

## Petrusfontein water woes drag on

• CLEMANS MIYANICWE

ABOUT 30 households at the farm Petrusfontein, some 30 kilometres from Khorixas, have been without clean drinking water for the past 15 years, and their water woes seem to be far from over.

This happened despite promises undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to resolve the issue.

Inhabitants have in the past years, after the farm's population outgrew its water supply, been relying on salty borehole water meant for their livestock – until their only communal diesel engine broke down last September after being damaged by elephants.

They now have to walk daily to the nearest farm with their livestock to access water.

Residents in a letter dated 15 January this year brought their plight to the attention of then minister of agriculture Alfeus

!Naruseb's office, but claim their grievances fell on deaf ears.

Clennethy Naris, one of the farmers, says !Naruseb invited community representatives for a meeting on 21 February during which a directive was set based on their concerns.

This included that the ministry, through the office of constituency councillor Elias /Aro Xoagub, would supply the affected community with a new diesel engine, and would install another borehole at Petrusfontein.

This has not taken place yet.

Executive director of agriculture, water and land reform Percy Misika on Monday said his ministry is aware of the disrupted water supply at Petrusfontein.

He promised the situation would be resolved soon.

"... internal arrangements have been put in place to ensure water provision within a short period of time," he said.

Misika could, however, not provide a date at which the community's water woes would be over.

"We cannot give a specific date to when these will be completed as government procurement procedures are being followed to procure all needed services/equipment," he said.

# A History of Beer in Namibia

The author of a recent book on the history of beer brewing in Namibia looks back at how this beverage became a favourite drink in a warm and dry country, and how it attracted political control as well.

• TYCHO VAN DER HOOG

NAMIBIANS love their beer – whether you find yourself at one of the busy bars in Windhoek, a cosy shebeen, or at a festive sundowner, beer is an integral part of daily life.

It should be no surprise that Namibia Breweries Limited is one of the largest and best-known private companies in the 'Land of the Brave', and its fame transcends national borders. Namibian beer is enjoyed in almost 20 countries across the globe and is therefore an important symbol of Namibia itself. But what do we know about its history?

Hidden behind your favourite bottle of lager reside many fascinating and sometimes problematic

stories. Did you know, for instance, that for decades the indigenous population was not legally permitted to drink beer because of colonial politics? This situation only changed in 1969.

During the past century, Namibian beer has made a remarkable transformation from an icon of apartheid to a symbol of an independent nation.

The story of apartheid and many others are now recorded in my book 'Breweries, Politics and Identity: The History Behind Namibian Beer'. This book is based on extensive research in Namibia's archives and also on interviews with many key players in the beer industry.

This is a special year for the national beer industry, as Namibia Breweries celebrates its centennial birthday in 2020.

The earliest written record that reflects the consumption of beer in Namibia dates from 1779, when a European explorer encountered a San family sitting around a pot of beer.

But Namibians have surely been brewing beer and other alcoholic beverages before this date, probably since time immemorial.

While searching through the archives of Namibia, I found several old recipes for beer, such as sugar beer and honey beer.

The recipes showcase the inven-

tiveness of humans as they contain all sorts of ingredients: potatoes, the crushed bark of the omuama tree, peas, maize meal and many more. Today, a vibrant culture of home brewing continues to exist.

## SETTLER WAYS

When German South West Africa was formally established in 1884, a growing number of Germans and other European settlers found their way to the south-western coast of Africa.

Drinking beer was clearly their main leisure activity, as in the early days of the German Protectorate, one third of all business licences were concerned with alcohol. In Windhoek alone there was one bar for every 41 settlers!

At first the German settlers imported their beer from Germany. This was, however, an expensive and inefficient business. So, fairly quickly after German rule was established, industrial breweries popped up across the protectorate.

The very first brewery was most probably the Swakopmunder Brauerei, established in early 1900.

Soon other towns followed with their own. In 1914, South African soldiers invaded German South West Africa as part of the First World War.

This military event caused an economic depression and the departure of many Germans, which resulted in difficult circumstances for the various small breweries in the protectorate. Most did not survive.

In 1920, two young German bankers, Hermann Ohlthaver and Carl List, bought four of the largest breweries and merged them into one company: South West Breweries. The main brewery was located on Tal Street in Windhoek, in the building that currently houses The Brewers Market.

Many decades later, South West Breweries changed its name to Namibia Breweries.

## BEER HALLS

Governments always have a special interest in beer. Not only because of the tax revenue that often makes up a significant part of state budgets, but also for political reasons: Almost everyone drinks beer. The South African apartheid state decided to use alcohol as a political instrument and legislated a prohibition of indigenous people drinking. The liquor law was difficult to maintain, as many people turned to home brewing.

