



NEWS LETTER / NUUSBRIEF

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2008

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2008 / BESTUURSKOMITEE 2008

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NOTE: THE OPINIONS OF WRITERS IN THIS PUBLICATION IS THEIR OWN AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OPINION OF THE JEEP CLUB RSA. THE JEEP CLUB RSA DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOUR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE OR DISABILITY.

PROGRAM OF EVENTS - 2008

Events marked (JC) Jeep Club RSA will be "Closed Events" indicating that Club members as well as non-members are welcome to participate in the event provided that he/she is driving a Jeep. At events marked (JC Open) thus "Open Events", the intention is that Club members should attend the event driving a Jeep but are welcome to invite friends with vehicles other than Jeeps to join in the fun.

The new Calendar for 2008 is published on the web site. The monthly updated Program of Events will be published in the News Letters, indicating what is planned in the near future.

Sunday 10 February One-Day Fun Trip (JC) - (See details below)

Sunday 09 March One-Day Fun Trip (JC)

The Program of Events will take preference over the Calendar for 2008 - the dates of the events may change and/or be omitted or added - so please consult the Program of Events on a regular basis.



WHERE HAVE WE BEEN AND WHAT HAVE WE DONE

TREASURE HUNT AND AGM - 20 JANUARY 2008



The Jeepers were not discouraged by the continuous drizzling rain and lined up for the treasure hunt, taking them through mud sections (with an alternative tarred route), tar sections and also "short cuts" through the veld. The route map (in rally style) guided them through the different sections and in true Jeep tradition; only one Jeoper opted for the alternative route at the "4x4 serious mud" sections. Surprisingly the Jeeps were very clean at the finishing point as can be seen on the photos. The rain and water on the tar road was sufficient to spare the Jeopers - no necessity to spend the Sunday afternoon washing the beloved Jeep.

At PMC the questionnaires were evaluated and only three competitors managed to score 5/10. Are we not used to this type of "competition" or did the drizzling rain and concentration, not to miss a turn-off or question, interfere with the competitor's judgment and observation powers? Prizes were awarded to all competitors and as first prize, Hendrik Vermeulen using Koos Meyer as navigator (map reader), won himself a year's subscription to the Jeep Club RSA!

At 11h30 the AGM started and members and companions sat through the one and a half hours it took to work through the normal agenda items, including the election of the new chairman (Marius Human), the executive committee (see the first page), and also discuss matters concerning the monthly fun events, weekends away and other Club matters. Jo-Ann and Yvonne was co-opted to handle secretarial and administrative matters.

It was decided that the annual membership fee be increased to **R300 per family** and that costs at monthly meetings be kept to a minimum - an organising fee will only be levied where the entrance fee is zero or very low thus making the events more affordable to all.

Outside the fires were burning and being in the Jeep most of the morning and spending some time in the meeting, the Jeepers were in the mood to spend an hour or two with their friends while the food was prepared.

Giel van Niekerk (previous Chairman) congratulated Marius Human (Chairman), Herman Erasmus (Vice-Chairman) and executive committee members with their election. He thanked the committee, all the Club Members and especially the woman and children for their support and participation through the years. May the Jeep Club RSA grow from strength to strength and with the support of the enthusiastic Jeep lovers, that should not be difficult.

Thanks also to Chrysler Jeep for their support in the past and also throughout the year.



The main objective of the Jeep Club RSA is to cater for what we believe in - family fun in our Jeeps - and we will in future continue to cater for the "loves" in our lives - our families, friends, outdoor adventure and needless to say - our Jeeps!





NEXT ONE-DAY FUN TRIP - SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2008

Departure We will depart at **9:00** from Toit's Nissan at the "koeksister" crossing (between Pretorius and Schoeman Street, before you get onto the Witbank highway coming from Pretoria Central, driving in an eastern direction) and drive in convoy from there - only in a JEEP!

Invite other Jeep owners to join in the fun!



- Venue** The venue is an off-road trail with normal as well as sandy obstacles on the route, situated ± 35 km east of Pretoria. All types of Jeeps can be accommodated. Toilet and other facilities are available at the start and end of the trail.
- Bring along** We will end the day's activities with a braai, so bring your own meat, salads, utensils, drinks, etc. - fires will be supplied. Picnic baskets are a hot favourite as an alternative.
- Costs** Gate fee - R80 per vehicle. (Non-members with Jeeps - R100 per vehicle).
- Information** For more information contact Herman Erasmus at 072 671 3829 or Frank Schmiedeskamp at 082 259 9186.



GENERAL NEWS

CLASSIFIEDS, JEEP RELATED ADVERTISEMENTS AND GENERAL ITEMS

In order to make the Newsletter more user friendly, quicker to download from the website and be able to publish more photos and interesting articles - Classifieds, links to "Jeep" related and general items, a list of members and photos of members vehicles, etc. is available on the website.

Please scan the website for classifieds and other interesting information!

