



MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB

Fixture List: January - March 2010

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Dear Members

I'm very happy to be able to wish all of you all the best in the coming year. I hope that you create many more fond memories with MBC over the course of the coming year!

Many thanks go to this years' committee for offering their tireless services. The committee consists of Jovita da Silva, Bobby Stanton, Dave Gay, Jeanne Rapson, Eddie von Bargaen, Joanna Hall and last and hopefully not least Grant Wilkinson.

At the AGM the 2008/2009 committee members were re-elected with the exception of Laura Wood. We thank her for her work as Treasurer. Joanna Hall was elected onto the committee and we welcome her and look forward to working with her in the coming year. At last years AGM it was mentioned that our esteemed, and valued leaders don't get the recognition, training and support that they deserve, and so one of our many focal points for the coming year is to ensure that our leaders are looked after. To this end we will be holding a number of leader social/training sessions so that we the committee can make contact with the MBC leaders and hear how we can help and support them. Gary Smart, Gary Sharpe, Bobby Stanton and Andrew Friedemann are heading up a sub-committee to try and meet the needs of our leaders, and groom new leaders into our ranks.

Social projects are still on the cards, and in this regard Dave Gay, Jan Lens and John Pickup will be assisting with the running of our social projects. I look forward to reporting back on these very important ventures.

CLUB CAMPOUT!!! Yes, it's a little earlier than the last two years, so have a look though the magazine and mark your calendars. It's been great fun in the past and I'm sure its going to even better this coming year.

All the best
Happy Hiking
Grant Wilkinson
MBC Chairman

MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB COMMITTEE

Chairman:	Grant Wilkinson	073 616 8789
Vice Chairman:	Bobby Stanton	031 465 5535
Treasurer:	Bobby Stanton (temporary)	073 279 5289
Fixture List / Magazine:	Bobby Stanton	031 465 5535
Membership / Subscriptions:	Jovita da Silva	082 691 9180
Backpacking Convenor:	David Gay	031 765 4246
Day Hikes Convenor:	Eddie von Bargaen	083 281 1288
Socials / Pro	Jeanne Rapson	074 148 6474

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THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS TO THE CLUB

Mahmoud Motala	Diane van Dam and family
Edith Strauss	Howard Phipson
Tracey Swart	Sylvia Kaye
Andrew van Dam and family	Teresa Whitfield
Gavin Scott	Tim Ewing and family

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.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DUE 1 JANUARY 2010

Please remember to pay your 2010 membership fees, which are due on 1 January. Fees have remained at R120 for Family membership and R100 for Single.

Banking Details:

FNB Westville

Branch Code: 223526

Account Name: Mountain Backpackers Club

Account Number: 50780007264

Don't forget your name and/or membership number as your reference.

Notification of payment must be sent to the club either via fax or email, or sms Jovita.

Please see above for numbers.

Thanks
 Jovita

January 2010

Date	Description	Distance Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
2	Day hike to Kloof Beacon. Downriver & up Kloof Gorge to the survey beacon on top of the escarpment. Meet at Krantzkloof Picnic Site, Kloof Falls Road for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	8 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
3	Day hike from Minerva Heights Farmhouse in the Byrne area. Hike through grasslands, indigenous forest and plantations. Approximately 6 hours over rough terrain. R10 donation per person to farmer. Braai facilities available.	12 km	David Tighe	031 4649033 076 0280708	3
9	Day hike to Mpiti & Porcupine Falls. Hike upriver from Kloof Picnic Site to see both waterfalls. Meet for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee	6 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
10	Joint Ramblers day hike to Boschhoek . New hike. Hike leader Francois Marais, Chairman of PMB Ramblers. Meet Francois at Midmar Dam at 7.45 am to travel on to the Farm Aird on the old farm Petrus Stroom. We will climb to the beacon on the farm Boschhoek (as high as Jhb.) and on to a waterfall overlooking Dargle Valley. Wonderful views of Midmar and Albert Falls and other mountain ranges. Refreshments afterwards at Aird on a beautiful stoep. NB. Early start because of the heat. Meet in Pinetown at 6.45 am. Petrol sharing costs R40	14 km	Francois Marais Phone Jon	082 4591522	2
4-11	Relaxed beach hike from Port Edward to Port St Johns. Wild Coast.	90 km	Christine Bro	082 7826025 info@karkloofcanopytour.co.za	3-4
9-10	Bushman's Nek Hut from Garden Castle via the Giant's Cup Trail, returning via the reverse route. Payment of R70 hut fee confirms your booking.	24 km 345 m	David Gay	031 7654246 (18h00 to 20h00 Mon-Thu only) cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-4
16	Day hike to Springside Nature Reserve, Hillcrest. Enjoyable walk through grassland, indigenous forest & pools. All the family welcome on this easy walk. Meet at Springside Reserve for 2pm. BYO braai.	4 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
17	Joint Ramblers day hike to Alverstone – a specially shortened version of Jon's Drummond to Alverstone walk for Summer (with no exploratory sections or climbing under fences). A moderate hike, starting off and ending at Dirk's Pub at Drummond. Petrol sharing costs R15		Jon	082 4591522	2
16-17	Relaxed Hike to Hidden Valley (Garden Castle area). Camp and swim in nearby pools. Optional exploration to Rob's Cave. Great for first time backpackers. Younger members are encouraged to participate.	16 km 150 m	Grant Wilkinson	073 6168789	3
23	Day hike to Kloof Gorge. Come down Kloof Gorge and along Molweni River to base of Kloof Falls. Meet at Krantzkloof Picnic Site for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	7 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
24	Joint Ramblers day hike to Summerveld – a hike along various footpaths in the valleys and hillsides of this lovely area. Petrol sharing costs R15. Please phone leader if		Colin Turner	031 7083517	2

