
The firm of John J. Kirkness

The late Mr. J. J. Kirkness came to this country in 1879, and was first engaged in building operations in Natal and the Free State. Eventually he made his headquarters in Pretoria.

He was the Contractor for numerous buildings here including the Raadsaal Building in Church Square the Foundation Stone of which was laid in 1889 by President Kruger. It is interesting to note that all the doors and windows for this building were made in Kirkwall, Orkney Islands, by Samuel Baikie & Company — his father-in-law — shipped from there to Durban, railed to Charleston, the rail terminus at that time, and transported by wagon to Pretoria.

Besides being interested in building, he established the Groenkloof Factory in 1888 and can be rightfully claimed to be the pioneer of the production of high quality bricks.

This Factory has grown with the years and is now capable of an annual output of 50,000,000 bricks, plus a range of other clay products, such as Roofing Tiles, Quarries, Structural Hollow Tiles and Pottery.

The Company also operates another Factory, also in the Pretoria district with a capacity of 36,000,000 bricks per annum.

Mr. Kirkness was a member of the Pretoria Municipal Council for many years and a Mayor at one period.