

Newsletter September 2010

MODDERFONTEIN
Conservation Society

P O Box 50, Modderfontein, 1645



The pair of African Fish Eagles that visitors to the Nature Reserve have been seeing alongside the road near Fish Eagle Dam throughout the winter months.

Photo: Ken England

EWT COMES TO MODDERFONTEIN

The Modderfontein Conservation Society has been involved in discussions with Heartland for the construction of a new facility which will be the home of the Society and will enable the expansion of one of the Society's and the Park's main objectives, that of providing environmental education.

In the middle of the year the Society and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) met as they were also looking for permanent premises as their current offices had become too small and their lease is expiring. During the discussions a synergy emerged between the two organizations and the Society suggested that EWT initiates discussions with Heartland as to the availability of a site for the construction of their offices in the vicinity of the Nature Reserve.

These discussions have advanced significantly with the first step of EWT joining the Modderfontein community being to rent offices from Heartland. EWT and Heartland have also discussed the terms of a partnership agreement, and this is being drafted. The EWT and Modderfontein Conservation Society will work together on the development of the Modderfontein Nature Reserve.

Note well!

N.B

Your Society has had to vacate the Town Hall as Heartland has signed up a permanent tenant for the venue. We have investigated several possible alternatives and have decided to give the SA Emergency Care's Fire Training Centre in Ardeer Road a try for the next two or three months.

- **Be there for Peter Greaves' fascinating talk on "Birding in Ghana" on Thursday 16 September.**

To get there, take Ardeer Road past the entrance to the Modderfontein Nature Reserve and just 0.8 km further, the entrance to SA Emergency Care is on the right.

SMALL HIDE RENOVATED

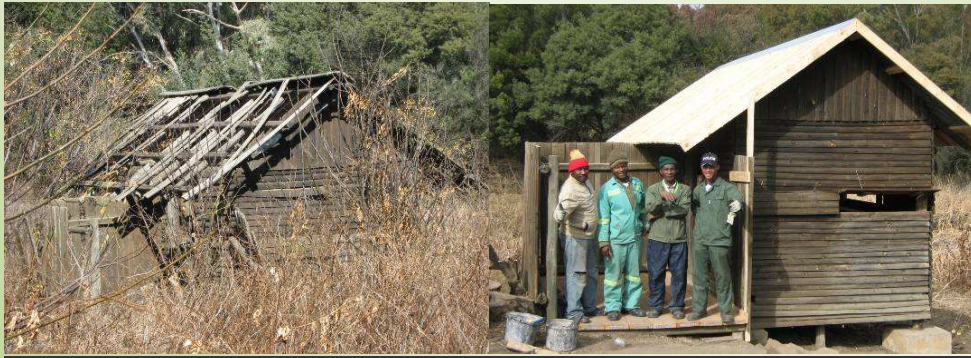
By Ellen van Dongen

The small hide on the northern shore of the Modderfontein Spruit near the John Voelcker Bird Dam has been renovated by GLMB Joint Venture.

The hide was the first to be constructed in the Modderfontein Nature Reserve in about 1993. It overlooked a wading area created by the deposition of silt during rainstorms. Over the years, time and fire have been responsible for the hide falling into disrepair.

At the beginning of June GLMB Joint Venture approached me with the suggestion that they could help out on a community project. Work started in mid-June on the remediation of the hide under the excellent supervision of Pierre van der Merwe. GLMB Joint Venture provided both the labour and the materials for the renovation. The final result is a hide that once again makes a proud stand along the Spruit and provides eager birdwatchers with a view point.

On behalf of the Modderfontein Conservation Society I would like to take this opportunity of expressing our sincere thanks to Pierre and GLMB Joint Venture for their contribution to this project.



Hide before and after renovation

WALKS & TALKS, PAST AND FUTURE

Klipriviersberg – then & now

Vic Oliver, a guide at the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve set in the hills south of Johannesburg, spoke at our August meeting

His presentation included fascinating tales of the rich history of the area, an overview of the Reserve, the BaTswana people who lived there and the first Boer Voortrekker who settled there.

His talk highlighted the Vierfontein Dam, the first water storage facility for Johannesburg. "As the city grew, water or the lack thereof soon became a major problem in the town," said Vic.

"Organisations such as the Johannesburg Waterworks Company were hard pressed to cope with the demand for this precious resource. At times the shortage was so acute that some residents were obliged to wash in 'mineral water' that might have been better used in a glass of something stronger," he quipped.

