

## *Charting the Uncharted* exhibition brings economic history to life

What do you do when all conferences are cancelled and the traditional ways of research dissemination are closed? You organise an art exhibit, of course.

As part of the Social Expo of the Department of Economics, LEAP collaborated with fourteen of South African artists to showcase economic history research in an innovative way. The exhibition, *Charting the Uncharted*, opened for one day, on the 6th of October, at Nooitgedacht farm. It will return to the Stellenbosch University Gallery (GUS) at the end of February.

The fourteen artworks were powerful, challenging and inspirational. Forensic artists Kathryn Smith and Pearl Mamthuba collaborated with Karl Bergemann to bring to life 19th century fugitives (see right). Lady Skollie and Calumet Links interpreted 18th century Khoer wealth. Colijn Strydom partnered with Jonathan Jayes on the Spanish flu of 1918. Marlene Steyn partnered with Laura Richardson to depict bridal pregnancy in the early 20th century. Nelson Makamo and several students collaborated on an interpretation of voter disenfranchisement in the late 19th century. Usha Seejarim and Amy Rommelspacher produced a piece on domestic workers in Cape Town. Ashley Walters interpreted Johan Fourie's research on 18th century settler wealth. Chelsea Ingham worked with Kate Ekama to visualise slave mortgages. Sepideh Mehraban and Lisa Martin collaborated on the afterlives of slaves. Vuli Nyoni produced a wonderful lithograph based on Nobungwele Mbem's work on black migrants to Cape Town. Nabeeha Mohamed translated Kara Dimitruk's work on labour coercion. Lwandiso Botozo and Jonathan Schoots depicted 19th century African nationalism. Kelsey Lemon worked with Stephané Conradie on school inspections and Brittany Chalmers and Sitaara Stodel investigated race reclassification during apartheid.



**POWERFUL:** Regina aka Mietje, aged 14, Zoute River, Swellendam (1834). VIZ.LAB's Smith and Mamathuba transformed advertisements of runaway slaves, published in the 1830s, into a series of five digital facial composites. Says Smith: 'As forensic artists who take a critical view of social dynamics, we identified a counter-forensic agency in how fashion enables the performance of alternative 'selves, but als how clothing, characteristic features, or personal effects can act as metonyms of identity in both forensic and museum/heritage contexts.' More images available on page 5.

# LEAP Webinar Series shifts focus to slavery

From August to October, **Dr Kate Ekama** organised the weekly webinar series. The theme for the semester was 'Slavery, Emancipations, Legacies'. Here she reflects on the lessons learnt.

As lockdown continued in South Africa, so the LEAP webinars remained online. This presented another excellent opportunity to invite international speakers, and welcome an international audience.

For the past few months, academics and interested members of the public from across South Africa and the US, Britain, Australia, Germany, Sweden, and Brazil have engaged with the theme Slavery, Emancipations, Legacies. Unsurprisingly, as host I chose this theme because it reflects my research interests. But more than that, historical slavery is a very important part of the work that is being done by scholars affiliated to LEAP and forms part of global conversations between academics, public historians, descendants, activists and others.

We began the series with two South Africa-focussed presentations, which approached the topic of slavery in South Africa very differently. Karl Bergemann, PhD candidate at Stellenbosch University, presented his study of desertion based on newspapers adverts placed by slaveowners and masters.

Dr Linda Mbeki, a bioarchaeologist at Iziko museums presented her research into the origins of enslaved people at the Cape based on the physical remains unearthed as developments in Cape Town literally dig up the past.

Dr Bronwen Everill shifted our focus much further north, to Senegal, where the French colonial rulers paid compensation to former slave-owners. Her work is drawing out how that process took place, and what its impact was on commerce and the development of capitalism in the subsequent years.

Dr Sarah Balakrishnan's research, focussed on what is today Ghana, took up some similar themes as she considered the complexities of the develop-

ment of property rights there through an analysis of the spiritual meanings of fences and tribute and how they appeared to British eyes as signs of ownership and rent.

Dr Thomas Mareite then highlighted the importance of political discourses around freedom and independence in the work he presented on enslaved and free refugees from the US South who fled to abolitionist Mexico. Dr Jake Subryan Richards shared his

commissions of inquiry which produced reports based on a huge volume of evidence collected from across the empire, including the Cape Colony.

The series continued on 13 October when Prof Nira Wickramasinghe presented her research on slavery in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The final webinar took place on 27 October, when team members from the Western Australian Legacies of British Slavery project will present their work on revisionist



**INVESTIGATING CAPE SLAVERY:** *Dr Linda Mbeki, Iziko Museums*

research on the development of abolition law, drawing our attention not only to the suffering of recaptured Africans while they awaited adjudication in the courts, but also their role, through resistance, in shaping the processes.

