



H
A
P
P
Y

X
M
A
S

DURBAN RAMBLERS CLUB

DURBAN RAMBLERS CLUB.

CHAIRMAN: Bob Ferns SECRETARY: Diane Harbour
Phone 331697/331916 Phone 832590

TREASURER: Robert Booker EDITOR: Michael Wigley
Phone 44811 Phone 351304

P.O. Box 1063.

JANUARY, 1967.

Sunday 8th MacPherson's Cascades Hike with Bob Ferns leading. The lorry leaves the market place at 8.30 a.m. Members 50c, Visitors 55c.

Tuesday 10th Executive Committee Meeting at Mac Rand's flat, 9 Chelmsford Mansions, Chelmsford Road, at 8.00 p.m.

Wednesday 18th Photographic Meeting at the McConnell's home, Quentin Smythe Road, Kloof, at 8 p.m. See map on page 12. The subject is "Action".

Sunday 22nd Alverstone Hike with Mike Woods leading. The lorry leaves the market place at 8.30 a.m. Members 45c, Visitors 50c.

FEBRUARY.

Sunday 5th Black Rock Hike with Lindy leading. The lorry leaves the market place at 8.30 a.m. Members 45c, Visitors 50c.

Tuesday 7th Executive Committee meeting at Dymock Parr's home, 8 Litchfield Road, Cowies Hill, at 8.00 p.m.

RAMBLE - ENGLISH STYLE.

Beyond the common crazy spirit of getting out into the countryside in all types of weather, rambles in England were somewhat different from what I had been used to in the Durban Ramblers Club. But that's not to say they were not enjoyable - some of the most pleasant times I spent in England were on these outings.

Let me start at the beginning.

As I was living in the Victoria League Students' Hostel, I had seen a notice inviting people to join their Sunday rambles. Although London has plenty to offer on a Sunday, I decided it was high time that I saw the English countryside. "Meet outside the ticket barrier at Liverpool Street Station at 9.30 a.m. with a return ticket to Chingford" said the bulletin. To one not well versed in catching trains, the vast complex of a main-line London station is a problem. Realising this, I made sure I got there in time, bought my ticket and then looked out for some similarly dressed people.

This didn't present any problem, so rather shyly I enquired whether they were from the Victoria League, as I didn't recognise any faces. In a broad New Zealand accent, my question was answered in the affirmative - it was Ron Hyslop who organised the rambles every fortnight.

Soon after leaving the station the train picked its way slowly through the drab slums of London's East End. We were a very multi-national group of people - four Aussies, three Kiwis, one Indian, one Englishman and one solitary boetie. On other rambles we have had Canadians, Yanks, Malawians, Nigerians and Bermudans, to name a few. That reminds me of something I'll never forget; on one ramble a

Ghanian came dressed in his best bib and tucker - the complete Londoner with umbrella. Needless to say, neither the day nor the way was dry, so he was rather bedraggled by the time he returned!

After that aside, back to the day in question. We soon left the slums behind and after passing the 'posher' suburbs the train arrived at Chingford where we disembarked. Chingford is at the southern tip of Epping Forest which comprises some 5,600 acres. We first followed the road as far as Queen Elizabeth I's Hunting Lodge - a magnificent Tudor building which stands on a hilltop on the edge of the forest.

Turning half-left, we headed for the forest itself. It's a wonderful place for Londoners to picnic and amble through at their leisure. Probably the best time of the year is the autumn with the trees turning orange and brown, and leaves lying thick on the ground. But it's very easy to get lost! After winding about in different directions (so it seemed), we arrived at High Beach which commands a fine view over the forest, with the River Lee in the distance. Nearby is High Beach church which is typical of English village churches.

Descending gradually, we soon found ourselves at a roundabout and the Robin Hood Inn. Having invaded the precincts, we proceeded to consume our sandwiches, etc., while quenching our thirsts with ye olde English bitter - it's not too bad once you get used to it. The lunch break was far too short for my liking, for, as closing time was 2 p.m., we were asked to go outside. The weather didn't encourage standing still, so Ron soon gathered his forces together and, checking the direction of his compass, headed northwards.

Scuffing our feet through the dead leaves, we

chatted among ourselves and before long found that we had arrived at the reputed scene of Queen Boadicea's last stand against the invading Romans. It is quite interesting, but consists of nothing more than a circular raised mound of earth with the remains of a moat on the perimeter. Mind you, I suppose after so many hundreds of years have passed, it's inevitable that to our 20th Century eyes such a bastion appears comparatively insignificant.

