



MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB

Fixture List: July - Sept 2015

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER – 3rd Quarter 2015

And here's winter... Pack warm, carry water and sleep out of the wind. What a winter this is going to be!

We have a myriad hikes for you to choose from this quarter. From laid back and lazy to daring adventure – from short and mild to long and exhausting hikes, you have a variety of entertainment lined up for you.

Please remember your submissions for the **2015 PHOTO COMPETITION** are due at the end of July 2015. You can upload these to the website www.mountainbackpackers.co.za or you can send them to chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za. Please, a maximum of 5 photos per entrant. Judging will take place in the 4th quarter of 2015 at a Social Thursday evening. (The photos are reviewed in a slide show by our judges, they are critiqued, and at the end, the places are awarded, along with the prizes). You may submit hiking related pics e.g. fauna/flora, scenic, portraits/action shots. Please give a short description per photo including the photographer, location (and season), and points of interest.

Please also remember to keep in touch with the **MBC's Facebook page** as there are loads of stories and updates for you to follow.

If you know of anyone who's done an exciting trip and would like to speak at one of our Thursday night socials, please contact me on chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za.

Happy hiking, stay warm, have fun, make new friends and we will see you OUT THERE!

Karen Miller

Chairman: Mountain Backpackers Club

MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB COMMITTEE

Chairman	Karen Miller	kjmchiro@eject.co.za
Vice Chairman	John McGovern	082 659 5111
Treasurer	Bobby Stanton	031 465 5535
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Committee member	Chris Cox	082 466 8814
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Website	Jovita da Silva	
Student / youth liaison	Amy Grantham	
Leadership liaison	Jacque Kennedy	083 399 9255
Secretary / admin: (paid position)	Philip van Gass	083 440 1651

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Postal Address: P O Box 37702, OVERPORT, 4067
Website: www.mountainbackpackers.co.za
Email: info@mountainbackpackers.co.za

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

Frances Chisholm	Andrea Alcock
Michaela Geytenbeek	Nick Alcock
Sharday Visser	Thubendran Naidu
Shevaugn Visser	Michael Lebotschy
Derek Visser	Mark Robertson
Guy Alcock	

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

July 2015

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
12 th July	UMGENI VALLEY NATURE RESERVE - near Howick - Lovely local day hike in a beautiful area - great views & chance to see plenty of game & bird life. Several trail variations. Great winter venue. Combined hike with Midlands Hiking Club. Last booking by Wed 8 July.	12 – 15km	Keith Ashton	Tel: 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	2
11 – 12 th July	ROCK CLIMBING SKILLS course to take place at Monteseel or Shongweni. Max 4 people at a price of R1600 each. (usually R2200 pp)		Gavin Raubenheimer	0829905876 or gavin@peakhigh.co.za	
18 – 19 th July	ROYAL NATAL NAT PARK: Hike to Cannibal Cave. Bring your missionary pot and a gruesome song to chant!!!! This huge cave is seldom visited. It has an interesting historical past and one has good views of the surrounding countryside. Meet at Royal Natal 09h00 or overnight with us on the Friday.	18 km	Christine Bro / John Pickup	christinebro3@gmail.com 0827826025 johnpickup9@gmail.com 0721512031	3/4
Sat 18 th July	KLOOK GORGE DAY HIKE. Upstream to 2 waterfalls. Leaving at 8.30am from the picnic site carpark. Small entrance fee. Bring sun protection, hat, water, snacks and a rain jacket. Moderate fitness required. Confirm with John beforehand.		John McGovern	John 082 6595111	1-2
Sat 25 th July	RICHMOND / BYRNE AREA- New Day Hike from Minerva Heights, Byrne Area to Osgodsby in the Richmond Area. This scenic route follows along good tracks, plantation roads as well as open grasslands. It drops down through a magnificent indigenous forest and passes a very old stand of mature Yellow-wood trees. Please note that for anyone who wishes to overnight, accommodation can be arranged at Minerva Heights. Please phone leader for directions. Nominal charge for transport & parking.	20km	David Tighe	Phone 031 4649247 or 079 153 2846	3
25 – 26 th July	DRAKENSBERG GARDENS AREA; Hike especially for first time hikers at a comfortable pace. Explore the area and sleep over in Annex Cave. The cave is small so numbers are limited.	3km to the cave / 250m	Clive Powell	0315646169 or 0833034778 (evenings only)	2-3
25 – 26 th July	BUSHMANS NEK: Hike to Bushman's Cave and return via Painters Cave and the Giant's Cup Trail.	25km 750m	David Gay	Phone: 031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) Email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-4
31 st July – 2 nd Aug	BUSHMAN'S NEK- Short (one km) backpacking to Bushman's Nek Hut for a two-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 for you tough hikers) - The hikes from this base are outstanding. Combined hike with Midlands Hiking Club. . Please book early to secure place - last bookings 20 July.	12 – 15 km each day	Keith Ashton	Tel: 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	2-3

