

## A Letter from Africa

Oct 2014

Our old PC has been supplemented by this Lap Top. This means that we can actually look at big files like Facebook etc. It also means that I can prepare this document and watch the passion and drama unfolding in Scotland. By this I refer to the Ryder Cup and not the referendum on independence.



I am once again trying my best to keep politics out of this letter although I will probably fail. We are all so cheesed off with what unfolds in front of us in SA that we do not need to have salt rubbed into this gaping and festering wound by reminding us all .For those beyond our shores I imagine the goings on here are perhaps of less interest.

So back to the Ryder Cup and golfing matters. Why? Well, it does give me a reason to insert a picture. Each Thursday our 4 ball does battle in a friendly yet competitive spirit. The main opponent seems to be the game itself.

It was thus most appropriate when Colin`s wife decided that the course and 19th hole represented a super venue for his birthday bash. This first picture captures the 6 players at the halfway stage. Not exactly good models for Armani but no illusions there.

We have myself in pink, Len, Colin, Stephen, Malcolm and Quintin in front.

Last week we decided to play a Ryder Cup event with SA v England. Colin made the day come alive with some splendid golf shirts. So, it was Colin and myself in Red for England and Quintin and Stephen in the green of SA. Another pic captures the moment.



Now if we zoom in at the shirt then you will see the name selected by Colin for the contest.

It reads "**RyderLess Cup**" which sort of sums up the level of golf on show when compared to the big boys.

A change of subject.

We went up into the Drakensberg Mountains again. This time to **Bushman's Nek**. It is a 10 hour drive with the last 26kms or so on a gravel road .This takes one deep into the mountains and close to the Lesotho border. The weather was wonderful although we had hoped for winter snow. Instead of log fires we stretched out on recliners, walked, played bowls and mini golf as well as being able to have lunch and breakfast on the patio. The route took us through the old Homelands of Ciskei and Transkei. The picture above shows you our daily view and to the left we have one of a group of baboons we encountered on a walk.

Another walk took us just across the border and into Lesotho. And what happened about 2 weeks later? A coup attempt in Lesotho which is still being played out in a country that is surrounded by SA but which is the basis for a lot of the water being supplied into Gauteng.

If we talk **water** then I have to mention that some suburbs of Johannesburg have been without water for a week or so. A huge uproar resulted but other South Africans point out that this is the problem encountered in many parts of SA. We have the water; all we need is the ability to feed it to



the population.



Some **economic news**. The JSE is under pressure as too is the Rand. The GDP continues to slow, yet the debt position is now higher than that of the UK as a percentage to GDP, even though we missed the main effects of the big recession. It speaks volumes about the way the country is being managed and sadly provides little comfort to those who seek work or an improved quality of life. It seems to boil down to one key issue which is about economic growth being driven by an educated and competent

work force. SA has failed miserably with education over the last 20 years and the Govt. does not provide an environment attractive for companies to invest into. An economist the other day likened SA to a leaking tyre. The air goes out slowly and it will take a while for the car to stop due to a flat tyre unless someone actually checks the leak and fixes it!

Andrea had a birthday since the last letter and although she did not want a party we did dine at home and underlined the day by dressing for dinner. A picture recorded the over the top moment.

Bev took the shot with Courtney making up the group, all armed with some suitable SA Champagne.



***Dolus eventualis***. A Latin term that we have all come to learn about by way of the Pistorius trial. Having tried to get our minds around the meaning, most of us including experts, were then left scratching their heads as the verdict went against this newly obtained understanding. We wait for the sentence and almost inevitable appeals.

Also in the news here is the October meeting in CT of Nobel Peace prize winners. People are beginning to cancel their attendance in response to the South African Government's refusal to give a visa to **The Dalai Lama**. This is 3rd time it has happened over the last few years including a Birthday gathering for Tutu. Seemingly all due to pressure exerted by the Chinese authorities.

**Rhinos** continue to be hacked to death-around 1000 pa-and there is no end in sight .I repeat my view that the solution lies in legalising the trade in rhino and elephant horns/tusks. I have not heard any argument to seriously counter this opinion.



Last page coming up but there is so much more to talk about. Maybe an old picture to start it off.

We are on top of the Mondeor Koppies and it looks as if I took the picture. From L to R at the back is, Vic, Bev, Peter, Jo, Chris and the Chapman kids in front (I think). In the far background one can see the old centre of Johannesburg and this takes us back to the days when we could walk into the hills with safety. This is probably around the late 70's.

**Other events in SA** at the moment include the Spy Tapes and the potential re-opening of corruption charges (about 700 of them) against Jacob Zuma. We appear to have made a multi-billion Rand agreement with the Russians to build a few nuclear power stations although the Government says that no final decision has yet been made! Zuma was in Russia the other day and we all smell the potential for huge corruption. In fact, Zuma is always in the news as the Nkandla matter continues with walk outs in Parliament and the ad hoc committee over the matter plus Zuma's refusal to answer questions. Unlike the UK, in SA, President question time happens only twice each year and then you deserve clear answers. The attack on the Public Protector continues with the ANC and partners laughingly accusing her of being a CIA agent!

Despite all of this the amazing thing was that one local election in the **Seaview** area went from DA back to the ANC, although perhaps balanced by the University vote to elect a DA backed student body. Actually I am not really talking about different parties as there is scepticism around them all. No, what we are concerned with is that the country is governed with competency and integrity. The DA has shown these qualities in the Western Cape and the ANC have failed elsewhere. *(I knew you would talk politics)*

So let us turn the clock back a long way to the days of the **Old Camdenians** with this old photo of a cricket match at Bow Lane in London. It was the Old boys v the ladies and to make it a little more even you will note that Alan Meyer faces the bowler with a left hand grip. Behind the stumps Bev stands guard although unlikely to get a stumping from that far back.

This would have been around the late 60's.

I was enthralled with the Scottish referendum debates and delighted that the UK holds firm. I see that UKIP gains support but surely in this Global Village of ours the challenge is to find ways of unification and not reasons for division. Over here in SA there is even a view that impoverished Lesotho should form part of SA and be integrated into The Free State. I doubt if that is the opinion of most Free Staters` as we have enough problems of our own at the moment. However, we would have control over this vital source of water.



That is it for now and I am sorry that I could not talk about South Africa without including politics. Love Bev and Alan