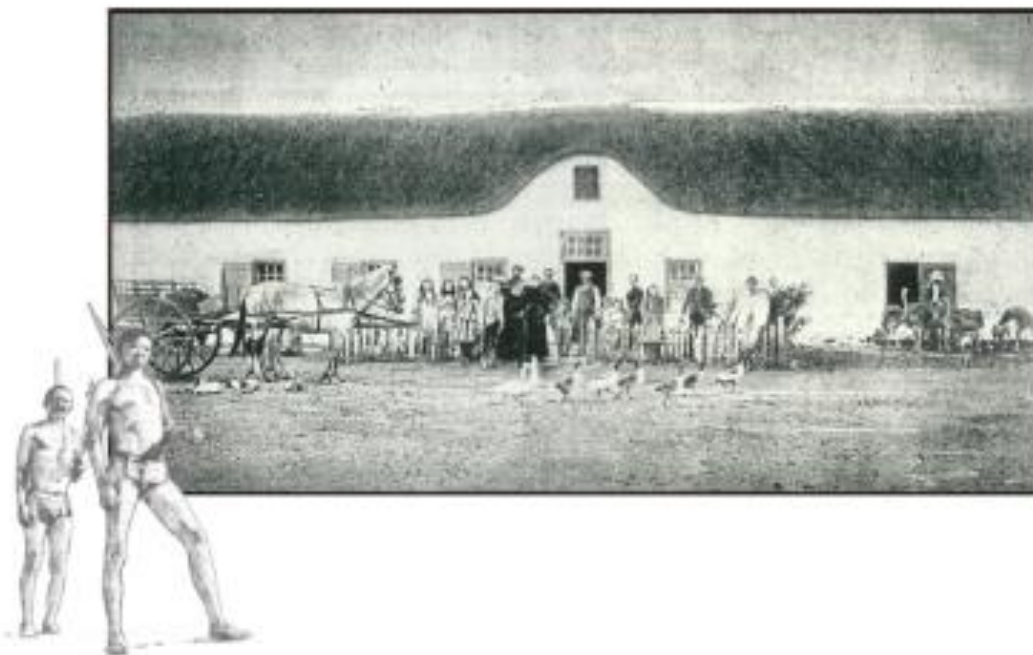


**X. APPENDICES - OTHER SUBJECTS**

**Appendix Yb2.**

**THE PEOPLE OF  
DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE**  
**A cultural-historical heritage**



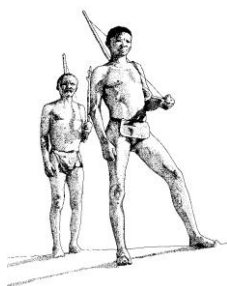
**Compiled for  
Western Cape Nature Conservation Board**

**by Ann & Mike Scott  
Overberg Conservation Services cc**

**March 2002**

# **THE PEOPLE OF DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE**

## **A cultural-historical heritage**



**Compiled for  
Western Cape Nature Conservation Board**

**by Ann & Mike Scott  
Overberg Conservation Services cc**

**March 2002**

*Drawing: Cape Nature Conservation*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

People and their ancestors (hominids) have been an integral part of the De Hoop system for more than a million years. They have left their mark on this vast and ageless landscape in forms that continually remind us of human dependence upon these natural resources. Along the coast are the ubiquitous middens containing the remains of shellfish, with here and there a tiny, efficient tool, fashioned of stone; deftly packed stone walls span the limestone hills; and compact cottages and spacious dwellings freely make use of natural stone, limewash and thatch.

During the most recent 50 years in the history of the reserve, Cape Nature Conservation has become one of the formative factors. The emphasis has shifted from a purely agricultural and hunting approach to land-use to one of conservation and education. Conservation includes not only nature, but also the cultural-historical elements - the tale of the people of the reserve, and that which they have left behind.

Further research and funding are required to implement this cultural-historical conservation. Long neglected, the archaeological elements are now enjoying increased attention. De Hoop contains some of the best preserved examples of coastal Early Stone Age through to Later Stone Age archaeology in the Western Cape and represents an extremely valuable asset for the future marketing of the reserve.

The historical buildings, their architectural style, possible architects and builders also deserve further attention, while the restoration of the buildings to their original condition, with new adaptations to suit our times, is of cardinal importance. Tracking down people who can possibly shed further light on the history of the reserve is a further priority.

Both the Khoisan legacy and the De Hoop, Potberg and Melkkamer homesteads and their long history as farms indicate a special type of partnership between nature and culture that should enjoy increased attention in a future of increasing demands on natural areas. It is this partnership and the accompanying responsibility that should be brought home to each visitor to De Hoop Nature Reserve.

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Overberg region has been occupied by hominids for more than a million years. There is evidence of occupation on the reserve from the Early Stone Age right through to the Later Stone Age and beyond, when indigenous people continued using the area after the arrival of European colonists. During the Later Stone Age the San hunted, collected veld plants and caught and collected marine animals. The Khoekhoen or Khoikhoi were the first people to have domesticated animals about 2 000 years ago, first sheep and later cattle. De Hoop contains some of the best preserved examples of coastal Later- and Middle Stone Age archaeology in the Western Cape and represents an extremely valuable asset for the future marketing of the reserve. Many midden sites and cave sites along the coast and inland bear testimony to these early occupations.

The following possible archaeological sites are known on De Hoop:

- Black Eagle Cave, Potberg: Hand-painting of historical interest
- Vulture Kloof Cave: Khoikhoi remains, later used as a kraal by farmers
- Melkbosheuwel Ruins: Khoikhoi midden site
- Caves at Grootfontein, Eselkloof, William's Kloof
- Pretorius's Cave, Badenhorst's Cave
- The Dig, Dronkvlei
- Klipkoppie midden
- Koppie Alleen middens
- Voëlklip middens
- Hammer-and-Ladder Cave, Hamerkop
- Stilgat:
  - West Cave Box
  - Cave Aeolianite
  - Cave
- Noetsie Sea Caves
- Bloukrans
- San Cave in kloof, John Richard's Bay
- Aeolianite San Cave, John Richard's Bay

### **2.2 DE HOOP HOMESTEAD AREA**

- A bored digging stone was found near the De Hoop homestead during excavations of trenches for telephone lines in 1985. Apparently some of these stones were used as weights on the sticks used by the Khoisan for digging up geophytes and possibly for other purposes.
- Beads made from ostrich egg-shell have been found on the cliffs above De Hoop Vlei just south-west of the homestead. Beads like these were made by the Khoisan at least 18 000 years ago, and are still made by the San in the Kalahari.

## 2.3 THE COASTAL PLAIN

The coastal caves (east of Hamerkop) represent a potential treasure-house of as yet unstudied archaeological sites, as do many other midden sites.

- A human mandible and teeth, possibly 200 years old or older, have been found in the Koppie Alleen dunes.
- Late Stone Age artefacts have been found in the middens on the Koppie Alleen coast. They probably date back to the last 2 000-3 000 years.
  1. Limestone sinker for fishing net (probably made of rushes).
  2. Silcrete adze, possibly for shaving wood.
  3. Limestone, silcrete, quartz and quartzite flakes. These may be by-products of tool manufacture although suitable pieces were often used on an *ad hoc* basis for cutting, scraping etc.
- Forty-nine potsherds from near Voëlklip on the Koppie Alleen coast may originate from two pots and consist of fine, sandy grit with ferruginous granules. Two perforated lugs were made by perforating the wall of the pot and attaching a lump of clay to the inner wall. Two sherds were each decorated with a row of dots. Khoisan pots are usually decorated on the rim, neck or shoulder, as in this case. The sherds show signs of having being stained with ochre and burnished. The incomplete firing, evident from the greyish colour on the inner part of the sherd, thickness and the porosity of the clay, is indicative of light firing (probably not more than 700°C) and the mottled red-grey-black colour of the outer wall suggests firing in an environment in which there was variable oxidation and reduction, such as when pots are fired in a pile of brush wood. The fact that some of the sherd breaks angle inwards, shows that the pot was made by the coil or ring method, a method common in the south-western Cape. The average sherd thickness (excluding the lugs) is 6.5 mm, consistent with that of Khoisan pottery. The pots were probably shaped like the Sandy Point (2) or Blombos pots (Rudner 1968, pp 648-9).

## 2.4 POTBERG

Within the Black Eagle Cave at Potberg a San artist has left us a legacy of a realistic "hand-print" painting, made with ground ochre, mixed with animal fat and a binder. The painting is one of only two sets known in the Agulhas region south of the N2 road. Late Stone Age artefacts and material found at this site, dating to within the last 2 000 years, include:

- A fragment of a clay pot.
- Ochre (haematite) - small pieces of red and yellow colouring matter used for rock painting and bodily decoration.
- Quartz, silcrete and quartzite flakes, possibly by-products of tool manufacture, although suitable pieces were often used for cutting, scraping etc.
- Some grass bedding material (age uncertain).

In 1707 Jan Hartog, the master gardener of the VOC, undertook an expedition " ... door de Hottentots gantouw werd genoem, door ons Het Elands pat ..." (Hartog 1707) to barter cattle with the Khoikhoi. Hartog's journal is also the first documented report describing the area near Windhoek/Potberg. He described a world with the small



settlements of kraals of the Hessequas, each with its own herd of cattle and sheep. It is likely that Potberg was a sought-after area for Khoikhoi cattle and sheep herders, due to its perennial sources of water. The Khoikhoi appeared to move downstream with their cattle during the rainy season, and upstream towards the source during the dry season, a practice later apparently adopted by European farmers who settled along the Sonderend River (S. Streicher pers. comm.). In time the nomadic Hessequas were forcibly displaced by European settlers; most lost their cattle and sheep, some were decimated by various smallpox epidemics after 1715 and others were forced into indentured labour.

## 2.5 ELANDSPAD

A large hand axe dating to the Early Stone Age has been found at Elandspad, further to the east of Potberg.

## 2.6 WINDHOEK

While searching for guano in a cave on the farm Windhoek during the latter half of 1949, Mr PSH ("Toekie") Badenhorst unearthed a collection of skeletons and implements (Grobbelaar and Goodwin 1952). These remains were housed in the Zoological Institute of the University of Stellenbosch but may now be curated at Iziko-South African Museum in Cape Town (?) The cave lies a few feet beneath a capping of Quaternary (probably Late Pleistocene) surface calcrete, below the level of the plain. The base of the cave is described as being more or less circular, 20' in diameter, the floor being covered by a deposit of bat and owl guano 5' thick. According to ML Wilson (2/9/92) nobody has been able to relocate the cave but it is possibly in Wasdam se Kloof, or between Rietkloof and Jagersfontein se Kloof, or in Ghwanogatekloof.

The material culture includes:

- Organic material:
  1. Cordage, made of matjiesgoed (*Cyperus textilis*); a coarse, regular net with diamond-shaped interstices, knotted at each intersection; a fragment of twisted rope; a circlet of "endless plait", presumably a leglet or armlet; a fringe, certainly the cut edge of a sleeping mat.
  2. Bone weapons and tools: possibly a bone spear point; arrow foreshafts in wood and bone; two bone awls.
  3. A wooden trap-trigger for a bird trap.
  4. Ostrich egg-shell: at least 200 beads in four sizes, and a double-bored "button" with an incised edge.
- Inorganic material:
  1. A polished axe or adze.
  2. Grinders and used pebbles.
  3. A bored stone - a single half-specimen (possibly a net-sinker, possibly from the net described above) or a knobkierie head.
  4. Pecking stones, used for trimming or backing little implements or for initial shaping of ostrich egg-shell beads.

5. Stone implements, including a MSA fragment, possibly a thick flake or heavily patinated brownish chert; one white quartz flake, a microlithic scraper; other unworked flakes of white quartz, surface quartzite, chalcedony - all refuse.
6. Pottery: parts of a small, typical pot. Evidence of the fracture indicates that it was coil-built.
- European elements:
  1. An iron point, 20 cm long and 2 cm maximum diameter, with every appearance of cast-iron; certainly a marlin-spike, broken off and possibly from a shipwreck?
  2. High quality red ochre, probably imported from elsewhere.

## **HARTOG'S EXPEDITION**

Jan Hartog's journal of his expedition in 1707 provides one of the first known accounts of the Windhoek area (see Chapter 5).

### 3. THE HOPE (UP TO PROCLAMATION IN 1956)

#### 3.1 EARLY INHABITANTS

The De Hoop homestead area has been occupied since the earliest times, as evidenced by a bored digging stone found during excavations of trenches for telephone lines in 1985. Apparently some of these stones were used as weights on the sticks used by the Khoisan for digging up geophytes and possibly for other purposes. Beads made from ostrich egg-shell have also been found on the cliffs above De Hoop Vlei, just south-west of the homestead. Beads like these were made by the Khoisan at least 18 000 years ago, and are still made by the San in the Kalahari.

#### 3.2 STOCK FARMING IN THE OVERBERG

During the 1730s the Dutch East India Company (DEIC or VOC) granted loan places for farming to the *free burghers* (VOC officials no longer in office). These leases were renewable each year, upon payment of rent. While many stock farmers trekked northwards into the Bokkeveld, Roggeveld and Karoo during the first half of the eighteenth century, others crossed the Hottentots Holland mountains and settled eastwards in what are now the districts of Caledon, Bredasdorp and Swellendam. Many of the loan farms were circular in shape, laid out according to the method in which the farmer was granted the land as far as he could walk or ride in various directions from a central point in an hour; the points were then joined up to form the boundaries.

Initially some *trekboere* lived in *kapstylhuise* (thatched *tents*), such as those at Puntje and Vermaaklikheid in the Heidelberg district, and also on the coast at Noetsie (now part of De Hoop, see Chapter 7). Once their occupancy became more permanent, the farmers erected more substantial stone buildings, which could be sold or bequeathed. In the Overberg they used the local ferricrete (*koffieklip*) and sandstones, that could be quarried only in irregular blocks which were roughly squared and laid in courses. The spaces between the stones were filled with small stone flakes (gallets or garrets) in the clay or mortar. This method is known as coursed random rubble and coursed squared rubble walling and is characteristic of the Strandveld.

Once it became possible to purchase land, influential families such as the Cloetes, Reitzes, Van Bredas, Albertyns and Van Reenens bought up many early loan-places and linked them together to form extensive grazing areas for the breeding of horses, Merino sheep and cattle. The value of fynbos was as yet unrecognized, and early survey maps of the De Hoop area mention "Grassy Sand downs ... Inferior Pasture, Heath and Reed with Stoney Hillocks ... Limestone Hills, with Bush and Reeds of very little use ... Sea Beach and Sand Hills, entirely Barren ..." (Map 433/1833).

During the first half of the 19th century, agricultural produce was transported to Cape Town by sailing vessels and the steamship, *Kadie*, of the trading firm of Barry & Nephews, via the harbours of Malgas and Port Beaufort on the Breede River. These vessels also brought back building materials and other supplies to Port Beaufort at a time when the journey to Cape Town by ox wagon was long, arduous and expensive.

De Hoop provides an outstanding example of the growth of such a large stock farm during this period.

With the death of Joseph Barry in 1865, the trading empire that he had established broke up; in that same year the *Kadie* sank. This brought to an end an era in the development of the stock farms in the Strandveld. This development was resumed towards the end of the 19th century and early in the 20th century, however, when several wealthy businessmen interested in horse breeding, sheep farming and wildlife bought farms in that area, including Anders Ohlsson and John ("Biddy") Anderson.

### 3.3 THE PAST OWNERS OF DE HOOP

#### INTRODUCTION

De Hoop Nature Reserve is made up of a number of different farms, which were incorporated at different stages. The past owners of the main homestead area (Farm 72, later 74; see diagram 234/1820) are listed below.

1739	Frederick de Jager (loanplace) Lourens de Jager
11.01.1820	Quitrent of Farm 72 granted to Pieter Lourens Cloete snr (2837 morgen/2 431 ha)
1837	Estate (Pieter Lourens Cloete jnr)
10.07.1850	According to the title deeds, "De Hoop" consisted of four farms (total 10 842 morgen/9 292 ha) in 1850: De Hoop (Farm 72; 1 346 morgen) Cupidoskraal (Farm 62; 229 morgen) Klipfontein (Farm 64; 8 028 morgen) Ramer's Dam (Farm 73; 1 239 morgen) The farm was subdivided and the De Hoop part (1 346 morgen/1 154 ha, now known as Farm 74) sold to Frederik Johannes de Jager
Date?	Purchased by Gabriël Francois de Wet
21.11.1876	Small portion (248 morgen) sold off to Nicolaas Barend de Wet (eventually became part of DHNR on 08.10.1975)
06.06.1885	Remainder (10 593 morgen/9 078 ha): estate (wife Elsje)
09.12.1893	Pieter Arnoldus Human (half share) Daniel Stephanus de Wet (half share)
08.11.1904	Estate: Pieter Arnoldus Human (wife Getruida)
23.09.1918	Johannes Gerhardus Human

13.01.1926	Subdivided and larger portion (Dronkvlei, 6 503 morgen/5 573 ha) sold to Johan David Albertyn of Potberg; incorporated into the reserve in 1978
30.07.1926	Remainder (4 090 morgen/3 505 ha) sold to Arend Brink Neethling
07.09.1943	Christiaan Ludolph Neethling (part of inheritance)
07.10.1943	Arend Brink Neethling (one sixth share)
08.11.1946	Christiaan Ludolf Neethling (one sixth share returned)
17.06.1947	Harry Lawrence David Wood
26.01.1953	Aban Arthur Gardiner (half share) Theron Gardiner (half share)
22.08.1956	The Government of the Union of South Africa

The European occupation of the farm De Hoop (originally known as *The Hope*) dates back to 1739. The various owners of the farm prior to its proclamation as a nature reserve in 1956 are mentioned below.

### **FREDERICK DE JAGER AND HIS SON, LOURENS (1739)**

In 1739 grazing rights were first granted by the VOC to Frederick de Jager, a burgher of Swellendam, at *The Hope*, a loanplace. The reason for the name *The Hope* is not known, but it may reflect the fact that the soils and climate of the area are not favourable for agriculture. Later the farm was also known as *The Hoop*. De Hoop was one of the old circular farms; the west part of the circle (to the left of De Hoop Vlei) was known as *The Milk Room* (Melkkamer today). The farm was surveyed by W.M. Hopley. Along with several other farms nearby, De Hoop was some 17 000 morgen (about 14 560 ha) in extent. F. de Jager apparently built the original homestead, a small T-shaped house which now forms the back or southern part of the present larger homestead. After his death, the farm passed to his son, Lourens.

### **PIETER LOURENS CLOETE, SNR (1819/1820)**

Pieter Lourens Cloete (1764-1837), a son of the well-known Hendrik Cloete of Groot Constantia, purchased the De Hoop *opstal* or homestead in 1819; at this stage, no-one had the right to sell or buy the land itself. He was also granted Courdinie and a nameless farm north-west of De Hoop (Fransen & Cook). Hendrik Cloete also owned a holiday home (*strandhuis* or *lustplaats*) at Mossel River, near Hermanus.

The following year (11 January 1820), P.L. Cloete obtained a quitrent of De Hoop farm, which was then 2 837 morgen (2 431 ha) in extent and included most of De Hoop Vlei. The governor, Lord Charles Somerset, also granted him two adjoining farms, namely Cloete's Kraal (2 912 morgen or 2 494 ha), and Klipfontein, now called Cupido's Kraal (7 368 morgen or 6 314 ha). In those days of large land-holdings, Cloete also inherited two farms in the Hottentots Holland district, namely Zandvliet (with its stud of thorough-bred horses) and Zeekoevlei. Both these farms, as well as Klipfontein, were in turn inherited by his son, also Pieter Lourens (see below).

P.L. Cloete snr was an entrepreneur. In keeping with the practice on several neighbouring farms in the Strandveld, including Nacht Wacht (owned by the Albertyns), he set up a huge horse-breeding enterprise at De Hoop. His stock included the first imported Spanish horses in the country; he also bred Spanish donkeys. These activities were centred on the present *opstal* and *werf* (yard), with its huge thatched buildings and *ringmuur* (encircling wall) (see below).

In 1817 an Admiral Sir Jaheel Brenton visited De Hoop farm, then crossed the Potte Berg mountains and travelled for some distance upstream on the west bank of the Breede River. He recounts that "immense quantities of corn were once grown [here], but a decided preference is now given by our host to sheep and horses. Of the former, he has a very large flock, with a valuable collection of merinos. It is considered that the wool of the 4th cross is nearly equal to the Spanish original" (Burrows 1994, p 129).

P.L. Cloete is believed to have enlarged the house that De Jager built. He and his wife were bird-lovers and allowed the (greater striped) swallows to enter the house through a gap in one of the gable windows and fly through the attic, down into the kitchen and back through the intervening rooms to their nest. It is said that when they left the farm, they always left the inner doors open to allow the swallows access.

P.L. Cloete snr. died in 1837, at the age of 73 years. Horse breeding continued at De Hoop for a century after the Cloetes left.

### **PIETER LOURENS CLOETE JNR (1837)**

Pieter Lourens Cloete jnr (1803-1884) inherited the De Hoop estate in 1837, upon the death of his father.

On 22 July 1843, Cloete instructed Van der Byl and Denyssen, auctioneers of Malagas Kraal, Breede River, to sell at *The Hope* on 19 August "a number of very high-bred MARES, in Foal to the Thorough-bred Imported Horses *Squirrel*, *Stansty*, *Gammon Boy*, and to that famous English Horse *Tremendous*; also, 40 COLTS, 2 years old, by the above Stallions. The MARES were bred on the place, and are worthy the attention of Persons commencing a good Stud. At the same time will be sold, 15 magnificent JACK ASS STALLIONS, of 2, 3 and 4 years old, of the large Jochim breed. Also, if not previously disposed of, that beautiful thorough-bred imported Horse *Fervid*, whose extra-ordinary running last April Meeting on the Green Point Course is well known".

By 23 November 1849 "the well-known estate, "The Hope"" was being offered for sale "on the spot" on 3 January 1850. By that time the estate included not only De Hoop itself but also the farms Matjes Fontein, The Milk Room (Melkkamer), The Potteberg Downs and Dronk Vley (Dronkvlei); a total area of about 46 000 acres (39 400 ha). The nature of the farming carried out at De Hoop at this time can be judged from the livestock offered for sale: 150 mares, foals and colts, 5 000 thoroughbred Merino sheep, 60 oxen, 50 cows and heifers and "a very fine Jack Ass". According to the writings of Japie Neethling, the fact that such a large number of horses was being offered for sale suggests that they were ordinary horses, rather than racehorses. At this

time racehorses were bred at Nacht Wacht, near Bredasdorp. Those at De Hoop were apparently draught animals and riding horses, reared to supply both the farm and the surrounding area. The only buildings included in the sale were "a good Dwelling House, and extensive Outbuildings, Mill, etc., all in good order", all on De Hoop itself. These outbuildings probably survived almost unchanged until 1956.

**ORIGINAL NOTICE OF THE SALE OF *THE HOPE*  
BY P.L. CLOETE ON 3 JANUARY 1850**

19 December 1849

**THE HOPE**

The undersigned, being duly authorized  
thereto by

Mr. P.L. Cloete

will sell on the spot, on  
Thursday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1850,  
The well-known estate

**"The Hope",**

situated in the Fieldcornetcy of Potteberg, District of Swellendam.

This Property consists of about 46,000 acres  
of Land, with a good Dwelling House, and  
extensive Outbuildings, Mill, &c., all in good order.  
The Land will be sold first in separate farms, and then  
the whole together. These Farms consist of -

1<sup>st</sup>. Matjes Fontein,  
with 6,000 Acres and a never-failing Spring.

2d. The Milk Room,  
With all the remaining Land to the West of the Lake, about  
8,000 Acres with a large Running Stream.

3d. The Potteberg Downs,  
Of about 3,000 Acres.

4<sup>th</sup>. Dronk Vley. With  
about 8,000 Acres.

5<sup>th</sup>. The Hope,  
With lake and remaining Land, about 21,000 Acres.  
After the Sale of the Property all the Stock on the Farm  
will be sold, as also the Furniture, Farming Implements,  
Stacks, &c. &c.

The Stock will consist of -  
**150 Mares, Foals, and Colts,**  
**5000 Thorough-bed Merino Sheep**  
**60 Oxen, 50 Cows and Heifers**

A very fine Jack Ass.

The Landed Property is in the mean time for Private Sale.  
For all particulars regarding this splendid Estate, apply to  
the Undersigned, Messrs. Barry & Nephews, Cape Town,  
or to the Proprietor, at "Zandvliet".  
Swellendam, Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1849.

J. BARRY

### **FREDERIK JOHANNES DE JAGER (10.07.1850)**

When the De Hoop farms were sold in 1850 they again reverted to individual holdings. De Hoop itself (1 346 morgen/1 154 ha, now known as Farm 74) was purchased by Frederik Johannes de Jager. The remainder (Matjes Fontein, The Milk Room, The Potteberg Downs and Dronk Vley; 1 491 morgen/ 1 278 ha) was sold to Tieleman Roux Myburgh and used for sheep farming.

At this time the South African wool industry was being established on the farm Zoetendals Valleij, south of Bredasdorp, by Michiel van Breda, through the experimental cross-breeding of indigenous fat-tailed Khoikhoi sheep with Spanish rams for the production of wool. Encouraged by Barry & Nephews, the wool trade developed and by 1860 over a million pounds of wool was exported annually from Overberg farms.

### **GABRIËL FRANCOIS DE WET (DATE UNKNOWN)**

Somewhere between 1850 and 1876 De Hoop was acquired by Gabriël Francois de Wet (born 1812). On 21.11.1876 Gabriël sold off a small portion of the farm (248 morgen) to Nicolaas arend de Wet. This portion was eventually incorporated into the reserve on 08.10.1975.

