

Overland Namib Desert and Northern Botswana – May 2017

By Chris and Lynne Skinner

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Route Centurion to Keimoes

This trip, with the ultimate aim of doing the Faces of the Namib tour from Solitaire to Walvis Bay, has been on the wife's and my bucket list for many years now. I have been longing to do this after hearing so much about it from various friends who had completed the adventure previously and who all, to the man, stated they would love to do it again sometime. A few potential partners had bailed out along the way during the planning stage but a colleague from work, an ex-pat from Sweden, was *vuur-en-vlam* for the epic trip. Initially my plan was to take minimum days to get there, complete the trip and return home immediately. A week before the trip though, logic prevailed and I decided to take an extra week's leave and return via the Okavango Delta and Chobe area, and finally Kubu Island. Booking camps in the delta area at such short notice proved to be a challenge but I was adamant that this leg of the journey was to be a reality. After trying various and all options, we managed to get one night in Linyanti camp and then also managed to book 3 nights at Senyati near Kasane. The nights in-between we would just wing it and see what came up. I viewed this part of the trip as a look-see for future (better planned) trips as I have not been to the Delta for more than 30 years. My Swedish friends, Joachim and wife Susanne, would go on and do Etosha after the Namib trip. Joachim had had no 4x4 or even manual gearbox experience since his army days many years back, so I decided take him for some 4x4 training to get used to the vehicle and understand what its capabilities were. He had borrowed a Landcruiser V6 4ltr double cab bakkie with alu canopy, fridge and battery system, and he would use my ground tent while I used a roof top tent.

Thurs 11 May: Centurion to Keimoes (855 kms)

The two vehicles left Centurion at 05h00 and headed for Upington along the N14. First refuel was at Kuruman with consumption of 5.6km/L on the Patrol and the LC doing 10% better – pretty poor I thought as I had decided on driving 110kmph on the gauge, which is actually 100% accurate with GPS due to the large takkies. Before I changed to the larger tyres, my gauges were at least 10% out with GPS, so in effect, when compared to a standard set-up my consumption would be showing 10% worse due to less distance on the odo – I think this is something not everyone considers when calculating consumption after adding larger tyres. Main contributing factor for my higher consumption I thought was the RTT - roof top tent - on my Patrol with the associated drag. Anyway, it is what it is, so relax and enjoy the drive.



Photo 1 – First Refuelling



Photo 2 – Orange River Cellars, Upington

First night we stayed at De Werf in Keimoes – very comfortable chalets. We had gin and tonics and dinner at Ikaia Lodge just across the Orange River with a beautiful view across the river towards the setting sun. De Werf is comfortable, but if you can afford the extra cost, Ikaia, a little more upmarket, is a great choice I think.



Photo 3 – Drinks overlooking the Orange River at Ikaia Lodge

