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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE DURBAN RAMBLERS HIKING CLUB

1ST QUARTER: JANUARY TO MARCH: 2018

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

Here we are at the end of the year and the start of 2018. Many thanks to all the committee members for all your hard work during the year, fabulous hikes and functions! For many of us it will be the end of three years (some 6) on the committee!

We look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM. Please can any items to be raised at the AGM, be done well before the meeting so all members have the opportunity to consider them by either emailing me, philipcollyer@gmail.com or suggesting to a fellow committee member who will be willing to have it added on the agenda.

Next year we replace or change positions for most of the committee (3 years is up!). It is a labour of love and is rewarding. When you are Rambling, think of someone who may be suitable to fill the following positions:

Chairman, Saturday Hike Organiser, Sunday Hike Organiser, Weekends - Away, Social Organiser

You may also feel inspired to put yourself forward, new people bring new ideas and create more effective organisations. Proposals can be made and seconded at the next AGM, or put forward via the Chairman or Secretary before then.

AGM to be held on Saturday, 17 February 2018, see fixtures for details.

Happy Rambling

EDITOR'S NOTE

It has been a year of some good challenges for me being on a committee for the first time. To take over the work other people have done and put your own stamp on it takes a little bit of courage and, in my case, the feedback has been reward enough. So thank you to everyone who has encouraged me in my endeavours to revitalise this rag from a fixtures list to something entertaining. Anyone who would like to contribute to the content, whether it is a classified listing, an event you would like us to know about or even a write up of a trip or trail you have done, please feel free to email me with your input.

Talking about content, credit goes to Ana Barbosa for some of the photos I have taken from our Ramblers Facebook page. She goes to a lot of effort taking photos at events and on hikes and posts them for all of us to see, without taking credit for herself. So know that unless she credits the photographer in the photos she posts on our page, she is that photographer. Thank you Ana for keeping that page so interesting and current.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| Chairman | Philip Collyer | 082 417 0204 | 031 201 8864 | philipcollyer@gmail.com |
| Secretary | Mary O'Donnell | 083 292 5913 | 031 209 3837 | mary@directcharcoalsa.co.za |
| Treasurer / Members' Database | Tina Regnard | 083 289 6276 | 031 207 5005 | regnardt@gmail.com |
| Sunday Hike Organiser | Stella Wells | 078 319 8979 | | stellawells4@gmail.com |
| Saturday Hike Organiser | Linda Smith | 083 353 8319 | | linda@compasshr.co.za |
| Weekend Organiser | Marie Gurr | 082 586 0266 | 031 705 3122 | marinev.gurr@gmail.com |
| Publicity | Ana Barbosa | 082 4962320 | 031 462 6492 | durbanramblers.publicity@gmail.com |
| Ordinary Member | Jenny Rooks | 084 952 0622 | 031 303 5828 | jen0212sa@gmail.com |
| Magazine | Ilona Lamprecht | 076 912 9829 | | ilona.tangodreams@gmail.com |
| Website Organiser | Abdullah Dada | 084 478 6779 | 031 269 1921 | dada@greenit.co.za |

MEMBER NEWS

NEW MEMBERS:

We are very happy to receive into our rambling group, the four new adventurers. Welcome to:

Christa Gadd
Kathe Gouws
Gavin Olsen
Alan Blundell

Happy Rambling.

INFORMATION

MAGAZINE:

Don't forget to send us any personal, email and/or postal address changes to ensure the magazine reaches you.

Note: If you have been receiving the magazine by post and now want the speedier email version, advise the secretary, Mary, and send us your email address. This helps reduce the posting costs and possible delays with getting the magazine to you.

If anyone has interesting hiking or member news to share, please let me (Ilona) know so I can include it in the next magazine.

WEBSITE:

The website (www.durbanramblers.co.za) as well as the **Durban Ramblers Hiking Club** Facebook page may be viewed for information regarding the club, hikes, etc. Should you wish to contribute photos to the Facebook page please send your contributions to Ana our Publicity person. You may also ask Ana to remove photos you would rather not be there.

MONEY MATTERS

SUBS FOR 2018:

Please note that subs are due in **January**.

- Single Member R100
- Family R150 (excluding children 18 years or older)
- **Joining Fee has been increased to R50,**
- New members joining after 1st July 2018 will only pay half the annual subs.
- For past members wishing to rejoin Durban Ramblers after being absent for a year or more, a new membership application form needs to be submitted and the joining fee, in addition to the annual subs, is to be paid.

The Membership Form, which can be downloaded from our website, is to be completed in full: Hike Names, Dates and Signatures of Hike Leaders, before handing or emailing them to the Secretary along with your proof of payment. If you have completed three hikes and want to continue hiking with us, please do so as a member of our wonderful group.

Please pay by EFT directly into the new bank account – include your full name as reference.

Note the new banking details: Nedbank, Account number 113 8655 228, Branch Code 13 01 26 00
Cheques and cash both attract big bank charges, so to help reduce our banking fees, kindly endeavour to make EFT deposits.

HIKE DONATIONS:

On some of the hikes hikers are asked for donations and in some cases the club makes donations on behalf of the members. Here is a breakdown of recent donations made.

| DONATIONS MADE ON HIKES - 4TH QUARTER 2017 | | | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Date | DRHC | Hikers (Wed) | Hikers (Sat) | Hikers (Sun) | Hike |
| Saturday, September 16, 2017 | | | 620 | | Kloof Highway SPCA |
| Saturday, October 14, 2017 | | | 480 | | Tanglewood Nature Reserve |
| Wednesday, October 18, 2017 | | 480 | | | Hill & Dale Conservancy |
| Saturday, October 28, 2017 | | | 400 | | Ubikwe Eco Trail |
| Saturday, November 11, 2017 | | | 540 | | Iphithi Nature Reserve |
| Saturday, November 18, 2017 | | | 580 | | Monteseel Conservancy |
| Saturday, December 09, 2017 | | | 480 | | Hill 'n Dale Conservancy |
| Total | R 0 | R 480 | R 3,100 | R 0 | R 3,580 |

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

While hiking and rambling is usually all good fun we should also be aware that sometimes something can go amiss and we might find ourselves in a stressful situation.

