

VIEWS & NEWS



MANY EYES MAKE LIGHT WORK OF GAME COUNT



ABOVE: Counters in Amber Lee were, from left, Paul Ladell, Mike Fitzsimmons, Sally and Paul Bartho and Peter Larsen. Impalas at the top.

Pictures: Crystelle Wilson

ABOVE: Participants in Amber Valley were Trish Adam, Gail and Darrel Slaughter, Dave Ducasse, Gwen Griffiths, Alastair Walters, Chiquita Phillips and Gavin Hayhoe.

BELOW: Some blesbuck.

Pictures: Flic Blakeway



LEFT: All the fires were lit for the traditional braai after the game count. On the right is organiser Deryck Day who announced the preliminary results of the count.

Picture: Crystelle Wilson

The ninth annual Game Count on the Greater Ambers Estate was held on 12 June 2024. See page 3 for the full report.

AMBER PEOPLE

Floral art is in her blood

Dawn Fallet originally came from Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), where her love for flower arranging began. It all started when a friend decided that she should learn how to arrange flowers – “as every lady should”!

She joined the Bulawayo Evening Flower Club and attended the meeting every week with a carefully planned arrangement, hoping to win that elusive gold ribbon.

Upon moving to South Africa, Dawn joined the Johannesburg Floral Art Club where her interest in flowers continued to flourish. Floral art designs were expected monthly, regardless of quality, which spurred her growth in the craft.

Consequently, she pursued floral art exams in teaching, demonstrating and judging. After three years of weekly trips to Pretoria, she qualified and began teaching and demonstrating floral art throughout South Africa, as well as judging at major shows.

Dawn also joined the South African Flower Union, where she led the teachers and demonstrators panels. One of the criteria at this level was to create consistent floral art designs and stay updated with the latest trends.

She regularly entered shows and won many awards, both in South Africa and overseas. When South Africa was re-admitted into the competitive world in 1994, the first show was in Toronto, Canada, where she won “Best Colour on Show”.

Floral demonstrations were both fun and creatively challenging, bringing out ideas and designs that entertained audiences nationwide. Weddings, both large and small, became a regular part of her weekends, each bringing the unique challenge of catering to the bride’s vision. Her dedication to perfection constantly left brides in awe, as only the best would do for such a special day.

Ten years ago, Dawn moved to Pietermaritzburg where floral art took a backseat as she returned to the classroom, limiting her time for floral design. Then, the idea of completing a TEFL course and teaching English online emerged, further limiting her time for floral art.

When she moved to Amber Valley and into a smaller house, she either sold or gave away the majority of her 50 boxes of floral art treasures, thinking her days of floral art were over. However, one must never say “never”!

Sally Pearson



ABOVE: Amber Valley resident Dawn Fallet creates the flower arrangements for the dining room.

Picture: Sally Pearson

LIBRARY NEWS

Winter is a good time to spend with books

In the winter months, after enjoying our days of sunshine, there is nothing better than to curl up with a good novel. Here are two new additions to the library for you to enjoy.

Willow Hale is the narrator of **Water**, a short novel by John Boyne. She is a stranger in a remote Irish island community, and we gradually learn about her secrets, in her own time, as she starts to come to terms with them. Water is the theme for this story and is used in many ways to symbolise parts of the story, of which death, swimming, rebirth, and soothing are just a few examples. This is sensitive writing that tackles some hard topics. When Vanessa Carvin arrives on the island she changes her name to Willow Hale, a solitary outsider escaping Dublin to live as a hermit in a small cottage, not a notorious woman on the run from her past. But scandals follow her and the choices she has made during her marriage have consequences.

The Porcelain Maker by Sarah Freethy: In Weimar in Germany in 1929, two young artists, Max, a skilled Jewish architect, and Bettina, a celebrated avant-garde painter, fall in love and start a life-long relationship. Later in Berlin life and freedom is threatened by the rising power of Nazism. Max is arrested and sent to the concentration

camp at Dachau where only his talent for making exquisite porcelain figures stands between him and death. Bettina risks everything to rescue him and escape Germany.

