

# JOHANNESBURG

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## HERITAGE FOUNDATION



## FLO BIRD BIRTHDAY EDITION

# A Lifetime of Activism and Still Going Strong

Flo Bird, long-time champion of Johannesburg's heritage and recent octogenarian, officially announces her desire to slow down. People remain sceptical.

It's just days away from Flo Bird's 80th birthday and the legendary heritage activist is bloody annoyed! The Johannesburg Public Library remains closed for no good reason and the entire Metro Centre in Braamfontein has been summarily declared unfit for human habitation. The city's public services are in disarray, heritage properties are getting invaded, civic authorities are being predictably sluggish. It's just the latest chapter in the continuing saga of Joburg, and it hasn't made for good reading...

But Flo has seen this all before and even after so many years of fighting the good fight, she is still there – in the thick of it – asking tough questions, demanding answers, holding people in authority to account. After all, when it comes to standing up for heritage, nobody holds their ground quite like Flo.

*"When I get angry, I will fight and I won't drop it. Sometimes you have to take a stand."* - Flo Bird

To meet Flo Bird is to encounter a force of nature. Honest, forthright, funny, kind and possessed of a steely determination that vanquishes all in her wake, this diminutive dynamo has been at the forefront of Johannesburg's heritage community for over 50 years. In that time, she has accomplished much on behalf of her beloved (often beleaguered) city.

Initially prompted into activism in the early 1970s by the impending construction of a new highway through Parktown, and further driven by the wanton destruction of the area's heritage houses by uncaring developers, Flo founded the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust in 1985.

She soon gathered together a remarkable team of like-minded volunteers committed to protecting the unappreciated heritage of the city and took the organization from strength to strength – forcing developers and civic authorities to disregard heritage at their peril and saving many threatened properties in the process (one can only imagine a fired-up Flo in these council meetings, puffing on her pipe to 'intimidate all the bloody men in the room').

Later, in 2012, the trust's scope and mandate was expanded to form the more inclusive Johannesburg Heritage Foundation, which has only grown in size and stature to become the foremost heritage organization in the city. The JHF now has hundreds of members, thousands of supporters, and is actively involved in education, walking tours, advocacy, joint planning committees, restoration and outreach.

*"Flo Bird is the Florence Philips of our Time"* - Monique McDonald.

It's an impressive legacy that continues to reverberate and inspire. But Flo is now 80 years old and the mighty Ms. Bird has declared she wants to slow down to focus on



Flo Bird at Old Cape Town Club (1997)

the things that interest her most. However, to paraphrase Mark Twain, rumours of her retirement are greatly exaggerated.

As her somewhat reluctant successor, David Fleminger tells it, "When Flo approached me about taking over as JHF chair, I hesitated. After all, hers are not easy shoes to fill. But as I looked down at the tiny but formidable figure in front of me, I realised what so many others have found out for themselves: you just can't say no to Flo! Nevertheless, I insisted that I would only take on the role with her continued support and participation as Honourary Life President. She may have built the foundation into a solid and sustainable organization that stands on its own, but she remains our figurehead – both an irresistible force and an immovable object. And I wouldn't have it any other way."

And thus begins a new phase, both for Flo Bird and the JHF. But her consistent and tireless work on behalf of the city and its diverse heritage community continues to inspire the next generation. After all, Joburg is still in a precarious state – perhaps more so than ever before. The fight is far from over. And Flo has never backed down from a fight she felt was worthy.

So, here's to 80 years of Flo Bird with many more to come. Long may she reign!



Flo Bird, Patricia Suzman, Jeffrey Jowell, Magda Mostert and Frances Suzman Jowell at the unveiling of the blue plaque in honour of Helen Suzman in Parktown. Photo: Tshepiso Mametela (2018)

# The Mansion is on Fire and it's Personal

**Michael Bosazza (Flo's bother)**

In the 1960's when I was at university, few of us had motorcars and so we only knew those parts of Joburg along the bus routes. Then when I finally got a car in 1968, I took some friends for a drive through Parktown to show them what I remembered as a gracious suburb. I was surprised and distressed to discover that the grand mansions were standing empty, the gardens derelict and the properties in the charge of security guards.

I told Flo and Johnnie about this and the next weekend we drove through the empty streets, appalled at the sight of abandoned gracious homes. The area was awaiting demolition for the playing fields of the new College of Education. We went exploring and in one house we found beautiful beaten pewter light fittings and door handles, and Edwardian tiles in the inglenook in the dining room. We asked the guard what was happening and who we could contact about this, but he couldn't help.

When we went back a couple of weeks later, we found that that house had been set alight and used as an exercise for the Fire Department. Nothing was saved or saveable. For me I think that Flo's righteous anger was the start of her campaign to save Parktown.

When Mike Martinson told her about the proposed M6 which would destroy more houses, she was outraged. As an old Parktown family we were too. Her campaign to save what was left of Parktown was brave and at times seemingly hopeless. Fighting a City Council that was hell-bent on their wild plans with no consideration for heritage, beauty, or even proper planning was regarded by many as a hopeless quest. Rand Afrikaans University had been placed in Auckland Park. The College of Education decimated Parktown. The Parktown ridge would forever be marred by the Hospital – and the Councillors did not care.

At one memorable meeting arranged by the Parktown Association, the Councillor was faced with outraged residents. He tried to say that he was on their side, but a mild-mannered official from Pretoria quietly pointed out that the Councillor had not in fact done anything to protect his constituents' homes.

The meeting became heated, and I remember my father shouting from the gallery, "Crucify the bastard!" I think that the Councillors began to understand that they were answerable to their constituents and that the residents were not going to remain silent. If I remember correctly the Councillor phoned Flo shortly afterwards and asked her what she wanted him to say at the next Council meeting.

At the time the Council had denied the existence of the mystery M6, but estate agents knew that the houses in its path were unsalable. Flo started the battle. She tried everything to prove that the residents in the path had a case against the City. Then one day she received a call to say that if she came to the Council offices, she would be given the proof of this planned (but publicly denied) motorway. In the event her alternative suggestion along Empire Road won her a nomination for The Star's Woman of the Year.

I heard that council officials were nervous of having a "Mrs Bird" done on them when she was seen entering the building! She fought to save Parktown from the developers and she had several victories. As a family these were celebrated despite Johnnie's irritation when Parktown intruded on his evenings.

She was one of the first women to serve on the National Monuments Council (the other was Desiree Picton- Seymour). At the time the NMC was Cape based and they only very reluctantly considered any building that was not Cape Dutch architecture of the 18th century to be worthy of conservation. Desiree liked Cape Victorian architecture, but Flo was determined to conserve places in the old Transvaal. She set a goal of 100 monuments in Johannesburg before Joburg's 100th birthday.

As my big sister, she has looked after me and guided me. Her family is immensely proud of her, but I think that our older sister, Sandy and I are perhaps a bit in awe of her. She has achieved so much and taught us about determination, integrity, ideals and purpose. Her standards are hard to live up to.



Michael, Floranelle and Sandra (1952)



Louanne Grant, left, and Flo Bird admire the scale model of the historic Parktown building.

## Scale model enlisted in campaign to save old Parktown house

### Gracious mansion has long history

A scale model of the historic building in Parktown, which now houses Mike's Kitchen, will be used in the campaign to have the beautiful old mansion declared a National Monument.

The model, commissioned by the restaurant chain, was made by master model maker

and magician Jimmy Ritchie.

The house, built in 1904 for James Goch, brother of the better known George, is one of only two Randlord mansions in Parktown to which the public has access.

It has beautiful stained glass windows, a carved newel post and

bannisters and many other features which cannot be reproduced today.

The building is owned by the Johannesburg City Council who have so far not shown themselves sympathetic to its declaration as a national monument.

However the National Monuments Council, armed with the petition of more than 12 000 signatures collected by the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust, intends taking up the matter.

## WATCH



**The Art of Neglect**  
Carte Blanche | M-Net  
19:00, 15 January 2023



Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), Africa's largest, boasts thousands of works including pieces by Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Gerard Sekoto, Walter Battiss, William Kentridge, and Sydney Kumalo. The collection is valued at between R500 million and R1 billion, but the gallery is now a shadow of its former glory. Derelict, dilapidated and in total disrepair with empty exhibit halls, crumbling walls and closed-off areas. Carte Blanche exposes the rot.

**Joburg fire | History of building gutted by fire in Joburg CBD**  
ENCA

19:00, 31 August 2023



David Fleminger of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation spoke with eNCA's Sally Burdett about the history of this building at 80 Alberts Street

**Crime in SA | Brixton cemetery vandalised** | ENCA

19:00, 4 April 2023



Sarah Welham, who is part of the group, Friends of Johannesburg Cemeteries spoke with eNCA's Sally Burdett.

## LISTEN



**702.**

**The years-long closure of the Joburg Public Library | 702**  
Flo Bird - 16.45, 4 September 2023

**The demolished Crown Mine buildings | 702**  
Flo Bird - 15:30, 14 February 2003

**MIX 93.8**

**Art Deco Buildings in Joburg | Mix 93.8**  
Brain McKechnie and Dave Gurney  
19:00, 26 July 2023

# The Battle To Rebuild Joburg's Historic Laundry Buildings Has Finally Been Won

Raeesa Pather - 24 May 2016

On the corner of Barry Hertzog and Napier streets in Richmond, Johannesburg, a dilapidated shed occupies an otherwise vacant piece of land. The buildings that once stood there were demolished in 2008.

In the late 19th century, the location marked the growth of black entrepreneurship. Zulu men from KwaZulu-Natal travelled to Johannesburg, latching on to any opportunities the fledgling mining town presented.

The West Rand's mining industry was growing and, making use of the stream that flowed through the area, these migrants washed the clothes of black mineworkers to earn a living and became known as AmaWasha.

Washing took place along the banks of the Gas Works Spruit – that is, until Rand Steam Laundries rolled in, leaving the AmaWasha without work. Some of the migrants were forcibly removed to sites far from the blossoming business area, signalling the beginnings of colonial segregation.

The company was based there until it was shut down in 1962. The buildings, some of the first examples of industrial architecture in the city, were declared provincial heritage sites and protected. But Imperial Holdings demolished the buildings in 2008 to make way for a car dealership.

Civil society reacted strongly. The Johannesburg Heritage Foundation led the backlash. Plans to turn the site into a motor showroom were halted and the foundation successfully pushed for the City of Johannesburg to put a stop to any development on the site for 10 years, leaving Imperial to pay rates and levies on land they could not use.

"The decision [to halt development] was taken because the PHRA-G had never received any application from Imperial. The demolitions were done without approval and were therefore illegal," said the Gauteng department of sport, arts, culture and recreation.

Although Imperial did not face any legal penalties for demolishing a heritage site, the foundation's vice-chairperson, Flo Bird, says the decision cost the company.

"Imperial didn't walk away unscathed. For eight years they paid rates on the building and they weren't allowed to develop. That's very heavy actually, and they [have admitted] that it cost them a fortune."

The foundation says it had nego-

tiated an agreement with Imperial for the buildings to be reconstructed, along with a commemoration site for the AmaWasha. Bird says the company tried to make amends but it couldn't make the numbers work and was forced to sell the land.

"Reconstruction is very difficult and it's not something that people do willingly. No heritage person will willingly agree to reconstruction but, in this instance, we don't have a choice. The buildings are gone.

"We were determined that no one was going to get away with demolishing buildings that had been provincially protected and then do nothing about it," Bird says.

A large billboard, for the Moolman Group, now occupies a spot on the site: "Rand Steam Laundries, new retail office/development coming soon... TO LET".

Willem Reitsma, Imperial's group treasurer, says the company's attempts to rebuild the heritage buildings and commemoration site were aborted when Imperial was hit by declining motor sales in 2015. This, and increased building costs, left them with no option but to sell the property.

Bird estimates that Imperial would have had to have dropped their sale price by at least R85-million – the projected cost of the rebuilding. She says the project may take 10 years to complete but "it would be worth it to reconstruct the Rand Steam Laundries as they were in their original form".

