



# Newsletter

June 2025

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### **From the Driver's seat**

As the storm rages outside, I'm reminded of the joys of the camping season being far behind us. With winter in full swing, the urge to escape into the bush is strong! Fortunately, our Namibia trip is just around the corner – only a month to go! The excitement is palpable with those joining me.

We're gearing up for our Atlantis event, with Schutz Marais at the helm. If you're interested in joining the planning team, please let us know. We'll need everyone's help on October 4th, so mark your calendars.

We also want to encourage you to come up with interesting places to visit and explore.

A warm welcome to our new members who've joined our club recently – we look forward to meeting you at our next Noggin or outing. Check out our online calendar for upcoming events.

Stay warm and safe, and let's make the most of this winter season.

Best regards,

***Connie Hillebrand, Chairman***

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### **From the Vice's seat**

It has been a busy quarter internationally and locally on a political and economic fronts. A 3<sup>rd</sup> world war is in the air and a world of peace is a far-away dream. Luckily, we still have peace at home although crime and political instability remains a threat. Fuel prices came down during the Quarter to more acceptable levels but now, with the looming 'War' talks, the oil price has jumped up again above \$70 a barrel. This will impact on the affordability of going on outings. But we all know the saying, "less is more".

We have had two weekend outings, a Cederberg and a Tankwa trip. For the rest of the year the West Coast trip, a Redelinghuys trip, and a weekend at Klipkrans in December are all on the calendar. The West Coast trip requires an organiser. Any volunteers?

For 2026 we have discussed the possibility of arranging a National meetup at the Addo National Park. It would be super to have our Club from the WC attend in numbers, joined by the Gauteng, KZN and EC Divisions. More information will be circulated shortly to gauge how many members would be interested. For us, we are planning to combine this with a drive through the Baviaans and maybe end in the Mountain Zebra Park after exploring ADDO and its surrounds. This is still in the embryo planning phase but something to tick off the bucket list. The EC Division would play an important role in organising ADDO trails.

4x4 Regards,

***Henri du Toit, Vice-Chairman***

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## Esselbank Adventure Through the Rugged Northern Cederberg - 25–27 April

Trip Leader: Rob Nel

### A Weekend of Trails, Culture, and Camaraderie

The Cederberg once again delivered on every front - dusty trails, epic scenery, deep cultural roots and memories that will be retold around many more fires. Led by Rob Nel, this action-packed long weekend from **Saturday 25 April to Monday 27 April 2025** brought together a passionate crew of adventurers for a two-day expedition through the **Northern Cederberg**, a region known for its raw, untamed beauty.



Designed for those who crave the perfect blend of off-road excitement, panoramic mountain views and cultural immersion, this journey checked every box: **river crossings**, **rocky tracks**, **historic towns** and even a bit of drama, just to keep things interesting.

### The Route: Passes, Paintings & Pitstops

We kicked off the adventure at **Traveller's Rest** for a hearty breakfast and a briefing of what awaited. After a quick deflate of the tyres, we heading straight toward **Engelsmanskloof** before turning into **Wupperthal** for a quick tour of the historic village and its famed **Skoen Fabriek**. From there, we pushed toward the **Esselbank Waterfalls**, then detoured to **Oasis** for a well-earned snack and cold one.

Our base for the weekend was the ever-charming **Nuwerust Rest Camp**, a secluded gem tucked between the towering sandstone cliffs - offering a blend of rustic comfort and unmatched starry skies.

*"Nuwerust Rest Camp is a true oasis for adventurers - think hot showers, cool shade, and the kind of mountain silence that city dwellers only dream about."*



Day two saw us navigating toward **Stadsaal Caves**, where Rob (yours truly) gained a new scar on his Ford Ranger courtesy of a rather sneaky pole - easily patched up at **Kromrivier** with a few trusty cable ties. We continued on to **Truitjieskraal**, where rock climbers provided entertainment for the group

with their gravity-defying ascents. A scenic route back to Nuwerust capped off the day's excitement, with some diehards squeezing in a last visit to **Oasis**.

Evenings were spent in true club fashion: big fires, cold drinks, laughter echoing into the night and stories passed around with smoky fingers and warm hearts.

### **Navigation, Comms & Safety**

Thanks to years of experience in the Cederberg, Rob relied on local knowledge backed up by **Tracks4Africa**, with VHF comms keeping the convoy tight and well-informed. A big thanks to **Fred** for keeping the tail in check as Rear-End Charlie.

Despite a few mildly washed-out tracks from recent rains, all obstacles were easily tackled - even by the **2x4 Ford Rangers** in the group. And while there were no recoveries or medical issues, the trip took a brief turn toward rescue drama on Sunday night...

