Kultuurhistorikus ontvang prys vir beste doktoriale geskiedenisproefskrif in Afrikaans


Ten einde nagroet die studente in Geskiedenis aan te moedig om steeds verhandelinge en proefskrifte in Afrikaans te produëer en om werk van hoogstaande gehalte te beloon, het die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns ‘n prys vir dié doel ingestel. Die prys staan bekend as die Protea Boekhuisprys en word deur dié uitgewery en boekhandelaar geborg. Dr. Marianna Botes, kultuurhistorikus van die Museum, was hierdie jaar die eerste persoon aan wie dit toegeken is vir haar doktoriale proefskrif getiteld Bloemfontein gedurende die bewind van president F.W. Reitz, 1889-1895: ‘n kultuursistorieëse studie.

Die Akademie se Protea Boekhuisprys is een van talie prysse wat deur die Akademie bestuur en toegeken word, waaronder die Hertzogprys vir letterkunde, die Salsprys vir verskeie akademiese disciplines, en erepensings en medalies vir akademiese prestasies op talle vakterreiné. Marianna het haar prys op 24 Junie tydens ‘n gала-geleentheid van die Akademie op Stellenbosch ontvang.

Collaborative Projects of the Mammalogy Department

Researchers from the Mammalogy Department currently collaborate with a number of South African and international scientists.

Dawie de Swardt with the other congress delegates.

Elmarie van Rensburg of the Botany Department spent four months (October 2014 to February 2015) in Vienna, Austria, participating in an International Research Staff Exchange Scheme: hERG Related Risk Assessment of Botanicals. This was in collaboration with the Department of Chemistry at the University of the Free State. Medicinal plants from South Africa collected by the Botany Department were screened for hERG channel inhibition at the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of Vienna.

Collaborative research in Vienna

From left: Dr Igor Baburin, Priyanka Saxena and Prof. Steffen Hering (all University of Vienna); Elmarie van Rensburg (National Museum) and Khanya Phungula (University of the Free State). (Photo: J. van der Westhuizen)

Dr. Nico Avenant collaborates with Dr Alex Sliwa of the Zoologischer Garten Köln, Germany, on the ecology of caracal.

Dr. Frederic Delsuc of the University of Montpellier, France and Nico Avenant collecting gut microbes at Tsawula Kalahari Reserve for their project on the evolutionary convergence of gut microbiomes in ant-eating mammals.
Conferences and workshops attended by Mammalogy Department Staff

Dr Nico Avenant of the Mammalogy Department recently presented or contributed to one oral and two poster presentations at the 12th African Small Mammal Symposium in Mantsosa, Madagascar. Contributions were also made at the 2015 Southern African Wildlife Management Association Symposium in Kimberley, the 6th Annual Diamond Route Research Conference in Johannesburg, and the 75th Annual Meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology in Dallas, Texas, USA.

Field work in Madagascar

In October 2014 Dr Ashley Kirk-Spriggs (Curator of Entomology) undertook field work in Madagascar with Prof. Stephen A. Marshall (University of Guelph, Canada) and Rin’ha Harin’Hala (Madagascar). Sampling was conducted at three sites in the central parts of the country (Ranomafana National Park, Anja Nature Reserve and Tsalakely) and generated over 3 000 dry-pinmed flies. Due to its long isolation, Madagascar has a unique endemic flora and fauna and over 80% of the flies that occur on the island are found only there. One of the highlights was the collection of representatives of the fly family Marginidae, one of only four fly families endemic to the Afrotropical Region.

Drs Nico Avenant and Seth Eiseb (National University of Namibia) at the 12th African Small Mammal Symposium in Madagascar.

Fly of the genus Marga, representative of a family endemic to the Afrotropical Region. (Photo: S.A. Marshall)

Museum involved with HEFSA

Patrick Letsatsi (History Department), as an Executive Member of the newly formed Heritage Education Foundation of South Africa (HEFSA) attended meetings in Durban, Grahamstown, Pretoria, Vereeniging, Bloemfontein and Rustenburg. These meetings were aimed at finalising the constitution of HEFSA and discussing funding proposals and partnerships with other heritage institutions and municipalities. For more information on HEFSA, contact Patrick Letsatsi at 0514479609 or patrick.letsatsi@nasmus.co.za

From left: Matome Mojela (Additional Executive Member), Fikiswa Mrwebi (President of HEFSA), Dr Moleboheng Mohapi (Head: Arts and Culture, Royal Bafokeng Nation), Alpheus Matjaph (Secretary General) and Patrick Letsatsi (Treasurer).

