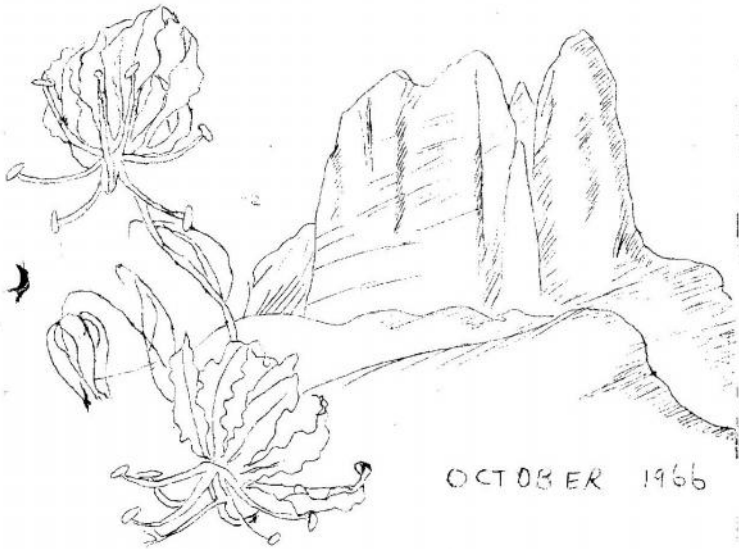


DURBAN
RAMBLERS
CLUB



OCTOBER 1966

DURBAN RAMBLERS' CLUB.

CHAIRMAN: Bob Ferns SECRETARY: Diane Harbour
331697/331916 832590

TREASURER: Robert Booker EDITOR: Michael Wigley
44811 351304

P.O. Box 1063

OCTOBER, 1966 - FIXTURES.

Tuesday 4th Committee Meeting at Mike Woods'
flat, 12, Vernon Court, Vernon Road,
at 8 p.m.

Week-end
8th-10th Anyone interested in going away
please contact Bob Ferns, 331697/
331916.

Sunday 16th Haven's Ridge Hike with Lindy
leading. Lorry leaves the market
place at 8.30 a.m. Members 45c,
Visitors 50c.

Wednesday 19th Photographic Meeting at Chris and
Adele Schorn's home, 243, Acutt
Avenue, Rosehill, at 8 p.m.
The subject is "General".

Sunday 30th Mposane Hike with Rob Booker
leading. Lorry leaves the market
place at 8.00 a.m. Please note
that this is an earlier start than
usual. Members 50c, Visitors 75c.

SOUTH AMERICA - CLE.

South of Buenos Aires and approximately two hundred miles inland, the South American lake district commences. Here, amid scenery reminiscent of both Norway and Switzerland, innumerable lakes form a chain across the Argentine and Chile.

Our plane landed at Bariloche in weather some three degrees above freezing point - hardly a warm welcome, though I dare say the number of honeymooners on our flight relished it, for besides its tourist attraction, the area is to the South American newlyweds what the Berg is to curs.

Bariloche lies on the shores of the largest Argentinian lake, namely seventy mile long Nahuel Huapi. (Don't despair, a few days in the country will have you getting around those tongue-twisters like a seasoned linguist). Eighty per cent of the inhabitants originally came from Europe and this is evident in the Scandinavian sweaters and wood carvings which abound in all the shops.

Our first boat trip took in lakes Nahuel Huapi, Moreno and Lopez, as at a certain point all three join together. Overlooking them is the quaint chalet-like Llac Llac hotel (pronounced Yow Yow). This name originated when roving Indian tribes tasted the berries which grow in profusion in the area and pronounced them "sweet-sweet", which is the direct translation of the name.

One of the islands we visited was the scene of Walt Disney's "Bambi", and the small wooden hut which he occupied during the filming still stands in the forest of myrtle trees which is reputed to be one of the largest of the few remaining in the world.

For the next few days we hopped from boat to

bus and back to boat again, travelling through some of the most exquisite scenery imaginable. The Lower Andes run through the lake districts so the entire trip was a fairy-tale wonderland of snow-bedecked mountains, pine-covered slopes, ribbon thin waterfalls and incongruously among this greenery, stretches that were almost desert-like with stark, rocky peaks jutting like accusing fingers against the vivid blue sky, while on their lower slopes only a few red boulders relieved the thirsting nakedness.

For the naturalist there was the interesting phenomenon of Lago Frias with its peculiar white-green colour, caused by the rivers' passage over limestone rocks on their way to the lake. Others (like myself) indulged in the happy pastime of turning hands and faces a brilliant purple by literally gorging on the blackberries which grow on the miles of hedges lining the roads - glutton's paradise would be an appropriate name to bestow on these parts.

