**Knockando Traditions - House Committee Inauguration**

There is an age-old tradition that exists at Knockando where newly elected members of the House Committee are inaugurated in a secret ritual that is known only by previous House Committee members. The practice is performed by the outgoing House Committee and is thus passed on from House Committee to House Committee. After the new House Committee has been appropriately 'Christened' at the Knock' swimming pool, their clothes are collected and taken to the Duck and Bull where members of the House will be waiting to congratulate the new "Knock' Graduates". The House Committee members are required to run to the pub to get their clothes, dress up in the pub and then settle down for a 'drink'. The drink referred to here is actually a challenge presented to the new graduates; the new comers have to down a six pack each in 30 minutes, no spillage allowed…this takes place in front of the outgoing House Committee and some members of the house (seniors) acting as supervisors. This activity is a team building exercise that requires sacrifice on every individual's part to ensure that the team makes it in time. The pub, for this activity, only provides alcoholic beverages! Furthermore dustbins are put aside and around the table where the 'new comers' are seated in order to catch the vile spew spt out by 'full new comers'. Indeed the dustbins come in handy each and every year!

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| **Knockando Traditions - Freshers Inauguration**  First years at Knockando or 'freshers' are referred to as 'Trafs' which is basically the word 'farts' written in reverse. Trafs were regarded as fair game for initiation and a special committee of seniors was appointed annually to supervise initiation ceremonies. This particular committee was called the 'assassination committee' and its prime duty was to 'welcome' the freshers. These practices continued in spite of opposition from the dean(s), the practice continued for many years in a 'masked' form.   Initiation was aimed at making trafs aware of their status as beginners. To achieve this, some seniors, that is third and fourth years, went to extremes in their efforts to humiliate the new comers. For instance they took delight in cross-questioning a traf, who had to stand to attention for long periods. Trafs were and are still expected to address senior students as 'Sirs' and to show respect by standing aside as a senior passes. Trafs were also forced to run to the Wits swimming pool every morning. Their leave privileges from residence were restricted and much of their time was taken up with rehearsing for a concert, which marked the end of the three-week initiation period.   In 1939 during a House meeting at Knock (I) J.C.E's Rector at that time Professor Williams expressed his concerns about the harsh initiation practices after a traf left the residence in little more than a week at knockando. The outbreak of the Second World War led to several men leaving Knockando in 1940 to go on active service. In 1946, when several ex-servicemen entered Knockando, it was decided that there would be no initiation of ex-servicemen, but it was desirable that they should take part in the traditional freshers (trafs) concert.  Not so long ago there was a 'ritual' were trafs were 'iknockulated' by pouring cold soup down their backsides, of course with their pants down! This was referred to as the 'vitamin shot'. How ever this practice has been deemed as very demeaning and as such has been done away with! Another practice which was a favourite was the 'knock' shock' and this occurred during the last night of O-week. This special night is called 'status night' and this is basically judgement and graduation night were enduring trafs will after successfully completing the 'tests' and 'puzzles' organised by the House Committee with the help of seniors will finally receive their status as 'First Year Sirs'. This evening marks the end of O-week.  The above practices primarily originated in the early days at Knockando and the exact way in which the entire programme was implemented has varied through out the years even though certain things have basically stayed the same. Initiation bore some fleshy luscious fruits in the sense that it fostered unity and spirit among the trafs and also emphasised Knockando's prestige, gentlemanly conduct, residence pride (and even arrogance were necessary) and of course discipline. During O-week the trafs are taught songs, 'rules' and of course the history of Knockando is narrated to them.  Nowadays O-week has been modified and is not historically as harsh as it used to be, but nonetheless certain elements have been kept in place and the same principles; discipline, spirit, residence pride, prestige, gentlemanly behaviour are still being stressed. The Knockando O-Week experience is simply one of a kind and without it one is never fully complete as a KNOCKANDIAN. |
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| **Knockando Traditions - Dress Code**  As early as the days of Knock (I) dress regulations were introduced by House Committees, for instance at one time the wearing of long white flannels on the tennis court even during the week was compulsory; the wearing of academic gowns to evening meals was also the order, although certain students complained that the gowns often became stained when the students reached across the table. The traditional grace said at meals was "Benedictus benedice benedicat Christum dominum nostrum". However several classical scholars have since questioned the correctness of the Latin grammar and syntax.  Another restriction on dressing up was the forbidding of any head gear (hat, cap, bandana etc.) in the dining hall, this was a sign of respect towards the House, gratitude for the food that was about to be received, and as a test of discipline.This was enforced up until recently when the tradition had to be abandoned due to tension in the House surrounding this matter, especially from those that missed O-Week! Short-sleeved attire was not encouraged in the dining hall for obvious reasons but of late these restrictions have been applied rather loosely and leniently! Pyjamas, sleeping wear in general and bare feet are not permitted in the dining hall for practical and hygienic reasons. |

