ANNUAL REPORT OF THE KOGELBERG BRANCH OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA
JULY 2015

There is no contest that the main event of the past year has been the publication of our book. Long a dream, finally we had an extremely competent author in Tim Attwell which led to generous additional funding and "Your Place in the Kogelberg" was a reality, officially "An Initiative of the Botanical Society of South Africa Kogelberg Branch."

We have to warmly thank both Tim Attwell for writing the book pro bono, and the Society for giving the major contribution from the Education Fund. The branch is to use proceeds of the sale of the book for education projects. Copies have been donated to libraries, schools, municipal officials and other influential organisations in the area. Over 300 copies sold.

There was a splendid launch of the book on a Saturday morning in May at Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens. As with all Kogelberg branch events, there was excellent teamwork from many members and also donations of wine and flowers.

Edward Silberbauer is a legendary figure in hacking circles and it was fitting that at the launch the Executive Mayor of the Overstrand announced that an area of flourishing fynbos but once covered in invasive aliens, is to be officially known as "Ed’s Valley". Later on in the proceedings the Executive Director of the Botanical Society presented new power saws and spare parts to the Betty’s Bay and Pringle Bay Hack Groups.

The launch was the first occasion when we displayed colourful banners, posters, and leaflets beautifully designed and given to us by our new marketing partners, SucceedGroup of Betty’s Bay. The founder and CEO, Ben van der Westhuizen said that his group will be the branch’s marketing partners, there will be no charges, that Kogelberg Branch of BotSoc will be the group’s community project. We are extremely grateful for this partnership.

Two stalwart and longstanding members of the branch have moved away; Caroline and Peter Joubert are now settled in Howick, KZN. Last year Peter gave an excellent presentation on aspects of evolution: “Life on Earth - The First and the Latest”, for our August talk. Caroline was our experienced guide for a spring walk along the coast in the Jock’s Bay area. Caroline is a fine amateur botanist and is preparing a booklet on the sages of Betty’s Bay.

This past year has seen another list of experts in their fields who were happy to come to Betty’s Bay to give us a monthly intellectual treat. What made the last crop remarkable is that so many of them have strong links with this area: in October it was Dr Sophie von der Heyden, marine geneticist from University of Stellenbosch, daughter-in-law of Ulla; November, Mike Markovina, explorer and
ichthyologist son of Pat and Mischa; January, Dr Tony Cunningham, ethnobotanist son of Sheila; April Dr Mike Cramer, son-in-law of Pauline Todd. Then in February, resident Vasti Geldenhuys with some input from Riaan Manser spoke about their epic rowing across the Atlantic. In March our own Jenny Berrisford and Jane Forrester talked gardening; in May, Mike Orren, now an Emeritus Professor and nearly a Betty’s Bay resident, was again a very popular speaker. Phakamane Xaba used to live to and work here and came back in September for a very topical talk on cycads. Those with no close links were no less excellent presenters: Alan and Jenny Mountain on Madagascar in July, white shark specialist, Dr Alison Kok in December and Dr Jenny Day making a return visit in June. Andrea Benn has written clear summaries of the talks for the newsletter.

There have been walks on the mornings of the third Saturdays, some more botanically focused than others, but all giving an opportunity to enjoy our amazing coastline and mountains. Amida Johns led a spring flower expedition to Rooisand; November more flowers were ticked walking through Fairy Glen; Tim took a group up Leopard’s Kloof in February and in April Barbara and a group saw many Gladiolus carmineus while walking behind Hangklip to the viewpoint overlooking Sea Farm.

At the end of August there was a repeat visit to the Karoo Desert National Botanical Garden outside Worcester. Werner Voigt, our old friend and former Curator at Harold Porter NBG, was a superb guide. Succulent enthusiasts and photographers were enthralled by the collections of Haworthia and other South African specials.

The Branch has in the past had garden visits in Betty’s Bay; for the first time, last September, there was a very successful tour of three gardens in Kleinmond belonging to members Henriette Botha, Jeanette Fischer and Joy Ruger. Tea was served on Joy’s deep stoep.

