

# The Hourglass

## Die Uurglas

I/2017



GRAAFF-REINET MUSEUM

✉ 104 ☎ 049 8923801 / ☎ 049 8925650 / ☎ 049 8910664  
☎ 049 8925650

✉ [graaffreinetmuseum@intekom.co.za](mailto:graaffreinetmuseum@intekom.co.za)

🌐 [www.graaffreinetmuseums.co.za](http://www.graaffreinetmuseums.co.za)

# CONTENTS / INHOUDSOPGAWE:

1.	LIEWE VRIENDE	2
2.	THEODORE HEINRICH WATERMEYER (1879-1948) – Graaff-Reinet's Most Famous Engineer	5
3.	VGK IN SUIDER-AFRIKA – Graaff-Reinet Gemeente.	11
4.	LETTERS FROM THE LÜCKHOFF FAMILY ARCHIVES	15
5.	AANKONDIGINGS	16
6.	WORDS TO PONDER.....	16

## ARTIKELS / ARTICLES:

ANZISKE KAYSTER, JOHANNES HAARHOFF EN GAWIE BASSON

## REDIGERING / EDITING:

ANSIE MALHERBE & PETER WHITLOCK

## DRUKWERK EN PRODUKSIE / PRINTING & PRODUCTION:

DENISE VAN WYK, KATRIENA BOOYSEN & VALERINE UITHALER

VERSPREIDING/ DISTRIBUTION: JAMES VAN RHYNERS & ZENEVIN ISAKS

# Liewe Vriende

---

Lank gelede beskryf my ma my as roekeloos!

Roekeloos en onverantwoordelik omdat ek nie Graaff-Reinet toe wou trek om daar my kennis met al wat leef en beef te deel nie. Ja, daar was 'n Kaapse romanse in die lug, maar die outjie se geloofsoortuiging het my nie aangestaan nie en ek kon nie meer aan beter verskonings dink om nie Graaff-Reinet toe te trek nie.

So bevind ek myself toe meer as een en twintig jaar gelede by die Spandau Sekondêre Skool as toesighouer, met 'n koshuiskamer, koshuiskinders as vermaak en pakke aanwinste om my dae mee te verwyl. Trane en hunkering na die Kaap was volop, maar die lewe het volstoom voortgespoed veral toe my pa 'n dierbare wit Datsun bakkie voor my deur kom aflaai. Toe kon ek soggens op eie stoom museum toe aanpiekel en was die taxi's en die afhanklikheid van oom Tonie Kayster, destyds

koshuisvader en later geliefde aangetroude oom, iets van die verlede.

Die Museum en sy mense het my hart gesteel en die ongelooflike trots en plesier wat ek uit my werk geput het, was sielsverrykend. Oom George se wysheid en ondersteuning sou my telkemale optel en dra en vandag is ek nog steeds sy "Slamse meisiekind". Hy kon hom altyd bloedig vererg vir mense wat praat "soos 'n lap wat skeur!" en my beleefdheid was vir oom George 'n riem onder die hart.

In latere jare sou ek getrou vir ses jaar die deure van die Ou Biblioteek oopsluit. Ek onthou tot vandag toe die suur gesigte en neusoptrekkerigheid van sekere lede van die *akkomdasie-establishment-elite* wat gedurig daar ge-in en uit het, maar hulle kom en gaan was volop en daar was ander dinge wat my aandag in beslag geneem het. Ek het die fossiele en Rotskuns-versameling op die punte van my vingers geken en myself besig gehou deur met

verskeie ingeligtes te korrespondeer. Ek het hordes museumtoegangskkaartjies geknip en geperforeer.....geknip en geperforeer.

Intussen het ek my ander helfte ontmoet. Hy het my geleer dat die lewe nie net uit die Kaap bestaan nie en dat 'n mens soms 'n deel van jouself aan 'n ander kan gee. Deur sy oë het ek my bevoorregtheid (nie bevoorregting) gesien: ek was nooit honger nie, nooit koud nie en het die liefdevolle aandag van albei my ouers geniet. In sy hart sou my man altyd 'n *Lawyer for Human Rights* bly en sou die werkswyse van hierdie organisasie ook later sy weg, skeef en krom, na my kant toe vind. Ek hoop ek is vandag 'n voorstaander van menseregte deur erfenis.

