



SEDIBA NEWSLETTER

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Welcome & General

Ed's Letter

Hi all

Remarkably another year has come and gone marked by our AGM, 16 October 2010, thanks to all who attended, we had to say some sad farewells and we wish John and Dave's families our heartfelt condolences. We also have a change of Chairman, Errol you've done a superb job; it has been a great pleasure working with you, thank you from the committee for your patience and guidance.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Jillian Burgess-Buchan, our new Associate Editor on Sediba, Jillian comes with a wealth of knowledge for which I am truly grateful, her passion is the bush and she will definitely give you loads of interesting info.

In due course Jillian will take on the majority of Sediba's content.

This will be our last Sediba for 2010 we will catch up again in January 2011

Take care until then

Regards

Jacqui

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Sediba dates

Next issue of Sediba will be out January 2011 with November, December 2010 & January 2011 updates.

Should you have any interesting pictures or articles which you think may be of relevance to the Society, please submit them to: sediba@fops.org.za, and secretary@fops.org.za Remember the more involved members are in the newsletter, the more news there will be!

Please also note that Sediba is a bi-monthly electronic newsletter downloaded off the website. Planned 2011 edition dates are Feb/March - published end March 2011. April /May - published end May. June/July - published end July. August/September - published end September. October/November - published end November.

The purpose of the Sediba newsletter is to keep members, sponsors, etc. informed with regard to work party updates, any current news, as well as any interesting articles that can be gathered from people in the know!

Workparty Change of Date Notice :

The workparty scheduled for the 31st Dec 2010 to 2nd Jan 2011 has been cancelled. The first workparty for 2011 will then be 28-30 Jan 2011.

2011 WORK PARTY DATES:

PILANESBERG: Friday 7th – Sunday 9th January 2011

Friday 4th – Sunday 6th February 2011

BORAKALALO: Friday 28th – Sunday 30th January 2011

Friday 25th – Sunday 27th February 2011

The full calendar of all work party dates etc. will be published on the website during January 2011.

Remember, should you wish to attend a work party, please call the work party co-coordinator on the MONDAY prior to work party date and book your space, with your registration number, as well as number of people.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

A very warm welcome to the new committee members, namely Warren Best - Chairman; Work Party Co-Ordinator - Kevin Lesser; Associate Editor Sediba - Jillian Burgess-Buchan

Committee is:

Chairman - Warren Best

Work party Co-Ordinator: PIlanesberg - Paddy Coombe-Heath

Work party Co-Ordinator: Bora/Kgswane - Kevin Lesser

Treasurer - Mark Viljoen

Sediba Editor - Jacqui Higgins

Associate Editor - Jillian Burgess-Buchan

PR/Fundraising: Jorg Hinke

Secretary - Fiona Chapman

Contact details for Committee members may be found on www.fops.org.za

FOR SALE:

Howling Moon 1,2 Roof Top Tent R6000.00

Contact: Mark on 082 773 8855

Parting words from outgoing FOPS Chairman, ERROL BLEKSLEY

On 31st August our very dear friend Dave Cockburn, fondly known as Stickman or Sticky for short, passed away. He will always be remembered as a person who went out of his way to help anybody, be it putting up tents, changing tyres, fixing faulty gas lamps, the list is endless, he was there. At times I believe if he did not have his Leatherman he would have been totally lost. To Sylvia our thoughts are with you and remember you have a great bunch of friends within FOP'S.

At about 08h30 on 12th September I received a phone call to say that John had passed away the previous evening. What the John Bennett? Can't be! What is going to happen to Bora now? John was one of the founder members of FOPS and well known to be a very committed and hard working member. To list all of his achievements will take most of the morning but without doubt one of the best serving employees of the NWP for nearly 30 years, all the hard work done without pay. He passed on doing what he enjoyed most, sitting at the fire playing his guitar in the evening while at a work party at Bora. Victoria, you and your family can be proud of John for who he was and what he did for FOP'S.

I would like to extend my thanks to the FOPS committee members, the Northwest Parks Board, our sponsors and all the dedicated hard-working members for another productive year.

