



President: Michael Tuffin **Chairman:** Errol Scarr **Hon Treasurer:** Henry Diesveld **Secretary:** Glenda Thorpe
Honorary Members: Laurie Powis, Colin Cook, Marianne Alexander, Barbara Hey, Mary Smith, Anne Bean, Adam Harrower, Michael Tuffin

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 4 June 2018 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands

SOUTH AMERICAN PLANTS AND LANDSCAPES – FROM THE DESERTS OF CHILE, THE ANDES IN BOLIVIA, TO THE AMAZON

Honorary Member, Marianne Alexander, will provide a visual feast, with snippets and inserts of the fauna and flora encountered: from the Chilean Atacama desert, the high (5000m) volcanic plains, lakes, geysers and salt flats of the Brazilian Alto Plano, to the floating reed islands of Titicaca and the city of La Paz, to Machu Picchu in Peru, over the Andes and into the forests of the Amazon.

NEXT OUTING

20 June at 10:00: Join the Helderberg Garden Club where Cherise Viljoen will be giving their members a talk on *Edible Indigenous*. Tea will be provided. A visit to a few members' gardens will follow at 11:30. Stay for lunch at The Halfway House (for your cost), if you wish, at Retirement Village prices, so definitely worth it. The choice is yours. Limited to 20. Car registration numbers and cellphone numbers will have to be provided for access to the complex. Please RSVP to Glenda by 15 June.

REPORT BACK

113th Annual General Meeting

This meeting was attended by 51 members and 14 visitors, with apologies from 13 members.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

"The year under review has been a busy one for our Society. Members have been very concerned about the drought situation facing our region and, as keen gardeners, it has broken many hearts as so many have seen their gardens and plants shrivel up, unless you are one of the lucky ones with good quality water from a borehole. As a result of the situation, we have tried to concentrate on speakers and topics which could assist members to cope with the drought.

During the year our speakers have ranged from Rosalind Spears who came and gave us an illustrated talk on the gardens of Coletton Fishacre and its connections with Gilbert and Sullivan. The talk was ably illustrated with pictures and music inserts which made it a very interesting address. This was followed in March by Cherise Viljoen's talk entitled *Beauties and Beasts* where she was encouraging members to plant more indigenous plants. Kay Montgomery was the next speaker in April and we all know her primarily as the journalist who writes in the Weekend Argus and her title was *25 years of Gardening in the Weekend Argus*.

In May Ernst van Jaarsveld spoke on his plant collecting trips – Cape Agulhas to Angola – which had us enthralled. In June, Mikhal Lambert of the Goedgedacht Trust told us about the work they were doing in the communities around Riebeeckskasteel to encourage vegetable growing and tree planting. We also sent donations of seed trays, pots and tools up to the Trust.

July was a presentation by our President, David Davidson, on the Trials and Tribulations of staging the SANBI exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show in which they won both the President's Award and a Gold Medal. In September, Morné Faulhamer spoke about landscaping with plants to survive our conditions. The following month Hugh Clarke, the co-author of the book, *The Illustrated Dictionary of Southern African Plant Names*, talked about it. Finally, in November, Professor Jenny Day explained how the city of Cape Town has sourced its water over the years.

At this stage we must thank Jenny Scarr for all her efforts in organising the speakers and following up on them.

The Christmas Party was once again well attended and a pleasant evening was enjoyed by everyone, including Rosalind and Johnny Spears who were invited as guests for that occasion. Our thanks must go to Melanie and her team who ensured an excellent meal.

Garden Visits: The visits are organised by Cherise Viljoen and we thank her for all the work she does in finding the gardens and arranging with the hosts to have their privacy invaded by members of the CHS, often supplying tea to the party.

Neville Wylie's was the first garden we visited last year in Constantia and we could see what he had been able to achieve in a relatively short time on a new site.

Other gardens visited included those in Fernwood and Silwood, landscaped by Clare Burgess. In March we visited Welbeloond, a hundred year-old property in Constantia. The Philippi Horticultural Area was a very interesting visit, in April, with Nazeer Sunday as our guide. In June, Anthony Hitchcock took members around the Tokai Restoration Area to see what had been achieved after the removal of the pine trees.