Twintig jaar gelede is erfenis verwar met geskiedenis en nooit sou ek die uiters langsame proses van verandering wat die museum intussen ondergaan het, wou verruil nie. Ek was daar, ek het dit

intens beleef en kan saampraat. Vandag hunker ek na die beleefdheid en verdraagsaamheid wat daardie tydperk gekenmerk het. Ek staal myself met die belofte van môre teen 'n sekere bedruktheid wat my liggie van hoop wil versmoor en ek probeer harder.

Ek kan twee voorvalle van uiterste hartseer onthou, maar die geluk in my huis en werk het dit elke keer oorskadu. As daar een ding is wat ek hoop my spanmaats by die Museum en Trusteeraadslede van my sal onthou is dat ek vir meer as twintig jaar ononderbroke diens by die Graaff-Reinet Museum gehad het. Dalk mag hulle saggies noem dat ek gereeld ten hemele wou skree as 'n besoeker so terloops vra: "So vertel 'n bietjie; wat weet jy van die Museum?", so asof twintig jaar nie 'n leeftyd is nie!

Iemand vra nou die dag of ek ooit my goedjies sal vat na groener weivelde. Ek het al probeer en het sak en pak teruggekeer.

# Theodore Heinrich Watermeyer (1879-1948) – Graaff-Reinet’s Most Famous Engineer

---

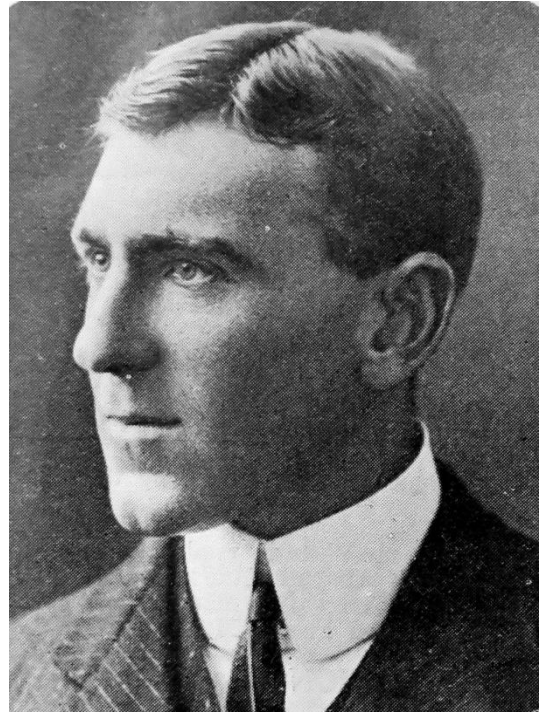
## Growing Up

By the middle of the 1870s, the farm Coloniesplaats north of Graaff-Reinet was occupied by a young couple - Christian Johannes Watermeyer (born 18 January 1842 in Cape Town) and Caroline Agnes Maria de Graeff (born on 25 January 1855 in Mossel Bay). Two of their sons died at childbirth (1877 and 1884), marked by a memorial stone in the Cradock Street cemetery, while the remaining five sons and two daughters reached adulthood.



*Memorial Stone of Theodore Watermeyer’s two brothers in The Cradock Street Cemetery, Graaff-Reinet*

This contribution deals with the eldest surviving son, Theodore Heinrich Watermeyer, born on 13 February 1879.



*Theodore Heinrich Watermeyer as young engineer, about 1920 (SARM 1926)*

Theodore spent his early childhood on Coloniesplaats and his schooling started at the Graaff-Reinet College. At the early age of about 13 years, he transferred to Stellenbosch Gymnasium, today Paul Roos Gymnasium. (The Watermeyer family also had a presence in the Stellenbosch area, owning the farm Jonkershoek.) After one or two years in Stellenbosch, at the tender age of

about 15 years, he left for England to complete his schooling at Bath College. After school, Theodore enrolled for a three-year course in civil and electrical engineering at Mason's College, today University of Birmingham. He was a brilliant student and graduated with numerous first class passes and book prizes.