	you intend hiking.				
24	Easy-moderate day hike; route TBA.		Gary Sharpe	031 7645334 072 9024899	2
23-24	Camping and social weekend with day hikes from the Injasuti Camp site in the Central Drakensberg. Cost: R70 pppn camping, R135 pppn safari tent, R265 pppn chalet.	20 km	Anitha Jaipal	031 2665207 082 4568739 aj@ProfPM.com	2-3
30	Day hike to Longshadows Trail , Kloof. Hike upriver in the Krantzkloof reserve to the escarpment and down again. Meet at Krantzkloof Picnic Site for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	8 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
31	Day Hike around Shongweni Nature Reserve.	5 km 100m	Arthur Bester	083 4823590	1-2
30-31	Mzimkhulwana Hut via Giant's Cup Trail, returning via Siphongweni valley, Siphongweni rock art site and Pholela River (Cobham area). Payment of R70 hut fee confirms your booking.	20 km 395 m	David Gay	031 7654246 (18h00 to 20h00 Mon-Thu only) cougar1@telkomsa.net	3
30-31	Lammergeier Cave, returning via Tomathu Ridge (Bushman's Nek area).	22 km 850 m	Carlos Gonzalez	076 4599127 homearanya@gmail.com	3-4
30-31	Scenic hike to Marble Baths Cave (Injasuti area). Bring suncream and costume for a swim in the river. First time hikers welcome.	16 km 460 m	Eddie von Bargaen	083 2811288	3

February 2010

Date	Description	Distance Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
6	Day hike in Palmiet Nature Reserve , Westville. Walk through beautiful scenery to Cascades waterfall. Meet at Village Market carpark, opposite Westville Hotel, for a 2pm start.	7 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
7	Day hike. Pack a picnic basket, bring the whole family and come and discover the magical Marutswa Forest in Bulwer! Follow a boardwalk with viewing decks and picnic spots through majestic yellowwoods, where you will see colourful Cape parrots against the backdrop of Bulwer Mountain. Flocks of up to 50 to 70 birds can be seen at a time. You may also see bush buck, reed buck, bush pigs and dassies. R20 per adult, R5 for pensioners and children free.	2 km	Marie von Bargaen	082 5027072	1
7	Joint Ramblers day hike - Bluff Meander. John's Bluff hike has not been done for some years now, so it will a new hike for some. Meet at the BP garage in Edwin Swales at 8.15 am.		John Van Zyl	073 1291928	2
7	Day hike. Enjoy a scenic beach hike from Umbogintwini to Amanzimtoti. Bring suncream and refreshments. This is a lovely section of the beach.	6 km	Yvonne Kloppe	073 6988836	1-2
13	Day hike to Kloof Beacon. Downriver & up Kloof Gorge to the survey beacon on top of the escarpment. Meet at Krantzkloof Picnic Site, Kloof Falls Road for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	8 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
14	Circular day hike from Enon Cottage , Byrne area. Route combines open grassland and indigenous forest. Approximately 6 hours over rough terrain - physical fitness	12 km	David Tighe	031 46490330 076 0280708	3

