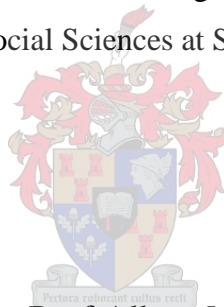


**The social history of three Western Cape thermal mineral
springs resorts and their influence on the development of
the health and wellness tourism industry in South Africa.**

Dané van Wyk

Thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (History) in the
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University



Supervisor : Prof Albert M Grundlingh

March 2013

Declaration

“Healing fountains and bubbly sunshine springs”¹

The social history of three Western Cape thermal mineral springs resorts and their influence on the development of the health and wellness tourism industry in South Africa.

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that the reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe on any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

This study explores the role of thermal mineral springs in South Africa in the development of the early tourism sector. Their healing qualities enhanced the country's reputation as a health resort, and therefore they became a national asset and tourist attraction. The ancient history of thermal mineral springs and the belief in their curative abilities are discussed in order to familiarise one with the rich history of thermal springs and to help determine their role in the tourism sector. By looking at the role of thermal mineral springs in the European and especially British contexts provides a foundation for understanding how the thermal water culture was passed on to South Africa through colonialism. With the colonisation of South Africa, thermal mineral springs became host to British invalids who visited the country since they suffered from consumption, and was hoping to be cured by the country's health giving natural assets. The influx of invalids and tourists ultimately spawned wide tourism and the modernisation of the springs.

The three thermal mineral spring resorts near present day Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal are used as case studies of how thermal springs in the Cape Colony and later the Western Cape developed from primitive sites to splendid resorts and world famous sanatoriums. Their history is traced from their formation to their modernisation, a time period ranging from the 1700s to 2011. This clearly illustrates the phases of development of each of the thermal mineral water establishments. The curative aspects of the thermal mineral spring water are emphasised, concentrating on how the South African thermal water cure culture was used and developed. This study concludes with discussing how the three thermal mineral spring resorts had to navigate the changing tourism sector in South Africa, as well as looking at their development from the 1980s to 2011.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie verken die rol wat warmwaterbronne in die ontwikkeling van die vroeë toerisme sektor in Suid-Afrika gespeel het. Die genesende kragte van hierdie warm water bronne het die land se reputasie as 'n gesondheidsoord versterk en van hul 'n nasionale bate asook 'n toeriste aantreklikheid gemaak. Die antieke geskiedenis van warmwaterbronne en die geloof in hul genesende kragte word bespreek om bekend te raak met hul ryk geskiedenis en om hul rol in die toerisme sektor te bepaal. Deur te kyk na die rol wat warm water bronne in die Europese sowel as die Britse konteks gehad het, dien as 'n platform om te verstaan hoe die gebruik van die warm water kultuur na Suid-Afrika deur middel van kolonialisme oorgedra is. Met die kolonialisasie van Suid-Afrika het die warmwaterbronne gasheer gespeel vir Britse invalides wat aan tuberkulose gelei het en daarom die land besoek het om deur die land se helende natuurlike bates geneesing te word. Die instroming van invalides en toeriste het wyd verspreide toersime tot gevolg gehad asook die vermoderniseering van die warmwaterbronne.

Die drie warm waterbronne naby die hedendaagse Caledon, Montagu en Citrusdal is gebruik as gevallestudies om die ontwikkeling van warmwaterbronne in die destydse Kaap Kolonie asook die hedendaagse Wes-Kaap, vanaf primatiewe bronne na pragtige oorde en wêreld bekende sanatoriums te illustreer. Die geskiedenis van die warmwaterbron oorde word bespreek in die tydperk van die 1700's tot 2011 om so hul ontstaan tot hul vermoderniseering te illustreer. As gevolg van hierdie verlengde tydperk kan die verskillende ontwikkelings fases van die warmwaterbron oorde waargeneem word. Daar word ook gefokus op die genesende aspekte van die warmwaterbron water en hoe die Suid-Afrikaanse warmwaterbron kultuur ontwikkel en gebruik is. Die studie sluit af met 'n bespreking van hoe die driewarm waterwaterbron oorde by die veranderende toerisme sektor in Suid-Afrika moes aanpas en dek ook hul ontwikkeling vanaf die 1980's tot 2011.

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Introduction and Literature Review

Steaming water, bubbling-up naturally from the earth has long fascinated mankind as a source of health and healing. The use of springs for bathing can be traced to the ancient Egyptians, and it is speculated that this custom was practised by earlier civilizations as well. Soaking in thermal mineral water was popularised by the Romans, the healing properties of the water at first a religious and then a more secular activity.¹ Perhaps the first to undertake a long journey for the sole purpose of the visiting of thermal springs was a group of Romans who travelled to Baiae.² This practice became desirable again during the Renaissance in European countries in the sixteenth century and even more so during the Victorian empire and its obsession with health as well as the Grand Tour, which played an important role in the development of the tourism industry as well.³ During this time the spa culture moved to South Africa, which was endowed with an enviable quantity of natural thermal mineral springs which could be found across the country. With the arrival of both the Dutch and British, the culture concerning thermal water health and healing was introduced to the Cape Colony and later the whole of South Africa. Bathing in thermal mineral water was seen as medicinal, the minerals in the water and the water itself were believed to cure many different ailments. In both Britain and South Africa people travelled to these springs to bathe or drink the waters in a variety of customs or rituals, which was known as ‘taking the waters.’ Such pilgrimage of health can be seen as an early tourism, especially since such customs often involved leisure activities. In fact, like the culture around the healing properties of thermal springs, there is evidence of tourism for leisure in the ancient empires of Babylon and Egypt.⁴ Evidently, tourism and the culture of spas or thermal springs enjoy a long and intertwined history.

The historiography of thermal mineral springs and their place in the history of tourism are in some way supported by J.C. Holloway’s *The Business of Tourism* (1998), which looks at the history and development of tourism and those who played a role in establishing the modern tourism industry. Holloway links the belief in the healing powers of the waters which was

¹ S. Spicer & J. Nepgen: *Holistic Holidays in South Africa: Health Spas, Hot Springs, Magical Places and Sacred Spaces*, pp. 13, 14.

² J.C. Holloway: *The Business of Tourism*, pp. 16-17.

³ A. Holden: *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, p. 23.

⁴ J.C. Holloway: *The Business of Tourism*, pp. 16-17.

found in ancient societies with the spas enjoying a revival during the Renaissance and Victorian era in Britain.⁵ The rise of spas as a form of leisure in Britain is noted in a number of works that points to the importance of the phenomenon of spas and ‘spa towns’ in looking at the broader history of tourism and leisure.⁶ In *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, 2006, Andrew Holden attributes the revival of spa tourism to particular concerns with health and the spas as “an early type of health tourism.”⁷ Within the South African context, Richard George’s *Managing Tourism in South Africa* (2007), looks at the development and management of the tourism industry in South Africa. George makes mention in a short case study of the ways in which thermal mineral springs and spas fit into not only the international scene but the national scene as well in that South Africa also encountered a shift from a preoccupation with health to a focus on the concept of wellness in the leisure industry.⁸

There is a growing arena of scholarship that combines a focus on the development of the ‘wellness’ industry and the contemporary use of thermal spas. Such works, like *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs* (2009), by Patricia Erfurt-Cooper and Malcolm Cooper, looks at the new modern industry of health and wellness and how this industry came to be. They discuss the history of spas as well as all the different kinds of spas that are available presently, each with its own focus area and the elements like marketing which is involved in running a modern day spa. Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper have noted the lack of historical writing regarding “African hot springs.” While there is some insight into how natural spring resources have been utilised in Namibia, there is little mentioned of South Africa’s abundant thermal mineral spring resorts, past or present.⁹

Work by Melanie Smith and László Puczko entitled *Health and Wellness tourism* also deals with aspects of the development of health related tourism into modern day wellness tourism, including the history of spas in different countries. This work includes South Africa as a

⁵ J.C. Holloway: *The Business of Tourism*, Longmans, Essex, 1999.

⁶ See the following works for more information: P. Borsay: *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500*, Palgrave Macmillan, N.Y., 2006 & H. Keyser: *Tourism development*, Oxford University Press South Africa, Cape Town, 2002 & A. Holden: *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, Routledge, New York, 2006 & A. Franklin: *Tourism An Introduction*, Sage Publications, London, 2003 & J. Urry: *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, Sage Publications Ltd, London, 1990.

⁷ A. Holden: *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*. Routledge, New York, 2006, p. 23.

⁸ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, Oxford University Press South Africa (Pty) Ltd, Cape Town, 2007.

⁹ Namibia is said to have two thermal spring spas Gross Barmen Thermal Baths and the Reho Spa. There is also a Hot Spring Resort found at the southern end of the Fish River Canyon and a town named Warmbad or “known by the local tribes as Bela-Bela meaning the boiling place” in P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, Channel View Publications, UK, 2009, p. 108.

country said to be “particular rich in thermal springs.” Wellness tourism focuses on a person’s general wellbeing, including emotional aspects, while health tourism has a greater emphasis on medical aspects. Health and wellness can also be related to the field of leisure in which medical and beauty spas can feature. It becomes clear in this work that although spas fall under the wellness tourism sector, there are many different kinds of tourism niches represented by this field. Spa tourism, where the focus is on “relaxation or healing of the body through water based treatments” which could include thermal mineral pools, is usually the best known form of wellness tourism. Medical tourism is discussed as well, making it clear that spas does not fall under this kind of tourism because medical tourism focuses on a person who travels abroad to “undergo medical treatments such as surgery.”¹⁰ This work focuses more on health and wellness tourism in itself and all the components that make up this modern leisure market.

Literature that is concerned with thermal springs in African colonies can be found in Eric Thomas Jennings’s constructive work *Curing the Colonizers: Hydrotherapy, Climatology and French Colonial Spas* (2006), that deals with the way France, who also had a long history of using thermal springs as therapeutic treatment centres, utilized the so called ‘hill stations’ and the thermal springs in their African colonies. They as colonisers took their bathing customs with them to the African thermal springs because it was believed that these Colonial spas would cure them from ailments arising in the colony. For a long period colonising countries believed that they had to adapt quickly to their new environment in order to survive and thrive. Both France and Britain were supporters of acclimatising but it was far more popular in France. In the 1830s, however, a shift occurred where acclimatising became less popular because it was believed that by acclimatising the colonisers were losing their “Frenchness” or their civilised nature. This shift also brought about change in the way the colonial spas were used. They were now used to cure one of acclimation and restoring “Frenchness.” The thermal spas were made to look like their counterparts in France, so that the French colonial officers could recover quicker.¹¹

When considering South African literature on the country’s thermal springs, there are two publications dealing with the medical and chemical side of the thermal springs. Prof. M. Rindl wrote *The medical springs of South Africa* (1936) in which he focused on the thermal

¹⁰ M. Smith & L. Puczkó: *Health and Wellness Tourism*, pp. 35, 85,101.

¹¹ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the Colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, pp. 1-3, 15, 21.

springs as ‘national assets’ of South Africa and noted that the springs should be utilised as such. Because the climate also affected the curative nature of the thermal springs Rindl mentioned how fortunate South Africa was to have not only curing thermal springs, but also a sunny and healthy climate. He spoke of the chemical characteristics of the different springs since this classified springs into certain categories which again were connected to the ailments they were said to cure. He was the first to create an “International Standard Measurement and Classification of South African Medicinal Springs” so that the “expressing [of] analytical data of mineral waters” would not cause confusion anymore between different countries.¹² Leslie Kent published *Die Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika* (1952), which like Rindl focused on the curative aspects of the thermal springs, climate, the early history of some of the thermal springs and the location of the different thermal springs in the country. He mentioned the geological elements of the South African springs which were different to that of thermal springs found abroad, which were usually caused by volcanic activity, but since the country thermal springs were not volcanic, the South African thermal springs therefore had a different heating source. Kent also looked at the medical classification of the waters and the effects as well as the use of the thermal springs. He therefore covered most of the elements connected with the waters and it shows that there was still scientific interest in the thermal springs in South Africa by the 1950s.¹³

A more specific history of the country’s thermal mineral springs can be found in Bun Booyens’s *Bronwaters van Genesing* (1981), where he covered both the individual histories of most of the thermal springs across South Africa as well as looking at the South African water cure culture and the belief in the power of the waters that developed through the years. His research covers the ancient as well as European history of thermal spas, and the South African context stretches up to about the late 1970s when thermal bathing was still known and used by some South African’s for health, although using the waters for holiday purposes was already present at that time.¹⁴ Booyens’s history has an episodic quality to it. One misses a sense of historic development as well the role played by springs in promoting specific towns. In chronological terms the thesis continues from where Booyens left off, incorporating more modern developments during the 20th century and beyond.

¹² M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, Publicity and Travel Department, South African Railways and Harbour, Pretoria, 1936, p. 16.

¹³ L. Kent: *Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika*, Publisiteits- en Reisdepartement, Suid-Afrikaanse Spoorweë, Stellenbosch, 1952.

¹⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, Tafelberg-Uitgewers Bpk, Kaapstad, 1981.

There are also some works on individual thermal spring towns available. Caledon, who has one of the oldest known thermal springs was discussed in three different theses. The first was by S.D. Maree in *'n Geografiese studie van die dorpe en gebiede Caledon, Bredasdorp en Somerset-Wes* (1945). He looked at the history of Caledon but also at the thermal spring as a tourist attraction and concluded that the thermal spring establishment was indeed the tourist magnet that drew people to the town.¹⁵ Elizabeth Joan Prins wrote about *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese Ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die agtiende en vroeë negentiende eue*, (1983) and Prins covers the history of Caledon by looking how the town developed, focussing on the economic and cultural sectors. Because the thermal springs are connected with the town, its history of development was not only covered but also central.¹⁶ Julianne E Wilson in her thesis covered the history of Caledon ranging from 1811-1884 in *A history of Caledon in the nineteenth century, 1811-1884* (1984). Wilson surveyed the establishment and the development of the town and also focuses on the thermal springs as the reason for choosing the location of the village. Once again the history of the Caledon baths was also covered in relation to the development of the town.¹⁷ A book on the history of the town of Caledon by Joy Edwards, *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, (1979) follows the history of the thermal springs from the early 1700s up to the late 1970s and focus on the thermal springs and their medical waters, tourism in the town and the broad development of Caledon as a rural town.¹⁸ M Brand published *Het Warme Bad* (1998) that focused directly on the history of the Caledon thermal spring water establishment and its development from a humble bathhouse to a world famous Sanatorium as well as its demise and the struggle to resurrect this important tourist attraction. Her research stretched up to about 1997 when the Overberger Hotel and Spa had been erected on the site.¹⁹

The thermal spring of the Olifants River Baths' history was captured in a book by Hazel Hall *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape* (2003) covering the early history of the thermal spring establishment which included more of a

¹⁵ S.D. Maree: *'n Geografiese studie van die dorpe en gebiede Caledon, Bredasdorp en Somerset-Wes*, Unpublished thesis for M.A. Degree, University of Stellenbosch, July 1945.

¹⁶ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eue*, Unpublished thesis for doctoral degree, University of South Africa, 1983.

¹⁷ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, Unpublished thesis for master's degree, University of South Africa, 1984.

¹⁸ J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, Caledon Venster Printing (Pty.) Ltd., Caledon, 1979.

¹⁹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, Magdaleen Brand, Botrivier, 1998.

family history, since The Baths has stayed in the same family for more than 100 years. In this book the powers of the waters are covered as well as how The Baths had to adapt to the changing leisure and tourism industry. Since there is not a large repository of sources concerning the development of The Baths resort, this book and Hall's personal collections were primarily relied on when discussing the development of the Citrusdal thermal mineral spring.²⁰

Mark Simon Boekstein worked on a thesis *The Role of Health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape* (2001) where he questioned the role health still had and if it still had the same importance to people visiting thermal mineral spring resorts as it had in earlier times when thermal springs were seen as medicinal and were used by people to alleviate ailments and disease. Boekstein briefly focused on the history of thermal spas as well as the history of some of the South African thermal mineral spring resorts. By sending out a questionnaire to the visitors of the thermal springs, he could evaluate what their main motivation for visiting the thermal springs were and found that health indeed still played a large role in people visiting the thermal springs and that the knowledge of the healing powers of the waters were still present in some form.²¹ A book by Sharyn Spicer and Janine Nepgen *Holistic Holidays in South Africa: Health Spas, Hot Springs, Magical Places and Sacred Spaces* (2005) concentrates on the holistic and wellness tourism industry under which thermal mineral springs fall. By looking at the ancient history of the spa and thermal springs as well as the local thermal springs histories it shows how far the thermal springs have come and the role it still plays in tourism presently, even if the format have changed.²²

After a brief glance at the historiography pertaining to thermal springs in South Africa, it can be seen that although some angles of the history of the springs were covered until the 1970s, little was done after that period which in fact was marked by the advent of a leisure tourism revolution. Most of the latter day works written on the South African thermal mineral water springs, with possibly the exception of Booyens's work, was of a popular nature, and did not focus primarily on history. It was the aim of the thesis, first and foremost, to investigate in depth the involvement of the spas and its latter day application. In doing so it hopes to move

²⁰ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants Rivier Warm Bath, Western Cape*, The Baths (Pty) Ltd, Citrusdal, 2003.

²¹ M. S. Boekstein: *The Role of Health in the Motivation to visit Mineral Spa resorts in the Western Cape*, Unpublished thesis for a master's degree, University of the Western Cape, 2001.

²² S. Spicer & J. Nepgen: *Holistic holidays in South Africa: Health spas, hot springs, magical places and sacred spaces*, Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 2005.

beyond the limitations of earlier works which touched for instance rather curiously on the complexities of the medical dimension of the spas, while analysis of the role of spas in general tourism is almost non-existent. This thesis will try to combine the historical literature that was available with more recent tourism literature to show change over time in the thermal spring industry with the revolution in the leisure industry after 1980s-1990s. The way in which the three historic spas found in the present day Western Cape, Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal, embraced and adjusted to this new kind of tourism in order to escape extinction and help these resorts and the old thermal water cure culture survive by will also be illustrated.

The scope of this study is rather wide because the thermal mineral springs have such a long history. It was also necessary to look at European histories to show the development of the thermal bathing culture and to indicate how this later influenced the thermal spring culture in South Africa. The time span in the South African context stretches from about the mid-1600s because there is no concrete date of the first discovery of thermal springs by colonials. Therefore the thesis covers the years 1700s to 2011. The reason for this extended time period is because it sometimes took many years for developments to take place at thermal mineral water establishments. In order therefore to show demonstrate change over time this extended period had to be used to show how these establishments developed into the present holiday resorts and how they adjusted to the changing leisure and tourism markets after 1980s. The reason for choosing the thermal mineral spring resorts of Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal is because the thermal springs found in their vicinity of the oldest and most prominent thermal spring establishments that survived up to the present day.

Gathering sources for this thesis was problematical as there was a limited primary base. Most primary sources came in the form of pamphlets published about the thermal mineral springs and was written in promotional tone. Another obstacle was that even when there was some literature available, especially in the different museums, dates or references were often omitted and one therefore had to try and piece together a complete picture by using both referenced and unreferenced sources. Montagu, Caledon and Citrusdal's museums were visited and their archives used to find information on the thermal springs. At times sources were just absent. The fact that both Caledon and Montagu experienced natural disasters could also play a part in the lack of sources. In comparison to rich sources in Europe, the South African field is rather meagre. Therefore pamphlets, newspapers, journal articles, guide

books and a variety of secondary sources were used as well as websites, personal collections and interviews with the modern day thermal mineral water resort managers and owners to create a full picture of the history and developments of the three thermal mineral spring resorts. Archival sources were very difficult to locate, and it was found that those in the archives could also be accessed at the National Library and town museum archives. Therefore because this information was available at more than one location, the latter was used instead of the archival versions. Some archival sources were found in personal collections, although the references were not always clear.

This thesis is presented in seven chapters describing the development of thermal springs in South Africa and their role in the tourism industry in South Africa. Chapter one deals with the ancient as well as the European history of thermal waters springs, the belief in the water's power and how this phenomenon had gained popularity in the Victorian times as well as how the industry developed in Britain, France and Germany. Chapter two moves to the South African context, where there will be looked at South Africa, which became a colonial asset of Britain, as well as a well-known health resort for people suffering from consumption and associated health problems. In this chapter an introduction to the thermal springs of South Africa will be given and their role in making South Africa a popular health resort will also be discussed. Travel and tourism in South Africa will be looked at as well and the positioning of the thermal springs as one of the first tourist attractions South Africa had to offer.

Chapter three looks at the development of the three thermal mineral springs during the end of 1600s to 1800s. During this time period most of the springs were discovered and were starting to develop and grow. Chapter four discuss the histories of the three thermal springs during the time period 1800s to 1900s. During this period the thermal springs were becoming better known and they were also becoming less primitive and more established. Chapter five looks at the modern time period the thermal springs moved into during the 1900s to the 1980s. The resorts all became more modern and the belief in the waters was also validated with scientific evidence. Tourism began playing a role at the resorts during this time period and each of the spas had suffered setbacks in this time period as well, and the reason why the period only covers up to 1980s is because after the 1980s there were a change in thermal spring resorts when a new leisure market, the health and wellness market, was introduced. Chapter six focus on the belief in the water cure, how it was started and also briefly glances at the bathing culture of Britain. The chapter then moves to the South African context where the South

African bathing culture and customs as well as the belief in the water cure will be discussed. Chapter seven starts from the mid-1980s looking at how the thermal spring resorts had to develop and adjust to fit into the new tourism and leisure section of wellness tourism. The chapter also shows that combining the age old waters with new modern treatment ensure the survival of the historic thermal spring resorts and they found a place amongst the new wellness tourism markets.

Chapter 1:

From Rome to Europe: the history and development of the thermal water culture in Europe.

Thermal springs and their uses have been with the human race since ancient times. When looking at the present day spa and thermal water industry, one tends to be unaware of the rich history of the use of thermal water. That is why the charming history and legacy of the thermal mineral springs have to be explored. The fascination with the hot water bubbling from beneath the ground has captivated the minds and imagination of different cultures since the dawn of time. This chapter will focus on this heritage of the hot springs, focusing firstly on investigating the reason for the popularity of the hot springs in the use of so many cultures. The Greek and Roman bathing habits will be discussed, explaining the way the public baths came into being, as well as the medical uses both these cultures attributed to the mineral thermal waters. The second half of the chapter will explore how this belief in the thermal mineral waters as a social and medical agent, was passed on to the European countries, specifically Britain, France and Germany. The way the water cure developed in these countries will be traced, in order to see how they on their part, would have influenced the hot water spring culture of the countries they colonised, for example South Africa, so that one can be made aware of the long history the spa and thermal water culture had enjoyed before it was brought to, and established in South Africa. This will also show how the dominant British spa or thermal water cure culture developed and was passed on to South Africa, and so helped to shape the spa and thermal water culture that was to later develop in the 1700s-1800s in South Africa.

The role of water in human culture

Sanitas Per Aquam is a Latin phrase that translates as “healing through water.”¹ Already from the ancient times water has been to many cultures a symbol of spiritual purity as well as a way to cleanse the body.² The role of water in culture can be seen in two ways, as either spiritual or as physical. The spiritual side of water becomes visible in the fascination people

¹ *The South African Spa Association Spa Index 2010*, p. 25.

² *The South African Spa Association Spa Index 2010*, p. 23.

had with natural hot springs, where these springs were seen as gifts from the gods. Many religions like for example Christianity, use the element of water as a symbol of purification and almost all religions compare water with the giving of energy. Water therefore has many different qualities attributed to it by different cultures and as the years passed water became the “basis for secular social activities” that include the *thermae* in Ancient Roman times and more recently the modern phenomena of the health and wellness spa culture. Before one can look at the emergence of the hot water spring fascination that had its roots in the ancient times, one has to look at why the element of water was deemed so important in cultures. The belief in the healing powers of water, especially hot mineral water, has its roots in the earlier cultural beliefs.³

There has been this ingrained belief in the human mind of water as a source and symbol of life, and that by using water in various ways, it can give one a longer and healthier life as well as help one with the emotional and physical wellbeing of the body and mind. Spiritualism and water are also very closely connected and the cleansing power of the water is a popular theme. It is therefore not strange that many civilizations believed that water was “divine, live-giving, cleansing and renewing.”⁴ In history water has been linked to certain religious rituals, the myths and legends surrounding gods and even miracles. One thing that one notices when looking at the characteristics given to water, is that the healing power of water seems to be at the centre of it all. Many ancient civilizations believed in these healing properties that the water possessed, and often warm water springs were seen as the most effective in healing the body, witnessed in the Native Americans’ belief that the Earth healed people through the thermal waters it produced.⁵

The development of the belief in the curative and rejuvenating power of not just water, but thermal water, is the main focus of this chapter. Without the knowledge of why people believed in the power of the waters, one will not be able to fully appreciate the extent of the popularity the water cure enjoys. There exist many different myths concerning water and springs, and each civilization has their own. Since ancient times water and divinity has been very closely linked, and even today that belief still lingers. Hot and cold water springs were linked to godly beings, and since the effect of water bubbling from the earth must have been

³ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 110, 111, 114.

⁴ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 112.

⁵ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 111.

an awe-inspiring sight to behold, one can imagine why that the ancient peoples would connect this natural wonder to the power of their gods. The belief in hot springs containing healing powers can be seen in many myths and has therefore contributed to the using of hot springs for curing the ailing.⁶

Although the focus of this thesis is primarily on the belief in the healing powers of hot water springs and spas, it cannot be ignored that other bodies of water also had their own myths regarding magical or healing powers. Many times patron saints would be connected to springs with curative powers and water worship was actually very common in Europe. This could be seen in the many “sacred springs and holy wells”⁷ found across Europe and these places were said to contain a spiritual guardian that provided people who visited them with blessings and cures. People would bathe and drink of these magical waters, hoping to be cured from one of the many diseases that existed. One can assume that during the Middle Ages the belief in the healing waters were still strong since churches and convents were built near natural springs, which would make the idea or myth of a patron saint residing in the waters more plausible.⁸

Thermal springs and religious activities have been associated with one another for a very long time and because of this association the significance given to thermal springs include the idea of it being a place where one will could be rejuvenated and experience purification. This spiritual connection that was attached to springs originated in ancient times and the belief was that these springs were gifts from the gods, and in order to give thanks to the gods, temples and statues were erected. The gods that were honoured at these springs were usually gods who were connected with health as Asclepius for example. The reason for this is because of the belief of the health giving properties these springs had, and the ancient people connected the gods to these springs. In Greece there were for example spas which were situated close to medical thermal springs where gods like *Asclepieae* and *Heracles* were worshiped. By placing these two sites together the patients visiting these places would receive a purification rite together with the healing effects of the waters.⁹

⁶ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 110-112.

⁷ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p.114.

⁸ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 112, 114.

⁹ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 115.

It is clear from the short previous description about the importance of water in religion and mythology that water's role in a culture is much more than just a way of cleaning or hydrating one self. If one thinks of how unique and mystic thermal mineral waters are, the fact that it is water that flows from the earth, at temperatures much higher than normal river or lake water, it is not difficult to imagine why early civilizations would have given these waters 'special abilities' and connected them with divinity. In a world where science was not as evolved as in present day, explaining hot water bubbling up from underneath the ground could easily have been associated with higher beings, and this can explain why the Greeks and especially the Romans for example connected the thermal springs with a variety of health-giving gods and goddesses.¹⁰

The Ancient Greek Bathing Culture: baths and healing waters

When one thinks of the thermal bath culture, the two main ancient civilizations that come to mind are Greece and Rome. One can even compare the Greek Gymnasium to the Roman Baths, because like with Rome where their baths were associated with their culture and power because of all the ruins of public baths found at Roman cities and towns¹¹, the Greek Gymnasium can be seen as the 'calling card' of Greece because it would be one of the first buildings erected when Greek colonies were established. The Greek culture did in fact play a role in the development of the Roman bath culture through their Greek Gymnasium¹² as well as through the *balaneion*.¹³ The Greek gymnasium can be seen as the predecessor of the Greek and Roman baths¹⁴, and it had a direct influence on the Roman *Thermae*.¹⁵ The Gymnasium, instead of just being used for athletic training, was turned into a place where by bathing, one could socialize with other members of the community.¹⁶ It must be stressed that the bathing in the gymnasium was in cold water, and that the hot water baths were rather known as *balaneia*.¹⁷ The Gymnasium was a popular sight in ancient Greece cities, and it was so influential that it stayed popular even in the time when the Romans ruled.¹⁸ The Greek

¹⁰ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 129.

¹¹ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 1.

¹² F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 7.

¹³ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 9.

¹⁴ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 7.

¹⁵ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 9.

¹⁶ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 7.

¹⁷ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 12.

¹⁸ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 7.

Gymnasium also spread to Italy because of the Greek colonies that were established there.¹⁹ The Gymnasium had facilities for bathing for the use of athletes and visitors to the gymnasium.²⁰ In the Hellenistic period the gymnasium's purpose was transformed in a way, when an intellectual role was added in the form of school teachings and it could even functioned as a university. With this new element attached to the gymnasium, it acquired a "social and cultural function."²¹

In the fifth century BC and beyond, the emergence of public baths, also known as *balaneia*, could be seen. It is important to know that before the establishment of the baths, the Greeks had to use the cold baths of the Gymnasium.²² The *balaneion* served a different function to the gymnasium and serviced as both a secular place in the urban areas as well as a religious place at sanctuaries.²³ The *balaneion* influenced both the Roman *balnea* and *thermae*.²⁴ These public baths became very popular in the Hellenistic times because of its acceptance and its function as a service that was provided to the community. Gone were the days of cold baths at the gymnasium, because the main method of bathing at the *balaneion* was in hot water in individual bath-tubs. Their manner of bathing required the bather to sit in the baths while an attendant poured hot water over them, in reality almost forming a sort of a shower.²⁵

Although most baths are associated with natural hot water springs, it was not always possible to have a hot spring near the town and therefore some baths had to be artificially heated for the use of the people living in the cities or towns. The artificial heating was done by a charcoal brazier and the steam generated by the hot water, as well as the heat from the brazier would have been sufficient to heat the small confined spaces designed for bathing. In the post-Alexandrian world there was the emergence of individualism in the Greek culture and the public baths as well as the baths at gymnasiums provided for this new "love of personal comfort and pleasure"²⁶ that was enjoyed by the urban bourgeoisie.²⁷ In the fourth and third centuries B.C. the Greek bourgeoisie strove towards living like kings, and since bathing in

¹⁹ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 9.

²⁰ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 24.

²¹ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 10.

²² I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 6.

²³ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 24.

²⁴ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 9.

²⁵ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, pp. 6, 7.

²⁶ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 24.

²⁷ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 24.

hot water was reserved for kings, this lifestyle fashion was passed on to the Romans when they conquered Greece.²⁸

In the mythology of Greece the thermal or hot spring is said to have played a very big part and there were many gods who were connected to the thermal springs for various reason. The god Apollo, who apart from other powers, were also said to have possessed the power of curing, and he made use of the thermal springs for this exact purpose, and was therefore also known as *Thermios Apollo*.²⁹ It seems that the goddess Artemis was also seen as connected to hot water springs, since many of her cults were situated near hot springs, as well as the cults of Apollo.³⁰ There were many Greek writers, including *Homer* and the well-known *Hippocrates of Kos* who emphasized the necessity of both bathing in the water, but importantly, also the drinking of the water when using the thermal waters for one's health. *Hippocrates of Kos* was also known for treating his patients with balneology in the fifth century BC and mentioned thermal waters in a book he wrote about medicine, referring to the curative power these waters had. This is evidence to show how much the Greeks believed in the healing properties of their thermal water, they put their trust into it and actively practiced the art of water healing as a method of healing the sick. Once again religion and the thermal waters were linked, as can be seen in the connecting of the god Apollo to the thermal waters. By worshiping him, one would receive health and or healing.³¹

But the thermal waters did not just serve the ancient Greeks with a place to combine religion and healing, it also made them famous for these healing springs, which in turn generated ancient tourism and attracted tourists to these sites. The city of *Thermea* is one such an example³², with the goddess *Artemis Thermia* as its local goddess.³³ This city, which was well known in the ancient world for its mineral hot springs, became the first known health resort in history, functioning as “a therapeutic and [a] tourist town.”³⁴ There is an important connection here, it shows that not only has thermal and mineral waters been linked to health and religion since the time of ancient civilization but it has also become the element that

²⁸ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 7.

²⁹ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 63.

³⁰ J.H. Croon: “Artemis Thermia and Apollo Thermios (With an Excursus on the Oetean Heracles-Cult),” *Mnemosyne*, (Vol.9), (3), 1956, p. 193.

³¹ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 63.

³² P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 64.

³³ J.H. Croon: “Artemis Thermia and Apollo Thermios (With an Excursus on the Oetean Heracles-Cult),” *Mnemosyne*, (Vol.9), (3), 1956, pp. 196-197.

³⁴ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 64.

provided the establishments of health resorts that lead to tourism, a legacy that one can still see in the present day wellness and spa tourism industry. Further evidence to this fact is that the present day city now situated at the *Thermea* site is known as the “metropolitan centre of thermalism and health tourism in Greece.”³⁵

From the Greek Gymnasium and Baths (*Balaneion*-Nielsen) to the healing hot spring sanctuaries of the gods, it is clear to see why hot water springs were so important in the Greek culture and myths. It is therefore not surprising that these cultural elements influenced the Romans who conquered the Greeks. The Gymnasium, accompanied by baths for bathing, directly influenced the way Roman baths and bathing developed, and contributed to the physical exercise regime that became part of the Roman bath schedule.³⁶ The ancient Greeks paved the way for the continuance in the belief of the healing thermal springs and baths, which lived on through the Roman culture.

The next part of the chapter will deal with the culture best known for its use of not only thermal springs for health, but also communal bathing for socializing, the bathing culture of Rome. As there was mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Roman bath culture that consisted out of the *balnea* and *thermae*, was influenced by the Greek bathing habits of the gymnasium and the *balaneion*.³⁷ But the use of thermal mineral waters was a custom that the Etruscans were said to have developed and they used “hydrothermal” products as well as the use of thermal bathing long before the Romans came into contact with them.³⁸ The Romans incorporated these practises in their own culture, and Greek influence can also be seen in the Roman use of thermal springs.³⁹ The Romans took these practises and since the second century BC, they began developing what is known as thermalism, which were directly connected to thermal mineral springs.⁴⁰

The Ancient Roman Bathing Culture: baths and customs of the spa

It is important to understand that the Roman baths usually used artificially heated waters in their baths, but that they preferred to make use of thermal springs where possible. This can be

³⁵ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 64.

³⁶ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 7.

³⁷ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 82.

³⁸ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 60.

³⁹ F.Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 60.

attested to the fact that they planned the erection of their settlements as near to thermal springs as they possibly could, since this natural source was one of great value. The knowledge the Romans had concerning the use of thermal mineral springs was collected by them from the different cultures they encountered and in the first to the third centuries AD, the use of thermal springs was at its peak.⁴¹ The baths that were found at the thermal mineral springs had a prime medical use, and they were also used as social resorts, and can therefore be seen as the ancestors of the present day hot water spring or spa resorts.⁴²

As was explained, the thermal mineral spring water baths were primarily used in the practice of healing.⁴³ The public Roman baths on the other hand, was seen as more of “a social pleasure experienced with others.”⁴⁴ The Roman bath culture had two types of buildings or institutions connected to it, called the Roman *balnea* and *thermae*.⁴⁵ These baths could either have been filled with artificially heated water, or with natural hot springs water. The classification of the water depended on the location as well as the purpose of the institution. In the Roman world the difference between the *balneae* and the *thermae* was said to have depended upon their size as well as their owners. The *balneae*, the smaller of the two establishments, was usually privately owned and not in the most prime spots in the city.⁴⁶ The function of these baths was hygienic. The *thermae* on the other hand was known for its social purpose and were usually owned by the state and they were very large establishments in comparison with the *balneae*, almost park-like.⁴⁷ The Roman *thermae*, had a small sports ground as well as a block where the visitors could bathe in hot water baths. These two elements can be seen as a fusion of the Greek gymnasium with the hot baths of the *balaneion*, something that was unique to the Roman bathing culture.⁴⁸

In the Roman world, bathing was associated with a social event where one would go and meet other bathers, making the act of cleaning oneself more a social call than anything else. The baths were usually designed so that more than one person could fit into them, and some written sources has highlighted the fact that the baths were sometimes used to welcome

⁴¹ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 60,61.

⁴² I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 5.

⁴³ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 5.

⁴⁴ R. Laurence: *Roman Passions: A History of Pleasure in Imperial Rome*, p.64.

⁴⁵ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 14.

⁴⁶ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 43.

⁴⁷ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 114. &

F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 43.

⁴⁸ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 6.

visitors and guests in private or in public baths.⁴⁹ In the book *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs* by P. Erfurt-Cooper and M. Cooper, there is a delightful quote, which illustrates the social nature of the Roman public baths:

“A visit to the bath would traditionally last several hours and include exercise, bathing and socialising. Roman baths were very social places and.....Bathers moved from room to room at a leisure pace, enjoying the company of fellow Romans and all the amenities the baths offered.”⁵⁰

Interestingly enough, bathing was not exclusively a social action, even though it primarily was seen as a way of enjoying oneself. It was also used as a way of cleaning oneself and was associated with hygiene, since there were no baths in the homes of the Roman citizens. Therefore, one can see why even without the social factor, the baths would have been important in the Roman world. The social function of the baths seems to have been to promote unity in the community and allowed people of different social orders to rub shoulders much more closely than they normally would in other establishments or events in the Roman world. With this communal mixing it was a prime opportunity for the wealthy Romans in the community to display their wealth as well as their status, since it was very important in the Roman world for a rich person to show his fellow Romans just how rich he really was, and with the baths' all inclusive clientele, it was the perfect place to exhibit this wealth. The public Roman baths were seen as a necessity with a dual purpose. It became the place to be seen and to socialise with members of the elite, even if there was no direct contact, and in the process of socializing, one could clean oneself.⁵¹

The use and importance of the thermal mineral bathing culture must be explored, by looking closely at the theme of the healing powers that were associated with the use of thermal waters. It is important to understand where this belief in the healing waters came from in order to understand why the fact that the belief in this thermal medicine that is still present today, is so profound. This belief has survived in various forms, and therefore it is important to explore its origin. A question one could ask is where the Romans got the idea to heat the water, instead of just using cold water as seen in the Greek gymnasium. The answer seem to

⁴⁹ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 1.

⁵⁰ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 63.

⁵¹ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, pp. 78, 118, 221, 218.

be that the Roman public bath culture developed out of the use of thermal mineral spring waters, more associated with health than with cleaning. The thermal mineral springs that were used, like at the resort of *Baiae*, seems to have triggered the love for bathing in hot water under the Romans, and this was the reason for the use of artificial heating systems in the Roman baths in order to duplicate the feel of the thermal waters. Resorts like *Baiae* used the natural springs they had to their advantage and these establishments became known as “cure centres”, where the thermal spring water was used in the healing of illness. These institutions were also said to have been the inspiration for the technology used in the artificial heating systems found at the Roman baths.⁵²

Looking at *Baiae* as an example of a cure based thermal mineral resort, it is important to note that *Baiae* was seen as the most “extensive and important centre of thermo-mineral bathing in antiquity” in the region of Campania.⁵³ This area had a substantial amount of volcanic activity, which resulted in the presence of many thermal springs which were used to feed the thermal baths. From about the first century BC, *Baiae* became popular under the wealthy upper class of the Romans as a “spa and a holiday resort.” Here the hot water from the springs were used to fill the big baths that were built for the use of the visitors and these baths were also recommended by the medical profession to be used in healing.⁵⁴

The popularity and significance of thermal mineral spring baths in antiquity can be seen in two sources, the one is in the extensive literary sources, while the other is in the ruins of the great thermal institutions near natural thermal springs. Signs that the popularity of these springs has not faded, can be seen in the present day spas that use the same natural hot spring sources in their own establishments, continuing the ancient tradition of “curative bathing.”⁵⁵ It is said that the baths could cure a person’s “pain and worry”, and therefore it had a dual curative power, which cured the physical pain as well as any psychological problems like stress and emotional pains. The reason for the popularity of the thermal establishments was the strong curative powers their waters possessed, together with the mineral content, radioactivity and electricity.⁵⁶ These were the prerequisites that were used through all the

⁵² F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 50.

⁵³ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 93.

⁵⁴ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 21.

⁵⁵ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 92.

⁵⁶ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, pp. 50, 92.

ages and even in present day springs, to determine the value of the thermal mineral spring and therefore also its popularity.

The popularity these thermal springs had as places of healing is a good indication of how important their role in ancient medicine would have been. It is said that the baths were seen as a therapeutic measure and that ancient doctors gave it the authority to be used as a cure. This becomes apparent when one looks at the detailed bathing inspired health regimes that were developed to cure many different ailments and diseases. These regimes were worked out by both Greek and Roman doctors, giving the thermal water cure centres the authority it needed to be seen as an important facet of ancient Roman life.⁵⁷

There were many brilliant medical men in the ancient Greek and Roman time, who's work are still admired in the present day. *Pliny the Elder* is one such a figure who wrote about using baths for medical purposes.⁵⁸ In his book *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder examined mineral waters' medical qualities which included both cold and hot mineral water. Pliny the Elder wrote that he believed that thermo-mineral waters possessed curative powers that could help with "muscular pains, rheumatism, and arthritis," and as will be discussed in later chapters, this belief in the water's healing abilities was carried on through generations, so much so that there are still people in the present day that believe that thermal mineral waters heal these ailments.⁵⁹ The fact that medical writers like *Pliny the Elder* wrote about the use of thermal spring water as a cure for ailments, gave the water cure the authority to be seen as 'real' medicine and makes the connection that the baths were associated with health in the ancient times.⁶⁰

The Greek physician *Asclepiades* of Bithynia was famous and well known under the doctors practising in Rome.⁶¹ *Asclepiades* was a devoted believer in the baths as methods of "remedial" and "preventative measures against illness."⁶² It is also very likely that *Asclepiades* was the one man that made the belief in the healing waters and the baths popular under the ancient Romans. One of the reasons that *Asclepiades* could be seen as an important

⁵⁷ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 86.

⁵⁹ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 86.

⁶¹ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 22. & G.G.

Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, pp. 95, 97.

⁶² G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 97.

figure in the establishment of the baths as popular curative remedies, is the fact that he reached both the rich and the poor with his message. In the ancient times, medicine was divided into “high” and “low” medicine. The high medicine, used by the wealthy, was seen as to have had a “rational, theoretical approach” in the healing method, while the low medicine, used more by the poor, was more connected with “folk medicine” which consisted more out of a “practical, cure-based approach” that was used in the healing method. What is interesting is that the way *Asclepiades*’s cure methods worked, since in reality it seemed to incorporate both the theoretical as well as the cure-based elements into his medicine. This made it possible for the belief and use of the bath cure to infiltrate all sectors of society, giving it a much wider audience and users. The fact that non-medical writers also prompted the use of medical bathing was a sign that the belief in the medical baths and thermal waters had found its way into the general knowledge of the people which could have ensured the passing down of this belief to future generations.⁶³

The fact that the baths played such a big role in the lives of the Roman citizens, must have meant that it influenced other spheres of their lives too. In a world where religion played a big role, it became clear that the Roman baths were seen as secular, as being of the mortal world, with no connection to that of the gods. Baths represented luxury and enjoyment, they were filled with noise and chatter and their main aim was to provide a “secular and sensual experience” for the bather. So there was clearly no religious aspect to the public Roman baths. Even when gods by the likes of *Aesculapius* and *Hygieia* was permitted to the profane world, their use at the baths was because of their traditional association with health and hygiene. But when one looks at the thermo-mineral baths, a whole different picture emerges. The way in which the thermal spring phenomenon with its magical waters was explained by ancient civilizations, was to attribute it to the powers of a divine being. The belief was that the thermal springs and centres that were built around these springs were protected by nymphs or nature gods. The ancients believed that in order to receive healing through these magical waters, one first had to honour the specific deity, usually the god of healing, *Aesculapius*. Even at “thermo-mineral establishments the springs” that fed these establishments were seen as “sanctuaries for the nymphs.”⁶⁴ From this evidence, one can derive that the Roman public baths like the *balnea* and *thermea* were secular places, where people went predominantly to socialize and wash themselves, and that the thermo-mineral

⁶³ G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, pp. 100, 87, 102.

⁶⁴ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, pp. 124-125.

springs had a much closer connection to the profane world, since the medical properties of the water was an gift from the gods, given to those who seek it by honouring the gods. This is the main difference between the two establishments, although both had its place in the ancient Roman world.

With the demise of the Roman Empire in c.500 AD, the Roman baths in Northern and Western Europe were severely hit and fell into disrepair.⁶⁵ The popularity of the baths faded as well as the socialization at the baths, and this can be contributed to the amount of plunder by the Vandals. Another reason why the baths fell out of favour was because of the poor condition the roads were in and as well as the scarcity of Inns and the danger of highway robbers who attacked people who travelled on the roads, especially in the Middle Ages. As a result many medical thermal springs in Western Europe only had people living close by visiting them, which caused the downfall of many well-known thermal spring baths.⁶⁶

Another reason for the demise of the bathing culture as it was used in the Roman public baths was because of the Christian church. Church fathers tried to suppress bathing as a Christian activity and because of the Church's attitude towards bathing, the effects on the bathing culture that existed after the fall of Rome were severe, and was no longer the same as the secular baths of the Roman world.⁶⁷ When the Church was asked if it was seen as a sin to bathe if prescribed so by a doctor, the Church response was very telling of what the remaining bath culture would look like in the Christian world: "Bathing is not absolutely forbidden to one who needs it – if you are ill, you need it, so it is not a sin." But then the clincher for the public bath culture came: "If a man is healthy, it cossets and relaxes the body and conduces to lust."⁶⁸ This meant that a person was no longer permitted to bathe only for pleasure, as one did at the Roman baths, and so the socializing and pleasure seeking bath culture ended for the time being.

There were, however, some thermo-mineral spring sites which was still used throughout the Middle Ages, and places like *Baiiae* was even used up to the seventeenth century. The reason for the continued use of thermal mineral springs was because medieval medicine was still dependent on ancient cures such as hydrotherapy, which were used for "preventative and

⁶⁵ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 66.

⁶⁶ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁷ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, p. 146.

⁶⁸ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, pp. 316-317.

curative medicine.” But even the thermal springs could not escape the watchful eyes of the Church. They made sure that it was clear that bathing may only be used as a medical reason, to heal oneself. The moment any pleasure was derived from the bathing, it would become a sin. This meant that places like *Baiae* could still exist, but only within those specifications. Bathing was therefore accepted by the Church if there was no way that the element of pleasure could be obtained, and bathing in thermal mineral water was “reduced to a functional, hygienic and medical activity.”⁶⁹ After this prescriptive way of regulating the baths, the use of thermal springs fell into decline for almost a thousand years, and this can be seen as a direct result of the Christian Church’s behaviour towards the so-called “centres of loose morals and breeding grounds of venereal diseases.”⁷⁰

It was not only the Christian Church that came into contact with the bathing culture of the Romans. There were also Turkish-Islamic communities who came into contact with these practises at small public baths in Byzantine cities between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries when the Turks moved through Asia Minor conquering the people. The Turks also came into contact with the Arabic Islam baths in Syria and Egypt.⁷¹ The Islamic baths or *hammam* can be seen as the nearest form of the ancient Roman bath practises and it is said to be the closest relative of the Roman *balneum*. The Islamic civilization, as oppose to the Christians, continued using the ancient bathing methods, and in turn preserved this bathing culture for their future generations.⁷² Since the Turks modelled much of its own urban society on that what was experienced in the Arabic culture, it is not strange that the baths were assimilated into their culture.⁷³ So because of the Turkish connection with the Arabs through the Ottomans, where they came into contact with the bathing culture the Arabs derived from the Roman bathing culture, the Roman bathing tradition was returned to Western Europe in the Middle ages. After Constantinople was conquered by the Ottomans, they moved west, taking with them this bathing culture, and in effect spread it across Europe, where presently Turkish baths can still be found in most European cities.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 317.

⁷⁰ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 66.

⁷¹ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 350.

⁷² G.G. Fagan: *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, p. 3.

⁷³ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 350.

⁷⁴ I. Nielsen: *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture of Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, pp. 118, 152.

The taking of the waters: the history of hot mineral water in Britain, France and Germany.

The spas of Britain

Throughout history it seems, the water cure never really went out of fashion, it rather just fell out of favour for some time, only to be brought back again and again. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the water cure did continue, but more as a religious fashion coupled with healing.⁷⁵ The water cure and the baths slowly but surely recovered and was again gaining support at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In this period many of the old European mineral springs, presumably many ancient Roman baths places, were rebuilt, turning them into so called resorts for healing, but also for socializing. Many well-known European baths had Roman predecessors, for example the French baths of Vichy and Aix-les-Bains, the German bath of Baden-Baden and of course Bath in England.⁷⁶

These resorts became popular and since regulations determined the length of time bathing was allowed, the 'patients' had time on their hands. Additional activities were therefore made available to the health seekers such as dancing in the ballroom, watching shows in the theatre, reading or gambling. Sooner rather than later, the focus of these resorts shifted from "health to pleasure", creating the link there was between health and leisure. It is said that because of this way of " 'taking the waters' by the elite of the seventeenth century, the foundations of the concept of the later and more modern pleasure resorts"⁷⁷ were in fact established.

In order for one to understand how the spa culture developed, it will be best to look at the European bathing culture of Britain, France and Germany. One of the aims of this thesis is to see if the hot water spring culture that developed in South Africa, was brought here by the people who colonised it, and in effect turned it into an early form of wellness tourism.⁷⁸ According to Bun Booyens, the belief in the warm water cure had been imprinted on the cultures of Europeans many centuries ago, and therefore the South African bath culture and

⁷⁵ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 317.

⁷⁶ M.S. Boekstein: *The role of health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape*, p.7.

⁷⁷ M.S. Boekstein: *The role of health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape*, p.7.

⁷⁸ C. Graham Botha: *Social Life in the Cape Colony: In the 18th Century*, p.105.

its uses that developed, could be traced back to early European and especially earlier English bathing cultures and cross fertilisation of cultures could have taken place.⁷⁹

The rebirth of the spa or hot spring cure culture in Britain seems to be difficult to determine, with many contradictory sources. It seems that with the Renaissance in Europe in the sixteenth century, there was a new rise in the use of water as a therapy for illness. Queen Elizabeth I took to public bathing in 1571 in order to make this practise popular under the people of Britain and to encourage them to use the bathing facilities in Britain, instead of leaving for the town of Spa in Belgium.⁸⁰ The importance of Bath and its curative waters as a national asset was made apparent in 1597 when an Act passed by the Parliament insured that the waters was free to use by “the diseased and impotent poor of England.”⁸¹ Spa, which became very popular in the fifteenth century, was known as one of the best places to take the waters in Europe, and it became extremely popular in England. It is therefore to no surprise that the British authorities tried to bring back the English population to their own ‘watering places.’⁸²

A number of reasons accounts to why the European baths rose to prominence again at the beginning of the sixteenth century. One was the belief that the healing waters could cure almost any illness and secondly, the many kings, queens as well as important people that visited the baths, imparted prestige. Because of this support by the royal and the rich, it stimulated the rise in middle and working class people who came to the baths. The fact that the economy was doing well also gave the affluent people a chance to relax at the various bathing resorts.⁸³

In the mid-seventeenth century the minerals and chemicals that the spa waters possessed were discovered, which had a big impact on the way the waters were being used. These minerals provided the health giving properties the waters were so well known for. Lists of the minerals found in the waters were compiled and as will be seen later in the chapter. These lists continued to be popular in the method used to see what diseases the waters would be able to

⁷⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.3.

⁸⁰ M. Smith & L. Puczkó: *Health and Wellness tourism*, p. 23

⁸¹ M. Bowman: “Belief, Legend and Perceptions of the Sacred in Contemporary Bath,” *Folklore*, (Vol.109), 1998, p.26.

⁸² “Spa”, *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1.), (No. 2729), April 1913, p. 846.

⁸³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.3.

cure. Hydrotherapy or the use of water as a treatment could be seen as being the “cornerstone” of the European spa, where the focus lied with health and physical . These spas were seen as places where one could be cured by “taking the waters.”⁸⁴

There were well known spas like Bath and Harrogate in Britain. But it is the fact there were so many more, smaller spas, that shows one how important the water cure really was in Britain. In James Stevens Curl’s article, *Spas and Pleasure Gardens of London, from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries*, he mentions a group of spas, eight in total, which could be found in the northern part of Clerkenwell. Most of these springs survived for quite a while, but the reason they are mentioned, is the fact that they existed. The belief in the healing of the waters were so strong, that where ever one was found, it was used as either a place for socializing or curing. One such a spa was Hampstead, apparently a very important spa in London. The waters of the spring that was found there was said to be medicinal, and in the beginning of the eighteen century, these waters were sold in flasks. This practise of selling mineral spring water would become very popular in Europe. These waters found at Hampstead was said to be highly regarded by the medical profession, in such a way that it was seen as being the best chalybeate waters in England. Hampstead wells, also known as “the inexhaustible Fountain of Health,” were celebrated by eighteen century physicians and once again the medical belief in the waters is apparent.⁸⁵

Kilburn wells’s waters were said to have been “exploited for medicinal purposes until the second decade of the nineteenth century.”⁸⁶ But the spas did not only bring cures to people of London, it also brought fame and nobility. Islington spa came into being in 1683 as Islington wells, and in 1733 Princesses Amelia and Caroline visited the spa on a daily bases. This of course resulted in the flocking of noble people to the spa, attesting to the fact that if royalty visited a spa, the nobility was soon to follow. Because of the new cliental Islington wells fame rose significantly. In 1754 Spa was added to Islington’s name, and between 1750 and 1770 there were lodgings available for visitors who wished to take the waters. *Islington Spa* became so well-known under especially royalty, that it was starting to become competition for the other famous spas of Bath and Tunbridge Wells. But people did not just visit the spa

⁸⁴ M. Smith & L. Puczko: *Health and Wellness tourism*, pp. 23, 24, 25.

⁸⁵ J. S. Curl: “Spas and Pleasure Gardens of London, from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries,” *Garden History*, (Vol.7), (No.2), 1979, pp. 27, 37, 42.

⁸⁶ J. S. Curl: “Spas and Pleasure Gardens of London, from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries,” *Garden History*, (Vol.7), (No.2), 1979, p. 43.

for socializing, patients with gout took to the healing waters, and those suffering from rheumatism would drink as much of the curative water as they could. Islington Spa was famous from 1683 until after 1811 and all who needed a cure came for its waters. Unfortunately the spring dried up in 1860, but the life of Islington Spa is a good indicator of how powerful the belief in the water cure was.⁸⁷

The belief in the healing powers of the waters took some interesting turns, as the London Spaw can attest. This spa was found by a publican who was said to have owned a tavern called the 'Fountain' tavern. After discovering the spring in his garden, he thought of a very interesting way of utilizing the spring, by brewing the beer with the spring water, in turn creating a medicinal beer. Both the beer and the water were sold as having curing properties. In 1685 the spring was made public "in the presence of an eminent, knowing, and more than ordinary ingenious apothecary, and other sufficient men" and the name was changed to *London Spaw*, presumably in order to attract customers.⁸⁸ After looking at these spas, it becomes clear that the belief in the taking of the waters was very popular under the people of Britain. It would then not be strange to assume that these beliefs became ingrained in the culture of most of the population, and that it could indeed have been passed on to the countries these British people colonised.

Britain was known for many renowned watering resorts like Bath, Buxton, Cheltenham, Droitwich, Leamington, Woodhall and Harrogate. It is said that Buxton and Harrogate was frequented by the upper middle class from the north.⁸⁹ Therefore *Bath* is a very good example to use when looking at the water cure on a larger scale as well as an example of a "long tradition of use of natural hot springs...as an attraction for religion, healing and pilgrimage."⁹⁰ It also became the favourite playground for the British royalty and nobility during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, continuing the idea of patronage given to the springs by the sovereigns previously mentioned. It shows that the spas had a major social side, intertwined with the taking of the waters.⁹¹ The English was very fond of their water cure, and not just because of the healing water, but because of the socialization that in later years became part

⁸⁷ J. S. Curl: "Spas and Pleasure Gardens of London, from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries," *Garden History*, (Vol.7), (No.2), 1979, p. 49.

⁸⁸ J. S. Curl: "Spas and Pleasure Gardens of London, from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries," *Garden History*, (Vol.7), (No.2), 1979, pp. 55, 60.

⁸⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 8.

⁹⁰ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 71.

⁹¹ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 117.

of taking the waters. Bath is a good example of just how this socialization was later coupled with the healing springs.⁹² Bath, being a town that was founded on the principle of the springs, correlates with South African towns that were established on the same basis. The Bath springs were discovered and re-developed by more than one civilization and was one of the most popular healing facilities in the Roman times.⁹³

Like many hot water springs and wells, Bath has a mythical history. It is said that a prince Bladud, who was suffering from leprosy, found the medicinal springs in the seventh century BC.⁹⁴ The prince worked as a swine herder, and saw that some of his animals were sick. He took them to a field, where the spring of Bath was situated, and the swine rolled in the mud formed by the spring's water. To the prince's amazement the swine were healed after they came into contact with the mud. The prince decided to try doing the same, and according to legend was miraculously cured. This is said to be the basis of the belief of how Bath originated.⁹⁵

The Romans are usually credited with the establishment of Bath, or as they called it, *Aquae Sulis*, as a famous bathing place, marked by huge structures, which in later years became part of the historical feeling that Bath gave its visitors.⁹⁶ These springs were said to have been used to treat wounded soldiers returning from battle.⁹⁷ When the Roman Empire fell, Bath was deserted, although there was said to have been pilgrims visiting the waters for their curative properties between the sixth and eighth century.⁹⁸ It seems that after the healing thermal spring water of Bath was discovered, the culture of using its thermal water for healing experienced only short periods of decline.⁹⁹

But in the eighteenth century Bath experienced a revival, when it was restored to its former glory by Beau Nash¹⁰⁰ and was turned into a "health and wellness [centre for] spa

⁹² B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 9.

⁹³ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 117.

⁹⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 8.

⁹⁵ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 71. & B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 8.

⁹⁶ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 8.

⁹⁷ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 71.

⁹⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.8. & P.Erfurt-Cooper & M.Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 72.

⁹⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.8.

¹⁰⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.8.

tourism.”¹⁰¹ The focus of the baths and water shifted from being used as a religious activity, to a stronger focus on the health as well as the social factor at Bath. Bath became famous and people came to “take the waters”, being it bathing in it or drinking of it. Bath’s healing waters were so well known that there were treaties written, attesting to the curative ability the waters possessed, and these treaties reached a high point in especially the eighteenth century.¹⁰² The social factor, which can be seen in many of the readings on the history of Bath, became the focus in the nineteenth century. Before that, Bath was a Mecca for those suffering ills and diseases. People from all the different classes went there to be healed since Bath was first and foremost a health resort.¹⁰³

It is this attention to health through the using of the thermal waters that is one of the main foci of this thesis. Because of this belief in thermal water therapy that was so highly acclaimed in Britain in the eighteenth century, it became part of the wider British culture and eventually was transported to the Cape Colony in the nineteenth century. It in turn influenced the way the thermal water cure developed in South Africa, as Bun Booyens states in his book, *Bronwaters van genesing*. The British influence on the culture of the Cape Colony would become visible in the way the hot water springs in South Africa was used, the way it functioned and the way it developed. As will be seen in later chapters, South Africa’s hot springs were often compared with some of the British watering places, and in effect made them famous under both the people living in the Cape and visitors from abroad who believed in taking to the waters.¹⁰⁴

The medical methods used in Britain for the taking of the waters, would slowly but surely puncture the cultural membrane of South African’s own use of medical methods in the curing of patients through thermal water. Therefore studying the practices at Bath, can give one a glimpse of what the forerunner of the water cure in South Africa looked like. The waters of Bath were said to cure ills like injuries to limbs, chronic illness, rheumatism, gout, digestive problems and nerve problems.¹⁰⁵ The water in small amounts was “clear, colourless, and sparkling.” But when the water was viewed in bigger quantities it had a “pale green-sea tint”,

¹⁰¹ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 72.

¹⁰² M. Bowman: “Belief, Legend and Perceptions of the Sacred in Contemporary Bath,” *Folklore*, (Vol.109), 1998, p.26.

¹⁰³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.9.

¹⁰⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.9.

¹⁰⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.9. & R.W. Falconer: *Baths and Mineral waters of Bath*, p. 43.

and it was also free of any odour and had a slightly saline, inky taste.”¹⁰⁶ The water was said to work if, when drunk, there was a “glow of warmth in the stomach, an increased appetite [and] improvement of the spirits.”¹⁰⁷ As was mentioned previously the discovery of minerals in the waters became important in the medical use of the waters. Charts were drawn up to show what minerals each spring possessed, and then certain minerals were assigned to cure certain diseases.¹⁰⁸ This phenomenon was also seen in the literature in South Africa concerning the springs that were found there, as will be seen in later chapters.

Taking the waters at Bath followed a certain pattern. There was a “pump house” where the spring water was available for drinking. The drinking of the water was also seen as the highpoint of the therapy, because this was combined with socialisation with others. Music played while the drinking took place, which was done three times a day, with three glasses of water at a time. Another treatment that became popular was when patients would ask for the method of “bucketing”, where extremely hot water from the spring was poured onto the part of the body that was in pain. As technology improved, the buckets were replaced by hoses, and the treatment’s name was changed to “pumping”. Sweating was also something the patients did, believing that it helped with the water cure. To induce this sweating process, people would cover themselves with blankets directly after their bath, and would then sit in a room kept warm with a fire. After the therapy, that included bathing and drinking the waters, there was still time for the patients to take part in leisure activities. The other amusements that were available included, watching music concert, horse riding and twice a week there was dancing. There was also steam baths, masseuses and mud baths that could be enjoyed.¹⁰⁹

There were of course people who disagreed with the whole curing waters idea, and there were even those physicians who believed that the water cure had no legitimacy and that the drinking of these waters were done in vain. There were also patients who bathed too frequently in the hot water, diminishing their chances of recovery. It comes as no surprise that there were many people at the baths who tried to sell people bogus cures, adding to the disbelief in the healing power of the waters.¹¹⁰ So even in the eighteenth century the belief in the water cure was not always believed or proven, and that is why in the nineteenth and

¹⁰⁶ R.W. Falconer: *Baths and Mineral waters of Bath*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁷ R.W. Falconer: *Baths and Mineral waters of Bath*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁸ R. Hutchinson Powell: “ Remedial Effects of Mineral Waters, Homeland and Foreign,” *Association Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No.75), Jun 9 1854, p.505.

¹⁰⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, pp.10, 11.

¹¹⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.10.

twentieth century there was a need to prove the medical legitimacy of the waters, as will be seen later in the chapter where the French and their struggle to legitimise the water cure will be discussed.

As it was mentioned before, Bath became the recreational resort of the royals and nobles in the early nineteenth century. Richard (Beau) Nash was said to have gone to Bath in 1705, and transformed the resort of Bath into the world famous establishment that it became. The people who went to Bath used it as a place for healing, but also as a place for leisure, and these leisure activities later included vices, such as gambling and seduction. There were many important and famous visitors, who stayed at Bath for quite a while, including Charles Dickens, Lord Nelson and Jane Austin.¹¹¹ With a patronage like this, it is not difficult to imagine the popularity Bath would have enjoyed in its heyday.

According to Marion Bowman in her article *Belief, Legend and Perceptions of the Sacred in Contemporary Bath*, Bath saw a decline in bathing in the nineteenth century¹¹² and the reason for this according to Bun Booyens, is because the royal and aristocratic patrons of Bath decided to rather visit other European spas. It is also true that there was a difference in the reasons why people from Britain and the rest of Europe travelled to the spas. The British visited the spas in search of health, while people from France and Germany for example made an annual trip to the spas. This could be seen as the reason why so many of their spa establishments survived. Another reason for the declining of British spas can be attributed to the rise of Seaside Resorts. Claims were made that the seawater found at Scarborough contained healing properties because of a spring that was found near the coast. With the rise in royal and noble visitors to seaside resorts like Scarborough and Blackpool, the amount of new clientele they would bring with their patronage, made sure of the establishment of these seaside resorts. Since the end of the nineteenth century the working class could also afford to take a vacation, which previously could only be done by the upper classes. With the rise of this new found Mecca for health and recreation, the spas in Britain experienced a sharp decline. The new scientific way of looking at medicine, also had a negative effect on the use of thermal mineral waters as a cure, since it lacked medical legitimacy. In the pages that

¹¹¹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, pp.10, 12.

¹¹² M. Bowman: "Belief, Legend and Perceptions of the Sacred in Contemporary Bath," *Folklore*, (Vol.109), 1998, p.26.

follow, one will see how especially France tried to legitimise the water cure as a medical cure in its own right so that the spas could function and become popular again.¹¹³

With the decline in bathing at Bath as a form of healing in the nineteenth century, there was however a revival at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century in the use of hydrotherapy, where the new focus lied at the physical effects the water and bathing had, as well as the how using waters with different temperatures as a form of medicine. So the focus shifted away from the powers of the minerals in the water itself, and was rather on the use of this water in a certain way to achieve healing.¹¹⁴ But this did not mean that the spa's days were numbered, it only meant that the water cure was now given a new disguise, in was transformed into the scientific term hydrology. There seems to have been confusion about what terms should have been used, in describing the water cure. In the early twentieth century in June of 1911, a Dr. Fortescue Fox spoke at the Royal Society of Medicine, where he touched on the fact that a name had to be found for the scientific use of water in medicine. He emphasised the fact that the name chosen would have to

“be inclusive of all the medical uses of water, and, besides being truly distinct, should as far as possible conform to, or be capable of, international use.”¹¹⁵

Dr. Fox did mention some terms that was previously used to describe medical water treatments, which included balneology and hydrotherapy. In the end there was decided on the term medical hydrology, which in turn would refer to:

“the science of waters, vapours and mineral or organic deposits in connexion with waters as used in medicine, both by internal administration and in the form of baths and applications.”¹¹⁶

The water cure was now seen as a science, giving it legitimacy to be seen as more than just a old wives tale. Dr. Fox, also asked for medical hydrology to be taught to students in the

¹¹³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, pp. 12, 13.

¹¹⁴ M. Bowman: “Belief, Legend and Perceptions of the Sacred in Contemporary Bath,” *Folklore*, (Vol.109), 1998, p. 26.

¹¹⁵ “Medical Hydrology,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No. 2659), Dec 16 1911, p. 1613.

¹¹⁶ “Medical Hydrology,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No. 2659), Dec 16 1911, p. 1613.

British Isles, since this was already happening in foreign schools, as will be seen in the piece on France later in the chapter.¹¹⁷ This can be seen as evidence that the water cure was still alive and well, it had just been transformed into a new kind of science. In 1917 a paper written by Dr. Fox's spoke of the uses of British spas. He said that it was now clear what role they had to play as health resorts in Europe. He mentioned many of the previously well-known spas, including the thermal waters of Bath, which according to him were "the most remarkable of their kind in Northern Europe," and that Harrogate's sulphur waters had no rival in any other country. Clearly he was trying to show the importance these and other springs in Britain had in terms of being used as health resorts of medical hydrology. Like in 1911, he implored more doctors to study "the principles and practice" of medical hydrology, and once again asked for the establishment of a British school of hydrology, and that this school would widen its scope to include not only the British Islands, but also the British Empire. He mentioned that the coastline would be a wonderful place to recover after using the mineral waters, and in practise, this would mean the combining of the spas and the seaside resorts for medical purposes. By using these resources, they would be honouring their inheritance, showing that the spas like Bath were seen as national asset, and as part of the British history.¹¹⁸ Spas were slowly but surely gaining ground again and they were given a new purpose after falling in decline, by being used in the more scientific water cure known as medical hydrology.

It was apparent that there was a rebirth in the field of British spas. Although the British doctors was seen as being the ones to pioneer the medical uses of thermal water, the study of the science of hydrology was done in other parts of Europe, and this could be seen as one of the reasons why it went out of fashion. It now becomes clearer why Dr. Fox was so eager for British doctors to participate in the science part of medical hydrology. It was so that the famous British spas, known for its miraculous water, could be revived. According to an article written in 1919, it had become fashionable for upper class British people to visit foreign spas, but because of the First World War the visits to foreign spas by "British invalids" was not possible since restrictions were in place. This gave rise to the realisation that the neglect British spas suffered and that this issue had to be addressed.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ "Medical Hydrology," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No. 2659), Dec 16 1911, p. 1613.

¹¹⁸ "The Future of British Spas," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.2928), Feb 10, 1917, p. 201

¹¹⁹ "Harrogate Spa," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No. 3055), Jul 19, 1919, p.78.

Interestingly, the reason for this revived interest in the spas was because of the wounded war soldiers that needed physical remedies, remedies that British spas could provide to these soldiers. So the war was in part responsible for the revival of the British spas, it gave them a reason to be seen as a national asset again. Because of this new found need for the spas, the British Spa federation was established, linking the spas of Bath, Buxton, Cheltenham, Droitwich, Harrogate, Llandrindod Wells and Woodhall. This federation was started so that the British spas could be legitimised as British mineral water health resorts in the eyes of the British population and to ensure that the decline the spas suffered did not repeat itself. It also ensured that the spas were being organised well and that their equipment was in good order. So in effect, it was the war that hastened the revival of the British spas, in a new form, as keepers of the healing waters to be used in medical hydrology.¹²⁰

In 1924 at a meeting of the Section of Balneology and Climatology of the Royal Society of Medicine, a Dr. W. Edgecombe presented a list of the nine principle British spas containing information regarding different ailments that was said to be healed at each spa. Something that was evident was that most of the spas claimed to heal mostly the same ailments. This was a problem, since this could either mean that it was true and that all these springs were alike, creating the notion that there is no differentiation in the British spa treatments, or that the healing of the diseases at the spas had been exaggerated. There were suggestions in favour of specialization of spas, like the spas in France, which were said to function much better because of the specialisation of its waters and spas, making it easier for doctors to know where to send their patients for health reasons.¹²¹ By making each spa specific, each spa could become known for having a specific cure for a specific ailment, which would help to promote the spas under doctors as well as patients. Interestingly in some of the advertisements found in 1909 and 1912's *British Medical Journal*, was specifically aimed at practitioners to inform them of what kind of water was available at each spa, so that the practitioner could look at the index given, and pair the illness with the said water, that would cure it, and then the patient could be sent to the appropriate spa. It seems that although there was differentiation in British spas, it was not as clear as in France, and therefore needed to be revised and more specific.¹²²

¹²⁰ "Harrogate Spa," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No. 3055), Jul 19, 1919, p. 78.

¹²¹ "The Principles of Spa Treatment in Great Britain," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No.3336), Dec 6, 1924, p. 1065.

¹²² "Back Matter," *The British medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No. 2687), Jun 29, 1912, p.37. & "Front Matter," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.2530), Jun 26, 1909, p. 37.

In April 1928, Dr. R.G. Gordon wrote on the uses and abuses of hydrotherapy in *The British Medical Journal*. It was clear that there were still much criticism of medical water therapy as Dr. Gordon was quick to mention that the idea that hydrotherapy cured all diseases, should be quickly abolished.¹²³ He did, however, believe that there were some ailments that hydrotherapy cured, and that the doctors had to remember to make use of spas when their patients were in need of “a change of scene and occupation, elimination of poisons, or a redistribution of circulation.” He stresses the fact that although hydrotherapy did have its advantages, but that the belief that it miraculously cured any ailment had no foundation.¹²⁴ In November of 1928, a Dr. Kerr Pringle, the president of the Balneological Section of the Royal Society of Medicine, restated the importance of the faith in spa treatment in Great Britain. Once again the British spas were seen as a national asset to be used by its people, and there was a “call for State intervention” so that a levy on “kur tax” could be implemented by the local authorities. It was made clear, that although there still was a cloud of scepticism in the medical profession about the use of medical hydrology and the effects of spa treatments, the new way a spa doctor tried to explain and figure out how the waters healed, was in terms of chemistry, instead of just expecting that the water worked.¹²⁵

As this analysis of the development in the British water cure shows, the belief that taking to the waters, wax and waned in the same way the popularity of the spas did. When the belief in the water cure was high, the spas flourished. With the rise of seaside resorts, the fame of the spas faded a little, but was revived once again by being transformed into a medical science as well as playing a big role in the treatment of soldiers after the First World War. The spas was once again seen as a national asset, as something to be cared for, and with the revival of the spas as a health resort in Britain, tourism would have been stimulated as well. It is then clear that the use of water in healing in Britain was still alive, and that there were people who fought for the legitimisation of it as a medical field, even in the twentieth century.

¹²³ R.G. Gordon: “The uses and some abuses of Hydrotherapy,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.3511), Apr 21, 1928, p. 659.

¹²⁴ R.G. Gordon: “The uses and some abuses of Hydrotherapy,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.3511), Apr 21, 1928, p. 661.

¹²⁵ “The Value of Spa Treatment,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol. 2), (No. 3541), Nov 17, 1928, pp. 906-907.

The French struggle for the legitimacy of the taking of the waters

It was not only the British who fought for the legitimisation of medical hydrology. The French also possessed a group of well-known spa complexes, and in this part of the chapter, there will be looked at the struggle by the French to get the medical water cure legitimised as a medical profession. The French also had many African colonies, and they used these spas in their colonies to their advantage.

Vichy, like Bath in England, is the crown jewel of the French Spas. The spring of Vichy was also used by the Romans, just like Bath, and Vichy has been known for its curative waters since that time. The town of Vichy has been used as a spa and resort from as early as the seventeenth century. One could take the waters, while enjoying oneself at the same time. It was even called the ‘second Paris’ because of the stylish surroundings, and it even had the title of being the “queen of Spa towns.”¹²⁶ The water cure played as big a role in France as it did in Britain, if not bigger. The French was very proud of their spa establishments as well as the medicinal waters that were found there. In France, the medical leaders played a part in both the administration and the scientific side of spa therapy. Since the early seventeenth century, the French government, the spas and the medical elite were all linked together after “Henry IV appointed his First Physician as the Superintendent of Baths and Mineral waters.”¹²⁷

The Academy of Medicine played a big part in the administrative supervision and scientific study of the mineral waters during the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century this role was fulfilled by the Société Royale de Médecine. The Academy of Medicine helped to legitimise the waters and added a professional status to the cure. This also meant that the water were not seen as only a source for tourism and recreation, but it also had the legitimacy of being a medical cure, and this helped to convince doctors to take the water therapy cure more seriously.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ M. Smith & L. Puczkó: *Health and Wellness tourism*, pp. 25, 26.

¹²⁷ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p. 453.

¹²⁸ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, pp. 453, 454.

Vichy was patronised, just like Bath, by the rich and the nobles, but apparently was not as famous as Bath or Baden-Baden in Germany. But this did not mean that Vichy did not have its own luxuries that could be enjoyed while taking the waters. There were classy hotels, casinos, theatres and an array of other recreational activities to be enjoyed and there was even the chance of meeting the rich and famous peoples who frequented the spa. The one big difference was that at Vichy, where one could also take the waters as a cure, there was also medical supervision, which was unusual during this period. During the nineteenth century “the academic elite as well as the spa doctors” tried very hard to legitimise the water cure by trying to give it medical authority.¹²⁹

Tourism was growing in the twentieth century, and thermalism quickly aligned itself with this rising economic venture. In 1926 a more “formal union between the tourist and thermal industries” through the establishment of the Confédération Nationale du Tourism, du Thermalisme et du Climatisme Français was established. The reason for the development of such a union was first of all economic. France wanted to be able to compete with Germany on the economic front, and as will be seen later, the French saw Germany as their rivals in especially the spa industry. The goal was to attract people to the thermal institutions, but not just as people visiting, but people that could be seen as prospective patients taking the water cure. It was acknowledged that thermalism was indeed a form of tourism as well as recreation, so by combining the industries, the market could be better organised. The organised spa industry went to great lengths to make sure that the thermal spa establishments were upgraded so that it could rival foreign spas and in turn attract their own foreign health seeking tourist. With this combination of the tourism and thermal institutions, a new sort of tourism developed in France, known as health and wellness tourism. France used their natural assets in order to get involved in the new economic venture that tourism brought.¹³⁰

But the ultimate goal of the spa industry was to get “hydrology accepted as a full-fledged discipline in the curriculum of the medical schools.”¹³¹ The reason for the importance of this inclusion was expressed in various forms throughout the twentieth century. The growth of medical thermalism could only be stimulated if it was known on an international basis.

¹²⁹ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p. 457.

¹³⁰ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, pp. 459, 460.

¹³¹ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p. 460.

Therefore the aim was to get doctors interested and educated in the subject of medical thermalism, because if the doctors knew of the therapeutic treatments the spas in France offered, they could sent their patients to these spas, stimulating the French spa industry. By creating a place where medical thermalism could be seen as a legitimate discipline, it could in turn “shape the views of a new generation of French doctors.”¹³²

Already in the 1870’s there were hydrologists who asked that chairs, in the medical profession, as well as courses in medical schools would be created especially for hydrology. An elite medical hydrologist known as Albert Robin, wished for the independent presence of hydrology in the famed Paris Faculty of Medicine. This feat was in part accomplished, when in 1911 the Paris Faculty of Medicine was offered a chair of hydrology which would be funded by the association which represented the French spas for a period of ten years. It seems that the competitive spirit against Germany was a reason for the support this decision enjoyed. German spas were said to have enjoyed governmental support, with a cure tax that was incorporated, which in turn provided the spas with extra resources and courses for hydrology at medical facilities were supported, in turn creating a word of mouth support of German thermal therapy because the doctors studying at these medical schools would have been exposed to this form of treatment. Therefore no matter how hard the French tried to compete against the German medical thermal tourism industry, without a faculty chair in hydrology, the Germans would still be better equipped. But this proposed chair was denied and a counter offer was given, that hydrology as a course would be given handled by a junior teacher, which showed that the elite medical men’s attitude towards thermalism and hydrology as a science was that of scepticism and that this discipline was not important enough to have its own chair.¹³³

In reaction to this Robin started the Institut d’Hydrologie in 1913, in association with College de France. In 1914 the first program of courses was offered. The main reason for the establishment of this institute was to make sure that hydrology would be seen as a discipline on its own, and not just as an auxiliary therapy for clinical medicine. This was done in the

¹³² G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p.460.

¹³³ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, pp. 461, 462.

fight for the legitimisation of medical thermal hydrology.¹³⁴ There was a lot of pressure exerted on the various medical institutions to accept a hydrology chair in their faculties. In 1928 Paris, Lyon and Montpellier gave chairs for hydrology in their faculties, and soon all the chairs regarding hydrology was filled, making it a legitimise field of study which would make it possible for the next generation of doctors to specialise in hydrology.¹³⁵

As was mentioned previously, the lack of specialisation of the spa water in Britain was said to be the reason for its slow rise as a medical and tourist destination.¹³⁶ In France however, it was a whole different story. French spas famed themselves on the specialisation of their spa waters and it was the basis of the French hydrological science and the thermal practise. The specialisation of the waters were in fact simple, it worked on the notion that each of the different waters were perfect for curing a specific batch of different diseases. By being specific about which water cured which ailments, the French spa industry flourished, and therefore saw the specialisation of the waters as their calling card in the industry.¹³⁷ By specifying which ailment could be treated at a specific spa, gave the spas worldwide acclaim, as in the case of Vichy, a spa known for curing the liver, or Aix-les-Baines where help for rheumatism could be found.¹³⁸ This specialisation of the water also had another advantage since it made doctors into experts when it came to a certain disease, and the grouping made clinical observation of the water cure possible. By specialising the waters, the therapeutic claims the waters had, was lessened and the waters were studied in a more “scientifically accepted dimension.” It also “conformed to contemporary norms of scientific belief.”¹³⁹

In the nineteenth century the main link that hydrology had to science, was through the chemical analysis of the waters. The chemicals in the waters had to measure up to a certain value to be classified as containing the attributes needed to be seen as therapeutic. In the mid-nineteenth century the use of the knowledge of the chemical composition of the water

¹³⁴ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p.463.

¹³⁵ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p. 464.

¹³⁶ “The Principles of Spa Treatment in Great Britain,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No.3336), Dec 6, 1924, p. 1065.

¹³⁷ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p. 465.

¹³⁸ E. Meier Tilton: “Mineral and Thermal Spas in France,” *The French Review*, (Vol.54), (No. 4), March 1981, p. 568.