The Betty’s Bay Hack Group continues to flourish with Edward Silberbauer still at the helm after twenty-six years. There has been a change in the Pringle Bay group with John Whitehead retiring as Convenor; Chris Geldenhuys has taken over. Under John’s leadership, this group has grown and is clearly making a difference in Pringle Bay. Dr Allan Heydorn is leading a charge against Acacia elata; Jan Joubert studies the new rules governing invasive aliens. We warmly thank the Convenors, all those keen hackers, tea and sandwich makers.

The monthly branch newsletter is admired far and wide across Botanical Society membership. Merran Silberbauer has been the Editor for over ten years and now enjoys a well-earned retirement while continuing to give invaluable advice. Thank you, Merran. Charlotte Rademeyer is an extremely competent successor; she has introduced pictures to add interest and colour. We are so fortunate to have high-calibre people in the branch. In the months to come, SucceedGroup will be designing and sending out a new-look newsletter.

The branch continues to take the children from Pikkewyntjies preschool, Mooiuitsig on outings to Harold Porter and the beach. Sue Folb has established a very good relationship with the school. Barbara Jenman and Tim Attwell have been her helpers on the expeditions.

So many people have been involved in the activities of the branch. One way of recognising special contributions is the Botanical Society’s Certificates of Appreciation. In December, at a small gathering of the committee, the recipients and family, these were presented to Jane Forrester for her sterling work over many years for Harold Porter Gardens and the solid support she gives the branch. Two hackers of note, John Whitehead and Tom Dreyer had more than earned their certificates; both wield
saws, loppers, tree-poppers in the battles against the invasive aliens, in Betty’s, Pringle and with the weekly Irregulars.

All these activities could not happen without a dedicated committee: Barbara Jenman has been a staunch and supportive Vice-Chairman; Sue Folb is a meticulous Minute Secretary, Peter Berrisford a careful treasurer who has had an extra load with the book; Tim Attwell, our author, Andrea Benn, Gwen Coetzee, Jan Joubert and Charlotte Rademeyer all play their parts. You see them busy at talks but there is also much going on behind the scenes. Edward Silberbauer and Berenice Carolus are ex-officio members. I say a huge thank you to them all.

Merrilee Berrisford

THE BATTLE OF BETTY’S BAY

One of those perfect winter days – not a cloud in the sky nor movement of air, it was not even cold. It will be remembered by those of you who do remember that the dune area of today's hack was completely burnt out in one of the most severe and extensive bush fires we have had in Betty’s Bay. This was in 1997. Photos taken shortly after this fire show the burnt out skeletons of hundreds of enormous rooikrans. It did not take long for millions of seedlings to appear, and the hack group got down on bended knees hauling out a high percentage of these as soon as they reached pullable age as our hack record photos prove. Today's work illustrates the importance of the follow-up over the years. Today the rooikrans is difficult to find amongst the fynbos thickets; but they are there and getting rid of them is really worthwhile. Hats off to the determined hackers. Hacking today were Andrea Benn, David Bossenger, Ursula Huyssen, Tom Dreyer, Barbara Jenman, Maarten & Hilary Mauve, Frik Potgieter, Rosemary Fowkes, Lewis & Caroline and James & Ed Silberbauer. Di Knott made the sandwiches and Merran Silberbauer made the tea.

Sadly we record the death of Joan Norton, an enthusiastic hacker and for many years our sandwich maker. Joan was always ready with a piece of doggerel to record life in Betty's Bay.

Next hack no 629: Sunday 6th September at 9am, this will be a special hack to assist a worthy charity.

Ed Silberbauer, Convenor

Please note: The Battle of Betty’s Bay takes place on the FIRST Sunday of every month (weather permitting) from 9am to 12 noon. Tools are provided and refreshments served mid-morning. All are welcome. Please contact the convenor, Ed Silberbauer for information as to the venue.

Ed Silberbauer, Convenor

PRINGLE BAY HACK NO 105

Despite the chilling winds from the south, the Pringle Bay Hack Group continued with the eradication of alien vegetation (mainly Rooikrans and Port Jackson) on the road verges along Diagonal Road and all three branches of Three-Way Road on 26 July 2015. The hack was tough, but extremely successful.

