VASSA OUTING TO NEWLANDS FOREST, 30 MARCH 2019

TIMBER, WATERWORKS AND THE HOMESTEAD AT PARADISE

The route takes us past the fire-fighting helicopters to the Upper Manson Road graveyard, then up to what is believed to be a VOC-period timber slide (lime plastered stone path). After that we cross over a stone-built causeway with interesting geological features and remnants of late 19th century waterworks, and onwards to the filter beds in the Fernwood Stream and the ruins of Paradise and a lookout post (c.1720-1820). This was the site of the chief forester’s home, with terraced gardens and outbuildings for horses, slaves, soldiers and woodcutters. Lady Anne and Mr Andrew Barnard stayed there for a few months in 1798. Then it’s downhill along the old wagon road all the way back to our cars, passing the derelict wood-and-iron pumphouse, Pixie Littlewort’s education centre and the public toilet.

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THE VOC POST OF PARADISE, NEWLANDS

Summary

Originally a military outpost on the frontier of European settlement at the Cape, Paradise became the home of woodcutters, soldiers and slaves. People lived there between about 1720 and 1820. The site included a homestead, outbuildings and garden that would have produced fresh foods such as fruit and vegetables and provided shelter for fowls and small stock. The buildings and the rubbish that inhabitants threw away have been rediscovered through archaeological excavations in the 1980s. Research at Paradise is by no means complete, but some of the exposed features are kept open for people to see. However, the remains are extremely vulnerable to weather and wear and tear from visitors, who should avoid walking over the site or climbing onto stone walls.

Paradise regained

Between 1980 and 1989 archaeologists from the Archaeology Department at the University of Cape Town carried out excavations at this site, known as Paradise. The excavations were part of an overall research project into Cape Town’s colonial past as well as a focused study of the architectural history of the structures on the site. Excavations at Paradise were also used to teach practical fieldwork skills to archaeology students, and for the benefit of non-archaeologists through UCT Summer School courses.

The ruined stone walls and terracing were almost completely covered in earth and vegetation when work began, but it became increasingly obvious that the building was once a substantial two-winged house. The werf of Paradise extends over a large area. The main dwelling is associated with two outbuildings, and the homestead and gardens are linked by extensive dry-stone retaining walls. Evidence was then found that indicated that the house had been substantially altered from an original T-plan to the existing H-plan. Furthermore, beneath the newly exposed front wall foundations and floors, traces of an even earlier house were discovered, occupied from about 1720. Research into the written records of the colonial period firmly identified the site with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) outpost of Paradijs, where a Company woodcutter was assigned to protect the forest and supervise timber production. (The name was apparently given to a section of the mountain that was quite easy for timber cutters to reach, whereas a deep ravine near Witteboom in Constantia Nek, was called Die Hel).
Historical background

The forested area on the flanks of Table Mountain where Paradise lies first appeared in the VOC records in 1657 as a grant to free-burgher Cornelissen, who wished to exploit the timber. He ran into trouble with the Company after serious misbehaviour and was banished from the Cape. The forest and its resources became official VOC property, and a dwelling was constructed to house a Company woodcutter, his family and slaves, and to provide facilities for a staff of soldiers and woodsmen.

The Master Woodcutter Salomon Bosch died in 1768 while still living at Paradise, and a detailed room-by-room inventory of his possessions was taken after his death. This allowed us to link the second, T-plan, house with the period of his residence at Paradise. The inventory listed a voorhuis, room to the left, room to the right, kitchen and attic. There was a stable and a ‘school room’ as well. At his death Bosch was married to a second wife, Gesina Martens, and there were altogether seven children in the family, aged between 1 and 15 years old. They owned four slaves - Anthony van Mallabaar, Baatjoe van Macassar, Bariesa van Mandaar, and her child Rebecca van de Caab aged 1½.

