



NOETZIE CONSERVANCY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Winter 2011

Chairman's Chat 2011 by Nick Taylor

Meetings of the NCOA Committee

The Committee has met five times this year: 10 February, 10 March, 11 April, 5 May and 2 June. Minutes are available on the Noetzie website at www.noetzie.co.za

Illegal Trading at Montrose

The Chairman wrote a follow-up letter to Lauren Waring, Director: Planning and Development at the Knysna Municipality enquiring about progress on the Municipality's action in regard to illegal trading at Montrose Castle. The Knysna Municipality replied that nothing had yet been done. The NCOA sought a meeting with the Municipality to discuss the hold-up. After this meeting, which took place on 17 February, a letter was received from Mike Maughan-Brown, Manager: Town Planning and Building Control. He informed the NCOA that the Montrose owners had been sent a letter giving a deadline of 14 March to respond, after which no further trading in contravention of the licence would be tolerated. The NCOA commissioned attorney Elbie Burger to write to the Knysna Municipality on 29 March complaining about the frequency of shuttles to and from Montrose.

Following an inspection of Montrose on 14 March and ascertaining that illegal trading was continuing, Mike Maughan-Brown handed the matter over to Godfrey Reed, Manager: Legal Services in the Knysna Municipality for action. On 31 March Mr Reed informed the NCOA that the matter was in the hands of the attorneys, but as it was not deemed an urgent issue, illegal trading would probably continue for the time-being. Apparently the attorneys are still considering the best way of approaching the situation in light of the fact that the owners are not based in the RSA. This is a rather puzzling response, as the owners must have representatives in the country, who could receive the notice.

The NCOA would have no objection to a legal operation of a B&B at Montrose Castle, providing the owners went through the correct channels for obtaining a licence and conformed to the guidelines and by-laws. These include, among other, restricting the number of bedrooms to 4 and placing limits on serving of meals other than breakfast. However, the owners have consistently flaunted regulations and continue to do as they please. The NCOA continues to engage the Knysna Municipality on this ongoing source of irritation to Noetzie owners.



Heritage status of old Pezula Castle

This matter was also discussed with the Knysna Municipality at the meeting of 17 February. The building is falling into disrepair, with many windows broken and old yellowwood beams, window frames and floors rotting with weather exposure. Julie asked that the safety issues - cleaning up the broken glass and covering the old broken water tank, which is a danger to children and animals - be a priority. She stated that a bare minimum need be done, like replacing windows and rehangng the doors to prevent further damage. Lauren Waring promised to send someone from her department to check the broken glass and the open tank, and to make the place safe. While this may be an interim solution, the NCOA continues to search for a more permanent plan, and are considering approaching Heritage Western Cape.



Flood water Control at Bond-Smith house (erf 48)

Derek Bond-Smith has had a major problem regarding flood water entering his house during heavy rains. Steve Getliffe built a low mound of earth to divert the water away from the house. This activity occasioned a lively discussion between the Committee and Steve Getliffe regarding legal requirements for work undertaken on private property.

The relevant rules governing such activity fall under the Outeniqua Sensitive Coastal Area Extension (OSCAE) regulations, "aimed at controlling small-scale activities at the individual plot level. This is an effort to ensure sustainable development of the coast". The scheduled activities include the following:

- Disturbance of vegetation (trampling, cutting or removal of vegetation);
- Earthworks (excavation, moving, removal, deposit, compacting of soil, sand, rock or rubble);
- Dredging (dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand or rock from a river, tidal lagoon, tidal river, floodplain or wetland); and
- Dune rehabilitation (planting on, or covering of dunes or exposed sand surfaces with any vegetative, natural or synthetic material, or the erection of structures and walls thereon with the purpose of preventing the sand from being eroded, accreted or moved by wind or water).

According to the regulations, any person failing to comply may be found guilty of an offence and would be liable for a fine not exceeding R100 000,00 and a fine not exceeding three times the commercial value of any property or object of which the offence was committed and/or imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten years.

Although Steve obtained an exemption for an OSCAE permit from KM, there remains some dissention about this issue, with some members of the Committee of the view that any activity of this kind should be subject to the OSCAE regulations, while others feel that owners should not trouble the KM to obtain permission for routine maintenance activities. This matter has not been resolved.

