

NEWS

Dean Allen (author, lecturer and historian) who has written the much-acclaimed "Empire, War and Cricket in South Africa" was the guest speaker at the East Rand branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) meeting, at the Benoni Country Club on Wednesday, March 9. U3A committee members Ann Smith and Tico Poplak flank Allen on the left, with Cheryl Paterson on the right.



Talking cricket and colonial history

Logan Green

You might be one of those people who (like me) are obsessed with the sport of cricket, but, have you ever thought about its origins and its development in our country and around the world?

Part of me is also deeply captivated by colonial history and the tales of infamous personalities such as Cecil John Rhodes and company, too.

So, what better way to peak my interest than through a book covering innumerable aspects of the Victorian Era, the Anglo Boer War, the Randlords, money politics, race and cricket, of course, to name just a few?

When Dean Allen, lecturer, historian, speaker and author of the intensively well-researched book "Empire, War and Cricket in South Africa", was set to give a talk on his recently released work at the East Rand branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) at the Benoni Country Club on Wednesday, March 9, I immediately ensured

that I cleared space in my busy sport reporting schedule to hear him speak.

I was completely engrossed in the stories that Allen shared with the audience.

He introduced me and many others to an almost lost figure in South Africa at the end of the 19th Century and early 20th Century, a certain crafty Scotsman named James Douglas Logan who, at the tender age of 19, left his middle-class lifestyle in Britain to head to Australia.

He never got Down Under, however, as he timed his arrival at the Cape perfectly with the rapid growth of the railways.

Logan quickly made friends and rose as a businessman (and later as a Cape politician) with acuity and ingenuity.

The high-flying opportunist Scot also turned what was once a one-horse Karoo town, Matjiesfontein, into a health resort for the rich and famous of the time and a cricketing haven in the most obscure little place.

Rhodes once said he had only met two creators in South Africa: himself and James Douglas Logan, the Scottish-born founder of Matjiesfontein.

A media darling, Logan was one of the first tenderpreneurs in South Africa and used that most British of sports, cricket, to push his own financial and social agenda.

I could delve further and deeper into this story, but you will only truly appreciate Logan's influence (both good and bad) on modern society and southern African cricket once you start turning the pages of Allen's book.

With colonial statues and symbols falling all over the place and the debate around the historical legacy of men like Rhodes, and now Logan, a hot topic (like Logan's arrival in the Cape) it is an apt time to be reading this book and to gain more insight.

I, for one, am already planning a trip to the Karoo.

Visit www.deanallen.co.za for more information about the book and the author.

What's on



March 17
Diabetic support group meeting, 5 Ninth Avenue, Northmead, 6pm (Louise Choate 082 783 4792)

March 19
Benoni Horticultural Society invites you to a talk on "The cut flower industry in Africa", by Stephen Rehbock, Four Seasons Nursery, Eva Road, Fairleads, 2.15pm for 2.30pm (Stephen Rehbock 011 849 2657 or Herb Trokis 083 633 6468)

March 23
Attend two talks by Dr Barry Bland. Topic: "Alzheimer's, Dementia, Parkinson's, the ageing process and what can be done before it's too late", Rynpark Seven, Struben Street, Rynfield, 3pm and 7pm (Wendy Hayward 082 788 7883)

March 23, 24, 26 and 28
St Dunstan's College Easter Sports Festival, netball, hockey and rugby, teams from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Zimbabwe, 54 Millburn Street, Rynfield.

March 26
Bunny Park Craft Market "Free Easter egg hunt", Pretoria Road, Rynfield, 9am until 2.30pm (Janine Richardson 072 713 3332)

March 27
Benoni Art Route, lovely art works by various artists will be on display. Visit www.benoniartroute.co.za to view the map or collect one at 56 11th Avenue, Northmead (Elaine Marx 084 581 6340)
Lemongrass Easter Urban Market, live entertainment, Easter egg hunt and kiddies activities, 38 Russel Street,

Western Extension, 9am until 3pm (Ivonne Taylor 083 284 4777)

April 1
The Benoryn Lioness Club, Bingo Evening, Lions Club House, 111 Howard Avenue, 6pm for 6.30pm (Valerie Ridout 0844710877)

April 8
Methodist Homes - Eddy House fish and chips evening, 133 Ampthill Avenue, 6pm for 6.30pm (Estelle Boshoff 011 421 2712 or 072 563 8338)

April 9
LifeLine Ekurhuleni in partnership with Grapes Pub and Restaurant quiz night, Grapes Pub and Restaurant, corner Russel Street and Victoria Avenue, Western Extension, 6.30pm for 7pm (Lauren Torlage 072 594 7034)

April 11
South African National Blood Service (SANBS), Benoni branch invites you to AGM, 42 14th Avenue Northmead, 6.30pm (Terrance Pillay 011 425 4943)

April 16
Benoni Van Ryn Rotary Club, book sale, Northmead Mall, 8.30am until 2pm (Ann Smith 011 425 4102 or 083 229 9024)

April 21
Methodist Homes - Eddy House day trip visit to the Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve and Ngwenya Glass Village, transport departs at Eddy House, 133 Ampthill Avenue, 8am (Estelle Boshoff 011 421 2712)

GENERAL

April 2
Bokkie Park Craft Market, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg, 9am until 2.30pm (Joan Gould 011 896 3637)

What's On, a community-based bulletin board, is not meant for profit-making business ventures. Items are included at our discretion. Details are not taken by phone. To have events included, fax details, name and surname of contact person to Penelope Masilela on 011 849 5966, or email to whatsonbct@caxton.co.za, by no later than 2pm on the Friday of the week before the item should appear.

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