



GRASSHOPPERS COUNTRY
The Great Brak River
Museum News Letter
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 Great Brak River

February 2013

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Volume 2013, Issue 2

Editor; Rene' de Kock

The GBR Museum is open Monday to Friday between 9.00 am and 4.00 pm.

If you are short of a Book to read? we have a large collection of pre-owned books on sale in the museum.

To make certain of receiving your full email newsletter, please ensure that your museum membership is up to date.

Family members only R40.00 per annum.

For the news letter to be sent by post, please add R50.00.

Special Points of Interest this month.

A new intern at the museum Page 16
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Invest in your Health

Join our group of over 50's for a once -a-week hour class at the Dutch Reformed Church hall in Long Street, next to the ou Pastorie.

Class starts at 8 am on Tuesday mornings. Please call Piet Snyman at 044 620 3053 to join.
 Cost: R40 per year.

Dear Friends of the Museum,

It happens every year. A visitor arrives at the information office wanting to know where such and such an establishment is as they can't find it. They have booked and paid a deposit for the self catering accommodation offered at a special rate of R 500.00 per day.

In this case Log Cabins on the beach at Great Brak River. Of course there is no such place and it is a scam. Please be very careful and obtain details via the official Tourism Bureaus or local estate agents. Newspaper adverts whilst often genuine can be bogus and R500.00 per day in season? Lets be real.

On the 15th of January, at short notice, Ina Stofberg organized a really fun day at the museum with balloons and tea to welcome the penguin man, David Chamberlain, second from the left, on his run around South Africa to help raise funds for penguin preservation.

See photo below and full article on page eleven.

The museum has a new intern, Wendy Welch. For more details see page sixteen.

For those interested, please diarize the museum's AGM which will take place on the 19th May 2013.

Martin Hatchuel interviewing the editor writes;

Mossel Bay's summer holiday season was remarkably better than those of the past few years, and – with strong forward bookings and exciting advances in the local tourism offering – most operators are cautiously optimistic.

Great Brak River Museum and Information Centre chairman René de Kock said that the village seemed busier than last year.

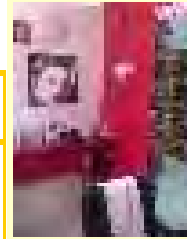
"It's still not as good as it was in the past, but it is improving," he said.

Continued on page 5





Clip & Cut
welknie@gmail.com



Men's Barber

63 Long Street
 Great Brak River
 Phone 074-590-8397

What is on, in and around the Museum in Great Brak River this and in the coming months.

Month & provisional date	Description	Contact person
February	New Enlarged Display of pre-owned books on sale in the Museum. Both English and Afrikaans books available from R2.00 each (specials)	The museum 044-620-3338
February	Exhibition The Story of our 200,000 year old Modern Man in Mossel Bay.	The museum 044-620-3338
February	An Item from the Archives This month we have the fascinating 'FACIT' calculator on display. Full story starts on page seven.	The museum 044-620-3338
FURTHER AFIELD		
31 st January to 3 February	MOSSEL BAY DIAZ FESTIVAL	Mossel Bay Tourism 044-691-2202
February March	Hanepoort picking at De Krans Calitzdorp Friday, 08 February 2013 to Sunday, 03 March 2013	Contact: Helet on +27 (0)44 213-3314 for further information
28 th February to 3 rd March	PROE MOSSEL BAY FESTIVAL	Great Brak Info on 044-620-3338
16th March	Visit Historic Herbertsdale and Jak-kalsvlei with Heritage Mossel Bay	Contact Pieter van Reenen on 082 475 7500 E-mail: pieter.01@vodamail.co.za

Great Brak River Shoestop
info@watson-shoes.co.za



1 Charles Street
 Great Brak River
 Phone 044-620-3453

Island Lodge
gespurr@mweb.co.za



Self catering, located in a delightful garden in the middle of the Island
 Great Brak River
 Phone 044-620-2934



Watson Shoes
info@watson-shoes.co.za
 Great Brak River
 The Home of Great Shoes

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TOURISM SNIPPETS

Mainly Tourism
Information by
Ina Stofberg

What is happening, in and around The Garden Route and
South Africa.

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

DIAZ FESTIVAL - 31 January - 3 February 2013 – contact Mossel Bay Tourism - 044 691-2202

PROE MOSSELBAAI FESTIVAL- Thursday, 28 February 2013 to Sunday, 03 March 2013 – [programme on proemosselbaai.co.za](http://programme.onproemosselbaai.co.za)



Contact **Computicket** for tickets. For more info make contact with Mossel Bay Tourism 044 691-2202 or Great Brak Tourism 044 620 3338.

GARDEN ROUTE 300 - Friday, 22 February 2013 to Sunday, 24 February 2013
The Garden Route 300 welcomes you to ride Knysna and surrounds on the 22-24 February 2013.

