

Monument a vital part of past

I WRITE in reply to Ross's letter about the little Summerstrand monument, pictured right, between Marine Drive and 7th Avenue. It was erected in gratitude to Joseph Storr Lister, who in 1890 saved Summerstrand, and eventually Port Elizabeth, from being engulfed by moving sand dunes.

Lister was a South African Conservator of Forests, educated at the Diocesan College in Rondebosch, and married to the daughter of Thomas Charles John Bain, the road-builder and engineer.

He answered a call for assistance from the Port Elizabeth Town Council to save the city from the shifting sand. He succeeded by planting trees and grasses on the dunes.

His plan worked and the dunes were stabilised.

A memorial plaque on the monument told the story for generations before being stolen about 30 years ago.

Country-wide removal of alien vegetation planted over 100 years ago now occurs in two work-providing government programmes – Working for Water and the Expanded Public Works Programme.

As for the monument itself, it is in good condition with just the information plaque missing.

Every now and again people sit around it, but they don't cause a nuisance. Beachfront rubbish is collected regularly by the city cleaners.

This little monument has been representing a very vital part of our past. All it needs is a new, non-copper plaque and it will be set for another 120 years!

Marion Harning, Port Elizabeth

