

THE 5th STUFF OF LEGENDS – 2014 BAVIAANS DASH. 27 TO 30 DECEMBER

Stats

- 2 x R1200GSA's (580km range)
- 1 x R1200GS (<360km range)
- 1 x F800GS (<400km range)
- 1845 kilometres travelled
- 3 full days and 3 full fights
- 967 photos taken
- 47 GoPro video shots (30 sec to 1.50)
- No injuries, no damages
- 1 worn clutch

PARTICIPANTS:

James (founder - 5 of 5)
 Andyman (5 of 5)
 Clayton (4 of 5)
 Cecil (1 of 5)

SPECIAL THANKS TO WIVES N KIDS FOR SIGNING THE LEAVE PAPERS FOR THIS ADVENTURE.

Even though you got a better , happier, contented product back afterwards, we know you had to cope at home on your own.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJxepsbbrDQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iWSXgS2gA4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxRmlXQKVec>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ph3hBK4-zPw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJ3QCPM6Onk>

Curl up in your armchair with a cup of coffee and join us on this ride...



So I am squatting on my favourite stepping stool – busy finishing the 3rd consecutive bike wash; – trying to restore the R1200GSA to its road pride trim.

At last, over an hour and a half since I started the first rinse off and wash, it seems the frame and panels have lost that dull mud sheen you get after days of intensive mud and river crossings and road grime.

My gaze continues on from stem to stern... on following the trail of dirt down my drive to the shallow sump where the drive meets the road.

My smile broadens and I stir myself to go fetch the battered old shoe polish tin from my kit. Emptying the gravel and sand onto the damp sump is a solemn affair.

I stir it more with symbolism than conviction into a mingled mud patch as the dirt samples collected from precious washes marries the dirt from this wash.

And so in the time honoured tradition (stolen from my Boy Scout camp fire days), I scoop up the mud into the tin and close it firmly.

Now I have the traces of almost every trip n tour blended into one homogenous sample of the dirt of Southern Africa.

The talisman is returned to its place amongst my bike gear.

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Wiping down the bike with a moist shammy follows this ritual and it is restored to its shiny pre-trip glory and rolled into its berth alongside Annie's GSA.



Wow! What an adventure- The Stuff Legends are made of!

3 nights n 3 days touring the Southern and Eastern Cape bonding with my 3 other riding buddies- all good men and true.

After packing away all the cleaning tools, compressor, and nozzles and washing stuff it is time to wipe down, replenish and stow all the gear into its shelves at the end of the garage.

Then exhausted, I snap the lid off a bottle and collapse onto the chair in front of my PC to go over all the photos and footage once again and again.....

I wonder what James, Clayton & Cecil are doing right now?Are they also descending in to a void of pleasant exhaustion after coming off the high of the past 4 days exacting riding?

Planned as a team effort, over drinks in Tipples Bar n Grill in Bellville way back in July, the detail fleshed out by James in emails, phone calls and web searches.

The basic route plan shaped on a napkin and committed to Garmin Basecamp by myself later.

Boy did I struggle to get in all the lekker roads that beckoned - and had to reduce the route to 1800km so we could squeeze it all in to 3 days riding.

Night ONE ; BATCH OVERNIGHT LAUNCHING OFF POINT.



Cecil n I came out of the Strand to ride together to the RV :-

Exit 36N – N1 Engen 1-Stop.

Why is it that those with furthest to travel are on time and the closer guys always late???

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We pulled in at 15H05 for the 15H30 Clayton n James only pulled in at 15H50 from just a few clicks away!

We met, rode swiftly to The Batch- Chateau Lafite, by way of the N1, klapmuts (R44), Wellington, Bainskloof Pass (R301).



After dismounting we fell into our routine of starting fires, firing up the fridge, the geyser and opening the water supply cock

120 KM SAID THE ODOs

Then we snapped off the caps of cold ones and settled into that comfortable camaraderie activity of good buddies starting off on yet another exciting adventure.