The Garden Route 300 the ultimate ride in Knysna, to share with the like-minded MTB fanatics, the best rides in Knysna - without the hassle of lugging your kit around from truck to tent to truck. Arrange your own ac-

commodation or if you're a local, ride from home, but join the vibe! Do your warm-up ride from your B&B to the start, and enjoy a cup of coffee and a rusk, before the days' adventure begins.

Race entry fees include all meals except breakfast - all lunches and dinners - each with a Knysna twist. This is no ordinary race!

Contact Louise Hemmes on 083 676-5681 or 044 382-3238



TOURISM NEWS Movies influence the travel decisions of 40 million tourists

According to the latest survey conducted by the TRAVELSAT Competitive Index, travel decisions of 40

Leani Kwekery & Tuin
Restaurant

info@leani.co.za



Old Mossel Bay Road
(R 102)

Opposite Tergniet turn
off

Phone 044-620-2565



Groot
Brak
Drank-
winkel

ammmdevilliers@gmail.com

12 Charles Street
Great Brak River

Phone 044-620-2931

The Museum Book Shop



We have pre-owned books,
and all sorts of novels both
in English and in Afrikaans.

13 Amy Searle Street
Great Brak River

Phone 044-620-3338

Grootbrak Harde-
ware

gbhardware@vodamail.co.za



Charles Street
Village Centre
Great Brak River

Phone 044-620-2591

million tourists were influenced by movies,

The index is the leading standard reference, global and independent survey benchmarking destinations' quality competitiveness using comparable data related to the brand experience.

The survey also reported that regions and cities could benefit widely from this driver to attract first-time visitors, young travellers and city breakers in particular.

On average between one and 10 visitors out of every 100 would choose a destination mostly thanks to movies.

Extended annual maintenance period for Cableway

The Table Mountain Aerial Cableway will be closed for annual maintenance for five weeks this year, from July 22 to August 25.

Work will include the complete overhaul of both cabins and the replacement of the direct current (DC) drive to an alternating current (AC) drive.

The Cableway will re-open for business on August 26, weather permitting.

For more information, call (021) 424 8181 or visit www.tablemountain.net

Pinnacle Point declared a Provincial Heritage Site

The archaeological sites at Mossel Bay's Pinnacle Point have revealed some of the earliest evidence for modern human behaviour and have been declared Provincial Heritage Sites.

According to **Professor Curtis Marean**, Pinnacle Point is significant because it's a uniquely dense concentration of well-preserved archaeological sites that contain a record of human occupation over a period of about 170,000 years - from the time when modern human behaviour first emerged to the pre-colonial period.

Prof. Marean said Pinnacle Point would now be put forward for National Heritage Site status before application could be made to have it declared a World Heritage Site.



You can now follow us on Twitter at
Rene' de Kock @HERITAGEMOSBAY

For more information, visit
www.visitmosselbay.co.za/archaeology

GARDEN ROUTE BUSH SPA

The Garden Route Game Lodge announced the opening of a new Bush Spa, which overlooks the game reserve. It offers a range of treatments and guests are transported to the spa in an open Land Rover.

The lodge has also announced the opening of its outdoor boma. The outdoor dining facility overlooks the game reserve and nearby waterhole.

For more information, visit
www.grgame lodge.co.za

Thanks & acknowledgment to tourism update

DID YOU KNOW?

When Howard Carter opened Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922, one of the first things found was a perfect 3,000 year old, ivory-handled ostrich feather fan.

Nature's Valley is the only town in SA within a national park.

Uniondale is a popular cycling destination.

The 100 km Karoo to Coast mountain bike race from Uniondale to Knysna through the Prince Alfred's Pass is held annually in September.

Continued from page 1

The Museum in particular showed positive growth in visitor numbers. "A lot of people came to see our new exhibition on human origins, and we were impressed by how interested they were: many of them were geologists and other professionals who already have an understanding of the issues which the exhibition explores," said Mr de Kock.

From time to time we advertise interesting events that take place in our local municipalities. One such event was at the botanical garden in George which has improved considerably over the years. The garden was opened in 1998 and is an independent, non-profit organisation. Its mission is to establish and maintain an indigenous Botanical Garden and establish an Environmental Centre for educational, research, horticultural training, conservation, and recreational purposes.

Anyone interested in our indigenous plants must come and visit.

On the 26th January two well-known performers, Steve Newman, and Ashish Joshi entertained a large crowd of evening picnickers at the old gazebo set against the back drop of the sunny George Peak.



Steve Newman is known throughout SA and way beyond its borders for his incredible body of award-winning work dedicated to the fine art of acoustic guitar playing wherein he also makes extensive use of the guitars as a percussion instrument.



His musical works, recordings, collaborations and performances span forty years. He created South Africa's one and only super-group, Tananas back in the early 80's and this trio of gifted musicians went on to play all over the world.



