



# MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB

## Fixture List: Oct - Dec 2014

### CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER - SPRING 2014

Welcome to the final quarter of 2014.

We have a pretty full fixture list for you to choose from. Anything from some fun hiking, to some more strenuous adventuring.

We are hopeful for the spring rains, but in the meantime, please plan your hiking routes bearing in mind the relative lack of water, and being mindful of water sources along your route. That said, if the rains do come, please be aware of the possibility of flash flooding if you are walking or sleeping in a flood-plane. Please be versatile in your packing for your hike, as the changeable weather go from sweltering to freezing in no time. Take with you all emergency rescue numbers you need, including 0800 005133, which is the Mountain Rescue Provincial Control Room.

On that note, please join us for the 2014 Annual Mountain Backpackers Club Campout. This is a family affair, is always heaps of fun, and a nice semi-lazy weekend away with awesome people! (see page 2 for details)

Club affairs will be discussed at the **AGM** to be held at the Sherwood Bowling Club on 23 October 2014, at 7pm. Please do attend. The Club will provide free boerie/cheese and tomato rolls for the occasion. Only bona fide members may vote. A new committee will be elected. If you are able to help out with the club, the committee really does need to increase in size, to reduce the workload that has fallen to a very few, we welcome your help. Please let me know on [chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za](mailto:chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za).

The annual **End of Year Party** will be held on the 27.11.2014. It is a wonderful, fun evening of the coming together for an intimate gathering of MBC members. Once again, the MBC hosts this event, and gorgeous food is prepared by Ruon and his team from the Sherwood Bowling Club. (you will have to RSVP your attendance before the 24.11.2014 to [chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za](mailto:chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za) please). Non-members may attend, at a cost of R70 pp. As usual, the cash bar will be available. Please do join us for this evening.

Safe travels, and happy hiking.

Karen Miller

Chairman: Mountain Backpackers Club

## MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB COMMITTEE

Chairman	Karen Miller	082 7423266
Vice Chairman	John McGovern	082 6595111
Treasurer	Bobby Stanton	031 4655535
Fixture List / Magazine	Alan Etchells	082 3984103
Secretary	vacant	
Marketing	Heidi Cox	082 7064283
Committee member	Chris Cox	
Socials	vacant	
Sorin Dimitriu and Roy Bowden have applied to join the committee		

**Fax:** 086 504 3382

**Postal Address:** P O Box 37702, OVERPORT, 4067

**Website:** [www.mountainbackpackers.co.za](http://www.mountainbackpackers.co.za)

**Email:** [info@mountainbackpackers.co.za](mailto:info@mountainbackpackers.co.za)

**NOTE:** In October/November 2014, at the AGM, we will be looking to elect new faces and new inputs into the running of the MBC matters. We need more hands on deck. Too much responsibility has now fallen onto too few, which is an unsustainable situation. Please consider helping out. The committee is fun, and will make you a good group of friends.

If interested, please contact Karen

## THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS TO THE CLUB

Andy Brown  
Vernita Mundell  
Roy Bowden

Harry Van der Walt  
Estelle Morkel  
Dhaya Khadua

## 2014 Club Campout

The annual 2014 MBC Club Campout will be held from Friday 17<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014.

**Venue:** The COBHAM campsite, near Underberg. This shady campsite is situated a short walk away from the Pholela river, and lies beneath the impressive Hodgsons Peaks. The men's and ladies ablutions are small, clean and have gas-heated showers & the campsite is serviced daily.

Please bring your own everything, including firewood and charcoal. The committee will contact attendees regarding catering for the communal Saturday night meal.

**Activities:** there will be fun club events. There are also a host of day walks in exquisite Berg territory. These will include short walks to nearby caves and viewpoints and possibly even a mammoth hike up Masubasuba Pass to the top of the Berg, between the Hodgsons Peaks. Feel free to indicate your willingness to participate in any specific day hike, and we will try to arrange suitable leaders.

Only members who RSVP ahead of time will be entered onto the attendees list. This is to prevent the outlay from the club being wasted on non-arrivals. We respectfully ask for your commitment to the weekend by no later than Friday 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014. Please RSVP to [chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za](mailto:chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za). The cost of accommodation is R60 pp pn, children R30 pp pn.

