



The Mountain Club of South Africa

Established 1919

KwaZulu-Natal Section

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## ***CENTENARY JULY CAMP 2019 – COBHAM***

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

**PLEASE NOTE: The July Camp dates accommodate the school holidays of all Provinces.**

For the *Centenary July Camp, 2019*, we have chosen the well-loved Cobham Reserve in the Southern Berg. Our Base Camp will be conveniently sited in Cobham's easily accessible, drive-in, built camp site, thus there will be no need to carry or transport kit! In addition, the camp site is attractively situated alongside the Pholela River. We already have enjoyed a warm welcome from the Ezemvelo staff when we went there for the planning meeting.

We have the wonderful opportunity to celebrate the KwaZulu-Natal Section's Centenary by adding our *Centenary July Camp* to the various and very different celebrations planned for this occasion. We chose this very easily accessible Base Camp site so that **all** who wanted to, would be able to attend the *CENTENARY JULY CAMP*. There need be no worries for the parents of the younger would-be July Campers (the youngest yet Camper was one-and-a-half years old and there are two potential Campers even younger than that!). We hope the *Centenary July Camp* might see us beating that long held record which was set, incidentally, also at Cobham, many years back, at a very beautiful traditional camp site some way upstream. This year's built camp site also offers more comforts and easier access for the more senior members (We still have to beat the record of a Camper over 90 years old!). Campers of all ages are most welcome to help us celebrate the Centenary July Camp. **Non-members also are most welcome to join the Camp and the Centenary celebrations.**

Cobham gives easy access to a wide variety of day walks with enticing rock pools for those who can't resist the lure of a Berg stream. It also offers day visits to the nearer caves of the Little Berg. There are many caves suitable for over-nighting and which suggest exciting sub-camping opportunities. In addition, for those who seek the challenge of longer trips or a traverse in the High Berg there are several mountain passes up to the Escarpment. The Camp lies below the Giant's Cup Trail and looks up at the Giant's Cup, itself.

Since Cobham lies on the Giant's Cup Trail, it also boasts the first overnight hut for those hikers doing the Trail and, as such, those hiking the Trail get the first call on the Pholela Hut, but much of the time it is available for others to use and enjoy. It is a delightful place with 30 bunk beds, eight in each of three bedrooms and six in the dining room/sitting room/ and general passageway to the kitchen with one electric plug point!! It boasts hot showers and a loo in the Hut and showers and another loo outside. If July Campers wish to enquire whether the Pholela Hut is available when they plan to come to the *CENTENARY JULY CAMP*, they should contact the Reservations Office of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife at 033 845 1000 to make their bookings and payments for the Hut to Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. They then should send a copy of the booking slip together with their Application Form and July Camp payment to attend the *CENTENARY JULY CAMP*, (Full details of this transaction appear on the Application Form to attend the *CENTENARY JULY CAMP* which is attached as the last page of this document.)

Another very attractive aspect of Cobham is the quality of the access road which is the first turn off to the Berg after Himeville and then only 14 kilometres on a good dirt road.

Campers are not required to attend the entire Camp and may attend for any period of the Camp that they wish.

It is the first time in a long while that we will be camping in an Ezemvelo built camp site. The advantage of this is that Campers can drive right up to their chosen camp site, then unload quickly, and go to park the vehicle in the designated Parking Area. Please note that this is a **tented Camp** and that car- or bakkie-camping won't be allowed. Since we are in a built camp site, Campers are invited to bring a gazebo or beach umbrella, a modest camping table and small camping chairs. (No large armchairs in the communal areas, please) Campers will also be able to enjoy the modern conveniences of hot showers and flush loos!

For those who are new to the Drakensberg, the view of the rolling hills of the Little Berg reveals gorges that enfold rivers and forests. There are waterfalls and sparkling pools to delight the brave who want to swim, or the photo-enthusiast who chooses to experience the Berg through the lens of a camera. Both the Little Berg and the Escarpment call the hiker to come and explore them. For those who want to hike but prefer not to carry tents, there are convenient caves that can form satisfying sub-camps.

For those who want to do day trips, there is an unlimited number of beautiful trips to 'there and back' as well as the more defined trips from Base Camp to specific objectives such as some of the closer caves and well-known pools. Of course, each of these could serve as part of a longer sub-camping trip. But, if the trip you really want to do lacks a convenient cave or caves, then carrying tents is the answer.

Caves in the area include Gxalingenwa, Spectacle, Pholela, Lakes, Weaver and Chameleon caves, each of which can sleep 12 people, Nutcracker Cave which sleeps six, Venice Cave which sleeps four and the tiny Gorge Cave which sleeps only two. (Please note those caves with Bushman Paintings may be visited, but may not be used for over-nighting or camping.)

