

# A Letter from Africa

December 12 2014

I am reading Ken Follet at the moment which I do mostly in bed at night. It was 11 pm on Nov 11<sup>th</sup> and I was on page 260 when war was sort of declared in WWI (that is in the book). I thought that that was a very big coincidence even if it was the start rather than the end of WWI. The book-The Fall of Giants is another great read and full of research that takes you into the many fronts of this "war to end all wars".

We went away again in Nov. and used our Timeshare swop for a week's stay at The **Hermanus** Beach Club which is a day's drive away of some 650 kms. We were joined for 2 nights by Helen and Brian and also by Ben and fiancée Chemelle, who drove in from Cape Town.

In addition we linked up with Lynn and Bill who had retired to Somerset West around a year ago yet are drawn to the beauty and charm of their origins in the Highlands of Scotland.

A few pictures catch some of these moments.

We did a lot of coastal walks along the kms of super pathways and managed quite few wine tasting and dining experiences as we wound our way up the Hemel en Aarde valley. The latter tend to be tourist traps but they are done in such a lovely way that they are irresistible to wine fans.



We combined the wine with a great lunch at Sumaridge and later in the week we also had a good wine/meal combination at Creation. When talking to the Marketing Manager at Newton Johnson (son of owner) it was most interesting to learn that the Grandparents came from mining people in Wakefield, then into SA Railways and finally wine farming.



What we did not see were whales as they had all left a little while before we got there. We did notice

lots of marine birds and what could have been seals and dolphins in the Bay.

Bev is seen with the old harbour in the background.



We returned home to petrol **shortages** (nearly ran out of petrol in Humansdorp), power cuts and, of course, no post due to the strike. In addition we have a vacuum of leadership at Government level.



**Courtney** finished her Primary School and heads for high school in Jan 2015. The last few weeks have been full of farewells, rewards ceremonies and band playing. She also took part in two sessions of water polo coaching provided by her new school and I set her up for free golf lessons via a promotion at the Walmer Golf Club. It was a hectic time for her.

A picture needs to record this time but Courtney is now focused upon the new school and its` challenges .As they say “as one door closes another opens”.

Bev spent some weeks in England to assist Melanie whilst she was in hospital. It was not a holiday but they managed a trip to Bamburgh and along the way visited **Barter Books** that describes itself as England`s largest second hand book store. It is housed in the old 1887 railway station and welcomes dogs and sports a toy rail track around the walls.



Mackenzie is using this opportunity with Tamba.

Of course no visit to Ilkley is complete without a drink at the **Cow and Calf**

that stands boldly on the moors. Bev raises a glass of the British stuff.

**Mackenzie** also showed off her cooking prowess when making some profiteroles carefully watched over by Tamba. When next in England I now hope to receive not only these delicious offerings but also another helping of her great curry.



A bit of **politics**. Our ex-Mayor, Wayile, is a staunch ANC member but was quoted in our local paper as follows when referring to our area: - “Drowning in a cesspool of maladministration” and went on to say that “There is a lack of leadership nationally”. It sort of says it all without me having to lift a finger to the keyboard.

The Rand is back above 18:1 to the Pound and the JSE has fallen to around 48700 (did reach 52000).Growth is under pressure from an electricity crisis that serves to fuel unemployment whilst world economies are buying less of our basic resources. The economy is in a mess with a President who is scared to appear in Parliament because he will have to field a barrage of difficult questions.

It has always been odd that the one Government body that operates well is that of **Tax Collecting** but an article recently made it clear to me. Tax collection is a function that aids the Government whereas all the other areas of governance aid the people!

This letter has followed the 2 cases of **Pistorius and Dewani** and there have been some movements again. Our National Prosecuting Authority spent some years and millions of Rands getting Dewani to court in SA only to see that their terrible preparations meant that the case was thrown out of court due to lack of evidence! What an embarrassment to the prosecuting system even though the Judge made the right call. Many will see him as actually guilty and it will be interesting as to how he is treated back in England and whether he will sue the SA system for arresting him" falsely".

The Pistorius matter is a little different in that the judge appears to have got the interpretation of *dolus eventualis* wrong as well as some other aspects of law. It is imperative that this legal issue is resolved and the judge has allowed an appeal which could now lead to Pistorius being charged and found guilty of murder. He is currently serving time in the hospital section of a Pretoria prison where he could be released after only 10 months.

Courtney became a teenager since we last wrote and I include a picture of her at her party.

The year is close to an end and the Xmas tree and decorations are again up, with carols playing in the background. It is a time to think of family and friends around the world and surround ourselves with good things .Perhaps even spoil ourselves by forgetting the many terrible areas of conflict and unhappiness that plague sections of the globe and which make our troubles look minor by comparison.



It goes without saying that we wish you all a super Xmas time with health and happiness in the year ahead.

Love

Alan and Bev