

A bird's eye-view of George Region

Compiled by ELNA GOUS

Regional Librarian

The George Regional Library was established in 1956 and consists of the municipalities of George, Knysna and Bitou. George Municipality hosts seven libraries and an individual depot, Knysna ten libraries and one Wheelie Wagon and Bitou six libraries. Bergplaas Depot is the responsibility of Mountain to Ocean (MTO) Forestry. A short summary of our libraries follows.

George Municipality

George Public Library

In 1842 the George Reading Room became the George Library and in 1961 the library was affiliated with the Provincial Library Service of the Western Cape. Since then circulation steadily rose year by year for George Library to become the library with the third largest circulation in the Western Cape. Other libraries in the Southern Cape make extensive use of George Library's stock.

The current library building was built in 1982 (30 years ago). George has, however, grown tremendously since 1982 and membership is about four times more than it was way back then. The library is much too small for the community it serves. The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University opened a satellite campus in George whose students also make use of the library. It also serves students from several educational

institutions other than schools. The staff are looking forward to the day they will be able to extend the building with the help of the Western Cape Library Service. A lovely hall had to be sacrificed for use as a workroom – a great disadvantage, as many more users could be drawn to the library if community activities were hosted in the hall. There is currently no space for library activities such as holiday programmes, story hours, et cetera.

Staff: one library manager; two senior librarians; one children's librarian; one reference librarian (children's and reference librarian funded by Conditional Grant); two senior library assistants; 12 library assistants; two Conditional Grant assistants and two part-time messengers (of which one is funded by Conditional Grant).

Membership: 27,784
Circulation: 253,565
Stock: 93,150

Blanco Library

The library was opened in 1967 in a building called 'Ararat'. After moving several times - from one building to a rented house to another building – a newly built library was finally opened in February 2000. Staff: two library assistants.

Membership: 1,150
Circulation: 150,875
Stock: 9,839

Thembaletu Library

Thembaletu (which means 'our hope') was an independent municipality from 1985 until 1995. When they amalgamated with George Municipality, discussions started on the provision of a suitable and adequate library building. The new library was opened in 1997. It provides an invaluable service to the community, as the central library in George is too far away from Thembaletu to be of use to the community. The library is a hub of activities, especially during weekday afternoons when high school and primary school pupils from Thembaletu gather for research, work on projects or simply for the fun of browsing for interesting books.

During 2012 Cape Access opened a computer centre in the library. This is a very valuable service and is used extensively by the community.

Staff: one senior library assistant; two library assistants (one Conditional Grant) and one library aid.

Membership: 2,215
Circulation: 4,833
Stock: 13,408

Conville Library

Conville Library opened in March 1978. The senior library assistant, Jeanetta Sauer, currently leads the team of library assistants Mieta Sause and Hazel Springfield and library aid Daniël Esau in this very busy

library. Conville Library is one of the fortunate libraries who still has the benefit of a library hall. It is well used for storyhours, video shows and holiday programmes. Staff: one senior library assistant; two library assistants and one library aid.

Membership: 4,681
Circulation: 22,685
Stock: 18,275

Pacaltsdorp Library

Pacaltsdorp Library opened in 1978. The staff comprises senior library assistant Anita August, library assistants Gill Meyer (Conditional Grant) and Anne-Maree Afrika and library aid Lulsaac Meyer. The library serves the communities of Delville Park, Pacaltsdorp and New Dawn Park. Staff: three senior library assistants (one of which is Conditional Grant); and one library aid.

Membership: 4,322
Circulation: 19,200
Stock: 13,400

Touwsranten Library

Touwsranten Library opened in April 1997 and was the responsibility of the Wildemis Municipality. The building was donated by SAFCOL. Touwsranten is now part of the George Municipality. This library serves crèches situated on the farms as well as primary schools such as Hoekwil and Touwsranten Primary. Staff: one library assistant.

