

## A TRAIL IN THE MALOLOJTJE GAME RESERVE

It was with a degree of anticipation and trepidation I accepted an invitation from Steve Watson to join his party of nine others on a trail in the Malolotje Game Reserve, situated in the western side of Swaziland nearby Pigg's Peak and not too far from Mbabane. Our party arrived at Malolotje at lunch time on Good Friday and after setting up our tents we took a short hike around the surrounding area. On Saturday morning we set off with great enthusiasm heavily laden with our individual opinions of a staple diet for four days and all the necessities of survival in the bush. Steve took the lead (thank goodness) and strode ahead with great confidence only to suddenly disappear into what looked like soft grass but turned up to be a ditch of slimy mud. Fortunately there was a dam nearby - where he could un-mud himself. When we had all settled our mirth Steve set about the serious business of finding our way to our next camp namely Timbileni.

Trails in this game reserve are not marked with the usual footprints which we in South Africa are familiar with, but are marked by means of cairns which mark changes of direction. I never did figure out what direction they meant but with the help of our team of "navigators" with their maps and compasses we were able to find our way from cairn to cairn. The hike was stimulating and interesting and we passed through country liberally stocked with game, which were not perturbed at all by our presence.

We found a spot for lunch near the old "She" mine and after lunch some of us spent some time in the old mine shafts while some of us got caught in a sudden downpour, but due to Bill's ingenuity we were able to rig up a shelter with the aid of my walking stick, a tent fly sheet and a small tree.

We arrived at Timbeleni in the late afternoon pitching our camp in a pleasant wattle grove. The only drawback of the camp being its lack of abundant water, but being true hikers we made do with the little trickle there was.

On Sunday morning we set off much to the relief of a herd of wildebeeste who had been eyeing their waterhole since early dawn. We hiked through beautiful country covered in places with an abundance of wild flowers and spectacular scenery. At one stage we got our cairns a bit confused and found ourselves descending a precipitous downhill which some of us negotiated mainly on our bottoms ..... When will I ever come down a hill on two feet.

On arrival at Mzulukudu camp which is situated on a lovely sight on the banks of the crystal clear Malolotje river we immediately had a bath. At this stage I think I should explain that the camp sights are merely clearings in the bush high enough for five tents at a squeeze but very beautifully situated.

On Monday we set out for South Siweni camp situated on the bank of the Nkomati River, on what we thought would be an easy day. The terrain became very broken and I don't think there is any level ground in Malolotje - it is all up and down. We had to cross the Malolotje river several times, which for the short ones amongst us was waist high. At one stage Bill's backpack disintegrated but he did a good job of putting it together again with the help of spare shoe laces and safety pins.

Tuesday found us climbing all the way out of the Nkomati Valley. I assure you there were no downhills, we just climbed and climbed and poor Mike was suffering from a bout of flu; I really must commend him for his fortitude. We enjoyed a pleasant interlude at a picnic spot not far from the base camp where we spent our last night.

On Wednesday we all returned to Durban feeling we had been part of a memorable experience. Steve, Jane, Dick, Regina, Mike, Bill, Rosemary, Liz, Jacqui, you were all such wonderful fellow travellers and thank you ..... from Winnie Jackson.



June - Aug 88

CHAIRMAN - TOM DE WAAL	474766	(H)
SECRETARY - MARGRET KIRSTEN	441467	(H)
TREASURER - WINNIE JACKSON	3052515	(H)
DAY HIKES - SCOTTY VALLANCE	282126	(H)
BERG HIKES - ROSEMARY FOSTER	842522	(H)
TRAILS - BRUCE MEDWAY	235895	(H)
PHOTOGRAPHIC - TREVOR COXON	425531	(H)
ENTERTAINMENT - MIKE MORRILLION	3091566	(H)
EDITRESS - BRENDA HOPPE	214137	(H)

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P.O. Box 1063 DURBAN 4000

### CALLING ALL DAY HIKERS

Have you wanted to hike in the Berg, but have been reluctant to do so because you have felt it would be too strenuous? Do not despair - the Berg Hike Section caters for all levels of fitness.

Join me and other fellow day hikers on a weekend of day hikes from Polela campsite on 9/10 July. Experience the cold nights in a tent, the Long Drop, a bath in a refreshing Berg river, a clear smog free sky .....

Book early as numbers are limited - phone Jack Aumord (423245 H).

