

# September Editor's Letter

By Miki



Now that HBT is so much easier to read on a small screen, we have a few new readers. I bid you a very warm welcome.

Somehow, September felt even busier than August. The mountain is alive again! When the mist clears long enough for our eyes to adjust, you'll see pure magnificence. Flowers showing off. Healthy, vibrant new growth and about fifty shades of green filling every available square meter. And I am loving it!! What a gift it is, to live here. How was September for you?

I would have loved to report back and share the name of my cape-wearing, pancake-making hero. But alas... No such luck. *Cognitively, we know this, we've heard it, read it and... if we're lucky, experienced it: **No one is coming to save you.***

So I had to be my own hero and make my own pancakes. By the time the rain, my schedule and my groceries finally aligned, we had no comms. (Dramatic sigh accompanied by a truly teenage eyeroll) *"You don't need Vodacom to operate a stove, Miki."* I know, but I do need to call my mom.

I know how to mix and make my perfect pancake, relax. I've been doing it for years; but for years, calling my mom and asking for her *better* batter mix has been part and parcel of making pancakes. It's not about the recipe of course...it's more than that...It's like I'm five again, it's raining and we're standing in the kitchen together, making pancakes; and she's letting, rather – allowing, me to Help HER.

Anyway...For the first time since I left home, I thought I was making pancakes without my mom. I had about five scoops of batter left when the phone rang...Vodacom back... And there she was. Core memory preserved again.

In this month's packed HBT, I broke several of my own rules. I said we'll never advertise, yet this month we're advertising office space. I said, no article/ submissions about 'The great beyond'; only Hogsback based, Hogsback related – by Hogsback for Hogsback; yet we have a short story about another town and an actual map proving we're not the real center of the universe (Bathurst's claim is irrelevant right now). I also ranted a bit about AI posters, I repeat: of course you are allowed to take offense (as long as you remember I never gave you a fence, or any fence, you decided you want to take one).

I am not 100% in the anti-AI camp, there's immense benefit and constructive uses... But I still want to ask questions. Sometimes stupid ones. Sometimes questions I already know the answer to... and I want to ask humans! Whether it's my mom for pancake batter or sewing direction, or you, about whatever it is I feel you can teach me; I appreciate human answers way more than a neat summary of world consensus.

Ask the stupid questions, ask the obvious questions, if the subject matter is real life, find the answer in real life. By all means use AI for your existential crisis questions if you want to.

And if you're the one they call, please, I beg you: *"I don't know"* is a perfectly good answer. Please don't tell someone to Google-it, don't send them to Chat GPT... Sometimes people aren't looking for an answer.

They're looking for you... so let's not become so efficient that we forget what a privilege that is.

Enjoy the September issue.

Love,

Miki

# What’s Happening & What Got us Talking

## 🌳 Hogsback Garden Club – Tree Planting Update 🌳

A little report-back for our members: 48 indigenous trees were planted in our precious Arboretum on Tuesday, 8 September. 🌿 We planted 12 different species, with four trees of each species, adding wonderful diversity to this special space.



A huge thank you to The Cape Parrot Project for their generous donation of the trees. We are also incredibly grateful to Clive and Carol, for managing this project; Jacob and the team, as well as the two homeowner gardeners, who planted all the trees.

Thank you to everyone involved in helping to grow and care for our beautiful Arboretum. 🌿

Here’s to watching these trees grow and flourish for many years to come!

Hayley McLoughlin, Chairperson



### September also kicked off the new HOGSBACK FRIDAY NIGHT QUIZ!

Every Friday night brings a new question; topics are: Local Knowledge, Fact, Myth-buster, Story or Bluff.

Week 1 astonishingly, only 20% of Locals got the Local Knowledge question right, where the Fact topic in week two (When only WiFi users could participate)... 74% hit the nail on the head!

Let’s not speculate as to what that says about us cellular data peasants...

Catch the FRIDAY NIGHT QUIZ this week on PULSE

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaB2QEpln-lqlbztT9S2l>

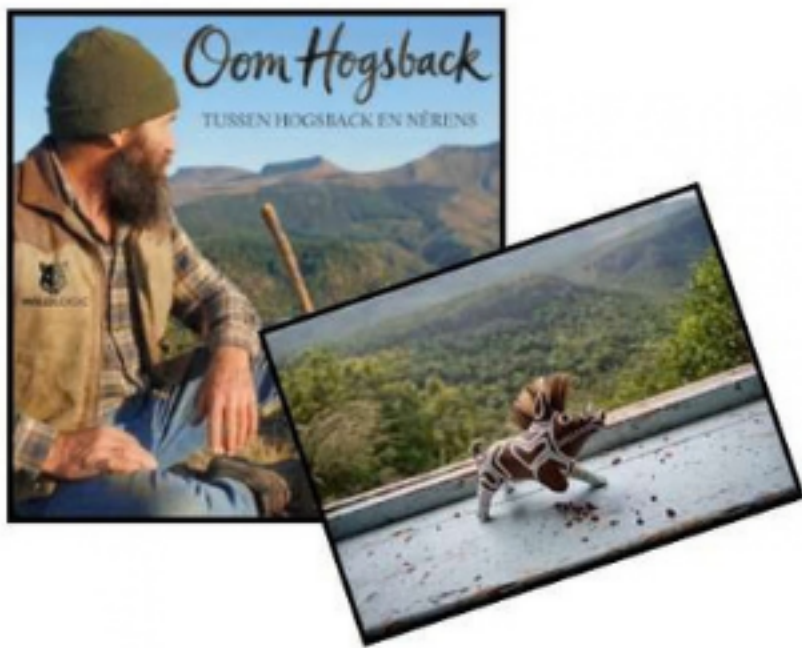
## HTO Elections

A big thank you to the 10 (eligible to vote) TPOs who turned up for the HTO Board as well as the prospective HTO membered TPO’s and the curious.

A special thank you to the outgoing Committee – Miki, Alex, Fiona, Mark, half-term-Brent & Laurent and still-in-Francois. Thank you to Vincent Blackbeard who braved the tourism space to oversee these elections – well done for keeping us on track! Thank you King’s Lodge, for hosting us.

The new HTO Board is: Chairperson: Siya Gxothiwe; Deputy Chairperson: Francois Rautenbach; Secretary: Janice Adlam; Treasurer: Joanne Campbell. Additional members are Bella and Ruby.

Thank you for stepping up and stepping in. Let us all, TPO or not, give them support and show appreciation every chance we get.



Have you listened to  
“Tussen Hogsback en Nerens” yet?

Oom Hogsback released a new  
single last week. “Drie Been Droom”

Find, Follow and Listen on Spotify.

Red Clay hosted an Intuitive  
painting workshop by Kurt Stone.  
Most of us thoroughly enjoyed the  
experience. Well done on all  
Kurt’s beautiful  
creations.



