



## UCT HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER May 2013

After a hectic start, 2013 is speeding along at an even more frenzied pace. Things are happening constantly and almost every day we see something new and exciting on the UCT website where staff, students and alumni are contributing to advancement in many different spheres of society.

### In this edition of the newsletter we are covering the following:

-  UCT Heritage events
-  Pretty Yende's debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York
-  Peter Silverman's column on UCT in the '50s
-  MBE for UCT Alumnus
-  SA Presidential awards to alumni
-  Desmond Sieni — Oarsman par excellence
-  60th FHS Reunion
-  The Bolus Herbarium and Library
-  UCT's Tax Exempt Status
-  In conclusion

### UCT Heritage Events

The first Heritage event of the year was an exciting, informative and entertaining lecture by Janice Honeyman on 25 January as part of the 2013 UCT Summer School. The lecture covered *The Women in the life of Giuseppe Verdi*, whose 200th birth year is celebrated this year. Verdi was a man of many talents which did not end at his amazing musicality, but also his ability to charm the ladies, on and off stage



Janice Honeyman (left) and guests



A very enthusiastic audience



UCT Alumni in Opera

This was followed by a series of talks in Durban, PE, Johannesburg and Cape Town by Dr Jonathan Clark, Director of the Schools Development Unit (SDU) about the UCT Schools Improvement Initiative (SII). The SII is a direct response to the education crisis in South Africa, which not only has negative implications for the country as a whole but poses serious challenges for tertiary education. Needless to say this created a lot of audience participation and tremendous support for Jonathan's project. To learn more about the SII and their amazing work visit the following link: <http://www.sii.uct.ac.za/>.



Mike and Glynne Case, Barbara Hall and Elaine and Vince Bender receiving their Heritage pins from  
DAD Deputy Director Lungile Jacobs

## **Met Debut for Pretty Yende:**

Whisked away from a family holiday in Piet Retief, UCT alumna Pretty Yende, a young soprano from Mpumalanga, had barely two weeks to rehearse for her debut at New York's famous Metropolitan Opera on 17 January. Tasked with replacing the indisposed soprano originally set for the role of Countess Adèle in Rossini's *Le Comte Ory* (a challenging score for even the most experienced performer) at a moment's notice, the undaunted UCT graduate jumped at the chance. The discerning Met audience followed suit, rising to their feet to applaud Yende's thrilling opening aria. Not even a slip down the stage stairs during the opera's opening could daunt Yende as she serenaded the Met crowd opposite Juan Diego Florez, regarded as possibly the world's leading tenor for the "high lying and florid Rossini role". The highly-rated Yende received her Performer's Diploma in Opera as well as her Postgraduate Diploma in Opera (Performance) - both cum laude - from the SACM. She also recently graduated from the Accademia Teatro alla Scala, Milan.



**Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use  
to change the world—Nelson Mandela**

**Pictures from the Top:**  
Pretty with Florez at the MET;  
With Prof Angelo Gobbato

## **MBE for UCT Alumnus**



**Dawood Parker** moved from Salt River to the UK more than 50 years ago – and is now being awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in recognition of his services to science and international development. "It was quite a surprise, but it was nice to be recognised," he said in an e-mail to the Cape Times. Parker went to Trafalgar High and graduated from UCT with a BSc in 1959 and BSc honours in Physics in 1960. He arrived in the UK in April 1961 after receiving a scholarship to do a PhD in Physics at Southampton University. The award was given to Parker in recognition of his inventions, which had contributed to improved survival rates in premature babies.



## **The Peter Silverman Column:**

In previous UCT Heritage Newsletters Peter entertained us with wonderful stories, reminiscing on UCT in the '50s. Once again he is here to entertain and inform and even though the usual humour is present this is a topic that is still pertinent. Please be advised that these are the views of the writer and do not represent views held by UCT.

