



Newsletter: November 2010

What happened at our last meeting held on 14 October 2010

Pres. Tony Gibb welcomed the 27 members present.

Brian White introduced our guest speaker Barnard Mokwena, the Executive Vice President of Lonmin. Barnard is responsible for the entire Human Capital and External affairs, including Community Investment, Mining Charter and Government Relations.

Originally from Mafikeng, at the age of 16 Barnard left the country to live in exile, where he completed his education in Botswana. He was awarded a scholarship from the Church in Zimbabwe and went to study at the University of Rome, where he received his Masters Degree, and is currently studying for his PhD. He also worked for Vatican Radio.

He spent one year teaching Media Studies at the Boston College in Massachusetts. In 1995 he returned to South Africa for his fathers funeral and decided to stay.

He has worked for various corporations such as SENTECH and LOTTO, who sent him to Camelot in the UK before he joined Lonmin in 2005 as Group Manager, thereafter being promoted to Vice President and then Executive Vice President.

Barnard told us that Lonmin mining area falls under the jurisdiction of two Municipalities Madibeng (Brits) and Bojanala (Rustenburg). If service delivery is bad, the locals demonstrate at the mine offices, who then try and sort out the problems with the authorities.

Education is a big problem. Classrooms are provided by government, desks, books etc by province, teachers by government but controlled by the unions, who are not really interested in teaching the learners. The children go to school without eating, so the mine has to supplement feeding schemes. They are trying to upgrade the quality of teaching. Last year only four pupils passed matric in the Lonmin area.

Workers qualify for a R1700 a month housing allowance, so they hire a shack for R200 and have R1500 more to spend, aggravating the informal settlement problem.

Using PowerPoint he showed us interesting statistics and answered questions from the floor.

Geoff Southey thanked Barnard for the informative presentation.

Next Meeting

Date: 11 November 2010
Time: 9:30 for 10:00
Venue: Rustenburg Methodist Church Hall in Brink Street
Speakers: Sandy Buchanan will be speaking about trains.
Ladies are invited to attend.

Birthdays and Anniversaries for November 2010.

04 Nov.	Mannie Winterbach	15 Nov.	Stella Munro
15 Nov.	Dieter Kruger	21 Nov.	Irma Pennefather
25 Nov.	Gideon vd Vyver		
25 Nov.	Paul en Biene Otterman		

AUSTRALIAN BRICKLAYER'S REPORT

Possibly the funniest story in a long while

This is a bricklayer's accident report, which was printed in the newsletter of the Australian equivalent of the Workers' Compensation Board. This is a true story. Had this guy died, he'd have received a Darwin Award for sure.

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to your request for additional information on Block 3 of the accident report form. I put poor planning" as the cause of my accident. You asked for a fuller explanation and I trust the following details be sufficient.



I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six storey building. When I completed my work, I found that I had some bricks left over which, when weighed later were found to be slightly in excess of 500 lbs.

Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley, which was attached to the side of the building on the sixth floor. Securing the rope at ground I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went down and untied the rope, holding it tightly to ensure a slow descent of the bricks.

You will note in Block 11 of the accident report form that I weigh 135 lbs. Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel, which was now proceeding downward at an equally impressive speed. This explained the fractured skull, minor abrasions and the broken collar bone, as listed in section 3 of the accident report form.

Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope, in spite of beginning to experience pain.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Now devoid of the weight of the bricks (that barrel weighed approximately 50 lbs) I refer you again to my weight.

As you can imagine, I began a rapid descent, down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles, broken tooth and several lacerations of my legs and lower body.

Here my luck began to change slightly. The encounter with the barrel seemed to slow me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell into the pile of bricks and fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked. I am sorry to report, however, as I lay there on the pile of bricks, in pain unable to move, I again lost my composure and presence of mind and let go of the rope and I lay there watching the empty barrel begin its journey back down onto me. This explains the two broken legs.

I hope this answers your inquiry.

Kevin Roben
Wagga Glass & Aluminium Pty Ltd
PO Box 5004 (11 Dobney Ave)
Wagga Wagga NSW 2550

Thank you to Tony Gibb for this contribution

Written and compiled by Des Smith

Wednesday, 10 November 2010