

Noetzie Conservancy Owners' Association



Editor – Iona Everett

Newsletter

May 2014

Chairman's Chat

by E J (Robby) Robertson - NCOA Chairman 2014

The NCOA Annual General Meeting voted in a marginal change to your Committee. While the outgoing Chairman, Cathy Shimmin, is calling it a day (for now?), the new Committee elected to honour me as her replacement. For those of you who are relatively new to Noetzie and don't know me, this will be my second stint as Chairman. To be honest with you, I am not sure when that was, but I do recall serving a full six years on the Committee, which coincided with the emergence of the new format NCOA.

Much of the vision for Noetzie that was compiled in those early days and encapsulated in the Noetzie Town Planning Scheme, is still in place. But as I get to grips with the present situation, it is evident that while some of the old challenges still persist, there are new issues on the table. The environment we are in is changing, and the new Committee will, I'm sure, endeavour to deal with these in a pragmatic manner, and keep you informed through this newsletter.

To all of you, thank you for giving me and the NCOA Committee the opportunity to represent you for 2014. We will do our best at trying to preserve that which is Noetzie for the benefit of ourselves, those who will inherit from us, and the greater Knysna community that surrounds us.

The new Committee is

Robby Robertson – Chairman
Julie Gosling – Vice Chairman & Municipal
Laurel Robertson – Secretary
Margi Dane – Treasurer

Mary-Lou Newdigate – Web page
Marina Devine – Environmental
Wendy Dewbery - Conservation
Iona Everett - Newsletter



Neil Metelerkamp

Neil Metelerkamp, our Knysna Ward 3 Committee member, was presented with the Conservancy award at the NCOA's 2013 AGM in gratitude for his tireless efforts to get our rates valuations reduced, and also for providing free auditing services to the NCOA for the last few years. Thank you Neil, we really appreciate everything you do for Noetzie!

Invasive Wasps Project

by Wendy Dewberry

Did you know?

Two exotic social wasps (of the family Vespidae), *Vespula germanica* and *Polistes dominula*, have now become naturalised in the south western part of Western Cape Province of South Africa, adding to the number of invasive social insects that now occur in the Fynbos



biome (such as the Argentine ant, *Linepithema humile*).



Scientific names: *Vespula germanica*
Common names: *German wasp*

Polistes dominula
European paper wasp

The Invasive Wasps Project is a research project with both eradication and infestation control and communications components. The project is researching the feasibility of eradicating both invasive wasps from South Africa or, failing this, investigating ways to prevent their spread to new areas outside their current, limited distribution. This is necessary to avoid future human injury, and large scale biodiversity and economic impacts.

What can you do to help?

The project is still pinpointing the exact distribution of both wasps in South Africa. If you see either of these wasps, please:

- Provide clear, close-up photographs to the team
- Provide locality information - landmarks or GPS co-ordinates will help locate the wasps
- Provide details of *Vespula germanica* nests or large (larger than A5 paper size) *Polistes dominula* nests.
- Provide contact details in case of a need to follow up
- Please use caution when approaching any wasp species.

Invasive Wasp Project Contact Details

Ms Carol Poole	Administrative Coordinator	c.poole@sanbi.org.za	021 799 8652
Dr Ruan Veldtman	Research Coordinator	veldtman@sun.ac.za	021 808 9441
Ms Karla Haupt	MSc student – <i>Vespula germanica</i>	karlahaupt@sun.ac.za	
Mr PC Benadé	MSc student – <i>Polistes dominula</i>	pcbenade@sun.ac.za	
Ms Carolien van Zyl:	PhD student – Nest observations	lien@sun.ac.z	

NC GEM

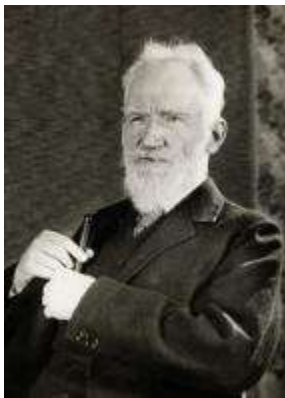
by Iona Everett

The Noetzie Conservancy **Guidelines for Environmental Management** known as the **GEM** has been published. A copy has been delivered to each house. Our vision is for you to leave it in a prominent place in your Noetzie home. It contains useful phone numbers and short comments on many of the items that affect Noetzie Property Owners. Please also bring it to the attention of anyone staying at your house. Any ideas for inclusion into the next version will be gratefully received.

