



Barn Dance



Kings Kloof



Newsletter

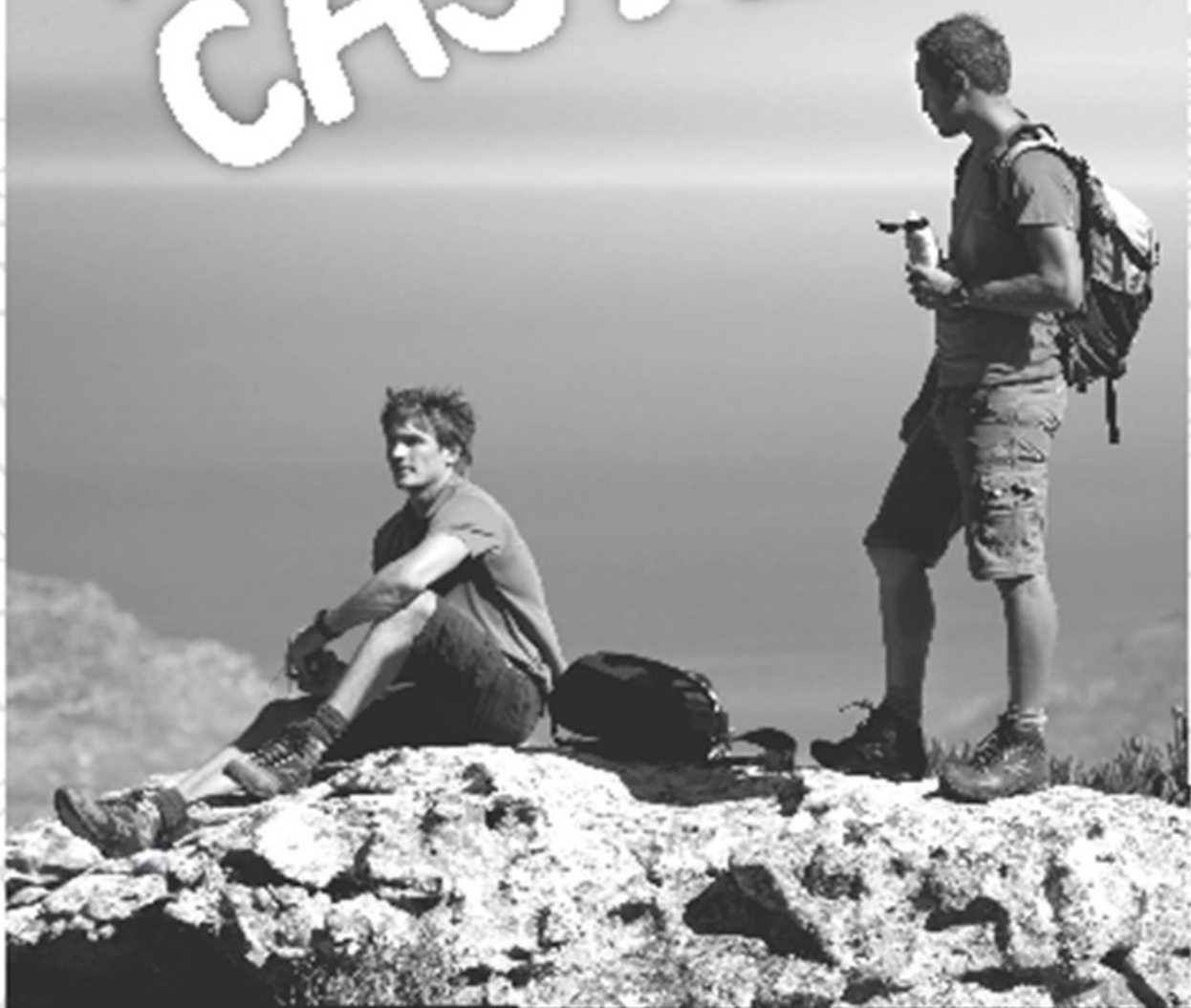
January to April, 2012

FOOTNOTES



Kili heroes

KINGS OF THE CASTLE



Tell us what inspires you @ www.hi-tec.com

www.hi-tec.com

 **HI-TEC**

INSPIRED BY LIFE

IN THIS ISSUE



Our Kili heroes. Read about their conquering expedition on page 20.

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Editor's Notes Harry Parsley

The Club's illustrious history culminated in a series of fantastic 80th anniversary celebrations this year. The highlight was the 80th anniversary luncheon which attracted a huge turnout of members. As we enter our 81st year as a club I am sure that we will continue to go from strength to strength.

In particular, the midweek hikes remain popular. Unfortunately, the proposed toll fees could pose a challenge for specific venues requiring highway travel. These fees will thus not only place a burden on commuters, but also on us as hikers. Hopefully, an acceptable resolution of this problem will be found.

Members will have noticed a revitalization of the Club's social programme in the latter part of the year under the guidance of Theunis. The Kiddies weekend at Foothold was an innovation that was enjoyed not only by the kiddies, but by all accounts the adults as well. The article in this edition of Footnotes also gives a flavour of the fun had at the Barn Dance. As Theunis has a full future programme of activities planned we should be in for fun times. All members are urged to give Theunis as much support with this as they can.

By the time the next edition of Footnotes appears we will have had another AGM. This meeting gives members the opportunity to raise issues they deem important to the Club and also to elect officials who will be tasked with guiding the Club into the future. As such, it is the most important gathering in the Club's year and therefore all members are urged to make every effort to attend this meeting. Besides, it is not all dry admin, it provides an opportunity to socialize with Club friends.

Footnotes wishes all readers a wonderful holiday period, be it hiking, camping or doing whatever you have planned. Also, I would like to express my appreciation for all the great articles, photographs and other contributions received from you all during the year. Love and light to you all.

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE
11th March, 2012.**

Email all articles and correspondence to the editor.

Alan Chater Chairman

“TRAIL CHATTER” Alan Chater



As 2011 draws to an end, (where has it gone?) one reflects on many things.

Celebration: The JHC's 80th Celebrations, the 80th Luncheon, 80th Mid-Winter Camp, and 80th Celebratory Hike at Delta Park, and the 80th Barn Dance weekend, hike and “Thank You” Lunch (which I sadly missed.)

Achievement: The Mount Kilimanjaro and Grand Traverse

Hikes some of our members contoured their way to personal celebration and achievement (Well done from the JHC members)

At last EXCO review we were just short of 500 members by 10, never the less a great growth in members and a sign of a healthy club.

Thank you: Making all these events happen is really testament to the nature of our many Club members, and we owe a big thank you to all those members that come forth and volunteered their efforts to making things happen. This not only goes to the 80th Celebration events, but also to all the members of Hikes Co, for the endless background work they put into the Adventure and Kloofing hikes, away backpack hikes, away and local camps, Wednesday and Sunday hikes.

The band of Merry Men & Ladies who put so much into Foothold to keep this most wonderful of venues running smoothly in the background that so many of us enjoy every month end. “I do hope the new ride-on lawnmower helps ease the workload.”

My EXCO team – A **BIG** thank you for keeping all the wheels turning smoothly and a special thank you to Marion Hufner who keeps the JHC “oil can full” when I have had to be away attending to business commitments.

Let me not forget our Hikes Leaders who safely guide our groups on the trail and I thank them for giving back their knowledge to the Club in helping others to become future leaders. You are the life blood of the JHC and we are always looking for more inspiring members to join this team.

Last, but not least, to all those special members that stand-up on the spur of the moment and volunteer their help in whatever it may be, you make the world a better place, thanks.

Memories, Thoughts & Good Wishes: My thoughts are with those members that have had

health issues, both personal and with family members, and I wish you all a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing you on the trail or at one of the camps soon.

And to those that have lost loved ones this past year may your grief be lightened in the memory of the life they shared with us all.

To each and every one may the coming year bring only joy and happiness, those having a yearend break and those not, please have fun and above all laugh with family, friends, yourself and anyone you may cross.

Drive safely, if you enjoy your journey, the destination will look after itself.

See you all next year on the trail with more “Trail Chatter.”

After three months of recuperation after an operation it was fantastic getting out into the Magaliesberg again. When we are in full health we take our Sunday/Wednesday hikes for granted, but they are



Marion Hufner Club Administrator

something special. The anticipation of seeing everybody again and being welcomed back as a ‘long lost friend’ was tremendous! Thanks for all the well wishes.

2011 has come and gone so quickly, but now we must focus on the hiking possibilities for 2012. New local venues, exciting away hikes and plenty of socials have been planned so check out the interesting programme.

Thanks to everyone who supported the JHC during the year, in whatever way possible, and we look forward to your continued support in 2012 and perhaps further support from those who wish to give something back to the club.

Travel safely, have a peaceful year end and all the best of health, happiness and good hiking for 2012.

Enjoy your hiking

**You can hire Hikers Haven at Foothold, camp there, or simply come to the monthly camp.
Contact number: 0879-401-903**



Slide Shows

Compiled by Peter Faugust



Presenter Christina Fatti discusses her presentation called, "Experiences in Switzerland and Lichtenstein by bike: Uniting people and cultures from across the world:", with Ron White while Jim Arnett listens in the background. Christina gave her presentation to the Club on 2nd August, 2011.



Peter Faugust being presented with a cake by Harry Parsley on behalf of the Club at the slide show evening to celebrate his 70th birthday.



CORRESPONDENCE

Dear JHC,

Thank you so much for the most wonderful weekend at Foothold. Despite the wind we had a fantastic time. Thank you for all the time and effort you put in to activities with the kids. Marion, the treasure hunt was lovely and our kids had a ball. Jenny Munton took my husband on the hike on Sunday morning, which he loved and I am sure you will be seeing him on hikes in the future. What a perfect spot Foothold is and we felt very privileged to share in the family/kids weekend. We hope Jenny invites us again!

Many thanks to all involved.

Meg and the Carter family.

Dear Marion,

All the kids thoroughly enjoyed themselves at Foothold. I took two of my sons friends up the ladder and they were so impressed with JHC. The kids had so much fun camping. It was great to have my family with me for a change. Thanks for all your hard work and also to Theunis.

Jenny Munton.