¹³⁹ G. Weisz: “Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France,” *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p. 466.

was the main way in which the water was classified. These classifications lead to specialisation which in turn made it possible to use the right water to cure a certain ailment. But the chemical analysis of the water still did not solve the myth surrounding the therapeutic elements the waters possessed. In the early twentieth century, after many new scientific tests were done, chemical composition was not the only thing that hydrologists could use to lay claim to the healing power of the waters. It was discovered that not only was the thermal mineral waters very complex, but it also contained radioactive elements, which strengthened the belief in the therapeutic qualities of the waters. The waters were also seen as a form of natural therapy, touching on the medical holism idea, which was popular in the 1930-1950.¹⁴⁰

The link between illness and climate was an old traditional medical subject that was associated with French and even British spas, where it played a small role. This belief would be seen in the South African context as well, since South Africa's climate was one of the main reasons for the visiting of British's consumption patients in South Africa. In the twentieth century the effect of the climate became an important element in the hydrology field. Between 1923 and 1933 the Institut d'Hydrologie built twenty climatological stations. The reason for the renewed interest in the effect of climate on health was because of the sun and air treatments that were used to treat tuberculosis patients and the development that took place in colonial and tropical medicines which focused on the ailments that were contracted because of specific climates. The government also accepted that mineral water spas as well as climatic stations, had a legal status, and lastly the two fields were linked, creating new chairs and institutions.¹⁴¹

During the time of the French Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth century, spas flourish in France. These spas were used against tropical diseases and were seen as very important for the health of the colonisers. Thermal hydrotherapy, the division in the medical profession concerned with the mineral water cure, as well as climatology, with its focus on altitude therapy was intertwined to form the "centrepieces of French colonial and tropical medicine between 1830 and 1962."¹⁴² The spas in the colonies had a dual function. Not only was it used for curing the colonisers of any tropical ailments they might have contracted, but it was

¹⁴⁰ G. Weisz: "Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France," *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, pp. 468, 473, 476.

¹⁴¹ G. Weisz: " Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France," *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, p. 475.

¹⁴² E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, p. 1.

also a reminder of home in France. Many scientists searched for thermal spas which resembled chemical composition of the water of Vichy. The spas that were built in the colonies resembled the spas back in France as much as the environment would allow. The reason for this was, not only to alienate the colonisers from the colonised, but also to serve as a reminder of their 'Frenchness'. When these brave colonisers of dark Africa returned, Vichy was said to be the ultimate recuperating resort for the weary coloniser.¹⁴³ It is clear that spas played an important role in the French culture, and they were determined to carry this part of their culture everywhere they went. It then comes as no surprise that they would jump at the chance of transforming the colonial spas into French retreats.

The spas and the use of altitude to cure the effects of the tropics with its extremely hot weather, gave the idea that the climate itself was to blame for the illness, and was therefore seen as toxic to the body of the colonisers. There was believed that these extremely hot climates affected the indigenous people, causing them to act in a very non-French or even non-European way. Beliefs like this supported the toxic climate theory even more, and it later grew into the belief that the climate, and not necessarily disease was the main reason for the death of the colonisers and this in turn caused the terror associated with countries with much higher climates than Europe. It is difficult to express how important climate was in scientific discussions in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but it was seen as an element worth looking in to.¹⁴⁴

With the arrival of the French colonisers in the colonies, there was a strong belief that one had to acclimatise to the new country and its environment. This notion was very popular in the nineteenth century. The belief in *acclimatation*, a concept made popular by the naturalist Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, was at the core of the "science of [French] colonisation." To the French, their medicine had to speed up the adaption process and it also had to make it easier for the coloniser to achieve the acclimation needed to survive in the colonies. The British also used this concept, but not as extremely as the French did. This could be seen as a reason why the recoil that took place in 1830 in France with the anti-acclimatisation theories, hit the French way of thinking much harder than the British. Many of the anti-acclimation theories were brought from across the English Channel. It seems that the turning point came in 1813. Before this, the principle of colonial settlements was to adapt to the

¹⁴³ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, pp. 1, 2, 3.

¹⁴⁴ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, pp. 8, 9, 14.

surroundings and the tropics as soon as possible. But doctors began to theorise the possibility of “progressive deterioration of the European body in the tropical regions.”¹⁴⁵ In 1870, the British officially declared extended stays in the tropics as dangerous to one’s health.¹⁴⁶ With this realisation, the British also open their spas to the colonisers who returned in ill health after a visit to the tropics, in order for them to recover as soon as possible. It was also noted that in was extremely important that¹⁴⁷

“On returning to Europe reacclimatization was needed. The keystone of cure in such cases was eliminating, a process enhanced by judicious spa treatments.”¹⁴⁸

For the British, adapting to the foreign colonial environment was now seen as taboo, and they, like France, used their curative springs to eliminate, not only the tropical disease, but also the changes to culture. Like France, they used the spas to bring back the British culture of the patient. But in France, where the belief in acclimatisation was much more severe, it was difficult to accept this change of their culture. With these new theories against adjusting to the colonial surroundings, a new fear griped the French scientist, the fear of the phenomenon known as degeneration. Degeneration was a condition which was said to affect both the body and the spirit, which in turn could lead to physical, mental and moral collapse. This condition, which apparently caused idiocy, sterility and even death, could affect not only individuals, but also whole races. Therefore the belief was started that the tropics caused the “denaturalisation” of Europeans. In short, it was the belief that when a person acclimatised too much, one would lose one’s European roots, and become like the indigenous people of the colonies. Acclimatisation was transformed into a weakness, with the belief that if one adapted to the environment, one fell prey to the indigenous influences, which in turn meant a loss of ‘Frenchness’, as well as the loss of one’s European roots.¹⁴⁹

With the treat of racial degeneration looming, a plan had to be made to keep the French colonialist save from this tropical evil. The way to combat degeneration was to slowly adapt

¹⁴⁵ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, pp. 15, 16, 21.

¹⁴⁶ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁷ “The British Health Resorts Conference at Leamington,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol. 1), (No. 3774), May 6, 1933, p. 796.

¹⁴⁸ “The British Health Resorts Conference at Leamington,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol. 1), (No. 3774), May 6, 1933, p. 796.

¹⁴⁹ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, pp. 21, 22, 23, 24, 29.

to the tropical environment. And for this, the spas were needed. The spas, which were decorated in the likeness of the spas in France, were used to keep the colonial patient in a French setting, so that the loss of any Frenchness would return. The spas also helped with the slowing down of degeneration that might have taken effect on the visitor to the spas. So the spas were used to not only keep the colonials healthy and French, but also to curb the degeneration process. Therefore, spa visits became as what was seen as a necessity in the colonial setting. The spas were used to ensure that the balance in the human body of the colonialist was restored, by giving back what the exposure to the tropics had taken out of him. The spas were used not just to remind the patients of home, but also to make them feel like it was their home, so that they would return frequently, and therefore suffer less from the loss of 'Frenchness' and the hated degeneration.¹⁵⁰

As it was previously mentioned, the Vichy spa was seen as the crown jewel of French spas. Vichy's reputation as a health spa became known nationally and internationally in the 1860s. Vichy was also well known in the colonial times, as a place where one could go and recuperate after a long and dangerous stay in the colony. The fact that Vichy had the cure for all the colonial ailments, made it famous almost overnight. Vichy became known as the "capital of the colonisers." Adding to this statement was the bottled water trade. These were not just any water, no, it was bottles said to have been filled with the curative waters of Vichy, and these bottles were sent to the colonies so that those who felt the need, could continue their Vichy water therapy while stationed in the colony itself, to add to the protection of the body.¹⁵¹ In 1924, a magazine advertisement, using the belief in the colonial curing waters of Vichy, described the situation as follows:

"You can't bear it any longer. The African climate has been sapping you slowly. You need to reinvigorate yourself. Go to Vichy.... Your blood is poisoned. It is carrying enough toxins to mine your health and make life miserable. Beware! Against the poison that is Africa, there is but one antidote: *Vichy!*"¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, pp. 32, 35, 37, 66.

¹⁵¹ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, pp. 180, 181, 199, 207

¹⁵² E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, p. 40.

This ad shows that in the first half of the nineteenth century, hydrology was seen as one of the leading cures against the dreaded diseases found in the colonies, and French hydrology rose to new fame with the rise of the Empire. The nineteenth century was the golden age of both the Empire and French spas. After the scare of the dreaded degeneration condition, spas became safe havens, places where one could regain not only one's strength and health, but also one's 'Frenchness'. Therefore it can be said that the establishment of colonies in the French imperial era, contributed immensely to the revival and flourishing of spas, in both France and their colonies. There was a time when the tourism authorities in the colonies tried to attract South African tourists to their spas, but it seemed that these French styled spas was not in favour with the British and Afrikaner tourists.¹⁵³

In the middle of the twentieth century, just after the Second World War in 1945, there were "influential doctors who saw hydrology as an important part of modern medicine. In 1947, thermalism was officially acknowledged as a partial specialty." Already in 1935 a small subsidy was given to help pay for medically generated spa visit, which could be ascribed to the "academic legitimisation of hydrology." In 1945, spa therapy was on the list of treatments that would be reimbursed by the government and in 1947 there were signs that the inclusion of spa therapy and spa medicine within the health insurance system was being organised. But, as was seen in Britain, the belief in the water cure did not last forever and the post-war National Health Service in Britain did in the beginning cover thermal spa treatments that were ordered by a doctor on a prescription basis. But as the thermal medicine sector in Britain failed to attract new patients, the NHS cancelled its contracts with the spa establishments, and this in turn caused the closing down of many of the British spas. In France, it was completely a different matter. The thermal insurance in France grew rapidly, and because of that, more and more people started to use the spas as a form of health care, which in turn stimulated the growth of the French spas, so much so that there were even complaints in the 1950s that the amount of patients were becoming too great to handle by the spa doctors.¹⁵⁴

It is clear from the previous evidence that the spas played a huge role in France, not just in the form of tourism or medical advancements, but also in the colonising efforts. The French

¹⁵³ E. T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, p. 40, 110, 211, 212.

¹⁵⁴ G. Weisz: "Spas, Mineral Waters and Hydrological Science in Twentieth Century France," *Isis*, (Vol.92), (No.3), Sep 2001, pp. 477, 478, 479, 480.

fought hard to legitimise thermal hydrology, and because of this fight, medical thermal hydrology was later turned into a recognised medical practise. The spas did not only cure the European diseases the people suffered, but it was also a saviour of the weary colonialist, afflicted with the dreadful tropical diseases. The French, unlike the British, used their spas, their natural national assets, much more to their advantage, maintained them, and could therefore reap the benefits of the new and growing health and wellness tourist market.

The History of the German Spa culture of taking the waters

Germany like many other European countries was blessed by the emergence of hot water springs in various places in the country. These springs were already used by the Romans, the same way the hot springs in France and Britain was used. From 69 to 79 AD, the first public baths were developed near the site known later as Baden-Baden.¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to see how France, Britain and Germany did not only compete on a political level but there was even a feeling of animosity when it came to the amount of springs in each country. In 1835, according to a rather one sided view, Ferdinand Gustav Kühne mentioned that nowhere was there more springs than in the Germanic realm. Kühne downplayed the amount of hot springs in the rest of Europe, in order to make it seem that Germany was superior. It does turn out that there was evidence that Germany possessed the most bathing establishments in Europe.¹⁵⁶

Carlsbad was known as the most famous spa in Germany in the nineteenth century and the reason for the popularity of spas in this time period can be attributed to the middle class, which was growing bigger and whose economic and cultural power was expanding. This meant that more people could afford to go to the spas, and it was not exclusively a rich and famous pastime anymore. German spa life was described as a combination of recovery from the stressful life lived in the cities by breathing the fresh clean air while engaging in a well worked out schedules. In 1830 there was a spa revolution in France, which pointed to a more rigorous move in the direction of a medical orientated spa experience and although there were still many recreational and pleasurable activities available at the spas, the move towards more

¹⁵⁵ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁶ H. Lempa: "The Spa: Emotional Economy and Social Classes in Nineteenth-Century Pyrmont," *Central European History*, (Vol. 35), (No.1), 2002, p.37.

strict rules regarding the diets of the patients and activities at the spa, could be seen as a form of “social discipline” that emerged.¹⁵⁷

Pymont was a spa that was already in use in 1556, and people from the highest to the lowest classes, which included nobles from across Europe as well as people living in the area was said to have visited Pymont when they suffered from ailments and disease. The spring was said to contain curative powers, a common theme in Europe as one has seen thus far. It does seem that this belief in the miracle waters was well entrenched in the cultures of most European countries that colonised Africa. As seen with so many spas in Britain and France, Pymont was also the recreational area for the royalty of that period and the rich nobles who followed them.¹⁵⁸

Jumping to the twentieth century, it becomes clear that the German belief in the health giving waters of their spas was still going strong. For according to an article in *The British Medical Journal* in 1927, the British mainly used their holidays to get away from their working environment. But Germans on the other hand, used their holidays in a search of health and recuperation. To the Germans it seems their health was a serious business, seen in the vast amount of healing spring establishments. Just like in France, the Germans also had specialisation in their spas, where a specific ailment was cured by a specific thermal mineral water, found at a specific spa. Baden-Baden was and is one of the many famous bathing establishments in Germany. It was known as the “Eden of Central Europe”, which like other famous establishments in Europe, Bath and Vichy respectively, became a drawing card for the elite and nobles from all around the world. Here the visitors could take a chance on lady luck with a bit of gambling as well as other leisure activities, while being in close proximity of the thermal baths, if they felt inclined to use them to restore their health or energies after the recreational activities.¹⁵⁹ The visitors to Baden-Baden could also enjoy the taking of the waters in the form of drinking it. This activity was undertaken, accompanied by slowly strolling and listening to music. It is also said that by 1846 there was a higher inclination to

¹⁵⁷ H. Lempa: “The Spa: Emotional Economy and Social Classes in Nineteenth-Century Pymont,” *Central European History*, (Vol. 35), (No.1), 2002, pp. 40, 43.

¹⁵⁸ H. Lempa: “The Spa: Emotional Economy and Social Classes in Nineteenth-Century Pymont,” *Central European History*, (Vol. 35), (No.1), 2002, p. 47.

¹⁵⁹ “The Cult of Water Cures In Germany,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol. 2), (No. 3476), Aug 20, 1927, pp. 320, 321.

dancing and gambling at Baden-Baden.¹⁶⁰ Baden-Baden was also known as a health resort which catered for the healing of gout and rheumatism.¹⁶¹

The description of the belief in the water cure that was dominant in Germany could be seen as a mirror image of countries like Britain and France. The spas was famous around the world, most of them dating from Roman times, giving them the mystical aura of the ancients, and so carrying on the belief in the curative miracle water. As time passed, it became a mission of many spa doctors, to keep this belief in the waters alive, by using science to help explain the healing properties found in the water as well as trying to legitimise the age old water cure in a modern way so that it would form part of the medical discipline, in order to safeguard this form of medicine for the future. But the spas were not only used as a centre for health, it also became a socialising centre for the royal and rich, but later included people from all walks of life. This in turn stimulated a rising tourist industry, where spas became health resorts visited by foreigners and locals alike in the search of health combined with tourism.

Since the ancient times, the water cure had been used in one way or another to heal the sick and entertain the rich. The Greeks and the Romans of ancient times bathed in the thermal waters for health and pleasure, passing this tradition on to the European nations and their cultures. They took this age old tradition a step further, by adapting it to conform to the changing of the times. This meant legitimising the water cure as not just a medical division, but also as a scientific phenomenon. It is true that there were times that the spas were in disuse, but time after time the spas were revived. The legitimisation of the water as well as the support of the governments of the respective countries, were responsible for the fact that the thermal cure was linked with the economic venture of tourism, which turned into the big health and wellness tourism industry of the present day, ensuring the survival of the spas. The spas were even used in the colonisation effort, to not only cure the colonisers of their tropical ills, but also to keep them European. This in turn was responsible for the revival of the spa industry in Europe. The thermal water, shrouded in myth and mystic, stood the test of time and survived since the ancient days up to the present. The reason for the survival of these spas and water cures can be attributed to one thing, and that is their ability to change and

¹⁶⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ "The Cult of Water Cures In Germany," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol. 2), (No. 3476), Aug 20, 1927, pp. 320, 321.

transform to the new notions that formed with each passing century. Water, especially thermal water, will always have a special place in the human psyche and as long as it keeps adapting, there is a good chance that it will still be present in the future.

As was noted, there were French African colonies which contained thermal mineral springs which were used by the French colonials for both medical and cultural purposes. The climate was seen as a separate form of disease that had to be fought using these springs. Interestingly Britain also had a colony which contained thermal springs, but this colony's climate, instead of being a curse, turned out to be a blessing. This colony was South Africa, and in the next chapter there will be looked at how South Africa as a health resort was established because of its healing climate and healing springs, which combined, drew invalids and tourists from Europe and especially Britain to the country as early health and wellness tourists.

Chapter 2:

South Africa as a Health Resort: an introduction to the country's thermal mineral springs.

“It is never too soon to recognise the fact that the enjoyment of life is vastly influence by general health.”¹ Throughout history people have tried to keep healthy through different ways, and before modern medicine was developed, usually turned to nature for a cure. As the case was in Europe, spas were used to regain lost health. This was a trend that was followed even when European countries gained colonies, as was done by the French in their African colonies.² One of the healing powers that were attributed to nature was the idea of a healing climate. That the sun, air and altitude could be beneficial and this idea was also followed by most European peoples. Just like the French, Britain also began using its colonies for more than just its monetary resources.

This chapter wishes to show how South Africa became known to the British population as a health resort, because of its climate, and also to show that combined with the healthy climate, the South African thermal mineral springs were continuously mentioned as places where one could seek relief from aches and pains. It can therefore be said that South Africa's status as a health resort, because of its climate also allowed the thermal springs to benefit from this as a form of healing. The colonisers were well acquainted with the phenomenon of thermal springs and their curative properties were an additional factor that contributed to its popularity. It gives more support to the hypothesis that ‘taking the waters’ was indeed a European cultural influence on the way thermal spring culture developed in South Africa.

Balneology, which is the study of baths and therapeutic bathing, was extremely closely linked to the climate³, and therefore the South African climate has to be discussed to show how

¹ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 34.

² See E.T. Jennings's book *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2006.

³ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p.14.

these two elements interacted with one another. This chapter also looks at how people travelled to South Africa, as tourists, but tourists who was in search of health. This manner of travelling reminds one of modern day health tourists, who travel to countries where the climate and surroundings are beneficial to their health. In this chapter the beginning of this trend in South Africa during the late nineteenth century will be looked at, to see how this search for health through travel became popular.

How European Culture affected the development of the early Cape society

Before one can start to explore South Africa as a health resort, the history of South Africa should be glanced at, so as to understand the major European influence South Africa experienced during the time of being a European Colony, since Britain was not the first to influence the South African culture. By looking back to South Africa's early history one can also see how Afrikaners used their European influenced past in their culture and medical knowledge, of which using thermal mineral waters was one.⁴ The Portuguese were the first European country to show interest in the Cape, but it turned out that South Africa and its coast line was not extremely important to the Portuguese, since they had bigger investments in other parts of Africa. This was also due to the fact that the South African coast was treacherous and there were no real trading opportunities and also no gold to be found at the coast.⁵

Portugal was known for their shipping expertise, but in time other European countries like France, England and Netherland started to expand and improve their own naval expeditions. The British started the English East India Company, while the Netherlands created their own Netherlands East India Company, also known as the Dutch East India Company. It is said the English were the first to take the Cape for their own by planting a British flag on Signal Hill , but they did not populate it, and it was the Netherlands that brought with them the idea of creating a settlement in the Cape, so that their vessels, travelling to and fro from India could have a place to obtain fresh food and other supplies before moving on.⁶ It is here then that the

⁴ E. Van Heyningen: *Medical history and Afrikaner society in the Boer Republics at the end of the nineteenth century*, Unisa Press, 2005, p. 21.

⁵ T. Cameron: *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika in Woord en Beeld*, pp.58-59.

⁶ T. Cameron: *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika in Woord en Beeld*, pp.59, 60. & A.S. Brown: *Brown's South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 92.

European influence in South Africa and especially the Cape would begin, and continue to grow as the years passed.

Jan van Riebeeck arrived in the Cape on 6 April 1652, tasked with creating a refreshment station for the Dutch East India Company.⁷ By the end of the seventeenth century the Company started to encourage people from all over Europe to come and settle in the Cape permanently. It was this shift that would influence the developing culture of the Cape because of all the different European influences that would be woven together to form the rising Cape culture, which later developed into what was known as the Afrikaner culture.. But this new Cape culture was predominantly held together by the Dutch language and the Dutch Reformed Church that was present.⁸ It is therefore not strange that the Afrikaner culture in the end was an amalgamation of many different European cultural influences. It is also interesting to note that many of these countries, like Britain, were all hot spring bathers, as one saw in Chapter 1. So the idea of thermal water bathing as a culture as well as a form of water healing must have been in a way introduced to the Afrikaner culture by these cultures, and strengthened by the later arrival and occupation of the British in the Cape.

The Dutch held the Cape until 1795, when the British took it, and this was also the first of two British occupations in the Cape. When the British took over in 1795, they did not really change much of the way the Cape was run. The British was in charge of the Cape until 1803, and in that time they tried to befriend the most prominent Afrikaners, and someone who played a big role in this charming of the Afrikaners was Lady Anne Barnard, who was used as hostess of the Castle in Cape Town for parties for the elite.⁹

The Cape was occupied by the British a second time after they conquered the Dutch in 1806.¹⁰ The Cape became important to the British because of their trading with India and the Cape's strategic position regarding its place on the sea route.¹¹ The British Empire became

⁷ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 238.

⁸ T.R.H. Davenport: *South Africa: A Modern History*, p.19.

⁹ T. Cameron: *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika in Woord en Beeld*, pp. 74-76.

¹⁰ T.R.H. Davenport: *South Africa: A Modern History*, p.29. & J.H. Stark: "The British and Dutch in South Africa: a paper read before the Trinity Club of Trinity Church, and the Dorchester Historical Society, and the Victorian Club of Boston," *Foreign and Commonwealth Official Collection*, p. 3.

¹¹ A.J.H. Van der Walt & J.A. Wiid & A.L. Geyer (eds.): *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, p. 223.

the leading colonial power in the nineteenth century and the fact that the Cape was in their hands made it dependent on the British Empire.¹²

After the second occupation the British started, just like the Dutch before them, to promote and encourage British people to travel to the Cape Colony so that they could settle in the Cape Town permanently. Not long after there was a large amount of Englishmen who was settling in the Cape. This of course made it possible for the British and their culture to become more prominent in the everyday life and structures of Cape society and the cultural cross fertilisation of the Afrikaner culture continued. The European cultural influence was rising and would no doubt infiltrate the Afrikaner culture to some level.¹³

By 1854 the Cape was much more culturally diverse and the British influence could be seen in many different spheres ranging from the government, to the law, and ultimately the cultural life in the Cape Colony.¹⁴ Through the years many of the Afrikaners, and especially the youth, forgot their Dutch cultural roots, and was instead intrigued by the British culture as well as the British way of life, and this was how the English culture infiltrated the Afrikaner culture. By the nineteenth century the British lifestyle and culture experienced a boom¹⁵ and it is therefore not a surprise to learn that the thermal water culture had travelled with the Europeans to the Colony in South Africa.

“Champaign air”¹⁶ and healing sunlight: South Africa’s curative climate

By the nineteenth century the British colonial influence in South Africa was strong, and for the new colonisers the natural environment of the country was one to be explored and to be turned into a health related asset. From the late nineteenth century, more and more exploration in South Africa as a health resort was sought. The reason why South Africa was such an important health asset was the fact that it had more than one healing “characteristic,” and it was these features that made the country such an attractive health resort for especially people who travelled to health resorts in search of cures for their failing health. These

¹² F.A Van Jaarsveld: *Van Van Riebeeck tot Vorster 1652-1974: ‘n Inleiding tot die Geskiedenis van die Republiek vn Suid-Afrika*, p. 77.

¹³ T.R.H. Davenport: *South Africa: A Modern History*, p.30. & A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 243.

¹⁴ T. Cameron: *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika in Woord en Beeld*, p. 92.

¹⁵ F.A Van Jaarsveld: *Van Van Riebeeck tot Vorster 1652-1974: ‘n Inleiding tot die Geskiedenis van die Republiek vn Suid-Afrika*, p. 85.

¹⁶ The air of Matjiesfontein, described by Lord Randolph Churchill in Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 17.

different aspects included the climate, air, sun and the thermal mineral springs the country had in abundance. These aspects and how they related to health will be examined in throughout the Chapter. But the question remains, how did South Africa gain the reputation as a health resort, how was it advertised and who were the people who ‘used’ the natural medical care South Africa had to offer.

One popular way South Africa as a health resort was advertised was through Guide Books. These Guidebooks were used by travellers, or in a modern sense, tourists, to find out about the most significant places and interesting facts of the country they were visiting.¹⁷ In the late nineteenth century Guide Books about South Africa could be found, for the use of “tourists, sportsmen, invalids and settlers.” It is very interesting to see the sort of people that were able to use this book when travelling to South Africa and who the target audience of these books were. The first were the normal tourists, who came to see the splendour of the British colony and was ready to experience the very different setting South Africa offered. Sportsmen or rather hunters, could come and experience the still wild nature of South Africa while trying to slay the mighty lion of Africa. There were also some people who decided to relocate to South Africa, and these settlers would use the books as a way in which to get to know their new home country. But the most interesting and especially relevant travellers were the so-called invalids. Invalids, people who were, by definitions sick with some or other disease, were encouraged to come to South Africa.¹⁸ One cannot help to wonder why, why the frail and the sick were enticed to go to South Africa, a place so different and so far away from Europe. The answer lies in the belief in the healing climate of South Africa. And this healing was not just for any kind of illness, no, it was specifically helpful in dealing with illness that affected the chest. It is for this reason South Africa’s status as a health resort was achieved, because it was the healing of this dreadful and common ailment that South Africa’s climate was famous for.¹⁹

¹⁷ J.C. Holloway: *The Business of Tourism*, p. 17.

¹⁸ A.S Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, front page.

¹⁹ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, front page.

This ailment was none other than consumption, or tuberculosis as it was later known. This ailment was rife in Britain in the nineteenth century.²⁰ This illness was known from the time of Hippocrates and he interestingly enough prescribed baths as a form of cure. One can assume that these baths would be taken in thermal mineral water since the taking of the thermal waters as a medical cure was started in Greece. It is therefore possible that thermal mineral springs could also have been seen as playing a part in the curing of consumption, which once again made South Africa a perfect place to recuperate from this ailment. The disease was well known and feared as much as the plague, as could be derived from the actions taken in the sixteenth century when Fracastoro demanded that those suffering from consumption be kept in isolation and all their belongings be burned with their demise. Through the years a cure was sought for this disease, and it came in the form of air and climate. The founder of the “open-air” cure was a doctor by the name of Edward Livingston Trudeau, who lived in the end of the nineteenth century. He was diagnosed with consumption and given twelfth months to live. Deciding to wait out his days in the Adirondack Mountains, he noticed a change. He spent his days hiking and hunting, but instead of nearing death, his health in fact improved. Realising that he was recovering, and that he might have found a possible cure, he opened his house for other consumption patients, and began a sanatorium, a hospital like establishment, where patients suffering from specifically consumption, could spend some time to recover.²¹ In 1897, Dr. William C. Scholtz wrote that the “open-air antiseptic” treating of phthisis was beginning to win ground, and the way this treatment was administered was by sending the patient to a health resort like South Africa, where they had to spend their day in the open air, away from crowds and that they had to exercise in the open air. This was done to help the body recover from consumption by using the climate as a form of medicine.²²

One can therefore assume that this discovery of how air and climate could assist in the curing of consumption was an important one. That was also why the discovery that South Africa was in fact a candidate for being a place where this sort of healing could take place must have delighted the British, because not only did it have a healing climate, but South Africa was

²⁰ R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Karoo-A Nineteenth Century Health Resort,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.5), Issue 2, Aug 1979, p. 9.

²¹ A. Dubb: “Medical philately: Robert Koch (1843-1910) the man, his germ and history,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), Issue 1, March 1984, pp. 18-19.

²² W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 20.

also in possession of thermal mineral springs. This fact was not forgotten when it came time to evaluate South Africa as a potential health resort. Many European countries were known for their healing climate, like the Swiss Alps for example.²³

Britain, who had since occupied South Africa by the nineteenth century, was now in charge of their own new health resort, and this meant that British invalids would visit so-called British soil, and not other European countries, and the revenue would therefore be ploughed back into British pockets. In 1888 at the Royal Colonial Institute's general meeting in Britain, Dr. Symes Thompson read a paper entitled *South Africa as a Health Resort*. Dr. Thompson was a physician and had spent time researching South Africa in great detail, including looking closely at its climate. What Dr. Thompson researched, was South Africa's climate's ability of "giving or restoring health."²⁴ What made South Africa a candidate for a health resort was in fact a combination of elements. The main element was its climate. Climate was one of the most important factors in the healing of consumption. The effect climate had on chronic disease was recognised by Thompson who was positively disposed to this as a cure so to was another researcher, Dr. J. Burney Yeo who wrote that "if consumption be a disease engendered by city life...by overcrowding, by breathing a damp, contaminated atmosphere, we should expect it to disappear in localities where all these conditions are reversed."²⁵

So the way in which to combat consumption was a change in climate. But there was according to Dr. Thompson a class system, which consisted out of three classes, when it came to treating patients with climatology. The first class were patients who needed a "change in air", where they needed to be removed from their current surroundings for a time in order to recover from their ailment. There were the second class patients who were said to be in need of "shelter" from the rough English winter, and the third class patients who had to be removed from their surroundings for either years, and even on a permanent basis, if they ever wanted to recover and survive.²⁶ There was also the danger of certain debilitating diseases being hereditary, and therefore a patient who was classified as a third class case, might for the sake of their children's future be encouraged to find a climate more suitable for their condition. It is interesting to note that the illnesses said to be cured by climate change like

²³ A. Dubb: "Medical philately: Robert Koch (1843-1910) the man, his germ and history," *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), Issue 1, March 1984, p. 18.

²⁴ J.S. O'Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, pp. 4-5.

²⁵ Brown, A.S. & Brown, G.G. (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 34.

²⁶ J.S. O'Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 6.

rheumatism and gout, correlated greatly with those believed could be cured or relieved by the using of thermal water baths.²⁷

Dr. Thompson explained that the treatment for the patients that fell in the first two classes he referred to earlier, could simply be send to European health resorts to recover, but for the third class, the most severe cases, they had to look to their colonies for suitable places of healing.²⁸ And it seemed that they found that in South Africa. Dr. William C. Scholtz wrote in 1897, almost ten years after Thompson, that patients from all three the classes mentioned by Thompson was visiting the Cape in search of health and relief. It was especially the third class, whose poor patients were already in the clutches of a fast moving consumption who favoured the Cape. There was also some patients who was in danger of developing a pulmonary disease very rapidly without warning, and Dr. Scholtz mentions that these patients who were send to South Africa before the attack on the lungs, usually developed well and into “healthy and robust members of the society.”²⁹

There was a great call to doctors to use the colonies as places where any of the three classes could be sent. But with this call there was also a warning. There were many patrons who testified of the healing qualities of the South African climate³⁰, but this gave rise it seemed to many instances where doctors were sending all their consumption patients to South Africa, no matter how far advanced the illness was. This was a grave mistake, since there were many who, instead of recovering, succumbed to the disease alone, in a far off country. There were also many invalids who believed that by only changing their climatic surroundings, they would be cured. This was in fact not the truth, since dietetic guidance as well as hygienic and medical supervision was required.³¹ A colonial medical doctor, Dr. H. W. Saunders, commented on the way consumption patients were “bundled off to South Africa,” many times much too late for any further healing because of the phase of their disease. The deaths of these patients were giving South Africa a bad reputation, and therefore there was a cry for

²⁷ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 34.

²⁸ J.S. O'Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 6.

²⁹ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, pp.35-36.

³⁰ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 11.

³¹ H. Weber: “Remarks on Climate and Sea Voyages in the Treatment of Tuberculosis,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No. 2005), Jun 3, 1899, pp. 1321-1324.

careful selection of patients by European doctors. It was also thought to be of need for a European doctor to consult with a local doctor living in South Africa whether a patient was considered a viable candidate because they would have better knowledge on which health resort in South Africa a patient would benefit from most.³²

Letters were written to the *British Medical Journal*, with negative remarks regarding South Africa as a health resort. In May 1899 Mr. J.W. Atkinson, the Secretary of the provincial hospital in Port Elizabeth wrote to inform the physicians of Britain on when not to send patients to South Africa. He even goes as far as to suggest that one should avoid South Africa as a resort for phthisical patients. In this same article a certain W.J.R., said to have been a surgeon on the ships bound for the Cape, wrote of circumstances under which invalids must not be sent to South Africa. The main reasons were medical, but there were monetary reasons as well. He suggested that when the disease is already in an advanced stage and active and the person is already sick but has no concrete plan for when they land, South Africa is not the best option. Connected with the last statement, was the fact that money still played a role in the life of the invalid. Poor invalids travelling to South Africa had to travel in the third class or even storage on the ships. This in itself was a dangerous place for a consumption patient, since it could aggravate the illness more. Poor consumption patients would not fare well in South Africa, and he hammers on the point that consumption patients have to have the necessary funds.³³ Dr. Scholtz also mentions in his book that poor invalids should not come to South Africa, since comfortable living costs were high and the patient could for the same amount of money rather stay in Britain, as it would serve him better, since for the same amount the quality of food and housing he would receive in South Africa would pale in comparison. There were also not many jobs on offer in South Africa for consumption patients, and it seemed the sooner the hopes for recovery had faded, the quicker the patients died. Therefore he suggests that English doctors rather send the poorer patients to other European health resorts, so that they could die with friends and family within reach.³⁴

³² W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, pp. 11-12.

³³ "Consumptive Patients in South Africa," *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.2001), May 6, 1899, p.1107.

³⁴ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, pp. 21-22.

So it seems that South Africa as a health resort was not only not for the poor, but also not for the faint hearted. More warnings were issued about life in the colony, and this was in regard to luxuries. The housing and the food as well as the environment and therefore patients are warned to be prepared to leave behind the ideas and pleasures that go along with the life in the cities, and to remember that many comforts they might know will not be available to them. Invalids had to be able to ‘rough’ it out in the interior towns where luxuries were not readily known.³⁵ Dr. Thompson also warns in his paper that “health seekers” had to be evaluated by the doctors, so that they did not send someone to South Africa who has lived such a pampered life, that they would not be able to adapt to the colonial way of life. He also mentions that those people, who were recovered from their illness faster, were those who could learn to accept and adapt to their new surroundings, and that it would therefore be pointless to send anyone to South Africa who would not be able to reach such a compromise.³⁶

In a letter to the *British Medical Journal* consumptives are warned that only those who were “robust, in an early stage [of consumption] not too dependent on comforts and with sufficient means to live without working for up to a year”³⁷ should venture out to South Africa. In a letter to the *British Medical Journal* in 1895, Surgeon-Colonel Hamilton also commented on the fact that the accommodation in South Africa after you “leave the peninsula” was in very poor shape, and was told by an invalid officer that even though the climate has helped with his illness, the food was undercooked and that in a sense he was starving.³⁸ In more than one source it is reported with some apprehension that meat or mutton was apparently served in the Cape every day, and therefore became known as “365.”³⁹ What this meant was that invalids had to be prepared when venturing out to South Africa, for an experience much different from other health resorts in Europe.

³⁵ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 31.

³⁶ J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 7 .

³⁷ F. Wyati-Smith: “Consumptive Patients in South Africa,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.2004), May 27,1899, p.1310.

³⁸ Surgeon-Colonel Hamilton.: “Notes on Health Resorts. XIX. South Africa as a Health Resort,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.1778), Jan 26,1895, pp. 206-207.

³⁹ F. Wyati-Smith: “Consumptive Patients in South Africa,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol. 1), (No.2004), May 27,1899, p. 1310. & W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 56.

While there were some invalids who only had to visit South Africa for a brief period, there were also those who made it their permanent home because of their health. These would be the third class patients who Thompson wrote about in 1888. Thompson claimed that for one to succeed in life, one has to work hard in order to achieve ones full potential, but a person can only do that if he is in good health. He was in favour of the British population using their Colonies as “health stations” and “breathing space for our teeming home population.”⁴⁰ According to Dr. Thompson, not all who lived in Britain was suited for it when it came to their health, because people who suffered from bad health would find it difficult to reach their full potential in the “competitive” world that was Britain. But he had a cure for that so to speak, and this cure was the colonies. For in the colony there would be less pressure and more peace, as well as a healthy climate, and with all these factors combined a man that might have been worthless in Britain, could therefore “rise to eminence” in these colonies. South Africa was said to possess such men, who because of their failing health in the difficult climate of Britain, came and settled in the Colony, and achieved greatness because their health problems had disappeared.⁴¹ So South Africa as a health resort held more than just the cure of disease, it also held the promise of giving a man a chance of gaining a successful place in society as well as a career, and this was proven by the many cases of invalids who had come to South Africa and who had reached the top both professionally as well as socially. According to Dr. A. Fuller, this was proof of South Africa’s efficient climate.⁴²

Exactly what was so remarkable about South Africa’s climate? In a *Cape Times* article South Africa as a health resort was ‘sold’ to the European inhabitants as “The land of soaking sunlight, and crisp dryness and the cool night-wind.”⁴³ A book by Dr. Arthur Fuller, *South Africa as a Health Resort*, described the climate of South Africa as well the different health resorts that one could be visit in South Africa. This was a multiple editions book, and would be updated as to include all the changes and advances the country enjoyed.⁴⁴ In this book Dr. Fuller gives what he saw as important factors in climate, which gave South Africa the right to be classified as a health resort for consumption patients. Dr. Fuller explained that there were

⁴⁰ J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 6 .

⁴¹ J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 6 .

⁴² Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 19.

⁴³ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 52.

⁴⁴ “Notes on a Health Resorts,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No.2013), Jul 29, 1899, pp. 281-282.

“principle features” which combined, created a county’s climate. These include “temperature, moisture; atmospheric pressure; sunshine; wind; rain and snow; nature of soil and elevation above sea-level.”⁴⁵ These features were what a consumption patient would need in a health resort, so the focus of Dr. Fuller’s book was on consumption patients, but it could have been helpful to any other traveller thinking of visiting South Africa. A health resort’s temperature had to be warm, between 60 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. But warmth was not always necessary, instead it was the dryness of the air that was all important and the absence of moisture.⁴⁶ The Cape interior was said to have excessive dry and clear air, all perfect for the consumption invalid.⁴⁷ The dryness in the air was also said to make both heat and cold more bearable, and as proof of that, Dr. Fuller mentioned that even the most hardened colonist, used to the South African heat, struggled in the English summer, because of the heightened moisture that was found in the air. It seems then that South Africa was blessed by its dry air.⁴⁸

Another important feature was elevation and the atmospheric pressure. At first it was believed that high elevation was harmful for consumption patients, but as the knowledge of the illness and the methods of how to treat it grew, it became clear that elevation was in fact good. The higher the elevation was, the better the atmosphere was, and this was important for consumptive patients. There was said to have been discovered that the amount of atmospheric bacteria lessened the higher the elevation was, and this benefitted the patient. Wind was said to be important as a climatic feature that had to be avoided by invalids, since dust brought on by excessive winds was harmful to the chest.⁴⁹ Dust was seen as the “curse” of South Africa and was one of the negative factors that counted against a town being a good health resort or not.⁵⁰

One of the features South Africa had in abundance was sunshine. South Africa’s sunshine had been its claim to fame for many years, and this was one of the major components needed

⁴⁵ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 4.

⁴⁷ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁹ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁰ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 37.

in climatic treatment of invalids suffering from consumption as there was this idea of the healing power of the sun.⁵¹ Rain, snow and the nature of the soil all had to do with the moisture in the atmosphere and according to Fuller, because of the rapid rainfall in some parts of South Africa, the moisture in the air was lessened and because there are certain regions that receive rain in summer, these regions were most favourable for consumptive patients because of the heat combined with the dryness of the air. So it seems that South Africa had all that was needed in terms of climate and could therefore be classified as a health resort. But there was one other factor that also played a big role. Consumption was contagious, which meant it was passed on quickly in high density towns. What South Africa had on offer was “pure unbreathed air,” which could be found in the elevated plateaux where there was high altitudes and thinly populated towns. Therefore the best climate for a consumptive invalid was a dry atmosphere which received rapid rainfall in the summer and which was elevated above sea-level, containing the minimum of people with hours of pure sunshine and almost no wind. South Africa was therefore seen by Fuller as the perfect health resort for European health seekers since the climate was so much more different and dryer than that of Europe “and [met], perhaps as much as any climate in the world, the recuperative conditions laid down.⁵² Brown, in his guide books go even further in praising the health giving qualities of the Cape Colony, by referring to those decedents of the early European settlers who by then had lived in South Africa for many generations as being healthy. Their “size and stamina” was seen as proof of the health giving climate of South Africa.⁵³

A traveller’s paradise: Two of the first ever health resort towns in the Cape

South Africa was therefore fully ‘licensed’ in a manner of speaking, to be called a health resort. But it is also interesting to note that sometimes towns themselves were also called health resorts because of their unique climatic character and setting. Therefore when different towns in South Africa were evaluated, they were also later called health resorts in their own right. In Doctor Fuller, Scholtz and Thompson’s books as well as the South African guide

⁵¹ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 5. & A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 40.

⁵² Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, pp. 5-8. & A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 39.

⁵³ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 40.

books written by Brown, the towns of South Africa were evaluated according to their individual worth as health resorts. The Karoo and many Karoo towns were highly praised as being blessed with healing climates and even healing thermal springs. The thermal springs were mentioned in combination with various health resort towns, since sometimes the climate was not necessarily the reason for the claim of a health resort, but rather the thermal spring itself. Many towns in the Cape Colony and throughout South Africa were lavishly praised for their climate, and the guide books by Brown on South Africa documented these well and made for an interesting read. There are also many others of similar ilk.⁵⁴ Particularly two towns had significant reputations as health resorts and will be looked at briefly to show the popularity they enjoyed even outside of South Africa, which in turn brought both tourists and invalids from Britain to South Africa.

The first town that was praised was Ceres. Dr. Gustav Zahn, the district surgeon, was so taken up with Ceres's potential as a health resort for especially consumption patients, that he wrote a pamphlet in 1887 describing the village as well as its sanatorium.⁵⁵ Ceres as a village was created in 1854, and it was easily reached by train, since it was only 84 miles from Cape Town.⁵⁶ Ceres was the first town to be publically named a health resort, by a Dr. Harry Leach from London, after he visited South Africa in 1878. Dr. Zahn tells in this pamphlet of how he had received many invalids from Europe, suffering with lung problems, and how well his patients recovered during their stay. These positive reviews of Ceres encouraged more invalids to visit the town.⁵⁷ In 1895 a Dr. W.T. Hertz, who suffered from phthisis and therefore stayed in Ceres for some time, proclaimed in a German newspaper, the *Hamburger Zeitung* that Ceres was a wonderful place to visit for those suffering from lung diseases. He even went as far as to compare Ceres with other famous European health resorts, and felt that none had as good a climate as Ceres.⁵⁸

These recommendations, all made by doctors, must have influenced potential patients to venture out to the Cape Colony to receive relief and healing from their illness. One can even

⁵⁴ See A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, Sampson Low, Marston & Company Ltd, Cape Town, 1899-1910.

⁵⁵ G.A.R. Zahn: *Ceres as a Health Resort in South Africa especially for Consumption Invalids*, p.3.

⁵⁶ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 26.

⁵⁷ G.A.R. Zahn: *Ceres as a Health Resort in South Africa especially for Consumption Invalids*, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁸ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 26. & G.A.R. Zahn: *Ceres as a Health Resort in South Africa especially for Consumption Invalids*, p. 7.

go as far as to speculate that this boom in tourists that came to South Africa in search of not only relaxation but health, spurred on the early tourism development of South Africa in the form of hotels and early forms of guest houses. This improvement and development was seen in the case of Ceres, where with the rise of visiting invalids, the supplies and equipment that was in line with giving a service to the visitors, and gradually began to improve in especially the “hotel and boarding-house” sector. Even the sanitation was attended to, making sure that it was up to standard, and a sanatorium was built⁵⁹ so that those patients who did not want to “rough it [could] have the comforts consumptives required.”⁶⁰

Dr. Zahn also mentioned the great number of visitors, consisting of invalids and tourists, but many of them came with the specific need for “health purposes.” This is where one can start to see the emergence of the so-called present modern day health or wellness tourism in South Africa. People were travelling to South Africa with the aim of regaining their health as a first priority. Dr. Zahn even included five cases as proof of patients, locals and international, who received health benefits from residing at Ceres. It was interesting to see that one patient, who came from England to South Africa, was so sick, that he was told he would not survive another British winter. Therefore he came to the Cape, and eventually went to Ceres, where he recovered very well, and was able to function normally again.⁶¹

The second town, that of Matjiesfontein, also made its mark as a health resort in the nineteenth century. Matjiesfontein was known as the “little oasis on the border of the Karoo desert.”⁶² The fact that it became a health resort, popular under especially the English, was thanks to the vision and hard work of James Douglas Logan. Matjiesfontein was also popular because it was situated near Cape Town and easily accessible by train. The railway line reached Matjiesfontein in 1878, making it easier for visitors to travel there from the coast. The air of Matjiesfontein was said to be wonderfully dry and bracing, and at the same time not too stimulating for the body and the altitude was just less than 3000 feet. This made Matjiesfontein a good candidate for being a health resort, especially for consumptive

⁵⁹ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 60.

⁶⁰ J.K. Murry: “Notes on Health Resorts. XX. South Africa as a Health Resort,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.1795), May 25, 1895, p.1158.

⁶¹ G.A.R. Zahn: *Ceres as a Health Resort in South Africa especially for Consumption Invalids*, pp. 16, 19.

⁶² Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 76.

patients.⁶³ James Logan, who reached the Karoo in 1883, was a consumption invalid, who came to South Africa to restore his health. Logan decided to buy land around Matjiesfontein, which was his “headquarters” and his health improved greatly, allowing him to live to the age of sixty two. After experiencing the healthy climate of Matjiesfontein, Logan saw the potential for a health resort, and he wanted to build a sanatorium so that other consumptive patients could come and recover there. This dream never materialised, but he kept it alive by having a resident doctor, a Dr. Robertson, who himself was a consumptive sufferer. Logan brought amenities to the town, like housing for the sick, and that made it possible for it to become the “Karoo’s major health resort.”⁶⁴

This was quite a feat, and Matjiesfontein’s popularity grew under rich English invalids who suffered from consumption, and many travelled and stayed there to recuperate. In British high society, travelling to Cape Town was not complete without having stayed at Matjiesfontein and Logan made a name for himself and the village, which was said to have been known by all in the British Empire.⁶⁵ Matjiesfontein was now in the position of rivalling other famous health resorts like Ceres, making it clear that Matjiesfontein’s reputation was now firmly in place and known in both the Colony and England. Before long ‘famous’ people from England came to visit at Matjiesfontein. One such a visitor was an English cricket player, George Alfred Lohman, who came to South Africa in 1893 on account of consumption. He stayed at Ceres for a while, but Logan, knowing what renown was included in Lohman’s stay, invited him to come and stay at Matjiesfontein. Lohman was very pleased with the climate of Matjiesfontein and was said to have been the best he ever experienced before. Unfortunately, not all survived the cure of consumption, no matter the climate, and Lohman died at Matjiesfontein in 1901.⁶⁶ Another famous patron of Matjiesfontein was the author Olive Schreiner who was seeking relief for her “chronic asthma” and she was so happy with her

⁶³ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 61. & R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Karoo-A Nineteenth Century Health Resort,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.5), Issue 2, Aug 1979, p. 10.

⁶⁴ R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Karoo-A Nineteenth Century Health Resort,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.5), Issue 2, Aug 1979, p. 10.

⁶⁵ R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Karoo-A Nineteenth Century Health Resort,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.5), Issue 2, Aug 1979, p. 10. & D. Allen: ‘*Cricket, War and Empire*’: *James Logan and the Creation of Matjiesfontein*, Unpublished paper, 2010, p. 6.

⁶⁶ D. Allen: ‘*Cricket, War and Empire*’: *James Logan and the Creation of Matjiesfontein*, Unpublished paper, 2010, p. 11. & R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Karoo-A Nineteenth Century Health Resort,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.5), Issue 2, Aug 1979, p. 11.

stay that she said that she would be happy to return to Matjiesfontein again.⁶⁷ With these patrons and good climate, Matjiesfontein became a renowned health resort for those wanting to breathe fresh air and recover from illness. Even internationally it was known, and this definitely helped with the formation of the status of South Africa as a health resort.

Both these towns were situated in the Karoo or the near Karoo region. There were several other towns which was said to be a health resort and each town in South Africa had some sort of climatic advantage that would be useful for an invalid. But the Karoo region was by far the most praised for its curative powers by many, particularly for the relief it gave consumption patients. The Karoo air was dry and smoke-free, much different than the city of London with its industries and smog filled air.⁶⁸ Commenting on the health giving properties of the Karoo, one invalid spoke of the “grand climate” and stated that, “the Karoo [was] the only chance to get my health back.”⁶⁹ One can therefore assume that the towns that fell in the greater Karoo region would themselves also be seen as possessing aspects needed in a health resort, like Ceres and Matjiesfontein showed. Other towns that were credited with this reputation were Beaufort West, Cradock, Kimberly, Fraserburg, Victoria West and Aliwal North.⁷⁰ Aliwal North and Cradock in fact had two health giving factors, the climate, as well as the warm water mineral springs that could be found in the town and once again shows that connecting the idea of health resorts in South Africa with thermal springs are appropriate.⁷¹ This reputation that the Karoo and its various towns received was summed up by Dr. E.S. Thompson when he wrote: “this dryness is in harmony with the nature of the Great Karoo district, which determines the character of South Africa as a health resort.”⁷²

As the popularity of South Africa as a health resort grew, so did the amount of invalids and tourists who came to visit South Africa in search of health. Dr Thompson speaks of a holiday for not just invalids but a summer holiday, already pointing to the fact that people started

⁶⁷ R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Karoo-A Nineteenth Century Health Resort,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.5), Issue 2, Aug 1979, p. 11.

⁶⁸ R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Karoo-A Nineteenth Century Health Resort,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.5), Issue 2, Aug 1979, p. 9.

⁶⁹ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 63.

⁷⁰ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 75.

⁷¹ A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 179, 195.

⁷² J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 30 .

visiting South Africa, not just in need of healing, but as a holiday destination as well, and this can be seen as the start of a form of a tourism sector in South Africa.⁷³ Guide books were used by prospecting visitors to find out a bit more about the country that they want to visit. Guide books about South Africa were also published and a several editions of a guide book written by A.S. Brown, entitled *The Guide to South Africa* was very popular. This book could not only help invalids or people thinking of settling in South Africa to learn more about the country, it could also help “medical men” to see where to send their patients, on account of South Africa’s reputation as a health resort. The fifth edition of this book was even discussed in the *British Medical Journal* in January 1898.⁷⁴

This guide advertised its use to “tourists, sportsmen, invalids and settlers.”⁷⁵ Tourists were encouraged in the preface of the books to come and experience the many attractions that has not been explored yet by tourists, and the book was based on European guide books, so that the tourist could be informed about what places was worthwhile to see, how to get there, what to expect and how a typical tour would be experienced. For the invalids and settlers information about the climate and South Africa as a health resort was supplied, and this was also done so that European doctors could choose an appropriate resident for their patient when they did visit South Africa for health reasons. Another bonus South Africa, a colony of Britain, had to offer was that English was spoken almost anywhere. This must have been a welcome change from other European health resorts. Medical men was also informed that South Africa was one of “few hot countries were Europeans tend[ed] to increase largely in weight,” because the great variation between night and day.⁷⁶

The guidebooks could also have helped to spur on tourism to South Africa because it highlighted all the attractions that different sort of tourists would want to be informed upon, opening up the country to exploration. An article that Dr. Scholtz included in his book *The South African Climate: including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, mentions how that the travelling facilities in South Africa had increased and developed further, which would now give “the health-seeker” a chance to move

⁷³ J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴ “Notes on a Health Resorts,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No.2013), Jul 29, 1899, p. 282.

⁷⁵ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. vi.

⁷⁶ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. vi- vii.

with the seasons in the country, so that they could have summer all year round. For this to happen, the transport and accommodation in South Africa must have developed rapidly and accordingly to serve the needs of these early health tourists.⁷⁷ It is said that the commuting by train began to improve and that hotel keepers was “improving their accommodation and their cuisine.”⁷⁸

These improvements were in reaction to the modern modes of transport that was now available to tourists or health seekers, and brought “all parts of the world within easy reach” of one another.⁷⁹ These transport included steamships as well as railway systems which improved during the late nineteenth century.⁸⁰ Railways in South Africa before 1890 was limited to the English colonies, but it seemed that after that the Republics of Transvaal and the Free State slowly but surely also came equipped with railways.⁸¹ With the invention of steam ships and improved navigation, the ocean, once a treacherous foe, now became the “playground for those seeking health or rest.”⁸² So now it was easier for tourists and invalids to travel to South Africa, and this meant financial gain for the colony since wealthy health seekers would spend money during their stay, and some might even have decided to settle in South Africa after the return of their health, and they would then contribute to the countries material wealth.⁸³

Dr. Thompson encouraged the British citizens to instead of spending money on visiting foreign countries, should rather make use the health resorts the British Empire had on offer, so in other words they had to travel to the colonies, and then spend their money on British soil. He asked medical men to the support the “national aim” by sending their patients to South Africa instead of a foreign health resort. Invalids brought with them wealth and this was something the Colony needed, so doctors were asked to help with this sort of ‘funding’

⁷⁷ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 27.

⁷⁸ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 42.

⁷⁹ Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 1.

⁸⁰ J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 8.

⁸¹ A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 24.

⁸² A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 4.

⁸³ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 28.

of the Cape Colony. But coming to South Africa did not only have to be in search of health, but also of a holiday,⁸⁴ and Dr. Scholtz included in his book an article where the writer encouraged “the man of leisure and means” to see the Cape as a vacationing resort, like Italy or the Rhine, which enjoyed a major influx of wealthy tourist. South Africa had to be made into a “sanatorium and pleasure resort” by the people of Britain, by choosing it over all other health resorts.⁸⁵

There were many stories and statements made by health seekers who ended up staying in South Africa after experiencing the healing power of the South African climate. One such a patron was none other than the famous Cecil John Rhodes. Rhodes was diagnosed at fifteen years of age with a severe case of consumption, and was believed to be at death’s door. He travelled to the Cape, not to be cured, but to try and survive a couple of months longer. But miraculously he was cured by the South African climate, and lived to become South Africa’s foremost capitalist. Rhodes became a fierce patron for South Africa as a health resort because of the recuperation experienced.⁸⁶ To show his appreciation and gratitude to the county for healing him, he proposed the building of a sanatorium for consumption invalids in Kimberley. This sanatorium became very well known and was another reason South Africa was considered as a country full of individual health resorts.⁸⁷ Even in the *British Medical Journal* there were letters from people who knew people that went to South Africa and recovered and prospered because of the healthy climate. Many of these new patrons were doctors in their own right and with them experiencing the healing climate and surroundings of South Africa for themselves, could only have helped South Africa’s claim to health resort fame.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, pp. 8, 33.

⁸⁵ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 28.

⁸⁶ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, pp. 44-45, 50.

⁸⁷ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p.76.

⁸⁸ W. Chr. Arniston & A. Kinsey-Morgan: “South Africa as a Health Resort,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.1), (No.1839), Mar. 28, 1896, p. 813.

An introduction to the bubbly sunshine⁸⁹ waters of South Africa's thermal springs

South Africa could not only boast with a healing climate, but also with an abundance of healing thermal mineral springs. The reason why South Africa's climate had to be discussed in the previous piece was because the healing climate and the healing springs went hand in hand. The South African sun was a big attraction, and there was believed that sunlight and appropriate surroundings contributed to the medical and healing properties of the thermal waters in South Africa. If there was two thermal springs identical in chemical composition and temperature, but the one was situated in a cold and damp environment, and the other situated in an environment filled with sunlight, it is certain that the "sunshine spring" would be the most effective in healing. These environments reminds one of Britain and South Africa, and could explain the various amounts of British and Europeans that visited South African springs because of its sunny and dry climate. One can therefore understand the fascination with the South African climate, and why both the climate and thermal springs were defining features in giving South Africa the title as a health resort.⁹⁰ The rest of the chapter will briefly introduce one to technical side of thermal springs, their uses and importance as well as how they were used as tourist attractions. The thermal water culture and belief in the curative waters in South Africa will be discussed in full in Chapter six.

These springs became very popular in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, and were frequented by South Africans and British visitors alike. But these springs have a very long history, and is said to have been known and used by the "Khoisan" people long before the Europeans arrived. When the European colonists arrived in the area known presently as the Western Cape, they were taught about the healing properties of these thermal springs by the "Khoisan" people. By that time the indigenous people were already using the springs to bathe in. The San people were made aware of this "sacred waters" by animals such as baboons and elephants, which went to these springs when they were in need of healing.⁹¹ This 'trend' was also evident in California where injured bears showed hunters the springs they would use it after being hurt and in France a warhorse rolled in the mud of a spring, recovering from fatigue.⁹² Therefore it is evident that through the help of nature, men were made aware of

⁸⁹ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, p. 5.

⁹⁰ L. Kent: *Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika*, pp. 1-2.

⁹¹ S. Spicer & J. Nepgen: *Holistic holidays in South Africa: Health spas, hot springs, magical places and sacred spaces*, p. 15.

⁹² L. Kent: *Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika*, p. 7.

these sacred and healing springs, a gift from deep under the earth. When the Dutch arrived at the Cape as the first colonisers the thermal springs of “Kaap de Goede Hoop” gradually came into their own.⁹³

One can argue that through these European influences in using the thermal springs, the culture was introduced to South Africa, and that the later Afrikaner culture derived their use of the healing springs from this knowledge passed on for generations. A vast majority of different European settlers came to South Africa, including Dutch, French, German and of course British. Because of the status the thermal water cure had in Europe, the thermal springs would have been the first medical treatment sought by the early colonial settlers. Already in 1695 the springs were mentioned by a J.G. Grevenbroek⁹⁴ and in 1724 Francois Valentyn mentioned and called the thermal springs an asset of the Dutch East India Company, showing the importance the springs enjoyed already in the 1700s. He commented that the springs were used by the indigenous groups in forms of a mud bath and that these springs were especially useful in the treatment of rheumatism and chest illness.⁹⁵

The Dutch East India Company made use of the thermal springs and there were many officials who became ill and rundown while working in the East who used the waters to be rejuvenated and healed. When Britain took over the Cape permanently in 1806, they too realised the value of their new colony’s thermal springs. English East India officers like their Dutch predecessors, also used the waters and baths to heal the ills they contracted while working in India.⁹⁶ India had many diseases like cholera and the bubonic plague, and the only way one was to heal from these complaints was by leaving the country altogether. But the journey back to England was very strenuous, and a sick man would barely have survived the four month at sea. But there was hope for the so called “Indian invalids,”⁹⁷ and this was the Cape, that lay half way and had an excellent and healing climate. What was more, the British East India Company would pay an official’s transport to the Cape and continued to give him his full pay, but this was only applicable to the Cape. Therefore many of these invalids from India chose to go to the Cape for treatment. In the Cape accommodation for these visitors developed, and hotels made a special appeal to these invalids, catering for their specific

⁹³ “Cape of Good Hope” in L. Kent: *Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika*, p. 2.

⁹⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 14.

⁹⁵ L. Kent: *Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika*, p. 2.

⁹⁶ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, p. 6.

⁹⁷ R.R. Langham-Carter: “Medical Treatment of “Indian” visitors to the Cape,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.4), Issue 1, Feb 1978, p. 12.

needs. The baths of Caledon was said to have been frequented by these invalids, and an advertisement that was brought out in 1842 was focussed on this 'Indian' group of visitors. Caledon's warm and chalybeate waters was said to heal many different ailments, including rheumatism.⁹⁸ The thermal baths became patronized by these Indian invalids, who with their strong belief in the healing power of the water could have encouraged the Colonials to follow their example.⁹⁹ Many doctors who worked in India and who had fallen ill would come to the Cape for treatment, and then decided to remain and open up practises. When the route to India through Egypt was opened first by land and then by the Suez Canal, Indian invalids could reach England much faster, and so the Cape's reign over these invalids ended.¹⁰⁰

It is then clear that the British supported and valued the thermal springs and baths of their colony greatly, and because of the big spa culture that had already developed in Britain in spa towns like Bath, this knowledge and culture was now passed on to the Colony. Many times the Colony's thermal waters were said to be equal to that of the thermal waters in England, and this must have given their reputation quite a boost.¹⁰¹

The technical analysis of thermal mineral springs found in South Africa

A thermal spring consists of water flowing naturally from under the ground if disturbed by some geological, hydrological or human force. The water then rises to the surface because of pressure and that is when a thermal spring is born. There are different sorts of factors or groupings that can be seen as the supplier of heat to the thermal water springs and these include

“direct volcanic activity, geothermal temperature gradient as water passes through subterranean rocks or fractures and fissures in rock formations resulting in pressure built-up that heats the water as it passes.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ R.R. Langham-Carter: “Medical Treatment of “Indian” visitors to the Cape,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.4), Issue 1, Feb 1978, p.12.

⁹⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 112.

¹⁰⁰ R.R. Langham-Carter: “Medical Treatment of “Indian” visitors to the Cape,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.4), Issue 1, Feb 1978, p.13.

¹⁰¹ J.S. O'Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, p. 8. & B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 9.

¹⁰² P. Erfurt-Cooper, & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p.131.

South African springs are said to come from the last two groups, as Leslie Kent explained, because there is a presence of deep fault-zones through which “continual circular convection” is supplied and where rain and “surface runoff water “can reach the depths. Here the water takes up heat from the rocks and is then returned to the surface at a rapid pace, resulting in the minimum heat loss. “In general the heat is attributed to the normal geothermal gradient” but there are also some cases where heat is absorbed because of “late Tertiary to Recent movement” that happened “along the fault-zones.” This heat can be trapped because rocks are not good at conducting heat, and the heat can therefore be ‘stored’ longer. Kent remarks on the great number of thermal springs South Africa have as a country with a “non-volcanic stable shield.” South Africa had a total of 87 thermal mineral springs in 1969, according to Kent.¹⁰³

The thermal springs that were found in the Colony were situated in certain positions or places, making the water they offered different and unique. The spring at Aliwal North is found in the Beaufort Beds and Malmesbury’s springs radiated from “old clay slates and granite. But all the other springs like those at Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal’s Oliphant river springs, are said to radiate from or near “the junction of the Table Mountain Sandstone with the Bokkeveld Beds.” According to E.H.L. Schwarz each of the hot springs also has a cold one accompanying it or flowing nearby.¹⁰⁴

A thermal mineral spring has certain well defined characteristics. These include having a high temperature, having some sort of particular entity that is not found in ordinary water or a large amount of “dissolved minerals.” It does happen that mineral springs are sometimes mistaken for medical springs, but there are many mineral springs which have no healing properties and some prestigious medical springs which when looked at chemically, is almost pure water. Different medical springs, containing many diluted salt solutions, has one thing in common, their water. But there are a variety of medical springs and this difference can be due to saline or gaseous properties, or factors like temperature and radio-activity. Therefore one can have many different kinds of medical springs which will work for different kinds of ailments. The saline mineral waters are made up out of “chlorides, bromides, iodides, sulphates, phosphates, carbonates and iron and magnesium and calcium,” to name a few. Some gasses found in mineral waters include carbon dioxide, sulphuretted hydrogen,

¹⁰³ L.E. Kent: *The Thermal Springs and flowing boreholes of the Republic of South Africa*, p. 1, 2, 6.

¹⁰⁴ E.H.L. Schwarz: *Hot Springs*, pp. 1-2.

nitrogen, argon, helium and radium. It is said that the healing power of the water can be contributed to the sulphuretted hydrogen or carbon dioxide it contains. There is also a gas that emits radium known as radon.¹⁰⁵

Prof. M Rindl in his book, *Medical Springs of South Africa*, took it upon himself to draw up a table of the “International Standard Measurements and classification of South African Medicinal Springs.” This initiative was implemented by the International Society of Medical Hydrology in 1931 and was done so that the way in which analytical data of medical springs was presented could become uniform and part of an international system, so that the confusion of the earlier years could be avoided. This ‘mineral water register’ of South Africa included only those springs who by that time had already been chemically classified and who offered accommodation and treatment. Because there were so many different kinds of springs, all the springs that were of the same group was placed together. The first group was the “indifferent waters,” which contained small amounts of “dissolved carbon dioxide and saline constitutes.” Mineral springs at Montagu and Goudini fell into this group. The next group was the sulphur water group, which received its healing properties from the alkaline sulphides and sulphuretted hydrogen. Aliwal North and Malmesbury fell into this group. Then there were the chalybeate or iron waters which derived its medicinal advantages from the amount of iron in the water. Caledon is one of the famous hot iron springs. There were also alkaline springs which contained alkaline carbonates and bicarbonates as well as salt springs which contained sodium chloride. There were some springs like Brandvlei and Olifants River Baths near Citrusdal that could not be included in the registry because it did not meet all the requirements. But if it was to be included, it would have fallen in the indifferent waters group.¹⁰⁶

The therapeutic claim of the thermal mineral water springs of South Africa

The therapeutic properties of thermal mineral waters was a phenomenon that was widely researched and water that could be used for therapeutic treatments was classified as warm between 99-104 degrees Fahrenheit and very warm above 104 degrees Fahrenheit. When thermal mineral water was used internally it was important to know how alkaline or acidic the water is. In volcanic regions the waters are said to be very acidic, but the springs that

¹⁰⁵ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁶ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, pp. 16-17.

could be found in the Union of South Africa only had carbon dioxide, which was the gas found in fizzy drinks. These waters of South Africa were also said to be more alkaline in nature, which were known to help some digestive illnesses. The waters of the Union was hypotonic, where the waters contains less salts than that of the body fluids and some were even isotonic, where the waters and the body fluids had almost the same amount of dissolved salt particulars. The temperature of the water, the time as well as the submersion had to be kept mind when bathing in weak mineralised waters, and these waters could be found at Citrusdal and Montagu.¹⁰⁷

Hydrotherapy is the modern day equivalent for the age old water cure. This cure literarily means healing through water, administered internally or externally. This water cure was used in the ancient Roman world, and from the middle ages up to the nineteenth century European and American thermal water resorts was a gathering place where invalids and holiday makers could be healed and enjoy socialising with one another. The springs of South Africa was said to have been a Mecca to flee to for invalids with all sorts of illnesses for more than two hundred and fifty years.¹⁰⁸ One of the main illness that had a negative impact on people in the nineteenth and twentieth century was rheumatism. Hydrology could be used to relieve the pain that accompanied rheumatism, but according to Prof. Rindl, the cost of proper treatment was very high and therefore only those with means could experience this form of healing and that spas in Europe and America were still only accessible “as playgrounds” to the wealthy. Even in South Africa the curse of rheumatism had struck much harder than was thought originally and this was seen in the number of farmers and people living near mineral springs with healing properties, who frequented these waters even if there were no accommodation available, in search of relief. South Africans were as a matter of fact blessed with having this age old cure for rheumatism, in the form of warm water springs at their doorstep.¹⁰⁹ Rheumatism, although the main illness which even had its own bath at some thermal bath establishments, was not the only disease the thermal waters were said to cure and other illnesses that was said to have been cured by the Cape’s thermal waters were “wounds; skin ailments, liver infection and other liver ailments; digestive problems and weakness in the body.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ L. Kent: *Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ B. Booyens: “Die Waterkuur en Waterdokters van die Paarl,” *Tydskrif vir Volkskunde en Volkstaal*, (Vol.40), (No.3), September 1984, pp. 15.

¹⁰⁹ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 112-113.

Treatment in thermal mineral waters could take place in various ways such as baths and douches and the water could also be drunk, inhaled or gargled. When water is drunk in vast quantities it has a flushing out effect, and therefore different water had a different effect on the body. Hyper-thermal baths had water that is higher than the body's temperature, and is said to give relief to rheumatic and spasm pains. Sub-thermal baths were said to have a sedative effect on the body, and these baths could be used in treating nervousness and mental fatigue. Saline waters could help treat urinary tract diseases and alkaline waters were used in the treatment of digestive disorders. There were also some springs that contain iron which helped with skin diseases and anaemia. Sulphur waters could remedy tuberculosis as well as rheumatic illnesses, and these springs must have been very valuable for consumption patients that came to South Africa, because they would get a double cure in the form of the healthy climate and waters.¹¹¹

It was only in the first quarter of the twentieth century that the water cure was to be issued with more caution, but in the nineteenth century the belief in the water in South Africa was at its peak. This could be seen in the faith Dr. Johannes Knockers van Oosterzee put in the healing power of the waters. In 1829 he identified up to twenty nine illnesses that could be cured by using the thermal mineral baths. What one has to remember is that in those years illnesses were identified and treated according to their symptoms, which meant that there was not a culture of preventative medication, and that the symptoms were largely treated and not necessarily the illness itself. Another piece of evidence concerning the importance the springs enjoyed as medical treatment in the Colony in the nineteenth century was the memorandum concerning the thermal mineral springs in the Colony that was compiled by the Cape governor after being requested by the Colonial Medical Committee in 1866.¹¹² In 1884 another list was compiled, entitled *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony* where "a full description of the rights, privileges, and reservations in favour of the public contained in the Title Deeds of the various Lands in this Colony on which Mineral or Thermal Springs exist, including also Government Lands" were given.¹¹³ In this list all the known thermal mineral springs were listed in the division where they were situated. These thermal springs, some situated on farms, included:

¹¹¹ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, pp. 14-15.

¹¹² B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 110-111.

¹¹³ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, p. 3.

“Caledon Baths; Olifants River Baths; Cradock Municipal Lands; Farm Warmwater; Farm Uitvlucht (Montagu); “Aan de Cogmans Kloof achter het Warme Bad; Uitvlucht; Farm Brandvallei; Farm “Aan de Groote Vlakte (Goudini Baths); Piece of ground in Commonage (Malmesbury)”¹¹⁴

There were some rights that were reserved for the public that was attached to the use of each of the baths. At Caledon the poor had to have access to the baths for free and the Grantee was not bound to keep the Bath or the Bath-house in a good condition. The Baths seems to have received a new owner in 1830. For the owner of The Olifants River Baths at Clanwilliam, the present day Citrusdal baths, it was stipulated that he would have to bring the buildings that was on the property already, in a proper state and money had to be charged for people visiting the baths. There were three different rates to be paid, but poor people were allowed to use the baths for free. The baths at Cradock had to be kept in a proper state for the use and benefit of the public. The Farm Warmwater at Oudtshoorn had to be used by the public and land was set aside for them to erect accommodation. The Farm Uitvlucht (Montagu) at Robertson had a hot spring and this spring must have been accessible by the public at all times and the roads leading to the baths had to remain free.¹¹⁵

The “Aan de Cogmans Kloof achter het Warme Bad” at Robertson, like the one at Uitvlucht had to be accessible to the public as well and the roads had to remain free. People were allowed to “outspan” on the land but the cattle was not allowed to graze longer than twenty four hours. The farm Uitvlucht at Swellendam was also open to the public to be used as a hot bath and the “outspan” place had to remain free of charge.¹¹⁶ The Farm Brandvallei in the Worcester district was to be continued to be used by the public as a hot bath and the poor in the community was allowed to use the baths “gratis.”¹¹⁷ Another farm in the Worcester district Aan de Groote Vlakte (Goudini Baths) was also set out to be kept in use by the public as a hot bath and the poor was also granted free access. The Piece of ground in Commonage in the Malmesbury district had strict guidelines connected to it and the erection of a bath, which had to be followed accordingly. The owners present and future were tasked with

¹¹⁴ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, p. 5-12.

¹¹⁵ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, pp. 5-7.

¹¹⁶ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, p. 9.

¹¹⁷ “For free” in A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, p. 10.

keeping the springs clean and the pipes in good condition.¹¹⁸ These were the lists of thermal water springs by the 1884, and it was clear that it was already in some way used by the public as hot baths.

In 1897 Dr. William Scholtz remarked on how the balneology developed at an increasing rate. In his book *The South African Climate: including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest* he commented on the wonderful medical properties the waters had and the value they held. It was clear in this book that the climate of South Africa together with its thermal mineral waters were the principle reasons why South Africa was seen as a health resort, and that this is why health seekers from Europe came to the country as tourists or invalids and even settlers. Balneology was also very closely associated with climate, which means the one influenced the other. Dr. Scholtz mentioned that improvements were being made at the different mineral springs so that it could become more comfortable and advanced by those who frequent it as a health resort in itself. He noted that the better known springs were “Caledon Hot Mineral Bath, Malmesbury Baths, Montagu Springs, Aliwal North Sulphur Springs and Bran Vley Thermal Baths,” which were all known for being used to cure rheumatism and skin diseases.¹¹⁹ But these springs were not only used by European or visiting invalids, it was also used by the Afrikaner people, where it had become part of their medical culture because of the European influences. They also believed that the water had the power to heal rheumatism and gout. The amount of thermal mineral springs in the Colony started to rise in the nineteenth century when the belief and use of these springs became more common and also encouraged by doctors.¹²⁰ The Boers or Afrikaners were also aware of the bathing culture because of the amount of thermal spring in the Colony, and therefore they would have encountered its use early on, encouraging this method of healing by thermal mineral baths in their own medical culture.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, pp. 11-12.

¹¹⁹ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. 14.

¹²⁰ A. Muller: “Die Maatskaplike Bestel aan die Kaapkolonie in die 19de eeu – ‘n Kultuurhistoriese oorsig,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol.5), (No.1), June 1990, pp. 33-34.

¹²¹ E. Van Heyningen: *Medical history and Afrikaner society in the Boer Republics at the end of the nineteenth century*, Unisa Press, 2005, p. 21.

In South Africa the thermal water resorts were visited mainly for its curative properties. The aim of the visitor was not to socialise, but to be healed, and therefore they followed a strict set of rules from which they did not deviate. The way the thermal baths were used in South Africa was informed by tradition and what they experienced themselves. There were of course more modern medicines available, but at a very high cost and the baths were therefore often seen as a last resort for a dying or very ill patient.¹²²

Marketing of South Africa's thermal mineral springs abroad

Guidebooks about South Africa were very popular with visitors and travellers, but it was also these guidebooks that helped the thermal mineral springs of South Africa to be known internationally. Guidebooks and almanacs were very popular in the nineteenth and twentieth century and their purpose was to advertise the attraction in the Cape Colony and South Africa. The guidebooks of A.S. and G.G. Brown were known as *The Guide to South Africa* and in these and other advertisements the Cape and its thermal spring resorts were celebrated and the healing properties of these baths were never over looked.¹²³ In the guidebooks each town in South Africa was mentioned with its attractions, and every time the springs would feature. There was also a list of the minerals that could be found in the Cape Colony, and the mineral springs were mentioned in this list. According to Brown, the healing powers of the thermal springs were known in South Africa, but that they have not yet reached the attention of the doctors in Europe. Luckily this changed as the years passed and the mineral springs became widely known. The springs that were mentioned in the guidebooks included, one can presume where the most well known thermal springs like Malmesbury, Goudini, Brandvlei, Montagu, Caledon, Cradock, Aliwal North and Olifant's River to name a few.¹²⁴ Throughout the years most of the information in each edition, that was published annually, stayed the same, and when a new hotel or feature could be found in the Colony and later the Union, it was included. All the springs were mentioned in all of the editions and were found under the description of the town they were situated in or near. Of Caledon was said in 1889 edition that there was a Caledon Mineral Waters Sanatorium and that the baths were about three quarters of a mile from the village. The history of the Caledon bath was explained briefly, and the fact that it was used by the Dutch as well as the British for healing purposes was also

¹²² B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 97-98.

¹²³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 117.

¹²⁴ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 204.

mentioned. The diseases the baths cured, like gout and rheumatism are revealed, as well as the fact that there are seven springs, one cold and six hot. The chemical analysis of the water was also given informing the reader of its high iron content. This information was all that was needed to make a tourist or doctor aware of the healing Caledon baths and encourage a visit.¹²⁵

In the 1901 edition Montagu and its spring were also mentioned like in previous years. The springs were said to have been two miles from the town and that it was well known for healing rheumatism and that invalids from all over South Africa visited these springs for healing. Accommodation was also mentioned and the fact that there were eight bath rooms where one could bathe.¹²⁶ In the 1910 edition the hotel known as the Montagu Hot baths and Sanatorium was also mentioned. In 1904's edition Aliwal North and its "celebrated Sulphur Springs" were said to have attracted scores of invalids because of its perfect climate and its healing springs. It was also a very good place for consumptions to go and was seen as a health resort in its own right.¹²⁷ In the 1910 edition Malmesbury and its bathing establishment, which was a brick building with baths and dressing rooms were said to have been well known in South Africa as a place for healing rheumatism.¹²⁸

Prof. Rindl remarked that there were many older countries in the world that regarded their thermal medical springs as "assets worthy of scientific investigations and commercial exploitation." These countries, like Germany, used their springs, and marketed it accordingly to get tourists to come and visit the country.¹²⁹ Prof. Rindl in 1936 saw South Africa's medical springs as worthy of being called a "national asset" and that these springs could be developed and commercialised further so that they could become valuable in monetary and tourism terms as well. South Africa had one unique type of spring, in the form of the chalybeate or iron springs. South Africa is one of few places where these medical springs are hot rather than cold, and this warmth is said to increase the waters healing abilities. Therefore the potential of South Africa's springs had to be used to draw in tourists and to become an

¹²⁵ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 310.

¹²⁶ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 324.

¹²⁷ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, pp. 415-416.

¹²⁸ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 321.

¹²⁹ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, p. 4.

asset to the country. Heliotherapy or sun treatment was also starting to flourish in Europe by that time, and once again South Africa had the perfect climate to facilitate these new medical treatments. Prof. Rindle saw this and therefore felt very strongly that South Africa had to use their assets of climate and thermal mineral springs to become part of the market for tourists seeking health.¹³⁰ This could be seen as an echo from the doctors of the nineteenth century that celebrated and patronised South Africa as a health resort on its assets of a healthy climate and healing thermal springs.

Throughout South Africa's history it can then be seen that its natural assets of climate and thermal springs were one of the main reasons why tourists and invalids as well as emigrants came to South Africa. Even before the arrival of the European the springs were already in use by the local people and with the arrival of the Dutch as well as the British, these settlers made good use of the springs as well, because of the established bathing culture that already existed in Europe. When the British took the Cape as its colony, the natural wonders of the colony was further developed and utilised in the form of a medical treatment which consisted out of the climate and the thermal springs, which were also sometimes combined in accordance to treatments. The creation of the idea of South Africa as health resort grew with the patronage of renowned doctors and public figures such as Cecil John Rhodes. But the climate was not the only aspect that qualified South Africa as a health resort, since its thermal springs gave it an extra dimension that supplied it with a so called upper hand over other colonial health resorts. There were a large amount of thermal springs to be found in the colony, some more developed than others, and together with the dry sun filled climate it made South Africa the perfect host for not just climatology but also balneology and heliotherapy. Because of these double health attractions, invalids and tourists from all over South Africa and Europe came to these springs to be healed, opening up the country to an early form of health and wellness tourism, as well as the tourism industry itself. This could be seen in the rapid development of hotels and accommodation as well as sanitation and food supplies in the country. When the railways were developed further it made travelling to different parts of the country easier, increasing the number of tourists and health seekers that could come to the country by steamship and travel through the country much faster.

¹³⁰ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, pp. 7, 9.

The thermal springs of the country had developed with a distinct European flavour that was derived from the ancestry of the Afrikaner, who had strong bonds with the Dutch as well as the English because of the occupation of the Cape and later the whole of South Africa. The springs were chemically tested to see what kind of healing mineral properties they possessed and were then placed into groups according to which illness they would be able to heal. The use of these springs was even used in the fight with consumption and especially rheumatism. The belief in the healing waters was not only found with European doctors, but also South African doctors believed in its therapeutic power. The bathing culture that developed at the South African bathing resorts were a mixture of self experience and rituals which had European origins. These rituals had been passed down from generation to generation from the earliest European settlers where the bathing ritual was already perfected and assimilated into the South African and especially the Afrikaner bathing culture. This also meant that this form of treatment was part of the many medical treatments that formed the Afrikaner medical culture. The bathing culture that was well known in the nineteenth century continued well into the early twentieth century in South Africa and the rules of this age old tradition did not change much. The thermal springs of South Africa could therefore definitely be seen as a health asset that has been around since before the arrival of the settlers and were used by people from all walks of life. These springs gave hope to invalids and enjoyment to tourists and made South Africa a new Mecca for health seekers.

