



DURBAN RAMBLERS CLUB.

CHAIRMAN:
W. DYMOCK PARR
PHONE 85398 (EVENINGS)

HON. SECRETARY:
PATRICIA OGLE
PHONE 24738 (DAY)

HON. TREASURER:
D. RAE ADAMS

P. O. BOX 1063,
DURBAN.

OCTOBER FIXTURES.

- Sunday,
4th. Water has a particular fascination for most people, and if they join the outing to McINTOSH FALLS AND CASCADES via Marianhill, with LES as Leader, they will be able to indulge this liking to their heart's content.
CHARGE : 4/-d.
- Thursday,
6th. Executive Committee Meeting at Frank Woodward's Flat, 801 "Montrose", Point Road, at 8 p.m.
- Friday,
16th. "Nothing succeeds like success" is an old saw. Therefore, you will be pleased to learn of another BRAAIVLEIS AT BEACHWOOD. This time bring your own meat and rolls - cocoa will be provided. Meet, as usual, at George Maddison's in Commercial Road at 7.30 p.m.
CHARGE : 1/6d. per person.
1/-d. for car-owners.
- Sunday,
18th. Falls, Cascades ... and now Rapids. Travelling via Pinetown, LINDIE will lead the hike to UMLAAS RAPIDS.
CHARGE : 4/6d.
- Saturday,
31st. Our Yankee friends are great on HALLOWEEN PARTIES, (pumpkins, candles, and spooks), so this evening we are giving it stick at the NAVY LEAGUE HALL, Field Street, at 8 p.m. Come in fancy dress if you feel so inclined - otherwise the usual clobber.
CHARGE : 5/-d.
- Sunday,
1st NOV. Late nights are fine, but one must be able to relax the next day. Accordingly, we have planned a PICNIC AT UMGENI RIVER this Sunday. But more of this later.
CHARGE : 5/-d.
- Sat. & Sun.
7th and 8th
NOV. This will be a "Maritzburg Week-end". Members are offered dinner, bed and breakfast at the Camden Hotel at 16/-d. per head. The party will leave from a recognised meeting place on Saturday afternoon, and we hope all car-owners turn up. There will be an additional fee of 6/-d. for those without cars. We are also hoping for a Social at the Royal Hotel with the P.M.B. Ramblers' Club that evening, (5/-d. extra charge), and an outing with them the next day.

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



FOUNDED 1932

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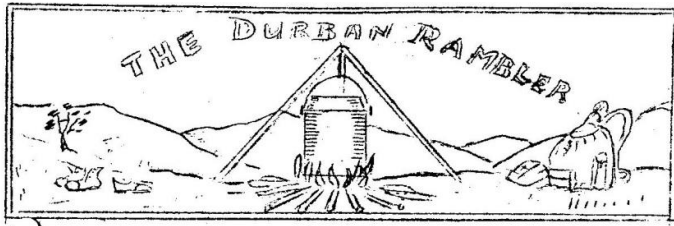
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OCTOBER, 1953.
VOL. 2 No. 8.

EDITOR : F. HULLEY.
PHONE : 20474.

As I was otherwise engaged on Sunday, 23rd of last month, Sheilagh Cliff has very kindly done the write-up on the hike to Shongweni Falls. Thanks a lot Shelagh!

SHONGWENI FALLS HIKE : 23rd August, 1953 by Shelagh Cliff.

Those lazy types who turned over after a look at the weather two weeks ago, enthusiastically rolled up again for this hike.

) The usual stop at Naidoo's was followed by unhappy expressions on the faces of a few ice-cream eaters. It appears that not even a stray dog would consume a lump which, accidentally or otherwise, landed at its feet. However, a quick survey showed that there were no permanent ill effects.

Soon after leaving the lorries Lindie led the way up a hill but, on the whole, we travelled along more or less level ground. Once again the grass had been burnt and was crisply green, and from the ridge above the railway line we had a wonderful view of the surrounding country. Apparently many hikers were in gay and carefree mood and their enthusiastic and harmonious singing was very impressive, especially to
to/.....

to the not-so-stalwart who needed all their lung power for the mere purpose of walking.

