



JOURNAL

for Friends of the
vir Vriende van die **Bartolomeu Dias Museum**

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News Letter 2011/3
Nuusbrief

WORLD AIDS DAY: 1 DECEMBER 2011

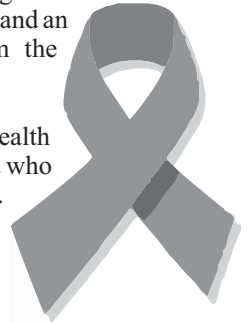


The Aids Exhibition in the Granary

Every year the Dias Museum commemorates World Aids Day as a tribute to the people whose lives were/are affected by this disease. The programme consisted of a performance by the Mossel Bay Community Band and an insightful HIV/Aids Educational talk by Sister Busch from the Department of Health.

Ms K. Jobela from the Dept of Social Development (Health Programmes) was a guest speaker as well as Mr N. Maphenduka who gave very positive input about living a normal life with HIV/Aids.

After a short moment of silence, Mr. Jonathan Kocks from the Dias Museum delivered a short prayer and the Aids Exhibition was opened by Sister Meyer.



NOBEL LAUREATES EXHIBITION AT DIAS MUSEUM

The Dias Museum was very fortunate to showcase a travelling exhibition about past South African Nobel Peace Prize Winners.

Nobel Peace Prizes are awarded to people or organizations that have made significant contributions to peace, humanitarian work, human rights advocacy, international conflict mediation, or arms control. The history of four Peace Prize laureates was displayed. The icons who played an important role in the country's transition to democracy were Albert Luthuli, Desmond Tutu, F W de Klerk and Nelson Mandela.

Chief Albert Luthuli received his award in 1960 (when he was president of the ANC). Desmond Tutu received his award in 1984 when he was Bishop of Johannesburg and F W de Klerk received his award in 1993 when he was President of the Republic of South Africa. Nelson Mandela also received his award in 1993 (when he was the leader of the ANC), said: "Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will experience the oppression of one by another."

The Dias Museum Complex is famous for its Post Office Tree, the Maritime Museum, the Shell Museum and the Caravel, but the Peace Prize exhibition added a compelling reason for visitors to visit the museum. The exhibition was taken down at the end of January 2012.

This article was compiled by Brigitte von Schutz and includes extracts from an article written by Martin Hatchuel. (Mossel Bay Advertiser, December 16, 2011)



The Nobel Laureates Exhibition



CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

CONCERTS

All concerts start at 19:30 in the Dias Museum, Mossel Bay
24 April : Minette du Toit (Mezzo Soprano) and piano by Pieter Grobler
19 May : Tygerberg Camerata Ensemble (Choir & Chamber Music)
5 June : Coady Green (Australian concert pianist)

EVENTS

27 April : Freedom Day
16 May : High School's Speech Evening Competition
19 May : International Museum Day

For more info about museum events, Tel: 044 691 1067

MANAGER'S CORNER

By Mr Mbulelo Mrubata

The third quarter of a financial year is a very interesting period because it is the end of a calendar year and the visitors start flocking to our museum in numbers. During this time of the year the weather in Mossel Bay usually is conducive for beach activities, golfing and hiking and so forth. It is arguably the period when people are willing to spoil themselves and their loved-ones. For local visitors December month is the time when most of the work places and schools close, so it is an opportune time for family members to get together. For most foreign visitors December is a period when the weather is terribly bad in most of their respective countries and that compels them to visit South Africa and towns like Mossel Bay and other parts of the country that have relatively wonderful sunny hot days.

The country's socio-economic and political stability enhances its tourism potential. Mossel Bay's strategic geographical position makes the town an ideal tourist destination as it is situated on the stunning Garden Route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Mossel Bay is by no means better than other surrounding tourist destinations as there are nice beaches at any coastal town or city. However, its history and conserved heritage resources are unique tourist attractions. This was observed as one of the reasons why our museum benefits immensely in the migration of both local and foreign visitors around the country. The comparison of this year's third quarter figures and previous ones shows that there has not been a major difference. This year our museum received 28 300 ordinary visitors during the third quarter. During the same quarter in the previous years the figures were as follows: 2008 – 30789, 2009 – 31951, and 2010 – 26357.

