao Bras”- Bay of St. Blaize - and it was where Bartolomeu Dias had first set foot in 1488 after he had rounded the Cape, with his tiny fleet of three caravels. The bay where he landed is known today as Mossel Bay.

To the east of the bay, Schrijver found the terrain to be impassable owing to deep ravines and dense forests, and he was thus forced to strike northward to find a pass over the Outeniqua Mountains, which he duly did when he found an old elephant path that eventually emerged onto the stony plains of the Klein

Karoo. This was the first pass over the mountains known to Europeans and was named the Attaquas Kloof Pass, after the local head of the Khoikhoi. The pass still exists in part and is situated slightly to the west of Thomas Bain's Robinson Pass (of 1869), and it can still be followed on foot or by driving a 4X4 vehicle - on receipt of a special permit issued at Bonniedale farmhouse.

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, communications between the coastal strip and the Klein Karroo were greatly improved when a new road pass was opened in 1847, between George (founded in 1811 and so named after King George III) and the village of Herold by the Colonial Secretary for the Cape of Good Hope, John Montagu. The pass was duly named in his honour, and it replaced a very steep and dangerous pass known as the Craddock Kloof Pass of 1812 (which had been used by the Voortrekkers). The Montagu Pass was engineered by Henry Fancourt White, and he was able to reduce the gradient by spending more time winding around the lower slopes of Craddock's Peak and finding a crossing of the watershed at a lower elevation. The road, although untarred and narrow, is still in use today as an alternative to the modern Outeniqua Pass (N9 & N12), should one wish a scenic drive on a mist free day.



**The Montagu Pass (from Illustrated Guide to the Southern African Coast)  
(Note the very visible road pass low in the valley, and the railway pass high up on the slopes)**

Oudtshoorn, in the Klein Karroo, became the centre of the Ostrich feather trade from 1875 to 1914 and there were two boom periods, the first between 1875 and 1885 and the second between 1903 and 1914. The latter was the bigger and many fortunes were made; however the bust came shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, when fashions changed and the ostrich farmers went bankrupt.

Interestingly, Oudtshoorn became known as “Little Jerusalem” as the feather trade attracted many people of the Jewish faith as buyers and salesmen. They came from Lithuania where there had been pogroms against them, and they sought a new life in the Cape. They spoke Yiddish, a dialect of German which was not too dissimilar to the dialect of Dutch (Afrikaans) which the farmers spoke, thus the new immigrants could easily learn the local language.

Oudtshoorn and its surrounding towns were prospering and were eager for railway communication but, alas, they were bypassed by the Cape Government Railway (CGR), when the CGR extended its main line from Worcester, up the Hex River valley, towards Kimberley by way of Beaufort West (by 1882). Oudtshoorn again missed its chance when the privately owned Cape Central Railway (CCR) built a branch line from Worcester to Roodewal (now Ashton) via Robertson. The line followed the course of the Breede River and was completed by 1887. An extension of the line through the Kogmans Kloof Pass to the town of Montagu was proposed, which would have allowed an eastwards extension into the Klein Karroo, however this was thwarted by the decision to extend the railway line towards Swellendam instead, under the aegis of the newly formed New Cape Central Railway (NCCR).

The farmers of the Klein Karroo were disappointed but not disheartened, and they instead looked eastwards and were determined to get a rail link to Port Elizabeth (PE); this was accomplished by the CGR’s Midland division, by way of a branch line from the junction on the PE to Graaff-Reinet line at Klipplaat. As elsewhere, the work was delayed for the duration of the Second Anglo Boer War (11th Nov 1899 to 31st May 1902) and the line was finally opened on the 1st March 1904.

Meanwhile the NCCR had been busy extending its line in stages, firstly to Swellendam (by 12th April 1899) and then onto Riversdale, (by 19th Feb 1903) and by 1904 a further extension towards the Gouritz River was underway with Mossel Bay the final goal.

