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FRIENDS OF LION'S HEAD & SIGNAL HILL • www.friendsoflionshead.org.za



CHAIR-PERSONS:	MEMBERSHIPS:	ADVERTISING:	NEWSLETTER:
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FLASH NEWSLETTER - ISSUE NO. 74 - MAY 2015 TO JULY 2015

Autumn/Winter activities. **Wear suitable gear and footwear for the weather and roughish terrain.**
Also waterproof protection or hats, sun-block, lots of water and refreshments for the mid-walk break.
 Dogs on leads are welcome. For security reasons, please phone the Convenor for meeting place and further details especially on dubious weather days. "Moderate" fitness required - for mountain paths; no climbing or scrambling. No smoking on walks, please, and switch off/conceal cell-phones. Fresnaye Sports Club (FSC) is on the corner of Ave Normandie and Ave St. Bartholomew, Fresnaye.



Date	Convenor	Meeting Details	Event Description	Notes
Sat 9th May	Margaret Moore 021-790-2617 or 076-787-9849	Start Time: 08h30 End time: 12h30	Alphen Trail Meeting Place: Parking below Alphen Hotel	Visitor: Donation Fitness: EASY/ MODERATE Members: FREE
Sat 23rd May	Gisela Mittendorf 021-422-1394 083-940-4128	Start Time: 09h00 End time: 12h30	Pipe Track. Meeting place: Kloof Nek car park	Visitor: Donation Fitness: EASY Members: FREE
Sat 6th June	John Wilson 021-461-2082 or 074-147-4404	Start Time: 09h00 End time: 13h00	Wash houses Meeting Place: Kloof Nek car park - bottom	Visitor: Donation Fitness: MODERATE Members: FREE
Sat 20th June	Colin Theunissen 082-484-4600	Start Time: 09h00 End time: 13h00	Cecilia Forest. Meeting Place: Cecilia Forest parking.	Visitor: Donation Fitness: MODERATE Members: FREE
Sat 4th July	Sidney Schlomowitz Contact: Annabel 021-439-7786 or 079-391-4570	Start Time: 09h00 End Time: 13h00	Newlands Forest - Rhodes Memorial and back Meeting place: Newlands Forest	Visitor: Donation Fitness: MODERATE Members: FREE
Sat 18th July	Annabel Kyriazis 021-439-7786 079-391-4570	Start Time: 09h00 End Time: 12h30	Lion's Head contour path. Meeting Place: Top of Avenue Normandie, corner Avenue St Bartholomew, Fresnaye.	Visitor: Donation Fitness: MODERATE Members: FREE

2015 First Quarter Rainfall Report

by Robert Pabst

The first quarter rainfall figures, as measured in Rontree Estate, Camps Bay were:

January	36mm
February	9mm
March	13mm
Total for First Quarter:	58mm

It is hoped that the first rains are soft and soaking so as not to cause too much damage to the fire-ravaged areas of the South Peninsula.

Friends of Lion's Head and Signal Hill 2014 Chairman's Report

As in previous years one of our main contributions to the local environment is two-way contact with Table Mountain National Parks. In this way we can point out the main areas that we feel need attention and hear from them what is happening on our mountain and TMNP's plans for the immediate and long-term future.

In this regard three meetings were held with the Area Manager during the year. We are fortunate to have Mathabatha Matjila as our area manager, she is very receptive to our suggestions.

We also submitted a response to the request by TMNP to comment on their new draft management plan.

Over the year we have raised several issues, chief of which was the erosion of the paths above Nettleton Road and the re-sprouting of alien vegetation. Several of our members reviewed the condition of the path after maintenance was done. We submitted comments and photos of sections of the path that were not satisfactorily reconstructed after winter rains. I am pleased to report that subsequent to our submission the paths have been improved.

Security continues to be a major concern and I am pleased to report that this has improved due to more activity. Very few incidents were reported during the year. We are concerned that patrolling with dogs seems to have ceased on Lion's Head.

The walk to the summit of Lion's Head has been rated as one of the best short walks in the world by National Geographic. There is increasing use of the paths and constant maintenance is required.

Activities during the year there have been over 20 organised walks with a total of approximately 200 visitors and members taking part. These have mostly been led by Annabel, John, Sidney, Colin and Margaret, whose efforts are much appreciated.

