



# GSSA Cemetery Recording News

Vol 3 no. 1 March 2005



Schutztruppe Cemetery.  
Seis, Namibia.

## Welcome

Hello and welcome to this new year of fun and excitement in the Cemetery recording Project. The year started well with the release of CD 3 of the Project on 5 March 2005 at the National AGM in Cape Town. The work in progress file is bulging at the seams and storage space on my computer is shrinking. I need to do a clean up and transfer to CD for storage purposes all the old data that is no longer current.

## Contributors and Volunteers

Please contact Errol or Peter at the e-mail addresses at the foot of this newsletter for guidance on our requirements for cemetery data that you may wish to submit. Sharing this data is a great step forward to so many who may have hit a “brick wall”.

## Cemetery CD

As I stated above, the new Version 3 of the Cemetery Recording CD has been released and it appears to have been well received judging by the number of orders received. To date 105 copies have been sold and despatched. More orders have since been received. These latest orders will be posted out very shortly. If you have not yet ordered your copy, please send an email to Andre Heydenrych as soon as possible. His address is [aheyden@mweb.co.za](mailto:aheyden@mweb.co.za).

## Recording Experiences

Hierdie Begraafplaas is in die middle van 'n bloekombos, toegegroeï met bossies, kakiebos en knapsekerels. In 'n stadium moes ek en my man oor drie omgevalle boomstompe klouter, toe ek nartuurlik op die eerste, hoogste boomstam gly, en ons albei hard grond toe bring. Daar le ek toe, op die naat van my rug dwarsoor twee boomstamme, vuil, vol modder en lyk soos 'n ystervark van die knapsekerels. My man le langsaan, sy been onder een van die stompe, netso vuil en vol modder, terwyl hy kamera, GPS en notaboek in die lug hou – hoogs vies omdat ek my 'handsak ook saamgebring het'.

*This is another classic from Alta Roux while recording the Nooitgedacht farm cemetery near Ogies. Wish someone else had been there to get a photo. Keep up the good work Alta – Ed.*

### Schutztruppe Cemetery, Seeis, Khomas Region, Namibia.

I recently had the opportunity of visiting Namibia again. As before I tried to make best use of my time. I managed to record the Old Leutwein Cemetery in Windhoek. Although it is claimed that there are more than 900 burials I was only able to record 363 actual headstones. Many graves do not have any headstone while there are many that have been vandalised over time. These records will be appearing in the next CD. As I drove in my own car, I was attracted to a sign at the roadside about 60 km east of Windhoek stating that there were some Schutztruppe graves close by. I turned off and after about 1 km found the graveyard. It is entirely walled in rough stone and cement. A big wrought iron gate provides access to the cemetery. I managed to photograph all the headstones in the early morning light and have also transcribed them for inclusion in the database. A general photo of the cemetery forms the mast of this Newsletter. As I progressed westwards towards the border I had to pass through Gobabis. It is a quaint small town that is still very active. Needless to say my eyes caught sight of a sign that said "Cemetery". What could I do? I am addicted to this pastime. I turned to follow the sign and 500m down the road I found the cemetery. Having planned to sleep over at Kang, a good halfway point on the long road home, and then looking at the time of day, I decided to get out my digital camera and see what I could do about recording this cemetery. Well the rest is history. Three and a half hours later I hit the road again with 1184 headstones safely stored on my camera. I then reached Kang at about 17H15, just in time to sit and watch the sun go down with a cold beer in my hand. Happily I have now completed transcribing the data as well and it is on its way to being included in the database.

*Errol Dollenberg*

### OLD CEMETERY CHRISTIANA

Over this past Easter weekend my wife and I decided to record the headstones of the old cemetery at Christiana. Fortunately we also took along 'Petrus' the wife's trusty gardener. We should however have taken along a road gang armed with chain saws and machetes. Without exaggeration this is the most overgrown patch of vegetation south of the Congo and must have something to do with the fact that Christiana is on the banks of the Vaal River. We anticipated at any moment coming across a tribe of head hunters armed with blowpipes! However with much hacking and spadework we were

able to photograph all the headstones, still in existence.

We remained however in high spirits in the knowledge that so many would benefit in finding that “missing link” of ancestors who shared their family history with this historic town. Just as we have benefited from the unselfish work of others, it gives us pleasure to pass this information on to Errol for inclusion in the next CD of the Cemetery Recording Project.

The following Afrikaans text is a summary of the town’s history:

“Die Dorp Christiana is gestig in Pretoria op 21 April 1870 op aandrang van Landdrost W Best en is vernoem na Christina Petronella Meyer, gebore Pretorius, dogter van ZAR Staats-president M W Pretorius. In September en Oktober 1870 is die dorp uitgelê deur die landmeter-generaal Magnus Forsman. Op 6 Julie 1871 stel William Best die Regering in kennis dat hy reeds 17 kleims verkoop het. Die NG gemeente Christiana was reeds in 1895 deel van die Gemeente Bloemhof. Die eerste begrafnis op hierdie perseel luidens die graf-stene wat nog bestaan, het plaasgevind in 1886. Die dorp het 'n noue verbintenis met die ontdekking van diamante en is in 1900 tydens die tweede Vryheidsoorlog deur die Britse magte omgedolwe in hul soeke na diamante. Die eerste kerk gebou het ook bekendheid verwerf deurdat daar "tot onder die vloer van die ou sinkkerkie" na diamante gesoek is. (verw. 100 jarige gedenkblad van die plaaslike NG Gemeente - gevier in 1998.)”

May the project go from strength to strength.

Regards Barry Stieger

## Branch/Individual Contributions

You will be pleased to know that I have stopped farming and have fully equipped myself for this you-know-what engrossing pastime. (Canon digital camera, GPS & of course the laptop).

Barry Stieger

*I am stunned at this man's enthusiasm for the project. His name will be coming up quite a lot in the near future as a contributor. He is doing fantastic work in the Devon area around his farm as well as travel to Christiana and surrounds for his own research – Ed.*

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank you for all your effort in distributing this newsletter. It was through the newsletter that I noticed Peter Moss was familiar with cemeteries in Zambia (where I was born) and visited there from time to time. I had for many years been trying to find the death and grave information for my great-grandmother Bridget FREED (nee KEENAN) who was buried in Kabwe (Broken Hill it was then) sometime between 1940 and 1950. A couple of emails to Peter and he came back with all the cemetery details for her including the date of burial. I was overjoyed and was so grateful, not only to Peter for his assistance but also to you in providing me with the link to Peter through the newsletter. I subsequently bought the cemetery CD for tracing other ancestors in South Africa and eagerly await the release of the next CD. Without your efforts in producing and distributing the newsletter, I would still be plodding on against a tough brick wall. Thank you.

Have a great day!!

Warmest regards,  
Terry Waters-Marsh  
FreeCEN Coordinator for Wiltshire & Somerset.

I have enjoyed your newsletters received and found them both interesting and fascinating. I was born in Johannesburg in 1934 and attended boarding schools at Klerksdorp Convent and at Grey College Bloemfontein. As a child and young boy I spent much time exploring old cemeteries in those locations and also in Magaliesberg, Rustenburg, Nelspruit, Barberton, Meyerton and Henley-on-Klip. At that time not interested in the history or recording bit, but very interested in the significance of what I saw and the wonderful past of South Africa. So interesting to read of your recorders' experiences and findings.

I live in Winnalee, NSW Australia since 1962, having lived in Lethbridge, Alberta Canada since leaving SA in 1955.

I subscribe to the [SOUTH-AFRICA IMMIGRANTS BRITISH-L@rootsweb.com](mailto:SOUTH-AFRICA_IMMIGRANTS_BRITISH-L@rootsweb.com) website researching my Maternal KING and SHARLAND and paternal HICKS and MANN families.

Is there some way I can contribute or help with your project?

I would like to be able to assist with something.

Thank you,

Regards, Douglas Frederick Hicks

Thank you very much for the latest Newsletter, as well as all the other information that I have received from you. I appreciate it very much.

Regards,  
Anna Martin  
Pretoria

En hier volg amper 'n modelvoorbeeld van die **waarde van die Grafskrifprojek**.

Een van ons lede (Robbie Robinson) is al vir jare - meer as 25 jaar - op soek na sy oorgrootjie se verdere inligting maar vergeefs - al wat hy weet is 'n SAMEUL FRANCIS ROBINSON se naam wat verskyn as ongekoppelde in SAG 9 B1 480 met gepaardgaande inligting en **vermoedelik** is dit sy oupagrootjie se vader.

Toe kry ek CD 2 en onder Robinson is daar 'n SAMUEL FRANCIS ROBINSON \* 1860 + !939 Swartklip Rustenburg.

Naam is te jonk vir oupagrootjie maar kan dalk 'n kind wees.

Kyk in Tel. boek en daar is werklik nog Robonson op Swartklip, skakel - mev Robinson antwoord, maar die nuus is nie te goed nie, haar man het die inligting vir GGSA gestuur maar hy is alreeds etlike jare oorlede en sy weet niks.

Bel sy 'n dag of twee later met die adres/ tel no van 'n niggie van die oorlede man, Robbie maak kontak met die dame en die resultaat - hy was Desember op die plaas in die **noordooste** van Engeland vanwaar die familie Robinsons afkomstig is - 'n suksesverhaal te danke aan 'n klein inskrywing op CD 2.

Groete,  
Simon du Plooy. Noord Wes Tak GGSA

*Baie dankie vir die storie Simon. Dit wys net dat die werk waardevol is vir iemand en gee vir ons die moed om aan te gaan vir die toekoms van die projek – Red.*

Die Harrismith BP is in 'n verskriklike toestand en ek gaan daaroor kls! Ek stuur 'n foto om te wys hoe lyk dit daar.

Meeste van die grafstene is stukkend gebreek. Selfs die van die kindertjies wat in die Kon. Kamp Oorlede is (dis in klein stukkies gebreek, so daar was min stene wat nog heel is. Die dwat nie stukkend gebreek is nie, is baie dof en 'n mens kan dit nie lees nie.

