

Unfortunately, Namibia was experiencing a heatwave! It was *incredibly* hot, with people who had devices with thermometers, registering temperatures of 44.5°C to 46°C (112°F to 115°F). This was getting on for 10°C hotter than we experienced in the Sahara Desert two years ago. There was quite a strong breeze at times, but this was not a cooling breeze, it was more like having someone blow a hairdryer on full heat, in your face as you walked. Not surprisingly, these conditions affected us all, and despite following instructions to keep drinking vast quantities of water laced with rehydration salts, some people were overheating. After about 1½ hours we came across a small isolated tree and those who needed it most had a small patch of shade.



Eventually, we reached the dried river bed which led towards our campsite. The infrequent but fast flowing waters had eroded one rock into the shape of a hand.

The breeze was now slightly cooler, and there was occasional shade with more bushes and small trees near the course of the river. Despite this, less than half our group made it to camp on foot, with others having to be picked up in the vehicle. I did make it on foot, but really could not have walked any further.

This experience led the trek leader and the trek doctor to agree that we needed to change the itinerary so that we could trek in the morning and late afternoon, and spend the hottest part of the day in camp. This meant getting up at 4am one day, and 4.30am the next to break camp, but it made the subsequent days much more manageable and safe for all.

Brandberg means fire mountain, and the reason for this was self-evident at sunrise.



Day 2 included trekking up a gorge in the mountain range, and the boulder-strewn scenery was what we would become more accustomed to over the rest of the trek.





This gorge is the location of a cave with various bushmen paintings thought to be 2,000-5,000 years old, including one known as the White Lady. Having been painted under an overhanging rock which protects them from the elements, and being in such a remote area, means that the paintings are amazingly well preserved.

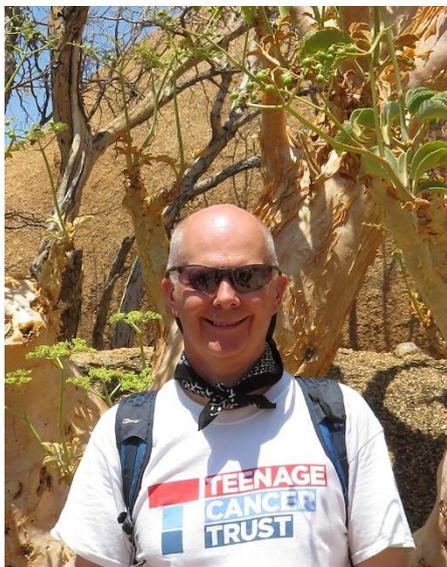
After our lunchtime retreat from the heat, we



returned to the river bed in search of the elephants a few people had seen the previous day when being picked up in the vehicle. Despite seeing elephant footprints which our guide said were only an hour or two old, the elephants themselves were too elusive for us. As the notice near our campsite said, some care is needed with elephants around, but the only advice we were given is that these desert elephants do not make fake charges - if they are charging at you, they mean it!

NOTICE:-
STAY AT OWN RISK
(BEWARE OF ELEPHANTS, CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS)

The rest of the trek was spent in the Spitzkopf and Erongo Mountain regions, again camping amid the mountains and boulders.

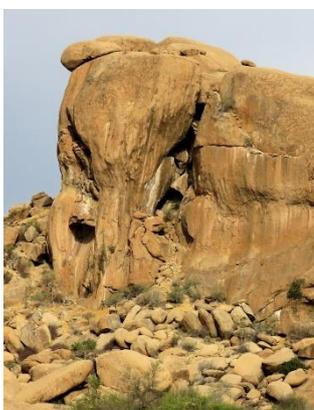
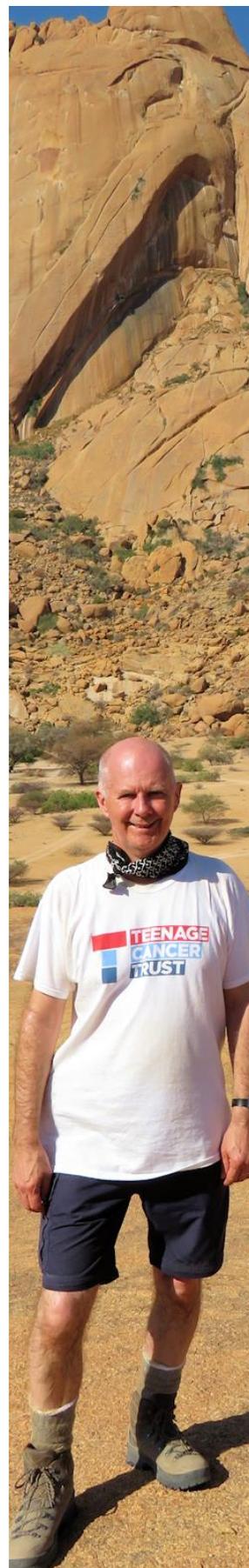


Here there was a little more vegetation, and other signs of life, such as these lizards which somehow survive in the extreme heat - one brightly standing out against the background, and one really effectively camouflaged.



An unexpected pleasure was the beautiful sunrises and sunsets, which could be enjoyed in the cooler parts of the day.

The stunning rock formations, created over millennia of wind, sand and water erosion, surprisingly often seemed to create animal shapes...



.... and the bridge below was a group photo opportunity not to be missed! As always, the camaraderie of the trekking family kept us going during the harder times, and the personal stories and motivations of some of those taking part acted as a reminder, if one was needed, of why were undergoing what was a genuinely challenging expedition.

Thank you so much for helping me raise **£3,705** (with Gift Aid: £4,008) for Teenage Cancer Trust.



Teenage Cancer Trust makes sure young people do not have to face cancer alone. The charity's work ranges from giving straightforward answers about diagnoses and treatment, to developing specialist units in NHS hospitals, and delivering specialist nursing care. Much of this has been possible through your generosity. I hope to trek again in 2018, and my fundraising page is open most of the year at: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/trekrise>

Thank you again for your support!

Nigel

NIGEL TURNER