Mossel Bay had a harbour midway between Cape Town and PE, and was seen to have the potential for further development, as good harbours were scarce along the Cape coast. As early as 1875 the Cape Government was petitioned by the townsfolk of Mossel Bay for a railway line into the hinterland, towards Oudtshoorn (to tap its wealth), which was similar to the proposals set forth by PE and East London. Mr J. Devonsher Scott, the Chief Resident Engineer at PE was duly sent to undertake a running survey for a possible railway between Mossel Bay and Oudtshoorn. His report given in 1876 was not optimistic, in fact he stated: “Difficulties are two-fold in nature. First, as a possibility of passing the mountain range at all and second the practicability of reaching it from the Mossel Bay side”.

What was the reason for his pessimism? The answer lies in the very peculiar topography encountered, which might have been especially intended to discourage railway builders. The shoreline is almost entirely sandy with windblown dunes just above the high water mark. From these dunes a coastal shelf rises abruptly to a height of 200 to 250 metres and this shelf extends at more or less the same level to the foot of the mountains, 10 to 40 km inland. The mountains vary in height from 1 000 to 1 500 metres with the southerly (seaward) face usually being steep, whereas the northerly side is more gently inclined. Furthermore, passes are, in reality, saddles over the range. The Gouritz River, to the west of Mossel Bay, is the only river to have broken through the mountain range, and its gorge is long and tortuous. It was considered as a possible way through for a railway but was discounted on the basis that earthworks would be heavy and therefore expensive and not thought practicable. Moreover, the rivers rising in the mountains have, over

the millennia, cut into the coastal shelf to form deep ravines; hence any route running parallel to the mountains would entail costly bridgework, while shifting sand precluded building along the shore.

The above gives the background to the problems that would be encountered when the line was under construction, due to the lie of the land. Numerous surveys were conducted and initially a route either wholly or partially through the Gouritz River Gorge held sway, but eventually a route via George and the Montagu Pass was opted for.

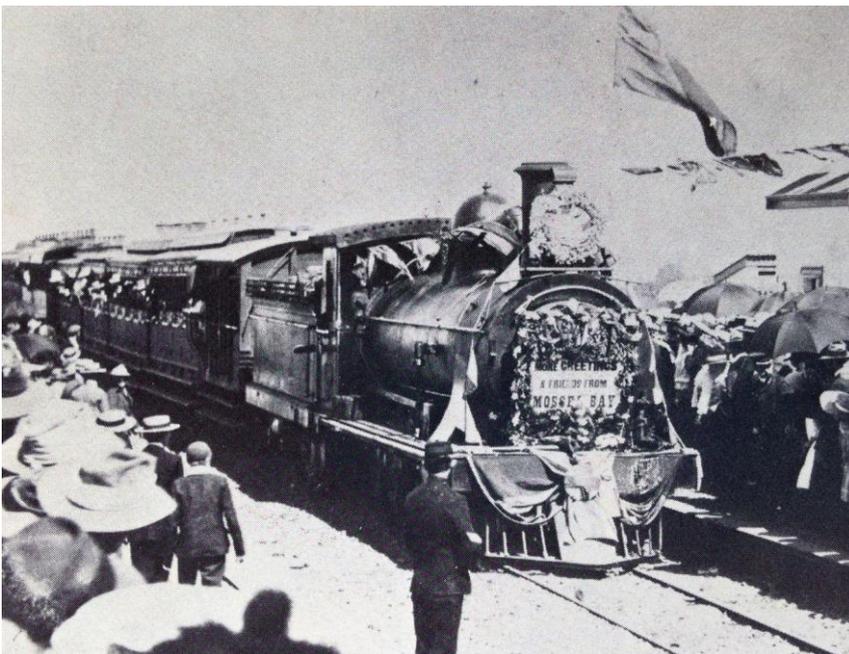
Even then the debate was not over, as various proposals were put forward with regard to whether or not a rack section should be used on the steepest part of the line or a narrow gauge should be used (as was later the case for the Avontuur line). It was finally decided that the line should be built to main line standards, that is to the Cape Gauge (3'-6"), with curves of 5 chains (330 feet = 100.6 m) and gradients no greater than 1 in 36 compensated.