*"Half of what I say is meaningless, but I say it so that the other half may reach you."*

*Kahlil Gibran - Sand and Foam.*

For good reason I recalled that line when I cast my mind back on my tenure at UCT. Here I was in Cape Town where I quickly grasped that my 'mateys' at Smuts Hall spoke either proper English, with an indescribable accent [to my Canuck ears], or an indecipherable lexicon of slang words that I began to realize came from too many sources to count: African, Afrikaans, English, Portuguese, and Malay—in fact, from any group of buccaneers, pirates, explorers, soldiers, miners or farmers. Anyone who had set foot in the Cape realized it was indeed a neat place to establish a settlement, port, and farm. At least at UCT, English was the accepted form of communication, though that did not guarantee comprehension. These many years later, I still savour my first introduction to the vagaries of South African expression when my Smuts Hall chums decided that they should invite me to a movie.

"Hay Peter, you want to go to the bioscope?"

"The what?"

"The bioscope, man, the bioscope".

My mind started to go through a mental vocabulary test.

"Bioscope" was not on my brain's Rolodex, and bioscope remained a blank card.

"What the hell is the bioscope?"

"The cinema, man, where they show films!"

"Ah", I replied, "I should have known. Where is it?" I inquired.

Obviously I cannot recall where this mysterious bioscope was or if it even exists today, but I do recall in detail the next exchange between my 'mates' and myself.

"Go down Rhodes Avenue and when you get to the robot turn left."

"Robot?" Were these guys kidding, was this a sort of "initiation process" for the Canadian? I conjured a number of possibilities, a mechanical device that did...what? Whatever it did, what did it look like? I had mental images of robots; none seemed to fit the context of hanging about at some street corner.

"Ok, to get to a bioscope, I have to find a robot, and once I find him or her then I go left. One small question, what is a bloody robot?"

It was then that one bright spark realized that some translation was required. "What you blokes call a traffic light." "Ah," I said, "a traffic light, a bloody traffic light" (The reader will note that I had already acquired the most used word in the South African lexicon, bloody, pronounced more like "bladdy". It was to stand me in good stead. )

It did not take long to acquire the rudiments of a South African vocabulary. "Dorp", which I still use to describe a small town in Canada. "Howzit", remains with me, as does "skop". I still refer to dried meat as "biltong" (which is sold in Toronto) "Rooinek" and cherish the word "Rooinek" as a description of any individual with a less than liberal inclination.



**UCT Rag Adderley Street—1952**

In some fashion it exemplified that absorbing another culture does have it's moments. ` Hay bru, we're having a Braai. Which I worked out with a little help from my chums as "hay buddy, want to come to a BBQ". And it took a little time to work out that a tickey was a sum of money, and that takkies were in my language running shoes/sneakers.



**Flower Seller—1950**

Those reading this should remember that South Africa in the 50s and 60s was a television free zone, a policy pursued by a socially conservative reactionary government who saw TV as a force for evil and, or for undermining the morals of the population.



**Muizenberg—1952**

Thus the South African Broadcasting Corporation and its side kick, Springbok radio were highly politicized, a vehicle to prevent any form of communication that could upset the then existing social structure, or undermine the Afrikaans language, or cause alarm and despondency among the population. The only competition was Radio Lorenzo Marques, broadcasting mainly popular music from "Portuguese East Africa." - Mozambique. Protected by the blanket of semi censorship South African slang gained in strength and diversity as something unique and was not undermined by the steam roller of American TV Culture.

But as I discovered, the conservative audio wall of the Government-controlled air waves was penetrated by a British programme, the Goon Show. It is still incredulous to me even after all these years that this wacky comedy show (mind you with an incredible array of talent, including Peter Sellers) commanded such a large and intensely loyal audience in South Africa. Perhaps part of the reason was the emerging intellectual 'laager', the result of the emerging international opposition to Apartheid. For many, the antics of the Goon show were a contact with a wider world, one divorced from the strain of South African race and political conflict.

### **Merit Orders:**

The following alumni received Merit Orders from President Zuma on Freedom day 2013:

**Order of the Boabab** – Community service, business & economy, medicine and technology



**Dr Colin Eglin**



**Herbert W G De La Hunt**



**Order of Luthuli** – Struggle for democracy, nation building and conflict resolution  
**Neville Edward Alexander**



**Order of Mapungubwe**  
Excellence and exceptional achievement to the benefit of SA  
**Professor George**



**Order of Ikhamanga**  
Arts, culture, literature, music, journalism and sport  
**Pretty Yende**

## **Desmond Sieni — An oarsman par excellence:**

The following is a verbatim quote from a letter written by **Desmond (Des) Sieni (photo right)** who currently resides with his wife **Catherine (Ine)** in a lovely warm and homely house in Somerset West close to Cape Town. Des read an article titled "National Colours for Rower" in the 2012 UCT Alumni News and the following was his response.