Environmental Management Plan for Noetzie

One of the main tasks the Committee has set itself for 2011 is the formulation of an EMP for Noetzie and its adoption by members of the NCOA at the next AGM. This will provide a framework for the management and protection of natural resources in the conservancy. It will also provide clear guidelines for residents in the event of a debate such as the one which was precipitated around the activities at erf 48 discussed in the previous paragraph.

Wendy Dewberry is leading this initiative on behalf of the Committee. Wendy is working with Maretha Alant, Environmental Planner at the Garden Route National Park who has experience in this field. Maretha is very interested in the NCOA EMP, as she would like all conservancies in the region to adopt the same process and plans to use the NCOA experience as a pilot for other conservancies to follow.



Weddings on the Beach

Weddings on the beach continue to be a problem. In February this year a service vehicle for a wedding “fell off” the Wagon Road and was, of course, stuck. It caused a traffic blockage. Another wedding brought horses onto the beach, which is illegal. The good news is that Knysna Municipality has decided that no further weddings may be held unless Richard Meyer has been consulted. The Municipality requires a deposit which will not be refunded should the organisers not clear up satisfactorily after the wedding.

Boom to control access to the beach

Illegal beach driving is another issue which is destructive to the environment (especially to the Oyster Catchers that nest in the sand) but very difficult to control, and was also on the agenda of the February meeting with Knysna Municipality. Both the Municipality and Marine and Coastal Management have agreed that a boom may be installed at the bottom of the Wagon Road. The Committee is investigating options concerning the placing of the boom, the power source (with solar preferred), and is in the process of obtaining quotes for the installation.

Lindsay road

The construction of Don Lindsay's road, which will provide direct access from the headland (above the parking) to his property, is almost complete. Steep slopes proved a challenge for Alan McVitty, the on-site engineer. Heavy rains during construction was a severe test and it appears that, apart from minor problems, all is well. The road was constructed with gabions up the East side. Concrete was put on top. Four drains at intervals along the length of the road guide the water to the dams alongside the road. Mostly it was built using hand labour and other environmentally friendly techniques wherever possible. Eion and Julie kept an eye on the progress. We enclose a photograph of the road as of 2 June.



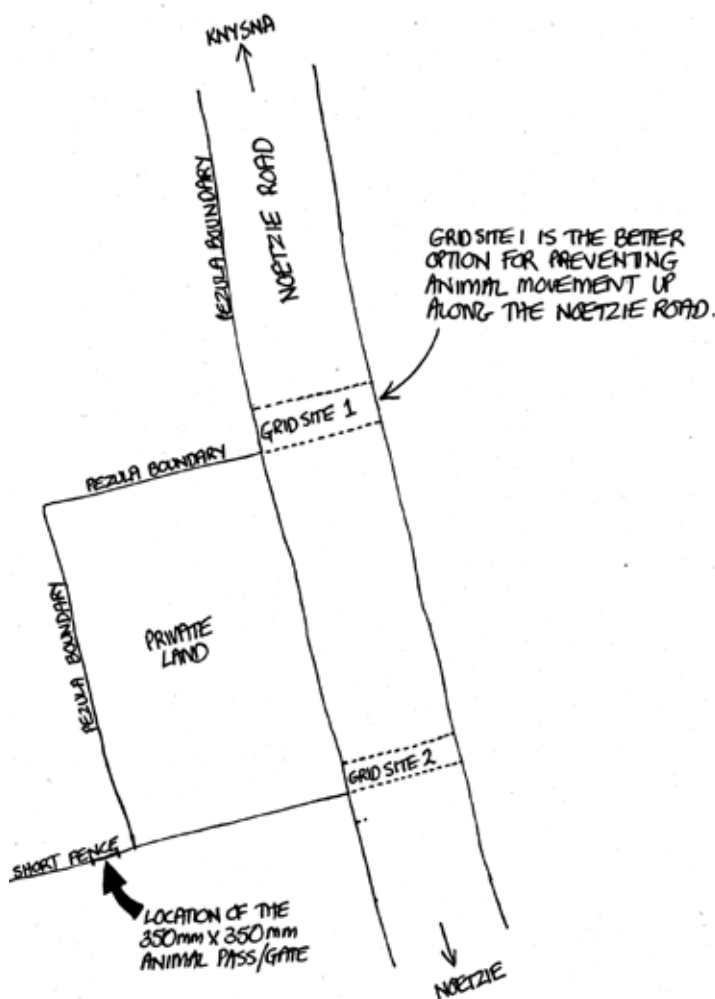
Alan Mc Vitty the engineer on the Lindsay access road.



