Hi all beneficiaries,

Here is our first and last Hamerkop newsletter this year. We would like to bring one out every month next year, or every two months depending on news and on time.

Domestic matters

On Tues 17th November, Gail, the Spottiswoodes, Jane and Claudine met at Hamerkop and did a bit of cleaning out of old stuff. We drew up lists of what needed to be purchased. New /better lights for the lounge and bedrooms, standing fans for the bedrooms, some kitchen things such as glasses (wine & gin-tonic glasses – guess what the domestic subcommittee think is important☺?), good frying pans (one deep one with lid, one shallow one), 2 small casseroles with lid, coffee plunger, good bread knife and general purpose knife, sharp scissors, thickish oven gloves, placemats to put hot pots on, string, duct tape and insulation tape. Pillows for the bedrooms to replace old, stained ones.

Main Bedroom

Gail & Claudine have bought sealant for the floor. It will need a period of about 2-3 days to wash the floor and let it dry, plus 3 coats of sealer with drying time after each coat. The sealer is in the wardrobe in the main bedroom and there is a roll of masking tape to protect the walls from smears. There is a special applicator with a sheepskin pad hanging on the hat-rack i.e. it is not an all-purpose mop!. Please if anyone is willing and has time to do it, let Oliver Barker (maintenance portfolio – cell 082-653-3533) know?

Rugs

We have finally managed to track, buy and install three co-ordinating rugs from Mr Price in a sort of Persian pattern with sage green colour (special thanks to Jane for tracking down the elusive third one in Rustenburg). The main bedroom is looking quite zhoosh.

Main bedroom bed & mattress

Really very comfortable, thanks Petra & Oliver!

Feedback from Regina & Joseph on various Hamerkop issues (Karin's portfolio)

Karin and Steve visited Regina & Joseph in their cottage on Tuesday 17th November 2015 and had a discussion with them on issues of concern brought up at the AGM:

Water supply to their cottage

Joseph was pleased to show that he has rigged up a temporary water line to their house. Regina and he are happy with the present water pressure. Joseph has done all the plumbing connections himself. He offered to dig and cement a trench across the road to conceal and protect the pipe crossing the road. There are 3 bags of cement left from construction of the buttresses some of which he could use for that. Decision on a long-term plan for their water supply will be discussed by the New Management Committee (NMC) - maintenance portfolio: Oliver Barker.

K & S noted that the ladder up to the tank has various rungs missing, which is rather scary for anyone going up there to clean up and flush out the debris, a task done by Steve some years ago. Consider an aluminium extension ladder to be kept inside, not outside. – >NMC maintenance portfolio: Oliver Barker. There may be a reasonable need for a higher extra tank to supply Regina's cottage, especially if we raise the height of her roof, but the water pressure in the main house seems adequate for now.

Structure and the space of Regina & Joseph's cottage

Regina & Joseph stated that they are happy with their house as it is, but would like the following improvements:

Another power plug in the kitchen/lounge. (also as per our safety concerns.)

- Lift the roof. It is quite low.
- They agreed with Steve that ceiling insulation would be good – they have none at present.
- Install a door from main room into the bedroom.
- They would like the collapsed outdoor store/shed at the back removed. Regina would like to have the roofing for her house at Marikana.
- Regina would be happy to have the washing line behind the cottage where there the store/shed is now – it would be nice not to see all the washing hanging at the front of their cottage

->NMC maintenance portfolio: Oliver Barker

Dead wood around Regina & Joseph's cottage is a fire hazard.

Karin suggested that Joseph & Regina remove the dead wood, problem of course where to put it. Karin's suggestion is that the wood should be cut up and stored in the empty reservoir. This would provide firewood for Regina & Joseph and Hamerkop beneficiaries in winter.

J & R seem willing to remove the dead wood, cut and store it in the dry reservoir.

NMC to discuss.

General

Leave - Regina said that she is owed two weeks leave. Treasurer to confirm leave owing.

