

That evening we all enjoyed a sociable gathering around the braai, as the stars emerged through the drifting clouds. Easter eggs and toasted marshmallows rounded off a most enjoyable day.

Having exerted a fair bit of physical exercise on Saturday, there was less enthusiasm for a hike on Sunday, but Brian was ready at the usual 9 a.m. to lead a hike up to Mushroom Rock. Seven of the more energetic set off, but two visitors and friends broke off to do a lower route, leaving three of us to persevere up to Mushroom, enjoying elevated views of the hotel, the helipad, the gorges towards "The Cathedral" and the splendid peaks of the escarpment. "Young" Brian got right up to and under the Mushroom, from where he took pictures of the interesting rock formation and the views below.

Many lizards and live things scuttled away at our approach, but a Berg Adder lingered in full view on the side of the path about a metre ahead of me! Before we could aim our cameras the 30cm long, black with white patterning, snake slithered off into the long grass. At camp, a troop of Baboon came to investigate our part of the campsite while we were resting our feet and having refreshments. A young trout fisherman got out his "stun gun", aimed and fired - and the troop made off in great haste! Bar one bull who stayed in the trees near Brian's tent. He "shooed" at it, but was assisted more effectively by the young man's stun gun, again. What a useful device!

The clouds gathered again, but this time dropped their load remorselessly. It rained all night, which made for damp packing up on Monday. However, we had had a really bright, warm, eventful and enjoyable Easter week-end at Cathedral Peak with good hikes led by Brian."

And now for Oribi Gorge:

"Twenty three Ramblers joined by four Backpackers had a fun time at this well organized Parks Board Reserve. Werner led us on a surprise hike on the Saturday, with some attractive river scenery and spectacular paper bark trees. We crossed the river at the bottom of the gorge before trekking the 4.5 km uphill back to camp - a challenge indeed! Saturday night was a beautiful, clear evening and although chilly, the braai fire, beverages and good company kept us warm!

Sunday, Werner led us on a hike across the top of the gorge with some spectacular views before descending down into indigenous forest and 1000 steps to the bottom of the gorge! This number we will attribute to Billy because after each hundred steps she gauged the distance, I would be most happy to settle for 2000 steps - it becomes a bit of a fishing story! Suffice to say it was a long way down. We were met at the bottom of the gorge and driven back up to the camp site where we lunched before striking camp and heading off home.

Thanks again to Sandy and Derek for organizing another great weekend."

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



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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE DURBAN RAMBLERS' HIKING CLUB

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2010

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CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

Hi everyone, and a happy World Cup howzit to you all. I hope you are all enjoying the soccer, especially the vuvuzelas! At the moment we are really spoilt for choice where sport is concerned, what with the World Cup, the Springboks rugby and the Proteas tour of the West Indies all available

on TV. But I'm glad to say you are not using all this sport as an excuse for not getting out and hiking! At the moment all our hikes on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays and the weekends away are being very well supported so I think a big pat on the back is due to our dedicated and hard-working hike organisers. Each quarter they turn out a programme with new hikes and venues that are both interesting and challenging. Also, our hike organisers have arranged several joint hikes with other hiking groups. The interaction with fellow hikers is working out very well and has given added dimension and pleasure to the hikes. Well done, guys!

I now turn to a topic that has been giving me some cause for concern lately. When Anne and I joined the Ramblers 10 years ago, the average age of members was about 55. Today the average age is somewhere nearer 65, which means that we as a group are ageing and it doesn't need an Einstein to figure out that if this trend continues, in another 10 years the Club could be in trouble! It's really important that we ensure the survival of the Club by encouraging younger people to join us so that in time they can take on the mantle of running the Club. I know it isn't easy - younger people these days are attracted to the more adrenaline-pumping activities, but where possible we each need to get out and actively canvas support from the younger generation. So come on, everyone, get out there and drag a young friend or relative with you to the next hike.

Regards
Trevor

Member News

New members joining us during the last quarter are listed below. We extend a very warm welcome to you all and hope you enjoy many happy hours hiking the hills and dales with us.

☺ Peter Brazier
☺ Helen Perry
☺ Astrid Fraser

☺ Trish Johnson
☺ Ron Page

HIKING SCHEDULE

July - September 2010

Saturday Hikes

- **Please note:** Saturday hikers intending to meet at Musgrave Park should instead phone Philip prior to leaving and arrange a pickup or travel in convoy with him. Musgrave Park has become hazardous due to roadworks.
- Please get to starting point by 13h45 in order for hike to begin on time.
- 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.

Date	Description	Leader	Contact Person
24 - 26 September (long weekend)	Eagle View - Caravan park and farmhouse. Popular venue at Wartburg. Camping R70 pppn, pensioners R60 pppn. Also large farmhouse with 5 bedrooms, large lounge/ dining room and fully equipped kitchen - R95 pppn.	Brian	Sandra 031-765 5029 084 355 4832

Please, if you are depositing money into the Club's bank account, could we ask you not to deposit cash as this results in the Club being charged large fees by the bank. Please use a cheque, direct debit or internet banking. Many thanks.

