



Public relations vacancy

The Friends of the Helderberg Nature Reserve requires the services (voluntary) of a well seasoned and enthusiastic public relations person to help promote the activities at the reserve.

If you have writing skills, experience in dealing with the media and organising events, this position is for you. An added advantage would be experience in designing posters and brochures.

Duties include:

- arranging publicity events in the nature reserve;
- assisting with media relations;
- promoting events and Friends membership;
- communicating with the media to promote the reserve.

Please contact Alistair Munday on ☎ 021 850 0872 or 082 886 6664 for more information.



Early riser keys

We apologise for the frustration experienced by some of the members due to the unavailability of keys, something which was beyond our control. Please be assured that a full quota (150) will be available for the upcoming membership year – 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

Keys will be issued on a *first come, first serve* basis, are for paid up Friends members only and will cost R100.

Terms and conditions

- The key is valid for *one* person only – the one who purchased it.
- The key may be used in the mornings *only* and not after closing time.

Please remember that the use of the key is a privilege and not a right. If abused, the privilege can be withdrawn without prior notice.

Obtaining a key

Keys can be obtained from the Information Centre daily from 10:00 to 15:30, starting on 31 March (*not* before).

Would those who have keys for the current year, please return these. Thank you. Enjoy your early morning walk!

Please note:

The hours for membership renewal/application and the issuing of keys are from **10:00 to 15:30 daily.**



Helderberg Friends

Newsletter No 66

March 2011

Annual General Meeting

7 May 2011 at 14:30

The AGM is not something we normally jump up and down about, but is it a very important event on any organisation's calendar, not least of all the Friends of the Helderberg Nature Reserve. The AGM will give you, as Friends members, deeper insights into the Friends' achievements of the past year and the challenges going into the future. Do make every effort to attend.

An important item will be the election of the committee for the upcoming year. We will be also be privileged to have Dave Pepler as our guest speaker.

Tea/coffee will be served after the meeting. Members are asked to please bring a plate of eats.



Agenda includes:

- Welcome and Apologies
- Minutes of AGM held on 8 May 2010
- Chairman's Report
- Financial Statement
- The EEC Officer's Report
- Election of Friends' Committee
(*Please note: Nomination Forms are available at the Information Centre.*)
- Guest speaker: Dave Pepler

Venue:

Mike Woods Environment Education Centre in the Reserve.

From the treasurer



Our financial year end is 31 March 2011. All indications are that we will achieve our financial goal of a break-even budget.

Our main revenue sources – membership subscriptions and the sunset concerts – are both on target. On the expense side, we have managed to reduce overheads and have been able to increase spending on environmental education and projects within the reserve.

The annual financial statement will be presented at the Annual General Meeting in May.

We thank all our members for their support during the past year.

Membership 2011/12

We have made a slight adjustment to the membership fees for the upcoming membership year – 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. The rate for ordinary members goes up by R5,00 and that for a family by R10,00. The rate for pensioners and patrons remains the same.

Membership Fees are as follows:

Ordinary	R90
Senior Citizens	R55
Family	R180
Patron	R275

Current members may renew their membership at the Information Centre during March and will be issued with their new membership cards. We encourage members to make use of this opportunity. Times for membership renewal are daily from 10:00 to 15:30.

– Patrick Neale-May



Letter from the Area Manager

Let me start by wishing you a belated happy new year – let us hope 2011 will be a great year! In terms of happenings in the reserve, we have certainly hit the ground running.

Reserve Management Plans

By the time you read the newsletter the comment period for our Integrated Reserve Management Plans will be something of the past. We have had some comments already and the Friends have had much input into the process.

We will need to collate the comments into the management plan and have it submitted to City Council and then to Cape Nature. It is quite a long process but well worth it, as the reserve will enjoy protected status under the National Environmental Management Act.

New students and an intern

I would also like to welcome our two new students from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology – Shelley Bletsoe and Robert Le Brun. They will be with us until the end of December 2011 completing their Work Integrated Learning component. They have big shoes to fill as Helderberg has produced the top student for two years running – no pressure on them at all!

Talking of staff, I would also like to welcome back Romy Klusener, one of last year's students. Romy has been awarded an intern position and will also be with us until the end of December.



