

KNRA Break

December 2015

KLIPRIVIERSBERG NATURE RESERVE ASSOCIATION

JOHANNESBURG'S JEWEL OF THE SOUTH



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 20th 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.....

"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans."

Commonly attributed to John Lennon, (it does in fact appear in his song "Beautiful Boy"), this quote has been traced back to January 1957 and appeared in the Reader's Digest under the name of Allen Saunders—a writer and cartoonist.

Regardless of the origins I have recently experienced first hand the truth of the quote. Happily indulging in a love for the written word, research and putting together the newsletter whilst acting as secretary for KNRA and KlipSA life decided to throw me a curve ball. Since it was a very personal curve ball I will not go into details here beyond to say I had to take stock of the situation and decide where my energy and time needed to be used. I duly resigned from my volunteer work and was bowled over by

the support and understanding I received. I was clearly not as alone as I had imagined. So to Margaret West, Lea Brash, Morné Brits and Andrew Barker I say a huge "thank you".

The hardest thing to give up was the newsletter since I had enjoyed the time I had spent putting them together. I was, therefore, thrilled when asked if I could see my way clear to continuing with them. **Yes Please!**

In the July 2015 newsletter I featured a remarkable lady named Marlene Wilson. She was in training to climb Kili-manjaro despite the fact that she is blind and at 69 years of age well entitled to be living out a restful retirement. Unfortunately on day five of the climb, and at 5000 metres, Marlene was suffering from severe altitude sickness and had to turn back. Her god-daughter, Jolene Letley, completed the ascent. Regardless of the fact Marlene did not summit Kilimanjaro the attempt was and remains inspirational and she managed to

raise funds for breast cancer. **Awesome lady!**

The following quote springs to mind when faced with such courage:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."
(Theodore Roosevelt)

On that note until next time!
"The Ed"

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Klipriviersberg Verreaux Eaglessubmitted by Bo van der Lecq

The following article and photographs were submitted via e-mail by Bo van der Lecq, Project Manager, Klipriviersberg Verreaux's Eagles Inc WBC, contact details are supplied at the end of the article.

(Please note that this article has been submitted to other publications for consideration and is not exclusive to this newsletter)

Klipriviersberg Verreaux's Eagles Inc Wits Bird Club

Territorial Boundaries

(All photos by Ernest Porter)

The pair of Verreaux's (Black) eagles that have been seen for the first time during 2003 skirting the hills above Meyers Farm (Alberton) and extending along the greater Klipriviersberg ridge system requires further investigation!

It is widely speculated that the original eagles may be the pair that previously nested in Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve during the 1990's and early 2000's having for some unknown reason vacated that site to cut a new urban niche for themselves within the approx. 15km long Klipriviersberg ridge system. Their main attraction is undoubtedly the natural abundance of Rock hyrax (dassie) **Continued pg 4**

Ruins Grateful Thanks



Donations:
Individuals:
N. Bentley, A. Cousins
E. Erasmus, M. Williams
C. Morton, H. Harper
E. Adair

Donations:
Businesses / Organisations:
The Aloes
Fast Flame Profiling cc

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

Progress is what happens when impossibility yields to necessity
 Arnold H Glasgow—Born 1905 * Died 2011 - American Humourist

Schedule of Events

December 2015 (January 2016)
(information subject to change)

Bird Walks
 Kevin Lavery
 083 267 3494
Mid Week Walk
 Ann Norton
 076 583 7946
Saturday Stroll
 Suspended until further notice
Guided Walks:
 John Burmeister
 084 804 4073
General:
 084 804 4073
 Please note that these dates are subject to change.
 Please confirm dates with the relevant persons listed above.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 <small>08h00</small> <i>Mid Week Walk Entrance Precinct (Also 20 January)</i>	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 <small>08h00</small> <i>Guided Walk Entrance Precinct (Also 17 January)</i>	14	15	16	17	18	19 <small>06h00</small> <i>Bird Walk Entrance Precinct (Also January 19th)</i>
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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.



