

THE OWL CLUB



Founded 1894

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Committee 2023/2024

President: Geoffrey Ashmead
Senior Vice-President: Ron Duff
Junior Vice-President: Bill Coetzee
Secretary: Hugh Amoore
Treasurer: Richard Morris
Imm. Past President: Mike Bruton
Additional Members: Nigel Gwynne
Evans, Peter Hyslop, Mike James,
David Little, Paul Murray &
Peter Sutherland

Honorary Auditor:

Verwey Wiese

Dinner bookings

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Bank details

The Owl Club
Standard Bank of South Africa
A/c no. 071 818 006
Bank branch code: 051 001

This month's edition:

Editor: Ron Duff
Contributors: Hugh Amoore, Mike
Bruton, Tony Grogan, Mike James,
Albert Lastovica, David Little,
Angel Tordesillas & John Webb
Caricatures: Tony Grogan
Photography: Mike Bruton & Ron Duff

"Growing older is mandatory.
Growing wiser is optional."
Doug Armev

NOTICE

Tuesday 18th April 2023 : Notice of meeting #1348

Dear Fellow Owls

THE 1348th MEETING OF THE OWL CLUB, PRECEDED BY DINNER, WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY 18th APRIL 2023, 6:00 PM FOR 6:45 PM START. VENUE: THE GRILL ROOM, KELVIN GROVE CLUB, NEWLANDS.

Chairman: **President Owl Geoffrey Ashmead**

Guest speaker: **Vince van der Bijl**
'MasiSports'

Vince van der Bijl needs no introduction. He was one of the best bowlers not to ever play test cricket, his entire career spanning the years of South Africa's sporting isolation. Vince (founder and MD of *MasiSports*) will focus on the model that they have developed to enable schools to provide a holistic education, so lacking in South Africa. As an example, *MasiSports* has produced revolutionary changes to the only *Masi* primary school, *Ukhanyo*, with its 1,910 learners. Eight sports, chess, art and hip-hop dance, together with life skills training, is provided with the essential coaches, facilities and kit. This model is currently being duplicated in three Western Cape and one Eastern Cape school and, with 23 educators already involved, the aim is for all South African schools to be able give our children the confidence for a positive and meaningful future. This is not a pipedream.

Music: **The Kirby Quartet**

Classical String Quartet

The musical programme for the evening will be performed by an exciting group of young musicians. This string quartet was formed in 2022 by students at the South African College of Music, UCT, They will be performing Borodin's much-loved second-string quartet in D, but they will be adding more for the classical purists!

WPB: **Owl Kate McCallum**

'The search for Thomas Bain's sketchbook of rock paintings'

Thomas Bain (1830-1893) was a prolific road and pass builder with a deep interest in rock paintings (among many other things). Kate read that he'd kept a sketchbook in his saddle bag (as he rode around the Cape) in which he recorded some of the rock paintings he came across. This is an account of the exciting search for the sketchbook, the actual sites he painted, and also the role played, therein, by The Owl Club.

Dinner price: **R320.**

Dress: **Black tie (or similarly elegant attire).**

RESERVATIONS & PAYMENTS:

Any Owl who does not have internet access is welcome to telephone the Secretary Bird at **082 440 8204** or **021 671 3121** to book a perch.

All other Owls are encouraged to use the **Pay'n'Perch** procedure by paying their dining fee into the Club's bank account by EFT and instructing the bank (using the option provided) to send a remittance confirmation email to secretary@owls.capetown whereupon their perches will be booked.

No further emails will be needed from you unless you have special dietary needs or if you are using a dining credit.

In all cases, bookings will close at 6:00 pm on Saturday 15th April 2023.

All bookings will be acknowledged.

The March 2023 (AGM) meeting

A total of fifty-three Owls and one guest met for the 1347th meeting (and 128th Annual General Meeting) of **The Owl Club**, held in The Ballroom, Kelvin Grove Club, Newlands on Tuesday 21st March 2023..

The proceedings commenced at 19:00, with President Owl **Mike Bruton** welcoming all and inviting Owl **Norman Osburn** to deliver the *Grace*.

The dinner started with a tasty cream of mushroom soup followed by a delicious beef fillet served with braised cabbage and carrot with mashed potato topped with a red wine and Guinness jus. The dessert was a hazelnut mousse and the meal was again accompanied by fine red and white wines from the *Hawksmoor* estate. A welcome cup of filter coffee ended the repast.

The President then asked Owls and guests to charge their glasses and to rise for the *Toast To South Africa*, which then led into a short comfort break whilst the tables were cleared.

The 1347th meeting of **The Owl Club** commenced with the President congratulating those Owls celebrating birthdays during the month of March, viz: Owls **Max Hales**, **Mike James** and **Daya Reddy**.

Owl **Christopher Gregorowski** was also congratulated on being the 2023 recipient of the *Robert Gray Medal Award* (the most prestigious and only award for a Diocesan College OD who has made a most significant contribution in his field of endeavour or to society in general).

The Parliament was then asked to rise and to observe a minute's silence in respect of three Owls who had flown to a higher perch since the last gathering, viz: Owls **Michael Maas**, **Anthony Storr Lister**



Honorary Life Owl
Glenn Babb



Honorary Life Owl
JP van Niekerk



Honorary Life Owl
Neil Veitch

and **John Terblanche**.

The Immediate Past President, Owl **Richard Morris**, was then invited to propose the *Toast To Departed Owls* (and this is covered in more detail herein), at the conclusion of which Owls raised their glasses as a token of respect.

Next on the agenda was the Fiscal Shrike's opportunity to draw the winners of the quarterly '*Club Flutter*' and in this he was ably assisted by the evening's only guest, **Jesús Silva Fernández** (the Spanish Consul General for Cape Town).

After a short break the **128th Annual General Meeting of The Owl Club** was then called to order, Apologies were recorded and the Secretary Bird, Owl **Hugh Amoore**, reported that a quorum was present.

As the detailed Minutes of the AGM are available to all Owls, the Sociable Weaver (Editor) will merely cover the highlights of the meeting in this report.

Following the *Annual Report* (delivered by the Secretary Bird), the *Annual Financial Statement* was presented (by the Fiscal Shrike) and both items were approved in short order.

Verwey Wiese (PwC) was re-elected as the Honorary Auditor for 2023/4.

The President then announced (not for debate) the Committee's recommendation that future meetings should be based upon a 6:00 PM for 6:45 PM start.

