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Museum dedicated service: Nonqane from 1977 - 2010



Silent Farewell for Mr Nonqane

By Zongezile Matshoba

Cecil Basi Nonqane retired quietly from the museum at the end February 2010.

Donation collected from the museum staff was used to buy him lovely gifts and a framed collage. The museum also sponsored a two-day at Haylard Hotel in Port Alfred with his wife.

Surprised and humbled by the gesture, Nonqane conceded that Albany Museum is next to his heart. "I have worked in all the sections and met all kinds of supervisors," he said. "Albany Museum helped me to develop and become what I am today with my family. Without it I could not have had my five kids".

Nonqane joined the museum as a laboratory assistant in 1977. He rose up the ranks to become an Assistant Director. When Dr Lita Webley left in 2008, he acted as a Director for nine month until Bongani Mgjijima, the new Manager took up the position.

the free service of their expertise. This is a tremendous service to the whole community as the museum is the only organization housing the comprehensive collection of insects between Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg along the coastal region and to Bloemfontein inland", the website reported.

The Grocott's mail also reported the Municipal Manager Ntombi Baart saying that the civic awards are not a competition, but "are awarded to those citizens who have done sterling work for the betterment of the community without expecting anything in return."

Despite their retirement, the Gesses continue to give their time and effort to the Museum and their specialised field of research, Aculeate Hymenoptera. They are both contract researchers in the Department of Entomology. This is made possible by the generous funds from the National Research Foundation.



Dr Fred and Sarah Gess win Civic Award

By Zongezile Matshoba

Drs Fred and Sarah Gess won the Makana-Capitec Civic Award for the Environmental Conservation & Tourism Category. Their nomination by Marijke Lewis and Dr Ferdy de Moor also caught them by surprise. They missed the official awards ceremony held at Noluthando Hall in Joza on Saturday, 12 December 2009 as they were on a field trip.

The Makana Municipality website reports that the Executive Mayor, Cllr Vumile Lwana values their international community service and their contribution to environmental conservation and tourism, which spans over 40 years.

"They are still able to generate funds to continue to research, to increase knowledge and still add to the collection of insects both by bringing in specimens and by providing

Museums remembers Mandela's release 20 years ago

By Zongezile Matshoba



Nomonde Sibawu, Cathy Lambley, Fleur Way-Jones and Nozipho Madinda celebrated with hundreds of primary and high school learners the 20th Anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Mandela spent 27 years in jail, only to come out on 11 February 1990 to be the first Black State President of South Africa.

Sibawu dealt with consequences that led to former State President F W de Klerk to make the pronouncement on 02 February 1990 that Mandela will be released unconditionally. Mandela has refused P W Botha's conditions.

"Violence in the townships, consumer boycotts, and international sanctions were some of the reasons that made de Klerk to feel the internal and external pressure," said Sibawu.

Some white business people also secretly went out to Zambia to meet the African National Congress.

A BBC film titled: Mandela – the Legend was also shown. In the movie, Mandela talks of why he hated Apartheid and why he fought for freedom for all.

"They wore suits, looking very good outside, yet inside they were dirty," Mandela said, referring to the Nationalist Party leaders.

Lambley taught the primary section why 11 February 2010 is a special day.

"Mandela is good person. He loves children and old people. He believed everyone should be free and treated as equal," Lambley said. The young ones were also asked to colour a South African flag.

Madinda took the learners through the Mandela Luthuli's Making Peace Exhibition which runs up to the end of July 2010.

Helen James, who has discovered over 13 distinct species, shared her expertise with other scientists, teachers and learners during the 2010 Scifest Africa Festival. Her first show about "When is a species a species?" on 24 March was sold out. What a surprise and shock for James to hear that! She was making her first ever debut at the festival, and her show was one of the opening shows on the opening day. It received rave reviews from the local and national media.

James is an Assistant Curator in the Freshwater Invertebrates Department. Dr Ferdy de Moor, curator of the FWI introduced her curator and chaired the session.

Education exchange info with PGCE By Zongezile Matshoba



Cathy Lambley, Nozipho Madinda and Theunis du Toit met the Rhodes University's Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students to inform them about the Museum Education, Mobile Museum and Taxidermy.

The intention was to expose the students to museum teaching. They were given the annual museum education booklet which states programmes on offer, as well as the bookings system.