August 2015

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
1 st Aug	BRIGHTON BEACH (Bluff) – beach walk to the whaling station and back, lunch at Lords and Legends. Meet Brighton Beach carpark (park by L&L) 08h00 to leave 08h15. Shoes for sand walking, hat and sunscreen, bring a snack and plenty of water. Rain stops play.	12km	Heidi Cox	Cell; 0827064283 email heidi.dinan@gmail.com	2
8 – 10 th Aug	VERGELEGEN : Hike to Kaula Cave, returning via the sulphur spring and Birds Nest Cave	35km/ 820m	David Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) :cougar1@telkomsa.net	3
8 – 10 th Aug	BUSHMANS NEK - Bushmans Cave & Whytes Cave. Day 1 we will follow the Bushmans River to Bushmans Cave. Day 2 we will make our way to sleep in Whytes Cave exploring the area as we go along. Return on the 3rd day via the Giants Cup Trail. Meet at Bushmans Nek at 08.30	30km	Christine Bro / John Pickup	christinebro3@gmail.com 0827826025 johnpickup9@gmail.com 0721512031	3-4
15 – 16 th Aug	HIGHMOOR : Caracal Cave - not often visited, Bring a 5lt waterbag which we will fill not far from the cave, to have water for the evening and Sunday morning. A new water source has been recced that is not far from the cave. Visit Foulton's Rock Paintings & return via another route. Last booking - 10 Aug. Cost R55 pp	10 – 12 km per day	David Sclanders	Email only: dave@bergfree.co.za	3
22 – 23 Aug	INJASUTI - Hike to & overnight in Marble Baths Cave - great venue for first time backpackers.	16 km	Rinaldo Captain	Cell: 084 766 2220	3
22 - 23 August	TENTING TRIP TO HIDDEN VALLEY : From Garden Castle Office via the Giants Cup Trail. Lovely pool next to the camp area. Ideal hike for beginners. NB : Hiking tent required.	14km 300m	Farouk Omarjee	031-577 6336 081 530 8447 farouko@telkomsa.net	3
29 – 30 th Aug	GARDEN CASTLE : Hike to Mzimude Cave, returning via Mzimude Pass and the Hidden Valley	27 km/ 1230m	David Gay	031-7640298 (18h00 – 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) : cougar1@telkomsa.net	4-5
29 – 30 th Aug	COBHAM - You can either book to stay in Polela Hut, or tent at the campsite. Do you own booking for Polela Hut at Q.E.P. Tenting, we pay on arrival. Book by e mail only, please supply a cell contact number on booking.	10 – 12 km per day	David Sclanders	Email only: dave@bergfree.co.za	3

Sept 2015

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
5 – 6 th Sept	MKHOMAZI - SINCLAIR'S SHELTER - New backpacking hike from Mkhomazi. - Normal routes are from Kamberg but this route is harder & very rarely done, but it is a lovely & challenging route which continues past Cyprus Cave first & follows indistinct & sometimes non-existent tracks with a final stiff climb. Combined hike with Midlands Hiking Club. The first six to respond can secure their place, additional hikers will need to bring tents. - last booking by 31 Aug.	12 – 15 km each day	Keith Ashton	Tel: 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	3+
5 - 6 th Sept	CLIMB GIANTS CASTLE : One of the most spectacular Berg climbs. Saturday: Giants Castle Camp Site to the base of Giants Peak. Sunday: Climb Giants Peak (optional) then return to the car park. Physical fitness essential.	34km 1555m	Farouk Omarjee	031-577 6336 081 530 8447 farouko@telkomsa.net	4

