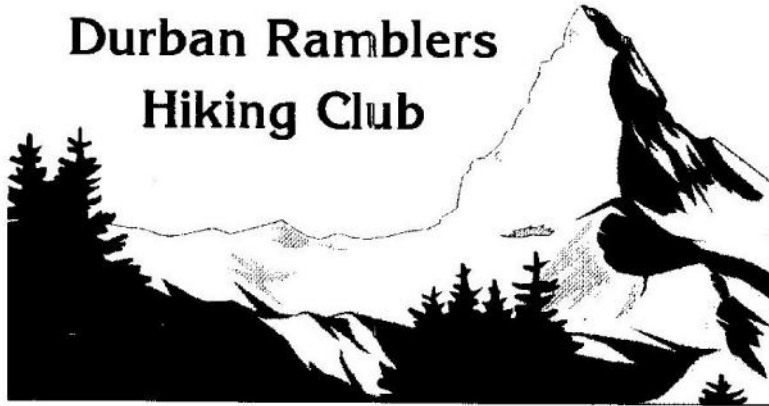


Durban Ramblers Hiking Club



October / November 1994

Title	Committee Member	Telephone Home	Work
Chairman	Bill Hyslop	701-6638	701-8996
Secretary	Lynda Holmes	305-1188	300-5911
Treasurer	Margret Kirsten	441-467	
"Ordinary" Member	Philip gatenby	213-592	
Day Hike Organiser	Sue Ferguson	701-3852	706-4055/6/7
Trails Organiser	Steve Watson	211-172	
Social Activities	John van Zyl		903-2374
Editress	Jean Jacobs	472-483	
Weekend Organiser	Nevil Walmsley	705-2919	701-8481

PO Box 1063 Durban 4000

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM:

Name: _____
 New Address: _____

 Old Address: _____
 New Tel No. (H) _____ (W) _____

Please forward to:

The Secretary
 Durban Ramblers Hiking Club
 31 Kingslynn
 60 St Andrews Street
 Durban
 4001

RECOMMENDED TRANSPORT FEES FOR BERG HIKES PER PERSON.

Southern Berg R35.00
 Central Berg R40.00
 Northern Berg R40.00

The above prices include toll fees.

FOR SALE R10.00 EACH

Ramblers T-Shirts
 and
 Sun Hats

Contact: Joe Strayton 723480H

TO TRAVEL HOPEFULLY IS BETTER THAN TO ARRIVE

Anyone interested in participating on the 1st Thursday of each month in hikes, which are about three hours in length should contact Vic on 237165 home.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Nothing grows faster than a fish, from the time he bites, until he gets away.

Many of us would be delighted to pay as we go, if we could only catch up with paying where we've been.

Handle them carefully, for words have more power than atom bombs.

Happiness walks on busy feet.

What will those people who complain of life, say about death?

HIRING OF EQUIPMENT FOR MEMBERS

TENTS R7.50 p/day
 deposit R50.00
 Contact Gerald Hall 251089

EACKPACKS

newish R5.00 p/day
 oldish R3.00 p/day
 deposit R50.00

SLEEPING MATS R1.00 p/day
 deposit R10.00

STOVE

with fuel R5.00 p/w/end
 deposit R20.00

Contact Philip Gatenby 213592

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1994 HIKING PROGRAMME

Check starting place and times for individual hikes. Hikers, please make every effort to get to our meeting places at least 10 minutes earlier so that fees can be collected and lifts arranged timeously.

NB: CORRECT MONEY ONLY, WILL BE ACCEPTED. THE DAY HIKE ORGANISER DOES NOT CARRY LOOSE CHANGE.

Day hikers, do not forget your two litres of water, a hat, and a cup for lunch time tea and coffee.

MEETING PLACES (Durban) Musgrave Park, Berea
 (Pinetown) Union Main Centre Old Main Road.