It is still early days, but so far Graham Smith has offered to lead a 4 or 5 night Escarpment trip, Margaret Brown and Gerhard Venter are eager to visit the Little Berg caves. Other would-be leaders are asked to let me know the details of the trips they would like to lead so that, if necessary, we can book caves through the Cobham Office.

#### FEATURES OF THE *CENTENARY JULY CAMP 2019*

## ***KZN MCSA CENTENARY JULY CAMP CELEBRATIONS***

### Centenary Celebrations

These will begin with the Festive Friday evening "happy hour" with our own drinks and snacks. We hope that newcomers will tell us what they would like to do so that we can try to meet their expectations.

As the gong goes we will have a sherry and the traditional Mountain Club toast,

"ONCE MORE, ONCE LESS".

After dinner we gather again with much laughter as we invite the old timers to tell of their reminiscences and the "old climbers, bold climbers" of the Camps gone by.

We hope to have some good singers as we used to do. There are still some song books for sale at R50, these are real JULY CAMP memorabilia.

## Centenary Lunch

This will be held on Saturday in a large marquee with tables and chairs ! A first for July Camp, at 12;30 for 13;00. There will be a stunning 3 course menu with a special vegetarian offer all produced by an expert outdoor caterer. Luncheon will be a leisurely, unrushed affair. The meal costs R220 per person regardless of age. We hope YOU will join us.

Those who prefer not to participate will be able to make up their own packed lunch from the selection put out after breakfast. This will have been indicated on each booking form.

### JULY CAMP ITSELF

We shall be enjoying the regular refinements that have become the accepted standard of July Camping. These include the solar lighting system that has made such a difference to the Base Camp.

A particular attraction of this Camp will be the ablution blocks with their 'as good as home' toilets and hot and cold running water and showers!

This year there will also be ample opportunities for:

- superb mini sub-camps, longer sub-camps and longer hikes in the Little Berg and/or on the Escarpment
- satisfying day walks with interesting views of forests, waterfalls, wildlife and streams
- excellent opportunities for bird-watching and Berg photography
- comparisons between Berg grassland, Protea open woodland and patches of indigenous forest
- game viewing that could include eland, oribi, common and mountain reedbuck, grey rhebuck, baboon , grey duiker, jackal and caracal
- campfires and sing songs
- trout fishing (rod fees are payable in the Office)
- access to the painted caves of the area. NOTE: One may not camp or sleep in the painted caves.

### DIRECTIONS - HOW TO GET THERE

From Underberg to Cobham:

In Underberg at the corner where the Shell Garage is, take the Sani Road to Himeville (±5km). As soon as you enter Himeville turn left (west) into New Street. Traveling north-west on a gravel road for about 14km you enter Cobham reserve.

I have been gently informed by some of the Committee members that nowadays no-one, but no-one, gives written instructions of how to get to a place – it's all done by GPS and Google.

The GPS co-ordinates, according to Google Earth are: 29°42'08.22"S 29°24'52.95"E

### LUGGAGE AND PARKING

**N.B.** On arrival at the Cobham Camp site, please chose your camp site, unpack your kit, promptly, and then park your car in the designated Car Park, otherwise, quite unwittingly, you might be parking on someone else's ideal camping spot!

### MCSA MEMBERSHIP CARDS, PASSPORTS and RESCUE PROTOCOL FORMS

- MCSA members are encouraged to carry their **current membership cards** with them.
- Campers intending to go up to the Escarpment **MUST carry their passports** with them.
- For every excursion out of Base Camp, no matter how long or short, every Camper **MUST fill in the Mountain Register** before leaving Base Camp,
- The **Leader of every excursion must carry the tear-off counterfoil which contains the vitally important details of the protocol in case of an accident.**

## BASE CAMP

- All campers bring their **own mountain tents** - sub-zero temperatures can be expected. Strong winds, snow or rain are not uncommon.
- If you take your tent sub-camping, there is an **MCSA tent** where Campers may store their excess kit.
- Base Camp meals are prepared and served by the **Camp staff**.
- We all wash the equipment we use at meal times. Hot water is provided for this purpose and for rinsing.
- Weather permitting, we gather around the **campfire for our own drinks and snacks**, a chat or sing-song and a hot drink after supper, or before supper if the mood takes us.
- Base Camp is protected by **firebreaks** burnt by Ezemvelo KZNWildlife.

