

eGGSAA Newsletter



International Branch of the GSSA

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September 2008

National Heritage Day 27 September 2008

The Western Cape Branch of the Genealogical Society of South-Africa (GSSA) is holding a family research exhibition where professional researchers as well as people doing research as a hobby will be available to assist those interested. eGGSAA will also be represented.

Saturday 27th September 2008 from 10:00 to 16:00 at Holy Trinity Church Hall, 222 Main Street, Paarl. Genealogy will be represented by

Cape Family Research Forum	Huguenot Society of South Africa
Cape Town Family History Society	Protea Boekwinkel, Stellenbosch
Drakenstein Heemkring	TANAP & TEPC
Genealogical Society of South Africa	Western Cape Archives and Record Service, Roeland Street
Genealogical Potpourri	
Huguenot Memorial Museum	

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Annual Awards - Genealogical Society of South Africa

Recommendations for the following awards are being accepted until the end of September. To nominate someone for an award please let Elmien Wood, GSSA secretary, woodem@mweb.co.za, know as soon as possible. Proposals for awards need a proposer and a seconder and must include a resume of the reasons for the proposal on the nomination form, but these may be supplied later.

All awards may be made to a group of people or an organisation as well as to individuals. Any product or service may only be considered for one award.

The **GENEALOGIST OF THE YEAR** award is made for an exemplary genealogical product (publication, collection, etc.) that is available for public use, and it must also be in the year of publication.

The **AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE** is made for an outstanding genealogical contribution over an extended period of time that was either to the benefit of the GSSA in particular or the genealogical community in general.

ACCOLADE-CERTIFICATES are awarded for outstanding contributions to the GSSA. Certificates may be presented to the runners up for the Genealogist of the Year Award, to branches, office bearers, newsletters, publications, etc.

*This issue of the eGGSAA
Newsletter was produced by
Richard Ball.*

The Gravestones are humming!

We now have almost 95,000 pictures of gravestones in the [eGGSA Download Library](#)!

Soon to be made available will be the gravestones from the 1813 Seaforth Cemetery in Simonstown and the Somerset-West Dutch Reformed Church, built in 1816!

Wilna and Deirdré Eygelaar have photographed all the graves in the [Pioneer Cemetery at Upington](#), Northern Cape. These photographs are now available online in the eGGSA download library. They have now moved on to photographing the Keidebeest Cemetery in Upington. This cemetery is extremely large and will take them a good while to photograph.

Wilna and Deirdré have put the life back into this part of the cemetery. They have found VISAGIE, SPANGENBERG, DE VILLIERS, DU PLESSIS, NIEUWENHUYS, MURPHY, VAN NEEL, DE WEE, and OOR graves among these rocks!



Deirdré Eygelaar in action at Keidebeest cemetery, Upington!

During the last month we have received several enquiries, some from as far away as Japan and Russia! Can you help with the following?

Boris GORELIK is a Russian researcher from the Institute for African Academy of Sciences in Moscow; looking for Russian immigrants of the 1930-1980's. Their website http://en.www.st-sergius.info/cgi-bin/client/display.pl?tag=topmenu_news

A couple of members are desperately looking for graves in the town of Cradock – is there anybody who can help us out in that region?

Brian KAIGHIN is interested in the history of Ladysmith in Natal. He has quite an extensive database of all the known British and Colonial dead for the Boer War, and is prepared to do searches free of charge. If you have any photos of British soldiers please pass them on to us. Website www.ladysmithhistory.com

The maintenance and captioning of the eGGSA Gravestone collection is done entirely by volunteers - if you would like to help please contact Alta Griffiths at alta@pinnaclespot.co.za

British Non-parochial Church Records now online

S&N Genealogy Supplies has leased from the British National Archives the right to provide images of these records online. As [BMD Registers](#) they provide access to these records, held in National Archives classes RG 4, RG 5 and RG6 and RG7. Basic searching is free of charge, but there is a fee for advanced searching and to download images. Non-conformist records are those of religions other than the Anglican Church (the state church of England).

