

In hierdie uitgawe van **DIE UURGLAS:**

Ons gaan Groen!

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Liewe vriende

“Ek werk liewer in die tuin!” mompel my oupa en storm die kombuis uit. Op agtjarige ouderdom ken ek my oupa redelik goed en weet teen hierdie tyd iemand of iets het hom nou goed die harnas ingejaag. Dit was ’n rare gebeurtenis, want my oupa was klein van hart, skaam en teruggetrokke, vredeliewend en die yin teenoor my ouma se yang. En my ouma se yang was groot! Sy kon ’n bak jellie sommer deur die lug laat vlieg, jou aan jou oor optrek en met een kyk jou so klein soos ’n muggie laat voel, veral in die kerk.

Die tuin was my oupa se hawe. Daar het hy liefdevol met klipharde werkershande steggies van wingerd en orgideë versorg en die kleinste arbeitjies tot groot rooi knewels laat uitswel. Saterdagoggende was hy vroeg op die been, ek en die Jack Russeltjie

agterna. In die tuin word ek op die drom met leiwater sitgemaak, ’n klein houtbankie voor die drom as ek sou wou afklim. Dan skoffel en werskaf hy; dra mis van die hoenderhok aan, bind die grenadellas op, maak walletjies rondom die pruimbome en inspekteer die perskebome vir insekby. Hy werk van agter na voor, van vroeg tot laat, want Sondag was hy ouderling in die kerk en Sondag was ’n tyd vir rus.

’n Tragedie of twee het al ’n paar keer in hierdie tuin afgespeel en vreemd genoeg, min of meer op dieselfde plek, Dalk is dié kolletjie onder die vyeboom vervloek. Hier het my Oupa eendag hout gesaag. Die hout is op ’n stomp geplaas en dan het hy gesaag: heen-en-weer, heen-en-weer. Sy oudste seun, so ongeveer vyf jaar oud op daardie stadium, het aan die eenkant vasgehou. Toe my oupa weer sien lê sy middel vingertjie op die grond, mooi in die lid afgesaag. Hy kon tot en met sy sterfte nie mooi onthou hoe dit gebeur het nie. Hulle het die vingertjie opgetel, in die Volkswagen gespring en

dokter-toe gejaag. My ouma was kalm - vir die vinger was dit te laat. Vandag groei daar so 'n snaakse nael uit die klein stompie en verskaf groot vermaak vir die kleinkinders.

In die tuin was 'n groot hoenderhok. Ek kon met die pruimboom opklim, op die dak van die hoenderhok loop, oor die heining tot in Antie Sarah se agterplaas loer, waarna ek op die skeidsmuur tussen die twee erwe paradeer het om dan in die vyeboom te spring om teen sy stam af te gly, tot in die tuin. Ek het my egter eendag so 'n bietjie misgis: toe ek weer sien, spring ek die vyeboomtak mis en val vervaard binne-in die boom en met 'n hik tot op die grond. 'n Skerp tak het my neusvleuel geskraap en rakelings my oog gemis. Die merk sit tot vandag toe daar, so in die hoek van my oog. Weereens het ons dokter toe gejaag. Hierdie keer was my ouma egter nie so kalm nie.

Onder die stoep het my oupa varings en orgideë in groot potte

gegroeï. Daar waar dit nat, donker en stil was. Sekere tye van die jaar het die varings voelers gekry en my laat gril tot in my tone. Ander kere kon ek die snoeiskêr neem en het hy my gewys hoe om van die *maidenhair* en *Cymbidium* orgideë te pluk. Dit het my ouma dan in 'n klein kristalglaspotjie in die kombuis gesit en af en toe aan die orgideë se groen blaartjies geraak en onwillekeurig geglimlag.

Voor in die tuin het roosbome gepronk, almal gekweek van steggies: rooies met lang stele, welriekende pienkes en my gunsteling, 'n geel roos wat na bye en heuning geruik het. In die hoek, naby die kraan, het aronskelke mals in die winter gegroeï, gevolg deur agapante in die somer. Slapkop freesias het oral in potte gestaan. Die Kaapse reën het hulle gewoonlik gepeper totdat hulle opgegee en gaan lê het. Die wittetjies het dan sulke aardige bruin spatsels gekry, maar selfs dit het nie hul hemelse aroma gestuit nie. Na so 'n reën kon 'n mens moeilik tussen die

reuk van freesia en katjiepiering onderskei, veral as die katjiepiering vroeg-somer geblom het. Naas die freesia was die katjiepiering my gunstelingblom.