(Although not part of this narrative, it might interest readers to know that Theodore's brother Ernest Frederick, 20 months younger, followed the same educational path up to Bath College. After Bath, the equally brilliant Ernest moved on to Cambridge where he completed dual degrees in mathematics and law. In 1943, he became South Africa's ninth Chief Justice – therefore also Graaff-Reinet's most famous lawyer)

We can speculate why Theodore Heinrich opted to become an engineer. He was born in the year that the railway reached Graaff-Reinet – probably the most

significant single event in the town's history to demonstrate the benefits of the industrial age to an isolated farming community. As a little boy, he must have soaked up some of the talk and excitement about the new train service. Moreover, while he was finishing up school in Bath, railway construction was underway on Coloniesplaats, the very farm where he grew up! (The railway line from Graaff-Reinet towards Lootsberg was completed in 1897.) The letters from his family about the construction activity on the farm would be further stimulation for an interest in railways.

### [The Engineering Years](#)

The second, practical part of his engineering training was spent as a pupil of David Gravell, a consulting engineer operating from Westminster in London, where he was mainly engaged in surveys for railways. Upon completion of his pupillage after two years, he became Gravell's assistant for a short while, taking responsibility for harbour works and planning of

railways in Wales and London. When peace was declared in South Africa at the end of May 1902, Watermeyer was already in the process of returning to South Africa to join the Cape Government Railways. The next five years were spent on the construction of the narrow-gauge railway between Port Elizabeth and Avontuur (in recent times better known as the “Apple Express”). He progressed rapidly through the ranks and from 1907 was put in charge of an assortment of projects in the Eastern Cape – easing gradients on old lines, strengthening of existing bridges to allow for heavier trains, and new lines at Alexandria, Riverside and Lady Grey.

Watermeyer’s biggest break came at the end of 1910 when he was tasked to build the difficult Montagu pass through the Outeniqua Mountains between George and Oudtshoorn – a line of 72 km. His supervision of this line, described by others as a “masterpiece of engineering” and a “magnificent engineering feat”,

established him as a foremost construction engineer in South Africa. When he retired, the Montagu Pass was singled out as the “most important engineering achievement of his career”. Following completion of the Montagu Pass, he was the first engineer to design and use a track-laying machine in South Africa while he was in charge of the new Aliwal North – Zastron line. He left the Free State for Natal to spend the next two years on general railway maintenance.

By the end of 1920, Watermeyer’s talent as manager was recognised by promoting him to Assistant Chief Civil Engineer at railway headquarters in Johannesburg. Five years later he was promoted to Assistant General Manager in Bloemfontein, and soon thereafter to the same position in Cape Town, where he was instrumental in the electrification of the Cape Town suburban railway system. His time in Cape Town came to an end in 1928 when he was transferred, for the last time, to Johannesburg as

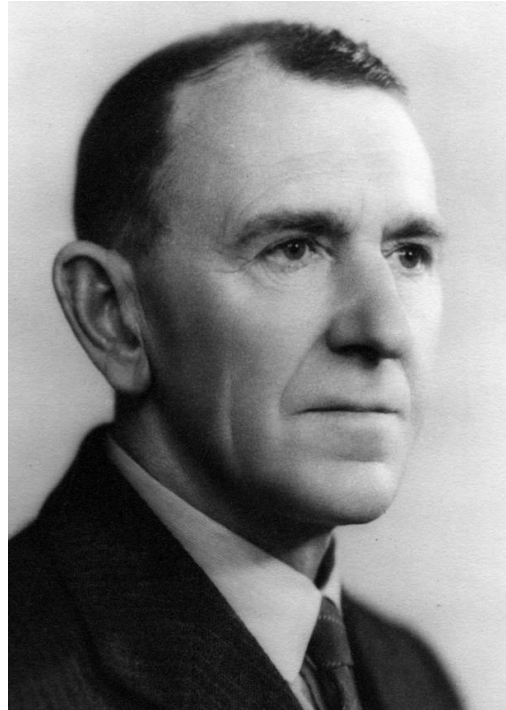
Assistant General Manager (Technical) in April 1928.

### General Manager of the South African Railways (SAR)

In Johannesburg, Watermeyer was part of the highest echelon of the SAR. His first chance to act as General Manager came in 1931 for a period of three months. In 1933, he acted again for six months before he was permanently promoted to General Manager on 14 August 1933. He was the first South African-born engineer to reach the top position of the SAR, a remarkable achievement at a time when almost all the engineers were recruited from overseas.

When Watermeyer was promoted to General Manager, South Africa was firmly in the clutches of the Great Depression. The first three years were ones of austerity to steer the SAR towards a sound financial footing. The next three years, however, marked an era of unprecedented growth. During this time, the ambitious Ten Million Pound Scheme was completed which focused on a massive

upgrade of the South African railway network, including electrification and train services in general.



