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Four Wheel Drive Club of Southern Africa

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NUUSBRIEF/NEWSLETTER **JUNIE/JUNE 2010**

When the sun starts dipping into the Atlantic each evening on the northern side of the Jutten island (i.e. from where I can see it) on its annual course towards the Northern Hemisphere, you can bet on it that the winter has arrived on the West Coast and is here to stay for a while. We had our promises of rain during April and early May and the morning and evening temperatures started to drop seriously (see the report back on the "Ou Wapad roete") but the real cold, rain and snow, have been delayed until the last week of May; fortunately with some stunning sunshine days in between!

We however hope that these conditions are not going to stop us from enjoying some 4x4 fun during the few weeks ahead!

1. ACTIVITY CALENDER FOR 2010

1.1 PREVIOUS OUTINGS:

1.1.1 WINTERSHOEK WORKING WEEKEND:

We met at the Piketberg Caltex garage at 14:00. Dicker came via Morreesburg as the road from Langebaan was in much better condition than the Velldrif/ Piketberg road. Our party consisted of Dicker in his Toyota and Herbert, Ben and Marieta in their Nissan and myself and Veronica in our trustworthy Defender 110

The 4 musketeers and 2 maidens set off for the Wintershoek wilderness area some 65km away. We arrived at the office at 15:30 to check in and after meeting the new park manager, we set off for the Tronk 12km away not knowing what the condition of the road was. On the way down there was a section of road, steep down hill, where we had to make repairs in the form of road building. In another section, we had to pass through rather large rocks in a turn and Dicker's bush bar got damaged. After this the going was straightforward until the last down hill where we laid concrete 2 years ago. This was still in fair condition but low range 1st gear had to be engaged.

We arrived at the Tronk 1-1/2 hrs later to be greeted with a wonderful surprise by a completely renovated accommodation; three double rooms and one single with a bathroom, toilet and shower. Unfortunately they did not connect the gas junker correctly, but the sleeping accommodation was five star. So we all had to boil water to have a "bird bath". After unpacking it was time for a braai and some liquid refreshments and then off to bed as Saturday was the working day.

After coffee, rusks and some cornflakes the next morning, the four musketeers, loaded with pick and shovels, set off to work on the water runoffs from the Tronk down to the concrete bridge. By 00:30 we had opened 16 runoffs and built 14 new ones and then it was the long walk back for lunch and a rest. After our rest the four of us piled in to the Landy to test our work and then to the concrete hill for more repairs. At the river track we had to cut back the dead branches that were hanging over the road. After all the repairs were done it was back to camp 16:30 for a good wash and braai. Dicker thought he would have a cold shower, but the shower head had only one setting, straight in your face; ice cold water straight from the river. Ben had other ideas as he went outside to the water tank to shower under the overflow. When he hit the water we thought Tarzan was with us. Marieta had a wash in her ammo box but Veronica and I stuck to our bird bath out of a dish.

The weather was stunning and we chatted around the fire till late. Sunday was a quiet day. We went for a walk to our old camp site and to see the other huts that have been renovated and then came home for brunch, packed up and left for home at 13.00. All in all it was a stunning weekend.

(Many thanks to Clive and Veronica for the report)

1.1.2 "OU WAPAD" ROETE; HEIDELBERG & GEORGE:



Monday the 3rd of May the vehicles started to roll in at the B.P, garage from about 11:15; Paul & Janine in their Terracan Willy & Marlene in their Isuzu, Ben in his Toyota, Dicker & Holde in their Hi lux Raider, Clive & Veronica in their Defender 110, and Ben & Marieta in their Nissan. Then the 3Musketees arrived; Christie & Elmiën in their Ford, Andre & Joana in their Grand Cherokee, André & Bee in their Isuzu and Pieter & Martha in their Discovery. All very hyped up at what lay ahead so much so that all went into the restaurant for breakfast or coffee. Some went across the road to the biltong shop for padkos. After Dicker called a drivers meeting we were ready to roll and after a radio check the 10 vehicles pulled out of Heidelberg on a great 4x4 adventure.