This service is not cheap (GBP 2.50 per full record or image), but to search all you need to do is register, which costs nothing. For the fee of GBP 2.50 you obtain a photograph of the original record.

[RG4](#) - General Register Office: Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths surrendered to the Non-parochial Registers Commissions of 1837 and 1857.

Church of England, 1534-

Royal Hospital Chelsea, 1682-

General Register Office, 1836-1970

Royal Hospital, Greenwich, 1694-

Dr Williams Library, 1742-1865

Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist Registry, 1742-

1837 Wesleyan Methodist Metropolitan Registry, 1818-1838

Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, Hackney, London, 1713-

South London Burial Ground, Walworth, London, 1819-c 1837

Necropolis Burial Ground, Everton, Liverpool, c 1825-c 1837

[RG5](#) - General Register Office: Birth Certificates from the Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist Registry and from the Wesleyan Methodist Metropolitan Registry, covering dates 1742-1840

General Register Office, 1836-1970

Dr Williams Library, 1742-1865

Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist Registry, 1742-1837

Wesleyan Methodist Metropolitan Registry, 1818-1838

[RG6](#) - General Register Office: Society of Friends' Registers, Notes and Certificates of Births, Marriages and Burials, covering dates 1578-1841.

Following the Non-Parochial Registers Act 1840, the Quakers deposited some 1445 registers (the most of any denomination), plus 56 files of original birth and burial notes and original marriage certificates. A further 121 Quaker registers were surrendered in 1857.

[RG7](#) - General Register Office: Registers of Clandestine Marriages and of Baptisms in the Fleet Prison, King's Bench Prison, the Mint and the May Fair Chapel, covering dates 1667-c1777

The documents are unauthenticated and are without any clearly documented provenance. After the outlawing of clandestine marriages in 1754, these registers remained in private hands, being bought by private individuals who then charged the public for making searches. Gradually a large collection built-up and in 1821, for a sum of £260 6s 6d, the government purchased from a Mr William Cox, the bulk of the registers and notebooks which now comprise this series. Under the direction of Lord Sidmouth, secretary of state for the Home Department, these were then deposited in the Registry of the Consistory Court of London where they were held until 1840 when transferred to the newly established General Register Office.

All these records, of course, can be consulted free of charge by visiting the [National Archives at Kew](#) and their web site is chock-full of all sorts of useful information, including [research guides](#) covering the great majority of the records they hold - well worth a visit if you are interested in UK genealogy or history.

British Non-parochial Church Records (continued)

Do remember, however, that the record class RG5 is included on the Latter Day Saints *Vital Records Index - British Isles* on CDrom, unfortunately discontinued in August I am informed by the LDS support, and many (perhaps all?) of the registers included in RG4 have been extracted (that is indexed) on the LDS IGI online. These LDS items do not, of course, include a photograph of the original entry.

The parish register extraction records (i.e. transcripts of complete registers) are generally pretty reliable but still need confirmation by checking the original parish register (or microfilm of) if at all possible. These Extraction records are to be found in the LDS IGI database (but beware, there are other records there as well as extraction records). The links below will provide an introduction and guide as to how this all works.

Records from one of the LDS extracted registers always bears the note: *Messages: Extracted birth or christening record* and gives its source batch number and dates, e.g.: *Source Information: Batch No.: C041241 Dates: 1558 - 1724*, whereas information submitted by an individual will have the note: *Messages: Record submitted by a member of the LDS Church* and its source information will be just a film number.

Below are some links giving more information on the LDS IGI database and its extraction program:

[Family Search](#) - the IGI site itself

[What is the IGI?](#) - a definition help page by Helen S. Ullmann C.G.

