

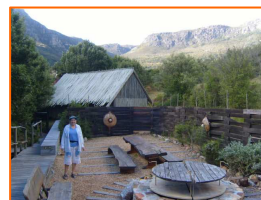
Hoerikwaggo Trail - 15 to 17 October 2010

Leader: Rosemary Paul

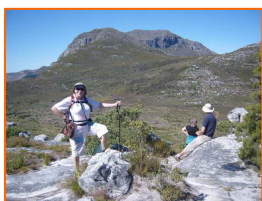
Participants: Rosemary, Adrian, Edwina, Lydia, Anthony, Mary, Aileen, Gail, Sybil, Geoff



We started on Friday at noon after a bit of a problem finding our way to the tented camp in Orange Kloof. The camp was a real treat in an idyllic area of the kloof with a river close by. Facilities are a hikers dream with hot showers and boardwalks between the tents and the kitchen/relaxing areas with no noises except birdsong and the sound of water. We did a 3 km hike through the forest and over rivers led by Rosemary. The weather was perfect. We had a fairly raucous braai for supper and turned in early.



We left Orange Kloof at 8 am on Saturday after a very comfortable night. It was a 2 km hike through the Kloof before we reached Constantia Nek and the start of Vlakkenberg. We ascended Vlakkenberg through a barren area where many gum trees had been felled and then traversed an area of rich spring fynbos and damp ground which was very beautiful. We then traversed the contour path around Constantiaberg with wonderful views before dropping down to the Manganese mines above Hout Bay. The weather was perfect for hiking with a light, cool breeze. The sea and sky were a vivid blue colour and visibility was crisp and clear. We passed the official guided Hoerikwaggo group heading in the other direction near Hout Bay.



We then took the upper contour path towards Chapman's Peak where we had lunch.

This was a steep but wonderful walk with glorious fynbos, waterfalls and lovely views. We reached Blackburn Ravine which was the sting in the tail for many of us. The path rises steeply, zig zagging endlessly until one is surprised when getting to the top.

Aileen and Gail led and were like mountain goats getting to the top long before the rest of us. It was painful but very beautiful! It was then downhill past the Silvermine dam to the Silvermine tented camp. Several of us detoured to the dam to soak our weary feet and Anthony had a swim. The camp is similar to the Orange Kloof camp but more stretched out. Our firemaster, Adrian, made the evening fire and another (rather less raucous) braai was had for supper. We had covered 16 fairly tough kms. Most of us had our big packs portered. We turned in and slept soundly.



On Sunday we prepared to leave and did a short hike in the Silvermine area.

This was a worthwhile and enjoyable hike. We should consider doing the complete Hoerikwaggo in the future. We were lucky to have had perfect conditions and were ably led by Rosemary who had just recovered from a bad bout of bronchitis.

Reported by Geoff Tinker