Western Cape Government
Education

EnviroNews
1/2016 June 2016

News from the Centre for Conservation Education

We have been through some staff changes, but that hasn't stopped us from continuing our services.

265 000 & COUNTING

That's the number of learners that has passed through the Centre's doors since 1989. This is Chelsea Daniels, from Rocklands High, who was learner no. 265 000.

BYE-BYE NICCI

All our schools will have dealt with Mrs Nicci Hoal at some point or other. She was the friendly voice at the end of the telephone line when you made your bookings, and who sent you your Confirmations. Nicci retired at the end of September 2015. We know many of you will miss her almost as much as we do, and join us in wishing her a very happy retirement.

During the First Term of 2016 we were able to secure the temporary services of Mrs Trys Smit, who ably filled in and helped to carry the load.

WELCOME NATASHA

In April we welcomed Mrs Natasha Schermbrucker who has been appointed in Nicci's place. She blew us away during the interview with her practical ideas for teaching Wetlands to Gr 6; expect great things on this front! We wish Natasha everything of the best as she settles in.

Our new intern, Andrea Cupido, also joined us in April. She is working on our Heritage Asset Register, and is currently busy locating all the items on our Accessions Register.

NEW BOOKING SYSTEM

It has been a concern for some time that teachers have been reporting that they were not getting the Confirmations that were emailed to them regarding their outings booked with us. So we have implemented some changes:

1. Telephonic or email enquiries are welcome, but …
2. Bookings must be made in writing using our Booking Form.
3. Request an e-Booking Form.
4. Once schools have done that, we will WhatsApp the teacher with some possible dates. When he/she has responded to this, we will we make the booking.
5. Confirmation will be emailed to the 'contact person' who made the booking.
6. Bookings for 2017 are now open.

SOME THOUGHTS ON LOCAL HISTORY

We have been experimenting with **local history**, not only at Gr 4 where it is part of the CAPS Social Sciences History, but also as enrichment for other grades.

During **International Museum Week** in May 2016, we used the theme 'Museums and Cultural Landscapes' to focus on the cultural landscape of Wynberg. We invited schools from the area and offered them these lessons:

1. **The First Schools** in Wynberg and where your school fits in;
2. **Martha Solomons:** The Black Countess of Wynberg;
3. **Who lived and traded where** in Wynberg and the effect of the Forced Removals;
4. **What's in a name?** Transport through Wynberg, and how some streets got their names;
5. **Gathering information from graves and gravestones** (a visit to the Wynberg cemetery.

Some of the learners' reactions:

- They clapped spontaneously when their school was mentioned in the overall history of education in Wynberg.
- They loved the story of Martha.
- Most of them did not know that Forced Removals had also happened in Wynberg; they thought they had only happened in District Six.
- It was very hard for them to grasp that even schools had received eviction notices after the Group Areas Act.
- They were fascinated by how some streets they travelled on every day got their names.
- "I will never be able to walk down this street again without thinking about what it looked like long ago" said one.

- They thought we were pulling their proverbial leg when we told them about the learner from Wynberg Boys' High who stole an aeroplane from Youngsfield

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Aerodrome and flew over his school, pelting his classmates with rolls of toilet paper (it's true)!

- They expressed surprise at seeing graves of children in the cemetery;
- "I never knew cemeteries were so beautiful and peaceful".

SOCIAL MEDIA & LOCAL HISTORY

The Internet and social media have changed forever the way we gather information. Never before have we had access to so much knowledge from other peoples' brains in such a short time. **Local History** sites are particularly popular on Facebook. When a site like **Cape Town Down Memory Lane** has in excess of 23 600 members, we who teach History should take notice: why do people like this site so much?

- People identify with **local history**
- **Local history** gives young. people a sense of belonging, as the information is relevant to their surroundings.
- It inspires learners to be proud of their communities, heritage and their place in the world.
- If learners become interested in **local history** at GET, they may be keen to take History at FET.
- Because South Africa is a developing country, there is pressure on heritage spaces. Often our ignorance about the historic value of a site makes us apathetic to its destruction. Maybe an understanding of **local history** will encourage conservation and preservation.

Local History is lekker!!

Also lekker is a text-rich classroom.

FREE POSTERS

The Centre has the following posters available for teachers:

- 2015 Marine Week with a calendar for 2016;
- 2016 World Book Day
- Chakma baboons

You are welcome to collect from the Centre in Wynberg.

BLUE PLAQUE SCHOOL PROJECT

This project was started in 2015. **Blue Plaques** are an internationally recognised symbol of buildings and places which have an important significance in the history and heritage of the local area. But few, if any, were awarded to schools. Many schools in the Western Cape have a long history and a proud heritage of providing education to their communities. Maybe yours could qualify for a **Blue Plaque**.

Awards are made after schools

apply with a motivation (see WCED letter Ref 20160304-8428). A committee of adjudicators then meets. Every year 1 school receives its plaque free, and up to 4 schools get plaques if they are able to pay for them. For obvious reasons older schools have a better chance of receiving **Blue Plaques**.

The categories for entry are:

1. The age of the school (125 +)
2. Architectural significance
3. Contribution to society
4. Survival under difficult circumstances
5. A famous past pupil or teacher

During 2015 the following schools received **Blue Heritage Plaques**:

- **Simon's Town** (age of the school: 200 years)
- **Good Hope Seminary High** (contribution to society)
- **Wynberg Girls' High** (age of the school: 131 years)
- **Wynberg Boys' High** (age of the school: 175 years)
- **Rondebosch Boys' High** (famous past pupil: Alan Cormack)
- **Deutsche Internationale Schule Kapstadt** (contribution to society)

And the 2016 **Blue Plaques**? Quite a few schools applied; not all qualified. These did and will receive their **Blue Plaques** in the course of this year:

- **Langa High** (contribution to society)
- **St George's Grammar School** (age of the School: 168 years)
- **Rondebosch Boys' Preparatory** (architecturally significant buildings)
- **Jan Kriel School** (contribution to society)

Contact us if you want to know how your school can go about applying:
Sigi: (021) 762-1622

And with that, warm and cheerful greetings from
Sigi, Anton, Mark, Natasha, Lynne & Andrea

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