

Railroader Digital Newsletter

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Harare Raylton Club down but not out

Harare Raylton Recreational Club which was gutted by fire in July was fully insured and an assessor from the insurance company has assessed the extent of the damage, Area Personnel Officer (Eastern Area) Ms Thokozile Maseko has said.

She said the building which was burnt was insured for \$1.2 million with Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ).

Raylton Recreational Club, a popular hangout for NRZ employees and leading personalities who relax there after work and on weekends, was burnt down by fire on the night of 19 July 2018, which destroyed the upper floor.

Ms Maseko said the NRZ was now going to hire its own assessor to come up with their own evaluation of the damage caused to the structure which will be compared to the insurance company's evaluation. She said the Harare Fire Brigade had compiled a report on the fire and this report would be handed over to the insurers.

She said the NRZ was not yet privy to the contents of the report from the Harare Fire Brigade as it would be handed over to the police



The management committee of the Bulawayo Raylton Recreation Club need to take out an insurance policy for the building

who in turn would give it to the insurance company. She said the 2018 Harmonised Elections had delayed submission of the report as the officers dealing with the matter were away on national duty. Now that the elections are over, she is confident that the report would now be submitted soon.

Ms Maseko said most of the damage was on the second storey while fixtures on the ground floor which houses the bar escaped major damage. She said the bar was still operational. "What was damaged was the top floor. On the ground floor most of the fixtures are intact. We closed in terms of using the building but did not stop operations. We are using a gazebo for our operations as we cannot afford to

close shop completely," she said.

Tenants who were housed on the top floors were using tents on the grounds as a temporary measure.

The management committee running the Harare Raylton Club took the initiative to insure the building.

It is the only Raylton Recreation Club in the country that is insured and management committees in other areas should emulate this to ensure their buildings are insured against major disaster.

This will allow the buildings to be rebuilt within a short space of time and not become an eye sore tarnishing the organisation's image as in the case of the Old Administration Building in Bulawayo which was gutted by fire years ago and has not been repaired.

NRZ promotes employee wellness

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) Medical Section will embark on a system wide campaign to promote wellness at work and highlight the dangers of hypertension and diabetes mellitus which are now ranking as major killers along with HIV and Aids in the world.

The Wellness campaign was launched at the Harare Agricultural Show where the medical table at the NRZ stand was a crowd puller as more than 100 people were tested for hypertension and diabetes mellitus. Nursing Officer Mrs Judith Dube said the campaign launch was a major success as members of the public responded positively. One hundred and forty-two people were tested for BP, Diabetes and had the Body Mass Index (BMI) measured to determine if they were overweight using a specialised scale acquired for the purpose. A further 18 people volunteered to be tested for HIV. Mrs Dube said the system wide wellness campaign will start at the Southern Area Headquarters targeting people attending meetings as well as those who work in offices. She said because employees in offices spent most of the day seated, they do little exercise making them prone to lifestyle diseases such as BP and diabetes. She said the medical section was extending its services to the wellbeing of clients because Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes and obesity were now major killers alongside HIV which has been the section's major focus for many years.

She said people found with BP,



NRZ Nursing Officer Mrs Judith Dube shows the General Manager Eng. Lewis Mukwada how the Body Mass Index is measured at the Harare Agricultural Show

Diabetes or deemed obese will be given pamphlets with information on how to get them fit again.

The NRZ medical section is one of the pioneers in the introduction of workplace HIV and Aids programmes in the early 1990s and its HIV and Aids programme has won national recognition.

The NRZ runs 16 clinics comprising two administration clinics in Bulawayo and Harare, four industrial clinics at the workshops in Bulawayo, Dabuka, Harare and Mutare.

It also has 10 community clinics spread across the country.

The community clinics offer services to NRZ employees, their dependents and members of the local community.



Acting HIV Programme Coordinator Mr D. Kondo addresses visitors to the NRZ stand at Harare Show on the importance of well-being

Smart partnership transforms Mutare guest house

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) guest house in Mutare underwent a makeover after raising money by taking in paying clients from a Harare company.

Area Personnel Officer (Eastern Area) Ms Thokozile Maseko said services at the guest house had improved greatly after the NRZ entered into an agreement to house workers from the Zimbabwe Fertiliser Company (ZFC) to stay there while on business in Mutare.

She said the company moves some of its inputs by rail and ZFC workers require accommodation for periods of up to two months at a time waiting for the consignment.

“We came to an agreement to accommodate their workers at a cost. This money has assisted

us to service the guest house,” she said.

Ms Maseko said money raised from the ZFC had so far been used to buy a 42 inch plasma television set, a refrigerator, a stove, a washing machine, two beds, curtains for the entire guest house and carpeting. The kitchen and bathroom were retiled using the proceeds.

