



The Atlantic Meyl

The Official Newsletter of Friends of Atlantic Rail

FRIENDS OF
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Atlantic Rail

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings members to the latest edition of the Atlantic Meyl, our newly revived club newsletter. It has been quite some time since our last newsletter was released, so long ago that I'm sure some members won't have ever received one! But I hope that from now on, our newsletter will come out regularly once again. It is hoped that the newsletter will become an interesting read for all our members, and indeed member participation towards the newsletter is highly encouraged. As editor, I have a lot planned for the Atlantic Meyl, and will be approaching various members from time to time for their contributions towards it. If anybody has anything interesting which they would like to share in the newsletter, I welcome you to contact me about it. But enough of the welcome now, let's get down to the meat of the actual newsletter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Chairman, Craig Kennedy, for his enthusiastic contributions towards this first edition, as well as Bev Simpson-Hurst for her photographs used in the layout of our newsletter.

But enough of the welcome now, let's get down to the meat of the actual newsletter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Chairman, Craig Kennedy, for his enthusiastic contributions towards this first edition, as well as Bev Simpson-Hurst for her photographs used in the layout of our newsletter.

Brett Radloff, Editor

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to all members to this, our first FoAR newsletter for this current club year. This isn't the very first newsletter we've had, there were previous editions published to the club members. In the newsletter, we will get to know more about what happens behind the scenes, get to meet all the wonderful members in the club, and also bring you news and events from us, and Atlantic Rail. We will try and bring you the news as it happens, but of course, this will happen once a month.

Some of you may be wondering what is happening to 879, our new locomotive that is currently undergoing restoration... Currently, she is nearly complete, with only a few bits and pieces left to add. She has been water tested, and did well with that. Only one more steam test to go to verify that everything is proper and she will then be ready. But that doesn't mean that we can automatically use her on our Sunday trips. There are certain documents relating to the locomotive that has to be signed and approved by Metrorail and Transnet. This is the most time-consuming process of the whole operation. Once we get those docs approved, then we can put 879 on a small test out on the line to see that she is fit to carry a load and to make sure that all systems are good. I cannot at this stage say when this will happen, but I'm sure it will be soon.

Some of you may also know that we have currently 2 firelighters in training, 1 fireman in training, and two TM/TSO's in training. Our firelighters are going well, learning as much as they can while

on the footplate. It's not an easy thing to learn, as it is something that takes time to perfect. We usually say it takes about 6 months to become confident in yourself and your own knowledge when firefighting. We do wish them all the best with the rest of their training. Kenny is currently doing his fireman's training on the footplate. Although he is doing his training with us now, it's not the first time he's been on the footplate. He's been doing these things since some of our younger members were toddlers, but never had the opportunity to officially qualify in fireman duties. He is doing well on the footplate, and making good progress with his training. But it's not just the physical job of firing, it's also the theory behind the locomotive, train working rules, signals, the rules that all forms part of the training. Our member Brett Radloff has completed his training, and has mentioned that the theory is possibly the longest and most complicated part of the fireman training. So, we wish Kenny all the best with his training. Our 2 LC's are on TM/TSO training, and are nearing the end of their course. This type of training is more theoretical than practical, and by them performing their LC duties on a Sunday, it's only part of their training. Their duties start long before we arrive on a Sunday, and often go on till after we have gone home at night. They are doing a fantastic job, and we wish them well for the rest of their training.

Please also remember that if you have any comments, suggestions or questions, please don't hesitate to contact me, or any member of EXCO. We will try our best to assist where we can, and if I need to confirm certain things with Atlantic Rail, I shall do that if need be. There isn't a question too big or too small, so please send them at any time...

That's it from me for now, see you all soon....

Craig Kennedy, Chairman

2014 RUNNING DATES

Atlantic Rail have released the running dates for the upcoming year. Please diarise these dates...