Directions to "Silent Pool" Entrance (North):

Coming South from N1 or N3:

1. From N12, either via Western Bypass (N1) or Eastern Bypass (N3) get onto the Southern Bypass (N12)
2. Take Kliprivier Drive off ramp (R556) and travel South until you get to the traffic lights cnr Vorster/Columbine Ave
3. Turn right into Columbine, go under bridge and follow Columbine until the Ormonde Drive lights (Engen to the left and Dischem to the right)
4. Turn right into Ormonde Drive
5. Pass Devereux Ave on your left and just before the bridge turn left into Frandolph
6. Proceed to the end of Frandolph to the "Silent Pool" gate. Parking is outside the Reserve.

Coming from M1 South:

1. Pass Gold Reef City and Nasrec off-ramp. Look for Vereeniging—R82 (don't continue to N12 –Bloemfontein!!!) You need the correct lane here unless you want the scenic route.
2. Take Columbine off-ramp and turn left into Columbine
3. Travel down until the lights at a small shopping centre. (Dischem on your left, Steers and Engen on your right)
4. Turn right into Ormonde Drive
5. Pass Devereux Ave on your left and just before the bridge turn left into Frandolph
6. Proceed to the end of Frandolph to the "Silent Pool" gate. Parking is outside the Reserve.

Directions to Peggy Vera Entrance (South):

Coming from South N1 or N3:

1. Take the (N12) and travel to the Kliprivier Drive off-ramp (R556)
2. Travelling South turn right into Impala Rd
3. Travel 4km and turn right into Springbok Rd
4. Turn first right just before Engen into Silver Lane
5. At the T-junction turn right into Peggy Vera
6. Pass the Klipriviersberg Recreation Centre which will be on your right, the Reserve entrance is the next turn right (Parking in grounds)

Coming from M1 South:

1. Pass Gold Reef City and Nasrec off-ramp. Look for Vereeniging—R82 (don't continue to N12 –Bloemfontein!!!) You need the correct lane here unless you want the scenic route.
2. Continue on the on the R82 passing Columbine Rd off-ramp with Southgate Shopping Centre on your right
3. Travel 3km and turn left at the first traffic light into Pierpont Drive
4. Travel about 1km to the fork in the road
5. Continue to the left (Pierpont) and take an almost immediate right fork to the end of the road (T-junction—Peggy Vera)
6. Pass the recreation centre on your right, the next entrance is to the Reserve (Parking in grounds)

From Alberton travel R554 Swartkoppies (away from Alberton). Cross the Kliprivier Drive lights (new shopping centre on the right), continue on to the first lights thereafter and turn right into Peggy Vera. Continue on past recreation centre on the right. Next entrance on the right is the Reserve. Parking in grounds.

Klipriviersberg Verreux Eaglessubmitted by Bo van der Lecq

“Members of Raptor Conservation Projects have been actively monitoring this pair since 2007 “

populations found within the entire rocky ridges with subsequent overspill into urban storm water drains and residential gardens.

Members of Raptor Conservation Projects have been actively monitoring this pair since 2007 when they were breeding in a power pylon off the Reading Interchange having raised numerous chicks to juvenile and fledging stages. During the latter half of their 2008 breeding season, their nest was deliberately destroyed that forced an eighty-day-old juvenile to fledge prematurely.

To prevent a recurring scenario during the following breeding seasons, permission was obtained from the late Hans Meyer to enable the erection of an artificial nesting platform on safe and secure property. The mast was donated by the then Siyavaya Highway Construction JV and was erected in time before the new 2009 breeding season commenced. Fortunately for us, the eagle pair diverted from reusing the power pylon and although the first breeding attempt was unsuccessful, during 2010 the pair raised a chick to juvenile and fledging stages being the first known success on an artificial man-made structure for large eagles in southern Africa or possibly Africa as a whole.

