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Black Diamond



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This is the official newsletter of the Durban Ramblers' Hiking Club. Contributions are very welcome, but the right to edit is reserved. If you have any tales to tell, we would love to hear them. Please email your copy to the Editor at [phenduke@durbs.com](mailto:phenduke@durbs.com)



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Standard Bank, Musgrave Road  
Branch Code: 04262610  
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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE DURBAN RAMBLERS' HIKING CLUB

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2008

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### CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

The end of the year rolls around again and so does the Christmas party. This year, as you will see later in the magazine, we have decided on a different kind of party. And, in order to help everybody with their Christmas budgeting, it will be FREE! So let's have a large turnout and a good time.

With one hand we giveth and with the other we taketh away. Petrol rates for the Sunday hikers for shared petrol must go up. They are currently R1 per kilometer which equates to 25 cents per passenger assuming 4 in a car. This will have to go up to R1.20 per kilometre which is a 20% increase.

On a sad note, Erica Jacobs passed away on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September whilst on a hike with friends at Kosi bay. Stella Wells has written a tribute to Erica further on in the magazine. We will miss her.

John Stevens  
Chairman

### New members

We welcome the following new members to our Club. May you all have many happy hours hiking the hills and dales with us.

- ☺ Barbara Fenwick
- ☺ Brian Merryweather
- ☺ Lance Joseph
- ☺ Lee Lynch

<b>SOCIAL CALENDAR</b>	
<b>Organiser - Mike Serrurier - 082 822 3106</b>	
6 December	<b>Christmas Party Time!</b> - from 11am till 5pm at Kranskloof Interpretative Centre. Please bring your picnic baskets, chairs, meat and drinks. The Club will provide fires, salads, rolis and music. Families are welcome but to assist with catering please confirm numbers with Mike on 082 822 3106 or Lisa on 076 174 7022 before 1 December.
21 December	<b>Lunch at Point Yacht Club.</b> All welcome. There is a limit of 40 so call early. Please contact Denise by the 15th of December 072 157 3664 or 031 462 7952.

<b>HIKING SCHEDULE</b>	
<b>OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2008</b>	

### **Saturday Hikes**

- Hikers may meet at Musgrave Park Medical Centre before 13h30 sharp, 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 13h45 in order for hike to begin on time.

could see the lake below. Here we braved the 383 stairs down the gorge to the historically interesting San caves, then back up again to head for the suspension bridge and the longest "long drop" in Africa. This is a "must see"! There were some amongst us, however, who refused to cross the bridge. After lunch we headed back to camp, and were thrilled to have herds of blesbuck, wildebeest and eland dashing around us as we made our way across the fields.

Monday dawned and we decided to take the easy route and drove to the picnic site from where we walked to the lake to have a look at the accommodation and facilities that we had seen from the top of the gorge the previous day. All too soon it was time to pack up and make our way home, but this will undoubtedly be a venue of many happy returns for the Ramblers.

*For sale : French La Sportiva waterproof hiking boots, mens size 9. Only worn twice. Bargain at R950, cost R1395. Contact Marie 031 309 2298 or 031 910 5736.*

### **Tribute to Erica Jacobs**

A tribute to Erica, long term club member and friend, who passed away on 4 September, whilst with hiking friends in the beautiful Kosi Bay area.

I met Erica through the club and from there we developed a close friendship not only sharing time together during club outings but on our regular 'girls' nights out either just the two of us or with other friends. Erica went out of her way to talk to people, was a good listener and was very supportive in times of need. Her grooming and pride in appearance was meticulous with make-up being the order of the day even on the most gruelling hike! She was envied by many ladies and admired by many men. Her life took on a different meaning when she retired and as another club member commented recently these last few years would seem to have been some of the happiest with holidays, trails and weekend trips being high on the list.

Her two daughters both moved to Cape Town and produced between them three gorgeous grandsons, of whom she was extremely fond, and so visits to the Cape also became very regular. Whilst Erica will no longer be seen hiking with the Ramblers we can be assured that she will be exploring new paths with scenery more beautiful than the Berg! Farewell our friend.

