



GRASSHOPPER COUNTRY
*The Great Brak River
 Museum News Letter*
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July 2011

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Editor Rene' de Kock

Dear Museum Friends

Issue 7 of 201

The longest night for this year has passed and with it comes our longest news letter to date.

Great Brak River and many other places have again been hard hit with storms and bad weather and for the first time our Island in the river mouth has been really and truly flooded. See report on www.ourheritage.org.za for more details. This web site is proving popular and we have already had nearly 5500 visits.

Nisde Mc Robert, our curator and Jan Nieuwoudt (BOC member) attended this year's museum heads annual workshop and get together in Worcester and were able to meet with amongst others Andrew Hall who is the new CEO of Heritage Western Cape. Subsequently, invited by Heritage Mossel Bay, Andrew was asked to be the keynote speaker at the Heritage Mossel Bay AGM. Although very much in demand, during his two day visit Andrew was able to pay an extended visit to our museum.



More than seventy supporters of Heritage Mossel Bay attended the AGM which took place on the 22nd June and the past committee was re-elected for the April 2011-March 2012 year.

- | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------------|
| A. | Chairperson | Jack van der Lecq |
| B. | Vice Chair | Rene' de Kock |
| C. | Secretary | Nisde McRobert |
| D. | Treasurer | Pieter van Reenen |

See our web site for full details and lots more news.

On Monday the 18th July, our MEC Dr Ivan Meyer will re-launch the Nobel Peace Prize Travelling Exhibition at the Great Brak River museum. An interesting evening and get together is being planned. *All our museum members are invited however please RSVP to Ina on 044-620-3338 before the 12th of July.* You will also be able to see the many changes taking place in the museum.

The travelling exhibition includes visual components through which visitors will be able to view historical footage, images and sound recordings reflecting the lives and times of each of the four South African Nobel Peace laureates. The exhibition text and accompanying materials is presented in Afrikaans, English and IsiXhosa.

The following South Africans are the Nobel Peace Laureates:

Chief Albert Luthuli - awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1960 which he accepted in October 1961 in Oslo, Norway. Chief Luthuli is the first African and South African to be

The Museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 9 am and 4 pm and on Wednesdays from 9.00 to 12.30 pm.

Hopes next fund raising "Hands On" crafts workshop will be in July and will be on Wednesday 20th.

Please call Hope de Kock on 083 378 1232 for full details and venue.

Short of a book to read

A large collection of Pre-owned books on sale in the Museum Shop....Every week day morning and afternoons when the museum is open.

Proceeds go to museum funds

The museum shop has a new range of cards depicting various scenes in and around the village

awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu - awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for the promotion of Peace and Justice in South Africa. He is the second South African to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nelson Mandela & F. W. de Klerk - Mr. Nelson Mandela and the then State President Mr. F. W de Klerk were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly in 1993. This is in recognition of their efforts in bringing about peace and reconciliation in South Africa.



From the post pony pre 1775 to the eagle motive used from 1970 to 1993, the U S Mail service is facing serious competition.



We read in the press about the problems being experienced with high postal costs. This is happening because we are using more and more emails for advertising and for day to day communication and less on posting letters. What could occur is that some countries postal services could become defunct? Postal services rely on funding from first class mail such as personal letters. Advertising mail is normally carried out at much lower rates. Whilst this may not happen in South Africa for some years to come both the American and British Postal Services are in trouble.

Our Corporate Membership Drive. We wish to thank the many local companies and small businesses who have already shown an interest in helping the Great Brak River museum and our information office's fund raising drive and who have become corporate members of their local museum. This is very much appreciated and is helping with much needed funds. Since most of you are receiving our news letter we will acknowledge this in more detail in due course. Please feel free in requesting information or details from our office. We would also appreciate contribution articles of interest in Afrikaans.

We know that we have economic imbalances in South Africa but this is a problem being experienced throughout the world. In this time when some South Africans are dreaming of 'New Land Grabs' we should look carefully at our past history and review who discovered and perhaps who 'owns' Southern Africa. A difficult question as the present day's South Africa is composed of many parts, many cultures and is a true Rainbow Nation. See included article.

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In September 2009 the **Wolwedans** dam water level stood at **44.50%** full and water restrictions were introduced.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry reports that during late June 2011, our **Wolwedans** dam water level is **100.2%** full.

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In fond memory of our dear friend and past committee member Pat McGregor. We will always remember your cheerful disposition and your great assistance  
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**Railroad tracks.** The United States standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

**Why was that gauge used?** Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates designed the US railroads.

**Why did the English build them like that?** Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

**Why did 'they' use that gauge then?** Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

**Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing?** Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

**So who built those old rutted roads?** Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since.

**And the ruts in the roads?** Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels.

Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore, the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. In other words, bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification/procedure/process and wonder, 'What horse's ass came up with this?', you may be exactly right.

Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses. (Two horses' asses).

Now, the twist to the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, you will notice that there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are 'solid rocket boosters', or SRBs for short. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah.



The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit larger, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass. And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important? So, Horse's Asses control almost everything...  
...Explains a whole lot of things, doesn't it?

PS South Africa uses a track width of 3 ft 6 in (1,067 mm). This was selected in the 19th century to reduce the cost of building track across and through the mountains found in several parts of the country or was it because of the donkeys?

Many of our readers were very interested in 'Our Local Geological Rock Formations' which we had to shorten due to a space limitations. This month we would like to add a short addition on some additional items.



