



***“De Rust Heritage Now”  
October Newsletter # 1/2020  
“Special Heritage Day Edition”***

*Following the Coronavirus Pandemic which has disrupted normal life for us all, we are now returning to our regular monthly Newsletter from September, 2020.*

*This month we will be celebrating Heritage Day on 24 September, 2020 and will be using this edition to showcase our area of the Klein Karoo using the recently launched Klein Karoo Heritage Eco-Trail which shows off the many outstanding features of this beautiful part of South Africa.*

*Our tourism sector has been particularly hard hit during the lockdown and this is our attempt to assist in getting our local visitors back to the region. This will then allow for those in the hospitality and tourism industries to get back to work. At a later stage it is hoped that international visitors to our region will follow as a natural result, though in reality this may still take some time.*

*This initiative links with the “Karoo Crossing Cycle Tour” part of the Cape Cycle Tour Routes offerings, recently launched by the Premier of the Western Cape in Prince Albert on Wednesday 23 September, 2020.*

*Come join us and visit this unique part of the Western Cape and meet our amazing cultural mix of friendly folk who will make your stay a never to be forgotten experience. This should be part of every persons “bucket list” in helping get our country up and running again. See you soon!*

## ***Spectacular Cycle Trails in the Klein Karoo Region***

### ***How to View the Klein Karoo from a New Perspective***

*The Klein Karoo is an ideal region for cycling and in recent times cycling has become a major recreational activity for many - both young and older with the benefits of this and other healthy outdoor sports activities rapidly on the rise globally.*

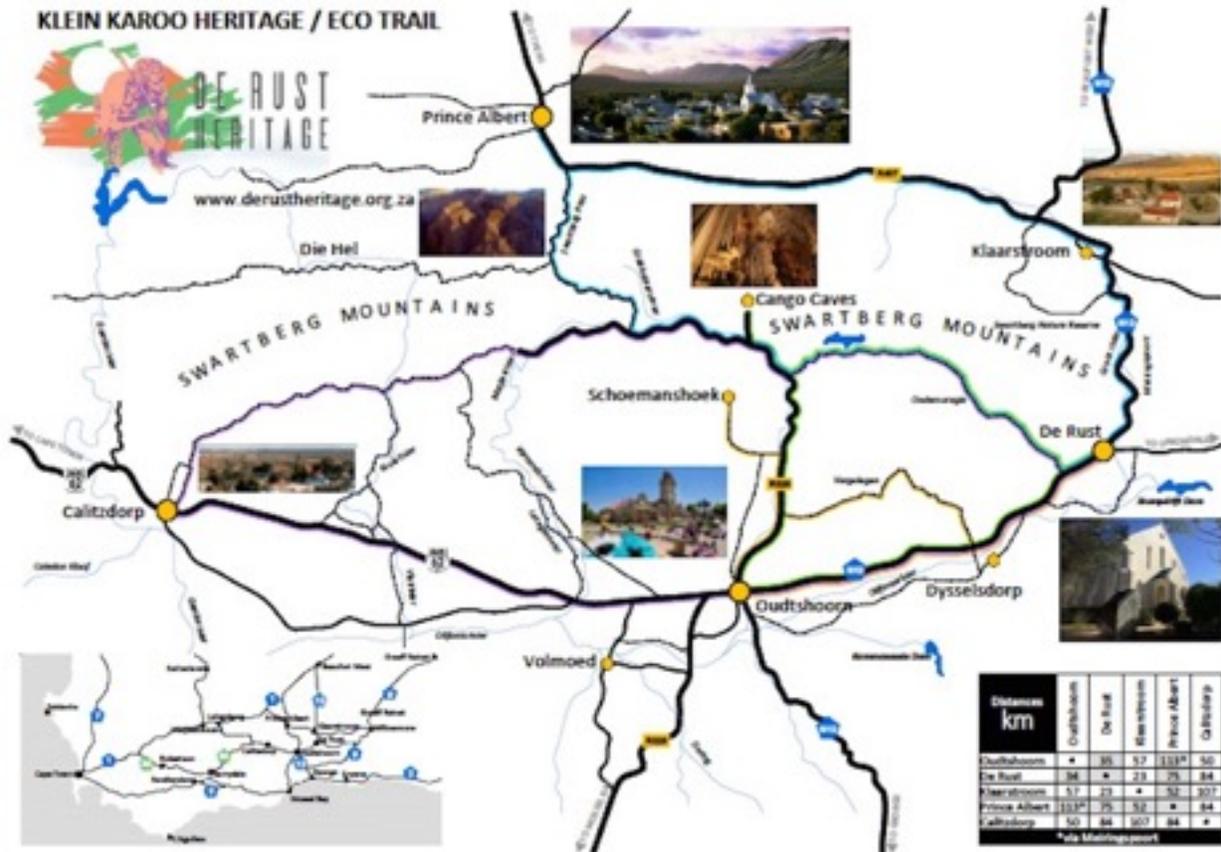
*The recent launch of the **Cape Cycle Routes** initiative by the Western Cape Government and Wesgro is now adding the **Karoo Crossing Route** launched in Prince Albert on Wednesday 23 September, 2020 by the Premier of the Western Cape Alan Winde and David Maynier the Minister for Economic Development. This route is from Prince Albert to Knysna and its 364 km distance can be tackled in a series of stages over a number of days. (Find out more at <https://capecycleroutes.co.za/>)*