Other gardens visited include the Sculpture Garden of Dylan Lewis in Stellenbosch, the home of Sheila Boardman - Soetvlei, followed by a visit to Bridlestone where all the landscaping along the verge of the townhouse complex was being achieved by using indigenous flora and drought-resistant plants. In August we visited Babylonstoren and were taken around the garden by Ernst van Jaarsveld. We saw the start of the construction of the Spice House which will be seen by those who go to Babylonstoren later this week.

September was the much awaited CHS weekend away at Prince Albert and you will hear all about it as soon as we finish the formal part of the meeting.

Jan Meynell's garden in Constantia was visited in October; it is a real eye-opener for a lady who's really dedicated to keeping her garden alive and thriving. Sue Buckland's indigenous meadow garden in the Sir Lowry's Pass Village was visited in November and I believe it was quite an eye-opener.

Plant Table: This is an important part of our monthly meetings and we introduced a points system during the year with slips being completed by plant owners. This is increasing the information available both at the meetings and in the newsletter. It has also enabled us to differentiate between those plants tough enough to survive the drought and those getting more water of various types. We thank all the members who bring in specimens and also Jenny Scarr for discussing them.

Plant Sale: The annual Plant Sale was held on the 9th of September and amazingly enough, in spite of the drought and our problems keeping gardens going, there was an amazing turnout of both people and plants and congratulations to those involved with the organisation of it. Melanie has run it for a number of years and it grows and grows. We made R12,357 profit, which was an excellent figure.

Flower Show: Unfortunately, as we said last year, the show would not be taking place as there were no volunteers to help organise it but hopefully the weather conditions will improve in the course of the next 12 months and then one could reconsider the staging of an annual show if sufficient helpers come forward.

Library: The library was opened in June and it has become a focal point of monthly meetings as members borrow the books. Peter Henshall has really done wonders with cataloguing all the books which have been donated, primarily by Michael Tuffin, for which we thank him most sincerely.

The other important people we must thank are Susan and her team, both the ladies and one gent, who regularly each month make the refreshments for members who wish to have tea or coffee.

Other issues which are of importance are the **CHS Nursery** and the **Seed Swop Box**. While the plant sales have been downplayed this year because of the drought conditions, Jane Robertson has encouraged members to partake in the seed swop box.

Donations: With our healthy financial situation we have felt the need to make donations to various community activities.

1. We sponsored three bus trips for 186 learners from the Nal'Uxolo Primary School in Philippi to the Goldfields Education Centre at Kirstenbosch for environmental awareness education.
2. The excess plants from our Plant Sale were donated to the Mamre Garden Club and Lillian Masebenza's Community Herb and Seedling Nursery and to the Marina Garden Club.
3. We again presented prizes to the top three students at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Horticultural studies.

The Athenaeum Garden: In spite of all our good intentions last year regarding upgrading the gardens, the drought has forced us to wait until the Athenaeum Trust can make provision for water to use in the newly planted area. Gerald Robertson is now our representative on the Trust so we hope to make more progress this year.

Last but not least I must thank Glenda Thorpe, our secretary, for all the work she does particularly in regard to the CHS newsletter, which is a mine of information for both our members and for those who happen to read the CHS newsletter online. The Haphazard Gardener's notes have been a useful contribution and we thank Peter for them.

We continue to be affiliated to Mediterranean Gardening International and CHS members have participated in a number of their organised outings while travelling overseas. News of their events, seed swapping and horticultural information is available to all members.

The Society revolves around you, its members, and to serve you, the committee are the people responsible for organising speakers, outings and the hundred and one other tasks which have to be done. And I would like to thank all those who help run the Society."

TREASURER'S REPORT:

"As the Audited Financial Statements for the year ending 28 February 2018 have already been circulated, only brief discussion will follow.

Income Statement: The deficit of R4 215 is slightly lower than the R4 400 forecast this time last year. Income was higher than expected which offset the unbudgeted library costs of approx. R7 000.

Balance Sheet: The financial position of the Society remains healthy with Accumulated Funds of R88 943. The market value of our investments was R126 213, a slight increase on last year.

Budget 2018 – 2019: A proposed budget has been drawn up based on the expected income and expenditure, and shows an expected loss of R5 300 for the next financial year. The question of possibly increasing subs next year would be revisited around about November."