We hope you find it useful

Peeps into the Past

by Chris Everett



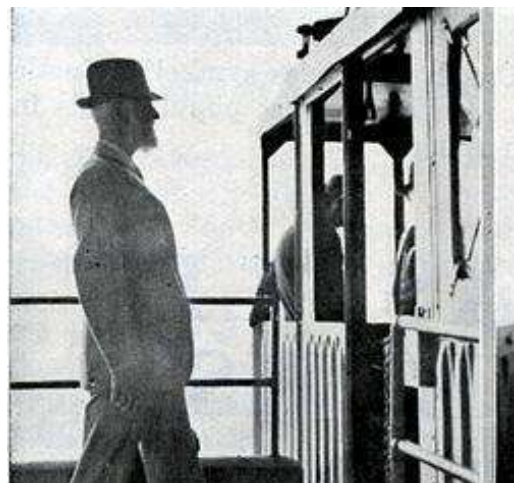
Here's the next one in Chris Everett's series of items of interest that did not make it into the Noetzie History - another Peep into the Past – Ed.

One of the famous visitors to Noetzie was the playwright and music critic George Bernard Shaw, always known as GBS. He was born in 1856 and was a co-founder of the London School of Economics, as well as writing more than 60 plays. He was also an essayist, novelist and short story writer. Nearly all his writings address prevailing social issues, including education, marriage, religion, government, health care, and class privilege. An ardent socialist, Shaw wrote many brochures and speeches for the Fabian Society, promoting equal rights for men and women, the alleviation of abuses of the working class, rescinding private ownership of productive land, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

He is the only person to have been awarded both a Nobel Prize in Literature (1925) and an Oscar (1938), for his contributions to literature and for his work on the film *Pygmalion* (an adaptation of his play of the same name, which also later formed the basis for the musical *My Fair Lady*).



He visited South Africa in 1932 at the age of 75 and again in 1935, on that occasion visiting only Natal. On his first visit, although he initially had meant to land for a few days only and take the same ship back to Britain, he decided to extend the trip and while in Cape Town, he went up Table Mountain by cable-car and took the first flight of his life around the Cape Peninsula.





He also had an introduction to surfing at Muizenberg, as this extract from SA Travel News (below) shows.

Having enjoyed a month of Cape hospitality and friendship, mountains and sunshine, bathing and motoring, fruit orchards and vineyards, he stunned his listeners by launching into an attack on the faults of privileged white South African society. He spoke of the capital invested in 'splendid hotels, golf links, polo grounds...' (*has anything changed?*) and of 'unproductive plutocrats' and their dependence on the labour of others 'not of my own colour' and said he felt as if he was in the worst kind of 'Slave State'. He went on in similar fashion in a broadcast which was carried by 1,500 miles of telephone wire from Cape Town to Durban, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria simultaneously. White South Africans were angry and there was strong reaction in the press. However unpalatable it may have been, Shaw's parting shot to Cape Town contained discomfiting truths to those who

regarded themselves as admirers of his fame in the world of theatre.

He and his wife Charlotte left Cape Town and motored along the Garden Route towards Port Elizabeth where they were to board a ship for Durban, after which they would sail back home up Africa's east coast. However an accident intervened - Shaw was driving and having negotiated the mountainous roads successfully, reached a smooth section, 'let the car rip', hit a bump and charged through a bank and five strands of barbed wire into a ditch. Charlotte was injured. They reached Knysna, booked in at Fraser's Royal Hotel (owned by Margaret Parkes' father) and stayed for five weeks.



The following four photographs were taken by Shaw himself, (the collection is now in the Library of the London School of Economics) and they show The Royal Hotel, St George's Church, a view over Knysna towards the Heads with the edge of Old St George's Church and the Brackenhill Falls.

