



## THATCHERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA DEKKERSVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Newsletter 1/2014

**NEWSLETTER**

3 March 2014

Dear TASA member

The new year kicked off with a big event which will not soon be repeated in South Africa, due to the fact that member states each take a turn to host the ITS Congress and Thatching Fair.

The ITS Congress and Thatching Fair takes place in Sweden during August next year and Japan will be hosting the 2016 International Congress and Thatching Fair.

We are convinced that it was a huge success and especially our international counterparts enjoyed it from the outset.

The Western Cape region acted as one and ensured the smooth running of this Congress. They deserve our praise and appreciation. *It is because of this event that the TASA, for the first time since its establishment, is financially capable to tackle other projects in order to promote the TASA and to address problems and shortcomings in our Industry.*

It was a privilege to host a group of 105 Thatchers from the Northern hemisphere.

The interaction that took place was invaluable and South African Thatchers can be assured that our thatching methods are on par with our counterparts - but we may even be considered a leader in some respects because constructing pole structures are also done by our contractors. South Africa has the most thatched roofs in the world.

The wooden board against which the thatch is stitched in other countries is the reason why no finishing touches are needed on the inside of the roof.

The pole construction on the inside of our buildings was surprising to many and the size of the surface area of our houses also impressed during the site visits.

### **Tourist program**

A week before the start of the ITS congress an interesting tourist program was offered so that our guests could experience and enjoy a bit more of our sunny country before their return to the snowy landscapes of the Northern hemisphere.



A visit to the Boulders to see the penguins



A boat ride to Robben Island



## Fun Fair

During the Fun Fair, demonstrations of the different thatching methods were presented. Competitions were also held to determine which team could hit nails into blocks the fastest; throw a bunch of thatch reed the farthest as well as the most accurately through a ring. This has, among others, contributed to the relaxed atmosphere and spirit of co-operation which prevailed to the end. The winning teams were each rewarded with a bottle of genuine South African wine.



It was a nice warm day outside Stellenbosch and our guests were treated to a delicious barbecue meal.



The delegation from the UK demonstrates their method of thatching



An example of the ridge detail in the UK



Demonstration of how to thatch a bend



Example of a bended roof



Demonstration of the installation of a fire blanket





Japan demonstrated how to thatch a Japanese style roof with Cape reed



An example of the thickness of Japanese roofs



It was the first time in history that the TASA's Western Cape members built a roof together



Demonstration of the performance of a chemical fire retardant product



The bundles of thatch reed were delicately "worked" to make it more flexible to accurately throw it through the ring.



Competition to hit nails in a wooden block



## Photo Competition

A photo competition was also held with 72 entries from 7 countries of ITS members' best work. The competition was fierce, but the roofs that got the most attention and captured the imagination were those that were the most creative

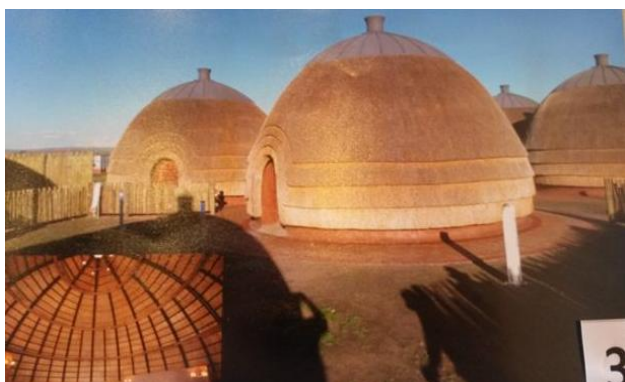
During conversations, the European countries complained that they are bound by narrow cultural standards and that creativity and imagination are nipped at the bud. South Africa is really a showcase to the world of what can be done with thatch.



Mr. Henk Horlinks of the Netherlands view the entries

## The best Thatched Roof in the World

Biggarsberg Thatchers' picture was awarded the "Best Thatched Roof in the World" and a thatching spade (dekspaan) used by Western Cape thatchers served as a trophy.



The winning photo



John & Shaun Smith of Biggarsberg Thatchers

## **Factors that influenced all ITS members and to which attention can be given to improve the situation:**

The group discussions resulted once again in the realisation that no matter in which country you find yourself, Thatch Contractors experience more or less the same problems.

Misscommunication between the different parties, fire prevention, approval of plans, workmanship, quality of materials etc. cause headaches for everyone.

There were not only interactions between the competing contractors of South Africa, but also invaluable interaction between contractors from seven different countries who attended the conference.

Although there are differences of opinion between contractors, the need to discuss these differences in order to broaden horizons and to cultivate more hope for the future exists.

It was very interesting to notice such a positive sentiment across the Industry. For example, in the UK Thatchers are curtailed regarding design, but find other ways to make the roof designs interesting. In Sweden thatched roofs are regarded as an expression of artistic creativity.

The Congress encouraged hope for the future for many contractors – which was especially evident in the enthusiasm of the Europeans.



Goodbye till we meet again in Sweden!

### **OUR GUESTS EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION**

**Subject: Overdue 'Thank you' from Thatchers in England.**

Dear Abrie,

Please accept my apologies for not contacting you sooner - I have made a point of avoiding the computer since I arrived home!!

Just wanted to say 'thank you' once again to you and everyone else who put in so much effort organizing such a packed event for international Thatchers.

Gordon and I had a fantastic time in S.A. and finished off at Pumba Game Reserve (which we highly recommend) - it is unlikely that we would have travelled that far if it wasn't for your conference to give us the push. You have set the bar extremely high for others to follow!

I'm sure we will meet again - Sweden perhaps?

Very Best Wishes,

Kate Hood (Glover).

Dear Abrie and the team,

Thank you so much for all the hard work you all put into making the conference such an overwhelming success.

The tours and spectacular scenery gave us a glimpse of the diversity of your wonderful country and the sampling of some of the local products was a joy.

The Thatching Fair was fantastic, the highlight being Michael Andersen's handling of the water reed in the distance and accuracy throwing competition.

The conference itself was an eye opener, to see so many Thatchers from around the world gathered together ... all confronted with similar problems. This will give a real focus for us in UK to keep working on the fire issues.

It all seems a long way away now we are back in the UK with rain yet again...

Thank you all again for your kindness and hospitality

On behalf of Team UK

Andrew

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Kind regards

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