



HERITAGE ACTIVITIES 2012

UK EVENTS:

This year for the first time, we had UCT Heritage events in London. What an absolute joy! On 12 July, whilst on vacation in London I had an opportunity to meet with UCT Alumni over lunch at the Vivat Bacchus Restaurant in Foddringham. Angela Edwards from our London office offered great help in facilitating the lunch. The restaurant belongs to a South African couple and the food and especially the wine were great ambassadors to the Mother City. It was wonderful to catch up with UCT alumni who have been overseas for quite a while. The passion is definitely still there and what was supposed to be a "quick get-together" turned into a wonderful afternoon of reminiscing and storytelling.

Once again, with the help of Angela, 25 Alumni met at a pre-performance event of the Cape Town Opera production of *Porgy and Bess* at the Coliseum. The Cape Town Opera Company, on invitation, presented a wonderful run of 14 performances at the home of the English National Opera. What was really amazing about the production is that the cast of 56 featured no less than 30 UCT Alumni! As a UCT alum myself, I felt proud to sit in such an amazing theatre so far from home and see our alumni presenting a dazzling world-class production.

HERITAGE DINNERS:



We had a very good turnout at this year's Heritage Dinners, and Professor Francis Wilson, President of the UCT Heritage Society, continued to be a great addition to these events. What is encouraging is that we have had quite a few people signing Bequest Pledge forms after attending one of the dinners.

• 6 August Durban

This was the first of a series of dinners that was held with in conjunction with the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences to commemorate their Centenary celebrations. Prof Graham Fieggen, a Paediatric Neurologist who is Head of the Division of Neurosurgery at UCT was the speaker. He was an excellent speaker with a good sense of humour. Even though we didn't have a full house it was a very good evening and we received excellent feedback.



• 7 August Port Elizabeth

There were 24 guests and, as in Durban, Graham was the speaker. As per usual the PE crowd is quite outspoken, and rightly so, and there was a lot of discussion around the quality of teaching at UCT at present – especially within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Graham put this all in perspective by quoting statistics about transformation in FHS and the quality of students finishing their degrees.

• 14 August Johannesburg

This was Prof Marian Jacobs, Dean of UCT FHS', first stop and her bubbly personality and excellent presentation had everybody participating in no time. It is good to see how many good memories of UCT people carry around with them.

• 29 August Cape Town

This was an excellent event, held at the MAC Club at the UCT Medical School, and attended by 46 FHS Alumni. We would usually not entertain such a large guest list as we try and keep it as intimate as possible, but because those in attendance had so much in common it actually worked out really well. Marian spoke extremely well and had them eating out of her hand by the end of the evening. What was especially encouraging was the fact that we had quite a few "younger" Alumni attending, which is unusual for a Heritage Society event, and will hopefully set a trend going forward!

UCT HERITAGE SITES

MICHAELIS SCHOOL OF FINE ART

Founded in 1925, the Fine Arts department of the University of Cape Town is better known as the Michaelis School of Fine Art, and has a long and proud tradition of producing outstanding graduates.

Today Michaelis is staffed by some of South Africa's leading fine artists, print-makers, sculptors and photographers. Internationally the School is recognised as one of South Africa's foremost institutions for the study of fine art and new media at an advanced level.

Special recognition is given to the

School's place in Africa, and the School strives to provide a stimulating and supportive environment in which both undergraduate and postgraduate students can achieve their full potential.

During their studies, students have access to an impressive range of resources and facilities, and Michaelis' location on UCT's Hiddingh Campus - adjacent to the Cape Town Company Gardens - ensures that students have access to many cultural institutions and heritage resources.

