

Penhill Post

A quarterly catch-up for the people of Penhill

A very warm welcome to our quarterly Penhill newsletter which we intend to present four times a year in line with the seasons. The aim of the newsletter is to spread POSITIVITY and UNITY in Penhill by sharing information. We would love to hear from you, the residents of Penhill, what you would like to see in the newsletter.

Editors

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Newsletter title competition winners

Three people came up with exactly the same title for the newsletter and the name received the majority of votes, so it was not necessary to enter a second round of voting. There was a clear winning title. The winners of the prize are:



Pauline Garnham, Mark Eliasov and Michelle Griffiths.

PHORA and NHW Annual General Meetings

On Saturday 14th October the PHORA AGM was held in the Penhill Park, followed on by the NHW AGM. There were 46 Penhill residents present. Our ward councillor, Mrs Kariena Mare, addressed the group and PHORA chairperson Paul Clark thanked Kariena for her continual hard work for Penhill and presented her with a gift. The first Heart of Penhill award was presented to Cina Costa for always having the best interests of Penhill at heart and always going the extra mile and especially for being a voice for animals that are lost or injured. The meetings were both very positive, highlighting what both organisations have achieved for Penhill over the past year.

The following were voted onto the PHORA committee for another term: Paul Clark (Chairperson), Dieter Heinze, Mark Eliasov, Wendy Golding, Lynda Myrdal, Ashton Mouton, Heather Hennink

The NHW committee received its new chairperson in the form of Kneale Caine. Kneale will provide us with a committee update for our next newsletter (Autumn edition). We interviewed NHW committee member Julia Maranyane. Julia has lived in Penhill since 2016. Her role in Penhill's NHW is Public Relations officer. Julia's love for Penhill is largely due to the wildlife that we are lucky enough to experience and the surrounding nature that we can all enjoy as a community. She points out that our Penhill nature reserve is very special and has plants that are not common elsewhere.

With the Festive Season and school holidays coming up we generally experience more crime in Penhill and more foot traffic through our area. Julia's advice is for us to be more vigilant. Parents should explain to their children that if they happen to be on their own at home for some reason, they should not open the doors or gates to anyone that is not known to them. Adults should heed this advice too. Julia says that any strange or suspicious characters walking within our roads should be reported on the NHW channels – or children can alert an adult. Julia's vision for the role of Penhill's NHW is to keep Penhill as safe as possible with the help of all residents living in Penhill.

FROM OUR GARDEN GURU

Whaleed Isaacs



Gardening tips for summer.

The hot weather is upon us and don't forget the Penhill wind too. Remember, if it's hot for you your plants are also feeling the heat. These are all factors that will dry out our garden beds and pots. The answer mulch, mulch and more mulch! After giving plants a good soak cover your soil with mulch, wood chips or straw. The mulch will retain the moisture in the soil and lessen your watering burden. The mulch will eventually breakdown and provide nutrients to the soil.

Another summer plant lover would be our pests who will also flock to your garden like bees goers on a hot day. You can apply an organic pesticide such as Neem oil for most fungal disease and pests. You can also make your own homemade remedy:

1tsp dishwashing liquid

1tsp bicarbonate of soda

1tsp vegetable oil / Cooking oil

Dilute these 3 ingredients into a litre of water in spray bottle. Remember to spray underside of leaves as well.

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

By Pippa le Grange



Horse riding on our roads in Penhill is becoming a problem. The volume of traffic has drastically increased over the last few years.

Just a few tips when you approach a horse

- Look out for horses being led or ridden on the road
- On the roads – take extra care and keep your speed down
- When you see a horse rider on the road – **slow down**
- Watch out for horse rider's hand signals.
- Drivers must be cautious when passing horses, and always regard horses as a potential hazard, remembering they are easily frightened and can act unpredictably.
- Slow down and pass carefully when it is safe to do so, giving the horse plenty of room. Once you are past, accelerate slowly.
- Do not sound your horn or rev your engine – horses are powerful but vulnerable animals easily scared by noise and may panic around fast moving vehicles
- When overtaking pass wide and slow



Please be safe on the roads and drive carefully.

DOWN THE MOLE HOLE

By Lynda Myrdal



As summer is now in full swing and we are seeing our slithering friends out and about, lets' talk about them: SNAKES!

