

TOURS

WALKING TOURS

SAINTS, SINNERS AND STUDENTS

Starting at the Albany Museum (the second oldest in South Africa), the tour includes an amazing variety of scenes and scenarios of 19th century military, judicial and religious life in Grahamstown. Of architectural interest are the buildings which include two gaols, two charming chapels, an orphanage, a military hospital which became the Colony's House of Parliament. Add to this, a secret garden and the second oldest Botanical Gardens in South Africa where a ghost resides. So the tour covers the barrack beginnings of Rhodes University and ends with the fulfilment of Mother Cecile's amazing dream of bringing education to South Africa.

The cast includes such colourful characters such as Piet Retief, Dick King, Makana (Nxele), Sir Harry and Lady Juana Smith. Setting the scene are: three South African architects (Sir Herbert Baker, William White-Cooper and Sidney Stent); two ghosts; four founding Rhodes professors; four doctors who started the Albany Museum and 20 army deserters. Not to be outdone in the list of credits is the anonymous Jack Ketch, the public hangman, and the visionary Mother Cecile.

Monday 21 June	10:00
Wednesday 23 June	10:00
Saturday 26 June	10:00
Wednesday 30 June	10:00

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes
Starting Point: Albany Natural Sciences Museum, Somerset Street.
Tickets: R40 & R35 for students

STATELY HOMES AND OLD SCHOOL TIES

Worcester Street on West Hill is graced by a number of romantic homes of generous proportions. Gothic arches, Victorian bow windows, a stucco Italian-inspired villa, stonework and filigree cast-iron make these residences noteworthy.

Alongside are a trio of independent schools: St Andrew's Preparatory, the oldest one in South Africa; St Andrew's College, over 150 years old, with its fine Baker-designed Chapel and White-Cooper houses; and the Diocesan School for Girls where the restored rose-stained glass Chapel windows and the Edwardian library, once named Victoria Hall, are special features. Add to this, "St Figs", the nickname for the College of the Transfiguration, and the oldest working post-box in South Africa and you have a memorable and informative tour. Amateur and professional architects, students and teachers, businessmen and bishops are all part of the history of this area.

Tuesday 22 June	10:00
Friday 25 June	10:00
Monday 28 June	10:00

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes
Starting Point: St Andrew's Chapel, corner Somerset and Worcester Streets.
Tickets: R40 & R35 for students

SETTLER SKELETONS AND COLOURFUL CHARACTERS

The tour begins at the upmarket guest house name "The Cock House" after the entrepreneur and Port Alfred Harbour visionary, William Cock. Two mills stood opposite, - hence its neighbouring street name: Mill Street. Hearing the mellow sounds of the oldest working portable organ in the Wesley Chapel adds a gentle mood. Visitors stroll past story book cottages with odd windows and intriguing doorways, cobble stones, wagon stones and think of the rolling stones that inhabited this area. The first Baptist Church as well as a quaint stone Anglican Church with its school and almshouse transports us back to an age of both industry and piety. Sympathise with the challenges of erecting the first hospital. Or join the retinues of unseen mourners of the past as you pay your respects at the glass-sided horse-drawn hearse, loving preserved at a historical undertakers. Passing by the Market Square so vividly painted by Thomas Baines visitors conclude that business continues - elephant tusks and skins long ago but supermarkets and KFC today. A story or two of skeletons in Settler cupboards completes this imaginative journey into the past.

Our colourful cast includes: entrepreneurs, traders, undertakers, carpenters, religious leaders, a prophet and medical men.

Thursday 24 June	10:00
Tuesday 29 June	10:00
Thursday 1 July	10:00

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes
Starting Point: Cock House, corner Market and George Streets
Tickets: R40 & R35 for students

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS

SPIRITS OF THE PAST

Recapture the 'Spirits of the Past' on Gunfire hill in front of Fort Selwyn Grahamstown with renowned historian and raconteur Alan Weyer whose captivating narrative of this region's proud history of spectacular battles and courageous people will add a new dimension to a visit to the Eastern Cape. This is a story that must be heard – of frontier wars, pioneering spirits and heroic people bound together by indomitable determination and gritty humour.