These include the South African National

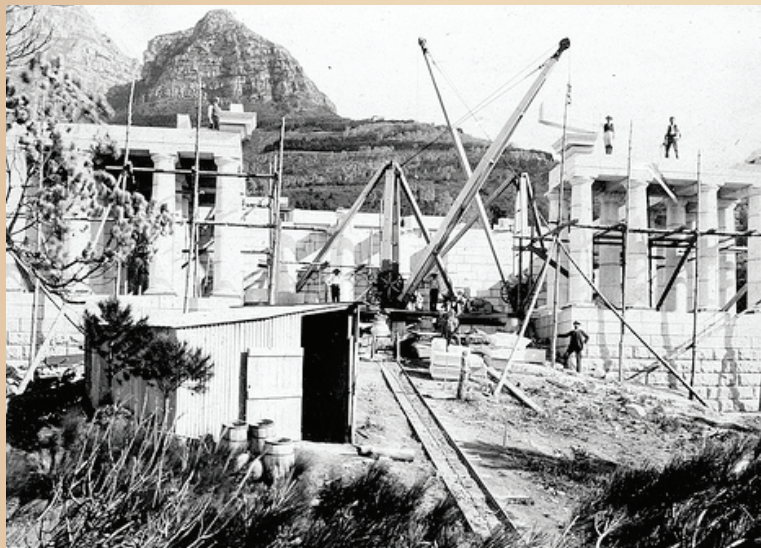
Gallery and the South African Museum, as well as some of the country's leading commercial art galleries and creative hubs.

The School houses the Michaelis Gallery at which visitors to the campus can view regular exhibitions by local and international artists. It also hosts an annual end-of-the-year exhibition of fourth-year student works, which has become a highlight of the local arts calendar.



RHODES MEMORIAL CENTENARY

The memorial is situated at Rhodes' favourite spot on the lower slopes of Devil's Peak. Rhodes's own wooden bench is still situated below the memorial. The magnificent view facing northeast can be imagined as the start of the Cape to Cairo road, Rhodes's imperial dream of a British colonial Africa which had Rhodes as one of its greatest champions.



Rhodes owned vast areas of the lower slopes of Table Mountain, most of which he gave to the nation on his death. Part of his estate was used for the University of Cape Town upper campus, part is now the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, while much of it was spared from less development.

The architect, Sir Herbert Baker, allegedly modelled the memorial after the Greek temple at Segesta although it is actually closer to the temple of Pergamon in design. It consists of a massive staircase with 49 steps (one for each year of Rhodes's

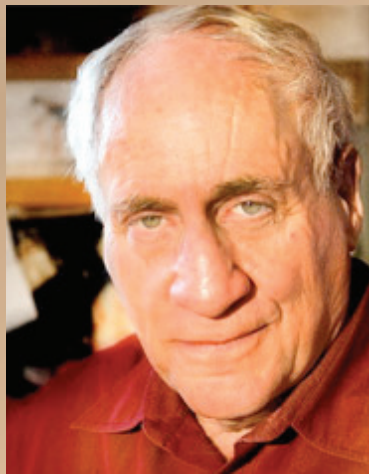
life) leading from a semi-circular terrace up to a rectangular U-shaped monument formed of pillars. The memorial is built of Cape granite quarried on Table Mountain.

At the bottom of the steps is a bronze statue of a horseman, Energy by George Frederic Watts. Eight bronze lions by John Macallan Swan flank the steps leading up to the memorial, with a bust of Rhodes (also by JM Swan). The inscription on the monument is "To the spirit and life work of Cecil John Rhodes who loved and served South Africa", together with a stanza from the 1902 poem Burial, written by Rudyard Kipling in honour of Rhodes.

The monument was completed and dedicated in 1912. An alternative memorial to him, which was to take the form of a massive "colossus of Rhodes" statue overlooking Cape Town from the summit of Lion's Head, never materialised.



PETER-GUY SILVERMAN - THE RUGBY MOMENT.



The year is 1955 and I remember it as if it was yesterday: the moment I discovered Rugby. I was walking down that magnificent 'imperial' walkway from Jameson Hall down to the lower campus. At the time I did not realize that the rugby 'pitch' separated the two parts of the university, and as usual I was daydreaming as I ambled along, unaware of my surroundings. Suddenly I was nudged out of my reverie by the hard running of a man clutching what I determined was an over sized football of American/Canadian design when he got belted by another male and bounced into the ground. I was somewhat shocked by this rather crude if not barbaric display of reckless bashing of players who were apparently severely under dressed for the occasion. Shorts, boots, socks, jocks (I assumed) and a jersey coloured by white and blue stripes. Amused by the seemingly undisciplined brawl that was unfolding, I decided to watch as 30 healthy, rather large men thumped each other with great abandon, leapt about, ran then formed into two snarling packs which went at each other with certain ferocity. Suddenly I perceived a ball emerging from this mass of sweating yelling bodies to be seized by a smaller version of the other players who would then hurl himself without fear

into the air while throwing the ball to what I gathered was in my game a 'running back.' Upon receiving the ball, said 'back' was attacked by several players from the other side, but obviously to avoid being left a broken mass of bleeding flesh and bone, flipped the ball to another back, who attempted to rush forward for a touchdown. I began to perceive that I was witnessing the historical background of the game I played in Canada, football. The man I first noticed getting beaten up was, it turned out, to be one of my Smuts Hall chums, Piet Van Der Merwe, and more to the point the first string flanker for the varsity first.

