

the STANFORD *News*

DECEMBER: 2021

ISSUE NO : 13



Cheers

TO A HAPPY
FESTIVE SEASON
AND A BRIGHT
NEW YEAR



**BIG DAY FOR
STANFORD's ANIMALS**

**Stanford Animal
Welfare Society
Christmas Fair
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PETER BRUCE

**More about the
"Orange Block"
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SHOWTIME: Representing the kingdom of Neptune, Sharonoka Jafta and Ethan van Rooyen get ready for the Stanford Festival which begins this weekend **See Page 16**



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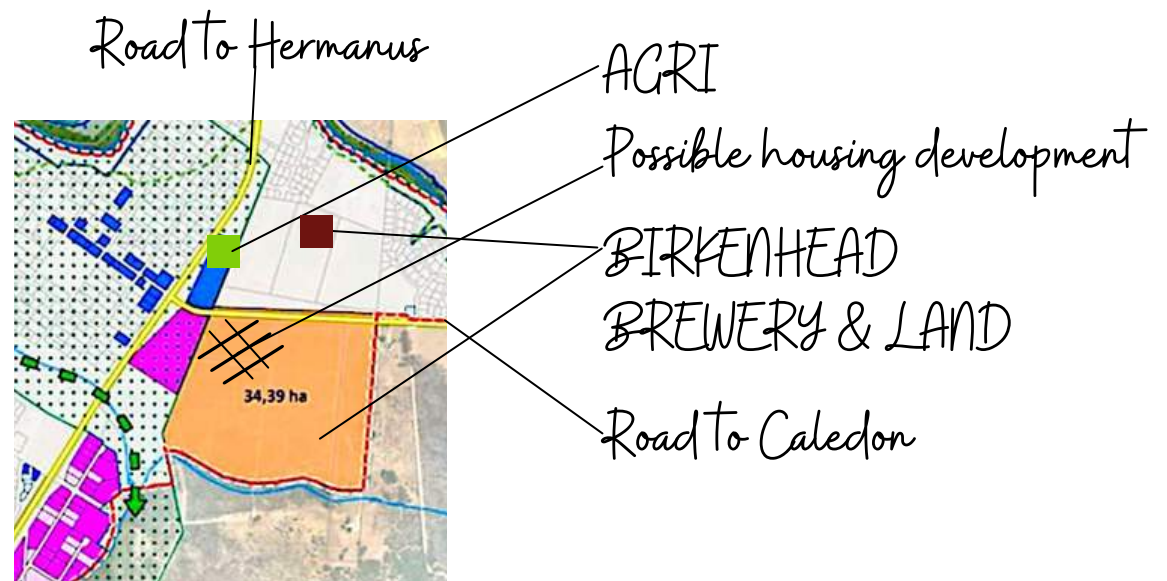


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A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ORANGE BLOCK!



PETER BRUCE



Villages are much trickier than I ever imagined. Last month Liz Clark, the editor of this digital newspaper, published an article that centered on an outline, the urban edge, of Stanford. It contained a new section, coloured in orange in a map she had been given.

"The orange block on this map – now in the public social media space – suggests that the 34ha area opposite Birkenhead Breweries on the R326 could be the focus of a new development," she reported. Nobody seemed to know what was going on, not even Louis Roodt, the newly elected ward committee member for the Stanford Ratepayers Association.

He and other village leaders held a meeting soon after that 'Extra' edition of Stanford News appeared, with former Overstrand Mayor and now Ward One (that's us) councillor Dudley Coetzee. As far as I can tell, he was also a bit bewildered by the orange block and promised to report back.

Minutes of the meeting were taken but have not been circulated, or at least not very widely.

Establishing a long string of facts is not something I particularly enjoy and the creation of municipal and provincial goals and targets and regulations make me want to run screaming from the room, but this is what I know:

Last year that orange block was added to the village. Officially it is still farmland. A public meeting, advertised on the municipal website and in the Hermanus Village News on Page 17 in small type advertised a public meeting in Stanford. That was just a week before it was held in the old municipal boardroom in Stanford on February 18, 2020 to explain that the urban edge of the village was going to be extended. The meeting was led by the head of planning in Hermanus, Petrus Roux.

Just two members of the public turned up, a husband and wife with property in the affected area. Two people. Whether the attendance of just two people at a public participation meeting can be considered a success or a failure of public participation appears to be neither here nor there. There was a period of time for the public to comment on the change, which added roughly 34.4ha to the village. When that period expired in April 2020, the new urban edge became a legal fact.

