



GRASSHOPPER COUNTRY

## The Great Brak River Museum News Letter

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Great Brak River

June 2007

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Contributions by Ina Stofberg  
Editor Rene' de Kock

### Dear Friends

As our local indigenous peoples do not have a recorded history, the museum would like to draft and collect an oral history, however, to do this appropriately, we need funding and this is proposed as part of the Great Brak River Revival program.

Now to the Fremantle Maritime Museum located not far from the Australian city of Perth. The Maritime Museum on Victoria Quay continues the stories of Western Australia's fascinating maritime history. A centerpiece is the America's Cup winning yacht, Australia II. Exhibitions bring to life their maritime past, including water sport and adventure, the Swan River and Fremantle, naval defense, trade, fishing and the movements of people throughout the Indian Ocean region. The movement of people is what interested me. They have many photographs of the people who founded Perth. Not the companies but the simple fishing folk that started the fishing industry in Perth. Great Brak River started with its boot and shoe factory and tannery and their must be many family photographs depicting life as it was. If you have any such photos and or stories in your possession, please let us know as we would like to arrange an exhibition.

The Great Brak Museum celebrated museum day, the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 by following one of the recommended department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's theme, "An institution in the service of society and its development", by hosting their biannual crafts display.



Hope with her students in the Museum.  
15<sup>th</sup> May 2007

Widely advertised and open for the full week, the many visitors streamed in to enjoy the various techniques on display. This year's exhibition displayed hand made goods of an exceptionally high standard coming from all sides of the community. Notwithstanding the lack of many of our local residents visiting us, we achieved a record attendance.

The craft workshop celebrated their third birthday on the same day. Classes were started initially to help the museum with funding and in the beginning only small items were undertaken. Today the classes have grown larger and the crafts larger and more demanding. From making book covers, cards and folding serviettes, we have now moved on doing specialised beadwork, Pewter and copper work, decoupage, sun colour painting etc. etc.

Whilst many visitors are from Great Brak River, others come regularly from Mossel Bay, Dana Bay and George to attend classes. Many participants make this a regular monthly commitment and meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 9.30 am at the Great Brak River Museum in Amy Searle Street. Being a "hands on workshop", classes are limited to 15 to 18 people to ensure that one obtains a thorough knowledge of the

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)

#### Vaaljapie

At the station,  
Little Brak River.  
Dining-Booking essential.  
[Phone 044-696-5878](tel:044-696-5878)

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

subject being worked on. Normally Hope has at least one assistant instructor allowing the pupil to obtain different perspectives of the subject.



**Mavis, Pat, 'Liz' and Sandi working on their projects.**

Hope de Kock and the Great Brak River Museum would like to thank the many "Friends of the Museum" for their assistance and help with the tea garden and serving the light lunches which the many crafters who put their work on display.

went down very well during the week. We also wish to thank



**Martha van Rooyen's display of her handmade porcelain dolls.**

Besides making porcelain dolls, Martha van Rooyen who lives in Greenhaven and her group of ladies (the Greenhaven Housewives Club) make all sorts of exquisite crafts from lampshades, baskets and needle work, wood carving to three dimensional decoupage framed pictures.

**FOR LIGHT MEALS, COFFEE & TEA SHOPS?**

**Pepper Tree**

Long Street,  
Great Brak River.  
Coffee Shop and light meals.  
[Phone 044-620-3081](tel:044-620-3081)

**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)

**Odditea Garden**

Old George Road,  
Little Brak River.  
Tea Garden and light meals.  
[Phone 082-829-8587](tel:082-829-8587)

**Purple Onion**

Long Street,  
Great Brak River.  
Deli and light meals.  
[Phone 044-620-3778](tel:044-620-3778)

**Future Events**

**Wynproe driekuns.** 6 Junie: Drie geleenthede vir wynproe saam met verskillende kelders word aangebied in Klein Brakrivier by Vaaljapie Restaurant. Die 3 datums is 6 Junie, 6 Julie en 6 Augustus - almal om 19:30. Die kelders betrokke is Kango wyne van Oudtshoorn, Bergwater van Prins Albert en Calitzdorp wynkelder. 'n Spesiale kultuur aand word om die geleenthede beplan met spesiale spyskaarte. Kontak gerus vir Vaaljapie by 044 6965878 vir meer inligting. Slegs 'n beperkte getal mense kan toegelaat word.

