



Harkerville



Dhaulagiri

JOHANNESBURG



Quarterly
Newsletter

July, August & September 2008

FOOTNOTES



1988 ERNET PARYZOLD
1989 THE HUDSONS
1990 BRIAN CULROSS
1991 JOHN MCCONNOCHE
1992 WENDY VAN GELDER
1993 LOUISE AARTS
1994 PETER FAUGUST
1995 ROLAND HEAP
1996 DEE STRAUB
1997 BOB GREENWOOD
1998 LAWRIE PODMORE
1999 NEIL/JUDY McLAREN
2000 INGE MEETS
2001 LINDA CRAWFORD
2002 JIM HUTCHISON
2003 MILLY SAFFER
2004 MARION HUFNER
2005 KEN MIDDLETON
2006 NATHALIE BERQUET
2007 JOHN CORRIE

JOHANNESBURG
HIKING CLUB

John Corrie
Hiker of the Year

IN THIS ISSUE



Cover story:

John Corrie wins the prestigious "Hiker of the Year" award. Congratulations John and thanks for all the hard work that won you the award. Photo by Malcolm Watson.

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Editor's Notes Harry Parsley

This issue is an absolute feast of hike reports and their associated stunning photographs. As space is a problem the question is which of the photographs do I use and which to leave out; I could easily use them all. I also could not put all the articles in that I have received in, but I promise their authors that I have them on file and will use them as soon as possible.

Jessie and I have just returned from the wonderful alpine scenery of the South Island of New Zealand, and Heron Island on the Barrier Reef of Australia. One can see why these majestic mountains turn people into Alpine "junkies", so it was with delight that I received articles on mountain hikes ranging from the Drakensberg to the Himalayas. Other hikes included in this issue are: the Cycad Trail, Tepelkop, Fish River Canyon, Harkerville and Gold Rush Kloofing. Club members are proving to be stylish authors and great photographers. Thank you all for your contributions.

Also pleasing is the increased number of letters to the editor. One of my goals when I took over the editing of Footnotes was to encourage the use of Footnotes as a medium of communication between members of the Club, so please feel free to contribute.

The club thrives on the contributions of many members who unselfishly contribute of their time to making the Club the vibrant organisation that it is. Most of these do so quietly and without seeking any recognition. The "Hiker of the Year" award is a mechanism of recognising these outstanding contributions. It is therefore a pleasure to give this year's winner, John Corrie, pride of place in this edition of Footnotes. Thank you John, and others like you, for your contributions to the Club.

On a lighter note it was noticed that Bev was presented with a cake for her birthday after completing the hike. It looked delicious, but not quite as delicious as Jean's Christmas cake. It seems the Club consists of mountaineers and cake eaters.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE 31st October, 2008

Email all articles and correspondence to the editor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jean Paetzold

For the past 26 years, it has been a pleasure making the annual cake.

The first was for the Club's 50th anniversary and featured a tent, Santa Claus and a lamb on the spit all made out of icing, and 50 candles.

I feel that if anyone out there would like to take over this annual Christmas cake making, then please do so! My eyes are getting dimmer, my hands shaky and my feet sore (not that they have anything to do with baking). My age is the same as the Club's (not hard to work out). If no one offers, then I will gladly carry on.

Very soon, I will be obliged to hang up my boots, and Ernst and I thank all you lovely people who have given us such memories to treasure.

However, hope to be at the Foothold weekends to make tea for the Sunday hikers and anyone who needs "a cuppa".

(Thank you Jean. That offer of the "cuppa" at Foothold weekends will go down a treat with weary hikers I am sure. If anyone would like to take over the cake baking, even if not for twenty five years like Jean, please give her a call on 014-576-1801. Editor.)

Ivor Gerrard

Comments from Cape Town

To the editor of Footnotes: On our return from northern Patagonia Phyllis and I were delighted with the "new look" Footnotes. The editor has done an excellent job. I belong to a number of clubs down here in Cape Town and can assure you that among quarterly newsletters, Footnotes would get the Oscar.

It was with sadness that I read of the passing of Brenda Weir/Curran, a former committee member of the Johannesburg Hiking Club. I joined in September 1969 and Brenda shortly afterwards. As Elizabeth Ogilvie pointed out she helped to revitalize the club during a stagnant phase. Older members would remember her as being friendly and helpful.

On a different note: It is to Peter Faugust's great credit that he has had the stamina to carry on presenting monthly slide shows. One wonders how many remember the Adult Education Centre of the early days? Peter, how about a letter to Phyllis

and myself? Marge Smith, what about a letter to Phyllis?

Regards to those who remember Phyllis and myself.

Chris and Marja Williams

I wanted to complement the committee on the quality of the last Footnotes, but time escaped me. Having just received the latest I won't let time escape again.

I would like to congratulate the editor and all those who made it happen. The quality goes from better to better and soon we will not have enough words to describe it.

My congrats for a great effort.

Arvin Chaitram

Johannesburg

Dear Sir,

I am a member of the Club. I found Paul Rangecroft's contribution in the latest edition of Footnotes (*Astronomy – Ten Days in History that were Cancelled*) and, for that matter, his contribution, *The Age of Aquarius*, which appeared in the July, August, September 2007 edition of Footnotes, to be fascinatingly informative despite the use of astronomical terminology (no pun intended). I find myself reading them over and over again in awe of how the magnitude of the information is imparted with such apparent ease. I will treasure these issues of Footnotes.

Well done to Paul Rangecroft and thank you for publishing them. I look forward to more of the same in future editions.

Janet Wooding

It is with sincere regret that I am resigning from the hiking club, I am moving to New Zealand. Please pass on my thanks to all the leaders, committee members and all the people involved in making it such a wonderful club.

Love to all of you.

Thank you for many years of happy hiking and wonderful friendship.

CEDERBERG HERITAGE ROUTE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Peter Hart, Chairman: Cederberg Heritage Route

The Cederberg Heritage Route (CHR), a Voluntary Association Not-for-Gain, has just launched a new multi-night hiking trails project in the Cederberg. These trails offer a mix of guided rock art walks, a 12km donkey cart trail and conventional hiking. The prices are inclusive of accommodation in simple guest cottages, all meals, any transportation beyond Clanwilliam to/from trail start and end points, transport of luggage between overnight stops, community trail guides, guided rock art walks and the donkey cart trail. All you carry is your day pack.

Three trails are on offer initially:

- The three night "Klein Krakadouw Trail".
- The four night "Groot Krakadouw Trail".
- The five night "Wupperthal Trail".

On all three trails the group size is limited to six persons, because of accommodation restrictions in the guest cottages and in the Land Rover used for transportation. It would be best to make up a party of family and/or friends because bedrooms and bathrooms have to be shared.

Details of the trails can be found on www.cedheroute.co.za.

For more detailed information, prices and bookings contact:

Cedarberg African Travel - Cecily Muller - Ph: 027 482 2444/Fax: 027 482 1420, or

email her at cecily@cedarberg.co.za.

Come and enjoy the Cederberg.

MAGOEBAKLOOF INVITE

Johan Talma

Some time ago Siep and I had the pleasure of joining a group of (midweek) hikers from Haenertsburg on a hike in the Wolkberge and Magoebaskloof. We enjoyed the area and the company so much that we decided to invite midweek hikers for a real feast of mid-week hiking there.

The plan is to spend the week of 15 - 19 September there and make use of the generosity of the local hikers to show us some of their gems. This is the week before the The Haenertsburg/ Ma-

goebaskloof Spring Festival and school holidays start.

We have made the following arrangements:

- Jay Branson (supported by his friends of the 'Haenertsburg B team hikers') has agreed to take a group of up to 12 hikers on a good hike on every day. The provisional list includes the Louis Changuion trail around Haenertsburg, two hikes into the Woodbush and a hike to Serala (above the New Agatha forest station). As is the custom on the JHC midweek hikes, Jay will also make provision for a slow and faster group on each hike.

- Accommodation has been provisionally reserved at Bali Will Will (2km before you reach Haenertsburg, coming from Polokwane) for the period: in Sunday 14, out Saturday 19 September:

- Self catering: max 8 people sharing @ R150/person/night;

- Camping @ R35/person/night (ample space), some electrical points, hot water.

Other than the odd R20 entrance fee for some of the venues, food, accommodation and travelling costs, there should be no other costs involved. It would be a great opportunity to share this with you.

Johan Talma

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(Footnotes is only published quarterly and as Johan requested feedback by end March the hikes may already be booked out. If you are interested contact Johan on the above contact details. Editor).



**Howard Rayner
President**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM: 18TH MARCH, 2008

Howard Rayner

Welcome, fellow hikers to the 77th Annual General Meeting of the Johannesburg Hiking Club.

After the celebrations of our 75th Anniversary in 2006 it was inevitable that 2007 would be a more subdued year. For the first time in many years, our membership showed a decline from 431 to 421. Six JHC members are no longer with us and we will miss Geoff Fleming, Josef Pascher, Lawrie Podmore, Mary Roberts, Rick Shearer and Brenda Weir. There was also a marked decline in participation in weekend events and for the first time ever the Xmas Dance was cancelled at the last minute as less than 30 people had booked and paid for the event. Sunday hikes continue to be popular especially at venues such as Castle Gorge. There has thus been an increase in attendance on Sunday hikes and Wednesday hikes. Thanks to Neil Ransome and his sub-committee for putting together an excellent program of events. Neil will be retiring from the committee this year and I would like to thank him for his many years of support. As a hiking club, we need to continually look at the needs of our members and modify the activities that we offer to cater for their requirements. We also need to enforce the deposit system for all hikes and socials. Remember, bookings will only be confirmed once the deposit has been paid.

