



**Newsletter**

**Autumn 2012**

## **Chairman's Chat**

*Nick Taylor*

The Committee set itself the target of formulating an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for Noetzie during the course of 2011. A draft plan was circulated at the end of November and presented at the AGM on 29 December. The draft was presented by Melissa McKay of Cape Environmental Assessment Practitioners (Cape EAPrac), the company commissioned by the Committee to assist us with this task. During her talk Melissa noted some of the factors that augur very well for the continued environmental health of Noetzie. Chief among these, she mentioned the passion and dedication of Noetzie residents, and the fact that properties are passed down across the generations, resulting in long term commitment and continuity of purpose. Nowhere have these qualities been more strongly to the fore than in the response of NCOA members to the draft EMP.

A lively discussion of the draft at the AGM highlighted the need to get a strong consensus, if not unanimous agreement, on Noetzie's environmental plan. On one hand, the plan must bring the relevant legislation and government regulations to the attention of residents. On the other hand, it must provide practical guidelines for best practice in environmental management. Following the AGM, extensive written comment was provided by Donald Fabian and Tim and Chris Everett. These responses contain a great deal of detail, all of which will be very helpful to the Committee in revising the draft EMP. One of the main points on which these written submissions converged was the need for a relatively short, accessible document which is of practical use to homeowners and visitors alike. Technical details can be posted on the website and referenced in the document. The Committee has started work on a second draft, which will be circulated for comment at the end of April.

On the development front, the largest project completed during 2011 was Don Lindsay's road, which provides direct access to his castle on the beach from the headland. The road opens access to a total of five beach properties (Portions 18, 19, 22, 85 and 86 of 394) and, as part of the conditions for approval, the Department

of Environmental Affairs stipulated that the current access to these erven via the beach must be prohibited during the operation of the new road.

In another development, the former Knarr house on the beach was purchased and extensively renovated by Derek and Kerri Cockcroft. There was no movement during 2011 on the two sets of plans approved by the Committee and the Knysna Municipality: those of Dr Visser (erf 76), and of Richard Robinson and Eve Thompson (erf 80). There has also been no further progress on the proposed development by Pezula in and around the car park, although we do anticipate future attempts to take this initiative forward. New developments include the purchase of erf 58 (between van Gend and Moultrie) from Henry Loubser by James van Wyk, and plans for building a new house on erf 22 (next to Don Lindsay) for Mr and Mrs Thompson.

The saga of illegal trading at Montrose Castle continues, with the Committee once again frustrated by the blatant disregard of the terms of their consent use by the owners, on one hand, and the slow response by the Municipality, on the other. The latest development is a letter from the Municipality stating that the matter has been handed over for action to attorney Cliff Mosdell, who is apparently awaiting further information from the NCOA. We are once again puzzled by this remark, since our attorney, Elbie Burger, has supplied the KM with all relevant details. Nevertheless, we responded with a letter to Cliff Mosdell enquiring as to what he requires.

I want to renew my recommendation that individual homeowners join the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association. Membership will assist in helping landowners to become more aware of the risks of fire, provide a detailed action plan in the event of a fire, determine what fire fighting resources are available, and provide a proactive fire management and emergency response plan. In addition, this may count in your favour in the event of an insurance claim. Properties smaller than 300 hectares pay R200.00 per year as a membership, with a once-off joining fee of R300.00.

In closing, it is pleasing to report that the NCOA is in a relatively healthy state financially. At the AGM, Treasurer Lauren Shimmin reported that we received R20,100 in levies, as well as R3,648 in donations and interest income during 2011. Expenditure of R3,909 was incurred for bank charges, IT expenditure, subscriptions and water testing. Therefore, retained income for the year amounted to R19,838. The bank balance at the end of the year was R69,000. In November, right after year end, a payment of R10,000 was made for expenses incurred on the EMP, reducing the bank balance to R59,000. Based on the fact that there are reasonable reserves available, it was proposed and accepted that the levies for 2012/2013 remain at R500. The Committee thanks Neil Metelerkamp for once again auditing the books.

