

# KNRA Break

**KLIPRIVIERSBERG NATURE RESERVE**  
JOHANNESBURG'S JEWEL OF THE SOUTH



**ASSOCIATION**

KNRA invites all interested parties to submit articles, letters and / or photographs for publication. Any suggestions for regular features are welcome.

Newsletters will be published monthly and contributions need to be submitted no later than the 10th of the month for inclusion in the next publication. Late submissions will be considered for the next publication if they are not time sensitive.

All contributions to be sent via email please.

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**Disclaimer:**

*All contributions are the opinion of the contributor and not necessarily of either the KNRA Committee or Editor*

*No racism, foul language or personal insults will be permitted. Please be respectful of others opinions .*

*The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters / articles and to reject any letters / articles that are deemed unsuitable*

## Ed 's Line.....

Issue One is done and dusted and I have received some very positive feedback. Keep your comments, suggestions and articles rolling in so that we can make this an interactive, informative and fun newsletter. In particular I would like to set aside a section for the younger nature lovers. If you know of any youngsters who have uttered amusing, wise or original opinions on nature reserves and conservation please send them in with their first name, age, school and standard (where applicable). Drawings are also welcome.

This month we will be taking a step back and taking the time to remember a past Chairman, Clem Kourie, who passed away 7 April 2014. Included in this issue are tributes and remembrances from Chairs, past and present, who share their memories and anecdotes.

KNRA is in the enviable position of having on board a direct descendant of the Quilliam family. Margaret West and her sister Lyn Thompson have generously agreed to share memories of a time when the farmstead was both a home and a livelihood for the occupants. Lyn's entertaining writing style will, I am sure, delight those who like me have often wondered what life on the old farmstead was like. These reminiscences will be serialised starting with this issue and continuing for a further eighteen issues. Look out for **"Klipriviersberg before it became a nature reserve. The next generation remembers"**.

On a more serious and educational note we have a fascinating article by René de Villiers discussing :

### **"The Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve, The Early Days"**

In reading the article and deciding on the instalment splits it became increasingly clear to me that the old adage "the more things change the more they stay the same" holds very true; but that of course is for you to decide for yourselves. Due to the sheer length the document will be serialised in fourteen instalments. Anyone who wishes to receive the document in its entirety can send me an email request.

Until next time "keep the communication channels open".

Submissions can be made to: knrasecandsec@gmail.com

**"The Ed"**

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## Tribute to Clem Kourie by Morné Brits

The amount of hard work and dedication that Clem put into the KNRA and the KNR is astounding. It was not just a passtime with him, but central to who he was. He set the bar very high, had strong opinions and was tenacious in doing things 'right'. This made it a bit difficult for the rest of us. It was not easy to win an argument or move things in a different direction. The importance of the KNR/KNRA to him was reflected in the committee

meetings; his focus and attention to detail is usually only seen in corporate boardrooms. I don't think I appreciate this fully until I started serving with him on the KlipSA's Sustainable Development team. There he was much more relaxed, quick to smile and quick to laugh with us. The difference was perhaps between that of hobby and a life passion.

Clem has left some big shoes

to fill. We miss his attention to detail, his networking and organisational skills and yes, even his 'big brother' ways. Nostalgically I miss returning from our guided walks with Clem patiently waiting for us at the KNRA table, dressed in Kaki's, hands in pockets with cooler bag full of cold drinks to quench our thirst.

He has truly made his mark.

Morné Brits

KNR Residents



Grateful Thanks .....

**Donations:**

- F.M. Hurst**
- M. Williams**
- A. Cousins**
- The Aloes**
- Fast Flame Profiling**
- J. Burch**
- The Unified Church of Nazerene Maraisburg**

**Saturday 21 March Workshop**

Despite the somewhat inclement weather a small but enthusiastic group of nature lovers gathered to hear what the KNRA does, wants to do and needs going forward.

There were no lack of suggestions, ideas and skills that would strengthen the core of the KNRA and hopefully we will be seeing a lot more of them all in the near future.