The Club's away weekends are proving extremely popular, and no wonder when we read the following enthusiastic reports on the weekends at Cathedral Peak (written by Ann Olds) and Oribi Gorge (by Coleen Seath). First, Cathedral Peak

"Some of us were able to get up to Cathedral Peak on Thursday ahead of the Easter week-end enthusiasts, and Sandra was advised by Ezemvelo rangers to tape off a block of campsites for Ramblers. What a good thing this was as we could comfortably move about chatting without walking across sites of "strangers". We were parked and pitched before the typical afternoon Berg shower.

Early Friday afternoon we hiked from the Hikers' car park below Cathedral Peak Hotel to the Trout Farm and were in good time to watch "feeding". Brian led us on a circular route to the Hotel where we treated ourselves to tea and cream scones!

In the dead of night we were all awoken to the alarming shouts from the security guard close by for assistance from his partner. A number of young men had cut through the fence and stolen boots and sandals from Roy and Rose's gazebo. Security vans arrived within about ten minutes, and much activity ensued the rest of the night. The robbers were later apprehended - one of them wearing Roy's brand-new boots! And Rose's sandals were found on the escape route. The boots were held by the police as evidence, so Roy hiked in borrowed boots the rest of the week-end.

Saturday dawned clear and sunny so Rainbow Gorge would be the perfect route for the day. Herbie and Ray arrived from Durban in time for breakfast before the day-hike. The river was really full and churning as a result of good rains the whole summer, and many waterfalls and streams adorned the trail. The undergrowth of ancient ferns, moss on huge boulders and decaying tree trunks adds a "fairyland/hobgoblin" atmosphere to this age-old gorge. Many "water-stops" afforded us time to enjoy the views and absorb the beauty. About three-quarters of the way to the waterfall, river-crossings become inevitable. This meant wading through, rather than "rock-hopping". Nine of the party of eighteen ventured on until the river became just too hectic, a short way from the waterfall.

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
Sat 11 Sept	Roosfontein Grasslands and riverine forest. Meet at entrance to Westville Prison at 13h45. Drinks afterwards at Firkin pub on the Pavilion rooftop.	Rob	083 417 7805
Sun 12 Sept	Umdloti to La Mercy/Mount Moreland This is a lovely moderate hike which encompasses a bit of everything. Distance about 18 km. Meet at the parking opposite the Bush Tavern at Umdloti at 08h30.	Brian	083 228 1981
Wed 15 Sept	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 18 Sept	Bartlett Estate Moderate hike through grasslands and sugar canefields. R10.00 donation to conservancy. Meet at 13h30 at Assagay Hotel to proceed in convoy to the Estate.	Dennis	083 320 4951
Sun 19 Sept	Summerveld This is a joint Backpackers/ Ramblers hike in the Summerveld area being led by Gary Sharpe. Meet at Stokers at 08h30.	Gary	072 902 4899
Wed 22 Sept	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 25 Sept	Summerveld Meet at Assagay Hotel at 13h30, walk in the Summerveld conservancy area. Parking at the Summerveld club.	Colin	031 708 3517
Sun 26 Sept	Mount Gilboa We are joining PMB Ramblers for a hike up Mount Gilboa in the Karkloof area to see the Clivias in full flower. Petrol sharing costs R50. Meet in Pinetown at 07h30. Hike leader: Mike Kirby.	Mike	Jon is Coordinating on 084 952 0622
Wed 29 Sept	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592

WEEKEND & TRAILS PROGRAMME

3rd QUARTER 2010

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

Sunday Hikes (Full Day)

- **Always** phone the hike leader beforehand to let him/her know to expect you on the hike.
- 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 Morning Hikes

Please check details of the hikes with Colin or Philip at the numbers shown. If no response is obtained from the first leader phoned, please phone the alternate leader - don't just leave a message as one of them may be away on holiday.

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
Sat 3 July	Palmiet Nature Reserve Shady walk beside river. Meet at Reserve car park below Westville Hotel at 13h45. Drinks afterwards at the Westville Hotel.	Philip	031 201 3592
Sun 4 July	Thornridge Farm Walk in a conservancy area at Cato Ridge. Petrol Sharing costs R35 and R10 donation to the conservancy. Bring your drinks for afterwards.	Jon	082 459 1522
Wed 7 July	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 10 July	1000 Hills Grasslands and bush overlooking the valley of 1000 hills. Park at Drum and Bell at 13h45 and have a drink there afterwards.	Werner	084 206 7836
Sun 11 July	Amanzimtoti - Winkelspruit Beach walk. Meet at the Sanlam Centre, Amanzimtoti at 08h30 or Davenport Shopping Centre at 08h00. Petrol sharing costs R15.	Roy & Rose	031 702 6464 082 671 4606
Wed 14 July	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 17 July	Durban Beachfront - Ushaka to Umgeni New hike!! Let us acquaint ourselves with the up-graded beach front of Durban. Meet at Ushaka car park at 13h45. Drinks afterwards at Ushaka.	Werner	084 206 7836
Sun 18 July	Umlazi Meander Hike down into the lovely stretch of the Umlazi River above Shongweni Dam and enjoy the abundant bird life. Binoculars are handy on this hike. Petrol sharing costs R20	Gary	072 902 4899

