

**KOGELBERG
Branch of the Botanical Society of SA**

**Newsletter:
November 2013**

News Editors: Ed & Merran Silberbauer

**THE BATTLE OF BETTY'S BAY
ROUND 608**

The next attack takes place on Sunday 1st December 2012, from 9am to noon
VENUE: Agapanthus Road, off Porter Drive.

TALKS

Saturday 16th November. Our advertised speaker is not available but **Tessa Oliver** of the GEF Fynbos Fire project, has kindly stepped into the breach. Her subject is “**Reducing the risk of future fire disasters in the face of climate change in the fynbos biome**”. At the start of the fire season this is of concern to all of us. In the Nivenia Hall at 6p.m. A voluntary collection will be taken and there will be liquid refreshments.

SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER IN THE MORNING AT 10A.M. **The Cape Leopard Trust, Boland project.** After a general explanation of the work of the trust, Jeannie Hayward & Anita Meyer will present an illustrated talk with emphasis on the leopards in our area. A voluntary collection will be taken. Also in Nivenia Hall.

January 2014. The talk will **NOT** be on a Saturday, instead on **THURSDAY 16TH JANUARY** Hilary Guise will talk on “**Flowers in the art of the Great Masters**”. Hilary is an artist, and art historian from London who will be in South Africa to lecture at UCT's Summer School on Chagall and the Sign of the Fish. Hilary will waive her usual fee in favour of donations being given to support the Harold Porter Gardens. Hilary remembers with joy her childhood years in Betty's Bay with her mother, Hope Denoon who had a house in Lipkin Road.

Please see the posters for any possible change of venue for the talks or contact Merrilee 028 272 9314.

INFORMATION ON A WALK

To ascertain if there will be a walk on the morning of Saturday 16th November, please contact Barbara 082 338 4109

HAROLD PORTER GARDENS CONCERTS

Sunday 22nd December CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT 8p.m. Adults R40, Children 6-18yrs

R20 Gates open at 6p.m. Booking not necessary. Come early and bring a picnic supper.

Saturday 28th December KARIN KORTJE and ROBIN PIETERS at 7p.m.

Saturday 4th January 2014 GUGULETHU TENORS at 7p.m.

Booking is essential for the two sunset concerts and opens one week ahead 028 272 9311 or at the Garden. Adults R75, Children R35. Gates open at 6p.m. Come early and bring a picnic.

NB at all concert BotSoc members and pensioners pay full price.

REPORT ON HACK NO 607

No sign of rain for a change, in fact perfect weather for hacking. The designated hack site west of the Kleinrondevlei was far from perfect there being lots of huge rooikrans all of which required a lot of effort and determination to approach and more effort and determination to eliminate. As always the troops steadfast to the end cleared the area of both small and large pockets of the enemy.

The "Great Lakes" area is fast becoming a second Sunny Seas situation, with New Zealand Xmas trees reaching saturation planting. If the proposed NEMBA legislation is passed and acted on there will be many a proud home owner facing enormous tree felling charges.

Next hack: December the 1st. Agapanthus road. This age old site should have dried up sufficiently to allow easier access to the many rooikrans.

This is that time of the year when we have our "Office Party" The same procedure as before. A fire will be provided at No. 2596 Kloof Road as will liquid refreshments. Bring something to braai or just pitch up for a bit of fellowship and marvel at the 50 years of campaigning in the wilds of Betty's Bay and beyond. Foul weather may force us to shift the date to the January hack.

Enjoying tea were Jill Attwell, Andrea & John Benn, David Bossenger, Barbara Jenman, Tom Dreyer, John Whitehead, Maarten & Hilary Mauve, Ursula Huyssen, Martin Bensch with Sean & Michael, Frik Potgieter, Merrilee Berrisford, Pieter de Waal, Jan & Betsey Joubert, Caroline, Lewis & Ed Silberbauer. Di Knott made the sandwiches and Merran Silberbauer the tea.

Ed Silberbauer, Convenor.

PRINGLE BAY HACK NO 89

On Sunday 27th October 2013 the Hack Group again concentrated on Australian Myrtle, Rooikrans and pine trees on the public reserve bordering on Oliver Road. Considerable progress was made, but there is still much work to be done to rid the area of Australian Myrtle,

The hackers present were Edward Silberbauer, Frik Potgieter, Sue Folb, Penny and Neil Berens, Tom Dreyer, Carol Wilson, Andy James, Ivan and Ria Staegmann and John Whitehead. The mid-morning coffee and sandwiches were provided by Ian and Marion Cushny.

The next hack will be on Sunday 24th November, 2013.

As usual we will meet on the pavement opposite Drosters Centre, in Central Avenue, Pringle Bay, at 08:30 and will then proceed to the hack site. Everyone who would like to help rid Pringle Bay of alien vegetation will be welcome. The hack stops at 11:30. Hacking tools are provided. Contact John at (028) 273 8807 or Ian at (028) 273 8589, or just turn up at the meeting point.