Thank you all for your time and interest.



Round Table Discussions

**Banking Details:**

Account Name:  
Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve  
Bank:  
Standard Bank Southdale  
Branch Code:  
006405  
Account Number:  
201047284

Schedule of Events

**Bird Walks**

Kevin Lavery

083 267 3494

**Mid Week Walk**

Ann Norton

076 583 7946

**Saturday Stroll**

Ann Norton

076 583 7946

**Guided Walks:**

Tony Ferguson

082 454 6114

**General:**

084 804 4073

Please note that these dates are subject to change.

Please confirm dates with the relevant persons listed above.

# April 2015

*(information subject to change)*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 08h00 Mid-Week Walk Entrance Precinct Peggy Vera Rd	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 08h00 Autumn Walk T.B.A.	13	14	15 08h00 Mid-Week Walk Entrance Precinct	16	17	18 07h00 Bird Walk Entrance Precinct
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 08h00 Saturday Stroll Entrance Precinct
26 08h00 Social Walk Entrance Precinct	27	28	29	30	31	

**GPS Co-Ordinates:**

**Silent Pool** 26° 16 ' 59.57 " S / 28° 00 ' 34.34 " E    **Entrance Precinct** 26° 18 ' 13.50 " S / 28° 00 ' 39.34 " E

**Walk Tips:**

We recommend that you wear a hat, good walking shoes and sun block. Bring snacks and water (water is a must!) Binoculars are recommended for the bird walks.

## Tribute to Clem Kourie by Noel Thornton

I met Clem at a KNRA AGM in 1999 and over the next fourteen years he became not only my mentor but a very good friend. He was unselfish in sharing his vast knowledge about the reserve with me and I benefitted immensely from our association.

What I admired most about him was his strict adherence to the norms that governed the management of the association. His dictum of no half-measures, fudging or exaggeration, together with total honesty, set the standard for how the association conducted its business. He was often criticised for his rather conservative approach to dealing with KNRA finances, the fact that we were able to resort to top legal opinion

when we opposed the erection of a communications mast in the reserve, more than justified his approach.

He was not an anecdotal person, too serious, too committed and way too sincere. I do, however, recall one incident when he acted totally out of character: We attended a meeting relating to land development in Meyersdal. There had been some fairly obviously "shenanigans" about the whole deal, hence the public protest meeting. During the course of the meeting a lady started expounding the merits of an individual whose conduct had been less than ethical, regarding the development. She had only just launched into her discourse, when a voice from the back of

the hall told to sit down and shut-up because she was talking nonsense. Need I say whose voice it was?

On a personal note: One of our children had nervous breakdown. On hearing about this, Clem asked me whether I had any objection to the situation being remembered in Roman Catholic prayers. Sometime later he had a similar situation and I was able to ask him whether he had any objection to Anglican prayers. Apart from the serious side of this, the Catholic/Anglican banter, misunderstood by many people on the committee, never failed to raise a smile.

The KNRA is fortunate that we had him for so many years. May his heritage live on!

***"He was not an anecdotal person, too serious, too committed and way too sincere."***

## Tribute to Clem Kourie by Les Sawers

I will always have fond memories of Clem. He was calm, placid and always ready to greet you with his hospitable smile. There was never anything that was too much trouble for him to undertake. Accounting was his profession and the Executive Committee could always rely on him to keep the finances of the association accurate and up to date and he never failed to provide the end of year reports well on time. His input in the committee meetings was always valued and respected.

While accounting was his profession the nature reserve was one of his passions. The fact that he is probably the longest serving member on the executive committee

bears witness to this. He shared his knowledge of the flora and fauna of the nature reserve with the general public on the guided trail walks from back in the days before the reserve had not been properly fenced and the trails had not yet been planned or laid out. Over many years annual clean ups were arranged to gradually clear out the 13 or so car wrecks and a great deal of corrugated and scrap iron that had been used to construct pig pens on the land and Clem was always available to help with this task, likewise when it came to clearing the Black Wattles. He also took part in fence patrols and accompanying myself and the South African Police Service personnel into the re-

serve to track down individuals illegally harvesting the flora for the muti shops and sango-mas.