CHS PRESIDENT:

The Chairman read a note from David Davidson, sent to the Society prior to the 2017 AGM:

"As you know I accepted the invitation (to be President), with honour, shortly before my relocation to the Deep South, where I now find myself increasingly unable to make a meaningful or active contribution to the Society, and I am feeling very guilty about this! I would therefore be very pleased for the position to be given to someone more actively involved in the Society at such time as an alternative incumbent can be found".

With Michael Tuffin, who was the Committee's preferred choice (having turned it down on a previous occasion), being so ill at that time, David was persuaded to continue as President for another year.

There was resounding approval from all members present when Errol Scarr proposed that Michael Tuffin be elected as President of the CHS.

David sent his apologies for not being able to attend the AGM and included this message to Michael:

"Dear Michael,

We know what extraordinary lengths you have been to to delay your appointment as President of the Society, but time has been kind, and waited patiently for you. You certainly DESERVE the position, you have EARNED it and we are now certain that you will OWN the honour, so it gives me great pleasure to pass on the badge of the President of the Cape Horticultural Society. Long may it remain with you. With kindest regards, David."



The President's badge was presented to Michael Tuffin, with thanks for his service to the CHS. Michael's response was that he was honoured, but, on the other hand, *"the older you get, the higher they push you up!"*

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE:

The 10 serving members were prepared to stand for re-election and two new nominations had been received. With unanimous approval from all members present, all 12 were voted onto the committee for the ensuing year. They are: Susan Armstrong, Henry Diesveld, Bill Elder, Jane Robertson, Errol Scarr, Jenny Scarr, Melanie Stewart, Glenda Thorpe, Michael Tuffin and Cherise Viljoen, as well as Isabella Hayden and Georgina Charlesworth.

Book Prize Winners



From left: Nico van Wyk, Jenny Liedtke, Errol Scarr, Michael Tuffin, Sihle Ngxabi, Prof Charl Laubscher (HOD: Horticultural Sciences) and Cherise Viljoen

The AGM followed with our annual presentation of prizes to the top students (2nd and 3rd Years and BTech) in the Horticultural Department at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Our first winner is Nico van Wyk who attained an average mark of 68% with 2 distinctions at the end of his 2nd year.

Nico grew up in Bellville where, from a young age, he helped his grandfather propagate plants in the backyard for his garden. The family moved to Paarl in 2004 where he has been gardening in his parents' garden. He later worked in some of their neighbours' gardens.

After grade 12 he got into growing mushrooms and worked at horticulture-related companies until 2016 when he decided that horticulture was his niche and so started his

diploma. Apart from studying, he is presently practicing permaculture, aquaponics and sustainable systems. He also collects rare herbs and is fascinated with the grafting of cacti.

Next year he intends doing a BTech degree at CPUT and potentially a Masters although he is still trying to figure out which of his hobbies are the most interesting for that. Ultimately he would like to work for himself and, considering the Cape Town situation, seeing himself doing something like Xeriscaping.

Four years later

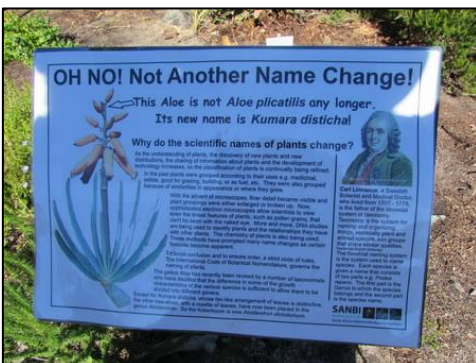
In 2014 the CHS donated R20 000,00 to the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden to help plant up the beds in the parking area after severe flooding the year before.



Left: Parking area at the end of 2013.

Below: Parking area 7 months later.

Far below: Parking area and entrance in May 2018.



Spotted at HPNBG:

“Why do the scientific names of plants change?”

As the understanding of plants, the discovery of new plants and new distributions, the sharing of information about plants and the development of technology increases, so the classification of plants is continually being refined. In the past plants were grouped according to their uses eg. medicinal, edible, good for grazing, building, or as fuel, etc. They were also grouped because of similarities in appearance or where they grew.