With regard to the Committee Members, I would like to comment on each in turn;

Fiona Chapman – Secretary

This happens to be one of the most taxing portfolios as it entails not only keeping minutes of our meetings, but also having to deal with numerous other functions, namely capturing all details of new members and sending out their relevant documentation; following up on existing members who have not renewed their memberships; sending out rather strongly worded letters to some of our wayward members who have transgressed our code of conduct; corresponding with our current and potential new donors; maintaining FOPS website with You & Me Digital, as well as assisting with Sediba. The role in fact can be termed 'the Dogs Body'; a big thanks to Fi for all the hard work that she does for us.

Mark Viljoen – Treasurer

Mark is one of those people who works quietly behind the scenes (not the type of job for Fi) and gets things done. It is due to Mark's dedication that our statements and balance sheets are professionally done and always up to date. Thanks to Mark and Judy for all of their hard work.

Paddy Coombe-Heath - Projects Co-Ordinator, Pilanesberg

Paddy - well what can we say? Here is a man who knows how to get the most out his team of volunteers at work parties, both verbally abusing and threatening them! The problem is that they believe him. Jokes aside, he is the right man for the job.

With his connections at Pilanesberg the right things get done, both for the benefit of the Park as well as FOPS.

Paddy and his merry bunch of team leaders normally go up the day before the work party begins to ensure that everything is ready and (hopefully) working for an early start on Saturday morning. Part of his duty also includes deciding who will be working on each project, a function which can be rather stressful at times for Paddy and he has been known to drive down to Tilodi Dam and sit under the trees to work on it!

A very big thanks to Paddy and all of his team who do a great job in Pilanesberg.

The Late John Bennett & Kevin Lesser - Projects Co-Ordinator, Borakalalo & Kgaswane

If it were not for John and Kevin where would Bora be? Not only do they work on FOPS projects but also endeavour to maintain the Parks' vehicles. The reason for this is that, at times, the Park's equipment is required in order to complete certain projects. Paddy noted that John moved so many rocks around in Bora from one side to the other, he was surprised that the earth did not go off tilt.

Kgaswane is one of those parks that requires more gardening than building, however more on that from Kevin.

Jacqui Higgins – Sediba Editor

A big thanks to Jacqui for a very good job done under very difficult conditions. To edit and produce a copy of Sediba also requires help and input from members. Endeavouring to get relevant information is, at the best of times, rather daunting a prospect.

Jillian Burgess-Buchan has offered to help out as Assistant Editor and it is this type of positive action that is required as opposed to finding fault with the production of Sediba. Thanks Jillian for your offer of assistance.

Public Relations and Fund Raising

This portfolio was very well run by Jorg Hinke but is currently vacant.

FOPS Tents.

A big thanks to Lindy for handling the hiring out of our tents. Although they bring in a big amount of money every year, the monitoring and controlling thereof can be rather difficult at times. Once again thank you Lindy.

A final thank you also needs to be extended to our Committee members for their positive input and hard work during the course of this year.

Lastly as you all know I will be standing down as Chairman and must thank all FOPS members, Park Management and friends for all their support and love during my stint in this position.

The three nominees for the position are all great guys and all equally suitable to take on the Chairmanship. I know that as members of FOPS your choice will be the right one. To the newly elected candidate: enjoy it, you have a great committee working with you.

Errol Bleksley

Chairman

NEW MEMBERS

During August, September and October we had an influx of new members – a big WELCOME to all of you! Once again, thank you to all existing members who renewed their membership! Please be reminded that memberships are due for renewal in JULY each year.

Mark & Sharon Algar	John Parkin
Robert & Janet Krause	Tim Dempsey
Reuben Adendorff	Jim Powell & Shirley Stones
JJ & Susan Kriel	Tyran Elliot & Geri Adolphe
Jenny Barnard	Lionel Redelinghuys & Rianet Botha
Genevieve Kuijpers	Colleen & Barry Elliot
Carol & Ashley Barnes	Sonnette Sholtz
Dieter Kuhl	Michael Gegenhuber
Josh Behrend	Robin & Joean Sink
Michael & Robin Lambert	Simon Griffiths
Mike & Yvonne Beyl	Brenda & Barrett Smith
Juliet Matthews	Kerry-Anne Hare
Neels & Rachel Blignaut	Angela Stout
Pieter & Nesta Malan	Rob Herbst
Glynn & Ann Brookes	Tim & Maureen Timmins
Cornelius & Wilma Meyer	Farren Herbst
Menante Botha	Thierry & Elaine Herly
Nigel Miller	Phil Hill
Christo & Rentia Botha	Johan & Fern Van den Pol
Allison Mines	Charlotte Hughes
Dicky Botha	Gerhard & Susan Van Niekerk
Mark & Annette Morris	Nellie Hobbs
Carla Caswell	Francois & Marinda Van Rooyen
Alison Moolman	Kelly Kramer & Mark Steyn
Johan de Jager	

Please could we ask that all members, both new and existing, adhere to the rules. (These are in addition to the rules concerning work party weekends. Should you be in any doubt about any of the rules, please ask your work party co-coordinator to go through them at the pre-work party briefing).