Membership: 1,187
Circulation: 4,489
Stock: 3,793

Waboomskraal Library

Waboomskraal Library officially opened in March 2012. The library is situated in the Thusong Centre, next to the local school. Children can visit the library during class periods from school.

A Cape Access computer centre was also opened and is a much needed facility for this mainly farming community. Staff: one library assistant.

Membership: 130
Circulation: No figures yet
Stock: 1,694

Hoekwil Depot

Hoekwil opened in 1994 for the Jacobsz Daycare Centre as a library depot. Staff: one part-time voluntary worker.

Membership: 100
Circulation: 1,261
Stock: 778

Knysna Municipality

Knysna Public Library

Knysna Public Library was opened in October 1957.

The sandstone section at the front of the library, erected in 1893, served as a subscription library. It is now a declared historical monument. Everything in the library was made from local indigenous wood or stone. The vast ship's bookcase which houses mainly the Africana collection, is very impressive and valuable.

The library was enlarged in 1937 and 1987, but is no longer adequate for the needs of the community.

As far back as 1998 the late Gillian Carter, previous head of the library, expressed a wish in the CL of Nov/Dec 1998 that 'we hope (that) it won't be too long before a fairy godmother finds a way to increase our facilities even further'. It seems her wish has come true as building plans were finally approved in 2012, and when the new extensions are completed, more than 300m² will be added to the library.

Staff: one senior librarian; one librarian; six library assistants (one Conditional Grant); one library aid; one cleaner and one trainee library assistant (Conditional Grant).

Membership: 11,111
Circulation: 88,215
Stock: 44,877

Leisure Isle Library

Leisure Isle Library opened in 1957 and is housed in two rooms in the Cearn Hall, which serves as a community centre. The users are mainly retirees. Biographies and readable non-fiction are the best circulators. Staff: one library assistant.

Membership: 249
Circulation: 6,800
Stock: 5,190

Hornlee Library

Hornlee Library is situated between the central business area of Knysna and Plettenberg Bay. The library opened its doors on 1 October 1977 and serves the communities of Hornlee, Hornlee-West, Oupad, Nekkie-West, Fraaisig and Rykmanshoogte.

Hornlee Library started with one full-time staff member and a cleaner, but the staff complement has since grown. The library is very small, but offers a good collection of library material and fulfills an important educational role in the community. It serves three primary schools, one senior secondary school and eight community crèches. Story hours, holiday programmes and programmes/festivals which are hosted by the town are well planned and attended by the community. The well-maintained suitcase library project is one of the main library outreach efforts in the community. A reading project is being run where special attention to listening and observation skills of children aged 6-10 is given.

The library runs a free computer training program for the community, which is well managed by the librarian and a literacy educator. Users may also make use of an half an hour free Internet service offered in the library.

Staff: one librarian; two library assistants and one contract worker.

Membership: 6,207
Circulation: 21,923
Stock: 13,660

Khayaletu Library

Khayaletu Library opened in February 2006. The circulation figures of this library are not very high, but the library is mostly used as a study and reading area for the community and nearby schools.

Staff: one librarian and three library assistants (two Conditional Grant).

Membership: 1,930
Circulation: 14,108
Stock: 6,604

Rudolf Balie Memorial Library

The library opened in September 2009, and is named after the first principal of Concoria-Fraaisig Primary School. Rudolf Balie was a community leader who symbolised hope



▲ Kwanokuthula Library's colourful art exhibition



▲ (Ltr): Library assistants Dalene Arendse and Stella Damana with librarian Josephine Littlejohn in front of a delightful display on 'winter' in Kranshoek Library



▼ A display in Knysna Library



▼ Knysna's crew that runs the show are back (Ltr): Matilda Jan Klaas, library assistant; Riekie Ferreira, librarian; Fundiswa Fose, library assistant; Deanna van Heerden, senior librarian and library assistant Thandwe Nqunqeka. Front (Ltr): Library assistant Maureen Cupido and Elton Snyders, library assistant