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

**Heritage Day** this year will be on the 24<sup>th</sup> September. Great Brak River will be celebrating by holding its annual festival. This will be somewhat different to previous years as our little train station passenger service will be 100 years old. The festival will take place at the Trans Karoo restaurant and the station. The Outeniqua Railway Society and others will be organizing a special Tjoe-Choo journey from George to Mossel Bay and return with a major function in Mossel Bay at the Diaz museum near where the original train journey started. A scheduled stop will be made both ways at the Great Brak River Station to commemorate its one hundredth birthday. We will release more information as the festive program develops.

## THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

**Hope's Hands on Crafts Workshop** at the museum will be held on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June at 9.30 a.m.** With many new ideas from **Keencrafts with Craftwise** at the CSIR Pretoria, the class will be doing "Decorative painting a small window screen". *Pending availability of materials* Contact Hope at 044-620-5124 or 083-378-1232.

**Fen van ons besondere kunstenaars** van Groot Brakrivier Clifford Jacobs se kunswerke word tans by Picasso's in Langstraat Groot Brakrivier uitgestal. Picasso's kan by 044 - 6202883 gekontak word.

**8 Junie:** n Spesiale musiekaand word om 18:30 by die huis van Etienne en Ronell Bruère Villa Mimi 4, Langstraat 37, Groot Brakrivier gehou. Daar sal gekonsentreer word op ongewone, onbekende en minder bekende Klassieke Musiek en alle belangstellendes word genooi om die aand saam met hulle te kom geniet. Kontak gerus vir Etienne by Tel:044 620 4700 of Sel: 0723072709

**27 Junie:** Spesiale inligtingsaand vir Mans. Dokter Robbie Botha gesels oor Mansgesondheid. Die geleentheid word deur die skakelkomitee van Kansa in Groot Brakrivier om 19:00 by Chris Spies kunsgallery aangebied. Vir enige navrae kontak Juanita van Wyk by 0826729377.

## Points to Ponder

We the unwilling, lead by the unqualified, have been doing the unbelievable for so long with so little that we now feel confident attempting the impossible with nothing.

Logic is the art of going wrong with confidence. -- Morris Kline

"He has a brilliant mind, until he makes it up" -- Lady Asquith

I've been working on becoming an idiot savant -- one of those people who can multiply two 10 digit numbers in seconds. I've got the first part pretty well figured out.-- Ken Fry

"People find it easier to forgive you for being wrong than for being right" -- J K Rawlings

"Curiosity has its own reason for existence" -- Albert Einstein

There is always another way— Ciro

I had amnesia once -- or twice.

Protons have mass? I didn't even know they were Catholic.

All I ask is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy. –  
Last three contributed by `Lin Barratt

Arrange to see the 1924 Hydro Electric Power Station, which is back in operation and which provided electricity to the saw mill and shoe factory. Our resident government engineer is available for guided tours on request.

**THE RECONDITIONED  
PELTON WHEEL BEING  
LOWERED INTO THE  
CASING.  
SEPTEMBER 2003**



## Did You Know

- The San believed the majestic spiral horned eland was the most powerful of all animals and thus depicted it in every cave that they painted.
- There is a cairn about 8 km outside Bethlehem in the Free State that was built by thousands of miners from Lesotho who would place a stone on a pile on their way to and back from Johannesburg. This together with a prayer to the ancestors would ensure protection from accidents at work.
- Great Brak River had electricity in 1910 before Port Elizabeth.
- **Our Jack.** Every small town use to have their own "Jack" A person, not necessarily called Jack, but a character befitting the age-old description/tradition associated with the connotation. I'm sure there are still towns in the rural areas that would be able to tell of their own. The little enclave of Tergniet can do so. Situated at the George-end of Rheebook, its narrow streets with its mixture of the very old and the very new, is at the best of times, very confusing, especially to the new-comer or visitor. But let's take a peep at our Jack. Willem (mid sixties) and one of Tergniet's first residents still resides in his little cottage in Van Zyl Street. Brown as a berry and with a good physique, always in shorts, sometimes a shirt and the smallest of

hats, Willem does his daily rounds of cutting and pruning shrubs and hedges, mowing lawns, watering gardens and the raking of leaves.

But there's no chance of walking past his garage when he's there: a long chat is the order of the day. It's impossible to get away even if it's just after five in the morning or midday.

Every story usually starts with: "Ek het gehoor hulle se -." Slightly eccentric, which is obvious from some of his mannerisms, Willem can tell a good story. I love his "ou dae" tales of the steam trains, the paths through the bush, the then pristine beach and fynbos, original buildings and farms and of course, what it was like before the roads came.

Willem knows how to make a good catapult, how and where to take off the best bait from the rocks and how to catch a dune mole. Willem leads a simple life, but he lives it to the full.

