



Chairman	Tom de Waal	474766	(H)
Secretary	Margret Kirsten	441467	(H)
Treasurer	Winnie Jackson	3052515	(H)
Day Hikes	Bettie Smetryns	445902	(H)
Berg Hikes	Rosemary Foster	842522	(H)
Trails	Bruce Medway	235895	(H)
Photographic	Trevor Coxon	425531	(H)
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Affiliated to the Hiking Federation of South Africa

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*Lesley Fripp (work)*  
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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 89/MARCH 89

The 1989 Annual General Meeting of the Club will be held at the home of Phil Caws, 26 Bedale Road, Malvern (see directions as per map on page 2) on Sunday, 19th February 1989 commencing 14h00 sharp.

This will be preceded by a braai from 12h00 onwards. Please bring your own meat/salad/refreshments.

It is important that as many people as possible attend the meeting, please make a special effort.

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A warm welcome to new member Mervyn Hackner.

Everglades Resort welcome Durban Ramblers Hiking Club Members.  
Price Monday to Friday out of season - R35 per day per person.  
Weekend specials - R85 per person.  
Contact Harry & Lyn Shaw, P O Everglades.

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FUTURE EVENTS

MARCH 1989

4/5 Bulwer Hotel weekend with Johannesburg Hiking Club.  
Maximum 14 people. Cost - dinner bed and breakfast  
R34,72 (inclusive of GST). Enquiries Mike Morillion  
(7011758 B) (3091566 H after 8 p.m.).

ADVANCE NOTICES

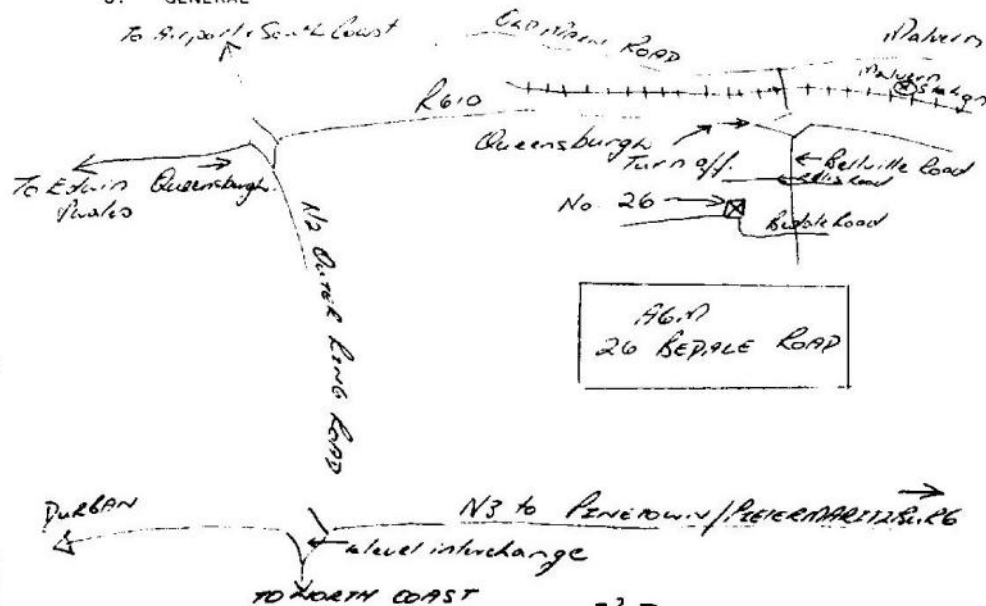
14 MAY CEDARA CIRCULAR Leader Winnie Jackson (3052515 H).  
Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30. Members R7  
Visitors RB.

17 to 30 JUNE STRANDLOPER TRAIL (East London Coast)  
Provisional Dates - Phone Eamon Bussy (473400 H)  
for details.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
DURBAN RAMBLERS HIKING CLUB  
 WILL BE HELD AT THE HOME OF MR PHIL CAWS  
 26 Bedale Road, Malvern on Sunday  
 19 FEBRUARY 1989 AT 14H00

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES
2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LAST A.G.M.
3. MATTERS ARISING
4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
5. FINANCIAL REPORT AND BALANCE SHEET
6. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS
7. CORRESPONDENCE
8. GENERAL



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1988

Ladies and gentlemen, all members of the Durban Ramblers Hiking Club, and members of the Committee. The annual report, taking the year that has passed in review, is not always as simple as it first appears.

