

A Letter from Africa

May 13 2015

Summer begins to fade but I prepare this note on the patio with a blue 25oC sky. In fact the weather has been kind to our overseas visitors about whom I will talk shortly.

As ever there is plenty to say and show.

Perhaps I should start with the news that **Andrea** will leave South Africa in a few weeks following the approval to take **Courtney** with her to England. Life here is a mix of first and third worlds but that adds to the attraction. What has sent people away has been more about crime and the future of SA and how do white people fit into this picture.

Key is work opportunity, where disgraceful governance has seen the number of unemployed grow by 1.4 million since Zuma took over in 2009. This is supported by a quota system that dramatically inhibits work opportunities to white skin coloured people as the ANC policy is to reflect the country's demographics throughout the workforce. They see no future and thus will give up their lovely life style, world class education and private health care to the challenge of a new life in England.

We are financially trapped and I will touch on this aspect later.

The visit from **Gavin and Stephanie** took us out and about and some pictures illustrate the beauty and excitement of SA and why so many stay and others travel here as tourists.



Wildlife...up close with no zoom lens, tests our resolve to not panic, as The **Addo Elephant National Park** inhabitants come out to play.



We were staying in the Safari tented camp with this view in the day and a late evening Ranger drive took 4 of them onto the paths not reached in our saloon cars.



A good braai and picnics at Jacks and lots of other sightings completed the two days.



Why do finances stop us leaving?

South Africa is a lovely country that most would wish to live in. Most youngsters leave for a better future but for retired people it is about now and today. They do not have time to rebuild.

Some numbers illustrate what has happened.

	St. Neots starter home	SA House	Exchange rate used
1972	GBP 9600	GBP12300	1.7/1
2015	GBP230000	GBP80000	18/1

Our house in SA (moved and extended) has increased by some 66 times in value in Rand terms compared to around 24 times in St. Neots, but the decline in SA and the Rand has wiped out and destroyed wealth when seen in GB Pound terms.

Of course any pension in SA is now converted at 18:1. It is not enough to buy property and live on in the UK.



We managed to get 9 into our small dining area (Courtney was at Band practise) with **Mike and Jenny** soon to leave PE and head to the DA controlled Cape Town area.

They have children there but CT represents, for some, the opportunity to leave ANC land to a clean and fairly competent DA controlled region. The national mess remains but at least locally things work and the region prospers.

We have local elections in 2016 and the great hope is that the DA will win over some of the main cities of SA. I must hasten to add that I am not opposed to the ANC in principle but am appalled at the shocking manner in which this current lot behave and take SA ever lower into the failed state condition.

So back to the **elections**. PE is particularly prone to a DA take over together with Pretoria and a small chance for Jhb. Some numbers from the 2011 elections illustrate the position.

City	DA	ANC	Others	Nett majority
Cape Town	135	73	13	49 to DA
Port Elizabeth	48	63	9	6 to ANC
Pretoria	82	118	10	26 to ANC
Johannesburg	90	153	17	46 to ANC

The statistics are quite clear if one looks at all the returns. The rural population have poor academic results but the cities have people of a higher academic quality. The masses in the rural areas vote ANC and remain poor, whereas the more enlightened

people in the metropolitan areas and universities are increasingly moving away from the ANC to the DA. The DA have a new leader following the retirement of Zille and Mmusi Maimane now heads the DA. The challenge is to remove the “white party” tag and provide a rallying call to all the poor masses in the rural areas.

Some walks in mountains and coast. We all went off to the Baviaanskloof area for a night in an ox wagon, taking the hike along the river to the small waterfall. Other walks saw us complete the return trip of the Sacramento trail and climb the lighthouse at The Donkin. A few pictures for you to get a feel for these moments.



4 slept in the wagon and 2 in the lean to. We are seen here in the “lounge” enjoying a sundowner with a great view into the mountains.



Bev took this shot and it should be noted that I am on the hike following some 3 months of inaction since my left hip collapsed in CT in mid Feb. A visit to the surgeon is due in a few days to see what can be done. This last week has seen a lot of walking plus 9 holes with Gavin at Sardinia after a trial session at the driving

range.



big SA flag waves

A windy day meant warm coats for some, with this picture showing the route towards Sardinia Bay from Schoenmakerskop. The



boldly in this shot from the top of the lighthouse.



In 1647 the Portuguese Galleon, the Sacramento sank and amongst its cargo were a number of bronze cannons. The 8 km walk passes one of the cannons that points to the wreck site. A good breakfast at the Sacramento restaurant provides for a good halfway house. Another, yet smaller, cannon sits atop Fort Frederick and dates back to the 1800`s although never used in anger.



A change of subject matter.

Who remembers the car rally we used to have in Johannesburg? It became a regular feature from our house and provided another super reason to get together and have a braai and some fun. As in all events some win and others do not win. It is always good to recognise both ends of the spectrum and thus in 1991 we have a picture of the winners, being the Seller gang from Jhb and Graham who did not win: in fact came "bottom".



Other goings on. **Debbie Hornby** came over for the birth of her grandson, Nathan, and they all had some lunch with us on the patio and 'signed' the visitor`s tree.

We have had a burst of **xenophobia** that was fed by utterances from

King Goodwill Zwelithini and Edward Zuma (son of Jacob) but were caused most likely by the open borders that we have that let in all comers-legal or not. These industrious people then started to operate and take business and jobs away from the less successful South Africans with resulting jealousy and anger. Of course there was concern about taxes not being paid etc. and unfair business practices but at the heart lies the discontent of the main body of people in SA.

At the same time we had a lot of animosity shown to the old Colonial powers with **statues being defiled** e.g. Queen Victoria, Horse Memorial, Gandhi and even removed e.g. Rhodes at UCT.

In 2022 Durban will probably host the **Commonwealth Games** as no other country is left in the “race”. It should cost no more than Glasgow and if this is true then it might be a viable games and a valuable draw for visitors and tourists.

South Africa`s **Trevor Noah** will host The Daily show in the USA around August. The shows reaches some 2.5 million viewers late evening and is a satirical look at politicians.

It`s Your Move. I was keen to get some chess in and suggested to the 1820`s club that they might look at it. In fact they wanted to introduce chess and before I knew it I had offered to host the FIRST session. But as with all volunteers it is now 6 weeks on and I am still hosting. Never the less we are playing some chess and exercising the brain.

I will end now as I have really gone well over my normal 2 pages.

One or two pictures to finish off.

The Donkin is full of art and I hope this one piece is intended to invite participation.

And on the final moments of the visit by Gavin and Stephanie we dined at the Boardwalk area where we mingled with the fans from the Kaiser Chiefs soccer match and the DA people exiting their conference where new leaders were elected.



So much more to tell but no space left!!

Regards to you all around the world and tell us what is going on in your lives.

I am on Facebook etc. but find it difficult to see how this media helps me communicate better than e mail.

Bye for now,

Alan and Bev Shearn