



GRASSHOPPER COUNTRY

The Great Brak River Museum News Letter

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Great Brak River

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Dear Friends

Great Brak River was in the news on Sunday 18th March when PASELLA showed viewers some of the interesting and unusual highlights of our little village. This has brought many new visitors streaming into our museum. The production was very successfully done and we must congratulate Pasella on the program content which amongst many items showed our unique hydro power station and introduced several local artists. Many thanks to all the villagers who helped with the content.

Enjoy a ride on the Outeniqua Choo Tjoe which operates three times a week from the 2nd of April, traveling from the George Transnet Heritage Museum, to the Diaz Museum, Mossel Bay.

The Oudtshoorn KKNK 2007 is on during the week 1st to 7th April. We are only an hour's drive over either the Outeniqua or Robinson passes. Why not stay over in Great Brak River and explore the village and our fabulous beach.

A reminder to those visitors visiting the Wolwedans dam. A permit is required from the Department of Water Affairs for entry through the main gate. Access to the dam wall is still available via the hiking trail.



Vossie Nunes & Kay Schroeder, Opening the Museum in the "School House" October 1994

Kay Schroeder who was our museum chairlady for a number of years has recently undergone a successful hip replacement; Kay who is now 82 is still active with her leather work. Amongst many achievements Kay initiated the "Out span" Flea market which takes place in Great Brak River at least every first Saturday in the month.

The Great Brak River Art Hop is being held on Saturday 7th April between 08.00 and 16.00 at the Vorentoe school. Tickets including tea/coffee are R25.00 each

We have already mentioned that Chris Spies one of our great local artists has very kindly offered one of two of his latest paintings to be auctioned for funds for the museum. This month we show you an enlarged view of the 1220 x 1220 mm paintings. An International United Kingdom critic has already rated one of these painting amongst the top six for 2007.

Don't forget, the museum will be starting a permanent display of paintings by local Great Brak River artists. The initial collection will go on display during this year's biannual craft exhibition starting on the 15th of May. Chris has already donated his painting for the museum collection.

The museum is busy with interviewing people for the position of project manager for the Great [Brak River Crafts Workshop](#).

WHEN LAST DID YOU VISIT THE DIAS MUSEUM COMPLEX?

DIAS MUSEUM

Tel: 044 691 1067

Hours: Mon - Fri

9.00 - 16.45

Sat & Sun

9.00 - 15.45

Start your tour at
the Granary

HAVE YOU VISITED ANY OF OUR LOCAL RESTAURANTS?

Trans Karoo

1 Morrison Road,
Great Brak River.

Variety restaurant.

[Phone 044-620-4163](tel:044-620-4163)

Stonehill

in Little Brak River for
exceptional dining.

[Phone 044-696-6501](tel:044-696-6501)

Whispering Waves

in Beach Boulevard.

Dias Beach

Small & intimate.

[Phone 044-692-8600](tel:044-692-8600)

De Katte

De Dekke extension, off
the R 102,

Great Brak River.

Coffee Shop and light
meals.

[Phone 044-620-2230](tel:044-620-2230)

Grootbrak in die Nuus



A kaleidoscope of colours, from the series the "Timeless trees of Africa"

Two of Chris Spies's paintings will go on auction in the near future in a bid to raise funds for the Great Brak River museum. The monies resulting from the highest bid on one of the two paintings will be donated to the Great Brak River museum funds. Full details will be published next month.



Also from the series the "Timeless trees of Africa" but with orange background.

Each painting measures approximately 1220 by 1220 mm

THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

Hope's Hands on Crafts Workshop will this month be held on Tuesday 17th April at 9.30 a.m. in the museum. The class will be doing "Pewter Roses"
Contact Hope at 044-620-5124 or 083-378-1232.

During the first and second weeks of April, we are arranging "hands on" selection classes leading to full time employment at the **Great Brak River Crafts Workshop**. Candidates must be interested in crafts, be unemployed and live in Great Brak River. We are looking for young women, recent school leavers and handicapped persons. Please phone the museum on 044-620-3338 to put your name on the class lists.

Future Events

The **8th of May**, die Damesklub Mosselbaai om 10:00 by Art Cafe Diaz Strand. Koste R 25.00 vir lede en R30.00 vir nie lede. Dit sluit verversings in.
Bepreek asseblief vroegtydig u plek by Glynn by 044 6920090 of Marie by 044 6952033.

The **18th of May** is International Museum day. Remember our very successful show two years ago; this year's biannual craft exhibition will be at the museum from **15th to 19th May 2007**. We are looking for local arts and crafts. Don't delay booking your place to exhibit. Contact Hope at 044-620-5124. The museum tea garden will be open and the session will start off on the Tuesday with the normal "Hands on Workshop".

Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd June is **Keencrafts** with Craftwise at the CSIR Pretoria. This is a must visit fun outing with low cost workshops if you are interested in crafts. More details available on www.keenoncrafts.co.za. Hope de Kock and her daughter Melinda will both be attending to bring back new ideas for the coming months.

Ighali 2007 will be held on the 29th August to 2nd September in George. Go to www.ighali.co.za for more details. Ighali is a get-together for creative people, a unique stitching experience for all stitchers, from beginners to expert, a variety of amazing workshops presented by the most talented needlecraft teachers in South Africa

Local Artist

Chris Spies paints life. Life in the beginning and the beginning of Life. Each day is a new beginning and so is each painting a new beginning with its own, different symbolic and metaphysical relationships.