## THE GRADING OF HIKES

1. Very easy trip
2. Easy trip
3. Moderate trip - physical fitness advisable
4. Strenuous trip - **physical fitness essential**
5. **Very strenuous** trip requiring a high degree of fitness

Please take particular note of **distance and height** as well as the **grading of the backpacking trip** you intend doing and ensure that your level of fitness is adequate.

### FIXTURE LIST – 4<sup>th</sup> QUARTER October 2014

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
5 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>HIGHMOOR</b> – day walk to mount Lebanon via a circular route. Good walk and views, some game paths, some over the grass. Undulating & different views from the top of Highmoor. Last booking – 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct. Cost – approx R30 + petrol share	15km 200m	Dave Sclanders	033 2395013 Phone evenings only	2,5
8 – 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>COBHAM:</b> Climb Masubasuba Pass from Gxalingenwa Cave; stay second night at Sani Mountain Lodge Backpackers; descend Stones Pass (North) to Wilson's Cave; return via Mzimkhulwana Valley and Hut. Passports may be required.	70km 1600m (5 days)	Dave Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) Email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	4 -5
11- 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>SINCLAIRS CAVE, KAMBERG:</b> Chance to visit San Paintings - cave only takes 8 in comfort, late booking. Last booking - 7 Oct Approx cost R45	26km 450m	Dave Sclanders	email only dave@bergfree.co.za	3
11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>GIBA GORGE:</b> Joint Ramblers/MBC/Midlands Hike. Meet at Giba Gorge Mountain Bike Park at 07h30 for 08h00 sharp!! (Note R10pp entrance fee for safe parking.) We will follow the old road up to the Eagle Trail and on to Macintosh Falls. We will then decide if conditions are favourable for a visit to the Umhlatuzana Shelter and Kirkland Falls. Return on trail via Giba Lake and Falls back to the car park. Please bring snacks and lots of drinking water	12km	Philip Swart	031-465-2776 072 606 6599	3
11-12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>ASSVOELKRANS CAVE:</b> Short hike in the Highmoor area of the Berg. Good for first timers and those unsure of their fitness. Option of walking to Mt Lebanon, with a day pack, on Saturday afternoon. Waterfall and pool next to the cave. Please book before 07/10/2014.	10km 100m	Farouk Omarjee	031-577 6336 083 419 0196 farouko@telkomsa.net	3
17 – 19 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>CLUB CAMPOUT - Cobham</b> The annual club campout will be held at the Cobham campsite from Friday – Sunday. Join us for 3 days of fun & a host of day walks .		Karen Miller	<a href="mailto:chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za">chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za</a>	
19 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>HOWICK MEANDER</b> - Local day hike - Symmonds Stream Conservancy, Beacon Hill Conservancy, along the Umgeni River to Howick Falls - option to the bottom of the falls - several local eateries for food & drinks at the end of the hike - note the distance & grade - Combined hike with Midlands Hiking Club. COST: R20 per person for the Conservancies	15km	Keith Ashton	Tel /fax - 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	2+

20 – 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	<b>ROYAL NAT PARK to WITSIESHOEK:</b> mid week hike -starting at Mahai camp and hiking to Witsieshoek Mountain Resort for an overnight stay. Return via same route.		Harry van der Walt	<a href="mailto:harry@neomail.co.za">harry@neomail.co.za</a> 084 5474 288	3
25 – 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>MONKS COWL:</b> Vaalribbökkop Cave via Steilberg, Three Pools Cave and Stable Cave, returning via Makhulumane Forest Walk.	28km 660m	Dave Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-4
25 –26 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>NEW SEHLABATEBI LODGE:</b> Hike from Bushmans Nek to the old Johnathan's Lodge, where transport to and from the new Lodge will be available. Cost: R150 for the night	25km	Clive Powell	Contact: 0315646169 after 19:00 or email <a href="mailto:clive.powell@durban.gov.za">clive.powell@durban.gov.za</a>	3
25 –26 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>BANNERMANS HUT, GIANTS CASTLE:</b> Overnight Bannerman's Hut, return by a different route altogether. Not done before. <b>NB:</b> The hut sleeps 8, last booking , with money – 10 <sup>th</sup> Oct. (KZN Wildlife want money with booking ) Approx cost R45	28km 600m	Dave Sclanders	email only dave@bergfree.co.za	3
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>UMDLOTI to UMHALANGA:</b> Beach walk and lunch Bush Tavern. Meet at 08h00 start at 08h15 Umdlotti Beach carpark. Rain stops Play.	12.5km (on sand)	Heidi Cox	0827064283 heidi.dinan@gmail.com	2