"The article about 'National Colours for Rower' brought back fond memories of my rowing time at UCT, 1951 – 55. In my final year BSc. Pure Science, I rowed in our senior crew, coxless fours. The other three oarsmen I rowed in the bow seat. We had a very successful year in 1955, winning intervarsity and also the head of the river – Zambezi, at Livingstone, in the then Rhodesia.

We rowed on the Zambezi in the Centenary Celebrations Regatta – having being invited by Sir Roy Willenski – a very keen oarsman. Most of the SA rowing clubs were invited to this regatta.



Our rowing days at Varsity were quite difficult equipment wise, having to do running repairs before an outing. In our final year we decided to purchase a new racing four. We achieved this by donating our tour grants to pay for the boat. Other than myself the other three of the crew were all medics. John Wyatt practised in Natal, Kokstad. Roar Nilssen later practiced in Namibia, then SWA. He qualified as an Orthopaedic Surgeon after a stint in South Georgia. Mike Wynn disappeared to Australia after qualifying".

**Left back:** Laurie Halifax, Des Sieni, Roar Nilssen, Neville Rough

**Front:** Mike Wynne & John Wyatt

"She handed him a glass of water and two Aleve gelcaps. They're anti-inflammatories. They will dull the pain a little bit and keep down swelling and redness. Swallow the pills, don't chew."

"Well, I thought I'd stick them into my nose and impersonate a walrus, but if you insist, I'll swallow them."

**Ilona Andrews - On the Edge**

## **Class of 1952 FHS REUNION**

This class reunion, which was held from 6-8 December 2012, attracted 30 classmates and their partners/spouses. They came from as far afield as London, Sydney, New York, Baltimore, Harare, Nova Scotia, Aberdeen (UK), Pretoria, Kloof, Klerksdorp, East London and, of course, Cape Town!



The graduating class in 1952 numbered 123 of us (9 females)! Regrettably, 48 members of the class are deceased and four were not traced (Blaine, Reitz, Skorbinski & Viviers).

The "Academic" day was highly rated and went far beyond the 12 o'clock stopping time. Information on Orthopaedic Practice in Rural Newfoundland (Jimmy Osmond), Medicine in the Wilds (Jimmy Thomas), Sex after 50 Years (Esther Sapire) as well as information from 2002 graduate, Alwyn Rapatso, kept everybody spellbound!

Overall rating of the weekend: 5 Star! Joan Tuff of UCT was part of the star rating and we ended with a small amount of money in the kitty!  
*(Thank you to Dr Hannah-Reeve Sanders for her input)*



## The Bolus Herbarium and Library

The Bolus Herbarium and Library collection is housed in modern premises in steel cabinets in the Botany Department at UCT. The herbarium is rich in Types, especially of the Cape Flora.

Before we go further, here is the Wikipedia take on what a Herbarium constitutes: ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbarium.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbarium)) In botany, a herbarium (plural: herbaria) – sometimes known by the Anglicized term herbar – is a collection of preserved plant specimens. These specimens may be whole plants or plant parts: these will usually be in a dried form mounted on a sheet but, depending upon the material, may also be kept in alcohol or other preservative. The same term is often used in mycology to describe an equivalent collection of preserved fungi, otherwise known as a fungarium.



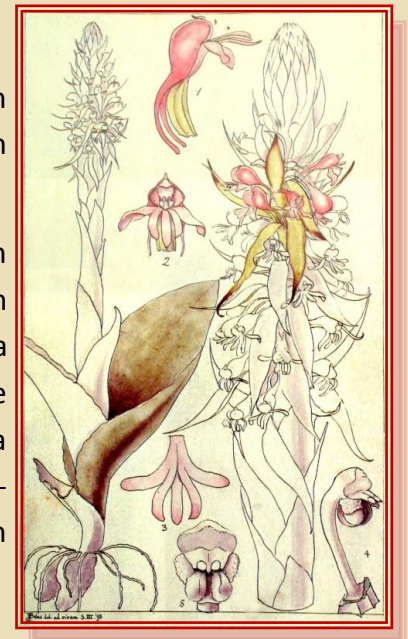
The Bolus Herbarium, established in 1865 by Harry Bolus, is the oldest functioning herbarium in South Africa. An amateur botanist and wealthy philanthropist, Bolus lived in Cape Town for a number of years during which he contributed greatly to the field of Botany by describing many new plant species. These included, of particular interest, types of South African Orchids and Ericas.

