

Easter 2009 The Road to Hell

Our 7th father and son Easter trip was to The Road to Hell on the Orange/Gariep river in the Northern Cape.

The participants for this trip were

Geoff Hill and son Andy in a Toyota Land Cruiser 100VX 4.2TDi aka Meneer
Dave Nixon, son in law Craig and a mate called Ron in a Toyota Land Cruiser 80
VX diesel.

Phillip Nixon, son Josh and brother in law Brett in a Land Cruiser double cab 4.5i
towing a bike trailer with a 4x4 quad and a scrambler.

Kobus Breet and his dad Piet (mates of Andy from Secunda) in a Hilux single
cab.



Missing this year were my brother Steve and his son Brendon who wanted to do this trip so badly but sadly work got in the way.

I left White River on Wednesday 8 April 2009 at 10h30 to sleep over at Steves in Johannesburg. There I met my son Andy and we left the next morning at 05h25. We met the rest of the traveling party at the Wimpy in Klerksdorp where we had breakfast. We were on the road again at 08h00 en route to our overnight stop at the parks board camp at Augrabies.

We arrived here at 17h00 and quickly settled in to our Roof top tents. Supper that night was prawns cooked on a skottle supplied by phillip and superbly cooked by his 11 year son Josh. These were beeg prawns and set the tone for the rest of the trip.



Next morning we visited the falls, took pictures and had bacon and pork banger sarmies before setting off at 10h30.



We arrived at Pofadder a little after 12h00 and filled up before setting out for Kamgab.

Somewhere we lost some time and it became obvious that we would not make Kamgab so we headed for Groot Melkboom instead. Along this route we let the Craig and Josh take their scrambler and quad and go exploring. While trying to find a suitable camp spot Brett driving the Cruiser double cab got it stuck to its axles in soft sand on a short donga rise. This was a great relief to me as I am normally the first to get stuck. Phillip discovered that the rear difflock was fubar.

We camped under the Groot Melkboom on the banks of the Orange and watched a magnificent moon rise. Supper was Goulash by Craig.



Next morning we got under way at 08h30 en route to the Road to Hell. I must say that this part of the world has magnificent scenery with wonderful colours lighting up the surrounding mountains.



We stopped for our traditional bacon sarmies along the way and two separate convoys came past us. The first was a couple of double cab 4x4's driven by the wives with instructions to go anywhere they liked and to stop when they felt like it. The guys followed a couple of minutes later on enduro type bikes. This was their second week of their trip. The second was a convoy of about 15 4x4's and 1 Mahindra towing trailers who told us that they had been to RTH and it was easy although a bit slippery near the end. I think they were mistaken as we shall see later in the trip.



After the breakfast we set out for the RTH. The descent was very easy and we all thought that the difficulty of the route had been talked up and were frankly a bit disappointed but we would learn the next day that it was a meanie!



We had a great relaxing time at the base of RTH and cooled off in the Orange as the heat seems to get trapped in the valleys. Kobus treated us to a Potjie for supper.



Our destination for the next day was Ramansdrift and we set off at our customary 08h30 with me leading. The drive out was going well until we reached the two difficult sections

near the top where with diff lock engaged and low first I managed to get through the first stage. The second tricky bit caught me out and I think the tire pressures were too low (should have been 1.2) and I was stuck. I then heard air escaping from one of the tires and mistakenly thought it was the spare. Unluckily for us it was my right rear that had deboned and required changing. After some engineering works thanks to Dave, Kobus and Phillip we managed to change the wheel which was not fun at that incline and in the unstable rocky conditions. With plenty of vooma I now managed to get through but I heard psst on every revolution and I knew what that meant. On reaching the top level section I found the left rear flat with a sidewall cut of about 3 inches. Two flats and only one spare!



We managed to get the other trucks up after much careful line picking and rock climbing but the cruiser double cab with the defective diff lock and bike trailer was not coming up. After unhitching the trailer and lowering tire pressures to 1.2 bar the double cab crawled out. We then had to man handle the trailer up that rocky slope. Not an exercise we want to repeat again especially as it was 40+.

Just a pat on the back for 11 year old Joshua who made it up and down with out a hitch on his quad.



Once we were all up I inspected the first flat tire and luckily could find no signs of damage, so the compressor did its job and I had enough tires to get us out of there.

We made our way to Kamgab as Ramansdrift was now out of the question and arrived there mid afternoon. The way into Kamgab is via a riverbed that was very wet and slippery and that is where the second convoy must of meant as their Road to Hell. I managed to get hung up on a rock on the way in and dinged my side steps but now the Cruiser has “houding”. The meal was a roast beef with veggies cooked on my Cobb.



As we had a lengthy stretch to do today we left earlier and were making good progress until the double cab towing the trailer went awol. We returned to find the trailer a frame had bent and an engelman had to “maak n plan”. A disused fence post and a hi lift jack

strapped to the A-frame made good and we were on our way. We had the traditional bacon sarmies in the grounds of the beautiful church in Pella before joining the tar again and filling up in Pofadder. Leaving Pofadder at 15h15 we put foot as our destination for the night was Red Sands outside of Kuruman and we got there at 19h30.



As we were tired we booked into chalets and ate at the restaurant. Great meal even better bed and after a good breakfast we were on our way 08h40. I arrived at Steve's place in Johannesburg at 14h30.

Next morning I fitted 4 new BFG's at Tiger Wheel and Tire and also had some running repairs done to the cable for my Garmin 276C and headed home at 11h20. I was back in White River at 15h45.

Great trip guys thanks for the company and the help on the "Road to Hell".

Trip distance 3425 km
Consumption 14.07lt/100km