



NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN BRANCH OF THE SIMON VAN DER STEL FOUNDATION NO 1 2014

NUWE LEDE/NEW MEMBERS

Ons wil graag die volgende nuwe lede hartlik verwelkom by die Stigting Simon van der Stel:
We wish to welcome the following new members to the Simon van der Stel Foundation:

Mr L Franken, Dr P Ebersohn, Mr & Mrs A de Wit, Mr M Hurter, Ms K Botha, Prof J Hattingh, Ms A Connolly, Ms I Nevera, Mrs M Farah, Ms S Lindsey, Mr P Esnouf.

DONASIES/DONATIONS:

Ons bedank graag die volgende lede vir donasies gemaak:
We are extremely grateful for the donations received from our members:

Mr MJ Ravenscroft, Mr MP Deacon, Judge & Mrs EL King, Mrs SE Collins, Mr JA de Kock, Mr R Jeffery, Mej C Beyers, Mr A Harvey

DIE HEKS, DIE SPOOK, EN DIE MATROOS.



Op 'n onlangse uitstappie na De Doorns het ons die plase Clovelly (1727 ontstaan toe weiregte toegestaan is) Buffelskraal (1840), Arbeid Adelt laat-Victoriaanse styl en Grand View, besoek. Dit was 'n aangename uitstappie per bus, waar almal die geskiedenis / kennis kon inneem. Die bonus was die vars duiwe wat te koop was, saam met die ete by Inspirati!
Hier het ons gehoor van Leicester Dicey, die stigter van die vrugte industrie.

Maar, dit is op Buffelskraal, waar ons belangstelling gevestig word!
Op hierdie plaas het 'n jong dogter by haar ouers gewoon.

Sy was pragtig, en natuurlik het vele jonge mans kom kuier. Daar was twee wat haar hart vinniger laat kloep het! Sy het hulle toe met mekaar laat kompeteer. Die een wat 'n blom teen die hoogste piek op die berg agter die huis eerste kon bring, sou met haar trou! Ongelukkig het haar gunsteling geval, en is dood! Sy het haarself daarna gaan toesluit met selfverwyt in haar kamer vir jare. Op die ou end het sy selfmoord gepleeg, deur by haar kamer venster te spring. Daarna spook dit in daardie kamer.

Bo die plaas Buffelskraal, troon 'n bergreeks. Die rotse neem die vorm aan van 'n matroos wat voor in sy bootjie staan, dus word dit Matroosberg genoem!

Daar loop 'n paar riviere deur die Heksrivier vallei. Hulle kruis mekaar en vorm die letter X. Dit het later die Heksrivier geword. Daar loop ook 'n storie dat dit so gedoop is as gevolg van die dogter wat selfmoord gepleeg het, as 'n heks beskou is.

MICKEY.

Eugène Marais



Eugène Marais, writer, lawyer and naturalist, was born in Pretoria in 1871 but for a short while was schooled in Paarl. On the 26th July we will be having a guided tour of the school buildings with Francois Lotter of the Eugène Marais Foundation who will also give us a short talk about the man and his legacy.

Widely acknowledged as the founder of ethology (the scientific study of the behaviour of animals) Eugène Marais spent many years in the Waterberg studying termites, snakes and baboons. He also discovered the Waterberg Cycad named after him ([Encephalartos eugene-maraisii](#)). His written works include the classic, "Die Siel van die Mier" - 'The Soul of the White Ant'. He was also well known for his poetry and recognised as the first professional Afrikaner poet. Sadly his private life was not a happy one, his young wife died eight days after giving birth to their only son. He became addicted to Morphine – at that time considered a 'safe' non-addictive drug. After being deprived of the drug for some days he fatally shot himself at the age of 65.