It was announced that seven Owls had been members for 50 years (or more), viz: Owls **Richard Rosenthal** (elected 1964), **Denis Davey** (elected 1971), **John Earl** (elected 1971), **Neil Veitch** (elected 1971), **Max Hales** (elected 1972), **Brian Warner** (elected 1972) and **Jimmy Baigrie** (elected 1973).

The President then announced that three Owls had been recognised as having brought distinction upon the Club and that the Committee had seen fit to bestow Honorary

Grace

For the food
we give thanks;
The company and comradeship
of fellow Owls
we appreciate;
For those less fortunate than us,
we pray.
Amen.

Life Membership on Owls **Glenn Babb**, **JP van Niekerk** and **Neil Veitch** (an announcement that was met with enthusiastic applause from all present).

The President then vacated the Chair in order to move that the Club mandate the Committee to arrange periodic assemblies in addition to the regular monthly meetings and, with the Senior Vice President in the Chair, the motion was voted upon and subsequently adopted.

The President then resumed control of the meeting and the Committee for the forthcoming year was confirmed with the following Owls to then assume office:

- *President*: **Geoffrey Ashmead**
- *Senior Vice President*: **Ron Duff**
- *Junior Vice President*: **Bill Coetzee**
- *Secretary*: **Hugh Amoore**
- *Treasurer*: **Richard Morris**
- *Immediate Past President*: **Mike Bruton**
- *Committee*: **Nigel Gwynne-Evans**, **Peter Hyslop***, **Mike James**, **David Little**, **Paul Murray** and **Peter Sutherland*** (* new Committee members).

Tribute was paid to Owls **John Green** and **Geoff Everingham** in recognition of their past valuable contribution to the Club's management.

The various motions having now been dispensed with, the demission of Owl **Mike Bruton** (to the role of *Immediate Past President*) and the investiture of Owl **Geoffrey Ashmead** (as incoming *President*) was ceremoniously handled and, there being no further items for discussion, the AGM was declared closed.

After a short bar break, and with President Owl **Geoffrey Ashmead** in the Chair, the 1347th meeting of **The Owl Club** resumed with Owl **Mike Bruton** introducing a series of six Mini Waste Paper Baskets which were filled (in order) by: Owls **Hugh Amoore**, **Tony Grogan**, **Albert Lastovica**, **Angel Tordesillas**, **John Webb** and **Mike Bruton**. These fascinating presentations (each supported by an interesting display) focussed on '*What Owls Collect*' (and these are published, in more detail, herein).

To conclude the evening, the President then invited all to charge their glasses and to rise as he proposed the *Toast to The Owl Club* and subsequently wished all Owls and the guest a safe flight home. /RD

Toast To Departed Owls Immediate Past President, Owl Richard Morris

Fellow Owls

It is with sadness and some reflection about one's own mortality that I invite you to remember 12 Owls departed, as we say, 'to a higher perch', since our previous AGM.

Between them they account for roughly 1,000 years in age or an average of a little over 80, well ahead of the biblical three-score-years-and-ten. But, perhaps more remarkable, they totted up 300 years in Owldom for an impressive average of 25 years. The brief salutes that follow are a fleeting glimpse of a few facets of their lives and cannot hope to do them justice.

Owl Alderman Clive Keegan: 2021, with a prior term from 1980-1987: (born 1950-01-26).

Banned as a student for anti-apartheid activities and with his university studies interrupted, he opened a book store – *Keegan's Africana Books* – in Rondebosch. In his late 20s he became a councillor representing Wynberg where he lived at the time. He rose to become mayor of Cape Town. He is credited – among his many other accomplishments as a councillor – for the pedestrianisation of St George's Street in central Cape Town. Clive leaves three ex-wives, Margaret, Marilyn, and Rowena.

South Africa and the Cape Town Press Club, where he was also very active, have lost a forceful voice.

Owl Piet Westra: 1988: (born 1937-06-23).

Born in 1937 in Gronigen, Holland, Piet obtained a Masters in Library Science at the University of Pretoria. He worked at the Transvaal Provincial Library, the State Library in Pretoria and as Director of the South African Library in Cape Town from 1981 to 1998. He wrote many works on library science, bibliography and Africana. He promoted cultural relationships between South Africa and the Netherlands and received awards from the *Nederlands Suid-Afrikaanse Vereeniging* and the Dutch Government. In 2002 he established the publisher, *Afrikaner Books*. Two of his best known books are 'The Taking of the Slaver Meermin' (with Dan Sleight) and 'Slave Trade with Madagascar' (with James Armstrong). He was a crusader for freedom of speech and received the first *Albie Sachs Freedom Award* in 2010.

Owl Peter Baker: 1990: (born 1934-07-19).

Peter was a surgeon and was devoted to his profession. His wife Marleen was also a practicing doctor.

The memorial gathering at the Royal Cape Golf Club was a cheerful occasion as Peter was remembered in a consistent



Owl Richard Morris

stream of tributes that put on display his generosity, kindness, loyalty and his steadfastness of spirit.

A gifted sportsman and dapper dresser, golf seemed an abiding passion. He played to an impressive 6 handicap ... or could this have been even less? A wag at the wake suggested Peter's wife was the handicap, implying that she may have prevented further dedication to this pursuit of a small ball.

In summary: a true gentleman, one whose presence will be missed and who will live on in the fond remembrance of the family and the many others whose lives he touched and made better.

Owl Charles Waddington: 2001: (born 1929-11-01).

The Hon. Mr Justice Charles Waddington was a former solicitor general of Southern Rhodesia and thereafter a judge in both Bophuthaswana and in South Africa.

A fledgling during the Presidency of Owl **Herman de Groot** in 2001, Charles became Owl President in 2007. He observed that this title was no less complimentary than the way he was used to being addressed as a judge as "Your Lordship" or, on one occasion, as "My Majesty".

He devoted much time and energy to polish the Owl Club Constitution, eventually reflected in a new edition in 2012, a year



after he was made an Honorary Life Member.

In 2014 he presented a WPB talk entitled 'From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe' (a transition that he witnessed at close hand).

Owl Graham Noble: 2011: (born 1936-09-22).

Graham was a limnologist by profession, (someone who studies freshwater lakes, wetlands and rivers). He worked in Pretoria and published seminal research on these ecosystems. He retired to Cape Town and continued to campaign for the preservation of wetlands. He spent many years in spirited engagements with the City Council and, when Princess Vlei was threatened by the development of a shopping mall, he led a successful campaign to halt this.

