

THE DROSTDY MUSE NEWS



Volume 1, Number 1

23rd August 2004

Newsletter comes alive

The best museum in the world with the finest collections could remain the best-kept secret without publicity and communication. The aim of this newsletter is to share with colleagues, other museums, and the general public news of developments and events at the Drostdy Museum, Swellendam. For staff the newsletter provides an opportunity to showcase their work and interests, and share ideas. This is the first edition in the new series, and we hope to bring you a variety of interesting items in each issue. We look forward to your feedback!

Museum Dutch clock chimes again!



The Drostdy Museum is the proud owner of a Dutch long-case clock in walnut veneer. The dial is decorated with a depiction of Amsterdam with oscillating ships in the foreground. It also carries the date and reflects the phases of the moon. Sadly this beautiful clock was not in running order for some time. But before we continue the story of our clock, some background on the history of such timepieces might be useful.

Clocks were developed as practical conveniences to keep accurate time, and also as articles of fine furniture. The earliest mechanical clocks date back to the 13th century and were set in the bell towers of churches to sound the hours. The earliest domestic clocks were similar structures on a smaller scale.

An important development in the 17th century was the introduction of the long-case clock, which stood on the floor; the mechanism being mounted on a tall wooden case inside which hung the weight. During the second quarter of the 18th century the long-case clock

reached the peak of its development. Amsterdam, an important commercial centre in the 18th century, became a significant focus for the clock-making industry.

Our own museum clock was donated by Mr Barnard Isaak Christiaan van Eeden in 1951. It was previously part of the Fairbairn collection. When Mr Patrick M Bellème, a horologist from Time Machine in Knysna visited the museum recently, he offered to restore the clock free of charge. On Monday 9th August 2004 the mechanism and dial were returned to the museum and installed in the case. The clock is now in perfect running order, the ships oscillate and the hours chime musically through the building. Do yourself a favour - pay a visit to the Drostdy to see this very special timepiece ticking away the hours.

Voluntary work such as this is invaluable to the museum and the people of Swellendam, through whose dedication and support the museum came into being in the first place. Such ongoing support is needed to guarantee the Drostdy's future.

Tizzie Mangiagalli

Who does what?

You could visit the museum any day of the week and be impressed by the different activities that carry on daily without fuss or bother. There is always a friendly face to welcome you in the museum shop, you might encounter gardeners pruning roses in the Mayville sunshine, at the Trades Yard or Ambagswerf you might find men baking bread in the miller's house, and someone doing tin work in the

old smithy. Not to mention the well-informed and helpful staff who act as guides in the Drostdy and Mayville.

The running of the museum is a combined effort directed by the Museum Manager, Tizzie Mangiagalli. But without the co-operation and enthusiasm of the staff, none of it would happen. The museum structure comprises four divisions: Finance & Admin, which is currently headed by Ronel Vosloo who is acting in this position, Public Programmes & Collections, catered for by Jomien Havenga, the Artisan Foreman post is now vacant, but there are four artisans in the museum's employ. The grounds are looked after by three groundsmen led by JJJ Slingers. You will meet all these talented and hardworking staff members in the pages of future issues of the Muse News.

Must see porcelain exhibition!

During the month of September visitors to the museum will be able to view an exhibition of a stunning 13-piece cobalt ware dinner service.

In the 1850's cobalt ware was both popular and fashionable. The predominant cobalt blue in this Staffordshire ware comes from the mineral cobalt, which was imported from Saxony. Eastern potters first made use of cobalt more than 600 years ago, and potters in the west then began to imitate Chinese export ware. In England the colour was commonly applied by hand painting to tin, and later to English porcelain.

This particular museum exhibit is startling in its beauty, and was

bequeathed by Miss K Taute of Molenrivier in June 1965.

You will be able to find the exhibit in the small room adjoining the museum shop.

Funny, but true...

A small boy was brought on a visit to the museum by his parents. After they had viewed most of the exhibits, the mother asked her son if he would like to write something in the visitors' book. Painstakingly in a childish hand he wrote his entry - 'Very nice, but too old!'

Events at the Drostdy in August

August 23rd - Members of the Swellengrebel family, who live in Holland, will be paying a visit to the town named after their forbears. They will also visit the museum.

August 25th -Hetta van Deventer, Cape Gourmet award winning chef, will be presenting her winning menu to special guests at Zanddrift. The function will be attended by VIP guest Christine Cashmere, who will present the award at a ceremony in the Drostdy before the meal.

August 27th - Swellendam's ACVV has arranged the launch of the new MER biography by Prof JC Steyn. The author and Miemie Rothmann, well-known member of Drostdy museum staff and MER's granddaughter, will attend the launch.

