

THE DURBAN RAMBLERS CLUB.

P. O. BOX 1063, DURBAN.

CHAIRMAN:

Frank Woodward.  
Phone: 21651.  
(Business)

HON. SECRETARY:

Margaret Moore.  
Phone: 36676.  
(Residence)

HON. TREASURER:

Bob Ferns.  
Phone: 23511.  
(Business)

FIXTURES FOR MARCH 1956:

SUNDAY 4TH:

To-day the spotlight is on CROCODILE VALLEY, in the Umgeni valley, with Lindie as the leading light. Lorries will travel via the North Coast Road. COST: 5/-.

TUESDAY 6TH:

Executive Committee Meeting at Margaret Moore's residence, 37 Venice Road, Morningside, Durban, at 8 p.m.

SUNDAY 18TH:

Lindie will lead us to McPHERSON'S RAPIDS, in the Cato Ridge area, lorries travelling via Pinetown. COST: 5/-.

EASTER CAMP:

March 30th, 31st, April 1st, and 2nd: - CATHEDRAL PEAK: Full particulars in this regard will be found on the enclosed Camp Circular. Please give prompt attention to the form required by Bob if you intend going to this Camp - the closing date for names to be handed in is Sunday, March 18th.

NOTE: Unless otherwise stated, all outings will start from the City Market, Warwick Avenue, at 8.30 a.m.

THE DURBAN RAMBLER.

FEBRUARY 1956:

VOL. 5. NO. 2.

Our thanks are extended to Jean Carter, Maureen Laatz and Dennis Rachmann, who have provided the ingredients for this month's Newsletter, and we also thank Frank Hulley whose account of the Canoe Championships makes interesting reading.

HIKE TO MCINTOSH FALLS - FEBRUARY 5TH.

by Jean Carter.

Seventy-two rather quiet people set off in doubtful weather and, as usual, enjoyed a fairly comfortable journey. Naidoo's soon got their fortnightly "shake-up" as enthusiastic Ramblers clamoured for last minute lunch tit-bits.

Arriving at the Shongweni turn-off we disembarked and set off down the road to the accompaniment of the Ramblers' Choir led by Scotty and Co. It sounded very tuneful as we walked along the road - the voices gradually fading into the distance.

The two miles to the Falls were soon covered, and we lunched at the Rapids a little further downstream. Before long a small water fight raged and many unsuspecting victims were soon shouting helplessly whilst water dripped down their necks. Others did the job properly and found the pool below very inviting, though colder than the sea.

Lindie's brew came up to standard and was enjoyed by all as we laughed at Basil's and Peter's antics on their wet rock slide. Soon, however, their rubber shoes proved too slippery and a more suitable outfit was adopted. A few energetic people scrambled down the rapids for about half a mile, but the majority just lazed around, toasting themselves in the sun.

At 3 p.m. we wended our way back to the lorries waiting on the Main Road, to have an equally pleasant, though windy, ride back to town.

THE 1956 CANOE CHAMPIONSHIPS: PIETERMARITZBURG - DURBAN.

by Frank Hulley.

On the morning of January 4th, forty-six canoeists gathered on the banks of the Umsinduzi River, at Alexandra Park,

Pietermaritzburg, to take part in the annual South African Championships. They ranged from callow youths entering for their first race, to grizzled veterans, to whom age created no barrier to the call of the river. Natal was particularly well represented with about 30 entries, as against a dozen entries from the Transvaal, and one pair from Rhodesia. The skipper of this team was Martin Hilliar, a foundation member of the Durban Ramblers, now in his 46th year. Another Ramblers' foundation member was my skipper, Stan Dean, who at 48 was the oldest competitor in the race.

While a goodly crowd of onlookers gathered, the Race Officials judged the boats, and I am proud to say that our boat won the prize for the best built two-seater, and Peter Marriott and his partner won the prize for the best built singles. This was signal victory for our Kingfisher Club.

