

MOUNTAIN CALL 2012

Dear Verlorenkloof owners and friends

We look back on the year with gratitude and humility for all the blessings we received, even that of waking up here every day. Late summer was the driest in more than 10 years and winter brought snow in Dullstroom. We were all healthy and well, including our new baby, the Kwena Basin Education Trust, which in the manner of new babies, took every possible free moment this year. Click on the website for the full newsletter and, if you have not yet pledged your bit for 2013, please give us a call!

All in all 2012 was a year of upgrades - the "Verlorenkloof 100%" refurbishment plan set new standards, and governance of the company was taken to a new level, with a brand new Memorandum of Incorporation. It was a valuable experience, for which Eric and I wish to thank the directors, who gave so much of their time quite selflessly.

We report with pleasure on some activities:

BOTANY: Although very dry, the summer was still beautiful and early in February we were visited by Ernst van Jaarsveld from Kirstenbosch who confirmed Verlorenkloof as a location site for the rare *Aloe minima* var. *blyderivierensis*. Several other botanists did field outings to Verlorenkloof and long term owner and plant friend, Kevin Gill, celebrates Christmas this year with the publication of a new field guide on the flora of the Magaliesberg.

FISHING: Fishing also reached new heights thanks to Richard who really took it to heart. Daniel Factor, now a working man, fished less often but lost none of his enthusiasm and still writes really nice reports! Early in October, together with the North Gauteng Fly Fishing Association, we hosted the SA Youth National Fly Fishing Championships at Verlorenkloof. Do read more on the website. We hope to reinstitute more competitive fishing on the river this coming year.

ARCHAEOLOGY: In September Eric and Heidi joined the Gauteng branch of the Archaeology Society on their 10 - yearly epic excursion to the Western Cape. We watched, we learned, we were in awe! Closer to home, a grant by the National Heritage Council and years of groundwork by some of SA's most prominent archaeologists and historians culminated in the publication of lovely brochures on the Bakoni heritage. In house guides Karel, Joseph, Johannes and Buffel joined a few other local field guides for their first archaeology training courses and we foresee that visits to Verlorenkloof's wonderful sites will regularly be on offer in the near future.

And lastly, on the activities front, we hope to devote more time in the development of **cycling** at Verlorenkloof - with work on dedicated trails and mapping planned for 2013, so watch this space!!

On the personal front, we are looking forward to 2013 - in September it will be a full 30 years since Eric and I moved here with Henry, aged 6 months. Our families remain supportive, and our friends still think one cannot possibly call this work. The flight of time becomes quite real when we see our grown up children - who are now both settled in Johannesburg. We are very happy to see them back here regularly. And no, still only the 2 little Boston terriers as granddoggies.... Eric senior is in good health and happily settled in his new home in the east of Pretoria.

Eric senior, our family and all the staff join us in wishing you and your families a wonderful Xmas and we pray that 2013 will bring calm, peace and joy on all fronts.

Fond regards
Eric and Heidi

NOTE - to diarise
BOTANY WEEKEND:

Join Heidi, Frans Krige and Kevin Gill on an in-house botany experience.

WHEN: 1 - 3 February 2013

COST: R 800 per person includes weekend accommodation in a shared room (R 1200 for a single room) in a few of the crofts at Verlorenkloof, all outings and brunch @ Foodspace on Sunday morning, whereafter we will head up to Verlorenvallei at Dullstroom where Frans will show off the orchids.

You bring: Own meals and drinks, comfy walking shoes and lots of enthusiasm!

For bookings - Heidi on heidi@verlorenkloof.co.za