



NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN BRANCH OF THE SIMON VAN DER STEL FOUNDATION NO 1 2019

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 P Engelen, Mr & Mrs R Southall, Mr F Schuitemaker, Mrs J Newton, Two Oceans Productions.

DONASIES/DONATIONS:

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

Mrs I Myburgh, Mej C Beyers

OBITUARIES

Our last newsletter opened with an obituary for Linda Muir. Sadly, this time, we have to open with an obituary for her husband John Muir.

John was born in Cape Town on the 5th November 1939 and educated at Rondebosch Boys Preparatory and High Schools. He was the Managing Director of The Land Trust Group of Property Companies until retirement in April 2006 when he became a Director of Joyce & McGregor Group of property companies.

But John was so much more than this, a loving husband to Linda and devoted father to their children he was committed to service to his community holding many civic positions:

Past President Cape Town Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees)
National Vice President Jaycees
Past President Rondebosch Rotary club
Councillor of City of Cape Town 1978-1996
Chairman of Executive Committee (4 years)
Chairman Town Planning Committee (4 years)
Deputy Chairman Executive Committee (4 years)
Served on the Council of the University of Cape Town (10 years)
Served on the Board of National Botanic Institute (Kirstenbosch 8 years)
Past Chairman Simon van der Stel Foundation (Cape Town)
Executive committee member of Constantia Property Owners Association
Co-ordinator for the proposal for the declaration of Constantia Valley as a Provincial Heritage area (with the late Professor Fabio Todeschini and others).

Passionate about the Cape as he was (and a love that he imbued in his children with family trips to places of interest both historic and geographic) he wrote two series of articles for the Weekend Argus: "Know your Cape", 60 articles, and The Cape on Sunday, 25 articles, as well as numerous articles on a variety of subjects. He authored two books for Howard Timmins (Publishers) – "Know your Cape" and John Muir's guide - Cape Town and the Western Cape. His last publication, for Random Struik was "Walking Cape Town" which he dedicated to Linda who acted as photographer.

Unfailingly patient and courteous he acted as a 'wise counsel' to the Foundation and on many Heritage committees and matters. He and his always popular and interesting walks and talks will be much missed.

DERK KONING

We also need to mark the sudden passing of popular member of long standing Derk Koning who was always an enthusiastic addition to many of our outings. Our condolences to Isobel King and Derk's brother and sister-in-law who also attended our outings when in the country.

THE RONDEBOSCH FOUNTAIN



This iconic Cape Town monument (picture, left courtesy of Facts Found) - which is actually an ornamental drinking trough for drivers, draught horses and dogs – has stood at the intersection of Main and Belmont Roads in Rondebosch for over a century and is a much-loved Cape Town landmark. In August 2015, almost 4 years ago, it was destroyed when a speeding car – driven by an unlicensed, uninsured, drunk driver – drove into it during the early hours of the morning. The Fountain was smashed, and bits of it were scattered all over, right. Concerned citizens collected all the broken pieces before the scrap metal dealers got whiff of it, and kept them safe. But it was soon clear that the Fountain was damaged beyond a 'quick-fix' repair.



Eventually the City of Cape Town (CCT) removed it altogether.

A public outrage followed. The Fountain, which had been manufactured in Scotland, was of historical and aesthetical value to the people in the area and to those who frequented the roads. A debate raged on social media about the future of the Fountain, with people demanding answers from the CCT as to its intentions, and why it was taking so long. The maintenance and repair of the Fountain was the responsibility of the CCT's Transport and Urban Development Authority, assisted by the Environmental Management department. Unfortunately, the original foundry in Scotland, no longer existed. While there were detailed schematic drawings, there were no measured and dimensional plans. This was highly specialised work and the necessary skills were scarce. Luckily a local foundry, Heritage Castings of Blackheath, appeared on the scene and collected all the shattered remnants. They had craftsmen who were skilled professionals and began the restoration that everyone was clamouring for.

