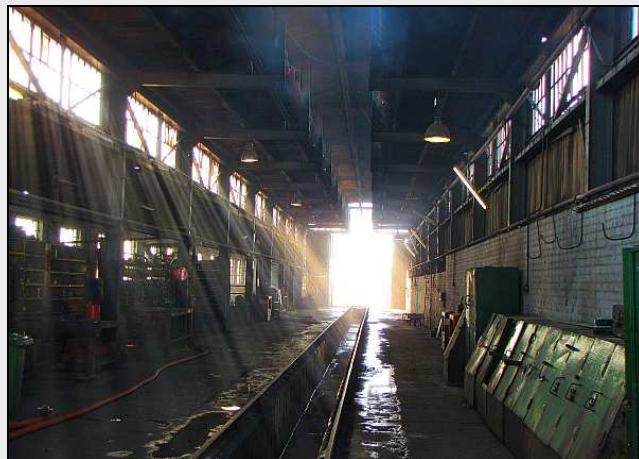




P59 – These two younger ‘Okies’ would be in charge of the Appletizer-shaped Cool Drink trailer. They are seen here transporting bags of ice for the morning. Corne had just lifted the barrow’s wheel onto the raised pedestrian path.



P60 – Spot the GMAM? The Germiston Depot’s location funnels the morning breeze, which usually rises with the sun and blows in from the east. Today was no different. We kept these normally-locked eastern gates open to provide an alternative path to the ash pits if necessary.



P61 – The sower and the blockman examine the porta loos. You need a lot of them if you are serving curry and rice! The toilet hire company gave us excellent service through the day, even providing janitors to service the booths. This photo also shows why Reefsteamers seems stropky about the ‘No Parking’ rule – this Member’s parking area is fully occupied by a miniature track, the toilets and access road.



P62 – This organizer is not too stressed YET although already going for the coffee. Lauren chats to Chairman Dennis, who was the safety official for the day. Dennis had oversight of the entire depot from a safety point of view and had to keep moving with four trains on the roster! He is undergoing frequent formal training in industrial safety with his day-job, the skills gained fitting in nicely for our Depot!



P63 – Having just reversed from the shadows into the sunshine, Class 15F No.3046 ‘Janine’ heads out west over the points ladder to pick up her coaches. The driver was Chris Saayman, with Andreas ‘Bobtail’ Matthee firing.



P64 – Oops! Because the coaches were parked a few lines over than usual, we needed to back out through the gates to move over the extra points. The guards had to hustle to bring the keys. No gates were harmed during this move!



P65 – 15F 3046 makes quite a picture backing up through the open western gates. Both the morning trains would be departing tender first and empty, and pulling passengers home in the higher-speed correct orientation. We would reverse the process for the two return runs in the afternoon.



P66 – I boarded the cab in time to see driver Chris Saayman about to grab a handful of steam while snuggling up to the coaches.



P67 – Appearing only as silhouettes in the rising light, the coach controllers were already on board for the first run. They'd be spending most of their days on the shuttle trains as we had four trips to run. Reefsteamers is grateful for the number of volunteers for this job – we had full coach crews.



P68 – The road is open, the signal is green, and the first train of the day is on its way! It was decided to run two trains either way to give visitors more options, but also to spread out the numbers of new arrivals, to ease the influx from a safety, hospitality and catering point of view.



P69 – Some of Simon's hand-pointer signs erected the previous evening. They gave him a lot of trouble to mount firmly as they tended to swivel and point downwind like flags. However, they proved to be well worth the effort.



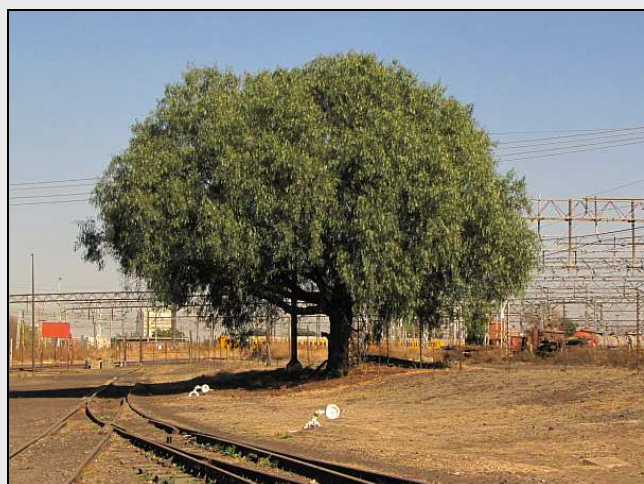
P70 – 12AR Susie's steam was a bit down after delayed fire work and shunting out of the GMAM's way. But they had an extra hour to pick it up again and neither driver Ackerman or fireman van Dyk were fussed about it.



P71 – Fireman's padkos and a pair of scotch blocks. Considering the morning schedules, I wasn't sure how much time Andre was expecting to have to lay over and cook a mid-morning snack. Maybe when they got back...



