

THE DURBAN RAMBLER.

MAY, 1953.
VOL. 2. NO. 3.

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There were unfortunately no entries for the "Short short" story competition on the Easter Camp, but first prize in the major monthly contest, "Camp at Champagne Castle", goes to Frank Hulley, and a cheque for one guinea will be posted to him in due course.

This edition of the News Letter is almost essentially a "Hulley" edition, as apart from Frank's winning effort on Camp, we are publishing for the first time and in response to numerous requests, the words of his song : "The Fortnightly Hike".

COMPETITION FOR NEXT MONTH.

We need a few new songs to sing on the lorries and round our camp fires ... songs essentially our own, with Rambler backgrounds. A cheque for 10/6d. will go to the best effort which deals with various members of the Club, and which can be sung to the tune of some popular number. As an example, here is one verse from Shirley's : "Ons is na die Berge toe" :-

"Though it's dark, the path is sure,
Lit by Ginger's lantern jaw,
Ons is na die Berge toe.
Icy steps that lead to Hell
Are cut out by Lionel,
Ons is na die Berge toe.
Even Archie's Cockburn nose
Drips amid the winter snows!
Ons is na die Berge toe, Berge toe, Berge toe, etc.

Entries for the above competition close on the 17th May, and the winning effort will be published in the next News Letter.

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THREE MESSAGES FROM US ALL.

To Dymock. All our sympathy, Dym, on the recent sad loss of your mother.

To Elaine Fryer. We rejoice with you at the wonderful news about your brother, which has just been received from Korea.

To Frank Woodward, Frank Hulley and Henry Saunders. Thank you for the perfect organisation, the music and sing-songs and the hard work you put into Camp, which made Easter at Champagne the wonderful success it was.

TALK BY LIEUT. COL. FREDERICK SPENCER CHAPMAN ON FRIDAY, 8TH MAY.

This will be held in the Projection Room at the Technical College, commencing at 8 p.m. Admission 2/6d. This is a joint venture arranged by the Durban Ramblers' Club and the Natal Mountain Club, and for those of you who did not read the 'Natal Mercury' on Monday, 20th April, here are just a few incidents in the life of this man whose motto is : "Live dangerously".

A school teacher (the Duke of Edinburgh was one of his pupils), he has taken part in exploratory trips to Greenland; attempted the conquest of Mount Everest; made the first ascent of the 24,000 ft. peak Chomolhari, and is one of the few Europeans to have visited the forbidden city of Lhasa in Tibet.

During the War, the Colonel was in charge of the "Stay Behind Parties", the force that harassed with guerilla tactics the Japanese Army

in Malaya. Voyaging by submarine, parachuting into enemy-occupied jungles with a "dead or alive" price on his head, author of several books, 45 year-old Col. Spencer Chapman has "crammed enough peace and wartime exploits into his life to make 'Superman' and other modern fiction heroes sound effeminate". Don't miss the opportunity of meeting this most unforgettable character.

KATHI'S CORNER.

SHE WONDERS

Whether those Ramblerettes who labelled a certain tent "The Grannies' Tent", realised just what time some of those poor old dears came to bed at night.

Whether a wood-chip really was the cause of Sonny's black eye.

Whether Scotty continued his bachelorhood whilst on holiday.

Whether a certain unshaven Rambler really was stopped in P.M.B. and given money for a meal and a bath.

Whether those 'newies' who laced up their tent flap and window to keep out the cold, really would have suffocated if one of the 'stalwarts' hadn't gone to bed soon after.

EASTER CAMP AT CHAMPAGNE CASTLE

by
Frank Hulley.

Not even the threatening weather could discourage the 70 odd Ramblers who squeezed into and onto the three lorries which set course for the 'Berg on the evening of the 3rd.

How refreshing it was to the city-clogged mind to see and experience the cheerful spirit with which the boys and girls exchanged the warmth and comfort of their homes for the wet, cold conditions which were to prevail for the rest of the week-end!

We shall not soon forget the leaking tarpaulins and the general shortage of "lebensraum" on the lorries. I can still see Len and "Annie Oakley" squatting huddled in the top corner just like babes in the wood.

