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NEWS-LETTER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOTANISTS  
NUUSBRIEF VAN DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE GENOOTSKAP VAN PLANTKUNDIGES

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## JAARVERSLAG VAN DIE PRESIDENT VAN S.A.G.P. VIR 1984

Die afgelope jaar is weereens deur 'n aantal hoogtepunte in die bestaan van die S.A.G.P. gekenmerk, wat hoofsaaklik in 'n gestadigde groei in ledetal sowel as die meer doeltreffende funksionering van die bestuur uiting gevind het. Dit is met groot genoë dat ek verslag kan doen oor die aktiwiteite van u Genootskap, wat ek graag onder die volgende hoofde nader wil toelig:

### 1. Vergaderings van die Raad en Uitvoerende Komitee

1.1 Raadsvergaderings. Voortvloeiend uit 'n vroeëre besluit, is die aantal Raadsvergaderings beperk tot slegs drie, teweete (a) 'n Raadsvergadering direk na afloop van die Algemene Jaarvergadering op 27 Januarie 1984 aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad. By hierdie vergadering is prof. G.K. Theron as vise-president aangewys, en sal, volgens die nuwe grondwet wat vanaf 1985 in werking tree, vir 'n twee-jaar termyn as President van die Genootskap optree. (b) Op 27 Julie 1984 is die tweede Raadsvergadering in die gastehuis van die Nasionale Botaniese Tuine in Kirstenbosch gehou. (c) Die derde Raadsvergadering is op 14 Januarie 1985 aan die Potchefstroomse Universiteit gehou.

1.2 Vergaderings van die Uitvoerende Komitee. Die U.K. het ongeveer elke twee maande vergader, nl. op 9 April 1984, 9 Junie 1984, 21 November 1984 en 14 Januarie 1985. Slegs die vergadering van 9 Junie 1984 was nie voltallig nie toe een van die lede nie teenwoordig kon wees nie.

2. Ledetal. Die Genootskap ondervind steeds 'n gestadigde groei in ledetal. Tans staan die ledetal op 550. Gedurende die afgelope jaar het 25 gewone, 21 studente en 11 affiliaatlede tot die Genootskap toegetree.

By die vorige Algemene Jaarvergadering is die stigting van die S.W.A.-streek goedgekeur. Hierdie streek het 'n streeksbestuur aangewys en is nou behoorlik op dreef.

### 3. Medals

3.1 S.A. Medal for Botany. This medal was awarded for 1984 to Prof. O.M. Hilliard for her outstanding contributions to Botany.

3.2 S.A.G.P. Junior Medalje. Die Junior Medalje is aan dr. F.C. Botha toegeken op grond van sy proefskrif getiteld: "Saadkiemingsfisiologie van sommige Suid-Afrikaanse Cucurbitaceae met spesiale verwysing na Citrullus lanatus".

4. Congress Matters. The 1985 Congress has, once again, emphasized the valuable rôle that this annual event fulfills in bringing together botanists from various branches of Botany and creating the opportunity for the exchange of ideas, not only on a formal level, but also informally. Council has again considered an alternate time to have the congress, and has concluded that January is still the most suitable to the largest proportion of members. The next Congress is being planned for the Transkei during January 1986. We all look forward to this venue.

5. Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Plantkunde. Die afgelope jaar het die amalgamerings van die S.A. Tydskrif vir Plantkunde met die Journal of S.A. Botany gesien. Die redaksie het verskuif na Kirstenbosch, met prof. J.N. Eloff as ex officio wetenskaplike redakteur. Ook is daar 'n paneel van subredakteurs aangewys, en aanduidings is daar dat ons Tydskrif 'n bloeytydperk voor die deur staan. Gedurende die afgelope jaar het prof. N. Grobbelaar as redakteur uitgetree. Die S.A.G.P. is groot dank aan hom verskuldig vir die leeu-aandeel wat hy gehad het in die totstandkoming en vestiging van ons eie Tydskrif. Die standaard wat gehandhaaf word, was deurgaans van hoë gehalte, en ons kan maar net vertrou dat die nuwe redaksie op hierdie goeie grondslag sal voortbou. Graag wil die Raad ook 'n beroep doen op lede om hierdie Tydskrif in die toekoms net so goed te ondersteun as in die verlede. Aan die nuwe redaksie ons beste wense - ons sien uit na 'n voortgesette puik Tydskrif.

6. South African Council for Natural Scientists. Registration of S.A.A.B. members with S.A.C.N.A.S. continues. S.A.A.B. has been requested by this body that credibility be established by specifying registration when advertising vacancies in Botany posts.

