

## Report on Hike Sunday 22 July 2012

Leader: Geoff Tinker

Hikers: Geoff and Rosemary Davis

I did not expect any takers as the morning dawned to heavy rain and very cold weather. The weather at the cable station was cold and wet but the cableway was operating as the wind was not strong. We entered the cable car with a large group of Chinese tourists and were soon engulfed in thick mist. Many of the Chinese were busy with their iPhones which looked weird with the screens filled with pictograms. A big cheer emanated from the Chinese when we popped out of the mist to wonderful views of Lions Head and Camps Bay.

We left the upper cable station in heavy mist which alternately cleared and then covered the landscape. It was like walking through scenes in The Lord of the Rings and we expected to come across Frodo and the Hobbits. Devils Peak looked like Mount Doom but without the fires. There were streams of water flowing everywhere. The Woodhead and Hely Hutchinson dams were full. En route to MacLears Beacon we were overtaken by a mass of thick, black clouds and donned rain gear. It rained hard for a while and the rain turned to sleet. Unfortunately the sleet did not turn to snow and the clouds blew over. At the Beacon the view of Devils Peak was enhanced by swirling mists. We had tea there in alternating cloud and sunshine. We approached Platteklip Gorge along the front table path and kept clear of the sheer drops at the edge due to slippery conditions. It was a lovely walk in misty/clear conditions.



Platteklip Gorge was a mix of many waterfalls, rivulets and swirling mists with overwhelming rock faces – I have never experienced it like that and it was beautiful. The journey down was also a social occasion. The rain had ceased and many hikers were on the way up. We met and interacted with many people and groups. The people came from Holland, the USA, Canada, China, Germany, Saudi Arabia, a real United Nations. They were all friendly, chatty and courteous. We also met a group of trail runners who were training for the Puffer. They had started at Silvermine and were ending at Ferrymans! On the lower slopes many proteas and ericas were in flower. The mist had cleared and we were in full sun.



The walk along the contour path was in full sun and there were several waterfalls and streams. We witnessed the park security removing an undesirable person from the mountain. It was good to see something positive about the security situation.

This hike turned out to be a real gem and was most enjoyable. Thanks to Rosemary for gently insisting that we do it

Geoff Tinker