A five-plate gas stove was also bought for the Mutare booking off quarters.

“The gas stove assists in times of power outages,” she said.

Ms Maseko said the arrangement with ZFC had been a success and funds will now be used to improve booking off quarters in the area starting with Mutare.

They were also exploring ways of opening up other

guest houses in the Eastern Area to other companies who would pay for their workers’ stay to raise funds.

One company expressed interest in using The Chase guest house in Harare for its employees but the idea was shelved because the guest house was busy and booked most of the time.

NRZ has guest houses in most towns around the country where it has operations for use by its employees when on duty.

The agreement between the Eastern Area and ZFC is an innovation to raise funds. It is also a model that can be used in other areas to unlock revenue flows for the organisation.

Guest Column

NRZ must consider solar power

By Innocent Mushukuto

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) must engage in research on the feasibility of using solar energy to cut down on high costs associated with electricity bills, costs of running, as well as repairing of diesel generators dotted system wide. Most of these generators are no longer functional due to lack of service or lack of funds to procure spares.

It is imperative that with high demand of lighting requirements in our vast yards and storage sheds, on the backdrop of expected high volumes of traffic, these yards will be fully utilised to maximum capacity, hence the requirement of an

undisturbed alternative source of power. Surely under such circumstances, there is no need for the company to rely only on the national grid for power source.

Again the removal of all intermediate station shunt locomotives has seen an increase in usage of mainline trains for attachment and detachment of traffic destined for these various stations. In other circumstances traffic fails to be attached due to poor lighting, and in some cases total unavailability of lighting in these intermediate station yards, either due to lack of repairs to yard lights or vandalism of both the ZESA and NRZ

equipment, thereby not having electricity at all in these stations. On the same note, lives of passengers are being endangered, because of the lack of adequate platform and waiting room lights in these various intermediate stations.

It is high time, NRZ considers the option to use solar energy for lighting purposes in all its yards, sheds, platform lights and even in some of buildings as well as intermediate stations. Further research can be done, if this can actually apply too, for various alternative usages meant to reduce various costs and provision of undisturbed source of power.

This, indeed, can help cut the

huge electricity bill the rail giant incurs on a monthly basis as well as plug its debt. Furthermore, use of solar energy in guest houses, staff quarters and drivers cottages to provide hot water can be essential for the NRZ to motivate workers since government, through the Zimbabwe Electricity Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA), has banned the use of electricity heated geysers. In implementing this, the current infrastructure can be utilised, electrical department can be challenged to refocus their programmes and plans. The highly expected industrial boom in our country might soon cause a lot of load shedding, hence the requirement of futuristic alternative plans like solar energy. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe (EWZ) recently completed installation of a 99.9Kw solar system at its head office with plans to move to its Graniteside station and Willowvale station. We can actually draw lessons

from there.

Switching to solar comes with several financial incentives

- Lower utility bills - getting most or all energy usage from the sun can save thousands of dollars a year
 - Increase property value: adding a solar energy power system will increase the value of buildings and potentially helps in the long run.
- Economic advantages
- Energy independence
 - Sustainability-adding solar energy will help to reduce consumption of limited resources and keep costs down.
 - Low maintenance- solar panels require little maintenance and typically last more than 25 years.
 - Reduction in energy footprint and impact on the environment.
 - Solar power is renewable, natural energy source that is non-polluting.
 - SAFETY- both on cus-

tomers' traffic as well as low injuries at work and to our passengers boarding/embarking the train at night.

The investment today might be extremely high, but the returns in the long run are very lucrative and enjoyable.

Innocent Mushukuto is an NRZ commercial clerk at Marondera station, a graduate in BCOM Strategic Management with GZU, 2014, writes and suggest in his personal capacity.

My View

You are worth more than fresh chips

In many organisations, female students on attachment have become easy prey for some male colleagues. Men with grandchildren are preying on young girls barely out of their teens, asking them out.

My heart bleeds when I see older men looking for the flimsiest of excuses to visit branches and sections where there are young girls and women on attachment. Some will say that the girls are over 18 and if they can choose their preferred candidate in national elections then they can certainly choose their lovers too. Fair enough.

But are these old people not abusing the trust bestowed on

their organisations by parents and institutions of higher learning who send their children to acquire critical skills when they ask these girls out.

The men are after one thing and once they get it, dump the poor girl and aim for the next target.

In most cases, these men are taking advantage of the dire situation the girls are in. Most of the girls come from poor backgrounds and the fact that they don't receive any allowance while on attachment does not help matters.

Not that the men going after these desperate girls are themselves endowed with resources

to spoil their "catches". In most cases, they lure them with a dollar (now \$1.50) packet of fresh chips and a 50 cent drink. A question arises from these affairs with students on attachment. Where is the dividing line with sexual harassment at the workplace?

