



VASSA Bulletin 1: 4 June 2009

To subscribe email: markbowen@xsinet.co.za

Welcome to the brand new Vernacular Architecture Society's regular online bulletin!

The committee has devised this relaxed and informal forum as a means of allowing members of the Vernacs and other interested parties to interact with one another, receive notices of interesting events and to enable members to stay up to date with club activities. This forum does not take the place of the official monthly newsletter, which goes into depth about the upcoming society talks and outings. This is merely something extra which will be of benefit to all and hopefully even enjoyable!

We are aware that there are a few members who do not have access to e-mail, this is obviously unfortunate but as we're such a caring group of people I'm sure that any interesting news will filter through to them. In the meanwhile time marches on and we need to stay abreast of technology. Initially this publication will be a bit clumsy but I'm sure it will find its feet; the idea was approved at Wednesday's committee meeting and yours truly is going to be climbing a steep learning curve in putting together a readable and worthwhile publication. The idea is to keep the format simple without fancy fonts and photographs to allow for easy downloading for those with dial up internet connections. Possibly in the future we will be able to have additional information on current topics loaded onto the website where interested parties can view pictures, news clippings etc.

The bulletin will be broken down into a number of subtitles which will give it some semblance of order, these may need to be altered as time goes by.

Upcoming talk 16 June at 20:00 at the Athenaeum. Veronica Wilkinson a well known artist and writer, (and generally a fascinating person!), will be talking about the Khmer temples of SE Asia. She will be showing some amazing pictures to illustrate her talk. Please see newsletter for full details. All welcome with no charge.

Upcoming outing 27 JUNE: A HILL, A HEIGHT, A VLEI & A GIFT. We visit four 19th century farms in the southern part of the Swartland with Joanna Marx. Enquiries 021 761 6102 Members only, please see the monthly newsletter for full details.

Report back on last talk Dr Des Martin gave a fantastic illustrated talk about the buildings of Cape Town's Long Street. The audience enjoyed seeing a number of his beautiful watercolours from his book "Walking Long Street". Des sold all the copies that he had available at the talk and then some more at the outing. It really is a beautiful book and you may be able to buy a copy from Des at 021 531 8811. he had them at a special price of R130.00 which may or may change if he has to reorder from the publisher. Best to check with him and to mention that you're a Vernac.

Report back on last outing This was a follow up on the talk by Des Martin and a number of members enjoyed a memorable walk up Long Street with him and gained real insight into the beautiful architecture to be seen in this road.

Lifts offered or required to outings Drop me an e-mail if you need a lift or are offering a lift to an outing. Hopefully somebody reading this bulletin is able to assist.

DIY member outings This section of the bulletin has the potential to be great fun! The idea is for members or interested parties who are keen to do related but not official outings to meet up with others who have similar interests. An example: if a member is new to Cape Town and would love to go to the Castle with a gang of interested people, he or she drops me an e-mail, it goes in the bulletin and hopefully people respond and a fine time is had by all. Maybe you missed the Long Street outing but still want to go, set a date and time and lets see who is interested. As I say, as long as it's in our wider field of interest I'm sure many of our members will be interested and would be delighted to share knowledge and experience with others, and also to learn from others.

Interesting newspaper articles Karen Watkins, the community newspaper journalist, gave us wonderful coverage in the Tatler last Wednesday when she reported on Des Martin's talk. A half page article no less! A few weeks ago members may have seen an article in the Constantiaberg Bulletin about the old clay lined furrow that still exists in Constantia and which is being threatened by developers. This is a relic from the days of the slaves and should be a national treasure but many people are unaware of its existence. Once again

this was Karen's handiwork. I will try and get copies of these articles in digital format to share with members, sometime in the future all these types of articles should be found on our website which Yvonne Reynolds does such a sterling job of looking after. If there is someone out there with a passion for websites, please let the committee know- Yvonne is snowed under at work and any enthusiastic help would be a bargain!

