

2010 COMMITTEE

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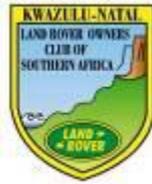
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LANDROVING IN KZN



December 2010
P.O.Box 70650; Overport; 4067

Monthly Newsletter of the LROC of SA KwaZulu-Natal
Find our Home Page at www.landroverclub.za.org

Hi All,

An early reminder of the AGM in February.

As far as the Committee is concerned, at least three of the current terms expire and new blood would be very welcome – give it some thought if you would like to consider joining the committee and contributing to the club?

Ed's comment, "The newsletter is published regularly on an irregular basis every month, printed as and when it seems fit and delivered when it suits. It will be late on your time, **but on time, on my time.**"



Pictures are worth a thousand words.

In the valley a week or so ago, we had an interesting recovery where we had to brace Don's landy with a winch to prevent it from going over while we winched it off a rock it was stuck on.

A really nice drive – what better way to spend a public holiday?

Wishing all of you all the best for Xmas and for 2011.

It is with sadness that I offer our condolences to Diane, wife of Tubby Sonnekus who, as the Chairman of the East Coast Cruisers club, was well-known to most of us and who sadly passed away earlier this month.

Some of you may also have known Margie Oliver (Natal Canoe Club) who also passed away in December. Our condolences to friends and family.

LROC KZN PROVISIONAL EVENTS DIARY 2010

<u>When</u>	<u>What, where</u>	<u>More Info.</u>	<u>CONTACT PERSON</u>	<u>Grade</u>
23 Jan 2011	4 TH GATES EVENT FOR 2010	Umgeni Valley up stream from Inanda Dam is the venue, meeting place is the car park at Waterfall Spar Shopping centre. Time is 08h00 for 08h30 depart. Both standard and modified obstacles will be set. A BYO braai for lunch.	George Goswell 083 6581324	3 / 5
17 – 19 Feb	THE UNLIMITED DUZI CANOE	Please note, the Duzi in 2011 will be in February and not January as in the past. The LROC will again be involved with the Duzi and we require members, friends, cousins and others to assist over the 3 days with traffic control. More info to follow.	George Goswell 083 6581324	1 / 3
25 - 27 Feb	22 ND LROC KZN AGM	Venue : Ringwood, Monteseel. It's a camp over weekend with a trail drive on the Saturday and the LROC KZN 22 nd AGM on Sunday 27 Feb. More info to follow.	Kenneth Jones 084 509 1427	1 / 5
March				
29 April – 2 May	TEMBE ELEPHANT PARK	Camp over in the big 5 Game Park, in an area out of bounds to day visitors to the park. We require 20 people to make this trip viable and it's on a 1 st come 1 st basis. More info to follow.	George Goswell 0836581324	3
May	CARS IN THE PARK	Annual Cars in the Park in Pietermaritzburg		
28 May	NATIONAL 4x4 CHALLENGE	1 st of 2 national 4x4 Challenge to be held in KZN in 2011. Not an event organized by the LROC but it's an event we promote and support as spectators.		
24 Sep	NATIONAL 4x4 CHALLENGE	2 nd of 2 national 4x4 Challenge to be held in KZN in 2011. Not an event organized by the LROC but it's an event we promote and support as spectators.		
Nov	LAND ROVER VS TOYOTA	8 th Land Rover vs Toyota Challenge		

Note: For All Gates Events:

1. Only paid up LROC members will be able to compete in the Gates Events from now on.
2. Non LROC members welcome to attend as spectators.
3. Only LAND ROVER vehicles will be allowed to take part. No other make of vehicle.

LROC KZN AGM: 26th & 27th February 2011

- Free camping from Friday with hot showers and toilets.
- **Sun 27th Feb 2010. AGM: at 12h00 sharp**
- Please bring your deck chairs as the AGM will be held under the clubs large awning.
- We will have a social braai with the braai packs and braai fires sponsored by the LROC for those paid up members and his/her immediate family, who book by **21st January 2011**. Provide own plates, salads, drinks, rolls etc.

Please contact Kenneth Jones via email kenneth@pcvs.co.za to book for the post-AGM braai.

Please Note : If you do not book, you will be required to provided your own braai pack. The LROC will only have braai packs for the members who book and no spare braai packs will be available.

Saturday Evening Video's.

1. We have all seen what a 4x4 Land Rover can do offroad, now come along and see what a 4x4, 6x6 and 8x8 truck is capable of doing in a Gates Type Challenge.
2. What the LROC KZN is all about, a slide show of some of our events.
3. Short clips of Land Rovers, the odd, the old, the strange, the enthusiasts, the.....
4. And others

Please note every body if you want your name to be on the braai pack list for the braai after the AGM you need to do the following:-

- 1) You need to have paid your subs up to date.
- 2) You need to e-mail the names of who you are booking braai packs for to kenneth@pcvs.co.za Please use this e-mail address and no other.
- 3) You need to remember that you may book for yourself and your immediate dependant family only. Bookings may not be made on behalf of any other member.
- 4) You need to remember that **the cut-off date for the braai pack list is the afternoon of the 21st January 2011.**

AGENDA

- 1. Opening and Welcome. Attendance register to be signed.**
- 2. Apologies:**
- 3. Thanks to :** Simon and Louis for the use of their property as the venue for the AGM
- 4. Confirmation of the minutes of the 21st AGM.**
- 6. Chairman's address and Treasurers report**
- 7. Election of Office bearers.**
Each serving member present offers themselves for re-election/stand down
See nomination forms.
- 8. Presentation of Certificates and Floating Trophies**
- 10. General. –**
- 11. Closing of the AGM.**

Kenneth & the Committee would like to thank Simon and Louis and Heather for allowing us the use of RINGWOOD. It's a great spot and we are privileged to be allowed the use of it.

RINGWOOD is a private home to Louis and Heather Powell and it would be appreciated if each and every member respect this and take the responsibility of retaining and removing at the end of the weekend the refuse and cans that they themselves generate. I also respectfully ask those members who are bringing children to ensure that there is no unruly behaviour in the sheds and workshops.

