

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

**Newsletter:**  
**August 2014**

News Editors: Ed & Merran Silberbauer

**THE BATTLE OF BETTY'S BAY**  
**ROUND 617**

The next attack takes place on Sunday 7th September 2014, from 9am to noon  
**VENUE:** Kloof Road, below main entrance to Disajeugkamp.

**TALKS**

**Saturday, 16th August Dr Peter Joubert** speaking on evolution “**Life on Earth -- The First and the Latest**”. Peter, a Medical Doctor who retired to Betty's Bay, is enthusiastic about Conservation, History and all branches of Science. He says that he also tries to write. In the Nivenia Hall at 6p.m.

**Saturday, 20th September “Indigenous Medicinal Plants”** presented by **Phakamani Xaba**, who was stationed at HPG and is now based at Kirstenbosch, and is an authority on this subject.

**Saturday, 18th October Dr Sophie van der Heyden** will speak on some aspects of genetics in marine biology.

**Saturday, 15th November Dr Mike Cramer** will take us to Namibia to learn about the mysterious Fairy Rings.

At all talks a voluntary collection will be taken and the attendance register will be circulated. Please note that the purpose of the register is twofold, firstly to advise the HPG for their records of the number of people attending and secondly so that regular attendees can be contacted should any alterations to the programme be made or, as has happened, a visitor offers a talk at short notice. Liquid refreshments are also offered.

Contact Merrilee: 028 272 9314.

**OUTINGS**

**Monday, 18th August** a guided visit to the **Karoo National Botanical Garden, Worcester**.  
**Optional:** lunch at the **Kokerboom** restaurant in the gardens. Members, please remember to

bring your membership cards.

Meet at 8.30a.m in the car park of Harold Porter Gardens to drive in convoy. Those requiring a lift and wishing to lunch will travel with like minded people. Anyone wishing to go directly to Worcester, should meet there around 10a.m. Please will everyone contact either **Barbara Jenman 0823384109** or **Jenny Berrisford 028 273 8343** as numbers are required by the gardens, in order to know how many guides are needed. Also please say if you will stay to lunch and/ or would like a lift.

**Monday 22nd September** to visit 3 or 4 gardens in Kleinmond ending with tea in Joy Ruger's garden. Meet at the carpark in HPG at 9am. More details in the next newsletter.

Merrilee Berrisford.

### **ENJOY AN OUTING AND HACK FOR CREW**

Ismael Ebrahim writes:- We will be searching for threatened plants we have not recorded yet. Our first trip will be to Shaws Pass. This will not be a conventional CREW monitoring trip but more an attempt to save the most incredible lowland fragment in the Overberg. Shaws Pass is a well-known botanical hotspot and is the home to many threatened plants. The site is in dire need of Alien clearing. I visited the site about two months ago and I was horrified and deeply saddened by its condition. It is time to take action. There is limited resources for alien clearing but if we pull together we can save this site.

We propose a mass hack on the weekend 16-17 August 2014. Bring your loppers, chainsaws, hand saws, poppers, etc and help us eradicate the aliens on the site. There is everything present. Bluegums, Hakea, Port Jackson, Rooikrans, etc. Keir Lynch will organise poison for us. If you can't saw or pull come help paint poison on the stumps. We are welcoming everyone. The CREW team will be staying over and we might have space for 5 people to stay over with us but accommodation and travel is up to you. If you want to join for only one day that will be great too. Ismael Ebrahim. [<mailto:I.Ebrahim@sanbi.org.za>]

Ed Silberbauer plans to make a day trip on the Saturday, if you are able to join him, please contact him 028 272 9096.

### **THEFT OF CYCADS FROM KIRSTENBOSCH**

In two incidents, the latest on Monday 4th August the other the previous week, a total of thirteen cycads were stolen from Kirstenbosch NBI. The value of the cycads is estimated at R200,000.00. The thieves are presumed to have entered the gardens after dark and it is suspected that they came via Cecilia Forest. The cycads are part of an ongoing study by Phakamani Xaba so are an additional loss. At the time of printing, SANBI had not verified all this information, although requested to do so.

Merran.

### **REPORT ON HACK NO 616**

At last, the weather allowed an uninterrupted hack under reasonable weather conditions on a site which was easily accessible and dry! A mass of Acacia elata, gums and pittosporum were cleaned up by the chain gang leaving a myriad of seedlings at a pullable stage to be dealt with by the light brigade. Maarten and Hillary Mauve hauled out close to 3000 of these pests in a small area ----which makes you think. A lot needs still to be done so we will gather at the same spot on the 7th September.