MEN’S RES

**Traditions**

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| **The Boat Club**  This was an exclusive drinking club of Residence. Membership required a resident to drink 3 glasses of beer in under 25 seconds and then to recite two poems, allowing for one mistake in each. If the participant made more than one mistake, he had to drink another beer in under 7 seconds and then start again.  A meeting of the Boat Club could take place at any time during the year. Usually it convened after the first AGM of the House. No meeting was official unless the mascot, Jock, was present, and other members of the Club. Jock was, and presumably is, the official mascot of the Boat Club. He is a fine statuette of a Scottish Grenadier Drum Major; and may have been intended to promote sales of hard liquor in some low drinking establishment. He stands about 2 feet high.  **The Darts Club**  This was the most exclusive club in Residence. It has had only approximately ten members in the last 30 years. Membership required the applicant to drink one bottle of claret wine in under 25 seconds and keep it down for 10 minutes. The meeting convened at 12 midnight after the AGM. Attire was formal - ie academic gown only. Freshmen assembled upstairs in the Dals (and later in the Old College) quad and seniors downstairs. The official adjudicator was the Chairman of the House Committee. House Committee members stood behind the nominee. If the nominee was successful, a cigar would be lit and smoked first by the new Darts Club member and then by all House Comm members. The newly inducted Darts Club member would then lead all the Mens Residents on a lengthy tour of campus and surrounds to yet again proclaim the rightful ownership of these assets and the neighbourhood by all Mens Residents!!  1981 - Stuart Kidgell MBChB 1982 - James Allen - BSc (Mining Engineering), MBA 1983 - Clive Farrell - BDS 1984 - Rob Surtees - BSc (Electrical Engineering) 1985 - Peter Bezuidenhoudt - BSc (Chemical Engineering), B Com, MBA 1986 - Liam Greef - BA LLB  **The Prattler**  The 'comprehensive treatise full of wit and wisdom, never dull' first appeared in 1928, under the editorship of Johnny Keen. Originally a collection of jokes that virtually all other magazines would refuse, in later years it became rather personal about (unnamed) young ladies in Sunnyside. If you ever find a copy from the late eighties, early nineties, keep it way from the kids.  **Initiation and Orientation Week**  Initiations were part of Res life from the outset. As men returned from the First World War, they imposed ever harsher measures on freshmen, no doubt to impose a degree of wartime discipline. Under the rule of Professor Hyslop, the rites were much curtailed in 1955. A pre-1955 Resident remembers the rites as follows:  *Sliding down a mud-slide on the embankment at the sports fields, into a pool of dirty water, then being ducked; parading on the football field and having to drink some vile concoction; having to wear a black bootlace as a tie for the first month in Res; being made to clean the city Hall steps with toothbrushes; being marched to the Women's Res, standing on a table and singing songs to the girls; being violently upturned in their beds at nights; being made to manoeuvre a cotton reel down the corridor using the nose; being upturned, barefooted, in the common rooms and made to leave an imprint on the ceiling.*  From 1955, the initiation included being introduced to Phineas, a ceremony carried out with great solemnity in a partially darkened room. There was fairly strict discipline with regard to wearing Freshers Buttons, taking part in the Freshers Concert, carrying out phone duties and so forth. Early morning awakenings took place, Freshmen trotting around campus wearing white lab coats and little else, from time to time serenading the Dean and Assistant Deans (much appreciated at about 1.00am)  By the eighties, Freshers' buttons had been replaced by large cardboard labels, worn on a string around the neck at all times, as were the specially designed caps. Although rolling down a mud slide was long-banished, Freshmen still rolled down the slope leading to the Rugby ground, wheel-barrowed each other across the field, and had various antics with cans of beer. After touring the monuments, Freshmen ended up at the pool at the end of the Library Lawns, where they were joined by the Sunnyside Freshettes. The men brushed their teeth in the rather unsavoury water, whilst the girls used their bras to fish for whatever lurked within the rather shallow depths. Later in the week, Freshmen in their lab coats also walked to Sunnyside to sing songs of rather basic passion to the Freshettes who usually listened and observed from their windows.  The event is now known as Orientation Week, and during it Freshmen are taught about Res and University life, learn Res songs, tour the Monuments, serenade the Dean and Assistants, tour Johannesburg and Soweto, and have many parties both as Mens Res and with the other residence Freshmen. These usually have a theme, such as Toga parties, Shirt & Hats parties, and even Pimps and Prostitute parties. Early morning arousings and trotting around Campus also feature. |