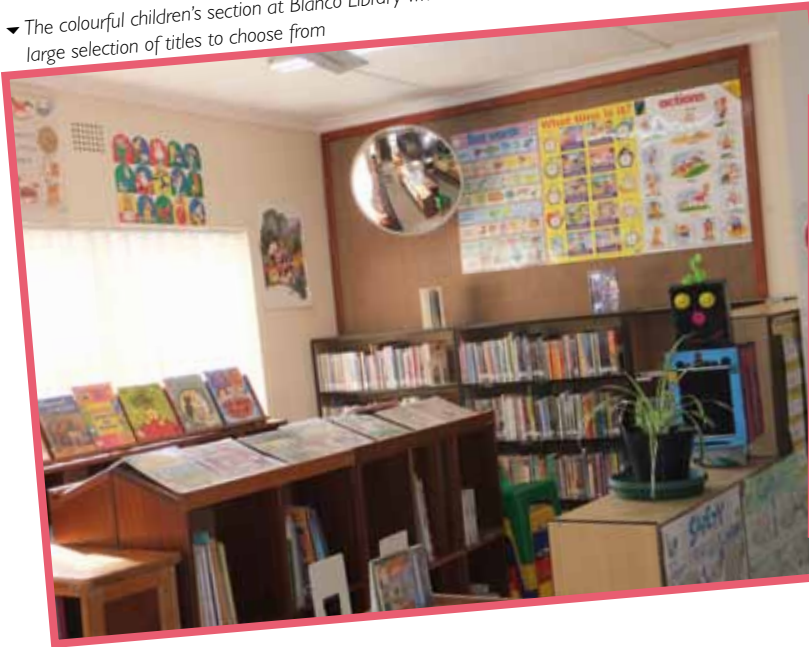


◀ The colourful children's section at Kurland Library



▲ (Ltr): Library assistants Eunice Willemse and Phumla Mngqaba run the show at Kurland Library

▼ The colourful children's section at Blanco Library where users have a large selection of titles to choose from



▲ Library assistants James de Waal (left) and Newton Jumaats serve the public of the Blanco community, while the library aid position (Conditional Grant) is currently vacant.

► Conville Library's staff sport a distinctive dress code that is rather pleasing on the eye. (Ltr): Jeanetta Sauer, senior library assistant; Andrew Fernandez, social developer; Mieta Saulse, library assistant; Daniël Esau, messenger; Hazel Springfield, library assistant and Raphael Goeieman, IT Cape Access



▼ Young members make good use of Conville's facilities



▼ It takes a large number of dedicated people to run a library with so many members. Seen here is the George crew: back (ltr) Jean Carolus, library aid; Lucille Hoop, library assistant; Francis Maas, messenger; assistant librarians Karen Sampson, Jana Botha, Freddie Rheeder, Jaques Olivier and Margaret Jacobs with the reference librarian Elmiën Voster. Front: Nolutho Lingani, senior library assistant; Sharon Raubenheimer, library manager; children's librarian Garalene Muller; Estelle van Rooyen, senior librarian; branches; Kippie van Straaten, senior librarian, George and Jeanine Carolus, library assistant

▼ A display aimed at the youth at George Library



and enlightenment. The library is housed in a double container which has been brightly painted by a local artist from the community. It is situated next to two preschools on Balie Street.

Staff: two library assistants (one Conditional Grant).

Membership: 459
Circulation: 7,654
Stock: 3,432

Masifunde Library

Masifunde Library, ('Masifunde' means 'let us read') opened in February 1997 after consultation with the public, crèches, schools, a literacy group, the Development Forum, the Development Trust and designated councillors. The first librarian was Xola Frans, the current library manager of Knysna libraries. Staff: one librarian; two library assistants and one contract worker.

Membership: 2,951
Circulation: 4,311
Stock: 12,798

Karatara Depot

The depot opened in 1956 and was available to the public for limited hours per week. Currently it is open 20 hours per week. Staff: two library assistants (one Conditional Grant).