**KIT REQUIRED – Even though we will be Camping so close to the cars . for your own sake it is sensible to keep kit to a sensible MINIMUM. A tent full of “stuff” gets uncomfortably crowded. But PLEASE include:**

1. Lightweight tent and bedding suitable for sub-zero temperatures with wind, snow and/or rain
2. Clothing (generally, the days are sunny and mild, but the nights are intensely cold)
3. Waterproof and windproof gear
4. **Personal first aid kit, sun-hat, sun-barrier creams, plasters and any medication you regularly require**
5. **If you are prone to blisters, please bring your own blister plasters and carry them with you whenever you leave Camp.**
6. **Torch and spare batteries are essential.** Headlights are most convenient.
7. Toiletries including **biodegradable** soap/ shampoo which can also be used for washing clothes! It is available from camping and outdoor shops
8. Boots should be sturdy, supportive, water-repellant, comfortable, and with strong Vibram-type soles!
9. Water bottle/s
10. Self sealing plastic bags for food and other purposes
11. Rucksack appropriate for intended activities
12. **Two eating kits - one for use in Base Camp (to be retrieved at the end of Camp), the other for your trips. The intense wind that demolished Base Camp last year, blew much of the accumulated kit away! Much plastic ware was smashed to pieces and enamel plates flew like Frisbees! Please do not rely on their being sufficient cutlery etc. in Camp.**
13. Plastic bucket/ basin to carry water, to have water at your tent and to wash clothes and hair
14. A clothes' line and a few pegs are useful
15. If required, a folding stool or **small folding chair** for use in communal areas
16. **Money to buy maps, pay rod fees and give tips for the staff of five. They all do a marvellous job under very difficult conditions and, otherwise, are unemployed except for occasional' togt' labour. Three of them are retired and one is disabled**
17. Sweets, drinks (your favourite tippie) and snacks to share at the campfire or while out on sub-camps and/or day trips
18. Two large rubbish bags; the 'carry in, carry out' principle applies. Please keep all the rubbish you generate whether in Base Camp or on day-trips/sub-camps and take all of it away with you.
19. To acquaint yourself with the area in advance, the relevant maps are the **KZNatal Drakensberg Park Hiking Map no. 5 Cobham and no.6 Garden Castle** which are available from Ezemvelo KZNWildlife, P O Box 13609, Cascades, 3202 or [customerservice@kznwildlife.com](mailto:customerservice@kznwildlife.com) Or, on arrival, from the Cobham Office.
20. Of course, Google may also suffice.
21. The relevant black and white MCSA July Camp maps will be available in Base Camp.
22. If you plan to join a **sub-camping party**, please bring **your cooking utensils/billy cans, matches, containers, plastic bags, stove plus all your fuel, and gas** if using a gas stove. The Leader can then select the best equipment for the trip. N.B. **These items are NOT provided by the Camp.**
23. **Neither open fires nor candles of any description are allowed anywhere in the Berg.**
24. **Camping stoves may not be used in Base Camp nor any open flames (and that includes candles and candle lanterns), because of the fire hazard in a very dry mid-Winter. Hot water for tea or coffee is available at most times from the kitchen.**
25. All Campers, for their own convenience and safety, should be reasonably fit and well equipped with, and should carry, any **medical supplies that they know they might need.**

## FOOD

- Camp fees include a standard selection of food for all meals in Base Camp and on day trips
- **Pre-packed, lightweight food is provided for sub-camping trips**
- If Leaders would like to plan their catering, they can ask that a copy of the food list can be e-mailed to them
- **Campers with specific dietary needs are advised to provide for their own dietary requirements. (I am one of them, so I know all about it!)**
- Although cell reception in the area is very poor, if you are dependent on your cell phone **please bring your own power pack. The July Camp solar system will is not capable of recharging private cell phones**
- If you need to use your cell phone, please be prepared to walk to get reception

**APPLICATIONS TO ATTEND CENTENARY JULY CAMP 2019: Please book early to avoid disappointment.**

### **N.B. Bookings close on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019.**

- **Please will each Camper apply on a separate copy of the attached application form and indicate preferences, abilities, and membership status of MCSA or other hiking clubs.**
- **WE REALLY WELCOME non-member visitors, children and teenagers, any-one who loves the Berg and hiking in it, all of whom are potential members of the MCSA.**
- Please indicate clearly whether you would like to do **day trips, Little Berg hikes or Escarpment hikes.**
- If you would like to lead a party, **please indicate the type of trip/s** you would like to lead.
- Leaders of overnight trips should **let the Committee know well in advance** if they want to book caves and give the dates.