Present were:- Maarten & Hillary Mauve, John Whitehead, Tom Dreyer, David Bossenger, John & Andrea Benn, Peter & Merrilee Berrisford, Lewis, James & Ed Silberbauer. Louise Digby made the sandwiches and Merran Silberbauer made the tea.

Ed. Silberbauer, Convenor.

### **PRINGLE BAY HACK NO 96**

The hack was cancelled due to bad weather. The next hack will be on Sunday 31st August 2014. 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. The hack stops at 11:30.

Everyone who would like to help rid Pringle Bay of alien vegetation will be welcome. 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.

### **ROOIELS HACK**

**First Saturday** of the month **8.30-10.30**. Tools & refreshments provided. Contact: Anuta Scholtz [anuta@omail.co.za](mailto:anuta@omail.co.za) or tel 083 388 8239 or Evette tel 028 273 8483

### **DISCLAIMER**

All participants in BotSoc events do so at their own risk. Whereas those in charge will do everything possible to ensure the safety of all participants, they cannot be held responsible in the event of unforeseen mishaps.

### **FIRE IN BETTY'S BAY 16th-17th July 2014.**

A disaster and a miracle. The disaster, a roaring northwester taking all before it "C rapidly "C fynbos and alien vegetation for they both burn well especially when in dense stands some right up against the houses. Disaster for the owners of the two houses which burnt down.

The miracle, that magnificent band of men and women "C the fire fighters - which included the volunteer brigades from both Betty's Bay and Pringle Bay, who prevented hundreds of homes from going up in clouds of smoke. They worked under very dangerous and difficult, almost impossible, conditions. Twenty four fire tenders were present from Overstrand, Overberg, Greater Cape Town and the Winelands and the police who were re-inforced from other areas (called in to curb the looting which, sadly, did occur). To them all, only praise can be given. Thanks too to those who gave refuge to the people who had to evacuate their houses and those who provided refreshments.

The fire started after dark in a wetland between Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay north of the old dump. At the debriefing the Fire Dept. said that the police are investigating the cause .....!

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE KOGELBERG BRANCH OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA JULY 2014**

Last year, important birthday celebrations and a very special award were the dominant activities of the Kogelberg Branch. This past year there are two features which stand out - the four-day trip to the Gifberg and then the sad moving on of key members of the old guard, people whose absence we feel deeply. Otherwise the rhythm of monthly newsletters, hacks, walks and talks, involving so many members and friends, gives great vitality to the branch.

To start with; the oldies who we miss so much; first it was Avril Nunn 91 moving to Bridgewater Manor, Somerset West just before our last AGM; this June Peggy Davidson 93 and then Emeritus Professor Nancy van Schaik 83 peacefully passed on in their Betty's Bay homes; in July, Penny Palmer 78 moved to Clareinch Home in Pinelands. Penny, Avril and Nancy were all past chairmen of the branch; all made major contributions. Avril we remember as a fighter against unfriendly developments and a champion of clean water; Nancy was an expert in matters legal and procedural and was co-writer of our present constitution. She was a member of the Talks and Outings committee giving wise advice at the most recent meeting. Penny's legacy lies in the written word; all our local publications have had her articles about some aspect of the natural world; she wrote the summary of the talks for our newsletter; the December issue of Veld and Flora included her, "Botanizing in the Dunes of Betty's Bay" which earned her the prize for best article by an amateur botanist in Veld and Flora in 2013. (Addendum: Jill Attwell, 91 moved to the Gerimed section of Kogelpark in Kleinmond in the last week of July.)

The Botanical Society Certificate of Appreciation is awarded at branch level for a variety of special activities. At a small gathering for lunch in Louise Digby's home, Avril Nunn and Jill

Attwell, both then nonagenarians and Honorary Life Members, were presented with the certificates in recognition of many years of exceptional service. Awarded at last year's AGM and presented at a gathering after the committee's last meeting of the calendar year, were three recipients; Penny Palmer for all-round loyal, dedicated service; Amida Johns for wise advice on environmental matters, flower walks and designing posters and Penguin Place for providing bread for the Hack tomato sandwiches every month for many years.

The branch is continuing to have activities with the children from Pikkewyntjies Preschool, Mooiuitsig. In December we funded a Snakes Alive presentation by Francois Van Zyl to a packed hall including many parents. The goal was not only to protect children but also to discourage the killing of snakes. Sue Folb continues to organize outings; the older group was taken to Harold Porter where they enjoyed a session led by two of the Groen Sebenza ladies; on a sunny morning in June, the whole school was taken to visit the penguins.

