



# FISHERHAVEN NEWS

— Voice of the Village —

## Bodyboarding prodigy takes on the world

Fisherhaven has a rising star. At just nine years old, local bodyboarding sensation Blake de Beer is making massive waves on the international stage, proving that age is just a number when it comes to passion and talent.

Blake has recently returned from Central America representing our community in the prestigious Federación de Surf de Costa Rica Circuito Nacional 2026. Blake showed incredible courage by competing in the Men's Open division since no divisions were available for children or teenagers. Surfing against top, adult, international talent, his fearless performance was broadcast via live stream to a global audience.

Blake's journey to the world stage began just 18 months ago when he joined Veraldo Deblanche's The Boogie Shack Academy. Since then, he has spent countless hours honing his skills in the waters of the Overberg. While he enjoyed exploring Central America's finest breaks - including the second-longest left-hand wave in the world - his absolute favourite hometown surf spot remains Caves, the secret little gem along Clarence Drive.

This global tour follows a string of fantastic domestic successes. Last year, Blake represented the Cape Winelands Bodyboarding (CWB) team at the National Championships in Durban, placing an impressive second in the U12 division. Earlier this year, he competed in the trials for the 2026 South African National Championships, which will be held in Cape Town this September and October. Blake will be representing CWB in the U12s once again.

Fisherhaven legend, Marc Webster, also competed in the trials and will be representing the CWB team again this year, in both the Pro and Drop-knee divisions. Blake is proudly following in the footsteps of his heroes - Marc, Veraldo and Onrus' very own two-time bodyboarding world champion, Tristan Roberts, who is lined up to claim a historic third world title later this year.

The whole of Fisherhaven is behind you, Blake and Marc - keep riding high!



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# The story behind the Copwatch name

CHRISTI HODGMAN

Every successful company has a story, and Copwatch's is one built on commitment, integrity and a passion for protecting communities.

The name Copwatch dates back to the late 1990s, when a group of dedicated South African Police Service officers volunteered their time to help protect local retail businesses from the growing threat of armed robbery. Their visible presence and commitment to crime prevention gave business owners peace of mind, and it wasn't long before the initiative became known locally as "Copwatch" – a name that represented police officers watching over and protecting their community.

Inspired by this vision, Bertus Myburgh officially established Copwatch in 1999 while still serving as a full-time police officer in Centurion, Gauteng. His goal was simple but ambitious: to create a professional private security company that would uphold the same values of vigilance, integrity, rapid response and community partnership.

Over the years, Copwatch has grown from those humble beginnings into a respected

security provider offering a comprehensive range of services, including:

- 24-hour Alarm Monitoring
- Armed Response
- Professional Guarding Services
- CCTV Monitoring and Surveillance
- SAIDSA-Accredited Control Room
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As technology and the security landscape evolved, so did Copwatch. By investing in advanced monitoring systems, highly trained personnel and customer-focused service, the company has expanded its footprint across South Africa while maintaining the personal approach on which it was founded.

A proud milestone in this journey has been the recent partnership with Overstrand Protection Services, a trusted family-operated security company that has served the Fisherhaven community for many years. Together, under the banner of Copwatch OPS, this partnership combines local knowledge and relationships with the national experience, technology and operational expertise of Copwatch.

We are excited about the future of Copwatch OPS and remain committed to providing the Fisherhaven community



with industry-leading security solutions while preserving the personal service and community values that have always been at the heart of our business.

More than 25 years after its founding, the mission remains unchanged: to protect people, property and communities with professionalism, integrity and unwavering dedication.

## Meet Christi Hodgman

BELINDA HAGGARD



Christi is the business manager of Copwatch OPS and leader of security operations in Fisherhaven and the greater Overstrand area.

Born in 1978 in Hartswater, North West Province, Christi has had a successful career in the security industry for most of his working life. He started with Chubb Security in Richards Bay and later joined Fidelity Cash in Transit, gaining valuable experience in the protection and security sector.

After moving to the Western Cape and getting married, Christi joined the Overstrand Protection Services (OPS) family in 2008. Over the past 17 years, he has become a familiar and trusted figure in the Fisherhaven community, building strong relationships through his commitment to service, professionalism and community safety.

Following the retirement of founder Florina du Pisanie, Christi has recently taken over the leadership of the company. Through a strategic partnership with Copwatch, the business now proudly operates as Copwatch OPS.

A dedicated family man and community-focused leader, Christi is passionate about serving and protecting the communities he calls home. When he is not working, he enjoys jogging, golf and fishing.

Christi looks forward to continuing the trusted service that residents have come to know over the past 17 years and is committed to ensuring that Copwatch OPS remains a dependable partner in keeping the Fisherhaven community safe and secure.

It is comforting to know that Fisherhaven is blessed to have someone so skilled and dedicated leading this vital business. We wish him and his team well and hope that they go from strength to strength.

## Cape of Storms lives up to her name

WEATHERWISE

WAYNE LAAKS

Yes! The Cape of Good Hope famously earned its original name 'Cape of Storms' from Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias. Cape Town and surrounds have always experienced winter storms, some rather severe. But evidence increasingly suggests that extreme rainfall events are becoming more intense because a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture. Southern Africa has recently seen several unusually destructive floods linked to climate variability and warming oceans. Some of the most notable and devastating storms in the Cape's history featured a mix of intense cut-off lows and aggressive cold fronts.

The historical May 1984 storm, often referred to as the worst storm in a 50-year period at the time, featured one of the fiercest weather systems recorded in SA meteorological history. Wind gusts of 186 km/h were recorded, blowing roofs off houses, uprooting countless

trees, and washing away vital road networks.

Recently, the May 2026 storm was regarded as one of the most destructive and deadliest weather events in recent times. This storm brought multiple back-to-back cold fronts, with the system featuring hurricane-like gusts and torrential rainfall. The destruction left at least 10 people dead, heavily impacted the agricultural sector with severe damage to vineyards and orchards, and left roads, power lines, and schools severely compromised.

Some other notable destructive events of recent times that also affected our village were in June 2017, May 2021, September 2023, and May 2024 – and let's not forget February 2026, which caused some flooding in our village. "Still counting the costs" and "Overberg Battered" are just a few newspaper headlines seen after a devastating storm moves through.

Always be prepared and stay safe!

## Your Homeowners' Association – working together for Fisherhaven

DINISH RAJPAUL

The Fisherhaven Homeowners' Association (FHA) exists to represent and promote the interests of everyone who calls Fisherhaven home. It provides an important platform through which community matters can be discussed, concerns raised and constructive solutions pursued.

As the recognised representative body of our village, the Association works closely with the Ward Committee, ensuring that Fisherhaven's voice is heard on issues affecting our community. Whether the topic is roads, stormwater, safety, environmental matters or municipal services, the FHA actively engages with the relevant authorities on behalf of residents.

Membership is open to all homeowners in Fisherhaven, and we warmly encourage every property owner to become involved. Long-term residents who are not homeowners are also welcome to join, provided they have the permission of their landlord. The broader our membership, the stronger and more representative our voice becomes and the more we can continue to build a safe, welcoming and thriving Fisherhaven for all.

While the Association is well supported, the attendance at our meetings is concerning. At the Annual General Meeting held in April, the following office bearers were elected to serve the FHA. They are:

Dinish Rajpaul (Chairman), Catherine Lamb (Vice Chair), Mariana Erasmus (Treasurer and Member Liaison), Ray Haggard, Marlene Carter, Christi Hodgeman and Jan de Ruyter.

We congratulate them and thank them for their willingness to serve our community.

There is much to be encouraged about. Significant work is currently underway to repair and improve village infrastructure, including roads, stormwater systems and surveillance measures. Further upgrades are already planned for the new municipal financial year, and the FHA will continue to monitor progress, engage with the relevant authorities and keep residents informed.

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# Building in Fisherhaven: choosing the right team

SIMONE GRAY AND JEAN-LEROUX GELDENHUYS



Building a home is one of the biggest investments most people will make. In a unique coastal environment such as Fisherhaven, choosing the right team can make the difference between a home that stands the test of time and one that presents ongoing challenges. With coastal winds, seasonal rain, high groundwater levels, corrosive sea air and varying soil conditions, building here requires careful planning, sound engineering and quality workmanship from the outset.