### November 2014

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
Sat 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	<b>AFRICAN FISH EAGLE TRAIL:</b> Lots of birdlife, walk through Beachwood Mangroves and along North bank of Umgeni river, meet at Green Hub Durban @ 08h00 & leave 08h15. Rain stops Play. Bring cash for tea at Springfield SPCA 1/2 way.	13km	Heidi Cox	0827064283 heidi.dinan@gmail.com	2
1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	<b>ROLANDS CAVE :</b> Cathedral Peak Area Walk up Mikes Pass, Organ Pipes and return via the Camel. Meet at Didima office 8am	30km	Clinton Bro	Email: <a href="mailto:clintstimbers@gmail.com">clintstimbers@gmail.com</a> CELL 0828202139 ( between 5pm – 8pm)	3-4
9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>KILLARNEY ROCKERIES:</b> Meet at Union Main Centre, Old Main Road, Ptn for a prompt 07h00 departure for Cato Ridge. (Suggest R28pp petrol-sharing.) (Use Exit 53 off-ramp from N3, then left, carry on straight to Thomas Ammann N27 Herb Farm, Cato Ridge.) The hike starts at 08h00 at the Herb Farm. We trust that we shall have the old horse-cart trail re-opened as a hiking trail to the Umlazi River Ravine, then back via the Rockeries and rock-art on the way to the car park. <b>Note:</b> this is an arid trail. Bring ample water and snacks for a +/- 4hr hike.	12 km	Philip Swart	031-465-2776 072 606 6599	3
8-9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>CATHEDRAL PEAK:</b> Forest Shelter via Solar Cliffs, returning via Phillip's Folly and Mike's Pass.	30km 445m	Dave Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) Email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-4
8 - 9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>INJASUTI -</b> Backpacking hike via Van Heyningen's Pass to & overnight in Wonder Valley Cave - good venue for less experienced backpackers - lovely pool for swimming & stream for water close by. Combined hike with Midlands Hiking Club - Last bookings by 30 Oct. COST: R45 per person	10 - 12 km each day	Keith Ashton	Tel/fax - 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	3

15-16 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>WONDER VALLEY CAVE:</b> Meet at the Injasuti Wildlife office at 9:00. Climb to the top of Van Heyningen's Pass and across Shada Ridge to the cave. There is a waterfall and pool in the valley below the cave. Bring your costume if you feel like going for a dip. Please book before 10/11/2014.	16km 470m	Farouk Omarjee	031-577 6336 083 419 0196 FaroukO@telkomsa.net	3
Sat 22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	<b>KLOOK GORGE DAY HIKE.</b> Leaving at 8.30am from the picnic site carpark. Small entrance fee. Bring sun protection, hat, water, snacks and a rain jacket. Moderate fitness required. Confirm with John beforehand.	4 – 5 hrs	John McGovern	John 082 6595111	2
Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	<b>KARKLOOF FALLS:</b> Joint Ramblers /MBC/ Midlands hike. Meet outside the Howick Hotel (in Howick!) at 8.15am sharp, to drive in convoy to Karkloof Country Club and the start of this scenic hike through woodlands. (R25pp for safe parking.)	14 km	Max Ramseier	083 968-4434 031 783-7876	3
21 <sup>st</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	<b>MHLOPENI NATURE RESERVE:</b> SA Natural Heritage Site, Muden area, self catering camp (R300 pp for weekend) or own tent (R160pp for weekend), it can be chilly overnight. Guided hikes Sat and Sun, beautiful bushveld, game and prolific birdlife. Pre-booking and payment essential: joy@mhlopeni.co.za.		Heidi Cox	0827064283 heidi.dinan@gmail.com	2
24 – 26 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>ROYAL NAT PARK to WITSIESHOEK:</b> mid week hike -starting at Mahai camp and hiking to Witsieshoek Mountain Resort for an overnight stay. Return via same route.		Harry van der Walt	<a href="mailto:harry@neomail.co.za">harry@neomail.co.za</a> 084 5474 288	3
29 -30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>STABLE CAVE, MONKS COWL:</b> Walk from Calfargie , shorter walk to Stable Cave, possible visit to a Rock Art site . Easy walk for 1st time backpackers. Large Cave. Great views of the Cathedral Range. Last booking - 18 Nov. Cost R45	20km 400m	Dave Sclanders	email only dave@bergfree.co.za	3
29 – 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>INJESUTHI:</b> Easy Hike to Marble Baths, great for first time backpackers unsure of their fitness. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon at marble baths.	16 km	Grant Wilkinson	Cell: 0813725611	3
29 – 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>GARDEN CASTLE:</b> Mzimude Cave via Tsepeng Pass, returning via Mzimude Pass. Head for heights essential.	27km 1230m	Dave Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) cougar1@telkomsa.net	4-5

