



GRASSHOPPER COUNTRY
*The Great Brak River
 Museum News Letter*
 2 Amy Searle Street
 Great Brak River

November 2009
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 Editor Rene' de Kock

Dear Museum Friends

Issue 11 of 2009

Contrary to what I may have implied, the Great Brak River estuary has a guaranteed one million m3 of water available for the management of the estuary per year that is even if the dam is less than 70 % full.

For those of you who have asked and are concerned with the present low level of the Wolwedans dam, the river mouth will be opened on the 30th November 2009 for the December tourism season and an attempt will be made to keep the mouth open for 30 days. Calculations suggest that less than one million m3 will be necessary. In these trying times any possible savings will help prolong our available water supply.

" Ons stel voor om die beskikbare water te gebruik om die mond voor die begin van die somer vakansie oop te maak en met laevloeioslatings te probeer oophou vir ongeveer een maand. By die huidige watervlak van +1.30 m MSL sal daar ongeveer 600000 m3 nodig wees om die watervlak in die strandmeer naar die oopmaakvlak volgens die GOK riglyne van + 2.0 m MSL op te stoot om die oopmaking effektief te laat wees".

During October, the Searle Memorial church celebrated the 150 year event with a magnificent flower show. Some of the photographs are shown below.



On the left, a tapestry of the church by Tienie Verster



The Orchids seen above are alongside the vintage pedal organ.

Some of the beautiful flowers on show in the Searle Memorial Church.

The Museum is open from Monday – Friday between 9 am and 4 pm. and on Saturdays between 9.30 am and 12 Noon

Having completed a very successful year both in fund raising and craft creation, Hopes "Hands On" crafts workshop is closed until January 2010.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry reports that during the last week in July 2009, our Wolwedans dam is 44.90% full. The bottom 15% layer is presently not suitable for purification.



Great Brak River's Wolwedans dam wall.

The only other dam in the Wolwedans catchment area is the Ernst Robertson dam which is 97.8% full however this is very small in capacity.

If you have forgotten the very successful "Searlestown", a video of the production is now available from the Vorentoe school priced at R 100.00. The original stage backdrop is in the museum and will shortly be hoisted onto one of the walls.

Thanks to Lesley Rae Dowling, the new owner, Great Brak River had a rare opportunity to visit the majestic 'Westbank' house and garden, the original home of Mary and Charles Searle junior. More than 110 visitors crossed the threshold to view one of the finest historic houses in our area. Originally completed in 1896, this house has dominated our skyline for many a year. Whilst passersby know the house exists, it is only when you enter the gates that one realizes just how large and attractive the garden is. Lesley has recreated a sense of opulence and has furnished her residence in an attractive style reminiscent of the past.



Lesley Rae and the ladies from the "Island" who were present during the visit. (photo by Sandra Buitendag)

2 days BIRDING COURSE
GREAT BRAK RIVER CONSERVANCY
 become a **REAL BIRDER** (19th & 20th November)
 a unique opportunity to be taught all practical knowledge and tricks

BIRD REGISTRATION FEE , includes all course materials, venue, light lunch and services. – R650 full payments only

Proceeds to fund
BIRDING ITINERARIES & COMMUNITY BIRDING GUIDES TRAINING IN GREAT BRAK RIVER

INFO & REGISTRATION

Email to greatbrak150@gmail.com – Cell phone 082 833 50 63 office hours

Venue: ILITA LODGE Great Brak River Heights South 044 620 4143
info@ilitalodge.co.za

BIG GOLF DAY

RAISING FUNDS FOR
 THE GREAT BRAK
 RIVER COMMUNITY

ILITA LODGE

11 NOVEMBER 2009

PLEASE CONTACT

Marulin Goodger

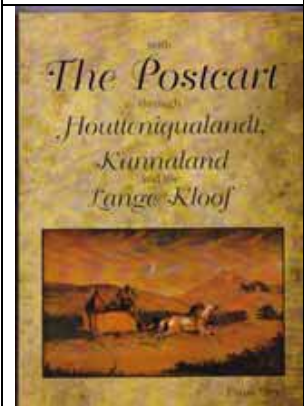
Cell: 083 460 1059

E-mail:

info@ilitalodge.co.za

The museum has obtained a copy of a most interesting new book by Pauw Steyl on the early history of the postal services in the original George District

With 'The Postcart' through 'Houteniqualandt', Kannaland and the Lange Kloof



Available from the author @ R 375.00

Cell phone

+27(0)84-499-8267

Paging Through History 150 Years Ago

IN A COUNT DOWN TO GREAT BRAK RIVERS 150TH BIRTHDAY JUST AROUND THE CORNER WE HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHERE THERE IS LITTLE MORE TO TELL EXCEPT:

GREAT BRAK RIVER IS 150 YEARS OLD ON THE 31ST OF DECEMBER 2009

This month we show you some of the majestic 'Westbank', the house built (much later) in 1896 for Mary and Charles Searle junior and now the home of Lesley Rae Dowling.



