

SKOGHEIM HVILESTED

A LEGACY OF GOD AT WORK



Skogheim

THAT ALL MAY KNOW HIM

CONFERENCE, RETREAT AND TRAINING CENTRE

FOREWORD

Thank you to all who shared your fond memories and stories with me; without you this little book would not have come into being.

As a relative newcomer to Skogheim, I had the happy responsibility of hearing and compiling the manifold testimonies of God at work, in and through the lives of those who have lived and camped at Skogheim. What a joy it has been, your stories touched my heart.

Special thanks to our donor who first had the idea and then made the publication of this book possible for our 50th Anniversary in 2017.

Thank you to all who had a hand in bringing it about, including Doug & Karen Sayce for editing, Andrew and Claire Brauteseth for photos, Lesley Brauteseth for loading all the photos, Jono Bestwick for the front cover art work, and Dean Burchett of Lightning Printers.

The final draft went to print four short weeks after the idea was birthed. What started out as a 'brief' history of Skogheim took on a life of its own. We received so many stories that all show the hand of our Heavenly Father. We are only sorry we could not include them all. We trust that this book may strengthen your faith as you read.

We will appreciate you bringing to our attention any errors in fact or composition, as well as any stories which we can add to this testimony of the work of our Almighty and Loving Father at Skogheim. I'm sure a third edition will be forthcoming.

Ingrid Kjonstad
March 2017
3rd Edition

"That you may know ... the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." Ephesians 1 v 19 (NASB)

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CHAPTER 1

THE SEED IS PLANTED

The heritage of Skogheim revolves around FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP and dates back to the arrival in Port Shepstone of the first Norwegian settlers in 1882. The original 100 acre, Lot 11, was owned by the Standal family. A few years later it was purchased by Otto J Brauteseth, also an 1882 settler after his marriage to Johanne Karine Øie in 1891. They had three sons and one daughter. Although a sickly woman, Johanne was a great prayer warrior, and so the seeds of the Christian heritage of Skogheim Christian Conference Centre were planted.

Otto was a man who persevered through many trials. A cobbler by trade, at one time he could only support his family by walking all the way to Eshowe to find work as a baker. Living on a river also provided trials of another kind as twice he made bricks to build his home only to have flood waters steal them away. Otto sub-divided the lot and lived on one portion of 80 acres now called 'Westhoven'.



Later Otto moved across to the smaller 20 acre plot while his second son, Christian Brauteseth and family, continued on at Westhoven. After the passing of Otto and Johanne, the smaller portion was rented out to Mrs Bertha Neel, who started a bird-haven where she housed a menagerie of 'thousands' of birds which she fed and cared for. The family finally decided to sell the larger lot and moved onto the smaller lot. This same 20 acre plot formed the nucleus of what we now know as 'Skogheim'.

Christian's wife, Ruth Larssen, had come to South Africa as a companion to a family. It was her sister, Inga Kvalsvig, known for her poetic abilities (perhaps we can with hindsight say her prophetic gifting), who suggested the name of SKOGHEIM HVILESTED for their farm. This name translated "Home in the Forest" and "Place of Rest" proved to be so very appropriate for the plans which God had in store. Christian and Ruth were blessed with eight sons.



Christian was a strong man, and his firm discipline of his sons was a suitable foil to that of his wife who was gentle, kind and strong. Together they exerted a godly influence on the lives of their children. Christian would one day say to his son Trygvar that he believed the reason the four younger boys were all called into ministry was a direct result of Ruth's mission-mindedness and tender-hearted witness to her children.

Their daily bedtime routine involved Ruth telling stories of the Lord and praying with them. Many a chore was given with the gentle reminder to 'do it for the Lord, do it for Jesus'. They grew up with a conscious awareness of the very presence of the Lord. These four younger brothers became involved in evangelism and church planting (and building), supported by their four older brothers.

Ronnie, a Methodist minister. Trygvar, a Free-Methodist minister and evangelist, who ministered for a number of years with Pastor Joseph Ndovela, Pastor Gasa and Mama Leah Khoza in the Bhoiboyi and Bhomela areas. Arne, a farmer and lay-preacher. And lastly Nils, always the practical

one, who supported evangelist Pastor Gasa in his ministry and who finally, was called to found 'Skogheim Christian Conference Centre'.

Their father, a talented linguist, also laid the groundwork for their ministries, as hunting expeditions were conducted in Zulu and many an evening after supper was spent with his boys sharing stories together, where they were encouraged to converse in Zulu. This habit gave the boys a superb command of Zulu which paved the way for their calling as ministers and evangelists throughout South Africa.

In memory of this part of our heritage, our first accommodation block ever built was called Ruth Hall, named after this dear lady who was a missionary at heart and yet never went on a 'mission'. Her prayer for many years was that God would use Skogheim to provide a place where missionaries could rest for a while. Through her prayers and faithful witness she raised up four men who impacted many for Christ. Trygvar remembers her as a 'thinker', who read many deep theological books in the midst of home duties and difficulties. Today our library is housed in Ruth Hall, one of the many God orchestrated coincidences we have discovered. Her beautiful spirit lives on in the rich legacy she left behind.



CHAPTER 2

THE VISION IS GIVEN

Ronnie took over the farm from his parents and built onto the small family kitchen. He then received a call into ministry in Swaziland with the Methodist Church. Nils returned from Zimbabwe and, wanting to get involved at Skogheim, purchased the farm from his brother.

In 1962 Nils and Liliias, with six children to care for, became burdened to provide a home for young boys, many of whom came from broken homes. From 1963 they developed a youth hostel for troubled boys who were not accepted in the general schooling hostel system.

Although a few girls were welcomed initially, soon the dilemma of 'boys and girls' living so near each other became apparent and they decided to limit their hostel to boys only. Liliias proved to be a hard worker just like her mother-in-law with many a young man fearing a hiding from Liliias far more than one from Nils, as she had strong hands and was firm in her discipline.

Nils and Liliias built a large dormitory onto the side of their home for the boys (now replaced with Vista 10-13, as well as the fridge, freezer and stock rooms) and two more rooms (the start of Ruth Hall) on the other side of the house for the girls. Nils and Liliias lived in what is now Ruth 1, and our tuck shop was a bedroom for Inga Kvalsvig and her son.



Through the years we have received visits from some of these young men, now in their sixties, and heard their stories. Having the security of a loving family for the first time, many boys found their marks improving. Joyce (eldest daughter of Nils and Liliias) well remembers as a young girl being told to tread quietly so the boys could study with the help of Mrs Gloria Holte, who volunteered to tutor them during homework times. Walks along the

Bhobhoyi River with Nils on Sunday afternoons provided ample time for them to learn and grow under the positive influence of a godly man. Many of these city boys grew to love this outdoor family life.

Still, having a family of 8 is very different to a family of 30, and the family was often called to make sacrifices. Joyce remembers a time when three young boys, finding a mother's love for the first time in their lives, were attempting to sit on her mother's lap only to find that there was no place left for her younger sister to join them. It was hard at times not to have one's parents to oneself, and having the influence of young boys in the home, who could often be led into mischief, was not always easy. Liliás spent many, many hours cooking for her extended family only to continue with laundry late into the night to ensure school uniforms were repaired and ready for the next day.

From these sacrifices, among many others, we have today a legacy of sacrificial service to others embedded into our heritage. The boys too left their own legacy at Skogheim as they persuaded Nils to build them a pool. Nils undertook this task with one condition, that they would dig the hole themselves according to his specifications. I am sure that at times while they were digging, these boys were tempted to give up on the task wondering at the size of their hole, but we now appreciate the hand of God at work in the digging. A huge pool for 20 young boys certainly, but one that's just the perfect size for the conference centre already conceived in the mind of God.



In 1966, in order to support the growing needs of this hostel for boys, Nils and Liliás were led to open their extended home for holiday camps. His younger brother Ronnie, now a Methodist minister in Benoni, was instrumental in bringing the first youth groups down for a camp near the sea. For a short time the hostel and holiday camping centre ran together.

Then early in 1967, God intervened through new legislation with the Child Welfare Act, which required the live-in services of a qualified nursing sister at all hostels. This led them to close the door on the hostel and concentrate on developing the property for the sole use as a Christian Conference Centre.

At this time Nils initiated his first major building project at Skogheim. He extended the two rooms on the 'girls' side' of the house into an eight room three storey building. Each room contained a number of triple-tier bunk beds. This first camping accommodation block later became known as Ruth Hall. With family often having to give way to guests, many were the times they would return home from school not knowing where their bed would be. This led to Ken finally putting his foot down and demanding a place just for himself. He found a spot near the pool and started to build his own rooms. Unfortunately, it was too far to allow for connections to the water and electrical supplies and had to be abandoned. You can still find the ruins of this attempt at privacy just below Woodhouse, next to the pool.

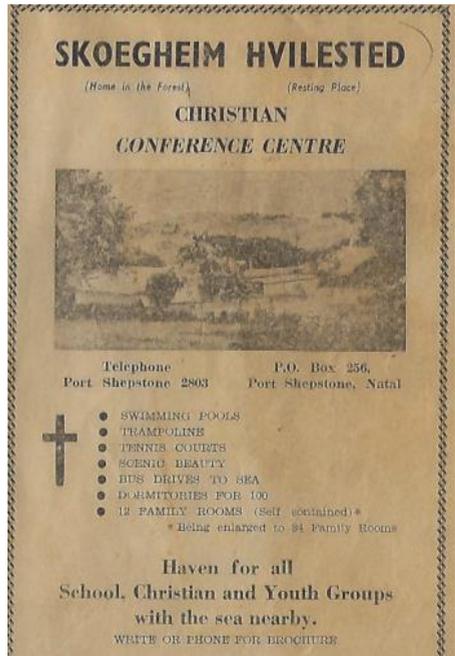
The beautiful parquet flooring in Ruth Lounge was a feature of note but required many hours on hands and knees to polish before the days of electric polishers. One minister had the bright idea of getting his camp kids to polish the floor by making it into a fun game, with the children sitting on clothes and being pulled here and there by their friends until the floors were sparkling.

These years of youth camps had all the family involved. A bus was purchased and used to bring children to camp. (This bus was also used by Trygvar in his outreach campaigns to ferry tents onto the mission field). Many was the time when Nils would return singing with a group of children, while Liliás and Joyce were ready for a holiday from all the work involved in preparing for their arrival.

Each time Nils went up to Gauteng to collect another group, Liliás would get stuck in and continue the building renovations to turn the family home into a centre for groups. (Liliás placed many a brick on the road to building Ruth & Nils Halls, and Joyce Anne was involved in the construction of Robin House). Once a group arrived it was all hands on deck to prepare meals,

wash dishes and after they had left to wash linen, clean rooms and make up beds for the next camp, and if there was enough time, back into construction. As church groups began to book, moving three-tier metal bunks was a common chore between camps, since group requirements differed. The children did not always appreciate their co-option into this ministry, and once in a while decided to take the law into their own hands. While preparing the beds for a Christian Doctors Fellowship camp, Joyce, Karen, Ingrid and Nola decided to apple-pie every bed they made. Joyce happily has no memory of the outcome of that escapade!

