



Caravan Club of South Africa – Good Hope Region

NORTHERN CAPE TOUR APRIL 2011

by Chris Ball

On the 1st April 2011 eighteen caravans met at the Malmesbury caravan park for the beginning of a memorable tour of the Northern Cape.

All vans arrived safely, followed by the normal banter of “hello” greetings and a place to park for the night. The Lategan’s and Blench’s arrived late, followed by some serious exercise and maneuvers with their vans trying to find a site. The “boma” at Malmesbury provided a good place for the first nights braai and first tour meeting. Colin (our “Captain”) filled everyone in on the next day’s travel arrangements. Two groups of nine led respectively by Colin Henderson and Kevin Trollip. Willie van Niekerk and Geoff Lankester had a discussion and comparison between Land Rover and Jeep, this would prove to be embarrassing for Geoff the “Landy” owner the next day. The camp site was not the best but did provide for a convenient launch pad for the tour.

Day 2 ... with an early start for the long drive to Springbok, and another late departure by the “tail end Charlie” of the second group Kevin L, having to replace a tyre damaged during his late night maneuvers at Malmesbury. A loo stop at Piketberg before going over the Piekener’s Pass. Just before our lunch stop at Vanrynsdorp, Geoff was ruing his words to Willie the night before that his “Landy” was the best, a burst gear box pipe put paid to Geoff’s smooth run, with Colin H and Colin B, towing him into Vanrynsdorp for repairs. Thankfully a young mechanic sorted out the pipe and we could move on to Springbok. Thanks to Kevin T, for changing Jaco van Zyl’s caravan’s tyre which was starting to split. The Springbok Park was in good nick, clean ablutions, no shortage of grass and a swimming pool. Fires were started, followed by the “captain’s chat” and liqueurs and fines. Adam Schafer was awarded the first “ASS” of the day for his ongoing insults and jabber. The highlight of each day was listening to the history and background of all the towns along the route. Every caravan was requested to prepare a “tourist” information story on one town. Kevin T was again “Mr Handyman” helping a KLM pilot change the wheel to his camper before leading his group to Oranjerus, our next stop!!!!

Day 3 ... “The long and straight road” (sing to the Beatle’s music) and tiring, but at the end was a beautiful park where we could relax watching the Orange River flow by at great speed. Our thanks must go to the park owner for his efforts to sort out most of the flood damage before our arrival. All the river sites were damaged, as the park staff were still busy with the replanting and watering of grass on our arrival. The ablutions were five star, which was complimented by a rustic restaurant and bar. The three families (Schäfer, Faulds and van Niekerk) with all the kids, decided to set up the kindergarten lager away from all the others, happiness for the “wrinklies.” The evening communal braai was enjoyed by all, the weather again playing along, giving all a show of stars seldom seen in our City. The “captain” filled us in on the next days’ events, followed by the intoxicating liqueurs and our next “ASS” was awarded to Marc Faulds for not being able to count to five, when slotting his van into his group after a pit stop.

A good rest after a long day was had by all, but looming in the morning was shopping in Upington!!! It was as bad as I thought, the sooner we escaped the better. However the Lategan's and the Blench's shopped till they dropped, as they missed a wonderful pub lunch at a B&B Lodge in Keimoes called De Werf. The beers were cold and the food was great, with the added ambiance of springbok grazing on the green grass around the restaurant. The Nortier's decided to give the "winding road" (The Beatles) up to the lookout point a miss, but the rest of us drove up to the summit of the local koppie, which gave us a bird's eye view of the Orange river valley, east and west of Keimoes. The beers having settled it was time to try some wine, so off to the Oranjerivier Wynkelders. Some wine tasting, stocking up on some wine and back to camp after a hectic but rewarding day. Potjie's and braai fires on the go it was back to the "Captain's" chat ... boring, liqueurs ... some good some bad and then to everyone's surprise the first lady "ASS" Carol Müller, for admiring the previous "ASS's" suntanned chest, must have something to do with one donkey recognizing another!!

Another perfect day for our trip through Keimoes and Kakamas to the Augrabies falls. We were not disappointed, the river was still powering over the falls into the canyon creating a ghostly mist. The damage of the flood a month earlier was clearly visible with most of the lookout points badly damaged and no access for visitors. However the platforms that were in one piece gave us all we needed, views of the falls, the canyon and the surrounding "karoo type" landscape. The visit to "moon rock", an eerie formation of solid rock, provided some good exercise, great views and an added attraction along the way were the seven giraffes rambling through the bush. Stops were made in Kakamas and Keimoes on the way back to Oranjerus, with visits to the farm stalls and antique shops. The tour dinner was held at the restaurant at Oranjerus on the banks of the Orange River, a three course meal was served, Colin and Diane were thanked for their organization of the tour and given a "cob" braai for future use on their travels. Liqueurs were tasted and the "ASS" was given to Willie van Niekerk for his 4X4 braai tour from his caravan to the communal braai area. Carol provided some fun and laughter with a great fines list. All in all a wonderful day!

"On the road again" (Willie Nelson") to Vanrynsdorp on day 6, a bad road, a hairy trip down the Vanryn's pass, but lots of fun en route at the pit stops and on the CB helped pass the time. The park was not in great shape, limited grass, sand and ablutions in need of an upgrade. The kids enjoyed the swimming pool and the guys enjoyed the bar... only there for the night. "Captains" speech was followed by a communal braai, more liqueurs and fines, where Geoff Lankester was given the "ASS" for wearing girlie things, a pink key holder around his neck (Mof...) Kevin Lategan's birthday, age unknown?? Congrats!

Vanrynsddorp to Redelinghuys, a long and dusty road, (8kms of gravel) was worth it. No one had been to the park before, but reports from Disa and Tafelberg were very good. The park is situated in the middle of the dorp which plays its part in the famous Sandveld potato region. We were not disappointed ... plenty of shade, grass, excellent ablutions, a cold swimming pool and plenty of farm animals for the kids, especially the man eating pigs that had a painful bite of Lyn Trollip's toe. Time to rest, park off with a cold beer, the temperature +- 38 degrees and to celebrate yet another birthday... Delene Runnalls. (definitely no mention of age) A birthday party for Kevin, Delene and Lyn Trollip (birthday next day) was great fun for all, snacks, drinks and sweets for the kids. Thank yo and congrats! "Captains" speech ... this is getting boring, intoxicating liqueurs and fines. The

“captain’s” wife Di was the “ASS”, for calling some people old farts. There was an objection from Jonathan Mills who had been insulting everybody all day, as he desperately wanted the “ASS” award, perhaps he was the real donkey!!

The final day was upon us, clear skies and 38 degrees in the shade, a do what you want day. A group ventured into Elands Bay to see what was on the go, ... not much. George and Nana found some fresh fish at the harbour, which they enjoyed later, and then went to find a pub lunch. The Hotel in Eland’s Bay has not changed for the last forty years, and is situated behind the windswept and sandy caravan park. A menu was found, food ordered accompanied with lots of cold beers. The food and the service was excellent, enjoyed by all including our birthday girl Lyn. The rest of the group spent a quiet day at the pool relaxing, before finishing the day off with a braai. The award of the prize for the best liqueur to the Trollip’s, and the permanent “ASS” award to Adam Schäfer for being a donkey the whole trip. All fines monies were donated to the 30th anniversary function at Mountain Breeze later this year.

Up jacks and home Jerome, after a wonderful tour! Thanks to Colin and Diane for organizing and leading, and to all eighteen families, thank you for the fun, friendship and fellowship that helped to make the Northern Cape tour the best.

Safe towing for the rest of the year with the Good Hope Region.