<https://open.spotify.com/artist/5j4ApVSJvEDL8cKZnphA1L?si=fciLKxVwSA64Y7mnARex2Q>

## Her Name is Poppy and she’s Staying

Every now and then, the frantic pinging of the community WhatsApp groups yields something better than local outrage or infrastructure post-mortems... it delivers a happy ending.

When a purebred Bouvier pup was spotted running down the pass two weeks ago, the collective assumption was immediate. A dog of that caliber, wandering the mountain roads, surely had a frantic owner burning through data bundles and canvassing every lost-and-found board in the province.

Kerry Yates took her in, fired off the necessary notices across Facebook, WhatsApp, and the local grapevine, and waited for the inevitable claim. Many a local offered a backup home, but as the hours turned into days, a familiar mountain phenomenon took hold. The Yates household fell completely, helplessly in love with the six-month-old ball of fluff.

Yet, Kerry kept looking. She searched the groups daily, checked with village guests, and held the door open for an owner who, as time gently proved, was simply never going to appear.

After two weeks of quiet waiting, the search is officially over. The lost soul on the tarmac has a permanent hearth, a new name courtesy of Caity; Poppy – and a family who realised very early on that she had already chosen them.

Welcome home, Poppy. You picked the right mountain.



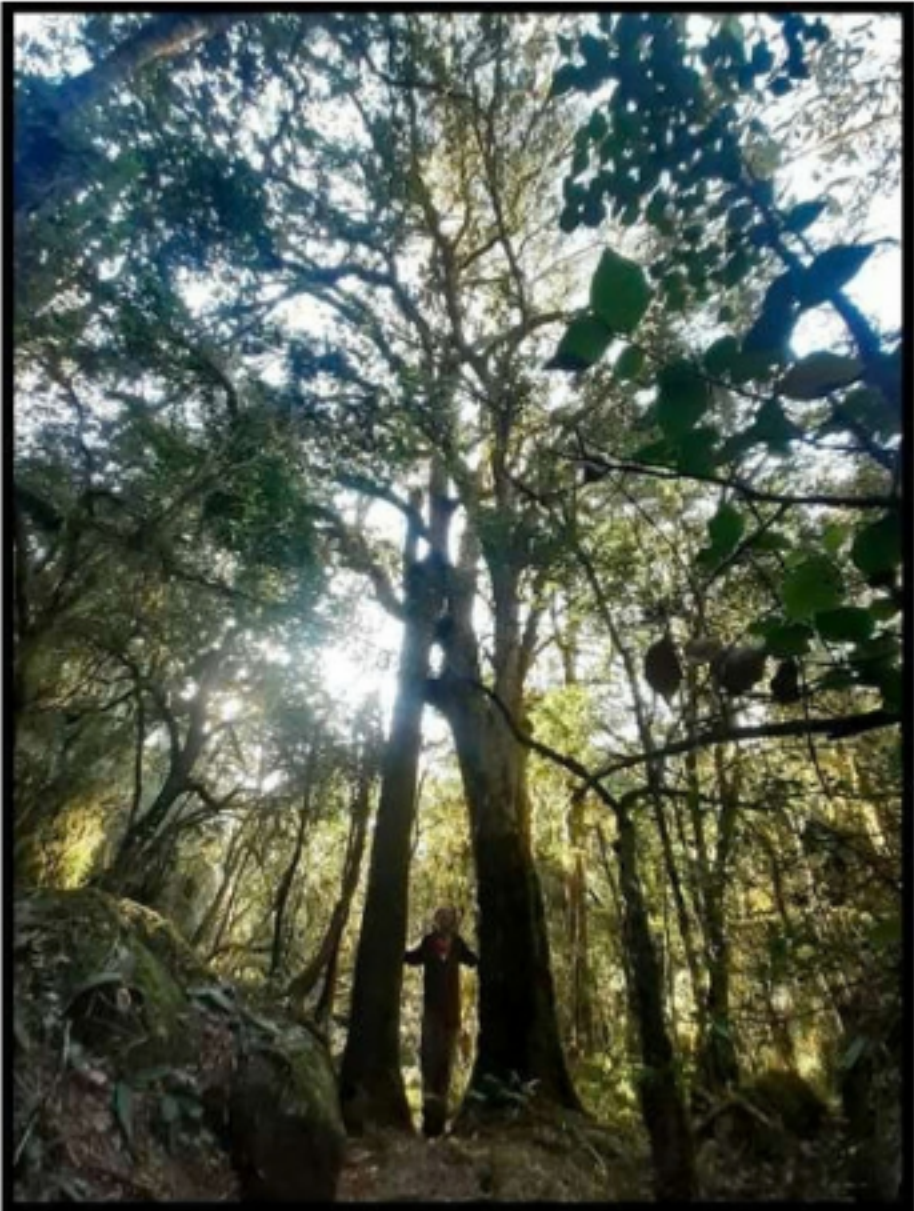
# From the Forest Floor

By Adi



Our yearly cycle has started!  
As we head to warmer weather, and the spring bipolar weather in full swing, nature is coming back alive everywhere, in everything! From the seedlings, to the baby animals, to the rocks with their new coats of furry moss building up like a new head of hair!

We as humans are no different, as we too go through growing periods when our side of the globe slowly starts heating up again.  
If you’ve done the root work during the winter months, your growth will be supported and steady, whereas if you didn’t do much root work, feeding, clearing and cleaning your surroundings, aswell as pruning off the dead branches of fear, trauma, anger, etc. we will find that it becomes hard to grow and evolve to be who we want to be in this world of characters.



So work through those generational traumas and blocks, those fears holding you back, the anger and resentment towards those who did you wrong in the past, as it will all just weigh down your new growth progress branches and infest them, landing you back at square one feeling all the despair!  
Being out in the forest, gardens or mountains helps immensely with clearing out all those cobwebs and clutter in your mind, with all the new plant growth stimulating your mind and senses. Breathe in those healing gifts from nature, and release everything else back to her. While out there, doing the internal work however, please help our environment by picking up litter, even if it was not yours, and most of all, please don’t litter!

Stay wild

Adi Forestbeing

# We All Belong



We, the greater Hogsback community, are part of a unique society—different in many ways, yet connected by what we share. We believe our animals are sentient beings and valued members of our community. That’s why we run the Wayne Kent Fund (WKAF), a community-funded animal welfare safety net.

## The goal

Our official goal is to “aid animal owners who require financial assistance to obtain necessary veterinary care for their animals.” We’re guided by three principles: membership, prevention, and emergency support – all subject to the Fund’s available resources and welfare criteria.

## Our pledge to you

“Your monthly membership helps provide veterinary care for animals in our community, while giving your own pets access to member benefits.”

