

DURBAN RAMBLERS CLUB.

Chairman: W. Dymock Parr  
Phone 85398 (Evenings)

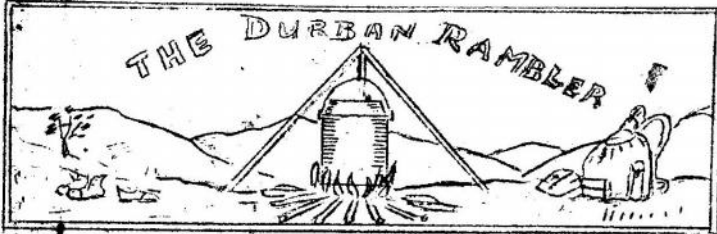
Hon. Secretary  
Patricia Ogle  
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Hon Treasurer.  
D. Rae Adams.

P.O. Box 1063,  
DURBAN.

FIXTURES FOR DECEMBER, 1953.

- Tuesday, 1st. Executive Committee Meeting to be held at Stan Christian's flat, 29 Albemarle Court, Old Dutch Road, at 8 p.m.
- Sunday, 1st. To-day we have a variation on an old theme, DOLOMITE STAIRCASE, reminiscent of the Tyrol. Our way leads via Topp's Needle to the Umgeni River, and the lorries will travel through Pinetown. Lindie as Leader.  
FARE : 4/-d.
- Tuesday, 8th. Dr. Vincent Wager has very kindly consented to show us his movie on the Seychelles, those isles of enchantment which he visited recently, and also films featuring the Great Barrier Reef. Come along at 8 p.m. to-night and enjoy the CINE SHOW at Tech. Projection Theatre.  
ADMISSION : 1/6d.
- Saturday, 19th. Father Xmas is to join us at the MASKED FANCY DRESS BALL to be held at Christine Fisher's Studio, Park Street, at 8 p.m. Prizes will be awarded for the most original costume, also the best-dressed Rambler and Ramblerette. To ensure that everyone receives something, will the girls please bring a small feminine gift, and the boys one for their fellow Ramblers. Suggested value of present - approx. 2/6d. Please do not label.  
Refreshments served.  
ADMISSION : 5/-d.
- Sunday, 20th. Which is your favourite hike? It could be WHITE ROCK HILL, reached after turning off the South Coast Road at Isipingo. Frank Woodward will be in charge.  
FARE : 4/6d.
- Tuesday, 22nd. Let's hope you are in fine voice for CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT at Albert Park this evening. Ramblers wishing to attend en masse should meet between 6.15 and 6.30 p.m. outside the Tea Room, cnr. Park/St. Andrews Sts.
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NUMBER, 1953.  
VOL. 2 NO. 10.

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HALLOWEEN PARTY, 31st October, 1953.

Witches, broomsticks, cauldrons, ghosts, black cats, bats, pumpkins and plenty of black magic are what go to mark the celebration of All Hallow's E'en, the night on which all those who practise and are associated with the Black Arts, are given free rein.

Our local hags and hobgoblins all gathered at the Navy League Hall to while away the evening in hideous revelry, making the night ring with their gruesome cackles and whoops of unholy glee. In the Hall, lit only by small lamps, they flitted to and fro with bats wheeling overhead, while witches and black cats watched from their cracks and crannies in the wall. Granny of all the most hideous creatures was undoubtedly Len, with the Lastz sisters in close attendance. They even threw a scare into a few ghosts that were idly wafting around, while Frank Woodward in his guise as Satan kept a fatherly eye on all the evil doings. However, all was not spells and sorcery, as here and there one could hear a merry Rambler laugh ring out.

Much merriment was provided by the antics of those who ducked for apples in a tub of water. Scotty finally got his apple after unsuccessfully chasing it for 10 minutes. (Perhaps we should have provided goggles and a harpoon gun). After that, the buns on a string led many Rambler a merry dance. Grub Call ... and those eerie creatures of the

spirit world found they had wonderful appetites. Food disappeared with amazing rapidity - a great tribute to Marge's sister, Sylvia's baking.

Then we all gathered around in a magic circle with spells flying left and right while Peter Shanahan told a spine-chilling tale, complete with sound effects. The climax was reached with a very skeletal Pierre leaping up out of a coffin-like box, accompanied by the staccato bangs of a jumping-jack cracker. More dancing followed, with capering and weaving of spells until the clock sounded the midnight hour. In a flash all sorcery and wizardry was at an end, and the usual jolly Ramblers we know so well reverted to their everyday selves.