In America in 1993, Clara, Bettina’s daughter, embarks on a journey to trace her roots and determine the identity of her father, a secret her mother has kept from her for reasons she’s never understood. Clara understands that her father is not the man her mother married. The story comes together as Clara’s quest continues in this well-crafted, enthralling novel.

Happy reading.

Rowena

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Add J Q X Z to these 5 - letter words
to make new 6-letter words.

BIOME OUSTS CAUSE STARE

GAME COUNT HELPS WITH ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Greater Ambers Natural Resources Club has organised nine annual Game Counts for the management of Amber Valley since 2016. The 2024 count took place in pleasant conditions on Wednesday 12 June. Of the 115 people who participated in the count, most were members of the club, but anyone interested in participating was welcome to do so. The count was followed by the traditional “bring & braai” at the Lakes where the preliminary results were announced. The convivial atmosphere bore testimony to the fact that people enjoyed themselves.

The purpose of the Game Count is to determine the numbers of the introduced animals, namely blesbuck and impala, on the estate. The blesbuck and impala numbers appear to be a bit low, even considering that 10 male blesbuck and seven male impala were removed during the past year because of the imbalance of males to females of these species. In 2022 seven zebra stallions were removed from the estate which has had a positive effect on all the game animals. Two young mares were introduced. A foal was born to the original mare in February 2024.

For the purposes of the Game Count the Greater Ambers is divided into 10 Areas and 30 Zones. The count is a concentrated effort to count all the animals during a one hour period on a particular day. All animals encountered during the count are counted, however, the

ZEBRA	BLES- BUCK	IMPALA	REED- BUCK	DUIKER	NYALA	WART- HOG	SCRUB HARE	TOTAL
5	57	96	13	20	0	70	1	262

ABOVE: The table shows the results of the Game Count held on 12 June 2024

numbers of many of the smaller animals such as duiker, reedbuck, warthog and scrub hare are not considered to be accurate, as they are easily overlooked. Only one scrub hare was counted during the count but many are observed at night, so we obviously have a healthy population of these animals. No otters were counted this year, although a pair of spotted-necked otters were recorded regularly at Robin Dam during May.

For the past two years participants in the count were asked to report on the presence of duiker and reedbuck around their homes or during their daily walks during the two weeks following the count. This was done again in 2024 and has again produced some interesting results.

About 40 people participated and reported a total of 88 duiker in 21 Zones compared to the 20 duiker counted on 12 June. There are probably many more duiker in Zones that were not counted in the two weeks after the count. Interestingly, many observers reported specific individual duikers around their home on a daily basis which was helpful in determining the final tally for the species. Most of the animals encountered were in very good condition

and only one person reported an animal with diarrhoea, despite the fact that it has been reported that the duiker are in poor condition! Most of the duiker occur in the residential sector of the estate but there is a healthy population in the Game Area, though some of these are obviously overlooked.

The reedbuck have a more restricted distribution within the Ambers, occurring in only 12 of the 30 Zones in the Ambers. Most reedbuck are recorded in the wetlands or adjacent grassveld. Nine observers participated and reported a total of 32 reedbuck during the two weeks of the survey; only 13 were counted on the 12 June.

The Game Counts are a very successful means of monitoring the number of animals on the estate and are used by management to determine their policies on the game. For the participants of the Game Count it is a fun day out and a way of making a positive contribution to our estate.

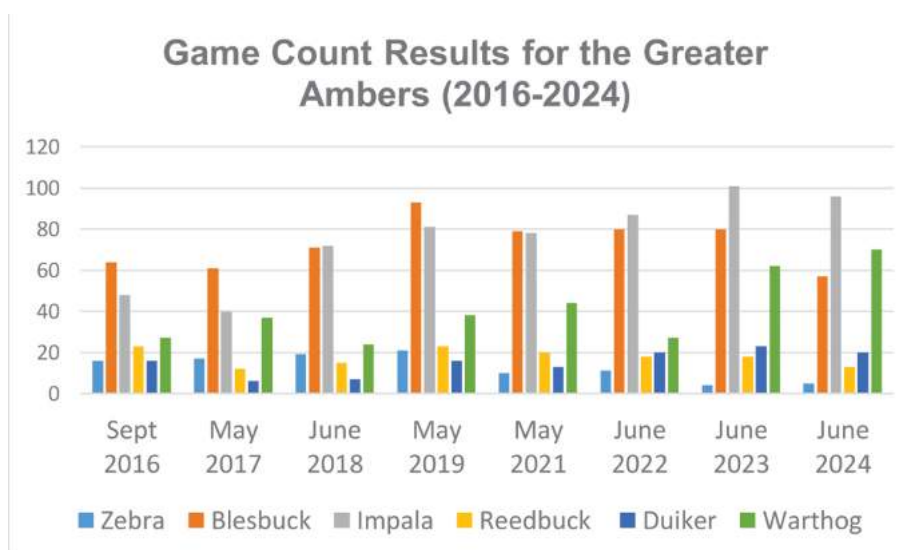
Thanks to all those who participated in the count and for making it a great success.

