

winery in which 80 litres of wine are in fermentation. Oh yes and the building of a bar which a number of Ramblers christened over the Christmas period.

Making friends here is easy. Just join in one or many of the thirty-nine clubs. You realise quickly that being a friend here means more than it might do in the big cities. People are more than willing to help those in need. In fact many give most of their time to the various charities that abound in this area. From Clouds of Hope aids orphans home, to Pevensy House for those with cerebral palsy, to S.P.C.A., Lions and Rotary. The churches and the schools play a big role in bringing people of all races together. It all adds up to a warm cuddly feeling that there is goodness in human affairs after all.

Amongst our new friends are Reg & Lynn Blow, who have been with the Durban Ramblers for many years. They have been here for about three years and are confirmed Underbergers. They would, we're sure, join us in wishing you all well, and hoping we see you soon in our little corner of paradise.

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)



PO Box 50563  
MUSGRAVE ROAD 4062

APRIL - JUNE 2004

Title	Committee Member	Home	Bus, Cell & Fax
Chairman	Brian O'Connell	306 0743	072 680 0289
Secretary	Ingrid D'eathe	702 0877	083 789 3753
Treasurer	Biff Maggs	312 1503	082 900 6965
Sun Hike Organiser	John Stevens		082 459 1522
Sat Hike Organiser	Ann Olds	767 1027	
Weekend Organiser	Merle Mackenzie	561 3038	082 454 0521
Publicity Organiser	Roger Arnold	208 7532	
Magazine Editor	Jayne Ferguson	462 2732	083 381 3990
Ordinary Member	Steve Watson	312 7108	

#### From the Archives of Mick McConnell

There are many tales to relate of hikes into areas now forbidden. One such Sunday trail was climbing out of Hammersdale falls on the Umlazi river when our party of 40 Ramblers were shot at by the owner of Rainbow Chicken Farms adjoining the river. His broiler houses had been raided by thieves many times as the Georgedale township was close by. He no doubt had a gut's full losing all his stock to gangsters and he thought our Ramblers party were up to no good.

*Note Ramblers,- for a Sunday hike 40 hikers!!!!!! Those were the days my friend .....*

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*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 or insert do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Durban ramblers Hiking Club.*

## HIKING PROGRAMME : APRIL – JUNE 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 072 680 0289 Rodger 2087532**

### Sunday Hikes

Please try to get to the meeting places at least 10 minutes earlier so that fees can be collected and lifts arranged timeously. Bring the correct amount of money as change may not be available. Please bring at least 2 litres of water and a hat. Add R5 for visitors. Sunday hikers are welcome to join Saturday hikes and the following social.

Meeting Places	Durban	Leave 08:00	Musgrave Park, Cnr Berea & Musgrave Roads
	Pinetown	Leave 08:30	Union Main Centre, Old Main Road

If there is a change to the meeting time this will be noted in the hiking schedule below.

**Please note that if you need a lift from the meeting place, contact the hike leader or one of the hike organisers to ensure that somebody will be there.**