There was a decrease in numbers of the museum's ordinary visitors during December month. This unusual plight was presumably attributed to the sunny weather and outdoor activities that attracted more visitors. The museum's buildings were very hot inside due to the ventilation not being up to the required standard due the age of the buildings. This compelled staff members to open the emergency door and that posed a serious challenge as that exposed displayed artifacts to insects, birds, reptiles as well as theft. This high temperature also caused problems in the aquarium tanks but fortunately for the animals, staff members closely monitored the tanks. Certain exhibition objects were temporarily removed and taken to Cape Town in preparation for the museum's transformation project and some complaints were received.

One of the noticeable milestones during the month of October was the collaboration between our museum, Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, as well as Oceans-Research in organizing various activities during marine month. The museum's doors were opened for individuals and groups to organize various activities free of charge. The retired local art teacher, Ms E McIlrath displayed a children's art exhibition and also gave art lessons to street children at the Shell Museum. Nadene Smith from Oceans Aware presented “Meet the Sharks” programme to several groups of learners at the Dias Museum. Two documentary movies involving the local shark experts from Oceans-Research were shown free of charge to the public in the Granary (Dias Museum). The Marine Month function was held on the 25th of October 2011 at the Maritime Museum. In November the end of the year function for our museum's staff members was held at the Gannet restaurant. What made it special was the way it was organized, as staff members were combined with the Friends Committee, Management Committee, volunteers, interns and weekend casuals. All these people had the opportunity to mingle with one another. The event coincided with the Management Committee meeting and therefore it was graced by the presence of the Deputy Director, Mr. Dlamuka. Most of the people who attended, gave positive feedback afterwards. The museum was managed by the casuals for an hour to ensure that it was operating normally. A travelling exhibition about four South African Nobel Peace Prize Winners was installed. As the exhibition was also audio-visual, it attracted lots of visitors. Illuminating emergency signs were installed at the Maritime Museum and officials from the local Fire Department as well as General Support Service's unit of our department was impressed by the improvement they observed since their last inspection.

The major highlight during the month of December was the hosting of a strategic planning session of our museum at the Protea Hotel next door. This was the first convergence of the Friends committee members, Management Committee members, museum's management team, as well as the Deputy Director: Museum Services where the future of Dias Museum was discussed intensively. The uncertainty around the future existence of the aquarium at our museum was also discussed and the presentation by Ms. Human clearly stipulated that our aquarium is not just a luxury but a necessity as people cannot easily see the animals in the sea. The museum's transformation project was also discussed as scientists presented it and dealt with comments and questions from the floor. Another milestone was the partnership our museum managed to forge with the Department of Health, as well as Social Development Department when hosting the World Aids Day celebration. The AIDS exhibition from Alma Clinic was put up in the Granary. Finally, it can be said that this quarter was a huge success.

GENERAL NEWS

FOOD & MEDICINE FROM THE VELD



The Everlasting or "Kooigoed" plant

Helichrysum Specie

There are about 240 different kinds of species of Helichrysoms in South Africa and 600 species world wide. The South African species are distributed all over South Africa. The Helichrysum specie has different names in different cultures. Other names are "Imphepho" (Xhosa, Zulu), Everlasting (English) and in Afrikaans it is called, "Kooigoed". A "kooi" is a bed or resting place.

Helichrysum species are aromatic perennial herbs or shrubs with hairy leaves. Several species are grown as ornamental flowers. They are easy to grow from cuttings and seeds. They should be planted in well-drained soil mixed with sand. They prefer sun but can also be planted in partial shade. Some of the Helichrysum species are very popular medicinal plants like the Helichrysum petiolare and helichrysum crispum. Both plants can be seen in our Ethno-Botanical garden. The medical use often depends on local availability. It is also said that the helichrysum is more anti-inflammatory than chamomile and has more tissue regenerating properties than Lavender.

The Khoikhoi made a refreshing, health giving tea using a mixture of helichrysum species. A cup of boiling water was added to a quarter cup of fresh Helichrysum leaves and left to draw for about 5 minutes. It was taken to cure backache, mild kidney and heart diseases. It was also used for heart weakness in man and animals. It is said that it has a quieting affect on the heart. It is used for coughs and colds and for pain relief.

