

Best Trip Ever - Darling 2013

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SUMMARY

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There must have been something specific in the re-survey of the Zwartland baseline, near Darling, that the four young land surveyors, who assisted the author in this exercise, called it the best?

They without a doubt were also fascinated with the surveying history of South Africa and had a chance to be closer to the core of it. This related to the first geodetic survey conducted in South Africa 270 years ago by Abbe de Lacaille. 90 years later, the Zwartland baseline, in its recent form, was built and measured by Sir Thomas Maclear. Its length was later adopted by Sir David Gill and incorporated into the geodetic system, which served well for a century, until the Hartebeesthoek94 datum, based on the WGS84 ellipsoid, was introduced in South Africa in 1999.

The aim of the 2013 trip was to verify the baseline length, in order to obtain a comparison of Maclear's value against modern GPS technology.

The author, who retired soon after this survey, provides an outline of the geodetic developments in South Africa, and afterward elaborates on the results received.

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