



THE CENTURION SMOKEBOX

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

Centurion Society of Model Engineers

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GPS 25° 51.066'S 28° 10.971' E

No responsibility is taken by the CSME for any subject matter in this newsletter other than official Society notices.

CSME NEWSLETTER MAY 2022

COMMITTEE

Chairman – Leon Kamffer
Vice chair. – John O'Mahony
Treasurer – Ballot Marx
Secretary – Imogene Groothuizen
Committee – Jon Shaw
Committee – Carel JanseVrensburg
Safety – Norman Reyneke
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Membership Fees for 2022 are unchanged from 2019

We need to increase the subscriptions for this year!

2022 SUBS R450 FOR ORDINARY MEMBERS R225 FOR SENIORS & STUDENTS

Bank details for any payments to CSME.

For any payments please email details of payment to Ballot Marx at csmetrains@gmail.com or ballotmarx@gmail.com

Bank Details are as follows:

Bank: First National
Branch: Centurion, code 26-15-50
Account Name: Centurion Society of Model Engineers
Account No: **62060752906**
Reference: Your Full Name/ subs 2022 (or what payment is for).

Note the account number change in red

Official correspondence and 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. Those members without email can collect a copy of the newsletter from the clubhouse on track day.

Next Club Meetings

The Saturday and Sunday of the 3rd Sunday weekend of the month will again resume as the member's days and that Sunday also being steam Sunday for the public. This month the 14th & 15th of May will be the member's weekend. Members are welcome any other time by arrangement with Swannie 012 643 0750, or 071 619 1644. The gates are again operational by cellphone.

Obituary

We have lost another of our long serving members Michael H. Venter who passed away on Sunday 1st May. The committee and members offer their condolences to his wife June and family. Mike as we knew him was the last of the members in the clubhouse photo of the founding members of the then Pretoria Society of Model Engineers at the hobbies exhibition in the City Hall in 1975. Mike served on the committee of CSME for many years and did sterling service as our treasurer. For many years Mike ran a hardware store in Doringkloof and later in Wierdapark and assisted members to find their tool, material, and hardware requirements. Rest in peace Mike.

Future Plans

The following dates have been reserved specifically for member days at the track site. These are public holiday weekends. Please diarise these and attend as we do not plan to open to the public (except the Sundays), just members, family, and guests, **so please support us to make the reservations worthwhile. June 16th to 19th inclusive, August 6th to 9th inclusive September 24th & 25th.** These dates will be an opportunity for children to drive if accompanied by a licenced member.

Chairman's Chatter

We had excellent weather the last few weekends, after the first few weekends in April rained out. We opened on the public holidays and attracted quite a lot of the public.

Thanks to the regular drivers, it takes a lot of effort to move that many passengers. We also saw John Sharpe's K1 in action, as well as Charles Viljoen's 16DA. Both very good passenger haulers and good steamers.

We are building up our reserves so that we can raise the caretakers flat. Holdup now is to get some sort of approval from the council for the plans and building.

We also took a massive jump ahead with our endeavors to build a raised track. Neil Webb's sponsor delivered the borehole pipes for the pillars, and Gys De Vries's family donated his raised track. We will start working on that, **a lot of work ahead so please come and help when we start on it.** It will be an incredible addition to our facilities. It is amazing after a while to experience the progress from a few workdays over a few months.

The raised storage in the old tunnels is near completion, we will work on the last tunnel tracks when we can.

Secretary's bit

?

Are you up to date?

Merely a reminder to members that end May is the cut-off date for payment or subs for 2022. Should you find yourself in any difficulty in complying, please approach the Committee to make suitable arrangements. Failure to pay may result in your losing your membership, which we of course do not want to happen. If you are not sure of your status, please contact me.

Imogene Groothuizen

CSME Member's Whatsapp Group:

The need was identified by the CSME Committee for a new and more effective communication means for matters relating to the CSME. In addition to the official e-mail distribution list, we would like to test the CSME Members Whatsapp group as a way of communicating information regarding the CSME activities and official business. The group will be a "broadcast only" group, meaning

group members will only be able to receive messages. The committee will ensure that messages will be CSME related only and to the point. This is needed to save data and unnecessary clutter on members' phones. If any detail or additional info and communications are required regarding a post, please feel free to contact any of the committee members via direct message on whatsapp. This includes if members have information regarding the club and club members, that they would like to share with fellow club members. If any members are not added to the group yet, please whatsapp you details to **Carel Janse van Rensburg at 0767749221**, and he will add you to the group. Feedback and suggestions are always welcome.



