

mation, she has tales to tell that keep one engrossed for hours.

She is one of the few people who know the true story of "Breaker" Morant. Her father was Arthur Keble Eastwood, a man who sailed round the world as a midshipman on the Cutty Sark and later became the first forestry officer in the district. He met Morant in Australia, and they renewed their friendship during the Anglo-Boer War. On the way to his court martial Morant gave Arthur Eastwood his cigarette case, which bore his initials in diamonds and emeralds.

And Magoebaskloof has yet another feature which has brought it world-wide fame. It is to the farm of Shiela Thompson, Audrey's daughter, that thousands come each spring to see the spectacle of azaleas, cherry trees, crab-apples and rhododendrons in bloom.

It is a sight not easily forgotten. From one side of the valley to the other the slopes are alive with colour. From crimson to purple, pale

pink, apricot, mauve, cerise, yellow and gold to virginal white the flowers bedeck the hills, spreading in lush carpets, canopied avenues, sprinkled along pathways, with banks of blossom mirrored in pools of crystal-clear water.

It is idyllic to meander up the old "Public Road," once used by the Voortrekkers, between hedges of azaleas, under a canopy of crab-apple blossoms; and it is easy to believe, as if by magic, one is suddenly strolling through some immense park as beautiful as the Windsor Great Park or perhaps Chatsworth... or perhaps a dainty Japanese garden.

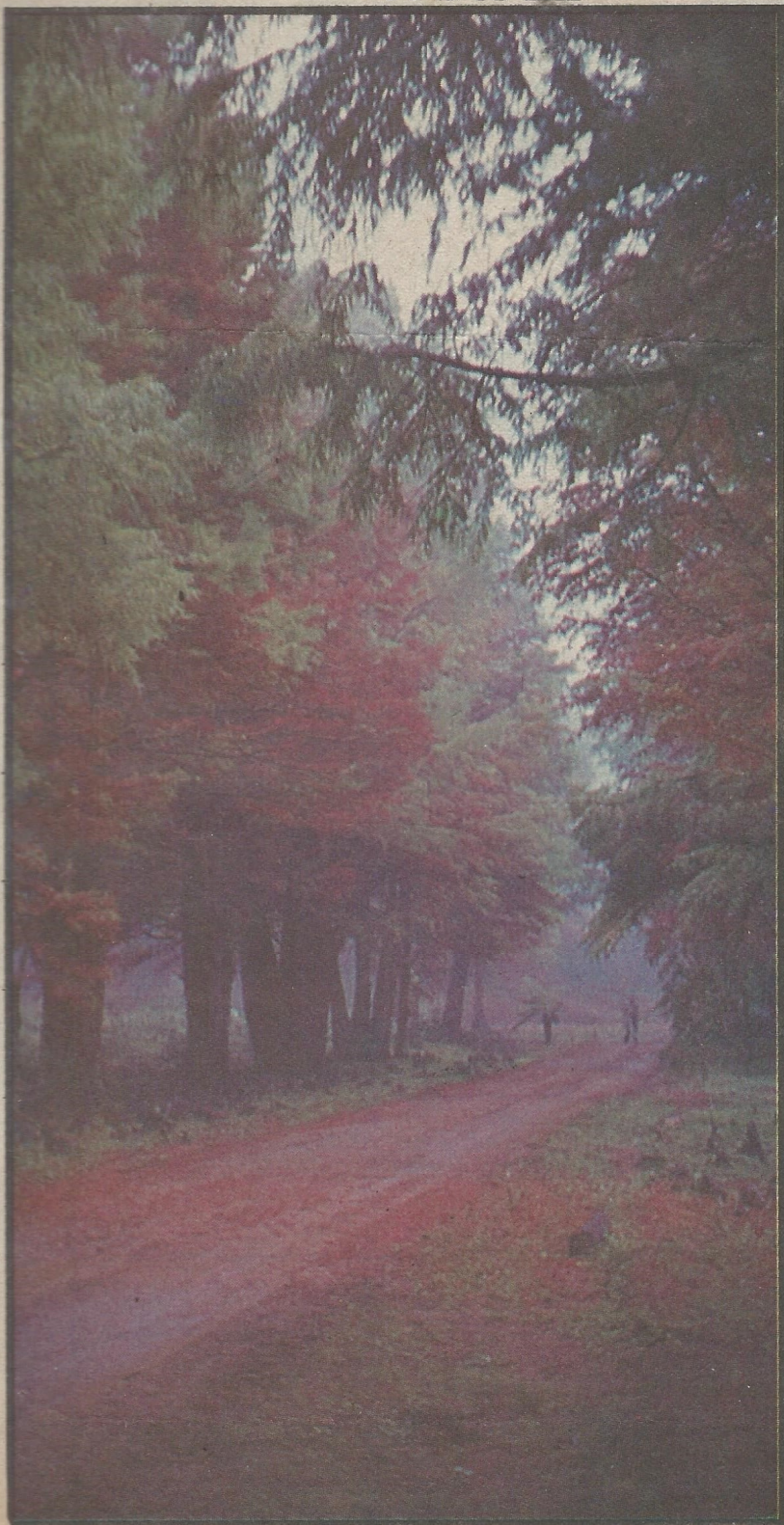
The fragrance of the blossoms, the incessant murmuring of the bees and the laughter of the water tumbling over rocks is as intoxicating as the clear, fresh air. And it is only when you hear the call of the hadedahs from above and the chatter of the little pedi children outside their huts that you remember you are still in Africa.



