Hamerkop newsletter April 2018

Dear Beneficiaries,
Sorry, this newsletter is a bit long, so much has been happening!

HAMERKOP NEW BLUE BOOK

Judith Oppler with Margie's assistance has drawn up a revised "Blue Book" which has 4 annexures describing the different rules and regulations governing the occupation of Hamerkop by the beneficiaries, it is a very useful document, big thank you to Judith and Margie! It is circulated to you as another attachment with this newsletter and a copy will be placed in the Hamerkop file at Hamerkop – it includes the Hamerkop Fire Policy.

SECURITY

Sadly the radio is not working – we were in Hamerkop three weeks ago, and tried it out☹!

Andre Dalais, our treasurer, will contact the radio technician to get the radio working.

Once working, beneficiaries need to switch the radio on at 6h50pm, listen and wait until tannie Santie has finished calling up each person on radio in the valley to check that they are OK - this should not take long, and then let her know that Hamerkop is occupied, by whom and for how long.. After that each evening switch on the radio at 6h50 and wait for her. Tannie Santie cell 083-271-2578

There is an updated checklist for operating the radio on the noticeboard.

On the Hamerkop noticeboard there now is a list of emergency numbers and a check list what to do in case of a "land grab". The latter can become a serious problem, if any sign of squatting on Hamerkop, consult your checklist on the board and set the necessary action in motion without delay!

A guide on unlawful land occupation for landowners and the relevant affidavit form will be emailed to you in due course with the Hamerkop ownership details already filled in. Please print it out and take with you to Hamerkop? I suggest to leave the form there in the Hamerkop file for Hamerkop beneficiaries who come after you. We hope that there will be no need for use of these forms, but one must be prepared!

The Hamerkop security code for the main house (4193) and for the gate padlock (3914) are advertised on the Hamerkop website. I find it useful having these numbers on my cell!

Hamerkop is a paid up member of our local community organisation, RGKB (Rietfontein, Grootfontein, Kromriver, Buffelsfontein Rural Authority Association). Its security representative, Charl Visser, is qualified to make civil arrests i.e. he can arrest people breaking the law on the spot!

You can contact Charl via Werner Odendaal (cell 083-411-7673), the new RGKB chairman.

One patrol car goes out every night according to a schedule and there are horse patrols twice a month. Patrols on foot are being planned for the near future. RGKB maintain that the patrols in December have stopped 6 burglaries and there have been no major incidences.

You may want to enter some of the cell numbers on your phone!

WEEKS FOR SALE AND/OR SWAP

Week 25: 19th Jun to 25th Jun, for sale at R40,000 or take this year's week in exchange for levy. Contact Carolyn Greathead.

Week 21: 22nd May to 28th May. This week is available for swop or for payment of levy amount (R3,000) for the whole week. Contact Ronel Louw on 083 302 2110.

FIRE AT HAMERKOP IN JANUARY 2018

In March 2018, after all the rain, Hamerkop looked lovely, lots of new growth, flowers, some burnt trees are sprouting again
On Thursday 22nd March – it rained all day!
Next morning – what a beauty all around!

Water seeping out everywhere	More rain coming!

Cleome monophylla	Coral fungus between the rocks	Stinkhorn fungus in the kloof
Frithia pulchra	Striga bilabiata	Scilla

HAMERKOP SIGHTINGS

A big baboon came up the path leading to Hamerkop stoep, another one was sitting on the stoep veranda, some had just jumped down from there, others came strolling along the road, they ran off near the cottage when they saw me.

The next afternoon we saw a really large troop on the West side of the Hamerkop kloof – there were many babies. All the rain has given them enough food allowing them to propagate!

The squirrels were very active on the roof of the main house, chasing each other, also just running enjoying life!

It looks as if they have replaced the bush babies under the roof of the main house. I think that I saw three bush babies appearing on eastern side of the annex at dusk, and the next early evening one bush baby was seen near the front stoep

We saw 2 klipspringer late Friday morning on the lower terrace below the Hamerkop house

Sightings of smaller critters:

Shongololo - millipede	This little creature was found inside a stick, which was hollowed out for a safe place for the pupa. At first glance it looked like a fly, but flies only have two wings, this creature has four. It has narrow "waist" (between thorax & abdomen) which makes it a hymenoptera (wasp, bee and ant order) – it is *Ceratina nasalis* – no common name, which belongs to the carpenter bee family	Dungbeetle on top of his dungball, orientating himself as to where to roll his dungball. Note the little opened out orange plates at the tip of the antennae - these enhance his sense of smell

DOMESTIC MATTERS

Thanks must go to Jane Luck for replenishing some of broken crockery, particularly glasses!