I think it fair to say that 1988 cannot be considered a very successful year. There were too many non-events, some failures, and a marked decline in out-and-out support for the Club and its activities. During the year a number of leaders, mainly of Berg Trips, had to cancel their trips due to lack of interest for these trips. Thus, a number of non-events. To try and promote a social spirit among members, especially between Berg hikers and Day hikers, braai evenings were held on the fourth Wednesday of the month, as was suggested at a very successful informal meeting of all interested hikers. The first two were quite successful, after that virtually negligible interest. So, a fine idea from the members, resulted in a failure.

For a long time, after the first very successful Barn Dance, people were asking the Committee when we were having another one. So the Committee got stuck in, and organised another one. Same venue, same great music from the same competent Disc Jockey, a fine, cool evening. Result again a failure. Out of nearly 400 members, we barely had 50 at the dance. In the ensuing weeks, I heard some of the flimsiest excuses for non-attendance that can be imagined.

On the credit side, we've had some very exciting outings, both Day hikes and Berg hikes. Thanks to Dick Billiet for some imaginative thinking resulting in some very different weekend hikes. Full marks to Winnie Jackson for some lovely new Day hikes, and Eamon Bussy as well for his stout efforts. Mike Morillion deserves praise for his up-country trails in the Transvaal and weekends to Bulwer and Mhlopheni. The meeting of Johannesburg Hiking Club members with Ramblers members for a weekend of hiking at Royal Natal National Park was also a very successful event, thanks to Cedric Biggs who led our contingent. Winnie Jackson's "Brandwater Trail in the Free State" was a really top class hike of 5 days, covering 72 kilometres. Our Day hikes remain very popular and well attended, and some of our Berg hikes were also popular and successful. What a pity that Bill Hyslop's Victorian Picnic was so poorly attended, considering that he used a grand new route and a lovely final picnic spot. The annual hike and braai at Mick and Gloria McConnell's farm at Curry's Post was another gloriously happy and gay affair, well attended by some of our older original members.

With our finances in good shape, and new members joining all the time, new hikes in our programme, I predict the future to be a good one. But! ... yes But! ... We need your support for our hikes, for all our activities, we need desperately some adventurous young men and women to become Berg hike and Day hike leaders, we need your support with new ideas, and everyone's support to help us run our hiking club smoothly and successfully for the benefit and enjoyment of all our members. Please will you give us that very necessary support.

I hope to see you all at our A.G.M. on the 19th February at Phil Caw's residence.

Tom de Waal  
 Chairman

#### DEPARTURE POINTS FOR DAY HIKES

DURBAN - Musgrave Park parking area - corner Berea and Musgrave Roads.

PINETOWN - Union Main Centre - Old Main Road, outside Big Bite. Please do not park your car outside Big Bite.

#### VENUE PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETINGS

Randall Scout Hall, Milner Road (behind Cowey Centre, next to electricity sub station). Please park in Milner Road.

#### DIARY OF DURBAN RAMBLERS HIKING CLUB ACTIVITIES

##### FEBRUARY 1989

- 4/5 COBHAM - Something different - specially for day hikers. Join me and I'll prove that Berg Hikes are not too tough for you. I promise you two walks that you will remember. Leader - Tom de Waal (474766 H).
- Sun 5 MPOSANE - Leader Steve Watson (214512 H). Depart Durban 8 a.m. Pinetown 08h30 - Members R7 Visitors R8.
- 11/12 HELLA HELLA - R15 per person - limit 10 people. Leader Audrey Vickers (283187 between 6 - 6.30 p.m.).
- Sun 12 GIBA GORGE - Leader Jo Streyton (215985 H). Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30. Members R4 Visitors R5.
- Wed 15 PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETING AT 7.45 P.M. - Bill Hyslop - Slides on Hiking Trail in France shown. Phone Trevor Coxon (425531 H).
- Sun 19 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at the home of Phil Caws. Your support and contribution will be welcomed.
- 25/26 HILLSIDE - Day walks from campsite. Closing date 11 February 1989. Leader Terry Lubbe (223857 H).
- Sun 26 CRAIG LEA - Leader Bill Hyslop (726763 H). Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30. Members R5 Visitors R6.

##### MARCH 1989

- Sun 5 BURMAN BUSH - HIKE-N-BRAAI Depart Durban venue only 10h00. Members R1 Visitors R2. Fires provided - bring your own meat, salads and drinks.
- Sun 12 THE EYRIE - Leader Eamon Bussy (473400 H). Depart Durban 07h30 Pinetown 08h30. Members R6 Visitors R7.
- 11/12 GXALINGENWA CAVE - Leader Tom de Waal (474766 H).
- Wed 15 PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETING AT 7.45 P.M. Dr Philip de Moor will be showing slides of a hike up the Ruwenzori Mountains in Zaire and the Wildlife Corridors.
- Sun 19 TOPPS NEEDLE - Leader Tom de Waal (474766 H). Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30. Members R4 Visitors R5.
- 24-27 ZULULAND EASTER ADVENTURE - Mtunzini Resource Centre - Self catering and tenting. For further particulars phone Winnie Jackson (3052512 H).

