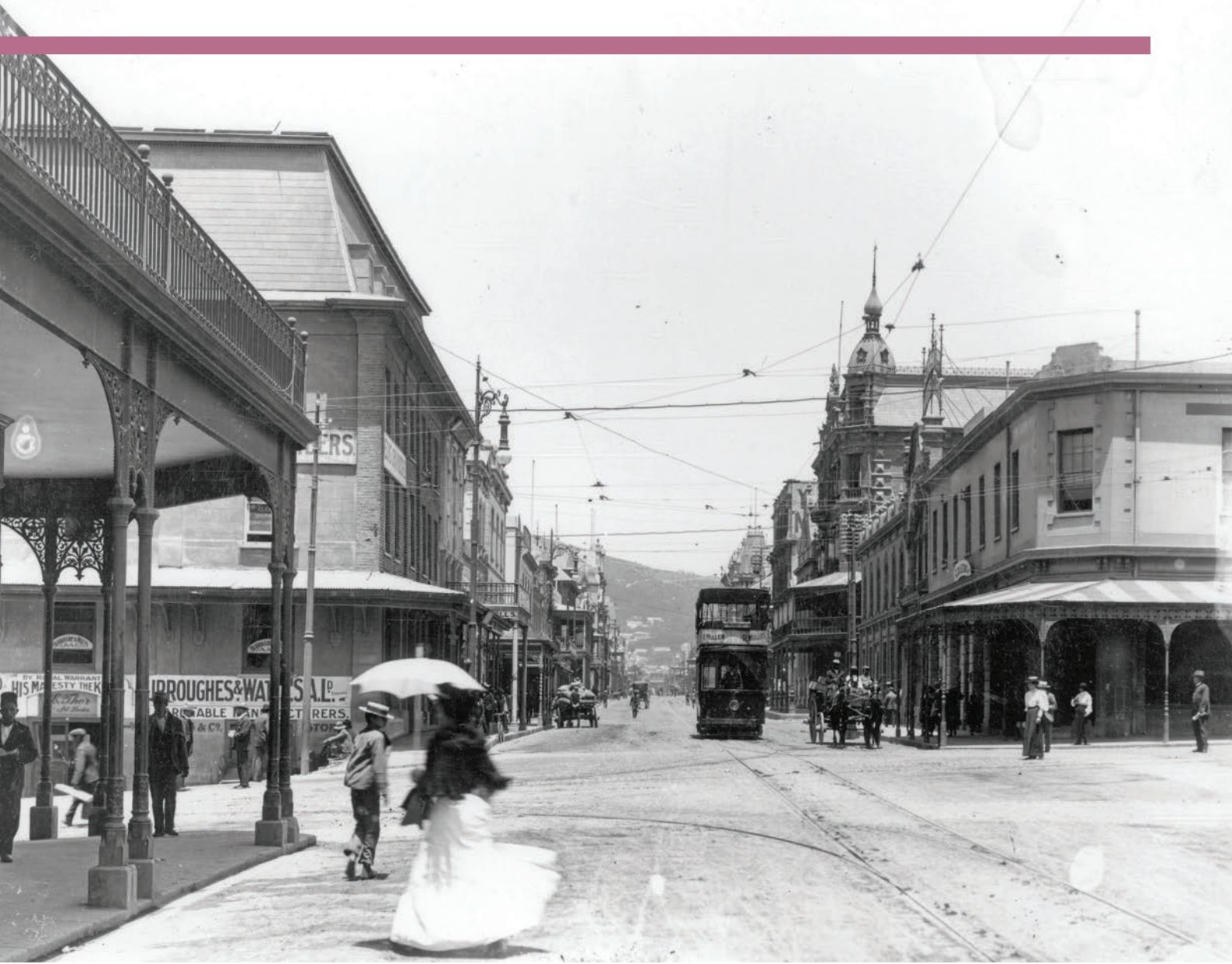


# CAPE KAAPSE LIBRARIAN BIBLIOTEKARIS

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Western Cape  
Government

Cultural Affairs and Sport

FOR YOU

# editorial

This year, International Literacy Day turned 57. As we celebrated Literacy Month — and Literacy Day on 8 September, it's worth re-visiting the history and significance of this keystone observance.

The idea of annually celebrating a day of literacy was first born at a 1965 United Nations Conference in Tehran, titled the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy. One year later UNESCO declared 8 September International Literacy Day; and another year on, countries around the world got on board and started participating.

For a variety of reasons South Africa's record of education — past and present — remains checkered, but as some form of consolation we are not alone in our quest for increased literacy. An estimated 750 million people in the world cannot read, of which 32 million reside in the United States as a first world country alone.

It's downright bizarre (and frightening) that in an ever-evolving era defined by technology, three-quarters of a billion people cannot interpret essentials such as instruction manuals, medicine prescriptions or street signs.

Imagine the perils and sheer disenfranchisement of being sick, poor and illiterate at the same time.

Clearly, more can and should be done. Although many of our public institutions are under threat — financially or otherwise — the continued responsibility of libraries and our education system, in contributing to this noblest of causes, cannot be underestimated in empowering those most vulnerable.

*Books are mirrors to our world and windows to opportunity; but they are also much more: they are actual doors to a life of sustainability and success, to our lives, and each of us has a responsibility to walk through them.* Kwame Alexander

Vanjaar het Internasionale Geletterdheidsdag sy 57ste verjaardag gedenk. Ter viering van Geletterdheidsmaand —

en Geletterdheidsdag op 8 September, is sy oorsprong en belangrikheid ongetwyfeld noemenswaardig.

Die idee agter die jaarlikse viering van 'n geletterdheidsdag het in 1965 ontstaan tydens 'n konferensie van Verenigde Nasies in Teheran, getiteld die Wêreldkonferensie van Ministers van Opvoeding oor die Beëindiging van Ongeletterdheid. Een jaar later het UNESCO 8 September verklaar as Internasionale Geletterdheidsdag en nóg 'n jaar later het lande van regoor die wêreld met oorgawe begin deelneem.

Suid-Afrika se rekord van opvoeding — histories en teenwoordig — bly om 'n verskeidenheid van redes gemeng, maar ter versagting is ons nie alleen in ons soeke na hoër geletterdheidsvlakke nie. 'n Geraamde 750 miljoen mense die wêreldoor kan nie lees nie, waarvan 32 miljoen alleen in die Verenigde State van Amerika woon.

Dis absoluut bisar (en skrikwekkend) dat in die snelveranderende era van die huidige, 'n driekwart-miljard mense nie in staat is om noodsaaklike aanwysings soos inligtingshandleidings, mediese voorskrifte of padtekens kan interpreteer nie.

Verbeel jou die gevare en ontmagtiging van gesamentlik siek, arm en ongeletterd te moet wees.

Duidelik kan en behoort méér gedoen te word. Hoewel vele van ons openbare instellings beleerd verkeer — finansiële of andersins — kan die voortgesette verantwoordelikheid van biblioteke en die opvoedingstelsel se bydrae tot die bemagtiging van die mees weerlose, deur hulle verbintenisse tot hierdie hartsaak, nie onderskat word nie.

*Boeke is spieëls van die wêreld en vensters van geleentheid; maar hulle is ook soveel meer: hulle is werklike deure na 'n lewe van volhoubaarheid en sukses; [en] na ons lewens, en elkeen van ons het 'n verantwoordelikheid om deur hulle te loop.* Kwame Alexander



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Die **Kaapse Bibliotekaris** is die huisblad van die Wes-Kaapse Biblioteekdiens en verskyn twee-maandeliks. Dit bevat artikels oor biblioteek- en inligtingwese, nuusberigte, resensies, aanwinstelyste asook praktiese artikels. Die redaksie behou hom die reg voor om, indien nodig, bydraes te redigeer, te verkort of te herskryf. Die publikasie van artikels wat nie in opdrag geskryf is nie, kan egter nie gewaarborg word nie. Die menings van medewerkers is nie noodwendig dié van die Biblioteekdiens nie. Alle kopie vir 'n bepaalde uitgawe moet die redaksie twee maande vooruit bereik. Artikels, briewe en nuusberigte kan direk aan die redakteur gestuur word.

*Braam*

# contents

## news | nuus

- 2 Libraries
- 6 Miscellany
- 10 People
- 11 Skrywers en boeke | Books and authors

## archives

- 12 **Revealing records on the Indonesian archipelago**  
Gustav Hendrich

## boekwêreld

- 18 **Biblioteke: Is daar 'n toekoms?**  
Willemien Brümmer
- 22 **Van die kantlyn beskou, een voet in die veld: 'n verslag van 'n boekbelewenis**  
Francois Verster

## workroom

- 26 **Reflecting on a year with Libby**  
Luinda Lilley

## genre

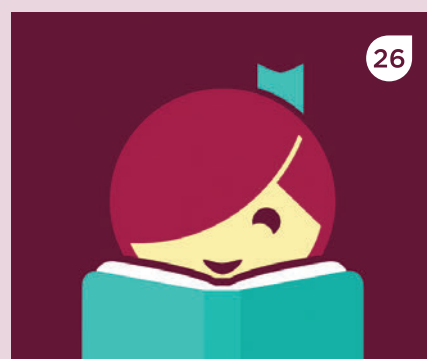
- 30 **Rediscovering our crown jewel of Africa**  
Compiled by Lieschen Kays

## reviews

- 35 **Book reviews | Boekresensies**  
Compiled by book selectors

## the arts

- 42 **The story of the *Anthology of American folk music***  
Robert Moul



## WCARS: Digitising for the future

Since the 1990s, advancing computer technologies have sparked interest in developing the means of capturing data and enabled their easy access in electronic format. In the sphere of archives, libraries and heritage, subsequently an almost unquenchable urge to embark on digitisation emerged.

However, in South Africa, efforts to bring our technologies on par with leading countries in this field have been hampered by the odds, especially lack of funding and expertise.

One of the main motivations for digitisation has been not merely for the sake of modernisation, but essentially that primary records, some being in an increasing state of decay, be digitised to prevent their further deterioration. Ideally, scholars and researchers would be able to access the archival material on-screen, and being an

asset, the hosting institution could simultaneously generate revenue. Despite the continuous debate on the advantages and disadvantages of digitisation, the latter invariably includes problems of adaptability and risk of information loss, uploading into sufficient storage space, internet connections and reliance on electricity.

Irrespective of these challenges, the Western Cape Archives and Records Service embarked on the establishment of a Digitisation Section during the mid-2010s. High-tech scanning equipment, most notably the prestigious Zeutschel overhead scanner for larger-scale sources, the Cobra A2/A1 V-shape book scanner with its retractable cradle for scanning archival/book manuscripts, and the i2s Quartz A1 3D flatbed scanner are being operated by professional operators.

The archives staff in the Digitisation Section strive to deliver quality scanned archival imagery. Hope remains that the digital images will soon be made available online, which would greatly aid the accessibility of records for future generations to come.

The **Cape Librarian** extends its gratitude to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service for making available its rare collection of vintage photographs of the Cape for the cover images for all issues of the magazine in 2022.

**On the cover:** Corner of Strand and Long Streets, Cape Town, circa 1890. Long Street is one of the most prominent and unique streets in the history of Cape Town. By the middle of the 18th century it had already appeared on city maps; and because it stretched all the way from the coast at Roggebaai to Lion's Head, it was a distinctly 'long' street.

**Picture credit:** 05 R1598

libraries

**Greenhaven shows off its services**

On 30 June staff from **Greenhaven Public Library** were invited to an expo at the Groot Brak Secondary School with various role players present. The reason for the expo was to make the the community's children aware of the services rendered by these stakeholders. We focused a lot on the Grade 12 learners, who were busy completing their winter school at the time. Many of the learners were very interested to hear about the Libby App. I believe they will soon join the library to use this app that allows them to read ebooks and listen to audiobooks. In showcasing the services the library delivers to the community, Duran, our ICT cadet, invited the Grade 12's to use our computers and internet, especially since they will be getting ready to further their studies next year.

**Lizette de Kock, Librarian: Greenhaven Public Library**



William Clayton, our library manager, attended the expo with three of Mossel Bay Library's ICT cadets. Duran, our own ICT cadet, was there as well

**Greenhaven's exciting winter holiday programme**

Over the July school holidays, **Greenhaven Public Library** in Groot-Brakrivier hosted a hugely successful winter activity programme. More than 40 children attended each day and were treated to a cup of soup and bread after the day's activities.

On Day 1 children were taught how to plant at home by using items from the kitchen. Everyone made their own container from a toilet paper roll. Day 2 saw a visit by a nurse from the clinic and a Love Life worker from the Great Brak River Clinic who did a great job informing the children about hygiene and making them aware of the help they can

receive at the clinic as these children face many social issues. The spelling bee on Day 3 was the highlight of our activity programme. It was a first for us and a huge success with more than 60 entries. On that day we had many children visiting and they are still coming back to become members of the library! Day 4 was a fun-and-games day.

We ended our holiday programme with a pajama party and movie day and afterwards the children received a tasty burger and soup.

**Lizette de Kock, Librarian: Greenhaven Public Library**



The spelling bee was a first for the **Greenhaven Library** Winter Holiday programme. It was a huge success with more than 60 entries

## Delft Library's in full community action

In May this year, **Delft Library** launched an innovative new online digital service, enabling residents to easily access a wide range of information that contributes to upliftment and opportunities. Best of all, the information can be downloaded and taken home, removing the need for costly personal data use.

Ashley Lewis, senior librarian and manager at Delft Library, truly understands the value of public libraries in disadvantaged communities. When it comes to tackling the mountain of social issues that limit learning and advancement, knowledge is power. And making that knowledge easily accessible is key.

Ashley has been there himself, and his early immersion in his local library motivated what has now been a 22-year City career. He started as a library attendant and worked his way up the ranks, ultimately earning a Master's degree in

Library and Information Science from the University of the Western Cape. His thesis focused on researching community perceptions, expectations and requirements of a public library in communities where help and information are rare. The results of that research are now being put into effect at Delft Library, driven by Ashley with the very able assistance of his team. Any community member can access useful information via a QR Code, USB stick or via the library's Smartcape computers.

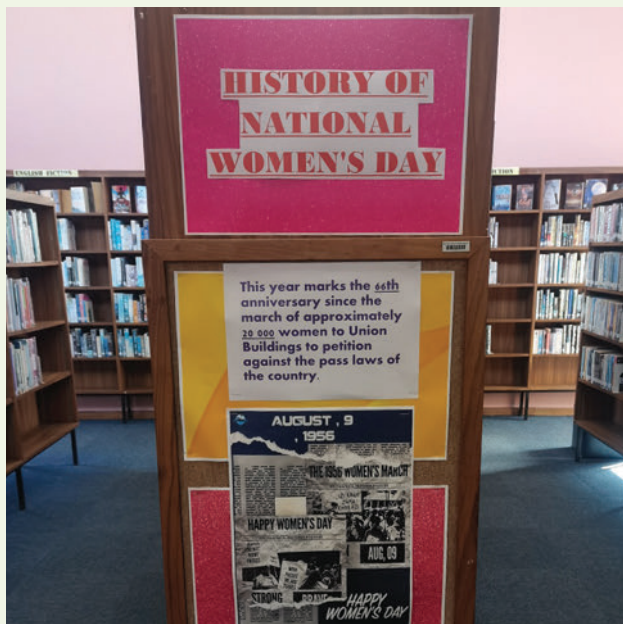
Users have access to the library's free Wi-Fi and can scan the QR code for the relevant information with their cellphone. All the documents they need will appear on their phone for use at their leisure. Library members can borrow a USB stick with all the information with their library card, and use it to download documents to their laptops. Smartcape users can access the library's computers and tap on an icon on the screen to access any documents free, or connect to the Delft Library Facebook page for more details.

The topics are carefully targeted to meet information needs and kept updated. They include bursary applications, subject selection for Grade 9 and Grade 12 for college and university entry, university selection, employment opportunities, assisting children to improve their grades and reading skills, dealing with marriage and relationship issues, advice on assisting children with drug, alcohol or gangsterism problems, starting a small business and how to obtain funding, women and child abuse information, and more. In addition, there are editable CV templates and online ID and social grant applications.

'The service was created to empower disadvantaged communities with tools to minimise poverty and build a healthier society. We have great hopes that the formula will be used in other libraries too,' says Ashley. 'It also showcases the importance and relevance of a public library service to communities in this fast-changing world.'

**Ashley Lewis, Librarian-in-charge: Delft Library**

### Esselen Women's Day



Esselen Biblioteek het hierdie treffende uitstallings ter viering van Vrouemaand in Augustus aangebied



Back (l-r): Keenan Dyers, Zamuxolo Makhqi, Librarian-in-Charge Ashley Lewis, Neziwa Nqayi, Lungile Ntsodo and Nicolaas De Bruin  
Front (l-r): Emily Afrikaaner, Velna Konstabel and Marion Simons

## Hermon's holiday happiness

It has been proven that during the school holidays children are exposed to a number of social ills. From 24 June to 18 July **Hermon Library**, in partnership with Human Nature Project and Uplift Hermon, developed and ran a school



Noot vir Noot competition

holiday programme which seeks to protect children by keeping them off the streets during the holidays.

Focusing on culture, art, sport and the promotion of values in education, the holiday programme is aimed at involving young people over the holiday periods and improving the quality of their lives by protecting them against social ills such as teenage pregnancies, under-age drinking, physical abuse, drug and substance abuse, vandalism and violence that may impair their development and ability.

Over a period of three weeks, 150 learners were targeted per day. Activities included T-shirt decorating, a chess tournament, a *Noot-vir-Noot* competition, board and card games, a movie day, a teddy bear picnic, a pajama day, story hour, build a kite, Olympics day, dress-up day and a domino tournament. We ended the holiday programme with lunch for 50 elderly; handing out sanitary pads to the teenagers and sweet packets for the children.

The outcome was very positive. Hermon Library will continue to provide an important community service to working parents and parents and children in need of a break that is safe, playful and educational all at the same time.

**Hildegard Adonis, Library Assistant: Hermon Library**

## Town Centre puts the 'warm' in winter

**Town Centre Library** in Mitchell's Plain hosted its successful winter programme from 29 June 2022 to 12 July; ably assisted by Mark Jenniker, Skye's Wooden Spoon (an NPO that serves children from Eastridge and Vosho Informal Settlements) and Read to Rise.

Daily activities included stories we can eat, arts and crafts, bedtime stories, indoor games and a puppet show by Read to Rise. The content for all the programmes was age accommodative from three to sixteen years. To keep everyone's attention, the programme was very interactive and engaging.

We can safely say, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, that 'we have landed'. We were in awe of parents' determination and consistency which drove us into wanting to give more, every day. This was a start of many programmes to come and the most amazing part was working with these little dynamic human beings that are unique in their own personae.

Fostering a love of reading is one of the most crucial elements in building a foundation for academic success. The library is trying to teach them this principle while they are still young by inculcating a culture of reading as the basis of their academic journey. As a beacon of hope and an information hub, we are sending a message to these children that their current circumstances do not define their destiny. The onus is on them to use the library as a safe haven where they can grow in all aspects of life, taking advantage of the resources at their disposal.



**Anelisa Gina, Librarian: Mitchell's Plain Regional Library**

## How to host a book launch at your library

The principal librarian of **Durbanville Library** recently offered to host book launches at the library. This initiative, supported by the Friends of the Durbanville Library, provides an avenue to strengthen patron connection to and interest in the library. By hosting an event that celebrates a local author, the library promotes literary success to the community and makes it accessible by creating a festive atmosphere for all.

Five book launches have been hosted to date. These events are well attended and becoming a monthly highlight for booklovers in Cape Town. Valentine's Day was the platform for Ané Kotze to launch her **Kaalwoorde** poetry collection. Sidney Gilroy introduced his book **Vlam**, followed by Elza Winckler and co-authors of the short story collection **Vrydagaand**. Emile Joubert with **Krummels in my koffer** was a highlight in June. Helena Gunter launched her book **Die hart het sy redes** next. Durbanville then put on their brave shoes and invited the often-controversial Erla-Mari Diedericks to launch the sequel to her book **Dominique, Die bewonderaar**. How liberating it is to listen to an author not shy about sharing information on a topic that is usually considered taboo. September saw three more authors invited, namely Chris Vorster, Pieter Fourie and Garnita Loxton.

Libraries are for everyone and will always be the perfect venue for author talks. Contact publishers or liaise directly with your favourite author and create a platform where book lovers can come together. René Schoombee, principal librarian and organiser of the events shares some tips on how to plan a book launch/author evening that will entice the audience to come back for more:

- **Develop a broader marketing plan.** A book launch is usually one aspect of a broader marketing strategy. As a public library you want to attract patrons. During the events at Durbanville Library many of the guests didn't realise that the library offered the variety of services it does and that the book, CD and DVD collections were so comprehensive and current.