7. Natuurbewaring. Die Natuurbewaringskomitee van die S.A.G.P., onder die bekwame voorsitterskap van prof. G.K. Theron, speel 'n leidende rol in verskillende natuurbewaringsaksies wat tans aan die gang is. Meer besonderhede hieroor blyk uit die verslag van die Natuurbewaringskomitee.

8. Publicity. Unfortunately the publicity the Association is getting at present still is not nearly enough to ensure that S.A.A.B. is recognised for what it really is - the only professional body to look after the interests of botanists in this country. With a membership of well over 500

it is imperative that every one of us should do our utmost to bring to notice what we stand for. This aspect should, in future, be fully exploited and I would like to put it to the incoming Council to make every effort on this front to ensure that S.A.A.B. attain the status that it deserves. The brochures, pamphlets and posters that have been completed this year should greatly contribute in this.

9. Trustfonds. Sedert die toetrede tot die tyddeel-skema het die bates van die trustfonds aansienlike groei getoon. Dit is weliswaar slegs boekwinste en sal sekerlik nie vinnig gerealiseer kan word in die huidige finansiële klimaat nie, maar die gestadigde groei is uiters bemoedigend. Die trustfonds is nou wetlik geregistreer.

10. Associated Scientific and Technical Societies and the Joint Council of Scientific Societies. S.A.A.B. is represented on both these bodies whereby continued participation is ensured.

11. Advisory Committee on Botanical Matters to the Minister of Agriculture. The Association is represented by seven members on this Committee whereby continued input is maintained.

12. Sintaksonomiese Nomenklatuurkomitee. Hierdie komitee het nou begin funksioneer en word nader toegelig deur die verteenwoordiger, dr. J.C. Scheepers.

13. Koördinerende komitee vir houtanatome. 'n Databank vir houtanatome word deur hierdie komitee in die vooruitsig gestel. Die N.I. Plantkunde sal 'n leidende rol hierby speel.

14. Forum Botanicum. Die redaksie van Forum Botanicum sal verskuif na Pretoria met mej. Mienkie Welman as die nuwe redaktrise. Graag wil ek haar die beste toewens vir hierdie onbenydenswaardige taak, en terselfdertyd 'n beroep op alle lede doen om hulle volle samewerking te gee om Forum Botanicum op dieselfde hoë vlak te hou as wat dit tot dusver gehandhaaf het. Aan die uittredende redakteur, mnr Ted Oliver, wat nie alleen een van die twee stigters van Forum Botanicum was nie, maar ook vir 20 jaar as redaksielid opgetree het, ons opregte dank en waardering vir 'n taak wat hy met onderskeiding uitgevoer het.

15. Samestelling van die Raad. Met die inwerkingtreding van die veranderde grondwet, waardeur die Raad verklein word na tien lede, sal die Raad vir 1985 as volg saamgestel wees:

President:	Prof. G.K. Theron
Uitgetrede President:	Prof. J.H. Visser
Sekretaris:	Dr W.F. Reyneke
Tesourier:	Prof. P.D.F. Kok
Raadslede:	Prof. J.N. Eloff, Dr. B. de Winter, Dr. O.T. de Villiers, Dr. G.E. Gibbs Russell, Prof. R. Lubke, Dr. R. Ver- hoeven.

Die volgende Raadslede tree na 'n dienstermyn van twee jaar uit:

Prof. C.F. Cresswell  
Prof. N. Grobbelaar  
Prof. R.N. Pienaar  
Prof. J.G.C. Small  
Dr J.C. Scheepers  
Dr J.H. Jooste  
Mnr C. Boucher

Graag wil ek by hierdie geleentheid die uittrede Raadslede opreg-  
dank vir hulle bydraes tot die ordelike funksionering van die Raad en die  
Genootskap. Hierdie bydraes het nie ongemerk verbygegaan nie.

16. Bedankings. Vergun my om, ten slotte, enkele persone uit te sonder  
aan wie 'n spesiale woord van dank gebring word. Die sekretaris, mnr. C.  
Boucher, en die tesourier, dr. J.H. Jooste, het deur hulle nougesette ywer  
veel bygedra tot die doeltreffende funksionering van die Raad. Aan albei  
ons opregte dank en waardering vir 'n ondankbare taak wel verrig. Mnr  
E.G.H. Oliver het as redakteur van Forum Botanicum voortdurend hoogstaande  
diens gelewer. Ook aan hom ons opregte dank en waardering. Prof. N. Grob-  
belaar as redakteur van ons Tydskrif, het nie alleen die Tydskrif begin nie,  
maar ook deur sy voortgesette ywer toegesien dat die Tydskrif behoorlik  
op dreef gekom het. Dit is 'n onskatbare diens aan die S.A.G.P. wat nie on-  
gesiens verbygegaan het nie. Laastens my opregte dank aan alle lede wat  
deur hulle belangstelling die taak van die bestuur van die S.A.G.P. verge-  
maklik het. Mag die S.A.G.P. nog groot hoogtes bereik.

