



Newsletter: November/December 2014

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SCOUTS IN FORM

Norman Doak recently organised an outing in the Modderfontein Reserve for a group of scouts. Norman is District Commissioner for the eastern areas and has had a life-long commitment to scouts and scouting.

Norman reports:

It was an interesting exercise to take a group of youngsters from several scout groups and arrange a joint hike and camp.

The contingent was made up of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts from three different disciplines, Land Scouts, Air Scouts and Sea Scouts from as far afield as Alberton, Germiston, Brackenhurst, Lambton and Kensington. We met in the Fish Eagle Dam car park and the scouts hiked from there to the magazine where we camped.

The challenge for the children was to hike the one kilometre to the magazine and backpack with all their kit as well as the ingredients for their first meal which was to be cooked "backwoods style", a new experience for some new scouts.

I took this on as an exercise intended to challenge skills and learned behaviour from seasoned Patrol Leaders and older scouts and hoped that they would pass on their skills and knowledge to their juniors. It was also an opportunity to get know the other scouters a bit better and form bonds of friendship and camaraderie.

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A group of 11 year old scouts packed and ready to go



REMINDER OF YEAR END WALK AND BRAAI

Following the success of last year's walk and braai, your committee has decided to use the old magazine again and looks forward to seeing lots of you there.

It is suggested that it may be a good idea to bring along gas or other camping-style light for your individual use and, as in the past, you'll need to bring everything else you need – food, drinks, cutlery, crockery and something to sit on.

There will be a communal braai fire which will be lit at about 18:00 and, for those who can get away early, the traditional pre-braai walk will begin from the lapa at 16:00.

To get to the magazine: continue along Ardeer Road, past the gates to the Reserve until you reach the factory's Ardeer security gate then follow the signs which Carol will arrange for us. You will need to sign in at the gate.

The Modderfontein
Conservation
Society Committee
wishes all members
a wonderful,
blessed Christmas
and a safe, happy
and healthy 2015



Scouts in form

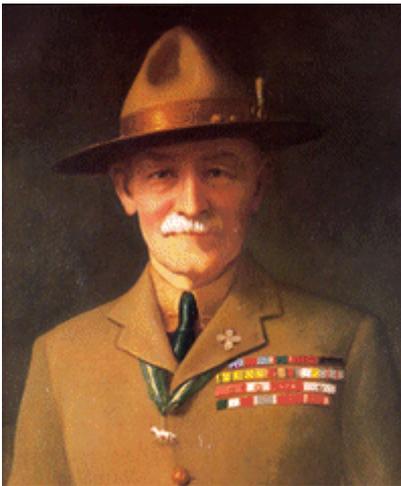
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The Air Scouts are all new kids and had never camped out so this was a really new experience for a patrol leader of 13 years of age who suddenly had me to answer to. He did exceptionally well for a rookie as I told him when his mom was driving him off home.

I was able to get to know the other scouters a bit better and was surprised that they trustingly sat in a ring and let me get on with bullying their scouts into doing things my way as per the advertised programme.

Friday night's supper – the "Backwoods Meal" meant that they were not allowed pots and pans and the scouts showed absolute ingenuity and even the youngest junior had his/her little fire going and cooking something in tin foil or on the open coals. We had hamburger patties, stew and chicken bits and salad in tin foil as well as potatoes and nobody went hungry. Puds were apples stewed in foil with cashew nuts inside – all good and wholesome food.

Saturday was an orienteering exercise with weigh points spread out left, right and centre. Everybody was on their own track and could not just follow other patrols as they weren't going where you were and were on their own mission. A distance of about 15 km had to be covered and they had to mark on their map where they found their weigh point which was a picture of a flag from neighbouring territories as well as international flags because scouting is an international movement and we



Lord Robert Baden Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement headed up the South African Constabulary, a peace keeping force which occupied Modderfontein at the end of the Boer War.

need to recognise international symbols. I came home with a happy heart as I think I achieved a great deal on behalf of the District and Scouting in general. A spontaneous round of applause from the final parade made me feel really good with multiple handshakes and farewells.

If you would like to know more about cubs or scouts and the adventures we offer you're welcome to give me a call at home on 011 608 2537 or on 082 447 9293. Girls are also included in scouting these days and several Girl Scouts camped with us.



A roaring fire is part of the scouting experience and, while Norman's scouts had good weather, storms can also put youngsters to the test.



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The scouts hiked from the parking area and backpacked their own kit and backwoods supper stuff to the magazine where we slept and returned the same way after the camp. Scouters drove to the hut and brought gas and pots and pans for further meals and all meals were judged as a competition for menu and content.