	advisable. R10 donation per person for use of cottage - braai facilities available.				
14	Beach day hike. Ballito to Shaka's Rock and back. Sandy beaches, rocky outcrops, tidal pools.	10 km 10 m	Duncan Hiles	031-2029994 083-2297748	2-3
13-14	Relaxed hike to McKenzie's Cave (Mkhomazi area). Great views of the Drakensberg! Younger members are encouraged to participate.	16 km 650 m	Grant Wilkinson	073 6168789	3
13-14	Pholela Cave via the Pholela River, returning via Lakes Cave (Cobham area).	19 km 690 m	David Gay	031 7654246 (18h00 to 20h00 Mon-Thu only) cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-4
20	Day hike to Mpiti & Porcupine Falls. Hike upriver from Kloof Picnic Site to see both waterfalls. Meet for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	6 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
20	Leaders-only social: Braai at Shongweni Dam. Please book for catering purposes.		Grant Wilkinson	073 6168789	
21	Joint Ramblers day hike - Ferncliffe Nature Reserve to Otto's Bluff. NB. This is a Saturday hike We are joining Midlands Hiking Club for this 17 km hike. Spectacular views of PMB and Albert Falls Dam. NB Meet in Pinetown at 6.30 am to be at the Reserve by 7.30 am. Petrol Sharing costs R35.		Brian Henwood Phone Jenny	084 9520622	2
21	Easy-moderate day hike. Route TBA.		Gary Sharpe	031 7645334 072 9024899	
27	Day hike in Springside Nature Reserve, Hillcrest. Enjoyable walk through grassland, indigenous forest & pools. All the family welcome on this easy walk. Meet at Springside Reserve for 2pm. BYO braai.	4 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
28	Day hike around Stainbank Nature Reserve. See lots of wildlife.	5 km 50 m	Arthur Bester	083 4823590	1
28	Day hike on paths with good views and plenty of game in the Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve, just outside Howick. Bring a picnic lunch and lots of sun screen! Cost to be confirmed.		Marie von Bargaen	082 5027072	2
27-28	Wonder Valley Cave via Van Heyningens Pass (Injasuti area).	16 km 500 m	Bobby Stanton	031 4655536 084 4655535	3

March 2010

Date	Description	Distance Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
6	Day hike in Kloof Gorge. Come down Kloof Gorge and along Molweni River to base of Kloof Falls. Meet at Krantzkloof Picnic Site for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	7 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
5-7	Ingogo Hiking Trail: This 2 day, 2 night backpacking trail is in the Northern Drakensberg area of KZN. Overnight accommodation is provided at the start of the trail (Friday night) and at a fully equipped cottage en route (Saturday night). A distance of 12 km is covered per day. Cost is R375 pp. If you choose to drive up on Saturday morning, cost would be R225 pp. A guide is required and the cost will be split amongst all hikers in the party (approx. R40 pp). Refer to www.footprint.co.za/ingogo.htm for trail details. Payment required to secure your	24 km 700 m	Anitha Jaipal	031 2665207 082 4568739 aj@ProfPM.com	3

	booking. Max. 15 people.				
6-7	Xeni Cave returning via Mushroom rock (Cathedral Peak area).	17 km 600 m	Greg Walker	031 7056414 (18h00 - 20h00)	3
6-7	Day hikes, running, mountain biking and fly fishing from Highmoor campsite. Bring your tent, bike and fishing gear. Overnight camping fee: R55 per adult / R28 per child under 12.		David Gay	031 7654246 (18h00 to 20h00 Mon-Thu only) cougar1@telkomsa.net	3
13	Day hike in Longshadows Trail , Kloof. Hike upriver in the Krantzkloof reserve to the escarpment and down again. Meet at Krantzkloof Picnic Site for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	8 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
14	Joint Ramblers day hike. Ngomankulu Neville's stunning hike with a variation on the traditional hike as we approach Ngomankulu from the Umlaas Road side. Wonderful views and a hike definitely not to be missed. Petrol Sharing Costs R30		Neville	083 9772475	2
14	Easy-moderate day hike; route TBA.		Gary Sharpe	031 7645334 072 9024899	
13-14	Climb Redi Peak (6th highest peak in the berg) from the base of Redi Pass. Tents required. A head for heights is advised. Younger members are encouraged to participate.	28 km 1800 m	Grant Wilkinson	073 6168789	4
13-14	Bring the family and come camping at the popular Umlalazi Nature Reserve, on the North Coast (Mtunzini). This area is well known for birding and lovely mangrove swamps with plenty of fiddler crabs. Join us for beach hikes, forest hikes, swimming in the pool or canoeing up the river. Camping R50 pp. Good ablution and braai facilities available. Chalets also available - call leader for prices. Dine at the Prawn Shack on the Sunday.	10 km	Marie von Barga	082 5027072	2-3
20	Day hike in Palmiet Nature Reserve , Westville. Walk through beautiful scenery to Cascades waterfall. Meet at Village Market carpark, opposite Westville Hotel, for a 2pm start.	7 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
21	Joint Ramblers day hike - Beach walk Virginia to Umhlanga Rocks at sunrise. Join Glenys on her annual beach walk., with an early start to see the sunrise and home by lunch time. Meet at Virginia Flying Club at 5.45 am.	17 km	Glenys	083 3752252	2
20-22	Club Campout – see notice at the end of the magazine.				
27	Day hike to Kloof Beacon. Downriver & up Kloof Gorge to the survey beacon on top of the escarpment. Meet at Krantzkloof Picnic Site, Kloof Falls Road for a 2pm start. R15 per person Reserve fee.	8 km	Linda Marsden-King	083 6211687 a/h 031 7029138	2
28	Day hike around New Germany Nature Reserve.	3 km 50 m	Arthur Bester	083 4823590	1
28	Joint Ramblers day hike. Inchanga - Monteseel area. Max is leading this joint hike with Midlands Hiking Club, starting off from his home at Drummond. The train will be at Inchanga Station so bring money for refreshments. Bring your drinks for after the		Max Jenny is co-ordinating.	Jenny 084 9520622	2

