



# Eynbos

Kleinmond  
Natuurbewaringsvereniging  
Nature Conservation Society

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KNBV het 'n oorkonde aan Peter Slingsby oorhandig uit erkenning sy groot bydrae. Hier is van die mense wat 'n lang pad saam met hom geloop het: Rowena Cohen, Ebraime Hull, Marie Marinus, Peter en Maggie Slingsby, Carl Swart (KNBV-voorsitter wat die ookonde oorhandig het), Peter Muller, Cathy Floris en Margie Samuels.

## Peter Slingsby

Peter Slingsby, well-known cartographer, conservationist and author, was the guest speaker at the KNCS annual general meeting in May. He allowed us to publish his very interesting talk in our newsletter. Enjoy the read.

Peter told the audience about conservation in the seventies and eighties of the previous century while he lived in Kleinmond. As still happens today, conservation interests were often in conflict with business interests, local administration and poachers.

From his talk it became apparent that Peter was in the thick of things, helping to get the area surrounding Kleinmond declared a nature reserve and making it accessible to the general public. He also played a role in rewilding and rehabilitating large parts of the new reserves.

He also invested in the next generation by starting an ECCO programme for school children. Today many of those children play important roles in nature conservation.

Peter Slingsby, welbekend as kartograaf, natuurliefhebber en skrywer, was die gasspreker by KNBV se algemene jaarvergadering in Mei. Hy het ingestem dat ons sy baie interessante aanbieding in ons nuusbrief publiseer. Pure leesgenot!

Peter het vertel van sy verbintenis met Kleinmond en daarmee saam oor natuurbewaring in die sewentigs en tagtigs van die vorige eeu. Daar was destyds, net soos vandag, dikwels konflik tussen die belange van natuurbewaarders en ekonomiese belange, plaaslike administrasie en stropers.

Uit sy aanbieding blyk dit ook dat Peter 'n groot rol gespeel het in die verklaring van die Kleinmond Kus- en Berg-natuurreservaat wat feitlik reg rondom Kleinmond strek en in die taak om die area toeganklik vir die algemene publiek te maak. Verder was hy intens betrokke by die terugbring van die natuurlike plante-groei en rehabilitasie van groot gebiede in die reservaat.

Peter het in die volgende geslag belê met sy EKKO-programme vir skoolkinders. Baie van die kinders wat deur sy hande is, speel vandag leiersrolle in natuurbewaring en elders.



## Kleinmond's Reserves: a Brief History

Address to the Kleinmond Nature Conservation Society,  
May 23rd 2024 by Peter Slingsby

My opening slide tonight is the extraordinary view from Elephant Rock Mountain, over Kleinmond, Sandown Bay, Bot River Lagoon and the distant peak of Maanskynekop, behind Hermanus.

We are all here for the same reason tonight, because of our appreciation of and commitment to the incredible natural beauty of this area.

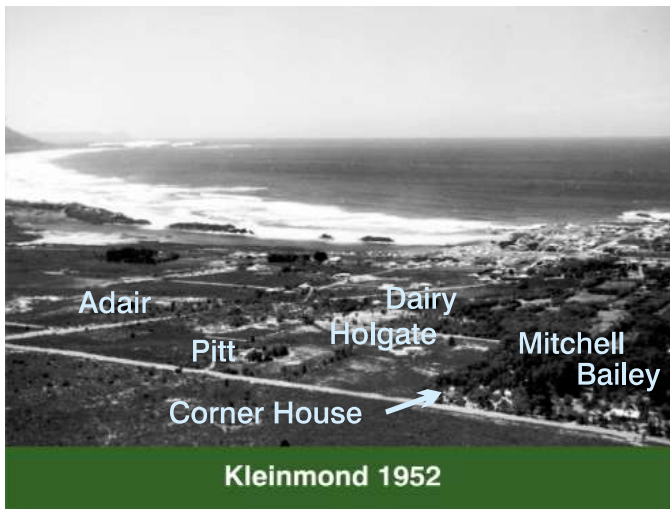


Here is an example. This field of *Protea compacta* grows just up the road here, between the peaks and Proteadorp.

This is a unique sight in the whole world: this is the only protea that flowers at the apex of one tall stem, creating a field of flowers almost like spring daisies ... just one of the many rare and very special beauties that we have in Kleinmond.

Maggie and I lived here from 1976 for nearly twenty years with our three children, but my family connection with Kleinmond is a lot older than that. My grandmother told us how in the early 1900s they would ride horses down the Palmiet valley, to the 'Blackburn House', the old thatched house between the harbour and Palmiet mouth—the house has been rebuilt since it burned down some years ago. Granny's family luggage would be brought by wagon from the railhead at Bot River.

My mother had only partial memories of this boat trip on the Palmiet in 1924, with her mother, aunt and siblings. I'm not 100% certain that it is my mother and her family in the boat, but it's from the same time, and the pic is in the family album. She was just four, and her father had died the previous year—he was not yet 40 years old. Perdeberg Peak is clearly visible in the hazy background.



My first stay in Kleinmond was in 1952, at Brightwoods Bungalows [now The Grail]. We stayed in Corner House. Kleinmond was quite undeveloped. My mother cooked the Christmas meal in a paraffin oven—there was no electricity. We'd walk down the gravel roads to the beach, or east of Bot River Road through the bush, putting up bokkies and jumping over puff adders. We would pass Piet Swanepoel's dairy and he would give us frozen cream on sticks.

The area north of 10th—now 13th—Avenue was the 'Engelse' part of town in those days—we made many friends. Later, in 1960, my parents built a house, and we became much more regular visitors to Kleinmond.



Bot River Road is of course the old dirt road to Bot River, which angled up from the Main Road and crossed the Isaacs River in the north east corner of town, where the golf course now is. From there the road crossed a concrete bridge and passed behind the Heuningklip and so on to the east. Until after 1945 there was no road between Klein-Berlin and the lagoon, where the present R44 passes.

What happened to this old road is an interesting story.