My oupa het graag aandag aan dahlias gegee, maar die winteraster het 'n spesiale plekkie in sy hart gehad. Dié het hy aan weerskante van die tuinpaadjie in sulke lang rye geplant en sodra hulle 'n bietjie langer groei, moes ek sykouse in repe sny wat hy dan gebruik het om hulle teen dun paaltjies te stut. Sy spesialiteit was die *Chrysanthemum Anastacia* wat met hul fyn spinnekop-pootjieblare ook maar maklik kon swig tydens 'n reënbui. Na weke van jong knoppies uitknyp en blare stroop, kon so 'n hewige reënbui my oupa se hart breek. Dan het my ouma die asterknoppe afgespoel en aan die familie uitgedeel.

Toe ons trou het my oom tydens die onthaal onomwonde verklaar dat die 'N' in my naam vir 'natuurkind' staan. My ander helfte wou hom altyd doodlag as

hy dit in herinnering roep, want nog nooit het iets volgens hom "onder my hand gegroei nie". Geen plantjie of steggie wat ek van die Kaap af Graaff-Reinet toe gebring het, wou groei nie. My oupa het steggies van *pride of India* gemaak, *bougainvillea* ingelê, *clivias* aan die groei gesukkel, suurlemoenboompies, katjiepiering en selfs aronskelke in swart sakkies geplant, maar Graaff-Reinet het alles 'n gewisse dood laat sterf. Ek wou bitter graag 'n Oupa-tuin hê, maar die klimaat en grondkwaliteit het my gekortwiek en ek moes tevrede wees met skoonma-se-tonge en woestynrosies. My hart was seer totdat my skoonma my nou die dag wys hoe welig "Oupa se varkblomme" rondom die kraan in haar tuin groei.

Iewers het 'n stukkie van my oupa in die Groot-Karoo kom neskop: ek en sy eie varkblomme.

The SPEKBOOM (Portulacaria afra) Revisited

Spekkies and Carbon Dioxide

Apparently a carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organization, or community.

In other words: When you drive a car, the engine burns fuel which creates a certain amount of CO₂, depending on its fuel consumption and the driving distance. When you heat your house with oil, gas or coal, CO₂ is also emitted. Even if you heat your house with electricity, the generation of the electrical power may also have emitted a certain amount of CO₂. When you buy food and goods, the production of the food and goods also emitted some quantities of CO₂.

But why does carbon dioxide get so much attention? Too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere results in

a carbon overload which has an effect on climate, resulting in climate change. A CO₂ overload can cause irreversible changes to the climate as CO₂ remains very long in the atmosphere. Gasses that our cars emit today will have an effect on our children and grandchildren. For millennia, the production of greenhouse gases such as CO₂ was regulated by the normal systems of the planet. Gases would be absorbed and emitted at a steady rate. Temperatures, meanwhile, were maintained at a level that supported life around the world.

Humans changed this balancing act beginning in the second half of the 1700s, at the start of the Industrial Revolution. Since then, we have been adding greenhouse gases, primarily CO₂, to the atmosphere at a steadily increasing rate, trapping heat and warming the planet. CO₂ is also affecting our oceans, changing its acidity levels and compromising marine life. The effects of CO₂ are long lasting and have become a problem which will not disappear overnight. However, a very unusual solution to the problem was introduced a few years ago. This

solution can only be found in the Karoo in the form of a small tree-like shrub, the Spekboom.



<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/511651207664195804/>

Portulacaria afra is often referred to as Spekboom (in Afrikaans) or Porkbush (in English) as well as Elephant's Food and is part of the *Portulacaceae* family. A small evergreen tree shrub, the Spekboom grows to between 2 meters and 5 metres. It has small green fleshy leaves and bright pink blooms cover the plant in winter.

The Spekboom evolved to survive the arid conditions of the Karoo. In winter, when it gets moisture from cold fronts, it photosynthesises like any other plant. In summer, it absorbs carbon dioxide (CO₂) during the day but stores this away without photosynthesising. Instead, it does this at night so no water evaporates. That moisture is then stored as carbon compounds in the Spekboom's leaves, stems and roots.

The Spekboom 'consumes' large amounts of carbon dioxide at a very high rate. The plant's fleshy leaves break down easily which means that the carbon is absorbed in soil. The plant is perceived to be a 'environmental miracle worker' as studies have shown that one tree captures 4 to 8 kg of CO₂ per year when it is mature. This means that The Spekboom is about 100 times more effective at reducing carbon than a pine tree.

In 2008 Spekboom-planting was one of the mechanisms under consideration by South African fuel giant Sasol, to offset carbon

emissions at its new-generation coal-to-liquids plant in Limpopo.

Today South Africans can be rewarded with carbon credits for planting Spekkies and saving the earth at the same time. How does it work: in a nutshell, carbon credit (often called carbon offset) is a credit for greenhouse emissions reduced or removed from the atmosphere from an emission reduction project, which can be used by governments, industry or private individuals to compensate for the emissions they are generating. In other words governments can pay with carbon credit or use it to offset against carbon emission projects. That is one of the reasons Spekboom is regarded as “Green Cash”.

The Spekboom Re-visited

A few years ago famed gardener Margaret Roberts noted the following about the Spekboom:

“The Spekboom can withstand heat, drought, frost and strong winds. It does well in many parts of the land, in gravelly, sandy soil. Recently while travelling from Jansenville to Uitenhage, I was amazed to see great froths of the mid-summer pink flowers on these shrubs as they clothed

barren hillsides and stretches of hot arid rocks.

(Garden and Home, 1991)



During the hottest part of the year this tough survivor almost seems to metamorphose into a delicate hothouse plant. The prettiest sprays of minute pink flowers cover the branches and the hum of the bees is loud and insistent as they go about collecting the sweet nectar. The flowers look so delicate that you catch your breath in wonder that the hot winds and the baking earth do not scorch them. But there they are, fresh and beautiful, lightly and sweetly scented. It is said that the

sweetest, most fragrant honey is that from The Spekboom.

The Spekboom has the remarkable quality to root from a branch simply thrust into wet soil. It can be anything from over a metre to a thumb-length in size. I have never had a failure and it will grow and spread up to two metres in height. It can be clipped into a neat hedge or it can be trimmed into a standard where its dark reddish-grey stem with its quaint nodes can be seen to the best advantage. Let it sprawl horizontally across a rocky, arid spot. The Spekboom makes a most beautiful pot plant which is able to stand out on hot steps, in the wind and will even survive if you forget to water it. As a bonus, the Spekboom never has an off period, which is quite rare.

Medicinal uses

The astringent juice in the Spekboom leaves is a quick thirst quencher as well as a folk medicine treatment for sore throats and mouth infections. If a leaf is held in the mouth and sucked, it will help hikers overcome over-exhaustion, heat stroke and dehydration. A

helpful trick for hikers and mountain climbers is to tuck a sprig into a pocket before setting off and, as a bonus, the juicy leaves can be rubbed over blisters and corns on the feet to ease those travel-weary symptoms.

In the Eastern Cape, where the Spekboom grows in abundance, people use the crushed leaf and the astringent juice for treating pimples, rashes, insect stings, grazes and as a soothing lotion for sunburn. Perhaps the Spekboom is one of our survival plants which we need to incorporate more into our lives, for who knows what other wonders it may contain.

Culinary uses

A Spekboom twig laid over a stew, a few minutes before serving, imparts a wonderful lemony flavour to the bubbling gravy. A large *potjiekos*, a mouth-watering open-air celebration, can be given a different, tremendously appetising taste by laying a Spekboom sprig the length of your hand over it a little while before serving. Keep the lid on to allow the tangy juice to intermingle, then serve on rice or over *stywe pap*.

It will be unforgettable. I have tried it with tomato bredie, mutton stew, pot roast and even in a vegetable soup.

When planning your garden, save a space or two for this remarkable plant. I promise you it will give you endless pleasure. I must admit that I was entranced the first time I saw the blossoming lilac-pink Spekboom on the sides of the Spandau's Kop. I thought it was fynbos which was hiding from sight until good rains came around!

SPEKBOOM AND VEGETABLE SOUP

- 1 Large onion, finely chopped.
- 3 Leeks, thingly sliced.
- A little oil.
- 1 Tomatoes, skinned and chopped
- 1 Cup barley, soaked overnight
- 1 Cup split peas, soaked overnight
- 2 Cups chopped greens, (parsley, fennel, dandelion leaves)
- 1 Cup chopped celery leaves
- 1 Grated turnip
- 2 lt Good stock
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 Spekboom 15cm sprigs

Brown the onion and leek in the oil, add the tomatoes and stir well. Then add the other ingredients, except the *spekboom*. Simmer for about 40 minutes, adjust taste and add more stock or water if necessary. Just before serving slip in the *spekboom* sprigs, simmer for 10 minutes and then remove them. Serve piping hot with freshly baked bread.



Beneficiaries of Boundless (The Graaff-Reinet Protective Workplace) with Spekboom for sale

Boundless, also known as The Graaff-Reinet Protective Workplace for the disabled, sell Spekboom at the reasonable price of R20 per tree. Please contact them at 049 8923244 or pay them a visit at 4 Industry Street in Graaff-Reinet and start your own Spekboom plantation. Green cash awaits!

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Juweel van die Karoo vernoem na onwaardige Goewerneur

JACOB VAN DE GRAAFF WAS WISPELTURIG EN KOPPIG

Tydens die bewind van goewerneur Joachim van Plettenberg het 'n Franse militêre mag naelskraap daarin geslaag om te verhoed dat 'n Britse taakmag die Kaap beset. Allerweë is besef dat die Kaapse garnisoen tot tweeduisend man versterk en dat addisionele fortifikasies in Kaapstad en Simonstad opgerig behoort te word.

Daarom het die direkteure van die Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, die Here XV11, besluit om 'n hoë militêre offisier met ondervinding as goewerneur aan te stel. Verder sou hulle 'n groter garnisoen,

wat sou kon help met die bou van addisionele fortifikasies, aan die Kaap stasioneer.



Cornelius Jacob van de Graaff

Na samesprekings met die Nederlandse parlement, die State-Generaal, het die Kompanjie Luitenant-kolonel Cornelis Jacob van de Graaff, wat kontroleur-generaal van alle fortifikasies in Nederland was en daarby nog die vriend van die stadhouer van Nederland, die prins van Oranje, in die amp aangestel.

KOM AAN

Die aangewese goewerneur van de Graaff en sy gesin, het op 22 Januarie 1785 in die Kaap aangekom. Sy voorganger, Joachim van Plettenberg, het twee maande later na Nederland teruggekeer. Van de Graaff het die reputasie gehad dat hy 'n offisier van besondere bekwaamheid was, maar vir die hoë amp aan die Kaap, het hy veel tekort geskiet. Hy was wispelturig, koppig, van 'n opvlieënde humeur en wat finansies betref, byna krimineel agterlosig.

Behalwe die salaris en emolumente van sy voorganger het hy nog 'n spesiale toelaag van R3 000 per jaar geniet. Sy ampswoning was die Kasteel, maar hy het ook die tuinhuis in die Kompanjies tuin plus die buiteverblyf te Nuweland tot sy beskikking gehad. Die Kompanjie het hom voorsien van perde en rytuie en die produkte van die

Kompanjiesplaas, Vissershoeck was syne.

HOFHOUDING

Die goewerneur het dadelik 'n vorstelike hofhouding ingerig en op 'n ongekeerde skaal begin bou aan verdedigingslinies. Hy het regeringsgeld vermors en sy ondergeskikte het in sy voetspore gevolg en hulle eie sakke gevul. Die kolonie se inkomste was ongeveer een tiende van die totale uitgawe.

In van Plettenberg se dae was daar 66 perde in die Kompanjies stalle. Van de Graaff het die aantal perde verdubbel en behalwe die staatskoets, die ander rytuie onredelik veel vermeerder. Hy het ook sy seun, kaptein Sebastiaan Willem van de Graaff, aangestel as bevelhebber oor die stalle en hom toegelaat om na willekeur op te tree.

PERDE

Die stalle, perde en rytuie was bedoel vir die algemene gebruik

van die amptenary maar van de Graaff het hulle gebruik reserveer vir sy gesin, sy vriende en sy hofhouding. Alles wat die goewerneur aangepak het, is gedoen op 'n wyse sonder inagneming van die Kompanjies belange, veral op 'n tydstip toe die Kompanjie reeds bankrot was.

Die Here XV11 was nie tevrede met die goewerneur se optrede nie. As besuinigingsmaatreël het hulle besluit om die militêre mag aan die Kaap drasties in te kort, van die slawe te verkoop, die werk aan alle fortifikasies te staak en al die perde en voertuie in hulle stalle te verkoop. Die opbrengs moes in die staatskas gestort word.

KLAGTES

Verder het die direkteur gekla dat hy hulle in duisternis hou omtrent belangrike sake terwyl hy terselfdertyd nietighede gestuur het. Hulle het ook beswaar gemaak oor die groot aantal klerke wat hy aangehou

het om hierdie onbelangrike briewe te skrywe en te kopieer.

Die Here XV11 sou nog meer ontstoke gewees het en om uitgawes te maak sonder na behore die Politieke Raad te raadpleeg, het hulle dwars in die krop gestee. Die koloniste het die administrasie as korrup beskou en die eindelose getwis tussen die sekunde en die fisikaal het meegehelp dat die burgers die regering met minagting, soms met haat, bejeën het.

DEBATE

Tydens debatte in die Politieke Raad was rusies algemeen en proteste en teen-proteste het die notule van die Raad ontsier. Op een geleentheid het die verwoede goewerneur sy swaard uitgepluk en probeer om 'n amptenaar te deurboor. Laasgenoemde het sy wandelstok behendig gebruik om die swaardsteke te deflekter. Hierdie tweedrag het die gemeenskap, selfs die kerk beïnvloed.

Ds Serrurier se preek oor Jesebel het die goewerneur aanstoot gegee, want hy het vermoed dat die preek op sy vrou, Reinet, gemik was. Toe 'n kommissie aangestel word om name aan die nuwe strate en pleine toe te ken, is op aandrang van die goewerneur besluit om Bergstraat (tans St. Georgesstraat) te herdoop na die godin van liefde en die naam Venusstraat is op die voordeur van die pastorie gespyker.

Ongelukkig het die dominee se huis op hierdie straat gefront. Die eerwaarde se protes het op dowe ore geval en eers nadat van de Graaff weg was, het Venusstraat weer Bergstraat geword.

GRETIG

Die direkteur van die Kompanjie was gretig om van van de Graaff ontslae te raak, maar hulle moes noodgedwonge rekening hou met sy beskermheer, die magtige prins van Oranje, stadhouer van Nederland en goewerneur-

generaal van die V.O.C. Die stadhouer sou net toestem tot die terugroep van die goewerneur mits dit geskied onder voorwendsel dat sy teenwoordigheid dringend in Nederland benodig word om oor Kaapse aangeleenthede te kom rapporteer.

Op 14 Oktober het die direkteur 'n skrywe aan van de Graaff gerig waarin hy versoek word om binne drie maande, na ontvangs van hulle brief, na Nederland terug te keer. Drie maande het verbygegaan, maar die goewerneur was nog steeds aan die Kaap. Eers op 24 Junie 1791 het hy en sy gevolg na Nederland verskeep.

FORTIFIKASIE

Terug in Nederland het van de Graaff sy titel en salaris as goewerneur behou, hoewel hy reeds by die Nederlandse leër aangesluit het. In 1794 word hy general-majoor en direkteur van die land se fortifikasies. Eers toe het hy uit die Kompanjie se diens getree.

'n Paar maande later met die opstand teen die huis van Oranje en die Oranjegesindes het van de Graaff sy amp verloor. Daarna het hy in Duitsland gaan woon waar hy in 1812 oorlede is.

'n Mens kan altemit beweer dat dit jammer is dat Graaff-Reinet vernoem is na 'n man van die formaat van van de Graaff en sy vrou. Maar gelukkig is die goewerneur se swakhede en wanadministrasie vandag net van historiese belang.

Graaff-Reinet staan op sy eie bene en sal self sy eie reputasie bepaal.

Uit Die Graaff-Reinet Advertiser van
15 Junie 1981 geneem sonder enige
veranderinge

THE 1934 ROYAL VISIT TO GRAAFF-REINET

(JOHANNES HAARHOFF)

The South African tour of the Royal family in 1947 was a well-publicised affair which had its 70th anniversary two years ago. Graham Viney wrote an excellent account of that tour in *The Last Hurrah* which became a best-seller since its publication in 2018. The *Hourglass* carried a piece about the two-hour long stop at Graaff-Reinet during the 1947 tour in its issue of May 2017. This contribution is about another, lesser known Royal tour when Prince George visited South Africa 13 years earlier, stopping at Graaff-Reinet for a full day on Monday 26 February, 1934.

Prince George departed from Cape Town on February 13, 1934. He travelled in the same Royal train that was built for

the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1925, upgraded with the most modern technology at the time – a telephone system that linked all the coaches throughout the train from the driver to the guard and a radio gramophone for the prince. As he was also an accomplished piano player, a small piano had been installed in his quarters.

