

difficult to find, was a worthwhile foray - and we saw zebra and buck. Ken Sclanders educated us with his extensive knowledge of the history, fauna and flora particular to the area.

On the last day of the camp, Jotham Maduna, who has been trained by Birdlife SA, joined a group of 'birdies' and set off to see what could be found. While it wasn't the best time of year for birding, having a trained guide meant that he recognised each bird call, and would then stop and search the trees until those illusive birds could be found and pointed out to us. Thus we recorded birds like the blue-mantled fly catcher and cape batis, among other things, as well as the white-backed duck on the farm dam, and crowned eagles soaring above the cliffs.

This was the first time this campsite has been visited by Ramblers and, hopefully, not the last. The camaraderie, which is so typical of Ramblers, certainly made up for the lack of electricity and hot water. And again, a big thank you to Derek and Sandra Pretorius, who always come to the rescue of the not so well equipped, or prepared, campers.

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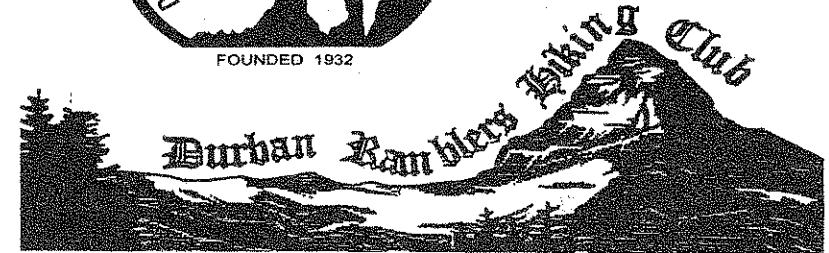
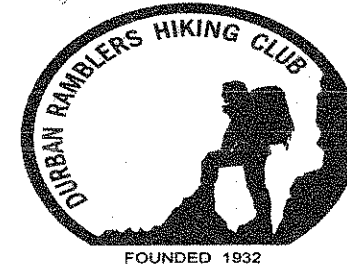
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This is the official newsletter of the Durban Ramblers' Hiking Club. Contributions are welcome, but the right to edit any contribution is reserved. The opinions expressed in any published article or insert do not necessarily reflect the opinion of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



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JULY - SEPTEMBER 2005

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Global Positioning System (GPS)

The club recently purchased a Magellan Meridian Platinum GPS for R4800. This 'top of the range' GPS measures latitude, longitude and elevation. In addition, it can measure barometric pressure and has a magnetic compass. The committee decided that it was important to record our hikes for posterity. The unit is able to automatically record the track of any hike and this can then be downloaded onto a PC for storage. The route can then be superimposed on a map for future use. The GPS is available for use by any hike leader on condition that the hike can be downloaded and stored. If anybody would like a copy of the manual and/or any of the hikes recorded so far, please email Jon at jon.stevens@bcx.co.za. An interesting site is <http://gpsinformation.net/>. There is also free software available for mapping etc - contact Jon for more info.

Monthly Get Togethers

- 29 July Sarie Marais boat cruise just past Point Yacht club. Boat departs at 19:00 sharp – please be there for 18:30. A ‘bring and share’. Contact Biff on 312 1503 with details of what you can bring to eat. Bring your own drinks. Cost R50.00 per person. Bookings are required as soon as possible and payment must be made by end July to secure boat. Money can be deposited directly into Ramblers bank account, details on the front of the magazine or paid directly to Mike. If deposit direct, let Biff know.
- 26 Aug Waxy O’Connor Pub. Next door to Westville hotel at 18:30
- 30 Sept Thatchers Bar. 18:30
- For further information on monthly get togethers contact Mike on 082 822 3106 or office 563 5871.

Socials

- 10 July The Barnyard Theatre. “Born to Run”. Half price Sunday tickets. Contact Denise Warburton on 462 7952
- 16 July The Barnyard Theatre. “In the Mood”. Tickets R85 per person. Contact Marie or Neville on 309 2298..

Scrabble evenings are arranged for the first and third Friday evening of the month. For further details contact Colleen Seath on 202 2279.

From the Chair

Hello fellow Ramblers

On reading through the previous magazine, it occurs to me that the wording of my letter could be misleading. In terms of the Constitution, no post may be held for more than three years. It is within this context that Ann Olds and Brian O’Connell were compelled to step down from their posts. Ann and Brian remain committed to the affairs of Durban Ramblers Club and their experience and knowledge of hiking trails is invaluable. Now that I find myself in the Chair, I have come to realise that, whilst it is a pleasure to be involved with so many wonderful fellow hikers, it is not an easy job. Again, thanks to Ann and Brian for their continued contribution to the Club.