Graham chaired the Scarborough Ratepayers Association and promoted a harmonious relationship between humans and wild animals. This included efforts to save the local troop of baboons from injury or extermination by irate residents.

Owl Donwald Pressly: 2017: (born 1963-05-09).

Per his devoted and beloved wife, Jean-Marie: "Veteran journalist, defender of liberal principles, historian, inquisitive explorer of nature, architecture, human beings and life-rambler, sharp wit, collector, amazing 'splendid' person, kind human being, and loyal friend, quirky companion, unsurpassed sense of humour, soul mate and love of my life".

Donwald had an enduring institutional commitment to the Cape Town Press Club and is credited with keeping it alive in the decades when so many other South African institutions were corrupted and destroyed. He died after a long illness. He was 59.

Owl Prof. Herman de Groot: 1974: (born 1932-07-19).

Herman was an obstetrician whose chirpy character belied a stressful youth in Japanese occupied Malaysia during World War II. In 2009 Herman presented a WPB talk on these experiences from when he was 9 to 12 years old, entitled "A Ghost Laid to Rest". A synopsis of this WPB appears in Owl **Tony Murray's** book, *The Glow of Brotherhood*, along with Owl Herman's conclusion that the ghost was not fully at rest – perhaps it is now.

Herman de Groot served on The Owl Club Committee from 1988 until 2004.

He became President in 2001 and was elected an honorary life member in 2006. Although of Dutch origin, Herman often donned a kilt at the December functions, insisting that he had assimilated Scottish culture through his wife Aileen.

Owl Hank Lith: 1987:

(born 1939-03-28).

Hank was Johannesburg born but Durban High School educated. After a Stellenbosch BComLLB he went up to Oxford to read Politics and Economics and gained a double blue in swimming and water polo. Back in South Africa in 1965, he joined Anglo American as a management trainee and became personal assistant to Harry Oppenheimer. In 1974 Hank enrolled at Pretoria University to follow his dream and study landscape architecture. Once qualified, he undertook landscaping and tree planting activities for Sandton, the City of Cape Town, the Vergelegen Estate and more recently (from 2014) took the Arderne Gardens under his wing – this last being an apt arboreal legacy for a remarkable but most modest man.

Owl Chris Orpen: 1992:

(born 1930-07-23).

Chris, an old Andean of 1948 vintage, completed a BSc in Applied and Industrial Chemistry at UCT. He initially worked in Durban. From 1954, and newly married, he spent 6 years working at a refinery at Pointe-a-Pierre, Trinidad, British West Indies. Texaco took over this refinery and deployed Chris to develop petrochemicals in Europe. After a 10 year stint in various challenging roles in the UK Chris returned to South Africa and in 1976 was made managing director of NCP Group, a part of Sentrachem. Elevated to the Sentrachem board in 1980 he continued to serve beyond his retirement in 1990 until the company was sold to Dow Chemical Company.

Chris had moved to Franschoek and had not attended dinners for several years. However, Owl **Doc Caldwell** lunched with Chris and their respective partners in February 2022 with the strong memory of how on-the-ball Chris was at 91. His last transaction with the Owl Club was the prompt payment of the 2023 annual subscription and he departs in the Fiscal Shrike's good books.



Owl Prof John Terblanche: 1980:

(born 1935-09-10).

Educated at Gray College in Port Elizabeth, he played 1st team rugby and was an excellent shot. He graduated from UCT in 1958 and married Anne in 1960. In 1964 he became a surgeon, top of the class, and was awarded a Ch.M degree for some research with Dr Chris Barnard. He developed a life-long interest in surgical diseases of the liver. He was head of surgery at UCT from 1981 to 2000 and on the UCT Council from 2004 to 2012.

Per Emeritus Professor Jake Krige: *"John was the consummate clinician-researcher-academician but also a kind and generous teacher and mentor. His vision, sound values, vigorous leadership, innovative scientific contributions, standards of excellence, practised and demanded, plus boundless energy and enthusiasm are a legacy that will endure. His influence was immense. The esteem in which he was held is reflected by the award of ten honorary Fellowships from each of the ten English speaking Colleges and Surgical Associations in the world. He was an ardent ambassador for South Africa and a popular and much-in-demand speaker at international meetings for over two decades."*

Per son James Terblanche: (at the start of his tribute): *"You may be assured that when Dad left us he was flying first class – as a life time platinum member of SAA. From early on he displayed a mischievous and playful side of his personality an exceptional talent for shooting, posing and being the centre of attention ..."*

Owl Anthony Storr Lister: 1986 :

(born 1955-11-15).

Anthony was a man of many facets: teacher, thespian, business man, devoted Anglican and lay minister. He taught history at SACS for many years and was well known for his flamboyance and theatrical flair, reflected in his being an honorary life member of the Cape Town *Gilbert and Sullivan Society* and frequent compère of our end of year dinners.

Anthony was active in the *Military and Hospitaler Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem* and officers and knights of the order were in full force (with capes, decorations and swords) at his requiem on Saturday 11th March 2023.

Owl Michael Maas: 2010:

(born 1955-11-01).

Michael was *ArtsCape* CEO for 18 years (from 1996 to 2014) and managed the transition from *CAPAB* to the *ArtsCape* of today. This included, in 2012, the multi-million-rand plan to revamp the then 43-year old complex into a comprehensive cultural facility with a distinctive African persona.

Both *ArtsCape* and the *Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra* provided glowing and heartfelt tributes for the path that he paved for *ArtsCape*, with humility and with dignity, and for his immense contribution and kind leadership in the development of young artists as chair of the *National Youth Music Competition* (he was a founder member of this project in 1984.)

It has been our privilege and delight to have such personalities and luminaries as table companions at **The Owl Club**. They have contended greatly in life. May their good thoughts, good words and good deeds redound to their honour.

As they have taken flight many of us here below must needs take up the fight and in the words of Dylan Thomas *"Rage, rage against the dying of the light"*.