P72 – An almost-side view of the 12AR No.1535 having shunted out to the Western Yard and is now waiting for the arrival of the 15F 3046 with the first visitors for the day. Not an easy shot to get with these SAR engines being so long!



P73 – Not often noticed in the quieter corner of the facility, this tree has grown to be a magnificent specimen and is likely to become a coach-eating monster in a few years.



P74 – A certain Smidge soon arrived with Puro Fairtrade Coffee <Product Placement> coffee for husband Smudge and fireman, and incidentally provided some bonus 'Production Value' for Camera Man Hannes and little me.



P75 – Fireman Andre fires the Gifford-type injector for a quick top up. We had just phoned through and had confirmation that Class 15F No.3046 'Janine' was well on her way back.



P76 – Camera man Hannes is on the prowl. He's done his 12AR pics and is now waiting for a certain 15F to get her hustle on and arrive!



P77 – Yup, God made two of them! Married pair Smidge and Smudge have a conversation at trackside. Notice that the short wheel-based Smidge is standing on a sleeper and still isn't quite getting the eye-level experience. ☺



P78 – Class 15F 3046 'Janine' has arrived with the first of the morning trains. She would uncouple and be shunted to the ash pits for servicing while the 12AR would immediately couple onto the rear of the train for the next trip.



P79 – A train load of visitors arrives. The Western Yard is quite bleak to look as and I wondered what our guests were thinking when seeing it for the first time. But at least it was clean and tidy!



P80 – Here is the reason for the 12AR's unusual location. The incoming passenger train hasn't quite come to a stop yet and already the 12AR is moving out to come back in to couple up to the last coach that you can see here.



P81 – The trestle tables were already proving popular and this was just from one train-load of passengers. They had already discovered the De Garwe Brewery stand in the washout area, judging by the yeasty wares on the nearest table!



P82 – The place was soon seething with visitors. The cold 25NC No.3472 had been placed up onto Road 7 for the Strong-Man Loco-Pull to be held later. The first train's passengers went for food first, as we expected ... the second train's passengers went for the exhibits.



P83 – Hey Mon, de place be rockin'! At the time of writing, I don't have the figures but I believe we had about 700 people descend upon our Depot for the Open Day.



P84 – Management Coach No.42 was used by Shield Chemicals to demonstrate automotive polish products. This poor shabby coach has paint damage from cold-contraction on a 2007 tour, and is basically parked in the weather because of the hail damaged roof on the sheds.



P85 – Due to low coal, the GMAM No.4079 didn't move much. But we played it very safe here, as we were a bit short of marshalls while the train was out and loco crews busy. We weren't going to move this engine until the train came back and 'released' the staff for Marshall duty, even though we had rostered a dedicated shunter for this train.



P86 – Just as in the lore for service pachyderms, steam locomotives can move surprisingly quietly. Class 15F 3046 had uncoupled and been turned around the balloon, and had just backed in slowly for fire servicing. The visitors would only catch-on once they heard the intermittent raucous hiss of the grate shaker stirring up some ash!



P87 – Look how clean our shunting yard is! No weeds. Granted, it is in the middle of our dry-season winter but this was one of the results of our three week clearing and weeding project.



P88 – The Big Screen concept had mixed results and we need to rethink the locations and strategies. We had chosen to use soundless slide shows to avoid competing with the Model Train people and also from competing with the workshop tours. (Where the other screen was.)



P89 – This little guy seems a bit intimidated by a freshly spun stick of bubble-flavoured candy floss. The thirst-causing candyfloss and popcorn stall was set up next to the plinthed Class A, opposite the depot from the drinks stands.



P90 – The Puro Fairtrade Coffee Stand – this being their second Depot Open Day with us. They run a popular shop! Their tables look a bit bare as the actual coffee dispenser is in the cargo bay of the tuk-tuk van behind the counter.



P91 – Here we are looking down the access tracks to the old loco boiler washout area – this being the hot-food stand being operated by Reefsteamers. Notice that even the shop staff were required to wear safety jackets for the day.



P92 – For the first time we had a row of crafts-market stalls. This is later in the afternoon and they had been 'browsed-out' by now. This was a convenient location with no risk of loco steam and smoke damage on the wares.



P93 – The De Garwe Brewery stand – they were offering free samples of beer and doing a brisk trade. De Garwe are frequent hosts on our beer-tasting special trains, offering full sized complimentary beers in a free branded glass. We run beer tasting trains about three times a year.



P94 – Due to the lack of volunteers skilled in these areas and also not required elsewhere, we weren't able to have many live-action exhibits in the 15M workshops this year. Here, James Thomson is letting one of our two Thule Shapers run on a piece of scrap steel.



P95 – The workshop tours were handled less formally this year, especially in the afternoon when the guides took small groups around. One new sight to see this year was that the half-restored wheel lathe house was open for viewing.



P96 – Diana Sanderson had her photo stall set up with mounted samples of her railway-related work for sale. She is building a photography business part time in addition to working a regular job, and frequently seen harvesting extra photographic material while staffing coaches.



P97 – Tucked in by the 'Millsite' stores, the mechanical bull was a new feature for this year and this little dude had just been double-dared by his evil blond little sister. It must be an American thing though, as the Saffie kids in general were more interested in that big bouncy landing pad!



