

The Alan Goodway Journals

April 2011

Hi Cross Country X-Club Readers,

The stunning 11 day break we were afforded by combining Easter and school days off and 3 days leave allowed us to go and travel to some distant roads in South Africa. Over this period we ran 2 long haul trips while a third, shorter, exciting trip was enjoyed by those lucky enough to experience a private excursion and camp with the SANParks Honorary Rangers in the Kruger National Park.

My overland trip covering great places like Upington, Kakamas, Keimoes, Kathu, Pofadder, Hondeklipbaai, Koiingnaas, Groenriviermond, Kleinzee, Port Nolloth, Alexander Bay, Brandkaros, the Richtersveld National Park, Lichtenburg and more. It was glorious! Excellent weather made it a journey to remember. Bar 5 new tyre replacements on a vehicle (tyres just did not look right, an a wise decision made on night 1 of the trip), two caravan's which lost their wheels due to bearing failure. Two flat tyres on a Land Rover Discovery (the same one, two different sides!), a plastic belly plate coming off a Land Cruiser, the rear window of the same said Cruiser being smashed out (by a fridge – forgot to lock the slide!), we had a whale of a time.



We had some people shuffling as well due to illness of a young one and the passing away of a loved one during the trip. But at all times, the group stood together, supported one another and everybody enjoyed the trip thoroughly. They say Africa is not for Sissies.

The beauty of this tour however was further the experience of meeting local people along the way. From the very helpful HI-Q owner in Upington (see story within), who really helped one of our members greatly over 2 days, the friendly staff at the Spitskop Monate Camp Site, the wonderful people of the Strandveld Conservation Club who now run the old De Beers Concession area in Kleinzee and the 2 4x4 routes there. Then Veronica and her team at the Houthoop Restaurant & Guesthouse for their exceptional seafood dinner we had. Another gem we met was Sam from the small, innovative restaurant in Hondeklipbaai, where we spent a lovely early evening with Fish AND Chips served, and doubled the turnover of the town and the bottle store on one evening. ☺ ☺

Further north, we explored Port Nolloth and Alexander Bay, and had the wonderful experience of hiring a local guide from Port Nolloth to show us the 'unseen' parts of the Richtersveld. Conrad Mouton was an exceptional experience and somebody we would recommend to anybody who wants to learn the inner secrets of the life within the Richtersveld, from the trees, the Half-Mens, the Kokerbome and the fauna and flora which most tourists simply drive past.



We stayed at Brandkaros, which we found adequate, but it has so much potential, if the Richtersveld Community who own it, just spend some money on the place. Another place that needs urgent attention is another local community initiative just outside of Pella, called Oasis in die Wilderness. I drove in, had a quick look around and decided that I could not let my tour group stay here, and promptly secured other another camp site at Klein Pella date farm. I am all for supporting local



The Alan Goodway Journals

April 2011

community campsites and initiatives, but when these people realise that they must invest before they receive, and offer tourists value for money, then it should go better.



Our tour ended in Lichtenburg where we stayed at the stunning Lichtenburg Vakansie Oord, which is in a stunning condition and well managed. Our treat was a lamb on the spit with the local members of the Lichtenburg 4x4 Club who again catered for a feast, which we struggled to finish after 11 hours on the road. But it was great indeed.

Rain in Namibia is causing chaos. We report on flooding, road closures and sadly there have been some deaths up north where the water traditionally floods the low lying areas. Speaking to my friend and owner of Uri Adventures, Eben Delpert, who had just spent two weeks in the desert, he stated that the dunes in Namibia was like driving on a tar highway. We have already booked our Dunes trip for 2012!

But that was not all we did. The club still had more excursions, offering extensive value to our members. We returned after many years to the stunning Grootwater 4x4 Trail for a weekend excursion.

