



Graaff-Reinet / Robert Sobukwe

Heritage Association of South Africa
25th Annual HASA Symposium
11-13 November 2026



CIRCULAR NO 3

(July 2026)

***REMINDER: THE SYMPOSIUM DATES DO NOT CONFLICT WITH
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS ON 4 NOVEMBER 2026***

Arrangements for the 25th Annual Symposium of the Heritage Association of South Africa (HASA), to be held from ***WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER TO FRIDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2026***, are well underway. The Graaff-Reinet Heritage Society, tasked with hosting the symposium, looks forward to sharing the history and showing the heritage of its town, as well as hearing new perspectives and learning from experiences elsewhere from you and other attendees.

In keeping with our symposium logo, the symposium strives to capture different perspectives not bound by a narrow conference theme. We wish to explore the ***echoes*** from the past, from palaeontological times through to South Africa's more recent history. At the same time, it is equally important to listen to the current ***voices*** and interpretations of historians, heritage practitioners and others. Finally, we have ***visions*** of renewed heritage awareness, by utilising technology which promises deeper analysis as well as wider and faster archival access to all media formats. This broader focus is fully reflected in the broad spectrum of submissions received in response to the earlier call for presentations for which the organisers are very grateful. The window for submission of presentations and posters is now closed

Treat yourself to three days of Karoo hospitality in the company of experts and others with shared interests. Bookmark the dates and ensure that you are on the symposium mailing list by sending an email to ***grt.heritage2026@gmail.com*** to receive the final Circular 4 during September.

Symposium content

To set the stage, the opening address of the conference will be an expert review of the ***National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999*** by **Bongani Mgijima**, current Director of the Stellenbosch University Museum. With the benefit of more than two decades of practical experience at museums of all types and sizes, he will discuss the background to the Act, its positives and its limitations, problems with its practical implementation, while suggesting possible remedies as we look to the future.

Graaff-Reinet is a town where ancient landscapes, human stories, architecture, art, and memory meet. The symposium presentations follow its journey through time - from the prehistoric world beneath our feet to the challenges of protecting heritage for future generations, as this random sample from the presentation demonstrates:

Discover the Ancient Karoo: Fossils, Origins and a 250-Million-Year Story

Journey back more than 250 million years with internationally acclaimed palaeontologist **Professor Bruce Rubidge** as he shares the remarkable story behind **Karoo Origins**—Graaff-Reinet's world-class palaeontological exhibition, outreach, and research centre. Discover how the Karoo's extraordinary fossil record reveals the origins of mammals, dinosaurs, and crocodiles, while inspiring research, education, tourism, and local development.

How Water Shaped Early Graaff-Reinet

Join **Johannes Haarhoff** as he reveals how the Sundays River shaped the growth, landscape, and heritage of early Graaff-Reinet. From a remote frontier outpost to a thriving Karoo town, water influenced settlement patterns, agriculture, and community life. Through the story of canals, irrigation, and competing water interests, discover how one vital resource helped shape the identity of the town.

Graaff-Reinet: The Making of a Remarkable Karoo Townscape

How did Graaff-Reinet evolve into one of South Africa's most admired historic towns? Join **Professor Walter Peters**—architect, architectural historian, and heritage practitioner—as he explores the planning, architecture, and urban design that shaped this iconic Karoo settlement. Discover how its distinctive street layout, tree-lined avenues, and landmark buildings created a townscape that remains central to Graaff-Reinet's heritage.

A Life in Focus: The Photographic Legacy of William Roe

Step into the past through the remarkable photographs of **William Roe (1827–1916)**, one of the most important visual chroniclers of nineteenth-century Graaff-Reinet and the Eastern Cape. Join photo historian **Carol Hardijzer** as he explores how Roe's images captured buildings, landscapes, industries, and diverse communities—creating an invaluable visual record of a changing society.

Touring the Churches of the Eastern Cape: Exploring a Living Heritage

Join historian, heritage researcher, and author **Philippe Menache** for a visual journey through the Eastern Cape's extraordinary ecclesiastical heritage. Discover the stories behind historic churches, mission stations, and places of worship that reflect architecture, faith, community, and cultural identity across generations.

Cultural Landscapes and the Vernacular: Exploring the Tankwa Karoo

Join heritage researcher **Karen Munting** as she explores the Tankwa Karoo's unique cultural landscape. Discover how traditional mudbrick, stone, and *brakdak* structures reflect generations of adaptation, local knowledge, and the relationship between people and an unforgiving yet beautiful environment.

Celebrating the Legacy of Athol Fugard in the Heart of the Karoo

Few places are more fitting than the Karoo to reflect on the life and legacy of **Athol Fugard**. Join heritage expert **Mike Benn** as he explores Fugard's contribution to South African theatre, literature, and cultural memory. Through works such as *Master Harold...and the Boys*, *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead*, and *The Island*, discover how storytelling preserves history, identity, and human experience.