RINGWOOD and its owners and the LROC and its officials do not accept any responsibility for any injury or damage sustained by anybody or their property in any way while attending this weekend at RINGWOOD.

NOMINATION FORM

- **Eligibility:** A member shall only be eligible for election to the Committee if he/she has been a member of the Club for not less than two (2) years immediately preceding nomination provided that, if good cause be shown, a shorter period of qualifying membership (but not less than one 1 year) may be condoned by vote of the members.
- **Nominations:** Nominations shall be in writing, shall bear the signature of the Nominee and the Proposer and shall be handed in to the Chairman before the commencement of the Annual General Meeting.
- **Term:** Members elected to serve on the Committee shall hold office for a period of two (2) years. A retiring member shall be eligible for re-election

Please clear the nomination with the member before you propose them, as it's a 2 year commitment.

Portfolio	Committee member	Term ends	Available for re-election
Chairman	Kenneth Jones	Feb 2012	
Trails / Gates	George Goswell	Feb 2012	
Quartermaster	Paul Stanley	Feb 2012	
Secretary	Bob Lemon	Feb 2012	
Member w/o	Louis Powell	Feb 2012	
Social Events	Alan Cullen	Feb 2012	
Regalia / Quarter Master	Paul Stanley	Feb 2012	
PRO	Paul Stanley	Fen 2012	
Member w/o	Peter Bassett	Feb 2011	TBA
Treasurer	Selwyn Ambler	Feb 2011	TBA
Membership	Gavin McKenzie	Feb 2011	Yes
Newsletter (editor)	Kenneth Jones	Feb 2011	Yes

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NOMINATION FORM

Nominee: _____ Signature: _____

Proposer _____ Signature: _____

Membership No. _____

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ited Duzi 2011, 17 – 19 February

The LROC will again be involved with the Duzi, our 22nd year and we require members, friends, cousins and others to assist over the 3 days with traffic control along the route. The vehicles of the paddlers seconds and spectators needs to blend in with the locals in the valley in a way that does not interfere with them going about their business. Managing this traffic at key spectator and seconding points is where the LROC fits in. Single lane bridges, narrow roads and two-way traffic without proper control will affect the outcome of the race and impact on the paddlers.

The private in the army had a motto, “never volunteer”. Well ignore it because the LROC KZN needs a number of Land Rovers equipped with volunteers to help with the smooth flow of traffic during the 3 days of **The Unlimited Duzi 2011**. The rate of pay is simple, it’s virtually nothing. The hours can be horrendously long and you will be required to stay at your post whatever the weather. A letter from your mum won’t suffice to let you off. Not quite true.

Despite a less than attractive offer, there is an undoubted reward attached to helping on an event such as this. You will get the unique opportunity to see the event first hand and from a different angle to most spectators. It’s mostly a morning task with your Landy close by with its awning out, fridge running and chatting with many a friendly spectator and paddlers seconds.

Included in the experience is an incredibly tasteful sticker for your vehicle, free camping in a large provided tent, all meals (1st night is a sponsored braai), drinks, event and marshal T-shirt’s and a contribution towards your vehicles fuel.

But, by far the biggest reward is the pure satisfaction of being involved in **The Unlimited Duzi 2011** canoe marathon, one of the biggest canoe marathons in the world.

Interested, then give George Goswell a call.

Cell 0836581324

Email kznlroc@mweb.co.za

Specially for Peter Basset

Kenneth Jones

Something I picked up off the net...

Many of us Land Rover lovers long to be able to take our vehicles to the African sub continent in order to enjoy using them for what they were designed to do. However many of us, like my son and myself do not own a suitable vehicle or have the free time available for the long drive south. This being my sons last summer with us before going off to University we decided to take a Land Rover based "boys only" holiday to South Africa and Lesotho.

What follows is my diary of what turned out to be a superb adventure.

Wednesday 7th August (my birthday)

3Pm flight from Norwich airport to Schipol, Then on from Schipol to Johannesburg, and finally Johannesburg to Durban arriving Durban 12:20 Pm Thursday.

Thursday 8th August

Collected from Durban airport by Peter Bassett of Conical Hat Expeditions. And driven north to Underberg where we are staying the night in Kirklees Cottage. Meet our other guide Neville De Klerk, and the two Land Rovers we will be using for the next two weeks. One is a green 1957 series one 107 pickup (Pokola). The packhorse for the trip. The other a sand 1957 series one station wagon (Sir Tinley) I asked Peter why he named it Sir Tinley and was told "it is more positive than maybe" (try saying Sir Tinley with a South African accent) so I put off asking Neville why Pokola for a later day.

Both vehicles have been re-fitted with series two axles, Salisbury's at the rear, 2.25 petrol engines, series 3 gearboxes, wide offset wheels and 7.50 tyres. Front centre seats have been removed and replaced with wooden trays for convenient storage space and CB radios fitted for inter vehicle communication otherwise both vehicles appear standard. They are also immaculate when we arrive. With absolutely no "maybe" Jonathan and I positively settle on Sir Tinley for our transport.

Our accommodation for the night is a traditional round stone built shack with thatched roof, comprising of three roughly divided bedrooms (two up and one down) A simple lounge with wood burning stove, kitchen with bottle gas cooker and fridge, toilet/showerroom with hot and cold water but no electricity. It also came complete with a night time guard, and an over friendly horse which repeatedly tried to get inside once successfully stealing food from the kitchen worktop.

Days total, 131k.

Friday 9th August

Rise around 7.30 to the smell of breakfast cooking. Neville it turns out is the main cook for the trip and is already doing us proud. No sign of the horse just yet but a Grey Duiker (a type of deer) is soon spotted a short distance from the shack. Today we head for the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, but first we must call on the owner of the shack to settle up. Multi strand electric fencing surrounds his home, and an electric powered sliding gate bars entry, I start to wonder why, and why we needed a guard at the shack.