12 January	11 May (Mother's Day)
26 January	25 May
9 February	15 June (Father's Day)
23 February	29 June
2 March	13 July
9 March	27 July
30 March	10 August
13 April	24 August
27 April	7 September
	21 September



A supershine 'Jenny' await's her first duties of the day, 29Sept2013

Pic: Brett Radloff

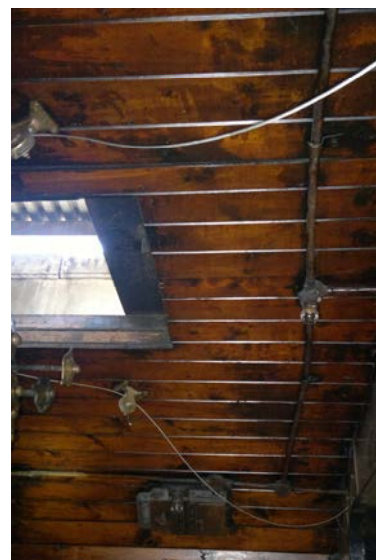
BIRTHDAYS

We have only one birthday that we know in the month of December. FoAR wishes Liz Kennedy, our club's 'First Lady', who celebrates her birthday on the 10th. From all at FoAR, we wish you a very happy birthday, with nothing but green signals in the year ahead.



NEWS FROM THE PLATFORM

Cosmetic work is slowly continuing on 879. Mechanically, the locomotive is more or less ready, but there are still large amounts of painting which need to be done. The current project underway is the cab. The wooden ceiling of the cab has recently been varnished. The backhead of the boiler now needs to be wirebrushed down in places, and then repainted. The sides of the cab also need a fresh coat of golden brown paint. These tasks will hopefully be completed soon. The large job of repainting the outside of the loco still remains though. One of the major challenges that we face in this task however, is finding time to do it. Running weekends are all taken up with prepping the train for the trip, and on the weekend in which we do not run, most of us need to take a much needed break! However, we appeal to those of you who maybe do not need that break as much as others do, to lend a hand in getting 879 finished and looking good again. If you have some free time on a non-train-weekend Saturday, please come and join us!



*Freshly varnished cab roof in 879
Pic: Brett Radloff*

On 3655's side, the loco has recently had new drop grates fitted, after the last ones were getting rather warped!

On a slightly different note, most of us have heard about the new movie "Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom" which has recently been released. Of particular interest in this movie is that part of it was shot at our station, and in our train. Those of us who were at the station that day will remember how wonderfully the station was done out for the shoot, and the curtains that are currently hanging in Coach 2 were fitted by the film crews for those scenes! So go have a look at this movie...

MEMBER PROFILE

Each edition, Atlantic Meyl will be taking a look at one of our members, in an attempt to get to know a little bit more about each other. As our new Exco has recently taken office, it is fitting for us to start with each of the members of the committee. And who better to start with than our Chairman, Craig Kennedy...

Being a member of FoAR, you obviously have a passion for the railways. Tell us where you got your interest from, when you first became interested in it, and why...

"I first got my passion for trains when I was a teenager. My high school was quite close to a station on our journey that we take on a Sunday. In the mornings before school, I used to walk from the bus stop, and passed the station, and as time went on, I started to notice the trains, as they passed, and stopped at the station. That's when the fire was lit. As time went on, I spent more time on the station, standing on the station, and then started chatting to the drivers. There were a few drivers that I always looked out for, and after a while, they started letting me ride in the cab with them, explaining the in's and outs of the then 5M2A sets. At the time, the 10M sets also started seeing rail time, and I was lucky enough to have met the test driver and Chief Engineering Technician at Salt River works. Through that friendship with them, I got invited to the workshops to see them building and servicing the rolling stock, and to have a look at where they are tested. I also managed to get behind the controls on one of the 10M sets, and spent some time driving up and down the test line in Maitland. And that's where my true passion started..."

When did you join FoAR, and how did you find out about the club?