*As mentioned WKAF has two distinct parts:*

Firstly a Community Welfare Fund that helps vulnerable households cover the cost of caring for injured, abandoned, or neglected animals. This includes emergency surgery, treatment for serious infections, and rescue cases. By receiving support, beneficiaries become part of a caring community working together to protect animals.

## ***Then secondly a Membership Benefit Programme***

Member benefits include vaccinations, parasite treatment, sterilisation campaigns, preventative care and member discounts.

To be a registered member, you are recognised and officially part of our family. We offer three membership options, each with its own benefits and privileges.

Take a look and see which one is right for you.

- Bronze membership: A monthly contribution of R50 (less than R2-00 per day) helps support animal welfare.
- Silver membership: Pay a monthly contribution of R100 and actively protect your own animals.
- For R200 per month, the Gold membership offers even more. You can protect your own animals while also supporting the community.  
Your membership helps provide veterinary care to animals whose owners may not be able to afford it.

There is another way. If you don’t need additional benefits but still want to help, you can become a Wayne Kent Animal Fund Patron. Your contribution helps subsidise care for animals belonging to people in vulnerable circumstances.

*Important notice for Hogsback Times readers: We will elaborate on the membership programme and the welfare fund on our communication platforms shortly.*

Every Hogsback animal deserves care! We are well on our way to fulfil this pledge. Let’s keep making the WKAF a shared experience for the greater Hogsback area.

# Cinder-ing-town

By Miki



(Bed-Time Short Stories... tangentially delivered.)

The solar inverter hummed its low, monotone hymn against the wattle-and-daub wall of the kitchen. The house had long since forgotten the sound of the Eskom grid. Outside, the weeds had fully devoured what used to be Main Road, pushing through the cracked asphalt; what's left of it anyway; with relentless, defying force.

Joseph smoothed his calloused thumb across the edge of his old workbench, watching the afternoon light dwindle. He was seventy-six... perhaps seventy-seven... Birthdays used to matter more; nowadays the calendar mattered very little, considering there was no longer a post office to deliver birthday card, or restaurant to go celebrate at.

It had not ended with a big bang. The delusion city people held about dead towns is that a fire came, or a mine dried up overnight, or a flood washed the foundations away...But the truth was never that simple. Definitely not here anyway.

It began the year the Ratepayers' Forum split into three separate factions over a street-lighting contract...Joseph remembered the meeting in the church hall – the stifling heat, the vein throbbing in the Forum's secretary's forehead, the bitter accusations of backroom favoritism... all over three kilometers of copper wire. At least that's what he thinks it was about.

He had sat in the back row, exhausted after a full day in his workshop, yet there, at the church hall, attending the Ratepayers' Forum AGM. Finding himself listening to neighbors he had known for twenty years, trade petty insults like currency. He had built the town market stalls... pro bono; he had organized the winter firewood drives; he had spent his weekends clearing stormwater drains and donated veggies from his garden for every soup kitchen event over the last 20 years. Enough was enough.

That night, walking home after the meeting, a quiet, cold realisation settled in his chest. *Why bother?* Every effort was met with suspicion...every sacrifice of time was carved up by newcomers with grand, competing visions for tourism revenue, aesthetic guidelines and self-serving logistics. It was a war of abrasion and the prize was merely the right to be exhausted, whilst witnessing the decline.

So, he pulled back. He resigned from the board. He shut his door, tended to his own garden, focused on his own business and locked his gate. He wasn't the only one.

One by one, the original 'caretakers' ...the quiet, practical souls who actually fixed the pumps, organized the relief funds, stirred the soup and held the fabric of this town together... simply stopped showing up. They had been thrice bitten and now shy. They retreated into their private sanctuaries, leaving the church hall and all it's committees, to the loud, the ambitious and the uncompromising folk who refused to listen to the founders.

Without the steady hands to keep it grounded, the town fractured entirely. Each small faction pursued its own blinkered agenda. The tourist committee fought the commerce coalition; the heritage group sued the infrastructure board. Decisions stalled, meeting after meeting, issues placed back on the agenda for the next meeting. Public works withered, the road repair budget was swallowed by legal fees. When the main water line failed five years later, there was no longer a functional council to authorize the repair... only three competing sub-committees arguing over who held the legal liability and why it's not their fault or their job to fix.

Fewer visitors meant the kind of economic strain that turns every 5th guesthouse owner, into an estate agent. For Sale signs decorated these streets, like Christmas lights once did. By the time Eskom went off for the final time, there was no town left to fix it for. Lack of infrastructure makes for a hard sell...People cut their losses and simply packed their cars and drove away, leaving behind ghosts of past glory and unread meeting minutes.

Only a few die-hards remained...the ones with deep wells, thick garden beds, solar panels mounted to their roofs... and nowhere else to go. Old man Mercer had died in his cottage two winters ago, buried by the three remaining residents under the Witstinkhout he had once fought the council to protect.

Joseph stepped onto the porch, looking out over the quiet valley. The forest was reclaiming the empty storefronts, green vines swallowing the rusted signs of boutique cafes and rival tourism offices.

He knelt by his cabbage patch, pulling a stray weed from the dark earth. The isolation was peaceful, yes...without a doubt, peaceful. His garden flourished; his solar batteries were full; his life was entirely his own. But as he looked at the silence stretching across the dead valley, the old question returned, like it had many times over the years...cold and persistent.

If.... If he had stayed in that stifling church hall... IF he had absorbed the insults, swallowed the pride and kept fixing the drains despite the noise... would the lights still be on?

Or had their quiet retreat merely accelerated the inevitable?

He dusted the soil from his hands, offered no answer to the empty street, and went back inside to lock the door.

# Restoration Season – it's WILD!



## Cape Parrot Project

Just as Spring suddenly arrives, so does restoration season at the CPP. As part of our conservation implementation work, we undertake restoration work in and around the State Forests at this time of the year. It coincides with the rains – so the alien vegetation removal work that we do is simultaneously easier – think soft ground and pliable root systems – and much, much harder – think damp people, slidey paths, herbicide application that is ineffective and thus has to be delayed. Of course, the baby trees need the rains to survive, so this is the best timing for them.

### Parrots need forests

One of the main reasons that Cape Parrots are in difficulty and have become endangered is because of historical logging that took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The very trees that the parrots would now be starting to use for their nesting sites – being old dead or dying trees where they can make cavities – are the trees that were removed in those times. Of course, we plant small trees, so this a long game – but we hope that the upwards of 15 species of trees that we grow in our community-based nurseries will go a long way to feeding and supplying shelter for many vulnerable forest plant and animal species in the meantime.

