

# THE HOURGLASS DIE UURGLAS

NEWSLETTER OF THE | NUUSBRIEF VAN DIE  
GRAAFF-REINET MUSEUM

EDITION  
1|2025

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- *Redaksioneel*
- *Die onthulling van die historiese Van Ryneveldspasdam lantern*
- *The Alex Laing Hall in Kroonvale*
- *The History of The Graaff-Reinet Golf Club*





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Die tema van Internasionale Museumdag 2025 – *"The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities"* – het hierdie jaar 'n geleentheid gebied om die rol van die Graaff-Reinet Museum in 'n vinnig-veranderende wêreld te ondersoek. Hoe betekenisvol is die kultuurhistoriese museum in vandag se samelewing? Verander die samelewing regtig so vinnig en hoe hou ons die pas vol? Dit het 'n deeglike ondersoek geverg om hierdie tema werklik te verstaan en gevolglik in ons werksaamhede te implementeer.

### **Vinnig-veranderende gemeenskappe**

Gemeenskappe verander deesdae baie vinniger as in die verlede en dus word kultuur, erfenis en gemeenskapsidentiteit ook daardeur beïnvloed. In die verlede, het mense taamlik geïsoleerd gelewe en dus was kommunikasie en kontak met ander mense beperk. Tans mag dit dalk klink asof ons iewers in die Steentydperk gelewe het maar dink net hoe lank dit geneem het om 'n posstuk of selfs 'n pakkie van die Kaap af te ontvang – weke! In baie gevalle het mense hul hele lewe lank in dieselfde dorp gebly en dikwels sou hulle slegs reise onderneem om voorrade, meubels, toerusting of luukse aan te koop of om met vakansie te gaan.

Verandering was dus baie traag - in baie gevalle so langsaam dat dit soms heeltemal onopmerklik was. 'n Goeie voorbeeld is die ontstaan van die dra van tradisionele wit trourokke: Voor die 19de eeu het bruide in Engeland gewoonlik hul beste rok gedra—ongeag die kleur daarvan. Dit kon blou, groen, rooi, geel of selfs swart wees, afhangend van wat modieus of prakties was. 'n Keerpunt het egter in 1840 gekom toe Koningin Victoria van Engeland met Prins Albert

van Sakse-Koberg en Gotha in die huwelik tree.<sup>1</sup> Sy het 'n wit satyntrourok met Honitonkant-afwerking gedra, iets wat destyds blykbaar baie ongewoon was. Met hierdie ongewone keuse, wou sy haar kuisheid beklemtoon maar ook die aandag vestig op die pragtige kantwerk gemaak deur Britse kantmakers.<sup>2</sup> Die koninklike troue het die wêreld aan die gons gehad. Gravures en beskrywings (deur koerante, Valentynskaarte, advertensies ensovoorts) is wyd versprei en het 'n groot indruk wêreldwyd gemaak. Die mode het soos 'n veldbrand onder die adellikes versprei en later self onder die middelklas. Maar helaas! Hier in Suid-Afrika het dit so lank geneem voordat 'n beskrywing of gravure van hierdie bekende wit trourok die land bereik het, dat mense in die 1850's, veral op die platteland, nog steeds gekleurde trourokke gedra het. Voorbeelde daarvan is in die museum se klereversameling te sien. Afstand het dus duidelik kommunikasie en kontak beïnvloed en verandering vertraag.

Gemeenskappe verander vandag vinniger as ooit tevore weens verskeie faktore. Hier volg 'n paar redes: globalisering bring mense, produkte en idees van regoor die wêreld saam. Op sy beurt, gee dit aanleiding tot die vermenging van kulture en nuwe aangepaste identiteite. Tegnologie en sosiale media beïnvloed hoe mense kommunikeer en hulself sien, terwyl grootskaalse verstedeliking en migrasie gemeenskappe herstruktureer namate mense vir werk of veiligheid verhuis. Vandag ervaar ons ook dat sosiale waardes oor geslag, ras en identiteit vinnig verander en dat die jonger generasies gedurig ou norme uitdaag. Boonop dwing globale faktore soos klimaatsverandering en ekonomiese druk mense om aan te pas, terwyl die werksomgewing deur outomatisering en kunsmatige intelligensie verander word.

Hoe kan museums die pas vol hou in hierdie tyd van verandering? Hoe kompeteer ons vir aandag te midde van tegnologiese innovasie maar ook in 'n wêreld van uiterstes soos oorweldigende rykdom en verskriklike armoede, waar verdraagsaamheid en wedersydse respek heeltemal deur toenemende polarisering verplaas word? Dit klink na 'n onbegonne taak...

## Die Museum as Anker in 'n Tyd van Verandering

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.historyextra.com/period/modern/history-weddings-rings-bridesmaids-why-white-wedding-dress-traditions/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-victoria-connection>.



