

SWARTLAND HERITAGE AGM

The slightly belated AGM was held on Goedgedacht Farm on Saturday 24 February.

Amongst the issues discussed were:

- The heritage organisations
- Grading of structures (1, 2 and 3A, 3B 3C)
- Feedback relating to the Swartland Heritage Survey
- Functions of Swartland Heritage
- Changing Profile of Swartland Heritage
- Examples of building development in the Swartland
- Protection of trees
- Selection of projects by Swartland Heritage
 - Malmesbury Riverfront – the future
 - Tiger Oats Complex, Moorreesburg – its deterioration
 - Old railway station, Moorreesburg – being plundered
 - PPC expansion, Riebeek West – impact on locality
 - Heritage South Africa Symposium
- A look at a village in England: Binham, in Norfolk.
This was followed by a talk by Dr Hans Fransen.
Most importantly, a new committee was elected – it

comprises of:

- Sue Burton
- Gail Friedlander
- Joanne Hopkins
- Pam Kolbe
- Chris Murphy
- Sue Savage

There is definitely one thorn amongst these roses!

The committee has held its first meeting to establish priorities and projects for the current year and will release this information in due course.

TREES AND VEGETATION

The importance of trees in our environment has become a topic of late.

Indigenous vegetation is already controlled by the National Forests Act, but what is little known is that some non-local trees are also protected. Amongst others are Stone Pines, Blue Gums, Oaks, Palms, Plane Trees, Norfolk Pines and Poplars. It is reasoned that some of these were introduced to the Cape as long ago as the 17th century and have over time become part of the cultural landscape.

Swartland Municipality announced last November that it will try and make provision in its annual budget for the protection of rows of blue gums, which indicates the importance placed on these trees.

Naturally, invasive species which wreak so much havoc are not protected; they include: Rooikrans, Black Wattle, Port Jackson, Pampass Grass and Water Hyacinth.



A note about

GOEDGEDACHT

The venue for the AGM is situated on the Riebeeksrivier Road, with records showing a grant to Stellenbosch heemraad Pieter Robbertsz in 1704 for grazing rights in the area (west side of Kasteelberg).

In 1824 this land was included in a quitrent grant to Pieter Loedolff, who apparently had been living there for some time. The main house dates from around this time. Even though the gable has been remodelled, it bears the date 1825.

There is evidence that in the 1920s the house was altered – this is in common with quite a few properties in the area and might have been the work of one builder from the Riebeek Valley.

The AGM was held in the 30m long cellar which still has early casement frames.



Today *Goedgedacht* is performing a very valuable rôle regarding education and developmental projects for the local community. It is not easy in these changing times to provide this essential groundwork for future generations but Peter and Annie Templeton and their entire team are working tirelessly to achieve this goal, with the motto, 'Build people, strengthen community and promote democracy'. All this while running a multi-bedded venue for conferences, workshops, weddings and retreats. Check out www.goedgedachtrust.org.za for more information.



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CHANGES AT ENGLISH HERITAGE

(An Englishman’s home is his castle . . .)

In the UK, English Heritage advises the government on the built environment. Their remit is, ‘to protect England’s spectacular historic environment and ensure that its past is researched and understood’. In practice this has meant that they enforce ‘minimal change’.

There are signs that a major change is occurring, which obviously goes against Britain’s more traditionally minded conservation establishment. English Heritage have now determined to take a more flexible stance towards the renovation of historic buildings, allowing them to evolve into more liveable structures.

The proposals

- Change in the historic environment is inevitable, whether caused by natural processes, through use, or by people responding to social, economic and technological advances.
- Places must remain authentic, embodying the ‘heritage values’ attached to them. This means defining what matters about a place, and building on that, making changes if need be to add authenticity.
- Intervention that causes limited harm to the value of a place may be justified if it increases understanding of the past, reveals or reinforces particular heritage values, or is necessary to sustain those values for future generations. This means, in the right circumstances, that you can change a historic building.
- Changes to a building or structure should be capable of being reversed, in order to not unduly prejudice options for future generations.
- Equally, places should not be rendered incapable of a sustainable use because of a reluctance to make modest but irreversible changes. Except that when we want buildings to be accessible and sustainable, which is everywhere these days, there might well be an argument for irreversible changes.

The feature goes on to cite an example of a couple who bought a tower on the verge of dereliction. If left it would have collapsed. They were given permission by English Heritage to convert it into a residence. The exterior result is apparently a ‘sensitive mix of traditional conservation techniques, preservation and careful restoration’. The interior, however, is described as ‘20th century retro-castle’.

The article was written by Kevin McCloud, the compiler and presenter of the awesome TV series ‘Grand Designs’ for those lucky enough to have been able to view. He sums up . . . “With care, our landscape will be a richer, more diverse, place where buildings are restored, rebuilt or sometimes just repaired and left. Because people don’t thrive on dogma or negativity. They thrive on diversity”.