## The 2012 committee

Julie Gosling served for six years on the committee and was therefore required to stand down and Catherine Suckling resigned her position earlier in the year. There were thus two places to be filled. Marylou Newdigate and Iona Everett were elected unanimously. At the first meeting in February the following portfolios were allocated:

Nick Taylor – Chairman  
Eion Brown – Deputy Chairman  
Cathy Shimmin – Secretary  
Lauren Shimmin - Treasurer

Wendy Dewberry – Conservation Matters  
Santie den Boestert – Municipal matters  
Marylou Newdigate – Facebook and website  
Iona Everett - Newsletter

# Annual General Meeting

*Cathy Shimmin*

As always the NCOA AGM is both a social as well as a business occasion. Residents and interested parties alike gather together to ensure that we preserve our beautiful heritage.

The NCOA AGM took place on the 29th December 2011 and was graciously hosted by Julie Gosling at her home at Noetzie. As always it was a joyful occasion. Nick Taylor Chaired the meeting and ensured that all were able to contribute.

The highlight was the discussion around the EMP. This gave everybody the opportunity to hear from our expert, Melissa and how she had gone about putting it together. This was meant to stimulate thought. Copies of the Draft EMP was distributed after the meeting for comment.

## Rainfall at Noetzie

*Wendy Dewberry*

When I arrived in Knysna some 13 years ago a seasoned Knysnarian told me that the old folk would always say that if it rains over New Year, there will be good rainfall over that year. A dry New Year meant the opposite. Being sceptical of tales, I took note. I hereby report that since then this tale has proved to be true. Sadly, this New Year was dry. Let's wait and see.

Month	Rainfall (mm)	Month	Rainfall, (mm)
2011 – January	30.5	September	56
February	52	October	27.5
March	41	November	123.5
April	18	December	30
May	207	2012 – January	13.8
June	129	February	75.5
July	190.5	March	106
August	99		

## Pezula Baboon monitors

The Group of Monitors employed by Pezula have had their hands full trying to keep the baboons away from houses. There have been several very bad cases of baboons getting access to houses in Pezula, in which they have completely trashed the entire house, with damage running into hundreds of thousands of Rands worth. The biggest problem for the monitors is that with the large area of the estate, it becomes very difficult to keep track of the location of the troops at different stages of a day.

There is no doubt that this additional pressure from the monitors has pushed more baboons back down into Noetzie. The behaviour of the two delinquent baboons is being reported to Cape Nature, but they are generally loath to take any drastic action.

# Baboons

*Tim Everett*

*Reprinted from Lagoon-side News, Noetzie Home Services Association*



Two large delinquent baboons have recently caused havoc and broken into 3 lagoon-side houses. The first incident occurred when baboons gained access to Tim & Niki Everett's house, tearing burglar bars off a window and opening the double front door. The Allsound alarm was triggered and the response guard found the baboons still inside, having opened every cupboard in the house looking for food. Fortunately little damage was done.



The second and third owners were not so lucky. The baboons entered Eion & Jan Brown's house through a window and once again opened every cupboard, tasting candles, soap, curry powder and anything else they could find and unfortunately causing havoc.

The third burglary was the Van Gent consortium house and once again entry was made through the double front doors and once again, every cupboard was opened, with the accompanying destruction and havoc, candles, soap and curry powder being the order of the day. As can be seen from the photos, the houses have been trashed.

***Baboons outside Petra & Henry's house***



# Noetzie Primates

*Marylou Newdigate*

We had a monkey "problem" at Noetzie, now it seems we are at the stage where we either do, or do not create a Baboon problem as well. Noetzie baboons never liked people. If you came across a troop while on a hike, they would run away and disappear fast, treating the human species like vicious predators. Since the establishment of the Pezula development along with their electric fenced corridor, our baboons have learned to be less fearful of us. As their habitat has been reduced, they are now looking for food in a smaller area too. That makes all of us at Noetzie possible targets. Once baboons have entered your house and stolen food, they will come back many times to try again. Baboons seem cleverer than monkeys and know how to open fridges and even cupboards.