We were fortunate enough to see Osorno, the Fujiyama of South America, in all her glory, as she kindly condescended to withdraw the veil of cloud with which she normally provocatively conceals her proud face from prying eyes. This volcano which last erupted one hundred and twenty five years ago, together with Puntagudo, very similar in shape to the Matterhorn, lies on the shores of Todos Los Santos in Chile. This lake holds the reputation that President Roosevelt named it the most beautiful in the world and the people around these parts are continually boasting of this just in case the tourist might be tempted to forget this noteworthy fact.

Around Llanquihue, Chile's largest lake, is found a corner of Latin America which closely resembles Germany. Indeed, most of the farmers here are of Germanic extract. Thousands of fruit trees grow lavishly in the soil which derives its richness from

the eruption of Celbuco volcano in 1960.

Eventually, leaving the lake districts behind, we drove along the Pan American highway towards Puerto Montt, the capital of this German colony. Down at its little harbour such delicacies as eel, octopus, crab and lobster hang in long rows tempting the gastric juices - or at least that's what they're supposed to do, but the overpowering and far from pleasant smell of fish, the rotting carcasses lying about and the scrunch of shells from some hapless marine creatures underfoot, all combine to have quite the opposite effect.

A few hours' flight brought us to Santiago, the home of the most sophisticated, educated and cultured of all South Americans - or so they believe. To give them their due they certainly were the most respectably dressed, but Santiago itself has the appearance of a colourless, grey city, lacking the sparkle of those on the East Coast. In addition it has the doubtful distinction of being the most exorbitantly expensive city we came across.

Santiago's hero was Bernardo O'Higgins and this partly Irish name is given to streets, buses, squares, shops, theatres and anything else you might care to mention. In the middle of the city is the famous Santa Lucia hill where the Spanish garrison kept a warring Indian tribe at bay during one of their numerous revolutions, and in remembrance, a cannon is fired from the parapet at noon each day. From here a trip up the funicular railway leads to the top of San Cristobal hill where a huge statue of the Virgin Mary gazes serenely down from among glorious gardens in brilliant contrast to the drabness of the city below. This forty foot high statue, which was made by the same people who made the Statue of Liberty, is cast in bronze covered with pure marble, and is Santiago's answer to Rio's Christ the Redeemer.

On our return flight we crossed the andes, so breathtakingly wonderful as to defy description. They are extremely jagged, brown mountains which seem to stand defiant and aloof as no other range does. As it was autumn at the time of our visit, there were merely huge tracts of snow lying on the upper reaches, looking like lakes among the cruel peaks, many of which are in the vicinity of 16,000 feet. I'm wondering whether these could be placed on the venue for a pleasant Sunday's hike for the hanklers. Suggest it to our leaders anyway. I'm sure nothing could deter those stalwart hearts, those long sturdy legs and above all the quality most necessary for leadership - a distinct lack of compassion for those not as well endowed with the above advantages.

Anyway we digress from the subject on hand which has reached the point where we landed at Sao Paulo at the somewhat unearthly hour of 3 a.m., but don't let us complain. As we had five days to linger in this outsize ant-heap with its occupants dashing round in a manner that would put even the most industrious of ants to shame, I chose the more tranquil alternative in the form of a day's visit to Brazilia. This capital of the state of Brazil sprang up in the middle of nowhere within the short space of four years, i.e. 1956 to 1960. The city is shaped like a plane, the cockpit being the administrative area, the wings the residential section and the tail contains the water-parks, factories and military camp.

In order to try to tempt some of the population away from the coast, the Government pays higher wages to the civil servants, while homes and cost of living are cheaper, but on the whole the plan has been a failure. There are a mere 800,000 inhabitants, which is a small figure compared with the other capitals which range mainly between 4 to 6 million occupants.

architecturally, however, the city is unique in

its approach. The blocks of flats are built on pillars and surrounded by large grounds, as part of an experiment to see whether the extra circulating air thus obtained and the wide open spaces for recreation will raise a healthier generation of children. Carrying this plan further, all kindergarten and junior schools conform to the following pattern. Between every two classrooms there must be a garden and one wall of each room is made completely of sliding glass windows opening on to these gardens, while the passageways are of trelliswork, covered with creepers. Under such conditions it would almost be a pleasure to go back to school. Note, I only said almost. On hearing I was South African one of the teachers had her pupils show me their collection of our money which apparently features high on their world coinage popularity poll.