Madinda told the students about the value of focus weeks. Rhodes University lecturers, such as Prof Eddie Baart and other professionals like the police often come to teach learners of all grades about a variety of things.



Museum Educationists: PGCE students enriching themselves about what museum education entails.

A species?

By Zongezile Matshoba



A species? Helen during her sold Scifest Africa talk

"Amakhosa Foodways are exceptional, so I ensure that I dress in traditional attire," she said. Learners are taught amaXhosa culture and way of living. Traditional food such as umgqusho, umvubo, and isigwamba are cooked to be enjoyed by learners. Madinda also mentioned the role of the mobile museum which strives to reach disadvantaged farm and rural schools, and showed them the mobile bus sponsored by Grahamstown Rotary Club.

Du Toit explained the process of making and maintaining artefacts for the museum. "Taxidermy is like art, matching colours is very important," he said. He emphasised the importance of cleaning and caring for the skin of an animal.

Lambley touched on the booking process and its importance. Schools that have booked earlier have a much better chance of getting lessons on offer. Up to 40 learners are accommodated for a variety of interactive lessons that take about an hour. "Children are further exposed to exhibition space by having additional lessons on galleries," Lambley concluded.

Proper preparation, creativity and reaching to the level of learners are vital, the PGCE students were told.



Tiles Donated to a farm school By Zongezile Matshoba

Cecil Nonqane spent his last days on field trips, outreach programme and community service. He accompanied Mobile Museum Service to donate hundreds of blocks of wooden tiles on 25 February 2010 to —, a farm school in —.

Nonqane told —, the principal and community members that it is not for the museum to give. Its main purpose is to collect and keep things donated by communities.

The principal thanked Albany Museum for caring for farm schools.



Community outreach: Mobile Museum Service donating tiles on behalf of the museum

"We are glad to notice that there are people and place out there that still care for us, thank you", she said.

Museum teach learners about Egazini By Zongezile Matshoba



Education and Mobile Services Departments assisted DSRAC and Makana Municipality in taking the Egazini Project to school learners. Zandisile Sakata from Cacadu DSRAC District to learners on the first day, 03 March for a tour of Egazini and Makana's Kop. The story of Makana was retold. On the second day, the learners were requested to tell their stories about Makana and Egazini in writing and art. Sakata was assisted by Cathy Lambley and Nozipho Madinda.

The Makana Municipality is planning to build a multi-purpose Egazini Memorial Precinct soon. The learners were required to say what their vision of the centre is.

The Battle of Grahamstown and Anglo-Boer War retold to foreign students By Nomonde Sibawu



It was quite exciting on a Saturday morning of 23 January 2010 to be tasked by Fleur Way-Jones to teach an international

Battling ideas: St Olaf students engaged in the ins and outs of the Battle of Grahamstown



group of 25 students. Cecil Nonqane taught them the Xhosa lifestyle, and Way-Jones taught them the history of the Settlers. The students asked prepared set of questions, to unfold or to give a critique of the battle.

It was a great challenge! It started with the praising of Makhanda kaNxele for having united AmaXhosa, his leadership style and braveness. The students asked the pros and cons of the battle.

Nxele was a left-handed person with unique characteristics. This can also be related to difficulties of teaching a left-handed child writing skills.

Hypothetically, Nxele should have asked the international community to intervene. This argument is based on the fact that when taking people to war one should see to it that there was formal training undertaken. One has to see first that the medical condition of his troops is conducive to the hardship of war. There is no account indicating that the AmaXhosa were

medically fit for the war. It is also imperative to know that Nxele should have known that Britain was a super naval and military country in those years. He should have also considered other options rather than making war as the only option. British soldiers were undoubtedly in an advantage position for they had all the resources to cope with the war such as good diet, medical benefits and formal training. One cannot become a soldier overnight, without any skills.

There were many similarities between the Anglo- Boer War and The Battle of Grahamstown. Both were the watershed moments in the history of South Africa. The Anglo-Boer War was between white and white (Afrikaner versus English). It was fought in four phases: semi-conventional, conventional, the Buller and the Guerrilla phases. Another similarity is the involvement of women during the battle. During the Battle of Grahamstown, for example, Elizabeth Salt tried by all means to deceive the black people. Britain exploited the weak

point of AmaXhosa culture - that you never harm any man's wife. It was a British strategy to deceive the enemy. With the Anglo-Boer War, there was the involvement of women in concentration camps and the British used AmaXhosa women during the war in a non-combatant capacity. Black women cooked for the British soldiers and even washed their uniforms. It meant that in order for the British soldiers to perform effectively, they needed the support of black women. Black people were even used as spies by British soldiers. Black men were left behind to take care of the farms of the Boers whilst they were busy with the war. Nonetheless black participation in the war is never mentioned.