Historikus deel van boekeprogram by Vrystaat Kunstefees

Dr. Hannes Haasbroek, historikus van die Museum, het tydens die onlangs Vrystaat Kunstefees aan die boekeprogram deelgeneem. Hy was deel van ’n paneelbespreking oor die skryf van historiese fiksie en nie-fiksie. Die paneeldeelnemers is van links André Wessels (geskiedenisprofessor aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat), Hannes en die skrywers Jaap Steyn, Francois Smith, Alexander Strachan en Johann Rossouw. (FOTO: NALN)
Museum celebrates Heritage Day

Heritage Day (24 September) is an important day on the National Museum’s calendar. This year we focussed on music and dance as aspects of our nation’s intangible cultural heritage. A major event was held on 22 September 2015 at Olievenhuis Art Museum to celebrate both the traditional and modern music and dance heritage. The event involved 120 learners from Joe Solomon Primary School in Heidedal and Batho Primary School in Batho. The learners were divided into groups and each group had to choreograph a hip-hop or kwazito dance. A panel of judges selected the three best items and prizes were awarded to the winning groups. All who attended were inspired by the learners’ creativity and natural flair for dancing.

Fourteen elderly residents of Batho were also invited to share their memories of the music and dancing of yesteryear. They recalled the township jazz bands of the 1950s and 1960s and the dancing in Batho’s community hall. All their stories were recorded for the Museum’s Batho Community History Project. Other items on the programme included ethnic dances performed by staff members of the Museum and also modern dance items performed by the Manguang Dance and Drama Group, a professional dance school in Bloemfontein.

Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History

Patrick Letsatsi of the History Department was one of the adjudicators at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Programme’s competition held at the Department of Basic Education in Pretoria from 3 to 5 October. The aim of this programme is to instil oral history research skills in young people and to assess how teachers introduce oral history in the classroom and link it to the curriculum. Learners and teachers are assisted with recommendations and advice. After holding provincial finals of the competition, at which Patrick assisted in the Free State, eight of the provinces (excluding Limpopo) sent learners, teachers and education officials to the national event in Pretoria. Judging by the quality of work presented by learners and teachers, it is obvious that oral history as a research methodology is rapidly growing in strength.

Multi-disciplinary international expedition to KwaZulu-Natal Province

Dr Ashley Kirk-Spriggs, Curator of Entomology at the National Museum, and Dr Vaughn Swart of the University of the Free State, organised a 20-day multi-disciplinary expedition to KwaZulu-Natal (November to December 2014). The expedition comprised 18 participants from South Africa, Canada, England and the United States. Field work was conducted at Royal Natal National Park and Ndumo Game Reserve. Ashley (second from left) and Eunice Letsoane (fourth from left, also from the National Museum) sampled insects of the Orders Diptera and Hymenoptera.

Visit to Moscow

Elize Butler from the Karoo Palaeontology Department towards the end of 2014 visited the Palaeontological Institute in Moscow, Russia, in November 2014. The aim of the visit was to compare two gorgonopsian fossil specimens from the Karoo Basin with Inostrancevia, a genus endemic to Russia. The data is currently being analyzed. If the South African specimens prove to be related to the specimens from Russia, it would suggest a global distribution for gorgonopsians, which in modern times have only been recovered from Africa and Eurasia. This research forms part of a project aimed at a PhD thesis.
**Night at the Museum**

When the Hollywood film Night at the Museum made its appearance on the circuit in 2007, the National Museum jumped at the opportunity to produce its own Night at the Museum, when the exhibitions come ‘alive’. The event was so popular that it has since been repeated every second year. Visitor numbers grew from 250 in 2007 to more than 2 000 in 2013. This year numbers were limited to 600 visitors for each of the three sessions to prevent overcrowding in the Museum. The 1 800 tickets were sold out more than a week before the event, which took place on 18 September. More than 100 actors, consisting of staff members, their families and friends, took part. While enjoying a fun-filled evening, the aim was also to introduce the ‘real’ exhibitions to the public.