12 th Sept	MONKS COWL Day hike to climb the Matterhorn 1995mts. Optional Saturday night bring and share braai at the Monks Cowl camp. Start from Monks Cowl office at 8.30	15km	Christine Bro / John Pickup	christinebro3@gmail.com 0827826025 johnpickup9@gmail.com 0721512031	3
Sat 19 th Sept	KLOOK GORGE DAY HIKE. Circular downstream route. Leaving at 8.30am from the picnic site carpark. Small entrance fee. Bring sun protection, hat, water, snacks and a rain jacket. Moderate fitness required. Confirm with John beforehand.		John McGovern	John 082 6595111	2-3
19 th Sept	INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP - a very important international event on the environmental calendar (3rd Saturday of Sept). Meet at 08h00 Umhlanga Nature Reserve carpark (Lagoon Drive next to Breakers Resort Umhlanga).	2km	Heidi Cox	0827064283 / heidi.dinan@gmail.com	1
24 – 27 th Sept	COBHAM: Gxalingenwa Cave via Ndlovini Mountain and Pinnacle Rock (Day 1); Lakes Cave via The Hub (Day 2); Mzimkhulwana Hut via Siphongweni Valley (Day 3); return to Cobham (Day 4).	38Km/ 875m	David Gay	Phone: 031-7640298 (18h00 - 20h00 Mon-Thurs only) Email: cougar1@telkomsa.net	3-4
25 – 27 th Sept	COBHAM: Stand on either end of the “Giants Cup” something to remember every time you travel into Underberg and see the cup. First night will be spent in Spectacle Cave. Following day we ascend Masubasuba Pass. Climb Hodgson’s Peaks South and North. Down to overnight in Gxalingenwa Cave. The 3rd day we return to cars via Pinnacle Rock and Emerald Dome.	38km	Christine Bro / John Pickup	christinebro3@gmail.com 0827826025 johnpickup9@gmail.com 0721512031	3/4

Advance Notices

2015 can be your opportunity to become a regular cave dweller and possibly win the title of **Mr or Ms Flintstone** .

We have selected 17 interesting caves and routes from various areas.

These hikes will be lead and organized by either John, Christine or Clint

John Pickup: 0721512031 johnpickup9@gmail.com

Christine Pickup : 0827826025 christinebro3@gmail.com

Clinton Bro: 0828202139 clintsttimbers@gmail.com

DATES	CAVES AND ROUTE DESCRIPTION	AREA	Kms	Grade
21 st – 22 nd Nov or 20 th –22 nd	Not often visited is GRASSCUTTERS CAVE in Mnweni. To embrace the Mnweni village life, join us on the Friday 20 th Nov as we spend the day at the Cultural Centre cycling, chatting with the locals and enjoying a Juba with them at one of the many spaza shops. Camp or book a bed at the Centre. Otherwise we see you 8.30am Sat at the Cultural Centre to start hiking to Grasscutters Cave.	Mnweni	36	3/4
12 th – 13 th Dec	End the year off with a Flintstone Christmas in “Mini Paradise.” A short walk to the beautiful CYPRUS CAVE , where one can dive into the pools for a refreshing swim, and sit either on the grass or on a rock chair around the rock table. The distance from the cars to cave is only 3.5 km, therefore we can carry loads of Christmas snacks and pressies to share. A prize for the best dressed Flintstone. Lunch at the Bierfassel on the way home. Ps. There is another cave opposite the river which could also be used for sleeping.	Mkomazi	7	

Advance Notices (cont)

