



MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB

Fixture List: April – June 2016

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER–2nd Quarter 2016

Welcome to the 2nd quarterly magazine and fixtures list for the MBC 2016.

You will find an array of hikes to choose from, of all grades- catering to your level of enjoyment. Please remember to book with the hike leader listed with that hike, and also to confirm arrangements.

Autumn is my favorite season for hiking- warm days and cool nights, along with the last of the afternoon summer storms that still roll in- making for spectacular cave 'tv'. The autumn landscape of the Berg is what coffee-table books are made of.

Coming up in the socials list this quarter is our Annual NEW MEMBERS EVENING. Hosted by Sorin Dimitriu and the MBC Committee, new members are provided with a slide show and talk on what to wear, pack, eat and other useful Berging advice. It is an opportunity to meet the committee and ask any questions you have about hiking and the preparation for time in the mountains. This evening is for new MBC Members, as well as aspiring hikers of all ages and abilities. Visitor members are welcome to attend.

In terms of 'celebrity' speakers, we have ROB BENTLEY coming to address the MBC on Thursday 28.04.2016. Rob and his team were on Everest route when the disastrous Earthquake happened. Rob has presented his story to many people in many venues already, and we are honored that Rob, as a past member of the MBC, has agreed to share his experiences, photos and story of this catastrophic event with us. Rob assures an action packed adventure with light-hearted interludes. Invite all your friends. MBC Members attend this talk for free. Visitors and non-members will be charged R30 at the door.

Enjoy the hiking stories written by our very own MBC leaders and members in this magazine as well. These are well worth the read in order to learn about areas you may visit one day.

SEE YOU OUT THERE!!!

Karen Miller
Chairman: Mountain Backpackers Club

MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB COMMITTEE

Chairman	Karen Miller	chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za
Vice Chairman	John McGovern	082 659 5111
Treasurer	Bobby Stanton	031 465 5535
Fixture List / Magazine	Andy Brown	072 101 2498
Marketing	Heidi Cox	082 706 4283
Committee member	Alan Etchells	082 398 4103
Social media	Brett Bentley	
New member mentorship	Sorin Dimitriu	084 681 8920
Recruitment	Roy Bowden	082 901 5301
Student/youth liaison	Amy Grantham	
Leadership liaison	Jacqui Kennedy	083 399 9255
Secretary / admin: (paid position)	Philip van Gass	083 440 1651

Fax: 086 504 3382

Website: www.mountainbackpackers.co.za

Email: info@mountainbackpackers.co.za

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2016

Single memberships: R220

Family membership: R280

Kindly pay your 2016 MBC Fees as soon as possible.

Please pay by EFT and NOT cash deposit or cheque at the bank! (The bank charges are prohibitively expensive).

Should you wish to pay cash, please pay the Chairman/committee member at one of the Socials (and make sure you get a receipt!) and we will process your payment with the administrator.

If you do pay by EFT, please give us a meaningful reference –surname, name and membership number is ideal.

Please EFT your payment to:

FNB - Westville Branch

Account Name: MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB

Account No: 50780007264

Branch code: 223526

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 – 2nd QUARTER

April 2016

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
2 nd – 3 rd April	Garden Castle: Garden Castle to Pholela Hut return along Giants Cup Trail. Start Saturday 7am from office at Garden Castle overnight in Pholela Hut. Return Sunday via Giants Cup Trail or get a friend to collect you at Cobham.	34km each way. Total 68km	Christine Pickup	Tel: 082 782 6025 Christinebro3@gmail.com	3-4
8 th -10 th April	MHLOPENI NATURE RESERVE: 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 & prolific birdlife. Pre-booking & payment essential: joy@mhlopeni.co.za Book before 1 Apr.		Heidi Cox	heidi.dinan@gmail.com 0827064283	2
12 th – 13 th April	Aasevoelsgransgrot (Cave): 8km round trip for beginners, bring a costume. Explore the area once we get to the cave. Sunday, a quick march to the cars, drop off our packs, take only a day pack and hike to Caracal cave for lunch.	16km over 2 days	Jacqui Kennedy	jacqui@retsol.co.za	1
16 th April	Kloof Gorge. Hikes depart 08.30 hr Ezemvelo car park, Kloof falls Rd. Route will be decided on the day according to weather conditions, hikers experience, number of hikers etc. For more info phone John on the Friday prior to the hike.		John McGovern	082 6595111	1-3
16 – 17 th April	Vergelegen: Visit the sulphur spring from Birds Nest Cave.	28km 660m	David Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 – 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-5
17 th April	HOWICK - Day hike in "The Ambers" - new hike - Lovely views around Howick & surrounding areas, plenty of game & birdlife - Combined hike with oher clubs. - Maximum 12 members, first come first served - Last booking by Wed 13 Apr. Cost: R20 p/p	12km	Keith Ashton	Tel: 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	1-2