There still remained the thorny issue of cost, which was estimated at £800 000. A scheme was formulated in which a private company would be enlisted to build and operate the railway, and that company would benefit from a subsidy of one third of the actual cost of the construction.

So it was that by the provisions of the Railway Extension Act of 1895, the Grand Junction Railway Company was contracted to build the line from Mossel Bay to Oudtshoorn, via George. The contract was signed on the 13th October 1896 (was that perhaps a Friday?) and work was started immediately from the Mossel Bay end, with a planned completion date of the 2nd August 1899! The three year building programme was far too optimistic and should have been queried right from the start.

By early 1898 optimism had turned to grave doubts, as only 15 miles (24 km) of earthworks had been built around the shore between Mossel Bay and the Great Brak River (not a difficult task), and it was no surprise

when the contractor went bankrupt in 1902. At that time the earthworks were near completion, close to George, at milepost 31 (50 km). No start had been made on the bridges over the Great Brak, Malgaaten and Guyang Rivers, and the Cape Government was forced to take over the work. Work recommenced during October 1904 and the line as far as George was opened to great fanfare on the 25th September 1907.



**The first train from Mossel Bay to George arriving at George (Railways Southern Africa July 1977)**

The NCCR had by then already reached Voorbaai Junction, just to the north of Mossel Bay and, by prior arrangement with the Cape Government, was handed the operation of the line until such time the line over the Outeniqua Mountains was completed.

The long awaited commencement of the building of the railway line over the Outeniquas, was begun on 1st December 1908 (just over a year after the railway had reached George). Convict labour was at first used, but during 1910 free labour was brought in. That was also the year of the Act of Union and the establishment of the South African Railways (SAR), after which rapid progress was made. The line was engineered by Mr. T.H. Watermeyer and it took four and a half years to complete at a cost of £465 000



(against an estimate of £350 000). The work had entailed the blasting of tunnels, of cuttings, of shelves and the casting of concrete culverts, viaducts and retaining walls and the laying of the permanent way (ballast and track).

It was one of the most difficult sections of railway line to build (and operate) in the whole of Southern Africa, rising 2 345 feet (715 metres) in one continuous climb of 15 miles (24 km) from George to Topping (the summit), with a maximum ruling grade of 1 in 36 compensated. The line was to share the name of the original road pass and be known as the Montagu Pass, and was finally opened on the 6th August 1913, thirty-eight years after the first petition for a railway had been sent to the Cape Government (in 1875.)

#### **Not ideal railway country - Montagu Pass - (Railways of Southern Africa July 1977)**

At first it was worked by ex CGR 6th Class (4-6-0) and 7th Class (4-8-0) tender locomotives, which were

comparatively small engines and a train required to be double-headed (two locos coupled together at the front of the train). This caused unhealthy conditions in the cab for the driver and fireman, due to smoke inhalation whilst going through the tunnels.

It was only when the Beyer-Garratt locomotive (two engines powered by one big boiler slung between the engines) was introduced in the early 1930's, that the conditions on the footplate improved for the engine crew, as the engine could be run cab first with the chimney behind. The first successful "Garratt" type (denoted by the letter 'G' in the SAR scheme) to be used on the Pass was the GD, which had a wheel arrangement of 2-6-2 + 2-6-2 and a Tractive Effort (TE) of 31 690 lb (at 75% Boiler Pressure). When slogging up the pass it would need a banking engine, pushing at the rear of the train. The GD soldiered on until 1946 when it was superseded by the huge GEA which had a wheel arrangement of 4-8-2 + 2-8-4 and a TE of 55 620 lb (at 75% BP); this machine could deal with 500 tons or 14 coaches unassisted. It was hand stoked, so the climb up the pass was always tough work for the firemen. They in turn were displaced in 1975 by the GMAM, 4-8-2 + 2-8-4 (built in 1955) with TE of 60 700 lb (at 75% BP), which had a mechanical stoker. This type of locomotive would close the chapter on steam power over the mountain. Interestingly enough, the maximum loading of a train was not dictated by the Pass itself but rather by a nasty 6 mile (10 km) bank on the eastern side of the Great Brak River, between Mossel Bay and George, which twists and turns with gradients of 1 in 40 uncompensated.



