



EAST RAND HIKING CLUB



Strandloper - December 2011

Newsletter

March 2012

To

May 2012

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

2012 is here and I hope you all have at least one new year's resolution -----“do more hiking! “

One of the members came to me at the last meeting at the Library and complained that all the hikes were full! Excellent! I don't mean that in a negative way. I am happy to report we were able to get him onto the hike he wanted to do because we had a cancellation. We don't like to disappoint our members but we also try to fill our hikes so that we don't have the costs of cancellations. But what this means is that our members are active and hiking!

We needed to fill the program up with some more hikes and in the second quarter we have done just that. Look at the program and you will see, Serendipity, Mateke Game farm, Uitkyk, Hennops, Kaapschehoop, Malolotja and for December Hoerikwaggo. (As promised we have collaborated with our Cape members Jo and Ian Goddard and Hoerikwaggo is organised through them) Don't wait too long to book onto these hikes as we really don't want to disappoint anyone. Let's fill these up as well! (By the way Mateke is the hike where I got my nick name “Dash” because I lead the group to do day one and two together on Saturday. I am sure you will be pleased to know that I am not leading this one.) There are also many day hikes on the program to get everyone out there hiking!

I am surprised that the Easter hike to the Maluti has not been fully booked This is still one of my favourites and if you are wondering if you can do it, Erich Hahn did it at the age of 80! That doesn't make it easy, because Erich is one tough 80 year old, but it is in the reach of many of you. The big climb on day 2 is with day packs only and it is spectacular! (Pictures on the Gallery on our website)

See you out there.

Alex



WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

“The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt.

People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance”

Cicero—55 BC

EVIDENTLY - nothing!



**I have to walk early in the morning,
Before my brain figures out what I'm doing...**



SOCIAL SCENE

This year got off to a good start with an interesting presentation on improving our photography by Michael Helps. Michael explained the basics for taking pictures that will grab the viewers attention and he also judged and commented on pictures submitted by members. Keep on taking those award-winning shots for the next time!

Nylstroom Bush Lodge - March 9 to 11

There are still places available for this social weekend, where you won't have to make any food, just chill. There is a hiking trail which isn't too long or demanding and we will be doing other activities, to entertain and perhaps test your abilities. So book now if you want a pleasant weekend with your fellow hikers. A fuller description was inserted in the Social Scene in December's Newsletter.

Due to the success of the weekend at **Mankwe Wildlife Reserve** we will book it again some time in the future.

Wednesday Socials at the Library:

March 28 – AGM: Do come along and support this important meeting, your input is vital. Will be followed by cheese and wine

April 25 – due to many members leaving on Thursday 26th to do the two Num-Num trails it was felt that the turnout would not justify the cost of hire and eats, so we should cancel this meeting. **However**, if you would like to prove us wrong, book your place at the Library for this night before the 16th April by phoning Gretta (or emailing), so that the theatre can be booked and eats arranged.

Unless you are advised to the contrary therefore, this social meeting will remain cancelled.

May 23 – One of our members will be doing a DVD presentation – details later.

June 27 – We are hoping to have an expert on bee-keeping. Details in the June newsletter.

July 25 – A wine tasting – details in June newsletter.

Future Activities:

On Sunday 2nd September we will hold a **Spring Day Hiking Dish Cook-off**. This competition is to test your skill at preparing a meal for fellow hikers. The venue is still to be decided, but in the meantime think about your killer dish. Prizes to be won!

It has been interesting and fulfilling being convenor, although I will be stepping down from this position, and I appeal to you to take part in the fun of helping to arrange club social activities by joining the Social Sub-committee. It only entails a handful of meetings and will give you the satisfaction of being fully involved in Club activities.

Socially yours

Derek





welcome to new members:

Glynn and Lindsay Chamberlain

Congratulations to:

Amanda Jordaan and Piet Van Heerden
On their engagement

And
Stephanie Leach (Now Weyers) and Rudolph Weyers
On their wedding

Life together is easy, as long as you love, honour
and take turns in doing the dishes



**A cover charge of R20.00 per person is payable to
cover the Cost of hiring of the Library and to cover the
cost of the “speaker”**



IMPORTANT NOTICE

**PLEASE NOTE: CELL PHONES MAY BE LEFT ON DURING HIKES,
BUT MUST BE USED IN CASE OF EMERGENCY ONLY**

**REQUESTED METHOD OF PAYMENT
Direct Deposits into our Banking Account**

1. Per EFT (Telegraphic Transfer) - *This is the preferred method of payment.*
2. Cheque Deposit .
3. Cash Deposit - This method of payment is the *LEAST* preferred - please include Cashment fee of R10.00 when using this method of payment.

**Do not forget to include your name and details of hike / fees on your deposit slip AND
fax confirmation of payment to Gretta— Fax No: 011.8499805**

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR

Family Membership R340-00

Single Membership R230-00



BIRDERS CORNER

A column for novice birders
by

Pierre Hofmeyr

Bird-watching in Mauritius

For a complete change from the birds in South Africa, we go overseas and have a look at birding in Mauritius. A week's hiking trip to Mauritius in October 2011 provided the opportunity to do some bird-watching on this interesting island.

The volcanic islands of Mauritius and Reunion (known as the Mascarenes) emerged from the sea at the same time some 8 million years ago and are about 400 km apart. Geologists theorize that the islands are geologically connected, the present active volcanism on Reunion being a safety-valve which keeps the volcanic vents on Mauritius dormant. Wind-blown and water-borne seeds were the origin of the natural vegetation on the island. Birds, of course, fly and colonized the island from other land-masses. Some were probably storm-blown and, once they found a safe haven, remained there. Some species are endemic to several Indian Ocean islands (endemic meaning occurring nowhere else), some to the Mascarenes and eight are endemic to Mauritius alone. This means that even during the island's relatively short existence evolutionary processes of natural selection took place resulting in the presence of these species on Mauritius but occurring nowhere else in the world.

With the absence of predators the famous flightless Dodo also evolved but unfortunately was extinct by 1750. Dutch sailors began using Mauritius as a stopover in 1598 and found the Dodo a convenient source of food. Within 80 years, the dodo was gone forever. Having evolved over millions of years to take maximum advantage of its enforced isolation, its size and inability to flee from predators pushed it into extinction in an evolutionary instant. DNA genetic evidence shows that the Dodo is closely related to the pigeon family and originated from south-east Asia. It is theorised that, having reached Mauritius, the birds slowly adapted over a few million years to living on an island that had no predators and a wealth of fruit lying on the ground. They gradually traded their ability to fly for the ability to store larger amounts of fat that would carry them through times of scarcity. To store the fat, they got bigger, making it more difficult to fly. Surrendering the ability to fly, and thus to elude enemies, cost them their existence when predators, *homo sapiens*, suddenly did arrive and they had no means of escape.



The natural vegetation over most of the island has been removed to make way for sugar-cane, this and tourism being the main foreign exchange earners of the country. The destruction of natural habitat (less than 2% of the original forest remains) has resulted in two other species coming perilously close to extinction, namely the Pink Pigeon and the Mauritius Kestrel. Both were reduced to less than 10 individuals before their plight was realized in the 1970s and concerned conservationists started a captive breeding programme with release of newly-bred birds to the wild. Even now there are less than 600 of each species in the wild and, although out



of danger, they are still amongst the scarcest birds in the world. Mauritius has only 54 species of land birds, ie. excluding sea and shore birds, and many of these are introduced birds such as our Village Weaver, Common Waxbill and Yellow-fronted Canary. The other Mauritian endemics are the Mauritius Parakeet, the Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike, the Mauritius Bulbul, the Mauritius Olive White-eye, the Mauritius Grey White-eye and the Mauritius Fody. I only managed to spot three of them but then mine was not a bird-watching trip. I was not able to photograph any of the endemics but was able to record two very common and attractive introduced species, the Red Fody and the Red-whiskered Bulbul.



FLAWLESSLY LOGICAL

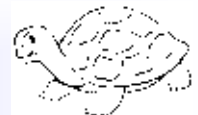
The wife and I were sitting around the breakfast table one lazy Sunday morning.
 I said to her, "If I were to die suddenly, I want you to immediately sell all my stuff."
 "Now why would you want me to do something like that?" she asked.
 "I figure that you would eventually remarry and I don't want some other fool using my stuff."
 She looked at me and said: "What makes you think I'd marry another fool?"



HEALTH MESSAGE¹.



1. If walking/cycling is good for your health, the postman would be immortal.
2. A whale swims all day, only eats fish, drinks water and is fat.
3. A rabbit runs and hops and only lives 15 years.
4. A tortoise doesn't run, does nothing ..yet lives for 450 years.



AND THEY WANT TO TELL ME TO EXERCISE!



Climbers bare their soles on Kili for Charity



The Mountain

Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest free standing mountain in the world at an altitude of 5895m, the highest mountain in Africa and the 4th highest of the 7 Summits. Mount Kilimanjaro was 1st summited in 1889 by Hans Meyer and Ludwig Purtscheller, an incredible 27 years after its 1st summit attempt in 1862. The structure of the mountain is composed of 3 volcanoes: Kibo (19,340 feet), Mawenzi (16,896 feet), and Shira (13,000 feet). Kilimanjaro supports 5 major eco-zones: rain forest, heath, moorland, alpine desert and glaciers which in turn, each pose different problems and challenges to those pursuing the quest of climbing this spectacular African landmark. The altitude of the upper eco-zones combined with the latitude of the mountain means that it is summer-like every day and a freezing arctic climate every night.

Apart from the physicality and testing elements on the mountain, altitude sickness is by far the biggest contributor to climbers not reaching the summit. The usual 6 day summit of Kilimanjaro is incredibly fast for a mountain this high and thus giving climbers very little time for acclimatisation. To put things into perspective, it takes approximately 14 days to climb Mt Aconcagua which is only 1000m higher than Kilimanjaro.

The Rules of Going Barefoot

A strict set of rules have been established and must be adhered to at all times during the climb in order to achieve and claim a barefoot summit.

In order for one to declare a barefoot summit of Mount Kilimanjaro a climber must:

- Walk and climb every meter of the mountain from a Mt Kilimanjaro Park gate to Uhuru Peak barefoot and during set climbing times.
- Establish set climbing times during each day and not place a shoe of any kind on any foot during the set climbing times.
- Establish a start and end mark at the beginning and end of each day and climb between these marks each day. The end mark of each day will automatically become the start mark of the following day.
- At all times walk with no artificial or natural substance or assistance between his/her feet and the ground. The skin to ground rule.

Therefore, between set climbing times, a climber may be shod or choose to do what they may. A climber may also warm his/her feet during set climbing times by various means except by putting shoes on. However if a climber requires means of warming his/her feet which results in the bottom of his/her feet being covered then he/she may not continue climbing until the covering has been removed.

Preparation

In a pre-departure post on his [‘The Science of Sport’ blog](#), Ross gives some insight into the team’s preparations for walking on the sharp and jagged shale and dealing with the toe-freezing cold. Indeed, the three gremlins that the team has to deal with are altitude, cold and terrain.

