

Newsletter 32.3.

April 2017.

Horst Kleinschmidt.

Family news on:

The passing of Martina Rautanen and Peter Ewaldt.
Scattering the ashes of my mother, Eva Kleinschmidt, in the Namib.
Yet more family come together in a visit up the west coast.
Graduation of Alicja Beksinska.
Time with my grandchildren.

1. The passing of Martina Rautanen (1947 – 2017)



It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Martina Rautanen, wife of Juha, in Helsinki, Finland. Martina fought a brave battle against cancer. We first met in Helsinki some years ago, then again in Wuppertal, Germany, then at the great 2014 family gathering in Komaggas, Northern Cape and again in 2015 when she and Juha collected me in Uppsala, Sweden and took me, first to their holiday home on the island of Åland, and then to Helsinki.

I got to know her as sensitive, enquiring and compassionate. In a recent email she noted with deep regret that racism was rearing its head in Finland. I recall how in Komaggas in 2014, in the community hall, after 600 breakfasts, lunches and suppers were prepared for the family delegates over our four-day stay, she called the kitchen team into our midst to thank them and for looking after us. She expressed solidarity with the all-women team and pointed to the lack of gender equality in our society. She quizzed me again and again to understand what I understood by white contrition, acknowledgement and restoration in South Africa. Coming from afar, she understood and then passionately embraced the journey our family is on.



Wuppertal, Germany 2013.

From left to right descendants of the Schmelen/Kleinschmidt clan: Ursula Trüper, Juha Rautanen, Kenneth and Valda Makatees, Martina Rautanen, Horst Kleinschmidt and Anna Makatees in front, Inge Heller, Heidi and Christoph Koerber-Raisig, and Rainer Heller on the steps of the church whence missionary Kleinschmidt was 'sent into the world' in 1838.



Martina, Juha and Anu Rautanen in Komaggas in 2014. Here Juha addresses the family on the Finnish connection to the Schmelen/Kleinschmidt clan. It was the 6th child of the Kleinschmidt missionary couple who married a Finnish missionary, Marti Rautanen who worked in what was then independent Ovamboland.

2. The passing of Peter Ewaldt (6 April 1952 – 23 January 2017).



Peter and Marianne. Right: Peter Ewaldt, Rainer Heller, Horst Kleinschmidt, Inge Heller and Marianne Ewaldt in Salzburg 2013.

Yet further sad news is the passing of Peter Ewaldt, another distant cousin. He was keen in his retirement to finally visit African soil and the places that connected him to Zara and Hinrich Schmelen. Christine and I met Peter and Marianne at their home in Salzburg in 2013 (picture on right, above). During an intense afternoon, we untangled the fraught happenings in our family's past. Empathy between Peter and me was immediate. His political philosophy and my own were, we

discovered, in harmony. I promised to take Peter and Marianne by car from Cape Town to Namibia to trace our ancestral footsteps. Alas, this was not to be.

The memorial addresses at his funeral laud him as the child of Salzburg who loved Mozart and music above all else. For 35 years, he was the conductor of the Salzburg orchestra in countless musical productions. World-famous Herbert von Karajan was his teacher when Peter was young. He leaves behind his wife Marianne, a ceramic artist especially known for her representations of labyrinths. We mourn Peter's passing with Marianne.



Christine, Horst, Rainer and Peter page through family photograph albums. Peter as a child. A gathering in which Peter is seen on the right.

Peter's passing encourages me, once again, to trace and acknowledge our family history immersed in race, racism, tragedy and wars.

In 1913, in what was then known as German South West Africa, Peter's grandmother, Mathilde (Tilly), sister to my own grandfather, hoped to marry Fritz Ewaldt. Mathilde's great grandmother was Khoi-khoi (Zara Schmelen) whilst Fritz' family were plantation owners in the East African German colony of Tanganyika (today Tanzania). The colonial official in the tiny village of Karibib (in Namibia) refused to wed them because earlier that year, on 12 March 1913, the high court in Windhoek created consternation when it declared Tilly's cousin, Ludwig Baumann, to be reclassified a 'Native'. He lost his rights and with it his right to own land. The dictum was that 'one drop of Native blood in your veins' made you not 'white' or German in this instance. The German colony practised a racial doctrine against prevailing legislation in Germany.

Fritz and Tilly appealed and the high court in Windhoek allowed the marriage between them because 'she might not be white (enough) but her manners and conduct was like that of white (German) people'. Fritz and Tilly Ewaldt left for Germany, just before the outbreak of WW1.