Feel free to discuss Berg Hiking with any of the following Berg Hike Leaders - Rosemary Foster, Phillip Gatenby, Terry Lubbe, Dick Billiet, Gavin Grix, Steve Watson and Jack Aumord.

### CALLING ALL 'TOPPER'S' BACK PACKER CHEFS

A competition for those of you who turn a 'Topper's' based meal into a gourmet dish. Submit your favourite 'Topper's' recipe to 'Topper's Competition', P.O. Box 1063 Durban 4000 by 31 July 1988 and you may be the lucky recipient of a R10,00 prize!

### MEMORIES

Many of you will remember Dave and Chris Barnes now in England - below is an extract from a letter recently received by the Club.

I still have many warm memories of the club and all the super friends I made. I have joined three clubs. Backpacking here is quite pleasant but very different. One tends to stay in campsites or huts, and routes are planned to take in a country pub lunch if possible. Durban Ramblers must be a pretty unique organisation - I see from the mag just received that there is still the wide range of activities available. I got a lump in the throat when I read those evocative names 'Mposane, Ismont, Shongweni .....!  
..... I miss you all ..... DAVE BARNES

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Liz Johnstone, Mr and Mrs Bernard Vanneste, Irene Coward, Dora Tharratt, Emma Schoemann, Tony Livingstone.

### CONGRATULATIONS .....

To Mr and Mrs Boudin (formerly Glynis Feldon) on their recent marriage.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your treasurer would appreciate payment of all outstanding annual subscriptions.

### HIRE OF TENTS AND EQUIPMENT

Tents and backpacks are now stored in Winnie Jackson's garage in McArthur Street (near Albert Park) and may be hired for a nominal fee by phoning Winnie (3052515 H) or Rosemary (842522 H) or Scotty (282126 H).

Remember: All equipment must be returned promptly.

#### DEPARTURE POINTS FOR DAY HIKES

**DURBAN:** Berea Centre - outside Wimpy. Management have requested that cars be parked outside the Centre parking for the day.

**PINETOWN:** Union Main Centre - Old Main Road - outside Big Bite. Cars not to be parked outside Big Bite.

#### A NOTE FOR NEW HIKERS (AND A REMINDER TO OLD HIKERS)

1. On day hikes, bring adequate drinking water. The Club supplies tea and coffee, but you must put your share of water into the billycan. Bring your own lunch, e.g. sandwiches.
2. Wear sensible shoes - not slaps or high heels (don't laugh, it happens!)
3. Bring a hat, raincoat and jersey in winter. This is best carried in a small rucksack.
4. Berg trips require more specialised equipment - packs, good sleeping bags, tents, stoves etc. The Club is able to hire some of this equipment to newcomers. Discuss with the relevant leader or with Winnie Jackson.
5. Even day hikes can be quite strenuous (particularly in summer), so phone the leader or Scotty Vallance if you have any doubts.
6. The Club is very environment conscious, so don't litter, damage flora, carve your name on trees, etc.
7. Don't get ahead of the leader - this results in chaos. If you fall behind for some reason, don't be shy to shout - the party will be quite happy to stop for you.
8. Treat other hikers with due consideration - the Club has a friendly atmosphere, let's keep it that way.

#### DIARY OF DURBAN RAMBLERS HIKING CLUB ACTIVITIES

##### JUNE 1988

- 4/5 CHAMELEON CAVE - PHOLELA - Leader Terry Lubbe (223857 H)
- Sun. 5 MPOSANE - Leader Liz Young (3012908 H) - Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30 Members R5 Visitors R6
- 11/12 THAMATU CAVE VIA LAMMERGEYER CAVE - BUSHMANSNEK - Leader Jack Aumord (423245 H)
- Sun. 12 SHONGWENI CIRCUIT - Leader Phil Caws (441089 H) - Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30 Members R4 Visitors R5
- Wed. 15 PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETING at 7.45 p.m. Jenny and Amadeo Paoli will be showing slides on their travels through Thailand. This promises to be a most enjoyable evening - venue at Randall Scout Hall (behind Cowie Centre, next to electricity sub station). Please park in Milner Road. Club fee R1 which includes refreshments.
- 18/19 COLENZO HISTORICAL HIKE - Leader Dick Billiet (813672 H) - Tents and day packs required.
- Sun. 19 COASTAL ADVENTURE - A different day hike! Leader Liz Young (3012908 H). Depart Pinetown 07h30 Durban 08h00 Members R4 Visitors R5
- Wed. 22 BRAAI/GENERAL POWOW - at Randall Scout Hall, Milner Road (behind Cowie Centre, next to electricity sub station) 6 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. - Bring your own meat and drinks. Your support is needed as a good attendance will ensure a meaningful exchange of ideas and general discussion regarding future club objectives as well as an opportunity to get to know other day and berg hikers.
- 25/26 ZULU CAVE - Leader Terry Lubbe (223857 H)
- 26 BOVINI HIKE AND LUNCH TIME BRAAI - Leader Phils Caws (441089 H) Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30 Members R4 Visitors R5. Please bring additional R6 per person for braai, salads, rolls etc. which will be supplied. Beer and cool drinks may be purchased at the braai. Please do not bring your own food or drinks.

