

comers sprawled over the best spots, and looking up, gazed at Shelter Falls - not very high, but a very pretty waterfall. The main problem was to find somewhere to change into costumes; there were very few private corners. The water was surprisingly cold, but many girls stayed in long after the boys had fled shivering to the banks.

All the Dons of the Maritzburg Club were there, and it was difficult to keep track of them - I counted five.

Our opposite numbers brewed an inexhaustible supply of tea; Durban Ramblers lunched on bread and jam, cheese, and fruit salad.

Water fighting seems to be right out, in the Durban Club. While the Maritzburgites were splashing madly, we looked on and never made the slightest effort to join in. Perhaps we need another Sheila or Mackie.

Peter led us back up an easy path to the Cascades higher up the river. Somebody had provided a car for the lazy, but that was forced off the road and had to travel back along the veld. Serves them right.

The countryside in the Howick area was beautifully green and fresh, and hiking was a sheer pleasure. All too soon we were back at the Car Park and after refreshments we had to say "good-bye" and head back to Durban - next year it might be an idea to have a Braaivleis to round off the weekend.

SOCIAL NEWS:

Both Dudley Saville and Clause Ambler are to be congratulated on having reached the ripe old age of 21 years! All the best for the future, old chaps.

When it comes to negotiating rivers, we wonder whether it's a good or bad thing to have Colin Avent back with us!

Is Blossom trying to break the world record for rolling cars over? He was lucky to get off so lightly in the accident.

Basil Jones is rapidly establishing a name for himself in the cycling world. Although this is only his first season of cycling he has already beaten some of the best cyclists in the country. Keep it up, Basil - we'll have a Springbok in our Club yet.

NEW MEMBERS:

Margaret Fry. Jo Hutchinson. John Leslie. Margery Tomlinson.

THE DURBAN RAMBLER

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EDITOR: HARRY THORSEN

PHONE: 20843 (Day)

EDITORIAL:

MY TyPIst HAS gONE o N A holiDAY?
my t YpIst H a sG on e on 5, THE SpreE,
MY tY pIs T! Has Gone oNa ho l ida Y
OH BRING BAck my Typi ?st TO Me.

This month Margaret has gone away, and only now do I realise what a tremendous job she does in preparing and despatching the Newsletter each month. I'll never again take her job for granted. (Whew! - ditto - Heather)

Editorial bouquet also goes to Heather Henry who is typing this issue. Thanks for helping us out of a spot Heather.

THE LURE OF DOLOMITE STAIRCASE

Sunday 21st October

As the Ramblers met the sixty-four dollar question was: "What and where is the Dolomite Staircase?" Only the older members knew the answer and they replied smugly: "Wait and see".

Our friends of the Mountain Club were also meeting at the Market place so many old friendships were renewed.

In spite of threatening rain we packed two lorries and set off to Hillcrest then on to Crestholme. The hike proper started from Mkutu stream continuing along the Amble course.

After a mile or two of easy going Lindie led us into thick bush and popped out on a ridge above the Valley of a Thousand Hills. What a view! It never fails to thrill and even the old greybeards of the Club were impressed. From there a long multi-coloured snake wiggled down the chimney and wound along Thornbush Path to Topp's Needle. Bob Ferns must have forgotten something on top for he scrambled up the Needle in double-quick time.

A steep but interesting path led from the Needle towards the Umgeni. Gangs were working on the Nagle Dam pipeline and we realised what a vast undertaking this is. The pipe track led, dead straight for miles up and down hills, and huge concrete sections of the pipe were being laid. In the City we turn on the tap and never think of the huge artery that brings our water from far away.

Reaching the floor of the valley, we hiked over natural lawns to a shady stretch of river bank where we outspanned after a fairly difficult but interesting hike. The river was fairly low, but Rob Philp plunged in and

appeared to enjoy his dip.

Frank and Ernie Clayton livened up the lunch break by telling us of their adventures overseas. Our Chairman seems very taken with life in Paris!

It was good to see Maureen Pring and Len Holland out with us again. Maureen is now nursing in Zululand and seldom gets a chance to come rambling with us.

As we pulled away in the afternoon the big question was still unanswered. "What is the Dolomite Staircase?" Rain began to pelt down. And then we were climbing a steep and rocky path extending up and up. In hot weather this section would be plain murder, but facing the rain, we sailed up, and the view was magnificent. Every foot we climbed unfolded fresh wonders. As we reached the top fingers of mist were groping into the valley far below.