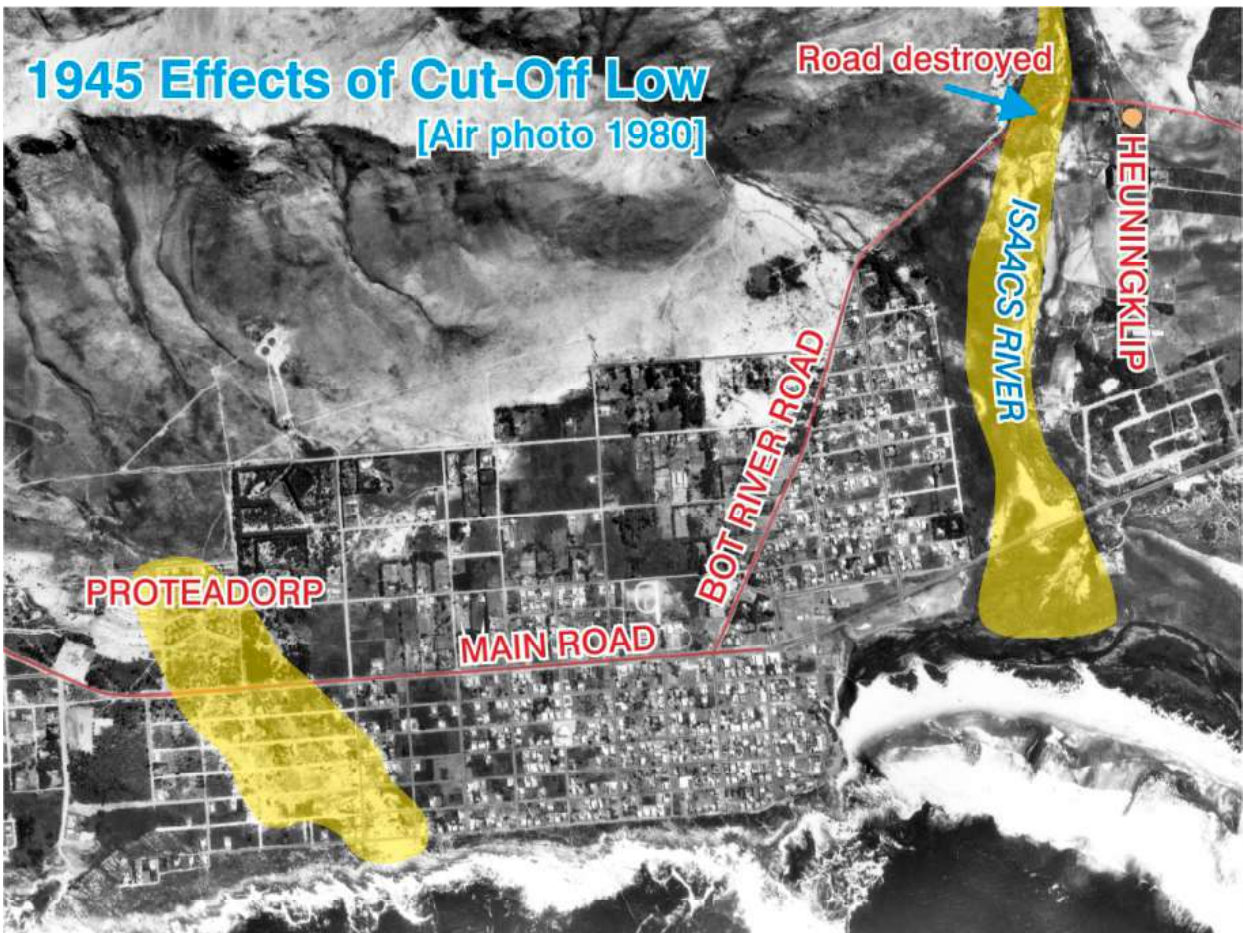
In February 1945 a massive veld fire swept through the whole area. It was still wartime and fire-fighting facilities were scarce.

Forester Piet Reynecke writes in his 1975 report on the fire history of the Kogelberg:

29/1/45 - 12/2/45

Feitlik die hele gebied het afgebrand. Die vuur is veroorsaak deur gevangenes wat behulpsaam was met die konstruksie van die pad tussen Gordonsbaai en Kleinmond. Die vuur het digby die tronk (tussen Rooi-els en Betty's Baai) ontstaan. Ongeveer 12 800 ha het afgebrand. Uitgawes verbonde aan die blus van die vuur het op R1.190 te staan gekom.

Please note that Clarence Drive was NOT built by Italian prisoners of war—I have been guilty of perpetrating that myth myself. Building on the road started in 1940 by the Cape Provincial Roads department with Black convict labour, to serve the coastal radar stations at Hangklip. The labour was housed at the prison at Pringle Bay, now Glen Craig resort. There were no Italian prisoners-of-war in South Africa until 1943, and they built the old Du Toits Kloof Pass, not Clarence Drive.



The air photo on the previous page refers. Shortly after the 1945 fire a massive cut-off low dumped an enormous amount of rain on the burnt area. With no vegetation to hold back the flood a landslip below present Proteadorp scoured out the veld all the way to the sea; for many years thereafter the town plots below the Main Road remained bare of any topsoil.

More serious was the effect of the swollen Isaacs River, which roared down the valley and totally destroyed the old bridge near the Heuningklip. Kleinmond was cut off from the outside world for several months while the present main road between Klein-Berlin and the lagoon was built.

It has been said that the village survived by hunting wild cattle and pigs at Rooisand, but I have not found any accounts that might verify this.



Some pictures from Kleinmond in the early 1950s:

1. About 1949: the new Main Road



2. On the other side of town the road still crossed the Palmiet on the pont; the bridge was not opened until 1952



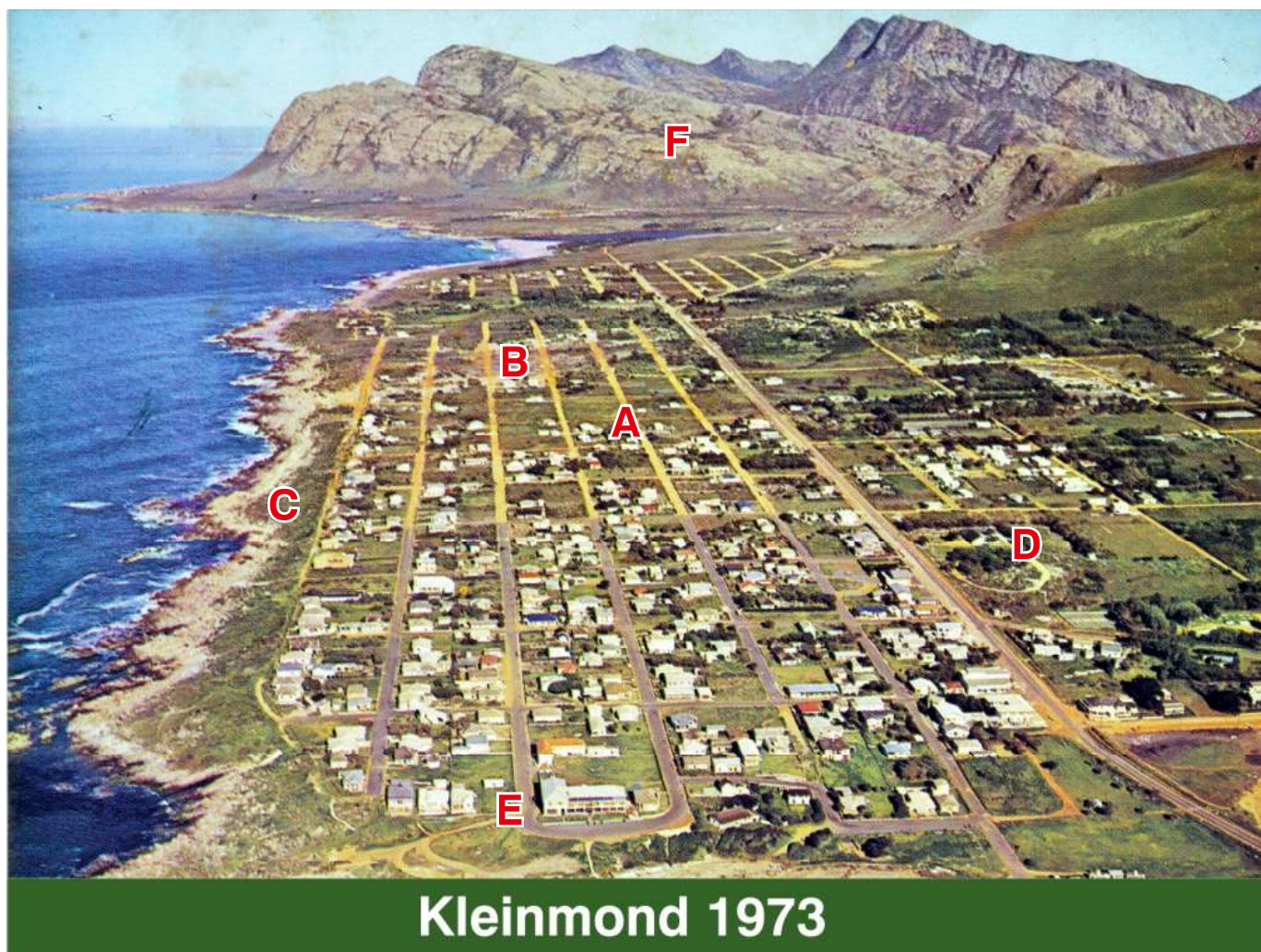
3. In 1952 Kleinmond Laerskool had just two classrooms and no trees!



4. By 1952 the old lagoon bridge had not collapsed yet. That took place in a storm some years later, 1957 I think?



5. The Losieshuis next to the Kerksaal. The building is still there.



**Kleinmond 1973**

In 1976 we moved to Kleinmond. Kleinmond was still a smaller, quieter place than it is today. Most streets were still untarred, and the telephone was on a crank-handle party line. The exchange knew everybody's business, and if you were away and tried to call someone at your home you'd be told that you were away on holiday!

In this pic from shortly before we arrived various features are interesting.

- A: Most town streets are still gravelled;
- B: The area washed out in 1945 is still bare of soil, nearly 30 years later;
- C: The original coastal reserve of just 55 ha was proclaimed in 1975;
- D: The Laerskool is not much bigger than it was in 1953;
- E: The Sandown Hotel stands proud as the biggest building in town.

In 1976 our neighbours were George and Stella Bailey, who owned a flower farm here in the mountains [F]. Stella taught me everything I needed to know to gain a good knowledge of fynbos.

George was on the committee of the newly-formed Kleinmond Nature Conservation Society and introduced me to the chair, Wessel de Beer, who invited me to join the committee. I was a cheeky youngster of 30 and most of the committee were well into their 70s, The first meeting I attended was held at the Sandown Hotel. The committee included retired dominees and professors, all many years my seniors, three councillors, a nurseryman and just two Engelsmense—George Bailey and myself ...

I still refer to the eastern end of the Coastal Reserve as the “hotel end”. The hotel’s name was later changed to the Beach House, and it burnt down in the early 2000s. I have no idea why it has never been rebuilt—on surely the most valuable site in town. We used to refer to it as the biggest building in town, with the most fleas ...



The chairman Wessel de Beer and I became good friends. I had a 4x4 vehicle and one day Wessel asked me to help him reconstruct the grave of TP Stokoe. Stokoe’s ashes were buried in a cairn on Stokoe’s Kop, deep in the Kogelberg [and not ‘scattered’, as Cape Nature’ pamphlet will wrongly tell you.] The little cairn had been damaged by baboons and Wessel wanted to repair it. Stokoe was a plant collector who found over 100 new species in the Kogelberg, and in all had over 30 plant species named after him, including many of our rarest beauties.

At the time the Kogelberg was tightly sealed off from the general public because of the number of delicate rare species, and I had never been inside the gate. I jumped at the chance, and on our way to the grave I took this pic of the Palmiet River valley.



This whole valley was previously owned by Hangklip Beach Estates, the first developers of Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay and Rooiels. After World War II they sold the property to the Prisons Department, with plans for a maximum security prison in the Oudebosch area. There was an outcry from the Grabouw farmers and eventually the prison was built at Helderstroom, near Greyton. Oudebosch then became an experimental protea farm, where Dr Marie Vogts, who served on this Society's committee with great distinction for many years, did much of her early work on South African Proteaceae.

Eventually the protea farm was moved to Tygerhoek near Riviersonderend because—wait for it—the Dept of Water Affairs planned to dam the river.