Many homeowners have either heard

building horror stories or experienced them firsthand. Delays, poor workmanship, unexpected costs and poor communication can quickly turn an exciting project into a stressful experience. According to Jean-Leroux Geldenhuys of JLC Construction – a local builder holding a Diploma in Civil Engineering and registered as an NHBRC contractor – choosing your team is one of the most important decisions.

His advice is to start with recommendations from people you trust and, wherever possible, view a contractor's

previous work in person. While photographs can be impressive, completed projects often provide a far better indication of workmanship and attention to detail. Geldenhuys also recommends involving a builder early in the process. When the builder, designer and homeowner work together from the outset, potential problems can often be identified before plans are finalised, saving both time and money. He also advises that every site should be properly assessed before plans are drawn, particularly for renovations or conversions.

There are several warning signs homeowners should not ignore. Contractors who are difficult to contact, slow to provide quotations or poor communicators during the quoting stage are unlikely to improve once construction begins. Likewise, quotations that are significantly cheaper than others should be treated with caution.

He also encourages homeowners to verify qualifications, experience and contractor registration before appointing a builder. Professional planning and project management often result in a smoother municipal approval process and fewer delays.

Finally, look beyond the quotation. A building team may be on your property for several months. Respectful workers, a tidy site and clear communication are often signs of a well-managed project and ensure the ongoing safety of the homeowner and their neighbours.

"Building a home is a partnership," says Geldenhuys. "The best projects aren't the ones without challenges. They're the ones where the right team is in place to solve them."

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# From hobby to hustle

SIMONE GRAY

There's nothing quiet about the rise of cottage industries in Fisherhaven. Spend a few minutes on the community WhatsApp groups and you'll find a growing number of residents turning their talents into thriving home-based businesses. From home-cooked meals, organic breads and baked treats to beauty and wellness services, handmade jewellery, pre-loved clothing, second-hand furniture, gardening, website design and countless creative crafts, local enterprise is flourishing.

For a village of an estimated 1000 to 1500 residents, Fisherhaven has developed a remarkably active home-based business community. The same can be said across the Overstrand, where buy-and-sell groups have become vibrant marketplaces connecting neighbours with neighbours.

The trend reflects a much bigger South African story. The country is home to an estimated 2.67 million small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), employing around 11.4 million people and making a significant contribution to the economy. Many operate from home,

turning practical skills into sustainable sources of income.

For residents, the benefits are equally appealing. Shopping locally offers convenience, competitive pricing and a personal touch while reducing travel, fuel costs and carbon emissions. Most importantly, money spent locally stays within the community, helping support local families.

Long-time Fisherhaven resident Madeleen Jordaan, founder of Koffie Catering Services, has seen the sector grow alongside the village. She says she recognised an opportunity to provide affordable, home-cooked meals that save residents both time and money while promoting healthy eating. "Success comes from professionalism, using quality ingredients and, most importantly, preparing food with love," she says. Jordaan adds that while rising food costs remain challenging, demand for local services has grown significantly over the past two years.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the cottage industry movement is that it is often a family affair. Fisherhaven baker Ulric Conradie, known for his organic ciabattas, has



been teaching his son, DK, the craft with the aim of helping him establish a business of his own. As more home-based enterprises take root, valuable practical skills are once again being passed from one generation to the next, equipping young people with knowledge they can build a future on. That may prove to be one of cottage industry's greatest contributions.

Whether this growth is here to stay remains to be seen. For now, Fisherhaven's Facebook pages and WhatsApp buy-and-sell groups have become shop windows for a community rich in talent, entrepreneurship and the willingness to support one another.



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# Another vintage of success for Vanessa

SIMONE GRAY

PROFILE



Our village has never been short of remarkable people. Many quietly go about their daily lives while their passion, dedication and achievements reach far beyond Fisherhaven.

One of them is award-winning winemaker Vanessa Simkiss. While she calls Fisherhaven home, she spends her days at Highlands Road Estate in the cool-climate Elgin Valley, where she manages both the vineyards and cellar.

Most recently, Highlands Road's Semillon 2018 earned a Silver medal in the Museum Class category at the Investec Trophy Wine Show, scoring an impressive 93 out of 100. The recognition follows Double Platinum honours at the National Wine Challenge for Highlands Road Chardonnay 2020 and Sauvignon Blanc White Reserve 2022. Earlier accolades include a Top 10 placing

in Sauvignon Blanc South Africa in 2017 and the Investec Trophy Wine Show Trophy for Sine Cera 2017 in 2021. Yet for Vanessa, the awards tell only part of the story.