	hike. R5 each for guides on this hike. Petrol Sharing costs R15				
28	Be brave! Do something daring! Thomas Moore school have a fundraising event each year, being a challenging walk of either 55 km or 80 km in one day! Starting at 02h00 from the school, there are refreshments available every 4 km. You may opt out at the breakfast stop after 25 km. Exact date still to be confirmed. Cost is roughly R120 pp. As details become available, they will be updated on the website	55 km or 80 km	Marie von Barga	082 5027072	4
27-28	Gxalingenwa Cave via Emerald Stream, returning via The Hub and the Pholela River.	36 km 900 m	Eddie von Barga	083 2811288	3-4
27-28	Dinosaur Cave via Fergy's Cave, returning via Injasuti outpost. Head for heights essential!	34 km 620 m	David Gay	031 7654246 (18h00 to 20h00 Mon-Thu only) cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-4

Advance Notices

Date	Description Distance Height	Leader	Phone
4-11 Jan 2010	Relaxed beach hike from Port Edward to Port St Johns. 90 km, grade 3-4.	Christine Bro	082 7826025 info@karkloofcanopytour.co.za
19 April – 1 May 2010	Grand Traverse 2010 230 km - Sentinel to Bushman's Nek Start your fitness programme NOW by hiking every weekend.	Grant Wilkinson	073 6168789
23-25 April 2010	Klipspringer Trail, Augrabies Falls National Park, Northern Cape Province: 3-day backpacking trail. Physical fitness essential. Overnight accommodation in huts. Trail description can be found at www.footprint.co.za/Klipspringer.htm . Cost: R160 pp (3 days, 2 nights). Payment secures booking. Accommodation can be arranged for before and after the trail at an additional cost. This trail can be done on its own, or combine it with the Orange River Paddling / Rafting Adventure.	Anitha Jaipal	031 2665207 082 4568739 aj@ProfPM.com
26 April – 1 May 2010	Orange River Paddling /Rafting Adventure 4-day, 5-night river trip. Price R3035 per adult (includes boats, equipment, qualified guides, all meals, camping, transport back to base camp) You do not need to be a great swimmer but a reasonable level of fitness is recommended. A 25% non-refundable deposit is required by end October to secure your booking, so if you don't want to miss out on this adventure – book early. Itinerary. <u>Trip Itinerary</u> Day 1 – Arrive at Fiddlers Creek Base Camp. Trip Briefing. Dinner Day 2 - Breakfast, Safety Briefing, Gentle paddle downstream. Lunch on route. Camping and dinner on the river banks. Day 3 – breakfast, then on the river. Lunch on route, camp on the riverbanks, dinner. Day 4 – breakfast, then on the river. Lunch on route, camp on the riverbanks, dinner. Day 5 – breakfast, then on the river. Lunch on route, camp at Fiddlers Creek Base Camp, dinner. Day 6 – Breakfast, then pack for home ... or the next destination!	Anitha Jaipal	031 2665207 082 4568739 aj@ProfPM.com
28 Apr – 1 May 2010	Olifants River Back-Pack Trail: This trail offers an intimate glimpse of the Kruger Park which few have the privilege to see. It stretches over 4 days and 3 nights and covers	Marie Von Barga	082 5027072 marie.vonbarga@spar.co.za

