



THATCHERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA DEKKERSVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Newsletter 6/2015
22 September 2015

NEWSLETTER

Dear member

After a very successful International Congress held from 9 to 13 September 2015 in Sweden, the TASA's delegation returned to South Africa, which consisted of "the big 5". Namely Bertus Nieuwenhuis, John Smith, Abrie Visagie, Kosie Theunissen and Jason Lucas. The overseas Thatchers could not compete with these heavyweights (literally)!

The goal of the ITS is spelled out as follows:

"INTERNATIONAL THATCHING SOCIETY - KNOWLEDGE OF THE THATCHED ROOF"

The aim of the ITS is to establish a base of knowledge and techniques that will upgrade the status of the thatched roof from its historical image as a roof almost entirely used on old and listed buildings, to a modern and competitive roof, comparable to many other kinds of roofing, irrespective of the function of the buildings upon which it is used. In practice, this means that the sharing of all knowledge concerning both fire protection and durability of thatching materials (water reed, straw and miscanthus) are presently the most important working fields of the ITS."

Here is a photo display of the Congress.



The TASA's delegation was warmly welcomed by the two Swedish hosts, namely Adam Ooms and Michael Andersen. From the Council meeting until the closing function, all attest of good taste and charm.



It was once again a very sociable atmosphere and we were spoiled with a delicious dinner at the storage facility of Adam Ooms.

Continuous humor helped to defuse stressful situations during meetings. Bertus Nieuwenhuis said that what impressed him was the feeling of goodwill that prevailed throughout between all the Thatchers.

They do not refer to their rivals as competition, rather as colleagues. When a Thatcher gets a big project, they share the workload between even 3 or 4 of them. The process repeats itself a next time when someone else gets a contract. There is no competition between contractors and the climate is favourable and relaxed between all.

The Swedes introduced us to their traditional thatching which to our frame of reference appeared as negligence. For example, the ridges of the thatched roofs are compacted with plant material such as heather or straw and held in position by placing wood in a straddled position over the straw. Sometimes chicken wire is also made use of with the distinctive wooden weights. It can apparently hold up to seven years, when the owner himself can just replace the old straw and put the timber weights back.



What was also impressive was the mixing of different cover materials, for example, heather and reed. The roof is covered with a layer of reed, then a layer of heather and then cane. This is to save costs on the reed which cost \pm 3 Euros per sheaf.

A second phenomenon was the cover of seaweed with a lifespan of about 200 years. It washes easily out on the beach and need only to be picked up. The seaweed is then laced as our ancestors did to make yarn or knitting wool. The thickness is uneven and then weaved through the rods which serve also to tie the seaweed to the roof. So coverage can be up to one meter thick. Peeled grass sods are then used as a weight on the covered seaweed.



Any plant materials from moss to different kinds of grass which want to grow on the roofs are left intact. This is something that will not be accepted in South Africa.

PHOTO COMPETITION ONCE AGAIN WON BY A SOUTH AFRICAN!

The photo competition was again won by a South African, namely Recon Thatchers. This is during the ITS' 2015 Photo Competition and crowned as the "Best Thatch Roof in the World."



2015 Best Thatched Roof in the World



Bertus Nieuwenhuis of Recon Thatchers on the right side



Photo competition entries are carefully viewed.



John Smith was the only South African who could throw the cane through the ring



Cecilia Nieuwenhuis and June Smith shone in their creativity and gave seaweed an entirely different use



Abrie also illustrated what the opening in the fence was meant for at the Sofiero palace in Sweden where the young men admired the fairer sex.

Bertus Nieuwenhuis said that it was a full program with a lot of information to process; many thoughts to nurture and it surely was a wonderful experience.

Messrs. Kosie Theunissen, Jason Lucas and Abrie Visagie traveled further north in Sweden a few days before the ITS conference headed by Michael Andersen and visited among others Sten and Samuel Nilson's farm. Sten is known for the hand manufacture of the wings of the old windmills. They also visited some historical buildings in Scania.





John and Jane Smith also used the opportunity to experience the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) by boat via the fjords in Norway.

New International Thatching Society Management

During the ITS Conference, Messrs Nigel Turton of England was elected as President and Michael Anderson of Sweden as Vice President of ITS.

All the members of the ITS that was in South Africa last year, still can not stop talking about their South African experience and again expressed their appreciation to the Thatchers Association for their presentation of the ITS 2014.

The next International Thatching Society Congress will be held in England during 2017.

The TASA's "Guide to Thatch Construction in South Africa"

Provision has already been made for the free downloadable "Guide to Thatch Construction in South Africa" on the TASA website. When this document is finalized, it will be uploaded and you will be notified of its availability.

THATCHERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S TENTH BIRTHDAY

The first formal Management meeting of the reconstituted Thatchers Association of South Africa was held on 2 November 2005. Members then present were:



Pat Wilson	-	Chairman	Micon Coatings
Philip Boardman	-	Secretary	Alternative Structures
Will Andrews	-	Member	Zambesi Thatch
Abrie Visagie	-	Vice Chairman	LQT
Terry Wilson	-	Member	Thatch-it
Abe Stears	-	Member	SATAS
Adv. Ronny Koekemoer-		By invitation	
Elzabie Meintjes	-	Administrative Officer	

All Thatchers were encouraged to join and those members who paid an entry fee of R500 to establish the TASA received a "Founder Member" certificate. They also received a "Founder Member" seal which was the first seal that was applied to the first membership certificate.

Special Recognition

The TASA would like to acknowledge members with an uninterrupted membership since 2006 to date - with a clean record - for their invaluable contribution and input. These members constructively contributed to the emergence of the "Guide to Thatch Construction in South Africa" which is the fruit of ten years' labour..

A special event is planned during which certificates (or if you have a better proposal) be awarded to these members and also a special vehicle sticker. On this occasion, the Guide will also be formally launched and presented to stakeholders in the wider industry.

Social Media

A friendly request to our members to promote the TASA's Facebook page by "liking it"

You will also find the TASA on LinkedIn under the name "Dekkersvereniging SA".

Kind regards

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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

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