We would like to encourage other members to lead the occasional hike to relieve the load. Most of these hikes are on Lion's Head and Signal Hill but to add variety some are held on Table Mountain, Devil's Peak, Hout Bay and even as far away as Silvermine.

Friends of Lion's Head assisted Hewat Athletic club with their 100-miler this year. We manned a station at 7am on Kloof Road. They gave us a generous donation.

Fire on the mountain: A devastating fire occurred on Table Mountain destroying some houses and causing injury amongst the brave fire fighters. An article about the effect of the fire on the local flora will appear in the next newsletter.

Finances: As can be seen from the circulated accounts, our finances are healthy and we are keeping money available in short-term deposits. We would like to thank our treasurer, Karin Smith and Sidney Shlomowitz, our honorary auditor, for their valuable work in maintaining and presenting the accounts.

Membership: Your Committee have constantly endeavoured to increase the membership. With additional members we can extend our monitoring and the frequency of our walks. We will also be in a better position to talk with authority to the TMNP.

The Newsletter has been published quarterly. It has been full of interesting material and much appreciated by our members. We also wish to thank Dick Russell for helping with our newsletter.

Our website has been used as far away as Germany to inform tourists of the activities of the Friends of Lion's Head. We have engaged a professional to improve and modernise our website.

Finally I want to thank the dedicated members of our Committee who met on 10 occasions during the year and whose enthusiasm made it possible for FLASH to continue with its valuable work. All of the committee have performed valuable work from leading walks, acting as Treasurer and Secretary, to organising functions.

The committee still needs additional members who are willing to be involved. We would particularly welcome some younger members on the committee. The work is not too onerous and meetings are held monthly at the Fresnaye Sports Club, usually for not more than an hour.

We also welcome members not wishing to attend the monthly committee meeting but who will help with the various activities of the club.

Ralph Roseman, Lynn Gillis - Joint Chairmen

Fire on the Mountain

The injury and loss of livelihood to all those affected by the fire across the Peninsula, in March, is tragic. To a large extent it could have been avoided. There is, nevertheless, a risk in living at the margins of an iconic national park filled with flammable vegetation that can easily burn during the hot and windy summer months.

However I would like to concentrate on the positive aspects of the fire. The fynbos vegetation that clothes the mountains of the Cape Peninsula and throughout the Cape Floristic Region is both fire prone, but more importantly fire dependant. Without fire there would be no fynbos. The burning of fynbos vegetation is an inevitability. It is sad that people are negatively affected but it is far from sad that the veld itself has burnt. This vegetation type has been subjected to fire for millennia, first by lightning, then by deliberate burning by the Khoi to improve grazing and now by human carelessness.

The optimum fire interval is 10-20 years. Different species prefer slightly different time frames and after each fire the composition of the fynbos is slightly different, adding to the diversity.

Fire is a keystone process without which many of the plants in the fynbos would not be able to regenerate, produce offspring or reproduce. Fynbos plants are either resprouters or reseederers. Either they can resprout after a fire has passed through or they produce seeds that are adapted to survive fire and require heat from the fire and chemical compounds from the smoke to germinate. Most of the area burnt consisted of vegetation over 10 years old and so was ready for fire.

Fynbos prefers a rapid hot burn on a windy day, which is what we had recently. This is the opposite from the usual controlled burns which for safety reasons are usually done on a warm, windless day in winter.

A recent problem has been the introduction of alien vegetation such as hakea, pines, port Jackson and black wattle. Some of these plants burn at a higher temperature than fynbos and destroy the seed bank.

All of the above is well known to Table Mountain National Park and Cape Nature officials. The solution to the fire issue is to introduce prescribed block burns, so that various areas of fynbos are of differing ages, which will promote diversity of the species. If this is done effectively large wildfires will only burn limited areas and be more controllable.

The problem is education of the public. At a recent meeting that I attended, a prescribed burn on Signal Hill was discussed. There were many objections from the residents complaining that soot got onto their washing and ash landed in their swimming pool. These minor inconveniences must be ignored for the greater good of the park and the avoidance of large-scale destruction of property by another large uncontrollable fire.

Flags and footholds on Signal Hill

"The Dutch East India Company maintained a permanent lookout on Lion's Head and a flagpole stood on the summit. The signaller lived at Kloof Nek which was then known as Vlaggemans Hoogte and he reached the summit up a ladder to signal the approach of ships by hoisting a flag".