PERSONAL EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Please have your emergency contact number(s) under ICE (In Case of Emergency) in your cell phone and on the new cards issued, or a label of some sort attached to your daypack. Details should consist of your name, ID number, name of medical aid and membership number (your medical aid card should be with you too) and the name/number(s) of someone to contact. Emergency personnel will look for your ICE details. Hospitals will not send an ambulance/paramedics if your medical aid details are not available. Please carry these important details with you on each hike.

FIXTURES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Or Annual General Madhouse as it used to be known.

AGM to be held on Saturday, 17 February 2018.
See fixtures list for more details.

See archive for Durban Ramblers Magazine for April 1975 for how proceedings went in those days, but it started out something like this:

ANNUAL GENERAL MADHOUSE

Our A.G.M. was held on 23 Feb under the Chairmanship of "Old Cube" John Castleden. After the usual routine matters - apologies, confirmation of previous A.G.M. minutes, honoraria, etc - were disposed of discussion got around to amending the Amble and Scramble rules. This subject was obviously dear to Ivan's heart as he had much of interest to say, and made a number of proposals. It was obvious that Ken also had certain opinions about it all because as fast as Ivan proposed one thing Ken would propose something else. This provoked much lively discussion, so much so that at one stage the Cube was forced to tactfully assert his authority to regain control of the proceedings. Useful points were contributed by Margaret, Mary, Philip, George and Gill, among others. Eventually the amendments were settled to everyone's satisfaction, chiefly embodying separating the concept of Amble and Scramble, abolishing the 3 hike qualification, and slanting them more towards attracting new members. A further amendment regarding no alcoholic beverages on hikes or picnics was dealt with by deleting the word "picnics". Members present were left with the impression that a certain large, beery and bespectacled gentleman standing at the back very definitely approved of this deletion - I couldn't quite catch his name, but it sounded something like Booze Mayday.

Let's see what the next one brings us.

WEEKENDS AWAY: Organised by Marie Gurr

SHAWSWOOD AND BENVIE 30th SEPTEMBER 2017 A weekend of flowers - and more flowers - and fun and frolicking under freezing waterfalls. By Rose Dix.

29th September - Friday - amid a flurry of changed arrangements, a few of us managed to meet up at 'The Farmer's Daughter' in Howick for a deliciously decadent cuppa, before heading off to Karkloof Falls, where we relaxed on the grassy slopes of the picnic site. A short stroll produced a field of new ground orchids, still in tight bud, but about to display their beauty at the first moist drops. (Definitely *Satirium*, possibly *longicauda*.) In a nearly dry stream bed, little sticky tendrils of *Monopsis stellaroides* clung onto exploring fingers.

Time to head to Shawswood, our home for the weekend... and what a delightful surprise in store for us. The accommodation is inviting - there are many options, from an old farm building to newly renovated stables which provide backpackers with really comfy beds - such a luxury !

30th September Saturday. An early start for the 20km car trip to 'Benvie Gardens'... a breathtaking estate of intriguing, interlinked pathways through ancient vegetation, each bush vying with its neighbour in a flamboyant display of massed blossoms and vibrant colour. A walk through indigenous forests, dripping with mosses and lichen covered rocks, who in their turn hosted beds of *Scadopsis*, finally brought us to a magnificent waterfall, where our intrepid Rob just HAD to swim. We watched, warm and amazed, while he "broke the ice"... so to speak.



This evening - as the evening before - we enjoyed a braai with our own tasty additions and long chats with old and new friends. A truly wonderful day.

1st October - Sunday - some of us climbed Gilboa - a 750m climb, but well worth the effort. Our Guide, Eric, does double duty as Farmhand plus Guide, and was helpful and patient with we slower members of the Hiking Fraternity.

(This hike has been written up by Stella ... pictures and further words are on Ramblers' Face Book page. Another group hiked to the bottom of Mare's Tail Falls, and these beautiful pictures are also on Face Book.)

And so, a memorable weekend- with lovely people and perfect surroundings - comes to an end.

Our grateful thanks to Marie and Nevil for all the arranging - and of course, to our delightful and caring hosts, Wendy and Bundy Shaw, who attended to our every need and entertained us with interesting facts and stories.

Rose

(Marie's Note: We had four birders on this weekend and on Sunday they headed off to the Karkloof Conservancy, just down the road. Bundy insisted on taking the remainder of the group on the back of his truck to the edge of the indigenous forest at the bottom of the Falls. They enjoyed a stroll and some boulder-hopping among colourful spring flowers and Rob couldn't resist another dip! Many thanks to Wendy and Bundy - it's the first weekend away we've been able to find something for everyone! MG)

Report of Umlalazi Nature Reserve at Mtunzini 10 to 11 November:

Report by Sarie Lapping, photos Ilona Lamprecht.

Friday arrived at last. Got everything ready for my first weekend outing with the Ramblers. Checked everything. Yes I remembered to pack my toothbrush, and all essentials. Now the minute has arrived and I am off to collect Ilona. We hit the road up north. What a lovely exhilarating feeling. "Damn!" says Ilona, "I forgot my condiments. I spent 2 days making them." Forever a practical woman, I weight up the options. A weekend away without Ilona's condiments? What if it goes off in her fridge? What if it is really good and we missed out on this this? No, this will not do. We turn back to collect the condiments. Fortunately we are not more than 5 or 10 km away.

We arrive at Umlalazi during the afternoon. It is a lovely camp-site with several wooden cottages. We unpack and settle in. Ilona and I share a cabin with Marie and Neville. Neville is in charge of the fire and it is lit soon. We are joined by Biff and Rob and Doreen and Rolf. Ilona prepares a bowl of veggies and produces her condiments, which she shares with us. My decision to turn back for them turns out to be a good move.

