

William Burchell & the Clivia ...

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Cape Horticultural Society

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THE STORY

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres

- **The beginning (1813) - serendipity:**
 - A sinking wagon!
 - Burchell's discovery of a plant he could not classify
 - How the specimen reached Cape Town
- **The middle (1815-1827) – 'nursery rhymes':**
 - Burchell's specimen(s) in London
 - Other specimens reach London nurseries
 - The cast
- **The end (1827) - conundrum:**
 - Two presentations to botany
 - Winner takes all



BOSLELIE – *C. nobilis*



Burchell's CG 3873

[K000865654](#)

The beginning – Serendipity: Discovery



B2050



B2051

Lieut. &
Mrs Laycock

Point of Conjunction of the chain of the Orange River

The mouth of this River abounding with Hippopotami

Lower Caffre Drift

Upper Caffre Drift

Hartee Beasts, Orabees, Spring Bucks, Koran Pows, &c. © Corn Place

Elephants, Spring Bucks, Hartee Beasts, Quakks, &c. &c.

Kowie River

Elephants, Buffaloes, Rhinoceros & Hippopotami

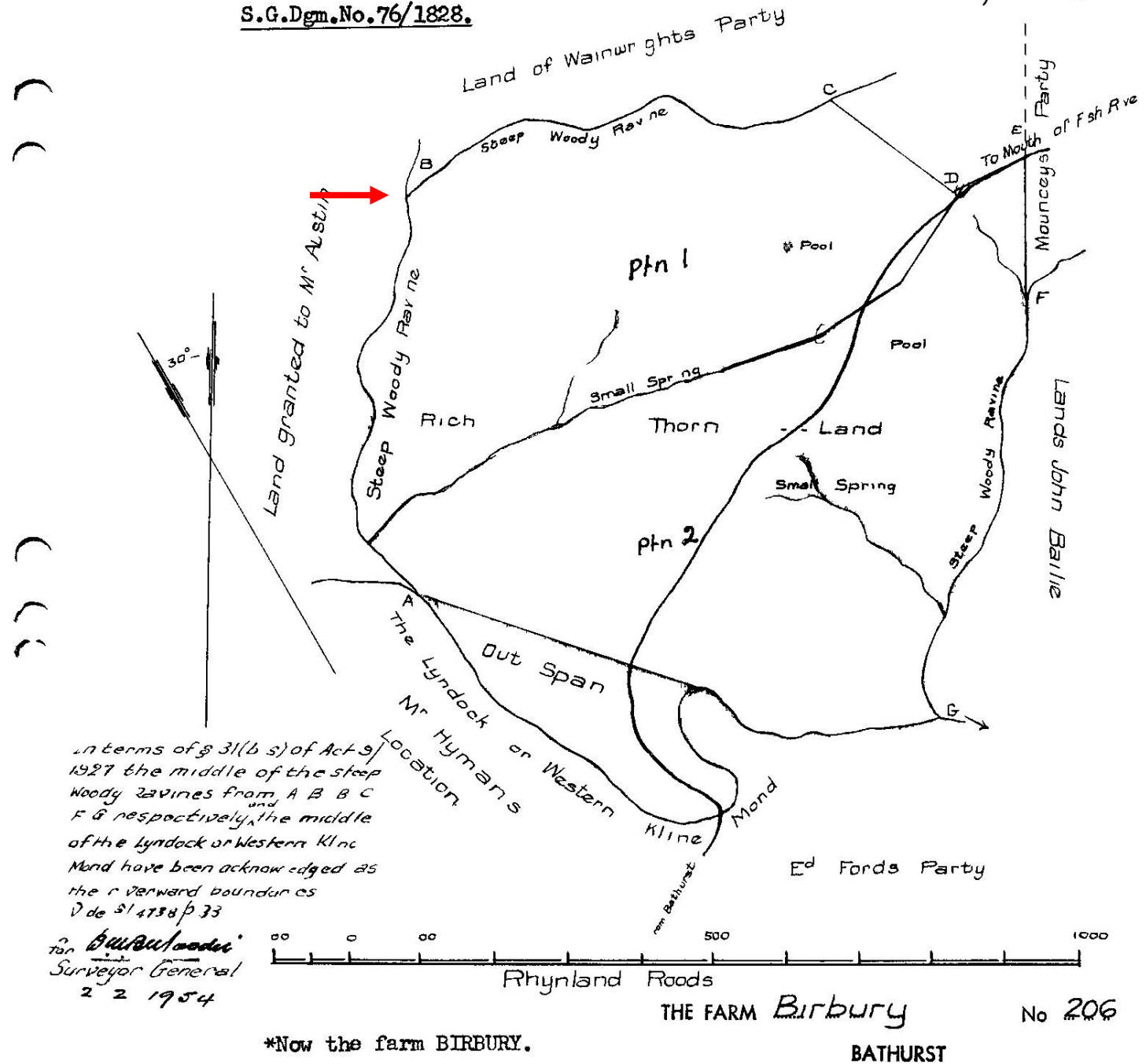
Riet Fontein, old Post

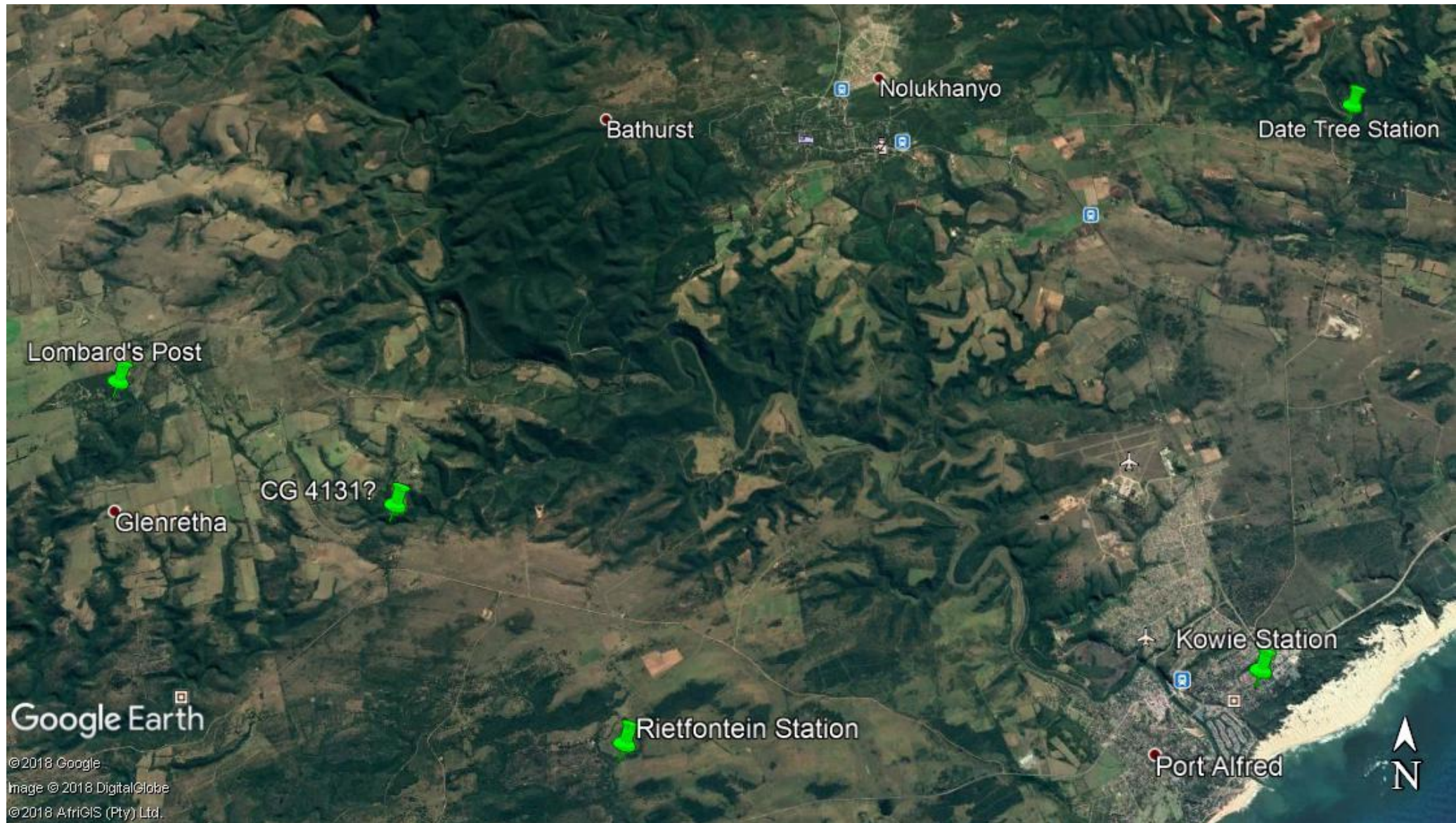
Lombards

Country between these Rivers abounding with Game but as now nearly exterminated except shooting parties of the Hollanders belonging to the Cape