**PetroSA's off shore gas project.** During late September 2010 the South Africa's national oil company's Sandro Borean said "Our next project is focusing on the FO project, which is the gas field approximately 40 km away from the existing platform," "It's a very large project, it's a billion dollar 'add-on' project or thereabouts and we anticipate first gas in the first quarter of 2013. This has been approved by the board recently," he said.

### The Sedco 709 Rig in Cape Town Harbour

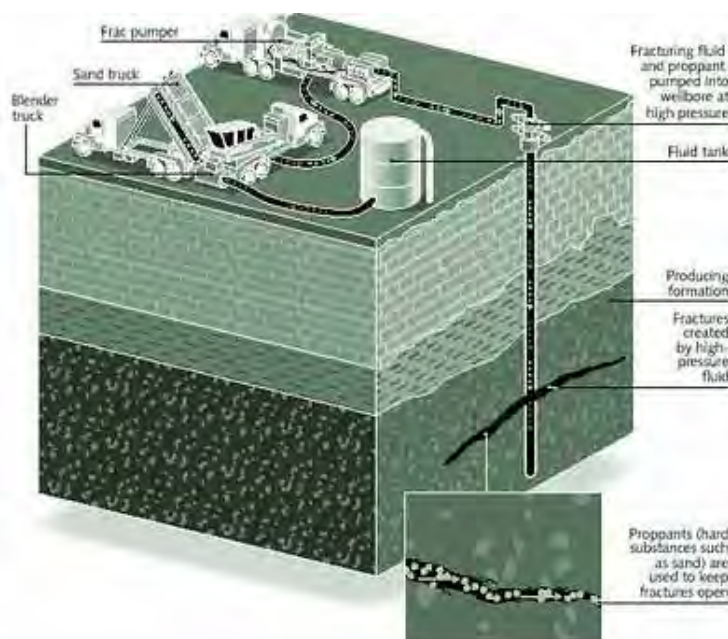
South Africa has limited gas reserves, first discovered in 1969 which are mainly located in the south coast's block 9 region, where the FO field is, and is scrambling to secure further supplies to one of the world's largest gas-to-liquids refineries in Mossel Bay.

Around 120 million years ago, South America and Africa began to separate. The Atlantic ocean continued to widen causing tears to develop along the southern Cape coast and depressions formed in which sediment began to accumulate (erosion from the South Africa land mass). This sea was then warm and shallow which became a host to many varieties of life which subsequently deposited large amounts of organic matter onto the ocean floor. Oil is biological in origin and is formed from the conversion of the thick organic matter deposited on the floors of the ocean. Due to the stretching of the earth's crust as the land masses separate, deep depressions are formed. Oil fields occur in areas where there are thick but deeply buried deposits of marine sediment which contain large amounts of organic matter. The formation of petroleum takes place when these organic rich sediments are slowly heated to between 100 and 150 degrees C. Too little heat and the petroleum is not formed, too much and the organic deposit is changed to gas. Once formed, the gas is squeezed from the source material in which it was created and migrates upwards through fractures until it encounters a sponge type reservoir which is covered and sealed by a cap such as a salt or mudstone layer.

Although our geological conditions are ideal, South Africa has only small quantities of gas which probably indicates that most conditions for oil formation were above the ideal 150 degrees C.

Sediments have to be buried to reach the critical temperature required for oil formation. Most of the world's oil originates from the Jurassic period rocks and was then stored in reservoirs of Cretaceous age rocks (142 to 65 million years ago).

**The large 'Karoo basin' covering one third of South Africa was originally a shallow inland sea. Along its northern boundary are our many coal fields and in the south it is believed that in similar circumstances shale gas has been formed and stored some 1500 to 6000 metres below the surface. Although this is still to be proven several large oil companies have applied for exploration leases (300,000 hectares near Graaff Reinet), however, the proposed method of gas extraction using chemicals and known as 'fracking' is not environmentally acceptable.**





The small Maalgaten River between Great Brak River and George flows over a bed of Maalgaten granite and enters the sea on the eastern side of Glentana. Although small, it has been suggested as a water source for the new proposed 'Lagoon Bay' development with its two golf courses. Proponents have indicated that it has an insufficient water supply that is already being depleted by local farmers.

#### **The Maalgaten River a short distance before it enters the sea.**

Based on published geological data, the George Airport area is known to be underlain at depth by deeply weathered Maalgaten granites with a cover of naturally transported and residual soils.

As the river bed exposes the Maalgaten granite, it is ideal for Magnetic anomalies and geological mapping, a method used to determine the presence of underground minerals including oil.

Mapping the patterns of magnetic anomalies attributable to rock magnetism has proved to be a very effective way of reconnoitring large areas of geology at low cost per unit area.

The Maalgaten (Afrikaans for Grinding Holes) is also well known for its many potholes which are formed through countless eons by the swirling whirlpools which occur as the water cascades down the river, caused the waterborne sand and hard rock to grind cylindrical potholes into the bedrock.

As we leave the Wilderness we approach Sedgfield which surrounded by the Indian Ocean and coastal lake system, is bordered by a series of parallel fossil sand dunes extending between the Kaaimans River in the west and Brenton on Sea in the east. These are the highest fossil sand dunes in South Africa.



These dunes were formed over two million years ago and over time have been eroded to steep cliffs showing distinct layers and patterns caused by water, wind and sand erosion. Creating a dramatic buttress to the temperamental Indian Ocean, these cliffs offer nesting platforms for two colonies of Cape and White Breasted Cormorants and to those who are patient enough to witness the transformation, at sunset they change from a spectacular golden yellow to deep rich ochre.

