

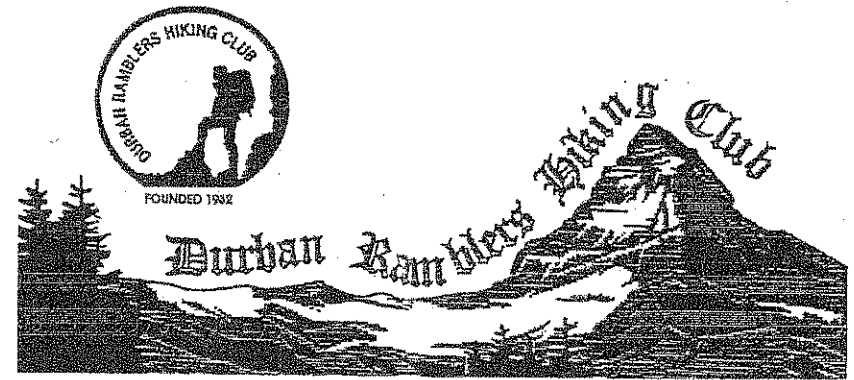
Thanks to authors for contributions. If you have any tales to tell we would love to hear about them. If you do not see your article in the magazine following provision of copy, please do not despair or become despondent. It will be used in the next edition. Please send copy to the editor at PO Box 888 Mount Edgecombe or e mail to JFerguson@canegrowers.co.za (text only please)

As summer sets in, it's getting rather warm again on the hikes. Some tips on sun safety :

Protect yourself and your family all year round

- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure. The hours between 10:00 and 16:00 are peak for harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- When outdoors, use sunscreens rated SPF15 or higher. Apply liberally, uniformly and frequently.
- When exposed to sunlight, wear protective clothing such as long pants, long sleeved shirts, broad brimmed hats and UV-protective sunglasses.
- Stay away from artificial tanning devices.
- Teach your children good sun protection habits at an early age. The damage that leads to adult skin cancer starts in childhood.
- Examine your skin – head to toe – at least once every three months.

With acknowledgement to the Skin Cancer Foundation



PO Box 50563
MUSGRAVE ROAD 4062

JANUARY – MARCH 2004

Title	Committee Member	Home	Bus, Cell & Fax
Chairman	Brian O'Connell	306 0743	083 544 6379
Secretary	Lois Harte	765 2853	
Treasurer	Biff Maggs	312 1503	082 900 6965
Day Hike Organiser	John Stevens Steve Watson	312 7108	082 459 1522
Sat Hike Organiser	Ann Olds	767 1027	
Berg/Trails Organiser	Merle Mackenzie	561 3038	082 454 0521
Publicity Organiser	Werner Vanslebrouck	208 7532	
Magazine Editor	Jayne Ferguson	462 2732	083 381 3990
Socials Organiser	Sharyn Prowse Jeanette McMahan	701 2688 765 3814	

What do you get when you cross a Scottish sheep with a Peruvian Mountain Goat?
The Dolly Llama.

A highway patrol officer was driving up a mountain road and saw a car stop on the road. He pulled up behind the car. As he approached the car he saw a dopey looking Rambler sitting behind the wheel, staring out of the front window. The patrol officer asked, "Sir, are you ok? Why did you stop in the middle of the road?" The Rambler said, "Well, the sign back there said, 'Look out for Buck Crossing.'" so I stopped. And those dam buck still haven't crossed!"

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Disclaimer
This is the official newsletter of the Durban Ramblers' Hiking Club. Contributions are welcome, but the right to edit any contribution is reserved. The opinions expressed in any published article do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Durban Ramblers Hiking Club.

Durban Ramblers Hiking Club
Notice of the 2004 Annual General Meeting

The 2004 Annual General Meeting is scheduled to take place as follows :

Date : Tuesday, 10 February 2004
Time : 19:00
Venue : Westville Hotel, 124 Jan Hofmeyr Road, Westville

A G E N D A

1. Welcome.
2. Apologies.
3. To confirm the Minutes of the 2003 AGM.
4. Matters arising from the minutes.
5. To receive and approve the Chairman's report.
6. To receive and approve the Financial report.
7. To approve any proposed amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the Club.
8. To elect office bearers and the Executive Committee.
9. To elect the Honorary Auditor.
10. To present the floating trophy.
11. To receive any other business of which due notice has been given.

Four main written proposals were extracted from the six letters which were received with regard to the Constitution that was distributed to members in 2003.

These four issues will be voted upon at the Annual General Meeting. Ballot papers will be handed out at the meeting.