The area was declared a nature reserve in 1984 after the land had been bought by the

Johannesburg City Council in 1939. Johannesburg City Parks (JCP) is responsible for the management of the reserve. The Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association, an 800 member strong interest group, works closely with JCP in its management.

After eight years as a Klipriviersberg guide, Vic's knowledge of the Reserve is extensive. His talk also covered the walking and hiking trails and some of the larger animals found in this jewel of the south, just 10 minutes drive from the centre of town.

See the Nature Reserve's web page at: www.knra.co.za.

Hiking club ambles through Modder

Twenty members of the East Rand Hiking Club were taken on Robbie's 'Fact & Fable Urban Ramble' through the Modderfontein Heritage Precinct late last month.

Club members who had walked in the Nature Reserve from time to time had never been aware of the rich and varied heritage of the town and were surprised at how Modderfontein's history dovetailed with the growth and development of Johannesburg, the East Rand and the country itself.

Robbie's walk started with an overview of the history of explosives in South Africa and an

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WALKS & TALKS, PAST AND FUTURE

(Continued from page 2)

explanation of how Modderfontein was founded. It then took the visitors around the village to look at the old homes and buildings which have been preserved by AECI over the years.

Heritage Day Walks – 24 September

Heritage Day on Friday 24 September will again see two walks through the Modderfontein Heritage Precinct, similar to that described above.

Robbie Vermont will lead a walk at 08:00, which has already been fully booked, and Keith Martin will lead another at 10:30. Both walks leave from the Dynamite Company Museum at 2 Main Street, and last about two hours.

The old factory manager's house, Franz Hoenig Haus, built in 1895 and completely restored during the late 1900s, will be open for visitors and The Dynamite Company Museum will also be open between 08:30 and 12:30.

The cost of the tour is R20. To book, contact Robbie on 011 608 2693 or 082 800 3704.



Entrance to Franz Hoenig Haus from the south side

Peter Greaves returns

When Peter Greaves, who took us "Beyond the Arctic Circle" in words and pictures last year, returns on 16 September, he'll take us on another birding adventure – this time in Ghana.

His Arctic talk was enthusiastically received and his photography is breathtaking. Be there for a thoroughly entertaining evening.



Tricia's St Francis in the Woods group and ...

QUIZ results

Pam and Robbie's Annual Quiz attracted almost 40 people on a relatively mild mid-winter night in July.

After answering 100 questions in four parts of 25 each, Team Foxies comprising Norman and Jenny Doak, Norman and Jenny Carliell and André and Jeanette Carr, ran home clear winners.

It was agreed that a general knowledge quiz provided more variety and interest than a restrictive and subject-specific nature quiz.

Tricia takes two

Fred Lomax, a regular Tuesday walker brought 11 youngsters and three adults from St. Catherines Church in Bramley for a walk in the Nature Reserve during the long holidays at World Cup time.

Tricia Llewellyn took them up into the game park but they were unfortunate not to see any of the animals close up. Most enjoyed the Ladybird Trees, although one girl was a bit squeamish. "One boy decided he was going to record everything I said on his cellphone which soon died, much to his disappointment," reports Tricia.

The group enjoyed seeing footprints of the animals and a whole range of plants. "One girl collected guinea fowl feathers for her hair and another dropped a phone in the game enclosure, says Tricia. Janet Brodrick and Fred, with the child, returned to the spot where she had taken a piggy-back ride and where it must have popped out of her pocket. It was found and she was greatly relieved."

Back at Fish Eagle dam they tucked into a picnic of chicken sausage rolls made by the helpers and sweets and chocolates.

St Francis

Eileen Powell, also a Tuesday walker, brought members of the congregation from Modderfontein's St Francis in the Woods Church for a walk after a Sunday service. Again, Tricia led the group. "We had 22 adults and six kids ranging from 10 months to about 10 years old. Among the congregation were Society members: Eileen, Anne & Hugh Ireland and Maryke & Peter Ewen.

"A few remained at Fish Eagle Dam with Hugh who is recovering well from his second knee op. It was a super walk down across Otter Crossing and through the new path to Crab Crossing. We looked at the Aloes growing out of the rocks which the group found surprising. None of them, other than our members, had ever been in the Nature Reserve before! From Crab crossing we took the new river walk to the renovated, small bird hide which the kids found fascinating.

"A picnic back at Fish Eagle Dam rounded off a very pleasant morning."