Sculpting Heritage: The Cultural Legacy of Anton Smit

Explore the power of sculpture to preserve memory, identity, and emotion through the work of renowned South African artist **Anton Smit**. This presentation reveals how monumental sculpture transforms historical reflection and human experience into powerful public artworks that inspire dialogue and connect communities.

Seeing Beneath the Surface: Science Meets Heritage

Discover how modern technology is transforming heritage conservation with **Dave Perrett**, Managing Director of Advance Laboratory Solutions. Through techniques such as CT scanning, X-ray imaging, electron microscopy, and other analytical tools, learn how hidden stories within artefacts, artworks, and historic objects are revealed without damaging them.

After the Founder: Can Heritage Organisations Stand the Test of Time?

As the symposium celebrates 25 years of heritage collaboration, **Professor K.A. Munro** reflects on the future of heritage organisations. Explore the challenges of leadership, succession, governance, sustainability, and renewal—and how organisations can remain trusted custodians of heritage for generations to come.

Symposium format

The symposium will run over three days. The mornings will be dedicated to podium presentations (18 to 20 in total) with a tea break, following by a light lunch. Specific time slots will be available for the viewing of posters and practical demonstrations. During the afternoons, attendees can choose from a range of field trips through and around town, all conducted and explained by local guides. Some are on foot, others by vehicle, each to take about two hours. The exception will be an extended field trip on the final afternoon which will last three to four hours. Upon its return to town, a final round of drinks and snacks will conclude the symposium at the main symposium venue.

The HASA Annual General Meeting will be held shortly after the field trips on Wednesday, 11 November. The Annual HASA Gala Dinner is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, 12 November. A pop-up bookshop will be present for the full duration of the symposium.

Field trips

Attendees have the choice of participating in a diverse range of field trips:

• Architecture and religion	Day 1	No cost
• Umasizakhe township tour	Day 1	No cost
• Withond pairing / Graaff-Reinet Museum	Day 1	R200 *
• Traces of the Boer War	Day 2	No cost
• Architecture and art	Day 2	No cost
• Palaeontology and geological echoes	Day 3	R400 #

* Includes a guided tour of Graaff-Reinet Museum, with food and drinks.

Includes a guided tour of Karoo Origins Palaeontological Museum, entrance to the Camdeboo National Park and an outdoor talk at the Valley of Desolation.

Call for nominations for HASA Annual Awards

The National Council of the HASA has for many years rewarded individuals and organisations who have given unstintingly of their time and expertise to conserve South Africa's heritage resources and who, in the words of the preamble to the National Heritage Resources Act, have by their example "encourage[d] communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that they may be bequeathed to future generations". The awards recognise outstanding conservation efforts across South Africa as adjudged by a distinguished panel of heritage and conservation experts. All societies or bodies affiliated with HASA and the general public are asked to nominate individuals, or bodies, that they believe warrant awards.

There are three awards made by HASA:

- The **HASA Gold Medal** is given to an individual.
- The **HASA Gold Certificate** is awarded to an organisation.
- The **HASA National Award of Merit** is presented to an individual who has made a worthwhile contribution to heritage conservation in South Africa.

Individuals and societies are encouraged to consider one or more nominations for any of these awards. More details about the awards and their criteria are obtainable from the HASA website at <https://heritagesa.org/awards/>. Nominations are made online through the same website.

AWARD NOMINATIONS CLOSE MONDAY 31 AUGUST 2026

Practical arrangements

Attendees have to arrange for their own accommodation. For “Graaff-Reinet” one can find comprehensive listings at, for example, www.lekkeslaap.co.za (126 options), www.bookings.com (71) or www.graaffreinet.co.za/accommodation_grt/ (28).

Attendees will be welcomed on Tuesday 10 November at the Graaff-Reinet Tourism Office, where a listing of local restaurants can be obtained. At the conference, no breakfasts will be served. Morning tea breaks and light lunches for all three symposium days will be served and are included in the registration costs.

How to register

We are ready to receive your registration, which requires you to complete the attached form and to email it to **grt.heritage2026@gmail.com**. Banking details are shown on the registration form. All enquiries regarding the symposium can be directed to the same address. Potential attendees are advised to book accommodation ***well in advance***.

REGISTRATION CLOSES ON WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

**The next Circular 4 with updated information
is planned for distribution during September 2026**





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Heritage Association of South Africa
25th Annual HASA Symposium
11-13 November 2026



REGISTRATION FORM

Title Initial(s) Cellphone

Surname

First name

Email

Dietary preference

	<i>rate</i>		<i>persons</i>		<i>amount</i>
Symposium 3 days	R1200/person	x		=	R.....
Symposium 1 day	R400/person	x		=	R.....
Gala dinner	R400/person	x		=	R.....
<i>Excursions</i>					
Graaff-Reinet Museum	R200/person	x		=	R.....
Karoo Origins	R400/person	x		=	R.....
TOTAL				=	R.....

Please transfer the full amount by EFT and email this registration form and proof of payment to **grt.heritage2026@gmail.com**.

Bank	Investec	/ Branch 580105
Account number	50024617508	
Account name	Graaff-Reinet Heritage Society	
Beneficiary reference	Your initials and surname	