



Newsletter: September 2011

P O Box 50, Modderfontein 1645 • Phone/fax: 011 608 2693 (office hours) • e-mail: robbiev@netactive.co.za

+FIRST AIDERS FARE WELL+

Fifteen committee members and members of the Society recently attended a one day first aid course at the SA Emergency Care Centre (SAEC) in Modderfontein .

The course was designed to give walk leaders a basic knowledge of what to do in the event of illness or injury. Your committee decided that the day should not be confined to walk leaders, but that it should be made available to any Society member who would like to attend. And what good value it was. With a subsidy by the Society and a good price from the SAEC management, the cost amounted to just R50 a head.

The day was organised by Norman Doak and the course was presented by SAEC's Johan Kitching. Johan's



Those who completed the 1st Aid Course are: (back) Dave Gordon with dummy, Bobbie Long and Sally Hogan, (middle) Carol Sherwood with dummy and Lesley Rae, (standing) Johan Kitching the instructor, John Clark, Norman Doak, Barbara Gordon with dummy, Rajen Reddy, Daryl Fuchs, Des Edgar, Mike Welham and Derek Long, (kneeling) Robbie Vermont and Janet Brodrick.
Photo: Jan Liebenberg

Your chance to give it a go

With Spring upon us and Summer in the wings, your committee is prepared to organise another course for Society members if there is sufficient interest. A comfortable and economical number is 15 and if we can fill 15 places, we'll set a date and forge ahead, probably in late October or early November. It is a full day course, you bring a packed lunch and R50.00 for the cost of the day. Tea, coffee is provided and soft drinks are available from The Fireman's Pub.

Please let Robbie know whether you're interested. If there are enough people, we'll organise another course.

Robbie's details are on the committee page.

relaxed, knowledgeable and humorous style soon put everyone at ease. He has a way of involving his class which aids memory and imparts a feeling of participation.

Walk leaders agreed that the day was a valuable contribution to their field capabilities.

Unfortunately a few folk had to miss the outing due to overseas and local travel, winter ills and having to work on a production line due to a strike, in the case of our chairman. Ellen, however, proposed a vote of thanks at the August committee meeting to SAEC for their continuing friendly and enthusiastic support for the Conservation Society

Deepest Sympathy

The chairman, committee and members
extend their heartfelt sympathy to
Jenny and Norman Doak and their family
on the recent passing of their granddaughters
Alexandra and Madison

SEA SCOUTS BRIDGE THE GAP

A team of Third Kensington (St Andrew's) Sea Scouts, under Jenny Petzer's leadership, has completed a project to build a bridge over a drainage channel in the Modderfontein Reserve.

The project will enable bird watchers to reach the newly constructed bird hide at the Reserve's Blue Crane Dam.

The bridge is a part of Jenny's Springbok Construction project which is included in the programme she is required to complete to achieve scouting's top award.

REQUIREMENTS

Not only is Jenny required to design the project, she has to look at the environmental impact it may have, prepare a budget for the work and source the necessary materials, equipment and assistance needed to complete the project.

Again, the project was organised and co-ordinated by Norman Doak, himself a past Third Kensington scout.

SUPPORT

"We had enthusiastic and meaningful support from Luke Strugnell of the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and Lucas Malan of Little Gnome Landscapes," says Norman. "I asked Luke – who manages the Reserve – to organise some straight, stout poles that we could use to bridge the gap. He then asked Lucas – whose company looks after the maintenance of the area – to source the poles.

"Both men obviously understood Jenny's needs and came up with a number of poles of approximately equal length and diameter and straight enough for our purpose."

CONCRETE

The team buried the poles in concrete on both sides of the ditch to ensure stability and constructed a hand rail for added safety.

"Partnerships have been established between the MCS and several scout groups over the past

couple of years," says Norman. "The result is that we, the MCS, have benefitted from several projects on the one hand and have afforded the project leaders opportunities to further their skills and qualifications.