1 October - Saturday

T C ROBERTSON RESERVE SCOTTBURGH

Walk and braai. This is an ideal spot for an afternoon/evening get together. B Y O Also if you have a gas lamp bring that too. If the weather looks a little doubtful, don't be discouraged as there is a roof over an area large enough for us all to sit and braai under. I suggest you bring a chair for comfort. For any more information contact John van Zyl 9032374W
 Ptn 1.30 Dbn 2.00

1-4 October 4 days

NGELE TRAIL

Come walk in the beautiful forest of Ngele, from houses providing comfortable accommodation with the luxury of hot water and baths. Re-scheduled from 17-20 Sept; Estimated cost inc; transport R90. Deposit R45 to Philip Gatenby.
 Leader Philip Gatenby 213592H

2 October - Sunday

KILLARNEY VALLEY New hike

This moderate hike consists of deep gorges which are tributaries of the Umlazi River. The scenery is wonderful, but then it usually is on our hikes. We have a safe area for our cars, however we will have to pay R5 per car for this peace of mind. I have built this cost into the fees for the day. Drivers please try to travel 5 up in your cars, it isn't a long way.

Joint leaders Steve Nel, Bill Hyslop. Contact Bill 7018996W

Dbn 8.00 Ptn 8.30

Members R10 visitors R12

8-9-10 October - weekend

SEHLABATHEBE LODGE LESOTHO

Booking essential for this three day long weekend. Maximum 12 people. Valid passport required.
 Contact Sue Ferguson 7013852H 7064055/6/TW

9 October - Sunday

SORA'S POOLS

Jean Foster will be leading this hike into the lovely gorge where we will find the pools. Bring your swim suit and have a dip at lunch time.

Always popular and so close to home.

Leader Jean Foster 721539H 7052433W

Dbn 8.00 Ptn 8.30

Members R7 visitors R9

DEEP SEA FISHING

Every Thursday with Irvin Johnston, from Durban down the coast
 Phone 4001696

FOR SALE

Boots size 8 Hi-Tec worn twice R150 Phone Reg Blow H7001860 W7051922

Boots size 5-6 worn once R120 Tracey Jacobs H472483.

14-16 October - 3 days

SANI PASS TOP LODGE

Join Barry in a weekend on the top of Africa. On Friday stay in a dormitory at the bottom of Sani Pass. Saturday up the Pass to Sani Top Lodge, accommodation for Saturday night, then hike to Ntabana Ntlenyana, highest mountain in Southern Africa. Sunday hike to Hodgsons Peaks and then back down the Pass.

Cost approx: R60 plus transport. Maximum 12 people. Passport essential.

Leader Barry Busby 849988H 722382W

16 October - Sunday

MOUNT ASHLEY

Long and energetic hike in the Midmar area. Always enjoyed by all, wonderful scenic views.

Leader Steve Watson. contact Sue 7013852H 7064055/6/7W

Dbn 7.30 Ptn 8.00

Members R12 visitors R14

20 October - Thursday

Evening meet see item under "Indoor Meet" for details.

23 October - Sunday

FARAWAY FARM

A popular hike of moderate length in the Eston area looking towards Shongweni.

Leader Dave Easton 728170H

Dbn 7.30 Ptn 8.00

Members R11 visitors R13

28 October - Friday evening

Come and eat, drink and laugh with your fellow hikers at the Keg and Pheasant. Union Main, our meeting place in Pinetown. These Pub bashes are usually good fun, funny how we seem to relax and let our hair down after a couple of drinks!!

29-30 October - weekend

WILSONS CAVE Drakensburg Gardens Area

Join Bill on a trip to Wilsons Cave, not visited by the Club for a while. Starting from Castle View Farm, and exploration of Pitsaneng Pass.

Bill says that in his opinion this is the most beautiful cave in the Berg.

Leader Bill Hyslop 7016638H 7018996W

30 October - Sunday

VERNON CROOKS NATURE RESERVE

Tom states that there will be "new green everywhere with spring flowers"

Brisk moderate walking. Some old and new trails, don't forget the Tabaard it is tick time of the year.

Leader Tom de Waal 474766H

Ptn 7.30 Dbn 8.00

Members R11 visitors R13 plus R3.50 entrance fee into the reserve payable at the gate.