During their formation in the Pleistocene, pieces of mollusk shell became mixed into the quartz sand grains as they were deposited into dune shapes. The hard nature of the dunes formed when rainwater seeped through the dunes, dissolving the calcium carbonate of the shell fragments and percolating into the sand lower down. During phases of minimum disturbance to the dunes, the dissolved material cemented the sand into hard and easily distinguishable layers.

Looking at the cliffs flanking Myoli Beach and either side of Gericke's Point, the clear horizontal and diagonal layers seen on the exposed cliffs are testament to the different epochs of the dunes formation.

These dunes played a major role in forming the coastal lakes around the Sedgefield area. During marine regressions, erosions were formed via the flowing rivers which managed to cut through the younger geological dune formations. During these marine advances and regressions with the erosion of the soft geology and with the deposits of the sediments from the river, new platforms were built. At the end depressions were formed which was later filled with water and lakes were formed. Here the result of a combined climatic change can be seen on the soft terrain geology.



**A Google map of Sedgefield with Gericke's Point on the left and Myoli beach on the far right.**

The orientation of the dunes is also an indication that South westerly winds have been the prevailing winds in the region for more than two million years. The dune system comprises a series of three fossil dune ridges, or lines (cordons), running parallel to the coastline. The southernmost dune is submerged three and a half kilometres out to sea and is a popular reef for ski boat fisherman. The central dune runs along the coastline forming the cliffs along the beach and reaches a height of nearly 204m, making it the highest fossil dune in South Africa. The third dune is easily seen as the line north of the Groenvlei lake (out of sight on the right)

with a remnant section in the west forming the island in 'Island Lake' at the Wilderness.



**One of the protected dunes behind and above the village of Sedgefield.**

An interesting side trip off the N2 is to visit the Millwood gold rush town high in the Outeniqua mountains.

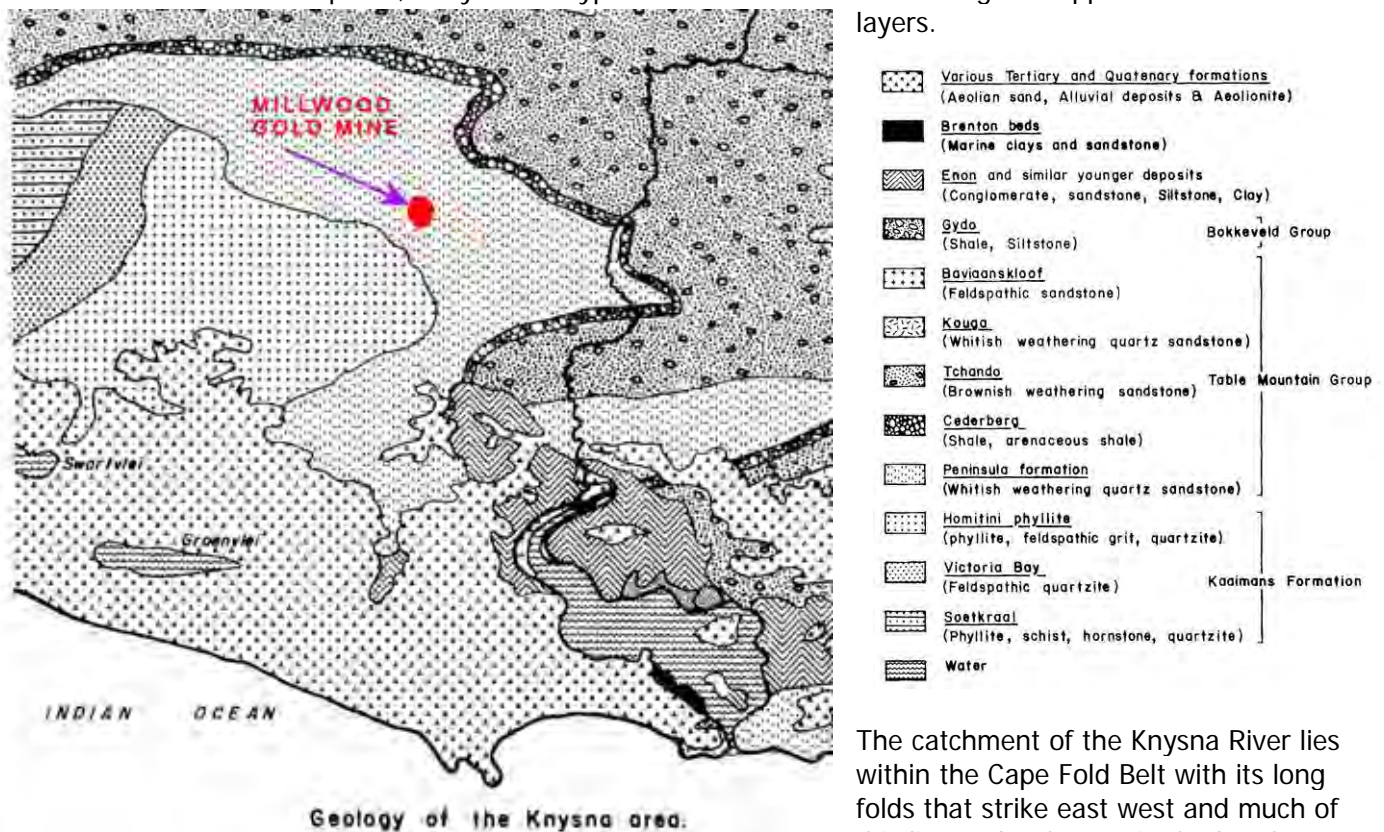
In 1886 this was a bustling town with shops, banks, hotels, a police station, a post office and several news papers. Today there is little left but one can stay in an original 1800's corrugated iron self catering guesthouse, visit the small museum or even take a guided tour down one of the old mines.

