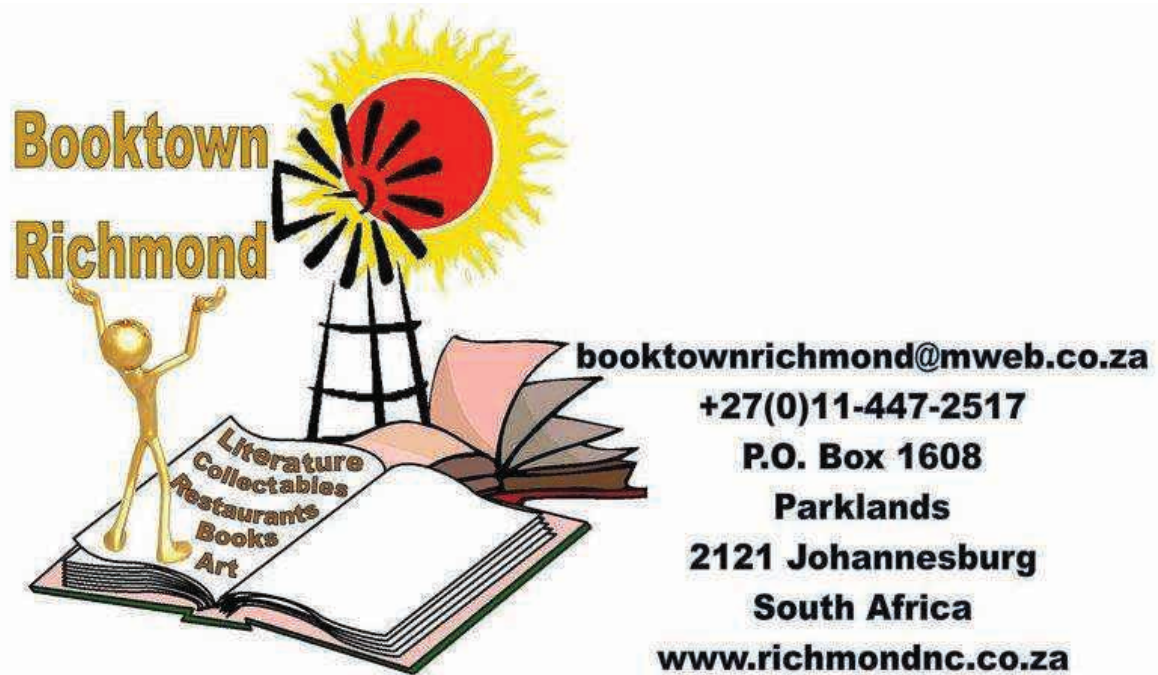




Don't Frack With Our Karoo™
Booktown Richmond's 6th Anniversary
 BookBedonnerd V October 25,26, 27, 2012

2ND ANNUAL J.M. COETZEE & NOBEL LAUREATES FESTIVAL
MAY 25, 26, 2012.

Karoosters,

I arrived in Richmond to find our headquarters looking mighty fine after a big make over, which saw the removal of the old central support column as well as the addition of air conditioning units which has the place as warm as toast on the frosty winter's mornings. Many thanks to architect Dave Clemens and Len and his crew. The main street was looking spectacular. John Donaldson's shops reminded me of Market Street and Die Tuishuise. And then I saw the Tourism Office and the beautiful mural Mike Norris had painted of Die Karretjiemense. If I don't watch out, Booktown Richmond may soon be overtaken by the Mural Town concept!



Locals also like Booktown Richmond's offerings

Have a look at my photo that I took just outside Phillipstown and Mike's mural. and bow before a master!!! Both Mike and I live in Howick and I know the hours Mike spent observing my two donkeys One Ear and Cupcake. He also spent much of his Christmas and New Year at The Donkey Sanctuary in McGregor. We are lucky to have you Mike.



Thank you for all that you are doing for what will become known as Picture Booktown Richmond! A special thanks as well to Alec from Tom se Meule for helping us with the scaffolding and Martie and Marcus from the Tourism Bureau for always being at the service of Mike for a week. The mural made such an impression on Richmonders that even the traffic cops wanted to autoograph the mural instead of writing out speeding tickets!!!!



This is Tooooo real to be just a painting!!!

The morning before I met a total stranger Freddie Leibach , and was reminded of what a singular place the Karoo is. Freddie is a retired Telkom worker who has been walking

the length and breadth of SA for twelve years. Why don't you stay over and listen to the talk on Outa Lappies, I ask? No he says I have to make my way to Victoria West. Now that is what Denis Beckett would call 'a beautiful madness.'