(Chris notes that he was able to identify the pictures – otherwise marked just as Cape Province in the LSE Archives in return for permission to publish them – Ed.)



While Charlotte recovered, Shaw wrote his novella, 'The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God', which is a book of short stories and is a satirical allegory relating the experiences of an African girl, freshly converted to Christianity, who takes literally the biblical injunction to "Seek and you shall find me" and attempts to seek out and actually speak to God. Both the story and the essay outraged the religious public, ironically creating additional demand that supported five reprintings. Shaw exacerbated the general furore by proposing

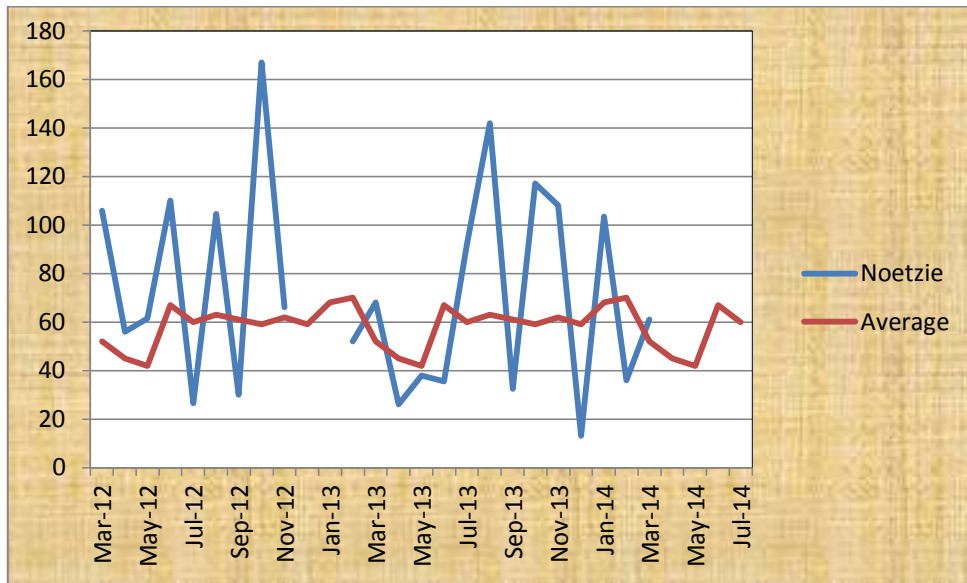
intermarriage of blacks and whites as a solution to racial problems in South Africa. This was taken as a bad joke in Britain and as blasphemy in Nazi Germany.

During his time in Knysna, Shaw visited Noetzie and again went surfing, as this delightful picture, kindly provided by Margaret Parkes, shows. Certainly on this occasion, the oft-repeated story that he outraged the public by bathing nude was not true, although there are many other well-attested stories of his liking for doing so.

Thanks are due The Society of Authors on behalf of the Bernard Shaw Estate, for permission to use the photographs by GBS, which are held at the Library of the London School of Economics and Political Science - references Shaw Photographs / 1 / 41 / 4999, 5001, 5005, and 5015.



Rainfall graph



Help! Snake!!

by Iona Everett

Derek's wife Yeo Bond-Smith is not normally worried by seeing a snake, and at Noetzie they are a common phenomenon, but she was obviously upset - and with reason too. She was in their kitchen and a snake had just slithered past her foot and into a hole under the cupboard. We contacted the Knysna Fire Department and they sprang into action, starting out for Noetzie immediately and receiving final directions on the road via their radios.

On arrival they looked sceptically round the forest – you could see them thinking 'Of course there are snakes here', but on hearing it was in the house they reacted promptly and soon, despite having to break down part of the cupboard to reach it, had the snake in a bucket. It was a lovely young Night Adder! They released him in the plantation as



they felt he might return if released too close.

Our thanks go to Ashley Cunningham and JP Ellis, seen here with Derek Bond-Smith and the snake, for their prompt response.

