

SONDELA NATURE RESERVE & SPA REPORT

MID-WEEK 21 to 26 MAY 2023

REPORT BY BRENDA McSWEENEY

The mid-week rally at the impressive Sondela Nature Reserve (Bela Bela area) was the second mid-week rally to be arranged by Northvaal. What a wonderful resort with something to suit everyone. Around 200 stands with private ablutions and wash up stations on level paved areas, braai facilities and plenty of green areas for children to play, under the trees. They also have a number of upmarket chalets and tented campsites. Various swimming pools both heated, warm and cold and a Wellness Spa, as well as a beautifully equipped children's playground. Definitely in the top 5 venues visited by Northvaal.



There were 21 motorhomes but unfortunately Elna and Ed left the day after arriving as Ed was not well. We are happy to report he has had a pacemaker fitted and doing very well. It was great to have members from Free State and Mpumalanga join the rally.



Ari opened the rally with a warm welcome. He announced the programme as it was then and congratulated those with birthdays, and welcomed a new member, Ilna Lemmer. Then Jim Williams told of the history and formation of the Motorhome Club, mainly for the benefit of new members. And, of course, he could not resist a joke or two!

This was followed with a "make your own jaffel" with mince (curry mince cooked by Marsha) and bread was provided. What a unique idea and one to be repeated.



A pancake "lunch" was also arranged, with Herma, Marsha and Gill very busy in the morning preparing the pancake batter. Some of the men, were trying to out-do each other by making pancakes, but none of them tried tossing the pancakes!! Most provided their own pans, spatulas and gas bottles, but for those of us who were not properly equipped there were ready-made pancakes to share. What a





wonderful surprise to have Alan and Ann Boucher join us for pancakes, they were booked into a time-share chalet.

Then another evening of fellowship and fun on the last evening when we had a bring 'n braai, under a beautiful warm night sky.

There was plenty of time for people to check out other camps in the area, swim in the heated pool, enjoy a breakfast out, chat around the “kuier vuur”, play various games, or, as one had to do, spend many hours working on-line.

Nowell and Ari arranged extra activities on our



behalf. A fun game drive was arranged on a wagon pulled by a tractor. However, the wagon was soon

full and about eight of us had to travel in a “proper” game-viewing vehicle. We learned a lot from the dedicated game rangers.

An excellent Conservation talk given by a very knowledgeable Charles Trennery, Conservation Manager, who concentrates on Nature Conservation. A vast field including soil erosion, erection of fences, biodiversity, rainfall and temperatures have to be monitored, grasses and tree sampling taken, exotic vegetation taken care of, fire hazards, water – dams, boreholes monitored, roads, game numbers and condition of animals checked. To name a few of the projects that need to be monitored and controlled on the game farm of some 5000 hectares. We now know where our Conservation fees go!

They have some 270 staff members and run an Academy with around 250 students who assist in the projects as well as studying for National and International certificates in the fields of hospitality, conservation, events or chef industry.

Some members of the group also paid a visit to the Wildlife and Rehabilitation Centre, which, by all accounts was extremely interesting. A variety of the animals were being taken care of having been injured on the road, brought in by local farmers, orphaned etc. Some will be released into the wild and others are being kept in the Centre.

Then we nearly had to spend an extra night as the residents of Hammanskraal were threatening to close both the R101 and N1 roads. However, on the morning of departure all was quiet and we could travel home safely.

A wonderful week was enjoyed by all and will be placed on the list for a future visit.

Thank you Sondela for a special few days.