(l to r) Robert Le Brun, student; Romy Klusener, intern; Shelley Bletsoe, student

We extend a big thank you to the Friends for the generous donation towards the salaries of Romy and that of Mark de Wet, intern at Kogelberg Nature Reserve.

Maintenance and upgrades

The upgrade of the toilet facilities in the picnic site is nearing completion. They were in desperate need of a facelift and that is exactly what we have done. We have put in new tiles, painted and also put on a new roof.

Our summer watering programme is also paying off and the grass is looking really good. Staff members have been arriving at work early in an attempt to avoid the extreme heat and have completed trimming back the over growth along the Brown Route, not an easy task, as you can imagine, when the mercury hovers around 35°C.

The boardwalk is also receiving some attention in that we are replacing all of the wooden slats in a phased approach. This is causing some problems due to the uneven surface. We will strive to correct this as soon as we can. Any volunteers will be most welcome!

Our consolidation and reducing of our footprint continues. Romy organised a digger loader which successfully removed the old *Eucalyptus* stumps from the office area. Romy will be embarking on a planting and seeding programme in time for the first winter rains. I am very keen to see what will come up.

The work around the stores area is also nearing completion. Congratulations to my staff for the initiative shown in this regard. It is they who took ownership of the process and ran with it.

Mountain Challenge 2011

We are looking forward to 22 May – the day when the 2011 edition of the Helderberg Mountain Challenge will be held. We are hoping for a bigger and better event this year and have added an extreme route which sees competitors running to the Dome. Rather than me! On this note, if there is anyone keen to assist as a marshal on the day, please contact me.

Volunteer!

I would like to encourage you to become volunteers in the reserve. The Friends run a variety of projects from environmental education to the nursery, to a monthly hack group, to serving at the Information Centre. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

A thought in closing: "You will enhance your life by finding a way to serve others. Whether you volunteer at a hospital or join a charitable committee, serving others in some small way will make you feel alive and fulfilled."

Until the next edition – stay well. I look forward to seeing you in the reserve.

Owen Wittridge2.



Clearing Invasives

Hackers continued to do good work in the waterworks area. A major pest there is scotch thistle - very prickly and a challenge to remove. Although the attendance dropped a bit over the holiday period, the hacks continue to be well supported with an average of 14 people per hack in 2010.

Upcoming hacks dates are:

9 April 2011 14 May 2011

11 June 2011 9 July 2011

All hacks start at 08:00.

For more information contact James Silberbauer on 078 306 1660.

Information Centre



What a joy it is when visitors walk through the door of the Information Centre saying, "Lovely, lovely, lovely!!"

Once again we thank many of the Friends for their valued support in coming to see the exhibits at the Information Centre or to buy a gift at the shop. Our overseas visitors usually find some South African gift to take home to friends, as do many locals. Please remember that all profits are for use in the reserve and we need your support.

Our volunteers

We thank the ladies who serve at the Information Centre on a daily basis and the volunteers who assist on a Sunday. Their dedication is to be applauded. Yvonne Hutchins, who runs the shop, is out of action for a while due to shoulder surgery. We wish her a speedy recovery and thank the ladies who have helped fill the gap.

We welcome Jane Boswell to the team at the Information Centre and trust she will enjoy working with us.

– Rene Lind, Co-ordinator

Concert Series 2010/2011

♦ Tommy Dell – 28 November 2010

The season got off to a good start with Tommy Dell and the Band Roadhouse. It was a great performance catering for young and old, English and Afrikaans. Apart from Tommy being a good musician, he is a great celebrity artist keeping the audience in stitches of laughter.

♦ Jesse Jordan – 12 December 2010

Jesse put on a fantastic performance. Everyone had a chance to let their hair down and enjoy the music. At one point the stage was in danger of collapsing with a number of people joining the band to dance with Jesse.

♦ Hello Africa – 9 January 2011

First time in the Helderberg, *Hello Africa*, with Verity, singer and songwriter leading the group, gave us a fantastic performance. What was encouraging was to see the younger generation joining our concerts.

♦ Shiraz – 23 January 2011

They came and they came like bees to a honey pot. By 16:00 there was not a single parking place left in the reserve. By 17:00 people were parking down Reservoir Road. It was exciting to see droves of people coming up the road and, yes, it was a bumper performance with more than 1 400 people in attendance. At this rate, we may have to introduce some kind of shuttle service for next year's performance.

♦ Ian Smith & VJR – 6 February 2011

Even if you are not a jazz fan, Ian and his group's performance was stunning. Ian and his trumpet sent crystal clear music through the reserve. To top it all, Adelia Douw, a 17 year-old young lady from the Delft Big Band, sang a selection of songs that literally made your hair stand on end. Fantastic! Adelia will be one of a group from the Delft Big Band going to Sweden later this year. We must have them back again.

♦ Graham Gillot – 20 February 2011

If you ever wanted to know how to play a guitar, you need to hear and see Graham. Together with Duncan Combs, he made playing the guitar seem like a walk in the breeze. It was fantastic music for all the rock fans, especially the kids who danced away to the music.



Enthralled by Adelia Douw's singing on 6 February

♦ Big Sky – 13 March 2011

At the time of going to print this concert, the last in the series, had not yet taken place. Being such a popular band, we are sure it will be a great occasion.

Running these concerts is no mean task. In saying this, I must thank *all* the volunteers who gave up their time to make this concert series such a success. It is hard work. Thank you!

– Alistair Munday, Events Co-ordinator

Snippet from the past . . .

Aircraft wreckage found in the Reserve

In 1978, while clearing vegetation, municipal workers came across the wreckage of a pre-war aircraft on the slopes of Helderberg Mountain. The plane was later identified as a Hawker Osprey of No 716 Catapult Flight, HMS *Amphion* – a then flagship of the African Station, Royal Navy, based at Simonstown.

The aircraft, equipped with landing undercarriage, was catapulted from the *Amphion* sometime early in 1937. It landed at Youngsfield in Wynberg and was flown from that airfield until the crash, probably early in 1938. Both the pilot and navigator lost their lives.

Following the crash the wreckage was guarded on the mountainside for about two weeks while a 'court of inquiry' was held into the circumstances of the crash. The engine, a Rolls Royce Kestrel, was salvaged but the rest of the aircraft was abandoned.

Indigenous Nursery

Open: Tuesdays to Fridays
10:00 to 16:00
Saturdays 10:00 to 14:00

How quickly the seasons come and go and we are once again looking forward to the first rains of the winter months.

Autumn and winter are the ideal times for planting, particularly the Fynbos family – proteas, pincushions and ericas. The nursery should have a good selection from which to choose. The cool, wet weather allows the plants to become firmly established before the warmer summer weather begins.

Most of the gardeners we meet at the nursery are very aware of the need to conserve water and choose plants that are area appropriate for their gardens and conditions.

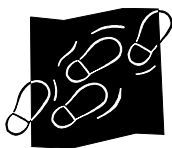
We are planning to source and stock a wider variety of plants that are endemic to the Helderberg area.



Photo, published on 4 October 1978, of the wreckage found by municipal workers in a crater on the mountain.

"I remember there was a terrible crash in King's Kloof," Mr Norman McLeod, retired printer and former owner of the *District Mail*, told the *Boland Bureau* in 1978. "People all over the town heard the explosion but I couldn't go up there because I was putting the newspaper to bed at that time and couldn't get away."

Thus this event was never reported on in the *District Mail* at the time.



Walks in the Reserve

Good news for walkers!

Walkers will be pleased to know that the Friends will be hosting walks on the 2nd Saturday of each month. These walks will be open to visitors, as well as members, and will be guided by two experienced hikers.

Further information regarding the walks is given in the block opposite. All walks will start from the kiosk near the restaurant in the reserve.

No booking, as such, is required. However, to assist with arrangements, please let the Information Centre know if you are planning to join the walk.

Please note: In the event of bad weather, the walks will be deferred to the following week, starting at the same time as scheduled.

Information Walks

These walks, a gentle stroll through the lower parts of the reserve, will continue on the dates listed below. They are a wonderful opportunity to explore the biodiversity of our Fynbos.

All walks start at 08:00 from the Information Centre and last about two hours. While the walks are free, those without a valid Friends' card will need to pay the normal entry charge.