Jenny Petzer with two of her helpers, Daniel Hartridge and Bethany Harker

WHAT'S COMING UP

15 September – EWT's Luke Strugnell talks on "Managing the Modderfontein Reserve in 2011"

20 October – Bernice McLean helps you to "Navigate your seafood choices"

17 November – Geoff Lockwood observes "Birding Changes in Gauteng"

2 December – End of year walk and braai at SA Emergency Care's Fire Training Centre in Ardeer Road.

Talks are at 19:30 in the Town Hall. See programme later.



Dear Ed

If anyone has precious trees that need to be restored following the heavy rains last summer (i.e. main branches starting to lean, or excessive growth spoiling the shape or swamping other trees), then Anton Muller can be recommended.

He is a tree surgeon with a love of indigenous gardens who can bring order and character back to overgrown and untidy gardens. His contact number is 083 600 9786.

Pat

FIREWOOD FOR SALE



**Black wattle/eucalyptus mixture from the Modderfontein Nature Reserve.
From Endangered Wildlife Trust, Building K2,
Pinelands Office Park. Just R8.00 a bag.
Contact Luke Strugnell on 079-878-3741**

PRIDWIN PRIMARY VISITS MODDER



Teachers, children and a few parents from Pridwin School in Sandton visited the Modderfontein Reserve during July as guests of Luke Strugnell of the EWT. Robbie took his camera along to capture a few images.

Burnt bridge



Pat van Nierop views the remains of Scout Bridge at the John Voelcker Bird Dam after it had been ravaged by fire. The question has been raised as to whether there is any suitable disposed metal plant in the Modderfontein Industrial Complex that could be donated to the Society to replace the wooden bridge Photo: Lesley Rae

New bridge



A new bridge under construction by Little Gnome Landscapes below the wall of Grebe Dam

Sally Hogan's picture book



Early start at Fish Eagle Dam



Tuesday walkers in the grass



Betty Chambers tries to spot the Fish Eagles

A question of knowledge

????????????

On a not-so-cold July night 40 members and friends of MCS gathered at Modderfontein Town Hall for Pam & Robbie's annual quiz, writes Janet Brodrick.

There were five groups of eight, and competition was keen. Pam had certainly spent a lot of time researching a very challenging miscellany of questions, including:

- What is the oldest football club in the world? (Sheffield)
- In which battle did the charge of the Light Brigade take place? (Balaclava)
- Which soccer team won the 2011 PSL league? (Orlando Pirates)
- Fidelio was the only opera written by which German composer? (Beethoven)

Teams beavered away at coming up with the correct answers and we all enjoyed the fun and brain teasing. The winning team – Team Top Notch, a combination of members and visitors – won by the narrow margin of one point over the 100 questions. Well done, winners!

And Pam and Robbie - thank you for your ongoing hard work.

A REMARKABLE SERIES OF PICTURES

By Lesley Rae



This series of photographs by Lesley Rae at Flamingo Dam, right in front of the Post Office, shows (clockwise from top left): a Goliath heron on the prowl; its patience rewarded; preparing for the swallow while a Sacred ibis watches a Black heron continue with its own business; lunch is correctly aligned and finally consumed.

The heron was seen regularly on the banks of the dam until the middle of August after which it was conspicuous by its absence.

MEMORIES AND MEMENTOS WANTED

As the heritage buildings that were dismantled in Antwerp Avenue rise again at their new location in High Street, the event underlines the need for memories and mementos of Modderfontein people and places over the years.



These are needed by your Modderfontein Film Committee to help with the research being conducted into the history and development of the social side of the Village.

If you can help in any way, please call Keith Martin on 011 608 2864 or 082 450 4003 or Sally Hogan on 011 608 3089 or 082 291 8084.

**MODDERFONTEIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY
Programme of events: 2011**

September	Saturday 10	07:30	Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday 15	19:30	Luke Strugnell: "Modderfontein Reserve: the EWT's involvement and plans"
	Saturday 24	08:00	Heritage Walk – Robbie on 011 608 2693 or Keith on 011 608 2864
	Sunday 25	07:30	Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays all	08:00	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856 Contact: Stephen Burrow (h) 011 608 1134 or (c) 082 444 5467
October	Saturday 08	07:30	Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday 20	19:30	Bernice McLean: "Navigating your Seafood Choices"
	Sunday 23	07:30	Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays all	08:00	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856 Contact: Patricia Llewellyn (h) 011 882 4114 or (c) 082 497 9241
	November	Saturday 12	07:00
Thursday 17		19:30	Geoff Lockwood: "Birding Changes in Gauteng"
Sunday 27		07:00	Walk in the Reserve
Tuesdays all		08:00	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856 Contact: Sally Hogan (h) 011 6083089 or (c) 082 291 8084
December	Friday 2 End of year walk and braai. The walk will start at 16:30 from the SA Emergency Care Training Centre and the braai fires will be lit at about 18:00. Come when you can and bring your own food, drinks, cutlery, crockery and something to sit on. Drinks can also be purchased at The Fireman's Pub.		
	Tuesdays all	08:00	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856 Contact: Any Committee member

- **Saturday and Sunday walks** leave from the Reserve gates in Ardeer Road at the advertised times
- **Tuesday walkers** meet in the CSIR parking area opposite the gates to the Reserve
- **FOR ALL WALKS, BE THERE AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFOREHAND**
- **Charges:** Visitors pay R10 for walks and R20 for evening talks; members pay R10 for evening talks

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 Chairman	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	

TELL US ABOUT IT

If you've changed your phone number or address please remember to tell Membership Secretary Robbie Vermont about it. We'd like to stay in touch but cannot unless we know where you are. Also, if your membership status changes, please let us know

Photocopying by courtesy of TOPTURF for landscaping, irrigation, golf courses and maintenance. Dedicated to the 'Art of Green'

Tel: 011 606 2521 E-mail: topturf@topturf.co.za Visit www.topturf.co.za

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Modderfontein Conservation Society.

REMINDER

Heritage Day

A walk around some of the historical areas of Modderfontein Village is an annual highlight of Heritage Day – 24 September.

Keith Martin and Robbie Vermont will conduct two urban ambles round the village on the day. For the early risers, there'll be a walk at 08:00 followed by a second walk at 10:30. Both walks will begin at The Dynamite Company Museum at 2 Main Street, Modderfontein (just two doors from 33 High Street Restaurant).

In addition to the walks, the museum will be open during the morning. This will give visitors the opportunity to see why Modderfontein was called "A Power for Prosperity" in the area and how it contributed to the wealth and development of the country as a whole. Other aspects of



Franz Hoenig Haus

AECI's operations are also showcased in the museum. The original factory manager's house, Franz Hoenig Haus built in 1895, will also be open.

The walks are so popular, that booking is essential. The cost is R20.00 a head and they last about one and a half to two hours. For booking call Robbie at 011 608 2693 or 082 800 3704.

NO POISONS REQUIRED!

By Rajen Reddy



Their ghostly whistles can be heard in the evenings and continue into the early hours of the morning. As night falls you see them running on the pavements while they seek refuge in our gardens during the day.

These are the Spotted thick knees (previously: Spotted dikkops) of Modderfontein. They are slightly bigger than plovers, with speckled brown upper parts, long yellow legs and large yellow/black eyes.

I've had a pair in my garden for the past four years. They lay their speckled eggs on the bare ground, where they blend with the soil. The clutch consists of two eggs and the chicks are precocial, that is they are born covered in feathers, they can see and can walk just minutes after they hatch. Their diet consists mainly of spiders, termites, locusts and snails.

Why in our gardens?

So why have they made themselves home in our gardens? To help us maintain beautiful gardens without the use of harmful chemicals, to entertain those of us that cannot sleep at 02:00, or is it because their natural habitat has been taken over by human developments? The increased urban land use in the Modderfontein area has evicted these birds from their natural habitats. They prefer open grounds with short grass and patches of bare sand and stone. As our most threatened biome, the grasslands disappear; many of the species that were dependent on them have left the area. So what can we do to save this species? Nothing! That's right, don't use harmful pesticides in the garden, don't scare them away, just let them be. They may spread their wings out and even hiss at you if you approach them, but if you stay out of their way, there's no reason why we can't live together.