**Peter Zoutendyk, a personal memoir**

I have known Peter Zoutendyk since my second year at UCT, when I had a summer job sorting plankton and he worked as a research assistant to Prof John Day in charge of plankton collection. UCT had just purchased for £5 (or ten Rand), an old wooden trawler and converted it into a research vessel, the John D Gilchrist, named after South Arica’s first marine scientist. Peter and I went on many trips on the “Gilchrist”, first in my undergraduate vacations and later as a fellow research assistant. One memorable trip extended as far as Luderitz in then South West Africa, now Namibia. The scientists helped with everything, for the ship’s crew consisted of a skipper, mate, two engineers, and a deck hand. We, including Professor Day, helped steer the ship, man the winches, the decks, and do all the scientific work. There were no trade union restrictions on what we could, or should not, do. We encountered a nasty storm on the return voyage, and the ship split a seam between the wooden planks and started taking water. The engineers got the pumps going in the middle of a winter’s night, but one pump became blocked and we then had to man the hand pump. John Day hopped around on his leg (he had taken off the wooden one for the night, and we all took turns in pumping water out while the engineer tried to unblock the electric pump, eventually succeeding. Because we joined in and did everything together, there was tremendous esprit de corps. Peter was central to this and loved life at sea, having worked on whaling ships in the Antarctic after matriculating and before studying at UCT.

In 1965, UCT acquired a purpose-built steel research ship, the Thomas B Davie, and we had many memorable cruises on that vessel with John Day or Eric Simpson. We also did some deeper diving from the “Davie” including a cruise to Vema Seamount in the Atlantic Ocean, where a population of rock lobsters had been decimated by commercial fishing.

Later, we both worked for the CSIR, based at UCT and using our work towards higher degrees. Peter saw the value of diving to observe and sample in shallower waters and pioneered scientific diving in South Africa. He was instrumental in starting the scientific diving unit at UCT and, with Tom Hennessy, forming the South African Society for Underwater Science to get our own diving qualifications instead of having to comply with the professional industrial diving regulations. Peter was president of this society for many years and succeeded in having special regulations promulgated to make scientific diving safe but without unnecessary bureaucracy.

Peter was the eternal positive thinker and improviser if things went wrong: “ ’n boer maak ‘n plan” he would say. We worked together on the “Kelp Bed Project” diving intensively at different sites around the western Cape to study the ecology of kelp forests and the energetics of how they function. We had a glorious summer, camping out every alternate week and diving every day to quantify the dynamics of kelp forests. As part of this, Peter devised a way of measuring currents at different depths, filling condoms with sea water to make them neutrally buoyant and timing their movement from a fixed point using an underwater compass at different states of the wind, tide and wave action. This resulted in the measurement of an “Ekman Spiral” in 25m of water at Oudekraal, confirming the theoretical prediction of the Swedish oceanographer Sven Ekman for wind driven upwelling. We had a tremendous team, lots of hard work but also lots of fun and some excellent braais and parties. Both of us were already married with young children, and with the wisdom of hindsight, I suspect that our wives and children were very long-suffering of our work habits.

Peter was always very fit, he exercised regularly and gave me a booklet of Canadian Airforce “5 Basic Exercises” that he followed for many years building up to the highest levels of fitness. He moved to Stellenbosch with the CSIR where he worked until his retirement. We saw less of one another after that move, but he still came to seminars at UCT occasionally and was always the same warm, friendly Peter Z., looking tanned and fit. A few years ago, long after he had retired and after I had too, I bumped into Peter at a beach near Simon’s Town. I thought it must be Sebastian or Matthew who looked so young and fit, but he came up to me and sure enough this was the eternally youthful Peter Z, by then well into his seventies. I find it difficult to believe that he has died. His sudden death on 15 June 2017 in his 86th year, after an active day, was a great shock to Hilary, his family, and his friends and former colleagues. We had thought that Peter was immortal, but then nobody is. We salute a true gentleman, a loyal colleague and a wonderful friend. Our sympathy goes out to Hilary, Sebastian, Matthew and Karen who will also miss him sorely.

John Field