Next year, and be careful to look out for all the advertisements in newspapers 20 km away, more public participation will be required when we will be asked to approve the rezoning of the orange block from farmland to residential land.

As Liz said in her report last month, "it could have important implications for the Stanford greater community, in terms of security, service delivery and investor confidence and interest". Anyway, not everyone is waiting for the rezoning and there are indeed plans afoot to build housing opposite Birkenhead. Most of the orange block belongs to Birkenhead and produces grapes. But in the far north east corner of the block is a 3.3ha site, privately owned, that is the subject of quite intense interest and planning already.

Writing this and trying to understand the passions and privacy of the people concerned, I'm not going to mention any names. But Stanford is already the subject of densification targets set for Overstrand a long time ago and unless the citizens of the village, and the people and bodies elected to the ward committee understand that we have obligations to one another the village will not make any progress.

Early plans for the private site and they are not pretty – more than a 100 houses are packed into it, most on sites measuring 200 square metres. That, I'm assured, is unlikely to survive and there will be fewer houses and bigger plots. But it is clearly going to be a substantial development.

You can throw your hands up about this sort of thing or accept it. We are not talking, I'm told, about RDP housing here. Even in the dense draft rendering most homes have double garages. And perhaps the arrival of approaching a thousand new residents would get the old Spar building open again.

What I am absolutely certain about though is that Stanford cannot allow itself to be brushed about by faceless officials in Hermanus as if we were mere lint on their sleeves. The leadership of the village needs to be more assertive but, also, more open and transparent with us.

Are we in this together or not? Our councillor needs to meet the village once or twice a year.

What we have now are a few people who know things and they decide what we, in turn, will or will not know. And when.

It's appalling. A lot of money has already been spent on the project, however big or small the houses in the corner of the orange block turn out to be.

Architects have drawn plans. Planning consultants are on the phones. Officials in Hermanus know what's happening.

But we don't. **PB**

The first 100 days are about the three "Cs"

LET'S GET IT DONE - TOGETHER!

Annelie Rabie, Overstrand's new DA Mayor, has a no nonsense approach when it comes to sorting out issues that affect communities.

The nice thing about her is that she is uncomplicated and reasonable.

"There's a lot of work to be done," she says straight off. "The important thing is that whatever we do, we do together. What we ask is that people hold our hand and work with us as a team. "Covid has taught us that we need to do things differently and that the best way to tackle things is to look at solutions rather than problems."

From that you gather she's not shy to call a spade a shovel and says she is happy to answer questions about the village, the surrounding area and look at issues affecting ordinary people - everything from housing to employment, promoting tourism to celebrating the village's history.

A recent diagnostic report lists the overriding concerns that most people in the Overstrand region have.

"And that's what we have to use as a blueprint for our first 100 days. The 'three Cs' that dominate the report are communication (or lack of) crime and the cost of doing business."

She says that during her first 100 days in office these are the issues she and her team will be concerned with.

"There's always a way forward, you just have to look for it."

"I'll give you an example of one of the real-time issues that came up recently. A local restaurant needed to install a generator so that it could remain open during load shedding. The question was raised that the generator would cause a noise in the main street and should not be allowed as it would disturb people living nearby." It's the sort of ruling, she says, that she would question and try and address.

"Firstly not that many residents live near the restaurant and if there is generator noise it would stop earlier than later. If a person is willing to invest in a village, promote tourism and employ staff, everything possible must be done to encourage that business. In these hugely difficult times when people are battling to keep afloat, finding equitable solutions is paramount."



But to achieve any meaningful goals, she says, working together is a must. Going forward partnerships will be a key factor in growing the economy

"Not just saying things - but taking the sort of decisions that will have a positive impact on the whole community."

The ward councillor and ward committees, she points out have "the clout" to put power back into the hands of people and ensure that money is spent wisely and equitably.

"Regular reports and updates are an essential part of the democratic process. So if someone asks me what my vision would be for the next five years in office, it would be to keep the elected DA on its toes, keep learning and keep improving. We can't work on our own and it's better to get things done together."

And on the ground level the questions from ordinary folk will be quite simple - who do I get hold of, what are their contact details and will they do anything?

Only time will tell!

"We want people to engage with us on a positive note. Gripping about the past or mistakes we might have made helps nobody. There's an urgent need to fix things - and that's what we intend to do."