As part of an academic institution, the Herbarium's primary function is to aid in the teaching and research of the diversity of the southern African flora, particularly that of the Cape Floristic Region. Research associated with the herbarium focuses mainly on taxonomy, systematics, biogeography and endemism.

With a collection of over a third of a million southern African specimens, it is the third largest university Herbarium in the southern hemisphere. The collection is recognized for its superb representation of the Cape Flora and the large number of type specimens housed.

The Bolus Herbarium Library developed from its origins as a taxonomic library and now contains a comprehensive collection of works relating to South African systematic and geographical botany, as well as extensive modern literature on evolutionary biology.

There is a lot more to see and should you want to explore further, go to: [http://www.arc.uct.ac.za/the\\_visual\\_university/?id=248](http://www.arc.uct.ac.za/the_visual_university/?id=248)









A herbarium is better than any illustration; every botanist should make one.

Carolus Linnaeus—Philosophia Botanica (1751)

## **Tax exempt status: University of Cape Town — May 2013**

The purpose of this notice is to confirm the tax-exempt status of the University of Cape Town ("UCT"), and in particular the specific taxes for which it is exempt.

-  UCT's receipts and accruals are exempt from the payment of income tax in accordance with the provision of section 10(1)(cA)(i) of the Income Tax Act 58 of the 1962 ("the Act").
-  Any donations to and by UCT is exempt from payment of donations tax in accordance with the provisions of section 56 (1) (h) of the Act because of the fact that, as mentioned above, UCT is a section 10 (1) (cA) (i) exempt institution;
-  Bequests or accruals from the estates of deceased persons in favour of UCT are exempt from the payment of estate duty in terms of section 4(h)(ii) of the Estates Duty Act 45 of 1955 as a result of the fact that UCT is a section 10(1)(cA)(i) exemption institution;
-  In terms of section 4(1)(f)(ii) of the Stamp Duties Act 77 of 1968, any instrument which is executed by or on behalf of UCT is exempt from stamp duty, if the duty thereon will be legally payable and borne by UCT if it had not been a 10(1)(cA)(i) exempt institution.
-  Section 9(1)(c)(ii) of the Transfer Duty Act 40 of 1949 exempts UCT from the payment of transfer duty in respect of property acquired, the whole, or substantially the whole, or which will be used for the purpose of one or more of UCT's public benefit activities as contemplated in section 30 of the Act. The reason for the exemption is once again because of the fact that UCT is a 10(1)(cA)(i) exempt institution.
-  In terms of section 26A of the Act as read with provisions of paragraph 62 of the Eighth Schedule to the Act, UCT is exempt from the payment of capital gains tax on the disposal of any asset (as defined in Eighth Schedule) as a result of the fact that it is a 10(1)(cA)(i) exempt institution. Likewise, any donation or bequest of an asset to UCT from any person is exempt from the payment of capital gains tax in the hands of such a person.

### **In conclusion:**

I have tried to touch on a variety of topics in this edition, but there are still a gazillion subjects to explore. It will really assist me if you could give some feedback. The contributions from alumni about their time at UCT is always very much appreciated and enjoyed by all readers.

Please remember that should you have already included UCT in your estate or recently decided to do so, you should kindly let me know, as I would like to include you as a member of the UCT Heritage Society.

If you are not as fortunate as myself to live in the Mother City (joking) and you are visiting our shores, please let me know as I would really like to meet you in person and show you all the amazing changes that are taking place on campus.

With warm UCT regards,

**René Nolte**

**UCT Bequests Officer**

Tel: +27 21 650 4106

E-mail: [rene.nolte@uct.ac.za](mailto:rene.nolte@uct.ac.za)

Web: <http://www.uct.ac.za>