Hi Marion and Theunis,

Thank you so much for all you did to make the weekend camp at Foothold such a fabulous treat for us and the children. I look forward to the next one.

Have a great week.

Love,

Sarah Proctor.

Morning Marion,

I would like to say a huge thank you to you and Theunis for the wonderful kiddies' weekend. Matthew was scratched and bruised, had dirty hands and a dirty face, but he had a wonderful time out in the country doing "boy things".

If you do it again, and Ken and I can be of help, please let us know.

I will send in the piece for the newsletter shortly.

Once again a very big thank you from Matthew and I

Kind regards,
Angela Raine.

Hi Marion,

Firstly, can I ask you to say a big Thank You to Exco for providing a lovely lunch, and for organising the lovely venue as well. Robbie and I didn't stay over, but we went through this morning and did the hike, followed by a delicious lunch. The

hike was relatively easy – only one small koppie to climb, but very pleasant, in spite of the heat!

Jean Smilkstein.

Hi Marion,

"Our family arrived in South Africa last year and after a couple of months I heard about Johannesburg Hiking Club from a friend. I really can't say why I got interested, as my father who is Norwegian, always wanted us to go hiking in the mountains when we were kids, and I hated it! However, I went for my first hike with JHC that spring and truly enjoyed the friendly people, nice hikes and great venues. I was surprised to see how wonderful the nature is just outside the big city. So our family joined the JHC and have since then had lots of both beautiful and adventurous hikes in always very good company. We have also joined the Club for a weekend in the Drakensberg, which was great. Since we started hiking we have had quite a few friends joining us for both Wednesdays and Sunday hikes and we usually bring friends that are coming to visit us as it is a great way to show them the surroundings of Johannesburg."

Have a great weekend and hugs,

Eva Dahlvig.

Dear Marion,

I hope you are doing fine. I must let you know that I am really impressed by the hikes offered by the JHC, I have thoroughly enjoyed all of them, especially the rock climbing and kloofing ones, and I guess I am getting kind of hooked more and more.

A really big compliment to everyone involved and in particular to the brilliant leaders of the hikes.

Thank you!

As my first long hike, I would like to book the Swart Tobie hutted trail (slackpacking). Can you please let me know whether there is still space available?

Thank you and kind regards,

Renate Moffat.

Hi Marion,

I want to thank everyone for the great lunch. It is a lovely place....not great hiking and it was hot, but the lunch and company were superb. We missed you. Elsa Wloschowsky.

General News

The JHC offers the following families condolences:

Jean Paetzold – daughter Carol died on 23 July

Ossie Friedl died on 1 August

Linda Pierce died on 14 August

Richard Yelland died in October.

GENERAL NEWS

Congratulations and good luck on your retirement to Elsa Wloschowsky.

Congratulations and a happy future to Ingrid Schwim and Keith Brill on their marriage in August.

Congratulations to Tom and Ann Kenny on the birth of their first grandson, Conrad, on 12th September.

Donations

A hearty thank you to the following for their donations to the JHC:

Dale McKinley

Liz Bourne

Sarah Proctor

Josephine O'Rourke

Teigue Payne

John Corrie.

New members

The Club extends a warm welcome to the following new members: Janice Hogarth, Ian Teague, and family, Jerry and Annette Widmer and family, Bronwynne Hanger, Jonathan and Beverley Woolfe, Olebogeng Denys Mosegedi, Josephine O'Rourke, Teigue Payne, Marie Nealon, Andre and Dorothy van Tonder, Royston O'Connor, Hannelie Lourens, Cecile Bouquillion, Sheila Forbes and Annabel Touati. Kevin Walsh and family have rejoined the Club.

Get well

We wish the following members a quick recovery: Jean Paetzold, Marion Hüfner, Kristen Hammond, Paul Menge, Leonore Christensen, Anne Bello-musto, Ken Middleton, Dick Carlisle, Magui Rayner and Mike Green.

RICHARD YELLAND: 5TH OCTOBER 1952 TO 20TH OCTOBER 2011

Irene Blythe

Avid hiker, musician and singer of note, adventurer extraordinaire, humorist, free-thinker and many many more. These are all things which spring to mind about our beloved brother Richard who passed away tragically in Botswana on 20th Octo-

ber 2011.

Richard was born on 5th October 1952, and from an early age we know he gave our parents many



grey hairs with his extreme antics, such as swimming in the sea well beyond the breakers, climbing the peaks of South Africa's beautiful mountains way further than most, cycling into the sunset and coming back well after dark, or kloofing with friends sometimes in most treacherous places. He just loved testing himself to and even beyond his limits without a care in the world! There was never a dull moment with Richard, and never a complaint from him whatever his circumstances and whatever pain he was in. We were always on tenterhooks waiting to hear about his next escapade. His zest for life was enormous!

There were times when Richard would be lively and entertaining with his music, singing, conversing and arguing about economics and changing the world. At other times he was deep in thought and quite reserved. But no matter what his mood, his mind was constantly active as he contemplated world finance and global issues, politics, new business ventures and life in general, especially in

2012 GATE CODES

CASTLE GORGE AND FOOTHOLD

JAN – MARCH 1563 APRIL – JUNE
9247

JULY – SEPT 8624 OCT – DEC 7513

.....Continued on page 10

80th ANNIVERSARY PHOTO



11th SEPTEMBER, 2011



CLUB NEWS

Africa.

Richard was highly intelligent and something of an intellectual, having obtained BA, BCom Hons, CA and MBA degrees from Stellenbosch university, UCT and Wits. Just recently he completed an international course in forensic auditing with flying colours and in a record time of only four weeks. The course would have taken most people a year or more to complete. Yes, he had been laid up with a broken ankle for this period, but when Richard did something, he went at it with an intensity and focus like no other person we knew.

One of his biggest passions was exercise and hiking with the Johannesburg Hiking Club, and we know he missed the physical activity while recovering from a broken leg these last three months after a fall from the roof of his home in Botswana while cleaning his new solar water geyser. Last Christmas he took his adopted Botswana family on holiday to see the sea in KwaZulu Natal, and he just loved the being part of the Johannesburg Hiking Club.

Richard's family in Botswana was a very special part of his life. He loved them dearly and they provided a base and sense of belonging in a home which Richard built for them using every last penny that he had.

Richard's heart-warming and thought-provoking songs are a tribute to him, and provide us with many of the fond memories we all have of Richard.

Our thanks to all at the Johannesburg Hiking Club for the many hours of happy hiking and company he enjoyed with you. Thank you for the love and care and support you gave him through these activities, for example when he broke his neck whilst body-surfing on a treacherous coastline in Richard's Bay and was nearly paralysed, and on other occasions too when mishaps occurred.

As we contemplate his passing today, we know that memories of Richard will pass through our minds for many years to come. Richard left this physical world in a very private moment. He was a Buddhist, and was quite accepting of death and not fearful of it, and he believed in some kind of reincarnation in the endless cycle of life.

Yours sincerely

The Yelland Family

Keeping Foothold neat and tidy

Leane and Hennie Hendriks patrolled at Castle Gorge on Saturday, 24 September. During their patrol they collected rubbish.



Leanne Hendriks with the rubbish she had collected at Foothold. Photo: Hennie Hendriks.

General Hiking Precautions:

The following basic precautions are recommended: Kindly carry your **medical aid card** or details with you at all times; Carry a minimum of 2 litres of water and drink sufficiently during the hike; Wear an effective hat; Use a high UV protection sunscreen lotion; Carry rain gear and a jersey in both summer and winter – during a thunderstorm the temperature can drop by as much as 10° Celsius; Wear strong suitable footwear that will provide traction and support the ankles (lace tightly); Walk with care to prevent injury

RULES OF THE JOHANNESBURG HIKING CLUB

Rules

All persons taking part in club activities do so entirely **at their own risk** and must adhere to the rules of the Johannesburg Hiking Club.

1: Hikers must follow the instructions of the appointed leader and must remain with the main party unless the leader has agreed to a splinter group controlled by a nominated sub-leader.

2: No fires may be lit (except at designated sites by permission of the hike leader) and must be extinguished completely before leaving the site.

3: All litter must be carried away.

4: No uprooting of plants or picking of flowers is permitted and care must be taken to avoid damaging trees, fences or private property.

5: Dogs and radios are not allowed on hikes or at camps.

6: Anyone under the age of 18 years who attends a hike must be the responsibility of a nominated member.

7: Nude bathing can be offensive. Please exercise discretion.

8: All behavior likely to bring discredit to the name of the club is to be avoided.

Camp and trail booking procedure:

All bookings must be made through the HIKE LEADER and not the Club Administrator. The Hike Leader controls and takes full responsibility for booking numbers and a possible waiting list (close interaction with club administrator takes place to ensure administrative efficiency).

Hikers may PROVISIONALLY book a place/s on a hike for a maximum period of 4 working days, during which time the full amount for the hiker/s must be paid into the JHC account. Hike booking payments must include a reference of the HIKE NAME and HIKER'S INITIAL & SURNAME (e.g. - , Slagtehoek/B Smith).

Onus is on the member to confirm proof of payment. If no payment is received, the provisional booking will lapse. Thereafter the next person on the waiting list will be informed of a possible position on that trail.

If you need to cancel the booking, the fee will be refunded ONLY if the club is notified at least two weeks prior to the event AND a replacement can be found. If cancellation is less than the prescribed time and/or a replacement cannot be found, fees will not be refunded.

Any refund will only happen after the camp and trail event is completed and all costs are reconciled.

The refund will be less the admin fee for that event.