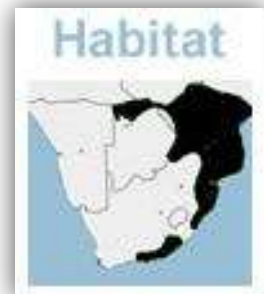
Bushpigs

by Iona Everett



Picture supplied by Wendy Dewberry

After seeing the pictures of our very own Noetzie Bushpigs on the Noetzie Facebook page, I decided it was time to do an article on these secretive animals. It is many years since we saw one at Noetzie when he was digging around in our dustbin! At Noetzie we are on the very edge of their range - see Map right.



Bushpigs (*Potamochoerus porcus*) can thrive in close proximity to human settlements as a consequence of their stealth and liking for crops such, potatoes, maize, tomatoes, sugar cane and other vegetables. In the wild they feed on plant roots, rhizomes, bulbs, tubers, fruits and insect larvae which are rooted from the subsurface soil. They are gregarious but secretive; bushpig families number as many as 12, but usually 6 – 8 and avoid human and predatory interest by sheltering in dense, almost inaccessible undergrowth. Soon after dusk, they leave their hides, travelling along well-worth paths through the bush in search of food.



The Bushpig is a strong, stocky pig with powerful forequarters. Although there are many colour variations they usually have a reddish to grey-brown coat, with an erectile, off-white crest of bristly hair along the top of the head and neck, and dark tufts at the tip of the ears. The upper tusks are barely visible, but the lower tusks are razor sharp and grow to 7 cm in length. They can be very dangerous when surprised and can inflict serious wounds. An adult boar measures up 900 mm at the shoulder and can weigh as much 60 kg.



This picture was from one of the Noetzie cams

Bushpigs are also the largest animals in Southern Africa to build nests. Sows bite off grass and pile it into a heap up to 3 m across and 1 m high, which when completed looks like a small haystack. They usually have three to four piglets in one litter. Apart from suckling them, the sows leave the care of piglets to the dominant boar. They also readily wade in water to reach aquatic plants, are strong swimmers and wallow in mud to cool down. Once piglets are introduced to the group, boars assume the role of protector. Piglets remain with the group until the age of six months, and thereafter are evicted by the dominant pair.

More Pictures from the Noetzie cameras.



Noetzie Road

Recent visitors will have noticed the appalling state of the first section of Noetzie Road, especially the section through Hlalani that was recently dug up for sewerage pipes. It is in a very bad state and the residents have to wade through mud to get to the N2. There are very deep dongas across the road, which erode further after each rain. The lower municipal section of the DR 1771 from Pezula to the Noetzie carpark is also in need of grading, as it has been badly eroded and is presently quite dangerous. Although the 2 km section under Eden jurisdiction was graded and resurfaced, it is unfortunate that Knysna Municipality did not work together with Eden to share the cost of the grader which was on site for a week or more.

Henk Booysen, Pezula Private Estate Manager, has taken this up with Knysna Municipality and Julie Gosling has been in contact with Councillor Louisa Hart, Chairperson of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee who has promised to send it on to be looked at and asked to be kept informed.

Community News

Patricia Margaret Nicolson, neé Everett

3 December 1948 – 25 February 2014

We are very sorry to record the death of Trish after a heroic battle with cancer. Trish was just 6 years old when she first came to Noetzie and she has spent many happy times there, having lived permanently in Noetzie for nearly two years in the 70s, joined in the Everett Christmas holidays and gatherings and more recently enjoyed her time in the beautiful house she built.

The Committee expresses its sincere condolences to her daughters Ambre and Tasha and their families, her long-time partner David MacFarlane and the Everett siblings and their families. The many messages of sympathy from the Noetzie Community were greatly appreciated by the families.



Noetzie is the poorer for the passing of one of its own.

Ella McKenzie Shimmin



Proud parents Nicholas and Andra-Lee Shimmin and grandparents Rob and Cathy Shimmin welcome the birth of Ella McKenzie Shimmin on Wed 14 May 2014. Congratulations and best wishes to the family.