Professors Lisa Ford and Stephen Doherty introduced us to the power and limitations of corpus linguistics in interdisciplinary historical studies via their analyses of British imperial

biographies, contributing to new ways of understanding the legacies of British slavery in the colonisation of Australia.

These webinars have been wonderfully engaging and inspiring. They have opened new conversations between researchers, connections between topics, and consideration of new questions and approaches.

The next webinar series will start in February 2022.



**Lisa Martin** introduced **Dr Dozie Okoye** (Dalhousie) during the sixth annual LEAP Lecture. Dr Okoye spoke about ‘Perspectives on Christian Missions and African Social Development’.

# LEAP hosts regional AEHN meeting

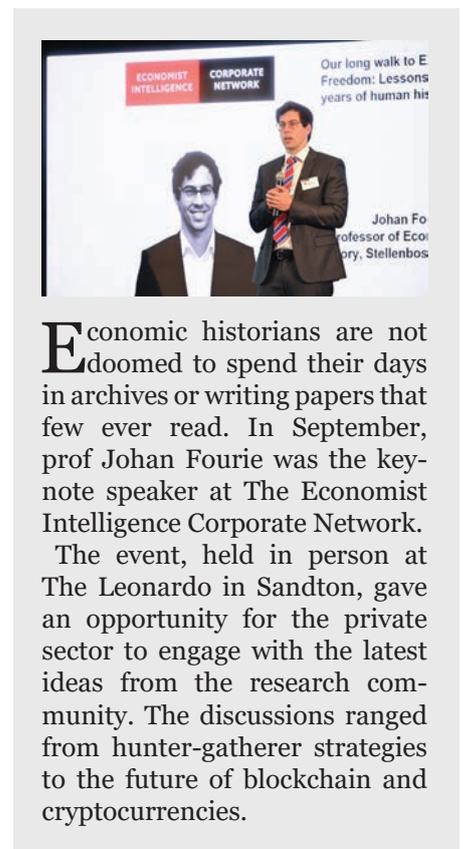
The annual African Economic History Network meetings was postponed in 2020 because of Covid-19. Given the travel insecurities this year, the AEHN board decided to encourage regional meetings instead. On the 22nd of April, two meetings were held, one at Lund University in Sweden and one at Stellenbosch University.

Because of lower restrictions, the event could be held in person. It was wonderful to be back to meeting in person. Dr Kate Ekama (SU) kicked off the meetings with a presentation on mortgage holders and slum landlords in the post-emancipation Cape. Umo Samuel Uwem (UKZN) presented on coerced labour and the Esuk Mba Slave Market in Calabar. Munashe Chideya (SU) discussed his

work on private joint-stock companies and government relations at the Cape. Alessandro de Cola (UFS) presented on Eritrean veteran soldiers. Leoné Walters (UP) discussed her work on slave trades and kinship networks. Lisa Martin (SU) gave a talk on emancipated Cape slaves moving to mission stations.

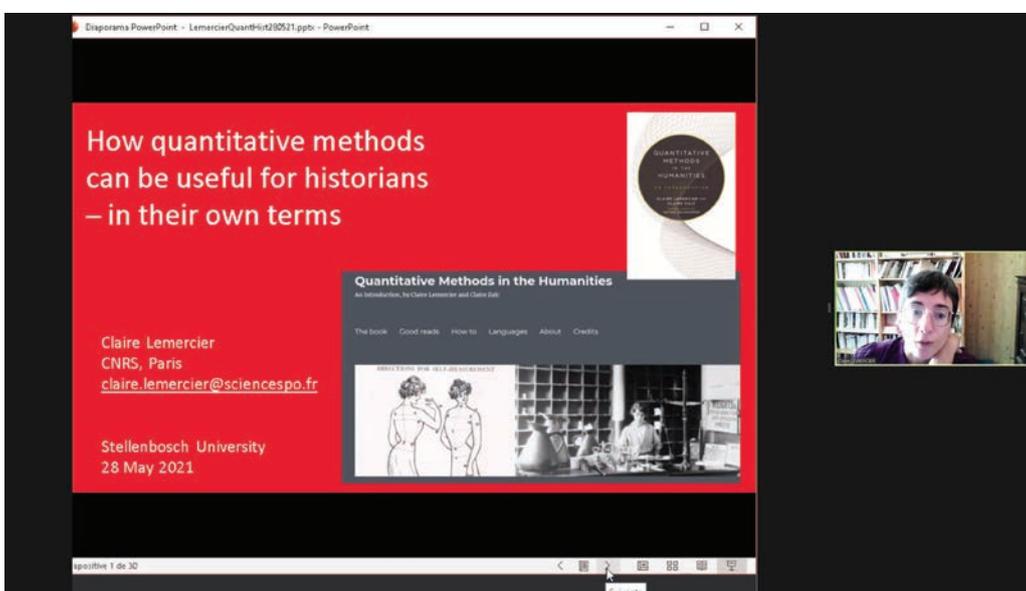
After lunch, Calumet Links (SU) presented new work on market structure and indigenous agency in North America and the Cape, while Tim Ngalande (SU) ended the day with a presentation on a new South African Historical Data Repository he is constructing for his PhD.