Congratulations to the committee, who have worked hard to put together a diverse range of activities for our members and visitors. The workload on committee members has increased markedly in recent times and it is very important that we have volunteers to help on the various sub-committees to spread this workload. Sub-Committee members also form the backbone of future committees. I would like to encourage as many members as possible to give something back to the Johannesburg Hiking Club by volunteering to serve on a sub-committee or become a hike leader. It's a rewarding price to pay for what you have got out of the Hiking Club.

Robbie organized a workshop for leaders at Footloose in October which was very well received by the participants. A leader's handbook was drawn

up during this workshop which has been distributed to leaders. During this weekend, the Footloose Gulley was stabilized. Thanks to Robbie and Jim for their hard work. An agreement was also reached with Netcare 911 during the year which will guarantee rescues of any injured hikers in the Magaliesberg during club events. Socials this year included The Lion King, Pub evenings, Dances, and Quizzes and a fascinating visit to Constitutional Hill. Thanks for all your efforts, Gwynne. I would also like to thank Peter Faugust for continuing to organise the slide shows. These have been running continuously since 1980. Marion continued to improve an already impressive website and will be succeeded this year as media officer by Harry Parsley who has already compiled two exceptional editions of Footnotes. Jean Smilkstein has already taken over the website.

At the AGM last year it was reported that we had been approached by the MCSA to explore the possibilities of working even closer together. We had several meetings with the President of the MCSA and Chairpersons of the Johannesburg and Magaliesberg Sections of the MCSA to discuss the future. We had somewhat different views on this association. The MCSA wanted us to become a sub-section of the MCSA, which would give us full benefits currently enjoyed by MCSA members. From our side, the feeling was that the JHC still wanted to keep our independence and identity. Counter-proposals were made in which the JHC would assist the MCSA with various agreed projects which would benefit both clubs, in exchange for limited access rights to some of the MCSA properties. Discussions are ongoing and it is hoped that a mutually beneficial agreement will be reached by the middle of the year.

Further property purchases within the Magaliesberg have for many years been identified as crucial, but it has been very difficult to find suitable properties. At present, we are providing a good range of hikes for Wednesday and Sunday hikes in the Magaliesberg, but as we have seen in the past there is always the danger of losing access rights to these properties. We need to continue looking for suitable properties for hikes.

The Youthful Hiking Group continues to provide a well-balanced set of activities which is well attended by a wide range of hikers. Although, there have not been many new members joining the JHC this year through the Youthful Hiking Group, it is important that we continue this initiative. Thanks to Wendy Farrow for her positive contribution to the JHC committee this year. I would also like to thank Beverly for her continual support of the Youthful Group. Clive is to be congratulated on keeping our finances in a healthy condition and as a PBO we

continue to pay no income tax. Thanks, Clive.

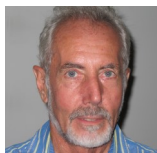
The committee will be undergoing some changes this year with the retirement of Clive Williams, Marion Hüfner, Neil Ransome, and Gwyn Clarke. Thank you all for your positive work over many years. We will welcome aboard some new dynamic committee members and I'm positive that this will move the JHC forward again. Jean has indicated that she wants to retire at the end of 2008 so we will have to find a new administrator. Interested applicants can approach Robbie. It's hard to believe that Jean has been Administrator for five years during which time the workload of the Hiking Club has increased. The Wednesday hikes are also very successful. Thank you, Jean.

Finally, I would like to thank all our committee members- Beverly, Clive, Gwyn, Jim, Jean, Marion Neil, Robbie and Wendy for all their efforts. Thank you to all the sub-committee members and hike leaders who have also given up their valuable time to help the JHC to continue to be a great club.

THE EXTRA MILE

Robbie MacDonald

The Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote: "The best-laid schemes o' mice and men, gang aft agley" (often go wrong). Those words could not have been truer than on the night of our AGM. "Make sure the Florium is not double-booked", I



Robbie MacDonald
Chairman

was warned. "You must circulate the date and venue thoroughly", I was told. "Check with City Parks that they are aware of this extra booking." "Circulate all members to bring extra lighting in case of power cuts." "Organise a Cheese and Wine to celebrate afterwards." What more could be done to ensure a successful AGM. Bingo! The guy with the key for the gate did not get the message and as a result JHC members were met by a pair of very locked gates and a blacked-out parking lot. All-of-a-sudden our carefully made schemes had gone seriously agley. It was a time for quick decisions. An alternative venue was suggested and passed verbally to the members within ear shot. On arrival at the new venue we found an almost ideal spot that even had adequate lighting and a few tables and chairs scattered about. Quickly members set about converting this space into an adequate meeting venue. "n Boer maak n plan" in setting up the cheese and wine. I am happy to report that the re-convened meeting went off

smoothly; it was also possible to introduce the incoming EXCO members. To all those members who took the time and effort to attend the original and the re-convened meetings I would like to say a big thank you!

Regretfully there was an incident at the Easter camp when hikers tents were invaded in the middle of the night and valuables snatched. The tentacles of crime creep into all facets of life, no one is completely safe. So, it is incumbent on all of us to be aware, whether hiking, camping or just strolling in the park. Let us all take active steps to prevent becoming victims of crime, even if this means some inconvenience.

As I write this, the news of yet another interest rate hike (no you won't find this hike in our programme) has been released, placing even more strain on our already stretched budgets. This means less money will be available for the really important things in our lives like hiking. However, I believe that if we are pro-active, if we endeavour to fill every vacant seat of cars proceeding to the venue, if the club continues to support venues offering reasonable rates, if the social events programme involves the participation of many, we will continue to enjoy a full hiking and social events calendar that is affordable to all.

Shortly, the new EXCO will be meeting for the first time, they will be bringing new ideas, energy and enthusiasm and I look forward to working with them. These are the people that make the JHC tick, collectively and individually they deserve your encouragement and support.

Talking of support I would like to thank all those members who have personally encouraged and supported me over the last 2 years, it is much appreciated. I will strive to ensure that the club continues as a dynamic and vibrant organisation.

Happy hiking

Robbie



Bev Brockman
Vice Chairman

This year has certainly started to be extremely busy. My newly acquired work has required me to visit various small towns throughout the country. Recently, I spent time in the Northern Cape; travelling from Upington to Springbok and back, then back again into that area to do the **Fish River Canyon** hike in Namibia, with eighteen fellow hikers. There is something about the desert that I truly love; it must be the vastness of the un-spoilt nature with those flat plains, some silver/ white, some red or black, with rock- strewn koppies, the odd kokerboom, and the most unbelievable sunsets. The roads are not busy, so one is alone, alone but not lonely – how can one be, when surrounded by so much beauty?

The **Fish River** hike was a great success! The weather was not too hot, especially on the first two days. The water level was perfect! Boots off, strops on at every river crossing, perfectly manageable – nothing like 2006! And, there was even ample time to climb the Four Finger Rock!

Kiddie's hikes are for children over the age of 8yrs. They are slow, short and not difficult. Sometimes, if we don't have many children, the group then joins the mainstream hiking, usually the slow group. There are many parents in the club that have children who they would like to introduce to hiking – this is an excellent opportunity for them.

The **Slow group** is a very special section in the club that needs the most attention.

A leader with good communication skills and an enormous amount of patience is required. Here we have new hikers that try hiking for the first time. We want to encourage them to enjoy the experience and to join us again and ultimately to join the club as members. Most new comers are youthful, but are not necessarily fit. We would appreciate it if club members would slow down. By slowing down it would help to encourage the newcomers to enjoy their hike and see hiking in a favourable light.

Thank you to those that managed to join us at the **AGM**, despite the sudden change of venue. Well

You can hire Hikers Haven at Foothold, camp there, or simply come to the monthly camp.
Contact number: 011 462 2993

done to those who helped to organise everything and everybody in such a wonderful manner!

Cheers for now ... until next time.

On the 8th January we welcomed back **Richard Salt**. Richard has been a member of the JHC for



Peter Faugust
Slide Shows

sixteen years, but does not go hiking that often. He is an engineer by profession and works on power stations.

In the year 2000 he worked in China for some time. The Club was fortunate to see his magnificent images from that sojourn in November, 2006. Last year Richard contacted me about making a presentation at one of the slide shows (I wish more Club members would do that). He announced that he had another batch of images, this time taken in India. I didn't ask any questions, only enquiring when he could show them to the Club. He preferred some time in January and hence the show "Images of India" was given on the 8th.

On Tuesday the 12th February we were entertained by **Donovan van Graan** with his presentation "Super Tramp's Encounters in Turkey, Kazrat, Mount Ararat, etc".

This was followed on Tuesday the 11th March by a presentation given by **James Pitman and Marianne Pretorius** (the third member, Mike Blythe, unfortunately could not attend) called "No Need for Parking – and African Rock Adventure". Each of the presenters is a legend and an expert one way or another in their fields of interest.

Two of these speakers were present at a Club evening almost two years ago on 11th April 2006. On that evening there were four speakers present and together they gave us a magnificent show entitled "The Karakorum – First South Africa Ascent of the Tango Tower".

Marianne Pretorius/Schankhart is the country's most well-known woman big wall rock climber, having climbed the North Wall of the Central Tower of Paine, Cerro Torre, the Tango Tower and numerous other big wall classics.

James Pitman is a relative new-comer to the rock climbing sport. As was demonstrated in his slide show to the Club in April 2006, he also summited the Trango Tower in Karakorum.

The third speaker, who was unable to attend the presentation, Mike Blythe, is not a rock climber, but

SLIDE SHOWS

has undeniably become one. His priceless flying knowledge was a huge asset to the adventure.

The presentation was in the form of a film documentary and showed some breathtaking, daring climbing feats and Mike's legendary flying skills, all in a setting of magnificent scenery.