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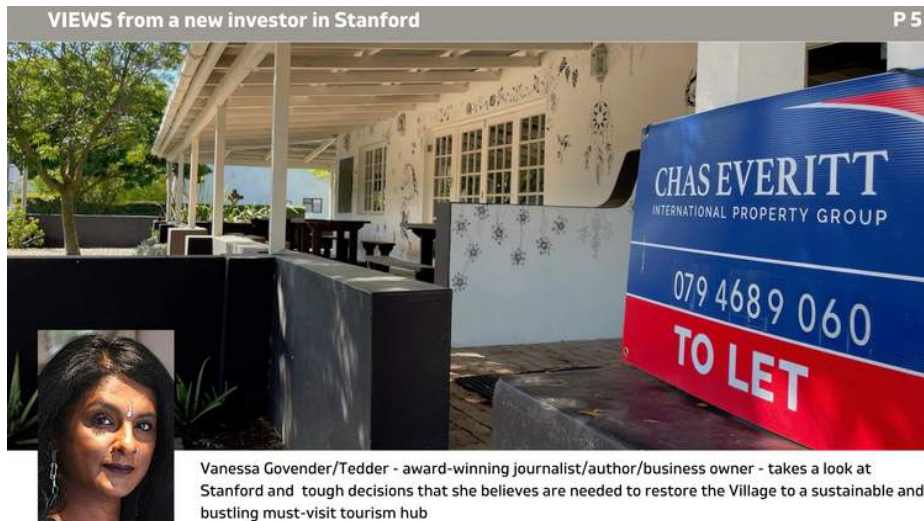
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Katie Smuts of the Stanford Heritage Committee responds to Vanessa Govender Tedder's article 'In search of character and sense of place' in the last issue of Stanford News



Sensitive issues placed under the spotlight

In search of character and sense of place

If you missed it, the article considered the roles of Stanford's tourism, business and heritage groups, and their collective responsibility to work together to assist our village in recapturing its mojo — and securing another 'Best Village' accolade for itself in the near future.

The need for collective action has been on the SHC agenda for some time but implementation has been complicated by various Covid waves. One of the ideas mooted was to bring the SHC and high street business and property owners to a round table meeting — providing a platform for discussion and creating a collaborative vision for the village's best interests.

Inadvertently, this idea was partly achieved by the happy coincidence of the Stanford Tourism and Business (STB) 'Meet and Greet' hosted at Madre's in November, where STB and business owners present expressed their support for proactive engagement.

While this push towards collaborative effort is exciting and positive, the article did reveal some misperceptions regarding the SHC's mandate and role.

Much of the following information was discussed at a public meeting in October 2019, but bears repeating to provide clarity, especially for newcomers to the village.

The Greyton Issue

As a final word, Stanford could never be Greyton, nor should it aspire to be: one look at Greyton's HPOZ regulations and guidelines should be enough to convince anyone that would not be advisable. The reasons that Greyton has a different look and feel relates as much to the unique settlement and development histories of the two towns as to their different histories of modernisation (gentrification), demographics, and the differences in their governance at municipal and district levels. These differences cannot simply be ascribed to the relative actions or lack thereof of their committees as the Greyton Conservation Society fulfils precisely the same role and mandate as the SHC and both are answerable to HWC.

Who and what is Stanford Heritage?

The Stanford Heritage Committee is a civic group registered with Heritage Western Cape in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999). Its role is to provide comment on heritage issues based on, and embedded in, local knowledge and experience of an area – it is thus a Conservation Body in terms of NHRA definitions.

Going forward, business and property owners, particularly along Queen Victoria Street, can assist by implementing more of the proposals of the Revitalisation Plan through a variety of means:

Join local civic groups and committees – pitching up and pitching in achieves far more than carping from the sidelines; Demand relaxation of parking ratios – allowed for in the HPOZ but ignored by planning – in applications;

Petition the ward councillor and other representatives to push the municipality to fund and create a qualified heritage officer position at the local level;

Comply with laws and regulations. Deviation from approved plans, or building without plans, is not a heritage issue – it is an infringement of municipal building regulations.

The impact on heritage is that noncompliance only serves to undermine the very look and feel that draws tourists in the first place. It also undermines faith in the heritage committee.

The SHC looks forward to hosting an event in the new year to facilitate engagement between property owners, business owners and residents. It is hoped that the outcome of such a gathering will assist Stanford Tourism and Business in driving forward a renewal, and moving towards a revitalised Stanford.

FOR MORE INFO ON STANFORD HERITAGE
AND THEIR ROLE IN THE VILLAGE

[CLICK HERE](#)



Essence of a perfumed garden

Some things happen purely by chance. That's how Stanford's Elly Nield describes her visit to a whiskey (the Irish spelling) tasting on a farm in Tesselsdal. The whiskey distilling is still in its infancy and the farm is not open to the public, but this was by special arrangement and a pre-birthday treat.

