



D01 – Our Class 15F No.3046 ‘Janine’ arrives with relatively little fuss with Oupa De Necker at the regulator. And yet she is working hard with those coaches strung out on a nasty upgrade S-Bend. Must be a good driver then...



D02 - The final approach to the platform is taken in almost full forward and just a few sniffs of steam with the rear vehicles of the ten-coach train just levelling out. The arrival time was a little bit late at about 11:20am.



D03 – In a funny kind of way, the regular Reefsteamers trains has kept the old Magaliesburg Station alive, as the station was starting to fall into neglect and the picnic grounds were originally not being serviced properly. The place was looking pretty spruced up today, and the gardens had the grass mown and weeds plucked.



D04 – Some guys walk pet dogs to attract the attention of the fairer sex, but our Carl knows that a horse works MUCH better to pull them in. This young lady was funny as she was bragging about her riding and show jumping experience, but she couldn't even get on the horse! I guess the horsie people have their version of ‘expert’ armchair railroaders too!



D05 – She bossily mounted up on Billy’s saddle without permission, but was too short to use the stirrups. (Was she show jumping on ponies or something?) The saddle then slipped to one side as the girth straps had been loosened. After a monumental struggle, and then a boost from me, she got on board and just as she settled, Billy dropped a load of fresh warm horse nuggets with impeccable timing!



D06 – Carl is blind, and yet that has not stopped him from jogging, endurance running, cycling, riding his horse and even building a model train layout. He recently moved to Magaliesburg and often jogs to the station on the quieter roads with the help of echo-location and GPS. Or he rides Billy the Horse, who is being deliberately trained to become accustomed to trains, whether steam or diesel.



D07 – The sun-drenched platform is all a-bustle with activity as everyone disembarks the warm coaches. The people in the foreground are in for a surprise, as after setting up that wheel chair, they still need to get it down the mid-train steps and across the tracks.



D08 – The station has two sign boards. This one is rusted almost to the point of illegibility, but the other one is in fairly good shape. I wonder if there is a story behind that? Notice the crew braai that has been laid on for us to use once we have gotten rid of the passengers for a few hours.



D09 – We have to split the train at the station and put down a set of purpose-made steps to allow passengers to cross the lines to the Picnic Grounds. It does make for an awkward experience for wheel chairs and baby-mobiles, but we always have plenty of hands available to help.



D10 – The pax crossing is guarded by our chaps. Cliffie (Right) is a senior Train Safety Officer and our Carriage & Wagon specialist. The fellow to the left (Warren) is one of our newer coach controllers. The Transnet Pilot also informs us of when the next trains are due anyway.



D11 – The entrance gatehouse still looks pretty good and is sign-posted by Transnet. In similar fashion to the old Park Station, this is actually a preserved building and was located from elsewhere.



D12 – A coach-end from ballast height, plus 6ft2. Notice a rarely-intact feature on the aging mainliners – the drip-strip on the upper gangway bellows tube. Notice the three cables hanging. Two of them are mains power (2Ph and 1Ph + N) while the smaller red one is for the newly installed PA system, which is reported to be working well.



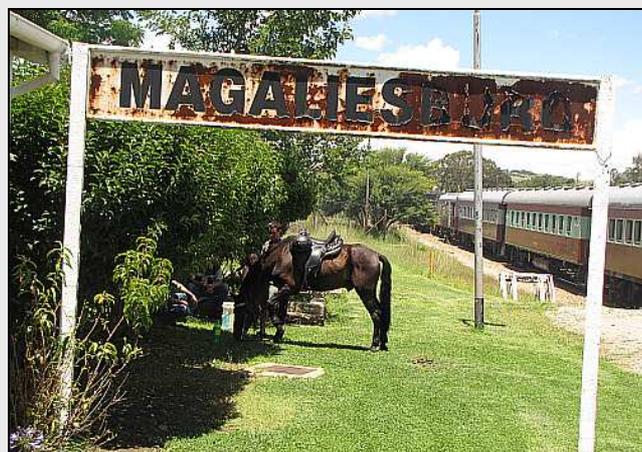
D13 – Slam-Door Coaches, which are in use by three of the Big Four Steam Operators, are certainly useful. But there's nothing like seeing a rake of steel mainliners in service. A condition of the lease is that the Reefsteamers coaches retain their basic original external appearance. (Hence the lack of advertising or custom paint schemes.)



