

We didn't quite make it to Langalibalele Cave, but Steve was determined to find it, so while the rest of us had lunch under the shade of a large protea tree, he made his way further along the trail and up the mountain. We are obviously just not at the same fitness level as he is!

On Sunday morning, Steve took us on a shorter hike to Pillar Cave and on the way we spotted quite a large herd of Eland. With all the rain that had fallen, the rivers were flowing quite strongly and we had to "de-boot" to get across. The berg is always a magic place to be, and after all the rain this summer, its beautifully green with lots of waterfalls, and despite the rainy weather we enjoyed our stay at Hermits Wood.

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)

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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.



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APRIL - JUNE 2005

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Monthly Get Togethers



Monthly get togethers are proving popular. Meet at 18:30 at the following venues:

- 22 April Something Fishy Florida Road
- 20 May Charlies Croft Wilson's Wharf
- 24 June Johnny Fox Florida Road (ex Squires Loft)

For further information contact Mike on 082 822 3106 or office 563 5871. A booze cruise on the Sarie Marais is planned for the 3rd or 4th quarter. We need 50 people to attend - maximum 60. Please contact Mike and let him know if you are interested. Friends of members are most welcome. Scrabble evenings are arranged for the 1st and 3rd Friday evening of the month. Contact Coleen Seath on 202 2279 for further details.

From the Chair

As you may or may not know, Brian O'Connell has been forced to step down as Chairman and I now find myself in the hot seat.

I would like to pay tribute to Brian and Ann. For three years they were tireless in their endeavours; attended almost every hike; attended all weekend hikes; helped at the Christmas Party and kept the whole club ticking over. Brian and Ann will be missed by the Committee.

New Committee members are listed on the front of this magazine. The Committee are here to co-ordinate the activities of the Club. However, you are the members and any constructive comments or feedback will be most welcome. If you have any ideas about improving the club, if you are unhappy about anything please let us know. We would welcome positive suggestions and for members to be part of the solution.

A Saturday hike co-ordinator is desperately required, as Field Boucher unfortunately has had to withdraw. If anyone feels they would like to assist, we are able to help and guide. Trevor and Dennis have very kindly made up a programme for this quarter and Field and Roger are doing the meet and greet – thank you guys.

If you would like to communicate with me direct, e mail is best and I am on line every evening. The e mail address is on the front cover of the magazine. Alternatively telephone me on the numbers, which are also listed on the cover. Let's have fun and work together to build a club which we all enjoy.

Have a good year and hope to see you on the hikes and at the socials.

Happy hiking
Biff Maggs, Chairman

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT BACK

The AGM was held on 8 February 2005 at the Westville North Library. 40 members attended. In his report, the Chairman said that the Club, which has 252 members, had had an enjoyable year and was in a good financial position with R75 000 in reserves. The Chairman appealed to more members to join the Sunday hikes and said that Durban Ramblers is a united club with much to enjoy in the future.

Audrey Vickers, Lindsay and Angela Milne have joined the Honorary Members group.

On behalf of members, Werner thanked the outgoing committee for all the work done during the past year and wished the incoming committee success for the forthcoming year.

Amendments to the Constitution

Members will recall that proposed amendments to certain rules were circularised in the previous magazine. The outcome of the voting procedure was as follows :

- Rule 5 - Honorary Life Membership. No changes. (Vote: 14 for 29 against)
- Rule 7 - Amended. Subs and entrance fee to be decided by Committee and ratified at AGM. Half price membership after July. (Vote: 16 for 23 against)
- Rule 8 - Amended. Subs to be paid after AGM. (Vote: 23 for 22 against)

AND, TALES OF TRAILS

Weekend Review

Sani Pass Wildflower Walk : 28 – 30 January (Ann Olds)

While Ramblers occupied most of the accommodation at the Sani Pass Backpackers Lodge, we enjoyed interesting interaction with visitors from Germany, U.K., Australia and Denmark. (That's what Backpacking is all about). Brian led a scenic walk on Saturday. We lunched beside a cascade and beautiful pool enabling us to cool off – 3 of the 16 hikers swam. Recent good rains meant rivers were very full resulting in "boots off" and several wet crossings, which added to the adventure.