South Africa as a health resort paved the way for the popularity of the thermal mineral springs in South Africa to become one of the popular medical past times the country had to offer. In the next chapter the origin of the three most popular thermal springs in the Cape will be discussed to show how they were discovered and used in the seventeenth to eighteenth century.

Chapter 3:

Natural assets discovered: The origin of Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal's thermal mineral springs until the 1800s.

This chapter looks at the origins of the three springs found at the modern day towns of Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal. The discovery of each of these springs was unique and each of the bathing places developed in different phases. Although it is not clear when these springs were discovered by the indigenous population of the Cape, there are some indications of when the European Colonialists became aware of these thermal mineral springs. Therefore some springs may seem 'older' than others, because the development of these springs was only stimulated after their discovery by the Dutch colonialists. One has to note that early knowledge of a spring resulted in the existence of a larger information base about that spring's origins and development, and that for some springs the information about their discovery was limited and less easy to locate.

The discovery of a spring that developed into the Prince of the thermal springs¹ of the Colony

"Baiae, Baden-Baden, the Bath of South Africa."² These are just some of the names Caledon and especially its springs were known by in the nineteenth century by different European travellers and visitors. This comparison speaks of the high praise the patrons of the Caledon springs gave the waters, and by comparing it with the best European spas, the renown of the springs were sure to rise. Caledon and its baths have a very long, but also interesting history and what is striking is that the springs featured in an important way in the birth and development of the town from a farm to a full-fledged village, to where many people flocked in order to take the powerful healing waters of the springs that emanated from a little hill. This is where the story of Caledon, formerly known as Zwartberg or Zwarteberg, starts.

¹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 46.

² J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 17. & W.J. Burchell: *Selections from Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, p. 26.

The Caledon baths had been used in the treatment of illnesses from as early as 1710 and people travelled great distances to take the waters and be healed.³ However the spring that was found at Kleine Zwarteberg⁴, as Caledon was previously known, was already known by the indigenous people before the Europeans had set eyes on it. It is not clear when the European settlers started to use the springs for medical treatments, but the springs themselves were already described in the 1600s by various travellers.⁵ As early as 1686 it is said that Oloff Berg and Isaq Schrijver, who were on their way to Cape Agulhas, as part of an expedition, had pitched their tent on the hill where the spring was said to have been located.⁶ Other sources that were found gave a different date as well as name spelling for the expedition of Isaac Schrywer, who in 1689 gave a description of the springs he encountered. These springs became known by Europeans between 1686 and 1689 and their popularity rose considerably with stories of their healing powers that could cure ills like anaemia, asthma, scurvy and even tuberculosis.⁷

The reason for this popularity was made possible by the Europeans themselves because of their travels to the springs. These European settlers, who came to the Cape of Good Hope in the Dutch-ruled era, came from a background where the use of thermal springs as medical treatment of illnesses was very popular and known for many years. The Dutch East Indian Company employees, as well as German and French immigrants who came to settle in the Cape Colony, would have experienced thermal bathing resorts in their own and other European countries. Because of the long and difficult sea voyage these people had to endure, as well as the difficult and different climate, they were susceptible to a variety of illnesses. The thermal bathing cure was used to heal many an ailment, and one can therefore assume, that the sick would attempt to get to a thermal spring as soon as they could. The water cure was encouraged by doctors in Europe, in all probability the doctors working on the ships would have been supporters of the visiting of thermal springs for the sick, and any thermal spring found in the Cape of Good Hope would have been prescribed for the ailing. According to Booyens the various springs in the Cape were not known to the Europeans for more than fifty years, and only rumours told by the indigenous people sparked hopes of the possible

³ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 57.

⁴ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, MA thesis, University of South Africa, 1984, p. 1.

⁵ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 4.

⁶ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 79.

⁷ J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 3. & R.R. Langham-Carter: "The Caledon Baths," *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), (Nr.2), June 1984, p. 18.

promise of thermal springs in the Cape. Although travellers like Berg and Schrywer were said to have seen the springs in 1689 already, it was J.G. Grevenbroek who in 1695 wrote about warm water springs which were found at the territory on some “Hottentots.” Grevenbroek was not happy with the Dutch, his “countrymen,” since it was not yet known, according to him, if the springs had medical properties, and he blamed it on the “idleness” of the Dutch. Booyens is correct in his observation that this could have meant that the Cape Government was already aware of the springs by the 1690s. So Berg and Schrywer as well as other travellers, could indeed have been familiar with the springs before the writings of Grevenbroek.⁸ In 1707 the traveller Jan Hertogh, who worked for the VOC as their master gardener and official cattle-barterer, was sent inland with the task of buying cattle through bartering. On his way back he stopped at the springs, and mentioned that clothes were being washed in the warm water.⁹ It is said that this was the “first concrete reference”¹⁰ to the thermal springs. References to the thermal water up to this point were purely about the existence of thermal springs, but no mention was made of people bathing in them.¹¹

In 1708 Peter Kolbe stopped at the spring during one of his travels. Kolbe was sent to the Cape to make astrological observations that would help with navigation at sea by using the stars as guidance. He failed in this task but he did make very good notes regarding the fauna and flora that could be found in the interior of the Cape Colony. In M. Brand’s book *Het Warme Bad*, she mentions that Kolbe spoke of a little house being present at the springs¹², but this is difficult to verify, since the man, Ferdinand or Ferdinandus Appel, who was given the rights to graze his livestock on the land on which the springs were situated, was only granted this right in 1709 and only in 1710 was the land given to him after he expressed to the Government that he would build a little house there for the sick to stay in when they visited the springs.¹³ It is possible that Kolbe could have visited the springs twice, in 1708 and 1710, and therefore spoke of the little house in 1710 instead of 1708 or it could also be that Kolbe only published his writings of his travels at a later date, and mentioned recent developments. A source which can be found in the Andries Dreyer Collection entitled “*The*

⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 14.

⁹ J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p.18. & J.E. Wilson: “Caledon and the Overberg: placid centre of a geographic microcosm,” *Contree*, 24 Sept, 1988, p.22. & E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 79. & J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 3.

¹⁰ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p.10.

¹¹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 13.

¹² M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 12.

¹³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 15.

hot baths at Caledon: historical notes on well known visitors to Baths” contains a piece on Kolbe’s writings that he published in 1719, where he mentions that the Zwartberg Bath belonged to Appel, and that before Appel there was no accommodation to be found at the baths as well as no one who could accommodate visitors to the bath. People had to bring with them tents as well as food. This could account for the confusion of the dates of when precisely Kolbe had visited the springs.¹⁴ Kolbe does mention that he was one of the first people to visit the baths, and he can therefore be seen as the first one to have written about his experience where he, in fact, took the waters himself.¹⁵ In Kolbe’s eyes the thermal springs were still primitive and he documented his experience in detail. Kolbe could be seen as one of the first patrons of the Caledon thermal springs, and he praised the healing powers of the waters since he was ‘cured’ after taking the waters.¹⁶

In 1708 the spring on the hill was still only a natural flowing spring, with baths dug out of the ground by invalids who visited it. But these circumstances would change in the upcoming years. Farms in the eighteenth century in the Cape were either given out on loan terms or in freehold. A farmer could apply for a permission permit to graze his cattle on a specific spot, which he could use for a year, where after the government could choose to renew the permit or to take back the land.¹⁷ Ferdinandus Appel was one such a farmer, who in September 1708 was granted rights to use the land that lay over the Hottentots Holland mountains near Bot rivier. In March 1709 he was granted permission to also use the land “*aan’t warme water*” for grazing.¹⁸ In March 1710 he was issued between 10, 12 or 18 hectares of land, depending on which source one believes, which belonged to him personally, on condition that he had to erect a house for the accommodation of the people who came to the baths for treatment of their illness and who could afford to pay for their lodgings.¹⁹

Appel became one of the first farmers who owned land, and can be seen as one of the pioneers of the agricultural industry who played a big role in the development of Caledon, because he had land that was owned by him, and not the government. Appel was issued with

¹⁴ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 4.

¹⁵ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 12 & 13.

¹⁶ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.12. & A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, pp. 4 & 5.

¹⁷ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 58.

¹⁸ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 33.

¹⁹ J.E. Wilson: “Caledon and the Overberg: placid centre of a geographic microcosm,” *Contree*, 24 Sept, 1988, p. 22. & J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p. 107. & C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 58.

the task of creating a bath for visitors by the Government, which shows that they were aware of these healing waters and realised its importance as a medical treatment.²⁰ With this bath the invalids would not have to dig their own baths anymore and a bath house was to be built for the use of visitors. This description of how the thermal springs' surroundings changed shows a move away from the primitive, natural way of digging one's own bath and staying in tents, to a more organised and structured way, where there was accommodation available for a price. Invalids who were wealthy enough could afford to take the waters in a more comfortable setting. These accommodations were still far from being luxurious, but it was a step towards the modernising of the bathing facility.²¹

The development under Appel took place at the time the use of the thermal springs by travellers from the Colony and abroad increased for the purpose of healing. The fame of the waters travelled abroad in the writings of European travellers as well as word of mouth.²² Appel was not only the caretaker of the land surrounding the Swartberg thermal springs, he was also the guide that lead people to the baths. These visitors, and essentially his clients, would have been invalids from the Cape and other regions, and presumably there would have been invalids from abroad as well, indicating to the rising fame of the springs, which was said to have been very popular and praised by the people living in the Cape.²³

In 1710, in his post as guide, Appel lead Commissioner Cnoll, who was an ex Commander of Java's East Coast to the thermal springs. Cnoll was a government official and as the government were aware of the thermal springs curative properties, it would have been highly popular under the Cape officials.²⁴ The year 1710 was not only the year in which Appel was appointed guide and administrator of the baths, but it was also the first time that the Zwartberg baths were used "as a health resort," with accommodation as well as a bath dug out for patients and visitors.²⁵ Commissioner Cnoll's journey was recorded in a journal which described his experiences at the baths, giving one a very good idea what the bath culture and bathing facilities looked like in the eighteenth century.²⁶ Cnoll, like Kolbe also gave a

²⁰ *Caledon*, Caledon Library Historical printout, p. 1.

²¹ R.R. Langham-Carter: "The Caledon Baths," *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), (Nr.2), June 1984, p. 18.

²² *Caledon*, Caledon Library Historical printout, p. 1.

²³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 15. & S.D. Maree: 'n *Geografiese studie van die dorpe en gebiede Caledon, Bredasdorp en Somerset-Wes*, Universiteit Stellenbosch, p. 3.

²⁴ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 79. & M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 4.

²⁵ J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 18.

²⁶ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 79.

detailed account of his experience at the thermal baths and noted that he also experienced healing through the waters.²⁷

Commissioner Cnoll was acquainted with Johanna Maria van Hoorn, who was in fact the granddaughter of Jan van Riebeeck who came to the Cape Colony in 1652. When the Commissioner came back healed, Mrs. Van Hoorn decided to write to her parents in Batavia to inform them of the Commissioner's recuperation. She also sent to her father, along with the letter, a bottle of the thermal waters of the Zwartberg spring.²⁸ In the letter she wrote she also exclaimed "what a priceless thing it would be if there were such a bath in Batavia."²⁹

Another traveller, junior merchant Willem van Putten who was a government official, also travelled to the thermal waters in December 1710.³⁰ Van Putten wrote extensively about the bathing culture he observed and experienced at the thermal baths, and mentioned the strict rules that applied to the patients taking the waters. He was also cured of his ailment and believed that the waters were medicinal.³¹ In 1717 Appel passed away and the house and the site fell into disorder.³² This was to be the first of many slumps in the development of the Zwartberg baths before it was turned into a world class Sanatorium in the 1900s.

The waters of the thermal spring behind the Hottentots Holland Mountains had been known by travellers for a long time, but the first mention of it in an international book was in 1724, in a book written by Francois Valentin. The waters were mentioned in the book he wrote about the possessions of the Dutch East India Company, which gives one the idea that it were seen as a very important asset to be mentioned in such a category. In the book, the waters of the Zwartberg thermal mineral bath are praised for its curative powers. This example of using the waters as a medical treatment was later followed by the British East India Company when they took over the Cape Colony.³³ Valentin also mentions how the indigenous people, who would have been the "Hottentots", used the springs in the form of a mud bath and that these mud baths also helped with rheumatism.³⁴

²⁷ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 88.

²⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 17 & 18.

²⁹ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 2.

³⁰ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 79. & B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 18.

³¹ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, pp. 94 - 95. & B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 96.

³² M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 5.

³³ A. Wilmot: *The South African Climate: The Best in the World*, p. 24.

³⁴ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 10.

The Dutch government decided to erect a government house where people who visit the spring could be accommodated in. There was another building, but this was small and the rooms were kept separated by a curtain. It is difficult to determine when the house and bath house was built, but sources suggest that it was between 1739 and 1772.³⁵ In 1772 Francis Masson visited the baths and mentioned that the Company erected a house where those invalids who visited the springs, could stay. Masson was not too happy with the way the water cure was being used and voiced his concern that this general taking of the waters without caution could be causing more harm than healing.³⁶ According to the traveller Otto Freidrich Mentzel who lived in the Cape between 1733 and 1741 there was a guesthouse at the Zwartberg spring to which doctors referred their patients as well as Company officials who were in need of medical treatment.³⁷ Mentzel noted that the guesthouse was erected recently in accordance with his visit, and also that it was too small to accommodate all the visitors that would arrive at the baths in the summer. The guesthouse was T-shaped with a small room where the manager stayed.³⁸ Mentzel felt that a doctor should have been present to look after the sick and to help them with taking the waters.³⁹

Throughout the 1700s many travellers described their experiences at the baths, making it possible for one to follow on the progress made. But as Booyens notes, it seems that in the twenty years between Kolbe and Mentzel's visits, the bath as well as the accommodation development was minimal, and this can be seen throughout the history of the baths in the seventeenth hundreds. The travellers complained that the accommodation was not big enough and people still had to sleep in tents, there was still no one to provide food and other necessities and the baths were still just holes in the ground. But even though the accommodation and the surroundings were not in the best of conditions, people still visited the bath and thermal spring. Evidently the invalids who went to the thermal spring went there with one goal, and that was to be healed. Therefore the belief in the waters trumped the bad conditions they had to face.⁴⁰

³⁵ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 25. & *Caledon*, Caledon Library Historical printout, p. 1.

³⁶ J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 18.

³⁷ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 5.

³⁸ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 17.

³⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 24.

In 1772 a Swedish botanist and doctor working for the Dutch East India Company, Karl Thunberg travelled in the Cape Colony and on his journey he visited the springs.⁴¹ He reached the spring in February and saw that the water cure was being practised by the people visiting the bath and springs, but that the diet accompanying the cure was in fact neglected. By the time that Thunberg arrived at the baths a stone bath house had been erected, and the invalid had to walk down steps into the bath, where he could choose how deep he wanted to go. The water was led by a channel into the small little hut where the bath was. It seems this is the same building Mentzel mentioned, where curtains divided the house into little rooms.⁴² In his writings Thunberg noted that the water came from two spring sources and that it was very hot, with the water forming a yellow ore deposit at the bottom of the channel. He is one of the first to mention the chalybeate tasting water of the springs. Other travellers only mentioned that the water took some time to get palatable. Thunberg does mention the fact that a house was built by the government and that there was a manager who was said to look after the building. He also commented that people still slept in their tents or wagons and that if one was to sleep in the guesthouse, it was found at the bottom of the hill, within walking distance of the springs.⁴³ Another reason why the baths could have been seen as still being primitive is the fact that there was no full time doctor and one does get the feeling that the travellers were distressed by the fact that there was no supervision at the baths from a physician. Both Thunberg and Mentzel mentioned this fact, and since both of them would have been familiar with the water cure they would have understood the implications of treating oneself with the water without any proper knowledge.⁴⁴

In July 1775 a newly graduated doctor Anders Sparrman visited the thermal springs at Zwartberg. As Burrows mentions, the springs underwent development after the government took charge and maintained it, and it could be seen as a primitive “health institution.” This was all the invalids needed it to be, they were there for their health, and not much else.⁴⁵ Sparrman, like those travellers before him, published notes on his travels in the Cape Colony, and in his 1786 book *A voyage to the Cape of Good Hope* he speaks of his experience at the

⁴¹ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 5. & A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 5.

⁴² B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 24.

⁴³ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 5.

⁴⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, pp. 81 & 82.

“Hottentots Hollands’ Bath. The bath was also known as the “Yzer” or iron bath, because of the big amount of iron ore that could be found in the waters.⁴⁶ Sparrman mentioned that about two hundred people visited the bath in annually, but noted that when he was at the bath in July, only eight other patients was there with him and they were said to have been treated very badly.⁴⁷

Sparrman gave a description of the bathing establishment and noted that the bath house was about a hundred feet from the guesthouse. He describes the bath house as a building where not a lot of sunlight could get into, and that there was a bath at the end of the one part of the house to which the water was led by a underground channel to the gable of the bathhouse where it was then lead by an open channel to the bath itself. The bath house was situated in the flow path of the spring, and so the water could constantly flow into the bath.⁴⁸ Sparrman describes the bath house by mentioning that it was three to four fathoms (one fathom equals 1,8 meters) long and that it was a fathom and a half in its breadth. The bath that was found at the end of the building was “a fathom and a half square, and two feet deep.” (one feet equals 0,3 meters) Sparrman also mentions that because the channel that lead the water from the gable to the house was not enclosed, it could be possible that “subtle and efficacious particles” could be lost to the open air.⁴⁹ The only other baths that were available were nothing more than holes in the ground, covered by branches. These baths were meant for the slaves and “Hottentots” who would visit the bath. With the separation of the bathing places the institution had become more structured and less natural.⁵⁰ Sparrman commented on the accommodation and the surroundings at the bathing establishment. He described the house built by the government to accommodate members of the Company when they visited the bath, which consisted of a hall, two large rooms, a kitchen and a small room. All of these had “earthen floors” and the small room was occupied by the overseer or manager of the baths. Therefore only the two rooms were for the accommodation of guests, and many times there were not enough room for the vast number of visitors which meant that some had to sleep in the hall or in their tents and wagons. The building was said to have been in the way of the water flow and that there was a room where the water could flow into, but this made the room

⁴⁶ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 5.

⁴⁷ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 25.

⁴⁸ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.20.

⁴⁹ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 7.

⁵⁰ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 20.

very damp and unhealthy and it seems it was even worse when there were too many invalids, who then had to be put into the same room. These were not good conditions for any invalid struggling with a possibly fatal disease, and it could also have caused other visitors to become sick. Sparrman was not impressed with this and as a doctor would have realised the danger.⁵¹

In October 1777 a traveller William Paterson visited the baths. He commented on how hot the water was and that the bath the Europeans used was almost 56 degrees Celsius where the one used by the 'coloured' people were 46 degrees. Paterson met many guests at the baths who were from Cape Town, and he also noted how they believed that the water could cure any ailment. He does mention that the surrounding area was very beautiful and the grazing for the animals was of very high quality. One has to remember that most invalids and visitors travelled to the baths by wagon, which meant grazing would have been essential at the baths, to ensure that one's cattle, and in fact one's transport, was well fed and healthy. Therefore grazing at the baths was a priority for many years.⁵²

Unfortunately the bathing institution became extremely neglected by the end of the seventeen hundreds. The reason for the neglect seemed to be that the man appointed by the Company as manager was a drunk who did not look after the buildings and the bath. Once again the Zwartberg baths experienced a period of neglect after a promising start.⁵³

The Company realised that a change had to be made and they therefore fired the manager and appointed in his place in 1796 Marthinus Wolfferum. Wolfferum had bought the farm De Warme Bad in 1794 which was also known as Het Warme Bad, next to The Baths. When he had taken possession of the land he requested the Company's permission to build a bathhouse on his land after noticing in what derelict state the government bathhouse was. This showed the Company that he was a man of foresight and was therefore a good choice as manager. After Wolfferum obtained permission to build a house, he erected one in 1797 which was said to have been much nicer than the one the government one. Wolfferum had bought De Warme Bad for 6000 rixdollars and had two springs of his own on his farm. He erected a bathhouse which, after he obtained permission to do so in 1795, could also be used by invalids and visitors. There was one condition, and that was that no one was allowed to use

⁵¹A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 6.

⁵²B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 27.

⁵³B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p.28. & E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 83.

Wolfferum's bathhouse without the written permission of the Government. This was done so that Wolfferum would not lure invalids and visitors away from the Government's bathhouse which would result in them losing money. Wolfferum agreed to repair and manage the Government's facilities, if he was allowed to charge visitors a certain fee for their stay. So Wolfferum finished the new bathhouse in 1797 and accommodation at the bath was once again restored to a more comfortable level.⁵⁴ On the 9 May 1798 Lady Anne Barnard and her company arrived at Wolfferum's house and they spent the night there.⁵⁵ Wolfferum stayed about 1,5 km from the old Government baths, and he took Lady Barnard to them in his wagon. Lady Barnard wrote about this visit in her diaries and she commented on the state of the Government house. It had about four rooms which could be divided into smaller rooms so that invalids could stay there, but at the time of her visit there were only "bare walls."⁵⁶ She continued describing the bath, which looked to her like a little house, where the water entered from a stream on its own. Lady Barnard did not bathe in the waters but she did "put [her] hand in it, and could just hold it there"⁵⁷ describing the high heat of the thermal water.

Another visitor who came by the baths while Wolfferum was manager was John Barrow, who visited the Zwartberg bath in 1798. Barrow commented that most of the invalids visiting the baths were people from Cape Town. He criticized the Government building since he felt it would rather enhance illness instead of cure it, and this could have been the reason why some of the English visitors boarded at a farm house 1.5 km away, which one could presume was Wolfferum's. Barrow does mention that the waters were believed to cure diseases such as "rheumatic complaints and debilitated constitutions."⁵⁸ Barrow noted that the waters were chalybeate, and compared it to the waters found at the Olifants River. The water, when it sprung forth from the source was said to be 114 degrees Fahrenheit, which amounts to about 57 degrees Celsius, and the water was then cooled down at the bath to a more 'comfortable' 55 degrees Celsius.⁵⁹ From this account one can deduce that Sir Barrow was not impressed by the state of the Zwartberg Government bath.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 42, 181, 182.

⁵⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 83.

⁵⁷ A.M.L. Robinson (ed.): *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas from the Cape and Elsewhere / 1793-1803 together with her journal of a tour into the interior and certain other letters*, p. 118.

⁵⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 29.

⁵⁹ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 10.

⁶⁰ J. Burman: *In the Footsteps of Lady Anne Barnard*, p. 64.

It is evident that some development took place from the end of the 1600s to the end of the 1700s at the Caledon or Zwarteberg spring and even though the accommodation and bathing facilities were still very primitive, the healing powers of the waters had been experienced by European travellers which would have helped with the popularity the thermal spring baths would experience in the future.

Treasure is found in the sand: The discovery of the Montagu thermal mineral spring

The quaint town of Montagu was established in 1851, but its history can be traced back much further, for like Caledon, signs that indigenous Khoi people lived in those regions before Europeans are evident. Montagu is situated in the Cogmanskloof region, and it is likely that two physical features of the terrain attracted both indigenous and European travellers to the region. The first was the Guano Cave and the second the thermal mineral spring which lies next to the Keisieriver. It is probable that the colonists heard about the springs from the Khoi.⁶¹ The colonist also discovered that more springs could be found behind “de Bergen van Afrika.”⁶²

The thermal spring at Montagu was used before the town was established, like most of the other spring towns in the Colony.⁶³ The first inhabitants of the Montagu region were a group of indigenous people who was known as the Quena people and in 1701 this group was referred to by the Dutch as the “Hottentots of the Koekemans tribe” and later this name was shortened to the “Koekemans.” It was this tribe that eventually gave their name to the region which became known as the Cogmanskloof in which Montagu was situated. It is therefore clear that the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape played a significant role in the development of the regions where most thermal mineral springs were found.⁶⁴

⁶¹ C.A. Hromnik: “Xuaka, The Confluence on which Montagu arose: Its early history,” *Quarterly Bulletin South African Library* 53, 1998, p. 9.

⁶² “the mountains of Africa,” in B. Booyens: “Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 13.

⁶³ B. Booyens: “Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, pp. 14 & 15.

⁶⁴ C.A. Hromnik: “Xuaka, The Confluence on which Montagu arose: Its early history,” *Quarterly Bulletin South African Library* 53, 1998, p. 9.

The influence of the Quena people is visible in the other names found in the Montagu region, and they have a connection to the thermal mineral springs that was found near the rivers. Since the Quena people were the first to live and experience the natural wonders of the region, it is not strange that they would incorporate the elements of these wonders into the names they gave the rivers. The two rivers, the Keisie and Kingna are Quena words, but these words were translated incorrectly and ended up misrepresenting the names of the rivers. The name of the Keisie river, for example, was translated as meaning “ugly river” and only after the right translation was discovered, the meaning of the words showed how nature influenced these people’s lives and the names they gave their surroundings.⁶⁵ The word Kei for example means “fire” or “to burn” and /eisi also means “the Fiery river” or the “hot water river.” It is therefore clear that the Quena people had already experienced the thermal spring’s power and heat and incorporated these elements into the names of the rivers.⁶⁶ The Quena people was said to have used the thermal springs as well, and there were signs of their presence at the springs found in the mud in the form of tracks. The springs were therefore in use long before the European trekkers discovered them.⁶⁷ There is no evidence as to how the Quana people would have used the thermal springs before the arrival of the Europeans, but one can assume that they, like other indigenous groups near Caledon, did use the water for some form of healing. They were the first users of this healing gift from nature found in the Cogmanskloof.⁶⁸ It would be a while before this healing secret known to the “native tribes” was discovered and used by “their civilised superiors.”⁶⁹

But it was not only the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape who used the Montagu thermal spring situated in the beautiful Cogmanskloof, which was seen as the gateway to the Karoo. Herders, hunters and travellers would also have passed near the thermal spring, since the trekpath and the “*uitspan*” place for these travellers went close by the place the spring was situated and the travellers could walk to the healing spring.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ C.A. Hromnik: “Xuaka, The Confluence on which Montagu arose: Its early history,” *Quarterly Bulletin South African Library* 53, 1998, p. 10.

⁶⁶ C.A. Hromnik: “Xuaka, The Confluence on which Montagu arose: Its early history,” *Quarterly Bulletin South African Library* 53, 1998, p. 12.

⁶⁷ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Francois Valentin mentions in his book in 1724 how the indigenous people, who would have been the “Hottentots”, used the springs in the form of a mud bath and that these mud baths also helped with rheumatism in Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 10.

⁶⁹ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 7.

⁷⁰ B. Booyens: “Die Warmbronnwaterkultuur van Montagu,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, pp. 14 &15.

The thermal springs of the Colony had been celebrated by the Dutch since the beginning of the 1700s and it was the famous German traveller Peter Kolbe who rejoiced in the Cape's many thermal springs, since the Germans, like the French and the English was already schooled in the healing powers that could be found in the bubbling waters of thermal mineral waters. Kolbe, who was not the first to hear about the Cape thermal waters, proclaimed that "De hemel een rijke water zegen in deze Colonie gelegd"⁷¹ and this was true when looking at all the healing springs the Colony was blessed with, since in the 1700s and 1800s these springs were seen as medical wonders. Not all thermal mineral springs were turned into commercial bathing places, and not all thermal baths developed at the same rate or time. This is true in the case of Caledon and Montagu, where the Caledon spring was already used by travellers for bathing by 1710.⁷²

Montagu was established in the region known as Agter-Cogmanskloof and before the town was created there were already some farmers present in that part of the country from about 1725, when there was land made available from the Dutch East India Company to farmers on the basis of borrowing land from the Company. As the years passed and more people settled in that area, the next natural step was to establish a town for the growing farming population.⁷³ This area steadily grew into a very successful farming region and many farms were laid out, contributing to the want of a village. It is therefore not a surprise that the land on which Montagu was laid out was indeed a farm named De Uitvlugt, which translates to 'a retreat.'⁷⁴ This was also the land on which the spring was found, which was situated near the river, and therefore this name became all the more fitting since the baths and the spring was indeed a retreat for invalids and travellers who might have required medical treatment.⁷⁵

This farm was loaned in 1744 to a widow Van der Merwe, and the reason for this could have been that in this time this region was still very difficult to access and the rivers made it difficult to reach many parts of the region. The inaccessibility was also the reason why

⁷¹ "the heaven has placed a rich blessing of water in the Colony," B. Booyens: "Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 13.

⁷² B. Booyens: "Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 14.

⁷³ D.H.H. Heydenrych: *'n Geskiedenis van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Gemeente Montagu, 1854-2004*, p. 9.

⁷⁴ J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 80.

⁷⁵ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 8.

development behind the Cogmanskloof was much more difficult and slower than that of other towns.⁷⁶ The road that was used by stock farmers and migrating farmers ran very close by the spring, and there were two entrances a traveller could use to get from Montagu to the spring. One could access the spring by walking two kilometres along a footpath that ran in the ravine that separated Montagu from the thermal mineral springs or one could use the wagon road that was four kilometres long and went around the mountain.⁷⁷

There are very few sources that deal with the Montagu thermal spring in the 1700s, and this could be seen as a result of the difficult terrain in which it laid, which meant that famous travellers did not pass by it and therefore left no written account like in the case of Caledon. Montagu and its spring were not found on or near the main colonial routes and this could be the reason for the shortage in sources about the early history of the spring. Since there are hardly any sources dealing with the history of the Montagu region before the middle 1800s, this also influenced the availability of information and sources concerning the history and origin of the thermal spring found at Montagu. One noticed with the gathering of Montagu history sources that in many cases dates were either omitted or the date of certain events was unknown. This makes piecing together the history of Montagu's thermal spring challenging and it is difficult to give a precise account of the early discovery and development of the Montagu thermal spring.⁷⁸ One has to allow the undated data to form a story from which one can piece together a fleeting glance into the Montagu spring's history.

One could speculate that although no written evidence about visitors to the Montagu springs in the 1700s survived, the people who passed there would have seen and utilised the spring and it cannot be denied that the thermal waters at Montagu would have been used for medical purposes. The only reference made to this was in a piece written in a book by the famous traveller Otto Mentzel, who visited the Cape in the 1730s. In this book he mentioned that a new thermal spring had been discovered in the Swellendam region, under which Montagu, which was not established yet, would have fallen, and Prof. H. J. Mandelbrote felt that this reference could have been to Montagu's spring. Mentzel noted that although the thermal spring was discovered, its healing properties were still a mystery, which meant that there was

⁷⁶ Montagu, Xuaka, Where The "Fiery River" joins the "Burning Tongue," *The Cape Journal*, Montagu Library Source, p. 4.

⁷⁷ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 58.

⁷⁸ C.A. Hromnik: "Xuaka, The Confluence on which Montagu arose: Its early history," *Quarterly Bulletin South African Library* 53, 1998, p. 9.

no development yet at that particular spring. It was pointed out by Mentzel that because the properties of the thermal spring was not known, patients were not sent there yet, and one can assume that they would rather have been sent to the more well-known Caledon spring instead.⁷⁹

The question of when the Europeans discovered the healing powers of this spring remains unanswered. With the knowledge of a thermal spring that was on their route, the spring was almost like a life line for weary travellers would they need it. There is however a story, a kind of myth about how the springs was discovered, that seems to have been passed on since before 1907, and the story was published in one of the few publications about the origins of the springs, and inquiring about the history of the spring from the present day museum curator, the same story was told.⁸⁰

The discovery of the spring by Europeans took place in the early years of the Colony's history and the exact date is unknown. The spring was however discovered by a trekking farmer.. The Cogmanskloof, as it was later known, was one of the ravines through which it was easier to travel and became one of the paths the trekkers took to the Karoo.⁸¹ It was one of these nameless travellers who had the privilege to discover the Montagu springs. According to the museum curator, the trekker was on his ox wagon travelling through the river bed, when his wagon broke. The trekker had to mend his wagon, but in doing so he injured his hand badly.⁸² Mrs. Cilliers mentioned that the trekker went to the river to wash his injured hand in the water, and he discovered that the water was lukewarm.⁸³ According to Booyens this trekker then followed this stream of lukewarm water until he found the eye of the thermal spring.⁸⁴

A pamphlet that was published by the *New Cape Central Railway* in 1907 also included a version of the discovery of the spring which contained more detail. This pamphlet mentioned that this discoverer was indeed part of a party of trekkers. By the time the party reached the

⁷⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 58.

⁸⁰ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 6. & Interview with Anette Cilliers, Joubert huis museum curator, 16 March 2011.

⁸¹ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 6.

⁸² Interview with Anette Cilliers, Joubert huis museum curator, 16 March 2011.

⁸³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 58. & Interview with Anette Cilliers, Joubert huis museum curator, 16 March 2011.

⁸⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 58.

place where the trekkers normally “outspanned” the injured trekker’s wound had been infected. Ironically this was also the place where the village Montagu was to be laid out many years later. It is said that the party drank from the water in the river, and they noticed that it had a very peculiar taste, but also a very pleasant effect on them. It is said to have “invigorated even that set of hardy men” and the trekker, following this hot water and eventually found the eye of the spring where it boiled out of a rock in the form of a fountain. When the trekker put his hand in this gushing fountain, he was surprised to find that the water was extremely hot. Excited about his find the trekker went back to his party and told them about this hot water fountain he had discovered. Quickly the camp was packed up and moved to the site, which was on a certain Mr. Burger’s farm. Unfortunately the pamphlet does not divulge if the farm was in the hands of Mr. Burger at the time of the discovery of the spring or at the time in which the pamphlet was published.⁸⁵ The trekker kept working on his wagon but also kept nursing his hand in the warm waters of the spring. He was delighted when the wound on his hand was completely healed in a short period of time. The trekker was so impressed that he told everyone about the spring. With this the reputation of the Montagu thermal spring was established, and it was not long before people would know about this natural healing treasure that could be found in the Cogmanskloof.⁸⁶

The thermal spring was therefore known before the village of Montagu was established, and would have played a role in people settling in the area, since having such a medical asset on one’s doorstep would have been very beneficial for the surrounding farmers. The spring was and would remain fairly primitive until Montagu was established as a small settlement in the early 1850s.⁸⁷ Therefore one could link the inaccessibility and state of development of the town and the development of the bathing establishment, which grew in accordance to these factors.

Nature’s gift: The origins and early history of the Olifants River Baths

The third thermal spring of note is the Olifants River thermal mineral spring, near present day Citrusdal. This spring has a long history, and as seen with the springs found near Caledon and Montagu, Citrusdal’s thermal mineral spring was also known to the indigenous people before

⁸⁵ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 7.

⁸⁶ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 58, 59.

⁸⁷ Montagu, Xuaka, Where The “Fiery River” joins the “Burning Tongue,” *The Cape Journal*, Montagu Library Source, p. 4.

it was discovered by European travellers. The indigenous folk of the area was the ‘San’, or the ‘Bushmen’, as they were known by the European colonialists. Evidently, San rock paintings found near the Citrusdal thermal springs, illustrated that the thermal springs played an important role in the lives of the ‘San’, not only physically with the provision of water, but also spiritually since these two spheres were “intertwined” in the San culture.⁸⁸ In the analysis of the San rock paintings there are indications to the fact that thermal waters were used for healing in ‘San’ culture. Some of these painting were found in 1989 by Allan Hall and even more paintings were found in 2001 by Janette Deacon.⁸⁹ Animal myths play a large role in the discovery of healing springs in many European and especially British origin myths, and the old Olifant’s River spring is no different. According to legend the spring was kicked open by an ox by the name of Kolberg while grazing under the watchful eye of a herdsman.⁹⁰

The discovery of the thermal spring by the European colonialists did not take place until about the middle 1800s. But before the discovery of the thermal spring at Olifants River, clashes have already taken place between the colonialists and the San or Koina groups.⁹¹ In 1660 a group of the DEIC (Dutch East India Company) explorers and their leader Jan Danckaert had reached the Olifants River, which they named. By that time the thermal spring was not yet known to them.⁹² The DEIC was managed from Holland by a body by the name of the “Lords Seventeen” whose main focus was on spice trading, and who had established a permanent half way station at the “Cape of Good Hope in 1652.”⁹³

In 1738 unrest was sparked by colonial burgers who had taken part in “illegal bartering” and had “extorted” cattle from the Namaqua, a Khoi-San group. These Khoi-San complained to a Daniel van den Henghel, who was Acting Commander at the time about these incidents. Van den Hengel tried to restore peace by confiscating the stolen cattle and ordered the guilty burgers before the “landrost” but they simply refused to be sentenced. In a second attempt to restore peace, van den Hengel sent a “field-corporal” to meet with the Khoi-San.⁹⁴ However

⁸⁸ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁹ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dr. Janette Deacon: National Monuments Council 1992 and Sven Ouzman: Rock Art Research Unit, Wits University 1993 (letter in Hen Rock file).

⁹⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 52.

⁹¹ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 534. & H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 6.

⁹² Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 534.

⁹³ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 6.

⁹⁴ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 7.

this first attempt at peace with the Koina was unsuccessful and blood was shed by 1739 with the murder of two Europeans and a couple of slave herders by Koina hunters. A farmer Jan Cruijwagen was asked to lead a “commando against the Khoi-San” but this action also failed because most of the burgers felt that they had nothing to do with the situation and that they would not want to take part in the creation of more unrest. While the unrest was still ongoing, there was a change in command, and Hendrik Swellengrebel was made Governor by the Lords Seventeen in 1739. Swellengrebel was prepared to give amnesty to the original guilty burgers if they joined in the fight against the Koina, showing that he was less objective in his decisions than Van den Hengel and that his concern was with his colonial brethren instead of the real victims, the Koina.⁹⁵

Swellengrebel wanted the Koina to pay for the murders committed by them, and the extortion of the cattle by the burgers seems to have been forgotten by him. He was determined to punish the Koina and send for reinforcements from the Cape to help the commando.⁹⁶ It is through these actions that one first learn of the fact that the Olifants River thermal spring had been discovered, although the specific date is uncertain, in 1739 it was written in the reports that a military post was to be set up “aan ter Warme Bad.”⁹⁷ During this war that broke out between the burgers and the Khoi-San the territory of the Khoi-San was taken from them which must have been a difficult blow, although one has no evidence on what the effect of the loss of the thermal spring had on the Khoi-San.⁹⁸

After 1739 the thermal spring baths were therefore known to the burgers and the government. Because of the popularity thermal bathing enjoyed in Europe, one can assume that swift action would have been taken to turn the springs into a bathing spot for visitors. It was acting governor Daniel van den Hengel, who was the first to propose that a building was to be erected. A “handsome stone building” was constructed by the DEIC, and to make the bathing experience more comfortable, neat “thatched bathing huts at the hot springs” were built. This was to become known as the “Company Baths” and Van den Hengel became the Fiscal by the time the building was finished in 1739.⁹⁹ With these developments, the thermal spring of the

⁹⁵ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 535.

⁹⁶ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 535.

⁹⁷ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 6.

⁹⁸ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 9.

⁹⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 9.

Olifants River Baths was underway to become one of the well-known thermal spring establishments in the Cape Colony.

Even though the baths were owned by the Company, it took 20 years before it was used and restored.¹⁰⁰ It was Governor Rijk Tulbagh who decided on renovating the old buildings so that the governor and other “privileged burghers” could enjoy the facilities.¹⁰¹ In 1763 the Council of Policy decided to appoint a soldier, Matthijs Pielat as “*Posthouder aan’t Warm Bad gelegen over d’Olifants Rivier.*”¹⁰² His tasks included supervising the newly restored buildings and making sure that only people who had personal permission from the governor were to use the baths and the other facilities.¹⁰³ This action would have ensured that only the “elite” would be able to use the Company Baths, which echoed the elitist use of the thermal springs in Europe where it was at first only an excursion that could be afforded by the aristocracy.¹⁰⁴ Pielat was to be issued a complete “*Instructie*” where his tasks and other instructions would have been written out and this would be a way of confirming his position if there was ever to be an inquiry made.¹⁰⁵ These changes however were never written down in official documents like the “*Rekeningh van Temmeragie en Reparatie*” and could mean that the information could have been “concealed.” It seems that Pielat had two predecessors at the Company Baths since his name, which fell under “posthouder” in the register under “*Diverse Bedieningen*” had replaced that of Albrecht Raful and his name replaced that of Johan Boehm, whose name was first seen in the register in 1758.¹⁰⁶

According to Dan Sleight many of the wealthy Cape burghers might have tried to avoid the thermal waters of the Caledon spring because the Company’s doctors did not only sent the colonial burghers to these springs for healing, but also slaves and Koina. The fact that permission from the governance had to be obtained to use the Olifants River Baths made these baths exclusive, kept for the use of the elite only. Many wealthy and powerful families was said to have used these baths.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 536.

¹⁰¹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 9.

¹⁰² Translates to: Post holder at the Warm Baths located on the Olifants River, in Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 536.

¹⁰³ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 536.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter One on history of thermal bathing in Britain.

¹⁰⁵ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 536.

¹⁰⁶ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 537.

On 29 October 1768 the Deputy Governor J.W. Cloppenburg visited the baths and noticed that the vegetation around the baths flourished and that there were many different accommodations. There were tent wagons, huts and shelters that were erected, presumably used by people who visited the baths which was said to have healed skin irritations and gout. The secundes Cloppenburg was very impressed with the baths and its waters, which he tasted and found to be rather agreeable. He even mentioned to Barend Lubbe, a “veldkorporaal” and farmer in the region the possibility of erecting more rooms and baths for the use of visitors, because the posthouse was only there for the use of the postholder and the Political Council. There was also a farmer Schalk Burger, who lived near The Baths and who sold fresh produce to the visitors to the baths.¹⁰⁸

It seems that the ideas Deputy Governor Cloppenburg expressed was taken to heart because in 1773 two famous botanists, Carl Thunberg and Francis Masson, visited The Baths and new structures had been erected. Huts had been built for the accommodation of burghers, slaves and the indigenous group the Khoi-San.¹⁰⁹ According to Thunberg one of the baths were known as “Engelbad” which was named after a Fiscal Engelman, who was said to have had the bath dug out and cleaned, and he was also responsible for the building that was used for accommodation of visitors. It could be that Thunberg was actually referring to Daniel van den Hengel who before 1739 had already asked for the erection of accommodation at the baths.¹¹⁰ Thunberg was one of the first explorers of the interior of South Africa who had a scientific background. When Thunberg visited the Olifants River Baths, it was his second time in the interior, and he was accompanied by Masson.¹¹¹ When they arrived at the baths, Thunberg noticed that the spring in fact had its origin in the mountains and that the water came down in different “veins” of which three lead into the little huts reserved for bathing. These little huts were race specific, so the slaves and the indigenous population had their own huts different from the ‘colonialists.’ The little huts had baths in it with steps where the bathers could sit as well as a floor where they could lie down for their sweating process and the water was lukewarm and not too hot for use.¹¹² The water was clean and clear and one could even cook food and wash laundry in it “without any staining.” Thunberg also praised

¹⁰⁸ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 537.

¹⁰⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 11.

¹¹⁰ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 11. & Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 538.

¹¹¹ Hazel Hall’s personal archive: Vernon S Forbes: *Pioneering Travellers in South Africa*, 1965, p. 25.

¹¹² Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: V.S. Forbes: *Carl Peter Thunberg Travels at the Cape of Good Hope 1772-1775*, p. 192.

the Dutch East India Company for building a “fine stone house” for visitors.¹¹³ Francis Masson was a gardener at the Royal Gardens at Kew and was sent to the Cape by the King to “collect seeds and living plants.” He went with Thunberg to the Olifants River Baths and mentions that there were people who told him that the water was hot enough to boil meat in, although Thunberg was more correct in his analysis of the water being lukewarm.¹¹⁴

When it came to the management of the Company Baths, it seems that in 1771 with the death of Governor Tulbagh the postholder’s job was also withdrawn. In 1778 Schalk Willem Burger was given permission by Governor J. Van Plettenberg to live at the outpost for three years. With this permission Burger was also instructed to renovate and maintain the Government’s post house and he also had to look after visitors who visited the baths.¹¹⁵ This included supplying visitors with “cattle, poultry and produce.”¹¹⁶ There seems to have been no significant activity since the visit of these two botanists and the managing of the Olifants River Baths was handed over to Schalk Willem Burger in 1778. The outpost at Olifants River Baths was not named in the 1779 “*Burgerbesware*” documents and Sleight therefore speculated that this could have meant that by 1791 it was not seen as an outpost anymore.¹¹⁷

This chapter focused on the origins of the three thermal springs at modern day Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal. All of these springs were discovered in their own unique way by the European colonials, but they share the fact that their existence was known by the indigenous people living in the Cape, who had already used the springs and their water in their secular and spiritual world, before the arrival of the colonialists. All of these thermal spring baths started out as being very primitive with only some stone buildings and primitive bathing structures. However as soon as the knowledge of these thermal water baths were made public, their popularity grew as years passed. In the next chapter there will be looked at how these now very simple bathing places would develop into more structured and comfortable bathing establishments from the 1800s to the 1900s as well as how two of the towns developed with the help of its thermal mineral springs.

¹¹³ C.P. Thunberg Collection [manuscript], National Library, Translated by Jalmar Rudner: C.P. Thunberg: *Royal Science Academy’s New Vol. II of 1781*, p. 83.

¹¹⁴ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: V. S. Forbes: *Pioneer Travellers in South Africa*, pp. 37-45, 1946.

¹¹⁵ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 538.

¹¹⁶ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 11.

¹¹⁷ Hazel Hall’s personal archive collection: Dan Sleight, *VOC Buiteposte*, p. 538.

Chapter 4:

The rise of the springs: The development of the Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal thermal mineral baths during the 1800s-1900s.

This chapter will evaluate the development of the three thermal mineral springs found at Swartberg, Montagu and Olifants River during the period of the 1800s to the 1900s. During this time period there was more written about the different baths, and the popularity of each increased as the years passed. It is constructive to see how differently the baths developed in relation to one another, and this also gives one insight on how each of the bathing complexes were progressing and how they subsequently became one another's rivals. It is in this period that these complexes were developing and creating their strong foundations they needed for the upcoming 20th century.

The Baiae of the Cape:¹ The development of the Zwartberg baths from the nineteenth century

The development of the Zwartberg baths continued in the early 1800s when it was bought by a new owner. The land the Zwartberg baths was situated on was owned from 1796 by Marthinus Wolfferum. In 1794 Wolfferum had already bought the farm De Warme Bad which was also known as Het Warme Bad, and became the bath's overseer as appointed by the Government.² Wolfferum decided to sell his farm in 1798 to adjutant Frans Meyer for "35 000 guilders" and the Government had to replace Wolfferum as overseer of the Government bathhouse and guesthouse. Magistrate Van der Riet decided that Meyer, who already owned the farm, was now also a good candidate to become the new overseer of the bathing establishment. Meyer decided to sell the farm in 1801 to Petrus Jacobus Rademan, who now had access to the bathhouse as well as the grazing that formed part of the farm.³ The farm Het Warme Bad was now in the hands of Rademan who also provided accommodation for bath visitors who did not want to be accommodated at the Government's

¹W.J. Burchell: *Selections from Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, p. 26

²E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 42, 181, 182.

³E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 42, 182.

house. However many people still preferred to stay in their wagons.⁴ In 1801 a traveller, Robert Sempel, visited the baths on his way to Plettenberg bay and according to his accounts not a lot had changed at the baths since Wolfferum had left. Commenting on the bathhouse, he noted that the only development that took place was that there was now a low wall dividing the one room into two. The one room contained the bath itself, while the other one had some sort of bed structure, on which one could put one's mattress that was made of stretched cowhide nailed to a frame. The bath was said to be able to drain by pulling out a plug, like a real bathtub. Sempel commented that the bathing and sweating ritual was not that different from the earlier format.⁵ According to Brand one could assume that the bathhouse that was described by Sempel, was the one built by Wolfferum after he took over the thermal spring establishment and became its overseer.⁶

Before one can look any further at the way the baths developed, one has to refer back to what was happening in the Colony in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Since 1795 the Cape Colony was under British rule, but in 1803, with the Treaty of Amiens the Cape was given back to the Batavian government. Thus, from 1803 the Cape Colony was once again ruled by the Dutch.⁷ In 1803 baron Friedrich von Bouchenroeder was tasked with inspecting the coastline as the Batavian Government wanted to see if the colony could be developed. He went to the Zwartberg region to conduct an investigation and commented on the baths and their water. His commentary was not always positive, shedding light on how appalling the situation was. He did mention that rheumatism and other illnesses were healed by the waters. The guesthouse was barren and had almost no furniture and was deemed inadequate. The amount of guests that could be accommodated was also very small which meant that in popular months many visitors would have had to stay in their wagons. Visitors were also tasked with bringing their own household and kitchen utensils. The Baron did mention that food and lodging could be obtained from the farmer Rademan. He continued by noting that the people from the Cape still preferred sleeping in their tents. Another criticism was that because the bathhouse was so far from the guesthouse the invalids had to walk a long distance in the open air which was not good for their health. Even though the boarding at the guesthouse was not too expensive, the invalids still preferred to rather stay in their tents

⁴ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p. 11. & M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 24.

⁵ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 33.

⁶ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 25.

⁷ T.R.H. Davenport: *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 29.

because the circumstances and surroundings at the guesthouse were so deplorable. Van Bouchenroeder felt that many improvements could be made to make the accommodation more comfortable for the invalids. He even suggested that a town could be established in the district.⁸

In 1802 a German Doctor Karl Lichtenstein came to the Cape. He also visited the Zwartberg baths in 1803 after Baron van Bouchenroeder and he found the accommodation at the baths equally deplorable and inadequate.⁹ He noted that the government guesthouse was in very bad shape and like Baron van Bouchenroeder mentioned that most people rather stayed in their wagons than in the seemingly filthy conditions at the guesthouse.¹⁰ It is interesting to see that even with the inadequate accommodation, the baths were still better than any other in the Colony and it also had the appropriate buildings, it only needed to be repaired and kept clean and neat. It does seem that throughout the years most of the visitors to the baths felt that the accommodation could have been improved, and the accommodation and surroundings were always the elements of the baths that were criticised. However, the water and its healing abilities were never criticised. Lichtenstein concluded that the Zwartberg thermal water was the best in the Colony and that it was suitable for bathing as well as drinking.¹¹

The role of the Batavian government from 1803 also signalled change for the Zwartberg baths. This change came in the form of Dr Johann Friedrich Hässner or Häszner, a German doctor who settled in Paarl. It was the Batavian Government who appointed Dr Hässner because they realised that the baths were not functioning at their full capacity, and they saw a golden opportunity to exploit this natural resource. It was because of the Batavian Government that the Zwartberg baths were saved from their desolate state and transformed by Dr Hässner.¹² According to Dr Lichtenstein there were many complaints, especially by the people from the Cape, about the deplorable accommodation at the Zwartberg baths. Dr Hässner was therefore appointed as the new baths manager so that he could develop the facilities in such a way that it would have all the comforts the invalids needed and he was tasked with looking after the patients as well.¹³ In effect Dr Hässner was given the

⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 33 & 34.

⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 34.

¹⁰ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 29.

¹¹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 34.

¹² J. Burman: *In the Footsteps of Lady Anne Barnard*, pp. 64-65.

¹³ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p. 11.

“monopoly” over the running of the thermal baths.¹⁴ Dr Hässner, who was a German doctor had a major impact on the development of medicine at the Cape. Hässner started working in the Cape at the Company hospital but he later decided to move to Paarl in 1786, where he became a surgeon working for the Dutch East India Company. One may wonder how Hässner become involved in the rejuvenation of the Zwartberg baths. Hässner’s first encounter of the baths was in 1804, when he went to the Zwartberg baths to sample the thermal mineral waters. Being a German doctor one can assume that he would have been well acquainted with the water cure and its many different proceedings and customs as it was practised in Europe. When Hässner arrived at the baths, he witnessed the neglected condition the accommodation as well as the bathing house was in and he immediately wrote to the Batavian Government in August of 1804, where he offered them his services as manager of the baths.¹⁵ In this letter he asked that the Zwartberg bath as well as a piece of land be appointed to him so that he could construct a new bathhouse.¹⁶ He also asked grazing rights for his cattle and sheep, so that in that way he could provide meat and milk and other produce to the sick who visited the baths. The buildings Hässner wanted to construct included a spacious guesthouse as well as a bathhouse for the invalids.¹⁷

The Batavian Government send the landmeter J.W. Waernich to map out the new border lines and the Chief Director of the Cape Hospital had to go and assess the power of the thermal spring water. The government was investing in this venture and therefore wanted to make sure that they would profit from people visiting the springs and paying to stay at the guesthouse.¹⁸ Hässner also wanted to construct better accommodation for the slaves and ‘Hottentots’ who had to sleep in the open and bathe in holes in the ground. This improvement would give the aesthetics of the Zwartberg baths a boost, as well as help with the increasing idea of comfort. In March 1805 Hässner presented the Governor with a layout and a plan of how he wanted to go about improving and revitalising the Zwartberg baths.¹⁹ This plan included a description and a sketch of the guesthouse, which would consist out of

¹⁴ L. Maritz: *Die Lewe en Werk van Francois Renier Duminy, 1781-1811*, p. 206.

¹⁵ J.C. Pretorius: “Dr. J.F. Hässner en die warm bad in die Overberg,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol.7), (No.2), Oktober 1995, pp. 45, 50.

¹⁶ B. Booyen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 35.

¹⁷ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 54.

¹⁸ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 54.

¹⁹ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 184.

“a lounge, a passage, fourteen rooms, a separate room and bathroom to be used by the Governor, a salon that would function as a dining room, four kitchens, a room for the Governor’s slaves, four bathrooms, one for the use of the visitors staying in the annex and an annex that would provide accommodation for sailors and soldiers. The annex would consist out of three rooms, a kitchen and a passageway and a building for the accommodation of slaves and Hottentots would also be built.”²⁰

Hässner planned to use the thermal spring water in the bathrooms by firstly creating a basin where the water could gather and then the water would be distributed to the different bathrooms by pipes. Since Hässner knew that certain patients would also want to take the cold water cure, he would erect a cold water bath as well. These plans that Hässner made was very detailed, he knew what he wanted to do and this must have impressed the Government greatly, for it seems that none of the overseers before Hässner had the amount of enthusiasm and drive that he had. By the time that Hässner came to the baths, a tariff for accommodation had long since been established. One can say that this element made the baths seem more structured and more developed. One would expect that after the description given above the tariffs would be high for the amount of comfort that was to be received. But Hässner’s tariffs were reasonable, which would have helped with convincing people from all classes to use the provided accommodation. There was a difference in the cost of each of the buildings. The main guesthouse with its kitchens and its own bath would be more expensive than the so called public boarding house and bath, which one can assume was the old government guesthouse. But Hässner also felt that people in need, ‘Hottentots’ and the sailors and soldiers employed by the Government should be allowed to stay at the bath for free. Visitors who brought slaves with them would have to pay for the lodgings of the slave as well.²¹

Sailors and soldiers would receive free food and drink and Hässner in this way made it clear to the Government that their employees would be cared for at no cost at the baths. One can assume that Hässner had some knowledge of thermal bath resorts in Germany, and therefore one could understand why he had a very good sense of how a bathing establishment would have looked like. He mentioned for example that a library would be built so that when the

²⁰ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 184-185.

²¹ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 185.

weather was bad, the patients could take to reading in their rooms. These plans were only the beginning and Hässner hoped that after erecting all of these new facilities he would also be able to add facilities like a graveyard and a horse stall. This showed that Hässner had a vision for the Zwartberg baths. Along with this plan that he had pitched to the Government he also asked for land of “*vyf en vyftig morge*” (fifty-five morgen) instead of the initial “*ses morge*” (six morgen). As one can imagine, all of these developments would not have been able to be covered financially by Hässner and the venture would cost round about “seventy to eighty thousand guilders” and he therefore asked for a loan of ten thousand rixdollars. Ending off his letter, Hässner requested that the Government should ensure that no one else would be able to erect a bathhouse near the thermal springs that would rival his, for this would make it difficult for him to make a profit.²²

The Government had send a land surveyor and the head of the hospital R de Klerk Dibbetz in the Cape to investigate the situation at the Zwartberg bath, and de Klerk Dibbetz noted that the water was about 118 degrees Fahrenheit at the source of the spring and 114 degrees Fahrenheit at the bath itself. He also mentioned the presence of iron in the water and concluded that this water could be used to cure a weak stomach, congestion, gout, rheumatism and even infertility. When the Government house was discussed De Klerk Dibbetz was not impressed and echoed the concerns made by previous visitors that the house was unfit for using and that it would rather make a patient more ill instead of helping with the recovery. The house was too far from the bathhouse, exposing patients to the open air and the house was damp and too small to accommodate large groups of people. There was also no way of obtaining any food or other necessities one could need at the baths. Therefore De Klerk Dibbetz expressed the importance of the promise made by Hässner to build a new guest and bathhouse.²³

Hässner’s hard work had paid off and on the 20th March 1805 the Batavian Government reached a decision and gave Hässner the baths, the bath and guesthouses as well as a extra “55 morge” land near the bath to develop and cultivate. With this contract, twelve conditions were included. The water that flowed free from the springs had to be allowed to flow down to the farm of P.J. Rademan who owned Het Warme Bad farm, only Hässner was allowed to erect a

²² “morg” in E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 185-186.

²³ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.54-55.

public bathhouse using the thermal spring water; Hässner and the overseers who came after him had to firstly be concerned about the baths and its development, and this development was not allowed to suffer because of the overseer's farming activities; Hässner only had fifteen months to erect all the buildings and developments he spoke of; the tariffs suggested by Hässner was accepted, although a couple of changes were made; Hässner and those who would come after him would not be allowed to sell the bathing facility without the permission of the Government, ensuring that the establishment would stay in Government hands and the Government could make rules and regulations on the bathing establishment as they saw fit.²⁴

With these conditions, Hässner received the bathing facilities and the extra land he asked for, and the time had come for him to create his planned bathing resort. According to Booyens Governor Janssens tried very hard to make sure that Dr Hässner was appointed as overseer. This was because Hässner was a certified doctor, and having a doctor on the premises would have increased the image and reputation of the Zwartberg baths. The Government also realised that the water cure could now be regulated by a doctor, which in turn would be better for patients visiting the establishment. Up to the eighteen hundreds both the earlier Dutch and English governments did not really invest much in developing the baths. A house was build and an overseer appointed, but that was it, there was no real investment in the baths. This could also be seen in the fact that the only produce visitors could buy was either from the overseer of the time, or they had to bring their own food with them. But this all changed after the Batavian government took over the Cape. Appointing Dr Hässner was their way of making sure that the thermal mineral springs would now be justified by the presence of a doctor and that together with the improved accommodation even more visitors than before would come to the Zwartberg baths.²⁵

Hässner was very eager to begin developing the baths since Hässner knew that if he upgraded and developed the baths and accommodation more people could be cured by the healing water.²⁶ When Dr Lichtenstein passed the baths on one of his travels in 1806, Hässner was already laying the corner stone of the new bathhouse.²⁷ This event did not pass unnoticed. A

²⁴ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 187.

²⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 35- 36.

²⁶ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 183.

²⁷ J.C. Pretorius: "Dr. J.F. Hässner en die warm bad in die Overberg," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol.7), (No.2), Oktober 1995, p. 50.

large crowd of people gathered to watch this momentous occasion, and even people from Cape Town travelled to Zwartberg baths for the occasion. This in turn would have been a form of publicity for the new bathing establishment and could have helped attract more visitors to the baths. Many people decided to stay on at the baths because of the improved accommodation which Hässner had put in place. This was a promising start for Hässner's new establishment.²⁸ With the new bathhouse in 1806 at Zwartberg bath, a new government also came to power. The English had once again taken over the Cape from the Batavian Government and was now the new authority. This was also the time in which Count Caledon was sent to run the Cape Colony.²⁹

Hässner developed his establishment and buildings from 1806 until 1811 but although he had made some improvements and developments by building a new bath and guesthouse, it seems that there were still a big group of people who chose to rather stay in their own accommodation. Lord Charles Somerset was also not impressed by the developments Hässner made and felt that it was not up to standard yet.³⁰ It does seem that the maintenance of a thermal spring bathing establishment was much harder than one could imagine. This could be seen by the variety of people who had been managers of this little thermal spring, and it seems that even the enthusiastic Hässner could not cope after some time. In 1810 he wrote to the Colonial Government asking for financial assistance as a fire had destroyed the new buildings and he needed funds to repair it. Hässner needed a loan to pay off his debts, and one could already see a pattern developing that would lead to the end of Hässner's idealistic resort.³¹

The town Zwartberg is established:

The year 1810 was a very important year in the history of Caledon. It was in this year that the government, after a request from some of the farmers in the Zwartberg area surrounding the farm Het Warme Bad, agreed to buy the farm in the area so that a church could be erected for the use of the neighbouring people and farmers.³² The farm Het Warme Bad was at that stage owned by P.J. Rademan who was known for giving accommodation to some of the bath visitors. As was mentioned previously, Dr Hässner was awarded the ground on which the

²⁸ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 11.

²⁹ *Caledon*, Caledon Library Historical printout, p. 2.

³⁰ B. Booyen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 36. & J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p.82.

³¹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 72.

³² M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 72-73. & J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p. 108.

bathing facilities were, along with an extra 55 hectares of land by the Batavian Government. The problem was that the extra land that was given to Hässner was actually part of Rademan's farm. This was the part of land where the springs were situated on the hill known as the "bronbult." Already in 1805 after the publishing of the application by Hässner for the right to the land surrounding the spring and for permission to build a bath house there, Rademan was fighting to get back his land. Rademan wrote to the Council in the Cape demanding the rights to the "bronbult"³³ and to be named the sole owner of the land. The Political Council who by that time was still run by the Batavian Government sent out a land surveyor by the name of J.W. Waernich.³⁴

His job was to see if any of Rademan's land was indeed given to Hässner and if that was indeed the case, if there would be any other land available to give back to Rademan. But in 1807 Rademan again wrote a letter, since it seems the surveyor Waernich never finished his assessment. Rademan wanted to be compensated for the loss of land that he endured and explained that he wanted to be given the amount of money he would have received if he had sold his farm with the land that Hässner now owned. He therefore wanted to be paid for his loss of land and devaluation of his farm. Rademan continued and said that Hässner diverted the stream from the two springs in such a way that the bathhouse on Rademan's land that was built by Wolfferum was now not receiving any more of the free flowing water of the springs, making it useless. The grazing that was situated on government land was also given to Hässner, but Rademan previously had the right to use it since he was an overseer of the government bath and guesthouse which gave him sole ownership of the use of the baths. This right Rademan now also lost because the bath and guesthouse had been given to Hässner.³⁵ From this one could conclude that there was a big dispute about land ownership between Rademan and Hässner, which when the government in 1810 was thinking of buying "Het Warme Bad" from Rademan came to the foreground again. This was why the dispute between Rademan and Hässner was ever present in the negotiations and the establishment of the congregation.³⁶

³³ Translates to spring hill.

³⁴ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.39.

³⁵ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 41.

³⁶ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 41.

The Rademan versus Hässner dispute firstly had to be settled by the government before any church land could be bought. In 1810 this dispute had been unresolved for five years. In this time the Cape government had changed to a British influenced government, who now had to sort out a ruling made by the previous Batavian government. Rademan wanted the government to either give him back the land that was taken away from him or to pay him the value of the land in money.³⁷ The government in 1809 realised that this issue was reaching breaking point and the Stellenbosch magistrate ordered a commission of *heemraden* to investigate both the claims of Rademan, although he felt that Rademan would not have been able to have maintained the spring and the land as well as Hässner did, which would have resulted in the devaluation of the land. It was true that Rademan could receive compensation for the land, but the magistrate wanted the commission to oversee the evaluation made by a land surveyor. So in 1809 the committee and the land surveyor Louis Michiel Thibault travelled to the Zwartberg to investigate the situation. Here the party learned that most of what Rademan claimed was in fact true and that the previous land surveyor J.W. Wernich in fact made a mistake when he granted the bathhouse land and “55 morge” to Hässner. Therefore Rademan was in fact the victim, but the magistrate felt that he was far too eager in his compensation claim. Rademan was said to have been very lazy and did not even maintain his own farm which showed that the bath and the land was better off in the hands of Hässner. Rademan did not even offer proper accommodation to visitors to the baths and therefore the claims he made about how much damages he suffered from not having the baths and the land under his authority was a lie, since it was clear that he would not have maintained the bathing facilities and this meant less people would have visited the bath and his accommodation.³⁸

The commission that investigated the situation decided that Rademan had to be compensated and wanted to give him land on a farm next to the one he already owned. But Rademan was not happy about this decision. He either wanted to be compensated with the money the land he lost was worth plus five years compensation for lost interest on the land or he wanted the farm back and restored like it was before 1805 as well as the farm “Groote Vally.” Rademan

³⁷ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 43.

³⁸ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 44-45. & J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p.21.

continued making outrageous claims. The government in the end rejected the claims by Rademan because of his laziness.³⁹

The government continued with its choice to buy Rademan's farm from him in December 1810. Rademan asked 30 000 guilders for his farm but the government suspected that the farm was worth far less. The magistrate had to investigate the actual value of the farm and reported that the farm was indeed worth 30 000 guilders. Rademan bought the land for about 30 000 guilders and if he was paid less it would mean that he would suffer a loss. By that time the government was already aware of the dispute between Rademan and Hässner, where Rademan lost land because of an incorrect land surveying. Therefore the government decided to pay the full amount and on the 21 December 1810 the farm "Het Warme Bad" was signed over to the government. The farm was now government property and the church could now be erected.⁴⁰ Hässner was temporarily appointed supervisor of the farm on the 23 December 1810 and he in turn appointed Johannes Hartog to be the temporary caretaker of the farm. The land was now in the possession of the government and although a church was still needed to be built, sermons were already being held in the old wine cellar by the newly appointed Reverent M.C. Vos in May 1811.⁴¹

With this dispute being central to the negotiations of buying the farm from Rademan, the magistrate at the time urged that the government had to take the time and resolve the issue so that the establishment of a church and a congregation could begin. The magistrate was very supportive of the establishment of a congregation since it would raise the moral standing of the people in the district.⁴² After the application for the building of a church by four farmers on behalf of the district, who by that time had raised enough money to build their own church, was successful, the farmers told the government in their letter that the people from the district had decided that the land at "het Zwartbergsch bad" would be sufficient since it was seen as the centre of the district.⁴³ The magistrate agreed that this was the best position for the church, because of the presence of the thermal springs. Because of the springs and the church, plots

³⁹ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 45-46, 188.

⁴⁰ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, pp. 48-49.

⁴¹ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p.23.

⁴² E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 41.

⁴³ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 41-42.

could be sold to people and the money made by this could be ploughed back into the church. The presence of a church would also increase the comfort of the bath visitors who could now not just heal their bodies with the curative thermal waters at the bath, but also experience the healing of the heavenly waters on their souls at the church sermons. The thermal spring was therefore directly responsible for the choosing of the place where the church in the Zwartberg district would be erected, and so played a role in the creating of the little town Zwartberg that was to follow in later years.⁴⁴

In the year 1811 a congregation was formed in the Overberg district and the church the farmers so eagerly asked for was to be built.⁴⁵ The idea was to sell plots near the church and thermal spring and in effect to create a new village. In March 1812 the land was inspected and surveyed and found that apart from the old buildings on Rademan's farm that was now used by the deputy magistrate, the parson and other officials, there would be space for 17 plots which could all be supplied by water from the spring. This was achieved by changing the thermal spring's water flow. The water from the springs, although constant, was also limited and would not be able to supply more than the 17 plots, and the only other water source was a stream in the Swartberg.⁴⁶ Most of the 17 plots near the church were sold in 1812 and by 1 January 1813 the church building was inaugurated. And so the village of Klein Swarteberg was born, with a little help from the thermal springs which did not just bring investors, who bought the plots, but also visitors to the baths which would boost the village's reputation. It also gave the water to the village so that those living in it could cultivate their plots and earn a living.⁴⁷

Back at the baths, Hässner was struggling to keep afloat. He wanted to sell his property but in March 1810 His Excellency denied him permission to do so because the baths could only be sold to a buyer who had medical training like Hässner. In 1811 His Excellency also reminded Hässner that with the buying of Rademan's farm the two springs now belonged to the government, which meant the person buying Hässner's property would not be able to use it, and this would have made Hässner's property far less valuable.⁴⁸ Therefore Hässner had no choice but to stay on as bath manager. Throughout all of these events people still visited the

⁴⁴ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 45.

⁴⁵ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 55.

⁴⁶ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p.25.

⁴⁷ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 73-74.

⁴⁸ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 73-74.

baths for their medical properties. In 1810 Captain Duminy, who was at the baths in 1797 with his wife, returned to once again take the waters. He was very ill and hoped that the waters would help alleviate the pain. Hässner was still busy with developing the accommodation and the bathhouses until 1811, and it is not clear in what stage of development the establishment was by the time Duminy visited there in 1810. He left the Cape on 9 November 1810 and reached the bath on the 13 November 1810.⁴⁹ Duminy bathed in the thermal waters as much as he could and that was allowed. It seemed that his conditioned worsened by the 29th but he mentions that at the evening of the 30th he was feeling much better. One can therefore assume that the water had worked its magic on Duminy's ailments. Duminy continued bathing twice a day until the day he left on the 29 December 1810 and only once complained of feeling sick again in that time.⁵⁰

Another well-known visitor to the Zwartberg bath in 1811 was William Burchell, who was an author and traveller who visited the Cape in 1811.⁵¹ He commented on the view of the bathhouse:

“Passing under the western end of Zwarteberg, the Bathhouse came into view, and had a very pretty effect, being a white, regular, flat-roofed building, pleasantly situated in an elevated part of the southern slope of the mountain.”⁵²

Burchell commented on the fact that at the baths Hässner, who was a “medical man,” was the supervisor residing over the patients. He described the bathhouse as having a ground floor which was divided by a gallery lengthwise and at the front it then opened up into eight small rooms. At the back of the gallery there was four baths and a kitchen as well as servant rooms could be seen at the front and the back of the building.⁵³

This was an insightful description of the bathhouse, but when Burchell commented on the establishment itself he was much more critical. He complained that in comparison with European bathing establishments, Zwarteberg had no form of entertainment or attractions for

⁴⁹ L. Maritz: *Die Lewe en Werk van Francois Renier Duminy, 1781-1811*, p. 207.

⁵⁰ J.L.M. Franken: *Duminy-Dagboeke*, pp. 169-175.

⁵¹ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 12.

⁵² J.C. Pretorius: “Dr. J.F. Häszner en die warm bad in die Overberg,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol.7), (No.2), Oktober 1995, p. 51.

⁵³ W.J. Burchell: *Selections from Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, p. 26.

visitors to enjoy and the age old complaint was heard, that there was not enough accommodation and supplies for the visitors. Burchell continued to comment on the healing powers the waters which were known to cure rheumatism. As many European visitors before him, Burchell also mentioned that the “people of the country” used the waters for any and all disease and had no regulation when it came to which ailments was cured or not. Once again the waters were praised and Burchell went as far as to predict that the Zwarteberg bath could become a popular destination and that it has always been much more celebrated than the other thermal water baths found in the Colony. Furthermore, he stated that neighbouring villagers could become regular guests and that the influx of new visitors could stimulate the amount of visitors to the baths. Burchell gave the Zwarteberg bath a very big compliment when he noted that “however wide the comparison, [it] may be regarded as the Bai[ae] of the Cape.”⁵⁴

It does seem that the improvements made by Hässner, although still not as luxurious as in Europe, put Zwartberg bath at the top of the other thermal water baths found in the country. Dr Hässner left the Zwartberg Bath in 1817 and he moved back to Paarl. Since the time that Hässner took over the baths he really tried his best to turn it into a flourishing resort. But as was seen in its early history, the bath for some reason was never an easy place to run or to keep. Money was always needed when a developing venture was undertaken, and it seems that this is where the problems arose. In the end Hässner moved back to Paarl since he could no longer afford staying at the baths. Hässner’s debt was so bad that at the time of his death in 1820 he still owed people money. Unfortunately the idealistic dreams Hässner had for the Zwartberg bath did not really materialise, but it was clear at the survey done after his death that Hässner in fact did make many improvements to the bathing facility which included the big new bathhouse.⁵⁵

Caledon is born

In 1811 the colonial village known as “Kleijne Zwarte Berg” was formed around the farm Het Warme Water. In April 1811 J.H. Frouenfelder came from Swellendam to Klein Zwarte Berg, where he would reside as sub-magistrate. Burrows describes the formation of the village very strikingly when he says that “it was a wholly artificial birth-on the day before Frouenfelder

⁵⁴A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 12.

⁵⁵J.C. Pretorius: “Dr. J.F. Häszner en die warm bad in die Overberg,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol.7), (No.2), Oktober 1995, pp. 52-53.

came there was no village, and on the day after he arrived it existed.”⁵⁶ A very big honour befell Klein Zwarte Berg in 1813 when Sir John Cradock, who had become Governor of the Cape, felt that he wanted to honour his predecessor the Earl of Caledon, and he proclaimed that the village’s name would be changed to Caledon on the 13 December 1813. In 1813 the Government decided to compile a new set of rules which had to be followed at the bath. These rules included that no animals or cattle belonging to a bath visitor was allowed to wander freely without informing the manager and the animals needed to be taken to the grazing field where they were guarded by a herder. Bath visitors were only allowed to be visited by acquaintances during the day and the visitors had to leave at the end of the day. The bath guests had to look after their own room and no animals except small lapdogs would be allowed. Any damage caused by a bath guest was to be charged at double the price and no one was allowed to walk around with an open flame or a burning pipe. This was probably done in an effort to curb fires. Bath guests had to use their slaves to clean their rooms as well as the kitchen. No one was allowed to be in the bath for longer than an hour in the mornings and the afternoon and bathing times was strictly from six in the mornings until ten at night. Bathing in the bath was subject to one’s arrival, on a first come first serve basis and guests had to take turns bathing. No one was allowed to shoot a gun for no apparent reason and vandalising of windows and doors through graffiti was forbidden. If any of the guests were to break these rules they had to pay a determined fine. These rules would ensure that a calm and relaxed atmosphere would be kept at the baths and that unruly bath guests would be heavily fined.⁵⁷

The fact that the Caledon bath was an asset for the Colony was no secret, yet it seemed that time and time again the bath and its manager failed to reach the standards that were expected. Even the enthusiastic Dr Hässner failed in his quest and this was a cause for concern. The fact that the government was aware of the value of the baths was apparent in the way they tried to turn it into a resort resembling the ones in Europe. The government wanted this bath to be known internationally and wanted it to become a big attraction that would make people visit the Colony. The Colonial Secretary C. Bird told magistrate Buissine that the baths as well as the climate the Colony possessed had the power to draw invalids from as far as East India and that the Cape Governor had to do everything in their power to make sure that the public, and

⁵⁶ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, pp. 86-87.

⁵⁷ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 38-39.

that included what one could call tourists, would have access to the curative waters the baths possessed.⁵⁸

It was true that the Caledon baths were very popular under the British officials as well as those from the East. Sailors and soldiers were also secured of receiving free accommodation and food when they visited the baths. But unfortunately because of the lack of accommodation and other comforts as well as entertainment, nothing except the thermal water made it popular and when it was compared to other European bath resorts the picture was quite bleak. This is what the government wanted to change, they wanted Caledon to be able to rival those resorts, not just with its water, but also with its accommodation and surroundings and become a world famous resort. One of the reasons why the bathhouses and resorts of the Colony were different to those of Europe was because people came to the baths first and foremost for the healing that could be found in the waters. That was their first objective. The socialising that did happen was a natural occurrence where people who was either sick or looking after sick loved ones would meet at the baths and enjoy each other's company.⁵⁹ The popularity of the baths could be seen in the amount of important visitors who had travelled there, and most of these were from the Cape. The Reverend of Caledon, Rev. De Vos, was treated at the baths in 1813-1814 and in 1815 J.A. Truter, the leading judge in the Cape Colony, also spent time at the bath.⁶⁰

After the death of Hässner the government took charge of the baths in 1820 so that it could still function as a place where invalids could go and take the waters. In the time period of 1850 to 1897 the baths were once again owned by a variety of private owners who tried to make a success of the Caledon baths.⁶¹ Famous visitors continued to go to Caledon baths and in 1825 Marten Douws Teenstra visited the baths.⁶² He was told by Cape doctors to try the baths since he was suffering from a liver problem. One of the doctors who suggested the Caledon baths was Dr J. Knockers van Oosterzee, who had a very strong belief in the curative powers of thermal mineral water.⁶³ Teenstra described the same house that Burchell described

⁵⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 39.

⁵⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 40.

⁶⁰ J.C. Pretorius: "Dr. J.F. Häszner en die warm bad in die Overberg," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol.7), (No.2), Oktober 1995, pp. 51-52.

⁶¹ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p.6.

⁶² M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 83.

⁶³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 43.

in 1811, the only difference was that it was now in a very bad shape and the rooms were dark, damp and filled with dust. One can almost say that the light went out of the bathhouse when Hässner left, since he was so enthusiastic about the baths and maintained them as best he could. All Hässner's hard work was starting to fade because there was no one to maintain it.⁶⁴

Teenstra complained that the bathhouse felt like a prison and that it conjured up images of death.⁶⁵ Teenstra described his bathing in detail and this gave one an idea of how the water cure had developed over time. He mentions the bath chamber with the four baths and that there were steps one had to walk down to get into the bath. There were two taps and each supplied hot water. The one's water was 43 degrees Celsius and the other 38 degrees. Teenstra commented that the water was clear and that it did not taste bad, and he sat in the bath with the water up to his chin while he was drinking the hot spring water out of a beer glass as was the ritual. He does however do something new by adding herbs to his bath, which conjures up images of modern day spa baths. It seems this ritual of adding herbs to hot water has therefore been around for a long time. After fourteen days Teenstra decided to end his bathing since he felt that he was not deriving any cure from it. After staying at the Caledon bath for about two months and trying the water cure numerous times, Teenstra decided to leave the bath and head back to the Cape because his health did not improve in the time that he was at the bath. Unfortunately the water did not cure Teenstra. Apparently his health did improve when he was back in the Cape, which may still be attributed to the water cure which was said to have in some cases only worked after the bathing had been seized.⁶⁶

The Caledon baths were now owned by the government and the Magistrate of Swellendam was given permission to sell some of the land. On 9 April 1827 they held an auction and they put up the big bathhouse with its baths, Hässner house and "391 morges" land with grazing and buildings included. The man who bought this land was Jan Gotlieb Brink, and he paid 536 pounds and 5 schillings. There were some conditions connected with the land, a theme that had been attached to the baths since the time of Appel in 1710. The government baths remained in the hands of the government and was to be used by those who could not afford paying for the new bathhouse. The owner of the baths, known since then as the "New Baths" had to allow the poor to use the grazing land for their animals. The cold water fountain that

⁶⁴ J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 3.

⁶⁵ J. Burman: *In the Footsteps of Lady Anne Barnard*, p. 65.

⁶⁶ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 43-44.

was present on the land could be used by the owner for irrigation as well. The public road that went by the baths had to be kept open and the owner had to maintain the spring, which gave the village its water, to ensure that the waterway was not obstructed. These were all rules that came with the buying of the land and Brink accepted them all.⁶⁷

It seems that after Hässner's developments, not much else was done to improve and expand the thermal baths of Caledon as a thermal bath resort like those in Europe. After Brink bought the land he had it until 1840, and no improvements to the bathhouse or the area was made evident in the commentary of a British visitor in 1840, who was not impressed by the lack of entertainment, refinement and lack of food and produce. Compared to the "fashionable watering places" in England, Caledon was primitive and not an attraction at all. After Brink sold the land, Thomas David Richards bought it for 400 pounds. He seemed much more interested in making the baths work for him, and in October 1841 he published a advertisement in the Government Gazette, informing people and potential clients that as soon as the repairs at the Caledon Baths was complete, there would be three rooms available for two rixdollars or if one stayed in the cottage, rooms would cost one rixdollar. The amount of accommodation by the looks of it was very small, and this could have meant that the amount of visitors were also very small. Unfortunately Richards, like those before him, could not turn the Caledon baths into a famous and high functioning resort.⁶⁸

After Richards the land was bought by George Miller, who like Richards, took to advertising the opening of the baths on 15 November 1842. Miller was hopeful that that some well-known visitors would patronise the baths,⁶⁹ and was especially vying for the attention of the so called "Indian visitor" who was none other than British officers stationed in India, who would travel to the Cape for their health.⁷⁰ Miller wanted these invalids to use the Caledon baths.⁷¹ The officers from the British East India Company had by this time started to patronise the Caledon baths when they were granted leave from the Cape.⁷² Miller could accommodate only six men, but there were horse drawn carts that could go and fetch an invalid in the Cape. As with his predecessor Miller also only lasted a year before it was sold to J.S. Needham for

⁶⁷ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 96-97.

