

OVERBERG GEOSCIENTISTS GROUP (OGG)

Website – <http://www.ogsg.co.za/>

(OGG – Reg. No. 275-138 NPO)

De Hoop Collection & OGG 4.6By Earth Age Display Launch

A successful, very well attended launch of an exciting new **Earth Age Display (EAD)** developed with the *De Hoop Collection*, took place at the De Hoop Nature Reserve on Saturday 22 August, 2026. This is the third such educational geological display developed across the southern Cape, and seeks to address a shortfall in the promotion of our vast Geoheritage in South Africa. The first was completed at the African Penguin Sanctuary in Gansbaai in 2022, the second at Harold Porter Gardens in Betty's Bay in 2023.

For many, grappling with the concept of Geological Time, typically becomes overwhelming given the vastness and complexity of the subject material. With 4.6 billion years (or 4.6 Ga) at play, this number becomes difficult to deal with. For the majority of our population, and even more so for the disadvantaged and poorly educated, understanding our local geology and earth history is challenging, understanding global geology and time-lines even more daunting. In many cases, the teacher is tied up in knots and learners are more mystified than ever by the end of the explanation.

Many ideas have come to the fore in seeking to address this conundrum, none simpler than stringing out the time over a manageable distance and scale. The Earth Age walls represent the time elapsed (4.6 billion years) from the beginning of the planet we live on, to the present-day. Along the wall, you are exposed to key events that took place during this journey in time. The events are represented via carefully selected diagrams with a basic message displayed on durable boards. QR codes on each board, provide a link to more detailed information for each major geological event, and are opened and read with your mobile device.



Mike Dormer, Nini Stephens and David Mourant at the De Hoop Collection EAD launch

The additional information has been compiled by geologists of the Overberg Geoscientist Group (OGG) and written in easy-to-understand language, while not detracting from the science. While the overall context of the display is South African, with references made to the Pilanesberg, Witwatersrand and key local events, Global events are also included. Importantly the display is not only aimed at the specialist Geologists among us. It seeks to enlighten and educate the Layman, Children and the unscientific but curious Public, in a friendly and fun way, down to the inclusion of *Wally*, the 'geological whale' as a guide.

Key biological and anthropological developments in earth age history are portrayed in the storyline. There is a display of rocks in the central *Garden* of the circular-EAD display, of the commonly seen geology and weathered materials around De Hoop, and Western and the southern Cape. The De Hoop Collection is already home to the world-class *Origins of Early Southern Sapiens Behavior*, an archeological and anthropological collection and display. The combination of the *EAD* and *Origins* displays, will provide considerable synergy and better understanding of how *Early Southern Sapiens* utilized and benefited from the local geology, soils and geomorphological features.

The display makes no claim to be exhaustive, but lends itself to continual improvement and additions. To this end the latest display construction, in the form of a circle is ideal for further geological additions, mineral displays, education, Guide development and Geo-tours within the exceptional natural environment of the De Hoop Nature Reserve. The already well trained, knowledgably and passionate Guiding Group at De Hoop Collection will receive further training from OGG members, thereby enhancing the overall value-add of the EAD to the bigger geological and archeological picture of the region.



Hendrik Arendse (GM), Wilfred Chivell (Marine Dynamics) and the De Hoop Collection Guiding Team at the launch.

This latest *EAD* construction owes its existence to the foresight and commitment of Nini and William Stephens of the *De Hoop Collection*, and their passion for education. It highlights the exceptional natural environment and treasures of the greater De Hoop area and southern Cape region and its coastline. Without their considerable investment in the display and with

the future of our youth in mind, such tools would have never see the light of day. It was a privilege and an honor to work with them in the design and execution of the display.

For more information about this new Earth Age Display, the De Hoop Collection activities, and the *Origins of Early Southern Sapiens Behavior* exhibition, you can contact the following:

Overberg Geoscientists Group (Website:

Mike Dormer (email: mikeydormer@gmail.com)

The De Hoop Collection information

<https://www.dehoopcollection.com/>



The EAD launch participants – including in blue-attire, William Stephens (De Hoop Collection CEO), Hendrik Arendse (GM), Dalfrenzo Laing (Head Guide), Dr Hayley Cawthra, Nini Stephens & others





*Scenes of the De Hoop Nature Reserve from the west looking south-east (above)
and east to the dune-corridor on the Indian Ocean shore line (below).*