Please rise and join me in the *Toast to Departed Owls*. /RM



Owl Hugh Amore

Mini-WPB: Owl Hugh Amore My collection of South African stamps & telegrams

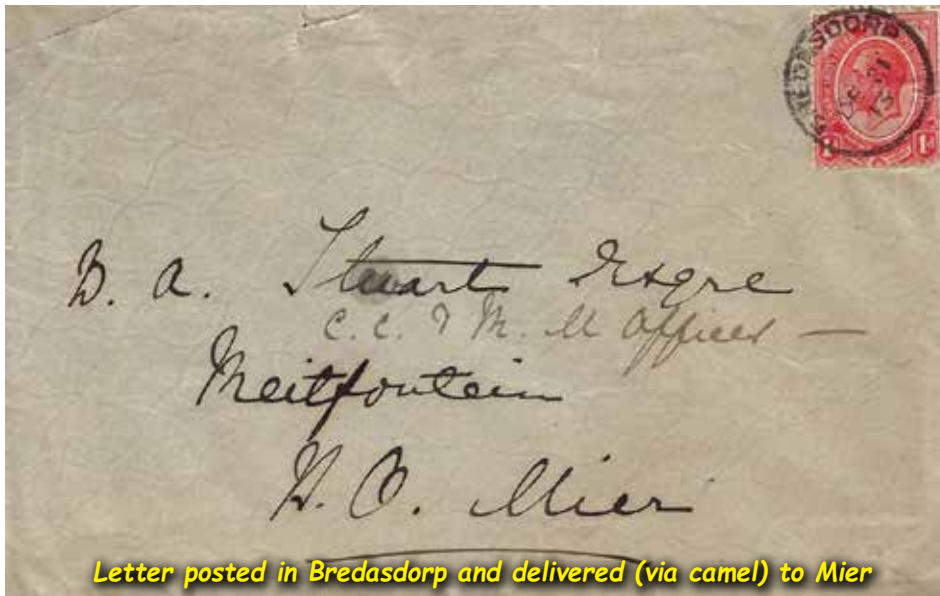
I don't know whether I was five or six years old when I started collecting stamps. I have never stopped; though in my late 20s mere collecting became *philately*, the study (my friends would insist the obsessive study) of stamps, their use, their purpose, and much more besides.

I have chosen three items at random from my collections that will, I hope, give an idea as to why this passion endures.

The first seems ordinary, with a common 1913 *1d stamp*, posted from Bredasdorp on 2^{1st} December 1913 and addressed to *Mier*.

The date stamp on the reverse shows a





Letter posted in Bredasdorp and delivered (via camel) to Mier



Overprinted halfpenny stamp (1936)

transit mark for Upington of 27th December. It has an arrival date stamp for Mier dated 1st January 1914 (New Year's Day), that is of passing interest. That Mier is remote is trite; even today access is by a track of sorts. So, how did it get to Mier? This is where this becomes an object for study. It reached Upington by the weekly train.

It then went by cart from Upington to Zwartmodder. The annual reports of the PMG (Postmaster General) at the time note the strategic importance of Mier (as it proved to be in the then unforeseen and coming WWI campaign against General Maritz' rebels in German South West Africa) and the PMG devotes paragraphs of each annual report of the time to record that the Post Office kept camels to provide a postal service to and from Mier!

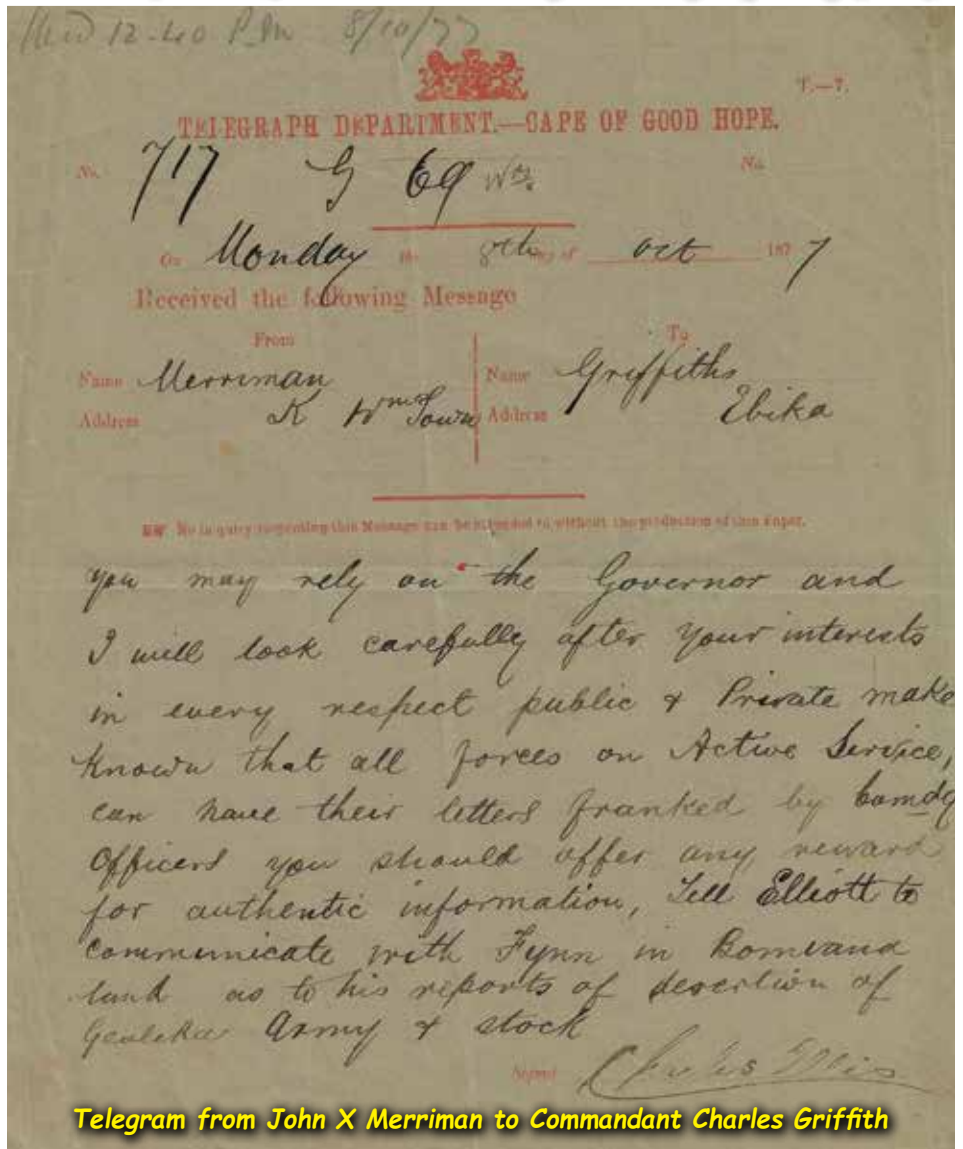
The last leg across this edge of the Kalahari (to Mier) was thus ... by camel! I find that of incredible interest!