There have been two Committee changes. Firstly, Ilona has advised that she is unable to continue with the Treasurer post, which is now vacant. Should anyone be willing and able to serve as Treasurer please let me know. In the interim, I will keep the finances ticking over. Secondly, thanks to Trevor Thompson who has offered to be the Saturday Hike organiser.

We are still looking for new people to lead hikes and we are also looking for suggestions for a few more hikes in and around the Durban area. If anyone is interested in being trained as a hike leader, please contact Jon Stevens or Trevor Thompson whose contact details appear on the front of the magazine.

Please remember to phone Derek Pretorius for change of name, address etc. His number is 7655029.

Otherwise the club is happy and running well. Day hikes, away weekends and the social get togethers are well attended with a good time being had by all.

Happy hiking
Biff Maggs, Chairman

Despite gloomy predictions of a cold front, snow on the berg and rain throughout the province, 29 Ramblers (26 hikers) set off for Highover in the Hella-Hella Valley for what turned out to be a superb weekend. We had glorious clear sunny skies during the day and spectacular starlit nights. So much for weather reports!

The get-together in the huge fully-equipped “lapa” on Friday night was most enjoyable and some lingered on to socialize and be merry by lamp-light even after the generator ran out of petrol and plunged us into darkness. Could this be the reason for a slight reluctance I sensed in some quarters on Saturday morning when rustling up the troops for the hike to Soada Falls? However there were those energetic souls who chose to walk the additional 2km up the hill to the start of the trail, while the majority of us took the easy way out in the back of the bakkies.

The hike to the falls is not one for beginners as it includes some good hills to test one’s fitness and a fair amount of rock-hopping to reach the falls. While Lena, our diminutive 71 year old Italian, admitted that she found it a bit much, she can be justifiably proud of her achievement in completing the 20km hike, plus the additional 2kms at the start! With her short little legs she has to take twice as many steps as everyone else, so well-done Lena.

Saturday evening we again gathered at the lapa for a braai and a good time was had by all in wishing Biff a happy birthday – thanks Biff for the generous supply of Amarula!

On Sunday Dave Edwards (co-owner of Highover) took us up the road by bakkie so that we could take an easy walk to the lookout. (Thanks also to Chris Jacobs for supplying additional transport). The view was obscured somewhat by the typical winter haze, but was none-the-less spectacular. In the summer months it must be an amazing place to visit as Dave says there are about 72 varieties of flowers in bloom and you can see as far as Sani. During the 6km walk we spotted a number of blesbuck as well as a herd of wild donkeys, and Dave gave us loads of info about the reserve.

We then made our way back to camp for lunch, before reluctantly packing up on Sunday afternoon. Definitely worth another visit!

DREADNOUGHT - 30 April - 2 May 2005

Driving out of Durban towards the north coast on a wet, misty and cold morning did not auger well for a camping weekend! Not to be deterred, a group of 14 die-hard Ramblers met at the Mvoti petrol station and then travelled in convoy to Dreadnought campsite, which is situated in the Entumeni area on the sugar cane farm of Louis Gunter.

After a rocky and bumpy ride down to the limited, but cosy and secluded accommodation, we set up camp, had a bite to eat and then set off on a hike leading to the Ibis Krantz. The trails during the weekend were interesting and diverse with much scrambling over boulders, lots of uphill and downhill - accompanied by some moaning and groaning from the not so fit! The trails wended through forest and glade with pink sandstone in abundance, giving a majestic feel to the surrounds. A mid-day break on Sunday alongside the spectacular waterfall on the Mkono River was most welcome and saw a few people dozing lazily, alongside the lizards, on the warm rocks.

The cool evenings were warmed by a cracking fire, encircled by tired but happy Ramblers. The warmth from the fire made up for the lack of hot water, which meant that cold showers were the order of the day for some of the unlucky ones. While Louis had put in a gas water heating system especially for the weekend it didn’t always work despite the many positive thoughts directed towards it!