### Impacts and plans

To date, in collaboration with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, and some private landowners (as well as our generous funders and supporters) we have been able to restore and maintain over 300ha of forest and plant over 85000 indigenous trees. This year we are working over 50ha of the Never Daunted site, removing highly invasive Kahili Ginger (*Hedychium gardnerianum*) – hey, gardeners, please think about removing this tenacious species from your planting! – and planting 4000 trees. In the Wolf River area we will be impacting about 8ha of a forest edge site and a further 5km of riparian zone to conduct alien vegetation management and plant 6000 trees.

This work will allow us to employ an additional 18 community members on the sites for 3 months on fixed-term contracts. In addition, we are able to purchase the trees from the community growers – so an additional 42 people will receive an income-boost in this way.

There is much planning, logistics and funding support that goes into all this work. A big shout out to our planting site co-funders, the Greenpop Foundation and the Briandez Legacy Trust and, of course, to the CPP team for making it all happen.

For more information follow us on the socials:

<https://www.facebook.com/capeparrotproject>

<https://www.instagram.com/capeparrotproject/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK13Mty-w3USNHtOs10EpdQ>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/cape-parrot-project/>

Contact: Susan Wishart (Project Manager) [susan@wildbirdtrust.com](mailto:susan@wildbirdtrust.com) 067 416 7219

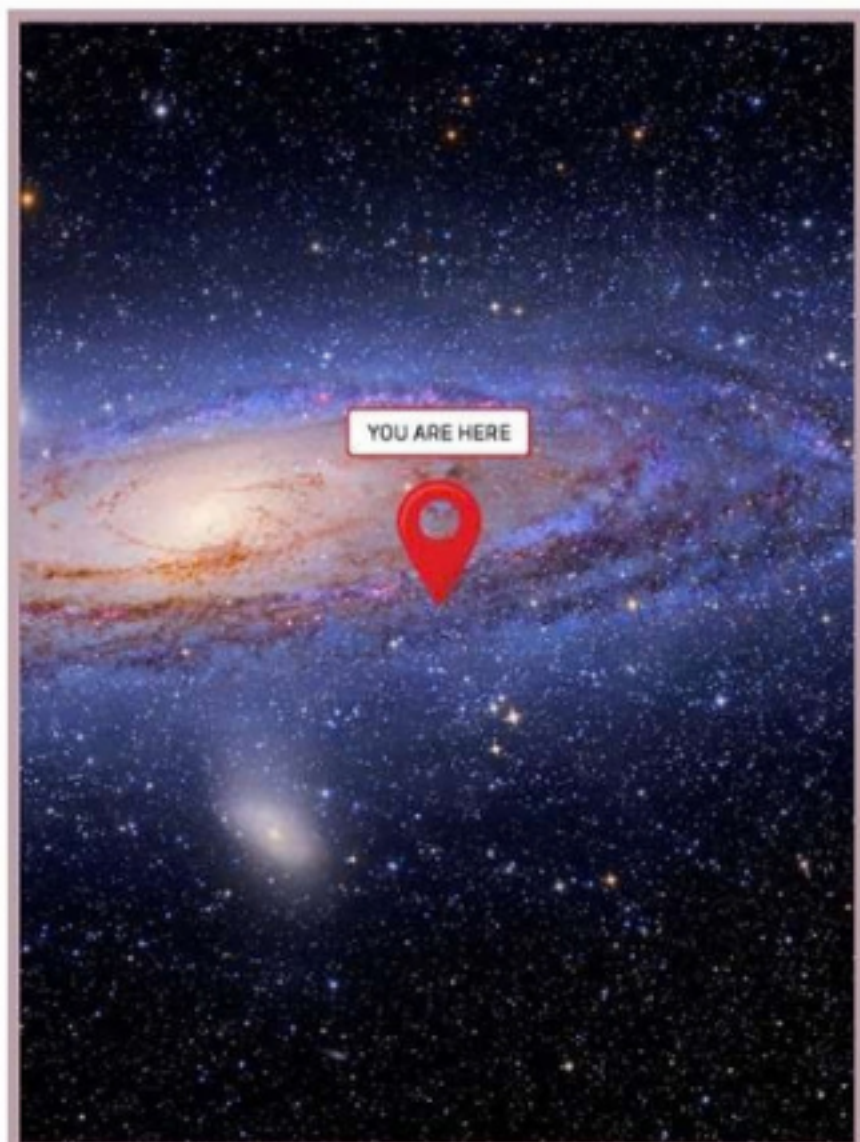


CPP chainsaw operators ready for action



Never Daunted Planting team 2026

# Coming Home



By Nicole Steven-Jennings

A few years back, I embarked on a journey to the land of my ancestors from my mother's side of the family. I wanted to see first hand the landscape, to connect with the traditions and to experience the heritage and culture of that place. It was an enriching experience. One of self-discovery, self-understanding and ultimately self-acceptance. I knew myself better after that trip.

My sister and I are the first generation from my mom's side of the family born in South Africa. Despite my very different cultural upbringing, I consider myself South African. What does that actually mean? Well, to me it means many different things. It's the warm hospitality and kindness that one can experience from complete strangers across the country. It's about being surrounded by multiculturalism where different beliefs are respected, various cultural traditions are practised and a multitude of languages spoken. It's this diversity that has, in my opinion, encouraged tolerance, flexibility and openness towards one another irrespective of our differences.

Culture is not static yet for some reason we seem to have a very rigid view of culture. It's either this or that. Black or white and nothing in between. The beauty of South Africa is that it defies narrow racial and cultural categories and instead celebrates the melting pot that has come to represent our society. In an interview published on Anthropology South Africa, Johnny Clegg says:

"Culture is a form of coding reality. Codes are constantly changing as each new generation brings in a new way of coding." (de Villiers: 2016)

Culture is just one lens through which we view the world. It is up to all of us to make an effort to better understand the different lenses that we have chosen to identify with. By doing so, we can better understand what it means to be human.

It doesn't matter whether you were born here or not. Starting with the Bantu tribes, waves of migration to southern Africa have occurred for many many years. I feel a deep sense of empathy for those migrants who recently had to flee South Africa for fear of their lives. That is not the Ubuntu way. We should all be asking the question who decides who can stay and who cannot? What is that decision based on? We are all here having a human experience, expressing our hopes, desires and struggles along the way. In fact, we are all "scatterlings of Africa". This is the place where the story of humankind began. This is home.

"It is music and dancing that makes me at peace with the world. And at peace with myself" (Mandela: 1999)

In a world where identity has become political and therefore a highly contested subject, to reject the cultural hegemony of the West has become the single most important act of rebellion of our time. Being curious and open-minded seems to be a good place to start on this journey of cultural understanding. To tell the stories, to sing the songs, and to share it all with others through authentic connection. As much as possible. To not let it divide us because we come from different 'clans' but instead celebrate how uniquely different we all are and to recognise that under the banner of humanity, we are one.