**Splinters-boek oor Bloemfontein bekendgestel**

Dr Hannes Haasbroek, historikus van die Nasionale Museum, se boek Splinters en Dorings uit die Roostad se verlede (SUN MeDIA-uitgewers, Bloemfontein, 2015) is in Julie in die Reservoir by Oliwenhuis-kunsmuseum bekendgestel. Dié bundel bevat ‘n keur van sy ware geskiedenisverhale oor Bloemfontein wat hy met verloop van tyd geskryf het en waarvan etlike in Culina verskyn het. Dit word ryklik met toepaslike foto’s aangevul.

**National Symbols Exhibition**

A new exhibition has recently been completed portraying South Africa’s National Symbols. It includes specimens of the Springbok, Blue Crane, Galjoen and King Protea as well as a large image of a Real Yellowwood tree, all with relevant information. The non-living symbols – the Coat of Arms, National Flag, National Anthem, Constitution and National Orders – are presented on panels as well as on a touch screen computer where the meaning of each of their components and information about their designers/composers can be found. Information on the Provincial Coats of Arms and South African World Heritage Sites is also available on the touch screen computer.
**Palaeontologist visits Brazil**

In September Dr Jennifer Botha-Brink of the Karoo Palaeontology Department visited Dr Marina Bento Soares at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as part of a research and training collaboration established in 2014. Jennifer is involved in training some of this university’s post-graduate students in the field of palaeohistology (fossil bone microstructure). A gratifying result of the visit was the establishment of several new research projects in collaboration with Dr Bento Soares.

**Scientists share research findings with colleagues**

Scientific research can often be a lonely venture for a scientist and at some point in the research process he/she experiences a need to share their research with others. In a large institution such as the National Museum, with its varied and diverse research disciplines, scientists and their assistants are not always aware of the research their colleagues in other disciplines are undertaking. Therefore, an informal platform, called Research Talks, was established to provide the Museum’s scientists with the opportunity to share their research with their colleagues. The objective is not only to inform but also to encourage inter-disciplinary collaboration between scientists in both the natural and human sciences. During 2015 Buji Makhubo of the Herpetology Department, Dr Marianna Botes of the History Department, and Amy Goitsenomido of the Anthropology Department shared their research with colleagues.

**Sasol New Signatures Art Competition 2015**

Marelise van Rensburg, graphic designer at the Design Department, was one of the finalists in this year’s Sasol New Signatures Art Competition. From the 590 entries, 110 were shortlisted for exhibition at the Pretoria Art Museum from 2 September to 4 October.

Sasol New Signatures is an initiative of the Association of Arts Pretoria and is recognised as the longest-running art competition of its kind in South Africa. It is open to South African artists above the age of 18 who have never had a solo exhibition. This year Sasol celebrates 26 years as the main sponsor, playing a pivotal role in unearthing new talent and providing a platform from which emerging artists can launch their careers. The winner receives R100 000 and the opportunity of a solo exhibition at the Pretoria Art Museum during the following year’s Sasol New Signatures Art Competition exhibition. The runner-up receives R25 000. There are also five merit awards of R10 000 each.

**Personeel woon SAVK-kongres in Paarl by**

Gedurende Oktober het dr Marianna Botes (Geskiedenis), Loudine Philip (Archeologie), Gerda Coetzee (Archeologie), Elmar du Plessis (Versamelingsbestuur) en dr. Hannes Haasbroek (Geskiedenis) die nasionale kongres van die Suid-Afrikaanse Vereniging vir Kultuurgeskiedenis (SAVK) by die Afrikaanse Taalmonument in die Paarl bygewoon. Eersgenoemde vier het referate en/of plakate by die kongres aangebied. Die temas van die kongres was vroue in die Suid-Afrikaanse kultuurgeskiedenis en museums en museumkunde in Suid-Afrika. Daar was ook ’n oop sessie waarbydrens sprekers oor hulle navorsing kon praat. Die bekende Afrikaanse skrywer-digter Elias P. Nel het kongresgangers tydens die kongresdinee met sy pittige vertellings en voordragte vermaak.
Sport In The Struggle Temporary Exhibition