Above, 'Westbank' in about 1900 before the many additions. On the right 'Westbank' before the latest restoration work.



.One of the many entertainment areas decorated in a simple yet elegant style.

On the right, the main entrance archway overlooking the front garden and the river.

Below part of the rear garden with Kitty and Brenda relaxing after the visit.



- 6 January, 1896 - Cecil Rhodes is forced to resign as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony for his involvement in the Jameson Raid
- April 6, 1896 – The opening ceremonies of the 1896 Summer Olympics, the first modern Olympic Games, are held.

- June 4, 1896 – The Ford Quadricycle, the first Ford vehicle ever developed, is completed, eventually leading Henry Ford to build the empire that "put America on wheels". In a tiny workshop behind his home on 58 Bagley Avenue, Ford put the finishing touches on his gasoline-powered motor car. After more than two years of experimentation, Ford, at the age of 32, had completed his first experimental automobile. He dubbed his creation the "Quadricycle," so named because it ran on four bicycle tires. The success of the little vehicle led to the founding of the Henry Ford Company and then later the Ford Motor Company in 1903. The Quadricycle was driven by a chain. The transmission only had two gears (first for 10 mph (16 km/h), 2nd for 20 mph (32 km/h)) and did not have a reverse gear. The tiller-steered machine had wire wheels and an 11 liter fuel tank under the seat. Ford test drove it on June 4, 1896, after various test drives, achieving a top speed of 20 mph (32 km/h).¹



- 6 August, 1896 - Cape Town's first electric tram service begins operation along Adderley Street to Mowbray Hill



- September 22, 1896 – Queen Victoria surpasses her grandfather King George III as the longest reigning monarch in British history.
- 1896 --- South Africa's first school of mines is opened in Kimberley (later to form the core of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg)

[Panathinaiko](#) Stadium the site of the first modern Olympic Games 1896.

Research continues to produce interesting items concerning the village and some of these will be highlighted in forthcoming issues.



Association Chairman's Chatter

Robert Smith

Tel 044 620 4952

E-mail gbrmass@gmail.com

Not only has the end of a month arrived quickly for your monthly newsletter compiled as always by your favourite editor, René, Christmas is now not that far away.

We are slowly working away at our plans for upgrading our museum. We have now decided how to change, in principle, the first three display rooms and also our colour scheme should be established next month. We will be assisted by Museum Services in George to plan the best layout for our artifacts in due course once we have finalised the contents for each display room.

The visit to the historic Westbank home and the strawberries and cream and tea was very successful and proved to be interesting and enjoyable by all the visitors (approximately 120) and we thank once again Leslie Rae Dowling for opening up her house to the public. The event also proved to be a good fund raiser for us.

As you will see elsewhere in the newsletter there are still a few events in the heritage program to take place this year and you are cordially invited to try and attend as many as you can. Our 'dorp' is only 150 years old once and is quite an occasion to remember.

A reminder that our book, the reprint of Margaret Franklin's "The Story of Great Brak River", with significant events from 1974 to the present added, which is very interesting, is available from the Museum in either soft or hard cover. This could be a very nice Christmas present for the readers' friends and family!

**Ilita lodge is proudly hosting a Fundraising Golf Day on the 11th November
and we invite you to spend the day with us!!
All proceeds will be allocated to the upliftment of the Great Brak River community.
Feel free to contact Mossel Bay Golf Club (044) 691 2379
to book your four ball:
Members: R 85.00 Visitors: R 235.00
Golf Carts only: R 180.00 each for the day
* Excludes half way house
Your contribution to this Golf day would be greatly appreciated!!**

**We look forward to entertaining you!!
Contact Marulin or Lyn for more information concerning Tee sponsorships –
great marketing opportunity!!**