Not everyone's favourite of course, but no need to fear them, or kill them either. They are more afraid of us, and don't want to be anywhere near us. Remember it is us who have encroached on their habitat, and not them on ours, so it is no surprise that we see them around here. And yes, they sometimes they get lost and end up in our gardens, and yes, occasionally appear in our houses. This is normally when they are seeking shade or want to get out of the heat. None of the advertised snake repellents work and they have been scientifically proven not to. So please don't use anything in the hopes that you will keep them away. The only way here to keep snakes out of your property/garden is to barricade yourself inside, behind a very high big solid wall, which won't always work because all snakes can climb. If you have chickens and rabbits and small livestock, with feed lying around, you are inviting rats and mice onto your property which is why you will also be inviting snakes for supper, as rats and mice are their favourite meals. Rat poison is not an option either, as you end up killing a lot of our wild life and raptors as a result. So if you want to keep the snakes out you need a clean, sterile garden, with no woodpiles, no bushy areas, no compost heaps, no pond with fish and no bird aviaries. I don't think that is the way, or why most of us live here. Just be vigilant and if you see a snake call one of our snake experts.

We have 177 different snakes in South Africa, but I will tell you about the three biggest snakes we have here, in and around Penhill and on the farms, as knowledge is key. We have the highly venomous Cape Cobra (*Naja nivea*) and also the highly venomous, fat, lazy, grumpy, highly camouflaged and expert opportunistic hunter, the Puff adder (*Bitis arietans*) We don't see a lot of Puff adders around, but believe me, they are here. These two snakes have very different personalities indeed. The third snake is our Mole snake (*Pseudaspis cana*). This snake is a constrictor so it is non venomous but can pack a mean bite if cornered or threatened.

No snake will rush and bite you if you leave it alone. They will just move on their way. But corner or threaten it, and it will definitely defend itself. They would rather escape though, than have to use their precious venom on you, that is only meant for their prey. The Cobra and the Puff adder will strike. So if you feel unsafe, if you spot a snake in your garden, please call your qualified snake rescuer, but keep your eye on the snake at all times and get the dogs and the children inside. We can't expect

these gentlemen to search a 2-4,000 m² or more piece of land to find them. Should the snake have wandered inside, close the door to the room it is in, and put a rolled up towel against the bottom of the door. If the windows are open just close them from the outside. Remember to breathe and keep calm. Pictures are also very helpful for your snake rescuer so he can establish in advance what he will be dealing with. So send him one when you call him if you can.

A little info about the Cape Cobra:

We have all seen these beautiful nope ropes, I am sure. Adults average about 1,4 to 1,6m, very seldom exceeding this size. Their colour is extremely variable, ranging from yellow gold, gold, reddish brown to black and speckled too. Folk sometimes confuse them with the mole snake due to their potential to be darkly coloured. The babies and juveniles have a dark band around their throats.



Naja nivea – yellow colour



Naja nivea – brown colour

(Photographs used with kind permission of Rudolph Visagie)



Naja nivea (juveniles). (Photograph used with kind permission of Gerrie Heyns)

Cape Cobras love living in fynbos and Karoo scrub like we have in the Conservation area and the surrounding farms. Their eyes are medium sized and have a round pupil. They are also non-spitters. They will stand their ground and warn you with a broad impressive hood when confronted or threatened. You can hear the hiss very distinctly as well. This is how cobras give you a first warning. They don't strike immediately, which gives you time to move away slowly and quietly, but once on the defensive it will strike. If you keep dead still and motionless it will also drop to the ground and move off.....let it. The old wives' tale that they chase you is untrue.

The Cape cobras' biggest enemy is man, followed by carnivorous animals, birds of prey and other snakes. The Cape cobra feeds on rats and mice, other snakes, lizards, frogs, toads. They also love birds, their favourite being weavers and they will climb to get at them. They are oviparous so lay eggs rather than produce live babies. About 8-20 eggs are laid in midsummer. These eggs take anywhere between 60 to 90 days to hatch. The hatchlings will measure anything up to 40cm, and are as venomous as the adults, even at this stage. They are independent at birth so do not stay together. So if you spot a baby, don't worry as the rest of the family are not around.

Now yes, it is true that Cape cobras are extremely dangerous, and their bites can sometimes be fatal. They have highly neurotoxic venom. This is not meant to terrify you but it's the truth so you need to know. They would rather not bite you though. As I told you earlier, their venom is for their prey. So do not be clever and think you can handle these snakes if you don't know what you are doing, or are not qualified to do so. It is extremely dangerous for not only you, but the sake too. Call your snake specialist. It is also illegal to catch and transport snakes if you don't have your permits and certificates to prove it. We have two snake rescue gentleman for you to call. Their names and numbers are regularly posted on our groups. Both are African Snake Bite Institute accredited. Call them should the need arise.