Altitude

Well, at 5,895m Kili is a big ol’ mountain and many an affected climber has had to skip the summit and return to a more comfortable elevation. As Ross says, “It’s impossible to know who will thrive at altitude, and who will suffer”.

The trip has been designed to take one day longer to ascend, which gives the team a day of adaptation at 4000m. "We also have a day where the change in altitude is minimal (from 4300 to 4700m, so only 400 m ascent) and so these are two "buffer days" that we are optimistic will allow us to get above 5,000m feeling strong for that final push," he adds.



Terrain

The sharp and jagged shale is the team's big worry. They've all been walking and running barefoot for six months to build up the skin on their soles. "Getting the feet tough enough is just a matter of being habitually barefoot. It means walking on tar, gravel, off-road at every possible opportunity until "nature's outsole" becomes so thick that those small stones feel like pressure, and not pain," Ross says.

Unlike the rest, Ross only joined the expedition three months ago as a participant so his feet haven't had the same period of time to toughen.

To deal with the sharp terrain they'll be walking really slowly. Ross explains: "When you are walking 4.6 km in 7 hours, you are taking 9 minutes per 100m. Try walking that slowly. Now, the good thing about this is that if you walk as slowly as that, you can get away with walking on quite sharp, rough ground. Try it. Find some gravel and walk your normal speed (about 1 to 1.5 min per 100m), and then repeat at 5 min per 100m pace. Feel that difference."

Cold

The ground on the mountain is cold; there's no escaping this reality. To escape frostbite the team has designed a disciplined foot-warming regime, which was developed during cold chamber training sessions. Their current plan (flexible and dependent on conditions) is to walk for seven minutes and then to actively warm their feet for three minutes. They'll repeat this for an hour and then stop for 20 minutes to properly re-warm.

They're expecting a daytime ground temperature of -5C at higher altitudes. At night this drops further so they'll start their summit day after sunrise to reach the summit before sunset. With the summit attained they'll don shoes for the descent.

Ross' teammates include Andrew King, Hedley Young, Camilla Howard and Clyde Barendse. Sean Disney is their lead guide. They're also joined by some media people (camera/video).



News Report

Many people can lay claim to summiting Africa's highest peak. But until now, none could attest to doing it barefoot. With a few calluses, toe stubs and grazes, six local mountain climbers reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro barefoot on Saturday afternoon.

They are all members of Barefoot Impi and took on the Old Mutual Barefoot Kilimanjaro Expedition to **raise funds for the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital.**

According to the Barefoot Impi website, those who join can attempt or establish a barefoot challenge, with the emphasis on personal achievement – and to the benefit of a charitable cause.

One of the climbers, Matt Botha, said he had always wanted to climb Kilimanjaro – a climb on "a unique African landmark that every proud African should aspire to do".

And the crew decided to climb barefoot to attract attention and interest in their endeavour to raise funds for the children's hospital.

"We wanted to do something cutting edge so we had to find a balance between the possible

and the impossible,” said Botha.

It took the crew about five days to reach the top and two and half days to descend.

No serious injuries or irreparable foot damage were experienced during the expedition.

Reaching the top was an emotional feat for the climbers.

“We all burst into tears,” said Camilla Howard, the only woman in the team.

The crew trained for months in advance – hiking up trails on Table Mountain without shoes and spending several hours in an ice chamber in -15°C temperatures to ready themselves for the challenge.

The team included six barefoot climbers, professional mountain guides, one of SA’s top mountaineers, Sean Disney, and scientist Dr Ross Tucker from the SA Sports Science Institute.

Tucker did extensive research to help the team prepare for the challenge.

“We didn’t go on this expedition irresponsibly; we went in there with a watertight plan,” said Botha.

David Russell-Rockliff from Old Mutual, which sponsored the team, said they had decided on Red Cross as the beneficiary because as a company they had a keen interest in people’s futures and the hospital had a similar vision in that they were looking after children.

Botha added: “Our number one goal was raise to funds for the hospital and summiting the mountain was our second goal... So even though we had a big undertaking, it was nothing compared to some of the mountains these kids (at Red Cross) have to climb.”

NATASHA PRINCE
Staff Reporter



Round like a Shot



Going to bed the other night, I noticed people in my shed stealing things. I phoned the police but was told no one was in the area to help. They said they would send someone over as soon as possible.

I hung up. A minute later I rang again. “Hello” I said, “I called you a minute ago because there were people in my shed. You don’t have to hurry

now, because I’ve shot them”

Within minutes there were half a dozen police cars in the area, plus helicopters and an armed response unit. They caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the officers said: “I thought you said you’d shot them”

To which I replied: “I thought you said there was no one available”

Tony Gladstone

(THIS GUY IS A GENIUS.....)





Interesting Facts About DUNG BEETLES



Before we move on to all those amazing dung beetle facts, you need to understand that the term 'dung beetle' refers to all those species of beetles which are dependent on feces or dung of animals for food and/or shelter. There exist more than 7000 species of dung beetles on the planet, which are found on all the continents of the world except for Antarctica. While some of these beetles are as small as 1 mm, others can grow on to attain a length of 2.4 inches – decent enough for an insect. Dung beetle habitat – spanning across deserts, grasslands, forests, etc. is one of the biggest habitats in kingdom Animalia. Given below are more of such facts about the dung beetle species which will give you a better idea about it.

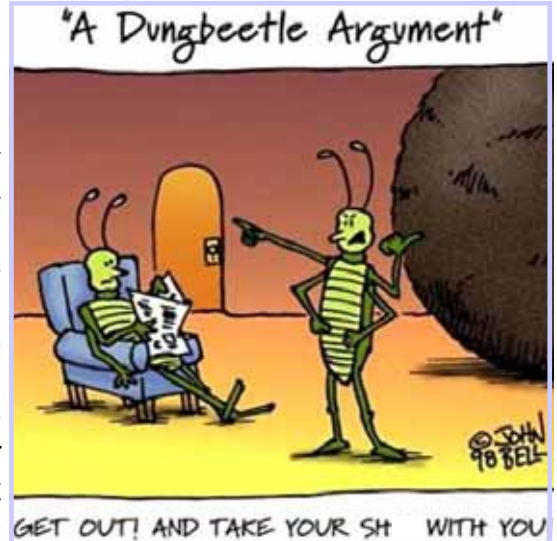
- As we mentioned earlier, more than 7000 species of dung beetles are found on the planet. While most of these dung beetles belong to the Scarabaeinae and Aphodiinae subfamilies, some species which belong to the Geotrupidae subfamily of insects are also considered dung beetles.
- Dung beetles don't eat or drink anything else but survive on feces or dung, as feeding on the same gives them all the nutrients that they require. However, there do exist some species of dung beetles which feed on decaying leaves and other plant matter, when they are not feeding on dung.
- As far as their dietary choice is concerned, most of these beetles prefer to feed on the dung of herbivorous animals in their native habitat. Very few species of beetles feed on the dung of carnivorous animals.
- There exist three types of dung beetles – the first type comprises the ones who roll dungs into spherical balls and take it to their dwelling (rollers), the second type comprises ones who bury the dung at the site where they find it by making tunnels (tunnelers) and the last group which makes dung itself at their home (dwellers).
- Dung beetles are armed with wings – which help them fly over a considerable distance, and three pairs of legs which they use to roll the dung balls or dig tunnels.
- One of the most interesting dung beetle facts – for kids in particular, is their ability to carry things which are 50 times their own weight which makes them strong contenders for the title of strongest insect species on the planet.
- These insects have a lifespan of 3 – 5 years on an average depending on which specific species is taken into consideration. They usually lead a solitary life with the exception of mating season when you get to see them in pairs.
- As far as the African dung beetle facts are concerned, their amazing ability to navigate by polarization patterns in moonlight is by far the most interesting of them all.
- The fossils of dung beetles suggest that they have evolved recently – somewhere around 40 million years now, thus making them one of the most recently evolved beetle types on the planet.

Dung beetles have an important place in mythology, especially that of Egypt wherein the Egyptian scarab beetle was considered sacred. Ancient Egyptians believed that it was a giant dung beetle which kept the world revolving as these insects



revolve the dung balls today. Similarly, some tribes in South America believe that the first human being was carved by a dung beetle.

While the fact that dung beetles feed on feces may seem repelling, this very act of this species has an important role to play in maintaining a balance in the Earth's ecosystem. These insects act as natural recyclers and help in recycling the nutrients and adding them back to the soil. More importantly, they also clean up animal waste in the surroundings – which would otherwise attract insects with the tendency to spread diseases and cause harm to other species. Yet another benefit of this beetle species revolves around the fact that they help in dispersing seeds around and promote the growth of plants when they roll dung balls from one place to another. All these benefits of dung beetles show how important they are for the ecosystem, and citing this very importance they have been introduced in various countries to assist in agriculture and allied activities.



Editor: On a recent visit to Mankwe Game Reserve, Lynn MacTavish mentioned how clean the veld was after winter—thanks to the dung beetles”

Pompom weed – a rapidly increasing menace



Pompom weed is an invasive weed of grasslands, savanna and wetlands that threatens conservation and agriculture in South Africa. This weed is listed as a category one plant under the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act No 43 of 1983). Plants from this category are prohibited on any land or water surface in South Africa and must be controlled or eradicated where possible. Pompom weed is drought tolerant and possibly allelopathic ie it might have a chemical defense mechanism that inhibits the growth of other species.

Pompom weed retreats underground during winter and people tend to forget about it. It is rapidly displacing native species, reducing both the biological diversity and carrying capacity of wetlands and veld. Infestations become conspicuous when the plants are in flower, usually between November and April, transforming the landscape from green to pink. The plant initially establishes itself in disturbed sites, such as roadsides, overgrazed areas and then invades grasslands, open savanna and wetlands.

Pompom is expanding at such a rate that chemical control will soon become unpractical and unaffordable. Biological control is the only sustainable control option against pompom weed. The pompom weed webpage is fully functional and can be accessed at the ARC homepage www.arc.agric.za. This website provides assistance in distinguishing pompom weed from similar-looking indigenous and alien plants, information on chemical control, progress with biological control, contacts in the national department of agriculture for law enforcement, research projects and current distribution of the weed.

Currently, this weed is most prominent in Gauteng, but is expanding its distribution into Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-west Province, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and the Free State.



THANKS FOR THE HONOUR

IAN AND JO GODDARD

Ian and Jo, who have been Members of the East Rand Hiking Club since the inception of the Club in 1984, have retired to Fish Hoek. This appears to be the trend among quite a few of our members who have moved to Fish Hoek over recent years, namely Jenny Price, Ray Arnott, Hugh and Sue Capon, Wolf and Pat Lange and now the Goddards! The Cape seems to have a magnetic attraction, as founder member/Hon. Member and Club Secretary for 14 years, Alison Cramer also moved down there last year to Rondebosch!

