

DURBAN RAMBLERS

HIKING CLUB

JUNE - JULY 89





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Affiliated to the Hiking Federation of South Africa

P O Box 1063 DURBAN 4000

JUNE/JULY 1989

MAG 3/89

Here we are almost halfway through 1989 - we're into the good hiking weather and we have some super hikes lined up to entice you out into the open. Remember the life blood of a good club is the member participation - the same goes for your magazine - any contributions, suggestions or criticism will be gratefully and constructively received.

First on the list as usual a warm welcome to our new members:

Lindsay Douglas
Wendy Grobbelaar

CORRECTION TO MAG 2/89:

Future Events: Sehlabathebe Lodge : Bussy's Birthday Trip
Dates should read : 21 - 23 July NOT 21 - 23 June.

Apologies from your Editor.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Tony and Rosemary Lubbe on their marriage.
Our very best wishes for future happy hiking.

ATTENTION: SPECIAL NOTIFICATION:

May 31 - June 4: Ngele Trail

Most beautiful forest trail on Natal Southern boundary. Contact Philip Gatenby immediately for booking. Tel : 213592.

SUBS 1989:

Still some subscriptions for this year not paid - surely just an oversight. Your club needs every cent to keep the wheels turning so how about Winnie hearing from you.

On the other hand we have in fact received a registered letter with R8.00 but no indication as to who it is from!! Will the sender (wtmb) please contact Winnie on 3052515 (H) or 812328 (W).

SPECIAL REQUEST:

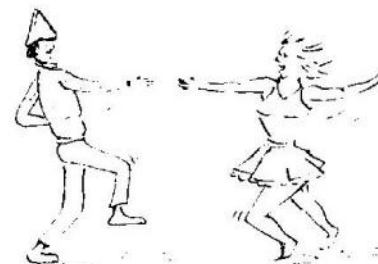
Volunteers wanted to man the Wildlife Stand at EXPO '89 on 20 - 24 September 1989. Contact Winnie : 3052515 (H) or 812328 (W).

-2-

What is a Bachelor?

A guy who leans towards girls - but not far enough to fall!!

Remember our first Barn Dance?



You must all agree it was fabulous - so you'll be pleased to know another one is in the pipe line. We'll keep you posted.

Article by Audry Vickers. pg 4

Article by Paula Jaros. pg 5

Sincere thanks to Audrey and Paula for sharing their experiences with us. I'm sure there are many more who could do likewise - Please Do - Editor.

One of our amateur botanists was driving over a mountain road - spied an unfamiliar shrub - stopped and got out to investigate. Just then a galant hero drove up, stopped, leant out the window and asked: "Are you having trouble? Can I help?" "Oh no, thank you" our friend replied "I was just looking for a big bush". Was his face red!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR : Watch this space - I hope to have a few next time!!!!

NOTES FOR NEW HIKERS - A REMINDER FOR THE OTHERS:

1. Bring 2 litres of water - for drinking and for your share in the billy can for tea and coffee - rated the best cup of the week!
2. Wear sensible shoes - NOT slops, ballet or high heeled shoes - don't laugh - it happens.
3. Bring a hat and rain coat.
4. Berg trips require more specialised equipment. Check with Dick Billiet.
5. Don't litter or damage plants.
6. Don't go ahead of the leader - it can result in chaos.
7. Some hikes are more strenuous than others. When in doubt check with the leader or with Steve Watson or Dick Billiet.
8. All persons taking part in Club activities do so entirely at their own risk and are required to adhere to club rules and instruction from the leaders.

A HINT TO KEEP MEAT FRESH FOR UP TO 3 DAYS:

Dip meat in vinegar.
Deep freeze in tin foil.
Keep in foil until ready to use.

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 right outside Big Bite.)

VENUE PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETINGS:

Randall Scout Hall, Milner Road (behind Cowey Centre, next to electricity sub station.)
These meetings are worth supporting - the photo sessions are always good and it is a chance to socialise - see your fellow hikers in "civvies":

DAIRY OF EVENTS:

JUNE 1989

- Sun 4 **LAAGERFARM:** Leader Bruce Medway. Tel (H) 235895. Dep. Durban only 07h30. Members R7. Visitors R8.
- 3 / 4 **STILLERUST HUT:** Day hikes from Kamberg Nature Reserve. Comfortable accommodation. 10 People max. Leader Dick Billiet. Tel. (H) 813672
- Sun 11 **VERNON CROOKS NATURE RESERVE:** Leader Bill Hyslop. Tel. (H) 725107. Dep. Durban only 07h30. Members R7. Visitors R8.
- 9 / 18 **EASTERN TRANSVAAL ADVENTURE:** Incorporating Kaapsehoop and Fanie Botha Trail. Contact Regina Billiet (H) 813672.
- Sun 18 **MOSS TRAIL:** Leader Joe Strayton. Tel. 215985. Dep. Durban 08h00; Pinetown 08h30. Members R5. Visitors R6. A hike not to be missed.
- 17 / 18 **Climb Intunja (optional) from Zulu Cave Monk's Cow! Area:** Leader Steve Watson. Tel. (H) 214512.
- 17 / 24 **STRANDLOPER TRAIL:** Leader Eamon Bussy. Tel. (H) 473400.
- Wed 21 **PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETING at 7.45 p.m.** R1.00 per person includes refreshments. Bob Tuck of Durban North presents audio/visual "Peace and Tranquility" featuring the Berg.
- Sun 25 **TABLE MOUNTAIN:** Leader Steve Watson. Tel. (H) 214512. Dep. Durban 08h00 and Pinetown 08h30. Members R6. Visitors R7.
- 24 / 25 **HLABENI FOREST:** Day hikes through most beautiful indigenous Forest. Huttet accomodation. Leader Dick Billiet. Tel. (H) 813672.
- 29 / 2 July **THABANA NTLENYANA:** Highest point in Southern Africa. Obligatory 41 km, optional + 25 km. Altitude 1520 to 2335 optional 1859 to 3515. Passport required. Bring Space Blanket. Leader Philip Gatenby. Tel. (H) 213392.

JULY 1989

- Sun 2 **LUANDA GAME FARM:** Leader Bruce Medway. Tel. (H) 235895. Dep. Durban 08h00. Pinetown 08h30. Members R5. Visitors R6.

JULY 1989 contd.

- 1 / 2 **BUSHMANS NECK EXPLORATION:** Tents required - expect anything. Leader Gavin Grix. Tel. (H) 428019.
- Sun 9 **SORAS POOL:** Leader Scotty Vallance. Tel. (H) 296409. Dep. Durban 08h00. Pinetown 08h30. Members R5. Visitors R6.
- 8 / 9 **TARN CAVE:** View the Snowcovered Berg. Reasonable fitness required. Tents for first night. Leader Jack Aurnord. Tel. (H) 423245.
- Sun 16 **MOUNT ASHLEY:** Leader Winnie Jackson. Tel. (H) 3052515. Dep. Durban 07h30. Pinetown 08h00. Members R7. Visitors R8.
- 15 / 16 **FIRST ANGLO BOER WAR (1880 - 1881) Historical Hike.** Very interesting. Leader Dick Billiet. Tel. (H) 813672.
- Wed 19 **PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETING AT 7.45 p.m.** R1.00 per person includes refreshments. Some Ramblers photographed by Mike and others.
Oh for the gift that the Giftie gie us - To see ourselves as others see us!
- Sun 23 **UMGENI VALLEY:** Leader Audrey Vickers. Tel. 283187. Dep. Durban 07h30. Pinetown 08h00. Members R7. Visitors R8.
- 21 / 23 **SEHLABATHEBE LODGE:** Bussy's should be Birthday Trip. Bring Champagne to drink to Eamon's health. Leader Dick Billiet. Tel. (H) 813672.
- Sun 30 **TWIN RIDGES:** Leader Tom de Waal. Tel. (H) 474766. Dep. Durban 08h00. Pinetown 08h30. Members R6. Visitors R7.
- 29 / 30 **GIANTS HUT CIRCUIT:** One party of four to start at Highmoor and other four hikers start from Giants Castle. Meet at Giants Hut and swap car keys (not wives). 8 max. Leader Dick Billiet. Tel. (H) 813672.

AUGUST 1989

- 5 / 6 **TUMATO CAVE CIRCUIT:** Reasonable fitness and tents required. Leader Jack Aurnord. Tel. (H) 423245.
- *** **EXTRA TREAT**
- July 5-10 Drive to Ngubathe - hike to Waterfall Bluff. Contact Jane Fraser for details. Tel. (H) 742160.

FOR SALE: Club T/Shirts R10.00 ea.
Gas Cylinders R 2,20 ea.
Very special prices!! Contact Winnie. Tel. (H) 3052515.

EASTER AT RHODES

Rhodes for those who do not know is a hamlet in the mountains of the north-eastern Cape. It is far off the beaten track and reached by a drive of 95km on gravel road from Maclear or Mount Fletcher over the spectacular Naudes Nek Pass, the highest road in South Africa, or via Barkley East 60km on gravel. In days gone by it was the centre of a farming community but now its main claim to fame is a centre for ski-ing in the winter months. When the news goes out there is snow, ski enthusiasts converge on the area from all over South Africa.