Eleven blocks of flats, housing approximately 2,500 people, form a super block which boasts its own junior school and small shopping centre, while four super blocks form a community with a de-luxe shopping centre and church.

There are no stop streets for traffic and in many places pedestrians cross by subway. As far as the houses are concerned, the backs face the backs with a street inbetween: this means that the fronts also face each other and between them are long stretches of lawn and small trees flanked by paving-stones leading to the houses. As they are all identical, they look rather like long lines of broody hens sitting on their nests, alternating between glaring at each other and holding a little pleasant gossip when the inclination takes them.

The modern lines employed in the administrative area would bring the light of joy to the most fastidious architect's oblong, square or circular eyes. The Houses of Parliament represent an inverted bowl

for the Assembly and a saucer-like one for the Senate. In the midst of a huge pond of water stands the twenty eight storey high Government offices (the highest building) while the Dawn Palace of the President, the Supreme Court and the Executive Power's buildings are beautifully constructed in marble and glass.

It was indeed a sad moment when the Boissevain sailed in the early morning mists from Rio harbour for the last time. Actually I have a vague suspicion that many necks must be permanently disjoined from craning round to drink in the last of the sights - perhaps some kindly soul should have pointed out the fact that there is a slight difference between a human being and a swivel-necked stork.

We were, however, fortunate enough to call at Tristan da Cunha on our return voyage. How anyone can bear to live on this desolate island defies the imagination. The village is clustered in one tiny corner beneath the gloomy cliffs, while a short, narrow stretch of field provides the only reasonable grazing area for the animals. Black patches of lava, from which peek the remains of the old canning factory, can be seen at the water's edge where the volcanic fires erupted from the sea, while a grey scar on the mountainside marks the passage of an avalanche.

Discussions with some of the forty Tristinians who we took off revealed what sounded like a rather jolly life, but one not suited to lazy individuals. A fine day involves a row over to a neighbouring island to collect seabirds' eggs, or a bit of digging in the potato patches, while rainy days are a time for schooling and work in the canning factory. On all birthdays, anniversaries, and in fact on any given excuse, a party is held and all in all it sounds like a rather adventurous, extremely hard-working life filled with a gay round of social entertainment unequalled anywhere else in the world. Due to inter-

breeding the islanders bear a resemblance to one another. They are a dark skinned people with high cheek bones, who startle you by speaking English in a British accent that could be cut with a knife.

In a country with such wonderful scenery as South America has, where the people are so carefree and happy, and "manyana" is the password to a different mode of life, where there is laughter despite the poverty, who could fail to have the holiday of a lifetime. So come on, scrape together those rands and cents and head westwards across the Atlantic Ocean, then on your return you too can break into print with "A South American Interlude" or something equally romantic sounding.

Myrtle.

SHONGWENI VALLEY.

Saturday was a miserable day. It was overcast and cold and there was a constant threat of rain. Would Sunday turn out to be a nice day for rambling? Many of the Ramblers were dubious and had made other arrangements. Fortunately, it turned out to be a glorious day. The wind was cold but the sun blazed down from a cloudless sky. Everything seemed to be "full of the joys of Spring" and sparkled and shone for the occasion.

When we collected the last of the Ramblers from Pinetown, the lorry was still not as crowded as on previous hikes, but those of us who had turned up thoroughly enjoyed our day walking in the fresh air. We left the National Highway at the Shongweni turn-off and got off the lorry near the Shongweni Polo Club. Having stripped off track-suits and sweaters, we proceeded along the road by the side of a cane farm, and made our way to the valley via Hawkestone, where

we had to climb through the inevitable barbed-wire fence. Leaving the public road, we walked between rows of cane and soon came out to the top of the valley. What a splendid view. The fields and trees were a healthy green, and the Berg in the distance was covered in snow. The natives we passed were friendly and greeted us cheerfully; the children waved and some donkeys frolicked around behind a kraal.

To reach the bottom of the valley we had to pick our way over and through rocks and loose stones. That area was dry and contrasted quite startlingly with the lush green ahead. The air was so invigorating that we stopped only once for those in the rear to catch up and then we were off again. Our next resting place was in a delightful spot, where we had our lunch. It was early when we arrived there but nevertheless we were ready for some sustenance. We ranged ourselves along the Shongweni River and stretched out on the rocks waiting for our coffee. What, no coffee? No. By some mischance the billy can containing the coffee had been left by the side of the road when we left the lorry. Still, we had another billy with us and also some tea.

After our meal was over and we had rested sufficiently, we scrambled up a very short rocky cliff nearby. It was not a wide face but provided a variety of routes. Once at the top, we sat and watched the others down by the side of the river. Some were lying peacefully in the sun, while others indulged in aquatic revellings.