www.ilitalodge.co.za

info@ilitalodge.co.za

(044) 620 4143

083 460 1059



Heritage Program Calendar for 2009 -
Prepared by the Museum Monday, 26th October

Month & provisional date	Description	Supported by	Contact person
083-448-1966	Program Organiser	Museum	Rene' de Kock
November	Walking the upper end of the Willie Searle Furrow. An unusual walk will be arranged taking approximately 2½ hours following the course of Willie Searle's water furrow from near the bottom of the tunnel to a nearby farm house. The walk falls on private property. This is a fairly energetic hike. The walk is spectacular and highlights the difficulty of building a water furrow through rough terrain in 1918. You may also see buck, birds and interesting plant life.	Museum	Mr Peter Searle & the museum 082-561-3052
	Ten people only at a time weather permitting		
7 th November	Flea market	Great Brak Outspan Market	Paula Grimbeek 082-788-2461
14 th November	Party in the garden at 'Westbank'	Laerskool Vorentoe	Careen Pienaar 082-750-6527
19 th -20 st November	Residential Birding Identification Course Birding on Great Brak fields. SEE DETAILS ELSEWHERE Entry forms available from the museum	greatbrak150@gmail.com	GREAT BRAK INITIATIVE GROUP
21 st November	Heritage Walk through Great Brak River Arranged by our curator Nisde McRobert for Mossel Bay Heritage but open to all. Meet for tea at the museum at 10 am. R 20 for tea and the museum visit. 10.45 am cross the river to view the old part of the village, Mossienes Ave., the herbal garden. Back across the bridge, Searle family Cemetery, view Fairholm's garden, visit the Searle Memorial Church and art exhibition. See the oldest house in Great Brak River. Back to the Museum for lunch. Bring picnic or order at R 20. After Lunch view the Hydro Power Station.	Mossel Bay Heritage and the GBR Museum	Please RSVP Ina at the Museum 044-620-3338 to facilitate catering.
25 th November	Special Tree planting to thank Bolton's for their support in all of the GBR 150 year activities during the year and also to celebrate 150 years by planting a tree in the memorial garden	Museum	Robert Smith 083-658-1500
Mid December	Interdenominational Church Function		Mrs Nisde McRobert 044-620-3783
31 st December Great Brak River is 150 years old.			
End December 2009	Franklin & Searle Family Reunion	Family only	Info Peter Searle 082-561-3052
15 th January 2010	The 2010 "Blow up Soccer Pitch" will be in Great Brak River.	Museum	Rene' de Kock 083-448-1966
Late January	Traditional Tea Party and crossing the river closing ceremony	Museum	Mrs Nisde McRobert 044-620-3783

SA Tourism Snippets

Did you know?

FACTS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA

- The Addo Elephant Park is the third largest conservation area in SA.
- The lady Loch Bridge near Wellington was the first steel bridge built in South Africa in 1910 and is still in use today.
- The mountain rose found near Villiersdorp is indigenous to this area.
- Vredendal is home to the biggest co-operative wine cellar in the southern hemisphere.
- If you want to live in Kassiesbaai, neighbour to Arniston, you have to be born there.
- Beaufort West is the oldest town in the Central Karoo and was founded in 1818 on the farm Hooivlakte at the request of Lord Charles Somerset. He named it after his father, the fifth duke of Beaufort. In 1837 Beaufort West became the first municipality proclaimed in South Africa.
- Bredasdorp 's Old Jail in Hoop Street houses the biggest collection of bottles in South Africa.

SOCCER WORLD CUP

Very briefly...

2010 SOCCER

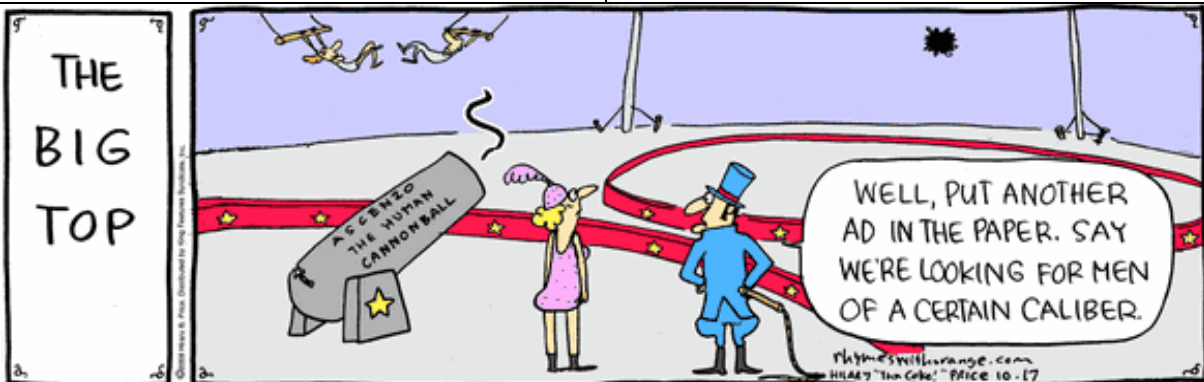
- For the village school children, some good news. The 2010 "Blow up Soccer Pitch" will be in Great Brak River on January 15th 2010. Watch the news letter for more details.
- The Local Organising committee has identified a gap in the market for a central accommodation inventory portal for accessing information on accommodation as well as the need for a network of visitor centers.
- Cape Town Tourism has extended its centre hours in preparation for 2010. They will be open from 08h00 until 21h00 - seven days a week

TOURISM SNIPPETS

- Visitors to the Table Mountain Cableway can now purchase tickets online at www.tablemountain.net
- The Outeniqua Choo –Tjoe started again on it's regular (George) Museum to (Mossel Bay) museum route during October.