In 1876, deep in the indigenous forests near **Knysna** at the lower reaches of the Karatara River, an alluvial gold nugget was discovered by James Hooper in a stream (named the Victoria Jubilee Creek in 1887 in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee). By 1885 the rush began with prospectors scrambling for digging rights. In the nearby wood was a sawmill and the area became known as Millwood.

Alluvium (from the Latin, *alluvius*, from *alluere*, "to wash against") is soil or sediments deposited by a river or other running water. Alluvium is typically made up of a variety of materials, including fine particles of silt and clay and larger particles of sand and gravel. The term "Alluvial Gold" specifically refers to gold dust found in that type of soil. When riverbed soil is scooped up and panned for gold dust that is alluvial gold. This is also called 'Placer Mining'. It is due to the geological age of the earth that this is even possible. All gold deposits started as hard rock formations...and stayed that way until there were earthquakes, rivers, glaciers, tidal waves and a lot of earth movement which eroded mountains and ground down the rock into its smallest form; dust. Trapped in all this rock were veins of gold, typically in the quartz. These veins were also pulverized down into small pieces in nugget, flake and flour size. Because gold is so heavy, it settles to the bottom of our rivers, streams and any deep depression or crevice. When we sift through all this sand and gravel to separate the gold, we are actually looking back at the earth's history.

In 1886 a gold reef was discovered and in 1887 the Millwood Goldfields was officially opened. Unfortunately, the quartz layers in which the gold was found had folded and faulted over the millennia and the reefs tended to vanish. The last attempt to mine gold by a syndicate in 1920 again failed. Gold does associate with some minerals. One of them is quartz, a crystalline type of rock that sometimes has gold trapped between its

layers.



The catchment of the Knysna River lies within the Cape Fold Belt with its long folds that strike east west and much of this lies under the sea in the breakaway

continental crust. Knysna is a true drowned valley, now more or less silted up.

A sequence of estuarine deposits occurs in the Knysna Formation north of the town and contains lignites (a soft, brownish-black coal in which the alteration of vegetable matter has proceeded further than in peat but not as far as in bituminous coal). These are up to 1.5 meters thick. Plant fossils include *Podocarpus* and *Widdringtonia* and pollens indicate Knysna forest tree species but work on early tertiary pollens reveals that the flora differed from that of the modern forest and includes a palm specimen.

Continuing down the N2 towards Knysna one encounters the engineering genius of Thomas Bain who started work in 1867 on the seven passes road. Consider the obstacles he faced with dense forests, steep river gorges and an annual rainfall of up to 2500 mm per year.

Various sources including the SEDGEFIELD and KNYSNA TOURISM OFFICES

I was hanging around at the river earlier this year hoping to snap some Odonatas (dragonflies, damselflies) when I noticed a little flying boat come buzzing across the water. On closer inspection it turned out to be a small black wasp which had caught herself a fishing spider (*Thalassius* sp.) -she was transporting the spider by dragging it on the water surface as she flew.



The wasp took frequent breaks, stowing the spider carefully in the vegetation while she went off a short distance and dried herself. When I left after 20 minutes or so, she was still making her way along the riverbank with the spider in tow.





***It should be remembered that history is written by the victor and after each war or invasion some 50% of previous history is lost or forgotten.***

In the 5,500 or so years of the development of language (you cannot record history if you do not have a written language) we have probably had some 5,000 small to large wars thus a great deal of pre or early history has already been lost.

**All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.-- Aristotle**

We already have strong reason to believe that Homo sapiens inhabited the southern coast of Africa some 160,000 to 200,000 years ago. But who were these people? Or better still who can they be affiliated too. Were the San the off spring of these people or were they incomers as many believe? We probably have to go back even further in time in an attempt to unravel the mystery.

Looking from another aspect, technically speaking, mining goes back to the appearance of the first flint tools around 2,500,000 years ago (long long before the arrival of Homo sapiens). Surface mining has occurred continuously since that time for a variety of products. Crystalline rocks suitable for tool manufacture have been continuously mined. The technological expertise of these ancient miners is quite intriguing.

There is also apparently no evidence of the presence of foreign miners in southern Africa during the Iron Age. The Iron Age as an archaeological term indicates the condition as to civilization and culture of a people using iron as the material for their cutting tools and weapons (from about BC 1200). But what of 'before the Iron Age'? And just who is a foreigner? Bear in mind that the Bantu only arrived in parts of southern Africa some 1,700 years ago.

At Lion Cave in Swaziland, first documented in 1947, ancient miners cut a tunnel 15 meters wide, 12 metres high and some 18 meters deep. This tunnel was cut into a 300 meter high cliff face. This is apparently the oldest known southern African underground mining operation. The endeavour has been dated to go back at least 43,000 years by carbon 14 and probably goes back much further.