Gedurende Mei-maand as deel van die Internasionale Museummaandvieringe, het die Graaff-Reinet Museum 'n historiese lantern, afkomstig van die Van Ryneveldpasdam laat restoureer en in die tuin van Reinethuis opgerig. Die lantern is een van veertien wat voorheen op die Van Ryneveldpasdam (vandag die Nqwebadam) se loopvlak gemonteer is. Die dam is op 16 Julie 1925 amptelik ingewy<sup>3</sup>. Die lanterns het die damwal belig, sodat die publiek snags gerieflik daaroor kon loop. Die damwal is egter in die 1960's vir die publiek gesluit en die lanterns is verwyder. Die lantern, vandag in Reinethuis se tuin te sien, is een van twee wat deur Dr. J. Human gekoop en by sy huis opgerig is. Een hiervan is deur sy kinders in 2019 aan die Graaff-Reinet Museum geskenk. 'n Kleinseun van Dr. Human het onlangs op *Facebook* opgemerk dat hy een van die ligte wat in die agterplaas opgerig is, baie goed kan onthou. Die ander lantern is nog steeds by die ingang van die woning te Somersetstraat 72 te sien. Kort na die opening en meegaande mediadekking, is nog 'n lantern voor Nedbank in Caledonstraat opgemerk en 'n paal waarop een van hierdie lanterns gemonteer is het ook weer te voorskyn gekom. Dit, na aanleiding van die oplettheid van lede van die publiek.

Hierdie belangstelling in 'n historiese lantern dui daarop dat mense nog steeds smag na 'n tasbare verbintenis met die verlede en dit is iets wat nie gou sal verander nie. 'n Artefak het die vermoë om lewe te blaas in die verlede te midde van tegnologiese en sosio-politieke verandering. Deur hul uitstallings en veral hul interpretasie van tasbare artefakte, die visuele kultuur, ontsluit museums die geheime van die verlede en word in der ware kalm en betroubare ruimtes in 'n wêreld wat deur onsekerheid, gejaagdheid maar ook onstuimigheid gekenmerk word. Museums is plekke waar mense se herinneringe wortel skiet en so word museums dus ankers in hierdie onstuimige tye van verandering.

### Museums onder die vergootglas: hoe betrek ons die Jeug?

Talle Internasionale Museumdagprogramme fokus hoofsaaklik op die jeug. Skole word na die provinsiale vieringe genooi en elke museum probeer om met

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<sup>3</sup> Sien meegaande artikel op bladsy 10.

nuwe en innoverende idees vorendag te kom om die jeug se belangstelling te prikkel. Die dilemma is dat ons voortdurend met die hedendaagse *Coca Cola*-verbruikerskultuur moet kompeteer. As museumkundiges wat ons opvoedkundige taak met groot erns bejeën, is ons deeglik daarvan bewus dat inheemse tale, tradisies en identiteit deur 'n grootskaalse globale verbruikerskultuur vervang en afgewater word wat tans die voorkeure en selfs ideale van die hedendaagse jeug bepaal. Hierdie tendens en sy vernietigende gevolge het ons dus genoop om maniere te vind om die boodskap hard en duidelik oor te dra dat ons kulturele erfenis deur 'n onpersoonlike massakultuur bedreig word en dat dit krisisaftmetings begin aanneem. Daar is tot die slotsom gekom dat museums ook ruimtes van verset moet word.

In 'n wêreld waar jongmense toenemend beïnvloed word deur tegnologie en visuele media, het ons dus gepoog om ons San-rotskunsuitstalling op kreatiewe en toeganklike maniere te gebruik wat die aandag van die jeug sou vasvang. Met die toestemming en samewerking van beeldhouer David Brits en musikant Raiven Hansmann het ons besluit om die kunsfliet *Tears Become Rain* (2020), waarin San-artefakte uit ons versameling gebruik is, aan jongmense tydens International Museumdag te vertoon.



Skermgreep van die *Tears Become Rain* fliet  
(<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-06-29-tears-become-rain-singing-through-drought/>)

*Tears Become Rain* vertel van 'n sangreis in 'n tyd van droogte, geïnspireer deur 'n ou San-verhaal uit die Bleek-Lloyd-argief en vertolk deur die Xam-verteller //Kabbo.<sup>4</sup> Hierdie flik is later aangewys as wenner van die *Rupert Social Art Prize*, wat verder bevestig het hoe museums deur kreatiewe vennootskappe kan help om die verlede met die hede te verbind, maar ook hoe om die jeug betrokke en geïnteresseerd te kry. Museum poog dus om hulself ook as dinamiese instellings te posisioneer wat tred hou met verandering. Ongelukkig het probleme met die elektrisiteit verhoed dat ons hierdie projek tydens die Internasionale Museumdag vieringe in Fort Beaufort kon loots, maar tans is dit deel van die Rotskunsopvoedkundige-program wat aan leerders aangebied word.



*Ms Thobeka Booysen introducing the new Rock Art Travelling Exhibition during International Museum Day 2025*

Die hoop is dat hierdie benadering, waar geskiedenis en erfenis op 'n visueel stimulerende wyse gedeel word, die behoeftes van vandag se jeug sal aanspreek en dat hulle deur hierdie ervaring van sensoriese stimulasie en

<sup>4</sup> Die flik kan gesien word by [https://youtu.be/E\\_ZZdONmnNo](https://youtu.be/E_ZZdONmnNo)



storievertelling verryk sal word. Op hierdie wyse hoop ons ook dat ons 'n blywende sleutelrol in die toekoms kan speel.