This is the first Halloween Party the Club has held, and let us hope this annual festival of the Black Arts will become a regular event on our calendar. Well done, Entertainments Committee, and your many cheerful helpers!

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PICNIC AT UMGENI DAM, 1st November, 1953.

by Harry (Boerewors) Thorsen and Lucy Ramsay.

Two lorries set off from the market place this morning. They were laden with "Halloweened" Ramblers happily relaxing after last night's wonderful party. We had a long but pleasant journey. There was a stop at Pinetown, and we visited Mr. Naidoo as usual. He supplied coffee and also the traditional cabbage.

The trip to the Dam was uneventful. One lorry turned off to pick up young Parr at his Boarding School. As he climbed onto the lorry his schoolmates gazed wistfully at him. We set off again with a grinding of gears in a cloud of dust.

The lorries dropped us at the Dam for half-an-hour. It proved to be most impressive there and the photographers were very happy indeed and took innumerable snaps. Most of us inspected the tunnel under the Dam, which was rather ghostly, especially as we still had memories

of the witches and a dreadful devil at the Halloween Party!

We were sorry to hear that one of the lorries had developed some trouble and could not be used. The whole party boarded the other and it was a case of standing room only. Ramblers were draped over the mudguards and roof of the cab as we drove a couple of miles to the picnic spot. Crowded conditions did not deter the singing, which sounded really effective. What a pity all that melody was wasted on the Natal countryside! By this time we had been joined by Frank W, Marge, Lorraine and Alf, who had forsaken the lorries and arranged their own transport.

We picnicked on the bank of the river under some trees. It was a beautiful site. Tea was brewed in an incredibly short time and the serious business of eating began. Everybody conscientiously relaxed after lunch, except, of course, our water babies - they found a beautiful swimming pool further down the river and took full advantage of it.

Just before we left a few drops of rain fell. They heralded a chain of events which were to devastate the normal Ramblers' routine, as a few minutes after we departed the Bedford proved to be a very sick lorry indeed - it could not carry its load up the steep hills. Unhappy passengers were obliged to abandon ship. The lightened truck could then limp towards Durban. The rest of us looked on smugly from the other lorry, but not for long, because it began to boil. We came to a steamy halt and could not proceed for some time. It ended up with some people changing trucks and others walking a mile or two. Eventually we joined the Main Road at Harrison. Both lorries rallied miraculously and we settled down to serious travelling.

Topp's Needle veterans found the same conditions on to-day's trip - it was very misty, and raining lightly. Blankets emerged from packs and were used to best advantage. Sleepy voices carolled old favourite tunes. The lorries, completely recovered by now, sped towards Durban. Being Ramblers, we ignored the light drizzle. We were drenched, however, by a shower at Mayville and each lorry deposited a congealed, but happy, mass of humanity at the Market.

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VISIT TO PIETERMARITZBURG, 7 - 8th November, 1953.

Saturday afternoon, the 7th, saw a rather well dressed group of Ramblers gathered at the Railway Station with Dymock anxiously calling the roll and making last minute changes in the seating arrangements.

Having seen off the ten types who were travelling by Pullman, the rest of us sorted ourselves out into our respective cars and followed on. A veritable cloudburst struck us in the Hillcrest area and travel was almost brought to a standstill. However, we pressed on regardless, and by the time we had reached Drummond the worst was over. A short stop for tea and refreshments, and then on to the Capital City.

What a colourful spectacle the streets of Maritzburg present at the moment, decked out in all the glory of their Jacaranda blooms! Most of the car passengers went straight to the Camden Hotel where we were to spend the night, while a few waited to meet the Pullman passengers at the Publicity Bureau. I understand the Pullman "Wallahs" had entertained their fellow passengers to a full repertoire of Rambling songs.

At the Camden our guests of honour joined us in time for a cocktail before dinner. We were a bit late in starting, so dinner was a trifle hasty as the Management was anxious to clear the dining room for a dance there that night.

Having wined and dined, we joined our hosts at the Collegians Club for the combined Social. How nice it was to see our old friends from the P.M. B. Ramblers, prominent among whom were Doc. Squires, that rotund ball of jollity Don Allison, Don Spencer and many others too numerous to name. Even Dave Geard, an old member of our Club, had motored down from Estcourt for the occasion. Soon everyone was swirling in gay abandon to the strains of the very lively orchestra.

To start the programme of the "Floor Show" a chorus of our Ramblers sang that number which seems to have come to stay - "Ramblers of the Garden Province", or better

known as "Heavy boys, Heavy". After that more dancing, followed by Scotty and Peter Hounsell giving their version of "Senny Boy". Not to be outdone, Don Allison and Don Spencer kept us in fits of laughter with their kitty-cat song: "Come eeeout, come eeeout, my pretty kitten". I must say Don Spencer made a very convincing Tom-cat!