The roads were in good condition on the way to Bonnedale for our first overnight. We stopped on the way to admire The Gorges of the Gouritz river on the bridge and the usual bush stop. The going was good but for all the gates Holde had to open and Veronica had to close; and now the convoy is +/- 5km long.

After all the dust and gates we arrived at Bonnedale camp and chalets at +/- 1600hrs to over night; campers to the Camp site Dicker & Holde, Ben, Ben & Marietta, Clive & Veronica, the rest of the group checked in to the chalets and tented camp. [See Email Andre & Joana] We had a problem with the 2 Ben's and they were renamed Ben Brill and Ben Boer and this worked well. The campers were some way away from the chalets and tents so we were left to braai alone. The temperature that evening dropped and after a good meal and liquid refreshments and a hot shower with paraffin lanterns, it was off to bed as we had to be rolling at 09:30 the next morning. We left Bonnedale on time and before we knew where we were, the 4x4 track hit us at a river crossing and a very steep rock face climb out of the valley. We all made it with some stop starts to the top.. The beautiful scenery started and what a blessing it was to see God's creation in all its glory with mountains and fynbos in its splendor, even with Proteas higher than the vehicles. This track took us from Bonnedale over the Attequaskloof to Duiwelskop to camp and chalets at Louvain Guest Farm for the night. Once again the campers were away from the chalets. The campers had to stoke a donkey for hot water but there was no water so the owner let us use one of the chalet's bathroom to wash. After a braai in their entertainment centre (wood supplied) it was off to bed to be rolling at 09:30.



We left on time for the sheep started blaring early morning +/- 06:00 all in all as this was a working farm. Once again we were greeted with beautiful scenery over Duiwelskop through the pine forests and down the Seven passes road to the N2 and on to Knysna for lunch, petrol and a bit of shopping at the Waterfront. We left Knysna at 14:30 for De Vlugt and Burchell camp. We traveled through the Knysna forest and over the pass to over night at De Vlugt. We left the six others to check into the chalets and the four campers left for Burchell's bush camp to meet Katot Meyer at his camp site and truly, this is a bush camp with paraffin hot water system that you have to light for hot water; situated in the bushes and a flat stone to stand on. The door is a piece of rope across the entrance of the pathway. The toilet is also in the bush; flushing all in all and what a view! The door was like that of the shower. Katot arrived and built us a fire and left to see us again the next morning at 09:30. After showers and a good braai it was off to bed as the temperature dropped again.

Katot arrived on time and Peter & Martha and Willy & Marlene joined us after some detours. Katot gave us a lecture on the area and how the pioneers crossed the mountains. He then took us to the start of the trail and left us to be modern day pioneers and he was not joking. We climbed up the one side and then down a mineshaft on the other side where he met us and took us to a lunch spot in the forest over some hair-raising obstacles. This took us 3h45mts to do 8km. The lunch break was a welcome relief as the concentration level was at an all time high on the track and the stress level running at about 1000%. Katot informed us of the biosphere area that they are protecting which was very informative. After lunch it was back to camp via the valley with again some hair-raising obstacles, 1h45mts to do 4km. All of us that did this trail now know what a schedule 5 trail is with the possibility of vehicle damage. Back at the camp it was liquid refreshments and to calm down, Ben Brill made us some lovely hors d'oeuvres for sundowner before our braai. Even the rain did not worry us as we had an awning to sit under and enjoy our braai and reminisce over the past days and all that has transpired. Ben Brill missed Rosil but all in all he coped very well under the circumstances....even when he had Katot as a passenger.

A message from Katot. Quote " you West Coast 4x4 guys are soft when it comes to mountain terrain. You must stop playing in the sand and pulling your boats to the water and learn what it is to be a pioneer to cross mountains like your forefathers. But all jokes aside, you guys and gals were not to bad.

I would like to salute our men for being the most capable drivers as the trail was tough but the guys were tougher, and of course there were the two coolcats Ben Brill and Ben Boer. Mooi so. Once again we have to admit our Country is beautiful and we are the lucky one's to enjoy it. The rain did not even dampen our spirit camping.

Thank you Dicker for being up front and a job very well done. This is echoed by all of us.