Erla-Mari Diedericks



Book shelves create an inviting atmosphere

- **Find the appropriate venue.** Durbanville Library hosts their event inside the library, surrounded by the book shelves. This creates an inviting atmosphere. Understandably, not all libraries have equal amounts of free space, so a library hall or outside venue will also make do. It is important to ensure that the venue has a warm atmosphere, that the audience is seated comfortably and feels part of the conversation.
- **Treat your guests.** Durbanville Friends of the Library hosts the events and the audience is treated to refreshments. A glass of wine, cup of coffee, some biscuits or a platter of sandwiches will definitely hit the spot.
- **Have books ready for sale.** Liaise with the publishers and book shops to set up a table prior to the event. The aim is to promote the book and assist the author in selling copies. Allow time for book signing and allow patrons to engage with the authors on a personal basis. Authors are celebrities and be ready to take a few photos if the author agrees.
- **Prepare to speak.** As the host, ensure you have read the book and that you can introduce the author in an authoritative way. The librarian can interview the author or the publisher can suggest someone or lead the interview. Choose wisely as this is an important component to keep the audience engaged. Allow the audience to ask questions and partake in the discussions.
- **Promote the event.** Make use of social media to promote the event. Create a mailing list and send the invitations out timeously. Make sure that people know that they must book a seat. This makes the planning phase easier as you will know exactly how many people to cater for. Share photos of the event on social media afterwards and liaise with your local newspaper to run a story before and after the event.
- **Stick to a budget.** Items you need to budget for include refreshments; décor; and small gifts for the author and interviewer. The fun part of organising a book launch is the décor and set-up. Keep to the theme of the book and introduce special elements that will make the author and guests feel welcome in your library.

*When one is present at a book launch, one is bearing witness to the birth of a new body of ideas, to the coming into being of another testimony of history.*

Ibrahim Babangida

**René Schoombee, Principal Librarian: Durbanville Library**

### Oral History launches in Prince Albert

On Tuesday, 16 August the Western Cape Library Service launched the Oral History initiative in Prince Albert. This initiative records and collects oral histories of communities across the province and makes them available to these communities and to researchers who would like to hear first-hand accounts of the lived history of the area. Minister Anroux Marais and Councilor Sidney Koonthea were among the invited guests, which also included over 30 storytellers. Minister Marais emphasised the importance of capturing oral histories: 'The people across our province need to tell their stories in order to heal from the past and also for future generations to be able to hear them and learn from them. It is very important that we preserve these stories so that they do not go lost,' she said. All the stories are available in the Leeu-Gamka, Klaarstroom and Prince Albert Public Libraries. They will also be available at Archives and in this way, be preserved for the next generation.



Chief Director of Cultural Affairs, Carol Van Wyk; Library manager of Prince Albert municipality, Reinie Smit; and Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Anroux Marais

**Neville Adonis, Assistant Director: Information, Research, Publication and Promotions, Western Cape Library Service**

### Struggle stalwart memoir provides hope and history

The International Association for Human Values (IAHV) is a worldwide organisation with a mission to make the world a better place by fostering globally the values that unite us as a human community. IAHV holds special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The South African chapter of IAHV has launched a service project called Smile Senior Citizens in conjunction with the project team in Cape Town. The project team has decided to make selected reading material available to their beneficiaries via public libraries and has donated 40 copies of Ebrahim Ebrahim's autobiography, **Beyond fear: reflections of a freedom fighter** to the Western Cape Library Service. The books will be taken up in the collection

and distributed to public libraries across the Western Cape.

Ebrahim 'Ebie' Ismail Ebrahim (1937–2021) was a South African anti-apartheid activist who was a member of the African National Congress's armed wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe. He was tried in the Pietermaritzburg sabotage trials of 1963 and was sentenced to a 15-year imprisonment at the Robben Island Maximum Security Prison. 'Ebie' was South African Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (2009–2014).

In his review of Ebrahim's memoir, Devon Curtis says: 'The power of the book lies in its vivid account of the inner life of someone who shaped the struggle for freedom, democracy and justice in South Africa. Even when dealing with questions of life and death, courage and betrayal, the book evokes warmth and humour. Some of the most seemingly innocuous observations turn out to be the most revealing. The book succeeds in conveying humanity at its best and at its worst. Ebie has written an honest, intensely human book. At its core, the book offers an additional valuable perspective for those who are already familiar with South Africa's struggle history. For people who are less familiar with SA's history, the book is an excellent introduction because it provides an accessible and engaging narrative of the evolution of the ANC.' (*mg.co.za*, 13/05/2022)

IAHV South Africa has selected the book as they believe that the story of the fearless and selfless freedom fighter, Ebrahim Ebrahim is an important chapter in the history of South Africa. It gives the reader hope and confidence. They believe the book will increase optimism among people in all sectors of our society.



IAHV donated 40 copies of Ebrahim Ebrahim's autobiography

**Stanley Jonck, Assistant Director: Selection**



## DCAS helps launch SA's first online sign language dictionary

The first-ever online South African Sign Language (SASL) dictionary was launched on Thursday, 1 September in Cape Town by the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS).

Available as both a smart device app and via a desktop computer, the dictionary allows users to view videos and translations of hundreds of words and sentences being signed in SASL.

The launch comes at a significant time in South African history, with Section 6(1) of the Constitution set to be amended to recognise SASL as the 12th official language of the Republic.

Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Anroux Marais, says DCAS 'is committed to supporting and promoting the development and use of SA Sign Language in our province'.

'As part of our department's vision, we aim to create a society that is inclusive and that fosters social cohesion. A big part of that vision is to ensure that we can promote the use of our official languages, including SA Sign Language. The move towards declaring SA Sign Language as our 12th official language will mean that the world will be opened up so much more to our deaf community and that we are more inclusive in all that we do.'

'The launch of this dictionary is a great step in making SA Sign Language more accessible to everyone across our province. We are proud to have been able to be part of the process and support the development of this dictionary. It is wonderful to see these kinds of initiatives being driven to promote sign language. I am also excited about the fact that this dictionary is a product that is available electronically on mobile devices. This means that the dictionary can be carried on your phone and isn't a separate publication. This is an innovative way to capitalise on the fact that many of us have our phones with us at all times and so it ensures that you can always have the dictionary at hand,' said Minister Marais.

All the phrases and words in the new dictionary were provided by the National Institute for the Deaf (NID), after thorough research that took different dialects and colloquialisms into account.

The launch also celebrated the start of Deaf Awareness Month. Minister Marais said it was an important time to discuss inclusion for the deaf community. 'As we are also celebrating Deaf Awareness Month, it is very important that we discuss issues of inclusion for our deaf community. There are many ways that we can ensure we make experiences accessible for those who cannot hear and we must start looking at innovative ways to provide this accessibility. My department is committed to ensuring that we support organisations and individuals in promoting and accessing information in SA Sign Language,' she said.

'In the Western Cape, we are privileged to have a dynamic and passionate team working with us to ensure that we are accessible to all. This includes using sign language interpreters at our events and looking at ways of developing new information and content to assist us in being more inclusive. I would like to thank the Pan South African Language Board, as well as the National Institute for the Deaf, for the work that they have done in developing this dictionary, but also for the continuous role they play in promoting SA Sign Language. You are valued partners of the Department and we appreciate all that you are doing to ensure that all our official languages are developed and promoted,' Minister Marais said.

The SASL dictionary app can be downloaded via the Google Play store or on the Apple App Store. Or, visit [Learnsasl.com](http://Learnsasl.com) via a web browser.



(Ltr) Director Jane Moleleki, Chief Director Carol van Wyk, DCAS Head of Department Guy Redman, Minister Anroux Marais and staff from the Language unit at the launch event of the first-ever online South African Sign Language (SASL) dictionary



Dirkie Ebersohn, National Institute for the Deaf Content Manager, explains how to use the new online dictionary

**Liam Moses, DCAS Communications**

## The launch of the new Rosevalley Public Library

Anroux Marais, the Western Cape Government's Minister of Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport and the Executive Mayor of Oudtshoorn Municipality, Christiaan Macpherson, officially opened the new **Rosevalley Public Library** on Tuesday, 26 July in Rosevalley, Oudtshoorn.

### Brief history and background

The community of Rosevalley, which is one of five extensions of the Riemvasmak Settlement in Oudtshoorn, has an estimated population of 11,108. The newly erected Rosevalley Public Library is funded by the Western Cape Library Service (WCLS) and the ASLA Foundation and is closely located to Bongoletu and Bridgton Public Libraries, which are 3,5

kilometres and 4,2 kilometres away respectively. Although the building process of the library brought about various challenges and delays, the new facility was officially opened to the public on 26 July, thanks to extensive community involvement and the help of local labourers from Ward 6.

### The building

Architect Brian Verwey planned and oversaw the construction of the library, which took approximately ten months to complete. The new library has a 551m<sup>2</sup> floor area, eleven computer workstations, three typing computers, and 24 seats in its capacious study area. The new library building cost a total of R10,153,564 to construct.

### Staff

The library's staff complement consists of a senior library assistant, two library assistants, and a cleaner.

### Special features

The new library boasts a standalone IT room, a good ventilation system, water tanks, and a succulent garden. In addition, the roof of the new library is uniquely shaped in the form of an ostrich egg and all burglar bars and safety gates in and around the facility has an ostrich feather design. Another interesting feature of Rosevalley Public Library is the exit door, which automatically locks when library items are not desensitized before leaving the building.

### Services

Free internet access, library literacy programmes, and photocopying are just a few of the activities and services available to patrons of Rosevalley Public Library.

### External surroundings/landmarks:

The new Rosevalley Public Library, which is the first government-funded facility within the area, is approximately



Rosevalley Public Library



The computer room offers free internet access to all patrons



Children's section

1,5 kilometres away from Saturnus Primary School and a further three kilometres away from Bongoletu Primary and Fezekile Secondary Schools. Situated along the N12 between Oudtshoorn and Dysseisdorp, there are little or no formal businesses in the community of Rosevalley. As a result, inhabitants rely mainly on house shops for daily necessities. However, plans to build a school, clinic, and a police station in the area are well underway.

### Library operating hours

The library is open to the public on Monday to Friday from 09h30–17h00.

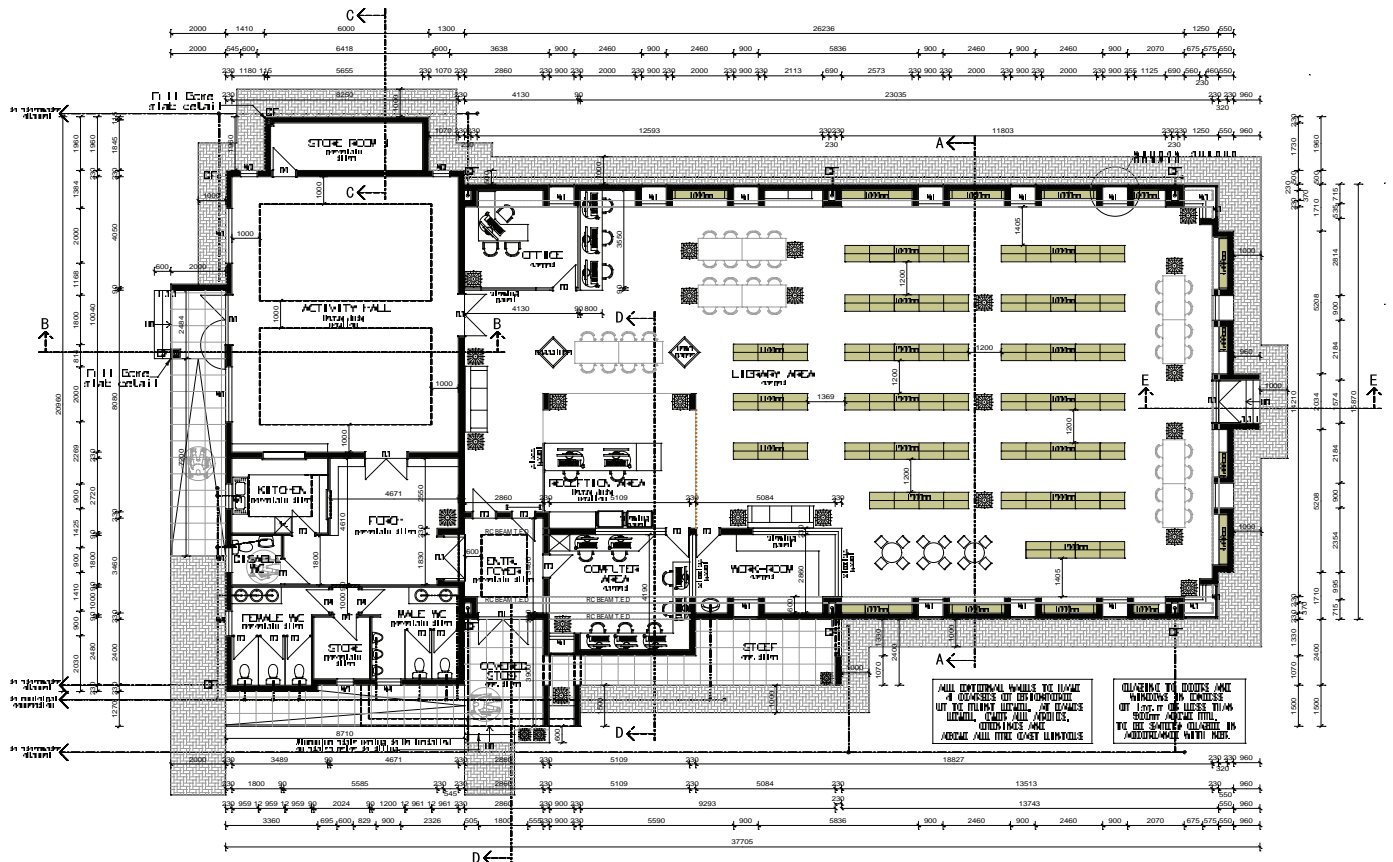
### Library contact details

Name of library: Rosevalley Public Library  
 Postal address: PO Box 255, Oudtshoorn, 6620  
 Physical address: Avon Street, Rosevalley, Oudtshoorn, 6625  
 GPS co-ordinates: -33.591731, 22.249680  
 Contact person: Deidré Carelse  
 Telephone: 044 203 3928  
 Fax: 044 203 3140  
 Email: [Deidre@odtmun.gov.za](mailto:Deidre@odtmun.gov.za)



(Ltr): Rosevalley Public library officially opened by Pierre Blaauw (ASLA Foundation), Minister Anroux Marais, Mayor Christiaan Macpherson, and Isabella Hendricks

### Research Section, Western Cape Library Service



The floorplan of the new Rosevalley Public Library

## Library Service's human chain



On 1 August Library Service personnel braved the weather and participated in the forming of a human chain in support of Women's Month; in recognition of gender-based violence; and the promotion of equality for women.

## I opened a book

Julia Donaldson

I opened a book and in I strode  
Now nobody can find me.  
I've left my chair, my house, my road,  
My town and my world behind me.

I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,  
I've swallowed the magic potion.  
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king  
And dived in a bottomless ocean.

I opened a book and made some friends.  
I shared their tears and laughter  
And followed their road with its bumps and bends  
To the happily ever after.

I finished my book and out I came.  
The cloak can no longer hide me.  
My chair and my house are just the same,  
But I have a book inside me.

*Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.*

R David Lankes

## people

### Saying goodbye to Wilhelmina Whitman



After 42 years' service Wilhelmina Whitman has decided it was finally time to leave. She started at **Ravensmead Library** in May 1980. After 26 years at Ravensmead she moved to **Adriaanse Library** and was there for nine years. In this time Wilhelmina completed a

BBIBL degree and was appointed as Senior Librarian. In 2017 she made her last move to **Kuils River Library**. She will be greatly missed in the service but we wish her a wonderful retirement. Wilhelmina reflects on her time in LIS:

Dearest LIS Family

The past 42 years of my career has seen me blossom in ways I had never thought possible. Many of you have been with me on my journey since the beginning, and some of you have joined along the way. Regardless, we have witnessed many changes, big and small, supported each other through the challenges we faced. Our triumphs and successes have seen us and particularly myself and the library service reach for the stars. It is with a heart filled with gratitude and appreciation that I bid you farewell, my retirement has surprisingly arrived so soon, I know many of you are surprised too. I do, however, wish to thank each

and every one of you for the love, care, support and loyalty you have shown me. My confession is that even though I may be leaving, I take a part of all of you with me, in my heart and in my prayers. I do wish that you will hold a piece of me with you. Whilst there is a degree of sadness, I do look forward to this new exciting chapter which lies ahead, for those who are my fellow retirees, I wish you the same peace and blessed journey. To the younger folk, hold the torch we have lit so high that all shadows are dispelled and there is no question of what we as LIS has achieved, may your journey ahead bring you the same fulfilment mine has brought me. Goodbye one and all, go with my best wishes and know that I will be taking the stories, lessons, love and laughter with me.

**Kathleen Laishley, Head 6: Library and Information Services, Community Services and Health, City of Cape Town**

Marzanne Leroux-Van der Boon sterf

Ons verneem met groot hartseer en leedwese van die afsterwe van geliefde skrywer Marzanne Leroux-Van der Boon (26 Desember 1940 – 17 Augustus 2022).

Marzanne Leroux-Van der Boon is op 26 Desember 1940 in Somerset-Wes in die Wes-Kaap gebore. Sy matrikuleer in Worcester en kwalifiseer haarself as 'n onderwyser. Sy gee tot 1993 Afrikaans by die Rudolph Steiner Waldorfskool in Constantia in Kaapstad. Sederdien skryf en vertaal sy voltyds.

In die 1970's begin sy kortverhale en vervolghverhale vir tydskrifte soos *Sarie*, *Landbouweekblad* en *Huisgenoot*, skryf. In 1974 word vier van haar vervolghverhale (**Voor dit lig word**, **Elizabeth se kind**, **Seisoen op 'n verlate strand** en **Die weerloses**) gepubliseer. Marzanne begin om ook jeugverhale te skryf: **Somernagdroom** (1980), wat al meer as 18 keer herdruk is, en **Die wag vir die somer** (1981). In 1993 ontvang sy die FAK/Helpmekearfonds-prys vir Ontspanningslesstof vir haar roman, **Klaprose teen die wind**. In 2004 ontvang Marzanne die ATKV-prosaprys vir **Granate bloei in Jerusalem**. Marzanne was vir etlike jare die voorsitter van die Afrikaanse Skrywersvereniging. Sy het ongeveer 27 boeke gepubliseer in haar lewe.



Sy word oorleef deur haar dogter Lenska en seun Armand en twee kleindogters Aliyah en Laylah. Marzanne was van Vredehoek, Kaapstad. Sy sal altyd onthou word vir haar liefde vir Israel en die Joodse kultuur.

(NB-Uitgewers/Publishers, 18/08/2022)

Booker Prize unveils 2022 shortlist including oldest finalist ever

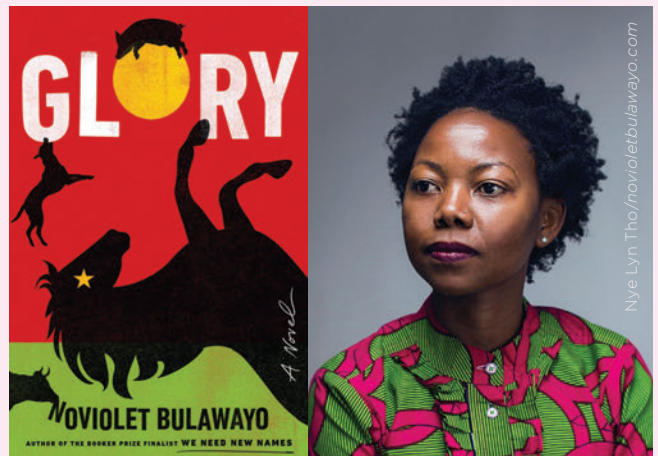
Britain's Booker Prize for fiction unveiled its final contenders for this year's award, featuring the oldest author and the shortest book ever to make the prestigious six-strong literary shortlist. Octogenarian Englishman Alan Garner, who will turn 88 when the winner is announced on 17 October, was shortlisted for **Treacle walker**, which is the shortest finalist novel by word count.

Speaking about the shortlist, Neil MacGregor, chair of the 2022 judges, said: 'They're not easy books, even though they may be short. But like many great pleasures, some require hard work and we found them well worth the effort.'

The shortlist, whittled down from a longlist of 13 announced in July, saw an equal split of men and women battling for the prize which can provide a career-changing boost in sales and public profile.

Zimbabwean novelist NoViolet Bulawayo made it for the second time, for **Glory**, while Sri Lanka's Shehan Karunatilaka was the only other writer not from the British Isles or United States, for **The seven moons of Maali Almeida**. American Percival Everett was included for **Trees**, earning independent publisher Influx Press its first Booker shortlist place. Fellow US writer Elizabeth Strout featured for **Oh William!** while Irish author Claire Keegan's **Small things like these** completed the shortlist. At 116 pages, Keegan's is the shortest finalist by the number of pages in the Booker prize's 53-year history.