When Gabriël died on 6 June 1885 (at the age of 73), his wife Elsje took over the farm until her death on 26 September 1892 (also at 73 years of age). Their graves may still be seen in the family graveyard south-east of the homestead, together with those of their daughter Gertruida and son-in-law, Pieter Arnoldus Human. Outside the walls of the graveyard lie the mysterious graves of Johanna Susanna Christina de Wet, "ons liewe suster" (29 August 1872 - 28 July 1890) and the unmarked grave of a baby or young child (see below).

### **DANIEL STEPHANUS DE WET AND PIETER ARNOLDUS HUMAN (09.12.1893)**

With the death of Elsje de Wet in 1892, her son Daniel Stephanus and son-in-law Pieter Arnoldus Human (7 April 1849 - 7 November 1909; married to her daughter Gertruida, 28 June 1855 - 6 April 1933, see above) bought The Hope and Dronk Vley from the estate on the basis of a half share each. In 1896 they also together bought the nearby Drie Fontein, the first farm to be granted grazing rights in the Wydgeleë area, in 1724 (to one Uys). They decided to subdivide the land in 1904, and P.A. Human remained farming on The Hope and Dronk Vley. D.S. de Wet bought Drie Fontein, which to this day remains the property of the De Wet family. Nicolaas de Wet's horse, "Alexander the Great", achieved fame by winning the first Metropolitan race in Cape Town (after first riding from Wydgeleë to Cape Town - some 160 km).

The De Hoop coast then boasted some the best angling in the area, particularly at "Koppie Alleen", so named by one of the Human daughters when the Humans and De Wets shared a picnic there at this time.



After the death of P.A. Human in 1904 (at the age of 60 years) his wife Getruida carried on farming until 1909, when the farm was purchased from the estate by their son, Johannes Gerhardus.

### **JOHANNES GERHARDUS AND FRANK HUMAN (23.09.1918)**

Johannes (Jannie) and his brother, Frank, took over De Hoop farm from 23.09.1918 to 1926. On 13.01.1876 Jannie sold the Dronk Vley portion to Johan David Albertyn (then the owner of Potberg). Later the De Wet family bought back Dronk Vley.

### **AREND BRINK NEETHLING (30.07.1926)**

In 1926 Arend Brink Neethling of Halfaampieskraal, Klipdale bought De Hoop for 7 000 pounds. The farm was then 4 090 morgen/3 505 ha in size, including 300 ha under water (the vlei) or sand (the coastal strip). In 75 years De Hoop had thus shrunk considerably from its original size. Farming activities had also decreased to only a few dairy cows (for own use only) and about 800 Merino *hamels* (wethers or castrated rams). At that stage, breeding ewes could not be farmed on De Hoop, due to a shortage of copper in the grazing that caused *lamsiekte* (lamming difficulties) in pregnant ewes, with associated mortalities. Once a year the old *hamels* were rounded up and replaced with younger ones from the nearby *Rûens* (hills). The sheep were regularly dosed with copper to prevent the wool from losing its curl.

Oom Jannie Human, the previous owner, remained on the farm as the manager. He was very shy and withdrawn and was cared for by his sister Bettie, who again was lively and outgoing. From early in the morning the wood stove would be burning with its customary kettle for boiling coffee water.

Arend had ten children, five sons and five daughters. His original farm (Halfaampieskraal) could be divided into four only and one of the sons thus had to seek his future elsewhere. This lot fell to Christiaan (Chris) Ludolph, whose fiancée had died of tuberculosis. Chris thus landed on Verfheuwel, near Wydgeleë (Ouplaas), where he married Martina Wessels a year later. Chris was the father of Japie and the grandfather of the three Neethling brothers (Christiaan, Neil and Jacques) presently farming at Verfheuwel Boerdery, west of Potberg. In about 1943 Chris began to feel that his inheritance did not measure up to that of his brothers, and consequently his father also gave him De Hoop as compensation on 07.09.1943. The other four brothers complained that this was unfair, but none of them was prepared to swap his portion with Chris, and the matter was thus settled. Chris sold his father a one sixth share of the farm on 07.10.43, which can back to him on 08.11.1946.

### **HUNTING**

During the time of Arend Neethling (1926-1946), the De Hoop area was well-known for its large quantities of small game, including grysbok, vaalribbok, duiker and steenbok (vlakbok). During the winter months the game stayed in the high dunes, when the low-lying areas were too wet. In summer the game moved to the coastal plains. The tradition of the annual winter hunt was continued by Arend, who invited his five sons and five sons-in-law for the occasion. Some of them arrived the day before and camped on the *werf*, either in tents or in the backs of old lorries; it was a

real family occasion. The hunters walked on foot in a long row, followed by a few horse carts to collect the dead antelope. The antelope were slaughtered and the fresh livers grilled for lunch. The eight- or nine-year-old Japie followed the procession, driving his grandfather Arend's black Dodge bakkie, mainly to transport the “essential” earthenware bottle in its tight leather case for a few *smolletjies*, usually gin, to warm the hunters in the winter cold. Besides antelope, francolins as well as pheasants were hunted. It took much skill to shoot a francolin on the wing in the dense bush, especially when a few flew up together. The shotgun held only two shots, then had to be loaded again. Hunting dogs were often used, to smell out the prey and then point.

Sixty to seventy antelope were shot each year but numbers did not decrease overall as the ewes were saved where possible. Hunting parties were organized to exterminate caracal and other predators and scavengers (regarded as *vermin*), so that game could increase. Good veld management (including annual or regular burning) also favoured the increase of game as the resultant young grass and other plants provided soft grazing.

During this time, wild geese and coot were hunted on De Hoop Vlei from small rowing boats. A few of the boats would slowly drive the birds in the direction of one of the bays on the vlei. Once at the shore, the birds would fly up and cross low over the boats to settle in another place. This is when the hunters shot them with their shotguns. All happened at great speed. Then the booty was collected and the party moved on to the next bay. Due to the growth of aquatic plants, it was not possible to ride on the vlei in a motor boat for many years.

### **CHRISTIAAN LUDOLPH NEETHLING (07.09.1943)**

Japie (born in 1934) remembers visiting De Hoop as a five- or six-year-old boy with his father Christiaan from Verfheuwel, riding over the rough twin-track road over the limestone ridges and through the sandy hollows. This road is believed to have been built by Gaaf de Wet; Cloete used the *jagpad* of D.C. Uys (of Wydgeleë). Sometimes they used the *spider*, a black, four-wheeled wagon without a *kap* (hood), well sprung and with soft seats; or the horse cart with its hard, wooden seats. He remembers the fresh early morning smells of the veld, and being received at De Hoop by tannie Bettie (Human). After a cup of steaming coffee they joined oom Jannie and his team of workers, dosing the sheep and performing other daily farm work.

Apart from sheep farming there were a few lands around the *opstal*, sown with grazing for the cows and sheep. These lands were worked by cattle for many years. In 1945 his father sent the 11-year-old Japie to De Hoop from Verfheuwel with the brand new tractor to work the lands - a risky but fortunately successful trip. Although it was very difficult to obtain tractors and cars at the end of WWII, in some or other way his father had managed to purchase a new Masey Harris 203 paraffin tractor, with rubber tyres; before this, tractors had iron wheels and large *ysterkappe* on the rear wheels for a good grip, rendering them unsuitable for use on ordinary roads. This was probably the first tractor to cross the limestone hills to De Hoop.

On 12 October 1945 Christiaan Neethling bought a neighbouring farm, Brakfontein. Money was scarce and in 1947 he sold De Hoop.

## **HARRY LAWRENCE DAVID WOOD (17.06.47)**

One of the last private owners, Harry Wood bought De Hoop for 12 thousand pounds. He kept a small herd of registered jersey cows, and added the silos and dairy facilities. He also grew wheat, oats and barley, and ran a flock of 700-800 sheep. He prohibited hunting and waterfowl shooting and, as a keen sportsman, made repeated but (fortunately) unsuccessful attempts at establishing alien angling fishes in the vlei.

By this time many of the buildings were in a state of disrepair. Wood was responsible for the renovation of the millhouse with its thatched roof, while maintaining its nineteenth-century character and charm. He built on a large sitting room at the back. The Nefdt brothers were responsible for the thatching. Wood's daughter, Janet Hodgson (*McGregor, tel. [023] 625-1835; has some photographs*) remembers having to walk out into the dark at night to visit the outside toilet (which they called "the tomb"). There was no telephone, but they communicated with Netta Anderson at Melkkamer by means of a loudhailer. They used a little boat to travel on the vlei. There was a tame antelope that came in with the cows every day at milking time. They had to open ten concertina gates every time they went fishing at Koppie Alleen – and also on the return trip.

## **ALAN ARTHUR GARDINER AND THERON GARDINER (26.01.1953)**

In 1953, H. Wood sold De Hoop to the Gardiner brothers of Carnarvon on the basis of a half-share each. They arrived with a few thousand pregnant Merino ewes that were soon catastrophically smitten with *lamsiekte* due to the copper deficiency in the grazing. Because of the low rainfall and the poor carrying capacity of the veld, De Hoop was too small to be a viable farming proposition and the family was soon forced to sell the farm to the government of the Union of South Africa on 22 August 1956. This marks the end of the era of private ownership of De Hoop.

## **3.4 THE HOMESTEAD COMPLEX**

### **THE HOMESTEAD**

The homestead complex is described in detail by Fransen & Cook (1965) and Walton (1989).

The large H-shaped homestead is unusual in that the front, north-facing wings (bordering on the werf) are very much longer than those at the back. The plan bears little resemblance to a typical Boland H-plan house and appears to have grown in stages from a simple rectangular three-roomed dwelling facing south, possibly built by Frederick De Jager, who occupied the area from 1739. To this Pieter Lourens Cloete added a *voorkamer* (sitting room) and a bedroom, and a *buitekamer* (external room) on the right, now known as Dr Hey's room. On the left, the kitchen looks like a more recent addition as it encloses the steps to the *solder* or loft, possibly once external steps; according to Dr Hey, however, this is the original kitchen. The hearth was built by Cloete, and is spanned by a large hardwood beam that was collected from the shore at the same time that the *Krakatua*? sank. The beam was adzed by hand and

still bears burn marks from when the heat of the irons was tested. The original hooks, chains and pulleys for curing meat and suspending pots and cauldrons over the open fire may still be seen. The *bakoond* with its cast-iron door was used for baking the traditional loaves of sourdough bread, characteristic of the Overberg. The two big beams spanning the kitchen ceiling are also considered to be original. The present fire-wood store on the right (north) of the chimney, on the outside, may originally have been a meat store.

## STABLES

On the right of the homestead stands a long row of stables, also dating to Cloete's time (after 1820).

## HORSE-MILL

On the far left and also in line with the homestead stands a T-shaped building, with half-hipped ("wolf") ends and a dormer gable over the east-facing front door. The original part (facing north) once housed a horse-mill; the east-facing wing is more modern and was restored by Harry Wood, using wood from the school house (see below). Wood also added the traditional reed ceilings, a *brandsolder* and yellowwood floors, doors and windows. Unfortunately no mill machinery remains, only the millstones, which are set into the steps on the eastern side.

## SCHOOL

Between these two buildings, and in line with them, stands a small rectangular building, said to have been the farm school. Its straight end-gables match all the others. Because of the replacement of its woodwork it is hard to date. A modern, brick lean-to has been added on the south side.

## OUTBUILDING

On the left of the old school stands another interesting building, end-on to the *werf* but nearly 15° out of parallel with all the other buildings; in spite of its new woodwork it very likely dates back to De Jager's time, before the walls of the *werf* were built (see below). It was used as a dairy in latter times.

## WERF

These buildings are linked by short lengths of walling to complete one side of the large rectangular *werf*. Its circular wall was probably built to enclose the livestock at night and protect them from predators and stock thieves. The *werf* measures about 95 x 75 m and is 1 morgen (0.84 ha) in size, its high, white walls 1.6 m in height. The northern side is broken by one pedestrian opening near the far right-hand corner, which leads into the stable yards. The two end walls are broken only by central gateways with plain but large piers, and a small pedestrian gate on the eastern side; the western gates open onto the banks of the De Hoop Vlei. There is also a small pedestrian gate in the southern side, immediately to the left of the homestead.

## **SHEARING ENCLOSURE, PIG-STIES AND KRAAL**

Outside the north corner of the *werf* was the long, rectangular shearing enclosure and sheep-fold. Originally this structure may have been stables; the small *keyhole* archways are believed to have been used to separate the foals from their mothers. The floors were originally roughly cobbled with rather large stones. Outside the west corner of the *werf* were the pig-sties and a kraal (presently the garages).

## **LIME KILN**

Originally, shells were collected on the beach and burnt in the small lime-kiln, south-east of the homestead, to produce the lime for the white-washed farm buildings.

## **STONE WALLS**

An extensive system of dry, packed stone walls was built to separate the grazing camps from the cultivated lands, as barbed wire was introduced to Cape only at the turn of the century. The walls are reputed to have been built by convicts? Today these typical structures are a heritage of this area.

## **GRAIN**

Originally there was a threshing machine, used for threshing the wheat, and a grain store with large wooden bins. The two large silos were added by Harry Wood (between 1947 and 1953).

## **3.5 GRAVES AND GHOSTS**

### **THE FAMILY GRAVE SITE**

The historic walled grave site lies to the south-east of the homestead complex. Within the enclosure are the graves of:

1. Gabriël Francois de Wet (4 February 1812 - 6 June 1885), who died at the age of 73 years. He owned De Hoop from 1850 to 1885, when he was 38-73 years old.
2. Elsje Johanna de Wet (born Swart; 14 March 1819 - 26 September 1892), who also died at 73 years of age. She lived at De Hoop from 1850 to 1893, from the ages of 31-73.
3. Getruida Johanna Human (born De Wet; 28 June 1855 - 6 April 1933), the daughter of Gabriël. She died at the age of 78.
4. Pieter Arnoldus Human (the husband of Getruida; 7 April 1849 - 7 November 1909). He owned De Hoop from 1893 to 1904, when he was 44-55 years old.  
[\*Note: according to the inscription on his grave Pieter died in 1909; but the deeds of transfer for the property mention the "estate of the late P.A. Human" on 08.11.1904?]

Outside the family enclosure is the grave of Johanna S.C. (Susanna Christina) de Wet - *Ons dierbare suster* (our beloved sister) - who died at 18 years of age (29 August 1872 - 28 July 1890). Nearby is an unmarked baby's or child's grave. The mystery surrounding these two graves has given rise to much speculation. Was Johanna the

daughter of Gabriël and Elsje, or the daughter or niece of Getruida? Did she have an illegitimate child, and was she therefore denied a burial in the family plot? Is it her child who lies behind her? Margaret Williams investigated the archives and discovered that a baby was indeed born in June 1889 and baptised a month later as Elsje Johanna; the baby's parents are recorded as Gabriël Francois Johannes de Wet and Johanna Susanna Christina (van Dyk), the same parents of the Johanna who lies buried outside the site. Was the baby Johanna's sister, born 17 years later? Or was it her own baby, adopted by her own parents - a common enough practice in those days - who died one year later? And why was her gravestone erected by her siblings, and not her parents?

*\*How many children did Gabriel/Elsje have?*

*1. Daniel Stephanus.*

*2. Getruida.*

*?3. Gabriel Francois Johannes? m Johanna Susanna Christina van Dyk?? If so, possibly parents of Johanna and adoptive parents of her baby Elsje Johanna.*

At the site there are also a number of mounds with marker stones, possibly the graves of farm workers.

## **GHOST STORIES**

### *MRS CLOETE AND THE OYSTER*

*De Hoop's traditional ghost story revolves around a hapless "Mrs Cloete", who is said to have choked to death on a large oyster presented to her by her husband (the son of the owner) at a party on her wedding day. Her demented husband is said to have used a shotgun to blow his brains out shortly afterwards. The oyster shell was subsequently mounted on the gable above the front door, in memory of the bride. Her ghost is said to walk at night, especially at spring low tide, when oysters may be gathered!*

Pieter Lourens Cloete snr, who is believed to have built the larger part of the De Hoop homestead, lived from 1764 to 1837, dying at the age of 73 years. He lived at De Hoop from 1819, when he was about 55 years old, possibly until his death 18 years later.

His son of the same name (later anglicized to Peter Lawrence) was born in 1803 and lived for 81 years, until 1884. Presumably he also arrived at De Hoop in 1819 with his parents, when he was about 16 years old. We don't know whether he married at all and if so, what the fate of his wife was. His mother lived at De Hoop (see swallow story above) at least 16 years after her marriage, but we also do not know her eventual fate.

So while it is possible that a Mrs Cloete (jnr) could have choked to death on an oyster at De Hoop on her wedding day (and why else would the shell have been set in the wall?), it does not appear that her husband killed himself soon afterwards; both the Mr Cloetes in question in fact lived to a ripe old age, although the eventual cause of death of both is unknown ...

There is also no sign of the oyster shell above the doorway of the homestead in an old photograph probably dating back to the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the young boys are wearing straw boaters and a spider cart is parked on the left of the entrance. Dr Hey mentions that the oyster shell was present when the Cape Provincial Administration took over the property in 1956, however, and that he heard about the oyster story from two old local ladies present at the sale of the farm.

### *THE GHOST IN THE LOFT*

*In latter years the loft of the homestead was used to store foodstuffs and farm produce and the lady of the house (Mrs Human?: Getruida, 1855-1933, or her daughter Bettie?) would often spend time up there sifting meal. On one occasion the voice of a spirit predicted her husband's serious illness but assured her he would recover; but on a second occasion the voice predicted his death. Her footsteps can sometimes be heard in the loft in the dead of the night.*

### *PRETORIUS'S GHOST STORY*

*The young daughter of one of the past owners of De Hoop was in love with the son of the owner of an adjoining farm, but he was not thought to be good enough for her by her parents. The two young people consequently disappeared together. Ten years later an axe and some blond hair were found in a hollow while milkwoods were being cut for firewood, suggesting a suicide pact. The ghosts of these two ill-fated young people are also said to haunt the homestead.*

### *A LETTER FROM HARRY WOOD TO MIKE SCOTT, RESERVE MANAGER AT DE HOOP, ON 16 APRIL 1990*

*My dear Mike Scott*

*Our discussion last Wednesday turned to the subject of ghosts and in particular the haunting of the Homestead at De Hoop.*

*In my youth I lived in a haunted house and had much experience of ghosts. While I lived at De Hoop I had no actual contact with any spirits - neither by sight nor sound. nevertheless I was always strongly aware of a "presence" and a kind of approval of my love of the place and of what I was doing to repair some of the old buildings.*

*Jannie Human who had lived all his life on the farm and lived in the old homestead used to smile and say there was a ghost but it didn't seem to worry him in the least.*

*De Hoop had an aura, an atmosphere, of complete peace and contentment. If it were haunted - presumably by Mr and Mrs Cloete, they would appear to have been quite happy in the changeless environment and those caretakers who had kept it as it was when they died about 170 years ago.*

*The stories one has heard, mainly from people employed by the Department of Nature Conservation, and the fear that has been engendered in them by this haunting, doesn't surprise me.*

*Sometime about 200 years ago the Cloetes, I presume, laid out the werf, buildings etc. and they really had an eye for the beauty of proportional architectural simplicity and they stamped their character on the place.*

*The way the buildings and immediate surroundings have been vandalised (sic) since acquired by the Department is enough to make their spirits want to show their displeasure. It would also be in keeping with their gentle character to do no more than frighten anyone connected with this vandalism and those who show and have shown so little real feeling and affinity for the place, its past and its aura.*

*I've no doubt such people are easily frightened and if I have any complaint it is that they should have done it more strongly.*

*I feel the work you are now doing is in the right spirit and as you progress, no doubt these spirits will again be at peace.*

*I am serious about what I have said in this letter and it is what I firmly believe.*

*Yours sincerely  
Harry Wood*

### **3.6 DE HOOP VLEI AND FOUNTAINS**

#### **ORIGINS**

De Hoop Vlei or Lake is probably the reason for the establishment of the *opstal*. The vlei is some 15 km long and starts at Celeskloof (Koleskloof), near Windhoek. The Sout River is 160 km long and rises at Soutkuil, near Jongensfontein (south-east of Caledon). Its name indicates the high salinity of the water. At Kathoek, just north of Windhoek, the Potteberg River joins the Sout River from the east. It is recorded that originally there was merely a chain of deep, reed-fringed pools between the farms De Hoop and Melkkamer, and that the water found its way through the dunes to the sea.

#### **DRY PERIODS**

The vlei regularly becomes completely dry. During these periods (including in 1992, 1989, 1975, 1945 and 1903; *what about from 1992 to 2002?*) it is possible to walk across from De Hoop to Melkkamer with dry feet. Only a little water remains at the bottom of the vlei for the remaining birds, supplied by the fountains such as Fransfontein, Tierhoek and Grootfontein.

#### **SINKHOLES**

In the past the lower reaches of the vlei also used to dry out completely towards the end of each summer. The water drained down sinkholes, the largest of which was known as *Cloete se gat*. According to Dr Hey, there were originally two sinkholes through which the water drained from the vlei. P.L. Cloete apparently filled in one of these holes. Rumour has it that at the south-eastern, bottom end of the vlei was a



second hole which was apparently quite large as the water level quickly sank after flooding. During the years when rainfall was below normal the water level also sank quickly and for this reason, according to Japie Neethling, one of the earlier owners eventually filled this hole with stones and rubble, resulting in a more permanent water body. A few years later heavy rain brought down sand and silt, which further sealed the sinkholes. Later strong winds closed off the vlei by blocking the exit to the sea. With each successive winter the lake increased in size until it reached its present length of 15 km and width (in places) of 500 m

[\*NB compare size of vlei on older maps, e.g. 1890 with 1969]

## FLOODS

*Great floods* have been recorded in the area in 1906 and 1957; before this, floods were recorded at least in 1792, while in August 1986 unusually heavy rains were also recorded.

During the floods of December 1906, Oom Jannie Human described how people could visit the upper storey of the limestone stables at Melkkamer by boat, where they made music and had a party (see Chapter 4). During these floods two large milkwood trees at Melkkamer died after being inundated for some time. According to the thickness of their stems they are believed to have been 500-800 years old.

During the winter of 1957 the rains fell with unusual persistence in the Bredasdorp area. The vlei gradually filled up and in September there was an overflow at two points on the western bank of the vlei onto the adjacent farms, Melkkamer and Reimerskraal. The water flowed westwards and eventually inundated most of the lower half of the farms of Melkkamer, Matjiesfontein and three-quarters of Reimerskraal. According to Uys and Macleod "a sheet of water lying parallel with the coast and covering approximately 4 000 morgen [3 426 ha] was consequently formed almost overnight". The depth reached up to 20 feet, and only the tops of windmills were visible in places. The inundation lasted 1.5 to 2 years, and for a further 2-3 years the water receded partially through seepage and evaporation, and a series of pans resulted. The waters attracted waterbirds in their thousands, forming large nesting colonies. Flamingos bred for the first and only time on record in the Western Cape. Farmers whose pastures were inundated sent a petition to the Administrator, asking for the vlei to be drained by excavating a tunnel to the sea (in 1927, see below). Fortunately these proposals were eventually shelved.

In August 1986, 185 mm of rain fell at De Hoop, mostly over one week; the average rainfall for this month is about 40 mm. This caused the vlei level to rise dramatically from 1.5 m in August to 4.7 m in September. An interesting occurrence was noted at this time. The water that fell on the flats surrounding the homestead, and on the limestone hills to the north, all collected in the Dronkvlei area. The veld was saturated, with large expanses of water all flowing eastwards, giving rise to speculation that this is the origin of the name Dronkvlei (derived from *Verdronken-vlei*, or drowned vlei). The large number of caves and *chimney pot* formations in the limestone of this area could also be associated with this phenomenon.

## THE WAY TO THE SEA

In 1927, when Arend Brink Neethling was the owner of De Hoop, Gaffie du Toit of Reimerskraal (west of De Hoop) tried to open the sand dunes so that the waters of the vlei could find their way to the sea. They dug frantically by hand, but all efforts were in vain. Although the water did run into the sea, the sides rapidly caved in again and the way was closed by driftsand a few days later, when the labour force was away in Bredasdorp (apparently) to celebrate New Year's Eve.

## FOUNTAINS

On the western side of the vlei, near Melkkamer, Grootfontein is believed to deliver 60 000 litres of water per hour. According to Japie Neethling, this fountain was known as *Wolwas* in early times. The sheep were washed there as their wool became dirtied by the dense bushes. They were then chased into camps to dry off before being shorn. At that stage wool fetched a price of three pennies per pound (six cents per kilogram). After the 1969 earthquakes at Tulbagh, some of the fountains in the De Hoop area are reputed to have dried up.

## WIELPUTS (WINDPOMPGAT)

*A borehole that sucks and blows*

The Dronkvlei area east of the De Hoop homestead is characterized by many sinkholes in the limestone. One of these holes forms a natural borehole from which water was pumped by a windmill when the area was still part of a farm (Dronk Vley). The windmill has since been removed, but a strange phenomenon was first reported by Oom Simon Streicher, a local historian [source: Gaaf/Pieter de Wet?]. On certain occasions, a strong draught blows out of the borehole. Closer examination and monitoring of associated environmental conditions on 31 occasions, from May to November 1992, revealed the following pattern. The draught is strongest after a few days of continuous strong winds, usually blowing from the south-west under winter storm conditions, but also sometimes from the south-east during summer. Blowing from the hole is more prevalent during neap tide, at mid- to low tide, but also occurs at mid- to high spring tides. Sometimes the draught is so strong that it is audible, and if a handkerchief is held over the opening, it is blown perpendicular to the ground. The fact that the air is sometimes also sucked into the borehole (but with less force) at some spring tides, towards low tide, has given rise to speculation that the borehole passages may be connected to the sea by means of an underground tunnel. The sea is about 4 km away as the crow flies, but the nearest section of rocky coast is 5.5 km away.