After retiring in 2003 **Gilbert Goor** spent several months working on his yacht. He left on his round the world trip in 2004 and returned in November, 2006 making the duration of his trip a total of three years. The pictures he took on this voyage were presented on the 14th April under the titles "Round the World Yacht Tour".

Finally, **Gareth Frost** who is a member of the Mountain Club, shared his fascination of the incredible mountain scenery of the Swiss Alps in his presentation "Swiss Treats – A Week in the Alps."

who is still breathing could ever be bored in India.

GILBERT'S TRIP

Gilbert Goor

Gilbert set off from Durban in January 2004 on a round-the-world sailing trip on his 32 foot yacht Gipsy Girl. The voyage took nearly three years and covered 30000 miles. He dropped anchor in very beautiful places with exotic names. His girlfriend Elaine joined him for some of the time on this life changing adventure.

After sailing around the Cape and making a stop at St Helena, Gilbert arrived in Salvador, Brazil,

where he and Elaine cruised around the bay for a few weeks. Then it was up to the Caribbeans after a few days stop-over at the Salvation Islands, made famous by Papillon. After escaping Hurricane Ivan and sailing up to Martinique, they went through the Panama Canal, one of the highlights of the trip.

After a three week visit of the Galapagos Islands they were off on the longest ocean crossing of the trip, nearly 40 days at sea, to the beautiful Marquesas. They spent three months in French Polynesia, visiting the Tuamotus, Tahiti and Moorea. Elaine then flew back to SA and Gilbert sailed to the Southern Cook Islands, the Samoas, Fiji, and down to New Zealand to avoid the cyclone season in the Pacific.

In April 2006 Gilbert sailed up to New Caledonia, Port Moresby, and to Darwin through the Torres Strait. After an incident-packed Indian Ocean crossing, and stops at the beautiful Christmas and Cocos Keeling islands, he visited Mauritius and Reunion, and eventually reached Durban in November.

Gilbert published a book about his trip, which can be obtained by phoning him on 079 525 7003.



Gipsy Girl at anchor.

Photo: Gilbert Goor.

SLIDE SHOWS



Taj Mahal.

Photo: Richard Salt

IMAGES OF INDIA

Richard Salt

In 2004 and 2005, Richard and Jill Salt were living in India where Richard was overseeing the engineering of power station design activities. Although based in Delhi, they managed to see some of this huge and teeming country. Visits they undertook were to the Taj Mahal at Agra, the Ran of Kutch on the Pakistani border, Hyderabad, Renuagar, Toranagalu, Bhuj in Gujarat, and Deeg. Of course there are many places to visit in Delhi itself, such as the Red Fort, Humayun's Tomb, Qutb Minar and the many markets, temples and religious shrines.

Richard managed to take photos of most of the excursions, which were shown recently at the slide show.

The local culture and way of life is so different from ours that no-one who is still breathing could ever be bored in India.



Humayun's Tomb.

Photo: Richard Salt

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:

Phone the designated leader of the trail or camp to reserve a place for yourself. Full payment of the event fee must be made promptly, either by making a deposit into the club's bank account, or by sending a cheque made payable to the Johannesburg Hiking Club. Your booking will only be confirmed once the club has received full payment. It will automatically lapse if payment is not received within two weeks from date of booking, unless otherwise arranged. If you wish to cancel your 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 later than prescribed date, fees will not necessarily be refunded.

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 liters 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

SUNDAY HIKES

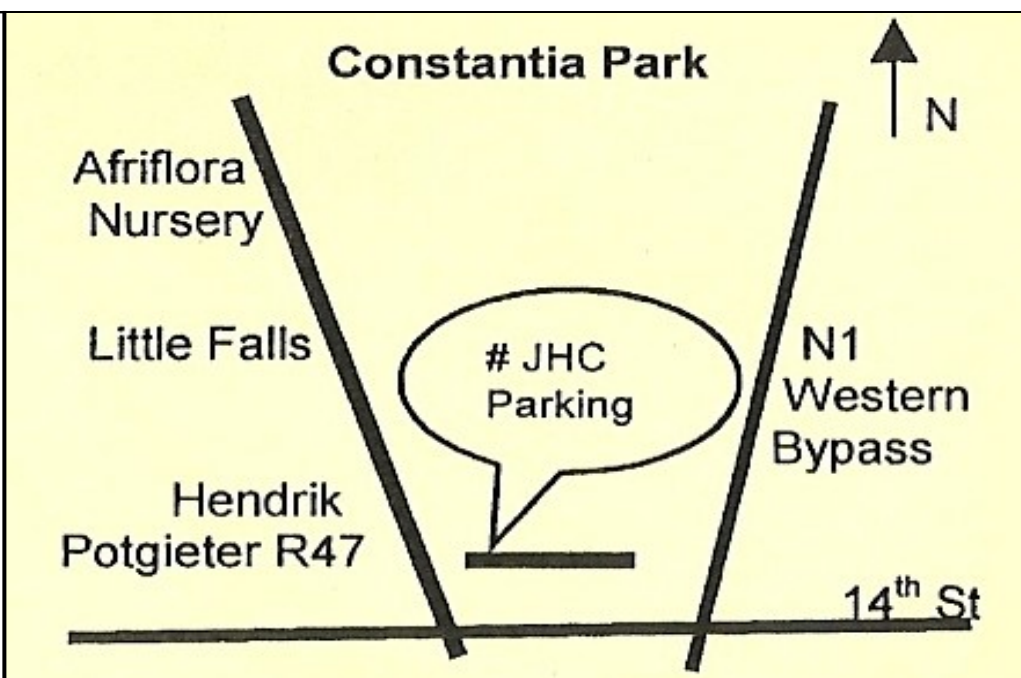
Meeting place: Constantia Park, Gateway House.

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)



HIKE REVIEWS

CYCAD TRAIL

Maureen Stobbart

The Group: Dennis Cox, Sue Desmond, Susan Morrell, SueE (Emmett), Maureen Stobbart, Mike Openshaw, John Faller, Howard Rayner, Carmen Rayner and Chris de Bree.



The Cycad group.
(Note "Brutus")

Photo: Dennis Cox

I was invited by a friend, Susan, to join her and some members on the Cycad hike in Mpumalanga. Quite honestly I was nervous as I had hurt my leg 2 days before and was not sure if I would be able to hike and did not want to be a burden. Also, I had only done 3 short hikes, but did not want to miss this opportunity, so I braved it.

On Friday at 4pm I met up with Susan and the leader of the group, Dennis Cox, and Sue Desmond. We left Fourways in the Friday afternoon rush hour traffic, with Dennis giving a brief instruction to which highway we were going, with both Susan and I, yes, yes OK I think we know the road, and jumped into our cars and set sail in this heavy traffic, with Dennis probably thinking oh what am I in for with these two women!

Anyway we arrived at the destination around 7.15pm after driving through some heavy rain and missing the main turn off. Susan was confirming with Sue the directions on the cell so we missed the turn off. We encountered a rather slippery sand road in the beginning. We all arrived safe with a fire waiting for us, as some members had arrived early. Here I met Mike, John, and Sue E

(yip3 Sues) not long after Howard, Carmen and Chris arrived.

It did not take long and we were braaing and enjoying some really good red wine (blue and white label). I noticed a little Fox Terrier amongst us and wondered whose dog it was but never asked, and heard some say he was Brutus. Dennis made sure we were all introduced and had offered to cook our meat before the rain came down. Dennis informed us we were getting up at 6am to leave by 8am.

After a good night's rest and breakfast, we set out on our trail, over this awesome terrain of boulders, trees growing in amongst the boulders and the most spectacular huge cycads. We stopped at a spectacular lookout point where Dennis did a headcount to check if we were all there, when I noticed the little dog. Sue and a few others made sure he had water and Brutus was quite comfortable with us. After a short break we carried on over wonderful terrain to another lookout where we could see the river and the hut we had to hike up to. Oh my gosh, this was an awesome sight, and when I saw where I had to hike to, I must admit I was quite afraid, thinking how am I going to do this?

Needless to say we carried on down to the river to have lunch. On the way down we were stopped dead in our tracks, when someone in the front shouted out there was a python. DID YOU GUYS SEE THAT SNAKE! We continued down to the river where we had a nice long break watching some swim, and Brutus enjoying Sue spoiling him. Here I discovered that the dog belonged to the owner of the farm, and the dog tags along with the hikers and goes back when he has had enough. But Brutus did not leave us, he decided while Chris was swimming he made himself quite comfortable on Chris's socks!

At 1 o'clock we started up the hill to the hut. Every time I looked up, I wondered if I was going to make it. Here the group spread out a bit with the more experienced hikers going up front. Having NO experience in a climb like this, I was trying to keep up, but saw in no time I was not going to be able to do that. Susan kept assuring me we could do it, and making sure I was ok. By now everyone was past us except Howard.

Susan said I should take a break because by now I wanted to be sick, I was seeing stars.

HIKE REVIEWS



On the trail.

Photo: Dennis Cox.

(Not time yet) After a short break the 3 of us started out again. We kept going till Howard needed a break. We waited a bit for Howard, and then we had a bit of a drizzle come down, which was quite refreshing, Howard got a second breath and encouraged Susan and I to keep going, and we finally got to the top. What an AWESOME view!



Sleeping accommodation.

Photo: Dennis Cox.

The hut was great. The shower set at the end of the rocks was a welcome sight, not to mention the awesome view from in the shower.

Sue, who had had her chance to shower, was relaxing with a curler in her hair, having fed Brutus again. Carmen and Chris were relaxing too, whilst John, Mike, Howard were taking in the view or making tea, Sue E was enjoying her book, Susan getting organised, me lapping up this shower, while Dennis was waiting patiently for his turn to shower.