The annual AEHN meetings will return in October 2022. The host will be announced in November.



Economic historians are not doomed to spend their days in archives or writing papers that few ever read. In September, prof Johan Fourie was the keynote speaker at The Economist Intelligence Corporate Network.

The event, held in person at The Leonardo in Sandton, gave an opportunity for the private sector to engage with the latest ideas from the research community. The discussions ranged from hunter-gatherer strategies to the future of blockchain and cryptocurrencies.



On 28 May, History professor **Claire Lemerrier** presented the keynote at the annual Biography workshop. The workshop, held online, kicked off with a short course on data visualisation by Jonathan Jayes. Prof Lemerrier’s lecture offered an international perspective on the benefits of quantification in history.



On 29 June, Calumet Links, lecturer in the Department of Economics, successfully defended his PhD thesis: ‘The economic impact of the Khoe on the north-eastern frontier of the Cape Colony’. From top left to bottom right: Erik Green (Lund University, co-supervisor), Calumet Links, Rachel Jafta (SU, examiner), Andrie Schoombee (SU, HoD), Carolyn Chisadza (University of Pretoria, examiner), Ann Carlos (University of Colorado Boulder, examiendr), Anja Smith (SU, colleague), Dieter von Fintel (SU, co-supervisor) and Christo Boshoff (SU, Vice-Dean: Research). Johan Fourie (the photographer) was Cal’s supervisor.

## Transcribed tax censuses donated

The Cape of Good Hope Panel project, one of its largest of its kind in the world, aims to transcribe the full set of Cape of Good Hope opgaafrolle – or tax censuses. The records are currently preserved in the Cape Archvies in Cape Town and National Archives in The Hague.

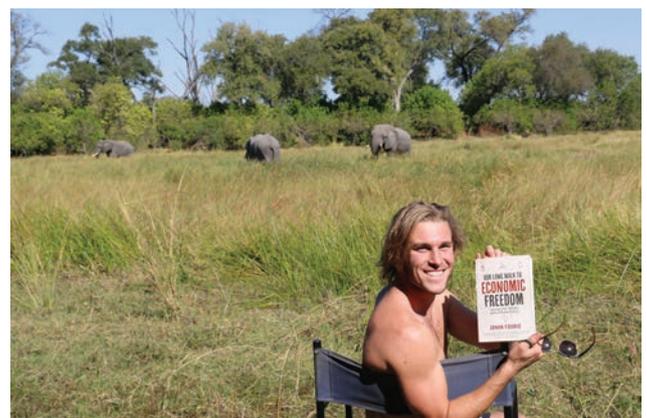
The first set of fully transcribed tax censuses was printed and published. It covers all tax censuses for the Graaff-Reinet districts, from 1787 to 1828. The records include more than 40 000 household entries, and list the number of agricultural assets (like cattle and wine) owned. It also records the names of the household head.

On 22 October, this first set was ceremonially handed over to Ellen Tise, Senior Director of the Stellenbosch University Library. The set will be preserved in the Africana section of Stellenbosch University. More books will continue to be added as the projects proceeds.



**HANDOVER:** Johan Fourie presents the transcribed records to Ellen Tise

Former student **Matthew Perrott**, now a Master’s student at the University of St. Andrews, sent in this photo of him reading *Our Long Walk to Economic Freedom* by Johan Fourie.





**ABOVE:** Prof Johan Fourie and Clara Babette (curator) in front of Lady Skollie and Calumet Links's collaboration. **RIGHT:** Lwandiso Botozo with his art. He collaborated with Jonathan Schoots.



**LEFT:** Sitaara Stodel produced this artwork with input by Master's student Brittany Chalmers



**ABOVE:** Artist Chelsea Ingham worked with Kate Ekama. **LEFT:** Kathryn Smith and Pearl Mamathuba collaborated with PhD student Karl Bergemann.