The condiments are deeeelish!!!! Neville and Rob turn out to be excellent braai-masters and our meat is cooked to perfection. After cleaning up we are all off to bed.

The next day it is overcast and rain is forecast for later in the day. Undeterred, by this we set off on our first hike. We are going to follow the path next to the river to the sea, turn south at the water's edge before returning to the camp. That is the plan. It is a lovely walk..... but the path all of a sudden disappears. We battle through some jungly bits and walk through marshy areas. Ah, there is the path! We found it, we are back on track. It starts to drizzle, but we



soldier on. The path disappears again and we are confronted by another marshy area. Rob and Neville test the water, sink in to their knees and they have not yet reached the middle of the marshland! My sons advised me to keep my new hiking boots as dry as possible. No, I am not going to follow our leaders and get my boots wet. Fortunately the others feel the same and we turn back. By then it started to rain and the wind came up. Not very pleasant.

Now to find another way to the sea. We headed inland until we found dry land and a proper road. By now we were soaking wet, that is if your rain gear is not

up to scratch, like mine. Fortunately, the rain stopped and the wind dropped. We are back on track. Found a road to the beach and turned south. The beach is very wide and it looks as if some of the dunes were recently created judging by the vegetation sticking out. We found some nudles on the beach and other wanderers were able to point us in the right direction. We returned on a lovely inland route through the bush back to our camp.



The next day we followed a short trail to view Mtunzini's famous Raffia palms. We found them. According to a plaque the palms were planted by the local magistrate, Mr. C C Foxon, who received the seeds from the horticultural state department in Pretoria with a suggestion that he plants them to see if they would grow. This was in 1917, exactly 100 years ago. My first visit and only other to Mtunzini was in 1969 when my husband and I stayed over as house guests of the Foxon family!

The Oribi Gorge weekend, postponed in November, has now been booked for Friday and Saturday nights, 9/10 February 2018.

Easter weekend at Loteni:

I had hoped to go to Injisuthi over Easter, but all cottages were fully booked by the first week of December. Fortunately I managed to get the last available accommodation for 10 of us at **Loteni** and will have booked camp-sites too by the time this magazine goes out.

As it will soon be time for me to vacate my position on the committee, I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge "thank you" to everyone who's been on these trips away - thank you for your advice and support, you've been easy, happy company and it's been really good fun "serving time"!

Marie Gurr, Weekend Organizer

WEDNESDAY MORNING HIKES: Organised by Coleen Seath.

Please check details of the Wednesday Hikes with Colin Turner on 031 708 3517 or Coleen Seath on 031 202 2279 / 082 735 7659 (who will co-ordinate with leaders.) You can also find out about the Wednesday hikes on the our Facebook page posted there a few days before.

SATURDAY HIKES (AFTERNOON): Organised by Linda Smith.

- Please get to starting point by 13.45 or 13.15 on occasion (please check schedule below) in order for the hike to begin on time.
- For directions to the starting point, please PHONE the organiser between 12.00 and 12:45 on the day of the hike, don't SMS.
- Children are welcome but check suitability of the hike with the leader.
- Please bring at least 1 litre of water, a snack for half time and a hat. It is recommended that hikers carry their own water.
- There is no need to tell the leader you will be hiking.

SUNDAY HIKES (FULL DAY): Organised by Stella Wells.

- Please be aware that a certain level of fitness is required to do Sunday hikes. If you don't exercise regularly, or aren't an experienced walker please complete three Ramblers' Saturday afternoon hikes before joining the longer Sunday hikes.
- **Always** phone the hike leader the day before at the latest, to confirm details and let him/her know to expect you on the hike. Be mindful that the leader also is preparing for the hike on the Sunday morning.
- Please note that the meeting point and or time in the programme might change, or the hike route might change, or it might be raining and the hike cancelled therefore **you must phone the leader** or you might find yourself left out and left behind
- Please try to get to the meeting places at least 10 minutes earlier to help with arranging lifts.
- Bring the correct amount of money as change may not be available.
- It is advisable to bring at least 2 litres of water, mid-morning snack, lunch and a hat. It is recommended that hikers carry their own water
- Keep Rehidrat in your pack in case of dehydration in the hot months.
- Use tick spray.

Hikes are described as being Easy, Moderate or Strenuous and are graded from 1 to 5, as follows:

1. A flat even walk
2. A hike without big and steep inclines
3. A hike with some steep inclines - Fitness recommended
4. A hike with steep inclines and rock scrambling - Fitness essential
5. A hike with many inclines and rock scrambling - Fitness very essential

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY HIKING PROGRAMME 1ST QUARTER 2018