At Noetzie, we are in the baboon's and monkey's territory. We must adapt our lifestyle so that we can have a harmonious co-existence with primates - it is entirely possible. Please, never shoot at, or deliberately harm any animal in the Noetzie Conservancy, ever. The septicaemia that results from lead pellets leads to a cruel and extremely painful death.

At North cottage, during daylight hours, we live as though there are baboons and monkeys just waiting for us to leave the kitchen window or door open. We have warning signs all over the house for tenants. Primates are clever, and will lull residents into believing they are no longer around so that their next raid will be easier. Do not allow yourself to be outsmarted by baboons or monkeys. If they get your calorie rich food, they are smarter than you. Do not display your food, and don't make your garbage available to them during your stay or more specifically, on departure. It is as though some people do not care about the baboons and monkeys as soon as they leave Noetzie. This is a people problem, not a baboon or monkey problem.



Finally, please do not assume that a baboon on its own is a rogue baboon that must be shot. It is more than likely a dispersing male.



# FEEDING A BABOON COULD MEAN ITS DEATH SENTENCE!

Feeding them as if they were pets seems like fun, but baboons learn very quickly to associate humans with food. They then lose their natural fear of people and can become so destructive and aggressive that they have to be destroyed.



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Never EVER feed baboons.**
- **Don't leave any food within sight of a baboon - outdoors or indoors - that could tempt them.**
- **Baboon-proof your refuse bins and don't leave refuse bags outside.**
  - **Close all windows and doors when you leave your residence.**
  - **When picnicking or camping, store edibles in your car boot or in a baboon-proof container.**

Thank you!  CapeNature

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# Pipefish

Iona Everett

We have been finding dead pipefish washed up on the Noetzie Beach tide-line for several months now. We found our first ones in October 2011.



## *Pipefish we found in October*

These pipefish (*Syngnathus capensis*) are related to the seahorse and occur in all the local estuaries. They are preyed on by various fish species that enter the estuaries.

Professor Brian Allanson, a Knysna resident and aquatic and estuarine ecologist said, "To have such a high mortality, points to a major environmental disturbance."

He explained that pipefish prefer to live

*within the estuary's eelgrass beds. "If these beds are exposed to pollution, then the pipefish will be exposed to many dangers - predation or rapid lowering of dissolved oxygen linked to sewage pollution and associated toxic compounds such as dissolved ammonia."*

*Allanson added that he was "tempted to point a finger at the recent extreme sewage pollution of the estuary. This would have reduced dissolved oxygen and introduced ammonia."*

*In closing he said that the fact that the dead pipefish have been washing up for over a month, suggests that a major pollution event was the most likely cause.*

**from an article by Fran Kirsten,  
Knysna-Plett Herald Journalist**

Like seahorses, male pipefish carry developing embryos in a pouch on their bellies and give birth to live young. They have straight, segmented bodies and vary from greenish to brown, with alternating lighter bands down their bodies. There is a dorsal fin down the back and a delicate fanned tail but no ventral fins – hence the apt name. They feed on live crustaceans and prawns.

In South Africa, the greatest density of pipefish occur along the Southern part of the West Coast and around the Southern Cape coast. As you move eastward along the southern coast, the population starts to thin out – and differentiate.



Most pipefish live in tidal pools and other coastal habitats. However, one species lives in the intestine of a species of sea cucumber!

# Valuation Roll

*Iona Everett*

Knysna has put out a new valuations roll. There are many anomalies and inaccuracies in it and values have in most cases risen sharply. We as a committee cannot object to valuations on your behalf and we advise you to get your objections to Knysna as soon as possible. The closing date is 15 April 2012.