Lady Anne Barnard, wife of the Secretary to the first British Governor of the Cape, wrote about the house at Paradise in 1797, when it became her temporary home. By the time the Barnards moved in, however, the ravages of time and neglect by the bankrupt VOC had taken their toll. They attempted to fix the place up, but in the end only stayed a few months before building their own house, the Vineyard in Newlands. The property was sold to the Van Breda family in 1804, who farmed Boshoff and Boschbeek nearby, but the family did not need the homestead which became a farm labourer’s dwelling. When the astronomer John Herschel visited Paradise in 1836, and drew a sketch of picnickers in the ‘ruins’, the buildings were already little more than rubble. Many of the stones were removed and reused in structures elsewhere in Newlands Forest.
Architectural development

The structural history of Paradise has been archaeologically reconstituted to date from about 1720. Small broken pieces of bone, ceramics and glass remained in the ground around and above the ruins and in the fill between floors and foundations, or tucked between other architectural features. Dateable artefacts particularly useful for understanding the earlier periods of the sequence included coins, European clay tobacco smoking pipes and Asian porcelains. British Staffordshire refined earthenwares and early 19th century glass bottles were associated with the final occupation of Paradise, and indicated the site’s continuing popularity as a romantic picnic spot.

After the VOC became responsible for Paradise, a small irregular three-roomed longhouse was built, with stone foundations and carefully prepared floor surfaces (lime-plaster mixed with brick dust, flagstones or packed dirt). This dwelling was dismantled down to the level of the floors in mid-18th century. It could have burned down as the archaeologists found a layer of sooty deposit and some fire-damaged wood and other artefacts. A larger, symmetrical, T-plan house was built on top after the area was expanded and levelled by cutting back to bedrock into the hillside behind and dumping fill over the previous house. It was surrounded by cobbled surfaces and along the front was a high stoep with end-benches.
The floors that remain from front rooms in the second phase house are constructed of a layer of yellow clay laid on top of a thick levelling crust of crushed brick. The roof was thatched and the stone and brick walls were built with clay mortar, sealed with shell-lime plaster and whitewashed. Later on, the back room that formed the ‘tail’ of the main house was demolished and a three-roomed wing built parallel to the front rooms. The rooms in this wing were a tiled kitchen, cobbled-floor stable and a workshop with a raised hearth and unsurfaced dirt floor. There is evidence of a flat roof construction (thick shell-lime plaster) with clay tiles set along drainage channels.

At the same time that the T-shaped house was built, an outbuilding was constructed facing it across the werf. This dwelling was eventually expanded from the original single room to a row of four rooms. There are still the remains of a corner hearth in one room, and in another the floor is carefully paved with flagstones (probably to keep vermin from eating precious stores). The third building at Paradise, an outbuilding beside the path to the stream, has only been partly excavated. It has two rooms, one of which is a cobbled-floored stable.

Further reading


Inventory of all the possessions left by intestate deceased **Salomon Bosch**, Master Woodcutter in the service of the Honourable Company at the Post of ‘t Paradijs.

**Widow:** Gesina Martens (married 1765)

**Previous wife:** Elizabeth de Nys (married 1750)

**Children:** Anna Johanna (15), Johannes Coenraad (12), Elisabeth (10), Fredrik (8), Salomon Christoffel (6), Johannes Christoffel (2), Lodewyk (1).

**Location:** At the above-mentioned post ‘T PARADIJS

### IN THE RIGHTHAND ROOM:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sconces</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirrors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtains</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet, on which I set of porcelain and in which the clothes of the widow and children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk with its stand, in which 1 silver sugar casket</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver spoons</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver fork</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small silver preserve forks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver pocket watch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel buttons set in silver</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver pocket clip</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver tobacco box</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair silver shoes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair silver trouser buckles</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot old silver</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold neck clasp</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair gold double shirt buttons</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knife with walrus handle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold button with 1 stone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piece gold from the neck clasp</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canes with silver knobs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daggers and 1 sword with silver fittings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kist with copper fittings, in which some clothing and rummage and on which small kist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestal tables</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square tables</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacquered cabinet/writing table</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed with hangings, on which mattress</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolsters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillows</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blankets</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed (kadel) on which mattress</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillow</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloak rack</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square table</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty cellaret</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty cellaret with flasks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor vat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IN THE VOORHUIS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuckoo clock</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacquered bowls</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcelain shaving bowls</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes brushes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small mirror</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small picture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird cage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin lantern</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin box</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipe rack</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racks, on which porcelain dishes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcelain dishes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcelain plates</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot porcelain tea ware</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pewter holder with 2 glass oil &amp; vinegar jugs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper box</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various porcelain &amp; glass ware</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper chafing dish with its kettle and basin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper tray</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pewter tray</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IN THE LEFTHAND ROOM:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mirror</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
porcelain soup tureen with its lid
1 pewter tobacco box
1 pewter tea pot
1 tub with porcelain tea ware
1 drop-leaf table
1 rustbank
2 chairs