check on Facebook for changes

| DATE | DESCRIPTION OF HIKE | LEADER | GRADE |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Sat 6 Jan | Longshadow | Linda | |
| | A nice easy hike to ease us all into the new year. Meet at the main entrance of the Krantzklouf Nature Reserve (Kloof falls Road) at 13.45. Entrance fee of R30. This is a pretty forested walk along a stream. Drinks afterwards at the Nature Café in Kloof Falls Road. | 083 353 8319 | 1 - Easy 6 km |
| Sun 7 Jan | Shongweni Explorer | Jenny Rooks | |
| | An easy hike around the area – nice for hot summer day. Meet Shongweni Polo club at 7.30. | 084 952 0622 | 2 - moderate 14 km |
| Sat 13 Jan | Herbies Hike - Roosfontein | Philip | |
| | Meet at 13.45 at the parking lot outside the Westville Prison. Hike is through grasslands and some forest, please ensure you bring enough water. R20 donation towards the upkeep of the Reserve. Meet afterwards for drinks at the Pavilion. | 082 417 0204 | 2 - moderate 7 km |
| Sun 14 Jan | Burman Bush | Philip Collyer | |
| | Lovely hike through this 55 hectare reserve, incorporating some road walking down to the Station Rd complex. Start and finish at Mitchell park where you could visit the zoo and/or the tea garden after the hike. Meet at Mitchell Park parking area, Nimmo Rd, at 7.30. | 082 417 0204 | 2-3 moderate 14 km |
| Sat 20 Jan | Nqutu Falls Trail - KKNR | Ann | |
| | Meet at the Nkutu Picnic Site off Valley Road in Waterfall at 13.45. Entrance fee of R30. A long hike over grassland and through forest with beautiful views to Nkutu Waterfall. BYO drinks and picnic for social afterwards at the lovely picnic site. | 083 666 5630 | 3 - strenuous 9 km |
| Sun 21 Jan | Isipingo Circuit | Jon Stevens | |
| | Explore the beaches behind the old airport. Bring your costume. Back by lunch. Meet at the end of Calicut Place in Merewent overlooking the Umlaas Canal cutting at 7.00. | 082 459 1522 | 2 - moderate 12 - 15 km |
| Sat 27 Jan | Phezulu Safari Park | Linda | |
| | Members only hike! Meet and park at Phezulu Safari Park (5 Old Main Road, Hillcrest) at 13.30 (note earlier time). Hike will be a guided walk through the beautiful park. Drinks afterwards at the restaurant. Entrance fee to be confirmed closer to the time. | 083 353 8319 | 2 - moderate 7 km |
| Sun 28 Jan | Ballito to Salt Rock | Margie Forbes | |
| | Beach hike with tidal pools and rocky outcrops from Ballito to Salt Rock. Return same route or through the suburbs. Optional lunch/drinks afterwards. Bring costumes for a quick dip. Meet at Virginia Airport at 7.00 or Tedder Way, Ballito at 7.30. Petrol sharing R20 | 073 437 6915 | 2 - moderate 10 km |
| Sat 3 Feb | Rail Reserve Hike | Janet / Sue | |
| | Meet at the Station Master Arms at 13.45. A walk along the rail reserve via St Heliers dam. There will be one long uphill. Drinks afterwards at the Station Masters Arms. | 082 820 8182 | 2 - moderate 10 km |
| Sun 4 Feb | Kloof Ramble | Jenny Rooks | |
| | An easy, scenic walk through Kloof incorporating Memorial Park with stunning views of the Gorge from Uve Rd. This will be a morning walk with two snack stops. Refreshments at Tina's after the hike. Meet in the parking area of Tina's Hotel in Kloof to start walking at 7.30. | 084 952 0622 | 2 - moderate 16 km |

| DATE | DESCRIPTION OF HIKE | LEADER | GRADE |
|------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Sat 10 Feb | Virginia Bush Hike | Jon | |
| | Meet at the Virginia Beach parking at 13.45. The walk will be inside forested area in the Virginia Bush and back down for a beach hike. R20 donation towards the upkeep of the Reserve. Drinks afterwards at Virginia Beach so BYO drinks and chairs. | 082 459 1522 | 2 - moderate 8 km |
| Sun 11 Feb | Bluff Walkabout | John van Zyl | |
| | Hike around the Bluff, including the old airport site and then back to Harlequins for social drinks. Meet at Wimpy/BP Garage, 299 Edwin Swales Dr at 8.00 and travel in convoy to starting point at Harlequins club and parking. | 083 799 8382 | 1 - 2 10 km |
| Sat 17 Feb | RAMBLERS AGM | | |
| | Venue: the meeting room of the Palmiet Nature Reserve, Old New Germany Rd. Join us at 11.00 for an educational snake talk by Nick Evans of KZN Amphibian and Reptile conservation. The AGM starts at 12 Noon. Parking is available. After the meeting, usually concluded by 13.00, the club will provide Braai fires. BYO food, drinks, cutlery, plates and a chair for a social. | | |
| Sun 18 Feb | Umgeni Valley | Keith Ashton | |
| | UMGENI VALLEY NATURE RESERVE - near Howick. Lovely local day hike in a beautiful area, great views & chance to see plenty of game & bird life. Several trail variations. As it can be hot this time of year we will keep to high ground. Combined hike with other clubs. Please email the leader to book a place on this hike by Wednesday 14 Feb. Immediately thereafter, contact Stella to co-ordinate transport from Durban, if required. Entrance fee to reserve R30. | Keith Ashton keimarg@iuncap.ped.co.za Stella Wells 078 319 8979 stellawells4@gmail.com | 2 - 3 12 - 15 km |
| Sat 24 Feb | Hillcrest/Keg Hike | Werner | |
| | Meet at the Oxford (old Heritage Market) at the Keg at 13.45. The hike goes down to the valley below with a small stream crossing. Some wooded areas, sugar cane and open areas. Meet back at the Keg for drinks afterwards. | 084 206 7836 | 2 - moderate 10 km |
| Sun 25 Feb | Pigeon Valley / D'Moss trail | Philip Collyer | |
| | This hike goes from the University into Pigeon Valley reserve and then incorporates the D'Moss trail. Slight variation to one previously done. Meet at the parking above the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre at UKZN Durban at 7.30 | 082 417 0204 | 2 - 3 ± 19 km |
| Sat 3 Mar | Pigeon Valley | Tina | |
| | Meet at Stella Sports Club, 175 Helen Joseph Road (was Davenport Road) at 13.45. Some street walking to the pretty little Pigeon Valley Nature Reserve, with some steep hills going up to St Augustine's Hospital and the University. Drinks afterwards at a nearby pub. | 083 289 6276 | 1 - easy to mod (2 uphill) 6 km |
| Sun 4 Mar | Beach Bums | Jill Dunstone | |
| | Hike up and down the hills, across a nursery, through some bush and along a bit of beach. Meet Virginia airport at 6.30 or Beach Bums, Causerina Beach in time to start hike at 7.00. Hike will finish around lunch time. Optional drinks/lunch at Beach Bums afterwards. Petrol sharing R20. | 084 780 0818 | 2 - moderate 15 km |
| Sat 10 Mar | Springside Nature Reserve | Linda | |
| | Meet and park at the Springside Nature Reserve (Springside Road, Hillcrest) at 13.15 (note earlier time due to closing time of Reserve). The hike will take us through the streets surrounding the reserve and then through the pretty reserve itself. R20 donation to the reserve. | 083 353 8319 | 2 - easy to mod 6.5 km |