**Monuments**

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| Mens Res has a number of monuments and part of the orientation week is devoted to taking Freshmen on a tour of them. They have been built up over a number of years and are as follows:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **http://student.wits.ac.za/NR/rdonlyres/59926658-3535-4125-8E79-22DEC836837F/0/zorro.jpg** | **Zorro RIP**  Zorro was the Residence cat. This eminent member of the feline species distinguished himself, as all true residents, in the noble and ancient art of love making. However, on one occasion, Zorro was confronted by all the Second Year students of Sunnyside and to everyone's disgust was horribly and brutally assaulted. Not being able to cope with the amorous desires of the ever frustrated Sunnyside students - Zorro succumbed.  This feline role-model was buried with a bottle of claret, to keep his memory sweet. His monument (erected with purloined bricks) is just outside the back door of Old College. |  |  | | --- | | **FTD Plaque: Memento of the Revolution of 1957**http://student.wits.ac.za/NR/rdonlyres/448D0E9D-4A69-4732-BB4E-6939305F5C73/0/ftdstone1.jpg  In 1951, Professor James Hyslop became Dean of Men's Halls of Residence. His tussles with Residents and their several House Committees are chronicled below. The plaque commemorating this Great Struggle is in the courtyard of the Old College. If anyone does not know what the "F" stands for, he was surely not in Mens Res…  Remembered only by a small plaque inlaid in the Old College courtyard, the FTD campaign and events leading to it were recalled by several Res occupants as the most memorable of their stay. By the nineteen fifties, initiation was unpleasant and to a degree brutal. Some Seniors tended to regard freshmen as legitimate objects of derision throughout the whole of their first year. Professor James Hyslop was appointed Dean in 1951 and decided to curb initiation. His attempts began in 1953. That policy caused a head-on confrontation with the House Committees of each succeeding year. He took the drastic step of housing only freshmen in Dals, Seniors in College, and in 1954 steadily excluded all seniors in the hope of getting a fresh ethos in the Res. In 1957, among other measures, Professor Hyslop ordered the Housecom to disband. This led to a revolt in which Prof Hyslop became the target of various semi-violent reprisals. His car was advertised for sale at a give-away price in a newspaper; Mrs Hyslop kept being locked in their flat; on one occasion the evening dinner was boycotted, the Dean having as his only companion an effigy of himself hanging from the rafters. It is said that on one occasion the flat door was bricked up and a fire-hose, gushing like a Saturday night Senior, was pushed down the chimney. In March 1957, the Housecom sent a letter to the Vice Chancellor chronicling the events and seeking Prof Hyslop's resignation; which was not forthcoming. He eventually resigned in 1960, and left Wits to become the Vice Chancellor of Rhodes. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **http://student.wits.ac.za/NR/rdonlyres/86B43102-5506-4021-B485-36B321F1BF06/0/eohstone1.jpg** | **EOH Plaque**  Mens Res regards this other Residence as an abomination, which should not be referred to by its full name. A gravestone was erected bearing the inscription EOH. During Orientation Week, MHR freshmen are encouraged to show their view of that establishment by bathing the plaque with body fluids. |   **Pistardius-Hon-Kersae (known to some as the Honkus Pistorius Tree)**  This beautiful arboreal specimen can be found on the eastern side of Old College House. Botanically this tree is classified as follows: Species: Similar to Jacaranda Family:Pistardius Genus: Hon Strange features: one target (Target Uranus) situated at the base  Tradition has it that on those occasions when Residents find themselves inebriated, it behooves them to pass this tree and pay homage to it by passing water on the trunk, and then "Honking", if so indisposed, at the base. Thriving on this type of sustenance Pistardius has survived many years despite the terrible and severe Highveld draught. With careful attention, and the consumption of a good deal of ale, one sees Pistardius living to eternity. What talks its roots could tell if they could evoke the events leading to each soaking the received!   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **The Vibrator**  Not all monuments are rooted in the past: one is of modern, if not quite space-age technology. The reason for the Vibrator Monument, now lost, has never been fully chronicled, but it is to an object of comfort, most used when Mens Res is on vacation or the inhabitants of it are totally inebriated. | http://student.wits.ac.za/NR/rdonlyres/156DFB30-FA3D-48B6-B57B-081EDEC43419/0/cross1.jpg |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://student.wits.ac.za/NR/rdonlyres/EDAAC585-64C6-4FBD-82D1-6EAC7E94D6D7/0/buck.jpg**The Buck**  This trophy is mounted in the College House Hall and symbolises the buck depicted in both the Mens Res and University crests. | http://student.wits.ac.za/NR/rdonlyres/E351F349-75BB-4138-9230-2AAF9FC60AD4/0/mandelasquare.jpg**Mandela Square**  This quad (situated outside the New College Entrance) is the most recent addition to the list of 'illustrious' Men's Res monuments. This area was unofficially named by students to commorate the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. | |