Groen Sebenza is a job-creation initiative funded by the Development Bank of SA whereby by new matriculants or new graduates are employed for two and a half-years to gain skills in the green industry. SANBI oversees the project. Harold Porter NBG has seven of these students as well as two interns; we gave them all copies of the Afrikaans Flower Guide to this area: 'Hottentots Holland tot Hermanus'. Gwen Coetzee and Jan Joubert visited the Gardens to personally present the books.

We are very grateful to SANBI for the help we have from the staff at Harold Porter NBG. Especially we appreciate the very beautiful venue for our talks. Hilary Guise, artist and art historian who lives in England but had a Betty's Bay childhood, our speaker in January, asked to have drinks and nibbles after her talk out on the stoep. There can be few venues more beautiful. The hall was packed for that lecture and also for the December talk by the girls from the Cape Leopard Trust. Coming so soon after the destructive November flood, the collection from that talk, over R3 000 was given to Harold Porter to go towards the restoration of the garden. Hilary Guise asked that the R2000 plus from her lecture go towards the planned Children's Education Garden.

We are also extremely grateful to all these speakers who made the journey to Betty's Bay:

September - Prof Richard Fuggle: "Snails versus hydro power"

October - Bryan Havemann: "Conservation in Rwanda's Akagera National Park"

November "C cancelled owing to flood

December "C Jeannie Hayward and Anita Meyer: "Cape Leopard Trust, Boland Project"

January "C Hilary Hope Guise: "Flowers in the Art of the Great Masters"

February "C Nell Wanty: "Arboretum de la Sedelle, a garden in the woods in France"

March - Prof Jeremy Midgley: "Pollination biology in the Cape as a model system for studying evolution"

April - Tessa Oliver: "Reducing the risk of future fire disasters in the face of climate change in the fynbos biome"

May "C Prof Anusuya Chisamy-Turan: "The Evolution of Birds"

June - Dick Stroh: "Fire in the Helderberg and its aftermath"

Walks are held on the morning of the talks, Barbara organizes them and Amida Johns sometimes comes along sharing her prodigious knowledge of flowers in the Kogelberg. Of course we are spoilt with choices of places to explore; places we've been to this year include the Palmiet Valley, Brodies Link, Rod's Trail, Hangklip Peak, Buffelstal.

In August we held another successful fundraiser organized by Judy New. "Antarctica: a photographic journey on board Agulhas 11" was presented in Crassula Hall by Betty's Bay weekender, Andrew Schofield. Members coordinated by Sally McConnel produced a tasty supper, Ayama wines were donated by the wine farm owners, the Dalpiaz family and the News. The proceeds were given to the Betty's Bay Hack as a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday gift and used to buy a power saw.

In September the chairman attended the Botanical Society of SA Branch Convention, AGM and Gala Dinner held at Kirstenbosch. The Betty's Bay Hack 50<sup>th</sup> was mentioned at each event; the years of toil praised by dignitaries such as the President and the Chairman of Council. There was a very pleasing renewed emphasis on conservation in the Society evident in the draft presentation by Jeffery Manuel, Vice-chairman of Council; "Conservation Strategy for BotSoc SA" heard at both at the Convention and AGM.

The Hack under Edward Silberbauer continues to battle the invading aliens in Betty's Bay and under John Whitehead in Pringle Bay.

Merran Silberbauer continues as the outstanding editor of the monthly Newsletter. We thank Di Knott for her years of work in the distribution of the hard copy; this is now done by Gwen Coetzee. Andrea Benn takes over from Penny Palmer in the writing up of the monthly talks. Jenny Berrisford's articles on gardening in this area will form a large component of the forthcoming book on good gardening practices in the Kogelberg. Editor Tim Attwell and his team are working on the book which we hope will be ready for sale by December.

Then there was the expedition to the Gifberg Rusoord, up in the mountains above Vanrynsdorp, a new venture for the branch. Twenty-eight people had a stunning four nights comfortably housed in scattered cottages with excellent dinners served under the stars. By day there were guided walks with a professional, Jaques Tredoux, covering flowers, birds, tracks and Bushman rock art. In the evening he gave talks preparing for the next day and also a stargazing session. There was great camaraderie, huge enjoyment of the place and the hope that there would be a repeat.