As I became integrated into UCT it soon became obvious that I, as a Canadian, and a Canadian football player to boot (no pun intended) had to play rugby. There was to be no exit strategy from this imperative, (and I was soon to find out the role of rugby in white SA is well-documented, and is the subject of academic study (see the movie, *Invictus*). Though the idea of getting hit and hit hard without the protection of a lot of padding did not excite me, I remembered that as a Canadian, I could not flinch, that Queen, country and flag demanded that I go forth and, in the words of Newbolt, 'Play up play the game.'

So it was that I began discussions with Piet about what position I might play. I was a fair size, 6'1", 210 lbs, had good balance, bad speed, and as a linebacker cum defensive tackle in football, liked to hit people. So it was declared that I would be anointed a flanker, on the left side of the scrum. My starting team was the 6th, and, while rather low on the team

pecking order; the 6ths also concealed some very good players that were in the game for fun, more interested in a rollicking time laced with many more beers than glory or the demands of playing for a higher ranked team. It was a learning curve, and I found that compared to North American football, a lot less dangerous. Far fewer broken bones, concussions, a lot more enjoyable to play. As a 'blind-side' flanker, I ran around a lot hitting people and occasionally getting my hands on the ball. (I did score a couple of tries). On occasion, when I saw that the other side would win the scrum (the scrum itself a repository of a delightful mixture of unprintable language, where I did learn some delightful Afrikaans curses), I would move off the rump of the 'prop' (if my mother only knew) and wait until the scrum half got his hands on the ball. Soon as that happened I would launch myself in the air to hammer said scrum half as he was in the air passing the ball. Occasionally I got the little 'jou bliksem' (or the equivalent) before one of his mates would 'ek sal jou bliksemse moer donner' which if memory serves me means "I'll beat you black and blue." There were other expressions of 'affection' as we bashed each other in what I perceived as free-flowing undisciplined mayhem. But all was forgotten and forgiven after the game when we collectively gathered for the traditional Lager and lime after the 'bath.' That was a culture shock, to strip down expecting a series of shower stalls only to find the sweat soaked and muddied players leaping into a communal tub. All very jolly and matey, but requiring a wee bit of effort to get used to.

In time I made it to the thirds (through I never did play intervarsity, to my everlasting disappointment) I do remember some of my team mates, Robin Potgieter, owner of a red TD MG a useful weapon when courting one of the Fuller hall beauties), Neville Davey, a Rhodesian who survived the Bush War only to die of cancer, Ron Kirby, who became a very well-known architect. I also learned that intervarsity meant the game with UCTs arch rival, the Afrikaans Stellenbosch University. Every other match meant little unless Stellenbosch was defeated on the rugby pitch. Was this Huntington's' clash of culture/civilizations been played as a rugby game I wondered? Possibly, as at that time, these two great universities possessed fundamentally different 'world views,' which added to the rivalry. UCT always believed it was on the right side of history, while it's rival a mere 50 km up the road, was defending a culture, a way of life under siege.

Still, looking back I recall those rugby games with great affection. In fact I continued playing when I was doing my PhD and working in the UK. My fondest memory is that I, (yes it was me) actually introduced something to the game. It started when I was given the ball to throw in a line out. While the Rugby ball is fatter I had big hands so it was possible to throw a 'spiral' with a lot more distance and accuracy than the then-traditional two-handed sort of push technique. I spent the next months demonstrating and teaching the various teams the Northern American style of ball throwing. In time it spread to other clubs and universities, and I hereby claim my moment of fame for its introduction.

SONJA MERCIER (NEE CLAUSEN) - THIS IS MY STORY



I elected to enrol at UCT because my father had attended SACS in about 1919, and there is a strong fundamental link between SACS and UCT.

My father was a dental surgeon, who had qualified in London and had his surgery on the 7th floor of the Commercial Union Building on St George's Street in Cape Town. His name was Dr Henry Clausen.

