

# THE CENTURION SMOKEBOX



*"Providing smoking news and steaming interests to members and friends"*

## Centurion Society of Model Engineers

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 **Centurion Society of Model Engineers**  
& Centurion Society of Model Engineers' Supporters Group

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## CSME NEWSLETTER MARCH 2025

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### COMMITTEE

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**2025 SUBS: R500 FOR ORDINARY MEMBERS R250 FOR SENIOR MEMBERS AND STUDENTS**

## Official Correspondence & Newsletter

If you read this and are not receiving mail from the CSME you should contact the secretary or editor to update your details. Please ensure we are notified of any change of email address and cell phone number. Those members without email can collect a copy of the newsletter on request from the clubhouse on track day. The news letters are also distributed via the official CSME Whatsapp group.

### Next Club Meetings

**The committee meeting is on Saturday, 15 March 2025, the club running day is 16 March 2025. Plus the SAR event on 21 to 23 March 2025.**

Members are welcome any other time by arrangement with Swannie 064 520 8572. The gates are operational by cell phone for members. Members, please contact Norman Reyneke to be added to the gate motor list.

### **Chairman's Chatter**

A very wet month, floods again and most Sundays cloudy weather but without rain so good attendance and lots of trains.

Some bad news received from the Secunda club, they also suffered some track damage due to flooding due to hyacinth that washed the track away. They definitely need some help to recover, so any donations or help are welcome.

The Tuesday gang is on a stroll getting help to do some long overdue work and upgrades. We finished the steaming bay roof and installed lights. We also upgraded the chains in the station to palisades.

Some progress at the raised track, dug the trench and installed power, air and water in progress.

We plan to work on it again weather permitting this Saturday. Lets see if we can weld a few sections of track again. Please come and help, the further we work, extra hands to help is always welcome. Even if you lurk behind a tree to take a photo of a funny moment for the newsletter's funny happenings section, you are still welcome.

The weekend after the club weekend is the long weekend where we plan to see how many SAR locomotives of any scale we can get together. Please come and join us, the more the merrier.

Leon

## Secretary's Bit

Thanks go out to all the members who were able to attend the CSME AGM on Saturday 15 February 2025. The Committee remains unchanged for 2025. All members will shortly receive an emailed form from me, asking for updated personal/contact information. This will enable us to keep in touch with all members with respect to club communications and the Newsletter. Please note that any information provided, will be kept in strict confidence by the club, in terms of the POPI

Birthday wishes go out this month to: Willie Fourie, Johan Swarts, John O'Mahony and John Sharpe

Norman

## From the Editor

Thank you very much for all the contributions to this edition on **THE CENTURION SMOKE BOX**.

The SAR/SAS get together is here. We will set a world record for the most SAR/SAS model trains under one station roof over one weekend. Please bring your engines and or projects, or join us to experience this great event.

The 45mm live steam and stationary engine display promises to showcase these little wonders of engineering.

Well done Johnny and thanks Rokko for a great article.

Another great WORKSHOP GADGET by Leon. Rokko also contributed to this section for future newsletters. If anyone has similar info to share, please send a photo and a paragraph describing it, and we can share it with the rest of the club and ME community.

Great model engineering by Neil, plus some new technology utilised by Jandre. Additive manufacturing is here to stay!

We have no items for sale in this month's **SELL/SWOP/WANTED** section. Please feel free to send me pictures and pricing wanted for unused tools, projects or running engines. We will find new homes and use for it!

Carel

# Chairman's Report 2025 - Leon Kamffer

We continued to operate fully and our passenger numbers continued to exceed previous years. This is mostly due to the running of steam and multiple locomotives on non-club Sundays as well and the condition of our premises.

On the administration side we continue to keep electronic records under the auspices of Norman as our Secretary. This includes historic minutes, membership info, driver's licenses, boiler certificates and every other piece of historic and current information.

We have 71 current members of which 2 joined us this year. Sadly Arnot Hepburn passed away. We have about 10 that did not pay membership fees to continue their membership. We issued quite a few driver licenses as well during the year. Recruiting members for long term sustainability will always be important. We need to maintain our active pool of drivers and the Tuesday and Saturday gang.

It is so important that every aspect of the club's business is conducted properly as we have access to a prime piece of property and interact heavily with large groups of the public. We did again assist with a profile of the club for the City Council for a recommendation for a lease.