Eats were served a little later, and the party was taking on rather a mellow tone, as laughter and good-natured banter quickfired around the Hall.

Later in the evening our Ramblers' "Barber-shop Sextet", heavily moustachioed and much straw-bashed, gave a jolly, roistering rendering of "Little Brown Jug" and "Goodnight Ladies". One of the audience told me they were very impressed by Basil Schonegevel's braces!

More dancing, and then just before midnight, the two Dons and the Maritzburg scribe put across another very amusing act in which Dymock allegedly suffered from "terrible turmoil of the brain" .... perhaps this was brought on by the arduous nature of his duties. The clock struck midnight and we all joined hands and voices in singing "Auld Lang Syne".

Next morning, after dumping our luggage at Don Allison's home, we all motored up to Howick. After spending a few minutes drinking in the beauty of the Falls, we shouldered our packs and scrambled down the steep path to the river. After boulder-hopping down the valley for a couple of hundred yards we turned left up the course of a creek over fallen trees, rocks, brambles, etc., right up to the beautiful, secluded Shelter's Falls. These Falls reminded me a lot of Nongwane with their delicate patterns of spray and lacy curtains of falling water. Soon many of us were swimming in the cool waters of the pool at the bottom of the Falls.

Lunch was served about 100 yards below the Falls under the shady wattles. "Snakebite" very gallantly covered up a defunct dassie from which occasional rather overpowering whiffs were emanating. The sweetness of the air then improved greatly. While others chose to lie around in the

shade the two Dons again treated us to some of their mad antics. What a source of mirth and merriment they are! The inevitable water-fight took place, involving various members of the two Clubs. Somehow or other I rather fancy Doc started it all.

As the sun began to swing low in the West we climbed up the steep slope out of the valley and hiked across to the edge of the escarpment opposite the Howick Falls. While pausing for a few minutes to admire the view, Dymock thanked our hosts for the very enjoyable week-end. Peter Elliot's reply was a classic in speeches. Verbatim it was: "Thanks, Durban, come again". After hiking through the village we gathered at the Falls Tea Room from where we motored back to Maritzburg.

Once more we were on our way back to Durban, with the bond between the two Clubs drawn still tighter, and many new friendships made. Let's hope we shall see the P.M.B. Ramblers as our guests some day.

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OVER THE TOP FROM NATIONAL PARK TO CATHEDRAL PEAK.

Overland trips by Ramblers seem to be more and more popular of late. Ramblers Edgar West, Archie Cockburn, Eunice Viljoen and Ian van der Lingen recently hiked over the 'Berg from National Park to Cathedral Peak. Edgar West very kindly lent me his Diary from which I took the following extracts. ))

FRIDAY, 2nd October : 8.45 p.m. Warm send-off from Dbn. Station by members of Mountain Club and Ramblers. Toasted success of the trip.

SATURDAY, 3rd: Rose 5.30 a.m. to find Archie had left his new camera in the Diner which had already been uncoupled. 'Phoned Ladysmith re camera - no luck. By bus via Bergville. Met Len Carr who supplied us with the necessary rations for the trip. Arrived National Park. Many stares received from gapers. One remark overheard when Archie unlimbered his ice-axe: "They mean business". Set off from Hostel 2.30 p.m. under heavy packs - 45 lbs. Shoulders a bit sore. Camped at Mahai Cave 5.30 p.m. 5,000 up. All very

hungry and tired. Had a good supper, also rum ration. The altitude seems to have affected Eunice's and my appetites (not so good); Archie and Ian ravenous. Air very warm and conditions very pleasant in the open.

SUNDAY, 4th : Rose early, day cold and overcast. 8 a.m. left cave for Sentinel hut, promises to be hard day's going. Saw Police boy ahead of us with rations. The scenery is magnificent, can see Sentinel, Devil's Tooth and Eastern Buttress. Distance from Natal Border to Hut, 8 miles. Spirits high, but I have developed a spot of knee trouble - probably owing to the heavy pack. Archie, Eunice and Ian reached chain ladder 1.45 p.m. I reached ladder 3.45 p.m. Archie and Ian worked winch hoisting packs. Found company at the Hut making a grand total of 9. Archie put up "Scotch Light" around the hut for guidance of all in need. Very tired. Turned in early.