An attachee recently recounted how she received unsolicited attention from one male in the course of her duties.

Instead of telling her what she wanted to know, he asked her to "meet her over lunch" to discuss the issue.

After the lunch "date" was turned down, the relentless man went a step further. He

sent her a picture of himself in bed on the Whatsapp platform. The take home to all men at the workplace regardless of organisation is: please let us respect girls who come for attachment and regard them as sisters,

daughters and most of all professional associate workmates. And people responsible for recruitment need to empower the girl child with information on what to do in cases of unwanted romantic attention.

Most fear to come out because they might lose their attachment places. And lastly to the female students you are worth more than a packet of chips and a bottle of Cascade.

Security targets illegal gold mining along tracks

The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) drew huge crowds at the Harare Agricultural Show (HAS) where it launched a campaign to educate members of the public on the dangers of gold panning on railway reserve land.

Sergeant Majors (Sgt Maj.) Charles Mwanyisa and Simbarashe Karivinge were the faces of the campaign and spoke to visitors on vandalism of rail infrastructure before asking questions to the public as part of a quiz to gauge their understanding on the issues discussed.

Winners walked away with NRZ branded T-shirts.

Sgt Maj. Mwanyisa said they showed visitors a video specifically made for the Harare Show on the devastating effects of gold panning in the railway reserve land, on railway infrastructure and the environment in general.

He said they wanted members of the public to become active participants in the fight against illegal gold panning activities in railway reserve land.

Members of the public were also urged to be responsible citizens and report such activities to the authorities.

The campaign targeted the young to make them aware of what action to take when they see people digging along railway tracks.

Sgt Maj. Mwanyisa said apart from campaigning at HAS, the Eastern Area security section will be using schools to raise



Sergeant Majors Simbarashe Karivinge and Charles Mwanyisa talk about the dangers of illegal mining along railway tracks at the Harare Agricultural Show

awareness on illegal mining on railway reserve land.

He said security officials from the area will visit schools close to the mainline from Kwekwe to Mutare and also on branch lines in the Eastern Area to address pupils and also urge them to report to their parents and elders in cases where they see people digging along the railway line.

The communities will then alert the authorities.

A lot of Illegal gold mining and panning is taking place a few metres from railway tracks.

Digging pits close to railway tracks poses a risk to the travelling public and there is a risk

of rail collapsing under the weight of trains due to the weakened ground or surface. NRZ is also forced to use scarce foreign currency to repair tracks and equipment damaged by illegal gold panning. This is money that could be better used in developing the rail network instead of repairing damage deliberately caused by a few people.

Illegal gold mining in railway reserve land is prevalent at Tagura in Mazowe, Bindura Town, Jumbo Siding, Shurugwi, Shamva, Ngezi River, Redfield, Kwekwe, Esigodini and in Chiwundura.

The railway reserve land is a strip 45metres wide on either

side of the track along main lines. At rail/road level crossings, a diamond shape measuring 150 metres from the centre line of the crossing on each side of the track and 90 metres from the centre line of the level crossing on each side along the road must be clear of bush and obstructions to give approaching vehicles and trains a clear view.

The public must respect this strip of land and stop any farm-

ing and mining activities along the railway reserve as it is a violation of the Railways Act.

The Railways Act (Chapter 13:09) Clause 38 paragraph 4, section c states that “any person who digs, excavates, drills, tunnels under or otherwise tampers with the ground within 45m on either side of the middle of a railway track to the actual or potential detriment of the safety of railway

traffic: shall be guilty of an offence and be liable to imprisonment for a period of not less than five years”

Starting with this edition, we are introducing a column that will focus on the history of the NRZ as well as displays found at the Railways Museum. To kick start the column is a blog by railway historian and enthusiast John Batwell who has been kind to trace the history of the NRZ since its formation.

NRZ 121 years on...

By John Batwell

At the time, imperialist Cecil John Rhodes commented “the railway is my hand” since railways ranked high in his vision for opening up and developing the interior of the African continent. The arrival of the railway in Bulawayo led to the newspaper the Chronicle getting carried away – “Today is the parting of the ways for Matabeleland, the relegation of the old method of transport to the past and the beginning of civilisation in its entirety....”. It had been four years since Dr Jameson’s Column had hoisted the flag on that wild syringa tree in the contemporary suburb of Sauerstown, marking the occupation of Lobengula’s capital and marking the birth of the Bulawayo of today.

It was declared a town on 4 November 1893 and the trains began running in 1897. Editorial comment in October 1897 in the Bulawayo Chronicle said, “Bulawayo has been waiting for the railway like the Austral-

ian farmer waits for rain which shall bring him prosperity.”