### December 2014

Date	Description	Distance Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
6 -7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>ZULU CAVE:</b> Meet at Monks Cowl Wild Life Office at 8:00. Route to Zulu Cave and back via the Sphinx trail. Fitness required. Please book before 01/12/2014.	28km 950m	Farouk Omarjee	031-577 6336 083 419 0196 farouko@telkomsa.net	3
14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>MINERVA HEIGHTS, BYRNE AREA:</b> Combined Ramblers, MBC & Midlands hike. Walk through plantations, indigenous forests & grasslands. Approx 6 hrs. Cost: R10.00 pp paid to the farmer. Meet at BP Garage on the Main Road (Shepstone Road) through Richmond at 08h00.		David Tighe	Phone 031 4649247 or 076 028 0708	3

13 – 16 <sup>TH</sup> Dec	<b>VERGELEGEN:</b> Climb Thabana Ntlenyana via Birds Nest Cave and Mkhomazi Pass; return via Nhlangeni Pass and Bridge Cave. Tents required.	50km 1980m (4 days)	Dave Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) Email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	5
31 <sup>st</sup> Dec – 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	<b>HIGHMOOR</b> - Your chance to celebrate New Year's Eve (& N.Y. Day) in Aasvoelkrans Cave with Keith & Margaret for their 10th time at New Year - Short backpacking hike to the cave, then explorations of the area from the cave - lovely waterfall & pool - bring swimming gear & all your goodies to celebrate in style. COST: R45 pppn incl. entry & levies = R90 total pp.	12 -15 km each day	Keith Ashton	Tel/Fax: 033-2395023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	2-3
28 <sup>th</sup> Dec – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	<b>MONKS COWL:</b> Keith Bush Camp; Gray's Pass; Didima Cave; campsite behind Eastman's Ridge via Tlanyaku Pass; campsite below Ntunja (Gatberg). Tents required.	46km 1820m (6 days)	Dave Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) Email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	5
30 <sup>th</sup> Dec – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	<b>CATHEDRAL PEAK AREA:</b> Meet at Didima 8am & overnight at Tseketske Campsite (the old hut area). 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec - up Tseketske Pass & overnight on the escarpment. 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan- Down to Twins Cave 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan- Return to Didima via the Bell Traverse.	68km	Clinton Bro	Email: <a href="mailto:clintstimbers@gmail.com">clintstimbers@gmail.com</a> Cell: 0828202139 ( between 5pm – 8pm)	4-5

### Advance Notices

**2015** can be your opportunity to become a regular cave dweller and possibly win the title of **Mr or Ms** Flintstone . We have selected 17 interesting caves and routes from various areas. These hikes will be lead and organized by either John, Christine or Clint  
John Pickup: 0721512031 [johnpickup9@gmail.com](mailto:johnpickup9@gmail.com)  
Christine Pickup : 0827826025 [christinebro3@gmail.com](mailto:christinebro3@gmail.com)  
Clinton Bro: 0828202139 [clintstimbers@gmail.com](mailto:clintstimbers@gmail.com)

DATES	CAVES AND ROUTE DESCRIPTION	AREA	Kms	GRADE
9 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Drakensberg Gardens, for something different. Meet no later than 6pm for a evening walk to <b>PILLAR CAVE</b> . Saturday we will spend exploring and walking over to <b>SLEEPING BEAUTY CAVE</b> . Sunday is a short walk back to the cars and home	Drakensberg Gardens	15km	3
14 – 15 Feb	Bring your Valentine , or just yourself, plus old swimwear for a Supa Swimming fun weekend in <b>MARBLE BATH CAVES</b> . Injisuthi hutted camp.	Injesuthi	15km	3
28 – 29 <sup>th</sup> March	Our favourite peak to stand upon is Cathedral. Overnight in <b>SHERMANS CAVE</b> and climb on the Sunday	Didima	20km	3/4
18 – 19 <sup>th</sup> April	Sleep in <b>BIRDS NEST CAVE</b> and return via Sulphur Springs	Vergelegen	28km	3/4
1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> May (3 day weekend)	Start at Mnweni Cultural Centre 1st May, overnight either in <b>5 STAR CAVE</b> , or <b>SHEPHERDS CAVE</b> . Ascend Mnweni Pass to spend the night in either <b>MPONJWANE</b> or <b>LEDGERS</b> . The sun should waken us up bright and early on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day for a early start down Rockeries pass	Mnweni	40km	3/4
29 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>STABLE CAVE</b> , Via Jacobs Ladder. Return via Hlathikulu Nek	Monks Cowl	28km	3/4