Rudolf Visagie 0826133464

Andries Cilliers 0845691510

So now you know a little about the Cape Cobra. It's about knowledge and respect. Leave them alone and they will leave you alone. They are a very important part of our ecosystem. Next time I will tell you about that fat, bad tempered, lazy Puff adder.

That's all for now folks.

From

Down the Mole Hole with Lynda

AUNT ESSIE'S KITCHEN
Recipes and tips from Esther Thomas



EASY SCONES

Mix together:

2 cups flour
12.5 ml (2½ t) sugar
20 ml (4 t) baking powder
pinch of salt

Next:

Into a cup measure a quarter cup of cooking oil. Add an egg and top up the cup until full with half each of milk and water. Beat together and mix in with a ladle to the dry ingredients. Flatten the dough on a bit of flour and cut out scones. Put on a spray and cook baking tray and bake at 200° for 10-12 minutes. To get a golden top brush with a beaten egg before baking. Enjoy!

Best served with butter, strawberry jam and whipped cream. Quick and easy to make and ideal for visitors popping in for tea over the Festive Season or just pure self-indulgence!

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

Dehydration treatment

With summer here it is important to keep hydrated. Here is a quick and easy remedy for dehydration for babies, adults and animals.

1 l water (boiled and then cooled), 40 ml sugar, 2½ ml salt. Mix and drink regularly.

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Ashton Mouton



Penhill Conservation Area Spring walk

The Penhill conservation area Spring walk was hosted by Ashton Mouton of Recreation & Parks on the 27th September 2023, the walk was a good distraction for the residents who suffered from various incidents associated with the intense Spring Storm that was experienced over the Heritage weekend.

The local ward councillor Kariena Mare joined the group to experience the Spring flowers within her local ward. There were 13 residents who joined the group and were able take photographs of a variety of spring flowers, birds, reptiles and pollinators residing within the Penhill Conservation Area.



Residents taking photos of various flowers and fauna they come across within the conservation area



A resident *padloper* or Speckled Cape tortoise was spotted moving within the conservation area. This species' conservation status is listed as threatened due to drastically shrinking habitat within the City of Cape Town.



Hesperantha falcata subspecies radiata (Aandblom)



Geissorhiza Ornithogaloides (Satin Chink)



New sighting of *Hesperantha radiata subspecies caricina* (vulnerable species and currently not found within the City of Cape Town)

Three new species were found and added to the species list, bringing the total to 243 indigenous plant species found within the Penhill Conservation Area

Photographs © Ashton Mouton and Lynda Myrdal (2023)

HISTORY HUB

By Esther Thomas and Wendy Golding



Stone Age Tools

Would you believe that one could find ancient stone tools in Penhill? Jeff Thomas found a few of these ancient Stone Age artefacts in upper Penhill while out walking the dogs a number of years ago. Originally Grey Rd went as far as meeting up with Herbert Penny Rd and above that was just bush, so there was no road going right to the top of Penhill as there is now. It was on these walks through the bush to the farm dam that Jeff found these stones.

The Stone Age in South Africa is divided into three periods: Early Stone Age (2.5 million years to 250 000 years ago), the Middle Stone Age (250 000 to 22 000 years to 22 000 years ago) and the Late Stone Age (22 000 to 2 000 years ago). The Early Stone Age tools are characterised by hand axes and cleavers as seen in the images below. There are two main Early Stone Age assemblages (collections of artefacts) in South Africa: Stellenbosch (later renamed Acheulian) and Fauresmith – named after the areas in which the assemblages were originally found.



Stone tools found by Jeff Thomas (*photographs* © Wendy Golding 2023)

Penhill's early memories and the origin of the blue gum trees

Following a conversation with an old Penhill resident and friend William Montague, Esther was able to establish some interesting information regarding the origins of Penhill's protected gum trees and Penhill's early beginnings. The original Penhill entrance was at the bottom of Laurimer Rd and was only moved when the railway bridge was constructed. Esther moved into Penhill in 1966 and at that point there were a few smallholdings with agricultural zoning in Way Rd, Hawke Rd, and Dyke

Rd. Some of the original Penhill residents (the Fouries, the Rossouws and the Sadies) moved into Penhill Township – as it was originally called – in 1946 and started building their houses. The farm's title deed before subdivision was in the name of Eric James Philip Penny. Herbert Penny commissioned William Montague's father-in-law to plant the boundary blue gums.

William Montague's wife was Elsa Fourie and she had an aunt called Hannie Swart and her husband was Douw. The Swarts lived on the corner of Laurimer and Gourley Rds opposite the Juristowski family. Hannie had a little kiosk down at the station between platforms 2 and 3 where she sold newspapers, sweets and pies. A whole block from Gourley to Dyke Rds was owned by the Hurwitz family.