References:

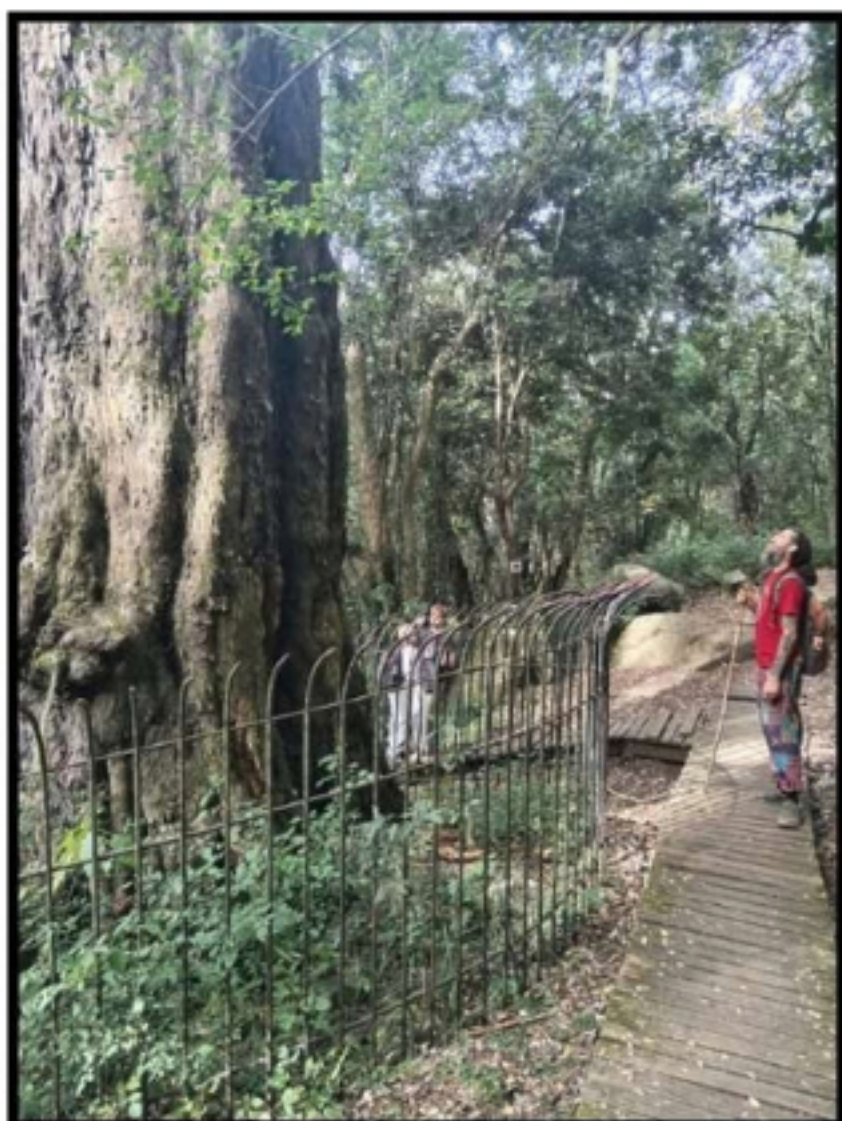
de Villiers, M. (2016). Johnny Clegg: a shadow man. *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 39(1), 58–63.

Mandela, Nelson (1999). *Assimbonanga. Johnny Clegg Live Performance*.



# From the Mountain Tops

By Adi



It's a sunny summer Saturday morning, day 2 of a 3 day magical woman's retreat, and I'm busy blending some herbs for the herbal ice tea served at breakfast. The ladies are all a little weary of our forest hike coming up at 1pm later in the afternoon, as their fitness levels are not at the levels they would like them to be at.

The ice tea calms the nerves as I brief the ladies on what to expect for our adventure later that day.

A shortish hike (around 45min) down through the Auckland indigenous forest to the Big Tree, stopping along the way to meet a couple of other special trees and magical hollows, with a little connection to nature meditation with the Big Tree, and then a 30min hike back up through the same forest (uphill now) back to the lodge. This information, along with the herbal tea blend, seems to calm everyone's nerves a bit and they went off for yoga and some sensory magic.

At a couple of minutes before 1pm we started gathering together, filling water bottles and the ladies testing their newly purchased Hogsback hiking sticks and shoe laces tied all up!

The summer heat already started building and I knew that we where in for a wonderful thunderstorm later the afternoon, which should be a powerful ending to a magical day for these wonderful ladies, I thought to myself!

After everyone gathered together and we where set to go, we headed off for our adventure!

By our second of three switchbacks down, I heard the first very far distant rumble... we will have enough time.... we make our way down to the Big Tree and I'm proud of the ladies, almost all of them where saying that they are not the fittest folks in town, but they still marched down like soldiers! We all take a moment to catch our breaths again, only to lose it again from the sheer breathtaking magnificence of the wonderful Monarch of the east! After everyone found a comfy seat around the tree, I started leading us into meditation using my Mala beads.

"Breathe in the forest magic, breathe out all your worldly stresses"

one bead at a time...

With about 15 beads left, another rumble came again, this time a little closer...

"breathe in the forest magic, breathe out your worldly stresses"

7 beads left... another rumble and I can now hear that some of the ladies are starting to nervously shift around...

"Breathe in the forest magic, breathe out your worldly stresses" 3 beads left... another rumble...

One of the ladies to the right of me turns to me and whispers: " I think we are connected enough to nature, can we leave please?"

With a slight grin on my face I close the meditation off and everyone suddenly seems to have been filled with a jolt of energy, up and ready to head back up again in no time!

Another massive thunder bolt, and the heavens open up, rain pouring down, first a refreshing feeling as we power walk, but then harder and harder, as we reach the staircase at the end back up to the accommodation! We burst into the restaurant, sopping wet, laughing, filled with the magic of nature, humbled by her immense power!

With a nice warm beverage in our hands, we all felt alive.



After gathering all our things, we start making our way up up up, on the three switchbacks back up again, it's never a easy trail back up again, but we march up, myself at the back making sure no one gets left behind, while being able to catch my breath and not look bad in front of the ladies lol. While still on the first switchback, another thunderous cracked is heard, and a couple of the ladies request permission to walk up ahead and not wait for the whole group, you know, to get refreshments ready for everyone. I agree to it and off they go like lightning bolts! The rest of us still making our ascent up towards the second switchback slow and steady. A few meters into the second switchback and mother nature decides to give everyone a scare and drop a lightning bolt within about 30 meters, no one is tired or out of breath anymore and the remaining ladies decide power walking is the name of the game and we power our way up and onto the third switchback, homeward bound now!