| DATE | DESCRIPTION OF HIKE | LEADER | GRADE |
|-------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Sun 11 Mar | Everton Circuit | Chris Dobson | |
| | Hike a circuit from the parking spot taking in both used and new routes to various waterfalls. Bring plenty of liquids. Combined with Midlands Hiking Club. Meet at Acutts Drive Bridge parking area at 08.00. Donation R30 (split between Ezemvelo Krantzkloof and Everton Conservancy). Parking/Entrance fee R30 | 082 461 1954 | 3 - strenuous 14 km |
| Sat 17 Mar | Burman Bush | Philip | |
| | Meet and park outside Mitchell's Park Zoo in Morningside at 13.45. A walk through the streets of Morningside to the reserve with undulating paths in shaded area, covers most of Burman Bush. | 082 417 0204 | 2 - moderate 13 km |
| Sun 18 Mar | T. C. Robertson | Ann Wilson | |
| | Explore T.C. Robertson Nature Reserve and surrounding area. Some cane, road and beach walking. Drinks after at the Blue Marlin Hotel. Meet in road at Glenwood Village, 397 Che Guevara Rd (Moore) at 7 am or Blue Marlin Hotel, Scottburgh at 7.50 for 8.00 start. Petrol sharing R50. | 079 850 0206 | 3 - strenuous 15 km |
| Sat 24 Mar | Umbogovango Nature Reserve | Linda | |
| | New Hike! A new reserve with abundant bird life to explore in the middle of an industrial area. Please check website and Facebook for details closer to the time | 083 353 8319 | 1 - Easy |
| Sun 25 Mar | Blythedale Beach and Forest | Jon Stevens | |
| | Hike along the beach to the Mvoti Estuary and back through Jon's mystical forest. Meet Virginia airport at 6.30 or Blythedale beach parking at 7.30. Petrol sharing R50. | 082 459 1522 | 2 - moderate ± 15 km |
| Sat 31 Mar | New Germany Nature Reserve | Abdullah | |
| | Meet at the New Germany Nature Reserve at 13.45. Hike is along woodlands and grasslands. Donation of R20 towards the upkeep of the Reserve. Braai afterwards in braai area just outside the reserve so BYO meat, drinks and chairs. | 084 478 6779 | 1 - easy to mod 8 km |

YEAR END CELEBRATIONS REVIEWS

Sunday Year End Lunch at Sharon's 26 November.

This is a special thank you to Sharon for, again, letting us all have use of her beautiful home and being the ultimate hostess, to Jon for leading everybody up the Promenade and into the forest and for also being chief braai master and finally to each and everyone of you (25 in total) that supported this year end function and contributed to what was a marvellous spread of food.. .It proves that the club is not just about hiking, but all the friendship and camaraderie that goes with it and makes all the organising worth while.

Regards, Stella Wells.

Wednesday Xmas Function at Phezulu 30 November.

Coleen, Biff and Colin outdid themselves this year with the Wednesday hikers' function being held at Phezulu, the same venue that served us so well for our 85th anniversary event. Colin entertained us with his insightful poetry on different members of the Wednesday bunch with a special poem dedicated to our very dapper looking Philip Gatenby. It was wonderful to see him looking so well. I am not sure if Coleen entertained us with her pass the parcel game, or did we provide the entertainment for her. A lot of thought and creativity went



into the story we had to follow as well as into the descriptions of the different sites we have hiked at over the year.



Good to see people who are no longer hiking with us on Wednesdays, but still keep involved in the club where they can. Thanks again to Ana for the album uploaded to our Facebook page.

Colin had a few poems to read out, which showed a keen perception of fellow hikers.

Observations and a salute to certain Ramblers

We always look forward to the birthday of Coleen with her mix of alcohol drinks she's our shebeen queen.

What could we do without our Marie Gurr we need her liquorice as much as we need her.

She might be small in stature, is our hiker Inga but as a fast walker she's a real humdinger.

Let's not forget our oldest member Marge Blake I ask her when she is going to look old for goodness sake.

She's a boogie boarder and a hiker is Biff Maggs But it's her whistle that everyone's attention grabs.

Sterling work for Ezemvelo does our member Ann and as a leader she always does the best she can.

Now Ilona is different but a capable person her magazine efforts are proof of a job well done.

Light on her feet is our former ballet dancer Rose but when will she wear her tutu when on a hike she goes?

And what plaintiff cry do we hear from Jill? Oh no not another hill!

Bringing up the rear is always our Ana she's there because each flower she captures on her camera.

Now before the hike gets going Nevil keeps us waiting he's still putting on his boots and sorting out the lacing.

And then we have our bundu bashing Werner with bloodied arms and legs will he ever be a learner to keep away from thorny bush and bramble when he leads us on a Wednesday morning ramble.

There's a chap who has Peter as his surname so for getting your first name wrong we are not to blame.

And finally the 60 thousand dollar question begs how many kilometres has Colin got left in his legs?

He seems ok at this given time provided there are many more hills to climb.

It's been a pleasure to hike with you all the young and the old, the short and the tall.

As I consider you all are part of my life and now one has given me grief or strife.

We are one family and do what we like, that is enjoying each Wednesday morning hike.



And Philip Gatenby got his own poem.