During the 1800's the intrepid British Settlers, German immigrants, Dutch entrepreneurs and European explorers left their shores to begin a new life on the southern most region of the African continent – region of the spiritual San people and mighty AmaXhosa. What awaited them in this region of wide horizons eclipsed their wildest imaginings...

Duration: 2 hours
Tickets: R90
Starting Point: Fort Selwyn next to the 1820 Settlers Monument

Times:

Sunday 20 June	10:00	Sunday 27 June	10:00
Wed 23 June	10:00	Wed 30 June	10:00
Friday 25 June	10:00	Friday 2 July	10:00
Saturday 26 June	10:00	Saturday 3 July	10:00

THE BLAAUWKRANTZ BRIDGE TRAIN DISASTER – 1911

A TRAGIC EPISODE OUT OF GRAHAMSTOWN'S PAST

Visit the bridge site and experience the ambience of the area, marvel at the engineering and construction of this mighty railway bridge. Visualise the enormity of this accident. Gaze down into the breathtaking chasm; experience the loneliness of the gorge. Hear the stories from Ben Bezuidenhout, of bravery and heartbreak, also of great courage and faith. Follow the account of little Maud Smith and her three year old brother Willie. Stand at the edge of this bridge and visualise the rescue attempts.

How did it happen? What were the causes? What were the findings? Hear stories of some of the myths and legends that have arisen since the train disaster. Discuss over refreshments provided as part of the tour, what this disaster must have taken out of the community.

Visit the cemeteries where the train victims are buried and leave the tour with vivid memories and a book on the Disaster, as a memento of your visit to the Blaauwkrantz Railway Bridge. Walking distance is approximately 500 metres from the bus to the bridge and back; it is an easy walk on flat ground. Don't forget your camera and binoculars if you have them.

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes
Tickets: R100
Starting Point: Victoria Hotel New Street

Times:

Thursday 24 June	10:00	Thursday 1 July	10:00
Friday 25 June	10:00	Friday 2 July	10:00
Saturday 26 June	10:00	Saturday 3 July	10:00

Dress: Casual & comfortable.
Hats recommended & comfortable walking shoes.

THE SECRETS OF BLAAUWKRANTZ POOL

There is a limpid quality to the air in this quiet forgotten little corner of the Eastern Cape approximately 22km from Grahamstown where the Blaauwkrantz Pool, in the Blaauwkrantz Nature reserve, is situated. This tranquil pool, sparkling in the sunlight, is a place of pilgrimage, of ghosts, a spiritual domain lying there, brooding, quiet and sombre. The one side of the pool consists of jagged rocks, steep and precipitous with ledges that protrude at various intervals. The People of the River reside here. Their spiritual powers are unlimited and have no boundaries. Who are they? Become acquainted with the endangered East Cape Rocky and its struggle for survival. What are out spans? Does Azolla threaten the pool? Will you see the 'Blaauw' in Blaauwkrantz? Discover the intriguing interactions and reliance of many organisms on this pool. Visit the area and let your guide, Ben Bezuidenhout, reveal and share with you the secrets of this fascinating pool.

Enjoy some warm refreshments before returning to Grahamstown. Walking distance is approximately 100 metres from the bus to the pool it is an easy walk on flat ground. Don't forget your camera and binoculars if you have them.

Duration: 2 hours
Tickets: R100
Starting Point: Victoria Hotel New Street
Times:

Monday 21 June	10:00	Monday 28 June	10:00
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GAME VIEWING

PUMBA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE SAFARI

The 5* Pumba Private Game Reserve covers 6500 hectares of privately owned property in the Eastern Cape. It is malaria free game viewing at its best. Pumba is situated only 22 km away from Grahamstown and 105 km from PE. It offers visitors the opportunity to experience the Big 5 in their natural environment. Share the excitement and beauty of Africa on a 3 hour game drive in an open land rover with an experienced ranger. The game experience includes wild dog, hyena, cheetah and the rare white lion, 22 antelope species and over 300 bird species. Your safari will also include a buffet style meal and selected beverages.

Duration: Approx 5½ hours
Starting Point: 1820 Settlers Monument Car Park
Times: Twice daily from 20 June – 4 July at 09:00 & 15:00
Tickets: 09:00 – R1060
15:00 – R1305