Ashish Joshi below, plays the Tabla, Darbukah, Dhol, Djembe, Zarb, Thunder Box, Santoor, Harmonium, Dhoum Dhoum however for us he mainly entertained on the bongos.



Later this month the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra will come to the park.

Now isn't this a bunch of friendly people. Below, the staff at the Great Brak Pharmacy

KHOE AND SAN HUTS

By Ina Stofberg

The basic village encampment (or kraal) of the pre-colonial Khoe was quite large, consisting of over a hundred people (some villages consisted of several hundred). Each village kraal consisted of members of the same partilineal clan - a group of male relatives of a certain ancestor, which included their wives and children.

Villages also included some members of other clans, as well as some dependants or servants. These could be Bergdama, San or indigent Khoi khoi.

The clan structure of the Khoe was to some extent more regulated than that of the San. Each group had a chief. Huts are usually built in a circular arrangement around a central fireplace, which is the central point of society life.



Their dwellings were beehive-shaped huts made with pliable sticks. The basic housing construction was a round hut (matjieshuis) made of grass thatched over a structure of branches, planted into the ground and tied with strips of bark of the knob-thorn tree at the top. The men generally collect the branches and build the construction, whereas the woman collect grass and set about thatching the hut in layers. This was enclosed with reed mats. It could be dismantled and re-erected in a new place when grazing in the region became short of supply.

At times the mats were basically removed and rolled up. People left the frames behind if they knew they would be returning to the same place. Long mats, the strips sewn together by the women enclosed the border, leaving a notch at each end. Doors made of a narrower rug to roll up or down was hung over these openings.

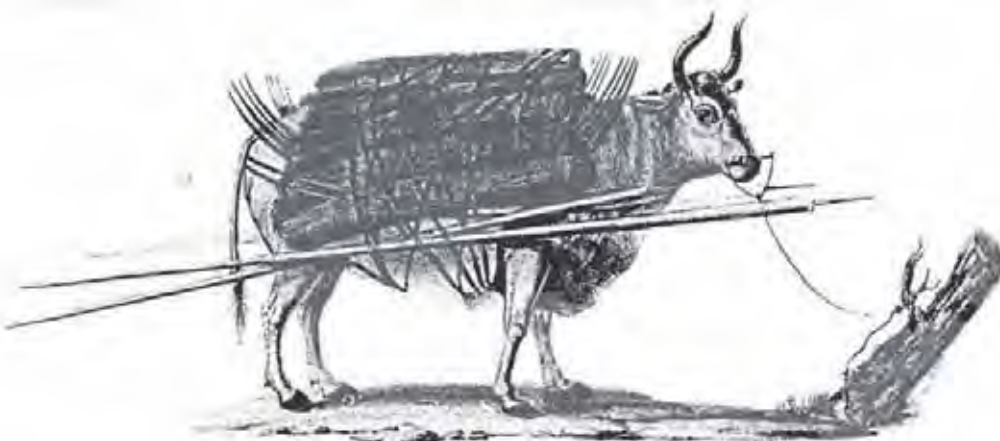
The huts could be dismantled promptly and transported on the back of oxen as they moved on. These rug-covered huts can still be seen in Namaqualand. The completed hut is moderately warm, which is crucial when temperatures go down rapidly after the sun sets in the Kalahari. The huts are also water-resistant to supply shelter from storms in the rainy season. They slept on reed mats in dome formed huts made from stripped branches which could be taken apart. Their huts were erected in a circle enclosed by a fence of thorny branches so that they could protect themselves and their animals.

All San bands moved about with the seasons to look for food and water, but they will also pack up and move if someone has passed away or if there has been a serious disaster in a certain area. They would not go back to that area until the grave or the incident had been forgotten by everyone.

Thanks and acknowledgement to the following:

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Khoi.aspx>
<http://www.rumadani.co.za/index.php/articles-on-south-africa/7-sa/31-the-remarkable-khoi-and-san-people-of-the-past>
<http://www.south-african-homeschool-curriculum.com/san-bushmen.html>
<http://www.khoisan.org/social.htm>
http://www.mooiplaasgasthouse.co.za/index.php?option=com_areainfo&task=view&id=27&Itemid=7