Long before she became an award-winning winemaker, Vanessa developed a deep appreciation for wine through a successful career in hospitality, where she curated five-star wine collections and learnt from some of the country's leading wine personalities. Wanting to understand what happened behind the cellar doors, she returned to university at the age of 42 to complete a Bachelor of Agriculture in Cellar Technology. It was a bold decision that transformed a lifelong passion into the career she loves today.

"Most people think winemaking is dipping little siphons into barrels and holding a glass up like in magazine advertisements," she says.

The reality is very different. Her days are spent balancing vineyard management, planning, administration, compliance and leading a team, with every season bringing new challenges.

Semillon remains one of the varieties closest to her heart. She believes this historic South African grape deserves greater recognition, particularly for the way it pairs with favourites such as breyani, pickled fish, lamb and lentil curry.

Interestingly, Fisherhaven is also home to a growing number of residents who make their own wine, beer and spirits. Vanessa is always happy to share her knowledge and offers simple advice: "So long as you're prepared to drink your own efforts, it's probably good."

While Vanessa's wines may be enjoyed far beyond the Overberg, we're proud to call her one of our own.

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# Portrait of a true artist

CREATIVES CORNER

BELINDA HAGGARD

Sue and her family moved to Fisherhaven in early 2022. She was drawn to the area's natural beauty and quiet, which creative people often prefer.

"The abundance of natural beauty and quiet here has definitely had an influence on me, but it's actually the people I've met and the friends I've made that have made moving here from Kommetjie such a brilliant choice."

She describes herself as a self-taught contemporary abstract painter and says painting has been the one constant in her life. Her fascination with creativity stems from childhood and has found expression in sculpture, clothing design, music and writing.

Writing is another important component of Sue's jigsaw puzzle. Her published works include an anthology titled *The Heart Is a River* for one of her exhibitions, along with individual verses in the *Rhodes Journal* of 2018. Sue is also a very good teacher, and I was fortunate to attend her vibrant Fisherhaven writing classes in 2025. I am delighted that she may be offering them again in summer. Sue finds the combination of art and writing relaxing and freeing, and a wonderful, non-threatening way to get to know herself.

Like many artists, writers and musicians, she needs to make time and space to create; otherwise, she becomes irritable and not very nice to be around. "People understand that athletes and academics need to do what they are built for, but creatives often exclude themselves from that category." It was only when she took herself seriously as an artist and carved out time to focus solely on painting that it became financially possible to step away from extra money-making ventures. She always paints alone, without music, allowing the quiet of her inner world to speak louder than the world outside.

Initially painting portraits before moving into abstracts, she sold her work through various Cape Town galleries and in 2014 was placed in the final 100 of the National Portrait Award. Sue also paints the beautiful local landscapes and seascapes of the Overberg, and these are available directly from her or online at Laguna Studio Gallery.



Like her husband, Ulric, Sue is very community-minded: when she is not painting or writing, her focus is on finding small solutions that could grow into big ones for our local community and ultimately for the country. To this end, she is a volunteer and will be a candidate for OHM in the upcoming local elections. The Organic Human Movement is registered as a political party and aims to bring about permanent, positive changes in SA, legally and without violence. "We will create a society where all people can live in peace and dignity, without government or global interference." Sue was also a candidate for OHM in the 2021 local elections.

Her artwork is available directly from Sue, and her first solo exhibition, which runs for the month of July, is hosted by WORLDART Gallery in Long Street, Cape Town.

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# Sandplay, a journey of self-discovery

BELINDA HAGGARD

**S**andplay is a modality in which a person chooses from a variety of objects to physically recreate a story, experience, trauma, dream or incident in a table-sized sandbox. The items one can choose from include a variety of natural objects, figures and found objects, amongst others. The observer/facilitator silently witnesses the play session. The central appeal of this process is that it allows people to engage in their curious, playful side and gain personal insights without judgement, suggestion or advice.