### **Rescue Ready – A Late-Night False Alarm**

After a lively Saturday night of beer pong next door (not us!), things quieted down dramatically on Sunday. When Marius mentioned that two campers had gone hiking to **Wolfberg Cracks** and hadn't returned by late evening, Rob's **Search and Rescue instincts** kicked in.

A quick check at the trailhead and alert to the relevant authorities turned out to be a proactive precaution - thankfully, the pair had simply detoured to **Oasis** for a bite before making their way back. All's well that ends well, but it was a timely reminder of the importance of preparedness in these remote mountains.

### **Participants & Camp Life**

**Vehicles:** 7

**People:** 11

**Notables:** Two new members joined for their first club adventure

**Vehicle Mix:** The usual suspects (Toyotas, Fords) and a wildcard Mahindra thrown in for good measure

Evenings at **Nuwerust** were pure Cederberg magic: towering cliffs catching the last of the sun, proper wood fires and stories ranging from past expeditions to trail misadventures (and miscalculations).

### **Final Leg – Olive Oil and Goodbyes**

On Monday morning, we packed up and pushed further south. A final stop at **Mount Ceder** had many of us stocking up on their **delicious local olive oil and balsamic vinegar** - a must-



try for anyone passing through. From there, it was on to **Op-die-Berg**, tyres reinflated and a slow descent down **Gydo Pass**, with goodbyes shared at **Prince Alfred Hamlet**.

### Reflections

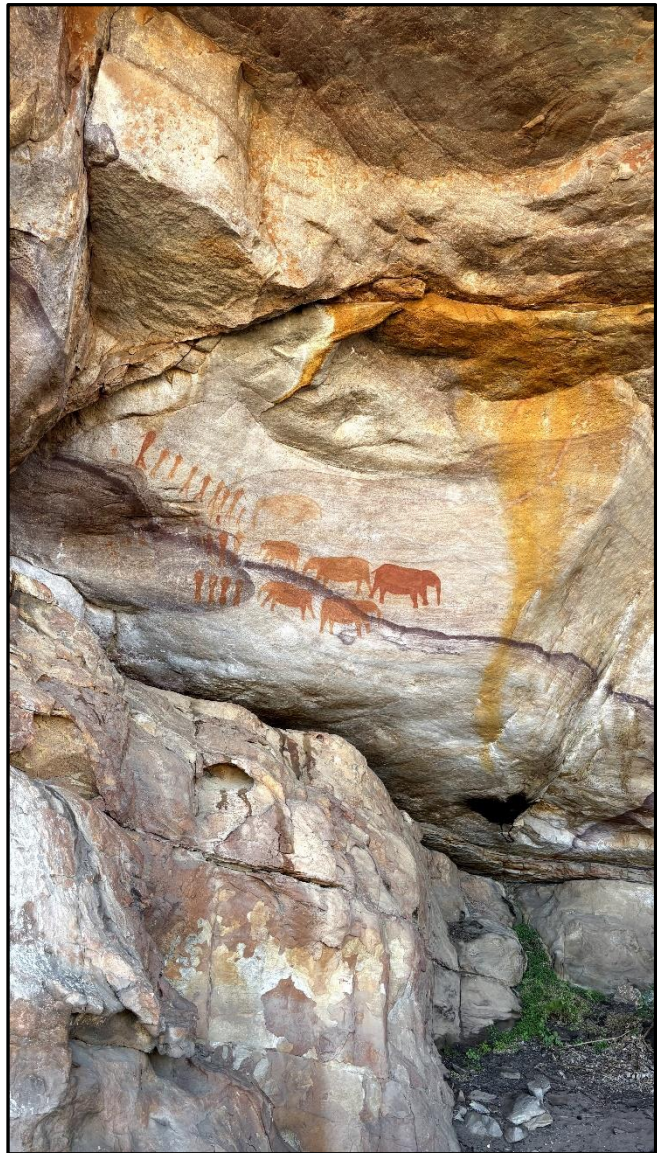
#### What Made It Memorable:

- The diversity of terrain: waterfalls, valleys, mountain passes and crags
- Cultural gems like Wupperthal and the ancient Bushman paintings at Stadsaal
- Unbeatable Cederberg weather - clear, sunny days and crisp starry nights
- Classic club spirit: good laughs, great food and zero egos

#### Tips for Future Trips:

- Don't underestimate a 2x4 with momentum and confidence
- Always account for last light if venturing off to places like Wolfberg

**Rob**



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## Mother's day 11 May 2025

Six members and their families celebrated Mother's Day when we met at the Blowfish Restaurant for a buffet breakfast. The weather was good as well as the company.