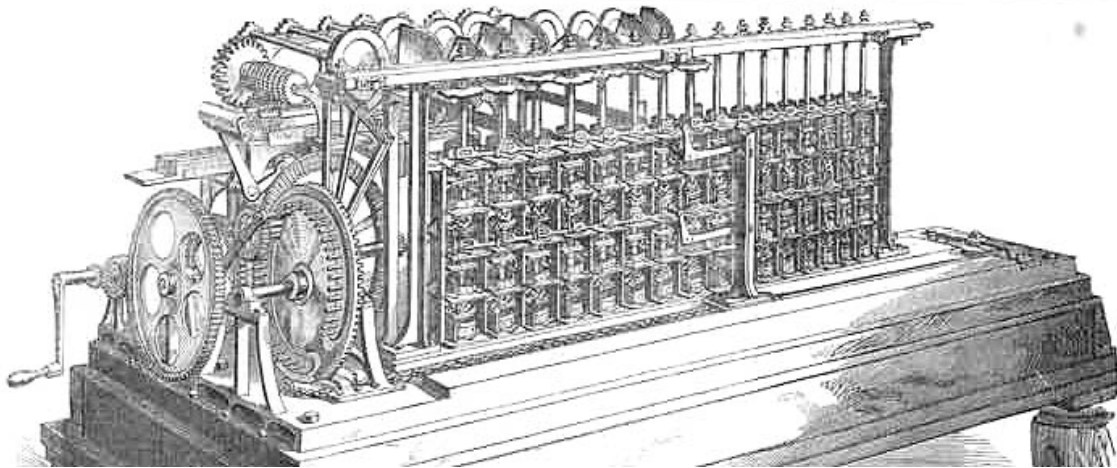
A Laden pack-ox (Le Vallant). Khoi-khoi huts were temporary structures that were taken down and transported when the tribe moved their kraal. The mats were rolled up and transported along with the framework on a pack-ox.



JUNE 30, 1885.]

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

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Beginning in the early 17th century, a wide variety of calculating machines were invented.

Stepped-drum calculating machines solved lengthy multiplication problems by successive addition and solved lengthy division problems by successive subtraction. The first commercially successful machine of this type, shown above, was the **Arithmometer** made by Charles Xavier Thomas de Colmar (1785-1870). This **Arithmometer** is in the Smithsonian Institution's collection. Thomas introduced his Arithmometer in 1820 and spent the remaining half century of his life manufacturing and improving it.

Thomas was French, and in 1856 the *Moniteur* reported that "Mr. Thomas has lately made the finishing improvements in the arithmometer, at which he has been working for upwards of thirty years. It is already used in many great financial establishments." Thomas's Arithmometer was a commercial success in Europe after the Paris Exposition of 1867.

These early machines were mechanical calculators and not computers. Also an office equipment book explains that "The adding machine prints the items as it is operated while the calculating machine only indicates the items or value without printing them."

When a printed record is needed for checking the work, for statements, or for other purposes, the adding machine best serves the purpose.

But for computations involving multiplication or division, speed and economy usually demand that this work be performed on calculating machines, unless the importance of preserving printed lists that will serve as permanent records overbalances the desirability of speed.

Both Burroughs and Felt & Tarrant were founded in the mid-1880s, but business was initially slow. Nei-

ther sold significantly more than 5,000 machines by the end of 1900. Turck states that adding and calculating machines "met with very strong opposition for the first few years. The efforts of book-keepers and counting-house clerks to prevent these machines entering their department were inspired by the fear that it would displace their services.

Sales of Burroughs machines grew rapidly after 1900, with Burroughs outselling Felt & Tarrant by about five to one during 1901-1910 and, with an expanded product line, ten to one during 1911-1920. The machines produced by these companies and a number of smaller competitors revolutionized the way offices carried out numerical calculations, accounting, and billing in the early 1900s.

A large number of higher-salaried men with pens who added columns of four-digit numbers rapidly in their heads were replaced by lower-salaried office workers, many of them women, with machines.

Different types of calculating machines, including [stepped-drum](#), [pinwheel](#), and [direct multiplication calculators](#), were faster than adding machines or key-driven calculators for multiplication and division involving long numbers. As a result, these other types of calculators were more suitable for scientific and engineering applications.

However, stepped-drum and pinwheel calculators, as well as the available direct multiplication calculators, were not efficient for high volumes of addition and subtraction, and hence they did not play a major role in the typical early business office.

Machines were, however, slow to catch on and Great Brak River were still using hand written ledgers in the 1950's.

An interesting adaption was the pin wheel design using the "Facit" name.



The first calculator bearing the Facit name was made in 1918 by the firm of Axel Wibell in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1924, Wibell's company was taken over by the Åtvidaberg Industries, which later adopted the Facit name for all of its products"

In 1970, the company had reached its peak with more than 14,000 employees worldwide. In 1971, modern Japanese-made calculators started to seriously disrupt the industry, instantly making Facit's mechanical calculators obsolete. As a result, Facit went out of business virtually overnight. The general view on this failure is that Facit met its demise as a result of refusing to acknowledge the superiority of modern calculators.

Rotary pin-wheel calculators

- Numbers are entered by moving levers to the required digits (on calculators made by Facit a keyboard is used). This raises the same number of pins on each pin-wheel as the number set in that decade.
- Rotating the mechanism, either manually with a crank or by electric motor, adds the number entered to the accumulator (or subtracts the number from the accumulator if rotated in reverse).
- By rotating multiple times and shifting the accumulator, very fast multiplication and division is possible.

