

NET VIR PRET

PROGRESS REPORT: January to June 2015



Celebrating the opening of the new building

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW BUILDING

The double-storey extension to our building was opened on 7 February 2015 in two sessions, an official reception in the morning followed by a children's party in the afternoon.

Guests of honour were author **Zoë Wicomb** and her husband **Roger Palmer**. Zoë made the initial donation to the Building Appeal which gave us the courage to get the project going. Also present were **Jude Brown** and **Gary Lock** from the Oxford-based group **EDSA** (Education for Democracy in South Africa) who have supported Net vir Pret since its inception.

A large crowd gathered, children, parents, young leaders, well-wishers from the village and several friends from further afield, including **Dr Michael Rice** (director of the PETS Programme) and his wife **Ruth**, also **Dr Chris Beer** and his partner **Rene Weinum** who have taken a special interest in our work and who themselves donated towards the construction of the building.

Messages of congratulation and support came from far and wide and after speeches and a welcoming performance by the Jazz Monkeys, the guests were entertained by our Riel Dancers and the Blikkies Band. The day was the culmination of a long process, taken forward by many people, both here and in other countries, who shared our vision of establishing a centre which would serve our children and youth for the years to come and the celebratory mood was appropriate to the occasion.

NEW VEHICLE APPEAL

As our activities expand, we find that we are increasingly required to transport a growing number of children to perform or take part in events outside the village of Barrydale. Our only means of doing this at present is to pack them into the small Ford Bantam truck we acquired in 2010 through the generosity of the Jephcott Charitable Trust.

The truck, or “bakkie” has served us well over the years and is still in good running order but it can no longer carry the number of children who would love to attend the exciting events we have for them in the village.

In the light of this, we are launching an appeal for funds to acquire a 17-seater mini-bus. Such a vehicle would solve the problems described above enabling us to extend our outreach to children on the farms by making it possible to bring them in to take part in the programmes at our centre.

We have discussed the matter with EDSA and are delighted to report that they have made the first donation of R15,000 in response to the appeal. The cost of a good second-hand vehicle is in the region of R250,000.

THE AFTER-CARE PROGRAMME

Our core AfterCare Programme under the leadership of **Donna Kouter** continues to run on weekday afternoons from 14h00 to 17h00 throughout the year. The programme is supported by a subsidy from the Department of Social Development calculated on a per capita grant for 30 children. In reality as many as 50 children attend and we are presently negotiating with the Department to

increase the subsidy.

Staff members are continuing with their professional training in a part-time capacity at Boland College, travelling to Caledon on Wednesdays. They completed Level 4 in Early Childhood Development last year and are now

finishing Level 5.

There is no doubt that the training is having a significant impact on our work and a visit to an AfterCare session finds children happily engaged in well-planned developmental activities.



THE RIEL DANCE FESTIVAL

Recent years have seen a massive revival of the Riel Dance which has its roots in the ancient fireside rituals of the San and the Khoi people. Net vir Pret has not been left behind and has been training riel groups for some years.

An annual competition in four stages is now mounted annually by the **ATKV (Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereeniging)**. Barrydale was chosen as the site for the second leg of this year's competition and Net vir Pret was invited to host the event.

Three hundred and seventeen performers from 27 groups arrived on 20 June from distant towns all over the Western and Northern Cape and several hundred spectators gathered. We were tasked with setting up the performance area, distributing posters and fliers, managing the gate and feeding the hungry.

Apart from this, we entered 5 groups, 2 from Net vir Pret itself (a junior and a senior group), and 3 from neighbouring farms where we run an outreach programme, 2 from **Vleiplaas** and 1 from **Lemoenshoek**. All groups were trained by Net vir Pret Director **Peter Takelo** (who with his guitar provided musical backing to their performance) and staff member **Herman Witbooi**.

We are pleased to report that we were awarded two trophies – the junior group got one for the best improved performance since the last event and the senior group came third in their age group. They will now go to the semi-finals in Vredendal in August.

We greatly appreciated the support of the Mayor who contributed towards the expense of the costumes.