She would like to take one week in December and another in February. She will let Karin know when she would like to take her leave and Karin will then pass that information on to the relevant beneficiary.

Refuse - Joseph told us that he takes their refuse to the hotel, nice to know that!

Hamerkop "uniform" - Regina likes to refer to herself as "Hamerkop Caretaker" and would still like a T-shirt or two with "Hamerkop Caretaker" printed on it. She will get a quote for two shirts.

Washing machine - Regina is happy to wash Hamerkop linen in her washing machine. Karin, as compensation for use of her machine, suggested that Hamerkop could pay for repairs if needed. She was grateful for the suggestion. NMC to discuss/ agree on. Meantime, continue to bring your own bedding.

Ash pit - Regina and Joseph agree that it is not appropriate for general refuse. Do people feel that there is an objection to disposing of ash into the ash pit? We have a problem in that at present people are throwing not only wood ash but charcoal and ash into the bush around the house.

Road – Joseph was concerned about the poor condition of the road causing damage to his car. The road does need work, both the rocky sections and high middelmannetjies – Matter for NMC - >maintenance portfolio: Oliver Barker.

Conservation/ alien invasives problem plant eradication (Karin's portfolio).

Karin would like to invite beneficiaries in residence to do some weeding, if and when in the mood to do so – this would of course be beneficial to Hamerkop and much appreciated!

Hildegard Klein and Ottilie Neser's booklet "A field guide to the invasive plants of the Magaliesberg", MCSA Magaliesberg Section has the more common declared alien invasive plants occurring in the Magaliesberg. The Spotties have donated a copy of this booklet to Hamerkop already, it seems to be missing presently, so they will donate another well labelled one to Hamerkop. It has good pictures of the problem plants, description of a sensible way how to dispose of them and pictures and description of similar looking, harmless, indigenous plants which could be confused with the "baddies".

Karin is in the process of compiling a booklet on problem invasive plants in Hamerkop, based on a booklet she has drawn up on the invasive problem plants in the Kloofendal Nature Reserve - those ones that occur in addition to the ones listed in Hildegard & Otti's booklet.

She would also like to compile a booklet with dried specimens of the problem invasive plants, which will make identification of these plants easier rather than from only pictures and descriptions – similar to the one she drew up many years ago with Paul Venter's help, on trees in Hamerkop. Karin will include a brief description of the smell and feel (thorny, sticky, stems being square or rounded etc) of these plants, which would aid in identification even more. In our newsletters, Karin would like to advise on what plants are flowering at a certain time, making them easier to recognise, in order to pull them out, also flowering plants can be decapitated before they produce seeds!

We have Crofton weed (Mexican Devil weed/ *Ageratina adenophora*) (category 1b declared alien invader) in both Rotsboom and Hamerkop kloofs, flowering has finished but they are still easy to recognise by the distinctive shape of their leaves , the fact that they grow in or near water, the unpleasant smell they exude when you break their branches or leaves. To remove do the following:-

If by chance still some flowers or seeds, cut off them off carefully and put them into a black plastic bag and close this tightly. Leave this in the sun to rot.

The roots must be dug out completely. They break off very easily and then regenerate. These can be placed away from the water and left to die.

Leaf triangular, margin towards apex serrated. Margin smooth at base of leaf

Stems are reddish, clumps can be pulled out fairly easily. Easier to work as a "pulling team"

Thank you

1. To Paul Venter for the "**new" bookshelf** in the lounge. We thought of putting the reference books there.
2. Please don't take books home. If in the midst of a story, take home to finish the story and then please return the book?
3. To Gail and Dave Cretchley who are **repairing one of the dining room chairs**

Contributions to Hamerkop Newsletter

Claudine with assistance from Karin has undertaken running a Hamerkop newsletter, every couple of months, just to keep beneficiaries informed of what is happening in Hamerkop. Please send any input, suggestions, feedback from your Hamerkop stay, some photos to Claudine or Karin? Thanks!

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas, lots of rain, peace, good health and happy, good relationships with each other in the New Year ahead ☺

Claudine & Karin