

### ***1893 The Lottering Forest Cottage***

Before the stone cottage programme had begun in 1889 and from this the decision to build a stone cottage at Lottering, it was planned to build an all timber cottage there, as the records reveal that a contract signed by James Cooper on 9 December 1889 had been awarded to a certain Paul de Vos, a local woodcutter/ building contractor from Storms River Hoek. De Vos had been selected by the Acting District Forest Officer (DFO) for Zitzikamma, Francis T Tothill. The timber to be used was to be extracted from the 1890 Section of the *Elands Bush* Forest, but only after it was opened for felling in March 1890. This 1890 section had as its boundaries defined as: To the west the Slang River and to the east, the Klein River. The timber contract was dutifully fulfilled by de Vos within the allowed 3 months and the timber placed in storage.

However, on 11 November, 1891 DFO Tothill on reading, presumably somewhat perplexed, that if the dimensions of the newly proposed *stone* cottage as specified in the offer to build were really to be 40 feet x 35 feet (12m x 10.5m), promptly cautioned the Conservator that the timber supplied by de Vos and now already stacked and dry, would be impracticable.

Of note here is the much larger floor area of the Lottering stone cottage i.e. 126m<sup>2</sup>. The early design for the five room stone cottage of floor area 60m<sup>2</sup> (as in the case of the now demolished Buffels Nek cottage) had clearly proven inadequate to meet the needs for housing the average forester and his family as well as providing accommodation (office and sleeping quarters) for the inspecting officer, resulting in a design change to a cottage with a floor area of 70m<sup>2</sup> which had been made during an early stages of building. The Lottering cottage, however, was clearly to be much larger than the 6 cottages built during this first phase. The Buffels Nek cottage was 10m wide and 6m deep; the Beer Vlei cottage was 10m wide and 7m deep and the Lottering cottage was to be 12m wide by 10.5m deep!

Tothill requested a copy of the building plan for the Lottering cottage<sup>1</sup>, which was to consist of six larger rooms.

Finding a competent stone mason turned out to be a challenge.

Tothill had earlier met a mason by the name of Glover, who had declined the contract to build the stables for the Forester [so was presumably overlooked],so he looked further and found another mason, Thomas Jones, who accepted the contract to build the stone cottage. By November 1891 Jones was quarrying for suitable stone at a place pointed out by Tothill, about 100 m from the new cottage site.

Tothill mentions that he had called for tenders for *riding* [transporting] the stone, which he presumed would be done by the Forestry Department. Tothill also called for tenders for the

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<sup>1</sup> Tothill finally received a copy of the plan for the Lottering cottage in January 1893.

carpentry work for the new cottage and received one [labour only] tender dated 19 November 1891 from a certain GH van Rooyen for £35, on the understanding that the Forestry Department would supply all of the timber, including doors, doors and window frames etc. Van Rooyen accepted the earlier specification as prepared for the Witte Els Bush cottage as applicable to this contract. But Tothill reasoned that he could get a better price, maybe as low as £20, from the contractor who had been awarded the nearby Witte Els Bush cottage contract, who was still active on that site. History does not confirm the outcome.

Stone mason Thomas Jones was a huge disappointment to Tothill. On 10 August 1892 Tothill wrote to tell Conservator James Cooper that he had accepted Jones's surrender of his contract to build the Lottering cottage. Tothill stated that:

*The work has dragged wearily on for some months and as I have now had to demolish a good deal of it, Mr. Jones represents the hopelessness of his being able to continue and I have therefore released him from his agreement. The [cartage fee] of £9.0.0 retained by me to ensure completion of work, 13,000 bricks, etc. becomes forfeited to the Department.*

At the end of February 1893, only 6 months after Francis Tothill had released stone mason Jones from his contract, he reported that: *The outside walls of this house are nearing completion and will be ready for the beams a fortnight after the last [concrete] lintel has sufficiently set to put into position.*<sup>2</sup>

Cooper indeed confirmed in his annual report for 1892 that *Difficulties are again experienced in obtaining masons for the Lottering cottage and little progress was made with the work until October last [1892] when I succeeded in securing a good tradesman although only at wages considerably higher than those hitherto paid. The cottage will, it is hoped be ready for occupation in May next.*<sup>3</sup> A year later Cooper could thankfully report in his annual report for 1893 that during the past year the much-needed cottage at Lottering had been completed. A wooden stable had also been built at the Lottering Forest Station.

