



seemed obvious to include a horse drawn carriage. So began the vision, the 'one stop' wedding venue. Over the years, the unique Summerhouse was completed, followed by bridal suites and the Guest House and the old chicken run in which old Mrs Harrison grew her prized orchids, which became the beautiful Conservatory. Bridal dressing rooms were then added. The old Dairy has recently been restored as another function venue.

Mary sold her share in 1996, and Oakfield Farm rooms have been added and recently became a family-owned business. Although farming is no longer viable, the farm is still a welcome oasis for the celebration of memorable occasions in this unforgettable setting.

Oakfield Farm was named after a beautiful old tree and it is still the lovely old trees which make this farm so special. To this end, more than two hundred trees have been planted to ensure that this enchanted place will be enjoyed by many in the years to come.

Timeless *Tranquility*

At the turn of the century, a gigantic oak tree, which became famous as the largest Oak tree outside the Cape, towered above the African grasslands and pinpointed a very special farm. It is uncertain as to how such a huge tree came to be planted before the land was settled; who carried this acorn all the way from the Cape? Was it dropped or was it planted? Either way, this old English Oak flourished and the farm was soon named after the magnificent tree. In the 1980's, lightning struck the great tree and now all that remains is the massive stump, cleaved in half on either side of the Pavilion. With the freshwater spring located behind the Chapel, Oakfield became the centre of a small farming community with irrigation furrows supplying precious water. Strawberries flourished in what is now the Homestead parking lot and many ancient plum and pear trees still bear fruit each year.

At a time when the coaches and ox cart were the only transport, the farm found itself on the busy route from Kimberley to Rhodesia. This was the time of the famous Zederburg coaches, one of which was even pulled by a team of Zebra. Of course, river crossings were always a problem and Muldersdrift was no exception. After heavy rains, the river was impassable for the coach and though travellers were dragged across the drift in a sling, the coach was left stranded on the wrong wide of the river. One brave coach driver was tempted to forge the river and the coach and horses were swept downstream. Although the driver survived,

the coach was destroyed, and several horses drowned.

With the drift in spate, accommodation was always a problem. A boarding room with walls more than a foot thick was built at Oakfield. This became part of the original farmhouse, and is now the office. For many years, the farm was owned by the Duvenhage family, whose ancestors are buried in the small cemetery above the stables. During the 2nd World War, two Italian prisoners, a mechanic and a dentist, were requisitioned to help run the farm. They built the dairy which provided milk for the community until 1991.

In 1988, Mary Slack fell in love with the farm, and with her long-time friend, David Stubbs, purchased the farm from the Harrison family. In 1991, David's son, Matthew, left his teaching career and trekked from the Cape with his wife and son and a load of horses. The task of making the farm pay its way was not as easy as it seemed. Quail eggs were sold, guinea fowl were bred and fifteen rather wild Warmblood horses arrived from Alzu Stud Farm to be broken in and trained as show jumpers. However, it was the old barn overlooking the indigenous wood and freshwater stream which came to the rescue. This was converted into a reception venue. Inspired by an old stone altar in an Oak forest which has seen the marriage of five generations of Halse children on their beautiful family farm, a charming Chapel was built in the grove of cottonwood trees. Having grown up on horseback, it also

