



NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE TOWN BRANCH OF THE SIMON VAN DER STEL FOUNDATION NO 2 2017

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:

Mrs M Abbott and Ms Chrystal Zietsman

DONASIES/DONATIONS:

Ons bedank graag vir die volgende lewenslede en gewone lede vir donasies ontvang.
We are extremely grateful for the donations received from our life and general members.

MOUNT PROSPECT FARM, PAGGASVLEI ROAD, CONSTANTIA

History

Mount Prospect's roots lie deep within 17th century Dutch rule at the Cape. As a portion of Simon van der Stel's original Constantia, Mount Prospect has immense historical value and reflects a pattern of early colonial settlement in the Cape winelands. It has a direct and highly significant association with historic persons such as Simon van der Stel and with foremost families in the valley such as the celebrated winemakers, the Colyns.

Although it lies on the border of Groot Constantia, the farm derives from Bergvliet, the largest portion of the original Constantia grant. Generations of the Brink family were responsible for the establishment of Nova Constantia and Mount Prospect on subsequent subdivisions. In a valley noted for its Cape Dutch architecture, Mount Prospect is the sole surviving intact Victorianised farmstead. Mount Prospect formed part of Nova Constantia with its well documented slave heritage. Close by is the kramat of Sayed Mahmud and further down, the site of the Spaanschemat allotments, reminders of Constantia's rich and diverse community life.

Mount Prospect encapsulates the history of farming in the Constantia Valley. It stems from the original grant of land to Simon van der Stel in 1685 when the foundations for wine farming in the valley were laid. The Colyns took Constantia wines to new heights at Hoop on Constantia and Nova Constantia, of which Mount Prospect formed part. However, in the 19th century wine farmers suffered numerous setbacks that led to the gradual fragmentation of their farms. Mount Prospect was established as a separate farm in 1881 and the farmhouse was rebuilt on distinctly Victorian lines. Although the Brinks continued wine farming well into 20th century, the pressure for housing saw the farm being whittled away to a fraction of its original size. Like many historic farms in the area, it faces the threat of being engulfed by suburbia and divorced from its natural setting.

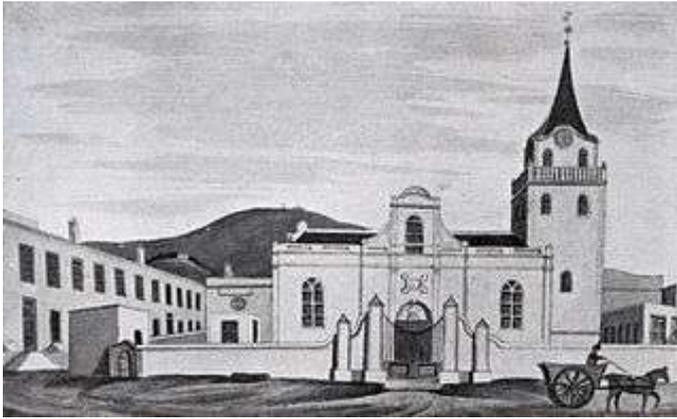
Proposed re-zoning and Retirement Village

In 2015 a proposal was made for a 35 unit retirement village which would retain the imposing Victorian residence circa 1805 with prominent twin projecting "stoep kamers" as a club house. The two outbuildings (in poor condition) would be retained and provide facilities for the retirement village. Objectives from the surrounding neighbours and the Constantia Ratepayers and Residents Association and the Simon van der Stel Foundation included objections to the number of units planned, that the old house would be hidden to a degree by the new houses and generally suggesting that the proposal was detrimental to the character of the area.

The project is currently the subject of an appeal. The Foundation has approached the Council to remedy the situation where a house is left empty and subject to damage and vandalism. We have asked the Council to implement conditions to protect houses by insisting they are occupied, maintained and protected during a re-zoning process.

JAK Muir

THE OLDEST TURRET IN SOUTH AFRICA IS TELLING THE TIME AGAIN!



The original church, above, with the turret towering over Cape Town and today's church with the original turret almost hidden.