Non-compliance with FOPS rules and code of conduct will not be tolerated, and may result in expulsion for the offender(s) from The Society.

- Acquaint yourselves with the rules and regulations as stipulated by the North West Parks and Tourism Board (NWP & TB) and abide by them while representing FOPS within any park under NWP&TB jurisdiction.
- Entrance to the Park is free on work party weekends only and only to those who are attending a work party.
- FOPS tents are for paid up members only.
- No member, other than a Committee Member may communicate with any NWP&TB official about FOPS affairs.
- And finally, have a good time whilst attending your FOPS work party weekend!

Work Parties

September 2010 - Pilanesberg Work Party

Hi Folks,

We had a fairly good turnout, with 27 people attending this month's work party. I think some people were a bit scared of the possibility of cold weather. The days were good but at night it did get a little chilly.

We had a new family join us, Neal and Cindy Hales, welcome you guys, we hope to see you again. Oh and we had another new face, our chairman Errol Bleksley - good to see you at W/P again!

First project on the list was of course the Iron Age site. Neville was back at the helm, but was body searched first for matches or lighter. We were not taking any more chances after he nearly burnt down the site last year! (Only joking) We cleared and sprayed as usual, boring and tiring work, but necessary.

Then to Bathlako fence, Chalkie could not make it, but a number of us went and finished off what we could. We scalloped the small up-rights to make them look uniform, and painted the tops with Waksol. This might not look like a big job, but there are hundreds of poles (at least it felt like it). We hope to have the fence finished next time.

Thereafter a team was sent to Malatse, to clear along the fence, as this will be our next project. This was hard work because the area is very overgrown. The guys did well, there just needs to be a bit more clearing done. We then started on cutting back the bush where it encroaches into the road. This is back breaking and after an hour or so your arms don't work so well anymore. It needs to be done, and our guys are the only ones who can and will do it.

Well that's about it for now until the next time.

I almost forgot, it's starting to get really hot out there. Please remember to bring your alarm clocks with you, so we can start before sunup.

Go well.

Regards

Paddy

October 2010 - Pilanesberg Work Party

Hi Folks,

The turnout was good, with 33 people attending, and a number of new faces, 6 in all. Unfortunately not all are members yet but we are working on it.

Daytime temperatures were mentioned in the previous work party report. October has already proved to be sweltering, with the first Friday registering a temperature of 31°, and Saturday 33°. Working in that heat is not fun, and going forward work parties will commence before sun-up.

The elephants breaking branches and generally making a nuisance of themselves around the camp on both that Friday and Saturday night ensured that we were awake in lots of time. In actual fact, it was not that much fun, a couple of people having been rather scared. Hopefully they will leave us alone for a while.

Now for some good news, Bathlako is up and running. Chalkie brought the necessary poles and sorted that out for us. He thereafter went and measured up at Malatse, which will mean we can get cracking there in November.

The Iron Age site needed a lot of spraying and cleaning up of the old grass from the previous month. The plants and grass are proving to be very persistent and keep coming back. Two teams spent their entire day focused on the cutting back of growth along the roads. One team went along Dithabaneng and the other along Korwe.

The third team stayed in camp and did a general spring clean which has resulted in a neat and tidy camp.

A big Thank You needs to go to Jorg, Steve and Janet, Grant and Johan, who did a lot of work on Friday attending to things that we don't have time to do on Saturday morning, as they are small details and do not warrant a whole team effort. Jobs such as fixing our driveway, putting up posters in the hides, fixing gates etc. Thank you and well done guys!

Till next time go well

Regards,

Paddy

September/October – Borakalalo Workparty (Kevin Lesser) In memory...

Hi All

By now most of you would have heard about our rather traumatic September/October workparties. Certainly not the type of workparties we expected. The September workparty was all going smoothly, with lots of attention still on the rebuilding of the cause-way. Then on Saturday night, during our privileged serenade session, John Bennett collapsed and passed away. The team did all they could to try and resuscitate him but by the time they had rushed him to hospital in Brits it was clear that there would be no recovery.

