

# out of africa

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KEEPING SOUTHERN AFRICANS IN TOUCH AROUND THE WORLD

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

## Tragic tycoon's mum looks to the future

Zimbabwe's  
wild, wild wet  
adventure!

## Captain Ken lured me to the US!



# Grit and determination show through in the stories you send in!



**T**HE Holmes a Court name is almost legendary in Western Australia. South African-born Robert Holmes a Court became one of Australia's most successful corporate raiders in the 1980s, building an empire worth billions of dollars in a few short years.

Much less known until recently was the story of his mother, Ethnee. All that changed when she was persuaded to write her memoirs. The story is one of joy, tears, inspiration

and courage. In her book, *Undaunted*, she tells how she was left to fend for herself and two small sons both of whom she was to lose tragically in vastly different ways.

This issue details her life today - a woman brought up by a man who knew Cecil Rhodes now keeps in touch with friends and family on the Internet!

The Lund family, too has shown grit in the face of adversity. Unfazed by the fact their children couldn't play sport in the countries they lived in, they eventually found their niche in Canada, where one son now hopes to qualify to swim in the Sydney Olympics next year

Maureen Cram, didn't let a small thing like moving to the US stop her either. She's the lynchpin behind South Africans Worldwide, an Internet contact site based in Johannesburg.

Maureen's running it from Boston, and, from all accounts, loving it.

Journalist Carolyn Howie returned to the UK after more than 30 years in South Africa to care for her aged father and ailing sister. She couldn't have known a new career in radio was waiting just around the corner. But it was, and today she's rising to the new challenge there.

The common thread running through all these stories is one of determination to succeed.

Southern Africans are showing they can rise to the challenges before them and overcome them. Not easily, not always without tears, but overcome them, all the same.

On a different tack, Australian journalist Rochelle Mutton chatted to the guides who take tourists on a wild whitewater raft ride down the Zambesi below the Victoria Falls. It's all in this edition. enjoy.

Oh, one more thing - season's greetings to one and all. May you all have a great Christmas and a happy New Year 2000!

Tom Henshaw



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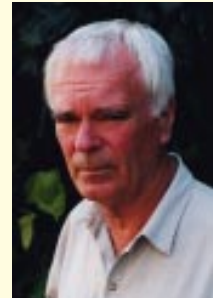
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Cartoon: Vic Mackenzie

# Peeved prostitute puts spell on punter's pecker

We couldn't resist reproducing this item of news from The Herald, in Zimbabwe. Former Herald cartoonist Vic Mackenzie rose to the occasion with the above exclusive cartoon

**A** HARARE man who thought he could get away with refusing to pay a prostitute for services rendered will forever rue his decision after the prostitute cast a spell which resulted in him losing his private organs recently.

Police confirmed the disappearance of the man's private parts.

The man, who recovered his parts after paying his dues, had spent the greater part of Friday night with the woman before he slipped from her lodgings on the pretext that he was going to the toilet, which was several metres away.

Unfortunately, his trick backfired when he woke up to find his private parts missing the following morning.

Fearing his wife's reaction and desperate to confirm that the parts were, indeed, missing, he went to the nearby Mbare Musika toilet, where, on confirming the parts' disappearance, he ran around the crowded terminus screaming and clutching his groin.

Police officers took him to their post, where the prostitute was summoned after he told them his problem.

Although denying that she had cast a spell on him, the prostitute, in the presence of the man's wife, told the officers that she could solve his problem if he apologised and paid for services rendered, plus interest.

As part of the punishment she said the parts would, however, return to him the following day.

"The man was here this morning to confirm that his private parts were back. It is really embarrassing for a married man to have to go through this experience for a small sum of \$60", said one officer at Mbare Musika police post.

- The Herald



# Life's going swimmingly for the Lunds in Canada

Now they have the Olympics in their sights . . .

**O**UT of Africa International? This has to be an oxymoron in many ways. Having read a number of the stories of the scattered Africans around the globe it becomes so evident as it is for my husband and I, that you never are "Out of Africa"!

As many have commented Africa is something that is a part of you that you will never escape. The smells, the smoke, the dust, the unbelievable beauty and without any doubt the beautiful people make it such a very special place which only those of us who had the privilege of having lived and grown up there can appreciate how fortunate we all are to be able to say we are "Out of Africa".