Our museum has a similar machine known as the hand cranked Facit C1-13 produced between 1957-1960. See photograph on the right.



Above: Close up from the right end showing the pin wheels with the number of pins raised on each wheel depending on the number set by each lever (from top to bottom 0087654321).

These pins act as gear teeth when the crank handle is turned.

The basic operation was straightforward but required much time and patience.

For instance to multiply 123×456 , with the carriage in its left-most position, enter 456. From the right, crank three forward turns. This adds the number three times to obtain 0000000001368. Move carriage one step and crank two times i.e. adding 20×456 . Move carriage one more step and crank one turn. i.e. adding 100×456 which gives 0000000056088.

The multiplication is shown in the quotient register; the product 56,088 in the accumulator.

00000123 000000005688

To divide, one reverse cranked, however, you needed to have all zeros in the accumulator indicating that there is no residue otherwise it becomes more difficult.



Information obtained from the Early Office Museum web site and the GBR Museum's archives.

So many employers in and around our village are paying below minimum wages or are dismissing employees without following the correct procedures that we thought we would provide you with some basic information. Should you feel you have been discriminated and discharged without due consideration please contact the CCMA on 044-8057700

All employees must be issued with a clear contract.

Take the case of a probation period? If it is not stated in your contract, it is not legal.

**An extract from the
New employees and probation periods.
SA LABOUR GUIDE
Published 09 Jan 2013**

Probation is dealt with in terms of the Code of Good Practice – Dismissal, contained in Schedule 8 to the Labour Relations Act. This document states as follows:

(1) A newly hired employee may be placed on probation for a period that is reasonable given the circumstances of the job. The period should be determined by the nature of the job, and the time it takes to determine the employee's suitability for continued employment.

Quite obviously, the lawmakers have no desire to prescribe to employers regarding the duration of the probation period. Thus, they leave it to the employer to define the duration, stating only that it should be reasonable and in relation to the circumstances of the job. Thus, the employer decides this matter.

There is nothing to indicate that the new employee must be employed on probation - that is for the employer to decide. Employees can also be employed without a stipulated probationary period. The Code states further:

“When appropriate, an employer should give an employee whatever evaluation, instruction; training, guidance or counselling the employee requires to render satisfactory service.

Dismissal during the probationary period should be preceded by an opportunity for the employee to state a case in response and to be assisted by a trade union representative or fellow employee.”

This means that the probationer's performance must

be monitored from day one, and any shortcomings in work performance must be addressed, by giving the employee the necessary evaluation, counselling, instruction, training and guidance in order to assist him to achieve and maintain the required work performance standard.

In addition the employee must be given an opportunity to state what he thinks is the cause of the non-performance, and what he thinks should be done in order to overcome the problem. The foregoing is a requirement. It must be done.

“(2) After probation, an employee should not be dismissed for unsatisfactory performance unless the employer has-

(a) given the employee appropriate evaluation, instruction, training, guidance or counselling; and
(b) after a reasonable period of time for improvement, the employee continues to perform unsatisfactorily.

(3) The procedure leading to dismissal should include an investigation to establish the reasons for the unsatisfactory performance and the employer should consider other ways, short of dismissal, to remedy the matter.

(4) In the process, the employee should have the right to be heard and to be assisted by a trade union representative or a fellow employee.”

These are very clear requirements. Thus, at the end of the probation period, if the employee has not performed in a satisfactory manner, the employer cannot simply dismiss him.

The employer must be able to show that the above procedure of evaluation, counselling, guidance and training has taken place, that the employee has been given a reasonable opportunity (with the assistance of a fellow employee or representative (if required) to state his case and to state what he thinks is the cause of the problem, and to state and implement (within reason) what measures he suggests are required to rectify the problem.

The code gives the following guidelines regarding dismissal:

“Any person determining whether a dismissal for poor work performance is unfair should consider-

(a) whether or not the employee failed to meet a performance standard; and

(b) if the employee did not meet a required per-

formance standard whether or not-

(i) the employee was aware, or could reasonably be expected to have been aware, of the required performance standard;

(ii) the employee was given a fair opportunity to meet the required performance standard; and

(iii) dismissal was an appropriate sanction for not meeting the required performance standard.”

Thus, the employer should keep detailed written records and minutes of the various meetings with the employee, detailed records of what was decided upon between the parties to rectify the matter, what period of improvement was decided upon by agreement between the parties, and what the result was of the implementation of the agreed rectification measures.

Should the employee refer a dispute of unfair dismissal to the CCMA, the employer would be required to show, by documentary proof, that he has complied with all the above requirements stipulated in The Code of Good Practice Dismissal.

Despite the above employers frequently misuse the probationary status of the employee to get rid of the employee because:

- the employee has committed misconduct
- the employer wants to make space for a brother, friend or cousin of the owner
- the employee ‘does not fit in’

a manager ‘does not like the employee’s face’

In fact the labour law meaning of ‘probation’ is ‘testing the employee’s work performance’.