After a pause above Shongweni Station a stiff climb was followed by a necessary rest, during which "Boerewors" and his cabbage leaves were very popular. We soon arrived at our lunch spot above the falls, and in these attractive surroundings the general idea was "eat and relax". Cyril, in spite of a great deal of heckling and friendly advice, successfully brewed the tea. Dymock was seen wandering around in search of "either food or talent" - his own words. It is suspected that he had seen lunch-time luxury in the shape of tinned fruit and cream but was too late, the tins being well and truly empty.

A few energetic Ramblers clambered down to the bottom of the Falls, some wandered off exploring, but the majority remained happily at ease until afternoon tea. Then packs were shouldered again and we covered the short distance to the lorries, and had a pleasantly warm journey back to town.

I have been asked by several Ramblers to publish an account of our trip down the Umkomaas. Here it is. ED.

FROM RICHMOND TO UMKOMAAS ON SHANK'S PONY :

Friday, 21st August, found Rocky Viviers, Frank Woodward and myself at Frank's home checking supplies, kit, permits, rail tickets and all the paraphernalia that goes to make up a hiking expedition. In spite of all our efforts to keep weight down, our packs seemed to get heavier and heavier as the kit went in.

Many strange glances came our way the next afternoon as we assembled outside the Railway Station to catch the Maritzburg Pullman. After a while the passengers got used to us on the bus and ceased staring. When we got to P.M.B. we found that we had an hour's wait for the Richmond bus, but a friendly cafe proprietor helped us while away the time by allowing us to listen to the

First Rugby Test on his radio.

The ride to Richmond (our starting point) was uneventful, if not somewhat nerve-racking as the "cowboy" driver tore along in the dark with very little in the way of lights. There we had a meal in the one and only cafe, for which we were charged 5/-d. which nearly broke Rocky's heart, and we shouldered our packs and set out along the main road for about 2 miles to the bridge over the Illovo River where we camped for the night.

○ We made an early start next morning in heavy mist, and had done about 6 miles before we called a halt for breakfast at 9 o'clock. The road wound between wattle plantations and the mist made it delightfully cool. By lunch-time we had done eleven miles and were overlooking the wild and beautiful Umkomaas Valley. A Native showed us the path down, and after a break we set off along the winding path that leads downward for 1,500 feet to the river. Our first crossing of the river nearly ended in a wetting for Frank. The river is very swift flowing and the bed consists of sharp rocks. He trod on a slippery rock and down he went. However, as the water was thigh-deep, he caught himself in time and only got his shorts wet. About a mile further down we decided to camp as the sun was already setting. We camped in a bay on the edge of the bush with the river chattering cheerfully at our feet. As soon as supper was over we were only too glad to turn in as we were pretty tired, having covered some 18 miles that day.

○ A very cheerful Native called on us and wanted us to move down to his "umuzi" where he said he would cook us a fowl. Not even the vision of cooked chicken could budge us, so we declined and he went on his merry way.

Another early start and after crossing the river 5 times in two miles, we decided to take to the hills as crossing the river took about 10 minutes each time. A Native footpath led us up the long rocky ridge, and by the time we were half way up we all began to feel petered out, so breakfast was decided on. We stopped and cooked breakfast right in the middle of the path where we sat. Noon found us on top of the ridges again, and you're truly was feeling a bit touched by the sun. A good rest put

that to rights and we set out again, this time almost directly away from the river to by-pass a huge cutback. At a Native kraal we asked an old "Kehla" the way and he pointed out a flat topped hill, blue in the distance, and told us that we should be able to sleep there that night and swore that Umkomaas was only a few hours walk from there. (How unreliable he proved!) Feeling very much more hopeful for a short trip, we carried on. Stopping at the German Mission at Mhlazuka just before lunch, a German nun made us some sort of cool drink which was very refreshing.

By now the nature of the countryside had altered. Round grassy hills stretched away into the distance, dotted here and there with plantations of gum and wattle. That evening we raced a thunderstorm into camp. By the time we had found a suitable spot, the sky was overcast and thunder rumbling overhead. In a wink the tent was pitched and a smouldering dung fire was heating the bully beef and spaghetti. No sooner had we gobbled our supper than the rain came down. The storm did not amount to much and we were able to have a good night's rest.