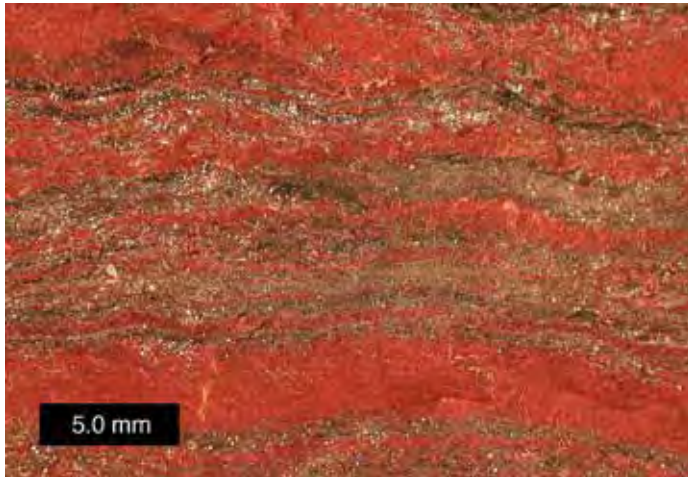
Interestingly in this case it is even known where these ancient miners "mined" their tools. Quartz, white quartzite, grey and white dappled quartzite, black indurate shales and greenish cherts were the principal materials used by the miners. These rock types occur mostly on ridges about 400 to 1600 metres from the tunnel or cavern entrance.

In the mid 1960's Adrian Boshier visited the site and noted three ancient mines named Lion, Castle and Stag caverns. He collected stone tools in and around them made of dolerite, which is foreign to the area. The tools were unlike those normally found on a Stone Age site, they were more specialised, consisting of choppers, picks and hammer stones. Professor Raymond Dart identified them as mining tools. The tools were not confined to the surface layers but were scattered throughout huge depressions which would have been solid haematite. In one of the mines tools were found lying among and beneath thousands of tons of red iron oxide known as haematite. Enquiries by Boshier among the Swazis elicited the information that haematite deposits had been mined in historic times and that it was the custom to fill in the excavation to avoid offending the spirits of the underworld.

What is interesting about this mine is what was being mined. The ancient peoples were not mining flint, which would be considered useful for obtaining food. Lion cave is a pigment mine. They were mining red ochre, a pigment used by primitive peoples as body paint for their rituals.

This red ochre is obtained from Hematite, a mineral, colored black to steel or silver-gray, brown to reddish

brown, or red. It is mined as the main ore of iron. It has been estimated that nearly 2700 tons of material was removed from this site. This is an incredible amount of material for Palaeolithic man to have moved. Red ochre must have been an important item. Since there was no blasting method available in that period, they miners first used to keep fire on the hard rock to make it soft then they used water to cool it so that the rocks broke easily.



**Close-up of a hematitic banded iron formation specimen.**

Ochre is clay that is colored by varying amounts of hematite, varying between 20% and 70%. Red ochre contains unhydrated hematite, whereas yellow ochre contains hydrated hematite.

The red chalk contained in this mineral was one of the earliest extracted in the history of mankind. The powdery mineral was first used 164,000 years ago

by the Pinnacle-Point man obviously for social differentiation. Hematite residues has also found in old graveyards from 80,000 years ago.

Iron ore in its various forms is a major mineral resource in Southern Africa. When Europeans first visited the area around Postmasburg in the Northern Cape around 1800 AD they found various sites where mining of red ochre and specularite had taken place. The local people such as the Tswana and Hottentots were familiar with these workings but mostly they attributed the tunnels and shafts to the 'old people' the Khoesan. Some of these tunnels extended over 100 metres underground and into areas where specularite was available. This mineral was more highly prized than either ochre or haematite and could be widely traded with other people who were not fortunate enough to have a source in their area. The mining operations showed a high degree of skill, knowledge and daring. Indications are that the mining of pigments in this area began before the birth of Christ, (see the THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 1981) or during the Khoe migration.

Specularite is a shiny form of iron ore, warm and greasy to the touch. For centuries it has been sought after as a cosmetic.

We all studied history as youngsters at school in South Africa and even if we did not take it in high school, we knew that South Africa was 'discovered' when a Portuguese national Bartholomeu Dias de Novaes landed at the present Munro's Beach on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1488 in what was later to become Mossel Bay. Here the local Gouriqua Hottentots met Europeans for the first time and traded sheep and cattle for metal objects and probably glass beads. Dias named the bay Aguada de São Bras ("Watering place of St. Blaise") or Angra de São Bras ("Bay of St. Blaise"). According to some sources Dias named the bay *Angra dos Vaqueiros* ("Bay of Cattle Herders") because of the abundance of cattle kept by the Gouriqua, but this is incorrect and probably refers to a name given to the present-day 'Vleesbaai', some 25 kilometers west of Mossel Bay, by later explorers.

Portuguese sailors had began exploring the coast of Africa in 1419, leveraging the latest developments in navigation, cartography and maritime technology such as the caravel, in order that they might find a sea route to the source of the lucrative spice trade.

Then again, long before the Portuguese, the Phoenicians equipped with reliable ships and sailing techniques, took to the sea in search of new markets, resources, and homes. In the process, they explored new lands where they often founded colonies. Their travels took them across the Mediterranean and through the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar), which most people then considered the ends of the earth. From there, they

sailed to Britain, which to most people was no more than a legend, but for the Phoenicians was a valuable source of tin. Even more astounding, they probably sailed around Africa two thousand years before Vasco da Gama did it for Portugal. Unfortunately, we have few details of Phoenician voyages since they wanted to keep geographic knowledge secret from any competition, in particular the Greeks, who might want to invade their markets. We do know that their method of exploration involved coast hopping rather than open sea sailing, since there were no reliable ways to navigate in open waters at this time.

The Phoenicians originally lived in Afghanistan or in some part of India, whence driven out they migrated gradually westwards. While still residing in the neighbourhood of India they colonized and traded with Arabia and the countries bordering on the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.