To view the valuation roll for Noetzie log onto  
- [www.knysnamunicipality.co.za](http://www.knysnamunicipality.co.za)  
- scroll down to GV 2012-2016 General valuation Objections -  
- select RURAL - Noetzie appears on pages 16 and 17

To object please print out and fill in Form A -Valuation Objection Residential

## Animal Sightings and other Environmental News

*Wendy Dewberry*

We still have 8 cameras up and about. Some are starting to grow tired and niggly. One camera has lost its night vision, another has lost its ability to video and one has a battery power that works intermittently. However, it is still exciting to collect the footage.

On the subject of baboons, apparently they have been breaking into homes and causing huge devastation. It seems that the problem really escalates after a season of rentals which serves to strengthen the belief that problem baboons are caused by problem humans. In my experience it is quite easy to live with baboons if one follows the simple rule of the jungle – don't pass food down the development chain. In our case, this means not letting baboons get your food by any means. The baboons which visit us at the top are quite unlike the reportedly rowdy crowd from elsewhere. We are able to take pleasure in observing the troop when they visit us, identify individuals, watch development of mothers with their babies and watch social interaction. I have posted some portraits on Facebook. This troop knows not to come near the house, even when we are gone. How do I know that, you may ask? Cameras! It seems as if they respect us. If you feel like a bit of fun, watch some footage [here](#).

On the Outdoor Classroom site I have set up an interactive patch of sea sand on a path in an attempt to capture footprints. The camera has caught the most delightful pics, and even one or two trespassers! We are in the process of setting up a bird hide in the area, but it will be secret, so if you want to know where it is, apply within !!!

The Noetzie Facebook page has over 50 members. It has been great to share snaps of the beach in all its moods, incidents and queries, but I wish more people would post questions, snaps and general comment. Come on all you clever people – we need you to share your knowledge.

This year so far the NCOA has been represented at the Garden Route Initiative (GRI), a forum that has been active for 10 years. The GRI is currently in a phase of adjusting its format as it is the primary bidder for the UNESCO- approved Garden Route Biosphere Reserve. Read about Biosphere Reserves [here](#).



The Knysna Environment Forum met earlier this month. Santi and I attended, and Steve Gettlife is a member representing the Bird Club.

The WEEDS forum was on 9 March, largely on alien control, and on the 31 March 2012, the NCOA was represented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Garden Route Conservancy Forum hosted by Cape Nature. Here all local conservancies from the Western Cape area, from The Craggs to Little Brak, gather together to share information and discuss burning issues.

On a sadder note, yet another male bushbuck was electrocuted on the fence. They seem to wander up the fence line at night when there is no traffic. With the first speeding vehicle coming down the Noetzie road, all hell breaks loose and alas, we find them electrocuted, dead, and stuck in the fence. Four years ago the idea of a cattle grid was discussed. However, it was decided that even a single incident of an antelope leg being caught would be enough to send us back to the drawing board. Julie found a Canadian Environment site which successfully uses the concept of “virtual” grids. This is merely painted stripes on the road. The change in depth perception worked without danger of broken legs. Noetzie has decided to try this method, using a bitumen seal on the road segment on which to paint the stripes. Won't it be exciting if that works for us ? We are considering raising funds publicly.

After many years of wondering what to do about the thick infestation of wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) up the Noetzie River, I am thrilled to announce that SANParks, under the guidance of Senior Forester at Harkerville, Mr Nico Oosthuizen, will use Working for Water teams to do a complete alien clearance of the stretch up the river to Brackenhill Falls. Not only will they complete this by the end of April this year, but the Noetzie River is being put on the annual budget with Working For Water. This is great news. This will break the back of the infestation. Noetzie members will now find it easy to do the hike each December and just hand pull saplings which come up so fast along the water course.