After an early start we joined a caravan of donkeys and Natives for a few miles, then crossed the Illovo River four times before altering our course a few points to the south. It took all morning to climb out of the Illovo Valley. At lunch-time we reached the flat topped hill which we had seen the day before. From the summit we were able to see Umkomaas faintly in the distance, to my reckoning, about 30 miles away. We spoke to a Native school teacher at the school on top of the hill, and to our surprise he answered our query as to the distance to Umkomaas in faultless English. His actual words were: "I really don't know. Actually I have never footed it from here".

Frank was beginning to have trouble with his feet and they had to be bandaged and treated. My own plates of meat were very sore and ankles felt they would not carry on much longer. Rocky, that blithe spirit, had long since ceased threatening to "Jag in" and was feeling as fit as a fiddle. Now the long

As the Umkomaas River commenced, and four hours after crossing the river to the south bank, we camped that night. Our camp site could not have been lovelier if it had been specially designed for us. Here we enjoyed the luxury of our first wash since leaving

It rained again that night, but our little tent stayed the wet. Our spirits were high as we fondly imagined that Umkomaas was about 8 or 10 miles away; and we pressed what we were going to have for lunch at the cafe. I never lay much store by a Native's idea of a short

The next day was overcast and delightfully cool and our way along the south bank of the river. There were no breaking hills to climb - although the sandy path along the bank was heavy going at times. The river was particularly beautiful along there with its deep pools, ferns, and green trees and bushes. Bird life abounded and we saw one old Native fishing. One barbel he had caught was as long as my arm. Twice we heard a muffled drumming sound that we imagined to be the drumming of the rain, but it was only the roar of a waterfall. At lunch we ate the last of our food and pressed on. Natives on the way told us that Umkomaas was either just around the corner, or several hours away. We were beginning to doubt our own estimate of the distance. The road branched off from the river for a bit, and we saw the first signs of civilization - a coolie store. The Native counter told us that it was 2 1/2 miles still, but the Indian said it was a further 9 miles. Our spirits sank. We were beginning to feel more than a bit worn out, and the prospect of another 9 miles that day was none too pleasing. As we went. Nearer town we met several Indians and a policeman who seemed to know all about us, as someone called the beans to the Press. The last mile in to town was the worst. The mud plunged to our boots which weighed a ton weight. At this point Rocky said that his feet were beginning to hurt, and I nearly passed out as our feet had to wade through the mud. At last we reached the station. In the station, it was

In spite of all the talk we had heard about snakes being so plentiful, we never saw one. How nice it was to drop our 50-lb. packs for the last time and relax in the train! All looked very scruffy with five days' growth of beard and the accumulation of dirt on our clothes. Still, I guess it was worth it in the knowledge that we were the first Europeans to do the trip on foot.

In retrospect it was a lovely trip, but I feel that doing it in 4 days was hard going. I would advise any future trippers to allow at least six days. We were surprised, upon working out the actual distance walked, to find that we had done 70 miles.

CAMP AT NSUZE : 5th to 7th September :

What keen type would miss the opportunity of spending a long week-end out in the open? Certainly not the 46 Ramblers who set merrily off to Nsuze on Saturday, 5th. Although the weather threatened and many eyes turned apprehensively toward the black clouds that hung overhead, spirits were high and jolly chatter resounded back and forth as the old-timers showed new-comers over the now familiar camp site to the river.

The advance guard had pitched most of the tents and done most of the donkey work by the time the second party arrived. There only remained a few drainage trenches to be dug and things were all snug and "hunky-dory".

The weather turned very chilly that first evening and warm clothing soon made its appearance around the fire as the crowd settled down for a sing-song. Some, however, had other ideas. They went for a walk in the dark, and joined us later on when we had a proper "traditional" sing-song.

(By kind permission of Heather and Barbara, I now quote an extract from a letter that passed between those fair damsels after Camp).

" On Sunday I thought of staying in bed until I saw a patch of blue sky through the tent opening. After breakfast a party of us wended our way down to the Falls, beautiful as ever. Peter H., Les and a couple of girls bravely plunged into the water ... and hurried out shivering. On our way back we walked along the river a little way when we saw some lovely orange lilies growing on the side of the hill and decided to take a closer look. There was a strip of water just there, and though most of us stepped over a narrow part, Ivan decided to jump for it. He landed in a marshy spot and splashed himself all over with mud. It wasn't terribly wide, but the marshy strips on each side presented a problem and soon some of the boys were lining up to test their prowess, and others were lining up on the other side to test their cameras. Les got nicely splashed and obligingly did it again as someone complained of not getting a photo. Rae's jump was the "piece de resistance" however. Suspense mounted as he slowly removed his socks, shoes and watch, and crammed his beret on over his eyes. A short run, on the edge now ... his feet seemed to stick ... he slid forward, splashed in, then stood up all grinning and muddy. I thought Camp could not go past without mud being flung around somewhere.