SUNDAY HIKES

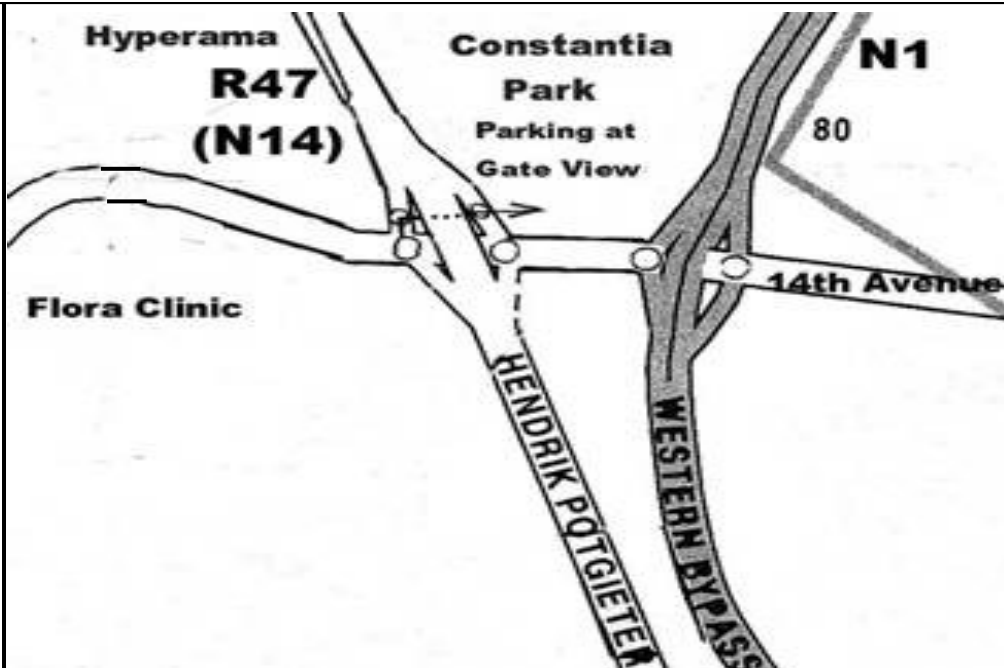
Meeting place: Constantia Park, Gateway House.

Meeting time: 07h45, but consult programme as times can be earlier or later on occasions

Return to meeting place: Varies, but usually before 17h30

Hike fees: Refer programme (non member fee in brackets). Bookable events indicated by 'B'

Restrictions: Certain events are subject to restricted numbers identified by, eg, R(10)



KIDDIES' WEEKEND AT FOOTHOLD

FOOTHOLD, KIDDIES CAMP - 24/25 SEPTEMBER.

Angela Raine (Pictures by Alan Chater).

It was with delight that I came across the flyer in the latest edition of Footnotes for a kiddies camp out at Foothold. I had been promising my six year old grandson that I would take him camping, but could not find a venue where there would be enough outdoor activities for him to get involved in. The next day I was off to work to let Sarah know, as I knew she was also keen to take her grandchildren camping. For the next couple of weeks the camp was all we could talk about and it was with great trepidation that we watched the weather in the week leading up to the camp.

Well, Saturday eventually arrived and guess what? We woke up to a cloudy and windy morning. Nevertheless we packed the bakkie and set off for Foothold. On the way out, we picked up Ken's squash friend, Ron, his teenage son and a friend, all in high spirits.

We arrived at Foothold, the weather not being

any better there, and pitched our tents. During the rest of the day more and more families arrived with very excited children.

The programme started off with a three legged race and a treasure hunt. A fire was lit and we all settled down to braaing and hearing what else was on the schedule for the rest of the weekend. After that, the children and their parents/grandparents were taken for a short walk on the "The Bird Ramble" to see if we could find any porcupines. Needless to say, with all the excited and noisy children around nothing could be found, but it was good fun anyway.

Later the children cooked marshmallows around the campfire, and by then were definitely ready for bed – I know my grandson slept like a log, although the wind had still not died down, and in fact, was worse during the night.

Next morning there were no "lie-in's" for the very tired grannies and granddads, the children were up and ready to start all over again.

After breakfast, we walked around Millennium Hill and back through the bird ramble to camp. A



KIDDIES' WEEKEND AT FOOTHOLD

braai was lit and boerewors rolls were prepared for all the hungry children and adults.

A huge thank you to Marion and Theunis – you both did an excellent job. My grandchild went home a very tired and grubby boy with lots of scratches and bruises proving that he had had a very exciting weekend.

PS from Sarah Proctor: Having promised my grandson, for the past couple of years, that I would take him camping, this kiddies

camp was the ideal opportunity. I took my two eldest grandchildren, aged 4 and 6, and they both had the time of their lives. They had never camped before, but we are now all eagerly looking forward to the hiking club's next kiddies camp. Many thanks to all those who made the weekend such a success.

JHB HIKING CLUB SE KIDDIES WEEKEND

Ruan & Tiaan (14)



Van stap na bergklim en speletjies speel saam die hiking club. Dit was baie lekker en ons sal dit beslis weer doen, veral die kamp en die bonfire. Dit was baie lekker om die natuur te kan leer ken saam met sulke wonderlike hikers. Die night hike was iets besonderes gewees om die natuur in die aand te kon sien en al die diere se geluide kon hoor. Die speletjies was ok baie lekker. Dit het ons weer soos klein kinders laat voel. Die treasure hunt was ok vreeslik lekker om saam met die kinders en hul ouers dit te kon doen as 'n "family outing" sodat ouers en hul kinders kan bond en saam speel. Amal was so nice en gasvry met ons. Bob is 'n besonderse oom wat ons altyd sal help as ons sukkel met iets as is dit hoe klein of hoe groot. Ons het die braai van die wors rolls nie so geniet nie, weens ons na die tyd soos 'n wors roll gevoel het, maar ons het dit eintlik baie geniet. Ons sal enigetyd weer so maak. Dit was baie lekker en iets anders om mens se kop weer bietjie skoon te kry en te vergeet van al die probleme in die stad.

BARN DANCE

BARN DANCE – GOODLAND FOUNTAINS
Sue Desmond. Pictures by Jackie Cilliers.

Wow! What a fantastic weekend!

I arrived at Goodland Fountains to find several hikers relaxing in the shade of the trees after pitching their tents on the lush green lawn over looking two large ponds. I had chosen to take up accommodation in the 'dorm'. Strolling up to the barn I found Theunis busy with the preparations for the Barn Dance. He showed me to the dormitories: 'The Married Quarters' – with partitioned areas to afford a bit of privacy for couples, The 'Male Single Quarters' – a delightful room, and then the Ladies Single Quarters with en-suite J... spacious, clean and very comfortable. After tossing the sleeping bag on to a bottom bunk, grabbing my camp chair and a drink, I headed over to the 'campsite', with its beautiful park-like setting, and the bushveld stretching out in the distance. The afternoon was spent pleasantly chatting to friends. Soon everyone had arrived and the braai fire was lit.

**Twirl your partner and kick up your heels.
....Yahooo!**

Top: Robert and Hilary Douglas. Below: Harry Parsley and Jessie Moehl



After sundowners and dinner it was time to go off and change for the Barn Dance. The barn had been decorated for the occasion with bales of hay, farm implements and balloons. The Blundell Barn Dance Callers got us kicking up our heels in no time at all. Fortunately for the three single ladies there were two very accommodating single gents. Penny was kind enough to opt for the male role on several occasions, but managed to remember that she was in fact a lady the next day. Prizes were awarded for the best dressed couple (George and Jackie), and for the most enthusiastic participant. The time disappeared all too quickly with the evening being enjoyed by all. A few of us decided to have a 'night cap' in the Married Quarters, to wind down before we dragged ourselves to bed at

BARN DANCE



The best dressed couple George and Jackie.

about 1.00am.

What a pleasure to wake up at leisure (no rush to the meeting point in Jhb) and to have breakfast in the fresh open air. The Sunday hikers arrived and the normal proceedings were dealt with. I had expected the hike to be a gentle 'walk about' as the area wasn't very mountainous. This was a pleasant thought as the temperature was expected to be over 30°C. I wasn't expecting anything very exciting though. Was I wrong! There was so much game to see that at one point the group had to stop for the herds to cross right in front of us...yes, herds (plural). Antelope and buck, there was a great deal of discussion as to what they were. It was decided that some were Kudu, Waterbuck, Impala, among others. We also came across two magnificent Roan Antelope, who viewed our group casually as we passed by. It was pleasing to see that the animals were not particularly disturbed by our presence, watching us with mild interest.

Back at camp many of us took advantage of the swimming pool to cool off before lunch. A few unsuspecting ladies were the target of a very skilled gent who showed how to create a tidal splash that ensured all in his aim got drenched. Thank you.

Lunch was enjoyed in the shade of a large veranda furnished with several picnic tables and benches. The meal was delicious and well received. Harry made the speech, thanking all those special people who put their time and effort into the Club. All too soon it was time to pack up and head back home. Thanks again to the organizers for a great weekend.

Footnote: Goodland Fountains is an exceptional venue for the Club's social events such as the Barn Dance or 'Bundu Bash'. Well laid out, spacious dorms with comfortable beds, swimming pool, game in abundance, a barn, large hall with large verandah, and beautiful grounds. Travel time from Jhb being approximately one hour with the highway for most of the way, making this a very appealing location. I hope to see the Club use this venue again in the future.

To all those hikers who missed this weekend, make sure you join us the next time the Club books Goodland Fountains. You will not be disappointed.

From Robert and Hilary Douglas

Hilary and I attended the camping/line dancing weekend at the new venue in the Cullinan area.



Some people even went hiking.

We wish to congratulate the organisers for this event and for the choice of venue. The camp site was clean and well grassed, the evening line dance event in the Barn was great! We were taught the various steps and we all had so much fun! Although not a good hike venue compared to our beautiful Magaliesberg, we trust you will recommend that this event and at this time of year be repeated annually. It is such a shame it was so poorly supported, although there was a good turn out for the JHC catered lunch spread on the Sunday! Good value for money.

THIS AND THAT



The new sit-on lawnmower.



80 YEARS OLD...LIKE THE CLUB
Sent in by Merle Doctor

Where are they now?

Hello Marion,
I have been a member of the JHC in 1967 and 1968 and made many hikes over the weekends with the club. Whilst looking on internet I found your website and was surprised that it still exists.

Do you have any records of those days? I am looking for surnames of the people I have on pictures of trips to Wynford Guestfarm in the Freestate, Kamberg in the Natal Parks Board as well as a trip to Northern Transvaal. I am curious to find out their names.