Sadly, during September 2010 the male disappeared and was never seen again. This incident resulted that the female had to raise her young protégé by herself and despite the burden associated thereto she managed successfully. Twenty-one months and thirteen days later, during 2013, the female attracted a new male that has been with her since. Impossible to determine their ages, we are of the opinion that the new male was approx. 3 years young as his leggings (feathered tarsi) were still pale and not black as found in adult eagles.

With no breeding in 2011 and 2012, the new pair bred successfully during 2013, 2014 and

2015. Currently there is a five-month-old juvenile within the proximity of the farm, learning eagle skills from the adult pair. She will remain within their natal home range until at least mid November before being gradually ousted by the adult eagles. This process can take at least six weeks to complete before she finds herself on her own and outside their territorial boundaries. Unfortunately, we do not know what the full extent is of eagle pairs' territorial boundaries are, and we are very keen to determine this with public participation. A long-term project, it is essential that we gain as much information as possible. The information can be logged on our form (attached) and returned to myself or Carike either by scanning or return email or provide the details on our Facebook page: **[Klipriviersberg Verreux's Eagles Inc WBC.](#)**

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**Top: Adult Female
Bottom: Adult Male
Pictures by Ernest Porter**



**Top: Juvenile
Middle: Juvenile and Female
Bottom: Juvenile
Pictures by Ernest Porter**



**Top and Bottom
Five month old juvenile
Pictures by Ernest Porter**

“With no breeding in 2011 and 2012, the new pair bred successfully during 2013, 2014 and 2015“

The Klip Riviersberg Nature Reserve, The Early Days

Compiled by René de Villiers

Consulting firm De Leuw, Cather

Now started one of those shameful chapters which had over the years been a hallmark of interactions with Council. ACT immediately asked Council for details of the appointment. On 13th November 1986 it responded by telling ACT that consultants had, indeed, been appointed. Their brief was to firstly examine the need/desirability of the link, and if it was found to be so needed, to, as a second phase, examine its alignment. The consultants were also instructed to contact all interested and affected parties. Council did not divulge the name of the consultants. After multiple letters Council eventually, on 26th March 1987 informed ACT that the consulting firm was De Leuw, Cather, and that the persons concerned were Messrs Eric Hall and John Marsh. We immediately asked to meet with the consultants so as to afford us an opportunity to present our case against the road. We were given an audience on 27th April 1987, and duly presented our

case. Things then went quiet as far as De Leuw Cather were concerned – but I will revert to it shortly.

One hundred questions

Following local council elections held in October 1988 ACT sent letters of congratulations to all of the newly-elected councillors, at the same time reminding them of the Peggy Vera Road problem. Quite a few of them responded favourably, especially Councillor Claire Quail, PFP. She invited us to submit questions to her about the road, which she undertook to table at an upcoming monthly Council meeting. Our first set of questions comprised some 100 questions which the Clerk of the Council vetoed as being too long. We revised our list and pared it down to some 50 questions which were duly tabled at an Ordinary Meeting of Council on 31st October 1989. Our questions were in the vein of: "How many households are there in every

individual suburb bordering on the Reserve? How many households would naturally use 'the link' to get to the Klipriviersberg Recreation Centre in Peggy Vera Road? How many households will not use 'the link'?" And: "Was a traffic study/ investigation made? If no, why not? If yes, what were the findings?" And so forth. I was told that our questions kept more than one Council Department busy for days on end. One of the startling findings was that some 2600 households would use the link to get to the Recreation Centre as opposed to some 8600 which would not. And this excluded Alberton suburbs, all to the south of the reserve, which would obviously not need the Peggy Vera Link to get to the recreation centre.

Next Issue : De Leuw Cather, again and The Tide Turns

“ One of the startling findings was that some 2600 households would use the link to get to the Recreation Centre as opposed to some 8600 which would not. ”

Klipriviersburg before it became a nature reserve.