Deryck Day, natresclub@gmail.com

The table and graph below shows the results of some of the species of animals for each of the counts between 2016 and 2024:

GAME COUNT RESULTS for the GREATER AMBERS (2016-2024)

	Sept 2016	May 2017	June 2018	May 2019	May 2021	June 2022	June 2023	June 2024
Zebra	16	17	19	21	10	11	4	5
Blesbuck	64	61	71	93	79	80	80	57
Impala	48	40	72	81	78	87	101	96
Reedbuck	23	12	15	23	20	18	18	13
Duiker	16	6	7	16	13	20	23	20
Warthog	27	37	24	38	44	27	62	70



AMBER GARDENS

WINTER DISPLAYS ITS WARMTH

Who thought that winter was dreary? Every year there is an explosion of colour across the Greater Ambers Estate, creating spectacular displays that warm body and soul.



ABOVE: Aloe Drive in Amber Ridge by Flic Blakeway (left) and the Game Area in Amber Valley by Char Eastment (right).

BELOW: Flower beds along Aloe Drive and a bee making the most of nature's abundance by Flic Blakeway.



RIGHT A wall of colour in Hilltop Road, Amber Valley, Flic Blakeway.

BELOW: The garden at the entrance to Amber Lee is ablaze with colours and textures. Image by Crystelle Wilson



GOOD CITIZENS

Pets and owners rewarded for good behaviour

On Sunday 9 June the KZN Agility Club, under the auspices of the Kennel Union of South Africa, organised Canine Good Citizenship Tests to be held on the perfect grounds behind the Yellowwood Cafe. An enormous amount of hard work goes into these events and Bev Hourquebie did a brilliant job with all the administration involved. Various different dog groups from our area in KZN took part, including the very special Ambers Dog Group.

Braving long, spiky wet grass, chicken bones and other rubbish often thoughtlessly left on the Wedge, our Ambers group of dogs and their owners meet there weekly to be trained by Fran Hamilton. She willingly gives up many hours to help teach owners and their dogs, who then go on to give entertaining displays for the residents of the Glades and our own Care Centre, while working diligently toward earning their Canine Good Citizen awards.

The important day arrived and we met our two skilled examiners – Tracy Manthey from Durban and Edith Gallant from Hilton. There were 22 dogs of every breed and mixture of breeds from the different clubs that were entered and took part, Chloe Scher being the tiniest!

Each handler drew a number from a hat, the odd numbers going to one examiner; the evens to the other, and at 09h00 the tests began. Some, or perhaps most, of us were a little nervous as we were put through the

various meet-and-greet, down-stays and other activities designed to test our dogs' sensitivity to noise and distractions. Handlers were questioned on dogs' needs and requirements and around two hours later they, and their dogs, gathered in the picturesque grounds of the Yellowwood Cafe for a much deserved coffee whilst the examiners totted up the result sheets.

Most of us tested for Bronze, but dear Roxy Campos had already passed Bronze and so she was going for Silver. Mary had been mortified when Roxy got the scent of a monkey and broke her down-stay but, on being given a second chance, she performed admirably.

It wasn't long before we were called back and with nervous anticipation we waited for our names to be called. Those who were judged not quite ready were advised as to what they should work on so as to try again next time. The rest had passed, happily including Roxy, and were presented with certificates and the most beautiful rosettes. What a proud day for our Ambers Canine Good Citizens.