### **Garratt in the Outeniqua Mountains (The Great Steam Trek)**

By the early 1980's dieselisation was superseding steam nationwide, and the services across the Montagu

Pass, notably the Cape Town to Port Elizabeth passenger train (which took two nights to complete the journey), was to be hauled by Class 34 diesel-electric locomotives. It so happened that the train to Cape Town crossed with the train to PE at Camfer, on the north side of the mountain, at 11:00 am. It was thus possible to get on board the train at George station at 10:00am and take a journey up the Pass and then change trains at Camfer and come back down again. Although passenger trains have long since been discontinued, it is still possible to do the trip up and down the pass by travelling in a four wheeled power car.

The amazing aspect of the Mossel Bay to Oudtshoorn Railway (which includes the Montagu Pass) is not that the line took so long to build, but that it was built at all. The volume of goods and passenger traffic that was forecast never materialised, and, had the building of the line been delayed any longer, say until after the First World War, the advent of the motor vehicle would have probably rendered it unnecessary.

The Outeniqua Pass - the modern tarred road over the mountain on the western slopes of the Malgas River valley, across from the Montagu Pass - was only begun in late 1942 and was opened in 1951. Until then motor vehicles had to struggle up the narrow gravel road over the "old" Pass, travelling adjacent to and under the railway line, cautious of oncoming traffic.

Today, should you take a scenic drive along the "new" tar road and you wished to stop at a look-out point, you could look eastwards across the valley and see both Montagu Passes, road (of 1847) and rail (of 1913), as well as the Craddock's Kloof Pass (of 1812) snaking their way up the steep southern slopes of the Outeniqua Mountains – certainly a sight to behold.

#### *References and Further Reading*

*"Illustrated Guide to the Southern African Coast" by the A.A. of South Africa.*

*"The Garden Route: South Africa's Eden" 1980 edition by David Steel.*

*"Early Railways of the Cape" by Jose Burman.*

*"The Great Steam Trek" by C.P. Lewis and A.A. Jorgensen.*

*"Mossel Bay to George: the line that took 38 years to build!" by Roger Fairfax: RAILWAYS Southern Africa, July 1977.*