**A Map of the known world drawn in 1502**

In ancient time the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea were connected together by a strait through which the Phoenician and Aryan trading ships entered the Mediterranean Sea and Indian goods were taken to Europe. As that passage gradually silted up the connection between India and Europe broke off.

Then did you know that Chinese ambassadors and traders were in southern Africa more than a century before the Europeans, as an extraordinary archeological find shows, which also agrees with ancient tradition. A joint team of Kenyan and Chinese archaeologists have found a coin that suggests early Chinese explorers reached East Africa about 80 years before the first Europeans.

A Chinese and Kenyan archaeological team has discovered evidence that Chinese traders visited Kenya in the 15th century. A coin minted between 1403 and 1424 and a sherd of porcelain dating to the early Ming dynasty was found in the remains of a village. The excavation by Peking University and local archaeologists was searching for clues to the voyages of Zheng He, who led a fleet of more than 200 ships on numerous trips across the Indian Ocean.

The coin was of a special make used by representatives of the emperor and the porcelain may have come from a kiln reserved for the use of the royal family, so these finds are evidence of an official visit.

In much of Africa, metallurgy was characterized by the absence of a Bronze Age, and the transition from "stone to steel" in tool substances. Discoveries of very early copper and bronze working sites in Niger, however, can still support that iron working may have developed in that region and spread elsewhere. Iron metallurgy has been attested very early, the earliest instances of iron smelting in Termit, Niger. It was once believed that iron and copper working in Sub-Saharan Africa spread in conjunction with the Bantu expansion,

from the Cameroon region to the African Great Lakes in the 3rd century BC, reaching the Cape around AD 400. Sub-Saharan Africa has produced very early instances of carbon steel found to be in production around 2000 years before present in northwest Tanzania, based on complex preheating principles.

Pioneering groups had reached modern KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa by 300 A.D. along the coast, and the modern Limpopo Province (formerly the Northern Transvaal) by 500 A.D.

Zheng He commanded seven expeditions, the first in the year 1405 and the last in 1430, which sailed from China to the west, reaching as far as the Cape of Good Hope. The object of the voyages was to display the glory and might of the Chinese Ming dynasty and to collect tribute from the "barbarians from beyond the seas." Merchants also accompanied Zheng's voyages bringing with them silks and porcelain to trade for foreign luxuries such as spices and jewels and tropical woods.

Moreover, Zheng He's ships were impressive examples of naval engineering. His so-called treasure ships (which brought back to China such things as a giraffe from Africa) were possibly 125 metres long. Columbus's flagship the St. Maria, in contrast, was only 26 metres in length. Zheng He's treasure ships, probably displacing no less than 10,000 tons and had an aspect ratio (width:length) of 0.254; in other words, they were wide and bulky—"the supertankers of their day." Aside from the treasure ships, Zheng He's fleet also contained a variety of other, specialized vessels: "equine ships" (for carrying horses), warships, supply ships, and water tankers.



**A display at the Ibn Battuta Mall in Dubai compares the size of ships used by Zheng He and by Christopher Columbus.**

It is ironic, then, that today little is known of Zheng He's voyages. A professor Wu pointed out this is mainly the doing of the Confucianists in the imperial court, who saw to it that Zheng's ships were burned after his

last voyage and who made every effort to "systematically destroy all official records of the voyages." Their motives were purely political. During much of the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644), the eunuchs exercised great power in the imperial court, at the expense of the Confucian civil bureaucracy. The expeditions of Zheng He, who was himself a eunuch, were strongly supported by eunuchs in the court and bitterly opposed by the Confucian scholar bureaucrats. From ancient times until the Sui Dynasty, castration was both a traditional punishment and a means of gaining employment in the Imperial service. At the end of the Ming Dynasty there were about 70,000 eunuchs employed by the emperor.



**China's 1418 World Map, it shows Africa and Australia in fairly accurate detail. Europeans only stumbled across Australia after 1600.**

One of the earliest known Bantu kingdoms was Gokomere, in the uplands of Zimbabwe which dates from the fourth century. The Gokomere people are thought to be the first occupants of this great Zimbabwe site which is near present-day Masvingo. Between AD 500 and 1000 the Gokomere and subsequent groups developed gold-mining techniques and produced progressively finer-quality ceramics, jewellery, textiles and soapstone carvings.

**Indigenous peoples** are ethnic groups who are native to a land or region, especially before the arrival and intrusion of a foreign and possibly dominating culture. They are a group of people whose members share a cultural identity that has been shaped by their geographical region. A variety of names are used in various countries to identify such groups of people, but they generally are regarded as the "original inhabitants" of a territory or region. Their right to self-determination may be materially affected by the later-arriving ethnic groups. Because of the varied and changing contexts in which Indigenous Peoples live or have lived and because there is no universally accepted definition of "Indigenous Peoples," this policy does not define the term. Indigenous Peoples may be referred to in different countries by such terms as "indigenous ethnic minorities," "aboriginals," "hill tribes," "minority nationalities," "scheduled tribes," or "tribal groups etc." (Definition from Wikipedia)

**So the question remains to whom does South Africa belong? To all the people of the 'rainbow nation' of course.**

Information from various sources.