Copies of the amended Constitution will be available at the meeting.
The Chairman will answer queries raised from the floor.

the Himeville Arms and Puckety Farm. By the time we got back to Bulwer for a late lunch, the weather was clear enough for a walk through the pine forests around Ashtonvale Guest Farm, and we enjoyed a braai that night.

Sunday was a glorious cloudless day and Brian took us on quite a strenuous hike up the twin peaks of Bulwer Mountain. The grasslands were amass with a variety of wild flowers, and the view from the top was spectacular. Bulwer is a popular spot for paragliders and we watched with interest as they launched themselves from the hill below us, to glide for hours on the thermals. In the end we thoroughly enjoyed our stay at Bulwer - a fitting end to our weekend trails for the year.

La Grande Route Pyrénéesne - Bill Hyslop

The route known as the GR10 (Grande Route 10) follows the mountainous border country between France and Spain. From west to east, it starts at the Atlantic Coast near Bayonne and finishes about 1 000 km eastwards at Banyeul on the Mediterranean Coast. Variations are possible along the general line of the route. However, masochists that we are, favoured the routes which gave us the best mountains to climb en-route. Apart from the masochism, this line enabled us to make use of the excellent 'refuges' of the Club Alpin Francais which are conveniently situated a day's walking distance apart and provided one does not object to climbing and descending about 1 000 km every day.

The group who came on this trip were different from the previous one with one stalwart figure, George Archibald, being present on both trips. I suspect that more of the original group might have been present if the exchange rate against the Euro had been more favourable and the fares, particularly the absurd airport taxes, had not increased so much in 2003.

As it happened, the smaller group made it easier to organise in 2003. The heat wave which hit France (it was 45°C when we arrived in Paris) had persuaded the French to take an autumn holiday rather than a summer one. We would have been in trouble finding a bed for the night if we had not always telephoned in advance.

We also learned a lesson about the French way of dealing with overseas travelers. In the village of Laruns, where we finished the trip in 2002 and started in 2003, I went into France's largest bank, Crédit Agricole, to change a travelers cheque as the cash was running out on the last day. I was told, "no, we only change travelers cheques in the mornings". Being late afternoon I went back the following morning and was told, "no, we only change travelers' cheques in the afternoons". This year, at the beginning of the holiday, George and Paul went into the same bank to obtain cash on their credit cards. Crédit Agricole refused to accept the cards. France's largest bank refusing credit cards provided by South Africa's largest bank!

Fortunately, the following day, in a little village high in the mountains, the local post office were prepared to cash as much as they wanted. I will be providing a slide lecture on the trip. I believe the Backpackers have already booked one from George. I am not repeating here what I will be telling you then, suffice it to say this year was quite differing in style from the previous trip. The trip in 2002 was not just a journey through magnificent country, it was a trip through history. 2000 years of it. From the pilgrimage route of St. James to Campestella and the ancient countries of Bearn and Navarre and their histories, to the present day story of the Basques. This year focussed on the famous mountain places and the life which has grown up in the ancient mountain valleys. Members interested in joining the 2004 trip may contact Bill at his new address : 54 Norris Nichols Rd, Pinetown. Tel 701 3624

was tricky as the fury tunneled down the valley blasting out gas stoves, ripping out guy ropes and flattening the "igloo" tents. The blasts subsided sufficiently for us to hike out in the direction of Sani Pass and we were rewarded with a sighting of a large herd of Eland.

Cheerful chatter and cooking around the campfire in the evening was suddenly scuppered as the furious wind thundered down the valley at us again. We later read the weather station recordings – average wind speed in 24 hours was 100 Kph. No wonder Jeanette and Steve abandoned tents to take refuge in the hut. Nonetheless we had a great weekend.

Mount Park, Dargle : 17 – 19 October

Despite the massive cold front and forecasts of widespread rain for the weekend, 26 intrepid Ramblers set off for Mount Park in the Midlands, and what a great weekend it turned out to be. While the rest of us snuggled into our comfortable beds indoors, 5 brave campers survived the 2° overnight on Friday to be greeted by a cold but clear day on Saturday. The hike to the top of Inhlosane was well worth the effort as the view was absolutely spectacular, and we weren't surprised to see the snow on the berg in the distance, having experienced the chill breeze blowing. We made our way back through the pine forest behind Everglades in time to settle down in the lounge with a lovely log fire burning to watch the SA rugby team lose to England. It seems the hike wasn't enough to tire the Ramblers, and after the evening braai they decided it was party-time, with much song and dance – thanks Jeanette for bringing the CD player!