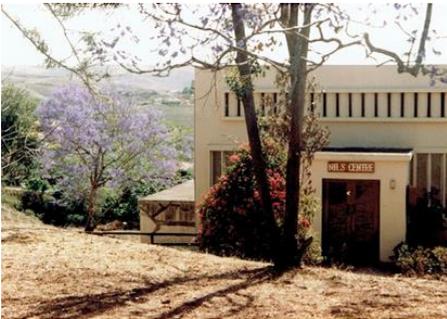
In 1970, with occupancy growing, Nils started to build Nils centre. He was running his own building company at the time, and any leftover equipment went into this new accommodation block. Nils proved very resourceful in finding building material that others were keen to be rid of. A local hotel that was demolished provided the plumbing needs, and auctions provided the doors. The Mayfair hotel in Durban provided lovely oak beds which are still in some of the Nils rooms today. Nils' assistant, Mkhwethe, was given the task of making bricks from river sand at the bottom of the property.



What started as a small ministry for Christian camps in 1967, mainly during the school holidays, soon became a busy family enterprise. New staff joined the team. Joyce had left the farm to study nursing during this time and then married Robin Westbrook. In 1971, they felt called to come and assist with the camping ministry as it grew. Rob took over some of the bus trips and general maintenance, while Joyce joined her mother in the kitchens and bedrooms.

One person who appears in many recollections of events at Skogheim is Mkhwethe Madikizela known as 'Plum' – due to his talent for plumbing. It was he who, when the boys decided to build a bonfire and set it alight, saved Karen from burning as she, then a little child, had climbed to the top without anyone else spotting her. Plum doused the fire which Wayne and Craig, Joyce's sons, had lit in the banana plantation and saved the guests' cars parked nearby.

The construction work continued into 1971. Each evening Nils would return home from his construction business and build onto the walls, placing the bricks Mkhwethe had made into position. Eventually Nils Hall was completed, creating accommodation for up to 150 people.



Special memories of this time are plentiful. Youth groups would walk the 5 km to the beach and come home hungry for the very delicious meals and their favourite Skogheim bread. Lilias baked huge loaves of bread, a 'must have' for every camp that came to Skogheim. Here is the recipe for you to enjoy.

Nutty Wheat Bread

5 cups bread flour 1 ½ cups nutty wheat flour Salt to taste
Mix 3t dried yeast with warm water, and when dissolved add to above ingredients. Add sufficient water to make a moist mixture (must not be dry). Put in a warm place to rise. Then stir this mixture, do not knead as it is too moist. Place in greased tins. Allow to rise and bake at 200°C for 15 minutes, then at 180°C for 1 hour.

Two camps stand out in Joyce's mind. One, an annual youth camp lead by Costa Stathakis, a minister with the Methodist church. The youth went out into the streets of the Margate area to hand out tracts. A special feature of this ministry had the youth pretending to be statues to attract the attention of those who passed by, and then hand out a tract and talk about Jesus. Joyce remembers them holding their meetings in the Workshop, as they only had one meeting hall and it was used by another group.

The other group of camps she recalls well was FUN IN THE SUN, an outreach to needy children who were brought by bus to enjoy a camp by the sea. Charlotte Schreuder, later to join Skogheim staff remembers: "It must have been around December 1980 that the youth group of the Methodist Church in Pretoria approached me. I was working for the Child Welfare Society, and they asked me if I had any children to send on a youth camp they wanted to run on the Natal Coast. This offer was met with great enthusiasm and, in consultation with some parent groups and the Louis Botha Children's Home in Pretoria, we were happy to suggest 60 children who otherwise would never have had a holiday, much less at the sea.



And thus the first Fun in the Sun camp took place, well prepared and professionally supported with 20 trained youth leaders, a nurse and a social worker on the staff. That social worker was myself, and from the start right through the following years I have been impressed with the devotion and skills of the leadership and well thought through programmes with and for the children. Many of these children were traumatised, some also neglected and placed under welfare attention. Nevertheless it was evident that the loving care, good food, fun and personal

attention for each child made a big difference: even though only on camp for a week, many of these children came to know the Lord.

Fundraising was a challenge, but the Lord brought in what we needed. I will never forget the hundreds of pancakes and other nice things we baked every Wednesday in the kiosk which the Margate Rotary Club allowed us to use. Once during a staff training session in the garden of Camp “pa and ma” (Nils and Liliás) we prayed together for the extra R2,000 still needed for the coming camp. We had hardly started and the phone rang and “Ma” got up to answer it. When she came back she said “Does anybody still doubt the Lord’s hand in this?” For the caller had just offered us R2,000, “because that might come in useful”.

On the bus from Pretoria to camp we always asked the children when we were coming close “who will be the first to see the sea?” Until one little girl asked: “and what happens when God pulls out the plug?”

Joyce recalls how each FITS camp had a special banquet at the end of camp where Liliás and Joyce served the most delicious meal with a sea theme: Green soup, Octopus made from half a boiled egg with spaghetti legs, a fish dish for the main meal and marshmallow fish for dessert.

A very dear memory of Joyce’s was of a day when the family were washing the dishes for the guests. While doing this chore they often passed the time singing their favourite hymns and choruses. Leaving the kitchen they found a young girl sobbing outside. She said she had never experienced such family togetherness and happiness in her life. That very day she committed her life to the Lord through the witness of their fellowship in song.

These years of family ministry were cherished. Each church group that booked was celebrated as a sign from the Lord that they were walking in the right direction. But finally the work became too large to be handled by just family and a few staff. The burden of ministry and financial needs resulted in hearts ready to enter the next season the Lord had for Skogheim. In 1977 Nils and Liliás accepted that they needed to let this precious yoke go, and on 6 January 1977 at breakfast time, they set it at His feet, praying it would go to a Christian group who had a vision to carry on the work and waited to see what He would do. They did not have long to wait as God was already at work to bring their prayers to fruition.

CHAPTER 3

ONE SOWS, ANOTHER WATERS (AEF)

Midge Pittman, grew up in USA, and as a young girl gave her heart to the Lord and almost simultaneously felt the call to missions. For many years she believed the Lord would take her into the mission field. In 1956 she wrote a 500 word essay on what she would be doing in 1976. She wrote about serving Him in Africa, but during Bible College was challenged with the needs of the Indian people and felt led to head in that direction having forgotten her essay written many years earlier. She obtained her Bachelor of Biblical Education Degree and Associate in Science in Technical Nursing degrees while working part-time in food service at Columbia Bible College and as a nursing aide while in Nurse's training at the University of South Carolina.



She spent her summer college breaks ministering at camps on Tapawingo Island, part of Camp-Of-The-Woods, in Speculator, New York State. This island camp for girls, gave Midge 12 years of camping experience under the leadership of Carolyn Ray which she would need when the Lord finally opened the way for her to join the mission field. After numerous attempts to obtain a visa to enter India, all of which were denied, Midge was asked to join staff at Columbia Bible College to be assistant manager in food service. Her call to missions never left her and she was challenged again to explore other doors, so Midge told the Lord that she would go wherever He opened the door.

She received her calling in 1973 as a missionary with AEF in partnership with the ECSA. When she was packing her things and preparing to leave for South Africa – she discovered she still had that 500 word essay that was written in 1956 stating she was serving the Lord in Africa in 1976. Is this a Coincidence? We may forget details, but God never does! She was the first

child called to be a missionary, and possibly the longest serving missionary sent out by her church, Grace Bible Church in Shorewood, Illinois.

She was sent out to Port Shepstone, part of the largest Indian community outside of India, to begin her service. Her task was to encourage camping as a ministry and serve as a missionary in the local church.

Midge remembers: "I left my Home in Joliet, Illinois on Good Friday, April 16, 1976 and landed in South Africa on April 18, 1976 at 33 years of age. It was the happiest day of my life. I had known God's call on my life since before I was 11 years old and I was now in the field. I could not have been more joyful, and the significance of arriving on an Easter weekend made it even more precious. Jesus ended His earthly ministry at 33 and I was about to begin mine at the same age.

I was appointed to serve the Lord at Oribi Bible Fellowship Camp under Paddy and Geoff Langton, Associate Missionaries under the Africa Evangelical Fellowship. I joined the Shiloh Evangelical Church that was established by the mission where I planned and promoted my first two camps. One for the ECSA Ladies and another for ECSA Youth on New Years' day. (The Evangelical Church of South Africa had established 26 churches throughout the region and held camps once a year.) Our Ladies Camp in August was attended by 112 women with the theme of Serving in Mission and we were blessed.

I looked forward to our scheduled Youth Camp at year end. That Camp changed everything. On 4 January 1977 three boys violated a lights out rule, lit candles in their cabin and went to bed leaving them burning. Their cabin was burned to the ground. Although no one was injured, the boys lost everything except the clothes on their backs.

On 6 January 1977, I visited the offices of the building inspector to discuss the fire and rebuilding plans. On my way down the stairs from this meeting, I bumped into Liliias who told me of their decision that very morning to put Skogheim on the market, and I asked her to give me a few days to discuss it with our mission.

I was encouraged by Geoff Langton to put both options before the AEF SEC. Soon I was in Pietermaritzburg to present to the AEF the pros and cons of Oribi versus Skogheim. I presented my case but could not make the decision

because I was new on the field and a “junior missionary” still in my first term. In my quiet time that morning, God underscored a verse from Daniel that now hangs in the Dining Room. “But go thou, thy way till the end be: For thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” Daniel 12v13 (KJV). Both the lots were about the same size at the time – and both would require further investment etc. I could not make the decision. With that word from the Lord, I left mission headquarters to return to Port Shepstone, knowing God was going to lead those men to make the right decision.”

AEF brought the matter of repairs and renovations of Oribi Bible Camp and the potential of purchasing Skogheim before the Lord as a matter of earnest prayer and on 7 April 1977 took a step of faith to raise the funds needed to make the purchase of Skogheim. They sent Midge back to America to raise the needed R60 000 (\$71,000) to make the down payment, with the balance of R90 000 to be paid over a 10 year interest free period.

A number of Midge’s supporters stepped in at this time, writing letters to organisations who they thought may be interested in supporting this ministry of AEF. Camp-Of-The-Woods gave Midge opportunity to present the need to their guests and many gave generously toward the purchase. One young girl on Tapawingo Island asked her parents for permission to tithe from her savings account to help AEF purchase Skogheim. Others gave up coke and candy money to help.