Not a group ride, no formal agenda, so not need to act responsibly, set an example and do like we say. I need this at least twice a year.

The first evening is always full of lively talk as we jointly prepare the grub and enjoy the sunset.

We briefly cursed Peter O for wessling out on us at the 11th hour- all because he totally overcooked his goose by posting on FB his overcommitted life with a selfie of himself and a nubile very young lifeguard while doing 'duty' on the beach.

So to restore his standing at home he ditched us and we'll straf him for that yet! It must have been near terminal for him to ditch so late!!!

However Cecil was sent his call-up papers and joined us in a pierhead jump to fill the slot.

Another tradition is to attach a blue ribbon to the right rear of each bike.

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While it is rooted in a Mongolian shaman blessing; wishing travellers a safe journey, I do this on all multi day trips to show we are on a multi day and also to help associate each bike with each other- helps these days when you get separated- there are just so many DS bikes riding around the cuds.

But I do pause in silent prayer for a safe journey for each of my fellow riders and that they will be kind to me when I have failings.

For others it may just be a nice conversation point when you meet other bikers/travellers and it gives a kinda identity.

lekker evening passed and we retired full of anticipation for the next days' ride.

DAY ONE ; BAINSKLOOF BATCH TO BEJHANE IN THE EASTERN CAPE

As is the norm, we rose with cock crow to the smell of coffee on the hob.

By 07H00 we were locked n loaded, brekkied, Cecil and I netted in on the radios.

A brief confab resulted in consensus that only a woos would don his rain suit despite the lowering clouds threatening a downpour.



The black South Easter that pummelled the hut all night was letting up as off out the park onto the R301 – Bainskloof pass tail end – direction slanghoek we rode.

Routing NW on R301 , Right and SE onto the R43 through Slanghoek, then Rawsonville



Brandvlei dam, then onto good gravel via Kniediep and the Breë river crossings, meeting the R62 at Robertson where we stopped for a slug n plug for the bikes.



But James being James we were coerced into a coffee stop which was lekker.

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And it was over this lekker coffee that we opted to dodge the planned gravel (from Montagu via the Langkloof pass, Ouberg pass, Kruis, bellair dam, Warmwaterberg and Ladismith). What i love about this Dash and these ride buddies, is the spontenaity - If someone gets a whim, we Just Do It with him and. Well.... that's how we roll.



Instead, putting miles under our belt we'd dash the R62 by way of Ronnies Sex shop and Rony's Jumper's Place.



There was a nice small crowd of bikers and tourists hanging out at Ronnie's Sex shop, and we ordered a full on brekkie and drinks as wheat bix just did not count as a brekkie.



Relaxing and geselsing met die diere, Harleys, other DS bikes, superbikes, tourists. Several stepped over and just stared wistfully at the bikes, pointing out and identifying the gear and stuff. Some came over and made contact.

Time can fly awfully fast like this. It's nice to touch people where it tickles. We were in the rhythm. Ever had a Peanut butter, whisky smoothy? - try it, it's delish.

Tick tock, tick tock.

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Back in the saddle, Clayton scorned my sedate 120kph pace and sent Cecil to point where he pushed the envelope to 140+.... swiftly to Calitzdorp.... passing motorists in quick succession, I love these guys who do not dawdle behind a car, but get the job done.

Our performance envelope is wide so we can zoom passed without waiting for an invitation or 6 miles of clear air. 10 metres is good enough.

Another fuel stop for the small tanks. little tanks can be a pain if you don't just roll with it...



Weather Gods, smiled down 8/10th cloud, +19.0°C. My music was great Cecil was quiet on the radio. Magic. I was in biker heaven.

My soul bursting with freedom and joy.

Then off swiftly on the Wesoewer road to the Calitzdorp dam and the Groenfontein road past Matjiesvlei, Itegansvlei road and to the T junction (R328) at the foot of the Swartberg pass.