After wishing us all the best, the Deputy Mayoress sent us on our way. Stan and I grabbed the lead right at the start, and were holding our own against a strong challenge from the Rhodesian boat and one from Maritzburg. For about two miles things went well, and then disaster overtook us - we hit a hidden spike on a submerged tree trunk and put an 18" rip in the fabric of our boat. We said a few things appropriate to the occasion and then pulled ashore to mend the rip. Sixteen minutes later we were back in the race, and then started a long battle to regain our lost time. After the long portage across the Sewerage Farm and Campbell's Farm we were lying 7th, and shortly thereafter overtook another pair. The river was very low and the boats kept striking snags, but we managed to maintain a good rate of progress.

At about 1.30 p.m. we nearly lost our boat in a rapid, and I am sure that had the boat not been so stoutly built we would have been out of the race altogether. However, no lasting damage was done and we continued onwards. By now Table Mountain was looming large on our port bow. The river became progressively shallow and rocky until in the end we decided that we could make faster time on foot. Then only did we really come into our own. Being Ramblers of long experience, we found that carrying our 38 lb. canoe was no hardship, and we maintained a pace somewhat akin to the average Amble pace. At 4 o'clock we cut off the last bend in the river and crossed the ridge overlooking 'Duzi Bridge on the road to Nagle Dam, and 27 minutes later paddled past the checkered flag marking the end of the run for that day.

What a treat it was to change into dry clothes and prepare a square meal, while discussing the day's run with other competitors who were really a grand crowd. Never a moan was heard, although many were dog-tired and sunburned, and suffering from blistered feet. Team by team they trickled in until by about 9 that evening only three teams were missing - they

at full sprinting pace went flat out for the finishing line. We covered this stretch of about 1½ miles in about 20 minutes flat. Dog-tired, and extremely sunburned, we dragged our boat out of the water just over 24 travelling hours after leaving Maritzburg, thereby breaking the existing record by just over three hours. Although we were 6th in order of arrival, we were placed 3rd in the Doubles Class, which Championship was being run in conjunction with the main race, and we now have a cup each to commemorate the occasion.

Although conditions were decidedly grim from a canoeing point of view, I can truly say I enjoyed the race, and am now looking forward to the next one.

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Well done, Frank - this was some achievement, and we hope you will do even better next time.

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LEAP YEAR DANCE.  
by Maureen Laatz.

In defiance of the oppressive heat and humidity of Friday night, February 17th, a sizeable crowd of Ramblers attended the Leap Year Dance in the lovely mural-decorated Norwegian Hall. Reg Bourne's Band was in attendance and provided excellent music.

Everyone wore their hearts on their sleeves, or if not on their sleeves, then on their ties or dresses. However, despite these small crimson paper hearts, handed out at the door by Heather and Pete, the Ramblerettes were slow in availing themselves of the unique privilege granted to women (unwed) by Mary Queen of Scots. No engagements were announced, and no gallant presentations were made to rejected spinsters.

Nevertheless, despite the lack of Leap Year Spirit, the social went off gaily. A "Bunny-hug" Dance was organised and this ended, peculiarly, in a Status Dance for the last three couples on the floor. Helen Laatz and Rae Adams proved to be the best statuses and received their prizes amidst applause.

It became increasingly hotter as the evening wore on and the dancers took their chairs out onto the lawn. Refreshments were served and then in no time at all the Band struck up the last dance of the evening and we were saying goodnight again at the end of another social.

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HIKE TO VALENTINE FALLS - FEBRUARY 19TH.

by Dennis Rachmann.

As Dickens might have written it: "Sunday. Durban. Rain." for many an eyebrow was raised to query the weather forecasts.

By nine o'clock a full two dozen stalwarts had accommodated themselves aboard the truck; several new faces were noticed and we hope to see them out again.

