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BIG FIVE HILLS

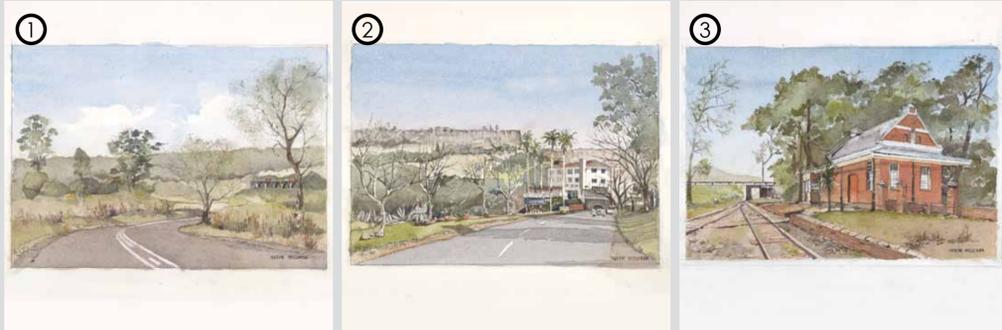
— OF THE COMRADES MARATHON —
LIMITED SET OF 500 COLLECTIBLE PRINTS

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The Big Five Hills of the Comrades is privately published by Dr Walter B. Stuart,
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NOTE ON THE ARTIST: COLIN MILLIKEN
Durban-born Colin Milliken has had a lifelong passion for art, with watercolour and pen-and-ink being his preferred media. Colin is an architect by profession, and has practised for some fifty years in Durban and Johannesburg. His paintings for this project were based on a set of aerial shots taken by Durban-based photographer, Pete van der Spek. Colin's other interests include running, cycling, jazz and birding.

THE BIG FIVE HILLS



① POLLY SHORTTS

This is a typical image of the undulating thorny bush of Polly with a wrought iron bridge visible in the distance. Trencherously positioned for the up-runner, the oddly named hill is named after Portland Benick Shortts, a local raconteur and bon vivant who owned a nearby farm named Shortts' Retreat. The first of our Big Five Hills is situated only 3 kilometres from the uphill finish – an easy start for the down run, but a challenging finale.

② INCHANGA

Picturesque Inchanga is known for its distinctive tall palms and famous hotel. Approximately 40 kilometres out of Pietermaritzburg and positioned close to the halfway point of Comrades, the runner faces the formidable challenge of Inchanga. The one-time site of an historic viaduct, Inchanga stretches over about 25 kilometres with an increase in elevation of about 190 metres. It is known for its deceptive 'double summit' – with the true summit initially hidden from view.

③ BOTHA'S HILL

An icon of the famous climb is the old railway station of Botha's Hill village. Situated close to Drummond, Botha's Hill is a challenge which must be confronted and defeated. Interestingly, when runners pass the famous Kearsney College, they know they've reached the top! The hill is named after Cornelis Botha who owned a nearby inn named Botha's Halfway House. It is during this gruelling ascent that the ultimate winner of the marathon has often been determined.

④ FIELD'S HILL

On the downhill run, it is from the top of Field's Hill that the metropolis of Durban comes into view. The hill is named after John Field, scion of a distinguished pioneering family. It is the longest and most arduous of our Big Five Hills – extremely difficult to negotiate for both directions of the marathon. The city of Pinetown marks the end of Field's Hill for the down runner and is traditionally the point from which large crowds of spectators begin to congregate.

⑤ COWIE'S HILL

With its distinctive drinking fountain, Cowie's is a welcome chance to quench that raging thirst. From the top of the hill there are only 17 kilometres to go (on the down run) and for the majority of runners these will be walked. On the up run, by contrast, Cowie's is manageable and pleasant. Interestingly, the hill is named after an Englishman William Cowie who threw in his lot with the Voortrekkers during their original exploration of Natal in 1837.



BENEFICIARIES OF THE BIG FIVE HILLS OF THE COMRADES



Ian Player with two immobilized rhino, 1962.

