Friday and after the previous day it’s going to be a relaxed day.

For me that means an early exit from camp using a by now well established silent routine. Turn over the well maintained smooth running TD5 motor, gently ease down on the not very loud pedal, leave the push button tent up and slip quietly down the track.

Today though the tent stays up, it’s time to do a bit of early morning water hole watching in colonial comfort.

As the sun rise chases away tea last of the night Capo Doves start arriving, in small groups to begin with becoming more numerous until the air is alive with the soft fluttering sound of a thousand wings. The water hole belongs to the grey mass of birds undisturbed by any threats.
Lying flat out in the comfort of my RTT the heaving mass of grey bodies is mesmerising, wave after wave swoop in locust like, settle, drink and then explode in all directions as a real or perceived threat is detected by the body corporate.

My office window, if every day could start with a view like this! Actually I’m lucky every day now starts with a view over the dunes out into the Atlantic but that’s just bragging 😊
A tawny eagle makes an appearance, looking almost bemused at the potential breakfast spectacle in front of him.

As the sun rises higher over the western dunes Bulbuls, Weavers, Waxbills and various LBJ’s gather in numbers in the shrubs surrounding the water hole.
A veritable birders paradise.

Recalling the previous days’ comments from our erstwhile tyre repair team about the lack of rain this must be one of the few water sources in the area. Man made you ask yourself the question, what would happen if it wasn’t here?

And the its time for the grey masses to give way to another swarm as the advance party of Burchells Sandgrouse circle in close formation looking for the right approach to get them down close to the water’s edge.

Their yellow rufous colouring in vivid contrast to the grey doves. It looks like a well-practiced hand over as the grey mass gives way to the new arrivals. Feathers puffed as they fill themselves with water, some over optimistic grouse overloaded unable to launch skyward are forced to shake out precious drops of water before struggling into the sky.
The Tawney Eagle remained uninterested through the morning drink fest.
Unlike the almost uncaring dash to the water by the birds a small group of Kudu, shepherded by a magnificent bull nervously make their way to the water before opting to forego a drink.

But all good things must come to an end, my own stomach reminding me that it's need food and drink, it's time to head back to camp. Descending from the RTT I come face to face with a lone jackal. Who's the more surprised him or me?

A quick summing up by him, he decides I'm not edible and trots off in search of something more interesting.
Camp is up and running, well not exactly running, remember it’s going to be a quiet day today but certainly breakfast is on the go, kettles are boiling, bush bread made with carefully measured amounts of flour, salt, yeast and water thrown together by that master of the camp fire Gasman and questions are being asked

Did I hear the lions at 04:00, nope dead to the world. Seems we all slept long and deep, I admit to much amusement that I had to set my alarm to make sure I woken up in time for my early morning ritual by the waterhole.

Molose 2, 3 and 4 are relatively close to each other. You can certainly hear sounds from 3 in the early evening. A couple in a F250, awoken by the lion roars in the night drop in asking if we had seen them. No luck yet but you never know with these cats.

A procession of Land Cruisers, safety in numbers maybe, silver ships pass by on the road to Molose 1 and the waterhole. We all look very closely at tyres but it seems it’s just the Grey Nomad that’s bewitched on this trip 😇

And then it’s just us and the sounds of the bush, magnificent!

In the afternoon another master class in bush survival. With the Grey Nomad already jacked by Charlotte Gasman proceeds to remove and repair the offending tyre.

However, the tyre insists on fighting back, sand in between the beading and the rim preventing a good seal.

Always knew my valve remover tool would come in handy one day, that and a can of Q20 and multiple deflation / inflation cycles equals problem solved.

Each trip I learn a little more. As silly as it sounds I had never used the valve removal tool
No more mystic, simple really but hey! nothing beats hands on experience, even managed not to drop the valve when I pulled it out!

Definitely time for tea and for those not on antibiotics a cold one

Charlotte, ever aware of her surrounds leads me to the entrance of the camp, 10 meters down the road what appears to be an old Brownie latrine complete with a couple of paste marks. Maybe we’ll get lucky
Bees attracted by the washing up water bowl have been committing suicide through the day drowning in numbers as the sought out the liquid. Even those that sought the safety of the dish cloth succumb. Sad to see I hope some of the little guys made it.

Back at the waterhole it’s quiet other than some white backed vultures. Skittish as we arrive they hop away to the shade of the tree line. Even in its stillness there is nothing like the solitude of the bush.

The early evening silence punctuated by the harsh calls of Blacksmith Lapwings, a scattering of doves nowhere near the numbers from the morning flutter from bushes while Tawny Eagles perch high on tree tops sit silent sentinel over a Kalahari sunset.
It's why we come out to these places

Rain clouds in the distance offering a veiled promise of relief for the parched veld. It's not seen water for too long, it will have to wait longer still.

The Harvest Moon, the inspiration behind the trip makes a brief appearance through broken clouds. Already
high in the evening sky it loses its orange glow all too quickly. We are denied its rise over the pan edge missing out on the illusion of size.
Supper tonight is provided by Gasman, rib eye steaks on the bone, potatoes baked in tin foil on the coals and homemade coleslaw, followed by malva pudding and custard. Nobody goes to bed hungry on a Vetgat Toure.

Tomorrow is a real red letter day in more ways than one...