"I joined the club back in April 2011. This was by chance as at my birthday function. My brother told me that one of his friends went on a steam train trip here is Cape Town. I immediately thought that I need to check this out, it will be awesome to see a working steam train up close and personal. That was the Tuesday. By the very next Saturday, I was covered head deep in soot from the smokebox, as Brett Radloff insisted I go and clean the inside in the smokebox, in white shoes..."

The railways is a vast environment. Where does your main interest in the railways lie?

“My main interest in the railways is more on the operational side of things, that being driver of course. Whether that is commuter trains, freight trains, I love anything to do with driving. There is just something so awesome about controlling something so big, over challenging sections of track and in difficult situations.”

Likewise, there are a lot of jobs within our operation. What is your favourite job on the train?

“My favourite job is on the footplate. My desire is to become a fireman. That is my ultimate dream job in the club as it’s such a physical, complicated and demanding job to do. Yes, it’s working on the locomotive which is the area on the railways I love, and it’s basically the most important job of the entire operation, I think. A driver just drives, and waves... It’s the fireman who gives him power to drive, and makes sure the locomotive is working in a safe and operational manner.”

Playing trains is only a hobby, what is your day job?

“I’m a draughtsman by trade. I design stainless steel products for the baking and catering industry. We are the guys that make the trolleys that bread is made on. The ones you see in your supermarket, ten chances to one, I designed it... Also products for hospitals, butcheries, kitchens and so forth. Anything stainless steel involving sheet metal, that’s where I am...”

Do you have any other interests or hobbies?

“I’m quite a lot into simulation, on the PC of course. Because I can’t work in the railways as my daily job, I resort of railway simulation. I’m a big fan of Train Simulator 2014, and have big enthusiasm in British Railways too. Because the developers of the game are British, the online forums I belong to revolve around the British Railway scene, and this has given me tonnes of knowledge about railway systems, train operations and handling, including our own systems we use here. So everything I do away from my day job is trains... I’m a train nut so to speak...”

You are currently serving on the club’s Exco. Tell us what made you join the Exco, and if you have any specific aims for your upcoming term on the committee.

“I joined EXCO because I wanted to find out more about how the club works, and to also give my opinion about various things in the club. I always had an opinion about anything happening in the club, as Brett Radloff can attest to. When I



joined, I found out a different side of the club that I never knew existed, and automatically I was hooked. What I basically want to achieve this year however, is to get more members trained up in the operational side of the train trips. From Firelighters to Fireman, TSO’s to Medics, I want our club to run the train, apart from the locomotive of course. I also want the members to engage more with EXCO, and engage in planning events and being more active in the running of the club. There is lots to do, so why not spread the love... That’s my goal, and if I can at least lay the foundation, and get the ball rolling while I’m in office, then I’ve achieved my goal.”

*A very young Craig with his brother, standing in front of 19D No. 3322 ‘Sarah-Jane’ at Cape Town’s platform 24, sometime in the late 90’s. The train was heading to Ceres on a day trip.
(Ed’s note: I wonder what Craig was thinking wearing that outfit? Was he pretending to be like Luca, whom he would meet many, many years later??)*



Craig receiving his first award from the Friends of Atlantic Rail Appreciation Society, a packet of ‘Hybrid Cabbage Seeds’!!!



RAILWAYANA

Many of our members are eager collectors of railwayana. For those who don't know, Railwayana are items related to the railways, often collectable, but can be anything really. From numberplates, to loco parts, badges, tools and uniforms, for the serious South African collector, anything with an SAR/SAS stamp on it becomes highly sought after! Those collector's amongst us often acquire interesting items, and I encourage anybody who adds anything interesting to their collection to please send in photo's of it to share with the rest of us.

Stefan Andrzejewski recently had a great haul of a variety of items, and has shared his find with us...