Our huge thanks to the trainers through whose expertise we are able to help our dogs become happy, confident members of society, to Yellowwood for allowing us to use their beautiful grounds and to all those who worked so hard to make this event so very enjoyable.

Di Scher

BELOW: From left to right are Lesley Marchant with Maze, trainer Fran Hamilton, Elena Joubert and Meggie, Mary Campos and Roxy, Di Scher with Chloe and Penny Shaw and Impi.

Picture: Shirley Swingler



As anyone who has ever been around a cat for any length of time well knows, cats have enormous patience with the limitations of the human kind.
– Cleveland Amory

No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversation as the dog does.
– Christopher Morley

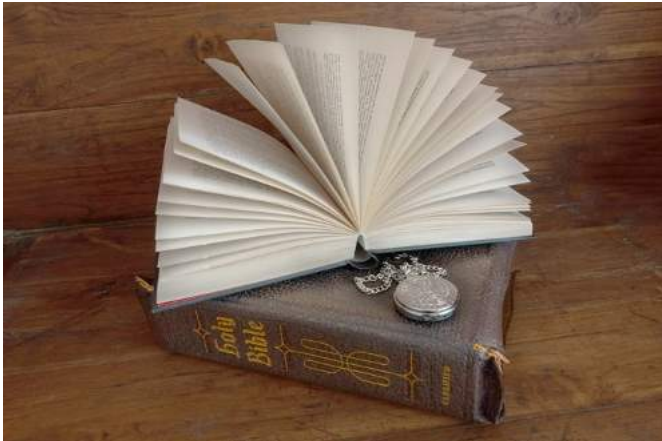
AMBER CAMERA CLUB

June winning images

RIGHT: Monthly Competition, Judges Choice Junior: "Low Fly By" by Julie Johnston

BELOW: Set Subject "Books", Judges Choice Junior: "Family Heirloom" Julie Johnston

BELOW RIGHT: Monthly Competition, Judges Choice Senior: "Dried Roses 3" by Diane Hampson

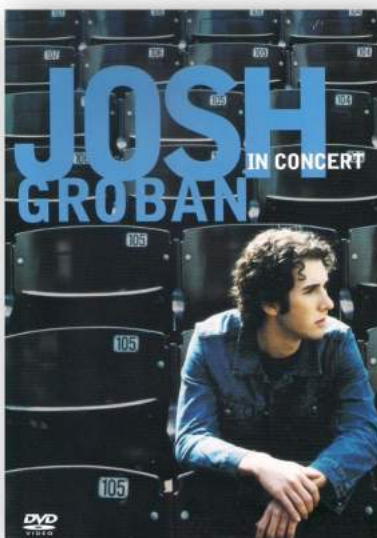


MUSICAL MOVIES

High notes and fast feet hit the spot

One of renowned musical producer/composer David Foster's greatest finds was undoubtedly American cross-over tenor Josh Groban. Born in Los Angeles in February 1981, he was initially planning a career as an actor until the age of 17 when David recruited him to stand in for Andrea Bocelli who was unable to perform on one of his shows. The rest, as they say, is history as Josh has gone on to worldwide fame and is recognised as America's favourite of the genre. We

are fortunate to have a recording of one of his early live concerts held in Pasadena Civic Auditorium in October 2002 when he was still only 21 years old.

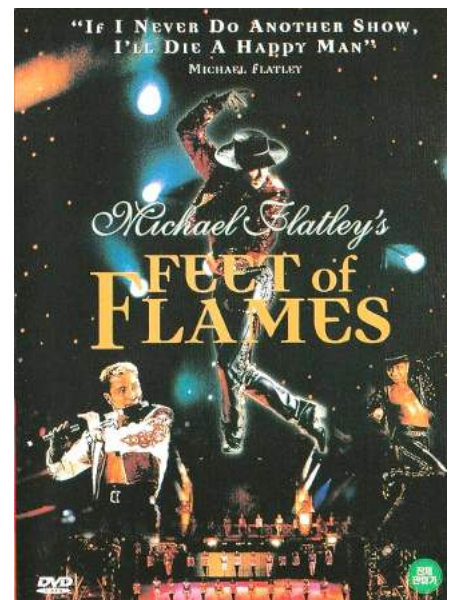


Monday 1st July 2024

America's favourite cross-over tenor in his early years sings a selection of light and popular numbers