MONDAY, 5th : Got up early, cleaned pots, etc. in Tugela River, 400 yds. away. Natal obscured by blanket of mist. River water very cold. Breakfast included Milo and Archie's famous "Chipattis" with Enos substituting for baking powder. Our Hut fellows departed 8.30 returning to Hostel. Archie, Eunice and Ian went to climb Sentinel while I rested my knee. They returned 1.45 to find me asleep, much to my surprise. While pasting up Scotch Light on standards between Chain Ladder and Hut, met new guests - Englishman, his son, and a Pole. Took photos from Escarpment that afternoon. Weather deteriorated about sundown.

TUESDAY, 6th : Archie distributed supplies after breakfast, bringing weight of packs up to 75-lbs. Pushed on into Basutoland 9 a.m. Spirits high though weather threatening. Hiked as far as possible that day with a short stop for lunch. Knee still worrying me. Archie found some ice and christened his ice-axe. I lagged behind a bit while others hunted for a cave. Found cave - a beastly hole. Supper: burnt rice, bully and curry soup. Turned in 7.30 - it is raining softly.

WEDNESDAY, 7th : Crawled out of the "Beastly Hole" 6 a.m. Clear over Natal but heavy cloud over Basutoland. Quick breakfast - on our way 8 a.m. 70-lb. packs made heavy going. Our route now along a Basuto road. Weather has improved. Photographed Rockeries, Bell and Cathedral in the distance. After lunch a thunderstorm broke and we were still 2 1/2 hours from Rockery Tower cave. Plodded along in the rain.

Reached Orange River 3.15 p.m. and cave at 4.10, very tired. Had to fetch water from Orange River. Supper of soup, spaghetti, cheese and tea. Sky clear, stars shining.

THURSDAY, 8th : To-day is rest day. Weather beautiful. Went down to Orange for wash, returned to find crows had raided our larder, pinched biltong and made a mess of the bread. After supper decided we would climb Mponjwane next day.

FRIDAY, 9th : Still clear and beautiful. Had climber's breakfast consisting of milk, post toasties and bread. Day's ration - chocolate, prawns and dried fruit (no biltong). 8 a.m. found us climbing Mponjwane, which means "Little Horn" in Zulu. Archie led, with Ian as second man. Reached summit 1.45 p.m. very pleased with ourselves. After lunch found tin with names of those who have reached top. Added our names to the list. Plenty vultures flying around - a bit ominous. Coming down abseiled about 800 ft. This I really enjoyed. Reached gully 6.30 p.m. made way to top of stony gully to grass traverse - very difficult in the dark.

SATURDAY, 10th : Another rest day. Grand sunrise. We are above the clouds which are rising. Went to photograph Pinnacle - no dice. Too much mist. Had difficulty in finding way back to cave. Misty all day. Had job to find the waterhole. Retired to sleeping bags.

SUNDAY, 11th : Mist very thick - spent day in bed. That night Archie had quite a job dodging drips - kept crushing me up against the wall.

MONDAY, 12th : Sky clear but blanket of mist down at 6,000 ft. Tidied cave and hung out wet clothing to dry. I stayed on guard against crows. After lunch took light packs and set off for cave at Mweni. Arrived at 4.10. Found cave easily using a map "Uncle Willie" had prepared. Cave beautifully clean and someone had left a supply of firewood. Thunder-storm brewing over Natal. Baboons barked at Ian while fetching water. Night turned very cold with much lightning and howling wind.

TUESDAY, 13th : Still bitterly cold and wind howling. I stayed behind in cave - those ruddy crows have followed us. 11:00 Thunder-storm breaks. Wind has dropped. Put billy on to boil. Something has just rushed into cave, knocked over billy and bolted out again - maybe one of Ian's baboons. Have to fetch more water. Archie & Co. returned.

very wet.

WEDNESDAY, 14th : Rain still falling with scattered snow on the krantzies. Fetched supplies from Rockeries Cave. Mist came up, so decided to spend the night there. Very cold with snow on surrounding hills on Basutoland side. Mist has thickened to pea soup density. Getting colder. Cleared after supper. Archie has run out of cigarettes - turning his own out of pipe tobacco and newspaper. Ian leads singsong.

THURSDAY, 15th : Woke 4.45 a.m. Sky a bright red - lovely day. Tidied and left cave which had been our home for last week. During morning clouds came up over Basutoland. Found cave marking Twins area. Reached cave 2.30. This cave is very spacious with magnificent view overlooking the Saddle. Took some snaps. Water a bit short.

FRIDAY, 16th : Headed inland 8.20 a.m. High wind blowing. Clear over Natal. Far below us we can see Cathedral Peak Hostel. Going gets harder as country-side has become more rugged. 40 Minutes after lunch-stop finds us overlooking Ndedema Hut recently erected by the Transvaal Section of the Mountain Club. Reached Hut 3.30 p.m. Charming and very cosy, even Dunlopillo mattresses. Well done, Transvaal.