IN THE KITCHEN:
1 pot stand, on which
a food cupboard and in which
7 porcelain dishes
14 porcelain plates
2 pewter soup spoons
8 knives
10 pewter spoons
4 iron pots
2 kitchen tables
2 racks, on which
3 pewter dishes
1 pewter bowl
1 copper kettle
1 copper tart pan with lid
1 iron balance
with its copper scale
1 copper poffertjespan
3 copper coffee pots
4 copper irons
2 copper coal holders
1 copper ash shovel
1 copper fire tongs
1 copper handle of a brush
9 copper candlesticks
1 copper mortar with its pestle
4 snuffers
2 coffee mills
2 chopping boards and
2 chopping knives
1 rice block with its pestle
1 tobacco knife
1 anchor vat
1 tin box
1 cabbage grater
4 planks
4 water buckets
1 empty kist
2 copper boilers
3 iron gridirons
1 iron trivet
1 iron frying pan
1 iron ash shovel
1 iron fire tongs
3 iron chimney chains
1 cellaret with flutes
1 nappy basket

IN THE ATTIC:
7 axes
3 cleavers
1 lot carpenter’s tools
1 tin speaking trumpet
9 chairs
1 fish net
1 skittles
14 porcelain table plates
2 empty bags
1 lot empty bottles and lumber

IN THE SCHOOL:
1 table
2 cloak stands
1 halfaum with salted cauliflower
1 screen
2 beds (kadels)
4 chairs
1 joiner’s bench
1 lot carpenter’s tools

IN THE STABLE:
1 horse
1 saddle and bridle
1 empty leaguer
2 tubs
1 ladder
1 heap of barley

AT KIRSTENBOSCH:
11 chairs, 1 tea table, 1 glass cabinet, 1 pipe rack

AT NEWLANDS:
6 sacks

SLAVES:
Anthony van Mallabaar
Baatjoe van Macassar
Bariesa van Mandaar, & her child Rebecca van de Caab,
aged 1½
The so-called Mountain Cemetery at Newlands is situated on the [–] of the mountain on the south side of the road known as Manson Street, off Newlands Avenue and opposite to the Reservoir of the Cape District Water Works Company. It covers about two acres, or a little more, and is divided into two portions. The upper portion appears to be under the control of Mr. Ohlssen of the Cape Brewers, and is reserved, I am told, for the burial of workmen belonging to that undertaking, but is very rarely used. [–] said to have been originally purchased about 1879 by a sort of syndicate of working men; being first used for burial on the 4th April of that year, as to how far this may be correct I am not in a position to state.

The lower portion belongs to the executors of the late Mr. Julius Elders, proprietor of the “Bricklayers’ Arms” Hotel, Palmboom Road, Newlands, [–] consist of Mr. Manson of the Waterford Hotel, Main Road, Rondebosch, and Mr. J. Knott, coloured undertaker, of Palmboom Road. The latter gentleman, who is said recently to have been removed to Robben Island Lunatic Asylum, besides being the business manager, seems also to have had personal interest in the concern.

No records of burials taking place seem to have been kept beyond a [–ty] block plan, from which it would appear that a number of plots are [–] in the way of business by certain Cape Town undertakers, and a [–asy] pocket note-book in which, when Mr. Knott was sufficiently sober to write, disjointed memoranda concerning the burial ground and other matters of a purely domestic character were jotted down. From this and from the submissions made by Mr. Knott, it was evident that:--

(a) The larger number of interments are of bodies brought from Cape Town.
(b) A very large proportion are of infants and still-borns.
(c) Very low fees for burials are charged, the usual appearing to be 5s. [end pg8]
(d) A number of the plots appear to be the property of certain Cape Town undertakers and are used by them in the exercise of their business.
(e) No regulations or rules exist, nor are any enforced in regard to the manner of burial, the private purchaser of the plot not infrequently digging the grave and performing the burial himself, although not an undertaker.
(f) The ground is unconsecrated, and burials often take place without any religious service whatever or with only such as may be performed by the undertaker himself.
(g) The ground is more than full, old graves being obliterated and re-opened in order to provide space for fresh interments.