Cattle Grid on Noetzie Road 4

At the last NCOA, AGM in December 2010 there was discussion about placing a cattle grid at the Pezula boundary to prevent wildlife from wandering up the Noetzie road. Albert Mclean, who attended on behalf of the Pezula Home Owners Committee, committed to dealing with the matter during 2011. The Committee resolved to canvass SANParks on the likely response of wildlife to a cattle grid. Julie reported that this has been brought up at the Pezula Environmental Liaison meeting, which features Alan Heydorn as chair and contains wide representation by environmental groups (SANParks, Knysna Municipality WESSA, DEADP, PHOA, NCOA). Ken Coetzee, of Environmanagement Services was commissioned to provide recommendations on the matter. His written report draws the following conclusions, which relate to the adjacent diagram:

1. **The short fence:** I recommend an animal pass (small gate) of about 350 mm x 350 mm in the fence near to the corner. This will enable dispersing animals to move along the boundary fence and pass through without becoming "trapped" in a corner.
2. **Placement of animal grid:** In my opinion the planned animal grid should be positioned where the Pezula property boundary swings sharply away from the Noetzie road, at right angles, on the seaward side of the road (Gridsite 1). Installing the grid further down the road (Gridsite 2) will require additional roadside fencing on property that does not belong to the Pezula Estate.
3. **Underpasses:** Further underpasses under the Noetzie road should be installed to facilitate the movement of wildlife. We now know that the underpasses are used by wild animals. An underpass linking the "Field of Dreams" area with Phase 4 is the most pressing requirement. I recommend a tunnel of 1,8m high and 2,5 m wide.
4. **Animal movement:** It must be appreciated by all interested persons that the installation of structures that facilitate animal movement cater more for the natural dispersal of populations than for daily "backwards and forwards" movements. The corridors are also mainly intended for dispersal movement. Most of the wildlife of the area are territorial animals (porcupine, grysbok, ratel, caracal, etc) which will only move further afield when they need to and not on a daily basis.





Estate Agent Signage

Another matter discussed with the KM at our February meeting was the issue of illegal signage placed at Noetzie by estate agents. Mike Maughan-Brown expressed surprise to hear that he had been quoted as giving approval for the erection of the sign, as he knew nothing about it.

Tree identification and naming

Indigenous Trees have been labelled within the conservancy area as part of our conservancy activities. More labels get made as we become aware of more species.

School Site ERF 394/1

Since the creation of the Noetzie Township in 1915, this site known as “the School Site” was determined for Education. Since it is part of the Conservancy Area, the NCOA should enhance it as a natural educational example of well-maintained fynbos, indigenous trees and walkways.

An example of this is Leisure Isle where the old driving range was earmarked for low cost housing but after intervention by residents, it is now a park.

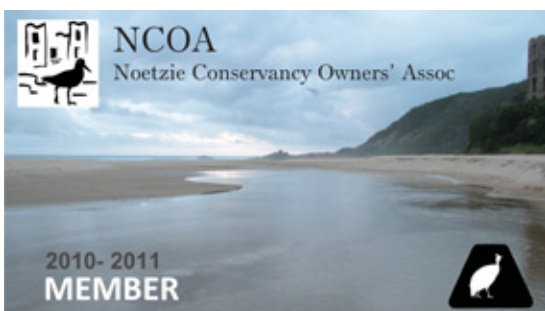
The Noetzie School site has been developed as a pledge park for Noetzie residents where they can contribute advice, energy, money or goodwill, enhancing it as an indigenous walk. To this end, alien clearing has been completed, trees have been planted, and maintenance has been done. See the article in this newsletter for more information.

Noetzie town planning scheme

Mike MB has brought to the Committee's attention that the Noetzie Town planning scheme is vague in reference to section 1.7, which refers to Commercial activity. There is no definition for “Holiday Business concession”. Mike MB will assist in addressing this, but wants to understand what the original intent was. We need to define it and put it on the web site. Simon Nicks is to be canvassed for his original intention.

SC fire protection

We wish to encourage all homeowners to become individual members of the Fire Protection Association and be fire-prepared. Please read the article on the FPA in this newsletter for more information.