## COSTS

- *The fees for the camp are **R350 (over 12 yrs) and R220 (children under 12 yrs) per person per night.***
- ***In respect of late cancellation, the Camp reserves the right to retain a 20% administration fee.***
- *If you are **not** a member of MCSA, or an affiliated Club, there is a **once-off additional visitor's levy of R80.00**, which can be redeemed against future membership of the KZN Section of the MCSA.*

• ***Please note, refunds will only be made if cancellations are received before 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019, as at this stage most of the catering and expenses will have been finalised.***

## PAYMENT and CLOSING DATE –31<sup>st</sup> May 2019

- *One application form per person and full eft payment **must be received on or before 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019***
- **Cheques or cash deposits are not accepted.**
- **Account details are: MCSA (KZN) Branch, Standard Bank A/c No. 051207141 Branch Code: 042626.**
- **As your reference, please use the letters JC (for July Camp), followed your surname and initials.**
- **Please include proof of payment with your application.**
- For application and booking queries refer to Gerhard Venter on 084 817 9200 or [julycampbooking@gmail.com](mailto:julycampbooking@gmail.com)
- For further information, queries and additional forms please contact:

The Convener, July Camp Sub-Committee,  
Rikki Abbott Wedderburn, (Cell) 082 538 5389

E-mail: [ronwedd@netactive.co.za](mailto:ronwedd@netactive.co.za)

Or

Margaret Brown, (Cell) 082 055 2143

(Home) 033 347 2009

Or

Gerhard Venter (Cell) 084 817 9200

(Home) 039 681 3507

## URGENT MESSAGES:

From **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2019**, the July Camp Advance Party will already be at Cobham setting up the Base Camp.

**There is no cell phone reception at the Base Camp site.**

**For urgent messages**, during this period and during the Camp itself (28<sup>th</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019), please contact:

Mr James Mthembu, Conservator                      083 9623 934 or [James.Mthembu@kznwildlife.com](mailto:James.Mthembu@kznwildlife.com)

OR

Mr Thandu Nomashina, Officer-in-Charge    033 7020 171 or [Thanduxono.nomatshina@kznwildlife.com](mailto:Thanduxono.nomatshina@kznwildlife.com)

**GENERAL ENQUIRIES: Rikki Abbott**  
**Cell: 082 538 5389      Tel: 033 239 2374**

**Email: [ronwedd@netactive.co.za](mailto:ronwedd@netactive.co.za)**

## - APPLICATION TO ATTEND THE CENTENARY JULY CAMP 2019 -

**PLEASE: delete alternatives that are not applicable, use BLOCK LETTERS, use a separate form for EACH person**

Dr. / Mr. / Mrs. / Miss/ ..... Phone:.....  
 Address..... Cell:.....  
 .....Code..... E-mail:.....

In the case of a child, age.....yrs. Countersigned by parent/guardian .....

I wish to spend only <b>one</b> night in Camp on	/	/ 2019
I wish to attend Camp	Arrive on: / /2019	Leave on: / /2019

I am a member of the .....Section of MCSA		
I am a member of the .....Hiking Club		
I am not a member of any club.		
I wish to sub-camp with some nights on the Escarpment	YES	NO
I wish to hike/sub-camp in the Little Berg, with optional one-day trips to the Escarpment	YES	NO
I wish to go on day trips, returning to Base Camp each night	YES	NO
I offer to lead a sub-camp party	YES	NO
I offer to lead a day-trip party	YES	NO
I will attend the Centenary lunch as a day visitor only	YES	NO

**JULY CAMP CHARGES** (delete what is not applicable)

Camping fee for (all inclusive) ..... nights @ R350 per adult (over 12yrs), or R220 per Juvenile (under 12 yrs.), per night. (please delete what is not applicable)	R
Non-member levy: R 80.00	R
Saturday Centenary Lunch R220	R
<b>Total due</b>	<b>R</b>

**No cash or cheque deposits**

**PAYMENT**

I have made a payment to: Mountain Club of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal Section, MCSA (KZN) Branch, Standard Bank, A/c 051207141, Branch code: 051001 References must start with JC (for July Camp), then surname and initials.	R
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**PROOF of PAYMENT** (delete what is not applicable)

Proof of payment has been POSTED to Gerhard Venter at: PO Box 229 Anerley 4230.	YES	NO
Proof of payment has been E-MAILED to: <a href="mailto:julycampbooking@gmail.com">julycampbooking@gmail.com</a>	YES	NO

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

PLEASE return booking form & confirmation of payment ON, OR BEFORE, Friday 31 May 2019 to:  
 Gerhard Venter, PO Box 229 Anerley, 4230. Cell: 084 817 9200, Tel: 039 681 3507  
 Email: [julycampbooking@gmail.com](mailto:julycampbooking@gmail.com)

**Those wishing to stay in the Pholela Hut should book directly with Ezemvelo at R120pppn. Then when making payment to July Camp please deduct R80 (Camping fee) from each day, so you pay R270 per day to July Camp and include proof of payment to Ezemvelo of the R120pppd.**

**We recommend that folk coming for Just one night to attend the Centenary and who want to stay in Pholela Hut should do so preferably on the Friday night to attend that evening celebration as well.**

**GEN. ENQUIRIES:** Rikki Abbott Wedderburn, [ronwedd@netactive.co.za](mailto:ronwedd@netactive.co.za) Cell: 082 538 5389, Tel 033 239 2374