*Watermeyer, the manager, around 1940  
(THL P419\_01)*

But soon the tide turned again. Once World War Two started in 1939, a heavy burden fell upon the SAR – a massive drain of 15 000 men to military service, a call on the SAR workshops throughout South Africa to manufacture war materials, and large increases in passengers and freight due to military traffic.





*Colonel Watermeyer (on the right) reviewing unit of the Tank Corps in Johannesburg during September 1940 on their departure for World War Two. (THL M129\_05)*

This extremely difficult time led to the unique honour of asking Watermeyer to stay in office for two years beyond the mandatory retirement age of 60 years, something never done before or since. He eventually retired on 12 February 1941.

Despite the ebbs brought on by the Depression and World War Two, the overall growth of the SAR during Watermeyer's watch (1933 to 1940) was impressive. A few key statistics are presented in the table with 1902 as a reference to the year in which Watermeyer started his career in South Africa.

### **Key Statistics to Illustrate SAR Development**

	1902	1933	1940	1933→ 1940
Total assets (million £)	51	148	167	12.8 %
Earnings (million £)	12.7	20.6	33.8	64.1 %
Route mileage (km)	6 930	21 160	21 380	1.0 %
Train mileage (million km)	40.0	63.7	100.3	57.5 %
Passenger journeys (million)	25.5	69.9	120.3	72.1 %
Goods tonnage (million t)	7.6	21.5	38.5	79.1 %
Steam locomotives	1232	2 136	2 278	6.6 %
Electric locomotives	-	96	178	85.4 %
Coaches	1 474	3 891	4 746	22.0 %
Goods wagons	18 325	39 747	53 236	33.9 %

With Watermeyer at the helm, the SAR was strengthened and modernised in different ways. Four of the most prominent projects were the accelerated rollout of electrification, the considerable expansion of the Road Motor Services, complete reorganisation of the SAR Police, and major harbour improvements at all South African harbours. Three new institutions were established, namely South African Airways (part of the SAR at the time), a new SAR Health Department, and the Central Training Institute at Esselen Park. New technical innovations were the introduction of precooling sheds in Table Bay Harbour and the establishment of

a SAR long distance telephone system throughout South Africa.



*Watermeyer's retirement dinner was held in the Blue Room of the Johannesburg Station in 1943. (THL M299\_06)*

On Watermeyer's retirement, many kind words were said about him. Besides the usual accolades of "able administrator", "unobtrusive efficiency", "powers of leadership" and "foresightedness", it is remarkable that almost all singled out his fairness and keen interest towards others, which "elicited the respect and support of men and women of every grade in the Service". His "kind consideration he had always showed the Afrikaans-speaking section" was acknowledged, which he thanked (in Afrikaans) for their "valuable and loyal cooperation".



*Watermeyer delivering his retirement address in February 1941, flanked by James Merriman Greathead (another renowned engineer from Eastern Cape Settler stock) on his right, and CM Hoffe, his successor as General Manager. (THL M299\_03)*

## Personal Life

Besides his professional interests, Watermeyer found time to be a keen golfer, winning trophies from time to time. He was also respected for a great knowledge of plants and was often consulted on botanical matters.

Watermeyer married twice. On 10 June 1909 he married Jessie Kerr Batchelor (born 3 March 1886), second daughter of Dr Henry Batchelor and Jessie Kerr Erskine of Queenstown. The couple had one son (later to become a prominent consulting civil engineer in South Africa) and two daughters. Jessie Watermeyer died in 1939. On 25 August 1945, Watermeyer married

Edith Winifred Lomas, born 23 August 1895.

Theodore Heinrich died on 3 December 1948 in Johannesburg. His funeral was at the Braamfontein crematorium on Sunday December 6. A guard of honour at the entrance to the church was supplied by nurses of the St John Ambulance Brigade, an organisation which he served throughout his career to eventually reach the highest level of office. His coffin, therefore, was draped in the mantle of a Knight of the Order.

Theodore Heinrich Watermeyer was a remarkable man, able and kind – a great son of Graaff-Reinet.