Brian McKechnie of McKechnie Keeling Heritage Consultants, who is involved in putting together a conservation plan for the site with the aim of replicating the original structures as closely as possible, says the buildings were one of a kind.

"There aren't really other good examples of turn-of-the-century steam laundry buildings in Johannesburg," he says. The buildings were characterised by their large warehouse structures, double-volume interiors and red brick exteriors. The ventilation structures on the roofs were also typical of



**AmaWasha'd out: Little remains of the Rand Steam Laundries**

industrial architecture of that time. But it's not just the design and construction of the buildings that were lost in the demolition.

"There's also social history that was lost in terms of erasing that whole landscape where the AmaWasha site was as well," McKechnie says. The best way to penalise developers is to levy a financial penalty on them, he says.

"The only way you can fine a developer is if you go to court and the judge would have to determine the value of the fine," he adds.

After years of negotiations, Imperial and the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation reached an agreement and the town planning scheme was amended. This sets out the rules and regulations for developments in Johannesburg.

This means the Rand Steam Laundries buildings must be reconstructed and a commemoration site built – and the property's owners have to foot this bill.

"It has been a long time that we have had to suffer with this bare land but, you know, you have got to jump through these hoops," Bird says.

The most important lesson is that heritage is always worth fighting for, and the battle can be won no matter how big the opponent, she says.

At the site, cigarette butts, empty wine bottles and other rubbish are strewn around. The grass is overgrown. The only echo of the burgeoning industry that once existed there is a filtration tower and a shed.

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# Heritage inferno

*Millions of rands worth of damage caused by fire at college*

**GRAEME SHACKLEFORD**  
graemes@caxton.co.za

PARKTOWN'S Holy Family College hall and five classrooms were destroyed when an inferno swept through the historic building.

The fire began in the hall roof of what was Parktown Convent School at approximately 9pm, and was first noticed by a college security guard.

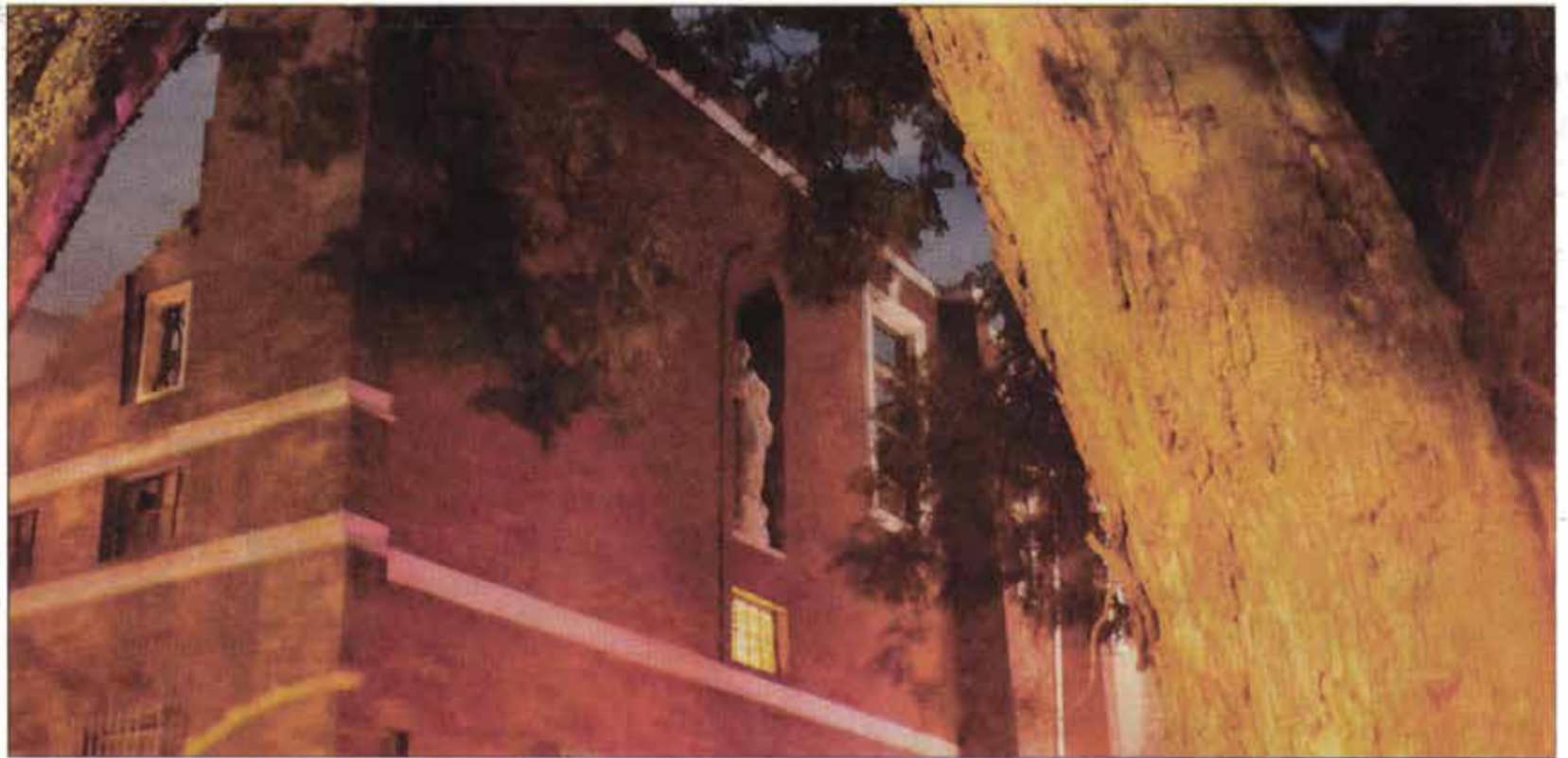
Johannesburg Emergency Management Services brought the blaze under control by 10.30pm, but not before it caused between R10 and R15 million worth of damage.

Emergency services spokesperson Nana Radebe said the collapse of the slate roof hampered the fire safety officers' investigations into the fire's cause.

Johannesburg Heritage Foundation's Flo Bird, who was at the scene, described it as a tremendous loss to the city's heritage.

"The hall was a beautiful Art Deco building, built around 1933. It had magnificent Art Deco lights which were irreplaceable, wooden panels and an Oregon pine floor. New curtains were hung and the grand piano restored a couple of months ago. There was also a collection of school memorabilia in the hall. Watching it go up in flames was traumatic," she said.

Bird said the hall was not just a structure of bricks, wood and stone, but a place of wonderful memories



A statue of the Virgin Mary looks down from the remains of Holy Family College's hall.

for many people.

"The school boasts an illustrious collection of old girls. Helen Suzman was a pupil, as was legendary dancer Dame Margaret Scott. Stage and screen actress Moira Lister schooled there and her first onstage appearance was on the stage destroyed in the fire," said Bird.

The hall was also the venue for many a matric farewell dance as well

as fencing lessons.

Principal Mark Potterton said lessons would continue as normal.

"We held an assembly on the field the morning after the fire, and the matrics asked if they could sing the school song. It was very emotional," he said.

While the building was covered by insurance, Potterton said the school board would meet to discuss setting

up a fund to assist with building a new hall. He also said the support from other Catholic schools and past pupils the day after the fire had been "phenomenal."

"Some schools donated tables, others donated chairs. One school brought doughnuts for pupils and staff. Neighbours have also been incredibly supportive. The way the community rallied around us has

been wonderful," he said. The principal had already begun discussions with the nearby synagogue with a view to use its facilities for the matric exams, traditionally written in the hall.

If any readers have photographs or memorabilia of Holy Family College/Parktown Convent School, please contact Flo Bird. Details: mail@joburgheritage.co.za

## Drawings show the rise of Joburg wasn't all glitter and gold

**UFRIEDA HO**

YOUNG Joburg grew up brash and bratty with few rules to follow, and no boundaries to push against.

What Joburg of the late 1880s did have, though, was money from gold fever to burn and aspirations to feed. It meant tin shacks for early prospectors gave way to brick structures and mushrooming new buildings rising as testament to prosperity.

"Many of those early buildings just fell down because there were no building laws to follow and no building inspectors to check on anything back then," says Flo Bird, of the Johannesburg Heritage Foun-

dation (JHF).

Being crushed in your sleep by a dodgy ceiling collapsing on your head wasn't good news, so new rules had to be created. One was for building plans to be drawn up by professional architects or draughtsmen and they had to be submitted to the authorities for approval.

Now many of those original drawings, some of them drawn on starched linens with Indian ink, are being recovered by the JHF from storage rooms at the City of Joburg.

Bird says preserving the original applications and drawings are a stipulation in the heritage act. Having them in an archive also gives more muscle to conservation efforts so that historical structures



Flo Bird of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation has her finger on Joburg's pulse, with the foundation's display of the city's building plans in Newtown.

PICTURE: MATTHEWS BALOYI

can't be razed to the ground or randomly altered as easily. But with the council under-resourced, the JHF has been championing the initiative on its own. It has been recovering, cataloguing and archiving the drawings for more than three years.

This month, on the 130th birthday of the City of Gold, the JHF and Museum Africa have put together an exhibition at the Newtown museum featuring some of the architectural drawings of early Joburg. These celebrate the skills and artistry of the architects and

draughtsmen and also hold clues to the historical nuances revealed in the drawings.

"We haven't been able to display some of the originals because they are so fragile, but the prints in the exhibition are excellent. These drawings are from a time before computers

*Continued on the next page >*

so every meticulous detail was done by hand. Some of the detailing is quite beautiful," says Bird.

The drawings reveal how life was for early Joburgers. Outside workers' quarters were tiny and labelled "boy's room". Markings for an "EC" referred to an earth bucket that was essentially a bucket toilet.

On one architectural drawing of an "EC" in a small Bezuidenhout Valley home is a labelled sketch of the door of an EC with a wire gauze window for ventilation above the door. There's also a bucket flap in the back wall. This would have been lifted so filled buckets could be removed and emptied by the night soil cart workers. These mule-drawn carts and labourers who undertook the task made up the sanitation in Joburg till around the 1920s.

The oldest drawings that the JHF has so far been able to recover are the plans of one of the first homes and offices of Thomas Cullinan (of Cullinan diamond fame). Dating to 1892, it no longer stands.

"Few buildings in early Joburg lasted, many were just torn down every few years. Joburg was like a child always outgrowing its clothes, also needing bigger and better."

The drawings on exhibit show a vanished Joburg — there are the blueprints of the Plein Street telephone tower; drawings of Pixley Seme's home in Bertha Street, Sophiatown in 1912 and the original plans for Bram Fischer's home in Oaklands. Retired architect Michael Fleming has been the JHF volunteer responsible for the project. He works suburb by suburb looking through old building applications to council and deciding on which drawings to preserve.

He's literally looked through thousands of applications over three years and still spends two days a week at the council offices to carry on the mammoth task.

"A lot of original plans have been pinched, gone missing or been misfiled," says Fleming, who is the grandson of Frances Fleming, the architect who was

a partner in Herbert Baker's firm. Baker's architectural stamp is on many of Joburg's iconic buildings.

Fleming shows off some of the original drawings he's been looking through in the JHF headquarters (based in the heritage gem of Northwards on Rockridge Road, Parktown).

On starched linens are drawing that include fine hand-drawn elements like shading on windows, details on bricks and dimensions for perfect arches.

The drawings were as much about the pride of the architects and the draughtsmen for their craft as they were documents of instruction to builders.

"These days you'd rely on a computer to do all that. You wouldn't see the same attention to detail," he says.

The architectural drawings tell a story of how Joburg has evolved — how a mining town put on some glitter, how it lost some of its shine, and how it's survived to mark 130 years of being.

## Bedfordview & Edenvale News, 1989



Mrs Flo Bird, of the Historical Monuments Commission, stands next to the plaque marking the war memorial building as a national monument.

# High hopes for enlightened planning

The Braamfontein Spruit was a forgotten river for more than a couple of generations until, in 1971, The Star's CARE campaign singled it out as potentially an ideal riverine parkland.

A lot has happened since then.