Subsequent to leaving Africa we have had the good fortune to have travelled to and experienced many countries, cultures, culinary and bacchanian "delights" none of which hold a candle to those of Africa.

Currently we reside in the delightful town of Oakville, Ontario close to the shores of Lake Ontario and between the Niagara Falls

and the city of Toronto. I must add, we are one of many Southern African families in this area, which is great.

So, why are we out of Africa. Business opportunities we would have been foolish not to take up and now having gained lots of International experience we may well at some point find ourselves heading home.

Having great difficulty shaking the dust of Africa out of our bones - but then who knows???

I am the eldest of four children born to John, well known Rhodesian Rugby hero (he captained the 1949 Rhodesian Rugby side that beat the unbeaten All Blacks)!! and A vril Morkel.

From an early age I was always interested in sport and in my senior school years played hockey, tennis and swam for my school. I left Roosevelt G.H.S. after completing my "O" levels, went nursing and then worked for Tilcor (Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation) during which time I met my future husband Chris Lund.

Shortly after meeting him I emigrated down to Cape Town South Africa where we married in 1977.

Chris is the youngest of six boys born to Rev. and Mrs Martin (Bob) Lund minister and one time Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of S.A.

Chris attended Rhodes University and then taught in Cape Town at the well-known S.A.C.S.

It was during this time that he went on a rugby tour to Rhodesia that we met! The rest is history.

Both of us have a keen interest in sport and for the longest time were involved either as participants, coaches or eager spectators. So guess who has been keeping tabs on the current Rugby World Cup Series.

We have three sons, Anthony and Craig (twins) who are 19 years old and Mark our "laatlammietjie" who is 11. Understandably we were very keen for our sons to be actively involved in sport.

Unfortunately their Primary school in Bryanston (Gauteng) only catered for the "A" team type and there wasn't much opportunity for the "rest" to be competitive.

When we moved to Denmark in 1992 on a business transfer the boys attended the Copenhagen International School where there was even less sporting opportunity for them.

For anyone out of Africa where most

people are sport crazy you can imagine our disappointment.

We managed to find a cricket club which was run by a delightful "beer swilling" ex-New Zealander who is a famed beer taster for the Tuborg brewery and who has written several books on both cricket and beer.

He's fondly known internationally as "Uncle Peter".

The cricket was fun but being in Denmark never created much opportunity for them.

When we moved to Canada in 1995 the sporting challenge was upon us again.

At the age of 15 our sons were not candidates for ice hockey, baseball, lacrosse or American football due to lack of knowledge and experience of the games.

It was at this point that the twins took up swimming. After one season of basic coaching they joined the elite squad and proceeded to improve by leaps and bounds surprising both us as parents and the coach.

After three years of competitive swimming they both swam Nationals for Canada and Craig has since qualified to attend the Olympic swimming trials for Canada in May/June 2000.

Anthony has embarked on an academic career at university which doesn't allow him sufficient time to train.

As can be expected we are all very excited and hopefully look forward to a trip to Sydney next year!! Should Craig make the team, Out of Africa will be the first to know!!

## Hairy bush tales . . .

### Monkey business in the mealie patch

I REMEMBER a 10-day patrol once in the Kandeya TTL near Mount Darwin.

We were on top of a gomo looking out for terts and bored out of our skulls until a troop of baboons kindly turned up with the entertainment and started raiding a kraal's mealie patch.

They were obviously worried about Phineas' reaction to their thievery and were in a muur of a hurry.

I'll never forget the hysterical sight of 15 or 20 bobejaans grabbing a mealie with one hand, then stuffing it under the opposite armpit for carrying purposes.

They then grabbed another mealie and stuffed it under the other armpit. This should have been sufficient, but Ah No.

They carried on in this frenzied fashion for at least five minutes and, of course, ended up surrounded by a pile of plucked mealies, with only two safely tucked into their armpits . . . because every time they raised their arm . . . the newly-placed mealie dropped out.

Only one was smart enough to gap it with three mealies . . . the third one clenched between its choppers! - Nick Russell

Baobabs: some have been growing in the Zambesi Valley since before the birth of Christ.  
Picture: Rob Webb



## Millennium won't bug the baobab!

... but safari operators say they've been rushed off their feet by people wanting to get away from it all on New Year's eve

**A**S THE end of another millennium rolls around, even the world's oldest braggart is unable to say: "Been there, done that." But at least one ancient baobab tree in Zimbabwe will feel the rising sun warm its gnarled trunk on January 1 2000 just as it did on January 1 1000.

