

# OVERBERG GEOSCIENTISTS GROUP

## OGG Breakfast Meeting & Presentation

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### Geological History of the Onrus River: Evidence from the September 2023 floods, Peat beds and Archaeology

by  
*John Blaine*

**Thursday 4 June, 2026 - Onrus Manor Activities Hall**  
**(In-person & Zoom: Coffee 09h30, breakfast 10h00, presentation 11h00)**

**Zoom Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82172892738?pwd=M1NWUkJFYzhqdTJ2Qk0yZ3BrV2srZz09>  
**Meeting ID:** 821 7289 2738; **Passcode:** Overberg

John Blaine graduated from UCT in 1968 and went straight into the northern SWA bush at the start of a 34-year adventure with major Canadian company, Falconbridge.

This work led to an MSc (Geology) also from UCT in 1977.

After retirement from Falconbridge in 2002, further exploration was conducted with smaller Canadian and Australian junior exploration companies.

Major interests were in early-stage mineral exploration, ie. the “hunting, tracking, discovery stage” before the engineers take over”!!



Career highlights were numerous kimberlite (but unfortunately few with diamonds), discoveries under deep cover in Botswana as well as gold, copper and uranium deposits in Botswana and copper in Namibia.

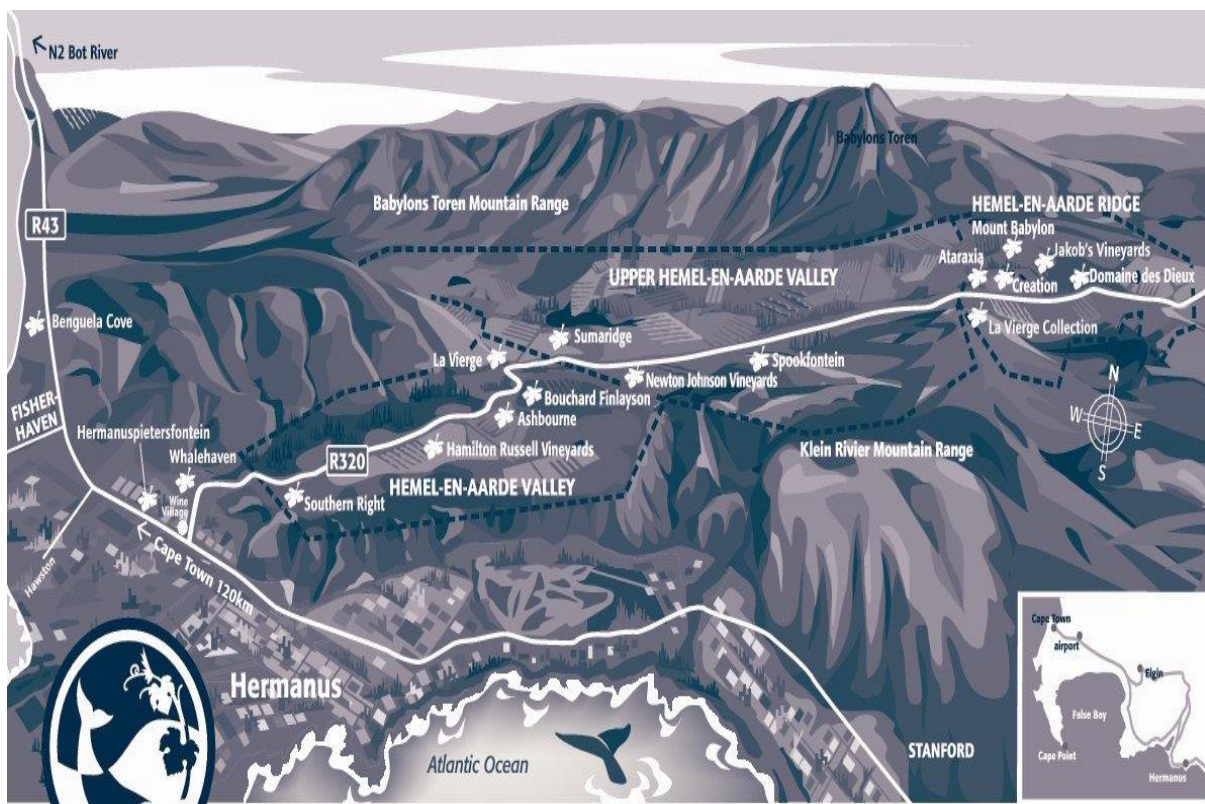
Much of this time was before computers, smart phones and GPS, ie. Using Aerial photographs, Topographic maps, compass and dead reckoning!!

John retired 2014 and has been living in Hermanus since 2017 following his rewarding 45-year career in mineral exploration. Since moving to the southern Cape, he has embraced the sharing of geological knowledge and experience with young geologists, laypersons and scholars, researching the deposition and deformation of the Cape Supergroup, and sea level change as recorded along the 12kms Hermanus Cliff Path, and Walker Bay Coastline.

He has also been actively involved in documenting the formation and evolution of the landscapes of the Onrus River system, that straddles the full length of the *Hemel en Aarde Valley* north of the coastal town of Hermanus.

The geology and geomorphology of the “*Valley of Heaven and Earth*” (as named by the early Cape Settlers) together with the Onrus River, sustain a now world-famous wine region. The Valley comprises three distinct wine Appellations (or ‘wards’), is famous for its cool-climate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, produced across the three contiguous areas that vary by altitude, geology, soils, and distance from the Atlantic Ocean. Grapes ripen at different times in these wards due to their unique elevations.

John’s 4<sup>th</sup> June presentation will cover the geological and geomorphological evolution of the Valley and its old land surfaces, particularly in the light of the devastating September 2023 deluge, high level conglomerate terraces, results of mass-wasting and debris flows, a series of waterfalls, nick-points and river capture, the Onrus Poort, 10 000yr old Peat beds, and fascinating evidence and tools from early Human occupation.



The Thursday 4 June, 2026, presentation will be followed by a **one-day Geo-Excursion** through the Onrus River section (*Hemel en Aarde Valley*). There is still room for 5 participants on this Excursion; interested parties can contact John Bristow ([jwbdia@gmail.com](mailto:jwbdia@gmail.com)) or John Blaine ([jblaine44@outlook.com](mailto:jblaine44@outlook.com)) should they be interested in participating.

The Excursion registration fee and Guidebook cost is R300 per person, and there is a R50.00 contribution to the entrance of the *Voelmoed Farm Trust*, where the group will have a picnic-lunch, discussion of key geological and structural features and a short walk to view the waterfalls in the Onrus River gorge, present below the De Bos Dam.