Sunday morning we awoke to a very cold, misty day, but set off for a 2 hour walk through the picturesque indigenous forest behind Mount Park, with clearly-marked trails. By the time we got back, the sun was out (sort of), and some of us relaxed on the lawn to chat while others went for a walk around the farm. All too soon it was time to pack up and head for home, but with warm memories of a thoroughly enjoyable weekend.

Roselands : 1 – 2 November

Two weeks later, 24 of us headed for Roselands - always a good venue and this weekend was no exception. Saturday was cool and overcast and a perfect day for hiking. Our guide Siyabonga (Siya for short) led us on a 7 hour hike through indigenous forest, pine tree plantations, grasslands full of wild spring flowers and even had us clambering up rocks alongside a series of waterfalls. Siya had lots of interesting stories to tell us along the way, and also gave us a lesson on the cultivation, picking and drying of tea when we visited the Sapokoe tea plantations. We returned weary but satisfied to find tea and coffee waiting plus chocolate cake and banana bread. Later, after we'd showered and relaxed over sundowners, we enjoyed a supper of chicken pasta (a vegetarian pasta was also provided) followed by fruit salad and ice cream.

Sunday we woke to a gentle rain which prompted Neville to declare there would be no hike that day. But by the time we'd enjoyed a hearty breakfast, the weather had cleared sufficiently to allow a 2 hour walk through the pine tree plantations in search of the big oaks. We were treated to a lunch of savoury quiche and muffins prior to heading for home.

Nip Inn, Bulwer : 28 – 30 November

Once again the weatherman was testing our resilience and Friday most of us traveled up in thick mist. After supper in the pub, we huddled in our tents through the cold, rainy night. On Saturday morning our designated leader and his 2 traveling companions decided enough was enough and packed up their wet tents to beat a hasty retreat back home. The rest of us decided to make like tourists and after a late breakfast made our way to Himeville to visit the museum (very interesting),

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Members

New members to the Club over the past three months include: Dee and Mike Kennedy, Yvonne Lanham-Parker, Lena Blain and Linda King. Welcome to Ramblers – we look forward to hiking with you.

Resignations

Gwen Huagen and Paula Baxter.

Obituaries

Tom de Waal. Marcia Wilde has this to say about Tom. "My initial introduction to Tom was through photography which is a hobby of mine. I needed to identify photographs I had taken of flowers. Tom's name was given to me as being a true fundi, a keen photographer and a member of Bluff Camera Club. He was only too well aware of how important it was to have the correct name on any slide/picture to be entered in any club competition or national photographic salon. Apart from the botanical/common name, you also had to be aware if it was indigenous or exotic as, putting what you hoped was a prize winning entry into the wrong category, would result in the work not being entered. At no time did Tom fail to come to my aid when I asked for his help.

He was the same when hiking. Always considerate to those at the tail-end as newcomers and commenting and imparting his knowledge of the surrounding environment in an interesting and joyful manner along the way. A big man in stature, but whenever he stopped to examine or handle a flower specimen, his hands were so gentle. No matter how often you joined Tom on his hikes along the Lighthouse or Vernon Crookes Trails, there was always something new to see and experience. Then, there was that something special of being with Tom at 'Clearwater' or wherever and ending a day's hike with the after supper – moonlight walks, enjoying the sounds of the night and gazing up at the star studded sky. I have certainly benefited from his influence and I am sure other Ramblers have similar sentiments. Thank you Tom."

And a poem for Tom penned by Mara Wheeler:

Across the narrow beach we flit,
one little sand-piper and I,
and fast I gather, bit by bit
the scattered drift wood
bleached and dry.

We will miss you Tom but we're sure you're enjoying your greatest hike across the sky.

John Scott who was a Rambler in the 1950's. He was always good fun on a hike and although he died a lonely man, we like to remember him in his happy days.

Contacts

If any members would like to contact Jane Borgars, (Richards), Ernie Foster(England), Clive Craig (New Zealand), Glen Wessels (Canada) you can get their e-mail addresses from Mick McConnell (1955). mcmuddles@sai.co.za Tel 033 2394275. 75 Amberglen, Private Bag X004, Howick 3290

MEMBERS' NOTICES

New Year's Eve Party

Merle Mackenzie will be hosting a New Year's Eve Party. Bring and braai.
Bring : puddings/salads to share, drinks, swimming costumes and a chair.
19 Mendoza Drive, Umhlanga Rocks. Phone Merle on 082 454 0521 or 561 3038 for directions.

Subscriptions

Reminder that subs are due on 1 January 2004. Single R50 Family/Couple R60
Country Single R35 Country Family/couple R40.