Show starts at 7:00pm
AMBER VALLEY CLUBHOUSE – PUB AREA

R10 donation to the Ambers Amenities Fund



Later in the month we feature a dance and music extravaganza entitled "Feet of Flames" held in London's Hyde Park on 25 July 1998. It stars Michael Flatley, creator of the Riverdance phenomenon, with over 100 dancers and a live orchestra on a four-level hydraulically operated stage. Born in Chicago on 16 July 1958, he created and starred in these shows which were seen by over 60 million people around the world from 1995 until his forced retirement due to chronic foot, knee and other pains in 2016 at the age of 58.

A number of residents would love to attend but are put off by the dark evenings and cold weather. Anyone willing and able to assist with lifts should please contact me to arrange time and place.

Shows start at 19h00 and the bar will be closed so bring your own refreshments. All donations go to the Amenities Fund which sponsors various perks and improvements to our Ambers facilities.

Trevor Jenkin

Electricity Saving ideas – Electricity Wise is Money Wise

As residents of the Greater Ambers, we are very aware of increasing costs of living and having less disposable income. Electricity usage can put a strain on our pockets. We cannot run away from the fact that electricity is a need, and it has to be used, but how can we save more electricity, rather than spending more on it? We can change our behaviour regarding electricity use.

By being wise electricity users, we can save money. The BIG electricity users are heating appliances and installations – geysers, microwaves, tumble dryers, heaters, electric stoves and kettles. So how can we be wise energy users, and save money?

- Reduce energy use during Eskom’s “peak tariff periods”: 06h00 to 10h00 on weekday mornings and 17h00 to 20h00 on weekday evenings. Especially, restrict the use of geysers, electric hobs and ovens, air-fryers, heaters, washing-machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers during peak hours.

- Reduce the time that the geyser is on: managing hot-water geyser usage is probably the most critical to save electricity in our homes. Your geyser is way out in front when it comes to energy usage, accounting for 30% to 50% of your bill. Keep it turned off until you intend to shower/bath. By only switching it on for an hour or two per day, you can reduce a 150-litre geyser’s power usage from up to 36 kWh (on 12 hours per day) to just 6 kWh. How? Install a timer or manually switch the geyser on for only one to two hours a day (not during peak tariff time)

- We can set the geyser thermostat so that we add no or very little cold water to the bath or shower, and we can consider insulating the geyser with a geyser blanket. We can also only wash dishes when the geyser has been turned on for bathing or showering.

- Could we switch off all lights that we do not need to have on?

- Could it be that we could cultivate the habit of only boiling enough water for a cup of tea?

- Are we willing to use hot water bottles instead of electric blankets?

- Do we take advantage of sunlight in the day to warm up rooms in the house and close curtains in the evening to prevent heat loss from the day? Have we looked at cost-effective ways to insulate our homes?

- Do we consider if it is worth it to switch on a heater when we can, instead, dress warmly (heaters consume up to 17 % of evening peak electricity). Heaters are very power hungry so rather layer up with jerseys, socks and blankets.

- Have we converted to energy-efficient light bulbs? (Convert from incandescent to LED lights). Try to opt for the most energy efficient LED bulbs you can afford. The consumption of an efficient LED bulb (4W) versus an old-fashioned incandescent bulb (60W or 100W) multiplies significantly over time and will decrease our energy usage.

- Have we reduced “phantom power” – by unplugging electronics to avoid standby usage? Many appliances and electronics continue to draw power even when they

are turned off. Unplug them when not in use to save electricity.

- Do we use sunshine instead of a tumble dryer? Tumble dryers are near the top of the list of home appliances that consume the most electricity.

- Do you use your washing machine on “eco” mode? Washing machines require a lot of electricity to heat the water in their cleaning cycles. Therefore, use the low temperature and “eco” modes. On average, washing machines consume about 60% of their power to heat up water. Therefore, for daily washes, the best way to save energy when using a washing machine is to use a cold water cycle. Another lifestyle tip for washing clothes is to pre-soak stained clothing in stain remover before loading these into the washing machine. This could help to reduce the number of washing cycles needed for a full clean and save energy in the long term. Consumers can also reduce the energy usage of their washing machines by scheduling the washing of clothes to certain days of the week and waiting until full loads are available before using the machine.

