

Knysna fossil comes to Gtown

By STEVEN LANG

A 13-year old boy from Knysna donated a fossil tooth of a meat-eating dinosaur to the Albany Museum last Saturday. Ben Ingel found the serrated tooth on the west side of the Knysna Lagoon some time in 2015.

When Albany Museum palaeontologist, Dr Billy De Klerk confirmed that it was indeed a fossil tooth from a carnivorous dinosaur, Ben said, "Well it's very exciting to think that I actually found one after all the time playing and trying to find one when I was younger and then actually finding one now."

Ben almost stood on the tooth when he was looking at kingfisher nests on the beach. He thought it was something special, guessing it might have belonged to a fierce dinosaur such as an *Allosaurus*, but

some family members said it was just a piece of plastic.

He accepted what they said but kept it in a small pouch for about a year before giving it to his grandfather, Vernon Rice.

On 26 January this year, Rice showed the tooth to two geologists, Rob Muir and Roger Scoon, who were doing research in Knysna. Muir identified the tooth as a theropod fossil and estimated that was probably between 120 and 140 million years old.

The tooth is particularly interesting because it is large and well preserved. Serrations are clearly visible along the edge of the approximately 45mm-long tooth that once sliced into dinosaur flesh.

It is believed that Ben's tooth is the first dinosaur fossil found in Knysna. It should however, not be that surprising to find

dinosaur fossils there as the geological deposits in the area are of a similar age to deposits found around Algoa Bay where De Klerk has found several important fossils. Realising how important his grandson's find was, Rice encouraged Ben to contact Albany Museum palaeontologist, Dr Rob Gess about ensuring its safe-keeping.

Gess suggested that the tooth be brought to the Museum, where he could arrange for an expert to study it.

De Klerk and Gess were visibly excited when Ben and his grandfather arrived at the museum on Saturday. After they carefully examined the tooth, they agreed that the person best qualified to study the fossil is Dr Jonah Choiniere at Wits University, who will also undertake to make an exact replica of the tooth for Ben to take home

and keep. De Klerk then gave Ben and his grandfather a personal tour of the dinosaur display in the fossil hall at the museum and Gess showed them fossil specimens he had found in the far more ancient shale deposits on Waterloo Farm just outside Grahamstown.

Asked whether he was really interested in dinosaurs, Ben replied, "Ah yes, a little bit. I used to have a friend, on his property we used to go looking for dinosaurs even though there was probably none there. We used to just go with paint brushes and go into the soil and see if we could find anything."

Dr Rose Prevec, Head of the Department of Earth Sciences at the Albany Museum cautioned that, "While it is wonderful to see members of the public, and especially young-



Ben Ingel, his grandfather, Vernon Rice and Dr Billy De Klerk with the dinosaur tooth. Photo: Steven Lang

sters, enthusiastic about fossils, it is really important that if they find something they think is a fossil, they should leave it in place and contact a local expert.

"By law, a permit is required to collect a fossil, even if it is on your own property, as they

belong to the National Estate.

Important information can be lost by removing a fossil from its context, and they can also be inadvertently damaged, so it is important for a qualified researchers to see the fossil wherever it was found."

MobiSAM calling all Makana residents

By THOZI NGEJU and HANCU LOUW

In an attempt to connect with the largest cross-section of Makana residents, we have been using the local airwaves (Radio Grahamstown) on Wednesday mornings between 9am and 12pm.

We shall soon be on Rhodes Music Radio (RMR) too.

MobiSAM urges all residents to connect with us, as we look to extend our reach and build awareness of your (residents') roles and responsibilities with regard to holding public officials accountable and monitoring service delivery in Makana.

We are predominantly Facebook and SMS for now, until the launch of the MobiSAM App in early March.

Acting on data gathered during a 2016 baseline study of the communication practices of residents across the municipality, we were pleased to be reminded of the socio-economic and cultural diversity in Makana.

In a bid to address the various levels of access to information and use of the local media channels that people rely on, MobiSAM has partnered with local stakeholders as well as

the municipally-managed ward war rooms.

These strategic partnerships have allowed the project to connect with people from City Hall and the bustling CBD to Extension 7 and all the way to Riebeeck East.

Working alongside the Grahamstown Residents Association, UpStart Youth, the Unemployed People's Movement, Umthathi Training Project and the various departments at Makana Municipality, has also allowed us to build networks of communication which has improved the flow of information between all the stakeholders in preparation of the launch of our application.

We are currently training both our team of ward liaisons and the communications team at the Municipality in using the technology that we hope will facilitate more communication and greater accountability.

The collaboration between Makana,

MobiSAM and especially the queries and complaints by citizens is key to creating more awareness of service delivery issues which impact all residents of Makana.

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