The total party in the Royal train included nearly a hundred persons. The Royal train was preceded by a pilot train which ran 15 to 30 minutes ahead, throughout the tour. The pilot train transported journalists, police and other officials with its own sleeping, restaurant and observation cars, as well as six motor cars. The Royal train would spend 21 days in the Cape Province, covering 3700 km by train and many hundreds more by motor car.

After leaving Cape Town, the Royal party made scheduled stops at Worcester, Mossel Bay

and an impromptu stop at Groot Brak with the Prince speaking from a railway station table on the platform to a large gathering of country people. At George, the Prince opened a Garden of Remembrance and was later presented with addresses at the show grounds. At the ball that night in the town hall, there were so many guests that the men were divided into two sections with distinguishing red and white ribbons to ensure that everybody could enjoy at least a few dances. When there was a white item only those with white ribbons could take the floor and vice versa.

The following day, while negotiating a tunnel in the Montagu Pass, the two engines hauling the Royal train stopped and found their wheels slipping on wet rails. Choked and blinded by smoke and fumes, the drivers agreed by telephone to reverse out of the

tunnel, spread sand on the line and eventually got through.

At Oudtshoorn, an ostrich farm and the Cango Caves were visited before proceeding to Port Elizabeth, with a short stop at Uitenhage. In Port Elizabeth, the Prince visited the snake park before attending a civic reception and ball at the Feather Market Hall. From here the party visited Grahamstown. After a brief private respite at Port Alfred, the Prince made an exhausting swing through King Williamstown, East London, Butterworth, Idutywa and Umtata, meeting a German missionary and numerous Xhosa and Tembu chiefs.

All this happened in pouring rain with the Prince at one point on horseback across country. The official photographer, who followed on foot, declared himself “thoroughly wet and unhappy” upon arrival! In the evening, the Royal train left for Graaff-Reinet – the longest run

without any fixed ceremony made on the entire tour.

The town of Graaff-Reinet, meanwhile, had been readying itself for the Royal visit for months. While the Royal train would only be in Graaff-Reinet for seven hours (11h00 to 18h00 on Monday 26 February 1934), the Graaff-Reineters seized the opportunity to turn the visit into two full days of merriment. The arrangements went very wrong at first.

Two or three days before the visit, a terrific thunderstorm broke over the town, causing hail damage running into hundreds of pounds. At the railway station alone, seven hundred glass windows were smashed. Broken windows and other debris littered the town “but so energetically did they work that when the Prince arrived there was little evidence of the storm”. Seemingly undeterred, the Sunday programme kicked off with a public outing for paying

participants, starting at 05h30 on Sunday morning in town. The programme promised:

Party leaves for the Valley of Desolation from Post Office corner, via Spandau Kop Nek, Eerstefontein, Groot Klip and through Valley, entrance from South face of Mountain. Breakfast at Groot Klip (sausages, toast, jam, coffee and fruit). After hour's rest, proceed on climb. Lunch on top of Valley at 13h00, rest until 15h30, with return journey via Outlook and down face of mountain. The guides are Messrs Neseemann and Kniep and the cost for everything is 2 shillings and 6 pence.

For the less adventurous, the swimming bath, golf links, bowling greens and tennis courts were open by special arrangement, motor boat trips on the dam and car trips to the Valley were on offer, while

special “boat trips by moonlight” by motor or rowing boats could be had from 19h00 onwards.

The big day arrived the next morning. At 10h45 streets were closed off and all vehicular traffic was suspended from 11h00. The Royal train arrived punctually at 11h00, where the Mayor and Councillors, Magistrate, District Commandant and visiting mayors from Aberdeen, Jansenville, Murraysburg, Pearston and Somerset East and their ladies were presented. From the station, a mounted commando escorted the party into town – Church Street, Somerset Street to Market Square. Here the Prince had a special word for a group of school children – “talk straight, think straight, and act straight”.

The party then proceeded down Caledon Street to the Union High school grounds, where a second group of school

children was addressed. The commando then led the group to Botanic Gardens, where it disbanded.



Figure 1. The welcoming arch on the Berrangé bridge across the Sundays River at the southern end of Church Street.



Figure 2. Prince George addressing a group of school children on Market Square.

The British photographer on the Royal train recorded the following:

We were met by a dashing mounted commando of farmers and their sons, who provided for Prince George an escort to the Botanic Gardens. There were about thirty in this guard of honour; all sun-bronzed and of wonderful physique, sitting easily upon superb horses which were perfectly under control in spite of the excitement. To enhance their naturally picturesque appearance the animals were decorated with white grass plumes. A commando escort is an old Boer custom and a great honour. These quickly moving fighting units, each self-equipped and self-contained, provided by the leading member or magistrate of each tiny community, were both gallant and effective in time of war.