Ons gaan oor 'n paar maande weer terug en ek sal weer probeer. Ons hoop hulle het teen daardie tyd bietjie reggemaak.

Groete,  
Sheri F.

*Hoe kan ons iets doen om die owerhede se aandag te bring aan die tipe probleem – Red.*

Baie dankie vir die 2 CD's. Ek het vinng deur #3 gegaan en sien dat die wat ek en Piet Lombard opgeskryf het verskyn op die CD.

Nou kan 'n mens sien dat jouwerk nie verniet was nie.

Groete,  
Fanie Blignaut

*Baie dankie vir die opmerking Fanie, ons probeer hard om die data so gou moontlik te verwerk – Red.*

Congratulations on CD3! I am particularly happy about the cemetery spreadsheet. I could easily determine which of my cemeteries have been included and whether any in my vicinity has been recorded by others. I noticed that some 1300 cemeteries do not have co-ordinates. I think this is vital information. In some cases co-ordinates could be added in a desktop exercise, while others would require a revisit to the cemetery. I am quite willing to help in this respect.

Regards  
Hentie

Thank you very much for the CD received in the post today.

What a stupendous CD. I can't believe the amount of information there is. Congratulations to all.

My only disappointment was that there was no North End Cemetery Port Elizabeth (that was where I started looking) where I was hoping to find my Grandparents. Then I realised that this CD was not for the large Cemeteries. So the search goes on.

Regards  
Ilse & John

*Thanks Hentie, Ilse and John for your kind comments – Ed.*

## **Branch News**

Johannesburg Branch – The recording of Edenvale Cemetery has been completed and is currently being captured onto spreadsheets. This should be completed within the next few months and will then be forwarded to Peter Moss for inclusion in the National

Database and therefore the next CD.

## Q & A Department

Q. What can I do to help?

A. Help record headstone data in your area and submit to us for processing.

Q. What format do you want the information?

A. Please send an email to Peter Moss or Errol Dollenberg and we will send you an Excel spreadsheet showing the type of data we require. You will also be given a list of guidelines for capturing the data.

Q. Can I send in only portions of a cemetery?

A. We aim at recording entire cemeteries so as to be useful to everyone. Personal family recordings have very limited appeal.

Q. Can I help in any other way?

A. Yes, we are always looking for volunteers to help at typing up data that we receive on paper. Should you reside in the Johannesburg area, please contact us and we will try to arrange to let you have some work.

## Statistics

Please note that no new data has been entered into the Names database thus far in 2005. This is because Peter is presently undertaking a quality review of parts of the present database.

The database is held in PAF format, and some of the information was input to this directly in PAF format, which had various other embedded information such as family relationships etc. When the data is translated into HTML for publication on the CD, this embedded information is of course lost.

Users of the CD have also commented on the desirability of being able to search for the married name in addition to the present search on maiden names only (where this information is applicable/available). This would mean making sure that both names are available in the NOTES field, and then searching on this. While the practicality of this feature has not yet been tested for the CD HTML format, it is important that the data is upgraded in readiness.

The quality check underway at the moment thus involves:

1. Ensuring that embedded PAF relationships are recorded in the Notes field
2. Ensuring that both maiden names and married surnames are correctly recorded in the Notes field to allow a successful search on either
3. The opportunity is also being taken to upgrade the quality of the format of the Notes field for the records affected above.

The above upgrades will also be necessary if the Names database is moved from the present flat file PAF format to a more universal database format such as MS Access. This would make administration much easier. Test work on this idea is also under way.

Peter has reviewed in excess of 15,000 records, and work on items 1, 2 and 3 should

be largely complete by the end of April.

We assure our faithful contributors that normal service for input of their new records will be resumed shortly!!

## Editor's Note

It has been very gratifying to get such positive feedback on the new Cd. So much work was put into it during last year. This year we are doing a major overhaul of the database to ensure that the next production will be even more improved. So much more data has been received from contributors that it is at times difficult to keep up with the processing thereof. We are however trying to keep our heads above the water line. A lot of data has been put through the basic processing phase and is in the queue to be finalised very shortly. At this stage we are planning to cut off our input to the database during November so as to ensure final processing and testing are accomplished in time for the production of CD 4 during March 2006. We, at the project, are indeed very grateful for the efforts made by all contributors to help the database grow. Looking forward to many more submissions in 2005. We like to be kept busy!!

## Next Issue

Please send your comments/feedback on the Newsletter and CD to the Editor for inclusion in the next edition. Anyone wishing to unsubscribe from this Newsletter should please e-mail [mwedolly@mweb.co.za](mailto:mwedolly@mweb.co.za).

## Contacts

Editor: Errol Dollenberg

P O Box 8147

Edenglen

1613

(011) 609-1583

082 217 2433 (cell)

Email: [mwedolly@mweb.co.za](mailto:mwedolly@mweb.co.za)

Cemetery Recording Project, Database and Document Coordinator: Peter Moss

Email: [peter.moss@mweb.co.za](mailto:peter.moss@mweb.co.za)

Project Leader: Adelbert Semmelink

Email: [adelbert@netactive.co.za](mailto:adelbert@netactive.co.za)