*-submitted by Johannes Haarhoff*

#### Sources:

*South African Railway Magazine* January 1926; February 1933; March and April 1941; January 1949

*Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* Volume 3

*SASSAR Magazine* June 1982

[https://www.myheritage.com/names/theodore\\_watermeyer](https://www.myheritage.com/names/theodore_watermeyer)

[http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph\\_final.php?serial=3054](http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph_final.php?serial=3054)

<http://www.identitynumber.org/marriage-lookup-surname-results.php?surname=WATERMEYER>

Transnet Heritage Library (THL) for photographs

Peter Watermeyer for genealogical information

*We Fought the Miles – The History of South African Railways at War 1939 – 1945.*

# Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider Afrika.

## GRAAFF-REINET GEMEENTE 'n Kort Geskiedenis

---

Die geskiedenis van hierdie gemeente begin in 1819 toe die *Graaff-Reynetsche Zendelings Genootskap* tot stand gekom het. Wanneer daar so terloops deur die geskiedenis van hierdie gemeente geblaai word, is die tekens van daardie tye duidelik te bespeur.

*Tydens sy bediening ( hier word verwys na Eerw. Auke Compaan) het die Independent Kerk hier 'n kragtige poging aangewend om die Kleurlinge na hulle kerk oor te haal. Baie het dan ook gegaan. Dit is interessant, indien nie pateties, om te sien in die register van die dae teenoor so baie name "Kerk" of "Gemeente verlaten".*

*Eerw. Paulus P Joubert (1931) Die Nederduits-Gereformeerde Sendinggemeente, Graaff-Reinet, K.P.  
Eeufees van die Gemeente*

Historiese inligting oor bruin mense en veral hul kulturele tradisies is baie raar. Daar bestaan selde geskrewe rekords oor die bruin bevolking van Suid-Afrika en

indien wel, is die aard daarvan eensydig en subjektief. Die verhaal van die sending in Graaff-Reinet word dan ook hierdeur gekelder en alhoewel baie geïnteresseerd in hierdie onderwerp, is ek nie by magte om ingeligte kommentaar daaroor te lewer nie omdat my navorsing daaroor maar nog in die beginfase is.

Die Sending is 'n verhaal op sy eie, dalk van mense wat geroepe gevoel het om die Christelike evangelie te versprei.

Eerwaarde Auke Compaan, wie aanvanklik deur Ds. Andrew Murray genader is om sendingwerk in Graaff-Reinet te doen, het onderneem om op sy eie die werk hier te doen. Vir hom was dit 'n geloofsdaad. Eerwaarde Paulus Joubert noem ook tydens die boekstaving van die geskiedenis van een van die oudste Gemeentes van die Sendingkerk (1932), naamlik die Graaff-Reinetsse Gemeente, dat hy daarmee wou bewys dat *die Nederduits-Gereformeerde Kerk nie onverskillig*

*was teenoor die behoeftes van die Kleurling nie en kennis wou versprei aangaande die groot en belangrike werk van die Nederduits-Gereformeerde Sendingkerk van Kaapland.*



*Eerwaarde Auke Compaan (Foto: Ds Gawie Basson)*

Hoe dit ook al sy, baie bruin mense het hulle tot die Christelike geloof bekeer onder aanmoediging van die sendelinge. Vir die huidige leraar van die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk, Ds. Petrus Gysman, spreek dit van die wyse waarop die Here werk.



Die gemeente se geskiedenis begin in 1819 toe die

*Graaff-Reynetsche Zending* *Genootskap* op 1 Augustus tot stand gekom het onder leiding van Dr Abraham Faure.

Faure was leraar van die plaaslike Nederduits Gereformeerde Gemeente Graaff-Reinet. Die eerste sendeling was Eerwaarde Van Lingen wat aanvanklik vir die London Missionary Society gewerk het.



*Oefeningshuis in Kerkstraat vandag die Hester Rupert Kunsmuseum (Foto: Ds. Gawie Basson)*

Deur die toedoen van Landdros Andries Stockenström is 'n bouperseel in Kerkstraat bekom waarop 'n kerkgebou opgerig is. Die hoeksteen is op 24 April 1821 gelê en die gebou was die

gemeente se aanbiddingsplek tot 1966.