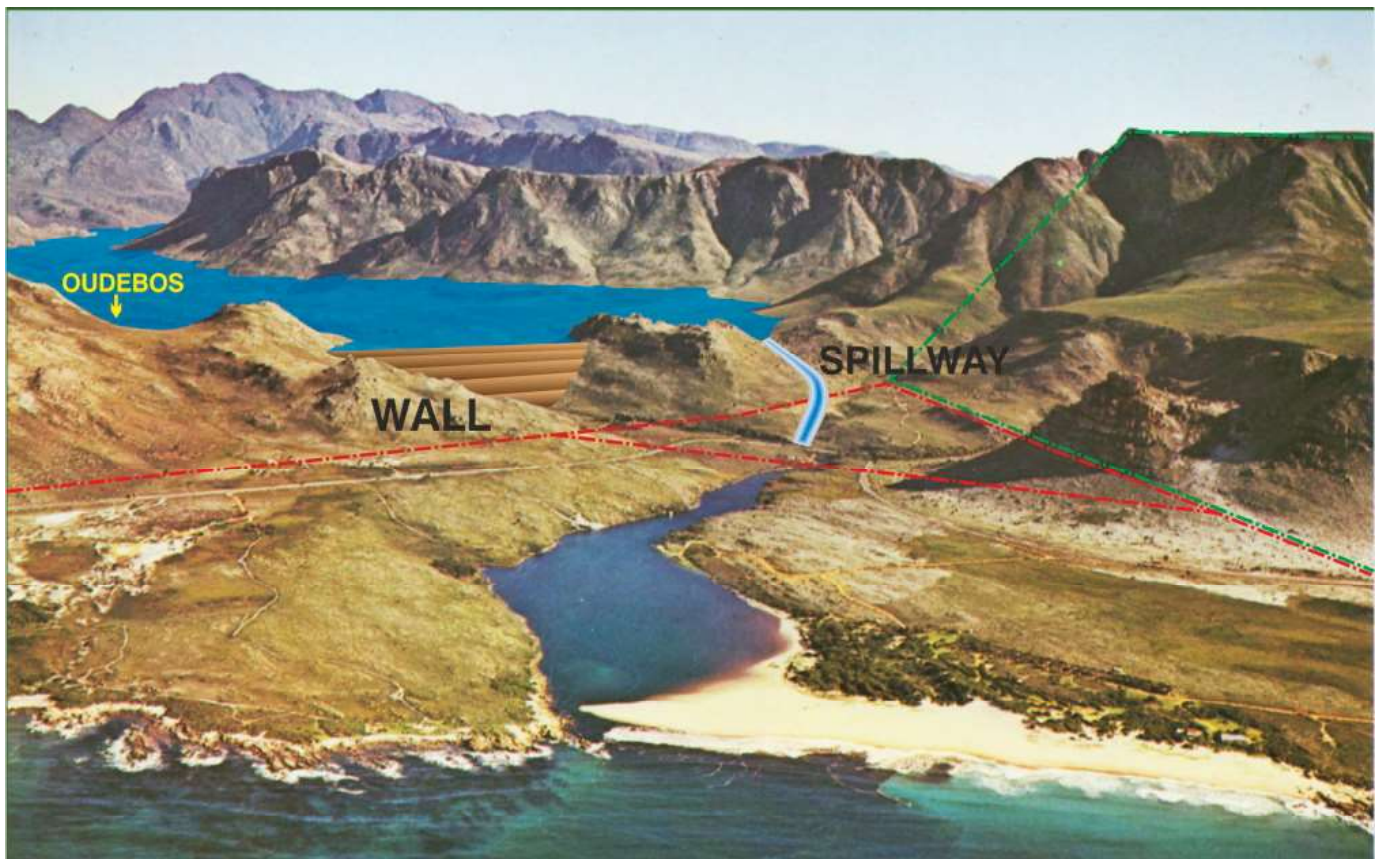
Foresters and the few conservationists who knew the area were horrified. Because the public had been so tightly excluded few people knew about the valley and fewer cared. My forestry friends sent me all the info about the dam and asked me to write an article about it. The article duly appeared in African Wildlife, in 1979, with my photo of the unspoiled valley on the front cover.

The article caused quite a stir. I cannot claim to have halted the dam—I'm told it was because ground tests showed the rock structure in the valley to be unsuitable for the foundations of the dam wall—but I like to think that my article had an influence. Eventually Water Affairs withdrew, and Forestry quickly had the area proclaimed a Nature Reserve under the Forest Act.

This form of conservation is the most secure we have—even Wilderness Areas and National Parks do not have as stringent protection. The status can only be changed by an Act of Parliament.

CapeNature took over management of the area in 1987 and the tight restrictions on access were eased; Mark Johns was appointed the first conservator.

The picture shows the area that would have been flooded, extending up into the Grabouw Valley, and drowning Oudebosch 20 metres under water ...





Nevertheless, the planned dam had one good effect. The National Roads Dept planned their N2 freeway extension here ...

Water Affairs said, “No, we want to build a dam.”  
End of N2 freeway ...

The effects of this road are hard to imagine. Tunneling under the Kogelberg itself, with four lanes roaring down the Palmiet Valley, sweeping round behind Kleinmond and out across the wetlands to Hermanus,

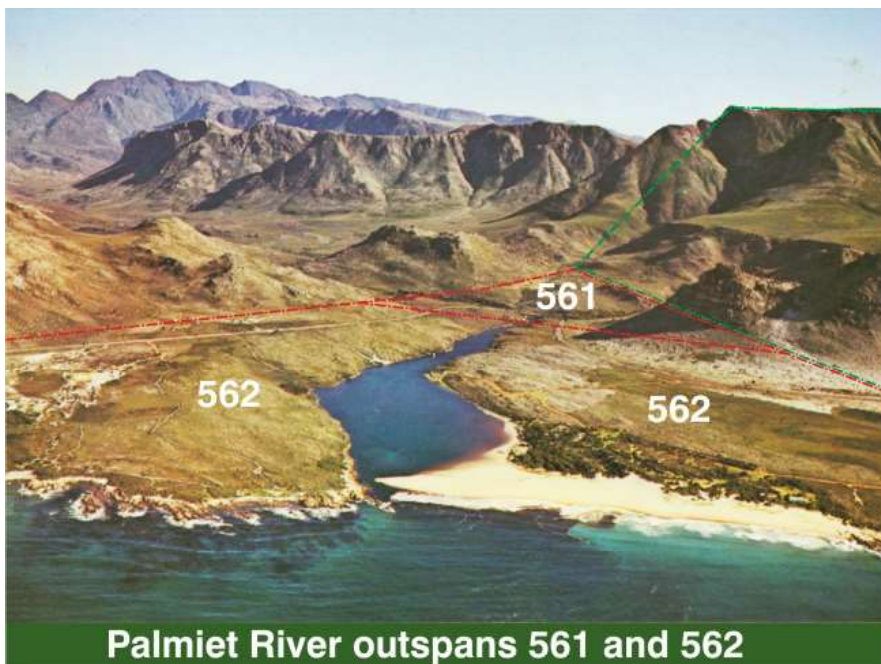


the road would have impacted every single Nature Reserve in our area ... everything we have conserved would have been lost, forever.