On South African Walkabout...for 12 years

But back to the 2nd JM Coetzee Festival. It got off to the best of starts with Kevin Harris' powerful documentary on Beyers Naude. It took us back to the dark old days of Apartheid. Amidst the horror and brutality depicted in this documentary I could not help but think: Booktown Richmond would not have come about under such a regime, we might have been tortured and locked up for 90 days.

John Cameron-Dow had a tough act to follow. He was the first speaker on JM Coetzee and he did not disappoint. Sadly his beloved Stormers let him down the next day to my Sharks.



Dang Microphone!!

Marius Crous must have caught the audience's attention with the mere fact that JM Coetzee translated an Afrikaans book by Wilma Stockenstrom into English. These days everyone in SA thinks Coetzee is an English writer but forget the formative role Afrikaans and Dutch literature have played in Coetzee's development as a writer. Marius' talk gave us an insight into the complexities of translation Coetzee would have faced in translating one of the most complex novels in Afrikaans.



Marius Crous

Ilze Zietsman had the audience spellbound with her talk on the homes of Pablo Neruda. What a pity though one is not allowed to take photographs in this literary museum but Ilse painted exquisite word portraits about one of the most colourful literary figures in world literature.



Ilze Zietsman

Darryl David gave a talk on Jewish Memories of Mandela. This was truly a most beautiful book and essential reading for all interested in liberation history. This is a book worth the money for its stunning historical photos alone.

Deborah Steinmair gave us a glimpse into why she is a well respected writer. She spoke about why Marike de Klerk, ex wife of FW de Klerk was the inspiration for her book. I judge an author by their ability to surprise me with linguistic cameos and Deborah put a smile on my face numerous times during her talk



Deborah Steinmair

Marianne de Jongh no doubt ruffled a few feathers of the non-literary fraternity. In literary circles it is common knowledge how JM Coetzee pushes the boundaries of the biography. Marianne's talk on Coetzee's novel *Summertime* certainly challenged peoples' ways of reading; and this is really the beauty of the festival. While it is much more academic in nature it nonetheless helps people come to grips with the complexity of Coetzee's oeuvres. Certain novelists need interpreters and that is the role of academics and people like Marianne.



Marianne de Jongh

Geoff Klass gave our programme balance. His talk on the Medical Laureates was long overdue. And while everyone might not have understood the finer technical nuances of his talk, we did leave feeling somewhat more intelligent knowing that we could tell our friends that it was a SA who invented the CAT scan.



Geoff Klass

Engela Duvenhage was the lady who must take credit for inspiring me to start SA's first Mural Town. What I did not know however was that she had visited Chemainus, on Vancouver Island, the world's first Mural Town 7 years ago, but only wrote about her travels last year!!! "You need to atone for your sins", I wrote to Engela after the festival, to which she replied : "Seven years ago you would not have been ready for a mural town...hence the title of my talk : "The Serendipity of SA's Mural Town." Thank you Engela for bringing the Mural Town concept to our attention and for your encouraging message from Dr Karl Schutz, founder of the world's first Mural Town in Chemainus.

I am the founder of the Chemainus Mural Society and the guy who came up with the idea...I have tried on several occasions to start a mural project in Africa but was not able to find someone with the determination and commitment that it takes for it to be successful. I am very grateful for your inspiration

For over 125 years Chemainus depended on the forest industry, and before the sawmill closed in 1984 the town completed a downtown revitalization project of which the mural played the most important part. The murals have created a multi-million dollar tourism industry, and we are congratulating Richmond for their wisdom in adapting our economic development strategy. These master paintings are not only creating a prosperous industry, but equally important, are an inspiration to everyone's heart and soul.

**Good luck and best regards,
Karl**



Mike and Engela...Mural Magic

Keith Britz almost missed his bus to Richmond. He said you've never seen a 70 odd year old man run faster, after he realized that the normal pick up point had been changed. Not many know that Keith's book Big Dan's Sofie, which was nominated for the EU Literary Prize and the Sunday Times fiction award, is also dedicated to a certain Darryl Earl David!!!! Keith's book and Booktown Richmond are my proudest moments, not to mention Keith's. It is a book that took 25 years to gain acceptance before being published and now it has finally been published in Afrikaans by Griffel Publishers. Originally written in Afrikaans, it had to be translated into English before it would see the light of day 28 years later as Sofie van Groot Daan



Mr. BTR Keith Britz

Antony Osler took us closer to Stoeptyd with his book *Stoep Zen*. And may I congratulate Antony and Jacana for producing a truly exquisite book. Eye candy! Word candy!!! A book that makes you think about life. Everyone certainly agreed because Antony sold all the books he brought. Poor Elza Miles did not even get a book.



