

## **HGSA 2012 Konferensieverslag**

### **“Doing History”**

Die Historiese Genootskap (HGSA) se veertiende konferensie is gedurende 6 en 7 Julie 2012 gehou. Die Departement Historiese-en Erfenisstudies van die Universiteit van Pretoria het vir die derde keer as gasheer van die konferensie opgetree. As die oudste nasionale akademiese historiese vakvereniging in die land (gestig 1956), is daar besluit om tydens hierdie konferensie na die toekoms van die dissipline te kyk; byna dieselfde as wat sesjaar terug gedoen is toe die konferensie in 2006 by UP gehou is. Met hierdie konferensie is dié tema nog verder ontgin. Die fokus van die konferensie was dus daarop gemik om die gesamentlike deelname van beide gevestigde akademici en nagraadse studente van die historiese dissipline aan te moedig. Die oproep om referate is baie goed ontvang. Van die meer as 80 referate wat gelewer is was die helfte van gesoute akademici en die ander helfte van nagraadse deelnemers – ’n verhouding wat baie gunstig is vir beide die HGSA en die toekoms van die dissipline.

Referente het van byna elke universiteit in Suid-Afrika gekom en deelnemers van die SADEC-lande, Europa, Amerika, Japan en die Verenigde Koninkryk is ook op die Tukkies-kampus verwelkom. Ons is dank verskuldig aan die borge wat dit moontlik gemaak het om die konferensie registrasiefooi so laag as moontlik te hou – dieselfde as ses jaar gelede! Sonder die volgende borge sou dit nie moontlik gewees het nie: die Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Fund; die Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe van UP; die kantoor van die UP-Registrateur; die UP-Argief; die Departement Historiese en Erfenisstudies asook Inligtingkunde van UP; Protea Boekhandel; Juta; en Createk. Die ruimhartige borgskap van die Oppenheimer Memorial Trust het dit verder moontlik gemaak om vyf nagraadse studente van buite Gauteng te borg om die konferensie by te woon. Die volgende studente het hulle onderskeie universiteite verteenwoordig: Glen Ncube (UCT); Danè van Wyk (US); Louwna Erasmus (OVS); Kylie van Zyl (Rhodes); en Karthigasen Gopalan (UKZN). Die Oppenheimer Memorial Trust het dit verder moontlik gemaak om pryse aan die drie beste nagraadse referate toe te ken. Die wenner was: eersteplek, Danelle van Zyl-Hermann (Cambridge Universiteit); tweede plek, Cornelis Muller (Universiteit van Pretoria); en derdeplek, Godfrey Hove (Universiteit van Stellenbosch).

Die konferensie tema is doelbewus so wyd as moontlik gestel om soveel moontlik fasette van “Geskiedenis beoefening” (“Doing History”) te betrek. ’n Wye spektrum van referate is gelok wat kronologiese gespreke gestrek het van die tyd van die primate tot kernkrag, en met onderwerpe wat strek van water tot vullis; brood tot bier; saligheid tot mallyheid; Zoeloe tot Hindoe; ontspanning tot verset; arbeid tot kapitaal; gesondheid tot siekte; oorlog tot vrede; een gemeenskap tot nasionale identiteite; asook ou en nuwe mondelinge en geskrewe argiewe, en onderrig en skryf.

Dit was 'n eer sowel as ervaring vir almal teenwoordig om twee befaamde akademië, Prof Ian Phimister (Universiteit van Sheffield en nou die Universiteit van die Vrystaat) en Prof Bill Nasson (Universiteit van Kaapstad en nou die Universiteit van Stellenbosch) as hoofsprekers te hê. Hulle referate was onderskeidelik getiteld “Rooms with views: researching and writing history”, en “Dabbling in history: more apprenticeship than sorcery”.