'These are, above all, books that we have enjoyed,' MacGregor said as he unveiled the shortlist at an event in central London.



Zimbabwean author NoViolet Bulawayo is nominated for **Glory**

'They're books that we want to recommend to others. They're not too long and that's maybe evidence that we're looking at not just great writing, but also some great editing,' he added.

The Booker is Britain's foremost literary award for novels written in English. Its previous recipients include Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood and Hilary Mantel.

(news24.com, 07/09/2022)

# Revealing records on the Indonesian archipelago

by Gustav Hendrich

**O**n 17 June 2022, a plea for the representation of unrecorded histories relating to previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa and their recognition was made by the chairperson of the Archives Advisory Committee, Jo-Anne Duggan during a visit from an Indonesian diplomatic delegation to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

Duggan stated: 'The Archives' mandate has been extended very strenuously to include non-public records and to give the Archives the authority to collect and preserve those, with a specific emphasis on the records of the past neglected, marginalised people... and our archives and communities are determined to rectify that and to play a role in making that legacy available to other people, and ensuring that it is being kept in very safe hands.'

Mogamat Kamedien, another vice-person of the committee, added his concern about the 'trust deficit between government institutions and the people of South Africa, since many of these communities have not been able to access the private collections, such as the Ajami documentation, and other Jawi publications brought by enslaved peoples, [which] currently falls outside the jurisdiction of the archives institution'.<sup>1</sup>

## In the spirit of preserving a collective memory

Apart from the enthusiastic gathering with the archives staff, members of the Cape Malay community and the dignitaries from Indonesia, the focus of the meeting was to bolster bilateral relations between the two countries by pointing to the rich historical archival

records pertaining to the Indonesian archipelago housed at the repository. A tour of the repository and the viewing of the remarkable Ebrahim Manuel Storyboard exhibition proved to be highlights of the visit.

The Consul-General of Indonesia to South Africa, Mohamad Siradj Parwito, expressed his gratitude towards the Archives for the safekeeping of indispensable and irreplaceable records. His Excellency Parwito emphasised the importance of the gathering because 'this is in the spirit of preserving the collective memory of South Africa, especially the Cape Malay community'.<sup>2</sup>

One such neglected grouping pointed out by Duggan that originated in the territories in Southeast Asia, known in colonial times as the Dutch East Indies, and after the Second World War and its independence in 1945 officially proclaimed as the

Republic of Indonesia — is the Cape Malay community.

Most South Africans imagine Indonesia with its tropical climate, dense jungles and numerous islands as an idyllic, but geographically distant country. Today, it is a thriving economic tiger in Southeast Asia; a developing country not dissimilar to South Africa. Historically speaking, both countries share a colonial history, with struggles for freedom and national liberation that finally paved the way towards post-World War Two independence. Yet, it was the legacy of a terrifying labour supply practice, a phenomenon which would indelibly link the two countries over the centuries, namely that of slavery; as well as the banishment of Orang Cayeng, Southeast Asian political exiles and high-ranking royal courtiers. These practices also entailed the administration and correspondences documenting the slave and spice trade between the Dutch eastern colony and the Netherlands.

### Slave societies at Batavia and the Cape

With the Netherlands being a seafaring nation, the discovery of spices in the East during the early 1600s heralded a period of prosperity for the Dutch Empire. Because of the threat posed by the Portuguese to their shipping and trading lines, the Dutch consequently embarked on the colonisation of territories in the Indonesian archipelago. Batavia, located as a port in Java, was selected as the administrative centre of Dutch authority in the entire East. For obvious reasons, owing to the limited number of Dutch personnel dispersed amongst the fortresses and *comptoire*, or trading posts, effective company rule was largely restricted to the coastal ports. According to the historian Karl Schoeman, 'the VOC never had overarching control over the Indonesian archipelago'.<sup>3</sup>

As the Dutch East India Company (VOC) evolved into a renowned mercantile enterprise, and in some ways an autonomous political entity, the shipping of spices, slaves and commodities from Batavia became of primary importance.

Batavia had become a hive of activity and dealers were trading with slaves from territories such as Bali, Banda, Celebes, and Timor.<sup>4</sup> As a commercial hub of trade, the slaves formed almost half of the Batavian urban population.

They were forcibly instructed to work on building sites, warehouses; in agriculture and in the gardens on the outskirts of Batavia. Perceived as a normal practice for this period — the slave being merely an article or



E4448 Front Entrance to the harbour, Batavia



E9147 Front Malay Group — Cape Town



M73 The Tiger's Canal, Batavia



J13746 Portrait of a Malay Coachman wearing a conical hat (Toering)

possession to render a service, their trade formed an integral part of Dutch colonisation.

Following the establishment of the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 as primarily a refreshment station, its purpose was to supply the VOC's mercantile fleet that regularly navigated the vast voyage from the East. Although the Dutch by that time already had 30 years' experience in slavery, it was not initially overtly promoted by the first Dutch commander at the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck. The labour shortage only became a problem in the wake of pressure to complete the Castle fortifications; and to cultivate much-needed arable land to provide the bypassing ships with food supplies.

As ships over time brought along slaves, van Riebeeck employed them to work as private and domestic servants. The demand for cheaper labour eventually spurred on the trade in slaves. From the comprehensive study on slavery at the Cape by Robert CH Shell that covers the period between 1652 and 1808, it is evident that slaves comprised a considerable part of the population. He established that 22.7% of slaves came from Indonesian territories, amounting to the third largest segment, following that of slaves imported from Africa (26.4%) and India (25.9%) respectively.<sup>5</sup> Bearing in mind the hardships of the long voyages conducted from the tropics to the Cape's more extreme climate, the living conditions of slaves were often appalling.

The slave trade as a vicious circle continued for most of the 18th century. In the Dutch East Indies arose a plight for the banning of Javanese to be enslaved, whereafter a *Plakkaat*, or government notification, was issued in 1715, stating that slaves 'from Java are not to be sold and are to be returned to Batavia'.<sup>6</sup> But the trading continued unabatedly and irrespective of locations such as Java — as the VOC persisted in raiding the islands of the Indonesian archipelago on a purely pragmatic level, with the intent of gaining profit from the sales of slaves.

It was only after 1767, when officials in Batavia requested that no further male slaves be bought to the Cape on Dutch ships — and intense competition between the European colonial powers — that a change in the slave exportation from the Dutch East Indies





E8681 Malay man, woman and child

to the Cape took place. The rivalry by these European maritime kingdoms for hegemony at sea and the ensuing Anglo-Dutch War of 1780 to 1784, caused a crippling loss to VOC ships and a decline in Dutch shipping around the Cape.<sup>7</sup> Despite these setbacks, that Shell describes as a 'true watershed', the company experienced a period of prosperity with new investments in slaves and competition on the slave markets to supply the farm estates with labour at the Cape.

With the advent of the bankruptcy of the VOC, its rule collapsed. After the first British occupation of the Cape in 1795, the practice of ships carrying slaves from the Indonesian territories all but disappeared, mainly because

of the British instead opting to import large numbers of slaves from the east coast of Africa. Yet, the slaves would remain in the labour pool at the Cape as servants and labourers until the emancipation of slavery in Britain in 1833 would legally rid the Cape of this inhumane system on 1 December 1838 – 185 years ago in South Africa.

### Slavery and Dutch administrative records

As an essential archival group reflecting the prevalence of slaves from Indonesia, and elsewhere in Africa, the archives of the Slave Office (SO), which covers the period from 1818 to 1845,

provide testimony to slavery at the Cape. The Slave Registers (especially the 6/- and 9/- series) contain details pertaining to the geographical area, the names of the slave owners which appears within the index pages of the registers, together with lists of slaves employed by the given owner.<sup>8</sup> In a close examination of these registers, it is striking to find the high frequency toponyms there appeared for slaves containing the geographic locality markers as slave names, such as *Van Batavia*, *Van Java*, or *Van Borneo*.

Viewed in historical context, it should, however, not be taken as given that those slaves indeed came from the mentioned territories, since it was not necessarily their place of origin, but simply the names given upon sale or trading at Batavia before being despatched to the Cape or abroad.<sup>9</sup> The Slave Office archival group remains popular as a primary source of research, but due to its poor physical condition, with some damaged, brittle, and fragile volumes being removed to the Preservation Section of the WCARS; the overall text is readable, and the content of the volumes intact.

Besides slaves, convicts and political exiles were also banished to the Cape. In a notebook in the archives of the Court of Justice (CJ), name lists of convicts from Batavia and elsewhere in the East from 1722 to 1757 is contained with each convict being briefly described, together with the ship they had arrived on at the Cape.<sup>10</sup>

A second significant archival group, which contains the oldest archival records in the repository with first-hand descriptions regarding the administration at Batavia and the Cape, is that of the archives of the Council of Policy (C) from 1651 to 1795. In addition to the group's subdivisions, most notably the Instructions from Holland and Batavia (1652 to 1766) that provides insightful information on almost all aspects of life, it attests to the correspondence to and from Batavia.<sup>11</sup> Of particular interest on administrative matters is the report by the Dutchman Augustus Wolf in 1733. Wolf informed the various trading posts that they would receive '*...compleet gecopieerde Notulen... de noodige ordonantien... en schriftelyke berigten*' (Complete copied Minutes of Meetings... the necessary ordinances... and written reports).<sup>12</sup>

The group furthermore contains a Guide to Batavia, which was compiled as an advisory report in 1794, entitled the *Gemeene advisen voor Kamer Amsterdam* (General advice for the Chamber of Amsterdam).<sup>13</sup> This report described the political, economic and governance in Batavia during the time when the VOC was in a disastrous state of collapse. An additionally detailed account is that of the *Memorie van Macassar* (Report on Macassar) that includes the administrative, financial discussions in fold-out charts and regulations until 1792, following an instructional enquiry of the possessions of the VOC on the coasts of Celebes, as well as the fortifications under the Dutch authorities at Macassar.<sup>14</sup>

### Batavian Republic records

The third source of essential archival information housed in the repository is that of the archives of the Batavian Republic (BR). After the Treaty of Amiens was signed in 1802 during the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, the British returned the Cape to the Dutch. Essentially, the Cape was to be ruled not so much from the Netherlands as the mother country, but from the Batavian Republic in the East. The turmoil in the wake of the fall of the VOC with its maladministration lingered on at the Cape, but after 1802 this situation was to change for the better. Whereas the company rule was primarily inclined to profit-making, the Batavian regime was to allow for more societal upliftment to the benefit of the local populace.

The new and enlightening ideas from the Batavian authorities and Commissioner General JA de Mist and Governor General JW Janssens were sent to the Cape to administer local government in March 1803.

A strong, centralised government was envisaged with new institutions such as the Audit Chamber (*Rekenkamer*), and Municipal Council consisting of elected members. As for religion, the Dutch Reformed Church remained the state's church whilst complete religious freedom was granted; and a Church Order made clerical matters subservient to the State. De Mist and Janssens undertook several journeys to the countryside and were familiar with

the rural circumstances. To improve administration, the larger districts such as Stellenbosch and Graaff-Reinet were subdivided to form Tulbagh and Uitenhage.

De Mist prohibited the further importation of slaves and had the intention to free the slaves' children at birth. He instead wanted to promote the immigration of farmers, permanent labourers from the Netherlands to develop agriculture. Despite the change, reform and rejuvenation, the Batavian Republic rule was to be short-lived until January 1806, when the second British occupation of the Cape ended Dutch rule.

The BR archival group is an extensive composition of documents encapsulating the political correspondences and issues relating to the instructions from Batavia. Altogether it contains the Resolutions of the Council of India from March 1803 to January 1806<sup>15</sup>; series of Secret Resolutions, Minutes of Proceedings of Com. Genl. De Mist; and other politically meaningful records. What is of significant importance are the letters despatched from the Commissioners of the Asiatic Council and the Governor

General of Dutch India from 1802 to 1804, that reveal the determined efforts to rule by establishing an intermediate Batavian Council with a meeting room at Batavia. The inventory to the BR group provides a concise description of the archival volumes with the periods on the abovementioned Asiatic Council.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the Council Minutes, a most prestigious archival record which specifically elaborates and critically describes the actual geographical locations of the Indonesian archipelago, is the report by the Dutchman Dirk van Hogendorp on the Batavian possessions and trade in Dutch India which appeared in 1801. Descriptions of the town of Jaccarta, as it was then known in Java; and further extraordinary depictions concerning the arability of the land, justice, the defence of the islands; and the Chinese residents who had a marked influence on the Batavian marketplace, and who van Hogendorp described as '*de onontbeerlykheid van dit volk (Chineezen)*' are some of the subject matters.<sup>17</sup> Descriptions on the minerals and diamonds from Borneo, and goods supplied, especially that of copper, spices such as pepper, and coffee,



E8674 Malays

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cacao, arak (a liquor), and the shipping of these products to the Netherlands are provided.<sup>18</sup> Van Hogendorp thus provides an objective perspective on the life and circumstances in Batavia and the Dutch East Indies. From an archivist's perspective, the general state of these documents, the fading handwritten texts in some volumes is a source of concern, though despite this the BR group is in a physically pristine condition, neatly bounded and easily accessible.

## Fostering a Cape Malay legacy

Although slavery was eradicated, it lingered on for much of the 19th century. As the Batavian regime at the Cape ended and the influence from the Dutch East Indies becoming less prevalent thereafter, the descendants of the Malay and peoples from the archipelago remained at the Cape. Over the centuries their culture, cuisine, and colourful appearance would become an integral part of the cosmopolitan Cape society, whilst the Cape Malay community would proudly uphold and foster their heritage.

With regards to contemporary Indonesia, the epoch of the Batavian Republic has long since passed. Later, during apartheid South Africa, many of the post-Indonesian independence

publications with their anti-colonialist sentiment were censored or banned by the Publications Control Board out of fear of sparking similar resistance in South Africa. The reports on the banned publications, such as *The fascist coup in Indonesia and the lessons communists draw from it* and *News: Indonesia Trade Union* are available in the repository.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from the indicated three main archival groups, the WCARS is also in possession of cartographical and photographic material on Batavia, the islands of the archipelago and of course of the Cape Malay community. Maps depicting Java and Borneo, and the coastlines of the eastern archipelago provide exceptional information useful to geohistorical studies. In providing visual imagery from the time of the Batavian rule, the photographic collection, especially the Elliott and Morrison collections, contain several picturesque sketches of the town of Batavia with its lush palm trees and splendid scenes of the tropical Indonesian landscape. As for the Cape Malay, a multitude of photographs portray the 'Malay Quarter', the Bo-Kaap residential area, and the traditional dresses of Malay men and women.

Apart from the records of the Slave Office, the Council of Policy and Batavian Republic archival

groups are in a laudable condition. As an institution, WCARS plays an instrumental role in the long-term safekeeping of these Indonesian-related documentation. During the explorative discussions with the representatives of the Indonesian diplomatic delegation, the visit has undoubtedly rekindled interest in the preservation of Cape Malay history; and it was commented that it would be ideal to donate Cape Malay family/ or cultural documentation to the repository which could be stored as Accessions, in strongrooms under conditions that adhere to archival best practice. The issues regarding the possibility of digitising private family Kitab collections (written in Arabic – an Afrikaans writing system using a modified Arabic alphabet) for the state archives were also addressed. The Indonesian Consul General of Cape Town thanked the Archives for its sterling efforts for preserving records on an otherwise forgotten past and concluded with the traditional Indonesian saying of expressing gratitude: *Tramakassie!*

*Dr Gustav Hendrich is an archivist in the Western Cape Archives and Records Service*



# Biblioteke: Is daar 'n toekoms?

deur Willemien Brümmer

*Is biblioteke praalgrafte vir boeke wat uitgedien geraak het in 'n digitale era? Willemien Brümmer skryf hoekom hierdie 'paleise vir die mense' selfs oor 20 jaar van nou noodsaaklik sal wees.*

In Jaco Jacobs se kinderverhaal **Nie vir sensitiewe lesers nie** is die dorp se bibliotekaris, juffrou Sauerma, 'n monster. Sy lyk nes 'n 'bleek, vet, degerige wurm' en die kinders moet beurte maak om hul skoensole vir haar te wys sodat sy kan seker maak daar's nie 'modder, hondpoef of stukke kougom aan nie'. Die biblioteek is 'plat, wit, vierkantig en verbeeldingloos' en dis grafstil en verlate, met nêrens eens 'n teken van 'n prent of kleur nie. Juffrou Sauerma druk 'n vinger wat 'lyk soos 'n bleek varkwors onder die blou inkstempel op die uitleen-kaartjie' en grynslag dreigend: 'Onthou, as jou boek se datum verstryk, verstryk jy ook.'

Vir party ouer (wit) middelklaslesers wat grootgeword het met die kleindorpse biblioteke van die apartheidsera, is hierdie storie dalk nie 'n blote grilverhaal nie. Jy was moontlik jare laas in 'n biblioteek, en jy wonder

heimlik of die hele konsep — 'n regte gebou vol boeke waaraan jy kan vat en ruik — nie klaar 'n soort dinosouriër is nie.

Jy lees dalk jou e-boeke op Kindle en jy glo Facebook is jou sosiale infra-struktuur vir die 21ste eeu. 'n Amerikaanse professor in die

ekonomie, Panos Mourdoukoutas, het vier jaar gelede reeds in die tydskrif *Forbes* geskryf: 'Amazon moet plaaslike biblioteke vervang om vir belastingbetalers geld te spaar.'

Dit het nie lank geneem voordat *Forbes* die artikel van sy webblad



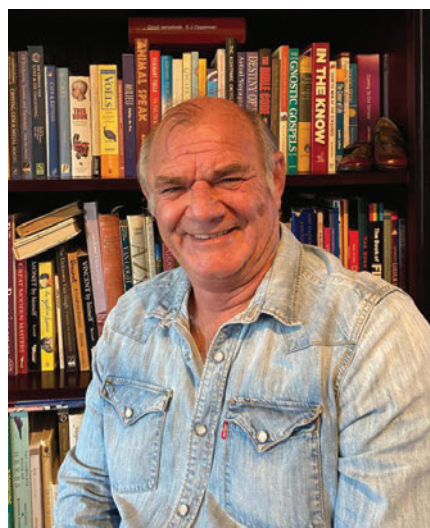
Die biblioteek in Dunoon, 'n sogenaamde 'paleis vir die mense' wat tussen die sinkhutte en chemiese toilette in dié informele nedersetting opgerig is, is in 2019 saam met die sportkompleks bekroon met die internasionale Human City Design-prys

moes verwyder nie, want bibliofiele was woedend. Boekerye het immers al oor millennia die toets van die tyd deurstaan: Vanaf die biblioteke in die Middeleeue wat hul boeke vasgeketting het omdat dit beskou is as 'geheime kennis' vir bevoorregtes — en al is 27 miljoen volumes antikommunistiese literatuur in Tsjeeggiese biblioteke, byvoorbeeld, verpulp ná die Tweede Wêreldoorlog.

'Deur die eeue heen was biblioteke sentrums waar inligting beskikbaar gestel is in die medium van die tyd,' verduidelik die digter Pieter Hugo, wat ook adjunkdirekteur is vir sentrale organisasie by die Wes-Kaapse biblioteekdiens.

'Die biblioteek in Alexandrië het boekrolle gehad en die kloosterbiblioteke het handgeskrewe manuskripte gehad en toe het ons almal grootgeword met gedrukte boeke as medium,' sê Hugo, wat al sedert 1997 as bibliotekaris werk.

'Nou bied biblioteke ook 'n gratis internetdiens aan die publiek en hulle help met rekenaar- en internetgeletterdheid. Veral op klein plekkies is dit steeds mense se eerste kennismaking met die internet en in baie biblioteke het ons nou ICT-kadette (dit staan vir informasie en kommunikasie-tegnologie) aangestel — jong mense wat in die biblioteek werk spesifiek om mense te help met rekenaars.'



Pieter Hugo is 'n digter en die adjunkdirekteur vir sentrale organisasie by die Wes-Kaapse biblioteekdiens



In Dunoon is 90% van die bevolking werkloos en vir baie is die biblioteek hul enigste toegang tot boeke kennis en die internet

Hy lag lekker. 'Die biblioteek is nie meer die plek waar die ou tannie met die bollatjie sê "sjuit" nie. Dis baie meer interaktief en dis gemik op hulpverlening en uitreikaksies na die gemeenskap en skole, want in die meeste gevalle hét skole nie meer biblioteke nie. In jou meeste openbare biblioteke kom skoolkinders smiddae biblioteek toe en 'n groot deel van die personeel se werk is om hulle te help met take en inligting.'

