August 2016

Dear Hamerkop Beneficiaries,

Our second Hamerkop newsletter this year 2016

Steve and I spent two days in Hamerkop this last week, it is always such a pleasure to be there!

1. Reginah

The main reason for our visit was that we had heard from various sources that Reginah was unhappy.

I have been trying to phone her various times but no response, also SMSs and WhatsApps have not had a response.

On arrival on Tuesday early evening she was not there, but the house, as usual, was clean and neat.

There are various new positions of cupboards in the kitchen, the tool cupboard has been tidied up, there is a shelf with the various household detergents neatly arranged, all good!

Next day (Wednesday) still no Reginah, but we saw her on Thursday (18th August), perhaps in response to my various messages to both Reginah & Joseph

I understood her main issues to be:

(i) Complaints/ concerns from beneficiaries – e.g. house not clean enough, too much detergent used. As I have been nominated by the Trustees, to look after Reginah, please address problems, complaints, whatever, regarding Reginah to me so that I can deal with them? It is difficult for her to get instructions from the different beneficiaries, who is she supposed to listen to? Likewise, if Reginah has complaints, problems with some of the beneficiaries, I have asked her to let me know about those, so again, that I can try and solve them.

(ii) Respect – beneficiaries, please be aware, that when you discuss Reginah whilst she is working in the house, that she can hear your comments, which might be hurtful to her. Please don't discuss her behind her back, no matter how well the comments are meant to be. Again, if you have feelings or concerns about her, please discuss them with me (tel (h) 011-674-2980, cell 072-595-6991, kspotty@pixie.co.za)?

(iii) Reginah's work description - two hours work each day except for Sundays – she likes to go to church – and on Tuesday she works a full day, cleaning the house.

The two hours working time is negotiable, but generally in winter time 9 – 11am, summer time 8-10am

During that time she will wash up once, not numerous times as people have late breakfast and keep piling up more dishes.

If there are many people staying at Hamerkop and the beneficiary would like Reginah to come in again and do more work (dishes are always a chore ☹), then that can be arranged with her, but she does need to be paid for that extra service. She is satisfied with R50 for additional two hours work.

She appreciates to be given food (not at all obligatory), but not instead of payment for overtime.

(iv) Shopping list – Reginah will let me know what she needs for the house so that I can inform the next beneficiary going out what to bring. That beneficiary can claim back expenses from our treasurer, Andre Dalais cell 082-457-1692, tel 011-880-3059, email andredalais@gmail.com – please submit the payment slips to him (scan & email)?

(v) Dogs – please, dog owners, do tidy up any dog mess inside and outside the house? Obviously tidying up doggie mess is not part of Reginah's work. Thanks.

(vi) Reginah's cottage

Cockroach problem – Reginah has no cupboard for storing her food, so my simple suggestion was to get her a cupboard for food and probably other things too. Does anyone have a cupboard that he/ she is willing to donate to her? Obviously the door must be able to close well. Let me know? May be a picture on WhatsApp would be good

She asks for one additional plug in her "bedroom/ lounge/ kitchen". Presently there is only one. The light bulb attached to some wire should probably be replaced with a light fitting attached to the ceiling.

The roof leaks – needs sealant where the roof corrugated iron plates meet.

Various holes need to be plugged so no squirrels or insects can get in. Presently a family of squirrels live in the roof of their bedroom.

Reginah's uncle is a builder. Steve made an appointment with him (Sam) there and then, and arranged him to meet William Tyson this Saturday, as William did agree to do work on the house whatever was needed. Sam did come and will give a quotation for the work that needs to be done, which then with committee approval can go ahead.

The second bedroom of Reginah's cottage apparently has no problems and is only used when they have guests

(vii) Removal of things under afdak behind Reginah's cottage

Problem is that there appears to be no-one local who owns a bakkie with which the wood and other stuff can be removed from Hamerkop. Reginah is very keen on the corrugated iron roofing of the afdak itself for her use, but, as previously discussed in the committee, all the stuff must be removed in one go, not just selected bits.

Any beneficiary who can help with removal of all the stuff? According to Reginah, Marikana inhabitants would find a use for all the bits, but the problem is how to get it there.

