



Two years in the planning and the weather nearly turned into a disaster.



Cyril standing next to his Frogeye on the Lootsberg pass on Saturday morning.

The view of the fields outside Beaufort West.



Saturday 7th dawned with predictions of cold weather. Little were we to know, cold weather meant snow, in Graaf Reinet and Beaufort West and sleet at Gariep. The Cape guys got through on the N1 but the Garden Route folks were stuck due the closure of the Lootsberg Pass. The guys from Gauteng found the Healey heaters only work in summer and not when it's very cold. Trevor had his BJ8 experience overheating and Thys had a valve problem. Both left their cars in Bloemfontein. Joe had the brakes on his BJ8 keep binding so he returned to Klerksdorp. By 7pm all were at Gariep for our opening dinner.



The next day, Sunday, saw us make an early start with a tour through the dam wall. About 250 steps down and same back up. Some of us were worn out before the trip had really started.

From there, we drove to Bethulie where we had lunch at the Royal Hotel. Bethulie is a very interesting town that traces its history way back to the mid 1800s.

Anthony Hocking was our host and guide and the afternoon was spent touring the town. Time ran out and we were not able to visit the Boer War Concentration Memorial.

Monday dawned with the weather warming up and some of the guys even ventured out in short pants. Down the N1 to Colesburg where the whole group of Healeys were stopped by the Traffic Police. They apparently did not like the look of John's number plate so decided they should just stop us all. Also muttered something about more than six vehicles constitute a convoy for which you need a permit. Once through Colesberg, it was onto Phillipolis where we were taken on a tour of the Ghost Town, Waterkloof, just outside Phillipolis.



After lunch and beers from the craft brewery, we then went into Phillipolis visiting various places in this little town.



On the way to dinner, Steve was seen trying to get high from the petrol fumes in his tank.



Glasgow Pont Hotel

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For dinner we went to the hotel in a REALLY small town, Norvalspont. Not sure of the population but it must be under 500. Here the members excelled themselves as the owners of the hotel thought we were cooking the braai and we thought they were. A compromise was reached and a great meal was had.



Thanks to publicity from AH Spares in England, we managed to get three overseas competitors to join us on the event. One couple each from Australia, Denmark and Canada. Total entry was 27 cars, with two being hire cars with overseas visitors.

This is a picture of one of the stickers Knud had made for his hire car. This picture is of his car in Denmark.



Tuesday morning, it's back to Colesberg and onto Orania. The previous night Trevor said his GPS had a distance of 280kms whereas John's said 180kms. Needless to say, everyone took John's route, saving 100kms. How could we go wrong. Brian took us down a different road to Colesburg so we were not bothered by the traffic police. The shorter route was via Petrusville which is very close to the van der Kloof dam.

Horror of horrors. About 20kms outside Colesburg, this is what the road became. It was fine at first but quickly got worse. Some of us continued whilst others turned back and went via Hanover and up the N12. We all arrived safely in Orania later in the afternoon.



On arrival at aan de Oever were pleasantly surprised as our log cabins were great and the food excellent. We were split into groups with one going on a trip around town whilst the other went for a cruise on the river. Amongst the whole group, only one couple had ever been to Orania let alone, spent the night there. The next morning there was time to wonder around the town before gathering at 1030 for a photoshoot on our way to Kimberley.

By now, the weather had returned to normal and most of the guys were in short pants. On getting to the Protea Hotel at the Big Hole, the afternoon was a relaxation period before we were picked up in taxis and transported to the Kimberley Club for dinner. Tradition is something this place has in abundance with a menu and taste of food to match. As everyone had had a long day, it was back to the hotel by 10pm with the Thursday looking to be filled once more with activities.

After breakfast it was a short walk to the visitor centre for a trip around the viewing platform, the museum and a trip “down” the mine. Lots of noise and shaking but only about 2 metres travelled. The previous day, one of the locals arrived and took Andries and John into town to visit his car and other collection. It was so interesting that a time was set for Thursday afternoon for everyone to visit his premises. There we found old switchboards, aircraft in the ceilings, muscle cars, records and old signs, all housed in this huge warehouse under his premises. A big thanks to Des Peine for the time he took to show us around and for the little wooden plaques he made for each car.



Thursday night we again took a short walk to the Occidental Bar for dinner. Each evening we would draw four prizes for men and four for woman as well as the main prize of the day, leading up to the ultimate big prize, to be



drawn on Friday night. This evening was the draw for a collection of Healeys in a Perspex dome, donated by Bunny Wentzel of Sportique. They were won by David Harding.



On Friday we travelled to Bloemfontein, about 150 kms. The Protea hotel here is in the zoo so we had buck and other animals walking around the fence and the sound of big cats growling at night. In the afternoon, one of our local members, Hennie van der Walt, organised for us to visit a Jaguar collection, just out of town. It is owned by a retired judge, Fred Beckley, who took us around all his garages, which don't only contain Jaguars, but a lot of other vehicles as well.

The weather, six days after the snow, was back to about 34°C at about 1300. By now the Healey heaters had started working again and Ben was happy.

Dinner was served in one of the hotel's conference centres. The highlight of the evening was the lucky draw for the Frederique Constant watch and model set. Donated to the club by the Frederique Constant agent for the country, Picot and Moss, it was the highlight of the tour. A one in 27 chance of winning a R 30000.00 watch.



The oldest member of the club on tour, Lionel Hewitt, was asked to draw the winner and he drew Steve and Rusty Hraber as the winners. Rusty was so delighted to win the prize that she danced around for about five minutes before we could get her up to be awarded the prize.

We had come to the end of our tour, experiencing changeable weather, good and bad roads, going places we had never been to before and doing all these things, in the company of a wonderful group of people. Next morning, Saturday, we all said our goodbyes and another National Tour was completed. Sue and Rusty were taking photos all week and are putting together a photo album in the form of an A4 book. The club committee has taken the decision to give each participant a copy as well as a car badge of the Tour logo.

To all those who were involved in organising the tour and those who contributed in any way, a big thank you from all those who went on the tour.