D14 – As soon as the passengers have been herded off, the sensible Reefsteamers head straight for the shade while the fruitcakes, bake-heads and coal sniffers head for the engine. Matthee, Coetzee and Ackerman are having a three way convo, while 'Smidge' Ackerman is knitting from the now-infamous knitting bag.



D15 – Moose the Ranger has never been so low, even when ditched right up to the front axles while chasing the Inchanga Choo Choo. Coenie started all this by asking for a lift to purchase crates of drinks and the next thing I was running a cattle transporter. They behaved themselves and I didn't even have to hose out the load bay afterwards.



D16 – Billy, the steam-powered horse isn't frightened of trains. He enjoys racing them! He just finds the brake squeal a bit annoying with his higher pitched hearing. He has been to the station several times alongside the Reefsteamers train and is becoming a fixture. But the kids get confused, as they think he is there as a riding horse.



D17 – The iron horse and the slightly hairier variety. Carl and Billy stand next to the Class 15F in a remarkable picture, as many horses wouldn't tolerate being close to a big black hissing machine at such close quarters. There was broken glass in between us, so we didn't try to cross over the line where there was more space and light.



D18 – I wuv my horsie! I do! These two, and a bit of Reefsteamers, will be featuring in an encouraging and challenging documentary on Pasella next year, called 'Blind Trust.' Billy's quite relaxed – his ears are laid back listening to clanking as the loco cab is tied out. The regulator leak steam hissing from the cylinders isn't fazing him at all.



D19 – Although the grass was recently mown, the low lying clover managed to duck under the blades. Billy finished off the lawnmower’s job, and filled up on clover whenever he could get a chance. We should hire him to keep the Depot’s grass down to a manageable height.



D20 – The girth strap has been re-tightened, the reins unknotted and the brain bucket firmly belted to the cranium. But there’s enough time to see the train moving off. ‘Smudge’ Ackerman took the tiger’s tail on the way home and he pulled off as smooth as an ice cube on Teflon.



D21 – Another quick horsie hug with the roughly 460 tons of coaches gliding off with nary a squeak or clash. The wind had freshened by then, hence the flared-open dampers on Billy’s nose and Carl was concerned about the possibility of a storm brewing on the distant horizon that he could not see. However, it turned out to be a beautiful warm storm-free summer’s day. Dry rails and roads then, for everybody on their way home.



D22 – The bi-aural radar is homing in quite well as the unseen passenger train starts to gather speed past the old goods shed. (Driver Smudge took it easy until the rear brakes came fully off, as a good driver should.) Even Billy is listening in. As the regulator leaks a bit and the drain cocks were left open all afternoon, there was no appreciable condensate in the warm cylinders. So there is no wet steam jetting in the background.



D23 – Wanna order a hand-built HO scale model of our Class 15F No.2914 or No.3046? These models are being built on-request by Scalecraft. FotR’s No.3117 and 3094 are also available. Shown is an earlier production model with improvements having since being made. A ‘longie’ Type EW 6-axle tender model is currently being designed.



D24 – These models are hand built on a Mehano chassis to 16.5mm gauge and come pre-fitted with Kadee couplers. They feature constant current lighting and a sub miniature plug to connect the locomotive to the tender.

These models are available only through Scalecraft, Rinke’s Model Train Shop (Honey Crest Mall) and Cape Model Trains. Contact details overleaf. They are available in generic black, as well as a blue or green livery. These engines need about 3 weeks to deliver.



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