



Rooibos Heritage Route Podcast



Please follow this podcast as you travel along the route. We will install small plates with numbers to allow you to follow the points along the route easily.

From Nieuwoudtville to Wupperthal

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For more information visit:

www.rooibosheritageroute.com



Nieuwoudtville – Wupperthal

1. Introduction

There are two versions of this podcast, each suited to following the route from north to south, or south to north. Please choose the appropriate version to match your direction of travel.

Welcome to this podcast, which has been recorded to give you a verbal introduction to some key places as you travel along the Rooibos Heritage Route between Nieuwoudtville and Wupperthal. It does not include all there is to know about the places, people and history of the Route, and does not reflect any absolute truths in this respect. Please use it as a point of entry to conversations, observations and further research, if you are so inclined.

2. Nieuwoudtville

Point # 1 Nieuwoudtville lies at the northern terminus of the Rooibos Heritage Route, and is centre of the northernmost area in which rooibos is produced. The village of Nieuwoudtville is home to over 3,000 people, and is known for its century-old sandstone buildings, most notably the beautiful neo-Gothic Dutch Reformed Church, which is a national monument. The adopted nickname “bulb capital of the world” relates to the fact that the area immediately surrounding the village is the world’s “hotspot” for geophytes. Geophytes are perennial plants with underground storage organs such as bulbs, tubers and enlarged roots, and in the autumn and spring they usually transform the landscape with their remarkable blooms. What makes Nieuwoudtville a geophyte “hotspot” is the fact that the area has a greater diversity of species, and of endemic species, than any comparable area on earth. Remarkably, one cubic metre of soil has been found to contain more than 30,000 individual bulbs and bulblets. The enormous plant diversity is associated with the three very different soil types that occur in the area: between Van Rhyn’s Pass and the village, acidic sandstone-derived soils support fynbos; most of the village is built on glacially-deposited tillite soils, which are more fertile clay-loams; and immediately to the east lie extensive red clay soils derived from magmatic dolerite. Each of these soil types supports an array of different geophytes, some of which have evolved different growth and flower forms and colours in adjoining soil types.

The village of Nieuwoudtville was planned by the Dutch Reformed Church in the late 1800s. The church bought the well-established farm Groenrivier as the site for the village from H.C. Nieuwoudt in 1897, after whom the village was subsequently named. The fascinating historical ruins and buildings of the original Groenrivier farmstead are on the south-western fringe of the village, and can be visited. In the spring the extensive stands of yellow *Bulbinella latifolia* make a wonderful backdrop. The older buildings were constructed more than 250 years ago, when this was one of five farmsteads established on the plateau by early Dutch settlers. In common with the other 4, the Groenrivier site had perennial fresh water and access to local fynbos and Renosterveld rangeland, as well as the more distant Succulent Karoo grazing lands in the Hantam and Knersvlakte, and even the Nama Karoo of Bushmanland. On the Route you will also pass another of these historical farmsteads, Matjiesfontein (Point # 6).

Construction of the first buildings got underway in the early years of the 20th century following the end of the Anglo-Boer War. The more substantial of the early buildings were built from local sandstone, which was quarried and prepared by Swedish stonemasons. Of the older houses, many of the smaller buildings were initially used by white farming families from more distant parts of the district as “nagmaalhuise”, in other words temporary homes for use when communion services were held at the church. Families that could not afford their own houses used to travel to the village by horse or donkey cart and camp out in the village over these weekends. Communion weekends were also the times when many a romance blossomed between the younger people.

After half a century of existence as an integrated community, the village was split into two Group Areas following the introduction of Apartheid in 1948, with people classified as Coloured being obliged to move out of the original village into the Proteaville township to the north of the R24 highway. Since the advent of democracy the rigid separation of residential areas on the basis of skin

colour has become a thing of the past, but the pattern of settlement remains as a reminder of the darker days of Apartheid.

3. Point # 2 Hantam National Botanical Garden

Two kilometres outside Nieuwoudtville you will see the sign for the turnoff to the Hantam National Botanical Garden, situated on the farm Glen Lyon. The former owner Neil McGregor was an innovative farmer who introduced pastures for Merino sheep to replace wheat production. He came to appreciate the amazing floral diversity of the area, and started using the land in ways that enhanced the spring flower displays. In 1960 Neil started offering flower tours on the farm. In 1991 the BBC Natural History Unit filmed footage for the documentary, 'The Private Life of Plants' on the property. In January 1994 Sir David Attenborough returned with the BBC Natural History Unit to photograph the area during the dry season. The Director of Kew Gardens, Sir Ghillean Prance visited the farm on several occasions.

In 2007 Glen Lyon was sold to SANBI, the South African National Biodiversity Institute and has since been proclaimed as the Hantam National Botanical Garden. The garden is unique, and is the only National Botanical Garden that it is not actively cultivated. Instead it is managed in ways designed to conserve and enhance the biodiversity on the property.

The Garden encompasses a large area of vegetation that is unique to the Nieuwoudtville area, with a stunning array of flowering plants. Many of these plants are geophytes, which are plants with specialised root organs such as bulbs, enlarged roots or tubers, which can store plant food. This enables them to flower and reproduce at different times of the season, and to survive droughts. The iconic March Lilly, *Brunsvigia bosmaniae*, flowers in the autumn if there has been sufficient late summer rain, sending up magnificent heads of pink lilies. The plants use the winter season to store up energy. They lose their large flat leaves in September and slumber quietly in the soil for six months before flowering. Strategies like this mean that you will probably see plants flowering in every season of the year. Different species use different pollinators to fertilise their flowers, and their flowering is timed to coincide with the life cycle of their specific pollinators. If you would like to know more, the visitors' centre at the Garden is worth a visit. Visitors are able to take guided tours in the spring flower season, or to walk or cycle through the property on their own.

4. Point # 3 Dolerite Hills

To the east are rocky dolerite-capped hills, covered in a vegetation type that is unique to this area. Known as dolerite renosterveld, it is dominated by the characteristic Renosterbos, or rhinoceros bush, *Eletropappus rhinocerotis*. Stands of this unremarkable bush conceals a wealth of amazing smaller flowering plants that grow in between them, many of them geophytes.

The fields adjacent to the road were once covered in Bokkeveld tillite renosterveld, another very species-rich vegetation type. Most tillite soils in the Nieuwoudtville area have been converted into wheat lands, but the roadside verges still hide a lovely array of flowering plants.

Further west you will see that the landscape is different. Sandstone soils appear, and the vegetation gradually changes to taller fynbos. It is in the fynbos that rooibos grows.

5. Point # 4 Glacial Pavement

The sign for the glacial pavement indicates a small parking area, from where you can walk through the small gate to see this remarkable geological site. Please close the gate when entering or leaving, there may be sheep in the camp! The glacial pavement is on private land, but the Louw family who farm here kindly allow visitors to view this unique site. Follow the path for about 200 metres and you will see a large rocky surface into which grooves were carved by glaciers that covered this area more than 300 million years ago. Look out for the stone pillar with a Geological Society plaque on it, which will explain how this unique landscape came into being. The sandstone surface of the Table Mountain Group was grooved by ice and debris moving over the then relatively soft and plastic sand surface. At the time South Africa was situated over the South Pole, and near the centre of the Gondwanaland supercontinent. A thick sheet of ice covered the land, and moved slowly from east to west, transporting rock and soil. This material accumulated to form the shales of the Dwyka Formation that are typical of the so-called 'vaalgrond' of the Nieuwoudtville area.

6. Point # 5 Oorlogskloof River

The road crosses the Oorlogskloof River on a small, single-lane bridge. This rather insignificant stream rises more than 100 kilometres away in the Roggeveld Mountains, and its waters seldom reach this point because of the many weirs erected upstream by farmers who use the flood waters of the river to irrigate fields of lucerne.

The name Oorlogskloof was given to commemorate a battle in the Frontier War of 1739, which broke organised armed resistance by the Khoisan and opened the Bokkeveld and Namaqualand for settlement. Captain Jantje Klipheuwel's kraal was attacked at this site by a commando of settlers. The Khoisan suffered serious losses, with 13 being killed and a number more injured. 162 cattle and 209 sheep were stolen by the settlers. However, apparently in a moment of contrition, the commando made peace with the surviving Khoisan and returned 48 cattle and 40 sheep to them before leaving.

To the west of the bridge the stream starts its decent into the deep Kobee canyon. Cutting its way down into the sandstone, the river forms beautiful gorges and pools before entering the Oorlogskloof Nature Reserve. The Reserve comprise 4 776 hectares of mountains dissected by deep river gorges. From the Reserve the river runs south, parallel to the Rooibos Heritage Route, and is known as the Kobee River. Streams joining it from the Bokkeveld Mountains ensure that it runs clear and fresh each winter, and its pool are home to the endemic Clanwilliam Sandfish and Sawfin.

7. Point # 6 Matjiesfontein

Where the road swings sharply to pass an old stone kraal, you are passing the historic Matjiesfontein settlement. Dating back to the mid-1700s, this was one of the first settler farmsteads to be established on the Bokkeveld. A perennial spring and easy access to Karoo rangeland to the east made this an ideal site for settlement. While many of the old building are long-abandoned, some have been maintained and even beautifully restored. Willem and Mariette van Wyk accommodate guests, and in the spring season Leana van Wyk offers flower tours with a tractor and wagon. Boerekos is on sale at the Padstal.

The proprietor, Leana van Wyk, was motivated to establish the business here because of her love of flowers. The vast variety of flowers in the area inspired her to construct an eating area amongst them two hundred years old rock formations stood there.

The buildings were constructed over 200 years ago using materials from the nearby vicinity such as stone and sand, with the roof made of poplar beams and thatched with a restio known as sonkwasriet. The poplar beams are not palatable for insects and provided they are kept dry they last for a very long time.

The first school of Nieuwoudtville was established at Matjiesfontein in 1870. The first teacher was a Miss Du Toit. There were thirteen children in the school. In those times water had to be fetched by hand from the fountains and carried to the houses. One part of the current farm stall was a stable where the school children's horses were kept. The original yellowwood beams to which the horses were tied can still be seen today.

Another of the buildings was used to make shoes. Leana van Wyk has transformed this building into a guesthouse, and the original fireplace is still in use. A big grain storeroom has also been converted into a guesthouse. Next to the current farm stall stone shelters were used for cooking food. An additional shelter, made from local stone, was later added, and has become a popular social area for visiting guests.

8. Point # 7 Junction of the Moedverloor Road

If you are travelling from Nieuwoudtville, turn off to the right through the cattle grid onto the Moedverloor Road, which will lead you all the way to Doringbos. It is a minor road, but carries more traffic than the main road that connects to the Botterkloof Pass. The reason is simple: this is the road that leads to the farms that produce the rooibos tea of the Heiveld Co-operative, and many rooibos farming families live along it.

9. Point # 8 Papkuilsfontein

Papkuilsfontein Guest Farm and the Waenhuis Restaurant lie behind the olive orchard that adjoins the road Papkuilsfontein is the historic home of the Van Wyk family. The spring flowers on the farm are legendary, and it also boasts rich bird life and remarkable San rock art. In the flower season the Waenhuis Restaurant offers a peaceful respite from the sun or wind, with excellent local cuisine.

At the western boundary of the property the stream that crosses Papkuilsfontein descends a remarkable 100-metre waterfall into the Kobee Canyon. Visitors are able to hike or mountain bike through the sandstone rock formations, and swim in the rock pool above the waterfall.

10. Point # 9 Onder Melkkraal and the Rietjieshuis Eco Lodge

The turn off to Onder Melkkraal is marked by two large tyres. This 1,300 ha farm is home to 30 households, many of them bearing the name Kotze, reflecting their descent from Hugo Lambrechts Kotze, who was born in 1813 and inherited the farm from his father in 1869. Most households on Melkkraal farm with sheep and rooibos tea.

Melkkraal has some wonderful examples of rock art on cliff faces next to a pretty waterfall. If you would like to learn more about this community, its history and the landscape in which it lives, and enjoy traditional hospitality, you can visit the Rietjieshuis Ecolodge. The Ecolodge is run by Maria Syster and Katriena "Tempes" Kotze, and you can book accommodation, a meal or a tour by phoning 027 218 1148. Both women are also rooibos tea farmers, and introduce visitors to the area to the plant, its cultivation and rooibos culture. Maria also knows and uses other local herbs for medicinal purposes, and will gladly share this knowledge with visitors.

11. Point # 10 Fynbos

If you are travelling south, after passing through this cattle grid you will notice an abrupt change in vegetation as you enter the fynbos. The road surface becomes red as a result of the ferricrete gravel taken from a pit next to the road: be careful if you are driving when it has rained, as this clay becomes treacherous when wet. The red colour is a result of high levels of oxidised iron in the gravel.

From here to beyond Moedverloor you will pass through a range of fynbos vegetation types, which vary in height and species composition in response to different soil types and depth, and varying rainfall. The landscape becomes rocky, and you can see the beautiful forms that have been created in the sandstone by erosion.

12. Point # 11 Viewpoint

You are now near the top of a ferricrete dome, Brandkop, which at 886 metres above sea level is one of the highest points on the Bokkeveld Plateau. This elevation provides an excellent viewpoint over the landscapes to the east and south. If you look north-east you will be able to make out the Hantam Massif, and to the south of it, the distant mountains of the Roggeveld. To the east lie the Stinkfontein Mountains. Dobbelaarskop is an elongated koppie that lies below the Stinkfontein Mountains, just above the white buildings of the tea court of the Heiveld Cooperative. To the south the land drops away to the distant valley of the Doring River, a mere 280 metres above sea level at this point. Groot Kop and Klein Kop are the two Karoo-type koppies visible on the near side of the valley. In the distance you can see the peaks of the Cederberg Mountains, the end destination of the Rooibos Heritage Route. From left to right, the peaks of Cederberg Tafelberg, Sneeu-kop and Krakadou, all of them higher than 2,000 metres, are clearly outlined against the horizon on a clear day.

Dobbelaarskop, or the Gambler' Hill, is the home of the Hesselman family. The Hesselmans have owned the farm since 2008. When he first arrived there as a young man, 79 year old Hendrik Hesselman – Oompie Hen, to everyone – worked here as a farm labourer, tending the livestock of the absentee landowners. He was later able to start sharecropping rooibos, and eventually rented the farm. Like many of the small-scale farmers here in the Suid Bokkeveld, Oompie Hen has been working the land for decades, coaxing rooibos tea from its sandy, nutrient-poor soils, or searching through this rugged, fire-adapted veld for wild tea. And, like many of these tea farmers, he and his family have inherited the scars of poor farming practices that are generations old. The Hesselmans have just accepted soil erosion as inevitable: they have constructed check dams, contour bunds to control run-off water and limit soil erosion.

13. Point # 12 Heiveld Tea Court

Heiveld Tea Court. As you will have seen from the sign, the Heiveld Co-operative processes its rooibos tea on this tea court, usually between December and April each summer. The Heiveld is a local business that was founded in 2001 to provide local small-scale farmers with an affordable way to process their rooibos, and to give them access to markets. Today the Heiveld sells its finest quality, hand made organic rooibos tea to consumers and traders in South Africa, Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

The members of the Co-operative harvest the rooibos on their lands and transport it here for processing in the summer months. This is done by mechanically chopping the tea into fine pieces, then compacting it and allowing it to ferment overnight in a heap on the floor of the tea court. The following morning it is spread out to dry in the hot summer sun. The Heiveld produces organic and Fairtrade certified rooibos using gentle traditional methods that produce the finest quality tea.

14. Point # 13 Blomfontein Farm

Blomfontein Farm. Below you lies the old farmstead of Blomfontein. Immediately to your right is a flat stone surface that was used to dry rooibos tea on in the old days, before modern tea courts were constructed. The harvested leaves and stalks of the rooibos plant were either chopped up fine with an axe, or with the use of a manually-powered tobacco chopping machine, and then fermented and later dried on stone surface of the rock.

Blomfontein was the first private nature reserve to be proclaimed in the Northern Cape Province, and embraces over three thousand hectares of pristine mountain fynbos. The property runs to the edge of the Kobee canyon to the west, and the landscape is one of gorges, cliffs and lonely plateaus. Wild rooibos thrives on Blomfontein, and is harvested every second year to make Heiveld Wild, the most unique and flavourful rooibos tea.

15. Point # 14 Dammetjies and a view of the Kobee Canyon

If you look to the west you will see the canyon of the Kobee, formed by the cumulative erosive effects of the Oorlogskloof River, here known as the Kobee River. The word Kobee means 'the place where things disappear' in the Khoi dialect that was used in the area before the colonial era. This large canyon is invisible from the plains of the Knersvlakte to the west, and is also well hidden from the east. Boer forces under Jan Smuts used it as their staging post before they entered Van Rhynsdorp during the Anglo-Boer War.

16. Point # 15 Turn off to Sonderwaterkraal, Landskloof and Matarakoppies

If you are travelling south, the main road swings left to the east here, and a more minor road continues south to the farms Landskloof, Sonderwaterkraal and Matarachope. Sonderwaterkraal was settled in the late 1800's by the Koopman family, who had come from Wupperthal. The name of the farm means the "kraal or corral without water". Andries Jakobus Koopman and his family transformed this waterless place by excavating springs, clearing land for grains and establishing homesteads. It is now home to the third, fourth and fifth generations of the Koopmans, who farm with rooibos tea, sheep and goats, and also grow vegetables for the table.

Adjoining these farms to the south and west are the Doring and Kobee Rivers, which form the boundary to the Western Cape Province. Cutting their way down into the sandstone, these rivers have created beautiful canyons with deep perennial pools that are stocked with indigenous fish and bass. In well-hidden overhangs and caves in the cliffs, known only to the Koopmans, San artists have left their enigmatic art for us to wonder at.

17. Point # 16 Kortkloof

The farm Kortkloof is home to the Parring family, descended from an adventurous Frenchman who roamed these valleys in the 1800s and married a local woman. Many of the houses are traditional "Sonquashuisies", constructed from the hardy restio reeds affixed to a framework of branches. Because the restios shrink when dry and swell up in rain, these buildings provide shade and good ventilation in the summer, and protection from wet weather in the winter.

Once you have passed the homesteads of Kortkloof, look to your right and you will see an unusual

aloe. This tall and stately single-stemmed aloe is *Aloe comosa*, which occurs only in a very limited area in the heart of the Rooibos Heritage Route.

18. Point # 17 School Cave

Above the road to your right is a large cave, now used as a shelter for sheep. Before the bridge over the Brak River was built, heavy rains sometimes made it impossible for the children to cross the river to reach their school and boarding house at Welgemoed, which lies further down the valley. When this happened the schoolteachers would teach the children in the cave until the level of the river had dropped sufficiently for them to cross it safely.

19. Point # 18 Moedverloor

South of the bridge over the Brak River lies the historic farmstead of Moedverloor, home to the Kotze family. Moedverloor is blessed with perennial springs and was an important resting place for travellers to the Bokkeveld before the Botterkloof and Van Rhyn's Passes were built. After resting here travellers would ascend onto the plateau behind Dobbelaarskop by means of a steep, rough and windy track known as Keerom, or turn back. According to local legend, one of the early travellers was so overwhelmed by the challenges of Keerom that he lost hope, hence the name Moedverloor, or lost hope or courage.

In 1877 the Botterkloof Pass was opened, and the Keerom route fell into disuse. Five years later the opening of the Van Rhyn's Pass between Van Rhynsdorp and Nieuwoudtville heralded a new era of easy access to the Bokkeveld. Bypassed by the new routes, Moedverloor slipped into a quiet slumber and the Keerom track was abandoned.

20. Point # 19 Welgemoed

To the east of the road is the historic school and boarding house, which served generations of children of the Bokkeveld. Established as an out-station by the Rhenish missionaries of Wupperthal in the mid-1800s, the building still serves as the church for the local community from as far away as Sonderwaterkraal.

Shortly after passing the Moedverloor farmstead you will see extensive stands of *Aloe comosa* on the slopes of the Stinkfontein Mountains to the east. This is the largest population of this beautiful endemic plant. The Stinkfontein Mountains are comprised of successive layers of Bokkeveld Series shales, from the oldest (approximately 400 million years old) at the base of the mountains to the much younger (approximately 370 million years old) at the top. This is probably the best place to view the entire succession of shales that comprise the Bokkeveld Series rocks of the Cape Supergroup. These shales were deposited when the ancient Agulhas Sea deepened, causing the deposition in it of deeper-water, finer grained sediments. These sediments contain deposits of invertebrate marine organisms such as brachiopods, trilobites, molluscs and echinoderms, as well as primitive fish known as placoderms.

21. Point # 20 Provincial Boundary

This unprepossessing gate marks the border between the Western and Northern Cape Provinces. From here you will encounter Karoo scrubland as you leave the sandstone of the Bokkeveld behind and traverse the arid flats to the south of the Stinkfontein Mountains. Arid in the long, dry summer, this area can be transformed into a wonderland of flowering succulents in the spring if the winter rains have been generous. The Succulent Karoo is the world's most biodiverse semi-desert ecosystem, and can be appreciated in all its stark glory on these open flats.

22. Point # 21 Doringbos

The T-junction of the Moedverloor road with the Clanwilliam – Ceres road adjoins the irrigated settlement of Doringbos, where the Rooibos Heritage Route crosses the Doring River. The Doring River drains the entire eastern side of the Cederberg mountain range, and rises on the slopes of Matroosberg, the highest peak in the Cape mountain ranges. Although it sometimes ceases to flow in the dry summer months, it can transform into a raging flood after copious winter rains. The single lane low-water bridge is the only all-weather crossing over the Doring River between the Cederberg and its confluence with the Olifants. A San burial site in a cave adjoining the bridge on its western side

was apparently destroyed by dynamite by the builders who were preparing the road for the approach to the bridge. During winter, the river turns into a dangerous and powerful force, which runs over the low level bridge when in flood. These conditions may result in a drowning or sweeping away of vehicles. If the water is over the road surface don't chance it!

23. Additional section: Rooibos

The Rooibos Route runs through the heart of rooibos country. Rooibos grows naturally in the sandstone soils of the western mountains and plateaus of the Cape mountains. In this area rooibos was used by the Khoi and San for centuries before European settlement.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, European travellers and botanists visiting the Cederberg region in South Africa commented on the abundance of plants that could be utilized for medicinal purposes. In 1772, Swedish botanist Carl Thunberg noted that "the country people made tea" from rooibos.

It seems that rooibos was gradually adopted by the settlers as well. In these times the people of Wupperthal would climb mountains to harvest the wild rooibos plants. The leaves and fine stems of the plant would be placed in hessian bags, carried down from the slopes and packed onto the backs of donkeys to transport them to the village. The leaves were then chopped with axes and bruised with hammers, before being left to dry in the sun.

A Russian Jewish settler by name of Benjamin Ginsberg was the first person to develop rooibos as a commercial product. He had previously been exposed to the tea trade, and in 1904 he conducted various experiments with the plant, perfecting a method for the curing of rooibos. Later, during the 1930s, Ginsberg appointed a local doctor and scientist Le Fras Naude to investigate cultivation of the plant.

It was common knowledge that rooibos seeds were hard to find, and this was a serious constraint. The plants were known to flower in the early summer, with each tiny flower forming a little seed pod. When ripe, the pods burst open and scattered the seeds widely around the plant, making it difficult to collect the seed. Local farmers and villagers were enlisted to collect the elusive seeds. One Khoi woman consistently collected more seeds than everyone else, and eventually shared her secret: she had noticed ants carrying the seed back to their nests, and had followed their trails and broken into their nests, discovering an "ant granary" of rooibos seed.

Commercial rooibos cultivation was developed and the rooibos seeds collecting process has been modified. Although many local farmers relied on exploiting the work of the ants for collecting seeds, rooibos seeds today are collected by a process whereby the collector lifts the sandy soil and seeds from around the plants and sieves out the coarser and finer particles using two different sieves. Following this, the seed is washed in a panning process that removes the remaining sand particles.

Today the industry is largely based on cultivated rooibos of the Nortier variety, which was first selected by Le Fras Nortier in the Pakhuis area. This accounts for more than 98% of the rooibos that is harvested and sold. However, four different varieties of wild rooibos are still harvested along the Rooibos Heritage Route in accordance with ancient tradition:

In the Suid Bokkeveld the so-called "bossietee" is a hardy re-sprouting shrub that lives for more than 50 years, and re-sprouts from its roots after fire. It makes a rich and delicious wild rooibos tea that is marketed by the Heiveld Co-operative.

In the Wupperthal area people harvest "rankiestee", which as its name suggests is a prostrate re-sprouting plant that grows close to the ground, as well as a re-seeding variety that is very similar to the cultivated "Nortier" variety but for its red and yellow flower. In addition, the more rare "tree-type" of rooibos grows in wetter areas such as Kleinvei, and also produces an excellent tea.

24. Traditional medicine, by Lena Scheepers and Maria Syster

This section was contributed by Lena and Maria, and is for information purposes only. It is not intended to provide medical advice.

"We live in an area where 'veld medicine' was used by everyone, and was especially effective for the children and elderly.

There are various remedies made from plants that we use for colds and flus, some of the plants include wormwood or wilde als (*Artemisia afra*), wynruit or rue (*Ruta graveolens*), buchu (camphor

bush), bloublomsalie (*Salvia africana-coerulea*) and hotnotskooigoed (*Helichrysum petiolare*). A little of each can be used in a tea, but not too much. You can also add some naroe-boegoe and drink it as a warm beverage before bed. You will sweat out the fever.

Camphor bush is not something you should use often or in large quantities, as it holds additional health threats. The same goes for wildeals, which is used for pain under your arms. Crush the wildeals and mix it with vinegar. The mixture should not be applied on the inflamed area but rather to the middle of your back, otherwise you might experience breathing problems.

Then you have a little naroe-buchu and add hot drink at night before going to bed. You drink a little, then you sweat the fever out. But one thing about camphor bush - you should not take much, just a few leaves. If you take too much, it is very dangerous - it could cause your heart valves to fail.

You can use sage if you have pain in your shoulders. You stamp the sage fine and put it into vinegar to draw. The mixture should then be placed in the middle of your back.

Then there is the agtdaegeneesbossie (or eight day healing bush), which is used mostly for ulcers. If you mix the crushed agtdaegeneesbossie with an ointment and apply it to the sores, all of the moisture will be drawn out. You can also use it for your hair. Prepare it like you would tea, and use half of it to wash your hair with and the rest to rinse your hair. It is also very good for headaches.”

Maria explains: “One of my children suffered from terrible sores on his head. I took him to the clinic and doctor in Loeriesfontein and they only shaved my child’s head. I went home wine. I went home and my grandmother made an ointment of agtdaegeneesbossie and fat. We applied the ointment to the child’s head and the sores went away within that same week.”

“The koorsbos helps if you have been bitten by something and start getting feverish. Drink a teaspoonful of this, which will make you sweat out the fever. It can also be added to the medicine taken for flu’s and colds.”

25. Point # 22 Engelsmansgraf

At the junction of the Wupperthal road with the Clanwilliam – Calvinia road lies the scene of a skirmish in the Anglo-Boer War. This is the grave of Lt Graham Vinicombe Winchester Clowes (of the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders) who was killed on 30th January 1901 in a skirmish with a Boer commando. Lt Clowes and some companions were on patrol when a Boer commando fired them upon. Clowes was killed and a fellow officer died later due to his wounds. His mother travelled from Hertfordshire, and had the present gravestone erected on the grave of her son. Annually, on the anniversary of her son's death, Mrs Clowes would travel to the grave to lay a wreath. Mrs Clowes took the steamship in Southampton and journeyed for three weeks at sea in order to reach Cape Town. A three day horse-drawn journey would have brought her from there to the grave.

From this intersection on a richer Cederberg Fynbos can be seen to the west of the road, with abundant proteas and ericas. To the south, the Biedouw valley offers the most spectacular views of colourful carpets of flowers during the springtime. This region is home to unique and diverse local endemic plant species.

26. Point # 23 Hoek se Berg Lookout Point

From here you can enjoy magnificent views of the Biedouw Valley and the Cederberg Mountains beyond. The farm Welbedacht lies nestled in the Biedouw valley below you. Formerly known as Die Hoek (or “the Corner”), this farm gave its name to this lookout point: Hoek se Berg, or “Corner’s Mountain”. Hoek-se-Berg Pass is a short, but steep pass that takes vehicles down to the Biedouw Valley. The gradient of the steepest sections of the pass can get as steep as 1:6 as it descends more than 300 metres into the valley.

If you are travelling south and need to use your mobile telephone, do so before descending the pass as there is no reception in the Biedouw valley.

27. Point # 24 Biedouw Valley

The Biedouw valley lies between the Biedouw Mountains to the north, and the Tra-Tra Mountains to the south. The valley is well known for the glorious springtime floral display after the winter rains.

Some of the common flowers in the areas include the yellow-and-white nemesias, blue heliophilas, showy orange gazanias, mauve senecios and an array of succulent vygies. Local farmers manage their livestock in ways that spare the spring flowers in order to preserve the best displays of the valley's beauty. The valley offers hikes and walks, and the smell of citrus blended with rooibos intoxicates the air.

One of the stories of the Biedouw River is of a snake called the Boss-snake, or the Biedouw River Monster. Although no-one has ever seen this creature and lived to tell the tale, it is nevertheless rumoured to lurk in pools in the river. This is thought to be a story put about by adults with the intention of keeping children away from the river.

28. Point # 25 Citadel Kop and Tra Tra Mountains

The Tra-Tra Mountains lie north of Wupperthal and are named for the Tra Tra River. The most prominent peak of the range is the enigmatic Citadel Kop, which dominates the skyline to the east of the Wupperthal road with its stone columns, looking like some ancient and impenetrable fortress. At 1 106 metres this is the highest peak of the Tra Tra mountain range.

These mountains are of Witteberg Sandstone, the youngest of the Cape Supergroup sediments that once overlay the entire Cederberg mountain range. All traces of Witteberg sandstone have long since been eroded from the higher peaks to the west.

The mountains are named after the Tra Tra River, which rises in the high Cederberg at Klein-Koupoort and flows down past the mountain villages of Brugkraal, Grasvlei and Kleinvlei, through Sas se Kloof to Wupperthal and onwards, eventually joining the Doring River.

29. Point # 26 Sandwerf

Now a private dwelling, this homestead is called Sandwerf (sandy yard) and was used in the olden days to house residents of high-lying Heuningvlei during the cold and wet winter months, when they would graze their flocks on the surrounding veld. The community would build temporary restio houses for the duration of their stay and move with their vital household belongings.

30. Point # 27 The turn-off to Heuningvlei and other villages

This is an important access road to some of the most important rooibos-producing areas of Wupperthal, and for nearly two centuries has been the lifeline for these villagers to the material, spiritual and community resources of Wupperthal.

From this point you can see the Wupperthal valley below you, and catch a glimpse of the village huddled in its folds.

At 800 metres above sea level, and surrounded by high mountain peaks, Heuningvlei is one of the coldest and wettest areas in the Cederberg, receiving more than 1000 mm of rainfall per year. It lies at the end of a donkey cart route that traverses an old mountain track to Pakhuis Pass. Enquire in Wupperthal or Heuningvlei if you would like to book a donkey cart trip.

Heavy rains sometime cause the Heuningvlei River to flood, leaving the village isolated from the outside world. During these times, the people of Heuningvlei use their resources sparingly and at times food supplies are delivered to the community by helicopter. When heavy rains cut the village off from the outside world in August 2008, a village woman gave premature birth to a baby boy, two months before full term. Some of the village women helped with the birth and the baby was wrapped in woollen blankets to keep him warm from the cold. By the next morning, the level of the river had dropped sufficiently for a few of the village men to be able to carry the woman and her baby son Beulan over the river to the ambulance that was waiting on the other side. A few years later, a bridge was constructed over the Heuningvlei River. The bridge was named Beulan's bridge in commemoration of the event.

Ben Zimri tells of his childhood experience of walking from Heuningvlei to Wupperthal via the Kloof. "As children we walked barefooted through thorns and bushes. As we got older, we started wearing shoes, and acquired a special pair of Church shoes, which we were not to use for walking through the veld. When we walked to church on Sundays, we would wear our rough shoes, and carry our church shoes in our hands. At a certain point after walking through the Kloof, we would put on our church shoes and hang the field shoes in a convenient bush. On one occasion a friend of mine had been given

a new pair of tough veldskoene, which he hung in the bush while he changed into his church shoes. I was walking some distance behind him and when I caught up I was not aware of those shoes hanging in the bush. It was a very cold morning, so I lit the bush for warmth and my friend's new shoes burnt together with the bush!"

31. Point # 28 Wupperthal

The picturesque village of Wupperthal lies at the southern terminus of the Rooibos Heritage Route. You can indulge in the tranquil delights of the village, and enjoy some refreshment at the Lekkerbek Restaurant.

This area has a long history, with rock art reflecting the legacy of the earliest inhabitants. San and Khoi people inhabited the Cederberg area from early times.

European settlers began stock farming in the Cederberg area in the early eighteenth century. During this century, certain farmers of Khoisan descent were permitted to occupy, farm and even own land in the Cederberg. The Koopmans are one of the longest-established coloured families of the area, and had settled in the Biedouw and greater Cederberg area by 1740. Many Koopmans subsequently settled in Wupperthal, and in the late 1800's a branch of the family moved further north up the Rooibos Heritage Route to settle at Sonderwaterkraal in the Suid Bokkeveld (Point # 15).

Until the end of the nineteenth century, and due to the relative isolation, inaccessibility and environmental marginality of the Cederberg Mountains, coloured households were permitted greater access to land than was common in the Western Cape. The economic independence enjoyed by coloured families permitted the emergence of a coloured rural elite, which was well established in the area when the Rhenish missionaries founded the Wupperthal mission in 1830. Many of the original inhabitants of Wupperthal who accepted the terms of membership offered by the Church were Khoisan and Coloured families who sought protection from the harsh punishment meted out to so-called vagrants by the colonial authorities. After emancipation in 1838, a number of ex-slave families joined the mission. The ex-slave and coloured families soon formed the emerging mission elite of educated teachers and artisans. Headman of certain households became deacons and elders, creating a mission hierarchy.

Throughout the 19th century the Rhenish Mission gradually extended its land holding beyond the original farm, and purchased adjacent farms such as Heuningvlei and Langkloof. Some former landowning families became tenants of the Mission.

Historical Wupperthal

The small town of Wupperthal was founded by German missionaries from the Rhenish church, Johann Gottlieb Leipoldt and Theobald von Wurmb, after they came to South Africa to work as missionaries. After the two men arrived in Cape Town, they headed to Clanwilliam answering to a shortage of missionary teachers. While in Clanwilliam, they heard that the farm Rietmond in the Cederberg was on sale and had the potential to house a mission station, having plentiful water available for irrigation and fertile soils in the river valleys. Before purchasing the land, the two men went to view the farm. They were impressed by the beauty of the landscape and the potential of the area to support a Christian farming community. On the 1st of January 1830 the farm was officially purchased and handed over to the two missionaries by the previous owner, Schalk Lubbe of Biedouw valley.

The landscape reminded the missionaries of the countryside around the Wupper River in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, and they decided to name the place Wupperthal, or "Wupper Valley".

Education, agriculture and the development of other artisanal skills were prioritised by the missionaries, who ordained a strict set of rules for the community based on their interpretation of Biblical principles. The livelihoods of the people on the farm became centred on agricultural production and artisanal skills. Skins of livestock were tanned and turned into shoes; wheat was grown and milled at the Mission. The village was built in the image of a European peasant village. White-washed cottages nestled under roofs of restio and rye thatch. The village has retained its essential character since the 19th Century. Over the years the Rhenish Mission expanded the boundaries of Wupperthal by acquiring and purchasing several adjoining farms including, Kouberg, Vogelvallei and Heuningvlei.

In 1833 and 1834, two missionaries who were also shoemakers joined Leipoldt in Wupperthal. Johannes Knab and Christian Hafele lived in the farmhouse behind the church, one of the original

buildings that is still standing today. In 1836 they established a shoe factory where residents of the town were trained to make shoes. Shoe making became a Wupperthal tradition over the next century. Although the shoe factory was destroyed by fire during the First World War, it was rebuilt in 1925. Shoes from Wupperthal became known as "Wupperthallers" and established a national reputation for their craftsmanship and durability.

The first church services in Wupperthal took place in the open air behind the church house, where the first service was held on Sunday, 17 January 1830. Although the missionaries had little knowledge of construction, they oversaw the building of the church and celebrated its opening on the 4th of May 1835. The church was later expanded with two wings commissioned by Leipoldt's successors.

The first school boarding house in Wupperthal was opened by Frieda Strassberger, the wife of one of Leipoldt's successors during 1904 - 1951. She was also the resident doctor and choir leader in the community.

The First Coloured Pastor of the Rhenish Church was Johann Friedrich Hein, who was born at Roggeveld near Wupperthal as Willem Hein in 1826. He later became the resident missionary at Kuboes in the Richtersveld, where magistrate William Charles Scully (who visited in 1899) described him as a man with "stately dignity in his stride, and courtly grace in his demeanour". So impressed was Scully that he noted that "self confidence and a complete ease were apparent in every word, in every graceful gesture". Hein passed away in Kuboes in 1902.

When he founded Wupperthal, Leipoldt used 19th Century German to spell the name of the village. Following the modernisation and standardisation of German, in 1930 the city of Barmen-Elberfeld in the valley of the Wupper River was renamed Wuppertal. The community of Wupperthal in South Africa opted to retain the older spelling of their town's name.

The farmhouse and the building that houses the museum were the only two buildings standing when Wupperthal was established. These buildings and the museum collection provide insights into the lives and times of the missionaries and the early villagers.

The two church bells were a gift from the people of the Wupper valley in Germany. They were cast in the German city of Bochum. The bells were used to announce the passing of a community member; the funeral procession would be led through the town on a Sunday morning as the clock struck 12.

Probably the most famous son of the Cederberg is Dr Christian Frederik Louis Leipoldt, who was the grandson of Wupperthal's founding missionary Johann Gottlieb Leipoldt. He was born on the 28th of December 1880 and as a young man worked as a journalist during the Anglo Boer War. He subsequently studied medicine in London and practiced as a medical doctor in Clanwilliam. Writing remained his passion and he became known as one of the greatest writers of Afrikaans poetry and prose. His trilogy 'The Valley' includes some fascinating reflections on the early days of Wupperthal, and subsequent historical events. C Louis Leipoldt, as he was known, was a great lover of the Cederberg and an enthusiast of rooibos tea. Leipoldt passed away on the 12th of April 1947. His grave is sheltered by a beautiful rock overhang in Pakhuis Pass, and can be visited on the way to Clanwilliam. The site is also graced by much older San rock art on the rock face above the grave.

32. Closure

We hope that you have enjoyed this podcast and your journey along the Rooibos Heritage Route.

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