⁶⁸ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p. 107.

⁶⁹ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p. 107.

⁷⁰ R.R. Langer-Carter: Medical Treatment of 'Indian' visitors to the Cape," *Bulletin of the Adler Museum of the History of Medicine*, (Vol.4), (Nr.1), Feb. 1978, p.12.

⁷¹ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p.107.

⁷² R.R. Langham-Carter: "The Caledon Baths," *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), (Nr.2), June 1984, p. 18.

300 pounds. Needham realised that the reason why the baths were not being managed successfully was because the people who bought it wanted to use the grazing and they did not really care about the baths. In 1854 Needham died and the land was worth more than when it was bought by him, which shows that Needham did make some improvements.⁷³ During the history of the Caledon baths it became clear that turning the thermal spring into a flourishing health resort was extremely difficult. Many owners tried but failed and the bad roads one had to take to get to the Caledon baths played a very big role in the reason why the bath resort could not be established.⁷⁴

One of the reasons why the Caledon Baths were so popular under people from the Cape was because of its close proximity to the Cape. This in turn was the reason why many visitors who came to the Cape as a port until their next ship came, could travel to the baths to take the waters. The British officials in the East sometimes had difficulty adjusting to the climate and they would then travel to the Cape Colony and Caledon to heal at the baths. The curative waters of Caledon were known outside of the Colony and passers-by would travel to Caledon and its baths before continuing with their sailing journey. Unfortunately with the opening of the Suez channel the Cape could be bypassed, and this affected the bathing establishments of the Colony very negatively. British presence in the Colony did however influence a new rise in the popularity of Caledon's baths.⁷⁵

The government decided in 1850 to give the old bathhouse and guesthouse to the Bishop Gray of Cape Town as a Glebe.⁷⁶ This donation included the buildings on the "305 morge" land and some of the regulations remind one of the regulations that were put on the sale of the New Bathhouse. The public road was to be kept open, and the government could construct a road on the land without compensation to the owner. Furthermore, the poor were to be allowed to use the baths if they pleased. It was however not the owners job to maintain the buildings. The water flow was not to be adjusted, so that the water used by the village and the New Baths would not be interrupted. For twenty years the Bishop owned the land and was it in the

⁷³ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p. 107.

⁷⁴ R.R. Langham-Carter: "The Caledon Baths," *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), (Nr.2), June 1984, p. 18.

⁷⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 65

⁷⁶ Glebe is a plot of land belonging to an English Church from which a profit could be derived from, in J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 5.

property of the Holy Trinity Church. In 1897 the land was sold to the Walsh brothers, who intended to create a health resort that could rival any European spa.⁷⁷

Throughout the Caledon bath's history one saw that many of the owners did not really try to turn the baths into the health resort it could potentially be. Hässner tried but failed, and most owners after him did not even last a year. In 1863 the baths were put on sale in an advertisement that proclaimed that "This could form one of the most valuable sanatoriums in the world-under the direction of a competent medical practitioner." With this claim the Caledon baths was given a new lease on life with the arrival of Dr Morkel who bought the Caledon baths in 1864.⁷⁸ He studied at Edinburg and by the description of a visitor to the baths in 1864 he was serious about the development of the Caledon baths as a health resort. This visitor, who wrote a letter to *The Cape Argus* on the 24 November 1864, comment on how the bathing establishment had changed under the guidance of Dr Morkel. In the letter by an "E.L.L.", a description was given about what had changed. He explained that a right wing and centre of a building was rebuilt. One can assume that this was the guesthouse built by Hässner that was transformed in this manner. The baths were also completely rebuilt and Dr Morkel made one very important improvement by connecting the baths and the guesthouse with one another in the form of a glass covered passage. This meant that the patients who used the baths did not have to walk in the open air to their rooms anymore, a fact that was always lamented about by earlier visitors to the old baths. This would also ensure that patients were not exposed to the weather and had a lower risk of catching a cold. There were seven to eight rooms that could be used and according to the writer if more people went to support Dr Morkel at his establishment the left wing of the building, which also contained rooms, could also be improved and made available for visitors to the baths. Although the rooms were very rudimentary with basic furniture, there were private sitting rooms available to visitors. The writer praises the treatment that one received at the establishment and seems very impressed by the way the Caledon baths were managed.⁷⁹

Dr Morkel had, with his developments at the baths, turned the struggling bath and guesthouse establishment which never seemed to reach its highest potential, into a "small Victorian

⁷⁷ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 98, 101. & J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 5.

⁷⁸ J.E. Wilson: *A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1881-1884*, p. 124.

⁷⁹ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 66.

sanatorium.”⁸⁰ Dr Morkel seemed to have set out to change the Caledon baths into an establishment that resembled health resorts found in Europe, something the government had tried to do for a very long time. The tariff for staying at the guesthouse was ten schillings per day, and the fact that Morkel, who stayed at the baths, was a medical doctor meant that the patients who visited the baths had a medical attendant to help them with their treatments. This was an element that was missing at the baths since the departure of Hässner, and made the baths seem more exclusive. The comparisons with the European bath establishments became more apparent with the adding of entertainment to the Caledon baths since this was a major feature at European baths. So with the inclusion of “pretty walks, rides and drives in the neighbourhood” as well as hunting opportunities and a library with more than four hundred books, the Caledon baths now starting to resemble a European bathing establishment.⁸¹

The Caledon baths in the twentieth century: The creation of a South African Spa

The division of the New Baths land is a long and a very confusing one, since the land was broken up in many different little pieces with many different owners. It seems that Dr Morkel did a good job with the baths, but he also sold his land about ten years later in 1874 to Pieter Jacobus Bredenkamp. Bredenkamp sold this land to Avon Bruce Brand in 1890 and Brand in the end sold the land to Walsh & Walsh on 21 December 1894. With this transaction one of the pieces of Brink’s land, which had been divided in two and sold to Needham and a C.J. Otto respectively was now in the hands of Walsh & Walsh. Otto’s land was sold to Morkel, and this land ended up in the hands of Wilhelmina Catharina Jane Kuys in 1891. In 1897 Thomas David Richard Kuys, who received the land from Wilhelmina Kuys sold the land to Walsh & Walsh. So in 1897 Walsh & Walsh had managed to buy all the little pieces of land that made up the New Baths.⁸²

With this the Caledon baths was to embark on a new and fruitful future. The Walsh brothers were from the Cape, where they were businessmen. By 1897, they had acquired all the lands representing the baths and they put their plans in motion to turn the Caledon baths into a world renowned Sanatorium. They started out small by building a small building designed by

⁸⁰ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 6.

⁸¹ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 66.

⁸² M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 102-103.

the famous architect A.M. de Witt.⁸³ They made a variety of improvements to the old baths as well, since at that stage they were only concrete holes in the ground which were six feet wide and three feet deep. It was still very primitive, since the water could be let into the bath by removing a plug in the wall. By the time the brothers bought the baths, the accommodation that was available was limited and comfort was almost non-existent. They therefore realised that the amount of accommodation as well as comfort had to be drastically improved so that the visitors to the baths would have access to the best they could offer. This materialised in the double story building that A.M. de Witt designed for them. They also improved the baths so that it was more modern and there were a larger amount of baths as well. The sanitation was at the highest level and followed hygienic trends of the time. The original buildings were also improved and the sister of the Walsh brothers, Mrs Halls was appointed as manager who did a very good job keeping the establishment flourishing.⁸⁴

Before the Walsh brothers had bought the baths, it was known as The Caledon Mineral Water Sanatorium and the doctor who was the medical superintendent at the baths was a Dr G.W.B. Danielle and in 1895 he gave exposure to the baths through his article, “The Mineral Waters of Caledon” in the *South African Medical Journal*.⁸⁵ In this paper he explained and praised the medical properties that one could find in the thermal mineral waters of Caledon, and these waters had been praised and celebrated by early visitors and doctors alike. The fact that Dr Danielle wrote about the water, gave the Caledon Baths the legitimacy it needed to boost its reputation, because here the healing waters were confirmed by a doctor in a medical journal. This would have meant a lot in the eyes of prospective patients and would help to attract visitors to the establishment. Even in the 1889 *Argus Annual and South African Directory* the baths of Caledon was mentioned and was said to “have proof efficacious in cutaneous and rheumatic disorders.”⁸⁶

In 1897 a piece on Caledon was found in the *British Medical Journal* under the heading “Health resorts and Sanatoria” which shows one how far Caledon and its healing waters was known. It mentioned that Caledon could be found in the Cape Colony and it described how beautiful the little town was. The climate and its position above sea level was also given, since those were two of the key factors that determined if a village could qualify as a health

⁸³ R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Caledon Baths,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), (Nr.2), June 1984, p. 19.

⁸⁴ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 13

⁸⁵ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 97.

⁸⁶ *The Argus Annual and South African Directory*, p. 774.

resort or not. The article mentions that one could travel there from Cape Town by train and this was something that was worth noting, because with the train service it cut down the time it usually took to reach the Caledon Baths by cart, making it easier accessible to more visitors. By 1897 the Walsh brothers had already bought the entire bathing establishment as well as the land it was on and by this time improvements would have started already. Dr Danielle was also working at the new baths. The article continued with stating that entertainment like tennis, cricket, croquette and shooting could be undertaken in the town. The thermal waters were discussed, which was a good way of marketing the baths, not just to people wanting to visit the Colony for their health, but also to doctors who had enough information about the waters so that they could send invalids from Britain to the Colony, the new health resort of Britain. The springs were described as being 60 degrees Celsius and that the indigenous people used it in mud baths to receive healing from the waters and that the water could cure diseases such as rheumatism and consumption.⁸⁷

In the article the medicinal worth of the water is analysed and the writer concludes that the water on its own or in combination with massage would have a very beneficial effect on an array of diseases. By the time the article was written the Caledon Mineral Waters Sanatorium already boasted with high quality sanitation and beautiful buildings with spectacular views. The mineral waters could be received through taps in the Sanatorium freshly “drawn from the spring.” The improvements made by the Walsh brothers were therefore already visible by August in 1897. The climate of the town, as well as the pureness of air and the abundance of sunlight one experienced were mentioned as well. Caledon was described as a health resort, and this could have stimulate early ‘health tourism’ to the Cape Colony.⁸⁸

In 1897 Dr Danielle decided to re-write the paper he published in 1895 and to include new information about the way the waters worked, the range of diseases it could cure and he also included a valuable description of the Sanatorium.⁸⁹ This paper was read at the Second Medical Congress of South Africa and Dr Danielle proclaimed his absolute belief in the curative powers of the Caledon thermal water and that it could cure or remedy a variety of illnesses and could even rival the waters of Britain. From this statement one can see that Dr

⁸⁷ “Notes on Health Resorts,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2.) (No.1911), Aug 14, 1897, p. 407.

⁸⁸ “Notes on Health Resorts,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2.) (No.1911), Aug 14, 1897, p.407.

⁸⁹ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, p. preface.

Danielle's belief in the Caledon waters was very strong, and this made him the perfect patron for the Caledon baths and Sanatorium.⁹⁰

This paper focused on Caledon itself and the Caledon spring's water and the climate, giving one the impression that all of these elements played a role and enhanced one another, and that Caledon could therefore be seen as a health resort, like Ceres and Matjiesfontein, but with the added bonus of a thermal mineral spring. Caledon was also easily reached from Cape Town by either rail or road compared to the other thermal springs in the Colony. A description of the springs was given to inform the reader of the surroundings. There were seven springs, of which one was a cold water spring, and they were all found upon a hill, just as earlier travellers described them and the baths and the Sanatorium was situated beneath the springs.⁹¹

By 1897 the treatment at the baths and the sanatorium had become much more modern and modern techniques had been introduced. There will be dealt with these advances in Chapter 6. Dr Danielle ended his paper by noting that there has been a rise in Sanatoriums in the Cape, and these Sanatoriums resembled European establishments, not just visually but in the standards of the treatments and comforts as well. The Sanatorium owned by the Walsh brothers fell in this category. Dr Danielle was the medical supervisor at the Sanatorium, and one can assume that he would have used the opportunity to advertise the Sanatorium in a certain way so that doctors would send their patients to The Caledon Mineral Baths & Sanatorium. The improvements to comfort and the baths were an important factor and as was mentioned, the standards were very high, since the Walsh brothers wanted their establishment to rival European spas. The Sanatorium was finished in 1897, but development was to continue since the accommodation was one again a problem.⁹²

The sanatorium that A.M. de Witt designed was a masterpiece and a feast for the eyes. It resembled a Swiss Chalet, treating visitors with the illusion of them visiting a beautiful European Spa. Wide verandas were seen at three sides of the building and the second story railings were made of "Chinese Chippendale woodwork." The first floor had cast iron railings

⁹⁰ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 5-6.

⁹¹ G.W.B Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 7-11.

⁹²G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 50, 54, 57, 59.

while the basement floor consisted out of stonework.⁹³ The building was a T-shaped one with wooden veranda floors and there was a beautiful view from each of the balconies, which gave the patients shelter from the elements like wind and rain. The dining room has stunning wide glazed French doors and a 120 people could enjoy dinner in the room. Keeping with the Victorian feel, there was a reading and writing room, as well as a ladies drawing room that opened up on the veranda. The ground floor had 25 bedrooms, a consultation room for the doctor, a billiard room and smoking room and the office of the manager. Bathrooms which were fitted with treatment baths could also be found on this floor, six in total and were situated so that the minimum distance had to be covered by a patient between the bathroom and his room. The treatment bathrooms were seventeen in total and had “hot and cold water taps, a shower; needle; electric; sit; hip and standing baths” which could be controlled by the patient as he saw fit. The first floor mirrored the ground floor in the amount of bedrooms, restrooms and bathing rooms. To add to the comfort of the patients the floor and ceilings were sound and heat proof and there was also a kitchen, stores and a servant room.⁹⁴

There was to be a new and exciting swimming bath built in the future which would be “40 by 80 feet with a sloping bottom from 3 to 7 feet.” This bath would be surrounded by dressing rooms so that the patients and visitors would experience the utmost of conveniences and there would be both male and female superintendents to make sure everything was running smoothly. The water in this bath would be kept fresh by ensuring that thermal spring water would be continuously flowing into the bath at the bottom and the older water would leave the bath at the top, ensuring freshness and a constant temperature. Other future improvements would include a drinking hall, which would look like a Kiosk, where patients would be able to drink the waters from the eye of the spring in comfort at a table with a view of the countryside. The Sanatorium had a telephone that connected it to the village and there was a well worked out menu to ensure invalids received the correct amount of food and nutrition. Accommodation, which was always a problem, not just in Caledon, but South Africa also, was picking up and being improved and developed to cater for the influx of European visitors

⁹³ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 7.

⁹⁴ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 59-62.

to the country, and this could once again be seen as the developments in which would later become the tourism business in South Africa.⁹⁵

This paper by Dr Danielle did in fact do a lot for the reputation of The Caledon Mineral Baths & Sanatorium and it was even reviewed in *The British Medical Journal* in 1902. In the review Caledon was called a resort and “a leading spa of South Africa” and the reviewer predicted that the popularity of this health resort could only increase with the further development of the country. Caledon as a health resort was praised for its air, its thermal springs and sanatorium and its iron rich water. Dr Danielle and his paper were in a great deal responsible for the positive advertisement the Caledon Sanatorium received, and would have stimulated the amount of visitors travelling to the establishment.⁹⁶

The creation of Montagu and the development of the Montagu thermal springs:

Before the mid-1800s there was no formal town near the thermal springs in the Cogmanskloof region. In 1838 the people in the area would have been farmers or travellers. This would explain the primitive surroundings of the thermal spring when Ferdinand Krause visited it. When Krause visited the spring in 1838 it seems that like the baths at Caledon, the first baths were no more than pools dug out of the ground which was fed by the nearby thermal spring. One can assume that the Montagu thermal water was quite hot since it took Krause a while to get use to the hot water in the pool. Krause also mentioned that this specific water was supposedly good at treating skin diseases, which was a sign that the water was indeed used in terms of medical treatments even at that time.⁹⁷ But steadily people came to settle in the area and in 1841 some form of a town was laid out on the land that was owned by Pieter Swanepoel, since 15 September 1841⁹⁸ since after 1820s the farms that was only available on loan basis was sold to the farmers and became their property.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 63-64.

⁹⁶ “Review: Health Resorts,” *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol.2), (No.2176), Sep 13, 1902, p.793.

⁹⁷ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 59.

⁹⁸ A. Hofmeyer: *Beknopte Geskiedenis van die ontstaan en vooruitgang van die dorp en afdeling van Montagu*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

⁹⁹ *Montagu, Xuaka, Where The “Fiery River” joins the “Burning Tongue,”* The Cape Journal, Montagu Library Source, p. 4.

The land on which the farm Uityvlugt was situated was transferred to a Daniel Stefanus van der Merwe on 1 April 1844.¹⁰⁰ But this settlement was not yet a village, since in the beginning only 100 acres of land was used for the cultivation of crops, and the only buildings were two houses. It seems that there was little development in the village and in 1850 D.S. van der Merwe asked a land surveyor, William Atmore to formally lay out the village on the farm land. So the village that was to become Montagu was founded in 1850. If compared to a spring town like Caledon, one can understand why there might not be a rich written history about the village and spring as in the case of Caledon, since Caledon was already established in 1813, which meant their springs also developed much earlier than those of Montagu.¹⁰¹ Sources differ about the exact date of the establishment of Montagu, and according to Hofmeyer the first “watererwe” (water plots) were sold in 1851¹⁰², but there are also some sources that points to the creation of the town in 1852.¹⁰³ This could be because Montagu was officially named in 1852, after the Colonial Secretary of the Cape, John Montagu, who went to the town in person to accept the honour of having the town named after him, and could therefore cause the confusion between the dates.¹⁰⁴

The forming of the village of Montagu grew with plots which were created on the land the farm Uityvlugt was situated on. The farm fell under the Swellendam district and received its irrigation water from the Badskloof and Donkerkloof. Most of the plots were sold in 1851 to people who were originally from Wellington.¹⁰⁵ But before a community could become a village, there was one important element was needed, one that each little village had, and that was a church. Churches play a very big role in the creation of a village as well as a community, since it was one of the elements that attracted people to a certain area and which made them stay in that specific area which could then be turned into a blossoming town. The farmers and towns people of the district were part of the Dutch Reformed Church, but the nearest church was in Swellendam since the village still fell under the Swellendam congregation. In 1854 an official appeal was put to the Swellendam church council to give

¹⁰⁰ A. Hofmeyer: *Beknopte Geskiedenis van die ontstaan en vooruitgang van die dorp en afdeling van Montagu*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

¹⁰¹ *Montagu, Xuaka, Where The “Fiery River” joins the “Burning Tongue,”* The Cape Journal, Montagu Library Source, p. 4.

¹⁰² A. Hofmeyer: *Beknopte Geskiedenis van die ontstaan en vooruitgang van die dorp en afdeling van Montagu*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

¹⁰³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁴ www.montagufarminn.co.za (9 August 2011).

¹⁰⁵ *Geskiedenis van Montagu en die distrik*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

permission for a church to be built in the village of Montagu.¹⁰⁶ The Swellendam Dutch Reformed Church council granted the people of Montagu this wish, since it was very difficult to reach the church in Swellendam, and the people travelling to the church would have had to cross the river eight times with their ox wagon, which made attending church a long and dangerous journey.¹⁰⁷

When the owner of the farm Uitvlugt heard that a church was to be erected, he kept out the piece of land from the present day Barrystreet to the Keisieriver for himself and in 1856 he sold the remainder of his farm land to the church so that the plots that could be created out of this land could be sold so that money could be raised to build the church in Montagu.¹⁰⁸ Each time a plot was sold an amount of that money went to the fund that was to be used to build the church, and on 1 November 1858 the cornerstone of the church was laid.¹⁰⁹ The church was being built in that time, so the town needed a preacher and in 1860 Dr. Servaas Hofmeyer, who was the previous preacher at Colesburg, was appointed as the official preacher of the Montagu congregation.¹¹⁰ The dry plots that were sold had a commission attached to it which had to be paid annually, and these funds would go to paying the preacher's salary.¹¹¹ In May 1862 the church building was finished and inaugurated with 1000 people attending.¹¹² So in 1862 the village of Montagu became a community, united by their own church.

With Montagu being established and developing, a natural disaster struck the little town on 8 March 1867. After a storm the river rose suddenly and the water swept through the town, killing thirteen people and damaging many vineyards. A mere two months later another flood hit the village, with damage to property and but no lives were lost. This was a natural disaster that seemed to become synonymous with the town as the years passed.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ *Geskiedenis van Montagu en die distrik*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Anette Cilliers, Joubert huis museum curator, 16 March 2011.

¹⁰⁸ *Geskiedenis van Montagu en die distrik*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Anette Cilliers, Joubert huis museum curator, 16 March 2011. & *Geskiedenis van Montagu en die distrik*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

¹¹⁰ A. Hofmeyer: *Beknopte Geskiedenis van die ontstaan en vooruitgang van die dorp en afdeling van Montagu*, Montagu Library Source. p. 2.

¹¹¹ *Geskiedenis van Montagu en die distrik*, Montagu Library Source, p.1.

¹¹² A. Hofmeyer: *Beknopte Geskiedenis van die ontstaan en vooruitgang van die dorp en afdeling van Montagu*, Montagu Library Source. p. 2.

¹¹³ J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p. 153.

The thermal spring and its still primitive baths was situated on the land that was in the hands of the Dutch Reformed church from Swellendam until the erection of the Montagu congregation. The Swellendam church council realised the importance of the healing properties the spring possessed. Therefore the spring and its baths were put to use by the church council so that invalids from all over the Colony who was in need of either medical care or healing of different illnesses could use the baths. This shows that before 1854 the thermal mineral water was already used for the healing of the ailing. This land was later donated by the Swellendam church council to the Montagu church council, which they in turn sold to a private person in 1855,¹¹⁴ which was also the first transfer which was written down in a legal record. The estate was “7 morgen 485 square roots” and during its development the springs and baths were owned by many different people.¹¹⁵

The primitive Montagu Bath in private hands: the many custodians of the healing spring in the 19th century

The Montagu Baths and the property it was on were sold into private hands by the Montagu church council after 1855, which meant that this was the start of the commercialisation of the spring and its baths. The developments would start slowly but it seems that each of the owners of the springs either brought on some expansions at the baths, or tried to create a haven for invalids where they could go and use the healing waters. But not only the ill were welcome at the Baths, healthy visitors were also encouraged to visit the spring and the bath. Unfortunately the sources do not divulge any dates about when the property was sold to the various owners and therefore makes it difficult to know at what precise date the property was in the hands of a specific owner.

The first owner to be mentioned by name after the sale of the thermal mineral springs into private hands was a missionary, J.R. Keets. Reverend Keets, who was the preacher at the Dutch Reformed church, was said to have visited the spring and the bath one day. The bath and its healing water made a huge impression on Keets, so much so that he decided to buy the bath so that his mother, who was very ill at the time, could use it to find some relief from her rheumatism, which was one of the ailments thermal mineral water was known to cure. The reverend's mother was said to have been relieved of her suffering, and after his personal

¹¹⁴ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 59.

¹¹⁵ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 8.

experience of the healing properties the water possessed, the reverend encouraged not only members of his congregation but also travellers, to use the baths for its beneficial and healing water. In that way the reverend made sure that the reputation of the baths and springs would be conveyed to wherever the visiting travellers would journey to, spreading the news of the healing water by word of mouth.¹¹⁶

Since it is not clear when the property was sold to the different owners, one therefore has to try and somehow establish a timeline with the little information that is available. After the Reverend's mother was cured, he sold the property to Mr. Miller who in turn sold it to a Mr. P.B. Moller. It seems that Mr. Miller had made some improvements to the property, since he made a substantial profit with the sale, although it is not clear what these improvements were.¹¹⁷ Although one cannot be sure of when all of these transactions took place, it would have happened after 1855. It is not clear when Mr. Miller sold the property to Mr. Moller, but one source that was found in the Montagu museum archive indicated that in 1886 a Mr. M.J. Moller wanted to inform the public that his bathing establishment was finished and that visitors could come and enjoy the waters.¹¹⁸

One cannot be entirely certain if this was the same Mr. Moller although the document is labelled: "Warm Baden te Montagu," and one can therefore use this information to try and establish a timeline of the development of the bath. In 1873 the civil commissioner of Robertson declared that it was necessary that a bathhouse had to be erected at the thermal spring and visitors would be charged a fee for the use of the thermal spring. The fee was a "tiekie" or three pence and accompanied with this was the order that the owner of the bathing establishment would be held accountable for its maintenance. At this time the bath was still very primitive and was nothing more than hollows in rocks and sand, so it was still in its most natural form, and the visitors and invalids would use these hollows to trap some of the health giving water for them to bathe in, by carrying the water in various containers to these hollowed out 'baths.'¹¹⁹ The one bath became known as the "Tiekie bath" and the first

¹¹⁶ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 9. & B. Booyens: "Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 15.

¹¹⁷ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 9.

¹¹⁸ Montagu Museum Source no.2: A hand written short history on the thermal springs' owners and water analysis. No clear reference to the author could be found, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ Montagu Museum Archive Source no.1: Handwritten description of an Worcester Standard Article published on 9 September 1886, p. 2. & B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

building ever to be erected at the baths was built over this *tiekie* bath, which one assume was the first bathhouse.¹²⁰

In 1884 a document named “List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony” was drawn up. The title deed of each spring revealed the status the thermal mineral springs enjoyed in the eyes of the government and public. Montagu’s thermal spring was mentioned in this document, and one can derive crucial information about the thermal spring from the data that is given. In the time that the document was issued, Montagu fell under the Robertson division and it is mentioned that the land on which it was situated on was once the farm Uitvlugt, which by 1884 was where the town of Montagu was developing. The name on the grant was a P. Swanepoel and the grant was dated 15 September 1841. This was the date that the farm was sold to Mr. Swanepoel, who gave land so that the village of Montagu could be developed. He was therefore the first owner of the land on which the thermal spring of Montagu was found.¹²¹ There were some conditions that were attached to the title deeds, which shows how important, even in 1841, the thermal mineral spring were to the public.¹²² These conditions were in favour of the public having access to the thermal spring. The condition included the “outspan place” and “thoroughfare” had to be kept open and free, so that anyone had access to it. The grant also mentions that the “benefits” of the thermal mineral spring was never to be kept from the public and that the public was to have the right to use the thermal water from the spring to create for themselves thermal water baths that they were allowed to use as they pleased. The grant also mentions that if the thermal spring was to be developed by some proprietors by constructing accommodation, the public had a choice to either stay in the built structures or in their own accommodation. This meant that the public had more power over their choice in accommodation. The roads leading to the thermal spring was also to remain free and open to all. The public who visited the spring was allowed to, when they “outspanned”, have their cattle graze on the property, but this was only allowed for 24 hours, except if arrangements were made with the owners of the property of that specific time.¹²³

¹²⁰ Montagu Museum Archive Source no.3: Hand written history of where the name of the Tiekie Bad originated, no reference to author found, p. 1.

¹²¹ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, p.7.

¹²² *Montagy, Xuaka, Where The “Fiery River” joins the “Burning Tongue,”* The Cape Journal, p. 4.

¹²³ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, p.7.

It is noted in the document a fee was charged in 1873. This was how the *Tiekie* bath mentioned earlier in the chapter was created, or named. In the document it stated that an attachment was added to the Grant of Uitvlugt, which by that time was the village of Montagu. This attachment was a letter that was written by C.B. Elliot in August 1873 to confirm that the Civil Commissioner from Robertson, under which division Montagu fell, had ordered that a bath house had to be built by Mr. A.J. de Wit to cover a part of the “Government warm bath near the village of Montagu” and that three pence would from then forth be charged by anyone who wanted to use the thermal spring bath.¹²⁴

Returning to the ownership of the Montagu baths, in the Worcester Advertiser of 9 September 1886 an advertisement by Mr. Moller dated 26 August 1886 appeared. Mr. Moller the owner of the bathing establishment in 1886 invited both the sick and the healthy to enjoy the waters and that they would receive a “warm” and “polite” welcome. Mr. Moller had built a double story house which had 21 rooms as well as other buildings connected with it on the outside. Invalids who came to the bath were allowed to bring their own food and bed linen with them. The advertisement also mentions that there were big stables as well as food for animals available at very reasonable prices. It seems that each thermal spring establishment thought of itself as “the best in the Colony” and with the bath at Montagu it was no different. In the advertisement the spring water was said to be able to cure all kinds of ailments and that it is strongly recommend to invalids who were in need of healing. There were two baths at the establishment, one was naturally hot and one can assume this would have been water that was pumped straight from the eye of the spring, and there was another bath which contained thermal water that had been cooled down. A separate bath was also available for the use of “Kleurlingen” which might have meant the indigenous people from the Khoi tribe that was still in the area. It is interesting that this special arrangement was made, and this arrangement was also seen at the Caledon baths. This is one of the first sources that show when and what kind of improvements and developments had taken place at the baths, although there are still many gaps in the development timeline of the Montagu baths.¹²⁵

According to a source found in the Montagu Museum archive, a Mr. Gregan, initials unknown, became the proprietor of the Montagu Mineral Baths in about 1891. The

¹²⁴ A. De Smidt: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, p.8.

¹²⁵ Montagu Museum Archive Source no.2: A hand written short history on the thermal springs’ owners and water analysis. No clear reference to the author could be found, p. 1.

accommodation was first class and the baths were recommended by the medical profession for curing rheumatism and gout. The baths were also said to have been “newly furnished.”¹²⁶ While the property was changing hands, it did not discourage invalids and other visitors to visit the spring, and one can assume that the growing number of visitors could have been the result of the improvements the owners made to the baths and the property.¹²⁷ Although it was previously mentioned that Moller had built buildings at the baths, there are some sources who mention that the first person who had given money for the improvement of the baths and the accommodation, was in fact J. H. Marais. It is unfortunately not clear when Marais had given money for the building of the bath and bathhouse. It could have been that he had given the money for the development of these buildings before or after Moller had brought about changes. The money Marais gave for the development of the baths and buildings was said to have been for the benefit of the sick and ailing who were visiting the spring and bath in larger numbers, as the spring and bath’s popularity grew.¹²⁸

It is not clear if Mr. Marais owned the bathing establishment, but it seems that after he gave money for the development of the property, J. O’Connor, who owned the Ashton Railway Hotel, decided to buy the baths and he invested a very large amount of money in the Montagu baths. This development was twofold, firstly he invested the money into the establishment so that it would draw more visitors and in turn he would make a profit, and secondly he improved the baths so that it would reflect positively on the town, so that people would either travel there to enjoy the baths, or to settle in the village. The spring and baths were used as a drawing card for potential residents, because the more people there were in the village, the quicker it would develop and grow into a large town. But unfortunately, it seems that the thermal spring curse one encountered with the history of the Caledon baths struck at the Montagu baths as well. After owning the Montagu baths for nine years, Mr. O’ Connor was suffering from financial difficulties, that seems to be synonymous with the owning of a bathing establishment. It seems that the baths literally drank up funds and that it was in fact very expensive run the baths even in the early years. This could be due to the fact that the fees attached to visiting the baths would have been fairly low and the amount of visitors were also not guaranteed, and all of these factors could have had an impact on the financial strain

¹²⁶ *The Montagu Mineral Baths & Sanatorium*: Montagu Museum archive, 1891.

¹²⁷ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 9.

¹²⁸ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 9. & Montagu Museum Archive Source no.3: Hand written history of where the name of the Tiekie Bad originated, no reference to author found, p. 1. & Montagu Museum Archive Source no.1: Handwritten description of an Worcester Standard Article published on 9 September 1886, p. 1- 2.

the owner would face in the end.¹²⁹ It is frustrating that the various owners of the Montagu baths are hardly known, and sources clash regarding the timeline and names connected with the primitive Montagu bath's owners. Since there are no dates given for when the earliest owners bought the property it is difficult to determine who owned the baths at the start of the twentieth century. But if one take into account that Mr. O'Conner owned the baths for nine years and the next owner had bought the Montagu baths property in 1905, one can assume that he had bought it at around 1896.¹³⁰

It the popularity of the baths grew as the facilities improved and became more comfortable for the invalids and visitors. Important sources were found that can help indicate how the Montagu bath's popularity and the establishment grew. These sources include the *Argus Annual and South African Directory* and yearly copies of Brown's *The Guide to South Africa*, which were guidebooks for tourists and invalids from abroad and those living in the Colony. The fact that the Montagu baths were mentioned in these publications meant that the baths were getting some publicity and becoming known by people outside of the Montagu district. International visitors could spread the reputation of the Montagu thermal water baths to others by word of mouth. As was mentioned, the development at the Montagu spring was improving as the years passed, and it must have been going well at the establishment since in the 1890 *Argus Annual and South African Directory* the Montagu baths was mentioned. This is an important fact because it meant that the Montagu baths was popular enough to be mentioned in this early tourist guide. According to the *Argus Annual and South African Directory* piece concerning Montagu, the baths were described as being "well known and highly praised." There was "a good boarding house" to be found at the baths, and visitors would have all the comfort they desired. Therefore it seems that by the 1890s accommodation was definitely present at the baths and that it was not as primitive as it was in the beginning and it is also clear that by that time more permanent baths were available.¹³¹

Brown's guidebook, *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, was used by visitors from abroad. Since the belief in the healing powers of the thermal springs were still followed at the time, travellers who came to South Africa in search of health would have eagerly tried these known thermal spring baths, and since Montagu was

¹²⁹ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, pp. 9-10.

¹³⁰ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, p. 10. & Montagu Correspondent: *The Worcester Standard*, July 29, 1905, bl. 5.

¹³¹ *The Argus Annual and South African Directory*, p. 774.

mentioned in these annual guidebooks, it would have illustrated their reputation to visitors abroad and in turn would have stimulated the growth of the bathing establishment. A reason why these guidebooks are such a valuable source is because they were printed annually and by reading the pieces written about Montagu and its baths, change over time becomes visible, and helps one to form a timeline when it comes to the development of Montagu baths.

In the 1893 guidebook, that was published three years after the 1890 *Argus Annual and South African Directory*, a better description of the thermal mineral spring that could be found at Montagu was given. It was mentioned that although the village of Montagu was at the centre of an agricultural district, that it was “particularly” known by the outside world because of its thermal mineral springs baths which was found two miles from the village and that the water was about 55 degrees Celsius. The piece was written in a promotional tone, but the reader would have been well informed about what the bathing establishment looked like and what they could expect. The ailments that the curative water was said to cure was also mentioned, which would have been a big help to those invalids who suffered from a specific disease. The Montagu thermal water was said to have been very effective in fighting diseases like rheumatism and other “cutaneous complaints.”¹³² Rheumatism was one of the diseases that were most commonly cured by thermal mineral waters, since Caledon’s water was also credited with healing rheumatism. It seems that by 1893 the Montagu baths were already well known by South Africans since invalids was said to have hailed from all parts of the country and went in search of health at these Montagu baths.¹³³

The accommodation had also improved, although one cannot be sure in which state of luxury these accommodations were, although one can assume that the accommodation would have been sufficient by 1893. By now the boarding house, which one had read about in 1890 could accommodate 18 visitors for only 6s. per day. The bathing place consisted out of two small baths that were connected with the building and the piece mentioned that the “arrangements have lately been considerably improved.”¹³⁴ The baths would have changed hands at some point in 1896 when one assumes Mr. O’Conner could have bought the property. In the 1897-1898, 1898-1899 and 1899-1900 editions of *The Guide to South Africa for the use of*

¹³² Cutaneous complaints are those that affect the skin in A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, pp. 138, 151.

¹³³ A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, pp. 138, 151.

¹³⁴ A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 138.

Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers most of the information that was found in the 1893 edition was still the same, and the evaluation of the Montagu baths stayed positive.¹³⁵

By this time Mr. O’Conner would have owned the baths and he had spent a large sum of money on improving the bathing establishment. A visitor’s book that was found at the Montagu baths show that the new establishment was apparently opened on 28 March 1900, and a very interesting inscription regarding the healing property of the waters was found in this visitor’s book in the form of a poem, where the curative water was praised and negative comments about medicine was made.¹³⁶

In the 1901-1902 *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, change was mentioned at the Montagu baths. Most of the information had stayed the same since the 1899-1900 editions, but the piece does mention that there was now “eight large bath-rooms” to be found at the establishment. Therefore O’Conner did improve the bathing establishment.¹³⁷ But it seems that with the improvements he brought on, the maintenance of the Montagu baths had become too much to bear for Mr. O’Conner, and he ended up selling the property. A reason for his financial problems can be derived from an article written by the Montagu correspondent of *The Worcester Standard* and which was published 20 May 1905. In this article the writer laments the absence of visitors at the Montagu baths, which in turn would have meant no revenue would have been collected and this could have given rise to Mr. O’Conner’s financial problems, since one has no idea for how long the baths were without visitors or the amount of people the Montagu thermal springs could attract. The writer also commented on the fact that the baths were in a very deplorable state and damaged and that it was not at all comfortable for invalids or visitors to use. Not even the curative powers of the waters were enough to persuade people to stay at the baths, and this would have been very bad for business. The writer of the article seemed ashamed of the fact that the baths were in such a bad shape, since this would have reflected negatively on the town as well as the amount of people who would have travelled to the baths, who would have needed food and

¹³⁵ A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 288A. & A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 288A.

¹³⁶ Montagu Museum Archive Source no. 2: A hand written short history on the thermal springs’ owners and water analysis. No clear reference to the author could be found, p. 1.

¹³⁷ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 324.

other necessities that they would have bought from the town, creating revenue for the town, and if people ceased to visit the baths this monetary advantage would have been lost.¹³⁸

But a month later the Montagu baths were rescued by a new custodian in the form of a Mr. Walker, initials unknown. In an article, written again by the Montagu correspondent for *The Worcester Standard*, the writer mentioned a very important fact that “for thirty years much and little has been said about our hot spring baths.”¹³⁹ This would mean that the idea of commercialisation of the Montagu baths came after 1873, since it was in that year that money was asked for the use of the bath and according to the writer since 1875, although the healing and curing properties of the Montagu thermal spring water was celebrated, the knowledge of this curing haven that Montagu possessed was not known to the greater part of the “outside world.” There could have been many different factors that contributed to the fact that Montagu’s spring was either not known or not regularly visited, the poor conditions for one as well as lack of accessibility. These elements, combined with advertisement or the lack thereof could also have had an impact on people’s willingness to travel so far inland. Caledon’s baths would have been much closer and they had ensured that people knew about their establishment by placing advertisement of the Caledon spa in the Guidebooks itself. The Caledon accommodations and surroundings were also in a better condition, which could have attracted invalids and visitors away from the Montagu baths. What one also has to keep in mind that by 1905, the Caledon Sanatorium was already seen as being much more modern than the baths at Montagu.¹⁴⁰

It seems that the bathing establishment had many problems before Walker bought it in 1905. The writer mentions that for years the Montagu baths were in the hands of a syndicate, although one is not sure who else was involved. This syndicate or owner had built a stone building over the spring, but unfortunately it seems that the water of the spring continued to seep through the floor of the building and this made it very uncomfortable and unpleasant to use. This could have discouraged people from visiting the Montagu baths because of the bad state the bathhouse was in. But there was hope for this establishment, according to the writer of the article, because Walker, who was a new resident at Montagu, had bought the property and had already started to make improvements. He had cleared away the drift sand that had

¹³⁸ *The Worcester Standard*, May 20, 1905, bl. 4.

¹³⁹ *The Worcester Standard*, July 29, 1905, bl. 5.

¹⁴⁰ 1901 edition of A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 51.

accumulated around the foundations of the building and the building had been drained as well. Walker was credited with the writers trust that he would be able to turn the Montagu baths into a flourishing establishment that would attract people from the surrounding districts. A small glimpse into the bathing ritual at Montagu is given since the writer mentions that Walker has managed to improve the baths enough so that on a Sunday morning one could drive out to the Baths and enjoy the healing warm water, accompanied by a cup of coffee that was given to each visitor by the “hospitable Laird.” This new owner of the baths seems to have made a very good first impression, and the Montagu correspondent wished him the best of luck and hoped that he would turn the Montagu baths in a successful enterprise.¹⁴¹

Walker indeed succeeded in turning the Montagu baths into a popular establishment and the improvements that were made were one of the positive elements that sprouted from his ownership. He installed taps at the baths which made it possible for guests to have a source of water to fill the baths at their fingertips. With the improvements Walker made, more visitors travelled to the Montagu. Walker showed that by giving the clients what they wanted business would be stimulated and this was seen since in the short time after Walker had reopened the baths the positive reputation of the Montagu Baths spread and resulted in clientele where before there was none. Walker had therefore succeeded in saving the Montagu baths and its reputation which in turn would have had a positive influence on the town.¹⁴²

Thus, the Montagu baths only started to enjoy wide spread fame at the end of the 1800s¹⁴³ and the reason for this could have been its inaccessibility, primitive accommodation and baths and the fact that it was not as well known. One also has to remember that the Montagu Baths had a delayed development and only in 1873 the first bathhouse was commissioned. Therefore the Montagu baths were still much more underdeveloped, and would not have been able to rival other more modernised thermal baths at the time. Like in the case of Caledon the baths also changed hands very regularly and it seems that the earlier baths was much more of an economic burden than an economic enterprise, because the maintenance of the baths had to be done regularly. But the Montagu baths with all its problems were still a very important natural asset to the Cape and the country could not risk losing one of its healing thermal spring baths, since the popularity thermal baths enjoyed under South Africans and visitors from abroad was

¹⁴¹ *The Worcester Standard*, July 29, 1905, bl. 5.

¹⁴² *The Worcester Standard*, 19 August, 1905, bl. 4.

¹⁴³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

still very high, and would have been an excellent tourist attraction if it was in a better condition, because Montagu and its thermal spring baths had a secret element that would give it an extra advantage over other thermal spring baths in the Cape Colony. Therefore there was a group that realised that it had to step in and save this important national asset by buying the property through the New Cape Central Railway Company in 1907 from Mr. O'Conner.¹⁴⁴

Transportation transforms a village: Montagu becomes more accessible

Accessing Montagu was a difficult task and this fact had a very big impact on the development of the town and its thermal baths. So for as long as the path to Montagu was long and dangerous, the amount of visitors would have been few. Therefore one has to look at how transportation and development made Montagu more accessible that would have helped to support the new and modern baths that was envisioned by the New Cape Railway Company in 1907. The development of Montagu and its baths were directly linked to its accessibility and in the early years of the village transportation was a problem, because of the difficulty the road posed to travellers travelling to the village. This difficulty strained the development of not only the town but also the thermal spring baths since without invalids and visitors the bathing establishment could not grow.¹⁴⁵ Montagu only had one exit which laid to the west and which went through the Cogmanskloof, where one had to cross the river about eight times, which would have been a very dangerous feat since ox wagons or horse carts would have been used and moving through the river would have been tough, and many times when a cart broke it had to remain there until help arrived. But these bad and difficult situations were improved in 1877 when it was decided that a road had to be built through the Cogmanskloof.¹⁴⁶

The decision was made by the Cape Parliament because of the dangers that were connected with travelling through the kloof, such as flooding, which killed twelve people travelling through the kloof in the 1867 flood. The well-known engineer Thomas Bain was involved with the building of the pass that was started in 1873 and continued slowly but surely in 1874 and 1875. Work continued and in 1876 only 280 meters and the tunnel remained to be built. This road tunnel is a very important structure in the history of South African road works,

¹⁴⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

¹⁴⁵ *Geskiedenis van Montagu en die distrik*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶ A. Hofmeyer: *Beknopte Geskiedenis van die ontstaan en vooruitgang van die dorp en afdeling van Montagu*, p. 3.

since it was the first structure of its kind in South Africa and this tunnel would become one of Bain's famous structures. This tunnel that had to be made would be very hard since the workers would have had to break through 16 meters of rock. In the end a breathtaking 6 meter arched tunnel was created and this opened up the pass to go through the Kalkoenkrantz and it was the "key to the pass." The pass was completed in 1877 and with that Montagu became more accessible to travellers and the outside world, which would have accelerated the growth of not just the village but also the Montagu thermal baths. Cogmanskloof pass created the link needed for Montagu's prosperity, and no longer was this town shut out from the outside world.¹⁴⁷ As an old resident of Montagu notes, after the tunnel was completed more people visited the town, and the drive towards the town was said to have been beautiful, which added to the attraction the thermal mineral bath gave to the town.¹⁴⁸

But the pass was not the only road and transport development that benefited Montagu and its springs, since in the end of the 1800 the railways came to South Africa. This new transportation system opened up the whole South Africa and people and goods could travel further in a shorter amount of time, and places that were previously deemed too far or remote to reach became accessible. This was the case of Montagu, but it took the creation of another town before Montagu was linked to the railway revolution. This was the town of Ashton, which was founded in 1887 to function as a station for the new railway line that was being extended. Montagu was dependent on Ashton because the railway did not extend to Montagu and therefore travellers and goods had to be fetched from Ashton station. So with the creation of the Ashton station, trains filled with visitors could now reach Montagu faster and more comfortably, even if they had to be taken to the town in a cart, where they would still have been able to enjoy the beautiful Cogmanskloof mountain pass and tunnel before reaching the village.¹⁴⁹ Ashton became "the key to Montagu" as it was only ten kilometres away and it was from here that one would take the pleasure ride through the imposing mountains to reach not only the town, but also the thermal mineral springs. With this access to the town it also opened up the baths to more visitors, it would be easier for them to get to Montagu and its baths and with the baths improving, there was a very good chance of it becoming one of the

¹⁴⁷ J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁸ D. Joubert: *Herinneringe uit die Verlede*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁹ J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p.152.

well known thermal springs in South Africa and now could have the potential to become a serious contender for the Caledon Sanatorium.¹⁵⁰

The Ashton railway was one of the private railways and was part of the Central Railway that ran from Worcester to Ashton.¹⁵¹ The carts that were available for transportation in 1893 to Montagu were 2s. per person.¹⁵² In 1897 the carts to Montagu ran twice on a daily basis except for Sundays and it cost 1s. 6d. per person for the six miles from the station to the town.¹⁵³ In 1898 people could hire private carts to take them to Montagu for 3s. 6d., and by 1900 the fare had risen to 2s.6d. for public carts and private carts were 5s.¹⁵⁴ Therefore the Ashton railway station became a lifeline for the town of Montagu, since it seems that because a railway could not be established at Montagu itself, Ashton was created to serve Montagu as a station, since it was only a ten kilometres away and easily accessible through the Cogmanskloof. The coming of the railway to Ashton therefore opened Montagu up to economic and cultural expansion and this in turn would have encourage travellers or ‘tourists’ to visit Montagu as a town but also as a source of health, which was found in the form of the Montagu thermal spring that would have benefited greatly from the new accessibility of the town and surrounding area.¹⁵⁵

Because of the railway Montagu’s baths were now ready to be turned into a haven fit for invalids and visitors alike, and this was seen in the amount of people who started to come from the Cape, bypassing Caledon Sanatorium, to visit the Montagu baths and escape the cold winters at the coast and the south eastern wind the Cape experiences in the summer. Visitors could therefore just get on a train, enjoy the ride to Ashton, where they were picked up in horse drawn carriages and taken across the breath-taking Cogmanskloof pass into the little village of Montagu and to its growing thermal baths. The moment that Montagu’s baths became accessible through the railways, was the moment that it became a contender in the struggle for best spa in the Cape Colony. But before the baths could compete against the likes

¹⁵⁰ J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p.152.

¹⁵¹ A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 25.

¹⁵² A.S. Brown: *Brown’s South Africa: A practical and complete guide for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 138.

¹⁵³ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 288A.

¹⁵⁴ A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 288A. & A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers*, p. 287A.

¹⁵⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

of spas like Caledon Sanatorium, it had to be improved and developed into a much more modern and luxuries establishment. This opportunity came in 1907 when the Cape Central Railway Company decided to buy the bathing establishment from the Ashton Hotel owner, Mr. J. O’Conner. This was the beginning of a whole new phase in the life of the Montagu thermal baths, this was the time that Montagu’s baths was put on the map for once and for all.¹⁵⁶

The development of the Olifants River Baths in 1800s-1900s

In the previous chapter there was dealt with the rise of the Olifants River Baths up to the end of the 1700s. It was seen how the baths was discovered and used by the Dutch colonialists and how the government took over the running of the springs when they had accommodation built and appointed a manager to look after the visitors as well as the buildings. But in the early 1800s the Olifants River baths was to experience a period of neglect. In 1801, Sir John Burrow, who was to become known as the “greatest all-round geographer of his time,” had visited the establishment and he was appalled by the sad state the original house built by the DEIC government was in. According to Hazel Hall, a reason for the decline in the baths could have been linked to its lack of accessibility. The Olifants River Baths were situated further inland than for example the Caledon baths in the Overberg district, which made the journey to these baths from the Cape much easier and therefore more popular. The journey to Caledon was easier because of the road improvement that was made to the Hottentots Holland kloof at the end of the 1700s.¹⁵⁷

One can assume that this neglected state of The Baths would have been brought to the attention of the Batavian Government in 1805, when a “*Commissie van Veeteelt*”¹⁵⁸ was ordered to tour the country came across The Baths in their bad state and drew up a report describing what was found at The Baths. It seems the building known as the Government House was extremely run down and the baths, which was found in little rooms, were “most cramped and unsuitable.”¹⁵⁹ This neglected state could definitely have deterred invalids from visiting the baths if they had alternative baths, like Caledon.

¹⁵⁶ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

¹⁵⁷ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 12, 22.

¹⁵⁸ Translated as “Commission for stock breeding in H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 12.

The Batavian Government's rule came to an end in 1806, and the British Government took over the rule of the Cape. During that time JS Burger, who was the son of Schalk Burger, requested from the government that they sign over the badly damaged house to him, since the English Government had "neglected it." Burger had been, like his father, the supervisor of the government baths. He wanted to demolish the building and rebuild it at his own expense, and "the government promised to look into his request." Although it's unclear if the request was granted, it does seem that The Baths experienced "considerable improvement."¹⁶⁰

With the British Government rule in the Cape Colony, the Olifants River Baths continued to develop. In 1814 a Scottish Officer, James Ewart, visited The Baths and wrote about his experiences at the thermal spring baths.¹⁶¹ He commented on the fact that he saw people from the surrounding district visiting the springs for medical purposes for the relief of rheumatic and chronic ailments. The water was either drunk or bathed in. The improvements that were brought on can be seen in Ewart's description of the bathing establishment where the baths had been "enclosed with low mud walls and thatched roofs." Accommodation was also provided by three houses which had three rooms available at the cost of a schilling a day.¹⁶²

The improvements to the Olifants River Baths must have been significant, since in 1825, according to Marten Teenstra, who visited the Caledon baths, these baths were in fact competing against the Olifants River Baths for clientele, and that because of the latter's scenic beauty, many farmers who lived in the area travelled there to enjoy what the thermal waters could offer.¹⁶³ It is in this testimony that the rise in the popularity of the Olifants River Baths can be seen, since being able to become the rival of an already well-established bathing facility like Caledon was no easy task. In 1830 a description of the baths was found in the *Cape of Good Hope Almanac*, describing the baths as having a beautiful scenery, and that a new and "tolerably good road [had] been made" which was a very important element in the growth of especially thermal springs like Olifants River Baths and Montagu. The visitors were provided for by the widow J. Burger, who lived on the farm next to the baths and there was also mentioned that "several persons from distant parts of the Colony" was known to visit the baths each year. This points to the popularity the baths enjoyed in that time period.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 12.

¹⁶¹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 13.

¹⁶² Hazel Hall's personal archive: James Ewart's Journal –covering his stay at the Cape of Good Hope (1811-1814) pg. 80, SA Library.

¹⁶³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 70.

¹⁶⁴ Hazel Hall's personal archive: 1830 The Cape of Goodhope Almanac – typed out page.

But unfortunately this fruitful period did not last, as the description given by the astronomer and surveyor, Willaim Mann, in 1842 showed. It seems that the baths had fallen into “disrepair” again, and the neat bath huts and accommodation Ewart described were severely neglected since there was no one to look after the buildings. This state the bathing complex was in would surely have affected its popularity. It seems that the poor shape the baths were in did in fact become a problem and by 1850 the Civil Commissioner in Clanwilliam had already received a large amount of complaints regarding the state of The Baths. The Baths at that stage was in the care of W. Frans Burger, who’s father J.S. Burger was granted the supervisory position over the bathing establishment by Lord Caledon. This was done on condition that the bathing establishment was to be maintained by Burger. The land that the baths was on was still owned by the government, and since the baths and the grounds had been so severely neglected, “the Civil Commissioner advised the government to sell The Baths” for an estimated sum of 200 pounds. It was only five years later in 1855 that the situation got so bad that the “inhabitants of Clanwilliam sent a memorandum to Sir George Grey” complaining about the neglected state of the buildings found at the baths. The inhabitants asked The Baths to be auctioned off and so allow the baths to be fully used by the public. This memorandum was signed by 48 men and a famous doctor, Dr W Guybon Atherstone also commented on the health risk the buildings posed to invalids visiting The Baths for a cure. Once again the Civil Commissioner advised the government to sell the land.¹⁶⁵

The Olifants River Baths in Private Hands

After receiving the memorandum regarding the neglected state of The Baths, it became clear to the government that trying to manage the bathing establishment from the Cape was becoming too difficult. It was therefore decided that the land and the buildings on it would be sold at a public auction that took place 9 August 1856. It is here where the first private owner, John Lawrence Sharp bought The Baths and 81 morgen for 358 pounds. It was made official in October when the Deed was signed by the then Governor, Sir George Gray. Unfortunately for Sharp, the transaction was not successful and another public auction had to be held 12 November 1859. At this action the land was sold to a Johannes Jacobus Wiese, who paid 213 pounds for the land, which was much less than what Sharp had paid, but closer to the actual

¹⁶⁵ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 13-14.

worth of the land and the deed was passed on 12 March 1860.¹⁶⁶ There was however conditions tied to the selling of the land, and Wiese had to accept these with the purchase of the land. These conditions included that the buildings and the baths had to be repaired by the purchaser within six months after the land was bought. Another interesting development at the baths was that there was now a set tariffs worked out that was to be charged for accommodation at The Baths:

“For a furnished room for accommodation of visitors and use of the Bathing house: Upper Class 1/6 per day; Middle Class 1/ - per day and Inferior class 6d per day. Indigent persons to have the use of a bathing place without payment, and to be allowed to construct huts or sheds for their accommodation for a reasonable time, if the proprietor provides no shelter for them. This however is not to be understood so as to permit squatting at The Baths.”¹⁶⁷

The Baths stayed in the hands of Wiese until he sold it to a Richard Grisold on 14 July 1868 for 510 pounds. But Grisold could not manage to hold on to the land and he sold the land to Josua Johannes Gerhardus Albertyn six months later. Grisold “did however hold the mortgage over the property until his death.” Albertyn was indeed the stepfather of J.J. Wiese, who owned The Baths nine years earlier. It seems that there is a pattern that is found in the history of all three thermal springs, and that is the fact that the bathing complex seems to have changed hands several times in a short period. The Olifants River Baths is no exception and between 1868 and 1885 the bathing complex had many different owners. It seems to show that managing the baths was not as easy as it seemed. Albertyn owned The Baths till his death on 27 July 1869, and the baths were inherited by his second wife Aletta Sophia Burger. The Baths were kept in the family when with her death The Baths was passed to her son JJ Wiese (Jnr). Unfortunately JJ Wiese was declared bankrupt in 1880, and the property had to be sold. It was bought by Johannes Petrus Kirsten for 400 pounds and his name was transferred to the title deed.¹⁶⁸

Kirsten, who was now the new owner of The Baths, was required, as was stated on the title deed, to make sure that the buildings, which included the accommodation and the bath

¹⁶⁶ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁶⁷ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 15 - 16. & Hazel Hall’s personal archive: archival document copies without references.

¹⁶⁸ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 16-17.

houses, were kept in a good condition and repaired if needed. He could change the tariffs asked of the upper and middle class visitors if he pleased, but he was not allowed to change the tariff set for the poor. It seems that the Baths were doing rather well and received visitors from places like Calvinia, Porterville, Clanwilliam and Cape Town, which shows how popular The Baths had become. These visitors were said to have been medically motivated to visit the thermal springs, and shows how well the belief in the taking of the waters had become part of the South African medical practises. Visitors who travelled great distances to reach the baths would have brought their own provisions, but Kirsten also supplied provisions to those who needed it. Especially in the summer time the amount of visitors to the Baths increased in volume, and Kirsten was forced to give board to visitors in his own house. Unfortunately it seems that Kirsten was not a good supervisor, presumably because he was under financial strain and the baths seems to have declined under his ownership. Buildings were becoming neglected and the sanitary conditions were well below standard. Since Kirsten did not keep records of visitors or finances, it seems that he was struggling to keep the bathing complex in a good state, and he also complained that he could not control the behaviour of the visitors who visited The Baths, which might have added to the decline of the conditions. The neglect and unsanitary conditions continued to such an extent under Kirsten, that a Reverend from the Dutch Reformed Church in Clanwilliam, CF Leipoldt, father of the poet C Louis Leipoldt, launched a formal complaint describing the “primitive and draughty conditions barely fit for sick people to restore their health.”¹⁶⁹

In June 1884, a list of the mineral and thermal springs that could be found in the Cape Colony was compiled and published, after there was a request made for it by the Commissioner. In this list a “full statement of the rights, privileges, and reservations in Title Deeds of Lands on which Mineral or Thermal Springs exist, including also Government lands” was asked for. The Surveyor-General did notify the Commissioner that the list was somewhat incomplete, but that it would be corrected in time.¹⁷⁰ The Olifants River Baths were also mentioned in the list, where it was listed under the Clanwilliam division. The name of the Grantee was still that of J.L. Sharp, but it is noted that it was “cancelled by authority of Government letter 8 January 1858. The land was in freehold, and the date on the grant was said to be 1 October 1856. In the section describing the rights reserved for the public, the conditions that were

¹⁶⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁰ From the Cape Town General Collection at the National Library: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, page unknown, possibly 3.

mentioned previously were once again listed, including the fact that the buildings had to be kept in a “proper state of repair” and the fixed tariffs were also mentioned. The fact that The Baths were mentioned in the list shows that it was therefore established as a Cape Colony thermal spring.¹⁷¹

In 1895 complaints about The Baths’ neglected and unsanitary state had reached the Government. The House of Assembly ordered that a Select Committee was sent to The Baths to enquire about the management.¹⁷² This proposal was made by D.J.A. van Zyl on 20 June 1895 during the “*Kaapse Wetgewende Vergadering*.”¹⁷³ Van Zyl mentioned that although there were regulations in place about the management at the baths, there was no method of enforcing these regulations and that the state the baths were in was so severe that patients were unable to “partake of the baths which were the best in the country, for medical purposes.” The Commission appointed included the Colonial Secretary, van Zyl, J.W. Sauer, J.T. Molteno and a Mr. Wege. The committee interviewed a variety of people, including a medical doctor, Dr. F.W. Weber, the owner J.F. Kirsten and a visitor to The Baths, S.W.J. van der Merwe.¹⁷⁴

This document includes all questions asked and gives one valuable insight on The Baths’ state as well as a glimpse into the life and culture at bathing establishments like The Baths.¹⁷⁵ The report the Committee compiled mentions that The Baths were visited for medical purposes, that the owner was responsible for the upkeep of the bathing complex; the sanitary conditions was insufficient; the owner, Kirsten was too poor to perform the requirements stated in the Title Deed and that there were many complaints concerning The Baths. The committee recommended that “better accommodation be provided” and “more effective control be exercised both by way of sanitation and discipline.” With these recommendation in place it was believed that while taking the waters “the comfort and health of the inhabitants [would be] promoted.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ From the Cape Town General Collection at the National Library: *List of Mineral and Thermal Springs in the Colony*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷² H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 18.

¹⁷³ Translates to “Cape Legislative Assembly” in B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁶ Hazel Halls private archive: Printout of Cape Town Archive document: Cape of Good Hope Report of the Select Committee on the Oliphants River Baths, 22 July 1895. Printed by order of the House of Assembly. July 1895.

From the questions and answers that were asked to visitor Mr Schalk Willem Jakobus van der Merwe, the neglected state of The Baths becomes apparent. He and his family visited the thermal springs for health reasons, and he explained what he experienced when he was at the baths in March 1894. The draining of the waste water was insufficient and gave off a bad odour, many windows were broken and were only covered up with tin and not replaced, and the floors were also in poor condition. The roofs were damaged and leaked, and the rooms cramped. There were also no stables for horses, and there were pigs on the land which caused a disturbance. When asked if these issues of neglect were a direct result of the owner's lack of management, Van der Merwe was of the opinion that the owner did not have enough money to do repairs and that if the Baths were in the hands of the Government, "it would be better for [those] who [came] from a distance to visit the place as a health resort."¹⁷⁷

When Dr. Frederick William Weber was questioned he mentioned that the road to the Baths was in a poor condition and that the lack of accommodation forced some visitors to put up tents to sleep in. Weber suggested that the following regulations had to be included in the managing of the baths: Proper accommodation, visitor numbers had to be controlled; clean and well ventilated rooms; outside toilets had to be built; only small amount of sheep may be brought by a visitor; no patients with diseases that were deemed infectious like leprosy and syphilis was to be allowed at the baths; fixed tariffs; the manager had to be reimbursed for any damage done by visitors; during the months of October to March an official must be appointed to make sure the regulations were met, and the cost would be divided between the manager and the Government and lastly that during the bathing season a doctor was to be sent to The Baths three times to give medical guidance to the visitors.¹⁷⁸

The last person to be interviewed was Kirsten, who had to answer for the neglected state of The Baths. Kirsten mentioned that sometimes the amount of visitors overwhelmed him and that he was indeed busy with repairs for the upcoming season. Kirsten said that he was aware of the regulations connected with the upkeep of the baths, but that there were occasions where people would overcrowd a room, and refuse to listen to him when he objected. He also mentioned that he in fact did not have a place where the refuse could be deposited and that

¹⁷⁷ Hazel Halls private archive; Printout of Cape Town Archive document: Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on the Oliphants River Baths. Interview conducted on 2 July 1895, Printed by order of the House of Assembly. July 1895.

¹⁷⁸ Hazel Halls private archive; Printout of Cape Town Archive document: Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on the Oliphants River Baths. Interview conducted on 9 July 1895, Printed by order of the House of Assembly. July 1895.

there was a chance that it could be washed into the drinking water.¹⁷⁹ Kirsten did mention that previously people did not visit The Baths during the winter months, but after Kirsten had adjusted the flow of the thermal water to one of the houses, he had visitors throughout the year. Kirsten told the Committee that if accommodation was improved, like with the erection of a hotel on the property he was sure that it would help The Baths to become more lucrative and help him to make enough money to keep the conditions at the Baths to a higher standard. One can therefore assume that the reason for the neglect the baths suffered under Kirsten's management was because of his lack of funds, which impacted his ability to keep conditions satisfactory.¹⁸⁰

After this report was sent to the Government, it seems like the testimonial given by Dr Weber impressed the committee members so much, that they decided to buy the Baths through the forming of a Syndicate. On 9 October 1897 the Olifants River Syndicate was registered as a Limited Company, whose directors included David de Waal, Thomas Louw, Pieter Wege and Herman Dempers, and there were three other shareholders as well. The Syndicate aimed to create a "hydropathic establishment" and include farming on the farm as well. They paid Kirsten 4000 pounds, the exact price The Baths was sold for 17 years earlier. The members of the syndicate had big dreams for their establishment, which included the construction of a railway tunnel through the mountains, so that the train from Porterville could reach The Baths. Unfortunately their dreams were interrupted by the outbreak of the South African War in 1899-1902. After the War the Olifants River Syndicate was experiencing financial problems and they were forced to sell The Baths to James McGregor, who at that time owned the farm Modderfontein as well as the farm Bloemfontein. Although some believe that The Baths were sold to McGregor on an auction held at the Grand Parade in Cape Town, it was in fact done in Clanwilliam by the civil commissioner. The Baths were sold for 5250 pounds, and on 6 November 1903 the property was transferred to McGregor.¹⁸¹ With the sale of the bathing establishment to McGregor a new age in both time and management was to take place at The Baths.

¹⁷⁹ Hazel Halls private archive; Printout of Cape Town Archive document: Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on the Oliphants River Baths. Interview conducted on 9 July 1895, Printed by order of the House of Assembly. July 1895.

¹⁸⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 74.

¹⁸¹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 19.

Like the Montagu Baths, the Olifants River Baths was also situated in a rather inaccessible location, and therefore the development of the roads to and from the area was very important for the growth of The Baths, since the quicker visitors could reach The Baths, the more visitors could be expected. The Olifants River Baths lies in the district that was accessed by two mountain passes, Kardouw Pass and Piekenierskloof Pass. There was a drift at Karnemelksvlei what would become known later as “Die Bad se Pad”(The Bath’s Road) gave one access to The Baths. Piekenierskloof pass was the road one would take to travel from the area known today as the Western Cape, to the interior and with Kardouw’s Pass was seen as “the gateway to the Bokkeveld.” In 1837 the Central Road Board had to decide which of the above mentioned passes were to be rebuilt. This decision was made, and in 1855 the surveyor, a Mr Ailing and Thomas Bain worked out a new route over Piekenierskloof, and work was started on the new pass. The new pass was opened 17 November 1858 and was renamed after the governor Sir George Grey. With the completion of Grey’s Pass it had a very good outcome for the district since trade was stimulated, and the baths also became easier accessible to visitors. One of the big transport revolutions that impacted the baths was the railways.¹⁸²

There had been talks that a line was to be made through the mountain that would have gone through the valley and next to the Olifants River, which would have passed very closely to The Baths. Unfortunately these plans did not materialise. If one was to travel from the Cape Town to the Baths one would have to have stopped at Piquetberg Road and the rest of the way would have been undertaken on a wagon. Train travel to The Baths was made easier when the railway was extended to Eendekuil, since there would be a railway bus one could take that travelled over Grey’s Pass into the valley.¹⁸³ As was mentioned, the only access to The Baths was through the drift opposite Karnemelksvlei known as “Die Bad se Pad.” As was seen earlier, in 1895 a Selected Committee was sent to The Baths to investigate the neglected state it was in, and they saw in which poor state it was since the farmers, without the help of the government, constructed it. It was suggested by the civil commissioner that instead of visitors using the Divisional Council road, which would require of them to pass over the Olifants River, a hard road would be better suited for the situation. In 1899 a new

¹⁸² H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 64-66.

¹⁸³ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, pp. 66-67.

road was made consisting out of clay and shale.¹⁸⁴ Therefore with the road in better condition, the visitors to The Baths could increase as well as its popularity.

This chapter surveyed the developments of the three thermal springs of Caledon - , Montagu - and Olifants River Baths. In Caledon one saw how in the early 1800s the town was created and established, with the help of the thermal water which would have been able to give water to an limited amount of plots and how the thermal springs and baths developed into a more modern bathing complex and at the end of the 1800s the Caledon Sanatorium was being developed to become a rival for well-known European thermal bathing complexes, and the dreams of the Walsh brothers was beginning to come true. Caledon ends the 1800s on a high and successful note. The town of Montagu, which by was established by the mid-1800s and its thermal water baths also went through a time of development, with the bathing complex changing hands frequently, but it seems that each custodian did try and develop the baths as much as they were able to. With the Cogmanskloof Pass that was built, the Montagu region and its baths were now more accessible for visitors, increasing the amount of people visiting the establishment. By the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, the baths, which was owned by O'Conner, was sold to the New Cape Central Railway Company in 1907 because the group realised that it had to step in and save this important national asset by buying the property through the from O'Conner.¹⁸⁵ The Olifants River Baths also experienced a time of growth, although there was also periods of neglect. The Baths passed from Government to private hands, and also had many custodians in a short time period. The managing of these Baths it seems was a rather difficult task, and a committee had to be appointed to investigate claims of neglect against the owner, Kirsten, who held The Baths in the last part of the 1800s. After The Baths were sold, there were also big developments planned for this bathing establishment, but an unforeseen war derailed these plans, and in the beginning of the 1900s, The Baths passed into the hands of James McGregor.

Therefore one can see that all the thermal water spring baths did experience some growth and development leading up to the 1900s, which placed all of them in rather good positions to thrive in the upcoming era where more modern technology as well as transport would develop, and where with the changing society, these bathing complexes had to accommodate it. This new era of the bath complexes that started in the 1900s will be discussed in the next

¹⁸⁴ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The History of the Olifants River Warm Baths, Western Cape*, p. 67.

¹⁸⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

chapter, as one will look at how the modern age changed not only the water cure culture, but also the bathing complexes themselves.

Chapter 5:

Spas of South Africa: The modernisation of the three Cape thermal mineral spring establishments in the 20th century.

As was seen in the previous chapter, all three of the thermal mineral spring resorts were in a fortunate position in the beginning of the 1900s and all three had the promise of becoming successful resorts. Caledon baths already had their Sanatorium that was to grow extensively, Montagu's Baths had been bought by a very successful company and the Olifants River Baths was to fall into the hands of a highly successful entrepreneur. This chapter traces the development of the three thermal mineral springs up to the 1980s, and showcase the trials and tribulations the resorts underwent. In terms of sources, the information was once again rather scarce and many years passed before there were any developments at the resorts, and therefore accounts for the rather large intervals and 'gaps' between developments. This chapter ends off with discussing how each of these resorts stood at a turning point in the 1980s.

The creation of The Caledon Baths Limited Company: South Africa's European Spa is born

Looking at the development of the Caledon Baths in the 1900s, it is important to remember that in 1899 the South African War between the Afrikaners and British broke out in South Africa and the country was in turmoil. When the war ended in 1902, the Sanatorium was still standing.¹ It seems that the war did not affect the business at the Sanatorium to any great extent since there was such an influx of visitors that new accommodation had to build. The Walsh brothers realised that the amount of money they would have to invest in the new additions was going to be substantial and they therefore decided to create a public Company which would give them enough funds to turn the Sanatorium into one fitted with the latest developments and innovations known to the Sanatorium sector.² The Walsh brothers formed the public Company The Caledon Baths Ltd. with A.W. Spilhaus, Louis Abrahson; Dr. John

¹ J. Burman: *In the Footsteps of Lady Anne Barnard*, p. 65.

² Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 14

Hewat, W.H.F. Kleyn and J.G. Walsh as its directors.³ These men wanted to produce an establishment that would function both as a health and holiday resort that would be frequented by health and pleasure seekers and which would make a successful addition to the town, raising its reputation. There were three elements that had to be visible in the new and improved Sanatorium. Modern conveniences had to be as up to date as possible, so that the Sanatorium would attract doctors' interests and convince them to send their patients to the Sanatorium. It was however important that the Sanatorium did not represent a hospital, it had to inspire and please the patients visually since this would help with the recovery. The most important business element was that the directors realised that there was no suitable winter and summer resort in South Africa for visitors or residents who wanted "a change or rest and who wish[ed] to enjoy the benefit of fresh and pure air, perfect comfort and pleasant company without the confinement and other disadvantages of a sea voyage" and they wanted to fill that gap in the market so that South Africans did not have to leave for European resorts.⁴ A prospectus was given out inviting people to invest in the Company, and in this prospectus the analysis of the water was given, to show prospective buyers how curative the waters were and the analysis done by a Professor Atfield, who worked at the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, legitimising the water's medical powers. A list of famous people who had visited the Baths in the past was also given which included individuals such as Lord Milner and W.P. Schreiner. The prospectus mentioned that the Baths were easily accessible by train and that there was a new and private road that would be constructed by the Company in the future that would make the road to the Caledon Station only five minutes away. The opening of the railway to the public also fuelled this expansion since it made Caledon and its Baths even more accessible and an influx of tourists were expected. The idea was to recreate the Sanatorium to be "equal to any similar Institution in the World." The estimated annual profits of the Sanatorium Hotel and Baths combined with the Bottling Works and the Farming Operations were estimated at 20 000 pounds.⁵

The new additions to be added to the Sanatorium were a south wing which would be connected to the older building by a stunning dancing and concert hall as well as a lounge. These plans would cost about £26 000 according to the architect who would erect it, the Cape

³ J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 5.

⁴ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 67-68.

⁵ *The Caledon Baths limited prospectus*, p. whole document.

Town based William Black, and these new buildings would have every modern convenience.⁶ The new additions also increased the amount of bedrooms from 80 to almost 200 and visitors could rent suites that were more luxurious. An additional room that combined a bathing pool and massage room was built as well as new bars. Additional staff were added as to increase the work force to a 100 workers as well as full-time nurses, although there were no full time doctors.⁷ Many of the building materials that were used like the cast iron railings and ceramic tiles in the Sanatorium was in fact shipped to Caledon from Europe, adding to the European Spa feeling the Sanatorium strived towards.⁸ The Sanatorium was now well on its way to becoming the “Baden-Baden of South Africa.”⁹ The railway made it possible for tourists to reach Caledon and it’s Sanatorium much easier than before, and the tourism industry was beginning to grow in South Africa as well, In a short time Caledon became known as the “premier spa resort in South Africa”¹⁰ which was boosted by the vast amount of advertising and marketing that was done in Brown’s Guidebooks and other tourist publications.¹¹ Advertisements of the Caledon mineral baths and Sanatorium were published in this specific source as early as 1897 and included the water analysis of the springs as well as information about the climate and diseases that were cured at the springs. The advertisement was written by Mrs Halls, who was the manager of the Sanatorium at the time. In the 1898 to 1901 advertisement the layout was improved with a picture of the Sanatorium and the statement that the water “possesses marvellous curative properties” and that there were “thousands of testimonies” to show that the water was “unique.” The headline, “South Africa’s Spa” announced the way in which the Sanatorium would be marketed in the future, as a South African themed spa that could rival even those in Europe. The 1904 advertisement had the same picture and information, but the title changed to “The Caledon Baths, Limited. The Caledon natural thermal chalybeate waters, baths and sanatorium.” In the 1910 advertisement a photo of the Sanatorium was included, showing the developments that had taken place. The Sanatorium was marketed in the best way possible to attract new visitors.¹²

⁶ J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, pp. 5, 7.

⁷ R.R. Langham-Carter: “The Caledon Baths,” *Adler Museum Bulletin*, (Vol.10), (Nr.2), June 1984, p. 19.

⁸ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p.7.

⁹ J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p. 108.

¹⁰ J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 7.

¹¹ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, p. unknown, advertisement on page.

¹² A.S. Brown & G.G. Brown (eds.): *The Guide to South Africa for the use of Tourists*, pp. 22, 35.

There were also a range of pamphlets available in the years to come that would intrigue future visitors and raise the cliental numbers. The alternations to the new wing lasted from 1902 to 1904 and was accompanied by a pamphlet in the year of its completion entitled *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate, South Africa* written by JB Greenslade. The cover page of the pamphlet exuded confidence and superiority by referring to Caledon's baths as "The Premier Health Resort of the Cape" and "South Africa's Spa" which gave one the idea that it was the only one available in South Africa. This highlights the company's interest of displaying the exclusivity of their establishment. s.¹³ Beautiful photos of the Sanatorium and its surroundings were included, and gave the reader a visual idea of the establishment. The pamphlet consists of flattering language and poetic discourse in order to attract visitors to the Spa. The waters of Caledon were compared to a 'treasure' that was said to have been the most valuable of all the country's assets. The sparkling water was like champagne, supporting the idea of it being expensive and indulgent. It is interesting to note that the Karoo air was also previously compared to champagne, so it seems to be a theme in describing the natural assets of South Africa.¹⁴ The writer mentioned that because of Caledon's climate and temperature, it added extra value to the thermal waters, not found at any other thermal chalybeate spring in the world. At the World Fair in Chicago in 1893 there were different countries from around the world competing against one another in different events. Caledon entered their thermal mineral water into the competition and won. They had outshone other thermal mineral waters found in both Europe and America and walked away with the first place because of the high quality "medical and curative properties" Caledon's water possessed.¹⁵

The chemical analysis of the water that was done by Prof Attfield was included in the pamphlet to inform the readers of the minerals responsible for the health giving properties of the thermal waters. The three main elements of the water, the temperature, at 60 degrees Celsius, the high amounts of iron and the purity, were highlighted and explained. The climate of the Cape which included the rainfall and temperature were also briefly discussed so that tourists could be aware of the weather throughout the year, making it easier for them to plan when to visit. The village itself was referred to as a "charming health resort." The fact that it

¹³ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, p. cover page.

¹⁴ The air of Matjiesfontein, described by Lord Randolph Churchill in Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 17.

¹⁵ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, pp. 1-2.

was called a health resort did not limit it to invalids, since there was enough entertainment to create a pleasurable atmosphere for tourists. The fact that Caledon was so close to the Cape was also highlighted and was put forward as an advantage. Nature was Caledon's main marketing tool and all the gifts nature produced were used in the marketing to attract visitors to the pleasant little town. The agricultural produce as well as the flora that could be found in Caledon was also used as an attraction. Caledon was marketed as a Winter Health Resort, to which individuals could escape the winter blues as well as having the advantage of the close proximity to doctors if any illness connected to the cold was to appear. Additional entertainment which included hunting, was a large attraction for tourists travelling to South Africa as could be seen in the Brown Guidebooks which focused on hunters or as they were called, sportsmen, as well as tourists and invalids. These guidebooks were used to sell South Africa to tourists abroad and the fact that Caledon spa was named and had advertisements in the books itself would have been a huge marketing advantage over the other thermal spring in the country. These books also stimulated the development of the tourism industry in South Africa.¹⁶

The pamphlet described the Sanatorium in detail, but the sales pitch that went through the pamphlet like a golden thread was the importance of the thermal springs. The thermal chalybeate springs were described as "Natures' Gift of Gifts." Gifts were meant to be cherished and used and nature was thus responsible for the cure people received through the water when they had their treatments. The reason for the struggling development of the springs was put down to difficult roads and unsuitable accommodation, but the Baths were saved by two men, the Walsh brothers, who gave birth to the glorious Sanatorium and turned it into the successful Company that it was in 1904. The Sanatorium was to be finished in the middle of 1904 and the pamphlet continued to describe all the improvements visitors could expect from the new wing and entertainment on the grounds. These new development would not only draw South African visitors, but also European visitors who for a long time lamented the absence of entertainment at the Baths. The Caledon Spa was now more in league with those in Europe and could bring an influx of tourists from abroad.¹⁷

¹⁶ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, p. 3-7.

¹⁷ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, pp. 8-9.

A doctor was also to be appointed at the Baths, where he would look after the patients' health and manage the massage department. No patient would be treated without a diagnosis by the doctor which would ensure that no patient could receive incorrect treatment. The pamphlet mentions the fact that train services would be available from the Cape daily and the amount of recreation was plentiful, which included billiards, golf, hunting and dancing. There were rules attached to meal times which included breakfast being served at 8.30am, lunch at 1.30pm, tea and cake at 4pm and dinner at 7pm. Tariffs were charged according to the time spend at the sanatorium and included boarding and the use of the baths at 12 guineas per month. Children under the age of 14 paid half price and one had to pay for individual treatments like massages and electric baths, but no fees were charged for using the regular hot or cold baths. This treatment price list reminds one of the modern day spa treatments list found at current spas.¹⁸

The Walsh brothers had set out to create a health resort in South Africa that could be seen as equal to European resorts and they left no stone unturned in this conquest. They created a Sanatorium South Africa could be proud of and when they realised that the accommodation was still lacking, they improved upon it. The final developments of their Sanatorium was complete by 1904 and the Company Caledon Baths Limited owned the land the springs were on for more than 53 years, which was quite an accomplishment, seeing as in the history of the baths, no owner was able to last as long. The survival and the development as well as the popularity of the Caledon Sanatorium was due to the enthusiasm, drive and ideals of the Walsh brothers and their Company, and this set them apart from the previous owners of The Baths. Their goal was for the baths to flourish and become known worldwide, and through their passion, it did.¹⁹

By the 1920s the Caledon Baths Company had turned the establishment into a Sanatorium and a Hotel that was in stark contrast to the historic "primitive Spa" that Caledon baths once were.²⁰ The building was still the same as in 1904 which had been maintained throughout the years. The lighting at the Sanatorium was done through Acetylene Gas, and the warm water swimming pool was also by that time constructed. Wine and other liquors were also available at the Sanatorium by that time. Motor cars were present by this time in South Africa, which in itself would have boosted the amount of visitors to the baths who did not have to travel by

¹⁸ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, pp. 15-18.