In die openbare biblioteek in Dunoon skitter juffrou Sauerman in haar afwesigheid. Dis 'n veelkleurige glaspaleis vir die mense binne 'n see van sinkhuise, chemiese toilette en shisanayama's: 'n Soort vuurtoring van hoop wat benut word as enige iets vanaf 'n gratis 'internetkafee' tot 'n plek waar jonges kan tafeltennis of rekenaarspeletjies speel. Dié dinamiese en ekovriendelike drierdiepinggebou is die heel eerste biblioteek in dié informele nedersetting, waar sowat 90% van die bevolking werkloos (en sonder internet) is. Al is dié gebied berug vir taxigeweld, boendoehowe en dienslewingsbetogings, word hierdie gebou beskou as 'n sogenaamde 'palace for the people' en dis nog net so ongeskonde soos in Maart 2019, toe dit met groot fanfare geopen is.

Malusi Radebe, bibliotekaris en areahoof in dié gebied, glimlag trots.

'Die gebou is met opset nie omhein nie, want as dit gebeur, vervreem ons dit van die gemeenskap en nou het hulle eienaarskap geneem van die biblioteek. As daar getoi-toi word of as infrastruktuur verbrand word, gebeur dit nooit hier nie. Die publiek sien die waarde van die biblioteek en niemand het nog ooit eens 'n klip na die gebou gegooi nie.'

Teen een van die buitenste mure is 'n skildery van 'n meisie wat 'n boek lees met die titel 'Future of Dunoon' en dis inderdaad wat dié biblioteek simboliseer: 'n Warm skuilte waar Suid-Afrikaners wat in 'n eenslaapkamersshack sonder elektrisiteit woon, gratis internettoegang kan kry en hul selfone (en hul eie batterye) kan herlaai.

Dis 'n byekorf van inligting waar jy enige iets kan doen van musiek luister tot speelgoed uitneem.

'Die kinders en studente kan hiernatoe kom vir 'n stil ruimte om te studeer, die gemeenskap kan die raadsaal gebruik vir vergaderings en kuns en kultuur en ons het programme vir digitale geletterdheid,' vertel Radebe.

Die bibliotekaresse hier, Nolubabalo Ntshangase, vertel hulle doen ook uitreikaksies na ouetehuse en skole, hulle vertel vir leerlinge hoe om aansoek te doen by tersiêre instellings en hulle hou loopbaan-tentoonstellings.

Vir ander inwoners is dit bloot 'n veilige hawe om te kom koerant lees of



Nolubabalo Ntshangase is reeds 'n bibliotekaresse by Dunoon Biblioteek vandat dié gebou in 2019 geopen is. Deel van haar werk is om vir voorskoolse kinders voor te lees, asook om deesdae met internet- en rekenaargeletterdheid te help

van huishoudelike geweld te ontsnap of werk te soek. By die rekenaarstasie is 'n plakkaat met die woorde: 'A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life.'

Vir Ntshangase en Radebe is dit belangrik dat die gemeenskap verstaan 'n biblioteek 'gaan nie net oor boeke nie'.

'Ons wys vir hulle jy kan begin met 'n tydskrif, en as jy eers daárvan hou, kan jy dalk 'n boek probeer. Met die kinders begin ons met die speelgoed en dan lees ons vir hulle stories en dan leer ons hulle ook dinge soos om nie met vreemdlinge te praat nie,' sê Radebe.

Die probleem is natuurlik dat openbare biblioteke al hoe meer moet doen met al hoe minder geld. Bibliotekarisse moet lankal nie meer bloot boeke keur en bewaar en uitleen en klassifiseer volgens die Dewey-stelsel nie.

Cecilia Sani, die direkteur vir biblioteekdienste by die Wes-Kaapse Departement vir Kultuursake en Sport, vertel net tussen April en Junie vanjaar was daar 5,149 'geletterheidsingrypings' by openbare biblioteke in die Wes-Kaap. Hul personeel help blindes ook met behulp van gespesialiseerde rekenaartegnologie lees, hulle neem gemeenskappe se mondelinge geskiedenis op en die ruimtes word benut as nasorgsentrus.

'Maar alles moet gebeur met minder finansiering,' sê Sani. 'Nie so baie biblioteke in die Wes-Kaap het toegemaak nie (oor die afgelope vyf jaar het ses dienspunte, onder meer die mobiele biblioteekdiens, gesluit), maar biblioteke moet nou, byvoorbeeld, personeel begin deel, want ons finansiering groei nie, dit krimp. Omdat die provinsie die meeste munisipale biblioteke gedeeltelik finansier en sommige kleiner munisipaliteite ten volle finansier, kan ons nie meer al die werklike uitgawes dek nie, en ons moet begin kyk na besnoeiing.'

Hugo vertel daar is 'n groot verskil tussen die meer tradisionele biblioteke in die 'lowerryke buurte' en die townships, waar die gebruik van die ruimte nie noodwendig aan uitleenstatistieke gemeet kan word nie. 'Daar word relatief min boeke uitgeleen, maar daar is baie mense in die biblioteke en hulle gebruik die internet, doen skooltaks, soek werk, lees koerante en stel CV's op.'

Hierdie sosiale infrastruktuur is egter nie 'n luukse nie, dis 'n noodsaak: Ses uit elke tien Suid-Afrikaners ouer as 16 word in huishoudings groot sonder 'n enkele boek en reeds vier jaar voor die pandemie het 'n verslag getoon net 22% van gr. 4-kinders in Suid-Afrika kon met begrip lees.

En terwyl die meeste biblioteke tydens die pandemie vir minstens ses maande moes sluit, is ons onderwysstelsel ná 2020 na 'n bykans ongeëwenaarde laagtepunt (sedert 1994) gestoot.

COVID-19 het egter ook bewys dat diegene met internet-toegang nie eens uit die bed hoef te klim om 'n boek uit



Cecilia Sani, die direkteur vir biblioteekdienste by die Wes-Kaapse Departement vir Kultuursake en Sport

te neem nie: Sedert Augustus verlede jaar kan lede van openbare biblioteke in die Wes-Kaap vir die eerste keer die gewilde Libby-app aflaai.

'Jy registreer en laai bloot die app af en jou biblioteekkaartjie gee vir jou die reg om dit te gebruik en dan het jy toegang tot derduisende gratis e-boeke en luisterboeke,' verduidelik Hugo.

'Jy kies wat jy wil uitneem en hy word outomaties afgelaai op jou slimfoon, rekenaar of tablet en jy't hom vir twee weke en dan verdwyn hy weer. Tot dusver is dit baie gewild. As jy nou 'n e-boek uitgeneem het, is dit vir niemand anders beskikbaar nie behalwe met enkele topverkoper-titels.'

Die e-boekediens is per boek immers duurder as gedrukte boeke, want 'n gedrukte boek word een maal gekoop en is dan vir altyd beskikbaar, terwyl die e-boek deel is van 'n diens met voortgaande koste.

Sommige biblioteke het ook tydens die pandemie begin met 'n soort deurry-diens, amper soos 'n McDonald's vir boeke; hulle het mense gehelp om te registreer vir entstowwe of hulle het kinders besig gehou met aanlyn storie-ure.

Sani glimlag. 'Ons het tydens die pandemie verskriklik baie oproepe gekry van ma's wat gevra het: 'Wanneer maak julle weer oop? My kind het nou al 20 keer dieselfde boek gelees!' Toe ons oopmaak was mense aanvanklik maar versigtig

en die dienste was beperk, maar die sirkulasie van die oudiovisuele materiaal het met 177,9% toegeneem in die 2021-'22-boekjaar. Daar was ook 'n toename van 110,3% in die totale sirkulasie per munisipaliteit (in die Wes-Kaap) in dié boekjaar.'

Die nut van 'n gratis diens is volgens Hugo weer eens tydens die pandemie beklemtoon, want afwesigheid maak meer bemind.

'Die Libby-app was 'n goeie alternatief en aanvullende diens, maar met die finansiering wat krimp moet ons baklei met die beursie-houers wat 'n tipiese middelklas-beeld het dat alles nou aanlyn beskikbaar is,' sê hy. 'Daar is hierdie gemaklike, beperkte idee dat alles nou net elektronies kan raak en dat jy nie meer 'n plek met boeke nodig het nie.'

'Maar almal het nie geld vir data en slimfone nie en die biblioteek gee vir arm mense toegang tot inligting. Studente het, byvoorbeeld, tydens die pandemie toegestaan by ons rekenaars sodat hulle kon klasse bywoon of eksamen skryf.'

Hoe die biblioteek van die toekoms gaan lyk, sal waarskynlik afhang van of jy in Kaapstad of Ladismith of Londen is, sê Hugo.

In Londen mag die biblioteek dalk virtueel wees — of juffrou Sauerman gaan 'n robot wees.

'Daar is reeds allerlei programme in die res van die wêreld waar jy 'n boek kies en jy check dit self uit soos by

die lughawe,' sê Sani. 'En by sommige universiteitsbiblioteke oorsee kan jy op 'n skerm intik na watter boek jy soek, en dan is daar 'n robot-trollie wat na die regte rak gaan, die boek afhaal en vir jou bring.'

In Suid-Afrika is hierdie tegnologie egter 'n hersenskim weens die onontbeerlike uitreikaksies in die gemeenskap wat bibliotekarisse vervul.

'Oor 20 jaar van nou gaan daar stéeds biblioteke met boeke in wees in die Wes-Kaap,' sê Hugo beslis. 'Die taktielbehoefte wat papierboeke wil voel en ruik sal beslis nog na biblioteke gaan — maar ook mense wat nie kan bekostig om op ander maniere leesstof of inligting te kry nie.'

Biblioteke sal egter hul spasies moet begin deel sodat hulle, byvoorbeeld, uitstallings kan hou saam met museums, of mense moet daar kan elektrisiteit koop of ID's kom oplaai, sê Sani.

Sy lyk hartseer. 'Dit is 'n bietjie moeilik om ons die biblioteke van die toekoms te verbeel as ons in hierdie stadium net hoop dat hulle in die toekoms sal oop bly.'

Sy sug. 'Baie van die biblioteke lyk nie meer goed nie; daar is krake in die mure en die tapye begin verweer. Daar is 'n dringende behoefte aan instandhouding en daar is nie genoeg geld vir genoeg mense nie,' sê sy. 'Maar dis 'n noodsaaklike deel van ons sosiale infrastruktuur wat kan help om te baklei teen ongelukheid, polarisasie en die agteruitgang van die burgerlike lewe.'

Die goeie nuus is dat mense deur die eeue heen aangehou het om boeke en dokumente op te gaan — al is biblioteke al telkemale bedreig wanneer nuwe magshebbers die verlede wou uitwis of vergeet. Teen einde verlede jaar was daar 375 openbare biblioteke in die Wes-Kaap, 1,934 in die land en 400,000 ter wêreld.

Die Noorweegse skrywer en juris prof. Jon Bing het gesê: 'Om te vra hoekom ons nog biblioteke nodig het wanneer daar elders soveel inligting beskikbaar is, is omtrent so verstandig soos om te vra of padkaarte nog nodig is noudat daar so baie paaie is.'

Of in die woorde van die wêreld se bekendste skryf-miljardêr, JK Rowling: 'When in doubt, go to the library.'

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By dié biblioteek kan jy ook allerlei speletjies soos tafeltennis speel of jy kan na musiek van jou keuse kom luister by die spilpunte vir elektroniese hulpbronne soos hierdie

# Van die kantlyn beskou, een voet in die veld:

## 'n verslag van 'n boekbelewenis

deur Francois Verster

**O**p 20 Augustus staan 'n netjies-geklede oud-Vrystater, statig en ernstig, met 'n senuagtige glimlaggie, voor die vissersvroue van Paternoster. Die leuse was 'Daar is hoop!'

Die Koelkamers, 'n gewilde teater aan dié dorp se eie waterfront, is vir die byeenkoms aangewend. Nogmaals lewer sy 'n tipies-boeiende vertoning van emosionele betrokkenheid en kreatiewe uitdrukking. Soos altyd hang die luisteraars aan haar lippe en soos gewoonlik word tranes openlik gestort. Ook deur my — vir die soveelste maal.

Terwyl foto's ná die tyd geneem word en 'n paar persone wag om hul ervarings met haar te deel, dink ek aan hoe dit alles gekom het — hoe

'n innemende middeljarige vrou uit bedenklige omstandighede na openbare forums kon tree om 'n boodskap oor te dra. Nie maklik nie, het ek haar al telkens hoor sê, en ek weet ook hoekom. Sekondêre trauma is steeds pynlik, en die oopkrap van wonde — haar eie en mense naby aan haar s'n, is maar 'n deel daarvan. Die aggressie en verwerping van diegene wat verkies dat stilte en onkenning gehandhaaf word, eerder as die oopvlek van die talle vorme van geweld (fisies, emosioneel, finansieel, ensovoorts) wat narsiste — gewentellose menslike parasiete — so mildelik uitdeel, maak nogmaals seer, ondergrawe wêér die skanse wat slagoffers en hulle gesinne oor jare moes oprig.

Ilse het altyd geweet sy kan skryf en dat dit die ideale manier is om soveel as moonlik vroue te bereik, om hulle in te lig. Daarom dan, nie uit weerwraak of swartsmeerdery nie, het **So lyk 'n vrou** gebeur, die topverkoper wat Lapa in Maart vanjaar begin uitgee het. Dié kragtige memoir het plaaslike verkope met 'n slag getref, sodat dit teen Augustus, gepas in Vrouemaand, alreeds 'n vyfde druk beleef het.

Hierdie boek, broodnodig en relevant in 'n land waar een uit drie vroue aan fisiese geweld blootgestel word (dalk meer), ráák mense; nie net hulle wat soortgelyke trauma beleef het nie (en nie net vroue nie) — talle mans en kinders is ook slagoffers van narsistiese vroue. Byna almal wat



terugvoer daarvoor gee, erken dat hulle by tye gehuil het en talle praat van deurnagte lees: min lesers kon skynbaar die boek summier neersit; hulle was gefassineerd deur die direkte, eerlike en soms grafiese vertelling van 'n vrou wat haar ná dekades losskeur uit die web van 'n parasitiese sadis en sy ewe gewetenlose ma en twee broers. Moord- en selfdoodpogings word ook beskryf, maar ook meer subtile ondermyning, so geslepe en berekenend dat dit aan 'n Alfred Hitchcock-riller herinner.

Maar hoe het so 'n skokkende, dog ware verhaal in boekvorm verskyn? Dit opsigself is een van baie byna onwerklike verskynsels wat die ontstaan daarvan kenmerk. Miskien begin dié reeks verskynsels toe die hoofkarakter, Esli, op 'n dag aan God vra: 'Waarom is ek nog hier? Sal die wêreld nie, soos "Bart" my al 'n duisend maal toegesnou het, 'n beter plek sonder my wees nie? Here, het ek 'n bestaansrede?' En toe, vertel sy (ook op forums aan gehore wat in geskokte stilte luister) was daar 'n teenwoordigheid. Die lug in die

badkamer het warmer geword, van 'n elektrisiteit wat al die hare op haar liggaam orent laat kom het. En daar was 'n stem wat aan haar 'n opdrag gegee het.

Dit sou egter 'n paar jaar neem voordat sy Ilse Verster en toe ook Esli sou word. In haar tuisstad het so baie dinge gebeur wat in die boek beskryf word, maar ek tel die draad van hierdie sonderlinge verhaal op waar die skrywer Dana Snyman besluit om 'n konsert op Jacobsbaai te hou, met die doel om bewusmaking van depressie as siekte kragdadig te bevorder. Sy verloofde, Anette, het kort tevore haar eie lewe geneem — in dieselfde stad waar Ilse toe besig was om van 'Bart' te skei. Die Swart Hond-konsert (*Swart Hond* is die naam wat Winston Churchill aan depressie gegee het) was beplan om op Dana en Anette se voorgename trouedag plaas te vind en Dana het mense wyd en syd uitgenooi. Só beland Ilse toe op 'n bus na Kaapstad. En op 8 Desember 2017 sê Dana aan haar: 'Hallo Ilse, kom sit, hier kom my vriend Francois

aan. Hy is ook geskei. Dalk het julle iets om aan mekaar te sê.' Dit was by die Kontreikafee waar die konsert die volgende dag gehou is.

Ilse en ek het mekaar net 'n week geken, toe weet ons: ons hoort by mekaar. Op 7 Julie 2018 is ons daar op die strand getroud. Ons het 'n klein, eenvoudige troue beplan, maar die gastelys het aanhou groei. Dat mense wat aan hulle sestigs begin raak ook liefde kan vind, het die verbeelding aangegryp. Dog, die wonderwerke was nog nie verby nie.

God se opdrag aan Ilse was onomwonde om vroue te waarsku. Jong meisies moet weet wat die kentekens van narsisme is, en ouer vroue moet weet dat daar ook vir hulle hoop is om geluk te vind. Ilse het afgetrek Kaap toe en begin om die dagboek aantekeninge wat sy noukeurig gehou het — die hele bloedige chronologie van aftakeling en uitbuiting, mét mediese-, psigiatriese- en polisieverslae — as onderbou vir haar boek te gebruik. Om die feite byeen te trek was relatief maklik, maar



Ilse Verster met haar debutwerk, *So lyk 'n vrou*

die emosionele impak van herlewing en ontbloting was soortgelyk aan skokterapie.

Ek moes soms tot laatnag by haar sit en haar vashou as sy aan die bewese gaan, saam na die badkamer loop wanneer sy naard word, en dan later in die nag wanneer sy begin ruk en skree, haar wakkermaak en troos.

Dan het ek haar op my skoot getel en Don Williams se *Ghost story* gesing: 'He's just a ghost story so don't let him scare you, he's not really there like he seems, and tonight when I hold you I'll hold you so close. I'll love him right out of your dreams...'

Daar het dikwels weke verbygegaan voordat ek haar kon oorreed om verder te skryf. Jy moet 'n roetine vind en kontinuiteit behou, het ek gesê, en sy het verstaan, en sy wou skryf, haar opdrag uitvoer, maar die trauma wat jare se psigiatriese behandeling skaars kon beheer, is nou opnuut blootgelê. Maar, sy het deurgedruk, aanhou skryf, hoewel asof met trane en bloed, nie bloot woorde, wit op swart nie. Stadigaan het die manuskrip gestalte begin kry.

En toe, nóg 'n ingrype, soos ons dit ervaar het — 'n skrywersvriendin, Riëtte Hugo, nooi ons na 'n skryfaand. 'n Aantal skrywers daag daar op en elkeen lees dele uit manuskripte waarmee hulle besig was. Ilse ook. Die uitgewer Marieta Nel neem Ilse eenkant en sê: "Daárdie is 'n boek. Laat my weet wanneer jy daarmee klaar is."

Maande daarna is daar 'n geleentheid op Stellenbosch. Die ATKV ken 'n oorkonde aan Dana toe, en ons is daar as sy gaste. Marieta is ook daar, en sy vra my uit oor Ilse se boek. Ek vra Ilse om Marieta se kontakdetail te kry. Nou. 'n Paar dae later sê ek 'Gee my jou eerste bladsy. Ek stuur dit aan Marieta.' Drie dae later kontak Louis Gaigher, hoof van Lapa se nie-fiksie afdeling, ons. 'Dis goeie sterk skryfwerk,' sê hy. Hulle stel belang. Duidelik baie belang. 'Sny die woorde tot 80,000 en stuur in.'

Geen maande se naelkou-afwagting, geen keuringsproses, geen heen-en-weer gesukkel tussen almal wat met die versorging en redigering te make het nie. Net een e-pos met 'n paar vrae aan Ilse, wat sy vinnig afhandel. Die voorblad (derde voorstel) was nie aanvanklik wat sy wou hê nie, maar sy aanvaar dit later as minder stylvol as 'n vorige een, maar beslis baie treffend. So is dit ook — kopers sien dit



'n Groot aand: 'n skrywersbyweenkoms in Vierlanden. (Lnr): Marieta Nel; Belinda Nel; prof. Willie Breytenbach; dr. Malene Breytenbach; Ilse en Francois Verster; Jolene en dr. Viljoen van der Walt; en Francois Bloemhof. Voor: dr. Matthys Odendaal



Die begin van nuwe dinge: die aand toe ons ontmoet het op Jacobsbaai. (Lnr): Dana Snyman, Francois Verster, Ilse Verster, Gert Vlok Nel en C Johannes Bakkes

op 'n afstand op boekwinkelrakke (al herinner dit ons aan Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Carribean*). Die boek het aangeland. Die boek vlieg egter gou weer, van die winkelrakke en deur die kuberruim — as e-boek, as luisterboek en in papiervorm. Uit Kanada, Australië en Namibië kom briewe en telefoonoproepe.