After a well earned shower, it was happy hour. Dennis had got everyone to carry up an item. We had chips, olives, gherkins, liver pate and not forgetting the camembert amongst other snacks (Dennis had forgotten the crackers for the cheese and pate – but according to him – crackers are so “last year”). Wow we really had a feast and a fantastic view too! We then had a fire made by Dennis who kept it going for as long as we needed it, while we enjoyed one another’s company. Here again Brutus was well fed, he then fell asleep next to the fire on the wood bag. Brutus then got comfortable in the hut, on Sue’s bed. Dennis made sure that the girls got an Easter egg before going to bed, nice thought. Thanks.

Some of us chose to sleep next to the fire under the stars, and some in the cosy hut.

Next morning we were up early, coffee was on the brew and breakfast was had in no time. There was a hurry to pack and go. Dennis checked all was clean, with Sue passing a keen eye to see if no one had left rubbish behind. As all was in order we set off. The hike back was a gentle 3kms, with Brutus and Mike taking the lead. It was relatively easier than the day before. Back at the base-camp, I went over to thank the owner, and asked him about Brutus. Brutus’s real name was Snippy, and the reason he was always shaking was because Snippy is 15 years old. Well done Snippy.

Thanks to all, I will most certainly do this again. IT WAS FANTASTIC, thanks to all for their concern and help, and tips for Susan and me on the Otter Trail.

HIKE REVIEWS



ORGAN PIPES AND BELL TRAVERSE: 22 TO 24 FEB 2008 George Christian

The team: Neil Ransome, Sue Desmond, Rod Hamilton and George Christian.

Such a perfect day! That's a song, or a least the words of a song (Lou Reed) and it could have applied to all 3 days of our weekend in the Berg. How often does one get three really good, rain-free, mist-free and warm days, in a row, nog al?

Originally Neil had organised this trip for the end of January, but the weather saw this trip postponed until the end of February, and the resulting cancellations and changing of plans saw just four of us leaving for KZN on the Thursday evening.

The traditional supper was had at Bengelala (near Bergville) and a welcome place to sleep secured at Alan Ralph's temporary abode nearby. Alan, well known to most of us, has a large landscaping contract at the new Nondela golf estate, which should keep him out of trouble for a while.

While booking in at Didima, we noted sadly that the missing hiker had still not been found; a sign of the times that we are living in, or a reminder of the dangers of walking alone?

The hike itself consisted of a day's walk up to the top of Organ Pipes via Mushroom Rock and the Camel. At the top of the pass we turned right towards Cleft Peak and camped next to a little stream just below the path up to Cleft. This gets you out of the big valley and away from the "Lesotho highway". This area is relatively crime free, but it's nice to be away from prying eyes and temptation.

The next day was 9,5 hours of hiking to the base of Cathedral peak via the top of Mlambonja pass, Twins Cave and the Bell traverse. A long day made easy by the beautiful views of the Lesotho valleys, Cathedral peak area and Mnweni wilderness.

Cathkin and the Monks Cowl to one side and the Eastern Buttress and Devils Tooth on the other. Now that's good weather for you.

Day three, another beautiful day, ho hum. No one felt like climbing Cathedral Peak, so we ambled down to the hotel for a well-deserved shower and meal. Nice to declare no injury or incidents on the mountain register as well.

We must have all been very good this year, because the Mountain Keepers provided us with yet another safe and event free passage, and rewarded our long days slog with good weather and spectacular views. And good company too, what more can I say.

Thank you Neil for putting it together.



Mushroom Rock

Photo: Sue Desmond

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DRAKENSBERT HIKE REPORT

Roger Price

Mafadi Traverse: a play for two or more, or maybe less, characters.

(Prelude. Or is it another flashback?).

Roger: (writes): The Mafadi traverse, an easy stroll with Neil Ransom.

Alice: (over his shoulder): "Roger! How can you write such nonsense! You're not Lewis Carroll you know."

Roger: "I decided to get up the berg again while I am still young. I tried to encourage you to come along, remember? Not that what I said would make any difference. And I asked you if it would be difficult, remember?"

Alice: "Who says that you are still young?"

Roger: "Do you remember what you told me? That Neil doesn't walk so fast?"

Alice: "Nonsense! I never said anything of the sort. In fact I've never seen you in my life before."

Injisuti (the spelling changes from decade to



Photo: Roger Price

decade).

The party arrives in 2 cars; Neil and Anne in Rod's, and Roger in Brian's, all rather shaken up by the bad road from Winterton, which hasn't seen any repair work for some time. But a new land speed record has now been set for the back roads of the Free State in a Subaru.

The party sets off early on Thursday morning. The plan is to get to the top of the escarpment and sleep the night there, then descend Leslie's

Pass the next day. Boots come off for a cool paddle across the first river. A slow ascent through the Clarens sandstone brings us up to a long, long ridge which leads up to the level of the contour path and the Centenary Hut. We climb straight up. Time is getting on. We lunch in the remains of Centenary hut, but don't spend too much time there.



Judges.

Photo: Roger Price

Bottom of Judges: Exhaustion is creeping in for me. I wonder how the others are doing. They look unfazed. We cross a river bed. The sky looks ominous. Suggestions that we sleep the night there are accepted, to my immense relief. The tents come out and it starts raining. The rain turns to hail. Fortunately we have managed to get three tents up and fly-sheets over the backpacks. Anne shelters in Rod's tent. I join them. Flashback:

Anne: "Rod, do you think that this will be a difficult climb?"

Rod: "Any moderately fit person should be able to keep up."

The night alternated between crisp clear patches



Photo: Roger Price

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Photo: Anne Bell



Photo: Roger Price



Photo: Roger Price



Photo: Anne Bell

with billions of stars, and mist belts covering us. Anne rustles around in her large cold tent trying to keep warm.

The next morning we are up with the mist and the red sunshine on the berg. No time to sit and look. It is not a long climb to the top, but gets steep in no time. Rod leads the way, with me at the back trying not to look as though I'm struggling to keep up. Which I am!

I reach the rocky section and my heart stops pounding. I think "so this is what happens when you die...". But I see someone far ahead. At the top they are all waiting. I hope that they are at least a little tired. We have a break and then go off again, walking around, sometimes through, patches of crusty wind-dried snow. After an hour or so we see some Basuthos on their ponies, with cattle, dogs and sheep, silhouetted against their private skyline. We are now on the roof-rack of Africa. To our right is the sea of

clouds washing Kwazulu-Natal and to our left the enormous valleys carved out of lava by long-

gone glaciers. Much discussion takes place about whether we'll get to the bottom of Leslie's pass by 2.30 p.m. I hope that they are joking.

Eventually, near the top of Leslie's pass, a sensible decision is made. We camp for the night.

Packs go into Anne's tent and she shares with Brian. In the morning the dew has frozen solid and we shake it off our flysheets as best we can. The group sets off without giving Anne time to find her prescription sunglasses.

Down Leslie's pass it becomes easier, until I miss my footing and land head-down. Luckily someone is there to get my pack off me. Going down is easy, either way.

At the river crossing a kind soul from the Eshowe Hiking Club carries my pack the last two kilometres.

Yes, maybe I did look knackered.

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HARKEVILLE: 3-4th JANUARY, 2008

Beverly Brockman

The hikers: Charley Lewis, Chris Downie, Padmini Moodley, Elsa Wloschowsky, Giulia Criscuolo, Hijme De Jong, Bev Brockman.

This article describes the two days after having



The group.

Photo: Hijme de Jong

completed the Outeniqua Trail.