Growth always entails vitality and this is central to the new series "Trees of Life". With the repetitive visual representation of 'Tree of Life', the multidimensional aspects of the same subject are being addressed.

Repeating the subject of vitality, in this case, has a much deeper value than just that of simple reproduction. It is a witness to the distinctive quality of the past and of a dynamic future. In this series the timeless trees of Africa, in the end, become Africa.

Profile

Chris Spies was born in 1951 in Whiteriver. He received his Honours degree in History of Art from the University of Pretoria and worked as a civil servant for 16 years (as Assistant Director of Art), and was responsible for art purchases, exhibitions and publications.

Together with a team he organised up to 147 exhibitions a year.

He has been in Great Brak for the past 14 years. After his arrival he had a General Dealership before he opened his gallery. This gifted artist has 11 publications up to date, amongst others the hand printed book titled : Frans Claerhout " Morwa wa Lerato") (Sotho for a loving person).



SA Tourism Snippets

- ❑ The West Coast is the only place in South Africa where whales can be spotted all year round.
- ❑ Hermanus is the only coastal village in SA that is completely surrounded by nature reserves.
- ❑ Knysna's most famous visitor was George Bernard Shaw, who loved the town so much that he stayed for five weeks and it was in this period he wrote : " The Black Girl in search of God".
- ❑ Prince Albert (in the Karoo) farmers are restoring vineyards that were last farmed in the 19th century.
- ❑ The graves of the last leaders of the Hessequa Khoi communities, Klaas and Markus Sabata can be found in Bontebokskloof near Swellendam.



THE ORIGINAL GREAT BRAK RIVER 1859 TOLL HOUSE AT THE CHARLES STREET BRIDGE BEFORE DEMOLITION. SEARLE MEMORIAL CHURCH IS IN THE BACKGROUND. A WATER COLOR BY W. MCPHERSON. (GBR MUSEUM

Points to Ponder

- ❖ Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
- ❖ For a man to achieve all that is demanded of him he must regard himself as greater than he is. - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
- ❖ All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake to the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible. This I did. - TE Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia)
- ❖ The increase in the value of the share options of white executives over the past decade is more than the total cost of black empowerment for SA's listed companies, reckons Trader Vic.

DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS WAS NOT THE FIRST TOLL HOUSE IN GREAT BRAK RIVER? BEFORE RICHARD SEARLE CAME TO GREAT BRAK RIVER, A TOLL WAS IN OPERATION ON THE HEIGHTS ROAD LEADING INTO THE VILLAGE FROM GEORGE. A WATER COLOUR BY HILDA SEARLE OF THIS ORIGINAL TOLL HOUSE HANGS IN THE MUSEUM.

Blood Donor Clinics

Contact Number : 044 874 2074 (George)

Every two months this service comes to Great Brak. on a Thursday afternoon from 15h00 to 19h00. @ the Dutch Reformed Church Hall.

Please contact the Information Centre for dates at 044 620 3338.

To be a donor you must:

- * Have a good general health
- * Weigh more than 50 kgs.
- * Be older than 17 years
- * Eat prior to donation
- * Not engage in risky sexual practices



THE WRECK AT GLENTANA.
THIS PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN
IN 1981 SHOWS THE
REMAINS OF THE
FLOATING DOCK GROUNDED
MORE THAN 100 YEARS
AGO ON THE MOSSEL BAY
COAST.

THE CURATOR'S CORNER by Nisde McRobert

Further details are available at the museum.

The Historic Cottages in Long Street, Great Brak River

An introduction

The cottages were built to house workers from the Searle's Industries. They were built around the 1900's and were numbered from no 7 – to no 25.

From the information gathered up to date the cottages were sold off in 1922 due to bankruptcy threatening the Searle Companies. After the Searle companies became solvent again the houses were rented out and some were bought back for employee accommodation. (Many were most probably bought back as strict stipulations had been laid down by the Searle's regarding, for example the water and business rights etc.) In 1905 they looked exactly alike which is confirmed in the 1956 photographs.

The cottages had probably already been sold off again by the time the Searle's sold off their properties to Bolton's in 1979.

As with the museum, all the houses were constructed using mainly local materials typical of that time; un-baked clay bricks bonded together with a mud mortar paste and plastered with a lime based sealing mortar. The houses had small sash windows with stable doors in front. Roofs were corrugated iron on Oregon Pine trusses (Oregon wood was also known as Douglas Pine and came from the state of Oregon in the USA). Each cottage had a large hearth for a black stove and a chimney and on the south side, a door to a large attic under the roof. These attics were ideal for drying fruit and keeping potatoes and onions.

Each house had two bedrooms, a sitting room and a kitchen.

Ceilings were made of tongue-and-groove boards with Oregon beams. Foundations are visible (same as with the Schoolhouse) (Each house had a small stone wall around it and to which the floor joists were attached and then Oregon planks were used to build the floor).

In no 7 - it is believed - there was a lady murdered by her gardener- this was well before the advent of security gates.

Lastly - all our coloured people moved out of these houses in 1954 when the group Areas Act was implemented and moved to company constructed houses in Greenhaven.



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