Philip

We salute Philip Gatenby, a leader and a pioneer of Saturday and Wednesday hikes, both far and near. He led us up mountains and across many streams to places and heights with most wonderful scenes. Ingeli and Blinkwater were his favourite trails bringing enjoyment to hikers walking hills and dales. His knowledge of paths leading this way and that were fixed in his brain under his air-conditioned hat. His fitness allowed him to walk a fast pace and often he won the Ramblers walking race. As chairman of the Ramblers he was held in high esteem for his knowledge of the hiking was obvious to be seen. He showed respect to all of those who came along his way and never had a bad word of anyone to say. So we welcome him back with hikers from before as friends from the past we will not him ignore and we wish him good health and very good cheer and look forward to seeing him back here next year.



Ramblers' Year End at Shongweni Club 10 December.

It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying themselves at the year end celebration, some faces we have not seen for a while and others we have shared many adventures with during the year. From Jenny Rooks and myself, our gratitude goes to Shongweni Club for their 'no problem' attitude to all the different requests we made and still making it an affordable option for us. See Ana's incredible photo album of this event on Facebook, it would seem some good socialising took place. Mission accomplished.



MEMBERS' STORIES

Our man of the year 2017, Colin Turner.



As soon as Colin got his first car at the age of 21 he would go into the Drakensberg every opportunity he got, staying in cabins and doing day hikes from there. He later married a travel agent and then most of their holidays were spent overseas. How Colin eventually got to join the Ramblers was through talking to the teller at his local bank, Lez Petzer, who invited him to join. So in 1980 he did and has been an avid hiker ever since.

Of course anyone who knows him also knows that this is not the full story of Colin and the Ramblers.

He says that back then, not that long ago really, the Ramblers were well known for their trips to the 'Berg and he went on a lot of them, hiking trails and sleeping in caves and such like. He did not lead any of those in that time. The Ramblers used to do these trips almost every weekend and they also did full day Sunday hikes closer to home.

The club also used to go on hiking trails around the country and during the time he was chairman, the last three years of the last millennium, he remembers that The Ramblers received numerous invitations for the openings of new trails. These trails were in Natal, Eastern Transvaal, The Free State and Eastern Cape. He lead a few of those trails, some that he can remember are Harkerville, Alexandra, Koranna trail in the Free State and Blinkwater.

He also took part in some of Bill Hyslop's two week trails in both Reunion, where they hiked around the cirques or volcanoes and also to Corsica, where they hiked around the French Island, which was made tough by the rugged rocky mountains. He also spent two weeks hiking across the foothills of the Alps of Switzerland.

Often he would assist Bill Hyslop with reces for hikes and then Bill would say, "well, you know the route now, go ahead and lead it." So that's how Colin started leading hikes. He says that when you do a recce and plan a hike you take better notice of where you're going and you can remember the route. To this day, some 350 hikes later, he still puts in a lot of thought in remembering different paths and how to put them together to create a hike. He remembers one recce the two of them did in the Umbilo valley below the Inanda dam wall when his car broke down, a water hose was broken. This being in the days before cell phones, can you remember those, and they had to use the phone in the local spaza shop to call the AA to come and rescue them. Telling the operator where they were was a different story, none of the streets in that area had names, and all they could answer to the questions of, where are you? Which road? Was, down in the valley below the Inanda dam wall. Fortunately the guy who was sent on the rescue mission was a standby breakdown person for the Duzi Canoe marathon and had previous experience in searching for people in this area and Colin and Bill were picked up about three hours later and the car was towed through low river crossings where the water was about a foot deep, eventually getting to a garage. It ended up that Colin would lead all the hikes in that valley.

Philip Gatenby started up the Saturday afternoon hikes as easy start-up hikes for people to train to become Sunday hikers. About 12 years ago Colin led the first Wednesday hike as requested by Bill Hyslop on a visit back here from the UK, and after that Philip and Colin agreed to lead alternate Wednesday hikes as mentioned in the previous magazine.

Colin was chairman for the years 1997 through to 1999 and remembers expressing his hope to see everyone in the next year in the Chairman's Rambles, fortunately the year 2000 came around just as all the others before and since. He has also served as Treasurer and ordinary member and still audits the Ramblers' accounts going on 23 years.

With the Ramblers Colin feels that he is part of a family of people that enjoy the outdoors. He always felt that he was part and parcel of the club. He does not have a big family of his own, his daughter lives in Canada, which is not a problem for him, but the ramblers has become part of his family now, and he enjoys walking and chatting and laughing with his fellow hikers. He always enjoys a bit of fun, he says he can be serious but not over serious. He likes to hear people laugh and see people enjoy things, which is why he writes his poems every once in a while such as the ones he recited at our recent Wednesday group lunch.

A few years ago he got worried that his knees were not going to hold out much longer, due to wear and tear, but with tablets and rubbing in some good ointments he's hanging in there and the knees are coming right. I still find it a challenge to keep up with him when he is charging ahead while leading us on another interesting Wednesday hike.



At our last AGM Colin was awarded Man of the Year trophy for all the years of leading hikes, being part of initiating the Wednesday hikes and for auditing the Durban Ramblers Clubs books at no fee. The next recipient of this cup has some tough boots to fill.

Sole to Soul Adventures, 2017.

A few of the Durban Ramblers took part in the Sole to Soul trails organised by Elsa Davids and Annemarie Le Roux, I was the sole representative of the club in the May outing whereas many Ramblers took part in the September walk. There were a few differences in the two events, I have asked Diana Patoir to report back on the latter:

Sole to Soul September 2017 – "Walking the Mountain of the Star" (the name given to the Outeniqua Mountains by the Portuguese Mariners)

After two days driving, Jill, Coleen and myself arrived at the Wilderness Beach Resort where we met up with the other 22 hikers as well as our leaders Elsa Davids and Annemarie Le Roux. Durban Ramblers was well represented with Bev & Malcolm, Jon & Sharon, Harry & Stella, Margie & Alistair and Astrid, as well as ourselves.

Full of excitement and a certain amount of tension, early the next morning we rushed around the Resort Dining Room, preparing our day-packs for the first day's hike.