##### JULY 1988

- 2/3 STERKHORN - Leader Rosemary Foster (842522 H)
- Sun. 3 MIDMAR MYSTERY HIKE - Leader Winnie Jackson (3052515 H) or Scotty (282126 H) Depart Durban 07h30 Pinetown 08h00 Members R6 Visitors R7 - Sounds different!
- 9/10 PHOLELA BASE CAMP - Leader Jack Aumord (423245 H)
- Sun. 10 UMGENI VALLEY RANCH - Leader Audrey Vickers (283187 H). Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30 Members R6 Visitors R7 plus entrance fee of approx. R2.
- Sun. 17 TWIN RIDGES - Leader Phil Caws (441089 H). Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30 Members R4 Visitors R5.
- Wed. 20 PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETING - at 7.45 p.m. Venue at Randall Scout Hall (behind Cowie Centre, next to electricity sub station). Please park in Milner Road. Club fee R1 which includes refreshments.
- 23/24 ASHTONVALE GUEST FARM FUN WEEKEND - Phone Mike Morillion for details (3091566 H) Sat./Sun. R40 per person.
- Sun. 24 KILLARNEY ISLES HIKE - Leader Dave Easton. Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30 Members R6 Visitors R7.
- Wed. 27 BRAAI/SOCIAL GATHERING - At Randall Scout Hall, Milner Road (behind Cowie Centre, next to electricity sub station) 6 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. - bring your own meat and drinks.  
This affords an opportunity for members to get to know each other.
- 30/31 GXALINGENWA CAVE - PHOLELA - Leader Terry Lubbe (223857 H).
- Sun. 31 KARKLOOF HIKE 'N BRAAI - Leader Scotty Vallance (282126 H).

##### AUGUST 1988

- Sun. 1 ISMONT - Leader Joe Streyton - Depart Durban 08h00 Pinetown 08h30 Members R7 Visitors R8.
- 6/7 WEEKEND HIKE
- 6/7 INGWENI TRAIL/MOSS TRAIL - Leader Audrey Vikers (283187 H 6-6.30 p.m.) BERG HIKE
- WITSIESHOEK MOUNTAIN RESORT FROM ROYAL NATIONAL PARK - Leader Dick Billiet (813672 H).
- 13/14 PILLAR CAVE/RHINO PEAK DRAKENSBERG GARDENS - Leader Steve Watson (214512 H - 8 to 9 p.m.)
- 20/21 NDEDEMA GORGE - Boulder hop to Poacher's Cave! - Leader Terry Lubbe (223857 H) Room for 6 hikers only - so book early!
- 27/28 TARN CAVE - BUSHMANSNEK - Leader Gavin Grix (428019 H)

##### FUTURE PLANS

##### SEPTEMBER 1988

- 10 to 19th NAMAQUALAND DAISY VENTURE PLUS 3 DAY TRAVERSE OF CEDARBERG. Phone Dick Billiet (813672 H).

##### OCTOBER 1988

- MICK AND GLORIA McCONNELL'S FARM HIKE 'N BRAAI - Leader Margaret Kirsten (441467 H) - Depart Durban 07h30 Pinetown 08h00 Cost Members R6 Visitors R7. Here one can spend a relaxing sociable day enjoying the company of many other day and berg hikers.

The Complete Guide to Walks and Trails in Southern Africa by Jaynee Levy is now available R12 cheaper than any bookshop at the reduced price of R38,95 excluding GST. This useful book contains information on day walks, trails, equipment and an enormous list of useful addresses from the Cape in the South to Malawi in the North, as well as an excellent guide to plants, trees, birds, reptiles and mammals.

Contact - Margaret Kirsten 441467 H.