The ladder degenerated in time and was replaced in 1881 by blacksmiths working on the docks in Cape Town who fixed chains to the rocks. These lasted for many years but had to be replaced in recent times to give fearful climbers a steady support when grasped by sweaty hands. More recently several stone footholds were affixed to the route which makes the route much easier and safer for the hordes of climbers who climb Lion's Head daily.

When the British took over the Cape in 1806, Lion's Head became known as Signal Hill and the signal station was relocated there. In 1891 two guns were mounted on the slopes of Signal Hill to become the Lion Battery which is still the site of the midday gun. This was manned by the military during World War 1 and continuously since. Jose Burman relates that the noise of the earlier cannon shattered windows but during World War 2 the cannon were replaced by more effective and quieter guns - no windows broken.

Information from Jose Burman's book, *The Table Mountain*.

Fresnaye Bowling Club

The Fresnaye Bowling Club is holding an "Open Day" of Fun Bowls on Sunday 3 May for anybody who would like to try out Bowls for the first time, or those who may have played before.

Visitors should arrive at FSC (Cor. Ave Normandie and Ave St. Bartholomew) at 1430 for 1500 - they will be briefly shown the basics of the game, after which everybody will be given a chance to play. Assistance will be given by experienced bowlers. Play will take place until about 1700, with a refreshment break at about 1600. Light snacks will be served after the game, in the Clubhouse area.

Dress is comfortable, but flat shoes or "takkies" must be worn. All equipment will be provided. Those interested should contact Dick Russell at dickruss@telkomsa.net.

Friends of Lion's Head has been involved with Fresnaye Sports Club for a fair amount of time with monthly Committee meetings being held at the Club, as well as Annual General Meetings and other functions. The Club is also a meeting-place for many of FLASH's walks.

Paying your FLASH Subscription

Due to high bank charges of R20-00 per transaction, we ask that you pay your membership fee of R50-00 in one of two ways:

EFT to our bank account: Standard Bank Sea Point, Account no 07 474 594 8. Please give your name as reference for us.

Cash to the leader of the walk. Please make sure that the walk leader makes a note of your name so that the Treasurer knows who has paid.

If you choose to pay by cheque or go to the bank to make a deposit, please add R20-00 to your payment, i.e. pay R70-00 (R50-00 being your membership fee and R20-00 the bank fee). Cheques must be crossed and made payable to Friends of Lion's Head. Once again, please give your name as reference.

FRIENDS OF LION'S HEAD AND SIGNAL HILL
APPLICATION FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP

NAME Mr/Mrs/Ms

First name.....Surname.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

Area Code.....

Telephone No (h).....Cell No.....

Email

Notes

- 1) Membership is R50 per person per annum, effective from January to December. Please deposit this amount directly to our bank account:
Bank: Standard Bank Sea Point branch
Savings account no. 07 474 594 8
Please include your name as our reference.

If you pay by cheque or make a deposit at the bank, please add R20 to cover our bank charges, i.e. please pay R70. Cheques must be crossed and made payable to Friends of Lion's Head.

Alternatively, you may give the cash to the leader of the walk. Please make sure that the name of the member, in respect of whom this payment is made, is recorded.

- 2) Your completed application form may be:
 - a) Handed to the leader of the walk together with your payment, or
 - b) Sent by email to friendslionshead@gmail.com or
 - c) Posted to Mrs Annabel Kyriazis, 304, Trafalgar Place, Regent Road, Sea Point, 8005,
 - d) Deposited directly into our Standard Bank banking account. Please ensure that the bank slip includes your name in the **bottom right hand corner of the deposit slip** or
 - e) Deposited using internet banking facilities, provided of course that you include your name as a reference
- 5) Should you choose contact by email, your payment, once banked, will be confirmed by email. You will also receive the newsletter by email.
- 6) Activities presently include: regular hikes, alien hacks, litter clean ups. Other activities could include rock climbing, bird-watching and paragliding, depending on volunteer guides.
- 7) For any further enquiries please contact Annabel on 021-439-7786 (after hours).

8) Friends of Lion's Head is a non-profit organisation and a member of the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA).



A most pleasant and interesting walk was led by Colin Theunissen along the Table Mountain contour path to the saddle on Devil's Peak. He then took us for our tea break to the top of Dark Gorge with stunning views. Very enjoyable.