SAAB CONGRESS 1986

J.H.V.

The next Congress and Annual General Meeting of SAAB will be held from  
Monday 20th to Friday 24th January, 1986. The venue is the University  
of Transkei in Umtata, Republic of Transkei. The Secretary of the Or-  
ganizing Committee is Dr B McKenzie of the Botany Department at the Uni-

versity of Transkei. The theme of the congress will be "The Role of Plant Science in Developing Countries". A plenary session and a number of parallel sessions are being planned. Workshops will also be arranged if requested. Poster papers will be presented as usual. All proposed titles of papers and posters together with abstracts must be submitted by July 31st, 1985. Accommodation will be available at the University's Hostels as well as some hotels in town. Some social functions will be arranged for the evenings. South African citizens must be in possession of a Book of Life or a valid passport to visit Transkei. Persons other than South African citizens must be in possession of a valid passport and require visas to enter Transkei.

Two venues for congress tours are being considered, namely the Mkambati Nature Reserve and Port St Johns. Mkambati is situated on the northern Transkei coast. It's past history as a leper colony has been conducive to the unique preservation of a portion of coastal grassland in an undisturbed condition. It is the only nature reserve that contains a small section of Acocks' veld type "Pondoland Sourveld". Interesting features include: the endemic Pondoland Palm (Jubaeopsis caffra), a variety of forest types (swamp forest, coastal and dune forest, riverine forest), dune vegetation as well as several grassland communities (Aristida junciformis, Stenotaphrum secundatum, Tristachya leucothrix) not to mention some spectacular scenery. From Port St John's there are several interesting features of coastal vegetation that may be visited; Mangroves at Mgazana, Silaka Nature Reserve with coastal forest, dune vegetation and sclerophyllous communities on the headlands. In either case the tour will extend over the weekend preceding or succeeding the congress and will be a maximum of 2 days + 3 nights. Depending upon response, accommodation will be in hotels or self-contained bungalows.

The first circular for this Congress will be distributed soon.

W.G.W.

#### HABITATRAAD TIEN JAAR OUD:

Die Nasionale Veldtrust kan met trots terugkyk na die geboorte van een van sy kinders, die Habitatraad, tien jaar gelede. Dit was inderdaad die Veldtrust wat die inisiatief geneem het om 'n vergadering te belê wat gelei het tot die stigting van die Habitatraad, een van die ingrypendste gebeurtenisse in omgewingsbewaring in Suid-Afrika. Daar kan sonder vrees van teëspraak verklaar word dat die Habitatraad 'n leidende rol gespeel het in die instandkoming van die nuwe Wet op Omgewingsbewaring en die daaruit-spruitende Raad van die Omgewing.

In sy jaarverslag op die jongste jaarvergadering van die Habitatraad wat in Pretoria gehou is, het die President, prof. R C Bigalke, ook verwys na die tienjarige bestaan van die Habitatraad en gesê dat baie veranderinge in dié dekade op die Suid-Afrikaanse omgewingstoneel plaasgevind het. Die Raad het ongetwyfeld 'n belangrike rol gespeel om regeringsdenke en -optrede te beïnvloed. Openbare bewussyn en betrokkenheid by omgewingsaangeleenthede is sekerlik ook gedeeltelik deur die Habitatraad beïnvloed.

Prof. Bigalke het daarop gewys dat daar op die 1983-jaarvergadering heelwat aandag bestee is aan die toekomstige rol van die Habitatraad in die lig van die stigting van die Raad van die Omgewing. Ervaring oor die afgelope jaar het getoon dat die Habitatraad steeds 'n groot en belangrike taak het om te verrig. Dit bly die enigste koördinerende organisasie wat namens private, vrywillige bewaringsgroepe kan optree. Die standpunte wat die Habitatraad huldig word deeglik in ag geneem, hoewel die Raad nie altyd sy sin kry nie.

Wat die afgelope jaar betref, was die Raad op baie terreine bedrywig. Op nasionale vlak is getuienis afgelê voor 'n Gekose Komitee oor die Boswetsontwerp. Voorgestelde wysigings van die bestaande Boswet wat na die mening van die Raad nie in die beste belang van bewaring sou wees nie, is teëgestaan.