Coping with challenges

It's amazing how trained scouts of 14 or 15 years of age can cope with challenges as well as cook some really decent meals.

I was originally apprehensive as I did not know the kids and their troop habits and innuendos but as is my style I blasted forth and took charge my way. The other scouters let me get on with it and by Sunday morning the gang had accepted me (I think). They all seemed to have had a ball and enjoyed the

challenges laid out and most of all established friendships and involvement with scouts from other troops which was a part of the desired result.

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Baden Powell featured on a patriotic post card – 1900.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER NEEDED

Having lost John Clark and Rajen Reddy over the past year, your committee needs an extra member who could take responsibility for a month's activities each year. Volunteers can form a queue at the next evening meeting or phone any committee member to make enquiries.



2 400 TREES PLANTED!

Anyone visiting the Reserve during the September/October period leading up to the rainy season will have noted a lot of planting activity taking place under the new power pylons between the boomed gate and the road leading to the Far Range.

This was Albertina Mothapo and her team planting no less that 2 400 trees and shrubs – the lower growing ones under the pylons and taller ones between the pylons and Fish Eagle Dam.

Albertina had propagated many of the plants at the Modderfontein Reserve nursery.

Albertina Mothapo and three of her energetic planting team

PROTECTION FOR THE GATE

The EWT's Graham Millard and his team prepare to erect a lightening conductor at the entrance gate to the Reserve. Several conductors have been installed, particularly to protect buildings from the ravages of those typical Highveld thunderstorms.



YOUR COMMITTEE					
Name	Portfolio	Home phone	Cell phone	Office phone	E-mail
Ellen van Dongen	Chairman Education	011-462-3067	082-813-9611	011-606-0843	Ellen.VanDongen@aelms.com
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Janet Brodrick	Minutes	011-616-2872	072-679-6461		janet7@vodamail.co.za
Peter Ewen	Reserve Development	011-608-4043	076-377-3263		petemar@gam.co.za
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Jenny Gough	Speaker Liaison	011-452-2201	082-685-0959		jagough@mailone.co.za
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Robbie Vermont	Membership Publicity	011-608-2693	082-800-3704		robbiev@netactive.co.za

2015 CALENDAR NOW ON SALE

The MCS launched its 2015 wall calendar at our November evening meeting when Peter Grube, a member of the Society, shared his adventures in Tanzania with fellow members and visitors.

While the number of colour illustrations has been reduced to one due to rising costs, Theta Graphics has come up with a very attractive design nonetheless.

The calendar is the same size as previously but it has just a single full-colour illustration of a tranquil scene in the Modderfontein Reserve. Below are 12 one-month-to-view A4 sheets with dates and space alongside each date for notes.

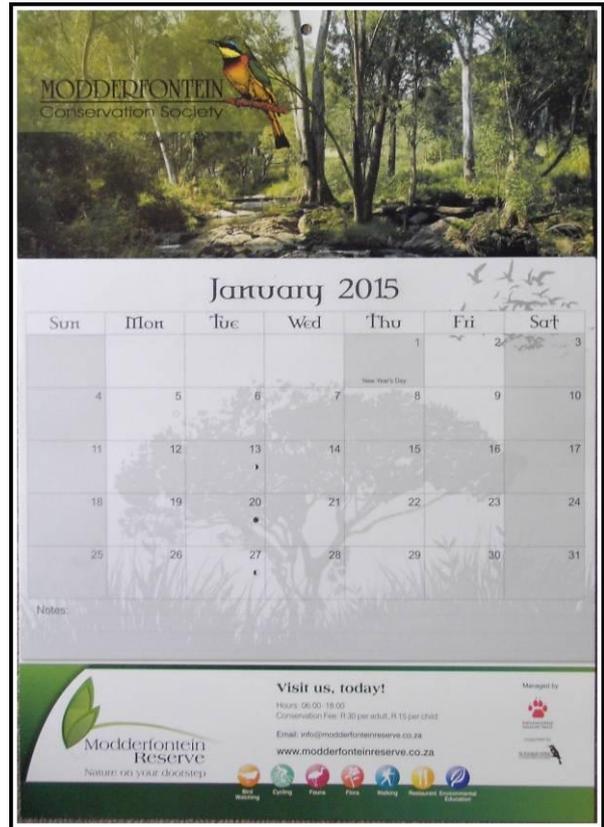
HERITAGE HIGHLIGHTED



The enlarged panels for notes are more user friendly and we expect to be sold out again.

Due to the generous sponsorship of AEL Mining Services, Acacia Real Estate and Zendai Heartland, we have been able to contain the price to just R25.00. These calendars are a real

bargain and will make great Christmas gifts. The calendars are on sale at the Modderfontein Post Office in Queen Street; phone 011 608 2551 or from a committee member.