Quotable quotes

- Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. - Dr. Seuss
- The possibility of stepping into a higher plane is quite real for everyone. It requires no force or effort or sacrifice. It involves little more than changing our ideas about what is normal. - Deepak Chopra



FUNNIES

*All great discoveries are made by mistake.

* Tell a man there are 300 billion stars in the universe and he'll believe you. Tell him a bench has wet paint on it and he'll have to touch to be sure.

* Nothing ever gets built on schedule or within budget.

* All's well that ends.

* A meeting is an event at which the minutes are kept and the hours are lost.

* A computer makes as many mistakes in two seconds as 20 men working 20 years make.

* Nothing motivates a man more than to see his boss putting in an honest day's work.

* After all is said and done, a heck of a lot more is said than done.

Over the next few months we'll be placing some of the photographs we received for our recently held photo competition.

Another photo competition entry. A beautiful photo of the island from Great Brak River Heights.



THE JOY OF SONG

Ina Stofberg writes; Some time ago Kay and Ted Schroeder came to visit the Museum. As always they were full of laughs, joy and songs. They sang some wonderful songs to me and I begged them for the words to one of these songs. They consented happily and gave me the words to the following song which they wrote themselves. I soon discovered that this was indeed a hobby of theirs. They take well known tunes and write their own, very original words. And although winter has passed, the song remains....

WINTERTIME IN GREAT BRAK

Winter time, here in Great Brak
Is the time for us to keep track
Of family and friends
For happy weekends
Right here in our Outeniqualand.

Chilly nights you need a fire,
Sunny days the temp is higher
Watch the whales in the bay
As they splash and play,
Off the shore of Outeniqualand.

On the hillside you can see the aloes,
Ev'ry flower's like a scarlet flame,
On the beach we shout some cheery ' hellos'
greeting everyone we meet by name

The tune is "Walking in a "Winter Wonderland". In case you can't remember how the real song goes it is like this:-

Sleigh bells ring, are you listening,
In the lane snow is glistening,
What a beautiful sight
We're happy tonight
Walking in a winter wonderland, etc

KAY wrote...

"The Great Brak song was written for a theme party organised by Marion O'Riordan and Nisde for a "Christmas in July dinner" with roast turkey, Christmas pud and all the trimmings. It was a full house as always. I can't remember the date but it was before the new church hall was altered".

OUR NATURE CORNER



A Forrest of Lichen.

LICHENS are fascinating organisms - actually they are two organisms which have opted to co-exist to their mutual benefit: a lichen comprises a fungal partner and an algal or cyanobacterial partner. The fungal partner benefits by getting sugars, its only nutriment, from the algae (which being green synthesises sugars through photosynthesis). The algal partner gets protection as the fungi normally forms the outer surface.

This protection against the weather allows the algae to have a more stable and constant environment to live in, allowing it to grow in areas where it would not survive on its own. There are over 10 000 different species of lichen and they will, and do, grow on just about anything, natural or manmade. The lichens in one of the photos are growing on a metal bar, exposed to all-day sunshine and a great deal of wind and yet they appear to be thriving. Various fruiting bodies or "apothecia" are visible - on the crustose lichens they look like embedded blue jewels.



This small (9mm) beetle looks more like a brooch of hammered gold than an insect! Unsurprisingly it goes by the name of Fool's Gold Beetle (*Aspidimorpha tecta*). It feeds on the leaves of plants

such as tomatoes, potatoes and morning glory.



Currently flowering on the farm:

Tree fuchsia (*Halleria lucida*) is a shrub or medium-sized trees. It is popular in gardens as birds and insects love its fruit and nectar-rich flowers. Note the persistent style on the fruits which resembles a wispy tail.

Photographs & text by -Sally Adam-

THIS HAS BEEN A BUSY MONTH AND NISDE IS AWAY ON LEAVE



AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ISLAND CIR 1900. THE CENTRE OF THE ISLAND WAS THEN COVERED WITH WATER. THE ISLAND MUST HAVE CHANGED SHAPE OVER THE YEARS AND AN EARLY MAP SHOWS THE ISLAND SPLIT IN TO TWO PARTS WITH A CHANNEL DOWN THE MIDDLE.



Looking down from the Heights, Great Brak River cir 1910. "Showing the original workers cottages built by the Searles.

Bibliography

Great Brak River Museum Files



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