

Ian Frederick Garland 1925–2007

Legendary tree planter, renowned conservationist, visionary educationist and reluctant sugarcane farmer Ian Garland died peacefully in Kloof on Friday 3 August 2007 after a long illness. He was 82 years old.

His lifetime work of caring for the environment has left a monumental legacy, which is felt daily far beyond Mtunzini and his beloved Siyaya catchment, and his wisdom and knowledge continues to be passed on through the Twinstreams Environmental Education Centre which he founded more than 55 years ago.

Ian's love for nature began when as a boy growing up in the Tongaat area he was bitten by the 'botany bug' and collected butterflies and studied frogs. By the time he began farming along the coast south of Mtunzini he was impassioned by the beauty he found here.

The twin streams of his farm—the Amanzimnyama and the Siyaya—were a paradise of swamp forest, papyrus marshes and water lilies floating on deep, crystal clear pools. In those days it was possible to canoe from the confluence of the streams right to the mouth.

Soon he had made his acquaintance with the rich diversity of Ongoye Forest and was part of the pioneering scientific exploration of Maputaland in the late 1940s. His excitement and boundless enthusiasm at the discoveries of this wondrous natural heritage led him to found South Africa's first environmental education centre at Twinstreams.

But during the 1960s with the intensification of farming and increased pressure on the land, Ian witnessed the loss of the paradise he had found on his first arrival and his message took on an urgency well in advance of the present debate on global warming.

The conservation centre at Mick's Park was soon transformed into a living laboratory visited by international scientists and academics but Ian always understood the importance of getting the message across to 'the ordinary folk' who perhaps didn't know the difference between a guava tree and a *Cleistanthus schlechteri*.

He was always available for a walk through the forests he had rehabilitated or planted and everyone from the Women's Institute to Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Harry Oppenheimer visited Twinstreams, heard the message that water is the key to life on earth and then planted a tree. But the most important lesson that Ian taught—though he seldom voiced it—was that individuals can make a vital difference. Few left his presence without being moved by his enthusiasm and commitment and many owe the joy they experience in a natural environment to the lessons of Twinstreams.

In his lifetime, he estimated that he had planted over 60 000 indigenous trees—not only on his own farm but wherever he felt the landscape needed a bit of 'cheering up'. Mtunzini's sense of place owes much to Ian's voluntary tree-planting and guidance.

Ian was recognised in later years for his tremendous 'lifetime contribution' to conservation and the natural sciences with an honorary M.Sc., two honorary doctorates and many community awards.

He is survived by his wife and soul-mate of 58 years, Jean, and their five children Bill, Francie, Peter, Ruth and Jill.

Hamba kahle.



Ian Garland

BRUCE HOPWOOD

(With acknowledgements to the *Zululand Observer*)