



Friends of Smuts House (FoSH)

Dear Friends,

Summer is in full swing with extreme heat since November last year, but also lovely rain showers the past 3 months.

1 FoSH COMMITTEE

Committee members are Nigel Coni (treasurer), Ron Mengell, Elise (talk host), Ian McFayden, Christo Rabie (chair, newsletter, marketing), Robert Jacobs, Cilla Taylor ad hoc (membership) and heritage specialist (speakers).

2 TALKS AND WALKS

We will have approximately 10 talks per annum (February - November)

In addition, we will also host 4 walks per annum:

- 1 bird walk
- 1 plant/flower/grass walk
- 1 geological / geographical walk
- 1 historical Irene tour which links with the Smuts farm Doornkloof, with the farming activities, the local history and the Smuts couple Jannie and Isie.
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3 EVENTS: UPCOMING TALK / WALKS FOR FEBRUARY - MARCH 2023

We have already kicked off with a talk by Claudia Fratini on the Zonderwater POW's on 15 February.

Our second talk for 2024 on 14 March marks an impressive publication by Guy Keeling on the 123 battles during the Anglo-Boer War (1899 - 1902). Guy has donated a colour coded map with the battle sites for our display inside the Big House. Each chapter or battle ends with a summary of the successes or failures of each incident, which makes this publication extremely functional for debate.

Payment for talks or walks:

Friends of Smuts House, Nedbank, Centurion account number 1621173909.

Kindly mark your bank deposit with the date, your surname and name.

Please then send proof of payment to christorabie9@gmail.com



Camp commander Prinsloo's grave
Decorated by Italian POW's

Claudia with the last surviving
Zonderwater POW



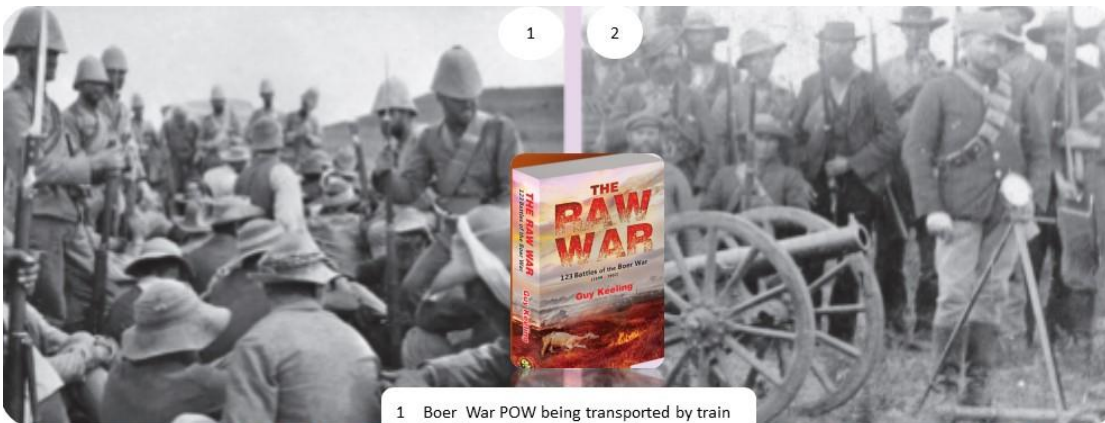
15 Feb. 2024 - Claudia Fratini
The artistic memory of the Zonderwater
POW

The objects created during WW II by
Italians provide evidence of material
culture.

The talk emphasises the object as cultural
historical source which carries stories of
lived experience – the transport to South
Africa, religious roots and craftsmanship.



The talk at Isie's Tea Garden next to
the Big House



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- 1 Boer War POW being transported by train
- 2 The Boers with a short barrel gun

14 March 2024 – Guy Keeling
"Raw War – 123 Boer War battles"
Book launch

From a guerilla war tactical perspective,
this book offers insight and better
understanding when Boer War and
Angola border war parallels are
juxtaposed.

The book shows how Smuts' commando
defeated an elite British unit in 1901 at
the battle of Elands River near Tarkastad.

Smuts played a prominent role in NOT
supporting war in the first place, but also
acknowledging the defeat long before
most generals, and negotiating a peace
treaty and war compensation.



Isie's Tea Garden
Exclusive Books & the
author



The bird walk was also well supported by The Friends on 17 February and 60 bird species were identified. We joined Birdlife Northern Gauteng and the group totaled 27.



European honey buzzard
Wespedief



Guide

Marna Buys / Birdlife North Gauteng

Topic

Bird walk on Saturday 17 February 2024

Thank you to Gauteng North for having their walk at Smuts House museum premises again together with the Friends of Smuts House Museum.

Approximately 60 bird species were identified on the walk!

Photographs

Amanda Gazendam

Christo Rabie (1 below)



4 FoSH PROJECTS

4.1 The restoration of the Cadillac's funding is a challenge. The bodywork is the most expensive to restore due to cracks in the enamel paint after being exposed in the full sun once upon a time. We have been advised to tackle one door / panel / piece of bodywork at a time and this remains a specialist job.

4.2 30 groups of students (total 150 students) have signed up for 40 hours each community work for the Big House this year.

Some projects of last year will be taken a step further but we will embark on other projects as well like installing the display in the milk room and royal tour display in the main bedroom.

Reflecting on our report of August 2023, the 3 major leaks are repaired and intact after heavy showers since December. Other roof leaks, however, need fixing this year.

Without the donations and support of the supper talks of The Friends of Smuts House, we would not have been able to complete these projects. We are extremely thankful that we are able to support the students with the hardware for their projects. We will report on this later in 2024.

4.3 The bees at the study and paper collection storage room remain a challenge. We now have access to scaffolding, which will reduce the cost of the projects to remove bees, take precautions for the future and do restoration.

4.4 Tree tags

Tree tags will be commissioned for numerous trees on premises. We will start of with the trees which are regarded as Smuts period trees first. The recent bird walk enables us to purchase at least 10 tags so this project will be stretched over a few years.

5 Garden tools

We have received a generous donation for maintaining the garden around the house, which includes a lawn mower, grass trimmer, spade, garden fork, etc. The museum has dedicated a garden worker once a week to maintain the garden around the house under supervision. There is still a need for a hose pipe for cleaning the gutters and downpipes of the Big House once a week, as well as a tall ladder, wheel burrow and pruning scissors. A chain saw (hand / petrol) is extremely important as the alien invasive trees category 1 and 2 in certain areas on premises still need to be tackled. Kindly WhatsApp a photograph of garden equipment to 072 799 5959 so we can arrange collection or delivery. Old used tools are the best option!

6 Milk room

The request for objects for a display inside the milk room behind the house has surpassed our wildest expectations and delivered authentic cans, separators, etc. The student group which is assigned with this task will now be able to complete it. Thank you to Chris and Annie Challis and friends for the beautiful dairy collection and thank you to those who want to remain anonymous. Isie Smuts used to make butter in this room behind the house and we want to display that history.



Cheese mould



General view



Lawn mower



Milk pails



Butter churners



Grass cutter



Separator



Dough pail



Milk & cream pails

Should you wish to be removed from this mailing list by replying to this email and we will act accordingly. Also, do not hesitate to spread the word of the talks and walks to interested individuals or friends!

Christo
Chair, FoSH, March 2024