We will certainly miss Ian and Jo's activities here in Gauteng, especially for their organizing of the Drakensberg backpack hikes. They have been committee members over the years and we thank them for all their input into the Club over this period of 28 years. Jo was elected the Vice Chairman of the Club at our last Annual General Meeting.

However, they have been bestowed Honorary Membership by the Committee and we are pleased that they will remain active by joining us on some of the longer backpack hikes. The wonderful news is that they have undertaken to 'recci' hikes in the Cape for us and have started by very kindly organizing the Hoerikwaggo Backpack Trail which starts on Table Mountain, for December 2012. Thank you very much Jo and Ian. This is very much appreciated!

Below is a letter received in November 2011 from the Goddards after they were informed of their Honorary Membership:

Thanks for the Honour!

Ian and I would like to thank the Committee for their decision to award us Honorary Lifetime Membership of the East Rand Hiking Club. It was most unexpected and is greatly appreciated. We have greatly enjoyed our hiking with the club and the friendships we have made.

However, all is not lost – we will continue to search for interesting trails for the club and to keep you abreast of the



hiking scene in the Cape. As we have mentioned before, there are trails not as far as Cape Town, i.e. Tierkloof in the Klein Karoo, which has a fantastic write-up – comparable to the Inca Trail at Macchu Picchu and other international trails. WE MUST DO IT! Although it is only 2 days or so, it could be combined with the Swartberg Trail or a visit to Die Hel. Anyway, if you want any info at any time, just let us know and we will be pleased to help. Will also enquire on the status of the Hoerikwaggo. Now that Table Mountain has been declared one of the new 7 Natural Wonders of the World, perhaps more attention will be paid to completing the Red Hill section of the trail and trying to secure better safety for visitors. We may join Friends of Table Mountain – depends what it entails. It would be great to have a group of ERHC hikers come hike in the Cape. There is plenty of opportunity for either base camps with day walks, slackpacking or backpacking, canoeing etc. so that everyone is catered for. Not to mention wine sampling and glorious seafood!

Let me know the deadlines for the quarterly newsletters and we will keep you in touch with our hiking activities “down there”.

Sorry to leave you all and to miss the Christmas “do”, but we hope we can meet up from time to time. Thanks for all the companionship and special thanks to Gretta for all her hard work in organizing trails, etc. We really appreciate the hard work and long hours that go into booking and putting up with various difficulties – it needs a special person to do that. Thanks, Gretta!

Happy hiking Everyone!
Kind regards,
Ian and Jo.

NEWS FROM DOWN SOUTH

Hi All

Having been in Fish Hoek for about 2 months now, we are really settled in. We have found people very friendly and helpful and have made many contacts already.

As for hiking, we could hike every day if we wanted to! Our house is located near the foot of Ou Kaapse Weg, so we have very easy access to Silvermine and have a good view of Chapman's peak from our garden. We have joined U3A (University of the Third Age), who have a very full and varied programme to suit all interests. We have hiked with their Tuesday group, with fantastic views of the Peninsula. We also hiked with the Meridian Hiking Club, also on the Peninsula, and both groups were very friendly. We have done some hikes on our own as well at Cape of Good Hope, Silvermine and Table Mountain. Having Wild Cards is a huge bonus, as there are lots of SANPARKS properties around here, i.e. Cape



Point Nature Reserve, Silvermine and the Boulders. For example, without a card, each entry to Cape Point costs R 85!

As you all know, hiking is thirsty work, so Friday nights we devote to exploring local eateries and drinkeries. The Brass Bell at Kalk Bay is the only bar I know that exits directly onto the station platform! A bit dodgy if you have had one too many!

The weather has been extremely hot for hiking – 37 degrees yesterday, which made us

abort half way up Platteklip Gorge, as it was in direct sunlight and the heat from the rocks unbearable. However, Ian had a good time eyeing all the young lady tourists, most of whom were very pretty and some very scantily clad! Between the heat, exertion and the talent on view, it's a wonder he didn't have a heart attack!

We went to one of the Sunday Concerts at Kirstenbosch with our wine and snacks to hear Mango Groove – very good and what a backdrop to the stage! Also went to Artscape to see Phantom of the Opera, which was excellent.

Each year, U3A organises a Summer School at UCT for 2 weeks, with a wide variety of courses on offer. All of the lecturers are tops in their field and some are from overseas, i.e. Cambridge University. Unfortunately, we were too busy moving in and getting organised, but hope we can make it next year. Most of you will remember Rae Arnott who was an ERHC member – she lives just around the corner from me. Wolf Lange, who has done some presentations and outings on the stars, also lives close by, as do Sue and Hugh Capon. In fact, there are a lot of ex-Benonians in Fish Hoek and surrounds.

There are many social events, especially as Fish Hoek, Simonstown, Glencairn, Clovelly, St. James, Muizenberg and Kalk Bay are all so close to each other. Between them all, there is always something going on, so it's not really necessary to go "over the mountain" for entertainment. I am starting a course on succulents on Thursday and we have a talk on submarines and another on the geology of the Cape Peninsula lined up.

Kirstenbosch entry is free for pensioners on a Tuesday and you get free up and down on the Table Mountain cableway on your birthday. There is also a pensioner rate for Robben island on Tuesdays, first ferry only. So you see, we are sussing out the joint, so to speak, and enjoying ourselves immensely. We do, however, miss our friends and the ERHC, but we are hoping that some of you will come and

hike th Hoerikwaggo with us in December – see details in the next programme. It has been booked as a slackpack and the scenery and tented accommodation is fantastic – you won't be disappointed.

No doubt you have all heard about the rumpus over the building of a toll office on Chapman's Peak. There was a protest march recently, with quite a large turnout, but it seems it is going ahead, anyway. The toll is now R 32 each way.

Dave and Marion McDougal are coming to stay for 8 days tomorrow. Once they go back, our kitchen is being ripped out and redone, so back to chaos again! Never a dull moment! If any of you are in Cape Town any time, please look us up – we will be pleased to see you. We will be seeing some folk over the Argus Cycle Race period.

Well that's it for now. Hope to report on a successful visit to Peru in the next newsletter. We are visiting the Amazon jungle for a few days, then going to Macchu Pichu - hence the urgency to get as much hiking in as possible before we go at the end of March. Living at sea level, we have lost the benefit of altitude, but are doing our best to keep hiking fit.

Cheers for now and Happy Hiking

Ian & Jo Goddard



KOOS

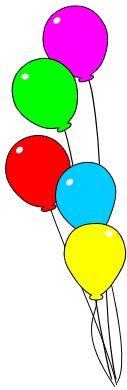


Koos ry in digte mis en kannie goed sien nie
Hy besluit om die motor voor hom se agerliggies to volg.
Skielik stop die motor en Koos ry DOEF! In hom vas.
Koos vlieg uit sy kar en skree op die ander bestuurder:
"Hoekom stop jy so f@\$ken skielik?"
"Omdat, ek in my f@\$ken garage is!"

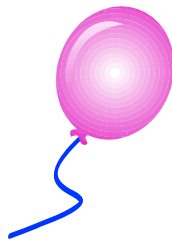
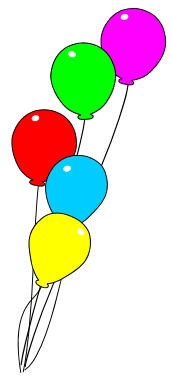


What did Mahatma Gandhi and Genghis Khan have in common?

Unusual names



Happy birthday

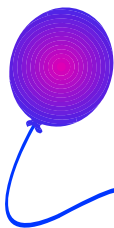


FEBRUARY

Sabine Dresen	01
Sandra Madsen	09
Harold Rees	11
Alison Cramer	21
Cavan Rankin	21
John Tyldesley	23
Sally Jones	25
Trudy Mills	28

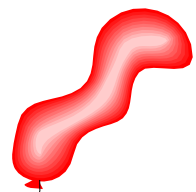
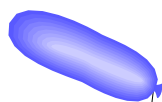
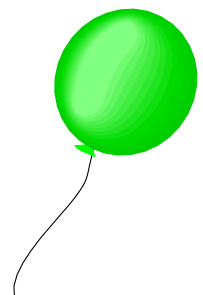
MARCH

Betty Holtzhausen	16
Lesley van Vuuren	23
Rina Scheepers	24
John Houghton	29
Mark Mahood	31



APRIL

Graeme Chown	02
Alan McKendrick	07
Irene Fuchs	09
Jenny Olivier	12
Elaine Deyzel	14
Audrey Tyldesley	15
Lesley Chown	19
Phyllis Morris	21
Brenda Sparke	25
John Snyders	26



**The secret of staying young is to live
honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age.**



TRANSPORT ON HIKES

Members should note that transport for hikes is the responsibility of the individual hiker. While the Hike Leader will co-ordinate transport, it is not part of his/her responsibility to provide it !

If you do not have (or are not prepared to use) your own transport, you must realise that you arrive at the planning meeting as a suppliant, and should not harbour resentment if you cannot be fitted in !



IMPORTANT NOTICE

BANK DETAILS FOR DIRECT DEPOSITS:

East Rand Hiking Club
Standard Bank, Benoni
Branch 013042
Account Number: 02 1010 285

PLEASE REMEMBER TO ADD A R10 CASH FEE WHEN PAYING CASH, EITHER TO THE CLUB DIRECT OR WHEN PAYING CASH INTO OUR BANK ACCOUNT then fax your proof of payment, either electronic or personal deposit, to Gretta on 011 849 9805 or E-Mail to eastrandhikingclub@nashuaisp.co.za

This proof of payment must **clearly indicate your name and the hike or hikes for which you are paying.**

The Standard Bank deposit slips have a row of 22 squares in the bottom left hand corner. Print the name of the hike in these squares. Also print your name clearly in the "signature space". From time to time we have nameless deposits in our Bank Statements causing a lot of wasted time and consternation!

If your deposit slip copy is faint please ink over the information. Faint copies are often too indistinct to read after transmission, and if we cannot read them, we will not be able to confirm your booking!

EAST RAND BIRD CLUB

The East Rand Branch of Witwatersrand Bird Club meets every third Tuesday of the month at Benoni Library Auditorium at 19h30 and would be pleased to welcome anyone interested in joining them. The evening consists of a presentation by a Bird specialist and/or other interesting topics, and you can find out about our frequent outings.

Please phone Erich Hahn 011 747 7514 if you would like more information

DID YOU KNOW.....

No piece of paper can be folded in half **more than seven (7) times.**

Oh go ahead... I'll wait...



BOOKING PROCEDURE

We would like to remind members who intend to do day-hikes that it is **essential** to 'phone the leader a few days in advance, advising him/her that you wish to attend the hike. It is also important to leave your home and mobile 'phone numbers in case the leader has to contact you regarding any changes in meeting time or place. We have had members waiting at the Bunny Park because they didn't 'phone the leader beforehand.