P98 – We had a small display of working live steam model locomotives set up in a clean corner of the old forge workshops. All of these locomotives are currently in service at the multi-gauge irons of the Rand Society of Model Engineers in Florida. www.rsme.co.za



P99 - Hannes Paling's Micheala was on display too.



P100 – A display of model engines running on compressed air, including a marvellous compact little bronze V4 oscillating cylinder engine driving the ferris wheel.



P101 – I've seen this modular N-scale layout many times but it is always impressive to see it being set up. This is a modular display layout designed for quick set up for shows and expos by the N-Gauge Guild 'Task Force' team.



P102 – The modules have just been set up and are being tested. Each one has three 9mm wide main line tracks that need to join up exactly for the trains to run. Notice how the paint colours and the height of the backdrops all match.



P103 – A UFO is coming in for a scan over Area 51 as a tanker train is being assembled behind a Wheeling and Lake Erie USRA 2-6-6-2 Compound Mallet. The scene is more surreal than you may think at first glance – that's an ELEPHANT being transported on top of the hanger roof.



P104 – Just another day at the old lumber mill. The silver tracks are the bridging pieces. Notice how this module's owner took the effort to weather their tracks. Maybe it's time to dust off the track plans for my Anvil Valley Railroad... but I just wouldn't have the time. ☺



P105 – With the little trains running around in loops, a slightly bigger 'train' is running switchback moves to couple onto the end of the waiting passenger coaches for the next shuttle run through to Johannesburg.



P106 – Here are the coaches waiting to be coupled up. This track is normally used for the Shongololo Train which would arrive in the evening. Good timing – we got to use the handy free space to allow passengers to disembark without crossing tracks



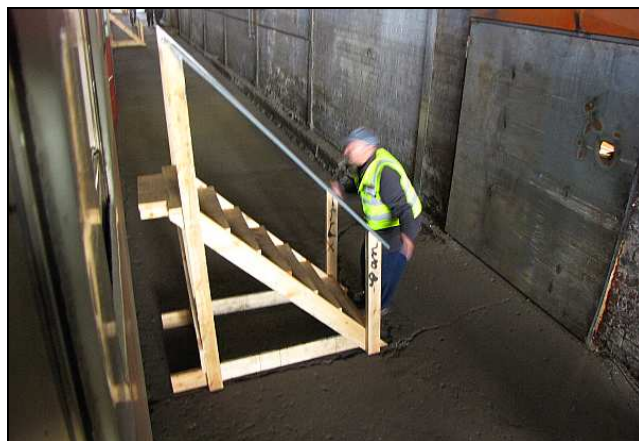
P107 – Fireman Andrew van Dyk ‘talked’ the driver into couple, connected pipes and they about were ready to go, safeties feathering and all.



P108 – As planned, the fresh locomotive was coupled on so quickly that we were already waiting to take off westwards-ho before the very last of the passengers were still disembarking. Now, that’s a quick loco change!



P109 – There are no flies on little Mrs Ackerman! The early-bird passengers were made to disembark passing by the appetisingly scented boerewors assembly area (Pictured here) and the other food stalls. So, we were enticing the guests as soon as they came onto the premises.



P110 – Slightly blurred in the dimmer light, the steps are being retracted. Gordon Bennett made four sets of steps over two weeks from our supplies of packing crate lumber. We have actually scrapped the steel steps from last year. They did the job, but were dangerously too wide in between the tracks and inviting a snag-up against a locomotive.



P111 – From the rearmost coach, one had an eye-level view the characteristic double-feed pipe arrangement on the 25NC. This is a heritage from her days as a condenser when the boiler was fed from pumps instead of Gifford Injectors mounted on either side of the cab underbody.



P112 – A bit of consternation going on here as the generator would not start. It turned out to be bad starting technique, as you need to lean on that starter in a long burst to build up enough compressive-heat to get the diesel fuel ignited. This diesel engine doesn’t have glow plugs.



P113 – Two old lads are examining a machine that once was contemporary with their youth...



P114 - While a little further along, younger people were able to get better acquainted with a technology that they never got to know themselves.



P115 – Mike Mathee was taking care of all the paper work for the day, leaving his dad (Cliffie) free to look out for the guests. To earn his monthly clams, Mike drives toasters for Transnet, but even he very much prefers the smell of coal smoke to sterile wafts of ozone and hot blower scents.



P116 – We are making our way through the rickety-looking trackwork outside the commuter stock staging yard. We usually have to do a switchback move here, but today we would be going straight through into Germiston station and then reverse-crossing onto the Pretoria main.



P117 – Avoid Black Smoke! Verwyder Swart Rook! So say the depot's warning signs. Here, stuck at a signalled stand-still, we make our externally-combustive presence very well known in the drowsy goods yards of Germiston.



P118 – Oops! Where there's smoke, there is fire. Susan must have dropped a few clinkers along the way. There's nothing quite like sitting in a coach with a veld fire brewing underneath your floor boards.