Gou begin die ou staatmaker, *word of mouth*, saam met talle artikels die woord versprei. Suzette Truter van *Sarie* was eerste met 'n onderhoud,

gevolg deur Willemien Brümmer, wat ons aan huis besoek het, vir *Netwerk24*. *Die Burger*, *Beeld* en *Volksblad* publiseer ook Willemien se uitstekende artikel. *Huisgenoot* stuur 'n joernalis en fotograaf, maar onttrek op advies van hulle prokureur — Ilse weier dat 'Bart' ook in 'n onderhoud betrek word, ter wille van haar kinders. Toe volg 'n televisie-onderhoud, op *Duidelik dapper* met Lea. Lea het ook opgetree by 'n reuse saamtrek van vroue op Bloemendal naby Durbanville, ten bate

van Jabez-fonds vir mishandelde vroue en kinders.

Nóg 'n televisie-onderhoud, met Anastasia de Vries vir die Woordfees-program en verskeie radio-onderhoude, selfs via Zoom met Johan Allers in Amsterdam volg. Hierna is dit talle optredes by leeskringe, vroue-saamtrekke, biblioteke, oorde en boekfeeste. Ilse raak uitgeput deur die golf van vroue wat haar gedurig kontak om raad te vra met persoonlike worstelings. Sy ontmoet ook etlike persone, maar besef later sy kan dit nie byhou nie — finansiële en emosioneel raak dit net té veel. Die Facebookblad (*Ilse Verster Skrywer*) wat deur die uitgewers aangevra is ontplof wat getalle betref en skielik is Ilse, wat vir 'n halfeeu deur iemand as 'n 'niks' en 'n 'suurstofdief' bestempel was, 'n openbare figuur.

Al die aandag is soms oorweldigend, maar sy haneer dit met grasia en die moed wat haar tot hier gebring het. Sy het steeds 'n opdrag om deur te voer: vroue móét hoop kry.

So wat lê nou voor? Dit raak duidelik dat die Weskus-roman waarmee Ilse baie jare gelede begin het steeds sal moet wag. Daar is 'n duidelike, onweerstaanbare behoefte aan meer fakkels wat aangesteek moet word om die lig van waarheid oor die donkerwerk van narsisme en ander geweldenaars te laat skyn. Die stilte moet verbreek word, want dis wat geweld laat gedy. Swye is die skans waaragter boelies in hulle valsheid en agterbaksheid skuil. Solank vroue moet stilbly oor wat met hulle gebeur, sál hulle onderdruk word. Goëie mense moet saamstaan, vroue én

mans, om hierdie pandemie van angst en pyn teë te staan. Daarom sal Ilse weer skryf, waarskynlik in antwoord op die vrae wat oor en oor gehoor word: hoe beïnvloed geweld in die huis die kinders? Hoe kom 'n slagoffer van narsisme uit so 'n hel? Waar kan slagoffers 'n heenkome vind? Hoe herbou jy jou lewe? Hoe verwerk 'n mens trauma? Die vrae weerklink ten hemele.

**So lyk 'n vrou** staan wel nie alleen nie. Daar is baie boeke wat insigte en raad verskaf. Om so 'n situasie te oorleef, moet slagoffers hulle bemagtig met kennis van waarmee hulle te doen het. Ilse het oor jare dosyne boeke en ander bronne oor narsisme (nie 'n geringe of tydelike afwyking nie, dis 'n ongeneeslike sielkundige toestand, nés psigopatie) en gesinsgeweld versamel en agter in haar boek noem sy van hierdie bronne. Vandag kan almal Google, en so kan jy verstaan wat narsisme is, maar wat **So lyk 'n vrou** anders en dalk meer nuttig maak, is dat dit jou inlig terwyl jy 'n storie lees — 'n gevallestudie van geweld wat soos 'n riller afspeel.

Elke boek het sy tyd, 'n optimale kans om suksesvol te wees. Hierdie boek het verskyn toe daar vanuit talle oorde reklame gemaak is oor huishoudelike geweld. Selfs op papier- en plastiek-sakke waarin kruidentersware gedra word, staan die woorde *DOMESTIC ABUSE* of *GENDER BASED VIOLENCE*. Teen die muur by Kaapstad Internasionaal is 'n reuse advertensie wat dit uitbasuin, en op forums word wysvingers geswaai; 'n beskuldiging teen die hele gemeenskap: praat uit, blaas fluitjies, stop dié pandemie!

Hulle beweer alle stories gaan oor iets wat iemand soek. 'n *Quest*. Het Ilse al haar doelwit bereik? Sy dink nie so nie. Dit blyk dat Esli nogmaals deur die Dal van Skaduwees sal gaan, die *sleepy hollow* waar niemand regtig kan slaap nie... die reis is nog nie voltooi nie.

*The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them, that's the essence of inhumanity.*

George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)

*Dr Francois Verster is 'n historikus, argivaris en skrywer*



Hier praat Ilse op 10 Mei met Riette Rust op FMR

# Reflecting on a year with Libby

by Luinda Lilley



As part of a three-year tender by the Western Cape Library Service (WCLS), the OverDrive ebook borrowing facility launched a year ago in August 2021 for all current WCLS and City of Cape Town Library Services (CCT LIS) patrons. Almost exactly one year later, it seems appropriate to pause a moment to review some of the milestones reached over the past 12 months.

All the statistics quoted in this article refer to the period from 1 August 2021 to 31 August 2022.

#### Note: terminology used

OverDrive is the interface available via the website or the Libby app. Libby and OverDrive are essentially the same thing. For the purposes of simplicity, in this article I will solely talk about Libby.

The launch and development of Libby has been overseen by the project manager, Stanley Jonck (Assistant

Director: Selections, WCLS). Together with the selectors from CCT LIS and WCLS, the titles on offer in Libby were identified and developed from the ground up. The selection of suitable titles for Libby fits into the bigger picture of the complete selection process which both the WCLS and the CoCT LIS librarians are involved in. It is not an exercise entirely separate to the collection development of physical books, but the two are complementary activities and ebooks are simply a different format to the regular print books added to libraries across the Western Cape.

In the first year of this project we have built the collection up to this level:

Formats	Titles	Copies
Ebook	7 275	9 212
Audiobook	504	2 179
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 779</b>	<b>11 391</b>

The popularity of Libby is reflected in the usage summary below:

Summary	
Total unique users	4 200
Total checkouts	89 448
<b>Total holds</b>	<b>24 150</b>

Overall user activity shows that usage of Libby is dominated by adult patrons (91.5%), followed by juvenile patrons (5%) and lastly young adults or teenagers (3.5%). Ebooks account for 88.5% of checkouts and audiobooks come in at 11.5%. The popularity of digital audiobooks is as a result of the ease of use of Airplay (used in cars), the convenience of listening and the need

# Meet Libby.

The one-tap reading app from your library



to rest one's eyes from constant reading on devices (laptops and mobiles).

Patron interests reveal what the most popular genres are. It has been useful to monitor this throughout the past year because it has indicated to us what our clientele like to see on the 'shelves'. Fiction definitely tops non-fiction, but that doesn't mean that we don't constantly add new relevant factual material.

The top ten most popular titles borrowed were:

Title	Checkouts
The girl in his shadow: a novel	218
Donkerdrif	208
Na 'n plaas in Afrika	194
The missing sister	191
The sentinel: Jack Reacher series, book 25	189
The olive tree (unabridged)	181
The four winds	171
The seven sisters: seven sisters series, book 1	165
The promise	153
The storm sister: seven sisters series, book 2	150

The most popular authors featured in the top fifteen were:

Creator (Author)	Checkouts
Dina Botha	2 449
Elsa Winckler	2 258
James Patterson	1 450
Lucinda Riley	1 310
Madeline Human	1 235
Deon Meyer	1 148
Chanette Paul	1 125
Rudi van Rensburg	986
Didi Potgieter	965
Danielle Steel	893
Nora Roberts	864
Irma Joubert	848
Marilé Cloete	832
Lee Child	761
Sophia Kapp	678

#### Trending subjects

Subjects with the most checkouts and holds in Libby.

🔍

BISAC Subject	Checkouts	Holds
Fiction / Romance / Contemporary	7 812	1 436
Fiction / Romance / General	5 418	1 184
Fiction / Thrillers / Suspense	3 047	1 078
Fiction / General	2 599	1 045
Fiction / Mystery & Detective / General	1 626	754
Fiction / Contemporary Women	1 513	627
Fiction / Historical / General	997	543
Fiction / Romance / Historical / General	947	372
Fiction / Thrillers / Crime	882	394
Fiction / Literacy	771	437

Patron interests reveal what the most popular genres are

Reflecting back on the past year, we can see that the OverDrive project has shown consistent and healthy growth. The project was initially hampered by limited start-up funding for the Opening Day Collection, as we were only able to do three purchases in May and August 2021 and then in February 2022. After that we received additional funding that was put into place to be able to schedule monthly purchases. Subsequently we were then able to dramatically expand the scope of the titles on offer.

In 2022, there was a change in the way in which the selection team operated. It was realised that the only way to steadily grow the collection and stimulate usage is if we do monthly buys of ebooks and audiobooks. Monthly online meetings were scheduled for us to shape and fine-tune the overall project. At these meetings, the team discussed the initial chosen titles and made recommendations towards finalising the monthly buys.

The scope of identifying new titles has been broadened as much as possible. Regional librarians, public librarians and registered users are able to make recommendations for titles on the Western Cape Library Service OverDrive website at: <https://westerncape.OverDrive.com/>

#### Milestone moments

We can be proud of the milestones that we have achieved in the short time that we have been developing Libby. To achieve this, in a climate of ever-shrinking budgets the selection team took full advantage of every price reduction and sale. OverDrive offers sales on certain genres like graphic novels or audiobooks in specific months. By closely observing where we could make cost savings, we have been able to stretch our budget.

We also actively promoted the global book club that OverDrive calls their Big Library Read campaign.

And to ensure the success of the project, we focused on our deliverables. The ongoing and upcoming tasks were identified by Stanley Jonck and discussed at our monthly meetings.

Here are the top circulating libraries in the past year:

Branch	Checkouts
Hermanus Public Library	4 576
Kleinmond Public Library	3 925
Durbanville Library	3 292
Paarl Public Library	2 786
Somerset West Library	2 606
Stellenbosch Public Library	2 388
Bellville Library	2 327
Table View Library	2 120
George Public Library	2 111
Claremont Library	1 831
Swellendam Public Library	1 790
Riversdale Public Library	1 746
Gansbaai Public Library	1 728
Brackenfell Library	1 669
Tyger Valley Library	1 642
Mossel Bay Public Library	1 606
Worcester Public Library	1 500
Pinelands Library	1 465
Hartenbos Public Library	1 384
Lutzville Public Library	1 375
Stilbaai Public Library	1 368
Colin Eglin (Sea Point) Library	1 349
Bredasdorp Public Library	1 310
Langebaan Public Library	1 159
Central Library	1 150

## Stumbling blocks

Owing to the unwavering commitment of the key selectors, we encountered very few delays or problems.

One challenge that we did encounter is that there are many titles on OverDrive Marketplace that publishers classify as juvenile fiction that actually include titles for tweens and older teenagers.

The real challenge for selectors – and an ongoing matter of concern – is the limited availability of newly

published Afrikaans ebook titles by respected, established publishers. Our ability to purchase access to these genres is now very limited. To partly compensate for this lack of material, we are left to choose from older titles and the handful of new titles added monthly. The selectors therefore need to carefully evaluate the many Afrikaans titles that are self-published as they mostly have a low standard of editing. Ultimately, this could result in an incomplete project goal to purchase sufficient Afrikaans material.

## What trends can we see and learn from?

The star performer in the Libby project has been the uptake of digital audiobooks. They continue to be well used and we will maintain a steady flow of new titles to support this interest.

We added more graphic novels in response to the worldwide trend showing a sharp rise in sales of comics and graphic novels. These increased by 62% in 2021 from 2020. The main area of graphic novels showing dramatic growth is manga. Now we need to

promote these purchases to ensure that we get value for money.

The Collection Development Team has identified a few areas which we are exploring going into our second year. These include:

- Adding the **Cape Librarian** and other local content to OverDrive
- Travel guides
- Magazines.

To conclude, I would like to show the far-reaching positive impact of Libby by quoting a friend of mine, Lucia, who sent me a WhatsApp message in the first week of September 2022:

*Thank you for introducing me to the audio library books. LOVE it. Was listening to my book on our boat trip from Phi Phi to Phuket. So nice to use the travel time more efficiently.*

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The screenshot shows a promotional page for the book 'The Girl in His Shadow' by Audrey Blake. At the top left is the 'BIG LIBRARY READ' logo. Navigation links include 'Current Title', 'Join the discussion', 'Marketing Materials', 'Past Titles', and 'Get Started with Libby'. The main content area features the book cover, the title 'The Girl in His Shadow' by Audrey Blake, and the text 'Participate in our free, global, digital book club!'. Below this, it states 'Available in Libby with no waitlists or holds from July 13-27, 2022'. There are two prominent buttons: 'Borrow the ebook or audiobook now' and 'Join the discussion'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Read in Libby' section with instructions to download the app from the App Store or Google Play, and a note that the title is available from participating libraries and universities.

We actively promoted OverDrive's Big Library Read campaign, their global book club

# Rediscovering our crown jewel of Africa

compiled by Lieschen Kays

The passing of the crippling COVID-19 pandemic, the imminent arrival of summer and most importantly, September as National Tourism Month in South Africa mean that locals and foreigners alike no longer have an excuse not get out and about, drinking in our country's boundless beauty and savouring its rich cultural tapestry.

In fact, with many of these industries dependant on exploration investment, as proud South Africans we are duty-bound to support them to the ends of protecting and rejuvenating supply, reigniting demand and strengthening capability to support the sector's recovery.

From the harshness of the West Coast and Karoo desert, the splendour of the Garden Route and lushness of the East Coast, South Africa offers a diversity in its beauty that is simply unparalleled anywhere else on earth. It belongs to all of us — and it's just waiting to be rediscovered, with the aid of the selection of titles now available in our libraries.

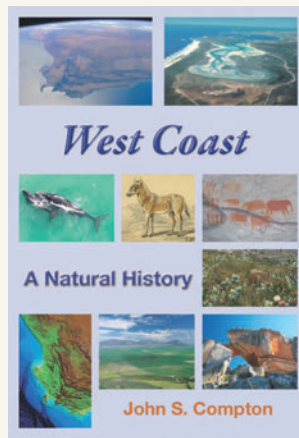
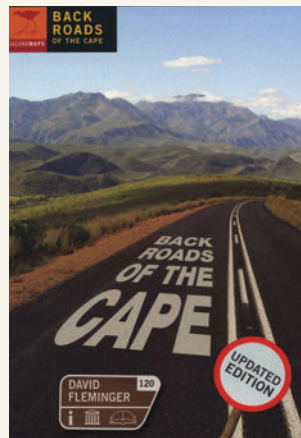
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## **EWART-SMITH, Cameron** **Getaway guide to the Kruger National Park.** - Sunbird Publishers, 2009.

The Kruger National Park is a splendour and one of South Africa's top tourist destinations, boasting an array of fantastic and exotic wildlife that will marvel its guests over and over again. With a 500 km coverage of land on South Africa's north-eastern border with Mozambique, this area provides plenty for visitors to explore, whilst being in awe of fauna, flora and the experience to match. The contents of this book transports one to visually explore one of the world's greatest game reserves, enticing its readers to book that tourist experience to discover its wonders first-hand. With beautiful landscape photographs in full colour this third edition offers insight into wildlife, historical sites, conservation and features over 2,500 km of roads and tracks; gate times and rest camp facilities; 25 detailed

maps and 14 rest camp plans; detailed descriptions of more than 60 game drives; and game-watching tips for the best wildlife sightings. The appeal not only reaches tourists, but also guides and those interested in researching the park a bit further. 'Cameron Ewart-Smith is editor of *Getaway*, Africa's première travel brand. Cameron is an author, photographer and editor based in Cape Town. He began his editorial career as senior photojournalist with the magazines, leaving in 2003 to travel for a year, doing research for a book. On his return, he continued his association with the brand over the next six years as compère of the *Getaway Show* and presenter of photographic workshops for readers. Cameron spent four months travelling through the Kruger National Park while researching **Getaway guide to Kruger National Park**, visiting all the rest camps and picnic sites along the way to glean local knowledge of the wildlife, birds, plants, routes and much more. He has contributed widely to local and international publications on subjects





sal mens wel kan bepaal waar lê die Tankwa-Karoo. Maar vir Adriaan Oosthuizen kry jy dié streek wanneer jy die langste grondpad tussen twee dorpe in Suid-Afrika aanpak; tussen Ceres en Calvinia. Saam met Adriaan se foto's vertel Leti Kleyn van haar besoek aan hierdie geliefde stuk land en dit word aangevul deur Dawid Slinger se vertellings en skrywes. Ook die Tankwa-Karoo se mense word aan die woord gestel en só word dit duidelik: Dié wêreld het 'n hart én 'n gat. Hier was oorlog, hier loop 'n spookwa, hier word begrafnis en basaar gehou en geboer en oorleef. Maar die inwoners word min, en of die inkommers en naweekboere dit gaan maak, moet mens maar sien. **Briewe uit die Tankwa** is 'n sieraad én 'n lekkerleesboek. Dit bevat ook 'n gids vir diegene wat meer oor die Tankwa-Karoo wil lees, gaan kyk en oorbly. Oor die outeur: Leti Kleyn is 'n dosent in Kreatiewe skryfkuns en Akademie se geletterdheid aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, maar is ook aktief in die Suid-Afrikaanse uitgewersbedryf. Oor die fotograaf: Adriaan Oosthuizen is 'n fotograaf gebaseer in Kaapstad. Hy spesialiseer in mode, kos, dekor, portretstudies, kuns en natuur. Sy werk is opgeneem in Suid-Afrikaanse tydskrifte soos *VISI*, *Sarie-kos*, *Taste* en ander. Hy ontvang 'n toonaangewende *Milk*-fotografie prys vanuit Nieu-Seeland, asook 'n goue medalje in die Suid-Afrikaanse *Fuji Pro Foto*-toekennings vir Natuurfotografie. Sy werk is ook ingesluit in 'n uitstalling wat uitgestal is in Sydney, New York en Londen.' ([lapa.bookslive.co.za](http://lapa.bookslive.co.za))

related to his interests, including hiking, mountaineering, diving and mountain biking. Through his association with *Wild*, he was recently a presenter of a six-part TV series on the Transfrontier Parks for Homebrew Films.' ([jonathanball.co.za](http://jonathanball.co.za))

#### FLEMINGER, David

**Back roads of the Cape.**- Jacana Media, 2005.

'Rich with historical narratives, personal recollections, reflections on politics, environmental debates, social observation, and practical travel information, this honest and opinionated book is a far cry from the typical sponsored travel guide. The author's idiosyncratic writing style and humour flavour the travel experience and impart a sense of immediacy and adventure, and resources for further information are listed in the back of the book, encouraging a personalised adventure.' ([goodreads.com](http://goodreads.com))

#### COMPTON, John S

**West Coast: a natural history.**- Earthspun, 2021.

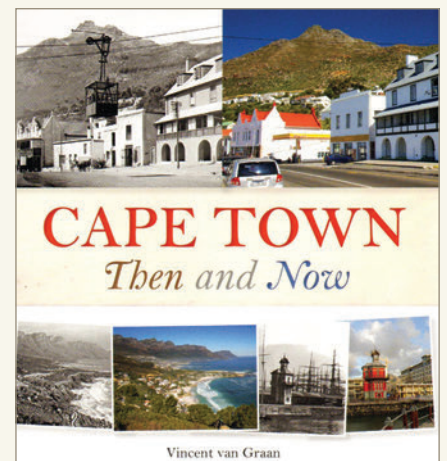
'Whether you live here or just happen to be passing through, the many facets of the West Coast leave an imprint upon each of us, giving us a "sense of place" — the sum of all that we take in from our surroundings. Through a series of illustrated essays that touch upon various aspects of its natural history, this book provides a guide for those intrigued by the wonders of the West Coast. From the beaches of the Cape Peninsula to southern Namibia,

and inland as far as the Cederberg Mountains, the West Coast is a region of diverse landforms, plant and animal life, climate and history. On a stroll along the beach one can encounter folded bedrock 560 million years old, dune sand 5,000 years old, shell middens 1,500 years old, and seaweed stranded on the last high tide. This book explores how the many habitats and life forms have evolved through time, including the increasingly large impact that we are having on the West Coast.' ([johnscompton.com](http://johnscompton.com))

#### OOSTHUIZEN, Adriaan

**Briewe uit die Tankwa.**- Protea Boekhuis, 2016.

'"n Koffietafelplezier, lekkerleesboek en 'n inligtinggids ineen oor die geliefde streek wat die Tankwa-Karoo heet. Met kaarte en geografiese grense