Afterwards, with the participant's permission and involvement, the facilitator may help the participant unpack the experience in a way that provides support, solace, emotional relief and insight into the related past experiences that may have deeply impacted the person's life.

It is a very safe personal journey in which the participant sets their own bar or intention. The observer then becomes a reflective mirror, asking carefully framed questions that allow the participant to create their own interpretations and connections and arrive at their own conclusions, without the observer projecting their own narrative. The participant may even choose to forgo a facilitator altogether and choose to play out their journey in private. The experience is highly confidential, and every effort is made to create a sacred, safe space for this personal journey.

Sandplay offers people a non-threatening, playful means of piecing together past experiences in a way

that makes sense to them. Play is one of the seven basic instincts of all mammals, making this modality natural and beneficial for children and adults. It's not only a wonderful journey of self-discovery, but it may also provide a springboard for other creative processes such as writing, poetry, painting, drawing or sculpture.

## Sandbox Experience – Two Testimonies

“The sandbox experience took me completely by surprise – from the moment I began, I was pulled into a genuine state of play, fully absorbed in the figures and the quiet world taking shape between my hands. There was real joy in it: lobbing bombs, animating figures rising from the sand, building castles and fences. As a 50-year-old man, I hadn't expected to find my way back to that mode of being, left behind long ago, simply by running out of time. Barry held the space with a light, supportive presence – no steering, no agenda – just full permission to dive in deep. What emerged was something I didn't anticipate: a tender, kinder regard for myself.”

“I found Sandplay an amazing experience of permission to get out of my head and into my play body while being witnessed. In a beautiful, mutually guided experience, Barry supported me in finding a deep message from within. It was the psyche at play, giving full permission to be witnessed and to bring meaning to something using a simplistic approach.”

**Contact: Barry Coombe**  
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# The frogs of Fisherhaven

YOUNG REPORTER

ZEPHY STRACHAN

Did you know that some of the frogs found in and around Fisherhaven are threatened? One of them is the Western Leopard Toad, an endangered species found only in the Western Cape. Another very special frog is the tiny Micro Frog, which is critically endangered and also found only in the south-western Cape. We are also lucky to have the Clicking Stream Frog, which is one of the frogs residents often see and hear. That is why we need to look after our frogs and the places where they live.

I really love frogs because they are cute and the sounds they make are calming. I also think tadpoles are amazing because they grow up to become frogs! Frogs are a sign of a healthy environment, so healthy frog populations usually mean our wetlands and water are healthy too.

Frogs live in and around wetlands, vleis, ponds, stormwater drainage channels and seasonal pools where they lay their eggs. Tadpoles grow there before becoming frogs. We should never pour paint,



chemicals or detergents down stormwater drains or throw litter into them because this can harm frogs, tadpoles and other wildlife.

## Fun facts!

**Western Leopard Toad:** Found only in the Western Cape. During August, many migrate to breeding wetlands, and volunteers help them cross busy roads safely.

**Clicking Stream Frog:** It is common near freshwater. Its call sounds like two marbles clicking together, and it can be

heard for most of the year, especially during the cool, wet winter months.

**Micro Frog:** It is only about the size of your thumbnail but can make a surprisingly loud call. It needs healthy wetlands to survive.

Please remember to look out for our frogs, just like we do for our horses and tortoises. Looking after our wetlands helps keep Fisherhaven healthy for frogs, tadpoles, people and all our wildlife. Have a good year.

## Urgent appeal: protecting our Ramsar heritage from illegal off-roading

Letter to the Editor / Overstrand Municipality

The recent photographic evidence of motorised vehicles – including motorcycles and 4x4s – tearing through the fynbos dunes adjacent to the Bot River Lagoon is a call to action we can no longer ignore.

The habitat surrounding our village is not merely “open land”. It is an integral part of the Bot-Kleinmond Estuarine System, officially recognised as a Ramsar site – a wetland of international importance. This area, which includes the Rooisand Nature Reserve, is a sanctuary for unique coastal fynbos and serves as a critical breeding ground for aquatic and ground-nesting birds.

When vehicles enter these dunes, the damage is multi-layered:

**Ecological Destruction:** The tires crush the “invisible” nests of birds like the African Black Oystercatcher and Kittlitz’s Plover, which rely on the camouflage of the sand and fynbos to survive.