Sometimes connection to nature is a simple walk in the garden, other times it's mother nature trying to charge your batteries for you with 100 million volts of electricity! Non the less those ladies knew that nature is alive!

Till next time folks

Adi Forestbeing

# AI Posters... Evolution, Revolution... or De-volution?

By Miki



The AI Poster Pandemic...AI might have industrialised mediocrity, but it didn't invent it; ... I mean we had Clip art, WordArt, Paint and stock photos before this...

Remember those 'Product Projects' back in school? When the teacher handed out poster or cardboard, stickers or markers... telling you to imagine and market a fake non-existent product to the class?? It was pure stress, messy glue, group work, terrible handwriting, lying blatantly and trying to score above 90% when you clearly weren't born an artist.. many of us hated those projects, well I definitely did.

The whole exercise would have been way more effective and relevant, had they blindfolded us for the duration. Because ultimately, they were teaching us persuasion, communication, visual storytelling and value proposition skills... right?

*Useful skills to have when we're... writing a prompt, for instance.*

My lack of visual creativity reared its head again years later...My son was probably 3 or 4 when he asked me to draw him a lion... I'll spare you the details; let's just say; he never asked me to draw anything again.

Fast forward to today, and the whole game has flipped on its head. Need a promotional poster for your business, event or a special? You don't need an art degree, a massive design budget or hours with physical cutouts and Pritt. Type a few descriptive sentences into an AI tool, and boom – you've got a slick, hyper-realistic poster in ten seconds.

**You and everyone else!!!**

The irony is, that AI creates these posters based on a general web-based consensus of good design, what people like, what works together and what not. It makes up its design based on market trends and courses and what is available online. ...

The cycle continues...

We've learnt, that when there's abundance or too much of anything... when human nature need not hunt, chase or search for it...the allure fades and sometimes we even start disliking whatever abundant thing it is. Over population of generic same-same AI posters, will make us hate everything in it, on it, design fundamentals will shift again. Data will change, so will the post-prompt result.

In some ways; it's beautiful... it ensures that; if I am patient enough, for long enough... my lion picture might just be classified as art one day. An old school Clipart image along with its curved WordArt might even make a come back.

I live in hope.

# When Survival Becomes Who You Are



Hogsback is beautiful. We know this. We live among the forests, the mist, the waterfalls and the mountains.

But there is another side to living here. One that cannot be photographed.

There are people who arrive on this mountain carrying the remains of lives that have already broken them. They come desperately needing somewhere to breathe, somewhere to recover, somewhere to begin again. Perhaps they believe they have finally escaped survival mode.

And then life here begins. For some, the sacrifices are chosen. They want a simpler life and accept what comes with it. For others, there is no real choice.

Modern conveniences disappear. Healthcare becomes difficult to access. Groceries and familiar necessities become harder to find. Money becomes tighter. Housing can be inadequate. Work can be uncertain. Distance turns ordinary needs into major obstacles.

And slowly, something deeper can happen. A person can begin to lose control over their own life.

There is a profound difference between choosing a simple life and being unable to change the life you are living.

Imagine knowing you need to leave, but having nowhere affordable to go. Knowing you need medical care, but knowing that care is far away. Knowing your circumstances are damaging you, but being unable to change them. Knowing your family needs a different future, while the only realistic way to provide it, depends on something completely outside your control.

A property selling. Money becoming available. The right opportunity appearing. A door finally opening.

And while you wait, life does not wait with you.

The clock keeps moving. For someone already carrying trauma, this can become an extraordinary psychological burden. They came here thinking, "I survived that. Now I can heal." Instead, they find themselves surviving something else. Years of survival can change a person.

Constant vigilance can become normal. Trust can become difficult. Withdrawal can feel safer than connection. Exhaustion becomes ordinary. A person may become angry, defensive, numb, suspicious or overwhelmed.

Eventually, they may barely resemble the person who first arrived.

Not because they were weak. Because they adapted to what life kept demanding of them.

And perhaps this is where we need to look more carefully at one another. We see behaviour, but rarely see the history behind it. We see the angry person, but not the years of exhaustion. We see the withdrawn person, but not the loneliness. We see the difficult person, but not the possibility that their reserves have been completely depleted.

None of this excuses hurting others. But it should make us think before we judge.

Because conflict, rejection, bullying, rumours and cruelty do not land on empty spaces. They land on human beings who may already be carrying far more than we know. Sometimes a person is not simply struggling with today. They are carrying yesterday, while desperately trying to protect tomorrow.

And sometimes the pressure becomes terrifyingly simple:

What if medically your time is running out, and so is your time to save your family?

That is a burden few people around you will ever see.

You are not only trying to survive the present. You are trying to build a way out for the people you love, while wondering whether you have enough time, health, money or strength to make it happen.

This is what being trapped can feel like. Not merely wanting to leave. Knowing you need to leave, while having no way to make the leaving happen.

We cannot explain suicide by one event, one person or one community. Human suffering is far too complex for that. But isolation, loss, financial hardship, conflict and disconnection can add to an already overwhelming burden, while connection, belonging and support can help carry it.

And perhaps that is what we need to remember. Some people came to Hogsback to heal. Some came because they had nowhere else to go. Some have been surviving here for so long that survival has become part of who they are.

We cannot remove every hardship from this mountain. But we can stop becoming another hardship for one another. Listen before judging. Think before speaking. Notice when someone is withdrawing. Make room for people to belong. Because perhaps the greatest gift we can give someone who has lost control of so much of their life is the knowledge that they are not completely alone.

The mountain may be beautiful. But the people living on it are human. And every one of them is carrying something we cannot see. *And yet, perhaps that is not where our story has to end.*

Because this mountain, for all its hardships, still holds something extraordinary. **Hope.**

It lives in the morning mist, in the sound of water moving through the forest, in a fire on a cold winter night, in birdsong, in colour returning after rain, and in the simple kindness of one person helping another.

Perhaps we should never lose sight of that. Life can become unbearably difficult. Circumstances can change us. Sometimes we may feel trapped in a chapter we never chose. But chapters can change. Doors can open. People can help.

And sometimes, when everything feels dark, the mountain itself reminds us that beauty can still exist alongside pain. So hold on to hope. For yourself. For your family. For the person standing beside you who may be struggling silently.

Because even on the darkest days, there is still another morning waiting beyond the mist.



# Fond Farewells & Warm Welcomes

By Miki

A community like Hogsback never stays still. It breathes. People drift in on the mist, drop anchor or just evaporate again. Some stay for a season... others – a lifetime and eventually, the road calls some away again, while quietly calling others back home.

This month, the village scales tipped once more with that bittersweet rhythm. We said a collective, reluctant goodbye to long-time occupants of our quiet corner, including our most distinguished four-legged mayor, whose dignified presence on the local paths, set the standard for municipal leadership around here. He was one of the first trail guides too, taking guests on hikes and telling them all our secrets.

