LAAGER 18 Newsletter

Chairperson: *Lindsay Friend*
Vice Chairperson: *Brett Wittstock*
Secretary: *Gillian Bezuidenhout*
Treasurer: *Glynis Bowker*

DATE	VENUE	HOST
22 - 24 Feb	Baviaans	Waters







How can you begin to describe the sheer beauty of this Breath-taking break-away trip. First & foremost, thank you to Sandra for the planning, Preparation & Organisation. We truly would not have fitted so much in, in this short space of time.



4 AM Saturday Morning, ready to take on the Adventurous Rugged Nature of the Baviaanskloof. Trailer tents in tow, 2 way radios checked.....we are off.

Famous "Nanaga" stop for some much needed coffee, then quick pit stop & a photo shoot thanks to our personal photographer Glynis @ "The Windfarm" between PE & Jeffrey's.





Up to Hankey, driving through pristine farmlands.

1st official stop & courageous Hike "Bergvenster", with Sandra offering very informative info on the area she grew up in.



Little did we know this hike would take us off the beaten track. "it's not far & easy to climb" were the words. Hiking in slops became a new experience for Glynis, Dave, Tim & Robbie, slip sliding rocks, thorn bushes & clutching at the nearest branches, taking a wrong turn, left us in some serious high terrain, with comments & giggles of being "afraid of heights". Backing up & heading on down, the path came into clear view.....








How on earth did we miss it..... and then as clear as day
we were all standing in the "Natural Arch" created by weathering.
WOW, what a spectacular view.




Some much needed liquid refreshment was needed after that as we walked onto "Phillips Tunnel".
One of the oldest irrigation tunnels in the EC.... Photo opportunity.




Kouga Dam visit, peering over the Dam wall admiring the sheer vastness.



Eager to get to "Kudu Kaya" & experience the pools, "a cool off "was well needed. We thrillingly pushed on. Arriving to captivating campsites, the trickling sound of the stream & unbelievable beauty.



Setting up in record time, costumes on, will we make all 10 pools?



Slippery rocks & heads down, off to pool 1, this is easy....
Pool 2, feeling the cool water at our ankles. Heading onto Pool 3 as the mountain water rises, slightly using the ropes provided to pull us up and onto the next pool.
Pool 4 the ropes become more prominent, exciting as we navigate our way through & in-between the pass.
Pool 5 rough terrain, flowing water, hang onto those ropes & use the stepping provided. Pool 6 swim, swim, swim, refreshingly cool & clear water, handles on the side of the rocks for that much needed breather, which we all took. Traversing our way up carefully using those arm muscles to pull on the rope.
Pool 7 shorter swim, but longer on the rope.

Pool 8 what can I say... how is this water flowing so fast. Looking up this is extremely intimidating are we going to make it? Pulling yourself through a waterfall upwards with slippery rocks takes some doing. Robbie, Tim, Sandra & Dave shouting words of encouragement from the top. Slip, slides & some serious attempts from Glynis while Gillian watched on.





Opting to rather save the bones, than break them & let the others go on to pool 9 & 10.



Gillian & Glynis waiting patiently like dassises on a rock, worry setting in as dusk settles. Have the others made it? Decision time we need to head back.... Nervous banter along the route, treading carefully as Tim has Gillian's glasses in his water bag... Seemed quicker going back, could have been due to Glynis own route ha ha

Back at camp, 15 min later relief sweeps over. They are back & made pool 10, what champs.



Fire lit, Burgers on the menu as we all settle down to the evening,
Reminiscing about the 1st day.
Early to bed, as early to rise.





Day 2 Adventures.... on & up the hair-raising Baviaanskloof. What spectacular views, taking photos does not do the scenery justice. Its definitely a 4 X 4 trail, with sheer drop offs, rough, natural terrain & makes manoeuvring past oncoming vehicles a skill.

Stopping off at Winston Le Roux cable way to see how the potatoes were transported across the mountain. While Sandra was trying to Zipline.....definitely need a Safety net for that one.



Next stop, Kruisrivier. Where do you see "White Sand", situated in a place called "Rooihoek" In the mountain pass?
Truly amazing.





Navigating our way through streams of deep water, loving the outdoor feel of adventure, & the quirky comments from the 3 vehicles over the two-way radio.
Lunch time already, as we delve into leftovers, keeping a beady eye on a roaming Baboon at the Smitskraal picnic spot, (or was he keeping an eye on us).









Making our way to the next campsite, spotting buffalo, kudu, buck, monkey, more baboons & tortoises just going about their business. As we arrive out our destination "Uitspan" we are in awe of how neat & well maintained these campsites are. Such beauty nestled in places we would have never dreamed existed.

Perfecting our record breaking setting up. Sandra, Tim & Gillian are eager to explore. Robbie, Glynis & Dave opting to relax & crack open a cold one.



Trekking up to the zipline which you can use to land into the dam at the bottom required skill, with Tim's fear of heights setting in.... followed by "there is no way I would do this".





Into the crevice we walk & are once again taken aback by the sheer vastness of the rock on either side & the peaceful surrounds.



Back at camp & looking forward to the steak braai, & so is the farm owner's puppy who wrestles Glynis steak with Gillian. Puppy none, Gillian one. Keeping a close eye on her until the owner politely takes her off to bed.



Banter around the fire as we slowly feel the fresh air has caught up with us & filter into bed.
Packing up is a breeze, is it Monday already?



Time to head on out of the Baviaanskloof, & Nuwekloof Pass which is a beautiful example of Rock formations, even one called "Queen Victoria" (below - The Bride) & is considered the official entrance to the Baviaanskloof. Passing through Raaskrans (noisy Cliff) & not missing an opportunity to have a photo at the BaviaansKloof Key (Sleutel). It is said that when this rock falls away from the cliff, the kloof will be locked forever.









Estimated home time 5 pm as we drive over the corrugated roads, shaken & bounced about, finally reaching the tar road. One Fuel stop & homeward bound. Passing through Uniondale, discussing the Phantom Hitchhiker – Fact or Fiction?

What a trip.... This is what making memories is all about.





Gillian Bezuidenhout
Secretary
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