

SWARTLAND HERITAGE OUTING

Malmesbury Riverfront and Schoonspruit

On 16 June SHF visited Loedolff House picture alongside), the surrounding Riverfront area, then Schoonspruit, the wonderful Victorian house at the centre of the proposed housing development on the outskirts of Malmesbury.

Len Raymond took the group through various aspects of Loedolff house, from early history to points concerning its construction and renovation.

The party then roamed the Riverfront where Chris Murphy explained the concept of it becoming a conservation area (part of the Swartland Heritage Survey agenda) and how controlled development could benefit local residents and visitors to the area. This is part of an on-going strategy making officials, business rôle-players and the public aware.

Schoonspruit, previously know as The Beacon, with lavish gardens portrayed below sometime in the 1920s, is at the centre of a new housing development. Of concern to SHF is the main house, a small cottage containing unique art nouveau features and the separate building, Vergenoegd.

The Heritage Impact Assessment, carried out independently, has come out strongly in favour of preservation of the house and has even indicated that there would be some benefit if the surrounding gardens could be re-established.

It is recorded that the grounds were so impressive that when the passenger train passed, it actually stopped for a while to allow passengers to wander in the gardens.

See attached document for full details



DRAKENSTEIN HERITAGE

August Lecture Series

16 Aug **Dan Sleigh** 300th anniversary of the dismissal of Willem Adriaan van der Stel by the Dutch East India Company

23 Aug **Johan Burger** specialist on the Zimbabwe Ruins

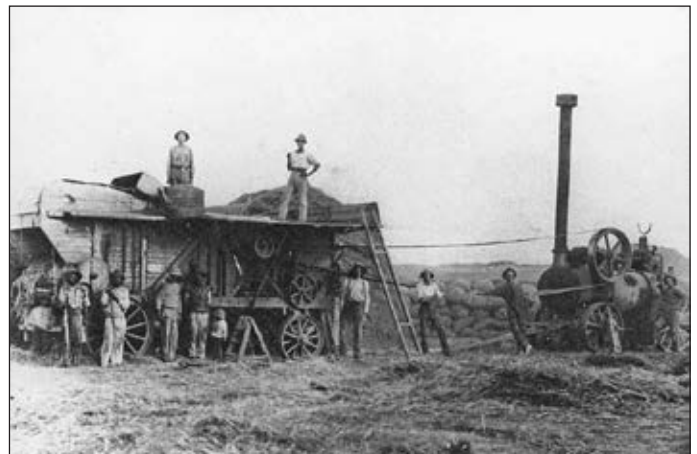
30 Aug **John Almond** lecture on geology and fossils

Cost: R25 per lecture

Venue: Hout Street Gallery, Paarl

Time: 20.00

Contact: Cathy Raymond on 021-872 2952 or 082-656 3994



WHEAT INDUSTRY MUSEUM

If you haven't had a chance to visit the Wheat Industry Museum in Moorreesburg do yourself a favour and have a look. Situated in Main Street in the town it houses surprisingly interesting exhibits in the large display area.

Established in 1967 and proclaimed in the Government Gazette of 2 October 1970, it was the first museum depicting and portraying the wheat industry in South Africa.

For further information phone 022-433 1093 or e-mail: kornmuseum@waccess.co.za



SWARTLAND
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OVERCROWDING*(We are not alone . . .)*

Dire living conditions in slums surrounding cities is not a South African phenomenon.

According to the May issue of National Geographic the number of people living in cities globally will surpass those living in rural areas in 2008.

That's next year!

This is a staggering reversal of man's long evolution from hunter gatherer to pastoralist to city dweller. The impact on cultural heritage cannot be ignored.

In our country we are witnessing a similar spectacle yet at the *same* time are aware of an exodus from cities to smaller rural towns and villages. Inevitably we are dealing with different socio-economic groups; perhaps even the one movement has helped spur the other.

For the Swartland, which does not have a major city as focus, this migration is particularly evident. All the villages are under pressure to develop, but the main focus is of course Malmesbury.

Indications are that within a relatively short space of time the town could nearly double in size. That is extraordinary when one contemplates how long development has taken to reach this established point –

- 1745 the Dutch Reformed Church formed a congregation
- 1829 the town officially established as Malmesbury
- 1861 a town municipality formed.