Local Conservationist and Wildlife members organised the transport up Sani Pass in 4X4 vehicles for 100 visitors on Sunday morning. From our vantage point in an open, railed Landrover, we enjoyed spectacular visits on the way up the zig-zag pass. The views from the "highest pub in S.A." were wonderful, on a crisp and brightening morning. Snow Rats scurried to and fro collecting food, never venturing far from their burrows. A Cape Robin was surprisingly up there looking very comfortable with the environment and visitors. Mountain Chats and Swifts and Martins were also in evidence, and for the keen birders, the Drakensberg Siskin and Orange-breasted Rockjumpers were good sightings. We were also thrilled by sightings of a Steppe buzzard, and a Black Hawk.

Botanists and Flora "fundis" accompanied visitors on the walk down, sharing information with any interested parties. Some of the beauties we saw were the rare *Huttonaea grandiflora* (mountain orchid), *Protea dracomontana* (creamy dwarf proteas), deep blue *Agapanthas*, many clusters of *Geranium schlechteri* (pink babies), *Papauer aculeatum* (orange poppies) and *Hesperantha scopulosa*. The variety of plants and colours was really surprising for a novice like me.

We walked the 8 km down to the Border Post at a leisurely pace entranced by the beauty on the "Alpine slopes". On this occasion the object was to take one's time enjoying nature's bounty. We were glad to be transported the last 12 km back to Sani Pass Backpackers Lodge!

Garden Castle : 25-27 February (Merle McKenzie)

We've got to the stage now that if we're going away for the weekend, we expect it to rain! This weekend was no exception – it rained Friday evening, it caught us on the way back from our hike on Saturday followed by one almighty storm in the late afternoon, and it found us hastily packing up after our morning walk on Sunday. Nevertheless, all had a good weekend.

Saturday morning we headed out along the Bushmen's Nek trail, taking time to appreciate the beautiful scenery. Along the way we had a close encounter with a puffadder sunning itself not 30cm from the path. I think it was becoming a little agitated by all the hikers passing by and started giving a few warning hisses, which is what attracted our attention. My only regret is that, in the excitement, I didn't think to get the camera out and record the event.

Sat 4 June	1000 HillsValley walk. Meet at 13:45 at 1000 Hills Hotel. Drinks at Drummond Hotel. Meet at Musgrave Park at 13:15	Brian O'Connell	072 995 6565
Sun 5 June	<i>Palmiet Excursion.</i> Mike Cottrell will show us the little known features of the Palmiet. Meet at the main Palmiet Reserve parking area at 09:00 Note the time. Cost R0	Mike Cottrell	266 6191
Sat 11 June	Longshadow plus Escarpment (Kloof 3). Meet at Krantzklouf Nature Reserve. 13:45 R10 entrance. Sundowners. BYO	Philip Gatenby	201 3592
Sun 12 June	<i>Triple Ridge.</i> Steve will once more lead us on his famous hike in one of its many variations. Cost R20	Steve Nel	083 454 0569
Sat 18 June away w/end	Paradise Valley. Meet at entrance at 13:45. R10 entrance. ** Drinks Lord Charles Pub.	Dennis Paxton	083 320 4951
Sun 19 June	<i>Neville's Surprise.</i> What will Neville surprise us with? Come and find out. Cost ???	Neville Waimisley	309 2298
Sat 25 June	Thornridge Farm. Cato Ridge. Meet Assegay Hotel 13:30 R5 donation to conservancy. Bring and braai. Meet at Musgrave Park at 13:00	Trevor Thompson	083 450 7109 7655133
Sun 26 June	<i>Cathy's Canter.</i> Starting and ending at Cathy's house in horse territory. BYO for afterwards. Go directly to Cathy's house or meet at Pinetown.	Cathy Kirkpatrick	765 1746 083 301 0435

Weekend & Trails Programme : January – March 2005

NOTE: Philip Gatenby will be co-ordinating transport arrangements for weekend away for those wishing to share lifts or travel in convoy. Please contact Philip for all weekend bookings. Telephone 031 201 3592