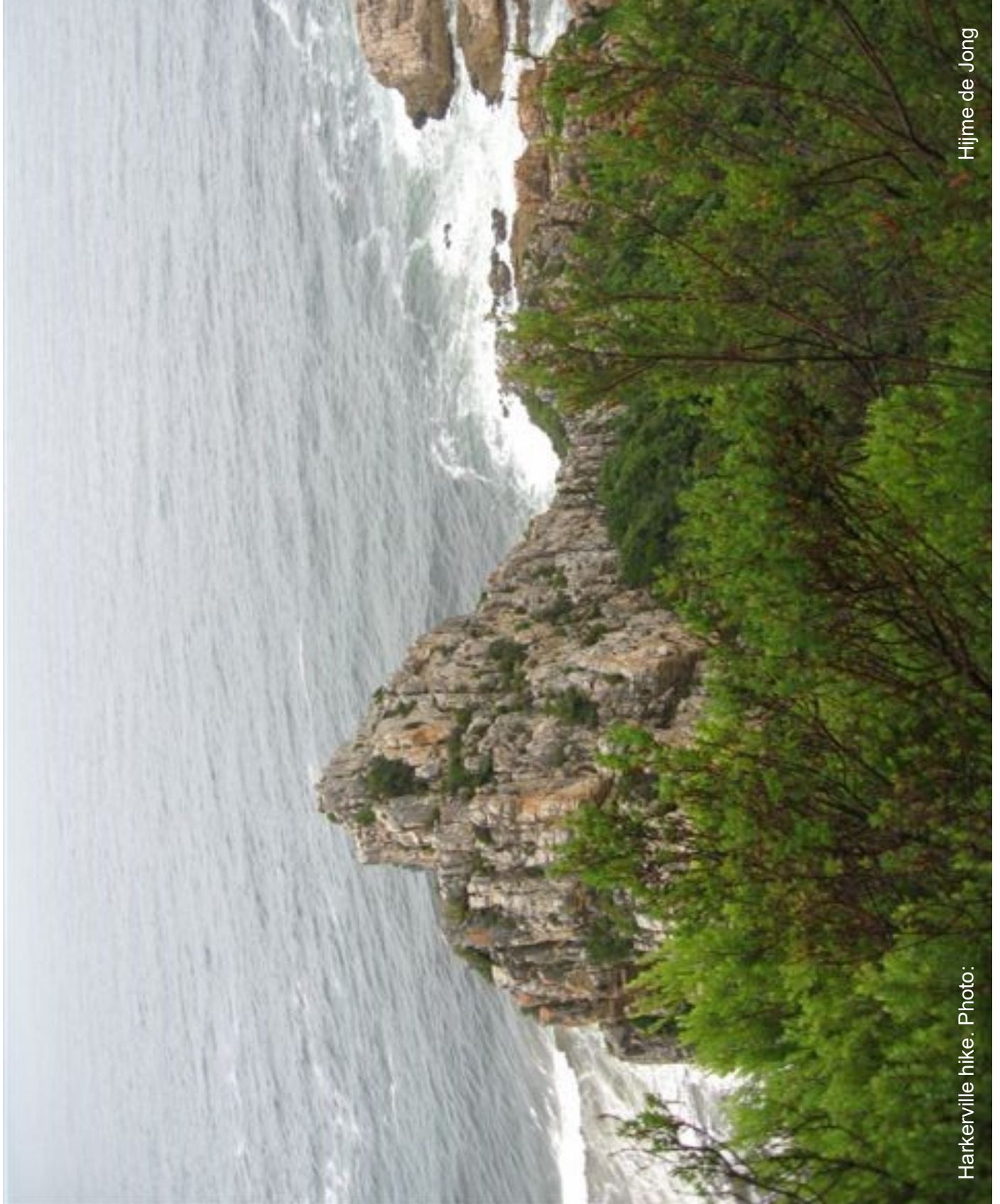
Two people joined us: Chris and Steve. Some had enough after 7 days, so only 8 from the original group remained thus making for a group of 10. On the 3rd January we woke up to a miserable day - it poured! This left a huge question mark over the trail. Steve had gathered all sorts of weather reports, which implied very wet rainy weather for the next 2/3 days, so his friends came to collect him. Two other hikers, Mike and John, pulled out and grabbed an opportunity to have a lift back to JHB. And so then we were 7. Then the rain stopped at 10am. Well.... lets go! Off we set into the forest for 11km. The rain came back, but we continued. Chris, who has done the trail several times before, became our leader. There is a section of tall beautiful Redwood trees, next to a road, usually a good rest place for tea. We needed to walk along the road, which was now a fast flowing river. It was pouring, but Chris insisted we have tea! Some of us stood like miserable donkeys, (poncho's give you that look), but soon lightened up when they had a warm sip of tea.

Chris guided us through the forest until the road and path became clear again. After a fairly easy 11km, we reached the coastline and it stopped raining. Then a steep descent down a wet slippery wooden staircase brought us onto the beach. The rugged coastline was dramatically different to the last 7 days, spectacularly beautiful; sheer cliffs and gullies, rocks, boulders and loose pebble-like rocks instead of sand. The hiking was a lot more challenging. This is where I felt that my new soft boots were not hardy / solid enough. I could feel every rock (very sharp pointed rocks here) and pebbles mould under my feet. Nothing compares with a good VIBRAM sole with a hidden steel shank. There are wooden ladders and chains there for assistance around the difficult places.

Slowly, we tackled each difficult moment. Those 2.5km took us most of the day. If one suffers from vertigo, this is not a hike for you. For myself, I believe I have a fear of falling, rather than a vertigo problem. As long as I can hold on in 3 -4 places and not slip, I am fine. For example, the dreaded section most talked about, takes you around a rock with a sheer drop of 40 / 80 meters into the sea crashing below you. I expressed to Chris at the beginning that the section worried me; particularly if it should rain at that time. Fortunately, there was no rain on the coast that day. The last time I did this, I took huge strain. Chris took my rucksack from me then and again this time and guided me. There is a short chain ladder, and then you hang onto chains to take you around. There are foot holes everywhere. I felt secure, it was not so bad, and slowly I made myself around to safety.

At another section, there are two wooden ladders crossing from a rocky section slightly ascending to the top of a huge boulder and then another, slightly descending to the next rocky outcrop. I managed the first ladder, stood on the boulder and could not move. I felt top heavy with my backpack, and nauseous whenever I tried to go forward. There was nowhere for me to hang on to. If the ascent was at a larger angle, I would have turned around and crawled down on all fours. This was awkward. After Hijme and Charley realised that whatever their advice, there was no way I could move. Charley came to the rescue, took my bag, and then gave me a hand across.

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Hijme de Jong

Harkerville hike. Photo:

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There were other ladders and tricky sections. Generally I was fine, as long as I could 'hang on'. To get to the Sinclair overnight hut, there is a steep ascent. The hut is well positioned on a high point with panoramic views of the sea. San Parks have been upgrading the trail's ablution facilities. We had flushing toilets and a promise of new showers, the next time we visit. Dinner was enjoyed around a fire. There is something to say about a small group; often one has a lot more fun, perhaps because we all share our experiences together and make it a memorable time.

Day 2: 12km.

After 2km you are taken back down a steep descent onto the coast. Here, a river flows into the sea. Some of us swam in the river, some in the sea. Whilst we were having tea, we watched a school of dolphins playing in the surf just in front of us, what a glorious sight! Once again, the trail has difficult sections, one of which has to be negotiated without a chain hand-hold. Then you pass through a rock arch. Some of us swam again. The weather was pleasant, drizzled every now and then, overcast at most times. The trail then ascends steeply to the plateau. As it was early afternoon, the group decided to walk on to the public picnic area at Kranskloof. Chris and some others had disappeared. Eventually we were called to join them. They had a bottle of ice cold Pink Champagne! Everyone sang Happy Birthday to me!

We shared the Champagne and little Liquifruits and enjoyed a last lunch on the trail. Chris and Giulia had driven down to Kranskloof two days prior and hid the Champagne in the river to collect later... what a stunning surprise! This has certainly been a birthday I won't forget, but that's not all! We had a 5km last walk back through the forest to the Harkeville hut. Elizabeth came to fetch Padmini and Elsa and summoned everyone onto the front balcony for photo's or something fabricated reason! Well, they all started singing Happy Birthday again! And Wow! Elizabeth had a cake made in Calitzdorp / Knysna /? with Happy



Harkerville.

Photo: Hijme de Jong

Birthday Bev, a hiking stick and a candle on it ! That was so special too! And of course, we took the final group photo's. To round the day off the rest of us drove to Plett and spent the evening at a lovely restaurant. What a wonderful way to end our 9 days of hiking!



The cake.

Photo: Hijme de Jong

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TEPELKOP TRAIL: 15th to 17th February 2008

John faller

Hikers: Jim Arnett; Ted Brady; Nick Corbin; Sue Desmond; Tom & Ann Kenny; Charley Lewis; Thembakazi Mali; Norman Pringle; Getty Sime-lane; Nothando Tungande; Janet Watermeyer and John Faller.

Vehicles arrived from early afternoon until late at night on Friday 15th at the very well equipped accommodation: fridge, kettle, electric lights, cutlery, crockery, microwave, hot showers, thick mattresses and even TV – what luxury! We thought we had lost Getty & Co but they arrived as quietly as mice after the rest of us had gone to bed.

Saturday dawned as an ideal hiking day and we set off at about 8h30. A gentle climb through mainly “ou hout” forests, along sandstone rocks and past many examples of the unusual Vingerpol succulent took us to the base of the “tepel” of Tepelkop. We all managed to summit the “tepel” using routes of varying difficulty and spent a while enjoying the beautiful panoramic view. We then traversed a few adjoining mountains until we discovered that our progress would find us back home too early so we climbed another peak above the trail. After a short rest at the top we headed back down to the path with a suitable lunch spot in mind. This proved a little difficult as there was a disappointing lack of water and shade available. After lunch we traversed along the base of sandstone cliffs and eventually arrived back at base in mid-afternoon – a total distance of about 12 Km. After showers we enjoyed a delicious “happy hour” laid on by Sue and Ann – garlic snails amongst other delicacies. After a braai we all headed off to bed quite early for a good nights’ sleep, disturbed only by hyena snores and mid-night walk-about.

Sunday turned out to be another beautiful day. The second day’s hike, about 8Km, was not very strenuous and we arrived back at the hut at around midday. Although short, it had plenty of interesting rock formations and lovely scenery.

After showers, we all headed off in good time to arrive home before dark. Thanks to Tom for leading, Ann & Sue for the eats and all for the company.



Photo: John Faller



Photo: Charley Lewis



Photo: Charley Lewis

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GOLD RUSH KLOOFING – GRASKOP **Sue Desmond**

The Team: Tracey May, Peter Roos, Rod Hamilton, Brian Lloyd, Gert-Jan, Bengt Dressler, Mike Wilkinson, Olga Braude, Yri Norman, Sue Desmond.

Most of us arrived at London Country House on Friday evening to very pleasant and well equipped accommodation. Patrick, who looks after the house, got our braai fire going and we spent a very pleasant evening unwinding.

Next morning we awaited the arrival of Rod, who was to be our leader for the weekend. There was no rush as we enjoyed our breakfast and the views. It was decided to take a vehicle around to the 'bouldering area' in case we finished late, thus we only set off at 9:40 for the river. On reaching the river Tracey suggested that we do some river crossings to get into the swing of things and for some of us the hiking boots came off and the water 'treads' went on. After two and a half hours, and two swims later, we found ourselves at a beautiful waterfall where many photos were taken. By now the group was into a very relaxed mode and we spent time at the bottom of the falls having lunch and a swim before we went 'kloofing'. This turned out to be a very pleasant gorge with areas better swum than walked. The gorge opened up again allowing for an easy walk along its banks before we cut over to the bouldering area. Here the river bed is rock with the water rippling over it. Bum sliding down the river with lots of laughs was the order of the day. It was then back to the house for a dip in the other London House (there are two) swimming pool before enjoying a superb Happy Hour prepared by Tracey.