Those days Jo-burg had an ever shifting population of young people and the Club was a means to meet with others. I have sent you one picture of a trip in a weekend in November 1967 with Vera Cohn, Tim ?, Norman ?. John ? taken on the Strijdomspas with view on the Olifantsriver. This was taken after visiting Duivelskloof, Northern Transvaal.

Look forward to you answer

Regards

Kees Geselschap
51 de Bruynestraat
2597RE The Hague
The Netherlands



ALL TOGETHER AT THE 80th



This picture of some well known people in the Club was taken at the recent 80th Anniversary Luncheon of the Club held at the Johannesburg Country Club. From left to right: Howard Rayner, Mary-Gail Shoesmith, Jim Hutchison, John Hudson, Jons Flentge, Robbie Macdonald and Chris Williams. Photo: Neville van der Merwe



The bathing beauties who were on the SABC 3 "Expresso" programme:

Francis, Beth, Judy, Marge, Jetta and Jean.

Indian Ocean Beach Hikes 2012



Mauritius

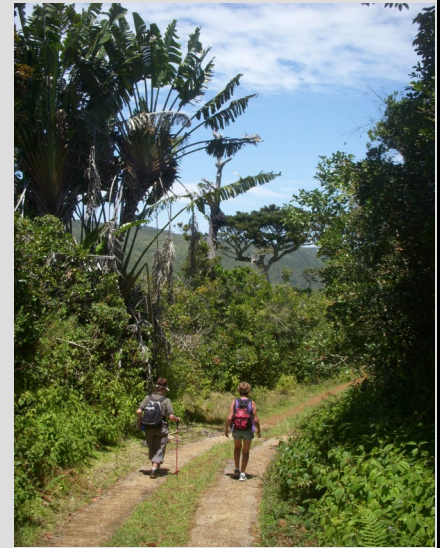
13 to 20 October 2012. An east coast beach walk, the Black River Gorge hike, Kestrel Valley, the Botanical Gardens, and a walk on the wild side. There is still time for swimming and snorkelling at our 3 star "all-inclusive" hotel on the beach. Nightly entertainment until 11pm. R14,600 per person sharing.

Seychelles

6 to 15 July or 20 to 29 July 2012. Leisurely walks amidst the palms and takamaka trees on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. We stay at small guesthouses with swimming pools, good food and friendly Seychellois hospitality. R16,500 per person sharing.

Zanzibar

1 to 8 September or 15 to 22 September 2012. Guided walks in Jozani Forest, Stone Town and Jambiani cultural village, a fascinating Spice Tour, and 3 beach walks on hard white sand beside turquoise seas. R13,400 per person sharing. Visas (+/- R350), and yellow fever inoculations (+/- R500) are extra.



(Final costs may be subject to exchange rate fluctuations, fuel surcharges and airport tax increases.)



Included:

Return flights from Johannesburg, including airport taxes.
Dinner, bed and breakfast in good quality accommodation, with ensuite bathrooms.
All day hikes, including entrance fees to parks and gardens.
All transfers, luggage transfers, ferries and inter-island flights where applicable.
All hikes are "slackpacking", easy to moderate, 5 to 15 kms per day, with day packs only.

Excluded:

Travel insurance, visas and inoculations (where required), meals and beverages not specified, tips and all items of a personal nature.

Enquiries & Reservations: Jill Salt

info@beachhike.co.za

www.beachhike.co.za

Cell: 074 103 5963, Tel: 013 764 1597, Fax: 086 672 5595
Oriole Services CC, P.O. Box 375, Sabie, 1260



HIKE REVIEWS



THE BOOTLEGGER

Footnotes Ghost Writer

Before I get started with my latest story I (that is the Bootlegger) would like to thank Milky Way for taking the time to comment on the Bootlegger Tales. My friends and I discussed the content of your letter, but were unsure of who should be thanked and for what.

Spring was holding hands with summer and the veld was begging the brilliant blue sky for the first drops of cooling rain. Tiny wild flowers danced in the breeze contrasting sharply with dull brown grass. Tiny green shoots were sending their message of eternal optimism that the rain would soon give abundant life to the parched land. On this glorious day me and my friends were taking full advantage of the wonderful conditions and were following the ridge which defines the Magaliesberg. As usual Pathfinder, Trailblazer and Strider were out in front while the rest of us followed some way behind. When they reached the highest point they stopped to allow the rest of us to catch up. Soon we were sitting at the beacon gazing at the panorama and enjoying the warm sun. It was Pathfinder's keen eyes that first spotted the tiny black specks gliding high in the dazzlingly blue sky. "Vultures for sure", said Tumbleweed. "I wonder what's attracting them; there is no vulture restaurant near here", said Tumbleweed. As we watched, one after the other they swooped over a spot on a distant hill side where a few had already landed. "Something is in trouble or already dead or dying. I think we must take a closer look", said Johnny Walker. Without waiting Pathfinder marked the spot and started towards it setting a cracking pace followed by Strider and Trailblazer. As the three approached the spot the vultures moved reluctantly to the crest of the ridge and spread their wings, soaring again into the thermals all the while eyeing our little group as it made its way to the contested spot. As we regrouped it was Tramp who heard a tiny sound then a flicker of movement. "Look over there by that cleft, something is moving", she said. We scrambled toward the spot to discover a young female klipspringer struggling feebly against the cruel wire trap that cut deeply into its pathetically thin hind leg. It was then that Tramp's amazing affinity with animals took over. "You guys back off as she is spooked out of her mind, I will try to make her understand that we mean her no harm". So with infinite care she moved closer all the while making soft comforting sounds. After what seemed like an age the struggles started to subside, the tiny animal lay exhausted a few feet from Tramp. Gently she reached out to touch the young animal it looked at her with huge liquid eyes and lay still almost as if it was resigned to its fate. Anticipating what was to come, Strider had unobtrusively located his multi tool with the pliers which he then handed to Tramp. "Lay still my little one". Gently she leant over and with infinite care prised the wire loose from the tiny leg and then cut it. In an instant the klipspringer sensed freedom and struggled to its feet trying desperately to balance on three legs. The plucky animal stood while the circulation and strength returned and then with increasing confidence it staggered, walked and finally bounded for cover offered by a rocky outcrop. "Run little girl go find your mother", said Tumbleweed. She has survived so much and we have done all we can. The vultures suddenly seemed to lose interest and soared into the late afternoon sky searching for easier pickings. My friends and I decided that it was time to head back to the car park, on the way we discussed the event. "Mankind has gone crazy, no wonder all wild animals flee when they become aware of us. What demented idiot put the trap there and for what reason?", said Tumbleweed. "It seems to me that mankind will destroy the very environment that is necessary for his survival", said Tramp. "What happened to us today is also happening all over Africa and the world and to all kinds of animals. Bootlegger!!! It is your duty to tell this story to as many people as possible. Unless this senseless destruction of nature is stopped mankind faces a bleak future indeed"

So here is my challenge to all JHC members, their friends and anyone else who reads this. **"We are all custodians of nature, we all have a responsibility to manage our environment to the best of our ability for our sons and daughters and future generations. Together we can make a difference"**

HIKE REVIEWS

KILIMANJARO: 16 – 24 SEPTEMBER. SPECIAL 80TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION EXPEDITION.

From the Journals of Hilke Kruger

16 September 2011 – to Tanzania.

I meet my fellow hikers, Sam, Lorraine and Ralph for the first time at O.R. Tambo airport. New friendships start as we board Kenya Airlines for the five hour flight to Nairobi, then the short flight to Kilimanjaro. We are met there by drivers from the Springland Hotel who will take us to our evening destination. It is dark as we drive through various villages where most homes are lit by candles, finally arriving at Moshi, a typical African big city. On the other side of town, after several hundred meters of rough dirt road, we reach our Hotel, basic but comfortable.

17 September 2011 – Machame Camp.

We all awake for an early breakfast and meet our guide Godlisten, for a briefing about our trip. We are soon in a small bus with other hikers, on our way to Kilimanjaro National Park. When we arrive at Machame Gate (1828m) it is a hive of activity with buses bringing in hundreds of tourists, guides organising their groups and porters sorting their kit. We join the queue at the Park's office building to fill in the register, something we will do at each of our camp sites along the trail. Soon we are hiking, watching in amazement as our support team of 17 carry their heavy loads with apparent ease. Our assistant guide, Hillary, leads us up a steady climb, pole pole (Swahili for slow), a pace we will soon come to appreciate. This first day we are in a pristine equatorial rain forest. The mist gets thicker and by the time we stop for lunch there is a steady drizzle. Spirits un-dampened, we plod on and later that afternoon reach Machame Camp (3100m). It looks like a tented village with hundreds everywhere. When ours are located, we see all is ready, warm water arriving to wash with and soon we are in our dining tent enjoying hot cucumber soup and a dinner all agreed was very tasty. A short briefing with Godlisten about tomorrow's hike and off to our tents. It was an early night.

18 September – Shira Camp.

We get up at our leisure, pack and eat a good hot breakfast. The day's walk starts with a steady climb over wet and slippery rocks. As we

reach the Moorlands, the scenery changes with different plants and shrubs. The path to Shira Camp is long and steep. We are surrounded by mist much of the way, but the afternoon the sun breaks through and there is great excitement as we see Mt Kilimanjaro in the distance for the first time. A last short push brought us to Shira Camp (3840m) located on a very open and exposed rocky plateau. It became cold and windy and a brief shower forced us to our tents. Afterwards we explored a nearby cave then watched a beautiful sunset with Mt. Maru in the distance. It was a cold and windy night.

19 September – Barranco Camp.

Loud voices wake us up early this morning. We wash, pack and after breakfast are once again on the trail. We are slowly, pole pole, on our way to Lava Tower (4590m). The air is getting thin and for the first time we all "feel" the altitude. Exhausted and a little nauseous, we stop at the base of the black lava tower for a long lunch, giving us a much needed rest. On our left, the Western Bridge of Kili and the path leading to Arrow Camp. In front the landscape is barren rock. After lunch Godlisten checks on each of us, asking how we feel. Refreshed we start a two hour descent through beautiful scenic rock formations and some of the oldest plants in the National Park to Barranco Camp (3900m) where coffee, tea and a vetkoek dinner await.