Stella Wells

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
	Hotel opposite petrol station at 13H45.		
21 Dec	<b>Point Yacht Club</b>		
	Lunch at PYC - see Social Calendar for details		
27 Dec	<b>Long weekend - no organised hike</b>		
28 Dec	<b>Colin's Meander</b>		
	Meet at St Helier at 9 am for a morning walk with views. Bring drinks and picnic for an optional lunch by the lake at the end of the walk. Please contact Philip if you are coming - he will cancel it if nobody phones.	Philip	031 201 3592
31 Dec	<b>Wednesday walk</b>	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592

### WEEKEND & TRAILS PROGRAMME – 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER 2008

Please contact the "Contact Person" below to confirm bookings for weekends **before** depositing the money in the bank. This will ensure your space is reserved.

Please liaise with Kim or Dennis if you wish to share lifts or co-ordinate transport for weekends away. (Kim 082 655 3796, Dennis 083 320 4951).

Date	Description	Leader	Contact Person
21/22 Nov	Garden Castle = R40 pppn camping, no electricity. Booking closes 10 November.	Brian O'Connell	Kim 082 655 3796

### **Tales of Trails - Lake Eland**

*Our thanks to Merle Mackenzie who submitted this very interesting and well written anecdote.*

What a superb venue for a hiking weekend. Twenty-one lucky Ramblers made their way down the south coast on the Friday to Lake Eland in the Oribi Gorge area, where we pitched our tents or parked our caravans overlooking the small dam with lovely views of part of the reserve, and from where we could see some of the game across the way.

The nights were pretty cold, but the days warm, and Trevor led the first hike on Saturday past the big fig tree to the picnic site. On the way we spotted several species of buck and some zebra, as well as a few giraffe in the distance. After relaxing at the picnic site and eating our lunch we headed along the circular route back to camp, in time to watch the rugby on TV in the pub at reception. Here we were also entertained by 2 young warthogs who were trying to gatecrash the party. Having been hand-reared, they are extremely tame and are an absolute delight to the kids as well as the grown-ups! Then back to the campsite for a gathering of the clan around the braai fire in the good old Rambler tradition.

The next day Steve led us to the edge of the gorge with absolutely stunning views, from where we

- For directions to the starting point, please phone the organiser between 12h00 and 12h45 on the day of the hike.
- 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** 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.
- **Meeting Place** : Union Main Centre, Old Main Road, Pinetown to depart at 08h00. If there is a change to the meeting time or venue this will be noted in the hiking schedule below.
- If it is raining, please check with the hike leader before setting out for the meeting place.
- **NB** : *if you need a lift from the meeting place, contact the hike leader or one of the hike organisers to arrange.*

### **Wednesday Walks**

Colin Turner and Philip Gatenby organise a morning hike every other Wednesday. All are welcome. Please phone Colin on 708 3517 or Philip on 201 3592 before the day for details.

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
4 Oct	<b>PARADISE VALLEY</b>	Philip	031 201 3592
	Shady walk with historical interest. Meet at 13h45 at entrance. R5 entrance fee. Easy		
5 Oct	<b>SHONGWENI/SUMMERVELD CIRCUIT</b>	Colin	031 708 3517
	A variation of a theme with Colin conducting. R15 petrol sharing.		
8 Oct	<b>Wednesday walk</b>	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
11 Oct	<b>VIRGINIA BUSH</b>	Gerald	031 205 1089
	Indigenous bush walk. Park in Kensington Drive outside the reserve. Meet at 13h45. Easy		
12 Oct	<b>LA MERCY</b>	Jon Stevens	082 459 1522
	Starting from Umhloti, cross the La Mercy river and explore the area near the new airport. Meet at the parking lot by the sea across the road from the petrol station at 08h30.		
18 Oct	<b>MONTESEEL</b>	Max/Jenny	031 783 4173 084 952 0622
	New 2hr30min walk. Meet in front of Assagay Hotel opposite petrol station to leave at 13h30 for onward journey to Max's farm at Inchanga. Steep hills at beginning and end. Views of Valley of a Thousand Hills. BYO for drinks at the farm. Moderate		
19 Oct	<b>THORN RIDGE FARM, CATO RIDGE</b>	Trevor	079 525 9230
	Trevor, our highly experienced Saturday hike leader, will explore one of his favourite areas. About 11kms of		

