



# THATCHERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA DEKKERSVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Newsletter 3/2021

## NEWSLETTER

Dear TASA member

Our hearts go out to our members who are suffering under the current conditions in our country. We have great appreciation for those of you who have already renewed your membership as well as for those who pay the membership fees in installments as funds become available.

When asked what the quality of our members' work is, it is unequivocally stated that our TASA members have the necessary knowledge to complete projects successfully. Confirmation is also given from which date membership has been granted. The fact that SATAS, which is an independent certification body, investigates and handles complaints if any, counts in favour of our members.

### 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

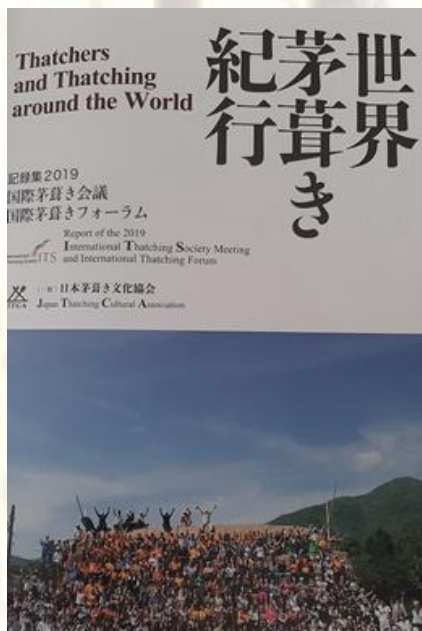
Our financial year closing was on February 28, 2021. The financial statements were sent to our auditor and our SARS as well as our CIPC (Companies and Intellectual Property Commission) returns will be submitted once our statements are finalised.

About ten of our members have not yet renewed their current year's membership.

A decision has yet to be made on how we would like to conduct this year's Annual General Meeting. Will we, like last year, ask for comments and recommendations via email and deal with restrictions as a result of the Covid 19, or will we, as in the past, book a place where we will all be able to socialise together?

### EXCERPT FROM MR. ABRIE VISAGIE'S PRESENTATION DURING THE THATCHING SOCIETY MEETING AND INTERNATIONAL THATCHING FORUM IN JAPAN DURING 2019

An informative and colorful report was made available to ITS members from which this was taken.



„We are talking about thatching in South Africa, so maybe I should explain where South Africa is. I don't know if many of you people have been there. So if you go from here to London, that's about half way, you turn left, and you go all the way, then you will find Cape Town; that is in South Africa. South Africa is very diverse. It's not only diverse in culture. We've got eleven languages, but I only speak two of them. We've got more than five official religions, but I think there are many more than that. We have nine provinces, and from north to south, we have about 2000 kilometers. So it's a really diverse country and it shows in the thatching, as well, which is quite diverse.

We've got three main styles in South Africa. In Cape Town, where my company is working, it is very much European style, working with a material called Cape reed.

In the northern part of the country, it's mainly with grass and the use of sways. Bertus, my colleague, is from that area, and André Friis, Chairman of the South African Thatching Association, is thatching that way. André is working mainly in Africa; he has completed a large project in Sudan and also the Sheraton Hotel in The Gambia and various Lodges in Botswana. So that is one way of thatching, but there is a lot of influence from Africa and other regions. John Smith, one of our colleagues, is from that area. What we in Cape Town call Zuluesque thatching is another way of thatching where you don't use sways at all. It looks quite different. Despite having so many different people on the job in South Africa and in the Association, we talk to each other at the same table, but we don't often get to the same answer.



Take a look at what we call the Cape Town European style thatching, much influenced by Europe, because Cape Town was a colony for many years. It was a Dutch colony, a bit of French influence, a lot of German influence plus English influence. So lots of Dutch influences way back. If you look at some of the buildings, the oldest one that we worked on originated in 1688. So it's quite an old and very traditional trade. If you go more to the northern part of the country, more freestyle, lots of game lodges and using different material as well. Then in the Natal area, come examples of John Smith's work, you see again working in a different method.

Current challenges we have. Listening to the other colleagues today, I think it's pretty much the same all over the world. South Africa as a country, both politically and economically, is in a bit of white water, we are not exactly sure where it's going. So it's having difficult times in terms of that. We are very dependent on a lot of foreign investments and that's eroded a bit at the moment.

The last couple of years we have been having a major drought, some of you referred to that this morning. The result from the drought, particularly in the Cape Town area, is that we have unknown veld fires, which is unusual for that specific area. Forest fires and wildfires. We really lost a lot of thatched buildings during this time. There were some English guys that talked about fires, 18 last year, we had one fire ruining 75 houses in Cape Town.

The main concerns are the cost because it's labour intensive and labour cost is rising in South Africa, as well. Fires are always a problem. It's not a pretty site – this was a heritage building that burned down, and it's difficult to convince people to rebuild with thatch after a fire. Obviously the cost of maintenance is a challenge. People think that they put up the thatch and leave it for 50 years and they don't need to maintain it at some point. As we mentioned this morning, the result is that the thatchers in South Africa actually had to survive by growing and expanding their businesses and the services they offer. So, different from other parts of the world, the thatchers are mainly carpenters as well, building the structures. And obviously, if there are not enough new thatched buildings, you do all kinds of things like you can see here.

So, what does the future hold? I think our main purpose is to get to the clients and get to the professional teams, the designers or architects, to convince them that thatch is still relevant and thatch is still a very good element to use.

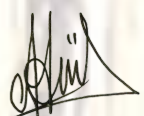
And before I say thank you, while I'm standing here, my colleagues have asked me to mention something about the biggest thatched roof in South Africa. I think specifically in terms of the South African market, which is far less regulated, it creates a lot more opportunities than some of the more controlled countries. I don't know if many people have realized that a lot of South African thatchers are not working in South Africa. A lot of them are working in the Middle East, in Dubai; it's a major thatching place for South Africans. And André Friis, who is sitting here as well, did major work in Saudi Arabia and one of his projects, even though not a single roof, was 40 000 square meters and apparently Europe's biggest one is 6 500, so it is obviously bigger. We have some really big jobs done all over the world by South Africans."



The next International Thatching Society congress will take place in Holland but has been postponed due to the Covid 19 restrictions until next notice.

We wish our members prosperity and success and trust together that conditions will improve in the near future. Please contact the TASA office if you require a confirmation of your membership or anything we can assist you with.

Kind regards



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**NATIONAL CHAIRMAN**

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