

Village Life

CAPE OVERBERG WHALE COAST

NO 5 ■ APRIL/MAY 2004 ■ R6,00 INCL VAT

The
Ploughman's
Pantry

Deli & Eatery

OPEN FOR PIZZA AT NIGHT
13 Queen Victoria Street, Stanford
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Barrys revisit their roots



Rev Andrew Thomas Barry and wife Joan, for many years missionaries in Botswana, at the mouth of the Breede River at Witsand. Rev Barry is the great-grandson of Thomas Barry as well as Dr Andrew Murray, famous pioneer theologian. Photo: Annalize Mouton.

BY ANNALIZE MOUTON

From Germany, Australia, France, Argentina, the UK, the USA, Namibia, Zimbabwe and from all over South-Africa, they came to Swellendam during the weekend of 19 to 22 March for the 11th International Barry Festival. One hundred and ninety in all.

Very young ones and not so very young ones, most of them descendants of Barry and Nephews, either by birth or marriage. Some of the overseas family spell their surname De Barry and some De Bary with only one "r"!

After an unsuccessful start on his own, Joseph Barry, who came to the Cape in 1819, became the deputy sheriff and later civil commissioner of Swellendam. He started trading in 1822 and on 1 June 1834 entered into partnership with his nephews, Thomas and John. Combining their talents they founded a strong commercial empire in the Overberg. Between 1834 and 1865 they established stores and warehouses at various places. Barrydale, Bredasdorp, Heidelberg, Ladismith, Malagas, Montagu, Mossel Bay, Napier, Port Beaufort, Riversdale, Riviersonderend, Robertson, Struisbaai and Worcester. All had their "Barry se winkel" (Barry's Shop). Swellendam, their headquarters, was changed from "a small and inconsiderable place" with only one shop to a bustling trade centre through their business acumen. They also had branches in Cape Town and London.

Joseph Barry was the man who introduced waterborne transport to the Overberg and developed Port Beaufort at the mouth of the Breede River into a busy trading port. They had a number of ships, amongst them their pride and joy, "Kadie", a 158 ton screw steamer built to order for them in Scotland, which carried goods to and from Cape Town. This not only opened up markets for the local farmers, but also stimulated agricultural progress in the Overberg by encouraging

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The Black Harrier, the lovely Overberg bird that only thrives where its type of fynbos is left undisturbed. Veteran photographer and conservationist Nico Myburgh and Dr Andrew Jenkins of the Cape Raptor Research Programme tell us more about this icon of the fynbos habitat - page 10.

Old wagon routes now mapped

The old wagon tracks over the Great Houw Hoek Pass lay forgotten under the proteas, everlastings and other vegetation. Nobody seemed to know anymore where the route ran.

When the Editors went looking for the routes made by the wagons and later road builders, their task was made a lot easier by the recent fire on the Houw Hoek. After many hours of research and countless photographs, and the help of a veteran historian, a map could be compiled showing virtually all the Colonial and later routes over the pass - the first such map to be published - pages 6 & 7.

We also visit the tiny community of Wolvengat in the Strandveld - also known as Viljoenshof - where innovative people of various kinds are creating a new vibe - page 3.

And don't miss the train to Bot River. The first Cape Overberg Explorer came steaming into the station with much jubilation for a project that could help to open the region to visitors - page 5.

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