



CELEBRATING OUR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

NPO REGISTRATION 097-978-NPO

HERITAGE W CAPE REGISTRATION HWC/RCB/09/05

Hello to everyone and the first newsletter of 2012.

As with the village's 150th anniversary, this update has taken a while but we got there eventually...

Well, we are finally officially a NPO and have the certificate to prove it! This item of good news arrived late in January with a letter from the Department of Social Development stating that the Society has been accepted as a non-profit organisation with an official certificate to this effect. This achievement is owing to the work of member Atholl Hay who applied in the first place, with relevant information, then chased up the department in Pretoria before the end of 2011. As a registered NPO we are now entitled to apply for funding from various sources, including the lottery. We think that Atholl may be coerced into action again soon, as he has wonderful experience in these matters. Thank you from all of us.

MUSEUM REPORT

From Marilyn Poole

The Little Museum with the Big Heart finally re-opened with an informal but fun gathering on February 16. Everyone there had either served on the Museum committee from those early days in 2001, when Helaine Shand had the marvellous idea of starting such a record of our heritage, or had been happily (?) press-ganged into work parties to paint shelves, clean exhibits, move furniture, hang pictures and all the hundred and one things which needed doing after the fire. With temperatures well into the mid 30s at the time, it really was a labour of love, and I should particularly like to thank my husband, Keith, who did the lion's share of the work. He spent two hours cleaning up the old municipal typewriter, and lovingly restored the sword and scabbard. He even re-fashioned the broken "toggle" out of spare leather (suitably polished with military tan!) and researched its history on the Internet.

The Museum is now in the room behind the Information Office/Tourism, where Helaine originally envisaged it should be. Ann Bedford has planted a charming little garden outside the window and we are actually looking quite smart. As was said on the invitation to the event, the Museum is not so much a Phoenix arising from the ashes, but a charming little Firefinch.

Because the space is only 62% of what we had before, we have had to rationalise some of the exhibits, giving back to donors duplicates of some items (such as the typewriters) or returning to Vrolijkheid most of the stuffed animals because they were too smoke-damaged to restore. The reason for retaining one of them is because the taxidermy was done by a McGregor oudorp resident - his story is on display.

The exhibits have been grouped to tell particular stories, such as the laying of the foundation stone of the church and the blowing down of the steeple. Another covers the postal history, and a third describes the whipstock industry which was a fundamental part of the village economy in the early days. More are planned. One overseas visitor told Jill Hogan at the information desk that he had seen many museums around the world, of varying standard, and although this was possibly the smallest, it was the best in terms of coverage and range of exhibits. He particularly praised the file of oral histories. So ... watch this space ... even though it's a small one!



Rob Leiper, Myrna Robins and former Museum

Committee chairman, John Buckle, raising a toast to the new look Museum.



Helaine Shand with Marilyn Poole's overseas guest, Audrey, in front of one of the display shelves.



Keith Poole and Bridget Rose reading one of the hanging boards in the Museum. These can readily be transported and displayed elsewhere if required

CAPE EPIC

From Jenny Johnson

The ABSA Cape Epic came to McGregor!!

What an exciting occasion this turned out to be! It was wonderful to be able to co-ordinate a joint McGregor Heritage and McGregor Tourism project to welcome the riders and their supporters to our village. McGregor Winery very kindly donated 1200 of their famous "Rush Hour in McGregor" postcards which we distributed to school children, residents and businesses in McGregor. The brief given to each person was just to have fun writing a personal message of welcome to the riders and/or to wish them luck. The messages that were written were an absolute delight to read and the time, effort and creativity that

McGregor put into this project was very heart-warming. Stickers from McGregor Tourism and the Heritage Society were pasted onto each postcard before they were delivered to the Langeberg Municipality to be packed into each of the rider's 'Goodie Bags'. The second task that we embarked on was to ask the children of McGregor to create pieces of art-work that could be used as spectator flags. Children from McGregor Primary, the Byekorf, the Waldorf School, Oona's Home School, Eden Valley School, Weltevrede Primary, Buffelskloof Primary and Uitnood Primary all very willingly took part. Well over 1000 art masterpieces were produced which we attached to sticks and reeds gathered from the surrounding countryside. The flags were handed out to spectators in Voortrekker Street on Tuesday 27 March – the day the Cape Epic came to McGregor! It looked great! Many thanks to the team – Meryl Rouse, Del Jones, Shelly Brownlee, Rita Cadle, Andries Willemse and Sarah Holloway for having fun together.