Kruger National Park

**VAN GRAAN, Vincent**

**Cape Town then and now.**- Struik Travel & Heritage, 2013.

'Vincent van Graan trained as a photographer and now manages a professional photographic lab in Cape Town, specialising in large-format, fine-art editing and printing. The detailed informative text accompanying the photographs was written by Anne Clarkson, a professional researcher and genealogist. **Cape Town then and now** is a unique visual portrait of Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula, contrasting rare archival photographs with stunning contemporary views. The book draws on the superb photographic collections of the Western Cape Archives, including the work of Arthur Elliott, Thomas Ravenscroft and Henry Steer. These images portray the changing Cape Town scene from the 1880s to the 1930s — landscape, architecture, transport, recreation and the march of history. Where possible, the modern-day photographs, which include spectacular aerial panoramas, have been shot from the same locations as the originals. Detailed captions explain the differences between the old and the new views and bring out fascinating continuities over time. **Cape Town then and now** is a visual journey that will appeal to Capetonians and visitors alike.' (*ilovebooks.co.za*)

**MUIR, John**

**Walking Cape Town: urban walks and drives in the Cape Peninsula.**- Struik Travel & Heritage, 2013.

'The perfect companion for the urban sightseer, **Walking Cape Town** features 24 easy walks and nine drives through the streets and suburbs of one of the world's most beautiful and diverse cities. From the Company's Garden in the heart of the city to trendy Green Point, Sea Point and Camps Bay, the colourful Bo-Kaap and the bustling seaside villages of Muizenberg, Kalk Bay and Simon's Town, this comprehensive guide reveals the fascinating history and urban charm that has made Cape Town one of the top destinations in the world. John Muir, an expert on Cape Town and its hidden gems, provides a wealth of information on all that can be discovered en route: the city's colonial past, Victorian and contemporary architecture, museums and monuments, churches and mosques, parks and gardens, and rivers and wetlands. Fully illustrated with more than 250 photographs, this extensive guide also includes: 32 easy-to-follow illustrated route maps; detailed route directions; absorbing fact panels detailing most of the city's iconic landmarks and famous residents; essential information on walking and driving distances, terrain

and level of difficulty; opening times and contact details; suggestions for restaurants, pubs and coffee shops to be found along each route. For locals and visitors wanting to discover more about the city's rich heritage, whether by foot or by car, **Walking Cape Town** is an indispensable guide.' (*barnesandnoble.com*)

**THOMSON, Grahame and CARLISLE, Julie**

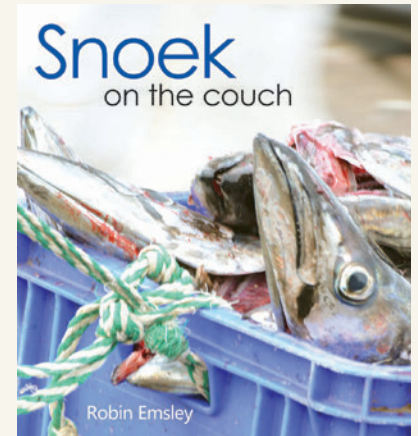
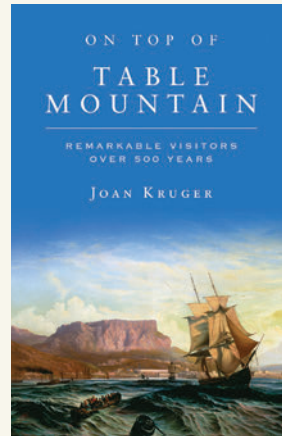
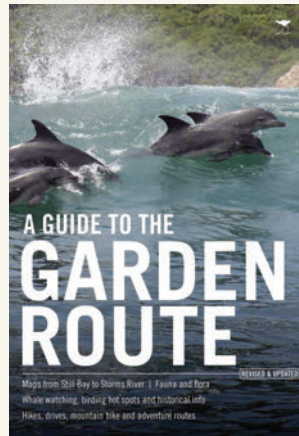
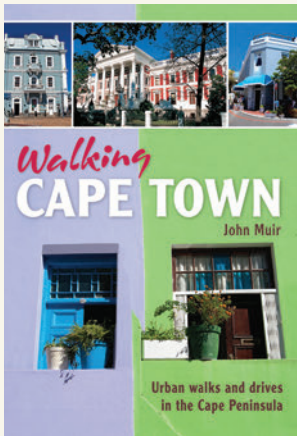
**A guide to the Garden Route.**- Jacana Media, 2017.

'Our Garden Route guide will take you on a magical journey along South Africa's Garden Route while exploring the beauties and hidden secrets of our natural heritage. Filled with detailed and up-to-date information, this book tells you where to go, how to get there and what you'll find in the area: hikes, drives, mountain bike and adventure routes; whale watching, birding hot spots; fauna and flora; maps from Still Bay to Storms River; historical, environmental, cultural and geological info. This must-have guide will enhance your experience and will certainly expand your knowledge of the area. This book will appeal to tourists and locals, holiday makers, hikers, bikers, walkers, birders, outdoor enthusiasts, nature lovers and guides.' (*jacana.co.za*)

**KRUGER, Joan**

**On top of Table Mountain: remarkable visitors over 500 years.**- Paternoster Books, 2016.

'Ever since 1503 when an off-course sailor scaled Table Mountain to find out where on Earth he was, visitors to the Cape have toiled, scrambled, ridden on horseback, climbed or run to the top... and written about it afterwards. **On top of Table Mountain** by Joan Kruger tells the story of the mountain as experienced by extraordinary visitors who made it to the top. First came the sailors, soldiers and surgeons as the colonial powers called on the Cape in their journey to the East. Next were the botanists, astronomers and mathematicians in search of unique discoveries, with the creative types looking for inspiration hot on their heels. In recent years Table Mountain has drawn intrepid thrill-seekers and everyday adventurers in almost equal measure. The book tells the



life-stories of 27 exceptional visitors to the mountain, including such well-known figures as William Burchell, Lady Anne Barnard and Jan Smuts. Discover inspiring personalities like James Holman, the Blind Traveller, who travelled around the world and wrote about it despite not being able to see. And delight in the observational powers of writers, scientists and trail blazers as you read first-hand accounts of their ascents. This is the first time that the English translations of their reports, written in a variety of languages, including Russian and Swedish, have been collected in one volume.' (*wildcard.co.za*)

**EMSLEY, Robin**

**Snoek on the couch** - Print Matters Heritage, 2018.

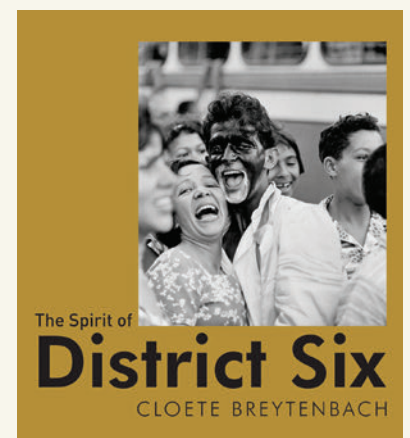
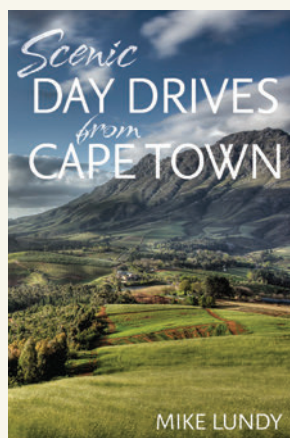
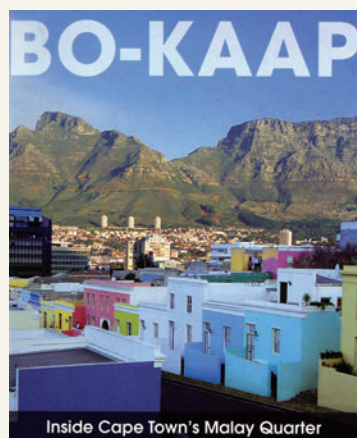
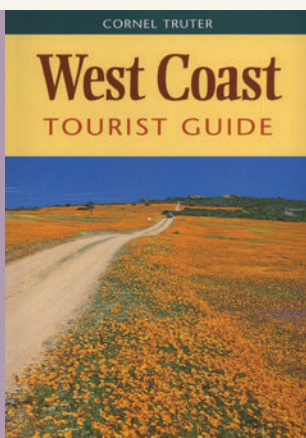
Robin Emsley, a professor of psychiatry at Stellenbosch University, has had

an epitome of the relation between a snoek, the encompassing culture it embraces, and that of the individual. An interesting personification on the oceanic wildlife surrounding St Helena Bay harbour, and its surrounding community on the West Coast. Whilst first encountering the local delicacy on the harbour, Emsley also noted how this species draws locals together for braais, gatherings and frequenting marketplaces and points of sale. Initially the book started off as a collection of photographs taken at the harbour and in the surrounding area of St Helena Bay. However, Emsley noted that there may be a philosophical juxtaposition between specie and human. Both seeking to survive and thrive, but with a sort of cultural dependence which initiates exploration of building a heritage that is authentically South African. Whilst metaphorical expressions of snoek

versus individual are addressed; the photographs and cultural agendas explored will lure tourists to traverse for themselves the beauty of the surrounding town, harbour, culture and lifestyle experience. Written in plain English, and there are some humorous touches in this book, with excellent images. **LK**

**TRUTER, Cornel**

**West Coast: a tourist guide** - West Coast Regional Services Council, 1994. The West Coast is a keen destination attraction not only to locals, but also to tourists from afar. With so many lovely sites to explore such as the Olifants River Valley, the Cederberg, the West Coast National Park, the Sandveld and Lower Berg River and many more; it remains a timeless and firm destination for all kinds of tours. The book is extravagant with detailed



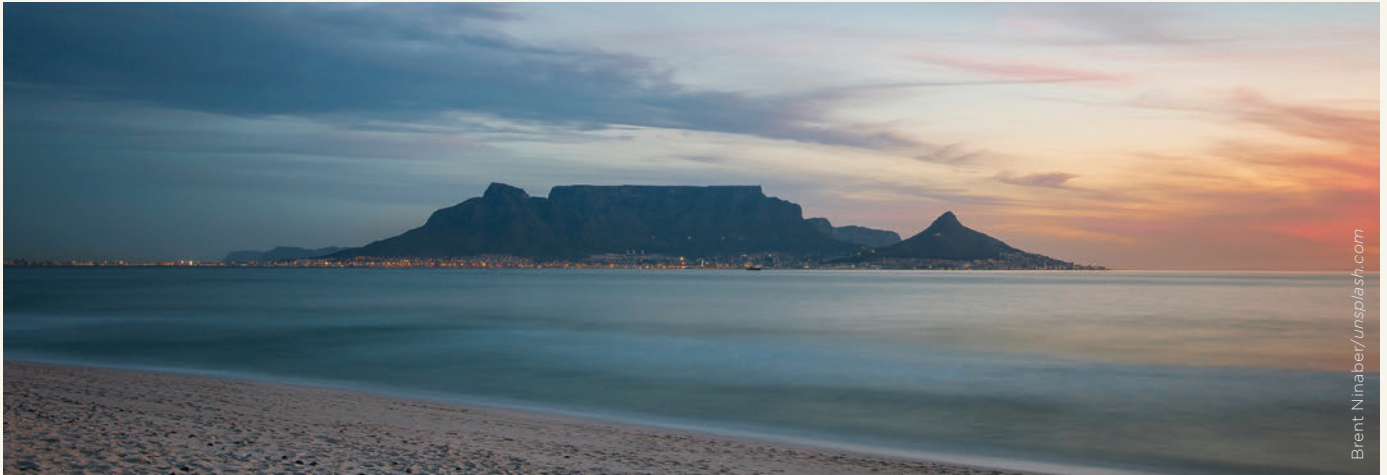


Table Mountain from Bloubergstrand

Brent Nijaber/unsplash.com

colour photographs as it yields to nature and touring shots, providing an experience that will certainly encourage one to explore these diverse regions personally or perhaps booking a local tour. Whilst providing a guide to the Atlantic coast of South Africa, from Cape Town in the south to the Hardveld in the north, the book also makes provision for information on spring flowers, water sports, nature reserves and fishing. The area is divided into eight regions with a map, background notes, history, current features and attractions with a bonus guide to details of accommodation sites and restaurant stops along the way. With such an array of areas covered and sites which entice one to explore, this lovely guide will be ideal for the budding tourist along with those referencing for knowledge purposes. **LK**

**WILKINSON, Robyn and KRAGOLSEN-KILLE, Astrid**  
**Bo-Kaap: inside Cape Town's Malay Quarter.** - Struik, 2006.

'Cape Town is renowned for its multi-cultural, cosmopolitan society, and the people of the Bo-Kaap are a vital part of this mix. Their forefathers came here as slaves, political exiles and traders from the Malay Archipelago, Indonesia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and India in the 17th and 18th centuries. Today they are fiercely proud of their heritage and follow a strict Islamic lifestyle.

This book opens the door on this tight-knit community and the reader feels as though a local is taking them on a guided tour of his/her favourite spots. Spicy Cape Malay cooking has infused South African cuisine for many years, and even the trendy restaurant Ginja on the outskirts of the Bo-Kaap boasts Cape Malay influence in many of its dishes. The beautifully illustrated recipes in this book allow the reader to make Cape Malay dishes in their own homes. Some of the traditional ways of the Bo-Kaap's residents are under threat from gentrification, as investors move in and property prices increase. Through the pages of this book, we have captured the essence of this vibrant and historical district.'

(*namibiana.de*)

**LUNDY, Mike**  
**Scenic day drives from Cape Town.**

- Human & Rousseau, 2010.  
 'The 15 drives, with colour maps and photographs and descriptions filled with fact and anecdote, can all be completed within a day, while allowing enough time for suggested activities en route. Every drive begins and ends at the Cape Town Convention Centre. The exact driving time, distance, and time allowance for fitting in visits to places of interest and lunch stops, are given in each instance. Activities en route include a trip up the cable car, a ferry ride to Robben Island, visits to the West Coast National and Fossil

Parks, wine tastings at the picturesque Stellenbosch and Franschhoek wine estates and getting acquainted with Africa's Big Five and the ocean's Big Two. The ideal book for visitors to the Mother City.'

(*goodreads.com*)

**BREYTENBACH, Cloete**  
**The spirit of District six.** - Human & Rousseau, 1997.

'This revised edition (in a smaller format aimed at the tourist market) of this beautiful book shows poignant images from Breytenbach's collection of District Six during the 1970s before the area was dramatically demolished by the apartheid government. It is an historical record about the inhabitants and their surroundings of that time and was compiled over a period of five years. The Cape Town area known as District Six (so called for its geographic position on the municipal map of the city) developed into a dense residential area close to the centre of Cape Town during the second part of the nineteenth century.'

(*protea.bookslive.co.za*)

**LK Lieschen Kays**

*Lieschen Kays is a book selector at the Western Cape Library Service*



# Book reviews Boekresensies

compiled by book selectors

## ADULT FICTION VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR

**BENEDICT, Marie and MURRAY, Victoria Christopher**

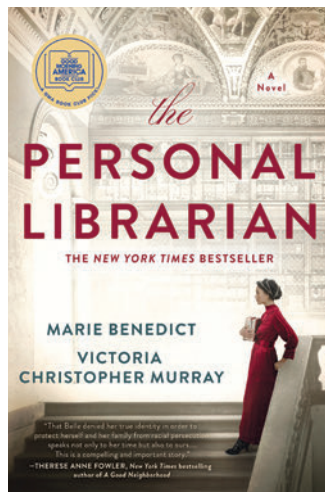
**The personal librarian.** - Berkley Books, 2021.

'Novelists Benedict, who is white, and Murray, who is black, collaborate on an excellent book about Belle da Costa Greene, a powerful real-life figure in early 20th century New York City. In 1905, JP Morgan hired Greene as the librarian to his private collection of art and rare books and manuscripts; she worked tirelessly (selling and acquiring millions of dollars of works) to turn it into the major public collection now known as the Pierpont Morgan Library. Greene became the first director of the Morgan Library when it was opened to the public. In Benedict and Murray's novel, Belle enters a society dominated by men, where she makes her mark with her incredible knowledge of books, art and people. But she fears that someone will learn her secret: that she is a black woman in a white social circle. When Belle's father left the family, Belle's mother had moved them

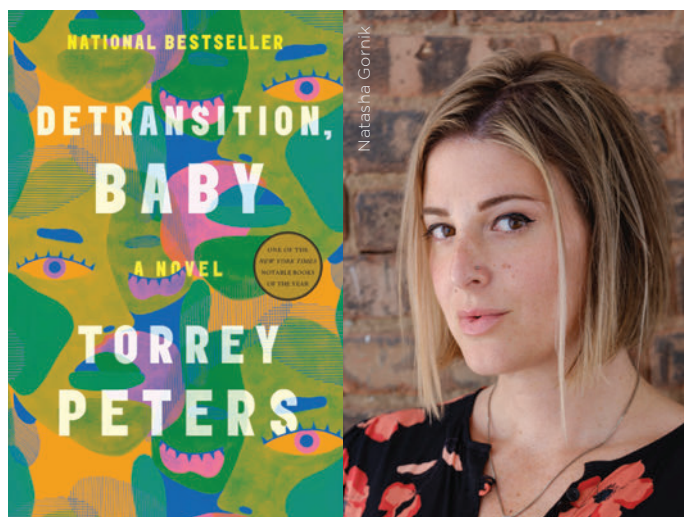
from Washington, DC to New York, where, with their light skin, the family could 'pass' for white. Belle doesn't want to live a lie, but she knows that many doors would close to her if she revealed her origins. This fictional account of Greene's life feels authentic; the authors bring to life not only Belle but all those around her. An excellent

piece of historical fiction that many readers will find hard to put down.' (*libraryjournal.com*, Pamela O'Sullivan)

**PETERS, Torrey**  
**Detransition, baby.** - Serpent's Tail, 2022.  
'A wonderfully original exploration of desire and the evolving shape of family.'



Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray



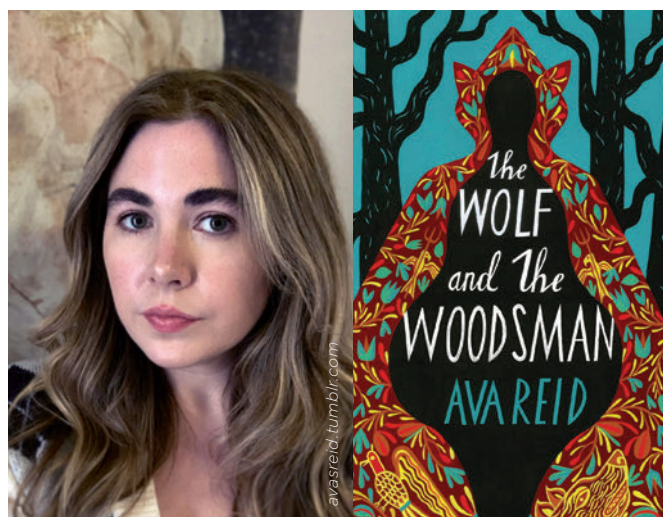
Reese's specialty is horrible married men — and she has carefully analysed all the reasons why. She is, in fact, exquisitely self-aware when it comes to her self-destructive tendencies. When her ex, Ames, asks her to be a second mother to the baby his lover, Katrina, is carrying, Reese knows exactly why she doesn't say no: She believes that motherhood will make her a real woman. Ames has issues of his own. Fatherhood is not a role he wants for himself — which is not to say that he doesn't want to be a parent. It's his hope that, by bringing Reese into their ménage, he might make Katrina consider other, less binary, possibilities. Set in New York and peopled with youngish professionals (and folks who are, at least, professional-adjacent), this novel has the contours of a dishy contemporary drama, and it is that. What sets it apart from similar novels are the following details: Reese is a trans woman, and, when she and Ames were together, Ames was Amy and also a trans woman. Detransitioning — returning to the gender assigned at birth after living as another gender — is a fraught subject. People who change their minds about transitioning are often held up as cautionary tales or as evidence that trans identity is a phase or a sickness, not something real. Peters, a trans woman, knows this, and, in Ames she has created a character who does not conform to any hateful stereotype. Ames is, like every other human, complicated,

and his relationship to his own body and his own gender is just one of his complexities. Reese is similarly engaging. She's kind of a mess, but who isn't? There's no question that there will be much that's new here for a lot of readers, but the insider view Peters offers never feels voyeuristic, and the author does a terrific job of communicating cultural specificity while creating universal sympathy. Trans women will be matching their experiences against Reese's, but so will cis women and anyone with an interest in the human condition. Smart, funny, and big-hearted.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

#### REID, Ava

**The wolf and the woodsman.** - Del Rey, 2021.

'A young woman from a desolate village and a disgraced prince must join together to save the kingdom from the prince's violent, religious zealot of a half-brother in Reid's debut fantasy. Évike, the only woman in her pagan village without magical abilities, is shunned and bullied because the gods have chosen not to grace her with power. So when members of the king's Holy Order of Woodsmen make the perilous journey through the forest to take a 'seer,' a pagan woman with the power to see the future, Évike is offered up as a substitute. The king, who represents the dominant, monotheistic state religion called the Patrifaith, steals a pagan woman every



year to use as a blood sacrifice. Rather than lose someone with the power to foresee ruined crops and other dangers, Évike's village is happy to send her to die instead. But when all the woodsmen except their captain are killed off by forest monsters, Évike learns he is no ordinary woodsman but Prince Bárány Gáspár himself. Gáspár is desperate to give his father, the king, a magical edge to a war he is currently losing. Otherwise, Gáspár's despotic brother, Nándor, will have the chance at a hostile takeover, and if Nándor is on the throne, everyone outside the Patrifaith is in serious danger. That includes not just Évike's village, but other groups like the Yehuli, who follow a lightly fictionalised version of Judaism and include Évike's long-lost father. There is an overreliance on simile in the prose, and sometimes the action gets muddled, but overall, this is an impressive debut. Reid's academic background in ethnonationalist religious history is used to great effect here, and she shows how folklore is bent and twisted to fit the dominant culture of the moment. Reid wades thoughtfully into thorny conversations about religious persecution, identity, and personal sacrifice. Compelling, complicated, and worthwhile.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

#### SMITH, Francois

**Die getuienis.** - Tafelberg, 2021.

'Kort op die hake van **Die kleinste ramp denkbaar** ... het Francois Smith

'n nuwe roman uit — **Die getuienis**. Dié jongste roman het nie net die kortlys van NB-Uitgewers se Groot Afrikaanse Romanwedstryd gehaal nie, maar ook met die tweede prys weggestap. So ironies as wat “die kleinste ramp” in genoemde titel dalk bedoel is, is dit ook die geval met dié jongste roman — in klein formaat en 40,000 woorde, wat die minimum vereiste is vir dié groot romanwedstryd ... In die bestek van 160 bladsye voltrek Smith 'n reis, kopleet met gewaande paradys, purgatorium én swaeldampe van die hel, en boonop 'n reis die verlede in en een waarin die verhouding tussen 'n man en vrou, en hul vader, gepeil en geweeg word. Retha en Gerbrand is op reis van Naboomspruit na Ventershoop, in die omgewing waar Gerbrand grootgeword het. Op dié reis in 'n geleende Figo is dié twee op mekaar aangewese, hoewel hulle binne hul geloofverwysingsraamwerk etlike insette van buite kry — noem dit boodskappe, manifestasies en waarskuwings. Dié kom op haas enige manier, van drome tot WhatsApp-boodskappe. Die reis strek verby Pretoria waar hulle vroeër gewoon het, via Winburg, waar Gerbrand se ma deesdae woon, en die laaste herkenbare plek is Bloemfontein. Van daar lei die reis die leser na plekke wat nie op enige kaart te vind is nie (iets van “hic sunt dracones”). Waarskynlik is Ventershoop in die Noordoos-Kaap (nie te verwar met Venterstad nie), omdat mense van Dordrecht en Maclear kan oorry na die

naweekseminaar waarheen Gerbrand genooi is as spreker. Hoe ook al. Dat dié reis vir Retha en Gerbrand van belang is, blyk uit die feit dat Retha, soos die Nuwe Testamentiese Lukas, “wil getuig en dit vertel presies soos dit was”. Daarby word hierdie getuienis as ware bevestig deur Gerbrand se weergawe, hoewel hy “omtrent nie 'n woord reg (kan) spel nie”. Die gebeure kry die leser dus aan die hand van dié twee vertelperspektiewe, onaangekondig al om die beurt, maar sonder twyfel kan 'n mens onmiddellik hoor wie aan die woord is. Retha praat vinniger as Gerbrand, sy het heelwat binnepraat, en haar trant is jovialer as dié van haar man. Gerbrand is meer besinnend, vraend. En dalk 'n raps meer bestraffend as dit by die grys gebied kom waar dinge nie wit of swart is nie. Waarvan albei bewus is, is die innerlike vrede wat hulle het — nie net met God, wat hulle Vader, of ook Abba noem, nie, maar ook met mekaar. 'n Paar bladsye weg raak 'n mens egter krielrig bewus van dié vrede as 'n soort oëverblindery. Of die vrede diepgewortel is, daaroor het 'n mens van meet af vrae, maar, die reis is nie bedoel as nét 'n reis per motor van dorp tot dorp nie. Smith staan volledig terug vir sy karakters en laat hulle die praatwerk doen (getuig). Hy hanteer hulle nie net met mededoë nie, maar weerhou hom van die geringste sweem beterwaterigheid. Hy spot nêrens met hulle vooropgestelde opvattinge nie, maar slaag daarin om met humor hulle voor te hou as mense wat ons almal

al teëgekome het. 'n Mens kan met 'n glimlag taamluk ver regkom, hoewel die teks meermale 'n lagbui (dalk as ontlading) regverdig. Smith bemeester in dié roman by uitstek sy fyn vermoë om teruggehoue “snaaks” te skryf. Spannend verloop die reis en verhaal wel. Dink maar aan die deurgaans teenwoordige lem — of dit in die vorm van 'n mes, 'n OneBlade of 'n skêr is, of die skrik van die nag, die pyl wat bedags vlieg, of die pes wat in die donker wandel. Dat die woord “getuig” of “getuienis” die vertaling is van die einste woord waarvan “martelaar” ook 'n vertaling is, weet Retha en Gerbrand dalk nie. Nietemin is hulle bereid vir hulle martelaarsopdrag — wat die “gereed vir uitstuur” reg aan die einde dalk 'n gelade betekenis gee. Die getuienis is die neerslag van die mens se soeke na sin — of dit nou die swart-wit vergestaltung van sin is, of in terme van 'n goddelike komedie. Smith boei enduit met daardie ingehoue krag wat hy reeds in **Die kleinste ramp denkbaar** so netjies aan die orde gekry het. **Die getuienis** hoort net so min op die rak vir geestelike lektuur as wat **Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance** sou kon deug op 'n rak vir boeke oor motorfietsse.'

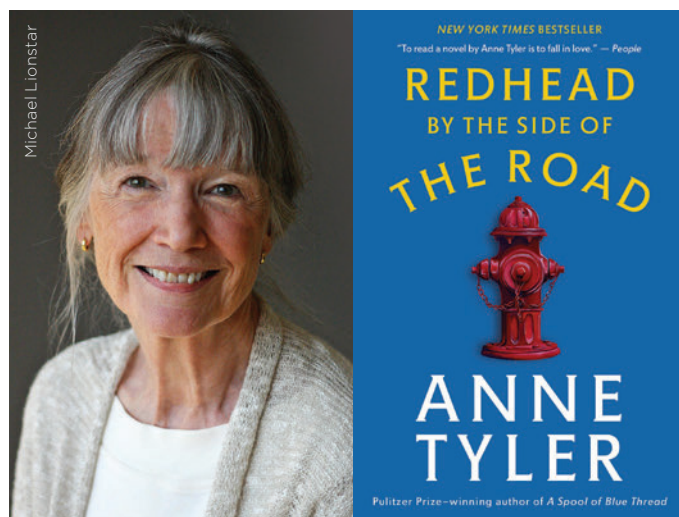
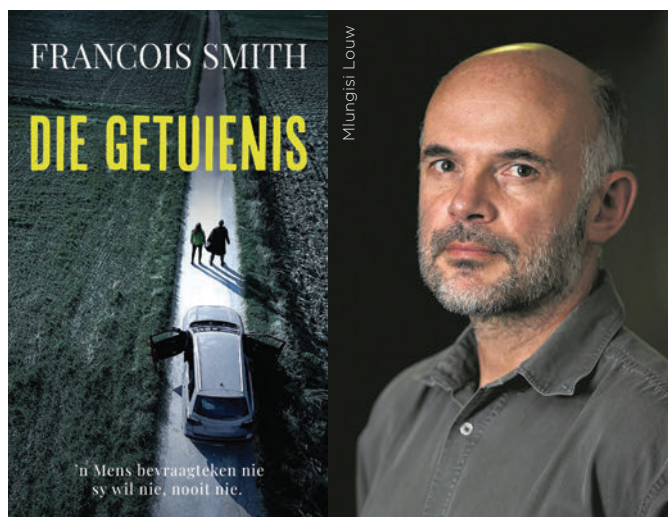
(maroelamedia.co.za, Johan Myburg)

**TYLER, Anne**

**Redhead by the side of the road.**

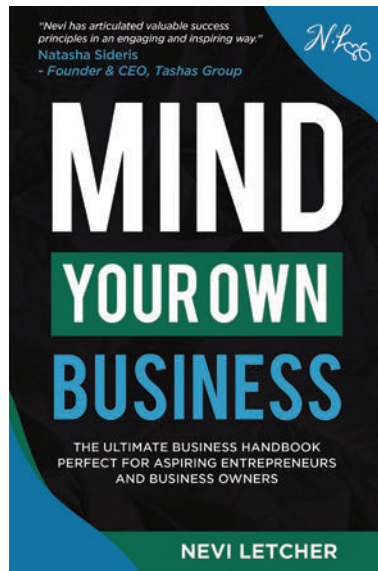
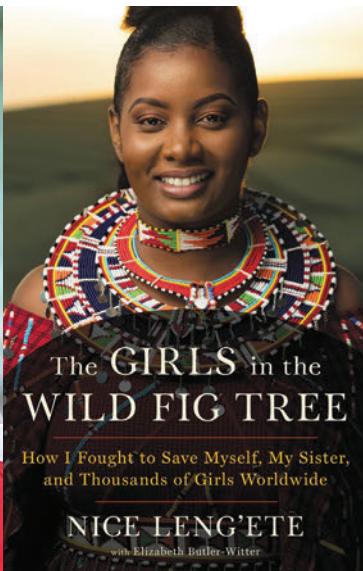
- Vintage Books, 2021.

'If Tyler's large-cast, many-faceted novels, including **Clock dance** (2018),





Jeroen van Loon



thehypewomen.com

are symphonies, this portrait of a man imprisoned by his routines, is a concerto. Micah Mortimer emerged from a childhood in a large family and a chaotic household desperate for order and solitude. Now in his forties, he lives in an aggressively neat and clean basement apartment in the Baltimore apartment building in which he serves as super. He is also the Tech Hermit, responding to calls from people needing computer help. He keeps to a strict schedule, which includes some time for his lady friend, Cass, a fourth-grade teacher, but not enough to interfere with his need for privacy. And then, as so often is the case in Tyler's radiantly polished and emotionally intricate tales, someone unexpected and in need appears and disrupts the status quo. Micah's catalyst for panicked self-examination and change is a stranger, Brink, a college freshman inexplicably on the run from the law. Micah dated Brink's mother long ago, but he's had no contact with her since. What is going on? Tyler's perfectly modulated, instantly enmeshing, heartrending, funny, and redemptive tale sweetly dramatises the absurdities of flawed perception and the risks of rigidity. Tyler's warmly comedic, quickly read tale, a perfect stress antidote, will delight her fans and provides an excellent first for readers new to this master of subtle and sublime brilliance.' (*booklistonline.com*, Donna Seaman)

#### ADULT NON-FICTION

**LENG'ETE, Nice with BUTLER-WITTER, Elizabeth**

**The girls in the wild fig tree: how I fought to save myself, my sister and thousands of girls worldwide.**- Wildfire, 2022.

'An inspirational memoir from a human rights activist who has devoted her life to fighting female genital mutilation (FGM). The author is a member of the Maasai tribe, born in the small Kenyan town of Kimana, and she evocatively explores the culture of her people. Historically, Maasai men are known as fierce warriors who protect their people and animals, while Maasai women serve as the caregivers of the house and children. A community bound by tradition, they live in hand-built circular homes and raise cattle as the primary food source. When they are young, children have one of their cheeks branded by a hot coil of wire; the scab creates a circle that serves as "a special symbol to mark us as Maasai". When it was Lengete's turn, she ran away, and she "still [has] no marks". Another tradition is referred to as "the cut". During this ceremony, the women subject the young females to a procedure in which their clitoris is either cut or removed completely without anesthesia. Lengete refused to undergo FGM. "I loved my family. I loved my people. But this, I thought, was

wrong," she explains. "Tradition can be good. Tradition can be beautiful. But some traditions deserve to die." Following her defiant act, she was shunned. With urgent, shocking, and heartbreaking detail, Leng'ete brings readers into her life. Beginning her work with the African Medical and Research Foundation when she was still a teenager, she found her calling. Armed with scientific evidence about the significant health risks associated with FGM, Leng'ete returned to her community in hopes of instilling change. Due in part to her relentless efforts, tribal leaders "changed the Maasai constitution to reflect our commitment to end FGM". Leng'ete was also awarded the Black Walking Stick, a symbol of leadership not normally given to women. She went on to campaign globally, including building A Nice Place in Kimana, "a safe haven for girls fleeing FGM". An incredibly powerful story that offers real hope for the future.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

**LETCHER, Nevi**  
**Mind your own business: the ultimate business handbook perfect for aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners.**- Letcher, 2021.

'Nevi Letcher shares her exciting journey and the lessons she learned when she started her own business. Ranging from practical advice to



maintaining the right state of mind and combining your business dreams with reality, there is a lesson for everyone to take home, whether you are a seasoned or novice entrepreneur. Nevi also emphasises the importance of nurturing a culture of continuous learning and being adamant about taking time off. [The author] shares what she learned and how she managed to implement strategies that saw her business grow from strength to strength. Reading through the pages brings about a never back down, turn back or give up attitude, but rather a calm acceptance of failure, absorbing the risk, and facing the challenges attitude. A must-read for any businessperson who wants to make their mark on the world. Whether you are thinking about starting your own brand as a visionary entrepreneur or maintaining your collection of relationships as a CEO of a highly successful company, [the book] will give one the necessary motivation and tools needed for achieving and maintaining a healthy and prospering business lifestyle. Letcher runs a successful marketing and events agency based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Having spent over 20 years in a corporate environment with 13 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, she honed her knowledge to become an entrepreneur. Her path was paved with her passion for personal development and solution-oriented nature.' (*thesouthafrican.com*, Dirnise Britz)

**ROUTLEDGE, James**

**Mental health at work** - Penguin Business, 2021.

'It has never been more essential to support our mental health at work. With one in four people experiencing poor mental health right now, we need to start talking about it. Penguin Business Expert James Routledge has worked with CEOs, HR directors, managers and people at all levels on successful mental-health strategies. In this book, he shares his stories, learnings and guidance. Readers can learn how to: talk comfortably about mental health; create a more open and inclusive community in the workplace; implement unique changes that are authentic to the individual and their business. Filled with honest and relatable stories, "conversation starters" and exclusive case studies from a diverse range of businesses and their people, **Mental health at work** can support anyone with their mental health in the workplace journey.'

(*penguin.co.uk*)

**YOUNG ADULT FICTION**

**JONG VOLWASSE VERHALENDE LEKTUUR**

**DAUGHTRY, Mikki and LIPPINCOTT, Rachael**

**All this time** - Simon, 2020.

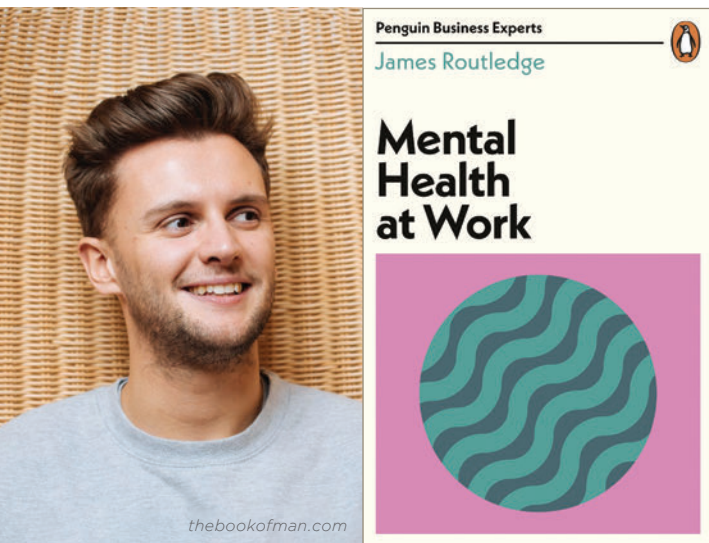
'A modern-day fairy tale about two teenagers suffering from loss who find

healing in one another. Despite the ups and downs in their relationship, Kyle and Kimberly have always made up, and Kyle looks forward to attending college together after graduation. But on the night they should be celebrating, Kimberly confesses that she has committed to a different college and breaks up with him. As they argue, their car crashes, and Kyle later wakes up in the hospital and learns that Kimberly is dead. In his grief, Kyle blames himself for her death. He struggles to leave his bed most days, ignores calls from his and best friend, Sam, and has visions of Kimberly and life before the accident. One day, while visiting Kimberly's grave, he meets Marley, a girl who likes telling stories and is mourning the death of her twin sister. Predictably, their natural affinity for one another evolves into romance. It is unfortunate that Kyle essentially moves from one romantic relationship to another on his journey to better understand himself and his co-dependence on those closest to him, although his gradual development into a more considerate person redeems him... For readers in need of a happy ending but not much else.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

**JONES, Kimberly and SEGAL, Gilly**  
**I'm not dying with you tonight**

- Sourcebooks Fire, 2021.

'High schoolers Lena James and Campbell Carlson are not what most



people would consider best friends. Lena is African American and a bit rough around the edges. Campbell is white and finding her place at a new school. They unexpectedly befriend each other when a racist incident occurs at their high school football game and results in a riot in the commercial district of town. Lena is pining to reach her unreliable boyfriend, aspiring rapper Black, who is just not that reciprocal about their relationship. Campbell simply wants to go home after working the concession stand on the orders of her dad, who owns the hardware store in town. Their newfound friendship is tested by the riot's effect on the store and the connection Black's friends have with it. Segal and Jones have proven themselves a dynamic duo in crafting this fast-paced, honest, and page-turning novel. Lena and Campbell navigate through the tough issues of race, class, and community relations in their own different yet similar voices and perspectives. Readers will be relieved that the novel avoids the "white savior" narrative. Some readers may get annoyed with Lena's obliviousness to Black's treatment of her, despite concerns from family and friends. Fans of the classic sitcom *A different world* will immediately recognise the nod to Lena James, the Hillman student played by Jada Pinkett Smith. Librarians will want to purchase this relevant and discussion-worthy young adult novel.' (*slj.com*, Donald Peebles)

### SCHEEPERS, Elrien

**Donkerbloed.** - Human & Rousseau, 2021. 'Die eerste twee bladsye van Elrien Scheepers se eerste jeugroman was genoeg om my te vang. Die hoofkarakter was in Sunnyside, maar 'n avatarklub, deportasietatoeëermerke en hommeluie? Ek was in. Al speel die verhaal in 2045 in Etswagoli af, behou die skrywer name soos Sunnyside, Muckleneuk, Mamelodi en Bryanston. Vir dié leser was dit 'n groottoeg-leeservaring, want alles het om die een of ander rede nader aan die werklikheid gevoel as wat 'n mens sou verwag. Sybella se ma en suster is in 'n twyfelagtige lugtaxi-ongeluk dood en sy is vasbeslote om met die hulp van Jax agter die kap van die byl te kom. Lesers moet egter nie logies opeenvolgende leidrade verwag nie, want hoewel die dryfvere agter die intriges dieselfde is as dié waaraan ons in 2021 gewoon is, lyk Scheepers se speelveld twee dekades later heelwat anders. Verbeel jou 'n polspaneel om boodskappe direk tussen gedagtelyne te stuur... Omdat **Donkerbloed** futuristiese wetenskapsfiksie is, was ek verras deur Scheepers se milde gebruik van beeldspraak. Die kreatiewe dierevergelings, uit dié veeartspers se bek, was my gunsteling. Hoe chaoties is dit wanneer mense "rondhardloop soos gerookte weeluisse"? En Jax is "so taai soos twee ratels wat oor 'n pofadder baklei". Dis juis hierdie beeldspraak wat **Donkerbloed** toegankliker maak vir

lesers wat wetenskapsfiksie afskeep, veral omdat tegnologiese terme en nuutskappings oorweldigend kan wees. Nes die plekname ken die leser die diere en hul maniere en is dit makliker om hul weg deur die fassinerende verhaal vol wetenskaplike feite te vind. Kop-oopskiet- futuristiese en tegnologiese terminologie en beskrywings is kreatief maar realisties gedoen om vreesaanjaend geloofwaardig te wees. Soos Sybella haar ouers se musiek van Ed Sheeran uit die jare toet onthou, onthou sy ook 'n groener omgewing. Deur vir Sybella 'n interessante stokperdjie in te skryf, spreek Scheepers haar slim uit oor die gevolge van ondoeltreffende leiersbesluite oor omgewingsbewaring. **Donkerbloed** is 'n goeie voorbeeld van 'n boek wat nie op sy baadjie getakseer moet word nie. Die voorblad sou my nooit kon voorberei op wat op die 234 bladsye gebeur nie. Ek sien reikhalsend uit na nog tienerverhale deur dié skrywer.' (*netwerk24.com*, Magdel Vorster)