The next generation remembers. (Part 8/ 19)

Written by Lyn Thompson

Joe and his dog

We always used to take walks on Sundays, sometimes into the hills, up the hills or down to the river and along its banks. With us was a motley assortment of the family dogs, large and small. They afforded us much amusement and on a Monday they were simply totally exhausted and spent the whole day sleeping in their varied baskets and beds. At the foot of what had been lucerne lands, then land rented out to a Chinese gardener and finally rented to friends who had horses, was the river and a lovely bend with a pool in it.

On one walk down to this section of the river, Joe was a little ahead of us and had crossed the river. From our side of the river if we took a quick glance at the terrain and river it looked as if the land continued without any pool or water in between. Joe thought he would test Nicky, his dog, and see how he perceived the lay of the land. As Joe was already across the water he called Nicky, who, loyal dog that he was, ran h*ll bent for leather along the ground in front of us to the pool and over the edge without stopping until we heard

the splash. He then swam to shore and shook himself all over his master, Joe. A fitting end to that little experiment. There were a few pools in the river at some times, but in our growing years especially the later ones, often the river was dry.



Next Issue : The Storm

“ With us was a motley assortment of the family dogs, large and small. ”

Spotlight On....*Eragrostis racemosa* (Narrow heart love grass)

“The name of the genus is derived from the Greek words $\epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$ (eros), meaning {love}, and $\alpha\rho\rho\omega\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ (agrostis), meaning {grass}.”

“This increased water use efficiency of C_4 grasses means that soil moisture is conserved, allowing them to grow for longer in arid environments.”

***Culm—refers to any type of stem but specifically that of above ground or aerial stems found on grasses (Latin—culmus)*

Picking brains and begging information on the flora and fauna found within the boundaries of KNR invariably results in some mind blowing facts (at least to me)! For instance I have been given a list of some fifty-nine Grasses positively identified within KNR.

I have always seen grass in two distinct ways, the wild grass seen in the reserves, fields and along roads or “domestic” as in garden lawns. The first I find quite interesting, the second not so much. I admire the lush, formal lawns in stately and other well kept gardens but since I get a very itchy rash I’m not so keen on it closer to home!

So how to choose which grass to highlight? I used my old standby; which common name looks the most interesting and this is it:

Eragrostis racemosa or
Narrow heart love grass
(Afr. Smalhartjiesgras).

The name of the genus is derived from the Greek words $\epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$ (eros), meaning “love”, and $\alpha\rho\rho\omega\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ (agrostis), meaning “grass”.

How could I resist?

Next was the Google search since I admit to knowing nothing whatsoever, including what it looks like! This is where things get really interesting!

Wikipedia provided the following table.

Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Monocots
(unranked):	Commelinids
Order:	Poales
Family:	Poaceae
Subfamily:	Chloridoideae
Tribe:	Eragrostideae
Genus:	<i>Eragrostis</i>

My next port of call on the web was www.fao.org. Dr. David B Hoare (PhD Botany/ Ecology) (Pr.Sci.Nat) states that there are about 350 species of *Eragrostis* mainly distributed in subtropical areas of the world (though Wikipedia list over 400). Within the African continent various *Eragrostis* species can be found in Mozambique, South Africa and up into Sudan.

Focusing on *Eragrostis racemosa*:

Found in Gauteng, Free State, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North West:

It is a dense, tufted grass that grows to around 800mm in height and is a perennial. The leaves develop from the base of the plant and the ****culms** are erect and sturdy. Golden seed heads follow green flowers. As a summer growing plant it flowers from early spring to late autumn. The leaves have C_4 photosynthetic pathways which (courtesy **Wikipedia**) means:

“ C_4 plants have a competitive advantage over plants possessing the more common C_3 carbon fixation pathway under conditions of drought, high temperatures, and nitrogen or CO_2 limitation. When grown in the same environment, at $30^\circ C$, C_3 grasses lose approximately 833 molecules of water per CO_2 molecule that is fixed, whereas C_4 grasses lose only 277. This increased water use efficiency of C_4 grasses means that soil moisture is conserved, allowing them to grow for longer in arid environments.”