## What's on, in and around the museum in Great Brak River this and the coming months?

| Month & provisional date | Description                                                                                                                                                  | Supported by                                                                        | Contact person                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Late February            | <b>Launch of the new museum and heritage web site.</b><br><a href="http://ourheritage.org.za">ourheritage.org.za</a>                                         | Museum & Heritage                                                                   | <b>GENERAL ENQUIRIES</b><br>Rene' de Kock:<br>083-448-1966                                                       |
| July                     | <b>Many new Pre-owned books on sale in the Museum Shop....Every week day. Both English and Afrikaans books available from R4.00 each</b>                     | The Museum for museum funds                                                         | The museum<br>044-620-3338                                                                                       |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> July    | <b>MEC Dr Ivan Meyer will re-launch the Nobel Peace Prize Travelling Exhibition at the GBR museum</b>                                                        |  | <b>GENERAL ENQUIRIES</b><br>Nisde McRobert @<br>044-620-3783 or<br>082-340-2920<br>Or the museum<br>044-620-3338 |
| August                   | <b>An Evening of Entertainment Local History of Film and Photography</b><br>This interesting evening has again been Postponed due to various timing clashes. | Museum                                                                              | <b>GENERAL ENQUIRIES</b><br>Nisde McRobert @<br>044-620-3783                                                     |
| <b>NEAR BY</b>           |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                  |
| 3 July @ 19.30           | <b>Art Film-LANTANA @ THEATRE@BRAK, Long Street.</b><br>There will be no films during August and September                                                   |                                                                                     | <b>GENERAL ENQUIRIES</b><br>Dries:drielaine@eti<br>memail.co.za                                                  |

For more details on **what's on** in our area email Hennie & Rene with a request for their news letter:  
[mcpjhb@metroweb.co.za](mailto:mcpjhb@metroweb.co.za)

### QUOTES FROM ALBERT CAMUS

- A free press can, of course, be good or bad, but most certainly without freedom, the press will never be anything but bad.
- An intellectual is someone whose mind watches itself.
- A taste for truth at any cost is a passion which spares nothing.
- A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.
- A guilty conscience needs to confess. A work of art is a confession.

### Quote of the Month.

"It's not a problem that we have a problem. It's a problem if we don't deal with the problem."

Mary Kay Utecht

She also fictionalised

"Our task is to provide an education for the kind of kids we have... Not the kind of kids we used to have... Or want to have... Or the kids that exist in our dreams."



## TOURISM SNIPPETS

### Car sharing – the future of car rental?

Car sharing is becoming increasingly popular in Europe and the US, with car sharing programmes popping up in every major city. The idea is to offer a pay-as-you-go car rental, allowing people to rent cars for short periods of time, often by the hour.

Car-sharing companies, which often work in conjunction with major car-rental companies, leave cars throughout the city. Clients can drive any car they like, whenever they like, for as long as they like, and only pay for the time needed. Once a booking is made, clients receive an email confirming all the details, including a map, photos and detailed directions to the car of their choice. They will also receive an SMS with the date, time, vehicle registration and location. Cars are unlocked by holding a smartcard, given out when the client becomes member of a car-sharing company, against the card reader unit on the windscreen. Alternatively, clients can use a dedicated iPhone app or mobile website to unlock and lock the car. They keys are left in the glove box.

Car sharing is not yet available in South Africa

### Heritage

The Heritage Environmental Management Company has expanded its footprint into Africa by recently certifying hotels in Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Mozambique and the Indian Ocean Islands.

The Heritage programme was recently implemented at properties in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Lagos, Maputo and the islands of Praslin and Mahé in the Seychelles as part of Southern Sun's strategy to become a leading responsible hotel and resort group. This follows the group's implementation of the Heritage programme in all its properties across South Africa last year.

### CEO of SA Tourism resigns

*Thandiwe January-McLean*, the CEO of SA Tourism has resigned

January-McLean has been with SA Tourism for a year and a half in total. Discussing the resignation, SA Tourism Chief Marketing Officer, **Roshene Singh**, says: "She led the organisation through its most challenging and exciting times. The year 2010 was a momentous year for all in tourism and under her leadership and drive, working closely with stakeholders across various sectors; South Africa attracted an all-time high of over eight million foreign tourist arrivals.

"She leaves a legacy of having moved the organisation forward to explore new markets and she firmly placed Africa and the domestic tourism agenda at the forefront of South African Tourism's marketing efforts, while entrenching its core markets."

January-McLean will leave South African Tourism at the end of August, at which time Tim Scholtz will be acting CEO until the board has completed its recruitment process.

Thanks & acknowledgement to tourismupdate.

## INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS & EVENTS DURING JULY 2011

- July 1 (Friday), **Canada Day** (Canada)
- July 4 (Monday), **Independence Day** (U.S.)
- July 6 (Wednesday), **Running of the Bulls in Pamplona**
- July 14 (Thursday), **British Open 2010**
- July 14 (Thursday), **Bastille Day** (France)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- South Africa is ranked first in the world for its floral kingdom and South Africa is home to the world's smallest succulent plants (less than 10 mm) and the largest (the baobab).
- South Africa has the third highest level of biodiversity in the world.
- South Africa is one of the most generously endowed geographic solar hotspots in the world, soaking up just over half of the world's highest category of solar wattage per square meter of land.
- South Africa is the second largest exporter of fruit in the world.
- There are only 12 countries in the world that supply tap water that is fit to drink, and South Africa is one of them. Our tap water quality is third best overall in the world.

## JULY - LOCAL EVENTS



The 2011 Oyster Festival will be held from the **1 - 10 July 2011**  
For more information please see: <http://www.oysterfestival.co.za>



**29th July 2011 to 31st July 2011**

2011 sees the 9th Annual Vodashop George Cheese Festival hosted at Outeniqua Primary School in George. Over the past 8 years, the Vodashop George Cheese Festival has established itself as the premier food event in George and the only event in the Southern Cape to attract in excess of 10 000 visitors to ONE venue.