### Stemme voorheen stil word gehoor

In 'n vinnig-veranderende wêreld waar museums toenemend daarna streef om inklusiewer en meer verteenwoordigend te wees, word stemme wat voorheen stil was uiteindelik 'n geleentheid gebied om ook hul plek in die historiese rekord in te neem. 'n Voorbeeld hiervan is die verhaal van Elise Bishop wat as een van die eerste persone in Suid-Afrika geslagsaanpassings-chirurgie ondergaan het. Vir dekades was Elise se storie onbekend en haar biografie onvoltooid, haar stem sag, amper stil tot in 2020 toe haar vertelling oor Graaff-Reinet en sy mense groot reaksie op die *The Graaff-Reinet History* Facebookblad ontlok het. Hierdie blad, wat eintlik die inisiatief van Wilmari Spence was en ook deur die museum geadministreer word, se ledetal het vinnig gegroei na aanleiding van Elise se stories - eers het sy slegs foto's geplaas, toe langer brokkies en daarna volledige beskrywings van gebeure en karakters uit Graaff-Reinet se vervloë dae. Haar biografie *Twee lewens* het in Julie 2022 verskyn. Hierdie proses het haar bemaagtig om selfs verder te gaan en 'n volledige boek te skryf, in 'n *lingua franca* so eie aan Graaff-Reinet wat "Graaffrikaans" genoem word.



*Elise Bishop*  
**GRAAFFERNET**  
**SIDESTOEP**  
**STORIES**  
in Graafrikaans

*Elise Bishop*  
**BOEKBEKENDSTELLING**

Die Graaff-Reinet Museum  
Nooi u hartlik uit na die bekendstelling  
van Elise Bishop se nuwe boek:

*Graaffernet: Sidestoep*  
*Stories in Graafrikaans*

Die skrywer sal tydens die geleentheid meer vertel  
oor die ontstaan van die boek en daaruit voorlees.  
Daar sal ook geleentheid wees om boeke  
aan te skaf en deur die skrywer te laat teken.

Datum: Saterdag, 24 Mei 2025  
Plek: Reinethuis, 1 Murraystraat,  
Graaff-Reinet  
Tyd: 11:00 vm



Graaff-Reinet  
MUSEUM



Elise se geskrewe verhale het nie net haar eie stem vrygestel nie, maar ook die taal van 'n hele gemeenskap gelegitimeer. Terselfdertyd het haar liefde vir haar geboortedorp bygedra tot verfilming van 'n dokumentêr oor Graaffrikaans, vervaardig deur *Die Stigting vir Bemagtiging deur Afrikaans* onder leiding van die bekende Sandra Prinsloo. Hierdie dokumentêr is in Mei 2025 — tydens Museummaand — by die Suidoosterfees bekend gestel en het lig gewerp op 'n kultuurhistoriese tradisie en taal wat voorheen nie in museumruimtes of in die historiese rekord sou verskyn het nie.<sup>5</sup> Elise Bishop se verhaal is 'n treffende voorbeeld van hoe museums 'n aktiewe rol kan speel in die bemagtiging van gemarginaliseerde individue en gemeenskappe, en hoe hulle bydra tot 'n meer volledige en verteenwoordigende historiese rekord.

In hierdie tyd van wêreldwye verandering en gemeenskappe wat ook groei, ontwikkel en verander, staan museums nie terug nie — ons staan eerder rotsvas. Ons skroom nie vir verandering nie — inteendeel, ons aanvaar die uitdaging met entoesiasme en 'n oop gemoed. Ons besef dat daar nog harde werk voorlê maar tans beweeg museums uit hul gemaksones en ondersoek nuwe en interessante idees. In my opinie is die Graaff-Reinet Museum een van hierdie museums!



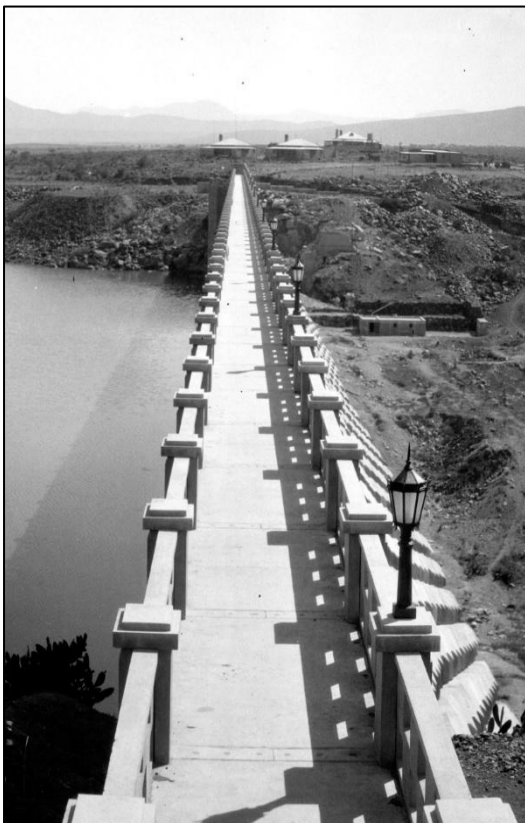
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<sup>5</sup> Sien die volledige dokumentêr by <https://youtu.be/8Xm20zE9UIo>