Coccos — the Coordinating Committee on Community Open Space — has come into being. It is a joint committee of planners from Johannesburg, Randburg and Sandton.

I believe it is the most significant plan to come out of local government since Johannesburg announced its massive motorway plan in 1970.

But this time the citizens can come out cheering, because these officials have a plan to give us back our clean streams, to stop the flooding and to provide us with a green belt for walking, cycling, riding, camping, lazing — getting back to a natural environment.

These planners are eager to meet the public and discuss their ideas.

For me the most astounding aspect of their presentation was not that council officials were admitting that past action has been insensitive and well-nigh catastrophe, but that for the first time council officials actually enjoying planning.

One could hardly believe that these are the

same grey souls who normally sit defensively behind desks, cautious in their statements to the extent that they say nothing at all: madly busy with the "urgent" and ignoring the "important."

This is a team from all sections of three councils — Johannesburg, Randburg and Sandton — who clearly love their work. They have trudged up and down the Spruit mapping all the details — the picturesque rocks and waterfalls, indigenous vegetation, footpaths and activities. They have been tirelessly noting the litter and pollution, silting and erosion, along with beauty of the red-bishop bird in reed beds and the intrusion of the massive pylons.

They can be forgiven for concentrating on the scenic attractions: Their message is all about opportunities not just about problems.

That in itself is a revolution in official thinking.

First I read their fairly technical

report. Mmm... very nice; sound scientific investigation and some strong recommendations.

Next I was invited to take a walk along the 6 km stretch from Delta Park to Plot 34, Driefontein in Sandton. That was great fun and their bubbling enthusiasm was infectious.

It was a delightful way to spend the morning, admiring the graceful willow and resting in the Craighall gorge watching the waterfalls, speculating on the men who built the weirs — small ones using local rocks and the great hand-tooled stone wall where once there was a dam for boating and picnics.

True, there were moments when one realised that it takes the eye of love to ignore the black-jacks, the broken glass and dumping sites; barbed wire fencing that trips up the unwary, great blocks of concrete that spoil the river bed. But these can be removed.

Then came their first presentation to the public. A last-minute rush to find extra chairs.

They had no idea that so many residents would care about the stream.

Overcoming their nervousness, four members of the team described their work, showed their slides and gave their view: No further canalisation; future developments should not be detrimental to the spruit; linking this system to other parkland areas; conservation areas of limited access; providing recreational and educational facilities — and dealing with the three major problems of flooding, erosion and pollution.

And it's not just for this stream — the policies can be applied to all the surviving spruits in our municipalities.

Public response was good. People were naturally concerned about losing land, fences and even garages. But they weren't asking for the old solution of the concrete channel which just shifts the problem downstream. The residents know their stream in its ugly moments and are concerned about sav-



FLO BIRD

ing it AND their properties.

A canoeist surprised everyone with some rather hair-raising experiences he had had, bringing out an aspect not considered so far. We harbour far more adventurous citizens than we realised!

One woman kept records of the weirs and could offer information not contained in buff council files. Discussion continued eagerly over tea and, as the team packed up, there were no complaints of the lateness of the hour.

The officials have done their bit. So has the Johannesburg City Council in approving the plan in principle. It is now up

to the residents to make sure it works.

Sandton residents should make it plain to their council that the river belongs to them too — they can ask for the same representation in their areas (Randburg has already done so) and demand that Sandton gives the green light for detailed planning.

But more than that is needed.

The public must come forward to help. We can clear the litter, get rid of the weeds and act as watchdogs. Only by a practical demonstration of our concern, and by keeping up the pressure on our councillors regarding the problems can we turn good intentions into action.

1980

# PROPERTY GUIDE

## Dolobran

16 Victoria Avenue, Parktown  
JHF Rating: A



This house was designed by J.A. Cope Christie in 1905 for Charles Llewellyn Andersson (later Sir), an accountant, who helped raise, served with and later commanded the South African Light Horse Regiment. After the occupation of Johannesburg he returned to civilian life and assisted the military administration as a Justice of the Peace.



## Villa Arcadia

2 Federation Road, Parktown  
JHF Rating: AA

In 1898 a Swiss Chalet was built here for merchant Carl Rolfes. In 1906 it was bought by Randlord and MP Sir Lionel Philips, chairman of Rand Mines. His influential wife Florence founder of the Johannesburg Art Gallery and described as 'No Ordinary Woman', masterminded the creation of the present Villa Arcadia with Architect Sir Herbert Baker. Certain design features are mirrored in Pretoria's Union Buildings, designed by Baker the following year. In 1923, under the S.A. Jewish Orphanage, it became 'The Arc', serving children for the next 78 years. Bought by HOLLARD in 2003, the Villa's original elegance and historic craftsmanship have been restored and are complemented by a modern art collection.

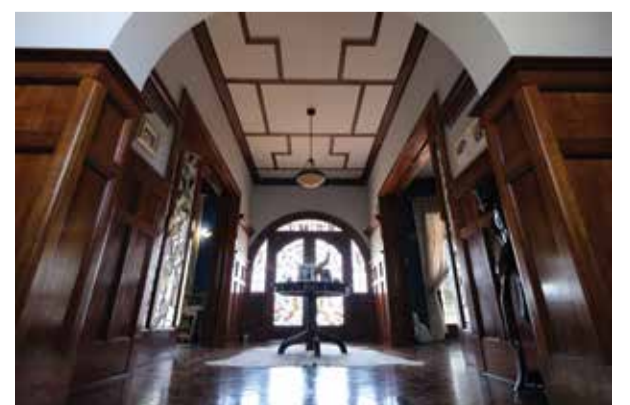


## Nelly Edwards

176 Galteemore Street, Malvern

Designed in 1933 for Mrs Anna Fogal by Nelly Edwards, Johannesburg's first female practising architect, 176 Galteemore Street grandly occupies three stands. It is a tour de force of art deco style. Brightly coloured tiles in geometric patterns adorn the

fireplaces and bathroom, boldly patterned stained glass windows are to be found in almost every room, and the house even contains the very modern convenience of a telephone cupboard.



## Stonehouse

5 Rockridge Road, Parktown | JHF Rating: AA



Building started here in March 1902 before the war had ended, as evidenced by the blockhouse which guarded Old Pretoria Road. Invited by the Governor Milner "to introduce a new and more permanent order of architecture into Johannesburg", Baker became very successful designing homes on the ridge using the koppie stone of the Witwatersrand. The house was built by John Barrow and Sons. Baker lived here with friends from the "Kindergarten" until his marriage to Florence Edmeades in 1904. They left for India in 1913.



## Eduardo Villa

73 4th Rd, Kew | JHF Rating: A



Our most famous sculptor arrived in South Africa as a prisoner of war yet chose to remain. Trained as an artist in Italy, from 1959 Villa produced the majority of his works in his studio on this property. In 1968, three years after marrying Claire Zafirakos, the couple moved into their new home, this distinctive house, designed by their friend, architect Ian McLennan. Eduardo Villa died here in 2011 aged 95.

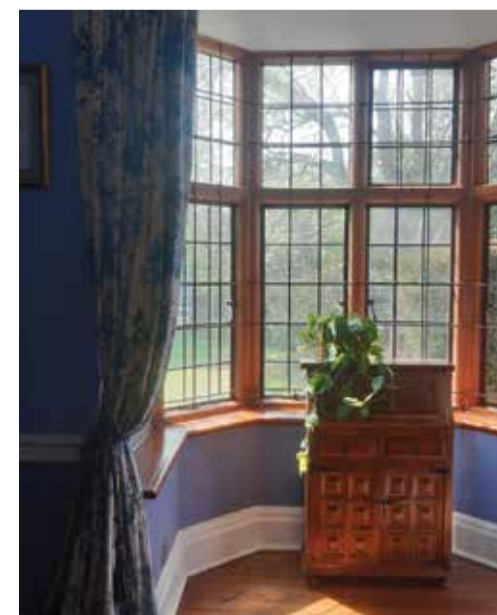


## Northwards

21 Rockridge Road, Parktown

JHF Rating: AA

The house was designed by Baker, Masey and Sloper in 1904 for John Dale Lace, owner of the Lace Diamond Mine, and his glamorous wife, Jose. In January 1901 Dale Lace raised, and after the war commanded, the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles. Jose organised fundraising events and celebrated Peace on 31 May 1902 with a picnic for the children of Nazareth House.



## Twenty Years Ago in Parktown

Article for the Rosebank Killarney Gazette's Twentieth Birthday

### Flo Bird 1991-04-23

These have been the most tumultuous years in Parktown's history. In 1971 the home of the Randlords was becoming home to fewer and fewer people as the onslaught of expropriations took its toll. Dozens of homes had already been demolished for the M1 which was then under construction; hundreds lost their homes to the Hospital and the College of Education and there were still more to go, making way for the Pieter Roos Park.

For years the residents had been pleading for a development plan, but the only planning in hand was the Province's determination to wrench the heart out of this champion of the Empire and the city Council's scheme to freeze the land for the grand motorway design - the M6.

The speculators had started to nibble at the bits that were left. A few boarding houses were still operating, but rising land values would soon put those to rest. Throughout the next decade the bulldozer would be ruling the roost, sweeping away the grand old houses and the lovely trees, eliminating a number of streets from the map and obliterating the very koppie on which Hohenheim once stood. The brutish architecture favoured by the Pretoria bureaucrats all but destroyed Parktown's character.

There had been much weeping and wailing at this savagely but it was only when Parktown West was threatened in 1973 that there came the gnashing of teeth. Middle-class people have invested much more in their homes than the rich so the fight and the odds were definitely against us. With not even a hundred members and absolutely no friends in high places we must have looked like losers all the way. But we have survived and people power has been growing with us in Johannesburg.

Today Parktown looks very different from twenty years ago as people speed past on the M1. Jan Smuts has been widened and instead of the two gracious blocks of flats which then flanked it - Parktown Mansions and The Crescent - we have a lower block on one side and a heap of rubble on the other. The shady lanes with the huge gum trees have made way for the office blocks in their carefully landscaped gardens. The residents are back but as students in the residences established by Wits and JCE.

We have gained a host of institutions including the College of Education and the Wits Business and Medical Schools, De Kruin Commercial High School, and the Talisman Foundation so that in fact the dominant land use in Parktown is educational. But we have also saved something from the old world. The Parktown Ridge including Rockridge Road and the Valley Road has been declared Johannesburg's first Conservation Area. We now have 11 national Monuments instead of just two in 1971. The Parktown and Westcliffe Heritage Trust will be arranging the 10th annual Heritage tours in September.

Apart from that monstrosity on the hill known as the Johannesburg Hospital and the three ugly sisters which stand alongside it (the Nurse's Homes) we have come through in reasonable shape. We have killed the M6, and then the A6 and this past week the link road. Will still of course have a number of changes to encounter. This is a dynamic township!

The Rosebank Killarney Gazette has played an increasingly important role over the years by keeping people aware of the planning issues and crusading for the small man against the might of City Hall. Next year the Gazette comes of age just as Parktown turns 100. May our successes and celebrations always go hand-in-hand.

## Flo - A Fleeting Memory by William Gaul



Having known Flo for many, many years, it's more than a little difficult to single out one memory involving her and her indomitable zest for heritage and adventure. Perhaps an account of one of the tours that she and I lead a long time ago, along the ridge running parallel with Escombe Avenue, known, not unnaturally, as "Escombe Ridge", will suffice.

On a golden, late winter afternoon, we embarked on our adventure through the property of Peter Rich, near the bottom of the hill, from where, after admiring Peter and Di's magnificent garden, we made our way together with about twenty or twenty five tourist, some of uncertain age and mobility, to the crest. This involved negotiating rock faces, dense undergrowth and a slippery track - but, once we had crested the ridge, the wonderful views made the arduous ascent more than worthwhile.

To the north, the Magaliesberg range stood like a card-board cut-out against the sky, with Hekpoort seemingly within touching distance. Just below us, the gardens of the northern suburbs were laid out, reminiscent of a luxurious carpet in shades of green, grey and russet. It was the southern vista, though, that was truly breath-taking: ranging from Melville, with its multitude of spires in the west, around to Auckland Park and Cottesloe with its gasometers (remember them?), the old Show Grounds with the Tower of Light preening over all, on to Braamfontein and Constitutional Hill (although not so named then): a cityscape of what was once a genuine "world-class city".