The Lottering cottage had been built at a total cost of £333, of which £123 was spent during 1892 (£55/16/2 on labour and £67/09/05 on materials)<sup>4</sup> plus an additional amount to complete the building of £207 incurred during 1893 (£169/1/7 on labour and £38/7/3 for materials).<sup>5</sup>

**NOTE:** In 1901 a cement stoep was installed around two sides of the building at the Lottering Station.

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<sup>2</sup> 1893.02.28 Report to the Conservator of Forests, Knysna. DAFF Files Knysna

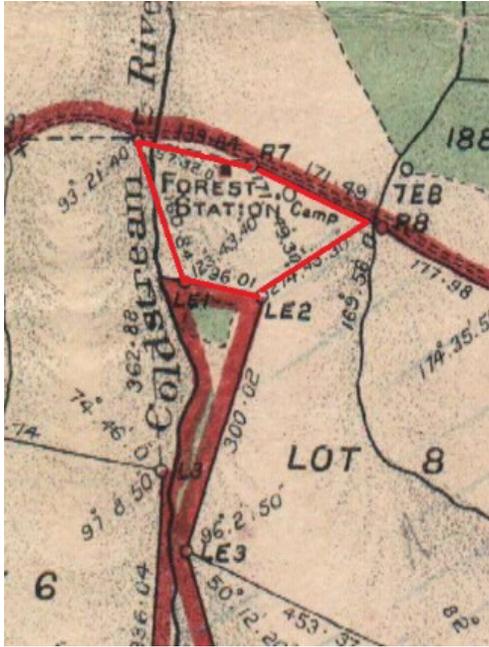
<sup>3</sup> 1892 Annual Report of the Conservator of Forests, page 49

<sup>4</sup> 1892 Annual Report of the Conservator of Forests, page 57

<sup>5</sup> 1893 Annual Report of the Conservator of Forests, page 92



Cooper suggested a possible solution; that was the exclusion of that portion of land on which the cottage stood from the extent of Lot 8.



By 13 January 1892 James Cooper was in communication with Government Surveyor F Melvill who had requested Cooper to mark on a drawing [trace] sent to him, the position of the stone cottage under construction and the land required around the cottage for it to serve its purpose.

Eventually agreement was reached and this portion of land was excised from Lot 8. The diagram opposite shows the boundaries of the piece of land reserved which also gave easy access to the Thomas Bain main road linking Plettenberg Bay and Humansdorp, which lay immediately north of the cottage. The cottage was completed in 1893.



North east view of Lottering Cottage, by author, 2015

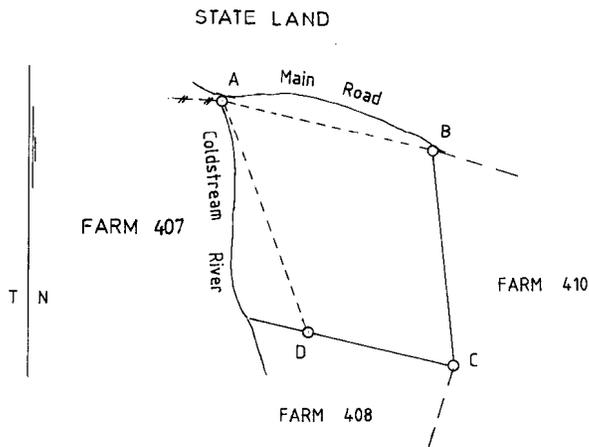
UNREGISTERED STATE LAND  
SECT. 17, ACT 9 OF 1927

GENERAL PLAN 2195UU(5653)

OFFICE COPY

SIDES Metres		ANGLES	
AB	528,35	A	57 32 00
BC	544,90	B	107 07 40
CD	362,75	C	71 36 40
DA	607,70	D	123 43 40

SG No  
3799/1997  
Approved  
*[Signature]*  
for Surveyor-General  
1997-07-04



Scale 1:12 500

The figure represents A Main Road B C D Coldstream River of land, being 27,2035 Hectares FARM No 409

situate in the Administrative District of HUMANSDORP Province of Eastern Cape.

Framed in terms of Section 16 of Act No 8 of 1997 in June 1997, by me,

*[Signature]*  
H E VAN ZYL (PLS 0755)  
(Professional Land Surveyor)

This diagram is annexed to No CRT dated 7/380/2000 i.f.o.  Registrar of Deeds	The original diagram is No annexed to	File Humd. 409 S.R. Framed Comp BM-8C (4213) BM-8D (4215) Gen Plan 2195 UU(5653)
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Farm No. 409

Recent SGO diagram of the Forestry Station property