¹⁹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.102.

²⁰ *The Caledon baths, Caledon, Cape Province: the radio-active thermal chalybeate waters*, p. 7.

wagon or train anymore. There were garages for motor cars as well as petrol if a visitor would need any. The healthy climate was mentioned as well as the railway services that included a cart which collected visitors from the station. The tariffs for accommodation had risen and the treatments that could be received were charged individually. The modern treatments were combined with the thermal water which showed that the water was still central to the healing treatments.²¹

In 1930 another pamphlet regarding the Sanatorium was released, still owned by The Caledon Baths Limited Company. The catch phrase changed to “The Natural Water Cure” and it was mentioned that further information could be obtained from Cook & Son.²² What makes this significant is that Thomas Cook was a British tour guide who had his own mass tourism agency which he had started in Britain with the first railroad pleasure trip in 1841 which was one of the first of these leisure businesses. Cook realised that there was a market, and he offered trips on the train for bargain prices. He hired a special train, being solely liable and sold the tickets at a reduced rate where he still made a profit. This business grew substantially through the years and in the end turned into international tourism, where he went beyond the borders of Britain and introduced people to the international scene.²³ By 1845 he had started to organise these kind of trips on a full “commercial basis” by using trains that he had “chartered.” In 1851 he arranged a tour to the Great Exhibition in London and in 1855 he had his first intercontinental “all inclusive” tour by taking tourists to the Paris Exhibition. These tours by Cook can be seen as the first steps to what is seen as a development in mass tourism as well the tourism industry itself.²⁴ Cook and his business continued well into the twentieth century with Cook and Sons and they continued to create travel packages for tourists throughout the world, but their main centre was still Europe.²⁵ Sticking to the technological developments in transport, Cook became the first “travel agent” to offer pleasure trips by plane in 1919.²⁶ The fact that Thomas Cook was involved with the Caledon Sanatorium meant that he would have access to international tourists for whom he could introduce to the idea of travelling to Caledon Sanatorium, boosting in return Caledon’s Baths’ popularity aboard.²⁷

²¹ *The Caledon baths, Caledon, Cape Province: the radio-active thermal chalybeate waters*, pp. 15, 17, 19.

²² *Natural thermal chalybeate springs: nature’s gift of gifts; the natural water cure*, p. cover page.

²³ G. Cross: *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600*, pp.125-127.

²⁴ J.C. Holloway: *The Business of Tourism*, pp.24-25. & A. Holden: *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, p.27.

²⁵ A. Holden: *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, p.28.

²⁶ M. Shackley: *Atlas of Travel and Tourism Development*, p.19.

²⁷ *Natural thermal chalybeate springs: nature’s gift of gifts; the natural water cure*, p. cover page.

Caledon was described as an “ideal health resort” and the focus was still placed on the health aspect of the thermal mineral water found at Caledon. Apart from the health aspect, one could also see the rise in entertainment at the baths that created the holiday feeling of the Sanatorium. Golf, tennis and the croquet courts were available as well as the thermal swimming pool. The concert hall was used for musical and social events such as dances. There were 120 rooms for visitors and 40 rooms for bathing together with hygienic restrooms. Electric lighting was now introduced at the Sanatorium and the hotel. The hotel linen was “electrically laundered.” By this time cars were more common and garages and petrol were available. It was also noted that a doctor would visit the Sanatorium daily, ensuring that patients had medical advice when they needed it. The same 1904 water analysis table was still given, to prove the high mineral content that was found in the water, and was accompanied by the quote: “There is no doctor’s prescription which can give iron in the same assimilable form as in this preparation from Nature’s laboratory.” This enhanced the new natural approach doctors were said to have supported at the time.²⁸

In 1931 two pamphlets were produced that dealt with the Caledon Baths. The first pamphlet was by The Caledon Baths Limited titled, *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*. The second was brought out by the Caledon Chamber of Commerce to market Caledon and its surroundings entitled *Caledon and its district: the wild flower garden of the Cape*. The pamphlet containing the history of the baths briefly covered the years from when the “Bushmen and Hottentot” lived in the area up to 1931, and covered the most important facts that were attached to the baths. This was a very good marketing tool since by showing the reader the history of the baths, it validated its historical curative waters.²⁹

In the second pamphlet Caledon was introduced as a tourist destination and was used to attract tourists. The spa played an important role in the tourism of the town, and was therefore featured extensively in the pamphlet together with the history of the town and the Caledon wild flower garden. The spa was used to sell the town together with all the other attractions the town could offer. The importance of the springs was seen in the fact that they had “drawn

²⁸ *Natural thermal chalybeate springs: nature’s gift of gifts; the natural water cure*, p. 3, 5, 7, 9.

²⁹ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, pp. whole document.

visitors to Caledon since they were first discovered” and “undoubtedly their existence was responsible for the founding of the town.”³⁰

These pamphlets illustrated that the Company was flourishing, marketing was done at a good pace and they were even connected with the international company of Cook & Sons. The Baths were for once a prized possession and was managed and used to its full potential. It brought tourists and visitors to the town, which would have had a positive influence in the Caledon residence. The 1931 pamphlet mentions that more people came to the baths in search of health and that the Sanatorium “provide[d] a place where post-operative patients [could] obtain the rest and treatment so often necessary to restore them to perfect health.” This description of health seekers and post operation patients that visited the Sanatorium resembles what one see in present day descriptions of modern health and medical tourism, which therefore had been present in a primitive form in Caledon since the 1930s. The Sanatorium could rival those in Europe and would have been a national asset for South Africa and an international attraction. Caledon was compared to famous spas like Bath in England given that Bath also had thermal chalybeate waters and there were very high hopes that Caledon would follow in Baths’ footsteps. The writer of the pamphlet hoped that Caledon would also become a “Mecca” for invalids and become a famous spa town.³¹ Caledon spa thus became known as the “prince”³² of the South African thermal baths.

But disaster struck the baths once again on the morning of 5 June 1946. The glorious and popular Sanatorium burned down beyond recognition. This was a tragedy of momentous proportions for not only the owners but also the town itself. The fire, which started in the dancing hall, was discovered by a night security guard at about twenty minutes past one in the early hours of the morning. He proceeded to call Mr Cohen, who was assistant manager at the Hotel. Mr Cohen raised the alarm and the Hotel guests, who were still able to save many of their possessions, were evacuated and taken to nearby hotels. Unfortunately the flames were fuelled by a very strong north-easterly wind which resulted in the flames spreading rapidly through the building, almost burning it to the ground. By eight in the morning only the massage and private baths part of the building was still standing since the rest of the burned

³⁰ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 4.

³¹ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, pp. 14-15.

³² B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 68.

walls started to implode and the “building smouldered for the whole day.”³³ With that, the glorious Caledon Sanatorium was no more and a great loss was felt by the people of the town.

Therefore it was a big loss when the Sanatorium burned down in 1946. The main tourist attraction that gave Caledon its popularity was now gone and this meant a loss of revenue for the town. The jewel of the Overberg was gone and the people of Caledon had lost a very big heritage asset.

After the loss of the Caledon Sanatorium the property, with what remained of the Sanatorium, changed hands many times, with promises of rebuilding the once glorious building. But unfortunately, those promises remained empty. The Sanatorium was not rebuilt after the fire, and although one cannot say with certainty why this was, one could assume that since this happened only a year after the Second World War ended, there might not have been money for this feat to be undertaken. A golden opportunity now existed to build an even larger and more advanced spa and resort, which could rivalled the likes of Bath. This would have brought in a large amount of revenue to the town and its people, but alas, this opportunity was not seized, and once again, as so many times before, the thermal springs was neglected.³⁴

One is not sure what happened after 1946, but in 1950 The Caledon Baths Limited sold all the land in their possession. Some land had already been sold to the Union government in 1916 and 1917 and in 1921 they also sold some land to Hendrik M Groenewald. They sold their remaining land to one of the shareholders of the company, a Mr Simon Davis³⁵ in a public auction on 26 May 1950, and the *Caledon Venster* reported on June 2 1950 that the “Caledon Baths” would be rebuilt, since Mr Davis promised that he would rebuild the hotel as soon as he could. In the same report it was mentioned that the manager a Mr John Swanepoel, was living in the part of the sanatorium that survived in order to insure that the public still had access to the bath. It was very important for the town as well as its people that the Sanatorium was rebuild, since it was not only a tourist attraction for the town as a health resort and provided a steady income, but it was also the social centre of the town where townsfolk could meet and share in the entertainment offered by the Sanatorium. The visitors who would visit the Sanatorium were usually rich and some were even famous and this was an attraction in

³³ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.125.

³⁴ J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 19. & J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p. 109.

³⁵ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.104.

itself for other people to go to the Sanatorium and rub shoulders with these ‘important’ people.³⁶

Two years later another report was issued by the *Sunday Times Newspaper* in February 1952, with the same promise that the hotel was being transformed into a luxury establishment, with the “radioactive water” that issued from the spring available in each of the bathrooms, modernised facilities was to be incorporated and the dining the guest would receive would be overseen by “Swiss and French” personnel, adding to the glamour of the experience. This new Hotel would be unrivalled in Africa, a one of a kind affair. This was the promise made to not only the people of Caledon, but the whole of South Africa in a national newspaper. The owners of the land’s excuse for not rebuilding the hotel sooner was that it was very expensive to do so, and that they were trying to get funds from the government under the “Touring Corporation Bill.” The thermal mineral spring and its history seemed to be an issue close to many of the towns’ peoples hearths, since it was the spring and its popularity that was responsible for the establishment of the town. But unfortunately, the promises of rebuilding the ‘Spa of South Africa’ was not materialising.³⁷

By December 1956 Mr Edu Langschmidt who had previously lived in Caledon, lamented the fact that the towns people were not utilising the wonderful gift of the spring that they had available in their town. But it seems the reason for the lack of development at the spring site was the fact that the owner, Mr Davis, was not able to get the monetary help that was needed to fund the project, and in the end in 1957 at a town council meeting it came to light that Mr Davis was in fact insolvent, and a council member, Mr J L Fourie suggested that the land was to be taken from Mr Davis. This took place on June 20 1958, but this act was not accepted by Mr Davis. He fought the expropriating of the bath grounds by going through legal channels. His estates curators challenged the expropriating by informing the town council that Mr Davis did not except it, but the town council mentioned that the matter was already settled. They did offer Mr Davis 909 pounds, but he did not accept it and a mediator were appointed. By this stage the incident had reached a critical point and after many deliberations the Municipality decided that a commission had to be sent to the Administrator because Mr Davis wanted compensation to the value of twenty thousand pounds.³⁸

³⁶ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.127.

³⁷ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.127-128.

³⁸ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.129.

While the feud between Mr Davis and the town council continued, the subject of developing the hotel on the bath grounds became a popular topic in the community. Once again letters to the newspaper was published, and one such a letter suggested that the reason for the problems with the expropriating of the land was because of the thermal mineral water. The writer had questioned the validity of the promised 150 000 pound development. A Mr W Jurgens wrote in May 1959 that he was in talks with the curators, one can assume that these were the curators of Mr Davis's estate, and that he wanted to purchase the land as well as the water on it. His plans were to turn the old Sanatorium grounds into a new "health and holiday resort" which would be developed as soon as he had confirmation of the sale of the land to him. But as before, none of the promises were kept, and the people of Caledon were once again left without their once celebrated attraction. The community finally had enough and started a petition against the expropriating of the bath grounds at the end of May 1959. This was however too late and it was reported on 24 June 1959 that Mr Davis would be compensated for the land, which now belonged to the Municipality. The Municipality asked for the help of Prof R Truter, who was on the Stellenbosch council, with their water plant plans, so that the spring water could be used for supplying water to the town. The popular thermal spring resort was therefore not rebuilt, and the town lost their main tourist attraction.³⁹ When the municipality took over the baths, instead of building a spa or resort, they simply piped the water into the water supply for the town, and all that was left of the glorious sanatorium was the thermal swimming pool that was build there in 1904 so that people could still swim in it.⁴⁰

When Burman wrote his book *Waters of the Western Cape* in the 1960s, he was unable to reach or see the old baths on the hill since it was by that time fenced off by the municipality, which one can presume was done for safety reasons.⁴¹ But the idea of redeveloping the once old baths Hotel was never really forgotten, repeatedly the idea of development was brought up by different role players. In 1965 this idea was once again mentioned, where a Motel was said to be built on the bath grounds. But this idea was not favoured by the Chamber of Commerce, who said that it would not bring in any tourism to the town.⁴²

³⁹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.129-130.

⁴⁰ J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 19.

⁴¹ J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p. 109.

⁴² M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.130-131.

But even with the negative reaction to the building of accommodation on the bath grounds, this did not stop the selling of two “acres” of the bath grounds to a Caledon businessman, a Mr W Bloom, in a public auction in 1966. It is said that Mr Bloom wanted to start a company, but as with small towns, many rumours started to go around surrounding the selling of the land in 1967. The Municipality did mention in 1975 that a company, who they did not name, did in fact lease the grounds where the swimming pool, house and the caravan park was situated. They were said to have paid a thousand pounds for this lease per year, and that they have been leasing it since 1967. They were planning to lease the ground for fifteen years, and with this information one can see that there were still some activities at the old sanatorium grounds. But the plans for the motel that was mentioned earlier was never realised because of the problem with water. The thermal spring was still the main source of water to the town, and the municipality would not risk losing the ability to supply water to the town. It seems that there was no lack of enthusiasm for developing the thermal spring, the problem was that the water the springs supplied was more important than was first thought.⁴³

The municipality could not risk having the water the spring supplied used for leisure and tourism, because the town, which by that time had grown in size and number, needed the water for household consumption. Therefore the municipality informed the people of Caledon that only after they had found an alternative water source for the town, the bath grounds would be able to be developed into a tourist attraction. They were in fact investigating the possibility of running a pipeline to the town from the Theewaterskloof dam, but needed a R1,441,000 loan to accomplish this endeavour. As before many different investors wanted to develop the old bath grounds, and one such an investor was Mr P C van Zyl van Hercules, who hailed from Pretoria and who was the owner of AA Metals. He had an elaborate and grand plan concerning the bath grounds and the thermal spring. He was willing to spend up to two hundred and fifty thousand rand on developing a holiday resort near the spring by buying more land around it, where he would build “thirty holiday homes, a restaurant that would be able to seat a hundred and fifty guests, three new swimming pools as well as restoring the caravan park. These were only some of the many plans he had for the bath and spring grounds. But once again this development was not realised, and the municipality continued to have talks with many different investors, which never materialised. In the end the Municipality decided to ask the community what their take on the development of the bath

⁴³ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.131.

and spring lands were. The community was asked in a survey if they would want the thermal spring to be developed by “a private person, an international hotel group or a local company.” The outcome was that the thermal spring would be developed simultaneously by the municipality and a local company, and in that way the spring, its water and the grounds would be kept in the hands of the Caledon people and community. The mayor in his speech touched on the importance the thermal spring had in the lives of the Caledon community because the municipality’s

“prime motivating factor that brought [them] to [their] decision was the retention of the hot water spring, with which God blessed Caledon as Caledon’s own and rightful inheritance.”⁴⁴

However since 1950, when Mr Davis had promised the rebuilding of the once glorious Sanatorium, nothing had yet happened, except many empty promises made to the community. It seems that the dream of reconstructing another tourist attracting thermal spring resort was never to be realised. Another promising newspaper headline in 1979 read: “Architect pitches Dream Spa to Council.” This article explained that the architect G Krige was asked by the municipality to draw up plans of the new “Caledon Spa.” This dream spa would include the following attractions:

“a main swimming pool building, where one would also have access to independent health baths and sporting facilities, a house for the manager of the resort, two tennis courts, an play park for children, as well as a river pool where children would be able to row in canoes. Stalls for horses would also be added so that horse rides would be available for the visitors. Holiday homes would also be added”⁴⁵

But unfortunately as before, this development was still nothing more than a dream because the article in which this new development was announced concluded that the Town council was “still waiting for a loan for the project.” It seems that the Dream Caledon Spa would remain just that, a dream and nothing more.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.131-132.

⁴⁵ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 132.

⁴⁶ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.132.

Another source of conflict concerning the thermal spring hill arose in 1979 when it was discovered that there was manganese ore on the thermal spring hill land. The Town council saw the fact that a company, “SA Mangan Edms. Bpk.” wanted to prospect on the grounds, to see if it was viable to mine there, as a chance to get the money needed to fund the pipeline that would connect Caledon and the Theewaterskloof dam. The company was granted leave to prospect on the land, but the community was not pleased with the new manganese project and was against it from the start. The conflict concerning this project continued to grow as the community started to voice their opinion, together with complaints about the rise in the water prices because of the more expensive water supply. But at a public meeting, as reported in the *Caledon Venster* newspaper on April 11 1980, the mayor reminded the community that they had agreed with the installing of the expensive pipeline in 1975 and that therefore the manganese project had to continue, since the funds generated from there would help finance the pipeline project.⁴⁷

By 1980, there was still no Caledon Spa, and the manganese project was still running, since the company had been granted permission by the “*Uitvoerende Kommittee van die Provinsiale Administrasie*”⁴⁸ to prospect on the thermal spring hill. The Company was in reality leasing the land from the Town Council at three thousand rand per month, money the Council desperately needed to finance the pipeline project. The Company was responsible for filling all the holes that they would make in the prospecting process and the thermal spring water would not be in danger since it would have been rerouted away from the mining activities. But people were still not happy about the fact that their once glorious thermal spring hill was being turned into a mining development. Dr du Plessis, who was the General Director of the Prime Minister’s Office, visited Caledon in 1981, and voiced his opinion that it seemed that in the prospecting process, the amount of manganese ore that was found was at a much lower level in comparison to other places in the country. He therefore felt that it might not be wise to go forward with the mining since this would mean that the chances of ever rebuilding the Caledon spa would then be over, and that the Spa would be a better long term investment

⁴⁷ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.132-133.

⁴⁸ Translates to: Executive committee of the Provincial Administration.

instead of the manganese ore mining. This opinion of Dr du Plessis ignited the already smouldering fuse regarding the unrest about the manganese ore project.⁴⁹

After his opinion was published in the *Caledon Venster* newspaper on 11 September 1981, it came to light that not only could the mining company prospect on the land where the holiday resort once stood, it was allowed to prospect the land covering the thermal spring hill. This caused the company of “*Supermark Beleggings*” to voice their concern over the possible negative influences the manganese mining activities could have for them. They had bought two hectares of land opposite that of the hospital to develop a motel on the land, but they felt that the mining of the manganese would make a project like this impossible and they wanted the Municipality to either buy back the land at a cost of twenty five thousand rand, or to give them the right to use the land how they see fit, which would cancel all the restrictions that came with the motel project.⁵⁰

It was declared that the Town Council, with the help of local support, would develop the thermal spring hill baths and grounds. This would mean that the bath grounds would stay in the hands of the town, and that they could develop it in the way they saw fit. Therefore, at a Council meeting that was held in August 1981, the ideas mentioned by Mr J J Kitshof, a council member, were accepted regarding the development on the thermal spring hill. “The town council would develop the new holiday resort in phases and they would use funds, amounting to fifty thousand rand annually, which would be supplied by the “*wentelfonds*” and any profit the holiday resort would make would be used to fund the resort. The town council would also have to apply to the Provincial Administration to obtain the “maximum allowed subsidy, amounting to 80%.” It was also important, especially after the conflict that surrounded development on the thermal spring hill, that all other and older decisions that were made regarding the land were deemed invalid, and the Council could start with a clean slate. It seemed that at last, after years of empty promises, that the once popular thermal spring resort would be redeveloped in some way, and the people of the town witnessed this change when by November 1981 the swimming pool had been restored and four “*rondawels*” were built.⁵¹ But the development at the thermal spring hill once again became silent and Caledon was still without its glorious thermal spring resort after many empty promises.

⁴⁹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.133-134.

⁵⁰ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.134.

⁵¹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.135.

The Modernisation and sophistication of the Montagu thermal spring baths in the 20th Century: A new spring to be reckoned with

By 1907 the Montagu baths had been in the hands of numerous owners who had tried to turn it into a flourishing establishment. Unfortunately most of them did not succeed and sold the property after a short period. Because of the large amount of money that was needed to turn thermal mineral springs into modern and standardised establishments, the Montagu baths stayed rather primitive for many years. This was all about to change after the Cape Central Railway Company decided to buy the bathing establishment in 1907, because they had a vision, they wanted to modernise not only the accommodation but also the baths itself. By 1907, Caledon Sanatorium was fitted with some very modern appliances and accommodation and was well known in South Africa and abroad. Therefore if Montagu wanted to become a contender, it had to be able to supply the same quality of service and more. As Booyens duly notes, the very successful and lucrative New Cape Central Railway Company must have had faith in the baths if they were willing to buy what seemed to have been a rather primitive establishment. It is clear that they believed that the thermal waters of the baths and the surrounding area could become a very successful resort, one that would become famous in the eyes of South Africans and visitors from abroad, and that it had enough power to rival the other existing thermal spring baths that could be found in the Cape. The Montagu Baths did indeed have a secret weapon that Caledon did not have, and that secret was its health giving air.⁵² The secret Montagu possessed becomes clear when one keeps in mind that during the 1800s and early 1900s the medical belief in the healing power of air by medical practitioners was as strong as the belief in the healing waters, and the quality of air would have influenced a doctor's prescriptions to their patients of where to go in search of healing. Although Caledon had very crisp air, it was in fact the air found in the Karoo that was considered the 'holy grail' of air. Doctors and patients alike believed in the healing powers of the dry air found in the Karoo, and many doctors and travellers wrote about the healing properties.⁵³

⁵² "The village itself was referred to as a "charming health resort" which became possible because of the thermal springs that made the village famous and the clean crisp air and beautiful surroundings" in J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, p. 3-7.

⁵³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

Montagu therefore offered a two-in-one deal, not only did it have thermal mineral waters with medical curative powers, it also had celebrated and renowned health giving semi-Karoo air, making it the perfect health resort, and therefore making it a strong contender for best spa in the Cape. However before it could become a contender, the baths had to be modernised and brought up to the standard of modern bathing establishments. This modernisation came in 1907 when the New Cape Central Railway Company or N.C.C.R. Company bought the property.⁵⁴

In December of 1907 four articles concerning the history and new developments as well as the curative properties of the Montagu thermal spring was printed in the *Worcester Standard*, from 7 December until 28 December 1907. These articles were written by T. Gooding Field, and was later reprinted and bound into a pamphlet that was titled “*Montagu Thermal Springs: Sanatorium under new auspices.*” This new sponsor was the New Cape Central Railway, and these articles could be seen as a promotion pamphlet, since it was written so that people could see “what the New Cape Central Railway Company Ltd., [was] doing to popularise [the] celebrated old Health Resort.”⁵⁵ By creating this pamphlet the Company sparked interest in the old Montagu thermal spring baths, and by calling it a Sanatorium the status of the establishment was already raised in the eyes of the public, who would now expect modern features at the baths and many people would have been intrigued by this new development. Those who remembered the old baths would have wanted to go and see how the Company would have changed the establishment, which made these promotional articles that was found both in the *Worcester Standard* newspaper and the pamphlet an excellent way of generating interest into the new Montagu “Sanatorium” and would have ensured that people would visit the baths once it opened again.

The first article had a very specific title, since it played on the Colonial heritage of the people from not just South Africa but also on visitors from abroad. The article, “Montagu thermal springs: A colonial asset unexploited, until now” gave one the idea that these springs were something left for the future by colonial ancestors. There was a notice in the *Worcester Standard* in the beginning of December 1907 which informed the public that the Montagu Baths and boarding house was to be reopened. The writer of the article, Mr. T Gooding Field,

⁵⁴ B. Booyen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 81.

⁵⁵ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the *Worcester Standard*, front page.

felt that many a reader would have just scanned over this piece of very important information, because they were ignorant of the “Colonial as well as local” importance the Montagu Baths had. The first article of the pamphlet continues to describe the scenery one would find if one was to travel to Montagu in 1907, describing the two ways one could enter Montagu, one being the road, the other a path that became known as “Lovers Walk” because of the breathtaking “shady and romantic valley” it was in that was founded just above the stream. Before reaching the Baths which was at the top of the *Kloof*, one had to cross the river several times. The N.C.C.R. Company proposed that in time bridges would be put over the stream so that visitors could navigate their way over the river easier. Although the land which one took to walk from Montagu to The Baths was on town property, the City Fathers insisted that the owners of the Baths had to clear any rubble that was found along the walkway so that it was easier and safer for people to walk towards The Baths through the *Kloof*.⁵⁶

After describing the mountain and river filled surroundings to the readers of the newspaper, Gooding Field continued in his second article to describe the “Discovery and succession of Owners.” The reason why this piece of the article was so important was because it gave the Montagu Baths a heritage covering. The fact that the thermal spring was used by the “Hottentots” and later rediscovered by a colonial trekker, would have given the readers some kind of ancestral link to the baths. If they were to bathe in the same water, at the same site, they would be partaking in a ritual that was done by their ancestors many years ago, and this could have functioned as an attraction to the new Sanatorium, since it increased the belief in the waters powers. If it had been used by people from as early as the first settlers, it must mean that the water’s powers worked, the water had to be curative. So the belief in the healing properties of the water would have been strengthened in the mind of the reader.⁵⁷ It also showed how important a role the baths had in the history of the town, and would have helped to encourage pride from people living in the village, making them keen to support one of their ancestral treasures.

The articles provided the reader with a timeline of how long the baths had existed and also what the place of the N.C.C.R. Company was in that timeline, and by knowing how the baths looked before, it would have made people eager to see how the Company was to change and

⁵⁶ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 3,4.

⁵⁷ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 7.

improve it. By giving the timeline of the baths, the N.C.C.R. Company wrote itself into the history of the Montagu Baths. Mr. O'Conner could not run the baths anymore and he sold it to Mr. Fred Dawson, who was the general manager of the N.C.C.R. Company, and he bought the baths on behalf of the Company. When the Company acquired the property, they immediately started to "remodel the Baths and the boarding-house" which was in poor condition. They also started to solve a problem that resulted from the springs being connected to the river.⁵⁸ One can assume that this problem could have been flooding, since it is mentioned that previous owners had struggled with the drainage which was a problem at the bathhouse.⁵⁹

It is interesting to note that after the N.C.C.R. Company took over the Montagu baths, the name was changed, and in the third article written by Gooding Field the title reads: "The coming Cape Sanatorium." So in order to compete with other resorts, the Montagu baths needed not only modern improvements, but also a rise in rank, so it became a Sanatorium. The remodelling of the establishment included improving the baths as well as expanding the existing boarding house. The biggest problem at the baths was weak drainage, which caused the bathhouse to be wet and unpleasant. The Company rectified this by putting in draining pipes so that the waste water was redirected towards the river and this ensured that the grounds and buildings remained dry and clean instead of being muddy. The problem the previous owners endured seems to have been quite severe and it cost the Company a large sum of money to rectify the drainage problem. This could have been why the previous owners struggled not only financially but with maintenance as well. The Company worked with engineers to find a solution for the problem, and it also came up with a way to supply water to the baths. There was a kind of holding pool or reservoir, which was surrounded by small walls, 12 by 10 feet and it was used to hold on to the water that rose into it. Two "out-fall pipes" were inserted in these walls. The one pipe was connected with the bath house that was nearby, while the other pipe took the water that overflowed to the baths reserved for the "natives" and from there the water was taken to the gorge.⁶⁰ These "native baths" were a "special cavity in the rock" and this bath was reserved for the indigenous people so that they

⁵⁸ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 10.

⁵⁹ Montagu Correspondent: *The Worcester Standard*, 29 July 1905, p. 5.

⁶⁰ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 11.

could bathe their “rheumatic limbs or neuralgic heads” in the water. Neuralgic was connected with pain experienced in the nerves connected with the head and face.⁶¹

The bubbling of the spring could be seen in the reservoir through three cracks in the bottom, where with intervals the water would rush to the surface. When the baths were still in a primitive state only one crack was issuing water, but as time passed two other crevasses was opened up, and this could have been why the previous owners had such a difficult task of keeping the bath house dry since these two extra springs could have been issuing water underground, causing the bath house to stay wet. There was a pump in the reservoir that was connected to an engine that could empty the reservoir and keep it from overflowing, but the springs were extremely strong and large amounts of water bubbled to the surface, which made it difficult to control the overflow which caused the dampness. It was therefore crucial that the overflow had to be kept under control. A double pipe line was installed so that the waste water of the Baths, the bath house and the boarding house ran into an “earthenware glazed pipe” and this pipe lead the water to the fall out into the river. Eight manholes had to be installed to keep the area dry and to keep the pipes from being clogged with silt when the river was in flood. The N.C.C.R. Company did all they could to make sure that the age old problem at the baths would not again affect the standards of the establishment. Floods influenced the Baths during its long history, and this could be contributed to the link the springs and river had with one another. With the problem of the excess water eradicated with the help of engineers and pumps, the Company could continue to modernise the accommodation and the baths.⁶²

The Bath house was rebuilt and improved with concrete walls and floors and this development cost the Company 2000 pounds. This new bath house contained eight separate bath rooms which all had steps one had to climb to reach the room. The rooms were 10ft by 10ft and each had their own bath tub that was made from iron enamel and the water that was used in these bath rooms was led straight from the reservoir to the bath, which meant the water would have retained much of its warmth and healing properties. The heat of the water was still too high for invalids to climb into and therefore they had to wait until the water was at an acceptable temperature before getting into the baths. One improvement that the patients

⁶¹ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 7.

⁶² T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 12-14.

and invalids would have appreciated was that the distance from the boarding house to the bathing rooms was covered in a glass panel veranda of about a 100ft long, which means that the patients would have been shielded from cold rain and winter conditions so that they did not catch a cold when moving to different buildings. The boarding house also had to be developed and modernised and it was enlarged so much so that very little of the old building was left intact. The new and improved boarding house the N.C.C.R. Company planned would have twelve bedrooms that visitors and patients could stay in, as well as a dining room and a drawing room that would both be 12ft by 20ft. The boarding-house with its dining and drawing room was refurnished and entertainments like a billiards table and other modern pieces was also said to be available. But the developments would not have been complete if the kitchen and the servant's quarters was not enlarged and modernised as well and this was done so that all the buildings would fit in to the theme of the "new scheme."⁶³

This scheme included more than just improving the buildings and the baths, it also extended to the grounds. A tennis and croquet courts was planned, as well as a golf link. The Company decided to use some of the other gifts nature bestowed on Montagu, to use as an attraction at the Baths, in the form of caves that were found in the mountain. The most famous one would have been the one situated near the thermal spring where one could climb up the rocks to its opening, and the cave itself was said to have been quite spacious. The view would have been breath-taking, and together with lover's walk would have had a very romantic effect. Steps were to be cut out so that it would be easier to reach this cave and so that even invalids would have been able to reach it and experience the view.⁶⁴

With all these improvements that were done the N.C.C.R. Company would ensure that more people would visit the new Montagu Sanatorium. But the fact that this establishment was under the management of the N.C.C.R. Company, which was a successful and capital rich company, also guaranteed that the baths and its healing waters would have enough public promotion in the form of "brochures, pictures in train coaches and advertisements in newspapers and magazines."⁶⁵ Because of the Company's connection to the railways, the promotion material would have been spread all over South Africa, and visitors from abroad

⁶³ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 14.

⁶⁴ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, pp. 14-15.

⁶⁵ B. Booyens: "Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 18.

who travelled with the train would also have become aware of the new Montagu Sanatorium. As was seen previously, the train and the railway played a very important role in the young tourist industry that was developing in South Africa, because the train was the quickest way to travel across South Africa. So with tourists, travellers and invalids using the railway to travel across South Africa, the tourist industry grew and the railways became the chosen transportation for most visitors. Most of the thermal bathing establishments in the Cape were not situated near a station, and this would have had an impact on the visitors who travelled to these baths by train. That was why when the Ashton railway station was built, Montagu was all of a sudden much more accessible to tourists and travellers who could now take a train and reach the new Montagu Sanatorium. With the improved accommodation and baths, the Sanatorium could now offer visitors a more comfortable and enjoyable stay. The visitors were picked up in carts from the Ashton station, which took them through the *Cogmanskloof* pass to Montagu which was about 10 kilometres away, and by doing so, the visitor was already treated to a magnificent view of the mountains and the surrounding area, which was definitely a treat. Because there was a good relationship between the Ashton station management and the Baths management, they worked in tandem to create a pleasant experience and combined with what nature gave on her part, the Montagu Sanatorium experience could not be outdone by any other thermal bath establishment. This is how Montagu became a contender for the well-known Caledon Sanatorium, and these two establishments continued to compete for the place as the best spa in the Cape.⁶⁶

With the railway and new Sanatorium completed, the N.C.C.R. Company could open the doors of the new and improved Montagu Sanatorium. Many advertisements were published in especially *The Worcester Standard*, informing the public that the Montagu baths and Sanatorium was open for business. People would have been intrigued by this re-opening, since the advertisement states that the “Bath house [had] been put into first class condition” which would definitely have attracted visitors to the new and improved accommodation. Other developments included a swimming bath that was 50ft by 20ft.⁶⁷ The advertisement mentioned the crucial factor in the success of the Montagu baths and Sanatorium, and this was the healing properties the thermal water possessed. The wonder waters of the Montagu thermal spring was said to have had the power to cure cases of well-known diseases like

⁶⁶ B. Booyens: “Die Warmbronnwaterkultuur van Montagu,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 18.

⁶⁷ *The Worcester Standard*, 14 March 1908, p. 2.

rheumatism and sciatica, and with this knowledge invalids suffering from these diseases would have flocked to the new Sanatorium in search of relief. Since the baths was now a fully operational Sanatorium, fees were attached to not only using the water, but also the accommodation, and this could be seen as the first steps to commercial success for the Montagu baths. These baths now functioned as a legitimate health resort, it was not just a spring and a damp building anymore, and it had become one of the Spa jewels of the Cape. The tariffs charged at the Sanatorium in 1908 included the use of the Baths, which ranged from the daily tariff of 10s.6d. to a weekly tariff that was 3 pounds and 3s. and a monthly tariff that was 12 pounds and 12s. The main reason for the Sanatorium's success was because the railway station manager in Ashton and the manager of the Baths worked together so that both derived profit out of tourists and travellers. This was seen in the week deal that was available, which included not only a week at the Sanatorium, but also "First-class Rail Fare from Cape Town" for only 5 pounds 5s.⁶⁸

An interesting observation one makes is that this bathing establishment also fell under the "T. Cook & Sons" franchise. Both Caledon and Montagu were included in their South African franchise. This connection would have significant promotional advantages for both of the bathing complexes, since Cook had a very high reputation in the tourism industry, and by being a client of Cook's would have meant international advertisement. The manager at the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium at the time was Herbert J. Bail, while Mr Fred Dawson was the general manager.⁶⁹ A great honour befell the Montagu Baths in August 1909, the chairman of the N.C.C.R. Company's board of directors, Colonel E Coper, visited the baths in his official capacity. Dawson, as general manager accompanied him. By that time the Baths had been improved and were in a much better state than before. They were also regarded by the Montagu correspondent for *The Worcester Standard*, as "one of the finest health resorts in South Africa." Colonel Coper was impressed by the way the then managers of the Baths, Mr and Mrs Rhynd and the way that they ran the bathing establishment. According to the Montagu correspondent, the general feeling amongst the towns folk was that the Baths had never been in such good condition, and thanks to the hard work and friendliness of the managers that the Baths had become all the more popular and more visitors had arrived at the Baths. Mr Dawson was also praised for his devotion he showed to the improvement of the Baths. It seems that the Montagu Baths had finally found a custodian

⁶⁸ *The Worcester Standard*, 14 March 1908, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *The Worcester Standard*, 14 March 1908, p. 2.

worthy of its splendour, and the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium were growing in strength with each year.⁷⁰

In October of 1909 there was a “special combined ticket from Worcester to the Montagu Baths” promotion, which would have given the Montagu Bath the exposure it needed. One thing that one does detect is the way in which the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium were being promoted, was changing. It combined the idea of a holiday were elements of Karoo air, thermal mineral baths, good food and luxury accommodation was all rolled into one package. The special offer included a first class train ticket from Worcester to Ashton return, as well as a cart ride from Ashton to The Baths. At The Baths lunch, afternoon tea and dinner could be enjoyed, as well as the use of the baths were included in the offer. This special offer would have given visitors a taste of what they could expect to experience if they were to go on holiday at the baths, and it was an excellent publicity opportunity. Not only would more people experience the baths, but through word of mouth the reputation of the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium would rise, and this would mean more visitors. The marketing the N.C.C.R. Company used in accordance with the railway would definitely have given Montagu Sanatorium an edge over the Caledon Sanatorium, increasing the rivalry there was between the two South African spas.⁷¹

Mr Dawson was very serious about turning the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium into a prime health resort, and in December of 1909 the Montagu Baths received a new manager, Mr Cugtan, who worked under Dawson. Dawson made sure to keep up with the modern times and continued to improve the surroundings as well as the buildings, and the alterations to the main building mentioned in the 1907 pamphlet was complete.⁷² In the beginning of August 1909 Messrs. Roberts & Nothling were awarded the tender to do the improvements at the Montagu Baths, and they started to work on the buildings immediately.⁷³ By December 1909 the building of the glass veranda was started. The entertainment rooms, that included a billiard and cards room as well as the stone steps to the cave in the mountain was all finished and could be enjoyed by the visitors to the Sanatorium. It seems that the N.C.C.R. Company delivered what it had promised in 1907, and the baths were indeed turning into a resort to be reckoned with. It was a well-known fact that invalids were usually the visitors to The Baths,

⁷⁰ *The Worcester Standard*, 21 August 1909, p. 5.

⁷¹ *The Worcester Standard*, 2 October 1909, p. 6.

⁷² *The Worcester Standard*, 4 December 1909, p. 6.

⁷³ *The Worcester Standard*, 14 August 1909, p. 5.

but in 1909 the Montagu Sanatorium also invited “tired city people [to] give these baths a trail.” With that invitation, the Sanatorium became more than just a bathing establishment, as one could see from their advertisement later that same month.⁷⁴

The managers of the Sanatorium made sure that the Montagu Baths received enough publicity, and there were many different advertisements that ran in *The Worcester Standard*. In December of 1909 a new advertisement was issued, in which the Montagu thermal baths were called the “finest health or holiday resort in South Africa.” The function of the baths had shifted into an even higher gear, this Sanatorium had become a resort, not just for the ill, but also for people who just wanted to unwind, creating a two dimensional clientele. This shift to being a holiday and health resort had turned the Montagu Sanatorium into a replica of the European spas, just like Caledon’s Sanatorium had. The focus was no longer just on health, it was also on entertainment, relaxation and socialising, which was an important development and change in the management and growth of The Baths.⁷⁵

By 1910 The Baths was running smoothly and it was clear that the N.C.C.R. Company created a successful enterprise. The popularity of The Baths had risen sharply by 1910 and the baths were known and visited by invalids from across South Africa.⁷⁶ However on the 20 March 1910 The Baths were damaged in a flood, which occurred because of the bursting of a dam on the farm of Mr Ansell after heavy rains. The finished bathing establishment had cost the N.C.C.C.R. Company 3000-4000 pounds in renovations. The baths were in the way of the rushing water and in the end the whole property was under about “5-6 ft of water.”⁷⁷ But luckily it seems that the damage to the baths were not too severe, since another report from the Montagu correspondent on April 16 1910 that the baths had been repaired by that time. The managers were praised for their speedy action in time of disaster and for the fact that the damage was very quickly repaired. In this time the managers of The Baths changed again, and a Mr and Mrs George Clyne became managers of the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium. This couple was formerly from “Malmesbury Hydropathic Establishment,” which was another thermal spring bathing establishment, which would have qualified them for the big responsibility they would have to undertake in managing the now very successful and well

⁷⁴ *The Worcester Standard*, 4 December 1909, p. 6.

⁷⁵ *The Worcester Standard*, 25 December 1909, p. 1.

⁷⁶ A. Wilmot: *The South African Climate: The Best in the World*, p. 30.

⁷⁷ *The Worcester Standard*, 9 April 1910, p. 5.

known Montagu Baths and Sanatorium.⁷⁸ The Clyne's must have done a very good job because the reviews given by the Montagu correspondent in October 1910 was very positive. According to the article The Baths were flourishing and "large number of influential people from all parts of the Union" had visited the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium and these important people became regular visitors to The Baths.⁷⁹

By 1914 the Montagu Baths had impressed Alexander Wilmot so much that he compared it to the German spas. He commented on the fact that there were South Africans who left the country for Germany in order to visit their thermal springs. He could not understand why people would spend so much time and money to visit springs in Germany, when according to Wilmot, the Montagu thermal spring was just as good as any German spring. This was a very big compliment for the Montagu bathing establishment, to be compared to the best thermal springs could offer showed how much faith there was in the healing properties of its water and the standard of their establishment. By writing about the springs, Wilmot gave the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium positive publicity, and could have encouraged more people to visit these springs he compared to German springs. By 1914 the railway had been extended to the Eastern Province with stations at Mosselbay and Oudtshoorn, which in turn opened the baths up for more visitors. This meant more clientele for The Baths, and more revenue. The fact that the Karoo air was also present in Montagu made sure that the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium was seen as a first class health and holiday resort. Montagu Baths was a place where one could combine health and pleasure, the health advantages came in the form of the healing air and water, and the pleasure could be derived from enjoying a game of golf or tennis, or exploring the old "Bushmans cave." The Montagu Baths and Sanatorium was growing in not just its visitor amounts, but also in reputation, showing why it became one of the spas of the Cape.⁸⁰

In 1915 a pamphlet was issued by the N.C.C.R. Company which gave a detailed description of the towns in the South Western Cape. Montagu was one of the towns that was mentioned, and according to the pamphlet, the "most interesting asset" Montagu had to offer was its radioactive thermal springs. By and after 1915 the fascination with radioactivity that was found in thermal mineral water had reached a high point. The bathing establishment

⁷⁸ *The Worcester Standard*, 16 April 1910, p. 5.

⁷⁹ *The Worcester Standard*, 8 October 1910, p. 5.

⁸⁰ A. Wilmot: *The South African Climate: The Best in the World*, p. 25.

continued to be improved and in 1915 Peat Baths were installed at the Sanatorium which helped with rheumatism and kidney diseases. These baths were the same as another form of baths that were used in Bohemia, which means more modern and even international bathing techniques were incorporated into the Sanatorium. The accommodation was up to first class standards and a Hotel was found at the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium. The remodelling of the old baths and accommodation was complete and Montagu could boast with a world class resort on its doorstep. All the modern conveniences that the N.C.C.R. Company promised in their 1907 pamphlet could be found and even the food was improved. It is interesting to note that the “Bushman cave” that was found in the mountains was still one of the features highlighted in the 1915 pamphlet, and it seems that the cave as well as bushman paintings were just one of the many attractions the Montagu Baths and surroundings offered. It’s also interesting to see that there was already a sort of tourist market for the viewing of Bushman paintings by 1915. The motor car had also by this time start to make its appearance, and the baths had parking for only seven cars. A car was also used to transport visitors from Ashton station to The Baths. With such good publicity the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium would have been well known by both South Africans and people from abroad, and it does seem that under the leadership of Mr Dawson the establishment was doing very well and impressed with its quick rise to stardom.⁸¹

After 27 years of owning the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium the N.C.C.R. Company sold the property to a Mr Fernandez in 1934 for R5500.⁸² There is not a lot of evidence as to whom Mr Fernandez was, but in his time as proprietor he was said to have given the Montagu Baths an “exotic and literally colourful character.”⁸³ Mr Fernandez still owned the Montagu Baths in 1938, when another pamphlet was issued praising the baths. It was important for bathing establishments to keep a public profile so that more visitors could be attracted. The pamphlet included beautiful pictures of the buildings as well as the baths, giving the readers a taste of what they could expect to experience at the Montagu Baths. The hotel at the baths still provided visitors with comfortable and modern accommodation and since many invalids were still visiting the baths in search for a cure, a nearby doctor was available, and he could reach the baths in seven minutes if anyone had a need of medical attention. This would have been a

⁸¹ New Cape Central Railway Limited: *The Garden route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and Intermediate stations, via Worcester, Swellendam, Riversdale, Mossel Bay, George, Oudtshoorn and Klipplaat, Montagu radio-active hot springs*, pp. 13, 18.

⁸² B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 82.

⁸³ E.J. Hofmeyer: *Short history of Montagu*, p. 1.

welcomed improvement since doctors had for a long time warned people not to use the thermal baths without the guidance of a medical practitioner, since some ailments could have a negative reaction to the thermal water treatment. The hotel claimed to maintain high accommodation and culinary standards.⁸⁴

The entertainment that could be enjoyed at the Montagu Baths had an almost English spa theme, with its tennis- and croquet courts as well as the Tea room that sold “high-class confectionery” which might have been introduced by Mr Fernandes who had strong European ties, and able to speak English, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, and because many international visitors frequented the Montagu Baths. The establishment seems to have improved even further, and it showed no signs of losing its popularity under not just South Africans but tourists from abroad as well. The Montagu Baths and its Hotel had created for itself a place as one of the top health and holiday resorts in the Cape. Visitor numbers are unfortunately not readily available.⁸⁵

Unfortunately not much evidence or sources could be found regarding the development of the Bath, and the sources concerning the baths after 1934 are mostly promotional material in the form of pamphlets that were distributed to inform the public about the establishment. As with the previous owners, dates were omitted when mentioning the fact that the baths came under new ownership. Another reason for the seeming lack of sources, was that since the baths was a resort, if there was no major change or event, years would pass before any mention of the resort was made in the media again, and that is why the dates of information concerning the baths is so wide spread and sometimes covers up to ten or more years.

After Mr Fernandes ran the Montagu Baths with great success, he sold the property to a Mr Hugh Tevis, who was an Australian millionaire. Mr Tevis planned to build a “large and imposing spa” on the site of the Montagu Baths, but unfortunately he was unable to do so because of the Second World War which started in 1939. One can therefore assume that Mr Fernandes sold The Baths to Mr Tevis in either 1938 or 1939. Mr. Tevis had to give up his dream of the big spa complex he envisioned, and instead he built himself a holiday home called “Little Sanctuary.”⁸⁶ Mr Tevis sold the property to an hotelier of Montagu, Mr Aaron

⁸⁴ Tourist Promotion, *Montagu Baths: Radio-active hot springs and Sanatorium*, pp. 2-3.

⁸⁵ Tourist Promotion, *Montagu Baths: Radio-active hot springs and Sanatorium*, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁶ E.J. Hofmeyer: *Short history of Montagu*, p. 1. & www.aasvoëlkrans.co.za, 18 September 2011.

Idleson, although one cannot be sure at which date this sale occurred. The Montagu Baths belonged to Mr Idleson for an unknown period of time, and then the property was sold to the Montagu Municipality.⁸⁷

The date of this sale of The Baths property to the Montagu Municipality is also not known. The Municipality ensured that the black and coloured people did not lose their right to use the thermal springs, as it was stipulated in the Land Grant of the property. The Municipality completed many different developments during their ownership of The Baths property and these new developments attracted especially more Cape Town based tourists who went to Montagu and its Baths to “get away” from the City.⁸⁸ Since it is unclear at which time the Municipality took over the property, one has to rely on some guidance from the pamphlets that was issued. In 1948 a promotional piece regarding the town of Montagu was released, and it was done in accordance with the Montagu Municipality. The importance of the baths in the town’s development become clear when looking at promotions like these, since it was because of the thermal mineral spring baths that Montagu became a tourist attraction, which in turn brought revenue to the town. The town was blessed with natural wonders like the radio-active thermal springs, the healthy climate and the beautiful surroundings, and all these elements attributed to the success and popularity of the town as a tourist and health resort. People were drawn to the baths not only as a form of restoring health, but also enjoyment and relaxation.⁸⁹

In the 1962 promotion pamphlet about Montagu, “its famous baths” are mentioned in the title.⁹⁰ The town had grown popular as well, and the Montagu Baths and the Baths Hotel were still flourishing and attracting people. From the photos placed in the pamphlets it showed people enjoying the waters in a modern looking pool and the Hotel appeared well maintained. There is no direct description of what The Baths complex looked like at that stage in time, the only indicators are the photos of people enjoying the curative waters. It seems that more people travelled to The Baths by car, pointing to the advancement in transport that would have impacted the visitor numbers of the baths. People could now drive to Montagu, or even just through Montagu and visit the baths. Combined with the other natural treasures Montagu

⁸⁷ E.J. Hofmeyer: *Short history of Montagu*, p. 1.

⁸⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 82.

⁸⁹ *Montagu, on the highway to health*, p. 1, 5.

⁹⁰ *Montagu and its famous baths*, p. 1.

had, the town would have been a major attraction, and the main element of those attractions continued to be the historic thermal mineral springs.⁹¹

It was the Montagu Municipality who developed the *Montagu Baths*, with a public swimming pool that was also built. The Municipality, unlike many other spring towns' municipalities encouraged the development and improvement of not just the baths but also the surrounding area around the Baths Hotel.⁹² One can assume that the Municipality had owned the property by 1969, since the writer J. Burman in his book *Guide to the Garden Route* mentioned that under the ownership of the Montagu Municipality the Montagu Baths were in very good condition and the establishment was flourishing. The Baths Hotel was still regarded as being of a high standard, and even treated their residents to the joy of having water from the thermal spring for used in their rooms, so they could have their own private thermal mineral bath. There was a big hot water swimming pool that was built in the formative years of the Montagu baths and there were also private baths that patients or visitors could hire. The large swimming pool was a definite favourite among visitors, so much so that over the 1969 Christmas period 7500 people had visited the pool. Burman was impressed when he learned that the Municipality intended to develop the baths even further. The developments included the improvement and rebuilding of the outdoor thermal bathing baths, the hotel was to be expanded, as one can assume that the popularity the Montagu Baths was experiencing called for more accommodation to satisfy the demand by the visitors. There were also plans to include a caravan park, a lido which was a public open-air swimming pool and an amusement park. All these improvements and developments, according to Burman, were to be done by the Municipality, who would then lease the property to a private enterprise. It seems that the period, in which the Montagu Municipality was the owner of the Baths, the resort was leased to different private hands.⁹³ The popularity the Baths enjoyed could also be linked to the destruction of the Caledon Sanatorium in 1946, because in an instant its rival was gone, and by that stage Montagu Baths would have been one of the most modern bathing establishments in the near Cape region.

It was not only South Africans who visited the Montagu Baths and Sanatorium. The visitors' book also reflects tourists from "England, America, Vancouver, New Zealand and Australia."

⁹¹ *Montagu and its famous baths*, pp. 13-14.

⁹² J. Burman: *Guide to the Garden Route*, p. 82.

⁹³ J. Burman: *Waters of the Western Cape*, p. 153.

The baths were also very popular with officers and soldiers and these international visitors would have been a priceless source of advertising for the Montagu baths. This idea of the baths being a retreat of some kind paved the way for it to become one of the most famous health resorts in the Cape. It was not only the thermal waters that started to attract visitors to the town, but other elements of nature was highlighted as well to encourage tourists and visitors to spend time at Montagu. The beautiful surroundings and the pathways through the Kloof, like Lover's walk⁹⁴ and the healthy Karoo climate were also used to draw the crowds. Because of the thermal spring near the town, many people flocked to Montagu to experience this healing. As the years passed the bathing resort was turning into a dual health and holiday resort and this affected the way in which the town developed. Because of the healthy climate, beautiful surroundings and the calm atmosphere that was experienced in the town, the Municipality decided to declare the whole of the Montagu area a health and holiday resort in 1936.⁹⁵

People were encouraged to settle in the area and many of them bought holiday homes. Montagu became so popular that at one time it had five millionaires.⁹⁶ Tourism became one of the main revenue makers in the town, and the focus on Montagu's healthy environment only increased during the passing years. In 1948 a pamphlet issued by the Municipality was entitled "on the highway to health" and the natural treasures were celebrated as the reason why Montagu had such a high "residential appeal" and how it became popular "as a holiday resort." Montagu was fortunate that not only was the town beautiful, but the road to it as well, which made travelling there an experience like none other. The breath-taking Cogmanskloof impressed tourists, and when they drove through the little tunnel in the rock it was like a gateway to the health and pleasure resort that was Montagu and its baths.⁹⁷

The little health and pleasure resort that Montagu became was used to attract people from bigger towns and cities, to encourage them to come to Montagu and redeem the health they had lost or just to relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Montagu was advertised as the opposite of the busy and cold city, it was a haven, "unspoiled by the smoke of industry and the bustle of busy thoroughfares" and there was a "restful atmosphere" that enhanced the

⁹⁴ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, pp. 3, 21.

⁹⁵ A. Hofmeyer: *Beknopte Geskiedenis van die ontstaan en vooruitgang van die dorp en afdeling van Montagu*, p. 5.

⁹⁶ www.aasvoelkranz.co.za. (9 August 2011)

⁹⁷ *Montagu, on the highway to health*, p.1.

“healthy outdoor lifestyle” one could find in Montagu. Montagu became the ultimate health and holiday resort, where tourists could “take the cure” in the thermal mineral baths, walk and admire the natural beauty of the surroundings and experience a peaceful and pleasant holiday with their families.⁹⁸ Montagu was compared to well-known European resorts because of its Karoo air that was “Alpine quality” and its thermal radio-active springs that was seen as being even better than those found Germany, and legitimised its claim to one of the most popular health resorts in the Cape.⁹⁹

Since the Municipality took over the Montagu Baths, it continued to flourish and develop with modern improvements and luxuries that were created. The resort also became more tourism driven. Not only was the angle of health as an attraction used, but also the idea of a fun holiday for the whole family. The Baths hotel at that stage was still very small, but with the inclusion of a caravan park, more people would be able to afford a holiday at the resort, and more visitors would be able to enjoy the thermal waters and the other natural wonders that could be found in and around the baths and Montagu. As the resort grew, more and more visitors from the Cape saw it as a retreat, a place where they could enjoy a healthy holiday, where families could spend time together. All was going well for the bathing establishment, and in 1977 even the well-known rugby player Dr Danie Craven visited the baths, a testament of the popularity the baths still enjoyed. All was going well it seems, the hotel was of a high standard, the thermal waters still retained their age old healing powers and attraction, and the visitors were swarming in from not just the Cape but also abroad. Just like Caledon’s baths, it seemed that for once the baths would become the world famous spas their proprietors wished for, but alas, in January 1981 disaster struck the small town of Montagu, a tragedy that would change the face of the Montagu Baths forever.¹⁰⁰

Montagu’s darkest day: The day wicked water killed the healing spring

The Montagu Baths were flourishing at the end of the 1970s and the thermal springs and the Baths Hotel together had formed the popular “public holiday resort” which by this time was in the hands of the Montagu Municipality, who paid R437 000 for the property. The sheer number of people visiting the baths was very high, as was seen in 1975 when 17 500 people

⁹⁸ *Montagu, on the highway to health*, pp.7, 15.

⁹⁹ F.B. Young: *In South Africa*, p. 47. & *Montagu and its famous baths*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ B. Booyesen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 82.

visited the resort. By this time the resort already had the caravan park that was mentioned earlier, and it was used by many visitors as an alternative accommodation at the baths. Montagu was popular with tourists, which resulted in revenue for the town. Montagu as a health and holiday resort was thriving.¹⁰¹

In 1977 the Municipality had improved the resort and the Baths Hotel, under management of Mr Amos van Zyl and his wife, who warmly welcomed visitors to the Hotel which functioned as a gathering place for people who still believed in the healing powers of the thermal waters and the resort was starting to develop its own character. The old hot spring baths were surrounded by palm trees and was situated at the foot of the high “dassieklip” at the Hotel. A big modern swimming pool had also been built and was filled with refreshing lukewarm water. There was also a little shallow pool for the children to join in the fun of the thermal waters and good lighting was provided for those who enjoyed a swim in the hot waters at night. A large amount of people frequented the resort finding peace and quiet at the baths and the Baths hotel, where a healthy and pleasant holiday could be enjoyed.¹⁰²

But on the 25th January 1981 this paradise was destroyed in one swift motion, as flood water swept through the resort and town turning this beautiful health resort into a pile of devastated rubble.¹⁰³ The 1981 Laingsburg flood was truly devastating not just for Laingsburg, but for many other towns, including Montagu. Many people died in the floods, and crippling damage was done to the town and the surroundings.¹⁰⁴ Many tragic stories unfolded in the days following the flood, devastating the people of the different towns. Montagu was hit hard by the flood, which was brought on by the Keisie River as the Badskloof was completely flooded. Montagu lost one of its greatest tourist attractions in the flood, because the whole Baths hotel resort complex was destroyed by the flood water rushing down the river onto the premises. One of the tragic stories of lives lost at the Baths was the one of Colonel J.J. van Rooyen who was at the Baths hotel at the day of the flood. As the water rushed in he took his car to try and rescue two elderly ladies who were camping in the caravan park at the Baths, but unfortunately the water was too quick and swept him and his car away and all three drowned in the water mass.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ “Montagu’s Baths Unique”: *Breërivier-bylaag tot die Worcester Standard and Advertiser*, 15 Oktober 1976.

¹⁰² “Montagu se mense sit nie stil nie,” Montagu Library source, Press Book, no.9, Jan-Nov 1977.

¹⁰³ E.J. Hofmeyer: *Short history of Montagu*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ “Karoo-dorp verwoes,” *Die Burger*, 27 January 1981, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ “Minstens tien vermis op Montagu,” *Die Burger*, 27 Januarie 1981, p. 13.

The beautiful Badskloof with its Lover's Walk and the Baths hotel and the swimming pools were shattered by the flood and the caravan park was completely destroyed. The three swimming pools were all levelled and filled with debris and mud and were hardly visible. The buildings that housed the healing thermal mineral water baths as well as the admissions building were swept away. The Hotel itself was also majorly damaged after it was hit by the force of the flood waters.¹⁰⁶ Only the walls of the Baths Hotel was left standing after the water had burst through it, and absolutely nothing was left. The wife of the Baths complex manager Mrs Peggy van Zyl declared that she would never go back to "that place."¹⁰⁷ At the time of the flood there were seven people staying at the Hotel, and they as well as the staff members had to flee for their lives, as a "6 meter waterfall" rumbled towards the hotel. They managed to evacuate the building from an exit at the back of the hotel and had to climb up the hill behind the hotel when the water hit the building. In the blink of an eye, the beautiful Montagu Baths was destroyed, years of memories and hard work swept away in an instant, and all that was left was a graveyard of broken memories.¹⁰⁸

To add to the devastation of the flood, many of the historic buildings were damaged as well. The Baths hotel's damage was to be at a minimum R1.5 million. The *Tiekiebad* at the Baths hotel had at that stage already been evaluated in November by Mr Brian Basset and others from the National Monuments Committee, to be named a National Monument. Renovations to this historic bath had already started in December of 1980 so that it would be in good condition by the time it was declared a National Monument. The final evaluation of the bath that was built in the late 1800s, would have taken place on 9 February 1981. But at dawn on 26 January 1981, the *Tiekiebad* was no more, it had been destroyed beyond recognition. Montagu had lost one of its prime historical buildings, a bath that had help Montagu to become the health and tourist Mecca that it was by 1981. Almost all of the tourist attractions that made Montagu famous in both South Africa and abroad, was destroyed and this was a very heavy blow to be added to the destruction the floods had caused. Montagu was firstly a tourist town, a resort, and now, they had nothing more than their museum and a town in pain to offer visitors. The Montagu residents were very worried because tourism was one of the livelihoods of the town, and they were not sure if it would ever be possible to restore all they

¹⁰⁶ "13 verdrink, groot skade op Montagu," *Die Burger*, 28 January 1981, p.16.

¹⁰⁷ "Dorp staan op ná vloed," *Die Burger*, 2 February 1981, p.11.

¹⁰⁸ "13 verdrink, groot skade op Montagu," *Die Burger*, 28 January 1981, p.16.

had lost, and if they could not, no tourists would come. Ironically it was the gifts of nature that was used to attract the tourists to the lovely town of Montagu, but it was also nature that had taken it all away.¹⁰⁹

But the people of Montagu were not about to lie down and let their beautiful town die, they started to rebuild as soon as they could. They asked the government for help, and sent Mr Gene Louw, the Administrator of the Cape a memorandum in which they described the devastation that the floods had caused, and that the once popular Baths hotel, which was by then nothing more than a ghostly shell of the previous establishment, and the resort with its healing baths were totally destroyed. The reason for this memorandum, that was send by the city clerk Mr W.J.B. du Plessis, was to inform Mr Louw that the town's biggest economic asset was gone. The town was built on the tourism market, and needed the influx of tourists to sustain it. It was therefore crucial that Montagu had to be resorted to its former glory so the amount of tourists would not dwindle. Montagu's residents could not foot the bill for the reconstruction of the hotel and resort on their own, and they needed financial help in that regard. Mr du Plessis also mentioned that the development of resorts like Montagu's baths was in fact a provincial case, and that was why he wrote to the Administrator for help. It was very moving to see how important the baths resort were to the people of Montagu, because even though it was an economic asset, it was also a historic one that they did not want to lose. The Baths therefore still had a very special place in not just the people's pockets, but also their hearts. There was even a Cape Town architect that offered to help re-plan the construction of the thermal water spring complex for free. The Member of Parliament for Swellendam, Mr Allan Geldenhuys and Mr Hendrik van Zyl, member of the Provincial Council for that voting department, were both in agreement that the Montagu thermal spring complex had to be rebuilt as soon as possible. The reason for this was, Mr van Zyl described, was that not many Cape Province towns were lucky enough to be blessed with such a treasure as a health resort and thermal baths like the one Montagu possessed before the floods. The town, and in fact the whole Cape province, according to Mr van Zyl, was enriched by the existence of the thermal baths complex and that it was for that reason why the rebuilding of the complex had to be a top priority.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ "Vloed verwoes historiese plekke op Montagu," *Die Burger*, 30 January 1981, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ "Hulpkrete uit hart van Montagu," *Die Burger*, 11 Maart 1981, pp. 1, 2.

The memorandum seems to have done its job, and Mr Louw visited Montagu on 19 March 1981. He agreed that the thermal mineral springs of Montagu must not be allowed to disappear, because it was an important asset that had to be restored and used as once before, and that a plan of action regarding the rebuilding of the resort had to be foregrounded. Mr Louw was clearly shocked to see the devastation the flood waters caused to the once popular resort, and he made it clear that resorts like Montagu Baths were very important and that steps had to be taken to restore it to its former glory. Louw felt that the development and rebuilding of The Baths resort had to be handled by and stay in the hands of the Montagu Municipality and that steps at planning had to be taken to start restoring the resort as soon as possible so that visitors could enjoy the waters and nature at the resort again.¹¹¹ It seems that the Baths rebuilding was a very important factor in the restoration of Montagu, because it was undoubtedly its biggest tourist attraction and financial asset, and therefore it had to be up and running again as soon as possible.

But unfortunately restoring the Montagu baths resort was not that easy. A Cape Town based architect firm was planning a R3 million developing venture at the Montagu thermal baths, but in November this plan fell through. The firm of Colyn and Meiring who would have undertaken the restoration of the baths informed Mr Zietsman, the city clerk of Montagu that the project would not continue. This was yet another blow to the town, which was depending on the restoration of the resort in order for them to attract tourists, who would all now be disappointed by the fact that the resort would not be finished in time for the holidays. The completion of the baths was therefore delayed with three months and many holiday makers were disappointed.¹¹² The Montagu baths' future was looking grim, and people were unsure if their prized thermal bath resort would ever flourish again as it did before.

The thermal baths had put Montagu on the map, it was thanks to the natural wonders Montagu possessed that the town was declared a health resort and became an extremely popular holiday destination for large crowds of tourists. These tourists helped the town to generate revenue, combined with its strong agricultural success, and Montagu became a well-known successful town. One cannot deny the role the Montagu thermal springs played in the development and growth of the town, it had an influence on the success the town and its people enjoyed. This influence the springs and nature had on the town were witnessed very

¹¹¹ "Montagu vol moed ná Louw-besoek," *Die Burger*, 20 Maart 1981, p.1.

¹¹² "Montagu-bron plan deur mat," *Die Burger*, 19 November 1981, p. 3.

clearly after the Laingsburg flood of 1981 that devastated the town and its surroundings. The Montagu baths and hotel was swept away and in the blink of an eye Montagu's main tourist attraction was destroyed. By 1981 Montagu was a fully-fledged tourist town, depended on visitors who stayed there during the holidays at especially the Montagu baths. With the destruction of this establishment the whole future of Montagu hanged in the balance.

The McGregor Era: The Olifants River Baths in the 1900s:

As was seen in the previous chapter, by 1903 the Olifants River Baths had been bought by James McGregor. This is where the family legacy of The Baths starts, since after the purchase of the establishment by McGregor, it has to date not left the hands of the family. James McGregor was a Scottish born man, who had moved with his family to South Africa when he was in his teens, and who left for the Australian gold fields when he was a "young man." But after six years of sporadic luck, McGregor returned to South Africa and arrived in East London by ship. Since the next ship to the Cape was only to leave in two months, he decided to walk home. McGregor started a trading business where he would barter his goods to farmers. He reached the Olifants River valley and decided to rent a room, which would become his "trading headquarters" on the farm Modderfontein. He also rented a shed for his scotch cart that he used, pulled by "four white mules." McGregor was very successful and in 1869 he and his brother Alexander bought the farm Modderfontein from its owner Nicholaas Rymert Spreeth for 800 pounds, and in 1881 Alexander sold him his part, and James McGregor became sole owner. McGregor became a successful business man and ended up buying property from the Clanwilliam and Calvinia districts. By buying Modderfontein, McGregor positioned himself very strategically because in that time, the town of Citrusdal was not yet established. His trade business on Modderfontein would therefore have flourished as the "main centre of the district", since the farm was situated at the foot of Grey's Pass, the main route into the valley. McGregor became so successful in his business endeavours and he later became known as "The King of the Olifants River Vallley."¹¹³

With the buying of the Olifants River Baths, McGregor started what was to be a family business. He had three sons, to whom he rented The Baths for five years. The brothers decided to trade in the name of "McGregor Bros" and the tourist potential of The Baths was

¹¹³ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.29-31, 32, 34, 36.

not lost on them, and they were planning to “develop this goldmine.” Therefore tourism was already a lucrative business in the early 1900s. The brothers’ plans for The Baths were huge, and like many proprietors at thermal spring baths like Caledon and Montagu, dreamed of creating a bathing establishment that could rival the best in Europe. The brothers wanted to develop the “Olifants River Warm Baths and Sanatorium – the South African Harrogate.” This establishment was to contain warm and comfortable rooms and the cuisine would be world class. For entertainment a billiard room, concerts, organ recitals and even “first-class shooting” would be offered. They wanted to keep the tariffs inclusive and moderate, and would offer an easy travel option by having a wagon fetch visitors from the train station.¹¹⁴

But before any change could be brought about at The Baths, the McGregor brothers would need to have the servitude, which was connected to the baths by law, revoked. Luckily this was granted with a special Act of Parliament which gave them the right to build new buildings but also to tear down the now three “unsanitary and inadequate” small houses that could be found at The Baths. The creation of the “South African Harrogate” was started with the Victorian Building that was built in 1905 as well as two bath houses which were made out of solid stone. The Government House, which was still in use, was where the meals were served to the guests. The sons rented The Baths from their father until his death in 1914, after which James McGregor bequeathed The Baths property to his two younger sons, William and James Campbell McGregor. Unfortunately William died and his share was divided under his siblings, which included seven sisters. James Campbell also died, leaving his share to his sisters, and the oldest son Joseph sold the small share he owned to his sisters in 1920. That meant that by 1920, The Baths were managed and owned exclusively by women, the daughters of James McGregor.¹¹⁵

A town is born: The establishment of Citrusdal

Up to 1916 Modderfontein had been the centre of commerce and the farming community in the Olifants River Valley, but when it came time to build a church and establish a town, the Dutch Reformed Church decided to buy a piece of land, which was part of a farm, on the “opposite bank of the Olifants River on which [they] established the town Citrusdal.”¹¹⁶ The

¹¹⁴ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p.38.

¹¹⁵ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.38-39.

¹¹⁶ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p.50.

congregation was established in July 1916 and the building of the town was soon to follow. In 1917 the church hall was built and in 1918 the rectory. The building of the town's houses was severely curbed with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914-1918 and the depression years that followed in the 1920s and 1930s. A town school was only erected in 1922-1923. Therefore the growth of the town was slow at first.¹¹⁷ Like with the other two thermal spring towns, the presence of the thermal mineral spring was to some extent part of the reason why a town was established in the area. A community from the farmers who lived in the area and which would have socialised at The Baths were already established, creating the feeling of mutual belonging. However, Citrusdal is a much younger town than that of Caledon and Montagu.

A woman's touch: The Olifants River Baths and the McGregor Sisters

Although the congregation and later the town was established in 1916, Modderfontein was still seen as the centre of trade in the area, since it housed “the post office, blacksmith; gaol; general dealer and outspan for the region.”¹¹⁸ It stayed like this until 1918 and Modderfontein was managed by the seven sisters and their two surviving brothers. The sisters, like their father seems to have been excellent business women, and they were also the first to open a shop, named “Die Blouwinkel” and in 1925 they had the hotel built, which cost 1600 pounds. These women knew how to run a business and up until 1924 the name of their business at The Baths went under the name “McGregor Sisters.” In that time period it seems that the chief source of revenue at The Baths was made from offering accommodation. One could, for 12s/6d receive full board and lodging which included one's bed, breakfast, lunch and dinner. A farm shop was also available and the post office with its own unique stamp. It is clear that the McGregor sisters had a monopoly over commerce in the area, and it is clear that they, like their father James, had entrepreneurial as well as business skills that they used to their advantage. This also made them the perfect custodians of The Baths, which needed entrepreneurial minded people to run it, so that the maximum modernisation and development could be achieved.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ A.P. Smit: *Gedenkboek van die Goue Jubileum van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk Citrusdal 1916-1966*, pp. 179, 180, 184.

¹¹⁸ Gaol was another word for jail in H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p.51.

¹¹⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p.51.

The seven sisters differed largely from one another, although all of them were very secretive about their age. The sisters were each other's family, and it was clear by the way they bequeathed their shares in The Baths, that they wanted to keep the property in the family for as long as possible. Interestingly, only two of the sisters married and only one had children, which means that from the 10 possible heirs to the McGregor fortune, only one would produce future heirs. The first sister who died was Johanna Marie McGregor on 27 August 1927. She left her shares in The Baths to Trygve Morch Olsen, who was an engineer from Norway, and who married one of her sisters after a scandalous elopement.¹²⁰

One of the sisters, who did marry, did so under rather scandalous circumstances. Elizabeth Helen McGregor ended up marrying Trygve Morch Olsen in February 1924, who as mentioned earlier inherited some shares in The Baths. He was fond of The Baths, and knew the only way to become part of it was to marry into the family. Morch Olsen therefore became engaged to Grace Florence McGregor, but ended up eloping with the older sister Elizabeth, who at age 40 was unable to bear any children. Morch Olsen's dream of being part of The Baths became reality when he struck a deal with the sisters in January 1924 to lease and manage The Baths for 15 years, since the sisters found it difficult to manage The Baths from Modderfontein.¹²¹

When Morch Olsen managed the baths, he brought on many improvements and developments regarding the buildings found at The Baths. Most of his buildings were built in the early 1900s. Unfortunately he was tight-fisted and this resulted in the buildings being "structurally unsound" and the rooms very small. Morch Olsen was responsible for building the presently known Dwarsgebou, which was earlier known as "Paddastraat" in 1925 which was built in stages. In the same year the Boarding house was also built, although Morch Olsen's stingy way of building once again impacted the visitors since the rooms were small and not soundproof, so that the bottom rooms could hear what was happening upstairs and because the thermal spring flowed near this building the rooms became very hot. Morch Olsen continued constructing accommodation since as it was the main source of income at The Baths. One of the buildings called "Skilpad" was built Nissen-styled, which resembled "a semi cylindrical corrugated style of roof" and two Nissen-styled bungalows, which would be for the use of servants and 'non-white' people was also added. Servants were not permitted to

¹²⁰ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.51-53.

¹²¹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.53-54.

use the same baths as the visitors, although they were provided their own small bath. Another building that was erected resembled the *rondavel* style and was in fact two chalets joined together, with each bearing a name. One was known as Hiawatha and Mini Ha-Ha. After the erection of the accommodation, Morch Olsen moved on and a “hot pool was constructed in the early 1930s.”¹²²

In 1927 Morch Olsen’s formally became part of The Baths when he inherited Johanna Maria’s one seventh share in the company and was at last part owner of The Baths. It seems that Morch Olsen was a keen but also kind business man, and he allowed local children to use the pool free of charge. The normal tariff was “a tickey or two and a half cents” and when bathing costumes, which was not always owned by all, became a necessity for swimming, Morch Olsen would hire these out a “tickey” a piece.¹²³

The drinking of thermal mineral spring water had been part of the bathing culture for centuries, but it was Morch Olsen who was the first to “make use” of this characteristic for monetary purposes. A bottling plant, which would produce beverages like lemonade, ginger beer and soda water, was started by him and the produce was sold to “The Rest Hotel, the Citrusdal Hotel and The Baths shop.” This enterprise seized in 1939 when Morch Olsens’ lease of The Baths was finished since the sisters did not want to allow him to renew his lease. In 1936 Morch Olsen had decided to give his share in The Baths to his wife, Elizabeth, who in turn left her two seventh share to her five remaining sisters when she passed away on 9 December 1939.¹²⁴

The eldest sister Margaret Anne McGregor was a “keen business women” and she was very involved in the management of Modderfontein and The Baths. She spoke to the Department of Public Works about the poor condition the road to The Baths was in and she also helped with extending a telephone to Citrusdal. She passed away in October 1941 and left her shares of The Baths to be divided between her four surviving sisters.¹²⁵

Edith Maria McGregor was the twin sister of Johanna Marie McGregor who passed away in 1927. In 1939 she and her sister Grace Florence McGregor became the new managers of The

¹²² H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.54-55.

¹²³ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.54, 56.

¹²⁴ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.55-57.

¹²⁵ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.52-53.

Baths and took up residence there. Edith wanted The Baths to be as modern as possible, and therefore appointed an engineer, Ninham Shand to help her with converting water into electricity. Shand came to the conclusion that a “Blackstone Diesel engine” had to be placed “halfway up the kloof” but it was later suggested by another engineer from Stewarts & Lloyds, Mr Gray, that a “Gilks Turbine” would work better. This device was installed by a man named Harry Hall, who had started working at The Baths in the time of the Morch Olsens. In 1949 this turbine was started and was in use until Eskom took over providing electricity to The Baths.¹²⁶

Nearing the end of 1941, only four sisters remained, only two had married and only one, Jane Jemima, had children. The sisters had worked hard, just like their father, to make a success from not just The Baths, but the rest of their business endeavours, and they wanted desperately for these assets to stay in the hands of their family. With the limited number of family members they had left, they devised a clause that would be present in the wills of all four remaining sisters. This clause divided their Baths shares as follows: Margaret Jean Peter, Jane’s daughter would receive a half share, while William McGregor Peter, Jan’s son received a quarter. The other quarter share was given to Harry Erskine Hall, who worked at The Baths. To make sure the property stayed within the family, Hall was only allowed to sell his share to either of the two siblings for 3500 pounds. The wills also stated that The Baths would be “entitled to their [Margaret and William’s] children.”¹²⁷ Edith McGregor died 28 May 1946, leaving only three remaining siblings.¹²⁸

Grace Florence McGregor was the youngest of the sisters, but seems to have had the most tragic life of them all. She was engaged to be married to Trygve Morch Olsen, but he eloped with her older sister Elizabeth. The next man she fell in love with was Harry Hall, who she would have met when she moved with her sister Edith to The Baths, but unfortunately Hall married Margaret Peter, her niece. This loss of love was too much for Grace and she died 23 December 1949. Even though she had a hard life, she was very active in the management and development of The Baths with her sister Edith. She enlisted the help of Mr P.C. Carmen, a University of Cape Town academic, to have the thermal mineral water scientifically

¹²⁶ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.57-58.

¹²⁷ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.58-59.

¹²⁸ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p.59.

analysed.¹²⁹ Carmen had found in 1945 that the water was in fact radioactive because there was radium gas present in the water. The radio-activity in the water could be measured by the small electrically charged particles that is emitted, and is measured in Mach units. Measurements of the waters found at different stages for example at the spring, water in the pipes leading to the bathhouses and water at the swimming pool outlet were tested. More on the effect of radio-activity and its implications for The Baths' thermal water will be discussed in the next chapter.¹³⁰

Jane Jemima McGregor was the only one of the sisters who had children and offered the family a chance to keep The Baths in the family, although she was not really part of managing The Baths. She died 28 June 1950, and so only one sister, Harriet Arabella McGregor survived. She owned a quarter share in The Baths and held the *usufruct* (which was the right to be included in the benefits of a property). Harry and Margaret Hall by that time lived at The Baths and with Harriet decided to form a partnership "McGregor & Co." and Harriet was in effect their boss. Harriet decided to relinquish the *usufructuary* rights she held over the shares of William, Margaret and Harry. She died 12 July 1962, and so the last of the McGregor sisters was gone. This was the end of an era, although the sisters made sure that their properties were divided under their surviving family members. Although some of the McGregor family properties were later sold, The Baths was kept in the family, and passed to the next generation, which consisted out of William McGregor and Harry and Margaret Hall.¹³¹

The next generation: McGregor & Co.

The next generation that took over The Baths were Harry and Margaret Hall, who married 25 June 1949 and who managed The Baths with Margaret's aunt Harriet. They had three children who could become the next generation of owners of The Baths. When Harriet died, the Halls took over the managing of The Baths, but they knew if they wanted the property to become theirs and their children's, they would have to buy William's quarter share. They did try to do this in 1964, but the deal did not go through. They were told to wait a while before making the

¹²⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p.60.

¹³⁰ Hazel Hall's private archive: Letter from P.C. Carmen on the Analysis of the Baths Hot Spring Water, 10 May 1945.

¹³¹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.62-63.

offer again. The Baths, under the management of the Halls did experience a prosperous period, but unfortunately once again went through a period of neglect as well. Not in the sense that the buildings or visitors were neglected, but more in the sense that stagnation took place, no new developments were made, and The Baths were kept in its neat, but old state. The Halls did not feel that The Baths needed any new improvements or developments, but in the changing hospitality and tourism sector of the country in the 1970s the opposite was true. Accommodation standards were being raised and The Baths was falling behind, which meant they would not have been able to compete with other thermal water establishments who had raised their accommodation standards. According to Hazel Hall there is one way of justifying the lack of focus on the modernising of The Baths, and that was because large sums of money were being pushed into Agriculture, and since The Baths also had a farm attached to it, the farming business at that time was more lucrative. As the years passed, many of the old services offered at The Baths were discontinued like the butchery, because in the 1960s the rules and regulations concerning the running of a butchery became too strict. The Post Office was also closed in 1965, since with roads that had been improved and more modern vehicles it was easier for people from the community to drive to town to post letters and the post office at the The Baths was not making enough money to be kept open. The building was turned into The Baths' booking office afterwards.¹³²

One can see the stagnation that took place, since The Baths had not changed, except for a tennis court, a kitchen section and linen room at the Government House that was added, since the time of Trygve Morch Olsen, who managed The Baths until 1939. Repairs and maintenance were done during the closed season from June to August, which are also winter months. Nothing new was happening to this “beautiful and promising spot” and the old pattern of prosperity and neglect was once again seen. Regular visitors did continue to bathe in the thermal mineral water, but for a business to grow, it needed old and new clientele. It is interesting to see how almost ritual like it was for some people to visit The Baths annually. Most of these visitors were “Boesmanlanders” from the Northern Cape and they would visit The Baths from the 16 December for a month or more. They brought with them all they would need such as “cooking utensils, their own bed linen and food they liked.” They even made their own soap and smoked pork at The Baths. Entertainment at The Baths was still provided in the form of “*langarm*” dances on the stoep of the Dwarsgebou and jukskei was a

¹³² H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp.71-74.

popular sport at The Baths. So although the number of visitors that went to The Baths had dwindled, those who did stay there still enjoyed it and kept it alive.¹³³

The Hall's children were very involved at The Baths while growing up and spent their holidays there, and were "encouraged to carry on the wonderful work and heritage of the family." This devotion to The Baths could be seen throughout the years it existed, and was sure to follow into the next generation. When they were adults and went to live at The Baths, the issue of shares in The Baths were once again raised. At last in 1983 William Peter, who had no real input in the managing of The Baths, decided to sell his share and waived the rule regarding Harry's share that was written into the wills of the McGregor sister. With this sale, Margaret became owner of The Baths, which is interesting, since once again The Baths were held by a female descendent of the McGregors, and Harry owned a quarter. The Halls now had the authority to create an environment that would make it favourable for their children to become part of the managing team at The Baths and so continue the family legacy. This was done by creating an operating company known as The Baths (Pty) Ltd and the shares were divided equally between all the shareholders which included their son Allan Hall. With the new company formed, two of their children and their spouses took charge of the company, but the Halls were still active in the "decision making process." Unfortunately because of health issues, the Halls had to move to the Helderberg Retirement Village in Somerset West and Margaret died there on 24 July 2001. By the time the book was published in 2003, Harry Hall was still alive, and still longed to return to The Baths. Therefore in the mid-1980s The Baths passed once again into the hands of the next and forth generation. It was by this time that the managers of The Baths decided to focus on only two aspects of The Baths, the thermal water resort and the tourist industry and the farming of citrus.¹³⁴ The Olifants River Baths had experienced fluctuating successes at the hands of its various owners since the beginning of the 1800s, but in 1903 this changed when The Baths passed to the hands of James McGregor. His sons had the dream of creating a well-known resort, but it was his seven daughters that in the end built up the property and made sure that it stayed in the family so that the legacy could continue. By the third generation The Baths became the full property of the Halls, and they made sure that there was a company their children and grandchildren could inherit so that the family legacy at The Baths could continue.