John Whitehead, Convenor.

FYNBOS GARDENING- GROWING PROTEAS

40 years ago when the cultivation of Proteas was in its infancy I found myself in the mountains above du Toits Kloof with a mountaineering farmer friend of my father. I was there to learn how to grow proteas for the cut flower industry. In answer to one of my many questions the old man looked down on me and said "*Jenny n protea is mos a wilde ding jy sal hom nooit mak maak nie*"

A few weeks later I stood with another farmer on top of the Piquetberg mountain. He was showing off his protea orchards. These plants were established in straight rows and the ground between them had been cultivated by a tractor. Horror above all horrors I could see that a generous spreading of granular fertilizer had been distributed. His comment was "*Jenny ek is n boer, I treat proteas just the same as my apple orchards.*" It was the healthiest protea orchard I had ever seen.

Well, we don't own vast tracts of mountainside; we own a small piece of land in the biosphere and want some of that diversity in our gardens. Over the intervening years I have learnt, to a limited extent, how to "*tame*" proteas. If you prefer the wild option plant your proteas at the edge of your property and fill in front of them with a few other fynbos shrubs. These should screen the bare brown base branches as the plant ages.

If you wish a more manicured and lush look then prepare a hole with compost and a sprinkling of organic fertilizer. Pinch out the growing tip of your selected plant, put it in the hole and water it. The following year or two continue to pinch out the growing tips. This should cause the plant to become more bushy and compact. Keep it this way by cutting the flowers for the house (a form of pruning.) or if you prefer, when the flowers are dead, cut back the branches. Make sure that you cut above a growth node and leave a few fresh green leaves. New growth should appear from these leaf axils.

In nature new growth usually appears from just behind the flower head. If the plant is left year after year the bush will get taller and taller with flowers mainly high up and not so visible. The bottom stalks lose their leaves and the plant starts to look untidy.

Another word from the old days "*n protea is vol flemies*" in other words the plants are "temperamental" and just up & die for no obvious reason. Take this into account during your original planting and add a few extras. This applies more to the pincushions and I will endeavour to explain why in the next newsletter. I would not pinch out pincushions which are naturally multi-stemmed.

Good luck and happy gardening and remember that proteas are only one component of fynbos

vegetation, and have a limited lifespan. Questions to: barnacle@maxitec.co.za.

Jenny B.

HAROLD PORTER GARDENS

A reminder that the first Tuesday of every month is **Pensioners Day** with free access and a 10% discount on plant sales, at the shop and on meals in the restaurant on production of your ID book or pensioners card.

The restaurant has re-opened as **The Red Disa Restaurant**. Owner, Vic Smit will open throughout the year on Saturday and Sunday evenings and Monday to Saturday evenings during the December/Jan holiday season (booking preferred). The restaurant is available for private functions. As before it is open for breakfast, teas and lunches seven days of the week with a discount for members of the Kogelberg Branch on production of a membership card. **NEW Telephone number 028 272 9946.**

OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

Kogelberg Branch has been busy this month starting with the four-night excursion to Gifberg Holiday Farm near Van Rhynsdorp. This is what **Deirdre Richards** wrote:

During October 2013, a group of twenty-eight from the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of SA spent a few days at the Gifberg Resort, high above and about 14 kms south west of Van Rhynsdorp. The Huisamen family have welcomed guests to their mountain farm for many years which is now an oasis of established trees and lawns in the sandstone plateau. It is a fascinating area, the northernmost reach of the fynbos biome, yet with the characteristic Knersvlakte stone plants found wherever blown sand has been arrested by rocks or small bushes to create a suitable environment.

Numerous, and well marked, hiking trails allow visitors to explore the area with ease by themselves but the Kogelberg group were fortunate to be led by Jacques Tredoux, of the Cederberg Wilderness Academy, the Resort's resident accredited Guide. Jacques is a son of the Cederberg and is passionate about the area. His enthusiasm and wide knowledge of the many aspects of the area added immeasurably to the value of the Kogelberg Group's understanding of their surroundings.

Although a botanical group, we were still challenged when finding unfamiliar species of families common in the Kogelberg area, 400 kilometres is a long way in the South African floral world! *Aristea inaequalis*, *Watsonia vanderspuyeeae*, and a mystery *Wachendorfia* sp which Jacques said had excited Richard Cowling the previous week, its bright yellow flowers and knee-high were fascinating and dramatic discoveries. Tiny *Nemesia* sp and deep purple *Monopsis* sp nestled together in damp seeps among the *Drosera capensis* or was it *Drosera cistiflora*?

The beautiful, large *Laperousia fabricii*, the 'hedgehog' *Euphorbia loricata*, the shade-loving *Whiteheadia bifolia*: these were new to many of the group.