6 November - Sunday

CRAIG LEE

Bill and Steve after much bush cutting are hoping to be able to find a new end to this hike, Craig Lee 1 and 2 will be joined together.

Leaders Bill and Steve. Contact Bill 7018996W

Dbn 8.00 Ptn 8.30

Members R10 visitors R12

12-13 November - weekend

CLEARWATER CAMP Port Edward

Visit Umtamvuna Nature Reserve from Tony Abbot's place to see nature at it's best. Flowers, Eagles, forest and river walking. A little of the ups and downs but will be worth it with Tom.

Cost 15.50 per night Maximum 12 people

Leader Tom de Waal 474766H

13 November - Sunday

KARKLOOF

New hike. This moderate hike is in the Karkkloof/Curry's Post area. We will be hiking through both indigenous and plantation forest. There is a chance to swim, so bring your cossie.

Leader Steph Rodgerson 214543H

Dbn 7.00 Ptn 7.30

Members R13 visitors R15

16 November - Wednesday

SLIDE SHOW BY BARRY BUSBY

In three short parts,

Diving, highlights of Barry's trip to Namibia, and hiking with our Club.

Venue - New Germany Sports Club. Where drinks are in plenty.

7.30pm for 8.00pm Barry's phone number at home 849988

19-20 November - weekend

SIMES COTTAGE Loteni

Day hikes from comfortable Parks Board accommodation with all mod cons: In the beautiful Loteni Valley area.

Cost R29 plus entrance fee R3.50 Maximum 10 people

Leader Nevil Walmsley 7052919H

20 November - Sunday

FERNCLIFF

This is a moderate hike in lovely shady conditions in the forest overlooking Pietermaritzburg. The views are worth the up hill to the unusual seat erected by the Pmb Ramblers.

Leader Philip Gatenby 213592H

Dbn 8.00 Ptn 8.30

Members R11 visitors R13

26 November - Saturday

BRING AND BRAAI

Will be at Gavin Thomsons home with the added pleasure of his pool.

Ladies please bring a salad or a pud. Don't forget your booze and costumes, also a chair.

Ptn 4.00 Dbn 4.30

Phone Gavin for his address and directions he is in the Tollgate area

284342H 3056521W. Gavin has a really nice outdoor area plenty of space.

for all of us.

27 November - Sunday

MOLWENI

This hike is ideal for a hot day. We will be walking in shady conditions along the riverside. Quite a long hike but very enjoyable.

Leader Margret Kirsten 441467H

Dbn 8.30 Ptn 9.00

Members R7 visitors R9.

..... ADVANCE NOTICES

4 December - Sunday

MTONGWENI

The above hike is in the Boston Conservancy area, and once again Pat Waddilove will be taking us out and about in this lovely part of the country. The lunch spot will be beside a waterfall with a beautiful pool

for swimming, so remember your swim wear Contact Sue Ferguson 7013852H 7064055/6/7W
Dbn 7.00 ptn 7.30

Members R13 visitors R15 Plus R3.50 payable to the conservancy.

4-5 February 1995

NTENIWA RUSTIC CAMP Spioenkop Dam

Cost + - R35 plus transport

Leader Nevil Walmsley 7052919H

Maximum 8 people

LEADERS WANTED FOR WEEKEND HIKES. ALL TYPES OF VENUES. BURG. COASTAL RESERVES. FARMS. If you are interested in leading/assisting, or have any suggestions for venues, please contact Nevil Walmsley H 7052919.

NEW MEMBERS

It is so nice to see so many visitors on our day hikes, it's even nicer to know that they enjoy the hikes and decide to join our club. So welcome to Mr/Mrs Mor., Louisia Emslie, Celia Vergari, Anita-Barbel Harms, Sheila Knight, L Colombo, Lena Blain, Gavin Thomson, John Joyce. We hope to see you all regularly, and wish you many happy years of hiking.