The Sport In The Struggle Exhibition is a sport history project of the Department of Sport and Recreation that tells the stories of the forgotten heroes of sport who were denied the opportunity to excel on national and international levels of sport due to Apartheid. Designed to be a mobile and easily transportable exhibition, it has been exhibited in venues both locally and internationally. In 2015 it was shown at the Potchefstroom Museum, the MacGregor Museum in Kimberley, and the National Museum. The main purpose of the exhibition is to remember, preserve, celebrate and provide education about South Africa’s lesser-known sport history. The exhibition consists of more than 40 panels with narratives, photos and drawings that tell the story of a variety of events and persons in the history of South African sport.

Tell es-Safi/Gath Excavation in Israel

Sharon Holt of the Quaternary Research Department was invited by Dr Liora Horwitz of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to join excavations at Tell es-Safi/Gath for the second time from 28 June to 24 July 2015. This site is famous as the Philistine City called Gath from where Goliath originated. Excavations have been ongoing from 1995 and various interesting finds have come to light. Archaeologists, students and specialists in various disciplines stayed at Kibbutz Revadim and were transported by bus to the site every day.

This year the highlight of the excavation was the discovery of what the project leader, Dr Aren Maier, believes to be the main gate to the old city. It is related in the Bible that after David felled and beheaded Goliath, he drew crosses on the walls at the gate of Gath. These have not yet been found, but next year excavations will continue and hopefully the markings left by David will be found.

Victoriaanse teeparty by Freshford-huismuseum

Op Saterdag, 12 September 2015, het die Nasionale Museum ’n stylvolle Victoriaanse teeparty in die tuin van Freshford-huismuseum, met sy ouwêrêldse atmosfeer, gehou. Freshford te Kellnerstraat 31 is in 1897 deur die bekendeEngelse argitek John Edwin Harrison vir sy gesin ontwerp en laat bou, nadat hy hom in 1895 om gesondheidsredes in Bloemfontein gevestig het. Harrison is in 1897 met Kate Caroline Marchant getroud en die huis is na Kate se geboortedorp, Freshford, naby Bath in Engeland vernoem. Die Nasionale Museum het die huis in die 1980’s gerestoureer en as huismuseum ingerig en in 1986 vir die publiek oopgestel.

Nagenoeg 66 gaste, elegant geklee en met Victoriaanse bykomstigheids, soos hoede, borstspede of pipels, het aangesit vir die en ververrings in eg Victoriaanse styl. Elkeen van die agt tafels het ’n gasvrou gehad wat haar eie tafel met pragtige, fyn porselein, silwerware en blomme gedek en versier het. Die gasspreker was Schalk van Dyk, voorzitter van die Oranje Blomme-union en lid van die World Association of Flower Arrangers. Die Victoriaanse teeparty is deur personeellede Hannetjie Labuschagne, Elmar du Plessis en Sudré Havenga georganiseer.

Sharon Holt at the excavation site in Tell es-Safi/Gath in Israel.

Schalk van Dyk (gasspreker) en die winnares van die beste Victoriaanse uitrustings tydens die geleentheid, Leandi van Jaarsveld (middel) en Anni van Eeden.

Nasionale Museum reik uit vir Mandeladag –18 Julie

Elke jaar kies die Museum ‘n plaaslike welsynsinstansie as seguinstigde vir sy Mandeladag-proyek. Hierdie jaar is besluit om weggooidoeke en toiletware vir Sunflower Children’s Hospice in te samel. Hierdie hospitium versorg kinders met ongeneeslike en lewensbedreigende siektes. Verder het die Museum ook splinternuwe matrasse vir al die beddens in die hospitium geborg. Behalwe die ongeveer 15 patiënte wat in die hospitium versorg word, reik Sunflower se personeel ook uit na meer as 300 siek kinders in die breër gemeenskap. Op 22 Julie het die direkteur en personeel van die Museum die skenkings tydens ‘n vrolike geselligheid aan Sunflower oorhandig. As deel van die dag se vieringe het ‘n sang-en-dans-groepe van die Museum die kinders vermaak en kolwymtjies, balonne en sonneblom-“handskoentjies” uitgedeel.