We were dropped off at “Ou Toll” – a sandstone building built in 1847 which is at the base of the Montagu Pass and after delicious pancakes and coffee, we finally set off!

The Montagu pass is the oldest unaltered pass which is still in use – 17.3 km in length as well as being the first road between George and Oudtshoorn. The pass is a gradual gradient – kind to us walkers and we all made it to the top without too much difficulty.

After a short stop we walked down into the Herold Valley and slowly made our way to the



Herold Wine Estate for our first night of camping. Before dinner we were treated to a wine tasting by our host Nico Fourie and then ushered into the kitchen, divided into teams and the game was on – which team could make the best pasta (from scratch), in the quickest time – it was great fun. I have a feeling that Sharon’s team won!



This valley is one of the coldest areas (it was freezing) and apparently ideal for growing Pinot Noir grapes. It is also one of the few places in South Africa where hops are produced which we saw on the neighbouring farm.

We woke up to a clear and a crisp morning – lovely for hiking and the scenery sparkling as we set off on a trail which led us into the Klein Langkloof and en route to the Farm Ezeljacht.

It was a long day – 25 km but we had a few stops on the way – breakfast on the steps of the Herold Dutch Reformed Church as well as visiting a farm pre-school plus we had some transport along the way – a farm tractor!



I was last in that afternoon and tired, so walking down the hill and seeing our tents with the Swartberg Mountains in the distance was a very welcome sight! Dinner was beautifully laid out on two long tables on the lawn in front of the old farm house.

I cannot give enough praise to our Tent Team “Under Canvas” who provided the tenting accommodation as well as all the catering for the seven days – nothing was too

much trouble and the food plentiful and moreish.

The next morning refreshed after a good night’s sleep and a hearty breakfast, we set off – stopping off to visit another pre-school on our host’s neighbouring farm. Elsa had asked us all to bring down a collection of colouring books and crayons as well as some Afrikaans reading books – these were distributed to the two schools we visited.

Our lunch was taken at the historical Church of St John the Baptist or “Sophia se Kerkie” (Sophia’s church) – originally built in 1855 on the order of Robert Gray, the first Bishop of Cape Town. The Bishop was so impressed with the farmer of Schoonberg, who housed and employed 70 people on his farm that he decided to build a church on the property. Bishop Gray’s wife Sophia designed the church hence the name “Sophia se Kerkie”. The farmer/owner Peregrine Bertie Richardson did the actual building and bore the costs!



Only a short distance covered that day so we arrived in the early afternoon at the Louvain Guest Farm – no tents – Beds and showers very welcome! Late afternoon the weather was chilly but we had Port Tasting with the kind compliments of Peter Bayly from Calitzdorp.

Day Five found us walking out and onto the mountain taking the Voortrekker Wagon Trail or the old Duiwelskop Pass – this historical ox-wagon route dates back to 1776 when it was used by the pioneers as a trade route between the coast and the Langkloof Valley. The



Duiwelskop Pass was first designed by Thomas Bain around 1865 – it is incredible to think how much he has contributed to our country. Our destination was the Bergplaas Forestry Station on the Seven Passes road; I seem to remember that this was quite a slog and hot - especially towards the end, we could see the station but there was always yet another corner or hill to climb.

The next morning we started out on the forestry roads and then into fynbos – slowly making our way down to the coast; after lunch we ventured into the Knysna Forest to view the “Big Tree” / Outeniqua Yellowwood which is approximately 800 years old and 33 metres high – what a magnificent tree! Our overnight stop was at the cottages on Oakhurst Farm near Hoekwil - one of the few remaining large working farms along the Garden Route – a beautiful spot with wonderful bird life. Dinner was set up around the boma fire.

Our last day dawned and after breakfast, we set off on the trail through farmland, following the river and under canopy – mainly Blackwood trees. After an hour we stopped off for coffee and cheesecake in Hoekwil – delicious. Walking in the light rain we took the bridle path, looking down onto the forest canopy and then into the forest, making our way along the boardwalk which followed the river – a lovely route. Late afternoon saw us arriving in Wilderness and walking another boardwalk and then onto the beach – the end was in sight! Quite a long way to the Beach Resort but it was lovely to see the sea and feel the sand.

And then finally we arrived at the Wilderness Resort – so very proud to have completed this wonderful hike. My grateful thanks to Elsa and Anne-Marie who were always gracious, kind and patient – beautiful women inside and out.

Diana Patoir

Sole to Soul, Mountain of the Star - May 2017 by Ilona Lamprecht

By no conscious design of anyone involved, our group consisted of 21 women only, some of them supported by the men they left at home who made it safe for them to take this time out for themselves, and all of us supported by the men of Under Canvas Tents who provided us with such warm hospitality.



I got a lift to the Wilderness with Lynn Tarr, Elsa’s daughter, well actually it was more like a road trip with 11 women from Underberg and Kokstad in two cars, stopping along the way for breakfast and lunch, sleeping at Graaf Reinette, getting up early in order to watch the sun rise over the Valley of Desolation. We were too early for gate opening though so went hunting

through the town for a coffee fix before making our way back to the reserve. Oh wow!

Elsa and Annemarie gave us a warm welcome when we arrived at the Wilderness Resort and we had a wonderful welcome dinner after our beach meditation to set the tone for the next week.



This would be the first time Elsa and Lynn, mother and daughter, would walk together and this dynamic added a special dimension to our group. Our first day walking also started at the Ou Toll huis and going up the Montague Pass. Elsa and Annemarie would carry little gas stoves and kettles and the rest of provided some of our water for hot tea or coffee at various stops along the way. On this first day we took things easy, finding our stride and noticing all the little marvels along the way.

We got to the top of the toll road a lot sooner than anticipated and were very grateful when a farmer and his wife near to our destination spontaneously invited us to picnic at their stream running through their garden. Most of us took the opportunity to take off our shoes and refresh our feet in the water. Nico at Herold Wine Estates was a generous host, allowing us to camp and also use the facilities of his cottages to wash up in. We also learnt how to make pasta from scratch, something a kindergarten child taught me how to do in Puerto Deseado, Argentina.