This Loco built entirely of matchsticks was donated to CSME via Leon by unknown donor.

Track and grounds

Due to the rapid growth of grass and weeds because of recent abundant rains it was decided to let some areas become wildlife refuge rather than mowing the rarely used grassland. The keiapples planted to grow into a barrier were being hidden by Kakiebos etc., but that situation is being tackled as time permits. Recent flooding that affected the buildings, has now been cleaned up. The workshop needs much tidying and the caretakers' flat needs serious changes to become habitable again. Alarm installations have recently been vandalised and are receiving attention. One can still see some litter lying around after the flood although a sterling effort was put in by the usual few members to clear up. We would soon be in pristine condition again if all members on their way around the grounds were to pick up the bits left and bin it. When the waters subsided a layer of thick clinging mud covered everywhere in sight, but the grass is now beginning to grow through and rehabilitate most areas.

Tuesday and Saturday Gangs

Repairing and cleaning of flood damaged assets is continuing as is the usual maintenance of all assets.

Security flood lights have been installed in places, and electrical work is ongoing for repair and improvement.

Various sets of points have had to receive attention, and some upgrade work is needed in the not-too-distant future.

Attention is still needed to the trees around the area but that is not high priority at present.

Who is doing what?



Rings for Eddies Marshall



Hannes Paling's progress on his SAR 18E





Cylinder for Bagnall "Teresa" crank axle for Neil's Midland engraving for John Sharpe's Shay

For sale & Wanted

Ben smith @ ben@thesmithfamily.co.za has for sale a Clayton steam lorry chassis and a whole lot of made parts, also a frame and parts for a Fowler 0 4 0 steam locomotive. There is also a frame and aluminium wheels for a bandsaw. No price quoted.

Hannes Paling @ japeng@mweb.co.za has the following for sale.
 Small shaper, V block for mounting on face plate, 3 & 4 jaw chucks for Myford,
 "Tos" 125mm self centering 4 jaw, back plate mounting, "Tos" 125mm 3 jaw, back plate mounting.

Kevin Mey, 0822234581 has parts suitable for a 3½" gauge locomotive, willing to swap for a car battery.



The baboon that worked for the railroad

Oct 31, 2016 | [Baboon stories](#) |



During the latter part of the 1800s, travellers to Cape Town, along the Port Elizabeth mainline railroad, frequently saw a curious sight as they entered the Uitenhage train station.

The signalman operating the levers that set the signals in the control tower was a baboon named Jack.

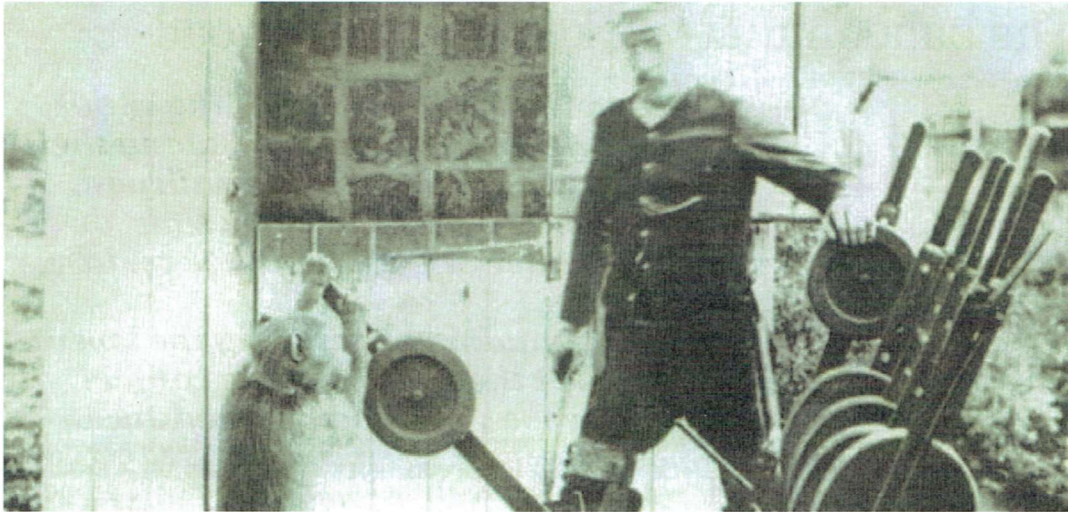
As strange as it may seem, Jack was an employee of the railroad. He belonged to James "Jumper" Wide who worked as a signalman until he lost both legs in an accident. Wide earned the nickname "Jumper" due to his habit of jumping from one railway car to another and sometimes