Date	Description	Leader	Tel
April 30 – 2 May	Dreadnaught – New venue in the Eshowe area with hikes from campsite, and optional additional hikes through the Entumeni & Dlinza forests. Birding guide will be available on Mon a.m. for those interested. No electricity. R30 pp/pn. Meet at Shell Garage just before Mvoti Plaza Sat 29 at 07:00 – travel in convoy to Entumeni. Phone Phillip for bookings and transport co-ordination.	Ken Sclanders	Phillip: 031-2013592 Merle: 032-4394317 (B) 031-5613038 (H) or 0824540521
May 27-29	Highover, Hella Hella - Natural heritage site. Beautiful chalets on the Mkomazi River R110 pp/per night. Bunkhouses R60 pp/pn. Camping R40 pp/pn. Hike the Soada trail to waterfall on Saturday. Short hike on Sunday. Phone Phillip for bookings and transport co-ordination. Full payment required by 16 April please.	Merle Mackenzie	Phillip: 031-2013592 Merle: 031-5601499 (B) 031-5613038 (H) or 0824540521
June 16-19	Ngele Trail. Walk to hut through magnificent indigenous forest and mountain grassland. (Kit transported by bakkie). Hot shower, loo with a view, plus day walks from hut. R25 per night + transport R100. Possibility to come for weekend only if leader available.	Philip Gatenby	031-2013592

- Rule 9 - Amended. Changes from 6 months to 2 months. (Vote: 29 for 16 against)
- Rule 15 - Remains the same. (Vote: 15 for 21 against)
- Rule 17 - Amended. Change in wording – Extraordinary General Meeting. (Vote: 31 for 6 against)
- Rule 20 - Amended. Financials can be required prior to the AGM. (Vote: 27 for 9 against)
- Rule 25 - Amended. Borrowing powers limited to a maximum of R1 000 or call a Special General Meeting. (Vote: 30 for 6 against)
- Rule 30 - Amended. Changes to constitution to be typed and handed to secretary. (Vote: 29 for 7 against)

Amended copies of the Constitution are available on request from Ingrid D'eathe. Contact details on cover of magazine.

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Members

Welcome to new members Carol Christianson, Lynda and Stephen Verreyne, Marie Murray, Marie Thorpe, Catharine Kirkpatrick and David Perrett. Welcome back to Lynda Murray. There were no resignations during the past quarter.

Old Members

Many Ramblers will remember Roy and Jane Borgars who relocated to England in the 1960's. They have kept in touch with Ramblers of old and have advised that they will be visiting South Africa during June 2005. On Monday 20th June, they will be arriving at Umgeni Valley chalets in Howick for a two night stay en route to Johannesburg. Mick McConnell has suggested that members who knew Jane might like to book into Umgeni Valley for a night or two or come up for the day on the 21st for a picnic or braai.

Mick relates this tale of Jane:

The Sani Pass had just been completed as a motor vehicle pass into Basutoland when Ramblers found themselves on a Berg hike. Hiking across the escarpment and down the Mahai at Drakensberg Gardens, Jane got wet in the rain. The wind then came up and the temperature dropped. Poor Miss Richards (Jane's maiden name) became a victim of hypothermia. Her eyes rolled up and finger-nails went pearlescent. She could not concentrate and, like Ophelia, wandered off the track. Her breathing became shallow. We were lucky to find a small overhang at the top of the Malamatsu pass. A change of clothing, hot Bovril and into her sleeping bag soon had her sitting up and wondering what all the fuss was about!!!

Congratulations

To Lois Harte and Werner Vanslembrouck on their recent engagement.

Condolences

To Trish Johnson on the sad loss of her son.

MEMBERS' NOTICES

Subscriptions

Good news. Due to the healthy financial position of the Club, subscriptions have not been increased for the 2005 year. Subs are due on 10 April 2005 and are as follows:
Single R50 Family/Couple R60 Country Single R35 Country Family/couple R40.
For those members who have not yet paid subs, a form is enclosed.

For Sale and Hire

Sale of 35mm slide projector – R100. Magazines to hold 320 slides – R20.

Hire of backpacks at R5/day and R50 deposit. Contact Philip Gatenby on 031 201 3592.

Ladies Hi-tec boots. UK size 7. Worn once. Contact Ruth Klein 031 767 2361 (evenings 5 – 7 pm)

Communication

Members are requested to let Derek Pretorius have their e mail addresses. This will be used in the event that any urgent messages need to be sent out. Derek's e mail is sandrajp@elect.co.za

General

- Each member should keep medical aid and emergency contact details in their backpacks.
- Note that the hikes are organised in various areas according to the season. Hence many hikes are planned in the Kloof area during summer as this area offers shadier hikes.
- Hikers may only hike on official paths in Palmiet Reserve and not in Wilderness area.
- Change of contact details to be advised to Derek Pretorius who is maintaining the Club's membership data base. Telephone 765 5029.
- If possible, please pay monies due to the Club either by cheque, bank transfer or internet banking. This will keep bank charges to the minimum. Cash deposits are expensive. Remember to mark the deposit slip with your name and item for which you are paying and post copy of slip to the Treasurer. See front cover for banking details.