Though telegrams are now obsolete, they formed an important part of the Post Office service from the date in 1877 when the Cape Government nationalised the service.

There is an image is of an early telegram sent on Government service during the last frontier war. It is of interest as early Cape telegrams, but also for the contents.

It tells us that the author, John X Merriman (later to become the last Prime Minister of the Cape Colony), and addressed to Commandant Charles Griffith, took it upon himself to authorise those in the field to frank their own letters.

Very soon after this telegram, Sir Bartle Frere (High Commissionere for South Africa) dismissed John Molteno and his Cape Colony administration (so out went Merriman) and took over (for the imperial power) the conduct of the war. Griffith, to whom this telegrams was addressed, was sent back to Basutoland, where he was unable to resist further interference from the new Cape administration which led to the disastrous Gun War!



Telegram from John X Merriman to Commandant Charles Griffith

Many philatelists find a single stamp to study. My choice has been South Africa's humble ½d Springbok. Millions were used between 1926 and 1954. More than thirty distinct pairs of printing plates were used, and the stamps from each can be distinguished. The image I have chosen is of a pane overprinted for official usage in 1936.

Two ½d issues of the time were similar. The accepted wisdom of the past 80 years, recorded in successive handbooks on

Union of South Africa stamps, has been that the issue labeled 4A was the issue overprinted. My study of this pane showed me that it has a variety (on the identified stamp on the pane) that only occurs on stamps of issue 4 (which was printed from a different headplate) and not issue 4A. I was able to publish an article to this effect!

Collecting is often about the hunt; this was an example of a successful hunt. {HA

Mini-WPB: Owl Tony Grogan My collection of autographed caricatures



Owl Tony Grogan

Briefly let me describe how I made this collection of signed caricatures. Firstly, I fostered the sketch book habit which, over time, enabled me capture many passing impressions with speed and spontaneity.

The drawings in the collection were made largely at meetings addressed by distinguished guests at the clubs of which I was privileged to be a member – one was **The Owl Club**, which has been addressed by very eminent people over the years, among them: Sir Arthur Harris, chief of British bomber command; Roy Welensky, last premier of the Rhodesian Federation; Arthur Keppel-Jones, author of *When Smuts Goes*; Sir Patrick Lawrence, the Astronomer Royal and many others. I think many of these drawings are in **The Owl Club** archives, although these won't be signed. The signed drawings in this collection were done largely at *The Cape Town Press Club* luncheons, of which I have been a founder member since its establishment in 1976. Others have been done at opportunities offered via my work as editorial cartoonist through which I have met very interesting people.

Soon after joining *The Press Club* I started drawing visiting speakers, jotting down impressions on the menu card or paper serviettes, then someone suggested, or perhaps it was my own idea, that it might be a nice gesture to present the visiting speaker with a caricature drawn during his address and to afterwards presented in a ready-made frame as a gift. This has become a tradition of the *Club* meets and I am told that this is often an added motivation for the speaker accepting an invitation to address the *Club*. In providing this service it also gave me a chance to do a second drawing, which I have then asked the speaker to sign.

In this way I have built up an extensive collection of caricatures which I think have added interest, authenticity and value for their bearing the subjects personal mark of his or her signature on the cartoons.

It has also been quite intriguing to witness the subjects' surprise and (usually) self-conscious embarrassment when they receive a drawing which he or she did not realise was being done during the address. I would like to add that most of the recipients of the drawing were delighted to receive a gift such as their caricature, as most had never been drawn before and also because it was an unusual souvenir of the event. I will add that I was conscious of the fact that the speaker was a guest of the *Club* so my depiction was usually kind and fairly gentle and didn't reflect the kind of satirical mockery reserved for my critical editorial



FW de Klerk

cartoons. British satirical cartoonist, Ralph Steadman, who was an exponent of the savage Gothic horror brand of caricature (which appeared in *The Guardian*) told me that he took great pride in the fact that none of the subjects depicted in his cartoons ever asked for the original.

Given the circumstances, most of the cartoons in my collection were drawn not to give offence. Steadman's reputation didn't stop the editor of *The Cape Times* instructing me to arrange a meeting with the dreaded Ralph Steadman (actually a very nice man) who was visiting the country on assignment to do illustrations of the Western Cape wine industry (for the UK *Oddbins* wine group), and to ask him to do a caricature of me whilst I did one of him.

I was heavily outgunned in this contest and *The Cape Times* had the gall to publish, in the next day's paper, the grotesquery he produced.

An interesting part of my collection is the number of caricatures of myself done by

international cartoonists at an international cartoon festival that I attended, in Budapest, in 1990.

Many of the most prized caricatures in my collection were done during the heady days of liberation when South Africa was the flavour of the month and many famous people visited our city to visit our famed leader, Nelson Mandela, and they would be invited to address *The Press Club*. These included well-known politicians, national leaders, royal personages, artists, many entertainers, academics, writers, pop stars and beauty queens. You will remember Madiba was a notorious flirt and was the only public celebrity to be photographed with his arm around Princess Diana.

I was able to draw other figures when a fortuitous occasion presented itself. I was introduced to Alan Paton by past Owl publisher, **David Phillip**. Eve Boswell, of the SA hit song *'Pickin' a Chicken'* fame, came into *The Cape Times* and she was interviewed by Fiona Chisholm (with whom I shared an office). I seem to remember she was past her prime at the time and was not too pleased with the result of the caricature!

One of my most prized caricatures was that of the Kenyan academic, Washington Okumu, who was regarded as the man who saved South Africa from disaster, by persuading prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Inkatha to participate in the country's crucial first election. I was on a flight to Malawi and saw this gentleman in the transfer lounge pushing a trolley. I thought I recognized him, did a quick sketch and asked him to sign it.



Evita Bezuidenhout

Part of the collection are the signed team caricatures of international teams



John Major

of cricketers and Protea teams who played at Newlands. During the nineties I was fortunate to be invited by Western Province Cricket Club to attend a number of matches at their club box at Newlands. I used to do some team caricatures of the participating members and would ask the Club Secretary to pass the drawing to the batting team (who were sitting in the stand close by) and ask if the members of the team would mind signing it, which they were quite happy to do. There are a number of legendary cricketers among Australian, South African, English and Indian teams, which are part of the collection.