**Legal Violations:** Under the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, driving

motorised vehicles in coastal zones without a specific permit is strictly illegal. Furthermore, as a Ramsar site, South Africa has an international obligation to maintain the ecological character of this wetland.

**Erosion:** Tearing up the fynbos root systems destabilises the dunes, leading to rapid soil erosion and long-term damage to the lagoon’s edge.

While we encourage the recreational enjoyment of our beautiful surroundings, it must not come at the cost of our natural heritage. We urgently petition the Overstrand Municipality and Law Enforcement to:

- Enforce strict penalties for off-road driving in these protected zones.
- Erect permanent signage at key access points clearly stating the Ramsar status and the illegality of vehicle access.
- Collaborate with CapeNature to ensure the Rooisand Nature Reserve boundaries are respected and protected.

We have a rare and beautiful ecosystem on our doorstep. Let’s ensure we don’t drive it into extinction.

Sincerely, Concerned Resident of Fisherhaven

# 'Lactuca virosa' – lettuce of the gods

HEALTH

SUE CONRADIE



During the American Civil War, the Confederate South was cut off from medical supplies, and the doctors working in the field ran out of morphine. The surgeons and the farmers in the area were all familiar with a locally grown plant that was extremely effective in subduing pain and helping to calm the wounded. This plant, similar in effect to morphine, but safe and non-addictive, had not only been used for generations by Americans and Native Americans as well as European surgeons and chemists, but also by previous societies, going back almost 3,500 years to the Ancient Egyptians who called it 'Lettuce of the gods'.

Its Latin name is *Lactuca virosa* (potent milk or poisonous milky plant). The Greeks called it thridax – lettuce. There are five related species of wild lettuce in South Africa, the most useful being prickly lettuce or *Lactuca serriola*, and it's found all over Fisherhaven. This amazing plant, considered a weed, as

most medicinal plants are these days, is known colloquially as Wild Lettuce. It looks exactly like a giant version of the dandelion, another amazing weed. The medicinal uses are found in the white sap that oozes out when the stem is cut or broken. This sap, Lactucarium, hardens into a brown resin. This resin is then made into tablets or a tea which not only relieves pain but also calms anxiety, promotes good sleep and relieves menstrual symptoms. In the natural environment, it's useful in preventing soil erosion and provides food for many animals.

There are other ways to extract the active ingredients, like boiling the whole plant or making an alcohol-based tincture, but the best is to do your own research and find the method of producing and using the plant that suits your needs. As with all plant medicines, Wild Lettuce is a natural medicine and must be used as such; it's not a tea like rooibos that can be quaffed at will.

## My secret chocolate cake

RECIPE

SUE CONRADIE

Okay, this isn't my secret, secret recipe, but it is so good that you'll never use any other chocolate cake recipe. It's moist, soft, chocolatey and above all, easy!

### METHOD

Preheat your oven to 180 °C. Line or butter two cake pans.

1. Mix all dry ingredients together, blending properly with a hand whisk.
2. Mix the wet ingredients together with a spatula – but NOT the coffee.
3. Make a well in the dry ingredients and add the wet ingredients, mixing in carefully. You can use a hand beater or stand mixer on low, but it's best not to overmix.
4. Add the hot coffee and mix it in quickly.
5. Pour the mixture into the two pans.
6. Bake at 180 °C for 30 min – please check them at 20 min; all ovens are different.

Check with a toothpick. It can come out clean but not dry – the cake will still cook a little while cooling down.

Serve as is with whipped cream or add your favourite chocolate icing. I make mine with soft butter (200 g), 2 cups of icing sugar and ¼ cup of cocoa. Mix madly until very creamy and add vanilla essence and a teaspoon of yoghurt if it is too stiff.



### DRY INGREDIENTS

- 1 ¼ cup (250 g) flour
- 2/3 cup (56 g) cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon bicarb (baking soda)
- 1 ½ cups (310 g) sugar
- ¾ teaspoon salt

### WET INGREDIENTS

- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup (120 ml) veg oil or olive oil
- ¾ cup (180 ml) full-fat yoghurt plus ½ teaspoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 1 cup of hot coffee (keep it hot or make it at the end)

# The remarkable Captain Shackleton

BOOK  
REVIEW

JENNIFER PAPE

In March 2022, 106 years after it sank, Ernest Shackleton’s ship, the *Endurance*, was discovered at the bottom of the Weddell Sea in Antarctica by the *SA Agulhas II*. This discovery – along with the fact that his father always claimed to have been on the *Endurance* – is what sparked Darrel Bristow-Bovey to write about the incredible journey of the *Endurance*.

