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Tips for hike reports

Some people claim they are not good at writing, so here are some tips for things to include:

- Area of the hike, date, name of leader, approx. group size
- Something about the weather
- Anything that stood out for you
- Mostly: write about what YOU found enjoyable or interesting, e.g. (medicinal) plants, environment, views, geology, insects, an interesting talk you had with someone
- You don't have to try and include everything
- If you have a sense of humour, use it!
- Please include 2-3 photos if you can!!
- For day hikes, 10-15 lines will do!

Winter Hiking in the Fairest Cape

While in other countries during winter one might be confined to the couch, the pub, the gym or other alternative forms of exercise, down here in the sunny south we are blessed indeed: winter is in fact often a nicer hiking season than the windy and hot summer months - in-between those cold fronts that sometimes even miss the weekends!

Read about all the lovely hikes that TCSA members and visitors enjoyed during this winter - hopefully you were there too! And of course hiking doesn't always have to be terribly strenuous; you can combine some mild exercise with the deliciously decadent like this group did:

Signal Hill and Cape Town: 25 July, Leader: Maré Ascot

What a fantastic hike we had last Saturday to the Noon Day Gun - amidst all the white, yellow and pink flowering veld flowers followed by a fascinating tour of Bo-Kaap (and restaurants on offer) with our trusty and well informed hike leader cum tour guide, Maré, then rounding off the afternoon sipping tea and beer at the Mount Nelson. Outrageously posh!

I must say I was most impressed to think that the various managers on duty were happy to look the other way when our little party of hikers came trudging through the foyer, complete with back-packs

and clumsy hiking boots... somewhat lowering the tone of the establishment while discreetly dressed residents partook of the "high tea" in full swing @ R150 per head. (We settled for a pot of tea on the delightfully sunny patio instead!!) After tea, Sue, one of our more adventurous hiking ladies requested from the Manager on duty, a tour of the Spa facility and maybe even a viewing of one or more bedroom suites upstairs!! (cont p2)



Flower power - Maré

Editor's Footnotes

Well yes, a monthly newsletter has proven to be a bit too ambitious, so we'll rather make it quarterly.

Thanks very much to all who did write-ups of hikes (with varying degrees of coercion) and sent them! It is indeed your contributions that make up a newsletter that is of interest to the club members.

Besides reports on club hikes and events, you are also very welcome to send me short write-ups of hikes, trips, tips and outings you have done privately and which you think will be of interest to other members.

How about recipes or tips for hiking or trails food? I have seen some very crea-

tive things come out of lunch boxes. What snacks and treats do you take on a hike? Any naked chefs in our midst??

Please mail me directly: Gudrun.Oberprieler@gmail.com

Keep them rolling in!

Yours on the go, Gudrun



Signal Hill continued (Photos: Maré Ascott)



Hikers can go anywhere -
Bianca at Mt Nellie

Much to our astonishment and delight an obliging young Manager rose to the challenge and gave us a most comprehensive tour of the oh so decadent Spa (!) complete with marble floors, murals, chandeliers, pedicure parlour (bedecked with stunning furniture and large, exotic

foot bowls) individual and discreet massage rooms (massage beds complete with heater blankets!) and oil burners dotted about everywhere exuding heady, aromatic scents. We departed the spa clutching pamphlets depicting various forms of decadent pampering and 'winter

specials'. The tour of the upstairs suites was equally impressive and we explored the smaller room for R4000 per night and the bigger suite (king-size bed) for a mere R6000 per night! Oh well.....a girl can dream can't she????!

Bianca Roberts



Wolfkop Scramble: 13 May, Leader: Tommy Hiscock

Another "30%" rain day. Well, fair enough (excuse the pun), Tommy decided that the scrambling bit was out. So with Gail (welcome to the Keen-Bean Club) making us an unof-

ficial threesome, we headed up to Fat Ladies Cave for tea, before doing a peak top circuit. We finished off with a visit to The Waterfall which was already flowing quite strongly,

for our early lunch and chat. Gale proceeded to Pick 'n Pay and we went home to potter in the garden for a short while.