Evelyn Rust was a supporter and personal friend who worked at a Radio Station in Columbia South Carolina. One of her letters to **Back To The Bible** (a former employer) resulted in their committing to give \$10,000 toward the purchase of Skogheim from Nils.

Midge recalls “Back To The Bible called me when I was back in Pietermaritzburg attending the AEF SEC meeting in June 1977. There had been a change in the SEC members and the full down payment had not yet been raised. They therefore considered withdrawing from the purchase agreement. In the end, partially due to their call, AEF moved forward with purchase on 1 July 1977.”

Meanwhile, Midge had been living at Skogheim taking over the reins of running the campsite. Nils and Lillas heard the news of the final decision to purchase the property, and over breakfast Nils promptly handed the keys to her saying, “Lillas and I have prayed about it and have decided to accept

the offer of the AEF and as of today you are in charge". The wonderful news in all of this was that Joyce and Robin were willing to remain on staff since the Centre was going to continue to be used to serve the Lord. They can tell many stories of those early days. Midge was not a cook and was not familiar with South African diet, so their willingness to stay on was a real blessing. Joyce is a fantastic cook and took a tremendous load off of Midge's shoulders. Joyce was her first and last cook at Skogheim. She not only cooked herself, but taught other staff to cook and managed supplies and budgets. She is a phenomenal Kitchen Manager to this day.

Midge inherited the leadership of Skogheim with R267 in the bank, staff wages to pay at the end of the week, and then soon discovered the fridge/freezer unit was giving problems and needed immediate replacement. Pat and Larry Cruttenden called the same day to speak with Midge on other matters and agreed to provide for the full replacement of the fridge/freezer units. The timing of their call was nothing short of a miracle. They were the first donors to meet the needs at Skogheim when Midge took over management of Skogheim, but they were certainly not the last. This initiated a long line of donations which were to establish Skogheim as a property set apart by the Lord for the blessing of His church.

Even in a ministry which had always been open to all God's people, the prevailing apartheid laws still had to be adhered to. One of Midge's first tasks was to visit her next door neighbours. Midge well remembers her visits: 'Laws at that time required permission to operate cross-culturally. I went to every neighbor touching our boundaries to introduce myself and explain our (AEF) intentions to operate in this manner with a letter in hand that I wanted them to sign stating they had no objections. That included Marge and Arthur Date, Marge and Arne Brauteseth and the Norwegian Settlers Church. Everyone signed and we were given a permit to operate with restrictions. We could eat together, meet together but not sleep in the same rooms or share the same ablution facilities. These restrictions were hurtful since missionaries wanted to share rooms with their church people.

Skogheim's design made it possible for us to meet their requirements but it meant we had to practise Apartheid at camp. I explained to our Indian Ladies Camp that this was not my desire but this was the law and if we did

not abide by it, they could close our camp. I asked them to abide by the law and pray with me that we would find an answer.

The next year I was at a CCI conference at Wynford Guest Farm with Roy and Lyn Langford. Roy was letting people share rooms cross culturally and as well as sharing the same ablution facilities. I went to him to find out how he had circumvented the restrictions. He showed me his permit to operate in which a gazetted law was mentioned: “You could have a person of another race in your home without a permit for no more than 30 days in a calendar year” was the pertinent part. The permit granting him permission to operate was written by the same person who had put restrictions on us. I asked him to copy just that portion of his letter that contained the law to take with me. I stopped off in Pietermaritzburg on my way home to speak to the official. He said he was in a different department now but I told him I still wanted to speak to him because he was the one who gave us the permit to operate and put restrictions on us.

I showed him my copy of the law and asked him if a permit superseded a gazetted law. He asked me if I had a lawyer – and I told him I did not need a lawyer but simply an answer to my question. He then proceeded to tell me that our letter for permit to operate had gone to Pretoria and the response was from them. I again asked the same question – does a permit supersede a gazetted law? He told me my question was an embarrassment to his department. I told him that was not my intention and that it was obvious that a permit did not supersede gazetted law and therefore was redundant.

In view of this, I returned to Port Shepstone and notified the authorities of our intention to operate under the law that was gazetted. I told them that we were not a political organization but existed solely for the purpose of ministering to people and sharing the love of God. Our platform would never be used for political purposes. I invited them to have a representative to review our calendar or spend the weekend with us or to come for tea at any time. They monitored us for a while, sending someone who attended a local church and worked for the security branch. We would share a tea together and even lunch and eventually that was the end of it. The Lord’s prayer and our prayer for unity among His children prevailed.”

The Lord sent many helpers to assist in the ministry. Midge recalls the day she walked over to the Dates to introduce herself and ask them to sign her letter to get the permit to operate cross-culturally: "I saw Arthur for the first time. He was standing on the top of the drive next to his house and looked like a giant of a man, and I quickly offered a prayer....Lord please make him friendly! Of course I did not know at the time that he was a gentle giant and that he and I would become lifelong friends.

Arthur's family had a butchery at some point and he knew how to butcher an animal. In the early years he would walk several animals over to Skogheim and down to the workshop and then put one down (the shooting part I found hard). We would hang it with a block and tackle, skin and gut it, then hang it in the fridge to cool it down for a time before we cut it up. Arthur and Marge would come over together and help cut up the meat. I was totally not used to this sort of thing and neither was Cecelia. Cutting up the liver was the hardest - did you know there is about 9 kilos of liver in a cow? We did not want to eat meat for a while after that first experience.....



Cecelia Elisha worked with Joyce Anne in the kitchens and finally took over running the kitchen when Joyce left in 1980. Cecelia was more than a cook – she was a dear friend and a quiet loving worker: together we ran Skogheim for many years. Cecelia and her brother, Manuel Elisha, were members of the ECSA church that I attended. He gave permission for her to come to work and live at Skogheim. I will always remember what he said when he came to Skogheim the first time to bring his wife and others from his church for a ladies camp. He

stood at the entrance and saw the tables all neatly set for a camp with table cloths, placemats and polished floors, then broke down and wept. He then said: 'Now I understand when He takes something away, it is because He wants to give us something far better.' As a member of the ECSA, he was saddened when Oribi Bible Camp had to temporarily close after the fire, but was thrilled over Skogheim. He worked for many years at Federated Timbers and always worked to get us the best prices and was a founding board member when Skogheim finally became a Trust.

Marge Brauteseth, sister-in-law to Nils was my part-time voluntary bookkeeper during the late 70s and Arne, her husband, was on our Board. It was a real blessing to have their help and friendship those first few years.

Philemon Khumalo was my first gardener, a beautiful humble man. When I first arrived he greeted me and called me “Ma”; I almost fainted since I was 34 and he appeared very old. He stayed with Skogheim when Nils sold and was a faithful worker. To be able to give him a pension was a pleasure. He was a humble and godly man. I remember when I was going home on furlough for six months. He called me and held my hands between his and said “Ma, I will pray for you every day”.

Mike Hansen, our longest serving board member joined Skogheim while it was still in the hands of AEF. At his very first board meeting, the current chairman announced he was resigning and Mike was appointed the chairman by the AEF committee. He knew nothing about Skogheim, but became a God-given advisor to me and continues to serve the Lord faithfully over the many years since then.

In March 1980 Nils wanted to sell the remaining portion of the property comprising the driveway and carport for which the AEF requested first option to purchase for a sum of R4000.

Charlotte Schreuder came for the first time to work with Skogheim in July 1980 for three weeks with Fun in the Sun, and later joined staff full time. She was highly organized and gifted in many areas, trained as a social worker, Life-Line counsellor and a gifted sewer. Her commitment and hard work helped bring many projects together.

Len and Zip Glass – assisted in office and dining room about two years 1982-1984. Certainly the Lord provided the workers.



You may have noted a difference in the spelling of Skogheim in the advert Nils and Liliias placed, shown earlier in the book. When making signs etc. we learned that Skogheim had been miss-spelt. When we bought the property we corrected the spelling and it has been spelled Skogheim ever since. The AEF wanted to change the name but I put up a bit of a fuss because of the meaning, which I felt was perfect for a Christian Conference Centre and also since its Christian heritage was all Norwegian until we came along. Our first Logo was drawn by John Freeman. He did several drawings and I took them to Nils to get his impressions. He liked the rondavel because he said that is what the settlers first lived in until they built their church. I added the man resting and reading beneath the tree to emphasize “Place of Rest.”



None of the buildings were named when I took over Skogheim from Nils. He told me once that he had wanted to name one after his mother, but never got around to it. He did not know we would name one after him and I named Nils Centre after him, thus the buildings were named:

- ❖ Christian Cottage after Nil’s dad (now staff accommodation).
- ❖ Ruth Hall after his mom.
- ❖ Robin House after Joyce (who had a hand in building it) and Robin.
- ❖ Woodhouse – because Doug and Esther Wood came to help us on numerous occasions and stayed there.
- ❖ Viking – Vikingholm was the original name when the property was purchased and was Norwegian, we kept a shortened version.
- ❖ Ann’s Place – to remember the gift by the Rotary Ann’s.
- ❖ Vista – name suggested by Carene and Ingrid because of the view from the top rooms.
- ❖ The Nest – associated with the surname of the anonymous donor.
- ❖ The Pavilion – area near the campsite & pool.



The first thing we developed was down at the river. We cut a path down and built the fire circle and braai. We held our first Easter sunrise service here.

In March of 1983 we received a painting from Marjorie Lambshed. I had asked her to consider doing one for Skogheim and she said she would pray about and did the painting. The title '**Is it Nothing to you that pass by?**' is one she chose. We did the framing and when AEF was sold – I asked her what she wanted me to do with it. She advised me that she had done it for me and Skogheim and it was to stay with her blessing.



Our next door neighbours, the Krugers who lived in what is now The Viking building were very nice people who advised us on building in the fireplace in Ruth Lounge. Mkhethwe got permission from his Chief for us to dig out the special rocks for the fireplace. We were given permission by the Chief because Plum told him their people were also welcome at Skogheim. (These rocks now form a beautiful feature in our Prayer Garden).



CHAPTER 4

GOD GIVES THE INCREASE

(Skogheim Christian Trust)

1984

On 15 October, the AEF for geographic and logistic reasons decided to sell the property. There were a number of interested parties who came to view the site. Amongst them was Scripture Union, Youth for Christ and the Evangelical Church of South Africa started by the AEF. Midge recalls "One group wanted me to manage the centre for them. I was troubled because Skogheim was open to all denominations and peoples. If we closed our doors there was nowhere for certain groups to go on camp. I wrestled with this matter over and over in my mind and prayed about it.

By the end of January I was convinced that a Trust was the only answer but did not know where to begin. He gave me the answer by waking me up almost like coming out of a dream on 31 January 1984 at 2:30 a.m. He would raise up 380 Friends to give a one-time donation of R250.00 enabling us to make the down payment on the purchase.