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
Wed 21 July	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 24 July	Paradise Valley Shady walk with waterfalls and open grasslands. Meet at Paradise valley parking area at 13h45. R10.00 entrance fee.	Ismail	031 209 0902
Sun 25 July	Nqutu Gorge & Inanda Dam view sites We park at the Nqutu Gorge picnic site (the farther of the 2 Krantzklouf picnic sites) and hike down to Nqutu Falls, across to the Umgeni River valley and Inanda Dam view sites. Entrance fee of R15 and R10 petrol sharing costs.	Colin	031 708 3517
Wed 28 July	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 31 July	St Heliers - Giba Walk along bike tracks, streams and waterfalls. Meet at St Heliers Lake parking area at 13h45.	Rob	083 320 4951
Sat 31 July	Ferncliffe to Otto's Bluff Note this is a Saturday hike. We are joining Midlands Hiking Club for a new variation of this very scenic and popular hike which has wonderful views over Pietermaritzburg and Albert Falls Dam. Hike Leader is Brian Henwood. Approx 15 kms. Meet in Pinetown at 07h15. Petrol sharing costs R45.	Brian	Jenny is co-ordinating the hike on 084 952 0622
Wed 4 Aug	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 7 Aug	Marianhill Monastery An old hike resurrected! Walk in the grounds of the Mariannhill Monastery. Meet at the monastery car park at 13h45. R20 donation includes hike and tour of the main buildings. Tea and scones at the monastery gardens afterwards.	Erica	031 2661853
Mon 9 Aug	Dargle-Lemonwood Trail Public holiday walk with PMB Ramblers. Steep hike. Meet in Pinetown at 07h30 or at Howick North off ramp at 08h45. Hike leader Richard. Petrol sharing costs R50.	Richard	Jenny is co-ordinating the hike on 084 952 0622
Wed 11 Aug	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 14 Aug	Hawaan Forest, Umhlanga Shady coastal forest walk returning via beach. Meet at 13h45 opposite Cabana Beach Hotel. Bring and braai at Merle's afterwards.	Merle	031 561 3038

Date	Description of Hike	Leader	Tel
Sun 15 Aug	Everdon Estates Hike in the Karkloof area with Midlands Hiking Club. A stunning hike with spectacular views. A level of fitness is required. Leader is Keith Ashton. Meet in Pinetown at 07h15. Petrol sharing costs R50.	Keith	Jenny is co-ordinating the hike on 084 952 0622
Wed 18 Aug	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 21 Aug	Sibaya Meander Meet at Sibaya Casino at 13h45 on right hand side of parking area. Lovely views. Drinks at the casino afterwards.	Jenny	084 952 0622
Sun 22 Aug	Chantecler/Alverston Dieter will lead us on his very popular but easy hike through farmlands and country lanes starting from the old Heidi's farm stall which has been modernised somewhat since we last did this hike. Petrol Sharing costs R15	Dieter	031 462 7445
Wed 25 Aug	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 28 Aug	Kloof Bottom Falls Hike to the bottom of Kloof gorge. Meet at Kranskloof picnic and parking area. R15.00 entrance.	Ann	031 767 1027
Sun 29 Aug	Wingfield Moderate hike in the Wingfield Farm Conservancy area at Mid-Iilovo. Meet at Davenport Shopping Centre at 07h30 or at Kingsburgh turnoff on N2 (Exit 32) at R603 at 08h00. Petrol sharing costs R40 plus R10 donation to Conservancy.	Nevil	083 977 2475
Wed 1 Sept	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592
Sat 4 Sept	Emberton/Springside Nature Reserve Walk from Emberton driving range across grasslands to the Springside Nature Reserve. Meet at the driving range at 13h45. Tea, coffee and cake at the Emberton Coffee Shop afterwards.	Dennis	083 320 4951
Sun 5 Sept	Stockville Starting from a pub in Gillitts, down into Giba Gorge from St Helier and then across to the Stockville valley. Beautiful views across the valley to Kloof and then down into the valley itself. An interesting amalgamation of peoples and cultures.	Jon	082 459 1522
Wed 8 Sept	Wednesday Walk	Colin or Philip	031 708 3517 031 201 3592