



GSSA Cemetery Recording News

Vol 6 No 3 – September 2008

Welcome

What would we do without all the tireless volunteers who spend their spare time plodding around cemeteries, large and small, in order to enlarge the Project's database? Some of our colleagues in the farming areas go cemetery-crawling, literally 'armed to the teeth' with picks and spades, axes and saws, to remove the undergrowth and vegetation that has encroached on sadly-neglected grave sites. And to what purpose? So that other genealogists and the genealogists and family historians of the future may have access to the data so collected. So that this information is not lost to posterity.

The good news is that the database has just passed the 300 000 mark. I do believe a vote of thanks to our Database Co-ordinators, Peter and Beverley, is definitely in order.

Contributors & Volunteers

Still on the increase, it can never be said that we have enough volunteers. It is always exciting to see an e-mail from a previously unknown person, enquiring as to whether we would be interested in the recordings they have made, or in the photos they have taken.



In the Heroes' Acre, Pretoria West Cemetery. Second President of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek. Courtesy: John Schwartz

The following new contributors' activities are mentioned in the Country-wide Round-up, among the many stalwarts of the past: Peter Dickson, Christo Heyman, Brian Kaighin, Martin Knoetze, Ariel Rudolph, Vaughan Holmes, Mieder Viviers, Anita Slabbert and Janet Melville.

Country-wide Round-up (Period 08.07.2008 to 30.09.2008)

To say 'Thank You' sounds inadequate and repetitive, but these two simple words are perhaps the only way of expressing our appreciation for the continuing contributions made by the many researchers from the four corners of our beautiful country. Without you there would be no Project.

- Amanda van Blerk of the Clarens-Fouriesburg district of the South-Eastern Free State has submitted details of 34 farm cemeteries (140 names) in the Bethlehem, Fouriesburg, Clarens areas. **(Ed: Amanda forwards records to Peter and photos to Alta Griffiths, who heads up the Cemetery Headstone Photos Project of the eGSSA Branch.)**
- Mieder Viviers of Kleinfontein (50 km east of Pretoria) sent in photos of 4 farm cemeteries.
- Christo Heyman photographed the Voortrekker graves near Ohrigstad and submitted them to eGSSA. **(Ed: Apparently this is still an active cemetery.)**
- Peter Dickson, one of our new contributors, has been quietly working his way through the Middelburg, Mphumalanga old cemetery records, and has provided us with an astounding 3026 names. **(Ed: His story appears elsewhere in this Newsletter.)**
- Willeen Olivier, 'n ou bekende, het ons van fotos van Berg-en Dal 378, Distrik Balfour asook, Bospoort 4 en Glengary 285, voorsien. Addisioneel het sy 'n total van 129 fotos van Ratsegaaiskraal, Boschpoort 253 (Boschpoort) en Treurfontein 73 (Coligny), almal in die Lichtenburg Distrik,voorsien.
- Six graves at Papkuilsfontein, near Anysberg, were discovered by Anita Slabbert; she is now busy with the Beaufort West cemeteries.
- Adrian Moss has recorded Rietfontein 189, Muldersdrift – 104 names
- Brian Kaighin of the Ladysmith Historical Society has kindly provided us with 178 names from the British War Memorials in the Naval Cemetery at Elandslaagte, District Kliprivier, Kwazulu-Natal.
- Martin Knoetze seems to be traversing the Magaliesberg – he has submitted one recording from the Pilanesberg Nature Reserve, District Mankwe and 96 from the Cullinan District of Gauteng, namely Bynespoort 335, Premier Mine Game Farm and Elandsfontein.
- Fanie “Blikkies” Blignaut keeps the northern Free State ticking over: his contribution was blocks A, B, C, E, and Jewish B of the Old Parys Cemetery, a total of 640 names.
- Derek Walker has added 10 names to the records for the Turffontein Concentration Camp Cemetery, as well as photographing the Brakpan War Memorial and the Modderfontein (Zuurfontein) Memorial.
- A new contributor from the Eastern Cape, Vaughan Holmes, has provided us with the names from 31 headstones in the Mount Ayliffe Cemetery in the Eastern Cape. In addition he has arranged access with Mr Ndaba, the keeper of the Mthatha (Umtata) records.
- Johan Pottas has been busy of late, submitting data of 1078 names from the headstones and burial registers of the Main cemetery, Trompsburg, as well as 9 names from the NGK’s Wall of Remembrance, Trompsburg, and 63 from the Main cemetery, Waterkloof, District Philippolis. In addition, Johan has logged 4 cemeteries from the Petrusville, Dist. Philipstown, Northern Cape with a total number of 465 names.
- The district of Montague in the W Cape has seen newcomer David van der Merwe doing a revision of one cemetery of 21 names and the addition of Bergheim (2).