During our stay in Hamerkop I have tidied some of the crockery in the kitchen – created a bit more order there. This included separating plastic from glass wine glasses. Please try and take care not to break the glass ones?

Thank you for being kind to our caretaker and her husband – they are now part of Hamerkop, they look after it and make one feel welcome and at home there.

Please feel free to bring food such as fresh fruit & vegetables or some chicken, for them, they would appreciate that, but do note, it is optional, you are not obliged to do so!

A set of drawers or a small cupboard for their clothes would be much appreciated, but transport to Hamerkop is a problem – can anyone help?

A top loader washing machine will be bought for Hamerkop and installed in the laundry, in the near future, also bedding linen, so that the payment towards paying Pretty for washing Hamerkop bedding by hand at R25 per item falls away and beneficiaries do not need to bring their own bed linen any more ☺!

LOST PROPERTY

Please identify and claim if any of these items belong to you or to someone you know? The boots and Woolworths cooler bag look quite nice.

If no one claims these articles by the end of May, we will donate them to anybody who wants/ needs them

WORK HAPPENING AT HAMERKOP

Aleck has done a good job at removing the burrs and its associated plants (*Cyathula cylindrical var. cylindrical)* around the cottage and the main house. There are just a few coming up again, I have asked him to remove them. Some have spread to grow along some of the paths into the kloof and the path to Grootkloof, particularly at the stream crossing. Please remove if you see some? Thanks!

Cyathula cylindrical – showing its problematic burrs, which stick to animal fur, human socks and other clothing and spreads in that way

Pampas grass in Rotsboom kloof, just above the dam. I have asked Aleck to take off the flowers to stop the seed from spreading. Digging them out is a big task.

The grass in the middle mannetjie and next to the road has grown a lot and does need to be cut again Lantana near the gate has been removed – this has been done since I wrote the first draft of this newsletter – we visited Hamerkop again on Thursday 5th April. Also work has been done removing vegetation obstructing opening of the main Hamerkop gate

Aleck has completed work on the MCSA campsite which is now overgrown with Khakibos. With time and no pulling of weeds, the veld grasses will take over.

MCSA parking lot – actually pretty nice for camping, no khakibos, just grass

The outside grey water pipe was blocked, holes in the pipe were located, roots were the cause of the blockage, now with the aid of Aleck, communications with Gary who organised the plumber to come out, all is fixed! Thank you to all involved!

FUTURE WORK PLANS

A priority is a door between Aleck and Pretty's lounge and bedroom, as Aleck and Pretty feel very vulnerable having to use the outside doors at night, which is also a cold affair in winter

Thanks must go the Petra van der Merwe for her investigation into upgrading the annex facilities! She will pass her findings and report on to Gary Cundill, our Hamerkop maintenance manager.

MARYSE FARRER

Maryse passed away on 3rd April after a long illness. Condolences to Humphrey.

ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS

Correction to previous newsletter, luckily the new invader in Kleinkloof, near Junction Pool, is not the Tree of heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*. The trees are *Trema orientalis*, which look quite similar but various differences are illustrated below.

Trema orientalis , Pigeonwood, Hophout– indigenous pioneer from the Raisinbush (Celtidaceae) family

Simple leaf, finely toothed margins, asymmetric base, three veins from the base of the leaf. Leaves come of alternately

Flowers in clusters, yellowish green small, inconspicuous.

Apparently leaves are cooked as a vegetable – I haven't tried that yet ☺

Trema orientalis' fruit

Pigeonwood is a pioneer in forest areas and grows along rivers – such as in Kleinkloof/ Ysterhout kloof
Van Wyk, B. & van Wyk, P. "Field guide to trees of Southern Africa".2013

Ailanthus altissima – Tree of heaven – declared alien invader from China

Ailanthus can be seen as forests next to roads in Johannesburg. It tends to overrun indigenous vegetation	Compound leaf, leaflets opposite each other. Roots produce numerous rootsuckers and resprout vigourously from cut stumps and root fragments. It can suppress competition with a substance called ailanthone	Ailanthus fruit/ seed pods – prolific seedproducer. All parts of the tree, especially the flowers, have an unpleasant smell Secretion from young shoots can cause an allergic reaction in some people
http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/trees/plants/tree_heaven.html Bromilow, C. "Problem plants and alien weeds of South Africa". 2010		

As always, enjoy Hamerkop when it is your turn to stay there, it is a special place!

Kind regards,

Karin Spottiswoode - Cell 072-595-6991, Tel 011-674-2980

Hamerkop committee member – Newsletter & Alien Invasive Plant Control