Having settled our account Peter and Neville lead us off down a good tar road towards Sani Pass the gateway to Lesotho. We soon leave the tarmac and take to our first dirt road. This one is in good well-graded condition and is well frequented by tour operators Land Rovers and other tourist traffic. After a while we reach the South Africa border post where a brief formality sees our passports stamped as having left the country. The real pass now begins with steep climbs and tight switchbacks, we stop a couple of times to admire the views back down the pass, along with other tourists of several nationalities. The road surface is mostly dry, but two-week-old snow lies quite deep on the side of the track in the shade of the mountainside.

On one tight, steep switchback I am suddenly driving on sheer ice, and the wheels are spinning, a quick turn onto the wrong side of the road and momentum takes us onto dry dirt and we have traction once again. I am now alert at every twist and turn as more ice appears as we drive ever higher up the pass. Eventually we reach the Lesotho border post at the top of the pass with no further incident. There we meet a local guide driving a white South African built 109 station wagon. It looks much like a stage one V8, but the driver tells me it is actually a straight 6. He is a Land Rover fan himself and admires our series ones.

Having quickly gone through the border formalities we head over to the Sani Top Chalet, renowned as the highest pub in Africa being at 9350 ft where we enjoy a pint of the local ale and I learn that Lesotho's lowest point is the highest low point of any country. We then head off across country behind the chalet on a poorly defined track where we struggle for traction as we climb steadily towards Phinong in the mountains at the head of the pass. This track is rough, with deep ruts, wet patches and more snow. Careful selection of line is vital to keep moving. After perhaps half an hour's slow progress we stop overlooking Drakensberg Escarpment, and the most fantastic mountain views. Jonathan and I are sent off to walk a very precarious trail for even better views whilst Peter and Neville prepare lunch. When we return we are impressed by the lunch spread. Table, four chairs, crockery, all laid out with a tablecloth awaited us for a ploughman's style lunch, with a view from our table like I have never imagined possible. Whilst eating we admire the Jackall Buzzards circling above.

Lunch over and everything packed away we head back towards the Chalet. The drive is easier this time as we have gravity on our side, but still very rough, and some of the ruts too deep for our wheels. Passing through the chalet yard we spot a very smart 130 adapted for game spotting to a very high standard. Moving on we re-join the main road (but still dirt remember) and head deeper into Lesotho. The further into Lesotho we get the less vehicles we see, all the day trippers have turned back and local traffic is almost none existent. The road surface is fairly good 80% of the time, but the remaining 20% is dreadful. Dongas, as our guides call them (deep wash outs) mostly on the inside of tight curves, leading over the edge of the road, sometimes to 1000+ feet drops, keep appearing making constant concentration on the road essential. Snow is lying quite deep beside the road at times. We also experience our first corrugations, which we quickly learn are best driven on the wrong side of the road.

Our guides are setting a cracking pace, and I am in awe that the elderly vehicles can take the constant hammering. The ride is equally impressive our elderly station wagon may rattle a lot but the suspension soaks up all but the most severe bumps. Jonathan and I switch driving and sight seeing at regular intervals so that we can both enjoy both. We are heading for Ha Rafoletsana, and the Molumong lodge our accommodation for the night. Eventually after about two hours drive we leave the graded road and its corrugations for a boulder strewn track leading through a small village with very steep climbs and descents which after about half a mile ends at Molumong lodge.

Molumong is an old wool trading station, which has been converted to a lodge. It comprised self-catering kitchens, toilet and shower facilities, a large comfortable lounge, dining room and four bedrooms sleeping up to 12 people. Alongside the lodge is a separate backpackers barn again with its own kitchen and toilet/shower facilities plus about ten sleeping places. Again everything is powered by bottled gas, except for lighting for which there is only candles. We share the lodge with a family of four South Africans who are touring Lesotho looking for snow to drive their Toyota through and they seem happy with the snow they have found so far. We enjoy a delicious evening meal of soup followed by the largest pork chops I have ever seen with fresh vegetables, Neville certainly works wonders in the kitchen again.

Days Total 66k

Saturday 10th August.

Lets just accept that every day starts with one of Neville's hearty bacon and egg breakfasts. A slight problem then delays our departure as Sir Tinely refuses to run after starting first time. Peter and Neville have driven off thinking we are following but soon return to see where we are. Neville quickly diagnoses an air lock in the fuel supply probably caused by the reserve tank switch over valve that was not pointing to quite the correct position. Once sorted we are back onto the graded dirt road for a while then onto 30k of tar road leading us to the Kao Mine road, 30k of very rough track, which is to be our main challenge for the day. As we stop for a briefing at the start of the Kao mine road Neville spots two vehicles way ahead of us working their way over the rough terrain. This seems to come as quite a surprise to him, and he goes on to explain that he has never seen other vehicles on this road before.

First low range is the gear for 50% of this so-called road, we crawl over boulders the size of footballs, dropping down to numerous streams, which are forded before the climb back up the other side. Time and time again we manage second gear for a few yards only to have to drop back to first for the next steep drop. Ahead of us Neville, driving Pokola, often sends boulders rolling back towards us or crashing down sheer drops beside the track. After about 5k we meet a couple of Toyotas coming the other way. As they are climbing we give way and let them pass, about half a K later we meet a couple more who stop to chat. We then learn they are the front-runners of a group of 26 vehicles, Neville is crestfallen, the two ahead of us was bad enough, but 26 vehicles on Kao Mine, unheard of.

It turns out they are a South Africa Toyota club taking advantage of the bank holiday weekend for a rough road driving trip. The vehicles are all piled high and grinding along at an extremely slow pace, each taking several attempts to climb out of some of the streams. Further ahead we come across a Toyota crew fixing a broken wishbone ball joint, they have apparently been there all night. We then learn that the group is taking two days to drive what we intend driving in 5 hours. A single Discovery pulls over to admire our series ones and much to their amusement I ask if they are the official recovery vehicle for the Toyota club.