With the advent of microscopes, finer detail became visible and plant groupings were either enlarged or broken up. No, sophisticated electron microscopes allow scientists to view even the tiniest features of plants, such as pollen grains, that can't be seen with the naked eye. More and more, DNA studies are being used to identify plants and the relationships they have

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with other plants. The chemistry of plants is also being bused. These methods have prompted many name changes as certain features become apparent.

To avoid confusion and to ensure order, a strict code of rules, The International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, governs the naming of plants.

The genus *Aloe* has recently been revised by a number of taxonomists who have decided that the difference in some of the growth characteristics of the various species is sufficient to allow them to be divided into different genera.

Except for *Kumara disticha*, whose fan-like arrangement of leaves is distinctive, the other tree-aloes, with a rosette of leaves, have now been placed in the genus *Aloidendron*. So the Kokerboom is now *Aloidendron dichotomum*."

And, as this board shows, *Kumara disticha* used to be *Aloe plicatilis*!

May Plant Table (suburb and source of water)

Cherise and Nicola filled in for Jenny and reported on the following specimens brought in by members:

EXOTIC:

Kirstenhof – wellpoint water:

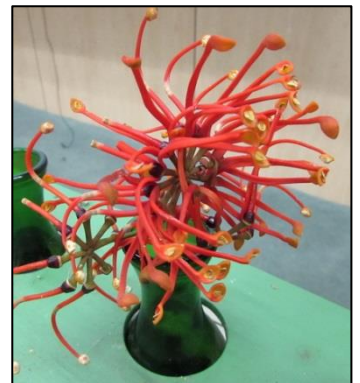
Stenocarpus sinuatus "Firewheel Tree" (right) from Australia and Papua New Guinea

Pinelands – grey water:

Crassula – could be "Campfire", which goes red.

Rugby – watered once or twice a week

Oncidium Jiuhbao Gold 'KBR' (Mericlone) 4543 (right, centre) – won in a R10 raffle eight years ago at an Orchid Society meeting. Each year the flowers get better and better. It won 1st place at the Orchid Society's May meeting!



INDIGENOUS

Sea Point – rain tank:

Tecomaria capensis (below, left) – likes full sun; attracts bees and sunbirds. Orange, yellow and coral are good hedge plants; the red tends to ramble.

Kirstenhof – wellpoint water:

Clivia gardenii – autumn flowering; leaves look similar to others but just a bit broader and more compact.

Lakeside – only rain:

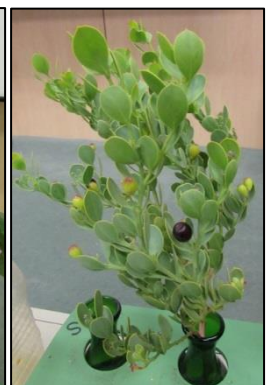
Dombeya burgessiae (below, centre) – if flowers are picked while still pink, they will retain their colour; use for pot-pourri.

Protea susara and P. "pink ice".

Betty's Bay – only watered every 2 to 3 weeks:

Osyris compressa (previously *Colpoos compressum*) "Cape Sumach" (far right) – a semi-parasite; indestructible; edible berries.

Plantz Africa website tells us: "It is a hemiparasitic plant, in other words a plant that is capable of producing its own food (photosynthesis) as well as utilising nourishment from a suitable host plant by means of parasitism."



Helichrysum – furry leaves; has a “veld” smell.

Syncarpha argyropsis “Everlastings” – pointy and not so furry leaves; flowers start out pink and are white when open.

Eriocephalus africanus “Wild Rosemary” – can be used in cooking; has cotton wool seeds.

Plantz Africa website tells us: “It is a well-known medicinal plant and an excellent shrub for the waterwise garden.”



Seriphium plumosum (previously *Stoebe plumosa*) – loved by birds for nest building

Stoebe cinerea “Slangbos”

For more information about the plants above, visit <http://pza.sanbi.org/>..... (put in plant name).

Restios – waterwise because there are no leaves. These are reduced right down to green stems; they create a beautiful textural element of movement, swaying much more in the garden than most plants will; although brown, they have a richness and a depth of colour of their own. Female plants are upright and male plants have stems that dangle.

