

**THE BEGINNING**

It all started in the Transkei.



**WILD COAST FUN AND GAMES**

Half way through the Wild Coast trip, the tour where I met Frans Coetsee. The pics below kind of sum up the character!)



**FRANS WITH CHANTAL**



**FRANS WITH STRAFDOP (COW PAT ON TOP)**

Geoff Russell decided he wanted to do a Drakensburg tour, which meant that he wouldn't be able to lead the Namibia trip that was scheduled early next year, 2011; so I would have to lead it, which I eventually did with rigorous planning and organising and it ended up being a great trip; so much so that I was approached by Frans a year later to join his group

of friends on their annual Toffs Tour on which he planned to follow the same route as our 2011 BMW Club tour. "Would you like to join us and help with the route?" So that was the start.

I had bought the 1150 GSA for the Wild Coast trip and it made it there and back as far as Robertson when the clutch packed up. While fixing the clutch I found so many things wrong with the bike that I virtually had to rebuild just about everything but the engine. I was lucky that my tour wasn't spoiled by breakdowns. Amazing bike the 1150, just keeps going.

On the 2011 Namibia trip, my rebuilt 1150 GSA rode like a dream and still does, but it has done close to 180,000 Km and small things can cause big delays; last time I had to ship a cable up to Springbok and spares were a problem so I decided that a new 1200 GSA under warranty was less likely to cause en route delays on the Toffs Tour (married guys, remember that excuse – it works – oh of course a new bike is safer too – you'll have to make your own excuses about why you don't want to sell your old bike).

Geez, quite a difference! Like riding a Dakar on steroids. No more reliable battleship-like stability. The 1150 ploughs through obstacles, while the 1200 is like a torpedo crash boat – power and mobility and you have to learn to understand its reactions. I was quite nervous of it initially, especially getting used to the feeling of the front wheel shifting so much after the solid feeling of the 1150. By the end of the trip that nervousness was a thing of the past – what a great bike!

I think I'd had one offroad ride when Donford decided the gearbox needed to be opened – just to be 100% sure of an odd noise in 5<sup>th</sup> gear.

So ...

Leaving on the 25<sup>th</sup> October and got the bike back on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Fixed 100% and great service from Donford, but now quite a lot to do to get ready and no time to really check the bike other than ride to work for a few days, though I needn't have worried as it turned out the only problem I had on the whole trip was the exhaust that rattled itself a bit loose after about 2,000 Km. Not bad on a trip where the trailer virtually broke in half because of rough roads!

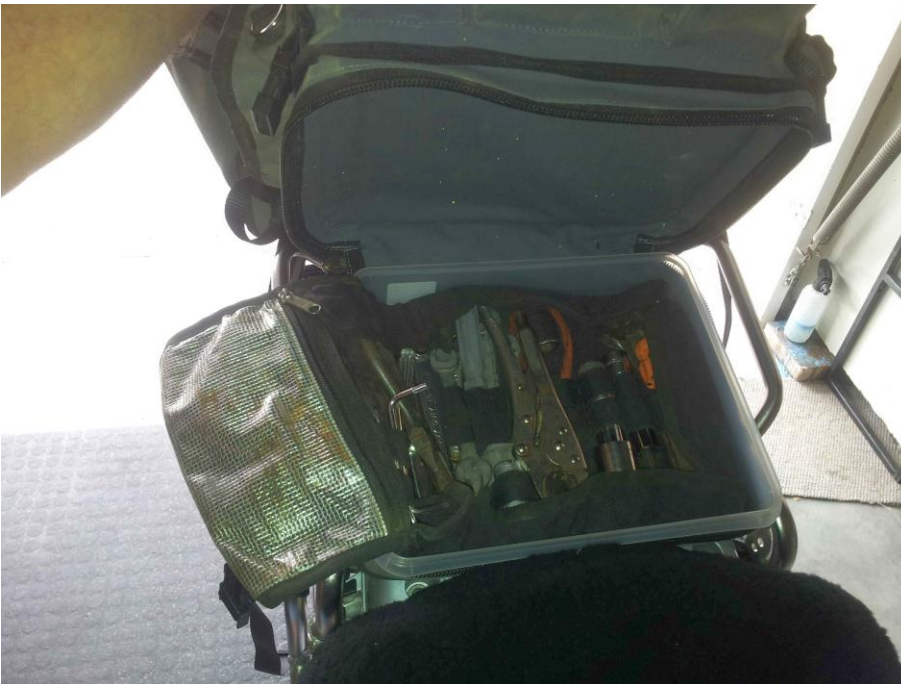
At this stage I don't know much about the trip or the other guys on the trip who I'd never met. I didn't even know whether there was a backup vehicle.