[How to search the IGI](#) - by a group of friends living in Forbes, NSW

[Newbies helping Newbies](#) - all you need to know about the IGI

[IGI Batch Numbers - British Isles and North America](#) - Hugh Wallis

The State of the Cape in 1822 now online

Leanne Starkey, on the [Rootsweb South Africa Immigrants](#) email list, provided the following useful information:

I hadn't browsed Google Books in a long while and was delighted to see this book had been digitised and uploaded this year for public use:

The State of the Cape in 1822 by William Wilberforce BIRD and Henry Thomas COLEBROOKE, published in 1823.

A wonderful resource with records and accounts of the Cape, including a chapter on the 1820 settlers. The book can be downloaded, but it is nearly 18 MB so those with slow/timed connections should be aware that it could take some time.

[State of the Cape of Good Hope, in 1822](#), by William Wilberforce Bird, Henry Thomas Colebrooke

Naval Social History Web Site Link

Lynette Oakes , on the Rootsweb [SOUTH-AFRICA-EASTERN-CAPE](#) email list, 8 September 2008, provides the following useful link:

This site was mentioned in an article in the October Family History Monthly. Perhaps it will be of use to someone. It is a wonderful site for info on Naval history from the late 18C to 20C and includes Naval vessels from c1793 - 1900, extracts from Naval lists, including obits and appointments, articles on life in the Navy, a short item on the Boer War, and heaps more.

[Late 18th, 19th and early 20th Century Naval and Naval Social History](#)

New Regulation at Master's Office Causes Delays

For those not aware of the new rulings at the [Masters Offices](#) around the country, there is a new directive which I have received from the Monica Kriel the Deputy Master, Office of the Chief Master, Master's Branch Pretoria, wrote Heather MacAlister of Ancestry 24 on [Rootsweb SOUTH-AFRICA-CAPE-TOWN](#) Mailing List, 28th July 2008. The main item of this *Chief Master's Directive 2 of 2008* is this:

3.2. No file or copy of a file is to be made available to anyone before a written request has been made for the file to be made available. The reasons for this are to be furnished; as well as the interest the client has in the relevant matter. This request is to be approved in writing by the relevant Deputy Master; and the recipient of the file must sign an acknowledgement of receipt in respect of the file requested. A period of at least 48 hours is required to enable the personnel to locate the file, which is to be made available at a central point. A form of identification must be produced by the requesting person before the file is made available.

The complete posting, with responses, can be read on the [Cape Town List](#)

Anne Lehmkuhl wrote on the 29th July: From what I understand now, asking for an estate file in the Cape Town Master's Office means filling in the new request form which then gets SENT to Pretoria where the Head Master will decide whether you can see the file or not. You will get a phone call to say whether you can go and look at the file. I presume this procedure will apply to all Master's Offices country-wide? I wait patiently to hear when those, who think this is a good idea, run out of patience dealing with a South African Government department that is already deep in organised chaos. This new procedure has nothing to do with making access better, in fact it makes it more difficult than it already is.

Anne further reported on 21st August: As expected, the Master's Offices country-wide have now made it more difficult to access estate files for genealogical purposes. While I understand and accept that there must be a control register of those who request files, I cannot accept that genealogists are required to jump through more loops at the Master's than any other person! Why are genealogists being specifically targeted? At the Pretoria Master's Office, genealogists specifically and they only, must write a letter to the Master stating why they want to access files. The Master will then decide whether that person is allowed to access records or not. This written letter asking for permission, is NOT required by any other person wanting to access files.

Anne's latest update on the 13th September: On the Master's Offices front - in Pretoria the wait for estate files is now anything from 3 weeks upwards, due to the new rule of filling in forms as to why you want to see the file. The files are archived in Centurion at a private file storage company and the wait is made longer when waiting for files to travel from Centurion to the city centre.

Mitochondrial DNA Analysis

The September 2008 issue of *Maiores*, the newsletter of the [Vrystaat Branch](#) of the Genealogical Society of South Africa, carries an interesting article by Naomi de Valdoeiros (in Afrikaans), My Mitochondriese-DNA Storie.