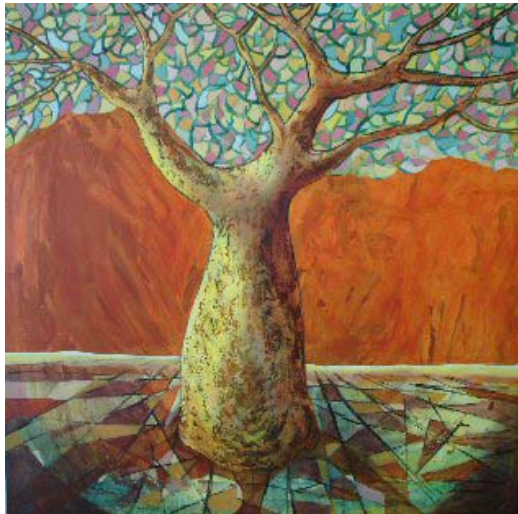


But the thing I like best about Willem is that he's a hoarder. It's what makes him so special. If you can't get rid of it, Willem will take it – either by hand-pulled trolley or on the back of his ancient bakkie. Throw something away, and after a few hours Willem will appear on the scene and rummage through whatever it is you discarded. He seldom leaves much behind. But then, of course: if you can't find it, Willem is bound to have it. And that's a fact. Everyone knows about, talks about Willem's garage. From the obscure ads to the items on sale (rocks to fridges – depending on his stock). Even his little red Vespa scooter sports a rather large handwritten sign tied to the rear rack. It reads: "Moles caught. R60 each." And believe it or not, he has caught quite a few.

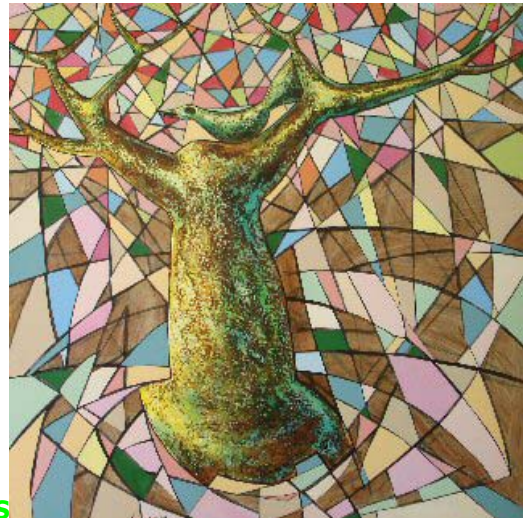
His garage is a sight to be seen. Only he can get inside, only he knows what's inside, be it the smallest odd washer, cable or some obscure part of something. Willem and his garage are perhaps worth a visit.

***Written by Mike Carstens***

## **Grootbrak in die Nuus**



**The Tree of Knowledge.**



**The Kaleidoscope Tree**

Each acrylic on board painting measures approximately 1220 by 1220 mm

Bidding for the two Chris Spies paintings opens on [bidorbuy.co.za](http://bidorbuy.co.za) on the 1<sup>st</sup> July and will close on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007. In order to buy you will first need to register as a buyer. This is a quick and easy process and should take you no longer than 60 seconds to complete. You will need to choose a username and password, which you will use to log on to the site with. After registering you will need to enable your account by clicking on a secure link in an email we send you before you can log in.

The auction is 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.

## SA Tourism Snippets

- Tourism figures from the Middle East have increased from 33401 in 2002 to 38209 in 2006.
- Arrivals from Hong Kong have increased from 42 822 in 2003 to 47870 in 2006.
- Small, medium and micro enterprises stand to benefit from 2010 as Fifa will be contracting non-hotel accommodation



CAN ANYONE GUESS WHERE THIS ROAD SIGN COMES FROM?

Tourism Radio, South Africa's only location-based station for tourists is going global. The Cape Town developed innovation, launched in December 2005, caters for self drive tourists who prefer the freedom of individual travel whilst not missing out on locally relevant information.



Playing a mixture of general, local, and specific information about the area that a vehicle is driving through, Tourism Radio has redefined the travel experience for independent visitors. Following interest in the concept by the global press industry in 2006, an approach was made that has led to Tourism Radio's acquisition by a leading European venture capitalist. "It has been an amazing ride over the last 12 months" said founder, and newly promoted Chief International Officer, Mark Allewell, "and it is very gratifying to see that South African innovations are making it on the global stage."

This investment in the company is allowing the Cape Town based team of 10 to take their service to the next level, with innovative technical solutions being rolled-out in the fields of ad tracking and content management amongst others. Very soon, for the first time in history Tourism Radio will allow advertisers to monitor the performance of their promotions, whilst provincial and local authorities will benefit from the precise tourism-route tracking records.