Our journey back to the lorry was short and uneventful. The path was dry and sandy. It took us only about fifteen minutes to get there. On the way back to the National Highway we stopped at the top of Shongweni Falls for the benefit of those who had not seen them. Unfortunately, the road was too far back

and we were not able to see the actual falls, which were surrounded by trees.

We returned to where we had left the lorry in the morning to collect the forgotten billy can. Much to our relief, it was still there by the side of the road.

The hike had not been long, but it was a particularly pleasant one and, as they say, "All's well that ends well".

Eugenia.

THE ICEBERG CAVERN.

In the month of Sept-em-Ber the children of Ham the Bler gathered at the dwelling place of Mac the Hand. For there was to be a journey. and the omens were propitious for there were thirteen of the children gathered there. And Mac the hand spake comforting words, saying Fear not children, for the way will not be hard for those who are strong and there will only be a bit of a zig-zag. And the children were comforted sleeping well that night.

On the morrow they rose up and made their way firstly to the Ton of Winter where they broke their fast, and smooth tongued John of Vinsen spake in the tongue of the country and was given double helpings, whereat the others became wrath and spake in loud voices, saying Waiter, I want same as the boss at the end. From the Ton of Winter they made their way to the Store of Broth-er-Fon where they left their chariots and made their way through a green and pleasant land by the River of Umhlatazine. Yea the sun was hot and the children were sore oppressed, but after many weary hours it was decreed that they should have lunch. And they sat in the shade of the

trees that were there and drank Bov-ril and ate Raisins. And it was good.

But short was the time for rest, and woe was the lot of the children of Ram the Bler, and they spoke in sorrow and anger against Mac the Rand, saying Is this dirty great hill what you call a bit of zig-zag. And Mac the Rand tried to comfort them, saying Be strong for the end is jus tarou nd theco rner. But the children were not comforted for theco rner did not end.

And they made pilgrimage to the Cave of Lom-bard wondering at the marvels on the walls. But the rain gods were angry and filled the skies with cloud, but the children were not afraid and made their way to the Cave of the Eland where they cleansed themselves in the river and were of good cheer, saying Let us make the burners to burn. And when it was done they feasted on the long sausage and the spud of Mag-gi and also on the Ins-tant Fud. And it was good.

And in the evening the Children of Ram the Bler sang with hearty voices fortifying themselves with Brandy and Snake-Bite. And they were of good cheer for it was warm.

In the morning they picked up their packs and left the Cave of the Eland with its many wondrous legends making their way towards the Peak of East-man. That morning the winds blew cold causing the children to shiver. But the feet of the hand-maiden Marion were sore and Rags of Robert took her by the hand leading her in the highways and byways and she was comforted, saying Who will lend me a Pin that I might mend my rammies.

In the forenoon the Children passed over the Ridge of the Peak of East-man and descended into the valley below where they found stones of great value

with which they loaded their packs. And some of the children were greedy, and such was their greed for the stones that they lost the other children, whereupon they became afraid and Dikko of the House of Us-her blew upon his whistle. And receiving no reply he took Mary of Gat-en-by by the hand and led her to the river where they found Ti-ka clad in a towel. And they were saved. But the hand-maiden Marion was not of the quick, and she fell into the water, saying Splaash.

It was after that time that the clouds became thick, and Ti-Na was sore afraid, saying Lo it snoweth. And the hand-maiden Marion, clad in track-suit, laughed, saying You great nit, that is seeds blowing in the wind. But it was snow and the Elers mocked the hand-maiden Marion.

Towards the middle of the afternoon the children reached the Schoon-ge-Zicht where they made a fire and drank an infusion of leaves dearly beloved by Viv the Ancient. And it was good, and they called it Tee.

Then the children feasted.

And after the feast John of Vinsen spake to them, saying Who will build me a wall for there is snow on the Berg and if ye do not then this night ye will sleep cold. So the children built a wall and they were warmed. And that night they sang again, and again they partook of the Brandy and the Snake-bite. And the gods were offended, and that night they made Vic-Tor mad and he spake unto the children in a language they could not understand, saying Ecch and Arrgh and Oooerahoo. And the children were amazed at this wonder.

In the morning the children made their way to the gorge of Aedema. And wondrous was the beauty of this gorge. And difficult was the way of the children of

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Ram the Bler for the rocks were huge and the pools were many times impassable. But much was the merriment and many were they who got wet feet. And there were some who would have got lost had it not been for the art of Ton the bearded one who made many wondrous signs.