It was an early start on Sunday to pack up and head for the Forest Falls for a three kilometre hike in before we were to go abseiling. The trail and the falls are very pretty and we enjoyed the early morning walk. Coffee in Graskop and then it was off to the 'Big Swing' where we were to go abseiling. There were a few of us not entirely convinced that abseiling was a good thing, including myself. Tracey kindly convinced us, 'all for one and one for all'...

On arriving at the gorge the drop didn't feel too

intimidating, thankfully, however we did notice the little chapel.... A few sips of brandy, compliments of Yri, and I felt that I could indeed walk down this rock face. It was so much fun that most of us decided to do the 'High Wire', which takes you sliding across the gorge. But we didn't stop there....between Bengt and myself, the two of us decided to go all the way by doing the 'Big Swing', much to the surprise and delight of the group. What an experience, dropping 70m and then swinging across the canopy of trees with the most beautiful water fall in front of us. Olga and Yri (after much persuasion from Olga) decided to do the same after hearing about our experience.

Lunch at Harries Pancakes completed this wonderful and varied weekend. Thanks to Tracey for organising it and to Rod and Peter for leading.

DHAULAGIRI CIRCUIT: APRIL 2008

Dick Carlisle



The team: Jim Arnett, Mike Openshaw and Dick Carlisle.

If you have done the trek to Everest Base Camp and the Annapurna Circuit, what else is there to do in the Himalaya? That's a question we have been asked, and the answer is, "Plenty!" This is especially true if you are looking for something far more challenging, and in more remote areas, without even thinking of scaling any of the peaks. That is why we decided to try the Dhaulagiri Circuit Trek.

Dhaulagiri, which means "White Mountain", is a large massif (about 55km long) to the west of the Annapurna and is divided from it by the Kali Gandaki river and the region of Mustang, which runs up to the Tibet border. The highest point is Dhaulagiri I at 8167m, with many others well over 7200m. The Frenchman Maurice Herzog was one of the first people to explore the area. He was aiming to be the first to climb a peak of more than 8000m, but he soon declared Dhaulagiri to be "unclimbable" and went on to achieve his aim on Annapurna at 8091m in 1951. The trekking route follows the Myagdi Khola River (a tributary of the Kali Gandaki) into the very centre of the massif; followed by a very steep decline down to

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the Kali Gandaki and then up-river to Jomsom.

To get there we flew from Kathmandu to Pokara, and then travelled by a bad road to the small town of Beni, where we stayed the night in a lodge. That night it rained heavily.

Day 1: Thursday, 10 April.

This was election day in Nepal and hence a public holiday. Despite that, we had a full turnout of one guide (Lukpa), one cook (Angarme) and eleven porters. There are virtually no tea-houses on this route, so the porters were carrying everything: tents, bedding, food, cooking gear, drinking water – everything! Including, of course, their own gear. It was a fine morning and we started walking at 7.30am, following the river going east. On the way many local people, much cultivation, and many kids (“Namaste! Gimme pen!”) were encountered.

The night stop was spent in tents at Babiachor. The supper was delicious and we slept well.

Day 2: Friday, 11 April.

We set off at 7.20am. The walk to Dabang was easy, along a track seriously washed away in places. It is a busy place with a post office, police station and plenty of vehicles. So, it is probable that there is a better road lower down on the riverside. The lunch stop was at Dabang, where



Think our packs are heavy. Photo: Dick Carlisle

us the first sight of a snow-covered peak with some pretty scary climbs up narrow paths with steep drops on one side. Our night stop was reached and again there was thunder and rain in the early afternoon. This soon cleared and the rest of the afternoon was clear and sunny.

Day 4: Sunday, 13 April.

It was a long hard schlep up a ridge until high above the river and then down to Boghara at 2080m, where we started to feel the altitude. We camped on a square in front of a school where there were kids, women and youths playing volleyball. Luckily, most of whom went home by supertime. Otherwise it was an easy day after the early exertions.

Day 5: Monday, 14 April.

This was quite a hard day, up and then down to Dobang. At 2520m, we seemed to be settling into a routine of a gain of about 500m a day,



Campsite

Photo: Mike Openshaw

the river changes direction 90 degrees and heads north. On leaving Dabang the route became a perilous scramble across wash-aways and scree. There was heavy rain, thunder & lightening for most of the night.

Day 3: Saturday, 12 April.

The day dawned as a fine bright morning giving

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Photo: Mike Openshaw

good for acclimatization. It was raining heavily when we arrived and this continued for two and a half hours. At last we were in amongst the rhododendrons. Lovely! It turned quite cold with the rain and we wished it would go away.

Day 6: Tuesday, 15 April.

We were walking by 7.30 in the early morning cold. It was hard going by the river, up and down through rain forest. Eventually got to more open country and sun at 10am. We stopped for lunch at 10.15am. Then on and up to night stop, which may be Choriban Kola or Callagarie, according to who you ask. This camp was at an altitude of 3115m. The usual rain started after we arrived and continued for two hours.

Day 7: Wednesday, 16 April.

A cold early start with a lot of up-hill work, which evened out at the Italian Base Camp at about 10am. 3660m, really in amongst the mountains

now with Dhaulagiri I towering up on one side and Dhaulagiris II, III, IV, etc, on the other. By midday it was still sunny. We could hear rumbles of avalanches high up in the mountains; we hoped that they would stay there. This was the half-way point, and two of the porters left us, having done their bit.

Day 8: Thursday, 17 April.

The night was bitterly cold making me wish that I had brought two sleeping bags. This was a day of rest, more in the interest of acclimatization than resting, no doubt. We did a two and a half hours walk to a bit higher altitude, then a circuit round and back to the same camp.

Day 9: Friday, 18 April.

We made an early start to get through a bad stretch of loose ground and falling rocks, whilst they were still frozen. The walk started with a short up-hill stretch behind the camp, then down a steep cliff onto a glacier. A permanent rope was in place to descend with, which is a necessary safety feature. Then, half way across the glacier, with a great roar, an avalanche bore down on us from Dhaulagiri I. Everyone scattered to get out the way, porters just dropping their loads and running. But fortunately it ran out of power before getting to us, leaving us in a large cloud of snow - like a blizzard. We moved off the glacier and started a long hard climb up to the river level again, then up onto another glacier and, finally, some hard going over moraine. We experienced one near-miss from a very large falling rock, but got safely to Glacier Camp at 4210m. It was early to bed. Outside it was raining, sleeting and hailing, but it was snug enough in the tent. We were given hot water bottles to go to bed with – and every night thereafter!



The avalanche.

Photo: Chris Bridgeman

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Photo: Jim Arnett

Day 10: Saturday, 19 April.

A not too difficult walk over more moraine. Steadily upwards, to Dhaulagiri Base Camp at 4620m where there were many tents, presumably of people climbing Dhaulagiri I. Our site, however, was a further climb to 4700m. It was a lovely clear day by 2pm so maybe we had got away from rain at last. Although the next day should have been a day of rest again, Lukpa said he wanted to do the next bit instead, whilst weather was still fine. We, however, opposed this as we felt we needed the rest (for acclimatization purposes, of course!)

Day 11: Sunday, 20 April.

We won: day of rest. We did a slow (what else?) walk up the valley to a no-name (and frozen) lake at 4810m and back to camp for early lunch.

Day 12: Monday, 21 April.

Yet another early start, with a hard slog up a valley to the no-name lake. Thereafter, a long, steep, hard climb up a moraine. It eventually levelled out a bit, but was still hard going due to altitude and now going through a snowfield. We eventually made it to the top of French Pass, at 5378m the highest point of the whole trek. Here there were great views of magnificent mountains behind us down the way we had come, and in front of us all around the Hidden Valley. We then started down, still through snow, to the night stop at Hidden Valley High Camp near a river. There was a strong wind blowing, but mainly beautiful weather all day. This camp was at 5114m, which is the highest night stop and makes for a hard day of five and a half hours continuous walking. Lukpa wanted us to keep moving on to avoid the worst of the rising wind throughout the day, but

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Photo: Jim Arnett

also to avoid a possible deterioration of weather.

Day 13: Tuesday, 22 April.

Once again, the usual early start, but fairly easy going across the floor of Hidden Valley. We then turned into Thapa Pass (between Mts Thapa (aka Dhampus) and Tukucho), over the high point at 5244m, and continued along the ridge. This was hard going through the snow with a drop on the right into eternity if you slipped. We eventually got out of the snow, but into a howling wind and onto a high point looking down into the Kali Gandaki valley way below. From then it was a steady, downhill walk on loose scree to the next night stop at Yak Karka (3680m) where we arrived in the late afternoon. It was a hard day of over ten hours walking!

Day 14: Wednesday, 23 April.

The weather was a little better, but Yak Karka was still not a favourite night stop for us! It started getting warmer as we continued on down. The track took us to a pleasant little Buddhist village called Marpha, on the river Kali Gandaki. This village is famous for its apple brandy. After lunch, there was a long tedious walk to Jomsom, where we spent the night in a lodge. The next day we flew to Pokara, and the day after that back to Kathmandu.

It was a hard hike, but very worthwhile!

FISH RIVER CANYON: 1 – 10 MAY 2008

By Jenny Munton

Leader: Bev Brockman

Participants: Jurgen Visser, Dave Mitton, Olga Braude, Jurie, Alan Ralph, Ted Brady, Jenny Munton, Riaad Michelle, Zahida Naidoo, Philip Green, Charley Lewis, Francois van der Merwe, Peter and Lucy Heritage, Robbie Macdonald, Peter Waldon and Unben.