"The whiskey tasting was most interesting, but for me what was more alluring was the aroma of rose geranium, lavender and herbs that wafted through from the distilling office.."

On closer inspection Elly discovered that in another part of the distillery and laboratory was not only for whiskey but flowers, lavender wild geraniums, citrus blossom, rooibos flowers and much more.

"That's when I met the chemist and perfume-maker – what a special lady!"

The 'special lady' turned out to be "not yet or ever to be retired" chemist Elmarie de Bruyn, whose life's work has been devoted to growing and producing dried herbs and balms for the international market, along with organic perfumes and essences – no preservatives, no alcohol, no animal testing.

"We tried these beautiful products and I was rather delighted that I have the same name as her product, and that's when she told me about her interest in developing an essence that captured the aromas of Africa's wild flowers and particularly the endangered fynbos of the Western Cape, most of which are grown on their family farm."

The introduction to this home-grown, yet intense and highly

professional industry was followed by an impromptu aroma testing of the full Elli range and a visit to her laboratory where the delicate extracting process takes place.

These products are all natural, organic and smell heavenly, besides having anti-inflammatory, calming and healing properties....A match made in Heaven!

Elly said she was curious to know how they marketed the Fleur and Rosemary Remembrance ranges with their beautiful local packaging.

"It turned out that she did very little direct or retail based marketing, as opposed to the already active on-line platform, which has a large international following, and that she had initially produced her range of the Fleur perfume and oil-based fragrances for her daughter-in-law and family. My focus and passion has always been to promote locally made products that make this region unique. This was certainly one of them!"

With that thought in mind Elly invited the Stanford garden club members and friends to an Elli Rosemary Remembrance and floral tea-tasting and a test drive of the Elli range, which in perfume terms, for totally organic, natural and seductive products such as these is remarkably inexpensive, all of them under R200.

The result?

"They loved it. I almost ran out of the initial stock of both the Fleur and Rosemary Remembrance ranges on day one. I have a feeling that the Elli range will become big in this part of the world and hopefully another reason why visitors should extend their travels further than Hermanus."

and of course a floral test drive!



We wish all a very Blessed Christmas and Happy & Safe Holiday Season.

For the latest Stanford property news, visit our website and social media pages.

We look forward to being of assistance should you require a **Valuation, Advice on Selling** your home or **Buying** in our sought after Village.



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A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE FOUNDER ELMARIE DE BRUYN

The therapeutic properties and unique fragrances of the African flora are the basis for the 100% organic products.

The journey started when Elmarie de Bruyn planted a hectare herb-garden for Herbs-Aplenty® (Pty) Ltd. This led to the establishment of commercial herb plantations and later to the creation of the Elli® range.

De Bruyn says her philosophy is based on a simple biological farming motto : does nature approve? This basic principle means that only certified organic ingredients are used with harvesting and processing of essential oil ingredients done on their farm.

Adding value to a rapidly changing tourism landscape . . .



The management committee of the Stanford Association of Tourism and Business has been hard at work formulating a strategy for the year ahead.

Rishi Sundstrom, chair of the Association lists some of the priorities

While The Stanford Association of Tourism and Business will no longer be funded by Overstrand Municipality, represented by Cape Whale Coast Tourism (CWC), it says it will continue to add value to the rapidly changing tourism landscape.

Says Rishi Sundstrom: "We believe the Association remains relevant and highly necessary despite the loss of funding. We have more than 120 members and draw on plenty of local and corporate experience. Currently our main services to members are the web listing, social media platforms and training opportunities. But we hope to expand on this."

While the CWC will take over management of the Visitor Information Centre, including the employment of its staff, the Association says it will aim to address the most urgent and largely practical issues that affect the much-needed high season.

In the upcoming months they aim to address the accessibility and appeal of the village to visitors.

"It is important for the village to appear open and welcoming to visitors with businesses committing to consistent trading hours" says Rishi. "There is sometimes some confusion, so the Association has compiled a list of updated opening hours for restaurants, which we encourage residents to share with their guests."

The Association says it has feedback that visitors are disappointed by the size of the Saturday morning markets, and a lack of cohesion due to the markets being hosted in two different locations.

"We are asking would it not be better to combine the two markets?"

Rishi said the Association was currently exploring this and other options for enhancing the visitor experience of Stanford's beloved markets.