16 th – 17 th April	Dinosaur Cave, Injusuti Wilderness Area – Central Berg. Cave sleeps 6 comfortably, restricting the numbers on this one.	20km	Jacqui Kennedy	jacqui@retsol.co.za	3
23 rd -24 th April	Mzimkhulwana Hut, Southern Berg. This is an idea hike for first timers at a relax pace. This hut forms part of the Giants Cup Trail and is situated in the Cobham area. Ablution and kitchen facilities are provided at the facility.	18km	Clive Powell	031 564 6169 Ah 083 303 4778 clive.glynis@gmail.com	2-3
30 th April 1 st May	Giants Castle Summit. One of the most spectacular climbs in the Berg. Physical fitness essential. Tents required. First day: 11km – Hike to tent at the bottom of Giants Pass. Second day: 25km - Climb up Giant's Pass to the summit (3315m) with a day pack. Return to the bottom to collect backpacks then hike back to the cars. Optional on second day: 11km - Wait at the camp site for the others to return from the summit then hike back to the cars.	42km 1555m or optional 28km 570m	Farouk Omarjee	031-577 6336 081 530 8447 farouko@telkomsa.net	4-5
30 th April – 2 nd May	Cobham: Day 1 - Glade Cave via Lakes Cave; Day 2 - Mzimkhulwana Hut via the Mzimkhulwana River; Day 3 - Return via the Giant's Cup Trail.	34km 530m	David Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 – 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	3,5
30 th April – 2 nd May	Monks Cowl area: Day 1: Monks Cowl to Keith Bush Camp. Day 2: Elands Grove to Cathkin saddle down Cowl Gorge to Cowl Fork campsite. Day 3: Coutour path to Blindman's corner and car park.	Day one- 18km Day two- 7km Day three 15km Total 40km 1300m	Andy Brown	Tel; 072 101 2498 e-mail: andybza@gmail.com	3

May 2016...

May 2016

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
7 th – 8 th May	Kamberg area- hike to Sinclair's cave and return. 1 st 6 people in cave. Excess in tents. Please provide contact number when booking. R60 p/p. Please bring correct cash.	24km 350m	Dave Sclanders	Email only: dave@bergfree.co.za Last booking 3 rd May	3
14 th , 15 th May	Injasuti: Lower Injasuti Cave. Meet at KZN Wildlife office at 9:00. Ideal overnite cave for first time backpackers.	14 km 100m	Farouk Omarjee	031-577 6336 081 530 8447 farouko@telkomsa.net	3
21 st - 22 nd May	Northern Berg Mont-Aux-Sources. Via chain ladders and Thukela falls. Head for heights required.	13 km 700m	Andy Brown	Tel; 072 101 2498 E-mail: andybza@gmail.com	4
21 st May	Kloof Gorge. Hikes depart 08.30 hr Ezemvelo car park, Kloof falls Rd. Route will be decided on the day according to weather conditions, hikers experience, number of hikers etc. For more info phone John on the Friday prior to the hike.		John McGovern	082 6595111	1-3
21 st – 22 nd May	Swimen Hut, beginners hike. Saturday to Pillar Cave, Saturday night bring and share braai. Sunday to Sleeping Beauty cave, bring a costume.	16km over 2 days	Jacqui Kennedy	jacqui@retsol.co.za	1
24 th – 27 th May	Drakensberg Gardens. Cottage - 3 nights MID-WEEK. Fully equipped and very comfortable. Beautiful area in the heart of the mountains. Max 10 members. Day hikes from cottage or simply unwind on the property (10 acres). Full DSTV for news & Sport etc. Hot baths and showers. Combined with other clubs. Please book early to secure your place. First come and paid first served. Last bookings by 16 May. R100 p/p/n Total R300	12-15km each da	Keith Ashton	Tel: 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	2-3
28 th -29 th May	Mkhomazi: McKenzie's Cave returning via Cyprus Cave	24km 688m	David Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 – 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-5

June 2016...

