Bergvliet Meadowridge Ratepayers Association

BMRA

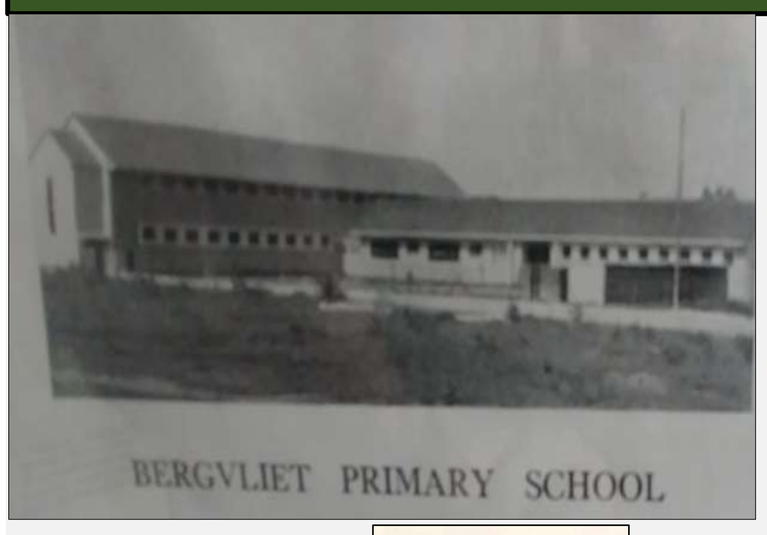
for the good of the community

Bergvliet Meadowridge Ratepayers' Association

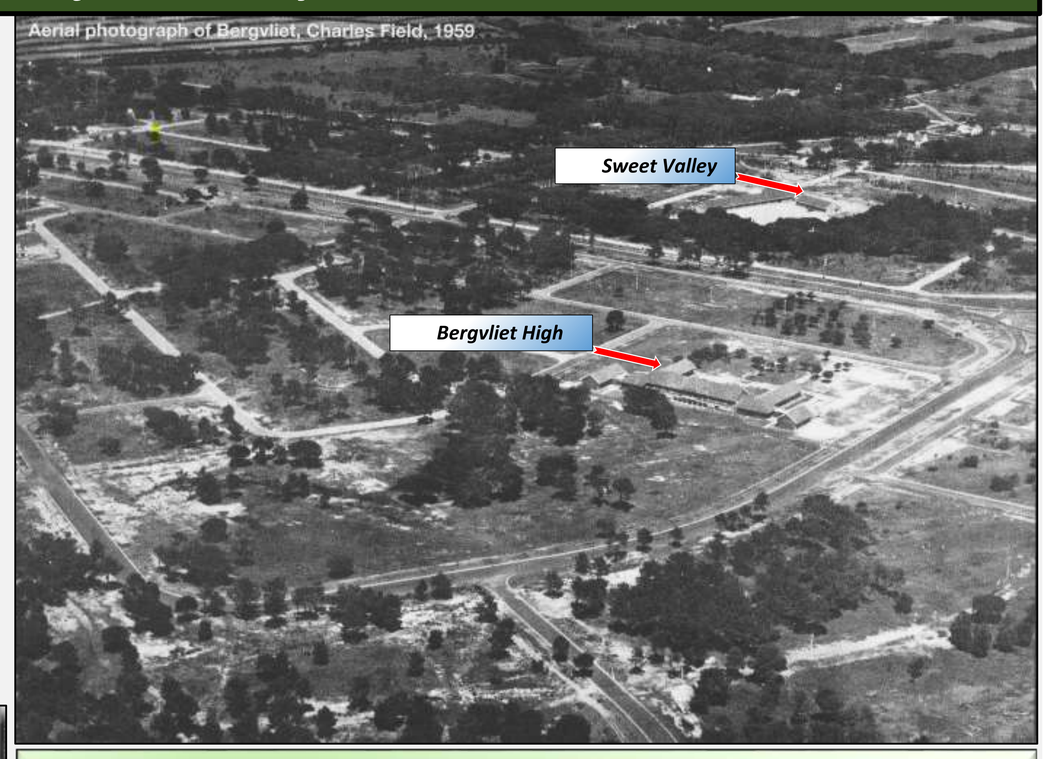
Celebrating 75 Years of Service to Our Suburbs

Beginnings of Education : Bergvliet Primary, Bergvliet High and Sweet Valley Primary

The foundations for the education of the youth of our suburbs were laid timeously by the Cape Provincial Department of Education and the early residents of the area. Over the decades , these schools have served the local community well and now draw from a wider section of our society.



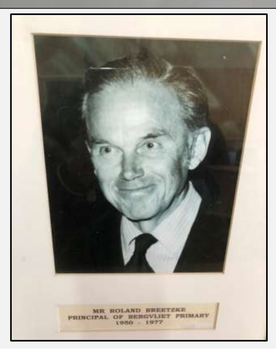
Bergvliet Primary, built in 1950, could accommodate 500 pupils, though initially only 174 registered. This was more than the first classes of Bergvliet High and Sweet Valley Primary: the former began with 70, the latter merely 35. Things are different today where there is so much competition to gain entrance to the three schools of our suburbs.