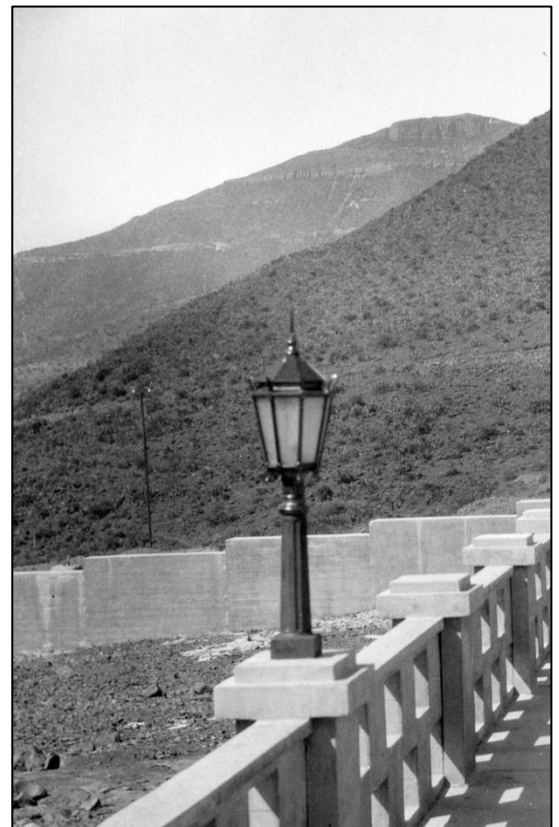
# Die Onthulling van die Historiese Damwal Lantern

Johannes Haarhoff

In 2019 het die Graaff-Reinet Museum 'n boek oor die konstruksie van die Van Ryneveldspasdam, soos die Nqwebadam destyds bekend gestaan het, gepubliseer. Hierdie publikasie, wat nasionale erkenning ontvang het, word steeds by die Museum te koop aangebied. Deur die goedhartigheid van twee versamelaars wat hul fotografiese versamelings beskikbaar gestel het, asook die gebruik van foto's vanuit die Museum se eie versameling, kon hierdie prag-publikasie saamgestel word. Tydens die bestudering van die foto's, het die lang ry damlanterns op die balustrade van die loopvlak die aandag getrek. Hierdie lanterns het saans die loopvlak belig terwille van die publiek wat destyds vrye toegang oor die damwal gehad het. Die ligte is egter reeds in die 1960's deur die munisipaliteit verwyder nadat hulle vir meer as 35 jaar diens gedoen het.



*Loopvlak oor die damwal met lanterns aan die stroomafkant balustrade gemonteer*



*Lantern op die beton balustrade van die dam se loopvlak gemonteer*

Daar was altesaam 14 van hierdie deftige lanterns op die damwal gemonteer. Die lotgevalle van die ligte nadat hulle verwyder is, kon tot nou toe as volg vasgestel word:

- 💡 Ses van die lanterns is in Pastoriestraat opgerig toe hierdie straat in die 1960's volledig gerestoureer is. Die lanterns is almal aan die noordekant van die straat opgerig – dié aan die suidekant lyk anders en is dus nie van die dam afkomstig nie. Een van die oorspronklike lanterns reg voor die huidige biblioteekingang, is verwyder en slegs die paal waarop dit gemonteer was, het agtergebly.
- 💡 Een lantern is voor Nedbank op die hoek van Caledonstraat skuins oorkant die Grootkerk heropgerig.
- 💡 Twee van die ligte is aan Dr. J. Human, bekende mediese dokter op Graaff-Reinet, verkoop wat die ligte by sy woning in Somersetstraat 72 opgerig het – een is by die voordeur op die sypaadjie aangebring, waar dit vandag nog staan.
- 💡 Dit is nog nie bekend wat van die oorblywende vyf ligte geword het nie.

Toe Dr. J. Human se woning in die 1990's ontruim is, het die tweede lantern wat hy gekoop het, in die besit van sy seun Johann gekom, wat dit in ongeveer 2019 aan die Graaff-Reinet Museum geskenk het. Die lantern is in veilige bewaring gehou terwyl daar gesoek is na 'n oorspronklike lamppaal waarop die lig gemonteer kon word. Die lanterns op die damwal het aanvanklik op kort paaltjies gestaan wat deur die handrelings van die damwal ondersteun is. Soortgelyke paaltjies kon egter nie gevind word nie. Hierdie jaar (2025), met die Nqwebadam se 100-jarige herdenking, het die Museum spesiaal 'n replika van die oorspronklike kort paaltjie laat maak, die lantern van Johann Human sorgvuldig gerestoureer en dit as 'n monument in die tuin van Reinethuis opgerig, selfs met 'n werkende elektriese lig.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 'n YouTube-opname is onlangs vrygestel ter viering van die 100-jarige bestaan van die datum. Klik gerus op die skakel: <https://youtu.be/H530IzNtPVE>





*Die Lantern word versigtig in Reinethuis se tuin heropgerig*



*Johann Human tydens die opening van die historiese lantern*

Die projek is moontlik gemaak deur die skenking en befondsing van die Humanfamilie, asook die samewerking van plaaslike medewerkers wat vir die restourasie en oprigting van die monument verantwoordelik was. Die monument is op Dinsdagoggend 13 Mei 2025 tydens 'n kort seremonie deur Johann Human onthul en die gaste is daarna deur die Graaff-Reinet Museum in die tuin onthaal.

Indien lede van die publiek dalk oor inligting aangaande die oorblywende vyf lanterns beskik of waar dit mag wees, kontak gerus die museum. Elke brokkie inligting kan help om die legkaart te voltooi.