Tydens die konferensie is daar ook twee boeke bekendgestel. Rory Pillosoff, 'n nadoktorale genoot van die Departement Historiese-en Erfenisstudies (UP) se boek getiteld *The unbearable whiteness of being. Farmers' voices from Zimbabwe*, is deur Prof Alois Mlambo, hoof van dieselfde departement bekendgestel, terwyl Archie Dick se boek *The hidden history of South Africa's book and reading cultures* bekendgestel en bespreek is deur Prof Charles van Onselen, navorsingsprofessor by UP. Tydens die konferensie is daar verder ook 'n internasionale samespreking tussen nagraadse studente van Suid-Afrika en studente van die VSA gehou.

Die positiewe terugvoer na die konferensie van konferensie gangers self dui daarop dat hierdie akademiese gebeurtenis die moeite werd was. Een internasionale akademikus het in terugskouing na die konferensie verwys as 'n “thoroughly enjoyable and extremely stimulating conference ... and a watershed moment for the South African historical profession” ('n genotvolle en uiters stimulerend konferensie ... en 'n waterskeidings oomblik vir die Suid-Afrikaanse historiese profesie).

*Professor Karen Harris*  
Voorsitter HGSA

## **HASA 2012 Conference report**

### **“Doing History”**

The Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) held its fourteenth conference from 6–7 July 2012. It was hosted by the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria (UP) for the third time. As the oldest national academic historical society in the country (established 1956) it was decided to look to the future of the discipline, very much in line with what was done a half dozen years ago when the conference was held at UP in 2006 – but taking this even further. Thus in framing the conference focus it was hoped to encourage the combined participation of both established academics as well as the postgraduate cohort of the historical fraternity. The call for papers was very well responded to, with over 80 papers with a fifty-fifty ratio of established academics and postgraduate participants – a ratio which bodes very well for both HASA as well as the future of the discipline itself.

Participants came from almost every university in South Africa, along with participants from the SADEC region, Europe, America, Japan and the United Kingdom. Our thanks are due to the generosity of our sponsors that enabled us to keep the conference registration fee low – exactly what it was six years ago! Without these sponsors this would not have been possible: the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Fund; the UP Faculty of Humanities; the UP Registrar's Office; the UP Archives; the UP departments of Historical and Heritage Studies and Information Science; Protea Books; Juta; and Createk. Thanks to the generous support from the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Fund the participation of five postgraduate students from universities outside of Gauteng was sponsored. The students selected to represent their respective universities were Glen Ncube (UCT); Danè van Wyk (US); Louwna Erasmus (UFS); Kylie van Zyl (Rhodes); and Karthigasen Gopalan (UKZN). In addition the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Fund also made it possible to make awards to the three best papers submitted by postgraduate students. The winners were: first place: Danelle van Zyl-Hermann (Cambridge University); second place: Cornelis Muller (University of Pretoria); and third place: Godfrey Hove (University of Stellenbosch).

The conference theme was also intentionally cast as broadly as possible to include the many facets of “Doing History”. Again we are glad to report that we succeeded in attracting a very wide spectrum of papers ranging chronologically from primates to denuclearisation and with subjects varying from water to waste; bread to beer; sanity to insanity; Zulu to Hindu; leisure to resistance; labour to capital; health to disease; war to peace; community to national identities, along with the oral and written archives of old and new, as well as the teaching and writing of history.

It was both an honour and experience for all to have two renowned academics to present keynote addresses. Prof Ian Phimister (University of Sheffield and now the University of the Free State) gave a paper entitled “Rooms with views: researching and writing history”; and Prof Bill Nasson (University of Cape Town and now University of Stellenbosch) presented a paper “Dabbling in history: more apprenticeship than sorcery”.

During the proceedings, two books were launched. One was by Rory Pillosoff, a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria entitled *The unbearable whiteness of being. Farmers' voices from Zimbabwe*, which was introduced by Prof Alois Mlambo, head of the same department. The other book is by Archie Dick, entitled *The hidden history of South Africa's book and reading cultures* and was discussed by Prof Charles van Onselen, research professor at UP. The conference also included an international round table discussion between South African postgraduate students and students from the United States of America.

That it was a worthwhile academic endeavour was evident in the exceedingly positive response we received from the participants after the

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conference, one international academic referring to it as “thoroughly enjoyable and extremely stimulating conference ... and a watershed moment for the South African historical profession”.

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