



# Lovemore Bros.

MACHINE MOVING AND RIGGING CONTRACTORS

June 2011

Simply getting on with it.

## LOCOMOTIVE NO 398 COMPLETES LAST LEG OF AFRICAN JOURNEY... BY ROAD

It won't be long now before Locomotive No 398 will be merrily puffing her way along the railway tracks in New Zealand giving tourists an experience of what southern African steam travel was all about in the last century. But transporting her there is another story...

The locomotive was bought by Steam Inc New Zealand from the National Railways Company of Zimbabwe. Her last voyage was to Beaconsfield in Kimberley in 1998 and has been kept in storage since then.

It was built in Manchester, England, by the Beyer Peacock company in 1950 and was used over most routes in Zimbabwe including the Cape Town mail trains through Botswana.

In March this year the decision was made to make the final voyage from Kimberley to Durban harbour before embarking on the sea journey to her ultimate destination down under.



On arrival at Maydon Wharf the locomotive is offloaded using gantries to raise her

The trip had to be undertaken by road because making her "railworthy" was not feasible.

This is where Lovemore Bros, the Durban based machine moving and rigging contractor was called in to transport the 136 ton unit which comprises the mainframe and boiler and two tractions being the coal bunker at the rear and the water tank in front.

Hugh de Borchgrave who heads the Mechanical & Projects division at Lovemore Bros, and who coordinated the

operation said much advance preparations had to be put into the project which included dismantling the unit, hoisting the three sections onto low bed trailers and calculating the logistics for the most efficient route to the coast.

"We brought along our mobile hydraulic gantry, a four leg gantry crane capable of lifting up to 200 tons and powered by LPG gas allowing us to use it at sites where electricity is not available."

The first task was to assist with dismantling the three sections which are joined with pipes, hoses, nuts and bolts. The front and rear sections were then separated and, their wheels fixed to rail tracks and raised high enough to allow a low bed trailer to reverse under each section which was then lowered onto it.

The process was repeated three times and the convoy of three low bed trailers was (almost) ready to depart.

*Continued overleaf*



Left: Locomotive No 398 completing her final African journey ... by road

Rigging

Machine Moving

Abnormal Loads

Mechanical Projects

Warehousing

**LOCOMOTIVE NO 398's  
FINAL AFRICAN JOURNEY  
...BY ROAD**

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They had to wait until later that night for Eskom to switch off the overhead



power lines to avoid the possibility of arcing.

The convoy comprised the front engine unit complete with water tank weighing 41 tons, the hind engine unit with bunker and water tank weighing 40 tons - the highest at 3.8 metres - and finally the boiler and its frame weighing 55 tons.

A fourth low bed trailer was diverted from Johannesburg to transport the gantry back to Lovemore Bros' Pine-town head office on the outskirts of Durban.

"Staff in our low bed department is

familiar with the most favourable routes all over the country and neighbouring states as well as dealing with the various traffic departments to arrange compulsory police escorts.

Logistics along the route includes height restrictions of bridges, overhead power lines and telephone lines and any other possible obstacles en route.

"The traffic departments were terrific and cooperated along the whole journey. We are cognisant of their work load and understand that at times we may have to wait while they attend to other priorities."

The convoy's route from Kimberley passed through Bloemfontein, Winberg, Senekal, Bethlehem, Harrismith, Ladysmith, Weenen, Greytown and Pietermaritzburg before winding down to Durban harbour via Umlaas Road.

At its destination in Maydon Wharf, Durban the process was repeated and the three sections were offloaded again using the gantries and placed on railway sleepers and packers to a height of 600mm giving sufficient space under the units for thorough steam cleaning in order to meet New Zealand's stringent import regulations.

"Each job poses challenges and transporting a locomotive on a journey of



about 975kms by road is no exception, but with good cooperation and careful planning anything is possible," says Dennis Visser, Manager of Lovemore Bros' Lowbed Division.