These awe-inspiring vistas accompanied us on our trek along the crest, encountering on our way barbed wire fences, stone walls, and even a half-full (half empty?) swimming pool that had been constructed by some mad millionaire on the apex of the ridge. It was only with Flo's endless exhortations and cajoling that the party kept moving along the ridge.

But it was not only the wonderful views all about us that gave us the courage to move on: there was also a multitude of smaller treasures at our feet that Flo and I were able to point out to keep our charges engrossed. The small white quartzite pebbles and stones that littered the hillside were, Flo pointed out, what gave the Witwatersrand its name: as the Voortrekkers and other early explorers approached the Rand, these glittered like water in the sun; hence "Witwatersrand".

We discovered among the rocks beautiful plants, such as the "bobbejaanstert" (*Xerophyta retinervis*), blackened now by a recent fire, but soon to produce the most delicate blue flowers. Many different species of fern were pointed out, and of course the stamvrug, or *Englerophytum magaliesmontanum*, named for those same Magalies mountains that we could see away to the north. The aloes were ablaze, teeming with bees as they gathered the pollen and gorged on the brimming nectar found in the late inflorescences.

Bird life was prolific, and of special note were the "dikkops", now known, rather sadly, as "thick knees", which scurried about among the rocks and tufts of dry grass.

Finally, and not a little sadly, we reached the point on the ridge where we had to begin our descent back to Escombe Avenue, through Henry Paine's property.

After crossing the road to "Cragside", we all collapsed into tea and cream scones on the lawn, where much energy was expended on picking the blackjacks from our clothes. For two or three years thereafter, a fine crop of blackjack plants was produced on my lawn after the first rains - and, to this day, whenever I pluck a blackjack from my garden, I am carried back to that sunny afternoon when Flo was able to indulge her passion for history, heritage and education. Long may she continue to do so!



National Monuments Council chairman, Mr HENDRICK SLOET received over 10 000 petition signatures yesterday from Parktown and Westcliff Trust chairman, Mrs FLO BIRD to save an 84-year-old house in Parktown from demolition.

## Petition handed to monuments chief

THE Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust yesterday gave over 10 000 petition signatures to Mr Hendrik Sloet, chairman of the National Monuments Council, in a bid to save an 84-year-old state-ly home in Parktown from demolition.

The house, currently being used as premises by a leading restaurant chain, is one of only two randlord mansions accessible to the public without special arrangement. According to Mrs Flo Bird, chairman of the trust, the Johannesburg City Council had refused to discuss the possibility of declaring the site a national monument.

"There are extensive office rights for the whole stand," she said. "We want the council to re-zone the property so that the rights apply only to the house and not to whole property."

Once demolished, the house will be replaced with an office block. "It makes an important contribution to the culture and heritage of the area," Mrs Bird said.

The Star 1973

## Fight to save hotel

PROPOSED redevelopment of Johannesburg's Sunnyside Park hotel will be fought "to the bitter end" by the 300-member Parktown Association.

This pledge was given today by the association's secretary, Mrs F Bird, after a Provincial Administration announcement that an application had been made for land rezoning to allow for an increase in the hotel's height and for the building of shops, offices and a garage on the site.

Parktown's provincial councillor, Mr Sam Moss, was preparing for discussions on the matter today with senior municipal officials and homeowners living near the hotel.

Mrs Bird said the association, would argue that the historic Sunnyside Park building would be affected by the proposed redevelopment.

"Permission to add to the original house — once the home of Lord Milner — should never have been given in the first place," said Mrs Bird, referring to expansion work carried out in the past.

She accused the city council of being "very wishy-washy" in its attitude to Parktown.

Mrs Bird added that the association would try to produce its own Parktown master plan.

"We will include parts of Parktown worth saving, though we have got to face the fact that a lot of it has gone and that there is nothing we can do about that."

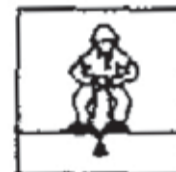
"There are portions which are definitely worth saving, however."

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## BIRD, FLO, 46, Parktown street-fighter.

The demolishers were ripping the guts out of Parktown, ruthlessly bulldozing the historic mansions of the Randlords, when Flo Bird decided it was time to make a stand.

A Parktown housewife with a degree in History and an enviable gift for shooting off her mouth and to hell with the consequences, Flo launched the Parktown Residents' Association, pledging on behalf of future generations to save the country's heritage and fight to the death "that bunch of dictators", the Johannesburg City Council.

That was in 1973. Since then she has appeared at countless Township Board hearings, and through her efforts managed to get several Parktown houses declared national monuments and to block an eight-lane motorway designed to cut right through the suburb.

Tiny but fierce, Flo inherited fiery Italian blood from her paternal grandmother, Angelina Bacchione, who lived once upon a time at no 13 Pritchard Street, and whose exciting stories about the Jameson Raid probably laid the seed for Flo's love of history.

Although Flo has resigned as secretary of the association — "I'm getting old and crabby" — she's still out there fighting. She's on the National Monuments Council and the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust. She and husband John, who supports her in the battle, live in the 1902 Herbert Baker cottage designed for Corner House founder Hermann Eckstein that Flo was born in.

# Mystery site's history unfolds

Kennedy Mudzuli

RESEARCHERS have unraveled the mystery of a stone wall, cypresses and gum trees situated on a large property between the M1 and Oxford Road near Temple Emmanuel.

Parktown & Westcliff Heritage Trust, under the leadership of Flo Bird, has discovered the wall and trees are reminders of two of the most prominent residents of Parktown.

Bird and Dennis Adams, a member of the trust, have unveiled plaques in the residents' memory.

The property was acquired by Edouard Lippert before the establishment of Parktown in 1890.

Lippert developed a plantation to provide timber for the mines beyond the gardens. This was known as Lippert's Plantation.

The plantation was taken over by The Braamfontein Company and renamed Sachsenwald, later anglicised to Saxonwold.

Lippert asked for Oxford Road to be named after him and until 1908 it was known as Lippert's Road.

Lippert and his wife Marie often hosted Paul Kruger and the then-president helped them plant cypresses.

There is still an arc of cypresses along the edge of the old stone garden wall and another circle of cypresses closer to where the house was.

After Marie died, Lippert named the house Marienhof in her memory. When war broke out in 1899 he returned to his home in Hamburg. The plaque in memory of the couple is from the Anglo-Boer War.

Albert Victor Lindbergh, the house's subsequent owner, co-founded CNA in 1892. After his death in 1939, his wife Gladys lived there until 1969 when the house was expropriated and demolished for the M1. Parts of the stone garden walls, gum trees and entrance gates remain.

Lindbergh has been honoured by a Johannesburg Heritage Plaque with a dormer window set up at the top.

Flo Bird, chairperson of the Parktown & Westcliff Heritage Trust, said the stone wall that edged the terrace would be retained with the ring of cypress trees. "The entrance piers will be straightened and repaired, the gum trees will be retained and the flower bed removed so the name can be seen from Oxford Road," said Bird.

"This is a historic site and will be included in our heritage tours."



Dennis Adams and Flo Bird of The Parktown & Westcliff Heritage Trust with one of the plaques in memory of the owners of a large Parktown property.

The Citizen (1990)



THE National Monuments Council plaque at The View in Parktown, was unveiled yesterday by Mr NEIL CULLINAN (left) who is the grandson of the late Sir Thomas Cullinan who built the house in 1897. Mrs FLO BIRD, chairman of the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust and Commander A J BECKER, OC 2nd Battalion, Transvaal Scottish Regiment stand with Mr Cullinan in front of The View, which was declared a National Monument in January.



39 Barkly Road Johnnie and Flo (1984)



## Enjoying a Victorian party

Flo Bird, chairperson of the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust and community activist in period costume at the Muffins and Memorabilia tea at the Sunnyside Park Hotel.

RKG 13/04/2001

## Those were the days...

REFINED ladies and gents dressed in costumes depicting the turn of the century attended a tea to commemorate the arrival of Lord Milner in Johannesburg in 1901.

Flo Bird said although Lord Milner was partly responsible for starting the Anglo-Boer War (1899 -1901), we can thank him for bringing Herbert Baker to this country.

Milner had a fierce love for Johannesburg and committed himself to forestation and architec-

tural improvements. Jeppe Boys, King Edward VII and Pretoria Boys schools owe their buildings to him. Milner was also responsible for establishing Rand Water and new systems of government in the Transvaal.

After the unveiling of the commemorative plaque guests munched on a Victorian tea of pound cake, seed biscuits and macaroons, while Anglo-Boer war enthusiasts shared their family memories and mementos.

Val Hammer Ton and Florence Stein, members of the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust next to the plaque which commemorates the arrival of Lord Milner at Sunnyside Park in 1901.



Winnie Job and Elaine Persona (manager of the Parktown Westcliff Heritage Trust) enjoying muffins at the Muffins and Memorabilia tea held at the Sunnyside Park Hotel.



Blighted Parktown . . . Flo Bird at the rubble which used to be the Crescent Mansions on Jan Smuts Avenue. ● Picture by Karen Fletcher

## Disused city property 'a waste'

By Jacqueline Myburgh

The recent call by the UDF to occupy disused land for the housing of homeless families is not unreasonable, considering the wastage of land close to the city caused by town and road planners, says Flo Bird.

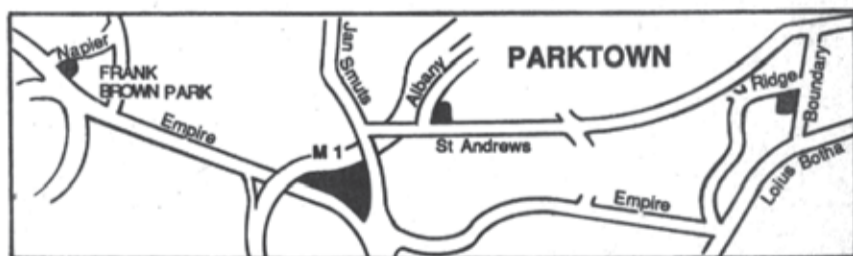
Mrs Bird, chairman of the Parktown Residents' Association and renowned urban conservationist, took The Star on a tour of four valuable properties. Close to the city, they have been disused for between two and twenty years.

She said what distressed her was not only that the land was disused, but that houses had been demolished while there was a housing crisis.

"In Britain, law dictates that buildings may only be demolished when alternative plans are imminent. But there is no such law in South Africa," Mrs Bird said.

One site is on the corner of Ridge and Boundary roads in Parktown.

In 1960, the Govern-



The dark shading indicates the four sites shown to The Star.

ment bought the land, planning to build a technikon. This plan was cancelled, as was a subsequent one for the M6 highway. The property became a squatter area. It currently belongs to the department of Local Government.

When The Star visited the area it was deserted but there was evidence that people had slept and made fires there.

"The situation is not the fault of politicians, but of town and road planners who do not think of the future," Mrs Bird said.

Crescent Mansions, on the north-western corner of Jan Smuts Avenue and

Empire Road, was demolished in November 1988.

"They rushed through the rezoning of the site for business rights, the 70 resident students were thrown out and now the university cries that they have no space for their students," Mrs Bird said.

The empty property currently belongs to a private developer.

Japie Hugo, senior deputy director of town planning at the Johannesburg municipality, said in a local context these sites had been compromised by busy roads and were not suitable for residential housing.

"In a regional context, I hear Mrs Bird's point

but market forces lead to bad town planning in general," he said.

Other areas "blighted by the planners", says Mrs Bird, are on the corner of Guild and Napier roads and where the M1 south offramp to Parktown meets St Andrew's Road. The former belongs to a private developer; the latter to the city council.

A planning spokesman said the site on St Andrew's Road had been acquired in order to widen the offramp but the money was not available when they thought it would be. "We hope to implement the plan during the 1991/1992 financial year," he said.