## 4. MELKKAMER

### 4.1 PAST OWNERS

Melkkamer (*The Milk Room* or *The Milk House*) was originally the centre of the circular farm, The Hope (*The Hoop*), now De Hoop. The name is probably derived from the earlier use of the property for milking cows by the Cloetes, who owned De Hoop. Melkkamer is situated on the left bank of De Hoop Vlei and was separated from De Hoop (Farm 72) in 1850, when it was sold by Pieter Lourens Cloete jnr to Tieleman Roux Myburgh. Together with portions of farms 64, 62 and 72, it then formed part of Farm 75 (then 8 719 morgen/7 472 ha).

Subsequent owners (mainly of the Melkkamer homestead area):

- 13.17.1859     The portion "Melkboom" (142 morgen) was sold to Dirk Cornelis Uys. A share of one third each of the remainder of Farm 75 belonged to Tieleman Roux Myburgh, Ryk Hendrik Myburgh and Phillipus Albertus Myburgh. Over the years, various portions were acquired by Hermanus Hendrik Steyn (1896); Pertrus Jacobus Marais (1899); and Stephanus Abraham Cilliers, Christoffel Heronimus Hoffmann and John Martin Shea (1903).
  
- 20.01.1906     John Henry Anderson (quarter share including the Melkkamer homestead area)  
                    George Henry Dickson (quarter share)
- 09.04.1920     Dickson sold his quarter share to Mrs Annette Harriet Anderson
- 13.07.1927     Estate: widow, Annette Anderson
  
- 28.10.1936     Abraham Albertus van Blommenstein
- 10.12.1958     Estate: son Philip John van Blommenstein
  
- 04.12.1985     Expropriated by the Republic of South Africa

### 4.2 THE MANAGER'S HOUSE

*(Most of the achitectural information from Walton 1989)*

In the Overberg, houses were initially built for the shepherds or farm managers and this was facilitated by Barry & Nephews bringing building materials, such as windows, folding shutters, doors and joists to Port Beaufort and Malgas, from where it was relatively easy to transport them by ox-wagon to the farms. As a result, throughout the area from the Breede River to Waenhuiskrans, the small houses exhibit many features in common.

The original manager's or foreman's house at Melkkamer was built in 1872. It is the first dwelling erected on the farm Melkkamer and is situated on edge of De Hoop Vlei, facing eastwards towards De Hoop. It is a rectangular building of roughly dressed local stone blocks with gallet infilling. Originally the house had a yellowwood ceiling and floor and stinkwood beams and consisted of one long, large

room. The roof is covered by a half-hipped thatched roof. The thatch is raised in an 'eyebrow' over the front doorway but instead of a dormer window there is a stone tablet bearing an inscription (see below) which is probably the date when the present vertically divided door and larger windows were added.

ANNO 1872 TRM. SD
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Mike Swart, the foreman on Melkkamer, lived in this house from 1938 until he left in 1984, just before the farm was expropriated. Mike was married to Ann ("On"), and later to Joria. Prior to 1938 Mike's father-in-law (also a Swart) also lived in this house as a foreman.

The floods of 1906 inundated the house almost up to window level, damaging the "roustene" (raw stones) on the inner walls. The floor was then replaced with a dung floor, and the house subdivided into its present form, with a kitchen, bathroom, dining room and bedroom. The front room (subsequently *Professor Uys' room*) was then occupied by Mike Swart's father-in-law, the double doors on the eastern (vlei) side constituting the original front door. A servant's room and garage were later partitioned off on the south-western side. The remains of a large milkwood tree that died after inundation by the floodwaters may still be seen nearby.

A very similar house, which is completely unaltered, is that on Agterstekraal (Walton 1989, Fig. 279) near Bredasdorp, said to have been built and occupied by a freed slave. In construction it resembles Melkkamer and, like Melkkamer, it is two rooms wide, thus giving it a higher ratio of width to length than other dwellings in the area. In plan, it has four rooms. The doorway leads into the living-room, behind which is the kitchen with its externally projecting hearth. The other half is occupied by two bedrooms; one entered from the living-room and the other from the kitchen. The living room is illuminated by an unglazed barred window closed by a wooden shutter. The front bedroom has a sliding sash window, each sash having six panes. Such windows are widespread throughout the area and may represent an importation by Barry & Nephews.

Most of the homesteads on neighbouring sheep farms are symmetrical thatched buildings having rubble walls with gallet infilling but, unlike Melkkamer and Agterstekraal, they have triangular stone gables. An excellent unaltered example is that on Klipfontein which was granted by Lord Charles Somerset to Pieter Lourens Cloete in 1820 and passed to his son (also called Pieter Lourens) in 1833. It is a symmetrical, three-roomed building, entered by a doorway with a *bo-en-onder* door and having a window on each side (Walton 1989, Fig. 280). These are sliding sash windows, each of which has sashes of six panes. Originally cooking was done behind a *skerm* at the rear of the house but at a later stage a flat-roofed kitchen was added and also a flat-roofed *buitekamer* was attached to the front. Such a development is very common throughout the Strandveld and even over a much wider area of South Africa.

### 4.3 THE ANDERSONS AND THE MELKKAMER HOMESTEAD

The Melkkamer homestead was built in 1907. In the early days at least two roads connected the eastern and western shores of De Hoop Vlei.

The owner of Melkkamer, John Henry (*Biddy*) Anderson was born of a Swedish father and Prussian mother in Kimberley on 26 April 1874. He was a colourful, charismatic figure who achieved his Springbok colours for both rugby and cricket (Dobson & Nelson 1890). He imported the well-known *paper house*, Yokohoma, in St James, near Cape Town. In 1904, after he had broken his leg and could no longer participate actively in sport, Anderson purchased the 8 000 morgen Melkkamer farm from Phillipus Myburgh.

The house has both Neo-Cape as well as Edwardian and Art Nouveau features and is the epitome of stylish elegance, with its tall chimneys, spacious verandas and high ceilings. Anderson was his own architect, using a house he had seen in Ireland as a model. He planted the ancient conifers that line the entrance road. Masons were brought from Cape Town to build the house from limestone, which was quarried from the western shore of De Hoop Vlei, south of the homestead. The stones were dressed and accurately numbered before transport. The builder was a certain Daan McBain, from Rondebosch (later purported to have hanged himself; his ghost is said to walk at night ... and windows have been known to bang inexplicably, on a still night ...).

The house took two years to build. Imported materials and fittings, such as cast iron gutter, teak veranda pillars and several elegant fireplace fittings were brought by train as far as Sir Lowry's Pass, and thence by ox wagon. The imported stained glass windows on the front doors were made by Richards and Barlow. Their name and the date (21/12/07) are inscribed on the glass.

#### *CELEBRATIONS DURING THE GREAT FLOOD*

*During the great flood of 1906 the level of the vlei had risen steadily for a week and the Wilsons of Skipskop, on the coast, decided to visit Melkkamer in their lifeboat to help rescue the cattle. They eventually reached the stable, and found Anderson and his partner, George Dickson (Madeleine D'Alton's grandfather - see below) in the loft, celebrating the completion of the building in style with a case of whisky and a piano which they had carried upstairs for safety!*

Anderson bred racing horses, having built the large stable complex with its loose boxes in 1906. The dry stone walls are packed with precision, with clay on the inner walls only. The original hand pump which was used to pump rainwater from an underground tank may still be seen. The horse races took place at the Albertyns' farm, Nacht Wacht, near Arniston. The most famous of Anderson's horses was York, who won the Metropolitan in Cape Town in 1904, also achieving second place in 1903 and 1905. The SA Turf Club has a beautiful painting of York. The Galloway Trophy (Kimberley, 25 June 1904) and other memorabilia are in the care of Anderson's great-great nephew, Mick D'Alton of Kosier's Kraal, near Bredasdorp. Another claim to fame was the first use of light, aluminium horseshoes in South Africa. The resourceful Anderson melted down teaspoons in desperation when he could not obtain aluminium for the purpose.

The small ruin (used as a garage) in front of the main house was already present in 1904, and the foundations of an even earlier building and possibly the original milk-room are situated between the homestead and the foreman's house (Playne 1910-11). This aspect deserves further research.

The engine room was used to pump water from the vlei into the big dams, for irrigation. Behind the main house were servants' quarters and storerooms, with their large bins, and a meat room. The original spray-race and kraals may be seen near the entrance gate. The ostriches were also plucked in the kraals. The graveyard is nearby. There was a rose garden with a pergola, fig trees, carnations, geraniums, herbs (mint), nasturtiums, hollyhocks, wisteria and a red bougainvilla (the latter still growing). A hedge of reeds provided protection from the wind. There was a vegetable garden, and vegetables (including pumpkins) were also grown in the vlei bed when the water level was low. There were chickens, turkeys, ducks and 300 geese at one stage.

The ostriches did well until the slump during the Depression. Grain and sheep were also farmed at some stage. Anderson was considered wealthy as he was in possession of the princely sum of 30 000 pounds. He was generous and philanthropic, but his money was eventually embezzled by a "friend".

Anderson and his wife Annetta (*Netta*, née Barry, born 21 August 1880) were childless. She was fond of animals, and hand-reared a duiker. She also had two pet blue cranes, which used to attack the wheels of the threshing machine when it started up. The Andersons were sociable, and Melkkamer was a popular venue with many guests for picnics, visits to the beach (at Koppie Alleen) and shooting parties. Anderson died on 11 March 1926, at the age of 51. On his death-bed he said, "There's somebody in the fender (of the fireplace)". His great-niece, Madeleine, was holding his hand and replied, "It can't be, surely not". "But don't be a damn fool, there's someone there". He firmly believed that when we pass away, one of our relations or friends comes from *upstairs* to fetch us. Anderson had suffered from diabetes. According to local tradition, the moisture seeped from his coffin while it stood in state, staining the bedroom floor. This mark persists to this day ...

## MADELEINE D'ALTON

The Anderson's great-niece, Madeleine D'Alton (12 October 1902 to 15 December 1996) was sent out to live on the farm in 1917 as she was a sickly child. At the age of 22 years, she was deeply in love with one John Buirski of Swellendam, but the family refused to let her marry him as he was Jewish. He died later. She refused a subsequent proposal from another friend. In 1930, her aunt sold Melkkamer to Abraham (*Amie*) van Blommenstein, whom Madeleine married in 1949, when she was about 47 years old. He was overweight and died of a heart attack ten months later. His son, Philip, continued to farm, converting the stables into a store for farm vehicles and machines. The western part of the stables was added in 1970. Netta moved from Melkkamer to Heuningrug Farm, near Bredasdorp, on 30 April 1973.

Madeleine retained her life-right to Melkkamer and maintained it in its traditional manner until January 1984, when the farm was due to be expropriated by Armscor (now Denel). The expropriation was officially served on 4 December 1985. Prior to this Melkkamer was a popular holiday venue for family and friends, who were waited

upon in style by Martin (Adonis) Engel (*Doony*). Madeleine had two wirehead terriers. On 10 October 1992 Madeleine celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in style during a large family reunion at Melkkamer. She passed away in 1996 at the ripe old age of 94.

#### 4.4 PROCLAMATION

The management of the homestead and adjoining property was transferred by Armscor to Cape Nature Conservation on 28 February 1989, when it was proclaimed as part of De Hoop Nature Reserve.

The Melkkamer homestead effectively remained in the possession of one family until 1984, a fact which both heightens its sentimental value for the family and facilitates research into its history. The history of the complex has been researched by means of a literature search and interviews with the family and other members of the community (Scott 1994). Most of the original furniture is still in possession of the family and has been traced and photographed. Copies have been made of photographs of Melkkamer and its earlier inhabitants.

Renovations were carried out by the Works Department of the Provincial Administration of the Western Cape in mid-1995. This was done with the assistance of Revel Fox and Partners, Architects and Planners, in consultation with the National Monuments Council. The homestead complex is in the process of being declared a national monument.

#### 4.5 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

##### *MELKKAMER AND SCHLOSS DUIWISIB* (Information on Duiwisib from Olivier, 1989)

*The Melkkamer homestead bears striking resemblances to the Schloss Duiwisib, south-west of Maltahöhe in Namibia. This remarkable castle was built around the same time, in 1908-9, by German-born Captain Hans-Heinrich von Wolf and his American wife, Jayta. Von Wolf owned eight farms with an area of 140 000 ha. He envisaged a home similar to the castles built during that time by the German Schutztruppe at Gibeon, Namutoni and Windhoek, and the renowned architect Willi Sander was commissioned in 1908 to design a building which would simultaneously be a home and a fortress.*

*Apart from local stone, the other building materials were imported from Germany via Luderitzbucht (now Lüderitz) and transported overland by ox-wagon, a journey of 640 km - half of which was across the Namib Desert. Von Wolf used stonemasons and builders from Italy and carpenters from Sweden, Denmark and Ireland. The castle comprises 22 rooms arranged in a U-shape, the open end of which is enclosed by a high wall. Like Melkkamer (which also has a U-shaped plan), the rooms have a feeling of spacious, timeless elegance. Many of the rooms also have beautifully embellished fireplaces.*

## *FEBRUARIESGAT*

*(Information supplied by Dawid van Papendorp, Simon Streicher and Mike Swart; see also Streicher 1997d)*

*Februarie was a released slave who came from Hang Lip (today Hangklip), somewhere around 1850. He chose to live as an outlaw rather than work for a master. During his wanderings he landed up at a cave now known as Februariesgat, in the north-western corner of the Melkkamer property. He lived by hunting and taking out honey, which he exchanged for food with workers on surrounding farms.*

*Apparently he kept a few of the workers' wives as hostages, to extort clothes, tobacco, candles and other articles from them. Every now and again he would steal a sheep from one of the farms. During these times he would leave the women bound up in his cave. It was virtually impossible to extricate him from the cave, which had a narrow entrance. Occasionally he moved to another cave at Kathoek (north of Windhoek) in a kloof south-east of the homestead (then owned by Dirk Odendaal).*

*The farmers were upset about the number of sheep being stolen and prepared a trap. One of the workers offered to await Februarie at a kraal. After several nights he was eventually apprehended while climbing over the wall, and shot. His body was dragged on horseback to the nearest aardvark den. It is not known whether this den was at Kathoek or nearby Van der Stelskraal, but the remains have never been tracked down.*

## *DIE SKEEPSMAS VAN SKIPSKOP*

*(Simon Streicher, April 1992)*

*"Ou Gawie van de Hoop" (G.F. de Wet) was vreeslik bang vir die see; hy het nie naby die see gekom nie al was sy plaas (De Hoop) tot teenaan die see (hy het daar gebly tot sy dood in 1885). Maar dit was nie altyd so nie. Nie voordat hy die groot skeepsmas by Skipskop gaan haal het nie.*

*By Skipskop het 'n skeepsmas uitgespoel. Toe ou Gawie daarvan hoor, het hy sy ossewa ingespan en met sy werksmense en ook Oom Jannie Human daarheen vertrek om dit te gaan haal.*

*By Skipskop is daar sulke groot hol plekke in die sand tussen die sandduine naby die see. Dié agtermiddag laat is in so 'n hol plek uitgespan om die nag daar te slaap. Dit sou 'n skuiling bied teen die koue seewindjie.*

*In die nag het daar 'n groot fratsbrander gekom en die holte oorstrom. Volgens oorlewering was daar 'n aardbewing maar of dit so was is nie so seker nie - die fratsbrander was daar wel - soos vandag nog gehoor word, wat groot skepe beskadig het en vissersbote omkeer.*

*Die mense het onder die wa gelaap en hulle byna doodgeskrik. Oom Jannie Human was 'n kort mannetjie en hy het byna verdrink deurdat sy voete nie grond kry nie. Van toe af kom "Ou Gawie van De Hoop" nie naby die see nie.*

*Die maspaal lê toe teen 'n sandduin opgespoel. Met die afrol na die wa raak die swaar paal uit beheer, rol teen 'n werksman se bene en een been is morsaf! Wat sou*



*van die skeepsmas geword het? Die kaggel in die kombuis van die Ou Huis op De Hoop het 'n baie groot balk. Miskien is dit 'n deel van die mas. Waar sou dit anders wees?*

## 5. WINDHOEK

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Good grazing and a plentiful supply of water made the Sout River in the upper reaches of De Hoop Vlei a popular area for Khoikhoi kraals and, later, European farmers.

### 5.2 THE KHOIKHOI

Possible sites for Khoikhoi kraals are Windhoek, Rietkloof, Wasdam de Kloof (fountain), Die Fontein on Van der Stelskraal (western side of De Hoop Vlei) and Tierhoek; also possibly Celeskloof (fountain) and Apolsfontein in Apols Steyn se kloof (Simon Streicher).

While searching for guano in a cave on the farm Windhoek during the latter half of 1949, Mr PSH ("Toekie") Badenhorst unearthed a collection of skeletons and implements (Grobbelaar and Goodwin 1952). The material culture includes both organic and inorganic material which are described in detail in Chapter 2.

### 5.3 THE EUROPEANS

Jan Hartog's journal of his expedition in 1707 provides one of the first known accounts of the Windhoek area (section below transcribed from the longhand with the assistance of H. Wessels and S. Streicher):

*DADREGISTER GEHOUDEN OP DE LANDTOGT EN VEERUÿLING DOOR DEN  
BAAS THUÿNIER JAN HARTOG A<sup>o</sup> 1707 NO 9.*

*Maandag 14 Nov. Met den dag vertrokken wij vandaar, en voor bij de Craal [Haasjesdrift] die de Voorige dag niet hadde geruÿlt, den Capt. by ons komende excuzeerde (?) Sig, met te zeggen dat hij gegastereert hadden, en dat hij strags bij ons Soude kommen om te ruÿlen, omtrent een uur langs gem. Sout Rivier getrocken weesende quamen bij vier Craalen met eenen quam den Corp. [Baadjieskraal] die ik den voorige dag had uÿtgeSonden weerbij mij, geruÿld hebbend 15 beeste ik ruÿlden aldaar weeten van oude Sousequas Soon jantjie en waterSchaap (?).*

*[Vier krale:]*

*Capt. haas en Caswaries*

*oude heer*

*brebaart*

*Swarte Coopman en platneus*

*tegen den avond vertrokken wij weerder vandaar en marcheerden omtrent een uur langs gem. rivier daar wij onse nagtrust namen - bij de Craal van' de oude heers broers [Van der Stelskraal].*

### ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Journal kept on the exploration and cattle-bartering expedition by the Master Gardener Jan Hartog A<sup>o</sup> 1707 No 9.*

*Monday 14 November. At daybreak we departed thence to the Kraal (Haasjesdrift) which had not bartered the previous day, the Captain at our arrival having made apology, saying that he was busy castrating his stock and that he would come to us soon to barter. After travelling for one hour along the Sout River we arrived at four Kraals, (and met) at one of them the Corporal [Baadjeskraal] whom I had singled out the previous day, with whom I had exchanged 15 cattle, knowing about the son of old Sousequa Jantjie and WaterSchaap (?).*

*[Four kraals:]*

*Capt. Haas and Caswaries*

*De Oude Heer (the Old Gentleman)*

*Brebaart*

*Swarte Coopman and Platneus*

*By the evening we departed again and marched for about one hour along the above-mentioned river, where we took our night rest – at the Kraal of the old gentleman's brothers [Van der Stelskraal].*

*\*From there they travelled westwards to Soutpansvlakte and thence to Rhenosterfontein.*

## **5.4 PAST OWNERS**

Like De Hoop, Windhoek was also a loanplace, eventually granted on perpetual quitrent jointly to Johannes Andries Beyers, Christian Hendrik Beyers, George Coenraad Beyers and Hendrik Philippus Beyers in 1837 for the price of three pounds sterling.

The original Windhoek farm (No 78; 4 267 morgen/3 657 ha) also included a large portion of land to the west of the upper reaches of De Hoop Vlei, today part of Van der Stelskraal. The farm is described in the original survey by W.M. Hopley (1837) as " ... Govt Ground consisting of ... Common Arable ... Winter pastures, with brackish patches between ... Heathy Limestone Hills, with Grassy Valleys between ...".

On 30.09.1958, Windhoek was incorporated into the newly proclaimed De Hoop Nature Reserve by the Government of the Union of South Africa. A smaller adjoining property to the south, The Nook, was added on 14.07.1960.

### **PAST OWNERS**

30.11.1837    4 267 morgen granted to:  
                  Johannes Andries Beyers  
                  Christian Hendrik Beyers  
                  George Coenraad Beyers  
                  Hendrik Philippus Beyers  
                  Three quarter shares sold to J.A. Beyers 03.12.1844, 10.12.1844 and  
                  16.10.55

13.10.1857    Again subdivided into five shares:  
                 Johannes Andries Beyers  
                 Jan David Beyers  
                 Pieter Coenraad Beyers  
                 Jan Marthinus Beyers  
                 Christiaan Frederik Beyers

These one-fifth shares changed hands at various times:

31.07.1858    Jacob Cornelis Taljaard  
                 Samuel Dirk Cornelis Odendaal

04.12.1868    Jan David Beyers

19.12.1871    Gideon Johannes Albertyn

16.05.1878    Maria C. Albertyn

16.05.1878    Samuel Dirk Cornelis Odendaal

20.10.1887    Pieter Johannes Odendaal

31.12.1892    Johan David Beyers

28.12.1894    Johan David Albertyn

03.09.1895    Johan David Albertyn

07.08.1913    Johan David Albertyn

11.12.1913    Francois Jacobus du Toit

11.12.1913    Francois Jacobus du Toit

The whole of the property was then partitioned into three:

19.08.1920    Francois Jacobus du Toit (Lot A: 853 morgen)  
                 Francois Jacobus du Toit (Lot B: 553 morgen)  
                 Johan David Albertyn (Remainder: 2 860 morgen; today Van der  
                 Stelskraal; part sold off as The Nook - see below)

Lot A & B (the eastern part of Windhoek) were sold together as follows:

19.08.1920    Francois Jacobus du Toit

19.08.1920    Matthys Johannes Odendaal (one third share each)  
                 Samuel Dirk Cornelis Odendaal  
                 Reginald Francois Taylor

04.08.1925    Matthys Johannes Odendaal  
                   Samuel Dirk Cornelis Odendaal

12.05.1939    Matthys Johannes Odendaal

07.04.1948    Paul Coenraad Bernardus Odendaal

07.04?.1948   Dennis Slingsby Newton-King  
                   Rae Fuller Ohlsson

24.09.1951    Kings Kloof (Pty) Limited

30.09.1958    The Government of the Union of South Africa

The Nook (205 morgen):

17.06.1926    Dirk Cornelis du Toit

27.07.1959    Estate: Cornelia Getruida Susanna Johanna du Toit

14.07.1960    The Government of the Union of South Africa

## 5.5 FARMING AT WINDHOEK

*Information supplied mainly by Jan Khaki du Toit [tel. Riviersonderend 510], Simon Streicher and Hennie Beyers, 30.04.1992*

Jan *Khaki* du Toit (born 1910) lived in the Windhoek farmhouse from 1920-1951. His father was (probably) a manager for the various owners during this time. The farm was bought from Johan Dawid Albertyn of Nacht Wacht. By this time the original farmhouse no longer existed. They planted many fruit trees including figs and lemons, some of which are still standing? Their water was obtained from the fountain (the dam was later enlarged by CPA). As a child, Jan walked to school at Kathoek, about 4.5 km north-west of the farmhouse, over the limestone hills. Jan had no shoes and walked barefoot, unlike his sister (Mrs Connie de Wet). On top of the limestone hills (*duine*) they would eat their breakfast of cold chicken, and in time they left a pile of chicken bones lying there.

Behind the farmhouse, higher up the mountain, was a church/school building, built by Newton-King (owner from 1948-1951). Nearby are the ruins of the base of a simple prefabricated building, built by Rae Fuller Ohlsson, an architect from Cape Town and related to Anders Ohlsson of Potberg fame. The Ohlsson brothers built hides for duck hunters who held regular shoots on De Hoop Vlei at Windhoek, sometimes using up to 16 rowing boats to transport the hunters. According to Dr Hey, 12 wheelbarrow loads of spent 12-bore shells were removed from around the hides during cleaning up operations after proclamation. Sea shells are reputed to have been found in nearby Oubuiterskloof, in the yellow outcrop near the path over the dunes.

## THE SWARTS

Elizabeth Maria Swart (see also Chapter 6) lived at Windhoek with her family from 1932-1942. At that stage there were dog kennels - her father, Gawie, was a *vermin* hunter and shot two leopards in the kloofs along the vlei (see below; also Chapter 6). Maria was married in 1945, by which time her father had moved to the *Withuis* on Van der Stelskraal, where he was buried upon his death.

### *POTBERG [GAWIE] SE TIERE*

*Gabriël (Gawie) Swart, Maria's father, was the local vermin hunter. He shot his first tier (leopard) at Potberg in 1910, when he was 33 years old.*

*He shot his second leopard in 1934 or 1935, when he was 57 years old, in Eselkamp se Kloof on the eastern side of De Hoop Vlei, which then belonged to Gaaf de Wet. The leopard was cornered by seven hunting dogs, which chased it into a milkwood tree. Gawie then shot it with a German gun and a long Eloy Pegamoid cartridge. He had a struggle to load the leopard onto his horse, and arrived home a tired but proud man. Once home he loaded the leopard onto the back of his red Diamond T bakkie to show Gaaf de Wet and some other farmers, because they had each promised him 25 pounds if he caught a leopard. Only one farmer, a Mr Albertyn, refused, saying the real leopard left three bite-marks and this one had four canine teeth. Gawie took the leopard to Bredasdorp to show Basjan and have photographs taken. He sold the pelt to Gaaf de Wet for 5 pounds.*

*Around 1937 Gawie shot his third leopard in William se Kloof in the limestone hills on Thys Odendaal's property. The German gun and the two leopard skulls were in the possession of Nicolaas, Gawie's son, for years, but due to certain circumstances Nicolaas had to give them to one of his brother's sons for safekeeping.*

*(Die Swellendammer, August 1999; Suidernuus 30 January 1987).*

*[\* Maria's brother Niklaas has the leopard heads: 34 Du Preez Street, Swellendam; older brother Danie: 9 Rothman Street. There is also a photograph of the gun with which their father shot the leopards.]*

## 5.6 RUINS AND THE DEPRESSION

During the Great Depression, many people came to the farms as workers for the larger farmers, in the hopes that they had enough cottages to accommodate them. In time the Europeans became shepherds and *foremen*, but were later referred to as the *poor whites*. The 1: 50 000 topographical map (3420 AD) shows the ruins of cottages in several of the kloofs along the top half of De Hoop Vlei that are believed to date back to this time [S. Streicher]. All are near freshwater fountains and were most likely also sites of the Khoikhoi kraals. Some of these sites are mentioned below.