- **27 March: Fynbos** – Ron du Toit
- **24 April: Protea** – Andreas Groenewald
- **29 May: Birds** – Jill Mortimer
- **26 June: Medicinal Plants** – Andreas Groenewald
- **31 July: Fynbos** – Ron du Toit

Note: If there is uncertainty, due to weather conditions on the day, please sms or call Rene Lind 084 513 1413.

Education Centre

The Biodiversity Exhibition, the highlight of 2010, was visited by a number of schools. Overall, however, fewer schools came to the EEC, due primarily to disruptions caused by the World Cup and civil servants' strike.

The EEC is looking forward to a better 2011. Read more about their plans in the enclosed EEC newsletter.



Walking Programme

Date	Start	Route	Grade	Est duration
9 April	07:30	Green Route	3B	4 hrs + break
14 May	07:30	West Peak	3C	6 hrs + break
11 June	08:30	Red Route	2A	3 hrs + break
9 July	08:30	Green Route	3B	4 hrs + break

Grading >

1 easy **2** moderate **3** strenuous
A no exposure to heights **B** moderate climbing
C moderate exposure to heights

Requirements: All walkers are to have suitable footwear – boots are mandatory for the Green Route and West Peak. Walkers need to bring warm and waterproof clothing (the weather changes quickly at higher altitudes), water bottles, a hat, sun block and snacks.

Contact persons:

- Don Reid sms or call 072 270 7972 email: donald.reid@telkomsa.net
- Rene Lind sms or call 084 513 1413 email: renelind@kingsley.co.za



Night Walks in the Reserve

Andreas Groenewald reports on the first two night walks in the series.

The first two night walks for 2011 went extremely well, with the weather definitely in our favour and many animals out in the open to view.

Full moon walk

On the first walk at full moon, the group was entertained at the start by a pair of Cape Hare feeding on the grass near the Information Centre. While viewing them, a pair of fledgling Spotted Eagle Owls joined us on their nightly patrol of the picnic area. Not being able to give the adult call yet, they communicated with screeching and hissing. These young ones showed very little fear and allowed all of us to get within a few metres of them – what a privilege!

The moon rose around 21:00 from behind some clouds, giving a wonderful glow to the surroundings. We all had a great

time taking in the view from high up the Yellow Route. Our route along the stream and boardwalk took us where we could view excellent examples of many types of spiders. Along the banks hundreds of tunnel spiders were waiting eagerly to pounce on a meal, while orb-web spiders waited patiently at the centre of their webs.

New moon walk

Our second walk at new moon, provided a great opportunity to learn about the various stars and constellations. The mighty Jupiter graced the early sky in the west as it travelled on its slow journey across the sky – it will be out of sight for the next few months. Good views of Orion, Lepus, Taurus and Canis Major provided for much discussions among the group members.

With the favourable weather, animal life was abundant. The young owls, hares and the occasional frog added further interest to an excellent evening. This made us all look forward to the next walk!



Cape Hare seen near the Info Centre



An orb-web spider waiting patiently for a meal

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♦ Mike Woods Environmental Education Centre ☎ 021 852-8831 ♦ Website: www.helderbergnaturereserve.co.za

To be cut out and kept in a prominent place as a reminder of upcoming programme and special events.



Friends of the Helderberg Nature Reserve Programme & Special Events

March 2011

27 08:00 **Information Walk in the Reserve: Fynbos**

April 2011

9 07:30 **Walk – Green Route***

9 08:00 **Alien Vegetation Hack**

24 08:00 **Information Walk in the Reserve: Protea**

May 2011

7 14:30 **Annual General Meeting**
at the Education Centre

14 07:30 **Walk – West Peak***

14 08:00 **Alien Vegetation Hack**

29 08:00 **Information Walk in the Reserve: Birds**

June 2011

11 08:30 **Walk – Red Route***

11 08:00 **Alien Vegetation Hack**

26 08:00 **Information Walk in the Reserve: Medicinal Plants**

July 2011

9 08:30 **Walk – Green Route***

9 08:00 **Alien Vegetation Hack**

31 08:00 **Information Walk in the Reserve: Fynbos**

* If the weather is unsuitable, the walk will be deferred to the following week.

Contact person for all walks: Rene Lind 084 513 1412

For more information contact the Information Centre ☎ 021 851 4060 or visit our website: www.helderbergnaturereserve.co.za