Shackleton and his 27-man crew set sail from London in August 1914, in the same week Britain declared war on Germany, and arrived at the whaling station on South Georgia Island in November 1914. From there they sailed to the Weddell Sea, where the ship became stuck in the pack ice in January 1915. Their journey of 634 days in this inhospitable world is retold in wonderful detail. All 28 men made it to Elephant Island, but then, leaving most of the crew behind, Shackleton and five men rowed to South Georgia Island, 800 miles away. Miraculously, everyone was rescued on 30 August 1916. Shackleton was a wonderful captain, and he kept his men motivated and positive throughout. He never gave up hope. One of the crew, Frank Wild, later ended up in South Africa and died in Krugersdorp. Highly recommended reading!

Jonathan Ball Publishers 2023



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## SUDOKU

RAY HAGGARD

GAMES

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 7 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8 | 5 |   | 4 | 9 | 3 |   | 2 |   |
| 7 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 9 |   |   |   | 5 |   |   |
|   |   | 5 |   | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |
|   |   |   | 8 | 3 |   |   |   | 4 |
|   | 4 |   |   | 5 | 9 | 6 |   |   |
|   |   | 8 | 2 |   | 4 | 9 | 1 |   |

Solution - Autumn Issue

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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| 9 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| 6 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 9 |
| 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 8 |
| 2 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 8 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 3 |

# Wetland AT RISK

## Part 2: A plant is a plant... or is it?



ADELLE STERREBERG

### Why should we care about eradicating alien vegetation?

Wetlands are indispensable ecosystems that support biodiversity, regulate water and climate, provide food and resources, and protect communities from environmental hazards. They act as sponges, controlling floodwater and helping maintain streams during drier periods. A healthy wetland is like a balanced community – every species has a role to play. Alien trees are bullies that don't just join the system; they take over until nothing else can survive, thereby threatening this fragile ecosystem and our critically endangered indigenous Elim Ferrocete Fynbos.

### Alien Plants vs Fynbos:

**1. Changing hydrology – thirsty water thieves:** An alien plant changes what grows above the ground; it also changes what happens beneath it. Aggressive

invaders – which rapidly grow taller and wider than local vegetation – quickly soak up rain, while simultaneously sending roots down to pull up groundwater. Depending on growth density, they use 2–10 times as much water as surrounding natural vegetation, which places wetlands at risk of drying out. As it dries and less water flows, the whole system starts to lose its natural “spongy and wet” character and is unable to support indigenous plants and animals.

**2. Changing soil chemistry:** Alien plants drop large amounts of leaf litter that breaks down differently from indigenous plants, negatively affecting the tiny organisms in the soil that help recycle nutrients and support indigenous plant growth. Gradually, the soil becomes more favourable to the alien species.

**3. Turning up the heat:** Alien trees don't just burn – their biomass creates heavy, continuous fuel loads that make fires more intense, longer-lasting, and more destructive than natural fynbos

fires, spreading faster and reaching higher temperatures.

**4. Winning the race for space:** After a fire, aliens grow back more rapidly and more strongly, thereby preventing native plants from re-establishing. Each cycle is harder to reverse. Once they form dense stands, effective removal requires sustained, science-based methods such as follow-up clearing, stump treatment, and long-term monitoring.

**5. Invisible spread by wind:** Port Jackson, one of the worst offenders, produces large numbers of lightweight seeds that are carried great distances by the wind. The seeds remain viable for many years.

**Conclusion:** In Fisherhaven, alien vegetation clearing is about removing aggressively growing foreign trees and vegetation, restoring natural wetland balance and preventing an irreversible decline in biodiversity.

### To report a plot with an alien infestation, use either:

- Collab Citizen App (available on Play Store)
- or call 028 313 8980.

### EDITORIAL TEAM:

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We welcome any contributions to the newspaper including photos old and new.

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