For us the interesting factor is that some of the aspects of the article are already in practice here, but then we deal with a somewhat ‘new world’ situation. To quote Graham Jacobs, “I think that we in SA have been adopting this more flexible approach anyway, as a result of being a largely developing country with different demands imposed by growth, as opposed to a developed country like England”.

FAMOUS DAUGHTER

One of South Africa’s most esteemed artists originates from the Swartland: Maggie Laubser was born on *Bloublommetjieskloof*, described as a sprawling, gabled farmhouse, in the ‘Malmesbury District’ in 1886.

She attended boarding school at the Bloemhof Seminary in Stellenbosch, then returned to help her mother on the farm. One of her loves as a child was to take solitary dawn canter on her horse through the veld to watch the sun rise. On a visit to relations in Cape Town she was introduced to a circle of artists and musicians, which resulted in the desire to study singing, and later painting.

After a spell in the old Transvaal as a governess on a farm and teacher in Ermelo, she left for Europe. Initially living in an artists’ colony in Laren, Holland she also studied and made trips to London, Scotland and the Midlands, as well as Antwerp and Lake Garda in Italy, and Berlin, where she met and was influenced by the Expressionists.

Returning to South Africa she met Irma Stern on the journey. When she finally settled, it was to be in seclusion on the farm *Oortmanspost* near Klipheuwel. She was a rather shy and retiring person.

From this period on she began to develop her distinctive style and she exhibited widely: everything she was and all that motivated her art was traceable to her background amid the quiet pastures of the Swartland. Her identification with the land and her farming forebears, her empathy with earth and nature were the constant inspirations for her painting.



DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

- Lawrence G Green, author of many books about life in the Cape during the 20th century, was present when the old signal cannon was brought down from the summit of Kasteelberg and placed where it now resides in the Riebeeck Kasteel square. This happened in 1934.
- The first slave revolt in the Cape began on the farm Vogelgezang, just north of Malmesbury, in 1808. Although gathering as many as 350 people en route to Cape Town, the rebellion was doomed to failure.

PROJECT UPDATE

Malmesbury Riverfront

The projected road route through the most sensitive part of old Malmesbury is now off the agenda.

At a presentation to Mayor Bredell, two of his councillors and a representation of management from Swartland Municipality, the case was put for a consideration to change the planned route.

It was pointed out that the proposed road, already clearly delineated on the erf map of Malmesbury, would bring about a further deterioration of the remaining historic heart of the town. The heritage survey now being conducted also highlights this area as of particular sensitivity.

Approached with vision, the *Malmesbury Riverfront* could be developed into an attraction, bring much needed capital (thus employment), both for visitors and residents. With the projected residential growth of the town this could offer a valuable recreation area.

We are now working on phase 2 of our proposal, which could include references for the project. It is now imperative that existing structures in and around the designated area are considered vulnerable until such time as formal guidelines are drawn up.

As part of our awareness campaign we have already presented this concept to a ward committee and in May will be detailing the concept to Malmesbury Sakekamer/Chamber of Commerce.

The potential for Malmesbury to have a conservation focus as an economic drawcard is very viable.



PROJECT UPDATE

The Old Tiger Oats Buildings, Moorreesburg

As previously reported this poor old complex continues to decline, attacked by vandals, weather and neglect, permitting indiscriminate destruction of a fine example of Victorian industrial buildings.

Last year, at our instigation, Heritage Western Cape provisionally listed the complex, offering further protection under the law. We were tasked with communicating this information to the owners and warning of the consequences (a substantial fine or imprisonment) of disregarding the notice.

Sadly, I have to report the owners once again ignored the notification. The only road forward from here is to instigate legal action. We can ill afford to lose what we suspect is the only example of this style in the Swartland.



Above top: Malmesbury Riverfront as it appeared about 1880.

Above right: The river as it appears today, already possessing some natural beauty; it does not take too much imagination to envisage this as a recreational part of any development.

The Cape Quarter in De Waterkant, Cape Town, an example of mixing the old with new to create a dynamic, economic solution for an inner city.

OUR HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS

Even to those of us who are regularly exposed to heritage organisations the structure is not always clear. In simplified terms they are:

NATIONAL HERITAGE COUNCIL

This was set up in 2004 by President Mbeki; its mission is to:

- Co-ordinate heritage management
- Provide a transformation strategy and framework
- Advise the Minister of Arts and Culture on heritage matters
- Play an active rôle in the repatriation of South African heritage resources
- Promote mainstream and living heritage
- Provide a framework for the sustainable utilisation of heritage resources
- Facilitate the establishment of strategic partnerships.

SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

This body replaced the old National Monuments Council, with primary responsibility to deal with Grade 1 heritage resources (those of national importance) and facilitate the creation of provincial bodies.

HERITAGE WESTERN CAPE

Under the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 this body is responsible for Grade 2 and 3, and for issuing permits for altering all structures older than 60 years in the Cape.