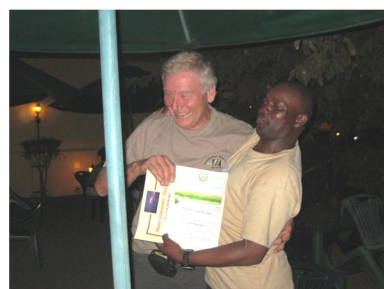
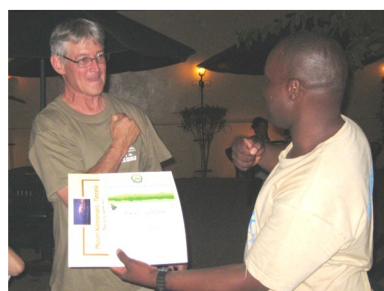
20 September – Karanga.

We had a short hike this day. It starts with a steep and difficult climb up Barranco Wall, but everybody is happy and in a good mood. Later that morning when we reach the top of Barranco Heights we are treated to beautiful vistas of the valleys and Mt Meru. A final steep climb brings us to Karanga Valley (4200m). With the sun shining we do a bit of extra training with Hillary, climbing another 100m on the next day's path. That evening a light rain serenades us in the dinner tent. When we emerge we see Kili is covered in fresh snow. The view is daunting as well as breathtakingly beautiful.

21 September – Barafu Base Camp.

Today's hike is even shorter and soon we arrive at Barafu (4600m). This camp is wedged among the rocks with tents on top of tents. We see many people from the previous night's summit, all exhausted, some obviously disappointed.

THE KILI TEAM



Top: At the finish (Sam, Ralph, Lorraine and Hilke).

Receiving certificates: Hilke (left), Sam (top left), Ralph (bottom middle) and Lorraine (bottom right).



HIKE REVIEWS

Godlisten does not want us to hear their stories. Our anxieties are rising. We eat early; pasta and hot soup heavy with ginger. The rest of the afternoon is spent getting our packs and warm clothes ready for the night time ascent, wondering how our bodies will react and whether or not the months of training and preparation will be enough. Our doubts are somewhat quelled when Godlisten gives us our last briefing before the final ascent, ensuring us that we are fit and we can make the summit. Still, inner questions linger. We are early to bed, but sleep is hard to come by as restless anticipation fills our minds. It is cold and misty.

22 September – Final Ascent.

We wake up at 22h00 and put on all our layers to keep warm. After a quick cup of tea and dry biscuits we are ready for the climb. Very slowly, pole pole, we follow our guide. People with shining headlamps come from all directions and long lines of hikers start moving up the mountain. What an awesome sight. It is bitterly cold and our hands and feet suffer as we struggle up the trail. A brilliant moonrise gives us encouragement. We continue on, pole pole. After about five hours of unabated climbing we see light in the eastern sky. As the sun rises we reach Stella Point (5745m) and can now see the summit. We are all overcome by emotion as we realize WE WILL MAKE IT! Eyes well with tears as we hug embrace and share a joy that can't be described. Our guides won't let us rest for long and soon we are walking the last 100m to Uhuru Peak (5895m). We have all made it. Photos, smiles, stunning views of the Rebmann Glacier, more photos, and at some point we start our slow descent back to base camp. By 10h00 we return to Barafu and after a quick brunch we start down the path to Mweka Camp (3100m). This had been a long exhausting 19 hour day, but what a sense of achievement and what an experience.

23 September – Mweka.

We are up at six and after a quick breakfast walk the final few kms down the mountain to Mweka Village. The rain forest is beautiful and the walk most enjoyable. At the reception office we sign the register for the last time before our driver takes us back to Springlands where we lunch and shower and relax. Godlisten and Hillary join us for dinner and present our certificates. More hugs and smiles and a toast or two to the moun-

tain and to us.

24 September – Jo'burg.

Not much to say. Most our thoughts are still on the mountain. We arrive at Tambo late, more hugs and smiles and we go our separate ways with memories shared.

ALWAYS CARRY A TWEEZERS

Ralph Jury

Hilke, I must tell you a story.

On the Wednesday hike after Kili, you may recall our group leader, David I think, led us a merry dance, where we struggled down a very steep rock face. I didn't realise at the time, but it resulted in a big tear in my new First Ascent shorts. Not happy!! That evening relaxing in my hotel room, I became aware of some posterial discomfort which for a while I attributed to the chair I was sitting on. Eventually I investigated further to find a thorn buried in my butt. So, with trousers round my ankles, I position my butt in front of a big mirror, and attempt to remove the thorn, but my finger nails are too short to hold the very short piece of protruding thorn, and I had no tweezers. So now I'm thinking "who can I trust to remove it"? After some deliberation, I decided to persevere and was eventually successful. Panic over. Moral of the story: always carry tweezers in your first aid kit.

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HIKE REVIEWS

ADVENTURE TRAIL: KINGS KLOOF Tracey May



A group of 11 of us participated in the Adventure outing to King's Kloof in Krugersdorp on Sunday 18th September. These included Nick Corbin, Steve Krummeck, Stacey Nel and Dean Prigge, Steve Ingram and sons, Kade and Singen, Renate Moffat and Steve MacDonald as well as Roy Harris and Tracey May. It was a beautiful day and we met Neil Margetts and his partner Lyndsay at Rocky Valley resort at King's Crag and started off to the top of the cliffs nearby to set up the abseil. Neil and Lyndsay quickly got the abseil ready and began to kit us all up for the ride down. The river ran through the valley below us and we set off down the cliff in pairs, abseiling a distance of 30 meters. All went well and once down we moved on to a Grade 14 climb on which Lyndsay was acting as instructor and belayer for us. Everyone had fun and really did well, we moved onto a level 13 which was quite high and then a short grade 18 which only a few managed to get past the first 3 meters! Very difficult!! We asked Neil to show us how it is done which he quickly did - in super fast time he was up and down - using his height, excellent climbing shoes as well as years and years of practice and experience to demonstrate his skills. We gathered at a pool in the river below to have lunch and then made our way back to the cars and off home. Judging from the response on the day and emails sent to me afterwards, everyone really had a good time, learnt a few new skills and are looking forward to the next abseil and climbing outing! Special thanks to Neil and Lyndsay for their professional and safe instruction, to Nick for keeping us all laughing and everyone for their courage.

HIKE REVIEWS

NUM NUM TRAIL, AUGUST 2011

Colin Lill

The five day Num-Num Trail is about 25km from Machadadorp on the Badplaas road. Hikers were Colin Lill, Mike Openshaw, Jill Salt and Errol, Candice & Russell Goodman.

The trail starts at the Pongola Railway carriages, where we slept before starting the hike. The carriages are fitted with electric lights and the showers and toilets are separate. Railway carriages are not ideal for hikers as the passages are narrow and compartments rather cramped, especially as there was another group of about 20 from Pretoria.

The trail offers a 'slackpacking' option, with the owners providing crates which they transport to the next hut.

Day 1 (7.5km) started in fine weather with a steady climb up to the escarpment. The path had a series of rather tedious zig-zags before we



reached the Aloe Kaya Hut just after lunch.

The camp had electricity and some interesting open hot showers between huge rocks.

The loo-with-a-view was stunning.

Day 2 (9.5km) started with overcast cold weather. We had a zig-zag walk through interesting rock formations, a steep descent into a valley and up again to the Burmanzi Hut on the escarpment edge. This was the longest and toughest day, but still rather short. Unfortunately the weather had turned to rain so our group and the other group spent a rather cramped afternoon and evening in the kitchen. Electricity and flush toilets and fairly spacious sleeping quarters made it more bearable.

Day 3 (6.2km) was still chilly, but most of the clouds had gone. We descended into a very pretty valley and then up to the Uitkoms Waterfall, a lovely spot for morning tea. We had a steep climb up to the Candlewood Hut, which has a stunning view of the waterfall and valley. No electricity, only a donkey boiler for hot water. The kitchen however was big and spacious and had gas stoves.

Day 4 (6.3km). This day was a very short walk to Waterbessie Hut (no electricity). We arrived at about 11.00, and decided to walk Day 5 (7km) back to the start, sleep over and travel home the next day.

All the huts had an "honesty shop" where one could buy snacks, cold drinks, beer and wine and leave the required money in a jar.

In summary, we found the trail very easy for a five day trail especially for those that want to take up the 'slackpacking' option. Various shorter options are available which would be a good idea for a weekend hike.

Google Num-Num to see maps and pictures.



HIKE REVIEWS

KAAPSEHOOP TRAIL, 4 – 6 NOVEMBER 2011
Sabine Behr

Participants: Victor Windsor, Nicci Maritz, Anne and Tom Kenny, Tracey and Roy May, Don Carter, Sue Desmond, Sabine Behr, Gabi Leone, Clive Roper, and Gail Mallison.

I travelled with Vic and Nicci to Kaapsehoop, where we arrived in the early afternoon. None of



us had ever been there and we were pleasantly surprised at this quaint little village. We parked at the end of the village and took a stroll down the road, where we found “Annabelle’s”, a little shop crammed with lots of odds and ends. The lady in the shop immediately started chatting and told us that 20 years ago there were only 18 people in this village and now they were 130 and had reached the limit. They ran their own little village without the help of a municipality. We also met the wild horses trampling through flower beds and drinking out of a water feature.

After the walk we packed our backpacks and



cooler bag and hiked the 400m down to the hut. Most of the other hikers had 4x4's so they drove right up to the hut. However, the owner arrived later in the evening to check that everything was ok and told us that the vehicles should please be parked in the village the next morning.

Early Saturday morning started with a major thunderstorm and we were already thinking of an extremely wet hike. It cleared up by the time we were ready to walk, and after the obligatory group photo, headed off following the trail markers. We climbed over interesting rock formations on the edge of the escarpment. We came across “Adams calendar”, which Gabi could explain to us in detail. This remarkable stone arrangement was apparently originally a large circular structure resembling but predating Stonehenge by many thousands of years!