June 2016

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
3 rd – 5 th June	Bushman's Nek - Short (just over one km) backpacking to Bushman's Nek Hut for a two or three-night stay. Beautiful day hikes from this base to see waterfalls, bushmen's paintings, caves & lovely pools for swimming. Hut has lockable rooms with bunk beds & mattresses + flush toilets & showers (only cold water but no problem) - Combined hike other clubs. Please book early to secure place - last bookings by 20 May. Cost R100 p/p/n	12- 15km each day	Keith Ashton	Tel: 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	2-3
4 th – 5 th June	Garden Castle. Rhino Peak. Day 1. Night hike to pillar cave. Day 2. Mashia pass to Rhino peak for sundowners. Tenting on top.	20km 1200m	Greg Walker	Email: gregory04@mweb.co.za 031 7056414 from 17h00 to 20h00hrs.	3-4
11 th June	African Fish Eagle Trail: 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. RSVP by 10 June.	12.5km	Heidi Cox	heidi.dinan@gmail.com 0827064283	2
16 th –19 th June	Lesotho : Sani Pass: Day 1 - Sani Mountain Lodge Backpackers via Phinong Pass ; Day 2 - Climb Hodgson's Peaks ; Day 3 - Climb Thabana Ntlenyana , the highest peak in southern Africa; Day 4 - Return via Sani Pass. A valid passport is required. 4X4s will take hikers to the SA border post and continue up the pass with supplies - no backpacks required! Hikers can drive, cycle or walk back down the pass. Spaces very limited - book early to avoid disappointment. Cost for accommodation is R750 pp for the 3 nights.	50km 1520m	David Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 – 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) : cougar1@telkomsa.net	3,5
18 th June	Kloof Gorge. Hikes depart 08.30 hr Ezemvelo car park, Kloof falls Rd. Route will be decided on the day according to weather conditions, hikers experience, number of hikers etc. For more info phone John on the Friday prior to the hike.		John McGoven	Contact : 0833034778 0315646169 (after hours) Email: clive.glynis@gmail.com	1-3
25 th -26 th June	Monks Cowl area: Magnificent Injunja via Zulu Cave.	30km 800m	Andy Brown	Tel; 072 101 2498 E-mail: andybza@gmail.com	3-5

25 th – 26 th June	Hike to Zeni Cave 6km, Sunday - 16km hike home, going past the Pyramid and Column, past Doreen falls, back to the car park.	22km over 2 days	Jacqui Kennedy	jacqui@retsol.co.za	3
---	--	------------------------	-------------------	---------------------	---

Advance Notices

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
9 – 11 th April	MHLOPENI NATURE RESERVE: 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 & prolific birdlife. Pre-booking & payment essential: joy@mhlopeni.co.za Book before 3Apr.		Heidi Cox	0827064283 heidi.dinan@gmail.com	2
1 – 10 th Sept 2017 (+ extra days for travel)	TANKWA CAMINO (2016 hike already booked.) Walk from Calvinia to Ceres. Cost R5500.00 includes meals, camp spot, fellowship, support vehicle, water, transport back to Calvinia & more. Please see website www.tankwacamino.com , for all information. Deposit required on registering. Please advise when you register, so that we can plan shared transport.	260km	Christine Pickup	Cell: 0827826025 Email: christinebro3@gmail.com	
17 th Sept	INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP - a very important international event on the environmental calendar (3rd Saturday of Sept). Meet at 08h00 Umhlanga Nature Reserve car-park (Lagoon Drive next to Breakers Resort Umhlanga). RSVP for organisational reasons by 10 Sept.	Working 2km	Heidi Cox	0827064283 heidi.dinan@gmail.com	1
26 th to 28 th August	Annual Club Campout / Social. 2016. Hutting and Camping and braaing and fun. Venue to confirmed.				
SPRING To be Confirmed	THE GRAND TRAVERSE 2016— Postponed to Spring/ September. Amphitheatre to Bushman's Nek. Only for the very fit and committed. Start your fitness program NOW.	220Km	Andy Brown	Tel; 072 101 2498 E-mail: andybza@gmail.com	5

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.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Directions to the MBC's Socials Venue: The 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 under the pedestrian bridge and at the first traffic lights take a right U-turn to join the opposite lane, drive down and turn left just before the pedestrian bridge, up this narrow lane for about 200m and then turn left through the gate into the Bowling Club parking.