"A friend of my sisters (who is also a rail fan), called me last week and said an old mate was selling a steam loco cab side plate. Would I be interested? 'Of course' I said, depending on the price. I drove out to see him in Somerset West on Monday. He also had many SAR books and a SAR clock for sale. The plate I purchased was from a 10B no 757. (Yes like the Boeing). I spotted a stainless steel railway mug. I asked him if he wanted to sell that. 'Yep' he said. Now out of all the thousands of SAR steam loco's, I turned the mug around, and on it is a 16DA 879 badge. I had to contain my excitement. This was the scoop of the year for me. Recently I purchased another ticket clipper. As Train Manager it is part of your equipment. The passengers just love it when I come down the passage saying "All tickets alle kaartjies". I have had numerous photos taken of me performing this all important function of ticket clipping."



WHAT WE DO...

As I'm sure most of us know, there are plenty of things to be done on the train. Each member of the crew plays a part in ensuring the success of each of our trips. But how many of us know what each of these jobs entail? We all know about the jobs we do, but very few, if any, of us have done everything on the train! The Atlantic Meyl will be taking a look at each of the various jobs that our club members do, which will hopefully be an interesting, informative, and perhaps even humorous read for our members. It will hopefully also show why it is that we love being a part of our club, and why we do it. Craig Kennedy has kindly given us a story about a typical shift with his duties as a firelighter...

I arrive at the station early in the morning, not knowing what to expect. Has Robin Vice been fiddling with the tubes again, is the loco cleaned out already...? All these questions going through my mind as I arrive. Ah yes, I see Robin has been busy and not much cleaning left for me to do... Great. But on a normal weekend, I would be expected to clean both the smokebox and firebox. These are not the easiest jobs on the planet, and are the dirtiest jobs to do on the day... Why can't I just sweep out a coach, that's much easier, and cleaner... But I guess someone has to do it, and one day I'll look back and watch and the young and eager bend their bodies to get into those tight places. But today, Robin has done me the favour, but he better not expect and praise for it.

As we open up the locomotive and remove security gates and bars, it's sad that we have to lock up the loco in this way. Oh well, just one of the rituals that we go through. As we are doing this, in comes in member after member, and after we spend some time talking nonsense and catching up, it comes time to get those coal bags onto the platform. Those bags are not the easiest, but with many members here by now, it's an easy task. We move quickly, swiftly, and with great efficiency. The usual members jump up the tender to start trimming coal, and the usual group stands and watches...

After coaling, we all retreat to our posts and perform whatever tasks have been laid out for us. Some on coach cleaning, others on loco cleaning... but before all that, its tea time... well more kakpraat than anything else. This is an important part of the process as it brings us all together to share in what we do best, nothing at all...

But as the firelighter on duty, it's my job to prepare the locomotive for lightup. As half my job has been done, I can focus on other tasks that require my attention. The tender needs water, and so too the boiler. I quickly arrange for the boiler to get the hose pipe, to get her to a certain level where I can safely predict the type of lightup I need to do... within a short time, the water columns in the cab start to rise, and now I decide how much to add in... "4 fingers should be fine", as I measure on each side, I stop the tap at just the right moment. I arrange again for the boiler to be closed up, and gauge how much water there actually is. Oh damn, that's too little I hear myself saying. I always seem to underestimate the level of the water. Oh well, I'm sure it will sort itself out.

Right, time for inspection then. I get my torch and check out the firebox, no signs of water anywhere, no discolouration on the side plates of the firebox, the list of checks goes on in my head... All seems good, and clean, so it's time to move on...

Next we check up front, open up the smokebox. Same thing, I want to see that everything is in place, make sure it's been put together nice and firmly. Spark arrestors look good, those holes seem to be holding up. Diaphragm plates and nice and tight, hopefully Jan won't pull them to bits again... Ok, time to close up. I get my tools, nuts and bolts, so that I can reassemble the smokebox components. I struggle a bit to get them nice and tight, but I'm managing. I finally manage to close it up and get everything sealed up and ready to go. Right, time for some kakpraat...