(Thanks again to Clive and Veronica for the contribution; photo's by Halde v Brandis)

1.1.2.1 ANDER KOMMENTAAR

.....Sorry maar ek het darem so 'n kort mail gestuur om "dankie" te sê vir al jul moeite, hoop jy het dit gekry! Vir my was die natuurskoon natuurlik 'n yslike bonus en ek het dit alles baie geniet, behalwe dat ek by "Bonniebrooke" bietjie skrikkerig was vir die tent se slaap, want daar was 'n reuse spinnekop die aand by ons braaivuur en as hul daar was, kon hul mos maar in die tente ook gewees het! Nietemin het ek baie lekker saam met jul almal gekuier, maar ek voel ook dat ons 'n bietjie meer kon "bond", maar dit is ook maar te wyte aan die verskillende slaapplekke. Vir ons was dit ook lekker dat daar so baie stilhouplekkies langs die pad was en dat dit nie net 'n aanhoudende geryery was sonder om ooit stil te hou nie. Alles was ook baie goed gereël en die leier het hom goed van sy taak gekwyt! Die medetoergangers was ook lekker aangename mense en ons sê 'n "GROOT DANKIE" aan almal wat saam was en aan die reëlingskomitee!

Groete

André en Joana

.....Net om vir albei van julle baie dankie te sê vir julle bydrae tot 'n uitstekende toer oor die berge. Dicker, jy het baie duidelik uitgebreide navorsing gedoen om alles te laat vlot, van padvind tot by hulp en bystand by die "tight spots".

Jou leiding was puik.

Nic, jy het 'n besondere roete bepaal, nie sonder uitdagings nie en, jou bliksem, jy het seker geweet wat voorlê, en toe besluit om by die huis te bly en bokkoms te eet en soetwyn te drink. Die stukkie pad by Katot was 'n uitdaging vir die meeste van ons. Maar jy is vergewe; jou reëlings was eerste klas wat beide die reisplan en akkommodasie betref, baie gemaklik na 'n dag van harde werk by die stuurwiel.

Nogmaals ons innige dank aan julle twee wat gesorg het vir 'n unieke ondervinding oor 'n geskiedkundige terrein.

Beste groete,

Piet Myburgh



1.2 FUTURE OUTINGS/EVENTS

1.2.1 TWEDE TOL BAINSKLOOF

This outing had to be cancelled as the final arrangements could be finalised with the relevant authorities.

1.2.2 THE BATHS CITRUSDAL

Unfortunately we had to cancel the arrangements and the booking for this event because of a lack of interest. If we can get a worthwhile number of members who are still interested in going on this outing (20 to 22 July), fresh arrangements can be made and a new booking can be negotiated with The Baths. Please get your details to Nic Mostert at your earliest convenience!

1.2.3 NAMAKWALAND BLOMME EN WESKUS

This outing is scheduled for 16th to 22nd August 2010 and preliminary enquiries have already been made and a route for approval by those who are keen to go on this outing, has been planned. Because of family commitments we have unfortunately run out of a leader for this event and would like to appeal to any other member of our club to take over this responsibility. Anyone who would like to make himself available, must please contact Nic Mostert or myself.

1.2.4 SCHEPPIE SAUS

We recently did a “reccie” of this venue which is about 15km south of Het Kruis (about 100km from Velddrif) in the Piketberg mountains and offers beautiful vistas of the Moutonshoek valley and surrounding mountains. There are a few bush camps with enough trees for some shade, basic ablutions with showers (hot and cold) and three Wendy houses. Electricity for lighting is available in the evenings and firewood is supplied. There are hiking trails for those who would like to take on the mountain on foot and two rock pools in the river for swimming. The trail runs along the foothills of the mountain and would average about level 2 and 3. The river crossings will be dry but the banks are fairly steep and sandy up/down hills.



This outing promises to be great 4x4 fun for the weekend (20 to 21 November 2010) and we would like to organize a fixed booking, especially for those who would like to take a Wendy house, as soon as possible. Please forward your details to Nick or directly to me as soon as possible.