"We are asking, would it not be better to combine the two markets?"

One of the Association's priorities was to continue to improve the online visibility of Stanford.

Explained Rishi: "As well as the existing website, we will be launching Stanford Culinary, a new website which will showcase our wonderful food and beverage entrepreneurs."

Among the issues will be enhancing collaboration between producers and vendors, thereby decreasing food miles within and around the village. Ways will be looked at to support restaurant members in sourcing their produce from local producers rather than having it shipped from far and wide.

"We believe Stanford Culinary could well provide the platform for such collaboration and we are currently exploring the option to include an e-commerce platform. So where are we now, in practical terms?"

THE POSITION AS IT STANDS

The CWC has yet to appoint a senior tourism officer for the Stanford Information Centre, which makes it difficult to gauge how the future relationship with the Association will be. Currently the Association runs solely on volunteers and is considering whether it would be a good idea to employ a tourism coordinator to take care of the needs of members and to ensure that we can keep delivering on our mandate.

STRATEGY GOING FORWARD

The management committee is currently finalizing the strategy document which will further detail their goals for the year, and how they envisage achieving them.

"We look forward to sharing it with our members and are excited for a new year of opportunities and development that will benefit our entire village."

TAKE A LOOK AT THE TOURISM WEBSITE & FB PAGE - SO MUCH GREAT INFO AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON



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CHRISTMAS CHEER: On behalf of Stanford residents Lynn Pullen says thank you to the members of the Stanford police, handing out special festive treats made by the community

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN STANFORD

DECEMBER 2021

16 ||| THURSDAY

Orchid Care Workshop at Eikenhoff Nursery
Auldfield - new and old hits, Stanford Hills

17 ||| FRIDAY

Xmas Sunset Market on the village green at 6pm - food, wine and gift ideas
Panthera Africa Sunset Visits at 6pm

17 & 18 ||| FRI/SAT

2021 - The Stanford Festival
Howard 082 667 9232

18 ||| SATURDAY

The Saturday Morning Market
Luddite wines and Haesfarm collaboration lunch. For details email: info@haesfarm.com

19 ||| SUNDAY

Summer Solstice Picnic Feast on Klein River Cheese Farm



23 ||| THURSDAY

Jeremy Loops will be rocking the Overberg at Stanford Hills Estate as part of his This Town Tour.

28 ||| TUESDAY

Sunset Sweatshop live at Stanford Hills Estate gates open 3pm



RESTAURANT NEWS

The popular Stanford Kitchen in Queen Victoria Street will be carrying on business as usual, but under new ownership. The restaurant where Made In Stanford was is now fully operational under a new name Searles – Garagiste. Owner is former Stellenbosch winemaker Derek-James Searles Crabtree. It is licensed – opens at 12 noon closes at 10pm

email your events and info to Le-Ann at book@stanfordinfo.co.za

A TOUCH OF RURAL MAGIC

Stanford gardeners celebrated the end of the year with a stunning picnic in the grounds of Klein River Cheese - enjoying a medley of delicious foodie treats from the region and chatting with friends - what could be nicer?

A PICNIC - DOWN A COUNTRY ROAD



ABOVE: Elly Nield chairman of the Stanford Garden Club



ABOVE CENTRE: (from left) Leigh King, Erna Herzberg and Elsa Gebhard



ABOVE RIGHT: Amanda de Wit
RIGHT: Picnic platters celebrating local foodie treasures



FAR RIGHT: Gael Broderick (left), Jeanne Pels (right) and Sandy Campbell **MORE PICS NEXT PAGE**





Now that's what you call a festive dessert!



TOP LEFT: Pulling out all the stops to make it a special occasion were (from left) Maggs Baleta, Leigh Hurlin and Louise Baatjies, TOP RIGHT: Jenny McConie (right) Marcelle Goss and in wheelchair recovering from a broken ankle, Sue Lundersadt LEFT: Meryl Reid and Wendy Moll ABOVE: Guests enjoying the country ambience



A SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

... for the de Wits it's a golden year

Fifty years of marriage is a milestone in anyone's life. For Amanda and Chris de Wit, it was a good time to head off from their Stanford wine farm and travel the country, not in luxury style, but in their faithful 15-year-old camper van to Addo, the Transkei, Underberg, Golden Gate to Pretoria spending time with both their sons and their families and coming home via the Eastern Cape, the Northern Cape and the Kalahari.