As the day goes on, various events take place, trains come in and go, we watch the Trans Karoo come in, the Malmesbury train go, and more kakpraat. As the various jobs get completed, so the members retire for the day and head on out. Time moves quickly now, and in the back of my mind, I realise that I need to get some rest. The night shift is long and hard, and the twilight zone is no fun. So around 16h00, I finish whatever jobs I was doing (kakpraat) and then retire to the coach to get some sleep. I know in the back of my mind that this is a hopeless exercise as I always get tired throughout the night, but hey, it does help, even if for only a bit. Our trusty Coach 82, our 'Holiday Inn' in railway terms. Well not really as it's only good for sleep, and making 6E1 sounds, and falling off beds, and cursing cats.... So ya, sleep as I try, trains making the world of noise, and of course, club members thinking it's a taxi rank...

I finally give up this fight to get sleep and get up. Hopefully by now, the braai is going on, and food in on the way. At this point it's dark already, as it's around 19h30 and most of the train activity has slowed down for the day. I gather my stuff, close up the coach and head on back to the loco. I round the corner and see the fire already on the go. Yes, food is on the way, hopefully the menu is good. As the braai finishes, there's time to relax a bit, before I really get busy with firelighting.

After a while, I glance at my watch and see it's now 21h00. Right, let's get cracking. I make my way into the cab, set my tools down, get my shovel ready and prepare to get going. One last check in the firebox for anything unusual, and then we can start. So now I need to lay my fire. I grab the shovel, load it up and start getting coal into the firebox. Starting at the back, I load up the shovel each time as it's not hard to place at the back. As it starts to fill up, I slowly start to move forward, watching to make sure that I keep the line nice and straight. I'm not going to cover the whole box this time, I'm in the mood for a little challenge. So, I lay the coal in a nice straight line, about the width of the firebox door, trying my best to keep it all equal and even. Now I start to get to the far ends of the firebox, and now this requires some effort and skill to place correctly. The trick here is not to use all your force to push the coal in, but rather to give it speed and at the end of the stroke, a nice firm flick up to spread the load and angle it nicely over the other coal... this give a nice ring to the shovel blade as the coal flies off it, and that is followed by the crack and bang of the coal hitting the brick arch and tube plate. Usually, this causes the coal to spread, across the width of the firebox, but this is fine in my eyes. A final check how the coal is laying and everything is set.



Now I need to get wood, and for this, there are lots of old pallets that we break up and use. The long toothpick, Kenny's friend, is used for this, and some skill too, on how to break up the pallet without braking the planks. This was taught to me by Robin Vice, a man of many talents. I manage to break up a pallet without a single plank breaking, as this I have done many times before. I check that I have enough and then take the planks to the cab. I drop them all on the footplate, and proceed to pack them on top of the coal I laid down, making sure to criss-cross them as I go forward. Making sure I get as much covered as possible, I get it all in with the greatest of ease.

With the fire laid, it's now time for final checks and preps. I grab my torch, and proceed with the checks. Firstly starting at the ashpan, checking that everything is in place, no leakages and that it's clean of course. I then proceed forward and check the boiler for any leakages, make sure that no obstructions are under the loco, nobody is still working on the loco and that everything is in place... Oh yes, don't forget those scotches. Moving forward, I reach the cylinders, and check that the drain cocks are open, and not broken in any way. All seems fine and I then move around to the front of the loco. Now is the smoke box closed? Yes, looks like it, but I'll check it anyway. Yes, all sealed and ready to go. Moving around again, we check the other side of the loco for the same things again. This time starting at the front, checking the main things to make sure everything is good to go. Onto the tender, I'm looking to see that the water valves are open and that again, no obstructions under the tender, and nobody still working there. Lastly, I check the coal level, and water level... All is good, so external checks complete.