Coming out of the forest, we found ourselves in the village of Epping and were led to a tea room where by prior arrangement the proprietors had laid on tea for us. After having almost more than our fill of tea, sandwiches and cakes, we were on our way again for a short walk to Theydon Bois. Here we boarded the Central Line tube, and singing unharmoniously (much to the disgust of fellow passengers), we headed for London.

One by one we got off and changed trains before returning to a room or bed-sitter; but not before we had expressed our appreciation to Ron for a wonderful day's outing.

Thus in two years I was able to see much of the countryside around London, enjoying every minute of it.

Should any of you who are going to the U.K. want to join in, you'll be more than welcome. If you write to the Victoria League Younger Members Group, 38 Chesham Place, London, S.W.1, they'll be only too pleased to help you.

Mike Castleden.

Our lunch break was kept down to the regulation one hour and all too soon we were moving upwards once more. By now, however, some form of relief was promised by the cloud which, all too occasionally, fleeted across the sun. Finally, with much panting and mopping of dripping brows, we made our way to the top of the ridge immediately below Mposane where, after allowing our somewhat scattered forces to regroup, we prepared for the assault on the summit. Some, however, preferred to decline the rewards of conquest and skirted round the shoulder of the hill while the others completed the course and proudly trod the heights.

Once that peak had been achieved and the two groups had joined forces, a slight dispute arose as to the better route to take. The rebel forces under Mac Rand won the day against the reactionaries headed by Robbie Booker and we began the descent of the hills that it had taken such an expenditure of energy to conquer. As the hours were slipping by, an increase in pace gradually became noticeable. Ah! thus do material things maintain their hold even on the hearts of Ramblers. They would scorn the delights of the country, yea and even its peace and solitude. For what? For a cool drink from Ben's Den. For such baubles they would reject a prize worth kingdoms. And I plead with them as they fly by. "Don't do it, I beseech you, don't do it". But with a crazed look in their eyes they laugh and press on. And they did it. They drank all the Coke before I got there.

The journey back was quite uneventful, apart from a few spots of rain making a threat that was never carried out, and some rather peculiar noises from the rear end of the truck where certain gentlemen were attempting to teach some of our new recruits to sing. Neither group seemed to achieve much harmony, but I would hate to suggest that this was any fault of the instructors.

Dick.

THE WILD LIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

You may have noticed an increasing number of stories about wild life in recent issues of the magazine and wondered why? Firstly, let me expose your Editor as a keen conservationist. Secondly, there are many things which are common to our two organisations.

When Col. Stevenson-Hamilton was fighting to expand the Kruger National Park, a few active people helped him to lobby M.P.'s and safeguard this wilderness. The fight, supported by the Wild Life Society, took two decades, but after setting the precedent other areas soon followed. In Natal most of our main reserves were proclaimed at the turn of the century, although the motives then were somewhat different to today's. The early Natal reserves were really hunting preserves and hunting took place around their borders for some years more.

The Tsetse Fly, many conservationists call it the friend of the game, prevented the early development of Zululand. After the First World War a determined effort was made to eradicate the fly so that cattle and other stock could be brought into the area. As carriers of the dreaded Nagana and hosts to the fly, wild life was blamed and a determined effort made to kill every living creature except the White Rhino. For years the bush reverberated to the sound of the rifle. In Mkuze alone 35,000 animals were shot.

All this time the Natal Society for the Preservation of Game and Natural Resorts, today the Natal Branch of the Wild Life Society, fought under the leadership of Dr. George Campbell to halt this destruction. These men were seldom, if ever, popular, but their fight proved worthwhile. The fight was won with DDT and other pesticides, together with the

simple practice of bush clearing around the reserves. Ironically, this is perhaps the only instance of pesticides proving beneficial to wild life, for today the indiscriminate use of these poisons presents one of the major threats to all animals and birds.

Col. Stevenson-Hamilton once said that we must worry about the big game animals and the small ones will look after themselves. Today we believe the converse is true. The big game is safe all the time the game reserves remain, but the small creatures are in most danger. As the development of the veld proceeds, the habitat of these animals is irrevocably destroyed.

It is this destruction that today is causing conservationists so much concern. It is also one of the common interests of our two organisations. Those of you who once walked along the south coast beaches or strolled through the forests beside the sea find today that these areas have gone. People and their cottages have destroyed the wild places. These places were the homes of smaller creatures and as the trees go so the shy animals lose their food supplies and shelter and go too.

As one who has enjoyed walking in many lands, I know you will agree that rambling is a joy that increases with the wildness of the area. There is less fun in strolling through a city park. There is great joy in seeing the proud Bushbuck or the pert Duiker in their own environment.