Meeting so many vehicles on the single track Kao mine road delays us a little. A puncture in Pokola delays us a little more. Therefore with so many other vehicles around for this bank holiday weekend (Woman's Day) the decision is made not to push on to our intended lodge for the night, as rooms may not have been kept for us despite our reservations. Instead we camp at the kraal of a Basotho family that Conical Hat has used before on the bank of the Malibamatso River. Peter and Neville quickly get on with the business of setting up camp, two sturdy tents are erected, pressure lamps lit, two tables laid with cooking stoves, food and crockery. Soon we have a comfortable, but chilly home from home. Whilst this activity takes place an ever-growing group of Basotho youngsters take great pleasure in watching our every move. Building up to quite a crowd to watch us eat, then dispersing once the dishes are cleared away. I feel as if it is feeding time at the zoo with us as the star attraction.

Days Total 75k

Sunday 11th August.

I awake around 6:30 to the squawking from a colony of Bald Ibis nesting on the rocks above the river and discover ice inside the tent; it takes a while to summon the fortitude to get out of my warm sleeping bag and dress. We brew coffee and watch the birds as the sun rises over the mountains until the direct sunlight falls on our campsite to warm us. The audience soon assembles again to watch us breakfast. Today we head for Marakabei via Mantsonyane and a relatively new tar road alongside the Khatse Dam and reservoir project. The reservoir is to provide water for South Africa and electricity for Lesotho and stretches for miles with the road winding around the mountainside beside it. We stop briefly to buy drinks at the lodge where we should have stayed the night and confirm that they were indeed full yesterday from an early hour. Enjoying our drinks we look down onto the reservoir and into a yard with rows of dung bricks drying in the sun for use as fuel. Driving on, now back on dirt roads I notice a strange sound from the front O/S wheel of Sir Tinley. We stop to investigate and discover a loose wheel bearing which Neville adjusts whilst we have lunch. A small crowd soon appears to enjoy the joint vehicle fixing and feeding display. I discover that when I need to pee I must do so as soon as we stop, as any delay will lead to an audience in every direction around the vehicles.

We are now facing a new problem; the last couple of filling stations have had no petrol! We stop at a large Frasers general store and they also have no petrol, or any other fuel for that matter. Sir Tinley with his reserve tank is not so desperate but Pokola with only one tank and a jerry can is running dangerously low so Neville decides to fill up with paraffin, yes paraffin. We move on to the smell of paraffin exhaust fumes, which evokes boyhood memories of petrol-paraffin tractors working on the farms around my Norfolk home. The paraffin does not seem to slow Pokola down at all, as we take a fast and sometimes slightly scary drive along potholed dirt roads to Marakabei Lodge near Marakabei. This turns out to be a comfortable motel style enterprise with full restaurant facilities and electric lights, so Neville has a break from the catering as we enjoy good steak or chicken meals.

Days Total 113K

Monday 12th August

We must find petrol today or we are in trouble. Sadly Frasers in Marakabei has none, the paraffin pump is also dry. The locals tell us there is petrol in a town nearby but in the wrong direction, Peter is concerned they are just telling us what we want to hear and have no real knowledge of the petrol availability. We head to a government road depot to ask if they will sell us some petrol, they actually had petrol but were not allowed to sell us any. Spotting a police station we head there to ask if they know of petrol, they do not but are willing to radio another town and ask if there is petrol there. The police there also do not know if there is petrol but are willing to drive into town and find out, then radio back (this could take some hours). Whilst Peter and Jonathan wait at the police station Neville and I go back to the Frasers store to ask if they have any bottled paraffin, they have none. Driving back I notice a compound full of gas cylinders behind a small shack of a store, we stop to ask if they have paraffin and they do. We then have to wait whilst they go through the laborious task of emptying 20 litre cans of paraffin into a bucket only to ladle it into our can using a 1 litre measure in order to sell us 40 Litres. Why they would not just sell us the contents of the original cans we did not understand. Now with Pokola on almost 100% paraffin and Sir Tinley on 75% we head on for Semonkong, via Roma near the capital city Maseru.

Roma is a college town and the second or third largest town in Lesotho so we are confident that once there we should be able to buy petrol. Leaving Marakabei we have to pick our way carefully over a very rocky road, which gradually improves before we come to a police checkpoint prior to joining a good tar road. Occasionally we still have to use low range to climb the steep passes but we make good progress. We drive on through "God help me pass" with Sir Tinley pinking happily on the petrol/paraffin mixture but showing no other signs of dislike for the poor quality fuel. Once in Roma we head straight for the Shell filling station in the centre of town only to be told that the pumps have not worked for some weeks! However the staff tell us that if we turn back there is a filling station in a small village on another road out of Roma that has petrol. With no confidence at all we head back, carrying straight on where we joined the main road to and behold there is a filling station, and they have petrol.

Back onto dirt roads once more and our guides inform us we are driving part of the "Roof of Africa rally" route. This is a fast section of well-maintained twisting mountain road. We stop in the middle of what appears to be nowhere for a picnic lunch. As usual the audience gathers rapidly, but this time I remember to pee before they arrive. The well fed youngsters jokingly beg for food, so as we leave Neville chases them up a path in Pokola. Later we pass a sign for our lodge in Semonkong proclaiming, "a few more hills, a couple more bends, Semonkong Lodge is where the road ends". Semonkong lodge is a comfortable place that again has electricity and a restaurant for evening meals and breakfast. In common with all the Lesotho lodges the facilities are old and rather worn but always clean and functional.

Days Total 116k

Tuesday 13th August

We have a leisurely day ahead of us, so we take time over breakfast before setting out to view the Le Bihan Falls, part of the Maletsunyane River and the highest falls in Southern Africa at 189 metres. Now despite there being a good dirt road to the falls, in typical Conical Hat tradition we set out on a packhorse trail behind the lodge. This is a more direct route but the lodge manager is not sure if it can be driven, so comes along to watch, together with several locals.