That is, the only legitimate purpose of a probationary period is for the employer to assess the suitability of the employee in terms of his/her work performance.

Before possibly extending a probation period the employer is required to give the employee the opportunity to make representations as regards the proposed extension. The biggest mistake that employers frequently make is believing that the conditional nature of the probationary employment reduces the probationer’s labour law rights.

On the contrary, the employer that places an employee on probation has a number of legal obligations including:

Making it clear that the employee is on probation

- Clarifying the length of the probation period
- Written by André Claassen & Jan du Toit.

- Setting reasonable performance standards
- specifying for and explaining to the employee the performance standards required
- evaluating and monitoring the employee’s performance against the set performance standards
- informing the employee of performance shortcomings
- issuing warnings to the employee where he/she is failing to meet the required standards
- assisting, guiding, counselling, training the employee where necessary before dismissing the probationer, giving him/her an opportunity to state his/her case.
- Despite a misconduct being of a serious nature, a dismissal can still be unfair with serious consequences to the employer.

For example, in the case of *Fraser vs. Caxton Publishers (2005, 3 BALR 323)* the employee was fired for falsifying her CV and for incompatibility. She took the matter to the CCMA where the arbitrator agreed that she was indeed guilty of the conduct for which she had been fired.

The arbitrator also agreed that this misconduct was serious enough to merit dismissal.

Despite this the arbitrator found the dismissal to be unfair because the employer had not given the employee a chance to defend herself against the charges.

The employer was therefore ordered to pay the employee compensation equal to four months’ remuneration.

These cases highlight the fact that probationary employees are strongly protected by labour law. At the same time, probationary employees often do not work out as well as was hoped. While the law allows the employer to dismiss such failures they must follow strict procedures first.

Probation can be a very useful tool for the employer but must only be used after the employer has utilised labour law expertise in:

- Designing a probationary policy and procedure
- Setting realistic performance standards
- Designing measures for monitoring and evaluating work performance
- Training management in probation law and in the implementation of the probation policy and procedure.

First published on [SA Labour Guide](#)



On Tuesday 15th January with the help of Aussie Eybers, the Great Brak River museum welcomed David Chamberlain who is running 2,700 kilometers around South Africa's coast to promote the African Penguin. He is now on the last stretch to Port Elizabeth from a starting point at Walvis Bay.

Dave was met by a crowd of visitors eager to provide a break, share a cup of tea and a discussion on his long journey.

Look out for Dave - lone man running with a pram full of non-baby stuff. Although the pram looks like it contains a baby this is not the case and is used to hold overnight attire and to create a talking point.

Dave inspired us with his run through very diverse countryside pointing out that although he enjoyed the West coast the most, he prefers to run where the countryside has lots of people.

Dave has been running for many years through countries such as Argentina and Antarctica and will soon travel to Canada where in March he is hoping to start crossing the vast Canadian plains east to west

from Toronto to Vancouver.

Principally David runs in support of BirdLife South Africa and in particular to support the African Penguin who's population has undergone a staggering 80% decrease over the last 50 years.



African Penguins grow to 68–70 cm tall and weigh between 2 and 5 kg. They have a black stripe and black spots on the chest, the pattern of spots being unique for every penguin, like human fingerprints.

They have pink glands above their eyes, which are used for thermoregulation. The hotter the penguin gets, the more blood is sent to these glands so it may be cooled by the surrounding air, thus making the glands more pink in colour.

When the first official population census was conducted in 1956, there were about 141 000 pairs. More than fifty years later, the population is at only 20 000 pairs. These charismatic birds breed only at a few islands along the coast of South Africa and Namibia and their numbers are continuing to dwindle. Penguins are threatened by a myriad of sources from predation by seals (and possibly sharks) to the potential for a catastrophic oil spill to a lack of food. The impact of these threats will only be exacerbated as the penguin population decreases further. The lack of suitable food is the threat that is the most controversial. Penguins eat mainly sardines and anchovies, which are also the target of the commercial purse-seine fishing industry. However, the role fishing has played in the decrease is hotly debated. In the mid-1990s the distribution of the sardines and anchovies shifted from the west coast of South Africa to the south coast. While this shift has almost certainly contributed to the population decrease, the colonies on the south coast have contin-



St Croix Island...Algoa

ued to decrease in numbers.

The journey ends in Port Elizabeth where the penguins have a large habitat, on the island of St Croix.

Algoa bay contains six named islands in two groups of three that according to BirdLife International "are of considerable importance as they are the only islands along a 1,777 km stretch of coastline between Cape Agulhas and Inhaca Island in Mozambique." The combined surface area of these islands is said to be 40 ha.

The islands are also home to just under half of the global population of the African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), the majority of which are on St Croix. St Croix also holds a locally significant breeding population of Cape Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax capensis*). Amongst David's objectives is to HELP obtain provincial status to the island of St Croix.