Antony Osler

The next morning started on a high with an inspiring talk by Jonathan Deale about his crusade against Fracking. It must have been a sobering talk even for those who did not have too much wine and whisky the night before, about the threat that fracking poses to one of the last pristine wilderness areas in SA, the Karoo. It is a sad fact that economists who write for the big business tabloids in SA are in the pockets of Shell and one needs the likes of Jonathan to expose their articles for what they are - LIES.



Better get the frack out of our Karoo...the man!

Helize van Vuuren then rounded off the morning session of Day 2 with a fascinating piece of detective work. I love academics like Helize. The previous day she could be seen prancing up and down the streets of Richmond looking for rock art around Richmond. Today she was speculating that Wilma Stockenström's book *Die Kremetart Ekspedisie* is a reaction to JM Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Riveting stuff!!!



Helize van Vuuren

Maureen Isaacson looked worried the entire festival bar the last night when I had dinner with her and she had a glass of wine as a constant companion!!! But it was my fault. When Chris Nicholson pulled out at the 11th hour I approached Maureen to give a talk on Desmond Tutu because I had heard she was working on a chapter for a book on African Peace Nobel Laureates. So, thanks Maureen for giving accomplished talks on Nadine Gordimer and Desmond Tutu; and we are so sorry to hear that your laptop was stolen on your way back at one of the garages. I hope it did not sour your trip to Richmond.



Maureen Isaacson...en fin!

Anton Harber gave probably one of the great talks at Booktown Richmond. I had approached Anton to present the Nadine Gordimer Warrior for Freedom lecture. Four times before the festival he had written to me asking what I expected of him! And then the gods smiled on him through the "Spear of the Nation" furore. What a talk; the students at Wits should be privileged to have such a lecturer. Witty, erudite, and so able to take the emotion out of an emotive topic. He started his talk by saying that Blade Mzimande had called him a half-baked academic. Those of us in the room knew we were sitting in the presence of greatness; and we are not alone in our admiration. Anton was shortlisted for the Paton Prize for his book *Diepsloot* and over the weekend won a Media 24 prize, the Recht Malan Prize for the book as well.



Anton Harber....no half baked cookie here

After lunch, we watched Kevin Harris' documentary on Desmond Tutu and the role of the church in the struggle. In a time when Tutu is revered by all but the ANC, it was good to remind ourselves through the lens of Kevin how vilified Tutu was during Apartheid. You can be assured this will not be his last trip to Richmond.



Film Producer Kevin Harris..long overdue in BTR

It was a pleasure to meet Elza Miles. She and well known Afrikaans author Johan van Wyk, never missed a single talk during the festival. Johan was my lecturer at university and it is true to say much of what I know I have him to thank for. But poor Elza; she told me she is a nervous speaker and true enough, just before her talk she lost one of the pages of her presentation. After a frantic search we found it, and then we listened to a talk on one of the great sons of the Karoo - Jan Schoeman aka Outa Lappies. Now we understood why Outa Lappies was such a revered artist and why Elza is such a respected art critic.



Elza Miles



Hennie & Izak from Prince Albert...and cactus art

And I am not alone in my sentiments. Prince Albert artists Hennie Boshoff and Izak hired a car from Oudtshoorn and drove to Richmond to hear Elza speak. And they did not come empty handed. Have a look at this exquisite pot plant that they donated to Booktown Richmond. But look closer at the mosaic. Oh so clever Hennie; a protest about censorship. See you at Villa Kruger soon. I have a feeling Prince Albert is going to see my face quite a bit in the not too distant future!



Stapled closed...are we?



John Nankin in full flight

But the afternoon session belonged to one John Nankin. Now that is what we meant by Bedonnerd when we named our October festival BoekBedonnerd! That is what you call entertainment with a capital E! I have a love affair with Helen Martins but after John's talk I have to know more about her husband Johan Pienaar. This is what Booktown Richmond is known for; we seem to attract people who suffer from a

beautiful madness. Thanks also to Johan van Wyk who introduced me to John. When the history of Booktown Richmond is chronicled, this talk will get special mention.

The festival however was made by a story told to me afterwards by Edwin Jackson, past participant at BoekBedonnerd, who was at his first JM Coetzee Festival. Edwin had just arrived in Richmond and went to draw out money from the ATM when the damn machine printed those dreaded words - INSUFFICIENT FUNDS. Edwin was now stranded because he had been expecting a payment which someone did not honour. He had no petrol to return and his alarm on his car was screeching like a toddler when Richmond resident Engela, sensing Edwin's distress, just gave Edwin R200 for his petrol. And then during the festival she popped another R100 in his hand with the words: "You need a cup of coffee." I need a box of Kleenex.....

Thank you one and all for making this intimate festival truly memorable.

DED & PCB