Next time when you are in Adderley St, please make the effort to view the c1704 turret adjacent to the Groote Kerk (sadly obscured by the neighbouring building). It is the oldest clock tower in South Africa, but with a slightly different appearance as it was raised in 1771 (a date you will see on the beautiful weather vane).

Spend a few minutes here and wait for the clock to strike a quarter or an hour. The sound comes from the two historic bells – the one dating from 1726 is decorated with the VOC monogram and was made by Jan Albert de Grave of Amsterdam. The smaller bell by Thomas Mears of London

dates from 1800.

The clock, only the second to be installed in this turret, was recently restored. This project was sponsored by our own Conservator Trust. The clock is by John Moore and Son of London, dated 1829.

We are proud to be associated with this project as we have a rather interesting connection with this site: Simon van der Stel was buried at the church in 1712 and the burial stone of Baron van Rheede (who's vault we maintain), can still be viewed here at the clock tower.

A blue sign will be unveiled at the turret to mark the occasion (see outings programme).

WORDING ON THE SIGN:

This clock, dated 1829, was made by John Moore & Son of London.

It is the second clock to be installed in this 1704 turret (raised in 1771).

The three quarter chime mechanism strikes quarters and hours on two bells dated 1726 and 1800.

The restoration of the clock was sponsored
by the Simon van der Stel Foundation (Cape Town) in 2017.

Ian Pretorius (who co-ordinated the project.)

WESTCOAST FLOWER SEASON, HISTORIC FARMS AND DARLING OUTING.

We all congregated at the Marmalade Café and kicked off the outing with excellent coffee and milk tart. We then proceeded to the old farm, Langfontein, which was known as Ormonde for many years. It was named after an English thorough-bred racehorse. His bloodline ran strongly in the horses bred on the farm in the 1900s.

The Basson wives entertained us with a variety of teas, jams and delicious, home baked scones while we could wander around in the beautiful homestead.

The farm has a rich history that dates back to 1805 with Jan de Goede as the first owner. In 1853 The Darling Village Trustees Board bought the farm for 50,000 guilders for the development of a village and church. In 1896 the farm was sold again, excluding the village, to William Duckitt. In 1908 the farm was sold to Pieter van Breda. He was responsible for building the stately Victorian farmhouse. Van Breda started to breed racehorses, which was the order of the day and very fashionable. This was actually done on



one of his other farms. When the foals were weaned, they were brought to Langfontein and prepared for the sale at the Rand Easter Show and the Rosebank Show in Cape Town. This was the time when the farm was called Ormande. It changed hands many a time afterwards and was owned by Jasper Basson, E.P.J. Smith, Coenie Louw, Willem Groot and Nico Basson. Langfontein now belongs to Charlotte Andrag, daughter of the late Nico Basson but her brother Theo rents the outbuildings from her for the Ormondes wine sales. Some of the first vineyards in the Darling District were planted at Langfontein.

The village of Darling was founded in 1853 on part of the Langfontein farm. The first Dutch Reformed Church was built in 1857 and the Old Pastorie in 1865. This was then our next stop. Originally a beautiful Victorian Building with a big verandah but unfortunately it is in a bad state of repair. It is currently run as a B&B.

In 1855 Johannes Shellink was appointed as sexton, reader and teacher. After the founding of the Darling Village the church service was held in one of the out buildings on Langfontein farm. The first school was housed in the same building. When in 1859 it was decided to build a new vicarage, the building was adapted to a school with living quarters for the sexton-teacher.

In 1899 the Town Hall was built. That was also our third place to visit as it is now the Darling Museum. It is an interesting museum as it depicts different scenes from the village life of Darling. Especially of interest are the relics from the Darling Creamery which was started in 1899 by two Swedes namely Möller and Threnström. There are also some very interesting old wheat farming equipment and a quaint school room. It is a really worthwhile visit.

Lunch was served at the Marmalade café where John Duckitt answered questions about Darling and surrounds and told us about their conservation efforts.

Burgherspost was next on the list for visiting and we were allowed to walk around on the 'werf' – a stunning setting and view. We were also allowed to peep through the windows of the beautiful homestead and antique furniture.

