

# Author shares stories of Matjiesfontein

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LIZAHN WENTZEL

Author and historian, Dr Dean Allen, shared stories of Matjiesfontein with members of the U3A Tygerberg last week.

Dr Allen was born in England but arrived in South Africa in the mid-1990s where he began his studies at Stellenbosch University.

It was while conducting research for his Master’s degree, that he came across the little Karoo town which captured his imagination and led to a PhD which he completed in 2008.

He released his book, *Empire, War and Cricket in South Africa: Logan of Matjiesfontein* in 2015 – with 6 000 copies being sold to date.

The book explores how Matjiesfontein was created and how Scottish railway man, James Douglas Logan developed it into a renowned health resort, attracting the rich and famous of the late nineteenth century and the role he played in developing the game



■ Dr Dean Allen, with Gerna Conradie and U3A Tygerberg chairman Johan Mallinson.

of cricket in South Africa.

Speaking to members of the U3A Tygerberg on Thursday July 13 at the Bellville civic centre, Dr Allen spoke about how Logan, who immigrated to South Africa in 1857 at the age of 19, made his fortune through business, politics and his association with cricket.

Logan died in 1920 and is bur-

ied in a little cemetery 10 kilometres from Matjiesfontein next to his wife Emma.

His son, James Junior inherited the town but ran it to its grave, according to Dr Allen.

His book was inspired by David Rawdon – who acquired the entire village of Matjiesfontein during the late 1960s.



■ Dr Dean Allen

Dr Allen met him during one of his visits which sparked a long time friendship.

Dr Allen promised Mr Rawdon that he would complete his book on Matjiesfontein – a promise he kept.

David Rawdon was the laird of Matjiesfontein from 1968 until he passed away on August 13 2010 at the age of 86.

Dr Allen said Matjiesfontein was a unique part of South Africa’s history because of the people of the town.

“It is important for everyone to go and experience the town and its rich history,” he said.

Dr Allen has spent the past 15 years discovering Matjiesfontein and said he hoped to one day call South Africa his home.