The collection has been gathered in the last close-on fifty years, so many of the drawings are of people who have died and are long-forgotten, although household names in their time, so I have Googled short biographies and added my own notes to remind one and explain who these people were. To browse through the collection is a reminder and a journey through the history of this extraordinary country, over the past fifty years.

JTG



Sir Arthur (Bomber) Harris



Owl Albert Lastovica

Mini-WPB: Owl Albert Lastovica *My collection of antique & unusual bottles*

products and were usually discarded once empty, that is why old and antique bottles are mainly dug from rubbish dumps, that in Britain, may be centuries old.

Bottles are collected for many reasons, and nostalgia plays a large part in this — “Reminds me of my childhood”; “Dad drank beer from bottles like that”; “I am attracted to certain types of bottles because of the history behind them, the colour, shape, age, embossed lettering, or paper label”.

A completist might say, “I want to collect one of

every stoneware ginger beer bottle marketed n South Africa”. We wrote a book on ginger beer bottles in 2000, it illustrated and described 506 bottles that were used by 217 bottle manufacturers, in this country, in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Many additional examples have been found since the book was written.

My wife Ethleen and I share an interest in bottle collecting. We started collecting in Canada in 1968, at that time our collection fitted on our mantelpiece. When we came to Cape Town (in 1972) we were introduced to an area in the vicinity of the Bellville shooting range on the Cape Flats ... where (from 1877–1907) Cape Town’s rubbish was strewn over the dunes to stabilise them.

This 72-hectare site has attracted many bottle diggers who have excavated hundreds of bottles from the area.

As our collection began to grow, so did our curiosity about the history of the bottles.

We searched in many libraries and through msn archives for more information on bottle manufacturing techniques, the



Groot Constantia wine bottles



The Lastovica bottle room

Bottle collecting is a major hobby. It started in the 1960s in America and quickly spread to Canada, the UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Bottle collecting magazines, initially typed and stapled, have developed into glossy, bound publications that draw even more people into collecting bottles. There are now many specialist books and magazines on various types of bottles and related items. Every month, bottle shows and gatherings are held in pubs, halls and warehouses around the world. It is here that bottles are bought, sold, swapped and auctioned. We have been to the UK bottle shows many times and have often returned with important South African pieces such as the antique Groot Constantia wine bottle with a handwritten label dated 1801.

Old bottles that are collected, were containers used for storing and marketing



South African snuff bottles

products and the many companies who manufactured them. Besides the National Library in Cape Town, and the National Archives in Roeland Street, we made many trips to the Corning Museum of Glass and Rakow Library, in Corning, New York State, the newspaper archives of the British Library and the Wellcome Collection in London.

Three books and numerous articles have resulted from our research.

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Digging for bottles in the USA



Owl Angel Tordesillas

**Mini-WPB: Owl Angel Tordesillas
My collection of Don Quijote & Incunabula books**

research), I can also mention the possibility that Shakespeare knew about Cervantes' works and of his many life upheavals (but not necessarily the other way around ...).

Since I was a boy, my reading of 'El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha', was part of my daily life. For instance, I had to handwrite pages and pages of the book. I learned to type, copying complete chapters of the story of the erratic adventurers of the 'Knight of the Sad Countenance' (or the 'Knight-errant') as our hero is described even today.

The coined description of 'Quixotic', is,

up in the attainment of noble deeds and in the pursuit of unreachable goals. Idealistic without recognition of practicality. But never malicious.

Before my time is up, I wish to mention that 'Don Quijote' is the most translated book after the Bible; as well as the book of which more printed versions have been made: 500-million copies (whilst the next most printed book achieved 200-million).

Arguably, my home collection is perhaps the largest private collection of the 'Don' with some nine hundred editions, in 60 different languages.

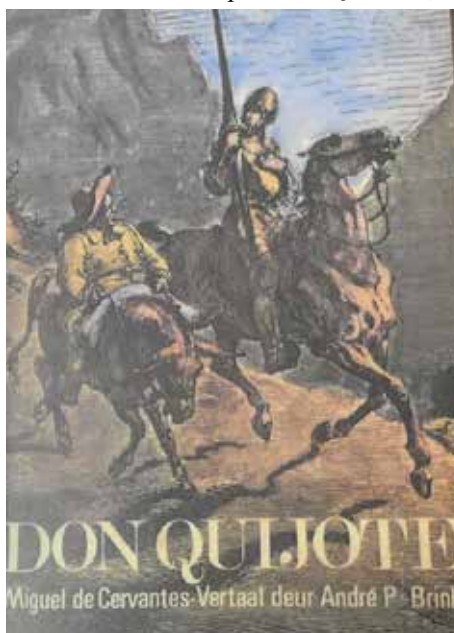
I'm here this evening to talk to you briefly about a few items from my personal library, as displayed in the exhibition next to our dinner tables.

President Owl Mike Bruton, suggested that I bring along some books of my 'Don Quijote' collection; as well as items from my home section of 'Incunabula'.

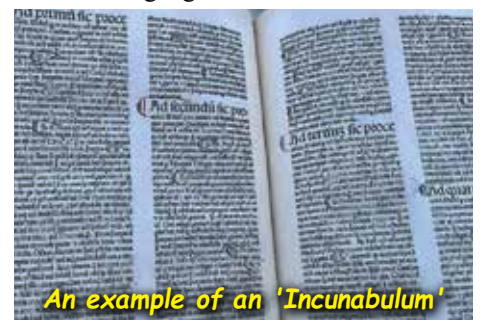
I imagine that some of you attended The Owls Club dinner of Tuesday 15th March 2005, when I delivered the Waste Paper Basket, under the title: "Don Quijote and Quixotism"; the year of 2005 was the celebration of the 4th centenary of the publication of Part One of the 'Don'. The chosen title fitted the occasion.

The author, Miguel de Cervantes, was a contemporary of William Shakespeare; in fact these two literary geniuses died on the very same day – the 23rd of April 1616 - a year after Part Two of the 'Don' came to light. As a further note, it's also worth mentioning that 'The International Year of The Book', takes place every 23rd of April.

During my readings (and many years of



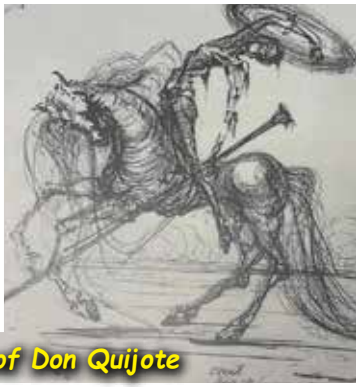
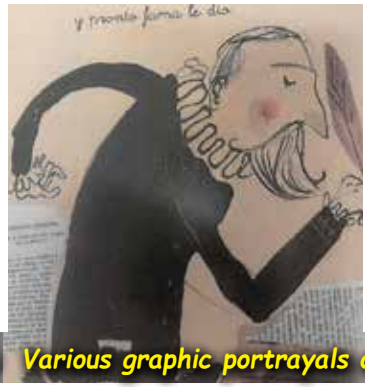
of course, applied to things non-sensible, nor practical. To anyone with romantic disregard for money. In other words, to foolish and romantic extravagance. Even applicable to anyone utopian and caught



An example of an 'Incunabulum'

Regarding my valuable collection of 'Incunabula' (books printed after the invention of the printing press, specifically Gutenberg's Bible (printed in 1455, until 1500), or books printed in Mexico and Perú, until 1550.

I take the opportunity to mention that I was tempted to talk of other sections of my home library: the one regarding literature of the Middle Ages (as I think that, mentally, I belong to the Middle Ages ...) or the section dealing with Erotica and my extravagant confrontations with the 'old' South African Censor Board (perhaps for another day?). AT



(Owl Angel Tordesilla's WPB - continued): Various graphic portrayals of Don Quijote



Owl John Webb

The 14-15 Puzzle



The 14-15 Puzzle was made famous in 1870 by the American puzzlist Sam Loyd. This is a sliding puzzle having 15 square tiles in a frame that is 4 tile positions high and 4 tile positions wide.

The problem is to slide the pieces around in the frame to get them in correct numerical order. Loyd offered a \$1000 prize for a solution of the puzzle shown, but knew he was safe. The puzzle is impossible to solve.

The Tower Of Hanoi

The Tower of Hanoi was invented by Edouard Lucas in 1883. The pieces must be moved, one at a time, to another pin but, at no stage, may any bigger piece rest on a smaller piece. The nine-piece puzzle requires



Mini-WPB: Owl John Webb
My collection of mathematical games

511 moves. The puzzle has nothing to do with neither Vietnam nor Hanoi.

Four Blocks Puzzle

The game has existed since antiquity and has been marketed by many toy and puzzle makers under a variety of names.

The first known patented version of the puzzle was created by Frederick A Schossow in 1900.

The four coloured blocks must be arranged in a row so that each face shows four different colours. There are many different colourings of the cubes, but all versions can be solved using graph theory.

Nine Men's Morris

Nine Men's Morris is a strategy board game for two players and dates from ancient Egyptian times. It was popular with the



Romans, and was also very recommended by the poet Ovid in his *Ars Amatoria* as an essential prelude to lovemaking. *Nine Men's Morris* is a game whose optimal strategy has been calculated and, with perfect play from both players, the game will always end in a draw.

Mancala

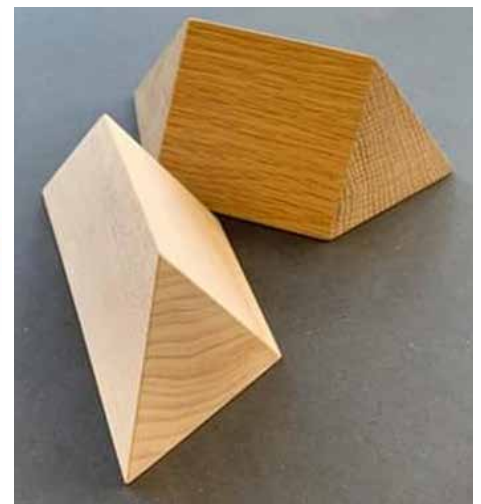
The African Stone Game dates back to the 3rd century and evidence suggests that the



game existed in Ancient Egypt. Mancala is played across Africa under a variety of names and rules (*Mancala/Wari/Bao/etc* ...). The game is played with small stones, beans or seeds and rows of holes or pits.

in the earth or on a board. The objective is usually to capture all or some set of the opponents pieces.

Tetrahedron Puzzle



The two separate, identical pieces must be put together to make a totally regular tetrahedron (a solid triangular based pyramid, or polyhedron, composed of 4 faces, 6 edges and 4 vertices ... in which all 4 faces are triangles). The problem is "How?"

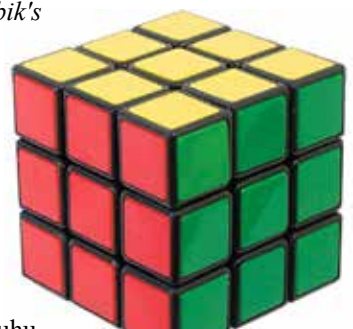
Rubik's Cube

The *Rubik's Cube* is a 3-D combinational puzzle invented by Hungarian professor of architecture Ernó Rubik in 1974.

His cube has proved to be the most successful mathematical toy ever. *Rubik's Cube* lends itself to the application of mathematical group theory (most helpful for deducing certain algorithms, in particular those which have a commutator structure).

The world record time for solving a 3x3x3 *Rubik's Cube* is 3.47

seconds, created by Du Yusheng of China on 24th November 2018 at Wuhu, China).





Owl Mike Bruton

Mini-WPB: Owl Mike Bruton My collection of fish stamps, coelacanth philately, coelacanth arts and crafts, different editions of 'Old Fourlegs' and words ending in '-ology'

endangered and unusual fishes, to celebrate religious festivals, or merely as part of illustrative designs.

The 1989 set of four coelacanth stamps issued by South Africa is the first set of African stamps depicting an important ichthyological discovery. In the mid-1980s, when I was director of the then- *JLB Smith Institute of Ichthyology* in Grahamstown, we suggested to the postal authorities that a set of stamps should be issued to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the

discoverers of the first living coelacanth, they had placed a photograph of Margaret Smith. I informed them of the error and they immediately corrected it and destroyed all their incorrect maxicards. The two error maxicards in my possession are therefore the only ones in existence.