Date	Description	Distance / Height	Leader	Contact	Grade
2-4 th Oct 2015	<p>CLUB CAMPOUT: Appin Guest Farm, Swinburne, Free State. Campsite is fairly level all around, and is big and clean and mown and no thorns. Bar area, braai area, undercover outside socializing/eating area, Electricity for building's accom.</p> <p>Swinburne is famous for rock climbing. Gavin Raubenheimer will be roping up for the MBC and instructing for those interested. Cost for rock climbing is R100pp.</p> <p>Tar road (N3) all the way, except for the gravel driveway to the farm. Backpackers Dormitory R70 pp pn (bring own bedding, about 18 beds) Camping R60 pp pn. Small cottages R190 pp pn (converted barn. Small shower/toilet en suite) Farmhouse R190 pp pn (with a family room, 2 double rooms and 1 twin room.)</p>	<p>zero to as much as you like.</p> <p>Walking, cycling, climbing, lazing around, partying and talking rubbish all night</p>		<p>RSVP to Karen Miller – chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za with accommodation preference, and if you would like to climb with Gavin Raubenheimer from Peak High Mountaineering.</p>	0-2
31 st Dec – 2 nd Jan 16	<p>BUSHMAN'S NEK- CELEBRATE NEW YEAR IN STYLE IN A STUNNING AREA - Short (one km) backpacking to Bushman's Nek Hut for a two-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 with Midlands Hiking Club. Bring your favourite tippie & goodies to celebrate. - Please book early to secure place - last bookings by 14 Dec. New cost after 01/11/15 - R100 pppn (R200 Total pp)</p>	12-15km each day	Keith Ashton	Tel: 033 239 5023 keimarg@iuncapped.co.za	2-3
4 th – 7 th Jan 2016	<p>STRANDLOPER TRAIL</p> <p>We travel to Kei on the 4th to start the 4 days / 3 nights hike on the 5th. We have booked and paid in full - R550.00, which is the full amount for trail fees. R75.00 extra for the first night if we chose to stay over at base camp in Kei mouth. Should we stay the final night at the base camp in Kei it is a further R75.00</p> <p>Shuttle transport from the end which is Gonubie back to the cars can be arranged. At this stage we do not know the cost.</p> <p>TRANSPORT arrangements, can be sorted once we know who is committed.</p> <p>For MAP and INFORMATION have a look at www.strandlopertrails.org.za</p> <p>Receipt of full payment of trail fees and accommodation secures your spot. This is high season, and the trail fills up quickly, so please bear that in mind.</p>		Christine Bro / John Pickup	christinebro3@gmail.com 0827826025 johnpickup9@gmail.com 0721512031	

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.

The Drakensberg by Tyson Brooks

The Drakensberg means Dragon's Mountains. It wouldn't be too surprising to meet something out of Lord of the Rings there, in fact JRR Tolkien was born in South Africa but he doesn't credit this mountain range with his inspiration. Perhaps a better name for the range is the Zulu name Quathlamba, meaning 'Battlement of Spears' as it is the eastern flank of the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. In fact it's so rugged only one road penetrates this side and a 4x4 is mandatory.

To hike this unique mountain range I contacted the Mountain Backpackers' Club who were doing a long weekend hike in the most scenic part ironically just outside the actual national park. I took an overnight bus from the Otter Trail arriving in Durban with a half day to see the sights. With its warm sandy beaches and amazing beach front Durban isn't exactly a dream. Urban decay has got a serious hold on this city only a block back from the beach leaving the city dishevelled and forlorn. Now it's a city of malls and suburbs where everyone with any money has disappeared to except for the strip along the beach which still resembles normalcy.

Knowing nothing more than that I was Canadian and liked to hike, Geoff and Natasha not only picked me up from the beach in Durban, but hosted me for the night at their place. I had a great night with them, their friendly beagles and their garden full of baby chameleons.

An early drive took us to the Mnweni Cultural Centre where we paid our hiking fees, donated some gear to local guides and left a whole whack of beer and refreshments in their fridge. Apparently hiking in South Africa does not involve the hardship that it does in Canada. However Geoff suggested I don't bring alcohol as the hike is difficult so weight should be kept to a minimum. Amusingly, on the Otter I was the only one with alcohol and here I was the only one without.

Thirteen of us headed out over the relatively flat terrain through small villages of begging children and the occasional snapping, snarling dog. I felt like I was back in Africa. Local men herded cows and pointed us in the right direction as the trail forked here and there. It wasn't spectacular but it was pleasant as we stopped for lunch at rock pools along a cold stream. In the evening we stopped at Five Star Cave and half of us were able to squeeze under the rocky ledge to sleep the night. The rest pitched their tents on flat ground a five minute walk away.

On the second day it became clear how amazing and spectacular the Drakensberg really is. The trail led up to what appeared to be an impenetrable wall of rock topped by rugged spear like peaks. It was as formidable and unique as it comes. We hiked past small marijuana plantations and the occasional small stone shelter under construction presumably for the ganja farmers. We climbed higher and higher up a pass that looked like it had been added with CGI. Surely this had to be Tolkien's inspiration. It was madness the Lord of the Rings hadn't been filmed here but apparently the government had not provided as many tax credits as New Zealand. For a long weekend the place was lonely and desolate, as every good wilderness hike should be. At the top where the water drains to the Atlantic is Lesotho, a mountain kingdom of ponies and locals wrapped in blankets for warmth. Up here at 3000m where it could snow any month of the year, the vegetation is stunted and the land is flat in comparison. Here we drank from the source of the Orange River. A river that would be warm as it flows to the Atlantic, dividing Namibia from South Africa. It was near the coast where I swam across the Orange to South Africa to touch its shores, before we officially crossed its borders.