Buck had a hard time in drowning the lusty-voiced choir whilst travelling to Naidoo's. There we were joined by the Wrapsons, and Frank Woodward whom we welcomed back from abroad.

The rain had held off all this time, but after we had left the truck at Gillitts, down it came to keep us cool. Led by Lindie we completed a scenic tour before arriving at the tree-lined dell with Valentine Falls at the far end. Although showers fell outside, in the picnic spot we were comfortably dry. Only two hardy souls swam, but even they appeared to enjoy being out of the water.

After the second brew the return journey led through tall wet grass until reaching the road we were able to "de-tick".

Eventually the truck was found, and we settled down for the homeward drive.

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SOCIAL NEWS:

We congratulate Jack and Sheila Blackman, and Peter and Barbara Hounsell, on the small bundles the Stork deposited with them recently. Mind you, in Peter and Barbara's case it wasn't such a "small" bundle as their son and heir arrived weighing 11 lbs.! I think we had better sign him on now for "heavy duty" work at Camps!

During March, both Mackie Fletcher and Shirley Boyce will be sailing for the United Kingdom. We wish them Bon Voyage, Happy Landings, and hope that they both have a whale of a time.

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THE DURBAN RAMBLERS' CLUB.

OFFICE BEARERS FOR 1956.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

CHAIRMAN: Frank Woodward.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Dymock Parr.

SECRETARY: Margaret Moore.

TREASURER: Bob Ferns.

CAMP CAPTAIN: George Wrapson.

ENTERTAINMENTS  
CHAIRMAN: Mervyn Campion.

LEADERS:

Chief: Lindie Lindhorst.

Sub-Loaders: Les Ryall.  
Mick Thomas.

4 ORDINARY

MEMBERS: Heather Henry.  
Rae Adams.  
Dennis Rachmann.  
Dudley Saville.

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CAMP COMMITTEE:

George Wrapson (Captain).

THE DURBAN RAMBLERS CLUB:

EASTER CAMP 1956.

PLACE: Cathedral Peak, Winterton.  
DATES: 30th March, 1955 to 2nd April, 1955 (inclusive)  
COST: Paid-up Members - £3.0.0.  
Visitors - £3.12.6.

TRANSPORT: Lorries will leave Durban (City Market Parking Area) on Thursday night (29th) at 8.30 p.m. SHARP. Please be there by 7.45 p.m. at the latest, to facilitate the packing and loading of the lorries.

CAMP SITE: Situated near the river, away from the Hotel, in the heart of glorious scenery with mountains near at hand waiting to be scaled by the enthusiastic climber. There are excellent facilities for both the hiker or the climber, and the less energetic may swim in the numerous pools to be found in the crystal-clear Berg streams. At night there will be camp-fire sing-songs, and anyone who is lucky enough to own a musical instrument is invited to bring it along. So, come along and enjoy four wonderful days in the open air at one of South Africa's mountain playgrounds, over 100 miles away from Durban's damp coastal heat. PLEASE NOTE that we are "campers", and therefore the use of the Hotel is not at our disposal for bathing and dancing. Should anyone be found transgressing this rule, they will in future be debarred from attending Camps arranged by this Club.

EQUIPMENT: It can be mighty cold in the evenings, especially on our all-night journey to the Berg, so bring along some warm clothing. You will need at least two blankets or sleeping bag, and a ground sheet. Then there is your personal kit (not forgetting your razors, boys!), plus mug, plate, knife, fork and spoon (please see that these are marked with your name). An old raincoat and an extra pair of shoes are advisable as precautions, and don't forget your swimming costume and towel. Please note that all persons are responsible for their own kit, so do stay with your belongings until they are loaded onto the lorries.

NAMES: Unfortunately our numbers are restricted to 60, so "paid-up" members will be given preference, and visitors taken only if vacancies permit. Kindly fill in the attached form and send it, together with the full amount, to the Treasurer, Bob Ferns, not later than Sunday, March 18th.

CLOSING DATE:

