

# Obituary

---

## Peter Rohloff (1963–2003)

In 1978 I had recently qualified in bird ringing and was in the throes of my project at the Melville Koppies Nature Reserve, Johannesburg. I received a telephone call from a young lad by the name of Peter Rohloff who was 15 at that time; he wanted to be taught all about bird ringing. I met Peter and suggested that he joined me at the Koppies the following weekend. I was very sceptical as I had been through similar experiences before and had found either the ‘interested party’ did not turn up or maybe turned up for one or two ringing sessions then you heard nothing further from them. Little did I guess that this was the start of many years of assistance, help and friendship – which I really have not found since! Peter as a schoolboy would cycle to Melville Koppies from his home in Discovery on a Saturday morning, whether it was sweltering hot or freezing cold or pouring with rain and then cycle back home on Sunday afternoon after a strenuous ringing session! Nevertheless, by the time I arrived on Saturday (as I often had to work in the mornings) he would have a good few nets up but left closed until I arrived and a hot pot of tea ready for me!

After his schooling he went first to RAU and then to Stellenbosch University. I understood that he went on to a job as an Agricultural Adviser in the northern Cape, followed by a stint in Botswana. At this time I lost contact with him. Peter was for many years a member of the WBC and easily qualified for his “A” bird-ringing permit when put forward.

What a shock to me when I read on the SABirdNet recently a posting by his brother, Wolfgang, informing us that Peter had been shot in a tragic and senseless crime. I contacted the family and his sister Elizabeth has given me the full story.

Peter had married and had a baby boy of 2½ years. They lived on a plot at Tarlton. He was the manager of a small firm, Osmo Pumps & Pipes, at Honeydew. He was at work on Friday 20 June (he was now 40 years old). A young colleague (21) and the female receptionist (56) were also there – it appears that four males walked into the shop, looked around then started to shoot indiscriminately. The receptionist was shot dead on the scene, the colleague was shot in the knee and is still recovering and Peter was shot in the lower back – however, after several hours of surgery at Milpark Clinic he died.

The motive for the killing cannot be imagined – nothing was taken – although cell phones and cash were lying around.

Peter was meticulous in his work and always put everything he had into it. He always seemed happy and had an extremely good sense of humour and generous nature. I’m convinced his work colleagues and his family will sorely miss him.

Our best wishes, thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Paula and young son Kevin, and the Rohloff family.

*L .J. Bunning, lbjbird@soft.co.za*