On Sunday evening just before dinner it started raining quite heavily so everyone donned macks and ate their food with rain dripping off the trees into it. Campfire was "out" of course, so we decided to sit in one tent, which had been pitched but wasn't being used. It was rather packed, but that didn't stop us singing our hardest. Then the rain came down harder. Soon people were complaining of wet seats. We eventually had to vacate the tent as no trench had been dug and the rain just streamed merrily in. By the time the rain had eased off a little, the ground inside the tent had turned to squelchy mud. Most of them went into one of the boys' tents, while about seven of us went down to make cocoa. When we went back to the tent we found it was like a nightclub - one dim lantern in the packed tent, and the air thick with cigarette smoke".

Here Ruth joined me with her accordion, and we had a rattling good sing-song. Tallulah, that jolly soul, taught us some rather good words to the tune of :

"My bonny lies over the ocean". Is the money still rolling in, Homey?

I looked in on Len later that night and found him fast asleep in his tent. Believe it or not. He wasn't washed out. Not he. He had dug a trench inside his tent and let the rain water out the door.

The weather cleared the next morning and everyone was dead keen on a jolly long hike. I will hand you back to Heather for a further description.

" On Monday, everyone with the exception of six lazy people, namely Frank and Di, Ernest and Cynthia, Pete and I, went hiking arriving back at 3 in the afternoon, and all declared it had been a lovely hike. The rest of us lazed around, made cold lunch, and had boat races on the river with billy lids. Kath didn't come - in fact it was rather strange, for at Camp amongst all the sisters except Di and Cyn, there was one of each set of sisters missing. Kath, Beryl Laatz, Pat Ogle, and you."

(Now I hand you over to Len for a description of the hike. Over to you, Len).

All cameras came out of cold storage on Monday morning, our first sunny day in Camp, and shortly after breakfast Frank Woodward (Number One, himself), rounded up some 30 faithful followers and an almost mass evacuation of the Camp took place. It made a gay splash of colour as the procession of multi-coloured shirts and shorts snaked its way from the river up the nearby foothills, and one longed for colour film to do justice to it all.

Once the adjoining escarpment ridge was reached a wonderful panoramic vista unfolded itself. Far away in the distance and just discernable, lay the sea, whilst all around and as far as the eye could see, the valleys and hills of the area stretched in endless and magnificent profusion. All this proved too much for Number One who was trying out a new camera, and surrendering the leadership of the party to Peter Hounsell, he began the great shoot! Landscape and

and Rambler alike fell to his shutter-happy finger, and had he been using a Sten gun, not a Rambler would have lived to tell the tale!

Heading towards the river AND lunch, the photographic possibilities of a rustic fence proved too much for our camera fiends, and Dulcie, Maureen and Helen were hastily and unceremoniously dumped on the topmost cross branch. Against the blue sky and billowing white clouds they provided as pretty a picture as one could wish for ... until the fence came down with a crash, and that was that!

Down to the river and a lunch of Dagwoodian slices of bread, butter and hunks of cheese, with an endless supply of beetroot chunks to lend colour to it all. A nearby bull looked menacingly at the invaders, but as one of our gallant lasses went to engage him with a red scarf he revealed himself in his true colours and scampered off!

Homeward bound, along the edge of the river this time, with no-one in any hurry to get back, and the dreamers dreaming silly wonderous dreams of arriving back to find the tents pulled down and packed ... misguided wretches! And still the magic of the day lingered and one of the returnees made much move to get cracking, till even Spike (the driver) was impelled to say: "Don't nobodies wants to get home to-day?"

Once more it was all hands to the pump and in a jiffy the tents were down and we were on our way back home. After the customary stop at the Fairbreeze, we pushed off, reaching Durban quite late.

This month I am indebted to Shirley Dodds for a song. Here she has had a go at poor old Popple, that much maligned soul. Anyway, thanks a million, Shirley.

