

NBL Preservation Group

Honorary President Sir Hugh Reid

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HISTORIC DUBS TANK SET TO RETURN TO UK



Showing off it's classic British outline, NBLPG Dubs Tank No 196 stands outside Masons Mill shed, Pietermaritzburg, on 17th January 2009. The loco had recently been repainted by the Umgeni Steam Railway and was rolled out specially for the visit of Mizens Railway Chairman, Mike Smith. (Photo by Andy Anderson, USR)

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Thanks to a generous offer from the Bulk Gear Shipping Line, to carry the loco at a greatly reduced rate as deck cargo from Richards Bay to Portbury Docks, Bristol, an historic 109 years old Dubs 'A' Class Tank locomotive looks set to return from South Africa to the UK this summer. However, £15,000 is needed to cover final repainting, container movement of track and other materials and road transport costs at either end of the journey.

Members of the Mizens Railway, near Woking are working hard to prepare No. 196's future home and have agreed to start preparation of the site for a loco shed and lay 60 yards of track for the engine to be displayed on. The Mizens Railway itself has kick started the project with a donation of £2,000 to the Shipping Fund and the loco's owners, the NBL Preservation Group have launched an appeal to raise the balance of £13,000 by the target shipping date of August 2009.

100 of the 'A' Class Tanks were built at Dubs' Glasgow Locomotive Works for the Natal Government Railway between 1888 and 1900 and they were the first engines in the World to utilise the 4-8-2 wheel arrangement. Their great success paved the way for many larger and more powerful locomotives using the 'Mountain' configuration.

The NBLPG locomotive started life as NGR No. 133 in 1899, became South African Railways No. 196 in 1910 and spent the last 20 years of her working life in industrial service, before being donated to NBLPG for preservation by AMCOAL's Springfield Colliery. She was subsequently moved to Masons Mill for cosmetic restoration and secure storage whilst funds are raised for shipping home.

NBLPG Secretary, Ken Livermore said that this is a very important project to us as, although Dubs built more than 4,000 steam locomotives in Glasgow before becoming part of NBL in 1903, only 2 of their engines are preserved on the UK Mainland. We are very grateful to AMCOAL (now ANGLO Coal) for releasing the loco to us for preservation.

Mike Smith, Chairman of the Mizens Railway and a keen NBLPG supporter added that the project would enhance the Mizens efforts to expand their existing railway attractions on their site and would help to cement Woking's long term status as a railway town. The opportunity to return No. 196 to the UK has arisen thanks to continued teamwork between the NBL Preservation Group and the Mizens Railway and, if you are able to help in any way, please contact the NBLPG via their website : www.nbloco.net or telephone NBLPG Secretary, Ken Livermore on 01189 864 706.