I am sure that the hardy characters who sat, clung, or generally adhered to the grub lorry through that wet miserable night, will remember that trip for many, many years. I can still see Scotty looking for all the world like 'Hans die Skipper' or an advert. for Oslo Sardines with his sou'wester. Les, again, appeared as a member of the late Field Marshal Rommel's Afrika Korps.

Dawn found us in Estcourt with the rain no longer falling. Optimism welled in every Rambler's breast - but in vain. Eric Tayler's cousin in his brave little Morris Minor (not blue, girls!) joined the convoy at this point, having travelled down from Johannesburg.

A short stop at Loskop to pick up supplies gave us a chance to stretch our legs, and while we were there it became evident that Dymock and Margaret had waged a losing battle with a very old eiderdown. Well, anyhow the feathers flew!)

The last hill before Champagne brought travel to a halt. Even Spike's gallant Bedford could not negotiate the muddy surface. The boys must have muttered a few silent curses as the cry of : "Get out and push!" rang out. (I did.)

By/.....

By dint of much pushing, sweating and getting in each other's way we finally heaved the laden trucks and cars to the top of the hill. This took most of the starch out of the boys. (No wonder, we hadn't had our Jungle Oats).

Under cover of all the confusion of the lorry pushing, Mac Rand and his jolly brother Pat joined us, having travelled right through the night to be with us. Pierre Wehner and Ivan Howell also showed their faces at this point and worked some of the fat they had acquired on Cathedral's lawns off their bodies.

At last, the camp site ... beautifully set amongst the wattle trees that nestle at the foot of the Matterhorn; a crystal clear furrow of cold water babbling on our doorstep.

It was "all hands to the wheel", and as if by the wave of a magician's wand, the tents were up. Ernest had completed his construction job and all thoughts turned to the kitchen. I thought we would never hear that old favourite : "Come and get it before we throw it out". My stomach had long since severed diplomatic relations with the rest of me. However, the 'pot mechanics' soon rustled up a meal which was long overdue.

The crowd settled down and so did the light drizzle. Many were the kow-tows and entreaties made to "Manock", that unpredictable little god which governs the weather along the 'Berg. We had apparently done something to incur his wrath, as he ignored us.

Supper that first night was a cheerful, if somewhat diluted, meal and the sing-song which followed was an even more joyful event. Though I have sung at six previous Ramblers' Camps, I had never before heard the old songs sung with such gay abandon or such melody. It was as if some blithe spirit entered every heart as old-timers linked arms with first-timers and, forgetting the cares of the day, the cramped sleepless night and the wet

weather, we roused the echoes with our songs and whirled in merry dances by the flickering light of the fire which also seemed imbued with a spirit of gladness.

It was with great reluctance that we broke that merry circle after cocoa had been served, to seek our cold hard couches. Believe it or not, one keen character came to Camp complete with "Libo" mattress and sheets. (Now we've seen everything!)

Saturday morning brought no improvement in the weather, but saw some adventurous groups braving the wet, set out on various short hikes - some up the Little Berg, some along the road and others to the beautiful waterfall down the valley.

These walks resulted in an alarming increase in the number of wet steaming shoes that perpetually ringed the fire. Some amazing new shapes and styles in footwear became fashionable as the heat of the fire wrought havoc with the shoes of the careless. (Including the boots of the writer.)

As the day drew to a close groups of Ramblers could be seen wandering down to the stream to bathe. What a bitter-sweet sensation is a Berg bath! One minute (sorry, second); the icy plunge into the crystal clear water, and then the brisk rub down which is followed by a glowing sense of warmth and well-being. For any further information on the temperature of the water, kindly apply to Messrs. Scott and Payne who were compelled to stay submerged while a group of holiday-makers strolled casually by.

Supper that night was really top notch, and made even more so by Frank Woodward's "plum duff".

Another merry sing-song followed which, for gaiety and harmony, equalled that of the previous evening.

Once more we crawled into our cold and in some cases damp beds; some to sleep like tops, others to shiver and lie awake, wondering why they had ever become Ramblers.