Yvonne Hiscock

Kloofnek Circular: 7 June, Leader: Maré Ascott

The first week of June brought a lot of rain! I looked at my schedule as I needed to get outside and it stated a meagre "be prepared for anything" Mare Ascott. And so at Kloofnek Superette I found Mare and her two close and fit buddies Peter and Sandy from the Meridian Hiking Club; and then it was me. We walked in slight drizzle through Oranjezicht, admiring some of the varied and lovely architecture. Having crossed over many streams (with the sound of frogs) on fairly gentle sloping paths, we stopped for tea just before Tafelberg Road with a most magnificent view over town, the harbour and the sea, which looked like it had iced over; it was so still and silvery! So far we saw few people about, including some radiant looking bikers, enjoying the uphill challenge. The rain which had stopped quite soon made everything look fresh and sparkling, there was no sign of any haze or

pollution and the grass was a vivid green. Along the way there were endless rivulets and gurgling streams rushing down the mountain, sometimes disappearing underground to reappear later.

The Tafelberg Road was regularly flooded as the water crossed it and rocks had rolled down the slopes unto it. We saw the full extent of the recent fire with the Queen's and Prince's Block House totally surrounded by blackness and the fire having reached as high as Mowbray Ridge. There were new green shoots out already on some of the trees in the burned out landscape, testifying of the renewal of life. Little purple and sometimes yellow flowers bravely appeared out of the scorched, burned soil.

We had lunch at the Kings Block House, out of the wind and with more spectacular views. We went back via the contour path, moving slowly closer to the cable car station,

which seemed very busy that afternoon now that the sun had come out. We climbed down underneath it hearing the almost silent ascending and descending of the cars.

On the way back there was another moment of rain and a strikingly strong rainbow which disappeared almost as quickly as it appeared out of nowhere. To me it was a magic token and I had enough time to make a wish before it disappeared. We descended via Molteno Road and visited the Molteno Reservoir on our way back. It was a tough hike, more than I had bargained for (and I wasn't the only one). Mare and her hiking friends, who are runners as well, move a pace! At the same time it was magical, you can get high on the mountain after the refreshing rain. There were lots of glowing, smiling faces about on the mountain that day. Thank you Mare for leading it!

Marjolein Gamble

Kalk Bay Scramble: 14th June, Leader: Tony Burton

*30% chance of rain is
"fair enough" for the
Keen Beans, says
Yvonne*

First of all, if ever the weather forecast says "30% chance of rain", rest assured, some of us WILL be out there, and that includes Tony! When at first glance we read - "interesting route" - we thought straight into the hands of the Kalk Bay muggers in the Amphitheatre, then we remembered that the police had caught some of the bu.....! No, it turned out

to be a favourite of his - "Lost Hat Crack", 'cause that is what Tommy and I call it. A few years back, with a huge group, Tommy discovered this Stormers Hat hanging in a crack that we passed through. In jest, he remarked about the goof who would have left his hat there, and those of us within hearing distance agreed and laughed. Later that day Tommy repeated the story, and a reply came from Tony that it was HIS hat and that he knew he had lost it up there somewhere, a few some months previously! Probably while doing the recce. During the following couple of weeks thereafter, Tony mentioned

that he had shot up to retrieve it, BUT we think he has lost it again?! It was an interesting hike, off the beaten track with, some nice twists, turns and mild scrambling. We started off with 3 visitors, but beyond Weary Willy, they decided to leave us and speed up to Amphitheatre instead. Boring! You cannot satisfy visitors every time! [Losing visitors if not hats, Ed] The rest of our party (Ethnee, Gail & Geoff) finished off via the jeep track, and, having completed over 10 kms, decided a drink at The Westlake Arms had been earned. Thanks, great hike!
Yvonne Hiscock



Up and down, round and about on Elsie's Peak: 20 June, Leader: Geoff Tinker

The view of Simonstown bay emerged slowly from behind the mythalasia studded lower hill as we climbed from the quarry. A bit of alien hacking took place as we progressed up the slope. Led by the self sacrificing Geoff Tinker, on the afternoon of the

epic rugby match between the Lions and the Boks, we reached the top of Elsie's Peak. The views on offer were crisp, the sea below as still as that of a pond on this still sunny winter's day. The flowers of the season and the birds were aplenty. We dropped

down on the Fish Hoek side and wound our way up again over the neck further on back to Glen Cairn. This was just the place to be on this glorious Saturday afternoon.