# Save the Dates



## AGM



### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

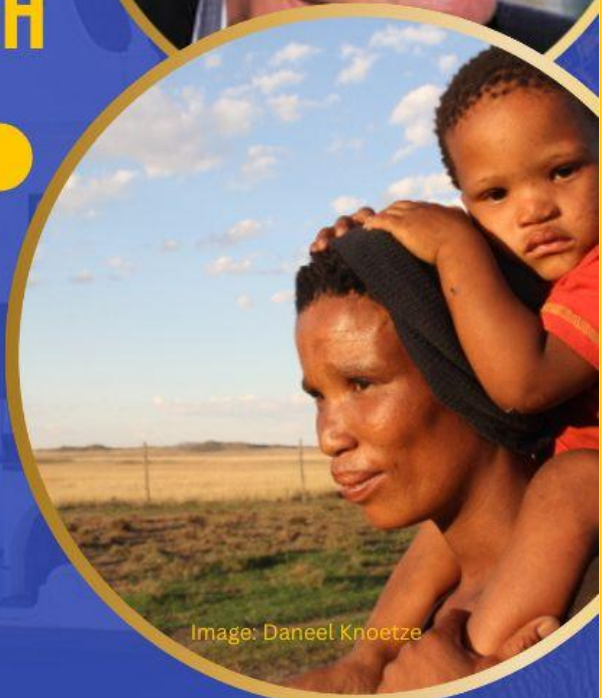
WITH RENOWNED ANTHROPOLOGIST

## PROF MICHAEL DE JONGH

“Discovering the forgotten people of the Karoo

– and their present-day descendants”

FRIDAY | 04 JULY 2025 | 11H00 |  
THE OLD LIBRARY ON  
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the Date

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# THE ALEXANDER LAING HALL

a Beacon in the Kroonvale Community

Anguska Kayster

The Alexander Laing Hall was one of the first public buildings constructed in Kroonvale, the former Coloured residential area of Graaff-Reinet. Situated in what later became known as “*Die Erwe*”—the more affluent and better-developed section of the township—the hall was envisioned as both a community and recreational centre. More than just a building, it formed part of a broader effort to foster a sense of unity, self-reliance, and pride among the residents of Kroonvale. This vision emerged in response to the forced removals and legalised segregation that had displaced them from central Graaff-Reinet, compelling the community to rebuild their lives on the margins of town.

This important building was constructed thanks to the generosity of Alexander Laing, a Scotsman man who settled in Graaff-Reinet in 1893.<sup>7</sup> Widely respected in the town for his strong values and deep commitment to community service, Laing never had children of his own. Instead, he focused his energy and resources on supporting the local *Non-European Welfare Society*. In his will, Laing made several donations to schools and charities, but one of his most significant bequests was a sum of £4,500 set aside specifically for building a town hall and community centre for the Coloured people of Graaff-Reinet.

Construction of the Alexander Laing Hall began in June 1961. The town engineer took a personal interest in the project and was directly involved in overseeing the construction. To keep costs down, the building was designed as a prefabricated concrete structure. The final cost came to around £2,500. The hall included a large central space with a stage, two reading rooms (as Laing had requested), kitchens, and bathrooms.

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<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, no photograph of Alex Laing is known to exist. However, his death and marriage certificates form part of the Laing genealogical record, which is preserved in the Museum’s archival repository.

The steel framework was put up in record time, and the prefabricated walls made the rest of the building process efficient. The town engineer, who appears to have designed the building himself, created steel vertical supports so that the hollow wall cladding only needed to rest on a course of concrete blocks. The main hall measured 50 feet by 70 feet, with a stage 17 feet deep and 25 feet wide. Each reading room was 18 feet by 18 feet. Above the entrance, an interpretation of a Cape Dutch gable – designed by the engineer – still stands today. On the street-facing side of the building, a small box office juts out, also topped with a gable and flanked by two main entrance doors. The wooden floor inside the hall is original and still intact. High-set rectangular steel-framed windows were meant to allow for air circulation, but unfortunately, the ventilation never worked well – the air tends to move just below the roof, leaving the hall hot and stuffy in summer.



*The Alexander Laing Hall in Kroonvale (2025)*

The official opening of the Alexander Laing Hall took place on 8 August 1962. Dr I.D. du Plessis, Secretary of Coloured Affairs at the time, delivered the keynote speech. He described the building as a gift to the community and a

fitting monument to Alexander Laing. However, his speech quickly turned political. He urged the Coloured community not to rely on government generosity but to start contributing more to uplift themselves. He praised them for being religious, for opposing communism, and for their supposed desire “to move in the direction of whites.” This message, though dressed up as encouragement, was patronizing and demeaning. It ignored the true spirit of Laing’s gift, which was meant to uplift the community with dignity – not as a favour or handout, but as a rightful investment in people’s lives.

Soon after opening, the hall became a vital part of the community’s social life. One of the earliest major events held there was the debutante ball of the Pirates Rugby Club, hosted by the then-mayor and mayoress, Dr. and Mrs Laubscher. More than 300 people attended. Father Cox, the team’s coach, shared the stage with the mayoral couple, and the event was described as a glamorous and memorable occasion. The hall quickly became the go-to venue for school concerts, church events, dances, fundraisers, and other important gatherings. However, there were challenges – for instance, the principal of the local secondary school, Mr Frederick Hufkie, once complained that the lack of a ceiling in the hall damaged the acoustics and made it difficult for the school choir to perform properly.

Over time, the Alexander Laing Hall came to symbolise Laing’s enduring legacy. As Kroonvale grew, a library, clinic, and municipal offices were added nearby, making the area a key civic hub. Still, the hall always stood in contrast to Victoria Hall in Church Square – the grand colonial town hall for Graaff-Reinet’s white residents. Victoria Hall, completed in 1911, was designed in the Flemish Renaissance style by Cape Town architects Hesse and Hesse. It cost more than four times as much as the Alexander Laing Hall, and the difference in size, design, and elegance could not be ignored. These two buildings, each important in its own community, also told a story of inequality – a physical reminder of how racial segregation shaped every part of life under apartheid.