The path was fairly easy with no major climbing necessary. When we came to the pine forest, we



were a bit disappointed that the trees were only about 3- 5m tall and did not give us any shade from the midday sun. Also finding a suitable lunch spot was difficult. By 14H30 we arrived at Florence Hill, our overnight hut to find Richard, the local, still busy mowing the lawn. There were two bedrooms with two beds each, which were immediately occupied by the two “lovebird” couples. Then there was a tiny third bedroom with three sets of bunk beds. Most opted to sleep outside on the lovely patio. One by one we headed into the hot showers.

We were all looking forward to happy hour - the goodies had been transported to the hut by the owner. It was quite a spread, and having found

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some wine glasses in the kitchen, we dug into the food and wine, and were soon chatting up a storm! The patio was lovely with a fireplace on the side, and so afternoon turned into evening, when Don made a fire for the braai with the logs provided. The party became jollier as the evening progressed and alcohol was flowing freely. Sunday morning started out with clear weather and looked like it was going to be a hot day. Some of us were ready to go by 07H00, although departure time was only 07H30. The path today was through huge pine forests with a thick layer of pine needles. Unfortunately, absolutely nothing grows in these forests and no bird life is to be found here. We came across a lovely



stone hut that made for interesting photography. According to the instructions, the route was supposed to be nearly 16km long today, however, it couldn't have been more than about 10 - 12km as Vic and I arrived in Kaapsehoop by 10H30, the rest by 11H30.

After a couple of beers/cool drinks and pancakes at the pancake restaurant, we all went our separate ways again back to the city.

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MEMORIES OF THE WHALE TRAIL (SEPTEMBER 2011), GETTING THERE AND BACK

Merle Doctor

Eleven women and one brave man, set off for the Cape, either flying to Cape Town or George and hiring a car, or taking a leisurely drive down, stopping off at B&B's along the way.



Sybille and I stopped at Graff Reinett, which will be remembered for the amazing amount of table lamps, all decorated with beads or feathers. It was great to be able to walk about a kilometer to dinner without worrying about been mugged. The next morning the very friendly owners directed us to Willowmore for breakfast, a tiny village with nothing much, but the wonderful 'Sophie's Choice' Restaurant. Be sure to stop over for a meal or just a great coffee and wonderfully presented food.

We branched off before George and took the road to de Rust. The aloes were in full bloom, a sight I shall never forget, as well as the long stretches of yellow Gazanias. We stopped many times to photograph them and looking around saw many other smaller, beautifully coloured flowers. On our way to Swellendam, we filled up with Petrol, and noted a wonderful sign promising to look after ones husband, when you want to shop alone!

On the excellent long dirt road down to De Hoop Nature Reserve, which covers 36,000 hectares, we saw more lovely flowers, as well as Ostrich, Blue Crane, Spur-winged Geese and Bontebok. There was a troop of baboons on the road as we

HIKE REVIEWS

entered the reserve.

The first night is spent at Potberg. Some baboons got into the house and riffled through Marianne's bags.

Day one

Day one saw us setting off at different times, up the Potberg mountain, which is 611 metres at the highest point. Looking to our right we saw the Breede river, and to the left the huge expanse of Witsands, which to me looked more like snow. There is lots of time to enjoy the 15km walk, no heavy stuff to cart around. There are flowers everywhere; different Ericas, proteas, and restios, a reed like plant. It felt like we were walking in a garden. Our lunch stop was next to the Coca Cola coloured Melkhout river, but it would have been better to have stopped at the second crossing, which was in a pretty setting. In the distance we saw Cupidoskraal, and walked through a path lined with pink and white fynbos. There is a large dam to cool off in; there were no takers in our group!

Lonie and Eileen took the whole day to get there and were greeted with having to walk under an arch of arms, we were all very glad to see them. Sybille treated us to one of her renowned cakes after dinner, a chocolate melt in the mouth master piece.



Day two

We walked on the crest of the Potberg Mountain. It was windy and rained most of the day and there were few flowers, but what a sight at the end of 14.7km to see the sea, with the unusual buildings of Noetsie with their thatch roofs right to the ground. Our boxes were late, due to a rock

fall. Sitting in the log lounge overlooking the sea, we were treated to a rainbow, over the rough turquoise sea.

Day three

We had loads of time to see the Southern Right Whales; the walk was only 7.8 km long. The whales, some with calves, were swimming just inside the swells of the waves. There was no swimming for us, the sea was still rough, and it drizzled on and off, but it did not distract us from enjoying ourselves. Hammerkop was a comfortable double story house, with a veranda opening out from the top storey, giving great sea views, and a friendly robin demanding to be fed.

Day four

The day started with a 10.5km beach walk, I took my boots off, and walked in cheap slip slops, only putting the boots on when the path left the beach. We passed the impressive Lekkerwater Lodge to get to Vaalkrans, which is situated next to a rocky inlet. The waves came dashing in, hitting the wall and returning to the sea. If you watch carefully, you can see some of the water coming up a few blow-holes on the way out. The Cormorants nest just below the top of the cliff face, with the pounding surf.

Day five

This is a half day walk to Koppie Alleen, only 7km, which has boardwalks for visitors. All too soon, a bus picked us up at midday, to return us to Potberg. We passed the 'Witsands', which were very beautiful and impressive close up. On the way we stopped for a glimpse of a Cape Francolin and her chicks, and a small group of Bontebok. Back at the car park, it was time to unpack the boxes and pack the car. A sign asks one to check under the car for tortoises.

24km of dirt road got us to the Breede River at Malgas. My Garmin announced "Get on the ferry get off the ferry!" before we even got there. The pont takes up to 5 cars, and is pulled along by men walking the length of the deck, going back to the front and reattaching the hook. One young man was wearing a long silver glittering wig!

Getting a heavily laden car, on to the pont is a bit of a challenge, as part of our hiking group found out. On the trip over the river we enjoyed lovely views of the Potberg, and could see where we had been hiking. About one kilometer on, the car that was having trouble getting on the pont, had a puncture. Five very capable lady pensioners coped well. First, out came the manual "Oops

HIKE REVIEWS

wrong instruction" I heard someone say. In no time the wheel was changed, no thanks to the two male drivers who passed by. I decided to take a photograph of the incident, and then spotted an Owl, or it spotted me, I'm not sure who got more of a fright!

We made our way to the Albertina B&B, which had an abundance of artificial flower arrangements, no less than 15 in the breakfast room! Then we made our way to the Albertina hotel, for a 5 course dinner at R159 a head, and bumped in to the 'other' hikers, and a merry time was had by all.

The next day we drove through George and out towards Willowmore, Sybille for muffins and a cup of the wonderful coffee, me for tea and cream scones.

But to get there I suggested a slightly different road, which turned out to be 98km of potholed dirt road! We only saw one other human, a man on a motor bike without a helmet. Again the flowers were tremendous, carpets of yellow gazanias along the side of the road. We arrived at Springfontein's 'Kuilfontein' B&B in the evening, because we had spent so much time photographing the flowers.

The charming owner of this once prosperous Jersey dairy farm has turned the buildings into comfortable accommodation, with real veldt flowers on the table. A mouth-watering Karoo lamb dinner awaited us, to be enjoyed with a glass of wine.

The next morning, after a good breakfast under our belts and with much reluctance, we got in

the car to drive home.

A big thank you to all the hikers for making the hike so enjoyable, and to Sybille, a wonderful driving companion. Not forgetting Jean Williams for organizing this most enjoyable Whale Trail.

LOURENSA NATURE RESERVE, 14-16 OCTOBER 2011

Marge Smith

The Free State has some surprising pockets, places of hidden charm amongst the flat mealie lands. Lourensa turned out to be one of these. It was of course fairly flat, but the farmer had made the best use of the slight slope of his lands with carefully contoured dam walls which had collected all the water from last summer's rain, and together with some natural seepage, had made five full dams. Trees had also been planted in an otherwise treeless landscape, turning the area into an attractive venue.

Five of us from the Hiking Club went there recently on a relaxed weekend and had a great time. It is possible to walk anywhere on the property and since the property is not that large one just cannot get lost. There were animals to see; buck of various sorts, zebra and wildebeest and, amazingly, some porcupine at night as well. The water and trees had attracted lots of birds, the specials being a marsh owl hovering low over the grass in the evening, Spur-winged Geese, spoonbills, and two fluffy and rather large baby spotted eagle owls. Accommodation was in comfortable rooms and included a big, thatched lapa for evening braais and as a general meeting and eating place.

Lourensa will not do for those who like a good, strong hike, but can thoroughly be recommended for a lazy, nature-orientated weekend. A bonus is that is such a short distance away, less than 2 hours drive from Johannesburg.

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HIKE REVIEWS

BOESMANSKRANS HIKING TRAIL: 7-9 OCTOBER 2011

Marianne S. Ulriksen



Situated in the Eastern Free State near Clarens and Fouriesburg, the Boesmanskrans Hiking trail promised to offer a beautiful and interesting hike, including a tyre ladder up a vertical cliff. Though the hiking trail in reality was no real challenge, we had a nice weekend with good company and wonderful surroundings.

We were a group of 12 hikers who met up at a farm near Fouriesburg on Friday evening. The accommodation consists of a one-room house with ten beds and a caravan with space for two people. The farmer has made a nice braai area just outside the house and the facilities also included a kitchen and two toilets with showers.

Saturday morning we were all ready for the day's adventures. So with Tom and Ann leading the way we started out towards the mountain. On our path we came by some bushman's paintings before we reached the tyre ladder. The ladder was solidly constructed and consisted of about 30 tyres – not any longer than the ladder at foothold – but still quite exciting to climb! Once on top we had a nice refreshment of strawberries, cream and waffles organised by Sue.

Continuing on our way we soon realised that the hiking trail had been shortened so as not to lead us to the top of the mountain. So we backtracked a little and made the further climb up the mountain where we were rewarded with a stunning view. Starting our

descent and meeting the trail again we enjoyed the beautiful surroundings - the vegetation in the krans underneath was lush and included a little forest area and small pools of water. Hungry for more, we climbed another mountain on the farm land before heading back to a well deserved happy hour, drinks, braai and plenty of insightful discussions.