	approximately 42 km. It will be led by two armed game rangers. A degree of fitness is required as you will need to carry a tent plus all your own food. The cost is R1753 pp plus R35 p/day conservation fee. Numbers are limited to 8, so hurry and reserve your place now! A deposit is required to secure your booking.		
14-18 June 2010	Umfolozi Wilderness Explorer Trail: Feel like escaping from the 2010 World Cup hive of activity? Join us for this exciting game viewing trail in the Umfolozi / Hluhluwe Game Reserve with fun evenings around a campfire, under the beautiful African night sky. See website for itinerary. A distance of 15 to 20 km is covered per day. Cost is R2750 pp – all inclusive (5 days hiking, 4 nights accommodation, meals, overnight hiking gear). Minimum 4, maximum 8 persons. Payment due by 20 Feb. 2010.	Anitha Jaipal	031 2665207 082 4568739 aj@ProfPM.com

Note: It is the prerogative of a hike leader to accept or reject members or other applicants in 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.

A Message from Linda

Saturday Afternoon Hiking

My sincere thanks to all those marvellous Saturday afternoon hikers who have climbed up hill and down valley with me this year. It has been super fun continuing to walk and talk with you all and also been great to meet new people and assimilate them into our band of happy hikers. Great thanks to my seasoned hikers who have, on occasion, led the hikes themselves, when I have had urgent business to attend to. Through it all, the tornados, floods, rain and sunshine, (we won't mention the black mambas!) we have hiked on, and here we are at the end of another year. Thank you all for the privilege, have a blessed Christmas and a prosperous 2010, and happy hiking!

Linda Marsden King

The following articles and/or stories are also available on the club website at www.mountainbackpackers.co.za

Mweni Guides

Some of you may have heard of the efforts being made by club members to collect hiking equipment in support of the Mweni Guides. The Guides are a group from the Mweni Cultural Centre who offer guiding services in to this area of the Berg. Here is a short note from John Pickup who is leading the effort:

Thank you very much for the kind donation of clothing, and backpacking gear which was handed over to Agrippa and the Guides at the Mweni Cultural Centre.

There were huge smiles all around and it was a good feeling to see how much they appreciated the goods and before we had left they were trying on the boots and putting up the tent to see how many could sleep in it.

If you have not yet hiked in the Mweni Area I urge you to consider doing so, as not only are the Mountains spectacular but the villagers very welcoming. Plenty of shops close to the Cultural Centre selling cokes and essentials. As one of the group members commented as the hike was coming to an end "it is like trekking through Africa."

Please continue to let me know if you have any gear or clothing that you no longer need, for the people, and I shall make arrangements for collection.

Regards

John Pickup

The Grand Traverse in 9 days – Unsupported by Paul Kraus

The GT in 9 days, unsupported in mid November was as speculated certainly going to be an interesting and tough challenge regardless of the weather conditions. The brain child of Christine Bro & John Pickup, I first heard of the plan when on a 4 day 'training hike' with Chris & John, from Cathedral to Mweni at the end of August. Although it tweaked my interest I only became committed to the hike about a month later and the Mweni hike was to be my final preparation one for me as I struggled to find a gap to hike again, so running and yoga had to suffice. I was especially concerned about the lack of specific body conditioning, that carrying a 25kg pack would demand...feet, back etc. For interests sake, following some experienced advice from Bobby Stanton I decided to tape my feet which worked wonders. As the date approached John, the co leader and navigator, had to unfortunately pull out due to a work contract in Zimbabwe, so did Piero along with a few other potential starters, and so we ended up with just 4 of us, Christine Bro, Carlos Gonzalez, Steven Ardendoff and myself...and the dynamic of 4 did work well in the end.

With my lack of experience, having never tackled more than a 4 day hike at any one time, planning what to carry, became an interesting challenge in itself. I knew we had to carry good cold & wet weather gear, but exactly what would be required in your average November week, or so we thought, would be less extreme than winter, and along with tents, food for 9 days as well as medical, navigation, and photography equip etc we all ended up with varying weights on our backs. Chris & Steven both decided to carry light (both about 18kg - 20kg), by contrast to Carlos (29kg without water) who we joked looked like the infamous Obelix, and I weighed in at 25kg.

We had obviously checked out the forecast, using the SA Weather Bureau and the Giants Castle 7 day forecast as the indicator. It looked good for the first two days and then we could expect a big drop in temps (down to 6C min & 10C max for Mon/Tues) along with some rain, and then it should begin lifting and warming up the rest of the week. Well we now know that this was not to be.