2. Security

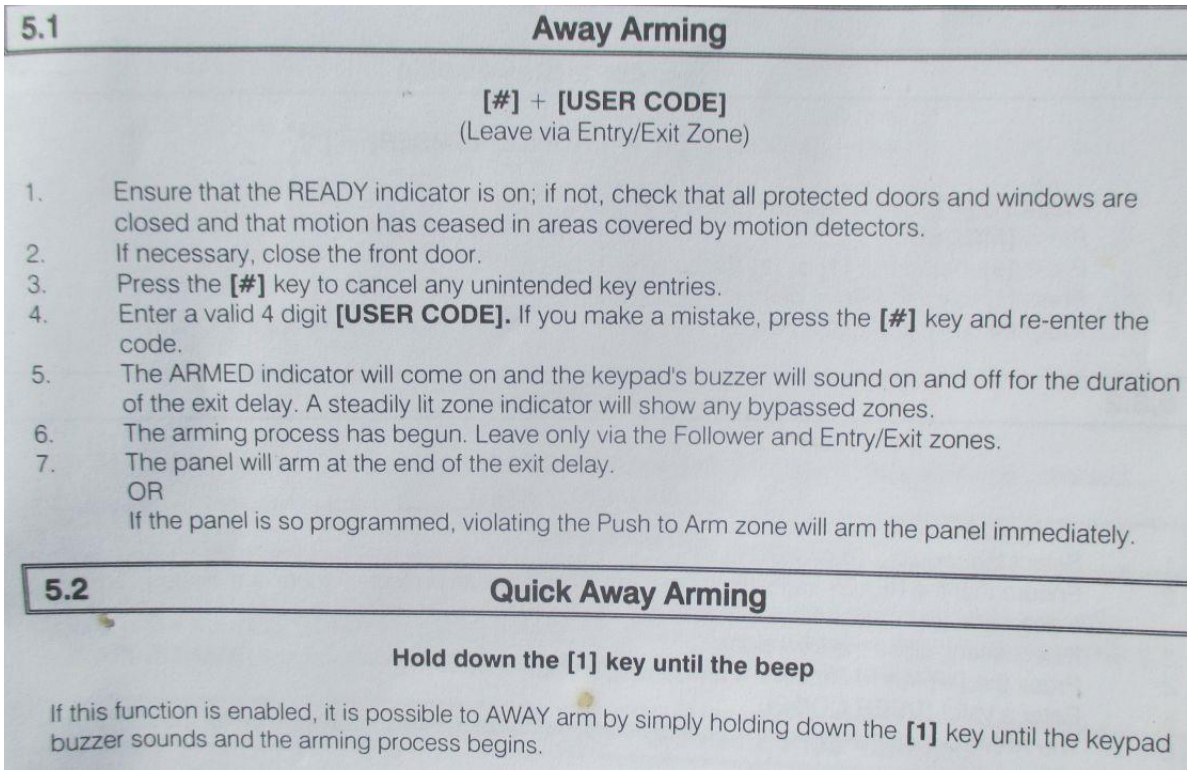
(i) The panic button and alarm siren work – we tested it, the alarm company does get signal when the alarm goes off and they phone Reginah's number if it does go off. No response from her and they do come out.

But apparently after switching on the alarm when leaving the house, according to Reginah, the siren goes off a bit later. Steve read the alarm manual and discovered that we may not be doing the alarming the right way.

Gail Cretchley has yesterday enlightened me on the following:

Instructions on our old Hamerkop key label is out of date.

The code 4193 is still the same, but no hashes (#) nor the letters DA are required, so on entering and leaving the Hamerkop house, only the code needs to be pressed, no hashes. Hash is only used when you make a mistake in typing in the code as explained in the photographed section of the instruction manual below.



5.1 Away Arming

[#] + [USER CODE]
(Leave via Entry/Exit Zone)

1. Ensure that the READY indicator is on; if not, check that all protected doors and windows are closed and that motion has ceased in areas covered by motion detectors.
2. If necessary, close the front door.
3. Press the **[#]** key to cancel any unintended key entries.
4. Enter a valid 4 digit **[USER CODE].** If you make a mistake, press the **[#]** key and re-enter the code.
5. The ARMED indicator will come on and the keypad's buzzer will sound on and off for the duration of the exit delay. A steadily lit zone indicator will show any bypassed zones.
6. The arming process has begun. Leave only via the Follower and Entry/Exit zones.
7. The panel will arm at the end of the exit delay.
   OR
   If the panel is so programmed, violating the Push to Arm zone will arm the panel immediately.

5.2 Quick Away Arming

Hold down the [1] key until the beep

If this function is enabled, it is possible to AWAY arm by simply holding down the **[1]** key until the keypad buzzer sounds and the arming process begins.

On the back of our old Hamerkop key label is a post-box address, which no longer is valid.

(ii) Reginah has implemented a rather ingenuous security system. When Steve and I arrived on Tuesday evening, the stoep lights and another light were on. The kitchen and lounge curtains were closed. One could clearly hear talking from inside the house which to us was very strange as there was supposed to be nobody in the house. Steve shone torchlight through a slit in the lounge curtains, there was nobody there, yet the talking continued. The mystery was solved when we opened the kitchen door and entered the lounge. The radio was on, turned onto the Afrikaans channel☺!