Marie-Paule Henshall-Howard (with photos)

For those who opted to stay in bed, that was the wrong decision...



Chapman's Peak, or nearly: 21 June, Leader: Tommy Hiscock

(Photos: Gudrun)

A small group gathered as the weather was definitely in the process of bringing in a cold front. For those who opted to stay in bed, that was the wrong decision. We climbed to the contour path at Blackburn ravine and as always, the view from up there never ceases to amaze. The cloudy mist pushed forward and retreated above our heads around the peaks of Noordhoek and Chapman. Below that, the unfurling garden revealed

all its treasures and we were so absorbed in admiring this splendour that the developing weather was just an enjoyable part of it all. Being in the lea of the mountain offered us the protection to be able to walk comfortably, taking it all in. We reached the neck at the same time as the mist and the views were taken away from us. Tommy took the deciding vote to turn back with the intention to reschedule. All you other lazies, you'll get

another chance. After a relaxed lunch protected by rocks we did the trip backwards with as much pleasure as before. The timing was perfect since I arrived home and dry just as the rain was setting in. It worked out perfectly I thought. Good exercise, fresh air, never depreciating views and home in time to cuddle with the book and the hot chocolate for a snug end to the afternoon. Cape Town at its best!
Marie-Paule

Constantia Greenbelt: 4 July, Leader: Rosemary Paul

I don't know how she remembers all those paths...

It was a perfect afternoon for a walk and, despite there being all sorts of important sport fixtures to watch on TV, 14 hikers set off in good spirits. The path starts off flat and rises gradually, passing through a meadow, over a bridge and twists

and turns alongside the Diep River. We eventually exited on Southern Cross Drive, turned right and entered Cecelia Forest. From there it was quite a steepish climb to join the wide path which would take us on to Cecilia car park. We found a lovely sunny spot on some boulders for tea. After leaving the car park we walked downhill until we picked up another trail which would lead us back to the cars. We decided to visit the horses in their pad-

docks at this point. This last part was quite wet and muddy in parts and we had to negotiate a fallen tree trunk to cross the river. Only one small mishap here, when one hiker slipped and fell off the log, but no damage was done. It was fairly easy going from then, passing lovely trees and vegetation with the Diep River below us. What a lovely walk. Thank you Rosemary. I don't know how you remember all those paths. See you all soon. Sue Windo

Cecelia Forest Waterfall: 1 August, Leader: Rosemary Paul (Photos: Gudrun)

A party of 21 comprised of members and a significant number of visitors, set off from the Cecelia Forest Car Park at 1.30



pm. We walked towards the Contour Path at Kirstenbosch, and

the devastation of the forest along this route is sad to witness. The resultant foreign terrain makes the once the familiar shaded routes now unfamiliar. Crossing into Kirstenbosch, the party ascended steeply towards the waterfall. The views over False Bay were magnificent,

and were enhanced by the privilege of hiking on a perfect Cape winter afternoon; blue skies, no wind and a cool environment. Upwards, we had a couple of welcome water-breaks, giving time to those at the end of the queue to catch up. En route, a few late blooming Wabooms were evident.



to an abundant cascade of water plummeting over the rock face. Around the Falls, the rocks

A relaxing tea was taken at the waterfall, and after the recent rains we were treated

were carpeted in brilliant green moss and in between, the abundant ferns. We commenced our descent, and on reaching the bottom, four of the party elected to take a short route home in order to watch the second rugby test between the All Blacks and the Springboks. The remainder of the party continued on in the direction of Constantia Nek. Before reaching the Nek, we turned left off the path, and walked through the "Cork Tree Forest", ultimately arriving back at the Car Park at 4.40 pm - still in time for the rugby! Many thanks to Rosemary for a wonderful hike, and for always remembering, and waiting for, those at the back!!

