

An Old Camdenian in Africa July 2012

It is Sunday and our chilly winter is broken today as we sit on the patio and enjoy a 23oC sunny day. Katherine Jenkins is playing the beautiful CD Sacred Arias.

All is serene and story bookish.

From this view our lot is pretty good in the new South Africa.

Our news in little old South Africa pales into almost insignificance when compared to the big issues troubling the world.

Down here in quiet Port Elizabeth we are even further removed from the din of a global economic order cracking and twisting under the strains of greed and an incredible belief that we can all take without actually having to give! Mind you I think the ANC Government had this idea first some years ago.

Never the less I am going to tell you about local news .So there.

Where do I start?

Bev had a **Birthday** which saw us have a lovely lunch at the new Coachman's in the renovated Brookes Hill complex overlooking the Indian Ocean. Andrea took the picture.



Courtney was also involved in a **big band bash** when a few schools put their brass bands on display with a range of diverse tunes.



This culminated in a final selection of pieces in which all 372 band members took part.

The picture is poor but it does give a feel for the general size of the combined bands i.e. everyone you can see in the picture.

I will include some **old shots** at random so if you find yourselves targeted this time it is by pure chance. You have heard of a blast from the past, well these are more **drafts from the distance**. But first some serious stuff.

We have a **Presidential election** later this year in which Jacob Zuma seeks another term. The process is one in which the ANC decides who will be their leader.

The voter as such has no say.

It is common cause these days to accept the fact that the ANC and Zuma have miserably failed the electorate and nation but along the way amassed huge fortunes as tax payers money is "stolen" by government employees.

There is no longer a debate. These are the facts.

Thus the arrival of the ABZ group, "anyone but Zuma" as alternative candidate!!

The introduction of Zuma in this letter must then lead me to **The Spear**. Artist Brett Murray had an exhibition of satirical artworks at the Goodman Galley in Jhb and one painting was of Zuma in a Lenin type pose but with his genitals hanging out. Rather like displaying the truth behind the façade. It was sold for around R135000 to an Austrian but then the ANC got wind of its existence and they saw it as an attack not only on Zuma but also on all black people in SA. It wasn't, of course, but the spin took people into the streets marching towards the gallery and also 2 people managed to deface the artwork by smearing paint over vital parts. It was not a painting that I would buy, nor hang in my lounge and it was not a respectful piece. But if you disrespect the poor, the school learners and sick etc by not providing services nor meeting promises then one can expect unsavoury criticism in return.

The draft from the distance.

Now who do we have here?
 It was clearly a cold day in Jhb or it could have been red nose day?
 The Chapman's, the Johns, the Jenner's and the Francis's and ourselves.
 Date-somewhere in the early 90's. Location-I think the Jenner's in Mulbarton.
 Sadly not all here today and some spread far and wide.



And in this shot we see 4 of the Fisher family (Paula missing somehow). Date 1983 in South Cave North Yorkshire. Paula now happily living in Australia, Tara and family in Swaziland and the remainder in Gauteng.

A change of plot now to Malawi where we see a sign of a real leader in the form of **Joyce Banda**. In coming to power the other month she immediately disposed of her official jet and 60 cars. She refused to host the AU Summit if convicted al-Bashir was to attend.

The AU responded by taking the AU meeting away from Malawi and I suppose generally sending her to Coventry because she did all the right things. Speaks volumes about the AU.

In the 19th Century, Ostrich feathers were all the rage and the Ostrich Barons built their mansions in the Karoo town of Oudtshoorn. The feathers were sold in PE via the Feather Market.



The Ostrich feather market declined and indeed the Ostrich population has recently been devastated by sickness. But the Feathermarket Hall still stands as a proud reminder of those times. It is now a venue for concerts and conferences etc and it was to this historic building that we recently went to attend the 11th Last **Night of the Proms**, a la Port Elizabeth.

I have to admit to not being a fan of these contrived events that get diluted down due to popular demand for the less serious pieces of music. However, 6 of us joined forces and the Eastern Cape Philharmonic did a fine job, with Richard Cock in charge.

Massed choirs and solo performances completed the picture which is shown above with the overpowering organ as centre piece. Dinner at the Stage Door (built in early 1800`s) finished off a fine evening and we left in the knowledge that the monies raised were for the St. Francis Hospice.



Mike and Roddy with Bev

Of course we watched the Queens Jubilee celebrations when the public finally seemed to appreciate the years of service and duty provided impartially by the Queen. A wonderful role model and brand image of Product UK.

On the **sports** front the Olympics grow closer with an SA team made up mainly of hockey or soccer players with a handful of top class individual athletes. A sad decline from the power sports nation that SA once displayed.

The SA/England rugby match in PE saw a full house all eager for some great rugby. They were denied this as the rain came down and the SA team failed to live up to expectations with boos growing as the crowd grew ever unhappy as kicks wasted possession and failed to score points. The English avoided the whitewash and probably saw their very average performance as a victory. But the Bok`s under 20`s ran out deserved winners against NZ in the Final.

The Euro soccer tournament is big on our screens and we have another average English team on display. It is the final tonight and although the southern parts of Europe have difficulty with finances they can play soccer.

I have just endured another match with Andrew Murray that continues to be some kind of torture. A natural desire to support the British number 1 is offset by this whimpish style of play that sees him blow hot and cold from one set to another. Nevertheless he is the best we have had for decades. The new roof meant that we were still watching at midnight SA time.

As ever that is enough for you this time. More scintillating news before we head off for the UK in August for 5 weeks. And I will include some other Drafts from the Distance pictures to remind you of the way we were. I have some old Camdenian pics that ready for next time.

Bye and all our love, Alan and Bev, July 1 2012