¹³³ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p. 74.

¹³⁴ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 75-76.

As there was shown in this chapter, all three thermal spring resorts experienced a highpoint in the early 1900s, and in the case of Caledon and Montagu, which were struck by devastating disasters, that put the survival of the resorts into question, while at the Olifants River Baths, the resort was stagnated, and in urgent need of a more modern make over. The next chapter will look at the long history of the belief in the thermal water cure and how the South African bath culture developed, and what treatments were offered to give one an idea what the visitors to the thermal resorts, discussed in the previous three chapters, would have experienced.

Chapter 6:

Curative dimensions:

The history of the taking of the waters at South Africa's thermal mineral springs.

The previous chapters have shown how different bathing establishments developed and how the springs helped established South Africa as a well-known health resort. Although the ways in which water cures were used has been touched on, this chapter provides a more detailed account of the bathing culture, customs and medical beliefs that emerged around thermal springs in South Africa. This chapter also seeks to provide the scientific background of these mineral waters particularly insofar as chemical composition of the springs played a large role in their curative properties. The bathing and medical culture concerning the South African thermal springs, is contextualised within the broader European origins, where the water cure is part of the history of the medical profession in Europe. The focus then shifts to the South African context with a discussion of the traditions and beliefs surrounding the medical thermal springs and the development of bathing treatments at various thermal bathing complexes. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the scientific cataloguing and how these new developments influenced the belief in the curative properties of the water.

The medical history of quackery: The Quack and the water cure.

When dealing with the medical use of thermal mineral springs, one has to look at it in the context of medical history as well. Illness and death were issues that the earliest of humans had to endure, and they therefore tried to create ways in which illness could be treated, cured or prevented. The ways in which this was done formed the basis of “folklore and superstition” which still echo in the way modern “preventative medicines have” developed.¹ The practice of medicine is found in all cultures, but it was the Greeks who produced one of the famous medical men, Hippocrates, who according to Kellogg “had an excellent understanding of the physiological properties of water, both hot and cold.”² This shows how water also started to form part of more formal medicine. But when Rome was Christianized the fields of religion and medicine increasingly overlapped with one another. This was seen

¹ J. Camp: *Magic, Myth and Medicine*, p. 9.

² J.H. Kellogg: *Rational Hydrotherapy: A manual of the Physiological and Therapeutic Effects of Hydratic Procedures, and the Technique of their Application in the Treatment of Disease*, p. 22.

clearly when the bathing culture in Rome was seen as being too secular. During the Middle Ages the church allowed bathing for health reasons only, no pleasure was to be derived from the waters.³ The practice of medicine during the Middle Ages was limited to monks and clerics, “classical medicine” was still practiced in Islamic countries and so with the establishment of universities that took place in the twelfth century, classical medicine was reintroduced to the Western world again.⁴

It was at the end of the thirteenth century that priests and the clergy were forbidden by the Vatican to practice medicine and that a door opened for a new kind of medical professional to emerged: the quack. The mid-eighteen century is said to be seen as the “golden age of quackery” – these swindlers of unproven medical cures profited from the ignorance of the public and medical profession, and the fact that one could easily get a license to practice medicine, given out by the Bishop of London or the Dean of St.Paul’s, under the law made by Henry VIII in England.⁵ Quacks ranged from the “ruthless exploiter” of the public and their superstitions, to “skilled” empirical healers. Quack remedies tended to fall into the sphere as folk medicine, deem legitimate by medicinal scientific. However one should be open to the fact that the roots of most medicine lie in quackery and folk remedy, and that these practitioners had a decisive impact on “community health.”⁶

The reason for this is that both the so-called “orthodox” and “unorthodox practitioner” practitioners share a common foundation in the magic people believed in, and that despite their opposition to one another they developed side-by-side. This can be seen when looking at witch doctors, which in the earlier human race was seen as the “medical specialists.” By studying the treatments and techniques used by ancient healers one can see the influence they had, not just upon the unscientific field of quackery, but also the orthodox scientific medical profession. Close examination of the way in which ancient methods were used reveals, that there was considerable knowledge in the treatment of illness, albeit often beneath the camouflaged folk beliefs or superstition. This supports Maple’s argument that the “institution of quackery ought to be regarded as an important factor in medical history.”⁷

³ F. Yegül: *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 317.

⁴ R. Porter: *Blood and Guts*, p. 33.

⁵ J. Camp: *Magic, Myth and Medicine*, pp. 89, 91.

⁶ E. Maple: *Magic, Medicine & Quackery*, p.10.

⁷ E. Maple: *Magic, Medicine & Quackery*, pp.10, 11, 13 15.

The reason why quackery had to be explained in context of medical history is because water cures and beliefs in the curative properties of bathing were situated within the empirical medical-field, but there were still some people who were sceptical about it.⁸ The water cure took flight in England, in 1790 Horace Walpole wrote that “one would think the English were ducks, they are forever waddling to the waters.”⁹ In the seventeenth century many of the European spas became known to the English people, resulting in the commercialization of spas with many English villages were turned into “fashionable resorts.” In the 1740s springs in America, previously used by the indigenous Native Americans, were commercialised. During the mid-eighteenth century quacks seized the potential of the water therapy business,¹⁰ which was flourishing under the rich elites, who as Maple noted “purchase[d] with gold what nature had provided for nothing.”¹¹ The springs were being visited by people who were frustrated with the state of contemporary medicine, and opted for something more natural instead. Quacks, who knew that people still believed in the ancient powers of spring healing abilities, were reluctant to let such a valuable opportunity slip through their fingers, and exploitation was quick to occur. Physicians also jumped at the chance of treating the rich and famous at the spas, and it was often difficult to distinguish the charlatan from the physician. The spa culture that became so fashionable under the rich society was responsible for this era becoming the most profitable era the Quacks ever experienced.¹²

When one looks at the customs that became fashionable at the spas, it is interesting to note, particularly where English spas were concerned, that water caused much more than just healing. It also became a social scene marked by vices and infidelity.¹³ At the spas, taking the water became a sort of a ritual with a basis that included drinking thermal spring water and bathing daily. Regulations concerning patients and bathing were enforced by physicians who made sure that the correct type of therapy was administered to each patient. The many people who visited the spas, predominantly the social elite, went to the spas to be cured from the damage their lifestyle had on the body and soul. By visiting the spas the patients would be able to relax, away from the business of urban life. The treatments offered at the spas ranged from different kinds of baths (including mud baths) and massage therapy. In later years electric treatment was also introduced: an electric current passed to the body via electrodes.

⁸ E. Maple: *Magic, Medicine & Quackery*, p. 33.

⁹ J. Camp: *Magic, Myth and Medicine*, p. 145.

¹⁰ J. Camp: *Magic, Myth and Medicine*, pp. 146-147.

¹¹ E. Maple: *Magic, Medicine & Quackery*, pp. 113-114.

¹² E. Maple: *Magic, Medicine & Quackery*, p. 114.

¹³ E. Maple: *Magic, Medicine & Quackery*, p. 116.

This trend was to become popular in South African spas as well. Leisure time at the spas was filled with various forms of entertainment, though regulated – the splashing of the water, for example, was not allowed. Nude mixed-bathing was allowed for young and old. As spas strayed from the pursuit of medicinal cures to the pursuit of leisure, gambling, prostitutes and “mach-making” practises increasingly overshadowed spa activities.¹⁴

At the end of the 1800s, the Industrial Revolution which took place off in Britain, with the invention of steam power, resulted in the improved of travel and production, economic growth and the rise of the middle class. During this period of economic and social change new leisure industries were developed to cater for the new forms of leisure that arose in the nineteenth century. The new wealth that was accumulated by the upper and middle class gave rise to the formation of a new kind of leisure, one of “novelty.” This new leisure for the wealthy was seen in the rise of the spa culture, which for a long time could only be enjoyed by the aristocracy. But as time progressed, the middle and lower classes in Britain could also join in the experience.¹⁵ Many old traditions like spa bathing were re-introduced as a leisure activity in the nineteenth century. In short: the nineteenth century witnessed a leisure revolution in addition to an industrial one.¹⁶

As the Victorian spas flourished, so did the old water cure - Hydropony, which fast the “passion of late nineteenth century Britain.”¹⁷ Hydropony was said to have been started by a rural Austrian by the name of Vincent Priessnitz who believed that being ill was caused by “foreign matter” that had entered the body. Priessnitz maintained that by treating the body with water would lead to this “poison [being] expelled” from the body. He was a very strong believer in hydropony,¹⁸ and his clinics offered the treatments including “hot and cold baths, sheets or wraps, a plain diet and the drinking of massive quantities of cold water.”¹⁹ This sounds very much like the old water cure of taking the waters, but the difference was that this new kind of water cure did not have to be done with thermal mineral water, and in hydropony cold water seems to have played a larger role. Still the treatment reflected many

¹⁴ J. Camp: *Magic, Myth and Medicine*, pp. 149, 152.

¹⁵ G. Cross: *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600*, p.123.

¹⁶ K. Roberts: *Leisure*, p.25.

¹⁷ E. Maple: *Magic, Medicine & Quackery*, p. 147.

¹⁸ R. Porter: *Blood and Guts*, p. 48.

¹⁹ E. Jameson: *The Natural History of Quackery*, pp. 185,186.

of the old water cures that were used at the spas,²⁰ and many of these hydrotherapy cures were later incorporated into the South African spa establishments.

Joel Shew's *Hydrotherapy or Water-Cure: Its Principles, Processes and modes of Treatment* (1851), Priessnitz was described as the father of hydrotherapy. Shew mentions that there had been an outcry over hydrotherapy as dangerous, but he questioned how much more dangerous it was in comparison to the other medical therapies available at the time, like bloodletting and the injections of "poisons" into the veins. Shew argued that the application of pure water should not be perceived as any more dangerous, and that those who objected to the water cure were ignorant of the way the cure was administered. He dared objectors to leave their "vile narcotics" and try to purify their systems with "Nature's pure fluid" and to sweat out their illness. Finally Shew argued that hydrotherapy could not be seen as quackery because while it had elements of primitivism and simplicity it did not have enough mysticism and he attacked medicinal drugs as unreliable, but that the water cure was different in this regard.²¹

In 1904 J.H. Kellogg also published a book on hydrotherapy, which was known in the twentieth century as hydrotherapy. Kellogg wanted to show a more scientific approach to the water cure, having studied the "physiological effects of water" in 1883. He showcased the different approaches in physiological and therapeutic treatments of the now more scientific, and therefore in most eyes, the more legitimate side of hydrotherapy which was now able to be proven by modern science. Kellogg informed the readers that because of the now "rational and scientific basis" on which the water cure had been studied, "it [had] been rescued from the hands of empirics and charlatans." Kellogg's treatments also portrayed many of the traditional treatments found in the old spa water cure, including the drinking of water at a different temperature, bathing, a rational diet, so called "medical gymnastics," and massages as well as the more modern application of electricity.²² Some of these treatments become available in South African spas like Caledon and Montagu in the 1900s, showing that the spas tried to keep up with international trends in health and treatment. This brief description of how the water cure developed shows that in most cases there were both legitimate and illegitimate purveyors of the water cure, and that some legitimacy was gained by the backing

²⁰ E. Jameson: *The Natural History of Quackery*, p. 186.

²¹ J. Shew: *Hydrotherapy or Water-Cure: Its Principles, Processes and modes of Treatment*, pp.3-4, 7.

²² Kellogg, J.H.: *Rational Hydrotherapy: A manual of the physiological and Therapeutic effects of hydropathic procedures and the technique of their application in the treatment of disease*, pp.7-8, 37.

of science with the popularisation of hydrotherapy, which was practiced by doctors for some time.

The South African Context: The development of the South African thermal water spring culture

As seen earlier, at British spas (and presumably other European spas), a particular form of a bathing culture had developed and this was followed religiously by the visitors to the thermal springs. One imagines that due to the presence of doctors at the spas, medical rules would have been applied strictly. However the more light-hearted and entertaining part of thermal mineral spring culture were still very much a drawing card, and possibly *the* drawing card in later years. The visiting of spas, mainly undertaken by the rich and aristocratic became an important social event and many doctors encouraged their patients to experience a change of scenery and air. By the time the Cape came under the colonial rule of the Netherlands and later Britain, the thermal water cure including its cultural and scientific aspects, had become a fixed and popular practice in these colonising countries. One can therefore assume that many of these European traits concerning bathing culture would have been passed on to the Cape, where they were to become traditions and part of Afrikaner folk medicine and leisure.²³

As in Europe, spa culture became a social event however, as will be seen, the spas built around South African thermal springs were primarily visited for their health and medicinal properties. Arguably, the priority of most drawn to the South African thermal springs was healing, rather than leisure.²⁴ Therefore there were very strict rules, albeit largely ‘unwritten ones’ regarding the visiting and utilisation of the thermal springs, particular insofar as returning home with renewed health was the greatest goal of these patients. The bathing culture that developed was predominantly based on “own experience, hearsay and information passed down by generations” and was, as mentioned deeply rooted in the Europeans bathing culture and tradition. Often people had no experience of or insight into the bathing tradition and were left to their own devices and what they thought was best. This is due to the fact that there were no permanent doctors at the thermal springs in the Colony, and this lack of medical supervision for patients, proved rather dangerous. Many foreign

²³ B. Booyens: “Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 1), (No.15), November, 2000, pp. 12-13.

²⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p. 97.

travellers lamented this fact because there was a chance that patients could damage their health by using the springs incorrectly.²⁵ The travel writings of these visitors offer valuable insight into how the South African, and especially Afrikaner thermal bathing culture developed and how these customs may have been influenced by such travellers and other European immigrants to the Cape.²⁶

One such traveller, Peter Kolbe, was a German who seems to have been aware of the thermal springs that could be found in the Cape Colony (which had a quantity he found pleasing).²⁷ Kolbe was the first traveller to write down his experiences in the Cape during his stay from 1705 to 1712. He visited Caledon baths in 1708 and described the many aspects of bathing tradition, as well as his personal experiences of the ways in which the waters affected him. Kolbe mentioned that holes (approximately 10 meters deep) were dug in the ground, to form the bath in which one was to lie. The water, he noted, tasted of metal due to a heavy iron content.²⁸

Kolbe must have been well acquainted with the thermal bathing traditions of Germany and would have followed those guidelines at Caledon. In describing the effect of the waters, he noted how the heat of it created a burning sensation as he entered the bath, but that this soon disappeared and became more comfortable. However, he continued, one could only stay immersed for between five and six minutes before the stomach started to contract and the pressure on the heart became too strong. Thereafter one had to exit the water and retire to bed, where the sweating would commence. After this session of bathing and sweating, Kolbe declared himself refreshed and rejuvenated. Kolbe continued to praise the healing properties of the bath by including examples of persons he knew to have visited the Cape and found themselves cured by its waters, including extreme cases such as hearing loss and lameness of the arm.²⁹ Kolbe can be seen as one of the establishers of the bathing culture in the Cape Colony's thermal springs. He felt that it was very important for one to go from the bath directly to a bed so that the sweat session could be undertaken. Interestingly, Kolbe mentions that the bather had to ensure that he had enough wine beforehand, indeed wine was deemed a

²⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.97.

²⁶ B. Booyens: "Die Volksgeloof," *Volkskunde en Volkstaal*, (Vol. 50), (No. 1), June, 1994, p. 21.

²⁷ Booyens, B.: "Die Warmbronnwaterkultuur van Montagu," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 1), (No.15), November, 2000, p.13.

²⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp.20- 21.

²⁹ A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, pp. 4 & 5.

vital part of the water cure and its effective treatment of ailments. Brandy was a fitting alternative: it was helpful in the sweating process, one spoonful had to be taken after bathing to help strengthen the patient's heart. However, there was a warning against imbibing too much wine and brandy, such excess would weaken rather than strengthen the body. From Kolbe's writings one can deduce that although the accommodation at the thermal waters was still quite primitive, - in fact there was none and visitors had to bring their own bed and cutlery and many slept in their wagons. This however did not discourage people from travelling to the springs, which only underscore the belief that people had in the curative properties that thermal mineral waters possessed.³⁰

Another traveller to write about his experiences was Commissioner Cnoll, who in 1710, travelled from Cape Town to the Warm Bath of Caledon that lay over the Hottentots Holland Mountains. Cnoll's journal describes his experiences at the baths, and details the bathing culture and facilities available in the eighteenth century.³¹

He undertook this journey specifically because of ill health – the water cure prescribed by Cape doctors to treat his “tight chest and shortness of breath.”³² Clearly the legitimacy of the water cure was maintained by the doctors in the colony. As mentioned, the water cure was well-known by Cape officials, a fact confirmed by the invalids Cnoll met when he first arrived at the Zwartberg warm bath. There were five men who had also travelled from Cape to the thermal waters in search of a cure: sergeant Cornelis - had a leg ulcer and experienced stiffness, Hans Caspers suffered from gout, Andries Muller had a bladder stone, Hans Caspase an eye infection. The fifth man Jan Smeetsman, did not want to divulge his reason for visiting the waters. There was also “a small negro” who was being treated for scurvy.³³ This shows that although Cnoll was one of the first to record the use of the baths for medical reasons as well as the medical properties the waters possessed, he was hardly the first to have visited them for health reasons.³⁴ It is constructive to note that before Cnoll was told about the thermal springs, he considered taking Chinese remedies first, and every other Dutch remedy he could think of as a contingency. The promise of thermal water with the potential

³⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 21.

³¹ C.G. Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 79.

³² E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 80.

³³ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, pp. 5-6.

³⁴ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 80. & J. Edwards: *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon*, p. 3.

to heal a variety of ailments after just a few days was attractive, a promise that must have had an impact on their popularity in the Cape.³⁵

Cnoll left Stellenbosch on the 20 January 1710 and met Ferdinand Appel, who managed the Caledon baths, at his house, where they were joined by Pieter Robertsz accompanied by his wife, his sister-in-law and her two daughters. They also wanted to go to the bath, and therefore requested from Appel the permission to join the journey. Robertsz suffered from a lame feeling in the body as well as a speech impediment. The rest of his company also had ailments they wished to cure at the bath.³⁶ His wife had some kind of “paralysis or palsy” in her legs, and one of his daughters had “feminine ailments” and experienced a choking sensation come every sundown. All believed strongly in the waters, evident by the way they spent their evening at Appel’s house where they discussed their different ailments and the healing properties the thermal waters were said to possess.³⁷ Appel led the group to the thermal springs on the 21 January 1710, and they reached the thermal spring on “a small flat mountain called Hot Spring” the day after.³⁸ Upon arrival they met the five men (mentioned earlier) “completely cured”³⁹ and “living” proof of the powers of the healing waters possessed.⁴⁰

Cnoll and his party pitched their tents, arranged a kitchen and a fireplace, supper and went to bed. When they awoke on the morning of 23 January 1710, the weather was not favourable for bathing and were forced to postpone their treatment. The weather played an important role in the taking of the waters – if it were too cold, wet or windy it was inadvisable to bathe. Cnoll commented that as they could not bathe, they chose to explore the surroundings and found “numerous baths dug out in the various springs.” This was one of the first methods used to create a bath for oneself. Here they found that the water, which was extremely hot, ran into these baths – where it cooled to a more desired temperature. Moreover, he continued, steam rose from the streams and baths of water and when the water was left standing for a while, a “film of a fatty or oily appearance” formed on the surface the latter.⁴¹

³⁵ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, pp. 79 & 80.

³⁶ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 13 & 14.

³⁷ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, pp. 80 & 81.

³⁸ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, pp. 82 & 85 & 86. & M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p. 13.

³⁹ J.E. Wilson: “Caledon and the Overberg: placid centre of a geographic microcosm,” *Contree*, 24 Sept, 1988, p. 22.

⁴⁰ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 6.

⁴¹ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, pp. 86 -87.

The group finally got a chance to take the waters the next day and it was the commissioner who was the first to do so. When the Commissioner took to the water, it had a very strong effect on his body (even though he was only in the water for one ‘hundred counts’) and a “noise was heard in his chest,”⁴² that reminded him of a pot of boiling water. Following the regiment of bath culture, Cnoll then went to his tent for a sweat session: laying between two blankets to induce more sweating. The effect the water had on his stifled chest was quickly evident, build-up of phlegm caused him discomfort in his throat and he suffered from coughing for the next ten days. This did not deter him from taking the waters every day. In his experience, the water was extremely hot, but that the heat became more bearable when he was covered up to the neck and made little movement. After about fifteen minutes he experienced a “stifling pulsation” that forced him to leave the bath. Sweating was an important part of the bathing culture and one was not to leave the bath until one had perspired all over the body, and Cnoll added that a pint of hot thermal spring water should be taken with the sweating ritual. After an hour under the blankets the patient had to be “rub[bed] down,” dried and dressed, leaving one refreshed and hungry. Despite the weakness he experienced during the first few days Cnoll still thoroughly enjoyed the bath experience – as did his whole company becoming stronger with each passing day and his ailments started to fade. After approximately fifteen days Cnoll’s health and the appetite seemed fully restored.⁴³

Another traveller from abroad, junior merchant Willem van Putten, a government official, also travelled to the thermal waters in December 1710.⁴⁴ Van Putten wrote extensively about the bathing culture he observed and experienced at the thermal baths, and mentioned the strict rules that applied to the patients taking the waters. He too was cured of his ailment and believed that the waters were medicinal.⁴⁵ Van Putten and his party arrived at the thermal waters on 13 December 1710 and the first thing they did was have their slaves dig out baths (of about three to four feet in depth) for them on the hillock, which they did with spades and picks.⁴⁶ The party’s first attempt of a bath was a failure as it was found that the water was not hot enough, and they thus had baths dug further down the hill where the water was warmer. Van Putten bathed twice each day, early in the morning and late afternoon, and by the third

⁴² C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 87.

⁴³ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 88

⁴⁴ E.H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey*, p. 79. & B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 18.

⁴⁵ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, pp. 94 - 95. & B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 96.

⁴⁶ Caledon Baths Ltd: *A short historical sketch of the Caledon baths*, p. 8.

day he proclaimed himself cured of his gout and upset stomach and as experiencing pain relief in general. Like Cnoll, van Putten attributed this to the combined use of the baths and the drinking of the hot mineral water.⁴⁷ In addition to commenting on the healing elements of the thermal springs, Van Putten described how his party got into the bath according to the places their beds were in the tent. They sat flat on the ground so that the water covered their whole bodies up to their chins, they stayed in the water for five hundred counts, and then they started to feel their stomachs contract which caused them to pass water more than once. By this time the water also effected the heart and in order to prevent fainting they got out of the bath. Fainting was a very real danger for a patient of the thermal spring, as one could easily drown if they passed-out in the bath. Van Putten notes that they had to dry themselves and drink a “pint” of thermal water, as well as a bit of brandy, before commencing their sweat session. These descriptions from the early eighteen century are some of the first written accounts of Cape bathing culture. Following almost identical bathing methods, both Cnoll and Putten felt refreshed after the long bathing ritual and believed that the waters were in fact medicinal.⁴⁸ These first-hand accounts show how a bathing culture was established, and there can be little doubt that such approaches to the taking of the waters, as well as the belief in it, were influenced by the European travellers and the settlers at the Cape. However, while there are numerous similarities to European baths, because the environment and surroundings differed so strongly to that of Europe, over time the bathing culture of the Cape developed its own unique practices.⁴⁹

Otto Freidrich Mentzel⁵⁰ and the Swedish botanist and doctor Karl Thunberg visited the Caledon baths.⁵¹ In Europe the waters had to be taken with the guidance of a physician and as a doctor, Thunberg noticed that the invalids took to both bathing and drinking of the water without dietary or any other form of regulations attached to it and that there was no physician on site at the baths. This lack of control, which endangered the patients’ lives, concerned him.⁵²

⁴⁷ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, pp. 94 - 95.

⁴⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 96.

⁴⁹ C. Graham Botha: *Collectanea*, p. 88.

⁵⁰ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 5.

⁵¹ M. Patrick: *Report on Caledon Spa: The Changing Landscape of the Caledon Spa*, Caledon Museum papers, p. 5. & A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 5.

⁵² A. Dreyer: *Hot Baths at Caledon: Historical Notes*, Cape Town, Andries Dreyer Collection [manuscript], CA 1600=1936, p. 5. & B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 25

A newly graduated doctor, Anders Sparrman visited the thermal springs at Zwartberg in July 1775. Sparrman and Mentzel's accounts of the way the water cure was used are almost identical, and Sparrman also noted how the invalids use the water without any supervision or medical plan and that there were no special baths kept aside for specific diseases. Sparrman spoke of a slave that was sent to the baths with a fever. This slave became living proof that some illnesses could not be cured by the waters because a short while after bathing the slave died. Sparrman mentioned that people would go and bathe at any time of the day, and the water cure specifically stated that bathing was done in the mornings and late afternoons, but never after lunch. But even though the taking of the waters by the invalids were not always in line with regulations, it was still clear that the waters and their healing properties were in fact successful in relieving some ailments and Sparrman mentions rheumatism and lameness being healed in a couple of days. Gout it seems was not healed consistently.⁵³

Some diseases like wounds and sores had varying outcomes, as Sparrman saw examples of this where one man had a wound that would not heal in the water, but another patient who also suffered from a wound was cured. So the waters affected each patient differently. Sparrman was not convinced that the minerals found in the water had any positive effect on the body since he argued that it passed through the body too quickly to be absorbed. Sparrman believed the only reason why healing occurred was because of the sweating process which caused a change in the composition of the bodily fluids. He therefore felt that with the bathing a healthy diet and some form of medicine had to be taken, and he even suggested people had to use wild marijuana in the water when they bathed.⁵⁴ Sparrman described the thermal springs as "gezondbronnen" which translates to healthy sources. The thermal springs were seen as health giving sources, given to man by nature to cure the ailments that plagued human kind.⁵⁵

Two men, a Cornelius de Jong who was an officer on a ship, and Captain Robert Percival, wrote about the thermal mineral spring at Zwartberg, but they never visited the bath itself, and relied on rumours, stories and written accounts of others to form an idea of the Zwartberg Baths. Therefore some of their information was incorrect, and clashed with other accounts.

⁵³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 25.

⁵⁴ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 26.

De Jong in his writings spoke of the belief in the water and its medicinal properties. He felt that because of the strong belief the patient had in the waters itself, and the trust they had put into that belief, made it more of a physiological healing than necessarily a bodily one. This statement would not have been very popular in the eighteenth century, since the belief in the waters was still very strong. He does however state that there were cases where the waters definitely played a role in the healing of a patient. Percival also wrote on hearsay, but many of his findings correlated with previous visitors' remarks. He commented on the fact that the Boers used the waters without regulation and came to the baths with ailments which would not have been cured by the waters.⁵⁶ This was a popular observation under European travellers who visited the bath, and it troubled them that the Boers from the Cape Colony did not have any sense of regulation when it came to taking the water cure.

One of the best descriptions of life during a visit to the thermal spring baths was captured in the writings of the wife of Captain Francois Duminy, Johanna, visited the bath of Caledon in 1797 with her husband, and her description of the life at the baths holds priceless information about the bathing rituals and the social interactions that took place at the baths. Her husband also held a journal when he went to the springs in 1810, but he did not divulge as much. The reason for the visit could have been because Duminy suffered from gout.⁵⁷ It was clear that Captain Duminy and his wife believed in the water cure like many other Europeans did, but Mrs Duminy also used other treatments at the baths to enhance the water cure.⁵⁸ It is interesting to note as Maritz does, that the baths were visited by people from the Cape, but mostly rich people who had a high standing in life. It were these people who believed so strongly in the healing powers of the waters and this echoed the cultural standing in Europe as well, where the thermal spring baths and health resorts were firstly only visited by the rich who could afford to go away to a resort for a couple of weeks to recover from their ailments. This trait could be witnessed in the Cape Colony, but there was a difference, because these people also send their slaves to the thermal waters to be cured. Duminy for example send a female slave to the baths even before he went himself so that she could be cured. It shows how strong the belief in taking the waters was, where even slaves were sent to Zwartberg Baths. There was a definite class difference which could be seen in the way the baths were set

⁵⁶ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁷ L. Maritz: *Die Lewe en Werk van Francois Renier Duminy, 1781-1811*, p. 193. & B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 30.

⁵⁸ E.J. Prins: *Die Kulturele en Ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Westelike Overberg in die Agtiende en vroeë negentiende eeu*, p. 190.

up. The wealthy could afford the bathhouses, while the less fortunate could camp in tents or wagons, while the slaves and “Hottentots” had to use their own more primitive baths.⁵⁹

The Duminy Company consisted out of Captain Duminy, his wife Johanna, their daughter and Mrs Duminy’s sister. Johanna Duminy never took the waters herself, but the rest of the party including Captain Duminy did.⁶⁰ In her diary Johanna Duminy wrote about the daily occurrences at the baths, and also noted when and how frequently her husband went to bathe. The atmosphere at the baths was described by her as she tells of how she met some of the other visitors at the baths and how they socialised. She mentioned Captain Duminy’s hunting, which was a favourite pass time at the baths if the weather was too bad and the invalid was strong enough to walk. A certain Mrs. Dutooy’s was visiting the baths especially so that one of her ill slave girls could take the waters. Johanna Duminy also visited with a very ill woman who was staying at the baths and kept her company for some time, sending her gifts like food or produce. Many of the other visitors also visited with the woman, which showed the kind of social custom that developed at the baths. Johanna met with many of the bath visitors, and many suffered or had family members who were suffering from an ailment. She tried her best to help where she could, using what one can call folk remedies. The last page of Johanna Duminy’s journal mentions that Captain Duminy could have coffee with her since he had stopped drinking the hot thermal spring water because it gave him an upset stomach and he had also given up taking the waters.⁶¹ What one can see from Duminy’s diary is that the atmosphere at the baths was informal, people would be in close proximity of one another, seeing each other every day, and this created some sort of bonding. People would go and visit those who were very ill, and depended on one another for help as well as entertainment. Those who were healthy looked after the invalids suffering from disease.⁶²

In 1801 Robert Semple visited the Caledon baths and also gave some insight on the bathing culture. Through his description it becomes clear that although the regulations of the bathing culture were followed, it was done rather loosely and subjectively. Patients would gradually immerse themselves into the extremely hot water and when totally submerged the blood flow and pressure would be accelerated and the patient was left breathing heavily. When the patient, on his own accord, decided that he has had enough of the water cure, he would move

⁵⁹ L. Maritz: *Die Lewe en Werk van Francois Renier Duminy, 1781-1811*, p. 194.

⁶⁰ L. Maritz: *Die Lewe en Werk van Francois Renier Duminy, 1781-1811*, p. 196.

⁶¹ J.L.M. Franken: *Duminy-Dagboeke*, pp. 131 – 135, 138.

⁶² L. Maritz: *Die Lewe en Werk van Francois Renier Duminy, 1781-1811*, p. 198.

on to the sweating session and then finished the treatment off with cooling down. This might have been the reason why the cure sometimes failed to work, because there was no medical help at hand.⁶³

Booyens notes that the South African bathing culture and procedures were only put into writing at a rather late stage. This was done by a Cape Town doctor in 1829, dr. Johannes Knockers van Oosterzee. His writing seems to be the first to fully describe the bathing culture and the procedures that went along with it when taking the water cure. Dr. Knockers van Oosterzee was a very big supporter of spa therapy and he had a keen interest in it. His article was published in *Het Nederduitsch Zuid-Afrikaansch Tydschrift*, entitled “Over het gebruik der Natuurlyk warme baden.” Knockers van Oosterzee mentioned that health care in the Cape Colony was rather expensive, and therefore the thermal water cure was sometimes seen as a last resort, but this also meant that people from lower financial standings might have used it as primary health care, if they could manage to travel there. Although the wealthy could afford alternative health care, they would have had the means to visit the baths for an extended period. Evidently the water cure was shared by people from all walks of life.⁶⁴

Dr. Knockers van Oosterzee recommended that the thermal waters could be used both internally, where the drinking of the thermal water occurred and externally, where there was bathed in the water for a certain time. In Afrikaner folk medicine there was believed that the curative powers of the water were much stronger at the eye of the spring, and therefore any water used directly from the eye was superior to water collected further away. As a result the bather aimed to sit directly on or near the eye of the spring and to drink from the water of the eye as well. The belief in this “stronger water” was maintained because people were scared that the health giving properties in the water would evaporate the longer the water was exposed to the atmosphere.⁶⁵

The internal use or drinking of the thermal waters could be undertaken in three different intensity settings. The first was the “strong cure” where as much water as was possible had to be consumed, giving the curative properties enough time to get rid of “deep seated ailments.” This cure was not recommended to people who suffered from medical cases such as high

⁶³ E. H. Burrows: *Overberg Odyssey: People, Roads & Early days*, p. 84.

⁶⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 97-98.

⁶⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 98.

blood pressure, digestive problems and sensitive nerves. The “moderate cure” was recommended as being the best of all the cures, and the use of the moderate cure meant drinking only as much water as the stomach could hold without experiencing pain. The moderate cure required that people started with only two to three beer glasses of water every ten to fifteen minutes, but after a while one could increase the intake to as many as three bottles. This practice reflects a very similar one used in Europe and shows the South African bathing culture’s European roots. The “weak cure” was to be used exclusively by tuberculosis patients and they were only allowed to drink half a bottle of thermal mineral spring water per day.⁶⁶

The external use of the thermal waters was also done in form of a ritual. This water cure also ranged from the strong water cure to the weak water cure. The strong cure was for those ailments like gout and other deep pains, and therefore the water had to be taken as hot as the patient could handle. The moderate cure could be used on other ailments, and had to be taken in the mornings as well as in the evenings and the water was not supposed to be as hot as the strong cure water because it made people feel drowsy. Therefore it had to be more temperate. It sounds like this was the popular cure for many thermal spring patients as was seen in the testimonies of the travellers dealt with earlier. The weak cure was used in relation to cold water and one bath in the cold water had to be undertaken daily. This was normally used as an “after cure” following the completion of the strong or moderate cure.⁶⁷

Through the evidence above, the development of the South African bathing pattern was illustrated. There were four crucial elements to the South African bathing culture. The first included paying great attention to the different temperatures of the water in different baths, something that was deemed extremely important. The second was bathing times were one had to be aware at what time of day it was best for undertaking bathing and at what time. Early morning and late afternoon were said to be the best time to bathe, and one was not to bathe when the sun was shining straight down at the beginning of the afternoon.⁶⁸ There was also a belief that children were not allowed to play around the spring because this would cause the healing elements that bubbled up through the water to be scared off. The belief was that these bubbles were in fact good spirits, and that the noise and movement would scare the spirits

⁶⁶ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 98-99.

⁶⁷ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 99

⁶⁸ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 99.

away. These rules were passed from the old European bathing culture to the Afrikaner bathing culture. It might also have been a way parents could ensure children would not bother other bath users with noise, since peace and quiet was required at the baths in Europe.⁶⁹

The third important element was that bathers were also very aware of the time period that they could spend in the bath before becoming faint and drowsy, which was very dangerous since it could lead to drowning. The fourth element was that a bather had to sit perfectly still in the bath so that the healing water could surround him and excessive movement was discouraged. This rule was instigated into the South African bathing culture by Commissioner Cnoll at Swartberg bath in 1710 and had thereafter been used by all bathers. The best months, according to Dr. Knockers van Oosterzee to visit the baths, was from August to March but it became a rule in the Western Cape to visit the baths in the months that had an “r” in its name. In the interior the winter months were favoured because the summers were hot and filled with rain. A period of six month was seen as a good amount of time to spend at the baths, but it also depended on how serious the disease was. Dr. Knockers van Oosterzee recommended that the patient increased the treatment from the moderate to the strong cure, ending the stay with the weak cure and before leaving the bathing resort had to rest a couple of days.⁷⁰

Food had to be taken moderately and patients was told to wait about an hour or two after their bath before having breakfast, which was usually nothing more than coffee and rusks, a custom that became part of the later Afrikaner holiday tradition. Patients who, for various reasons could not enter the bath on an empty stomach were told to eat a small light breakfast beforehand. Wine could be drunk at the baths since it was seen as part of the bathing tradition. After bathing patients were to rest by either conversing with someone or reading a book, but sleep was not permitted. Walking was recommended to pass the time as well. Sweating was a process that was very important in the bath culture ritual. This was done by firstly drinking a couple of glasses of the thermal mineral water, and then one had to lie under layers of sheets and blankets. After the sweat session one had to cool oneself down properly before putting on one’s clothes to make sure not to catch a cold, since colds were feared by the bathers seeing as it could cause death.⁷¹

⁶⁹ B. Booyens.: “Die Volksgeloof,” *Tydskrif vir Volkskunde en Volkstaal*, (Vol.50), (No.1), Junie 1994, p.21.

⁷⁰ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 99-100.

⁷¹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 99-101.

Mud baths were a secondary feature of the thermal springs, and were used even before bathing establishments were erected. Since people had to dig their own bath like structure or holes in the ground, the soil and water mixed, and these baths turned into mud baths in no time. It was natural to assume that the mud would therefore also carry the curative properties of the water it contained and therefore the healing powers of the mud was also included in the bathing culture and was used when visiting the thermal springs. The belief in this mud was so strong that people would even send it to invalids far away and was also sometimes used as a plaster for wounds.⁷²

The patients visiting the baths would have had a need for some form of entertainment especially since most stayed for as long as six weeks. The bath resorts were slowly but surely turning into a more social environment which started to overshadow the medical reason for visiting the thermal spring. Families came to stay with invalids and the healthy visitors needed some amusement to help them pass the time. Dances, sporting events and bathing times were later organised by a camp captain. Trading stories and jokes and discussing family histories was also one of the forms of entertainment for the Afrikaner families. One was encouraged to talk about one's illness, discussing it as well as the use of the baths and how it impacted the illness, just as it was done in Europe.⁷³

Healthy visitors and the bathing community which formed from the different families that visited the baths at the same time took it upon themselves to visit the sick patients who had no family at the baths as was seen in the conduct of Johanna Duminy when she looked after a sick bath patient. Needle work and crochet as well as knitting were done by the women and the young people would go to the veldt and pick flowers, have picnics and catch fish. There were also dances, concerts and debates held for the entertainment of visitors. Card play, which became taboo in the nineteenth century, because the church saw it as gambling, was also enjoyed at the baths. Men would go hunting or they would shoot at targets. When it came to bathing, the different genders were not allowed to bathe together and this rule lasted for two hundred years. Men bathed naked until bathing suits came into fashion and women would wear a thin dress. Men were banned from even observing from afar the women bathing

⁷² B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 103-104.

⁷³ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 105-107.

and a red flag was raised when it was female bathing time to inform the men that they would have to stay away from the bathing spots.⁷⁴

Another tradition that became part of the South African bath culture was the idea of the resting or relaxing cure. This can be seen as the forerunner of the modern day de-stressing cure. Instead of only using the baths and its water for healing the body, the whole establishment, which included the water, the baths, the accommodation, the surroundings, the entertainment and the socialising factor, was used by people to unwind and rest after a busy year. Elderly people was said to have had a annual trip to the baths, where they stayed for about two weeks, where they took the waters and relaxed, and would always comment on how good the time at the baths were, and that the time spend there “did them good.”⁷⁵ The bath culture in the Colony slowly but surely became not only a source of health for the body, but also the soul, echoing the transition that had taken place in Britain as well. The transition at the Cape Colony bathing establishments began slowly, moving from health to holiday retreats, but the medical aspect it seems was never truly forgotten.

The medical belief in the thermal water cure: Treatments and testimonies concerning the curative thermal mineral spring waters of the Cape Colony

Throughout the thesis it has been evident that the medical belief in the curative properties of the waters found at the thermal mineral springs was very strong. In this part of the chapter more detail concerning the different methods of treatment and testimonies about the water will be looked at. As there has been mentioned, doctors in Europe believed very strongly in the thermal water cure and many of them send their patients to spas, including some of the spas found in the Cape Colony. But the Cape Colony doctors also had a strong belief in the water and in the 1700s doctors who worked at Cape hospitals would send their patients to the nearest thermal bathing establishment at Caledon. Both the thermal and cold water cure was supported in South Africa. The support of the thermal water cure by doctors did start to dwindle and after the “first quarter of the 1900s” doctors were far more sceptical and reserved in their use of the thermal waters as treatment.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 105-107.

⁷⁵ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 67.

⁷⁶ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 109-110.

But in the 1800s the belief in the water cure was still strong under South African doctors as could be seen in the document the Cape Governor compiled at request of the Colonial Medical Committee where the number of existing thermal mineral springs found in the Cape Colony was listed. In this memorandum it was mentioned that ailments like rheumatism was cured by the waters, and there had been an age old link between rheumatism and thermal water cures, it being one of the main ailments that was cured by the thermal water . But there were also other ailments like skin problems, wounds; liver problems; body fatigue and scurvy that was said to have been healed by the waters, according to the report. There was not as much information in this memorandum concerning the bath culture and customs, but it did show that the thermal water springs and their curative properties were still deemed important. It does seem that many doctors, as the 1800s progressed, started to think more critical about the thermal water cure and became more careful in voicing strong opinions concerning the curative effects, but none the less, patients were still being sent to the thermal springs to recuperate and rest.⁷⁷

In 1895 a Select Committee was appointed to evaluate the Olifants River Baths, and during this evaluation a Dr. Frederick William Webber was questioned. From this questioning one could get an insight into the doctor's role at the thermal water establishments. The doctor admitted that he still sent patients to the Baths and he compared the water at the Baths as being as good as those found at famous spas in Germany and England like Buxton. This showed that the doctor knew of the curative waters these spas held as well as their reputation. He makes a constructive observation, that the Olifants River Baths were known locally as "The Pool of Bethsaida," a reference to the healing pool in the Bible. Webber also added that there was no medical attendant at the baths and therefore the patients could not be helped by a medical professional in deciding what kind of treatment to use. Therefore doctors did send some patients to the baths, but once there, the patient was left up to their own devices of how to treat their problem.⁷⁸ These patients did not know whether to use the cold water or the different thermal water cures and this could have influenced their recovery.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, pp. 111-113.

⁷⁸ Hazel Halls private archive: Printout of Cape Town Archive document: Cape of Good Hope Report of the Select Committee on the Oliphants River Baths, 22 July 1895. Printed by order of the House of Assembly. July 1895, pp. 11-12.

⁷⁹ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 113.

In 1897 a Dr. William C. Scholtz, who worked in Cape Town, wrote a book entitled *The South African Climate including Climatology and Balneology*. In this book Scholtz touched on the reasons why South Africa became classified as a health resort, pointing to its healthy climate, but also because of the existence of an abundance of thermal spring, and combined it made the country an even better health resort. In this book there was also a chapter with a reprinting of a paper written by Dr. G.W.B. Daniell concerning the curative properties of the water found at the thermal springs in Caledon. This indicates that the belief in the water cure, or Balneology was still present and supported by doctors. It seems like a mixture of Balneology and Hydrotherapy was used at the spas.⁸⁰

Dr G.W.B was the medical superintendent at the Caledon baths, which shows the development of the spa, for at last medical supervision was provided at the spa just like in Europe. One element Dr Danielle was very adamant about was the fact that the medicinal value of the thermal springs in the Colony was not really known to most people living in and outside South Africa. There were more thermal springs than just those at Caledon, but these springs seemed not to have been used to their full potential and Dr Danielle mentioned that doctors did not send their patients to the springs for healing. Dr Danielle hoped that his paper in the *South African Medical Journal* would shed light on these natural healing resources that South Africa was blessed with and that local doctors would use them in Balneotherapies. Balneotherapy was the use of water in the treatment of ailments, and although thermal spring water had been used by people since the time of the Greeks, the new modern way of using thermal water was much more refined. A scientific dimension had been added to the waters, and the chemical composition made it possible for doctors to determine which sort of thermal mineral water would be helpful with a certain illness. Therefore thermal mineral water therapy was now more legit, it was seen as being part of the medical field by means of scientific proof. Thermal water was combined with other elements and turned into a treatment, but it still retained its bath culture roots that consisted out of drinking and bathing in the water. Balneotherapy was a more modern, scientific version of the age old water cure. Dr Danielle even went as far as to say that there were times when staying at a spa worked better than pharmaceuticals.⁸¹

⁸⁰ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, Castle and Company Ltd, London, 1897.

⁸¹ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 6-7.

The old water cure had by 1897 been reinvented and was known as Thermotheapeutics, or the “art of bathing.” It was believed that hot water affected not only the skin, but also the internal organs. Studies were done to see what the effects of different water temperatures were on the body, the constitution and the mind. Water was now administered with much more care than before, and two different bathing treatments were developed. The first was the brief bath, where heat radiation was reduced and heat production was delayed. The long bath on the other hand was used to raise the body temperature by adding surface heat. By using different forms of hot baths the body temperature could thus be lowered or increased. Timing had become crucial in the bath treatment and one had to make sure that the condition of the patient could handle the effects of the treatment.⁸²

Sweating as a by-product of the water cure was known in South African bathing culture since the time of Cnoll. It remained popular and sweating was helped on by wrapping the patient in blankets to create even more sweating. The sweating was said to help for rheumatic and gout complaints. Baths and hot water did not only heal, it was also used to either stimulate or sedate patients. The stimulation was achieved by placing a patient in a needle of spray bath, where the heat plus the water on the skin created stimulation which in turn helped with circulation and reflexes. Sedation was achieved by using a lower temperature bath, not above 95 degrees Fahrenheit, and could help delicate patients such as females.⁸³

In his paper Dr Danielle described the medical uses of the Caledon thermal waters. He commented that he was of the belief that the mineral and heat combination gave the water its curative abilities, although the ferrous carbonate was one of the main curative properties. He recommended that the water be taken internally as well as externally. Waters that contain carbonic acid, like Caledon’s, were said to have relieved the ailments concerned with chronic rheumatism and gout, as well as many other chronic diseases and when bathing in these waters, they cause a specific reaction where the skin become red, tingled, heat was felt and sweating increased. It worked almost like an aesthetic for the pain by numbing the skin which gave relief. Dr Danielle noted that since the minerals were in a diluted form in the water, it was an easier medium to be absorbed by the body, making it better than the medicine one

⁸² G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 16-17.

⁸³ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 18-19.

would take for the same ailment. After such a description Caledon's thermal water sounded like a wonder cure.⁸⁴ This fact was reinforced by a letter that Dr Hahn wrote in which he noted that "The Caledon water is the most valuable mineral water we have in South Africa."⁸⁵

The Colony was therefore put in a very good position for attracting invalids from Europe, stimulating the blossoming tourist industry that was beginning to form.

Dr Danielle describes in 1897 the effects the water had on the body, where a burning sensation was felt when entering the waters, raising the pulse and temperature, water was passed and the skin stimulated. When drinking the water many of the same effects were experienced as well as an increased appetite. These baths help rheumatism, but sometimes one would have to take the waters more than once to feel the effects. The steam at the baths was also used to cure lung diseases such as chronic bronchial diseases. Caledon's thermal water was said to cure an array of illnesses which included "Anaemia, Chlorosis; Malaria,; Rheumatism; Gout; Hysteria; Skin diseases; Women's disease and Liver diseases" to name a few. Anaemia was helped because of the iron that was found in the water and by drinking the water it would slowly disappear. Malaria, which was a tropical disease, was said to have been relieved by taking the waters and this was done often by officers who were stationed at the tropics. Malaria patients were said to have frequented Caledon's Sanatorium where they were treated by drinking and bathing in the water. The water was also said to help with anxiety, mental tensions and the wear and tear that went along with the everyday life. Dr Danielle also noted that a beautiful view and fresh air would hasten the recovery of a patient taking the water cure. Nature was used in all its elements to heal the patients and almost had a modern day holistic feel to it.⁸⁶ A doctor, Dr A.G. Viljoen wrote in the *South African Medical Journal* of 1888 that the waters of Caledon were unique in its composition and temperature and that the fact that this was hot chalybeate water made it easier for "cholorotic" patients to drink. Viljoen also noted that he had patients that came from the Colony but also the "neighbouring States and England" who he had treated with this water cure and who had recovered very well. It shows that there were not just South Africans using the waters for health, but there

⁸⁴ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 20-23.

⁸⁵ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 13, 14-15.

⁸⁶ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 26-27.

were international invalids travelling to South Africa to receive treatment and healing from the Colony's thermal springs.⁸⁷

Rheumatism was one of the ailments that Caledon was famous for curing, and rheumatism was rife in South Africa at the time. But not only South African sufferers visited Caledon, there were English patients as well, who travelled to the Cape Colony instead of European resorts to find relief. Caledon outshined some European spas because of its thermal chalybeate water, which was a rare type of thermal water. Therefore a better treatment for scrofula was offered at Caledon than could be found at European chalybeate waters resorts, raising Caledon's international profile. As was mentioned before, officers from India favoured Caledon as a place to recuperate after their time in the East. Dr Danielle continued to describe in the utmost detail how every disease he mentioned was proven to have been cured by the Caledon mineral water, and he had testimonies from other doctors as well to back up his belief in the thermal chalybeate waters. Even eczema and influenza was said to be cured and liver problems which occurred because of long periods in tropical climates as well as malaria infection could be relieved at the Caledon thermal waters Sanatorium.⁸⁸ This echoes the use of baths by the French colonisers who had to go to France after an extended time in the tropics in order for their liver function and 'Frenchness' to return to them through Vichy's waters.⁸⁹

By 1897 the treatment at the Caledon baths and the sanatorium had become much more modern and modern techniques had been introduced. This included new baths, massages, electrical devices and dietary regulation. Massages were seen as one of the most "valued" of new techniques to be added to the treatment regime of Balneology. Massages were combined with bathing which resulted in quicker recoveries. Another treatment that was introduced was Electro-Therapeutic treatment, where an electronic apparatus was attached to a needle bath, which was a special kind of bath, and then while the bathing was taking place an electrical current was sent through the water to the invalid. This was used as a "pick-me-up" and tonic in cases where exhaustion was experienced. This kind of treatment could also help with rheumatism and gout as well as insomnia and herpes. Dr Danielle noted that "electricity as an

⁸⁷ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 13, 14-15.

⁸⁸ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 28-29, 41-42.

⁸⁹ See E.T. Jennings: *Curing the colonizers: hydrotherapy, climatology and French colonial spas*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2006.

aid to diagnose is fully realised by the profession” and that he saw a bright future for the use of electricity in treatment. Dr Danielle expresses the wonderful curative effect the combination of water, electricity and massage had as a form of treatment and that he was sure that hydrotherapy, which for a long time was thought of as quackery, had been proven by science and observation by medical men as being a form of treatment that did work, when administered by the hands of a professional.⁹⁰

From the 1904 pamphlet that was issued concerning the Caledon spa, one can derive information concerning the development of the medical belief in the thermal bathing industry in South Africa. Since there is not many available sources concerning the development of the water cure in South Africa, one has to rely on the different pamphlets issued through the years for the different spas to see what kinds of new and modern treatments they were offering, and from testimonies included one can get a glance at how strong the water cure was during that time period. In the 1904 pamphlet the treatments that were available at the Caledon spa were explained in detail so that those who were not familiar with it could understand what it would entail.⁹¹

The first was the water treatment, which included all sorts of Baths like “Full-Baths, Half; Trunk; Hip; Partial and Hip baths. There were also Kneipp Wraps; partial wraps; frictions; slappings; wet sheet and douches.” With steam treatments there were variations of “full vapour and partial vapour baths; steam jets and steam compresses.” One could even receive light and air treatments in the forms of “nude or wrapped sun baths; air baths; walking barefoot and sleeping in the open air.” The electricity treatments that could be experienced included “galvanic, faradic and inductive electricity” which was applied with great care and electric massage and baths were also available. Massages were given either as full body massages according to Metzger’s system or internally under the guidance of Thure Brand’s Method. Even gymnastics, which fulfilled the exercise part of the old water cure, was available in the form of Swedish or resistance gymnastics. All of these treatments were applied by trained bath assistants and the temperature of the water was also watched closely. The diet of invalids was special and the kitchen was adapted to these specifications. All of these treatments would have been found at a European spa, and the availability of them at

⁹⁰ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 47- 48, 50.

⁹¹ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa’s spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, pp. 10-11.

Caledon Spa was a sign that South Africa was catching up to the new developments from abroad. A doctor was also to be appointed at the Baths, where he would look after the patients' health and he would also manage the massage department and no patient would be treated without a diagnosis by the doctor. This would ensure that no patient could receive the wrong kind of treatment.⁹²

There were also some amusements available that included tennis, croquet and golf and there were also dances given, so that people could also take time to unwind and relax while having the benefit of spa treatments at hand. There were testimonies included in the pamphlet so that people who read it could see first-hand experiences of people who had found relief in the waters. Having testimonies written by doctors made the water cure and the other therapies seem more legit and three doctors, including Dr Danielle was quoted as saying how much they believed in the healing properties of water. There were 41 testimonies of people praising the curative powers of the thermal waters and treatments included in the pamphlet, and there was even a poem written about the waters by a W.R. Quinan on 30 November 1903. In this poem he uses many Greek and Roman imagery to get his point across, which was describing how people travelled to Caledon, not to find gold or riches, but health in the fountains. He also mentions the manager Mrs. Hall as the "priestess who keeps the shrine in order." The masseuse was compared to a blacksmith, moulding the body into shape and in the last verse the thermal waters were praised, the reason for its heat said to come from the "caverns of Hades" and that it is Galen, a famous roman doctor himself that stirs the healing iron into the water.⁹³

Many of the testimonies spoke of miraculous healing of ailments and restored health. This shows one the belief in the curative powers of the waters were still strong. Many people also use the word holiday when describing their visit, illustrating how gradually health and leisure was becoming intertwined at the South African spas. One testimony written by a Baron Nettelbladt describes the Caledon Spa as the South African equivalent of Karlsbad, a famous spa in Germany. A Mr J.A. Kuys mentioned that he knew of cases at the Caledon spa where even serious ailments like paralysis were cured. There were even international visitors to the spa like Mrs. K Hall, who hailed from Surrey, England, who proclaimed that she, a sufferer of

⁹² J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, pp. 10-11, 17.

⁹³ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, pp. 16, 21-22.

“acute dyspepsia” found some relief while visiting the spa.⁹⁴ From these testimonies it’s clear that the thermal water cure was still very popular under not just South Africans, but also visitors from abroad.

In 1907, the next pamphlet to be of use was focused on the Montagu Baths after it was bought by the N.C.C.R. and was being turned into a world class resort. Before 1907 another poem concerning the curative power of a thermal spring could be found in a 1900 Montagu Baths visitors book. The name of the poet is unknown, but the existence of it points to the belief and thankfulness invalids attributed to the thermal spring water. One can assume that this visitor was healed since he wrote:

“Where doctors’ fail a cure to bring, Nature provides the Montagu Spring. When nauseous drugs you cease to buy, come here and give the baths a try. Tho pains and aches your frame may ract, You’ll feel quite frisky when you go back!”⁹⁵

It seems that the writer of the poem had a quite negative view of doctors and medicine. The medicine is called nauseous and the trust in doctors seemed to be low since the poem speaks of their failure to heal. Although doctors and medicine would have been present in South Africa by 1900, the belief in the healing properties the thermal waters possessed was still strong and it was used in accordance to medicine. Doctors also send patients to the baths, but what one can gather from this poem is that the baths was also used as a substitute when patients felt that the medicine given to them did not work, and they resorted back to what could be seen as part of both the Afrikaner folk medicine or “Boererate” and the English spa belief in the restorative powers of the thermal spring baths.⁹⁶

Montagu was blessed with a gift from nature, but not just any gift, this was a healing gift. The water of the thermal springs that bubble forth from the ground was seen by many different people and groups as treasure of immense value. As was mentioned before the indigenous “Hottentot” people as well as the early European settlers and the Afrikaners used these waters

⁹⁴ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa’s spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, pp. 23-24, 25.

⁹⁵ Montagu Museum Archive Source no. 2: A hand written short history on the thermal springs’ owners and water analysis. No clear reference to the author could be found, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Montagu Museum Archive Source no. 2: A hand written short history on the thermal springs’ owners and water analysis. No clear reference to the author could be found, p. 1.

as a healing source. The belief in the waters of Montagu's thermal springs was the main reason for its popularity which helped it grow into one of the famous South African spas. As with Caledon, the water was the main reason for people visiting the Montagu area on their travels. The earliest users of the healing spring was the local tribes of the area, and one can assume that they also experienced the healing relief the water could give, since although there are no written sources about the way in which they used the water, in 1907 it was mentioned that the "natives" would still travel for more than 50 miles to seek healing from the spring that they used to heal their own "rheumatic limbs."⁹⁷

When Gooding Field visited the Montagu Baths in 1907 to evaluate their curative powers, he was informed by a resident that the waters were so good, that not even "the pool of Siloam [was] in the [same] category with it."⁹⁸ The visitors who had used the water all agreed, the water had powers beyond any other spring, and dozens of testimonies of people who have experienced a cure after using these waters were found by Gooding Field. Stories were told of men, women and children who were brought to the Montagu thermal baths to receive in some cases miraculous healing from the waters, and invalids were said to have "thrown away their crutches," their limbs all healed from using the water, and that they could walk away completely cured. These were the sort of healing the Montagu Baths had become famous for, and could be accounted for by all who lived in Montagu.⁹⁹ This kind of belief was rooted in self experience and observation, and it is also how the water cure and bathing culture became part of the culture of the Afrikaner Boers, who saw it as a form of folk healing, or a "boere raad." The belief in the power of the water had also been passed on from previous generations and this belief was continued at the Montagu baths. Unfortunately there are no sources indicating the way the baths and the waters were used by the early visitors to the Montagu thermal springs, but one can assume that the visitors followed the same procedure as the one followed by the visitors and travellers to the early Caledon thermal springs. These were procedures, or a culture that had been formed out of remnants of the way the Europeans

⁹⁷ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 7.

⁹⁸ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 2.

⁹⁹ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, pp. 2, 15.

took the water cure, although many European travellers who observed these rituals thought it to be a quite primitive form of bathing.¹⁰⁰

Montagu baths had wonderful scenery when one strolled along the paths or had a picnic on the grounds. As the years passed bathing establishments in the country started changing their initial focus and health resorts were combined with holiday resorts, which had an effect on the regulations attached to the water cure and bathing culture. The atmosphere became more relaxed, less reserved and the strict rules of how the water cure had to be taken slowly started to fade and become more of a guideline than a set of rules.¹⁰¹

An interesting feature that was picked up in both Caledon and Montagu thermal spring literature was the fact that there was a great tendency to compare the thermal springs to spas found in Europe, which would have legitimised the South African springs in the eyes of the European tourists as well as the South African visitors, who would be proud to know that their own springs were just as good as those found abroad. Montagu's waters according to Dr. Marloth could be compared to the waters found at the spring in Gastein in Austria and a spring in Buxton in Derbyshire. Dr. Marloth, who did his analysis of the Montagu Baths in 1903, felt that the thermal spring was of a good enough quality to be turned into a Sanatorium as well as a health resort. He recommended that better accommodation was needed for visitors, and that if this was done the Montagu baths did have the potential to become the "Gastein of South Africa." In 1907 that recommendation was indeed answered when the N.C.C.R. Company began modernising the baths and the accommodations, and the establishment emerged as one of the leading Sanatoriums in the Cape. It seems that Dr. Marloth was correct in his assessment, because the Sanatorium did in fact become very popular under the people from South Africa and even abroad.¹⁰²

Dr. Marloth was not the only scientist who saw the value in the Montagu thermal waters. In 1908 Dr. Hahn, who analysed many of the thermal waters in the Cape, was convinced that the Montagu thermal waters could rival even the best found in Europe. He mentions that the Montagu thermal water was even better than the waters found at the German spas of

¹⁰⁰ B. Booyens: "Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 16.

¹⁰¹ B. Booyens: "Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu," *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 17.

¹⁰²T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 16.

Carlsbath and Baden-Baden, a feat that was sure to increase the popularity the thermal water enjoyed. A personal testimony to this fact was a German lady, an invalid who could hardly move around on her own, who visited the Montagu Baths in search of healing. The Montagu waters had healed her and she was adamant that these waters were better than any of the thermal water that could be found at any German spa and she claimed that she “derived more benefit” from the Montagu thermal water than she ever had from any of the German spas.¹⁰³

The Montagu baths became known for its effectiveness in curing a long list of illnesses which included skin diseases and chronic gout, which was one of the major ailments invalids tried to cure at the baths.¹⁰⁴ Rheumatism was the most common ailment to be treated at thermal springs, and at Montagu this was the case as well. Other ailments the Montagu baths alleviated included paralysis of the full body or individual limbs, “nervous exhaustion” and “mental over-exertion.”¹⁰⁵ As time passed, and science became more important in the eyes of the masses, the proprietors realised that they had to legitimise the healing power the water contained through publishing testimonies from scientists confirming the miraculous curative properties the Montagu thermal springs produced. These testimonies were included in advertising material for the baths, because it was these testimonies that kept the belief in the thermal water alive, and the fact that the water was at a later period legitimised by doctors and scientists, convinced people to continue to use the Montagu baths as a form of treatment for their diseases. In the 1907 pamphlet issued by the N.C.C.R. Company, Gooding Field found extensive evidence of the power of the Montagu springs through testimonies given by patients and visitors who had experienced the curative powers first hand. Mr. Cadby, who was the former manager of the N.C.C.R. Company, had suffered from a very bad case of sciatica and he was unable to work because of the pain. He had tried to get medical care for his ailment, but none worked, and he decided to give the Caledon baths a try. But he found no relief there after five weeks of stay, and he was desperate. He then remembered that the Montagu Baths laid near the Ashton station, and with little hope, decided to visit it, hoping that he would find some cure, and not a repeat of what took place at Caledon. He was richly rewarded with his faith in the Montagu thermal water, and within a month he was cured and left The Baths a new man. Previous owners informed Gooding Field of miracle cures they

¹⁰³ A. Wilmot: *The South African Climate: The Best in the World*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁴ B. Booyens: “Die Warmbronwaterkultuur van Montagu,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 16.

¹⁰⁵ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 16.

had witnessed in their time at the baths, where for example a farmer carried his wife, who was too weak to walk, to the baths. After the first fourteen days, where she was constantly taking the water cure, she was able to move on her own, and merely a week later she was strong enough to leave the baths and walk on her own again.¹⁰⁶

One testimony was quite touching in the sense that the patient, a young man, was brought to the baths by his parents from the Transvaal. The man, who had suffered from rheumatism since he was a young boy, could not walk or stand by himself. His parents in a desperate attempt to help him would carry him to the thermal water bath each morning and each night, so that he could be bathed in the spring water. After a month of this intense water treatment, he was completely cured, people could not believe their eyes, and the townsfolk of Montagu would never forget the miracle they had witnessed. The young man, overjoyed at being cured, wanted all to know about his amazing experience, and therefore wrote a sworn statement expressing that it was in fact the curative thermal waters of Montagu's spring that was responsible for his restored health.¹⁰⁷ Testimonies like these would have ensured that people's curiosity would have been triggered, and would in turn have helped to make sure a large amount of visitors, invalids and tourists would have gone to the newly opened Montagu Baths, and that the belief in the water would remain strong.

The 1915 pamphlet regarding the Montagu Baths also included testimonies. A Mr. Alfred Brett wrote in 1908 of how he had a severe sciatica attack that caused him a large amount of pain. He visited the Montagu Baths and was completely healed in just seven days. He was very thankful of his recovery and exclaimed that he wished that all those who suffered from rheumatism or other ailments knew about the wonderful curing water Montagu Baths had to offer.¹⁰⁸

Another happy patient, Mr. Alfred Dixon also told of his experience when he suffered from indigestion and was visiting the Montagu Baths at the time. He ended up drinking of the thermal spring water, as was customary with the water cure. From the moment that he had

¹⁰⁶ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, pp. 19-20.

¹⁰⁷ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 20.

¹⁰⁸ New Cape Central Railway Limited: *The Garden route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and Intermediate stations, via Worcester, Swellendam, Riversdale, Mossel Bay, George, Oudtshoorn and Klipplaat, Montagu radio-active hot springs*, p. 20.

drunk the water he experienced instant relief. Although Montagu's thermal water was not known for its effects on indigestion, it did in fact help this patient, who intended to recommend the baths to all his friends. Therefore positive experiences by patients generated free advertisement for the Baths because of word of mouth. This fact was proven by the next testimony, from a Mr. C.J. Grove, who suffered from both Malta fever and sciatica. He was told by his friends of the miraculous cures the waters of Montagu could produce and he took the train to Ashton, from where his father had to transport him on a stretcher to the baths. This man was seriously ill, and he could hardly move and was therefore in dire need of relief. He spent five weeks and five days at the baths taking the water, was completely healed and walked on his own the day he left the baths.¹⁰⁹

By the 1920s a new pamphlet was brought out called *The Caledon baths: the radio-active thermal chalybeate waters*. It was full of beautiful pictures of the Sanatorium and the surrounding environment. The catch phrase was "Nature's Gift of Gifts" but a new discovery had been made with the new "Natural Radio-Active thermal chalybeate waters."¹¹⁰ The writer noted that medical doctors in the 1920s, curbing the use of medicine and returning to nature for cures and that the baths were at the forefront of this revolution where air, exercise and water was used in combination with one another to create healing of diseases.¹¹¹

The 1930s Caledon Spa pamphlet had much of the same information as the 1920s one, but by this time there were new therapies and treatment that one could experience that included modern and up-to-date methods of electric and hydrotherapeutic treatments. The bathrooms included "cooling, massage, rest and dressing rooms." There was a quick description of each of the treatments, which started with the diathermy treatment, where the body temperature was raised by electrical means and was used to treat rheumatic, joint and muscle pains. There were also high frequency treatments that were used for rheumatism, gout, obesity and anaemia. Ultra violet light radiations treatments were offered since ultra violet rays was said to have a good effect on health and vitality. Hot air baths, which was a treatment where through dry heat sweating was induced, was able to cure illnesses like rheumatism, obesity and inflammatory diseases. Another treatment which relieved rheumatism, gout and fibrosis,

¹⁰⁹ New Cape Central Railway Limited: *The Garden route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and Intermediate stations, via Worcester, Swellendam, Riversdale, Mossel Bay, George, Oudtshoorn and Klipplaat, Montagu radio-active hot springs*, pp. 25, 26.

¹¹⁰ *The Caledon baths, Caledon, Cape Province: the radio-active thermal chalybeate waters*, pp. cover page, 3.

¹¹¹ *The Caledon baths, Caledon, Cape Province: the radio-active thermal chalybeate waters*, p. 7.

included pads, that was dipped in certain medical solutions, being placed on the body and “ions” were introduced to the body. There were also Schnee baths, which was a full body immersion bath where currents was introduced to the water and was seen as a tonic which could help with sciatica. Massage baths, which had two different kinds of treatments, the Aix and Vichy systems, was available and here a patient was massaged, by an attendant while warm water from either a douche or a fine system of sprays were sprayed on the body. Rheumatism, gout and some cardiac conditions was healed through this treatment. The tariffs for these treatments were charged separately from the accommodation and other charges. One could also now pay per day, per week or per month, so one could regulate one’s stay.¹¹² The pamphlet was accompanied by pictures of not just the sanatorium, but also the entertainment centres and the different treatments one could be experience, so that patients could see the modern appliances that were used.

The early belief in the curing properties of thermal mineral water under the South African invalids was not specific, and the water was used to cure any and all diseases. Unfortunately not all ailments could be cured by the waters, and many people lost their lives at the springs. This accounts for the fact that many thermal springs in South Africa also had a graveyard near to it, to lie to rest those who the waters could not help. Most of the time these waters were their last resort and a large amount of people suffering from severe diseases did not survive.¹¹³

By 1938 the Montagu Baths became known for healing “eczema, gravel, acute indigestion, Malta fever and diseases [connected to] the nervous system.”¹¹⁴ The waters of the Montagu baths were for a long period the only form of treatment at the Sanatorium. But as the establishment developed and improved more treatments became available. One of these new treatments was which was known as Peat-Baths, which was a form of treatment that was well known in European spas like Karlsbad, were employed at the Montagu Baths in 1938. Peat was a sort of substance that was combined with thermal mineral waters to treat “chronic rheumatism, gout, Ischia and sciatica.” Dr. Hahn tested the peat that would be used at the Montagu Baths, and determined that it was of the same good quality found at Karlsbad and that when the waters of the Montagu springs, which was highly radio-active, was used in

¹¹² *Natural thermal chalybeate springs: nature’s gift of gifts; the natural water cure*, pp. 11, 13, 15.

¹¹³ B. Booyens: “Die Warmbronnwaterkultuur van Montagu,” *Die Kultuurhistorikus*, (Vol. 15), (No.1), November 2000, p. 16.

¹¹⁴ Tourist Promotion, *Montagu Baths: Radio-active hot springs and Sanatorium*, p. 1.

these peat baths it would be of the exact same quality of the baths at “famous Bohemian watering places.” Montagu could therefore contend with the best of the best European spas when it came to the quality of its water and its treatments, but also because of its climate, which was mild all year round, and meant that the thermal baths could be used all year round and not just in the summer like at European spas, and this factor gave the Montagu Baths an edge over its competitors.¹¹⁵

In Prof Rindl’s 1933 book *The Medical Springs of South Africa* many different aspects of the thermal medical springs in South Africa was highlighted. There was also proof that the thermal water cure was still used and that the belief in it was strong, since Rindl mentions that many people in South Africa would have undertaken this form of medical treatment if they were offered the help of a doctor, who could tell them which thermal spring they had to use to cure their ailment. Rindl commented on the use of the thermal water in modern bathing culture which included internal and external use of the thermal water through baths, douches; drinking and gargling. A good diet, exercise and “cheerful” surroundings as well as the importance of having a doctor at the spa to help with treatments were supported by Rindl.¹¹⁶

In November 1940 an article on thermal springs and balneology was published in the *South African Medical Journal* in which the importance of the thermal springs in the country was stressed by the editor of the journal. This article was there to educate “normal physicians” about the benefits of the water cure as well as the healing properties it had so that these doctors would send their patients to the spas to recover from an array of ailments. In the article, written by more than one unknown writer, Rindl mentioned aspects he felt were extremely necessary and which had to be addressed. One of these elements was that he felt that medical attendants should be forced upon spas to ensure the safety of their patients, only trained staff should have been allowed to work with patients and that specialization in hydrotherapy was needed.¹¹⁷

It seems that the belief in the water cure was still popular as illustrated by Kent’s pamphlet, *Geneeskragtige Bronne van Suid-Afrika*. He touched on many different aspects of the medical thermal springs and mentioned what kinds of treatments were still available. It

¹¹⁵ New Cape Central Railway Limited: *The Garden route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and Intermediate stations, via Worcester, Swellendam, Riversdale, Mossel Bay, George, Oudtshoorn and Klipplaat, Montagu radio-active hot springs*, pp. 19, 20.

¹¹⁶ M. Rindl: *The Medical Springs of South Africa*, pp. 10, 19-20.

¹¹⁷ B. Booyens: *Bronwaters van genesing*, p.114.

echoed the established thermal water cure culture which included looking at the temperature, the time limit and the kind of water treatment that would be taken. Kent mentioned all the new and modern treatments one could experience at the South African thermal water establishments, which included “shower and mist baths, massaging and electric as well as light therapies.” He noted that mud baths could be undertaken and the thermal mineral waters could still be drunk. This shows that the established and modern bathing culture was stable and strong and was supported in the 1950s. Concerning the medical side of the thermal bathing practises, Kent cautioned, as many doctors, that each patient using the thermal springs should consult a doctor before undergoing any treatment because each person’s case differed and that it could be dangerous to undergo spa treatments without the necessary information and advice. A doctor could work out a program for a spa visit that was safe. Here it shows that doctors were still sometimes consulted on the use of thermal mineral water treatments, so one can assume that some doctors still supported the use of spa treatments. Kent also mentioned that the spa waters were sometimes used when all other avenues of medical treatment had failed, and that therefore it was mostly used in long chronic illnesses as a preventative cure, a blocking cure or a curative treatment. Unfortunately there are times when the water cure could only suffice as a pain reliever and to make the patient comfortable, since there was nothing more that could be done. Kent does mention that the thermal mineral spring resorts did not only have patients who visited it, but also healthy visitors who just liked to enjoy themselves swimming in the nice hot water. The spas turning from a medical spa to more of a health and holiday resort complexes as the years passed, and many people where participation in the age old taking of the waters tradition without even knowing it.¹¹⁸

This trend of medical spas turning into health and holiday resorts was also seen in the 1962 pamphlet on Montagu and its spa, where people were invited to experience the “cure of medicinal baths” and the “health-giving springs” while on holiday in the Montagu region. Even though the focus was shifting to holidays and attracting tourists, the medical aspect was not lost and was actually still used to attract potential tourists. The advertising was not focused of only attracting ill patients anymore, it was to get tourists, who were not necessarily ill, to still enjoy the exquisite waters.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ L. Kent: *Geneeskragtige bronne van Suid-Afrika*, pp. 7-9.

¹¹⁹ Montagu District Publicity Association, *Montagu and it famous baths*, p. 16.

The question this chapter was trying to answer was for how long the belief in the thermal water cure lasted, since doctors had begun moving away from prescribing it as a treatment in favour of medicine. Even though it is not fully clear when doctors stopped trusting in this cure, it seems that in the eyes of many South Africans this cure was always somewhere present in some form, and although it was seen as a folk remedy, it was still practiced by some. This can be seen in the use of the thermal springs by two well-known figures in Afrikaner circles. Through the years an array of tourists and visitors had visited the baths at Montagu, and Dr. D.F. Malan was a big supporter of the Montagu baths and its healing waters, and one can assume that he himself had experienced the curative powers since he was the Dutch Reformed Church reverend at Montagu from 1906-1913 and he called Montagu “the Switzerland of Africa” to which he returned in later years with his family to enjoy healthy and pleasant holidays.¹²⁰

Another well-known figure who was a regular visitor to the Montagu Baths was Dr. Danie Craven. He visited the baths on the weekends¹²¹ and one of his visits made headlines, because of the knee operation he had in 1977. Craven visited the baths after his old rugby injured knee was strong enough to be released from its cast. He was there to start the first of many thermal water treatments in hope that his knee would be helped by the curative thermal waters. He was convinced that the water therapy worked after spending time floating in the hot mineral water, and after the first treatment his doctor measured the angle his knee managed to bend, which had increased by the second round of thermal water treatment. Craven had by that time been a frequent visitor to the Montagu baths because of the hot thermal water, which was perfect for practising ones muscles. Craven mentioned that he went to Montagu and its baths for “the health of his soul.”¹²² Craven believed in the powers of Montagu’s water, and Montagu baths would have been proud to have as famous a patron as Doc Craven sing their praises. The visits by famous people to the baths could also have had an encouraging effect on tourists who read about the belief these famous visitors had in the water. It is therefore interesting to see how long the belief in the water cure and water therapy had lasted, and that it was in fact used in conjunction with the modern medicine available at that time. It seems the water cure still had a place in many South Africans hearts even as late as 1977 and that the thermal baths were still popular.

¹²⁰ Ds. D.J. Malan: *Geskiedenis van Montagu en die distrik*, p. 22. & “Montagu: Beyond the Cogmans Kloof,” *Village Life*, No. 20, October/November 2006, p. 24. & B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 82.

¹²¹ B. Booysen: *Bronwaters van Geneesing*, p. 82.

¹²² “’n Dorp en sy baie water,” *Die Burger*, 17 Mei 1977, p. 6.

**The scientific value of the water:
Chemical composition influences curative properties**

Since the time that thermal mineral baths were seen as curative, there had been a search for the curative agents in the water. At first the heat and mysterious elements were given the benefit of providing the cure. But as time passed science and the water culture developed, becoming more advanced, and this led to the discovery of different chemicals in the thermal mineral waters. Therefore the value of thermal mineral water and its treatments depended on the chemical composition of the springs and influenced the different illnesses the water was said to cure.¹²³ There will be looked at the three different thermal springs' chemical composition as well as how the discovery of one mysterious element gave away the secret to all healing thermal mineral spring power. Most of the information could be found only in pamphlets concerning the different bathing resorts.

In Dr Scholtz's book of 1897 an advert of the Caledon Mineral Baths and Sanatorium was included. In the ad the classification of the waters as being thermal *and* "chalybeate," made this spring unique since thermal iron springs were rare. The water was 120 degrees Fahrenheit and a high level of iron in the form of Ferrous Carbonate was present in the waters, along with other minerals and salts. The water was clean and easily drinkable. The ailments the Caledon thermal water was said to cure was "pulmonary diseases, rheumatic and gouty affections; anaemia and skin diseases" to name a few.¹²⁴

In 1897 Dr Danielle also published a book on the waters of Caledon. Dr Danielle included an analysis of the Caledon thermal mineral water that was done by Prof Hahn who worked at the South African College. This analysis showed the minerals that could be found in the water and described their chemical composition, which was the key to the curative powers of the water. The chemicals that present in the waters were "Ferrous Carbonate, Sodii Sulphate; Common Salt; Silica; Alumina; Calcic Sulphate; Calcic Carbonate; Magnesium Sulphate and Carbonic Acid Gas." The most precious of these chemicals were the Ferrous Carbonate which played a very big role in the therapeutic healing the waters were known for. The water found at the Caledon Sanatorium was sparkling clear and without any colour, except when in large

¹²³ J. Camp: *Magic, Myth and Medicine*, p. 146.

¹²⁴ W.C. Scholtz: *The South African Climate including climatology and balneology and discussing the advantages, peculiarities and capabilities of the country as a health resort-more particularly with reference to the chest*, Caledon Sanatorium ad, p. 204.

quantities, where a light brown tint from the iron present in the water could be observed. The water had no smell, which was a good, since many thermal waters were said to have had quite a strong nose to them. The water could be drunk, although it was a taste one had to get use to. The water also contained iron, and in a liquid form, it was said to have been one of the best ways the body could absorb it. Danielle does mention that he did not believe that a single chemical was responsible for the curative effect of the waters, but that he believed there was a combination of chemicals and temperature that gives one the healing properties.¹²⁵

In the 1904 pamphlet an analysis the chemicals found in the Caledon thermal water was published for the public's benefit, so they could see all the different curative minerals that was present in the spa water. The chemical analysis of the water was done by Prof Attfield, a "Professor of Practical Chemistry for the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain." The three main elements of the water, the temperature, at 60 degrees Celsius, the high amounts of iron and the purity, were also highlighted and were explained.¹²⁶

After the realisation about what made the water so special or healing, thermal springs were recommended by doctors, who had scientific backing and the scientific results gave the water's healing properties legitimacy. This fact was not overlooked by Gooding Fields when he investigated the healing powers of the Montagu Baths in 1907. In 1903, a Dr. Marloth who was a "leading scientist of the Colony," examined the water of the Montagu baths to determine exactly what the healing properties of the waters were. He found that there was one main spring with different outlets in the area and that the water was 112.3 degrees Fahrenheit. Dr. Marloth analysed the water and concluded that the water was very clear and free of any colorants or odours. The water was a good temperature and it refreshed the body when it was drunk, and he also discovered that the water was oversaturated with gas that consisted out of Oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide. The chemicals that were found in the water included

¹²⁵ G.W.B. Daniell: *The Waters of Caledon: being a paper written for the medical Congress, Cape Town, with additions up to present date*, pp. 12-14, 20.