Die Habitatraad het ook standpunt ingeneem oor die toekomstige bestuur van die Sederberge en omliggende gebiede. Kortliks gestel is 'n verandering van die huidige situasie teëgestaan. 'n Nasionale beleid ten opsigte van bewaringsgebiede en die rol wat verskeie organisasies behoort te speel, moet eers bepaal word - soos deur die Beplanningskomitee van die Presidentsraad voorgestel is.

Die Raad het dus die aanvaarding deur die Minister van Omgewingsake en Visserye van die aanbeveling van die Raad vir die Omgewing dat daar vir die huidige geen verandering in die status en bestuur van die betrokke gebied sal wees nie, verwelkom.

#### **DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE**

Prof. Bigalke said another issue of national importance which engaged the attention of the Habitat Council was that to take over the De Hoop nature reserve and surrounds as a weapons testing range. The Council nominated two representatives on the Commission appointed to examine the environmental implications of the proposal and have studied its report with care. In reaction the Council reiterated the views that prior study and planning rather than reaction to public pressure must become accepted practise and that reserves must be considered inviolate. Furthermore the Council believes that an independent authority should be able to inspect the site from time to time to satisfy it-

self that assurances given by Armscor regarding conservation and biological management, are indeed carried out.

World Environment Day on 5 June was marked by a symposium on "Engineering our Environment - Destructive or Constructive" arranged by the Federation of Societies of Professional Engineers and co-sponsored by the Habitat Council and EPPIC.

Prof. Bigalke said that the Southern Cape with its outstanding scenic resources and recreational opportunities is, not surprisingly, subject to strong pressures of many kinds. The Habitat Council has been concerned about the interpretation of the regional Guide Plan in permitting development, particularly in the vicinity of Plettenberg Bay. Member organisations drew attention to various anomalies, which have been taken up with the Minister of Planning and the Provincial Administration.

In the Western Cape the Council gave evidence before a Parliamentary Select Committee on the Paarl Mountain Amendment Bill. Professor Bigalke said that the amendments which sought to make it obligatory on the Paarl Town Council to lease the nature reserve to neighbouring farmers for agricultural development were opposed. He said that unfortunately considerations other than environmental ones prevailed and that he had no option but to deplore the passing of the amended Act by Parliament in June 1984.

He said a success story in Natal was the amendment of a plan to extract water from the Umtamvuna River so that the nature reserve would not be affected. However he could not report as happy an outcome to the issue of an access road to the Natal Parks Board camp through Mapelane Forest Reserve. The Umfolozi floods destroyed the existing road and the Council's efforts to avert development of a new one were unsuccessful. The Council also took up objections raised by members to a proposed geophysical survey of the Drakensberg in Natal for mineral deposits and was advised that the company concerned had withdrawn its application.

Ekos 2 Vol. 3, Des. 1984

REPORT TO S.A.A.B ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FLORA CONSERVATION COMMITTEE OF THE  
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE YEAR 1984.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: Mr R D M Parker (Chairman), Mr R I G Attwell (member, Botanical Society of S.A.), Mrs P A Bean (Representative, S.A.A.B.), Mrs K Bergh (Chairman of Council, Bot. Soc.), Mrs Danielle Law (Executive Secretary of the Bot. Soc.), Mr R J Couling (Escom), Prof J N Eloff (Director, National Botanic Gardens of South Africa), Mr J A Fenn (Regional Director of

Forestry, SW. Cape), Mr J F Fick (Representative, Divisional Council), Lt Cdr R Geary-Cooke (Vice Chairman of Council, Bot. Soc. and Editor of Veld and Flora, the Magazine of the Society), Mr J C Greig (Representative, Wildlife Society, and Editor, African Wildlife Magazine), Mr G J E Matthaei (member, Bot. Soc.), Mr W J Middelmann, Representative, S.A.P.P.E.X.), Dr J H Neethling (Representative, Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation of the Cape), Mrs G Ordman (member, Bot. Soc.), Mr F A Roelofse (Director, Parks and Forests Division, Municipality of Cape Town), Prof E A Schelpe (President, Bot. Soc.), Mr P Slingsby (Member, Bot. Soc.), Mrs M A Swanepoel (Minute Secretary, Bot. Soc.), Mr F v.d. Kooy (Escom), Mr D Wightman (Escom).

## INTRODUCTION

The Committee is large, its size having been attained over a period of years as a result of the active involvement of all its members in Conservation matters. It is not, however, unwieldy nor ineffective; on the contrary, the commitment of its members to conservation and their diversity of background and experience result in frequent and productive interaction. On many occasions one person on the committee has been able to provide very real help in solving the problems of another. The Committee has had a full and effective year. Apart from those topics in which it was actively involved, there were many others for which reports were received in order to keep fluid or sensitive situations under surveillance: the vital role of a watchdog Committee which every conservation body must fulfil.

## ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 1984

### 1. NATURE RESERVES

1.1 Kalbaskraal: At midyear a small notice in a newspaper spotted by a member of the public was drawn to the attention of the Society, announcing the deproclamation of this Local Authority Nature Reserve. Further investigation revealed that the land had already been sold by public auction. The complex legal issues which have been unearthed as a result of objections, justifications and statements have to date remained unresolved. The Committee views as a dangerous precedent the deproclamation of any reserve. It therefore took up the cudgels, along with other organisations, to challenge what might appear to be a fait accompli. At the end of 1984 the Administrator of the Cape was obliged to become involved as arbitrator, an unenviable position which we hope he will resolve with Conservation as the winner.

1.2 Kleinmond Reserve: An attempt to add 300 ha of extremely fine Fynbos to this reserve was being inexplicably held up despite all the correct procedures having been followed.



1.3 De Hoop: The Committee expressed its dissatisfaction with the weakness of the Hey Commission report to the Minister of Environment Affairs in regard to a watchdog on the Armscor occupants of the Reserve. It requested that a scientifically competent, independent monitoring body be constituted, by law and not merely by vague assurances, to supervise and attempt to control ARMSCOR's impact on the veld. The Committee also pointed out that as the Reserve was no longer freely accessible to the public, expenditure from the miniscule annual Provincial fund allocated to Conservation was less justified in the Reserve than before, so that Armscor should accept financial responsibility from henceforward out of its vast coffers. The Minister replied that "as the recommendations had been accepted by the Cabinet, it implied that the Cabinet had instructed that the recommendations must be implemented, and it was no longer a matter which depended on the goodwill of Armscor". Here the matter must perforce rest, but it is still unsatisfactory. Until persons independent of government pressure are allowed free access the status of this reserve will remain uncertain.

1.4 Maanschykop Provincial Nature Reserve: This area has recently been purchased in order to protect the populations of the Marsh Rose, Orothamnus zeyheri, in the Klein River Mountains. Plans are afoot to extend the boundaries. This is a satisfactory development, not so much in order to offer protection of one species of plant, but because it further enlarges the percentage of the mountain which is now conserved, making a large unit in combination with Fernkloof Nature Reserve and Voegigat Private Nature Reserve.

## 2. CONSERVED/CONSERVABLE AREAS OTHER THAN NATURE RESERVES

2.1 Cape Peninsula Nature Area. This recently-established area remains on the agenda of the Committee in order to keep a watching brief. By May 1984 Mr Fenn was able to announce that the area was being managed by a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr Hey, comprising representatives of most of the interested bodies. By July a technical subcommittee had made considerable progress in gathering information on the whole area with a view to forming an overall management plan for the Area. By November as a result of considerable pressure from FCC and others, the Administrator decided that the whole of Sandy Bay should be included.

2.2 The Cedarberg Wilderness Area. The announcement that the National Parks Board intended taking over the Cedarberg was received with dismay by conservation bodies in the Cape. The Botanical Society played an active role in the ensuing Enquiry called for by the Council for the Environment. The following are among the many points of view expressed about the issue. This area has at present a higher conservation status than it would have as a National Park as

presently conceived in this country. It is being well managed by the Directorate of Forestry with its large Fynbos research base. It is also an extremely fragile area lacking the resilience to withstand the onslaught of increased numbers of visitors.

The documents put out by the Parks Board to explain their demands showed astonishing ignorance about the area, coupled with inaccuracies. It is a great pity that the National Parks Board did not establish its credibility as a conservation body by announcing its purchase of additional land in this or adjacent areas which are in much greater need of conservation protection. Its attempt to downgrade one of the few really grand Fynbos wildernesses into a tourist attraction was most insensitive, and unwelcome to those who know the area best. The Council for the Environment, after taking evidence, proposed that the position remain unchanged pending the formalisation of a national policy on nature conservation management and jurisdiction.

2.3 Paarl Mountain: This area is a National Monument. Recent ploughing of virgin veld in the area prompted the Paarl municipality to object on the grounds that a revision of the boundaries of a National Monument after proclamation was a precedent which would render all national monuments vulnerable to fortuitous depredations. The Botanical Society felt that this was a historical rather than a botanical issue, but submitted their own objections on botanical grounds. Having submitted a petition, the Society expected to be called to give supporting oral evidence and prepared themselves accordingly. On the day on which oral submissions were to be heard, the Society was informed that "as the petition had never been received, their evidence could not be heard". By an extraordinary coincidence, the same fate befell the petition of another conservation body. The outcome was almost predictable: farmers could continue to lease the land for 32 years, (admittedly at an increased rental, but this value bears little relationship to the value of the land being leased) after which the land would revert back to the reserve!

