

For many of the ladies it was a chance for introspection and meditation. For those struggling – both with the physical demands of the walk and emotional stresses they may be dealing with back home – veteran Lighthouse walker, Les Clarke, wrote a message in the sand a few kilometres before camp that read: The tide washes away my pain – my feet carry me forward in faith and hope. She was a role model to many women on the walk, with her constant positivity, care and support.

After dinner that evening – a delicious hot potjie made by The Eatery and roosterkoek made by two ladies from Buffeljagsrivier – there were also prizes for the best blisters (eight was the record), best fall (we later found out she had hurt her ribs) and for perseverance. By now the ladies had bonded and there were many laughs to be heard around camp and many stories told by the fireside.

Day 3: Saturday 9 March entailed a 29 km walk to Pearly Beach and was by far the hardest day for me, both physically and mentally. The terrain was extremely challenging with rocks, soft sand, jeep tracks and coastal footpaths to overcome and we had to have a few breaks along the way. One of our longer breaks was at Quoin Point where another lighthouse could be seen next to Jessie's Bay. The ladies who already had blisters were struggling and I could feel one of my own beginning to develop as well.

At more or less the halfway point, we reached the old fishermen's community of Buffeljagsrivier where we visited the town's Seesterretjies Crèche. After saying goodbye to the children, we left for the second half of our journey to Pearly Beach and

that is where I found myself starting to struggle physically. I could feel that I had definitely developed at least one blister on my toe and my right ankle was starting to hurt due to the slight incline of the beach and the rocky terrain – and I wasn't the only one. This is where the true spirit of L2L came to the fore, as the ladies all encouraged and supported one another to keep going.

I had ladies checking to see if I was all right, whilst others offered me pain medication or words of support. When we stopped again for a brief break, I was given deep heat from one lady and a bandage from another for my ankle, which was strapped by yet another lady (a physio from Cape Town, who also strapped it for me the following morning). I was simply blown away by all these caring women.

The toughest part of the four-day walk for me was undoubtedly the last 10 km to Pearly Beach. I am truly grateful for all those who encouraged me to push myself on that last stretch. I am especially grateful to L2L committee member, Simone Heunis, who was there for me every step of the way. I had never been so happy to see those red Spar flags marking the end of the day's walk as I was that day when we reached Pearly Beach. The ladies who had already arrived, clapped hands as each of the walkers made it to the end of this gruelling day's walk.

After dinner – a tasty chicken pie made by Spar with chicken from Elgin Free Range Chickens followed by brownies for dessert – those of us with blisters had them injected with methylate (which burns like you will not believe) and wrapped in medical tape for the next day's walk. We all

went to bed early that night as many of us could barely keep our eyes open after the long day.

Day 4: By Sunday 10 March I felt like I was walking with family. We had all grown so close over the past few days, especially with those with whom we had shared our chalets. We had 27 km to cover, but the terrain was easier and we were all excited to be going home that afternoon. We made a number of stops along the way and also crossed a lagoon by Uilenkraalsmond.

From Kleinbaai to Danger Point Lighthouse we walked with a view of the lighthouse in sight, which kept us going, even when it didn't seem to be coming any closer! Upon arrival (finally!) we were greeted by staff members and a group of children from Camphill School, as well as representatives from Spar and the Overstrand Municipality. L2L patron, Nicolette Johnson congratulated us and hung a medal around each walker's neck with the help of Camphill School staff member Genevieve Linney. We posed for the traditional group photo in front of the lighthouse before being transported to Grotto Beach where friends, family and members of the Hermanus community were waiting to welcome us back.

We walked the last stretch from the Klein Rivier Lagoon at Grotto Beach to Dutchies as one group before family members of the ladies ran up to greet their loved ones. It was an extremely emotional time for all the ladies as they said goodbye to their fellow walkers and returned to their "normal" lives with their families. I, too, was overcome with a mixture of relief and pride – and above all, gratitude for the opportunity to have been part of this inspiring journey.