In the 1980s, the hall took on new significance – this time as a site of political resistance. On 18 March 1985, during a gathering of the *Municipal Management Committee* at the hall, a crowd of around 150 people gathered



outside and attempted to set the building alight. This marked a turning point in Kroonvale. The unrest did not stop there. It continued throughout the year and reached a heartbreaking climax on 7 August 1985, when the Spandau Senior Secondary School – a key institution in the community – was burned down. The event sent shockwaves through Kroonvale. Two teachers and a learner were arrested for arson. They were later sentenced to prison terms of eight and six years respectively. These events showed just how deep the anger and frustration ran in a community that had long been marginalised and silenced.

Despite these turbulent times, the Alexander Laing Hall survived. In recent years, both the Alex Laing and the grand Victoria Hall have suffered neglect. Victoria Hall was eventually closed for safety reasons, and restoring it would require a great deal of money – far more than what the municipality can currently afford. Yet the Alex Laing Hall continues to serve the community. During the COVID-19 lockdown, it was transformed into a temporary shelter for about thirty homeless people. In that moment, the hall gained new meaning. It became a place of refuge, safety, and second chances – both for the people it sheltered and for the building itself.

Today, the Alexander Laing Hall stands not only as a monument to the generosity of one man, but as a witness to the joys, struggles, and strength of the Kroonvale community over generations. It has hosted celebrations, endured protests, and offered shelter in times of crisis. Its story is deeply woven into the history of Kroonvale – and it continues to be a place where the community gathers, remembers, and moves forward.

### **Sources:**

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# THE HISTORY OF THE GRAAFF-REINET GOLF CLUB

BERNHARD WEYER

*This article has been summarised from “The Chronicles Of The Graaff-Reinet Golf Club”, covering the period from 1888 to 1993. These chronicles were written by the late Johann van Zijl, who was a lecturer at the Graaff-Reinet Teachers Training College. The late Brian Charles, former president of the Karoo Golf Union and member of the Executive of the S A Golf Union wrote the foreword, and to quote Brian all golfers owe Johann a big debt of gratitude for his tireless efforts into the research of the golf club history.*

The Graaff-Reinet Golf Club was formed on 19 May 1894. By 1886, there were also Cricket, Turf, Rifle, Archery, Quoit and Football clubs in Graaff-Reinet. Also, according to Cosmo Henning, a Buck-Hunting Club, modelled on the English fox-hunting clubs. However, golf was being played in Graaff-Reinet before 1894.

In 1888, a Mr Harold Glennie arrived in Graaff-Reinet.



**Douglas C. Proudfoot**

*First Club Captain, Graaff-Reinet Golf Club 1894*

*S.A. Amateur Champion 1893 – 1899 & 1902*

He had strong ties with the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, the holy grail of golfers. He married Charlotte Rubidge, and they had quite a few sons, including Walter, who was the father of Horace. He was soon joined by the Proudfoot brothers, Charles and Douglas. They had a business on Market Square, trading in wool, hides and skins. They were also very keen golfers.



By the time the golf club was officially formed, Douglas Proudfoot had already taken part twice in the SA Amateur championships, winning on both occasions.

He ended up winning it on eight occasions between 1893 and 1902. Golf was unfortunately cancelled in 1900 and 1901 – the Anglo-Boer War got in the way.



**20 October 1897**

*The opening of the first Clubhouse.*

*The Union Steamship Challenge trophy is displayed on the table.*

*Behind the table Douglas Proudfoot is clearly visible*



*A group of Lady Golfers on the first course.*

*The date is unknown and the photograph might have been taken in front of the clubhouse*



What is interesting about the first Golf Club committee was that it had three ministers of religion – Reverends Jenkins, Roper and Carlisle. The first golf course was in the Sunnyside area, near the existing Provincial Roads Department. There was an existing racecourse, and the golfers were given ground around the perimeter of the track.

Like all sports clubs, there is always a need to raise funds. In 1911, the Victoria Town Hall had just been built and a Grand Ball was arranged by the golf club. This was a very formal occasion. This was the era of the dance card, where each male partner entered the name of the female partner with whom he wished to dance. The programme opened and closed with a waltz, and which one was supposed to dance with your partner. After that, presumably with whoever took your fancy! There were also two Barn Dances and two Lancers, the rest being quick steps.

Getting back to the golf course, complaints were made by golfers about a lot of dust – there were brickfields nearby and trucks were crossing the fairways. Also, a lot of noise from trains. However, another strong motivating factor to relocate was that a dam was being built on the Sundays River. Dam means water, means possibility of grass golf course.

In 1925, the Graaff-Reinet Golf Club made the second move – north – between the dam and the Middelburg road, but south of what was known as the Hill course, which we will get to later. Kenneth Wiley and A. S. Meiring were the main instigators in getting the new course built. Luckily, a clubhouse was available. This was the house which had been used by the resident engineer during the building of the dam.

A very formal farewell dinner was held for Mr A. S. Meiring, “The Skipper.” The programme had toasts to the King, Governor-General and to Our Club. The reply to the toast was given by Mr F. Raphael. He was the father of Sylvia Raphael, who later became an Israeli Mossad agent, involved in tracking down the Black September terrorists responsible for the Munich Olympic bombings. This programme is displayed in the clubhouse.