## **APOLSFONTEIN**

The shepherd of Kathoek (owned by the Odendaals) lived in a cottage in Apols Steynse Kloof, on the eastern side of the vlei. Guano was also removed from Apolsfonteinse kloof at one stage.

## **RIETKLOOF**

Jan du Toit ploughed up part of the fertile soils in Rietkloof, for crops. Water was led in with a furrow. But the vlei came down in flood and the venture was abandoned. At one stage a Bosman also lived here, according to Maria Swart. His cottage was on the north-western side of the stream and had a high stoep and a pear tree [*Lantern story*]. This may also possibly have been the site of a Khoikhoi kraal.

## **ESELKAMP**

There is a ruin near the edge of the vlei.

## **WASDAM SE KLOOF**

Ruins of a cottage in which the shepherd at Melkkamer lived.

## **DIE FONTEIN**

On the western side of the vlei on Van der Stelskraal, opposite the earth bank at Die Eiland, is another ruin at Die Fontein. This building was once inhabited by the Albertyns' shepherd.

## **CELESKLOOF**

*(Simon Streicher 5.10.1992)*

This kloof is now part of Van der Stelskraal, but formed part of the original Windhoek farm. It lies beyond the dip used for stock, near Aasvoëlkrans. On the right is a gully 6-7 m deep, and at the top a calcrete crest. Bats have also been recorded from a cave in this area in the past, 150 m into a kloof with three or four fountains.

The ruins of a cottage may also be seen, where the father of Sias Hess (now working at the Elim trading store) lived. Earlier Poens Swart, a shoemaker and leather-tanner, lived here. Near the fountain further westwards is another hole. This is possibly the site where a Khoikhoi captain was buried; he could have died during the 1713 smallpox epidemic.

## **5.7 THE BAT/GUANO CAVE**

The well-known Windhoek Bat/Guano Cave extends 1 650 m into the hillside on the eastern side of De Hoop Vlei. It has four main chambers and is believed to have been used by bats for centuries. A draught of fresh air flows in from the back.

According to Maria Swart, her brother Niklaas (born 1908) was one of the first people to discover this cave. During World War II (from 1942-1945) a 6 m layer of guano was removed for use as fertilizer on surrounding farms. A permit to sell the fertilizer had to be obtained, due to the scarcity of phosphates (submarine danger). The amount was allocated according to the size of the farm.

Jan *Khaki* du Toit opened the original mouth of the cave with dynamite so that the guano could be removed more easily. The guano was removed by lorry and fetched 5 shillings per bag for Toekie Badenhorst, who removed it with 15 workers. [*Johan Albertyn has a tape recording of Toekie Badenhorst describing how he removed the guano?*] The bags of guano were slid down a wooden ramp in front of the mouth of the cave, to fall onto the lorry. Daantjie Mathee and his brother drove the guano to Bredasdorp and offloaded it with another team of workers. Sometimes three lorry-loads were driven in on one day (three tons?).

In 1945 the vlei came down in flood. They made a float of several drums, pulled by a cable like a pont. There was also an engine, to pull the float with cables and pulleys. Mining of the guano was abandoned; the remains of the coco-pans and railtracks are still in the cave.



## 6. POTBERG

*Much of the information on Potberg is based on the report, "Potberg die historiese agtergrond", by Anna Rita Cillie van der Westhuizen*

### 6.1 EARLY INHABITANTS

The Potberg area was inhabited by primitive people from the Early Stone Age to the Middle Stone Age (one million to 40 000 years ago). During the Late Stone Age, first the San inhabited the area, and about 2 000-3 000 years ago the Khoekhoen or Khoikhoi moved in.

Within the Black Eagle Cave at Potberg a San artist has left us a legacy of a realistic "hand-print" painting and other remains (see Chapter 2).

In 1707 Jan Hartog, the master gardener of the VOC, undertook an expedition " ... door de Hottentots gantouw werd genoem, door ons Het Elands pat ..." (Hartog 1707) to barter cattle with the Khoikhoi. Hartog's journal is also the first documented report describing the area near Potberg. He described a world with the small settlements of kraals of the Hessequas, each with its own herd of cattle and sheep. It is likely that Potberg was a sought-after area for Khoikhoi cattle and sheep herders, due to its perennial sources of water. In time the nomadic Hessequas were forcibly displaced by European settlers; most lost their cattle and sheep, some were decimated by various smallpox epidemics after 1715 and others were forced into indentured labour.

### 6.2 PAST OWNERS

- 1730 Coenraad/Christoffel Groenewald
- 1761 Estate: wife Anna Hasselaar Groenewald
  
- 1838 Hendrik Petrus Gildenhuis (Swart, Swart, Uys, Taillard, Gildenhuis & Lourens)
  
- 1851 Gabriël Johannes van Dijk I
- 1864 Estate: wife Magdalena Gliomee van Dijk
  
- 1878 Michiel Josias du Toit
  
- 1890 Henry & William Fletcher
  
- 1895 Gabriël Johannes van Dijk II
  
- 1902 Anders Ohlsson
- 1912 Estate: son Axel Ohlsson
  
- 1913 Johan David (Dawid) Albertyn
- 1932 Estate: son Arthur ("Atoor") Albertyn

1940 K. Swart & Myburgh  
? Jan du Toit and his wife (Miss Myburgh)

1980 Cape Provincial Administration

### 6.3 THE LOAN PLACES OF THE VOC

By 1710 the first loan farm was granted to the first Free Burger (*Vryboer*), Ferdinand Appel, in the Caledon area. These early farmers lived a very simple, isolated existence with many hardships, eking out an existence with little more than a firearm, limited supplies, perhaps a wagon and tarpaulin, and a herd of fat-tailed sheep (descendants of the indigenous Khoikhoi sheep). During the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century they established themselves in the vicinity of Potberg.

#### GROENEWALD

On 7 December 1730 a grazing loan was issued to Coenraad (or Christoffel) Groenewald " ... omme voor den tyd van een heel geheel jaar met zijn vee te mogen gaan liggen en wijden op de plaats aande Zoute Rivier bij de Potteberg ...". This is the first reference to European settlers in the Potberg area. Groenewald died between 1730 and 1761 when, on 17 November, a grazing licence was granted to his widow, Anna Hasselaar for one year, to " ... met haar vee te mogen liggen en wijden aande Zoute Rivier bij de Potteberg zynde de verlaate plaats van haar moeder de weduwee Jacob Hasselaar."

#### ODENDAAL

On 9 November 1768 Hendrik Odendaal obtained a grazing licence for the apparently abandoned farm, described as " ... de verlaten plaats van de goede wyfen van meede landbouer Christoffel Groenewald ...".

### 6.4 BRITISH RULE AND THE QUITRENT SYSTEM

On 15 May 1798, Lady Anne Barnard and her husband Andrew, the British Colonial Secretary, visited the Breede River mouth, where they enjoyed a meal of freshly caught fish with a Mr and Mrs van Rhenin (*sic*) (Robinson 1973). *En route* from Swellendam Lady Anne describes an interesting sight, probably one of the first references to the Cape vultures of Potberg: "At a distance a flock of birds still larger than pows [bustards] were seen; they were so busy about something as not to perceive that we were approaching them, till, scared by guns, they mounted and hovered, half unwilling to depart. We found it was a company of eagles [likely to be vultures] feasting magnificently on the identical bontebok we had faced Mr. Barnard out of the day before - the spot was nearly where he had shot. But little more of the buck remained than the head. Van Rhenin took possession of it as a perquisite to the Lord of the Manor, and departing we gave the eagles liberty to renew their meal".

The second British occupation of the Cape in 1809 brought a new system of land ownership and administration.

## **GILDENHUIS**

Thus it came about that, " ... On this first day of November 1838 ... I [Sir George Napier, the governor] do hereby grant, on perpetual quitrent unto, Daniel Johannes Swart, Jacobus Nicolaas Swart/Piet's son, Petrus Johannes Uys, Johannes Joachim Taillard, Hendrik Petrus Gildenhuis, Hendrik Jacobus Lourens, a piece of land five thousand three hundred and fifty six morgen, situated in the District of Swellendam, Field Cornetcy of Potteberg including the loan place Brakkefontein ... that he shall punctually pay, or cause to be paid, at the expiration of every twelve month from the date of these presents, unto the Civil Commissioner of the district, 3 Pounds Sterling ...". The actual amount of land shared by the farmers was 5 356 morgen and 450 square rood.

Gildenhuis received the portion of farm, then known as Brakkefontein, upon which the Potberg homestead as we know it is situated. Although the farm was allocated under the quitrent system in 1838, Gildenhuis hired it as a loan farm from the state before this. He had a map drawn in 1838 that shows various structures, including a residence and stables. According to the register (*opgaafrolle*) of 1837, Gildenhuis then owned nine draught horses or mules, 35 stud horses, 20 cattle and 400 sheep or goats. He harvested 165 muid (*mud*) of grain (wheat, barley or oats) and also had two wagons and apparently a horse cart.

According to local tradition (Johan van Dyk pers. comm.) Gildenhuis exchanged the farm for a saddle and bridle with the following owner, Gabriël Johannes van Dijk.

## **VAN DIJK**

Gabriël Johannes Van Dijk became the owner of Potberg in 1851. He was born on the farm Remhoogte, in the Swellendam district, in 1818/1821, the son of Wynand Burger van Dijk and Helena du Toit. He first married Cornelia Swart (born 1824) and they had three children, Burger Wynand van Dyk, Elsje Johanna van Dyk and Nicholaas Barend van Dyk. Cornelia died in 1857 and was buried in the small graveyard at Potberg, near the waterfall.

Three years later Van Dijk married Magdalena Catherine Giliomee, the widow of Dirk Cornelis Human, at Bredasdorp, in community of property. Magdalena had two children from her first marriage, Dirk Cornelis Human and Mattheus Lodewikus Human. She and Van Dijk had two more sons, Gabriël Johannes van Dyk and Petrus Johannes van Dyk.

Gabriël van Dyk (snr) is reputed to have built the original white-washed homestead and stables on the farm. On 13 April 1864, he departed on a hunting excursion into the nearby limestone hills. While he was attempting to load the carcass of an ostrich onto his horse, his gun accidentally went off and he was wounded in the upper thigh. The amount of blood he lost proved to be fatal and he, too, is buried in the little graveyard at Potberg.

Van Dijk had taken out a mortgage of 200 pounds sterling from Jonas van der Poel on 15 August 1857 to finance the purchase of various properties. As surity he gave his shares in Cupido's Kraal, Wijdgelegen. Klipfontein and Brakkefontein (the latter then 15/16ths of 5 356 morgen and 540 square rood). At her husband's death in 1864, Magdalena Giliomee/van Dijk took over the mortgage.

### *THE GRAVEYARD AT POTBERG*

1

Ter Gedagtenis aan  
Gabriël J. van Dijk  
Geb. 25 Sept. 1818,  
Overl. 13 April 1864

2

Cornelia van Dijk  
(Geb. Swart) Geb.  
1824, Overl. 1857

3

Magdalena van Dijk  
(Geb. Giliomee)  
Geb. 10 Sept. 1835  
Overl. 25 Feb. 1881

### **DU TOIT**

On 19 September 1878 Magadalen Giliomee/van Dijk married Michiel Josias du Toit, within community of property, and the ownership of Potberg was transferred to Du Toit. In their joint will ("... ten eerste is het onzer beide Testateuren expresse wil en begeerte dat onse woonplaats, Brakfontein, ook genaamd Potteberg, met al dezelfs grond, gebouwen en regten en ook ons aandeel in de plaats Klipfontein daaraan grenzende, en thans in ons gemeenskaplike besit ...") the properties of Brakfontein and shares of Klipfontein were bequeathed to Dirk Cornelis and Mattheus Lodewikus Human, Gabriël Johannes and Petrus Johannes van Dijk and Lourens Matthys Josias and Johannes Gerhardus du Toit (the two children of Magdalena's third marriage, to Josias).

In 25 February 1881 Magdalena died "... at her own house on the farm Brakkefontein or Potteberg" and was also buried in the small family graveyard. For financial reasons, Du Toit appears to have appealed to the Supreme Court to sell their property.

In November 1884 the court made the following ruling: "In the Supreme Court of the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 1884. In the estate of the late Catharina du Toit, born Giliomee and surviving spouse Michiel Josias du Toit of the division of Swellendam. Upon the motion of M. Maasdorp of council for the abovementioned surviving spouse, executor testamentary of the estate of his said late wife and upon reading the petition and affidavit filed, it is ordered that the applicant be authorized to make sale of the landed property in the estate for the purpose of paying of the debts due by the same".

## **FLETCHER**

On 10 July 1890, Brakkefontein was transferred to the brothers Henry and William Fletcher, who were horse breeders. Before long (1894) they again sold the farm to Gabriël Johannes van Dyk (Jnr), one of the sons of Gabriël (Snr) and Madalena van Dijk.

## **VAN DIJK**

Gabriël Johannes van Dijk (Jnr), generally known as Oom Gallie, farmed at Potberg until 1902, when he sold the farm to Anders Ohlsson. Using Spanish donkeys, Oom Gallie bred mules to sell to farmers in the Bossieveld and Bonnievale area. He also farmed with cattle, sheep and ostriches, and planted wheat for their own use.

## **OHLSSON**

In 1902 Anders Ohlsson obtained the transport deeds to various farms in the Potberg area. These included portions of Cupido's Kraal and Klipfontein, and Portion A of Brakfontein (or Brakkefontein, also known as Potteberg; the name Potberg came into use only after 1949); and the whole of Rietfontein, Papkuilsfontein, Poorts Riviere and Eilandspad. Jointly these properties became known as *The Potteberg Estates*, some 70 000 acres (33 333 ha) in total.

### **ANDERS OHLSSON'S PERSONAL LIFE**

Ohlsson was born at Christiana (now Oslo) in Norway in 1841, of Swedish parents. His first wife, Isabella Henry, was born in Scotland. They had five daughters and one son, Axel. Mrs Ohlsson died in London on 25 May 1883.

In October 1894 Ohlsson married a second time, at the age of 53, to Margaretha Hornor of Norwich, England. After their honeymoon in Europe they returned to South Africa with Ohlsson's two eldest daughters, who had been to school in Britain for four years.

In September 1912 Ohlsson passed away at his Montebello Estate, after an illness of one month.

### **OHLSSON THE ENTREPRENEUR**

Ohlsson came to Cape at the age of 23 years and developed a trade specializing in the import of Swedish produced goods and wood. Five years later he achieved prominence when he entered into a partnership (A.W. Erikson and Company) with another Scandinavian, A.W. Erikson to trade in Damaraland in South West Africa (now Namibia). Trade was so successful that between 1869 and 1872 Ohlsson ran his own schooner, the *Louis Alfred*.

The deteriorating relationship between the Namas and Damaras led to the end of the partnership. With the huge amount of capital that Ohlsson had built up he made

investments in various businesses in Cape Town, including the South African Glass Co. Ltd in Woodstock. In 1881 he built the Anneberg Brewery at Newlands.

As a prominent businessman he became more and more involved in public life and served on various boards and committees. He was elected to the Harbour Board in 1884 and 1887, served as Director of the Cape Town and Districts Waterworks Company in 1888, and was appointed Swedish and Norwegian Consul General in Cape Town in 1886. Ohlsson also received two awards from the King of Sweden and Norway (King Oscar II) for his services to the Kingdom, namely Knight of the Northern Star in 1892 and the Royal Order of WASA.

After taking over the Lettersted Brewery in 1888, Ohlsson began buying out other Cape breweries and amalgamating them as one firm. In 1889 he took over the Cannon Brewery and bought the Newlands Brewery from Cloete, whose home, Montebello, he also made his own. Ohlsson was now in a position to take over the monopoly of Cape breweries and established the firm, A. Ohlsson & Co. (Pty) Ltd. Due to a shortage of South African capital, he registered Ohlsson's Cape Breweries Ltd in London in November 1889, with a capital of 250 000 pounds in five-pound shares. The new firm began functioning on 1 January 1890, with Ohlsson as managing director, and grew from strength to strength. In 1902, Ohlsson built the Cape Glass Factory at Glencairn, near Cape Town, the first in the southern hemisphere to make bottles by machine. Three years later, however, it was liquidated, apparently due to bad management.

One of Ohlsson's objectives was to promote the increased use of local products in the beer production process. It was a difficult task to encourage farmers in the Colony to produce barley. The cultivation of hops was unsuccessful and this product had to be imported. At the end of 1890 he was able to obtain locally produced barley, at a far lower price, and introduced incentives to farmers to encourage cultivation.

The firm was also dependent on local farmers to produce fodder for its 75 horses and mules. These animals were used to draw the delivery carts for the beer and other work at the brewery, and consumed 4 000 pounds of oats and hay per year. An oats field three miles in length, depicted in a photograph at Potberg in the time of the Ohlssons, may reflect an attempt to reduce these costs.

In 1906 Ohlsson retired as managing director and was succeeded by his only son, Axel. Axel's main interest was in farming, however, and he was also sensitive to the strong lobby against beer brewers at the time, waged by the Temperance Alliance.

#### OHLSSON'S WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS

Apart from business, Ohlsson had diverse interests included hunting, farming, angling, the collection of firearms, Swedish pre-historic implements, examples of natural history, antique silver and the maintenance of a comprehensive library of both new and old books.

"He was an active participant in a wide variety of sports particularly shooting, horseracing, and football. He had a fairly highly developed sense of social responsibility, as is evidenced by his enlightened views on subjects such as ... the use

of the Dutch language in the civil service and courts; the poor working conditions of convict labour, and concern with labour in general; and the plight of lepers and lunatics. These views show Ohlsson to have been a man sensitive to, and appreciative of, the need for basic human rights ..." (Ryan 1976).

## OHLSSON AS PARLIAMENTARIAN AND CONSERVATIONIST

In 1884 Ohlsson was elected to parliament. In 1888 he was re-elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly. His last parliamentary election, in 1894, was the most fiercely contested but eventually lost, due to a number of factors including his late entry to the contest. During the ten years that he served as a Member of Parliament he did much to promote the improvement of conservation measures for game.

His proposed Game Bill of 1886 was the first step towards establishing effective legislation to enforce closed hunting seasons. "A clear barometer of the impact of the promulgation of the Game Bill into law, was the large number of government proclamations appearing in the Government Gazette after 1886 dealing with game preservation, shooting seasons, protected game and similar problems. Proclamations dealing with game and game legislation being virtually non-existent in preceding years ... Ohlsson, in introducing the Bill, referred to the fact that there had been no amendment in the Colony's Game Laws since 1823. Provision was made in the new Bill for the Governor to proclaim a closed season during certain periods of the year. He could also prohibit the destruction of certain eggs and the wholesale catching of pheasants and partridges. Payment of a small gun licence could be enforced, and permission was to be obtained from the Governor prior to any specially classified game being shot - including elephant, bontebok, hippopotamus, gnu, buffalo, and hartebeest" (Ryan 1976).

Ohlsson was closely involved in the Western Districts Game Protection Association, which had the objective, "... to prevent the unlawfull, unseasonable, and unnecessary destruction of game". It also aimed to provide a forum for new thought concerning game conservation and to ensure the conservation legislation submitted in 1886. Ohlsson served both as vice-chairman and chairman from the establishment of this association in 1886 to shortly before his death in 1912.

Ohlsson was also instrumental in the passing of the Fish Protection Bill, aimed at curtailing the effects of large American deep-sea vessels fishing in South African waters with nets of a small mesh size.

In 1891 Ohlsson made a controversial request to the Colonial secretary, J.W. Sauer, to lease hunting rights on Robben Island with a request, "... whether Government would be prepared to grant me a lease (for 25 Pounds per annum) embodying the sole right to shoot over the Island, say for a period of five years ... I am actuated by a strong desire for encouraging and preserving game upon the island, the quantity of which, owing to the indiscriminate granting of shooting permits ... has decreased to a very considerable extent ...".

He also promised to introduce partridges, pheasants, guinea fowl and springbok to the island and to provide adequate protected to any game that required it on the island. In January 1852 a memorandum of agreement was signed according to which Ohlsson

was granted by the government "... the sole and exclusive right for a period of five years to commence on the first day of February 1892 ... to shoot rabbits and game on Robben Island ...". Ohlsson was also obliged to shoot rabbits on the island, if so requested by the government. This agreement met with considerable dissatisfaction under other Members of Parliament, who felt that the matter should have gone out on tender.

Due to his interest in conservation, Ohlsson had a pool constructed on his Montebello Estate for the hatching of trout ova from Scotland. Three types of ova (those of Loch Leran, rainbow and brown trout) were imported between 1891 and 1892 and hatched with the help of Latour, an Irishman. The government subsidy for the project did not make provision for the fish after hatching, however. In August 1893 the fish were taken to the Ceres district, where most of them died apart from 80 000. Ohlsson's appeal to the government for continued support for the experiment met with success, eventually resulting in the establishment of a state trout hatchery at Jonkershoek, near Stellenbosch, which in time stocked the most important streams in the South-Western and Eastern Cape under the auspices of the Department of Nature Conservation.

### OHLSSON THE LANDOWNER

In 1902 Ohlsson obtained the transport deeds to various farms in the Potberg area. These included portions of Cupido's Kraal and Klipfontein, and Portion A of Brakfontein (today known as Potberg); and the whole of Rietfontein, Papkuilsfontein, Brakfontein, Poorts Riviere and Eilandspad.

He also purchased the small harbour of Port Beaufort at the Breede River mouth, from Mr Carlson, who had bought it from Barry & Nephews. When Ohlsson's son Axel inherited it, he sold it back to Alfred Barry, grandson of Joseph Barry. Ohlsson used this harbour to transport his building requirements from Cape Town, including all the wood used for building at Potberg, from Australia, and cast iron fence posts from England (J. van Dyk pers. comm.).

In addition he also had a large farm in the vicinity of Saldanha Bay, farms in the Ceres area and a game farm near Swellendam.

### CONSERVATION AND HUNTING AT *THE OAKS*

At Ceres Ohlsson owned four farms, all in the vicinity of the Lakensvlei Dam. On his farms, apart from smaller antelope, he hunted pheasants, francolins, quail, snipe, doves, wild geese and rabbits. Imported hunting birds such as English francolins and pheasants, and Californian quail were also released here and hunted. A detailed register was kept of all hunting expeditions and the numbers of animals killed.

The Oaks, one of these farms, was known as Ohlsson's *shooting box*. Here he employed a permanent gamekeeper, Mr Brink, to attend to the conservation of the game on the farm and the extermination of *vermin* such as falcons, wildcats, mongooses, jackals, bateleurs? (*berghane*) and otters. In the year ending 1899, 304 *hawks* (probably lesser kestrels?) alone were killed. Today's concept of holistic ecological conservation did not exist, and most predators were regarded as *vermin*; the



raptors were thus shot because they caught young pheasants (Mrs van der Merwe pers. comm.).

A special four-roomed stone building was constructed on the farm, equipped in similar fashion to the meat room at Potberg. Whereas dressed stone was used at Potberg, the stone here was packed into a cement frame, a technique known as "pointing". The first room had large hooks on the walls, "... hier is die voëls oopgesny en opgehang as hulle saans uit die jagveld kom ..." (Mrs van der Merwe pers. comm.). The feathers remained on the birds, but their intestines were removed and a preservative was rubbed on into the body cavity. After ripening on the hooks, the preserved birds were taken back to Cape Town.

Ohlsson also had houses built for his workers, "... van die eerste plekke wat die kleurlinge eg-geboude huise gekry het. Van bakstene en klip gebou ..." (Mrs van der Merwe pers. comm.). Dog kennels were also built at The Oaks and at De Eike, the farm where the gamekeeper, Mr Brink, lived. Apart from controlling *vermin*, Mr Brink was also responsible for the upkeep of the horses used during the hunting season. Mrs Brink was responsible for keeping house for the Ohlssons during holidays. A midday meal had to be prepared every day and taken to the hunters in the field with the little cart used for hunting expeditions. She also had to prepare the evening meal.

In 1910 the four farms were sold, but Anders Ohlsson maintained the hunting rights to the farms until his death in 1912.

## SOCIAL PRACTICES AT *THE OAKS*

Mrs van der Merwe's reminiscences about the Ohlssons, who later leased The Oaks from her father, shed interesting light on their lifestyle.

The Ohlssons visited The Oaks for periods of fourteen days, mainly in order to hunt. During this time they stayed in the old homestead on the farm, today only a ruin due to a devastating fire. In this house with its heavy, dark furniture, typical of that time, the Ohlssons dressed up for the formal evening dinner. Mrs van der Merwe's parents and their children's teacher were often invited to these dinners.

These short holidays were happy times for the Ohlssons; friends were invited along, as well as the younger children and the elder daughters and their husbands. They often sat up late playing cards, "... soos hul leefwyse maar is, heel anders as ons boeremense ..." (Mrs van der Merwe pers. comm.).