His memory and recall were a definite asset that enabled him to provide valuable input regarding the historical background to issues that had arisen with the City Council, Parks Department, Residents Associations, the general public, property owners and entities that felt that the Nature Reserve was fair game for projects that were not in the interests of the Nature Reserve.

He will be sorely missed by us all.

With fond memories,  
Les Sawers  
Past Chairman

***"He was calm, placid and always ready to greet you with his hospitable smile."***

## The Klip Riviersberg Nature Reserve, The Early Days (Part 1/14)

Compiled by René de Villiers.

*“I could simply not comprehend why anyone would want to scar this green jewel of the south, our long suffering south, by constructing a road right through it. ”*

### Proclamation of The Reserve

The Klip Riviersberg Nature Reserve, or the reserve for short, has always had a special place in the hearts and minds of the people living along its borders and is safe to say that most of the residents in Mondeor feel that way about it. It was certainly the case in the early days of the reserve, and I count myself among them. Since the very early days the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association (KNRA) had been arranging guided walks in the reserve, and with the modest finances at its disposal strove to keep alien vegetation in check, combat fires, arrange guided walks and bring the reserve to the attention of the greater Johannesburg and the rest of the country. One of its earliest projects was to lobby, successfully, for the formal proclamation of the area as a nature reserve. For the record, it was proclaimed on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1984 in terms of section 14 of the Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ordinance 12 of 1983); Administrator’s

Notice 1827. It comprises Erf 49 Alan Manor, Erf 1472 Mondeor, Erf 1353 Kibler Park and Ptn 14 of the Farm Rietvlei 101. All of these erven belong to the (then) Johannesburg City Council Parks and Recreation Department. Portion 17 of the farm Rietvlei 101 which falls within the fenced borders of the reserve, belongs to the University of the Witwatersrand. In all its endeavours the KNRA has done a sterling job and we owe a large debt of gratitude to those early pioneering committees and members in general.

### The road-through-the-reserve

A recurring feature and threat to the reserve, again especially so in the early days, was the mooted building of a road through the reserve – a controversy which, in time, became known as the Peggy Vera Road issue. It was this matter which perked my interest from the very beginning - I could simply not compre-

hend why anyone would want to scar this green jewel of the south, our long suffering south, by constructing a road right through it. The Peggy Vera Road issue cropped up from time to time and would then in between times go quiet, only to flare up again. This whole thing spanned a period of more than a decade, or even longer. What I am about to relate gives a broad brush view of the history, and I trust I will be forgiven if at times I get my dates or the sequence of events slightly wrong, or if I omit the names of people who played significant roles over the years. But the broad thrust of events is certainly accurate and illustrates the intensity of this threat to the reserve over many years. And, sadly, it is my prediction, that the threat is still with us.

**Next issue : Political Environment**



Farmhouse Stoep

## Klipriviersburg before it became a nature reserve. The next generation remembers. (Part 1 / 19)

Written by Lyn Thompson

### Occasional farm visit when young

When we were very young we lived in Vereeniging and would occasionally come to the farm for the weekend. Our grandfather, Albert Quilliam was still alive in those days. He would stand at the gate to the little garden in front of the farmhouse and watch the cattle come past on their way to the cattle kraal for the night. When we were there he would stand with us until the cattle had gone and then we would go inside. Margaret was still just a toddler in those days and after one such parade in front of the gate granddad opened it and took us outside onto the dirt road. He walked until he found a lovely, large cowpat and put Margaret’s bare feet into it. Then he marched us inside and handed Margaret over to our horrified mom. He said with a chuckle \*that should ensure her growth!\*

**Next Issue : Feral Dog**

*“If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts also happens to the man. All things are connected”.*

CHIEF SEATTLE (SI' AHL) OF THE SUWAMISH TRIBE, letter to President Franklin Pierce