

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first edition of the *Johannesburg Heritage Journal* – the first, we hope, of many editions.

The *Journal* is intended to provide a forum for the research that undoubtedly is undertaken into many facets of Johannesburg's – and the Witwatersrand's – rich history. It has come about because it was realized that no regular publication on this history and heritage exists. The political powers-that-be are less than enthusiastic in their approach to heritage: one only has to consider the depredation of our heritage fabric that occurs almost daily, with impunity. The Top Star Mine dump, mining head gear, the Rand Steam Laundry buildings, and, of course, one of the oldest buildings in Johannesburg, the Post Office in Rissik Street, are examples which spring all too readily to mind of our heritage being laid to waste. History is no longer considered a subject worthy of teaching in public schools – instead, some watered down version of "social studies" is presented in place of a discipline which has long been central in education at all levels.

Rather than being too negative, though, it was thought that something – albeit small - could be done to counter the gloom – and this journal is the outcome.

We are very proud and privileged to include in our introductory edition an article by Mike Alfred on the life and times of a man who was, almost single-handedly, responsible for the survival of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand mines as the British closed in on the town in May 1900 ... read about the life and times of Dr FET Krause.

Our first edition also includes a report on some of the prominent personalities laid to rest in the Brixton Jewish Cemetery – important, because the now dwindling Jewish community played such a vital role in early Johannesburg and beyond. An article on a little-known builder, Alfred Hoheisen, records some of his early life and work in Braamfontein and Yeoville, and also relates the fascinating tale of how this artisan, albeit indirectly, became the founder of the famous Delheim Estate in the Cape.

A third article focuses on the life of a middle-class Johannesburg family in the early part of the last century. Margaret Barry, in the preface to her charming album, *Magnates & Mansions*, writes: "This album is but a small portion of the large mosaic of social life in early Johannesburg ... Hopefully, many other vignettes will be written about early residents and their families, with descriptions of their homes and other things important to their way of life." This article represents just such a vignette. So much has been written on the doings of the super-rich Randlords, and since writers such as van Onselen and Callinicos have shed abundant light on the trials and tribulations of the poor in the early years; it is quite refreshing to read of a family who, fresh from England, were able to adapt to life on the Rand without changing too radically their English ways and outlook.

We are also proud to publish an enlightening article on one of the few heritage sites in Sandton – *Norscot Manor*. This was written by the late Avril Reid, and traces the history of the Eriksen family in greater Johannesburg.

We look forward to the contributions our readers will surely make to the *Johannesburg Heritage Journal*. Please don't hesitate to submit your story, research or even brief anecdote on the history of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand.