

36. Keurkloof

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A place with many historical treasures and untold stories



Entrance to Keurkloof from the R62

Inleiding

Keurkloof is geleë in die Cogmans Kloof Pas, tussen Ashton en Montagu wat as die poort tot die R62 dien.

Hierdie pragtige kloof is vandag (2020) verlate en bedek met bosc en gras. Die omgewing word steeds van tyd tot tyd deur stappers en rotsklimmers besoek.

Die kloof is egter vir twee redes van belang:

1. Dit was een van die belangrikste **watervoorsieningsbronne** vir Montagu en Ashton in die verlede;
2. As gevolg van die beskikbaarheid van bergwater het dit ook as 'n **gewilde ontspanningsgebied** vir die inwoners van

Ashton en Montagu gedien.

Wanneer en hoekom albei bogenoemde fasiliteite nie meer bestaan ☐☐nie, is nog onduidelik.

Die enigste bewyse van die mens se bewoning in die verlede, is die ruïnes van geboue wat tot die ou ontspanningsgebied behoort het, en verder in die kloof-op ruïnes van die ou watersuiweringswerke.

Keurkloof het tydens sy bestaan ☐☐’n inwonende opsigter gehad, wie waarskynlik ’n munisipale werknemer was, en ruïnes van sy woning is steeds sigbaar.

Anelma Oosthuizen (neé Kriel), wie haar kinderjare op Montagu deurgebring het onthou dat Keurkloof ’n baie gewilde piekniekterrein was met braaivleisgeriewe en toilette. Volgens haar het daar ’n mnr Leyding en sy gesin gewoon wie die opsigter van Keurkloof kon gewees het. Sy was saam met Hannie Leyding, een van die dogters op laerskool. Sy reken dat ’n bergbrand moontlik die huis van die Leyding’s kon verwoes het. Verder onthou Annelma hoe haar pa dikwels in die kloof varswater gaan haal het vir huisgebruik.

Die bergwater loop nog vandag (2020) en volgens mnr. M. Johnson, Direkteur: Ingenieursdienste Langeberg Munisipaliteit word steeds deur die munisipaliteit gebruik (J Biesbach uit navorsing vir interpretatiewe aanwysings vir nuwe pad). Dit blyk egter uit ’n visuele besoek dat alle fasiliteite en geriewe wat vroeër bestaan ☐☐het, verlaat is.

English version

KEURKLOOF

Introduction

Keurkloof is situated in the Cogmans Kloof Pass, between

Ashton and Montagu which serves as the gateway to the R62.

This beautiful gorge is deserted today (2020) and covered with bush and grass. The area is still visited from time to time by hikers and rock climbers.

However, the gorge is important for two reasons:

1. It was one of the most important **water supplies for Montagu and Ashton** in the past;
2. Due to the availability of mountain water, it also served as a **popular recreation area** for the residents of Ashton and Montagu.

When and why both of the above facilities no longer exist is still unclear.

The only evidence of human habitation in the past is the ruins of buildings that belonged to the old recreation area, and further into the gorge are remains of the old water filtration works.

During its existence, **Keurkloof** had a resident caretaker, who was probably a municipal employee, and what remains of his home are still visible.

Anelma Oosthuizen (née Kriel), who spent her childhood in Montagu, remembers that Keurkloof was a very popular picnic area with braai facilities and toilets. According to her, a Mr Leyding and his family lived at Keurkloof. In all probability he was the Keurkloof caretaker. She attended primary school with a Hannie Leyding, who was a daughter of the caretaker. She wonders if a mountain fire did not destroy the Leyding's house in Keurkloof. Furthermore, Annelma remembers how her father often fetched fresh water in the kloof for home use.

The mountain water still runs today (2020) and according to Mr. M. Johnson

Director: Engineering Services Langeberg Municipality is still

being used by the Municipality (J Biesbach from research for interpretive signage for new road). However it appears from a visual visit that all facilities and amenities that once existed have been abandoned.



Ariel View of Keurkloof with R62 in background

Picture: Google Satellite

In die berigte wat mnr. D.J. Nolte, 'n onderwyser van die Hoërskool Montagu, vir publikasie aan Die Burger gestuur het kan gesien word watter probleme die Munisipaliteit gehad het met watervoorsiening vanaf Keurkloof

Berig: 15 Maart Jaar 1939 – 'n Tekort aan water in Montagu is met gister se reën byna omgesit in 'n te veel aan water. Nie alleen loop daar 'n dik straal water by die stoordam in die dorp oor nie maar dit blyk dat die Raad se stoordam in **Keurkloof** ook te klein geword het. 'n Saak wat 'n tyd gelede reeds aangeroeer is, is dadelik aangepak en op 'n spesiale vergadering van die Stadsraad vanaand en daar is besluit om die stoordammetjie in Keurkloof waaruit die Ashton pypleiding kom onmiddelik te vergroot en ook ekstra pype in te sit.

English version

In the reports that Mr. D.J. Nolte, a teacher from Montagu High School, sent to Die Burger for publication, it can be seen what problems the Municipality had with water supply from Keurkloof

Report: March 15 1939 – A shortage of water in Montagu was almost turned into too much water with yesterday's rain. Not only is there a thick jet of water overflowing at the storage dam in the town but it seems that the Council's storage dam in **Keurkloof** has also become too small. A matter that was touched on some time ago was tackled immediately and at a special meeting of the City Council tonight it was decided to immediately enlarge the storage dam in **Keurkloof** from which the Ashton pipeline comes and also insert extra pipes.

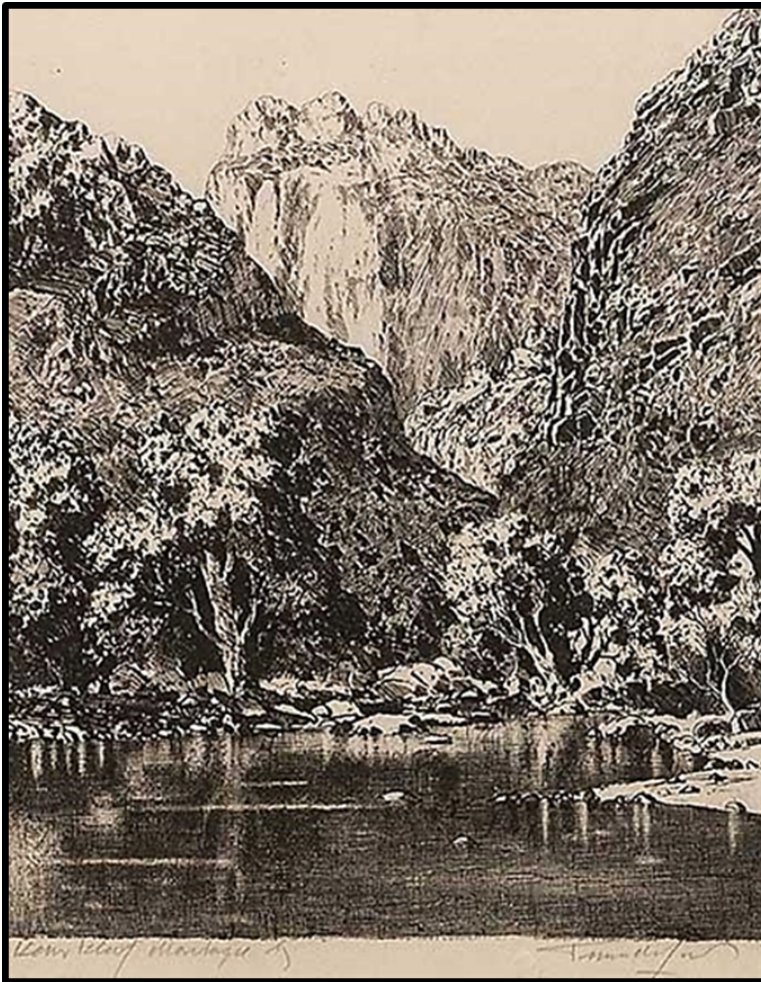
Berig: 11 Julie 1939 – Op die jongste vergadering van die Stadsraad is daar weer geroer aan die kwessie van watervoorsiening. Daar is deur die voorman in sy rapport op gewys dat uit **Keurkloof** alleen 100,000 gelling water per dag in die stoordam val terwyl vanaf Kruis tog seker ook ten minste 50,000 gelling kom en volgens die boeke van die Raad is die getal gellings wat verhuur is byna die helfte minder en dan kla huurders nog gedurig dat hulle te min water kry. Die Raad het toe besluit om eersdaags nog 'n groot stoordam te bou wat ongeveer 10,000,000 gelling kon hou. Die veral met die oog op voorsiening in skaars tye. In die winter is daar gewoonlik 'n oorvloed aan water terwyl daar in die somer weer 'n ewe groot tekort is. Die onopgeloste moeilikheid is egter waar om so 'n dam te bou. Hierdie saak is in die hande van die volle Raad gelaat om ondersoek in te stel. Hierdie watermoeilikheid geld natuurlik hoofsaaklik vir die erwe wat bokant die Bads en Donkerkloof stroom is en dus nie 'n leibeurt het nie.

English version

Report: 11 July 1939 – At the latest meeting of the City Council, the issue of water supply was raised again. The foreman pointed out in his report that from **Keurkloof** alone 100,000 gallons of water runs into the storage dam per day, while Kruis yields at least another 50,000 gallons. According to the Council records consumption is about half of what is potentially available. The ratepayers are still however constantly complaining that they are getting too little water. The Council then decided to build another large storage dam in the near future that could hold about 10,000,000 gallons. This to cater for times of scare rainfall. In winter there is usually an abundance of water while in summer there is an equal shortage again. However, the unresolved difficulty is where to build such a dam. This matter was left in the hands of the full Council to investigate. This water difficulty naturally applies mainly to the plots whose water flow is above the Bads and Donkerkloof and therefore do not have leiwaterturns.

Berig: 5 Maart 1940 – Keurkloof kampeer geriewe (uittreksel)

Onder die rapporte wat aangeneem is op die gewone Stadsraadsvergadering was ook een van 'n spesiale komitee wat aangestel is om te handel op 'n brief van die Automobile Vereniging. Die komitee het aanbeveel dat daar dadelik twee gemakshuisies in **Keurkloof** opgerig word ten geriewe van die reisigers en kampeerders wat dat aandoen.



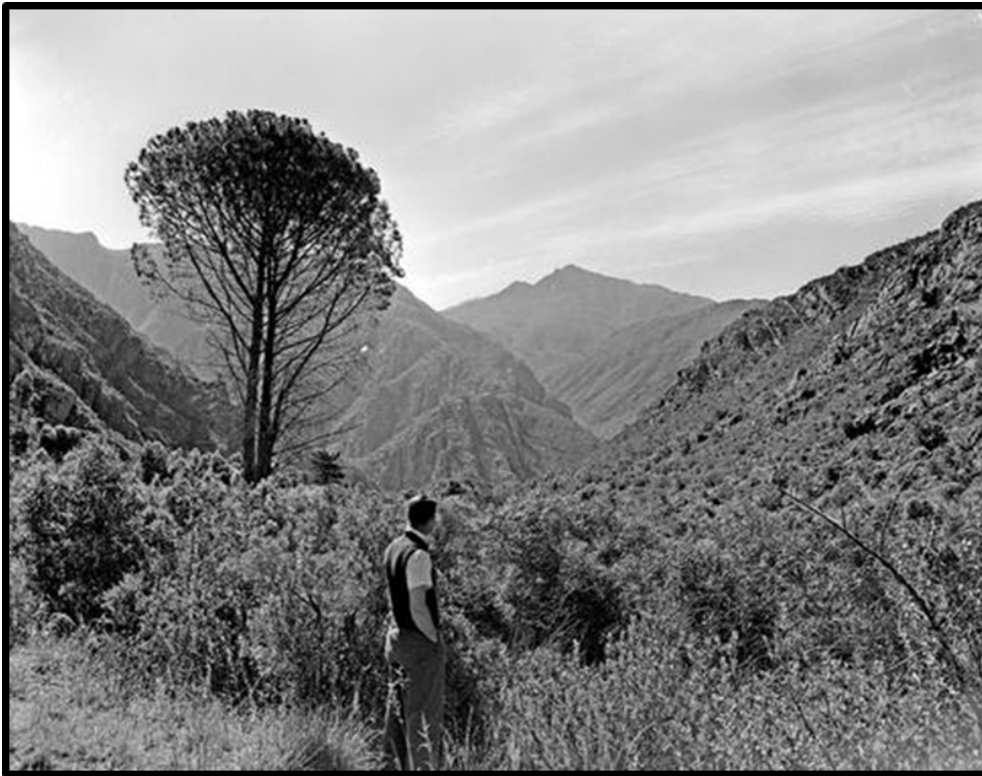
An early painting by Tinus de Jongh suggests what Keurkloof could have looked like?

Picture: Tinus de Jongh/Kotze Kuns

English Version

Report: 5 March 1940 – Keurkloof camping facilities (extract)

Amongst the reports adopted at the ordinary Municipal Council meeting was also one of a special committee appointed to act on a letter from the Automobile Association. The committee recommended that two comfortable chalets be erected in Keurkloof immediately for the convenience of the travelers and campers.



Keurkloof in 1947

Picture: Transnet Heritage Library





The old building housing the filtration plant

Berig: 3 April 1940 – Die plaaslike Stadsraad het vannaand in 'n spesiale sitting gegaan oor 'n verslag van ingenieur C E van Breda oor die moontlikhede om die Raad se watertoevoer te verbeter.

Daar was onlangs twee planne voor die Raad.

Een om die bestaande dam op De Kruis te vergroot en dig te maak en ten tweede om 'n groot stoordam by die dorp op Kanonkop te bou van ongeveer 1,000,000 gelling terwyl die Kruis skema ongeveer £2,000 sal kos vir ruimte vir twee miljoen gelling. Die Raad het toe op laasgenoemde besluit en 'n ingenieur se advies ingewin. Die ingenieur het sy verslag in drie afdelings opgestel.

Die eerste deel gaan oor De Kruis dam wat tans 1,143,000 gelling kan hou as hy vol is en dertien voet diep staan maar sodra die water oor 6 voet stoot begin die dam te lek, en dan is die inhoudsvermoë maar 182,000 gelling. Hy meen dus die dam behoort dig gemaak te word en kan dan verder uitgegrawe

word. Met die verwydering van 5,500 kubieke jaarts kan die dam gemaak word om 2 miljoen gelling te hou. Die opvang area is goed beskerm teen besoedeling behalwe die afstand van die kloof tot by die dam, 'n distansie van 300 jaarts waar die water in 'n oop geut loop. Dit behoort toegekamp te word. Die totale onkoste sal ongeveer £2,000 beloop.

Die tweede deel wys daarop dat in **Keurkloof** ook baie water verlore gaan omdat die pype reeds veertig jaar oud is en baie geroes van binne. Op 3 April het hy beraam dat daar uit die 100,000 gel. water wat die kloof per dag lewer 60,000 wegloop na Kogmanskloof toe. Oor die diensdoenende stoordam by die dorp meen hy dat dit te klein is. Dit hou maar 60,000 gel. As daar iets met die toevoerpype verkeerd gaan kan die dorp binne vier en twintig uur sonder water wees.

Na 'n deeglike bespreking het die Raad besluit om De Kruis dam te laat dig maak en groter maak en om die een pyplyn vanaf die vangdam tot by die meter in **Keurkloof** te laat skoonmaak en uitsement.

English version

Report: 3 April 1940 – The local Municipality will hold a special session tonight on a report by engineer C. E. van Breda on the possibilities of improving the Council's water supply.

There were two plans before the Council recently.

One to enlarge and renovate problem areas leading to water wastage at De Kruis and secondly to build a large storage dam at Kanonkop of approximately 1,000,000 gallons while the De Kruis scheme will cost approximately £ 2,000 for space for two million gallons. The Council then decided on the latter and sought the advice of an engineer. The engineer compiled his report in three sections.

The first part is about De Kruis dam which can currently hold 1,143,000 gallons when it is full and stands thirteen feet deep but as soon as the water pushes over 6 feet the dam starts leaking, and then the capacity is only 182,000 gallons. He therefore believes that the dam should be made watertight and can then be further excavated. With the removal of 5,500 cubic yards, the dam can be made to hold 2 million gallons. The catchment area is well protected from pollution except for the distance from the gorge to the dam, a distance of 300 yards where the water flows into an open gutter. It should be encamped. The total cost will be around £ 2,000.

The second part points out that in **Keurkloof** a lot of water is also lost because the pipes are already forty years old and very rusty from the inside. On April 3, he estimated that out of the 100,000 gallons of water that supplies the gorge per day 60,000 runs off into Cogmans Kloof. Regarding the service storage dam at the town, he thinks it is too small. It only holds 60,000 gallons if something goes wrong with the supply pipes, the town can be without water within twenty-four hours.

After a thorough discussion, the Council decided to have De Kruis dam gutter closed and enlarged and to have the one pipeline from the catchment dam to the meter in **Keurkloof** cleaned and cemented.



Part of the old Keurkloof filtration works



Die stoordam Keurkloof

During a hike done on 28/03/2021 it was possible to trace an old metal pipeline back up the kloof to a small collection dam where the water was stored and feed into the old pipe system.



Standing in Keurkloof looking towards the R62. What may have been the water pipeline/road can be seen on the right hand side of this 1947 picture.

Picture: Transnet Heritage Library

14 Desember 1940 – verslag van die ingenieur of Montagu se waterwerke

Die plaaslike Stadsraad het gisteraand 'n spesiale vergadering gehou en die rapport van die ingenieur C E van Breda oor die Raad se waterwerke is bespreek.

Uit die verslag blyk dat die dorpswater aangevoer word met drie toevoer pype. 'n Dubbel pyplyn van 4 duim en 3½ duim en 16,280 en 166.750 voet onderskeidelik bring die water van Keurkloof en 'n ander pyplyn van 266,340 voet lengte en verskillende diktes bring die water van De Kruis. Tesame dus 'n pyp lengte van 59,370 voet wat die dorp se inwoners van helder skone bergwater voorsien.

Die Keurkloof skema is ongeveer 40 jaar gelede en Kruis 20 jaar gelede voltooi.

Die gebreke in die stelsel op die oomblik volgens die verslag is dat die pype van Keurkloof, wat uit gegote yster pype bestaan, geweldig aangepak is en sal moet skoongemaak word of deur 'n nuwe pyplyn vervang word.

Die pyplyn van De Kruis het die nadeel dat dunner pype nader aan die dorp gebruik is en tussenin etlike waterverbruikers hulle water direk uit die hoofpyp kry. In albei gevalle wys die ingenieur daarop dat by die inlaatdamme baie water verlore gaan deur lekkasie.

Dan het die Raad ook wenke gevra vir planne vir die doeltreffende stoor van water gedurende die somermaande. Hy noem die konstruksie van 'n ronde stoordam op Kanonkop vir 1miljoen gelling teen 'n alles insluitende koste van ongeveer £11,000. As alternatief noem hy ook die Raad se vorige skema om die De Kruis dam groter te maak en dig te maak teen 'n koste van ongeveer £2,000 vir dieselfde stoor kapasiteit.

English version

December 14, 1940 – report of the engineer or Montagu's waterworks

The local Council held a special meeting last night and the report of the engineer C. E. van Breda on the Council's waterworks was discussed.

The report shows that the town water is supplied with three supply pipes. A double pipeline of 4 inches and 3½ inches and 16,280 and 166,750 feet respectively brings the water from **Keurkloof** and another pipeline of 266,340 feet in length and different thicknesses brings the water from De Kruis. Together, therefore, a collective pipe length of 59,370 feet provides the town's residents with clear clean mountain water.

The **Keurkloof** Scheme was completed about 40 years ago and Kruis 20 years ago.

The shortcomings in the system at the moment according to the report are that the pipes from **Keurkloof**, which are cast iron, are badly corroded and will have to be cleaned or replaced with a new pipeline.

The pipeline from De Kruis has the disadvantage that thinner pipes were used closer to the town and in between several water consumers get their water directly from the main pipe. In both cases, the engineer pointed out that at the inlet dams a lot of water is lost through leakage.

The Council then asked for suggestions on how to create more efficient water storage facilities during the summer months. The Engineer proposed the construction of a round storage dam on Kanonkop for 1 million gallons at an all-inclusive cost of about £ 11,000. Alternatively, he also supported Council's previous proposal to enlarge and water proof De Kruis dam at a

cost of approximately £ 2,000 for the same storage capacity.

Berig: 30 Januarie 1941– Waterskemas

Ongeveer 20 jaar gelede het die Raad groot somme spandeer om die dorp behoorlik van water te voorsien. Twee skemas bekend as De Kruis en die **Keurkloof** skemas het tot stand gekom.

Die skuld het swaar op die dorpenaars gedruk maar die water voorraad was bevredigend. Met die verligting van skuld het die watervoorraad ook afgeneem deurdat pypleidings toegeraak het. Verlede jaar is aansienlike skulde gedelg sodat selfs die belasting kon verlig word. Vanjaar was die water reeds in die voorsomer so kritiek dat die Raad begin roer het in die saak. Dit het reeds gevorder tot by die skraap en uitsement van 'n deel van **Keurkloof** se pype. 'n Pomp is opgerig om uit 'n boorgat by Witfontein water te pomp. Die eerste paar dae het dit taamlik gegaan. Die gat lewer egter maar 1,500 gelling per uur en word ook so gou droog getrek. Die verbruik het egter vinniger gestyg deurdat die Raad aan Ashton toegestaan het om water aan die Langeberg Ko-öperasie te lewer. Volgens kontrak is die Spoorweg geregtig op 'n minimum van 12,000 gelling per dag maar die verbruik het in die somermaande al gestyg tot 'n gemiddelde van ongeveer 30,000 gelling per dag.

'n Tweede stap wat die Raad geneem het was om 'n ingenieur te kry om ondersoek in te stel en verslag te doen. Die verslag het egter openbaar dat die verspreidingsstelsel baie ondoeltreffend is. Beide tussen die **Keurkloof** bron en die De Kruis bron sit twee groot verbruikers wat hulle water uit die hoofpyp kry voor die belastingbetalers, tewete Ashton stasie en mev. Schlesinger. Mev. Schlesinger (Qu Si Sana) wat uit die De Kruis lyn tap het egter daartoe oorgegaan om te laat boor en daarin geslaag om genoeg water vir haar gebruik te kry. By Ashton het bogenoemde verwikkelinge vanjaar plaasgevind. Verder openbaar die ingenieur ook in sy verslag

dat die onderdorp se mense almal direk uit die hoofpyp voorsien word terwyl die bo-dorp s'n hulle water uit die stoordam bokant die dorp kry. Met ander woorde die surpluswater van die onderdorp moet eers die dam bereik voor die bo-dorpers iets kry. Hierdie toestand is deur 'n belastingbetaler per brief onder die aandag van die Raad gebring. Hy eis ook verder dat die verhelpbare toestand onmiddelik reggestel moet word. Die Raad self het op die rapport van die ingenieur gereageer deur 'n lening van f11,000 aan te vra hoofsaaklik vir die bou van 'n groot stoordam bokant die dorp en die verbetering van die distribusie stelsel.

'n Paar belastingbetalers het gemeen om hulself die somer te red deur op hulle eie onkoste watermeters te laat insit. Nou blyk dit egter dat as die water snags afgedraai word die pype vol wind raak sodra dit dan weer aangedraai word loop die meters dat hulle skreeu onder die druk van die wind. Van die euwel dat hulle moes betaal vir water wat hulle nie kry nie het hulle oorgegaan tot die ander euwel dat hulle nou moet betaal vir wind wat hulle nie wil hê nie.

English Version

Report: 30 January 1941- Water schemes

About 20 years ago, the Council spent large sums of money to properly supply the town with water. Two schemes known as De Kruis and the **Keurkloof** schemes were established.

The debt put heavy pressure on the local ratepayers but the water supply was satisfactory. With debt relief, the water supply also decreased as pipelines became clogged. Last year, significant debts were paid off so that even the tax could be relieved. This year, the water was already so critical in the early summer that the Council began to have concerns about the water supply. It has already progressed to the scraping and

cementing of part of **Keurkloof's** pipes. A pump was erected to pump water from a borehole at Witfontein. The first few days it went pretty well. However, the hole produces only 1,500 gallons per hour and is also pumped dry very quickly. However, consumption increased more rapidly as the Council allowed Ashton to supply water to the Langeberg Co-operative. According to the contract, the Railway is entitled to a minimum of 12,000 gallons per day, but consumption has already increased to an average of about 30,000 gallons per day during the summer months.

A second step the Council took was to get an engineer to investigate and report. However, the report revealed that the distribution system is very inefficient. Both between the **Keurkloof** source and the De Kruis source, two large consumers who get their water from the main pipe sit in front of the taxpayers, namely Ashton station and Mrs. Schlesinger. Mrs. Schlesinger (Qu Si Sana), who was tapping from the De Kruis line, proceeded to drill and managed to get enough water for her use. At Ashton, the above developments took place this year. Furthermore, the engineer also reveals in his report that the people of the lower town are all supplied directly from the main pipe while the people of the upper town get their water from the storage dam above the town. In other words, the surplus water from the lower town must first reach the dam before the upper villagers get anything. This condition was brought to the attention of the Council by a taxpayer letter. He also further demands that the unsatisfactory condition be rectified immediately. The council itself responded to the engineer's report by requesting a loan of £ 11,000 mainly for the construction of a large storage dam above the town and the improvement of the distribution system.

A few taxpayers agreed to have water meters installed at their own cost to ensure they were billed correctly. Now, however, it seems that if the water is turned off at night, the pipes become full of air as soon as it is turned on again, the

meters begin to run under the pressure of the air. From the one evil that of paying for water that they did not get, they went on to the other evil that they now have to pay for air which they do not want.

25 April 1942 – waterprobleme opgelos

Dit kom voor asof Montagu se waterprobleme nou baie naby opgelos is. Die halfmiljoen gelling stoordam teen Kanonkop wat so pas voltooi is, is nou verbind met beide De Kruis en Keurkloof, asook met die hoof uitleipyp na die dorp toe. Donderdag het die welkom geluid van vallende water vir die eerste keer in die nuwe dam weerklink. Maar met die eerste inkeer van die water in die hoofleipyp na die dorp was die drukking so geweldig dat die pyp op 'n paar plekke die druk nie kon staan nie. Die herstellings is egter gou weer gemaak en die dorpenaars, wat nog telkens voor leë krane moes staan, vewag nou oorvloed water. 'n Tweede sagte reëntjie oor die dorp in hierdie maand het ook nog die vooruitsigte versterk.

English Version

April 25, 1942 – water problems solved

It seems that Montagu's water problems have now just about been solved. The half-million gallon storage dam at Kanonkop that has just been completed is now connected to both De Kruis and Keurkloof, as well as to the main discharge pipe to the town. On Thursday, the welcome sound of falling water sounded for the first time in the new dam. But with the first inlet of the water in the main pipeline to the town, the pressure was so great that the pipe could not withstand the pressure in some places. However, the repairs were soon made again and the villagers, who still had to stand in front of empty taps, were now waiting for plenty of water. A second light rain over the

town this month also strengthened the prospects.