I have also displayed part of my large collection of coelacanth arts and crafts. The craftwork coelacanths were made by artisanal artists in southern and eastern Africa whom I had commissioned. They

As opposed to Owl **Hugh Amooore**, who is a philatelist, I am a mere stamp collector, and a thematic one at that. I have displayed examples of fish stamps from Africa as well as part of my collection of stamps and other philatelic items depicting the coelacanth.

As an ichthyologist, I have collected fish stamps so as to improve my understanding of the relationship between humans and fishes.

Over 3,000 stamps depicting more than 900 fish species have been issued by nearly 200 countries or postal authorities worldwide in the past 158 years since the first fish stamp, depicting a cod, was issued by Newfoundland. I have found that there is a reasonable correlation between the importance of fish and fisheries to a country



Fish stamps, coelacanth philately, South African inventions, etc.



Coelacanth arts & crafts, etc.

and the number of fish stamps that that country has issued. At least 65 countries (or postal authorities) in Africa and adjacent islands have issued fish stamps, with Malawi, Zaire, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast and Burundi having issued the most.

Fish stamps have been issued by many African countries to celebrate the beauty and diversity of fishes, to highlight those commercially important species, to promote ecotourism and angling, to draw attention to

first living coelacanth known to science.

Our proposal was accepted and I was requested to share ideas with the artist who designed the stamps (A. McBride from Muizenberg). We were also invited to pass comment on the design of the first day cover.

They did not ask us to check the design of the maxicards and, when I received them, I immediately noticed a major error. On the maxicard with a stamp depicting JLB Smith and Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, the two

were each asked to create a 40-cm long coelacanth using the materials that they normally use. This collection will be donated to the East London Museum in 2024 when they celebrate their centenary.

I have also displayed different language editions of JLB Smith's famous 1956 book, *'Old Fourlegs, The Story of the Coelacanth'* which has sold over 800,000 copies in five English editions (including braille) as well as editions in German, French, Russian, Estonian, Afrikaans, Slovak, Dutch, Latvian and Japanese. It was the first book by a South African author to be published in so many foreign languages. The Russian edition of 1962 had an extraordinary print run of 100,000, theoretically one book for every 1,200 Russians at the time! The 1977 print run in Latvia was enough to ensure that 1 in every 38 Latvians had a copy.

I have also displayed some examples from my large collection of South African inventions, which I use to illustrate my talks on this topic. The prize item is a crystal-controlled radio receiver invented in 1948 by Trevor Wadley, whom I definitely rate as South Africa's greatest inventor.

Finally, I have on display a list of

words ending in *-ology* (which means 'knowledge of'), that I have been collecting since I was a student. The shortest *-ology* word is simply 'ology' (a knowledge of all things) and the longest word discovered is 'ethnotraumapsychopharmacology' (the study of the impact of drugs on behaviour,

stress-relief and the mind). By far the most *-ology* words, and all the long ones, have been created by medical professionals, who seem to have a need to distinguish themselves from mere mortals. After all, why call yourself an ENT specialist when you could be called an 'otorhinolaryngologist'?

According to Dr Google, there are about 1,740 words ending in *-ology* ... but my list contains many more.

My collections have given me endless satisfaction and have connected me with equally crazy collectors worldwide. I will never regret having made them. /MB

Members' News

Flown to a higher perch

Owls will be sad to know that Owl **Michael Maas** has flown to a higher perch. A memorial service was held for him on 24th March 2023. The Immediate Past President paid tribute to him at the AGM.

.oOo.

Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the AGM (held on 21st March 2023) are enclosed with this Notice.

At the AGM the outgoing President floated the Committee's idea that dinner should start at 6.45 pm (rather than 7.00 pm). The limited feedback from Owls supported this change and members will, in future, be advised to meet from 6.00 pm and for dinner to be served at 6.45 pm.

An important innovation proposed and accepted at the AGM was for assemblies at which Owls and their guest might meet to discuss important questions of the day.

Members at the AGM requested that the

Committee consider as a more suitable name ... *Colloquia* ... and this the Committee has accepted. Owl **Mike Bruton** has accepted the Committee's invitation to convene these *Colloquia* and he has plans for the first *Colloquium* meeting, to most probably be held in the month of June.

The Committee has decided that for the foreseeable future these *Colloquia* will be held at Kelvin. But it has also recorded that holding *Colloquia* will not, in any way, affect any other activities of Owldom; to be specific, *Colloquia* will not affect any future decision to hold gala meetings, etc.

.oOo.

The Owl Club Committee

The new (2023/2024) Committee has been allocated portfolios as follows:
 President: Owl **Geoffrey Ashmead**. Senior VP and Sociable Weaver: Owl **Ron Duff**. Junior VP and Webmaster: Owl **Bill Coetzee**. Secretary Bird: Owl **Hugh Amoore**. Fiscal

Shrike: Owl **Richard Morris**. Familiar Chat: Owl **Mike James**. Chorister Robin: Owl **David Little**. Archivist and curator of possessions: Owl **Paul Murray**. Membership: Owl **Nigel Gwynne-Evans**. Cellarmaster: Owl **Peter Sutherland**. *Colloquia* convener and Immediate Past President: Owl **Mike Bruton**.

.oOo.

New Members

The Committee is pleased to report that **Michael Baker** and **Jonathan Horn** have been elected as members. We look forward to their induction as Owls at a meeting in the near future.

.oOo.

Reminder: New dinner start time

As already reported under the AGM section ... **diners are reminded that dinner at meetings of The Owl Club will now be served from 6.45 pm.**

.oOo.

Grogan's Gallery: Seen & noted @ the March meeting



Seen & noted @ the March meeting



Immediate Past President Bruton & President Ashmead



Owl Hugh Amooore's stamp & telegram display



Owl Angel Tordesillas' 'Don Quijote' display



(l/r): Owls Kinahan, McCallum, Little, Everingham, Osburn, Avery & Muller



Owl Albert Lastovica's antique & unusual bottle display



The Owl Club : 2022/2023 (Outgoing) Committee

(Back): Geoff Everingham, Bill Coetzee (Webmaster), David Little (Chorister Robin), Nigel Gwynne-Evans, John Green (Cellarmaster), Mike James (Familiar Chat).
 (Front): Hugh Amooore (Secretary Bird), Richard Morris (Fiscal Shrike & Immediate Past President), Mike Bruton (President), Geoffrey Ashmead (Senior Vice President), Ron Duff (Sociable Weaver & Junior Vice President). (Insert): Paul Murray (Archivist).



Owl Mike Broom



Owl Dirk Kemp