¹²⁶ J.B. Greenslade: *The Caledon Baths, Ltd, South Africa's spa: the Caledon natural thermal chalybeate, hot mineral springs sanatorium, baths and estate*, p. 3.

“chloride of potassium, chloride of sodium; chloride of lithium; sulphate of sodium; sulphate of magnesium; sulphate of calcium; bicarbonate of calcium and iron; alumina and silica.”¹²⁷

This analysis showed that the thermal water was of a very high quality, and because of the “super-saturation” of the water it was fit for both drinking and bathing. This was an important feature because the water cure dictated that one had to drink of the thermal water as well as bathe in it, and therefore Montagu’s very high quality thermal water was perfect for the healing of ailments that included “rheumatism, chronic gout, paralysis and nervous exhaustion.”¹²⁸

In the early 20th century when there was proclaimed that the mystery curative ingredient that had eluded scientists for years, had been found. This was the chemical radium. This discovery was made by a Dr. Marloth and he used a radioscope. What Dr Marloth discovered was that the water was radio-active and that the water also gave off radio-emanation into the surrounding air. Radio-activity was declared as being the mystery healing element. Dr. Marloth tested both Caledon’s and Montagu’s waters for radium, and mentioned that this new discovery was the reason for the water cure, and that the chemicals in the water had a supplementary function.¹²⁹

When Montagu’s thermal water was tested, it was discovered that the thermal mineral water was radio-active, even more radio-active than the waters that was found at famous European spas like Karlsbad. This meant that the waters of Montagu were even better than some of the spas in Europe, and that South Africans were treated to a superior level of water at Montagu. With close inspection it was found that many of the radio-activity in the Montagu thermal water was lost when kept in the open too long, and it was therefore important that the water had to be used as close to the source as possible when a patient bathed or drank the water. Dr. Hahn proclaimed that he was certain that the curative power of the Montagu waters was due to its high concentration of radio-activity. And so the secret to Montagu’s healing water was

¹²⁷ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 17.

¹²⁸ T. Gooding Field: *Montagu Thermal Springs Sanatorium under new auspices*, reprinted from the Worcester Standard, p. 16.

¹²⁹ A. Wilmot: *The South African Climate: The Best in the World*, pp. 23-25.

revealed, it was the radio-activity in the water that was the source of the water's power.¹³⁰ In the 1938 pamphlet an analysis of the Montagu water was once again given, showing the chemical analysis of the water, and an old report that was done by Dr Marloth, who had since passed on. No mention of the radio-activity was made.¹³¹ In 1944 another analysis of the Montagu thermal water was done and the minerals in the water were once again tested. This test was done at the Analytical, Metallurgical and Research laboratories in Cape Town and the tests were conducted by a Mr. Muller. The analysis of the minerals showed that the water of Montagu was different to those of Caledon because of the chemical composition of the water,¹³² and this was why the two thermal springs fell under different thermal water classifications. Montagu's waters fall in the group known as "indifferent waters" which means that it contains only small amounts of "dissolved carbon dioxide and saline constitutes."¹³³

It seems that most of the pamphlets reprinted older chemical analysis tables as well as testimonies of late doctors who did tests on the waters. In the 1948 Montagu pamphlet it is mentioned that the late Prof Hahn spoke highly of the amount of radio-activity found in the waters. The amount measured was 30.5 Mach units and the chemical analysis table was included.¹³⁴ The radio-activity of the water was also once again tested and the result was that the water was classified as being "moderately strong radio-active water."¹³⁵ In the 1962 promotion pamphlet about Montagu, "its famous baths" are mentioned in the title. Once again a chemical analysis table, radio-activity and the curative aspects of the waters were highlighted.¹³⁶

Caledon also had numerous pamphlets. One that was published in the 1920s does mention the radio-activity that was discovered, the "elusive element" and main factor in the healing properties of the waters was at last revealed. Radio-activity had become the new trend in the thermal water industry and Caledon joined in the new movement. Radium in the water was confirmed by the tests done by Dr Marloth and his radioscope. Radio-activity in the water and the presence of radio-emanation in the air was seen as the reason for the curing of all the

¹³⁰ New Cape Central Railway Limited: *The Garden route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and Intermediate stations, via Worcester, Swellendam, Riversdale, Mossel Bay, George, Oudtshoorn and Klipplaat, Montagu radio-active hot springs*, pp. 15, 17.

¹³¹ *Montagu Baths: Radio-active hot springs and sanatorium*, p. 10.

¹³² Mr. Muller from Analytical, Metallurgical and Research laboratories: *Montagu spa framed source*.

¹³³ M. Rindl: *Medical Springs of South Africa*, p. 16.

¹³⁴ *Montagu, on the highway to health*, p. 12.

¹³⁵ Mr. Muller from Analytical, Metallurgical and Research laboratories: *Montagu spa framed source*.

¹³⁶ *Montagu and its famous baths*, p. 12

patients that had visited the Baths. But radium, which was healing, was not only ingested when the thermal water was drunk from the source, but it was also daily inhaled since it was found in the air around the springs and patients would have breathed this healing air every day. Where the ferrous carbonate was earlier seen as the healing element, it was now seen as assisting the radium in the healing process. Although the chemical analysis that was illustrated on the table produced by Prof Attfield in 1904, this analysis only focused on minerals that were found in large quantities, and not the rarer substances like radium. Dr Marloth discovered the radium in the water so not only did the water have vast amounts of iron, but it was also very radio-active. He noted that the “health-restoring powers of the water are largely due to its radio-activity” and this meant that Caledon was now in the same league as European spas who also had radium water. This information was provided by Dr Marloth in May 1910 and one can therefore trace the start of this new belief in the radium water.¹³⁷ In the 1930s another pamphlet was issued, but it only contained the chemical analysis table done by Prof Attfield. The radio-activity was not mentioned, and the new kind of treatments was fore grounded more.¹³⁸

The Olifants River Baths the water had also been tested. Radio-activity was discovered in these waters which meant that the water had come into contact with strata which had contained radium. But this health giving gas was very fragile and could easily be lost if “agitated.” Radio-activity was found when “radio-active substances manifested its activity by emitting small electrical charged particles and these units were measured in Mach units.” This was done by measuring “the number of units of electricity emitted from one litre of water in an hour.” The Olifants River Baths had 14.8 Mach units, which make it very light in radio-activity. Therefore the water was seen as pure and excellent for drinking. A chemical analysis table was also available and the following chemicals could be found in the Olifants River Bath waters were “Potassium, Sodium; Calcium; Magnesium; Sulphate; Chloride; Alkalinity; Nitrate; Iron and Fluoride”¹³⁹

In conclusion, it is constructive to see how the old water cure developed from being seen as lucrative quackery to a more medical practice and how through the years more scientific legitimacy was given to healing patients with the help of water. The South African bathing

¹³⁷ *The Caledon baths, Caledon, Cape Province: the radio-active thermal chalybeate waters*, pp. 5, 12-13.

¹³⁸ *Natural thermal chalybeate springs: nature's gift of gifts; the natural water cure*, p. 9.

¹³⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 27-28.

culture developed from many of the same elements that could be found in the European spa culture, but the South African thermal spring resorts seemed to have retained its medical focus much longer than the European spas and the medical benefits were of importance for a longer period. As the years passed, many of the thermal mineral water establishments started to mix health and holidays, and the reason for that was because more and more people started to visit the springs with invalids and entertainment was needed. As this entertainment grew, a week at the spa became more of a healthy holiday instead of just a medical treatment. The bathing culture that had developed in South Africa concerning the drinking and bathing treatments was still followed religiously until the holiday resort idea became more prominent and the medical rules became less strict. The medical belief in the waters was passed down from generations, and even though in a diluted form, as late as 1977 visitors like Doctor Danie Craven showed that South Africans still had a medical belief the waters.

The chemical water analysis was the first scientific proof doctors had to say why the waters were curative, but the mystery ingredient was found in the early 1900s, with the discovery of radium and the curative properties of the radio-activity it emanated. The tables explaining the different chemicals were published in pamphlets so that prospective patients could see what curative properties the water contained and it made the water cure seem more legitimate. The South African bathing culture as well as the medical belief in the waters was only mentioned up to the late 1970s because this culture and belief was to change or evolve in the years to come when there was a big change in the health and holiday resorts market. The new bathing culture and the new more modern medical outlook on the water cure will be dealt with in the next chapter, showing how the three thermal springs had to adapt to survive the new tourism industry from the late 1980s onwards.

Chapter Seven:

Old tourism made new: towards a new leisure and wellness industry in South Africa.

South Africa's reputation as a health resort and Mecca for invalids had been established in the early 1800s, as was seen in Chapter 2 when the outbreak of consumption forced many people to leave Britain for the benefit of their health. These people had to stay in South Africa for a certain amount of time, so that they could recover with the help of the South African sun and dry air. These people or invalids as they were called had to stay in hotels or boarding houses, they spend their British money in South African shops, and even sometimes went on trips through South Africa after they had been cured. These 'invalids' could be seen as the first so called 'health tourists' that visited South Africa. As years passed tourism in South Africa became more and more valuable to the country, although the tourism sector was not formalised until the Government realised the benefits tourism had on more than one level. This chapter will briefly look at the way in which the tourism industry in South Africa developed from a rather unimportant sector, to one of the biggest and most important sectors in South Africa. The main focus of this chapter will be on the way the three thermal water spring establishments embraced the new tourism sector that emerged in the 1980s and how these establishments had to adjust and renovate themselves in order to keep surviving in the changing tourism market, which started to include not only domestic but also international tourists.¹ The emergence of the niche known as wellness tourism will also be explained, and finally there will be looked at how, after the emergence of this sector in South Africa in the 2000s, the three thermal water establishments had placed themselves in the tourism market, and how they had evolved in their marketing and amenities to suit the new spa industry that was created with the emergence of the new niche tourism sectors.

A brief look at the development of the Tourist Industry in South Africa

Tourism has been present all over the world since the time of the Greeks where leisure was seen in the same category as knowledge, virtue, pleasure and happiness and these factors

¹ Memorandum van die Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut: *Die uitbouing van Toerisme*, 1969, p. 1.

made up what was known as the “good life.”² The difference between the present day South African tourism industry and the tourism that took place during the 19th and early 20th century in South Africa is that in 1963, with the establishment of the Department of Tourism, it had become an important and regulated sector of the South African economy.³ But this was not always the case in South Africa. Although tourism was an important factor in South Africa since the middle of the 1800s, it was not regulated or publically supervised by the Government. As was seen in the previous chapters, the “tourist image of South Africa” was that of a health resort, and this image was strengthened by the thermal springs that could be found across South Africa, which also served as one of the first tourist attractions. The popularity was derived from the Victorian belief in the taking of the waters and was used by both the inhabitants of the Cape Colony and visiting tourists and military men on their way to India.⁴

The use and development of the thermal springs as tourist attractions in the Cape Colony echoed the development of the tourism industry in Britain where the thermal springs and spas were also some of the first tourist and leisure attractions supported by the rich for its healing waters but also its entertainment value which in later years started to eclipse the health aspect of the spas. The thermal springs in South Africa on the other hand were visited primarily for health, since the entertainment aspect was only later added to the thermal spring establishments.⁵ One can therefore say that a “rudimentary tourism industry” in South Africa was kick-started by the discovery and visitation to the thermal springs in the Cape Colony, which with their development, also helped the tourism industry and tourist attractions develop in South Africa.⁶

The Cape Colony and later the whole of South Africa therefore experienced an influx of invalids after it was classified as a Health Resort in the 1880s and the tourist industry was slowly but surely developing.⁷ Small Karoo towns like Ceres and Matjiesfontein became known as ‘health resorts’ in their own right and were visited for health reasons by invalids as well as “socialites” from Europe.⁸ Because of the influx of tourists and invalids to these

² T.L. Goodale & G.C. Godbey: *The Evolution of Leisure: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives*, p.27.

³ Memorandum van die Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut: *Die uitbouing van Toerisme*, p. 8.

⁴ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p.48.

⁵ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 22.

⁶ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p.49.

⁷ J.S. O’Halloran: Dr. E Symes Thompson in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, pp. 4-5.

⁸ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p.49.

towns, as well as to the rest of the Cape Colony, the need for accommodation as well as sufficient sanitation grew.⁹ But it was not only the influx of tourists and invalids that created the need for hotels and boarding houses in the Cape Colony and South Africa, it was also because of the different kinds of travellers that were travelling to the Cape Colony and South Africa in the late 1800s that included transport drivers, hunters and especially diggers when gold was discovered in 1884. So with this varied amount of travellers and tourists who needed accommodation while they travelled, the early accommodation sector in South Africa was stimulated. With the outbreak of the South African War between the Afrikaners and the British that ranged from 1889 until 1902, one would expect that the young tourist industry would have experienced a negative reaction to the turmoil. The opposite was in fact true, given that with the war, the rest of the world was introduced and made aware of South Africa as a country, which in turn created a new market of tourists travelling to South Africa.¹⁰ This new market was the British citizens who were encouraged by the Government to support their newly conquered Colony after the war.¹¹

One of the founding fathers of mass tourism, package tours as well as the tour operator business was a British man by the name of Thomas Cook.¹² Cook was the first ever travel agent who took advantage of the rising of income for the middle class in Britain, the need to travel and the development in transport and turned it into the business known as a travel organisation. Cook was also the founder of the first tour by rail in 1841.¹³ He wanted to give the middle and poor classes the same chance at travel tourism, but at affordable rates. Cook realised that he could use the new technological innovations of steam trains and ships for this dream, where he could create tours especially for these classes.¹⁴ Travel to foreign countries by package tour was mostly purchased by the middle class, who had more money to spend on tourism.¹⁵ These tours by Cook could be seen as the first steps to what became known as mass tourism in the wider context of the tourism industry itself.¹⁶ With South Africa becoming better known, the tourist agency of “Thomas Cook and Sons” developed the first steamship

⁹ See Chapter 2 for more information Ceres as a health resort. Dr. A. Fuller: *South Africa as a Health Resort with especial reference to the effects of the climate on Consumption Invalids*, p. 60.

¹⁰ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 23, 26.

¹¹ See Chapter 2 for more information on the marketing of South Africa to the British visitor.

¹² J.C. Holloway: *The Business of Tourism*, p. 27.

¹³ H. Keyser: *Tourism Development*, p. 105.

¹⁴ A. Franklin: “Tourism,” in C. Rojek (red.) & S.M. Shaw (red.) & A.J. Veal (red.): *A Handbook of Leisure Studies*, pp. 394-395.

¹⁵ A. Holden: *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, p.28.

¹⁶ J.C. Holloway: *The Business of Tourism*, pp.24-25. & A. Holden: *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, p. 27.

tour from Britain to South Africa in 1900 even though the war was still raging and in effect created this tour for “war tourists” who were not put off by the turmoil taking place in South Africa.¹⁷ This development can be seen as a big stepping stone in the growth of South Africa’s tourist industry, because such a well-known and highly successful travel agency like that of Cook’s were willing to create travel packages for mass tourism to South Africa.

With tourism increasing in South Africa, The South African Railways, who in their own right were already a “major player in the local tourism industry”, decided to create a publicity department in 1906, which operated abroad, promoting South Africa as a tourist destination.¹⁸ London was the first to have such an office, where the Cape Colony was described as a “health resort of Europe” in the hopes of attracting more foreign tourists. Since the Cape Colony and the whole of South Africa belonged to Britain, it was seen as being part of England’s home away from home destinations, and by supporting tourism in South Africa, the British public would in return also be supporting the British economy.¹⁹ The tourist industry in South Africa was indeed growing, and the promotion of it started to become a priority. In 1910 the unification of South Africa made it easier to promote South Africa as a tourist destination abroad, and the government also started to support this initiative by putting aside money for this cause in 1914. Unfortunately the outbreak of the First World War halted these developments, but no time was wasted after the war and in 1919 an “Overseas Advertising conference was held in Johannesburg” where many different parties involved in the promotion of South Africa abroad attended. These included “various government departments, chambers of commerce, public associations and participants in the tourism industry.” The famous Thomas Cook & Sons travel agency as well as the Union-Castle Steamship Company were under those present.²⁰ The promotion of South Africa had now become an important initiative, and at the conference it was made clear that the attraction of tourists was to be the main goal. More tourists would mean more money from abroad would be spent in South Africa, which in turn would boost the economy. As the South African Railways already had an office in London promoting South Africa, this office was turned into the new Public and Travel Bureau which after its establishment launched an enthusiastic “marketing campaign” by publishing new guidebooks and pamphlets concerning South Africa, as well as launching press releases

¹⁷ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p.50. & R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 26.

¹⁸ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 26.

¹⁹ See Chapter 2 for more information.

²⁰ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 28.

promoting the country across Europe in the hope of enticing European tourists to include South Africa in their tours abroad. Transport companies like the cruise ship from Europe and even America were responsible for bringing the tourists to South Africa in the 1920s and 1930s and the South African Railways in turn were promoting tours to the interior of South Africa.²¹ The image of South Africa that started out as that of a health resort was changing and the emphasis that made the country famous shifted away to that of a more developed and “sophisticated travel destination” which offered more than just a healing climate.²²

With the growth in the tourist industry in South Africa the agencies and departments dealing with the tourist sector also grew. After the establishment of the Public and Travel Bureau, who was the main promoter of South African domestically and internationally, in 1938 a new organisation, The Tourism Development Corporation was founded to focus specifically on marketing South Africa internationally. Unfortunately the outbreak of the Second World War halted this development, but as soon as the war was over a new organisation, known as The South African Tourism Corporation (SATOUR) was “established in 1947 with the same goals in mind.”²³ SATOUR was independent from the South African Railways and Harbour’s tourism department, which handled the country’s tourist marketing in the previous years.²⁴ It is instructive to note that the war in fact helped South Africa in their search of new tourists because the world wide exposure it received because of the country’s involvement with the war and because of the many “British airmen arriv[ing] in the country for training.”²⁵ This is a pattern that was seen with the South African War as well, where tourism was in fact stimulated and not deterred by the war efforts. The new and improved tourist image of South Africa was now portrayed as “the land of Sunshine, Sea, Game and Immense Scenery” and the added African ethnic factor that the country had to offer was also a big attraction for tourists.²⁶ In 1948 the Apartheid government took charge of South Africa, which once again directed the attentions of the world on South Africa, and just like the war rather stimulated

²¹ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 28. & F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 50.

²² F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 50.

²³ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 28.

²⁴ A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the “Old” South Africa: Excursions into South Africa’s Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, p. 105.

²⁵ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 51. & A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the “Old” South Africa: Excursions into South Africa’s Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, p. 105.

²⁶ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 51.

than deterred the flow of tourists to South Africa.²⁷ Originally tourism was not high on the priority list of the new government, who was experiencing isolation from abroad, and not much was done to market South Africa to prospective visitors. By the 1950s tourism was still highly domestic and regional, and statistics shows that in 1952 only 17 percent of the tourists visiting South Africa was from abroad. But this was to change in the 1960s which saw the South African economy experience a boom, as well as the stabilising of the country.²⁸

Before aeroplanes became the preferred mode of transport for tourists, cruise ships were used which took more than two weeks to reach their destination. But with the invention of the jet aeroplane²⁹ in the 1960s, South Africa could use this new mode of faster transport to its advantage by attracting more tourists in a shorter time period. But since air travel was still very expensive, it was mostly more affluent tourists who used this mode of transport. With this 'new' kind of tourists visiting South Africa, the infrastructure as well as accommodation and facilities in South Africa had to be improved to reach these higher class tourists' needs.³⁰ The domestic market also benefitted from these improved developments and when the government realised that tourism could help with the country's already booming economy, they started to show much more interest than before. This was seen with the establishment of the new "separate government department of tourism in 1963"³¹ who was put in charge of "formula[ting] polic[ies] and promot[ing] tourist initiatives."³² The expansion of SATOUR was also a step in the right direction as new promotion offices were opened in "Europe, America and Australia."³³ The government, who was now completely in control of the country and who had a thriving economy, could now fully turn their attention to the tourist sector, and especially to tourists from abroad.³⁴ This new government focus was seen in the upgrading of the "local amenities" by the Department of Tourism the "Hotel Board" that was developed in 1965, which in itself was a very good development, since their job was to "improve" local hotels and accommodation so that it would be fit for the new sophisticated tourist market. These improvements included a grading system to which hotels had to comply

²⁷ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 51.

²⁸ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 29.

²⁹ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 29.

³⁰ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 51.

³¹ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 29.

³² A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the "Old" South Africa: Excursions into South Africa's Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, p.106.

³³ R. George (ed.): *Managing tourism in South Africa*, p. 29.

³⁴ A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the "Old" South Africa: Excursions into South Africa's Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, p.106.

which ranged from a one star hotel, to a five star hotel. Hotels and accommodation was now standardised across the country, and the hotels therefore had to abide to the new and improved standards and rules regarding the hotel and accommodation industry. With the new and improved accommodation that could be found in South Africa the country's reputation as a tourist destination was improved and the needs of the "higher class hotel" visiting overseas tourist was satisfied.³⁵

Although the tourist industry was showing growth, it was in fact not completely "exploited" by the Apartheid government, who felt that focussing on the "high-income tourist" would be much more beneficial for the country economically, and therefore did not support the promotion of South Africa to the mass tourism market. The government wanted a certain kind of tourist to visit South Africa, and for that reason the marketing of South Africa was done in a very specific way, by "carefully compiled direct mailing lists" of people from abroad who were high on the "socio-economic" ladder. The motivation for this tourist policy was because the government did not want the country's tourist attractions to be overrun by masses of "poor" tourists who could not afford to add to the county's economic growth. The government also believed that, according to "Theo Behrens, Secretary of Tourism from 1973 to 1981" these wealthier tourists would accept the country's political situation more easily and on their return home would influence the correct sort of tourists the government wanted for South Africa.³⁶

But this selective process followed by the government was not necessarily a good business venture since the lower ranged hotels needed the mass tourism tourists to visit their hotels and when tourism started to become a "status export" in the 1970s³⁷ the government had to change their idea about the 'sort' of tourists they wanted for South Africa. When Owen Horwood was appointed as Minister of Tourism in 1973 he declared that the government would deal with tourism in a new way, which was more business orientated. This could be because the government realised that tourism would bring in valuable foreign revenue. Tourism therefore had had a transformation in South Africa where it had become a business which had to be run in a business orientated manner. As with the wars, one would think that because of the Apartheid policies and laws in South Africa tourists would not want to visit the country, but

³⁵ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 59.

³⁶ A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the "Old" South Africa: Excursions into South Africa's Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, pp. 106-107.

³⁷ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 64.

once again, there was not too much of deterrence in the flow of tourists to the country. This could be because it was still easy up to the middle 1970s to rather focus the tourist's eyes on the "wildlife, sunshine, beaches and mountains" and not mention Apartheid at all. There was in fact a steady increase in the amount of tourists to South Africa in the years between 1965 and 1970. By the mid-1970s the foreign tourists visiting South Africa had grown steadily and SATOUR had even branched out to countries like "Paris, Rome, Frankfurt and Amsterdam" showing that the foreign visitors market South Africa had had expanded since SATOUR's establishment and this was a positive outlook for the tourist industry in South Africa.³⁸

Unfortunately it became increasingly difficult to keep the eyes of the world on South Africa's natural wonders, and off the rising conflict caused by the Apartheid laws. Before the mid-1970s apartheid and tourism was able to exist "in the same space" but this blissful existence was to end in 1976 after the Soweto revolt where school children revolted against being taught in Afrikaans, and the violence that ensued "spilled over into other parts of the country. These incidents turned the spotlight away from South Africa's natural mystic beauty, to the dark ugly reality of what was happening in the country itself. The "publicity" the country received from then on would be devastating to the tourism industry because South Africa was all of a sudden branded as being dangerous, a facet that was seen very negatively in tourism circles. This was seen in the "27 percent drop" in the number of foreign tourists and the Department of Tourism had to take action to try and curb the negative press South Africa was experiencing so that the tourism market would not suffer more losses. Although tourism did rise in 1978 from the slump it took in 1976, it was not near the booming figures of the 1960s. The unrest in the country after the Soweto uprisings in the 1980s only grew worse, especially in the volatile 1986 when a "state of emergency was announced" which again caused a drop in the tourist numbers which were slow to pick up.³⁹ But since the tourist image of South Africa was tainted, the "tourism officials had to rethink their tourist strategies. Tourists now had to become ambassadors of South Africa, telling the real story abroad, and therefore the officials tried during the 1980s to create a "positive image of the country" to curb the critical media exposure it endured. Through these efforts it was possible for the tourist industry to

³⁸ A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the "Old" South Africa: Excursions into South Africa's Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, pp. 107, 112.

³⁹ A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the "Old" South Africa: Excursions into South Africa's Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, pp. 113-114.

survive the turbulent last years of Apartheid by producing a “relative steady flow of tourists from abroad.”⁴⁰

Domestically South Africa’s tourism after the 1970s was focussed on the Kruger National Park and tourism to the “so-called home lands” where casinos and hotel resorts became very popular and was almost seen as “forbidden fruit,” since at these resorts actions that were illegal like gambling and prostitution was allowed. Domestic tourism in South Africa was largely dependent on the “white tourism market.” Because of the Apartheid laws other than visiting friends and family the black tourist market was almost nonexistent. Discriminating laws such as “The Group Areas Act and the Separate Amenities act” was responsible for the exclusion of black people from “certain hotels and beaches.” The government wanted the domestic mass tourism market, which consisted out of the “white lower-middle classes” to grow and expand, and therefore rather focused on developing resorts for these tourists, such as the “Aventura spa destinations” and the focus on “domestic black tourism” was mainly centred around the homelands.⁴¹

The domestic tourist promotion was therefore largely structured for the white middle classes, and one of the most important tourist destinations for this group was seen as the holiday resorts that could be found across South Africa. There were many different studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s to see what kind of activities and accommodation was popular under both international and domestic tourists in South Africa. In the “Memorandum van Die Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut” that was published in 1969 there was looked at “the development of tourism” domestically and internationally. In this memorandum there was a large focus on the fact that international tourism was built on the foundations of domestic tourism, and therefore the domestic tourism had to have strong foundations so that it would be able to carry and support international tourism.⁴² In the study done by F.F Ferrario in *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa* he looked at the different categories of attractions that could be found in South Africa by analysing guidebooks and pamphlets found in the 1970s regarding South African tourist destination. These categories could include numerous different attractions under each category, and through analysing some of the

⁴⁰ A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the “Old” South Africa: Excursions into South Africa’s Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, pp. 115, 117.

⁴¹ A. Grundlingh: Revisiting the “Old” South Africa: Excursions into South Africa’s Tourist History under Apartheid, 1948-1990, *South African Historical Journal*, No.56, 2006, pp. 117-118.

⁴² Die uitbouing van Toerisme: *Memorandum van Die Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut*, 1969, pp. 1-2.

country's most famous tourist attractions was easily spotted, which were "traditionally" associated with South Africa like the "wildlife, African folklore, natural vegetation and Bushman paintings." In the end Ferrario established 22 categories into which South Africa's numerous tourist attractions could be dealt. As was seen in Chapter 2, the thermal springs in the Cape Colony had been a constant entry in the late 1800 and the 1900 guidebooks. This was still the case in the 1970s since "Spa Resorts" received a category of their own, since "it did not conveniently fit into any other."⁴³ Therefore the thermal mineral springs had their own category, but there was also a category which dealt with "scenery and landscape" where natural springs were included and another category named "open air activities" under which fell "bathing pools."⁴⁴ One can therefore see that slotting thermal mineral springs into only one category was rather difficult. One must also remember that underdeveloped thermal of natural springs might have been seen as being something different from a thermal spring resort like that found at Montagu, and it might explain the distinction.

The survey Ferrario conducted was to see what attractions in South Africa appealed to most foreign tourists visiting the country. The top three categories were those of "Scenery and Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Vegetation" which traditionally was part of South Africa's tourist image abroad. Spa Resorts on the other hand was founded at the bottom of the list with the lowest percentage of tourists interested in this category.⁴⁵ An explanation for this low rating could be that the thermal springs in South Africa, once so loved by tourists visiting South Africa as a health resort in the 1800s and early 1900s, was not as high priority for the foreign tourists visiting South Africa in the 1970s. This could be because South Africa's tourist image had changed from one of a health resort, to that of a more diverse country where the wildlife and African traditions were pushed to the forefront of the marketing of the country abroad. It could also be that the spa or thermal water resorts were more focussed on the domestic than the international market. This is an interesting question that will be looked at as the chapter continues to look at how as the three resorts in Montagu, Caledon and Citrusdal developed, they also developed a focus group that they specifically marketed their resort to.

⁴³ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, p. 82.

⁴⁴ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, pp. 82, 89, 94.

⁴⁵ F.F. Ferrario: *An Evaluation of the Tourist Resources of South Africa*, pp. 80, 164.

After looking briefly at the development of tourism as an industry in South Africa, one realise that tourism has been present in the country since its early years as a Dutch and British colony, and that the tourism industry in South Africa had developed because of the natural beauty and resources that were present in the country. The role of the thermal mineral springs in the introduction of tourists to South Africa had also become clear once again, as it was the first attraction to draw people both domestically and from abroad to the country. But as the years passed, their glamour and allure seems to have faded because of other attractions which with the changing international tourist industry started to overshadow it. By the 1970s the spas were at the bottom of the list for visiting foreign tourists. The question that remains is how the thermal mineral spring resorts faired domestically from the 1980s and 1990s, when a new shift to old time relaxation was rediscovered.

The creation of Niche tourism: Wellness tourism is reborn

Tourism has been seen as a method of getting away from one's normal daily activities so that one could "relax and increase one's wellbeing."⁴⁶ It is difficult to determine when exactly the "trend towards wellness in tourism" started, although there are many sources according to P. Erfurt-Cooper and M Cooper who "suggests that spa and wellness holidays have been around for hundreds if not thousands of years."⁴⁷ Tourism for health reasons was one of the first motives for travelling to different destinations.⁴⁸ Visiting spas for one's health was very fashionable, especially in many parts of Europe and as was seen in South Africa, the thermal mineral water spas and resorts were one of the first tourist attractions that kick started "local tourism" when taking the waters became a popular health and recreational pastime in the 1700s. As was mentioned in Chapter one, many European countries who had colonies in the 1800s, which includes South Africa, had "hill stations" or as was seen in Chapter two thermal mineral springs that they used for the benefit of their health. This contributed to the idea that travelling to distant "therapeutic" destination was good for one's health and could be called 'health tourism.' This phenomenon has been present in tourism for an extended period of time. Spa or thermal mineral water tourism can be seen as being a very old practice indeed. One thing to remember is that even though travelling to spas was done for the benefit of one's

⁴⁶ J. Connel: "Medical Tourism: Sea, sun, sand and... surgery," *Tourism Management*, Vol. 27, 2006, p.1093.

⁴⁷ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p.1.

⁴⁸ See Chapter One and Two on the emergence of health as a tourist attraction.

health, it was mostly through treatments such as water bathing or massaging, and not medical or surgical procedures.⁴⁹

The reason for noting this distinction is because in the “last decade and primarily in the present 21st century” there has been a shift in the idea of exactly what health tourism is. The reason for this is because new facets have been added to this age old term. One can no longer speak about health tourism as a “passive theme in tourism,” it is not something that is included in the overall experience of a holiday anymore, but instead have taken a much more “active” role in the tourism sector. This can be seen in the fact that different kinds of health tourism has become available, niches that have formed stemming from the overall idea of health tourism. It is important to know the difference between the new terms associated with the new niche tourism. Two of the new health tourism sectors that have developed are known as medical and the other as wellness tourism. One has to distinguish between the two sectors because although both deal with receiving ‘health’ through tourism, it is done in different ways.⁵⁰ The reason for looking at this new form of niche tourism is because it revived the thermal water spring resorts as tourist destination, which had been declining after its glory years in the early 1900s. The “term health tourism” was defined by the IUTO in 1973 as “the provision of health facilities utilizing the natural resources of the country, in particular mineral water and climate.” This description of health tourism would have fitted South Africa in the 1800 and 1900s, where both the climate and the healing water was utilised by tourists, and shows that health tourism had by that time already made its appearance in South Africa, although it was not yet named as such. There was however a distinction made in German literature between different kinds of tourists where one kind wanted to be cured from a certain illness, where the other kind wanted to prevent or recover from illness. “Traditionally mineral water and climate” was used for those searching for health, but as the tourism sector as well as the medical sector developed, different kinds of procedures were becoming part of health tourism.⁵¹

Thermal mineral water or spas, which had been part of the tourist scene since the very beginning, was used differently in different countries and the distinction was beginning to show with the development of the health tourism industry. The spa tourism that was known in

⁴⁹ J. Connel: “Medical Tourism: Sea, sun, sand and... surgery,” *Tourism Management*, Vol. 27, 2006, pp.1093-1094.

⁵⁰ J. Connel: “Medical Tourism: Sea, sun, sand and... surgery,” *Tourism Management*, Vol. 27, 2006, p.1094.

⁵¹ M. Smith & L. Puczko: *Health and wellness tourism*, pp. 3-5.

Europe was the “historic thermal spa” therapies which included hydrotherapy which was different to the “spiritual” spas found in Asia and the new more modern American spa tourism which includes cosmetic surgery. There was also a shift in the health and wellness industry towards a more active role, where instead of wellness and relaxation being part of the holiday experience, it has become the reason for the tourist activity. The idea of escapism can be seen here, where one travels to escape the everyday routine for the benefit of one’s health.⁵² Since there is such a vast amount of different terms connected to health tourism and its different sectors, it is important to define each sector so that the difference of each can be fully understood.

Terms and definitions concerning the spa and wellness industry

The term *spa* which originated in the Belgium town of Spa in the “14th century AD,” was usually associated with thermal waters and health resorts. But as years passed and the health resort industry developed, the word has been used for health resorts, irrespective of if they contained thermal mineral water facilities or not. This new broader definition of the term actually shows how the health resort industry had changed from at first only including thermal mineral water treatment to the more modern application of cosmetic treatments as well. The use of thermal mineral springs also differs from country to country. As was seen in the first chapter, the European use of mineral thermal waters was with the focus on healing the visitor or patient to the spa, and health plays a very big role. In Japan the use of the water was a more social event, where people enjoyed bathing together which ranged from family members to even businessmen, using the spa or *Onsen*, as a form of “corporate stress relief.” The most recent development in the spa and wellness industry is the more cosmetic driven spa, where one receives cosmetic treatments as well as water treatments, but these treatments are not done in natural thermal water, which was one of the prerequisites for spas before the revival of the spa industry.⁵³

Wellness as a term seems to have its “origin in a natural and holistic approach to health include[ing] the use of water and the minerals within it to provide cures for various human ailments.” This would therefore include thermal mineral waters and spas. But with the

⁵² M. Smith & L. Puczkó: *Health and wellness tourism*, pp.6-7, 9.

⁵³ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p.2.

“revived wellness concept” that took place in the “19th to 21st century” the focus had shifted from not only using these elements to prevent and cure illness, but also including “health promotion and education” as well as having a more “holistic approach” so that not only the body, but also the mind would be treated so that both would be in harmony with each other.⁵⁴

Wellness’s definition can be narrowed down to be understood as being an “approach” one takes when it comes to one’s health and lifestyle where one “actively” takes care to “prevent illness” and to “actively promote a state of wellbeing.” This definition therefore shows why thermal springs and spas fall under the field known as “Health and Wellness Spa Tourism,” since by visiting these resorts the visitor, or patient, takes the prevention of illness into their own hands, and uses the thermal mineral water as a form of prevention and a method of obtaining a better state of wellbeing. This form of tourism is therefore unique, and differs from other forms of tourism.⁵⁵

Wellness tourism offers more to the tourist, and one of the biggest “motivations” for engaging in any tourism activity is the promise of “escape.” By travelling to a tourism destination, one can escape one’s everyday life and experience something new. It is this freedom that gave rise to a form of tourism, where one could combine the feeling of escaping with the need to either “maintain or recapture personal wellbeing.” This was how the health and wellness tourism niche was formed and defined. Once again the thermal mineral waters and spa industry fits very well into the definition of what kind of tourism is favoured by health and wellness tourists.⁵⁶

Health and Wellness tourism has three sectors that differ from one another, but in which thermal mineral water and spas can both play a role in. It is the function of these elements that differ, and therefore influence the importance it has in each sector. The first is Health tourism, which is defined as “any kind of travel to make yourself or a member of your family healthier.” It is not clear though when health tourism was first introduced since there are no “written records.” Not only has the health tourism sector been revived, it has also undergone renewal and expansion and this is seen in the way “health tourism is emphatically medicalised

⁵⁴ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁵ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁶ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p.6.

with spa therapy or *thermalisme* in France and Germany, where in France medical spa treatments are still being covered by the national health system.”⁵⁷

With the focus of wellness tourism shifting to a more modern approach, “historic thermal spas had to update their facilities to include the new direction the thermal spa industry as well as the wellness industry was heading.” This is also the focus of this chapter, since it will try to show how the historic South African thermal spas of Montagu, Caledon and Citrusdal had to adjust and evolve within the changing in the tourism sector. Upgraded hotels and new treatments had to be introduced which included the different thermal bathing treatments like hydrotherapy, massages; beauty treatments and even “specific cures like slimming cures.” With the new and modern approach “health and wellness spa tourism” ended up including both the “medical and wellness side of treatments.” Thermal mineral waters and spas can be used by both the health and wellness tourism sectors and can therefore be used traditionally “with taking the waters.”⁵⁸

Another problem concerning the place of thermal mineral water and spas in the Health and Wellness tourism industry is the question about the quality of the water that is used in the resorts. The reason for this being that originally with the advent of the taking the cure, thermal spas were known for using natural thermal mineral water in their baths and treatments. Thermal mineral water is defined as being derived from a natural hot or mineral spring which is usually found near volcanic environments. The health spa resort focus shifted to prevent one from getting ill and helping one to live a better and healthier life. A more holistic approach emerged, where body, mind and soul was treated with “new-age treatments as well as the more traditional water-based therapies.” The most important element for health and wellness facilities is the water present. Water plays a very big role in the holistic approach being taken by the new resorts and its place can range from being the key focus of the facility like hydrotherapy, to being part of the natural surroundings like a lake or spring, or the decor like pools and fountains. With the holistic approach, most spas and thermal mineral spring resorts have tried to mimic the natural environment, so that one feels closer to nature while using the water treatments at the facility.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁸ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp.8-9.

⁵⁹ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 9-10, 12.

This shows that the age old tradition of thermal water bathing was “granted a new lease on life” after the wellness industry was revived in the tourism sector. Thermal mineral spring bathing is one of the main components of this new holistic movement which has become a lifestyle and which has gained a large sum of followers over the years.⁶⁰ Holism can be defined as indicating the mind, body and spirit connection that needs to be in harmony for the chance of obtaining “optimum wellness.” Together with the holism movement, there was another health and wellness movement that evolved, the New Age movement, where the followers of this movement were open to new and alternative “experiences.” The New Age movement was established in the 1960s in England, and by the 1970s it had drawn many followers to its cause, and is because of the time period this movement is many times connected with the Baby Boomers group. Activities that New Age tourists enjoy include Homeopathy, Aromatherapy and visiting Spas.⁶¹

The Baby Boomers can broadly be defined as being the generation who was born after the Second World War, and this rather large generation was reaching their “retirement age with a different set of values and ideas about health and healing.”⁶² It was this Baby Boomer generation that was responsible for the revival of the thermal mineral spring and spa resort industry, through their support of the new way people across the world started to think about wellness and fitness. It was no longer only necessary for only young people to look after their health, instead a new “ideology” was established to be followed by people regardless to their age or income.⁶³ This new ideology consisted out of being aware of one’s own “wellbeing” and the reason why the baby boomer generation supported this movement was because they were reaching middle age. They started actively to engage in looking after their personal health, and the fitness industry was hit with this wave of customers wanting to be fit and healthy. With this conscious movement of the baby boomers the *Wellness Movement* was established in the 1980s and 1990s. This movement consisted out of followers taking their health in their own hands by visiting “health resorts and spas” where therapies were rather preventative than curative. A new era in Wellness management came into being where instead of looking for a cure, people started to prevent an ailment from arising. It was in the search for this prevention, that the thermal mineral spring resorts, formerly used to treat disease, were revived and was now being used to prevent it. The new trend of visiting spas and health

⁶⁰ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 21.

⁶¹ M. Smith & L. Puczko: *Health and wellness tourism*, pp. 50, 52, 53.

⁶² “Break away to places that heal,” *Business Day*, 3 September 2008, p. 1.

⁶³ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 25.

resorts, some including thermal mineral water springs while others did not, was growing in the 1990s. This generation was looking for ways to escape, “escape their stress filled work environments and pressures they experienced in their family lives.”⁶⁴

Stress was the new illness to cure.⁶⁵ Others wanted to enjoy their retirement in a healthy way, and therefore had no problem with going to their favourite spa or thermal mineral water resort to go and relax and with that “achieving” the stress free health retreat they wanted. Because of this, some people would stay for long periods of time at these “health and wellness spa and hot spring resorts” and this is why the new and improved wellness and spa spring resorts included features like golf courses and beauty parlours. The whole health and wellness industry was fitting itself to accommodate these kinds of clients, who were in their “late 30s to mid-50s and who were Active Health Seekers.” The Baby Boomer generation became the target market of the health and wellness industry.⁶⁶ This generation of baby boomers were also the wealthiest, and because of the fact that people were living longer after they had retired, a new tourist market was developing that focused more on health and wellness. But it was not only the baby boomer generation which started to favour the health and wellness industry, the younger generations following them had also started to form part of the health and wellness tourist sector.⁶⁷

This new trend in Wellness meant that the old historic spas were “modernised and redeveloped” so that they could fit into the new mould of a 21st century health resort. Facilities were added to help with this ‘face lift’ of the spas, long been forgotten by many. The new “wellness boom” the world experienced was a blessing to many thermal and cold water mineral springs, which had lost their support of clientele as the years passed. As the new wellness phenomenon grew, the variations of spas and what they offered also grew. The classification of these different kinds of spas made by P. Erfurt-Cooper and M. Cooper in their book *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, brings the total to about 49 different variations on the age old thermal mineral water spring spa resort. Instead of just being a spa where thermal or cold mineral water was used as treatments, new ventures like “Adventure spas” where one could partake in some outdoor activities and relax in a thermal

⁶⁴ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 25, 42.

⁶⁵ M. Smith & L. Puczkó: *Health and wellness tourism*, p. 61.

⁶⁶ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 42. & M. Smith & L. Puczkó: *Health and wellness tourism*, p. 141.

⁶⁷ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 171.

spring, or Casino spas, where both a casino and “luxurious” spa were combined, or Holistic spas where treatments like homeopathy and hydrotherapy are offered came into the industry. The traditional “hot spring spas” also still had their place, where they continued to offer their curative waters to patients who needed it. The idea of a spa had changed though, and it did not necessarily mean that the facility which called itself a spa had a thermal mineral spring. Spa had become more of a word describing luxurious cosmetic and beauty treatment facilities, than necessarily a health resort with natural thermal mineral water.⁶⁸

According to the International Spa Association research in 2007 women were still the biggest supporters of health and wellness tourism, but it does show that men are also becoming interested in visiting facilities like spas which offer wellness and health treatments. The “average” age of spa visitors are said to be in their mid-30s to early 40s and the main reason these people are visiting spas is to “relax and relieve stress.” This is interesting, because the original reasons for visiting thermal mineral water springs were to cure illnesses experienced by people living all over the world, like gout and rheumatism. The new global ‘illness’ is that of stress, and once again people turn to the thermal mineral water in the search of relief of this ailment. The treatments that are very popular at the more modern spa are “facials, saunas and massages” but these spas do not necessarily have any thermal mineral water facilities or treatments. The health and wellness spa industry has become a “household name” and the industry has become the leader in the Leisure industry.⁶⁹

Now that one has looked at the growth of tourism in South Africa, as well as the revival and evolving that took place in the health and wellness industry, which includes health and wellness tourism and their three sectors, there will now be looked at how this changing environment affected the way in which the three thermal mineral spring resorts had to adapt and change to fit into the new thermal water and spa resort industry that emerged in South Africa since the 1980s onwards.

⁶⁸ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, pp. 33, 35-37.

⁶⁹ P. Erfurt-Cooper & M. Cooper: *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, p. 168.

The revival and rebirth of the Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal thermal mineral water resorts

The growth and development of these three different establishments will be discussed as well as their ability to overcome tragedies like in the case of Caledon and Montagu, or the changing of generations, as in the case of Citrusdal. Each of the resorts had their own disruptions and challenges to deal with within the political climate of the Apartheid regime. One will therefore look at how the three different thermal spring establishments recovered from their setbacks and how they adapted and changed to conform to the new tourism environment that was emerging in South Africa after the 1980s.

As was seen previously, in 1981 the thermal spring hill was at last seeing some developments taking place with the swimming pool that was repaired and accommodation in form of “rondawels” were built.⁷⁰ The development of the thermal spring hill once again became silent, but by 1984 rumours spread that an international company was interested in developing a very expensive holiday resort. In 1985 three different potential developments were said to be in the pipeline. The first was a developer who wanted to not only buy private land to add to the thermal spring hill land, the developer also wanted to demolish the historic bath and the facilities that was there presently in 1985. He wanted to build new buildings and add tennis, golf and “rolbal” courts. It is a blessing that this development did not materialise, since the historic value the thermal mineral springs would have been lost. Another developer wanted to create a health resort, which would have resembled the resort one could find at Goudini, and the third developer wanted to use the thermal spring land, which included the healing thermal water, for a retirement home complex where the elderly could use the curative waters. Even in 1987 there were still rumours of a so-called developer who had wanted to create a hospital and retirement town on the thermal spring hill. As before, the rumours stayed rumours and none of the big dream Spas or holiday resorts that were promised to the Caledon community for approximately thirty five years ever materialised.⁷¹

⁷⁰ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.135.

⁷¹ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.135-136.

A phoenix⁷² reborn: The revival of the Caledon Spa

By this time the Caledon Community was tired of waiting for the once famous Spa to be rebuilt or redeveloped. Therefore a local businessman, Mr Jan du Plessis, decided to start a “project that was known as the *Overberg Spa, Edms. Bpk.*” This project, which included a hotel and a spa, was financed by “*Volkskas Bank Beperk*” and a further seventy seven local shareholders who contributed five and a half million rand to the project.” The company was formed by Mr du Plessis, who had bought twenty-one hectares of the thermal spring bath grounds. J D Maresch was the architect hired for the project, while the contractors who were responsible for the building of the buildings were “LTA Building (Cape),” with the electricity being done by “J M Bardenhorst” and the “CIW Pty Ltd” company was responsible for the water plant at the spa and hotel. After all the negative reaction the manganese prospecting project had caused, and after it came to light in 1989 that there was to be a real new development at the thermal spring hill, the mayor declared that the prospecting lease was cancelled, and the thermal spring hill and grounds were saved from being lost to the Caledon community.⁷³ According to the report in *Die Burger* the project was a combined effort from the Caledon municipality and local businessmen where the capital for the project was provided by Caledon and other businessmen, while there were also shares available to the public so that those who wished could take part in financing a part of Caledon’s historical tourist attractions.⁷⁴ But the real “local hero” of the whole development of the once famous Caledon Spa was unmistakably “Oom Jan du Plessis.”⁷⁵ In an article, appropriately named “Oom Jan’s Cure for Caledon,” it is described how it was Oom Jan that in fact saved or one could even say cured the town of its financial crises. The reason for this is because it was Oom Jan’s brainchild of reinstating the curing thermal waters of the Caledon hot spring to bring in the money as it had in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

The new spa development, that was to be known as the “Overberg Spa,” was what the town had been yearning for, and hoped that the new spa would become the new tourist attraction to the town, just as its predecessor was in the early 1900s. Tourism is very important for small towns and after the loss of the Caledon Spa in 1946, the tourism industry in the town “came to

⁷² “Oom Jan’s Cure for Caledon,” *Sunday Times Magazine*, 26 August 1990, p. 44.

⁷³ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, pp.135-136.

⁷⁴ “Caledon-spa sal duisende na Overberg lok,” *Die Burger*, 1 Junie 1989, p. 3

⁷⁵ “Oom Jan’s Cure for Caledon,” *Sunday Times Magazine*, 26 August 1990, p. 44.

a standstill”⁷⁶ because there were no more attractions available to draw big crowds of people. Although the town was named as the “main town of the Overberg” region approximately three months prior to the newspaper article, the fact that the famous Caledon thermal spring water spa would be reopened would have done the town wonders, since studies had shown that by having the Spa rebuilt together with the Nature Garden Caledon could boast with, tourism would have been stimulated immensely. The development of the thermal mineral springs into a resort would turn the once “*boeregemeenskap*” back into a tourist town and since the water from the springs were hot, it would mean that the town could expect tourists all year round, even in the winter. Dr. Theuns Oberholzer, who was the mayor of Caledon in 1989, also mentioned that with this new tourist attraction, the businesses in town would have to change to accommodate the new rise in tourists visiting the town. The amount of tourists that was estimated to visit the town after the completion of the Overberg Spa was about 30 000 in the first year of operation, and if the amount of day visitors were added, the figure jumped up to 100 000. As one saw earlier, the ‘resurrection’ of the old famous Caledon Spa in the end became a community driven project, and the people from the town were the ones who took matters into their own hands in order to save the spring hill and its thermal waters for future generations. The project was funded by the whole district and Dr. Oberholzer also mentioned that the marketing for the new Overberg Spa would also be done throughout the whole district. It was clear that the thermal mineral springs had not been forgotten by the townspeople of Caledon or the surrounding district, and with the resurrection of the spa it would not only bring to life a promise the community had been waiting for since the 1950s, but it would also bring economic prosperity to the district.⁷⁷

The cost to develop the Overberg Spa was said to be R15 million, and it would include a hotel with a 100 rooms, as well as the spa. The developers of the Overberg Spa, Plan Trust Development would make sure that the thermal mineral spring and its baths stayed as the focus point of the whole project, while the three star hotel that was to be build would also function as a “starting point from where visitors could travel to see the other attractions the Overberg had to offer.”⁷⁸ The new development was to be built on the exact same land as where the former famous Caledon Spa first stood, and besides a hotel, which was to be built in a Victorian style, an “à la carte restaurant, a bar, shop, braai places and a children’s

⁷⁶ “Caledon-spa sal duisende na Overberg lok,” *Die Burger*, 1 Junie 1989, p. 3

⁷⁷ “Caledon-spa sal duisende na Overberg lok,” *Die Burger*, 1 Junie 1989, p. 3

⁷⁸ “Caledon-spa sal duisende na Overberg lok,” *Die Burger*, 1 Junie 1989, p. 3

playground”⁷⁹ would also be available to the guests. This new development could be seen as a more modern take on the old Caledon Spa, which rather catered for people who were in need of medical attention through recreational activities. The Overberg Spa had a more family resort focus, and families could visit the thermal springs as well. The new Overberg Spa was said to receive “international status” which meant that the facilities would be of a very high standard, but even more surprising was the fact that the report clearly states that the Spa would also “be accessible to all race groups.” This is a very significant statement, since South Africa was still an Apartheid state, which meant race still played a large role in the way the country operated. But one can assume that since the Spa would be held to international standards, the excluding of tourists based on their race would not have been possible.⁸⁰

The thermal mineral spring, which would act as the focus point of the whole development would have been utilised in indoor and outdoor baths. But to keep to the more modern day feeling of the resort a “splash pool, Jacuzzis, saunas, steam rooms, gymnasium, massage parlour and skin and beauty salon” would be available. This change was in line with the new definition of a “spa” which was started to emerge in the 1990s. Therefore with the revival of the Caledon thermal springs, not only would the towns people and tourists able to use the healing chalybeate waters again, but the resort was modern, which meant it would satisfy the new modern tourist market.⁸¹

With the rebuilding of the thermal mineral spring resort, tourism to not only Caledon, but also the district was sure to increase, and for this reason Caledon and the planned Overberg Spa resort became the new big thing. When the news of the redevelopment of the thermal spring hill came, all eyes were on Caledon. A plan was put into place by the town council, who must have realised the economic benefits the new tourist industry could offer. This development tied in nicely with the honour Caledon had received a few months before the start of the project when it was named the “main town” in the Overberg because of its placement in the district, from where it helped nearby farming towns with administration and financial services in the agricultural sector. Caledon therefore seemed to be in a favourable position to be turned into the “tourist mecca” the town council wanted, which reminds one of the plans there was for Caledon to become the “Bath” of South Africa. It seems that the dream of turning the spa

⁷⁹ “Caledon-spa sal duisende na Overberg lok,” *Die Burger*, 1 Junie 1989, p. 3

⁸⁰ “Caledon-spa sal duisende na Overberg lok,” *Die Burger*, 1 Junie 1989, p. 3

⁸¹ “Caledon-spa sal duisende na Overberg lok,” *Die Burger*, 1 Junie 1989, p. 3

and its grounds into a world famous resort was once again back on track. The town council had sold the 18 hectares of thermal spring land to the Overberg Spa, and the hotel was said to be completed in 1990.⁸² The new tourism sector that was developing in Caledon spurred on other means of attracting tourists to the town, as could be seen in the efforts of the town council who had decided to start a “advertising association” which would worked with the South African tourism council to create a plan of how Caledon’s tourism attractions and industry could be promoted to become bigger and better.⁸³

Tourism was the new commodity in the district and it seems that the town council of Caledon was making sure that the town did not miss any opportunity to attract visitors and used the Overberg Spa as one of the main attractions.⁸⁴ This idea was also remarked on in an article that was published in the *Finansies en Tegniek* where it was said that the community of Caledon realised that “in the future tourism [would] become an important source of income” and that through the work of the Caledon community “one of the country’s oldest tourism attractions could be restored.”⁸⁵

Rising like a phoenix from the ashes of the historic Sanatorium and Spa, the new “De Overberger Hotel” was opened on 22 September 1990.⁸⁶ The hotel had a 100 Rooms and cost R17 million to develop. As was promised the thermal mineral spring baths still had a major role to play in the new tourist attraction, and what made the bathing experience even more authentic was the fact that the old Victorian styled bath had been restored to its former glory, which meant that the visitors to this bath could experience a bit of history as they soaked away in the warm chalybeate water that came direct from the thermal spring. There was also a “gazebo spa” that was found next to the “heated swimming pool.”⁸⁷ The hotel had embraced the new wellness tourism aspect that was beginning to form in the 1990s in South Africa, by also offering the guests at the hotel “health-orientated” services like a “gymnasium, massages, aromatherapy [as well as] beauty treatments. Outdoor sports like golf and tennis and even bowls were also to the tourists’ disposal.”⁸⁸ So with this new development came the revival of the once glorious Caledon Spa. Even though the new hotel and spa was not near the

⁸² “Caledon word toeriste-mekka van Overberg,” *Die Transvaler*, 31 August 1989, p. 9.

⁸³ “Municipaliteit lewer groot bydrae tot Caledon-fees,” *Die Burger*, 5 Oktober 1989, p. 18.

⁸⁴ “Municipaliteit lewer groot bydrae tot Caledon-fees,” *Die Burger*, 5 Oktober 1989, p. 18.

⁸⁵ “Caledon se nuwe mineraalbad-oord,” *Finansies & Tegniek*, 5 Oktober 1990, Vol. 44/39, p. 46.

⁸⁶ M. Brand: *Het Warme Bad*, p.136.

⁸⁷ “New Hotel in Caledon,” *Getaway*, (Vol. 2), (Nr. 6), September 1990, p. 137.

⁸⁸ “New Hotel in Caledon,” *Getaway*, (Vol. 2), (Nr. 6), September 1990, p. 138.

magnificent of the world famous Caledon Spa, it was a step in the right direction in the preservation of the celebrated historical thermal chalybeate waters of Caledon. It took the community forty years to be able to enjoy the thermal water baths as they were meant to be, but what is even more astonishing is how the thermal mineral springs was in fact the saviour of the town they had developed around them. The reason for this was that the district had been suffering from drought, and because the town was an agricultural based town, this meant that it was suffering financially. But with the opening of the new hotel and the spa on the old Bath grounds, the new tourism sector was to be the new monetary injection the town needed. By combining the agricultural and the tourism market, and investing in tourism, Caledon was on its way to once again become a tourist rich town as it was in the glory days of the Caledon Spa.⁸⁹

It seems that the hotel did well until it was liquidated in 1993, and was said to have been closed for a few years.⁹⁰ But in 1996 there was new legislation passed concerning casino licences and with this in mind there were “proposals” that called for the “redeveloping of the complex.”⁹¹ In 1997 reports started to surface concerning new developments in Caledon. The municipality had revealed that there were two role players, the British Ladbroke Group and the Fortes King Group who had decided that they were going to undertake the “development” of Caledon Hotel, Spa and Casino. This would not only include a casino, if the licence could be obtained, but also “four hotels, a classic- styled spa resort, a Jack Nicklaus designed golf course and a country styled water park.”⁹² Job creation would be stimulated, included temporary and permanent jobs. The reason why Caledon was chosen was made clear by Mike Bennet, the Landbroke Group’s casino director of overseas operations. Caledon was rural but still near to Cape Town and the N2 highway and it also had nature elements.⁹³

The Overberg Country Hotel and Spa was still popular by 1997 and at that time was bought by the Ladbroke Goup, “one of Britain’s largest gaming companies”⁹⁴ people could once again enjoy not only the Victorian Bath, which by this time had been classified as a national

⁸⁹ “Caledon se nuwe mineraalbad-oord,” *Finansies & Tegniek*, 5 Oktober 1990, Vol. 44/39, p.46.

⁹⁰ M. Patrick & A. Manhire: *Archaeological Impact Assessment: Blue Crane Golf Course, (Erf 4031) Caledon*, compiled for Doug Jeffery Environmental Consultants, December 2009, p. 8 & Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

⁹¹ M. Patrick & A. Manhire: *Archaeological Impact Assessment: Blue Crane Golf Course, (Erf 4031) Caledon*, compiled for Doug Jeffery Environmental Consultants, December 2009, p. 8.

⁹² “Caledon plans large-scale developments,” *The Cape Times*, 24 Januarie 1997, p. 1.

⁹³ “Caledon plans large-scale developments,” *The Cape Times*, 24 Januarie 1997, p. 2.

⁹⁴ “UK Casino giant is gambling with lives,” *Sunday World*, 25 April 1999, p. 7.

monument, but spa treatments like massages were as well. Caledon was to become the “Sun City of the Western Cape” since the casino licence was granted and the large development was to take place in the years to follow.⁹⁵ Even though there was excitement about the developments in Caledon, there were still those who felt that the tranquil rural feel of the town had to be protected. Doreza Kersandt, who was the marketing director of the Cape Overberg Tourism bureau at that time, mentioned that although the new casino would bring monetary and job opportunities, she hoped that the rural and family friendly feeling would still be found at the casino so that that part of the tourism market was not alienated. The Caledon mayor, Dawie Abrahams also mentioned that even if the casino was not to be, the rest of the tourism orientated development would still continue. This shows that Caledon was now relying on tourism as a commodity and was making a place for itself in the tourism industry by using its natural resources, which included the thermal water springs.⁹⁶ The thermal mineral spring water was still the major drawing card to the hotel and was offered to guests in pool, spa or jacuzzi form. The re-opening of the Overberger Hotel and Spa in 1999 was done in style and would have definitely drawn tourists to experience the hotel and its spa.⁹⁷

Caledon was once again hit by misfortune. The gambling company Ladbroke decided to pull out of the planned Casino, Hotel and Spa resort that were to be built on the site of the Overberger Hotel and Spa after the Caledon Casino Bid Company received a casino license from the Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board in December 1998.⁹⁸ This came as a huge shock to all involved in the project, and especially the inhabitants of Caledon. The casino development that was to take place would have been undertaken by Ladbroke, who was the biggest shareholder, and the Fortes King Group as well as two community trust groups. This development was to bring economic growth and prosperity to the town as well as the poor that dependent on the creation of the project to offer them jobs. Ladbroke would have provided developers with a R270 million monetary injection that would have secured a rise in job opportunities.⁹⁹ But with the news that the group was not going to honour the agreement, many people in the Caledon area was left devastated and it was also a big blow to Western Cape tourism, as it would have been the first casino in the province. The people most affected by the collapse of the development plan was a group of previous disadvantaged as well as

⁹⁵ “Indulge your senses: Going wild in Caledon,” *Cape Times*, 12 September 1997, Caledon Museum Archive.

⁹⁶ “Casino moet nie landelike atmosfeer doodsmoor,” *Die Burger*, 24 April 1998, p. 20.

⁹⁷ “Caledon’s timeless attractions,” *Saturday Argus*, 4/5 December 1999, Caledon Museum Archive.

⁹⁸ “Caledon casino: Ladbroke trek finaal kop uit,” *Die Burger*, 12 March 1999, p. 3.

⁹⁹ “Britse dobbelgroep se ontrekking skok,” *Die Burger*, 9 March 1999, p. 2.

poor people who was hoping that the coming Casino would offer job opportunities. One devastated woman, Sophie Davids expressed her unhappiness by saying that “the failure of the bid is 10 times worse than apartheid.” Job opportunities were not the only thing that was lost, but “potential tourism benefits for the region, province” as well as community based tourism was damaged, and tourism was to become a very important source of revenue for the area, with guesthouses that were built for the expected influx of tourists, but with the collapse of the casino development, this seemed unlikely.¹⁰⁰

Another problem was that in light of the purposed development, the Overberger Hotel had already closed down in January 1999 and many of its “furnishings” had already been sold¹⁰¹ because the building would have to have been demolished by March 1999 so that the work on the new “casino, Hilton Hotel, Health and Racquet Club, spa and tourist town” could be started.¹⁰² When the deal fell through in March 1999 the Fortes King group started negotiations with Ladbroke to try and make sure that the Overberger Hotel was re-opened so that as many jobs as possible could be saved.¹⁰³ The reason why the Ladbroke group pulled out of the deal was made public. The Group had secretly been bidding on the chance of taking over “Stakis, the UK-Based European hotel and casino group.” They won the 14 billion pound bid, and that was the reason why they could no longer fund the casino project taking place at Caledon and in the process shattered hundreds of peoples’ hopes and dreams for a brighter future in Caledon.¹⁰⁴

But all was not lost and in July 1999 another round of bidding started, with nine different entries concerning the erection of a casino in the Overberg and Breërivier district. The reason for the competitive nature of this was because only one casino license per region was issued, and although Caledon was awarded the licence before, after the development fell through the license were fair game and many different groups wanted to be granted that license. The Fortes King Hospitality group was said to once again apply for the license.¹⁰⁵ Caledon was again in the running for the casino license bid and in November 1999 Kevin King announced the good news to the towns’ folk with the reopening of the Overberger Hotel. There was also

¹⁰⁰ “Casino bid crash rocks Caledon,” *The Cape Times*, 11 March 1999, p.3.

¹⁰¹ “Casino bid crash rocks Caledon,” *The Cape Times*, 11 Maart 1999, p.3.

¹⁰² “Overberger sluit sy deure,” *Overberg Venster*, 15 Januarie 1999, p. 1.

¹⁰³ “Ladbroke pull-out dashes Caledon’s dreams,” *The Cape Times*, 12 March 1999, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ “UK casino giant is gambling with lives,” *Sunday World*, 25 April 1999, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ “Nege staan in ry vir Overberg casino,” *Die Burger*, 12 July 1999, p. 5. & Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

a new bid partner involved, an American company Century Casinos Inc. who was “quoted on the Nasdaq and who was skilled in casino management, since they already owned 100 casinos in 25 countries.”¹⁰⁶ They would join the Fortes King Group and the Overberg Community Trust and the Overberg Empowerment Co., a trust set up by the Anglican Archdeacon Richard Arendsen so that the poor could also have a piece of the prosperity the casino could offer. The casino was in fact seen as a “black-empowerment casino project” and therefore it was so important that it succeeded, to give hope to the poor of the town. This shows that the whole Caledon community was taking part in this new development.¹⁰⁷ Caledon’s chances of getting the bid looked good, since after Hermanus dropped out it was the only town in the Overberg to make a bid for the licence. Fortes King, who had bought the Overberger Hotel back from Ladbroke in September, made it possible for the development to still happen at the original spot near the thermal springs. Because of the popularity of the thermal springs were so high, they had been opened earlier on public demand. This shows how much the thermal springs were still enjoyed and supported by the public. The Overberger Hotel had been refurbished and had 68 rooms available as well as access to the thermal mineral springs.¹⁰⁸

The new Caledon Hotel, Spa & Casino development would include improvements like an hotel with 86 rooms, conference facilities, casino and retail facilities as well as a new health spa which would be “built around the hot mineral springs” to include the modern treatments and keep the historic waters available to the public.¹⁰⁹ By mid-February 2000 the Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board announced that Caledon was successful in securing the casino licence bid. There were also hopes that the casino could be built and opened at the end of 2000, so that the town could profit from the development as early as they possible.¹¹⁰ By mid June the first official construction on the casino was started and many permanent and non-permanent were created for especially the Western Cape and the economic injection the new casino would give to the Overberg region would be large. While the construction was taking place, the Overberg Country hotel and spa, which had a three star grading, was still operating and open to the public.¹¹¹ By September the construction was still on track and the

¹⁰⁶ “Nege staan in ry vir Overberg casino,” *Die Burger*, 12 July 1999, p. 5. & C. Bisseker: “Bid is back on track,” *Financial Mail*, 12 November 1999, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷ “Bid is back on track,” *Financial Mail*, 12 November 1999, p. 31. & R. Joseph: “UK Casino giant is gambling with lives,” *Sunday World*, 25 April 1999, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ “Caledon is terug in wedloop om casino,” *Die Burger*, 11 November 1999, p. 9.

¹⁰⁹ “Bid is back on track,” *Financial Mail*, 12 November 1999, p. 31.

¹¹⁰ “Caledon firma kry Overberg casino,” *Die Burger*, 17 February 2000, p. 2.

¹¹¹ “Casino, hotel, spa starts construction,” *Saterdag Argus*, 17-18 June 2000, p. 9.

R103 million Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa was to open by October. There were recruiting done under the locals and many of them were trained so that they would be able to work in the casino and on the grounds by the time the casino was opened.¹¹²

The first ever Western Cape Casino: The Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa era begins.

On the 11 October 2000, the first ever Western Cape casino was officially opened in the small rural town of Caledon, with much fanfare. There were 250 slot machines and 14 gambling tables. The design of the casino carried a water motif, reminding one of the thermal spring waters that still bubbled and could be enjoyed in the Victorian spa near the casino as well as stars to represent the beautiful Caledon night sky.¹¹³ At the opening the Western Cape Premier Gerald Morkel mentioned that although casinos were known as places where money was lost, the Caledon Casino was to become a source of jobs for the Overberg people. With the completion of the casino, other features like the Overberger hotel, conference centre and the spa could now be updated and redeveloped to complete the vision that was created for the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa.¹¹⁴ Morkel was also very impressed with the fact that although construction on the casino was only started in May-June, the development was completed by October, and many saw this as a miracle. The opening of the casino was a very big event, and for the first time Caledon experienced traffic jam with all the visitors to the casino flooding the town. This meant that the town, after all the media attention, became a tourist mecca, with people rushing to get a chance to try their luck at the first ever Western Cape casino.¹¹⁵ This surge of domestic tourism was good news for the little town which relied on tourism to make money and it was mentioned in the local newspaper that because of the casino many people who would never have visited Caledon was indeed passing through and this stimulated the businesses in town and tourists searching for accommodation in town increased, stimulating the hospitality sector. There were also people who after winning some money at the casino, decided to spend it in town buying souvenirs.¹¹⁶

¹¹² "Roofwetting as Caledon takes the lead," *Overberg Venster*, 1 September 2000, p. 1.

¹¹³ "Casino dice ready to roll," *The Cape Times*, 11 October 2000, p.1.

¹¹⁴ "Overberg's gamble pays off in jobs and hope," *Cape Argus*, 12 October 2000, p. 7.

¹¹⁵ "Stormloop toe 1st W-Kaap casino open," *Die Burger*, 12 October 2000, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ "Casino bring woelinge," *Caledon Kontrei Nuus/News*, 26 October 2000, p. 3.

The official opening of the whole development was planned to take place early in 2001 after the completion of the new and upgraded remaining facilities. This was a good plan, since by opening the casino, tourism would already be stimulated and it would also entice people and make them curious about the new developments that were still to be completed.¹¹⁷ The Victorian Spa was due to open at the end of November 2000 and the entire spa complex was to be completed by the end of March 2001.¹¹⁸ The local business sector also showed its support of the new Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa in the local newspaper by placing advertisements with words of encouragement and support.¹¹⁹ The focus market of the Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa was the “break away to the little rural town for a weekend” market.¹²⁰

The spa complex was completed in April 2001 and officially opened in the first week of May 2001. The new spa included not just new and modern treatments, but also the historic Victorian bath and other various pools where one could lay in the thermal water as was done by the first visitors to the historic Caledon thermal spring in the 1700s. The focus and the marketing were still on the “health conscious” and the claim of the “healing waters” was kept in the literature when describing the thermal springs. It was in this manner that the historic legend of the curative waters was kept alive. The new and improved spa, which received its water from the eye of the source on the opposite side of the N2, which was then lead back to a water tower to cool down to about 30 degrees Celsius, included not only the Victorian Bath and the many rock pools with bubbling thermal waters and waterfalls, but also modern treatments like “massages, seaweed body wraps; hydrotherapy; detoxifying and rejuvenating.”¹²¹ And so the waters of the Caledon thermal spring were once again open to those in need of health and relaxation.

The Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa was even featured in the architectural magazine *Planning* and it was very interesting to see how the photos of the new 2001 building looked against the historic Caledon Sanatorium. It also made one realise that at last, after years the thermal spring resort was restored, just in a modern form. It was interesting to see how the planning of the new development had to be altered because of the historic factor that was present on the grounds. Initially the Overbeger Hotel would have been demolished and a Hilton Hotel would

¹¹⁷ “Eerste wettige casino in Wes-Kaap met toejuiging begroet,” *Die Burger*, 12 October 2000, p. 13.

¹¹⁸ “Casino elke dag druk besoek,” *Overberg Venster*, 20 October 2000, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *Overberg Venster*, 27 October 2000.

¹²⁰ “Die dice val nou reg,” *Insig*, 31 December 2000, p. 29.

¹²¹ “Age-old appeal of Caledon’s healing waters,” *Saturday Weekend Argus*, 13 May 2001, p. 15.

have replaced it, but after the Ladbroke group pulled out of the deal, fortunately this did not happen. When the new Casino bid partner, Century Casinos became involved in the project there was decided to rather keep the Overberger Hotel structures as well as the rest of the historic building like the Victorian bath, and rather restore most of it. The resort did not only house a casino, but also a conference centre, offices; shops and an open-air amphitheatre. A car park which can hold up to 500 cars was also built and a lot of emphasis was put on the “spa and its features” which was still seen as one of the main attractions. The new spa included the “Victorian bath, new changing rooms; sauna and steam rooms; a treatment centre; linking walkways; waterfall feature and pools of various types and sizes” and the spa complex and the casino is linked with a long stairway. There is also a water feature in the form of a “cascading” waterfall that is in the middle of the stairway from the top to the bottom. Since the Caledon thermal springs had such a long history, the architects decided to use that history of the thermal waters in the creation of the resort, and water is indeed found all over the resort. “Pools, canals and fountains” were used to showcase the curative waters that gave rise to the town and these features were used in both public and secluded areas at the resort. Because of heritage laws, the architects had to be careful to not overstep those boundaries, and in the end the resort still had a “rural character” which fits in nicely with the town and the area. With the curative spring waters that constantly flowed in and around the resort, visitors were reminded of the historical significance of the town and its thermal spring waters.¹²²

By 2003 it was time for some improvements at the Resort and this was done by revamping the rooms in the hotel, as well as adding a new restaurant. Caledon did not have the monopoly over casinos in the Western Cape anymore, since three other casinos also opened by that time. Erwin Haitzmann, chairperson of Century Casinos, said that with the new improvements they were trying to get more international tourists to Caledon. The resort was now ready to break into the international tourism market and this was done by big promotions of the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa in Europe. The resort received most of its visitors from the domestic Cape Town market, as well as about a third of people from the surrounding areas. The rest was filled by either domestic tourists from far away, or overseas tourists. The resort was to be focused on bringing more tourists to the area, which would mean more revenue for the town

¹²² The Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa Resort,” *Planning*, (Vol. 22), (No. 176), Jul-Aug 2001, p. 70-72.

and more prosperity as well.¹²³ In 2005 plans were being drawn up for a possible golf course at the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa resort. About 300 houses would be added, as well as an 18-hole course. This new development would increase the leisure market of the town and also draw new tourists to the town. But before any decisions could be made an impact study had to be made because of the historic significance of the site.¹²⁴ As the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa grew, the success of the casino surprised many people and the Caledon resort had the potential to be a big player in the small casino market. One can assume that if the casino was doing well, the thermal springs element would also have gotten a large amount of exposure, since the theme of these curative waters were visible throughout the resort, and definitely gave the casino a upper hand and a ‘wow’ factor over other casinos, providing its patrons with something more than just a normal beauty spa.¹²⁵ In 2006 there was another report on the planned golf estate which would have 450 houses and a 27-hole golf course. The Century Casino group had established a South African based company known as the Blue Crane Signature Golf estate which would feature at the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa resort and the well-known golfer Trevor Immelman would help out with the design as well as give the group some advice. It was believed that the new golf course would stimulate the domestic economy as well as improve the “Caledon tourism infrastructure” by drawing more tourists to the area. Building on the estate was to start as soon as the permission for it was received, in either 2007 or 2008.¹²⁶ With this new development it shows the growth the once famous Sanatorium had to become a well-known and successful holiday resort. Once again with some help of the thermal spring, the town was once again becoming a tourist attraction.

In 2008 the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa was to once again change hands, when Century Casino, who owned the resort, announcement that they wanted to sell their shares. It seems that the growth the casino experienced was not as strong as before and Century Casino was willing to sell. At this time the purposed golf estate was also hanging in the balance, along with the tourism sector in Caledon since the estate would provide a new tourism market for the town. The chairperson of the Caledon business sector Riaan Els expressed his hope that whoever bought the shares in the resort would still continue with the Blue Crane residential development that was planned. According to Els, that although the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa resort did create job opportunities for the people in town, the town businesses did not

¹²³“Die Caledon-hotel vernuwe kamers, kry nog ‘n restaurant,” *Die Burger*, 28 Junie 2003, p. 7.

¹²⁴ “Caledon kry dalk nuwe golfoord van miljoene rande,” *Die Burger*, 25 June 2005, p. 8.

¹²⁵ “ Caledonners dobbel kwaai,” *Finansies & Tegniek*, (Vol. 12), (No. 3), 10 August 2005, p.30.

¹²⁶ “Caledon kry golfoord met 450 huisies,” *Beeld*, 19 September 2006, p. 17.

really derive any benefits from the visiting tourists, since they only stayed at the resort and did not really visit the town.¹²⁷ By December 2008, Century Casino had decided to sell their shares to “Tsongo Sun Gaming, the investment arm of Tsongo Sun Holdings, for R460 million.” Tsongo Sun Holdings was BEE accredited and owned by “Hosken Consolidated Investments and SABMiller.”¹²⁸ By April 2009 the sale of the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa was in full swing and the first of three regulatory approvals was made by the Competition Tribunal of South Africa. The sale still needed to be approved by both the Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board as well as the Kwazulu-Natal Gambling Board, because shares in not just the Caledon casino was sold, but also shares in a Newcastle casino owned by Century Casino.¹²⁹ By June the approval from the South African Reserve Bank and the Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board was given, and only the Kwazulu-Natal Gambling Board still needed to give its approval.¹³⁰ On 30 June 2009 Century Casino’s sale of its South African Subsidiary to Tsongo Sun Gaming (Pty) Limited was announced.¹³¹ In October 2009 the final approval by the Kwazulu-Natal Gambling Board was given and the sale was finally concluded.¹³² In October 2009 the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa resort was at last owned by the Tsongo Sun group.

In the same year, the town of Caledon decided to expand its Tourism development and to focus on turning the town into a tourist attraction. A “Local Economic Development” strategy was approved by the Theewaterskloof Municipality. One of the focus sectors was that of tourism because it was one of the sectors which grew and it had a “high potential for stimulating the local economy and creating local jobs.”¹³³ It was recognised that the Theewaterskloof had many attractions on offer which included its natural assets, historical places and the casino. The biggest tourist market was found to be from the Cape Metropolitan area, “the backbone of tourism in the area,” but there were also signs that international tourists were starting to visit the area, and it was this market that was one that could be stimulated. A

¹²⁷ “Casino by Caledon soek nuwe baas,” *Beeld*, 27 Oktober 2008, p. 3.

¹²⁸ “Caledon Casino owes us millions, say small shareholders,” *Cape Times*, 3 June 2009, p. 3.

¹²⁹ “Century Casinos Obtains Approval of Competition Tribunal for Sale of South African Casino Properties,” *PR Newswire*, 24 April 2009, Academic OneFile. Web . 22 June 2011.

¹³⁰ “Century Casinos Obtains Approval of Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board for Sale of South African Casino Properties,” *PR Newswire*, 8 June 2009, Academic OneFile. Web . 22 June 2011.

¹³¹ “Century Casinos has closed sale of its South African Subsidiary,” *PR Newswire*, 24 April 2009, Academic OneFile. Web . 22 June 2011.

¹³² “Century Casinos Obtained Final Approved for the Sale of its South African Subsidiary,” *PR Newswire*, 7 October 2009, Academic OneFile. Web . 22 June 2011.

¹³³ *Tourism Development in Theewaterskloof: A strategic plan, Executive Summary*, obtained from Tourism Marketing Officer, Lizette Kok at the Theewaterskloof Municipality, p. 1.

“situation analysis” that was done showed that the Theewaterskloof area had a “considerable potential for further [tourism] development” which in turn could lead to the strengthening of the local economy and job creation. The thermal mineral springs were classified as natural tourist attractions and it is mentioned that they are in fact “well utilised” by tourists.¹³⁴ The casino was classified under gaming, and although the casino was doing well and attracting tourists, not many of these tourists made use of the other attractions available in the area and it was suggested that “better links between the casino and other tourism players” were needed. In this way the one sector could help the other and so ensure success for both. There was decided to focus on the domestic tourist market at first, of which Cape Town was the biggest, and to then slowly start to create exposure to the international market.¹³⁵

By 2010 the proposed plans for the Blue Crane Signature Golf Course at the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa Resort was still underway, and a Heritage Impact Assessment was done “in compliance with Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHR Act).” It was found that there were some historical structures and sites that could be potentially damaged if construction was to start, but because the heritage elements found at the site were so important, by adjusting some plans a safe way was found to construct the estate, although careful work around the sites and “archaeological monitoring” had to be done. It was also recommended that some sort of museum was introduced at the spa so that the history of the waters and for example the Victorian bath could be visible for the public, so that they can see that they were actually partaking in a historical custom without even knowing it. This could also have made people return to the thermal waters if they were informed of its famous and healing history. The historic *wagenweg*, where old wagon wheel tracks could still be found in the rock, had to be protected during construction and feature in the new estate, where it could be used as a road for light vehicles like golf carts, which would not damage it.¹³⁶ The golf course plans are still in the proposal phase, however slowly but surely there is being worked towards getting it underway.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ *Tourism Development in Theewaterskloof: A strategic plan, Executive Summary*, obtained from Tourism Marketing Officer, Lizette Kok at the Theewaterskloof Municipality, pp. 1, 10.

¹³⁵ *Tourism Development in Theewaterskloof: A strategic plan, Executive Summary*, obtained from Tourism Marketing Officer, Lizette Kok at the Theewaterskloof Municipality, pp. 12, 27.

¹³⁶ *Proposed Blue Crane Signature Golf Course: Caledon*, Heritage Impact Assessment, Aikman Associates Heritage Management, Tulbagh, Feb 2010, obtained from Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, p. 32.