To those who have packed up their hearths and moved on to new chapters: thank you. Thank you for the years, the shared fire-side stories, the patience during power outages and the indelible marks you've left on this mountain. You leave behind empty spaces that won't easily be filled. I'm trying not to mention names, because how can you say Eileen without sharing a story about her magical organized chaos, how can you say William without hearing his guitar. Shaun's looks and Cathy's brilliance, Michelle Griffith's wisdom and connection to nature. The hours they all volunteers, the messes they helped clean, the laughs and the love.

And if we do that, then I would have to include all your wonderful farewell messages on the WhatsApp groups. Point is, we all have a story, a memory or experience and you'll be missed, but Hogsback bids you farewell and wishes you only the best!

Yet, as the mountain always does, it makes room for new beginnings too...To the fresh faces unpacking boxes and awaiting moving trucks; welcome. To the newly adopted rescue pup currently discovering the sheer sensory overload of the mistbelt, kiddo cuddles and wet leaves; welcome to the best life a dog could ask for.

And to those wandering souls who left years ago, only to realize the mountain never quite let go of them: welcome home. You know as well as anyone that once Hogsback gets into your boots, you're bound to find your way back eventually.

To those departing, take a piece of the mist with you. To those arriving (or returning) put the kettle on, if there's electricity. The mountain is glad you're here.



## If it wasn't in the paper, you wouldn't believe it!

By Miki



## The Great Main Road Tsunami of 2026

For a brief, shining hour during September 2026, Hogsback was on full war footing.

*The WhatsApp groups detonated. Photographs circulated—distressing, high-contrast images of a torrent, a veritable Amazon, cascading down the Main Road, carving potholes into craters.*

In a village where a dripping tap is treated with the gravity of a court martial and water is held more sacred than local property lines, the alarm was raised.

Our local water heroes; bless their vigilant, spanner-wielding souls – mobilized instantly. Diagnostic teams were dispatched. Pressure gauges were consulted. A solemn, collective oath was taken to locate the ruptured arterial main before the mountain's entire supply drained into the Thyme valley.

Then came the investigation. The methodical tracking of the current upstream, past the potholes, past the misty verges... they stood shocked as they discovered the origin; the leak led straight to Jeff's gate.

Jeff was emptying his swimming pool!!

Because naturally, as the first whispers of spring hover over the frost, Jeff decided the time was ripe for action. Why keep a pool full of water when you can transform it into a massive, concrete crater? Perhaps it is a pre-summer preventative measure. Or perhaps Jeff, in his infinite tactical wisdom, reasoned that his new under-aged tenant is far safer taking a twelve-foot plunge onto hard, unforgiving plaster than risking a wet toe. A public service, really.

The crisis is over. The "main road river" was merely Jeff's seasonal backwash, delivered to the public thoroughfare with total nonchalance. Stand down, team. Stow the pipe wrenches. Jeff has his pit, the road has had its rinse, and the WhatsApp group can return to its primary function: debating whose blue dot Jack Russel is Xolani holding?

# Finding Vocational Connection

The local telecommunications infrastructure has finally achieved its ultimate form... complete and utter retreat. When a high-altitude mountain village forces seasoned professionals to conduct board meetings from the cab of an Isuzu or negotiate international broadcast deals via a router taped to an inverted lawn chair, one doesn't complain. One monetizes the absurdity.

*Disclaimer: Neither property owner accepts liability for sudden, unaccountable drops in signal caused by passing cattle, heavy fog or sheer provider apathy.*

# OFFICE SPACE

FOR RENT

## ***The Takealot Modular Co- Working Hub***

*Stay Connected.  
Continuously.*



### **Description:**

Engineered specifically for the discerning international tech operative who requires direct-to-Alice signal when Tor Doone inevitably suffers its tri-weekly collapse. This state-of-the-art facility features two load-bearing Takealot corrugated cardboard pedestals, twin consumer-grade routers balanced at a delicate 45-degree angle and a multi-seasonal umbrella. It isn't aesthetic... it's infrastructure. If your international clients query the background noise of distant power tools and indigenous bird calls, tell them it's a bespoke audio filter.



**ADD-ON THERE: R100 SURCHARGE  
FOR INTERNAL CAB SEATING INSIDE  
THE LAND ROVER**

### **Location:**

Kevin's garden... precise micro-climate coordinates available upon booking.

# The Xolani Heights Drive-In Executive Suite

## COWORKING OFFICE SPACE RENTAL



### Overview:

Why sit in a dark room when you can conduct global commerce from your driver's seat with sweeping panoramic views? Xolani's front yard is officially the premiere telecommunications hub of Hogsback. Fully ventilated, infinite legroom, and guaranteed line-of-sight to functional infrastructure.

### Location:

Directly in front of Xolani's structural masterpiece (currently in its minimalist phase).

### Amenities:

- Uninterrupted, high-octane Vodacom and MTN coverage.
- 360-degree mountain scenery to gaze at while your Zoom call buffers... wait, no, it won't buffer here.
- Natural solar heating (keep the engine running or roll down a window; you control the climate).

### *Lease Terms & Special Infrastructure Fund:*

*Daily parking rates apply. Every single cent from your desk-fee goes directly toward the Xolani Roof & Finishing Construction Fund. You aren't just sending an email; you are personally laying a brick for local architectural history. Note: Reverse-parking recommended for optimal video call backdrops. Strictly no idling during board meetings. Shared space, be considerate.*

CLOSING TIME — SEPTEMBER 2026 EDITION

## Closing Time

By Miki

## Skinner Snippets

- The rumor about yoga classes starting again in October – CONFIRMED, but that’s ALL that is confirmed. When, what times and days are yet to be announced.
- “Moving Truck spotted outside Corrieghlas!” When HBT heard this rumor, we rushed to the scene and can confirm, it was a moving truck indeed. DELIVERING not collecting. So, not yet guys, not yet.
- Mel won the Hogsback Women’s Bowls Championship in July already, we did not report on it and apologise, but we can’t keep up. She collects trophies faster than we can type!
- Confirmed – It was an unrelated deer.
- And no Linda never reported, but it has been reported.
- A feasibility study was done and apparently making piles of pancakes, just for them to be judged and eaten, is impractical.

---

### Dalk Demand Difference Definitions

– **Satire** is the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize the flaws, corruption, or foolishness of individuals, institutions, or society.

– (Incuse you spotted it and were curious...)