swinging from railcar to railcar. One afternoon in 1877, near Kleinpoort in the Eastern Cape, he attempted to leap to another car and fell underneath the moving train. The massive metal wheels of the train severed both his legs. Jumper was devastated. Not only had he lost his legs, but he would be of no use to the railroad. He took a post as signalman at Uitenhage station, where he made himself two pegged legs he carved from a piece of wood, and built himself a small trolley he used to get around. Still, he was limited on how well he could perform his job.

One afternoon he was visiting the marketplace in Uitenhage where he saw a baboon leading an ox wagon. He met the owner who demonstrated how smart the primate was. Soon, Jumper was convinced the baboon could serve him well. He pleaded with the owner to let him have the baboon. The owner didn't really want to give up his favorite pet, but he felt sorry for the crippled man. He gave the baboon to Jumper and thus began the most unusual friendship in the railroad's history. The two lived in a cottage a half mile from the railroad depot. Each morning Jack would push Jumper to work on the trolley. He would push the trolley up a hill and once on top of the hill, Jack would jump on the trolley for a fun ride as it rolled quickly down the other side of the hill. Once at work, Jack operated the signals that instructed train engineers which tracks they would take.

Wide kept an important key in his signal box. It unlocked the points that enabled locomotive drivers to reach the coal-sheds. Whenever a driver wanted it, he gave four blasts on his whistle and Wide would trotter out on his crutches and hold up the key. Jack watched this performance for a few days, then raced out with the key as soon as he heard the four blasts. Thereafter it became one of his duties.

Finally the time came when Wide was able to entrust the signal levers to the baboon. Wide would hold up one or two fingers and Jack would then pull the correct lever. He always looked at his master for confirmation. In the end, the baboon needed no instructions from his master. Jack really knew which lever to operate for each approaching train, and caught the various offerings thrown to him by passengers.



The working relationship between Jumper and Jack worked well and the two forged a strong friendship. Many locals would go to the tracks to see if the story of a baboon working the signals was true. Most marveled at how well Jack performed his job.

He knew the difference between the “home” and “distant” signals, and also the engine whistles; and although he was always under the eye of his master, he never made a mistake or required telling twice. Jack was one of the sights of Uitenhage for many years, and his astonishing feats of intelligence was the wonder of all who witnessed them.

Then one day, a prominent lady on route to Port Elizabeth observed Jack working and was horrified at the prospects of a baboon running the signals. She notified the railroad authorities who were unaware Jumper’s assistant was an ape. At first they did not believe her wild story until the system manager and several authorities visited the station. Jumper and Jack were immediately fired.

Jumper pleaded for their jobs and the system manager agreed to test the ability of Jack. An engineer was instructed to blast his train’s whistle signalling Jack to change the correct signals. Jack made all the changes without fail. He even looked around in the direction of the oncoming train to make sure that the correct lever and signal were changed.

Jack passed his test with flying colours and the railroad system manager was so impressed he gave Jumper his job back and even hired Jack who became the only baboon in history to go to work for the railroad. From that day forward, Jack was known as Jack the Signaller. For his labour, he was given monthly rations from the government but he also received an employment number. In the 9 years Jack worked for the railroad and his legless master, he never made one mistake that resulted in an accident.

Around Jumper’s cottage Jack learned to perform other tasks such as removing rubbish and sweeping the kitchen floor. He also turned out to be a very good watchman. Intruders were greeted by a fierce guard who gnashed his teeth and snarled ferociously to frighten away unwelcome visitors.

Jack died in 1890 after developing tuberculosis.