Robert Luckhoff was credited with establishing trees around the fairways. He was also credited with getting the right mixture of sand and oil for the

greens. Sadly, the water from the dam failed to materialise. One last comment about Mr Luckhoff – he left a lasting legacy by doing caricatures of the golfers, which are still in the clubhouse.

The municipality had given a ten-year lease to the golf club. When this was due to expire, they again started looking for another site, once again south of the town, very close to the original Sunnyside course. The first fairway was close to Prinsloo Body Works and Daisy Slabbert's workshop. A new clubhouse was built, near to the offices of the municipal electricity department. The clubhouse was opened in April 1939 by Dr N. J. Laubscher, grandfather of Jackie Laubscher.

At the opening, it is recorded that “in spite of being no golfer at all, Dr Laubscher started proceedings with a goodly drive down the first fairway.” 1939 was also the start of the Second World War. By 1941, the golf club membership had virtually halved, with golfers exchanging clubs for rifles and joining SA troops serving in the Western Desert.

One of the effects of the war was that golf balls were very scarce. Players donated serviceable balls to the club. These balls were loaned to golfers for a shilling per round. If you did not lose the ball, you could return it and get 9 pence back. Members had to fill in scorecards in pencil so that they could be erased and re-used.

In 1952, the golf club made move number four – once again north. The location was a bit further north than the Dam Course. This was planned as a 9-hole course, and there was a lot of discussion about the location of the clubhouse. One proposal was to have the clubhouse near the area where the Andries Pretorius monument used to be, in other words, closer to town. But then it was wisely decided to move it to the northern extremity of the 9 holes. This was to allow for extending the course to a full 18 holes, which duly happened in 1963.

This time the opening was done by Dr Jack Laubscher Jnr – it is not recorded whether he also opened proceedings with a “goodly drive.”



*The temporary Clubhouse of split-poles, erected on the Hill course in 1952.  
This photograph was taken on the day when Herby Arnott won the archer shield*

The clubhouse of the Hill Course was a popular venue for wedding receptions, private parties and dances. The film “King Hendrik” was shot in Graaff-Reinet and golfers Willem van Wyk and Gerrie Smit had small parts in it. Apparently, a most memorable party was held in the clubhouse with the whole film crew present. Bob Courtney had a major role in the film and also entertained them with his piano-playing skills.



**June 1963**  
*Dr. Jack Laubscher Jr. hoisting the club flag during the  
opening of the second nine holes on the Hill course*



In 1986, the golf club also celebrated the Graaff-Reinet bicentenary. There was an attempt to invite Gary Player, but he was unavailable. Dennis Hutchinson, ex-professional golfer and later TV commentator, did however accept. He spent time on the course with a number of fourballs and that evening was a very entertaining guest speaker.



*Some "Golden Oldies" during the bicentenary celebrations in 1986.  
Denis Kirk, Koos Strauss, Gerrie Smith, Piet Nienaber, Willem van Wyk,  
Johan Human and Louis van der Merwe*

A number of past presidents like Messrs. W. Kingwill, J. S. Minnaar and R. C. Holmes have served the club for lengthy terms of office, however, the record goes to Dr. J. H. Human who was the president for 12 years, from 1959 to 1970. He was a very passionate golfer, playing every Wednesday and Saturday. Besides his son Johann, who was given the task of scrubbing his golf balls, he also had three daughters. When they approached marriageable age, they were duly informed by their father that should they wish to get married on a Saturday, he would not be able to attend – they all got married on a Sunday.

Due to the political situation up until this point, the golf club, like the rest of South Africa, was racially segregated. Some of the non-white golfers, by special invitation, had been allowed to play at the Graaff-Reinet Golf Club. However, because of the constitution, this was problematic. Then in 1988, Brian Charles proposed that Willie Claassen and Chris Koeberg be elected



full members. This motion was carried without opposition. Willie Claassen subsequently became the club champion on a number of occasions.

So, playing on the fourth course and still playing on sand/oil greens. Just to explain the technicalities of playing on a Karoo course – if you happened to be on the fairway, you could place your ball on a “ringetjie,” a section of plastic piping about 6mm high. Later, this was replaced by a piece of artificial grass, which you carried with you. After the fourball had finished putting, a caddie had to remove the footprints and lines left by the balls by dragging a “mat,” to leave the “green” in pristine condition for the next fourball.

After about 35 years at the Hill course, there was still the dream of having a grass course. Investigations into grass had been initiated by Dennis Kirk in 1959 and in 1971 by Lewis Tilney, Jack Solomon and Reg Holmes, but no progress was made. The catalyst for establishing a grass course was in 1989 when Union High School appointed Keith Cretchley as a PRO. He was a very keen golfer and, together with Reg Holmes, they initiated a concerted effort to establish a grass course.

In May 1989, a Feasibility Study Committee was officially formed with Reg Holmes as chairman, Basil Booysen as secretary, and additional members Keith Cretchley, Bernie Weyer, Thys Galloway, Gielie Vlok, Leon Gerber, Dave Theunissen, Brian Charles and Kobus le Roux. Messrs. Cretchley and Weyer were tasked with investigating a suitable site. There was strong sentiment about the possibility of grassing the existing Hill course. Two other sites were suggested by the Town Engineer Dries Greyling. These were once again south of the town. The first was past the sewage works, between the Aberdeen road and the Sundays River, and the second was just before the golf course, the area which now has a BMX track.