"Had a wonderful time" says Amanda "can't think of a better way to celebrate an important anniversary"

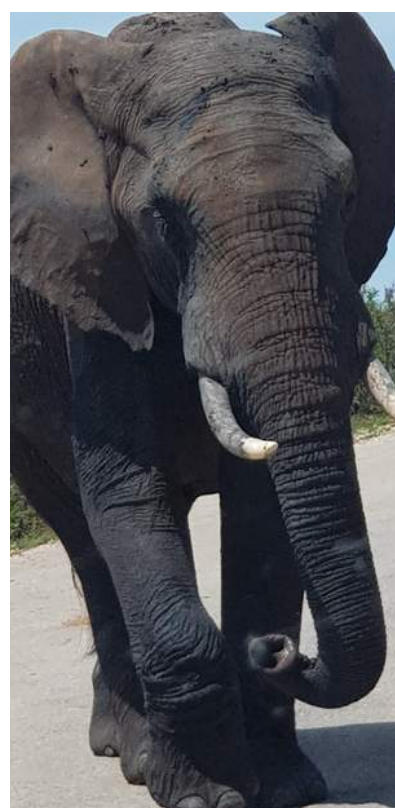


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STANFORD: PURE LOCAL



TOP OF PAGE: Chris and Amanda de Wit before they set off on their adventure

ABOVE RIGHT: The Pineapple House in Bathurst

ABOVE LEFT: The couple on their wedding day in Pretoria

ABOVE: Their 15-year-old camper van that criss-crossed the country without a hitch

LEFT: A large elephant that stopped them in their tracks

OUR LITTLE CHURCH IS IN NEED OF TENDER LOVING CARE



I often go past the 120 year-old St Thomas Anglican Church in Morton Street and think how sad it is that the gardens have been so badly neglected. I would have thought an old church, still in its original state, would have been a must for many visitors. Often, I think, we don't make enough of the fascinating history that surrounds this little village. Is it not worth a little museum or even a tea garden? Would love to see it brought back to life – let's hope someone takes up the challenge – even adopts the garden

Sandy Campbell

St Thomas Anglican Church in Morton Street is the oldest church in Stanford and was built around 1880. The Moore family carved some of the pews and pulpit, and the material for the thatch roof came for the surrounding area. In 1892 The Bishop of Cape Town gave permission for weddings to be performed in the chapel.



PETER & TRISH BADENHORST

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Stanford-based artist Sara Abbott chats to Liz Clarke about her work and the creative energy that has changed the way she sees the world around her

Never too late to explore new ideas

It's not that easy trying to describe Sara Abbott or her creative style as both are mercurial like the wind that scurries across the mountain tops and whips along the Klein River.

But the facts are pretty straightforward. Sara is a well-known artist in the Overberg. Her favourite mediums include pastels, oil, water colour, charcoal – or to make it easier a mixture of everything. Visiting her in her heritage Stanford home is like tip-toeing through layers of well-burnished history, not only hers, but those who dared to dream before her, from farmers to witblitz makers.

We start off with drawers, many of them, piled to the brim with work that has inspired her in the moment and is seldom seen. As we flick through the contents, fleeting images of horses, free-flowing and maybe wild, mystical characters, dogs asleep, cattle, plenty of goats and floating ethereal spirits dashing heaven-wise, all become part of the Sara Abbott story.

"I see things a little differently – that's just the way I am" she says as we stop at a quick working sketch of a horse standing in a vice. "I search for the stories behind what is obvious. It's that searching that dictates the way I do things. It's almost as though there is an alternative energy at play. When I let that side of me free, I'm never quite sure what is going to happen next. But you have to wait for those times, because it's not like clockwork. It either happens or it doesn't."

Tall pots of brushes, paints, pencils, brown paper, art paper of all sizes are in every room. There's a quintessential edginess that tells you that, that trying to understand it all is not the point. It just is. While imagination and free flowing of ideas are part of her modus operandi there is a more focused side which, she says, is about

broadening her knowledge and understanding and experimenting with different art mediums. For a while now she has ventured into the world of Decalcomania under the tutelage of artist Greg Kerr. Kerr's avant garde concepts of transferring one image onto another, has, says Sara, brought a whole new dimension to her art. "I feel like an explorer suddenly coming across something unexpected, rich and strange. Each piece cultivates a story of its own."

There had to be something in her childhood that made her want to feel free to explore, I suggest.

"Yes absolutely" she says. "My early childhood was spent in Kenya in the beautiful wild area called Timau in the foothills of Mt Kenya. I had a Somali pony called Negus. Perhaps it was he who gave me the wings to explore and not be fearful and why all my life horses, animals and nature have been a driving force in the way I express myself."