I still have the hand written letter that I wrote to give to Michael Hansen to read. By this time Arne Brauteseth had been consulting with his brothers about the possibility of taking it back as a family trust. Michael felt my letter made sense and so I took it to Arne and told him that if he felt led to initiate a Trust that I would support him - but if not, I would like him to submit my letter to the meeting of the AEF SEC.

While at the CCI Conference – I received a call from Arne. He told me he had made an offer himself but felt my letter should also be submitted so he had handed it in. The next day I received another call from Arne – he had discussed the Trust with his brothers and he was withdrawing their offer in favor of mine. Then I heard from John Freeman. They would give me five months to initiate the Trust. I could not leave Skogheim because they did not have anyone to put in my place. I could hire a part-time secretary in order to keep the books separate. I was to pay the AEF R46 000 by July 15,

1984 and another R46 000 by August 31st. Failure to meet either deadline would result in the cancellation of the agreement.”

While AEF had sent Jan and Corky Falk to assist with running the centre in maintenance and catering for several years, they had no one available to run Skogheim and allow Midge to again return to the USA to raise funds for this second purchase of Skogheim. She wrote a letter to her supporters, and Joan Givens, a personal friend and supporter, raised and received funds on her behalf through her church. Ila Benton, a co-worker at Grace Chapel with Joan Givens, made direct contact with Pat Robertson with The 700 club and they donated \$5000.00. Midge did 4 three-minute radio broadcasts for one of the donors to assist in raising the support. This proved to be a challenge for Midge but the Lord undertook.

One small incident among the many which attested to the Lord’s guiding hand and exact provision in the smallest details through our history happened during this time. Midge remembers she was sorting through stuff that Nils left at the workshop and discovered an old safe with one side broke out. The day she discovered it she vaguely remembered seeing a strange key in a bottle of surplus keys in the office. She went back to find it and to her utter amazement it fitted the safe lock. Corky bought a piece of steel and welded in the needed repairs, gave it a coat of paint and it looked like new. When the dining room was extended toward the front garden, the safe was moved into the small inner office and bricked in.

In March of 1984, Sheila Park of the South Coast Herald did a full page cover for us to appeal for FRIENDS OF SKOGHEIM. Then later a half page cover and finally a quarter page cover. Later when we held our banquet she wrote about our dedication service and added a photo of our Board.

When the first article came out in the paper about the 380 Friends, Midge was told she had a lot of guts to take on a project like that. Her reply: “If I was trying to raise up 380 Friends, I would be worried, but God told me He would raise them up, so I don’t have anything to worry about”.

A small cook book was published and many bottles of our 2 popular ‘poppy seed’ & ‘chilli’ salad dressings were sold at the Rotary Kiosk in Manaba. Gloria Tarboton organized a roller skating Marathon for Port Shepstone Baptist youth and friends to raise funds for Skogheim purchase from AEF.

July 20, '84

THE energy of youth was amply demonstrated when members of the Baptist Youth Club and their friends undertook a marathon 24-hour endurance rollerskating exercise to raise funds for Skogheim Hvilsted, last week.

Unless R96 000 is raised by August 31, the present outreach of Skogheim, a haven for underprivileged children and interdenominational retreat for people of all races, could be in jeopardy. A Trust has been set

up to secure Skogheim's future and an appeal has gone out for "Friends of Skogheim" to assist in raising funds so that its present format can be maintained.

At 12 noon last Wednesday, the children slipped into their rollerskates and were off to do their bit to save Skogheim. They whirled round the hall to the sound of festive music in a lighthearted manner.

As the hours passed, a gradual drop in numbers was experienced, due to aching limbs and blistered feet.

At 11 o'clock on Thursday morning the Herald was there to photograph the last two survivors, who were determined to make the final count down at 12 noon.

The mothers of the contestants stood by throughout the marathon to assist the children with refreshments and to encourage them.

The final figure had not been ascertained at the time of going to press. However the organisers said the 'marathon' had been a great success and they hoped to repeat the event next year.

Skating for Skogheim



Up and away! A group of enthusiastic children commence their roller skating endurance test in the conference hall of Skogheim.



Just another two more minutes for Dianne Wallace and Gary Carr, who rollerskated for 24 hours without a break.



Olga Hessler offers a shoulder to lean on, while Dianne Wallace rests her weary legs.



A big smile of relief from Dianne Wallace (centre) after she had completed the 24-hour rollerskating marathon. Removing her rollerskates from her tired feet are, Miss Midge Pitman of Skogheim (left) and her mother Mrs Maureen Wallace, of Port Shepstone.

Gloria also created the zoo-putt with Midge and did all of the art work which she returned several times over the years to touch up.

The one sweet memory Midge has of the roller skating marathon was Gloria carrying her son, Ronald, out of the hall to take him home and him crying and saying: "I could've done more, I could've done more". He was only about 6-7 at the time. When they were designing the zoo-putt and Midge thought one hole was too difficult, but Ronald picked up a putter and hit a hole in one!

Our minutes record the happy news on 23 October 1984 “The transfer of the property was registered on Thursday 18th October, 1984.”

By 18 November 1984, the fundraising had fallen just R20 000 short, but two interest free loans of R10 000 allowed for the remaining half of the R96 000 down-payment to be paid in full. These two donors felt we needed more time to gain more friends and made provision for us to do so. They were repaid within one year. FRIENDS OF SKOGHEIM had brought in support from eleven different countries and throughout South Africa.

1986 - 1988

The remaining R100 000 of the purchase price was provided for by an interest free loan. It was paid back over the next ten years in payments of R6 000 half-yearly thereby enabling us to grow the ministry without the encumbrance of large debt repayments. During this time Skogheim was able to consolidate the facilities and continue to increase its occupancy, until by 1989 occupancy had once again doubled.

Short-term workers started visiting Skogheim for ministry purposes. Many South African folk over the years have invested their time and talents in Skogheim, however long-term volunteers were also a great help to Midge, Charlotte and Cecilia. Many names are recorded in the minute book, though I am sure some names have been missed. We would love to hear your story from you if you have at some time volunteered here at Skogheim.

Paul van Zyl, Terry Pullen, Douglas & Esther Wood, Jerry & Cheryl Hoyt, Cris Nash, Amore Hall, Kim Hawks, Karen Earl, Lauren Wolfe, Lorna Acutt, Wayne & Craig Westbrook, Janine Brauteseth, Rebecca, Kathryn Gibson, Loes Tjebbes, Carene Christiansen, Wayne Miller, Andrea Ernst, Liesbeth Dollekamp, Guy Longmore, Clive & Debbie Brauteseth and Bev Byerly.

Jerry Hoyt requires special mention as he returned a number of times to volunteer at Skogheim. On his first visit he had the novel idea of freezing great big blocks of ice, putting a blanket over the top and skiing down the then steep slope from the dining room into the pool. It is not only our guests who get into mischief on camp! His final visit in 2008 was to assist with the extension of the electric fence to allow for expansion for our community outreach ministries.

1989 – 1991

As Skogheim grew it became apparent that further facilities would be needed. A property adjacent to Skogheim became available. As you may imagine, living next-door to a campsite with lively groups of children enjoying the camp at times strained relations with the original owners of the property. It had been a desire of Midge's heart to expand the site if it ever came up for sale. However we missed the first opportunity when the current owner decided to sell due to his failing health, and it was only when it had changed hands to the Johansen family that the opportunity again presented itself.

The Johansens had purchased the property from the Hingesons and were in the process of moving in soon after Mr Johansen had been released from hospital. During the move Mr. Johansen suffered a relapse and died. Skogheim reached out to the family with an offer to place a gate in the fence between the two properties so Mrs. Johansen would not be so isolated.

A short time later Midge learned from a neighbour that the property was going to be sold again. On 12 October 1988 Midge providentially met his son, Derrick, on the road near the Viking and he encouraged his sister and brother to sell to us and offered her the opportunity to come up with the down payment within 72 hours before the property went onto the open market. Friends of Skogheim once again joined hands and the down payment was provided within the allotted 72 hours, and by February 1989 the Viking property was secured and the full purchase price met within 18 months. With the added facilities in the Viking the occupancy of Skogheim was increased by more than a third.

Occupation of The Viking occurred on 1 April 1989. Midge also worked for a number of years with Mkhethwe and describes him as a real character. She recalls his response to this extension of Skogheim. "When we bought the Viking property and I shared with the staff about God's miraculous provision in less than 72 hours through Camp of the Woods and an anonymous donor, everyone shouted for joy and clapped their hands, but he mumbled something under his breath. When I asked what he had said, I learned that he said – "You are so happy but look how much more work I have to do – look how much more grass there is to cut. For a man who had

seen this ministry grow from a little youth hostel for 20 boys to the now 30 acre conference centre, it was the last straw that broke the camel's back."

"I called him aside and told him he was a good worker but he could only do one man's work in a day, not two. It did not matter if he worked on the new lot or the old lot. He could only do one man's work in a day and that is all I expected. When it registered, he smiled and accepted the additional property without complaint.

In 1995 he accepted the Lord during a staff Bible Study and wanted to get baptized. We were resurfacing our swimming pool at the time and he told everyone I was doing it for him because he was going to get baptized. It was a joyful day. At his retirement he also chose a suit and I went with him to buy it. He had very good taste and chose a light cream suit with a dark shirt and a tie that picked up the colors of his suit and shirt. An incredible match but then he said 'Ma – What about shoes?' I bought him shoes as his gift from me. Min Shaw, a famous South African singer, was with us that weekend and sang with him. He was so proud he beamed from ear to ear. His decision to accept Christ was a fitting end to a full life, though at first unknowingly, spent in service of the Lord whom he came to love."

1992 - 1997

We paid off the loan for the Viking in November 1991 and the same day received a full donation to build the Nest.

Midge recalls: "This was another one of those miracles. I had been approached by Bobby Thomas about a new building with a lounge that would accommodate families more comfortably. She had found a donor who committed R125 000 to provide for this facility. Michael suggested Ira Lind as a good builder, so I approached him with the news of the donation and the need to submit a plan before it would be forthcoming. He told me he was extremely busy but he would see what he could do. The next morning he arrived when I was at breakfast with the plans drawn and costed on the back of an old calendar. When I realized it was for double the amount of our donation I felt I could not ask him to do it again since he had stayed up half the night to complete the quote.

After praying about it I felt I should send the plans through to the donor and explain that we knew it was more than their intended donation but that we felt this was what was needed to honor their intention and that we would trust the Lord for his “Divine Plus” for the balance. The donor promptly doubled his donation. Ira went to be with the Lord before it was completed and we placed a framed photo of him in the lounge as a remembrance of him and the voluntary work he did for us. He also helped us to obtain the best prices on materials. The completion of The Nest brought our capacity to 270 guests.