The Reuters correspondent remembered it somewhat differently:

Leaving the station in fierce Karroo heat, the Prince was escorted to the shady Municipal Gardens by a mounted commando of forty sturdy farmers clad in Khaki slacks, white shirts and riding shaggy but hardy horses.

At the Botanical Garden, the Prince was formally welcomed by the town, where he was also introduced to the 96-year old Mr Nyschens. In his reply, the Prince shared his favorable impressions of the Cape Province – its “most fertile lands” and “the climate admirably suited to agriculture”. The speech was “extremely well translated” by the young Reverend Berning Malan, the assistant dominee at the Nuwe Kerk from 1931 to 1938.



Figure 3. Prince George addresses the crowd at the Botanical Garden, with Mayor Urquhart on his left and Reverend Berning Malan translating on his right.

After the official ceremony, the party departed to the Valley of Desolation, where lunch was had. Once again, in the words of the British photographer:

A procession of cars took us to the Valley of Desolation. A civic alfresco luncheon was held on one of the hills overlooking a vast expanse of rocky land, relieved only by thick basalt pillars rising in places to a height of between 300 and 400 feet. Under gaily coloured umbrellas, an excellent meal with cooling drinks

had been provided by our hosts, the Graaff-Reinet municipality. A committee of lady helpers, assisted by a number of Boy Scouts, was responsible for the service arrangements. The Prince thoroughly enjoyed the informality of the function. Sitting on a rock with a plate on his knees he chatted gaily with the local people. On returning to town, he attended a native and coloured community gathering at Goedhals Square.

His Reuters colleague offered his recollection:

About three miles from the town, facing the Spandau Kop, is the Valley of Desolation, a confused grouping of columnar basaltic pillars rising to a height of nearly 400 feet. A road has been constructed to

the summit of the mountain whence a marvellous view across many miles of country to the distant mountain ranges is obtainable. The Prince enjoyed an al fresco luncheon at this spot. Discarding his jacket and donning smoked sunglasses, the Prince settled down on a rock overlooking the Valley, and Boy Scouts provided a luncheon of typical South African dishes cooked at an open campfire. Despite the intense heat, the Prince appeared to enjoy the novelty of his surroundings, and he chatted animatedly with Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Pollard, who motored across from the Kendrew settlement, 18 miles distant, where he now farms.

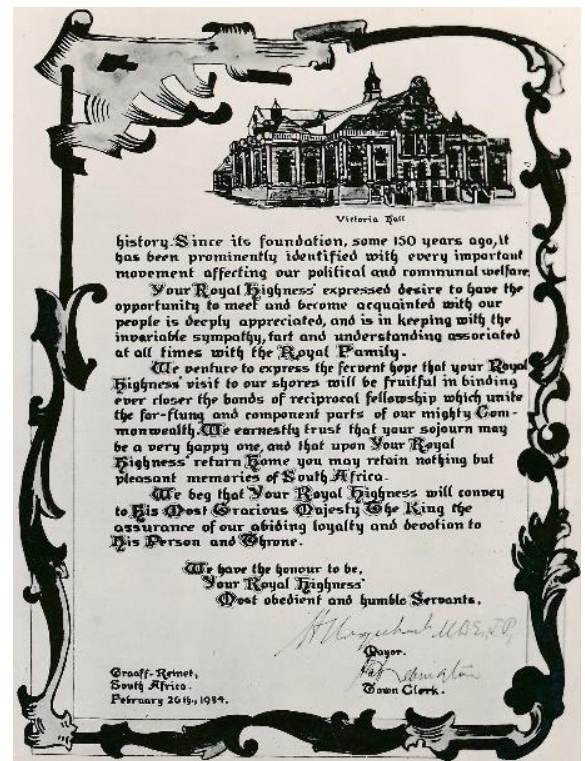
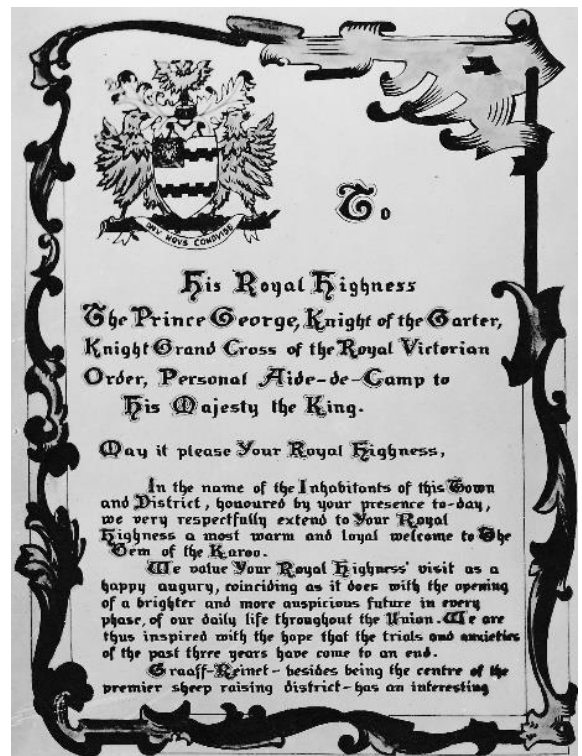