GROOTWATER 4x4 WEEKEND

Under leadership of my club guides (Kim & Sanette van der Merwe), the convoy arrived at Grootwater just before six in the evening. It was tar road most of the way except for the last few kilometers – and Kimberly-hole sized potholes and lots of stop-start road works around Vaalwater. The dusty gravel road started out in fair condition but soon turned out to be a bit more challenging the closer we got to Grootwater. The dirt road took us through a steep decline and huge speed bumps. Someone was interested in the Afrikaans for speed hump. “Spoed boggel” crackled over the radio.



Om nege uur Saterdagoggend was almal gesteweld en gespoor en het met groot opwagting en geesdrif die 4x4 roete aangepak. Die roete was aanvanklik baie maklik en iemand se toe ewe skepties en effe terleurgesteld: “We need to compliment Herman (die eienaar) on the good condition of his roads.” Wat dadelik die volgende reaksie uitgelok het: “Ja, it is far better than that piece of half tarred road after Vaalwater with all the pot holes!”. Die woorde was nie eers koud nie toe die gids die konfooi stop om die eerste taai rotserige opdraande uit te loop. Die roete het toe vinnig baie uitdagend geraak en die gids moes bont staan om almal deur die hindernisse te lei. Meeste van die mans het later hand moes bysit met klippe wegrol, rotse skuif en foto’s neem. Die gevolg was dat vier van die sewe voetuie toe deur vroue bestuur is. Wys net – die vroue in ons klub “rock”!

We stopped to admire some buck which was branded by our club expert as “any buck”! The mysterious animal was however later identified by Herman as a Reedbuck (or Ribbok) – not regularly seen!. Leopard- and buck tracks on the road briefly immobilized our trek with lots of oe’s and ah’s and everybody carefully treading not to spoil the fresh spoor.



The Alan Goodway Journals

April 2011



Die middag het almal luilekker gekuier terwyl die seniors in die klub op hul kant gaan staan het vir 'n middagslapie. Die kinders het met kano's op die dam gaan roei. Die seuns dit eerste op die water gewaag en gou verveeld geraak om net te roei. Hulle het gekyk op hoeveel maniere hulle die kano's kon sink en hoe ver hulle kon roei met die kano's onder die water. Vet prê! Toe die dogters die water aandurf kon hul gille myle vêr gehoor word.

Sadly all good things come to an end and Sunday was pack-up-and-go. Late Sunday afternoon it was home sweet home. But not for long, adventure is calling . . .

EASTERN CAPE PASSES LONG HAUL

The Eastern Cape Tour was also a blast. Except for the cold weather and temperatures (down to -3 degrees I believe), the team had a great exploration of some of the most beautiful sites that can be seen in the Rhodes district of the Eastern Cape.



It was only surpassed by the experience of driving up or down some of the passes. The Lapa Munnik pass was exceptional and I will definitely do it again sometime in the future. The same goes for the Lundean's Neck Pass. We all had a great (if not a bit cold) time and we really enjoy the trip.



SONDELA GAME RESERVE WEEKEND

Absolutely a great weekend we had, the company was great the "BOS TV" (konka) was very pleasant and it was not that cold yet. Very relaxed and all seemed to enjoyed the venue. Lots of entertainment for the kids - horse riding they enjoyed and some of them went and play klei lat and swimming at night with a video next to the pool " On a big screen nogals" and on Sunday morning we arranged a game drive for all at 10h00 and thereafter everybody left at their own time.



The Alan Goodway Journals

April 2011

Once again another pleasant weekend and we are well relaxed, just to short as usual. A very well organized venue!

SAND RIVER EXPERIENCE WITH SANPARKS HONORARY RANGERS

The four couples (they only have 8 people at av time, so its is very exclusive!) all met on time at Skukuza by the hosts. After introductions, participants goods were transferred to the San Parks vehicle/trailer and thee drive to the Sand River Bush Camp took about 30/40 minutes, with some game spotting on the way. On arriving at the Bush Camp the participants were introduced to the catering personnel who were to look after our meal requirements. Then an introduction to the facilities at the camp. Hot and cold running water as well as flush toilets. Tent accommodation was allocated to each couple. Each tent faced onto the Sand River! After moving into our accommodation, details of what we could expect over the next few days were explained to us.