Fighting the battle to see industrial development planned for the benefit of everybody takes time, money and people. The people are needed to demonstrate that more than a few naturalists wish to keep these places. The money is needed not least to cover the administrative costs of such a fight. Human time is required to ensure that knowledge and

information can be collected and fed to the correct people.

The conservationist believes that this task is hard because so few people understand the joy of wildness and the sight of veld teeming with life. We believe that more people must be taught to appreciate these things, thus our slogan, 'Conservation begins with Education'. The numbering of trees and taking groups of people to places of interest are two of the ways we achieve this.

However, the finest educational mediums we have are our two journals, 'African Wild Life' and 'Natal Wild Life', which are both sent quarterly to all members of the Wild Life Society. Ramblers who want to keep their national heritage are welcome as members of the Society. For adults the annual subscription is just R3.15, and for juniors, who are under twenty-one, R2.00. Although two-thirds of your subscription is used to produce the magazines, the remainder is used to finance and run the Society. If you then find that your enjoyment of your rambles increases with increasing knowledge of the countryside, will this alone not be a sound investment? Who knows that the money you invest now may be the very thing that safeguards the land that gave you so much pleasure for your children.

Hardy Wilson.

You can join the Society by sending your name, address and subscription to The Secretary, The Wild Life Conservation Society, P.O. Box 2985, Durban.

the Photographic Section in December. The January meeting will be held at the McConnells' home at Quentin Smythe Road, Kloof (see page 12 for directions), on Wednesday, January 18th, and the competition subject will be "Action".

The list of signatures of members who wish to avail themselves from time to time of a 10% cash discount on films and photographic equipment has been furnished to the Medical Centre Pharmacy. Will any members whose names do not appear thereon please contact Margaret Moore if they wish to purchase photographic supplies from Medical Centre Pharmacy.

Donald Seaton has supplied a formula for checking fungus on slides. I have not, as yet, tried either Donald's formula or that supplied by Derek Gibb, which was printed in the August Ramblers' magazine, so cannot say which is the more effective. However, for those who wish to experiment, Donald's formula is:-

1. Remove slide from mount and wipe over with a clean chamois or soft hankie.
2. Immerse for 2-3 minutes in a solution of:

75% Ethyl Alcohol
5% Formaldehyde
20% Methyl Alcohol.

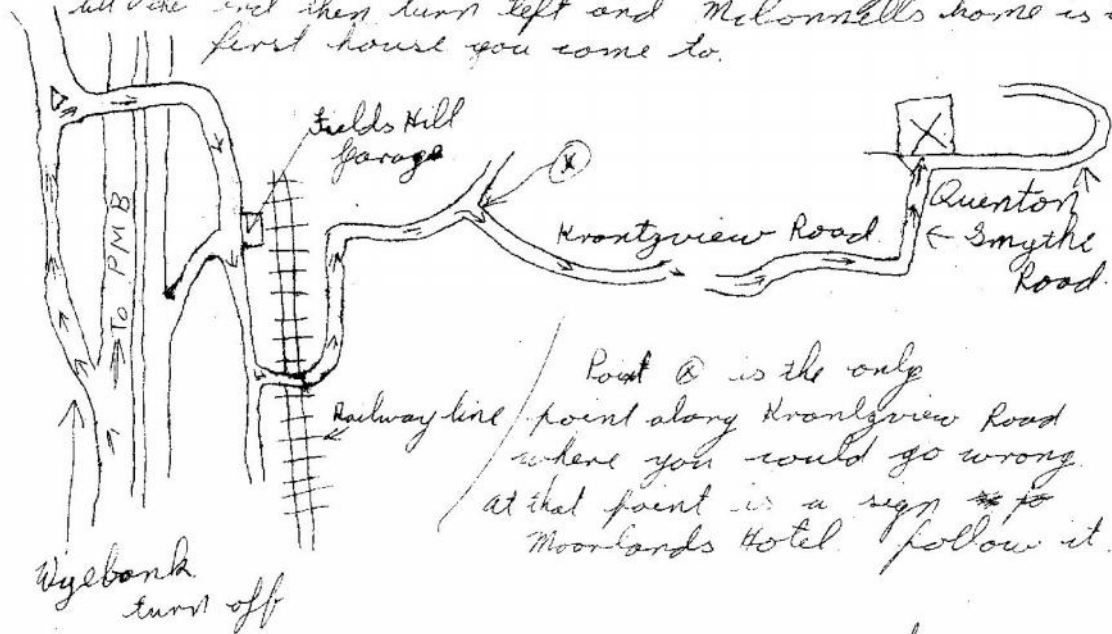
3. Dry thoroughly. (The slide can be remounted after about 30 minutes).