### JUVENILE FICTION

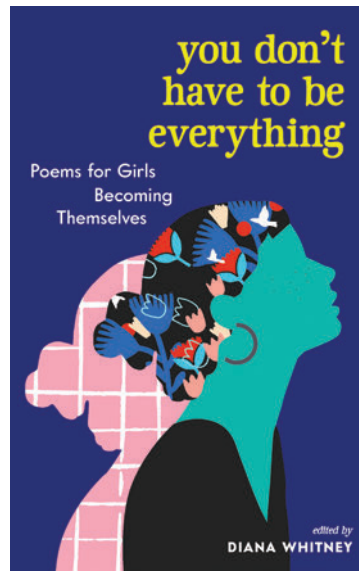
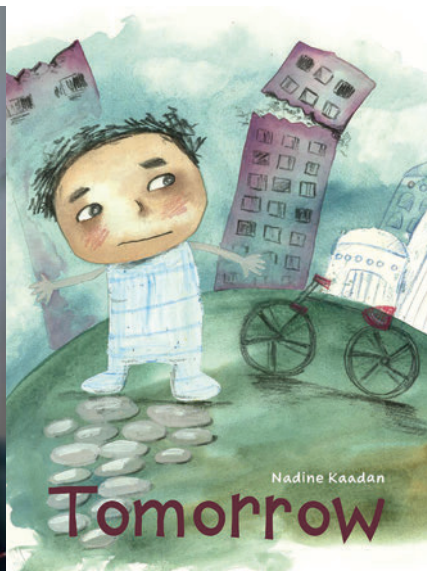
#### DALY, Niki

**Ntingela phezulu! Thoko/translated by Xolisa Guzula.** - Jacana Media, 2021. UThoko yintwazana enobubele nenobugcisa bokuyila izinto kwaye uhleli edlamkile. Kolu ncwadi olu ziziqendu ngeziziqendu, umbhali umzoba uThoko kwakhona





justsofestival.org.uk



Jeff Woodward



njengomlinganiswa unobomi obukhuthazayo kumfundi ukusukela kwamanye amabali angaphambili. Zivele mfundi kula mabali mane asekelezwe ngoThoko xa efumanisa ukuba ubuhle abukho ngenkangeleko kuphela koko kubandakanya okuninzi. Simfumanisa UThoko ezama ukuqhelana neqabane likanina. Uthi esacoca ngaselunxwemeni suke abone ezinye indlela zokurisayikilishwa kokungcola. **NNG**

#### KAADAN, Nadine

**Tomorrow.** - Lantana, 2019.

'A story about how a child and his family cope with war. Yazan, a Syrian boy, has not been able to go to the park to play recently nor to go to school sometimes, which upsets him. He used to have fun watching his mother paint and painting with her, but recently she has been constantly watching TV with the volume so loud and the images spilling out of it full of darkness literally: Shadows ooze out of it in the pencil-and-watercolor illustrations, one of many symbolic images used to portray war and destruction. One weekend, after all of Yazan's attempts at self-entertainment and to engage with his parents fail, he escapes. However, the world he sees outside is not what he expected: The street is empty, there are no other kids to play with, and scary sounds of explosions abound. Yazan's father

eventually comes to the rescue, and his parents become more involved again, explaining to him why he cannot go outside. His mother brings her paints, and Yazan is excited. "When will the fighting be over?" he asks. "I don't know", says his mother, but "let's paint a park in your bedroom, and soon, you'll be able to go outside again and play." Kaadan crafts a happy ending within an active war context...' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

#### JUVENILE NON-FICTION

##### **You don't have to be everything: poems for girls becoming themselves/**

edited by Diana Whitney/illustrated by Cristina Gonzalez, Kate Mockford and Stephanie Singleton.- Workman Publishing, 2021.

'An engrossing, comforting collection of poetry depicting the challenging experiences of the transition from girlhood to womanhood. Ranging from the sharp and sentimental to the carefree and unbound, this anthology of poems is divided into sections based on themes such as loneliness, rage, shame, sadness, and belonging, among others. Contributors include many established greats such as Maya Angelou, Margaret Atwood, Joy Harjo, Naomi Shihab Nye, Mary Oliver, and Elizabeth Acevedo as well as some newer voices who will be familiar from

Instagram. In the inspired introduction, editor Whitney emphasises that the themes should not prescribe or dictate what readers take from any one poem. While highlighting the subjectivity and distinctiveness of poetry's impact, the overarching theme of female experience is infused in every stanza. The chorus of diverse voices will show readers that there is community in some of the most difficult and common feelings girls and women will have. Through the sharing of truths, uncertainties, and insecurities, readers will likely find poems that resonate with them. Bold and varied color illustrations complement the poems, adding a modern look and feel to the presentation of the verses. This collection feels like a gift, a pep talk, a shoulder to cry on, and, most of all, a mirror that will captivate its audience. A helpful companion for young women navigating a spectrum of complex emotions.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

**Note:** At the time of going to press some of these titles are not yet at the libraries.

**NNG** Nomonde Ngqoba

# The story of the *Anthology of American folk music*

by Robert Moulton

When one hears the words *Coo coo bird*, it has an almost hypnotic quality about it as it tells the story of the cuckoo. The song has been played by many folk musicians for many years. The version I am referring to is by Clarence Ashley, a highly celebrated banjo player that recorded in 1929 — and if it wasn't for the efforts of an eccentric bohemian with the name of Harry Smith, it may have disappeared forever.

Smith, an avant-garde film maker with an addiction to narcotics and drink and a propensity to squat and scavenge was far from role model material, he'd collected thousands of out-of-print 78 RPM records that he found all over America during the Second World War. Smith was used to the strange and more esoteric; having belonged to a strange philosophical group that saw

him live in Native American reserves. He realised that what he was collecting was a treasure trove of old music that came from the South from Texas to Virginia, and notably the Appalachian mountain region that he noticed had a very strong cultural and creative quality about it.

The latter was not only ignored by record companies, but in fact had been removed from the American airwaves altogether. Smith approached the small left-field label Folkways records in New York to sell his collection (he always needed money) to them. The owner, Moses 'Moe' Asch, persuaded him to put his collection into a compilation and released this into LP form. This is how the *Anthology of American folk music* three-album compilation was born.

Folkways always skirted with copyright infringements, but Asch boldly went ahead noticing that all the record labels that Smith used were all out of print

and in most cases defunct after the war, leaving the record labels with little legal tenure. Asch's label was a passionate supporter of creating an American musical heritage and folk music in particular. Whereas he promoted ethnomusicology with field workers, crossing the globe to record music from largely indigenous communities using only the most basic recording equipment, Smith's LPs were already there and only needed remastering. Asch also realised that Smith had encyclopaedic knowledge of all the music he'd collected and felt that he should put it out as a booklet to the LP.

The booklet became a cult favourite with people. Smith made it look like a mail order catalogue but filled each track with extensive information with added wry humour. Through its oddness the booklet alone made the *Anthology* already worthwhile owning.

Each of the three two-album LPs in the compilation had its own theme. Double-LPs were rare in 1952 but to release a trio of them more or less at the same time was truly unprecedented. Unsurprisingly it did not initially sell well. But those who did hear it — primarily urbanites and young college educated listeners — were amazed by it. For them this music represented an America they never knew existed, and it also arrived at the right time for many of these youngsters that were increasingly questioning consumerist America. This roots-based music was the perfect antidote.

So where and how did this music originate? Smith concentrated on blues, gospel, Cajun and what was then referred to as old-time music. He ignored European immigrant folk music from the Balkans to Eastern Europe, Jewish music and Latin-based sounds from Mexico, Puerto Rico; and concentrated on music that came from Britain by the settlers who'd arrived at least 150 years before.

Particularly the area from the Appalachian mountain range, a section that covered parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, West Virginia and into Virginia itself — was full of rivers and forests and difficult to travel through in those days, so as a result communities existed largely in isolation. They had, however, brought with them the folk tunes from Britain.



harrysmitharchives.com

Harry Smith was an American polymath, who was credited variously as an artist, experimental filmmaker, bohemian, mystic, record collector, hoarder, student of anthropology and a Neo-Gnostic bishop. Smith is also remembered for his influential *Anthology of American folk music*, drawn from his extensive collection of out-of-print commercial 78 rpm recordings



Moses Asch founded and ran Folkways Records from 1948 until his death in 1986. Folkways Records was influential in bringing folk music into the American cultural mainstream



The handbook included in the *Anthology of American folk music*



Ethnomusicologist Cecil Sharp in 1916



Ralph Peer pioneered field recording of music

The British ethnomusicologist Cecil Sharp found that most of these were folk tunes originating in Britain that had nearly died out but the lyrics had now changed. *Coo coo bird* is an example of this. Sharp released three volumes of folk songs from the region, which was also read by many folk enthusiasts and is still in print today. He was a pivotal figure in what became country music in America.

The music from this area came from social gatherings at so-called medicine shows, a kind of vaudeville during which minstrels played fiddle and banjo whilst selling miracle cures. The banjo originated in Africa and many black people travelled through this area with their music. Through mixing with white settlers, this unique musical combination was the result. The music continued to develop into the early 20th century, and was almost always accompanied by the fiddle and banjo. Guitar followed a little later.

Virtuosity was a feature of early old-time music. One only has to listen to someone like Eck Robertson on fiddle to appreciate how good these musicians were. A popular music industry was developing in America in the early 20th century where places like New York's Tin Pan Alley would have songs written to be recorded, and demonstrates the North's appetite for 'show tunes'.

In the South they added a local flavour to these popular songs. Always regarded as backward, the region was quick to co-opt any new development; and with the arrival of the phonograph and radio any genre would gain new listeners. Jazz exploded on the American scene and blues made inroads in the early 1920s. But that was only the beginning: a shrewd A&R Records talent scout and recording engineer by the name of Ralph Peer was to bring old-time music along with Cajun from Louisiana to a much larger audience. Peer was not an altruist but his contribution to jazz, blues and particularly old-time was enormous.

He found talents, and if considered good enough got them a recording date and commercial release of a 78 rpm record; and of course, demand a share of the royalties from the record sales for himself. He was behind the likes of King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and other New Orleans stars; as well as the first female Blues female singer, Mamie Smith, that recorded



Original Carter Family members: Maybelle, AP and Sara



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Uncle Dave Macon, the first star of the Grand Ol' Opry

*Crazy Blues* in 1920. He'd also worked with Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith who were big names in Blues in those days.

But he also took an interest in the music of white performers in the South. America was a rigidly segregated country in those days and Peer was certainly aware of that.

As late as 1923, the first old-time release saw the light — a record called *A little old cabin in the lane* by fiddler John Carson. Ironically Peer thought that it was poor but the public did not, and the demand for the record dictated production of considerably more copies to keep up with. Old-time had arrived in a big way and the subsequent development into country music would soon follow.

Peer was also behind the early recordings of two giants in Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter family.

Interestingly, the latter appears four times in the *Anthology* series, while Rodgers doesn't at all.

Peer worked with various labels such as Okeh and Victor. Rival labels like Paramount, Columbia, Brunswick and Gennett were similarly producing many artists in the South performing old-time, Blues, gospel, Cajun and all other genres of music that compiler of the *Anthology* collection Smith also focused on. The peak period was from 1926 to the early 1930s when the Great Depression arrived.

In the late 1920s, the burgeoning music industry was selling 140 million units of all music in America per year. All the artists that featured on the *Anthology* benefited financially in some way from their recordings; as well as receiving radio air play and live concerts to a wider audience than they

were used to. For many listeners and buyers of records in the north, this was an introduction to the many varieties of Southern music.

Peer eventually succeeded in forming his own music publishing company, Southern Music, that still operates today and profoundly affected the course of popular music in the 20th century. In recognition of his efforts, he was posthumously elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1984 (he died in 1960) for his contribution to the genre.

The last recordings on the *Anthology* are dated 1934 and this is significant. Wall Street crashed in 1929 but its effect was only really felt in 1931. The results for recorded music were catastrophic. The glorious 140 million unit-high overnight collapsed to around six million units in 1934. The requirements for survival necessitated massive cutbacks and record companies did so ruthlessly. Whole departments in record labels were wiped out. Even stars like Jelly Roll Morton were neutered — and for regional genres such as old-time and Cajun it was even more devastating. Many were doomed to obscurity. Even Jimmie Rodgers struggled and died young from TB, yet fans knew the Depression greatly contributed to his demise. The Carter Family folk music group managed to get by thanks to radio appearances and touring performances, but by the outbreak of the Second World War many performers were forgotten — and with new sounds and the later post-war renewal of America, the 1940s and 1950s saw the emergence of a different country and along with that came a new recording industry.

That was the backdrop to the *Anthology*; but what of the performers on the set, the real stars of the show? For the purposes of brevity I can mention only a few. Some acts were well known like the Carter Family who'd kept going for nearly thirty years. Other people might have heard of Uncle Dave Macon who came from Tennessee and was an incredible performer (proof you don't have to be handsome to have charisma!). He was short, tubby and always had a plug hat with walking stick. He would make jokes and had all the attributes of a vaudevillian performer but played the banjo as if he was born with it.

He made his first recording when he was 52! But he was so irreplaceable that he continued until his death at 82 (the year the *Anthology* was released) and left numerous recordings.

Blind Lemon Jefferson recorded a lot as well but for most on the set it was just a few recordings. Some just had one track, like Cajun performer Didier Hibert. The record undoubtedly showcased some of the best banjo players around at the time. Clarence Ashley appeared both as single performer and with a group called the Carolina Tar Heels. Then there was Dock Boggs, Buell Kazee, Bascom Lamar Lunsford and a real character called Charlie Poole with his North Carolina Ramblers. Poole's lifestyle was so self-destructive that he once escaped police custody after hitting a policeman with his banjo and avoiding arrest with a gun pointing to his head (he lost a couple of teeth and jumped out of the window). Poole died from an alcohol-related illness aged just 39, but he was a legend and his legacy was kept.

The *Anthology* also featured some extraordinary gospel performers, and no more so than Blind Willie Johnson with his astonishing recording of *John the revelator* — one of the finest gospel recordings ever. Fiddle players like Eck Robertson, Eck Dunford, Uncle Bunt Stephens, GB Grayson and Leonard Rutherford are all brilliant. It was no wonder the set captured the imagination of people who were looking for something different in the 1950s.

Smith categorised the three double LP's into three themes: *Ballads*, *Social* and *Songs*. He'd meticulously selected 84 tracks for the set and arranged them by theme. In *Ballads*, tales of forbidden lust, shipwrecks, murder and assassinations of presidents follow each other to showcase the darker side of American life — although some of the songs originated from the UK, of which the Brit Sharp would have approved. It is an album that must be heard repeatedly to fully appreciate how skillful Smith was in his choices.

The second LP illustrates deals with dances, festivals and events where music is celebrated. Each track gets slightly wilder and until climaxing with a rowdy song about moonshine (illegally home-brewed liquor, in the context of this song, recorded during Prohibition). Juxtaposed is the fiery sermon of Rev JM Gates from the

Baptist church, as if to say if there is too much good living then there will be a reckoning on judgement day, as Blind Willie Johnson would put it. The album provides deep socio-cultural and religious insights into Southern living back then.

The third album features all manner of songs of which many are jolly by nature. But it can be deceptive. Macon's *Buddy won't you roll down the line* sounds very cheerful until one realises that it is actually a song about scab labour at a lumber yard. Contrast this with the leftist rhetoric of Pete Seeger or Joan Baez, and Macon's accounts of life for lumber yard workers is more humane and uplifting. He reflects but does not agitate or provide sanctimonious platitudes. A quite remarkable performance.

Considering historical (and contemporary) issues of race as a global phenomenon, Smith's approach to the subject is really interesting, as he simply never mentions the race of any of the artists on the albums. Only the biographical information and picture each of a performer were provided as clues. People were surprised to find that Frank Hutchison (*Stackalee*) and Dock Boggs (*Sugar Baby*) were white

and not black — and vice versa for Mississippi John Hurt. It was a perfect illustration of how both communities, despite the segregation and history — influenced each other musically.

It is worth noting that during this period, music performed by black artists was marketed as *Race music* — a term preferred by blacks in the South. On the other hand, old-time was marketed in the same category but with the tag *Hillbilly* — a term used for the poor whites so that white listeners would not see their music as black! It was a stance record companies were comfortable with as they generated more income from it.

There are a few surprising omissions on the *Anthology*, too. Firstly, Jimmie Rodgers should have found himself on the LP but as he was (too) well known, that might have been the reason for his absence. But I am further mystified why Gid Tanner and his Skillet lickers did not make the cut. They were the most successful band of the time and contained two great fiddlers in Tanner and Clayton McMichen; as well as a brilliant blind guitarist and vocalist in Riley Pickett.

At first, the *Anthology* did not sell well, but in places like New York's



Dock Boggs



Charlie Poole





Joan Baez and Bob Dylan at a civil rights rally in Washington, DC in 1963

Beatnik and anti-conformist community Greenwich Village, it became a source of inspiration. Folk music did not die, though became more political in the 1950s as Woody Guthrie, the Weavers, Pete Seeger and others used folk as a source of agitation. Understandably, several of these artists fell foul during the McCarthy trials and persecution of left-wing individuals.

Groups such as the New York Ramblers, Holy Modal Rounders and many others began to tap into America's roots. The *Anthology* was a godsend to young, educated listeners who disliked rock and roll and other commercial music — and saw this music as pure. Many startled musicians were culturally unaware of what was happening in a place like Greenwich Village. This was how Dock Boggs, Kazee, Lunsford, Hurt, Ashley, Doc Walsh and a few others went on stage at folk revival festivals in the sixties; and had their careers restored with recorded albums.

Of all the things the counterculture of the 1960s achieved, this re-establishment of a whole musical

tradition was one of the most significant. It must be also said that blues was rediscovered too, by which I mean artists like Son House and Skip James joined Hurt on the folk revival circuit. After years of obscurity, the feeling of suddenly playing to large and genuinely appreciative audiences must have been sensational.

One young man from Hibbing, Minnesota, who clearly loved the *Anthology* was Bob Dylan. Although iconoclastic in image, he is at heart a traditionalist who'd often referred to the *Anthology*. On *Blonde on blonde* he referenced the lyrics of Lunsford's *I wish I were a mole in the ground* with the track *Stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis blues again*. Dylan's last album, title *Rough and rowdy ways*, is from a Jimmie Rodgers song.

Dylan never lost his feel for this music. In 1967 he recorded with The Band; the sessions only released in 1975 as the Basement Tapes and reflecting the spirit of the music on the *Anthology*. The following year he surprised many people with the acoustic sound of *John Wesley*

*Harding*, which was an exceptional riposte to the all-emcompassing psychedelic sound of the time. The Band's eponymously-titled album (1969) really showcased the influence of all the musicians that were recorded in the *Anthology* series. Country rock evolved from this in the 1970s, that, in turn, spawned the Eagles, Jackson Browne and many others.

From the late 1930s onwards, old-time itself had evolved into country music, and particularly established through the arrival of innovators like Bill and Charlie Monroe, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. Their addition of mandolin to the sound expanded the genre and made them sought-after by country rock-minded musicians. Today it is going strong and the crossover artist Alison Krauss has given bluegrass a bigger profile.

To ensure the long-term survival of the recordings, the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in Washington acquired Asch's business after his death in 1986. It has also been decided all of his 2,168 recorded titles would stay in print indefinitely regardless of sales performance.

Just before his death in 1991, Harry Smith, the incorrigible scrounger received a Grammy for his achievement. 'I saw America changed through music,' he declared in his acceptance speech. In 2011 *Rolling Stone* magazine voted the triple-album *Anthology* number 284th on its comprehensive list of 500 best albums of all time.

From a librarian's perspective, what Smith did was something truly noteworthy with reference to the importance of storing and protecting aging cultures that are in danger of disappearing. What if Smith had not approached Asch? Would we have heard the likes of Hurt, Johnson, Jon Falcone, and the rest? After listening to this I got to think about saving South Africa's own diverse musical heritage; the need to preserve Maskandi or Zulu guitar music or so many others.

Who knows? Perhaps libraries can be at the forefront.

*Robert Moulton is a librarian at Wynberg Library*



## parting shot



Art Section: New art prints albums being compiled, 1960



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