KRANS NATURE RESERVE

From Myrna Robins

As the official announcement of the site for low-cost housing seems to be eternally delayed, Atholl Hay and I have been contacting Cllr Davin Hull for a meeting in order to discuss the subject of the Krans reserve protection and the rezoning of the area.

We met with Davin Hull on March 6 and handed him a CD and printout of the reasons why the Krans needs to be protected and proclaimed – a fat file, well illustrated, with support from archaeological, botanical, wildlife, education and other experts. He is supportive of the idea of the Krans as a reserve and asked us to email him requesting that the rezoning of the area be placed on the Council agenda for the next monthly meeting. We have done this and await developments.

YOUTH REPORT

From Debbie Mosca

We have sent off an official request to the Cape Winelands Municipality, asking if they could help with funding for provision of a library for the McGregor Primary school. We have filled in forms, got quotes, included certified copies of our constitution etc, and now await a reply. We suggested to this municipality that as both the space and the teacher-librarian were in place at the school, provision of shelving, catalogue, computer and stock should follow and that the opening of a library would be a pleasing way to mark McGregor's 150th

anniversary and further co-operation between the Heritage Society and the Winelands Municipality. We have identified two sources for books as well.

MARKING MCGREGOR'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1862 the village of Lady Grey was laid out some 22km from Robertson, and grew slowly as farmers built nagmaal houses and others became permanent residents. The fact that there was another Lady Grey village in the Eastern Cape led to postal confusion and it was clear one of the towns would have to change its name.

In 1904 the congregation of the Dutch Reformed church in this Lady Grey decided to name their parish McGregor in honour of recently retired minister Rev Andrew McGregor. The postmaster followed by renaming the village McGregor and the whole village followed suit, and was officially renamed McGregor in 1906.

The Heritage Society has been making plans to ensure that the 150th anniversary of the founding of our historic village does not pass unnoticed. Committee member Marilyn Poole organised a gathering of members who have helped in the museum, see above, and is organising a heritage dinner, see below.

Venerable watermills and traditional Cape fare

Calling our members to join us for a four-course heritage feast on Friday May 04 and find out more about one of the village's historic icons, the watermill at Green Gables, formerly the Old Mill Lodge. Meet Andy Selfe of Elgin, a globally renowned watermill fundi and restorer . We will start the evening gathered around the water-wheel, complimentary glass of award-winning Rooiberg muscadel in hand , where Andy will share his expertise with members, then go on to Tiger's menu of traditional Cape fare, classics that well could have come out of the original kitchen in 1912. Match the courses to Green Gables' affordable wines, or BYO.

Cost: R150 a head, which will help pay for the Museum's rent for its space at the Tourism office.

Time: 6pm

Bookings to Marilyn Poole on 023 625 1306.

Don't leave your booking until too late - there are only 34 seats available.

KAMPTERREIN DEVELOPMENT

From Rob Leiper

Members will hopefully be aware from our earlier mailing of the proposed revisions to the plans to develop the old Kampterrein on Darling St. This was, of course, the subject of a previous proposal for re-development as retirement village which went through a lengthy series of objections and revisions at Heritage Western Cape. The proposal was dropped

after permission for it had been 'won' and the developers have now submitted a revised plan for sub-division into twenty-one residential erven, together with two institutional erven for the old church and school. We asked members to express their views on this and there was a clear majority of those who responded who felt that the Heritage Society should object and seek to have these plans revised.

We have submitted a letter of objection to the Municipality stating that this revised proposal should clearly be re-referred to Heritage Western Cape for review before any further consideration at municipal level. It is a very substantial change and cannot rely on the earlier decision by that body (which in any case it appears to ignore in various significant respects.) We outlined a detailed case on heritage grounds why we consider the proposed sub-division to be inappropriate and we expect to make this case to the provincial heritage body in due course.