In addition to this the forcibly expressed opinion of at least one of the local clergymen, is to the effect that none of the persons interested in this undertaking are in any way fit and proper persons to be entrusted with the responsibility of owning and controlling a burial ground.

I may mention that from the abovementioned pocket book I ascertained that during the year ended 31st December, 1893 (excluding the month of July, for which no record seems to have been kept), there were at the least 94 bodies buried in the cemetery. Of these no less than 56 were brought from Cape Town. Of these 56, 11 were adults, 24 of children, and 21 were still-borns, and of the 24 children, no less than 9 were under a month old.

During the same year the proportion of still-borns to all burials in Maitland Cemetery was 80 out of 1,228 burials, or 6.5 per cent against 37.5 per cent in the case of the Cape Town burials in the mountain...
cemetery. In explanation of this great difference, I was informed by Cape Town undertakers that the cost of burials in the mountain cemetery is much cheaper than elsewhere. Whether this is or is not the true explanation of the difference the fact remains that the existence of an absolutely uncontrolled burial ground such as this may in the hands of unscrupulous persons provide the means for the concealment of crime.

So far as I was able I traced most of the burials coming from Cape Town to the Mountain Cemetery, and I must admit that I found that the majority had been duly registered by the undertakers at the Town House, but not all, and of those in which this omission had occurred, the bulk were of infants and still-borns.

But quite apart from the method of conducting the cemetery, there can be no doubt but that it should be closed, as it is now more than full. Also, its position near to the Reservoir is not the most suitable, although so far as I could observe, the level of the bottom of the Reservoir is not lower than the cemetery graves. The upper portion of this burial ground, or that under the control of Mr. Ohlssen, although not so full, should also be closed.

According to Pixie Littlewort:
- Mourners walked up from churches on Newlands Avenue (the old “level road”).
- The arms have been broken off some metal grave markers; to be used as tools for stripping bark.
Pixie Littlewort pointed out all sorts of fascinating cultural and natural features on our recce.

Great chunks of lime plaster are eroding out of this path. It was once a smooth strip made of stones and shell-lime plaster which extended far up into the forest, crossing over the contour track. Pixie believes it to be a timber slide for logs. The slide was previously protected by brambles, but they were eradicated as aliens and a path was opened up along part of the route. It is fragile and will soon be gone if it is not closed.

Donkeys and Spanish mules did haulage work, and their stone-built drinking troughs can still be seen. Jose Burman’s “wagon road” through the paddock along contour is not feasible for ox wagons. It would have needed cutting and filling. The road in fact ran lower down: Newlands Avenue was called the “level road”.

But the most substantial remains are those of the water works related to capturing spring and river water for properties in Newlands below, and the reticulation system associated with the Newlands Filter Beds and Reservoir. Wood and iron buildings are in a dire state; their contents long gone. Stone work is more resilient, and recent interventions also make us of stone walling and gabions.

At Stone Faced Bridge (actually a causeway) is Malmesbury shale bank. Note decomposition into red clay: elsewhere used for brick making. At foot of bank in corner with causeway are three large stones. These cover the entrance of the pipe to a reservoir that fed Newlands House, directly below. (Newlands Estate had property and water rights above the road, now part of forestry domain. Currently disputing who is responsible for maintaining the pipe under the road!)
By building a causeway instead of a bridge, there are constant problems with flooding, erosion and other damage. The repairs are done with some sensitivity and remains of previous interventions provide a sense of layered history. Bench under the tree for Charles Littlewort and Pixie’s god-daughter, of the Newlands Thompson family.

Many stone-walled features associated with water supply, and dressed stone water troughs for donkeys and Spanish mules. Near Harry’s Haunt is a spring (see two Ilex trees) and where the water crosses the Woodcutters path are stepping stones. (See Van Riebeeck’s journal and diaries for reports on going with Harry to explore mountains for timber and lookouts.)