20th – 21 <sup>st</sup> June	Winter solstice in <b>AASVOELKRANS CAVE</b> , Highmoor area. For the energetic, meet at Glen Garry Campsite and we walk up to Highmoor from there. Our Flintstone Masterchef will judge our soup evening. Your soup will be judged for flavour, appearance and most unusual.	Highmoor Camp or Glen Garry	8km from Highmoor & extra 20km from Glengary	3
18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>WONDER VALLEY CAVE</b> from Monks Cowl, because the views from Shada Ridge are magnificent. Return via the houses	Monks Cowl	40km	3/4
8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> Aug (3 day weekend)	Meet at Bushman's Nek and we shall follow the Bushman's River to <b>BUSHMANS CAVE</b> . Day 2 we will make our way to sleep in <b>WHYTES CAVE</b> exploring the area as we go along. Return on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day via the Giants Cup trail	Bushmans Nek	30 km	4/5
25th – 27 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Stand on either end of the "Giants Cup" something to remember every time you travel into Underberg and see the cup. First night will be spent in <b>SPECTACLE CAVE</b> . Following day we take our packs with us to C30, Hide them and with a hop, skip and jump we will be up Masubasuba Pass. Climb Hodson's Peak South, the Hodson's Peak North. Come down to C30 where hopefully our packs will still be. Over the Hub to <b>GXALINGENWA CAVE</b> where we can rest our weary bones. The following day we return to our cars via Pinnacle Rock and Emerald Dome.	Cobham	38km	4/5
24 <sup>th</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> Oct	In remembrance of our friend Luciano. <b>ROLANDS CAVE</b> We will walk up Mikes Pass, Organ Pipes and return via the camel.	Didima	30	3/4
21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov or 20 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Not often visited is <b>GRASSCUTTERS CAVE</b> in Mnweni. To embrace the Mnweni village life, join us on the Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> Nov as we spend the day at the Cultural Centre cycling, chatting with the locals and enjoying a Juba with them at one of the many spaza shops. Camp or book a bed at the Centre. Otherwise we see you 8.30am Sat at the Cultural Centre to start hiking to Grasscutters Cave.	Mnweni	36	3/4
12 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	End the year off with a Flintstone Christmas in "Mini Paradise." A short walk to the beautiful <b>CYPRUS CAVE</b> , where one can dive into the pools for a refreshing swim, and sit either on the grass or on a rock chair around the rock table. The distance from the cars to cave is only 3.5 km, therefore we can carry loads of Christmas snacks and pressies to share. A prize for the best dressed Flintstone. Lunch at the Bierfassel on the way home. Ps. There is another cave opposite the river which could also be used for sleeping.	Mkomazi	7	

**Note:** It is the prerogative of a hike leader to accept or reject members or other applicants from participating in his or her hike, after questioning the applicant on their fitness and experience. It is a privilege not a right to participate in a hike.

Day hikers are requested to phone the leader beforehand to confirm their attendance and that the hike is still on schedule.

### Cobham to Sani Backpackers Hike by Christine Pickup

Taxi... TAXI... TAXI....Now what were we doing calling for a taxi whilst out on a hike? The answer is, we were feeling too lazy to walk the last 4kms to Sani backpackers on the tar road after emerging from the beautiful Gxalengenwa Forest valley.

**Cobham to Sani Backpackers on the 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014 was definitely a hike with difference.**

19 eager walkers started early on Saturday morning from Cobham. We were to meet Jacqui later in the afternoon at the Backpackers.

Amongst the hikers we had a doctor, professors, scientist, entrepreneurs, business people, a farmer, payroll specialist, architect, Comrades silver medalist ... Oh and myself and John.

The weekend had a fun theme of getting to know others by swapping stories, cds and sweeties.