An excellent job was done by the treasurer Ballot Marx managing our finances. Financially we could generate surplus income to fund our flood mitigation and maintenance, details as per treasurer's report. We invested a substantial amount in improvements, mostly solar power, generator, started the raised track, We paid all money owed towards the solar system. We retained some income, and will have to pay some tax.

The practice of hauling with a few extra locomotives during non-club Sundays help with income, as well as reducing the peaks on club Sundays. Fees are now well adopted and stayed at a R15 and also a R30 rate for entry that includes the first ride. This practice definitely makes us less attractive for groups that show no interest in our model trains and other activities. Thanks to the very active and regular driver group. We also have the 2 large locos from John as well as a few others doing regular service.

Interaction with the City council and Councilor was maintained. We basically received no assistance from the council this year again.

We made no progress to reinstate power, basically accepted that we probably will not. As mentioned we purchased a generator and additional solar, basically eliminating diesel except on very cloudy and rainy days.

Most of the Kei apples survived the winter and is slowly starting to create a boundary.

The Saturday preceding the club day was supported on a few occasions during the year. It was enjoyable on Saturdays to see members making use of the club premises. On Sundays the focus is on passenger hauling, so members must come forward with activities and proposals to make use of the premises on alternate occasions. We booked a few long weekends for camping that was well supported, will again book a few this year. We will arrange a few visits and activities again this year. Please support it.

Carel continued with the newsletter, all will agree he does an incredible job of it. Special thanks to Carel. It is an important aspect to share info and keep our members informed. We ask for and look forward to more contributions from our members, especially their current projects. He also assists with marketing.

Norman is looking after our Facebook page and website, and also the alarm system. We get a lot of likes from the public when we advertise club events. We do not advertise at large, so this targeted electronic media is important, and played a big role informing the public. We also continue to book parties electronically on our website.

The September fair was again arranged, with good support and attendance in spite of the poor weather. Thanks to Carel Janse van Rensburg that took over the arrangements. Well done all.

The Saturday and Tuesday gangs continued with their valued contributions, doing general repairs, servicing locomotives and rolling stock. Saturdays were mostly spent on assisting with raised track and repairs. The Tuesday gang did a massive amount of work on our equipment such as lawnmowers and general maintenance. Francois managed to get 2 bridges properly cleaned and repainted as well.

The interaction and support from the affiliated clubs is much appreciated and continued during the year. The boat club stopped to function, and CSME took over the facility and also reserve it for groups that appreciate the fenced off area and lapa. We will have to do maintenance on the lapa this year. The CNC club changed to zoom meetings for the lockdown, we definitely look forward hosting them again. The Mini Truckers and the 45mm track both operate actively and draw additional crowds. They are thanked for the massive effort and investment.

The food stalls that operated on Sundays days were well supported.

Raised track construction progressed well, concrete trackbed is installed with about close to half the track. We build a tunnel and completed the groundworks around it.

We settled with the injured after the incident at the crossing, after the insured brushed us off. After getting help to write a letter to the insurer they did in the end accept responsibility, but send us a letter that they will not renew our insurance. We obtained alternative and also pursuing specific liability insurance.

The year-end function on the 16th of December was well attended. It is an opportunity for the members to interact without the public being present. It is an annual event that we need to continue in the future. Thanks to Rocco for handling the Father Christmas and handover of trophies. The sheep braai done by Carel was excellent and well appreciated by all.

It is always a debate if the club is not too commercial, but it is the part of our activities that fund our enjoyment of our lovely premises. Our operating model was severely challenged by Covid, and we adapted well. More steam locos other weekends, running public holidays made us generate enough income to support our improvements. Theresa our steam locomotive see regular service, and quite a few drivers. Francois and Hudson took ownership and executed quite a few repairs and improvements. We are slowly collecting more half built locomotives and tools.

Swannie our caretaker is managing the grounds maintenance, parties and public Sunday well. We also have a few regular members that actively help on this non club days as well.

Thanks:

First to the committee members for their contribution. Each person brings a different perspective and fills a much needed gap. It is hard work to run the affairs of the club, I appreciate it. Special thanks to Norman for the effort keeping administrative affairs in order. Special thanks to Ballot as treasurer, John O'Mahony for the effort maintaining equipment and patience to deal with the council and insurance and Norman for his constant attention to alarms and locos. Francois for the maintenance to locos as well as regular driving. Carel for the newsletter and Facebook advertising, Carel, Dirk, John, Francois, Nick, Hudson, Roco, Shaun, Norman and Neil for their driving not forgetting anyone else helping with passenger duties.