The following hackers responded to the call despite a severely cold and windy morning and assembled at the Drosters Centre: John Whitehead, Neil and Penny Berens, Edward Silberbauer, Tom Dreyer, Gert and Marita Grobbelaar, Charles Hector, Sue Folb, Louw and Karen Toerien, Murray McGregor, Mike Begley, Pierre and Andree Henning, Anthony and Hillary Harris, Gary and Loraine Prothero plus their daughter, Kayla, Rienie Schenk and Chris Geldenhuys. Besides them we were glad to welcome
Ilse and Mike Meyer to the Pringle Bay Hack Group.

A special word of thanks for the contribution and support provided by members of the Bettys Bay Hack. Their efforts and encouragement are as always greatly appreciated.

While Lena and Dave Muirhead are away on a well-deserved holiday, Karen and Loraine stood in for the ever-necessary mid-morning refreshments. They provided us with delicious sandwiches and refreshing tea and coffee. Thanks you two! Again a special word of thanks goes to Peter and Joyce of the Mini Mark for the generous donation for the tea and sandwiches for the Hack Group, it was as always greatly appreciated by all.

The Street hack in July did not materialise, mainly due to bad weather and some members being away travelling. This group was started as a new initiative in May this year, under the guidance of Lezette van Jaarsveld. They normally meet for 1 1/2 to 2 hours on alternate Friday mornings and would very much appreciate help. Anyone who would like to join and help rid Pringle Bay of alien vegetation will be welcome. Lezette can be contacted on 028 2738450 or 0823983446 to check the dates and venue.

The next monthly hack will be on Sunday, 30th August 2015.

As usual we will meet on the pavement opposite Drosters Centre, in Central Avenue, Pringle Bay, at 08:30 and proceed to the hack site. The hack stops at 11:30. All are most welcome to join. Hacking tools are provided. Contact Chris at (028) 273 8588, or just turn up at the meeting point.

Chris Geldenhuys, Convenor

**ROOIELS HACK**

First Saturday of the month, from 8:30–10:30. Tools & refreshments provided. Contact: Anuta Scholtz on anuta@omail.co.za or tel 083 388 8239, or Evette on tel 028 273 8483.

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Last Saturday, Telkom electricians notified us that they could not work on the distribution box in Kloof Road in Betty’s Bay, which supplies electricity to the Holiday Camp and to us, due to snakes inside, and could I please remove them. At first I could not see them, so I took a flash photo of the inside of the box. To my surprise, one of the green “cables” started to move away. I identified it as a harmless, but very useful Olive House Snake which loves rats and mice for dinner. (It looked similar to a Boomslang and I urge residents not to kill these snakes as they are doing us all a favour by keeping the rodent population down, thereby eliminating the use of harmful poisons.) The snake and its mother/father were allowed to escape into the surrounding bush.
Below may be seen a photo of the beautiful area where last month’s Hack took place.

Lewis Silberbauer

TALKS

Saturday, 18th July, Dr John Hanks: The need to embrace ‘ancillary considerations’ in strategies to reduce wildlife crime.

Dr John Hanks – a wildlife enthusiast who is passionate about the conservation of mammals – spent his early years in the Luangwe Valley in Zambia. While studying the elephant population in the Kafue
National Park, he met up with Bo and Jill Attwell. In the 1960’s there was only a radio link to the outside world, other than writing letters! The Pangolin was then the most endangered species, hunted for its scales. The new drug M99 was used to immobilise elephants; tin plates fitted to their tails and painting their ears helped in tracking. Today animals have collars, chips linked to satellites, and are tracked by helicopter.

The strong message that came across in Dr Hanks’ illustrated talk was to ask whether there is no ‘sympathetic regard’ ie considerations by us and the world for the huge poaching problem in our country. Do we really care!

Annually $19 billion is spent on crimes linked to poaching – drug dealing, counterfeit crime, and human trafficking. There appears to be no legal solution. But John Hanks stated that he was not a pessimist and he put forward six, possibly controversial, considerations for us to act on.