Little did we know of the plan brooding and hatching in James' mind - as we chased down the R328 to hook left on the Oudermuragie road to De Rust.

Clayton n James swapped mounts for this stretch and it was every man for himself as we dashed Eastwards on good gravel through to de Rust on the N12. Clayton did a big brake and controlled slide test in a gravelly corner and came out smiling.

One life gone, eight to go.

Without stopping we snapped right onto R341 passed Stompneus dam and good tar to Willowmore,

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Some nice tar with great scenery on the R341 to Willowmore
Eating up the miles, James found himself drifting off to lala-land once too often.
So he stopped us all and we shot the breeze for a while.



James called Rony de Sodt to warn him n Lisa to get dressed and expect company, we were merely 50 clicks from Jumpers Place & their bar.
We arrived at 15H34 at Jumpers Place to be greeted and welcomed with cold beer after 40 km of fast N9, almost all to ourselves.
We chatted to Rony n Lisa, catching up on the news and demolished a huge plate of slap chips.
But time waits for no man and we had some distance to go.
Ever timed a minute?
I did.
It runs out awfully fast at a rate of 60 seconds to a minute- My Goodness, that's quick!

Rony's advice. - "Guys, ditch the planned 30 kilos of R329 (Steytlerville concrete strip road) and the R337 in preference to the earlier Groot Rivier contour road".
And that's all we needed, that's how we roll....



So we filled tanks (took ages) and left Willowmore.
Net die een pomp stasie. Ook nie vinnig nie! Hulle het heeldag tyd?!

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Wow, what good advice, my bike loved this gravel, skimming the surface as the road followed the contour along the Groot river.

WAS I WEARING MY GSA OR WAS THE BIKE WEARING ME?????
IT TOOK OFF AT A PACE LEAVING JUST DUST....



twisting n turning, rising n falling, hemmed in by thick acacia trees close to the road.



We ate miles with ease, arriving at Bhejane on the dot 18H00, as planned, dragging a huge tail of trail dust in our wake.

In the utter silence that followed shut-down the cooling engines clicked n ticked loudly as we were warmly welcomed by Philip and Adriana at the lapa. (I gave them a bug thumbs up on Trip Advisor.com)

620 KM SAID THE ODOs

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NIGHT TWO; BHEJANE

While I showed Philip how to make a decent rock shandy, the others killed three beers dead in seconds.

3 pieces of lovely nubile eye candy arrived in a rental 4x4 bakkie to camp and were a bit intimidated by our blatant stares as we undressed them with our eyes.

Peter O would have been proud of us and hard put to do better. Dutch interns on the last few days of a 4 month work period in SA with NGO's, we became gentlemen after we'd eaten our fill of their welcome appearance and they realised our bark was far worse than our bite. (even if each had his own private fantasy playing out in his head)

And as the beers washed away the trail dust in this hunting lapa so the brave stories started to emerge which soon resulted in competitive talk which ended up... James ditching the planned 10km 4x4 route ride the next morning, replacing it with a marksmanship contest. Cecil, being black, felt he did not need to measure his dick against us as he was in the lead anyway so he opted not to shoot.

...And that's how we roll.

We bought a kilo of Nguni bees biltong, we would eat it as a duty, over the next two days.



We rode into the game reserve to our tented site on the banks of the Groot River.



Lekker well appointed tented camp. James n Clayton each with their own tent, Cecil n I sharing.



Time to relax and unwind.. After a lekker home cooked meal of cook-kos, a few more drinks and some Jaegermeister we retired to dream of the day ahead.

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DAY TWO : The DAY oF DAYS- BHEJANE TO DOORINGKLOOF BUSH CAMP, BAVIAANS



As is the norm, we rose with cock crow to the smell of coffee on the hob.

I took a good stroll to recce the territory and get some exercise and met Cecil on my return doing the same thing... on his skoeter.

By 07H00 we were locked n loaded, direction – lapa and heading for the showdown.