Many thanks to Bev Brockman for being such a wonderful leader. It was wonderful to experience her love of the Canyon and she passed on the mystique and beauty to us. It is easy to understand why people return time after time. Bev also led us calmly, putting no pressure on us. Due to the fact that Ais Ais is closed for renovation, it was difficult for Bev to arrange transport and a campsite. So thank you Bev for all the effort you put in to that. Everything ran smoothly and we were deposited at the brink of the Canyon in what seemed like effortless efficiency.

Many thanks also to the gallant chaps who helped me across the river when I became a bit wobbly and would probably have taken a few more tumbles than only one!

We set off at 5am on the morning of 1st May, Bev, Ted and I being driven by Charley. It was



The group.

Photo: Robbie MacDonald

an interesting journey, watching the scenery change as we approached Namibia. We went through the border without any hassles.

We stopped at Karasburg for cool drinks, and I was fascinated to see genuine Bushmen; tiny people with lots of wrinkles, as well as tall people with high cheekbones and lighter skin, and then the black people, who were amazingly good looking.

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Photo: Robbie MacDonald

ing, happy and charming.

We spent the first night at Augrabies Falls. I wandered down to the falls from the campsite to watch one of the most spectacular sunsets I have seen in my life.

The second night we spent at the Canyon Roadhouse, which was littered with old cars, one with cacti growing out of it and another attached to the wall of the building like an ornament, old style petrol pumps and various other machines of a by gone era, all made into features.

We camped in the river bed, trusting no freak flood would occur, and were privileged to see our first scorpion, which ensured that we all wore shoes for the rest of the hike – no barefoot on the beach stuff.

The morning of the first hiking day, we went to

Rose Quartz Mountain, and collected beautiful rose quartz stones. It was a pleasant warm-up to the real thing, and the view from the top was spectacular; the top of the mountain glinted in a pink haze.

We went down into the Canyon that afternoon, after being transported from Hobas in a yellow bus which chugged up the hills. I had butterflies in my tummy as to what to expect about the climb down. As a first time hiker in the Canyon, I found the climb down into the Canyon far worse that expected. The chain was precariously attached to uprights in the rock which were loose. My backpack was too heavy and swivelled on my back and when I reached the bottom I was jelly kneed and relieved to be alive.

The sky was overcast the first night in the Canyon, and thinking of rain, I put my backpack into my survival bag, only to find that in the night I had

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had visitors – little mice who chewed through the bag and also my nuts. One ran over me in the night and I accused everyone of trying to scare me, but it was obviously one of the little furry visitors. It did not, however, rain.

The rest of the hike through the canyon was almost a dream of great beauty. Beautiful rock sentinels surrounding us. River crossings, none of which needed my survival bag thank goodness. The river was flowing well and the water was drinkable. The deepest water throughout the hike was just below waist level. However, I did manage to fall face first once and thank goodness was not hurt and my camera was safely in a plastic bag, so all was well and it was a funny experience.

Another interesting escapade was that I fell backwards into a crack in the rock, while climbing, and fortunately Charley was nearby and hauled me out before I had to dismantle my backpack and pull it out myself. I cannot mention enough times that being over laden was a huge problem for me!

Apart from the first night, the stars were spectacular, and I wished that I had my chart of the constellations of stars with me. I spent a lot of time trying to identify the constellations, and one night saw 11 shooting stars.

Bev had a wonderful custom of getting us all together after our evening meal, and we each had a chance to describe the high and low of the day. Some of the guys collected fire wood, and made a really cosy blaze, and we sat around in a circle and one by one recounted our stories. Those who climbed Four Finger Rock the one day, described that as the highlight of their day. I personally did not have the energy and envied them the experience. I found that day the most difficult, it was also the day we passed Von Trother's grave, and the heat and the trek across the scrub that day took its toll on me. When we reached the Causeway and had a swim, I popped back to life.



Photo: Robbie MacDonald

I had so many highlights. One day we sat having our lunch with a troop of baboons. We sat on one side; they sat nearby lifting up rocks and eating Hydra from under them. The size of a rock that a baboon can pick up is formidable. Alan told us all about Hydra and how healthy the water is when they are present, so I did not mind these little creatures, which are half plant and half animal. Baboons love them!

Another highlight was seeing the wild horses left abandoned there after the First World War. They are strong, about 15.2 hands, and still have the look of army horses, and move with an air of independence which our domestic horses lack.

My personal highlight was the last night, when we slept on a very large sandy beach, and I stood in the centre of the beach, and surrounded by mountains, saw the new moon in a V between the mountains. I will never forget that beauty. My second highlight was just before Ais Ais, when I got separated from everyone, and lost my way, and spent time looking for footprints, which were mixed with hoof prints, and I felt so alone and at peace because I knew there was no danger, but the canyon seemed to belong to me alone.

Arrival at Ais Ais was sad in a way, because it was the end of the hike. Ais Ais is being renovat-

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ed, but some of us were collected by a small bus, so those left behind waited and had a shower and chatted under the tree about our experience, and eventually we were collected and taken back to the Canyon Roadhouse where we had a celebratory dinner.

The Fish River Canyon is more spectacular than I expected. More majestic. More dangerous. Something that I am very grateful I was privileged enough to experience. The terrain was extremely difficult to hike over. We were either climbing over rocks (sometimes very large and dangerous), clambering along stepping stones, or hiking in deep sand. All I needed was one shirt, one pair of quick dry shorts, and a swim in the river at every opportunity in the same shorts and shirt and needed no more than that for day attire for the duration; lots of sunblock; something warm to sleep in and not as much food as I took. I am grateful to Robbie for taking some of it off me. I had more than enough food, even after giving him about half of mine.

When we came out of the Canyon, we met a chap who was hiking it for the 13th time, and I can see why. I would love to do it again, knowing what I know now and having a second chance to look around.

MEMBER NEWS

Hitched

The following item of news is hot off the press (at the time of receipt by Footnotes in any case). Our youthful hikes organizer, **Wendy Farrow**, and a JHC member, **Danny Rost**, got married on March 27th 2008. This is wonderful news and I am sure that we all join in wishing the couple the most wonderful future together, and of course many good hikes.

From Beth Corrie

The April Foothold 'long' weekend was full of celebrations. On the Friday we celebrated my husband's (John) seventieth birthday.

On Saturday Peter and Charmaine Coletta came along in their camper. It was great to see them after some months of absence. We all enjoyed the Saturday evening celebrating Peter's sixtieth birthday with many delicious eats and drinks.

Congratulations and best wishes to both Peter and John.

There was sufficient food for the Sunday evening as well.

Thanks for the lovely party.

OBITUARY

It is with sadness that we mention the passing of one of our life members, **Mary Brits/Roberts**. Mary, who passed away last year in Durban at the age of ninety eight, joined the club in January 1951. She was the second wife of Vic Roberts, first President of JHC. Mary had been living in a retirement village in KZN. We extend our condolences to her family and friends. (Submitted by *Jons Flentge*).

It is with sadness that we record the passing away of **Christabel McLaren** on Sunday, March 16th, after a fairly long illness. She was the sister-in-law of Judy McLaren.

Many of the midweek hikers will remember her from the days when she used to hike with us on a Wednesday. Condolences are extended to her family and friends.

CLUB NEWS

UNIQUE 2008 AGM

Marion Hübner

The stage was set, the food organised, ex committee/new committee all keen to get going, a lot of members arrived to have their say, gas lamps were bought along in case of power outages (which was the case), cheese and wine ready to be enjoyed - almost everything was thought of EXCEPT the possibility of all gates into the venue being padlocked.

Judging by the number of cars, which were parked all over the place causing havoc along Olifants Road, a weekday evening was a good choice for the 2008 JHC AGM.

A decision had to be made and it was decided to meet and hold the AGM at The Keg, Constantia Park as they had electricity and there would, hopefully, be a suitable corner to hold the meeting. A good number ventured out to Constantia Park, but The Keg was too noisy. Luckily, there's

a small tea room in the complex which leaves their tables and chairs out – this was a perfect spot to hold the JHC 2008 AGM. Members organised the chairs in a circle which made for a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere. A chilly wind was howling around us but this did not deter from the business at hand. In general, speeches were short, goodbyes were said to the 'retiring' committee members and the 2008 committee was nominated. Questions were raised and quickly answered and the meeting was over.

Wine, cheese and biscuits and other goodies were then enjoyed by all concerned. The conversation was flowing and one member mentioned that it was the best AGM since he joined back in 1988 – improvisation must be the answer!!!

Thanks to the retirees for all their dedication and good luck to the new committee.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a very warm welcome to the follow-

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ing new members of the Club. We are sure you will find a wonderful camaraderie and experience many great hikes with the Club:

Sybilie Schnelker, Tanya Hodgson, Janet Watermeyer, Nada Jesfpic, Mark Greyling, Jackie Cilliers, Bob & Jean Bowden, Gerlinde Seuring.

DONATIONS

Thanks for the donations which have been received from: Heidi Zipplies, Norma Johnston, Ockie Oosthuizen, Bengt Dressler, Elize Sarantis, Frank & Carol Thomas, Mike Wilkinson, Mike Green, Dave & Sue Emmett.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN CORRIE - MEMBER OF THE YEAR 2007

By Jim Hutchison

The effort put into the maintenance and development of Foothold by the few regular monthly campers has been highlighted by the election of one of their number, namely, John Corrie as Member of the Year.

John has enthusiastically contributed his labour and expertise to both the bush ablution project over its four and half year duration, and the ongoing general maintenance and improvement work on the Foothold property and Hikers Haven.

As is the case with the regulars, whether workers or not, John and his wife Beth enjoy the monthly camps at Foothold, where nature and camaraderie reign supreme.