New NCOA members

The Committee is delighted to announce a new initiative to engage local members that may not otherwise be able to participate in the NCOA. Three subsistence fishermen have been given fishing licences by Julie Gosling. At the Committee meeting of 10 March a proposal was accepted to enrol the fishermen as Ordinary members of the NCOA. This could encourage other members to possibly sponsor and encourage locals in similar positions in the area to join. This offers them the opportunity to be part of the conservation efforts of the NCOA

and also to be eyes and ears within the Conservancy area, reporting irregular activity such as poaching or fires. A card will be issued signify membership. The NCOA thanks Karyn Romero for her time and work in designing and amending the cards.



Dragonfly encounters @ Noetzie by Jan Brown

On our many visits to Noetzie, Dragonflies have begun to fascinate me. I have taken stacks of photos and became interested in discovering more about these intricate insects.

Dragonflies (Anisoptera) are a familiar sight on the edge and up the river where their multi-coloured bodies and powerful flight make them particularly conspicuous. They are accomplished predators and their huge compound eyes and strong wings equip them well for the task. As dragonflies can move their wings independently, it enables them to hover and then fly in any direction, backwards, forwards, up or down – a most useful feature when catching prey in flight (this is enough to make any helicopter pilot green with envy!) They scoop up small insects, tadpoles or fish off the surface of the water in a catching basket formed by extensions on their forward placed legs.

Male dragonflies are exceptionally territorial and patrol and defend stretches of a river and mate possessively with females who enter their turf. He guards and protects her during egg-laying to ensure no other male attempts a sneaky mating.

An interesting fact is that dragonflies have large wings that cannot be folded away; they hold their wings out horizontally when at rest. This feature is called 'palaeopterous' and differentiates Dragonflies from Damselflies, who fold their wings over their bodies while resting.

An interesting website to explore is www.warwicktarboton.co.za



Male Blue Emperor Dragonfly



Blue Emperor Dragon fly



The School Site

Within the Noetzie Conservancy area of 10.2 ha, there is a 1 ha portion, erf no 1 which, in 1915 when the Noetzie township was formed, was allocated for a Noetzie township school. For years, the NCOA committee has attempted to facilitate the education purpose of this area. Among others, plans for edu centres were discussed, a plan to create a community educare project was proposed And then an environment practitioner came to Noetzie and said “ this is an area which could have a high education value for bio diversity and ecology, and the beauty is that, largely, you don’t do a thing!”

After Julie Gosling heard this idea, she liked it. As pristine fynbos, the area should burn. She connected with the Fire Protection Association who explained that to burn such a small area is not at all beneficial. Apart from there being a huge danger to the existing Pezula electric fences, burning the small area would encourage birds and animals to denude the seedbank which emerges after the fire. It is accepted practice not to burn small areas. In 2009 she hired a man and his team to remove all the alien from the property – mostly pine, wattle and pampas grass. She asked that in the removal, minimal damage to the existing fynbos occur. In this way, paths were created. These strolls throughout the area led her to see the potential for an “outdoor classroom” - an area where members, children and visitors to Noetzie could exist for that moment in a pristine hectare of coastal fynbos, and be surrounded by interactive information about biodiversity and the role of birds, insects ,fire, weather, human history, coastal fynbos, indigenous trees and medicinal uses of plants. In 2011 she had the paths re-opened and all the fuel-load – the stuff that would burn in a fire - removed. The fynbos bounced back. She then purchased 85 indigenous trees and compost and put me to work again. Xolile and I continued clearing, digging, planting. On week- ends Julie would don her gumboots and get stuck in with spade and barrow. In two weeks we got all of those trees into the ground and we are happy to announce that they are all doing well.

Carrying water for 85 trees, at 15 litres per tree initially was a task. You can imagine my feeling of relief when, at the point of the 3rd and final water before they could be left to survive on their own, Noetzie was blessed with 150mm of rain.

At this point, some tree labels are in situ and some area’s have been created for people to sit and contemplate.

We are in the process of designing a concept so that people who wish to add their energy to this project can. We think it may be an idea to enable people to donate a tree and commemorative plaque, or bench or some interpretive information boards, either in support or in memory.

Your ideas will be welcome.



30 trees await planting.



Path plan of School site.