# THE WEEKEND



## WALKING TOUR BRIXTON CEMETERY 'BEYOND THE DITCH TO THE CREMATORIUM'

**SATURDAY, 13th APRIL, 2013**

Across the Brixton Cemetery runs a shallow ditch beyond which lie the graves of the Chinese, Indian, coloured and black people. Some are famous and many have no headstone but it is a beautiful resting place culminating in the Hindu crematorium. The original structure is a declared heritage site and it was Gandhi who pressed the Town council for this space. On the walls of the offices nearby are the names of those cremated there and one of the first lived in a fine house in Parktown – The Causeway/ The Hamlet.

We start in General Section (white) with the graves of some distinguished and three extinguished souls. The walk is shaded partly by huge blue gums, the tree of South African graveyards because wreaths are often made from the boughs and the seeds fall near the graves.

- MEET** : Flo Bird and Val Hammerton
- RESEARCHER:** Sarah Welham
- WHERE** : Brixton Cemetery - enter from Krause Street at the grave of Daisy de Melker's victims. Follow the JHF signs
- TIME** : 14h00
- DURATION** : 2½ hours
- COST** : R70.00 for members and R100.00 for non-members

-----oOo-----



Bookings can be made via the JHF Office: mail@joburgheritage.org.za 060 813 3239 or through **Quicket**



1990 RKG

## Last look at Northwards

Janet Lee, Prue Wright, Flo Bird, Daphney Saul, Flo Shtein, Elizabeth Gillett, Val Hammerton, Winnie Job, Luanne Grant and Katherine Love assemble outside Northwards for a tea party to mark the centenary of the historic house. The Parktown & Westcliff Heritage Trust hosts the last of the centenary tours of the house on November 27 from 2pm at 21 Rockridge Road in Parktown. Details: Elaine Persona at 011-482-3349.

# DRIVE-IN CINEMAS

## JOHANNESBURG AREA

### LOUIS BOTHA AVENUE JO'BURG

PHONE 40-6611 — 40-3782  
— TONIGHT at 6.45 and 9 —  
Richard JOHNSON — Eike SOMMER  
In the exciting deadly thriller  
**DEADLIER THAN THE MALE**  
In Technicolor  
Theatre cleared after First Session

### OFF RIFLE RANGE ROAD, MONDEOR PANORAMA

PHONE 32-6105  
— TONIGHT AT 7 —  
Rosanna PODESTA — Philippe LE-ROY  
In the breathtaking robbery adventure  
**SEVEN GOLDEN MEN**  
In Colour  
— TONIGHT AT 9.30 —  
Troy DONAHUE — Dorothy MCGUIRE  
In the romantic drama  
**A SUMMER PLACE**  
In Colour — (No persons 4-16)  
Theatre will be cleared after 1st Session

### BARAGWANATH

Ext. Jhb. — Potch Rd. Beyond  
Robot Baragwanath. Phone 32-7166 — 32-7176

— TONIGHT AT 6.45 —  
**LAST 2 DAYS!**  
1st SESSION ONLY!  
EMIL NOFAL'S  
POWERFUL HUMAN DRAMA  
**WILD SEASON**

In Eastmancolor and Widescope  
★ GERT VAN DEN BERGH ★  
Marie DU TOIT — Joe STEWARDSON

PLUS: EMIL NOFAL'S  
MILAN FILM FESTIVAL  
PRIZE-WINNING FEATURETTE  
**THE EVER FREE**

Theatre cleared after 1st Session  
— TONIGHT AT 9.15 —  
★ CHRISTOPHER LEE ★  
**THEATRE OF DEATH**  
Technicolor — (Not for persons 4-16)

### MALVERN BUS TERMINUS STADIUM

PHONE 25-1131  
— TONIGHT AT 6.45 & 9.15 —  
"HIGHLY ENTERTAINING"  
— "Rand Daily Mail."  
"BRILLIANT" — "Transvaler."  
"SALTY HUMOUR" — "Sunday Times."  
"DEFINITELY THE BEST." — "Vaderland."

EMIL NOFAL'S  
Wonderful New Drama  
**WILD SEASON**

Eastmancolor and Widescreen  
★ GERT VAN DEN BERGH ★  
Marie DU TOIT — Joe STEWARDSON  
Janis REINHARDT — Anthony THOMAS  
PLUS: EMIL NOFAL'S MILAN FILM  
FESTIVAL PRIZE-WINNING

### SOUTH AFRICA'S UNIQUE INTERNATIONAL DRIVE-IN CINEMA TOP STAR

PHONE 834-1585  
PARK CENTRAL • JOHANNESBURG

— BOTH SESSIONS: 6.45 & 9.30 P.M. —  
2ND — GREAT WEEK — 2ND

An insight into the current  
Middle East conflict.  
**FILMED IN ISRAEL**

Paramount Pictures presents  
**SOPHIA LOREN**

— in —  
**JUDITH**

— Co-starring —  
Peter FINCH — Jack HAWKINS

In Technicolor & Panavision  
Released by STER FILMS  
PLUS AT ALL PERFORMANCES  
(Weather permitting)  
**THE STYLES DIAMOND SHOW!**

### DAKOTA

MAIN REEF ROAD PHONE 35-8847  
INDUSTRIA 15-4438

— 1ST SESSION AT 7 P.M. —  
A professional gunfighter becomes Town  
Marshall in

**WARLOCK**

Richard WIDMARK — Henry FONDA  
Anthony QUINN — Dorothy MALONE  
Cinemascope & Color DeLuxe

— 2ND SESSION AT 9.15 P.M. —  
A spine-chilling, death-defying spy  
thriller

**SECRET AGENT  
FX 18**

Ken CLARK — Jany CLAIR  
Cinemascope and Eastmancolor

### EAST RAND

### WELGEDACHT

Springs-Delmas Road, Springs  
Tel. 56-9711

BOTH SESSIONS AT 6.45 & 9.30 P.M.  
STER FILMS present

The Rollicking Story of a Ribald Century  
that really should have been ashamed of  
itself!

KIM NOVAK as MOLL FLANDERS in  
**THE AMOROUS ADVENTURES  
OF MOLL FLANDERS**

— Co-starring —  
Richard JOHNSON — Angela LANSBURY  
Technicolor — Panavision  
(No persons 4-18 admitted)

### AIRPORT STAR

EDENVALE MAIN ROAD  
PHONE 53-2986  
— 1ST SESSION AT 7 P.M. —  
Mercuri! Men! Morals! Menace!  
When they mingle, it's an explosive

### DUNNOTTAR

SPRINGS-NIGEL ROAD PHONE 734-2711

— 1ST SESSION AT 6.45 P.M. —  
Even the thunder of the war drums could  
not match the wild beat of their hearts ..

**WAR ARROW**

Maureen O'HARA — Jeff CHANDLER  
Universal International in Technicolor  
— 2ND SESSION AT 9.20 P.M. —

He is the fire of life itself . . . a picture  
of the sun in the shape of a man!

**ZORBA  
THE GREEK**

Anthony QUINN — Alan BATES  
Irene PAPAS  
Released by 20th Century-Fox



Main Reef Road — BOKSBURG-BENONI  
Phone 54-3878

— 1ST SESSION AT 6.45 P.M. —  
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer presents the  
Craziest Spy Story ever!

**THE SPY IN LACE PANTIES**

Panavision — Metrocolor  
— starring —  
Doris DAY — Rod TAYLOR  
Arthur GODFREY

— 2ND SESSION AT 9 P.M. —  
A super shock film! The Big Fright in . . .

**THE CANLY WEB**

— Starring —  
Murray HAMILTON — Joyce TAYLOR  
Kathy DUNN  
Eastmancolor

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41 Black Reef Road — DINWIDDIE  
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will commence at 7 p.m. sharp.

1ST SESSION AT 6.45 — 2ND SESSION  
AT 9.15 P.M.

The story that can only now be told . . .  
the true story of Eddie Chapman, the  
fantastic spy!

**"TRIPLE CROSS"**

Eastmancolor  
— starring —

Christopher PLUMMER — Yul BRYNNER  
Romy SCHNEIDER — Gert FROBE  
Trevor HOWARD — Claudine AUGER

DANCE EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT AT  
THIS DRIVE-IN TO LARRY'S BLUE  
BIRDS

### SPRINGBOK

SPRINGS-BRAKPAN ROAD — PHONE 56-7835

— TONIGHT at 6.45 and 9.30 —  
Dirk BOGARDE — George CHAKIRIS

In the explosive drama  
**THE HIGH BRIGHT SUN**

In Technicolor  
Theatre cleared after First Session

### Randfontein

WESTONARIA MAIN ROAD/PHONE 663-1476

— 1ST SESSION AT 7 P.M. —  
Rock is ready to make love yesterday  
tomorrow and especially to Day (Doris  
that is)

**SEND ME NO**

**FLOWERS**  
Rock HUDSON — Doris DAY  
Teny RANDALL — Edward ANDREWS

A Universal Picture in Technicolor  
— 2ND SESSION AT 9.15 P.M. —

The dramatic moments of courage and  
glory in World War II . . .

**WEEK-END AT  
DUNKIRK**

Jean-Pau BELMONDE — Catherine SPAAK  
In Color DeLuxe

### STARLIGHT

PHONE 664-4401

DISCOVERY RD. ROODEPOORT

Discovery Road, Roodepoort

— BOTH SESSIONS: 6.45 & 9.30 P.M. —

Paramount Pictures presents

The supreme suspense of a woman  
wronged beyond words, almost beyond  
revenge

**SOPHIA LOREN**

— in —  
**JUDITH**

— Co-starring —  
Peter FINCH — Jack HAWKINS  
In Technicolor Panavision  
Released by STER FILMS

### OTHER AREAS

### KLERKSDORP

MEIRINGS  
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DIAL 632  
ASK FOR 22841

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DINO DE LAURENTIIS'  
**THE BIBLE . . . In the Beginning**

In Technicolor — Admission: 50c

### LANZA

Potchefstroom-Klerksdorp National Road

Phone 4-1948 — Stillfontein

— TONIGHT AT 6.45 & 9.15 —

International Espionage . . . Intrigue  
Drama!

**THE POPPY IS ALSO A  
FLOWER**

Stephen BOYD — Senta BERGER  
Yul BRYNNER — Jack HAWKINS  
Trini LOPEZ

Presented by STER FILMS in  
Magnificent Colour

# Vandals ruin ash walls at Braamfontein Cemetery

Written by Itumeleng Mafisa

Johannesburg - A Johannesburg-based group called The Friends of the Cemeteries has appealed to the City of Johannesburg to upgrade security at the Braamfontein Cemetery, where ash walls containing the remains of 4 000 people have been vandalised. Volunteers from Friends of the Cemeteries have been busy trying to clean up the mess left by vandals. The Star understands that the marble and granite plaques have been taken off the walls and smashed on the floor.

This was not the only cemetery that had been having problems; Brixton Cemetery also had problems with people staying in the cemetery and using the tombstones as shelter and, in some instances, as fireplaces or shields from the wind.

Johannesburg City Parks has managed to sort out the problems at the Brixton Cemetery through security upgrades.

Sarah Welham told The Star that a team of volunteers was now working hard to try and find out the information of the people who

were placed inside the wall and notify their family members.

The team is also trying to repair the vandalised ash walls since some family members of some of the deceased have moved out of the country. "We first saw this on March 13; what they have done is pull off the marble and the plaque. So you will look into this wall, and you will see the caskets with the ashes," Welham said.

South Africa Johannesburg Grave vandalism 04 April 2023. The plaques covering the niches at Braamfontein cemetery has been removed or damaged. Some sites have been robbed of the metal boxes that hosts the ashes, presumably as scrap metal. Picture: Timothy Bernard African News Agency (ANA).

She appealed to the municipality for organisations from the private sector to help build a high wall around the cemetery to ensure that vandals are kept out. "We appeal to the private sector for help since the municipality might not be able to build such a wall



Flo Bird who is the chairperson of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation expresses her disgust with the overgrown trees and poor state of the cemetery. Picture: Timothy Bernard African News Agency.



around the cemetery," she said.