The school buildings are in the grounds of the Zomerlust Gastehuis in Main Road Paarl and we will be having alight lunch at the restaurant, after which the owner will give us a guided tour of the house and it's collection of old photographs and memorabilia. The buildings origins date back to the original grant in 1792 to Johan Meyer who quite possibly built a single storey thatched house in an 'H' plan on the land which then stretched down to the river. The present façade dates back to the 1860's after the second storey was added. The present day entrance porch was added in the early 20th century. The farm was in the ownership of the well known family of Abraham Pieter de Villiers. They have been important role players in this history ever since their very first French Huguenot ancestor arrived in 1685.



The Zomerlust (which translates to Summer Pleasure) has close ties with the history of the Paarl Rock Brandy Cellar which was situated across the road from the Zomerlust guest house. Legend has it that an underground pipe linked the maturation casks in the cellar to a tap, where guests were entertained in a grand style. The house was once known as 'Buckingham Palace'.

Rhodes Memorial.

The Conservator Trust is busy organizing a pictorial sign board in three languages to inform the many visitors to this tourist attraction. The information included the history of the site and the design and architectural features of the memorial.

We are working in close conjunction with the Table Mountain National Parks Board and have enlisted the assistance of architect John Rennie and Angela Gilbert, a layout designer. We are hoping to have it erected in time to mark the 102nd anniversary of the opening of the Memorial on the 5th July. John Muir is coordinating the project. Members may like to drive up to Rhodes Memorial after the Groote Schuur visit on the 13th August to view the sign board and maybe have lunch at the Restaurant.

John Muir

Muratie, Kersefontein and Martin Melck.

Members who joined us on the tour of Morganhof and Muratie earlier this year were treated to a brilliant summation of the history of Muratie by current owner Rijk Melck. This history is intricately woven into the life of one of the Cape's most interesting figures, Martin Melck, the 'stamvader' of the Melck family. As we will also be visiting one of his other, and maybe most beautiful, farms, Kersefontein near Hopefield, I thought it would be of interest to learn a little more about the man.



Originally purchased by settler Martin Melck in 1770, the story of Kersefontein is very much the story of the Melck family. Starting with the remarkable success of settler Martin Melck, the history of the family has always been closely interwoven with that of Kersefontein.

The first deed described the farm as a 'zeker Veepost' (certain cattle post) and it was precisely for this that Martin Melck intended to use it. Sheep, cattle, horses and wheat have continued to flourish here over the past two centuries.

The eighth generation owner Julian Melck continues with these traditional farming activities and has contributed the subtle and careful changes to a number of farm buildings, to accommodate visitors. The great attics of the farm have yielded fine period antiques, which were carefully restored and now grace the luxurious guest suites.

Martin Melck's history is certainly one of the greatest success stories which the early Cape produced. Like many of his predecessors at De Driesprong, he was a German who had come to the Cape as a soldier in the service of the company. He was born on 20 October 1723 in East Prussia, in the Baltic seaport of Memel. Memel today is called Klaipeda and falls into the former Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania. He arrived in the Caped on the 26 June 1746 when he was twenty-three years old.

The Company made soldiers available to farmers as labourers. Shortly after his arrival Martin was hired out for several months as foreman on Johan Giebler's Farm called Elsenburg. In 1750, four years after his arrival, he was discharged from the service of the company and became a free burgher in the colony of Stellenbosch. Martin bought, in the same year, the farms "Aan't Pad" (now Cloetesdal) and "Watergang". He kept on, however, with his cartage contracting and also started a profitable lime-kiln at Saldanha Bay.

After the death of his first employer, Martin from time to time rode over to Elsenburg to visit the widow Anna Margaretha Hop. They were married on 20 August 1752, two months before the bridegrooms 29th birthday. Marriages at this time were, without exception, in community of property and Melck was thus, after his marriage, owner of Elsenburg and Hoopenburg (now Muldersvlei). De Driesprong (Muratie) was transferred to Martin Melck on 7 February 1763. In 1766 Martin was appointed to the honourable office of the Heemraad. Among other things he helped to establish the boundaries between the districts of Stellenbosch and Swellendam as well as diverted the course of the Eersterivier in order to prevent flooding. During the 1770's he built the first wagon road from the castle to 't Rondebosje. In 1770 the enthusiastic farmer extended his land ownership by the purchase of De Laaste Gift, now part of Lourensford Estate), also Kersefontein and St Helena on Berg River.

