



Newsletter

October 2018

DRISA in short

DRISA plans to present, on the internet, a searchable catalogue of the Transnet Image collection, with a thumbnail of each image, freely accessible to railway and history researchers all over the world.

Since April 2018 ...

Since the previous newsletter of April 2018, DRISA continued to make small gains, the major milestones being:

- Afrihost, a loyal sponsor of the DRISA project from the start, renewed its sponsorship for another year, which is gratefully acknowledged.
- A further 2700 images were uploaded to the N Collection.
- The scanning of the South African Railways and Harbour Magazine is now almost at the 1935 mark, having started with the first issue in 1905.
- Since the 1950s, a variety of photographic formats was used to introduce colour photography. The SAR photographers started to use 35mm slides, colour negatives, colour positives and even Polaroid images. To bring order and logical structure to these groups of images is one of the most severe challenges encountered yet. Our "Monday volunteers" tackled the colour positives first to group them properly into properly numbered boxes.
- The same volunteers then consolidated all the 35mm slides from their numerous locations in boxes, cartridges and carousels. Thousands of slides were then individually checked and grouped into about 20 broad categories, placed in numbered plastic sheets (20 slides to a sheet), and then into a set of about 20 large files. Well done to Stewart, John and Sandy!
- DRISA is now at the point where almost all the procedures used for cataloguing, scanning, numbering, internet presentation, etc have been properly tested and codified. A corresponding procedures manual is now being completed. The procedures manual is primarily a quality control instrument to ensure consistency in how things are done, even as new volunteers come on board.

South Africa 100 years ago in 1918

The pages of the South African Railway and Harbours Magazine provide an intimate glimpse into the world 100 years ago. Historians today gloss over 1918 by noting the end of that unthinkable tragedy called World War One, and maybe also the influenza epidemic that had cut down so many of our forebears. But life went on in many other ways as well. Here are some links to the pages of the SAR&H Magazine on a variety of topics.

Sticking to World War One, here is a poignant letter from a son to his father, republished from a newspaper in Oudtshoorn:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/203/page/13>.

For the railway-minded, also something on the use of light railways at the front:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/202/page/17>

For rolling stock enthusiasts, two pieces on the history of locomotive development:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/199/page/33>
- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/202/page/28>.

Here is a history of railways in South Africa:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/206/page/33>

Electricity was all the buzz in the railway world then – here a prophetic view:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/204/page/29>

Ever thought that life of a lighthouse keeper was romantic? Read more in three parts:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/198/page/35>
- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/199/page/43>
- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/202/page/37>

The grain elevator question was a primary issue of the time. Short after this report, the SAR&H started a massive national programme of building grain elevators all over. (A few months ago, the elevator at the Cape Town Waterfront was turned into an art gallery, if you remember.) Read a summary of the findings of a commission of enquiry:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/205/page/27>

Finally, in a country of vast distances, travelling is still an issue today. But not any more than 100 years ago!:

- <https://railways.haarhoff.co.za/issue/208/page/7>

To search for other topics, go to www.drisa.co.za and click on MAGAZINE COLLECTION, then its URL. Select the collection in the left panel, then on the monthly issue of interest. Browse the ARTICLES on the left panel to get the article and read from there with the NEXT button. Adjust the width for comfortable reading by setting the preferred pixel width.

How to browse for images by subject on the AtoM website

- Go to the DRISA website at www.drisa.co.za.
- Click on IMAGE COLLECTION and then next to “hosted here”.
- Click on the BROWSE block on the top left and then on SUBJECTS in the dropdown list.
- There are currently 35 main subjects listed.
- Those subjects with a small triangle to their left have sub-divisions. Click on the triangle next to ROLLING STOCK, for example, to open the next layer of subjects. Click on the triangle next to LOCOMOTIVES, for example, and another layer opens.
- Once you find a subject of interest, click on the subject itself. In the main part of the screen, a vertical list of thumbnails appears.
- Scroll through the thumbnails and right-click on those that are interesting. They open up in separate windows as you go down the list.
- Do not be frustrated if you see the same image more than once. There is an inevitable degree of copying in such an old collection. Having duplicates allows serious researchers to pick those versions which would suit their planned publications best.
- After selecting the thumbnails, examine the images in more detail in the newly opened windows. Pictures show with all their associated metadata. At the top will be their numbers (or REFERENCE CODE in the words of AtoM) and a short TITLE. Below the picture, further information is shown regarding its type (negative or print, colour or black-and-white) and its size (in mm in the sequence height x width), as well as its keywords (ACCESS POINTS in the words of AtoM) regarding PLACE and SUBJECT. At the bottom of the panel on the right the box number of the original in the THL is shown.
- Browsing by subject is but one way to find interesting images. More advanced users will quickly figure out many other options to find images of interest.
- Happy browsing!

A taster of recently scanned images

Please help with a description of this wagon (N05567_02) – purpose, proper name, etc – and send to Johannes Haarhoff at johannes@haarhoff.org.za or Yolanda Meyer at yolanda.meyer@transnet.net



The final page shows a variety of early transportation modes (N37543, N38428, N35965, N08623):