2.4 The Palmiet Water Scheme: The Botanical Society, in company with numerous other groups and individuals, kept a watching brief on developments in the area, and by and large, were satisfied with the effectiveness of the conservation awareness programmes being conducted by ESCOM on the site, which helped ensure that damage was kept to a minimum. Indeed, all ESCOM contract workers throughout S. Africa are obliged to view a conservation awareness slide and tape presentation, and are said to display a genuine interest in the subject matter. This has resulted in a good level of environmental awareness on the part of everyone at the Palmiet site.

One must not fail to point out, however, that as in the case of Paarl Mountain National Monument, it is almost impossible to reclaim Fynbos once it is damaged.

It is important to emphasise this as almost no one seems to realise that a secondary covering of bushes in an area in which the natural veld has been disturbed does not, in reality, equal the original veld, and may never do so. Veld disturbed is actually a heritage lost. Mountainsides defaced by dam walls and quarrying are scars on the landscape no matter what effort has been made to diminish their impact. The almost inevitable establishment of yet another dam in this previously glorious valley seems to be being taken for granted by ESCOM even prior to the tabling of a White Paper on the subject.

2.5 Riverlands: This area has for some years occupied the attention of conservationists, being one of the few residual lowland Fynbos areas still worthy of receiving Reserve status. Negotiation between various organisations has revealed that the land is owned by SATS; is partly alienated by the sale of a scatter of building plots in a township whose plan was passed decades ago; has a squatter problem; a worse alien wattle problem; is leased to a Church, which subleases farming rights to a private person who has the right to plough some of the area, which area is not demarcated by a fence; through which fires sweep at unpredictable times; and in which livestock or traces of livestock have been found even in the natural veld area. Approximately 35 species of now virtually extinct plants are known to be represented by relict populations here, and about 700ha is wistfully regarded by Cape botanists as an area worthy of being conserved. The best that can be said about the conservation prospects of the area at the moment is that hope is not lost as long as negotiations are still proceeding between the owners and the Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation.

2.6 Wolfgat: This area of 248 hectares on the False Bay coast has been earmarked for proclamation as a Nature Area by the City Council. Despite lack of financial support by the Administrator the City Engineer will, in the interim, meet the cost of patrolling the area to prevent damage, trespassing and poaching.

2.7 Langebaan Nature Area: The establishment in December of this Nature Area by the Minister of Constitutional Development in terms of the Environment Conservation Act is good news. Once the Management Committee has drawn up a Management Plan for the area, it should be safe from further exploitation.

3. ROAD DEVELOPMENT: For those who feel that the conservation cause is suitable only for latter-day Don Quixotes, the recent decision by the Administrator of the Cape to refuse permission for the building of the proposed coastal road from Struisbaai to Die Dam will come as a surprise. At least one coastal area seems to have been preserved from gratuitous development. The Minister for Environment and Tourism has twice recently called attention to the "alarming rate" at which our coastal areas are being exploited. He appealed this year to

local authorities to intervene and require environmental impact studies before any further destruction is caused by coastal developments. Because of his conservation ethic we trust that this demanding portfolio will remain Mr Wiley's for many years, and that his pleas will be well-received by all local authorities.

#### 4. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

4.1 Mr Slingsby organised and ran further Environment Awareness one-day and 3-day Courses during the year, confined, due to the cost of transport, mostly to children and teachers from the nearby areas, and limited in number by the amount of free time he has available. The Committee thanked him for his generosity in giving up free time for this invaluable project, and pledged financial support where necessary.

4.2 Prof. Eloff stated that Environmental awareness teaching was one of the main priorities of the National Botanic Gardens, and to this end, an interpretive centre and overnight accommodation were being planned in the new building programme for Kirstenbosch.

#### 5. PEST PLANTS

5.1 During the year the Committee took note of several matters, not the least of which were the articles in the Department of Agriculture newsletters on biological control of scotch thistle and *Sesbania*, and the dangers of pesticide contamination of the land. Such articles are welcome, and will be received and, one hopes, read, by a large audience of those most in a position to take constructive action.

5.2 It was also noted that the bugweed, *Solanum mauritianum* has been given "declared weed" status and that persons on whose property it grows are now obliged to eradicate it.

5.3 Copies of the new Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act No 40 of 1983, which strengthens the impact of existing legislation and increases the penalties for transgressors, are being held for perusal at the Botanical Society Office.