Lynn McMaster

Steenberg Peak: 18 July, Leader: Nerina de Villiers

It never ceases to amaze me just how many paths there are to walk on the Cape Peninsula, enough that even the frequent hiker never has to walk quite the same routes. And then of course with weather, seasons and the diverse floral kingdom, no route is ever quite the same again anyway. In spite of having lived in the southern suburbs for years, I had never hiked up Steenberg Peak before! It was a pleasantly sunny and warm day when the troupes gathered

around Nerina on Boyes Drive to escape the drudges of city life for the afternoon. Soon we were on our way up on a steep path. With height, the views over Lakeside and the False Bay coast became increasingly spectacular, and the sweat worthwhile. However, the 'plat' of the plateau we were aiming for, eluded us for quite some time. Nerina kept on creating the illusion that we were almost at the top - never trust the leader on distance and exertion! At the top the wind was

fierce and icy, and gloves and beanies appeared. We found reasonable shelter at Steenberg beacon for a well deserved tea break, rewarded by wonderful views across the bay. Because of the howling wind nobody was keen to explore the plateau and we headed straight back down to the cars. The end of an afternoon of good exercise and plenty of fresh air - a nice hot bath. Oh the pleasures of winter in Cape Town!

Gudrun (with photos)



De Doorns Weekend (Botterboom Trail): 8 –10 August, Leader: Brian Ford



Who went: Brian, Sue, Tommy, Yvonne, Geoff, Lynette, Tony, Carol, John, Gesine, Nerina, Debbie, Robin, Vicky.

It was a bit of a gamble when Brian and I booked the Hexpas eco trip and the Botterboom trail as no-one we know had been on it and there was no way of recce-*ing* it beforehand. But it was a worthwhile gamble as the 7 hour tractor trip to Matroosberg station and back was full of interesting historical facts, flora information and generally a very enjoyable day. Well worth it for anyone looking for something different to do. The 2-day Botterboom trail has various options. The first night was spent near the starting point for the tractor trip, just a basic hikers hut which was clean and adequate. We opted for the shorter first

day which wound its way up to stunning viewpoints of the Hex River valley, through interesting rock formations and unusual and different flora. The farmer delivered all our luggage safely to the Tunnel station camp site below the majestic Tafelberg mountain where we spent our 2nd night in very comfortable tents. Unusual findings at this stop-over were 3 semi-tame springbok, huge mountain tortoises and some smaller cousins, a donkey, ostrich, zebra, peacock and an affectionate dog called 'Oortjies'. This site has showers, flush toilets and was a great stop-over. For our next trip here we've already all planned to use this as a 2 day base and do circular hikes in the area. The 2nd day's hiking was longer than the first but just as enjoyable, sometimes

along the old railway line to the north, which was built in the late 1870's and closed in 1989. This railway line boasts the oldest railway tunnel and bridge in South Africa so there is plenty of history along the way. Stephaan timed bringing our luggage back to the Veldskoen padstaal perfectly as we arrived back, and his organisation, knowledge and information of the area were some of the many things that added up to making this weekend so memorable. Go to the Hexpas eco web site and communicate with Stephaan who is the wine farm owner, organiser and conservation enthusiast.

So a great time was had by all and we look forward to the next trip out that way! Highly recommended!

Brian and Sue



Photos: Gesine Pasche

Whose photo is it anyway? - The issue of ownership

How much do you think about copyright and ownership in this world of the 'free for all' Internet? Many people think that because something is on the Web, it's for taking, for free. Well, wrong! Just like authors of texts hold the copyright to

their work, so do authors of images such as graphics and photographs. Copying them without permission is stealing, and you can be sued. Nowadays with cheap and easy-to-use digital cameras abounding, everybody takes photos. However, be mind-

ful that more serious photographers might not like to share their work freely, for various reasons. So do not just assume that you can have everybody else's photos. Be respectful, ask, and don't take it personal if the answer is no.