MEMBERS EXCURSIONS

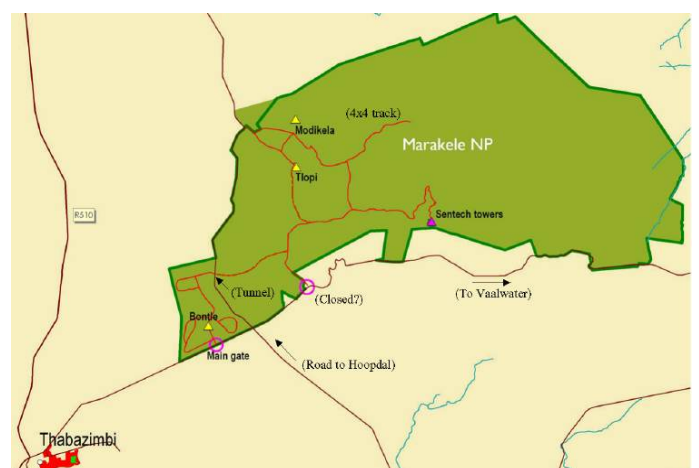
Bertie and Berra often visit places we have not even heard of or plan to visit some day - luckily they shares their experiences with us - we really appreciate that. Where have you been lately?

MARAKELE

During October 2007, my wife and I decided to take a mid-month, mid-week break to a nearby national park called Marakele.

Background

Marakele is one of South Africa's newer parks and is situated in the Waterberge about 200 kms north-west of Pretoria close to the town of Thabazimbi. Referring to the map, Marakele is divided into two parts by the road to Hoopdal, which crosses over it in the western tip. To the west of this road is a flat bushveld area with numerous trails suitable for normal cars. Here is much game to be seen, consisting mainly of various types of antelope, giraffe, rhino etc. - nothing too dangerous. To the east of this road is the bigger part of Marakele - the 'big five' section. Although most trails in this section are also accessible to normal cars, the terrain is more mountainous and there are tracks for 4x4's only. Game is much more difficult to spot here. Crossing from one section to the other is through a tunnel underneath the road to Hoopdal with an electric gate on one side. Entrance to the park is in the western section and here is an unfenced camp called Bontle with 38 camping sites suitable for caravans and tents. In the eastern section is another unfenced camp called Thlopi with 10 permanent tents on wooden decks next to a dam. A third camp, called the Modikela Bush Camp is close to Thlopi.



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Activities within Marakele consist of game and bird watching, enjoying the beautiful scenery, visiting the Sentech towers up on the Kransberg mountain which is also close to the largest colony of Cape Vultures in the world, tackling a 4x4 trail, and relaxing in camp.

Our experience at Marakele

Our first step was to find out if there was accommodation available. An internet visit to the National Parks Board's website stated that all units were fully booked. A personal visit to their offices in Pretoria, however, secured a spot in Tlopi (later while there, we also noticed some empty tents - maybe the weather had a role to play). Each tent has space for two adults (+ 2 children on stretchers), a bathroom and an outside kitchen underneath a small lapa on a deck with a view across the dam. Each tent has electricity. Cost was R590 per night for the two of us.

There are a number of routes to Marakele, with the obvious two being the R511 through Brits, and the N1 to Warmbaths and then the R516 to Thabazimbi. We selected the first to get to Marakele and the second for our return. Going on a trip always puts us in a relaxed mode so we got going early and stopped at the Hartebeespoort Dam for a breakfast at Caffe Panini, which has a great view of the dam. The section of the R511 between Brits and Beestekraal was quite busy and in not too good shape (potholes) but the rest was plain sailing. So was our return a few days later, though somewhat longer and also having a number of toll-gates.

After entering and registering at the main gate at about noon, we first explored the western section of Marakele and were delighted at all the game we saw. The weather was cloudy and there was much evidence of recent rains. We also drove into Bontle campsite and found it clean and well organised, with enough grass and shade to keep a camper happy.

More samples of game we found in the western section of Marakele. There is also a herd of sable antelope but we could not find it.



After a few hours of exploring in the western section, we made our way into the eastern 'big five' section by driving through the tunnel underneath the road to Hoopdal. Almost immediately the terrain became more mountainous and dense, and because this section is far bigger than the western section, game became more scarce (perhaps much more spread out). We reached our tent at Tlopi, unpacked and enjoyed the view across the dam from our deck.



No sooner had we unpacked when three elephants entered the camp, which is unfenced. The bigger two of them continued past the tents. The third, a teenager judging by its tusks, came in right between our tent and the neighbouring tent and started to demolish a young Karee tree, so close that we could have touched it from our deck.

After it was safe to leave the deck and reach the Jeep again, we drove around exploring some of the trails in the vicinity of Tlopi. We tried to reach the Modikela Bush Camp just out of curiosity but were turned back by an official who said that it was booked for a private SAPD training session. As it was getting late we returned to our tent to enjoy sundowners and a braai. Later that evening clouds rolled in and the wind picked up so that during the night it sounded from within the tent as if the end of the world was upon us.