Water tests have been done over the past few years to monitor the use of the septic tanks and soak-aways along the river. The results for January just after season, and February are alarming. There is a relatively significant difference of results between the periods. This indicates that better use and care of septic tanks and soak-aways along the river is essential if we want to maintain the health of the river and be able to swim in it. The NCOA plans to keep up the testing to watch trends.

*(The next issue will contain more articles on Septic Tanks and Soak-away Systems and a handy guide for owners and guests – Ed.)*



## Recycling in Knysna

*Santie den Boestert*

The following can be recycled in Knysna :

Clean glass, clean plastic - hard and soft (no gladwrap), paper (no used tissues, serviettes, etc).

Separate bags are issued free of charge by the Municipality – (they used to be green, but are see-through at the moment) and they are delivered to Noetzie residents by the refuse bag collectors and also collected by them together with the black bags.

All the refuse bags, black and transparent, are then taken to the depot next to the fire station in Waterfront Drive, where the contents of the black bags are compacted and the bales then get transported by road to the Mossel Bay dumping site. The 'green' bags are taken to the recycling site just behind this depot where the contents are separated into glass, paper and plastic containers.

Recycling is presently done by a private person, Chris Julian. He compacts the paper and the plastic, and the glass goes into a container, all of which is then transported by road to recyclers in either Cape Town or Durban, depending on who pays the best.

## Facebook page competition

I have decided that with the wonderful pictures on the Facebook page, it would be nice to hold a competition for the best picture posted. Those who are not yet Facebook friends need to talk to Wendy Dewberry or Marylou Newdigate about becoming friends. Next newsletter it will be a picture of a Noetzie animal and will be judged by the winner of this issue's competition. Get posting people!

Winner: *Wendy Dewberry*

I felt that this picture captured some of the peace of Noetzie.



# Births

The Noetzie population is growing fast - a warm welcome to the world (and in due course to Noetzie) to the following:

► *To Eion and Jan Brown's daughter, Sandy and Dave a daughter, Sabine Vos, born 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012*



Following hard on the heels of Everett Hsu, whose birth was reported in the last Newsletter, a further three Great-grandchildren of John and Pat Everett have arrived:



◄ *Callum Jones, born to Trish Nicolson's daughter Tasha on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012*

And two further grand-children for Cathy and Rob Shimmin

► *Benjamin Nicholas Shimmin, born to Andra-Lee and Nick Shimmin on 13<sup>th</sup> March*



◄ *Alexandra born on 26<sup>th</sup> March to Jacqui (Shimmin) and Billy Cilibanov*



# Deaths

Immel Botha, Bruce and Rory's father, died aged 80, on 21 January 2012. Immel spent regular holidays at Noetzie since 1956, and when Rory and family next visit South Africa, an ashes sprinkling ceremony will be held on the beach.

**RIP Immel**



## Editor's note

*Iona Everett*

When I was tasked with taking over the newsletter from Wendy Dewberry, I knew that I had very big shoes to fill. Her newsletters have been informative and really interesting. Tackling this newsletter was very different from when I started the single sheet black and white NCOA Newsletters in 1997. At that time I did everything, including printing them and putting them in envelopes to post or getting our children to deliver the Christmas issue to all the houses. That first issue was concerned with the Town Planning Scheme, (now we are busy with the Environmental Management Plan), animal sightings, refuse, and payment of NCOA subs, plus the comment "A long term project is to compile a history of Knoetzie – any volunteers as Editor or contributions would be welcome". Not much has changed and Chris is still looking for contributions!

The next issue will have articles about septic tanks. The committee is having the river water tested regularly and e-coli counts definitely rise when many houses are occupied. We must make an appeal to all residents to make sure their septic tanks are correctly treated. All information needed to do this next issue.

I sincerely want to thank my fellow committee members for their help and contributions, and Tim Everett for letting me reprint the article from the Lagoon-side News. Without them this issue would not be as interesting.