Membership: 539
Circulation: 5,064
Stock: 2,105

Rheenendal Library

Rheenendal Library was opened in 2000. As high school children have to travel 35km to Knysna to attend school, a need arose for a library in Rheenendal itself, as the children did not have access to information to complete tasks. The library is situated next to the primary school. Currently the library runs an extensive reading project, which was established after research revealed that the literacy and numeracy standards of the learners are very low.

Staff: three library assistants (one Conditional Grant).

Membership: 1,823
Circulation: 9,243
Stock: 8,986

Sedgefield Library

The Sedgefield Library started off as a book depot in a storeroom, until a proper library was opened in 1989. During the first year after opening, the total book circulation was 40,156, while the circulation for 2011 has dropped to 30,895.

Sedgefield is the first 'slow go' town in South Africa. Inspired by the concept of 'slow food' it is a member of a worldwide organisation that originated in 1999 in Italy, Cittaslow. Its aim is to promote quality of life and resisting a fast-lane lifestyle. A Cittaslow town's population may not exceed 50,000 and Sedgefield's is expected to reach a maximum of 15,000. Its residents are keen users of their library.

The library has, however, been without a librarian for almost two years now. Staff: five assistants (two Conditional Grant) and one relief worker.

Membership: 2,899
Circulation: 30,895
Stock: 18,179

Smutsville Depot

The Smutsville Depot originally operated as a branch library of Sedgefield, but in 2011 it became an independent depot. It effectively serves the needs of the nearby primary school as Sedgefield Library is situated too far from the Smutsville community for primary school children to use. Personnel from Sedgefield Library work in Smutsville on a rotating basis.

Staff: Five assistants (two Conditional Grant) and one relief worker.

Membership: 486
Circulation: 4,961
Stock: 2,628

Bitou Municipality

All libraries in this area were computerised for the first time in July 2012. However, everybody is still in a learning curve with the SLIMS system.

Plettenberg Bay Public Library

The library has its origins in the old Formosa Library which developed from a ladies' book club in the late 1940s and continued with volunteer staff for almost 30 years. Opened in 1978, it is currently situated in a mall in the central business district.

Staff: one library manager; one senior library assistant; three library assistants (two

Conditional Grant); one driver and one ICT supporter (Conditional Grant).

Membership: 10,799
Circulation: 40,360
Stock: 16,489

New Horizons Library

This library was very small and could not provide in the needs of the community any more. In 2010 the municipality decided to rebuild the library. In December 2010 the old library was demolished, whilst a library service was provided from the cloakroom in the sports grounds.

The community is very excited about their wonderful new library and e-library which was officially opened on 24 September 2012.

Staff: One branch librarian and two library assistants (one Conditional Grant).

Membership: 3,262
Circulation: 2,649
Stock: 7,438

Kranshoek Library

Kranshoek Library was opened in July 2007. The village of Kranshoek serves as the headquarters of the Griquas, an ethnic/religious group spread all over South Africa.

Librarian Josie Littlejohn and her assistant Daleen Arende are very enthusiastic about their work and can say with pride that they are doing their very best to provide the children of the local primary school, Kranshoek Primary and other schoolchildren with the best possible help they can.

As this is not a big library, it normally doesn't receive many English fiction books. However, the English fiction block loans which they receive with each visit from the region are very well used by the few English readers.

Staff: one librarian and two library assistants (one Conditional Grant).

Membership: 1,545
Circulation: 13,952
Stock: 9,974

Kwanokuthula Library

This library opened in 1998.

Staff: one librarian and two library assistants (one Conditional Grant).

Membership: 3,690
Circulation: 17,598
Stock: 11,177

Kurland Library

The library was officially opened in 2010, having operated as a depot since 1975. Staff: one librarian and two library assistants (one Conditional Grant).]