Azaleas and crabapple blossom — a fairytale scene.

Star

TRAVEL



An avenue of exotic swamp cypress in the Woodbush reserve.

Story and pictures by Lindsey Sanderson

This is Madribe — the land of the grey mists. A land of rolling green hills, dense forests and sparkling waters. Magoebaskloof.

It was of this area that John Buchan wrote: "... at last has been found the true Hesperides." Describing it he said: "The highveld seems tame and monotonous, the bushveld an intolerable desert, and even the mountain glories of the Drakensberg something crude and barbarous after this soft, rich and green gardenland."

And a gardenland it is, stretching from the foot of the Magoebaskloof pass to the little hamlet of Haenertsburg, which boasts little more than a general dealer's store, a butchery, a post office and a service station nestling under the Iron Crown — the summit of the Wolkberg.

Here there is everything to charm the heart and the eye. If trout fishing is your delight you can skim a fly across the clear water of Stanford lake — if boating is your bent the Ebenezer dam offers you kilometres of water, fringed with pine forests, on which to sail. Take a picnic and spend the day fishing for bass in the Dap Naude dam in a setting as pretty as a Swiss lake.

Forest walks abound or, for the lazy, a drive through the Woodbush reserve has its rewards. "The woods," in Buchan's words, "are virgin forest — full of superb orchids and fern, and monkeys and wild pig and tigercats (leopards) and bushbuck. It is little changed today and as you take the narrow winding road through the reserve

the chances are you will come across a family of busbuck or a troupe of monkeys or baboons. Streams tumble down small gorges overgrown with fern and moss, sheltered by yellowwood or other indigenous trees.

Halfway down the kloof are the Debengeni falls where you can picnic or have a braai while you lie back and relax to the background music of the Letaba River tumbling down the massive rockface on its course to the Lowveld.

There is history, too, in the area. It was in these same forests that the rebel chief Magoeba was surrounded and finally shot and decapitated after a campaign that lasted more than two years in a war waged between the Pretoria government and several rebel chiefs who refused to be subject to the white man's laws or pay the taxes demanded of them.

Haenertsburg itself was born of the gold rush, and one can still see old mine diggings up on the Iron Crown, and during the Anglo-Boer War it was on the farm Waterval that the last of the Staats Artilleries Creusot guns — the Long Toms — was mounted. When the Boers withdrew in defeat the Long Tom was blown up to prevent capture by the British.

Sir Lionel and Lady Phillips had a farm in the Woodbush, and it was to Magoebaskloof that Lord Methuen and members of the Milner Kindergarten came to relax.

One of the most remarkable people living in the area today is Mrs Audrey Thompson who was a small girl when her father settled there at the turn of the century. A mine of infor-