In line with requests by members that we try to make positive proposals for the development of the site rather than merely objecting we have suggested the following as constituting a more sensitive and appropriate way forward:

- The new off-grid 'dog-leg' road be removed from the plans and open space be retained in the sub-division such as to retain the existing earth dam and connect it by footpath to a length of undeveloped edge along the Krans; this would include at a minimum plots 7,8 and 10 with parts of 5 and 6 (on the developers' plans)
- The 'default' size of sub-divided plots be 2000 square metres to conform to the existing plot size in the area of Darling Street and the rural character of the town edge and the plot divisions on the proposed plans be redrawn and combined such as to make this possible – it is not difficult to see the various ways in which this could be undertaken
- The sizes of the two institutional erven be increased to incorporate the proposed plots 21, 22 and 23 on the extension of Church Street
- The proposed extension of Bree Street should accommodate an entrance and 'look-out point' to the Krans nature reserve (as should the open edge reaching from the old earth dam)
- A Conservation Management Plan for the whole site covering both built and landscape environments be prepared and submitted to Heritage Western Cape for approval, with responsibility for implementing it built into the title deeds of all sub-divided property
- In line with the promised social benefits of the previous development, that at least one of the heritage buildings and its curtilage be donated, or sold at a beneficial price, to a community trust for the purposes to be determined as of benefit to the wider community of McGregor in recognition of the place of these buildings in the memory of the village; and that the developers actively and collaboratively lend their expertise to facilitate the establishment and financing of this Trust

This form of development of such a sensitive and historic site would be of positive benefit to the village and still provide scope for a reasonable commercial proposition for a

responsible developer. We believe that proper attention to conservation is likely to increase the value of the individual properties.

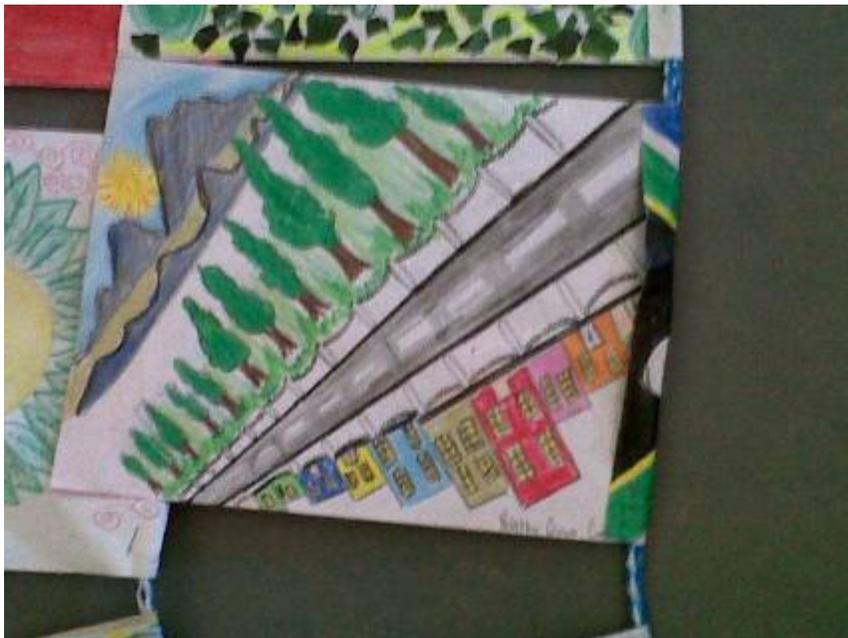
RESTORATION PROJECT

From Rob Leiper

The chair of the restoration project met with Davin Hull and Heritage committee member Andries Willemse in order to explore how best to take the project forward. It seems clear from the experience of the pilot work that members of the community most affected by decay of the old vernacular houses in the village need to be closely involved in any project to plan and manage their restoration. This was discussed and agreed at the meeting. Essentially people from the coloured community should be in control, with support from the professional skills of others as needed. We believe that it should be possible with the right governance structure to attract grant funding to take this work forward, something that would have many benefits. Whether there is the will to prioritise this area of work amongst a hard pressed group of people is what Davin and Andries will attempt to explore in the coming months.

IN CONCLUSION:

CAPE EPIC ARTWORK FROM LOCAL SCHOOLCHILDREN AND POSTCARDS FROM MCGREGOR





Two fine examples of Jenny's initiative



Cheering them on: Committee member Jenny Johnson initiated a flag project in village and farm schools, and received 1 000 hand-drawn SA flags from the pupils who waved them enthusiastically as the Cape Epic cyclists raced through McGregor village on their way to the mountains.

The Heritage Society committee members for 2012 and their email addresses:

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