***Whose Layout Is This???*** (answer to be provided in our next edition)

*If you look very carefully, there is a clue right before your eyes..... ->*



***Answer to the October edition question...: That layout belongs to Ralph Davey, a Southern Pacific guru!***

## **SAR&H's 1952 Transport Display Included A Model Railway That Ran For 12 Hours A Day**

April 1952

TYDSKRIF VAN DIE S.A. SPOORWEEË EN HAWENS

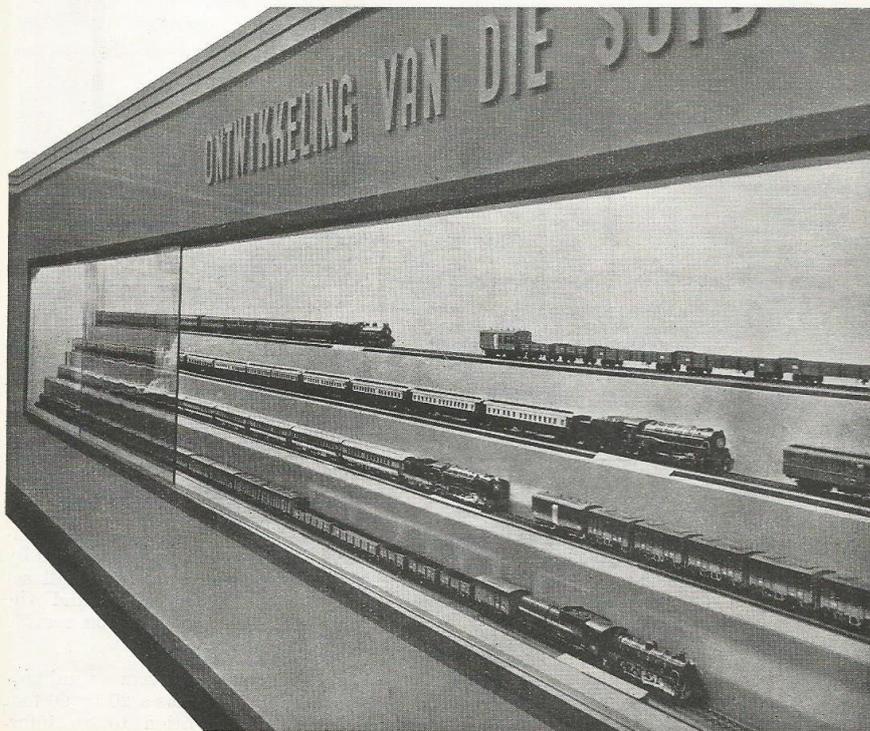
225

### The Railways' Contribution to Van Riebeeck Celebrations

540 Models Tell Story of S.A. Transport

ooo

THE South African Railways have taken a prominent part in the nation-wide celebrations commemorating the landing of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape of Good Hope 300 years ago. The Festival Fair, one of the highlights of the Van Riebeeck celebrations and the greatest exhibition ever staged in South Africa, was officially opened by His Excellency, the Governor-General, the Hon. E. G. Jansen, and the Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. E. H. Louw, on Thursday, March 13.



Replicas of the Blue Train, Orange Express and other trains in the S.A.R. Pavilion at the Van Riebeeck Festival Fair

**Editor's Note:** Jan van Riebeeck arrived in South Africa in 1652. In 1952, as part of the 300 year anniversary celebration of that event, South African Railways & Harbours (a very influential organisation in those days!) took part in the Festival Fair. Their display included a large model railway layout ("the finest miniature railway ever presented" [at that time!]), as mentioned in this April 1952 article in the SAR&H Magazine... It must have been quite something to see!!

A copy of the article was kindly provided by Colin Anstis.

PS This event happened before I (and at least some of the rest of you) was even born!!

Prominent amongst the many buildings and decorations which have transformed the barren stretches of Cape Town's reclaimed foreshore into a temporary metropolis of neon-lights and busy streets, the South African Railways Hall of Transport is among the first to catch the visitor's eye. On entering the hall the visitor is surrounded by five hundred and forty models, ranging from the latest Constellation aircraft of South African Airways to the old sedan chair, a relic of the early

bridges on this 30 by 15 ft. scenic railway. Four tracks have been laid, and exact replicas of the Blue Train, Orange Express, Durban-Johannesburg Express and a coal train drawn by three electric units, will, for twelve hours of nearly every day for the duration of the celebrations, wind their way through typical South African scenery. The model railway has seven bridges, two tunnels, a number of cuttings, embankments, a powerline leading to an electric



The S.A.R. Pavilion at the Festival Fair

days in the Cape. These models were specially built by fourteen manufacturers in Britain and tell the interesting story of transport development in South Africa.

Ninety-two of the models are used on what is considered to be the finest miniature railway ever presented in the Union. For months past, artists of the Railway Designing Section have been busy moulding stations, mountains, kopjes, rivers and

traction substation, a lighthouse with flashing light, and a seashore actually washed by waves. Water runs down a waterfall set in a realistic mountain scene, and the trains pull into a four-line station serving the town of Van Riebeeck.