The editor wishes to thank the many people who sent me great photographs of the Penguin man. Sorry I cant publish them all.

For more info go to : <http://www.birdlife.org.za/conservation/seabirds/penguin-run>

Left: Only home of the African Penguin.



OUR NATURE CORNER

PHOTO'S AND TEXT;
SALLY ADAM

This month Sally provides us with a collection of interesting insects found in her garden.



The Southern Marbled Emperor
(*Heniocha apollonia*).

It is a large nocturnal moth having a 10 cm wingspan. It is a clumsy flyer with feather like antennae. Often found in our fynbos and woodlands near residential dwelling.

This may be the caterpillar but I am not sure?



Left a Long Horned Grasshopper

Right....Blister Beetle

Blister beetles belong to a group of insects with a very interesting and sordid past with people. They obtain their name from a caustic chemical they produce called cantharidin. When crushed, the beetle can literally bleed the chemical from its joints and skin contact with it can result in blisters. Even though cantharidin is caustic, it has some though dangerous medical properties that people have long exploited in the form of Spanish fly. People would consume a concoction of dried and crushed blister beetles for ailments such as gout and arthritis.



Another one of those little known but fascinating shrubs that is both a remarkable plant whilst having herbal qualities is the Spekboom or Elephant's food.



I haven't yet been able to link it with our Bushman but don't doubt that with its properties that it has historic connections. In Khoi-Khoi Culture Cooking "Kukumakranka" by Renata Coetzee and Volker Miros mention is made that the leaves when combined with slangbessie can be used to make a salsa or a starter serving of food.

The Spekboom, as it is more commonly known, is a plant that grows primarily in the Eastern Cape and in parts of the Western Cape.

How was the plant discovered? Botanists have known about this plant for centuries. The first European botanists (about 400 years ago) have documented it as one of the most common plants in the landscape. Man and Spekboom have probably been living together for about a millennium.

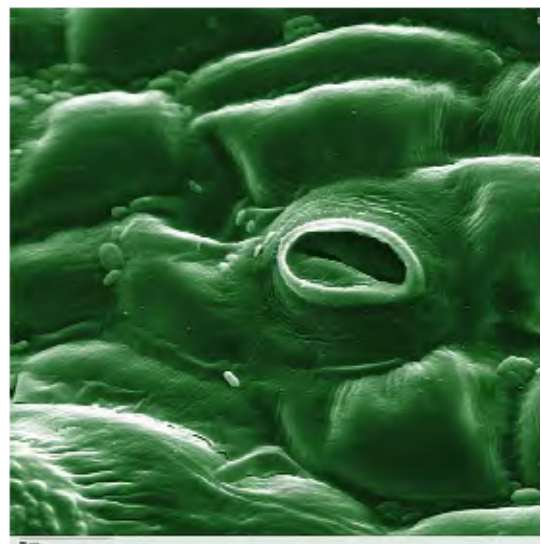
Anthony Mills – one of the leading experts writes: "In many areas of the Eastern Cape the Spekboom completely dominates the landscape."

"Secondly, the Spekboom forms a very dense forest, so dense that it's difficult to walk through. The only animals that can really get through it are large herbivores like: elephants, rhinos and buffalos, as they can smash their way through it. For a human to walk through the landscape is quite difficult."

"Finally, the third interesting thing is that it occurs in very dry areas. One of the reasons it can grow in a desert-like climate is that it is a succulent (just like a cactus). We think that the main reason it can grow

so rapidly in dry regions is because it is able to 'shift gears'. When it's really dry, it grows like a cactus using a certain physiological path way. **This means that it absorbs carbon dioxide at night. The plant's stomata (see box) open at night and close during the day in order to save water. This slows down evaporation and in the end the Spekboom grows faster during the day, as it also uses the carbon dioxide it needed at night.**

A stoma is a microscopic pore on the surface (epidermis) of land plants. It is surrounded by a pair of specialized epidermal cells called guard cells, which act as a turgor-driven valve that open and close the pores in response to given environmental conditions. The presence of countless numbers of stomata is critical for plant function. Typically, the plant epidermis is tightly sealed by wax-coated, interlocking epidermal pavement cells, which protect the plant body from the dry atmosphere and UV-rays. At the same time plants must be able to breathe, or exchange carbon dioxide and oxygen, for photosynthesis and respiration. Stomata act as a gateway for efficient gas exchange and water movement from the roots through the vasculature to the atmosphere.



Stoma in a tomato leaf when scanned using an electron microscope.

It's able to change gears depending on its wet or dry state. There aren't many plants around the world that can do this. The magnificent plant can grow into

a tall tree – up to 5m high. On top of it all, it hosts the most amazing vegetation.”

The Spekboom is also very productive when used for producing honey.



