



By Benedict Poulter

Thirteen senior scouts and scouters from the 1st Pinelands Scout Troop spent the first four days of July on an epic trek all the way from Cape Point to Signal Hill, via Maclear's Beacon.

The route, covering a total of 83km, was done unsupported, and all supplies, food and equipment were carried on their backs. The group went out of its way to specifically go via Maclear's beacon, which is the highest point on Table Mountain and the peninsula, at 1085 meters above sea level. Hence the challenge name *Tip-to-Top*. Daily hurdles varied, from long distances up to 31km, to wet and cold weather, all taken in stride by the group of tough scouts.

On the second day the hiking party was unexpectedly joined by a dog that seemed blissfully happy to join them on their quest. The dog, who became affectionately known as "Buck", eventually followed the seniors all the way to Signal Hill over the remaining three days and 52km. Buck was later returned to the area where he started following the scout group, and his grateful owner was found. I am sure that Rudi (Buck's real name) will not forget that walk.

ROUTE DETAILS:

Day 1: The scouts started at Cape Point at the bottom of the funicular and hiked 31km

to the Marine Conservation Station on Red Hill above Simon's Town. This was the longest day and being the first, was a very tough one. The group only arrived after 9:30pm and slept at the Centre which is in the old South African Navy Signal School navy base, the resting place of Just Nuisance.

Day 2: "Buck" joins the hike which continued from Red Hill via the Elsjes River area and the Brooklands ghost town, through Fishhoek to the Sunbird Centre between Noordhoek and Clovelly. The rainy night is spent in tents that the scouts are thankful to have lugged along.

Day 3: A long day with an early start. The party hikes through irregular showers of rain up to Silvermine, along the top of the Tokai Plantation, over the top of Vlakkenberg down to Constantia Neck where they meet up with Erik, a guide from the Table Mountain National Parks. He leads them through the Orange Kloof restricted area to the scout mountain club hut on the Back Table of Table Mountain.

Day 4: The group leaves the hut and hikes to Maclear's beacon. Unfortunately the weather was poor and with a cloud on top of the mountain the well anticipated view all



the way to Cape Point was unavailable. The *Tip to Top* challenge was completed when the group continued down Platteklip Gorge, along the contour path down to Kloof Nek and past Lions Head to the Parking lot at Signal Hill.

MAIN PICTURE: Cape Point Nature reserve, with Cape Point, the start, seen in the distance.

MIDDLE: The group reaching Maclear's beacon in the mist. The freezing cold "Table Cloth" prevented the view of the Peninsula.

ABOVE: Anja taking a break with Rudi, the travelling dog.