The primary beneficiary of the sale of this portfolio will be the MAGQUBU NTOMBELA MEMORIAL FOUNDATION. This charitable institution was founded by Dr Ian Player together with Andrew Ewing and Nick Steele and is named after Magqubu Ntombela, a dedicated game ranger and for Player an inspirational figure. Player acknowledges that Ntombela was his mentor and that he introduced him to a new way of looking at the challenge of wildlife preservation. In the 1950s and 1960s, Player and Ntombela helped save the white rhino from extinction. Today, rhinos face a renewed threat caused by widespread poaching, and we are thus called upon once again to protect this magnificent creature for the benefit of succeeding generations. Money raised by the sale of THE BIG FIVE HILLS OF THE COMRADES will be channelled into various projects to help protect both black and white rhino.

The secondary beneficiary of this initiative will be the WILDLANDS CONSERVATION TRUST, one of six charities endorsed by the Comrades

Association. This Trust is motivated by the profound realization that we as human beings are inextricably dependent on the health of our environment and that our survival as a species will depend on our ability to conserve our natural resources. Funds raised by the Trust are thus deployed to achieve a number of environmental objectives – and many important contributions have already been made.

DR IAN PLAYER. He is a world renowned conservationist, perhaps best known for Operation Rhino, the programme he initiated to save the white rhinoceros from extinction. His contributions to environmental issues have been enormous and include the establishment of protected wildlife areas at Umfolozi and St Lucia in KwaZulu-Natal as well as setting up the Wilderness Leadership School in the 1950s. Dr Player has led an energetic life: he served with the South African forces in Italy during the Second World War, and on his return helped to establish the Dusi Canoe Marathon – a spiritual and geographic companion to the Comrades Marathon.

LEGENDS WHO WENT THE DISTANCE



This is a limited edition of the Big Five Hills of the Comrades Marathon, painted by Colin Milliken comprising only 500 numbered sets – each of the 5 prints being individually signed by the legendary Comrades runners featured here.

① DAVE ROGERS

Botha's Hill resident Dave Rogers epitomizes the true spirit of the race. Rogers has achieved a record forty-five finishes – with his first successful marathon taking place way back in 1961. In the seventies Rogers reached his running peak securing several top-ten finishes, including a third place in 1976 (after Alan Robb and Englishman, Colin Woodward). His time in 1976 was 5 hours 52 minutes and 41 seconds.

② BRUCE FORDYCE

He is rightfully known as the 'King of the Comrades' with a record 9 wins to his credit. After posting a third and a second place in 1979 and 1980 respectively, Fordyce completed a back-to-back series of eight consecutive wins from 1981 to 1988 with a ninth (and final) victory in 1989. For his efforts he also won the London to Brighton Marathon on three successive occasions from 1981 to 1983, and still holds the world record for the distance of 50 miles.

③ FRITH VAN DER MERWE

Benoni school-leaver Frith van der Merwe managed a hat-trick of women's Comrades victories in 1988, 1989 and 1991. But, in reality, Frith's achievements went a lot further than the bare statistics might suggest. As Professor Tim Noakes has pointed out in his authoritative *Lore of Running*, Frith's winning time in 1989 was good enough to win every men's race until 1983! Crossing the line in 5 hours 54 minutes and 53 seconds she beat the second-placed female by over an hour and finished in fifteenth place overall.

④ JACKIE MEKLER

Springbok athlete Jackie Mekler is one of a number of handful of athletes who have succeeded in winning the Comrades five times (an illustrious group which includes legends Arthur Newton, Hardy Balling and Wally Hayward). His first victory took place in 1955 when he beat Andy Greening to take the title. During his era Jackie Mekler established records for both the up and down runs. He achieved his final victory in 1968.

⑤ ALAN ROBB

He is one of the outstanding personalities of the Comrades: indeed his distinctive 'shuffling' running style has become part of marathon folklore. He has also brought him four wins and records for both the up and the down run. Robb became the third athlete to achieve a hat-trick of wins (1976 to 1978) thus joining the prestigious ranks of Arthur Newton and Dave Bughshaw. By 2013 he had completed a staggering forty runs.

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