In 1977 I was given the job of part-time ranger for the Kleinmond Coastal Reserve. I had three labourers, and our first task was the construction of the first part of the walkway through the original reserve, at the hotel end; this later became known as the Laura Wessels footpath, after the donor.

The outspans 561 and 562 on both banks of the Palmiet River mouth were heavily infested with alien vegetation. This Society donated funds for two students to join my three labourers, and with five strong young men, saws, axes and a chain saw in two months we cleared dense stands of over 100 000 pine trees, and jungles of wattle and myrtle. When the aliens are gone it's hard to imagine they were ever there! The Palmiet banks, Fairy Glen, the Palmiet Camp and all over the outspans countless weeds were strangling fynbos and forest patches.

At Fairy Glen and along the Palmiet banks we planted over 200 indigenous

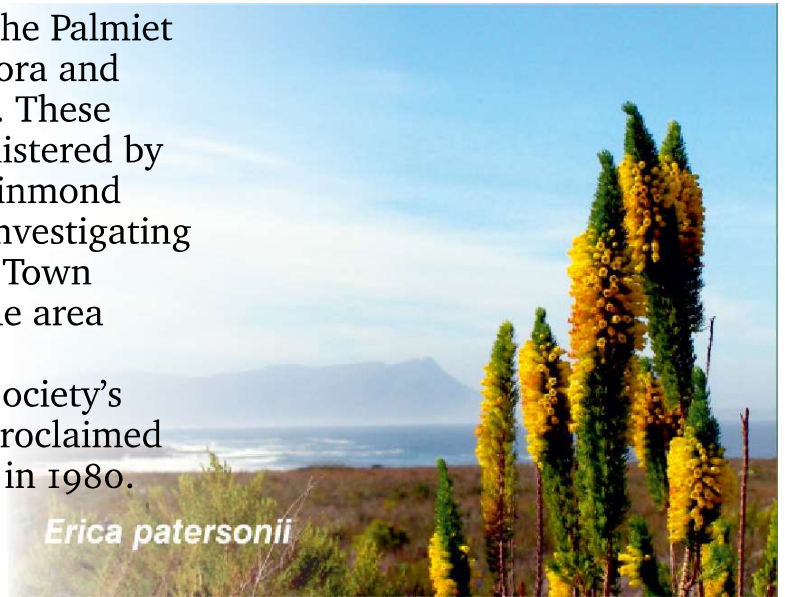


trees into the gaps left by the vanquished aliens, and I am pleased to see how they are flourishing. The trees were donated by the City of Cape Town nursery—rooiers, yellowwoods, wild olives, assegai and many others.

And under pressure from this Society, overnight camping at Fairy Glen was stopped by the Municipal Council.

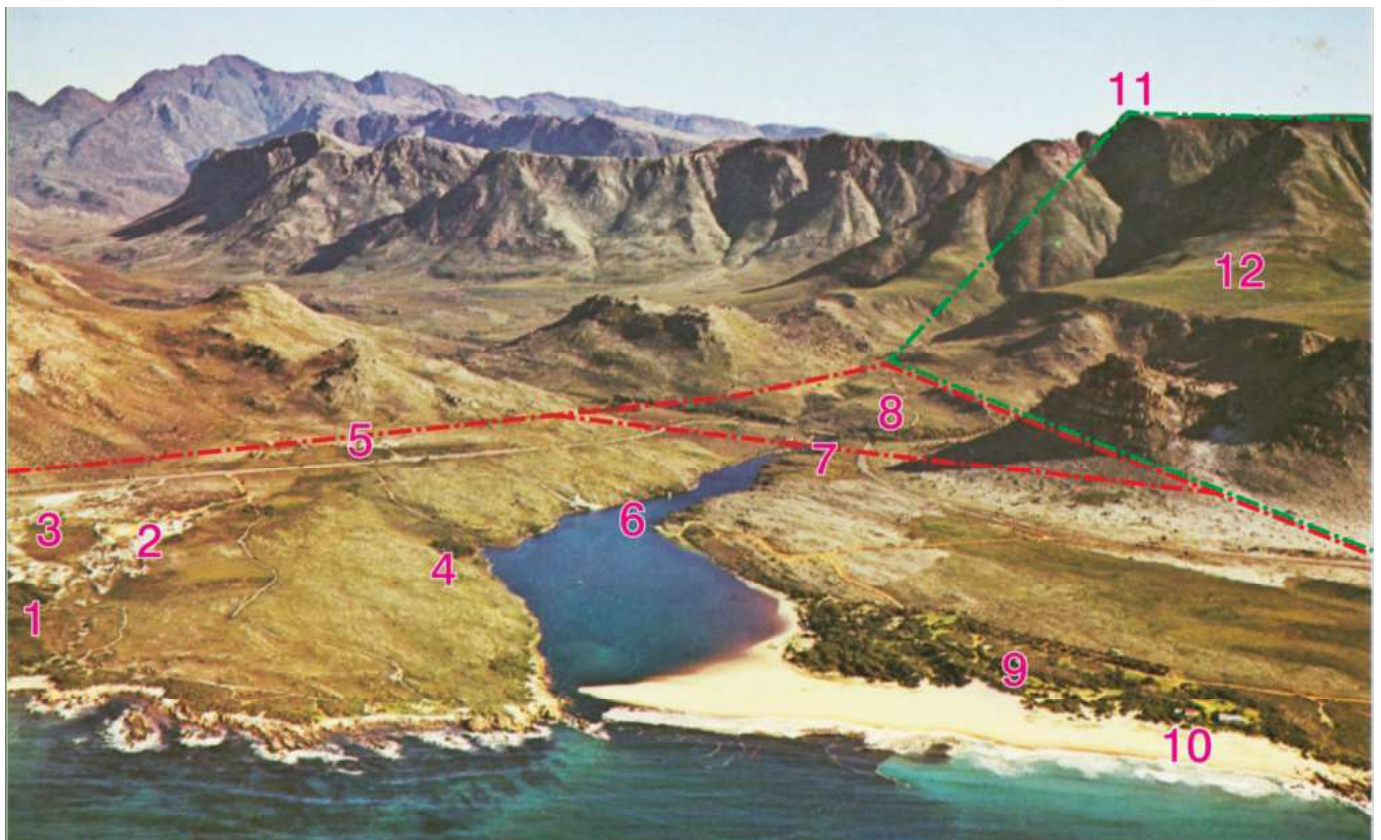
As we know, the outspans flanking the Palmiet River include some very beautiful flora and some of the finest views in our area. These outspans had been state land administered by the Municipality since 1964; the Kleinmond Nature Conservation Society, after investigating the condition of the area, asked the Town Council to consider incorporating the area into the Coastal Nature Reserve.

The Council agreed to the Society's request and the area was formally proclaimed as a 330ha extension to the Reserve in 1980.



*Erica patersonii*

As one member of the Society Committee put it, parts of both outspans had been sadly abused “deur algemene onheil”. For years the area had been subject to random camping, wild flower picking on a commercial scale, sand quarrying, dumping, poaching, etc etc.



In this aerial phot from about 1975, 1 = Paterson's Milkwood [where the explorer William Paterson is reputed to have encountered a Cape Lion, in the 1780s], 2 & 3 Sand quarries and dump; 4 = pine plantation; 5 = cemetery; 6 = site of the old pont; 7 = the present-day road bridge; 8 = Fairy Glen; 9 = Palmiet Camp; 10 = historic houses; 11 = Perdeberg Peak; 12 = shale band or 'die trap'.

The area bounded in red comprises the Reserve extension of 1980.



**“ONHEIL” IN KLEINMOND NATURE RESERVE, 1980**



Despite the proclamation of the reserve, sadly the abuses continued unabated without intervention from Cape Nature Conservation or the Municipality. In fact the Municipality continued to dump rubbish and nightsoil in the area and to quarry sand, while flower-picking continued. The pictures above were all taken *after* the area was proclaimed a Nature Reserve.

In the later 1980s a huge amount of overburden from the reconstruction of the R44 between the R43 intersection and Rooiels was dumped in the area with the permission of Cape Nature Conservation; later the Municipality embarked on their sewage treatment plant, which appears to be under extension at present.

[The Municipality’s plea that they had nowhere else for these activities was heeded and a portion of the Reserve was in due course excised, but there were no aesthetic or rehabilitative guidelines or conditions attached. Kleinmond can hardly be proud of the eyesore that greets visitors from the Betty’s Bay side, as they approach the Palmiet bridge. A hardy hedge of fireproof taaibos interspersed with suitable trees would do a lot to screen the sewage plant from the road.]\*



Seepage from the sewage works has created a smelly vlei of dense reeds which is already severely impacting the priceless Paterson’s milkwood forest.

*\*Lines in brackets were inadvertently omitted from the talk.*

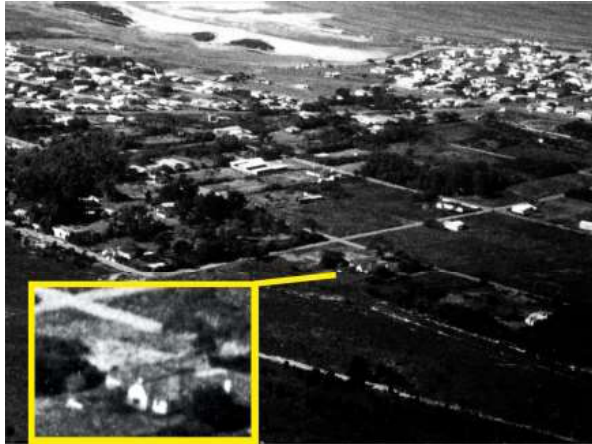


I need to go back in time a little here. On August 9th 1979 one of Kleinmond's most damaging veld fires broke out. It was a Friday afternoon and the Municipality had been burning rubbish at the dump. At lunch time the labourers knocked off as usual and had all returned to the depot to receive their weekly pay. The depot was in town where Spar now stands.

A typical strong north wester suddenly arose at about 1 pm. The fire had not been properly extinguished and within minutes the veld was alight. Swirling, strengthening wind pushed the fire over the ridge. The fire raced up and over the peaks, burning deep into the Forestry Department's Kogelberg. By three o'clock the fire was in amongst the houses, too.

Late that night it started to rain, and the fire burnt itself out in Heuningklip farm's protea lands.

The yellow stars on the map are houses that were damaged, while red stars are houses that were destroyed. The inset shows the Albertyn homestead in 13th Ave. It was a thatched house with a "fire pool" [!] and sprinklers on the roof, but old Mrs Albertyn had passed away a few months earlier and there was no one at home. The house burned to the ground and priceless antiques and old photographs were lost forever.



As a result of the fire relations between the Forestry Department and the Municipality became seriously strained, which influenced what was to come. Forestry were very unhappy that the Municipality had not followed the guidelines for burning rubbish, which included that the dump should never be burned on a Friday. If a fire on your land spreads to your neighbour you are liable, in terms of the law. Forestry wanted compensation for their costs fighting the fire, and I believe that several of the private owners or their insurance companies also made claims.



Which brings me to the next important bit of Reserve history. The shale band or 'trap' below the peaks on the western side is the home of the 'Pride of Kleinmond', the rare and endemic *Erica pillansii*, which is in flower right now. It was my privilege to incorporate this lovely flower in the Society's logo in the mid 1980s.

In the late seventies hundreds of bundles of the very commercially-desirable Pillans heath were being picked and carried out to lorries that freely used the Municipality's private mountain quarry road. When I queried this with the town clerk he told me that that land did not belong to Kleinmond. I was not sure about that. In 1980 the Mountain Catchment Act came into effect and Mr Don Bands of the Forestry Department was responsible for its implementation in the Western Cape.

Bands was aware of the tension between his department and the town. He called a site meeting with the Mayor and officials, as well as our Society with its new chair, Ds Johan Lückhoff, and myself.

On a cold, blustery morning we met at the mountain quarry. Bands outlined the area to be included in the catchment, and then read the riot act to the Mayor and officials.

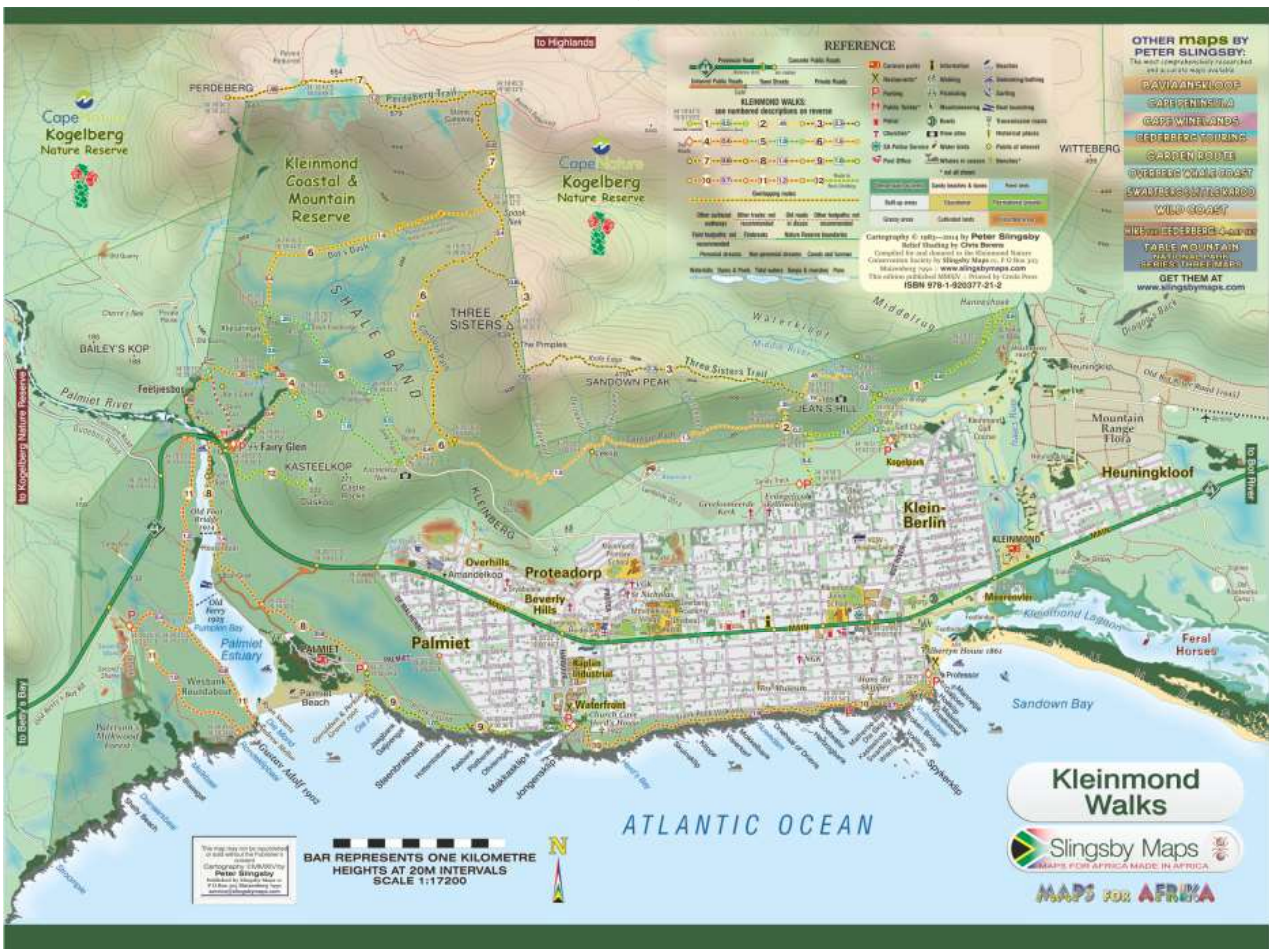


Bands in particular pointed to the many quarries and borrow-pits that had been opened by the Municipality over the years [see red arrows on map, previous page]. Most of these had been opened without any reference to the Mining Act and the rehabilitation protocols that should have been applied. He pointed out that under the Catchment Act his department had authority to take over the land and compel Council to pay for the rehabilitation of these areas. There was to be henceforth no more quarrying or flower picking.

I remember a very stony silence on the mountain that day! Bands gave a softener, however, when he promised to provide seed from the nursery at Highlands to help with the rehabilitation. This slightly misfired, however. The nursery had managed to get their seeds mixed up and thousands of seeds of a Garden Route species, *Leucadendron uliginosum*, were sown. Fortunately these have died out—in 2004 I could find no plants. Nevertheless the quarries have largely recovered.



It took another couple of years to persuade Council, but eventually they acceded and had the Catchment Area proclaimed as an enlargement to the Reserve. The mayor, Brigadier Piet Smal, opened the extension at a ceremony at Fairy Glen in 1986, where a large number of indigenous trees were added to those we'd planted in 1977. The Kleinmond Coastal and Mountain Nature Reserve was complete, and Kleinmond had a substantial nature reserve almost encircling the town. The Society's dream was realised within 10 years of its foundation, and the network of paths it has created have made this beauty accessible to all who would see it.



Sadly I don't have not enough time to describe the groundbreaking discoveries about the role of ants in fynbos that were being made right here in Kleinmond in the early 1980s, but I have promised to write up, for "Fynbos", the inspiring insights into the post-fire regeneration of hundreds of our rarest and most showy plants that were discovered through experiment right here!



My last reserve in this account is Rooisand, but there is a necessary pre-story. In the early 1980s we became increasingly aware of the circumstances of the disadvantaged people of Proteadorp. Many of these Kleinmonders were descendants of the Jongensklip community, who had lived in stone cottages clustered around the present-day harbour since the mid-1800s.



In 1954 the government applied the Group Areas Act and the entire community was forced to move to 36 sub-economic and two economic houses in 'old' Proteadorp. Sadly none of the picturesque, vernacular cottages were preserved. After the move job opportunities in Kleinmond—with the Municipality, flower exporters, builders, etc—continued to attract people to the town, and by 1976 this population had outgrown the available housing. The area that is now the Proteadorp sports field housed a substantial informal settlement.

I emphasize that these were not black African people, who were not allowed to seek work here at that time. Black Africans first moved here with the rebuilding of the R44 from the R43 junction to Rooiels, after 1989.

The extreme poverty amongst some of the people of Proteadorp was manifest by the number of child beggars going from door to door begging for 'n stukkie brood—and on top of that the clinic sister told us that the malnutrition disease known as kwashiorkor occurred in Kleinmond. We were shocked. It seemed that here was a disproportionate number of children whose 'body mass index' fell more than 25% below the accepted norm for their age—not necessarily suffering from kwashiorkor but severely underweight nonetheless. Please note that inasmuch as genetics plays a role in your size, there is an accepted 'normal range' for all human beings.

The two boys on the right are my sons. They're pretty normal in size—neither is an Eben Etzebeth.

The three maatjies on their right are similar ages, as shown; all fall below the 25 percentile. In 1982 we started a school feeding scheme at the old St Nicholas Primary School, and in short order some 80 kids were given soup and bread every day.



St Nicholas Primary School only had three classrooms; this meant that the older kids started school at 12 noon, when the younger ones went home to empty houses, as their parents were still at work. There was no supervision; it wasn't tall spotty teenagers hanging around in the streets with nothing to do, it was really young children sometimes starting a life of crime before they were even 10 years old. That was the reality, and that was one of the reasons we started EKKO; the other reason was my strong feeling that if people are denied access to nature and knowledge of it, why should they respect it?



I'm not trying to make a political statement with this slide; I'm merely pointing out the reality for the children of Proteadorp. At the same time we should be aware that our years in Kleinmond from 1976 to 1994 were amongst the most turbulent in SA's history. Kleinmond was no exception; everything in this village was political, even within the communities. Our chairman Wessel de Beer was also Chair of the local National Party, so the village's 'Bloedsappe' started a

rival Society. There were two 'white' tennis clubs, two different groups trying to get a golf club going—and always, two rival opinions about opening the lagoon. Young white people working with Proteadorp children was definitely political!!!



From time to time we came under considerable pressure, usually harmless rumour. Nevertheless I assure you that we never ever discussed politics with the kids or their parents—ask Ebraime! We ran EKKO purely to provide healthy outdoor activities based on appreciation and learning of the natural environment.



We ran EKKO from 1982 until 1994, with excellent support from this Society as well as many conservation NGOs based outside Kleinmond. Over those 12 years some 450 boys and girls from Kleinmond went through our programmes, including a sprinkle of White children—we were always a non-racial organization. We took children to the Harold Porter gardens, down to Rooisand, up the mountain, and taught them to swim in the Palmiet River on George Bailey’s land. These were all natural places normally inaccessible to these children, not only from racial exclusion but often simply because their parents had no transport.

I salute the Strandlopers and their Eco programme—it was such good news to learn of their existence from Ebraime Hull and others, and I would urge you all to give them as much support as you can.

Things started to improve for the Proteadorp community during the 1980s. There was a new school in 1985, and new housing. We always said that in 1982 club children with shoes were the exception. By 1994 there were hardly any without shoes. A simple measure!



We had our successes and failures—but the successes were spectacular. Horticulturalists at both Kirstenbosch and Harold Porter, Curator of the Hantam Botanical Gardens at Nieuwoudtville, Deputy Building Inspector for the City of Cape Town amongst them. Here I am with Ebraime Hull—I did not know that he was to introduce me here tonight. Senior at Harold Porter, he is also an accomplished artist trained by the great Vicki

Thomas. With Ebraime and I is his beautiful painting, that has pride of place in our Zandvlei living room.



EKKO led to support from a variety of unexpected quarters, as well as the chance to encounter a cross-section of both weird and wonderful political figures. Alan Boesak did not strike us as having a well-developed sense of humour. Tony Heard, the Cape Times editor sacked for publishing his interview with Oliver Tambo, became a firm and lasting friend. Next is Donald Wood, then Shirley Williams, former Minister of Education in the United Kingdom. Steve Biko's son, who is not illustrated, played kerrim with the Proteadorp kids. Barry Streek and Elsie Esterhuysen were distinguished friends. Finally, two political opposites, one a Cabinet Minister and one a judge, told me separately around Kleinmond braai fires how they'd poached perlemoen and kreef from these shores in their respective young days.

EKKO led to our lease on Rooisand, 300 ha of wonderful wild country on the banks of Bot River Vlei. In 1984 I saw the lease advertised for tender by the Caledon Afdelingsraad. We bid R60 per year, and we won the lease. The property was infested with aliens, mostly wattles, but had never been farmed. It was home to lots of small wildlife and some quite rare flora, and was already well known for the small herd of feral horses.



The previous tenant had leased Rooisand for the keeping of his hives, but when we asked him to remove them we kicked over a veritable bees' nest. He had not realised that his lease had expired; he had friends and relatives in high places, and in short order the Raad did everything they could to cancel our lease. In retrospect that is when most of our political troubles kicked off, but our advocate defied their attempts, even them trying the Group Areas Act to get us out. We kept the lease despite all—a minor victory against pre-ANC corruption!

All was quiet until 1991. In the meantime hundreds of kids from EKKO clubs and schools from all over the Cape enjoyed environmental camps at Rooisand.

One day in 1991 we were hosting a private school group when we heard the heavy, rhythmic thumping of a helicopter. A large yellow police helicopter flew right over us and landed on the hillside nearby. I hurried up the hill to them. The Kleinmond police van was standing there, with the local commandant. Two men covered in shiny gold braid were climbing out of the helicopter.

“What’s going on here?” I asked the commandant.

“Oh,” he said, “your days of camping here are coming to an end. These police generals are here to assess this property. They are going to build a rehabilitation centre and recreational resort for police involved in the unrest, and this property is ideal.”

Fortunately I knew that if a government department wanted to use any undeveloped State land it had to first be offered to the local Nature Conservation department. The EKKO committee set up an urgent appointment with the Cape Administrator, Mr Kobus Meiring. The meeting was also attended by the Department’s Director. He was quite negative about taking on another reserve, but we pointed out that Rooisand was the only non-private land that could be conserved anywhere on the shores of the vlei. If it was lost now it would never be regained. Meiring agreed, and the Director was told to have the property assessed by Mark Johns, the new conservator for the Kogelberg.

A few months later the police withdrew, and EKKO signed a new lease with Cape Nature Conservation that allowed us use of the land until 1996. The Rooisand Nature Reserve had become a reality. Of all our reserves it’s the only one for which I can claim direct responsibility, and if it wasn’t for EKKO we might be seeing Mr Cele enjoying his holidays at Rooisand!

Thank you for the opportunity to address you tonight.