Next morning it was still cloudy but we decided to drive up to the Sentech towers. The narrow and steep tar road disappeared into the clouds but we pressed on - luckily there was no other traffic around. When we arrived at the towers the visibility was only about 15 meters and we could not even see them, only their anchor cables mysteriously vanishing into thin air above. We waited for an hour for the clouds to lift but that did not happen. So we made our way down the mountain again stopping at a beautiful (picnic?) spot at the bottom of the pass.



A park official told us that cycads could be seen on the 4x4 track but that they were very difficult to spot. Undeterred we set off, determined to investigate every plant on every mountain ridge with our binoculars on the 5 kms 4x4 trail. At the start of the trail we were lucky to see a flock of vultures. Hereafter we proceeded slowly and investigated every possible cycad candidate on the mountains to our left and also on the mountains to our right - no luck. At the end of the trail we turned around and proceeded even slower on our way back. After we had examined the same ridge for the fourth time and I was getting impatient my wife suddenly noticed a different looking tree on the ridge. Closer attention revealed that it was indeed a cycad, with also another smaller one a little lower down. From that distance we could not tell if they were actually the Waterbergbroodboom (*Encephalartos eugene-maraisii*) but we would like to think so. That night we braaid again. The wind had died down and we slept more peacefully.





The next morning we packed up early, as we had to leave the tent before 9am. Then we drove back up to the Sentech towers and on our way spotted dung beetles at work, a kudu bull, an eland, and at the top of the mountain a klipspringer. There were few clouds and the sun was shining. We stopped next to the towers and walked up to the edge of the abyss - what a view. Two vultures circled nearby as we said goodbye to Marakele.

Read about other adventures - select "Members" on the web site and scroll down.



A HOLIDAY YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE!

We packed our mobile home and set off on a holiday - opting for something different from the normal - as you will see!

We decided not to make use of the railroad, mostly because the trains do not always stop at our specific holiday destination.



On the way we had a few small obstacles to overcome but eventually arrived at our destination.



A friend offered his private island and on arrival we immediately combed the shoreline to get acquainted to the environment.

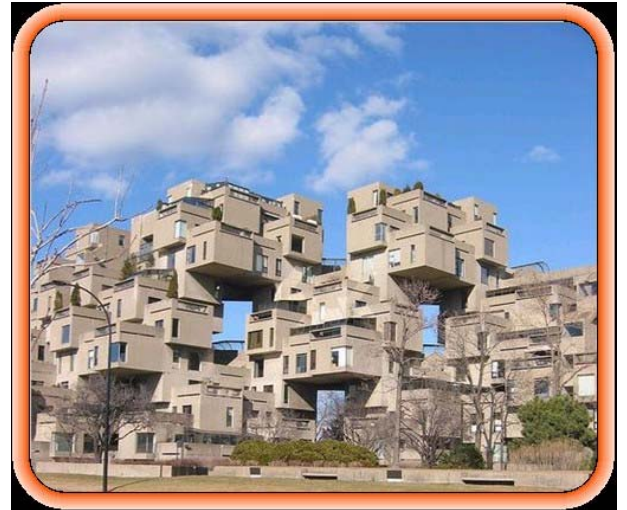


All too soon the holiday was something of the past and we had to return to our city nest on the 9th floor.

Trust you have enjoyed your holiday even more than we have and had a safe and trouble free trip.

May the New Year bring you prosperity, good health, joy, good friends and many Jeep excursions!

See you at the next One-Day Fun Trip
Sunday 10 February 2008



BOESMANSNEK



Boesmansnek is a border post between the RSA and Lesotho (near Sani Pass) - mostly utilised by horse riders and pedestrians but with a section of no-mans-land where in this case, the bikers decided to give the 4x4 a rest and explore the veldt on their mountain bikes.



HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BEFORE?

This is without a doubt one of the coolest PC-Illusion, I have seen so far.

Follow the instructions:

- 1) Relax and concentrate on the 4 small dots in the middle of the picture for about. 30-40 secs.
- 2) Then, take a look at a wall near you (any smooth, single coloured surface)
- 3) You will see a circle of light developing
- 4) Start blinking your eyes a couple of times and you will see a figure emerging...
- 5) What do you see? Moreover, who do you see?



MEMBERS PARTICIPATION





Your enthusiasm, participation, support and positive attitude will ensure that the Jeep Club RSA grow as a family orientated pleasure club catering for the “loves” in our lives - our families, friends, outdoor adventure and needless to say - our Jeeps!

The Jeep Club RSA cater for what we believe in - family fun in our Jeeps!

Please print this Newsletter in colour and distribute it amongst your friends and family without access to Internet facilities.

Make sure your companion, kids and friends also read the newsletter and know what we are up to next!



HAVE A WONDERFUL DAY - LIVE WITHOUT LIMITS