Please note that in some instances the programme calls for hikes to be booked through Gretta, in which case **your name is placed on the waiting list until payment is received and confirmed with Gretta per fax on 849 9805 or by e-mailing to: eastrandhikingclub@nashuaisp.co.za**. ***Ensure that your name and details of hike are clearly endorsed on document, or you stand to forfeit your place to another on the waiting list! You're not on the trail unless you have paid and Gretta has been advised.***

In the case of pre-booked day hikes, also 'phone the leader 2 days before, confirming arrangements, otherwise the leaders have to contact you at their own expense. The same booking/payment procedure applies to weekend hikes and trails. In the case where a member has to withdraw from a hike, please note that no refund can be made unless a substitution is possible from the waiting list.



THIS POINT BEARS REPEATING
You are not booked until you have paid!
When booking hikes names are placed on the Waiting List and will only be transferred to the confirmed list when:
Payment is Received and confirmed with Gretta.



INDEMNITY

The Club assumes no liability for any of the information contained in the Newsletter. All ideas, opinions, and suggestions are those of the contributors. Whilst every care is taken in compiling the contents and advertisements, the Club, their members, **Hike Leaders** and **Committee** assume no responsibility for any effects arising there from.

The **Club, Hike Leaders** and **Committee** will not be held responsible for any losses or damages of any nature whatsoever incurred during or resulting from any club function or event of any nature. Members will be deemed to have indemnified the Club by their participation under their rules.



Have you ever noticed that a woman's
"I'll be ready in five minutes"
And a man's
"I'll be home in five minutes"
Are exactly the same?





CLUB RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

HIKE RULES

Hikers must make sure who the appointed leader of the hike is, and follow **only** him/her. No fires may be lit.

All litter must be taken home, including fruit peels/apple cores etc.

Cellphones to be used only in emergencies; **no** radios, music, noisy behaviour, dogs etc.

No uprooting of plants or picking of flowers. Care must be taken to avoid damage to trees, fences and private property.

COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS

•Hiking boots, lace-up shoes or tackies – no sandals, slip-slops or high-heeled shoes.

•A filled 2 litre bottle of water per person.

•A sunhat, a sweater for warmth and an anorak/raincoat for wind/rain protection.

A daypack for day hikes, larger backpack for trails and a whistle. (No plastic bags to be carried in the hands).

LEADERS MAY REFUSE TO ACCEPT HIKERS WHO ARE NOT SUITABLY EQUIPPED

MEETING PLACE AND TIME

The meeting place for all day hikes will be at the entrance to the Bunny Park in Pretoria Road, Rynfield, Benoni at the time indicated in the Hikes Programme. Indicated time is leaving time!

HIKES

Sunday hikes are normally for a full day. A packed lunch is usually required for day hikes unless “braai/picnic” is indicated on the Programme. It is necessary to contact leaders of the day hikes to inform them of your intention to attend such hikes and check arrangements (unless the programme states “book with Gretta”). An entrance fee is usually charged by land-owners.

LEADERS

Make sure that you know who the leader of your hike is and follow **only** him/her. Do not deviate from the main hike without his/her permission.

TRANSPORT

It is recommended that hikers accepting lifts donate **R0-50 per kilometre** to the driver towards running costs, **or as negotiated with the driver/owner of the vehicle**. Distance to venue is shown on the Programme under “Km Return”.

VISITORS FEES

Non-members are requested to donate R20 (scholars R10) per hike to the Club until such time as their Membership Fee has been paid.

CHILDREN

Anyone under the age of 18 who attends a hike, must be the accepted responsibility of a Club Member, and no child under the age of 12 is allowed to hike, unless permission has been obtained from the leader in advance.

ALL PERSONS TAKING PART IN EAST RAND HIKING CLUB

Briefly explain what hard water:

ICE





cancellation of Bookings

Members will appreciate that, when bookings are cancelled, there are certain difficulties. Cancellations and refunds involve telephone or E-Mail costs, bank charges, book entries etc., and at the same time, when the trail has been fully booked, other members have been precluded from participating and it is difficult to find replacements at a late stage. This often results in popular hikes being only partially filled when they are, in fact, in heavy demand.

The majority of trail authorities require payment in full in respect of bookings well in advance of the date of the trail. In many cases these payments may be required some six to twelve months in advance. The National Parks require payment within two to three weeks of making the reservation, for a date up to a year in advance on the popular trails.

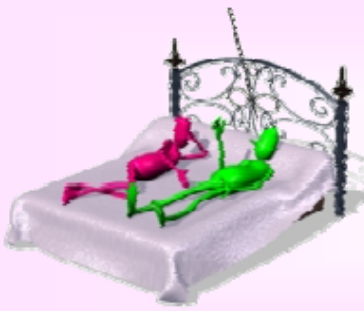
Where a booking by a member is cancelled and the trail authority has provision for refunds (usually less a cancellation fee depending upon the number of weeks before the date of the trail), the Club would then assist by applying for such refund from the trail authority on behalf of the member concerned. The amount refunded to the member is not guaranteed, but would be subject to the trail authority's acceptance of the cancellations, less the cancellation charges.

Any cancellation will be dealt with by the Administration Secretary, who will give preference to members already on the waiting list, or when no waiting list exists, the Admin. Sec. will put the member in touch with other members who might be interested in taking over a cancellation. In that event, payment would have to be made direct between the members involved and not through the Club's books, resulting in no loss to the cancelling member. However, where a replacement has been found by the Admin. Sec., the member will forfeit a cancellation fee of R10-00.

Under no circumstances are members to give their bookings to non-members. Any acceptance of non-members on hikes is at the sole discretion of the Committee.

Where the Club has paid over the fee to the trail authority concerned and it is not possible to obtain a refund or to find a replacement, then the fee in respect of the cancelled booking would have to be forfeited by the member.

REMINDER: As bookings are only confirmed once your payment is made to the Club, please ensure that your payment is received **as soon as possible, as your name is placed on the "waiting list" until payment has been received.** It is therefore also very important to either fax your payment to **011-849-9805** or e-Mail to **eastrandhikingclub@nashuaisp.co.za** immediately after making the payment.



Darling, do I please you in bed?

Yes,, I love that trick you do with your mouth

What trick?

The one where you shut up and go to sleep

FORTHCOMING HIKES

By
Gretta Jones

EZEMVELO TENTING WEEKEND: Near Bronkhorstspuit: 13 to 15 April 2012

Come and join us for a camping weekend at Ezemvelo Nature Reserve, arriving on Friday afternoon. Take your own tent and camping equipment, all food and liquid refreshments. Do day hikes on Saturday and Sunday with plenty game, including gemsbok to be seen. Cool off in the camp pool if you wish! Good ablutions. Not too far from home – only 150km round trip from the Bunny Park! For those of you who do not as yet own a tent – now is the time to invest in one! It does not have to be a big tent, just a small inexpensive 2 or 3 man tent is sufficient. Every now and then we have a tenting weekend which is great fun and gives you the opportunity to get to know the members better!



For those camping for the weekend, please book with Gretta and pay well in advance into the Club's Standard Bank account. Remember, if you are paying **cash** or by **cash cheque**, whether it is to the administrator or a direct deposit to the bank, **please** add a R10 cash fee to your payment.

For those of you not able to camp for the weekend, contact the leader, **Malcolm Honeywill** before **13 April** to make arrangements to arrive at Ezemvelo by 07:30, on Sunday 15th April, for a day hike, giving yourself an hour's drive to get there. If, by

any chance, after you have booked with Malcolm and are unable to hike on Sunday due to illness etc., please phone him to cancel. Entrance fee is payable on arrival at the office. Take your cozzies for after the hike as well as either braai, (take briquettes) or picnic lunch and chairs.

Ezemvelo is situated on the Bankenveld ecotone which is the transition between the grassland and savanna biomes. The Wilge River bisects the reserve causing interesting landscape formations and is bordered by riverine bush teeming with birdlife. 286 Species of birds have been identified on the reserve and the list is still growing! Visits by blue and crowned crane, black, martial and fish eagle are frequent.

MATEKE GAME FARM: Thabazimbi, Waterberg: Base Camp Hike: 25 to 27 May 2012

Breathtaking scenery and rich vegetation leaves a permanent impression in our minds! Mateke is situated 60km north of Thabazimbi on the Ellisras/Lephalale road. Game at Mateke are at ease with humans, allowing good viewing and includes kudu, zebra, klipspringer, bushbuck, steenbok, grey rhebok, mountain reedbuck and wart-hog.

We have booked the Tree Camp which con-



sists of two thatched tree houses built in big indigenous trees, joined with a huge wooden deck. Open plan and only bunk beds are provided. The open boma braai area has braai facilities with fire places and grids, but no electricity is provided. The ablution block has showers, hand basins and two flush toilets. A donkey boiler provides hot water.

To reach the tree houses one has to park on one side of the river and cross over via a suspension bridge of 30 metres. There are natural pools to swim in at the camp.

There is a large table, kettle, large steak pan, no. 2 cast iron pot, drinking water.

Take your own: Sleeping bags and pillows, towels, eating utensils, toilet paper, dish-washing soap and cloths, camping chairs and small fold-up tables to move around. **No electricity, no fridge or stove – take own gas appliances.**

There are two circular hiking trails which lead to the most spectacular and scenic areas on the farm. Both trails are well planned and marked. A lot of game and bird species are to be seen on all the trails. Take bird lists, bird books and binoculars. More than 120 indigenous tree species have been listed and marked.

Njala Trail, 13km: This trail follows the Mamba River with its natural rock pools, taking the hiker to stunning views and wonderful picnic spots. Make time to enjoy a good swim in the rock pools and enjoy real Waterberg bushveld.

Kudu Trail, 9km takes one into the mountains and through dense indigenous forest to kloof areas and views with nothing but unspoilt bushveld as far as the eye can see.

This is a stunning weekend break, so don't delay in booking! Booked for 12 hikers only.

SERENDIPITY BACKPACK TRAIL: Modimile (Nylstroom) / Mokgopong (Naboomspruit) district: 15 to 17 June 2012

A great hike for all the weekend back-

packers and good practise for the backpack hikes which are lying ahead! Booked for 10 hikers, so do not procrastinate in reserving your place! Serendipity is situated in beautiful bushveld and is only 2 hours drive from Johannesburg.

This is a spectacular two-day circular backpack trail with 12km on Saturday and 12km on Sunday with a moderate/average grading. The trails stretch over an unusual combination of valleys, gorges and savannah. There are mountain streams, rock pools with crystal clear water, indigenous forests, waterfalls and panoramic views of the Waterberg. There is a large variety of trees, abundant bird life and game to be seen and enjoyed while hiking.



Arrive and sleep over at Bush Baby camp on Friday 15 June. This is a wooden cottage with 2 levels and bunk beds. There is a braai and wash-up area with braai grids, kettle, 1 gas plate, 2 pots, pans, cold shower and flush toilet. Parking is 50 metres from the camp. No Electricity. Fire wood can be ordered in advance.