In addition to the wonderful trails and scenery, we were surprised by Dawn McGill who impressed with her rowing skills on the farm dam, we visited the Bush Camp which is nestled amongst the trees and, whilst

19 – 21 August	Oribi Gorge. Tenting at Parks Board campsite. R50 pp/pn. Hikes from camp through scenic gorge. Contact Merle for camp bookings. Chalets are available if required & should be booked direct with KZN Wildlife on 033-8451000 or e-mail bookings@kznwildlife.com	Brian O'Connell	Merle 032-4394317 (B) 031-5613038 (H) 0824540521 Brian 0729956565
9 – 11 September	Hlalanathi – (near Royal Natal National Park). Camping @ R45 pp/pn (electricity available). Opportunity to do the Cavern Hotel's "Big Five" - a 17km hike along the sky-line of the mountains surrounding the hotel to the top of the 5 peaks (Hlolela, Battleship, Sugar Loaf, Cold Ridge & Camel's Hump). Not to be missed! Cost is R75, inclusive of guides and packed lunch. Early booking essential. Deposit camp & hike fees to Club bank account by 30 July please	Brian O'Connell will lead alternate hikes for those not participating in the Big 5	Merle 032-4394317 (B) 031-5613038 (H) 0824540521 Brian 0729956565

AND, TALES OF TRAILS

Weekend Review

LOTENI - 24 – 28 March, 2005.

The drive to Loteni via Nottingham Road was more comfortable, more scenic, and a little shorter than the route via Underberg. 21 campers (19 hikers) enjoyed a variety of hikes, beautiful scenery, sightings of Eland, and Puffies! Easter seems to bring the Puff Adders out in preparation for their winter hibernation.

On our way up to Yellowwood Cave, Steve Watson had a very close shave with a huge, freshly re-skinned Puff Adder. He stood on it – luckily close to its head – and leapt, squealing from rock to rock in shock! His mountain goat agility stood him in good stead.

The next day, Brian had us hiking up to Sheba's Breasts. While we paused to watch a group of Eland grazing on a plain below us, we witnessed one beast suddenly rear up, startled, and the group cantered hurriedly away in the opposite direction. Presumably the Eland was warned off by a Puff Adder. On our return route in the afternoon, I was noticing how small boulders seemed to have been up-turned by Baboon (which were plentiful), when my attention was caught by what appeared to be a large grey, shriveled leaf next to a rock about 30 cms from the path. Then the scales moved! Another Puff Adder!

Perhaps this "alert" gave us the adrenalin required to ford a pretty fast-flowing river, expediting our return to camp and refreshments.

The rising Full Moon on Thursday evening was spectacular.

The walk from camp to Jacob's Ladder was lovely from a scenic point of view. A few toughies could not resist the sparkling, tingling water in the pools below the Falls.

The evening braais around a communal fire became quite an adventure as the afternoon storm clouds vied with us for time

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Members

Welcome to new members : Alison Stuart, Eleanor Swanepoel, Lynda van Rooyen, Penny Thompson, Rosmarie Ziep-Eggert and Inge Riemann Welcome back to Bev & Kevin Boyd and Tracey Jacobs.

Resignations

Sally Brown.

MEMBERS' NOTICES

South African National Society

Invitation to garden party to celebrate the Society's Centenary. 9 July 2005 at 11:00. Robert King's home, 9 End Road, Everton. R40 per head. RSVP R Rowland, 95 Ogwini, 9 Russell Street, Durban, 4001 by 5 July 2005.

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.

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@eject.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 : JULY – SEPTEMBER 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 (Full Day)