Essentially something like 250 years of slow growth; until now!

I think we have established previously that growth is good. In 1961 the then Mayor of Malmesbury (Mr AS Meyer) stated: *"It is the task of every generation to leave this world behind in a better state than that in which they came to find it – to leave it in the same state in which they found it means stagnation, or rather retrogression, for with time marches development"*.

This obviously needs to be taken in the context of the times. Rapid, unplanned urbanisation can create a legacy of slum development and the disassembling of areas of cultural heritage, especially with 21st century cluster housing developments.

Without proper, informed, urban planners we are not going to leave any sort of cultural landscape/s for our children or their following generations!

QUOTE

"... the burglars choose homes with a lot of land and high fences, making them impossible to see from the street. And like most people they know exactly what they want. They take cash and jewellery..."

Where would you expect that scenario to have taken place? Well, it was not in South Africa, but in Beverley Hills.

Advice often given in conservation circles is not to surround (specifically heritage) properties with high boundary walls because they do not allow the structure to interact with its environment. But it is the safety aspect that is interesting. Once intruders are over a high barrier they are at liberty to act at leisure and with little risk of confrontation from anyone beyond the property boundary.

Quote taken from The Sunday Times

FOLLOW UP . . .**Maggie Laubser**

In the last issue we revealed that the prominent artist, Maggie Laubser, was born and raised in the Swartland.

Due to some diligent detective work, Gwen McGregor of Swartland Municipality traced the location of the farm where she was born. She says, *"I have managed to find out some info regarding Bloublommetjieskloof. I have just discovered that a farm by that name is situated on the Malmesbury-Stellenbosch Road, immediately opposite the turn off to Klipheuwel where there is a road on the left. This is apparently called the Slent Road. Bloublommetjieskloof is the second farm on the right. A landmark being the new windmills situated nearby."*

The situation makes sense. Anyone familiar with Maggie Laubser's evocative landscapes can see the relationship to this particular area.

**BOOK COMMENT**

Cape Landscapes – Sir John Hershel's sketches 1834-1838
by Brian Warner published University of Cape Town

Reviewer Randolph Vigne considers Sir John Hershel to be arguably the greatest Englishman to have lived at the Cape. Quite an attribute!

The reason being Hershel's work in charting the southern heavens, and his rôle as a great natural philosopher. His work *Introduction to Natural Philosophy* was the inspiration for Charles Darwin. He also contributed in the field of botany and was a talented artist.

He resided at Feldhausen, in what is now Claremont, a sort of *earthly paradise*, as he described it, and sketched the old Cape Dutch house, providing a comprehensive record of it and its surroundings. He also drew scenes of Paarl, Caledon, Newlands, Table Mountain, the False Bay and Atlantic coasts, the Hottentots Holland and panoramas of the Peninsula and hinterland, providing an invaluable and impassioned record.

PROJECT UPDATE

A hard case to deal with

A couple of weeks ago I was notified by a member of the public that a building in a small Swartland town was being worked on, and they were concerned that the correct procedure had not been followed. I went and had a look and it appeared that all the plaster on the building had been removed both externally and internally. I contacted Swartland Municipality who had not approved plans for any alterations. They ordered the builders to cease work.

I was then contacted by the owner, an architect based in Johannesburg, and arranged to meet her on site. One of my intentions was to get her to fill in a permit application so it could be submitted to Heritage Western Cape*. When I arrived I then found that substantial changes to the interior had been made, like the removal of a central doorway, walls and floors.

It was a very stressful situation. When speaking to the owner we emphasized that the exterior should not be further altered, but be replastered as before, but Swartland Heritage could not comment against internal changes.

In terms of significance the house is representative of (probably) early 20th century rural Swartland style, with a typical simple 'A' gable. The person who reported the changes said she considered it to be one of the least altered houses in the town.

What concerns us is that due process was ignored. We do not know how similar projects in Gauteng would be approached. At time of going to press the matter has been reported to Heritage Western Cape and we are awaiting their response.

* This is the requirement of the National Heritage Resources Act, that changes to **all** structures 60 years and older require a permit for alterations from the relevant heritage authority; in our case Heritage Western Cape.