On Saturday, hike to Berg Camp which is a stone and thatched hut. This hut also has a braai and wash-up area, braai grids, 1 kettle and 2 pots. Cold shower and flush toilet and no electricity. Take your own small gas utensils: lamp etc.

KAAPSCHEHOOP: MPUMALANGA:
Backpack 6 to 9 July 2012

Backpackers will have to take leave for Monday 9 July

Arrive at Kaapschehoop 6 July.

Florence Hill – 7 July.
Barretts Coaches – 8 July.
Hike back to Kaapschehoop Monday and depart.

Situated near Nelspruit, this popular, moderate to difficult backpack trail has been booked for 10 backpackers only, therefore do not delay your booking!

Hut Facilities: All the huts have bunk beds, showers and toilets. Electricity only at Barretts and showers at Kaapschehoop and Florence Hill are heated by donkey boilers. Provide your own eating and cooking utensils.



You may see the famous wild horses on the trail. Flora consists of yellowwood trees, aloes, endangered cycads and tree ferns. The trail starts at Kaapschehoop Hut, follows along the escarpment to Florence Hill and includes magnificent views of the De Kaap Valley, lush indigenous forests, gorges, pine-scented plantations, streams and interesting structures from the De Kaap goldfields that are of historical interest.

From Florence Hill to Barretts the first section of the trail is through a plantation that leads you all the way around a gorge to a picnic table with a spectacular view back to Florence Hill. Sappi Paper Mill, which can

be seen on this day, is the largest paper mill in the southern hemisphere. Sleep in Barretts Coaches on Sunday night.

Leaving Barretts on Monday morning back to Kaapschehoop, the trail takes you down into the first ravine, known as Jack's Corner. The path eventually traces a historical wagon path and enters a pine forest. This area is known as Bannister's Gold Workings and was a major digging when the diggers lived there. The trail gradually rises over the grassy plain until it reaches the cliffs from where it winds through some rocky ledges, fynbos, yellowwood trees and aloes.

Arriving back at the Kaapschehoop village, the hiker can study the Victorian architecture, browse through fascinating arts and crafts shops or have a bite to eat at one of the tea gardens or pubs before departing for home.

MALLOTJA: SWAZILAND: Basecamp Cabins 9 to 12 August 2012

Malolotja Nature Reserve is one of the most impressive mountain parks in Southern Africa. The spectacular scenery and the variety of fauna and flora makes it a prime highveld conservation area. It is the last unspoilt mountain wilderness left in Swaziland. The reserve extends over an area of 18,000 hectares in north-west Swaziland, making it the largest proclaimed protected area in the Kingdom.

The range in altitude from the top of Ngwenya Mountain, Swaziland's second highest mountain (1829m) to the deep Nkomati River Valley (640m) accounts both for the mild temperate climate and great variety



of habitats; from short grassland, to thick riverine scrub, bushveld and moist Afro-mountain forest.

The Malolotja River rises in the east of the reserve and meanders its way through some fragile bog systems before tumbling over numerous waterfalls, including Swaziland's highest waterfall, the Malolotja Falls and cutting its way through a steep sided gorge to meet the Nkomati River, some 900m below.

Malolotja hiking trails rank among Southern Africa's finest as they offer not only the solace of true wilderness with magnificent rugged country, but also a fascinating variety of fauna and flora and much to interest the amateur geologist. There are numerous hiking routes in the reserve to choose, from long to medium in distance. Experience an interesting day hike into the valley followed by a relaxing evening at the cabins around the braai fire.

We have made a reservation for two of the Cabins, sleeping 4 people each. They are spacious, self-catering, fully equipped chalets. Fireplaces and awesome views enhance the warmth and charm of the national park experience!

The well maintained roads are suitable for normal sedan cars.

FISH RIVER CANYON, NAMIBIA: Tough 5-day Backpack: Start Hike 17 August, finish 21 August 2012. Allow yourself 2 overnight stops en route before commencement of the hike.

Here is the classic Fish River Canyon "challenge" after a last successful trip in 2010! This trail commands respect as it is long and tough in places.

Sleep under the stars and count the satellites! The trail is 86kms long and is for fit backpackers only. This is one trail not to be missed, so start training now.

The trail starts from the main viewpoint near Hobas with a dramatic descent into the Canyon and ends at Ai-Ais. On account of the rugged terrain it is essential for hikers to be fit. A medical certificate for each member of the group must be completed and handed in at Hobas. Be prepared for boulder-hopping, river crossings and enjoy the stop-off at Palm Springs for a dip in the hot spring water. Take cozzies.

No facilities are provided on the trail and although sleeping in the open, a tent is not necessary. Day-time temperatures during the winter



months are generally pleasant, fluctuating between 20C° and 25°C. However, nights can be freezing at this time of the year.

HOERIKWAGGO SLACKPACK TRAIL: TABLE MOUNTAIN TO CAPE POINT: Start Hike 28th, finish 31 December 2012

What a great hike for December – the one everyone has been asking for! Thanks go to Ian and Jo for testing and trying out the various stages of the hike and for making the reservation for us! They are also very kindly looking into before- and after-hike backpackers' accommodation for the hikers at Fish Hoek or Simonstown.

Although luggage will be portaged, the hiking will be long and strenuous, therefore one needs to be fully hiking fit. The hike is booked for only 12 people.



The sight of a bald eagle has thrilled campers for generations. The sight of a bald man, however, does absolutely nothing for the eagle.



The hike starts at Table Mountain and finishes at Cape Point.

Day 1 (Friday 28th): Cape Town to Orange Kloof Forest: 18.4 kms, 8 - 9 hours

Ascend Table Mountain via Platteklip Gorge to the upper cable station. Walk towards Hout Bay, arriving at Orange Kloof Tented Camp on the back slopes of Table Mountain in the late afternoon. Camp is situated in a forested area.



Day 2 (Saturday 29th): Orange Kloof Forest to Silvermine Nature Reserve: 17.5 kms, 7 – 8 hours

Traverse the Constantiaberg and Vlakkeberg with magnificent all-round views of the Cape Peninsula. Overnight at Silvermine Tented camp, overlooking False Bay.

Day 3 (Sunday 30th): Silvermine to Kommetjie: 18 km, 8 – 9 hours

Walk to Chapman's Peak, with magnificent views from Table Mountain to Cape Point. Descend to Noordhoek Beach and walk along beach to Kommetjie. Spend the night at Slangkop Tented Camp, near the lighthouse. Fabulous sunsets from boardwalk along the beach.

Day 4 (Monday 31st): As we are unable to book the Smitswinkel Camp just inside the

gate to the Cape Point Nature Reserve it has been suggested that this day be done as a day walk from the gate to Cape Point. This is regarded by Ian and Jo as an absolutely spectacular walk and there is a restaurant along the way! Pick-up at Cape Point and return to accommodation at Fish Hoek or Simonstown at the end of the hike. They comment that they have seen no baboons at all in this area on their recent 2 visits – not even at the restaurant, which was the baboons' favourite haunt!

Costs: The cost shown in the programme (R800.00) is for the first three days hiking accommodation and portage only.

Additional costs, to be paid in cash or by card are:

Silvermine Nature Reserve (day 2): R25 entrance fee, or no charge with a Wildcard.

Cape Point Nature Reserve (day 4): R85



entrance fee, or no charge with a Wildcard. Two nights' accommodation, before the start (Thurs 27th) and at end Mon 31st), which is still to be arranged.

There will probably be extra costs for transport as cars will be at start points – this still needs to be researched.

When camping, always wear a long-sleeved shirt.
It gives you something to wipe your nose on.



Colin: Is it your turn to carry the emergency kit?



Ellen: Yes, and I tested all the matches at home last night to make sure they work this time.



Port St Johns to Coffee Bay Backpacking Trail

7 to 13 August 2011

By George Fowler

The backpackers were: Terry (leader) and Lesley Youens, Ian and Jo Goddard, Kevin Healy, Lucilla Claasen, George Fowler, Thinus de Wet, Sean Nel and Carina Schwarz.



Sunday 7 August

From Benoni to van Reenen's Pass the outside temperatures varied between -0.5 to around 4 degrees. The distant snowcapped mountains between Harrismith and van Reenen had a soft sheen in the early morning sun. The last snow capped hill was passed about 110km away from Port St. John's and by the time we got to the Amaondo Backpackers the weather was pleasant and warm and it remained that way for most of the hike.

The hikers arrived in dribs and drabs during the afternoon and evening with Sean and Carina being last to arrive just on bedtime. The family-managed Amaondo Backpackers has an almost South Pacific Island ambience, with the bar, dining and dancing areas open and facing the sea. The luxuriant sub-tropical vegetation close to the buildings provides shade and creates the exotic atmosphere. Our party enjoyed the food, drinks and a festive evening before retiring to bed.



Monday 8 August - Port St Johns to Mngazana

We were up and ready to go well before our guide, Jimmy Selani, arrived at 9h30 and started the hike. The trail led past Second Beach into the Silaka Nature Reserve and proceeded along an elevated path, with the sea some distance below us. Jimmy identified the following flora as we walked along this path - the bush tick berry which causes vomiting when eaten and thereby 'cleans the spleen'; the wild fig tree which is used in making wheels; the coral tree with its seeds being used as beads for jewellery; wild banana trees for fruit; cats tails, the fruit of which is eaten by children; the coastal silver oak used for timber; the Natal plum (num-num berry tree) from which a vitamin-rich jam is made; the dragon leaf tree, the leaves of which are used for tying and bundling; the iron-wood tree used for furniture, walking sticks and clubs and a decorative mother-in-laws tongue. These coastal forests have thus met the needs of the local people for many generations.

We emerged onto what used to be Third Beach until about 16 years ago when a huge storm ravaged the Natal and Transkei coasts,



damaged and destroyed buildings and infrastructure and drastically reshaped the coastline in many places. Our tea break was below a 6 metre high rocky cliff with sand above it. The rocky ledge on which we sat had previously been covered by at least 3 metres of sand since I hiked this trail in December 1988. After the break we ascended Heartbreak Hill which was hard work but only the first of several steep climbs and descents that we were to encounter over the next four days.

On arrival at the Umngazi River Bungalows we had a late lunch on the boardwalk next to the pub and jetty. After stocking up with copious bottles of wine and beer we crossed the river in the ferry and proceeded up the long



beach ending at the Mnguzana River. In 1988 the trail went through the mangrove swamps which were infested with red crabs and were much closer to the river mouth than they are now. We were ferried across in three groups from the sand bar to one of several jetties catering for holidaymakers and continued on until we got to the village with

our overnight accommodation, just as the twilight was fading. Showering was time-consuming and primitive but at least we all got clean and felt refreshed. Tasty food was brought in and enjoyed by all. We slept comfortably on what was to be normal for every night of the hike – on foam mattresses on the floor. All ten of us enjoyed the largest rondawel on the hike which had an electric light and enough space for the dining table and some chairs.

Tuesday 9 August - Mngazana to Mpande.