Thanks, Connie, for selecting the gifts for the six Club mothers. It was sincerely appreciated by all who attended.



The food on offer was also good and enjoyed by all ...





We all celebrated the mothers of the Club with appreciation of the important role they play to make trips work. We all enjoyed the company and kids, old and young could mingle and catch up. The view of Table Mountain across the ocean was also amazing.

**Henri**

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## Safari Centre Noggin – Friday 6 June 2025

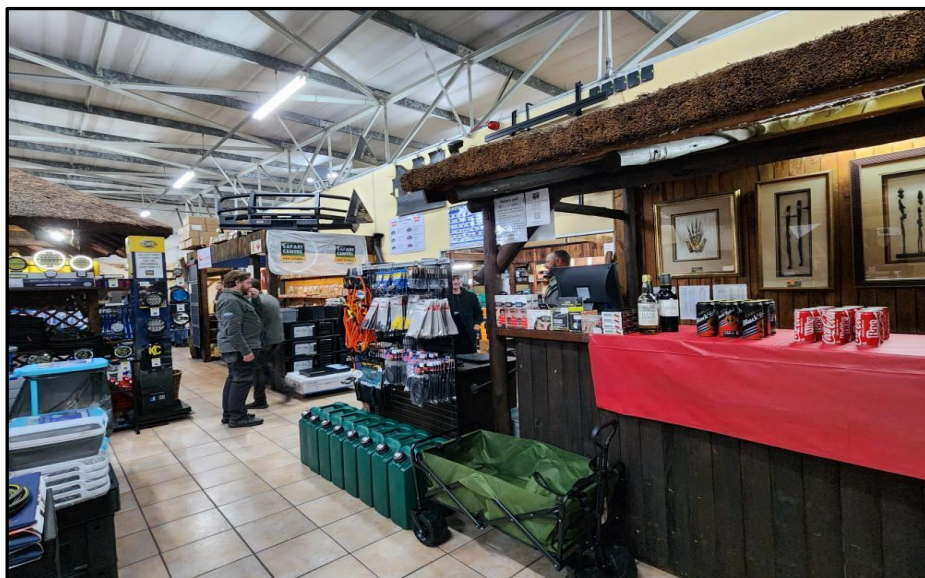
A total of 19 members attended the Safari Centre Noggin at 18h00 on 6 June 2025. This included Marius and Gisela Roux who attended their first Noggin. Welcome to the Club.

We were welcomed by Horst and Johan from Safari Centre who introduced us to two guest speakers. Firstly, John from Australia told us about the wide-angle mirrors that he had developed for making towing easier and safer. KC hillites also demonstrated the quality of the KC spotlights and provided even more information at the display. Quite impressive!!



What followed were some super boerewors rolls with the usual sauces, enjoyed by all. Then we had the opportunity to browse and buy what we needed for the next trip.

Thanks, Safari Centre for organising a super evening.



*Henri*



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## Atlantis Dunes Club – Day Outing - 29 June 2025

A winter's day well spent in the sand.

It's not every day we venture into the dunes in the middle of winter, but this time we decided—whatever the weather—it was going to happen. And as it turned out, the day was perfect: no wind, no rain, and surprisingly mild for the season.

Nine vehicles lined up for the usual pre-departure routine: tyre pressures down, a quick vehicle check, radio test—and off we went.



After a bit of easy driving to get a feel for the terrain, the more experienced drivers split off for a go at the tougher routes. The sand was in great shape—not too soft thanks to recent rain—so conditions were ideal for some proper dune fun.

Eventually, all nine vehicles found themselves back at a familiar landmark: the same tricky incline that's caught out someone on nearly every previous trip. And yes, it claimed another victim—this time a rear driveshaft universal joint gave in after a particularly bumpy climb. The approach was a bit too enthusiastic, the rear wheels lost and regained grip mid-air, and the stress proved too much.

Thankfully, the right tools and know-how were on hand. Jimmy and Jose quickly removed the damaged rear driveshaft section, and the vehicle limped out using front-wheel drive only, guided by a few others to find an easier way back.

No major drama, and hopefully no further damage. Just one of those things that can happen on the dunes.

The rest of us carried on for a few more loops before stopping to enjoy some lunch and catch up with each other. Then it was back to the gate, tyres re-inflated, and off home after what turned out to be a relaxed and enjoyable outing.

Another good day out, and a reminder that dune driving is always full of surprises—sometimes mechanical!

Some track stats:

Length	Area	Elapsed Time	Avg. Speed
17.8 km	1.6 sq km	3:58:12	4 km/h

The damage:



(prepared by some clandestine AI)

**Fred**