**WATER**

The geology of the study area includes the Table Mountain Group (specifically the Peninsula Formation and Graafwater Formation); Malmesbury Group, and also the Cape Granite Suite. The main TM springs’ names are Albion Spring, Kirstenbosch Spring, Kommetjie Spring, Main Spring, Newlands Spring, Palmboom Spring, Table Mountain Spring, and Waterhof Spring. The Liesbeek River is the main drainage systems in the area, with a few smaller streams, such as from Nursery Ravine and Window Gorge.

Note that the stream water is coloured brown by the vegetation but the spring water is clear. This is very evident in Kirstenbosch, where Bird’s pool is a clear spring and the streams are brown.

There is a major geological fault which extends from beyond Constantia Nek through Kirstenbosch to Newlands. Groundwater infiltrates the cross faults and fractures in the numerous ravines on the eastern slopes of TM and Devil’s Peak. On the lower slopes the faulted rock is covered by layers of clay, sand and boulders. The clayey horizon confines the water along the fault zone line and, where the layer is thinner, the water can issue out from underground.

About seven upper springs emerge along the contour in Newlands Forest and run through summer. The Geology Department at UCT estimated the age of the spring water. It emerges below the Graafwater rocks – pinkish iron-rich layers. There used to be a water collection point and horse water troughs on a line directly below Mount Pleasant. The UCT dam is on this line. The streams run underground and form holes beneath the thick grass cover, which can be quite dangerous.

The springs of the City of Cape Town are not only a water supply resource; they are also the heritage of the city. Ownership of Albion Spring was granted in 1715. In 1889 a steam pump station was built by the Cape Town & District Waterworks Company and in 1891 the first water was pumped into the mains that fed the reticulation of Claremont, Woodstock, Mowbray and
Maitland municipalities. Newlands Spring and Kommetjie Spring were brought into use in 1885. The streams and springs also provided water to drive watermills in the mid-19th century: Cloete’s Mill Dreyer’s Mill and Letterstedt’s (Josephine) Mill. Newlands Upper Reservoir was completed in 1905. The first brewery licence was at Papenboom Spring, granted in 1694. Ohlsson’s Brewery (Cannon, Anneberg and Mariendahl) has used spring water for more than 100 years, and the breweries still do so today because of its very high quality. All beer from the South African Breweries Newlands Brewery is made from the Newlands Spring water, no municipal water is added (Porter, 2012), and the water is not chemically treated in any way before is used for beer production. The overflow of this spring is directed into the Liesbeek River, at the end of Spring Street in Newlands. Some of the water from the springs in Newlands is used to irrigate local school grounds. Albion Spring in the past had been flowing unused into the Liesbeek River but now is linked to the city’s water supplement water, occasionally pumped to a reservoir (Armstrong, 2014). The spring flowing into the river helps sustain the river’s flow, particularly in summer. The water is firstly treated and then integrated into the city’s water supply plan.

Day Zero has threatened Cape Town before. While the Molteno Reservoir was being built in the City, the acute water problem was reflected in an advertisement in The Argus in 1881, stating that: “that portion of the town at present receiving water from 08:00 to 12:00 will not receive it until 09:00 and the remainder of the town receiving it from 12:00 to 16:00 will only receive it to 15:00. Water for brickmaking, building and wool-washing is stopped”. The strictest rationing of water did not remove the fear of a “water famine” and the minutes of the various Town Councils, from Sea Point through to Wynberg and Claremont, are full of references to schemes and counter schemes, negotiations with landowners and meetings with irate ratepayers asking them to get on with the job. Despite the amalgamation (and presumably the hope of increased efficiency) of Cape Town and suburban waterworks, during the period between October 1919 and May 1920 it was necessary to shut off supplies from 12 and later to 20 hours a day – a final total of 2977 hours of water shedding.

In 1921 the Steenbras project was completed (it cost 1 252 133 pounds including the pipeline). Even during the prolonged drought of 1923, water was only restricted for a month.

See the Terence Timoney papers (in UCT Libraries Special Collections: ZA UCT BC1430) for fascinating information about Cape Town’s water supply and waterworks. He set up the Waterworks Museum next to Woodhead Dam.
Tracing of Thibault’s map of the public road to Simon’s Town, 1812
Topographical map of Table Mountain, Mountain Club of South Africa, 1908 (UCT Digital Collection).