



Sinangwana, a gem of a holiday resort on the Transkei Wild Coast, south-east of Port St Johns. It was to Sinangwana that Alistair and Glen Weakley were returning from a fishing trip with children and a friend when they were murdered in their vehicle. See *The Chiel*.

# *The Chiel*

## Sinangwana

It is a black day when a political leader is gunned down in cold blood. They are black days when people kill each other. It is a black day when innocent fishermen are shot dead at the roadside.

I know well the part of Transkei where Alistair Weakley and his brother Glen were shot in cold blood. Every year the Chiel family makes a pilgrimage to Mpande for two weeks of blissful rest from the pressures of work and city life and every year we vow to go back. Sadly this year we will not be going there and after this week's news I must admit I am relieved we made the decision earlier in the year to visit the Kruger Park and Eastern Transvaal instead.

Sinangwana (main picture, left), where the Weakleys were staying with friends, is just a 10-minute walk from Mpande and every year we amble across to exercise the dogs, burn off a few calories and to enjoy the magnificent view of one of the most beautiful parts of the Wild Coast.

The road follows the top of a high ridge that runs parallel to the sea. The view is expansive and the sea always a rich turquoise. Dolphins, working their way up and down the line of breakers, peel off from their school to surf the waves and then leap up and back out of the white water as it dumps.

Sinangwana consists of some 20 to 30 cottages perched on the side of a hill, facing north and east, sheltered from the wind and overlooking the river that goes by the same name. Its beach stretches 500 metres along the shore to steep hills and cliffs that plunge into the sea.

A few kilometres further north-east is Brazen Head, a landmark to shipping, excellent fishing spot but accessible only from the top which is reached by 4-wheel drive vehicle. The long walk to the bottom and then back again is only worth it if fish have been caught.

Beyond Brazen is the Umgazana River, famous for its mangroves, Umgazi and its hotel and then Port St Johns and its northern side to Poenskop. It is my guess the Weakleys would have been returning home from fishing at one of these places when they were mowed down in cold blood in an act of wanton terrorism.

Unfortunately the area is renowned for its criminal element and as the nearest police station is at Port St Johns, a 45-minute drive away, there is little law enforcement. Some years ago I was returning to Mpande from Umgazana at dusk when a rock was thrown from a bank that struck the roof of the vehicle just above the window and in line with my head. I was lucky.

Every year we go there we are told of the latest break-ins to the cottages. Last year we arrived to find bedding had been taken. The year before it was crockery and cutlery. A few years before a number of cottages at Sinangwana had been broken into and one burned down.