Smoke from burning leaves is inhaled for lung and chest pains. The leaves are used on wounds to prevent infections. Besides numerous medical uses people from all cultures loved to stuff their bedding with kooigoed to repel insects and parasites and have a good delightful night rest. The leaves are cooked and eaten in Curry's. The plants are a popular imphepho – a ritual incense. Some people believe the smoke of the burned leaves can invoke the ancestors to the ceremony and keep bad spirits at bay.

INTERESTING FACTS AND ARTIFACTS

TEMPORARY DISPLAYS

Item of the month displays continued to inspire and encourage the museum visitors to interact with our stored artefacts. The initial objective of the display exercise was once again achieved during the third quarter.

Museum visitors from various parts of the world made invaluable contribution in the comments book to assist the museum in solving the problem of lack of background information or provenance about most of our stored collections. Most of the visitors wrote positive comments in complimenting the museum for affording the members of the general public an access to backstage artefacts.

There were two objects which were displayed during the period in question (October and November months) as the museum hosted two travelling exhibitions concurrently during December month. The first item was displayed in October and was a sewing machine which was donated to Dias Museum on the 11th June 2007 by Mrs. Abrahams who resides in Dial Brand Street, Mossel Bay. She said the machine belonged to her husband Adam (Atie) Abrahams who used to work at Green and Shirley tailor shop from 1942 to 1980. The second item was displayed in November and was an electric food-mixer which belonged to Mrs I.A.R Light who purchased it in Bulawayo (Rhodesia) in 1939. She donated it to our museum on 26 April 1996. Can you perhaps help us with more information?

Contact Erna at the museum. Tel: 044 6911 067



The sewing machine that was on display



Food-mixer

MUSEUM OFFICIALS COMPLETE TRAINING

The museum is very proud of the Education staff of the museum because they all completed their training to present all the museum's school Education programmes. All these programmes are curriculum-based, meaning that the content corresponds with the teachers' classwork. This is very important for the teachers because they know that the museum's lesson adds to the learners' learning experience. All the programmes boast powerpoint presentations, worksheets and hands-on experiences for the learners.

Extensive training was presented by Mr Barry Jooste of Museum Scientific Service : Education. He is based at the Dias Museum and responsible for museum Education programme development in the Southern Cape/Karoo region.

The relevant staff's training comprised of classroom presentation techniques, class discipline, content familiarity, powerpoint presentation skills and practical training.

To increase the effectiveness and authenticity of the training, it was completed using the visiting learners.



Ms Janette Hermanus, Mr Barry Jooste and Ms Connie Domingo

All our programmes are well-attended by all our local and visiting schools with educators commenting very highly, as seen on the teacher feedback forms.

When the learners arrive they are divided into groups and seated in the education centre. The reason for groupwork is to teach the learners to work together to solve a specific problem or question. Each group's correct answers are recorded on a huge poster for them to see their progress. They all want to be the winning group at the end of the programme as there is always a small prize for them to win.

After the powerpoint lesson they have a short break and return for the completion of the worksheets. The fun part starts after this when they exit the centre for their practical session of the lesson. At half past eleven they return for the prize giving and sadly at twelve they depart back to school.

A huge thank you again to the **Garden Route Casino Community Fund** for sponsoring the transport of the schools to the museum and back to school again!

ANGLO BOER WAR BLOCKHOUSES



Anglo-Boer War blockhouse in Cloete's Pass situated lower down the pass

In the 1900's several blockhouses were erected on passes in the Outeniqua mountains. They were built by either the Mossel Bay Town Guard or the District Mounted Force. The objective was to prevent Boer Commandos from infiltrating the coastal areas of the region. Little is known about the history of these little forts as the Anglo Boer War archival records were sent to London where they were apparently later destroyed to make place for more recent records. These small loop-holed blockhouses were only about 4m x 5m with a height of about 2m. It is not known whether they were roofed. They were situated in the following areas;

1. Spitskop Pass – Two blockhouses some 100m Apart – North facing down the Pass
2. Attaquas Pass – one blockhouse facing down the pass towards Oudtshoorn
3. Cloete's Pass – three blockhouses facing down the pass towards the Klein Karoo.