We were met by the PH, toting a .270 hunting rifle and a box of ammo, who introduced himself as Coetsee and his spotter, Willem.

We drove in the game retrieval Hilux (1974 on 2 cylinders).



At the range, Willem set up the tiny target at 50 meters range and we fired from standing, no support. No surprise my shot was closest to the mark



and only the second shot of Clayton and James was close by (by which time a live target would have bolted a country mile after the first wide shot. That settled that.

Boere brekfas, juice n coffee and James the treasurer settle up as usual.

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So. James runs the 'pot', and he does all the math at the end of the tour. Then he sends the bill a week later and we marvel at how we did all this on such a reasonable budget.

Into our ATTGATT, and off we rode.

This was to be the day of days.



We encountered several very large tortoises. The route was only 320 kilos and we had all day to do it in and no time to waste.

This is Red route ONE.

The Groot river road out of Bhejane was good gravel with never more than 300 meters of straight road at any one time.

Big Sky country which stimulates you to sing at the top of your voice.

Cecil had not configured his GPS though the hub, (not spent time at origin setting up properly) so he lost coms with me as soon as Gertie gave him his next turn instructions on the GPS.

Shame Clayton and Cecil kept noting their GPS routes were not correct- Huh! small wonder with all the improvising going on.

James - one thing he loves about this trip is that he does not navigate at all.

Sometimes, when I see his right wrist itching I tell him he can bolt for it, there is just a T-junction ahead. He never needs a second invite. Clayton normally rides off just inside his rooster tail matching him wheel turn for wheel turn.



After 23 k's the dry road joined the tarred R329 for a while -19k's, before we snaked off onto the wild and hairy Sapkamma road which skirts the base of the mountain, rough, washed away, lonesome, rutted and in poor condition, it was sheer biker bliss!

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However this was later spoiled by the Cambria road which since I last did this route,



has been hugely upgraded to service the Water project on the Groot River and make it useable for trucks and cars. (Bugger progress!)

But as luck has it as we approached Wolwekraal, we found the 'old' Grootriverpoort road and turned right, riding along the loveliest stretch of lonely road you can hope for, apart from the Nguni cow herds that surprised you over several blind rises.



We encountered double and triple mounds that allowed you to go airborne as we swooped, each man for himself until it rejoined the Cambria road once again at the top of the Groot Rivier Poort. This was a fighter pilots dream come true. It brought out the best in us as we romped and played and cheated death, making the designers absolutely proud of their creations.

My shocks, set for hardest and highest bottomed out often, polishing the stanchion shafts, adding back years of youthfulness to my life. I was getting younger by the kilometer.



a really cool section through forest



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Man this was elevating stuff and we had to stop, regroup, and savour the last 20 exhilarating kilometres. Excited animated chatter, nineteen to the dozen.

Hands demonstrating in swooping gestures how we experienced this section, much resembling fighter pilots in Battle of Britain movies after landing from a sortie.

If our wives could have seen us, they would send us off every year with a smile. 4 joyful little boys with their toys, with all of the Eastern cape to play in.

Excellent stuff!

But wait, there's more.



And now we descended the steep drop to the Groot Rivier crossing. The descent was steep, best go one at a time



The Groot Rivier crossing which was not as difficult as made out to be - if you avoid the green slime and here we stopped awhile - I shot off to build a log cabin. Glad I did or I would have shat myself on the pass to come!

One by one, distance between bikes, Clayton leading, we took a deep breath & commenced the climb up the DJ1839 road/pass - loose bed of stones of Antoniesberg Pass, the bike ahead disappearing into the thick wet mist.

We met three friendly 'plastics' emerging through the mist descending and later one Tenerre 660.

The rider flagged me down to warn me of mud, blood n guts.

He was overheating, and very exhausted.

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I got going again and navigated the two gates.



Then we hit the mud sloots.

Cecil was down, a wheel in each of two slots and no traction in the mud.

James stopped where he could stand the bike and went to help. Clayton had run into a dead-end slood and also helped before having to manhandle his beast out and into a new trajectory.