Above: A lost feature of the internal structure.

Below: The front of the building with plaster removed and exposing the leiklip construction, common in the village and surrounds.



PROJECT UPDATE

Sonquasdrift

The present owners of Sonquasdrift (or Zonquasdeurdrift as it has also been known) have applied to make some alterations to an outbuilding within the loose werf on the farm.

One of the oldest grants in the area, it was first recorded as being occupied by a French Huguenot, Guillaume du Toit, in 1704 and a formal grant to Dirk Coetzee was recorded in 1718. According to Alan Mountain aggressive encounters between Europeans and the San occurred from about 1701.

Part of the proposed alterations are to a structure containing relatively recent additions but of particular interest is the outer wall, which is of immense thickness, insinuating another purpose – it has been suggested that it might have been part of an outer defensive wall on the farm.

Plans, drawings and comments have been submitted to Heritage Western Cape for a permit. One of their further requests is that a registered heritage practitioner submit a report. The complex is of such significance in the Riebeeck Valley that every care must be taken with its development.



Sonquasdrift as it appeared in an undated photograph by Willem Malherbe



One of the buildings contained within the loose werf as it is now

PROJECT HISTORY

Recollections of St Thomas Street, Malmesbury

Some time last year Swartland Heritage Foundation was contacted by Dawid Bestbier, a one time resident of St Thomas Street in Malmesbury. He enquired whether the row of houses he lived in were still there and if we had any further information about them. As it turned out we were the beneficiaries of his family's fascinating recollections.

Besides a photograph in Malmesbury Museum and a short note in *Hans Franses's Old Buildings of the Cape*, we were not much the wiser.

Dawid's recollections were:

- *My parents moved to No 7 roundabout 1939 in the same year when they got married. I was born in No 7 in 1944 and lived there until the end of 1962 when my parents moved to Bellville. The unit was one of two that had a chimney (as can be seen in picture A) We could not make a fire in the fireplace as the smoke kept on coming back in the living room (No draught because of obstructions?) My mother had a little garden in front of our unit.*
- *Originally the units had cast iron trellis work on the stoep, which was replaced by a hideous brick wall late in the 1950s. The whole row of houses was 'condemned' for demolition by the municipality during the 1950s and my parents searched for other accommodation, but eventually we stayed on and the houses remained.*
- *The pavement on the opposite side of the street was planted with Silvery Oak trees. From picture (overleaf) they seem to have disappeared?*
- *The photo illustrating the double-storey with the shuttered windows (B) was the home, consulting rooms and dispensary of Dr PJ Joubert, our house doctor. The house had a garden in front of it which was walled in. The house had an annex (the steps in the photo led to the front door) and was the consulting room of the town's masseur, a certain Du Plessis. The gabled building on the other side of the double-storey housed the town's library. On the corner of St Thomas and Voortrekker, the Victorian?/Edwardian? styled building of attorney Frank (called Frank's Building) was a very good example of architecture that never should have disappeared from Malmesbury. But it was demolished and replaced with an unsightly face brick building. What a pity!*
- *Voortrekker Road below the small English (Anglican - CP of SA?) Church was never narrow or lined with Victorian/Edwardian style houses. Voortrekker Road in the CBD area between Wesgraan Cooperative and Boland Furnishers (near the erstwhile town swimming pool), was narrow and lined with very old commercial type double storey buildings which inter alia housed the Malmesbury Café with a Greek owner, Rita's Boutique, Smith's Shoes (at a certain stage Cuthberts), De Braal Photographer and Bonnin's Hair Dressers, and also the motor show room of Sofer's. Towards the top of town, on the way to Moorreesburg, many old, early 20th century houses lined the streets. I think they are mostly all still there?*
- *I will try to retrieve any old photos that I may have and forward to you. I will also consult with my brothers and sister and send you whatever collective knowledge that we might have.*

Further information was received from Dawid's brother, James:

- *The road leading from the bridge (that crosses over the river towards the boy's hostel) towards the railway station and Bokomo was lined on both sides with small Victorian era shops that were very run down by the 50s. I remember there being a fishmonger (Tolken's?), some place doing bicycle repairs, a furniture store belonging to one Sive and a corner bappy store selling penny polonies. Go and have a look at Main street Wynberg if you want to know what it used to look like.*
- *Right next to the bridge was the movie house. 'Whites' sat downstairs, 'Coloureds' upstairs.*
- *Going round the corner into Voortrekker Street, one had Van Zyl's General Dealer on the left, followed by some store we did not frequent, Job's cycle shop, a Texaco garage and then Smuts and Koch which should still be there.*
- *Across the road was a hotel, a garage and Vermeulen's General Dealer. I believe the Spur is somewhere in this area now.*

Yet more information flowed from brother Peet, plus a copy of a booklet he had prepared for his family:

- *You will find a photo of Voortrekker Road in 1945 and another one dating to about 10 years later. None of them show any cottages in Voortrekker Road. The older photos were extracted from a 1945(?) publication 'Na Tweehonderd Jaar' commemorating the first 200 years of the Swartland NG Church. As far as I can remember this street was always as wide as it still is presently. Interestingly enough the street (from about the place where Rainier Street meets up with it right down to near the bridge) was divided into two with a fairly prominent island, large enough for a number of trees – see top photograph overleaf.*
- *A number of the photographs (one below) showing the house in St Thomas Street will also give you an idea of the caste iron trellis on the stoep. We were all very sad when it went, but I must admit that at that time little was done to repair the damage. Certainly the brick wall was a poor substitute!*

The three brothers have together painted a wonderful image of a period in Malmesbury's history. This oral tradition is an invaluable record for conservation purposes.



A photograph from Peet Bestbier's family booklet. The caste iron trellis work was later replaced by a brick wall. The painting quoining and panelled front doors are also of interest



Lower Voortrekker Street c1960 from a photograph supplied by Peet Bestbier. Note the trees in the centre of the road



The same view looking down the street towards the Diep River around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

A Below left: *The row of cottages in St Thomas Street as they appear today.*

B Below right: *The cream coloured double-storey occupied by Dr PJ Joubert, and the pavement minus the Silvery Oak trees. To note, this structure was originally Cape Dutch vernacular with gable*



OBITUARY

Tony Traill

Tony Traill, who died a few months ago, was a linguist and world-renowned expert on Bushman/San languages. He journeyed at least four times a year into the Kalahari to be with them, listen to them, talk to them and record their language and stories.

His early revelation regarding languages was when he mastered Zulu and became proficient in Sotho, studying under Robert Sobukwe, the PAC leader. He furthered his range by learning Lozi in Zambia, one of the indigenous languages.

A previously rejected dictionary on one of the San languages, !Xoo, captivated Traill and he spent time with Bushmen themselves, becoming fascinated with the peoples themselves because of their spontaneity, lack of subservience, sense of fun and bawdy sense of humour. He eventually mastered the apparently difficult language and the first !Xoo-English dictionary was published

Tony Traill made an invaluable contribution to communicating with a group of human beings on the very edge of the modern world and as such close to extinction.

DISAPPEARANCE OF HERITAGE ITEMS

Although reported some time ago, the issue of disappearance and sales of items of national (heritage) importance is continually reported in the press.

One specific case that was reported was that the visitors' books from the Presidential Office Residence, Mahlabandlovu for the periods 1979-1992 and 1994-1996 were offered for sale. The books were taken into safe keeping and Arts and Culture Minister, Pallo Jordan, said that stringent measures were being taken to ensure that valuable heritage documents were not being lost through sales.

The point here is that much of which can be construed as irreplaceable conservation material is not easily recognised by the public. This was reiterated by David Hart of SAHRA who made the point that unless documented these lower profile but no less valuable items are more difficult to protect.

And following . . .

SAHRA announced in the middle of last year the beginning of a national audit of *state-owned* heritage resources. It is an immense project, costing a projected R29m, and taking four years it encompasses 2,000 state owned entities.

This audit is a requirement of the National Heritage Resources Act and can only add to our database.

Still more

As late as June this year Dianne Kohler Barnard of the DA raised the issue yet again, claiming that more than 14,000 heritage objects had been pilfered from museums, galleries and churches over the past four years. Examples were of a Pierneef painting disappearing from the SABC, 17th century ceramics from the Cape and a Moses Seleko sculpture from the Eastern Cape.