*Laaste diens in die Oefeningshuis – 6 March 1964 (Foto: Ds. Gawie Basson)*

In gevolg die Groepsgebiedewet is die gemeenskap waartoe die gemeentelede behoort het, verplig om te verhuis na Kroonvale, die toegewese nuwe woonbuurt. Dit het veroorsaak dat die gemeente en hulle kerkgebou etlike kilometer van mekaar verwyder is. In die lig

van die nuwe situasie het die kerkraad besluit om die bestaande kerk te verkoop en 'n nuwe gebou in Kroonvale te bou.

Die nuwe eienaars van die ou kerk was van plan om dit te sloop en 'n vulstasie op die erf te bou. Dr Anton Rupert het ingetree en die gebou het aan die slopershamer ontkom. Dit het toe die Hester Rupert Kunstgalerie geword.



*Nuwe kerkgebou in Kroonvale vandag  
(Foto: Ds Gawie Basson)*

Die nuwe gebou in Kroonvale is heelwat groter as die oue. Die boukoste het nagenoeg R 40,000.00 beloop. Die gemeente moes by die bank geld leen en het so in groot skuld geraak. Na die inwyding, oor die naweek van 11 en 12 Maart 1967, het die leraars, Ds F J Bessinger en Ds C A Meyer na ander gemeentes vertrek. Die gevolg was dat die paaiemente op die lening agterstallig geraak het en die skuld groter geword het.



*Foto: Ds Gawie Basson*

Ds C R Serfontein van Murraysburg is toe beroep en oor 'n tydperk van sewe jaar is die kerkskuld uiteindelik gedelg. Die finale totaal R 75,000.00

Die hele gebeure was vir die gemeente traumaties. Na 145 jaar moes hulle afskeid neem van die gebou waar hulle geslagte lank



*Dooptont (Foto: Ds Gawie Basson)*

aanbid het, waar hulle skool ontstaan het, waaraan baie sentimente en emosie gekoppel was. Toe moes hulle hulle vir byna 'n dekade afsloof en groot offerings maak om die groot skuld te delg.



*Binne die VGK Kerk, Graaff-Reinet (Foto: Ds Gawie Basson)*

Op Sondag 12 Maart 2017 presies vyftig jaar later, is hierdie gebeure deur die gemeente met 'n Dankdiens in herinnering geroep.

- Deur Ds. Gawie Basson, voormalige leraar van die VGK Gemeente, Graaff-Reinet

# LETTERS FROM THE LÜCKHOFF ARCHIVES

In recent years, Friend of the Museum, William Lückhoff, has donated many interesting documents to The Graaff-Reinet Museum. He recently came upon letters from a certain Pastor Wilhelm Lückhoff who fled Germany in 1935. Although his family has its roots in Germany, William has no idea how Pastor Lückhoff is related to the family.



*63 St George Street  
Bloemfontein  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 1940*

*Dear Archee,*

*I thank you very much for your kind letter and for your sympathy. It was impossible for me, as a preacher of the Bible to agree with Nazism. I am a*

*member of the Nie-Moller Group of the Confessional Church. So I could not come together with a part of my congregation which hypocritically sympathized with Nazism which is absolutely antichristian. Since two years the Nazi's threatened to kill me. They wanted to get me on a German boat on order to shoot me in Germany. They spread all kinds of rumors in this country about me. In the last three weeks I have received three anonymous letters so that I decided to resign. In four weeks time I have to leave here with my family and I hope to find a job, I intend to go on a farm and to start with dairy cattle.*

*But before I finish my letter, I should like to ask you if you are able to give a job to an elderly, fine man who has been farm manager for many years in Natal. He is a German and lost his position. As I am the secretary of a German relief Committee, I have to find jobs for my German people. I should be very pleased if you could be able to help me in this case.*

*With best regards from house to house.*

*Your sincerely*

*W Lückhoff*

## AANKONDIGINGS

---

- \* Die Algemene jaarvergadering word hierdie jaar op 15 Junie 2017 om 12h00 by die Ou Biblioteek gehou. Die gasspreker is Prof. Johannes Haarhoff en dit belooft om 'n baie insiggewende diskoers te wees. Ons hoop om u daar te sien.
- \* Ons doen 'n beroep op al ons vriende om *Die Red Reinethuisfonds* te ondersteun. Alhoewel restourasie nie vir die volgende paar jaar nodig sal wees nie as gevolg van die befondsing van Die Rupert Historiese Huise Stigting ontvang, wil ons graag hierdie fonds lewend hou.

## WORDS TO PONDER.....

---

*"I hope..."*