Kogelberg Branch is an active branch with many members not only participating in events but also helping with the organization. This is the strength of the branch. At the core is the committee; each member is involved, taking responsibility for chores, working hard. Vice "C chairman is Barbara Jenman; Secretary - Sue Folb; Treasurer "C Peter Berrisford; members-

Tim Attwell , Andrea Benn, Gwen Coetzee, and Jan Joubert; ex "Cofficio members "C Berenice Carolus, Curator of Harold Porter NBG and Edward Silberbauer "C Hack convenor. All of you earn praise and our warmest thanks.

Merrilee Berrisford, Chairman.

### **DATES TO DIARISE**

Cape Floral Kingdom expo. 28Th to 31st August 2014 in Mega Park, Bredasdorp. Entrance is R100 for adults, pensioners R70 and children under 12 R20 . See p53 in Veld & Flora's June issue.

[www.capefloralkingdom.co.za](http://www.capefloralkingdom.co.za) or 082 556 8778

Hermanus Botanical Society's annual flower festival will be held in the Fernkloof Reserve from 25th to 28th September 2014. Entrance R20 for adults, children under 12 free. The theme is Plant Explorers then and now.

[www.fernkloof.com](http://www.fernkloof.com) [botsochermanus@telkomsa.net](mailto:botsochermanus@telkomsa.net) Tel. 028 313 8100

### **MADAGASCAR - Alan and Jenny Mountain - Saturday 19 July 2014**

This most interesting, informative and well illustrated talk was in two parts. Jen started by describing the Ecological Interventions, with Alan concluding with thoughts on the Human Factor. One needed to see the beautiful pictures and hear the animal calls to fully appreciate the huge diversity of plant and animal species.

Madagascar is 2.5 times the size of Great Britain. 1580kms long and 570kms at its widest ,west to east. A mountain chain runs north to south with the escarpment descending steeply in the east. There are four biomes, being

- 1) The Eastern rainforest which has the now protected remnants of a once extensive forest. It receives 3555ml of rain a year.
- 2) The Western Savanna
- 3) The south-west dry or spiny forest with only 300ml of rain annually
- 4) The extreme north where the thick forest plants are mostly deciduous.

Alan and Jenny arranged a private trip of 18 days using a tour operator to take them where they wanted to go. They visited the first three biomes, the coast and the mountains.

Madagascar was isolated for 150 million years and has no hoofed animals, nor wild cat or dog

species, and no poisonous snakes, toads, squirrels or woodpeckers. However, there are 200 000 living organisms of which 150 000 are endemic!

Madagascar is a living riddle. One recently solved riddle is of the Ais-ais. This strange lemur was thought to be a squirrel, is nocturnal, the size of a cat, with long ears like a bat, eyes that don't look straight ahead, spiky hair, pink nose, teeth like a rodent that never stop growing, the tail of a fox, and with the 3rd and 4th digit on each hand twice as long as the others and with claws at the end. This animal has evolved to take the place of a woodpecker as it pokes under tree bark for grubs.

There are 100 species of lemur. Their rain forest environment is challenging. They and many of the animals have adopted strategies of survival, such as hibernation, resting and conserving energy, seasonal fat storage, small group sizes, small brain sizes and female sexual dominance.

The ring-tailed lemur is the national animal. Bamboo is the main source of food for the Giant Bamboo lemur, which is now listed as one of the world's most endangered primates. The bamboo forests are being exploited by mining, farming, logging and hunting.

Madagascar is the epicentre for the diversity of chameleons. The diversity of plant species is even more amazing. There are over 1000 species of orchids. More than all on mainland Africa, and 6 species of indigenous baobab

However Madagascar is a troubled country. Alan enlarged on the human factor and the conservation dilemma. He spoke about the destruction of the forests largely through the greed of foreigners. He mentioned the exploitation of natural wonders, wood, minerals, and animals for the pet trade. Crimes not only against the Malagascy people, but the whole world.

Within a population of 20.5 million most are poor subsistence cultivators of the land. In a failing economy they are not able to rely on government help, but they remain resilient, developing small cottage industries including fishing, within their communities.

Madagascar does have a magic and a haunting beauty, and with a good local guide there is so much to see that is unique to the country.

Andrea Benn.

#### RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES

Month	July	2013	2014
Rainfall	mm	118	207
Temp, °C	Max	34	35



Min

6

8

#### 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](mailto: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, 9th September 2014.

Please address all mail to : Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of SA, P.O. Box 85, Betty's Bay 7141. E-mail : [merran@telkomsa.net](mailto:merran@telkomsa.net) no graphics please.