Without vigilance from officials and public alike we can expect our heritage treasures to be continually depleted in this global scourge – collectors without scruples.

BOOK COMMENT

Mills of Southern Africa

by Chester O Staples published Umdaus Press

Mill technology was introduced to South Africa by Jan van Riebeeck in the 17th century and subsequently many hundreds of mills driven by water, wind and horse were constructed.

Most are now in a total state of disrepair or dilapidation but a few notable exceptions have been renovated and are in working condition. Two examples are the Josephine watermill and Mostert's windmill.

Chester Staples spent six years researching mills, travelling 25,000 kilometers in his efforts to record, visit and photograph mills around the country.

The book may be ordered directly from Umdaus Press, telephone: 011-675 1477, fax: 086-504 1348 or e-mail: umdaus@succulents.net or Exclusive Books.

Note: as in any document of this type, omissions occur; three in the Swartland spring to mind – can you identify or locate these? (Mail responses to: orchard@waccess.co.za)



TECHNOLOGY – TRANSPORT RIDERS

Towns in the interior of South Africa, such as Grahamstown, Graaff-Reinet, Bloemfontein, amongst others, that came into existence because of expansion, created a new demand – that of the transport rider.

Previously serviced by the ox wagon, carrying some 1,800 kg, a new, bigger capacity transport mechanism was required and the bigger wagon demanded improved technology, such as a new braking system. The older brake shoe was no longer sufficient for the heavier loads and instead new brake blocks were fitted to the rear wheels and operated by means of a screw.

This enabled the new wagons to carry loads of up to 4,500 kg, utilising a span of 16 to 20 oxen per wagon. They usually travelled in two shifts, from 02.00 to an hour after sunrise, and from 16.00 to 22.00, allowing for day grazing.

The end of this form of transport approached when the railways penetrated the interior of the country, coupled with the invasion of rinderpest, which struck ruthlessly from 1897. Even though traders switched to mules for transport the death knell of wagon transport was sounded.

Further reading on this subject may be found in Jose Burman's Towards the Far Horizon

TO GATE OR NOT . . .

The City of Cape Town has announced that it wants to discourage gated developments. We believe this is a view that is growing internationally.

This argument has been raging for some years now, with developers and 'security conscious' groups taking up one position, whilst politicians accuse them with taking up a separatist stance. In effect we are re-enacting a medieval attitude.

Of course we all want to live in a safe environment (that goes without saying) but, with our recent history of brutal separation, these environments seem to stand as reminders of this past stance.

THE PUMP HOUSE

A Restoration Project

The Pump House in Melkbosstrand has apparently retained much of its early form from its construction in the 1700s. It still retains a bearing wall in front of the house to prevent waves from destroying the building.

Between the mud and the clay in the walls is evidence of whale bone, the old beams still exist and the floors are finished in mud. It was originally known as the 'dam house' because there was a fresh water dam in the close vicinity, from where traders would sell their wares.

Now the pump house is envisaged as being an upmarket restaurant. The restoration project has been aided by the guiding hand of Gawie Fagan.

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Superspar Development in Clanwilliam

In the Swartland we are being overwhelmed by development. As we have stated many times conservation is not against progress, but it is the HOW and WHERE that is so relevant.

The Cape Times reported on 3 August that there is an outcry in Clanwilliam regarding the erection of a very large supermarket building in the historic main street. It surely is an issue of design and volume. There is further concern by the local aesthetics committee and Clanwilliam Heritage Trust that the owner of the site proposes to purchase an adjacent site containing an historic building with the intention of demolishing it.

There appears to be very little co-operation between developer and concerned groups, which appears to be a prevalent attitude – bulldoze your way through and once established there is little that can be done.

It is actually time that developers took note of the spatial aspect of the National Heritage Resources Act. When visiting Clanwilliam in future one will never again receive the pleasing aspect of the main street.

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!





SWARTLAND
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PO Box/Posbus 303
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 7299

registered with Heritage Western Cape no: HWC/RCB/03/05
 affiliated to Heritage South Africa

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*

How to pay *Hoe om te betaal*

- 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 gepos word aan die Sekretaris/Tesourier, Swartland Erfenis Stigting, Posbus 303, Malmesbury 7299.