##### APRIL 1989

- Sun 2 MONT AUX SEAL Leader Mike Morillion. Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30. Members R7 Visitors R8.
- Sun 9 MOUNT ASHLEY-LYNNWOOD Leader Bettie Smetyrns (445902 H). Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30. Members R7 Visitors R8.
- Sun 16 INGOMANKHULU Leader Eamon Bussy (473400 H). Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30. Members R6 Visitors R7.
- 22/23 BIRD'S NEST CAVE - VERGELEGEN (EXPLORATION) Leader Jack Aumord (423245 H).
- Sun 23 MPAMPANYONI - Leader Tom de Waal (474766 H). Depart Durban only at 07h30. Members R6 Visitors R7.
- Sun 30 UMKOMAAS GORGE - Leader Bill Hyslop (726763 H). Depart Durban only at 08h30. Members R7 Visitors R8.

#### JOINT MEET WITH JOHANNESBURG HIKING CLUB AT ROYAL NATIONAL PARK - NOV. 19/20

"Rarely, rarely comest Thou, Spirit of delight". If I have remembered the quotation correctly, this must have been one of those rare occasions. The camp in rugged glen was a delight; the weather was a delight; the scenery was a delight; the trips chosen by the two leaders, Chris & Cedric, were a delight; and above all, the company was a delight.

Anyone seeing us gathered around the camp-fire that Saturday evening would never have guessed that the party consisted of two groups of people meeting for the first time. During the day we had got to know each other on a pleasant social ramble up the "crack" and down the "mud-slide", with pauses by pleasant pools where the more hydrophilic disported themselves. We lunched on the hill-top from which the views towards the escarpment were splendid. And how could such ominous titles as "the crack" and the "mud-slide" have been given? The one was a pleasant steep-walled gully with easy scrambling to the top; the other was an interesting steep bank with lots of trees to give both shade and support and little chain ladders to give help on the rocky bits.

Sunday saw a varied programme: those with children to watch over staying fairly close to camp - and these included our past stalwart member - Ed Coogan who now is a prosperous-looking Johannesburger; others went horse-riding; and the longer hike took the rest up the magnificent gorge of the Tugela to the foot of the Tugela Falls. Again, those who liked cold water took to the famous "tunnel", whilst those who preferred steep tracks took the chain-ladder and a winding route over the hillside to reach the same place. As Cedric commented, this walk up the Tugela Valley must rank with anything in the world for sheer scenic beauty.

As chance would have it, the members had, almost unanimously decided to bring "Licorice All-Sorts" as the sweet to chew on the outings, so we were continually exchanging these things during the two days: all helping to make the week-end a moving experience.

Thank you Johannesburgers for your company: we hope to see you again soon!

Bill Hyslop

#### NSHONGWENI DAM CIRCUIT - 15 JANUARY 1989

Twenty-five brave souls put their faith and trust in me as substitute leader, on this, a perfect hiking day.

The walk commenced, following the dirt road 'round the perimeter of the dam to the river, where the fun 'n games started. Heading up stream we criss-crossed the river a few times trying to locate the bush path, and after missing it in the process, boulder-hopped further upstream to some derelict buildings on the river bank. Regrouping here, we clambered up the now revegetated landslide to the path in the bush, and once again on familiar terrain, proceeded along the top of a grassy tree-strewn ridge to the zulu dwellings.

With a full panoramic view of the dam in the distance, we descended the rocky path, and crossing the sandy valley, had our lunch-break under a large "Ficus Natalensis".

"Walkies" once again, and once more it was a bush-bound path to the top of the opposite ridge, with two of our party experiencing cramps and heat fatigue, but like true hikers they pulled through admirably. The view from here onwards along the top of the cliff face was tremendous, looking down on the fast-flowing canal and the silted-up valley.

We eased down the rocky path to the dam and picnic area, welcoming the sight of the taps and ablution block, as we were all virtually out of water after this, a real hot day in the bush.

Mike "sand in the shoe" Morillion.