I found some firm ground to park and went to help. I took off my neck brace, shut down the music so the constant energy spend would not make me feel claustrophobic and overheat. I did not need any diversionary distraction now.

It started to rain, light sad rain. warm rain.



Clayton was again bogged in a slood and had to find another route.

The grass was wet wet wet but had better traction than the slimy wet mud.

We needed momentum, but 'mud' and 'accelerate' are never used in the same sentence!

I gave up on keeping my rider gear clean as soon as James' bike lost retraction and splattered me from head to toe as I pushed from the back. Nevertheless, we got going.



12 kilometres in the rain, fog n mist, countless pools of muddy water, countless rocky banks to negotiate, no stretch of straight path, no view of the environment beyond 50 meters. Choose a line get momentum. Look up and ahead, bend the knees and do the job.

Cecil teamed with Clayton for safety, James n I teamed up together for buddy help and we had the nicest climb ever. i ma fitter than I have been in years and so this was sheer adult fun. The most fun I've had with my clothes on.

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The ruts, rock banks and slote were the main feature

Somewhere on this section, my garage remote ejected from it's holster in the LH hand grip guard (*note to self: remove as soon as you leave home and put in tank bag*)

Somewhere during this bucking bouncing roller coaster ride I lost my daglo-orange head light lense. (Damn R260.00 wasted)

Somewhere in this meleë, my spider chair also parted with the bike. (good riddance, veteran of countless rides, worn and near worn out, I keep meaning to replace it)

Evidence from Gopro footage and photos suggest it was over the rocky banks I bounced up.

And worse, somewhere through all this my two fingers on the clutch lever rode the clutch until you could smell it down in Patensie!!!

Then we had to descend on the slippiest of muddy roads where each of us found a place to lay our bikes down in the mud.

The ruts made by 4x4's often went all over and criss-crossed, evidence of spins n slides. Being deep, we had to jump the ridges to keep a line. It was challenging stuff.

I commented that we just cannot afford anyone to lose their mojo on this day.



You had to stay right on top of your game, and full of good humour



But we rode in light rain into Patensie, soaked wet, covered in mud and everyone looked so wistfully at us wishing it was them having such obvious fun and adventure!

We stopped at Tolbos where our lovely lively waitron, the effervescent Darcey gave us the best service ever. (I gave them a bug thumbs up on Trip Advisor.com)

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All their waitrons had fantastic gutspa and charm and really gave as good as they took from us in banter.

We kuiered a bit too long, cos it was so lekker.

Then we had to refuel and dash into the Baviaans.

Anything after this was tame n lame. I could feel my clutch was slipping....

We paid for our permits at Komdomo and then we tackled the three passes with the Gamtoos river far below. I gave them a good report on Trip Advisor too.

First the Combrink pass, then the Holgat Pass and then the Grasnek Pass.

I say tackled because the traffic was heavy and it is testimony of our riding skills and alert riding that we suffered no accidents- only many near misses.



the water is low this time of year

The new generation of plastic SUV driver does not know or respect the rule of '-descending driver gives way for ascending driver' much of this road is single lane width so encounters are always close and many of them sudden due to the twists n turns. They also just use 4.6 litre engine power and not skill to negotiate obstacles, digging holes, crumbling concrete.... shame where is this going to.

Rain just adds to the challenge as visors and spectacles mist up.

Somewhere up on Combrinks as we stopped to regroup, I felt that horrible grumbling again and grabbing my trowel, lighter n loo roll, hand sanitiser bottle & in desperation walked very gingerly - careful not to erupt, to find some privacy and build another log cabin. Was it Bejhane breakfast or Nguni biltong that did not like being in my body??!

And I thought I only stank on the outside!

In the lead again I startled several kudu in the road or on the edge of the road and several other antelope I failed to identify.

The rain came and went, now we were dry as a bone, now we were wet through again. But comfortable in 24°C ambient temp.