Tucked under a cliff face with a perilous access path is Ledges Cave. Looking out over South Africa towards the top of a 1000m cliff, it was perhaps one of the most spectacular places you could possibly camp. That night the wind that gently gusted through the cave, scoured the flattish plain above where a few of the group had chosen to camp. In the morning a few relayed stories of their tents being flattened against them. It was so cold on the top, we crunched through patches of ice as we departed. The cave had been comparatively mild in temperature.

To descend we used the Rokeries Trail. A steep rock garden of a path for a drop of 1800m. At intervals locals wearing gum boots sat on big rocks as lookouts. Tonight would be a smugglers run. A team of donkeys would descend laden with ganja for the South African market. Water is not Lesotho's only export. The trail would be almost impossible for a donkey due to its almost scrambling sections. I am told it's not uncommon to see dead donkeys along the trail.

We passed two local women dressed in wild-west type dresses one with her face caked white with clay as sunscreen. They asked for food as they balanced bundles of cut grass on their heads to later make brooms. Lucky them, as they received almost everything we hadn't eaten and they cried out with joy, clapping their hands in delight.

As the trail became less steep, the terrain opened up and homesteads came into view. At one, we asked a farmer if he could call a taxi to save us the hour walk out. Instead we got to ride in his closed pickup. With 13 of us it was a

tight, sweaty & uncomfortable fit, with most of the packs piled on the roof. The cultural centre had our cold beer ready and hot showers on our return.

Special thanks to John and Christine for organizing and almost hosting me the night after the hike. Instead of hosting me they managed to get me on a hike through Kruger. Thanks to everyone else in the group for a fantastic trip.

NOTE: Tyson Brooks

Back in Canada

<http://tysontravels.wordpress.com/>



Sentinel Climb April 2015

by Karen Miller



The Sentinel is a giant lump of rock, nestled in the gateway to the top of the Escarpment which takes you to the top of Tugela Falls and the top of the Amphitheatre. You get here by way of the N3 to Witsieshoek (Free State), through a large town called Phudithitjaba. The road is good except for a monumentally bad section as you go up/down the mountain between the Witsieshoek Hotel and the carpark from where you start the hike. Even a self-respecting 4x4 would balk at this bouldery and potholed section.

This trip was lead by professional mountain guide, Gavin Raubenheimer from



Peak High Mountaineering. Climbers: Rinaldo Captain, Carol Howard, Karen Miller, Thora, Johan, Irene and Mark Wisdom, Elaine Bushell.



We arrived on Friday night and had booked into the dormitory in the car park. A single candle was the provided light, and there are about 15 bunks in the stone room, with two tables on which to carry out your cooking. We awoke to a cool and glorious sunrise, and were on our way by 8.30am. We carried our backpacks and our water for the day – as there is none en route.

We made our way up the zig-zag path until we rested under the Sentinel, where Gavin sketched out and escribed the climbing routes up this now hefty summit. We climbed up around the back of the Sentinel.

After a short and sharp ascent, we hid our packs and geared up for the first section of the 2-part climb. Each of us had a harness, carabiner, abseil device and helmet. In addition we carried our water and daypack with jackets and snacks.

As there were nine of us, we had to wait to ascend and descend all sections. Gavin is ultra-safety- conscious. As many of us had never climbed before despite years of hiking, and some of us were novice at best, this day turned out to be a grand adventure. So up we shimmied in the rock crevice and all got up unscathed.



From this point we hiked up hill and dale. Funny, when you are summitting something, the only direction is UP. It was do-able, although a scramble in some sections. The 'vynbos' on this side of the Sentinel is really exquisite, and you could easily feel you're climbing in the Cape. But the views are unmistakably KZN. The sweeping Sentinel Gulley, with views of the Buttresses, Devils Tooth etc were quite breathtaking on this clear and warm day.



We approached the second roped-up section of the climb, now close to the summit, and although on a very nice positive gradient, it would be tricky for a novice to ascend/descend without the safety of a rope. Gavin explained how to jumar up the rope. Once we were all up, it was a pleasant cliff-side gander up to the summit. We ate lunch and signed the MCSA's summit register and took heaps of photos of this never-ending vista.