The second day we got a not so elegant lift to the Church, the September crowd travelled in style. We all got squashed into the back of a bakkie. It was also a long hard day, and some suffered a bit from

exhaustion. The Tent guys came and found us to give those that needed it, a lift to the next camp, and by the time we got there it was twilight, we were tired but when we saw what was waiting for us at Ezeljacht, all that exhaustion just disappeared.



At Louvain Guest farm we had fun with an interactive art lesson and then were treated to an amazing dinner prepared by our leaders, Elsa and Annemarie. The next morning our Louvain hosts travelled along the road with us, carrying our belongings and assuring us that they were oh so grateful for the interruption of another day on the tractor in the dust. (This area was desperately waiting for the rains to come.) Another long day to the forestry lodge, if Annemarie says it's just around the corner, be sure to ask her which corner, because it sure wasn't the one we were coming to. That night we stayed at the tented 7 Passes Camp, with luxury tents, which included a balcony over the lake and a jacuzzi in the bathroom, but with the drought, we could not fill the bath enough to do it justice. Some of these tents got damaged by the winds during the fires and storms that came along the next week.



The last day dragged on and on, although it had a wonderful start at the Big Tree, the Wilderness Celebrity. And here I get to mention my room or tent mate I got to share this wonderful experience with, Joy Heath. The eldest member of our group and the most stylish and elegant. It was an honour to get to know her, and sharing that ceremony with her at this big tree was so special. When we had walked 100 km we lined up for a photo, and when we finally found our rooms at the back of the Wilderness Hotel, we established that we had walked 111 km in total. The rest of the hotel was taken up by the Cape Town MG club,

so there were MGs of all ages all over the hotel. Our personal chef at the hotel gave us a demonstration of how to fillet a sole, of the fishy kind, and then we were each treated to a humongous sole (in honour of the sole to soul hikers) for dinner and a flambé desert.

Our road trip girls returned over the next two days, starting with a visit to Sedgfield market, stopping somewhere overnight, and getting back to our different locations the next afternoon.

An amazing journey that will always be special in my heart, thank you Elsa and Annemarie for creating this space for us, and to all the women who shared so much of themselves.

Ilona Lamprecht.

EVENTS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2018

I asked Elsa what she has planned for 2018 and this is what she said:

We will run with the **mountain of the star** walk again, and by next week hope to have finalized things in the Hermanus and Klein Karoo area. It is a waiting game waiting on hosts to come to the table at this time, although understandably it is high season and they are scrambling. Your group are all chomping at the bit with regards to dates for this new year, such a fabulous two groups, what a way to initiate the new trail. Loved meeting with all of you, even the tent guys, really enjoyed the two groups.

Wishing you a fabulous holiday season. Fly high and free in 2018. Love Elsa

Camino walks in 2018:

Due to cancellations, there are two places available on the **16 day walk along the Camino path** that Jenny Rooks is leading, walking for 5 days in **France, starting from Lourdes**, over the Pyrenees at the Somport Pass, down into Spain along the Camino Aragones to Pamplona from 20 May to 5 June. The total distance is 300 km. This is rated one of the most stunningly beautiful Camino routes. For more info look For more info - <http://www.amawalkerscamino.com/aragones.html>.

There are also 2 places available on the **22 day walk** being led by Jon Stevens and Sharon Miller, the **Via Francigena, in Italy from Lucca to St Peters in Rome** from 4 May – 25 May. This is a beautiful but challenging walk through stunning countryside on a 1200 year-old trail to Rome. Check it out on <http://www.amawalkerscamino.com/la-via-francigena.html>.

Namaqua Camino

Dear Durban Ramblers members,

The Namaqua Camino is a brand new 10 day, 240 km hiking trail that meanders through western Namaqualand in the Northern Cape Province. The route starts and ends in the quaint little village of Hondeklipbaai. It is an assisted slack packing hike. Daily stages are between 15 and 28 km. The terrain differs from day to day. From hard gravel roads towards the mountains to sandy tracks along the coast, the Namaqua Camino has it all and more! The dates for the first of two 2018 Caminos have been selected specifically during a time of the year when the weather is generally temperate. Facilities in the overnight camps are basic and rugged. Eco toilets will be available at the overnight camps and along the route. Along the way, you will encounter the Namaqualand people and their unique way of life. After a day's walk, you will pitch your tent under the unpolluted night sky and listen to the absolute silence.

The dates for the 2018 Camino's are:

24 May - 3 June

20 -30 September

Maximum 45 persons per Camino

We have more information on our website and Facebook page or please contact us at the e-mail address or phone number below.

Regards from Namaqualand on behalf of the Namaqua Camino Group,

Elize Kruger

+27 083 6745045 - www.namaquacamino.co.za

Let your soles touch the earth and let the earth touch your soul



CLASSIFIEDS

Sometimes we find out things that could be useful to fellow hikers such as places to buy reasonably priced hiking goods or were to get good service. Please feel free to share your own bits of useful information here.

Sharon is selling a pair of size 6 **Salomon shoes** worn once, happy to take R1000 for them. Please send her a WhatsApp on 083 775 4826. ==>

For those of you who have been wondering what happened to William who used to own the specialist **sport shoe store** in Glenwood Village, he is still around, just one block down at 332 Che Guevara. Call him on 031 201 5729 to arrange for a consultation and bring your old boots so he can see what kind of boot or shoe would best support you. He might still have some year end specials going on.



I have also found a family that make really good **shorts and ¾ pants and longs** out of cotton at very reasonable prices, they can be found at the Golden Hours Family market near the Hyper by the Sea. A lovely place to have a Sunday lunch under the trees and find some other bargains.

And that is it from me, Ilona, for now. If you have a story you would like to share, please send it to me. Let's have some more adventures and make some more histories in the next few months.