The senior Net vir Pret group entertains the crowds.

The Blikkies Band and the Riel Dancers often perform for guests at the Karoo Art Hotel and entertained pensioners at 3 Old Age homes in Robertson and Montagu during May.

THE MUSIC PROGRAMME

An immediate benefit of the new building was to provide space for the Music Programme which had been operating for a year in Derek's living room. Under the direction of **Gari Crawford**, who comes in on 4 afternoons a week, the programme grows from strength to strength. In addition to the original group - the **Jazz Monkeys**, there are now three others - a second teenage group, a group of youngsters and a girls' group.

This development has been made possible by the acquisition of new instruments, and especially junior lead and bass guitars through a very kind and generous donation from **Gordon Browning** whom we met when, biking across the province, he spent the night at the hotel where the Jazz Monkeys happened to be playing.



Newcomers to the Music Programme



Early in the year we were visited by by **Adriaan Brand** who was scouting round for performers to entertain the crowds at the celebrated annual **Solms Delta Oesfees** (Harvest Festival). He listened to the Jazz Monkeys and the Blikkies Band and watched the Riel Dancers and then suggested that we try to work on a fusion of all three.

In performance at the Solm Delta Oesfees

This we did and in April we set off for Franschhoek to present our show. The Oesfees is an outdoor event and there were 3 or 4 thousand people present. The group which preceded us was a high powered and very professional rock group which had the audience on their feet cheering. It looked



like an impossible act to follow. But we gave our best and the audience were no less enthusiastic in their response to us.

In April the Jazz Monkeys gained further recognition when they were approached by SATV 2 producers to appear in a documentary they were making on Barrydale for the Pasella Programme.

The Jazz Monkeys play for TV 2

The group performs regularly at the Barrydale Art Hotel and is often invited to play at weddings and parties.

THE ART GROUP

Joan Peeters' Art Group is also in its second year. Meeting weekly at Joan's studio, the group has already had two exhibitions of work. This year the class has been working on mosaics and is also decorating plant pots which will be on sale at the **Barrydale Blooms Festival** in October when local gardeners will open their gardens to the public. John Sacks is the source of ongoing donations of pots for this project which we greatly appreciate.



NEW PROGRAMMES

A problem over the years has been the tendency for Net vir Pret to lose youngsters once they have reached their teens and move beyond the AfterCare programme. In an effort to counter this we have been striving to develop new programmes which can keep them in the embrace of the project. The Music and Art Programmes described above are the early result of these endeavours.

2015 has seen the introduction of a further two, the **Pottery Class** and the **Bike Club**.

THE POTTERY CLASS

The Pottery Class opened in March under the direction of Barrydale potter, **Jean Bittkau**. The class has its own studio in the new building, complete with kiln.



Jean is presently teaching twice a week and her students are already producing work of promising quality.

They have been making hand-built pots, bowls and mugs and made pottery chimes to take home for Mother's Day. Their work will be on display at the Net vir Pret Market Day in December.



THE BIKE CLUB

Readers of these pages will remember that last year we received the magnificent donation of 50 bicycles from the UK through the kindness of **Kevin and Noëlle Ablitt** who cycled from George to Cape Town to raise sponsorships to pay for the shipping.

We have now formed a **Bike Club** under the supervision of staff member **Angelo Endley** and intern **Hermanus Braaf**. The Club is 18 strong at present (including 6 girls) and meets three times a week. Angelo and Hermanus are training the members on bike maintenance.

Hermanus and two members recently decided to see if they could cycle along the **Barrydale Trail** which leads to a World Heritage Wilderness Site and a waterfall. They did the trip in 3 hours (it takes 5 on foot), had to push their bikes half the way, and only had three punctures on the journey.



The bikes have been stored in Derek's garage as an interim measure but a secure shed at Net vir Pret is under construction and will be available within weeks.

The Bike Club plans to enter for the **Renosterbos Marathon** which takes place later in the year.

IN THE PIPELINE

Fabric Design

A new activity for teenagers will soon be underway.

Michelle Berry has come in to run training with staff and Interns on Fabric Design and Printing.