*Existing road through Meiringspoort*

*For those cyclists looking for a shorter but still challenging route in the Klein Karoo region it is suggested that the **Klein Karoo Heritage Eco-Trail** should be seriously considered. This route starts in De Rust and includes the ride through the stunning Meiringspoort Gorge and then enters Klaarstroom at the other end of the poort. It*

then goes on to Prince Albert - a convenient overnight stop before tackling the Swartberg Pass the following day - 75 km in total.



Day 2 is from Prince Albert over the pass and descending on the Southern side of the Swartberg stopping off at the Congo Caves (approx. 30 km). Suitable accommodation is available in the area if required. At this point there are a number of options available including the following:

**Congo Caves back to De Rust via the Oudemuragie Valley gravel road (30 km).**  
The route passes the Raubenheimer Dam which is the main water supply source for Oudtshoorn. In addition, the route travels through the Oudemuragie Valley with fine views of the Swartberg Mountains as well as passing through the extensive olive groves of DeRustica Olive Estate.

**Congo Caves to Oudtshoorn and back to De Rust - all tar (approx. 70 km).**  
This route returns to De Rust via Oudtshoorn on the R328 and passes a number of historic farmsteads and ostrich farms on the way. In addition to the outstanding scenery there are also a number of prime examples of “Feather Palaces” built during the Ostrich Boom in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

The N12 National Road from Oudtshoorn takes you back to De Rust passing the village of Dysselsdorp on the way. It is also possible to bypass Oudtshoorn by taking the Vergelegen gravel road off the R328 from the Congo Caves to join the N12 at Dysselsdorp - a reduction of 25 km.

**Congo Caves to Calitzdorp on a gravel road for an overnight stop (55 km).**

The route to Calitzdorp (the Sweet Wine Capital of South Africa) takes you along a good gravel road with the Swartberg on your right. There are a number of interesting art studios and settlements along the way with largely flat terrain.

**Calitzdorp to De Rust via Oudtshoorn - all tar 84 km.**

Those that decide to go on to Calitzdorp can then ride back to De Rust via Oudtshoorn (84 km). This road is relatively flat and travels through a series of farming areas on the way with the Swartberg Range to the north.

*Other than the Swartberg Pass section which is relatively challenging the majority of the routes are level to undulating and can be managed by even relative novices to mountain biking.*

### **Accommodation Stays**

A wide variety of accommodation is available in the area ranging from farm stays, bed and breakfasts and upmarket lodges. In line with supporting the local tourism industry at this time we believe that the outstanding landscapes as well as the warm hospitality of the local residents of this region makes a visit to the area essential for everyone's "bucket list".

Further information on De Rust and District is also available online on [www.derustheritage.org.za](http://www.derustheritage.org.za) as well as from the **Oudtshoorn & De Rust Tourism Offices** on [www.oudtshoorn.com](http://www.oudtshoorn.com) plus the Prince Albert and the Calitzdorp Tourism Offices.

**Alan Tonkin**

10 September, 2020

*Old Road through Meiringspoort late 1800's*