The costs is R50.00ppn and R200.00 per 4x4 for the route.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

CHAIRMAN/TREASURER.....Dicker von Brandis.....022-772-2620/084-581-5917
 VICE CHAIRMAN/NEWSLETTERS.....Frans Engelbrecht.....022-772-2543/082-450-5991
 SECRETARY.....Edna Botha.....022-714-4591/082-457-7308
 OUTINGS.....Nick Mostert.....022-783-0878/083-639-5555
 CONSERVATION.....Clive Campbell-Smart.....022-952-1711/082-439-7134
 MEMBER WITHOUT POTFOLIO.....Lyllal Ovenstone.....022-783-2995/073-263-8644

3. BIRTHDAYS.

Christie Kirsten.....	3 June	Willie Botha.....	15 June
Danie du Toit.....	13 June	Roger Young.....	29 June
June Fannin.....	13 June		
Clive Campbell Smart.....	4 July	Willy de Kwaadsteniet.....	24 July
Bernadette van Ast.....	6 July	Colleen Feldon.....	25 July
Marieta Fouche.....	7 July	Edna Botha.....	29 July
Veronica Campbell Smart.....	10 July	Maryna Psotta.....	22 July
Willem Basson.....	31 July		

3. NEW MEMBERS.

A hearty welcome to our new members Kurt and Sandy Pessenbacher, 116 Elizabeth Ave East, Port Owen. We hope that you are already feeling part of the Club and that you will enjoy the activities that are on offer.

4. SPEEDY RECOVERY.

We wish the following members a speedy recovery and hope to see them again soon at our meetings and outings.....

Ponty Acker.

Ponty is making a slow but steady recovery and we hope that he will soon be able to enjoy live to the full.

Lyllal Ovenstone

Lyllal had to undergo some serious surgery recently and is recovering at home. We wish him well and hope the follow –up surgery will be successful.

5. THE CHAIRMANS CORNER.

Dear members

I do not use the Chairman’s corner of this news letter often but have the need to do so today. I will be frank and request that you read this with an open mind in order to improve the excellent spirit of this FWDCSA Division even more!

When Nick requested me to accept the lead in the Ossewa outing he looked at me, produced his big dirty smile and said "jy moet 'n slag voel hoe dit is, jou blik—" Early on the morning of the second day of the outing I suddenly saw Nick in front of me, complete with "thaat" smile, and realised what he meant.

We, the members and that includes myself, do not offer a lot of help to the tour leader during outings. When we arrive at the overnight destinations we try to figure out where we sleep and once we think we know where it is we rush forward to secure the best spot(s). Once we have settled in our home for the night we are reluctant to spend the little extra energy required to gather for a shared evening. We hardly ever read up on our destinations nor the route and expect the tour leader to know most of this information.

On this trip I learned that the tour leader (I will use he instead of he/she) has a much more involved task than I realised. Over and above all the planning and booking for the tour he must study and know the route that is to be traveled in order not to get lost too often. Remember in most instances he has not been there either!! This is easier said than done even with GPS's as the signboards don't always say what you expect them to say and the emotions in the lead car can get bristle due to this. When you get to the evenings destination you must be friendly, sign in, sort out the host and the tour members and then you must put up your own nest. As it happened in Louvain I even had to go and organise water for the camping area.

All of the above got me to think and to suggest that on the following outings we should appoint a camp officer for each overnight spot on the route for taking over the allocation of the accommodation to our members and to organise the evenings at those venues. Nobody to dash for spots until they are given directions and the go-ahead by the camp officer. We should also appoint a member(s) who will read up on the route and inform us via the radio or during the preceding evening of what is to be expected on the day or the next day. The appointments can be done by asking for volunteers or, if there are none or too few, by having a draw.

The above should make the life of the tour leader much more pleasant and will allow him to concentrate on getting us where we need to be. It will also ensure that we have somebody more relaxed and with spare energy to organise the accommodation and the activities for the evening once we arrive at our venue for the night.

I will open this debate at the next meeting and look forward to your comments.

Happy 4X4ing, Dicker

6. CONCLUSION.

This is our story for this month. We hope you have a pleasant time ahead and we hope to see as many as possible faces at our next meeting on 13 June at the LYC.

Until the next time, enjoy the 4x4 and drive safely.

FRANS ENGELBRECHT

01 JUNE 2010