5.4 An appeal was received from a member of the public to take action on the spread of alien vegetation in Viljoen's Pass, outside Grabouw. Mr Fenn said that all Forestry land, of which this is a part, was subject to an overall burning and alien clearing programme, and would be attended to.

6. I.U.C.N. MEMBERSHIP: This was ratified telephonically on the 8th November, 1983, and formal ratification received on December 7th, 1984, resulting in enhanced status for the society and a flow of useful information.

## 7. THE WILD FLOWER TRADE

7.1 Sale of Endangered Proteas. A furore broke out after the revelation that the flowerheads of Protea holosericea, an almost extinct, very local, high-altitude protea on the Langeberg Mountains, had been sold "by the thousands" by a Montagu farmer, having been poached from adjacent private land where it was being protected. While one could conclude from the size of the trade that the protea was not in fact rare in its only habitat, it is nevertheless true that such wholesale exploitation had jeopardised its survival in the event of a fire sweeping through the habitat. The Magistrate fined the farmer R300 and very unfairly blamed the Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation for not keeping a better watch on the plants. A strategy for dealing with future cases of this sort was worked out by the Committee.

7.2 The position of Endangered species under the existing Ordinance. The problem of Protea holosericea highlights the need to develop a better method of ensuring the survival of rare, exploitable plants. The present Provincial Ordinance lists endangered plants. Only a very few species of Cape Flora are on this list, and Protea holosericea is not one of them. However, all Proteaceae are on the Protected list and are subject to selling permits. Additional species may be excluded from harvesting on the licences of individual harvesters. While it is agreed that the list is inadequate, the Committee foresees that any attempt to afford better protection for our hosts of rare species by increasing the number on the list will make the Ordinance unworkable. Mr Middelmann agreed to make a start by attempting first of all to find out which species are being exploited by the Wild Flower Trade, and with the help of Mrs Bean would then assess the complexity and size of the problem. However, in the meantime the Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation has appointed an officer to tackle the preliminary surveys, so nothing more could be done until these were completed.

7.3 Veld Utilisation for Decorative Purposes: The Wildflower trade was still awaiting the appearance and implementation of a questionnaire long since promised by the BRI. The questionnaire would seem to be in draft form in the hands of the Department of Agriculture at Elsenburg, but nothing further has been done despite the passage of several years since first being mooted.

7.4 Mountain Catchment Areas Regulations: The M.C.A.R. Committee had recently compiled a set of regulations concerning the use of privately owned land falling within the catchment area. The F.C.C. commented that, while these were a step in the right direction, they could not be expected to be effective unless they were enforceable, and could not see how to achieve this on privately owned property.

## 8. VELD FIRES

8.1 Fires on the Peninsula: Two winter fires which occurred during this year on the Cape Peninsula had been started by "persons ignorant of burning procedures", one being a person in the Navy and the other a private landowner in a Divisional Council area. Both fires were being followed up.

8.2 Illegal Mountain Fires: Mr Fenn drew attention to the new Forestry Bill which contained suggestions to increase the maximum penalty for causing a fire from R1 000 to R2 500, and to oblige guilty landowners to pay for the cost of fighting the fire. The opinion was expressed that it was not only private individuals, but also municipalities and divisional councils who should exercise stricter control.

8.3 The Effects of Fire on Fynbos: Attention was drawn to a quote from Prof. Schelpe's recent University of Cape Town summer school lecture which found its way into the local press, that summer fires, such as the huge Villiersdorp mountain fire of this year could do nothing but good in promoting the regeneration of the Fynbos. He did, however, add the caveat, not published, that the interval between fires was also important, a short cycle being very harmful. The Committee, while accepting these points, nevertheless expressed its condolences to those who had suffered bereavement due to the loss of life occurring among the firefighters.

9. THREATENED PLANTS: The plight of the almost extinct Moraea loubseri at Saldanha Bay was considered by the Committee. As it is in cultivation all is not yet quite lost, but although further plants have been discovered in the wild which have not been affected by quarrying, it is also true that nothing much can be done to ensure long-term survival except by creating a Reserve. The establishment of reserves is the most urgent and necessary requirement in conservation; what we do not protect in the next few years will be lost for all time. Indeed, more and more plants are becoming endangered every year and, it seems, will disappear before the rather indifferent gaze of our society, despite the concern and attempts to publicise the reality of the situation by a few individuals. Our society cannot even plead ignorance, as can more primitive ones. Yet, the creation of individual pocket-handkerchief sized Reserves for such single species more often than not fails to ensure their survival. In any case, urgent attention should now rather be given to the encouragement of the attitude of mind among conservationists which understands the ecological necessity for creating ecosystem reserves in preference to one-species reserves.

