

## SOUTH AFRICA's STEAM CRANES - A looming Crisis....

Posted by: "John Nicholas Middleton" on July 6 2007  
(Letter courtesy of the [Sandstone Heritage Trust Website](#))



Hi everyone,  
With all the focus on the scrapping of steam locomotives at Bloemfontein and elsewhere, a tender notice has quietly slipped through the system. It came to my notice today. It lists almost every last steam crane on SPOORNET property, including the historic cranes previously set aside by Transnet Heritage Foundation at Millsite and cranes located elsewhere.

It is Tender notice 1190 72805 and it closes on 31 July, with site visits to view the cranes between 9 and 18 July.

The cranes in question are as follows:

**Danskraal PX Depot:**

46, 47, 49 (these are all Cravens - 1921-1922);  
80, 95 (Cowan Sheldon - 1935),  
179, 193 (both Cowan Sheldon - 1947),  
553, 554, 556, 557, 558, 559 (all Cowan Sheldon - 1951)  
578, 580 (Cowan Sheldon 1965)

**Kimberley:**

50 (Cowan Sheldon - 1927),  
84, 199 (Cowan Sheldon - 1947)

**Germiston :**

96 (Booth Rodley - 1936) - Reefsteamers

**Lydenburg :**

178 (Cowan Sheldon - 1946)

**De Aar :**

194 (Cowan Sheldon - 1947)

**Voorbaai :**

555 (Cowan Sheldon - 1951)

**Klerksdorp:**

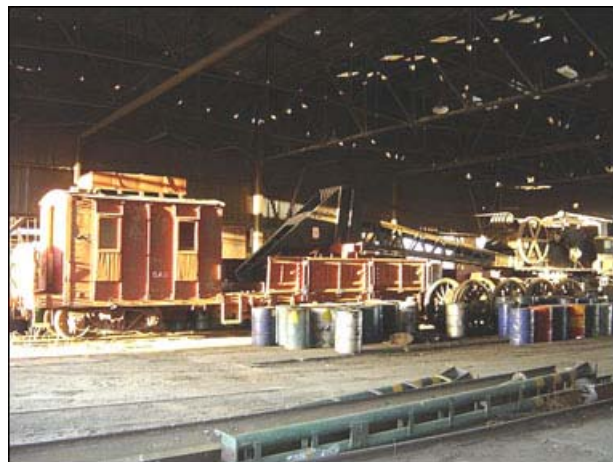
577 (Cowan Sheldon - 1965)

Are the various Clubs aware of this? Can anything be done before it is too late?

These cranes could be invaluable to Preservation Groups for major repairs such as boiler lifts on locomotives, etc.  
Once they are gone, a whole chapter of SAR history will have disappeared in one fell swoop. By my reckoning, if all these are scrapped, all the historic cranes will have gone and all that will be left will be one or two of the more modern ones (551/552 of the 1950 batch and 579 of the 1965 batch) and that's it.

551 was at Voorbaai - is it still there?

Regards  
John Middleton  
Washington DC



Two views of one of these magnificent machines awaiting its fate in Kimberly.

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