The government responded aggressively. In the 1950s in Windhoek, liquor accounted for nearly 60% of all criminal cases of the black population, and nearly 90% of all the fines! The authorities also conducted raids to demolish home-brewing installations.

As a way of compensation, beer halls were established in every township throughout the country. In a beer hall, the indigenous population was allowed to drink a watered-down version of beer, and the revenues of these establishments were used to fund the state.

In 1969 the racist liquor law was repealed, and beer became available for everyone. The large number of

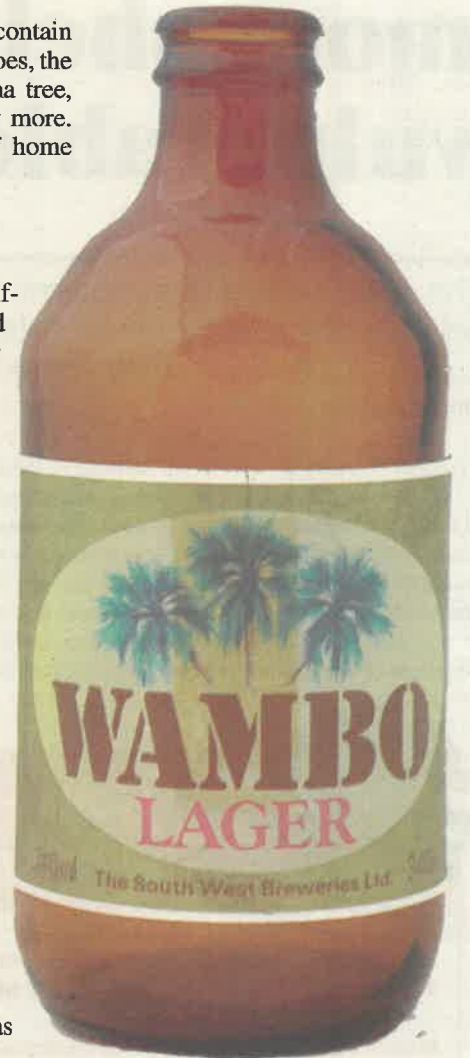


Photo: Swakopmund Museum

**ETHNIC MARKETING ...** One of the many historical beer brands in Namibia.



Photo: Basler Afrika Bibliographien

**TRADITIONAL BREW ...** Young women carry pots of beer in northern Namibia around 1930.

shebeens and other drinking establishments throughout Namibia is testament to this.

## TRANSFORMATION

A number of factors contributed to the transformation of South West Breweries into the company it is today. Surprisingly, the civil war in Angola is among them.

Many merchants in the northern part of Namibia used to be dependent on the smuggling of Cuca beer from Angola.

When the civil war erupted, the smuggling suddenly stopped, and this was the opportunity for South West Breweries to sell its beer instead, both to indigenous Namibians and white soldiers stationed there. From then onwards, production boomed.

Another factor was the introduction of the 1516 German Purity Law (Reinheitsgebot) in the 1980s, which strictly regulated ingredients and allowed the brewery to market its beer as a premium product.

But the most important was the advent of Namibian independence in 1990. Namibia Breweries became one of the crown jewels of the newly independent country.

*\* I am always looking for more information on the history of beer in Namibia. If you have stories to share regarding the production and consumption of beer, do not hesitate to contact me at t.a.van.der.hoog@asc.leidenuniv.nl.*

*\* The author is a PhD student at the African Studies Centre of Leiden University. His book 'Breweries, Politics and Identity: The History Behind Namibian Beer' (Basler Afrika Bibliographien) can be found in Namibian bookstores and libraries.*

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### AVAILABLE RADIO FREQUENCIES

The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) herewith gives notice that it has published for application, available **radio frequencies under the Frequency Band Plan to be conferred on a first-come-first-served basis** in Government Gazette No.7312; General Notice No. 344 dated 19 August 2020.

Kindly note that applicants or licensees may only apply for the frequencies which are listed in the published gazette notice and no applications shall be considered for any other frequencies which are not listed in the gazette notice.

Frequency allocation applications for the Khomas and Zambezi regions shall not be considered, as there are no frequencies available for these regions. CRAN is still in the process of concluding cross border coordination with neighbouring countries.

Notice shall be given of the available frequencies in other congested towns (not listed in the gazette notice) inclusive of the Khomas and Zambezi regions in due time as published in the Government Gazette.

**Questions, queries and further clarification must be directed to the Operations Department at Tel: +264 61 222 666 or email [operations@cran.na](mailto:operations@cran.na)**

