

Storytelling at Robben Island



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On 30 April 2004 I joined two librarians of Wynberg Library, Nomonde Ngqoba and Anita Ramjee-Paibhoo on the ferry to Robben Island. They were asked by Ruth Carlison, who also arranged for us to travel free of charge as 'business guests', to do storytelling at the pre-school. Ruth was a member of Wynberg Library before she moved to live on the island.

Some of the children in the pre-school and primary school live on the island, while others travel daily to the island with their parents, who are employed at the museum. High school pupils travel to the city to attend school.

Ruth, her helpers Lynette and Asiah and the children. It was tea-time for the kids and we were also treated to tea and biscuits.

The children at the primary school were joined by pupils from the junior class of the primary school (grades one to three) accompanied by their teacher, Rhona van der Horst. The children were kept in separate groups so that stories could be aimed at their age level. Nomonde fascinated the little ones with colourful illustrations in pop-up or textured books, while Anita amused the older children with funny as well as scary stories.

Library bags, with a sticker, bookmark and activity book (material made available for 2004 Library Week), were handed out to each child before the older ones returned to class

and the young ones had their play-time. The librarians provide a block loan of picture books to the pre-school, which is changed with each visit (about three times a year).

We also visited the primary school, located in a beautiful stone building. The principal, Tetha Sithole, showed us around the computer room and school library.

We were envious of the lack of burglar bars to secure the room - there is no threat of theft!

After taking photographs of the stone buildings and scenery on the island we walked back to the harbour to hop onto the ferry.

On the ferry back to Cape Town Harbour we marvelled at the beautiful sight of Table Mountain and other scenery. I did not manage to fit in a tour of the island, but at least that is a reason for me to go back!

Above: Nomonde Ngqoba introducing the fascinating world of books and stories to pre-schoolers

Below: Anita Ramjee-Paibhoo in a lively storytelling session with enthusiastic primary school learners

Right: Nomonde Ngqoba, Ruth Carlison and Anita Ramjee-Paibhoo in front of the pre-school

Below right: The primary school is housed in a beautiful stone building