These donations, however, brought about a major hurdle with the Receiver of Revenue. In 1993 there was no recognition of organisations as a Public Benefit Organisation and we were notified that all the donations received would be taxed as income. After months of negotiations and as a last resort Midge and Michael went up to Pretoria to settle the matter. In God’s sovereignty He arranged for them to meet with the very man who could understand the intended purpose of Skogheim since it was his uncle who had written our trust deed. There was much rejoicing when the letter came clearing up the misunderstanding and assisting us in the future to be able to receive non-taxable donations.

There are innumerable stories of how the Lord, through donations and voluntary help, caused Skogheim to develop into the facility we now care for today. The completion of Viking and Nest created the need to enlarge the dining room, kitchens and the main Nils Hall. All these upgrades were provided for by the Lord as the need arose. Mike remembers how Donations came in for specific projects and believes the timing of the donations showed God’s hand in all the development. Even the costing of the aluminium roof over the kitchen and dining room was reduced from the original quoted of R26,000 (way above the budget) to a mere R6,000 delivered on site after the manufacturer had been approached for a discount. We can only acknowledge the Lord’s hand in it all.

When the final bond payment was made in April 1996, it was with joyful hearts we again celebrated a 'Burning of the Bond' with all the 'Friends of Skogheim' who had so freely invested here.



In 1995 we began the upgrade of the original family home built by the Brauteseths. This included the renovation of the original 'boys' dormitory' from the youth hostel days to create a beautiful en-suite family room accommodation block called Vista. In 1999 funding was provided for the extension of the original Nils meeting hall to accommodate 400 people. We had to say a sad farewell to the very well-remembered egg-box covered ceiling, replaced with a beautiful floating ceiling and a brand new sound system, all of which were donated.



The final major building work saw the extension of Christian cottage into three apartments for senior staff and the pavilion. The pavilion, ablutions and kitchen area were built for folk who tented during camps, but in God's plan would 7 years later provide the ablution facilities for our youth programming accommodations. The final buildings were completed by

2003. Bringing our capacity to 300 guests in rooms and 40 in their own tents.

Ernst Naf was deeply involved in all of this development right from the start. He came to us in 1989 as we began the expansion of our facilities and is still with us today. He has a unique view of how it all happened. Here are his words: "I first visited Skogheim in 1988. While working at a camp in SWA, I heard of a job in JHB with the Stadtmission. While working there, replacing windows throughout a house, they invited me to join them on a holiday to Skogheim as there would be no one to cook for me in JHB."

He saw many woodworking projects that needed his skills and even fixed some drawers while on holiday. After the work with the Stadtmission was complete, he heard of a job to make a kitchen unit in Uvongo. When that was over, he packed his suitcase and caught a lift with his employer as she went to buy tiles for the floor. On arrival at Port Shepstone he saw Rob Prigge (then chairman) and asked if he could take him to Skogheim. Rob said he was going to a board meeting that very day, so Ernst came along.

Ernst's first job was to sort out the flooding in the staff accommodation and lay the foundation for easy access into the laundry, which we had only been able to access over two scaffold planks. Later, a doorway was broken open and a metal bridge was positioned allowing easy entrance into the laundry.

Soon after his arrival in March 1989, the purchase of the Viking was completed and Ernest left his first set of fingerprints at Skogheim.

When it was discovered that the retaining wall at the Viking was moving due to flooding, there was much discussion on how to stabilise the wall – it was Ernst who remembered how old castles in Switzerland had big buttresses built to support the walls. He thought 'why not make the same plan here at Skogheim' and the next day the work began. With Ernst as supervisor, the Viking was soon transformed into a mini-castle, and today the wall is still standing. In 2016, we converted the Viking into a self-catering unit and the builder was so confident with the retaining wall, we were able to build a wall on top of the buttresses to create a lovely open braai area on the verandah.

Close to the Viking was Protea cottage, with a little veranda on a high retaining wall, with no balustrade. Says Ernst: "People decided to put a pre-cast concrete wall onto the beautiful nature stone in the walled garden. Ollie Hall brought a lorry full of material to make the fence. As the first concrete poles went in I was not happy. Ollie agreed to take the precast wall home and bring a load of natural river stone to match the stone already in place, after which I completed the wall. After starting I soon saw how difficult it was to build a straight wall with round stones, but I came up with a good plan, and soon it was nicely finished with flower beds on top. It is still standing today." And so the stories continue: Ernst has since left his mark on each and every building, the gardens and grounds. His legacy will endure long into the next 50 years.



Says Ernst: "Here is still more work for tomorrow, every day. And so I stay..."

Each building project has a special memory for Ernst: The Nest: the entire foundation had to be stabilised, so the whole building now stands on a concrete frame which bedrocks in the rocks below. During the building time there was much rain and often the whole foundation was flooded. In addition in one place there was permanently flowing water which needed pumps to remove it, so that building could continue. One group of campers volunteered to help to move the bricks closer to the Nest for the builders.

The dining room extension enabled us to serve all guests on one level. There were three roofs over the dining room, with a box gutter in the middle which was always leaking. Often Midge had to lay gutters on dining room tables to lead the rain water out by the door. (An experience that Ingrid repeated not 20 years later in a storm in the laundry area). Now we have one big roof with one gable and an additional meeting room below and no leaks. The builder wanted to pull the ceiling down, but we had campers every weekend who needed to eat. Ernst made a plan and two support beams later, it held long enough to change the ceiling around while allowing for dust-free eating by our guests. Then one weekend when there was no

camp, the old roof gave way to the new one. Ten days later the new ceiling was in and painted, ready for the next camp.

The Lord made an interesting provision for our dining room tables. In our minutes of 12 October 1992 it is recorded that “Eskom plans to place a second power line through Skogheim”. Below the old power line were standing twenty Norfolk pine trees which they wanted to cut down. Scott Kvalsvig cut them down and Ernst told him the specifications required 2.5m long logs. Scott offered to saw planks for Ernst, but Ernst wanted the wood to dry first as a log so that it was extra straight, and then cut the planks so they would not twist. Arthur Date helped to bring the logs up to the workshop, and they were left to dry for 4 months. Not long after this the first table was in the dining room, and little by little 4-5 more were added until all 25 were finished.



For all those who have wondered but never asked: the pictures of chiefs of different African people groups came from a calendar that Midge received. When she first arrived, we did not have two cents to spare, and she liked these photos so much because they all appeared to have such compassionate eyes that they were placed onto wood and now decorate our dining room. The flags of the nations are also special as they represent people who have come to Skogheim from other nations.

1997-2006

The building of Vista was done in stages as funding was received. First the kitchen was enlarged and then a new fridge, freezer and stock room were built (to double the size). Then the ground floor of Vista was completed, with the office moving to the front of the dining room.

The ground floor 30 bed dormitory became our archives room plus four twin-bedded en-suite bedrooms. Funds allowed for a further four rooms to be built on the second floor. And the roof was temporary closed off and

stood half completed for a number of years before funds arrived to complete the full Vista with 13 rooms.

During the building of the Pavilion, the excavations nearly caused the pool to slide down the hill. A pipe had broken and water was running the whole night, washing away the corner of the bank holding the pool in place. We had to empty the pool to prevent it from collapsing. But in the Lord's oversight of the building process, the changes and excavations we made after the water leak enabled us to eliminate any drop off area between the pool and the pavilion.

A donation came in to double the size of Nils hall. It was discovered that Nils had been highly ingenious, using steam train ash and old water pipes to reinforce the cement of the walls. This changed the whole building plan, as more columns and beams were needed for the concrete slab that was to be built on top. Shutter boards were put up for the new ceiling, but the workers made the small mistake of using scaffold planks for support beams. Early the next morning concrete was poured, and after the third truck load of concrete was poured, the ceiling fell down as the beams collapsed. A quick fix later with new shutter board allowed for the ceiling to be poured, although they had to work late into the night to finish the pour. Later the fallen concrete had to be knocked out with a compressor.

Ernst's Snake Stories

Ernst's tales would not be complete without some mention of snake stories.

Jerry Hoyt spotted a huge green mamba going over the garden wall. For more than an hour they searched for the snake but could not find anything. After searching through a bougainvillea and shaking it on all sides they still found nothing. Finally searching under the bush they discovered a large green sausage: the mamba had stayed still all that time. Arthur Date arrived and shot the snake, but there is always a second one around, so they hung the dead snake over the bush and then watched to see if it would appear. After two days they saw nothing of the second one. But Ernst discovered eggs under the bougainvillea bush,



17 eggs in total: Says Ernst: “One more than the snake book said mambas normally have”.

On Good Friday one year, when raking leaves near the Viking, Bongani saw a green mamba had crept into the gate pipes. Unbelieving Ernst checked, and then placed a plastic bag over the entrance to the pipe and tied it to the bottom of the pipe, and pushed a stick in from the top. Out popped a 1,5m long green mamba.

We had spotted a black mamba a number of times but could not find its home. One day as Ernst was driving along in his golf cart he spotted it moving along the bank. Although he could not keep up with it, he did see it make for home under an old blue storage container. Pure Venom was called and soon had our unwanted visitor in hand.”

Ernst is our longest serving member of the maintenance department staff, but the Lord has abundantly provided the hands needed for all the work to be done. While we cannot mention every name, here are a few, with more stories in Chapter 6:

Josette Brauteseth joined Skogheim in 1978 and served as the secretary and then book-keeper until 2007.

Carene Christiansen volunteered with us for 6 months in 1992 and decided to return as head-caterer in our kitchens for more than 5 years.

Staff Bible class was originally taught by Pastor Hansen, but on his retirement he introduced **Maggie Moonsammy** to us. She continued faithfully teaching Bible class once a week for more than 17 years, and the staff had a “Pastor” they could talk with, as so much of our ministry time happens over weekends and Sundays.

Midge retired in December 2006, returning home to look after her mother. She returned a number of times with mission teams, to continue work in the community, specifically for two of our staff's churches, with the help of Friends of Skogheim and a number of campers who knew our staff well. Over 30 years the Lord had used her faithful service to develop the facilities of Skogheim and provide a platform for the extension of His Kingdom in the hearts of all who have visited us over the years. Midge always said: "I was privileged to be in a beautiful country serving beautiful people with wonderful friends. I gained far more than I could ever give.

Coming to South Africa was not loss but gain and part of my heart will always be there." We are grateful that He brought Midge to us, and provided all the staff and finances needed over the years to develop this Home in the Forest and Place of Rest.



CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Two years before Midge retired, Ingrid Kjonstad returned on staff in order to take over the leadership of Skogheim. God had planted the seed of camping ministry in her life many years before as a teen who experienced the amazing blessing of camp, attending the Baptist Union youth camp in Barkly West every year.