N.B. Some people say "Perma-film" is excellent for protecting slides from fungus. Naturally, it must be used on fungus-free slides.

A merry Christmas and good "clicking" in 1967 to you all.

"Shutterbug".

Near top of Fields Hill take Wyebank turnoff then keep taking right hand road till you reach Fieldshill garage. After passing the garage turn left over the railway line after that just follow Krontzview Road till the end then turn left and Nelsons home is the first house you come to.



Point X is the only point along Krontzview Road where you could go wrong. At that point is a sign for Moorlands Hotel follow it.

not to scale.

A DAY TO REMEMBER.

The weather is perfect, and several cars make an early departure from the Durban market place on the 13th November, 1966 - destination, far-away Maritzburg.

About an hour later, thirty-one Durban Ramblers join forces with seven Maritzburgers, who are to be our guides for the day. Two factors contribute to the small contingent of local footsloggers - a Remembrance Day service in the morning, and a strenuous hike the previous day. The Maritzburg Club, incidentally, hikes every Saturday and sometimes also on Sunday. Energetic types, those Maritzburg Ramblers!

The knowing ones wave jauntily at a few lonely specks of trees silhouetted against the sky-line at the summit of a distant hill. "We'll pass through ~~the~~ before lunch", they confidently predict. "Impossible!" we laugh disbelievingly.

At 10 o'clock a convoy of eleven cars snakes its way to the Lido in Chase Valley, where we are greeted by several hundred picnickers ("The rest of the Maritzburg Ramblers' Club", somebody quips).

Here we park the cars and set off on foot, and soon enter the municipal plantations. Extending for several miles, the tall wattle, gum and pine trees provide not only welcome shade for weary travellers, but also a considerable source of revenue to the Maritzburg Corporation.

After a while, we stop for coffee, and help ourselves to Rags' biscuits.

Don Wilson, our indefatigable leader, warns us that the next part of the route is "not exactly flat",

but that "it goes up a little". This turns out to be the understatement of the century, for the "gentle rise", popularly known as the Gut Buster, is at least twice as steep as our old friend Heart Break Hill at Hillcrest. I notice many panting hikers stopping to "admire the scenery!"

Hereabouts may be seen the amazing "Pipe-which-Don Wilson-can-no-longer-squeeze-through". Don "stoutly" maintains that his figure is still as slim and trim as ever it was, but that somehow over the years it is the pipe that has gradually narrowed!

We come at last to Smith's Quarry. Here and there can still be seen the burns of the fuses which preceded the detonations of the quarrymen in the days when stone obtained from these parts was widely used by stonemasons. A good example of their work, I am told, is the Cenotaph in West Street.

While Barbara leads a small party along a less strenuous route, the majority of us follow Don on a stiff rock climbing expedition. A curious dassie comes twittering out of his little cave in the rock to eye the intruders. It is worth the extra effort to go the hard way, for suddenly we are standing upon an open ledge, and are looking down on Maritzburg spread out far below. It is truly a magnificent sight.

We climb up and up to the summit of the cliff, and continue along the top. Three hours after we set out we reach the little clump of trees which we saw from the market place. We enter the forests again, and after some further marching, halt for a picnic lunch under the trees. Next to us lies a small pool which the Maritzburg Ramblers call Mosesfontein, because it is fed by a little spring of cool, clear water. It is delightfully refreshing to drink from the spring, especially in the knowledge that it is

free from "Bil."!

Here we are joined by Doc Squires, who has been taking part in the Remembrance Parade. I approach some pretty girls to pose for my camera beside the pool, and am surprised (and a little disappointed!) at their reluctance. You would think they'd jump at the chance of appearing in the Best Photograph of the Year!

Our appetites and thirsts appeased, we climb to a higher level. The ground becomes littered with boulders, reminding experienced hikers of the trans-Berg trips. We gain the highest point of our amble, some 1,500 feet above the Maritzburg market place. Below us stretch the forests, with here and there light green patches of gums contrasting with the darker pines.

The way becomes easier as we follow some winding tracks. Presently we come to the Midmar Dam pumping project, where bulldozers are busy altering the shape of the countryside as they lay miles and massive water pipes. A few of the bolder ones almost lose their necks as they tumble after Diane down the steep side of a cutting.

We have a look around the pump-house, slaking our thirsts at a slowly trickling tap.

Continuing along a bumpy track, we appreciate the lovely Queen Elizabeth Park over on the right. We cross a tarred road and descend a hill through dense bush. Emerging at the bottom, we return to civilisation, houses, gardens and good roads.