Henry Bro very kindly drove us to the Sentinel car park on the Friday afternoon. The warm and windy conditions were very noticeable most of the way up. I guess a small clue to the high pressure buildup and a low pressure cell moving in, the famous NW Berg wind that typically precedes a cold front. On arrival at the car park we were met with a chilly, slightly cloudy and breezy but beautiful sunset. The hut was in good condition, with warm water, flush toilets however Steven spotted a few fleas lurking and unfortunately Carlos displayed the evidence of their overnight activities the following day.

OVERALL TOTALS PLANNED – 9 DAYS, 230KM, 11 000M ASCENT

DAY 1

Sentinel Car Park to Madonna and her Worshippers – 25.3 km, 922m ascent, 9hrs (ahead of plan).

It was a crisp and once again breezy day to start, but the framed views of the Amphitheatre and down into Royal National were amazing, inspiring a great start to our journey. We made good time and ended the day slightly ahead of schedule. The idea was that wherever possible we would try gain kilometers so that in the event of bad weather days or other setbacks whereby schedules might not be met, we would balance out, as we did not have any contingency days due to work commitments commencing on the Monday 23 Nov, a day after our scheduled arrival at Bushman's Neck. Carlos did well with the navigation, making up miles.

As the sun set the temperature dropped rapidly and the first evening, with temps close to zero, would be our warmest night of the five days which were to follow, where the coldest temperatures in the past 32 years in the Drakensberg would be recorded.



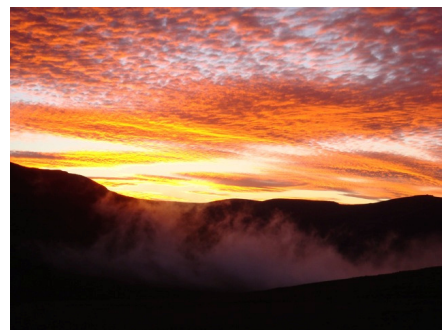
DAY 2

Madonna & Worshippers to The Saddle - 19 km, 980m ascent, 10hrs (ahead of plan).

A beautiful clear and cold morning with a thick white blanket of low cloud over KZN. The going was good until our mid day lunch break, where, whilst relaxing and refueling, the mist started to blow onto the escarpment. The wind direction had changed and we were in for an afternoon of GPS navigation in misty and damp conditions right until we had set up camp. We were however blessed with the mist lifting and one of the most beautiful sunsets I have ever experienced.

The pace, as was the case on day one was fast, with Carlos setting the rhythm, for which we were grateful as we again ended the day slightly ahead of schedule. This meant for the second day running we would pitch tents on these cave planned days, of which there were only a few for the trip. We would take 45 to 60 minute lunch breaks, with two other short eating breaks, otherwise we tried to maintain the same pace consistently. During lunch, removing socks, drying feet and refreshing seemed to work well for my energy and motivation.

Again the night temps were around freezing point and the minus ten Mountain Hardware down sleeping bag worked like a dream.



DAY 3

The Saddle to Yodlers Cascades – 27.5 km, 1283m ascent, 11hrs (ahead of plan).

This had to be the toughest day of the hike, although day five was a close second. We slept and woke in the drizzle and walked for 11 hours in wet and very cold conditions. Energy and warmth management became critical, and one's technical gear was tested to it's maximum. A pair of water proof Goretex mitts proved to be essential for me, as I tend to struggle with poor circulation.

We kept up the quick pace and were fortunate as most of the day had paths to follow, as this one of the most frequently traversed area of the Berg. Just as well as the visibility was extremely poor all day with some scary sections negotiating Thuthumi Pass in the Ndumeni Dome region. The next section of about 8 kilometers to Yodlers Cascades, into a biting wind, with small hail stones and rain, kept us persevering, knowing that moving is the only way to stay warm as our energies depleted with every kilometer. Finding a suitable campsite was the next challenge as evening approached and little did we know at that stage that this would be our base for the whole of the next day.

Steven unfortunately never brought waterproof pants and his boots were wet through. Both Christine & Steven were very wet, and we were all beginning to feel the strain.