Early morning wake up calls, drive to the locations for our morning bush walks and boskos would be provided. Bush walks were to be three to four hours long, but were to be done at a leisurely pace to suit all participants. The bush was thick and the grass tall. Silence was required on the walks but there was always time for interesting explanations and interpretations of spore we came across. All male participants carried backpacks with their own water and part of the boskos packs.

We returned to camp for a brunch and time to rest before the afternoon programme began, which consisted of a drive before alighting from the vehicle for a short bush walk. We would return to camp after dark when we had the Park roads to ourselves. Spotted two male lions, other game and even an African Wild Cat!

Nothing was too much trouble for our hosts. Questions were patiently dealt with and their knowledge and expertise was superb. Catering was excellent. Unfortunately our time at Sand River Bush Camp came to an end all too quickly. We can highly recommend The Sand River Bush Camp.

MONTHLY CRANE MONITORING PROJECT

The monthly count is now done and dusted. One of the counting crews managed to spot 97 Blue Cranes as well as a lone Wattled Crane which is apparently on the Endangered List. Watch this space. We're back next mionth.



OUR FUNDI TEAM IN CHALLENGE 2 OF THE SERIES

It was a bit of hesitation that we rose early to head North to the valley of Thabazimbi for the 2nd leg of the Bridgestone 4x4 Fundi Challenge. It had now been raining overnight, and the anticipation on what to expect on our arrival, was not good. Only doing the press work still bothered me, but I wondered what was going through the participant's minds.

Johan Mostert, the host of the competition as well as the designer of the 10 obstacle challenge course, moved the competition from Gauteng to the North West province's lush bushveld area of the town of Thabazimbi. He had spent the previous week in the sun, prepping what he believed to a stepped up challenge. Then the rain came.

Bridgestone decided to take the competition back to the Sweet Home farm, exploring new routes and locations on the farm. The field was set to tackle the obstacles. And then it the rain came!!! The first 10 vehicles were in the field, when the water arrived. It arrived in buckets. Buckets from the sky above. The Clerk of the Course and the Bridgestone host started tripling around. Would the rain stop? What would it do to the clay obstacles out there. What about the safety factor?



The Alan Goodway Journals

April 2011

Arriving back at the start point, scrutineering had been halted and no more vehicles were being sent into the field. Then the Clerk of the Course started to close obstacles one by one. Johan Mostert then responsibly made the decision to close down the event. It was becoming dangerous. The priority at all times under the Motorsport SA rules and regulations was safety. Safety for the vehicles and safety for the competitors! As the competition deals with standard 4x4 vehicles, most used by the competitors to do live their daily lives, it is imperative that the competition don't risk any damage to person or vehicle.



So no points were scored, and the circuit now moves to the next event which will be a Reg Raid. More about that at the end of May.

It is amazing that while you go away, and have no real comms with the outside world, all types of things happened. We emerged from the Richtersveld to learn that Gadaffi had lost a brother, Osama Bin Ladin's life had ended, and the Royal Wedding went off without a hitch. Oh yes, and the Stormers smashed the Sharks at Newlands. Well done boys!

We have an extremely busy month of May again, and then it will be time to create the next edition. ENJOY!

Regards

Alan

Alan Goodway (GP 1796)

Owner - 4x4 Offroad Adventure Club (Gauteng)
Partner - Isibonela Adventures cc
Registered DEAT Cultural Tourist Guide - National
Professional 4x4 Trail & Overland Guide - National
TETA Accredited 4x4 Unit Standards Assessor
Member - SA National Offroad Training Association
Member - 4 Wheel Drive Guides Association SA
Bridgestone Ambassador 2008, 2009, 2010
CAPESTORM Ambassador 2010



UNTIL OUR NEXT ADVENTURE!