Her first introduction to Skogheim was as part of the team who volunteered to prepare the Viking for campers in 1989 when it was first purchased. After completing a B.Com and finding work as a trainee Hotel Manager in Plettenberg Bay, she returned in 1994 to assist Carene and Cecelia in the kitchens as a caterer and then went to be a carer for the elderly in England. While applying for jobs, God used the interviewer to place Ingrid back on the path of His choosing, when she was told that perhaps she was more suited for work in the hospitality industry. She found work as a pot washer at a Christian Conference Centre in East Sussex, "Pilgrim Hall".



It was here, after working her way through all the different departments, God called her back to Skogheim and she sent a letter to Midge, applying to come and work as the admin & hospitality assistant. She trained under Midge for six years, then left to pursue a one-on-one counselling ministry with children. Five years later the Lord again redirected her path, and she returned to Skogheim just two years before Midge needed to return to USA to care for her mother. Truly man may plan his steps but the Lord directs his path.

2006 – 2007

During these years we continued hosting and serving camps. Midge returned for a visit with four others from Grace Bible Church. Teresa helped sew new table cloths and place mats. Kim Brinkman worked to set up ongoing budget for costing purposes. Sherry Boyett helped set up first aid equipment and helped with sewing. Justin Laib helped prepare our second cookbook for printing. Another time Midge came over, having raised funds to assist with repairs and renovations of two local churches where some of our staff were members. One camp which was attending at the time the problems with the buildings were discovered also donated funds toward the repairs and towards providing plastic chairs and paint for the buildings.

When Ingrid returned to Skogheim in 2005, she said to the Lord that she only returned so that in the end she could look back on a task, much too big for any one person, and be able to trace the hand of God at work through His people to accomplish it. Many has been the time, when trying to balance the books, she and Karen, the book-keeper, resorted to the game of 'blowing bubbles' (an amazingly effective way to relax and laugh together).

In the paraphrased words of Hudson Taylor, the world has yet to see what our Lord will accomplish through the lives of people whose hearts are fully committed to Him. Over the years of serving the church here at Skogheim, both Midge and Ingrid have come to know that no matter how insufficient we may feel for a task, we move forward – not because of who we are – but because of Who He is and what He does in and through us and others.

2008 – 2016

In 2008 the Lord led us into the beginning of our outreach ministries. Over the years and with the Lord's guidance the ideas originally conceived in our minds have developed according to His plans.



Verse for the Quarter:

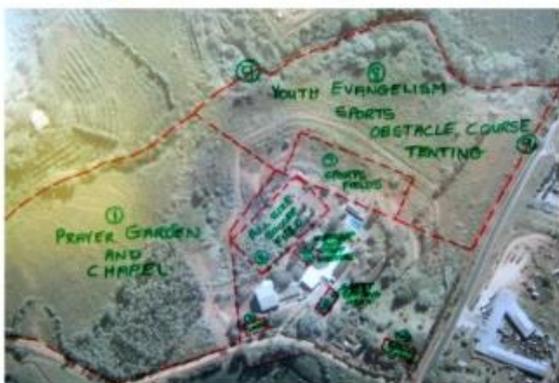
Jesus said: "...But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

John 12:32

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Skogheim's Ministry into 2015



Layout of the Proposed Ministry Developments at Skogheim

The Mission of Skogheim is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all who come to our site. We have initiated a 3 part plan to expand our current ministry.

Firstly, we are seeking to impact the youth in our local community. There are over 400 000 school-going children within a 60km radius of Skogheim. This is a huge harvest field with great ministry potential. Many of these children live

daily with the effects of AIDS & crime, having lost hope.

Our vision is to create a simple tenting facility which will enable us to build into the lives of children, teaching them life-skills through sports training and team building. We also hope to offer day-long outdoor educational programmes. Underlying all these programmes will be the message of the

hope and future which only the Lord can provide. Please pray with us that the Lord will bring the right person onto our team who will also have a vision for reaching out to children in this way.

Secondly, we plan to develop an indigenous Prayer Garden & Chapel which will be available to the local churches for day retreats. It will also provide a new avenue of ministry for the

conferences which currently use our site.

Thirdly, we are seeking to provide first-rate Bible teaching in various ways, in order to help people discover the great and glorious truths of God revealed in His Word. Truths that will set us free to serve Him and bring Him Glory.

Pray that we will follow His direction and His will in all these endeavours.

ReJoyce Prayer Garden & Walking Trail

One day Joyce Anne and Ingrid decided to explore the part of Skogheim's property that was not fenced. Some years previously a small portion of the 80 acre section of the original lot had been re-purchased, bringing the total size of Skogheim to 40 acres. This happened long after the first electric fence had been donated by Harold Buirkle from COTW to improve security. The land outside had been left fallow. Joyce and Ingrid had rather a difficult walk but eventually, after much hilarity breaking their way through triffid and lantana weed, they rolled out into the most peaceful and beautiful lush lawn area along the stream at the bottom of the hill near the krans.

Sitting there together they agreed that everybody should have the joy of experiencing this peace and tranquillity. The idea of a prayer garden was born. Joyce, Ernst and three garden ladies together spent more than 4 years of hard work laying the foundations for the current prayer garden. Ernst dug all the pathways by hand and when Dave Sparrow joined the team we were able with earthmoving equipment to grade the main path through the garden. As the garden was established we have noted an increase in the wildlife. Buck roam freely within our fence and the butterflies and birdlife have increased substantially, as the prayer garden was planned to contain only indigenous plants & trees.



We praise the Lord for the testimonies from visitors to this peaceful place. One lady came walking up from spending time with the Lord there weeping: she had never had an encounter with the Lord as she did on that day. Another camper received confirmation from the Lord through Psalm 46 v 10. Every year we hear more and more testimonies of how the Lord is revealing Himself and His word to folk as they spend time with Him in the garden.

The long hours of hard work put in by so many folk to establish this garden have been a blessing to many. Jerry Hoyt

returned in 2009 with his friend Nathan to help us to extend the fence to protect the full length of our boundaries, in order to allow for the outreach ministry developments. He also carved all the verses which are in the prayer garden and another donor provided all the benches.

We continue to develop this 10 acre portion of Skogheim each year as increasingly folk are using this quiet haven to spend time with God and reflect on His Word.

Impilo neqiniso

In 1980 the first programmed youth camp was run at Skogheim. Fun In the Sun as mentioned already was a sponsored camp for young people who otherwise would never get a chance to go on camp. This set the foundations for the type of programmed camp Skogheim runs today. Although Skogheim evolved into a conference and retreat centre, Midge still had visions of specialised programmed camps to be run at Skogheim. These dreams were realised just 3 years after she retired when in 2009 God led Skogheim into the next phase of outreach with the development of Impilo neqiniso (Life & Truth).

After attempts to start up a programme with the help of Sports Outreach Africa in 2006 and Adventure Educators in 2008, Jonathan Bestwick joined us in 2010 to establish Impilo Neqiniso as a ministry project. Years earlier in 1998, plans to turn what was once a fruit farm just below the swimming pool, providing delicious fruit salad for campers, into a sports field failed. Not long after excavations started we hit rock and could excavate no more. Now, years later it was home to a frog pool, which often provided us with lovely choral music in the evenings.

However the Lord had plans as always, and this area together with the pavilion built 7 years previously provided the ideal venue for our programmed youth ministry. Once again a generous benefactor provided the funding to establish 'tent city' with its solar-powered lighting and the low-ropes course. The aim of Impilo Neqiniso was and is to support teachers and parents in their quest to bring up competent, significant and Christ-centred young people. With many parents working full time jobs and teachers focusing on academic results, young people are not developing in

key life areas such as the ability to persevere, to lead, to base their decisions on a values system, and to love and respect fellow South Africans.

Local community workers, pastors and teachers are consulted about what we can do to uplift and inspire our young people. Using experiential learning and the powerful tool of outdoor adventure camps, Impilo trained local leaders to role model and make a difference in the lives of learners who would otherwise never get a chance to go on camp.



After the facilities had been developed, it was decided that all future sponsorships would be used to subsidise learners who went to schools that could not usually afford to go on overnight camps. A heavy emphasis was placed on helping young people to break the poverty cycle by approaching life with the right mind-sets. However, the weakness of any camp, no matter how successful it is, is what happens to the campers after the camp.

Follow up and continued discipleship are a very important but often overlooked factor in ministry. To address this we now partner with other community development groups and ministries. To come on a sponsored camp they need to let us know how they will continue to develop and minister to their youth long after the Impilo Neqiniso camp is finished.

Through the generous funds donated to the programme over the years, Impilo Neqiniso has been able to branch out and, in addition to the youth camps, run 'needs-based' specialised courses for our local communities. These included unique programmes for rehab centres, drug and gang troubled men and boys, special needs schools, church council teambuilding, sports team dynamics training and many other impactful programmes.

Lesley witnessed the arrival of a man walking with his head down and drunk. Their leader was so excited to see him (they had been trying to minister to him for years to no avail). By the end of the weekend he had given his life

to Christ and to our knowledge has managed to turn his life around and stay clean since. Much to our joy he left our site with his head held high.



Every year God guides us further and it has been amazing to do God’s work and see young lives change. God has always provided through the generosity of different funders, big and small. These funders may never get to meet the people that are impacted by our programmes, yet it is through their acts of giving that many lives have been changed forever.

An unexpected addition to the original vision for outreach ministries was the **Daniel Generation Academy**. You will read how the seed was planted in Busisiwe Mbhele’s story later on. This mentor intensive programme lasts as long as it takes a student to complete his or her tertiary degree (4-5 years). Young South Africans who have completed their schooling with passes allowing entrance into a degree study are eligible to apply for the programme. These young people are unable to study because of their life and financial situation.

Skogheim sponsors their entire Tertiary studies and all related costs. They live and work at Skogheim and are mentored and disciplined through their time here. They also participate in other training courses and obtain their driver’s licence,



ICDL and first aid training, in addition to their tertiary studies. These DGA students form the backbone of the team that runs our Impilo Neqiniso camps.

The aim of the academy is to develop young South Africans to the point that when they leave Skogheim they have everything they need both on their CV and from a life discipleship and training point of view to be influential in their community and work place. We want to send Godly leaders out, who in turn inspire and motivate others around them. At the time of writing, two students are doing very well and look to complete the programme at the end of 2018. One more Godly Lawyer and one more Teacher with aspirations of becoming a pastor will leave us at the end of 2018.

Staff Outreach Ministries

Vereker Munro has faithfully come 2-3 times a year to hold sewing classes for our staff. The Cottage Patch Quilters Guild who held a yearly conference with us, reached out in a number of ways to our staff. Funds came to repair two churches.

As the staff progressed, sewing machines and material scraps were donated to assist staff to make quilts to sell and support their families.

We decided that since we have been so blessed by them as a staff that we need to give back to our community.