All groundsheets and blankets were nationalised on the way home, so everybody managed to stay fairly dry. Cold and rain could not depress us, we had climbed the Dolomite staircase and had enjoyed a wonderful day.

HARRY AND BILL IN BASUTOLAND

It was blowing hard the day we flew into Basutoland and our little plane was flung all over the sky. It seemed as if we would crash into the peaks of the Thaba Putsoa Range, but our engine chugged away and we scraped across. For thrills there is nothing to beat this mountain flying.

Our destination was Semenkong, a small trading station about sixty miles south east of Maseru and one of the most isolated outposts in Africa. "So you're going to walk back", said our pilot as we landed. "You must be mad".

Maletsunyane Falls, the highest in Africa are about an hour's walk from the airfield. It is impossible to describe the stark majesty of the scene. Take Nongwaan, Howick and Hammarisdale, multiply by six, add a few tons and take away all vegetation. That should give you some idea of Maletsunyane. As we stood on the brink a few flakes of snow fell, underlining our worries about the weather. Rain followed and then sunshine, so it continued all day. A fairly easy scramble took us to the bottom of the gorge from where we were able to gaze up the waterfall. A tremendous iceberg, floating in the pool below cut out all ideas of a swim.

A long, steady climb up Nevin Gully (named after my friend Nevin in 1954) brought us to the top and we turned our backs on Maletsunyane - but I'll be back again.

We camped that night on a river bank, blessed our lilos, cursed the weather and anxiously discussed the chances of rain or snow. The clouds looked most threatening and we had no tent. Still we slept well and, next morning were rarin' to go. Peaks nearby were snowclad, the first time we had

seen this.

It was no fun hiking that day as we were still horribly unfit. I got a passing Basoot to carry my pack, but Billy manfully and stubbornly dragged his along.

That afternoon we reached the Kentane Valley and gazed on the finest scenery we had ever seen. Clear water pours over clean rocks, the river flows between hills that glow orange in the sunset. Kentane has a quality of peace and remoteness which even beats that of the Berg. That night we survived a heavy frost and our "Pal 'O Mine" sleeping bags lived up to their name.(advert.)

We hiked downstream the following day on the way to Kentane Falls. The valley narrowed and wound in all directions. Kentane Gorge, nearly 1,000 feet deep was a fantastic sight, but we did not really appreciate it. You see, we had lost each other. I roamed about for six hours shouting my head off, and Billy was doing the same. It was a most upsetting experience and I was just about to head back for Semenkong, where they had a radio transmitter, to summon help. Then a couple of excited Basutos appeared and hustled me at Amble pace up and down mountains and through valleys to a little gully where an exhausted Billy lay. What a reunion we had! That taught us a valuable lesson - never separate. Basutoland is no country to play with.

Next day our path led us steadily uphill to nearly 10,000 feet. All at once we passed through the nek and began to drop down. Our toes were bruised as we plodded down endless gradients. We dropped about 4,000 feet in ten miles searching for a camp site. The scenery beat even the Drakensberg and I wish we had been more in the mood to appreciate it. A few minutes before the sun set we found a camp site. It had been the toughest day of my whole hiking career. Our dinner that night was lousy as we were too tired and fed up to cook properly. In spite of queer noises in the bush, we slept well.

Bad tempers could not survive next morning as we gazed at the beauty of our surroundings. The mountain we had descended now towered well above us. It reminded me of our Easter camp site at Cathedral.

An hour's walk the next morning brought us to the lowlands where the going was hot and dusty and the Basoots were far less friendly. Late that afternoon we arrived at Mallalea, (sprinting the last hundred yards to avoid an angry bull). The owners of the Trading station took us in and showed wonderful hospitality to a pair of dirty and bearded Ramblers.

UNCLE RAE'S COLUMN:

Dear Uncle Rae,

I am depressed. Everybody says I have an inferiority complex.
What do you think?

Yours,
Bertie.

.....

Dear Bertie,

Nonsense. Of course you have no complex. You just are inferior.

Yours,
Uncle Rae.

THE AMBLE SONG:

I'm sure Doc Squires will not mind my reprinting his Amble Song.
It was quite a hit at the Maritzburg week end.

Good King Wenceslas looked out,
On the annual Amble.
His eyes grew rahnd and soon he cried,
"Cor blimey! What a scramble!"
"If these bods do not take care
and cease what they are doing
I'm willing to bet a couple of quid
Their poor sore feet they'll roo-in".