They had a daughter Erika, the mother of Peter. Tilly's woes were not over. From family accounts it seems that Fritz' family did not approve of Tilly. Another woman may have been suggested as his wife. In the family records it says that Fritz was killed in action as a soldier on 11 December 1916. But, according to one of her grandsons this was a ruse to bestow honour on him. In fact he committed suicide. Nothing is known about whom his family wanted for him, neither if there might have been a child or children.

By 1933 Tilly's daughter Erika was seventeen. The new Nazi federation of young women enticed her and she soon became a valued member. To validate her membership she was asked to submit her family tree so as to confirm that she was of Aryan stock. She admitted, when writing it down, that her great grandmother was Khoi-khoi, thus Black. A letter from the Cologne Nazi committee went to seek advice from their bosses in Berlin. The matter was shoved under the carpet because, it seems, Erika was considered valuable, had leadership abilities. But, correspondence reveals, she should not be allowed to ever get married nor be allowed to have children.

Erika went to her grave without telling the full story. It is known that she made a career in the BDM (Bund Deutscher Mädchen – the women's section of the Hitler Youth) and that she feared 'de-

nazification' after the war. Was Peter born despite her superior's wishes? All Peter knew was that the tumult after the war left much unsaid. His mother did however write-up the first comprehensive family tree and in it acknowledges Zara, her great grandmother.

I met Erika in Salzburg 1978 with my mother But I had recently arrived in exile and paid no attention to her past or her history. Neither my politics nor her politics was discussed. Peter regretted that he did not press his mother for more information.

3. A trip from Cape Town to Swakopmund in February 2017. Our mother's ashes, and, meeting up with history to build a new family identity.

Starting, with the end of the trip: the scattering of our mother's ashes.

On 9th February 2017 we travelled east from Swakopmund into the desert to an edge where we looked down on the 'moon' landscape that hides the Swakop Riverbed. Down below us, hidden by a thousand hillocks is the farm Goanikontes. Mutti's loved telling us how her favourite childhood moments were spent here, riding donkeys with her friends. Throughout her life it remained a destination, often for the 'Alt Pfadfinder', the emeritus German scouts from the 1930's.



Eva on her 90th birthday in Cape Town at the time when Karl and Tusha got married. Picture taken in the gardens of Groot Constantia, 2006.

The so-called moon landscape through which the Swakop riverbed twists.

The Swakop River, when it flows, cuts its way westward through the Namib and when it reaches its destination gorges its torrent of muddy water, trees and more, into the Atlantic Ocean. In the distance Trekkopje mountain – place where one of three local uranium mines operates from.





School holidays up the dry Swakop River in the 1920's. Mutti Eva, on right leading the donkey. The inscription is by Mutti. She wrote in the Sütterlin script. I am only able to read the last two words: "and I".



A last farewell to our mother, Mutti! Her ashes, with roses scattered into the desert that she felt was home to her. Mutti's childhood memories are of outings to to the struggling vegetable farms, like Goanikontes, her favourite haunt.



Horst and Immo, with Immo's daughter Tusha, drinking a Champaign toast to Mutti. Tushs and husband Karl, with daughter Zara live in Perth, Australia.



In celebration of our mother's life (she reached the age of 99.7), in the evening, we shared a meal with family members. Here with Dianne Raunig and her mother Dorothy Makatees. As ever, Peter and Auriol offered hospitality and their home for us to gather.



Auriol and Peter from Windhoek.



Zara, Immo and Heidi, far right is Karl. Zara is named after her

great, great, great, great grandmother.

The journey in chronological order:

31 January – dinner at our home on Jacobs Ladder, Cape Town.



Martinus Fredericks, oral historian of note on the history of the Fredericks' who left the surrounds of Cape Town during Dutch colonial times to eventually settle in Bethany, Southern Namibia, where German colonial rule eventually impacted even more severely on their lives. Here in discussion at the home of Christine and Horst, telling the visitors from Berlin (Ursula and Leo) and those from Perth (Tusha, Karl and little Zara) that the first Zara was from a Chief's family, part of the !Aman people, now known as the Frederickse's.

4 February – dinner at Muisbosskerm, near Lambertsbaai, halfway to Komaggas.

The travellers heading north in a minibus included Ursula, Leo, Tusha, Karl, Zara and Horst. Our first destination was Lambertsbaai. Our non-descript accommodation was easily forgotten when we met Kenneth Makatees and daughter Anna, at the rustic beach restaurant called Muisbosskerm. Traditional west coast fish dishes of all kinds, wine, a perfect sunset and wonderful conversation made for a great evening.