Though we all enjoyed the hike, there was a general feeling that we had covered most of the farm land on Saturday's hike. Besides, some were keen to watch South Africa's rugby defeat – sorry match – against New Zealand together with the farmer on Sunday morning. So in the end, the group split with some heading for an early hike and others starting out a little later. There were no new hiking trails, so the Sunday morning hike had little new to offer, but was nevertheless enjoyable.

In sum, nice and relaxing hikes in a beautiful area – a recipe for a weekend to de-stress away from Joburg.



MID-WEEK HIKE

Dora Ark Children's Home Hike

Marion Hübner/Picture Sandra Kellerman

On Wednesday, 5 October, the JHC entertained 11 children and 1 assistant from the Dora Ark Children's Home in Roodepoort. We took these children on a 7km hike through the undulating hills of the Hennops Picnic Spot. We encountered impala, zebra and wildebeest along the trail with views of Hartbeespoort Dam and Pelindaba. It was a hot day and the children enjoyed a picnic and swim after the hike. Thanks to all concerned for organising a day out in the Magaliesberg for these children.



Steering wheel on the wrong side

NOTES ON A HOLIDAY IN REUNION: HOW TO DRIVE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE ROAD.

Bill Murray.

Your trip is planned and paid for. A comprehensive package tour of hotel bookings, air fares and car hire are sure to combine to make a memorable holiday.

The weather is perfect, the sea is a pearlescent blue, the family are happy with these idyllic surroundings, particularly after enjoying the lovely breakfast served on the terrace of the 5 star hotel overlooking the heated pool.

This idyll is broken by the arrival of the hire car. All of a fluster you sign a ream of documents that you don't understand and the rep from the car hire company smiles, wishes you "bon vacance." and leaves.

There is no car key, only a credit card on a key fob. You slip into the driver's seat and don't know what to do. The steering wheel is on the wrong

side of the car. The gear lever has to be played with the right hand and there's no hand brake. An illuminated panel is full of instructions that you don't understand except one, you are travelling at 0 km per hour. The tension mounts, it's a hot day, nothing works including the air conditioning, and the engine isn't even running. The sweated brow has become a swamp and the armpit problem is now down to belly button level.

I put the credit card in the slot provided and oo la la I spied a push button that says START! I pressed it. Nothing happened. The holiday is ruined.

I walked back into the palatial surrounds of the hotel lobby to discuss the problems of trying to start the engine of a very modern French car with any one sympathetic to listen. There's no one. The family are thinking of exploring the beach and one is surfing the internet. Surfing! I can't even drive the hire car.

I put on a wide brimmed hikers hat and wonder

despondently from the hotel grounds. I was advised by a good friend to practise driving on the wrong side of the road with nobody else in the car and "watch carefully as you go round a traffic circle," he said. I walked round the streets adjacent to the hotel in a sort of Ballito a la Française. There were mysterious T-junctions, confusing road signs, cars parked on every available flat space, a highway flyover dominated the town and phalanx of estate agents offices completed the scene.

I wondered, confused, back to the hire car, flopped into the driving seat and fumbled with the buttons. Miraculously the engine started. Great! Now how do you engage the reverse gear and release the non-existent hand brake. Well more good luck, the hand brake was released by a push button and gravity took the car backwards to point towards the exit gate. I drove on my own slowly round the resort block that I had so recently and so sweatily, walked. I took a second circuit and gained enough confidence to tackle the highway.

The high torque, low revving 1,9l turbo diesel purred along at a comfortable 100 km/h on a spectacular new highway of majestic scenery. I managed the six speed gear box with ease and found the air conditioning controls and learned how to work them. I mastered going round a traffic circle the wrong way, handling a left turn at a T-junction and even parking and stopping the engine. Bill Gates had designed this car; you have to press the start button to stop the engine and once stopped the parking brake applies itself. Clunk.

Our holiday was not ruined, it was just about to begin.

Richard Yelland's Limericks

Richard Yelland limericks

There was a hiker from Blackheath,
Once lost his pair of false teeth,
He said, "Oh my gosh,
This doesn't sound posh,
But I've bitten myself from beneath,

A baboon once fell into a tank,
And swam round and round 'til it stank,
When Bob came in sight,
The baboon got a fright,
Jumped out and said, "You I must thank!"

Said one wasp to the other, "Hey brother,
Let's give these hikers some bother,
A nest in the sink,
Will drive them to drink,
And the shower's a good place for another!"

While on the beach having a rave
A hiker got hit by a wave
Said he, "Oh heck
I've buggered my neck
A whiskey and waitress I crave"
A hiker called Frances Rawl,
One New Year's Eve having a jawl,

She said, "Robbie, you're studious,
But your music is dubious,
Let's rather go on a pub crawl!"

A hiker called Jim the Hutch,
Likes fixing things so much,
He fixes things in his sleep,
And dreams how to keep,
Very busy and not lose his touch.



BIRDS OF MADAGASCAR



THREATENED BIRDS OF MADAGASCAR

Adam Riley (Edited version)

Paging through a field guide, it's always with a sense of dismay and sadness that I come across reference to an extinct species. This is particularly poignant if the bird has disappeared during the course of my birding days or "on my watch" as I like to think of it. Islands, for various reasons, experience more extinctions than continents (with Africa being the only continent not suffering a bird extinction!). Madagascar, however, has had more than its fair share of extinct or lost species and **Madagascar Pochard** was firmly on this list. Previously common at its only known site, Lake Aloatra, into the 1930's, the introduction of numerous exotic fish species and human disturbance led to massive population declines. The last sighting of a flock was in 1960, when one bird was shot for a museum specimen! Then in 1991, a fisherman on the lake caught a male in his fishing net. This bird was kept in captivity until it died a year later. This individual provided hope that the species might still persist in some remote part of Lake Aloatra. However numerous expeditions failed to produce any evidence of the bird and in 2006 the IUCN reclassified Madagascar Pochard as "possibly extinct".

It was therefore an absolute thrill when I heard the news that biologists from The Peregrine Fund, whilst surveying for endangered Madagascar Harriers in November 2006, had discovered a small population of these diving ducks at a very remote crater lake 330km north of Lake



The lost paradise, Lake Bemanevika.
Photo by Felicity Fryer



Male Madagascar Pochard, one of the great bird rediscoveries of the past few years!
Photo by Adam Riley

Aloatra! Then rumors leaked out that at this same site the mythical Red Owl could easily be seen, Madagascar Serpent Eagle was breeding and other rare birds and lemurs abounded. As you can imagine, I was champing at the bit to get to this lost paradise and when I finally obtained the necessary permissions in 2008, it didn't fail to astonish!

After 15 previous trips I thought I knew Madagascar well, but never before had I seen such vast expanses of pristine wilderness on this island that has sadly been ravaged by its human colonists over the past 1,000 years. Birds I had previously only come across a few times in months of birding Madagascar were abundant: **Madagascar Harriers** everywhere, **Meller's Ducks** by the bushel, **Gray Emutail**, **Forest**

BIRDS OF MADAGASCAR

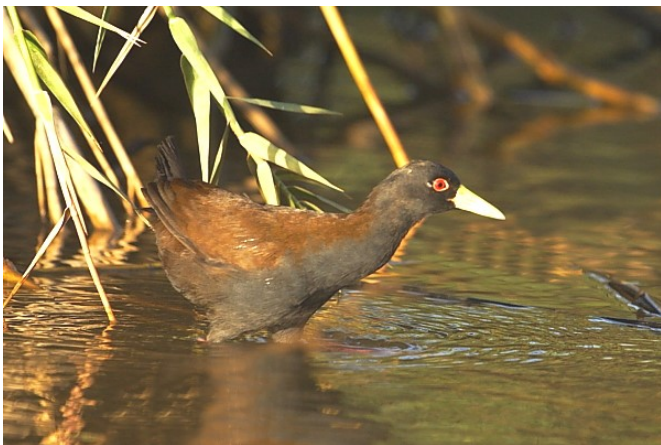
Fody and I even obtained a sighting of the mythical **Slender-billed Flufftail**! I had only seen **Red Owl** once before in flight and here was one nonchalantly perched in a Pandanus!

But nothing matched my joy at seeing the entire world population of nearly 20 adult **Madagascar Pochards** with 12 chicks! This astonishing story of rediscovery is unfortunately still awaiting its happy ending; all of these chicks failed to survive and the number of adult female pochards is critically low, creating great concern for the species future survival. On the positive side however, a captive breeding program has been successfully initiated by WWT in partnership with the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, The Peregrine Fund and the Madagascar government.

Another Malagasy bird to also have been taken off the lost birds list is the **Sakalava Rail**. Named after the Sakalava people of western

Sakalava Rail and a myriad other waterbirds that frequent this amazing site. However, due to the remoteness of the area sadly just a handful of intrepid birders have taken the opportunity to support this community initiative by making the journey to this fascinating area. I assure you that it's a journey well worth the effort, not only for endemic birds and rare mammals, but also to interact with the wonderfully friendly and welcoming local people.

Besides the **Madagascar Pochard** and **Sakalava Rail**, other lost Malagasy birds that have now been found include **Madagascar Serpent Eagle**, **Red Owl**, **Slender-billed Flufftail**, **Red-tailed Newtonia**, **Dusky Tetraka** (previously Greenbul) and **Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity**. It is unlikely that the world's largest bird, the **Elephantbird**, which became extinct in the 17th century, will be re



*The endangered Sakalava Rail, Lake Kinkony.
Photo by Adam Riley.*

Madagascar, it was previously known only from specimens taken in 1930 and 1962, until its rediscovery at a remote lake in north-west Madagascar in 1995. It is now known from a handful of wetlands in this dry western region of the island, and this species has since been classified as Endangered. Lake Kinkony, is a perfect candidate for community ecotourism. The impoverished community living on the shores of the lake has constructed a basic tourist campsite with bucket showers and pit latrines, village ladies prepare delicious meals and local guides take birders out on wooden canoes to search for this elusive rail. Not only does this provide much needed income for the community, but it also raises awareness of the need for conservation of the



*The mythical Red Owl on a day roost at Lake Bemanevika.
Photo by Adam Riley*

ASTRONOMY



Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity.
Photo by James Wakelin

discovered but there is still some hope for three other missing species:

Snail-eating Coua, Aloatra Grebe and Bluntschli's Vanga.