1) Of the 10 countries considered to be the most corrupt in the world, six are in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1988 the North Korean Embassy was involved in taking rhino horn out of Zimbabwe. The investigation was stopped as the Prime Minister felt he owed North Korea a favour! We need the courage to speak out on corruption and help eliminate it. Check the website https://wildleaks.org/ to see what can be done.

2) Recognise the insecurity of Africa’s designated protected areas. These are small, isolated, and surrounded by rapidly growing populations. All are inadequately funded. We are still losing out in Kruger although the Army is now there. There is a lack of political commitment, with money being channelled to other areas like service delivery. Poverty in Mozambique leads to an inexhaustible supply of cross-border poachers, despite the risk of death.

3) Stop the developed world dictating to Africa on how to manage its wildlife. Was it wise to burn 12 tons of ivory? And when the Dallas Safari Club tried to raise $1m to go and hunt an aged rhino, it was stopped. Wise?

4) Call attention to the realities of the enormous social impact of high rates of population growth. We need to put family planning and high rates of population growth high up on our agendas. Do we have the courage to speak out?

5) Be aware of the role international terrorism plays in illegal ivory trade. How much is being spent on countering this terrorism?

6) We need to focus on the growing impact of China in Africa. China needs sources of raw materials to sustain its economic growth. It sees Africa as a boundless source of natural resources.

Not a pessimist, Dr Hanks suggested a possible solution. Pouring in huge sums of money hasn’t worked, neither have trade bans and the more than 400 NGOs working on rhino poaching today. Legalising trading would make a massive difference. A central selling organisation is needed. Ian Player was in favour of legalising rhino horn trade over both public and private sources. Rhino horn is a sustainable resource. At $64 000 per kg via the illegal route, private owners can make money, and government will gain tax benefits. It won’t stop poaching, but it will make it unpopular. It is no longer realistic to imagine herds of animals roaming freely in Africa. We need to save what realistically can be saved.

Andrea Benn
FORTHCOMING TALKS

Saturday, 15 August. Dr Roger Parsons who was recently awarded his PhD from the University of the Free State for research into the (hidden) hydrology of Groenvlei near Sedgefield, will speak on The hidden hydrology of Groenvlei, a lacustrine wetland near Sedgefield.

Saturday, 19 September. Ulrike Irlich from the Cape Peninsula Early Detection Rapid Response Programme will talk about targeting invasive species.

Saturday, 17 October. Prof Gavin Maneveldt of the University of the Western Cape Marine Biology Department

Saturday, 21 November. Grant Brooker will speak on Eco-pools.

The Annual Fundraiser will be held early in October – Judy New will present her Travels in Peru, after which a finger supper and donated Leopard’s Leap wines will be served. There will be lucky draws with prizes of the flower guide, Wild Flowers of the Table Mountain National Park, SANBI shopping bags and Judy has a quiz with Ayama wine as the prize. The date and further details will be confirmed later.

Funds raised will go towards books on natural history for Harold Porter and other suitable local organisations.

--ooOoo--

Reminder: The Harold Porter Gardens have asked us for flower guides and other books for their library as theirs are used extensively. Before planting any plants, the gardeners have to look it up in the library. We gave them six copies of Wild Flowers of the Table Mountain National Park; Head Office had given us 20 copies to distribute as we think best. If anyone has books that could be of interest to the library, please take them to the Harold Porter office.

--ooOoo--
It was one of those crisp, clear, calm, sunlit mornings that winter has a happy knack of delivering after rain. The fierce wind and driving rain of the previous day had many wondering if it would be worth the risk of setting out on a walk. It was.

Armed with a long list of plants supposed to be in bloom in July in the three vegetation types we would encounter (Hangklip Sand Fynbos, Coastal Lowland Freshwater Wetlands and Overberg Dune Strandveld) ten intrepid walkers, cheered by the enthusiasm of Barbara Jenman’s two grandsons, set off on our treasure hunt.