A special thanks to everyone that assisted on the raised track construction so far.

Special thanks to the Tuesday gang that can always be trusted to do the urgent maintenance when needed. Swannie our caretaker for his contribution.

City council for entrusting us with this great property to enjoy what we love and assisting with the upkeep. Ladies in the clubhouse, they again excelled in the way they keep us nourished with tea and cake. Every club member for being part of this great club. A special thanks to those members that do a lot in the background, machining and donating parts for locos and maintenance, going to buy materials, supervising construction, driving and helping on non-club Sundays and drawing public with other activities like the 45mm setup and mini trucks.

Lastly to the public for their support and rewarding us with their enjoyment.

Let's continue to build and improve our club to the enjoyment of our members and the public alike.



**The CSME invites owners of South African Railway models including pre 1910 NZASM, NGR, CGR, right up to Transnet Freight Rail and PRASA, in all gauges, from T to 7 1/4 inch, to participate in the SAR/SAS Get Together during the long weekend of 21 to 23 March 2025.**

This includes any projects in process that builders want to display.  
We will set-up the display track under the Meerpark Station roof.

We will also have tables in the club house to display the smaller gauges, like T, N, TT, HO, SAR Cape Gauge HO, HO SAR, OO, S, On30, O Gauge, G gauge, Cape Gauge 1, 16mm SMT, 16mm on 45mm, 1:12 on 45mm and 2 1/2 inch, but not limited to!

We are planning to have special edition hat pins available for sale exclusive to this event.

**Let us see how many SAR/SAS models we can get under one station roof.**

We will record and document each model in attendance. It is about having train fun over the first long weekend of 2025, but we might as well record a world record while we are at it!

*(Any other engines also welcome on the track)*

**On the 45mm side of Meerpark Station, we will be having an exclusive 45mm live steam weekend, plus a stationary engine display on the 45mm platform deck. Please support this exhibition if you have live steam 45mm locos, or stationary engines. We will supply air for those who prefer running an air rather than steam.**

Please feel free to contact Carel Janse van Rensburg for information regarding this event at 076 774 9221 or [kgmodelbouery@gmail.com](mailto:kgmodelbouery@gmail.com)

Camping as per usual available to club members.

**See everyone at Meerpark Station.**

# Profile on Honorary life member – by Roko Popich

## John Sharpe

Date of birth: 29 March 1959  
Place of birth: Welkom  
Life partner: Alida ( 45 years married)  
Children: John & Hanisja  
School: Fochville Hoerskool  
First job: Aircraft instrument fitter  
Favourite holidays: Fishing off Namibia coast  
Favourite food: Steak & chips  
Mentors: Frank Mundell & Charles Viljoen  
No of Locomotives: 9 (nine)



The first thing which catches your eye when attending the CSME are the beautiful locomotives hauling loads of passengers at our club. These locomotives belong to various club members, among them are our workhorses owned by John Sharpe. The first thought crossing your mind is “how does he do it?”, or a public favourite is “how do you start?”. John’s story is an interesting one.....

At a tender age of five he was already running alongside locomotives on the line from George to Mosselbay. When the other kids were playing on the beach, he was waiting for the steam loco to come pass so he could race alongside it.

Many years later at the age 27, John met up with Wim Roestenburg at the local NG Church bazaar where Wim was running a model S1 on a piece of track. The model engineering bug bit Johnny and all he wanted then was to build a 19D. So Wim gave him one drawing – a general assembly of the loco, with the advice that it was too difficult to start with, but he was determined to start! With no equipment, only a hacksaw and a small PicknPay drill press he started. Two weeks later there were a set of 19D frames on the table.



Johnny really struggled on and it hit home after 2years only that this hobby is not easy so he got in touch with a group of builders from Carletonville; Jimmy Brown and Steve Terblanche. They convinced John to build a Super Pea and around 1987 he purchased a set of frames and wheels from Steve Terblanche. At this time the RSME had a prominent builder Frank Mundell who later became a mentor for John. Frank and Peter Batistich had just then build two Super Peas and of course when they heard John was building a Super Pea they just clicked. Not having any drawings for the loco, John would measure up on Franks loco on a Sunday at RSME open day and make the parts during the month. Frank said if he couldn't produce parts on the following open day he wasn't allowed to measure up for the next month. Take note: John lived in Fochville and Frank in Rustenburg – so after a short period of time the green Super Pea which Dirk drives as CMSE was born.