It is a very unfortunate loss and the wealth of knowledge that departed will be very hard to replace. His some 25 years of dedication to the FOPS organization will not and should not be forgotten. His direct involvement with projects in Kgaswane, Borokalalo, Madikwe and Pilanesberg will forever live in the structures and trails that remain.

We salute you John Bennett for your tremendous dedication to FOPS and North West Parks & Tourism Board.



John Bennett 1939 – 2010

The October workparty was dedicated to John Bennett and we had the memorial service in Borakalalo. John had often said that should his time be up, he could think of no better place than in the bush. His last wish was granted, so Borakalalo will forever be his final resting place. So for those of you that see spirits or ghosts, beware if you should see something in Fish Eagle camp, especially if you stared too far down that good bottle of wine!!

The service was well attended and eloquent speeches were delivered by family and the parks staff.

I would like to thank the crew that helped put the service together and that made the arrangements run so smoothly. Also a big thank you for your contributions be they refreshments, flowers, plaques etc.....



Trees were planted by the family members in the Fish Eagle camp site, a wooden plaque was erected in the lapa and memorial benches were installed on the top of the Pitjane trail. Plaques were also attached to the benches to honour passing volunteers and passing park staff members.



Best regards,
Kevin

Anecdotes

An Exciting Introduction

How the Jacaranda 94.2 initiative with Stoprhinopoaching.com inspired our new member Lionel Redelinghuys to join FOPS.

"I was on my way to Menlyn mall on Saturday 4 September 2010 when I heard about Jacaranda FM's campaign to help Save our Rhino. Before that I have seen the commotion on Facebook and was rather moved by what I saw. So, when I heard on Jacaranda that they were raising funds, I immediately donated R20. Not much but I did it and I have no regrets.

"Since our last visit to Pilanesberg in August 2010 we'd been planning a follow up visit to the park at which time our friends would join us. That was the weekend of the 10th September 2010. Friday was a normal day in the Park, elephant here and there, lots of rhino but nothing out of the ordinary, except for a vehicle towing a game trailer and an extremely armed game ranger at the Manyane gate asking for a license and permit.

On Saturday morning I had a strange but good feeling that we were going to see some action. Then we noticed bakkie loads of game rangers chasing about in the park. We couldn't quite figure out what was going on until we saw the helicopter in the distance. We immediately stopped one of the park officials (an Australian guy) and asked what was happening. It was then that we were told that rhino tagging was taking place. I was very excited, from a photographer's perspective this is an awesome opportunity.



We drove around looking for lion but also trying to figure out how to get to the helicopter. Finally we managed to locate the landing site and boy, were we lucky. We got there just in time. The rhino had just been darted. We weren't in a prime position to photograph the event, but we were there. We then noticed the guys from Jacaranda. I got so excited because it was then that I realized that my donation had helped fund what I was witnessing.

The whole encounter made me and Rianet (especially me) feel that we'd like to get more closely involved in these kinds of projects. We simply love nature and the animals, but we especially love the Pilanesberg. There's such a rich history and so many interesting things. I thought to myself, there's got to be some way to get more involved without having to relocate, get additional training or leave my current work situation. It was then that I remembered about FoPS.

When we got home, I Googled FoPS and was immediately intrigued by what I found. What interested me even more was the fact that FoPS have tents available for member's use. To me, being in my early 20's and not having too much money, this had to be the ideal organisation. That's how I came to join FoPS and at the end of the month my very best friend will also be joining!"

Thank you Lionel for the article, and once again, WELCOME! For more info on Jacaranda FM's campaign visit

<http://jacarandafm.amazee.com/wwwstoprhinopoaching.com>

Ele's in Charge

During the past few months a number of the Pilanesberg Work party members have encountered Elephants who refuse to share their road! (Sure does seem some find this highly entertaining.) Here are some photos of when a bull refused to let the work party through....

Whilst this may offer a great photo opportunity, please don't forget the potential dangers!

The herd was to the right off the road, presenting a great viewing, then the bull came onto the road and started walking up towards the vehicles, and then he moved off to the side again ...



After this the bull then walked in front of the vehicle 'pushing' Paddy back the way we had come...

even though the speed at which he moved is not really captured in stills, it was a disconcerting couple of minutes.