NICOLA’S AND CHERISE’S CHOICE, RESPECTIVELY, FOR MAY

EXOTIC	INDIGENOUS
<p>University Estate – not watered at all: <i>Banksia</i> from Australia – loved by bees; never watered; thrives in the wind. Brought home 25 years ago in a plastic carrier and grew as is – now 5m high.</p> 	<p>Betty’s Bay – only watered every 2 to 3 weeks: <i>Dicerotheramnus rhinocerotis</i> (formerly <i>Elytropappus rhinocerotis</i>) “Renosterbos” (Eng: rhinoceros bush): Plantz Africa website tells us: “Although not showy or beautiful, it is an interesting and important component of our indigenous flora. It is the dominant member and the namesake of the threatened vegetation type ‘renosterveld’. The plant, Renosterbos, should not be confused with the veld type, Renosterveld, which consists of a typical assemblage of shrubs, geophytes and grasses.”</p> 

WELCOME ...

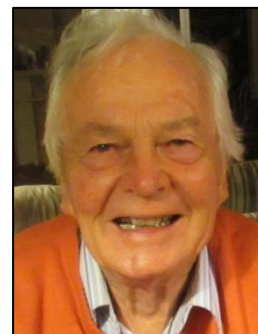
... to another new member, Paul Leader, as well as to Peter and Val Toms who have rejoined after an absence of a few years. We hope their association with the CHS will be a long and beneficial one.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

Bill Elder was born in Scotland and in 1970 he and Jenny arrived in South Africa.

Jenny belongs to a Book Club which meets on a Monday night, so in the mid to late 1980s Bill joined the CHS to “while away the time”. Jenny manages to join him on the odd Monday night. At the May 1990 AGM Bill was elected to the committee – mainly, he says, to help “run the slide projector”!! He can be seen doing an excellent job at our year-end party – and previously at flower show prizegivings – keeping our members happy with the beverages on offer.

Bill does a lot of travelling but when he’s at home, he enjoys working in his own very small veggie patch in a retirement village – and grows tomatoes, spinach, beans, basil, organum, assorted lettuce, rocket, peas, mint, thyme and rhubarb.



JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – MAY / JUNE 2018

The time had come to plant the indigenous bulbs. The plan was to do so before the end of April. 5 o'clock on the afternoon of 27th April: Freedom Day had arrived – no more stalling. I had bought *Albuca* sp., *Babiana villosa* hybrid, *Gladiolus alatus*, *Lachenalia pallida* and *Ornithogalum thyrsoides* because they were the only choices there were at the local nurseries. (Bring back the Kirstenbosch annual plant sale!) I had decided to plant them in containers as they would stand a better chance of survival. The pots are 18cm deep and have been placed on the front west facing veranda where they would get plenty of sun and sufficient air circulation and they were unlikely to overheat on hot days – 28 degrees one day recently. They are also protected from too much rain. (Not much fear of that so far this winter.)

I then consulted Duncan's *Growing South African Bulbous Plants* as to the growing medium. Oh dear! 'The most important component of the growing medium is SAND which should preferably be a medium-grained washed river sand, available from most retail nurseries'. 'Growers will discover their own ideal growing medium – but there can be no doubt that the more sand that is incorporated into the growing medium, the better the results will be'. Oh well the nurseries are closed so the sandy soil in our garden will have to be sufficient.

I placed a layer of broken clay pots over the drainage holes at the bottom of the containers and then some compost to stop the sand from washing out. The containers were then filled with our 'nutrient-poor' garden sand which 'drain(s) rapidly'. This is an 'essential factor' when cultivating local bulbous plants. I covered them with a mulch of fruit shells. The bulbs have begun to sprout. Watch this space to see how they survive.

Last month I mistakenly referred to my pot of Nerines as *N humilis*. On closer inspection, I found that they are, in fact, *N gardenii*. I also thought that another of my Nerines had died, but here it is (right) – a late arrival but looking beautiful – and this one is definitely *N humilis*! It seems to thrive when crowded. These bulbs have been left undisturbed in the same container for years.



Two succulent plants which are growing well in the garden are *Othonna capensis* (below, centre) and *Senecio radicans* (left). *Othonna*, which has plump deep green stems can also be used as a ground cover. The *Senecio* is growing like crazy. It produces a matted colony of banana-shaped tendrils.