What a change after sleeping on hard ground and grass.  
SATURDAY, 17th : Thick mist, rain, sleet, and snow until noon. Nice and warm in the hut. Wonder if Roy Denny and Des Watkins will come as rain is very heavy. 11.30 Ian swears he can hear someone yodelling. Roy walked in a few minutes later. Des and Dot arrived a little later. After lunch sat around while Des gave us all the news of the past fortnight. Had wonderful supper, washed down with a bottle of wine brought by Des. Snow about a foot deep when we turned in.)

SUNDAY, 18th : Breakfast 8.45 a.m. Still snowing heavily. Des and Archie pronounced gully and Pass go-able. Set off down Pass after lunch with Archie clearing the way with his ice-axe. Snow 2 ft. deep. 3 1/2 hrs. later reached Cathedral Hostel very wet. Met Jack Blackman and Bernie Bent. Had a shot out of Jack's bottle and trooped in to dinner. Food scrumptious after rations. After dinner bade farewell to Eunice who was staying on at Hostel, and set off for P.M.B. by car.

So ends my first, real 'Berg trip. Enjoyed every minute of it in spite of minor discomforts.

SOCIAL NEWS.

We congratulate Laurel and Percy on becoming the proud parents of a bonny boy on the 17th. Who knows, he may grow up to be Chairman, or at least Camp Captain!

Heather Henry has left us for a while. She has gone up to Eshowe for a few months while her firm gets going in their new domicile.

Robin Delton is laid up with an attack of Yellow Jaundice. What a colour scheme - red hair and all! However, we hope to see him out hiking, his usual merry self, in the near future.

Now is the time for all good Ramblers to start thinking what they are going to wear at the Xmas Party which is to be held in Fancy Dress. It's really amazing what you can do with a few rags, bits of paper, etc., so get going right away. Let's make this party even better than the last.

The Chairman has received a very nice letter from Joan Christian thanking us all for the occasional chair which we gave her and Stan for their wedding.

Frank Woodward will be taking a party of crippled children out for a picnic soon. We are trying to make this a regular feature, but need funds. The fund is now open and all contributions will be gratefully received.

BEHAVIOUR. It has come to the notice of the Committee that there has been rather a lot of throwing of banana skins, apple cores, etc. on the lorries lately. This may be great fun, but we are sure it creates a bad impression in the minds of other users of the road - besides, someone may get hurt. Please bear this in mind in future and keep your peels in your pocket.

KATH'S CORNER :

MARITZBURG MURMURS .....

Wonder what was in the Nederberg Reising that made some of the Ramblers so gay at dinner, or should we blame the appetisers downed beforehand?

What did I say to make Lionel fall at my feet after one of the dances?

Apparently Les found it preferable to curl up and sleep in the back of a car than to share a room with Pete H. and Billy B. who chatted until 3.30 a.m. !!

DURBAN DATA .....

Paging through a Birthday Book recently, we came across this entry: "Margery Walker - 1899". Surely you haven't been bluffing us all these years, Marge?

One of our - as yet unattached - Ramblers has been seen gazing into furniture shops lately. Food for thought here .....

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We haven't had a new song to sing for some months, so let's learn a new one. This is my latest effort. Sing it to the tune of "McNamara's Band".

(1)

We are the Durban Ramblers  
and we come from old Tekween  
to Ramble o'er the countryside  
the merriest crowd you've seen,  
When weather seems a threatening  
and the wintry wind blows keen,  
Come join our happy company  
of those who've hiked and seen.

CHORUS.

Ohhhhhh the krantzes ring as the Ramblers sing  
and the fires they blaze away,  
as we boil the old tin billy-can

on every hiking day,  
The Treasurer will track you down  
and deprive you of your fee,  
and probably spend the whole darn lot  
on a hideous drunken spree.

(2)

When long week-ends they come around  
you will see us haste away  
out of the crowded city  
in the countryside to stay,  
We go with packs and haversacks  
and clothing bright and gay,  
to camp out in the open veld  
and hike the live-long day.

CHORUS.

(3)

Our members are all jolly types  
from every walk of life  
who hike together in harmony  
with never a sign of strife,  
You will find a bond of friendship  
amongst those who pay the sub,  
and hike together for many a year  
with the Durban Ramblers' Club.

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We are pleased to welcome the following new members  
to the Club :

Miss Maureen Cliff,  
Miss Dulcie Kennin.

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