In as little as five sessions, the group is already producing items of promising quality.

Under the leadership of **Clarisa Jonas** who joined the staff in March, the group will open a Fabric Workshop for teenagers in August.



Michelle and the Fabric Group show off their cushion covers

Early Childhood Development Workshop

Also planned to open in the following weeks is a weekly workshop for young mothers and their offspring which will focus on developmental and age appropriate activities they can run with their children. The workshop will be run by Donna with assistance from Clarisa.

MUSEUM PROJECT

Amanda Shackley from the Swellendam Tourism Office made contact early in the year. She had seen last year's First People parade and she wanted to invite us to assist in the upgrade of the KhoiSan Room at the Swellendam Museum.

A visit to the Museum confirmed that while the information in the KhoiSan Room was accurate and interesting, it needed better presentation. Meetings were held with **Johan Kriek**, Curator of the Museum, and **Alison Coughlin**, also from the Tourism Office, guidelines were drawn up for what an effective Interpretation Centre should look like, the Interns visited the Museum's archives to gather information, Barrydale artists **Joan Peeters** and **Nigel Hewitt** offered support and Nigel produced a series of sketches.

The matter has been in abeyance for a while but we hope it will be revived soon.

THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Funding from the **DG Murray Trust** has made it possible to take on 5 Interns in the current year. They are **Violet Higa**, **Hermanus Braaf**, **Conroy Europa**, **Conray Festus** and **Merencia Britz**, all local youngsters in their early twenties.

The Interns have been tasked with the following undertakings:

1. To research local KhoiSan heritage in response to the appeal from the **Swellendam Museum** for assistance with upgrading their KhoiSan exhibit.
2. To research the period of Slavery at the Cape in preparation for raising local public awareness of the issue and the devising of themes and activities for the July, October and December Holiday Schools.
3. To conduct interviews on topics of local concern with a view to producing a community news sheet on the issues. The issues chosen were: Teenage Pregnancy; Schooling Now and 30 Years Ago; Traditional Karoo Remedies; Identity. The news sheet is presently on view at the Barrydale Library from where it will travel to schools and churches.
4. To research the drop-out rate at local schools (including the farm schools), to produce a news sheet on the issue and to devise a presentation which can tour schools in the Overberg which counsels learners on the importance of completing their schooling.



Interns with librarian Rina de Villiers and their news sheet



Interns running the Vleiplaas Holiday School



Following on last year's exploration of heritage and ancestry which focussed on the KhoiSan people, the theme for 2015 is The Cape Slaves. Research is well underway. The Interns were invited to a 3-day workshop on the Galant Slave Rebellion at the **Iziko Slave Lodge** in Cape Town which was co-ordinated by **Khanyisile Mbongwa** of the **Handspring Trust** and at which **Paul Tichman**, Director of the Museum and **Susan Newton-King**, Professor in the **History Department of UWC**, provided valuable input.

The Interns subsequently conducted a Saturday workshop for the 26 Young Leaders on the theme of the Cape Slaves and took responsibility for the second week of the winter Holiday School where they ran a programme on the theme for farm children at Vleiplaas.

They are presently working on the script for the performance which will be presented at this year's Day of Reconciliation Parade. The Parade is held in partnership with the **Handspring Trust for Puppetry Arts** and the **Centre for Humanities Research** at the **University of the Western Cape** and their representatives, **Kelly-Eve Koopman**, **Mongi Mbongeni** and **Khanyisile Mbongwa**, came up from Cape Town to assist with this process in a Saturday workshop in July.



Kelly leading the scripting workshop with staff & Interns

An exciting new partnership with the **University of the Free State** is taking shape where **Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela** has embarked on a 5-year project entitled **Trauma, Memory and Representations of the Past**. This project will look at the impact our history has on the present and incorporate the role that art and theatre might play in capturing this impact on the current generation. It is proposed that Net vir Pret will provide a rural input.