The trail led inland with two steep climbs and descents that morning and good sea views from the heights. We arrived at our overnight hut at Mpande, where Christina was our host-



ess, at about 2pm. Local handmade necklaces, bangles, beadwork, etc were on sale outside our hut by the craftspersons themselves and several items were bought. Here the rondawel accommodated all of us comfortably and there was a separate building with a spacious dining room and adjoining kitchen. The loo and shower were in another separate building well away from the others. The grass around all these buildings was kept neat and short. There was time for a walk to the rather windy beach and some of us chose a refreshing swim in a natural rocky pool. Dinner was tasty and a festive, cosy, social evening ensued around the large dining table due to earlier purchases of beverages from the local shebeen.

Wednesday 10 August - Mpande to Mageza.

A substantial breakfast of fried egg, thick slices of bread, mealie meal porridge and tea or coffee was a good start for the day. The

trail went inland over the Mtonga River and on approaching the Mnenu River we hiked along the side of a shallow valley of a tributary in which a damaged community of mangroves was re-establishing itself. Boarding the ferry was tricky because of very slippery rocks at the water's edge. However there were no mishaps and all reached the opposite side of the Mnenu River safely. Here we met and chatted to four men who were taking a break from city life by fishing, drinking and relaxing



in a rough but well equipped riverside cottage. Thereafter we had a long barefoot beach hike until forced to climb away from it to a path over grassy hills. Our lunch break on a hilltop in the Hluleka Nature Reserve offered a magnificent panorama of the Pondoland coastline. Over a ridge just behind us four zebra and a wildebeest were drinking at a natural pool. On reaching the Hluleka Camp we were fortunate to arrange a tour through one of the seven four-bed luxuriously appointed, yet reasonably priced, self catering chalets.

It was a long hot uphill hike from there, to a shop for refreshments and then on to our overnight stop near Magesa. These huts



were opposite a senior school and about 200m from a shebeen. Two were for sleeping, a third for meals and socialising plus a fourth one for ablutions. Just before sunset three schoolgirls and a group of supporters entertained us with dancing and singing for which they were rewarded. After a good, prepared meal it was early to bed after a long, hot day of hiking.

Thursday 11 August - Mageza to Mankosi.

After breakfast, in hiking past the school, we were amazed to see potential latecomers running to get to school on time. The reason for their haste became apparent when the headmaster gave each latecomer a smack on the right hand with his cane. We need corporal punishment like that in our schools again. Caning instils discipline into misbehaving 'learners' very effectively!

We headed back to the coast over two steep climbs and descents to a small river crossing and then onto the beach at Preslies Bay.

After passing Ngcibe, we walked along the beach leading to the wide and deep Mdumbi River where we were ferried across with some difficulty by our oarsman against the strong incoming tidal surge. After another beach walk, a short steep climb up to the grasslands was followed by a long walk inland to our overnight huts at Mankosi. All of us slept in one hut, there was a separate dining room with adjoining kitchen and the ablution hut had the best shower on the hike - it had hot and cold water and it worked!

Dinner was acceptable and, with drinks from a shebeen, a pleasant after dinner atmosphere prevailed.

Friday 12 August - Mankosi to Coffee Bay.

After breakfast we proceeded back to the coast and soon reached the Mtata River where we walked through a large, sandy debris field comprised of uprooted tree stumps, tree trunks and other natural and manmade rubbish that remained behind after very heavy flooding. The ferry crossing was uneventful and after a short steep hike up the hill we descended past the Ocean View Hotel and arrived at Coffee Bay. After some time a taxi came by and only just accommodated all of

us and our backpacks, to the extent that for the next hour some of us sat with backpacks on our laps – not too comfortable! At Umtata a Quantum taxi was hired for our group to travel non-stop to Port St Johns. Our taxi driver was one of the best on the sub-continent, as he drove very smoothly without any speeding and delivered a relaxed and happy band of hikers safely to Amaondo Backpackers. That evening everyone was in high spirits after the hike and an enjoyable evening was had by all.

On either Saturday or Sunday we all drove back home in cool weather. On Monday 15 August at about 8h30 the news was that van Reenen's Pass had been closed to traffic because of excessive snowfalls, just as it had been about two weeks before. We had been blessed with being able to travel down, do the hike and return in this short window between the two cold, heavy snowfalls.

While this is quite an arduous hike, it is one of the finest coastal hikes in South Africa. Whether hiking through indigenous forests; through mangroves; up and down bushy or grassy hills; through grasslands; barefoot

along beautiful, pristine beaches; crossing rivers by walking over or through them; being ferried across rivers too wide and deep to ford; through the many villages with their teeming children; or through Nature Reserves, this trail always offers something different as one backpacks along it.



Many thanks to Jimmy Selani and our fellow hikers who made this such a memorable and enjoyable experience.

Moral of the story

An eagle was sitting on a tree resting, doing nothing. A small rabbit saw the eagle and asked him, 'Can I also sit like you and do nothing?' The eagle answered: 'Sure, why not.'



So, the rabbit sat on the ground below the eagle and rested. All of a sudden, a fox appeared, jumped on the rabbit and ate it.



Moral of the story:

To be sitting and doing nothing, you must be sitting very, very high up.

What's it like to be Old?



Put cotton wool in your ears
and pebbles in your shoes,
Pull on rubber gloves
Smear Vaseline over your glasses,
And there you have it:
Instant Old Age



Come hike with Me

I have taken up hiking! It actually began the last weekend of "smoking"! I figured it was a good healthy hobby. Knees aren't good enough for running so hiking it is! I am on 29 days without a smoke and doing pretty good. I've gained a bit of weight but realize that it's somewhat normal. Hiking is helping me keep focussed!

1st hike in NH and uneventful (as in funny). Great small mountain/hill. We (hubby and I) were hooked. We have been adding to our equipment to make it even more enjoyable. Like better backpacks etc.

From here on I have hiked a local state park 4 times (2 with hubby-on weekends and 2 with sister during the week). Each time there was a story to be told. I am going to tell what happened each time. It appears that weekday hiking you see more than you would on weekend trips.

Hike 1: A state park that my sister and I think will be fairly safe. We've heard all the stories about single hikers going missing so we plan safety. We both carry a walking pole that has a nice point on the end if needed. As we finish our 6 mile hike in the woods we come out to a road. There is a man parked at our exit and tells us about some kind of treasure type hunt that you can access on line. We listen, chat briefly and move on. A state park van pulls over and asks us if we had called the state police to complain about a suspicious character. We say no, he moves on. I guess it could have been the treasure hunt guy? A bit later up the road a van pulls over and asks the same thing. Shows us his ID and tells us that he is an undercover agent that patrols the park. It seems that state parks are a common place for men to hook up with other men. He tells us how it is done and points out a car that has passed him 3 times using "the signal". He also tells us we could be even more safer by carrying pepper spray as well as our poles (more on that later). As we drive out of

the park we see that car parked next to another car and both are empty. Pretty sure he found a "friend".

Hike 2 with hubby. Told him the story from hike 1 so he is a little bit worried about me & sis hiking. We did a 5 mile in the same area. We actually think we saw couples that maybe met up with the signals. We guessed because they didn't look like they knew each other too well.

Hike 3 with sister. Tried a different area with a big steep long hill hike. We had a great time. 7 1/2 miles that day. We hiked down to the end of the park and came to a field that the trail cuts along the edge. As we come to the clearing we see a wooden platform. Sister says "hold up" looks like someone is laying on the deck sunning. It was a mountain biker. We backed up and thought if we made some noise we may not freak him out. We start out of the woods again and she freezes in her path....."holy crap he's naked"!!!!!!! Yup, I guess it may have been a rarely hiked area that he felt comfortable enough to drop trousers and sunbath naked! We u-turned back into the woods and backtracked out the way we came!

Hike 4 with hubby. We hike the big hill area again but cut through the campground. 4.5 miles that day. As we pass tents along the way we come around a corner and a girl is stepping out of her tent. She is wearing nothing but a blanket (I could tell it was just a blanket the way she was holding it). I start tapping my walking pole on the pavement, she hears us and boogies back into her tent.

Now let's talk about the pepper spray suggestion: On the advice of the undercover guy I go to the local police station to find out how to get it. Seems I need a permit and will need to see the firearms person. Officer on the desk wonders why I just don't get a pistol permit!!!! I don't want a gun, just pepper spray. I have stopped by the station twice and left a mes-

sage. No call back yet. I see an officer that I know at work and tell him. He says be patient, that the office I need to talk to is busy, and then why don't I get a pistol permit!!!! I face-book an old friend that would have pepper spray knowledge and he suggests a gun permit!!!! Jiminy crickets.....I don't want to shoot anyone! I don't even want to pepper spray anyone but figure it's a good safety measure. You can't get pepper spray without a permit

and I am still waiting! Will stop by station again to-day!

So after hearing all my hiking "stories" don't you wish you could hike with me????????? !



1981 & 2005 - *Two Interesting Years*

Interesting Year 1981

1. Prince Charles got married.
2. Liverpool crowned soccer Champions of Europe.
3. Australia lost the Ashes.
4. The Pope died.

Interesting Year 2005

1. Prince Charles got married.
2. Liverpool crowned soccer Champions of Europe.
3. Australia lost the Ashes.
4. The Pope died.

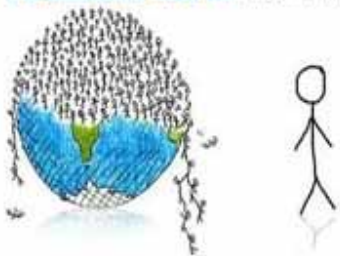


Lesson to be learned:

The next time Charles gets married, someone should warn the Pope.



**THERE ARE OVER
7 BILLION PEOPLE ON EARTH**



**AND YOU'RE GOING TO LET
1 PERSON RUIN YOUR DAY?
DON'T.**



After eating an entire bull, a mountain lion felt so good he started roaring. He kept it up until a hunter came along and shot him.

The Moral:

When you're full of bull,
Keep your mouth shut!



The Strandloper Hiking Trail

28 to 31 December 2011

by

Betsie Smit and Tonie Lazarus

Participants: Tonie (co-author) and Bertha Lazarus (Leaders), Lesley van Vuuren, Elaine Deyzel, Stuart Simpson, Carina Schwarz, Sean Nel, Eddie Grant, Amanda Jordaan, Piet van Heerden, John Meyer and Betsie Smit (author)

The Strandloper Trail running from Kei Mouth (Cape Morgan Eco Tourism Centre) to Gonubie is a truly spectacular trail. Between silver beaches and pit-stop hotels, there are some natural challenges like numerous river crossings, rocks and lots of soft sand! The trail is designed to take four days with a distance of just under 60 km.

We all arrived at the Eco Centre on the 27th and settled into our respective sleeping areas. We ended the evening with a braai and some drinks and went to bed looking forward to the start of the hike.

Day 1: 28 December

We had an early morning briefing regarding the route, tides and some general tips to keep us going. There were some scary jokes about sending the shortest people across the rivers first in order to check the depth! We eventually set off at 08h15 for our first day which was from Kei Mouth to Double Mouth.