She said that initially she thought that the vandals had stolen some valuables from the caskets placed inside the wall, but it appeared that nothing had been stolen and that the ash wall was just vandalised.

"They need to upgrade the security; these things happen at night. I am told the security doesn't always get issued with guns. The fence around the cemetery has holes, and parts of the fences always get stolen, and the city says they won't replace it," she said.

Welham said she was surprised that all respect had been lost for the dead in Johannesburg. She said she suspected that the vandalism could be a result of a drug problem in the community.

"This has something to do with the contents of the niches. We thought that the nyaope smokers wanted to smoke the ashes. The ash wall contains people from 1930 onwards," she said.

In a statement, Johannesburg City Parks said it was aware of the situation at Braamfontein Cemetery.

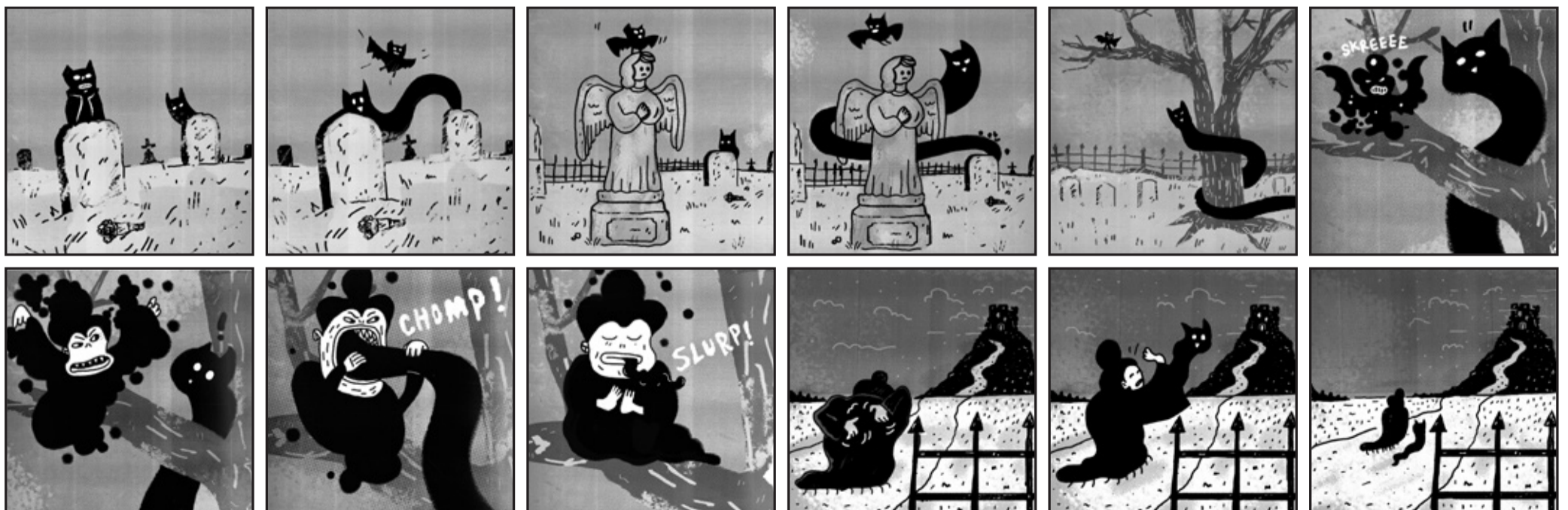
"The damage of the reported vandalism at the Braamfontein cemetery, which by far is the largest form of damage in a single cemetery, with many niches destroyed, has not yet been determined. This cemetery holds the remains of loved ones as early as the 1800s," City Parks said.

Published Apr 6, 2023 - The Star

## TOONS

### CRAWLEY WOOD

BLONDE SKULLS &  
AP VRDOLJAK &  
@CRAWLEY\_WOOD



# Farewell to a legacy

**Heather Walker**

Mourners bade farewell to 72 historic plane trees in Empire Road by tying black crêpe ribbons around each one.

According to Flo Bird of the Parktown & West-cliff Heritage Trust, the pavement trees from Jan Smuts Avenue to Joubert Street will be felled within weeks for the next stage of the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit.

"We cannot stop the destruction but we can let the authorities know how we feel. We don't want our trees to go without a murmur. And we want to make sure that the indigenous trees they promised to plant to replace these will be planted."

But Bird doesn't believe this will happen. "Look at the devastation the BRT has wrought in King-sway, Auckland Park without a single cent spent on landscaping," she raged. "They're a bunch of liars."

The trees, which were planted in 1936 to commemorate the Empire Exhibition, had already been marked for the guillotine with red and white barrier tape when the protestors arrived.

"I hope the rain makes the paper's black dye run, so it looks like the trees are crying black tears," said Bird. "I hope it makes the executioners feel bad."

Bird said it would take years before new trees grew big enough to create shade. "And the tiny pavement that will be left when the road is widened. It's all very well creating a bus system, but does city council not realise that people need to get to the bus stop? The pedestrian environment was not considered."

She was joined by her husband John Bird, William Gaul, Fiona Wallace, and Wallace's 15-year-old son Duncan Lewis, who attends the National School of the Arts. "This is our legacy; every tree is a legacy," said Wallace.



John Bird, Fiona Wallace, Duncan Lewis, William Gaul and Flo Bird tie a black ribbon around one of the trees.

## 'Lindfield'

Victorian House Museum  
72 Richmond Avenue  
Auckland Park 2092  
Johannesburg



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## Woman's Value Magazine



1996 - Flo Bird (front) and Leigh Jackson in costume to take classes during the Schools Fortnight at the Holy Family College.

# A History Lesson



**A HISTORY LESSON:** Johannesburg Heritage Foundation vice-chair Flo Bird illustrates how children learnt to read 100 years ago.

PICTURES: DUMISAN SIBEKO



**HISTORIC PASSAGE:** The corridor at Holy Family College, built in 1905.

# CLASSIFIEDS

## Hatch Patch & Dispatch

**New Plaques**



**YWCA Community Hall**  
66 Mahalefele Road, Dube. Maddie Hall Xuma facilitated the affiliation of the YWCA-SA to a non-racial World YWCA in 1955.



**Orlando East Public Library**  
100-104 Mooki Street, Orlando East. The first purpose-built public library in Soweto, the Orlando East Public Library opened on 12 January 1950 and remains the oldest active library in Soweto.



**Stewart Drive** Stonework stabilised and repaired



**Orange Grove** Waterfall Restoration



**Tramway Hotel**  
184 Main Road, Fordsburg. Constructed 1904. Once a favourite haunt for miners at the turn of the century, old regulars drink last toast to Tramway the Tramway Hotel.



**House of Dr A.B. Xuma**  
73 Toby Road. Sophiatown. Constructed 1933. One of only two houses to escape the destruction of Sophiatown by the apartheid government in the late 1950s.



**Princess Alice** Adoption Home Window Restoration



**Van Eck House**  
AKA Escom House. 17-23 Rissik Street, Marshalltown. Architects P. Rogers Cooke & G.E. Pearse. Constructed 1937. Once the city's tallest building, and the tallest building outside America to be demolished by implosion.

**Presbyterian Church**  
AKA Divine Bakery. 55 Mint Rd, Fordsburg. Architect G. Granger Fleming. Constructed 1897 as a church for Scottish residents, the space has retained its ecclesial architecture.



**Colin Gordon Nursing Home**  
AKA Esselen Private Hospital. 15 Esselen Street, Hillbrow. Architect W.B. Pabst. Constructed 1943/4. The work of a highly inventive architect who rejected the rational approach, choosing to express emotion in his buildings.

**Restorations**



**Rand Club**, windows restoration

**Lost**



**Barnato House**  
AKA Dale Lace House / Norman Nursing Home. 103 - 111 Davies Steet, Doornfontein. Architect unknown. Constructed 1893. Demolished.



**Top Star Drive-In**  
Southway Street Park Central. Architects Frank and Jarrett. Constructed 1961, CBD. From Top Star to fallen Idol. DRD Gold is extracting gold by reprocessing the dump on which the old landmark once stood proud - marking the end of another golden era.



**Chiefs House**  
AKA Emakhosini. 7 Moroka Street, Meadowlands. Built in the late 1950s to accommodate homeland chiefs on their visits to urban areas.



**St Alban's** Roof Restoration



**Fordsburg Post Office**  
63 Min Street, Fordsburg. Demolished in the late 1930s for the new Standard Bank building.



**The Crescent**  
1 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown. Architect Arthur Leitch. Plans submitted 1919. One of the oldest flat buildings in Johannesburg. Demolished.

# Puzzles & Such

## Blue Plaques



K W J C J E D Y Q S H P I K D  
 N C A E D B H E A H T I N N E  
 L O O N S C K V X A R L I O M  
 D I A L O M E C N Y O R Z R L  
 B M T N D R O N A H W I N T O  
 G E N T N A A N B B N G U H V  
 P A H A L D V N D V A H T W U  
 G P K U A E F E N D S T E A D  
 V E G L Y T H M R W M A N R O  
 B R E N T W O O D T A E D D L  
 A K O O N A W Y L B H R U S O  
 A V A L O N K E V M S T L D B  
 H A W T H O R N F U I N I J R  
 N A A L N E K I E M B U N Q A  
 B I S H O P S K O P Q D I G N

There are 25 Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Building names in the puzzle. Can you find them all?  
 Words can go in any direction.

## “ DO YOU PERHAPS KNOW WHERE THE BATHROOM IS? ”

How well do you know your heritage home bathrooms?



A \_\_\_\_\_



B \_\_\_\_\_



C \_\_\_\_\_



D \_\_\_\_\_

## ANAGRAM

Find the name/s or places in these phrase.

1. AT BOUNDARY BREWER
2. MAYONNAISE WILL MEND
3. DELIGHT OR CHOSE
4. GIN PANNED UNDERLYING SNAG



E \_\_\_\_\_



F \_\_\_\_\_

# Flo Bird: First Lady of Heritage Preservation

By Ufrieda Ho - 24 Apr 2020  
Daily Maverick

History and heritage are about the texture of a city, also about the intimate, and the personal, and that always counts for Joburg's first lady of heritage preservation.

Bulldog, street fighter – whatever label you have for Flo Bird she'll own it, and she may even take a few of them as compliments. After nearly half a century of being a heritage preservation activist, some name-calling comes with the territory. She's used to hearing it from unscrupulous developers whom she's got to back down, also from politicians she's challenged to grow a pair to act in the interest of the city and its citizens rather than in self-interest.

Bird, a history major and one-time teacher, was an accidental heritage activist. It was in 1972 that she and other residents in Parktown got wind of the city's plans to build a freeway system for Joburg. The proposed loops of tar and concrete would have carved up their suburb and, Bird says, would have seen the present-day M1 and M2 extend well beyond an M10.

It would also have come with the demolition of iconic old homes in Parktown. Neighbours and communities would have been cut off from each other and Bird argued that it would change the identity of the city forever.

The city council tried to force down property prices and to make residents jittery enough to capitulate and sell their properties cheaply. Bird, though, did not baulk. "When I'm angry I will fight and I won't drop it; sometimes you have to take a stand," she says.

She says that her cause simply turned out to be history and heritage. But she believes unequivocally that it is an important pillar on which to build a city; it provides texture, character and gives a sense of place and belonging for its citizens. It's knowing exactly where the Ponte building, Brixton Tower or the Nelson Mandela Bridge fit in on the urban horizon, right through to knowing that a city is its communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.

Fighting the freeway project would stretch on for nearly 20 years until the council finally abandoned its proposal for good. The residents, standing firm and standing together, won. Their victory saved the likes of the sports fields at St John's College, The View and Hazeldene Hall – all more than 100 years old – and now recognised heritage landmarks.

The long fight taught Bird about persistence and staying the course. It also taught her about organising, building networks



For Flo Bird, Joburg is in her blood. The city, its people and heritage preservation have been her passion for nearly half a century.

and relationships and about doing the homework to understand bylaws, regulations and rights. It showed Joburgers what they stood to lose if they didn't fight and this sparked tours to the iconic houses in Parktown and Westcliff and led to the formation of the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust in 1980.