When the Anglo-Boer War broke out (1899), the British troops had their camp very near to Lakensvlei. Ohlsson notes in his hunting register that on 17 May 1902, 30 francolins and 20 rabbits were shot by 150 hunters of the "... Imperial Army ... mostly poachers ...".

Mrs Ohlsson remembers a romantic incident from this time. Apparently the Ohlsson daughters enjoyed the attention of the officers of the British troops very much. During this time the boer commandos of Smuts approached very close to Ceres. "Apparently one night, in the middle of the night, officers galloped up and said; 'you must come,

Smuts is within hailing distance, come we'll rescue you all'. They put these girls in their nightdresses, shocking!, onto their horses and galloped into Ceres for safety."

The way in which the lifestyle of the Ohlssons differed from that of the Ceres community is also reflected by the comments of the Overberg farmers. It should be borne in mind that both Ohlsson and his wives were not born South Africans, despite his outspoken allegiance to this country; in contrast, their children were born and bred in the country.

## AXEL OHLSSON

There is a close association between the Ohlssons' personal life and the history of Potberg. Anders Ohlsson was the perfect image of a self-made man. He "... was 'n kort, gesette man, ietwat koppig en driftig van aard, ..." (J.J. Muller pers. comm.). Perhaps because he had struggled in life, he wanted only the best for his children. As is often the case, his ideals for his children did not accord with their own ideals and desires. He wanted his daughters to marry prosperous husbands (Mrs S. Ohlsson pers. comm.), and placed a high premium especially on marriages to members of the British aristocracy. Unfortunately this was not always a recipe for success.

The involvement of Ohlsson's son, Axel, with Potberg stems from a marriage to which Anders was bitterly opposed. One of his major political opponents was Senator T.E. Fuller, a farmer from the Eastern Cape. Axel fell in love with Fuller's daughter, however, and married her, despite the opposition of his father, who would have had him marry into the British nobility. Anders expressed his disapproval by not attending the reception, which was held at Grootte Schuur (today the official residence of the state president). The couple visited the Breede River mouth during their honeymoon. Anders also bitterly blamed his son for not becoming involved in the brewing industry when he (Anders) retired in 1906. Axel's main interest was in farming, however, and he was also sensitive to the strong lobby against beer brewers at the time, waged by the Temperance Alliance. Matters reached such a state that Ohlsson even considered disowning his only son (Mrs S. Ohlsson pers. comm.).

According to Mrs Esterhuizen, while relationships were so bad, Ohlsson even gave his manager at Potberg, Mr Marais, to understand that he (Marais) would inherit the farm. Axel's wife had a strong character and much love for her fellow men, however, and insisted that Axel make peace with his father. After they had set aside their differences, Axel and his family moved to Potberg in 1911/12 to see to the farming, at the request of his father. The manager, Mr Marais, left Potberg when he realised he would not be inheriting the farm (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.).

Axel remained on the farm with his wife and two sons, Ray and Neill; later two daughters were born. The difference in their lifestyle to that of Anders is evident in the way in which the family lived, and the manner in which they were accepted by the local community. Anders died in September 1912, requesting Axel in his will to build on to the house at Potberg "so as to provide a sufficiently large room wherein my son may place the antique and other articles I have given him ...". In agreement with the executors of the will, however, Axel decided to sell the estate as he preferred to go farming in the Eastern Cape. Shortly afterwards his young wife succumbed during the great influenza epidemic of 1918.

## ALBERTYN

Dawid (J.D.) Albertyn purchased the various portions of The Potteberg Estates at a public auction in 1913; this heralded a new era for Potberg. The Albertyns were respected farmers who farmed at their family farm, Nacht Wacht. Albertyn bought Potberg mainly on account of its plentiful game, as he was passionately fond of hunting (A. Albertyn pers. comm.). Like Ohlsson, he appointed a manager, namely Gabriël (Gawie) Swart, formerly Ohlsson's manager at Cupido's Kraal, who had already worked for Albertyn at Van der Stelskraal.

The Albertyns used the older homestead mainly as a holiday house. During the rest of the year Hans Swart and his wife lived in the house. During the Albertyns' visits to the farm, Mrs Swart would do the housekeeping and cook meals for the family. Amongst other duties, Mr Swart was responsible for the maintenance of the farm buildings and the pruning of the myrtle (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) hedge that encircled the residences on the farm.

Dawid passed away in 1928. His son, Arthur (*Atoor*), farmed with sheep and wheat at Potberg from 1932 to 1940.

## 6.5 POTBERG FARM

### BUILDINGS

#### THE OLD WHITE HOMESTEAD

According to his great-great grandson, the original white-washed homestead on the farm was erected by Gabriël van Dijk (J. van Dyk pers. comm.). According to a photograph in 1906 (see below), it was built in typical T-shaped Strandveld style with a long *voorhuis* (parlour/reception room). At the back was a section built at right angles to the front part. The beams of the ceiling are reputed to have originated from shipwrecks.

In 1902 Ohlsson obtained transport of the part known today as Potberg. A photograph dating back to 1906 shows the changes that the Ohlssons made to the original homestead of Gabriël van Dyk. The photograph also shows part of another building on the left side of the photograph, possibly the original homestead or another building later incorporated into the new manager's home.

The old T-shaped thatched-roof house obtained a new *voorkamer* on each end in the front. At the back a new part was built, parallel with the long leg of the T, to house the sculleries, changing the shape of the house to a Y. The sculleries are used today as storerooms. Originally they had large sinks, and long shelves along the walls. This is where the game hunted on the farm was processed.

Two large pantries were installed, to store sufficient provisions for the large numbers of people working on Potberg. Today the original house has been changed so that it can accommodate two families; one pantry is used as a lounge while the other forms

the kitchen and back entrance for the second unit. The old kitchen, granary and meat room have been preserved in their original form. The large sitting room of the original house has also been divided into two.

## THE STONE HOUSE

Next to the old white house is an elegant house built in characteristic European-Victorian style by Ohlsson of stone, a building material he actively promoted. According to Johan van Dyk, who farmed at Juliesfontein and whose grandfather sold Potberg to Ohlsson, the Potberg house was built of local stone, using Malay artisans from Cape Town. All the buildings erected by Anders Ohlsson were characteristically made of dressed stone, with corrugated iron roofs.

The stone house was erected as a residence for the estate manager, of which there were several in Ohlsson's time including a Mr Devenish and a Mr Marais, neither of whom left on good terms with Ohlsson (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.). Young bachelors working on the farm, helping with the horses and mules, were also accommodated in the house.

The room on the right, in the front of the house, was originally used as a post office from 1907 to 1932, when it was closed. The room on the left was used at least in later years, during the time of Dawid Albertyn, as a schoolroom. Available records refer to a school at Brakfontein in 1908, with Miss Margaret A. Odendaal as teacher at a salary of 30 pounds per year; but it is not known whether this refers to Potberg or another farm of the same name in the area.

According to Maria Elizabeth Swart, some of the other teachers at Potberg (1912-1932) included Kootjie Bosman, Ella van Zyl, Miemie Albertyn, Anna Dunn and Miss Baderhorst. Christine Snyders (born 1904) taught from about 1930 to 1933. She boarded with a Mrs Maria Swart, and in 1934 married a Mr L.B. Conradie who taught at Ouplaas/Wydgeleë. She sometimes also helped out at Ouplaas until they left in about 1939. According to their daughter, Mrs M. Theron (24 Sultan Street, Stellenbosch) their favourite childhood stories were those about *katjie-kee's*, painted ladies and the giant arum lilies down in the woods.

The verandah of the stone house is paved with black slate, similar to that used at Montebello. Inside the front entrance, on the left, is the sitting room which originally was entered via a passage, the left wall of which has since been broken out. The present kitchen was originally used as a bedroom, while the present bathroom was used as a pantry in the time of the Ohlssons and Albertyns (Elizabeth Maria Swart pers. comm.). The room at the back of the house, opposite the present kitchen, was the original kitchen. A *bakoond* was built into the wall on the mountain side, with a hearth in front. The original bathroom (today used as a store) had a large cement bath.

### *Elizabeth Maria Swart*

Mrs Elizabeth Maria (Tant Mariatjie) Swart was born at Potberg on 14.07.1916. She grew up at Potberg, where her father (Oom Gawie or *Ou Langman*) was the manager and *vermin hunter* for Mr Albertyn; her memories of the farm at this time are an important resource. Her mother's parents, Oupa Niklaas (*Straatjie*) and Ouma Jakoba

van Noordwyk (*Ou Moedertjie*) first lived at Melkbosheuwel. Maria's parents married in 1902. The couple first lived at Buffelsfontein (near the pan just east of and below the Vulture Kloof), then at Cupidoskraal, then at Verfheuwel and then at Potberg (from 1913-1932). They had five sons and seven daughters. The family moved to Windhoek in 1932, where they lived until 1942(?), then to the *withuis* at Van der Stelskraal. Her mother died in 1944 and her father in 1963.

#### POTBERG SE TIERE

*Gawie, Maria's father, was the local vermin hunter. He shot his first tier (leopard) in 1910, when he was 33 years old. At that stage they lived at Cupido's Kraal, near Potberg. Gawie and Oom John Dunn of Elandspad went hunting one morning. Gawie shot the leopard at Boskloof (the Vulture Kloof), from the opposite side of the kloof.*

*He shot his second leopard in 1934 or 1935, when he was 57 years old, in Eselkamp se Kloof on the eastern side of De Hoop Vlei, which then belonged to Gaaf de Wet. The leopard was cornered by seven hunting dogs, which chased it into a milkwood tree. Gawie then shot it with a German gun and a long Eloy Pegamoid cartridge. He had a struggle to load the leopard onto his horse, and arrived home a tired but proud man. Once home he loaded the leopard onto the back of his red Diamond T bakkie to show Gaaf de Wet and some other farmers, because they had each promised him 25 pounds if he caught a leopard. Only one farmer, a Mr Albertyn, refused, saying the real leopard left three bite-marks and this one had four canine teeth. Gawie took the leopard to Bredasdorp to show Basjan and have photographs taken. He sold the pelt to Gaaf de Wet for 5 pounds.*

*Around 1937 Gawie shot his third leopard in William se Kloof in the limestone hills on Thys Odendaal's property. The German gun and the two leopard skulls were in the possession of Nicolaas, Gawie's son, for years, but due to certain circumstances Nicolaas had to give them to one of his brother's sons for safekeeping.*

*(Die Swellendammer, August 1999; Suidernuus 30 January 1987).*

Boskloof was also the breeding site of the vultures. Maria and her family lived at Potberg from 1913 to 1932 and in those years the skies were *black with vultures*.

#### OTHER BUILDINGS ON THE WERF

##### *The generator room*

Behind the old (white) homestead is a small building known as the *generator room*. In the time of the Ohlssons, this is where Harry Hanua was accommodated, the German appointed to look after his horses and their breeding programmes (N. Fuller Ohlsson pers. comm.). Ohlsson "... was hartstogtelik lief vir renperde (in sy later jare was hy voorsitter van die Milnerton-sportklub) ..." (J.J. Muller pers. comm.). There were also jockeys to exercise the horses (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.).

In the Albertyns' time, Gabriël Swart's mother-in-law, (and Mariatjie's grandmother, *Ou Moedertjie*) Mrs van Noordwyk, and her husband lived in this building. Mr van Noordwyk was bedridden for many years, and their youngest daughter, Alie, later

came to live with them to help look after him. He died at Potberg and was buried somewhere in the bluegum forest, on the left of the old entrance to Potberg, but the grave has not yet been located.

In those days the *generator room* (*Ou Moeder se Huis*) looked very different from now. Approaching from the side of the white homestead, one first encountered a small room that was later used as the school (after the room in front of the manager's house). Next to this room but on the outside of the building was a small shed, used for storing flour and other provisions. The remainder of the building was divided into three small rooms. In one of them lived their daughter, one was the Van Noordwyk's bedroom and the room at the end, on the side of the river, was their sitting room (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).

The original front door is still in position. Signs were found of the wallpaper and of a green and red strip which, in the absence of skirting (*vloerlyste*), was painted on the wall. In Ou Moeder's small sitting room was a collection of small snakes preserved in spirits (probably brandy), an important decorative element. These included cobras and garter snakes? (*kousbandslange*). Outside the door was a rue (*wynruit*; *Ruta graveolens*) and a wild wormwood (*wilde-als*, *Artemesia afra*) bush, for medicinal use. A syrup was made of the *wilde-als* to treat colds. A type of buchu (*Barosma betulina*) was also picked on the mountain for medicinal use.

On the side of the house, next to the sitting room, was Ou Moeder's corrugated iron kitchen where all meals were cooked. Through a small window, the old lady used to entertain herself by watching the baboons trying to help themselves to prickly pear fruit.

#### *The baking house*

A sufficient supply of food was required for the large numbers of people working on the farm during Ohlsson's time. A baking house (*bakhuis*) was erected with two outside ovens heated by coals, for baking bread. Next to this was a large iron pot, used to heat water into which a slaughtered pig could be immersed so that the hairs could be scraped off easily.

Nearby was a small whitewashed building that has since disappeared but in the time of Dawid Albertyn was used as a dwelling for workers, and later as a wood store.

On the other side of the baking house was a bell that was rung to announce meal times and the end of working shifts (Mrs du Toit pers. comm.).

#### *Stables and barns*

The old stables are one of the oldest buildings on the farm and originally had a yellowwood manger and cobbled floors (both no longer there). They were possibly built by Gildenhuis, as the 1838 map shows a house, with stables in the same position as the present stables.

The stud stallions and mares, the pride of Anders Ohlsson, were kept in the stables. The 1913 advertisement refers to "... 20 loose boxes ..." and "... stabling for another

70 animals ..." (Cape Times), as well as "The magnificent Irish Hunter Stallion 'Redberry, ... Sure and active at stud. Won reserve at Registered Hunter Sires Show in London 1907 ..." and "A magnificent Colonial-bred Stallion, 'Dick'" (Cape Times, 9 October 1913). The stud stallions were apparently housed in the two wings flanking the small courtyard. The more elegant stables at Montebello give an indication of the original appearance of the Potberg stables.

The building presently used as offices, a lecture hall, kitchen and dormitories for the environmental education centre originally comprised the barns and stables erected by Ohlsson. At that time there were two separate buildings that were connected by a corrugated iron barn, within which was a Marshall's Mill for grinding the wheat grown on the farm (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.). The mill itself was driven by a 12 horsepower Tangye Engine, connected to the mill by a belt and housed in a small corrugated iron building on the south side of the present building (Cape Times). The mill was later driven by steam generated in the threshing machine's boiler (A. Albertyn pers. comm.). The *skuttebak* of the mill was on the same level as the top of the stairs, mounted against the wall. The mill was of special importance because people from the whole area brought their wheat here to be ground into flour.

The miller and blacksmith were one and the same person, Apie Lourens (E.M. Swart pers. comm.). The smithy was on the same side of the building (the northern side) as the mill, but on the western side. The smithy was the only place in the whole area where a horse could be shod and wagon rims (*bande*) could be made tighter. The eastern part of the building (today the kitchen, store and sick bay) originally consisted of two smaller barns. The loft was used to store horse fodder and also apparently flour for domestic use.

The employees of the Ohlssons lived in the part presently used as offices. Mrs Esterhuizen and her sister, Mrs du Toit, lived with their parents in this building when they were young. Their father was chiefly responsible for caring for the horses.

The two present bathrooms housed the loose boxes for the horses. The boxes each had their own stable door and were separated from each other by a wooden partition (E.M. Swart pers. comm.). Eventually Jan du Toit broke out the 20 loose boxes to fit out the stables as a dairy.

In front of today's lecture hall was a large corrugated iron store, used for storing bales of fodder both in the time of the Ohlssons and Dawid Albertyn.

### *Coach houses*

Other outbuildings on the farm included the stone coach house built by Ohlsson, and the older coach house (presently the interpretation centre) apparently built by Gabriël van Dyk. Within the stone wagon house were several little rooms, apparently the oil stores referred to in the 1913 advertisement, also used for storing implements (Cape Times). The oil was apparently used as fuel for the engine driving the mill, but also for the smaller engine in a building near the present silo that was used to chop up prickly pear leaves to feed ostriches in the time of both the Ohlssons and the Albertyns (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).

Arthur Albertyn built on an extension to the back part of the coach house, and enlarged the gate between the coach house and the horse stables so that the dung could be driven out by wagon.

### *Kennels*

The kennels on the stream side of the education centre were of great importance to the Ohlssons as they used dogs to exterminate *vermin*. The auction advertisement also mentions that. "... owing to the activities of the late mr. Ohlsson, the Vermin have been completely exterminated" (Cape Times).

The kennels were broken down when CDNEC took over the management of Potberg. They were a stone structure consisting of four separate kennels, each with a little door at both the front and the back (E.M. Swart pers. comm.). The dogs were fed from the front, and through the back could reach an enclosed run in the sunshine. Anders Ohlsson had five pairs of dogs for hunting jackals and baboons (Neil Fuller Ohlsson, grandson, pers. comm.).

Kennels were also erected at Montebello and The Oaks. Photographs of the Montebello kennels, albeit on a more elegant scale, provide an idea of the appearance of the Potberg kennels.

### *Other outbuildings and structures*

There was also a small stone house built into the wall of the kraal behind the manager's house, and corrugated iron barns on either side of the central dividing wall in the kraal. In the Albertyns' time, the calf run and milk room, originally with a corrugated iron roof, were on the other side of the kraal (E.M. Swart pers. comm.). The pigsties were built on the way to the waterfall. Other structures on the farm included dams built by the Ohlssons, a sheep dip, with a *dipkraal* and various cottages for the workers.

## SUBSEQUENT CHANGES

Relatively few changes were made to the homestead complex by subsequent owners. Most were restricted to the interiors of the buildings, so that today most are preserved in their original form.

Apart from the threshing floor and a corrugated iron barn, few of the other structures from Ohlsson's time have been broken down. The existing buildings are thus largely complete and are representative of the Ohlsson homestead in 1913.

## 6.6 FARMING ACTIVITIES

Farming practices apparently did not change much from the time of Gildenhuis. Sheep farming appears to have been important, as well as horse breeding prior to mechanization. Crops were also planted, but on a limited scale. In the time of Gildenhuis, only 33 morgen was cultivated; in 1838 he harvested 165 muid (*mud*) of grain (wheat, barley or oats).



Subsequent owners would probably have followed similar practices, as the soils and vegetation did not lend themselves readily to any other kind of farming. Sweet grazing was always restricted and the soils were very shallow, deterring the planting of crops. For this reason most of the owners of Potteberg also possessed other properties that were more suitable for the planting of wheat.

Gabriël Johannes van Dijk (jnr), generally known as Oom Gallie, farmed at Potberg until 1902, before the time of Anders Ohlsson. Using Spanish donkeys, Oom Gallie bred mules to sell to farmers in the Bossieveld and Bonnievale area. He also farmed with cattle, sheep and ostriches, and planted wheat for their own use.

During Ohlsson's time the main focus was on breeding mules and horses, as well as sheep, ostriches and crops. During the time of the Albertyns, there was more emphasis on mixed farming which, apart from producing wool, wheat, ostriches, horses and mules, was mainly based on subsistence. For Potberg and other farms in the Overberg, the year was regularly divided into ploughing time, sowing time, harvest and threshing time, shearing time etc. The existence of the farming people was dependent on the large tasks that had to be completed every year.

After the farm was sold to Messrs Myburgh and Swart, 1 500 morgen was used for sowing while a further 100 morgen was planted with pastures, mainly for cattle.

Large bluegum (*Eucalyptus*) plantations were planted after 1940 as a potential source of income.

The last owner, Jan du Toit, concentrated mainly on cattle and sheep farming.

## THE FARM MANAGER AND WORKERS

Ohlsson employed various farm managers, who stayed in the stone house. During the Albertyns' time, and even before that, Potberg was a whole community of people. These were also years of the Depression and many Europeans did manual work on farms, due to a lack of any other work. During these difficult times, everyone was expected to help with the work on the farm. Many people were needed as almost all the work on the farm was done by hand.

In Dawid Albertyn's time the manager, Gabriël (Gawie) Swart, and his family were housed in the stone house. Elizabeth Maria Swart was one of Gabriël's twelve children. Apart from the general work as a manager, one of Swart's tasks was to exterminate all the *vermin* on the farm. For this he used a pack of dogs that were kept in the kennels built by the Ohlssons.

Various people were housed in the barn (today the office of the education centre), including Oom Voëltjie Swart, a shepherd. A servant, Koekie, and her husband also lived in a little house built into the kraal wall (Danie Swart pers. comm.).

## HORSES AND MULES

The main type of farming practised at Potberg by Ohlsson was horse and mule farming. An indication of the scale of the operation is that, at the 1913 auction, 145

horses were offered for sale and 124 mules and donkeys; and this was after Axel Ohlsson, his son, had already sold a large amount of stock the previous year, at his father's death, valued at 12 000 pounds. The advertisement suggested that the remaining stock (not sold at the auction of 16 October 1913) would be auctioned at the end of that year. This included jennies and horse mares and their foals as well as jacks.

The reason for this large scale of operation is that tractors came into the country only in 1910, and became commonplace only late in the 1920s. Mules and horses were indispensable especially in the vine and grain cultivation areas of the country. It should be borne in mind that "... 'n goeie saaiman ..." could sow eight bags of wheat, from dawn to dusk, enough to keep "...8 tot 9 ploegspanne goed besig ..." (S.W. van der Merwe). Each ploughing team had six to eight horses or mules. Hence, according to the advertisement, "It is needless to say that Potteberg has for years past been noted throughout the Western Province for its Mules and Horses" (Cape Times).

In Albertyn's time the breeding of mules and horses continued, albeit not on the same scale as in Ohlsson's time, as the emphasis was shifting to mixed farming.

## SHEEP

Potberg was always a sheep and crop farm. The two usually go together because sheep can so easily feed on the stubble lands that remain after the harvest. The Ohlssons farmed with sheep, and during the time of Dawid Albertyn there were about a thousand sheep on Potberg (D. Swart pers. comm.). The job of their shepherd, Oom Voëltjie Swart, was to take the sheep out to the veld and look after them by day, then bring them back to the large stone kraal next to the manager's stone house at night.

### *Shearing time*

At shearing time the sheep were herded to the *werf* from the various parts of the farm, where they grazed. There they were chased into the corrugated iron barn between the two large stone barns. Today's sick bay and kitchen were originally divided into two barns. The sheep were sheared in one of them, and the wool was baled in the other. The children were often used to help with the latter task, to help tramp the wool into the bags.

Both *Coloured* as well as European shearers came from far and wide to help shear, some from as far as Malgas. During shearing time there was also time for songs such as, "'n Ienk en 'n pienk en 'n balie hoe - 'n Ienk en 'n peink en 'n balie hoe, - My tand is seer, my ma sê 'k moet rooi laventel aansmeer!" (Mrs du Toit pers. comm.).

## OSTRICHES

During the Ohlssons' time ostriches were kept and even hatched, as suggested by the reference in the auction advertisement to "... Incubator rooms ..." and the fact that it is mentioned that "... this property is excellent for ostriches ..." (Cape Times).

A favourite form of entertainment was to watch the annual plucking of the ostriches. The ostriches were chased together in kraals for this purpose (N.F. Ohlsson pers.).

comm.). Mrs E.M. Swart also remembers from her childhood how the ostriches were chased into kraals made of American aloe (*Agave americana*) to be plucked. These kraals were behind the present education centre, and it is possible these same camps were used both in the time of Ohlsson and Dawid Albertyn.

## CROPS

Due to its situation and soil types, Potberg is suitable for crop as well as sheep farming. Anders Ohlsson to a large extent regarded Potberg as an experimental farm (Mrs S. Ohlsson pers. comm.). Here he tested various kinds of crops including new types of oats, one of which still bears the name *Potberg*. The Ohlssons especially sowed oats on a large scale, and there is a photograph of an oats land of three miles long.

Ohlsson constantly tried out new crops at Potberg, including a type of South American gooseberry, *Physalis angulata* (R. Saunders pers. comm.). This plant became known by the Ohlsson family as *grandfather's weed* (Mrs S. Ohlsson pers. comm.) and was originally brought in by Ohlsson as a fodder plant for sheep. Danie Swart, who lived at Potberg as a child and whose father was the manager for Ohlsson at Cupido's Kraal, remembers "... daar het later so 'n wilde appeliefie [gekom] hy gee 'n vrug net soos 'n mak appeliefie, maar hy groei laag op die grond en as die skaap hom nou eers gevat het, dat hulle hom nou eet, dan word hulle vreeslik vet van hom".

This plant eventually invaded the whole of the Bredasdorp area, via the neighbouring farm Juliesfontein (Johan van Dyk pers. comm.). Although it was an outstanding fodder species for stock, it hindered cultivation due to its very long roots, and exhausted the soil (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.).

### *Ploughing time*

Until Arthur Albertyn took over Potberg in 1932, most of the farming activities took place without mechanization. Even as a young boy, Danie Swart had the responsibility of ploughing the lands alone with a team of donkeys.

After 1913 sowing was still done by hand, but eventually the seed was ploughed into the ground with a *drie-voor-skottelploeg* drawn by 14 donkeys. Later a sowing machine was acquired that was also drawn by donkeys or horses. "Toe die saaimasjien ingekom het, het ons eers geploeg, dan met die saaimasjien gesaai en dan altemit met 'n eg die saad toegemaak" (D. Swart pers. comm.).

### *Harvest time*

During the time of Oom Gallie van Dyk, scythes were still used for harvesting (J. van Dyk pers. comm.), and also apparently still during the time of the Ohlssons. Photographs taken on Potberg's *werf* in 1906 show the wheat still being threshed by horses on a threshing floor and tossed up into the wind with a *koringskop*. The old threshing floor was on a small rise in front (on the north side) of the education centre.