Vereker taught us how to make teddy bears from material scraps that had been donated, and in one sewing marathon we sewed 82 quilts over 3 days to give to a local crèche.



Resource Ministry

In 2010 the final phase of our outreach ministries, originally called ‘Aletheia Ministries’ was launched, to provide individuals with tools to help them in their study of God’s Word and in their ministries. Valuable teaching tools and material is being sourced and translated into Zulu (originally by Busisiwe Mbhele and now by a team of volunteers).

We have partnered with Precept Ministries and Bible Centred Ministries for the material, which we translate into Zulu for our local pastors and congregations. Seminars conducted in English and Zulu are reaching out into our local community to build the faith of Believers and help them in their God given calling.

Then finally in 2016 the Lord led us to start a satellite Bible School partnering with Mukhanyo Bible College. With the help of three local pastors as tutors, seven students are now starting their second year and hope to graduate in 2019.



CHAPTER 6

STAFF STORIES

We thank the Lord for the faithful workers He has sent to Skogheim. Here are just a few amongst the many who have served Him over the years.

Aunty Thembi (1981 – 2006) worked in every department over the years, so she knew the skills that would be needed for each area, and was responsible for introducing many wonderful staff to serve at Skogheim. Just before she retired she was working in and caring for the kitchen, responsible for feeding all staff, and helping to prepare meals for guests, having served the Lord faithfully for 25 years.

Busisiwe Ruth Madlala (10 February 1989 – current) came to us as a young woman fresh out of school. A neighbour out of concern for Ruth’s family, as no one had a job at that time, asked Thembi to find Ruth a place at Skogheim. Both her siblings were at school so Ruth came to support her family. God kept her here through many ups and downs and coming and going of staff, till she is now the longest serving member of staff currently at Skogheim for 27 years. She was our first dining room supervisor and has done a fantastic job through the years keeping the dining room spotless. She put her brother through teachers college and her sister through nursing school. Many guests ask for her when she is on leave during their camp. She has been a loyal worker and has grown in the Lord, a blessing to all who meet her.



Doreen Theli Nhlumayo (1 February 2002 – current) was referred to us by her previous employer, Merle Serridge. Merle had trained her as a cook at a facility in Margate, but when Doreen developed cancer, they paid her out, not expecting her to live much longer. Doreen got so sick from chemo that she told the Lord – “You



made my heart clean and you must make my body clean because I cannot take this chemo anymore.” The Lord heard her request and healed her. Merle could not take her back to work since she had been paid out by her business partners, so recommended her to us. She is a beautiful woman of God and continues to serve today even though she has suffered another two bouts with cancer. Her life is a testimony of a heart fully committed to her Lord. He alone can have carried her all these years, healing her body time and time again and allowing her to still be a blessing to His people in this place.

Charlotte Schreuder (1980 – 2001) first visited Skogheim in 1980 with Fun in the Sun. As Midge got to know her through these camps she decided that Charlotte would be a valuable staff member to help her with the growing concern that Skogheim promised to be. To confirm her impressions she went to Pretoria and spent some time with Charlotte, working along with her at the Louis Botha Home. This time allowed them to establish their friendship and confirmed their impression that working together would be possible. A job interview with a difference!



Soon after this, Charlotte decided on a change and applied to the Child Welfare Society in Margate, who were looking for a part-time social worker. This suited both Midge and herself, as Skogheim did not have to pay her salary right away and she had time to familiarise herself with the tasks at Skogheim. Charlotte played a huge role in the practical organising of everyday camp procedures, especially in the housekeeping department, ensuring that guests always had a welcoming room to rest in after meetings and fellowship around the table.

Busisiwe Medrinah Mbhele (2 July 1984 – 23 July 2013) We were so blessed to have Busisiwe on staff. She was extremely organized and took over the entire housekeeping department when Charlotte retired. She is a committed Christian and a beautiful person. She has now married and is teaching at a school near Harding. We were blessed



to have her on staff for so long and know she will be a blessing wherever she serves.

Busi's story laid the foundation for the start of the Daniel Generation Academy: "I was brought to Skogheim at the age of 19 years by Thembi. I had made an application to be a policewoman, but nothing came of it. My mother was very sick at that time and I was grateful for the opportunity to provide for my family. I started in the laundry and was a kitchen assistant when guests were here.

I had a problem with my eyes. Ma (Midge) was the one who got my first pairs of glasses. Later, I had just lost my mother, when I lost my pair of glasses. I had all the expenses of the funeral and so had no money for glasses. Ma and a friend took their tithe and gave it to me to buy another pair. I was promoted to housekeeping supervisor in 2007 and in 2008 started studying for my teaching degree through UNISA.

A camp that came every December called D-camp, asked me to talk about why I work here and what my dreams were. This really touched me. At first I had just come to work, not knowing that this place is different from other places. Soon I realised, we can feel that it is God's place. That you feel safe and secure, you feel God's presence. Then I realised that I can study even if I am here, and I started to work towards my dream of becoming a teacher.

When we started translating books for Aletheia Ministries, the stories of Job and Joseph were wonderful and spoke to my heart. At school I was one of the difficult students as I struggled to learn, as I had no glasses. (Despite these early difficulties, which certainly taught her to work with perseverance, the Lord gave her a special gifting for translation above the normal: in fact one editor told Ingrid that Busi could very well work for the UN, her translations were of such a high standard).

Busi continues: "I am where I am now because of Skogheim, Ma and Ingrid. If it wasn't for Ingrid chasing my friends away when they stayed too long to talk and turning off the TV, I wouldn't have studied and passed. I also translated a bible study book on forgiveness. Looking at that book now, I cannot believe that it was me who did the translation. It must have been the Spirit of the Lord who was guiding me and saying, "No not that word, use this word". Even assisting Ingrid with translating at a ladies bible study in Mahlabathini is a wonderful memory.

Every time Ingrid preached to those ladies and as I was translating, something would touch my heart. "Forgiveness" is a most beautiful thing – I still give copies of this book which Ingrid gave me: when I see someone struggling with un-forgiveness, I can give it to them and it does help them. Teachers at my church's Sunday school are still using the teachers' book I translated, and the children are responding so well." Busisiwe's story is placed here for a reason: it was her life, her perseverance in study and maturing in the Lord and growing in her responsibilities at Skogheim which laid the seed for an idea of setting up the Daniel Generation Academy.

We would be remiss if we did not include a picture of two very special staff saints who, amongst quite a few other canine staff members, welcomed young and old to Skogheim over many years.



CHAPTER 7

BOARD OF TRUSTEES THROUGH THE YEARS

The 1st meeting of trustees was held on 12 July 1984. In attendance were: Michael Hansen, Nils Brauteseth, Arne Brauteseth and Midge Pittman.

The 2nd meeting was held on 19 July 1984 when Manuel Elisha, Charlotte Schreuder and Robert Prigge were welcomed as new trustees.



We will be holding our 177th Board of Trustees meeting in February 2017.

TRUSTEES AND THEIR DATES OF SERVICE

Michael Hansen ~ 12 July 1984 – current

Nils Brauteseth ~ 12 July 1984 – 18 January 2009

Arne Brauteseth ~ 12 July 1984 - 8 August 2005

Midge Pittman ~ 12 July 1984 - 11 December 2006

Manuel Elisha ~ 19 July 1984 - 10 October 1994

Charlotte Schreuder ~ 19 July 1984 - 30 April 2001

Robert Prigge ~ 19 July 1984 - 31 December 1989

Mr E. Marriott ~ 16 June 1986 - 17 November 1986

Peter Pfaff ~ 13 March 1989 - 11 December 2006

Mrs Bobby Thomas ~ 13 March 1989 - 9 March 1992

Ollie Hall ~ 14 January 1991 - 7 February 2000

Erwin Redinger ~ 2 October 2000 - 15 September 2014

Oscar Swanlund ~ 6 October 2003 - 5 September 2010

Nico van Zyl ~ 6 October 2003 - current

Gillian Finlayson ~ 15 November 2005 - 3 March 2008

Hugh Beckett ~ 15 November 2005 - current

Sven Seeger ~ 15 November 2005 - current

Brian Smith ~ 9 May 2006 - current

Clive Brauteseth ~ 1 June 2009 - 18 January 2014

Peter Jenkins ~ 13 January 2013 - current

Kevin Pillay ~ 13 July 2015 - current

Ruth Greeff ~ 13 July 2015 - current

Siegfried Ngubane ~ 10 July 2016 – current

CHAIRPERSONS

Robert Prigge (17 August 1984 – 14 August 1989)

Michael Hansen (14 August 1989 – 22 January 2001)

Peter Pfaff (22 January 2001 – 9 May 2006)

Michael Hansen (9 May 2006 – current)

We honour these men and women who have freely given of their time and talents behind the scenes in the furtherance of His Kingdom work here at Skogheim. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

Thoughts on Skogheim - Peter Pfaff

It was a great privilege for me to serve on the Board at Skogheim both in the capacity as one of the board members and also as chairman over a period of some 17 years, and to watch Skogheim grow from humble beginnings into the institution that it is today. In fact, it is one of my regrets

in life that on my retirement to Hillcrest I was no longer actively involved in Skogheim.

Being a lawyer by profession, and having practised law for over sixty years, I have seen the other side of life more than most. I think I am therefore well qualified to testify that belonging to the Skogheim Christian family is a clear object lesson in its portrayal of there being one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, but many members and these members not all having the same function but nevertheless proving that when the body is united, focused and bearing with one another in loving fellowship, great things can be achieved for God.

To my mind, Skogheim is more than just a unique place – it is a unique ‘experience’, and my prayer is that the Lord will continue to provide in the future as He has faithfully done in the past, so that Skogheim can maintain the objectives for which it was established inter alia: providing physical and mental refreshment for weary visitors; providing spiritual help, hope and encouragement for world-beaten pilgrims; providing opportunities for the preaching and teaching of God’s Word and providing the training and programmes for reaching out into the community to share the love of Jesus with those in darkness.

CHAPTER 8

INTERESTING MOMENTS FROM THE MINUTES

When we look back on minutes written many years ago they may seem strange and at times quite humorous. We hope you will enjoy these excerpts...