The first part was very steep and narrow, Jonathan drove as I directed from the safety of the high ground. The right hand wheels were rubbing the rocks whilst the left were on the very edge of a long drop towards which the whole vehicle was leaning alarmingly. Some rocky steps then had to be climbed requiring 100% concentration on the part of the driver. Once this initial steep climb was achieved we found ourselves looking across open veldt with many foot trails climbing to a distant fold in the hills. Neville's first attempted route had Pokola stuck in wet mud after a very short distance requiring Jonathan to turn Sir Tinley around on an exceedingly rough area of protruding rocks in order to tow him out of the mud. The second line was rougher and at a severe side angle but gave better traction so we were able to pick our way in first low. Crossing the fold in the hills again required walking first then careful driving with passengers pointing to cross several ditches.

At a later rough area we had to roll rocks into a deep wash out before we could drive through. The final obstacle was a muddy stream crossing, no more than 3 metres wide but with a steep climb onto the opposite bank. Having enjoyed the challenge of the drive we then enjoyed the sight of the Maletsunyane crashing down the 189 metre falls. Returning to Semonkong lodge for lunch we could of course have taken the dirt road back, but could not resist returning on the route by which we come, just because it was there.

We spent the afternoon exploring the town and doing some shopping, Jonathan bought a quite good pair of boots for 45 Maloti (approx 3 quid) and I managed to send postcards home, mind you I have been back 15 days now and they still have not arrived despite the sign in the post office saying they would take 4 days. We learned that a white flag flying over a hut means that they have alcohol for sale, red means meat, and green means vegetables. Finding a Land Rover breakers yard in the middle of the town, just a pile of bits lying beside the road with no sign of an owner, Jonathan comments that the body panels are better than those on his 110 at home. As a final surprise amongst the tin huts selling all manner of provision we discover a statue built from scrap metal.

Days total 10k

Wednesday 14th August

Today we head back to South Africa, we could take the long but easy way around back via Roma, but Peter has other plans. We are taking a route that becomes no more than a bridlepath, crossing the mountains and two major rivers. The manager of the lodge tells us that someone claimed he had driven this route about a year ago, but in the opposite direction. It is a bit of a gamble as the unknown part is several hours' drive away, and several hours drive back if it is impassable. The first stage is shown on the map as all weather dirt road and we make reasonable progress along its potholed surface. The second stage is shown as 4WD track where we have to spend much of the time in 1st and 2nd gear, low range. Occasionally having to walk ahead in order to find a safe line over rocks and boulders, or around tight switchbacks negotiating steep mountainsides.

The mountain views are stunning with occasional native Basotho villages dotted along the way. Villagers come over to the roadside to watch our progress as if they have not seen many vehicles; there certainly are no prior wheel tracks to be seen. Leaving one small village the track deteriorates quite suddenly. Several villagers follow us to a point where a deep washout on the left together with a pile of boulders on the right makes the track impassable. They soon dive in and start moving rocks for us, but in a haphazard way, after a little advice they then start to work in an organised manner shortly creating a drivable if careful surface. Again they follow us down to a second washout where we repeat the repair procedure. The track then falls steeply whilst clinging to the mountainside with a sheer drop beside us. We then come to a long washed out section leaving only just enough width for a 107 to pass. Neville takes Pokola through but the ground collapses behind his wheels. Had he travelled any slower Pokola would have ended up on his side. There is now not enough track left for Sir Tinley to be driven through.

As we stop to assess the situation the villagers start work again trying to shift a large boulder that is blocking our path. We resort to using one of the high lift jacks and at last the obstruction is moved leaving only just enough width to drive through. Jonathan and I then elect Neville as driver as we do not want responsibility for the vehicle for what is a potential roll over situation. Neville edges Sir Tinley slowly through at an alarming angle, this time the earth under the left wheels does not collapse and they make it through safely. We ask the natives if we will encounter any more problems and they think not, so we pay them for their efforts and drive on down the still very steep track. Two more switchbacks requiring three point turn manoeuvres within inches of a drop of many hundred feet are required before we reach more level ground.

At last we seem to be on a driven track again and get our first glimpse of the Senqunyane River, the first of the two river crossings. We pass through yet another village of traditional round thatched houses with several inhabitants of all ages waving to us. Then as we drop down to the river it seems too wide and fast flowing to possibly wade. Peter and Neville wade into the river on foot to check if it is safe to take the 107's across and decide that it is. I ride across in Pokola in order to film Jonathan driving Sir Tinley through. It is a magnificent sight to see such an elderly vehicle wading a river as wide as the Senqunyane, Jonathan keeps a good bow wave all the way and then powers up the steep sandy exit with no problems.

After a couple of miles we reach the Orange River, the Senqunyane had seemed wide but it was nothing compared to the Orange. Our guides were plainly concerned as were Jonathan and I and went wading on foot again to judge the depth and condition of the riverbed. After much wading and consultation it was decided that the Orange swollen as it was with melt water from the recent snow was too dangerous to cross. This was a major blow. It was now 3pm, we had been driving for 7 hours, and it was going to take at least 6 hours to drive back to Semonkong. Despondent we head back, to wade the Senqunyane once more. At the village we stop to speak to the locals one says there is another crossing further up river but is not sure where. Neville then spots the police flag is flying over one of the huts and walks over to investigate. He finds a police officer who confirms that there is another crossing that has been driven this week and is willing (for a fee) to guide us to it.

With Sylvester Bereng, police officer and guide riding up front we once again wade the Senqunyane but this time turn left onto a hardly discernable track over the veldt. For miles we follow the vague tracks sometimes descending into gorges, scary now, as the brakes have not dried out from their three prolonged dunkings then climbing back up the other side. At last we come down to the Orange again at a point where several vehicles are parked on our side and the roof of a vehicle can be seen in the water.

