

6 MRS OLIVE S: MATJIESFONTEIN, GHOST TOWN

The Blue Train is on time and slides quietly into the old railway station of Matjiesfontein. Welkom! Welcome!

The first building to be seen is the turret of the Lord Milner Hotel. The street parallel to the railroad is like a picture of a Victorian boulevard. There is the Fire and Rescue Car and the Beefeater double-decker, with, in big red letters BEEF-EATER. A guy with a London bowler hat and in a butler outfit is blowing a rusty clarion, and a booming sound pierces the air when the train becomes silent.

All passengers come for a two-day spa weekend in Lord Milner hotel. It was built by Lord James Douglas, at the start of the South African War. The first impressions are of the many different palm trees and Jazz is already taking pictures of all the indigenous trees and scrubs.

There is the Masonic Hotel and the old bank office. All buildings are more than hundred years old.

Johnny B, the butler, invites us to the hotel, talking about all the Victorian treasures they will see.

The Old Padstal is now a coffee shop, and in front, the old Shell pump is still operational.

And where is the old Australian lady? Oh yes, there is the Schreiner cabin, and she tries to open the closed door, while her dog is watering the rosebuds.

In the small garden in front of the hotel entrance, there is a