The weather was overcast and we set off at a brisk pace and did 4km in the first hour, pass-



ing patches of beautiful veld flowers of different shapes and sizes. We arrived early at the pumphouse (part of an old titanium mine) and

did some exploring. The pumphouse is no longer used as a sleepover as it was severely damaged during a storm, and looking at the damage done to it at its elevation, it must have been a mother of a storm!

The walk towards Morgan Bay covers fairly rough grass and boulders until you reach a



sandy beach where you see the Morgan Bay Cliff rising out of the sea to a height of 57m.

We arrived at the Mitford Restaurant at about 11h00 but to our dismay (and hungry bodies) the restaurant was only opening at 12h30!! We backtracked a little and went back to The Morgan Bay Hotel's 'The Deck' restaurant. Unfortunately, they had just closed for breakfast and would only re-open at 12h00!!! for lunch servings, and would not budge from this rule. We all sat down anyway and ordered coffee and tea. The waitress then proceeded to throw some more disappointments at us: they had no coffee beans, so no coffee could be made, they ran out of pizzas, someone had eaten all the brown bread, no bananas, no straws and we were not allowed to order take-aways! (as they had no doggy bag boxes?) Eventually we left having had only cold tea. A very sad group of hikers hit the road to do the next stretch to Double Mouth.

We started the steep Morgan Bay Cliffs climb and quickly gained in height, with beautiful

views over the ocean. We saw why no ships were in sight, as the rocky coast was quite rough. After crossing over the cliffs, we climbed down to the beaches below, and the trail now led us over some rocky areas, but we were lucky to see two schools of dolphins. They looked much happier than us!! Just before arriving at the Double Mouth caravan site, the coast became sheer cliffs, and we had to do a steep climb up, to get over the ridge, and then climb down to the caravan park.

We arrived at the Double Mouth hut at about 14h30. It is quite a spacious elevated log cabin situated right on the beach with a lovely porch overlooking the beach. We were able



to use the ablution facilities at the nearby camping site and we all enjoyed a shower. Although the water was very muddy and brown, it was bliss to be clean!!

As we weren't able to shop (or eat) during the day, we were starving and dinner was shared amongst everyone. (Stuart chose to sleep in the bunk bed above Betsie). Overall, it was an excellent day with good hiking weather and we covered 13.5 km.

Day 2 – 29 December

We woke up to a truly beautiful sunny morning and everyone was awake and having coffee and breakfast by 05h00. Today's hike was going to take us from Double Mouth to Cape Henderson.

We left the hut before 7am, and at 07h15 we arrived at the spot where the very wide and deep Quko River and another nameless river, come together, hence the Double Mouth River. While we were still trying to contem-

plate ways of crossing the river, our little girl scout, Carina, spotted a canoe hidden in the trees. We decided to quickly load all the backpacks in the canoe and that we would then swim across. All the guys jumped in with their ropes and made sure the canoe was pulled across safely – a few crossings had to be made before all our packs were on the other side of the river. What excitement!

The crossing only took us about 30 minutes and it was time for boots and clothes on again. Now there was a different spirit in the group. The hike had become an adventure. Once again, we walked along beautiful beaches and enjoyed the lovely scenery, passing Bead Beach, Black Rock, Barracuda (where we had a snack break), Shell Beach and Marsh Strand, before reaching Haga Haga. We were quite anxious to discover whether we were to encounter the same lunch time problems as yesterday. On arriving at the Sandiwana at about 11h45, we were taken by surprise at the friendliness of the management and staff, who went out of their way to accommodate us. We then had an excellent lunch and some of us enjoyed very cold beers! After lunch we hit the little Haga Haga shop for supplies. Some were very enthusiastic about their shopping, but more of that later.

Day 2 had now become very hot – and both the sandy and rocky beaches didn't seem to want to end. We walked, walked and then walked some more!!



We eventually arrived at the Cape Henderson hut just past 16h00. It had been a long day. Disaster: there was no shower, and the toilet well, don't want to conjure up those memories again!! This was definitely not a

comfortable hut, but luckily there were lots of bushes around - you are free to use your own imagination at this point!

There was one highlight though: Derek and Gretta were on holiday at Bosbokstrand, a camp site next to our hut and we awaited their arrival with great anticipation as they were



bringing us drinks!! Lesley and I downed our ice cold beers quickly to replenish all the lost body fluids! It was SO good. Elaine was not a happy hiker: for the first time in her hiking career, she had developed a blister! Eddy was also not doing so well and his ankle was giving him trouble, after hurting it on day one after about two kilometers into the hike. He refused to turn back then and persevered right to the end of the hike.

Whilst preparing our dinner, Carina and Sean surprised everyone by pulling a lettuce out of her backpack! It even came with its own water supply: a little plastic bag tied at the bottom to keep the roots moist! That was most definitely the best item bought at the Haga Haga shop!!

Although the hut wasn't very comfortable, we all went to bed early and had a good night's rest. (Stuart, once again, slept in the bunk bed above Betsie) On this day, we had covered 17.1km.

Day 3: 30 December

Today's hike took us from Cape Henderson to Beacon Valley and has the most river crossings. After breakfast we left at about 07h30 and it was already quite hot for so early in the morning! As we had to cross Bosbok Strand after only going for a few meters from the hut, we started off in our strops and after the crossing, quickly put on our boots, except

Eddie, who continued on in his sandals.

We crossed a few rivers during the morning:
Nyarha, crossed without packs on back;
Kwenxura, also shallow;
Chefane, bit deeper and had to carry packs on heads;
Omntsa, shallow one again

Today's walking was quite strenuous as the long stretches of beach consisted of very soft sand. I tried to step into other people's footprints, but alas, shorter legs can only stretch so far!!

At Cintsa East, we had a long break, with some of the hikers taking a swim with the holidaymakers, who kept staring at us. They most probably thought we looked scruffy, and smelt bad, but after all the refreshing hiking that we have done up to that point, we didn't care. We arrived at the Chintsa West Pub and had a beautiful and well deserved lunch. The service was excellent and we had lots of fun and once again some of us enjoyed some very nice cold beers. After some negotiations, Tonie and I each purchased a bottle of wine to keep us company for the evening. Stuart was so kind to buy the ice!!

After lunch, it was a short walk past Reef Point and the Oyster Catcher breeding nests to our hut, and we arrived at the Beacon Valley hut at about 14h00.

Very nice surprise considering the previous hut we slept in: it was a spacious 3 roomed hut with a shower and built braai place. Only downfall for us females: another dreaded long -drop toilet



Some of us now started to show strain: Elaine's blister grew bigger, Eddy was still battling with legs and also developed blisters; Amanda had a problem with her eye and I had one very sore calf muscle. Good news was: the lettuce survived and still looked fresh and crunchy!!

Piet, Amanda, Sean and Carina were still full of energy and went off snorkeling, swimming and exploring. They were such good team players: came back with more ice! John decided to walk back to the restaurant for some sundowners. (Stuart surprised us all, when he asked Lesley – 'Do you mind if I sleep on top of you tonight' (on the bunk bed above her. She said fine and Betsie was not even jealous). Goes to show what good and sharing friends they are. We had a very nice relaxing afternoon and evening after completing 13km. We went to bed looking forward to the last stretch.

Day 4: 31 December

Today's trail took us from Beacon Valley to the finish line at Gonubie, and with the two biggest river crossings to be breached. Once again, we hit the beach early, passing Glen Muir, Queensberry Bay, Glen Eden and Gengariff quickly, arriving at the Bulura River about 20 minutes later. It wasn't too deep and we were able to wade through with our packs on our heads.

Just to surprise us, we had to endure lots more soft beach sand at the start and then rocky stretches of beach towards the end.

When we reached the Kwelera River, two and a half hours before low tide, we were very lucky to meet a guy who took our backpacks over in his canoe and we were able to swim

across knowing our packs were safe. John and I (Tonie) decided to try crossing closer to the sea, where there was a causeway/jetty on the other side. We had almost crossed the river, but had to swim the last ten meters. John got assistance from a surfer, but I swam across, and made it, by grabbing on to the rocks at the side of the river. We had underestimated the pull of the current, and for nearly 30 minutes, I could not use my arms, as the effort had left them quite limp. Have to mention, however, that there was no danger involved, as I was just trying to swim too fast!

After this crossing, we started seeing Gonubie in the distance, and thought the end was near – wrong! The worst stretch was waiting for us: a stretch of boulders with no sand in sight! The sounds of the rocks rolling around in the waves were amazing though. After this stretch we eventually arrived at the river mouth and, once again, we were lucky: a good Samaritan took us and our backpacks across in his canoe!! Eventually we were all across and for the first time, we encountered real rain, or rather a heavy drizzle.

With the end in sight we all had a burst of energy and walked the last stretch to the restaurant where a table was reserved for us, and from where we had to catch our shuttle back to the Eco Centre. We had a wonderful lunch, cold drinks and lots of laughter and jokes.

On the way back to Kei Mouth, we stopped at the local shop to get our last supplies for Old Year's eve. On arrival back at the Eco Centre we had our first hot shower and proper toilets in 4 days – was very enjoyable!!

We all pitched in to make snacks, etc. for the evening and had an enjoyable evening discussing the highs and lows of the hike. Boy, was the weather good to us, but as Tonie always says: 'We are the East Rand Hiking Club – weather is always good to us!!'

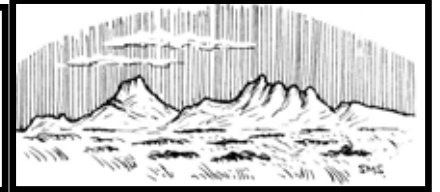
Overall it was an amazing experience – one I would certainly want to do again. A special thanks to our hike leaders, Tonie and Bertha, who anticipated, and being aware of the tides at all times, ensured we had safe river crossings: Thank you for a wonderful hike!!





FOOTLOOSE IN THE MAGALIESBERG MAGALIESBERG NAMES

H.J. BARKER



Tonquani - a name whose music has enchanted the ears of mountaineers for 40 years. Who coined it? What is its history? No one seems to know. When I first visited the then hardly known kloof in 1932 it was called 'Dinaan's Kloof'. Who was Dinaan? What was his history? No one seems to know this either; nor when and why the kloof's name became changed to Tonquani. I can only say that by 1935 we were all calling it Tonquani. Is there anyone other than I now alive who remembers the old name?

From end to end the Magaliesberg Range bears the record of its occupation by the Bakhatla tribes—stone circles, broken pottery and those tributes to spirits protecting the foot-traveller - heaps of stones at the summit of passes which the Khosa call *isi vivani - mute* and vanishing memorials in stone of the iron age which has itself vanished away. There was a story among the local inhabitants that a chief called Tenquaan or Tenquani found refuge in the rock-bound recesses of Tonquani from Moselikatse's questing impis and that it is from him that the name is derived. 'Tenquaan's Kloof' - Tonquani - the only kloof in the 130-kilometre stretch of the range whose name bears witness to the inhabitants who roamed its kloofs, centuries before the white hunters and trekkers, and had found their way among its kranes, pursued its game and listened to the singing of its streams.