The very last walk took us to see the Gifboom, which gives its name to the Gifberg. It is a small tree, *Hyeananche globosa* - its seeds were pounded up to poison hyeanas; Bushmen used them in arrows. It was late afternoon, straying Nguni cattle were herded by John Winter as we went up the track. There were still red flowers on the male tree and last year's fruit on the female. There were also the birds to enjoy. A flock of European Bee-eaters arrived in the trees above the swimming pool at 6.10pm every evening! A pair of fiscal flycatchers were feeding three demanding, half fledged chicks in a bush close to one of the cottages. And a harassed pair of pied barbets tried desperately and ultimately unsuccessfully, to discourage a lesser honeyguide from laying her egg in their nest hole. Jacques interpreted the drama to a rapt group as the dynamics of the situation unfolded.

Tributaries of the Doring River flow swiftly over the smooth sandstone boulders and the pools provide welcome swimming spots on many trails, such as that to the 'Bushman' paintings. Dated between 300 and 2000 years old, they vary in condition but many are exceptionally clear. Seen in situ, shaded from the heat, with the sounds of the river, the smells of the bush around it is almost possible to approach a fleeting concept of that earlier way of life. Its reality was reinforced by Jacques' collection of stone tools, gathered from his father's farm lands which the group was invited to handle.

Light pollution is not a huge problem for the Kogelberg, but the clear skies and wide horizons of the Gifberg must be unsurpassed for star-gazing. Jacques gave the group a quick introduction to astronomy, with the additional pleasure of examining the moon, planets and stars in their millions through his telescopes.

The Kogelberg group were unanimous in their approval of Gifberg Resort as their first Society outing for a long time. The companionship and experiences of the few days together was one they all hoped would be repeated as a regular feature of their Botanical Society Branch programme in the future. **Thank you, Deirdre.**

Who was there? From Pringle Bay, the Folbs, Peter & Sue and Grays Mervyn & Sue who shared Tuinhuis with Tony & Jen Grogan; Betty's Bay weekenders Robin & Rea Borchers and John & Meg Winter were in Groothuis near to the pool, with Onrust residents Ivan and Marie Latti and Thabo Maphisa. These three were new to the rest of the group but were instantly assimilated and great company. Kleinplasia was way across the river, reached by walking through a field of Nguni cattle. There Allan Heydorn was the Sultan with his harem, wife Helene, Ulla von der Heyden, Jenny Berrisford, Pauline Todd, Barbara Jenman and Andrea Benn – lots of laughter in that house. Betsey and Jan Joubert were there for one night having come earlier with family. The Richards, from Hermanus and Berrisfords shared Kliphuis. Each night everyone came together for the good dinners provided by Jansu Huisamen and team. Still, warm evenings meant these could be enjoyed under the stars on a deck overlooking the water-lily-covered dam. Afterwards Jacques would give a presentation preparing for the next days walks. Altogether it was a very happy and enriching stay.

Deidre Richards and Merrilee Berrisford.

YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2013-2014

The committee held its first meeting after the AGM. The office bearers were elected as follows, Chairman – Merrilee Berrisford, Secretary and Vice-Chairman – Barbara Jenman, Minutes Secretary – Sue Folb, Treasurer – Peter Berrisford.

New committee members, Gwen Coetzee and Jan Joubert went to Harold Porter NBG to present personally inscribed copies of the Afrikaans Flower Guides, 'Hottentots Holland tot Hermanus' to the members of Groen Sebenza's and the two students.

Also serving on the Committee are the ex-Officio members, Bernie Carolus, Curator Harold Porter Gardens, Ed Silberbauer, Betty's Bay Hack Convenor and Mark Johns of Cape Nature.

Sue Folb organised for the older group from Pikkewyntjies to visit Harold Porter NBG and have a 'lesson' from Senior Environmental Education Officer, Eunice Jurgens. The Branch paid the R10 per head that SANBI asks for such a lesson. Barbara Jenman and Tim Attwell went along to help; juices donated by Kleinmond Spar were enjoyed and a good time had by all.

Merrilee Berrisford.

WALK IN OCTOBER WITH AMIDA JOHNS

Fourteen members crammed into Mark Johns' bakkie, driven up the Palmiet Valley to the bridge to slowly walk back along the river. The Kogelberg is Amida's garden, she knows it all. We are tremendously lucky to have her as guide. First special was *Aspalathus intervallaris*, a red data list species, distinguished from other sprawling *Aspalathus* by its silver leaves and single, big flowers. Along the river were wetland specials, *Metalasia riparia*, *Grubbia rosemarinifolia* and the spreading *Cliffortia pedunculata* covered a slope next to a little stream. A very special daisy was *Capelio caledonica* which is found only in the Palmiet Valley mountains. It differs from the more widespread *C tabularis* by not having a stalked leaf; the leaf blade attaches directly on to the branch. Then there was the mystery of the *Euphorbia* which was in fact *Montinia caryophyllacea* the only member of the rather odd family, the Montiniaceae. Two Ericas in flower: were white *E imbricata* and pink *E placentiflora*.