The Rondebosch Fountain (let's call it that, because that's what it's called in the vernacular) was presented to the community of Rondebosch in 1891 by George Pigot Moodie, one of its most colourful and wealthiest residents. He lived in the house that was then called Westbrooke and which is now the President's official residence, Genadendal. The Fountain was installed and formally opened on 26 September 1891. The post was topped by a lantern which was also the first electric street lamp in South Africa and powered by Pigot Moodie's own generator until the municipal power supply was implemented. The Fountain was a typical piece of Victorian ironmongery of its time, and was cast by Walter Macfarlane & Co Ltd of the Saracen Foundry in Glasgow. Macfarlane & Co existed from 1850 to 1967, and was the most important manufacturer of ornamental ironwork in Scotland.

Macfarlane's had an agent in Cape Town: C Freeman & Co in Strand St. Mr Moodie probably visited them and paged through one of Macfarlane's extensive catalogues. In them are pictures not only of every item large or small, plain or elaborate, that the foundry produced, but also tantalising views of their showrooms; in one of them is a drinking trough almost identical to the one that ended up in Rondebosch; and a fantasy scene of a street lavishly decorated with Macfarlane's products. Sadly, many of the firm's architectural fountains, crestings and railings were destroyed after being requisitioned during the 2nd World War as raw material for the war industry and to boost public morale. Overzealous citizens eagerly ripped up ornamental iron street furniture in the misguided belief they were helping the war effort. This ill-considered scheme resulted in the destruction of much of Britain's (and some of South Africa's) heritage cast iron work, as the material proved mostly unsuitable and was consigned to rust away in scrap yards all over the country. Many more cast iron features were removed in the 1960s due to their high maintenance costs.



This makes the Rondebosch Fountain (pictured left in a historic photograph by TD Ravenscroft) all the more unique. It survived all of that and more: it has stood on the same site for over 120 years it saw the horses (and other creatures) it once watered being overtaken by motor cars; it stood firm when the roads around it were widened and tarred; its light guided home many pedestrians on a dark and lonely night; it alone remained when all the buildings around it were demolished and replaced with modern structures (with the exception of St Paul's Anglican Church on the

hill). One of the shopping malls was even named The Fountain Centre. The Fountain was declared a National Monument in 1964. In 2011 it was renovated by the Rondebosch Ratepayers' and Business Association, together with the Groote Schuur Community Improvement District. It was sandblasted and treated to a smart newly-painted exterior and surrounded by a neat, freshly-planted, indigenous water-wise garden provided free of charge by Starke Ayres Garden Centre. The repairs to the Fountain cost R40 000; the CCT provided R10 000.

And now for the good news. A local foundry in Cape Town called Heritage Castings has been working behind the scenes and has done amazing work, creating an almost completely new New mouldings have been created for the damaged parts since none exist any longer. These parts are being re-cast by a specialist and the whole will be reassembled. As mentioned, many of the smaller pieces were recovered by local residents, and yet others sent in photos of various parts of the fountain which will help in the assemblage. The funding is being provided by the Simon van der Stel Foundation, the Cape Town branch of Heritage South Africa.

A 79-year old pattern maker, Steve Wood, right with some of the moulds, has so far spent 2 000 hours in manufacturing the patterns needed to replicate the individual pieces. He and his team at Heritage Castings are almost finished. So we will be patient a little longer, and welcome our beloved Fountain back when it finally comes home.



PS

Other fountains in South Africa manufactured by Walter Macfarlane & Co that I am aware of are of course the similar drinking trough in Mowbray, which was presented to Mowbray by the SPCA in 1899; the Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain in Durban, erected in 1897 (sadly no more) and the King Edward Coronation Fountain in Cradock, erected to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902.

Sigi Howes

WORCESTER OUTING. OCTOBER 2018



Members, left, enjoying the spring sunshine in front of the impressive Delft inspired ceramic tile mural by Lucie de Moyencourt and Michael Chandler at the restaurant on the Bosjes estate just outside Worcester. The Bosjes Tree of Life is made up of 366 ceramic tiles and depicts the flora and fauna of the farm and its surroundings.