From Westville - take the M13 towards Durban, past Westwood Shopping centre, through 45th Cutting traffic lights, down Jan Smuts Highway, turn left just before the pedestrian bridge, up this narrow lane for about 200m and then turn left through the gate into the Bowling Club parking.

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 under the pedestrian bridge and at the first traffic lights take a right U-turn to join the opposite lane, drive down and turn left just before the pedestrian bridge, up this narrow lane for about 200m and then turn left through the gate into the Bowling Club parking.

<u>SOCIAL CALENDAR</u>	
MBC Socials normally take place every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at the Sherwood Bowling Club, 7:00 for 7:30pm	
DATE	DESCRIPTION
14 th April	<p>Downhill Snow Skiing. By Sorin Dimitriu.</p> <p>Alpine skiing is the one of most exciting sports and recreations I ever experienced. It takes place in the magnificent white covered mountain landscapes surrounded by imposing peaks or crossing forested slopes, into the fresh air and invigorating cold of winter. This is a presentation of my many years of skiing trips and the deep passion I have for skiing.</p>
28 th April	<p>Everest Earthquake. By Rob Bentley.</p> <p>Celebrity speaker, Rob Bentley and his team were on the Everest route when the disastrous Earthquake happened. Rob will share his experiences, photos and story of this catastrophic event with us. Rob assures an action packed adventure with light-hearted interludes. MBC Members attend this talk for free. Visitors and non-members will be asked for R30pp at the door.</p>
12 th May	<p>New member evening. By Committee.</p> <p>A fun evening where a new member can learn everything they could wish to know about the club, it's leaders, activities and recommended equipment.</p>
26 th May	<p>Rare leatherback and loggerhead turtles in KZN. By Heidi Cox.</p> <p>We are privileged to have rare leatherback and loggerhead turtles on the far North Coast of KZN. These species are critically endangered due to loss of suitable breeding grounds, oceanic debris and deep sea fishing practices. Heidi and Chris Cox visited Bhanga Nek and Mabibi to watch these incredible creatures' plight laying eggs and running the gauntlet to the sea's edge as they hatch. Heidi is keen to tell you all about it!</p>
9 th June	<p>Chadar Trek. Northern India. By Karen & Debbie.</p> <p>An icy adventure up a frozen river trek takes us to back to an ancient trading route in the North Indian Himalaya region of Leh in Kashmir. The peace and tranquility of the mountains was quickly broken after a chaotic trip to Delhi and the famous Taj Mahal. Curry for breakfast, lunch and supper, chilli sauce for desert and constantly frozen toes!</p>
23 rd June	<p>Raptor Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre. By Tammy Caine.</p> <p>" Raptor Rescue Rehabilitation Centre is a centre dedicated to the rehabilitation and research of indigenous birds of prey. Established over a decade ago the centre has grown from a simple treatment clinic for sick, injured and orphaned birds of prey to a centre dedicated to scientific research, community outreach and conservation efforts to protect and preserve our resident bird of prey populations"</p>

REPORTBACKS FROM RECENT CLUB HIKES

STRANDLOPER HIKING TRAIL. 60km KEI MOUTH to GONUBIE. 5th to 8th January 2016

Led by Christine and John Pickup.



Christine and John Pickup are well known for planning unique hikes, so for January 2016 they organised the spectacular 60km, 4 day 3 night Strandloper Hiking trail.

For our adventure we were to “slackpack” the trail with John’s daughter Claire and partner Eej providing logistical support by delivering luggage, food and refreshments to the overnight huts.

On the evening of the 4th January a mixed group of twelve walkers and two “roadies” congregated at the Kei mouth environmental hut / backpackers for an introductory braai and refreshments.