- ❖ 26 July 1984 - The monies from the USA have been posted to South Africa but have not yet been received.
- ❖ 8 November 1984 - We have made an offer of R1-00 per chair to the City Council and await their reply. *(Two meetings later the offer must have been accepted as it notes that 184 chairs had been acquired).*
- ❖ 4 February 1985 – Anglo American assists multi-racial projects from their Chairman’s funds. Miss Pittman suggested solar heating as a possible project. *Midge was always ahead of the game!*
- ❖ 19 January 1987 - Report on the Tornado Damage is extensive, with repairs continuing well into March of that year.
- ❖ 5 February 1987 - Freezer stock is low, we need two beasts to be put down for the coming season. *Thankfully, Mndeni Meat now delivers.*
- ❖ 25 May 1987 - Mattresses: Some of these are very old grass ones and need replacing.
- ❖ 16 February 1988 - The Norwegian Church has been photocopying the monthly bulletin and quarterly newsletters at Skogheim. It was decided not to charge the church for this service. *25 years later: the Norwegian Church donated their photocopy machine to Skogheim with neither party recalling the previous arrangement until reading the minutes to write this book.*
- ❖ 12 October 1988 - Mr. Ernst Naf is in the area again and has indicated his availability when needed. 13 March 1989 - Ernst Naf intends to spend two more weeks at Skogheim from 14th March to do any woodwork needed... *and then he never left.*
- ❖ 12 June 1989 - Rotary Ann’s have made a generous donation for furnishing the flat (behind Viking). *This flat is now called Ann’s Place in memory of their gift.*

- ❖ 9 October 1989 - Now that there is general extra help, both Midge and Charlotte are to have one day off per week.
- ❖ 12 October 1992 - Eskom has asked to erect a second pylon...this involved the cutting of about 20 Norfolk pines *which with Ernst's skill became our dining room tables.*
- ❖ 11 November 1993 - a Donation of fans for every room has been received. *Visitors (the Purdys & van Wicklins) from USA experienced the heat of summer living in our rooms and decided to bless our future guests with a donation of fans for every bedroom.*
- ❖ 31 July 1995 – Miss Pittman shared some visions for programming...*this dream was realised in 2010 with the start of Impilo neqiniso.*
- ❖ 5 August 1996 - Purchase of a Second Computer agreed, as work is often hampered with only one available...*we now have six.*
- ❖ 5 August 1996 - Discussion on the desirability of a “cell phone”. Agreed to buy and use wisely, for greater efficiency. *What more can we say!!*

CHAPTER 9

TESTIMONIES OF GUESTS & VOLUNTEERS

Pinetown Baptist Church has been associated with Skogheim for about 25 years, having enjoyed many ladies retreats and annual church camps. Over the last 10 years a group of scrappers have also been coming to Skogheim twice a year for a scrapping break away.

“We have seen how Skogheim has grown from strength to strength, not only in its buildings but in what it offers to us weary travellers. We love the place, the accommodation, not to mention the food and our faithful Ruthie in the kitchen along with all the other wonderful cheerful ladies serving tables and last but definitely not least the awesome staff.



We trust and pray that we will enjoy another 25 years association with this amazing place in the trees.” **Doreen Barkley**

Gloria Tarboton – guest and volunteer

“Skogheim was truly ‘home in the trees’ for me and holds very precious memories. My very earliest memories go back to when Skogheim was home to Nils and Liliás and their children. I watched Liliás as she cooked, baked and sewed, and was amazed at all she could do. I was a young mother and could not even imagine tackling the things she did. Nils, Mervyn and I played badminton in the Norwegian church hall.

I remember clearly the day Liliás asked if we would like to share what I think she said was a hind quarter. But when I saw that huge animal lying on their kitchen table it seemed to be the whole beast! I remember well that as I sheepishly approached the table Nils asked me ‘which half I would like’! He held out the ‘saw’ and told me to help myself. I nearly dropped dead! But then he began to laugh and like the gentlemen he was, Nils carved, packed

and labelled our meat. We often laughed together about that day in the kitchen.

My memories of Skogheim are too many to list – hours and hours with Midge who by the way challenged me beyond my capabilities: she got me involved in her home assignment presentations even though I had no previous experience. She got me to paint animals on the Mini golf (I know it was my idea to make them out of rocks rather than paint them flat on wood) but then she pushed me over the limit because the walls needed to have wild life painted right round the room (and I had never painted in my life before). I remember holding the paint brush above my head so I could begin to paint an elephant! “Oh! Please dear Lord help me!” I cried. When Midge walked in she said “Hey that elephant has only three legs!” “The fourth leg is behind the other leg” I shouted back at her. No matter how many times I said “I can’t”, she said “You can” and then disappeared before I could say any more. I am forever grateful to our Heavenly Father for bringing Midge into my life!

More recent memories are of our Baptist church Bible study group enjoying a morning together in the Prayer Garden. We were blessed as we sat quietly in that beautiful place while Ingrid led us in prayer and devotions. What a scrumptious morning tea Joyce-Anne provided for us.

Precious memories how they linger how they ever flood my soul. . . I could write a book but I can’t! There is so much more to tell but it is recorded in heaven and God receives all the praise, honour and glory.” Bless you all.

Ziphakamise Pastoral Care and Counselling Basic Course

We celebrated our graduation at Skogheim and ten certificates were awarded to Pastors from different denominations. The programme was organized by Ziphakamise and contact sessions took place at the Ziphakamise Board Room. The lecturer was Ps. Charles Manda from University of Pretoria.



Ziphakamise Youth Summit

We had our second Youth Summit at Skogheim in July 2011. Forty students attended this remarkable event.



The Camp was a success and the youth responded very well to the program and are willing to continue with the project. A few challenges came up but it was nothing unexpected. There is a need now to keep in touch and involve this group of youth in development programs that may come up in future and make sure that they implement the skills that they learn in to their lives.

Bob Van Wicklin – volunteer Skogheim has been a rock for many, and can truly hold as many of those who seek comfort there. Thank you, everyone at Skogheim past and present and future for taking care of this special place and opening your doors to everyone.

Kim Pasquini – volunteer.

Oh how I wish I could attend the anniversary celebration at Skogheim!!! That place has a place in my heart that nothing else can replace. I may have only been there just under a year, but it really impacted my life. I wish the best for a great event and a wonderful time celebrating

50 years!! Wow! Hard to believe it was almost 30 years ago that I was there. Where on earth has the time gone???

I've attached a photo of me taken near the entrance sign. I look back on the photos I took, and the memories come flooding back. Two things happened there that really changed me. When the Fun in the Sun group of kids were bussed in for their weekend, it was always such a crazy and chaotic time, but so much fun.



I remember specifically a group of Afrikaans children that I could hardly communicate with, due to the language barrier. Despite the language difficulties, I had the privilege of praying with two of those boys while they asked Christ into their hearts! I have thought about them over the years, wondering if they too remember that moment, sitting on the lawn beside Ruth Hall. That was the first time I ever prayed with someone as they accepted Christ!

The other thing that I remember so well...a gentleman had walked onto the property one afternoon, exhausted and in pain. He walked with a cane, but his pain was so bad...a result of having shoes that were torn with no support. They were full of holes on the bottom and around the toes. He asked for help in Zulu, but I could not understand him. He then pointed to his feet with tears in his eyes. I knew what he was telling me at that point. I went to look for a pair of shoes in the mission's closet but was unable to find any that would fit him. He sat patiently and waited for me as I frantically looked for over 30 minutes. I tried several pairs to no avail. Then it hit me....look down. I have ALWAYS complained that my feet were too big, but I never had a hard time finding shoes to fit me. I had literally bought a new pair only days before...white Ked's sneakers. I was wearing them that day. I sat down next to the man, took off my shoes, and handed them to him, motioning for him to put them on his feet. You know what? They fitted perfectly!!! At that point the tears welled up in my eyes as he got up

and did a little happy dance. He was SO grateful to get a new pair of shoes, and at that moment, I was humbled.

No language barrier could stop God from showing up. He knew what the man needed, and He provided for him. That is the one moment in my life that I cherish to this day. I was so honored that I got to work at Skogheim back in 1988-1989, and I will never forget the amazing people I met while I was there. A piece of my heart is still there with you all, and I am thankful for the chance I had to live there, if only for a season in my life.

Grace Read – Guest & Volunteer My first memories of Skogheim are from when I was a teenager and I visited with my parents, when Skogheim was still being run by Mr and Mrs Brauteseth. I remember clearly the great big bus filled with very excited children arriving, and Mrs Brauteseth never being out of the kitchen. It made a massive impression on me at that time.

10 years later in 1985, Colin and I (along with our 5 children, later 6!) desperately needed a short break. We called Skogheim and got the warmest of welcomes from Midge. We had the most wonderful 5 days in the Rondavel, and that started our annual visits (sometimes even twice a year) to our beloved Skogheim in Robin House for 10 years. We always brought cousins and friends with us, and every Easter we packed up with great excitement, to have 10 of the best days of the year.

The children were very kindly invited to join in all the activities that were on offer, Colin enjoyed helping Midge set up the computer systems, and Charlotte was always coming to check that we had everything we needed. And of course we will never forget the two St Bernards - one even travelled with us down from Pretoria!

On Easter Sunday, miraculously a magnificent cake with Easter eggs enough for every family member would suddenly appear on the dining room table. We will never forget the amazing meals cooked by Cia and the absolutely delicious soup which accompanied every meal. Cold drink and biscuits were provided in the afternoon, and to this day, we still use that same biscuit recipe in our home.

Midge and Charlotte were just kindness itself, and it was with very heavy hearts that we would pack up to leave, but we knew that Robin House would be waiting for us a few months later. Over the years Skogheim grew and grew and grew, and every year we were so excited to see all the new additions.

In the later years we met up with Ernst, and with much delight our son Andrew would follow him around and watch his wonderful carpentry ability. We still have a chair that he helped Andrew to make from a recently cut-down tree. How unique is that. And we can never forget Medrinah's help with all the practical details of running a large family.

God blessed us abundantly in giving us this wonderful annual holiday. Everyone who visited with us has built up very special memories that will never be forgotten.

Thank you to all at Skogheim who made this possible for us and who remained special friends to this day. God bless this amazing ministry.

CHAPTER 10

UNTIL HE COMES!

Skogheim is all about FAITH and FRIENDSHIP. Skogheim was started by Nils and Liliias, and only received a handful of donations during those years because it was “privately owned.” Once they sacrificially gave it up to be fully used by the Lord - He brought in ‘Friends of Skogheim’ to meet major needs whenever they arose. There would be no Skogheim without our God-given FRIENDS.

We as a staff are privileged to be here to see Him at work providing for all our needs and even some of our wants. To bear witness to the ongoing work of the Spirit in the lives of all who come through our gates. We stand in awe and give Him all the glory, and honor and praise.

A very big thank you to our donors, who over the years have provided more than 80% of the funding needed to purchase and develop Skogheim, adding to the facilities of the centre and the equipment and other ministry needs. You and the Lord know who you are. You have richly blessed us and the people of Southern Africa with your generosity and prayers. We pray that God will continue to use the talents which you invested on His behalf in this place, to reap a rich harvest when He returns.

Thank you for being our FRIENDS and joining us in our walk of faith. May Skogheim always be A LEGACY OF GOD AT WORK.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11 v 28-30 (NRSV)



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