NOTES OF INTEREST

A few weeks ago Mike Morillion was reading through the Getaway magazine and saw this little item that may interest some of our members. Water Vale Country Lodge, 50ks from Durban Hammersdale/Inchanga turn off. For a quiet relaxing weekend (for a change) Ideal for bird watchers. No children or pets. For more information phone direct 0325-34918 or phone Mike at work 7011758.

MOÇAMBIQUE (8)

PONTA DO OURA

FUN PACKAGE

ABOARD THE

DOUBLE DECKER 4X4 PINK OVERLAND

MIN. 8
MAX. 12

7 DAYS
R1300

INCLUDES

OPTIONAL EXTRA

SKI-BOAT HIRE
SCUBA GEAR



- * Return transport from Margate or Durban.
- * VISAS + BORDER TAXES.
- * ALL MEALS
- * ALL BAR REFRESHMENTS
- * 4x4 vehicle for Beach trips
- * ACCOMMODATION IN TENTS WITH LINEN.

Enquiries: 03931 75165 (W) 75448 (H)

THE FOLLOWING SNIPPET was sent to us by our well remembered fellow hikers Dick and Regina.

Dear Hikers....Have you ever hiked to "Hell" and back? This is now possible. Our Hiking Hostel in the charming little town of Prince Albert, which is situated at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains, can be your base for the two to five day trail, the Tierberg Trail and our conducted two or three day hike into the Hell.

Of course, if you are not feeling energetic you may well amble within the town and admire the Karoo style, Cape Dutch and Victorian houses, many of which are National Monuments. Our Hostel can accommodate groups up to 14 people, either self catering or with meals on request. Our specialities are Ostrich of Karoo lamb served with home grown vegetables.

For bookings and all details please phone us. We look forward to being your Hosts! Dick & Regina Billiet. Tel (04436) 267 Fax by request (04436) 227.

ANOTHER SNIPPET

Mozambique....Ponta Do Oura

We would like to introduce your Club members to a unique camping experience at Ponta Do Oura on the Mozambique coast. Ponta Do Oura offers excellent Ski-Boat and Rock fishing and is a divers paradise.

The 4x4 Overlander or affectionately known as the "PINK BUSS" is equipped with 12 bunk beds, a fully stocked cocktail cabinet and freezer and a music system, therefor making the trip as enjoyable as your stay at Ponta.

The journey takes approx; 12 hours and we prefer to leave in the evening, arriving at the Border Post early the following morning to enjoy a hearty "Border Braai" before travelling the last hour down to Ponta.

Groups of 8 to 12 are ideal, although we can take more but this would mean that passengers would have to share a bunk bed for the journey.

The price includes all travel arrangements, food, bar refreshments, accommodation, beach trips and visas.

As an incentive we are offering your Club a 5% booking fee on all bookings from your members. Dates can be arranged between members and are subject to availability.

For further information phone Wendy or Marlene St Michaels-On_sea (0391)75165/6 Fax (0391)75109

INDOOR MEET Thursday 20th October

For our October slide lecture we will be joining the Mountain Club for a lecture entitled "A Narrow Escape On Panch Chuli"

The lecturer is the world famous climber Stephen Venables, who is being brought over from the UK to show his stunning slides and tell the story of this dramatic expedition.

Many will remember the last lecture he gave a couple of years ago when he delighted everyone, as much with his ardent and pleasant personality as with the excellence of his lecture.

The venue will be the Shepstone 1 lecture theatre at the University of Natal at 7.30pm for 8pm on Thursday 20th October. Entry will be by ticket, price R10. We suggest you book early by sending the money to Bill Hyslop P.O Box 480 Kloof 3640 Tel 7018996W. He will arrange a block booking with the Mountain Club. Book early...last time many turned up to find that there was a 'full house' and by the time this news letter reaches you, booking will have been open three weeks.

One of our club members who stays at Nottingham Road, phoned me and offered accommodation to any of our members for an over night stop. I thought this was extremely kind and thoughtful of Mark and Heather Burgher their phone number is 0333-36153

BARKSTON ASH FARM 23-24 July By Myrtle Ryan

Where do Ramblers go for a break when they are not marching up a mountain, humping up a hill, skipping over a stream or bashing through the bush? The derisive honking of geese and melancholy lowing of cattle should give a clue...the farm of course.