Our guides again wade into the cold water, this time the crossing is in three stages diagonally across the river using two island sand banks a total distance about 200 metres, 120 of them in the water. Neville returns to say it seems crossable if we remove the vehicle fan belts. Pokola heads into the water first driven by Neville accompanied by Sylvester who insists his job is not over until we reach the other side, only to halt 20 metres in whilst water is over the wheel tops. Much gurgling of exhaust precedes a return to forward motion, and eventual climb out onto the first sand bar. It is now my turn, with Sir Tinley in first low I drop down the bank into the water. At the point where Pokola stopped the water is flowing across Sir Tinley's wings and my feet are getting wet. Jonathan, in the passenger seat is ok he can lift his feet out of the water but I must keep mine on the pedals. As Sir Tinley climbs out onto the sand bar I feel tremendous relief and satisfaction at the same time. The next two sections are no deeper than the Senqunyane and are driven with ease but to our right is that Toyota roof jutting out of the water as if the rest of the vehicle is in there somewhere. Sadly all thoughts of the camera were forgotten due to our concerns over this crossing so no pictures were taken of what was one of the high points of the whole trip.

At the other side we stop to pay and give grateful thanks to Sylvester our saviour then wonder how he will get back to his village as he sets off on foot. Having re-fitted the fan belts we set off towards the border. After a short distance Pokola grinds to a halt with what turns out to be a dead fuel pump. The pump it seems did not like being submerged in icy cold water for so long. Despite several attempts at fixing it the pump refuses to play, so Neville resorts to a jerry can of petrol on Peter's lap with a siphon feed to the engine.

It is getting dark and starting to rain as we head down a now slippery dirt road with unpredictable drum brakes still suffering from multiple deep-water soakings. Despite riding the brake pedal to dry the linings I notice little improvement. I now long for the disk brakes on my Hybrid at home. It is a long tiring drive to Qacha's Nek the border town, at 9pm we arrive at the border post which we have been told is open till 10pm only to find it closed at 8pm trapping us in Lesotho for another night. The border guards direct us to the hotel Nthatuoa, which luckily has vacancies when we eventually find it.

Days total 96k

Thursday 15th August

We rise at 6:30 and breakfast in the hotel at 7:00, a strange mixture of boiled sausage and fishcakes with salad does not take long to reject, but the coffee, toast and cereals are welcome. Neville has already removed and re-built the fuel pump on Pokola but sadly has to return to the jerry can after only a mile or so. We fill the tanks with real petrol in town and head back to the border post, which is now open and are quickly through into no-mans-land. The road here is awful. Large potholes are now full with water as it has rained most of the night. Picking our way through dry potholes is one thing but through ones filled with water a different challenge altogether. Firstly there is no way of knowing how deep they are; secondly many contain those football sized boulders again.

Arriving at the South Africa border post the guard is a little confused as I appear to have left Lesotho twice. It seems the Lesotho guards at Sani top have stamped me in and out again (as they do for day trippers to avoid them having to go back to be stamped out only an hour or so after arriving) not realising I was in the country for several days. Ahead of us lay around 15 miles of wet, slippery dirt road before we join a good tar road and head for the town of Kokstad. Jonathan and I then go do a little shopping whilst Peter shops for food, Neville has the two punctures repaired whilst he buys and fits (in supermarket carpark) a new fuel pump.

Whilst in Kokstad we have cell phone signal for the first time in days and Jonathan learns that he has gained sufficient "A" level grades for Bradford University to offer him a place on the cybernetics course he has applied for. This calls for a celebratory KFC for Jonathan, quickly followed by a feast in a nearby Wimpy for both of us. Wimpys here offer a lot more than any I have seen before but even with Jonathan having the biggest burger combination on the menu and me going for an enormous rack of ribs. The whole thing including drinks and tip comes to little over a fiver. Such is the value of most things here with the Rand being at a low against Sterling.

Now with the time taken for repairs added to the delay caused by not making it into SA the night before we are running late. A long drive to the Wild Coast lies ahead of us so we push on towards Port St Johns. The roads are good tar for most of the way but become dirt for the last 30k. Some of this is newly built but still very twisty and slippery. We cross the fantastically named Umzimvubu (pronounced oom,zim,voo,boo) river just before Port St Johns then take the opportunity to re-fuel with petrol and stock up with beer from an adjacent bottle store (I notice 75cl of J&B Scotch is only £3.50) so stock up on that as well. Another 20+k of good tar road followed by 20+k of incredibly rough dirt road sees us at Mpande Bay after dark.

We now need to cross the estuary of the Mpande River, but as we are running late it is almost high tide. Peter and Neville again go wading on foot to check the depth but parked on the beach with headlights pointing over the water I can see by the waves that are rolling up the river that we stand little chance of a safe crossing. Three guys appear and encourage us to drive through saying they have done so shortly before but as they reek of Brandy we decline. A group decision is made to turn back a couple of hundred metres and set up camp for a few hours whilst the tide turns. Neville again excels himself in the culinary dept with an excellent braai (barbecue). A very pleasant evening is then had by all sat around the driftwood campfire under a tarpaulin strung between Sir Tinley and a tree re-living the challenges of the last few days. Having not worked it out for myself I ask Neville the meaning of "Pokola" expecting a reasoning similar to "Sir Tinley" but no, it apparently is a local word for a favourite hard working, pack animal. Often used as a term of endearment to a loved one. We all agree that it is a good name for his 107.

Around midnight we break camp and return to the beach where the Mpande river is half the depth it was 4 hours earlier. Having waded across we decide the mud road over to the cottage booked for us is too steep and slippery to drive in the dark, so we crash for the night in a fishing shack owned by Peter and some friends.

Days total 189k.

Friday 16th August

Awaking around 9am to a fine dry morning we drive the kilometre or so over to Mpantsana bay, the next bay down the Wild Coast where we have to wade yet another (much smaller) estuary to reach our home for the next two nights. I now see why Peter and Neville were wary of driving it at night. The track is no more than a horse trail of black clay like soil with deep ruts and outcrops of rock, rising steeply over a hill only to drop more steeply down the other side. The cottage itself is luxury compared to many of our overnight accommodations, with four staff ready to carry our bags and supplies. No electricity again but plenty of oil lamps and a donkey stove hot water system complete with staff member who kept the boiler fed with logs throughout our stay.

