

McGREGOR HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2011

YOUR COMMITTEE

During the past few months there have been some changes to the Society's Committee:

- **Pam Verrall** and **Jill Hogan** have resigned due to other work commitments and **John Buckle** has asked to come off the committee due to health reasons. We thank all three for the amount of time and energy they have given to the society over the many years.
- **Shelley Brownlee** has taken over the role of Treasurer from 1 June 2011. We welcome Shelley (newly arrived in McGregor with Konrad and their son James) who brings with her excellent bookkeeping experience.
- **Debbie Mosca** and **Rita Cradle** have joined the committee as co-opted members and are giving energy to our work with the youth of McGregor.
- **Shaun van Niekerk** (Waldorf School) was replaced by **Herbie Steyn** at the beginning of the year. **Waldorf School** have since withdrawn their representation on the committee.
- Other members of the committee (still here!) are **Tony Saddington** (Chairperson), **Rob Leiper**, **Marilyn Poole** (Secretary), **Atholl Hay**, **Maggie Oostendorf**, **Myrna Robins** and **Andries Willemse**.

CONSTITUTION & NPO STATUS

The committee has just finished the proposed changes to the constitution which if approved at the AGM in July will allow us to apply for NGO (non-governmental organisation) status. This will bring many benefits to the society especially in terms of fund raising opportunities.

McGREGOR MUSEUM

An addition to the display in the hanging boards in the Museum is a complete copy of the Heritage Society newsletter put together some time ago by the teachers and pupils of the Waldorf School. It was such a fine effort, and so full of interesting material, that we felt it deserved a wider and more permanent viewing. Do take a moment to pop in to the Museum and read it again. It takes up both sides of one of the boards.

We are still chasing after biographical and musical material about McGregor composer George Payne, but it is taking a while to track down at the two South African universities which (we understand) have collections of his compositions.

Also waiting to be assembled is a hanging board display which highlights the original Heritage Society work to restore one of the oldest houses in the village ... a house which, sadly, needs further restoration today.

We are also hoping to highlight some of the geological and archaeological treasures found on the Krans during a recent survey. They were left in situ for security reasons, so it is unlikely that we will be able to display actual objects, but we hope to have good photographs and descriptions.



Early Stone Age hand axe with the tip missing



A range of Middle Stone Age artefacts

Examples of artefacts found during the recent archaeological survey of the Krans

LOW-COST HOUSING

Tales of where the long overdue housing will go abound. We are hopeful that the Province and new Municipality will settle this issue soon and indications are that the Swanepoel Farm is the chosen location. This land would have your committee's support and would enable housing to be built with land for vegetable gardening and open spaces.

DEWAR & LOUW REPORT

Many thanks to our members and friends of Heritage who raised R24,373 towards the R25,000 costs of the Dave Dewar and Piet Louw report. The report continues to be used and was recently submitted to Province alongside our views on the low-cost housing proposals. We are hoping that plans for the new housing will draw on the expertise of Dave and Piet who are internationally recognised for their design and understanding of these types of developments. At the recent Cape Town Civic Honours Awards ceremony, Dave Dewar was awarded a Mayor's Medal for Social Affairs and Services.

THE KRANS

The subcommittee tasked with saving the Krans Nature Reserve has not been active recently, as we were told by Corné Claassen of CapeNature that nothing would happen until the site for the low-cost housing was finalised and demarcated, after which the registration of the conservation area, as mooted by MEC Anton Bredell, could be taken up by CapeNature with the municipality. With the elections over, we hear that the housing site will receive almost immediate attention from the Province, with a first meeting with Langeberg municipality scheduled for late May.

Once the site has been finalised we will be reminding both CapeNature and Province that we are looking forward to the next step,

We will also suggest that the reservoir area above Long and Smith streets be included in the registration of the enveloping erf 330 conservation area so that it can be protected from any future ideas of development, cellphone masts or anything else!

You may have noticed that the three entrance signs to the Krans (at van Reenen Street, Smith Street and Vaal dam entrances) have been refurbished. Thanks to Bruce Milne for his help with this.



KAMPTERREIN

After our appeal to the Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport was turned down we decided not to take the Minister's decision on review. We did however lodge our objection to the rezoning and consent use application which was considered by the Municipality. The municipality approved the project and we have again objected to this at Provincial level. We await the result of this objection.

RESTORATION PROJECT

The Restoration Project has now reached the conclusion of its first phase. During this period of about a year a total of **R34,376** was raised for the restoration of historic dwelling houses in the Oudorp. This is an impressive testament to the generosity and good will of McGregor's residents and visitors. It also shows the widespread interest in conserving the heritage of our irreplaceable built environment, as well as in improving the living standards of people in the village. We would like to extend our warmest thanks to all who contributed to the project.

The money raised enabled the working party to achieve its ambitious target of restoring the fabric of four houses in a year. (One of these remains uncompleted pending the resolution of an ownership dispute but funds are available to finish this work.) R25,230 has been spent on the three restorations undertaken so far. The houses restored were: 65 Buitekant St; 29 Kantoor St; 25 Tindell St; and - to be undertaken - corner Tindell and Buitekant Sts. The gratitude of the beneficiaries, expressed to the working party for the work done, extends to all who supported the project.

There has been extensive discussion during the course of the project of the principles and the challenges involved in such restoration work and much has been learned. A detailed breakdown of funds raised, work undertaken and the issues raised are outlined in a full report on the project's first phase; this is available on request to any member interested in the project's work and its future (from rob.leiper@gmail.com).

The report proposed a number of lines of action for the Heritage Society to consider in taking the project forward into a second phase. This included obtaining formal Non-Profit Organisation status in order that grant-funding could be sought from public bodies and foundations in South Africa or even abroad; we are in the process of applying for this status. The project does 'tick boxes' of social upliftment and skills training as well as heritage conservation which may make it attractive to many such grant awarding bodies. Funding of this kind would require a full and detailed business plan based on a strategic outline of what needs to be achieved by restoration in McGregor rather than the ad hoc process of selection which we have been following so far. However in order to be successful and to address some of the issues of involvement and motivation which were raised in this pilot phase a further process of consultation with the wider community is essential. This would be to clarify our aims, widen awareness of the value of our heritage and should result in a more inclusive governance structure for running the project. To take the work forward people with skills in community development and leadership, grant writing, legal issues, building construction and architecture would be of great help. We invite all members interested to become directly involved or take an ongoing supportive role.



Completed restoration



Awaiting restoration...

NEXT AGM

Our 2011 AGM will be held at **6.30pm** on **Thursday 28 July**. Please diarize the date. You will receive the agenda, the proposed constitutional changes and details of the venue shortly.

NEW WARD COUNCILLOR

Finally, a word of congratulations to **Davin Hull**, our new Ward Councillor. We look forward to a real open and honest relationship and communication with him and the new Municipality around issues affecting heritage.

This edition of the Heritage Society newsletter was edited by Atholl Hay.