John subsequently met Charles Mr Big” Viljoen and Charles invited him to their private railway at Derdepoort Park. On opening the storage container at Derdepoort John got exposed to Oom Sarels’ 7¼-inch “Lucky 7” and Charles’ 7¼-inch 15F. His jaw dropped and he knew is what he wanted to build next and the 7¼-inch 19D was born. Worthy to mention is that he built only one and a half years on a 3½-inch gauge 19D and he completed the Super Pea! All with hacksaw, files, angle grinder, a small PnP drill press and a tiny EMCO lathe. He line-bored loco cylinders with a lathe you could fit in your pocket. So when Fred Sannie from the RSME emigrated and decided to sell his whole workshop – guess who was there first? John acquired the complete workshop.



## Profile on Honorary life member

During 2012, Steve Dawe from RSME cast a set of 7¼-inch wheels for Johnny and the pursuit of BIG and BIGGER began. Francois Muller from CSME had a CNC shop and assisted John in the manufacture of the coupling and connecting rods. Those who have built a SAR loco will know the scale of work it requires, so he decided to take a break from the 19D and built the K1 Garret. Often running on the CSME track.



While building the K1 Garret Johnny realized he would have to join the local Gym to build some muscle to push the K1 up and down, but John is not a Gym-guy so he decided to build a red Electric to shunt the K1 Garret. Within a couple of months (ignoring the Nut-House application) the red Electric was complete- a loco enjoyed by many of our members. The K1 Garret was completed in 2019 and it had its champagne run at Andries Keyser's locomotive works down in the Western Cape.

John always wanted to build a Shay and acquired a set of drawings of Ron Etters' Siver City Shay, but proceeded to redesign and scale up the whole locomotive. He converted it from a 2 truck to a 3 truck locomotive and within two and a half years Lady Shay was born.

Despite having many health issues John has never allowed it to be a stumble block in his life. Although he is a very soft hearted person, he's also firm and a fool is often seen and not tolerated by Johnny. His kindness always seems to stand out in all situations. Alida comments that Johnny is driven by challenges to find out a new way to do something. I can vouch for that as he learnt CNC machining late in life. At the moment John is busy with a 91 Electric SAR locomotive which is a dual gauge locomotive while in the meantime finishing off his 7¼-inch gauge 19D. Years ago, Nick Popich said that "Johnny is the new kid on the block" – no better way to sum it up! I hope you enjoy your retirement after 39 years at Ashanti Gold Mines with CSME benefitting and appreciating your inputs. Men love to "kuier" at a pub, but the best "kuierplek" on a Saturday is at Johnny's "kampplekkie" where coffee and biscuits creates a great atmosphere.



**Stay well and enjoy your honorary life membership!**



## Workshop Gadgets - Leon Kamffer



### Vertical milling head for a lathe.

Making scale brass fitting often requires the milling of squares or hexagons. Removing the parts from the lathe and doing it in the milling machine and dividing head takes time and one has to return the part to the lathe and lose the reference position.

It is much faster if the part can be milled in the lathe, in the same setting, and after the square or hex is milled, additional machining can be done before parting off. With a DRO the milling tool is just another tool to set up and make multiple part production quick.

A small vertical slide that takes a 3 to 8mm end mill or slot drill that can be deployed easily makes a simple job of it. The slide is built on top of a standard toolholder for the quick-change tool post. Aluminium was used to limit weight, and a small Unimat spindle was used. One can easily build your own spindle as well, did a few so far for other machines or applications. An 8mm by 1.25mm threaded rod was used for the leadscrew, with a split bronze nut to eliminate backlash. The handwheel divisions and numbering fits the leadscrew pitch for easy size adjustment. The position of the tool is behind the toolpost so one can mill longer parts that is even held with the tailstock center.

Used with the chuck divider, one easily mill squares and hexes in brass fittings. One measurement and adjustment to final size. As it is fitted in a toolholder, all subsequent parts do not require measurement as accuracy is adequate for the purpose.

## Seen around the Club

A great addition to the steam bay and workshop area.