Some motor cyclists take a liking to Tina and Marian, and give them a short life back to the Lido and the waiting cars.

Don Wilson and his fellow Maritzburgers enhanced the walk with a wealth of colourful local background, and if I have forgotten the places we saw and visited, and glossed over the incidents, it is because there was such a constant variety in terrain and scenery.

As I now write these inadequate lines some four weeks later, I have blurred but nostalgic memories of roads, dust tracks and narrow footpaths; of tropical undergrowth, open grasslands, towering forests, treacherous rocks, and breathtaking panoramas; of birds singing, an eagle leaving its lofty nest; of fragrant scents, tasteless, unripe berries, and dazzling wild flowers in glorious colours - and finally of grand companions, all marvelling at the wonders of nature.

Of the many hikes I have enjoyed this year, I pick the one to Mosesfontein (and far beyond!) as being the highlight of 1966.

"Encyclopaedia".



HIKE TO MWABI SUMMIT

OR

"HOW WE LANDED UP NEAR MacPHERSON'S CASCADES!"

) The morning of Sunday, 26th November, just came along. It didn't actually dawn - certainly not in this part of the world, anyway. The sky was a leaden grey. It rained and rained. Not heavily - but persistently enough to make everything very wet.

As I drove down to the market place, I wondered how many other idiots there would be, all keen to go hiking; or squelching, more like it. If it hadn't been for the fact that I was the leader, I know where I would have been. Tucked up in bed reading some trivial (but entertaining?) section of the "Sunday Times", no doubt!

) When I arrived, sure enough, there they were - a keen, energetic, youthful (or youthfully-minded) bunch of Ramblers. Still it rained, but everyone was very cheerful, including the driver who had already collided with a lamp post on his way to the market place.

Lindy decided that in view of the weather, Mwabi Summit was out. There were few enough Ramblers anyway without the risk of losing a few more on the slippery pipe-line! At Pinetown a few more gallant souls joined us, and we decided to proceed further in three cars. Rags Roberts courageously agreed to use his Volkswagon, which later turned out to be ill-founded judgement.

En route to MacPherson's farm, we had a jolly time with each car (especially Rags'!) slipping and sliding all over the place. It appeared that the

various tyre manufacturers hadn't designed their products to cope adequately with such conditions. Fortunately, we arrived at the farm after having sustained no permanent damage; although a few Ramblers did look rather odd, splattered with mud (you know, the kind that sticks).

The hike was most pleasant. We settled down for lunch in a delightfully protected valley about a mile from the cascades and enjoyed relaxing with hot mugs of tea (refer Viv Pammenter) under a rocky overhang. Fortunately, dry firewood was available as the rain had not managed to seep through some of the thick pickets of bush.

After lunch, several groups still felt the urge to converge on the cascades, which looked a most impressive sight. When Viv and I arrived there, we were informed that further upstream a few members of the opposite sex were probably taking a swim - without their costumes. Rather foolish, perhaps, on a cold day. But we didn't see them.

The return to the farm was uneventful, because with such a small number of Ramblers (only thirteen) the odds were against any of them falling into one of the rivers at a crossing point. Now, if we had had at least thirty Ramblers, surely one would have fallen in?

After negotiating the slippery farm road, Rags' car began to give trouble, and despite all efforts to restore the engine to a normal condition, peace was only obtained when the car was towed back to Finetown from Cato Ridge. But that would probably make another story.

So ended another day's outing, which all enjoyed. But we should like to express our sympathy to Rags and hope that his delinquent vehicle has been put right.

"Christmas Pudding".

EDITORIAL.

Everyone has been asking why they didn't receive a magazine for December. Well, the answer is that this magazine is intended for both December and January. It should have been out before the 25th of December, as you will see from the cover.

At the last Executive Meeting the following resignations were received:-

Miss J. Hough,
Miss V. Hirshberg,
Miss G. Tonkin,
Miss P. Humphreys,
Miss S. Humphreys,
Mr. Q. Gardner.

We are sorry that you are leaving and hope you enjoyed your stay in the club.

We regret to record the death of one of our members, Harold Wanless, who passed away early in December.

④) Congratulations to Arthur Roffe and Alrae Mardell who announced their engagement in November, and also to Douglas Mall and Cheryl van Rooyen who were married on the 17th December.

I hope you had a happy Christmas and wish you all a prosperous New Year.

The free hike for the best article in the last magazine goes to "Off Course".



Long-tailed Widow bird i-Sakabulu

Diatroptera proenl proenl