I lost count of the river crossings and lost count of the light rain squalls that kept the roads interesting as we tip-toed against the clock to our destination – Dooringkloof Bush camp.

We had some good laughs at one or two river crossings, James providing much cause to laugh- all caught on camera.

We made good time averaging just over 50kph to the western portal of the game reserve at Sandvlatke.



We made good pace but were quite chilled, we did not push hard.

And this is where mature very equally skilled riders make the trip lekker. We did not have to wait ever for anyone.

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Here we dismounted to go and see the hidden waterfall that drops down into the kloof inside a rock race. Unless you are shown it, you will never know it is there.

I had ridden point as the most vulnerable due to a slipping clutch.

Then it was an easy fast dash to Dooringkloof bushcamp.

Chris welcomed us in and he n James soon had their heads together while we assessed the fellow campers.

Many people came to look over the battle weary bike n bikers and looked on wistfully as they compared their boring 4x4 sedentary vehicles to these thoroughbred stallions of the off-road.

Engines ticked cool, mud n guts all over.

It was clear we had emerged from the wildest wilds after an exhilarating adventure.

Chris directed us to our chalet, Number 3 of only 3; and also the 3rd chalet of our trip on the 3rd & last night.



What a lekker day, we leaguered under the carport of our chalet overlooking the dam and the campsite.

367 KM SAID THE ODOs

NIGHT THREE : DOORIGNKLOOF BUSH CAMP

No connectivity for over 24 hours with none still for another 18 hours- What Bliss!!

We stripped off out of wet gear and then we showered.

James had come over to look over my bike and his assessment that my clutch lever (Tour-o-tech two finger) was set as far back as it could- which was wrong. And seen as I had needed to feel my fingers in control and having to reach so far had unwittingly been 'riding' the clutch for extended periods in the climb from the Groot Rivier up and over Antoniesberg.

Later at night when I worked this through, I came to the same conclusion and it was easier the next day, set much closer.

The result of the huddle between Chris n James was plenty beer, ice buckets, braaipacks, a loaf of white bread (salad), snacks, coffee, firewood, whatever.



We were content, replete in our accomplishments and glad to be barefoot in boxer shorts.

We shot the breeze, fiddled with equipment and ate and drank and drank and ate and had bread for salad.

At some stage we drifted off one by one to find our pit.

We had ridden into each camp well in time to settle before night fall.

We braaied in daylight and kuiered in the chalet while a light rain fell outside. We all agreed the whole day's ride of some 370 clicks was one of the best rides we had done in a long

time.

Everyone coped and kept their mojo intact and really enjoyed the challenges as much as the sections of lekker varied road.

The very few cars we had seen up to and before Patensie had all greeted us as one does in the cuds lest you need each other later. (Oh Yes, the Antoniesberg 4x4's had been the real deal. they knew off-road pass etiquette. God Bless them)

Cecil's excellent humour had kept us laughing many times.

Clayton is miles ahead in his knowledge of the floral world and has much interesting information to share.

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DAY THREE ; HOMEWARD BOUND – DOORINGKLOOF TO HOME

As is the norm, we rose with cock crow to the smell of coffee on the hob.

After coffee, Cecil wanted to go recce the campsite and let people think he was looking for something to steal.

I went to ride shotgun and we patrolled the site and chatted to two ER600 bikers riding and camping commando style telling us about their Antoniesberg & Baviaans ride. 2 days to do the section.

Chris mentioned he had contacted Jaan's Padstal near the kloof exit (20 kms on) and breakfast was at 08H00.

By 07H30 we were locked n loaded, heading out for the breakfast place on the roadside.

So much for James wanting to leave early and breakfast in De Rust.



Breakfast was 'proper' at Jaan's Padstal

I found that my clutch slipped easily, but I was not going to become a casualty.

I learned to ride with a slipped clutch and with an eye on the rev counter managed to ride all day without raising that smell of burning clutch for my followers. It meant no music as I need both ears to respond to engine rev messages.