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment. - Dorothy Nevill

Die Brandnetel

Dit maak nou nie saak hoeveel ons sry nie maar dit is `n feit wat staan soos `n paal bo water dat ons lewensstyle veel te wense oorlaat. Jig, Artritis, ensomeer, hou dikwels verband met ons eetgewoontes. Vanslewe se mense het van beter gewee en voorkomend "geëet". So `n jaar of ses gelede het `n kliënt Brantnetel gesoek maar, helaas, ons het nie gehad nie. Toe onse Miemie egter aan die begin van die jaar verklaar dat sy nou op brandnetel-tee is en leesstof begin aandra, het ek gewee dat dié onkruid aandag moet geniet. Die Brandnetel met die Botaniese naam *Urtica dioica*, is ook in Sotho bekend as *Bobatsie* en *Umbabazane* in Xhoza.

So lank terug soos 23-78 nC is deur Pliny van die wonderlike medisinale kwaliteite van die brandnetel geskryf. Navorsers het selfs gedurende die Yster-tydperk tekens van die bestaan daarvan gevind. Lank gelede reeds het die Romeine en die Grieke dit gebruik om die simptome van rumatiek te verlig.

Die aangetaste dele is met die brandnetel geslaan sodat dit rooi en opgehewe raak om die bloedsirkulasie te verbeter en sodoende die onsuierhede te verwyder. Nog `n interesantheid is dat die vesel vir die maak van kledstof gebruik is en gedurende die Eerste Wêreldoorlog is dit as plaasvervanger vir katoen gebruik.

Siestog, van mooi, sal `n mens die plantjie nie beskuldig nie, dus is dit van geen waarde vir die tuin nie

maar, is uitstekend as metgeselplante in die groentetuin. Dit is `n eenjarige plant, van mediumhoogte, en kom oral in die gematigde streke van die wêreld voor. Dit het `n sterk wortelstelsel en dofgroen blare wat bedek is met stekelrige haartjies wat die "brand" veroorsaak. Die wollerige, groen blommetjies is of manlik of vroulik en word aan verskillende plante gedra. Dit word deur die wind bestuif en blom vanaf Junie tot September. Waar dit groei, is die grond vrugbaar en verklap dit die teenwoordigheid van stikstof. Dit is nodeloos om te sê dat dit uitstekende kompos maak.

Toenterjare het die plattelanders gereeld bosse brandnetels na die stedelinge geneem en vir hul "lente-ontgiftigingsdiët" verkoop. Wanneer ons kom by ekseem, stabilisering van bloedsuiker, lewer en nierprobleme, allergië, en bloedarmoede, is die outjie voor in die koor vir doeltreffendheid. Vir `n moeë brein wat vergeetagtigheid veroorsaak, kan dit ook verligting bring. Ek wonder of dit sal help vir die befoeterdheid van base ook? Wanneer die brandnetel in kookwater gedompel of droog gemaak word, sal dit nie meer brand nie. So vier handevol blomme en blare, geweek in `n liter kookwater, deugesyg, (botter-neteldoek sal doen) `n wynglas vol 3 maal per dag geneem, sal die simptome verlig, selfs opklaar. `n Wynglasie vol van die volgende mengsel, geneem een maal per dag, is gewaarborg om die bloed skoon te maak. `n Koppievol blommetjies en sade moet op 2 koppies wyn getrek en daarna deugesyg word. Les bes kan ons verklaar dat die

hele plant uitstekend vir `n voetbad is.

`n Opgehoopte handvol gewaste wortels en `n dubbele handvol blare en stingels word oornag in 5 liter geweek. Die volgende môre kan dit tot kookpunt verhit en 2 tot 3 keer gebruik word.

Die jong sprietjies en blare maak `n heerlike dis wat soos spinasie smaak. Voeg dit by soppe en bredies, sit voor en wag vir die komplimente. Dit is ook een van die wêreld se chlorofielrykste plant en behoort veel meer geëet te word. Daar is min of geen ander plante wat net so ryk aan minerale en vitamies is nie. `n Beter getuigskrif kan ek dié Aspoesterplantjie nie gee nie. Daarby kan ons nog voeg dat beeste en varke dit ook voortreflik as groenvoer vind. Die museum het nie nou Brandnetels nie maar, vanaf Augustus sal daar weer wees en hierdie jaar gaan ons dit droog sodat dit altyd beskikbaar sal wees. `n Mens behoort dit in gesondheidswinkels ook te vind.

Museum wysheid: "Anything loving that we do or think contributes to the healing of humanity."

Jomien Havenga

Look out for the next issue of the Drostdy Muse News and remember to promote and conserve South Africa's diverse heritage.

Till next time -

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