Images, like text and music, have authors and thus copyright applies. Before using someone's pictures, ask for permission. If it does not say 'free', it probably isn't!

Over the Moon in Greyton



If you are looking for a very affordable weekend away in beautiful hiking surroundings, try the **Zebra Moon Hikers' Lodge** in Greyton. Hosts Mark and Jill Berning converted the

former Uitkyk Primary school hostel a year ago, offering very neat dorms for 5 or twin bedrooms. Kitchen facilities and bedding are included. The views are stunning, hikes

on your doorstep. And lots to discover in the village. I recently spent a lovely weekend there. Contact them at 083 6299576, info@zebramoon.co.za, www.zebramoon.co.za

Club Members Introduced

Treasurer: Jeff Pitcock

Jeff's introduction to the hiking club came about by him being in the next bed to Denise Hopkins, both donating blood at the time! [carry membership forms wherever you go! Ed] When he bemoaned the fact that the doctor had told him to cease playing squash, Denise invited him to attend a hike. So he arrived with a friend on a Wednesday evening to hike up to Eagles nest at Constantia neck. The two had contemplated but then dismissed the idea of taking a beer along, only to discover at the top that almost everybody else had brought a dop of sorts! This and the discovery that he was not the most unfit person on the hike encouraged him to eventually join the club. At the next AGM Denise as the Chairperson persuaded Jeff to take on the position of Treasurer, stating it was just "taking a couple of cheques to bank now and then". [Denise seems to have an irresistible charm! Ed] Too late did he realize his mistake, but fortunately his wife Lynn has a degree in Financial Management. The rest, as they say, is history. Jeff describes himself as very much a fair weather hiker, but says the pleasure he obtains from hiking is like nothing else, each hike is a unique experience and thoroughly enjoyable. He enjoys weekends away and is looking forward to carrying out his first trail later in the year.



Jeff on the right!

Webmaster: Maré Ascot

After a few Big Walks Mare decided to give hiking a go in 2003. Now she doesn't know what she would do without hiking. She has done three long trails so far and proudly bagged a few peaks in the Western and Eastern Cape, with more to come she hopes. But most importantly she just wants to put one foot in front of the other for as long as she can, no matter where it is. Of course if she could get a sponsor to do the Inca or Kili, she would not say no! Mare has a daughter in Matric and a son of nearly 27. Her interest in websites began when she bought her first digital camera and wanted to share her photos. With a lesson or two in how to get stuff on the internet and lots of self-teaching, she has been the webmaster of the TCSA website since June 2006.



Always on top!

Social Committee: Denise Hopkins

Denise joined the TCSA about 13 years ago. She would recommend hiking to anyone as she has met so many nice people and been to places she would never have seen otherwise. Her last trail with the Club has the Wild Coast Meander in 2008, and her longest hike ever was the 750 km pilgrimage over the north of Spain known as the Camino. Denise has served on the Committee for many years including a three year stint as Chairperson and five years as Social Secretary. These days she has a dog that keeps her busy. She keeps fit by going to Virgin Active and is presently learning to ride a motorbike - why walk when you can sit? Her last big social activity was going to the Grahamstown Art Festival in July. She is contemplating arranging a few shows for the Club [go for it! Ed]. Her spare time is spent on Facebook.



Hiker or biker?

Green Matters ~ Green Map movement hits Cape Town!

Cape Town has produced the first green map in Africa, reports Elma Pollard, editor of the new publication "Green Times". (www.thegreentimes.co.za) "It is an interactive web-based map featuring the natural resources and sus-

tainable living options in the city", like nature reserves, organic eateries and shops, farmer's markets, recycling drop-offs, green accommodation etc. "The intention is to make people aware of the natural resources of the city, and to

encourage green ways to live, work and play". 350 cities in 50 countries have Green Maps. It is an inclusive, living and evolving project, so participation is welcome. It is part of Cape Town's plan to green the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

How you can help:

Sign up for the newsletter and contribute information, comments and images. Read more: www.capetowngreenmap.co.za

News from Brisbane - Mervyn Henderson



Hiking on Mt Greville

Mervyn joined the TCSA in 1987 and became a hike leader the following year. He was on the committee as day hikes convenor and also as chairman for several years. He was the day hikes convenor again before he left for Australia last year and was elected a life member for services to TCSA.