It would be another 20-odd years before the organisation changed its name to the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation (JHF), but for years before that it had already moved beyond being focused on the heritage and history preservation of these elite Joburg suburbs.

The JHF has been something of a soft landing for people stuck in suburbia to venture out to places like Dube, Fietas and old Chinatown. Through these tours JHF has put more obscure places and more invisible people on the Greater Joburg map while highlighting issues like the marginalisation of migrants in the city, as well as the outstanding land claims in areas like Vrededorp and the need to change people's perceptions of "the other" even as the realities of the divides of race, class, wealth and culture are ever-present.

For Bird, the evolution of the tours, of the foundation and even the changing idea of collective heritage in Joburg is a natural part of adapting. Every generation has to choose what is worth fighting for, she says. For her, having stuck to history and heritage has meant she's pulled a thread through the past to the present and offered a reminder that we are more bound together than we realise.

"You can't teach somebody to be an activist, and people will find their own causes, but you can show them the results and what can be achieved when they fight for something and that inspires people," she says. "We must also remember the value of being able to take a stand because we have a history of a brutal government when violence and intimidation against people was very real," she says of the apartheid era.

She understands too that in a divided world there are outsiders and insiders, which means there are bridges still to be built – it cannot be gawking from a tour bus at the expense of forgetting that heritage and history is intimate, personal and resides in the core of identity.

Bird is now in her retirement years but she's as busy as ever. There are developers to fight, also the ongoing JHF Blue Plaque project to oversee. This project involves researching sites and places that are noteworthy and remarkable and deserve a round blue heritage marker to tell its story. She also works on cataloguing old building plans of heritage buildings and houses in the city.

Joburg is in her blood, so much so that she says she itches to get back to the urban throb after a maximum of 24 hours in a game reserve. "I love nature, but then I start to miss the city," she says, from her Parktown home. Home means being able to explore Joburg's cemeteries, to head to the theatres or to plot a tour to another lesser-known part of the city. It's also where she can connect remotely with her gin and tonic club. They do word puzzles, read and share humorous passages from their favourite books.

She packs her work in during the morning hours. Then she may check her watch and if it's a decent enough hour, she may just have a gin and tonic because, well dammit, she deserves it!



A VALENTINE for a fallen hero... Elaine Persona, Flo Bird and Dennis Adams of the Parktown Westcliff Heritage Trust remember Major Doveton at a plaque in Parktown which explains why the road was named after him. Picture by MARIOLA BIELA

## Love conquers all – and it's not just for the young

By JOY RUSSELL  
LOVE conquers all.

So it seemed in 1900 when the Anglo-Boer War was in full swing. It was then that mine manager David Doveton fell at the Battle of Wagon Hill during the Siege of Ladysmith. He was, at the age of 54, an unusually elderly member of the Imperial Light Horse Regiment. That fact, however, appears not to have dampened his enthusiasm for taking on the Boers. It may have

been a factor in his demise, though, for when he fell in battle he was so seriously injured he was taken to hospital and his captors decided to send for his wife.

According to Flo Bird of the Parktown Westcliff Heritage Trust, General Joubert generously agreed to let the good lady through to nurse her man. Sadly her efforts were in vain and Major Doveton died in his wife's arms on February 14 – Valentine's Day.

The Boers then escorted Mrs Doveton back the way she had come.

Commented Mrs Bird: "I think it's the sweetest story. The Boers wouldn't let food in, but they did let Major Doveton's wife go through the lines. His wife must have loved him very much. If he was 56, she was probably in her 50s.

"So you see, love is not just for the young."



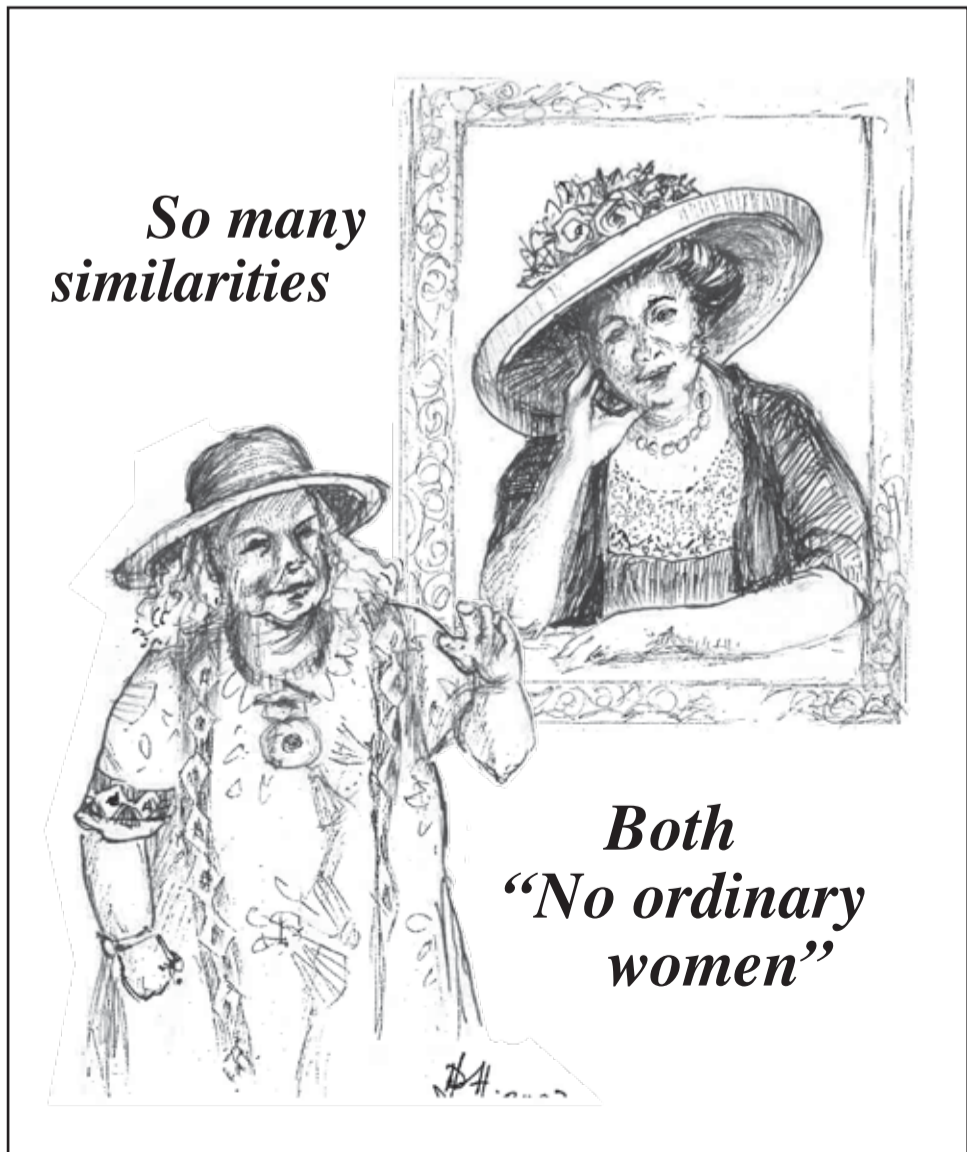
Flo Bird leading a tour through one of Joburg's lesser-known suburbs.



Flo leading a tour of the mining district.



Adam Asvat Blue Plaque (2014)



By Janet Hughes

March 27, 1990 ROSEBANK/KILLARNEY GAZETTE Page 5

## The View now a national monument

The historic Cullinan house, "The View" in Parktown has finally been declared a national monument after a 16 year battle to keep the demolishers at bay.

The move has been greeted with unreserved delight by Rae Graham, city councillor for Parktown, and Flo Bird of the Parktown Association and the National Monuments Council.

Both women have fought at local and national level to save the valued Victorian house from demolition, backed by the Parktown and Westcliffe Heritage Trust, and the Johannesburg Historical Society over the years.

The house, now owned by property developers and leased by the Transvaal Scottish Regiment as its headquarters, was the home of Lady Cullinan until her death in the early 1960's.

Built by Sir Thomas

Cullinan, of diamond fame, it served as a family home from 1896 for 10 children, a governess and several servants.

The City Council expropriated the land on the death of Lady Anne to put up the planned M6 motorway - but they reckoned without the the residents of Parktown.

"It was one of the first issues I had on becoming councillor in 1977," said Rae Graham, "and we managed to buy time for

the house when the motorway issue was at its height."

"The house, unpretentious for such a large family, still conveying an impression of status. It reflects the attitudes of those early pioneers who had the courage to put down roots in what must have been a bare and barren veld," she said.

Noting that Johannes-

burg is "infamous for having no house museum of its own like those of Durban, Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, Bloemfontein and Cape Town," Mrs Flo Bird explained why the house was worth saving.

"It is the only house in Parktown constructed before the Anglo Boer that retains its original style and form.

Visiting tourists from America and Britain have classified this as an 'A' category monument."

The Transvaal Provincial Museum is interested in restoring the handpainted stencils and wall murals.

In the meantime the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust is making an appeal for the loan of a set of scaffolding so work can begin on the damp patches near the ceiling on the first floor.



Mrs Flo Bird, dressed in Edwardian period costume, points to the magnificently panelled inner dining room door of The View - the historic Cullinan house which has recently been declared a national monument.

# TALES FROM THE TRENCHES



**Nicola Noble**

The funniest thing - well it wasn't funny at the time, but looking back it is. It was when I did a Westcliff tour, The Pallinghurst road owners are super accommodating, and most let us in, and the owners of Ye Rokkes, who had just bought the house and spent a ton renovating, agreed to allow us in just to the entrance area to see that spectacular staircase. We totally lost control of the group, it's like they lost their minds and next thing there were people taking selfies on the staircase, people wandering into the house and even people using the bathroom. The owners were not impressed!!! But they are letting the JHF in again, I hope Adam has more control than I did that day.



**Sarah Welham**

Doing research with Flo in the less salubrious parts of Johannesburg has always been interesting. She seems to be fearless. Back in 2011, we were doing a survey of the older sections of the suburb Berea. There were some beautiful buildings still standing and we wanted to capture them all for our database on Johannesburg.

One such was the old Corona Lodge Building in O'Reilly Road with its beautiful old trees and a gem of a building around every corner. Flo, Mary and I were engrossed in the Lodge building, admiring the old foundation stone dating from 1902, when we heard the most awful gunshots from across the road. Of course, Mary and I were terrified but Flo calmly suggested that perhaps it was time we headed back to the car.

We did so, all the while looking over our shoulders to see if we were going to be caught in some crossfire. If I remember correctly, it was residents in one of the apartment blocks expressing their anger over something. It certainly did not deter us, and we continued to walk the streets in the muckier parts of town, me with my camera at the ready and all three of us staring up at buildings.

Usually, things were quieter and many of the locals stopped to ask us what we were doing

and showed great interest in our wanting to preserve the old buildings. Some however, became hostile when they thought that we might be instrumental in having them evicted. Joubert Park area was one of the worst.



**Kathy Munro**

On one occasion when Brett and I led a tour to see the Obel and Obel buildings - Clarendon Place at Circle court, we split our group into two to negotiate the lift. Brett took his tour members into the building, I stood outside talking about the location, the façade, Art Deco architecture, the inhabitants of Circle Court in the thirties.

Suddenly the present intruded and gave a different sense of place - a mob of men come charging down Claim Street in hot pursuit of someone who had allegedly stolen a cell phone. In front of our eyes, there was total pandemonium as the angry men delivered on street justice and beat the thief. Our genteel guest from the northern climes of Johannesburg were aghast - and one yelled at me "Kathy do something, you have to save the poor man being beaten - they are going to kill him". No one wanted to witness a killing! I had to take it all in my stride - pull out my cell phone and try for an emergency security/ police number.

It all calmed down - the crowd evaporated once the said stolen phone had been retrieved. A normal day in Hillbrow! Such are the surprises of tour guiding.



