

**1). PROJECT – CLEANING THE MAGALIESBURG TURNING TRIANGLE:**



P01 - After a long warm, wet summer, the Magaliesburg turning triangle had become overgrown and the points all gritted and rusty. While Transnet will look after the major repairs such as alignments and sleepers, Reefsteamers volunteers will now need to keep the foliage under control.



P02 - Gordon stands in front of the 'ravine.' After some of the (exaggerated) stories we heard, we were wondering if we would find the lost wrecks of long-overgrown steam locomotives hidden in the jungle, perhaps with the grinning, moss-covered skeletons of their crews still within.



P03 - The bow saws only saw limited use in the ravine. The heavy secateurs were more useful for cutting down the bamboo-like reeds that were rattling against the locomotive and slapping the fireman on the inside of the curve.



P04 - As we weren't sure of receiving mechanical help later in the day, some of us started weeding by hand. Some of that cosmos was over 6ft tall. But they have shallow roots and just came straight out with nary a grunt or cuss word.



P05 - It turned out to be a pleasant day – warm and sunny but not brain-broiling hot. The weather is starting to turn for winter and the grass is busy dying off. Regardless, we still disturbed a number of late season butterflies.



P06 - All of the points had their pads cleaned and liberally lubricated with heavy graphite grease. It was applied with a brush, so grease on the railhead was inevitable. The rail heads will need to be cleaned before the next usage.



P07 - Work starts on chipping out the grooves in the level crossing. Although the fill was 'only' soil, it had been baked quite hard and repeatedly compacted by the road traffic.



P08 - Joe's team didn't have so much growth to deal with at trackside, but the track itself was overgrown. Grass in the ballast hinders the drainage and dislodges the stones.



P09 - Alan Lawton paints the tips of the guard rails on the points, as per the standards required to be kept within the Germiston Depot Yard.



P10 - Just a small sampling of the 'black jacks' that were enthusiastically clinging to my work gloves. I didn't even try to clean the gloves – just tossing them when the job was done.



P11 - Absolutely devastated ... the fellows sadly watch the chairman walk to his car after he finished his planned half day – 2 ½ hours late! RS volunteers were represented by Alan, Gordon, Big Robbie, Dennis, Jannie, Stewart, Craig Gibson, and oh, me-o as well.



P12 - One of the two road crossings with newly cleaned-out flangeways. Now let's see if our drivers can keep the anvils on the rails instead of the roads!



P13 - After we had carefully hand-picked the woody, twiggy bits and especially some surprisingly nasty thin-gauge thorns, we let the weed eater lads out to do the last trim.



P14 - Moo! Alan Lawton shows the proper environmentally friendly way to dispose of unwanted cosmos flowers. Keep chewing – only another 2136 flowers to go!



P15 - This rail was rolled in 1939 and likely saw service on the old Pretoria main. By contrast, the concrete sleeper was cast in 1975. Note the hodgepodge of Pandrol clip (left) and rail clamps. (right) Transnet will still replace the wooden sleepers for us in the event of their failure or theft.



P16 - The Reefsteamers Pyromaniac strikes again! Watched by Jannie, Gordon lights up the last few bunches of grass in the hope that a burn-off would eliminate more manual weeding work. In classic fashion, the fire only took off along the trackwork once we walked away!



P17 - Stewart Currie takes a quick slash amongst the tall grasses... with a panga! (What came to YOUR mind?) Notice how everyone else was standing safely out of range!



P18 - The 'final product.' A nicely cleaned length of track plucked by Jannie Gouws and little me, and then skinned with Bongani and the Weedeater. Reefsteamers needs to take over the triangle from now on, so we need to plan for a spring weed spraying and an mid-autumn burn-off.