Next morning at 8:30 with the sound of incessant snoring still fresh in our ears we proceeded to a briefing with the custodian of the trail Brian, who assured us that we were definitely cheating by “slackpacking” the trail and that the chances of drowning were minimal.



So at 9:00 the adventure began. Mixed emotions from the group. A few apprehensive of the river crossings, some apprehensive of walking 60km for the first time in their lives, others in trepidation of walking with a bunch of hardened Berg hikers, the rest looking forward to a relaxing stroll on the beach.

We quickly reach the quaint little resort of Morgan Bay where we swam and held a mini Iron man / woman competition on the beach. After a relaxing lunch we climbed the headland and walked along the scenic cliffs before descending to our first overnight stop 13.5km out in a picturesque log cabin on the beach at Double Mouth. Our worldly possessions plus food and booze had already been dropped off by Claire and Eej. Ablution facilities were provided by the adjacent caravan park.





Day two was a pleasant but brief 9km walk to the backpacker rooms at the Haga Haga hotel. The scenery on the way was varied with spectacular rock formations like alien landscapes on the beaches of Marsh Strand and Fairy Beach. We lunched at the hotel and the Pickups enjoyed a reunion with the coastal branch of their family. In the evening before supper John and Christine were strong-armed into renewing their marriage vows in a "ceremony" help by the hikers as Haga Haga is their old honeymoon destination.

Day three started wet and became wetter, turning it into a 23km slog in pouring rain with a head wind that chilled most of us to the core. At 11:30 and 19km out twelve drowned rats descended on the Chintsa West pub and restaurant and quickly took over. The balcony was strewn with packs and wet clothing, the restaurant strewn with wet hikers using coffee, hot chocolate and whiskey to warm themselves. After a veery long relaxing lunch we made the last 3km dash to the Beacon Valley cabin. Back to basics with candles, stoves and long drops. Only the brave had cold showers.



In the evening the rain abated and around a warming bonfire we reflected on the walk so far. Again mixed emotions, for some it had been a journey of self-discovery, some had had to dig deep that day and for other it was a stroll on the beach.

Day four, our last day and 14.5km to Gonubie. The good weather was with us again and under sunny skies we headed along the beach. The going became tough underfoot with lots of bolder hopping, but this was more than compensated for by the giant pod of dolphins entertaining us and themselves near Glengariff. With their breaching, back flipping and surfing along the breakers they were obviously having a great time. They are truly magnificent creatures.





We crossed the Kwelerha river with do problems and were serenaded towards Gonubie by the fascinating sound of pebbles being rolled up and down the rocky beach by the ebb and flow of the waves as the tide came in. The Gonubie Mouth crossing was a little harder for the vertically challenged as wading with your head under water is a little disconcerting.

12:00 and the hike is all done. Lunch and farewells at the Gonubie Hotel then back to Kie Mouth before heading home. The last night saw drunken revelry at the Kie Mouth Country Club as rain poured through the leaking roof half flooding the restaurant and making the impromptu dance floor rather slippery.

All in all a great hike with a great crowd and a pleasant change from the Drakensberg.

Andy B

Hikers.

Christine and John Pickup, Thandazile Zama, Prem Subban, Moira Fleming, Penny Robertson, Mary McLean, Sonja Leeb, Jacqui Kennedy, Johan van Rens, Farouk Omarjee, Andy Brown.

Roadies.

Claire Pickup, Eej Bourke.

ADVERTISING

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 or visit 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.

Peak High Mountaineering

Peak High Mountaineering is South Africa's leader in guided hiking and mountaineering. We conduct tours and courses in a variety of destinations in southern Africa, including the Drakensberg, Cape Town (Table Mountain), Cederberg, Magaliesberg and Free State.

Contact: Gavin Raubenheimer gavin@peakhigh.co.za
Mobile: +27.829905876

Tel: +27.333433168

Fax: +27.333433168

Discounts for Members

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

Tripper Sports: The Warehouse, Bible House, 70 Ramsay Ave, Mayville, Durban. Phone 0825627411;
www.trippersports.com

The Kingfisher: 53 Hunter Street, Durban. Phone: 0313683903 (Ganny)

Flamingo Sales (Columbia gear): Contact Conrad Buchner Phone 0315395401 or
conrad@flamingosales.co.za

Cape Union Mart: www.capeunionmart.co.za