I leave you this month with a picture of an orange-flowered *Epidendrum* (below) which has flowered for the first time after sulking in its pot for years.



GOOD MULCHING PRACTICE

Mulches can be defined, quite simply, as materials that are applied over the soil surface in order to modify growing conditions. A huge variety of materials, both organic and inorganic, have been used by gardeners, some for hundreds of years, which suggests they must have genuine value.

Yet, how different mulches function in a range of situations, and whether each mulch is equally successful on all soil types, is less clear. Research by the RHS on this topic has shown that understanding the characteristics of different mulching materials is crucial in anticipating how well they might perform in any given situation (see table below).

MULCHES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS									
o = poor/low potential		oo = moderate/average potential		ooo = good/high potential		? = unknown			
Mulch type	Moisture retention	Weeds suppression	Free from weed seeds	Thermal insulation	Nutrient release	Soil erosion control	Longevity	Appearance over time	Environmentally friendly
Bark chips	oo	ooo	ooo	oo	o	oo	ooo	ooo	oo
Wood chips	oo	ooo	oo	oo	o	oo	oo	oo	ooo
Garden compost	ooo	o	o	o	ooo	ooo	o	oo	ooo
Composted green waste	ooo	oo	oo	o	oo	ooo	o	o	ooo
Sphagnum peat	oo	o	oo	oo	o	o	o	oo	o
Farmyard manure	ooo	oo	o	o	ooo	oo	o	oo	ooo
Coconut fibre (coir)	oo	o	oo	oo	oo	?	o	oo	o
Gravel	o	oo	ooo	o	o	?	ooo	ooo	oo
Slate	o	oo	ooo	o	o	oo	ooo	ooo	ooo
Polythene sheet	ooo	ooo	ooo	ooo	o	oo	o	o	o
Woven polypropylene	oo	ooo	ooo	oo	o	oo	oo	o	o

When applying mulch around plants, a few simple rules will help produce good results:

- Apply organic mulches 7.5 – 10 cm deep. Ideally extend the layer as far as the 'drip-line' (the whole area underneath the plant's branches) and pull back mulch from the trunks, stems and crowns of plants.
- If a mulch is being applied to dry soil in dry weather, soak the ground prior to application. When watering plants that have been mulched, ensure sufficient water is added to wet the soil beneath thoroughly.
- Ideally, feed plants prior to mulching. However, where plants have already been mulched, a foliar feed can be applied or a granular fertilizer can be scattered on the surface after an organic mulch has been raked back. This will ensure the nutrients are directly available for uptake by plants.
- Where spring bulbs are grown, a thick layer of dense organic mulch can actually retard growth by keeping soil temperatures lower than bare soil. A thin layer of coarse mulch, or no mulch, tend to give better results.

Excerpt from *The Garden* of April 2003.

CAN YOU HELP?

Member, Wilma Tindall, has moved to a small holding in the Mamre/Atlantis area and has the following request:

"We have been growing trees from seed and the time has come to plant them out – there are many – into their final designated place on this 9 hectare property.

BUT the area is over run by mole rats with VERY large incisors that slice through roots of even mature trees, like a knife through butter, or simply pull saplings down into their tunnels!

We want to protect the roots as much as possible by planting them into large plastic pots that will go into the ground and we are asking if you would like to donate/recycle your large cracked, split, broken pots (preferably 30 – 36cm diameter, if possible) for this purpose. Or perhaps you know where we can get these; or how to get rid of mole rats non-toxically successfully!! Please let me know on wilmatindall@gmail.com or 083 645 2468.

THINGS TO DO

2 to 30 June: *Wild Harvest – nectar, berries, capsules and seeds* exhibition at UCT Irma Stern Museum, Cecil Road, Rosebank with parking in Chapel Road.

- Opening times are: Tuesday – Friday 10:00 – 17:00 and Saturday (not the 16th) 10:00 – 14:00.
- Walkabouts and tearoom on Wednesdays from 10:30 – 12:30.

For more information and the programme of events, call 021-685-5686 or visit www.irmasternmuseum.org.za

Photos: Andrew Thorpe, Marianne Alexander, Benjamin Festus, Peter Henshall and Glenda Thorpe