Our mission was to explore the area and climb Ben McDhui the highest mountain in the Cape. We arrived before midday on Good Friday, the Hotel Manager took

us in his Landrover 10km up the Carlisle Hook valley, then we were on our own. The first 2kms were quite steep but once on the top of the little berg it was pleasant undulating walking. We had been expecting to spend the nights in tents but discovered a hut with bunks and mattresses available, so we moved in for two nights.

Saturday we took lunch and explored the ski slopes, ski tow and lodge all the time trying to imagine what it was like with snow. Then we climbed Ben McDhui, at this point South Africa, Lesotho and Transkei come together. The views from the top were spectacular, mountains and more mountains and valleys as far as we could see. There had been a lot of rain in the area so there were waterfalls and streams everywhere and the flatter areas were like a sponge. The vegetation was typical Cape Fynbos with many wild flowers and succulents. There were large herds of cattle and sheep grazing the mountain slopes. Little stone huts used by the herdsmen were dotted around the country side, some no more than crude shelters. Stock theft is a big problem and the S.A.P. have a stock theft unit in the area and the police station high in the mountain reached only along a dirt jeep track. Jackal are also a problem to the farmers.

Sunday we returned to Rhodes via the Kloppershoek Spruit valley which involved some "bundu bashing" and a steep descent into the valley. As we followed the fast flowing spruit down, the valley opened out into picturesque farmlands with the poplars and weeping willows turning yellow contrasting with the green fields. Sunday evening we stayed in a house in the village and dined at the hotel which is the hub of the village. The bar proved to be the meeting place of locals and visitors.

Before leaving for the long drive home on Monday, Dick took us on a walking "Cooks Tour". Many of the deserted houses have been bought by people who can afford to retire there and are slowly being renovated.

A big thank you to Dick and Regina for organizing this interesting weekend which was enjoyed by all.

Audrey Vickers

UMTAMVUNA NATURE RESERVE

(6th & 7th May)

Under the leadership of Steve Watson twelve souls enjoyed a stimulating and varied week-end at Port Edward. Six of us stayed at "Wild Sea" cabanas with its large swimming pool and the main party was housed at "Sea Verge" in a beautiful setting with spacious lawn and ocean view.

We left Durban around 6.30 p.m. on Friday and were the last to arrive. Thanks Steve for waiting for us and opening up - lights on etc. By the time we unpacked, met the others and had a chat, we settled for an early night.

Next morning after a few hits and misses we were at the gate of the reserve at 9.00 a.m. The weather was clear and crisp.

After a short walk we started the 300m descent into the gorge. I realised some of the party had made this journey before and were members of the elite fit who hike every week-end (I hope my heavy breathing didn't bother them too much). It was a pleasure to have Dick Billiet and Scotty Vallance to draw attention to the flora, fauna and history of the area - I would have otherwise missed many things. As we neared the river we were helped down the steep face by the stepping-stones and wooden logs so skilfully placed by the Natal Parks Board. We walked along the river with the clear running water, sometimes criss-crossing the boulders. Before ascending the west slope of the gorge we all stopped for a welcome rest and a long pull at our water bottles. Climbing up through the forest we clung to the branches and tried to avoid the pebbles cascading behind the mercurial leaders. Out of the wood the grass made walking a plodding experience and it was pure heaven to reach a cool flowing stream with rocks to sit on and a natural shower bath. Adolf's customary offering to the crabs was again rejected (glad I filled my water bottle upstream of the reclining bodies !!)

At the crest the views down the Bulolo valley and across the Umtumvuna to the Transkei were magnificent as Steve led us to the Vulture's kitchen. It was very interesting to see how the rangers keep the birds supplied with carrion and the bones essential to their survival. I hope your photos turned out well Barry.

Umtamvuna contd.

We passed a herd of blesbok and how alert they were when they sensed us approaching their territory.

Back at the starting point 5 p.m. happy to sit for the short drive back and think of a hot bath or a cold beer, or both. A few of us met up at the local Hotel and had a merry interlude jollied along by the new owner and his friendly daughter. We then wended our way back to "Steve's place" for a braai with the rest of the Ramblers. At the end of the evening Adolf wandered off with his blanket roll to enjoy the night beneath the stars while the rest of us fell into more sybaritic beds.

Next day we split up for our beach walk, the main group being ferried by Barry to the mouth of the Umtamvuna for the full hike back to Port Edward, the stragglers meeting them half way.

A memorable experience of a beautiful and tranquil reserve unspoiled and seemingly remote from the throngs of the nearby Casino.

Paula Jaros