We carried as little as possible so we were able to really enjoy our walk past Emerald Dome, Pinnacle Rock and

through the Gxalingenwa valley to end at Sani Backpackers Lodge. This is the Backpackers which is based at the bottom of the pass.

Although we were hoping for cold and snow it was not to be. The weather was beautiful, with warm winter days. At one of our many breaks at Ngenwa Pools Karen, flying the flag for Toti, showed us how tough Toti residents are by diving into the freezing water. This earned her a large slab of chocolate. The last time I had fun with Karen was more than 20 years ago. But not much had changed.

After leaving the forest we have a 4km walk on tar to the Backpackers. Whilst waiting on the Armco barrier for the group to catch up some of us began to wish for a lift to the backpackers. So desperate was Tania that she lay in the centre of the road blending in with the white road stripe

Lo and behold there came an empty taxi from Lesotho.

The driver was only too happy to squeeze as many people as possible into the vehicle and pose for many photos with us and his beloved beautifully embroidered blanket.

Mikes feet, who had had enough for the day, whispered in his ear to pay the fare for all passengers. A bargain of note, he said later. His feet were so sore he would have paid double.

Although there was an opportunity to self -cater for dinner we had all chosen to book, the home cooked meal offered at the Backpackers.

It felt like a large family get together as we passed messages from the top end of the table to the bottom end, broken telephone style. Had not done that for years!.



Fortunately there were not too many other visitors because we invaded the lounge. With a roaring fire blazing in the corner as we reverted from adults to children to play doubles and swop our cds and sweetsies.

"Can you feel my love, can you feel it as I walk away" belts out Eddie Grant from an 80's cd.

But we were feeling the love and no one was walking away." Jovita Travolta" and the "Rocker" emerged from the closet and we all ended up dancing to the music of our newly acquired cds.

The music, singing and dancing went on late into the evening fuelled by beer from the fridge and "other" drinks brought to the party.

John staggered out just after 10pm only to stumble back in, as his eyes opened in the morning, to look for his Goldfish cd. Not too bothered about his beanie and gloves we had borrowed for doubles

All good days have to end, so it was with heavy hearts, sore heads and full tummies that we left Sani on Sunday to walk back to Cobham via the Stromness and Giants Cup Trails.

A good time was had by all and on the way home I did something I have never done before....that is I fell asleep in the car. Sorry for the snoring passengers!!!!!!

"You can't get more laid back on a hike than this"



## Dinosaur Cave – Injesuthi area 9 – 10<sup>th</sup> August 14

By Alan Etchells

Hidden somewhere in one of the many little Berg valleys in the area between Giants Castle & Injesuthi, is a cave with the fossilized footprints of long extinct dinosaurs. To reach the cave is a hard days hike from the Injesuthi camp, with some fairly long and steep climbs.

Led by Dave Gay, our party of 9 set off under a cloudy sky with a cold wind gusting. Most of the hike was over recently burnt grass and we were amazed how extensive the veld fires had been.



Resting after a long climb.



Natural arch in Dinosaur Cave

While on route, detours were made to Fergies Cave, where San rock art was viewed and then later, Dead Dog Cave, an amazing feature consisting of a series of rock overhangs at two different levels.

After passing the highest point, the route slowly descended until we finally reached the edge of the valley above Dinosaur Cave. The cave is filled with huge slabs of rock, which appear to have broken off from the roof. It was on one of these sandstone slabs that we found a number of different dinosaur footprints, clearly visible in the rock. It was quite a sobering thought that these large animals had once roamed this exact spot, so many millions of years ago.



Some of the fossilized dinosaur footprints (Courtesy of Dave Sclanders)

Near the cave we found the ruins of a house & kraal walls made from stone blocks as well as a trough cut into the rock, which must have been used for dipping animals. One wonders what had attracted this pioneer farmer who had once tried to make a living in this harsh environment.

In spite of the limited flat area around the cave, everyone found a spot to settle down for a comfortable night, lulled to sleep by the sound of the little waterfall in front of the cave. The next day dawned sunny and warmer and after packing up, we set off on the long trek back to Injesuthi, via a different route to the one we had come. Following a jeep track at times as well as sections of path, we saw more great views of the Berg and adjacent valleys. Eventually we reached a ranger outpost where a welcome break was taken, with everyone relaxing on the grass. Then it was

time to continue along a path which descended steeply at times, allowing some views of the road leading to Injesuthi far below. Everywhere around us was still burnt grass, which in places was starting to show green shoots. After further descending, the path finally emerged onto the road, which we followed back to the cars.