- Is a shower an option to a bath? While a candle-lit soak in the tub feels like a romantic way to unwind, showers use a lot less water, which in turn means less hot water and less electricity.

- Do we do enough “maintenance checks”? Maintenance checks can go a long way in conserving energy for refrigeration. For the 98% of South Africans who own fridges and use them daily, there are a few ways to optimise the energy usage of these important appliances. On a monthly basis, the suction of the seals on the doors of fridges and freezers should be checked to ensure that they are working properly. Broken or compromised seals can cause warm air leakage, which increases the amount of electricity that the appliances need to use to keep the contents cool. Consumers should also allow food to cool properly before placing it inside a fridge, to keep the appliance’s internal temperature as low as possible.

Flic Blakeway

POETRY

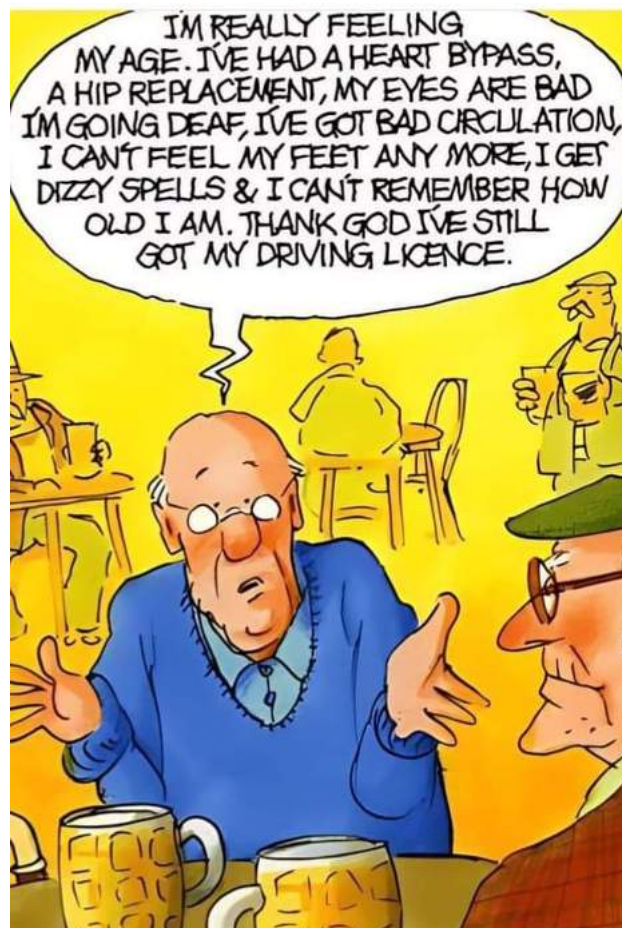
Storage

When I moved from one house to another
there were many things I had no room
for. What does one do? I rented a storage
space. And filled it. Years passed.
Occasionally I went there and looked in,
but nothing happened, not a single
twinge of the heart.

As I grew older the things I cared
about grew fewer, but were more
important. So one day I undid the lock
and called the trash man. He took
everything.

I felt like the little donkey when
his burden is finally lifted. Things!
Burn them, burn them! Make a beautiful
fire! More room in your heart for love,
for the trees! For the birds who own
nothing – the reason they can fly.

– Mary Oliver



Contributions for *Amber Views & News* are most welcome.
 Send by email to crystelle.wilson@gmail.com
 or WhatsApp 082 723 5158
 by the 20th of each month.

S C R A B B L E
 ANSWER:
 ZOMBIE JOUSTS CASQUE EXTRAS

GREATER AMBERS

IN-HOUSE FACILITATION TEAM

(The team that lives here)

Christine Francis 5491
 Ed Frank 6607
 Tish McDonald 5031
 Gill Siedle 5355

George Smith 7063
 Gwyn Sprake 5708
 Ron Wilmans 5399
 Marlene Wilton 7009

Sales for our greater benefit