Over the fireside chat last night James felt he needed more passes ridden and more gravel so he re-planned our route.

I plotted it into practical riding and that's how we roll....

We jinxed left off the R332 as soon as we merged at the top of Nuwekloof pass at the Western portal to Baviaans, onto the Vaalwater pad.

Good clean very fast gravel, beautiful scenery, very domestic & pastoral scenes on the farms we passed through. Very few cars.

James shook his reigns loose and let his steed take its head. He flew off into the future while we came along behind.



50 km of sheer good riding gravel later this road tipped us out onto the N9.

We stopped to re-group and immediately the other boys netted in with their mommies, the first mobile connectivity in 2 days.



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Down left and almost due south for 7 tar km's of N9 before pulling hard right onto the gravel R339 to surge up through the Kromlaagte valley up and over into the geelboslaagte valley with its stream bubbling along beside us, till we hit the R341 from Willowmore to De Rust.

Now we rode back along the R341 to De Rust, where the GSA's waited for the little tanks to fill up. We had endurance all the way to Calitzdorp.



And lo n Behold, who should come clip clopping along but Valetntyn and Victor (Springveld has apparently been sold meantime) and the same boys harvesting Lucerne in their donkey cart.

<http://bmwmccc.org.za/donkeykar-shopping-trip-de-rust-friday-16th-december-2011>

I stopped them to chat and we had last seen each other in 2011. The boys are older, more streetwise, tinted korreletjie hair and they want money. Shit, how they have been ruined as they lost their former youthfulness & innocence.

A bit disparaged I lit out of there, into the Meiringspoort, twisting and turning within my limitations, I could not drop a gear and gun my way past slow traffic.

So very soon I was tail-end-Charley, bringing up the rear. Far in the rear. Taking a left onto the R407 to Prince Albert we soon reached the northern portal of the Swartberg Nature reserve.

Back on gravel, this is what James had been hankering after, 2 days prior and cooking up ever since...

Whoomph, like a rat out of an aqueduct, Clayton's bike lunged off and up the pass and he waited up at the top in the neck to regroup.

I nursed my GSA up and found that it liked lower gears and I could get an easy 60 to 80 kph up the pass where traffic allowed.

Soon I was stopped at the Gamkaskloof turn-off to chat to bikers gathered there. Seemed two guys n three ladies was odd, two of the ladies were my age, not spring chickens \ but soon learned that they were just that in spirit. Hubby one had gone back down with water to hydrate and rescue a couple on a tandem that had expired from heat exhaustion a way back.

Wow aren't bikers great folk! Ek gesels toe met die diere vir 'n rukkie and trek toe dan weg.

Soon we were gliding down the Swartberg pass.



Kobus se gat had, against all regulations placed 4 very garish yellow banners, totally out of place in this pristine environment. I only had bad experience there so this pissed me off even more. I nailed them on Trip Advisor.com James however, seduced by the banners wanted to stop. I asked for forgiveness if I waited outside and boycotted Kobus se Gat or rode on and teamie that he is, swallowed his frustration and let me ride off.

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Down past Lategansvlei and on to Kruis, on the Groenfontein road we were approaching the Calitzdorp dam when I saw a sign inviting us to stop for ice cold beer.

I was way ahead so I went through the parking lot and parked downhill in such a way the next bike could not miss me.

Our host Johan du Plooy was pissed off at this and sent Erica out to tell me they are closed and to Fuck-off!

However, I saw something was awkward so my smile put her off and soon she was promising beer despite the fact they were closed.

But no lunch. No, beer is fine.

She told me Johan was pissed off that I rode on his footpath and down his grass, so I went in and he only scowled when I apologised.

Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

But it only took a few minutes and we were all chatting, Johan then made us lunch. He straffed us all with some witblits.

Stop it! I like it!

One beer became two and tick-tock we were losing time.

But we all chatted and I had to go tell other arriving people, stopping when they saw us that it was closed. But they were nice so I let them in.