Our descent was a double-back, however this time we had a very angry baboon above our track. We eventually discovered that all his barking and angst was in fact at a younger baboon that he was chasing. He chased the smaller baboon off a cliff face and this little imp was left dangling by his fingertips whilst trying to hide from the chief. And it was in this moment we got to witness something I'd always thought was an urban legend. Chief baboon started hurling rocks!!! Now I don't mean pebbles, I mean ripping rocks out the ground and throwing boulders! And lots of them. In rapid succession. They were of course aimed at the other baboon, but the flight path of his temper was right above us! It was a curious moment in suspended animation for us. Fascination robbing us of our faculties to get the heck out of there! This happened another two times on our descent. The second occasion sent 7 of us scurrying under a rock ledge- through bush and terrain we would never have gotten through without adrenaline.



We then had to abseil (the first climb section). Gavin gave the abseil instructions under the booming barking of said chief baboon, and we abseiled down this little gulley whilst hiding from falling rocks of this baboon now dislodging them with all his running and ranting. Only to discover that some of our hidden packs had been raided by crows and the stuff strewn onto the grass slopes below.

The walk to the cave was on a bouldery contour path to Sentinel Cave. This protected, although dark and cool cave, is nowhere near water.



Huge thanks to Rinaldo, Thora, Johan, Mark and Irene and Elaine who then soldiered onwards another 90 minutes up to the top of the Tugela Falls to collect water for all of us for the night. They made their return, including their descent of the chain-ladders, in the dark!

The cave is a little damp inside, so choosing a sleeping spot got a little crowded on the one side to avoid the wet streak down the middle. We had a warm night.

The next morning we rose and walked once again up the chain-ladders and spent some time taking in the breathtaking scenery from the top of the Tugela falls. Alarming however, is how dry it was, and how little water was running already at this time of year.

Our dilly-dallying up top cost us the last of the good weather. Our descent was thus in mist, frozen rain and wind. We made a grateful return to the carpark and home after a thoroughly satisfying and happy weekend. Thanks Gavin and the group for a weekend of adventure and laughing and stories.



Photo Competition 2015

Your entry pictures may be of any hiking related subject - flora, fauna, scenery, action shots etc. The entries can be viewed in the Photo Gallery, and will be judged in September..

Prizes: 1st place: R750 cash/voucher

2nd place: R 400 cash/voucher

3rd place: R200 cash/voucher

We look forward to having you participate in this annual event. You can upload these to the website www.mountainbackpackers.co.za or you can send them to chairman@mountainbackpackers.co.za

NOTE: The closing date is 31 July 2015.

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.

Discounts for Members

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

Trippler Sports: 23B Calder Road, Mayville, Durban. Phone 0312093649 Website: www.trippersports.com

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

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

Cape Union Mart: www.capeunionmart.co.za/

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 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>	
The following MBC Socials will be held during the 3rd Quarter at the Sherwood Bowling Club, 7:00 for 7:30pm	
DATE	DESCRIPTION
9 th July	Mocambique Tour – Eddie & Waldo van Bargaen, Terri and Tanya Hall will all share this presentation on their recent Trip to Mocambique over Easter. From Ponta through the sand dunes, via old ferry to Maputo, log homes in Bilene on the lake, 2 day beach hike from Xai Xai to Limpopo river mouth and much more. Lots of good photos.
23 rd July	Wild Coast Trip - Mike and Tanya present their 2 recce 4x4 and hiking Wild Coast trips done in May and August 2014. Come share their adventures and visit untouched places on our coast.
6 th August	Lisa Guastella will give a talk on the Magoebaskloof hiking trail, Makapansgat caves (a World Heritage site) and the Marakele National Park.
20 th August	Phuket and Ko Samui , by Karen Miller. 2 island getaways in Thailand. Vibrant life, shopping, beaching and cocktails... Culture, Buddhism and coconuts! Put your feet up or come join the party!
10 th Sep	Presentation on Reptiles , by Craig Smith Snakes, scorpions and spiders are an inevitable part of any trip to the outdoors. Encounters can be fascinating and awe inspiring or downright disastrous. When accidents do happen it is essential to have an action plan in place and be able to assess and adapt. Hopefully this presentation will be the first step towards that preparation. Be aware live animals may be part of the presentation and safety precautions will be part of the proceedings. Craig Smith is currently Senior Aquarist at Ushaka Marine World and is passionate about reptiles since a young child and has worked with them for over 30 years.
24 th Sept	Public holiday – no social