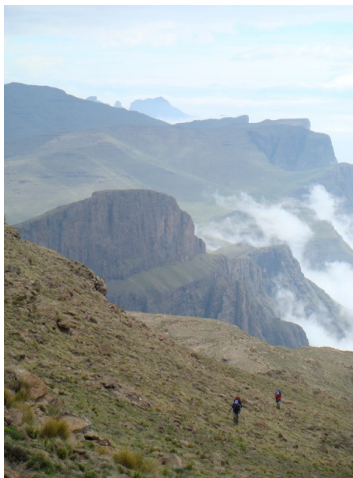


DAY 4

Sat out the rain at Yodlers Cascades – (Lose a day in our plan which will be impossible to make up)

It rained all night, the temperatures were dropping (0 degrees at 7am) and so when we woke to a white out and perpetual rain, we decided it would be too risky re hypothermia to set out, and so we waited to see if it would lift later in the morning when we could get going and try make up the lost time. By 11am when it was just 3 degrees and no lifting of the rain, we made the call to sit it out and pray for a change in weather. The temps never rose above 3 degrees all day and by 5pm it was back down to zero.

I was most thankful for my book...and my aching feet were even more thankful for a recoup day! We did a few visits to one another's tents, slept, dreamt of sunny skies, and began rescheduling our plans with lots of 'what if' scenarios being discussed. Plan B was to go as far as Sani Top, as Christine and Carlos had work commitments on the Monday whereas Steve and I were more flexible. and I were both considering completing the GT albeit in 10/11 days.



DAY 5

Yodlers Cascades to Leslie's Pass - 20.5 km, 976m ascent, 10hrs (On schedule if it wasn't for the lost day)

Woke at 4.30am to clear skies...finally and decided to depart at 7am giving the gear a half hour to dry. The new day kicked off with a big climb out of the valley up toward Didima Dome. Incredible views on top as well as a good signal to call in for weather forecasts. The synopsis was not looking good and by 11am a huge dark cloud build up over Lesotho and was looking very ominous. The rain gear came out again and that was it for the rest of the day, rain, hail, wind and very icy conditions with extreme whiteouts in the afternoon. Carlos once again did an amazing job with the navigation...with the exception of doing a full circle at one point when his Suunto wrist compass played up. I was convinced we were going nowhere but it wasn't for long before we were back on track.

Tired, wet, weary and ravenous hikers were once again breaking camp in the drizzle and preparing for the coldest night so far.

DAY 6

Leslie's Pass to Injusuthi Camp - 15 km, 200m ascent, 9.5hrs.

The tents were encrusted with ice and frost as was everywhere in the valley, with snow sprinkled on all the hill tops around us. It was beautiful to say the least. There was a bit of blue sky and wispy cirrus clouds about. I took quick walk up the nearest slope to gain views into KZN and Lesotho confirmed that we were in for another day of bad weather, which was again confirmed by the weather report in the form of my dear wife on the other end of the mobile phone looking at the Giants Castle 7 day forecast online. The Team back down in the valley had already decided to 'call it a day' and the plan was for us all to walk down Leslie's into Injasuthi camp.

On packing up we were met by a young Basutho shepherd and his two dogs, showing no sign of being perturbed by the weather or life in general...and yes he only had a tee shirt and underpants underneath his old blanket. I checked. His legs up until his knees were wrapped in insulating plastic webbing, covered of course by his tried and tested gumboots.

The walk out was very picturesque and tough going in places without any paths.

Henry very thankfully once again met us at the camp with litres of cold coke and large packets of crisps. And of course the hot shower was memorable beyond description.

Another day...another time, I look forward to picking up on the second half of the traverse of these most incredible Mountains of the Dragon.



HambaNathi

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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.

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Discover some of the exquisite secrets of the Drakensberg Mountains with a fully qualified Mountain Walking Guide. Single or multi-day trips. Contact Philip Grant (033) 997 1817 or Cell (082) 417 9163. or email pgrant@yebo.co.za.

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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.

Training Course

WILDWAYS Adventures will be running an Advanced Mountain Walking Leader course from the 7th – 18th December 2009. Although an advanced course, the training starts with the basics and builds on the knowledge through the week. The course is split into 5 days of theory training run at our training centre at Monteseel and then a 5 day practical hike where you can practice the skills you have learnt on the theory section under the watchful eye of your trainer. One however does not need to attend both sections. Bookings close 26th October. For more information please contact Michelle on info@wildwaysadventures.co.za or **031 767 2160**.

FREE Training information

If you have missed out on any of our training sessions, the information sheets are available free of charge from our website as PDF documents. Please go to www.wildwaysadventures.co.za or www.aqn.org.za to download this information.

WILDWAYS Adventures

Have you ever wanted to do one of the best walking trails in the world? A trail through Alpine meadows and over 2 international passes. Join **WILDWAYS Adventures** on our 2010 trip to hike the **Tour du Mont Blanc**. For more information please contact Michelle on info@wildwaysadventures.co.za or **031 767 2160**.