Member Data Base

Computer wizard? Your skills are required. We are looking for a member to help maintain the membership data base. If you are able to assist, please contact Biff Maggs on 312 1503 or 082 900 6965.

Electronic copy of magazine

Would any members like to receive the magazine via e mail? You will need Microsoft Word to open the file. Please contact Biff Maggs on 312 1503 or 082 900 6965.

Monthly Get Togethers

Mike Serrurier has organised the following monthly get-togethers for this quarter :

23 January	Friday	Wanderers Club, Montclair	18:30
20 February	Friday	The Wreck Point Waterfront (move into Thirsty's for a meal	18:30
23 March	Friday	Bring & share braai John van Zyl & Denise Warboton 35 Bangay Road, Montclair	18:30

Contact Mike on 082 822 3106 for details. In addition, a number of scrabble evenings are arranged every month. If you would like to join in please phone Colleen Seath on 202 2279.

Slide Show

Bill Hyslop will present a slide show on his latest hike across the Pyrenees (see page 11).
21 January 2004 at the Westville North Library at 19:00. Refreshments available.

Walk in the Berg with Maeve

Contact Maeve Kay on 031 466 2642 for a hiking experience in the Berg. Third week of every month Tuesday to Thursday.

themselves to encourage visitors and really do deserve your support for this beautiful area. "Use it or lose it". Our indefatigable little Kiwi, Audrey, would have none of the sissy business of transported kit and carried her full pack in and out.

On Sunday we did a long walk to visit the vandalized hut at Kings Halt – once an historic trail house of which many Ramblers hold happy memories, situated high up at the head of a valley with views across the vast area of trees - now a very sad looking ruin with everything growing up around so as to totally absorb it. Next time we'll visit the far reaches of the contour path instead.

Haven Rock, Montezuma Game Farm : 25-27 July

We were fortunate to be able to visit Montezuma again in July, when our host, George Archibald took us for long walks and game drives through the reserve, where we saw wildebeest, giraffe, zebra, buck and prolific birdlife. A most enjoyable and energetic weekend for the 17 who attended.

Umdoni Reserve, Pennington : 15-17 August

In August, 18 members camped at Corians Caravan Park in Pennington – really nice venue with good ablution facilities. On Friday night some of the group went onto the beach just as the moon was rising over the sea – a sight to remember. Next morning we hiked into the Umdoni Reserve, following clearly marked trails through the indigenous bush, and visiting places of interest such as Lynton Hall and Botha House. The group had to endure some history lessons along the way, but weren't required to write a test, and instead were rewarded with tea, coffee and scones at Lynton Hall. We stopped alongside the river for lunch, where Jeanette did her best to splash everyone, throwing rocks into the water. Then on Sunday, we headed south along the beach, clambering over rocks, and stopped just short of Sezela Sugar mill. We all enjoyed the ice cream at Lynn's Place on the way back.

Umtamvuna Reserve : 5-7 September

The following month found us on the Transkei border, when 10 lucky Ramblers spent the weekend at Clearwater Chalets overlooking the Umtamvuna Gorge. What a magical piece of Africa! On the Saturday we hiked from the Parks Board Office down the gorge to the Bulolo River, then followed the long trail through the indigenous forest, stopping to gaze at staggeringly beautiful cliffs of curious colours, or to admire the colourful clivias just coming into bloom, or to pick wild berries. We sat on huge rocks in the middle of the gorge to eat our lunch then continued along the trail until we reached the confluence of the Mtamvuna River. Then came the long haul up out of the gorge and the walk back at the top through grasslands just starting to show spring flowers.

On Sunday we set off from the chalets down the scenic gorge, and followed the trail along the Mtamvuna River. Again we were amazed at the beauty of our surroundings and the towering cliffs on the other side of the river. Monica was the only one to brave the cold water but thoroughly enjoyed her swim. We stopped at the Vuna Lodge for a light lunch before making our way back to the chalets. A really memorable weekend! Thanks Steve!

Cobham : 26 – 28 September

Cobham campsite alongside the river below Giants Cup now boasts hot water showers. We had space enough to position our tents / caravans out of "snoring" range but within friendly hailing distance, and in the shade. However prepared we thought we were for changeable weather, the wind that raged, bellowed, and flattened was a new experience for all. Saturday morning's breakfast

AND, TALES OF TRAILS

2003 Weekends Review – Merle Mackenzie, Philip Gatenby and Ann Olds.

We've had a variety of venues for our weekends away in 2003, starting off with Mtunzini in February, which Ann covered in an earlier magazine. For those who missed out on our travels, here's a brief summary:

Oribi Gorge : 21-23 March

March found us at Oribi Gorge for a long weekend, an absolutely spectacular area which can compete for scenic beauty with the rest of the world. We certainly got some exercise up and down the gorge, visiting Hoopoe Falls and Samango Falls, and somehow Brian managed to coax us up to the top of the gorge above Samango Falls where we could again take in the magnificent views. We had some good laughs along the way and weren't too tired to sit around the campfire at night telling jokes and playing silly games as only campers can do.