# Preserving the past

*Amy Rommelspacher spoke to transcriber Helena Liebenberg about paintings, preservation and partnerships.*

## When did your transcription career begin?

In October 2001, my life took an unexpected turn on a fascinating journey that was to prove the most rewarding and enriching years of my future career. I was appointed as a transcriber on the TANAP team tasked with making the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of the Cape of Good Hope (1651-1795) available in the public domain. These documents have always been regarded as the flagship series, with volume C1 in particular of invaluable importance for the written VOC legacy of Cape history.

The TANAP Transcription Project was funded by the Netherlands government and executed in the Western Cape Archives between 2001 and 2003. All the Resolutions are available in XML-format and can be accessed by the public on the Internet. (Scope: 7 million words.) An extensive bilingual Introduction and Glossary enhance the contents of the Resolutions.

## What does it mean to transcribe archival documents?

To transcribe 17th and 18th century Cape archival documents translates to producing a closely as possible verbatim version of the written text in typed form, and is still one of the best ways to preserve the contents of archival material in particular. It is a prerequisite for transcribers and editors to be native speakers of Afrikaans and/or Dutch, as a clear understanding of the old language is essential if one is to produce a true rendition of the contents. It is sometimes quite difficult to find a meaningful way out of a jungle of obsolete words, or words written as they were heard by the VOC Cape scribes, who came from all over the then Low Countries and the adjacent German-speaking regions. The writing and spelling abilities of the scribes and of ordinary people living in remote areas of the Cape colony come under the spotlight when one seeks to establish the correct spelling of a word to determine its true meaning. Folk etymology is sometimes quite amus-

ing: a burgher of Swellendam wrote *rysdaadels* (literally meaning 'rice dates') instead of *ryksdaalders* ('rix-dollars'), while another one addressed an official of the Orphan Chamber as *Cekkertarel Remkam* instead of *Secretaris Rönnenkamp*.

## When and why was the Tracing History Trust established?

While still entrenched in the TEPC Transcription Project, Dr. Antonia Malan and I realised that so much work was still to be done to make invaluable archival material available to the public. So, in December 2007 the Tracing History Trust was established in Cape Town as a non-profit organisation, which was registered in January 2008. At present the interests of the Trust are taken care of by the two of us and three additional trustees. The core objective of the Trust is to initiate and facilitate transcription and related projects.

## When did collaboration with LEAP begin?

As early as 2009 the first step towards future cooperation with LEAP was taken by Prof Johan Fourie when he approached the TEPC technical team to extract the word/item "schilderij" (painting) from the five transcribed

Foundation the secondary funder. THT is honoured to be one of the Panel's partners.

Another project is the Biography of an Uncharted People project. By making historical information easily accessible, the Biography project will give dignity to people who were overlooked in the past, such as slaves and indigenous people.

One component of this project is to disseminate the Church Cash Books and Journals of the Cape of Good Hope and Stellenbosch, vested in the Church Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa in Stellenbosch. The cash books and journals cover the period from 1670 to 1830, with many years missing in between, spanning the years of VOC governance (1670-1795) and British occupation in 1806 and later.

Personnel of the Church Archives are photographing the volumes, while the Trust team members have started with the transcription according to a suitable template. The following texts came as a surprise, where the name Eva, also known as Krotoa, was mentioned in the Cash Book of 1673 (GEM K 1370) – see insert.

Each digitisation project is actual-

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Debit	Caapse armen	adij ultimo Octobris	aen d' Hottentottinne Eva	f785:13:9
Credit		adij ult:o Octob:r	p:r Eva d' hottentotinne	f208:13:-
			de hottentotin Eva	f517:3:12

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MOOC10-volumes of Cape auction rolls. This information was needed to determine the financial status of early Cape estates for his doctoral thesis. His support continued through the years and at present THT is involved in two important LEAP projects.

## What are these projects?

The purpose of the Cape of Good Hope Panel project is to transcribe the full series of tax censuses, match households across censuses, and match census households to other sources, such as probate inventories and auction rolls (the latter partially completed during the TEPC Project). LEAP is the primary funder of THT's present Auction Roll Transcription Project, with the Andrew W. Mellon

ly a conservation effort and should be regarded and supported as such. With the aid of modern equipment and software, intricate searches and extractions can be executed to ensure maximum use of disseminated archival information. The contents of the transcribed documents from various archival series form a network of interrelated events which serve to either confirm, adapt or rewrite early Cape history according to what the disseminated volumes reveal. Through the addition of thousands of names to the known population lists of the early Cape society by means of transcription, it is therefore possible to present a more balanced picture of the early Cape society.