Myths surround the station

One of our historic buildings, the station, is still the subject of urban myth. The Sunday Times once had a story about the head of the SA Railways and Harbour Services who set a tone for Hermanus where he, Sir William Hoy, enjoyed fishing for many years. The story continued that Sir William decreed that the railway line destined to link Hermanus with the Bot River junction 30 km away would not be built lest it reminded him too much of work while on holiday.
“Hoy’s decision involved a huge amount of executive discretion, because Hermanus’ ‘station had already been built in anticipation of the railway line reaching the town’. Today the railway station stands there still, in front of Hoy’s Koppie. Hoy and his wife are buried there, perhaps in gratitude for their contribution to Hermanus’ cachet as a secluded, somewhat up-market resort, the Cote d’Azur of the Cape, as some of its inhabitants like to see it.” “With no noisy trains steaming into town, no taint of smelly locomotives, the station was a regular winner of a trophy, proudly awarded each year by the rail services to the nation’s neatest railway station. Anyone who knows Hermanus and its history would smile or smirk at the above stories, or myths. Since the inception of the railroad bus and truck service in 1912, the bus station in Main Road where Pep Stores and Niel du Toit are situated, was used for all bus traffic. The trucks stopped at a special shed on the market, where fish was loaded and supplies off loaded. The new station, which was never intended for trains, was built in the 1943, thus before the end of World War II. William Hoy discovered Hermanus in 1910 and became the most enthusiastic patron of this enchanting village. When local residents pressed the railway head for a train to the village, he wanted Hermanus to remain unspoilt and not run over by masses that could turn up once there was a railway line. He had experienced this at Kalk Bay. Hoy was fond of the fishermen and as he wished to help them, he introduced the very first road service of the SAS & H between Botrivier and Hermanus. This served as a road link between Hermanus and the nearest station. Sir William Hoy and his wife are buried on the koppie, because it was his special wish, which is why it’s called Hoy’s Koppie. The station, built thirteen years after his death was used as a station until the end of the bus service in 1985. Thereafter Eskom and the municipal electricity department used it. In 2001 the local tourism bureau became the proud users. After a few months the Hermanus Arts Society joined and occupies the northern wing of the building. Hermanus can be proud of the present occupants of her station.