The original farmhouse on the land between Hawke Rd and Gourley Rd was condemned several years ago and pulled down. It was owned at one time by Rose Way and her family, after whom Way road is named. Ilanka Coetzee says that when she lived there with her mother Mona there were a few large rose bushes (one can be seen in the picture below) in front of the house.



The original Penhill farmhouse (*photograph courtesy of Rose Way*)

The oldest existing house in Penhill belongs to Wendy Golding and was originally a farm workers' cottage (apparently one of three). It was apparently built in 1938 and the blacked walls of the chimney interior that was above the original kitchen hearth can still be seen if one looks up the chimney that is now above a gas stove. The large oak tree next to the cottage must easily be as old as the cottage itself.

Request for information

Please do share with Wendy or Esther any interesting early memories of Penhill. Photographs will also be welcome. For the next newsletter Wendy and Esther will be on the trail of **the old Penhill graves**. We have gathered a little bit of information but we would love to hear from any of you who has any information or memory of them to add to our story.

CHRISTMAS CREATIVE

By Wendy Golding



Pinecones can be painted with silver or gold paint or you can paint the pinecones with glue and sprinkle on the glitter. Try a bit of electric blue too!

With Christmas just around the corner it is time to make your own Christmas décor. Here are a few easy ideas that are just as much fun to make for big kids (grown-ups) as they are for the little ones.

You don't need to restrict yourself to pinecones. Look for interesting seed heads in the garden or even dried trigs and wood that can be decorated with paint or glitter. You can tie a bunch of twigs together with red and green ribbon.



I went down to Marz Mart at the Eerste River City Centre (where Spar is). They have loads of things you can buy to make your own Christmas décor. I bought all of this for R110. I got three bottles of glitter (R20 each), a pack of gift ribbons in shiny colours, two lots of string (silver and gold), two packs of large stars (silver and gold) and a pack of small glittery silver stars. And glue, of course.



I used cardboard from boxes and toilet roll inserts to make the décor. Great way to recycle cardboard.



RESTAURANT REVIEW

By the Lunching Ladies (Pippa, Pauline and Hester)



This is for all who are fortunate enough to live in Penhill Estate. Now that summer is on our doorstep a few of us decided to go and have lunch, at least once a month at a new and exciting eatery that none of us has been to. So on Friday 3rd November we went to Somerbosch, (on the R44 between Somerset West and Stellenbosch). What a gem!!! We made a reservation and were escorted to our table and had a super nice server. We ordered two pasta dishes and one calamari dish. We also had a very well-priced rose wine.



Pasta of the day with a chilled glass of rosé



Pippa's calamari salad and fries

Then Pippa noticed the fries arriving at another table and we called the server. Nothing was too much trouble for her. In no time Pippa had her beautiful fries that we all shared. After our lovely lunch we could not eat another morsel. We all went into the tasting room and Pippa bought a variety of wine for our friend Wendy. By this time the wind has died down and guests were sitting at tables under the trees. What a beautiful and relaxed site. On Saturdays the cyclists often have their breakfasts there and so do the golfers! The farm Somerbosch is truly a place where you can have time to be silent or just fun like we had. The prices are very reasonable and the food is delicious. Well, we had a super time and we hope some of you will go and visit it soon. In the next we will be giving you feedback on another exciting place or two. Until then, keep well and look after each other. *(Hester)*



The Lunching Ladies (Hester, Pippa, Pauline)



Pauline

My lovely old friend, Pauline recommended this local hidden gem Somerbosch restaurant to me. Three of us ladies from Penhill decided to go for lunch there. When you drive into the car park you already get a wonderful feeling. In summer you can sit out in the garden surrounded by big shady trees. We landed up sitting in the cosy restaurant because it was a cold, windy day. With a great farm location along the R44 towards Stellenbosch, this winelands restaurant has a stunning atmosphere, very professional and friendly staff, delicious wine and food. I had the calamari salad, which was delicious. We spent a few hours relaxing, drinking good wine and eating delicious food. I highly recommend this lovely restaurant. *(Pippa)*

PENHILL DIARY



Carols for Kids

Saturday, 23rd December
18h00-20h00

Venue: Kneale Caine's house
Corner of Grey and Kingfisher streets



Nature walks and seed collecting	Keep eyes open on Penhill WhatsApp groups as notices are posted from time to time.
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We would love to hear from you. What would you like to see in the newsletter moving forward? We welcome any Penhill news (hatches, matches and dispatches included). Information and photographs for our History Hub will be gratefully received as well.

Wishing you peace, health and happiness in 2024 <i>Esther and Wendy</i>