Next, we move inside the cab. Ok, starting left to right: Reverser in midgear; Regulator closed; Large Ejector in Running; Small Ejector Off; Drifter Closed; Cylinder Cocks Open; Driver's side Sellers Valve Closed; Water inlet valve Closed; Lubricator Closed; Water Columns has water in them, steam valve open up, water valves open up; Drop grate handles locks and secured; Fireman side Sellers Valve Closed, Water inlet valve Closed; Both driver's side and fireman side Blowdown valves closed. So that's the main controls then, it's the turret next... So what I do? I open everything, and close them all again except both side injectors and main steam... Lastly, checking the handbrake is on and tight, we are now ready for lightup.

I get the bucket with waste and L.O10 in it, together with the paraffin lamp. In goes the first burning waste, followed shortly by the second, then the third, and then followed by a last one just for good luck. By this time the cab is filling fast with black smoke from the burning waste, and I make quick progress of getting the waste in, and as soon as it's in, the firebox doors are closed.

As I clean up, I make my way onto the platform, and admire the thick black smoke coming out the chimney. At this point I hope I didn't put too much waste in the firebox, as I don't really want to smoke everyone out the platform. We always judge by the amount of smoke at lightup if you still learning, or if you're an old hand at it. This time thankfully, it's not bad at all.

Crackling can be heard from the ashpan as the wood starts to burn. This is a good sign as it means we are officially under way. Technically speaking, this is the point that a firelighter's job really starts. The entire day's prep has come to this moment when fire meets coal.

So now it's the initial waiting game, where I allow the wood to burn through, giving the fresh coal enough time to really start burning. You must remember, this is a long process, nothing compared to a braai of some sort. The initial wait is about an hour or so and that's when you can start building your bed... now I relax a bit, and time for more kakpraat.



As time goes on, I keep checking the fire to see its progress. In the beginning, dark orange flames, this lightens to bright yellow. Usually the ends of the bed seat in first, followed by the thicker center grave. Always checking, feeling plugs and monitoring. Any signs of problems must be caught as they happen, so being vigilant is the name of the game.

A glance at the watch reveals just over an hour has passed, so time to get crackling. A quick peak into the box, and I can see low flames with a high center. Right, time for some fresh coal. Open the firebox doors, and a light sprinkle over the grave. As the coal lands, it creates a black spot of non-burning coal. That would be worrying to anyone who doesn't know... Coal in, and we close the firebox.

Now for another wait before we need to rake that fire. Still, checking as we move along, making sure that everything is running smoothly, I feel the front of the boiler to see that the heat is spreading evenly.

After a while, I go and check the fire, and yes, she is ready for action. I get the pricker from its holding place, some clean waste and in we go. Starting at the front, long strong glides through the bed, back and forth to mix up the coal, and get some of the bottom coal to the top where it can burn. As I do, thin, dark orange flames rise from the bed to signify fresh coal getting flames. Good sign all round and I'm happy with the progress. All done with the rake, and I place it down the side of the footplate. We close up the box and wait for things to settle before I introduce yet more fresh coal.

As time goes on, I keep checking the fire, keep checking the plugs to make sure they warming up nicely. When the flame dies down, a little coal is added to keep her going.

That is the main point of this type of lightup, you build a bed, make sure it's burning good, and then you spread it with the pricker. It's hard labour so to speak, as you constantly have to monitor the fire. If the flames get too low, you might struggle to get the fresh coal to take. You have to catch it at the right time, so that you keep the rate of fresh coal constant, but also watching the time as you don't want to run out of time while doing all this. There is a point that we mark at which point your bed should be fully covered, and this is usually between midnight and 2am. Of course, if it's onto 2am and your bed is not yet covered, you'd best have a good plan as to how you going to work as it takes a while from that point to really start getting pressure.

Thankfully, on this night, at 12h20 my bed is covered, and I lay a nice fresh layer of coal onto the new bed. As the coal lands on the bed, it catches alight and starts to crackle as they ignite. A lovely sound it is, trust me.