Ox wagon transport from the South had virtually stopped owing to the rinderpest; freight charges to Mafeking were up two hundred pounds a ton; and the time it took consignments to reach Bulawayo roused the local merchants to great heights of fury.

The early development of the territory took place at the pace of the ox. A fully-laden wagon carrying over three-and-a-half tonnes ground and bumped its way over the rough transport road at little more than three kilometres an hour for some eight hours a day so at such a ponderous pace the almost 800km took a very long time. Passenger travel beyond Mafeking was by coach conveying 12 passengers and mail but as Bulawayo quickly grew into an important distribution centre as gold mining camps and other settlements sprang up in the area, the extension of the railway from

Mafeking was becoming imperative.

The northward thrust from Mafeking, where the railway from Vryburg had reached in October 1894, got off to a slow start. At that time, Bulawayo was receiving more than two thousand heavy wagons a year from the south.

A passenger on the mail coach reported counting over a hundred wagons on the road between Palapye in Bechuanaland and Bulawayo alone. Such was the urgency for the rail connection to Bulawayo that the final 18 months of construction, despite problems including water shortages, was laid at the remarkable rate of a mile a day, 640km in 400 days! As a result, the railway was in part laid directly on the ground with little or no ballast. Such was the haste that the surveyors were often only a day or two ahead of the construction gangs and the route took the line of least resistance.

The development of the rail-

ways in Zimbabwe was directed essentially by the need to serve the towns, mines and farms which were fast being established and ultimately to link the landlocked country with sea ports. The link between Salisbury (Harare) and Bulawayo was completed in October 1902 and Salisbury was also, by now, connected to the Indian Ocean at Beira by rail. The line had arrived in Salisbury from Beira in May 1899. Rhodes had said, "We are bound, and I have made up my mind, to go on without delay. Let us see it [the railway] on the Zambezi in our lifetime." It happened but not for Rhodes to observe personally as he died in 1902. The construction north-west from Bulawayo began in 1903, crossing the Zambezi River at Victoria Falls in September 1905 and reaching the Congo border by the end of the decade in December 1909. As mentioned mining and agriculture in essence dictated the development of rail routes. Three decades of rail growth from 1900 had seen railway lines grow like tentacles pene-

trating much of Mashonaland such as Chinhoyi, Shamva and Kildonan whilst in the Midlands Eiffel Flats, Masvingo, Shurugwi and Zvishavane and branch lines in southern Matabeleland served Matopos (whom Rhodes believed everyone should be able to enjoy leisurely at week-ends) and West Nicholson. (Ninety-four years later West Nicholson was linked to Beit Bridge). Where the tracks did not go, the Road Motor Service (RMS) was set up, this having been introduced in 1927. Up to 1927, the whole system was operated by Mashonaland Railway Company under the title 'Beira and Mashonaland and Rhodesia Railways' but as from the beginning of October 1927 the Rhodesia Railways Co. Ltd. became the working company. From 1 October 1936 the Rhodesia Railways Ltd. became the owners of the entire railway system in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Zambia and the Vryburg (Union of South Africa) - Bulawayo section. The Vryburg - Ramathlabama portion was purchased

by South African Railways in late 1959. On 1 April 1947 the then Rhodesian Government acquired the assets of Rhodesia Railways Ltd. and on 1 November 1949 the railway undertaking became a statutory body known as Rhodesia Railways.

The railway line through to Beira in Mozambique was relinquished to that Portuguese colony in that year.

On 1 July 1967 the system was divided at Victoria Falls bridge with Zambia Railways in the north and Rhodesia Railways in the south. Rhodesia Railways was redesignated Zimbabwe Rhodesia Railways on 1 June 1979 and finally National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) on 1 May 1980.

In 1987 the NRZ handed over the railway running through independent Botswana (former Bechuanaland) to that country which then took over ownership, management and operation from Plumtree southward.

To be continued

NRZ In Pictures



NRZ General Manager Eng. Lewis Mukwada meets South Africans interested in importing coal from Zimbabwe



Eng. Lewis Mukwada poses for a picture with staff manning the NRZ stand at Harare Agricultural Show



Director Marketing Mrs Elector Mafunga and Director Operations Mr Samson Bhuza at the HAS NRZ stand



The trolley was a major attraction at the Harare Agricultural Show, drawing hundreds of people



Workers from Tracks prepare the NRZ stand in the run-up to the Harare Agricultural Show



School children learn about NRZ operations at the Harare Agricultural Show



Sister Sibanda (Right) measures Blood Pressure on an NRZ security guard at the Harare Agricultural Show



Mr Ginger Muzuza shows General Manager Eng. Lewis Mukwada products made by Inter-Rail-Tech