The Hall of Transport covers a total area of 6,000 square feet and has a 20 by 60 foot entrance hall. In addition to an information counter, this entrance hall has

several of the outstanding exhibits from the Railway museum ; among these are one of the first telephones used in South Africa and the telephone used by the late King on the Royal Train in 1947.

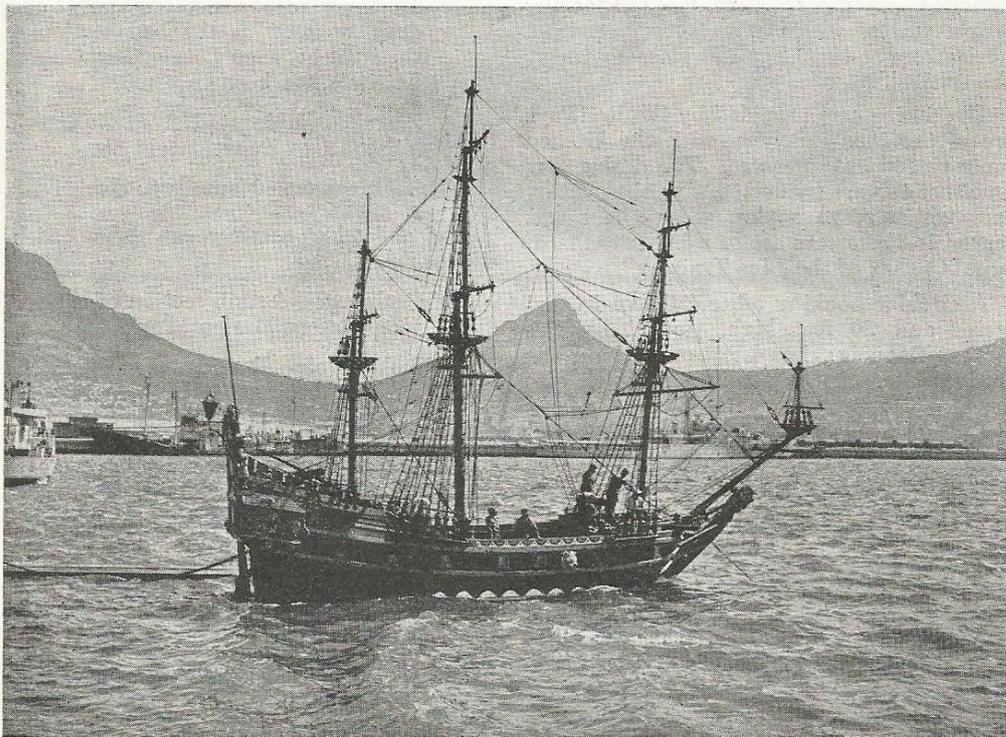
### STORY OF TRANSPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Also in the entrance hall is a map of the Union showing the twenty-five manned and four automatic lighthouses along our coast-line. They are marked by small flashing lights on the map, and each reproduces the actual number and length of flashes of the lighthouse represented.

On entering the main hall, the visitor's attention is held by three large showcases containing detailed models of the engines and trains used by the Natal, Cape and Transvaal Railways before Union. The engines and trains of the South African

Railways from 1910 to 1952 are shown in a case running along the full length of one of the walls. On the other wall, eight beautiful dioramas show the four major harbours. Two dioramas illustrate each port, one depicting an early historical incident and the other showing the port as it is to-day. In the model of the present Table Bay harbour, Cape Town is shown with the proposed new buildings already erected on the reclaimed foreshore.

Models ranging from ancient lorries to modern luxury buses tell the story of the Road Motor Services from 1912, when a distance of just over twenty miles was covered, until to-day when these services operate over 26,000 route miles. In another case the fascinating story of South African air transport is illustrated by models of aircraft, ranging from the Bleriot monoplane, which flew the first South African mail



A replica of the Dromedaris, one of Jan van Riebeeck's three vessels

from Cape Town to Muizenberg in 1911, to the four-engined pressurised Constellation aircraft now employed by South African Airways on the Springbok service between South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Models of Cape carts, sedan chairs, basket chairs, ox wagons and several types of carriages depict the early days of South African transport.