By this time, most if not all the member's have retired to 82, where they sleep and refresh for the next day. So now it's just you and the



loco. This is where it get's hard.

The fire is now burning well, with all the coal burning, and the firebox hot. I can slowly start to feel the temperature in the cab rising, as the metal I'm surrounded by heats up. We are now really starting to make headway as I can softly hear the sounds of boiling water. It sounds sort of like a gentle whisper in your ear, and it's a relief to hear it.

Still checking that everything is going smoothly, I decide to take a walk around the grounds and see what is what with the sleeping 6E1's in the other platforms. At this time of the morning, around 1am, there isn't a soul walking around the station, and the Train Lodge is quiet.

This is the point where things get really hard. This is the point where you can feel the sleep crawling up on you, begging you go retreat to some sort of bed and rest the night away. But you know this is not an option, as the entire train weekend is now in your hands. You are now in control, more so than some believe. If you decide to walk away and leave the loco, no train will run on the Sunday. The entire weekend would go up in smoke and you would be the reason for that. So lot's of pressure then, but you know all too well that this tiredness is only the beginning. From time to time, I make my way to the cab, check the fire, check the water, make sure everything still on track and then find somewhere else for me to explore.

A glance at my watch, 2am. The fire is simmering, giving off enough heat to braai any meat to a crisp in seconds. Everything is good, loco is doing well, but I'm not... I start to get images of my bed in my mind, I start questioning myself as to why on earth I decided to do firefighting where I could be warm in bed, enjoying my dreams to their fullest. I start weighing up the pros and cons of me being here by myself, to struggle with tiredness by myself, with not even someone to talk to... At this point life is not looking good for me...

Through the tiredness, I check the fire, check the water and check the loco. By this time, the needle has lifted, and I start to calculate how I'm doing for time. I can see I might be doing good, but it's too early to tell. So, I retreat to my usual patrols of the station, in a desperate attempt to stay awake. It gets harder by the minute, and the thoughts of sleep get stronger and stronger.

A glance at the watch, it's now 3am. The tiredness is strong, difficult to get through. Ok, thankfully I have a Play energy drink in my blik. So I get myself comfy on the edge of the platform, and enjoy through my tiredness this drink which is supposed to wake me up. I finish it feeling full, as its quite a lot to drink... I sit there, waiting to get that boost they keep talking about... Nothing... Oh well, some more exploring I can do before I start prepping for finals.

I check my watch once again, 4h15. Nice, it's almost that time when footplate crew

get here. With that realisation, I feel my brain building steam and starting to switch on. It's like a fire is started, and I feel every inch of tiredness going away, with the ideas that now I need to focus.

One last patrol around the station, and I make my way to the cab. First thing I check is the fire, to make sure there is one. Open up the doors to inspect the whole box, I see hardly any fire left... Mmmm, maybe I left it too late... Pressure? Sitting at just below 600kPa... Right, I need to make a plan now; I need to get fire going and pressure on the boiler...

On with the blower, wide open to fuel any fire that there still is. Grab the shovel, and start laying coal. At first, a sprinkle, to get some heat into the box. As the coal lands, flames erupt from under the coal. With the blower sucking hard, the flames start dancing in the draft as more coal is added, evenly at first, and then corner, sides and back. I need flames where the waterspace is, so that it can start burning and making steam... the more coal I add, the more flames start dancing, the higher they dance too. Finally I pack the rear corners as the flames now covering the entire bed, with a tunnel of air being carved out of the flames in the path of the firebox doors.

My eyes now start to burn as the bright yellow flames go white, and the roar of the fire becomes deafening. I close the firebox doors with about 3 inches still open to get air into the box, and the heat can be felt through that tiny gap. The pressure needle isn't moving at all, but I know with this new fire in, we'll get movement soon.

Now I'm fully awake, I'm alive and kicking, out of breath from all the shovelling I've been doing. I peek into the firebox, and see a white wall of flames, and know now we are moving. Slowly the needle starts to climb, and I close the blower a bit. Now the coal is burning, so I don't need to draft to be that strong.