The "NEW" bridge got a new coat of paint. Since this bridge came into use, millions of liters of water passed under it, millions!



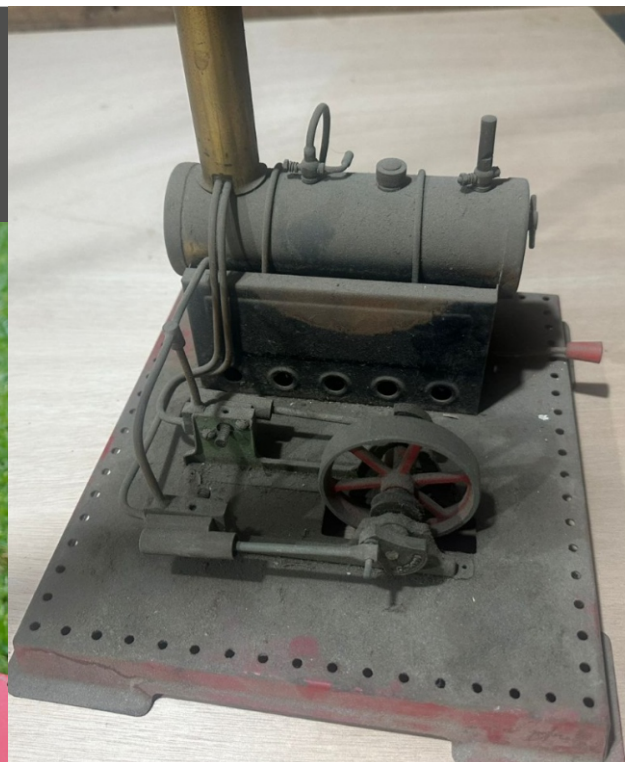
Services supplies extended to the Raised Track Station area.

## Who's doing what?

Leon built his own belt grinder:



Dirk got hold of this vintage stationary engine, and turned it into a new one:



## Who's doing what?

### From Neil Webb's Workshop: 2" Differential

It all started with drawings for a differential for a 3" Burrell. At R10k for a set of gears from UK, I looked around for local alternatives. I found a set of metric equivalent (with a finer pitch ) which got me thinking about a similar arrangement for my 2" Minnie which had a fixed axle with pin drives. So I got an extra set of slightly smaller gears and set to modifying the components.



New gears as purchased.

I cut out the centre of the final drive gear and mounted the pinions. The centre boss acts as a spacer and allows the "crownwheel" to rotate on the axle. Silver steel pinion gear shafts. The back bevel gear is fixed to the axle.

The other bevel gear is mounted directly on the rear wheel which free-wheels on the axle.



## Who's doing what?

### Assembled differential

It was necessary to modify the original drive arrangement - still to be finalised



### Offset drive modification

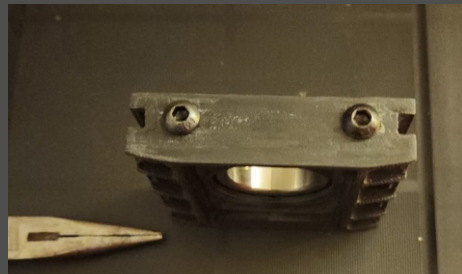
The far wheel is driven by the axle via the brake drum with a removable pin.



Overall view with the near wheel removed.

## Who's doing what?

New member Jandre is busy designing a 5 inch gauge 0-4-0 shunter based on a Ruston 48DS. This locomotive is part of a bigger project to run goods trains at the CSME. The good wagons will be 3D printed with PETG. He designs on Freecad where after it is 3D printed. The printed components on the loco is used as prototypes for patterns to be casted later, like the axle boxes and wheels. For the goods wagons, the printed components for the frames and detailed parts will be used as is. he will receive the loco frame soon form Steelman engineering who cut it by water jetting.





# FUNNIES



If the "NEW" bridge got a new coat of paint, it surely cannot be the "NEW" bridge anymore! So, we need a "NEW" name! Suggestions welcome!



Now we are fully off the grid!



Neil was caught, in true engineering style, testing the new roof at the steam bay! He was happy to report that no direct sun was present during his testing procedure!



The days before moisture vulnerable CSME assets were moved above **Centurion Sea Level** or at least, the start of moving all above **CSL**

Calling on all ex Boat Club members!  
We moved the harbour to the station!