In those days, nearly 40 years ago, I wandered across the kloof and intersected its companion valley, which joins it near Red Column—stoney and dry and blocked at the end by boulders as big as houses. Easy enough! Call it *Boulder Kloof* - and so its name was given.

Then some years later (about 1936 it was) after the rufous kranes of 'Red Gully' had suggested that name to me, I came upon the tangle of wind-grieved, rain-washed humps of quartzite that lie to its west, when walking there with Simon Biesheuvel. 'Like the good

old Cedarberg,' he said; and so we called the area 'Little Cedarberg'; and when, that same day, we reached the junction of Tonquani and the magnificent red-walled cleft that joins it below Boulder Kloof - what more natural than to name the new kloof Cedarberg to have the memory of looking down upon the junction and seeing a pair of caracals and a young cub startled by our voices leaping in Lyncine grace for the cave in the opposite kranes of Tonquani, and that great black eagle which nested in Cedarberg for years afterwards wheeling in ponderous circles to view us.



Different now! Eagle and lynxes have gone. Maybe when the intruders come less often and more reverently, the birds and beasts will come again. Who named the pleasant pastures of *Wei Kloof* I do not know, but by 1938 it had been christened, and so, further west, had *Breedt's Kloof*, beside the pass that bears Breedt's name.

West of the pass a patriarch Grobler was living, and we named his kloof after him and, traversing the pleasant country between his kloof and *Groot Kloof*, Paul Houmoller and I christened *Hamerkop Kloof*. Beyond it, Groot Kloof was one of the few kloofs which the Boerevolk had clearly named, when I first climbed down it in 1932.

Westward still, we first visited and named *Kalmoes* and *Gly Kloofs* in the forties, after the War—so slowly, in the 130 kilometres of Magaliesberg, seemingly so easy to reach and explore, did the exploration extend.

Mahlabatini -'the place of the White Sands'- was christened by Marjorie Hoehn in 1940, but *Fern Kloof* had already been named. *Re-tief's Kloof* (called after its then owner), with easy access from the main road and open to cars, had been ruined by the rubbish of visitors in the early 'thirties. Such also had been the fate of *Rustenburg Kloof*, for the same reasons-and the condition of these kloofs was the best argument for preventing unrestricted access to places of natural beauty.

Westwards there remained three kloofs, *Chamney's* - again named from its owner, a 'main road' kloof whose beauty stayed unscathed because the owner closed it save to visitors who sought and obtained his permission to enter; *Circle Kloof* and *Westering Kloof*.

Westering Kloof lies on the summit plateau of the range at its Western end. Its rough, tumbling, powerful stream discharges into the mile-long vlei which feeds Chamney's and Circle Kloofs. Few people have ever traversed its length and fewer still will in future, for, together with the rest of the plateau, it is now enclosed in a fence three meters high and is preserved as a game and nature reserve by the Rustenburg Municipality. It was explored and named by me and my wife in 1948. Its name will be forgotten and its beauty rarely seen, but the game and the flora and the water will benefit.

Circle Kloof runs out to the south of the range and most of its course lies in the reserve. Paul Houmoller named it, in allusion to its wide circling valley, in 1938.



In reminiscing about these names I have first carried my eyes in imagination westward from Tonquani, approximately the centre point of the range. Looking eastward I see *Fountain Gully*, with its cave and its unique and pleasant spring perennially yielding water sweet, almost on the summit, which I explored and named in 1934, and beyond it *Easter Kloof* and its fine waterfall, given its name at the Easter club meet there in 1937. On the wide indifferent plain, under the stark and alien yew, stands the huddle of jejune crosses where the British soldiers, overrun in their isolated outpost by the Boers at the battle of Nootgedacht, lie buried.

*Their bones have fattened their enemy's vlei,
Their blood has reddened his river
They followed a dream and now they are clay
In the land they could never deliver.*

Moving eastward from there one comes on the placid *Waterweed Kloof*, which I dubbed thus in 1938 in allusion to its being one of the few streams flowing across country slowly enough to permit waterweeds to survive in its pools. It flows into *Dome Kloof*, where we first climbed in about 1935. Who named it I do not know; but I do recall the first time-in 1937-when I scrambled from it into *Porcupine Kloof*, blocked by briars and reeds, and saw a porcupine and his mate flapping off, rattling their spears as I peered over the first cascade. One never sees these animals now, and hardly ever the Leguan whose name I gave to *Likkewaan Kloof* in 1936, when my wife was startled by one running out from a crevice where she was standing. We had wandered together down *Boekenhout Kloof*, with its stately trees, to that point from *Castle Gorge*. Colin Hutchinson gave that its name in 1933. Some had called it Cascade Kloof; but Colin's more flamboyant appellation seemed appropriate, and it ousted all others.

Eastwards from there *Damhoek* had its title from the old maps; and the *Seven Dwarfs*, named by Paul Houmoller contemporaneously with the famous film in the pre-war years, were only christened then.

The Mountain Club knew nothing of *Trident Kloof* till about the outbreak of war in 1939. I visited it then from the south and traversed

the sombre shadows of its western cleft, calling it *Cavern Kloof* because of its succession of gloomy antres, and returning up the twisting eastern kloof to the summit. Trident's triple roots called obviously for such a name and so it has remained.

It was only about 1948 that I entered *Makchokini Kloof* and named it from the little African tribe which then dwelt on the slopes through which it runs. They had lived there, they told me, since republican times, for Kruger had given their Chief *Makchokini* the farm and the kloof. They had a school, and their children ran happily in the village. Now they are gone. Whither? Who knows?

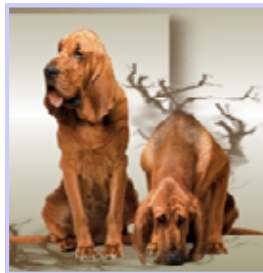
Eastward still from there behind Remhoogte lies *Buddlea Kloof*. When I explored it and named it on a bitter winter 1st of July in 1934, I went with Cooper Partridge, opening a climb on the west side of the gully in a south wind so strong that my rope floated like a pennant in a gale, and the kloof was choked with the sweet-scented bush after which it was named. We had had to drive through drifts where now there are bridges and the area was lonely, untroubled by man. We disturbed a leopard, and buck were aplenty. Thence we circuited and to the east, on the grass band below the summit krans, found the spring then, as now, chattering without pause in its reedy hollow. I looked at the tangle of ravines to the north where there were signs of a kloof,

so well hidden that its roots could not be de-scried and vowed to come again and find it. I had to wait 25 years to do this.

Long before then - one day early in 1939 - having climbed with John Langmore at Eureka, I persuaded him to come with me from the south to look at the massive kloof lying between Eureka and Buddlea, which can be seen from the north but to which access was barred by the intervening farms on that side. We climbed down over, the rocky ramparts of a kloof, silent save for the wind sighing high up in the somber trees reaching for the sky past the sides of the vast scopulous arena. There was no stream in this dark rift, and the impression was predominantly of kranses and more kranses. We looked around and admired the solemn scene so seldom observed and left, calling the kloof *Krantz Kloof* - and found afterwards that that name is the one by which the kloof is known to the local inhabitants. This is the only case where the club gave a name to a kloof coinciding with the original name.

Eastward of Krantz Kloof we have only named *Commando Kloof* (running next to Commando Nek) and the little group of kloofs north of the Hartebeestpoort Dam Hotel. These I traversed first in 1948 and called the largest *Hartebeestkloof*. The curious will find a bushman painting - well concealed.

Now I ask you:
What kind of best
friend would
remove your
Testicles?



...and when she asked
“What’s the best
Form of birth
Control after 50?”
I said: “Nudity”



My wife said: “Watcha doing today?”
I said: “Nothing”
She said: “You did that yesterday”
I said: “I wasn’t finished”



Now that I’m older I
thought it was great that
I seemed to have more
patience.....
Turns out I just don’t
give a damn!



In which battle did Napoleon die? * **his last battle**

Freedom and Jeff

Freedom and I have been together 11 years this summer.
She came in as a baby in 1998 with two broken wings.
Her left wing doesn't open all the way even after surgery,
it was broken in 4 places.
She's my baby.



When Freedom came in she could not stand and both wings were broken. She was emaciated and covered in lice. We made the decision to give her a chance at life, so I took her to the vet's office. From then on, I was always around her. We had her in a huge dog carrier with the top off, and it was loaded up with shredded newspaper for her to lay in. I used to sit and talk to her, urging her to live, to fight; and she would lay there looking at me with those big brown eyes. We also had to tube feed her for weeks.

This went on for 4-6 weeks, and by then she still couldn't stand. It got to the point where the decision was made to euthanize her if she couldn't stand in a week. You know you don't want to cross that line between torture and rehab, and it looked like death was winning. She was going to be put down that Friday, and I was supposed to come in on that Thursday afternoon. I didn't want to go to the center that Thursday, because I couldn't bear the thought of her being euthanized; but I went anyway, and when I walked in everyone was grinning from ear to ear. I went immediately back to her cage; and there she was, standing on her own, a big beautiful eagle. She was ready to live. I was just about in tears by then. That was a very good day.

We knew she could never fly, so the director asked me to glove train her. I got her used to the glove, and then to jesses, and we started doing education programs for schools in western Washington. We wound up in the newspapers, radio (believe it or not) and some TV. Miracle Pets even did a show about us.

In the spring of 2000, I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. I had stage 3,

which is not good (one major organ plus everywhere), so I wound up doing 8 months of chemo. Lost the hair - the whole bit. I missed a lot of work. When I felt good enough, I would go to Sarvey and take Freedom out for walks. Freedom would also come to me in my dreams and help me fight the cancer. This happened time and time again.

Fast forward to November 2000

the day after Thanksgiving,
I went in for my last checkup.
I was told that if the cancer was not all gone after 8 rounds of chemo, then my last option was a stem cell transplant. Anyway, they did the tests; and I had to come back Monday for the results. I went in Monday, and I was told that all the cancer was gone.
So the first thing I did was get up to Sarvey and take the big girl out for a walk. It was misty and cold. I went to her flight and jessed her up, and we went out front to the top of the hill. I hadn't said a word to Freedom, but somehow she knew. She looked at me and wrapped both her wings around me to where I could feel them pressing in on my back (I was engulfed in eagle wings), and she touched my nose with her beak and stared into my eyes, and we just stood there like that for I don't know how long. That was a magic moment. We have been soul mates ever since she came in. This is a very special bird.

On a side note: I have had people who were sick come up to us when we are out, and Freedom has some kind of hold on them. I once had a guy who was terminal come up to us and I let him hold her.
His knees just about buckled and he swore he could feel her power course through his body. I have so many stories like that..

I never forget the honour I have of being so close to such a magnificent spirit as Freedom.



Forgive your enemies; it messes up their heads

Live a good and honourable life, then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time .





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