The Addo Elephant National Park, situated in the Eastern Cape Province some 70 km by road from Port Elizabeth was proclaimed in 1931 to save the last 11 survivors of the once numerous Eastern Cape elephants. The park consists of 12,126 hectares of gently undulating Valley Bushveld dominated mostly by the Spekboom, which covers approximately 80% of the park area.



Some 500 species of plants are to be found in the park. Elephants eat *P. afra* from the top downwards allowing the plant to spread itself vegetatively by spreading horizontal branches at ground level. Outside the park the same plants are eaten by goats who eat the plant from ground level upwards preventing the plant from spreading vegetatively.

Consequently these plants must rely solely on seed to proliferate the species which often proves difficult in such a dry climate. As a result it was observed that inside the park where the plant is subjected to browsing by elephants, *Portulacaria afra* survives and spreads successfully, whereas outside the park the plant is becoming sparse as a result of overgrazing and poor regeneration.

Portulacaria afra, also known as **dwarf jade plant**, **elephant's food**, **elephant bush** and **spekboom** in Afrikaans, is a versatile plant and is used in a variety of ways ranging from cooking to medicinal remedies.

The leaves add a delightful taste to salads and stews. These leaves are also sucked to treat over-exhaustion and dehydration due to its thirst quenching characteristic. It is also believed that chewing the leaves promotes the flow of breast milk. Leaf poultices are applied to blisters, corns, acne, insect bites, sunburn and aching feet. High blood sugar levels are apparently effectively treated by chewing the leaves several times a day.

There are at least five green forms, with one version in Limpopo having larger leaves up to 250 mm long, and several yellowish leafed varieties. The latter were only discovered or propagated in the 60's. My yellow leafed bush was found on the Oudtshoorn side of the Robinson pass.



This is an excellent plant for Bonsai. It grows really well outdoors in our area during the summer with plenty of sun, water and some fertilizer. During winter the plant is a welcome addition indoors when most other bonsai species must be outside. Indoors, over time the leaves may begin to fall off. Remove outdoors to a frost free area for at least a month. When autumn and winter is approaching make sure that you don't over water the plant. During the winter water only when it is absolutely necessary.

Data, collected from various sources, available on request

I, Wendy Welch am a local resident living in Great Brak River for the past fourteen years. I went to school in George and Mossel Bay. After school I studied to become a Grade R educator. My hobbies include reading, travelling and photography. I have been working at the Great Brak River museum and Tourism Bureau since the third of January 2013. On the thirteenth of January this year I went on a course at Kromme Rhee in Stellenbosch. I went on the Langeberg bus to Cape Town, of which I took to Cape Town before I took another bus with the other students to go to Kromme Rhee in Stellenbosch. It was also my first public bus ride on a long journey. On Monday and Tuesday we did the First Aid Level 1 part of the course, of which our lecturer was Mrs Magda Benade. We sat in a group of about five or six at different tables in the Lecture Room. We all had to practice doing CPR on a doll, of which her name was Resussi Ann. On Wednesday and Thursday we did our Tourism part of the course, which involved Communication, Guiding Techniques, Safety and Security, Customer Care and Historical Milestones of which our lecturer was Mrs Jeanette Bosman. On Thursday evening we had a special guest come and visit us that was the head officer of Tourism called Hanneltjie. On Friday we had a wonderful educational tour of the wine lands of which we visited Paarl, Franschoek and Stellenbosch and each student had to be a tour guide for five minutes. We were put into different groups and I chose the fourth house at the Village Museum in Stellenbosch of which Olof Marthinus Bergh and his family lived in the house from 1836-1877. It was amazing to see how the different houses changed over the years and how the people used to live during those times between 1690 and 1877. The tourist attractions we visited included the Language Monument or Taal Monument in Paarl, of which it represents the growth and development of Afrikaans and provides recognition to the language's roots that are spread over the three conti-

nents (Africa, Europe and Asia). We visited the Language/Taal Museum (which was one of my favourite museums because it is very interactive) which you get to learn more about the growth of Afrikaans, its variants and existing use, which was also in Paarl. We drove past the Drakenstein Prison in the coach. We visited the Huguenot Museum, which elaborates on the history of the French Huguenots who established in the Cape. On display are the different tools they used to make clothes they wore, wine and the culture and yearning for an improved life that they brought with them.



We also visited the Huguenot Memorial in Franschoek. This is devoted to the cultural influences that Huguenots brought to the Cape Colony (and to South Africa) after their immigration during the 17th and 18th centuries.

We had lunch sitting outside under the trees in Franschoek before we drove past Pniel and through Hellshoogte Pass. We then visited the Village Museum and Kruithuis, which was a government fort and armoury built by the Dutch in the colonial times in Stellenbosch.

All students received breakfast, tea breaks, lunch and dinner at Kromme Rhee and the food and drinks were really good. I came back via the Langeberg bus to Great Brak River on Saturday afternoon. I enjoyed every second, made lovely new friends and I learnt a lot.