A great hike and thanks to Dave for leading!



Farm house ruin



Descending path to Injesuthi Camp

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### **A Mid-week Drakensberg Getaway.**

By Harry van der Walt

Fortunately for the retired and those able to get away from their work commitments, a new mid-week getaway to the Drakensberg is planned.

On the first day of Spring, myself and Toby Cronje, undertook to do an old regular hike from the Mahai Camp site of the Royal Natal National Park up to Witsieshoek. What a pleasure it was to have the perfect hiking weather and the absolute quietness of nature to surround us on the hike.

We left Queensburgh at 13h00 and arrived in Bergville at 16h00 and booked into our chalet. The price is most reasonable with 2 bedrooms, 4 single beds, with electric blankets, kitchenette and bathroom. After a stroll around the property we started a braai and sat chatting until late that night.

The next morning we were up at 06h00, had breakfast at 07h00 and left at 08h00. Within an hour we arrived at the main office to pay our overnight car-fee and after taking photos at various spots were ready to start our hike at 10h00.

As we had already acclimatized to the altitude, we had an enjoyable one hour hike up to Gudu Falls for a 15 minute break, and a further one hour hike to Mahai caves for a lunch break. From there it was a further 2 hours hike up to Witsieshoek Mountain Resort.

What a pleasure it was to arrive at this newly restored resort. There are now new luxurious chalets overlooking the Amphitheatre and a brand new Hikers Cabin. This consists of 6 bedrooms with 2 beds each, 2 bathrooms, a kitchenette /lounge area and a view to die for.

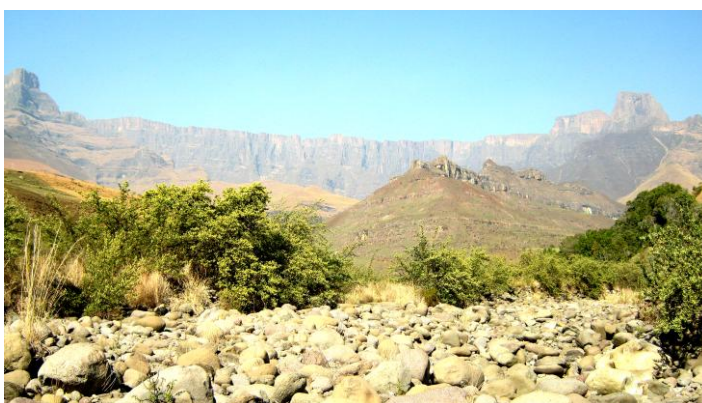
That evening we had a la carte supper at the hotel and sat around the log fire reminiscing with other foreign travelers of our experiences.

The next morning we were up at 06h00 to have coffee and admire the most amazing sun rise ever from the verandah of the cabin. At 07h00 we had a mega-breakfast and were soon sorry to leave such a friendly place. At 08h00 we set on our return journey down the Crack and past Look-out Rock and the Cascades back to the car park to find our car still where we had left it.

For my next trip I plan to rather take the easier route down and that is the way we went up. The Crack and the Cascades route past Lookout Rock is a very steep drop down and pretty hair-raising.

For those interested in joining me and others to do this mid-week trip, please contact me on my email address or cell. [harry@neomail.co.za](mailto:harry@neomail.co.za) / 084 5474 288. See Fixture List for the dates of the next hikes.





### **HambaNathi - Walk with us" Guided Wild Coast Hikes**

HambaNathi offers guided hikes along the Wild coast, South Africa's most beautiful, wildest and most exciting stretch of coast. Camp on unspoilt beaches, swim in magical rock pools, see an abundance of marine and coastal life. All hikes are fully catered. Transport and last night's accommodation in Mbotyi are arranged. Visit our Website at <http://www.wildcoasthikes.co.za> or phone 031 202 9994.

### **Southern Secrets Hiking and Backpacking**

Discover some of the exquisite secrets of the Drakensberg Mountains and Lesotho, including visits to rock art sites, with a fully qualified and registered Mountain Guide (KZN0904) and Nature Guide (KZN1025). Single or multi-day trips. Contact Philip or Christeen Grant 033 9971817 cell 0824179163/2 email [pgrant@yebo.co.za](mailto:pgrant@yebo.co.za) or visit [www.southernsecrets.co.za](http://www.southernsecrets.co.za)

### **Berg Free Adventures**

David Sclanders runs single and multi day guided trips into the Berg, visiting rock-art sites, sleeping in tents, caves and mountain huts. He is a member of the South African Mountain Guide Association registered as a guide with the Department of Tourism, Registration Number KZN0050. He can be contacted on telephone or fax **033 239 5013**, Cell **082 443 4287** or visit [www.bergfree.co.za](http://www.bergfree.co.za).