#### HORTICULTURAL DISPLAYS

The horticultural displays are among the finest attractions at the Festival Fair. Approximately 60,000 square feet of floral decorations have been provided by the Railways, and inside the Halls lovely gardens displaying the natural flora of each of the provinces are to be seen. Sunken gardens, rockeries, tropical plants and in one of the gardens a large pool complete with fifteen live swans have been provided.

Carpet beds of live plants represent historical scenes with a South African motif. In addition, there are hundreds of varieties of flowers, including specially grown tulips, which were preserved in a refrigerator so that they will blossom during the festival.

The dining cars provided by the Railways are of the twin-car type, with the kitchen units placed in the centre. The dining cars on either end are connected with observation cars which serve as lounges. The meals served in these cars are of a high standard, equal to that of the Blue Train.

A circular booking office, 50 feet in diameter and 20 feet high, topped by five 40-foot flagpoles, has been erected on the festival site. In this building, which also has an office for the General Manager, clerks from the various Railway Systems accept bookings for any point on the South African Railway route.

## ***The EMRIG Water Tower Challenge.***

By ..... nobody, once again this month ☹ ☹ ☹

### ***Water Tower Challenge Honours Board***

- 2015 October            Glynn Chamberlain
- 2015 November        Niel Wilson
- 2015 December        Terrence Marx (Part 1)
- 2016 January            Terrence Marx (Part 2)
- 2016 February         Terrence Marx (Part 3)
- 2016 March             Terrence Marx (Part 4)
- 2016 April              Peter Fish
- 2016 May                Colin Anstis
- 2016 June                Dave Wynne
- ..... **then the ball got dropped for a bit... (no newsletters, change of Editor...)**
- 2017 March              Brian Dawson
- 2017 April                Kevin Chamberlain
- 2017 May                Kobus Pelsler (Part 1)
- 2017 June                Kobus Pelsler (Part 2)
- 2017 July                Kobus Pelsler (Part 3)
- 2017 August             Doug Buchanan didn't participate (write), needs to donate to charity!
- 2017 September        Karel van Breda
- 2017 October            Carl Andrews
- 2017 November and December and 2018 January        ..... **no contributions** .....
- 2018 February         Margaret Wynne (who stepped in and offered to fill the gap!)
- 2018 March & April     ... waiting for articles .....
- 2018 May                Ash Pappa
- 2018 June                John Henry (volunteered an article)



- 2018 July Margaret Wynne entertained us with her story on trollies!
- 2018 August .... Nothing once again... ☹
- 2018 September Brian Dawson
- 2018 October .... Nothing once again... ☹
- 2018 November ... same story...
- 2018 December ... same story.... ☹
- 2019 January to date... ...still nothing has changed ☹ ... and THEN.....!!!!
- 2019 May, June, July & Aug Kobus Pelser (*thank you for all your hard work, Kobus!*)
- 2019 September Shane Brinkley (all the way from Perth!!)

And Shane challenged **Jimmy Mattushek**, but Jimmy has declined to accept the challenge. He submitted an article a couple of months back. He's not going to be doing another one now. So we are still looking for someone else to take up the challenge!!.... Shane – nominate someone else, please!!

**Upcoming Key Duty Roster:-**

For ease of reference, we include here the Key Duty Roster up to the end of the following month for the respective newsletter published. Below is the 2019 Duty Roster till the end of **December / mid Jan 2020**.

Cell numbers have been removed due to this newsletter being in the public domain; however, these are on the full duty roster list on the noticeboard at the club, and the copy emailed to duty members, if required.

As always, if you cannot make your assigned slot, please make an arrangement to swap with someone. Entries in ***Bold italics*** indicate a change from the original schedule.