Eragrostis racemosa grows in loam soil which broadly speaking is soil made up of sand (40%), silt (40%) and clay (20%) though these proportions can and do change giving a wide variation of loam type soils. Annual rainfall is usually in excess of 600mm per annum

The plant is used in erosion control where it is placed in shallow soil or overgrazed areas. Although the plant itself is well grazed it has a relatively low leaf production. Here it acts as a “sub-climax species”. The definitions of climax and sub-climax are explained by the following taken from

www.forestrynepal.org.

Climax: Culmination stage of plant succession for a given environment. If succession is allowed to progress without disturbance, a stage is reached when no more improvement is possible in the soil and the vegetation. At that stage the vegetation is in equilibrium with the environment, and stays unchanged indefinitely by reproducing itself.

Biotic climax or sub-climax: A climax which differs from the climatic climax of the area owing to the action of biotic factors.



Photos by kind permission of Johan Wentzel of the Wildflower Nursery situated in Silkaats Nek, Hartebeesfontein.

Access their indigenous plant database here:

<http://www.wildflowernursery.co.za>

Ignorance, Once Again The Undoing Of JCPZ..... Article Written

By: Kate James B.Sc. Honours (Archaeology) Wits

The Sotho-Tswana ruins, Boer war ruins and Farm house ruins located in the Klipriviersberg nature reserve are a vital link to the cultural heritage of the greater Johannesburg area.

The Sotho-Tswana ruins date from around the 18th century and are part of a large Sotho-Tswana community that encompassed the whole of the Johannesburg area. The Sotho-Tswana ruins in the Nature reserve are all in fairly good condition, as with all central cattle pattern settlements, the ruins in the reserve are also considered burial grounds as the Sotho-Tswana peoples like all people from the central cattle pattern group buried their dead in and around the cattle Kraal in the centre of the settlement, because of this the ruins in the reserve are considered unmarked burial ground much like the graveyard near the farmstead in the valley running through the reserve.

Along with the Sotho -Tswana ruins there are Boer war emplacements in the hills of the reserve and the previously mentioned farmstead; one of the oldest in the greater Johannesburg area. These structures are an integral part of the heritage of the area and should be treated with great respect.

Unfortunately this has not been the case, recently workers from Johannesburg city parks have taken it upon themselves to re-build some of the structures in the reserve. This re-building work though done in the spirit of fixing has done more harm than good. Without proper supervision from a trained heritage agent these workers may have damaged not only the walling of the ruins but any artefacts that may have been around those walls. The National heritage resources act of 1999 has a few lines about disturbing structures:

4) No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority—

a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;

It also has this to say about burial grounds;

3) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority—

a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;

b) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

4) SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for the destruction or damage of any burial ground or grave referred to in subsection (3)(a) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has made satisfactory arrangements for the exhumation and reinterment of the contents of such graves, at the cost of the applicant and in accordance with any regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority.

5) SAHRA or a provincial

heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for any activity under subsection (3)(b) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has, in accordance with regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority—

a) made a concerted effort to contact and consult communities and individuals who by tradition have an interest in such grave or burial ground; and
b) reached agreements with such communities and individuals regarding the future of such grave or burial ground.

As the Johannesburg's parks agency didn't apply for any of those permits or contact any of the communities around the reserve, the agency is in contravention of the act, something the Johannesburg city council should be worried about.

As to the ruins thankfully some of them are far from the meddling hands of the JCPZ workers, although for how long? The continued invasion by unneeded and unwanted city infrastructure is making the reserve a less peaceful place. Where it once was a place when you could reconnect with our natural and cultural heritage, it is fast becoming an area that JCPZ wants to transform into a commercialised theme park, one that will most likely fail and become like so many of Johannesburg's culturally relevant areas, a place where people fear to go.

Hopefully the city realises that the heritage they are destroying is their own, and once gone it cannot be replaced.

Article written by Kate James B.Sc. Honours (Archaeology) Wits

“The Sotho-Tswana ruins date from around the 18th century”

“These structures are an integral part of the heritage of the area and should be treated with great respect.”