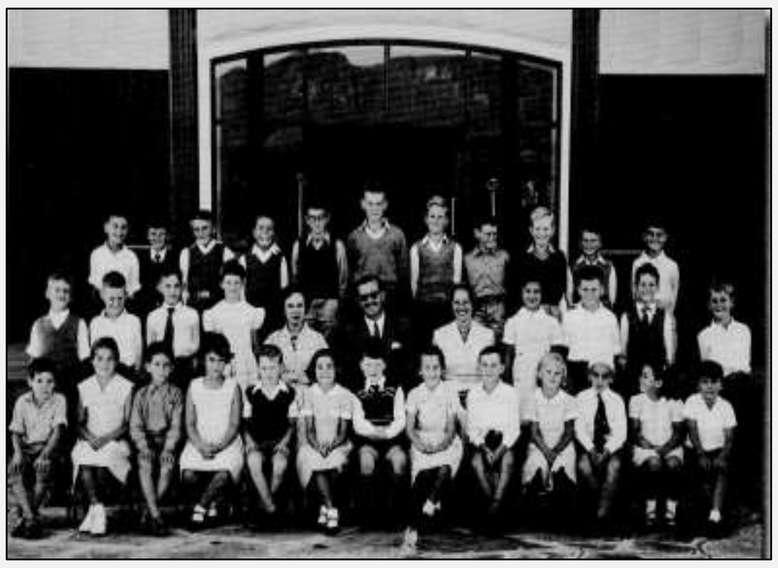


From this aerial photograph, taken in 1959, it is clear why the Bergvliet Bulletin wrote "…room to spare for pupils" when Sweet Valley Primary (top right) and Bergvliet High (middle right) opened their doors in 1957. There were no fields: bush and pine trees were the schools' surrounds.

Mr van Heerden, "Mr Van", who served as principal of Sweet Valley for 33 years. Below are its first classes.

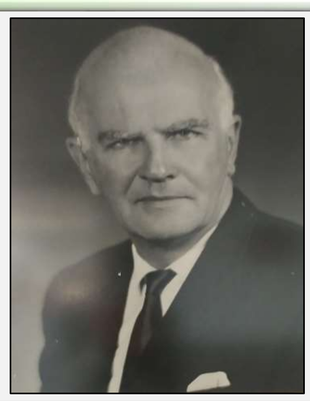
Mr Breetzke, who was served notice by the Divisional Council for "a reduction in the number of pigeons" in the interest of the pupils' health.





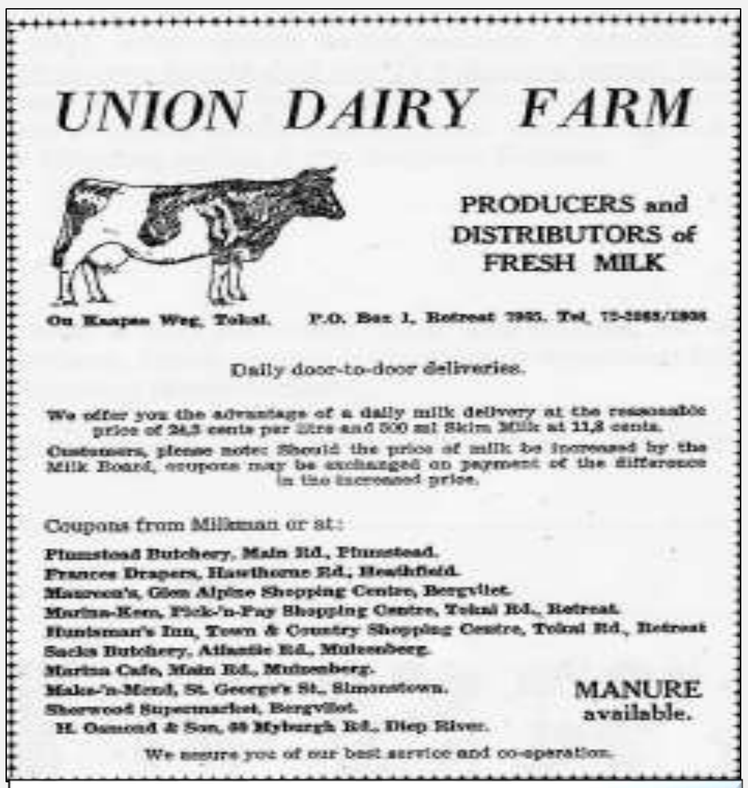
Bergvliet Primary, like the other schools, had its challenges when it came to sportsfields. It soon requested the Divisional Council to come and bulldoze the bush and trees which were surrounding the buildings so that sportsfields could be planted. The pupils then planted the grass.

Mr P.A.M. van der Spuy, whose birthday on 15th March 1957 serendipitously coincided with the official opening of the school in 1957, which made Founders Day mean just that bit more.



Interestingly, Sweet Valley should not have been built in Bergvliet, but in Meadowridge. An office error had the school sited in Dreyersdal Road – "a remote school in secluded woodland".

A contrast of eras and classrooms at Bergvliet Primary School.



Until the late '70s, each Sweet Valley pupil was given a daily bottle of milk from a local dairy.

1960 - grass planting at Bergvliet High. With cricket being played at Bergvliet Club and rugby at Tramways fields, fields were needed – school was even suspended on a Friday for a mass planting exercise when civvies could be worn and photographs posed for.

Since the schools opened to all races in the '90s, much has changed, allowing more opportunities for those previously excluded.

1960 BHS boys who played on Tramways fields

"Only one parent was a doctor, one a teacher, one an engineer, and one a nurse. The rest were building inspectors, bus conductors, builders, carpenters, electricians, engine drivers, fitters, machinists, mechanics, nurserymen, plumbers, policemen, railways workers, salesmen, steel merchants and technicians."

- An excerpt from: Sweet Valley we are here