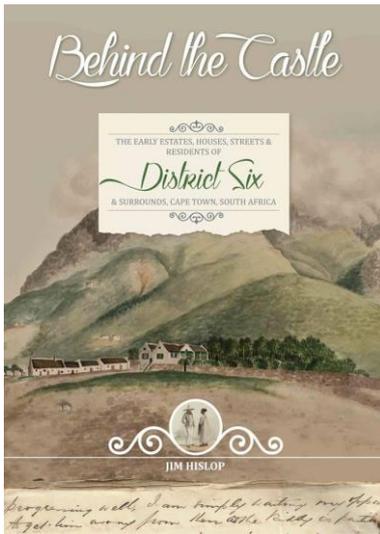
SCHOOLS BLUE PLAQUE PROJECT

Our Chairman, right, unveiling the blue plaque at Beau Soleil Music Centre in Wynberg together with the Principle Marina Louw. Sigi Howes the co-ordinator of our schools blue plaque project, was also in attendance.



BOOKSHELF

BEHIND THE CASTLE: JIM HISLOP



Many think of District Six as a bustling, densely populated city neighbourhood, but it wasn't always so. Originally, the area loosely referred to as 'Behind the Castle' consisted of a few scattered estates (such as Zonnebloem, Bloemhof, Werkerslust and Hope Lodge) with large homesteads, vineyards and grazing land, accessed by a few farm roads that were later formalised into District Six thoroughfares, such as Hanover Street.

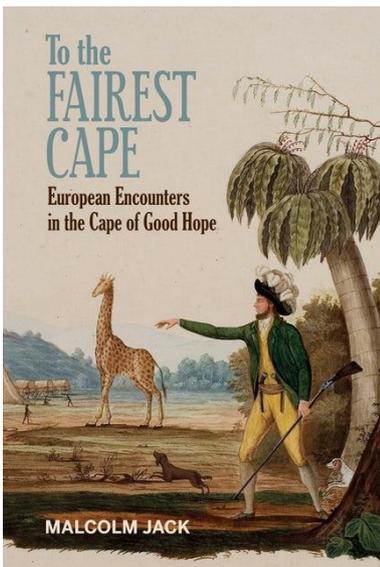
The first residents were a vibrant mix of freed slaves, artisans, washerwomen, European merchants and wealthy land owners. *Behind the Castle* looks at this early history of the place that was to become District Six – something that has never been extensively covered in a book – until now.

Lavishly illustrated with old artworks, photographs, maps and drawings (some published for the first time), *Behind the Castle* is a treasure trove for lovers of old buildings, bygone eras and the forgotten corners and characters of Cape Town.

152-page, full-colour, A4-size soft cover.

This is Jim Hislop's second book, his first being *Wheatfields and Windmills*, both were co-sponsored by the Simon van der Stel Foundation.

TO THE FAIREST CAPE: MALCOLM JACK



Crossing the remote, southern tip of Africa has fired the imagination of European travellers from the time Bartholomew Dias opened up the passage to the East by rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. Dutch, British, French, Danes, and Swedes formed an endless stream of seafarers who made the long journey southwards in pursuit of wealth, adventure, science, and missionary, as well as outright national, interest.

Beginning by considering the early hunter-gatherer inhabitants of the Cape and their culture, Malcolm Jack focuses in his account on the encounter that the European visitors had with the Khoisan peoples, sometimes sympathetic but often exploitative from the time of the Portuguese to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833.

This commercial and colonial background is key to understanding the development of the vibrant city that is modern Cape Town, as well as the rich diversity of the Cape hinterland.

Publisher: Bucknell University Press.

NB Sir Malcolm Jack will be giving a talk on the subject of his latest book on the 31st August as one of our talks sponsored by the Conservator Trust. See the new programme for details.

S.A. HERITAGE SYMPOSIUM - Friday 4-Sunday 6th October 2019 – TULBAGH

HASA will present their 18th annual S.A. Heritage Symposium in the host town of Tulbagh in the Cape Winelands. The symposium is timed to be part of the Historic Boland town's three-week long Half century celebrations and commemorations of the 1969 Earthquake resulting in the complete architectural reconstruction of the town. Controversially the theme and keynote lectures of the symposium examine heritage as a politically manipulated construct and aims to examine the transformation of heritage in South Africa from a colonial built tangible history to an emphasis on intangible African heritage and struggle/liberation history. The three day will be organised by the Tulbagh Valley Heritage Foundation in association with Tulbagh Museums. For more information please contact Jayson@cdq.co.za or call 076 950 8470.