Although Tourism Radio currently operates only in the Western Cape, Tourism Radio Namibia is launching in May '07, and Tourism Radio Barcelona in August. "Thanks to this deal Tourism Radio South Africa is now able to cement its expansion plans throughout South Africa over the next six months, and we are all looking forward to offering this exciting service nationally", said Damian Dingwall, General Manager of TR-SA.

Tourism Radio, originally launched in Cape Town, offers international visitors a convenient, inexpensive way to gather the information they need about the country as they travel through it.

The innovative service uses Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, installed in rental cars, to track the movements of its users, giving them information relevant to the particular area they are driving through.

Once a visitor opts to include Tourism Radio in their hired car - for as little as R10 to R15 a day - they simply tune in to Tourism Radio on 90.2FM to get cultural, historical and anecdotal information, as well as updates on nearby attractions and shows.

What this means in practical terms is that if you're in Cape Town, you learn about the development of the Mother City, and when you drive to Stellenbosch, the focus of the broadcast travels with you.

## Funnies for June

### *Pregnancy and Women*

Q: Should I have a baby after 35?

A: No, 35 children are enough.

Q: I'm two months pregnant now. When will my baby move?

A: With any luck, right after he finishes college.

Q: My wife is five months pregnant and so moody that sometimes she's borderline irrational.

A: So what's your question?

Q: Is there any reason I have to be in the delivery room while my wife is in labour?

A: Not unless the word "alimony" means anything to you.


The **Museum** is still looking for glass fronted show cases preferably with some historic significance. If anyone can help please contact the museum.

The **Museum & Information Office** is open every day from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm and our three ladies will show you around or provide you with visitor information and what's on in the town and surrounding areas.

# THE CURATOR'S CORNER by Nisde McRobert

**The Houses of Great Brak River :**

**Compiled June 2007**

INTRODUCTION	THIS HOUSE IS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL COTTAGES BUILT ALONG THE OX-WAGON TRAIL AND IT HOUSED ARTISANS WHO WORKED AT THE SHOE FACTORY AND THE TANNERY OF SEARLE LIMITED. IT ORIGINALLY FORMED PART OF PORTION 6 OF THE FARM WOLWEDANS NO 129 AND IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE PREVALENT STYLE FOR WORKERS HOUSES OF THE TIME. IT WAS BUILT IN 1900. THE ARCHITECT OF THIS HOUSE IS UNKNOWN.
ADDRESS	<b>11 LONG STREET GREAT BRAK RIVER: ARTISAN'S HOUSE</b>
HERITAGE STATUS	THE HOUSE IS IN A GOOD CONDITION
CONSTRUCTION TYPE	SINGLE STOREY WITH A STONE FOUNDATION. WALLS ARE SUN BAKED PLASTERED BRICK AND FLOORS ARE CONCRETE WITH TILES AND CARPETS. CEILINGS ARE OF OREGON PINE, COVERED WITH BEAMS AND THE FRONT DOOR IS A WOOD AND GLASS STABLE DOOR. OTHER INTERIOR DOORS ARE WOOD WITH PLYWOOD EXTERIORS.
PICTURE (1995)	
TYPE ROOF	ASBESTOS REINFORCED CEMENT (ORIGINALLY WAS CORRIGATED IRON)
NUMBER OF ROOMS / BEDROOMS	THERE ARE FIVE ROOMS OF WHICH THREE ARE BEDROOMS
IMPORTANT FEATURES OF HOUSE	THE HOUSE HAS AN ATTIC ON THE SOUTH SIDE
ADD-ON'S TO HOUSE/ BUILDING E.G. KITCHEN, CHIMNEY	AN EXTENSION TO THE REAR OF THE HOUSE WAS ADDED AND SERVES AS A BEDROOM. ALTERATIONS MADE TO THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: A BATHROOM, LOUNGE AND STOEP WERE ADDED.
HAS THE HOUSE ANY OF THE ORIGINAL FURNITURE OR FEATURES?	SOME FEATURES AND COLOURING ARE ORIGINAL BUT FURNITURE HAS BEEN REPLACED BY BUILT IN CUPBOARDS IN THE KITCHEN AND BEDROOMS.
ORIGINAL OWNERS	SEARLE LIMITED. SOLD OFF BY SEARLES IN 1922
CURRENT OWNERS	THE PROPERTY WAS RESOLD BY FRIEDA DE LANGE ON 11 DECEMBER 1995 TO THE PRESENT OWNERS, RODNEY & NISDE McROBERT
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC	ONLY ON SPECIAL REQUEST.



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