HIKING PROGRAMME : APRIL – JUNE 2005

Saturday Hikes

Hikers may meet at Musgrave Park Medical Centre before 13:30, or earlier if indicated in the programme, to travel in convoy or to share transport to the start of the hike. Please get to starting point by 13:45 in order for hike to begin on time. 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.

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, lunch and a hat. Add R5 for visitors. Sunday hikers are welcome to join Saturday hikes and the following social.

Meeting Places	Durban	Leave 07:30	Musgrave Park, Cnr Berea & Musgrave Roads
	Pinetown	Leave 08:00	Union Main Centre, Old Main Road
	Bluff	Leave 08:00	BP Garage, Edwin Swales Drive

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

IMPORTANT : 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 2 April	Longshadows Kloof. Meet picnic site at 13:45. R10 entrance. ** Sundowners BYO	Ann Olds	767 1027
Sun 3 April	<i>Rob Roy. Starting from the Rob Roy hotel we penetrate deep into the Valley of a Thousand Hills. You will feel some of them! Cost R15</i>	Steve Watson	312 7108
Sat 9 April	New Germany Nature Reserve. Meet at reserve at 13:45. Donation R5. Drinks and possibly supper at the Black Forest Pub in Pinetown.	Cedric Biggs	702 4905
Sun 10 April	<i>Camelot Farm. Medium hike in the upper valley of the Sterkspruit. Rained last time. Cost R20</i>	Dieter Becker	462 7445
Sat 16 April	Kloof beacon. Meet at 13:45 picnic site, Krantzklouf Nature Reserve. R10 entrance. Followed by drinks at Tina's.	Ken Sclanders	083 298 5543
Sun 17 April	<i>Virginia – Umhlanga Ramble. Glenys once more takes us on her beach ramble. Please note times are the same at both Pinetown at 08:00 and Durban at 08:00. To meet at Virginia Airport at 08:30 Cost R10</i>	Glenys Bentley	083 375 2252
Sat 23 April	Virginia Meander. Meet at Virginia Airport parking lot at 13:45. Followed by drinks in pub at airport.	Glenys Bentley	083 661 3134
Sun 24 April	<i>Mposane. An interesting hike up this mountain situated above Nagle Dam. Good views. Cost R25</i>	Steve Watson	312 7108
Sat 30 April away w/end	Stainbank Nature Reserve. Meet at reserve 13:45. R10 entrance. ** Sundowners BYO	Clive Siepman	765 5051
Sun 1 May	<i>Hornet's Krantz. Explore the heights of the Monteseel area. Medium hike with one or two decent climbs. Cost R20</i>	Dieter Becker	462 7445
Sat 7 May	Bartlett's Estate. Meet at Assegay Hotel at 13:30 R5 donation to conservancy. Followed by bring and braai.	Trevor Thompson	083 450 7109 7655133
Sun 8 May	<i>Steve's Surprise. Steve is still thinking about this. But never fear – it will be entertaining! Cost ???</i>	Steve Nel	083 454 0569
Sat 14 May	Alverston Farm surrounds. Meet at Assegay Hotel at 13:45. Drinks at Assegay hotel. Meet at Musgrave Park at 13:15	Dennis Paxton	083 320 4951
Sun 15 May	<i>Inkonka Meander. Kloof gorge area. Medium hike Entrance R10 Petrol R10 = R20</i>	Brian O'Connell	072 995 6565
Sat 21 May	Drummond. New walk. Easy walk, farm roads, great views. Meet 1000 Hills Hotel 13:45. R5 donation to conservancy. Followed by bring and braai.	Trevor Thompson	083 450 7109 7655133
Sun 22 May	<i>Mlazi Ufundu Meander. Moderate, happy hike. Long uphill in the morning and a pretty waterfall. Guest leader. Cost R15</i>	Adrian Rowe	764 4721
Sat 28 May away w/end	Inanda Road and surrounds. 13:45 Slightly different route. Hillcrest turn right at Inanda Rd. Park on Jackson's Farm opposite Kirklington Estate. Drinks at Stationmasters Arms.	Colin Turner	708 3517
Sun 29 May	<i>Bluff Wonderland. Visit the remains of the original Cave Rock plus other interesting things. Meet at BP garage on Edwin Swales at 08:30. If you need a lift from Pinetown please contact Jon Stevens otherwise nobody will be there. Cost R0</i>	Mike White	083 325 6348