... the St Catherines group

PHOTO GALLERY



Pat van Nierop shares this one with us: "Soms praat 'n vrou net te veel!!!"



Tuesday workers John Clark, Robbie Vermont, John D'Aquino, John Cruickshank and Ken England attend to a blockage. Photo: Tricia Llewellyn



Bill Blake took this photograph, and the one below, from his lounge window. The Laughing Dove with twins is a really endearing shot and the Cape Robin takes every opportunity to be first for the cheese.



Goliath Heron photographed on Flamingo Dam in front of the Modderfontein Post Office, in a 'high traffic' area. Photo: Ken England



Vervet vuvazela monkey in Amanzimtoti

Only after the last tree has been cut down
 Only after the last river has been poisoned
 Only after the last fish have been caught
 Only then will you find that
 Money cannot be eaten

CREE INDIAN PROPHECY

MODDERFONTEIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER Programme of events: 2010

September	Saturday 11 07:30 Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Thursday 16 19:30 Peter Greaves returns to talk on Birding in Ghana
	Friday 24 08:00 and 10:30 Village Heritage Walks: Booking essential. Call Robbie on 082 800 3704
	Sunday 26 07:30 Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Tuesdays: 08:00 Walk in the Nature Reserve with John Clark 082-509-9856
	Contact: Keith Martin (H)011 608 2864 or 082 450 4003 or Janet Brodrick*
October	Saturday 09 07:30 Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Thursday 21 19:30 Duncan Pritchard talks on Avitourism
	Sunday 24 07:30 Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Tuesdays: 08:00 Walk in the Nature Reserve with John Clark 082-509-9856
	Contact: Ellen van Dongen (H)011 462 3067 or 082 813 9611 or Rajen Reddy*
November	Saturday 06 07:00 Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Thursday 18 19:30 Riaan Stals - entomology & harlequin beetles
	Sunday 21 07:00 Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Tuesdays: 08:00 Walk in the Nature Reserve with John Clark 082-509-9856
	Contact: Janet Brodrick (H)453 3910 or 072 679 6461 \
December	Friday 03 18:00 End of year walk and braai The walk will start at 16:30 and the braai fires will be lit at about 18:00. Come when you can and bring own food, drink, cutlery, crockery and chairs
	Tuesdays: 08:00 Walk in the Nature Reserve with John Clark 082-509-9856
	Contact: Any committee member

Who are you?

Since the beginning of March when subscriptions fell due, we have received two or three payments made directly into our banking account from members who did not use their names on the deposit slip and/or failed to advise Robbie Vermont of the payment.

As 15 July was cut-off date to pay subs, these folk were probably deleted from our membership data base as we had no idea who they were. This is a friendly reminder to ensure that when you make a payment directly into someone's account, to ensure that the payment can be traced back to you so that you'll get the credit.

YOUR COMMITTEE

Name	Portfolio	Home phone	Cell phone	Office phone
Ellen van Dongen	Chairman	011-462-3067	082-813-9611	011-606-0843
Pat van Nierop	Vice Chair	011-882-4392	083-326-6838	
John Clark	Tuesday walks	011-454-1801	082-509-9856	
Norman Doak	Community liaison	011-608-2537	082-447-9293	
Robbie Vermont	Membership	011-608-2693	082-800-3704	
Patricia Llewellyn	Treasurer	011-882-4114	082-497-9241	
Keith Martin	Heritage	011-608-2864	082-450-4003	
Janet Brodrick	Speaker liaison	011-453-3910	072-679-6461	
Peter Ewen	Reserve development	011-608-4043	076-377-3263	
Daryl Fuchs	Technology		083 395 0778	
Carol Sherwood		011-443-4114	082-906-5794	
Rajen Reddy			071-686-0631	011-709-8726
Stephen Burrow		011-608-1134	082-444-5467	011-501-2000
Sally Hogan		011-608-3089	082-291-8084	

IMPORTANT!

Your 2011 Conservation Society calendar, featuring four more beautiful water colour prints of historical Modderfontein buildings by Honorary Life Member Ken England, will be on sale on 1 November at the Modder Post Office in Queen Street.
Enquiries: Robbie Vermont on 011 608 2693 or 082 800 3704

VISIT THE SOCIETY'S WEB PAGE AT:
www.modderconserve.org
It's still under construction, but looking better all the time

Contributions are welcome. Please send to Robbie at the fax number or e-mail address in the committee list.
Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Modderfontein Conservation Society.

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