Mervyn sent this report on his new life in Brisbane:

“As most of you will probably remember, I departed the fairest Cape with considerable haste last year in October. I left only family, my many friends and some money that the SA Government will not let me take out of the country. I had a soft landing in Brisbane, situated on the East Coast and about the same latitude as Johannesburg, with a climate not dissimilar to Maputo. I was very fortunate to have accommodation with long time friends, Rob and Sue Vos, also from Cape Town, who had moved to Brisbane. I soon met up with old friends from the Trails Club, namely Anne (Shuttleworth), Karen (Scheiby) and Denise (Bethel), who are now married to Ralph, Derrick and Raymond respectively.

Soon after arriving in Brisbane, I joined the Brisbane Bushwalkers Club (www.bbw.org.au). The club is large with currently 700+ members, though probably 200 of these are probationary members who still have to do their 4

qualifying hikes, including a base camp weekend for new members, or the special Minimax day for those not interested in camping. My next two issues to address was transport and housing. After careful research, I decided to buy a Suzuki SX4 4x4, which has three drive options: 2 wheel drive, all wheel drive, and lock-up AWD mode. Its not a tough 4x4, but will get one out of a tricky situation. The high clearance is a big plus. So far it has proven to be fairly economical and pleasant to drive.

My next buy was the house. This proved to be much more difficult as Brisbane has many suburbs, and it's quite difficult to differentiate between many of them. I spent a lot of time visiting potential houses in a range of suburbs before settling on a house in Kenmore on the Western side of Brisbane, just below Mt Coot-tha, close to where I had been staying with my friends in Chapel Hill. Housing is expensive in Brisbane, and is largely proportional to the distance from the CBD. Kenmore is about 10 km from the CBD and the average prices are probably about 70% more than a house 20 km from the CBD. The houses are rather light construction with a timber frame and brick or wood veneer on the outside and plasterboard in the inside. My house is a single story with 3 bedrooms, a study, an en-suite and bath-

room and separate toilet. It also has a large lounge joined to the dining room as well as a large family room. I therefore have plenty of room for visitors! I have a double carport, which is quite adequate as theft is not a problem. I commute to work in the city using the bus, which stops about 400m from my house.

Back to the BBW: my first hike was to Mount Greville, south of Brisbane. Its a remnant volcano, and fairly steep to climb, reaching 700 m on the peak (see photos). We climbed up a narrow valley with subtropical vegetation, such as palms, and easily reached the top before lunch. Because of the risks associated with bushwalking, the club has insurance for emergencies. Only members (full or probationary) are allowed on hikes because of the insurance issue. All hikes have to be booked in advance, either by nominating at club meetings, or on their Internet site. It is interesting to observe the many issues that TCSA has in common with BBW. Incidentally, BBW was initiated in 1948 by a South African, John Taylor, who never actually became a member! Thus far I have met many pleasant hiking friends from different backgrounds through the club. More on hiking and life in Brisbane in my next newsletter!" Yours in hiking,

Mervyn



Mervyn's new house



Mount Greville



View of the Main Range from Mt Greville

What do you know about Brisbane?

Brisbane is Australia's third largest city and capital of Queensland, situated on the East coast about 730km north of Sydney. With its pleasant climate and relaxed life-style,

it is one of Australia's most popular holiday destinations. It lies on both sides of the Brisbane river (no prize for originality), to which large black

whaler and bull sharks are often attracted, which probably explains the many bridges connecting the two parts of the city - who would want to swim across!