<https://www.facebook.com/aloeloerestaurant> aloeloe@donkeytrail.com.

(Not on Trip adviser yet, But I listed them, gave them a big Nod!)

Please stop and visit, the food is good, the hospitality is fantastic!

Don't let them know you know me, you'll get chased away, or shot or both.

Chasing the clock we descended to Calitzdorp to refuel.

Two incidences highlighted this stop.

James went to the rescue of a small kid ±6, being abused by his mother in the colourful language only our farm folk can conjure up. The mother then abused James verbally for the whole town to hear, reminding him in full colour that he had not made the kid, kid came out of her P#\$% and James had no right to tell her how to raise her young. James bravely decided, discretion was the better part of valour, with drew as she hit the kid this way and that as she went to the bottle store, loudly proclaiming her rights over the kid as she had delivered him without help of James.

Then as bikes were coming in to refuel, an F800GS came in with Natal plates and we chatted.

He was riding commando, solo, making his way eventually back to KZN. Time was clearly not restricted.

Clayton chatted as they both have the F800GS and it turned out he was nursing his bike because his rear shoes were almost metal to metal with the disc. He wanted to do Gamkaskloof but wanted to know if it could be done on front brakes alone.



All the while in the background this local woman was loudly, colourfully disclaiming James' right to mentor her and her right to the kid or how she treated him, describing in graphic detail how he was made and where from he issued during birth.

Which fact seemed conclusively to prove her claim.

And woeps waps, while this guy was explaining his rides we had changed his brake shoes and he was incredulous that it was so quick n easy.

Clayton just happens to carry a worn pair which he gifted to this guy who probably still now cannot believe his fortune.

His trip was back on!

I know he will tell and re-tell this episode for years to come, probably with tears in his eyes.

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And through it all, the SAPS roll up asking which one of us assaulted a poor local woman who was just walking in the street.

The hag had called the SAPS from the bottle store!



James did not have to even try hard convincing the cops as to who was the real culprit; she was still hard at it, staking her claim.

They left us and went. That all done we saddled up, rode out on the R62, up n down the Huis Rivier pass and then slap regs into the Seweweeks poort.

Enough has been written, sung and filmed of this beautiful legacy to Bains. What a lekker sojourn up the poort.

The clouds were now gone and the temp was rising to 29°C

25 kms after exiting the poort we turned left for a chase down the secret hidden valley of Willemsiriver before coming back up to join the same poort-to-Laingsburg road.

After Rooinek pass we turned left onto the P2469, Witteberg road, running parallel to the N1 from Laingsburg to Touwsrivier. A Stunning 60km piece of good gravel road.

It has one surprise- a widowmaker patch of the loosest sand just after a cattle grid -if you are not on top of your game, you could find your ride is ruined. Look up, open up! Live to tell the tale.

So treat the farm gates with respect on this road.

This now completed James' wish list and he was very happy to cram in so much.

At Touwsriver we stopped for a final cooldrink, inflated tyres, small tanks got filled.

Then we said our goodbyes, Clayton n James chasing home, Cecil riding shotgun to me.

And that's just where I tried to out gun a taxi for speed and this finally burned more clutch reducing me to a very slow pace.



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Discretion was best so Cecil took me on tow to Worcester to let the clutch cool down while I summonsed Annie to fetch a trailer and come meet us.

The way I prefer to rig for tow. I want my rear brake foot-lever free please.



Riding home was possible, but would have ended up in the dark.

So I dropped the tow in Worcester and rode to Rawsonville as RV point, trailered the bike and went of home. Cecil took off for home, his tour of duty as wingman over.

688 KM SAID THE ODO

And so ended a super weekend of good riding.

Until next year's Stuff of Legends DASH....

Further reading

<http://bmwmccc.org.za/grootrivier-poort-die-baviaanskloof-se-kleinboetie>

<http://bmwmccc.org.za/antoniesberg-pass-have-you-ridden-it>