Discounts For Members

CAPE UNION MART offers members 5% discount - **membership cards must be produced.**

CAMPING & OUTDOORS offers members 5% discount off most items on presentation of **valid membership cards.** The Crescent, Umhlanga Ridge.- tel 031 566 3177.

New store at Bailey's Centre, Builders Way, Hillcrest – Behind Oscar's – 031 7657595

OUTDOOR WAREHOUSE offers 5% discount when presented with a **valid membership card.**

BACKPACKING EQUIPMENT

In the past some members have not hiked because they did not have the necessary equipment, particularly winter gear. Our club has a full range of backpacking items, making it unique in KwaZulu-Natal. In addition to the backpacks and tents, there are sleeping bags, rain gear and gas stoves. Comfortable, warm jackets are for hire on club trips by MEMBERS only.

Hiring Fees

Item	Deposit	Daily Fee
Tent	R100	R20
Backpack	R100	R20
Sleeping Bag + Liner	R50	R10
Gas Stove	R50	R10
Jacket	R50	R10
Mattress	R25	R5
Groundsheet	R25	R5
Poncho	R25	R5

EXCITING SOCIAL CALENDAR – PLEASE NOTE THE VENUE

Directions to 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 Jungle Nursery on the right, turn right under the pedestrian bridge into Tropical Nursery parking, follow the road past trees to the back of the nursery.

From Westville - take the M13 towards Durban, past Westwood Shopping centre, through 45th Cutting traffic lights, down Jan Smuts Highway, turn left under the pedestrian bridge (in front of Naked Ladies) in to Tropical Nursery parking, follow the road past trees to the back of nursery.

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 Jungle Nursery on right, turn right under pedestrian bridge in to the parking of Tropical Nursery, follow road to the back of Tropical Nursery.

SOCIAL CALENDAR	
MBC Socials take place every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at the Sherwood Bowling Club, 7:30 for 8:00pm Wors rolls or Hamburgers sold at the venue for R15 each.	
DATE	DESCRIPTION
28 Jan	Adventures Down Under – presented by Lisa Smith A presentation of cliff walks around NSW, striking scenery of the Great Ocean Road (Melbourne – Adelaide) including Mount Gambier, and Rottnest Island (Perth).
11 Feb	Exploring Synergies to Protect the Berg – presented by Grant Trebble Grant works for WESSA KZN. He will be presenting on the role of WESSA and the threats they have identified in the Berg, as well as proposals that have been put forward to establish an effective process to help protect the Berg.
25 Feb	Six Weeks Off The Beaten Track - presented by Sharon Jordan A motorcycling, tenting, hiking trip on dirt roads and back routes through Mozambique and Malawi including riding across the Zambezi on the legendary Dona Ana 3.4km railway bridge, crossing Lake Malawi on the M.V.Ilala with island stops and climbing Mt Mulange - Sapitwa Peak.
11 Mar	Alison Chadwick Cycling through Cuba - by Alison and Gordon Truluck A fascinating 3 weeks of cycling with a group of 18 people from Havana down to Santiago de Cuba (630kms). We experienced it all, cigars, rum, salsa, motor vehicles from the 1950's, stunning architecture, magnificent scenery – an experience to visit Cuba now before it all changes.
25 Mar	Mexico, Guatemala and Belize – Presented by Donovan and Anitha Van Luyk Don and Anitha will be doing a presentation on their tour of Mexico, Guatemala and Belize showing the diversified culture, religion, history of this region.

2010 ANNUAL CLUB CAMPOUT

This will be held at Injasuti Campsite
20 to 22 March 2010

Diarize it NOW for a weekend full of fantastic hikes,
and getting to know your fellow club members!

Programme

Saturday	11:00	Day event	Hike to Injesuthi Lookout via Van Heynigen's Pass for fabulous views of the Berg, 8km. Optional visit to Wonder Valley Cave. Grade 2 - 3
	18:00	Evening	Opening address
	18:30	Evening	Potjie evening. Bring your own veg. Beef/chicken to be supplied by the Club. Vegetarians also catered for. Get together around Bonfire.
Sunday	08:00	Morning/ Day Event	Hike to Battle Cave 11km return. Visit one of the major rock art sites of the Drakensberg Grade 2 - 3
	14:00	Afternoon	Geocaching competition Get into teams with a GPS. Great prizes and fun for the whole family.
	18:30	Evening	Bring and Braai. Braai fires to be supplied by the Club. Get together around Bonfire.
	20:00		Fun Awards & Closing address.
Monday	11:00	Morning	Pack up camp and drive to Gorge Pools. Meet for a swim and relax in the sun before heading back home