The city is described as "stylish and vibrant". Your next holiday destination? Remember Mervyn's B&B! www.brisbane.worldguides.com

5 Peaks Challenge in the UK, by Robyn Henshall-Howard

Robyn, a former TCSA member now in Liverpool, was on the support team of a group of walkers who climbed 5 mountain peaks in the UK on a non-stop 4-day tour to raise funds for charity. She sent this report:

"The 6 Peaks Challenge was organised by a charity called WaterAid as one of their major fund raisers for the year. They are the chosen charity of the year at our firm Hill Dickinson. Wateraid run projects around the world bringing clean drinking water to communities thereby uplifting their lives and helping them to improve their living conditions, combat many water-borne diseases and develop new sources of income. This year all the money raised has gone to a small village in Nepal for new taps, latrines and sanitation education. The Challenge walkers set off late on a Thursday evening, travelling by ferry from Liverpool to the Isle of Man where they climbed the first peak, **Snaefell Pike**. For us drivers the challenge did not start until Friday evening after work. Four teams from Hill Dickinson took part, each made up of two drivers and at least four walkers. My co-driver Denis and I set off in our minibus at about 8pm at sunset. We headed for Heysham Docks near Lancaster to meet with the other teams and later our walkers. The four of them were all smiles and excitement at having completed the first leg. We staid over near the town of Llanberis in North Wales. At about 4:50am on

Saturday we set off for the bottom of Llanberis pass where the walkers started the trek to the top of **Snowdon**. Sadly it started to rain as our walkers set off. The next leg was a drive up to Scarfell Pike where we camped at Seathwaite Farm. More rain came down and our team got back down quite late (about 8:30pm), awaited with hot noodles and a beer. I realised just how much I miss being outdoors, on the mountain and with my tent and backpack. I haven't done much of that since I came to England as hiking and camping is not the same here as it is in South Africa, but there are some truly amazingly beautiful places and I just need to explore them! Soon we were off again on a long stretch up to Fort William in Scotland. The drive was fantastic as we passed numerous deer along the flat road on the moor, close enough to touch their huge antlers. We stayed at a little place called Corran Bunkhouse at the Corran ferry crossing point. The lovely soft bed was magic after 36 hours in a van! By this time it was 4:00am on Sunday. Our walkers however got their things together and took the van to get to the base of **Ben Nevis**. The view over the loch and the impressive mountain on the land on the other side was spectacular. Our walkers came off Ben Nevis at about 2pm and we then had a long drive down to Stranrear to get our car ferry to Ireland at 7pm! After a winding narrow road the length of

Loch Lomond, we crossed a very pretty bridge at Glasgow and then headed for the coast. The last part of the drive was very pretty as we traced the coastline, the sun making golden yellow light across the sea to the right and the grass on the rolling hills shine lime green. We made it with a little time to spare but only just! The ferry ride was quite exciting as I'd never been on a car ferry before. We soon tucked into a massive meal of fish and chips. Quickly we were back in the van making our way through the outskirts of Belfast finding our way down to Newcastle. It felt a little like I was on the foreshore in Cape Town but soon the countryside became the greenest green - Ireland! Also true of Ireland it was pouring with rain so it made for a hasty start for the walkers. They set off up **Slieve Donard** for the night walk - about 11:30pm by then. Back the next morning, and then off for the final peak, **Corran Tuathail**. A long 6 hour drive between Newcastle and Killarney, but we got there before the cut-off time of midday. On this final peak, the drivers were allowed to hike it so we set off with our walkers. It was brilliant to be properly involved and in my boots. A cold, gale force wind blew at the very top and we walked the last part in the clouds, but it was brilliant! Back at the bottom we had a big cheer and welcome news of dinner at the hotel in Killarney at 8pm followed by a little awards ceremony. The champagne

corks popped. The next morning saw us back on the long road to Dublin. True to form, our team left last and this time we literally just made it to the ferry. The final leg took us from Holyhead in Anglesea back to Liverpool. Challenge done! Possibly till next year, depends on who you talk to. The participants were unanimous in one thing, though, it was an amazing experience and we were all glad to have done it."



Summit of Corran Tuathail

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. **Marcel Proust**