The first two are officially classified as "Extinct" and the latter

is a newly described species based on two juvenile specimens collected in 1931 and is currently classified as "Data Deficient".

Could it just be possible that some or all of these three lost birds still survive in relict patches of habitat in remote regions of Madagascar.....?

About the Author

Adam Riley has grown up with a lifelong interest in wildlife, which evolved into a particular fascination with birds. Raised in a rural region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, Adam qualified as a Chartered Accountant but in 1998 his career path took an alternative route when he founded [Rockjumper Birding Tours](#) with his friend Jonathan Rossouw. Since 2000 Adam has been the sole owner and managing director of Rockjumper and has also founded [Indri – Ultimate Mammal Voyages](#) and [Oryx – Worldwide Photographic Safaris](#). Adam has traveled extensively to all 7 continents, leading tours to numerous countries ranging from Colombia to Egypt, Angola to Papua New Guinea and Antarctica to Alaska. Adam is one of Africa's most experienced birders, having seen over 2,000 species on the continent as well as 7,000 species worldwide.

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT ...

Paul Rangecroft (with thanks to Kit Bruyns for compiling the illustration)



Each night, an array of stars passes through the sky as the earth rotates on its axis and different parts of the heavens come into view. Do we see the same array of stars from one night to the next, and if a particular star rises into

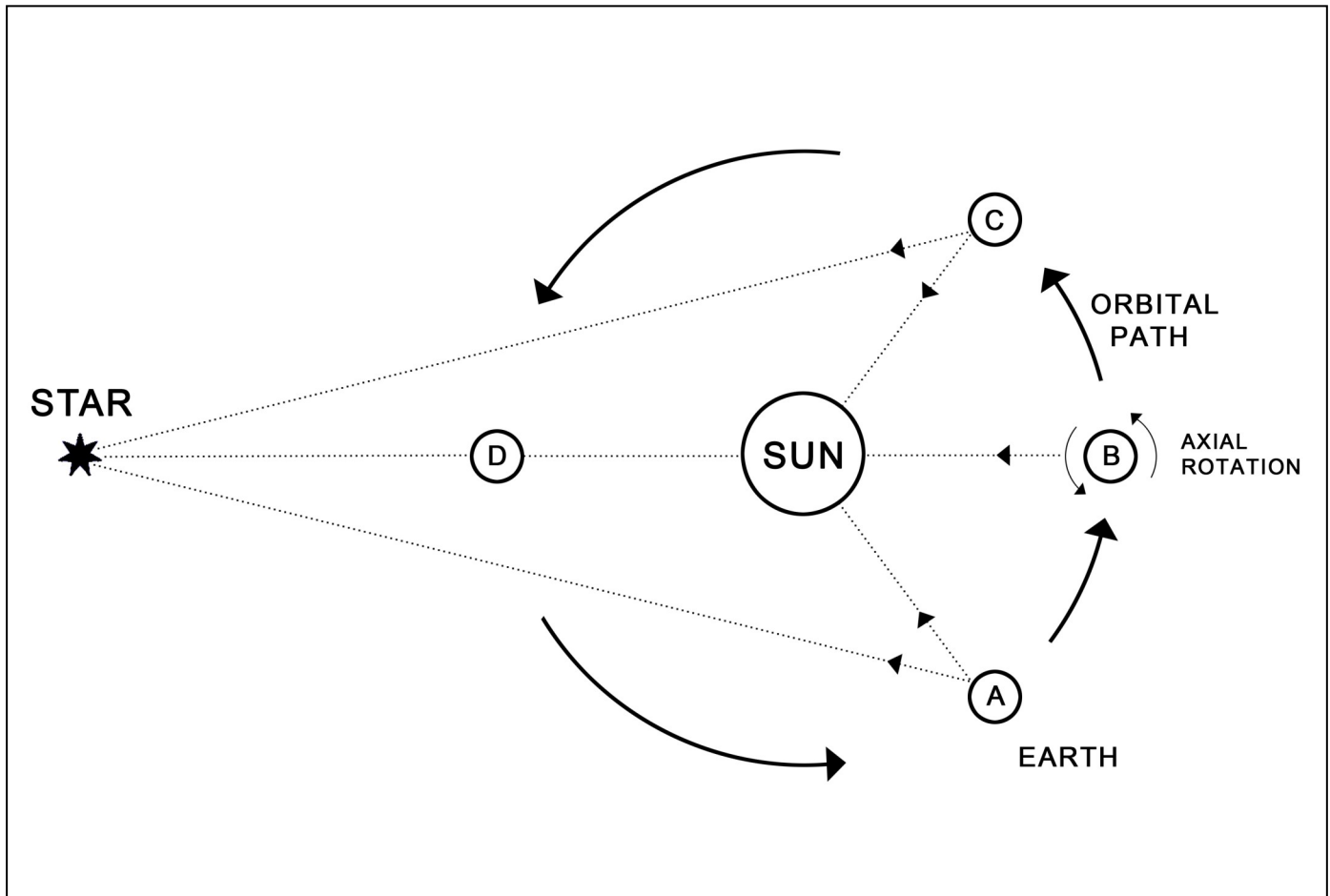
view at a particular time tonight, will it rise into view at the same time tomorrow night? How much of the 360° span of the heavens would we see if we stayed up all night?

Looking up at the heavens facing southwards, the earth's eastern horizon lies to the left and its western horizon to the right. With the rotation of the earth on its axis, the sun and non-circumpolar stars rise into view from the eastern horizon and move across the sky from left to right (circumpolar stars remain permanently in the sky – refer to previous article entitled *The elusive Southern Cross*). Stars that lie to the right of the sun rise into view before it does and lead it across the sky, whilst stars that lie to the left of it rise after it does and trail it across the sky.

A star's position in the heavens relative to the sun (from our perspective on earth) determines the time of day at which it passes through the sky. Stars that lie in close proximity to the sun pass through the sky at much the same time as it does (i.e. during daytime), whilst stars located on the opposite side of the earth to the sun pass through the sky at night. The passage of stars in intermediate positions commences during daytime and ends at night, or vice versa.

Stars become visible in the evening sky as twilight fades, and disappear from view in the light of dawn. The stars that appear as twilight fades are at different points in their passage across the sky. Stars that lie overhead at the time, for example, are roughly halfway through their passage, and the latter part of it will be visible to us in the night sky. Stars visible on the eastern horizon at the time (those positioned on the opposite side of the earth to the sun) are at the start of their passage, and virtually their entire passage will be visible in the night sky. Stars that rise later in the evening will complete their passage in daylight the following day. In fact, the rotation of the earth, together with our 180° field of vision (from horizon to hori-

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zon), allow us to see some part of the passage of most of the stars in the 360° span of the heavens over the course of a night. The stars that do not appear in the night sky at all are those that lie in close proximity to the sun – they move across the sky with it during the day. The area around the sun within which they lie is referred to as the *invisibility zone*.

The positions of the sun and the stars in the heavens are fixed, but with the advance of the earth in its orbit around the sun each day, their positions relative to each other shift slightly from our perspective. The borders of the invisibility zone also shift slightly relative to the backdrop of the stars. Stars on the margins of the zone move into it on one side and out of it on the other, and as a result, the array of stars visible to us changes slightly from one night to the next. The timing of a star's passage across the sky is dependent upon its position in the heavens relative to the sun, and because its position changes slightly each day, so too does the timing of its passage – stars rise about four minutes earlier on successive days. The diagram below shows how the relative position of a star from our perspective shifts from one side of the sun to the other as the earth advances in its orbit (from position A to position C). The dotted lines represent lines of view from the earth. The star passes through the invisibility zone on route – at position B, it lies in the centre of the zone. The timing of the star's rising advances relative to that of the sun as it moves from a trailing position on the left-hand side of the sun to a leading position on the right-hand side of it.

This change in a star's position and advance in the timing of its rising follows a cyclical progression linked to the earth's orbit. Stars that lie in the plane of the earth's orbit, for example, move from a position directly behind the sun (at orbital position B) to a position directly opposite it (at orbital position D) and back again over the course of a year, and the timing of their rising advances through 24 hours over this period. On completion of an orbit, a particular star will thus return to the same position relative to the sun and rise

ASTRONOMY

at the same time of day again. During the course of this progression, the star passes through the invisibility zone and is not visible in the night sky for a period of one to two months.

Ancient cultures used this annual cycle of the stars, in particular their reappearance after emerging from the invisibility zone, to mark important times of the year, such as the beginning of the agricultural season. The Xhosa used the reappearance in June of the Pleiades cluster in the Taurus constellation, known to them as *Isilimela* ("the digging stars"), to mark the time for tilling their fields. The Xhosa name for the month of June is *Isilimela*. The ancient Egyptians used the reappearance of Sirius, the brightest star in the heavens, to mark the onset of the annual flooding of the Nile, an important event in their agricultural calendar (silt deposited by the floodwaters enriched the narrow strip of arable land on either side of the river). Sirius disappeared from the night sky for about 70 days each year, and the ancient Egyptians associated its disappearance and reappearance with death and rebirth. They incorporated this cycle into their funerary customs by delaying the burial of royalty until 70 days after their death, so that the time of burial immediately preceded their "rebirth" in the heavens.

All the stars visible to us with the naked eye are members of our own galaxy, the Milky Way. There are billions of stars in the galaxy, but most of them are indistinguishable to us. In fact, we can distinguish only about 9 000 stars from the earth with the naked eye through the year. Because part of the northern sky is not visible from the southern hemisphere and vice versa, the number of stars visible from a particular location in either hemisphere through the year is even less. Between 2 500 and 3 000 stars are visible to us in the night sky at any moment in time. The stars that we can distinguish individually are the ones that lie closest to us, and some more distant ones that are very bright. The fact that we can distinguish so few of the stars makes the spectacle of the night sky no less impressive, though!

Footnote

Vincent van Gogh depicted the night sky in a painting entitled *Starry night*, and Don McLean composed a song about the painter's troubled life in 1971 entitled *Vincent*, which refers to this painting in the opening line (*Starry, starry night*

...).

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