

STARS OF SANDSTONE SHONE BRIGHTLY ONCE AGAIN

By Roger Houghton

The Stars of Sandstone heritage festival near Ficksburg in the Free State, shone brightly after a year's break and, despite inclement weather on the first few days of the 10-day show, it was well supported.

I was attending the show for the third time and continue to be amazed at the level of excellence achieved in terms of exhibits, layout, ambience, and activation opportunities. Members of our group of 10, under the banner of the Pretoria Old Motor Club, enjoyed a variety of memorable experiences such as riding in a pukka ox-wagon drawn by huge Afrikaner oxen to travelling in military convoys and riding in trains pulled by beautifully restored locomotives.



The locomotives take a break to fill the water tank on the Happy Wanderer trip

There were several classic cars and motorcycles on display in one of the halls, while the visiting Triumph and Lotus car clubs, among others, added further variety.



The highlight for many people was the afternoon Sound of Thunder displays by a variety of tanks and armoured vehicles.



Mk 4 Ford Armed Car with 2 pounder gun.

Produced in SA for the Abyssinia and Western desert campaign during WW2.



Rooikat Armed Vehicle Mk2 with a 76 mm gun 8x8.

Designed, developed and built in SA by OMC

However, for the photographers nothing beats the Mountain Wanderer Trip, which is the sunset train ride around the full circuit of the narrow-gauge rail network, totaling 26 km. Not only does the train pass vast fields of blooming Cosmos flowers (the Sunflowers were not yet in bloom), but driving alongside the train for photo opportunities were a variety of vehicles from a 1939 BSA, Ford Model A with “dickie seat” and Ford Model T bakkie to a coal-burning, steam-powered 1939 Sentinel truck. Meanwhile, flying overhead in formation are a Harvard, Tiger Moth and two Chipmunks.



Ford Model T Bakkie



Sentinel steam truck



1907 International



1939 BSA B20 500cc from World War II

At this stage there is no decision as to whether the Stars of Sandstone will shine again next year but visiting this beautiful working farm is to come to a place of reminiscing and memories.