Membership: 845
Circulation: 11,016
Stock: 6,705

Wittedrif Library

The library opened in September 1956. Local organisations in the community appointed members on a library committee who took responsibility for the library depot. Mrs J Blignault was appointed as librarian, a position she held until her death in 2008. Emmerentia du Preez took over from her. She often brings personal educational programmes from home for the children to use in the library. Staff: one senior library assistant and one library assistant (Conditional Grant).

Membership: 410
Circulation: 2,873
Stock: 4,021

Wheelie Wagon projects

Bergplaas

Bergplaas Wheelie Wagon opened in 2011. Staff: One community worker

Membership: 37
Circulation: average 400 books per month
Stock: 1,260

Fairview

Opened in March 2012. Staff: one part-time library assistant.

Membership: not available yet
Circulation: not available yet
Stock: 1,084

New projects on the horizon

Buffelsnek Wheelie Wagon
Geelhoutboom Wheelie Wagon
Extentions to Knysna Library



◀ Library assistants Cathleen Windwaal and Surita Fredericks serve the community at Karatara Depot

▶ Karatara Depot is open 20 hours a week



◀ Whilst users and staff from New Horizons Library are all waiting with bated breath for their new library, library assistant Luzane Pietersen and librarian Elrisia Breda are doing a sterling job in their temporary accommodation

▶ Although not a very busy library, Khayaletu is used mostly for study purposes. The team that serves the community are: (ltr) Library assistants Ntomboxolo Lande, Geraldine Somerset, and Sylvia Matinise



► The study and computer area at Masifunde Library is well used. Below are the friendly staff, (ltr) library assistants Ncumisa Frans and Suzelle Simmers with librarian Judith Moni



▲ Nadine Page, library assistant and staff are hard at work at Leisure Isle Library



◀ Children's art in Plettenberg Bay Library



▲ Library assistants Glenda Beukes and Derencia Gesels from Hornlee Library chatting to some users



▲ Meet the friendly Plettenberg Bay team. Back (ltr): Library manager Maryna Johnston; Jackie Toubin, library assistant; Danrick Moodien, driver/messenger and Gwyn Lewis, IT assistant. Front: Nontsikelelo Funda, library assistant; Gizela McCullum, senior library assistant and Verentia Deal, library assistant

► Senior library assistants Anne-Maree Afrika and Gill Meyer with Lulsaac Meyer, the messenger from Pacaltdorp Library, have their hands full serving Dellville Park and New Dawn Park Libraries as well



▲ The issue desk at Pacaltdorp Library

▼ The computer section at Rheenendal Library are very well used by the community



▲ Library assistant Danfred Grootboom keeps the show on the road at the Smutsville Depot

▼ Thembaletu Library, which means 'our hope', is often a hub of activity



▶ Rheenendal Library's friendly staff. Library assistants (ltr) Lilian Laminie and Muriel Pietersen are kept on their toes serving the public - always with a smile



▼ Below and bottom: Rudolf Balie Memorial Library is housed in a brightly painted double container - a pleasure to visit



◀ (Ltr): Xoliswa Kortman, senior library assistant; Abigail Leyema, library assistant; Richard Ntaka, library assistant (Conditional Grant) and Sphiwo Ncinithwa, library aid are the people who ensure that the community of Thembaletu utilises their library to the full



◀ Attractive murals are a feature of Rudolf Balie Library



▲ Sedgefield Library's users' needs are seen to by (back, ltr): library assistant Rhodes Henene and Jeremy Coetzee, junior library assistant. Front: Susanna Barnard, junior library assistant and Babalwa Witbooi, relief worker

► Melanie Buys, the library assistant has her hands full as the only staff member to serve the Touwsrante community.



▲ Colourful chairs attract children to read at Touwsrante Library



▲ A very busy Wittedrif Library



▲ Waboomskraal Library was officially opened in March this year

► Jamie-Lee Swartz, library assistant (Conditional Grant), sees to the needs of Waboomskraal's 130 members.