One cannot tell from her article how rigorous her documentary research into her matrilineal ancestry has been but her results seem to have been corroborated by mitochondrial DNA analysis.

The newsletter can be found on the eGGSa web site [Branch Newsletters page](#).

Genealogical Data and its Interpretation.

For an interesting discussion on the interpretation of information from the English and Welsh Census returns, see the Rootsweb South Africa email August 2008. One lister posted the following, source of information not stated:

Abraham appears in the 1891 English census as follows: Abraham Belinfante, Age: 20, Estimated Birth Year: abt 1871, Father's Name: Samuel, Mother's Name: Catherine

Lister B pointed out: That listing shows some of the inaccuracies perpetrated by the site on which it was found. The census does indeed tell us that Abraham's father was Samuel. It does not tell us that Catherine was his mother. It tells us that Catherine was Samuel's wife - and that is quite different.

A search on [ancestry.co.uk](#) lists the results as above - one can, of course, also see a photograph of the actual census page, which gives the following information:

Samuel Belinfante, Head (of the household), married, aged 52, Cigar maker, born Holland
Catherine Belinfante, Wife, married, aged 51, born Holland
Abraham Belinfante, son, single, aged 20, born London

Several other listers then replied to the effect that this was being overly precise - for instance, from Lister C:

If we want to be overly sceptical, all records are suspect. That Catherine was recorded as Samuel's wife, and Abraham as his son, is indisputable; whether these relationships were true is another matter. Were Samuel and Catherine actually married? Was Abraham Samuel's own son by Catherine, a son by a previous marriage or a son of Catherine and some unknown third party? (The record does not actually tell us that Samuel was Abraham's father, it tells us that Abraham was Samuel's son, the interpretation of which could be different).

My own opinion is this. There is nit-picking and then there is nit-picking. Lister B was correct - it is important to know how to interpret your data - unless you know, for instance, that these census records always identify a 'head' for each household to whom all relationships are referred you can easily make a mistake. It is important to distinguish that a person identified as the wife of the head of the household is not necessarily the mother of individuals identified as sons or daughters of that head of the household.

Lister C is partly correct in what he writes - one must keep in mind that all records can contain human errors, accidental or deliberate, but he is wrong to blame lister B for trying to show how such records should be accurately interpreted and clouding a very simple issue by introducing several red herrings.

Richard Ball

Transcript Projects Proposal - volunteers required

I have two projects in mind that I believe would be useful if added to the current transcripts on the eGGSa web sites. I would be grateful for any offers of help on either of the two following document series.

Sue Mackay's extremely valuable extracts from various South African newspapers which she has transcribed and made available on several of the Rootsweb mailing lists. She has given permission for these to be indexed and it seems to me that such an index would be usefully housed on the eGGSa web site. These are all in English and in typescript, so indexing should not be too difficult.

Sue has made extracts from the following South African journals, all housed in the British National Archives at Kew which has allowed her to photograph appropriate sections which she has then transcribed.

Eastern Province Herald 1847-1850 +1856

Eastern Province Herald 1854-1855

Farmers Chronicle 1886-1892

Graaff-Reinet Herald 1852-1856

Grahamstown Journal 1835-1852

The South African Commercial Advertiser 1824 onwards, still in progress.

The Cape Death Notifications of 1758-1803. This is series MOOC 6 in the Western Cape Archives (WCA) and was the death notification system in force prior to the institution of the Death Notice system in 1834. It contains, particularly in these earlier years, very little information other than the name and date of death (sometimes only approximate) but I believe that this information is nevertheless valuable. The later years, that is 1820s and 1830s do contain more information but, unfortunately, my project of having these photographed was stymied by Ms Minicka of the WCA and her crusade against the use of cameras at that institution. There is, I understand, a card index to these records in the WCA but this is not part of the [NAAIRS Online Index](#).

These documents consist largely of names and dates, are written in Dutch and not always the most legible photographs. In the earlier years they can be a bit chaotic. Here are two examples:



Please contact me if you would like to help with either of these projects.

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