THE BRANDWATER TRAIL by Tom de Waal

Our party of 12 assembled at the very pretty camping and picnic resort called Meiringskloof, near Fouriesburg in the Orange Free State. It is fairly new, but already boasts the finest public ablution block I've yet come across anywhere, and has ample space for everyone, male and female, in separate sections of course. Shortly after breakfast on the first morning Winnie led us out of Meiringskloof Gorge up a long chain ladder and along Meiringskloof spruit over large slopes of pure flat stone with much water seepage. This was where Winnie had an unfortunate mishap over a slippery stretch of seepage, which put her out of the rest of the hike. This was very sad, as she was the only organiser of the trail and the accepted leader. She put Tom in charge, and off we went, along level paths up long grass slopes to the top of high ridges, from where the farms could be seen down in the valleys. They looked like mosaics and much like patchwork quilts way down there, with different crops and activities in the various squared fields in varied colours.

In the dry heat, thirst was a problem, but fortunately we found quite a few clear, cool streams flowing out of the high hills, down small gullies, much as you find in the Drakensberg, though not as plentiful. And traversing the high Rooiberge and the higher Snyman'shoek Berg, the path wound through large patches of "Fynbos" and "nChi-Chi" bush, often more luxuriant than in our Drakensberg.

On the descent from Snyman'shoek Berg we travelled along contour paths littered everywhere with agate and other crystals and many different coloured stones. From there high on a ridge, and a cool breeze in our faces, we saw distant sandstone cliffs with thin waterfalls and cascades, and Free State's highest mountain Generaalskop (2757m) somewhere in the Golden Gate area, loomed up in the distance, misty and blue.

Down in the lowlands, where the farms lay, we found gushing, clear streams with many beautiful willows, offering cool shade to weary hikers. Everything along the way was beautifully green and fresh-looking, and whether high on the ridges or down along farm roads and paths, there were many and varied wild flowers to be seen, much of them also found in the Drakensberg.

The other men, Dave, Terry, Mike and Philip in that order were asked by Tom after the initial day to lead the remaining days hikes, which they did so well, that we always reached the next stop very early in the afternoons, and had time to wash up and do some looking around.

Our night stops were in huge sandstone overhangs, and they were huge. Imagine a huge, deep crescent shaped cave, which could easily accommodate 3 to 4 brick and tile houses side by side, the biggest one easily 6 to 7 such houses, and all of them with plenty of room still left to the top of the overhang. Although spacious, the floors were dusty and abundantly strewn with sheep and goat droppings, and many a cow patty, and in one such "Holkrans" as they were called, there were definite signs of people turning into dung beetles, to clear their sleeping places, before spreading space blankets, etc., over the dusty dung-aromatic straw. Nevertheless, we all slept well, ate well, and sounded well, as many a pure sounding note attested during the later evening, which included some snoring.

Every day from some high ridge, the Maluti Mountains were clearly visible, shrouded in streaky clouds, looming a hazy cobalt blue high over the distant landscape. All along our way we were scenically entertained by magnificent sandstone cliffs, vertical, curved, sculptured in huge varied shapes, and coloured in vibrant colours of pale sandstone, ochre, pink, red and brown, all beautifully blended, the whole contrasting perfectly with all-over greenness of the grass and other vegetation. The fourth days hike, which closely followed the Little Caledon river, passed through a truly superbly scenic gorge, with the earlier mentioned coloured sandstone cliffs on all sides.

Civilisation only returned when we passed a settlement of local inhabitants, with their very picturesque red, brown and ochre mud dwellings, the sides of which were decorated with intricate patterns fashioned by palms and fingers while the mud was wet.

Five days, and 72 kilometres later, we were all agreed. A wonderful, scenic, different and challenging trail, and well worth the effort, thanks to Winnie.

MOUNT BULWER FLORAL HIKE

Date: 9 - 11 December 1988

Leader: Dick Billiet

Group Members: Dick, Regina, Heinz, Diana, Robin, Betty, Jacky, Tony, Marie and Belinda

All ten of us met at dusk at Boston, after a rather misty drive from Durban. We then proceeded with Rob Spiers, our "host" and guide, to Brentwood Farm, and its farmhouse where we were to spend two nights. The farmhouse itself was large and rambling - so many rooms, enough for a bedroom each. Other luxuries included Escom electricity and hot/cold running water. It even boasted its own Camabert cheese - loving cat!

At 5 am we awoke - no luxuries of lie-ins with the bird-life in full chorus. After a leisurely breakfast, we proceeded to the Mountain View Hotel in Bulwer to clamber up the Mountain. A couple of us having chosen to sleep at the Hotel and enjoy its luxuries. Jacky and Betty laden with the makings for pop-corn for lunch on the Mountain. Another couple chose to take the contour path to see the Bushmen Paintings and to brush-up their rusty German with Heinz, who is visiting his daughter, Regina, from West Germany, at the Hotel's Bar. There were so many walks from the beautiful hotel; it really posed a problem of which one to choose! At about 5 pm the motley group were reunited to return to the farm and its luxuries of hot baths and a mouthful of "what killed aunty".