I also had no luggage because the soft panniers that I had planned to use kind of caught fire and melted when I went on Geoff's "All the Passes" tour to Oudtshoorn using a Donford loan bike (mine was still in pieces in their workshop).

After last year's river crossings I also wanted better protection around the cylinder heads so I wanted to find head protectors or more substantial crash bars. (The 1200GSA crashbars are quite lightweight in comparison with the 1150GSA).

Within two days I had Chris Grinton fitting his Flying Brick luggage to the bike and Adie and Mike Adendorf fitting their prototype crash bar extensions to the bike, both of which turned out to be a great success. I've already put evaluation reports on the BMW Forum for both of these pieces of equipment so I won't elaborate any further other than to say that both are really well thought out and designed and superbly well manufactured.

Next I packed the luggage and found I had tons of space for everything I needed including tools and spares. The Brick turned out to be a great asset.



**TOOLS IN THE TOOL POUCH**



**BIKE BARS AND BRICK**

As it was a new bike I tested the tools by dismantling everything that I might need to remove in an emergency on the road and put it all back together, made a list of a few odds and ends that I discovered I needed, as well as a length of Kreepy Krawly hose – the air intake on the 1200 is lower than the 1150 and the airbox feed to the engine is so low that it guarantees that water will get into the cylinders if there's a deep water crossing. BMW won't let you protect the engine by doing a simple mod to re-route the airbox hose so to keep my warranty intact I opted for the temporary air hose mod which is a standard length of kreepy hose shoved into the air intake to the air filter, taped in place and the other end fed up behind the screen.

I fitted the Kreepy Krawly hose into the air intake and cable tied it to the forks – there was absolutely no change in the bike's performance for the whole trip and my air filter was pretty clean after the trip, considering the amount of dust we experienced.



## AIR INTAKE NEXT TO KEY

Feeling reasonably prepared but still not much knowledge about the trip, I found Frans' emails and didn't learn too much more until he paid me a visit and sat and drank a few beers and let me know that a bunch of guys would be arriving in Okiep from Gauteng and we would be meeting Marius and Lance at the Swartland Onestop at about 10h00 on the 25<sup>th</sup> ... for breakfast. OK this wasn't going to be a Geoff trip.

## DAY 1

Breakfast turned out to be the beginning of my Toffs education.

Marius is a very tall gentle giant who makes an Adventure look like one of those black plastic push bikes that 3 year olds scoot around on! Pretty useful legs for paddling, also for standing on the pegs and checking the weather conditions.

Lance ... words are inadequate! He wears a R3,000 Stetson, cowboy boots and a cowboy belt that can be used as a weapon. In fact almost everything Lance owns can be used as a weapon! (The pen he used to fill in forms at the border has laser sights and can shoot ceramic mustard gas paint balls with an accurate range of about 25m). He drove the backup vehicle ... a Dodge pickup with a 6L Cummins Diesel that churns out 350HP standard with no mods.

The ride north was uneventful. Stopped at Van Rhynsdorp for pizzas and milkshakes then up to Okiep, 8 Km past Springbok, where we met the Gauties.

We stayed at the Okiep Country Hotel, which used to be the single quarters for the mine managers at the copper mine. A really excellent place with great food, comfortable rooms and friendly staff. The bikes are safe inside a locked enclosure next to our accommodation.

We lounged next to the pool while the hotel staff braaied for us. Later in the bar Lance the Weapons Specialist Cowboy produced a violin and harmonica and kept us entertained for the rest of the evening. It turns out that Lance plays for the band "Blacksmith" in Cape Town. (He also has a selection of bikes too numerous to keep at home so he stores them in a shed somewhere!)

No shortage of humour or entertainment on this trip!



**DIE MANNE :**

**FRANS, LANCE, MARIUS, STEFAN, JACO AND GERHARD AND ME ON OUR KNEES**



This chimney is right next to the hotel and used to fire the pumps for the mine; it created such an up-draught with the heat, that it was used to suck air out of the mine and create a flow of fresh air for the miners.

Unfortunately the mine is no longer used and has flooded. The flooding means that the water in Okiep is now mixed with copper and copper sulphate making it undrinkable, so we filled our bottles and camel packs with filtered water from the hotel dining room.



**OKIEP COUNTRY HOTEL**