Bruce's Rock Balancing

If you have ever walked past the North Cottage on the beach when Bruce and Marylou are in residence, you may have been fortunate to see one or more of Bruce's cairns. These are not merely a stack of rocks. They are a delicate assemblance of seemingly impossible balancing acts of skill. If I hadn't witnessed it myself, I would have imagined trickery. When asked, Bruce explained that as a boy growing up in Kalk Bay, he went on mountain hikes and often left markers in the form of balanced rocks or cairns to show that he had been there. A minimum of 3 stones balancing on top of each other was the norm. He says : " Since then, I always enjoyed balancing rocks. I imagine an invisible gravity pin holding them in place, and I just have absolute trust in the process. The longest period that one of these stacks stayed balancing was about 2 weeks, although I do take the balancing rocks down when I am not at Noetzie because they are not safe around small children or pets and will fall over if the wind is blowing. "

The photos are fabulous, but do try to see the real thing when you are next at Noetzie. You will be amazed.





Permits for Sinclair Nature Reserve

Sinclair Nature Reserve is accessible via Noetzie beach to the East and requires a permit which is free from SANParks, which manages the reserve. The permits can be allocated to your erf number per annum. If it would help, Wendy is offering to obtain these for you during the year. Please just email your request to her with your family name and erf number to whistle@agnet.co.za

NCOA subs by Lauren Shimmin

A big thank you to those who have paid subs for the year, and especially to those who always contribute a bit extra! So far, NCOA has received subs from 30% of property owners. Please, if you have not yet paid, do so at your earliest convenience. It is in our best interest as a community.

Per the constitution, all registered property owners are required to be Owner Members of the NCOA. Each member is required to pay an annual membership fee which is payable within two months of the start of the financial year, being November. For the 2011 financial year, it was agreed at the AGM to be escalated to R300 per member. Additional contributions are very welcome and will be used for the benefit of the Noetzie community.

Each property provides the opportunity two owner- member amounts. Additional subs for ordinary members like siblings, friends or students are very welcome. Any interested party may also pay subs as an ordinary member to support Noetzie and be part of the community.

Recent costs have included the following:

- Analysis of river water - to monitor the functioning of septic tanks and any irregularity from up-river – problems here could indicate bigger issues with the surrounding environment.
- Tree labels for the identification of trees within our conservancy
- I.T. costs for website maintenance
- Society membership (e.g. Fire Protection Association)
- Consultants for environmental and legal issues

NCOA currently face the following challenges which require funding:

- Legal, town planning and conservation advice regarding development of the proposed carpark development and
- Assistance with the preparation of a Noetzie Environmental Management Plan

As a reminder, the bank details for subs and donations are as follows:

Noetzie Conservancy

Standard Bank Branch code: 0004205

Account Number: 001898493

Please remember to include your family name or erf number as a reference.



Eastern Cape Fire Protection Association by Mark van Niekerk

The Noetzie Conservancy is currently a member of the SCFPA as a group. Due to legal considerations and in the event of a civil claim, it is preferable for individual property owners to join the association. Should proceedings materialise, insurance companies would normally inquire whether or not the property owner was indeed a member of a FPA. Membership to the SCFPA is not compulsory though pressure from the insurance industry may result in most landowners choosing to join FPA's in future. Individual membership would assist in helping landowners to become more aware of the risks of fire, provide a detailed action plan in the event of a fire, determine what fire fighting resources are available, provide a proactive fire management plan and provide an emergency response plan. Properties smaller than 300 hectares pay R200.00 per year as a membership, with a once-off joining fee of R300.00. By joining the SCFPA, landowners would already have taken a step towards becoming legally compliant.

Due to the nature of the area, the relative proximity of commercial forestry and conservation areas, it would be advisable for landowners in the Noetzie vicinity to join the SCFPA. There have been fires in and round Noetzie in the recent past – the van Gend house at the river burnt in the 1990's , a fire on the headland occurred in 1998 and there was a big fire in Sinclair Nature reserve three years ago.

A fire management plan will greatly assist members in time of emergency in terms of fire fighting equipment, plan of action, escape routes and insurance.

The Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA) established in 2007, is a section 21 Non Profit Organisation (NPO), which operates in an area bounded by the N9 in the North, the Bloukrans river in the East, and the area West of the Robertson pass.

It's primary objectives seek to empower local communities in assisting them to become more aware of the risks of fire and capacitate them to act proactively to reduce the hazards and vulnerability of assets. It also empowers members to act as a first response to fire emergencies. In so doing, communities become safer and are more prepared in the event of a fire emergency. Through the creation of an enabling framework and greater awareness, fewer ignitions will result in less spread and easier suppression of veld fires.



Fire at Van Gend house in the 1990's.