Another similarity between the battle and the war is that Boer generals were not military leaders in the traditional sense of the word. They had little, if any, theoretical knowledge of war and had no formal military training. Officers were democratically elected according to Boer law. What was common was that both Boer and the AmaXhosa had good ideals to safeguard their heritage and land. They merely wanted to safeguard what belonged to them.

One learns that from the battle that a war cannot be won on defensive strategy alone. Offensive action is also a pre-requisite. Needless to say that AmaXhosa military system was different from that of the traditional European armies. One doubts if they did employ their forces including artillery and fight battles according to the conventional military doctrines of the day. Rather they had an uncanny instinct for fighting with a common sense approach that more often than not paid off remarkable dividends.

Nevertheless Nxele deserved applause for being so brave.

AmaXhosa were in an advantage though limitations were technical. It is good to learn from the Battle of Grahamstown that strategic planning is very imperative when one wants to embark on war. AmaXhosa knew the terrain very well but their weakness was

to waste the opportunities availed to them.

On the other hand, the Boers should not have lost momentum if they wanted to defeat the British. They should have destroyed the infrastructure of Britain too. The international community should have put pressure on Britain, and even impose sanctions on Britain which is always a non-violent tool.

In conclusion, it is clear that a lot has been said but also a lot has been glossed over about the battle of Grahamstown.

A Day at the Observatory Museum 29 March 2010

By Fleur Way-Jones



Clocks and timing: Scifest 2010 taught learners about calendars and clocks

Can you believe that at one stage this workshop was in danger of cancellation? The presenters waited patiently and then suddenly the workshop was booked out by the Upstart group of local learners who are of Mrs Shareen Badat's young journalism programme runs an insert in *Grocott's Mail*. The students from Nombulelo, Ntsika and Mahlasela High Schools and Graeme College were the participants for the day.

The student programme started with a bang as they were introduced to time and rhythm in linear and African music. Dr Cynthia Schmidt from Rhodes Music Department spoke about rhythms in the body, heartbeats, walking, even speaking. Grant Mears

used the drums to show counter rhythms and everyone clapped in two opposing rhythms. Hilton Borerwe demonstrated on the marimbas about the African rhythms and how the community contribute to music by playing, singing or dancing. So they did all of that and they discovered some stars among the group who could hardly be parted from the marimbas and drums to enjoy their refreshments.

Then with the introduction of a quiz about time, it was the turn of Mr Brian Clarke (ex-Fort Hare University) to show how a sundial helps to check the time and the difficulties with northern hemisphere sundials in this area and the adjustments that need to be made. Finally we heard about the Norwegian and Xhosa calendar with its links to agriculture.

Just before the lunch break the learners were taken on a tour of the museum by the curator and they listened intently so that they could answer the Treasure Hunt and find the various musical instruments, the clocks, the gramophones, etc. Then they joined Duncan Greaves, well known photographer from Foto First, who gave a demonstration of how to "fix" an image. Various fantastic pictures were designed by the students by dipping ear buds into vinegar and drawing the design on exposed light sensitive paper – one student drew an artwork; others sketched hearts and names. Various cameras and old photographs shown by the curator, added a bit of history to exercise.

The group divided into two and went to Dr Ingrid Marais of Dr Davies Optometrist to hear about the latest eye care and view the eyewear while the curator showed the various stages in the development in spectacles. Students then had fun identifying the types of spectacles in the mystery boxes. Who can forget one student wearing 19th sun-glasses with flexible visors, looking strangely like a rapper! They distinguished between lorgnettes, monocles, rimless pince-nez and gold-rimmed spectacles with strange curved arms. Some old spectacles suited the

learners perfectly. So with all that knowledge and a bit of fun, the learners left the museum knowing something about physics, music, photography and optometry.