**Venue: Outeniqua Primary School**

**Time: Thursday - 17:00 - 00:00**

**Live entertainment, restaurants & cash bar**

**Time: 10h00 - 00h00 (Friday & Saturday)**

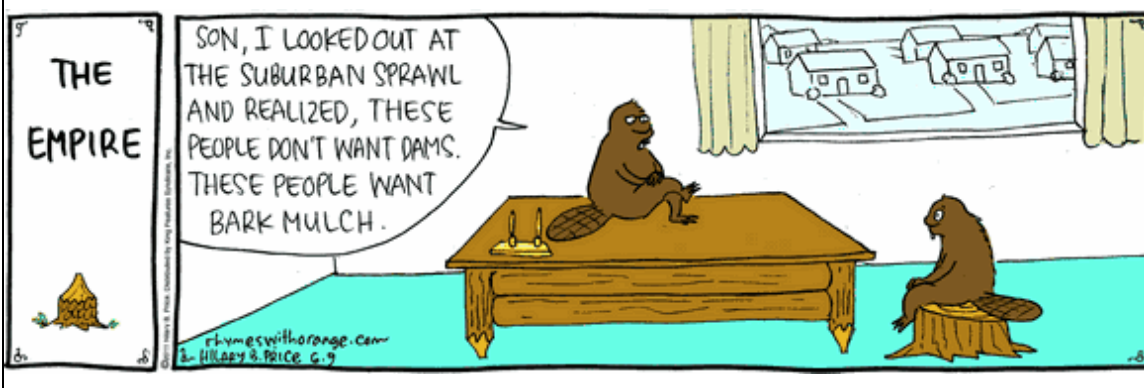
**10h00 - 16h00 (Sunday)**

**Prices: R80 - per adult - R30 - per child under 13 years**

**Sunday Special Price: R60**

**R40 PENSIONERS SPECIAL**

**Friday 10:00 - 12:00**



**Rhymes  
with Orange  
by Hilary B  
Price**

**'Marketing'**



## GREAT BRAK RIVER INDUSTRIES SINCE the mid 1800's - PART THREE

### 1908 HARNESS FACTORY



The Searle's Company established a flourishing harness factory according to an advertisement in the "South African Commerce and Manufacturers Record" of 1908. The leather used for making harnesses was of good quality tanned by the Tannery. Later extensions to the harness factory became necessary with electric current generated by a turbine motor plant on the original Charles Searle water furrow. A horse harness is a type of tack that allows a draft animal like a horse, mule or donkey to pull a horse-drawn vehicle like a carriage, wagon or sleigh. The harness may also be used to hitch animals to ploughs etc.

### 1912 MINERAL WATER PLANT

In 1912 an aerated mineral water plant was established in the present parking area of the Shoe Factory Shop in Station Street. David Grebe, the foreman of the village in 1912, provided a delicious recipe for lemonade that was manufactured and sold far and wide.

The glass bottle used was an example of the British Codd Glass stopper bottle that was invented by Hiram Codd in 1872 for use in the aerated water trade. The glass stopper or marble used was enclosed in the neck of the bottle and when the bottle was filled with gas, pressure would form an airtight seal with an India rubber seal in the neck of the bottle thus removing the need for the cork.



Info courtesy of the Story of Great Brak River by Margaret Franklin  
And Rylands Mineral water bottle circa 1900

## **1912 GARAGE**

C. Searle & Co. was advertising the sale of motor cars and maintaining to be motor experts with an engineering works in Great Brak River. Willie Searle owned the first motor car in Great Brak River. His car was a Sunbeam 16/20hp.

According to the advertisement of the day a five passenger Ford car sold for £225, a Hudson for £450, a Sunbeam 12/16hp. sold at £550 and the Sunbeam 16/20hp. sold at £660.

After World War Two Ossie Fleming was appointed as manager of the Searle's Motor garage in Great Brak River and this included the workshop and motor garage.

The Glentana garage at Sinksabrug (building still in existence on the east of Great Brak River and now a post collection box unit) was incorporated into Company's motor trading activities. Later the Company obtained the franchise for Fiat and Toyota cars. When Ossie Fleming's health failed the district's motor garages were sold off but retained the motor garage at Great Brak River until the company was eventually sold off.



**Behind the present day "Shoe Stop" on the factory premises.  
An arresting new Hudson is seen on the right.**

The name "Hudson" came from Joseph L. Hudson, a Detroit department store entrepreneur and founder of Hudson's department store, who provided the necessary capital and gave permission for the company to be named after him. A total of eight Detroit businessmen formed the company on February 20, 1909, to produce an automobile which would sell for less than US\$1,000 (There were

then approximately 4.80 dollars to the British Pound). The company quickly started production, with the first car driven out of a small factory in Detroit on July 3, 1909.



The new Hudson "Twenty" was one of the first low-priced cars on the American market and very successful with more than 4,000 sold the first year. The 4,508 units made in 1910 was the best first year's production in the history of the automobile industry up to that time and put the newly formed company in 17<sup>th</sup> place industry-wide, "a remarkable achievement at a time.

"Production in 1911 increased to 6,486.



**The C. Searle & Co garage was situated on the corner of Charles Street in Great Brak River circa late 1980's**

Some of these photographs have been restored and reproduced by Jan Nieuwoudt from damaged negatives which have only been recently found in the Great Brak River Museum' archives.



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