Heritage matters took centre stage when Keith Martin presented a copy of the St Francis in the Wood 60th Anniversary photobook to the Dynamite Company Museum on behalf of the MCS and hosted members of the Johannesburg Department of Arts and Culture to a tour of the Heritage Precinct. Here are Keith, Judith Muindisi, Eric Itzkin and Museum Curator Martie Smith.

and bird guide and a level 1 FGASA field guide. In addition, he worked for four years at Lapalala Wilderness School as an Environmental Officer/Educator and spent the past two years as Reserve Manager at Ndou Reserve and Lodge. He has also undertaken voluntary work at Mokopane Breeding centre, the South African Veterinary Association and the Pretoria Zoo.

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NEW RESERVE MANAGER

Boaz Tsebe has been appointed Manager of the Modderfontein Reserve in place of Luke Strugnell who left to further his career in the Eastern Cape. Boaz has a National Diploma and a BTec in Game Ranch Management, a certificate in Supervisory Public Management, is a level 2 first aider



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

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Visit: www.ewt.org.za or phone 011 372 3600

"CONSERVATION IN ACTION"

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

MODDERFONTEIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY	
Programme of events: 2015 (Updated 21.11.2014)	
January	Saturday 10 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday 15 19:30 Melissa Hofmann talks on "Bird Strike Avoidance at ACSA Airports"
	Sunday 25 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays: all 08:00 Walk in the Reserve
	Contact: Norman Doak (h)011 608 2537 or 082 447 9293
February	Saturday 14 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday 19 19:30 Noel & Enid Williams presentation on "Lesser Known Reserves"
	Sunday 22 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays: all 08:00 Walk in the Reserve
	Contact: Carol Sherwood (h) 011 443 4114 (c) 082 906 5794
March	Saturday 14 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday 26 19:30 AGM and talk by Juliet Price on the Jane Goodall Institute's "Roots and Shoots Humanitarian Outreach Programme"
	Sunday 29 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays: all 08:00 Walk in the Reserve
	Contact: Janet Brodrick (h)011 453 3910 (c) 072 679 6461
April	Saturday 11 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday 16 19:30 TBA
	Sunday 26 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays: all 08:00 Walk in the Reserve
	Contact: Peter Olive (h) 011 609 4708 (c) 083 461 6221
May	Saturday 09 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday 21 19:30 Neil Heron – Kruger Park Guide and Ranger on "Animal Behaviour"
	Sunday 24 08:30 Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays: all 08:30 Walk in the Reserve with John Clark 082-509-9856
	Contact: Jenny Gough (h) 011 452 2201 (c) 082 685 0959

SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

Notes:

- **Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday walks** leave from Fish Eagle Dam in the Reserve promptly at the advertised times.
- **Bird Walks** are held on the first Saturday of the month.
For times and info: Pat Ayling on 082 465 3683 or Pat van Nierop on 083 326 6838.
- **Heritage Day walks – bookings essential.** Call Keith (082 450 4003) or Robbie (082 800 3704).
Cost R30.00 per person

FOR ALL WALKS: BE THERE AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFOREHAND

- **Evening meetings** take place in the Modderfontein Town Hall at 1 Casino Road.
- **Charges:** Visitors pay R10 for walks and R30 for evening talks; members pay R10 for evening talks.
Conservation fee to enter Reserve – R30/adult and R15/child or pensioner.

Visit www.modderconserve.org

**STOP
PRESS**

During the Springtime, several reports were received indicating that the Blue Cranes had returned but there was a little confusion as to whether there was just one or whether there were two. This photo taken by Peter Olive a

few days ago shows two birds in the fields just below the gypsum dumps. We're hoping to see little ones early in the New Year.



Scorpion talk in last minute rescue

New member Maureen Otnes demonstrates that scorpions are not necessarily dangerous. She was one of the 40 or so folk who attended the October evening talk and demonstration. When scheduled speaker Jonathan Leeming was unable to attend, Ian Engelbrecht and Alistair Mathie stepped in at the last moment to rescue our speaker evening. Ian, did the talking. He has an MSc in Conservation Biology from Wits and is almost done with a PhD on trapdoor spiders at Tukkies. He worked at the Arachnids Unit of the Agricultural Research Council for a short while and then for Gauteng Nature Conservation for seven years (for his sins, he says). He has also done extensive work in a voluntary capacity for the American Museum of Natural History collecting arachnids all over southern Africa for research purposes.

Alistair brought a whole lot of live specimens and other interesting things for a 'hands on' session afterwards.