In the time of Dawid Albertyn a self-binder cutter (*snymasjien*) was used that cut the wheat itself and bound it in sheaves. Thereafter the sheaves were taken to the yard

(werf) and packed in stacks (D. Swart pers. comm.). At this time the wheat was threshed with a threshing machine. "Eers was dit die groot dorsmasjien wat jy 40 of 50 mense nodig gehad het om by hom te werk, ... toe het die blikbakkie, soos ons dit genoem het, ingekom ..." (Danie Swart pers. comm.). "Dan trek jy hom maar langs die mied, dan het jy nou mense op die mied wat nou die gerwe ingooi en jy het die manne by die bak wat nou die gerwe op die bak gooi, en jy het 'n lossnyer op die bak en jy het die voerman ... hy sit nou daar die graan en inwerk. Jy moet ook mense hê wat die strooi wegwerk ... Hier waar die fynkaf (strooi) uitkom, moet jy ook nou mense hê wat die kaf kan wegwerk (D. Swart pers. comm.). A large number of people was thus needed to do the work, and every pair of hands was put to use.

During threshing time the children had to help shake out the straw mattresses and fill them with new, fresh straw (E.M. Swart pers. comm.). The women were responsible for taking food to the lands. Often a pot of soup was taken for the harvesters, who would sleep just there on the lands (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.).

## WATER

One of the most important improvements brought about at Potberg by the Ohlssons was the more efficient utilization of the water sources of the farm. According to the structures erected below the waterfall to dam the water, and to the fact that the 1913 advertisement mentions that "...There is a never-failing supply of water, ... supplying a number of dams in convenient parts of the property ..." (Cape Times), there appears to have been more water available then than now. Mrs Swart, too, remembers that there was a dam in the stream just above the generator room, that had a fair amount of water.

The Ohlssons led the water to the homestead and vegetable gardens in three inch (7.6 cm) pipes (Cape Times), which was a noteworthy improvement. Earlier, in the time of Gallie van Dyk, water had to be carried with buckets from the stream and carried in for domestic use (E.M. Swart pers.comm.).

## GARDENS

Apart from the other farming activities there were also 36 acres of irrigated gardens. Judging from the activities of the Albertyns, who bought the farm from the Ohlssons, the gardens covered an extensive piece of land to the west of the homestead, and also included a piece on the left, just before the first turnoff into Potberg. At this time there was a vineyard, fruit orchards, fig trees, vegetable gardens with tomatoes, pumpkins, potatoes and carrots in the part just below the homestead. There were also various camps in this part of the farm. During the time of the Albertyns this was called *die akkers* (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).

## FENCING

Ohlsson imported cast iron support posts for anchoring wire fences on the farm, via Port Beaufort (J. van Dyk pers. comm.). The fencing of his property was important to Ohlsson, as evidenced by a letter that he wrote to the Treasurer-General of the Cape Colony on 1 March 1906, in connection with flotsam and jetsam that washed up on the coast (of his property) after the 1905 floods. This was bought by public auction by

one of Ohlsson's previous managers, who neglected to remove all the items including the carcasses of hundreds of animals, much to Ohlsson's irritation.

In the letter he points out, "...I would point out that all the farms, some 60,000 to 70,000 acres in extent which abut on this foreshore [... from the mouth of the Breede River, ... along the coast in a westerly direction towards Martha's point] ... the whole of this peninsula is owned by me and is surrounded on three sides by river and sea, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> side is fenced in so that it is at present quite undisturbed as there are no public roads nor are there any farms beyond which would necessitate persons passing through ... on these farms I have at very great expense erected miles of fencing for the purpose of forming camps ...".

One of Ohlsson's main reasons for purchasing Potberg was to use it as a breeding place for indigenous and exotic game that was hunted by himself and his friends. He therefore had erected on his estate, "... camps, in which are kept imported stock as well as different species of game brought from all parts of South Africa as well as from England and Scotland ...".

## GAME

According to the 1913 auction advertisement, game was plentiful on Potberg: "There are few, if any properties throughout the Cape Province where such an abundant and varied assortment of game abound, such as Blesbok, Bontebok, Springbok, Fallow Deer, besides Stembok (sic), Duiker, Rheebock and Klipspringer, ..." (Cape Times).

It is not clear whether Ohlsson brought in bontebok to Potberg, although according to an excerpt from "100 Years Of Brewing In South Africa", he did reintroduce game from various sources to Potberg: "Into his Potteberg Estate he introduced Bontebok from nearby districts, fallow deer from the old summer residence of the Cape Governor at Newlands and red deer from Scotland".

Mesdames du Toit and Esterhuizen remember bontebok from the time of Dawid Albertyn, i.e. before 1930, the year in which their father left Potberg. "Ja, daar was baie bontebokke. Hulle het juis daardie laaste jaar wat ons daar gebly het, Vader se een hele land opgevrete soos 'n trop beeste in 'n land dat hy nege sakke fynkoring gekry het en daar was nege sakke gesaai" (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.). It is not certain whether these bontebok were among of those originally brought in by Ohlsson, but Arthur Albertyn destroyed all the bontebok on the farm at that stage; possibly because they may have been hybrids (Dawid owned a farm in the Free State and may have introduced blesbok to the area); or possibly because they were a serious threat to the cultivation of crops and caused great damage to the lands (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.).

Photographs taken during the Albertyns' hunting expeditions at Potteberg indicate how prolific the game must have been then. In the 1949 advertisement, however, it is mentioned that only "... a number of springbuck and bontebokke still roam wild on the farm".

## 6.7 SOCIAL PRACTICES

Life at Potberg was to a large extent isolated. The farm was far from the nearest town and the various families were dependent upon each other for entertainment as well as practising their religion.

### DIFFERENT LIFESTYLES AT POTBERG

The Ohlssons brought with them a different lifestyle to this part of the Overberg. They were "... van die eerste mense wat 'n kar gehad het ..." (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.). When they heard that the Ohlssons were coming to Potberg, "... al wat leef en beef in Bredasdorp gaan staan langs die pad om te sien hoe lyk 'n motorkar" (J. van Dyk pers. comm.). They were also stylishly dressed for the journey, "... hulle was altyd deftig aangetrek met baadjies en krewatte as hulle gereis het, oop kar, afslaankap. Hulle het stofbrille gedra ..." (A. Albertyn). "... dan 'breakfast' hulle hier op Potberg en dan gaan hulle Kaap toe en saans as die son sy kop wegtrek dan kom hulle van die Kaap af, waar hul vroeër dae gery het" (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.).

The Ohlssons installed a telephone system to Bredasdorp, using imported jarrah poles, some of which may still be in existence. They possibly also had one of the first cameras in the area (1906)?

#### OHLSSON'S TELEPHONE

*(Simon Streicher, adapted from the Breede Brief, January 1998)*

*The Ohlssons' foreman lived in the large stone house at Potberg. On each of the other farms was a caretaker. In order to maintain communication, Ohlsson set up his own private telephone system. This must have been a few years before 1912, before the first public telephones from Caledon and before the Bredasdorp and Swellendam districts had telephones.*

*The telephone line was 20 km long. Two kinds of wooden poles were used. Some of the poles still stood at Elandspad, near Cape Infanta, in 1947 and were square with two sides longer than others, made of oregon pine. A few years ago another type of pole was found in a bluegum plantation at Elandspad. These poles were six-sided, 3 m long, with a pole on the one end for a cross-piece, made of Jarrah wood.*

*The large telephone sat in a wooden box against the wall. On top were two large bells with a hammer. On the side was a large handle. To talk, one had to first ring the code of the farm; as long as one spoke one had to turn the handle, otherwise the phone would go dead (there were no batteries - one supplied the power by turning the handler). One of these telephones was still in operation at Elandspad in 1947, in the "telephone" room.*

*\*Bill Green (Lekkerwater) remembers the phone.*

*\*\*Poles on Wienand de Wet's farm?*

The Ohlssons invited their neighbours to dances and parties. This lifestyle verged on what was regarded as swank (*uitspattigheid*) by the farmers of the area (Mrs du Toit pers. comm.). According to her, old Gaaf de Wet attended such a party to which he

and his wife had been invited, "... toe ek daar kom toe sien ek dis darem 'n wonderlike afferingte en toe ek daar weggaan toe weet ek darem glad iets anderste!").

During the time of the Albertyns (and Ohlssons), life at Potberg in those days fell into two categories, the patrician existence of the Albertyns who lived closer to Bredasdorp and the conveniences of modern life, and the far more rural existence of the people at Potberg. The latter were the people who spent the largest part of the year on the farm, in contrast to the Albertyns who visited the farm only a few times per year.

## **SOCIAL/RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS**

Among the large, social but also religious gatherings for the year were the Thanksgiving Festival in March and the Mission Festival in August. During both occasions a bazaar was held at Ouplaas to collect funds for the church. Because Potberg was fairly far from Bredasdorp, the town was seldom visited for church and only for very important business. Normally each farm was self-sufficient, relying on travelling hawkers (*smouse*) for manufactured goods. The bazaars at Ouplaas were thus well supported by people in the area.

E.M. Swart remembers one specific occasion when puddings were brought from Potberg for the pudding table at the bazaar. The mode of transport was a horse cart with sacks on the rails on either side for people to sit on, with the cake tins and puddings on the one side. Upon their arrival at Ouplaas, it was noticed that one of the puddings had a huge footprint in the middle, belonging to the maid, Koekie, who had apparently lost her balance and landed ankle-deep in one of the puddings. The Potbergers were highly entertained by this story, which lent a sparkle to everyday life, and repeated it for years afterwards with enjoyment.

### *Religion*

Due to the isolation of Potberg, the inhabitants of the farm were also self-reliant for the exercise of their religion. The preacher from Bredasdorp travelled the 36 miles to the area only a few times a year, when everyone from the surrounding farms came to Ouplaas for a service held in the hall.

On other Sundays church was held on the farm in the *voorhuis* (parlour), "... en as ons klaar gesing, geles en gebid is, staan ons kinders almal rondom my moeder se stoel en dan van die oudste af, voordat hulle voorgestel is, sê almal die 'Onse Vader' op, maar ons kleintjies word die 'K ben 'n kindjie klein' voorgesê". Bible study gatherings were held every week under the leadership of Oom Hans Swart in the large dining room of the stone house (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).

## **HAWKERS**

The Potbergers were dependent for manufactured goods mainly upon two Jewish hawkers, Katz and Levin. "Katz het met 'n perdekarretjie gery en Levin later met 'n motorkarretjie ... die negosiegoed wat hy [Katz] op die kar gehad het was 'n aardigheid as hy begin uitpak, maar hy was baie skelm. As hy nou die aand oorbly dan steel hy nou die nag voer vir sy perde". The men on the farm apparently discussed

this theft and decided on a plan of action. "Hulle het toe gewag en toe Katz in die stal is, wat hy besig is met die voer het hulle ingevlieg met streepsakke en hulle slaan en hul skree net 'otjie, otjie, otjie!' Hulle weet dis hy ... dan sê hulle, 'nee, maar dis Katz, katz!' " (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).

## **SOCIALIZING AT WEEKENDS**

On the farms people normally went to bed very early at night, as they often had to rise as early as 03h00 or 04h00. There was thus little time for social gatherings during the week. On Saturday evenings the young people got together and chatted and listened to music on the wind-up gramophone outside on the lawn.

## **GAMES**

During the time of the Ohlssons the children played with toys such as wind-up dolls and toy wagons. There was also a pet Persian sheep that followed them everywhere around the yard (*werf*) as children (N.F. Fuller pers. comm.). In the time of the Albertyns the children entertained themselves by playing games such as K-I-N-G, *bly-of-gly*, rotten egg (*vroteier*) and *blikkie-aspaai*.

## **CHRISTMAS**

The Ohlssons celebrated Christmas in true Western European tradition, with Father Christmas and presents. In Mrs Swart's youth, Christmas at Potberg was celebrated in similar tradition. The children hung their stockings over the couch in the sitting room the night before Christmas, so that "Vader Krismis" could leave something in them. They never received presents, only money, which was highly valued. "Jy was uit jou klere uit! Selfs al was dit 'n sikspens - dis nou joune!".

## **FOOD AND SERVANTS**

The daily life of Axel Ohlsson and his family apparently did not differ much from that of most other prosperous members of the farming community. Neil Fuller Ohlsson, his son, remembers typical food items such as mutton, pumpkin, homemade bread and biltong. The family had a cook, in the person of Minnie Stanford, who had been his father's housekeeper at his holiday house at Port Beaufort. Women from the local community also worked in the house as servants, while the children had a child-minder, Charlotte le Roux.

## **WHEAT**

In the Albertyns' time, sufficient wheat was produced for the needs of the farm people and only a little was sold. One year wheat had to be harvested that had blown down in a storm and was not completely dry. It was then strewn in one of the attics to dry. Even so it dried in a solid mass, and pieces had to be broken off and ground before it could be used for baking. That whole year the bread tasted of mould (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).



## VEGETABLES, MEAT AND OTHER FOOD AND BEVERAGES

The Albertyns also produced sufficient vegetables on the farm for their own use, including kolrabi, sweet potatoes, potatoes, maize, cabbage, carrots and pumpkin. Their diet thus consisted largely of unrefined foods. Dairy cattle were kept for milk. Once a year a pig was slaughtered, a sow, as the meat of the boars was considered inedible. The pork was also processed in the baking house.

They ate mutton, beef, pork, bread and crushed maize (*stampmielies*). *Hotom* was a popular dish, often enjoyed for supper, made by boiling water with salt and a piece of fat, then adding maize meal to form a porridge. Other supper dishes included soup, *melkkos*, *stampmielies* with milk, and bread with far and jam or honey, the latter harvested on the farm. Dinner at midday consisted of meat and potatoes or rice or crushed maize or *stampkoring*, with pumpkin.

Ostrich eggs were also often eaten (E.M. Swart pers. comm.). During harvest time, soup was taken to the workers on the lands or threshing floor (Mrs Esterhuizen pers. comm.), while ostrich eggs were often cooked for the shearers, or egg-bread baked for them. The latter was made by beating one or two ostrich eggs, then dipping bread into the egg and frying it.

Coffee was roasted (*gebrand*) and ground on the farm. Indigenous honey tee (*Cyclopia genistoides*) was drunk in place of *English* tea. To make it, bushes were picked on the mountain and cleaned, placed in sacks and wet. Thereafter it was placed (still in the sacks) into the warmed oven of the bakery to sweat. After this the tea was taken out and opened up, then chopped up and stored for use (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).

## POTBERG POST OFFICE

The farm manager Mr Swart was also the postmaster of Potberg. During the period 1913 to the early 1930s, post was transported by a small horse cart to the various farm post offices. The post was brought to Ouplaas (Wydgeleë) and taken to Potberg once a fortnight (A. Albertyn pers. comm.). Besides the post, Gabriël also kept a supply of dried fruit in one of the cupboards of the post office. In those days dried fruit and especially raisins were a treat, bought from travelling hawkers. Thus it was that the children quietly removed some of the dried fruit on those occasions when Swart forgot to lock the post office's door (E.M. Swart pers. comm.).

## HUNTING EXPEDITIONS

According to Danie Swart (elder brother of E.M. Swart), his father was Ohlsson's manager at Cupido's Kraal before he went to Potberg as manager for Dawid Albertyn. He was also responsible for arranging Ohlsson's hunting expeditions. The Ohlssons hunted mainly on Sundays, and he remembers as his father disapproving of hunting on this day. They hunted mainly birds such as francolins and pheasants. This is similar to the practice at Ceres and is typical of the hunting methods of the British aristocracy, where birds were chased up by field rangers and then shot by the nobility.

Antelope were seldom hunted by the Ohlssons (Danie Swart pers. comm.), a fact which is supported by the hunting registers. Although drawn up for The Oaks at Ceres, they include other hunting destinations and there is also a reference to Potberg. From 1893 to his last hunting expedition in 1912 at The Oaks, no less than 11 006 items of game were shot in the expeditions in which Ohlsson participated. Thus it appears that Ohlsson followed to a great extent the tradition of the English *Baronial Hunter*. His records indicate that during the expeditions in which he participated over 19 years, no fewer than 6 208 pheasants, 1 992 francolins and 865 snipe were shot.

In traditional English country fashion, the Ohlssons organized shooting parties in which various invited guests participated. A special little wagon was packed for the day (Mrs van der Merwe, Ceres, pers. comm.). A picnic basket was packed, with a tin in which to pack sandwiches. The same method was followed at Potberg. The little wagon packed with enough provisions for the day later came into the possession of the Albertyns. A person who organized the hunt and a team of dogs also came along, apparently to chase up the game (Mrs S. Ohlsson pers. comm.). At Ceres, horsemen were also used to drive up the game (Mrs van der Merwe pers. comm.). The Ohlsson's apparently also kept a detailed register of all the marine fish they caught on the coast of the Estate.

Albertyn and his family and friends visited Potberg from time to time, not only to keep up to date with the farming, but also to hunt. They used the same little wagon as the Ohlssons to carry provisions for the expeditions. The Albertyns shot mainly antelope, as well as birds. The meat was taken back to the farm and processed in the sculleries, then hung up on the many meat hooks in the meat room for later use.

Apart from the general work as a manager, Swart's task was also to exterminate all the *vermin* on the farm. For this he used a pack of dogs that were kept in the kennels built by the Ohlssons.

## **6.8 BUFFELSFONTEIN AND MELKBOSHEUWEL**

### **MELKBOSHEUWEL**

Mrs Elizabeth Maria (Tant Mariatjie) Swart grew up at Potberg, where her father was the manager for Mr Albertyn. Her mother's parents, Oupa Niklaas (*Straatjie*) and Ouma Jakoba van Noordwyk (*Ou Moedertjie*) first lived at Melkbosheuwel. Elizabeth's parents married in 1902.

Maria Swart's late cousin, Maria Erasmus (born Van Noordwyk) was busy writing a book about Potberg and Melkbosheuwel and also had a photograph album on Potberg. Maria's father was Gawie and her mother, Jacoba (Kootjie) Phillipina Swart. Maria's daughter, Mrs Johanna Swart of Plaatjieskraal (PO Box 282, Bredasdorp 7280, Tel. 02922-742) is now in possession of the diary. Extracts from the diary paint a fascinating picture of life at Potberg during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

When Maria (Erasmus) was one year old, they moved to Potberg where her father also worked in the butchery. The family moved to Melkbosheuwel in about 1917, when her father was a sowing assistant (*bysaaier*) for Dawid Albertyn of Potberg.

They lived there for 17 years. Maria played under the milkwoods that still grow in the white sand. The sheep were washed in a natural fountain, the *Wasgat*, before being sheared. At Melkbosheuwel Maria's father cut green fodder for the horses and mules, and caught wildcats in a gin-trap. They went to the beach in a horse cart with iron wheels and caught fish and ate *alikeukels* and *perlemoen*. When they gathered milkwood berries and stained their clothes they were scolded - so the next time they first took off their clothes before eating the berries.

Maria's mother washed all their clothes beautifully by hand, starched and ironed them in the little kitchen with its dung floor. The washing was first rubbed with soap and left in a large zinc bath to soak then rinsed. This was repeated up to five times. They bred turkeys, which were kept in a camp and fed on grain and stinging nettles and other plants. They were sold in Swellendam in September and the money was used to buy clothes for the children. Her father played the accordion and mouth organ. At Potberg they worked and sang, with Tannie Kootjie who lived in the stone house and was one of 12 children (also Maria Swart's aunt – harvesting photograph?). Many sheep were sheared by shearers that came mostly from Suurbraak, singing while they worked. Her mother made butter in a glass churn and used *Cyclopia* for honeybush tea. They used butter and eggs to barter other kinds of food. There was a *Skribasvereniging* at Ouplaas that held functions to collect funds for the distribution of Bibles.

## SCHOOL

They travelled to school from Melkbosheuwel in the trap (horse cart). The ostrich males scared them. It was one hour's walk to Potberg. At school they were allowed to speak English only, but not Dutch. Their first teacher was Miss Alta van Zyl of Boesmansrivier, who married a Dunn from Elandspad after two years. They played marbles, *vroteier* (rotten egg), *slangetjie* or *tolletjie*, *jakkals en honde*, *aljander alsander* (oranges and lemons), walking walking on the green grass, and K-I-N-G. On rainy days they played games like *groenman*, *bynes*, *polisieman* or *blindemol* on the stoep.

At Potberg her father had an open cart, beautifully painted by a craftsman, with an attractive harness. There were two Derring harvesters, an early sowing machine and early plough (*skottelploeg*). Her father and oom Apie Lourens operated the threshing machine. The bontebok had to be chased out of the wheatfields at night and were regarded as a pest when the wheat was ripe. They easily jumped over the fences. Arthur Albertyn would allow them to shoot the oldest ram only.

## HARVEST TIME

Forty people were involved in the working of the threshing machine. Food was made on the hearth. At Melkbosheuwel there was a No 8 Dover wood stove. Meals were cooked for 30 people at a time, also on pots on outside fires. Soup was cooked at night in a large soap pot, and there was freshly baked bread. They were helped by servants at these times. Coffee and bread were served early in the mornings, when the machine was started up. Later a black tractor was used in place of the engine. The threshers were not given alcohol; a typical breakfast consisted of bread and pork fat with meat, egg and salted harders.

## HOLIDAYS

Maria's father loved fishing. At the end of the year they would travel to the coast by wagon, spanning a canvas top over the cart; the children slept on the ground. They went to Filison se baai (near Vaalkrans?), on Potberg's ground. Fresh water was carried in a large cask. Fish was pickled in onion and vinegar (curry). Cooking was done in a large black three-legged pot. The preserved fish lasted until April. They watched dolphins and collected perlemoen and alikreukels. Fish caught included stumpnose, steenbras, roman, zebra, kingklip, hottentot and dageraad. In September, galjoen were caught. On Sundays there was no fishing, but her father played the accordion and they walked and swam. At this time Pieter de Wet's brother drowned at Hamerkop.

The Albertyns visited Potberg during the holidays in April and September. They arrived in a *spider* cart with luggage, children and servants. Once the children had removed their brown velvet clothes (with real buttons) they went climbing up the mountain with the farm children, including Maria Swart. Two servants were brought in another little cart, to look after Johan Albertyn (Adam's father). April was hunting time and there were often visitors. On the last day the farm people also took part in the shoot.

## PIG SLAUGHTER

Sausage was made by mincing the pork in a mincing machine. A small cow horn was used to stuff the sausage by hand. This was a huge task. The fat was used to make a special bread (a *kaaiingbroodjie*). The bones were pickled and bacon strips cut. Everything was used, including the thick fat and ribs. The cool room was a large and airy place. Dark brown *harpuisseep* (carbolic soap?) was cooked.

## BUFFELSFONTEIN

From 1902, Elizabeth Swart's newly married parents first lived at Buffelsfontein (east of the pan just east of and below the Vulture Kloof), then at Cupidoskraal, then at Verfheuwel and then at Potberg (from 1913-1932). They had five sons and seven daughters. The family moved to Windhoek in 1932, where they lived until 1942(?), then to the *withuis* at Van der Stelskraal. Her mother died in 1944 and her father in 1963.

To the north of Buffelsfontein but higher up in the Potberg mountains, in one of the necks, lies Kollie de Kraal, a large piece of flat, arable land. After a fire the area also offered younger grazing. The nearest farmer to use it would have lived at Buffelsfontein (see Streicher 1998a). At Kollie se Kraal are the remains of a stone kraal and a shepherd's cottage.

## **6.9 THE CAPE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

Potberg was sold by Jan du Toit to the Cape Provincial Administration in 1980. Together with the farm Dronkvlei, portions of The Potteberg Estates were added to the De Hoop Nature Reserve, increasing its size to 18 763 ha.

During the most recent 50 years in the history of Potberg, Cape Nature Conservation has become one of the formative factors. The emphasis has shifted from a purely agricultural approach to one of conservation and education.

Potberg and its long history as a farm indicate a special type of partnership between nature and culture that should enjoy increased attention in a future of increasing demands on natural areas.

## 7. THE COAST

### 7.1 EARLY HISTORY

The coastal area from Hamerkop to Cape Infanta is known locally as *Die Hoek*. In the words of Chris Mellish (former owner of Stilgat), this isolated stretch of coast is a wild, lonely part of the world, steeped in folk-lore and legendary tales, many of them concerning the 48 ships which the records prove went aground there between 1673 and 1890.

The presence of even earlier inhabitants in the area is testified by Khoisan midden sites, which are common along the entire coast, including at Koppie Alleen. Signs of their occupation have also been found in cave sites at Hamerkop, Stilgat, Bloukrans, Noetsie, John Richard's Bay and west of Cape Infanta.

The early history (up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) of the 16 properties that today make up the so-called Eastern Section of De Hoop Nature Reserve still has to be researched in more detail.

### OHLSSON AND THE POTTEBERG ESTATES

In 1902 Anders Ohlsson obtained the transport deeds to various farms in the Potberg area. These included portions of Cupido's Kraal and Klipfontein, and Portion A of Brakfontein (or Brakkefontein, also known as Potteberg and, after 1949, Potberg); and the whole of Rietfontein, Papkuilsfontein, Poorts Riviere and Eilandspad. Jointly these properties became known as *The Potteberg Estates*, a huge area of 70 000 acres (33 333 ha) in total. Ohlsson also owned the small harbour of Port Beaufort at the Breede River mouth at one stage. His only son, Axel, inherited the Potteberg Estates upon his death in 1912, but shortly afterwards sold the property to Johan Dawid Albertyn and moved up to the Eastern Cape.

### WARTIME STORIES

During WWII, from 1942, when the movement of ships through the Suez Canal became restricted, German submarines became active around the southernmost tip of Africa and many Allied ships were sunk. South African matchboxes were printed with the message, "Don't talk about ships", as there were many spies in the area. The submarines were reputedly supplied with diesel, water and other provisions by mysterious yachts, including one at the Breede River mouth. Around the South African coast in an area of about 1 000 miles out to sea, at least 133 Allied ships were sunk by U-boats from 1942 to the end of WWII, while 781 German U-boats were destroyed.