Seventeen wanna-get-healthy-on-farm-fare hikers took Brian Boyd up on his offer of a weekend at Barkston Ash, near Mooi River. There to welcome us were our host, his brood of boisterous hounds, coffee, tea and ..excuse me whilst I wipe away incriminating crumbs - a veritable mountain of mouthwatering shortbread, rustled up by master chef Brians own fine hand. Not to mention home-made gooseberry jam, marmalade, lemon curd, butter....

Before you get the idea the weekend was judged by cuisine alone, let me hasten to add that after such indulgence, our leader Nevil soon whipped us into activity, a brisk walk in the countryside. And very pleasant it was too, tawny grass, views unobscured by urban scrawl. Though at one stage the intrusive odour of pigs certainly spurred us to greater speed in search of fresher air. Incidentally the porcine smell lodged Paul into the fulsome merits of a movie he'd seen "Leon The Pig Farmer"

Nevil had planned for us to enjoy our lunch in the shade of a stone wall which he assured us was "just over there." Eventually a mini-mutiny, brought about by rampant hunger pangs, caused an enforced halt in the shade of some thorn bushes. Energy recovered we set forth, to find the wall was indeed, just over the next rise. It marched like a tiny replica of the Great Wall of China up hill and down dale.

Around the braai in the evening the humour flowed, and John conducted our home grown 'orchestra' in his inimitable style. But somehow I don't think the invitations to play will exactly stream in. And the chorus too failed dismally to come in on cue despite Dave's coaxing and several impromptu dress rehearsals.

We were joined the next day by three hiking enthusiasts from Mooi River, for another tramp around the winter dry veld. The afternoon ended eventfully with a huge pall of smoke on a neighbouring farm where a fire was obviously raging. It formed a fitting background to our own bit of drama when Philip's car failed to start. The men all gathered round to prod, probe and offer advice, but after an hour, gave up. We abandoned Philip and his recalcitrant motor to spend the night with Brian. So imagine our surprise when at Fields Hill Hotel we raised our glasses to toast the success of the weekend, only to see Philip walk in. We won't go into details as to where the fault lay, suffice to say the ladies were rather outspoken in their comments.

Many thanks Brian for your hospitality, Nevil for leading us and everyone for the camaraderie. And by the way, just whose partially charred underwear WAS that which found it's way into the remains of the braai fire??!!

REMEMBER Nigel Bird the Pommy from the Wirral Ramblers in Pommyland. Well he certainly remembers us, the following article he wrote, which is one of many in their twenty six page July-November magazine.

New subscription fees are as follows

Country	R16
Single	R20
Couples/Family	R25
Country Couples	R20

A reminder to prospective members. To become a member you must engage in three day hikes or one Berg trip. The entrance fee is R10 plus a yearly sub.

SOUTH AFRICA PART I: BACKPACKING IN THE BERG

Hiking in South Africa is different from the U.K. in two major aspects. There are no rights of way and for most of the country there are no maps. In KwaZulu-Natal, the Drakensberg Mountains (The Berg) are well mapped and there are also several hiking and wilderness trails. Closer to Durban some day trails can be found.

The lifestyle here is much more outdoor than in the UK, helped no doubt by the much better climate. Consequently, the average standard of fitness is significantly higher than in the UK. Can you imagine having a 5-day public hike in the UK, in which 120 people off the street backpack from hut to hut. Here, a group called Rotary Hikes do it each Easter, splitting the people over 4 different dates, and in my group only one person dropped out. OK, the total distance was only ca 70 km, with only a moderate amount of ascent each day, but as far as I was concerned it was too hot to walk after midday. Indeed, the sun shone for virtually the whole time.