BOOTS 'N ALL

I have a brand new pair of hiking boots for sale. They are called Little Foot, in leather and size 7 and a half. They have an excellent sole and are also good looking as walking shoes. They are a size too small for me. Contact Norah Keye 0828231457 email nora.keye@vodacom.co.za

PORCUPINES

Francis Raal sent Footnotes the following article written by Peter Moore. Francis says: "This could be useful to you for Footnotes as we are always seeing quills on our walks and invariably pick

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them up to take home. But what about the fashionable aspect - my niece had them as decoration at her ethnic wedding reception. She was horrified to hear from a concerned guest that a few little fellows must have been killed. So we don't give it much thought until told!"

Peter Moore

Jim asked if porcupines shed their quills. I looked in the book by Smithers where there was no mention of quill shedding, but I found this article on Google from the Mail and Guardian, about 2003.

I remember, many years ago I was in Namaqualand, walking in the veld, I came upon some porcupine quills. I picked up a small handful that weren't broken and took them home with me. I remember that they were black and yellowish.

Porcupines shed old quills like we shed old skin and old hair. Old porcupine quills are black and yellowish, and quite thick. They are also often broken or damaged.

The porcupine quills everybody buys by the busload for corporate events are somehow all black and pristine white. Some of them are so slender and delicate that you can bend them. And you can buy them in huge big bunches, sorted according to size. I wonder if the porcupines actually have decided to be really nice and started popping only their really pretty quills, in different sizes and lengths for convenience, for the quill craze back in the city? How thoughtful of them! Get real!

Oh dear! If it were that simple folks then the moon would really be made of cheese, and Santa Claus would be able to get down the chimney without getting stuck.

Fact is, porcupines are being KILLED, mercilessly, and increasingly, for their quills because thanks to the interior decorating shop and the corporation and its events, trading in porcupine quills has become an industry.

It starts out there on the farms, where farmers consider these beautiful animals a formidable enemy, because they eat their crops at night. Porcupines are not on the endangered list...yet... so nobody gives a damn what happens to them.

Night hunting

According to a representative of WAG (the Wildlife Action Group), a lot of the quills come from

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the Free State, where unscrupulous farmers have now found a two-edged sword: they can kill off the vermin that eats their crops, AND make a tidy sum out of selling their beautiful quills to suppliers, who in turn supply the events companies, the interior decorating and curio shops and the flea markets. Because porcupines are nocturnal animals, they are most often hunted at night with lights that blind them before they get shot.

had found on a plot that had been up for sale. Apparently, the area around the traps was strewn with hunks of flesh, body parts, broken bones and broken quills. And all this for a pretty little porcupine quill next to your serviette at the awards jol. Makes you think, doesn't it? Or at least I hope it makes you think.

It doesn't necessarily even have to be out there on the farm.

here are many porcupines in the Cape Town area, and they're also being increasingly targeted by poor people trying to make some extra money by selling quills to unscrupulous suppliers. A Cape Town woman phoned into a Cape Talk radio show the other day, telling the host about three porcupine traps that she and her husband

ANYONE FOR A BIG....BIG....HUG?



ASTRONOMY



THE SHIFTING TIMES OF EASTER

Paul Rangelcroft

Did you wonder why Easter occurred so early this year? The timing of Easter changes from one year to the next and Easter Sunday, the day upon which the resurrection of Christ is celebrated, can occur as early in the year as 22 March and as late as 25 April. The Church sets the dates for Easter each year in accordance with a curious formulation which dates back to the rulings of the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

The council was convened during the reign of the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, to address certain matters of the Church, including when Easter should be celebrated. The council ruled that Christ's resurrection should be celebrated each year on the first Sunday after the first full moon to occur after the northern hemisphere spring equinox (20 / 21 March). This year, the equinox occurred on Thursday, 20 March and the first full moon thereafter on the following day. Easter Sunday thus fell upon 23 March, the first Sunday after the full moon. Had full moon occurred a few days earlier, say on the day before the equinox, the first full moon after the equinox would have fallen upon Friday, 18 April and the first Sunday thereafter upon 20 April.

The timing of full moon at a particular time of the year retreats by 10.6 days (11.6 days in leap years) from one year to the next, and this is why the timing of Easter shifts from one year to the next. The shift in the timing of full moon is related to the difference in length between a "seasonal" or "solar" year (upon which our calendar is based) and that of a "lunar" year. Calendars that are based upon a lunar year also comprise 12 months, but the duration of a lunar month is based upon the cycle of the phases of the moon and is defined as the interval between two successive new moons (29.5 days). This period is shorter than the average length of a seasonal calendar month (30.4 days) and hence a lunar year is shorter than a seasonal year.

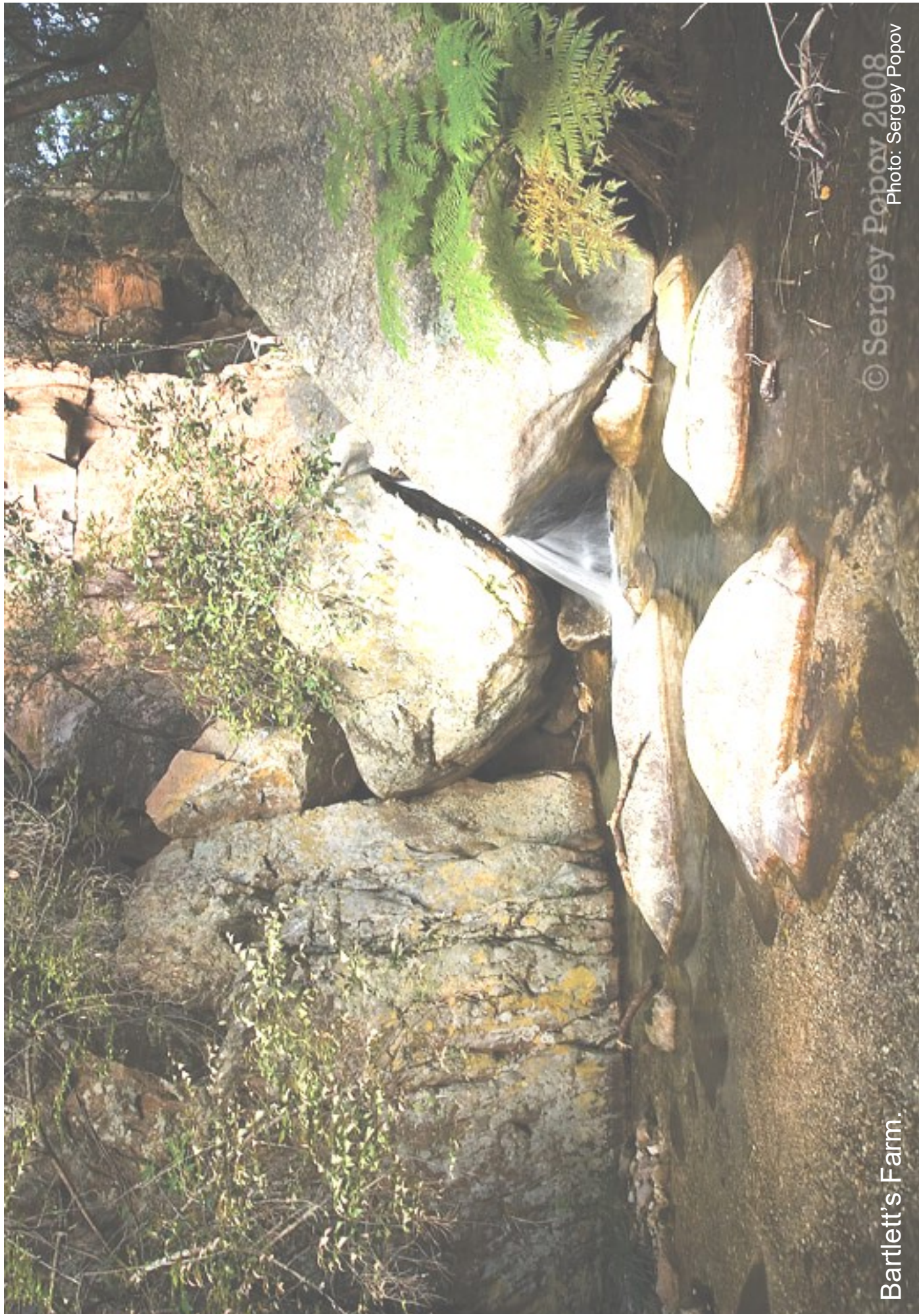
The Jewish calendar is based upon a lunar year. Holy days in the calendar, such as Passover, oc-

cur on the same date each year in the Jewish calendar, but on different dates in our calendar because of the difference in length between seasonal and lunar years. This difference also causes a lunar calendar to drift out of line with the seasons. A correction is made for this periodically in the Jewish calendar by inserting an extra month into the calendar for a particular year.

The intention behind the ruling of the Council of Nicaea was that the timing of Easter Sunday should coincide with that of the resurrection as closely as possible in terms of the time of year and the stage in the lunar cycle. According to the bible, Christ was crucified on a Friday at the time of Passover, and rose from the dead two days later on the Sunday. Passover is celebrated during the season of spring (in the northern hemisphere) at a time of full moon, and this usually coincides with the first full moon after the spring equinox. Passover occurs on a different day of the week from one year to the next. The council decided, however, that Christ's resurrection should always be celebrated on a Sunday.

Generally, Easter Sunday occurs a few days after Passover in accordance with the sequence of events at the time of Christ's death. This year was an exception, however, with Passover falling upon 20 April, one lunar month beyond the date of the first full moon after the spring equinox. This occurred as a result of the insertion into the Jewish calendar of an extra month during the current year (in order to correct for the seasonal drift in the calendar), which caused the subsequent months and thus Passover to advance by one lunar cycle.

Brian Lever was unable to submit an article on photography for this edition of Footnotes. We hope to resume his series in the next edition.



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Photo: Sergey Popov

Bartlett's Farm.