I glance at my watch, 4h45. As the pressure rises, the boiler bangs and creaks as it expands and comes to life. Steam now coming out of many places, and the footplate is a hot place to be. The water in the columns is bouncing up and down, and the sounds of steam are well in the air.

With the fire burning well, and pressure slowly climbing, I get the Brasso and begin to clean. During the night, a lot of coal dust lands on the roof, spindles and gauges, and it's common practice to hand over a clean loco. So, with waste in one hand, and Brasso in the other, I clean each spindle and gauge, wipe down the roof, side walls and boiler panels. It's dirty, I won't argue with that. But it's getting clean and looking good.

We are now at 900kPa, and time to test injectors. This too is a skill you have to learn as time goes on, and thankfully, I've learnt exactly how to use them. Open wide the water inlet, and brown water comes out... wait a while till the water clears, and open the Sellers valve. As this happens, the injector comes to life with



everything vibrating and rumbling. Head out the window, and slowly I close the water valve to start the injector. As I close, the water starts to rush out the overflow pipe before coming out in a fast jet stream. As it does, a quick flick open and the famous injector suction sound comes out the pipe, and the water disappears. Success, and on the first attempt too...

Now, with the injector open, I spray down the footplate with the spray pipe. Once all that is down, pressure dropped to 850kPa, and the fire is settled and calm.

Time is now 5h20, and final preps are done and we are now ready for hand over. Last minutes clean around the platform and the loco and we double check that everything is done. At this point, I'm wide awake, with no sign of tiredness anywhere. Consistently keeping an eye on the fire as I don't want it to start dying, the footplate crew don't like dead fires...

Finally, at 05h40, Jan and his dad, with Hennie arrive at the station. I'm relieved they are there as now I can relax as the loco becomes theirs. I say hello, help with bags and inform them of any problems that I had during the night. They seem pleased with the loco and it's condition, and I know it's a job well done.

It's been a good night for me, the loco made it through, and so did I. The shift is done as the footplate crew are setting up and getting stuck into prep work for the day. I help where I can, and offer assistance where I see they need it.

Shortly after, Stefan arrives, and now I can relax as no issue's were found by the crew. I gather my things and hang around while the crew prep the loco, greasing and putting on fire, testing and going about their usual business. One day it will be me, I think to myself, but for now, my shift is done and it's time to clean up.

But first roadworthy, so I hang around until Hennie returns, we shunt and leave for the yard. On our return, I gather my things, and head to my car, collect my clothes and straight to the showers. It's been a long night, and it feels good knowing that I just started an awesome train day for more than 200 people...



Photography by Matt Raubenheimer, Peter Rogers and Brett Radloff

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

As of the next edition of Atlantic Meyl, we will be running a 'Photo of the Month' competition. A special monthly album will be created on the Atlantic Rail Facebook page, where photographers may add any photographs of theirs that they wish to enter into the competition. At the end of the month, the FoAR Exco will judge the photos in the album and chose a winner. This photo will then appear in the newsletter, and will form part of the FoAR 2015 Calendar. So, getting photting and enter the competition!!

THE REAR TRAIN MARKER

And that is it for this edition of the Atlantic Meyl. I trust our members enjoyed the read. Any comments, feedback, contributions of any kind, (and even criticisms!!) are always welcome! A big thank you from me, the Editor, to all those members who contributed to this edition in anyway, be it with content, photographs or ideas. Until next month...



Contact details:

Brett Radloff, Editor, brett@atlanticrail.co.za

Craig Kennedy, Chairman, craigm.kenn@gmail.com

Matt Raubenheimer, Membership Secretary, mraubenheimer@gmail.com

Atlantic Rail bookings, info@atlanticrail.co.za, 0215585805

www.atlanticrail.co.za www.facebook.com/groups/AtlanticRail/