

2009
SASHT
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Jimmy Verner
(*Bishops Bavin, Johannesburg*)

In this, my last report as Chairman of the Society, I would like to pay tribute to all those members whose work and ongoing interest and concern have helped the SASHT to grow and develop over the years. Undoubtedly the hardest worker has been our present Chairperson, Prof Elize van Eeden, but there are many others without whose efforts the Society would not be in the healthy position it is in today.

The 2008 Conference in Cape Town organised by Prof Rob Sieborger of the UCT was a great success and I thank him and his team for all their work. The use of the slave museum as the major venue helped to make the conference memorable as we were urged to help learners to develop an historical consciousness and gaze; to be aware of and to explore the hidden voices of the past. The conference provided a well organised and stimulating start to the year.

The work of the Society has proceeded quietly - almost unobtrusively - since the conference through the publication of *Yesterday&Today* edited by Elize van Eeden and her editorial team. *Yesterday&Today*, is on its way to becoming an accredited academic journal and we hope to see this happen in the near future. Elize has also been responsible for ensuring that our webpage (www.sashtw.org.za) is better and more up to date than ever before. While this does play a part in raising the profile of the Society we need to do more and an electronic newsletter organised to start in 2010 by the SASHT Executive members Prof Johan Wasserman and Mr Simon Haw. The Executive Committee has also agreed that marketing the Society must become a priority and specific portfolios for the Committee will be introduced for the new Committee.

The constitution of the Society was at last adopted at the AGM although it will always be a "work in progress" as all truly viable constitutions are. I am pleased to report that though membership numbers are still lower than ideal, they are growing and perhaps more importantly we are seeing an increase in the number of members who are becoming involved in the affairs of the Society.

I wish to thank all those involved in the planning and preparation for the 2009 conference which I believe has been one of the particularly successful conferences. There have been suggestions that we should move away from the Heritage Day weekend timing for the conference and we would appreciate input on this. For 2010 with its strange academic timetable as a result of the World Cup Soccer, we will stay with the familiar dates, namely Heritage day on Friday 24 September and Saturday 25 September. The Conference will be hosted in the Free State (Golden Gate National Park).

I hope to see you all there and wish Elize all the best as she takes over the Chair of the Society.

Note from the editor:

Mr Jimmy Verner has chaired the SASHT from 1999 to 2009. He did so with enthusiasm, integrity and tremendous support, despite the low ebb phases of the SASHT. In 2009 he was nominated to fill the SASHT's treasury portfolio for the 2009-2010 term. The SASHT Executive Committee hereby honour Mr Jimmy Verner for his outstanding and longstanding service to the SASHT as Chairperson.