Tusha, Kenneth, Horst and Karl in discussion as the shadows grow longer. In the meantime Anna and Zara were making a film – technological know-how the elders marvelled at.

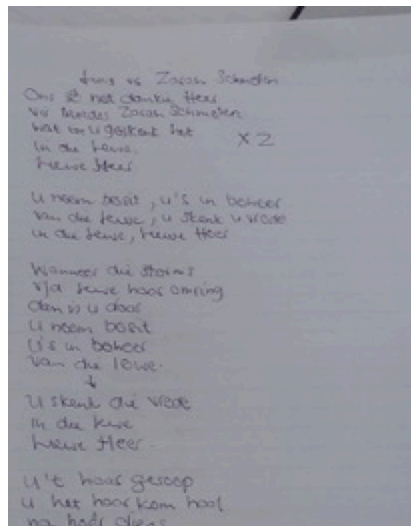


Cousins, Anna and Zara plotting to make a film, since then shown on Facebook.

5th and 6th February – Komaggas, Northern Cape:



Eight generations separate Zara Walsh from her ancestor Zara Schmelen. Zara Schmelen's maiden name was Hendricks. In pre-colonial time the surname, oral history tells us, was //Gaixas and part of the !Aman, today Frederickse's



Three generations: – Zara, Tusha Walsh, Ursula Trüper and Horst at the memorial and gravestones of Zara and Hinrich Schmelen in Komaggas. Oom George Cloete, a local farmer and church elder composed and sang, accompanied by guitar, to Zara Walsh, the Afrikaans ballad he composed to honour Zara Schmelen. He wrote this when the family gathered here in 2014 to honour the Schmelen's 200th wedding anniversary.



The derelict church stands between today's Uniting Reformed Church and the Calvinist Reformed Church. Could this building be reconstructed and become a symbol of colonial and apartheid church history?

7th February - Bethanien.

As was expected, a visit to the Schmelen house was a disappointment. The place is neglected and vandalised. Despite the Schmelen house being a Namibian national monument (allegedly the first, and surviving stone house originating from 1814) the Lutheran Churches of Namibia and the Namibian Government fail to live up to their stated undertakings. There is talk that these historic buildings may be sold to private enterprise.

We gave the Bethany Guest House a photographic story of the 200 year history - capturing the past and present.



Ruben Fredericks, retired school headmaster, with Horst and Ursula at the Bethanie Guest House. We talked of oral history and the likely family connection of Zara Schmelen as a member of the !Aman people, today referred to as the Frederickse's.



The inscription on this plaque tells the tale of how the Lüderitz expedition tricked the Bethaniers out of their land through a sales contract in which German sea miles and British miles were used to the colonisers advantage.



The above trunk of a tree situated in the yard of the traditional authority of Chief David Frederick. It is a site of pilgrimage, visited by locals on the same date, for over 100 years. German (Schutztruppe) soldiers hung a group of men from the tree when they fought against colonial occupation in the 1904-1908 war. The tree originally stood in a riverbed but was accidentally bulldozed during road repairs. It remains a poignant memorial to the war and the genocide imperial Germany committed against the Nama and Herero people.

Together, we are building bridges across the divide that our family and history imposed on us. The task is on going. We are unlearning and un-teaching the normal our parents believed in or were compelled to act according to. We do this for ourselves and to serve as an example to thousands of other families whose own history waits to be untangled. We do this by listening and responding to the social and economic history that made us what we became. We tread softly, as some in our family may not yet be ready to embrace the new normal, and we know that we offend others, as we tread a road not before travelled.

4. Happy times, good times.

A graduation



Alicja is brother Immo and Mags' daughter who graduated on 6 March 2017 with a distinction for an MSc in the Control of Infectious Diseases, from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She is now back at medical school and intends to graduate from there next year. She did the MSc between her 3rd and 4th years – it is something called intercalating, I am told.

Time with the grandchildren, visiting from San Francisco

During the latter half of March 2017, daughter Zindzi, son-in-law Jeremy and grandchildren Jude and Ayala visited us. They live in San Francisco. Here grandpa (oupa) negotiates a discussion on the impressive trains that pass at the bottom of the hill and adding different toppings on ice-cream cones.



After a visit to the penguins at Boulders Beach, Simonstown



Pictures taken by Christine in the back of our garden