The Inferno

In addition to rhino tagging and the antics of our road hogging giants, the park saw more excitement with the fire that burnt down 11 000 hectares of park and the Bakubung gate!



INTERNATIONAL VULTURE AWARENESS DAY – 4 SEPTEMBER 2010

The first Saturday of September every year is observed as International Vulture Awareness day by the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Birds of Prey Programme (EWT-BoPP), its partners and associates including provincial conservation bodies and several other NGOs involved in vulture research and conservation in South Africa. The purpose of this day is to create awareness of the continued plight of all vulture species and to highlight the work done by conservationists to monitor populations and implement effective measures to conserve these birds and their habitats.

"The day evolved from the Sasol National Vulture Awareness Day that has been celebrated in South Africa since 2005" says EWT-BoPP Manager, André Botha. "This initiative received such interest from organisations elsewhere on the world that the first international event was celebrated by 152 organisations representing 45 countries in 2009. We expect global support to be even greater this year."

The Endangered Wildlife Trust in collaboration with the Vulture Programme of the Rhino & Lion Wildlife Conservation NPO and Birdlife South Africa hosted a fun-filled family day at the Vulture Programme's rehabilitation centre near Hartbeespoort dam on Saturday 4 September 2010. Activities included morning and afternoon talks on vulture conservation, vulture feedings and plenty for the kids to do. 350 guests visited the centre on the day as well as an additional 70 disabled children with 29 teachers and 17 volunteers from the Jeep Club. Eland Platinum Mines (X-Strata Alloys) made t-shirts for all the children and their teachers. Educational interactive sheets were handed out to the children to take back to school with them as activity sheets as well as a reminder that we need to save our vultures.

A number of rehabilitation centers and vulture restaurants in the country also hosted special events and showed vultures to the public.

South Africa is home to no less than 9 vulture species. Seven of these species are listed in the Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Barnes, 2000) as facing a certain degree of threat of extinction. The Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* is one of only two bird species listed as "Regionally Extinct" in South Africa. The Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*, whose range in southern Africa is restricted to the Maluti-Drakensberg Mountains in South Africa and Lesotho is classified as Endangered and continues to decline in numbers. The Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres* only occurs within southern Africa and the conservation of this species remains one of the main focal areas of the EWT-BoPP. Other species, such as the Lappet-faced Torgos *tracheliotus*, Hooded Necrosyrtes *monachus*, White-headed *Trigonoceps occipitalis* and African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* mostly occur in large conservation areas and are listed as Vulnerable.

Vultures are faced with a range of threats such as poisoning, persecution, electrocution and collision with power lines, drowning in farm reservoirs in drier parts of the country, shortage of safe food supplies and loss of suitable habitat. Recent research has shown that these birds are highly mobile and can cover several 100 kilometers in a day in search of food.

This makes the implementation of effective conservation measures to benefit these species a daunting task which needs to be approached from a national, or more likely an international perspective.

For further information regarding the Vulture Rehabilitation Centre or the International Awareness Day, contact either André Botha at andreb@ewt.org.za or Kerri Wolter at kerri.wolter@gmail.com.

North West Parks & Tourism Board

Rhino Poaching Update

Rusty Hustler -11 October 2010

Rusty advised that it has been a quiet period in North West Parks since losing 5 Rhino in one weekend. A brief update follows :-

14 August – a carcass of a White Rhino was recovered in Borakalalo. The carcass was approximately 6 weeks old and was missing the horns. .556 ammunition was recovered both from the head and neck.

14 August – A White Rhino carcass was located south of Shepherd's Tree Lodge in Pilanesberg, having had both the horns knocked off. The animal had been dead for approximately 4/5 days and it is suspected to have died of natural causes and the horns subsequently stolen.

11 September – During the Jacaranda 94.2 promotion, a White Rhino was shot and wounded. She was treated and now appears to be fine, having since been seen in the Pilanesberg.

14 September – In Borakalalo, two White Rhino carcasses were located with their horns still intact. It is not certain whether they were darted or died of natural causes, however this is being treated as an investigation.

18 September – A Black Rhino carcass was discovered in Pilanesberg having been shot, 306 tracer ammunition was recovered.

18 September – Four White Rhino carcasses were found during the game count in Pilanesberg (all shot on or about 16 September), all missing horns. Two had been shot on or about the 16th September, one at least six weeks old that could have been linked to the three rhino located on 9th of August in the Klippesberg and one that appeared to be wounded, died on the night of the 18th Sept but subsequently found to have been in a fight with either an elephant or another rhino.