Fleur Way-Jones is the Curator of History Museum

Education Department and Mobile Museum Services Developments By Zongezile Matshoba



The last six months has seen a lot of changes to our Education Department. Marijke Cosser-Lewis sadly bade farewell and retired as HoD. Her replacement, Cathy Lambley, took over in November 2009. The Education Department was also split to accommodate the Mobile Museum Services, as a separate department. This is now run by HOD - Ms Nozipho Madinda. A few of our highlights:-

the Grocott's Mail Then and Now

Exhibition, which saw many learners visiting the museum in 2009. The exhibition also ran an exciting education programme from May through to July, facilitated by Nozipho Madinda, Zongezile Matshoba and Gxekwa Khululwa. Our figures for January through to July reflect the ongoing support we receive from learners and teachers. The department is especially grateful for the kind assistance received from museum staff, Rhodes lecturers and individuals from the community who take time out of their precious schedules to run the popular FOCUS WEEK programmes.

Alongside this, the Luthuli/Mandela Making Peace Exhibition has also generated much interest amongst our local community. Madinda has been actively involved in the running of the education programme.

Another exciting programme facilitated by the education department was 67 Minutes for Mandela Day. Cosser-Lewis, Madinda and Matshoba were actively involved in organizing this programme which saw clothing donations distributed to Manley Flats and Wilsons Party Farm School, in July 2009.

In 2010, The Mobile Museum Services was actively involved in running a teachers training workshop for local and farm schools, dealing with the role of the museum in community education. A collection of wooden tiles was donated to Carlisle Bridge farm school by the Museum.

Madinda attended Library Week in April at Chris Hani District to market education at the Museum. Both the Lambley and Madinda attended the regional SAMA Conference held in March at the Olive Shreiner Museum in Cradock. Madinda presented a paper about Mandela Day and Lambley, presented a paper on Reflexive Museum practice citing the exhibition Declassification – as way of example.

2010 also saw a two day workshop celebrating the day Mandela was set free from captivity. This ran from the 18th – 19th of February and involved Victoria Girls High and Nathaniel Nyaluza as well as learners from Ntaba Maria.

A two day Heritage Workshop was conducted by Makana Heritage Solutions looking at the development center in Joza, and the involvement of the of a youth.

As usual, the Education staff assisted with showing learners various sections of the Museum both in 2009 and in 2010. In addition to this, the Education Department has become more involved in developing education programmes to assist the Exhibitions Department.

2010 has seen the development of the Education Department's Special Programme – which includes a monthly Bedtime Stories activity for learners at the museum on Saturday evenings. This outreach programme has included children from Eluxolweni Shelter.

Albany Museum In Media



Civic awards recognise unsung heroes

(Grocott's Mail, 15 December 2009)

In the Environmental Conservation and Tourism category (Makana/Capitec civic awards), Drs Fred and Sarah Gess won the award in absentia.

A night at the Museum

(Grocott's Mail, 12 March 2010)

A night in the Museum, inspired by a popular film, was held at the Albany Museum on Saturday evening.

Every creature great and small

(SciCue, Edition 1, 24-25 March 2010)

Helen James draws on her study of mayflies and other insects to outline how the differences and links between various organisms are important to understanding biodiversity and ecology.

Getting to the Pointe

(Mail & Guardian Online, 24 March 2010)

This year the Talkshops are being held in Grahamstown's 1820 Settlers Monument ground floor art gallery and kick off at 10am on March 24 with freshwater biologist Helen James's lively discussion "When is a species a species?"

Speaking about species at Scifest

(Grocott's Mail, 26 March 2010)

Biologists have been baffled by it. It's a fundamental question that they have been asking for a long time, and the discussion continued with Helen James at this year's Scifest Africa, when she asked the question: when is a species a species?

If these quilts could talk

(Grocott's Mail, 26 March 2010)

Marsha Macdowell and Kurt Dewhurst visited Grahamstown last week to see the 1820 Settlers quilt collection at the Albany Museum.



Albany Museum in Pics



Clockwise from top-left:

Volunteering benefit: Khululwa Gxekwa taught plant specimen mounting by Tony Dold of the Selmar Schonland Herbarium

Nomthunzi Api from Athropology assisting in Education during one of the Focus Weeks, AmaXhosa Way of Life.

Alive or dead: PGCE students learn all about taxidermy and animal artefacts from Theunis du Toit

SAMA time: Nozipho Madinda, Cathy Lambley and Fleur Way-Jones all delivered papers during this year's SAMA Eastern Cape Conference held at Cradock's Shreiner House.



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