CG 4132

S. G. Dgm. No 76/1828





Catalogus Geographicus 3873

'In the wood near Date Tree Station. a.m. 29 Sept 1813'

3873. 2 ~~Xylocarpus~~ nov-jen v Bob Ref

~~3873~~ ~~Cyrtanthus??~~ ~~Agapanthus??~~ ~~Agapanthus??~~
 3873 Radix tuber cum fibris erasis (agapanthus)
 Folia radicalia opposita (agapanthus) plana, saepe
 obliqua — Scapus anceps compressus — Flores penduli
 aurantiaci — coccinei — apicibus viridibus — Stigma
 trifidum — odor nullus — Folia fragilia et nullas
 fibras continent — a 29.9.13

3873/2 Phoenix reclinata



Cyrtanthus ??

Rootstock thick tuberous with fibres
 (Agapanthus)

Leaves radially arranged (Agapanthus)
 flat, often obliquely twisted

Flowering stem or scape two edged
 compressed

Flowers pendulous orange-red with green
 tips stigma three lobed No odour
 Leaves brittle containing fibres

4131 1 Agapanthus? (nov. Gen. v. Bot. Keg. 1182)


- v.S. 555 Cyst sylvati



Habitat ad ripas rivulorum.
Mr Jennings says "the fruit is eatable tho' not very
good. 4.8.17.
22.9.13.

Memoranda Botanica – Ephemeris Botanica p 54





The Morley that took Burchell's collection from Algoa Bay to Table Bay



January 1814

The Middle: Nursery Rhymes

- **Fulham Nursery – (William Burchell)**

- Discovered 1813 & took samples to London 1825