(iii) Reginah warned us that some "tsotsis" have recently been causing mischief in the valley in terms of stealing car tyres. I don't know what one can do against that!

3. The Sparkling Waters Hotel

(i) Reginah explained the hammering and banging noises we had been hearing in the day time was due to the Sparkling Waters Hotel "being taken down for the new hotel"

(ii) We approached the security guard at the gate to the hotel and were told that the hotel was being upgraded, that the reception was now in the conference area next to the car park at the gate and we were welcome to get more information there. Unfortunately we did not have time to inquire further.

(iii) Information from Gail is that the local community is against this development by the new owner (the sale has not gone through yet). He has huge plans which could be harmful to the conservation of the neighbouring parts of the Magaliesberg. Ollie Oppler and Margie Owen-Smith are in contact with the BVC (Buffelsfontein Valley Conservancy) and the Rietfontein, Grootfontein, Kromrivier en Buffelsfontein (RGKB) community and have registered us as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) They will update us when they know more.

4. Repair, painting etc.

If any painting or repair on furniture or books is being done and the item that needs repair, is taken home, please put that in the book or let the "Hamerkop domestic team" (Gail, Claudine & me) know about it, so we don't think that the item has gone missing? Thanks.

It looks as if the outside garden chairs have been painted, also a new bird watering basin has been placed where the old bird feeder used to be, super, thanks! Big thank you to the Epstein family for tiling around the kitchen tap, it looks great!

I have taken the "Field Guide to Wild Flowers of the Witwatersrand &Pretoria region" home for a bit of repair, will bring it back next time we are in Hamerkop.

5. Hamerkop Pool

Please can beneficiaries who put the lower plug (also the upper plug) into the dam wall, remove it before departure? The dam must be emptied after use. Trees on the embankment are unlikely to survive if roots and lower stem are left under water. Dead trees will eventually cause the whole embankment to cave in.

6. Hamerkop Flora

Aloe marlothii – interestingly, yellow flowers not orange

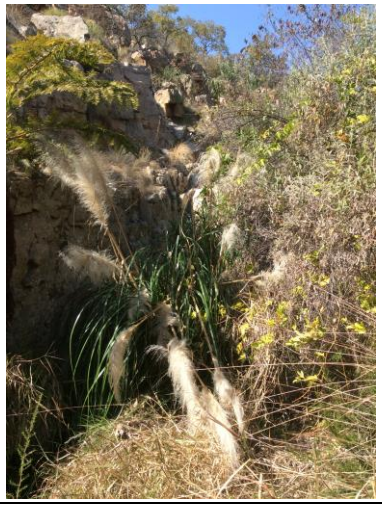
Old *Acacia robusta* has fallen over and needs to be cut down and removed, bit by bit. Please volunteer? There is an electric saw in the store room

Increased view from left side of stoop. Thank you for hard work done on cutting down some of the trees obscuring the view. I spent some hours removing many of the cut down branches this last Wednesday 17th August, as they are a fire risk. More work is needed to remove the smaller branches (children can assist here too!), these can be used as kindling for fires at Hamerkop.

During our April visit to Hamerkop I cut grass away from covering the dam wall making crossing of the wall much easier

Pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) – declared alien and invasive plant, category 1b - . needs to be taken out by law – in stream entrance into Hamerkop kloof (see adjacent photograph), also above our dam in the stream bed, upstream towards Laurrie Cilliers' house

Flowering seed heads need to be cut off, put into black bag, removed and burnt. Cut off the leaves using gloves as the leaves have sharp edges, then digging out the stumps, may be pulling out bits at a time, not an easy task!



7. Hamerkop fauna

We saw 6 bush babies on Wednesday evening. At our April stay in Hamerkop we saw a young genet. On this last Wednesday evening we did not see the genet but chicken bones left out overnight did disappear, so likely the genet did come round.

Squirrels are still around during the day, they were quite noisy, I don't think that they liked our cat. There is also a family living in Reginah & Joseph's roof, as mentioned earlier.

Bush pig diggings were seen in the kloof and their droppings on the path next to the stream going towards Swanepoel's property – could possibly be warthogs droppings but they were quite small

8. Contributions to Hamerkop Newsletter

Please submit anything of interest for our newsletter, website (sspotty@pixie.co.za), Facebook (Steve in charge), write in the Hamerkop book if it is there?

9. SUMMARY

Do not complain directly to Reginah if you do not like the way she does things. Please speak or email me?

You are responsible for any mess made by any pets you bring.

Reginah is looking for a cupboard for storing food.

Kind regards,

The "Hamerkop Newsletter Team" (Karin Spottiswoode, with input from Claudine Bennett, Gail, Margie and Oliver O).