We lived on a small farm in Lismore Avenue in Tokai, where we had horses, cows, chickens, flowers, fruit and vegetables. It was a bit too difficult for me to travel all the way from Tokai to UCT, so I needed to get into residence at Fuller Hall. My residence application was rejected on the grounds that I was a Capetonian. In those days, Rhodesians (Zimbabweans) were given preference. I was desperate.

Unbeknownst to my father, on a bright morning of late January, 1961, he gave a lift to the chief matron at Fuller Hall, who was hitch-hiking to work along the Old Constantia Road. It so happened that my father so impressed this matron of Fuller Hall, that it was she who got me into residence at the 11th hour! My father's good turn certainly paid off! I had the last room on the top floor of the eastern most turret, facing the highway beyond the rugby field.

On his way home, my proud father would hoot in a specific way, in order to greet me as he drove passed. I waved to him from my residence window.

I studied languages and majored in German with Prof Rossdeutscher. We were only nine students in his class of majors in 1963. I thoroughly enjoyed his interesting lectures, which continued well beyond the allotted time so that we missed lunch on the days he lectured. He was a hard task master.

However, when I first found myself in his class of majoring German students at the end of February 1963, he took a long, hard look at me and asked reproachfully, "Fraeulein Clausen, – what are you doing wanting to major in German? After all, your father is only a dental surgeon, that is only a glorified mechanic. How can such a 'mechanic' produce a daughter who has a sufficiently philosophical bent of mind to enable her to succeed in majoring in German?"

I replied, "Well, put me to the test now Prof Rossdeutscher, before it is too late and I have possibly wasted your time and mine!"

Immediately he replied, "Read all 3 of Goethe's major works about William Meister within the next two weeks. Exactly in a fortnight's time, I will test you orally on all three of them and then I will give you my answer".

I enrolled for four subjects in my final year in 1963, so that his assignment for me was a very tall order. In those days we had to do only 9 courses towards our B.A. degree, but I chose to do 10 and that 10th one was Xhosa II, with Dr Kunene. I also did History of Culture 1 and 11 in one year, so that I could take advantage of Professor Bockholst, whose lectures on art went right back to the beginning of mankind.

Each lecturer recommended about 13 reference books at the end of each lecture, yet I wanted to surprise Prof Rossdeutscher,

as I knew that my father was indeed a kind of philosopher cum dental surgeon in his day, always looking for the better health and life fulfilment of his patients, even while he did his job of fixing up decayed teeth and broken jaw bones.

So from 12 midnight to 2 a.m. I began to whizz through those books which I had never before set eyes on. A miracle happened, and, under such enormous pressure, I began to see each page as one would a film and it just took me a second or two to read each page, which came into my mind as clear as a bell. Wonder of wonders, I even remembered each detail better than if I had read each word, one at a time, or even each sentence, one at a time. At the end of those two weeks, I was waiting for Prof Rossdeutscher when the time came for him to test me in front of the other eight finalist students in my class. I can see the room clearly. It was in the seminar room at the head of the library above the gracious broad stairway of the main UCT entrance-way.

It was a dark room, with brown wooden shelving filled with books and dark brown chairs and a dark wooded floor. Our old tables were arranged in a rectangular fashion. I chose to sit directly opposite Prof Rossdeutscher and I initiated the process by asking Prof Rossdeutscher to begin his questioning of me, as I wanted no more such talk about my beloved father. He was prepared, and he began by firing one question at me after another and I quite amazed myself, by being able to answer every detailed question most confidently and accurately. After an hour of this, he seemed to have exhausted his questions and so he said, "All right, Miss Clausen. You may major in German!"

So there you have it. And wonder of wonder, this daughter of only a dental surgeon succeeded, - four subjects in the final year, and all!

I desperately wanted to do my Honours in German, but my brothers needed to be educated too and in those days, boys seemed to be given preference over girls. So I completed my teacher's diploma at UCT in 1964 with the help of an AB Bailey bursary. I've enjoyed a full life of teaching and facilitating the learning process, with wonderful experience in South Africa and abroad in Switzerland, Ukraine, Germany and in Russia. I've since majored in the Russian language through UNISA and raised a daughter who is a medical doctor via Pretoria University and who is now doing her doctorate in cancer research temporarily in France. She and her husband have recently bought a house in Rondebosch, Cape Town!

I hope you've had some amusement in the reading of the above true story. Is this not also a part, albeit a VERY small part, of the heritage of UCT?