Unfortunately, these sites had no redeeming features, prompting Bernie Weyer to explore the area in the general vicinity in an attempt to find a more suitable location for a golf course. Graaff-Reinet lies in the horseshoe of the Sundays River, and the Sundays River also forms a horseshoe around the golf course. In addition, there were some natural undulations over the

course, formed when the Sundays River took a shortcut over the site. Plus some higher contours – ideal for the clubhouse. Most importantly, the site lay below the town sewage works, allowing the course to be irrigated with sewage water.

The Town Engineer, Dries Greyling, confirmed that the site was available, and the Land Surveyor, Leon van der Walt, established that 18 holes could fit on the site. Now there was only the small problem of money. A grass course is very costly to establish. The estimated cost was R500,000 – not much today, but with the help of Google, the equivalent of R5,000,000 today.

The first substantial donation was from FNB, who gave R20,000 – R200,000 in current terms. No surprise that the FNB manager, Nick Scholtz, happened to be a very keen golfer. The Kendrew Golf Club, which had closed down, gave R15,000. Members also contributed by buying a thousand bricks. The current cost of a thousand bricks is about R3,000. Their names are recorded in the bar area.

However, the real turning point came when the Hill Course was sold to the SA Nature Foundation for R190,000. The person who played a major role in these negotiations was Buzz Rayner. Bernie Weyer was tasked with providing a layout for the course, initially providing a 9-hole course, with the second nine to be added later. The existing seventh green would have been the ninth, and the present 9th hole would have been 18th. However, very wisely, it was decided, in view of costs, to forget about 18 holes and rather concentrate on a 9-hole course closer to the clubhouse.

The total cost of the golf course, including clubhouse, was R500,000. This would have been substantially more if a contractor had been appointed for the work. A lot of the work was done by the golfers themselves. Gerrie Venter, Piet van Dalen and others spent long hours on the course. Deforestation was done by Paul Rubidge at a fraction of the cost.

On 27 March 1993, the last game was played on the Hill Course. On 3 April 1993, the first game was played on grass. The honour of teeing off on the

course for the first time was given to Piet van Dalen, who had spent many hours on the course supervising all the construction activities.

The grass course started with membership over 200, and at present hovers around the 100 mark. Thank heavens an 18-hole course was not built – the club is under financial strain to maintain a 9-hole course.



*The present-day golf course (2025)*

The golf club has the Urquhart Cup, Luckhoff Cup, Archer Shield, Holmes Cup, Kirber Cup, but until comparatively recently one name was glaringly obvious by its omission: Douglas Proudfoot. Weppie Weideman, an excellent golfer and club champion for ten years, found out about Proudfoot's record SA Amateurs wins and suggested to the committee that a tournament be held to commemorate him.

The first Proudfoot Tournament, which takes place over three days, was held in 1997. It has proved very popular and continues to be held every year. So it took 95 years after winning the SA Amateur title for the 8th time that Douglas Proudfoot was finally honoured by having a cup awarded in his name. Without the very popular Proudfoot Tournament, the Graaff-Reinet Golf Club would be in serious financial difficulties. While it will be exceedingly difficult to have another member of the calibre of Douglas Proudfoot, it has produced some exciting new prospects. Jean Louis du

Plessis was the EP Junior Champion. He holds the record for the best gross on the current golf course with an excellent 63, which is 9 shots lower than par. Incidentally, the best gross on the Hill Course was also a 63, by Weppie Weideman.

Jean Louis is now playing college golf in the USA. He won the Camden Collegiate Tournament in South Carolina as well as the Spring Bulldog Bash in Alabama during his first year. He is currently at the University of Louisiana where he competes in the first division. And then there is Johndre Ludick, whose father Johnny was the club captain for 9 years. His grandfather Mike was the groundsman for many years. Johndre, his father and uncles Patrick and Clive have all been club champions, Johndre while still a schoolboy. At a national level he has won both the Eastern Province and Kwa Zulu Natal Open Championships. At an international level Johndre achieved third place in the Egyptian Amateur Open and the All Africa Junior Championships, and second in the Zimbabwe Junior tournament.



*Johndre Ludick with Deon Nel, President of Golf RSA*

Amazing what talent the Graaff-Reinet Golf Club has produced. The future golfing careers of Jean Louis and Johndre will be followed with great interest.



# TO CONCLUDE...



In this issue of The Hourglass, we have explored several remarkable events and periods in our town's history—from the early days of the Graaff-Reinet Golf Course and the significance of the Alex Laing Hall to the recent unveiling of the historic Dam Wall Lantern, which has now been beautifully restored and displayed in the garden of Reinet House. These stories remind us how places and objects shape our sense of identity and community over time.

We would also like to **REMIND** all our members and supporters to renew their **annual subscription fees**. These fees are essential for the museum's daily operations, ongoing conservation efforts, and public programming. Your continued support directly contributes to the museum's sustainability.

Looking ahead, please note that our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** is just around the corner. We also invite you to get involved in the preparations for our much-anticipated **Heritage High Tea** in October. Whether it is assisting on the day, helping with décor, or contributing in other ways, your participation will be greatly appreciated and truly valuable.

As winter settles in and we welcome the season's first snowfall, it serves as a beautiful reminder of how our region changes with each passing month. However, cold weather does not mean closed doors—the museum remains open. In fact, winter is a wonderful time to visit, reflect, and explore. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Warm regards,

*The Graaff-Reinet Museum Team*