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
Sat 3 April	Palmiet Nature reserve. Faurea Close. **Bush and grassland. Return via UDW Campus. Car guard.	Brian	072 680 0289
<b>Sun 4 April</b>	<b>Inchanga Meander. Beautiful views. Cost R20</b>	<b>Brian</b>	<b>072 680 0289</b>
Sat 10 April	Krantzkloof – Mpiti Falls. Meet Krantzkloof picnic site. Up-stream to top of Falls. BYO sundowners.	Clive	765 5051
<b>Sun 11 April</b>	<b>Easter Walk about Town. Minosa Rock, Durban's oldest rock formation. View city from city angle. Meet Musgrave Park at 08:30. Cost R0</b>	<b>Mike White</b>	<b>083 325 5348</b>
Sat 17 April	Alverston Nature Reserve. Meet Assegai Hotel. #R10. Game viewing. Bring & braai.	Brian	072 680 0289
<b>Sun 18 April</b>	<b>Inanda Dam. Medium hike. Great views of dam. R20</b>	<b>Steve</b>	<b>312 7108</b>
Sat 24 April	Hawaan Forest, Umhlanga Beach. Meet on grass opp. Cabana Beach. Walk up to Nat. Res. Return along beach. Bring & braai at Merle's.	Merle	561 3038
<b>Sun 25 April</b>	<b>Summerveld. Roam horsey area of Natal. R15</b>	<b>Brian</b>	<b>072 680 0289</b>
Tues 27 April Public Hol	09:00 Beach hike. Meet opp. Cabana Beach Umhlanga. Hike to Umdloti for lunch at Bush Tavern. Hike back to Umhlanga.	Brian	072 680 0289
Sat 1 May	Krantzkloof – Nkonka. Meet Krantzkloof picnic site. Walk up behind Interpretive Centre, cross Bridle Rd. Spectacular gorge & sea views. #R7. BYO sundowners	Ann	767 1027
<b>Sun 2 May</b>	<b>VIRGINIA- Umhlanga Ramble. Glenys takes us on a beach ramble. Note times Pinetown 08:00 Durban 08:30. R10.</b>	<b>Glenys</b>	<b>083 375 2252</b>
Sat 8 May	Summerveld. Meet Assagai Hotel. Park at Mushroom Farm. Long walk to view Falls and railway tunnel.	Colin	708 3517
<b>Sun 9 May</b>	<b>Kloof Gorge High. Highs &amp; Lows of Kloof gorge. R7 entry fee to picnic site. R10.</b>	<b>Adrian</b>	<b>764 4721</b>

roses on our back hedge. In the morning the sun rises on Hlogoma mountain behind us and sets on Hodgson's peaks in the evening. Our life has changed and it gets better and better.

Underberg is a bustling little village, not particularly pretty, but not even the most beautiful of towns could compete with the surrounding scenery. Viewed from the top of Hlogoma mountain it seems to have settled well into a countryside of potato and maize fields, spotted with lakes and dams all lying below the magnificent mountains. The shops cater well for all basic needs and prices are not much higher than in Durban. In fact locally produced bread, chicken, milk etc is cheaper. But the atmosphere in any settlement is a reflection of the people who live there. And Underberg has a very happy atmosphere. Shopping takes longer because you will meet people you know and stop to chat about the latest local news. Time is meaningless, news is parochial and after only nine months, our world has shrunk to such important matters as when the next meeting of the gardening club is, or how that big cow that's eating our hedge managed to get out of the adjoining field. We don't miss the great media flag waving. If New York fell into it's own harbour, there might not be even a mention in our local monthly newspaper. Much more important would be any changes in the local library opening times.

We are hiking most weeks. The local club organises a hike most Sundays and there is often an old fart's hike on a Wednesday that ends in a braai and booze-up at someone's house. The hiking club has no committee, no constitution and no fees. Twice a year members get together in one of the local pubs and thrash out a six monthly itinerary that will include at least three backpacking weekends. Once that has been accomplished the serious matter of drinking gets under way. Anyone and everyone is welcome on all of the hikes. So if you are in the Underberg area and want to join in on a Sunday hike get in touch with us for the information. The hikes range from easy to forget it. Some of the leaders seem to have a poor understanding of some words such as 'moderate'. We went on a hike to find bushmen paintings in the Mqatsheni area with Bill Small, a 79 year old ex-forestry ranger – a moderate hike of about 25 kms up and down a hundred hills and not a path in sight. They breed these old buggers tough up here.

It was great to see the Ramblers on the flower walk. Robin Guy, a local bird expert was quite excited because he had never heard a hadeda on top of Sani Pass before. His face fell when we told him it was probably Jeanette. Anyway Underberg welcomes you all. In fact the mayor may send your committee a written invitation to come up more often, as whenever you lot do come up here, it pours with rain. And we need all the rain we can get. Thinking about weather up here reminds of an incident Grahame had with a local, just after we had moved in. He was an old boy dressed in tweeds and wellies and cottoned onto Grahame about joining the local bowling club. He then talked about the rain that was needed. Grahame stupidly mentioned that it looked like it might rain soon. The old boy fixed Grahame with a bleary eye and said in an Oxford English accent. 'There's only two kinds of people who know what the weather will do in Underberg, old boy. New people and bloody idiots.'

Yeah, life is different here. All we miss about Durban is the people we knew, and we hope to see you all up here. Chris has the occasional feeling that she is undergoing 'cold turkey', but that is sorted out by a dose of retail therapy in PMB every three weeks. We are enjoying a close contact with the soil and Chris has put away high heels for wellies. We have produced most of our own veggies and herbs and plenty of fruit, especially plums. We have made stewed plums, bottled plums, plum tarts, plum jam, plum wine etc. Chris has made a big batch of plum jam and her endeavours may lead to higher things. Whilst boiling a pot of the plum and sugar mixture, nature called her. She got back to a dark plopping goo which we will selling to local hardware stores as the new level of epoxy glue, patented under the name 'Plum Tuff'. Grahame's main culinary contribution has been the production of enough potatoes to feed Ireland and the setting up of a

the heavens opened again on Saturday night, but we managed to braai on the verandah and enjoyed the fun and banter.

Sunday, however, was a glorious day, and we eagerly set off at 07:30 with the Wildlife Society in 4x4's to the Border Post and then the bone-shaking trip up the pass. After refreshments at the Sani Top Chalet, we took in the breathtaking views, and then gradually made our way back down the pass on foot. We could not have wished for a better day – glorious blue sky, occasional clouds drifting by, waterfalls pouring out of the mountains, the incredible variety of flowers, and always those majestic mountains. Truly a memorable trip, and one which we should perhaps repeat in the future.

#### A Hop and a Skip – Llewellyn Evans

A group of us went on a hiking trail organised by the Wildlife Society. This was one of the so-called 'hotel hopping hikes'. The hike lasted four days and extended from Mazeppa Bay down to Haga Haga. You had to get yourself to Mazeppa Bay where you met up with the other members in your group. The next day we all set out on the hiking trail. The hike was great. Good views, not too taxing terrain and each day ended at one of the hotels along the coast, i.e. Day 1 was from Mazeppa Bay to Wavecrest. Day 2 was from Wavecrest to Seagulls. Day 3 was from Seagulls to Morgans Bay and Day 4 was from Morgans Bay to Haga Haga.

Apart from the wind which was troublesome on two of the days, we had excellent weather. Mostly we walked along the beach, explored the rock pools, collected shells etc., and occasionally moved up on to the headlands. Most days we were accompanied by an African guide and for those who wanted them, porters were available to carry any heavy packs. This was an unexpected bonus although only one member of our party availed himself of it. All this is to provide small job opportunities for the local population.

The hotels were all clean, comfortable and very welcoming. The showers were hot and the beer was cold.

On the final morning Mazeppa Bay hotel sent a kombi down to collect us and our packs from Haga Haga and transported us back to our cars at Mazeppa Bay hotel. From there we all dispersed back to our various homes.

This certainly is an alternative way of seeing the very scenic Transkei Coast. It is more expensive than camping and roughing it, but it does have some very obvious advantages. Anyone needing further details may contact the writer at PO Box 307, Kloof, 3640.

#### Living in Underberg – Grahame & Christine Davies

Nine months ago we moved permanently to Underberg! My how time flies. We bought a house that looks out over farmlands to the Giants Cup and with Hodgsons peaks on either side. Every day we sit on the stoop and stare at the constantly changing mountain scenery. We look around in wonder at a garden which we did not plant, but which is a riot of colour – roses and dahlias, pride of India, may and cosmos. On clear days the peaks are magnificent, their lower slopes covered green in spring and summer or white in winter when the snow falls. Clouds, rain sunshine and the time of day change the shadows on the mountain. Early morning mist hides everything except the rambling

Sat 15 May	Roosfontein Nature Reserve. ** Meet Westville Prison Gates. Open grassland walk.	Werner	208 7532
Sun 16 May	Table Mountain. Moderate hike revisiting this scenic area at a different time of year. See sunken forest and other marvels. R25	Lee	262 3753
Sat 22 May	Krantzkloof – Uwe Rd. Meet Uwe Rd. off Buckingham, Kloof. **Flat walk along contour. Views.	Brian	072 680 0289
Sun 23 May	Camelot. Medium hike in upper valley of Sterkspruit.. R20	Dieter	462 7445
Sat 29 May	Francois; Trail. Inchanga. Take Hammarsdale/ Inchanga glide off from Freeway. Meet Inchanga Hotel 13H45 Escarpment/bush walk Good views. #R5. Teas served.	Malcolm	2081053
Sun 30 May	Ngomankulu. Eston area. Great views. Medium hike with steep downhill & steep uphill. Variation from last time. R25	Neville	309 2298
Sat 5 June	Stainbank Nature Reserve. Yellowwood Park. **Shady walk. #R7 BYO sundowners	Clive	765 5051
Sun 6 June	Old Baldie. A perennial favourite. Walk the exposed granite surfaces and enjoy. R20	Steve	312 7108
Sat 12 June	Krantzkloof – Saurus Pools. Meet Uwe Rd. off Buckingham, Kloof. Steep walk down from contour to river, & up again. #R7	Ann	767 1027
Sun 13 June	Ferncliffe. Philip's hike in the PMB area. Last hiked some time ago.. R30	Philip	201 3592
Wed 16 June Public Hol	09:00 Shongweni Dam. R12pp at gate. Meet at picnic site across from canoe club. Braai/picnic till sunset.	Brian	072 680 0289
Sat 19 June	Clifton Lookout. Meet Assegai Hotel, proceed to Mushroom Farm. Open walk through grassland and cane.	Dieter	462 7445
Sun 20 June	Triple Ridge. Steve will lead us once more on his famous hike in one of its many variations. R20	Steve	083 454 0569
26 June	Drummond. Meet 1000 Hills Hotel car park. Walk along escarpment and through farmland. Sundowners at hotel.	Brian	072 680 0289
Sun 27 June	Umgeni Bend. Hike along the Umgeni river from Nagle Dam return via a pretty valley. Fairly long but easy going. R25	Dieter	462 7445

#### Weekend & Trails Programme – April to June 2004

Date	Description	Leader	Tel
9 – 12 April	Cobham – Easter in the Berg. Day hikes from camp-site. No electricity. Hot showers. R34pp/n. Full payment to Merle by 29 March to secure booking.	Brian	Merle 5601499 (B) 5613038 (H) 0824540521
7 – 9 May	Highover. Hella Hella. Natural heritage site. Beautiful chalets on the Mkomazi River. R90pp/n. Bunk houses R50pp/n. Camping R40pp/n. Hike the Soada trail to the waterfall on Saturday. Short hike on Sunday. Full payment to Merle by 26 April	Ken	Merle 5601499 (B) 5613038 (H) 0824540521
4 – 6 June	La Mouette. Blythedale. Excellent camp site on coast. R37.50 pp/n. Full day hike Saturday through coastal bush and Prince's Grant. Lunch by the lagoon. Short hike on Sunday. Full payment to Merle by 2 May	Mike White/ Guest Leader	Merle 5601499 (B) 5613038 (H) 0824540521

26 - 27 June	Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve. Howick. Fully equipped chalets R130pp/n sharing. Linen supplied. Dormitory R55pp/n - bring own bedding. No camping. R9 entrance to reserve. 10% discount to WESSA members. Hikes through reserve, game viewing. Full payment required by 23 May	Sally Brown/ Merle	Merle 5601499 (B) 5613038 (H) 0824540521
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If anyone sees a potential for a club hiking weekend during one of their private weekends away, please contact Merle McKenzie on 031 561 3038. Likewise, any ideas for day hikes or half day hikes in and around Durban, please contact the Saturday/Sunday hike organiser or any committee member.

**Change to meeting time for Sunday hike on 28 March 2004 to Gilboa. Depart from Pinetown at 07:30.**

#### MEMBERS' NEWS

##### New Members

New members to the Club include Micol Coetzee, Janine Nel, Valerie Walker, Rosemarie Hutchings, Kevein Oellermann, Chris and Jenny Sturges, Daryl Kinder, Pat Chur, Elwy Haskins, Kathy Lawson and Lyn Drewett. Welcome to Ramblers - we look forward to hiking with you.

##### Annual General Meeting

56 Ramblers attended the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting which was held on 10 February 2004 at the Westville Hotel. Newly appointed office bearers are as shown on page 1. Minutes of the meeting are available electronically or at the next AGM. Honorary Life Membership was awarded to Colin and Barbara Mercer (June 1973) and Mike and Judith Kirby (February 1974).

##### Farewell

**Bill Hyslop.** A spontaneous farewell party was arranged to say au revoir and to pay homage to Bill who will be relocating to England mid March 2004. Attempts were made to contact as many Ramblers as possible. If we were unable to contact you, this was not intentional. Some 50 Ramblers shared an evening of friendship, memories, laughter and enjoyed a braai - in the drizzle - but not enough to deter hardened hikers.

Bill was thanked for his tireless efforts and enthusiasm put into the Club, on the Committee and in the field. Fellow hikers reminisced happy and frustrating experiences but all appreciated we are losing a great hiker who contributed tremendously to Ramblers. An emotional Bill, thanked all and mentioned what fun we have compared to the boring lives of many!! He invited folk to visit and hike with him in England. Thanks to all those who joined the party and made the evening special. Special thanks to Fay and Wreford for opening their beautiful home and garden for the evening.

**Bill, may you still enjoy many years of hiking and inspire others along the way as you did us. Our loss is their gain. We thank you and wish you well.**

Bill's new address is : 147A Bramhall Lane S, Bramhall, Cheshire, SK7 2NG England. Bill would love to hear from any members who happen to be in the UK and are looking to hike.

##### Leon Hugo - Author

Leon Hugo, author and Chairman of the South African Trail Owners' Association addressed a group of Ramblers on 2 March 2004. In the next magazine we will feature the many interesting topics which were discussed.

#### MEMBERS' NOTICES

##### 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.

##### 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.

##### Monthly Get Togethers

Please note that the braai on 26 March 2004 has been postponed. Time 18:30 for following events  
**26 March** Pirates Arms, Wilson's Wharf  
**30 April** Thatchers Old Parkview Hotel Brickfield Rd,  
**28 May** Jack Rabbit Cnr Bulwer & Clark  
**18 June** Hops & Barley, Riverside Hotel  
 Contact Mike on 082 822 3106 for details.  
 Contact Colleen Seath - 202 2279 for Scrabble evenings.

#### AND, TALES OF TRAILS

##### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Weekend Review - Merle Mackenzie

##### Sani Lodge : 23-25 January

Our first weekend of the year was timed to coincide with the annual Wildlife Flower Walk down Sani Pass. Once again the weatherman decided to test our endurance, and it poured with rain on Friday as we made our way to Himeville and on to Sani Lodge & Backpackers. Would-be campers frantically tried to acquire alternative accommodation in the chalets and dorms, and others delayed traveling until the next morning in the hope that the weather would improve.

The lodge was fully booked, not just with Ramblers, but also with Amblers who were participating in the Flower Walk, as well as a group of young backpackers from overseas. It was fascinating hearing about their travels to various parts of the world, so while the rain poured down that evening we got involved in some interesting discussions.

Saturday morning dawned cloudy with occasional patches of blue sky showing through, and after breakfast we optimistically set off along one of the trails from the Lodge. Stunning views, lots of waterfalls, and a really long hike into the mountains. What a surprise we got when half-way through our hike, we met that intrepid little Kiwi, Audrey Vickers, accompanied by Margaret, both with full packs - they were on a three day hike in the berg, having spent the night in a cave somewhere. Both in their seventies, they are quite incredible and certainly a hard act to follow.

We lunched by a pool on the Pholela River, where a few valiant members braved the cold water, and were subsequently joined by some of the overseas travelers. By the time we started back towards the lodge, the rain had started again, and it was a weary, bedraggled group who trudged the last 7 km along the muddy road passed the Sani Pass Hotel, and on to the lodge. Needless to say,