It grieved Martin Melck that the many Germans and Scandinavians at the Cape, all Lutherans, were forbidden by the Company to form a congregation. One petition after the other was in vain. Martin now took the law into his own hands and built a hall, which was supposed to be a packing shed in the smart Seestraat (now Strand Street). This building was comparable to the "schuilkerke" (hidden churches used by Roman Catholics in the Netherlands).

Apart from the building which cost 45 000 guilders, the generous Melck also donated two adjoining plots for a parsonage and a dwelling house. Governor Tulbagh was a great opponent of the Lutherans, but as a good friend of Melck's he turned a blind eye.

The Council of Seventeen eventually gave in and in 1780, the year before Melck's death the first pastor began his ministry. The adjoining parsonage was built after Melck's death by the architect Louis Michel Thibault and Anreith. Since 1932 the building has been called the Martin Melck house.

Anna Hop, his first wife, died on the 22nd of May 1776. Melck was at this stage 53 years old and most certainly the most marriageable man in the Cape. At this stage he owned 10 farms, 2 loan farms, owned a dwelling house and 2 packing sheds in Cape Town, 203 slaves, 170 horses, 1321 head of cattle, 4167 sheep, 106 pigs and about 200 000 vines. The Estate was valued at an unbelievable 240 000 guilder (this was equal to 2222 years of pay).

On 1 November 1778 he remarried Maria Rosina Loubser. Martin Melck died on Friday, 23 February 1781, at Elsenburg. The 58 year old Melck was presumably buried in the Lutheran Church in Strand Street. A memorial plaque by Anton Anreith was unveiled at the church 4 years after the benefactor's death.

From the Muratie website.

Heritage Symposium

The symposium is held at Richmond on Friday, 17 and Saturday 18 October 2014.

The programme includes speakers on heritage, visits to historic houses, the horse museum and farms.

A gala dinner and handing over of gold medals is scheduled for the Friday evening.

Contact person is Marina Beal at beal @vodamail.co.za. Tel.082-8854044 or 011 646 5980.

Restaurants with history

La Belle. Café and Bakery. Alphen Boutique Hotel, Alphen Drive, Constantia.

Open for breakfast and lunch daily and early suppers in summer. Bookings 021 7956336.

Alphen Manor House is one of the most beautiful houses in the Constantia Valley. Built around 1765 the rare double storied house was subsequently remodelled. Now a 5 star boutique hotel with refurbished bedrooms and en suite bathrooms. The grass forecourt is surrounded by lovely old buildings including the Great Cellar and the pressing cellar.

It is said that the arrogant Dr James Barry challenged a member of the Cloete family to a duel on the steps of Alphen. The outcome is unclear, but both survived the episode and Dr Barry eventually died in England aged 71, when it was discovered that "he" was a woman! The property is still owned by members of the Cloete family but the hotel and restaurants are managed and run by a family with extensive experience in the hospitality industry.

La Belle is situated in the old "Boer and Brit" building and has been renovated to include an open ceiling. On the walls around the fireplace hang a collection of 15 old clocks, and a long bar counter runs down part of another wall showcasing a display of cakes, pastries and breads. The inside tables are popular in winter and the outside tables under the oaks and shady umbrellas are delightful in warm weather.

The menu has a good variety of choice covering starters, interesting salads and popular main courses, including crispy fried kingklip and chips R140, fillet steak with an excellent béarnaise sauce R150 and the ever popular pork belly R120 as well as generous burgers. There is a short but adequate wine list and the service is good. It is well worth a visit.

John Muir

In fact on the 8th October we will be having a guided tour of the buildings by present day owner, Nicky Cloete Hopkins who will tell us the interesting history of her family's ownership of the farm over the past 150 years. Nicky will also be giving a tour of the newly installed display of glass collected by her mother Shirley Cloete

Members are free to book tables at La Belle on 021 795 6336 to enjoy lunch after the tour.