And it came to pass that the children left the gorge and entered once again that green and pleasant land and at the Store of Broth-er-Ton they found their chariots awaiting them. And that of Bob the Chair-man which was a Beetle would not start until the children had pushed it.

And so the Children of Ram the Bler made their way back to the Land of Teg-wen, where they arrived many hours after the sun had set. And it was good.

CUR.

RIVER VIEW HIKE.

About eleven people met the lorry at the market place thinking hopefully that more would join. The truck wheels rolled out of Finetown with numbers swollen to about thirty. We piled off the truck at Botha's Hill. Mike Woods was leading the way partly along dirt roads and partly over hilly countryside where the first glimpses of spring flowers and green blades of grass were seen. On reaching a ridge we beheld a magnificent view of the Valley of a Thousand Hills. After a short view-looking rest we took to the road again, arriving at Valley View Trading Store where we squatted around in native style, sipping cool drinks. What luxury on a hike! Finally, after having one for the road, we moved on. We straggled across the country. A few enthusiasts photographed a snake lily while another member was being chased with a sucker held by a ferocious beast!! When we

reached our destination we found the Castleden family waiting for us - relaxed and cool. Collapsing on the grass from pseudo-exhaustion (from which a few never recovered throughout the afternoon), we fortified the inner man - and woman.

Some discussed the forthcoming hockey match; a few went adventuring. When the heavy weight man, 2240, blew his whistle, the straying Ramblers, so well disciplined, duly appeared and off we set. A ridge was eventually reached. Far below lay the Umgeni Valley with Kloof Tower jutting out from the ridge. A welcome sight was the lorry into which we climbed, eager to give our tired feet a rest. Even our tongues were quiet as somewhat subdued we thought of Monday and WORK.

Sucker.

QUEENSMEAD TOURNEY.

In the days of Balthazar John V there was assembled a faire and strange companie upon ye field at Queensmead. And they were wont to hold ye tourney, e'en such as is fought with curved sticks. and strangely 'coutred in sundrie garb they were. I.e. at 14.30 hours on Sunday, 18th September, two motley teams were glowering at each other across the half-way line of a hockey field at Queensmead.

Whoever split us players into teams either knew something - or knew nothing at all. My team found itself confronted with a formidable trio, Rags Roberts, Mike Mordaunt and a third chap called Hurry (at least that's what I think his name was but I could never catch up with him to find out).

From the first whistle to the last, including the many whistles inbetween, these three musketeers drove attack

after attack at a goal desperately defended by Ton, Mike Castleden, Rosemary and Roger, to name some of the stalwarts. Stonewall tactics soon paid off though, for periodically the ball would shoot out of a goalmouth scrimmage to be picked up by our lonewolf forward, Dikko. The opposition were caught napping several times and Dikko took full advantage, descending on the goal occupied by Robbie - much to the latter's discomfort. (A hat-trick wasn't it, Dikko?). A fourth goal for Dikko's Demons came from a low-flying French Mirage. Everybody said it was a Laurance, but I know a Mirage when I see one.

There were a thousand exciting highlights in the struggle - and many new innovations to this sport were introduced, e.g. three halves of twenty minutes play each, changes of goalies and the relieving of referees when the emotional strain of "reffing" became too great.

There was an interesting attempt at fratricide by one player (who shall remain nameless) on his elder and bigger brother (who shall also remain nameless). The matter was not finalized there and then because the whistle blew - our five foot tall ref. was by now blowing indiscriminately - but we would like to bet that the altercation was resumed in the privacy of the Castle---oops! Well you know whose home I mean.

The end of the match was climaxed when Rags, teeing off from a sixteen yard hit, put the ball into a low orbit trajectory, thereby striking an attractive young lady where probably she was last struck with a slipper. The referee hastily blew his whistle and declared the match finished. The final score? Four to two, I think, but who cares anyway - "Just pass me that bottle of wintergreen again, please, nurse".

"Left right out".

EDITORIAL.

Yes, I know what you are going to say. Well, I have no excuse, unless of course you call not getting the articles in time an excuse. I do not have much time to work on the magazine, so if you agree to write up a hike, it would be much appreciated if you could send in the articles as soon after the event as possible.

The free hike for the best article last month goes to "Dead Duck".

This month we welcome Mrs. Audrey Ralph. Hope you have many happy hiking days with us.

Stop press.

Congratulations to Vic Fortmann on his engagement to Gertrude Nieuwenhout. Our best wishes to Colleen and Graham Root who got married recently.

In our "hatched" column we say welcome to a new daughter who was born to Det and Joan Sewell.