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
	bushveld, grasslands with abundance of spring flowers and riverine forest. Petrol sharing R20, donation to conservancy R10. Meet at Assagay Hotel at 08h30 or Union Main Centre, Pinetown at 08h00.		
22 Oct	Wednesday walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
25 Oct	<b>KLOOF NKONKA FALLS</b> Grassland walk to falls, lovely views. Meet at Kranskloof picnic site at 13h45. R10 entrance fee. Bring and braai afterwards at Trevor & Anne's home. Moderate	Ann	031 767 1027
26 Oct	<b>WINGFIELD, MID-ILLOVO</b> Hike down into a scenic gorge, along the river and gently up and out after lunch. Meet at Musgrave at 8am or meet at Kingsburgh turn-off on southern freeway - Exit 133, R603 - 8.30am. Cost: R50 (includes donation to conservancy).	Neville	031 309 2298
1 Nov	<b>NEW GERMANY NATURE RESERVE</b> Grassland walk, some game viewing, walk-in aviary. Meet at reserve car park, off Otto Volek Road at 13h45. R5 donation. Easy	Ann	031 767 1027
2 Nov	<b>VIRGINIA-UMHLANGA RAMBLE</b> Start the hike as the sun rises. Meet at Virginia airport at 6.00. Bring breakfast. We'll be back to the airport before lunch.	Glenys	083 375 2252
5 Nov	Wednesday walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
8 Nov	<b>BARN SWALLOWS AT MT MORELAND</b> Meet at the Mt Moreland village green at 13h30 to start our walk by 13h45. Braai + sundowners afterwards until the viewing of the swallows at about 18h15. BYO binoculars, chair and R10 donation to the conservancy. <b>Directions</b> : Take the Umhloti Beach / Verulam turnoff from the N2 or M27. Turn left towards Verulam. After 1km at the white Tongaat/Hulett pillar, take the first right (D757) to Mt Moreland. After 3Km take the left fork over the low water bridge, then next right & first left up the hill into Mt Moreland. Park on the village green on your right.	Jenny	084 952 0622
9 Nov	<b>VERNON CROOKES</b> Explore the western section of the Vernon Crookes Nature Reserve. Visit the Umzinto waterfall and an old gold mine. Enjoy the rolling green hills and the spring wild flowers. This is a moderate plus hike of about 14Km. George will supply transport at the end back to the cars.	George Archibald	083 419 1191

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
	R10 to the park, petrol R50. <b>We leave from Musgrave Park at 07h30.</b>		
15 Nov	<b>GIBA GORGE</b> Pretty valley with streams and waterfalls. Meet at 13h45 at the cycle track. Phone Lois for directions. Entrance R10. Safe parking. Drinks at pub / restaurant.	Lois/Werner	031 767 2969
16 Nov	<b>MUSTANG MOUNTAIN</b> Starting from Hammarsdale, skirting Bartlett's Estate & back. Petrol sharing R15.	Steve Nel	083 454 0569
19 Nov	Wednesday walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
22 Nov	<b>ASSAGAY MEANDER</b> Assagay suburb and farm area. Lovely views. Meet at Sugar Loaf Centre, bottom of Botha's Hill at 13h45. Pizzas at Paparazzi's afterwards. Easy	Lois	031 767 2969
23 Nov	<b>EXPLORATION HIKE</b> Near Richmond. Meet at Pinetown Civic Centre 07h15. This is a Backpackers' hike.	Grant	073 616 8789
29 Nov	<b>LOWER BURMAN BUSH</b> Shady walk through indigenous bush, returning via upper Morningside. Meet at 13h45 at Rose Garden opposite Mitchell Park.	Werner	031 767 2969
30 Nov	<b>DRUMMOND</b> Max will lead this hike starting from his house in Drummond, around Peacevale and other places. Bring drinks for afterwards. Petrol sharing R15.	Max	031 783 4173 083 968 4434
3 Dec	Wednesday walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
6 Dec	<b>CHRISTMAS PARTY - KRANSKLOOF</b> See Social Calendar for details		
7 Dec	<b>UMHLANGA MEANDER</b> Jenny will explore an extension of her Umhlanga estuary hike. Meet outside the Sharks Board in Umhlanga Ridge at 08h30.	Jenny	084 952 0622
13 Dec	<b>SPRINGSIDE NATURE RESERVE</b> Circular walk to Emberton and grasslands/forest walk through reserve. Meet at 13h45 at reserve car park, R10 donation to conservancy. Bring & braai afterwards in reserve. Easy	Trevor	079 525 9230
14 Dec	No hike today		
17 Dec	Wednesday walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
20 Dec	<b>SUMMERVELD/SHONGWENI</b> Another of Colin's good hikes. Meet in front of Assagay	Colin	031 708 3517