For more detailed information, contact Mark H van Niekerk, the manager of the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association. via email at markh.vn@gmail.com, or call him on Tel: 044 302 6900, Fax: 044 382 5461, Cell: 084 2714610 or you may write to him Private Bag X12 • Knysna • 6570





Construction of Lindsay Road by Alan McVitty

A visit to Don's castle is always a happy occasion. A Christmas visit and a few beers got me involved in building the Lindsay road. Don had already obtained environmental and planning approval and had cut a pilot path alongside the telephone poles. A huge stretch of 'mother rock' was revealed. Various ideas were brandished about including a wooden bridge type structure. After having hand built the Phantom Forest Eco Reserve road I agreed to help. I hauled in Donovan McCullam my trusted foreman and we tackled the challenge head on. Don had already started clearing the new alignment to avoid as much rock as possible and Donovan had the light bulb moment to bag the top soil for later use. We were determined to build the road by hand and touch the earth lightly. Gabions provided the retaining structure and all went well until more 'mother rock' was exposed. Paving breakers worked on the weathered rock but we then had to make choices. After a failed attempt with a compressor, jack hammers and

Jim's Unimog we had no other option but to bring in DenRon's BIG PECKER. After eight days of pecking the road was formed and the gabion structures held. The race was now on to surface the remainder of the road to avoid any storm water damage. After much research with suppliers and other contractor colleagues Technicrete grass blocks were selected. They are strong and the wired system forms an integrated structure. Our 'weather luck' ran out and near completion 125 mm of rain fell in four hours. The Technicrete grass blocks with cross drains channeled the run off and scouring was minimal. There was no settlement off the fill and Lindsay road stood strong. The road is now near completion and on the flatter sections over Dons plot, Grinaker grass blocks have been used to soften the intrusion. All the surrounding alien vegetation has been cleared and the cut bush will be chipped and spread in situ. The Lindsay road was built to a very tight budget and was completed in only 3 months. It has been a happy contract working with Don, Charmaine and Jim. The encouraging support from the resident girls Julie, Wendy and Catherine was simply great. Thanks for the challenge and the fun.



Gabions



Dons road as of June 2011



rainfall at Noetzie

As you can see from the latest figures, this year's rainfall has been erratic. The mean average for 2010 was 68 mm. As at 31 May, it stands at 70mm for 2011, with the wet months still to come.

Between 6th – 8th May we had 113mm. This caused the river to wash out across the beach. It was very dramatic as the river gushed in front of Montrose, took the bend at Knarr and entered the sea somewhere between North cottage and Craigross. Vehicular access was impossible. Within 2 weeks of that, high winds had brought the sand back and access has been re established. See the photos.



May 8 , 2011

January 2011	30.5 mm
February 2011	52 mm
March 2011	41 mm
April 2011	18 mm
May 2011	207 mm



June 2, 2011



Hennie and Santi Den Boestert are once again proud grand parents – this time we welcome little Ilanie Wiese who was born on 13 April 2011 weighing 4.4 kg and 56cm tall. It was a natural delivery and everything went very well. Big sister Carike just adores her little sister and loves to kiss and hold her. She now has her own doll and mimics everything Mommy Sulet does with new baby Ilanie. Congrats to Mommy Sulet, Daddy Juan and Carike. And of course to Hennie and Santi



Peggy North was born on 3 June 1931. Her first visit to Noetzie shortly after that means that she has been part of the Noetzie community for 80 years. Peggy is an accomplished artist. She attended art school in Cape Town and in Edinburgh, Scotland. She taught life drawing and art to many students, some who went on to become accomplished artists themselves. She continues to inspire. Her home has been in Kalk Bay for 40 years. This, and her close association with Noetzie for 80 years has provided Peggy with endless inspiration for her oil and watercolour paintings. Through much of her life, Peggy was an anti-apartheid activist and a member of the Black Sash. She is loved dearly by family, friends artists, art students and also by homeless people whom she has helped feed and shelter over the years. We wish her a healthy and happy 80th birthday on 3 June!





The following videos are available to be viewed on youtube

Hlalani Christmas Party 2010

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2cO25otAX4>

On Christmas day of 2010, some Noetzie residents took gifts to the children of Hlalani – the informal settlement we drive through on the Noetzie Road. These are a few clips and snaps put together of that morning. Remember it is best to let the video play through and then hit “replay” on the screen for the smooth uninterrupted viewing.

Stealth Camera Footage video – all the best snippets to date.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjU9iVjLMO4>