Walking along the trail, you would hear a sudden shriek - had somebody fallen? No, there was a troupe of baboons we had not noticed about 200 metres away. One evening, a herd of eland came sniffing around the huts at dusk. The mobile phone has nothing on the telephone bird, which can be heard over a great distance, or how about a scarlet and black grasshopper 10 cm long. Then, of course, one has to watch out for snakes, though they are generally as keen to get out of the way as you are. However, it is as well to check your sleeping bag before getting in.

At one of the overnight stops, I was having a (cold) shower when I felt this thing on my back. Every time I tried to reach it with my hand, it moved smartly out of the way. In the end, I had to flick it off with my towel and was then much relieved to find it was only a lizard. Someone else found a snake in the shower.

Afternoons, people generally found a mountain stream in which to go for a quick dip. As there was no electricity, evenings were spent round a camp fire or braai (barbecue), swapping stories, telling jokes or having a sing-song. Quite a number of people had made modest alcohol provision, like carrying 5 litre bags of wine!

The Berg is an ancient escarpment, made mostly of basalt, which runs across Southern Africa for about 1,000 km and rises to 3,400 m (ca 11,000 feet). Much of the way the top part of the escarpment is a sheer cliff with many rocky pinnacles. Below that, the ground is less steep and that is where most of the paths and trails are. On this trip our maximum altitude was 2,000 m.

Since this first trip, I have been back to the Berg for a weekend, with the Mountain Backpackers Club. We spent Saturday night in a cave at about 2,000m, though this one did not have any bushmen cave paintings. Next day, we climbed higher to a superb contour path which can be followed for ca 60 km. The next trip will be a 4-day one when Hilary and Mickey are over, where we should reach the top of the escarpment, by a walking route.

NBS/PT/NIGEL
24 May 1994

SOUTH AFRICA PART II: RAMBLERS AND BACKPACKERS

On my Easter trip to The Berg, I met the Day Hikes Organiser of the Durban Ramblers and I did not need inviting twice to join some of their hikes. The full name of the club is the Durban Ramblers Hiking Club. The various hiking clubs around the country operate independently but a Hiking Federation of South Africa has recently been formed, to which the Durban club affiliates.

In 1992, the club celebrated its 60th anniversary and is clearly still going strong. There are about 300 members in total, though of course not everybody goes out on every hike. A programme-cum-newsletter is produced every 2 months. The formal social side of the club is not developed but the informal side is.

Travel to hikes is by car, people meeting at 2 locations in Durban then sharing cars. At present, there is only one walk each Sunday but the popularity is such that they will soon have to consider providing 2 leaders. Last Sunday, a joint walk with the Pietermaritzburg Ramblers, there were 75 people in total. As well as walks each Sunday, there are also 2,3 and 4 day trips to The Berg and various hiking trails.

Day hikes are of about B grade. Distances may be shorter, but there is the heat factor and the terrain can be rough underfoot, e.g. boulder hopping across streams. Strong C walkers of adventurous spirit would manage the walks. Last Sunday, the walk was advertised as 12 km but turned out at more like 17, and nobody saw any reason to complain.

As there are no maps away from The Berg, hikes follow trails, visit nature reserves or are negotiated with individual landowners. There is no general right of access and if you trespass you are likely to end up with your backside full of buckshot.

Two other things that are different here. I tell people about this strange wet stuff that falls from the sky on many Sundays. They cannot understand why anybody would want to go hiking when the sun is not shining. The other is that you can stop for a drink on the way back on a Sunday.

If the Ramblers hikes are not tough enough, there is the Mountain Backpackers Club which has a somewhat younger membership. This club is also affiliated to the Hiking Federation and organises trips ("fixtures") to The Berg, sometimes 2 or 3, every weekend. There is also quite an active social side.

Hikes are graded from 1 - very easy to 5 - very strenuous. The one I have been on so far was grade 3. Whilst the days were not that long, one section was pretty tough with a full pack. As I understand it, grade 4 walks are best described as A walks with full pack at up to 3,000 m altitude. On this basis grade 5 are high altitude A+ walks with full pack. I will be more than happy if I can work up to a grade 4 whilst I am here. There is much more to do than just going hiking.

NIGEL BIRD

NBS/PT/NIGEL
24 May 1994