*\*Research into German U-boat stories off the Agulhas coast during WWII is being conducted by Mr Jochen OEO Mahncke of Kenilworth, tel. (021) 797-5167; also contact Mrs Annette Miller at Bredasdorp, tel. (028) 425-1606.*

At one stage (possibly during WWII?), guano was removed from a bat cave at Draaihoek, south of the Potberg Vulture Kloof.

In 1942 a man who wore garments made of the skin of wild animals apparently lived on the coast of the Eastern Section. His hat was made of grysbok hide. He spent his time angling, and did not speak to anyone.

For the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, up to its incorporation into the reserve in 1990, our knowledge of this area is also fragmented but deserves further research.

## 7.2 THE PROPERTIES

*\*In March 1988, an inventory was made of the buildings on the coast by CNC staff. Some of these buildings have been renovated for use on the newly established Whale Trail, while others that were not suitable for restoration have been demolished; some of the prefabricated buildings have been transferred to other sites on the reserve.*

### KOPPIE ALLEEN

The beach cottage at Koppie Alleen was owned by the De Wet family, prior to its incorporation in the reserve in 1978. The exact whereabouts of the *koppie* is uncertain, but is thought to refer to a high sand dune north-west of the present visitors' centre. The environmental education centre was built in 1984.

### THE LIFEBOAT AT POTBERGSTRAND

*This story was researched by Simon Streicher, Die Snuffelaar (Streicher 1997c; 1999), with contributions by Boetie Mos (Johannes Stefanus) van Eeden, 6/10/92, and Dina (Ina) Uys.*

*In 1943 a British supply ship was torpedoed on her maiden voyage by two German submarines, some 400 nautical miles off Cape Agulhas. Still in their pyjamas, some of the crew escaped in three lifeboats. Only two of these boats reached the shore, one reputedly at Fish Hoek, near Cape Town, and the other near Potbergstrand in the present-day De Hoop Nature Reserve, after 14 anguished days and nights at sea. One of the 27(18?) survivors who could still walk set off for help, picked up an empty cigarette box that said "Made in South Africa" and realized in which country they had landed. He covered the 10 km to Potberg, then owned by Frans Uys, first stopping to quench his thirst at a windmill. Uys arranged for the remaining survivors to be brought back to Potberg, where his wife Ina provided a much-needed meal for them, including 60 eggs which disappeared in a trice! Under the watchful eye of a doctor and the magistrate, they were taken to Bredasdorp and thence to Cape Town. In the mean time, the valuable lifeboat still lay at Potbergstrand ... [This story was published in Die Huisgenoot by Herman Steytler, in 1942/43?]*

*The boat was bought for five pounds by a local farmer, who in turn sold it to a keen angler from Swellendam, Mr Daisy van Noordwyk, for twenty-five pounds. Now the 25' (8 m) boat had to be fetched from Potbergstrand. The first attempt was made by a transport-rider from Swellendam, Jan Mollie, with a team of donkeys, but in vain. Then the wagon and oxen of Frikkie Mos (van Eeden) of Buffeljagtsrivier were hired, who entrusted the task to his 18-year-old son Boetie Mos. At Potberg Frans Uys loaned Boetie the chassis of a bus, with tyres on the wheels, which would be more*

*suitable than the wagon for braving the sandy track to Potbergstrand. When they arrived at the coast they made a meal of boerewors and fresh, scrambled ostrich eggs; 16 eggs had been taken from an ostrich nest, using a tame ox as a shield against the aggressive birds. Altogether 12 helpers tried to shift the boat for two days, but in vain. In the end, it was dragged to the top of the sandy slope on black wattle poles (rollers) and then onto the bus chassis. After the oxen had been rested and fed, the return trip was made to Swellendam.*

*The heavy 36' lifeboat was dark blue in colour and pointed at both ends, but had no name. It had copper air tanks built into the seats for ballast. Carved into the gunnel were 14 grooves - one for each day it had drifted at sea. The boat was converted into a fishing boat by Andries Wolhuter, the blacksmith at Swellendam. A four cylinder Fiat inboard engine was built in, with a rudder and a small deck. Boetie Mos took it to Malgas by ox wagon, where it was christened Goeie Hoop and duly launched (later its name was changed to Laeveld). Daisy fished from it for many years. Upon his death the boat was sold to Fred Hopley of the Oysterbeds Hotel at Port Beaufort. At one stage it was also used as a pleasure boat at Hermanus. Finally – and sadly - this gallant little vessel capsized and met its end at the Bar at the Breede River mouth.*

## **WYOMING**

In 1988 there was a large white house on this property, owned by Nico Myburgh until expropriation.

## **VAALKRANS**

Between Wyoming and Vaalkrans were a large wooden house, a wooden shack with green doors, a white wooden house with a large chimney, a second white wooden house with a metal chimney and a shack (named *Taskers*). The attractive stone, thatched cottage has been renovated for use as accommodation on the Whale Trail.

## **LEKKERWATER**

Lekkerwater used to belong to Bill Green, who enjoyed fishing there. A memorial has been erected to his memory at this site. The original large white house was subsequently modified and allocated to the use of the State President of South Africa, F.W. de Klerk until 1994.

### **SOLIDERS IN A LIFEBOAT**

*Douglas Moodie, 15/1/96, PO Box 24, Elgin 7180, Tel. (024) 559-387/592-610*

*During WW II (when Douglas Moodie was in North Africa) a group of British soldiers in a lifeboat washed up ashore on the only bit of smooth rock. The rock sloped, and the next wave took the boat away. The soldiers, who had been at sea for sometime, scrambled ashore. Pot Beyers had a farm about half an hour's drive away. He and others and Hoffmann (from Bredasdorp) collected the people and treated them well. In 1962 he (Green?) and his wife visited Orkney in Northern Scotland. Her*



*handbag strap snapped, and they were directed up a little land to a leatherworker, who re-attached it. When he heard that they were from South Africa, he told them how he had been washed ashore on the coast in question in a lifeboat, and remarked on how well they had been treated.*

## **HAMERKOP**

During Ohlsson's time (1920s), James Ward lived at Hamerkop in the stone house. His wife, Antjie, was from Mozambique.

During WWII the Military erected a temporary telephone line from Verfheuwel to Hamerkop.

Today there is a black granite memorial at Hamerkop, erected to Daniel Stephanus de Wet, who was washed off the rocks on 3 October 1933 at the age of 20 years. Daniel was the son of Gaaf and Ellie de Wet.

In 1988 there were several buildings at Hamerkop, including a large wooden house with two cabins; a brick shack; a white brick house; another larger, double-storey white house; and a wooden shack.

### **THE SUBMARINE AT HAMERKOP**

*by Chris Mellish*

*James William Pearson Dunn was a legendary figure, reputed to have come from noble British stock shipwrecked more than 100 years ago between Cape Agulhas and Cape Infanta. Tall and striking, with his aristocratic looks and fiery auburn hair, Pearson had inherited Elandspad, in the present-day eastern section of the De Hoop Nature Reserve, from his father, William Alexander Dunn (see below). In 1943 Pearson and Pot Beyers, who had an arrangement to graze his sheep on Elandspad at certain times of the year, were busy dipping sheep when, through a gap in the hills, Pot suddenly spotted a German U-boat emerge from the sea. Pearson had sometimes seen up to four of these vessels at a time, surfacing to charge their batteries and always disappearing just after dawn. A member of the NVR (National Volunteer Reserve), Pot rushed off to the nearest town, Bredasdorp (over an hour's drive away in his Chev lorry) and reported the occurrence to the Air Force in Cape Town from the police station. Thanks to his prompt action, a small Woppitty reconnaissance plane was sent over the area, followed an hour later by three bombers, which made short work of the submarine. The depth charges were heard by several of the farmers in the area, and soon only a large oil slick was to be seen. Many years later, in 1989, the wreck was located during an offshore survey by Armscor (now Denel) but has remained undisturbed as it is regarded as a war grave by the German government.*

### **THE SEAPLANE AT HAMERKOP**

*Dina M. (Eyna or Ina) Uys*

*In 1940/41 a sea-plane was spotted landing at Diepwater, east of Hamerkop beach. At this spot the water pulls back from a deep channel, then rushes in again. Dina's husband Frans, of Potberg, rushed to Diepwater and indicated to the survivors not to*

*approach the shore when the water pulled back, but to wait until the water rushed back in again. Thanks to this strategy, the sea-plane could come close to shore and the five survivors were able to climb to safety - not even their feet got wet!*

## **STILGAT**

The quaint wooden *shack* at Stilgat was built in 1942. There was also a wooden cabin in 1988.

### **THE SEA-PLANE BETWEEN STILGAT AND NOETSIE**

*By Chris Mellish, as told to Capt. J.P. Malley (originally published in the Cape Argus on 18/1/1958 under the title, "Stranger than fiction").*

*James William Pearson Dunn, bailiff and shepherd, had a flair for telling stories, but his vivid imagination and love of dramatization often left his audience in some doubt as to the credibility of his tales.*

*Known to us simply as Pearson, he was reputed to have come from noble British stock shipwrecked a hundred or more years ago on the desolate stretch of coast between Cape Agulhas and Cape Infanta, which is the setting for this true tale. His family ties had obviously been severed at an early age for he spoke but one language – Afrikaans. My father often left him in charge of his farm. In 1943, I, then 12, having picked up an unusual piece of metal on the beach, took it to Pearson with a view to a possible story. I was not to be disappointed.*

*Pearson immediately identified it as a plane's wing-tip. He related how the previous year [28 November 1942], when he and a fellow-shepherd were hunting for sick sheep, a strange looking aircraft (amphibian Walrus) had dived straight into the sea at the base of the cliff on which they were standing. It was a stormy day and the aircraft was immediately lifted by the enormous breakers over the first reef and securely wedged between two rocks close inshore. Three men emerged from the tiny side door and, after climbing onto the fuselage, stood and laughed their heads off. One of them then re-entered the plane and, after emerging with a small brown suitcase, they all scrambled frantically for the shore, arriving bedraggled and exhausted at the cliff base in due course. At no small risk to their own well-being, the shepherds descended the cliff face and assisted the exhausted survivors to their cottage some way inland, where they were extended great hospitality in food and shelter and ultimately driven in a pony cart to the nearest telephone, from whence their return to the Wingfield Aerodrome became a matter of course.*

*Told with great dramatic embellishments, I discredited Pearson's story though the details became indelibly printed in my mind. Fifteen years later I found myself in London in the company of a complete stranger, Mr. D.V. Robertson, who was kindly giving me a lift into the city. Mr. Robinson was export manager of a large British factory and it wasn't long before conversation veered to South Africa. He then began to tell me how on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1942, as a lieutenant (A) R.N.V.R., he had made a forced landing in the sea near Cape Agulhas.*

*Though barely able to contain myself, I decided to sit dumb as Pearson's tale unfolded again. I then asked, "But why did you stand laughing your heads off and what was in the brown bag that one of you went back to collect?" Suddenly realising that he had omitted to tell these details, Mr. Robinson became, quite understandably, wildly excited and pulled in to the kerb whilst we talked over this remarkable coincidence. He made me promise that on my return home I would leave no stone unturned to locate Pearson and thank him on his behalf as the language barrier had prevented him from getting his name.*

*He explained the laughing away as nervous hysteria. The decision to retrieve the bag was made when it became apparent that the aircraft would not immediately sink.*

*Coincidence, however, was not to end there. I flew back to Johannesburg and on my first night in the train en route to Cape Town, found myself seated for dinner alongside a Mr. Vermeulen, a middle-aged policeman returning on leave to his home town, Swellendam. Incredible but true, Mr. Vermeulen's next-door neighbour was none other than our erstwhile shepherd and bailiff, James William Pearson Dunn!*

Chris Mellish also describes Pearson in his original ms:

*When I knew him, Pearson, as he was called, looked like a self-portrait of Vincent van Gogh I had once seen – bright red hair, piercing blue eyes, a face hardened by wind and weather. And yet with all his strength and massive physical proportions, he had the gentle heart of a child ... Yet when I knew Pearson he spoke only Afrikaans and could barely read or write. Nevertheless, his proud bearing and chiselled features certainly do tend to support his claim to aristocracy. ... The old shepherd was famous throughout the district as a storyteller, and many a time he has had me spellbound with exciting tales of phantom ships, surfacing German submarines, and the wild animals of the veld which he loved so well.*

Summary of Chris Mellish's story (above):

*On a stormy day in 1942 Pearson Dunn and another shepherd were looking for sick sheep on the Mellish farm, now part of the eastern section of the De Hoop Nature Reserve, when they saw a sea-plane (an amphibian Walrus) dive into the rough sea near Hamerkop and become wedged on the rocks. Three men emerged from the tiny side door and began laughing hysterically. Once they saw the plane was not going to sink immediately, one of them went back to retrieve a small brown suitcase. All three made it safely to the shore, where they were well cared for by the two shepherds. The following year, the 12-year-old Christopher Mellish found a plane's wing-tip on the beach and was told the story by Pearson. Fifteen years later, Mellish met one of the three survivors, a Mr DV Robinson, by coincidence in London, who confirmed the story. By a further coincidence, Mellish met up with the Swellendam neighbour of Pearson upon his return to South Africa, and was able to convey the thanks of Mr Robinson to Pearson.*

## NOETSIE AND ELANDSPAD

### NOETSIE

The original *puntjie* or *kapstyl* (thatched tent-style) shelter at Noetsie dates back to 1918. There was also a prefabricated shack with three cabins.

There is a story that while the wife of Moxie Dunn (of Malgas pont fame) was on holiday at Noetsie, resting on the lawn, a freak wave came crashing in right up to the door of the puntjie.

### ELANDSPAD

The graceful stone, thatched farmhouse at Elandspad is of historical importance, as it is extremely old, possibly dating back to 1797. John and Allison Michler and family lived here for more than 30 years, up to expropriation [they now live at Hermanus].

### THE YELLOW LIFEBOAT

*Douglas Moodie (85 years old) 15/1/96, Tel. (024) 593-807*

*A yellow-painted double-ended lifeboat (similar to a whaler or longboat?) was used to take people across the Breede River by the Dunns in William Dunn's time. It was a big boat and needed six oarsmen. The boat washed up nearly 80 years ago. It was apparently hidden [in a sea cave??] at first, and later used at Port Beaufort.*

### THE WRECK OF THE JESSIE

*After Jose Burman (Hermanus: Riviera of the South)*

*The bay at Quoin Point (west of Cape Agulhas) was named after the Jessie, which left Cape Town on 7 October 1829. In a story recounted by Frederik Tesselaar, 13 men escaped when the ship was wrecked that night. They drifted on the sea until 9 October and landed "on the side of the Potberg", during a lull, at 09h00. "By dint of great effort we hauled the boat ashore". Here they were able to sustain themselves on black mussels and rain water. They then climbed a high hill "... as steep as Signal Hill [Cape Town] ...". They found a few cottages but these were uninhabited and closed up. Eventually they arrived at the Breede River, opposite Port Beaufort on the eastern shore. First they were refused help to cross the river by the son of Marthinus Steyn of Swellendam, who had come to the river to fish. Eventually they were helped by an Englishman, William Dunn, who lived at St Sebastian Bay.*

William Alexander Dunn arrived by ship at Witsand in 1828 (?) with his wife, formerly Lady Sarah Pearson. Their son James was a colourful character. Their grandson, Dirk Beukes, now lives at Witsand. James is said to have exchanged 250 morgen of his land for 250 bottles of French brandy. When this was first delivered in a barrel he sent it back, insisting on delivery in bottles.

William came to St Sebastian Bay as the *Resident*, to keep a watching brief for the authorities at Port Beaufort. He lived there for 10 years, then settled on the Potteberg farm, Rietfontein (today Grasrug). William is a mystery figure. He acquired a huge

tract of land around Cape Infanta on both sides of the mountain, probably the most desolate part of the Overberg coastline, rugged and untamed.

William had six children; his son James was the eldest, while Paul and S. Dunn were in joint possession of Papekuilsfontein, Rietfontein, Brakkefontein and Elandspad. The latter farm was James's home, and a favourite spot for wrecks. The three unmarried daughters remained at the Rietfontein homestead (Grasrug), which gradually fell into ruins around them. Their life was one of increasing poverty and degradation, punctuated by sudden splurges of spending. There were rumours that they periodically unearthed pieces of the treasure buried with 27 members of a ship's crew, who had died of yellow fever at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*L. Tomlinson of Swellendam has a tape of Pearson Dunn speaking (Mrs Kelly, the lawyer's wife?).*

## BLOUKRANS

The only buildings at Bloukrans in 1988 were a wooden shack and two cabins.

East of Bloukrans, a fishing boat, the *Dirkie Uys*, ran aground during the 1960s. All but two of the crew of 17 were drowned. One of the survivors was Nicky Hess's cousin's husband's brother (Nicky was employed as a field ranger by CNC at De Hoop for many years, and is now based at De Mond Nature Reserve).

## BLOUKRANS CAVE

One of the largest known coastal cave systems in the area is found within the reserve, at Bloukrans. The entrance, an insignificant hole, is housed in a huge, spectacular rock amphitheatre framed by stalactites, facing the sea. The cave entrance lies on a broad platform of earth and rock rubble that runs parallel to the amphitheatre, at about half its height. Scattered middens testify to earlier occupation of this area by the Khoisan.

The cave system was known as *Die Kelders* to previous generations of Europeans, who left countless inscriptions on its walls during expeditions (often by ox wagon) to this natural wonder. One gains the impression that almost everybody who was anybody from 1865 to 1984 made the pilgrimage to the caves at least once in their lives.

Most of these *graffitti* were written in pencil (or indelible pencil) and are being gradually covered by lime-rich deposits left by water dripping from the cave's roof. In 1992 two local farmers, Thys Steyn and Attie Eksteen, became concerned that this cultural heritage would become lost in time, and proposed preserving it for posterity. In 1995, in co-operation with Cape Nature Conservation, they and their families embarked upon a labour of love and systematically photographed and transcribed this amazing collection of some 1 800 historical entries.

The names reflect well-known families of the area, predominantly Dunn (most likely then living at Elandspad, offspring of William Alexander Dunn and his wife Lady

Sarah (Pearson)). The name of Annie Dunn (“P daughter” [Pearson’s daughter?]) appears at least 16 times in 38 years, from 1885 to 1923. The Barry and Moodie families are also dominant; for instance, a party of 12 Dunns was recorded on 12/1/1916, and 10 Moodies on 19/1/1925. Many of these visits appear to centre around the years 1916-17. DS Moodie visited the cave at least in 1905, 1922 and 1925.

Other local family names include Hopley, Uys, Van As, Reid, Lourens, De Wet (G.F. 25/1/1922; P. 15/1/1945), Wilson, Pretorius, Steyn, Swart, Ohlsson (14/2/1912; OA + Ethel 11/3/1912: Potberg), Murray, Van Breda, Buirski, John Anderson (6/7/1914: Melkkamer), De Jager (1914) and Albertyn (1895: Bredasdorp). The name of Oak Viljoen (apparently linked with the famous Oak Valley Estate at Elgin), appears seven times, including in June 1918 and 1919. The names of at least two babies are recorded (Burger and Pienaar).

The earliest inscriptions date back nearly 140 years, the earliest recorded being “TJ Herholdt Stellenbosch 15 October 1865”. The entries then extend from 11 February 1871 to 1872, 1885, 1890, 1891, 1905, 1913, 1916, 1917, 1939, 1945, 1948, 1951 and 1961; then there appears to be a gap until 1980 (Ferdie and Marie Spamer of Bredasdorp, 1980 and 4/8/1984), after which the cave was no longer accessible to the general public.

The cave was a popular venue for feast days and other celebrations, and for courting couples (naturally, in respectably chaperoned parties). Cupid had a busy time, judging by the number of pairs of names immortalised in heart-shaped borders. There were visitors from Port Elizabeth, Fraserburg, the Orange Free State and Transvaal (C.J. and Gerty Uys). The Duke of Mowbray and Duke of Beaufort visited the caves on 4/4/1894; other foreign visitors included Erenst Fhuberg of Stockholm Sweden, and Ida Manca of Freiburg. A selection of some of the more interesting inscriptions is listed below:

- ❖ Hensibe Clasé, Brick (Brig) “Zepher”, 1872.
- ❖ Visitors from on board the “Mary Ann Schooner” of London, 19 August 1877.
- ❖ “Came here for Lettie Herrold’s birthday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1884 in two oxwagon”.
- ❖ “God save the Queen”, “God save the noble Queen” and “Rule Britannia”, September 1891.
- ❖ “Happy feast”, 13/5/1893.
- ❖ L. du Toit, Cupidoskraal, 1894.
- ❖ “Had good shoot, Bag 20 Tucks [Tusks? Bucks?]”.
- ❖ Hilda Carlson and Hilda Stockdale, “The long and the short”, January 1895.
- ❖ Müller van Nümburgh decorated his inscription with a skull and crossbones.
- ❖ “Think of me when I am far away”, 1/1/1900 (Anglo-Boer War?).
- ❖ Maria Johanna Dunn of Rietfontein, born 1/1/1900, “Remember me when this you see”.
- ❖ Captain Shubingthan.
- ❖ Eidelweiss König, 9/1/1900.
- ❖ Sarie Kemp, Verlang na Josef – kom terug (inscribed in a heart).
- ❖ C.H. Winkler. “Honger Staking”.
- ❖ A picnic party included seven couples and Mr & Mrs C. Hyland as chaperones: “God be with you till we meet again”, 11/1/1900.

- ❖ H.B. Sidwell, Bishop of George and R Earp Jones, Recor of Heidelberg, 14/12/1915.
- ❖ The Geldenhuys family from the Orange Free State, “Wie kan betwis dat God met een Java die God is”, 17/1/1916.
- ❖ The Gildenhuys, Van Noordwyk and Dunn families (Potberg area) inscribed, “God behoed ons”, also on 27/1/1916.
- ❖ “M Moodie for L Devenish, The two Love Birds”, 8/7/1917.
- ❖ Daisy van Noordwyk (of lifeboat fame, sometime after 1945), 22/2/1922.
- ❖ Edmond D. Burrows, Grandpa’s boy.
- ❖ God’s almag is te groot (Dolly).
- ❖ JD Hugo (Magistrate) visited the cave on 13/4/1922 and 13/7/1922.
- ❖ W.D. Malherbe, “Onverwacht gekomt”, 26/12/1923.
- ❖ A picnic party “Walked in the rain on Sunday for devotion”, 28/6/1935.
- ❖ Eljo (Elsje?) de Wet, “dogter van G.F. de Wet (Gaaf)”, 15/1/1945.

## **MOSELBANK**

The Mosselbank property belonged to the Van Eeden family of Driefontein. The large, wooden house was built by the Hertz family during the 1960s.

## **KEIZERSGAT**

This large, fairly inaccessible sea-cave at Mosselbank was named after Keizer, apparently a shepherd from Heidelberg, who lived there.

## **RADEMANSBANK**

*(A true story: Peter Zoutendyk)*

*East of Mosselbank, two anglers were fishing during bad weather. Only one of them returned to Bredasdorp, sporting a good catch. In the pub, he was asked how the fishing had been. “Oh, wonderful! I caught lots of fish.” “And what about your friend, Rademan?” “No, he was washed off the rocks and drowned. But I caught lots of fish – man, it was wonderful!”*

## **UITERSTEPUNT (WITKLIP)/CAPE INFANTA**

Cape Infanta was named by Perestrello, one of the captains of Diaz’s ships, in 1575.

## **WITKLIPPUNT**

There is a memorial to *Zoud*, Peter Zoutendyk’s father (12/7/04-19/6/77), who built the white concrete “shack” there in about 1947. In 1988 there were also three wooden cabins.

## **JOHN RICHARD’S BAY**

The lonely grave of John Richard Howard lies in this remote, picturesque bay. Howard was the first officer of a ship that sank off Cape Infanta in 1943, during WWII. In the absence of the captain, Howard elected to go down with the ship. His

body washed ashore, where the Zoutendyks managed to trace his identity from his tag. His mother was found in America and the monument erected. The bay was named after him.

The stream in this bay is thought by some to have been the source of water for a German U-boat, reputed to have sent men ashore in a rowing boat during WWII. Pypie, the shepherd from Grasrug, witnessed this event and was sworn to silence; terrified that his family would be killed, he kept the secret for at least 30 years. The story is considered improbable, however, as the only access to the bay is via a very narrow and dangerous cove.

## PAPKUILS VALLEY

This secluded spot about 1 km inland, east of Cape Infanta, was originally the site of a small settlement of *kapstylhuise*, in the traditional Vermaaklikheid (and Noetsie) style. These structures were thought to be at least 100 years old in 1988. There were fig trees, and a stream. This section of the coast is also known as Rubber Bay on account of the large bales of crude rubber that washed up when a ship sank during WWII. There was a great storm in this area during the 1950s (corresponding with the 1957 floods at De Hoop?), which is believed to account for the high levels reached by the driftwood.

## U-BOATS AT PORT BEAUFORT

*There are stories about the U-boat crew, disguised as fishermen, who came round Cape Infanta in a rubber dinghy and up the Breede River to Port Beaufort during WWII. There they bought food and other supplies from local fishermen, at very high prices. They also persuaded the fishermen to bring food and other provisions out to the U-boat at night. Diesel fuel for the U-boat was apparently bought at a shop at Witsand at night and taken to the U-boat in 4 gallon (18 litre) drums at night. Some of the Germans, disguised as holiday-makers, apparently moved as far up the Breede River as Malgas. The police and other authorities came to hear of this and sent two detectives (also disguised as holiday-makers), who had a holiday at Malgas and Witsand for a while. The fishermen warned the shopowner at Witsand in time, however, and the activities were stopped.*

There was another story, about the body of a German officer that washed up somewhere along the coast with two tickets for the old Alhambra Theatre in Cape Town in the inner pocket of his uniform.