The Act makes provision for municipalities to assume responsibility for Grade 3 structures with the proviso that a survey of all resources in the area be conducted; once approved (in our case) by Heritage Western Cape *and if* the municipality concerned is deemed competent, the process can be set in motion.

Swartland Heritage Foundation is registered with HWC as an organisation interested in the built environment within the Swartland Municipal footprint.

HERITAGE SOUTH AFRICA

We are affiliated to HSA, which is an umbrella organisation with directors made up of similar interest groups (represented by the Chairpersons). It is a vehicle to co-ordinate ideas, learn from one another by making comparisons of similar issues and offer guidance and advice.



SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY (SAHRA)



SWARTLAND HERITAGE SURVEY

At a feedback meeting at Swartland Municipality recently, Graham Jacobs and his team reported that the identification of buildings and areas of sensitivity is well under way.

This is a vital part of the programme as the Swartland region is seriously under threat from indiscriminate development; only when the municipality has a solid reference system in place can properties and areas of cultural importance be protected.

The survey will provide this database and once all buildings and sites are quantified and listed, and approved as above, will it provide an ongoing reference for all future alterations and development, both for Swartland Municipality and those with vested interests, such as developers, architects or us, for that matter. Completion date is June 2007.



Schoonspruit, just outside Malmesbury; an example of a structure although already protected by the National Heritage Resources Act, would be further highlighted as a result of the Swartland Heritage Survey.

ANY OLD BONES?

The Swartlander recently reported the finding of a set of bones exposed during the digging of a trench for a new set of pipes within the grounds of the old age home in Malmesbury.

Two aspects were extraordinary:

- After exhumation, the local newspaper was contacted; they reported the bones, remains of a coffin and a gold ring as 18th century (who determined this?); then the evidence was replaced and work carried on.
- The police do not appear to have been notified.

Under the National Heritage Resources Act it is an offence not to notify the correct authorities. If the grave is indeed 18th century, potentially vital clues to an early inhabitant of the town are now lost.

Surely if the bones were deemed to be human, at the very least the police should have been informed?

SAHRA have been notified of the incident.



Photo courtesy The Swartlander

TOURISM OFFICE, MOORREESBURG

The interesting building below was last year adapted for use as the Tourism Office in Moorreesburg.

It was declared an historical monument by the old National Monuments Council in 1984:

The building was designed by architect NT Cowin and erected on land donated by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1913 with building costs of £1,500, donated by Andrew Carnegie of Scotland. The project was the brainchild of Miss MD Koch of the farm Biesjesfontein near Moorreesburg.

The Scottish aspect might explain the stonework; this style is not much in evidence in the Swartland, probably due to the lack of suitable building materials. It might have blended very well to the north of us in towns such as Nieuwoudtville or Sutherland, but is nevertheless a welcome diversion to the usual Swartland vernacular.

Only very minimal changes (such as reinforcing security) were made to the structure for its new function.



The old library, now tourism information office in Moorreesburg.

INFORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP

For information about Swartland Heritage, or a copy of one of the leaflets alongside (in English or Afrikaans) contact Chris Murphy:

orchard@waccess.co.za

A membership form is printed overleaf; further copies may be obtained from

Sue Burton: suburton@intekom.co.za

For only R40 (single) or R60 (couple) per annum you will be helping preserve our heritage in the Swartland!





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AANSOEK VIR LIDMAATSKAP APPLICATION FORM

	MEMBER 1	MEMBER 2
Surname <i>Van</i>		
Names <i>Name</i>		
Street Address <i>Straatadres</i>		
Postcode <i>Poskode</i>		
Postal Address <i>Posadres</i>		
Postcode <i>Poskode</i>		
Contact <i>Kontak</i>		
Tel no <i>nr</i> (H/T)		
Tel no <i>nr</i> (W/W)		
Fax <i>Faks</i>		
Cell no <i>Sel nr</i>		
E-mail <i>E-pos</i>		

Membership fees *Lidmaatskappelde*

Single person R40,00 • Couple R60,00 *Enkel R40,00 • Pare R60,00*

H o w t o p a y H o e o m t e b e t a a l

- Directly into our account or by internet transfer *Direk in ons rekening of deur internet oordrag*:
 Account name *Rekening naam*: Swartland Heritage Foundation Bank: ABSA Branch *Tak*: Malmesbury
 Account number *Rekening nommer*: 91 6535 0951.
- A cheque made out to Swartland Heritage Foundation, plus completed application form, may be posted to the Secretary/Treasurer, Swartland Heritage Foundation, PO Box 303, Malmesbury 7299.
uitgemaak aan die Swartland Erfenis Stigting, plus voltooide aansoekvorm, kan ge-pos word aan die Sekretaris/Tesourier, Swartland Erfenis Stigting, Posbus 303, Malmesbury 7299.