

Spotlight

on Councillors' Visit to Franz Hoenig Haus

by JOHN FREER*

As an innovation on the annual programme, the Excursions Sub-Committee organized a social get-together of the Institute's Councillors and their families on Sunday, 27th February, 1983.

By the kind hospitality of African Explosives and Chemical Industries, a visit was arranged to Franz Hoenig Haus at Modderfontein (see front cover), which serves both as a lodge for V.I.P. guests at AE & CI and as an important museum of antique furniture, scientific instruments, historical documents, and nineteenth-century culture.

Franz Hoenig Haus

This is how the old house is described in an AE & CI brochure:

'Set in a gently wooded area with carefully tended gardens, it is difficult to believe that Franz Hoenig Haus is situated within a stone's throw of a major chemical manufacturing complex.

'The peace, tranquillity and 'olde worlde' atmosphere of the surroundings and of the house itself transport the visitor into time gone by. To an age of quiet, sophisticated refinement, of gracious ladies and distinguished gentlemen, of faultless cuisine and superior wines, of animated conversation and spirited repartee.

'One of the oldest restored houses in the Transvaal, it appears today very much as it did when it was

built in 1896 as a residence for Franz Hoenig, Modderfontein's first Factory Manager. The residence was occupied up to 1949 by seven successive managers before it was considered too old fashioned for the purpose. It was certainly a large, rambling and, in winter, an extremely cold building.

'Both its name and style of architecture give the clue to the building's Germanic origins, and no wonder, as Franz Hoenig was Austrian and the builders, masons and carpenters who constructed the house were recruited in Germany.'

The Visit

On this beautiful sunny occasion, Councillors and their families were received by Mr Dave Mather on behalf of AE & CI, and were invited to enjoy a full array of most welcome liquid refreshments and snacks. Professor Peter King, Senior Vice President of the Institute, replied to Mr Mather's welcoming address, and thanked AE & CI for making such an interesting historical venue available for the get-together, and for their hospitality in providing refreshments and an open-air buffet lunch.

After a tour of the museum and a visit to Dirty Dick's (regretably closed on the Sabbath), everyone relaxed and enjoyed the surroundings, the easy companionship, and the excellent fare of succulent lamb on the spit, attractive salads, crisp white wine, and enticing sweets.

For all those who attended, it was a successful and memorable occasion for which they remain most grateful to AE & CI and to Dave Mather and his team.

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Asian Mining — change of date

The Second Asian Mining Conference, previously announced as being held in Manila, The Philippines, from 5th to 8th November, 1984, will now be held in Manila from *11th to 14th February, 1985*. The organizers, The Institution of Mining and Metallurgy and The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, regret any inconvenience that this enforced change of date may cause.

Associated with the conference will be the Second

Asian Mining Exhibition, which is to be organized by Industrial and Trade Fairs International, Ltd.

Full details of the conference, the exhibition, and the related events are available from The Conference Office, The Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, 44 Portland Place, London W1N 4BR, England. Telephone: 01-580 3802. Telex: 261410 IMM G.