## 7.3 ARMSCOR AND THE OVERBERG TEST RANGE

The coastline of De Hoop Nature Reserve (now protected as part of the De Hoop Marine Protected Area [DHMPA]) was a popular holiday and angling destination in the past. The establishment of the Overberg Toetsbaan (OTB; Overberg Test Range) by ARMSCOR in 1984 in a large area west and east of the DHNR resulted in a new era of co-operative management for the reserve. In 1986 the properties of the Eastern Section were expropriated, and in 1990 they were added to the reserve. At this stage the owners of the coastal properties from Koppie Alleen to St Sebastian Point were:



<b>PROPERTY NO.</b>	<b>COMPANY/FARM</b>	<b>SHAREHOLDERS</b>
1	Cape Provincial Administration	
2	-	N. Myburgh
3	-	C.L. Steytler
4	Potteberg 29 (Edms) Bpk	P.M. Faure J.A.F. Horwood P.S. Louw R.H.C. Peters C.L. Steytler G.G.H. Todd J. van der Merwe W.J. Winshaw
5	Potberg Beleggings (Edms) Bpk	P. de Villiers P.W.J. Bosman H.M. de Villiers J.E. de Villiers J.F. Malan J.J. Malan M.T. Malan F.J. van der Merwe
6	-	A. Henning
7	Buffelsfontein	W.J. de Wet
8 & 9	Lekkerwater Holdings (Pty) Ltd (includes Cupidoskraal)	D.A.K. Adamson J.C.K. Adamson (Mrs) E.K. Green W.K. Green B.K. Meintjies (Mrs) M.K. Stark (Mrs)
10	Hamerkop	L. Roup Van Rhee de Berg
11	Overberg Enterprises (Pty) Ltd (Stilgat)	J.S. Dowling C.G.S. Mellish J.F.S. Mellish D.C.S. Taylor (Mrs)
12	Noetsie	W.H.S. Schreiner G.S. Scott P.R.S. Scott
13	Elandspad	J. Douglas-Hamilton J. Michler
14	Bloukrans	J. Dreyer P.F. Dreyer
15	Witwater and Papkuilsfontein	E.C. van Eeden
16	Witklip Estates (Pty) Ltd	R. Gawith J. Teixeira (Mrs) P. Zoutendyk
17	Stilbaai Estates (Pty) Ltd	E.V.E. Howes J.M. Klosser

## 8. DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE (1956 TO PRESENT)

### 8.1 1956 TO 1984: WILDLIFE FARM AND NATURE RESERVE

#### THE PURCHASE OF DE HOOP BY THE CAPE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Numbers of wildlife in South Africa had reached an all-time low by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to factors such as unsustainable hunting and the loss of habitat. Thanks to the efforts of the Wildlife Protection Society, the Wildlife Protection Ordinance was promulgated in 1950 and, as a result of the proposals of Dr Douglas Hey, the Cape Provincial Administration established a Department of Nature Conservation in the same year. The organization was closely linked with five natural history museums of the (greater) Cape Province.

A high priority for the young Department was to establish field stations for research on the breeding and management of wildlife and the propagation of indigenous flora, and the study of the habits and habitat requirements of species. The first station, established on the banks of the Eerste River at Jonkershoek in 1952, soon became too small. The task of finding a new, larger experimental farm for breeding waterfowl and other wildlife for distribution to other reserves and farms was assigned to the Department's Professional Officer, Frank Brand and the Jonkershoek station manager, Roux Pretorius. Four days later they returned, highly excited at having found the ideal property at De Hoop. This coastal farm had recently been sold by Harry Wood to the Gardener brothers, who were now willing to sell it for 25 000 pounds.

The first hurdle was to persuade the Administration to purchase the property, as nature conservation was still a new concept. Thanks to strong support from the Deputy Provincial Secretary, G.A. van Oordt, and the Provincial Valuator, Kallie Pauw, the formalities were soon concluded. De Hoop was purchased by the Cape Provincial Administration for 25 000 pounds on 22 August 1956. A wildlife sanctuary/experimental game breeding farm, known as the De Hoop Wildlife Farm was established, and proclaimed as the first Provincial Nature Reserve in 1957. G.A. van Oordt and another retiring Deputy Provincial Secretary, J.E.P. Levyns (both of whom had played an important role in the establishment of the Department of Nature Conservation and the development of the Provincial Museum Service), were honoured at a tree-planting ceremony at De Hoop in 1957, with the planting of wild fig *Ficus capensis* and *F. natalensis* trees (see Hey, p 88 for picture). Today, almost 45 years later, the largest of these legendary *F. natalensis* trees has a canopy width of 34 m, with branches of 10-15 m long, and roots stretching up to 50 m away (see also *De Hoop se Wonderboom* below).

#### DE HOOP SE WONDERBOOM

M.C. Botha, *Onrusrivier* (Editor of *Hermanus Times*), 1995

*... Ons het die aand in Die Spookhuis naby die De Hoop-vlei oornag en die volgende oggend tyd gehad om 'n uur in die geselskap van die pragtige boom, Ficus natalensis, of Natal-vy, langs die huis te vertoef (foto 1). Lang, vertakende wortels groei uit takke naby die sentrale stam van die boom, en wanneer hulle die grond bereik, groei hulle*

*dieper die grond in en vorm sodoende 'n nuwe stam. Sommige van die onderste sytakke van die boom is langer as 10 meter en omdat hulle feitlik horisontaal met die grond groei, sal hulle sekerlik afbreek as dit nie vir die natuurlike stutte was nie.*

*Op foto's 2 en 3 lyk dit asof een van die lopers nie na benede gegroei het nie, maar inderdaad terug gegroei het binne in die tak in en nou soos 'n koddige ledemaat van die tak hang. Hoe het dit gebeur? En sal die uitgroei ook aanhou groei en dikker word soos die res van die tak? Die boom se ondergrondse wortels strek tot 50 meter in alle rigtings - tot by die wit muur agter op foto 4.*

*... Die koms van die boom het 'n wêreld van sy eie geskep waarin voëls, slange, insekte en knaagdiere baljaar .... Voëls wat ons die betrokke oggend in die boom bespeur het, sluit in bokmakeries, waterfiskale, rooivlerkspreus, Kaapse tiptolle, rooivlerkduifies, gevlekte- en rooiwangmuisvoëls en bont houtkappers. 'n Nonnetjie-uil gebruik die boom as skuiling.*

*Die holtes in die boom se sentrale stam het oor die jare opgevul met dooie blare wat op plekke tot 2 meter hoog is, en hierin loop allerhande goggas rond, maak spinnekoppe nes en word motte en vlinders papies. Stap 'n mens onder die boom rond en hoor al die tjirp- en fluitgeluide van die dosyne voëls, en jy sien en hoor die zoemende insekte wat oral om die blare en bessies rondvlieg, voel jy jy betree 'n unieke kosmos - 'n eiland van sprankelende lewe midde-in die dooie wêreld daar buite.*

*Geen wonder nie dat party mense vas glo dat dié boom ook die skuilplek van feetjies is.*

A subsequent sale of farm implements, equipment and livestock attracted a large gathering of local farmers and their families. At this sale, Dr Hey met two ladies (possibly Annetta Anderson [then 76 years old] and Madeleine van Blommenstein [54 years old], of Melkkamer[see Chapter 4]), who told him the oyster story (see Chapter 3) and showed him the oyster shell mounted above the front door of the old house. They also mentioned another ghost in the attic of the old homestead, and recounted how they used to dance bare-feet in the kitchen when they were young, to the music of Oom Frikkie and his concertina, while he sat on the steps that led up to the loft. Unfortunately these old steps were removed in the 1990s, when the gas stove was replaced by an electric one. The festivities were aided by a *vaatjie* (cask) of sweet wine that Oom Serfaas brought from Wellington, that always stood on the window sill.

During this exciting time, Dr Hey and his family camped in old homestead, then derelict with no roof, and gaps in the ceiling boards. They were visited by rats, snakes and other wildlife. There were also rumours of a *captain's treasure* under the floor, which his two young sons tried in vain to find.

## **8.2 SUBSEQUENT INCREASES IN THE SIZE OF THE RESERVE**

The first properties purchased by the Cape Provincial Administration, in 1956, were De Hoop and part of Cupidoskraal (see above). Various other properties were added

subsequently, often as portions and at different times (Appendix 1 of the De Hoop Management Plan [July 2001] is used as a reference).

## **WINDHOEK AND THE EASTERN BANKS OF DE HOOP VLEI**

It was imperative that all riparian land around the vlei be acquired. Windhoek (1 205 ha) was thus purchased in 1958. In 1960 The Nook (176 ha) was bought from Mrs du Toit, as well as a small piece of land from Mrs van Eeden. The whole of the eastern bank was now part of the reserve.

## **THE WESTERN BANKS OF THE VLEI**

Portions of the upper part of the western bank were bought from Arthur and Johan Albertyn. Some years later (1985?), when negotiations were underway to establish the Skihaven resort (with 2 000 holiday chalets, a hotel, caravan park and game farm) south-west of De Hoop Vlei, the CPA expropriated the riparian portion of Reimerskraal (1 625 ha).

## **DRONKVLEI AND THE POTTEBERG ESTATES**

The farm Dronkvlei (Dronk Vley) and portions of The Potteberg Estates (Potberg) and Cupidoskraal (Cupido's Kraal) were added to the reserve in 1978 and 1979, increasing its size to over 18 000 ha, with a coastline of 11.8 km.

## **MELKKAMER AND THE EASTERN SECTION**

Various properties along the coast east of De Hoop (also part of The Potteberg Estates), and the farm Melkkamer were expropriated by Armscor in the 1980s. In February 1989 the Minister of Defence, the Hon. W.N. Breytenbach, formally transferred a portion of Melkkamer (300 ha), including the homestead, and 20 000 ha of land from Potberg to Cape Infanta, to the Administrator of the Cape for the extension of De Hoop Nature Reserve - now 33 795 ha in size - to establish an ecologically viable nature reserve representative of the systems of the Western Cape.

## **8.3 THE RESTORATION OF THE OLD HOMESTEAD COMPLEX**

### **PROCLAMATION AS A NATIONAL MONUMENT**

The National Monuments Act, No 28 of 1969, and National Monuments Amendment Act, No 35 of 1979 states:

*"By virtue of the powers vested in me by section 10 (1) of the National Monuments Act, 1969 [Act 28 of 1969, as amended by Act 35 of 1979], I, Teunis Nicolaas Hendrik Janson, Minister of National Education, hereby declare the De Hoop homestead and a surrounding area, bounded by the ring-wall, and including the ring-wall, situated in the District of Bredasdorp, to be a national monument".*

*Description:*

*The De Hoop Homestead and a surrounding area bounded by the ring-wall, and including the ring-wall, situate on the remainder of certain piece of redeemed quitrent land (now known as the remainder of Farm 74), situate in the Division of Bredasdorp, being portion of De Hoop and measuring four thousand and ninety (4 090) morgen, five hundred and forty-four (544) square roods.*  
(Deed of Transfer 11958/1956, dated 22 August 1956 [paragraph 2]).

(Government Gazette, 7 September 1979, No. 6648: 11)

## **THE RESTORATION PROCESS**

The restoration of the De Hoop buildings was undertaken departmentally, on a limited budget, by the farm manager Roux Pretorius, making use of the Nefdt brothers of Sikipkop, who were skilled in the traditional building methods of Overberg, and departmental carpenters James Adendorff and Pieter Lourens, with the approval and advice of the National Monuments Council. Although the layout of the buildings remains very much as it was in 1956, they were extensively re-cycled to provide accommodation and offices for the staff and visitors. Nevertheless, De Hoop still offers a picture of a prosperous Overberg stock farm as it was in the middle of the nineteenth century.

## **ROOF, CEILINGS AND FLOORS**

The restoration of the old house started with the roof, which was re-thatched by local thatchers from Elim. The roof of the kitchen had never had gables, and had always been open. The two cross beams are believed to be original. The ceilings of the other rooms were in good order. Seven layers of paint were removed from them before they were varnished dark brown. The collapsing (brick) wall of the outside bathroom was rebuilt and the leaks in the roof repaired. A functional little roof was added between the bathroom and the rest of the house. The original yellowwood floors were now rotten and were replaced with beams of the original size (30.5 cm) from Knysna, using the original joists.

## **WALLS AND WINDOWS**

The walls of the house were completely stripped of plaster to the original dry limestone, with no cement. All the steel window frames were removed, and replaced with ones in natural wood (rather than the original green paint) of a standard design, in the original places indicated by the stonework after the plaster had been removed. They now opened inwards, instead of outwards as in the original structure, but had the traditional shutters. The oyster shell was already mounted above the front door in 1956. The Cloetes had left one pane in the dormer window above the door open for the swallows.

## **THE HEARTH**

The massive brick chimney was supported by a single beam. As it was sagging badly, it was jacked up and a slender brick pillar was erected as a support. The original hooks, chains and pulleys over the open fire were kept, together with the *bakoond*.

## DOORS AND CUPBOARDS

Seven layers of paint were removed from the interior woodwork, and the doors were found to be of solid yellowwood, with handcrafted iron hinges and catches. Pretorius made replicas of the pieces that were missing. A number of little cupboards (*muurkaste*) that were bricked over and closed with wallpaper were restored. Originally they were used to display crockery.

## GARDENS

In order to plant trees around the homestead, large holes were dug in the solid limestone and lorry-loads of soil brought in (\*see Hey p 88 for picture of *Ficus* tree being planted by Van Oordt).

## OUTBUILDINGS

Outside of the north corner of the *werf* was the long, rectangular shearing enclosure and sheep-fold (originally used as stables). This was roofed over to serve first as a store, and in the 1990s as a reception centre. The original grain store is now used as a tack room. The threshing machine was completely rebuilt by Roux Pretorius and used for threshing the wheat. One of the two large silos (built by Harry Wood) was converted into worker's quarters.

## NEW STRUCTURES

The cool-room was added after 1956, together with a kraal for the rubbish (which hitherto had been thrown into the vlei) and the present stables. A boathouse and slipway were built, completely accessible by boat during winters with good rains. The Administration also added a group workers' houses (on the southern bank of Fransfontein on the vlei), two overnight rondavels and a tennis court.

## OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

*The Administrator, Otto du Plessis (in hat). Second from right: D. Roux Pretorius and Du Plessis' son.*

*Ficus natalensis tree: planted 1957/58?. Ficus capensis?*

*Threshing machine completely rebuilt by Pretorius.*

*Admin 1960: Dr Hey and son Anthony and son John (+ Du Plessis's son). Hat: Apie Venter. Glasses: Norman Henshilwood. Administrator behind Pretorius in hat.*

## 8.4 GAME AND VELD MANAGEMENT

### BOUNDARIES AND FENCING

The reserve boundaries were resurveyed by Ivor West of the Department of Surveying, with the assistance of final-year students from the Survey Department of the University of Cape Town. The old beacons were hunted down and identified.

Gameproof fencing was necessary on the public road from Ouplaas to Skipskop and Waenhuiskrans, as poaching from the public roads was commonplace. Initially, fencing was done departmentally. For this difficult task, holes had to be made in solid limestone, and eventually a contractor was called in.

## HABITAT MANAGEMENT

At that time antelope numbers in Cape Province at their lowest ebb. The objectives of the reserve at this stage were thus to research the breeding of antelope, determine optimum habitat requirements and produce as many animals as possible for restocking depleted areas. Much of the De Hoop strandveld was then covered by mature restio plants (only the young shoots area palatable), the vegetation was denuded by overgrazing and large populations of dune moles had caused soil erosion. Ways were thus sought to improve the carrying capacity of the veld, for instance by using a brushcutter. All old lands were cultivated with preferred pasture grasses and fodder plants, including Danish cocksfoot, Italian ryegrass, *Phylaris tuberosa*, rooigras (*Themeda triandra*), Kentucky fescue and lucerne. These species were heavily utilized by all varieties of antelope. The best way of compensating for trace element deficiencies for the fenced herds was found to be by providing pelleted food in feeding troughs at watering points.

## INTRODUCTIONS OF ANTELOPE

At that time the only antelope in the reserve were grysbok, steenbok, a few duiker and three bontebok rams. There was also a large red deer, presumably from Potberg, which had been stocked with a variety of deer and antelope by the Ohlsson brothers. Springbok were the first antelope introduced, from Jonkershoek. They first bred in 1959 and numbers had reached 120 by 1970. The herd was revitalized by the introduction of two large Kalahari rams, and soon De Hoop was restocking farms and other nature reserves. The Administration was opposed to the introduction of animals foreign to the Cape e.g. European fallow deer, Himalayan thar, inyala, impala and blesbok.

When the National Parks Board moved bontebok from Bredasdorp to Swellendam, the Department of Nature Conservation played a major role in assisting but were then told there were no bontebok left for De Hoop; the Department was, however, welcome to collect any animals left. The resultant eight juvenile bontebok and a number of vaalribbok, formed the nucleus of the fine herds of today. The reintroduction of bontebok (whose numbers were at one stage down to fewer than 20) is a success story, especially due to farmers such as the Albertyns of Nacht Wacht, who provided animals for stocking the first Bontebok National Park in Bredasdorp.

In 1959 seven black wildebeest were introduced from the Somerville Reserve in the Orange Free State and put to graze on cultivated pastures. After further purchases, the first calves were born in 1964. Their numbers reached 37 but the species never adapted well to the fynbos environment. The herd was eventually sent to Rolfontein, in the Northern Cape. Ten gemsbok were introduced from the Kalahari to De Hoop in 1962/3. They also did not thrive and were sent to Vrolijkheid, near Robertson. Ten bushbuck were caught from Bushman's River near Alexandria and released near De Hoop Vlei but were not seen again except for one young ram which became tame

(and eventually attacked Roux Pretorius). Three Cape hartebeest were introduced from Setlagolie in Northern Cape in 1963. They never thrived and were transferred to another reserve. One of the most successful introductions was ten hand-reared eland from Loteni Reserve in Natal in 1964. The antelope were bottle-fed for the first few months. They bred well and the herd could soon stock other nature reserves and farms.

Although once plentiful on the coastal mountain ranges from the Outeniquas to the Orange River, the Cape mountain zebra had by this stage become the most endangered animal in the Cape, if not in world, with only 30 individuals left. The first one introduced to De Hoop (originally from the Oudtshoorn district) in 1970 was obtained from "Cowboy" Mills, who had a game park near Port Elizabeth. During the 1970s five more zebras were caught in a catch in the Kamanassie mountains, under the guidance of Chief Professional Officer Dr Neil Fairall. The following year, two more animals were obtained from the National Parks Board. Today there are flourishing herds at De Hoop, and at Gamka Nature Reserve near Calitzdorp/Oudtshoorn.

## **INTRODUCTIONS OF BIRDS**

Guineafowl were introduced and culled for distribution to other reserves. A few feral ostriches were also brought in from the Jonkershoek reserve, and were also culled periodically.

## **PROBLEM ANIMALS**

The tunnels of a large population of dune moles made it impossible to patrol the farm on horseback. A full-time mole catcher was employed, who caught over 3 000 dune moles in a year. The skins were used experimentally to make a fur coat but the project didn't result in a demand for moleskin. The carcasses of the moles were dried and used to feed the hunting hounds at the Vrolijkheid station, near Robertson.

In an experiment in biological control for a plague of Cape gerbils (*Tatera africa*), which also produced numerous burrows, 50 adult mole snakes were introduced to De Hoop from Robben Island under the guidance of John Visser, staff herpetologist. The snakes soon dispersed and had little impact.

## **A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS**

Gradually the emphasis shifted from an experimental station to conserving nature and natural ecosystems in the south-western Cape (1995). Species of antelope not native to region were transferred to other reserves. Today nine species of antelope occur on De Hoop, namely bontebok, eland, bushbuck, grey duiker, steenbok, grysbok, vaalribbok, klipspringer and hartebeest.

## **8.5 DE HOOP VLEI AND THE WATER SUPPLY**

### **DE HOOP VLEI**

After 1956 the Cape Provincial Administration went in search of a suitable water



supply, and a water diviner was engaged to divine water in the limestone hills. First, two boreholes were sunk in the limestone hills, and the water was brought across Fransfontein in a suspended pipeline, but the supply was insufficient.

On the Melkkamer side of the vlei is a strong, potable fountain, known as Grootfontein. Dr Hey visited this fountain by rowing boat and followed it to its source. A pump system was established in 1968, with pipes to take the water to the main homestead. Two towers were built, from which to suspend the pipes. When this did not work, the water was conveyed in 4" (100 mm) asbestos, then 100 mm pvc pipes beneath the vlei. Grootfontein is believed to deliver 60 000 litres of water per hour. The fountains at Butchersgat and Tierhoek were also investigated. After the 1969 earthquakes at Tulbagh, some fountains in the De Hoop area are reputed to have dried up.

The vlei level was measured by the Department of Water Works from a structure near the two rondawels. In October 1957 the waters overflowed, inundating a large part of Reimerskraal and Matjiesfontein; it also dried up almost completely in 1975, 1989 and 1992 (1992-2002??) (see Chapter 3).

In 1950 the Inland Fisheries Officer introduced trout, largemouth and smallmouth bass, bluegill sunfish to the vlei, fortunately without success, due to the high salinity. A herbivorous South African species, *Tilapia/Oreochromis mossambica* was introduced successfully, and after this the fish eagles returned.

The vlei was proclaimed a wetland of international importance in terms of the Ramsar Convention in 1975. Prior to 1984, however, a coastal freeway was proposed by the Department of Transport, which would have bisected the reserve and involved building a massive bridge to span the vlei. The engineers used Departmental boats to undertake their survey and detonated large charges of dynamite in the vlei to assess the nature of the substratum, all without prior permission or consultation. Due to strong public protest, the route was eventually moved inland.

## **8.6 THE ARMSCOR/DENEL ERA: 1984 TO THE PRESENT**

The establishment of the Overberg Toetsbaan (OTB; Overberg Test Range) by ARMSCOR in 1984 in a large area west of the DHNR resulted in a new era of co-operative management for De Hoop.

### **ARMSCOR**

A proposal by ARMSCOR to take over De Hoop for the establishment of a missile testing range in 1983 came as a severe shock to the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation and caused Dr Douglas Hey, then Director, many sleepless nights after 20 years of uphill battle to establish the reserve. As a result of the strong public reaction against proposal, the Minister of Environmental Affairs, the Hon. Sarel Hayward, appointed a Commission of Enquiry to report on the potential impacts of the development, both positive and negative, and to outline steps that

should be taken to prevent or alleviate the degradation of the area as a habitat for fauna and flora.

The Commission reached a unanimous conclusion that De Hoop is unique in world biology but, on assurance by the Military, also concluded that there was no alternative site for the missile test range, then considered vital for the future security of South Africa. The Commission listed 80 management recommendations, which were accepted by ARMSCOR. An assurance was given that the area would be used for missile guidance tests only and not for testing explosives, military vehicles or troop manoeuvres. All expropriated land not required directly for the missile range (including the shoreline of De Hoop Vlei) would be incorporated into the nature reserve, which would be more than doubled in size and remain under management of Cape Nature Conservation. The Range would not curtail the normal activities of the reserve, and would assist with the eradication of alien vegetation and control of veld fires on the newly acquired private land. The threat of a township development was also averted. Unauthorized access to coast would be prevented; the deterioration of the coast from Skipskop to beyond Koppie Alleen was a cause of great concern, and the establishment of the De Hoop Marine Reserve in 1986 and its proclamation as a Marine Protected Area in 1990 is regarded as a conservation breakthrough.

A satisfactory working agreement was thus reached, representing a successful marriage of the interests of nature conservation and the development of a military facility. A Review Committee with representatives from Cape Nature Conservation, ARMSCOR and the South African Defence Force now monitors the conservation of the entire area.

## **8.7 THE WESTERN CAPE NATURE CONSERVATION BOARD: APRIL 2000**

### **VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND GOALS OF THE BOARD**

The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board was established in April 2000.

#### *Our vision is*

to become a world leader in conservation. We aim to instill in all our people a deep sense of ownership and pride in our unique natural heritage and a realization of its intrinsic and economic value.

#### *Our mission is*

to conserve the natural heritage of the Western Cape, in partnership with all its people, for the benefit, well-being and enjoyment of present and future generations.

#### *To accomplish our mission our objectives are to:*

- maintain ecological systems and processes;
- conserve genetic diversity; and
- ensure that utilization of the natural heritage of the Western Cape is sustainable.

#### *Our goals are as follows:*

- to prevent unnatural extinctions of any species indigenous to the Western Cape;

- to establish and manage reserves representative of each ecological region of the Western Cape;
- to communicate to all people the value of the natural environment and the necessity of conservation;
- to ensure that the utilization of natural resources is sustainable;
- to provide scientific services for the support of conservation programmes;
- to provide visitor facilities and services in nature reserves;
- to formulate and apply legislation to ensure the conservation of the Western Cape's natural heritage;
- to evaluate development proposals to ensure that environmental quality is maintained; and
- to conserve sites of cultural-historical significance on reserves.

## **THE OBJECTIVES OF DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE IN 2001**

### **1. Primary conservation objective**

To maintain a representative and viable example of the biodiversity of the South Western Cape coastal region through the conservation of the natural fauna and flora and integrated ecosystems.


### **2. Secondary conservation objectives**

- To form a focus for conservation research and monitoring (including special protection of rare taxa).
- To provide facilities and opportunities for formal and informal outdoor environmental education.
- To provide opportunities and facilities for nature-orientated outdoor recreation and interpretation.
- To support the conservation of important cultural-historical sites.
- To involve local communities in the conservation of their natural environment.

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