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

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
2 July	Nkonka Falls. Krantzklouf Nature Reserve. Meet picnic site 13:45. Entrance R10 BYO sundowners.	Ann Olds	767 1027
Sun 3 July	Inanda Dam. Medium hike, great views of dam.	Steve Watson	312 7108 Cost R15
9 July	Macintosh Falls. Meet St. Hiller's Dam at 13:45. Drinks and/or supper at Team Spirits, Gillitts.	Ken Sclanders	083 298 5543
Sun 10 July	No Hike. See Social for Barnyard Theatre.	Denise	462 7952
16 July	Lower Burman Bush. Meet 13:45 at Jamieson Park. Bring & braai at Burman Bush braai area.	Werner	767 2969
Sun 17 July	Table Mountain. Moderate hike up to plateau. See sunken forest & other marvels.	Lee D'earth	262 3753 Cost R25
23 July Away w/end	Longshadow & escarpment. Krantzklouf Nature Reserve. R10 entrance fee. Meet picnic site 13:45. BYO sundowners.	Clive Siepman	765 5051
Sun 24 July	Giba Heights & Woods. Moderate to strenuous, dizzy heights, distant views, indigenous forest & waterfalls. A steep descent, lunch - a steep climb.	Steve Watson	312 7108 Cost R15
30 July	Assegay Meander. New hike through Assegay suburbs & farming area. Lovely views - easy walking. Meet Sugar Loaf Centre, bottom of Botha's Hill at 13:45. Drinks at Assegay Hotel.	Lois Harte	767 2969
Sun 31 July	Umgeni Bend. Hike along Umgeni River from Nagle dam, return via pretty valley. Fairly long - easy going.	Dieter Becker	462 7445 Cost R25
6 Aug	Paradise Valley. R10 entrance fee. Meet 13:45 at entrance. Drinks and/or supper at Black Forest, Pinetown.	Dennis Paxton	083 320 4951
Sun 7 Aug	Duzi Cascades. Through the orange and nut farm. Backwards and forwards across the river. Maybe we will see the python again.	Steve Nel	083 454 0569 Cost R25
13 Aug	Kloof escarpment. Krantzklouf Nature Reserve. R10 entrance fee. Meet 13:45 at picnic site. BYO sundowners.	Philip Gatenby	201 3592
Sun 14 Aug	Umhloti Meander. Forest & beach walk. Moderate in strength and length. Leave Pinetown and Durban at 08:00 to meet at parking lot by the sea across the road from petrol station at 08:45.	Brian O'Connell	072 995 6565 Cost R15
20 Aug away w/end	Springside Nature Reserve. Hillcrest. R5 donation to conservancy. Meet reserve car park 13:45. Drinks/supper at Station Master's Arms, Hillcrest.	Trevor Thompson	765 5133 083 450 7109

Sun 21 Aug	Hilton Ramble. Around the Hilton College estate with a magnificent view of Albert Falls Dam and down to Gwen Falls.	Colin Turner	708 3517 Cost R40
27 Aug	Virginia Meander. Bush & beach walk. Meet at Virginia airport at 13:45. Drinks at airport pub.	Glenys Bentley	083 661 3134 564 7632
Sun 28 Aug	Amanzimtoti Circuit. Mixture of coastal hills & beach. Leave Durban & Pinetown at 08:00 to meet John at Doonside/Warner Beach glide off 08:30. (Exit 137)	John van Zyl	462 7952 Cost R20
3 Sept	New Germany Nature Reserve. Meet at reserve car park. 13:45. Drinks afterwards Lord Charles, Pinetown.	Philip Gatenby	201 3592
Sun 4 Sept	Killarney Rockery. Moderate hike with beautiful rock formations. Note: meet at 08:30 in Pinetown.	Llewelyn Evans	082 452 2614 Cost R25
10 Sept Away w/end	Palmiet Nature Reserve. Meet at reserve entrance near Westville Hotel at 13:45. Hike leader is a member of the Nature Reserve Committee and knows the history etc. Drinks and/or supper Westville Hotel. R5 donation	Mike Cottrell	266 6191
Sun 11 Sept	Umlazi Meander. Hike down into a lovely stretch of the Umlazi River above Shongweni Dam and enjoy the abundant bird life.	Adrian Rowe	7644721 Cost R20
17 Sept	Kloof Beacon. Meet at picnic site, Krantzklouf Nature Reserve at 13:45. Entrance R10. ***BYO sundowners.	Brian O'Connell	072 995 6565
Sun 18 Sept	Vernon Crookes Nature Reserve. A new route in this lovely reserve. Leave Dbn & Pinetown at 08:00. Meet exit 104 N2 Umzinto/Park Rynie turn off) at 08:45. R10 entrance fee to nature reserve.	Dieter Becker	462 7445 Cost R30
24 Sept	Bartlett Estates. Meet early at 13:30 at Assagay Hotel. R5 donation to conservancy. Bring and braai.	Trevor Thompson	765 5133 083 450 7109
Sun 25 Sept	Mimosa Rock. Durban's oldest rock formation. See the city from a different angle. All meet Musgrave Park at 08:30	Mike White	083 325 5348 Cost R0

Weekend & Trails Programme : July- September 2005

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

Date	Description	Leader	Tel
22-24 July	Umlalazi - Mtunzini. Tenting at Parks Board campsite. R50 pp/pn (includes electricity). Hikes through coastal forest, beach, and Raffia Palms. Contact Merie for camp bookings. Chalets are available if required & should be booked direct with KZN Wildlife on 033-8451000 or e-mail bookings@kznwildlife.com	Steve Nel	Merie 032-4394317 (B) 031-5613038 (H) 0824540521 Steve 08345405