The evening braai was a jolly affair, until horrors!!! Jacky and Betty produced their fish to braai - we were nearly black-balled by Rob who is a dairy/beef farmer. Anyway, the cat lost out. Besides Rob, some other "talent" joined us: Jacques the local "konstabel", I think, Clive, armed with half a dozen arums for Jacky (we will not query whence the bouquet was plucked!), and 2 farmers from the OFS - Ruben and Burgers - all of whom made generous contributions to the fun and booze.

At about 8 am the next morning, Rob arrived to take us on a gentle walk around the farm - he had been up since 5 am milking the cows. Having ensured that the arums given to Jacky wouldn't wilt, by putting them in the loo, as a make-shift vase, we rambled off through the veld identifying gladioli, ground orchids, duck nests, toadstools and grabbing handfuls of blackberries - of which there was an abundance. We stopped often to crush leaves, sample camphor - tasting berries and smell roots - Rob really brought the veld alive to us city-dwellers.

After lunch, which was next to a thunderous waterfall, we made up for the leisurely ramble by "hot footing" it up a steep hillside, to be home just ahead of the storm. Rob's offer of raiding his plum and peach trees at his home and meeting his wife, Celia, was gladly accepted.

The week-end was very enjoyable for the nature-lover; even for those who just enjoy looking at "pretty yellow flowers", this week-end should not be missed. Wonderful time of year. Rob Spiers should be thanked for sparing his week-end to show us around and for giving us the socio-political background of this rather controversial area. We wish him well with the project of turning Brentwood into a reserve.

Happy wanderings.

Belinda Eisenhower

by Margret Kirsten

In the early hours of the 20 Nov. 1988, three of us, myself, Audrey Vickers and Vic Conrad headed for Pietermaritzburg, picked up Margaret Robberts and drove in the direction of Queenstown, over the Katberg pass to the Katberg Forestry Station. This area is managed by the Ciskei, and part of the Ciskei.

We did a 2 day trail here with an overnight stay in Diepkloof hut, the only hut on the trail. (more are proposed). The trail paths are good but have very few indicators on the first day. The trail is very varied from pine forests to beautiful indigenous forests, the path winding up to just below the escarpment from where we had wonderful views and sheer rockfaces above us. Some sections of forests were severely burned and had a sad appearance, erosion has already started in these places.

One thing we noticed and missed on this trail is, new pine plantations but has besides these few things some very beautiful parts. The hut has only recently been finished and has a sand floor which could be very dusty if the party is large.

En route to Swellendam we spent a full day at Sedgefield. A four hour beach-walk and a visit to Knysna and Noetzie filled our day, finishing off with a lovely braai and a good few glasses of Cape's famous liquid.

We visited the well known Drostdy Museum, Ambagswerf and Mayville in Swellendam, which was very interesting, before proceeding to the Swellendam trail's starting point. This trail is situated in the Marloth Nature Reserve and is extremely well laid out with excellent overnight huts. Daily distances are not long, 10 to 15 km, but have some steep climbs and descents and require a fair degree of fitness. We made an early start each day and took it leisurely, still arriving appr. 1-2 pm at our next overnight hut. The mountain scenery is too beautiful for words and we were lucky to have clear, hot days most times. In fact, it never rained, in daytime, during the whole 2 weeks.

November is the best time to see the Cape fynbos, which was in full flower. Carpets of Erica, vast varieties of proteas with some exquisite species. A photographers paradise. The mountain streams provided cool swims most days. Each day we had time to go for an afternoon exploration in a kloof close by or climb one of the peaks surrounding us. There are many walks one can do from each hut. The changing landscapes and colourful fynbos are the highlights on this trail. It is one of the finest trails I have done.

We continued our trip to Montagu, visited the main places of interest in town and made our way to Donkerkloof hut. Again a very nice and looked after hut, surrounded by high cliffs. (hence the name). This area is very rocky, dry and hot. The Bloupunt and Cogmans kloof trails are a must. The fynbos is quite different from the fynbos at Swellendam and the scenery fantastic. Bloupunt peak gave us splendid views all around us. We spotted 5 tows, Montagu, Ashton, Robertson, McGregor and Bonnievale.

The last afternoon we walked through Bathkloof, also known as Loverswalk, to the Avalon Hot Springs holiday resort. The hot pools did miracles to our muscles and was very relaxing.

After some wine tasting at the Muskadel Farmers Co-op we sadly had to make our way back to Durban via the H. Verwoerd Dam, where we spent our last night.

Many thanks to my companions, it was a great trip.