Member Surveys This section allows the committee to gauge member's opinions on topics that may come up from time to time but may also allow us to determine where member's interests lay. This will be a great help in determining what sort of outings or speakers we should be arranging and who would be suited to various task teams etc

Talks by other societies and clubs that may be of interest Here we'll note anything that comes to our attention that may be of interest to our members. I'm betting that most of our members have multiple fields of interest and expertise – this is what makes us such a vibrant and attractive bunch! The first item is actually the cause for the bulletin being put together in great haste – our renowned member, DR Hans Fransen is giving an illustrated talk at the S.A. Sentrum vir Nederland en Vlaandere (voorheen Huis Der Nederlanden). I have included the full details below. I doubt that too much English will be spoken during the session but even if your Afrikaans and Dutch is a bit rusty, it is bound to be a wonderful presentation. Entry is free and it may be an idea to phone for directions if you don't know where it is. Don't phone me!! I don't know either!

Op Saterdag 6 Juni 2009 om 10:30 vm. in die S.A. Sentrum vir Nederland en Vlaandere (voorheen Huis der Nederlanden) in Pinelands 021 531 5831, Sentraalplein 4, sal kultuurhistorikus

DR. HANS FRANSEN

'n lesing met visuele toeligting aangebied oor

DIE KAAPSE SENDINGDORPE: VERGANE GLORIE?

Lank het die Kaapse sendingdorpe, soos Genadendal, Mamre, Elim en Wupperthal, getel as ons mees ongeskonde historiese omgewings. 'n Eeu of twee gelede deur sendinggenootskappe gestig as heenkome vir ontheemdes en vrygelate slawe, wat almal 'n stukkie grond langs 'n riviertjie kon kry om te bewerk, was dit tot onlangs nog idilliese oorde met hulle rye grasdakhuisies en hulle kerkwerwe met ou kerkies, pastorieë, skooltjies en watermeulens.

Al hoe meer word hierdie oorde egter deur hulle inwoners hul karakter ontnem, deels vanweë die stigma wat daar onder die dorpelinge kleef aan die ou omgewings as synde "simbolies van die verknegting van die verlede". "Modernisering" is aan die orde van die dag. Welbedoelde pogings om van die historiese skoonheid van die dorpe te bewaar – soos nog onlangs deur die Nederlandse regering op Genadendal – word met wantroue bejeën. Maar nog is dit nie te laat om van hierdie unieke omgewings tenminste ten dele vir die nageslag te bewaar nie. Vir Mamre word daar huidiglik so 'n poging beplan.

Hans Fransen se liefde vir die sendingdorpe gaan al 'n halfeeu terug, en hulle voortgaande "verloedering" is vir hom 'n groot hartseer.

Cape Town Historical Society hosts Dennis le Jeune talking about the Belgian Congo. At the Enviro Building of the SA Breweries, Boundary rd, Newlands Monday 8 June at 20.00. Call Neil Veitch on 021 762 2825.

W Cape branch of SA Archaeological Society meet on Tuesday 9 June at the SA Astronomical Observatory auditorium in Observatory at 18:00. Dr David Braun will talk about new excavations at Elandsfontein. R10.00 entry for non-members. Call Connie Feast for details 021 689 5921

Members question and answer section This is for members who have a lot of questions to ask. Especially newbies like myself! Hopefully members will share their hard earned knowledge by answering these questions, so that we can all learn. Obviously both questions and answers may have to be edited due to space requirements but let's see what transpires and play it by ear. Also I'm guessing that only one or two questions will be able to be posed per edition so don't be disappointed if you need to wait a bit.

Being the editor I get to pose the very first question!

Q 1: When I drive up Protea road in upper Claremont (going towards the mountain), I see a small white painted cottage on the left hand side of the road with a thatched roof. It is just across from the antique shop that seems to be in perpetual state of being renovated. The front door and windows appear to be new but I'm

wondering if it's an original? It's strange place to build a little thatched cottage if it's a recent build. Thanks
Mark Bowen

Any thoughts anyone?

Constructive thoughts on this bulletin will be welcome, please bear in mind that I don't want to turn this into my full time job so I need to keep it simple. Please enter into all correspondence via e-mail to this address ie markbowen@xsinet.co.za My wife, Kim, is already giving me the eye whenever the phone rings in the evening so the e-mail option is more conducive to a happy home life .

This is being called a regular bulletin but we won't commit to a definite schedule until we determine how popular the idea is. (We, being the committee of course).

Thanks for your time and all the best

Regards

Mark Bowen

Secretary for the Vernacular Architecture Society

Should you wish to **unsubscribe**, please send me a blank e-mail with the **word unsubscribe in the subject box**