Rich yellow *Euryops abrotanifolius* (bergharpuisbos) greeted us as we topped the first rise, the blue expanse of the lower reaches of the Palmiet River spreading out before us, carrying our gaze to the sea beyond. Pink *Erica glabella* and white *Erica imbricata* (aka salt and pepper heath) had us adopting the familiar ‘botaniser’s crouch’ beside the recently cleared path.

The tolbosse (*Leucadendron* species) sported their late winter yellow finery as we identified *Leucadendron laureolum* by its coy habit of concealing its cones with its involucral leaves. *Protea repens* in full bloom had us humming the old song, ‘Suikerbossie wil jou hê...’ and feeling very ‘Kaaps.’

Inevitably we failed to find many of the plants on our list and did find many that weren’t – among them the unusual *Drimia* which we confidently (?) declared to be of the species *exuviata*, heavy with buds a full two months early. Could the many unusually sunny and warm days we had through June and early July have prompted it to flower along with many other early bloomers?

We seemed to be about three weeks early for others. *Serruria elongata* are heavy with buds, as are the yellow pincushions (*Leucospermum concocarpodendron*). We have to come back soon. We weren’t too early for the bright white belskruie (*Osmitopsis asteriscoides*) that signalled boggy conditions underfoot.

Otter and Cape grysbok spoor on the shore near the river mouth diverted our attention from the characteristic *Searsia* bushes of the Overberg Dune Strandveld, where we paused for coffee and self-congratulation for having made the trip.

Rapidly running out of time, we hotfooted our way over the Dune Strandveld along a grassy jeep track to regain the riverside path, noting the steady encroachment of *Virgilia divaricata* (one of the Keurbooms). That shouldn’t be a problem, should it? Well, it turns out this isn’t our local *Virgilia*
oroboides. *V. divaricata* hails from east of the town of George and is behaving very badly in our neck of the woods, forming dense stands and crowding out the locals.

The West Bank Roundabout is a beautiful walk, easily tackled by families. Pack a picnic in your rucksack and enjoy it as winter turns into spring.

Tim Attwell, Leader

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**Hermanus Botanical Society Flower Festival 2015**

**Fernkloof Nature Reserve, Fir Avenue, Hermanus. 34°23’55 S: 19°15’57 E**

**Thursday 24 September to Sunday 27 September**

**Open 9am to 5pm**

Opening on Heritage Day, we celebrate our magnificent Floral Heritage with a spectacular array of local flowers in the Fernkloof Hall, with hundreds of specimens individually named.

This year’s theme is “Fynbos Creatures”. Large posters around the Hall will introduce you to them and their lifestyles. As most are secretive and often nocturnal, you will be amazed to discover who shares the flower-covered hillsides with us!

Within the marquee, meet local interest and craft groups who will have plenty of tempting goods for sale, in addition to the numerous food stalls.

The entrancing alpacas will be with us again and snake-handling demonstrations and other activities will keep both children and adults entertained in the amphitheatre. Or join a guided walk into the Fynbos world along the Reserve trails.

Delicious teas and lunches will be available throughout the Festival.

**Entrance fees are R20,**

**Children, under 12, or in school uniform, Free.**

**Pensioners Day, Friday 25th, entrance R10.**

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Tel. 028 313 0819 or 028 313 8100

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**RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES**

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Please accept our apologies for the incorrect rainfall and minimum temperature given last month. The correct figures for June 2015 should have been: rainfall 123 mm and minimum temperature 6º
CHANGE OF ADDRESS and/or STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP
If you change your address, wish to resign or change your status, please notify the Botanical Society Head Office on (021) 797-2090. To receive this newsletter via e-mail (and save the Branch the costs of printing, packaging and postage) send your address to peterb@gmail.com

REMEMBER, YOUR ARTICLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME
The editor reserves the right to edit contributions.
Deadline for the next newsletter is Tuesday, 1st September 2015. Please note that with the new format of our newsletters, it would be much appreciated if your entries could be submitted earlier – at latest on 1st September. Thank you.
Please address all mail to:
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e-mail: peterb@gmail.com

Editor’s e-mail: cradem@mweb.co.za
Please use my former e-mail address as given here – apologies for the confusion!