Burgherspost was originally one of the grazing farms belonging to the Dutch East India Company. Interestingly in 1918 it was bought by Alexander van Breda whose son Pieter bought Langfontein in 1908. In 1925 Pieter's son, Alexander (Sandy) grandson of the other Alexander, bought the farm and it was here that he was breeding his race horses. It now belongs to Roger Sandiford and produces quality grapes for the wine industry as well as for their own Cloof brand wines.

Burgherspost put aside roughly two thirds of the farm for conservation of the critically endangered Cape Lowlands. They have appointed a qualified conservation officer to manage the reserve. There is accommodation on the farm and the officer will take you on game rides.

A most successful and satisfying day outing enjoyed by all.

Information from Nina van der Westhuizen's book, "A Darling History".

Nicci Hoal

BLUE PLAQUES

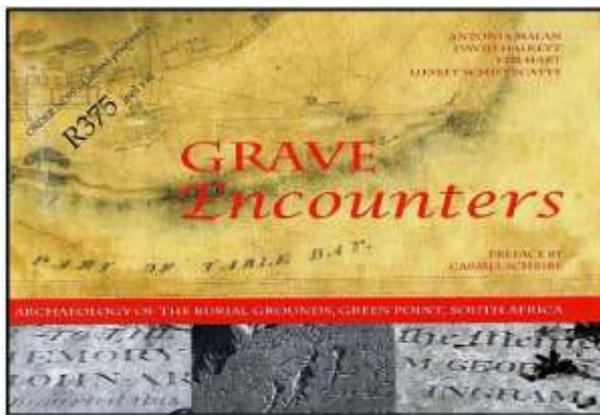
The latest recipient in the school blue plaque programme was Camps Bay Primary School's Preparatory School, the beautiful stone building built by E A Cook in 1913 for the then Camps Bay Public School (founded in 1906).

Pictured on the right are Stuart Collier, principal of Camps Bay Primary School, Linda Murray, head of the Camps Bay Preparatory School Campus, our chairman, Ian Pretorius and SvdS member Mark van Rensburg of the Centre for Conservation.



BOOKSHELF

GRAVE ENCOUNTERS.



The Conservator Trust also co-sponsored the publication of *Grave Encounters: Archaeology of the Burial Grounds, Green Point, South Africa*. This interesting, and beautifully illustrated book, co-authored by Antonia Malan, David Halkett, Tim Hart and Liesbet Schietecatte deals with the burial grounds beneath the buildings of modern day Green Point.

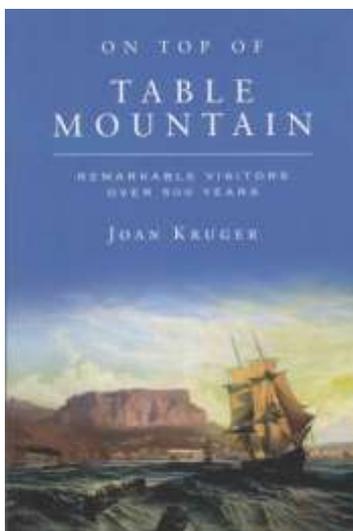
The issue came to the fore when the developers of the Rockwell building in Prestwich Street unearthed human remains whilst excavating the foundations.

Taking us back to the earliest days of the colony and the indigenous peoples who predated that, the book details the growth and development of the settlement that became Cape Town.

The various cultures and religions are all dealt with as well as the negotiations and agreements that were arrived at to reconcile the varied histories.

Dr Antonia Malan, who heads up the Historical Archaeology Research Group and is based at the University of Cape Town has generously agreed to give us an overview of the grave sites and take us on a walk around the area where the graves were found. We will meet at the Prestwich Memorial for coffee and tea before the walk. Date 19th May 2018. See programme for details.

ON TOP OF TABLE MOUNTAIN



Die boek bevat pragtige foto's van plekke waar die gewone toeris nooit kom nie, en ook kaarte van staproetes. Kyk na die lys besoekers aan die Kaap wat oor die berg geskryf het; die helfte kom uit die VOC-tyd. Dit is 'n boek vir altyd, een wat in elke Kapenaar se huis behoort te wees, en dus die ideale kersgeskenk. Dit sal tydens die funksie te koop aangebied word.