The problem of rare and endangered plants is so frustrating and depressing that it is almost a non-subject for discussion these days. Indeed, deproclama-

tion and diminution of even those areas which we believed to be safe is currently a new threat to be fought. The pleas of the far-sighted who see the futility of all involvement in the natural veld of our country, including research, when that veld is not conserved, seem to go unnoticed. Spending money on research on our vanishing wild heritage without ensuring its long-term survival by swiftly creating reserves where there is still any veld worth saving, is a placebo, or perhaps the displacement activity of scientists denied the power to do something more rational. But it is not satisfactory. Should SAAB not do something to alert the government to the need for acting swiftly? Slow action in this regard is no action. Pleading poverty in the current financial crisis will merely ensure that our heritage is lost, for we have at this moment already almost no land left worth conserving.

10. PUBLICATIONS: By the end of 1984 23 000 Guides had been sold, and almost a third of a million rand was tied up in stock. Four Guides in both official languages had been published: No. 1, Namaqualand; No. 2, Outeniqua and the Little Karroo; No. 3, The Cape Peninsula; and No. 4, the Lowveld. This represents a huge capital sum allocated and partly tied up, the last Guide having cost R74 000 to publish. The books were being sold as near cost as possible so as to make them accessible to everyone who is interested in the Flora, and the policy is to keep all in stock at all times as far as possible. By the end of the year Guide no. 5, "The Hottentots' Holland to Hermanus area" was well on its way. Photographs with accompanying vouchers had been completed, and the first draft of the text was almost finished.

11. LINKS WITH OTHER GROUPS: The Committee keeps in contact with several other conservation groups.

11.1 The Habitat Council: This body seems to keep a very low profile. No correspondence was received and nothing took place worthy of comment by the Botanical Society throughout the year.

11.2 C.C.N.C.C.: The Botanical Society is represented on the Coordinating Council for Nature Conservation in the Cape by the Chairman of its Flora Conservation Committee, which ensures an interaction between them when items of mutual interest arise.

11.3 The Endangered Wildlife Trust: The Society continued its close liaison with this group, as in the past.

## 12. OTHER MATTERS

12.1 The Flora Conservation Scholarship: On the advice of Prof Schelpe this scholarship, worth R1 000 annually for 2 years, was awarded this year to

A.M. Avis to allow him to conduct research on the use of indigenous plants for dune stabilisation.

12.2 Kirstenbosch Research Centre: The Flora Conservation Committee donated R5 000 towards the establishment of this laboratory.

12.3 "Sexual Encounters of a Floral Kind": A copy of this film was purchased for the Botanical Society from funds made available by the Conservation Committee, and has been in constant demand ever since it arrived. As a means of arousing interest in plants it has been a rousing success. If people are intrigued, amused or delighted, or their intellect has been stimulated by plants, they will want to ensure the plants' long-term survival. There can be few better ways to promote the conservation ethic than this.

P.A.B.

#### DEATHS OF TWO HONORARY MEMBERS OF SAAB

The doyenne of South African botanical artists and recipient of the SAAB Certificate of Merit, Cythna Letty, died in Pretoria on Friday, 3rd May 1985. She was 90 years old. An obituary will appear in the next issue of Forum Botanicum.

Prof. P J Botha, voormalige Professor in Plantkunde aan die Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir C.H.O. en ontvanger van die SAGP Senior Medalje vir Plantkunde, is op Sondag, 28 April 1985, oorlede. Hy was 73 jaar oud. 'n Lewensskets sal in die volgende uitgawe van Forum Botanicum verskyn.

#### NUUS VAN DIE SAGP-SEKRETARIAAT

##### 1. Konstitusie

Die 1985 weergawe van die SAGP konstitusie (Engels/Afrikaans) is nou op aanvraag beskikbaar vanaf die Eresekretaris: SAGP, dr W.F. Reyneke, Departement Plantkunde, Universiteit van Pretoria, Pretoria, 0002.

##### 2. Bywoning van 1986 Kongres te Umtata deur Staatsdiensamptenare

Na aanleiding van navraag oor die uitbetaling van reis- en verblyf koste aan staatsdiensamptenare het mnr R.F. Bester (Hoof: Begrotings en Ondersteuningsdienste, P/Sak X723, Pretoria) die volgende inligting beskikbaar gestel: Die Transkei word soortgelyk aan ander buurstate van die RSA, nie as buiteland beskou nie en gevolglik sal die normale reis- en verblyf kostetarief vir persone wat wel daarvoor kwalifiseer, van toepassing wees.

#### REDAKTRISE/EDITOR

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