In spite of all this sympathee
The girls and boys kept walkin',
And as they reached the winning post
Lindee their times kept chalkin',
Soon the last poor blighter's in
And then we go to luncheon;
All sorts of grub is soon produced
and everyone starts munch-ee-on.

Then a good sing-song begins,
Led by friend Frank Hulley,
Many join quite brightly in,
Others somewhat dully.
All too soon t'was time to go,
And Scotty we did capture;
But throw him quickly off the bus
He's no cause for ra-a-apture.

With all those lovely gals around
"Fie! What were we thinking?
But from capturing some when next year comes,
We shall not be shrinking.

Now/...

Now our song is done, and we
Welcome you most hearty,
And trust that everyone here tonight,
Enjoys our weekend pa-a-arty.

DOC

SOCIAL NEWS:

Welcome home to Marge Parr and Shirley Boyce who have returned from Europe. It is great to have you back. Marge asked me to convey greetings from Alf and Fifi now living in Switzerland, and Kay Swales in England. Kay is still interested in the Club and would like to meet any members who visit London. Her address is :

53 B York Street, LONDON, W.1 Phone AMB 0792

21ST GREETINGS:

To Athalie Coulthard and Herv. Campion. May their door keys never grow rusty.

Frank Hulley has been tramping the Umgeni Valley to survey the canoe race course. Its a tough race he says, but we are sure he will do well.

We have not seen much of Jean Carter or Ada Reilly lately. As members of the cast of the "Quaker Girl" they have been working hard.

SOCIAL AND BRAAIVLEIS AT ATHLONE:

As usual the Weatherman and the Committee did not agree on the braaivleis arrangements and Durban looked waterlogged as the Ramblers set out to Athlone. However, the Committee triumphed by taking over the Barn. The tables were moved together and the dancers congregated in noisy groups.

Coal burners were set up under shelter and the braaivleis went on. Chops, sausages, steak and salads were on the menu at prices guaranteed to startle the Meat Control Board.

John Leslie was there with his latest jokes, but the guests of honour were Marge and Shirley. It was a terrific welcome home for them; they haven't seen a South African braaivleis for a long time.

Balfour Giles and his band did the honours and realised what Ramblers like - lively tunes, Paul Jones' and fast tempos generally. Meg and Don Campbell, our jive champions made the most of it.

So the evening passed with everybody in the swing of things. Towards midnight lights dimmed and smoochy music announced "Party's over".

COEDMORE DAM HIKE

The fine drizzle normal at this time of the year began about 8.15 and by 8.30 had developed into full bodied raindrops. Within the next few moments the unexpected happened - the rain had gone, leaving only heavy grey clouds.

At Seaview a startled Indian tearoom keeper did a busy trade for a few minutes when we stopped for refreshments. Continuing our journey we passed Coedmore Road, wound through Bellair, Hillary and Mount Vernon, crossed the Umhlatuzana River and chugged up hill and down dale until we miraculously arrived in the new Indian township Silverglen. Here we 'de-trucked' and after the tea men (men here embrace women, as is very proper), were organised we hiked back along the road. Looking over our shoulders at an approaching lorry what did we see? Yes, you've got it! Several Ramblers riding back. But their journey was short-lived - your Reporter only managed a hundred yard ride.

Shanks pony again, and we continued along the sandy road, climbing high up the hill. Most of the way we had a new vista of hills and valleys including a picturesque horseshoe bend in the Umlaas River.

Suddenly, on turning the corner of the road we saw Coedmore Dam fringed with numerous trees and shrubs. Almost opposite was a block-house to which we made our way. Settling down outside this edifice we enjoyed the peace and quiet whilst Bob collected alms from the poor.

Our 'tea-caddies' soon had the brew made and we munched lunch. The energetic types organised cricket or walked right round the dam, whilst others not so keen turned back halfway. Lindie later conducted a small party along the road and about thirty minutes later we found the Umlaas filter beds. Surrounded by luscious green lawns, shady trees, flowering jacarandas, crotons and roses, the ponds and reflections made a most pleasing study. On further investigation we found a miniature garden filled with bright flowers and a small pond where two waterlilies were blooming. All too soon we left this delightful spot and returned to the dam. We soon cleared away our debris and set off along the 18" wall round the lake to meet the trucks. Settled in the lorries we chugged up a hill or two and passing the Lamont Native township joined the main South Coast road at Mobeeni, to bump along familiar roads to Durban. In all, the weather had been kind to us, but by 8 p.m. the rain had returned full force.

