

Walk the walk in Greyton

There are 10 short fynbos walks and a historic village walk in Greyton.

Be careful walking around the narrow, shady lanes of Greyton. If the upmarket 4x4s don't get you, the plethora of arts and crafts shops, coffee shops and beckoning B&Bs just might.

Greyton was founded as an "agricultural village" by Herbert Vigne in 1854. Vigne thought he might attract valuable patronage by naming it after the Cape Governor of the day, Sir George Grey.

Sadly for Herbert, the town remained largely ignored until the 1970s. Then apartheid moved out the coloured residents and the city estate agents moved in. There's more interesting history in Greyton - Founded 1854, published by the Greyton Conservation Society and available for a few rand from the tourism bureau. The booklet is essential reading if you want to get the most out of Greyton and its walks.

The historic village walk rambles around the centre of the town, visiting two dozen buildings and other interesting features while dodging the shiny 4x4s (we admit we were there on a very busy day!). The 10 fynbos walks are largely centred around the Gobos River valley, and get you out of the traffic and up into some splendid mountain country.

The river's curious name is a corruption of "Ghô-bos", a Khoi word for the wild almond, *Brabejum stellatifolium*, the same tree Van Riebeeck used for his famous hedge on Wynberg Hill. The walks are well laid-out and are marked with distinctive coloured footprints.

They vary in length from a 30-minute ramble to a three-hour climb that reaches an impressive viewpoint. You can see all the way to the sea from up there; the Overberg wheatlands form an endless rolling patchwork out to the distant mountains.

Four of the walks permit dogs; the others are all inside the 2 200-hectare Greyton Nature Reserve, where mutts are a no-no.

Full details and lots of useful information are contained in the Greyton booklet mentioned above. The sterling work of the Greyton Conservation Society in the establishment of these beautiful walks deserves fullest congratulations.

Greyton is also the start of the impressive Boesmanskloof Trail that crosses the Sonderend Mountains to McGregor.

The overnight trail requires a permit from the Cape Nature office at Bredasdorp (telephone 028 425 5020). It's unlikely that this trail's name will survive the present rush to dump offensive place-names.

There are lots of eating-houses in Greyton, and a pleasant picnic area on the banks of the Gobos.

If you are wondering where most of the original inhabitants are, you should drive up the main road into Heuvelkroon before you leave town. The houses are mostly pretty small but, as so often (ironically) happened under apartheid, the views of the Sonderend Mountains from Heuvelkroon, the "crown of the hill", are by far the best in town.

By Peter Slingsby