Though not formally trained, she has honed her skills over many years with the help of "great and influential" artists who she says have opened her eyes to what is possible.

"I've always loved drawing and as a child I won an art prize for a painting where the splodges on it were mistakes.. I love the use of free swirling movements in design and even random brush strokes if they make sense."

When it comes to the commercial side of art, she's eminently practical.

"I like to work on subjects that people would cherish in their homes. I love horses, anything to do with water and the outdoors.

Is there anything she would like to paint and hasn't so far.

"Difficult one – landscapes possibly – those would be a challenge!

A festive family outing at Birkenhead Brewery - loads of fun, loads of people

Shining a light on animal care



Christmas lights, carols, old fashioned country food, fun, games, doggie treats, amazing raffles and book bargains brought the people to the Birkenhead Brewery for one of the year's big fund-raisers. And what a success! SAWs convenor, Wendy Hanson, said it was team effort - one we can all be very proud of





Learners from Die Bron Primary are key players in keeping the river healthy and clean. This is some of the trash recovered during the clean up - the first of many

Meet the heroes of the big Mill Stream clean-up

If you want to see citizen power in action come to Stanford, where the clean-up of the Mill stream/dam/wetland system is in full swing.

A citizen science initiative, the project was designed by Whale Coast Conservation (WCC) with the initial intention of equipping volunteers with the knowledge and skill to identify frog species and to teach them how to record frog monitoring data. The frog species that were identified were uploaded to the Animal Demographic Unit's virtual museum called FrogMap.

It was then discovered that the system was so badly polluted that frog life barely existed in the dam or the stream. Hence the clean-up which began several months ago. The Stanford News will be following the progress and publishing reports on the stream and river health during 2022.

As a consequence, a thorough study of the system is underway. An environmental improvement plan, based on research recommendations, will be formulated.



IT'S TRASHY TOAD

Meet Stanford's trash-collecting Western Leopard Toad made by local sculptor - Malcolm Pemberton.

Trashy Toad will make his appearance at this year's Festival and afterwards be adopted by Die Bron Primary.

Students doing Mill Stream clean-ups and learning about this endangered species will be measuring their litter cleaning efforts in "Toad fulls".

Sheraine van Wyk from Whale Coast Conservation is over the moon about the latest addition. Big thanks too to SA Red Cross Society for contributing towards this great idea



The reed clean up at the Queen Victoria Street bridge where the stream is beginning to move again thanks to Sarah James, Mark Longridge and their teams of willing helpers

SMALL STEPS - a forest says thank you

Sarah James recounts her experiences on a recent fynbos hiking trail that included a visit to an indigenous forest nearly wiped out by fire

I will never forget the day when I and a group of friends from Stanford held tiny trees in our hands, planting them and knowing that it would be one tiny step in restoring a once magnificent forest of rare black Stinkwood. It was such a humbling experience, more so because I now have the exact global co-ordinates that will enable me and even my descendants in the future to visit the tree and watch it grow to maturity.

Have to admit that I was a bit nervous of the distance – about 28 kms in three days -and wasn't sure how my new knees would cope. But all was fine. All I can say is what a wonderful experience.

The Glamping Trail has been designed and run by local botanist and trail organisers Sean and Michelle Privett who met us at the Growing the Future College in the Grootbos Nature Reserve for the first afternoon six km walk and to tell us about the trail. We started off at a leisurely pace stopping every so often to learn interesting facts about the Flora and Fynbos before arriving at Fountainbush Cottage our first night stay where a delicious dinner awaited us. The second day was an all-day 11km hike with Billy Robertson, an incredibly knowledgeable guide who filled our heads with so much fascinating information. Swims in dams along the way, Lomond wine tasting at the end of a long day and a lazy time relaxing in a hot tub outside after lighting a fire to heat the water.

On the way came the tree-planting ceremony in Flower Valley Farm's Stinkhoutsbos forest with GPS Coordinates so we can follow the growth of the tree over the years!

Two breakfasts, one lunch, and two dinners were all delicious and plentiful. The third day was a four-hour 11km hike back to the starting point at the College, arriving at lunchtime. At the end of the trail, we were given a beautiful Field Guide to the Flora of Grootbos Nature Reserve, a time never to be forgotten.