¹³⁷ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

With the technological era that developed, pamphlets, although still used, was not the best way to advertising one's business. With the rise of the internet resorts like the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa could connect with much more people through their website, as one of the major marketing tools. It was possible to convey much more information to potential visitors as opposed to a pamphlet, as well as stunning and intriguing photos of the resort and all its attractions, to make tourists want to visit the resort. Throughout the years the marketing of the various Caledon establishments, including the Sanatorium, the Overberger and the Casino and hotel, the curative waters and their long and healthy history was used to attract people to the thermal springs and later to the casino and hotels as well.¹³⁸ Even when the Casino was already part of the resort, the thermal waters spring still fascinated people and with the title of best water in the world in 1893 and its calm, relaxing and healing waters it became the retreat many visitors were looking for.¹³⁹ The heritage of the thermal spring can still be found on the website, so those visiting the site would be informed about the historic water they would be using. It is mentioned that the "original Khoikhoi and San inhabitants of the area" used the water and that the water has "restorative powers," which speaks more to the new focus of the thermal springs which was stress relief rather than medical. The Victorian bath as national monument is also mentioned.¹⁴⁰ The different baths that can be enjoyed at the new modern spa includes Turkish baths, which was said to help with various ailments such as coughs and muscular tension, the Khoi-San Pools, that were rock pools in which the thermal mineral waters could be enjoyed like in days of old; there was also a Sauna that helped with detox; a lap pool for low impact exercise; the Victorian bath house that contained 11 different minerals and iron, a temperature of 37-39 degrees Celsius and helped with blood flow. There was a gym where visitors could practice their bodies after relaxing the mind and lastly there are Vichy Showers, which was where thermal mineral waters were used as a form of massage. Other modern spa treatments were also available to create the feel of an complete spa experience, combining the old spa, where thermal water was the main focus, to the modern spa with its treatments.¹⁴¹

Keeping the heritage feeling, the conference centres that can be found at the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa resort was named after historic parts of the town, like Swartberg fountain, the previous name of the town; The Earl, after who Caledon was named and The Millstone,

¹³⁸ "Caledon-spa alombekend vir genesende water," *Die Burger*, 30 June 2005, p. 2.

¹³⁹ "Warmwaterbronne lok besoekers na Caledon," *Die Burger*, 25 April 2008, Eindhoven.

¹⁴⁰ The Caledon Spa, www.thecaledoncasino.co.za, 14 Oktober 2010.

¹⁴¹ The Caledon Spa, www.thecaledoncasino.co.za, 14 Oktober 2010.

because of the historic Mill street which was part of the highway before the N2 was built. The heritage has been added to the resort as much as possible, and guests were also taken around the grounds and educated on the history of the site the resort was built on. The spa and thermal water springs is still such a strong drawing card that there was decided to include it into the trading name of the resort, showing that the thermal baths still had a special place at the resort. Even though the thermal water baths were popular it was made clear that the baths on their own would not have been able to sustain themselves, and therefore it is the revenue from the casino that finances the maintenance of the thermal mineral spa.¹⁴²

According to Mark Ross, the Hotel manager, the clientele for the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa have not really changed much and it is still being enjoyed by many. There is also a strong Muslim clientele at the resort and many come because of a Kramat that can be found on the grounds,¹⁴³ where it is said a Muslim saint was buried. There is some disagreement about who is really buried at the shrine, Daoud Ibrahim or Abdul Kader. None the less it is a holy site which is visited frequently.¹⁴⁴ Sometimes there are up to 200 Muslim guests at the hotel, in the week from Monday to Thursday there are usually corporate guests. The biggest support is from domestic tourists that hail from the Cape Town region. 80-90% of the Hotel guests are from Cape Town, and only 1 % of visitors represented the international market. There is however plans to address this market in future. Since the opening of the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa in 2000 the hotel has been refurbished twice and the spa area had been extended by adding the rock pools.¹⁴⁵ The resort focuses on being a family destination and therefore has activities the whole family can enjoy. Apart from the casino and the spa, which focuses more on the adults, there is also a crèche, a Wonderland and a Playstation room where the kids can spend their time while their parents try their luck at the casino or relax with some of the spa treatments on offer. Children stay for free at the hotel, and 95% of the rooms were child friendly and they could sleep with their parents. The Hotel also focuses on the family

¹⁴² Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

¹⁴³ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁴ *Proposed Blue Crane Signature Golf Course: Caledon*, Heritage Impact Assessment, Aikman Associates Heritage Management, Tulbagh, Feb 2010, obtained from Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, p. 27.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

market and they have 70% of guests returning for another holiday. In 2003-2004 stables were added to the resort and horse riding became another activity to be enjoyed.¹⁴⁶

When asked if there were still some people who believed in the curing properties of the waters, it seems that there were some visitors who still had faith in the waters to cure their aching limbs, but presently the healing water was used in a more holistic way by the visitors to relax and for stress relief. The time spent at the resort and spa was a break away from the busy working environment. The medical focus that was put on the thermal waters in the past had shifted from curing physical ailments to restoring the balance between body and mind. The calm and rural setting gives the feeling that time has stopped and it is just far away enough to feel like a holiday.¹⁴⁷

The peak times for the resort was especially during winter and school holidays, weekends and long weekends. During the week there are mostly conference groups attended by either adults or children. On the day the interview was conducted the hotel was filled with 250 children at a child conference that took place at the resort. There were also government conferences held at the resort. The Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa is also a Level 2 BBE holder. There is also a involvement in the community through CSI project and a school hall was built for the Swartberg School. The resort also provides jobs for the local community with 90 % of the employees being locals and it was the second largest employer next to the municipality.¹⁴⁸

The maintenance of the thermal baths and use of the thermal waters are both of high priority. The baths are cleaned on Mondays but during the summer months it gets cleaned twice a week Monday and Friday. Because the water is kept flowing from the top pool downward to the lower pools and the furrows next to the steps, no stagnant water can be found and this means the water stay hygienic and clear. The water that had been used in the baths is cooled by the flowing process and is led in the end to be used for irrigation at the resort. With this no water is wasted and used for more than one purpose.¹⁴⁹ The Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

replaced the hope the town had for the thermal spring baths since the tragic event of the destruction of the world famous Sanatorium. The resort brought back the tourism market that the town had enjoyed in the glory years of the Sanatorium and tourism, together with agriculture became the two economic sectors the region depended on for jobs and profit. The tourism market once again put the town and its thermal springs back on the map, and the resort's different elements of the casino, hotel and spa worked together to generate more tourists. Caledon was established because of its thermal mineral springs, and it was because of the thermal springs and their history of curative waters that the site was chosen for the casino, because the thermal springs gave the resort an extra feature¹⁵⁰, not only was there a modern spa, there was also an authentic historic thermal springs people could enjoy. It is this element that makes the Caledon Casino, Hotel and Spa unique and throughout history as well as the present, the thermal mineral springs was the drawing card for the site. It was the fountains of health that gave rise to the town, and it was those very same fountains that returned the tourists to the town in 2000 and helped bring back the town as a domestic tourism contender.

Surviving disaster:

The development of the Montagu thermal mineral springs after the 1981 flood

The whole of Montagu and its thermal spring resort was left devastated after the 1981 Laingsburg flood. Historical monuments like the Tiekeibad were gone and the mineral springs and hotel was badly damaged. The Montagu thermal springs experienced a tough time after the flood after plans for development fell through. The future for the Montagu Baths looked rather bleak.¹⁵¹ But hope was once again restored in 1982/1983 when it was made public that a new holiday resort would be built on the site of the previous thermal spring resort and would be known as Montagu Springs. The development was undertaken by the Schus motor group who had a twenty year lease contract with the Montagu Municipality with the option of another thirty year lease. They also had the option of selling the property within three years. The new developments would take place around the old thermal mineral springs stretching 7.5 hectares but the damaged hotel would not be used, although there were plans of rebuilding it later. The thermal swimming pool that was destroyed was being upgraded to a more modern and larger pool. A "terrace amphitheatre would surround the large swimming pool, which

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

¹⁵¹ "Montagu-bron plan deur mat," *Die Burger*, 19 November 1981, p. 3.

would stretch up to the rock wall where the thermal springs bubble from.” The resort would also be child friendly with child and toddler pools that was to be constructed which would also receive water from the thermal mineral spring source. The director of the Schus motor group explained that a “true paradise” was to be created where the water from some twenty thermal springs, with a constant temperature of 42 degrees Celsius and the highest radium count in the country could be enjoyed by visitors. A cold water swimming pool for both children and adults would also be provided. It seems that the Schus group was keen to transform the resort into a caravan / holiday home park instead of using the previous hotel structure. This could have ensured more visitors since a caravan holiday might have been cheaper and also because more people could be accommodated. Entertainment such as tennis courts, a games room, picnic spots, a restaurant and a licensed bar would also be developed. New life was to be breathed into the devastated thermal springs resort, and the thermal waters were once again the main attraction.¹⁵²

The caravan park was completed first and people were invited to enjoy the thermal spring waters. It was also mentioned that the old bath hotel had been bought and was going to be rebuilt by Mr. Dieter Sowade, who was the director of the Avalon hotel in Montagu and the new baths hotel was to have a three star grading. By the time Montagu Springs had opened for business in 1983, construction on the hotel was already on the way.¹⁵³ Dieter Sowade and his business partner Sean Coetzee leased the land on which the hotel stood from Schus. Sowade planned on building a 25 room hotel including a “restaurant, bars; and a cafe/store for the self-catering holiday makers.” He hoped to later sell some rooms on a time-share basis and that the concept he was planning for the hotel was that of a health spa, as was seen in overseas resorts.¹⁵⁴ With this new accommodation, the different accommodation that ranged from the cheapest with the caravan park, to more expensive with the hotel and more permanent with the holiday homes that was to be built, it ensured that visitors from all walks of life could afford to stay at the new resort and enjoy the waters.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵²“Nuwe gedaante vir Montagu se bron,” *Die Burger*, Montagu Library Source.

¹⁵³ “Montagu se bron van dié naweek af weer oop,” Montagu Library Source.

¹⁵⁴ *Caravan and Outdoor Life*, July 1983, pp. 30-31, Montagu Library Source.

¹⁵⁵ “Montagu se bron van dié naweek af weer oop,” Montagu Library Source.

The Avalon Springs Hotel is born: A new beginning

Finally in December 1985 the Avalon Springs Hotel was complete and the old thermal springs once again had its hotel overlooking the thermal spring baths. The hotel was part of a “hotel complex” that would be completed by 1986 to include a “hydro-unit for disabled visitors, a health spa that could be used by the hotel guests and a block of timeshare flats.” By 1985 12 double rooms was in use as well as a restaurant, a coffee house and two lounge bars. A conference room was also available to businesses. Sowade made it clear that he wanted to try to achieve a four star grading for the hotel, which would mean that the Avalon Springs Hotel would be the first rural hotel to do so.¹⁵⁶ The town and other domestic tourists supported the new hotel and before any advertisement was done it was already half full when it opened. Sowade wanted to target the luxury tourist market and especially people from Cape Town who wanted a weekend away for some rest and relaxation. The reason for the name was because of the already successful Avalon Hotel in Montagu, and the new spring hotel wanted to build on the quality found at the Avalon hotel. The new hotel also created job opportunities for the local community. Sowade was both owner and general manager of the hotel and a Mr. Steve Turner was the hotel manager.¹⁵⁷ The marketing of the Avalon Spring Hotel was still fixed on the idea of a healthy break away from the hustle and bustle of the city life. The luxurious feel of the hotel was enhanced by the luxury bath robes given to the guests using the thermal waters with which they could relax next to the pools. Visitors to the hotel had free entrance to the use of the thermal mineral springs.¹⁵⁸

In March 1986 the brand new hotel complex opened with a three star rating. Sowade wanted to create “a midway between a health farm and luxury resort” with his new hotel complex. This would be achieved by hosting events like diet information classes on weekends, held by a Essie Honiball who was famous for her fruit diets. The rooms were very luxurious and champagne was given to guest when they arrived at the hotel. The hotel restaurant menu included South African favourites such as potjiekos. There were three thermal water pools of various temperatures. There were still more development to come at the resort which included two indoor swimming pools; a sauna; three spa baths; a steam bath; solarium, some sort of sun room for tanning and a gymnasium. 28 time-share flats were also to be built and sold to

¹⁵⁶ “Bad Hotel herleef weer na vloed,” *Worcester Standard & Advertiser*, 20 December 1985, p. 23.

¹⁵⁷ “Hotel with a difference,” *Worcester Standard & Advertiser*, 20 December 1985, p. 23.

¹⁵⁸ “Rus hier na die gejaag,” *Worcester Standard & Advertiser*, 20 December 1985, p. 22.

the public. By 1986 the Avalon Springs Hotel was already a popular holiday retreat and the future for this resort was looking very bright.¹⁵⁹

But in 1987 the hotel suffered some bad press. In the 1980s racial tensions in South Africa were still rather high and the Montagu thermal spring resort did not escape these problems. In 1987 schoolteacher from Athlone accused Avalon Springs Hotel of racism after a group of “coloured visitors” was asked to leave the premises before “white visitors.” Mr Raymond Elixer complained that they were asked to leave the premises by 6 pm, when on the notice board it stated that visitors had to leave by 11 pm. Upon inquiring this he was allegedly told by a “coloured attendant” that “coloured” people had to leave early. A manager did however explain to him that according to new rules that were brought in three months before, all visitors who did not stay in the hotel had to leave by 6pm.¹⁶⁰ However Mr W.D. Sowade, the owner of hotel said that there was no racism at the hotel, and since opening in 1986 the hotel and its services were open to all races and that people who misunderstood the rules and regulations were quick to blame it on racism if it did not suit them. The thermal spring pools were accessible to all races from 7am to 6pm, but that people also had to keep in mind that the number of people who could swim in the pools did have a limit for safety reasons and therefore whenever the number of visitors would exceed the allowed limit visitors would be shown away because the pools had reached their capacity and that it had nothing to do with race.¹⁶¹ Avalon Springs Hotel was not the only one to be accused of racism. Montagu Spring, the caravan and holiday house resort next to the thermal spring resort was also accused of racism when after a family booked into one of the holiday cottages and had enjoyed their time at the thermal water pools, on returning to their accommodation was asked to leave because they were Muslim. They were informed that the owners of the cottages had decided that the resort was to be an whites only resort and therefore the Hay family was asked to leave. Mr Ben Barber, general manager of Schuc Leisure Homes had said that unfortunately there was nothing that he could do since the owners owned the cottages and could therefore decide what happens to them and who books in. He did however say “I know this is strange, but there is nothing we can do about it at the moment.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ “Nuwe spoghotel op Montagu,” *Die Burger*, 21 March 1986, p. 8.

¹⁶⁰ “City man accuses spa of racism,” *The Cape Times*, 2 June 1987, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ “Montagu springs, It’ not apartheid,” *The Cape Times*, 16 June 1987, p. 9.

¹⁶² “Resort turns away family over colour,” *The Argus*, 13 August 1987, p. 5.

With all the bad publicity the Avalon Spring Hotel and the Montagu Springs received, Mr W.D. Sowade wrote to *Die Burger* and *The Cape Times* to explain what were the real facts. Sowade agreed that the problems were a direct cause of the apartheid regime and that private companies must now struggle to find a solution to its problems. He explained that the Schus holiday homes were on private land and this was administrated by Schus Holdings (Edms) Bpk. The holiday homes, of which there were 60-70, became the property of the owners when they bought it. Under the group areas act only white people were permitted to live in private owned accommodation, and therefore the Schus holiday homes fell under that law which was why only whites could rent the holiday homes. The owners themselves also voted against racial mixing on the Schus holiday Cottage area. The Avalon Springs Hotel and the thermal spring pools on the other hand were totally separate from the Schus development and was open to all races. There were two indoor pools that could only be used by hotel guests, but once again it was open to all races because the hotel was open to all. All the hotel areas were open to all races. Sowade therefore wanted to make it clear to the public that although the Schus holiday area privately owned and therefore only open to whites, the Avalon Springs Hotel and all its extras were open to all races.¹⁶³

In 1988 Avalon Springs became a time share resort, one of the only at that time which was a health resort. There were 29 self catering units that could be bought for timeshare.¹⁶⁴ The opening of the Avalon Springs Hotel and Timeshare was attended by many like the senior manager of Trust Bank, a representative of Cosmopolitan and a city clerk from the Montagu Municipality, and all were very impressed by the resort.¹⁶⁵ The Avalon Springs also became “affiliated to Resort Condominiums International which is a holiday exchange network” that was run in both South Africa and abroad. This meant the resort would get international exposure and draw foreign tourists to the area.¹⁶⁶

Though the years the Avalon Springs hotel had to battle not just floods, but fire as well. In December 1991 a veldt fire broke out and damaged the entire right wing of the hotel.¹⁶⁷ In 2003 and 2008 the town of Montagu and its thermal springs where once again hit with floods.

¹⁶³ “Montagu-bron: S6 lyk situasie,” *Die Burger*, 22 August 1987, p. 8. & Staff Reporter: “Hot springs open to all-hotel manager,” *The Cape Times*, 26 August 1987, p. 10.

¹⁶⁴ “Oord op Montagu nou ook beurtdeel,” *Die Burger*, 30 April 1988, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Letters to Dieter Sowade congratulating him on his new timeshare, framed and found in the halls of the Avalon Spring Hotel, May 1988.

¹⁶⁶ “Avalon Springs Hotel, Montagu,” *Architect and Builder*, July – December 1988, p. 11.

¹⁶⁷ “Meer as muskadel en springbokvel,” *Sarie magazine*, 12 March 1997.

In the 2003 flood guests at the Avalon Springs Hotel was evacuated and placed in hotels in Montagu.¹⁶⁸ In November 2008 the resort was once again ravaged by the water mass and the whole resort was flooded, including all the thermal water swimming pools, the children's entertainment area and the resort was forced to close down. This must have been a very heavy blow since the December tourism season was approaching and many people who had booked their stay at the resort could not spend their holiday there on account of the damage and the resort had to close down for repairs.¹⁶⁹

In 2007 the Avalon Springs resort was sold and became part of the Dream Vacation Club Company which belongs to Weston Dickson and Di Gordon. This company specialises in time share holidays.¹⁷⁰ After the devastating flood of 2008 the resort reopened in March 2009 and by 2010 the accommodation at the resort was enhanced with 14 new double houses that were built which amount to 28 living quarters. The resort has also upgraded its hotel rooms, first finishing the front facing rooms in 2008 and the back facing rooms in the 2010-2011. The rooms were given a modern and fresh look and because the resort is part of the tourism grading council, they had to conform to certain standards. The rooms were therefore refurbished to an even higher standard than required and so the hotel "stay[ed] ahead of times" when it come to their standards. The Hotel is run with a "down to earth" policy and wants to give guests a "home away from home" feeling when they stay at the resort.¹⁷¹ The hotel received its four star grading from SATOUR on 15 November 1997 in terms of the national grading and classification scheme.¹⁷²

As one of the oldest thermal spring resorts, the thermal waters are still the number one priority for the management of the resort. The eye of the spring is found right next to the swimming pools. To get the water to the pools, an 80kg submerged pump is found in the hole to the eye of the spring and it works on a flood switch system. As the water pool up from below in the eye, and reaches a certain point, the pump starts up automatically and pumps the water out until the water in the eye has reached a certain height again and the process starts all over again. Between 160 000 – 180 000 litre of water are pumped through in a day.¹⁷³ The water is

¹⁶⁸ "Floods ravage Western Cape," *Cape Times*, 23 March 2003, Montagu Museum Source.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011. & flood photos displayed in Montagu Museum.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

¹⁷¹ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

¹⁷² Framed certificate in the hall of Avalon Springs Resort, visited on 17 March 2011.

¹⁷³ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

also not wasted and to ensure hygiene the water continues to flow from the first to the last bath, from there the water flows into a pipe and into the river, so no water is wasted and there is always fresh water in the baths. A small amount of chlorine is added to the water for hygiene purposes, but this is not harmful to the environment and it does not take away any of the curative minerals found in the thermal waters. There are three pools, each with various degrees of water temperature. The pool closest to the eye gets the hottest water, and so the more temperate water is pushed into the second pool and therefore the third pool, which is furthest away from the eye has the lowest water temperature. There are jacuzzis found in all the chalets and there is also a private pool for hotel guests as well as an island swimming pool with a bar, which is also restricted to the use of the hotel guests. There are three day visitor pools available.¹⁷⁴

When asked if some of the guests still believed in the curative powers of the water, Mr. A. Schoeman, general manager of Avalon Springs resort, mentioned that there were some guests who had been visiting the resort since it opened in 1983 because of the thermal mineral water. He has also received letters and testimonials of people who had experienced healing from the curative waters. When asked if he believed in the waters' healing powers, Schoeman said he did and that the water "pulled the tiredness out of you, it regenerates you."¹⁷⁵ As was seen earlier, when the Avalon Springs opened it was still during Apartheid, but Dieter Sowade decided to open the resort to all races, and his was one of the first resorts to do so. Today the resort has clients from all race groups, across South Africa and even abroad. Avalon Springs also has a large Muslim client base who visits the springs during the festive holidays and many of them had bought timeshares so they return each year to enjoy the thermal waters. The resort's target market is families, and they want people to be able to enjoy the thermal waters, no matter what their age. They have also tried to make the hotel accommodation as reasonable as possible, because they want people from all walks of life to be able to enjoy the waters. They had reviewed their tariffs and had moved away from the per person charge to rather charging per unit, and business has picked up after that change. The resort also has international clients from as far as France, England and China and these guests come especially for the thermal mineral water since they still have a very strong belief in the curative nature of thermal spring waters.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

Keeping with modern times, there is also a health spa and a gymnasium available at the resort and can be found on the fifth floor of the Hotel. The resort does therefore cater for wellness tourism, as many of the guests visit the resort to relax and get rid of stress and at the resort there is both the new modern therapies like massaging available, but also the age old thermal water cure on their doorstep, giving guests best of both worlds and they can combine these two treatments for optimum results. When asked what the thermal springs mean to Montagu when it comes to tourism and being a tourist attraction, Schoeman mentioned that the thermal springs were still very important to the town, since not only was the thermal springs the reason for the town's existence, but it also drew in tourists from afar. Although there are now many other tourist attractions in the area, he felt that the thermal springs were still one of the main ones. With the flood of 2008 the resort was closed from November till March 2009 and the town could feel the loss since there was no tourism and there were no business. There are a large amount of self-catering units at the resort, and a kind of cross fertilisation happens when the visitors to the resort buy their holiday groceries in the town, and the businesses in town is supported. The heritage of the thermal springs is still very important and Schoeman feels that if the thermal springs were closed, the hotel would have to close too since the springs are the drawing card of the resort. At the resort itself the heritage of the thermal springs are present for all to see in photographs and mementoes that are framed and found in the halls of the hotel and the rest of the complex, which serves as a reminder to visitors of those who had come before them and who had taken the waters many years ago.¹⁷⁷

When asked about what job opportunities the resort offered the community, it was found that all the staff were locals from the area, so the resort did in fact help the local economy by not just boosting tourism but also offering jobs to the locals. Peak season is throughout the year and most of the time the hotel is 85-90% full. Especially weekends are busy and the hotel is usually full to capacity. There are also day visitors to the thermal springs and as many as 300-500 visitors have visited the resort over a weekend. In December 2010 there was a day when 1100 day visitors passed through the gate in just one day and the total amount of day visitors for December 2010 was 8580 visitors. Marketing is done on a "return business strategy" where it is believed that clients has to be treated well, which will result in him returning to the resort and also telling friends about the good experience he had at the resort. Schoeman does

¹⁷⁷ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

not believe in writing articles about the resort and prefers the word of mouth option when it comes to marketing and believes that a relationship has to be built between the resort and its clients that will ensure their return.¹⁷⁸

The resort also has a very impressive and informative website where there is a clear focus on the family since there is child entertainment available. Parents are encouraged to sleep in while their children can enjoy themselves on the “Super Tube,” swim in the hot pool and play minigolf and some arcade games even before breakfast. But the parents are not forgotten and for mom there is a spa where she can be pampered and for dad there is a bar where sports can be watched or a round of golf on the golf course. Therefore the resort is fun for the whole family and it includes the healing thermal waters as well. The history of the thermal springs and its curative waters are also included on the website, which would inform potential visitors of the legend of the curative waters of the thermal mineral spring. The website does cover all the different criteria of the resort and there are even pictures of the rooms available for potential guests to see the new and improved accommodation. Beautiful pictures of the resort itself are also included and the feel of the resort is that of a tropical getaway. Nature is still used as well and the spectacular views of the mountains from the pools with the *dassies* sitting on the rock walls nearby and the birds chirping in the trees does give one a sense of calmness and tranquilly.¹⁷⁹ When asked if there were any plans for the future, Schoeman mentioned that maintaining the resort was their first priority and that they would also be giving the staff some additional training to ensure that guests receive the best possible service and experience the resort could offer.¹⁸⁰

Therefore after many trials and tribulations with floods and fires the thermal springs of Montagu continues to attract people to the Avalon Springs Resort. The thermal springs were the reason why the little town was established and through the years it kept giving the town a way of surviving through drawing tourists to the town, ensuring that Montagu became one of the most popular tourists destinations and from where other attractions were also incorporated to enhance the tourism value of the town. The healing waters the spring is known for are still used by young and old for enjoyment and relaxation. One would however be able to appreciate the history of the thermal spring in the town’s heritage more if there were more

¹⁷⁸ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

¹⁷⁹ www.avalonsprings.co.za, 13 August 2010.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011.

information on it in the town museum, where the only mention of the springs can be seen in the photos of the 2008 flood. Luckily there are some historic photos available in the resort itself so that visitors can see for themselves how the Montagu thermal spring resort had changed and developed into the Avalon Springs resort in the present. Tourism is extremely important for Montagu and with the Avalon Springs resort that keeps developing and staying with the modern times, the town can be sure of a tourist attraction that will serve it well for many more years to come just as it did in the past.

Embracing change: The Baths and the new generation

By the early 1980s it was clear that it was time for the next generation of the Hall family to take over the management of The Baths. As was seen previously, the management of The Baths under Harry and Margaret Hall was rather stagnant and there were no real new developments to keep up with the new tourist market. This changed in the late 1970s when the fourth generation became involved in the management of The Baths. It was clear to the new generation that some “drastic measures” had to be taken if the resort was to be able to compete with the new modern standards. Allan McGregor Hall was Harry and Margaret Hall’s son and after completing his training at Elsenburg Agricultural College he started working at The Baths. Allan and his brother in law Izak Schalk van Niekerk worked together to come to grips with the management of the resort and Alan married Hazel Sylvia Osborn in October 1980. It was with this new addition to the family that a new era at The Baths was to start.¹⁸¹

Improvements had to be made and there was started with the bathhouse. The original bathhouse was made of stone and the baths were Roman styled and sunken into the ground. The bathhouse was built in 1905 by James McGregor and his sons. The water from the spring would run continuously into the baths and out the drain, so for a bath one just had to plug the hole with a big wooden bathplug and the bath would fill up with hot thermal water. There were five bathrooms in the bathhouse and some of the baths had names like “Krompyp” and “Kolberg.” It is unfortunate that this historic bathhouse was in fact torn down in 1982 resulting in the loss of an historic monument. In its place a “gray face brick building” was

¹⁸¹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 76-78.

built. The new baths were all lined with different coloured mosaic but unfortunately this was difficult to maintain and in 1986 it was replaced by acrylic baths. Each new bathroom was given its own name which included “Kolberg, Krompyp; Oudekraal; Olifants Bad and De Tuin.”¹⁸² The water in the Kolberg bath would remain at a constant temperature of 43 degrees Celsius while the rest of the bathrooms would have had more temperate water. In keeping with the improvements the original swimming pool, which was made out of concrete was removed and replaced with “gunite concrete.” The guests could enjoy the pool by night with the removal of the ticket kiosk. The reception area and later the shop as well, were added to the Government House and the care taker of the resort was given the new title of manager. With the improvements to the resort more people came to visit The Baths and it became clear that the accommodation needed to be upgraded. This was started by adding a new ablution block in 1983 at the caravan park. By 1984 even more change came when the “new company of which the younger generation were partners, The Baths (Pty) Ltd” was formed, giving them a larger “sense of ownership.”¹⁸³

Decision regarding the future of the resort had to be made, and “the concept of anti-commercialisation was proposed.” Even though some changes had to be made, it was felt that on some elements there could not be compromised. These elements included the peaceful and tranquil atmosphere that was found at The Baths and there was decided not to disturb it by allowing televisions and telephones, but other modern “creature comforts” like microwaves were allowed. It was believed that the “less commercialisation took place, the more unique The Baths would be.” Visitors to The Baths had remarked that this kind of concept has led to them getting to know their fellow guests, and friendships could be formed around the thermal waters, just like in the early days of the resort when all the visitors would get together and tell stories and have a good time. By staying true to the anti-commercialization legacy, the authentic feel of The Baths resort has stayed intact and has become the resort’s guest drawing card.¹⁸⁴

The Baths resort still had a policy of closing down for three months during the winter, usually so that repairs to the infrastructure could be done. But by 1986 this policy was revised, since one could imagine that a thermal mineral water resort would actually be very popular during

¹⁸² H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 78-79.

¹⁸³ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁸⁴ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p. 80.

winter months. The repairs would be done throughout the year and it was decided that The Baths would be fully functioning all year round.¹⁸⁵

As was mentioned, the resort, after all the new changes were put into place, had to upgrade its accommodation for the larger amounts of tourists. Three new face brick chalets were therefore built in the kloof. The *Dwarsgebou* was the first building to be upgraded, and this time the directors of the company decided to get professional help and the architects John Rennie and Pat Riley's help were asked in the matter. After they saw the newly built chalets, they were concerned that it would not fit into the resort setting and there was decided to "change the aesthetics of the chalets" so that it would fit better with the resort's theme. All these alterations were done in 1987 and also included altering the two existing chalets known as "Mini Ha-Ha and Hiawatha." When these changes were done the chalets were renamed to reflect the history of The Baths better and the chalets were named after previous owners which included "Schalk Willem Burger, John Sharp; Richard Grishold; Jan Cruywagen and Johannes Wiese."¹⁸⁶

After the chalets were done the architects could get back to working on the *Dwarsgebou* which was the most primitive and outdated. The alterations started in 1988 and included creating a double story as well as six duplex units, three on each side and in the middle a communal room. In 1989 the alterations were done and a "grand dinner" was held to celebrate the opening, and even the head of "Captour, presently known as Western Cape Tourism, John Robert was a guest speaker." The shop was moved towards the pool area so that it was closer to the activities. The shop was moved into a Nissen style building that was once used by "servants and non-whites." This increased the size of the shop and also made it easier accessible to visitors while they partook in activities and this "doubled its turnover."¹⁸⁷ The next building to receive a face lift was the Victorian building and in 1991 work on this was started by John Rennie and his new partner Gregg Goddard. They turned the rooms into flats and another storey was added as well. While the Victorian building was upgraded the second bathhouse was upgraded too when the "old Roman-styled baths" were taken out and new round spa baths were put in their place where the water could be regulated with cold water.

¹⁸⁵ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 80-81.

¹⁸⁶ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p. 81.

¹⁸⁷ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p. 82.

The improvements were coming along nicely and in 1996 it was time to give The Baths resort its own sewage line that was “installed down the road and out the resort.”¹⁸⁸

“The Western Cape’s Best-Kept Secret,” this was the way The Baths were described in 1987. But an historian Jill Baikoff created a small brochure which included historical information. But as the tourist market grew, the need arose for another, more capturing brochure. This took place in 1992 with the publication of the first tourist driven The Baths brochure where tourists could get the necessary information, but also see photos of the beautiful resort so to entice them and make them want to visit the tranquil beauty of The Baths.¹⁸⁹

In the 1980s there were changes in the Apartheid system which saw the relaxing of the Public Amenities Act, which only allowed white people to visit public facilities which included The Baths. The rules were so strict that a United States Ambassador who wanted to visit The Baths was not allowed in because he was black. A breakthrough came in 1989 when municipalities were pressured into relaxing that specific law and in 1990 this law was revoked. According to Hazel Hall, The Baths was one of the first resorts to open its doors to all races, but this new change did not suit everybody and many of the frequent visitors to The Baths were unhappy with this new move. Many of them threatened never to return, while others were sure that the resort would now be ruined. The Baths themselves were not prepared for this rise in clientele, with especially the day visitors that became too much to handle. The infrastructure at The Baths could not accommodate the rise in visitors and the overcrowding became a sudden problem. Therefore The Baths had no other choice but to cap the number of visitors who could enter the resort by regulating the amount of day visitors that was allowed. With these new changes The Baths could once again function better and many of the “old – time” visitors did indeed return once again to their beloved resort “after accepting the inevitable change.”¹⁹⁰

Allan Hall, son of Harry Hall and part of the younger generations who took over The Baths. Alan was very passionate about the resort and wanted it to be as good possible. He also wanted to focus on tourism and wanted to develop and upgrade The Baths so that one day he could pass it on to his children as a family legacy. Tourism and the thermal mineral waters

¹⁸⁸ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 82-83.

¹⁸⁹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p. 83.

¹⁹⁰ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 83-84.

therefore became the main focus for Allan. To increase the leisure activities and entertainments at The Baths the idea of hiking trails were brought in. This way both the wellness and eco-tourism markets could be accessed. The first trail named “The Buchu Hiking Trail” would take hikers up the slopes of the Warm Water Berg in a figure of eight. By 1989 the mountain hut that was found at “Mesyn se werf” was rebuilt for accommodation for hikers to use when they used a new hiking path that was to be made that stretched from the resort to the hut through *fynbos*. Overnight stays in this hut would mean another tourist activity would be available to visitors at The Baths. To ensure a comfortable stay for visitors “windows, bunk beds and a corrugated-iron roof” was added to the hut and an interesting new feature was found when the old storeroom was turned into a “Honeymoon Suite” which included a double bed and a long drop was also built. The hike would have been about four kilometres from The Baths. Unfortunately disaster struck and the storeroom and long drop were destroyed in a fire started by children who wanted to coax a snake from under a bush. The fire that raged from this incident destroyed 22 kilometres including the hut. This had not been rebuilt because its popularity waned.¹⁹¹

Communication was also upgraded at The Baths when in 1993 they got their own telephone line, since previously an old “party line” which was also used by some 10 other farms, were used and that meant that there was always a good chance that the line was busy. After 1990 there was also a problem with people who called to make bookings, because with the increase of visitors, more phone calls were made and the one line at reception was not enough resulting in frustration among clients. With the new telephone line “fax machines, computers and modems followed.” Unfortunately an outdated line was installed and this resulted in slow calls and even more delays. When cell phones became popular cell phone companies were eager to install a mast so that there would be cell phone reception. The directors of The Baths all agreed that this would not be in line with the anti-commercialisation policy that The Baths chose to uphold. When a questionnaire was sent to the clients of the resort to ask how they would feel about having cell phone reception at The Baths many agreed that it would take away the calm and tranquil atmosphere and voted no on the installation of a cell phone tower.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 86- 87.

¹⁹² H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 87-88.

With the increase in visitors it was realised that more activities and entertainment would have to be provided to ensure the needs of all the visitors were fulfilled. Child friendly entertainment was also being included into the resort.¹⁹³ A trampoline and a pool table were added, but there was still a problem. Although the summer months that had become the “low season” there amount of cold water available at the resort was not enough for the guests’ needs. Guests were also asking that a cold water pool to be built, and the directors struggled to figure out if the pool would enhance the resort or not and if the cost to put it in will be covered by attendance. It was conclude that if by adding a cold water pool “would increase occupancy by 13 % it would be a worthwhile venture. When the pool was finished, just in time for the summer holidays, it showed that it was indeed a worthwhile project when the occupancy rating were so good that it surprised everyone.¹⁹⁴

By 1995 The Baths were passed to the next generation with the formation of The Baths Heights (Pty) Ltd Company. All three of Harry and Margaret Hall’s children were now shareholders in the company and it was the fourth generation who would take The Baths resort into the new and modern South Africa.¹⁹⁵ Alan’s sister Lila’s husband Izak helps Alan in operating the company and the middle sister Jean, who lives in Australia had decided to sell her share and by the time of publication in 2003 negotiations were underway.

In the 1990s with the rise of health and wellness tourism The Baths employed a masseuse to satisfy that market demand. Theresa Wallace was the masseuse and she ran her business from one of the chalets named Skilpad. Unfortunately although some of the guests did support her, the venture was not really a success and the service was terminated in 1995. The chalet was renovated and turned into a new accommodation unit that become very popular. Another building that was turned into accommodation was the little red brick cottage that was once used by William Danster and his wife Mickey. Both of them had worked at The Baths and after they had retired the little cottage was named after him and turned into chalet accommodation in 2000.¹⁹⁶

As the resort grew and more visitors came there was a shortage of romantic accommodation for couples. To rectify the situation a small chalet was built on the mountain side so that it

¹⁹³ Interview with Manie Gordon, manager of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011.

¹⁹⁴ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, p. 88.

¹⁹⁵ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁹⁶ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 89-90.

overlooked the valley in 2000. By adding a small gazebo covered spa next to the chalet a feeling of romance was evoked. This little chalet was named Wild Olive because it was surrounded by wild olive trees. In 2001 further down the valley another chalet, Sugar Bush was built. At the resort there was also a camp site which was enlarged and a new ablution block and outside shower was added. Because tourism was experiencing such a huge boost more accommodation at The Baths was needed so three more chalets outside the kloof had been constructed. All three these chalets also have their own private spas. “Taaibos, Klipkers and Sandolien were named after the indigenous trees that surround them. To cater for the family market, two old labourers’ cottages had been turned into large family friendly accommodation and were named Willy and Jimmy, after the two McGregor brothers who died in the flu epidemic of 1918.¹⁹⁷

With the rise in visitors the cold water pool could not handle the strain, and the need for more swimming pools arose. In 2002 the rock pool was constructed underneath the waterfall by Alan, as well as two little spa baths which contains lukewarm water. With the problem of the amount of pools solved, it was time to get rid of the Boarding House in 2002. The building had been built by Trygve Morch Olsen and unfortunately it was not done very well and was therefore becoming rather unsafe. Permission from five government departments, including the South African Heritage and Resource Agency, had to be obtained before the building was allowed to be demolished. One of the biggest projects to happen at The Baths was completed in 2003, and that was their very own restaurant. Although the directors were worried about this development, it was realised that in order to stay in feeling with the tourism sector and attracting foreign visitors, a restaurant was needed. The restaurant and new reception area was completed in time for the centenary celebrations that took place at The Baths, celebrating a 100 years of the resort being in hands of the McGregor family.¹⁹⁸

In 2005 the Olsen building was erected on the site of the old Boarding house that had been torn down in 2002. In its place more luxurious and up market accommodation was built which included 6 self-catering flats, each with their own private thermal water baths. The building was named the Olsen building, in honour of Trygve Morch Olsen, who was at one stage a

¹⁹⁷ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 90-91.

¹⁹⁸ H. Hall: *Taking the Waters: The history of The Olifants River Warm Bathes, Western Cape*, pp. 92-93.

manager of the resort, and was also married to one of the McGregor sisters and therefore part of the family and the history of The Baths.¹⁹⁹

In 2011 The Baths were still flourishing. When it comes to water management, it is done very effectively. The water from the thermal swimming pool and the private baths flows into an underground channel, which turns into a natural little river flowing underneath the restaurant. This little river then flows past the camp sites and to the farm at the bottom of the river, from where it is collected in dams. The mineral water is then cooled down in these dams and is then used for irrigation in the orange groves, which means none of the precious water goes to waste.²⁰⁰

The clientele through the years has not really changed that much. Presently the ratio is about 50% Afrikaans and 50% English speaking visitors. Previously the Afrikaans speaking visitors overshadowed the rest. There are also small Muslim client bases that visit The Baths. The new target market for the resort is families, although it used to be older people. But the focus has shifted from health to relaxation and holiday and therefore child friendly and family friendly activities were brought to The Baths. The resort is mainly visited from people from the city like Cape Town, or people from the West Coast. International tourists make out about 20% of their clientele. Marketing is done by word of mouth, the internet and websites and by hosting specials during the week when the resort is less busy. These specials are advertised in magazines and newspapers. The peak season has shifted to winter and the months of August and September, but the resort is very busy from April to December. In January and February it is the lowest season, because of the high heat.²⁰¹ The website is very informative and gives a brief history of the resort. In keeping with modern times, there are also internet hot spots available at the McGregor restaurant if a guest needed to use the internet. This shows that the resort is keeping up with the times without sacrificing the character of The Baths. The chemical analysis of the water is still given to inform guests on all the minerals that can be found in the healing waters.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Hazel Hall, owner of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011. & www.thebaths.co.za, 3 February 2011.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Manie Gordon, manager of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011.

²⁰¹ Interview with Manie Gordon, manager of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011.

²⁰² www.thebaths.co.za, 3 February 2011.

Tourism in town has definitely been boosted and helped by the presence of the thermal water springs at The Baths resort. This can be seen when looked at the estimated 30 000 visitors to the area per year. The Baths has been an economic and monetary injection for the town, since visitors who stay in especially the self-catering accommodation would use the town's shops to buy their groceries and many of the other guests at the resort also make use of the town shops. Job opportunities were given especially to the farm labourers working on the farm connected to the resort, but there are also some local town's folk who are employed at The Baths.²⁰³

When it comes to the heritage at The Baths, it is something that is very close to the owners' hearts because it is not simply the story of a resort, it is their family legacy. That is also the reason why they did not want to commercialise the resort, so that as much of the old time charm of the resort could stay intact and be experienced by their guests. By not becoming commercial, the heritage, history and character of the resort is kept save. The accommodation is up to standard, but visitors can still feel that they are close to nature and experience the tranquillity and peace that only nature can bring. The heritage of The Baths can still be seen in old photographs that hang in the restaurant and Manie Gordon, the manager of the resort has two old doors in his house which contains carvings of names and dates of people who visited The Baths in the 1800s.²⁰⁴ When asked if the visitors still believed in the waters, Mr. Gordon explained that there were older visitors who still believed in the curative properties of the thermal waters. He remembers two occasions where visitors had told him tales of healing. The one was told to him by an elderly gentleman, who had been visiting The Baths since childhood with his parents. As a young child he suffered from polio and he was in a wheelchair. One day his friends pushed him to the baths, which were still the sunken roman styled baths. After sitting in the water for a while, he surprised his friends by walking out of the bath to a big tree in the middle of the resort. He was totally convinced that the water had helped him to find relief and that is why he had returned for many years to take the waters again. The second story was told to Mr. Gordon by the mother of a child with a bad skin condition. They returned to The Baths each year and stayed for up to a week or two, because they were sure that nothing else helped their child as much as the thermal waters found at The Baths and they said that each time when they left their child's skin would much better than

²⁰³ Interview with Manie Gordon, manager of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Manie Gordon, manager of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011.

before. So far future plans just included maintaining the resort in the most pristine manner possible and to deliver excellent service to their clients.²⁰⁵

The historic Olifants River Baths had grown and develop in the hands of the McGregor family, to whom the resort was and very important asses. This love has been passed on from generation to generation ensuring that in each generation there would be someone who would look after the resort and its healing thermal waters. Although there was decided on a policy of anti-commercialisation, this did not mean that The Baths were stuck in time, it just meant that it would feel that way to visitors when they strolled passed the Victorian building, in no danger of hearing a telephone or television. Even though the authentic feel of the resort was experienced on the outside, on the inside the accommodation was up to standard with many modern convinces at hand. Slowly but surely The Baths grew as the popularity of the resort resulted in the rise of visitors and new accommodation as well as entertainment was needed. The resort also grew more child friendly to satisfy the new family target market. With the erection of the Olsen building luxury was brought to The Baths, but the building still blended with the back to nature atmosphere the resort was selling. People could unwind, and did not have to worry about any of their everyday problems while relaxing in the pool. Even though the spa concept did not work, it was mentioned that there was no reason why it could not be attempted again in future, and there will be looked into it then.²⁰⁶ The Baths has brought tourism to the town of Citrusdal and has played a role in the erection of the town as well. The thermal spring had been around even before the town was established and it has kept helping the town to attract more and more tourist to partake in the various leisure activities the area has to offer. The Baths had survived the change in the thermal water industry by subtly changing some of the elements of the resort, but by keeping to the biggest one, nature, it has established itself in both wellness and eco-tourism, and flourished.

Healthy Holidays:

How the belief in the thermal waters still influence guests to thermal mineral spring resorts.

As there were looked at how the thermal mineral spring resorts had to adapt to survive the new leisure revolution, one could see that in all three of the thermal spring resorts large

²⁰⁵ Interview with Manie Gordon, manager of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Hazel Hall, owner of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011.

acclaim and emphasis was still placed on the curative nature of their waters. One can therefore not help but wonder, how big an impact that information still made on thermal spring resort visitors. Mark Boekstein looked at this phenomenon in his Master thesis *The Role of Health in the Motivation to visit Mineral Spa Resorts in the Western Cape*. He mentions that in the 1980s there was a change, a shift in the way traditional thermal mineral springs were used and this was because of the emergence of health tourism.²⁰⁷ It became clear that during this shift the focus which for so many years had been on the use of the thermal mineral waters in treatments to combat and cure disease had been pushed aside and that the focus was now on having treatment that would prevent illness as well as beauty and health treatments experienced in an calm and relaxing “leisure atmosphere.” In the new health and wellness tourism market the focus was on a new ailment, stress. Therefore the emphasis was put on “relaxation as well as the release of stress and tension.” Boekstein does mention that the thermal spring resorts in the Western Cape had already changed into leisure resorts in the past, and that can be seen clearly in the history of the thermal spring resorts.²⁰⁸

What Boekstein did in his paper was to work out if the belief in the mineral waters were still the main motivation for tourists to visit the thermal mineral resorts in the Western Cape. This was done by collecting data from spa visitors themselves and the paper was completed at the end of 2001. When asked why the thermal mineral springs were visited, 56% of the respondents chose the “relaxation, lack of stress, peaceful atmosphere” option while 32% visited for the thermal mineral springs.²⁰⁹ When respondents were asked if they were aware of the fact that swimming in thermal spring waters were seen as healthy 98% of them were aware of that fact. 28% experienced relief in pain, 12% felt relief from stress and 6% mentioned that it helped with their rheumatism. After extensive research done by looking at different patterns and how people responded about why they did visit the thermal minerals spa resorts, Boekstein found that health still was a rather important motivator in people’s

²⁰⁷ M.S. Boekstein: “The Role of Health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape,” M.A. Thesis for the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Western Cape, November 2001, p. 8.

²⁰⁸ M.S. Boekstein: “The Role of Health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape,” M.A. Thesis for the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Western Cape, November 2001, p. 28.

²⁰⁹ M.S. Boekstein: “The Role of Health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape,” M.A. Thesis for the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Western Cape, November 2001, p. 37.

decisions for visiting thermal mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape.²¹⁰ He also found that although many of the visitors knew that swimming in thermal mineral water was good for one's health, they rarely knew why or what was in the water that made it so curative. Boekstein concluded that he had found that originally the thermal mineral spring resorts were established because of the curative water, but that as time passed they slowly moved into the "family leisure resort" market. Even though they were not necessarily used for healing the ill anymore, that idea of the curative waters still "form[ed] [an] important part of the motivation of domestic tourists" to visit the thermal mineral spring resorts.²¹¹ This is evident if one listens to all the different managers and owners of the three thermal mineral spring resorts. All of them mentioned that although the belief might not be as strong as it once was, many visitors still visited the curative waters to find relief.²¹²

After looking at the three thermal springs of Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal, one could clearly see how they all adapted and changed to fit into the new milieu that was health and wellness tourism. The Caledon thermal spring was brought back to glory again after many years with first the erection of the Overberger Hotel and spa and then the rise of the Casino and hotel, and even though modern spa treatments were made available, the thermal waters were still honoured as the biggest drawing card and its heritage was protected. The old water cure was combined with the new modern advances, and so a atmosphere was created where both the history and the present could be experienced in one and where visitors could still experience the historic curative waters. By including the water as such a strong element in the layout of the resort, it was ensured that the water would always feature in some way and reminded those who visited of the great gift they had in their area. The Caledon thermal spring resort found a way to move from the pure health market to the more modern leisure market without losing its thermal spring drawing card.

²¹⁰ M.S. Boekstein: "The Role of Health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape," M.A. Thesis for the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Western Cape, November 2001, pp. 37-38, 66.

²¹¹ M.S. Boekstein: "The Role of Health in the motivation to visit mineral spa resorts in the Western Cape," M.A. Thesis for the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Western Cape, November 2001, p. 70.

²¹² Interviews with Hazel Hall, owner of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011, Manie Gordon, manager of The Baths Resort, 8 March 2011; André Schoeman, General Manager of Avalon Springs Resort, 17 March 2011; Rudi Coetzee, Operational Manager and Mark Ross, Hotel Manager at The Caledon Casino, Hotel & Spa, 15 Feb 2011.

Montagu's thermal spring had to compete with nature as the resort was left devastated after the 1981 flood. But luckily the thermal springs were important to the town, and the thermal baths were quickly redesigned and opened again for the use of visitors. The resort itself was restored to its former glory through the vision of Dieter Sowade, who started to slowly build up the hotel, piece by piece and again turned the Montagu thermal springs into a renowned modern but also family friendly resort. Just like Caledon, the family market was the target group for the Avalon Springs resort and the thermal springs was still seen as the major drawing card and was therefore opened up to young and old so that visitors from all ages could enjoy the healing thermal waters. Avalon Springs also included a modern spa at their resort, and like Caledon, the resort offered the best of both worlds to the guest in form of the bubbly thermal waters and the more modern conveniences found at the spa. This made the transition from a pure health resort to a healthy holiday resort easier, because although there were other holiday entertainments on offer as well, the thermal springs still remained the main focus at the resort.

The Baths in Citrusdal had to deal with a change of management, where after becoming stagnant, the resort had to undergo many new developments in order for them to become competitive in the leisure resort market. The Baths decided to focus nature, which next to its thermal mineral springs, was its second biggest asset. From the start the new management agreed that a policy of anti-commercialisation would be followed so that the character and the tranquil atmosphere of The Baths resort would never be put in jeopardy. Although new developments were made to push The Baths into the modern leisure market, it never went to the extent of interrupting the rural natural setting of the resort. As time passed the interior of the accommodation was upgraded and the exterior maintained as close as possible to the original. New buildings were also built in such a way that it did not clash with the character of the resort. The Baths decided to focus on the family market, as well as the eco-tourism market because they were surrounded by nature. This made The Baths resort a bit different from both Caledon and Montagu, where The Baths had a more natural feeling, with no cell phone reception, no televisions in the rooms and an atmosphere that reminded one of a nature break away. For two short periods they also incorporated modern spa treatments like massages, but it did not work as well as was hoped, although it is still a possibility that a more permanent spa treatment centre could one day be opened at The Baths. So The Baths also made the transition from a purely health orientated to a more family friendly nature resort, where the

historic thermal spring waters could still be enjoyed together with the tranquil peace of nature without any commercial interruptions.

Therefore each of the resort had found a way of keeping their thermal mineral spring the main focus of their resort and by moving with the times and the new leisure movement, almost like a chameleon changing colour to fit to its environment, the thermal mineral water resorts simply changed their outlook and added some extra elements and so weathered the storm of the new era in the leisure industry. The focus was shifted from health to healthy holidays and relaxation and by combining the old with the new they endured and became new players in the new and more modern leisure market.

Conclusion:

Thermal mineral springs can be described as healing fountains of life. This description shows the importance thermal springs enjoyed since the ancient times and how through the ages the thermal waters gave people hope and health. Water played an important role in human culture on a both spiritual and physical level and there has been a belief that the use of water played a part in a longer and healthier life. The Greeks and Romans used cold and thermal mineral water for healing and hygiene, and in many instances the waters were linked to gods. The Roman Baths had two distinct purposes, which were either religious in nature and used for healing or secular where bathing was done for social purposes. Thermal springs were always used for healing, while heated water were used in the more secular bathing houses. The Romans had cure centres like the resort found at Baiae, where ailments were said to be cured. The ruins of many old Roman thermal spring baths were found later in European countries like Britain, France and Germany and these countries continued using the thermal water for healing. In the Victorian era the water cure was revived again after a period of decline and gathered followers under especially royalty and the wealthy, but as time passed the middle and lower classed also joined in the curative use of the thermal water. The water cure achieved medical legitimacy and was still used in the above mentioned countries till the early to mid-1900s.

The strong beliefs in the curative powers of the waters were also passed on to the colonies these countries colonised and that were how the belief in the water cure culture was preserved and kept alive. One of these colonies that were introduced to the water cure culture was South Africa when the country was colonised by Britain, where a strong belief in the taking of the waters were present. By the time Britain colonised the Cape Colony, it had already been in the hands of the Dutch, who were told by indigenous groups of the thermal mineral springs that was present in the country. There was a large group of travellers from abroad who visited the thermal mineral springs in the Cape Colony and brought with them the knowledge of taking the waters and upon learning of the Colony's thermal mineral springs, used it as traditionally as they could and left some sort of blue print for future visitors to follow. The colony offered visitors health found in both the climate and the thermal mineral waters, and it was especially those with respiratory ailments in Britain that travelled to the country in search of relief and a cure. South Africa became known as a health resort and turned into the last

hope for many patients who suffered from this ailment. The cure was found in the climate and air and South Africa became known not only for its healing climate but also its thermal spring waters and combined, these two elements gave the Cape Colony and South Africa the reputation of a health resort. With the influx of patients and invalids who travelled to especially the Karoo district which was known for the curative effects of its fresh air, the still primitive tourism sector in the Cape Colony was stimulated with the rise in accommodation that was on offer for the new tourist market. Towns like Ceres and Matjiesfontein became known as health resorts, and Matjiesfontein became especially popular with British visitors.

Guidebooks singing the praises of the South African climate and thermal springs were also published, reaching a wider audience as well as new potential tourists to the country. The importance of the thermal springs were seen by the list of thermal mineral springs that was compiled in 1884 by the Government to familiarise itself with the number of thermal springs the Cape Colony possessed. What was marketed here was the climate and the supposed benefits of the thermal mineral springs were added in an early attempt to project South Africa as a potential tourist destination.

As visits to the springs increased during the 1700s primitive accommodation was provided. Often the thermal spring sites in South Africa consisted of nothing more than bathing holes in the ground. As the different thermal spring water resorts developed gradually conditions improved. The development of the Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal thermal mineral springs were followed from the 1700s up to the 1900s. During this time period the resorts slowly but surely started to grow and became more established. As the popularity of the thermal mineral springs developed, the resorts were instrumental in the founding of the towns that were situated near them. It was at the end of the 1800s that the resorts of Caledon and Montagu fell into the hands of custodians that would transform it into highly successful thermal mineral spring resorts, by the Walsh Brothers and the New Cape Central Railway Company respectively. The Baths resort at Citrusdal also experienced a change of hands when it was bought by James McGregor in 1903, and he turned the resort into a successful bathing establishment. All three the resorts were therefore in a good position to flourish in the modern age of the 1900s. The Caledon and Montagu resorts became modern and started to include treatments, well known from abroad, at their establishments, showing the progress these resorts made as the tourist industry was developing. They even started to compete with one another for the title of the best spa in South Africa in the 1900s. Each of the three resorts

developed uniquely and therefore each had a different look and feel. Although there were many setbacks with the Caledon Sanatorium that burned down in 1946, Montagu Sanatorium being flooded in 1981 and The Baths in Citrusdal battling change in management in the early 1980s, all three thermal springs fought for survival after these setbacks.

The ancient belief in the therapeutic powers of the thermal waters can be traced back rather far in medical history. Quacks, which were seen as charlatans selling fake medical cures and advice and thrived from the end of the thirteenth century, started to include the water cure into their repertoire. This did create some negative connotations with the water cure. But by the mid-1800s the thermal spas had once again become popular in Britain, and there were specific rituals and rules created in the way the thermal water had to be taken. But the spas were not used exclusively for healing purposes anymore, it also became the site of gambling and other entertainment. South Africa also developed its own tradition concerning the rules and regulation when the thermal bathing culture and customs came to South Africa and it was changed to suit the surroundings and the country. These rules did have some roots in the Dutch and British customs, but also development in its own unique way. The South African spas were visited for an extended period for health purposes, and the entertainment element only came at a later stage when the resorts started to focus on healthy holidays from about the 1900s. Drinking the waters was considered just as important as the bathing in the thermal waters and the rules focussed strictly on the time spent in the water, the temperature of the water, the time of day the baths were taken and the fact that the patient had to remain perfectly still. The water cure also had three intensity settings known as the strong, moderate and weak water cure. There were also rules concerning food and drink which was allowed during the water cure treatment. Transporting a patient to a thermal mineral spring resort for curing became a social outing, with families joining the invalid, and so spa communities were formed. As this practised became more popular, entertainment was later provided to healthy visitors. There was also a strong belief in the curative properties the water possessed and evidence of this can be seen in the many testimonies written up in pamphlets published about the thermal mineral spring resorts. Many different diseases believed to be cured by the thermal mineral waters included rheumatism and gout.

In order for the thermal waters to be legitimised as a medical cure, scientific analysis was conducted and published to show patients exactly what minerals were present in the thermal mineral waters. It was also important for patients to know what the waters contained because

there was a belief that certain minerals cured certain ailments and also that certain kinds of thermal waters worked better than others for healing different ills. In the early 1900s radium was discovered in the thermal mineral water and so scientists concluded that it was in fact the radium which could be credited for the healing powers the waters possessed and that the minerals had a more of an auxiliary function. Water analysis tables as well as the amount of radium that could be found in the water were published in the pamphlets concerning the thermal mineral springs to inform the public of the different healing qualities of the different waters found at the resorts. People as late as the 1970s still had some sort of belief in the waters, even though the use of the spa resorts was already more directed towards holidays and pleasure as opposed to their supposed curative dimension.

By the 1980s with the leisure and tourism revolution the three thermal spring resorts of Caledon, Montagu and Citrusdal had to make a choice. They had to adapt to the new and modern tourists who were looking for a modern styled spa. These tourists fell under the new leisure market that focussed on health and wellness. The Caledon resort acquired a casino, hotel and new modern spa treatments and the Montagu resort gave visitors the chance to stay in a four star hotel with modern treatments while visitors could still enjoying the historic healing waters at both these resorts. Both of these resorts decided to embrace the new market and by combining the old and the new spa cultures gave their guests the chance of experiencing the best of both worlds. What made them stand out was the fact that they were in fact offering their patrons real natural thermal spring water and not just heated water, therefore there was an extra healing element connected to these resorts. The Baths resort near Citrusdal decided to keep to its natural roots with their anti-commercialization policy. Guests were treated to the thermal waters in various different ways that included a swimming pool as well as jacuzzis. Visitors could go and relax in these waters while not being bothered by the modern outside world and could recharge and relax in a natural and tranquil atmosphere. Even though each of the modern spa resorts had their own theme, they were all focused on the family market, making it possible for young and old to experience the thermal waters together.

In conclusion, when one looks at the history of thermal mineral springs in South Africa, these national assets did indeed help to stimulate the tourist industry in the country. They are truly part of the South African heritage because as was seen, not only were the waters used by colonials or Afrikaners, it was also used by the indigenous groups that lived in the Cape

Colony and that these thermal springs were already common knowledge to them. They are said to have shared their knowledge of the curative properties these waters possessed with the European colonialists.¹

Throughout the history of the thermal spring resorts they had to overcome many difficult obstacles including bad management, fire; water and family problems. But each time a solution was found, even if it took a couple of years to be done. With the changing in leisure and tourism in South Africa as well as the changing in the country's political environment, these thermal spring resorts decided to embrace change and by adapting to the changing times, the thermal mineral water resorts survived by creating for itself a new place in the modern leisure and tourism age. The thermal waters that helped create the tourist industry in South Africa therefore are still contributing to the market, and are doing it in a new, fresh and unique way.

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Appendix
Photographs of the Caledon thermal baths



Drawing by C.D'Oyly of view of Caledon Baths, n/d (KAB, D' Oyly Collection, DOY83).



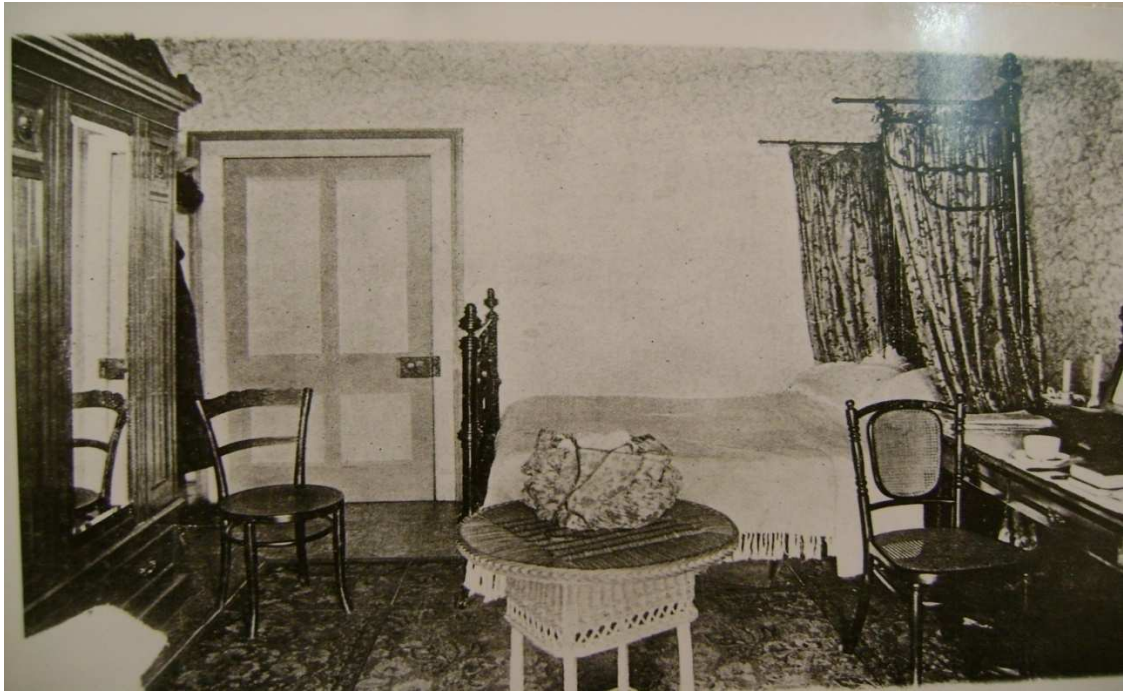
Caledon Sanatorium, 1898 (KAB, Jeffreys Collection, J2298).



Drawing Room, Caledon Sanatorium, 1898 (KAB, Jeffereys, J2299).



Reading Room at Caledon Sanatorium, n/d (Jeffereys Collection, J7444).



Bedroom in the Caledon Sanatorium, n/d (Jeffreys Collection, J7448).



A bathroom at the Caledon Sanatorium, n/d (Jeffreys Collection, J7449).



One of the Bathrooms at the Caledon Sanatorium, n/d (Photo without reference, Caledon Museum)



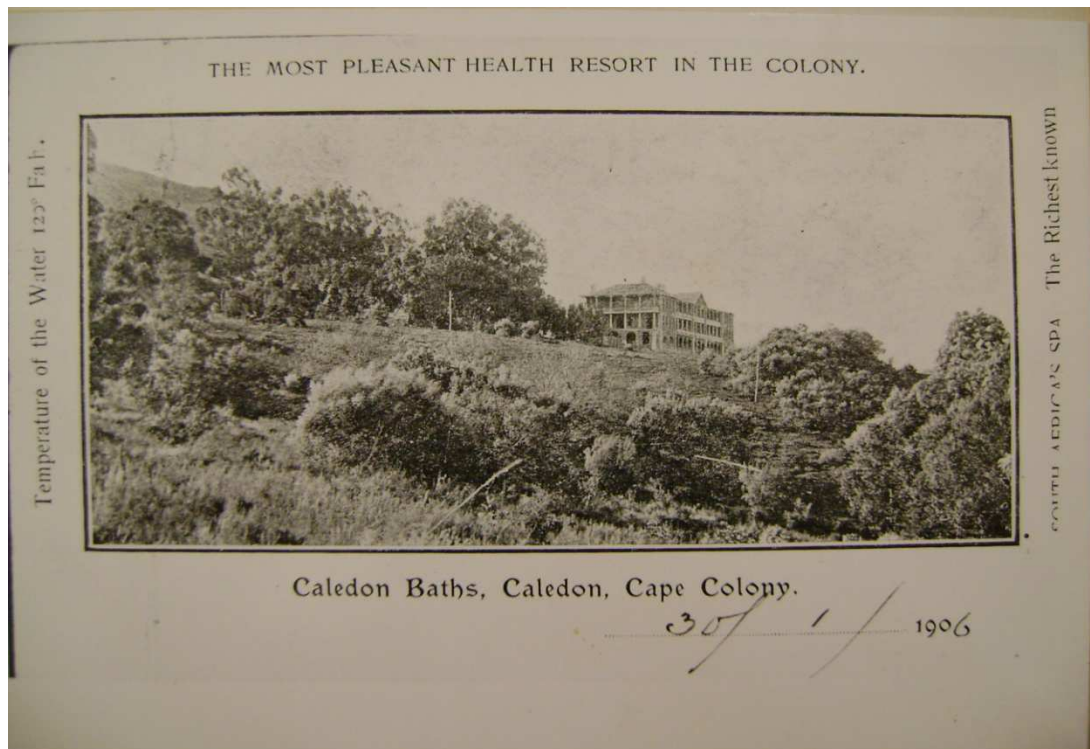
Caledon Baths, n/d (KAB, Ravenscroft Collection, R817).



Caledon Baths, n/d (KAB, Ravenscroft Collection, R826).



Caledon Sanatorium, n/d (KAB, AG Collection, AG11598).



The Caledon Sanatorium situated on hill, 1906 (KAB, AG Collection, AG12777).



Construction at the Caledon Sanatorium, n/d (Photo without reference, Caledon Museum).



Visitors drinking water from the eye of the Caledon Spring, n/d (Photo without reference, Caledon Museum).



Visitors drinking water from the eye of the Caledon Spring, n/d (Photo without reference, Caledon Museum).



Caledon Sanatorium, 1907 (KAB, AG Collection, AG12773).



Visitors at the Caledon Sanatorium, 1918 (photo without reference, Caledon Museum).



Caledon Baths Sanatorium Bowling Greens, n/d (Photo without referencing, Caledon Museum).



Visitors enjoying leisure time at the Caledon Sanatorium, n/d (photo without reference, Caledon Museum).



Visitors swimming in the Victorian Bath, n/d (photo without reference, Caledon Museum).



The Caledon Sanatorium ruins, after burning down 1946, (Photo without reference, Caledon Museum).

Montagu thermal baths



Montagu Baths and surroundings, n/d (KAB, Ravenscorf Collection, R312).



Montagu Baths Hotel, n/d (KAB, Jeffreys Collection, J8972).



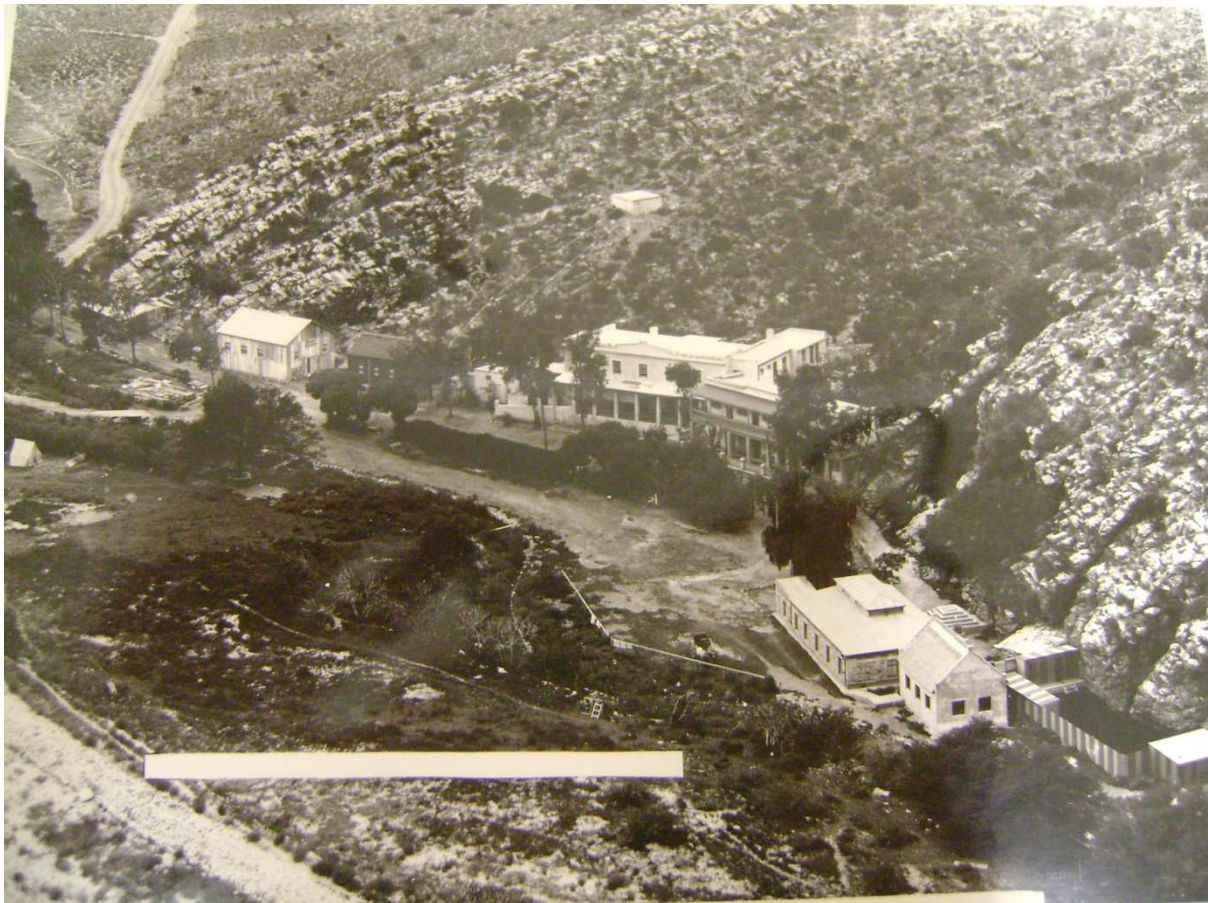
Accommodation at Montagu Baths, n/d (KAB, Ravenscroft Collection, R315).



Accommodation at Montagu Baths, n/d (KAB, Ravenscroft Collection, R316).



Mineral Baths at Montagu Baths, n/d (KAB, Ravenscroft Collection, R1358).



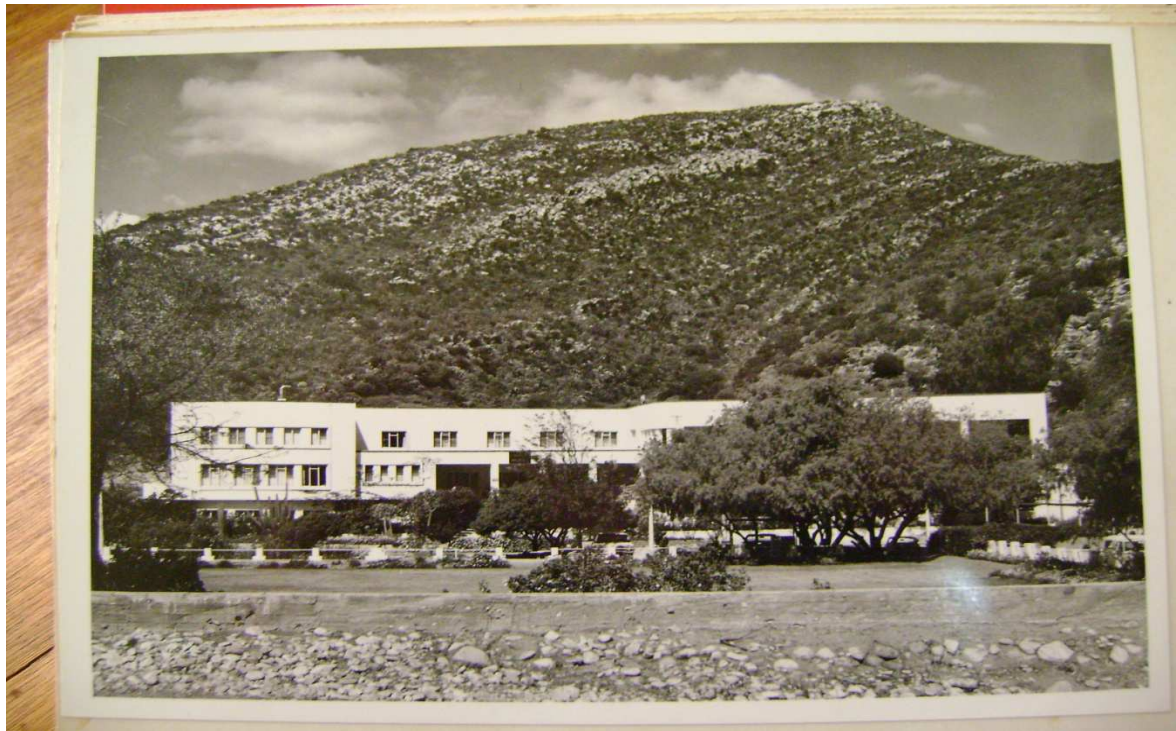
Montagu Baths complex, n/d (KAB, Ravenscroft Collection, R1359).



Pool at the Montagu Baths, n/d (KAB, Ravenscroft Collection, R1360).



Group of people drinking thermal spring water at Montagu Baths, n/d (KAB, AG Collection, AG16178).



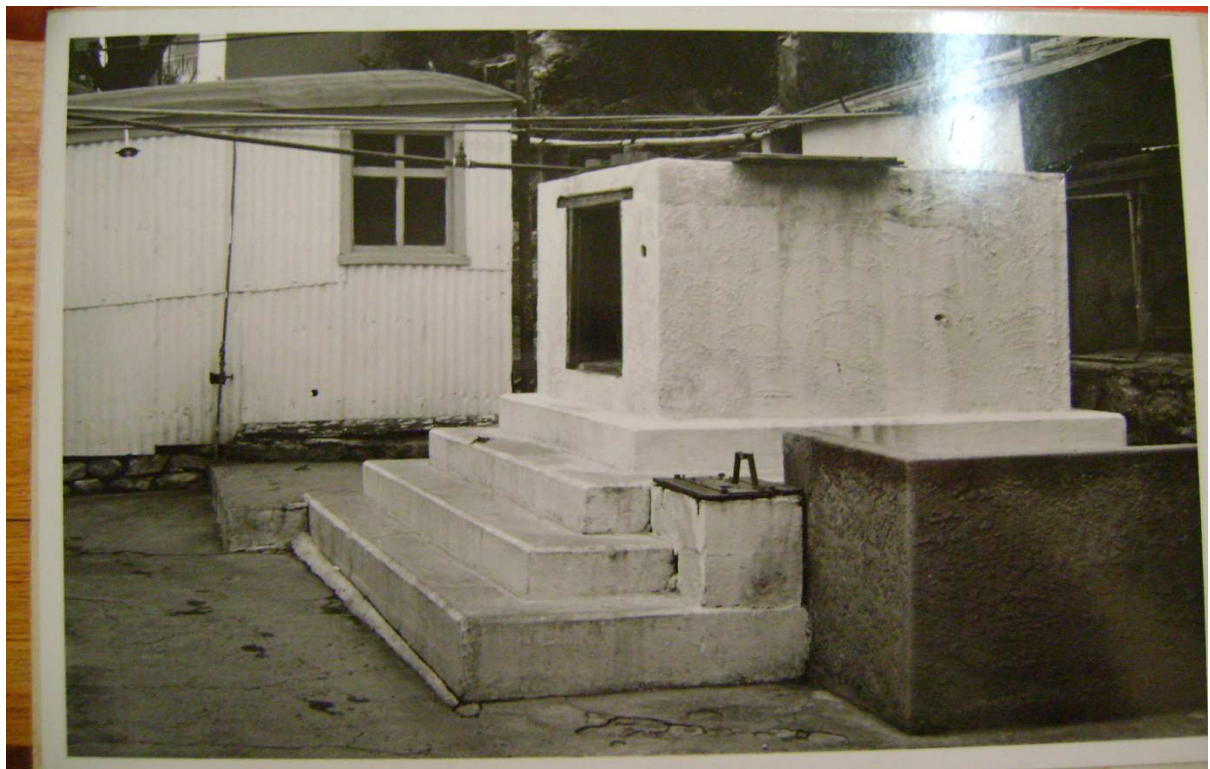
Montagu Baths Hotel, September 1977, (KAB, CA Collection, CA2962).



Montagu Baths Complex, September 1977, (KAB, CA Collection, CA2963).



Bath House at Montagu Baths, September 1977, (KAB, CA Collection, CA2964).



Covered eye of spring from where hot water is pumped, Montagu Baths, September 1977,
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Private Baths, Montagu Baths, November 1980, (KAB, CA Collection, CA3325).



Private Bath, Montagu Baths, November 1980, (KAB, CA Collection, CA3327).



Wooden passage from hotel from hotel to hot baths, Montagu Baths, November 1980, (KAB, CA Collection, CA3329).



Wooden passage from hotel from hotel to hot baths, Montagu Baths, November 1980, (KAB, CA Collection, CA3330).



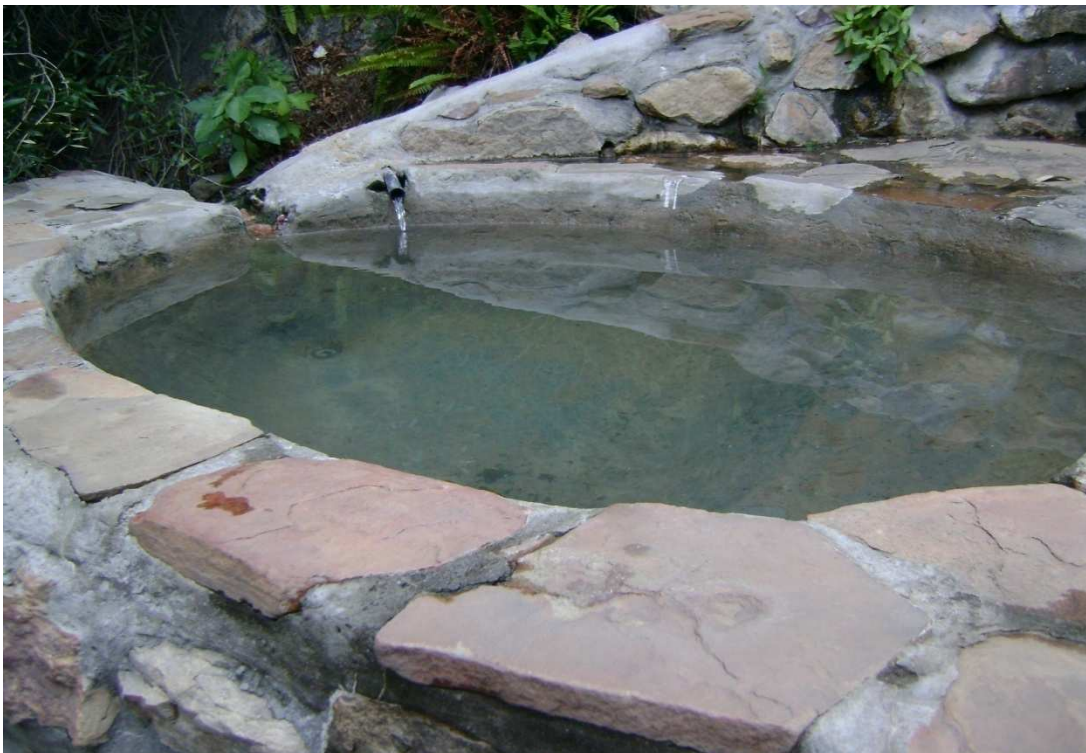
The Baths grounds, 2011 (author's photo).



Present day Bath House, 2011 (author's photo).



Rock Pool at The Baths, 2011 (author's photo).



Small rock baths, 2011 (author's photo).



Modern Olsen Building, 2011 (author's photo).



Victorian Building, 2011 (author's photo).



Hot water swimming pool, 2011 (author's photo).



Cold water swimming pool, 2011 (author's photo).



Mr Gordon shows the water flowing from the eye of the thermal spring, 2011 (author's photo).



The thermal spring eye, 2011 (author's photo)



Graffiti by spring visitors as early as the 1800s can be seen on doors in Gorden's house.
(author's photo).



Two of the thermal water Jacuzzis available at The Baths, 2011 (author's photo).