The remainder of the day is spent lazing around the cottage balcony and beach taking a well-earned rest. We watch ships go by on the Indian Ocean and wander out onto the rocks to watch the waves breaking.

Days total 1k

Saturday 17th August

Local village headman Colbet, comes to meet us, he understands a lot English but speaks only a little I realise he is confused by my not speaking Afrikaans. It seems all white met he has met speak it and he expects us to as well. We take a walk via Sharks Point to see the wreck of a Panamanian refrigerated cargo ship the Aster in what is now known as Aster bay where we meet local men and boys fishing from the rocks. On the way we spot Dolphin out in the bay seemingly feeding on a shoal of fish.

After lunch back at the cottage I drive back over the hill and through the estuaries to see a local waterfall surrounded by rare Orchids and Cydad trees whilst Jonathan takes a swim in the bay. A local youngster, Joseph came along for the ride and made himself useful opening gates etc. Along the way I learned a little of how hard a life the local population leads. The white cottage owners all contribute to a fund for the village, which has among other things paid for an extension doubling the size of the school. They are currently planning to improve a spring, which is the only fresh water supply for the village. At the moment it is only a hollow in the ground on the side of the bay and is often contaminated by the animals for whom it is also the only fresh water.

Days total 18k

Sunday 18th August

Again it has rained overnight but we must move on. Having loaded the Land Rovers we drive back over the beach and onto the track. The black clay is now wet and slimy, making the drive over the hill impossible. Impossible that is until we fit chains to the rear wheels. What a revelation, with the chains fitted Sir Tinley just potters along over the steepest parts of the track with no trouble at all. The front wheels slip and slide from one rut to the next but the chains ensure the rears never loose traction.

Back on Mpande beach we remove the chains and talk to local boys playing with toy cars home made from wire, with coke can bottoms pushed together for wheels. We head back towards Port St Johns and over the Umzimvubu (I just love that name) river once more. The dirt road is still wet but its great fun sliding Sir Tinley around the bends. We stop to buy Oranges and Pecan nuts from children beside the road. The scenery is almost jungle for a few miles then becomes mile after mile of sugar cane as we approach the Oribi Gorge hotel where we stay the night.

Days total 197k.

Monday 19th August.

Good breakfast served in hotel restaurant then off around the gorge. They boast the highest commercial abseil and gorge swing in the world. Thankfully both are closed on Mondays so Jonathan cannot talk me into trying them out. We spot baboons in the valley beyond the gorge and ponder the reported presence of leopards.

Drive on towards Durban and Gwahume reserve where we are to spend the next two nights. Stop at Crocworld for lunch but unfortunately the restaurant is closed (does anything open in SA on Mondays) so we wander around looking at Crocodiles, snakes and rare birds. Eventually finding lunch at an ocean side restaurant that apart from us is deserted. Arrive at Gwahumbe around 5pm to be greeted by two Ostrich and a few wildebeest.

If the cottage at Mpantsana bay had been luxury it was insignificant compared to the one at Gwahumbe. We actually had electricity this time, and even the shower has a view of the reserve with Zebra and antelope wandering around. We take an early evening drive into part of the reserve. The tracks here are easily driven yet involve some interesting fords negotiable only by capable 4WD vehicles.

Days total 115k.

Tuesday 20th August

The day is spent game spotting around the reserve. Even here the driving can get quite challenging as we scramble over rocky tracks and ford the many small rivers crossing the reserve. We spot many types of antelope and wild birds yet the reported Hippo, Rhino, and Giraffe elude us. Returning to the reserve from a short shopping trip the Giraffe are calmly walking up the track towards our cottage to meet us.

Days total 12k

Wednesday 21st August.

Up at 6am and straight out on another DIY game drive leaving Peter at the cottage preparing breakfast. Having headed into part of the reserve we have not visited before we soon find ourselves on a track heading off into the surrounding hills. This we realise is part of the advertised 4WD trail and as we have a plane to catch decide to turn back. Sadly the trail is too narrow to turn around on and too steep and winding to reverse back so we have to carry on for a while. Eventually we find a turning spot and head back. Returning up one particularly steep, tight bend Sir Tinley decides to cut out and refuses to re-start. Having rolled back (not a happy manoeuvre) he re started only to cut out again on the second attempt. We then diagnosed the problem as fuel starvation caused by a combination of a low fuel tank and the very steep climb. Putting a little more fuel in the tank from Pokola solved the problem allowing us to climb back up with little trouble and return to the cottage for breakfast.

9am we set out for Durban airport in Sir Tinley with Peter. A straightforward drive, only stopping to top up on take home gifts at a craft workshop complex. The drive is not without its surprises as we spot a native woman carrying a sofa on her head along the motorway hard shoulder. That's South Africa.

Days total 85k

Subs Cut-Off

Gavin McKenzie

Please note that 2011 subs (R 160) will cut-off on the 31st March 2011. All reminders have been sent. Bank details are as follows:

Bank:	Standard Bank (New Germany)
Account Name:	Land Rover Owners Club of SA KZN
Account Number:	251 366 510 (Cheque Account)
Branch Code:	045 826

Please use YOUR NAME as the reference on the deposit slip and forward a copy of the deposit slip to Gavin McKenzie at gavinmck@telkomsa.net

There will be no exceptions. Members missing this cut-off have to re-apply for membership and incur a joining fee. Any queries please contact our membership secretary, Gavin McKenzie.

Land Rover 90, 110, 127,130,147, 180 and 230?

Kenneth Jones

I must admit to also being slightly surprised – 90, 110, 127 and 130 I knew about – but 147, 180 and 230?

The '90' and '110'

In the early 1980s, Land Rover embarked on a £200 million investment programme that quickly produced the Stage 1 Land Rover and the five door Range Rover. The programme finished with replacements for the Series III in the form of the 110" ('One Ten') Land Rover in 1983, and the 90" ('Ninety') Land Rover in 1984. The Series III remained in production until 1985.