Sunday dawned cold and wet, but a capital breakfast which menu boasted bacon, eggs and toast, soon drove out the chills. Once again after breakfast adventurous souls sought the open road and went walking. Some played cricket in the roadway, commentary on which was brought to the public by the sponsors of the "Neversweat Raincoat Company".

After a hot lunch some of the more obstreperous individuals attempted to lynch the Chairman. Foiled in this direction, they turned their attention to Len who was promptly strung up by one leg. This had an adverse effect on our Editor who immediately suggested a hike to Cathkin. Eleven others dashed to gird up their loins for this trip. As one of the mad dozen, I can testify to the cracking pace set by Len, and although the rain was teeming down, we covered the $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. flat. I guess the yellow shirted, maroon trousered slickers at the Hostel wondered at the strange doings of this bedraggled group camping on their verandah. Highlight of the visit was the sight of Len coming down upon his 'never-you-mind' with a terrific thud in the mud, in the backyard of the Hostel.

Having fortified ourselves with tea, cake, toffee and chocolate, we set off in the downpour on the homeward journey. Boots became so wet that no one bothered to de-foot at the river, but waded straight through. Arrived back at Camp in the same time ($1\frac{1}{2}$ hrs), and found supper in progress. Stan's soup was really delicious but could not compare with Mac Rand's "cough mixture".

By now the rain had really set in in earnest and all thought of the campfire and entertainments show was abandoned. In its place (from some reports) "Kath's Cuddle Corner" became a bit more than a printed page.

Monday, and time to break Camp. While tents were crashing down, "Manook" relented and old Sol himself peeped out. The mists parted just long enough to give us a brief glimpse of Cathkin Peak in whose shadow we were camped. The lorries were loaded and it was "Farewell, Champagne, Tekwini here we come".

The trip down was made in perfect weather and we were back in Durban at the wonderful hour of 8 p.m. Maniram's lorries and drivers deserve a special pat on their backs for their magnificent performance.

And now another Easter Camp was ended, with new friendships made, old friendships grown stronger, and that merry little sprite the Rambling Spirit had enslaved many new people. The week-end was brought to a fitting close as we joined hands and shook the surrounding buildings with "Auld Lang Syne" and our cheers for the Camp Committee who had done their job so well.

ROLL ON ORIBI!

THE FORTNIGHTLY HIKE by FRANK HULLEY.

With acknowledgments to the bloke who composed the song "Waltzing Matilda" to which tune this little ditty is to be sung.

Verse I

When a Durban Rambler

Rises on a Sunday morn
Lifts down his haversack
And gulps his tea
He sings as he goes down the
road to meet the other chaps.
"Who'll come a-hiking, a-hiking with me."

CHORUS.

Who'll come a-hiking
Who'll come a-hiking,
Who'll come a-hiking, a-hiking with me.

And he sings as he goes
down the road to meet the other chaps,
"Who'll come a-hiking, a-hiking with me".

VERSE II

There he finds the lorries
waiting at the Market place
with Lindie and Spike
and the Ogles three
And we sing as we leave
in the lorries from the Market place
"Who'll come a-hiking, a-hiking with me".

CHORUS.

VERSE III

Maybe its the Pump House
Macintosh or Valentine
Zama or Hillcrest or Craiglea
And the leader looks for suckers
to carry all the billy-cans
make up the fire and brew the tea.

CHORUS.

VERSE IV

When the Ramblers get there
off will come their haversacks
under the shade of the Kaffirboom tree
And they sing as they sit and
gobble up their sandwiches
smoke their cigarettes and drink
their tea.

CHORUS.

VERSE V.

Round comes the Treasurer
Jing-a-ling his money bag
laughing and chortling and
chuckling with glee
"With the four and sixpence
you've got in your handkerchief
you'll come a-hiking, a-hiking with me".

CHORUS.

VERSE VI.

When we straggle homeward
late in the afternoon
a tired sunburnt bunch you will
see
But we sing as we walk along
bowed beneath our haversacks
"The merry Durban Ramblers Club
are we".

CHORUS.

NEW MEMBERS.

We wish to welcome the following new members to our
Club :-

Miss Shirley Boyce

Miss Elizabeth St. George

Miss Romilly O'Shea

Mr. Basil Robinson.

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