Sarah James planting a tree in the Stinkwood forest. TOP OF PAGE: A carpet of Erica covers the Grootbos Nature Reserve

MORE ABOUT THE TRAIL

The trail starts and finishes on Grootbos Nature Reserve and passes through various farms along the way with a lunch stopover at the Stinkhoutsbos Forest Restoration Project. This Afromontane forest is currently being restored, following a devastating fire in 2006. The forest was also heavily over-harvested for the furniture trade by Italian prisoners of war during the Second World War. According to local botanist and trail organiser Sean Privett, the forest is the only one in the area that houses the black stinkwood tree. In exchange for a donation to the Trust, walkers can plant a tree, which they can name after themselves or a loved one. The GPS coordinates of the tree will be sent to them and the walker-donor can track its growth whenever they – or their descendants – visit the forest in future.

The trail has a Green Flag status. Green Flag status offers walkers the security that the trail is well-maintained and safe to hike, that the area has sound nature conservation records, and that descriptions offered of the trail are accurate. The Green Flag Accreditation system has the buy-in of major hiking organisations across the country. The Fynbos Trail is easy to moderate to hike in terms of its difficulty rating. There are various options from full slackpacking to self-catering. More information can be found on their website .





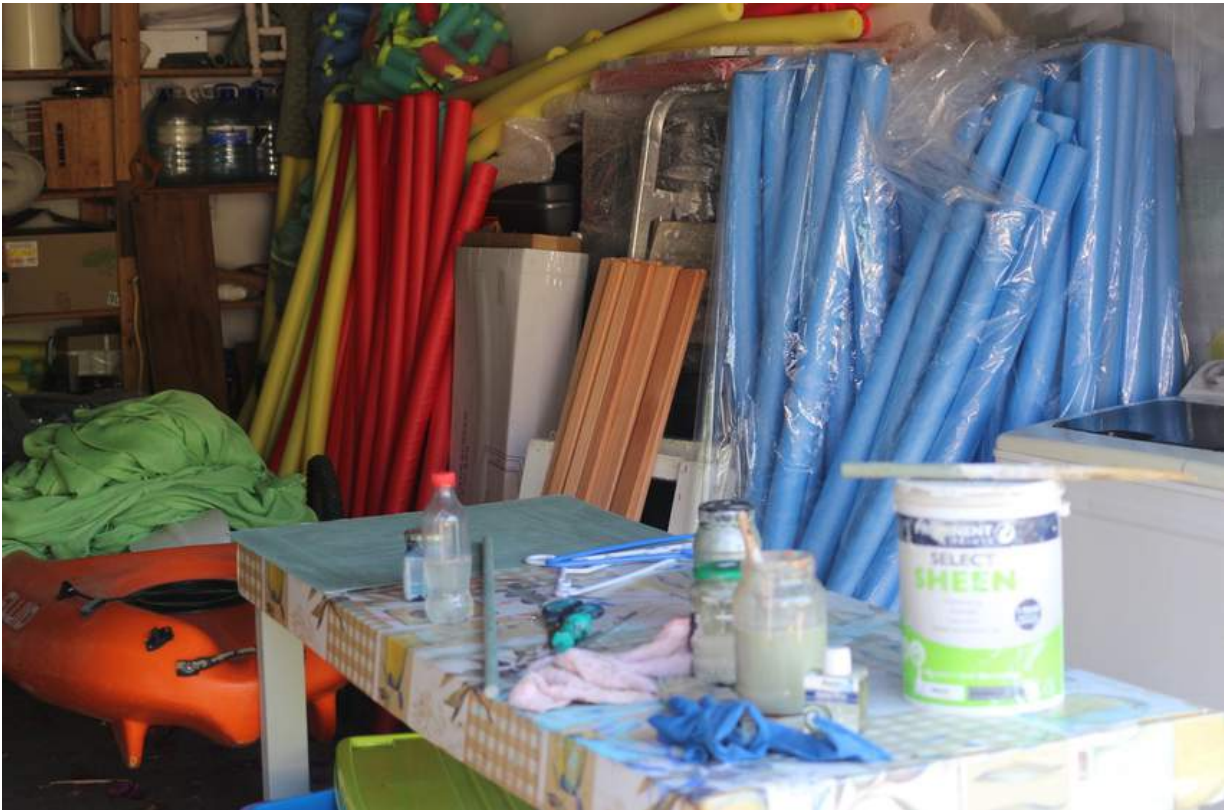
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 [CLICK HERE](#)



Journeys always start somewhere. For the Stanford News it began in June 2021 with the first edition that highlighted the building of our new heritage roads. Now we are already planning the way ahead for 2022. Hope you've enjoyed the journey so far. If there are any editions you missed - just click on the month link