- John Schwartz identified 35 names of a memorial of the Boer War Cemetery on Long Island, District Bermuda in a book, “Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda”, written by Colin Benbow and printed by The Bermuda Historical Society. (Ed: Andy Bermingham of this Society kindly gave his permission that we could reproduce any part of the said book, and assured us that Colin Benbow would be totally in agreement.)
- Kruisementfontein 81, Viljoensdrif, Dist Sasolburg (6) and Khadie 1309 (4) in the same area has been lodged by Peter Moss. Together with Beverley, Peter has recorded the British Military Cemetery at Rietfontein 485, Hartebeestpoort, Dist Brits – 147 names.
- Thanks also to Paxie Kelsey who is assisting Willeen Olivier with the transcription of her recordings.
- Ockert and Sasa Malan are still going strong – (Ed: It would seem they combined their recording with viewing the flowers in the Cedarberg.) Biedouw 536, Welbedacht 139, Zanddrift 152 and Uitspankraal 28 – all farms in the Biedouw Valley, Dist Clanwilliam, W Cape – provided a total of 24 names, while Tassans Kuil 253, Velddrif, Dist Piketberg, W Cape rendered a further 9. Also submitted by this husband/wife team was Roodepoort 75, Loskopdam, Dist Middelburg, Mphumalanga – 10 names.
- An updated recording of Zaaillager, Estcourt, KZN was completed by newcomer Ariel Rudolph..
- Another newcomer, Janet Melville, has completed the recording of the Main Cemetery in Tarkastad (1332 names) as well as the War Memorial in Tarkastad (42)
- A single grave in East Road, Morningside, Johannesburg was discovered and recorded by Sonja van Eden – Veldkornet F C Esterhuizen. Submitted by Alan Buff.
- No Newsletter would be complete without a mention of Alta Roux. This time she has been far from her usual haunts, recording the headstones and register of the Main cemetery in Olifantshoek, Dist Postmasburg, N Cape (906 names) as well as Vrolikheid Noord (7) and Suid (6) in the same town.

Cemetery CD

CD6 (All transcribed recordings up to 24th November 2007) is still available from André Heydenrych at aheydenr@mweb.co.za. Cost is R90,00 for a first-time buyer and R60,00 for members who have purchased previous issues.

Branch News

Good News! The Western Cape has a new person to steer the Project in that area – Wanda Botes. Welcome aboard, Wanda. Hope you make great strides.

Current Branch activities:

- **Maitland cemetery:** Petro Coreejes-Brink is busy with the transcription of a section of this cemetery.
- **Braamfontein Cemetery:** Transcriptions are still proceeding.

- **Boksburg Cemetery:** South East Wits Family History Society have almost reached the halfway mark in recording this historical cemetery.

Recording Experiences

(1) We asked one of our newcomers, Peter Dickson, to tell us how he got involved in his own headstone recording project:

“There was nothing special about the project, it came about when a friend, Sarah Koster, who had done a lot of research prior to the Anglo Boer War Centenary, and had in fact "saved" the Sipres Street Concentration Camp Cemetery from 'disappearing' to make way for a housing development, attended a N.Tvl GSSA meeting with me in 2005.

At that meeting she indicated that "WE" would tackle the cemeteries in and around Middelburg - She was the 'spark' but unfortunately the family relocated to Nelspruit and I was left on my own.

I started by purchasing a digital camera, intending to photograph all the headstones as I worked my way through the cemetery with clipboard and pencil.

A retired municipal employee told me that the town council had been very particular and meticulous about their cemetery records and suggested that I do some investigating. - Fortunately, unlike many other town councils, Middelburg's Council still guard their old records.

I was given access to the original records and was given a table and chair and a very large Record Book in a vacant office.

I started by photographing pages of records - Was reasonably successful, but not really satisfactory as I found I was having to return again and again to check my transcriptions from the photographs against the original records. The record book is very thick and it was not possible to have the pages absolutely flat to photograph - Also some of the handwriting was almost illegible.

Ultimately, I went armed with a good magnifying glass, pad, pencil and eraser and spent many hours transcribing the entries - before typing the information into my computer. From time to time I would visit the cemetery to verify some of the entries in the Burial Register

What we now have on record has taken nearly four years to complete.

There is a British Military Cemetery within the Old Middelburg Cemetery with about a thousand graves - The records are intact at the municipal offices.

I am now looking to start to find the farm cemeteries in our area.

That is my story,

Regards,

Peter.”

(Ed: A remarkable effort for one person.)

(2) Alta Roux’s lament:

“Peter

Olifantshoek cemetery and register. I tried to check it as thoroughly as possible, but after a while all the dates start to look the same!