Figure 4. The address presented to the Prince

A final stop was made at 16h45 at the Swimming Baths to attend the Royal Swimming Gala, which was underway since 14h30. The programme of the gala featured events such as “graceful diving, ladies open”; “blindfold lemonade and bun race”; and a polo match between the “Gem Team (in fancy dress) versus “The Rabbits”.

By 17h30 the procession returned to the railway station, allowing the Royal train to leave at the scheduled time of 18h00. For the Graaff-Reineters, the fun continued into the night with the “Royal Vagabond Carnival Dance” in Victoria Hall which was advertised with the bylines “a riot of fun and frolic” and “come and make whoopee”.

The records of the 1934 Royal visit also provide a glimpse of the community leaders of Graaff-Reinet at the time. The Mayor was Herbert Urquhart

and the Town Clerk was AE Bebington.



Figure 5. The Prince (with hat on the right) looking into the gorge at the Valley of Desolation.

The arrangements for the visit was delegated to convenors of committees and individuals:

- Parade of Ex-Service men:
John McCabe
- Traffic Control and Route:
Colonel Burger
- Decorations and Arch at Bridge:
Mr Laing
- Gardens Platform:
Mr AA Kingwill
- Gardens Seating
Mr P Pohl
- Gardens Tent and Drinks
Mr Laing

- Lunch at Valley
Mr Nesemann
- School Children
Mr WE Pienaar/ Lieutenant
Mentz
- Boy Scouts
Mr Steer
- Rovers
Reverend KAW Jeffrey
- Girl Guides and Rangers
Mrs Asher Jnr
- Voortrekkers and Cadets
Mr Cronje
- Interpreter
Reverend Berning Malan
- Orchestra
Messrs Bebington/Pohl/Steer
- Presentation Kaross
Mr CL Olivier

The Graaff-Reineters of 1934, in describing their town to the Prince, exuded keen civic pride, citing reasons that remain valid today:

[Graaff-Reinet's] history is full of incidents of great interest and importance, and out of a turbulent past has evolved a community full of character which now lives in peace and

prosperity and contentment; and nowhere in South Africa will you find a community more proud of its ancient traditions, more proud of its town, and more proud of its district, and rightly so.

Sources:

Burch, F Leslie (1934) *With Prince George Through South Africa*. Methuen and Co Ltd, London.

Frew, AA (1934) *Prince George's African Tour*. Blackie and Son, London.

Graaff-Reinet Publicity Association (1934) *Visit of HRH Prince George, 26th February 1934*.

Figures 1 to 4 were provided by the Graaff-Reinet Museum, Figure 5 was taken from Burch (1934)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Annual General Meeting of The Graaff-Reinet Museum will be held on Thursday 27 June at 11h00 at The Military History Museum next to Urquhart House. Please join us as we present our reports regarding the fiscal year under review. If you are interested in antiques, our guest speaker promises to provide a scintillating insight into the highs and lows of the antique market.

The Save Reinet House Fund is still active. Although all our museums will be completely restored by the end of the year, we are trying to be pro-active and gather a nest-egg for future maintenance work. Our nest-egg is going strong thanks to a generous donation of R10 000 recently acquired. We cannot thank the public enough for their generosity.

Ons boorgat is weer in 'n werkende toestand. Ons versoek graag dat indien daar 'n steggie of twee gemaak word, een aan die museum geskenk word. Die museumtuin het erg onder die droogte deurgeloop en ons probeer die tuin regruk.

WORDS TO PONDER.....

"Gardening is the art that uses flowers & plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas" ~ Elizabeth Murray