**Diana Steele**

For the past few years, the Research Centre has been honoured with visits by Gingin. These are not daily occurrences but depend on Gingin's whim! He has endeared himself to all of us and even Flo has softened and asks where he is on the days when he doesn't visit. Visitors to our book sales held in the school hall will probably have met Gingin. He loves the attention of so many admirers and is not afraid of crowds - clearly, having made his home in a school with hundreds of children, he wonders among them without fear!

Recently he visited us when only Jannie and I were at the centre. Having warmed Jannie's lap long enough he eventually settled down on Merle's chair in the digitisation

room. When the time came for us to leave there was the usual clear up and rush to the loo, switching off lights and closing blinds and we locked up and left.

Only when I got home to be greeted by my own three furry children did I remember that I hadn't physically carried the reluctant Gingin out which we are usually forced to do! I live nearly 20kms away but was too embarrassed by my carelessness to call for help from Mary who lives just a few minutes away so made the journey all the way back to the school.



I was 5 minutes away when I realised I didn't have the keys with me, so I had to smother my pride and call Mary. Thankfully she was more than willing to rescue poor Gingin and found him shut in our office and extremely hungry! She filled his bowl with nibbles which he ate ravenously. She had to carry him out and locked the office door, but he still didn't want to leave! Despite having been locked in for over an hour, he was asking to be locked in again! Mary was steadfast though and carried him out to find another willing human to snuggle.

Note: We all believed Gingin to be a boy when we first became acquainted but have been informed he is in fact a she! While I still think of Gingin as a boy I may be mistaken so in my tale above, "him" could be a "her". I don't think Gingin is particularly concerned so I'm sure he (she) won't object! Flo, on hearing of the saga, suggested that perhaps we should provide him with a litter-box so he can move in permanently. I think he would prefer that all doors are left open permanently so he can come and go as he pleases!



**Adam Golding**

I once led a tour entitled "A Search for the Oldest Pub in Joburg". Basically a pub crawl of historic pubs. By the last pub I think we had three times as many people on the tour as we started with... And we didn't have all the people we started with either!



**Brian McKechnie**

My best tour memory - I was doing a recce for a Hillbrow tour with Flo. We ended up in Pullinger Kop Park and were remarking on how good it was looking - none of the usual drug dealers/addicts hanging around. Then we noticed a huge guy with a Hawaiian shirt and a giant gun heading towards us. Before we could make it to safety, the gun guy had caught up to us - luckily he was a plain clothes policeman. SAPS were doing a clean up operation at the park. On our way back down the hill Flo and I spotted all the usual dealers and addicts hiding out under the bridge!



**Tracy Clayton**

Offering to be a sweeper on a JHF tour seems like the easy job but really not so much. Wrangling a large group around a grand house or through city streets, not losing anyone down open manholes and making sure no-one wanders off, this requires a certain skillset and lots of patience. I channelled the mom in me and turns out I am a pro sweeper.



**Ed Coogan**

A one-man meeting- in Sir Lionel Phillips' Office!  
We have been on lots of tours of the Randlords' mansions, even led some, to admire these impressive edifices, or dream of their glamorous lifestyles. Did you ever wonder what it was like for Lionel Phillips or John

*Continued on the next page >*

# TALES FROM THE TRENCHES



Dale Lace – admiring the view, or stressed about the falling gold price? What if you were the man in Lionel Phillips’ office?

That’s just where I was, one cold Friday in July.....

I arranged to meet with Zanele, the Group Marketing and Events Manager at Hollard, to request an outside tour of Villa Arcadia for our Heritage Weekend in September. We had already been informed that we could not enter the villa that weekend, as it was to be a wedding venue, but an outside tour would be a breath of fresh air, and it would give Hollard credit for their environmental and restoration efforts. Unfortunately, I got the date wrong; I arrived at 14:00, and Security did not know what to do with me. They asked me to wait in the library (Sir Lionel Phillips’ office back in the day), and there I waited....

.....and I waited.....

I thought of Lionel in those days, concerned about his huge enterprise, but nonetheless assisting with Florrie’s projects – Kirstenbosch, botany studies, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and so on. The Phillipses were such a capable couple, and added so much value to South Africa. However, he was probably very cold in that impressive but dark room!

....and I waited.....

I inspected the many volumes on the bookshelves, then I chanced on ‘Villa Arcadia – Views from the Ridge’ on a coffee table. It is a beautiful book, quite a work of art in itself, telling so many stories about the Phillipses and about Hollard’s restoration of the villa and its grounds; by 2003 it really was in a sad state. I am sure that Lionel would be proud of Arcadia in its present pristine condition, plus magnificent trees and a glorious art collection.

At four O’ clock, I thanked Security and went home, after an unsuccessful but interesting afternoon; By now I had lots more to tell on my tour!

The following week, I got in touch with Zanele, and we made another appointment. She proved charming and helpful and enthusiastic. She arranged a copy of the book for me – and the tour happened! On September 9 the Johannesburg Heritage Trust led a tour along the driveway and up to the top of the ‘Koppie’, with very different views of Arcadia and the grounds. Sadly, Lionel could not be with us!



**Barbra Cron**

I will always remember Flo forsaking her usual brisk, “Get out of my way” stride to walk slowly with her walking stick into the offices at the Department of Social Development. This, and her obvious attitude when she wouldn’t budge from the clerk’s desk until the NPO Certificate was finally produced, won the day and the certificate for

JHF! I recall her stating that she was “too old to come back”, and couldn’t leave until everything was sorted out. As she was by then huffing and puffing with indignation, the clerk probably decided to just deal with her and get her out of her office before there was a medical emergency!

Flo was so into her role that she got upset when I asked her to walk quicker when crossing the busy Pretorius Street in Pretoria on the way back to the car!



**Michele Vrdoljak**

A lifetime I have spent, peeking through fences, cracks between gates, keyholes and pretending to be searching for the bathroom to enjoy a peek of the nooks and crannies of our old mansions.

After volunteering at the JHF, I got to help organise the promotion of the viewing of a Baker home for sale. Upon arriving, Paul, the owner took me on a tour of the house, and we sat on the grand veranda having coffee and speculoos biscuits....and I thought what an upgrade from years of undercover tactics!

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## Highway threat to historic house

**By SARAH SUSSENS**

ANGRY residents are fighting a plan to run a major road through the grounds of one of the country's most historically important homes.

Hazeldene Hall in Parktown, Johannesburg – a magnificent Edwardian home built in 1902 – may have the A6 arterial running metres from its front door, through the bottom of its garden.

It's one of the few stately homes left in the area and Parktown residents are complaining that the council is not interested in preserving the city's architectural heritage.

**Mrs Flo Bird of the Parktown Residents' Association outside Hazeldene Hall**

# CHANGING THE COURSE OF HISTORY

Brian Sokutu

Against a background of South Africa's soaring youth unemployment, high rate of drug addiction and rampant crime, a leader of the 16 June, 1976 Soweto uprising, has implored government to rethink its policy on social grants for young people - diverting the funds towards education and empowerment projects instead.

Speaking to *The Citizen* yesterday at the Hector Pieterse Memorial in Soweto ahead of the 46th anniversary being commemorated tomorrow, Seth Mazibuko, who led the student march, painted a picture of frustrated youth neglected by government.

"With the high youth unemployment, all government does is to give grants, which go to drugs, booze and more babies instead of education and viable empowerment projects.

"Government should stop that money and let it go towards free education.

"For this, we owe our young people an apology.

"When 1994 came, all the leaders left our township communities and rushed for [black economic empowerment] tender deals, with some going to



CHANGING THE COURSE OF HISTORY. Seth Mazibuko, a leader of the 16 June, 1976 Soweto uprising, at the Hector Pieterse Memorial site in Orlando West, Soweto, yesterday. He was arrested in July 1976, aged 16, and held in solitary confinement at the Fort Prison in Braamfontein for 18 months before being charged, tried and sent to Robben Island for seven years. Picture: Michel Bega

parliament to be called 'the honourable'.

"They left the gap in our townships, with our children becoming leaderless and parentless.

"The space they have left is now being occupied by the wrong people, who have introduced drugs and distorted our history.

"Our young people have been destroyed and government, which has failed to engage, has been divorced from their issues," said Mazibuko.

With some foreign tourists having descended on Soweto this week, Mazibuko said planned activities would include an early morning visit to the graves of

fallen heroes Pieterse, Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seatlholo.

"On Thursday, we shall also be paying respect to the memory of Mbuyisa Makhubu, who was photographed carrying the fatally injured Hector Pieterse.

"There will also be a gala dinner - all done to relive the memories of 1976," said Mazibuko.



Flo leading a tour of the historic Central Fire Station.



With Seth Mazibuko at the Fort. He was prominent in the Soweto Student uprising.

and this is where it all started. The basis of our Heritage

Randjeslaagte Beacon

from PRITCHARDS COMMERCIAL MAP OF JOHANNESBURG SUBURBS 1896

By Janet Hughes

## BBG MENU

Marius Batts  
msupperclub100@gmail.com

BREKKIE CROISSANT	60
Bacon, egg, tomato, fried onion	
BOERIE BURGER	75
With tomato chaka laka	
BOBOTIE BURGER	75
With peach chutney relish	
BBQ PULLED PORK	70
With red slaw salad	
CHICKEN PREGO	75
Marinated in, peri peri and garlic sauce	
EXTRA CHEESE SLICE	10
Cheddar cheese	
MALVA PUDDING	35
Served with caramel sauce and custard	
P'MINT CRISP TART	35
Home made with mixed biscuit crumble	
CHEESE CAKE	45
With a roasted strawberry sumac coolie	
BREAD & BUTTER PUD	45
With rich dark chocolate, walnuts and raisins	

**Soul Food At Your Service**

Anagram: 1. Aburrow and Treeby 2. Emley and Williamson 3. The Ridge School 4. Gurney Planning and Design **Bathrooms:** A. Villa Arcadia B. The View C. Dollhouse at Lindfield Victorian House Museum D. L Ron Hubbard House E. The Pines F. Eduardo Villa Home

# Out & About



Recording the history of the Fort. At Flame Recording Studios at Constitution Hill



With Mary Boyeasse at the marvelous exhibition of historic plans they put on at Museum Africa



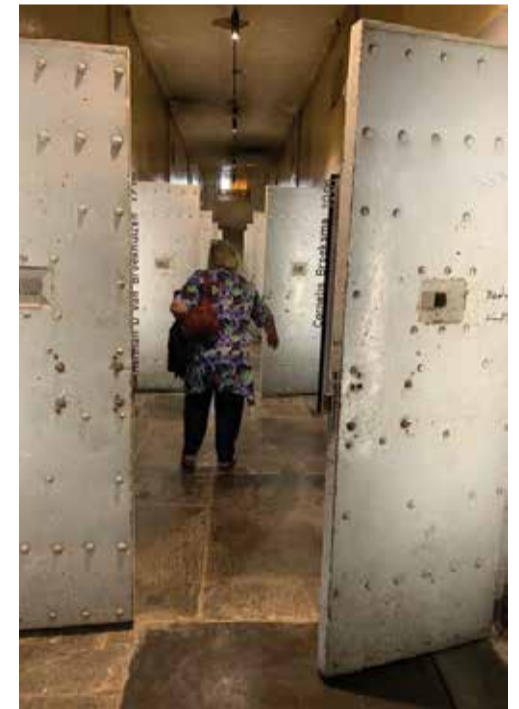
Tour of Ferreirasdorp



Mary, Flo and Adrienne at the book sale



Preparing for the Orlando East tour, with Seth Mazibuko, Tshenolo Mokhele and Brett McDougall



At Constitution Hill



With Chichi Selepe on the tour of Dube in Soweto where seven plaques were unveiled



Flo and an unnamed gentleman at the party after the historic Dube plaques were unveiled



Tour of Dolobran (2022)



Cronationville/Bosmont - Heather Mason (2023)



Kholvad House with Lindiwe Sisulu



Guides Flo, Sarah and Clare (2018)



Heritage Weekend Tour of the HFC Chapel - Heather Mason (2016)



With Loretta Chambelain at Yukon House (2014)



Research Lunch at Flo's house (2021)