**Metallurgy** is the science and technology of extracting metals from their natural ores, refining them, and preparing them for practical use. The word comes from the Greek words *metallon* (metal or mine) and *ergon* (work). It forms a core part of materials science and engineering

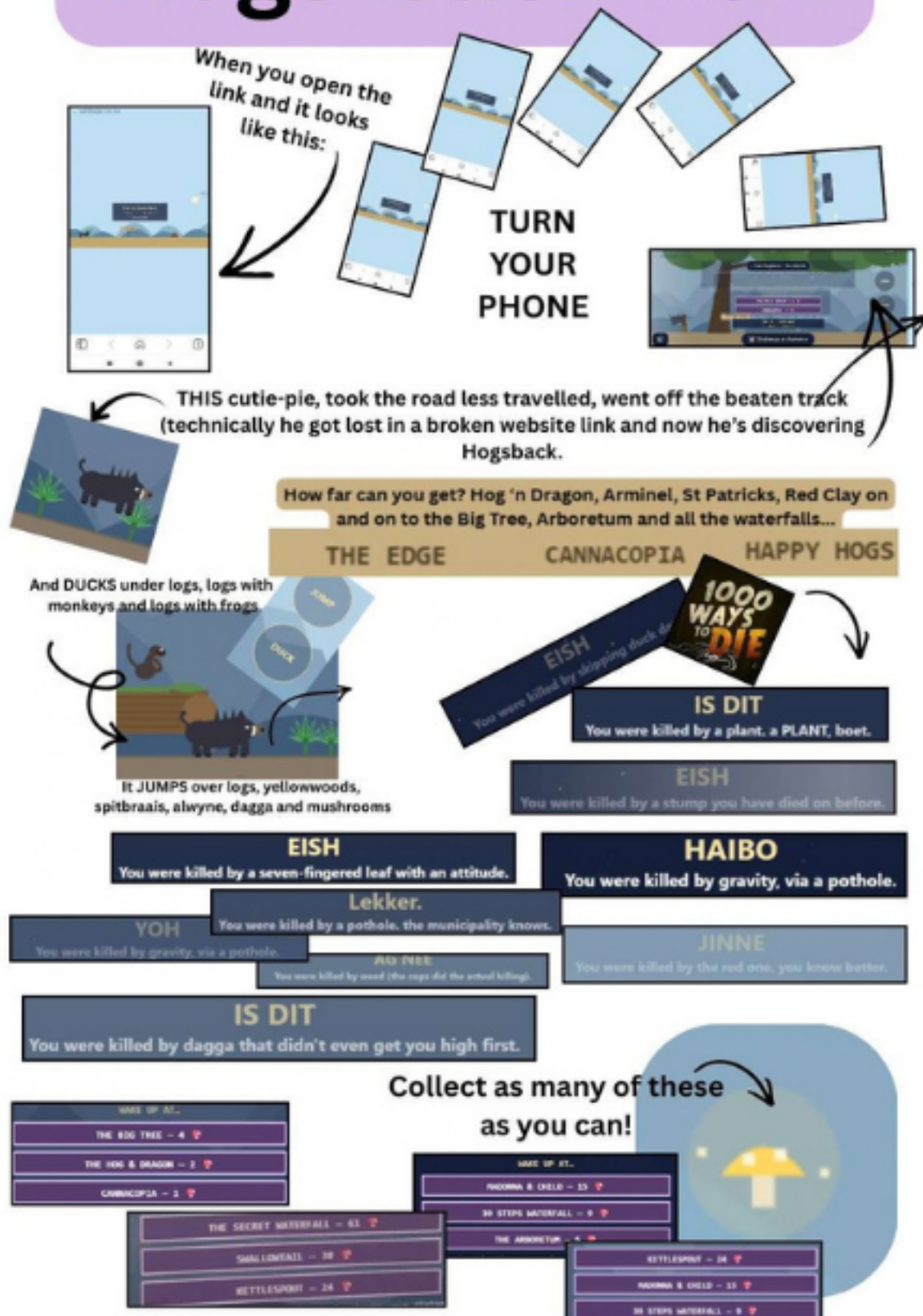
---

Stampvol September... daar was troues, verjaarsdae, moord, roof, meer verjaarsdae, nog ’n huweliksviering. Daai ander egskeiding is nogsteeds nie deur nie, die offer op die huis is aanvaar en soos een paartjie jubel oor hul nuwe begin, weën ’n ander paartjie oor hul droomhuisie van die mark af is.

Someone is still carrying the world on their shoulders, someone else is mourning a loss like they’ve never experienced. Someone failed an exam for the first time ever, someone else passed their first term for this year. That same pair is still busy with their affair, the other one stopped their adulterous behaviour. And a few Hogsback hoplites have volunteered and are fighting post-MITS, Vodacom and MTN wars.

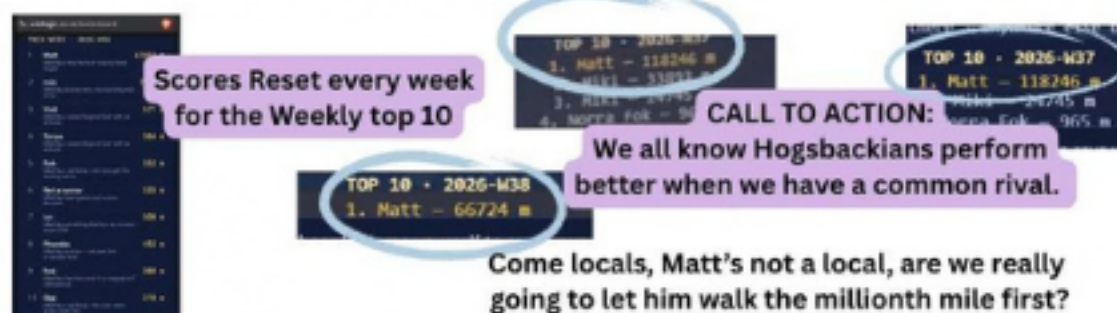
---

# Playing Hogs-back-Run



Your golden shrooms pay for restarts from check points...

They get progressively 'more expensive'



- **Do Not play unless you can apply self-discipline.** Pick a play-time-limit and stick to it.
  - The walk starts slow, jump last minute, until the pace starts increasing.
  - Use your real name. Not a must, but would be nice to know whose playing.
- Ready to try again? Go: [www.wildlogic.co.za/hogs-back-run](http://www.wildlogic.co.za/hogs-back-run)

- October lies ahead of us and we have so much to look forward to... (some warmer days please!) but also; Open Gardens, The EC Provincial Book Fair, Wine Festival, Halloween dress-ups, markets, artists who have been making and preparing their creations especially for Open gardens, Food Market, Quizzes, Seconds Market and much much more.
- 
- 

## HAVE AN OPTIMAL OCTOBER HOGSBACK!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUBMISSIONS, THE TRUST, THE  
INSPIRATION, THE TOLERANCE AND FOR READING THE  
HOGSBACK TIMES.