Cathedral Peak : 18-21 April

23 Ramblers spent Easter in the Berg camping at Cathedral Peak, and Brian took us through the beautiful plane forest where we could spot buck and baboons, and then into Rainbow Gorge – a place of such natural beauty it has to be seen to be believed. We enjoyed that walk so much we persuaded him to take us back again 2 days later, in between visiting Xeni Cave to view bushman paintings. In the evenings, it was great sitting around Robbie's roaring fire and Gerald and Diane even got us singing those old songs from way back when. I somehow don't think we're going to start a Ramblers choir!

Buccleuch : 16-18 May

Once again we had a full house at our popular "Granny Flat in the forest". Our walking of the Bushpig Trail on the Saturday was enlivened by some Company employee having supplemented our markers with his own. He had apparently tried to do the trail, but got lost and turned back without removing his markers. We thrashed around for over an hour in every direction until we eventually retraced our steps and found the last of our own markers. We started forward again and soon found the turn we needed.

Farmer Bryan joined us on our return, and that evening tins were opened, frozen thingees were unfrozen, packets of all sorts of ghastly bits and pieces were poured into boiling water – the Ramblers were cooking up a feast. After we all ooh-ed and aah-ed over the great cheesy-coloured moon, Coleen took over and Scrabble and mentally stimulating card games were laid on the prevent eyelids drooping before an appropriate hour.

On Sunday morning we tried a new walk to the north of the hut which offers promise of longer walks in the future, since the track appears to be one which will be kept open in all seasons.

Ingele Trail : 14-16 June

A very poor turnout of only four people enjoyed this beautiful trail in spite of the fact that our packs are transported to and from the hut by bakkie, and the cost of the hut, with hot water showers, is considerably less than others charge for a camp site. The wilderness experience of having the whole place to oneself is also rare in these times. The people involved in this venture are falling over

For Sale and Hire

35mm slide projector – R50. Magazines to hold 320 slides – R20. Hire of backpacks at R5/day and R50 deposit. Contact Philip Gatenby on 031 201 3592.

Congratulations

To Malcolm McGill and Dawn Booth on their recent engagement.

Erratum

In the October – December 2003 magazine, 'gremlins' crept into the editing of Erica's article on the Inner City Hike. Due to space limitations, we are unable to reprint the article as written by Erica. Sincere apologies to Erica for any embarrassment caused.

Sunday Hike : Dec 28 2003

The hike which is to be led by Bill Hyslop will be at Nqutu Falls. Contact Bill on 031 701 3624 for details.

'Twas the season to be jolly Sharyn Prowse

The Christmas party was a huge success. Many hours of preparation by Jeanette paid off, with the Hillcrest Scout Hall artistically transformed into a magical dance venue.

The purple, lilac and silver colour theme throughout was complemented by a stunning floral arrangement. Individual place mats were made and attention to every last detail was ensured by the talented Jeanette. The Ramblers danced the night away to the versatile "Danny Booyens", who played tirelessly to a demanding crowd.

The delicious traditional Christmas dinner was preceded by a gourmet platter of starters, which was enjoyed by all. The overnight campers were entertained by the sleeping arrangements of Robbie Robertson, a hardened "non-camper", who showed the campers how it is really done, complete with bath, loo, base-bed and all other essential camping items (including teddy).

A special thanks to all those who made the evening such a success and especially to Jeanette, for her hard work and dedication and sharing her talent.

HIKING PROGRAMME : JANUARY – MARCH 2004

Saturday Hikes

Hikers may meet at Musgrave Park Medical Centre before 13:30, to travel in convoy or to share transport to the start of the hike. A cost of R8.00 for transport is payable to the relevant driver. Hikes marked ** are suitable for beginners. Hikes marked # involve an entrance fee into the nature reserve. Visitors are to pay R4.00 to the Club. Bring the correct amount of money as change is not always available. For directions to the starting point, please phone one of the organisers between 12:00 and 12:45 on the day. Children are welcome but check suitability of hike with leader. Please bring at least 1 litre of water, a snack for half time and a hat.

Organisers : Ann 767 1027 Brian 083 544 6379 Werner 208 7532 / 082 927 6926