- Cultivated many plants 1815 – 1825 ... Clivia??
- In Brazil 1825- 1830

- **Botanical & Nursery Garden (John Tate)**

- Saw WJB's samples ... probably also cultivated
- Imported through soldiers in Albany (Lt. Lacock or Lynch?)

- **Royal Gardens, Kew (William Townsend Aiton ... James Bowie; William Hooker the successor in 1841)**

- Bowie in Albany intermittently for 14 weeks, 1820-1822
- Took specimens to Kew – said he found them on Quagga Flats – nonsense
- Apparently his plants flowered 3 times by 1827
- Departed for S Afr in 1827 where he remained until his death in 1869

- **Syon House (Richard Forrester; Lady Charlotte Clive (Herbert)... William Herbert?)**

- **Royal Horticultural Society (John Lindley)**



William Hooker in Curtis's Botanical Magazine 55: t.2856

Bowie wrote to **William Hooker** on 10 April 1827:

'there is another plant **at Kew** ... related to *Cyrtanthus*, but it is not bulbous ... is now flowering for the third time. The plant was known to Burchell but whether he named it I cannot learn – I enclose a dry flower (K000366133).... If not otherwise named I should like to give it to Mr Aiton. The plant is already in two other gardens near Kew ... if it flowers in either of those gardens it will be sent immediately to the Bot Register *though they dare not publish the history of its possessions.*'