SERENADE TO POPPLEWICK (To the tune of "Captain of the Pinafore").

My name is Popplewick, a climber bold,
And a right good climber too.
My affinity for pubs and Umbogintwini Clubs
May be evident to you.
His affinity for pubs and Umbogintwini Clubs
May be evident to you.
On the krantzies that I climb, which are famous for
their grime,
I garden peacefully;
The bananas on my shorts may be quite obscured by dirt,
But I never, never climb a tree.
What, never? No, never. What, never? Hardly ever.
He hardly ever climbs a tree.
Then, give three cheers, and give them stick,
And we'll sing a serenade to Popplewick.
Then, give three cheers, and give them stick,
As a serenade to Popplewick.

My name is Popplewick, and on my shorts
Is embroidered Popple Peak.
I'll spend a lazy hour on the summit of Kloof Tower,
Which I climb up every week.
My Himalayan tents are impregnable to rents,
And a storm can't bother me.
I may sometimes take a chance when I'm half-way up
a krantz,
But I never, never use my knee.
What, never? No, never. What, never? Hardly ever.
He'll hardly ever use his knee.
Then, give three cheers, and give them stick,
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SOCIAL NEWS :

The main highlight of the month's social activities was undoubtedly the Spring Ball. Rambler and Ramblerette donned their finest rags and came to the Dan Pienaar Hall on Saturday evening, the 12th. There we found Lindie in attendance at the door, while Len and yours truly showed people to their seats.

I was very pleased to see four of our friends from the Maritzburg Ramblers present, as well as a party from the Mountain Club. Old-timers Vernon and Cordelia Gibb made a very welcome addition to the throng. Soon music filled the air and immaculate males swirled their very elegant partners in graceful dances. The dance floor was not overcrowded and dancing was a pleasure, while Charles Walker kept proceedings going with his excellent music. The eats were delicious (at least I am told they were, as Scotty and I slipped up on them), while those who were not so intent on feeding the inner man paid due tribute to that jolly old rascal, Bacchus.

All too soon we were dancing the last waltz and it was time to go, but the pleasant memories of that lovely evening linger with us. I, for one, always look forward to this annual festivity when we respond to the call of the Spring.

STILL MORE WEDDING BELLS are rehearsing to ring in the marriage of Bernie Bent and Maria Roza on the 10th October. They will be married with Nuptial Mass at the Emmanuel Cathedral at 9 a.m. on that day, and their Reception will be held at the Caister in Musgrave Road after 10 a.m. Those of their friends who wish to attend are requested to hand their names to the Secretary not later than 4th Oct.

Everyone knows Bernie, but not so many know Maria who is also an old Rambler. They will be going up to Eshowe to live. We shall be losing a very staunch Rambler who has given freely of his services to the Club for a long time. We trust they will not forget us and will come down and see us how and then.

Margaret Moore and Pat Carter will also be leaving us early in October when they depart for the United Kingdom. Although they have not been Ramblers for a very long time, they have both shown themselves Ramblers of the first water and we shall miss them too. Bon voyage to both of you, and please don't forget us altogether.

I guess Elaine Fryer is a very happy girl now that her

brother is back home safe and sound after being a Prisoner of War in Korea.

Our congratulations go to Ian Muller on his prize-winning essay on: "Soil Erosion - Its Effects and the Remedy".

ADVERTISEMENT

ANY ONE WANT NEW BOOTS? If so, please note.

For Sale A pair of "Voortrekker" boots, size 6, almost new, nailed with tricounis. Phone: Jimmy Hill. 23114 (Office Hours), or 46180.

KATH'S CORNER.

CAMP CAPERS

No names mentioned, but a little bird tells us of a Ramblerette who 'phoned a certain Rambler and seemed sorry to hear he was going to camp ---- apparently she thought she'd borrow his sleeping bag!

Les, we hear, likes taking coffee round in the mornings so that he can see how the girls look without their "warpaint". Have you had many shocks, Les?

Shame on you, Cynthia, leaving your soap in the path for a cow to tramp on - she might have slipped and broken her neck!

We know of at least two people who don't like getting wet. During the storm, Ernest and Len both dug small trenches inside their tents to save going out into the rain.

Lilos ... sheets ... campbeds ... and now breakfast in bed ... you boys don't like roughing it, do you?