Exploratory work has already begun and doctoral student **Joline Young** came up in May to spend three days with the Interns. She presented a comprehensive overview of Cape Slavery and also ran a workshop on interviewing skills. Prof Gobodo-Madikizela is herself coming at the beginning of August to plot the way forward and we look forward to her visit with great anticipation.

MATRIC OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The **Matric Outreach Programme** targets youngsters in their final year at school and motivates them to make plans for further study at tertiary level. Through the Programme, learners have access to individual counselling which aims at:

- Ensuring they make realistic choices
- Identifying appropriate institutions and courses
- Submitting timeous applications for admission
- Researching and applying for financial support.

This process is in full swing at the time of writing and will intensify in August when final decisions and applications will be made.

In this regard, we are pleased to report that our partnership with **REAP (Rural Education Access Programme)** continues to provide valuable support. This year the top two 2014 matriculants at Barrydale High (**Charleen Britz** and **Simonia Ernest**) were both awarded full-cost support from REAP and are training to be teachers at the CPUT campus in Wellington.

It is worth recording that in spite of her excellent matric results and due entirely to the vagaries of admission procedures, Charleen found herself on a waiting list at the beginning of the year and if it had not been for the intervention of both REAP and Net vir Pret it is not at all certain that she would have gained admission.

The following students were counselled in the Programme and are currently engaged in tertiary study as indicated:

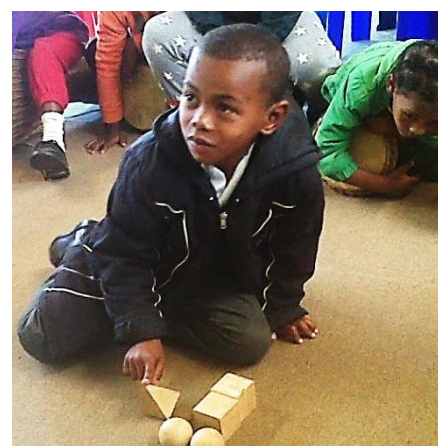
Name	Course	Institution
Cecil Levendal	B Com 3	Univ. of the Western Cape
Mickhyle Jooste	B Com 3	Univ. of the Western Cape
Franco Afrika	BA 3	Univ. of the Western Cape
Marisca Marais	B Ed 2	Univ. of the Western Cape
Zanwill Pokwas	BA 2	Univ. of the Western Cape
Rowann Snyman	B Com 2	CPUT*
Fiogen Joubert	B Tech (Tourism) 2	CPUT*
Vanessa van Rooi	B Tech (Hospitality) 2	CPUT* (Hotel School)
Clarence Moses	B Admin 2	Univ of the Free State
Herschelle Swart	B Admin 2	Univ of the Free State
Charleen Britz	B Ed 1	CPUT*
Simonia Ernest	B Ed 1	CPUT*
Callen Windvogel	Nat. Dipl. Management 3	Boland College (Wellington)
Grace Nel	Nat. Dipl. Safety & Security 3	South Cape College
Deslin Pekeur	Nat. Dipl. Office Technology 2	West Coast College
Davina du Toit	Nat. Dipl. Management 1	Boland College (Paarl)
Earl Bron	Electrical Engineering N4	West Coast College
Peden Swart	Electrical Engineering N4	West Coast College
Nuroshaan Koppies	Nat. Dipl. Management 1	West Coast College
Jeandre Hopp	Nat. Dipl. Marketing 1	Boland College (Worcester)

*Cape Peninsula University of Technology

THE PETS PROGRAMME

The **PETS Programme** (Putting Educational Technology into Schools) is now in its third year and targets Grade 3 and 4 teachers in Mathematics. PETS encourages teachers to take responsibility for their own development. The Barrydale Programme is a pilot project under the direction of **Dr Michael Rice**. Net vir Pret is the facilitating partner.

This year the Programme has moved on from Fractions to work on Decimals and Percentages. PETS has put in place an interactive



Learning fractions with Peter

course on its website where teachers can test and develop their knowledge. Dr Rice comes up to run a monthly workshop, accompanied by **Mary Debrick**, who writes the material, and **Riekie Harm** who does the translation into Afrikaans.

Net vir Pret includes elements of the Programme in the AfterCare work and Peter runs a voluntary Fractions Club at the township **BF Oosthuizen Primary School** in the afternoons where he explores innovative ways of teaching.

2015 has seen an increase in the number of teachers attending the Programme, from 17 to a new level of 33. The newcomers are mainly from the primary school and their lively contribution is much appreciated.

The Barrydale programme is a pilot and PETS director Dr Michael Rice reports that he has started discussions with schools in Mitchell's Plain who are interested in setting up a similar venture.

OTHER NEWS

- **Sharon Dean** and **Lynn Hilton**, both old friends and supporters of Net vir Pret, visited in

March. Derek met them at the airport – not because they needed a lift but because they thought the gifts they had brought for us might not fit into the car they had hired. And indeed, Derek reported that when they appeared in the Arrivals Hall, he could hardly see them their trollies were piled so high. They brought a banjo, toys and games, bike helmets, craft and sports equipment and clothing and we thank them and all their friends from the bottom of our hearts for their kindness.



- As mentioned above, **Jude Brown**, Director of EDSA and her husband **Gary Lock** arrived in time for the building opening in February. Jude, a retired youth worker in Oxford with wide experience, stayed the month and spent the time working hard to help us redraft action plans, update job descriptions and the like. Back home in Oxford in June, they organised a fundraising Spring Ball for our benefit.
- Hard on their heels, **Ann Harries Brown** arrived for a week. Ann, together with Peter Takelo, was the founder of Net vir Pret and it was a particular pleasure to show her the fruits of her initial vision. Ann is also the Chair and founder of EDSA.
- **Martje Nooij**, Director of SPZA (Stichting Projecten Zuid Afrika) spent a week with us in early July from the Netherlands. SPZA have supported us on an annual basis since 2007 and Martje comes to check on us every year. We enjoy her friendly visits and appreciate her hands-on support.

- **Out and About**, the Barrydale social club, visited in July and spent 2 hours listening to an account of our activities, drumming with Peter and being entertained by the Blikkies Band and the Riel Dancers. They passed the hat around and chairman **Dave Simpson** added a wad from his own pocket. This money will go towards buying velskoene (leather shoes) for the team for the Vredendal competition.

- Barrydale author, **Leslie Howard**, visited in July, bringing with her books which had been made by a class of children in Adelaide as gifts for our AfterCare group. Leslie spent time with the group reading to the



Leslie Howard story-telling

children and we hope she'll come back soon.



- With the icy Karoo winter upon us, **Jean Bittkau** gathered a group of **Commuknits** who have been knitting scarves for our children in local school colours. The knitters are Jean herself, **Eve McDonald**, **Daphne Goodall**, **Barbara Bridge** and **Karen Bittkau**, all from Barrydale. They were joined by **Johanna Barnard** and her mother **Johanna de Wet** from Swellendam who wanted to

knit as their offering for Mandela's Day. Half the wool was donated by **Shirley Marx** and **Di Chappell** and to date 30 scarves have been produced to the great appreciation of the recipients.

- New friendships were formed in late June when **Mdu Menze** and **Delphino Machikicho** drove up from Cape Town to meet us at the urging of **Robbie Gow Kleinschmidt**, Director of **ASSET**. Mdu and Delphino, both young, idealistic, professional men who want to make a difference in the world, have voluntarily set up a project in Fisantekraal, an impoverished community outside Durbanville. Called **Waubbe**, the project aims at keeping youth in school and at encouraging them to excel and progress to tertiary study

FUNDING

It is with deep appreciation that we are able to report that all our donors have renewed support in the current year. Our thanks go to them for making our work possible: the **Claude Leon Foundation**, the **DG Murray Trust**, **Education for Democracy in South Africa (UK)**, the **King Baudouin Foundation (BE)**, **Stichting Projecten Zuid Afrika (NL)**, the **Department of Social Development** and many private contributors.

The present budget shows a shortfall of R138,000 but we are in the process of approaching a potential new donor and we hope that this problem may soon be resolved.