### **Discounts for Members**

MBC members are offered discounted rates at the following three outdoor gear outlets:

#### **Tripper Sports:**

15% discount to MBC members

Goods must be purchased either online (ex Tripper website) or from the Tripper shop at the factory (Da Vinci building near Tollgate Bridge Durban) – details below. Membership card and ID must be produced

Address: 23B Calder Road, Mayville, Durban. Phone 0312093649 Website:  
[www.trippersports.com](http://www.trippersports.com)

#### **The Kingfisher, Durban**

Up to 10% discount can be offered to our members based on the following criteria:

- The discount will be dependent on whether it is a full price or already discounted item
- The MBC member must present their membership card and ID document (with photo)
- The purchase is made in store OR online. Contact Gany to agree on the discount that will apply.
- 

**Note:** EFT is required for the purchase to be valid and any delivery charges due will still apply over and above the price of the goods.

Contact details: Gany Phone: 0313683903 Address: 53 Hunter Street, Durban

### **Flamingo Sales (Columbia gear)**

A selection of items has been made available which qualify for a 20% discount to MBC members provided a minimum of 10 items are purchased at once, viable if setting up for an expedition or a group of people purchase at the same time. Further information can be obtained from Conrad Buchner (Flamingo) or Heidi Cox (MBC).

The purchase must be made via Conrad Buchner at Flamingo Sales. If you need to try on an item or want to see a physical sample, the Columbia Store at Gateway is likely to have it, however the discount does not apply from the Gateway shop.

#### Contact details:

Conrad Buchner - [conrad@flamingosales.co.za](mailto:conrad@flamingosales.co.za) Phone 0315395401

## **SOCIAL CALENDAR – PLEASE NOTE THE VENUE**

### **Directions to Sherwood Bowling Club - 860 Jan Smuts Highway**

**From Durban** - Take N3 out towards PMB, after Tollgate take the Sherwood off-ramp and turn right under the freeway in to Jan Smuts Highway, up the hill, past Jungle Nursery on the right, turn right under the pedestrian bridge into Tropical Nursery parking, follow the road past trees to the back of the nursery.

**From Westville** - take the M13 towards Durban, past Westwood Shopping centre, through 45<sup>th</sup> Cutting traffic lights, down Jan Smuts Highway, turn left under the pedestrian bridge (in front of Naked Ladies) in to Tropical Nursery parking, follow the road past trees to the back of nursery.

**From PMB**, from Hillcrest take the N3 past the Pavilion and four-level interchange, take the Sherwood glide-off, keep left in to Jan Smuts Highway, past Jungle Nursery on right, turn right under pedestrian bridge in to the parking of Tropical Nursery, follow road to the back of Tropical Nursery.

### **SOCIAL CALENDAR**

**MBC Socials normally take place every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month  
at the Sherwood Bowling Club, 7:00 for 7:30pm**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>A Himalayan Life</b> by Debra Bouwer – an insight into the life of the Sherpa people of the Himalayas. This talk will look at all aspects from their origin, traditions, religion and their adaptation to living in high altitude regions.
23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	<b>Club AGM</b> Free boerie rolls available. We just need you. Come on people, we want to see the venue full. Those who would like to step forward as a committee nominee, please contact <a href="mailto:chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za">chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za</a> , prior to the meeting.
13 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>The International Coastal Cleanup</b> - more than just picking up litter from the beach. James Wood from KZN Wildlife will give a talk about this annual event in which MBC members have participated in for the last 3 years.
27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>End of the Year Party</b> and 'Bring and Braai' at the Sherwood Bowling Club (7.30pm). Contact <a href="mailto:info@mountainbackpackers.co.za">info@mountainbackpackers.co.za</a> or tell a social committee member if you are coming. Salads and rolls will be provided.
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>Climbing and trekking in the Cordillera Blanca of Peru</b> , by James Voortman The talk will be about a trip James did in Peru to climb Pisco (5700m) and Chopicalqui (6400m). This talk will also include aspects on preparation, acclimatization, etc and a whole lot of excellent pictures.