Externally, there was little to distinguish the 90 & 110 vehicles from the Series Land Rovers which had been in production since the late 1940s. A mild facelift of revised grille styling and the fitting of wheel arch extensions to cover the wider-track axles are the most noticeable changes. Also the windscreen was made larger and came as one piece. The grille was moved forward, as it was on the stage 1, to allow sufficient space in the engine compartment for the Rover V8 as well as the new engines planned. Inside, the furnishings were improved, and the rear load space was increased by restricting the boxed-in sections to the wheel arches only.

Leaf springs were replaced by coil spring suspension, which gave a more comfortable ride when the vehicle was lightly laden and also improved axle articulation. Power-assisted steering was added as an option. The Series III 4-cylinder engine options were increased to 2.5 litre, and the Rover 3.5 litre V8 became a standard option. The 90 / 110 incorporated a full-time four wheel drive system similar to the early Range Rover & Stage 1 V8, with a transfer gearbox with a lockable centre differential. However the very earliest 110" models did retain the Series gearbox with a free wheeling front axle. On the Station Wagons, the 'Safari Roof' design was dropped.

The 90" was launched in 1984. The new name was partly a result of marketing. In reality the wheelbase is 4.5" longer than the 88" Series III, at a full 92.9". New features of the 110" were carried over to the new 90". In 1984 Wind-down door windows were fitted to both the 90" and 110" models, replacing the sliding glass panels on earlier models.

From 1985 a new chassis type was available, the 127-inch (naturally officially called the One Two Seven), which carried a High Capacity Pick Up (HCPU) - style rear load bay and a 'twin cab' 4-door passenger compartment on a stretched chassis. The 127" was also available in numerous special conversions such as 6x6 types and fire engines. Eventually the chassis became an "off the line" option and was renamed the 130" to distinguish it from the 127" which was a conversion of a 110" chassis.

Defender 147"

Land Rover Special Vehicles (South Africa) developed and built the Defender 147.

The Defender 147 can carry up to 13 passengers, but comes with a variety of options to suit a family, game lodges or safari operators. In conjunction with engineers from Land Rover UK, a prototype Defender 147 underwent a series of "torture tests" that simulate a 10 year life cycle, to prove the capability of the design. In keeping with Land Rover tradition, the 147 badge indicates the length of the wheelbase in inches, with the total vehicle length coming in around 5.3 metres. The prototype Defender 147 began life on the normal assembly line at the Land Rover SA plant in Rosslyn, near Pretoria, where a substantial amount of the production was completed before it was transferred to the Special Vehicle section for final assembly. While the front and rear sections remain the same, it has grown 935mm in total length and wheelbase (based on 110 dimensions). Special adaptations include an additional door and C-pillar on each side, along with the adoption of heavy-duty suspension components consisting of a 1580kg-rated front axle, 2200kg rear axle, and co-axial helper springs. High capacity steel wheels are fitted. The vehicles are powered by the Td5 turbo-diesel engine. At least 10 vehicles have already been delivered to clients



South African Defender 147" SW.

Defender 180"



Defender 230"

It's taxed and tested and driving around UK roads.



Land Rover Owners Club – KwaZulu Natal

George Goswell

At 10h00 on Sunday 10 July 1988 a group Land Rover enthusiasts gathered at Cars In the Park Pietermaritzburg with the intention of forming a Natal branch of the Land Rover Owners Club SA. 13 Prospective members registered as members of the proposed Natal Branch of the LROC SA. The Constitution of the LROC SA was adopted and the following members for elected to an interim committee.

Chairman	Peter Blakeway
Vice Chairman	Richard Wisdom
Secretary	Adrian Moore
Organizing Secretary	Graham Crouch
Treasurer	Gavin Jones



6 Months later the Inaugural meeting of the Official LROC SA KZN Branch was held at the Polo Pony Hotel, Shongweni. Paid up membership stood at 29.

The following members were elected to the 1st official committee of the LROC SA KZN branch.

Chairman	Peter Bassett
Vice Chairman	Adrian Moore
Secretary	Marius Strydom
Treasurer	Rob Humphrey
Member w/o	Louis Powell.

The LROC KZN started life as a branch of the Land Rover Owner's Club of Southern Africa in 1989, but in March 1996 became a separate entity.

That's the history of when the LROC KZN was started, but would you like to read about all that has happened during the last 22 years with the LROC KZN.

I have scratched around, begged, borrowed and stolen copies of the newsletters and other documents from the 1st year of the LROC KZN, 1988. All these documents have been scanned and will be written to a DVD. It will be a complete history of the LROC KZN and it will be made available to YOU the member.

The DVD will be ready for distribution at the AGM in February 2011. There will be a small charge of R20.00 to cover the cost of the materials.

To book a copy of this unique "22 years with the LROC KZN" DVD please drop me a line.

Thanks

George Goswell kznlroc@mweb.co.za 0836581324 031-7002300 (h)

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS.

Remember it's your club and you will get out of it what you want to. You have purchased **THE BEST 4 x 4 x FAR** and now it's time to use it. See you at the next club event.

Name	Name	Name
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Classifieds If you wish to place an advert, please forward the info to kenneth@pcvs.co.za

Please note that ads will run in two successive newsletters whereafter they will be removed. For ease of reference those highlighted in red have already appeared and will not appear in the next newsletter unless you specifically send me an email asking me to keep the ad.

For Sale

1999 Landrover Defender Short Wheel Base
2.8 Lt BMW petrol engine
Special register 40 – 50
Colour : Blue

Fitted out for camping, complete with:

Roof top tent
2 x petrol tanks
2 x water tanks
2 x batteries
2 way radio
Hi-lift jack
Roof carrier with 4 jerry cans and fitting for gas canister

Back section fitted with drawers holding 4 x ammo boxes and slide-out fitting for fridge

Four original back seats available

Asking price; R110 000

Contact: Barry Beningfield Phone: 032 538 1967 cell: 0824513148
Email: diben@iafrica.com