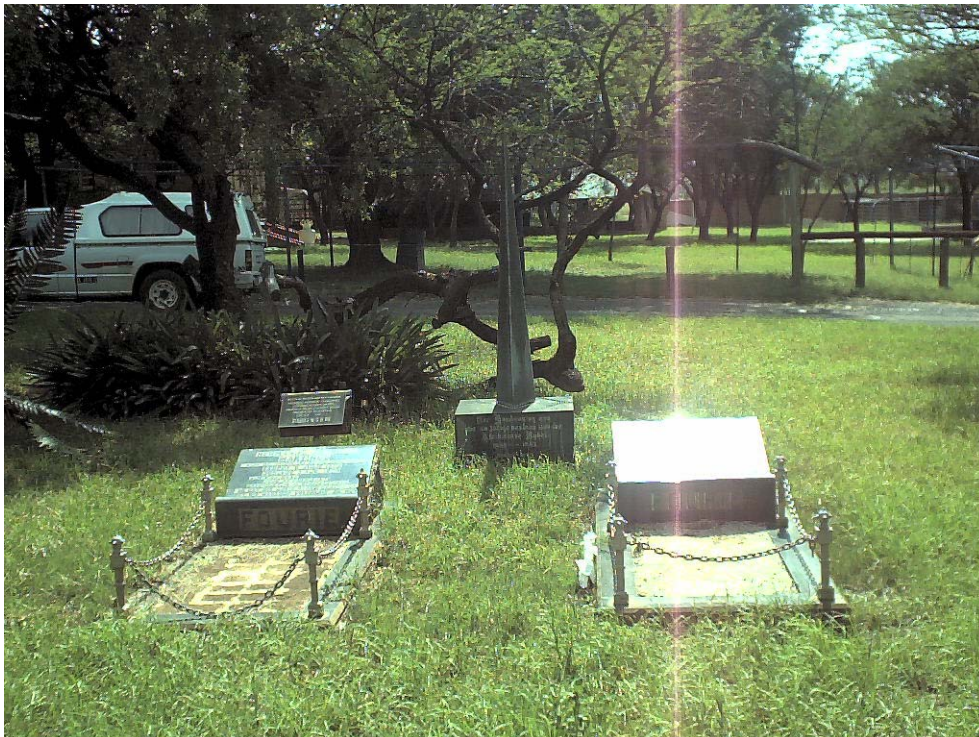
Could you please let me have a postal address for the Olifantshoek farm cemeteries - I'd rather send the photos by snail mail, as our Telkom lines have been stolen, and I am using my son's 3G modem, but the signal isn't very good. I doubt whether the Telkom lines will be replaced - once the copper thieves start stealing the cables, Telkom stops replacing them.... I really feel very bad about this, because most of my research depends on phone calls nowadays, and I have no idea what I would do without a Telkom telephone. I have a pre-paid cellphone, which I only use for short, private calls.... My son goes back to Pta tomorrow, taking his Internet... Yes, I am complaining. It seems Telkom just gave up and lets the thieves steal the cables at will!

Alta”

General

This is a renewed appeal: when recording cemeteries, please endeavour to obtain the GPS co-ordinates of the entrance of the cemetery, based on the WGS84 datum. A photograph of the entrance would also be greatly appreciated.

We have had a request for help in establishing the exact whereabouts of the graves of Hermanus ?? Fourie, born 5th July 1882, died 5th August 1939 and his wife Johanna Everharda la Riviere. The graves are, to the best of our knowledge, somewhere in the Marico area. Fourie was a Predikant of the Hervormde Kerk and was a translator of the Bible. The photograph below is of the two graves. What we need is the name of the town and the GPS co-ordinates. Could this be a farm cemetery?



Editor's Note

Many encouraging e-mails were again received from the recipients of the previous Newsletter. Please do not hesitate to e-mail if your efforts have been overlooked during the period under review, or if the facts have been incorrectly reported. Although, this is not yet in pdf format, the Editor has learnt a few things about reducing picture, and thus, the overall size. Apologies that the Newsletters this year have not been on time. We hope the content makes up for it

Submissions for inclusion in CD 7 (which will be issued next March), must reach the National Co-ordinators not later than 1st November 2008.

Next Issue

The next Newsletter will be issued during December, 2008, and will, of course, be the last one for this year. Any comments, criticisms, articles of interest, etc should reach the Editor by not later than 30th November 2008.

If you wish to unsubscribe, send an e-mail with the Subject "Unsubscribe" to johns@timco.co.za.

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[Further information re the Project can be obtained on the GSSA homepage www.ggsa.info. Follow the menu to Projects/Cemetery Project. Information re present Status etc is provided via Excel files.](http://www.ggsa.info)