28 September – A Black Rhino, Magdalena, was found in Pilanesberg during the game count having been shot and wounded. She has been treated and appears to be fine.

Limpopo Investigation – A large number of people have been arrested, more than likely to be one of the syndicates and quite co-incidentally since their arrest, things have gone quiet.

Rusty Hustler has been appointed to the National Wildlife Crime Reaction Unit as the representative for North West Parks.



Rhino Poaching update

Interesting news on Rhino poaching from EWT at

<http://www.tracker1.co.za/weblink/d2be62f1-ff7b-42ba-b857-5dd9973c4056.htm>

Endangered Wildlife Trust's (EWT) Rhino Security Project Update: 1 October 2010

Number of rhino poached

Since January 2010, 213 rhino have been poached.

Arrests made

A Mr. Tommie Fourie was arrested in Musina three weeks ago for illegally trading in 36 rhino horn on the Maremane Game Reserve in Musina. Mr Fourie was the Reserve Manager for a Danish Consortium who owns the land. He has since then been fired. Further arrests in this case are pending as the buyer of the rhino horn is already known to the investigating team. This is the tip of the iceberg of another smuggling syndicate which will eventually be exposed.

Eleven members of a local rhino horn syndicate were arrested last week and were all given bail in the Musina Magistrates court on Wednesday the 22nd of September. It was a great celebration that coincided with National Rhino Day, a WWF initiative that took place on the same day. The main member of the syndicate, Dawid Groenewald, was released on bail of R1-million, his wife R 100,000 and the rest of the accused's bail amounted to R200 000, collectively. There are more arrests pending.

The magnitude of this syndicate's activities is not yet fully known but it is significant. The case has been remanded until April 2011 for further investigation. It is expected that this will be a lengthy case and will take some time to finalise. At this stage it is too early to say whether this arrest will have a positive effect on poaching, but it is expected that poaching numbers will not decrease.

In our view the Groenewald arrest is more significant than the case against the Van Deventer brothers which case will be heard in the Pretoria high court during the second week of October 2010. The Van Deventer brothers and their co-accused are facing charges of racketeering and are potentially facing 25 years in jail, if found guilty.

Groenewald was also arrested in the USA in February this year for the ille

gal smuggling of a leopard skin, which was hunted without a permit during 2006, and for which fraudulent permits were obtained in 2008 in order to facilitate the export. Groenewald pleaded guilty and was fined and banned from ever doing business in the USA again. He still stands to be prosecuted for this in South Africa too.

Last week two more individuals were arrested in Phalaborwa for the role they played in poaching inside the Kruger National Park. The suspects are a Mozambican and a Chinese National. They have been released on bail of R80 000. This arrest was prompted by an arrest inside the Kruger Park where three poachers were arrested at a rhino carcass with two horns in their possession. The police subsequently set up a 'buy bust' operation and arrested the two while they were attempting the rhino horn sale in Phalaborwa.

The Fossil dig.

The Fossil dig is still on track for the 30th October dig near Ventersdorp, the person leading the dig will be Tinus de Beer.

However, the process of going on the fossil dig has changed somewhat. To be able to attend the dig with the Paleontology Society, you have to be a member of the Paleontology Society. The reason for this is the control of monies going to the society and the indemnity form that has to be filled in on-line. Hopefully this does not scare you away from the dig.

The costs are exactly the same as previously advertised, i.e. R60-00 for an individual and R100-00 for a family membership. It's quick and easy, I filled in my application form on-line on their website, paid via EFT and sent the proof of payment to Tinus at mufon-sa@icon.co.za. A process that took less than 15min and I can now say that I'm also a member of the South African Society of Amateur Paleontologists (SASAP).

So, if you want to join the dig, which sounds like a huge amount of fun, then hit the link provided below and on the left-hand side of the their web page you will find the selection button for "Application Form", fill in the few details they require, fill in the Indemnity form at the bottom and press "Submit".

There are a few payment options, but the EFT is by far the quickest.

When you send the proof of payment to Tinus, send it in this format (e.g. "Payment attached for Mr. Smith, attending Ventersdorp outing with 2 family members).

Then you'll get an e-mail from the society with more details on the dig.

See you there.

<http://www.sasap.org.za/>