	Date	Name		Date	Name
1	Sat 2-11	<b><i>Mark P</i></b>	1	Wed 6-11	Kallie vB
2	Sat 9-11	Terrence M	2	Wed 13-11	Colin A
3	Sat 16-11	Kobus P	3	Wed 20-11	<b><i>Brian D</i></b>
4	Sat 23-11	Colin A	4	Wed 27-11	<b><i>Dave W</i></b>
5	Sat 30-11	Johan dV	1	Wed 4-12	Kallie vB

1	Sat 7-12	Theuns W	2	Wed 11-12	Colin A
2	Sat 14-12	Brian D	3	Wed 18-12	Dave W
3	Sat 21-12	William vdB	4	Wed 25-12	<b>Father Christmas</b> 😊😊
4	Sat 28-12	Glynn C	1	Wed 1-1	<b>TBC</b>
1	Sat 4-1	<b>TBC</b>	2	Wed 8-1	<b>TBC</b>
2	Sat 11-1	<b>TBC</b>	3	Wed 15-1	<b>TBC</b>

**To guys doing Key Duty, remember to also empty the dustbins and check that the kitchen area is tidied up before you leave, as part of your duty. ALL extension cables are to be UNPLUGGED at the wall sockets to protect the layout equipment against possible power surges due to lightning etc.**

The complete Key Duty Roster for 2019 was included in the January newsletter (available on the club's website), if anyone needs to refer to it. There is also a copy posted on the noticeboard at the clubroom. Mark, as Secretary, is responsible for the roster and the updating thereof – so for any changes that need to be made, please liaise with Mark.

And **SOON** he'll be needing to prepare the roster for 2020!! So start thinking about when you plan to take your holidays, and when you'll be available to do duty!

### **Club Diary and Other Upcoming Activities:-**

- Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November, Reefsteamers to Irene
- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November, Reefsteamers to Heidelberg, on the occasion of Susan's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!!
- **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, EMRIG Club Workshop day**
- Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November, Reefsteamers to Heidelberg
- Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December, PMTC Swap Meet in Pretoria
- Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December, Reefsteamers to Irene
- **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December, EMRIG Swap Meet at Northmead Mall**
- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December, Reefsteamers to Heidelberg
- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December, club closed
- **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2020, EMRIG AGM - please diarise NOW!**

## **2019 Club Committee Contact details:-**

Chairman – Glynn Chamberlain	<a href="mailto:glynn.chamberlain@gmail.com">glynn.chamberlain@gmail.com</a>
Past Chairman – position unfilled....	
Secretary – Mark Peddle	mark@icemountain.co.za
Treasurer – Jan Kruger	jan.kruger10@gmail.com
Layout Manager – Colin Tanner-Tremaine	cttremaine@mweb.co.za
Webmaster – Glynn Chamberlain	glynn.chamberlain@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor – Brian Dawson	brian.dawson@iafrica.com
Publicity – Mark Peddle	mark@icemountain.co.za
Swap Meet Manager – Mark Peddle	<a href="mailto:mark@icemountain.co.za">mark@icemountain.co.za</a>

## **Club Banking Details:-**

Banking details: -

Name: - Eastern Model Railway Interest Group

Bank: - FNB Northmead Square Account No: - 625 483 74149 Branch code: - 250 112.

Please, ***DO NOT forget to put YOUR NAME as the reference.***

**IMPORTANT NOTE – SUBS FOR 2019 ARE NOW SERIOUSLY OVERDUE FOR PAYMENT IF NOT YET PAID; THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN PAID BEFORE END OF MARCH!**

**THE SUBSCRIPTION FEES FOR 2019 ARE THE SAME AS THEY WERE THIS PAST COUPLE OF YEARS – THEY ARE STILL : R400,00 FOR ORDINARY MEMBERS, R600,00 FOR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP.**

**PLEASE CAN WE ASK THAT EVERYONE PAY BY INTERNET TRANSFER IF AT ALL POSSIBLE? – CASH DEPOSITS COST THE CLUB MONEY!!!**