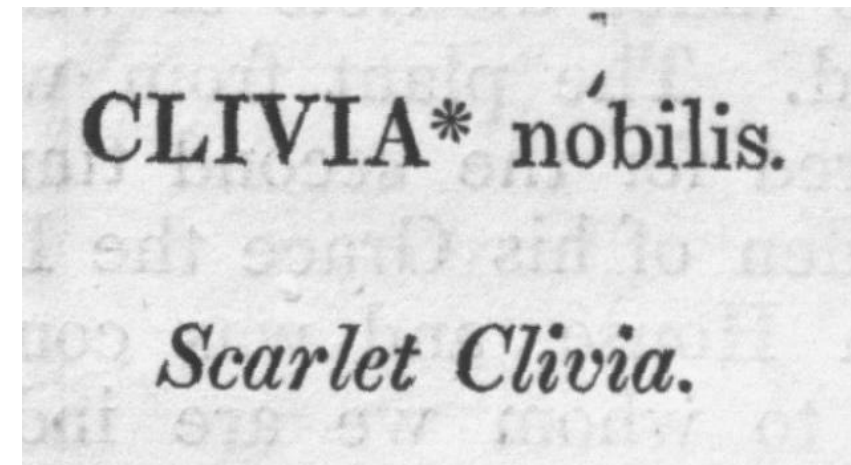
Which other gardens? Forrest & Clive of Syon & ? Tate' Bot & Nursery Garden? Maybe The Syon plant was 'taken' from Kew? Illustration from wet specimen provided by Richard Cunningham (from Syon, ex Aiton?) and Hooker uses his description of the apple aroma of broken leaf. Bowie mentions that the plant was 'known to Burchell'

Peter Macowan commented: Bowie, however, for prudential trade reasons, reported it from "Orange River" (and not a location in Albany)

Hooker reported it to have been found growing 'on shaded spots, near Quagga Mats, and more common in the Albany tracts, near the Great Fish River'

Hooker proposed the name *Imatophyllum Aitoni*

John Lindley, Edwards's Botanical Register, 14: t.1182.



This noble plant is supposed to have been one of the discoveries of Mr. Bowie at the Cape of Good Hope, from some of the inner districts of which colony it was probably procured. The plant from which our drawing was made, flowered for the second time in July last, in the princely Garden of his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, at Syon House, and was communicated to us by Mr. Forrest, to whom we are indebted for several observations upon its habit and characters.

Names plant after Lady Clive (Duchess of Northumberland): *Clivia nobilis*



WILLIAM Herbert in Amaryllidaceae, 1837

This beautiful plant was first discovered by Dr. Burchell,
in whose herbarium, soon after his return from Africa,
One of the plants flowered for the
first time in this country in the collection of the Duchess of
Northumberland, after whom it was named.

I obtained for Mr. Tate, from the kindness of Dr.
Burchell, a precise account of the spot where he had seen
this plant;

Sir W. Hooker was mistaken in supposing Mr. Bowie to
have been the first discoverer of this plant. Indeed, roots
of it were in my hands before he had seen it in Africa.

WHO SUPPLIED SYON? Tate from his nursery, or Bowie illicitly
from Kew

Only Herbert mentions
Burchell in a
publication; neither
Hooker nor Lindley

Burchell and Bowie
were abroad in 1827

THE STORY

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres

- **The beginning (1813) - serendipity:**
 - A sinking wagon!
 - Burchell's discovery of a plant he could not classify
 - The plant was sent by sea to CPT
- **The middle (1815-1827) – 'nursery rhymes':**
 - Burchell's specimen(s) in London
 - Other specimens reach London nurseries
 - Who supplied Syon?
 - Did Burchell cultivate successfully
- **The end (1827) - conundrum:**
 - Two presentations to botany
 - Winner takes all



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Annie & Justin de Wet
Steyn of Clivia Wonders



John van der Linde
John Rourke