Piled wood above the river showed how high the Palmiet had been this last winter; another marker of flood lines even higher, were the *Brabejum stellatifolium* (wild almond) high on the bank, as the buoyant fruits are dispersed by winter floods.

The valley was full of colour; no wonder Asian tourists were busy with cameras. Most spectacular were the *Mimetes cucullatus*, with the highest leaves almost scarlet. Dark pink flowers of *Muraltia filifolia* made dainty circles on the white sand of the paths; *Aristea capitata* (*A major*) and *A africana* provided the deep blue. It was good to have members from Pringle Bay and Rooi Els there to enjoy a memorable morning.

Merrilee Berrisford.

A LIFE IN CONSERVATION

The recent history of the central part of Africa has been one of environmental destruction, wars, genocide and general lawlessness. It was therefore a pleasant change when we were taken through this dangerous era by Bryan Havemann, and shown the positive side of the story. Training the local people to manage their natural environment was a priority and has proved to be a very successful exercise.

Bryan spent two years in Rwanda as Project Manager for the Akagera National Park and CEO of the Akagera Management Company, working with African Parks and the Rwanda government to lead the rehabilitation of Akagera. The park comprised some 270 000 hectares when it was proclaimed; but was greatly reduced in size when, after the various wars, land was needed to resettle the people who had fled the area. Most of these people were destitute. The park at present measures 110 000 hectares. Managing successfully must have taken up all the resources of this very resourceful man. Major problems were the sudden increase in human population pressure, farming with livestock most of which suffered from one or other disease, human versus animal conflicts especially at places where water was utilised. badly planned and executed farming, and above all the rampant poaching. This included the killing of rare animals as well as the constant hunt for "Bush Meat"

Bryan's experience came from his many years in the Kruger National Park as researcher, wilderness trails ranger and a senior game ranger with the S.A. National Parks; and then as National Director of Conservation for WESSA

Bryan now works for the Nature Conservation Corporation as Conservation Development Manager. This is a consultancy company whose vision is real growth for people. Their purpose is to provide services to the conservationist sectors in Africa. Due to the development and changes in environmental legislation throughout Africa, specialists are needed to apply these laws and to assist in getting them understood by all who work with them. The company handles whole projects from the planning stage through to completion. This could be the construction of huge coal-fired power stations to various pump storage and other massive water handling projects. The protection of the biodiversity at the project sites is always a priority. Minimising environment damage at sporting events such as important marathons and motor races are included. Wind farms. mining and the building of a new airport, for example King Shaka, were also projects of the NCC. They also undertake operational services such as the elimination/removal of invasive plants and animals, birds or fish. on a large scale. Conservation at work is but one of the projects followed from the planning stage very often to long after completion. One of the few really important facts that ensures the success of these enterprises is the strongly supported political will including both government and citizens that all co-operate to reach their goals. Despite this various problems still persist, due mainly to conflicts between the many communities who cannot find durable solutions to their differences.

Penny Palmer

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

We have been advised of a new book: *South African Flowering Trees – a botanical adventure through history* by Rob Wood (with 26 botanical plates by the Late Millicent Freaan and line drawings by Sandie Burrows) to be released in December 2013 For further details, fax 0866144932 or email robin@printmatters.co.za

THE BOTANICAL EDUCATION TRUST

In a newsletter earlier this year, our chairman told of a donation made to this trust by the Kogelberg Branch. The Chairman, Charles Botha has informed us that five awards totalling R103,640 have been made. R25 000 to Kevin Bakewell to assist with the publication of vols. 2 & 3 of the Flora of the Witwatersrand. R25 000 to the new field guide South African Orchids by Steve Johnson et al. R12 940 to Margaretha le Roux for research into the genus pelargonium. R20 700 to Simon Magoswana to study the genus Inulanthera and R20 000 to Robyn Powell for her work on the genus Conophytum.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES

Month	October	2012	2013
Rainfall mm		96	80,5
Temp, °C	Max	28	31
	Min	5	7

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/ AND/ OR STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP

If you change your address, wish to resign or change your status, please notify the Botanical Society Head Office on 021- 797 2090, as they print the labels and keep the records.

We do only the newsletter, e-mails and posting. To receive this newsletter via e-mail (and save the Branch the costs of printing, packaging and postage) send your address to merran@telkomsa.net

REMEMBER YOUR ARTICLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

The editors reserve the right to edit contributions.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS TUESDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2013.

Please address all mail to : Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of SA, Betty's Bay 7141.
E-mail : merran@telkomsa.net no graphics please.