Herpetologist visits museums in France and Portugal

Dr Michael Bates, head of the Herpetology Department, visited the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, France (28 September to 10 October) and four natural history museums in Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra in Portugal (12 to 15 October) to examine preserved specimens of egg-eating snakes and plated lizards (gerrhosaurs) for taxonomic revisions.

Congratulations

Two Museum researchers have recently been evaluated or re-evaluated by the National Research Foundation (NRF). NRF ratings are awarded based on an extensive peer-review process of the candidates’ research by their peers.

Dr Jennifer Botha-Brink, Head of the Karoo Palaeontology Department underwent re-evaluation and was given a B rating. A B rating is given to researchers who enjoy considerable international recognition by their peers for the high quality and impact of their research outputs. Jennifer received this rating based on her research on the bone histology of therapsids, the ancestors of mammals.

Dr Daryl Codron of the Florisbad Quaternary Research Department, was awarded a C1 rating. A C1 rating is defined as an award to an “...established researcher as described with some reviewers indicating that he/she already enjoys considerable international recognition on the basis of his/her high quality recent research outputs”.

Michael Bates examining lizards at the National Museum of Natural History and Science in Lisbon, Portugal. (Photo: L. Cerisaco)
Best of Bloemfontein Reader’s Choice Awards

The local newspaper Bloemfontein Courant instituted a competition in 2013 to select the best local business or institution based on the choice of their readers. This year the National Museum was awarded the prize for the best museum and Olievenhuis Art Museum for the best art gallery. Olievenhuis also attracted more than 80% of the votes in that category and was therefore awarded the certificate for ‘Landslide Winner’.

Staff member elected onto Executive Committee of OHASA

In October Patrick Letsatsi of the History Department attended a conference of the Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) at Durban’s Playhouse Theatre. He presented a paper titled ‘The liberation Heritage in the Free State: a special reference to students riots in the Bahlokleng-Bethlehem from mid-1980s to 1990’. Patrick was also voted onto the Executive Committee of OHASA and will be responsible for Promotion and Publicity for the new term.

Book repair workshop

Henriette Mohatlane (right, National Museum library) and Engelia Mogoera (left, Collections Department) together with Emar du Plessis also of the Collections Department, attended a three-day workshop in book repair presented by well-known conservation specialist Johann Maree during July. Maree trained at libraries in Switzerland and Austria and was head of the department of paper and book conservation at the University of Cape Town Libraries. The workshop focused mainly on the identification of the different parts of a book and the repair of case-bindings.

Herpetologists attend conference in Namibia

Dr Michael Bates and Buyi Makhubo of the Herpetology Department attended the 12th conference of the Herpetological Association of Africa at Gobabeb Research Station in the Namib Desert, Namibia in November 2014. Michael presented a paper “A preliminary review of the western forms of the Gerrhosaurus nitrolineatus Hallowell species complex (Sauria: Gerrhosauridae) in Africa” (authors: Broadley & Bates) and Buyi presented a paper entitled “Phylogenetic relationships in the Pachydictyus capensis species complex (Sauria: Gekkonidae) of southern Africa” (authors: Makhubo & Bates).

Doctoral student from Brazil visits museum to study worm lizards

Ms Roberta Graboski Mendes from the Museum of Zoology, University of Sao Paulo (Brazil) visited the Museum for a week in November 2014 to examine worm lizards in the Herpetology collection as part of her Ph.D. project “Phylogenetic analysis and evolution of head forms of Amphibiaenidae”.

From left: Dr Louise Coetzee, Palesa Leratholi and Ester le Roux at the Best of Bloemfontein awards ceremony.

Delegates at the Herpetological Association of Africa conference at Gobabeb Research Station, Namibia. (Photo: WR Branch)

From left: Roberta Graboski Mendes from University of Sao Paulo, and Herpetology Department staff Dr Michael Bates, Buyi Makhubo and Agnes Phindane.