The tree has been growing quietly in the Zambesi Valley near Lake Kariba for at least 1020 years, according to radiocarbon dating.

Others of its kind in this southern African country are believed to have already seen more than 2,000 years go by.

The only millennium bugs likely to give them any trouble are the usual hopping, crawling and munching varieties. And possibly a tourist or two.

While the big parties will be in the world's big cities — some of which, like New York, have been around for a piffling few hundred years — the more remote spots in Zimbabwe are booked solid for the end of the year.

There, apart from being made to feel young and insignificant by the venerable baobabs, revellers can watch prehistoric creatures such as rhinos and crocodiles stomping and slithering about much as they have done for millions of years.

Zimbabwe Sun, the country's biggest

leisure group, says that along with its flagship hotels at resorts such as Victoria Falls on the Zambesi River, small safari lodge vacations have been snapped up by people wanting to get away from the hype and hoopla surrounding the millennium.

"We have bookings from all over the world," said public relations official Ray Mawerera.

Safari operators polled on whether they were offering any offbeat attractions for New Year's Eve appeared confident that their guests would be happy to remain in a thatched bar or restaurant, and hear the lion's roar and hyena's giggle from there.

"In any case," said one, "if we took our clients for a midnight moonlit dinner at a water hole or something they could end up being on a millennium menu themselves."

When the sun rises, the guests can always gaze at a baobab and reflect that while they will certainly not be around on January 1 3000, the tree might be.

Zimbabwean tradition has it that baobabs, with their big, fat trunks — up to 10 metres (30 feet) in diameter — and bare root-like branches, were slammed into the ground upside down by an angry god.

Perhaps they were given long life as recompense.





Maureen and Ken on the beach in Boston.

# I left SA for a life in America with Captain Ken!

Maureen Cram tells how she came to be running the Johannesburg-based South African contact web site South Africans Worldwide, whilst living in the US.

**O**NCE upon a time, there was a listing of email addresses, services and embassies on a Web site known as South African's World-wide. It had existed for several years and was a great resource to find South Africans all over the globe.

One day the person running and hosting it asked The House of SYNERGY if they could take it over as he would be leaving university soon and his university account would be cancelled – meaning that the hosting space for the site would disappear.

THOS took it over and spruced it up a bit, hosted it off their directory of SA sites, South Africa Online and it continued to slowly grow.

I was working for THOS at that time, had no intentions of leaving South Africa and had no idea what SA W represented to those South Africans living in other parts of the world, as well as those with a wish or desire to leave South Africa themselves.

Then along came Captain Ken! For those who subscribe to SA Wmail, you will know all about (well maybe not all!) my beloved husband Ken. For





Maureen and Ken at their wedding with the children: Matthew and Emmett from Johannesburg, Deborah from Coventry UK and Melissa from Massachusetts USA.

those who don't, here are a few details as to how I came to be a SAW myself!

I was happily unmarried, working away as THOS' Operations Manager and dating here and there – nothing serious! My sons wanted me to 'settle down' as they both had. I think they were worried that their mother would end up just living with her cats!

So I joined an Internet dating service and filled in a detailed questionnaire...

I ended up writing to Ken as just a pen pal... I had no intention of ever leaving South Africa . . . but he seemed very nice . . .

I came over to the USA in July 1997 for a holiday/blind date and once we met we knew we were going to be married (actually we were about 99% sure before we even met that we were right for each other!).

I came back, did all the paperwork and arrived in New York on November 1 1997.

Having 90 days to get married, we did the legal thing on New Year's Eve with a Justice of the Peace coming out to our house.

But our wedding day was June 27 . . . by our lake with all our family and friends present.

As we were already legally married, we asked Ken's brother Bill to officiate. We wrote our own service, exchanged rings and are living happily ever after . . . and get happier by the day.

So now I was living in rural New

Hampshire in the USA, still working for THOS back in Johannesburg but wondering what I was going to do.

I became the editor of SAW and soon decided that SAW needed a newsletter and so SAWmail was born!

It has grown from a base of 350 subscribers to around 3000 as of writing!

It takes lots of time to write but it has helped me and I hope it has helped and is still helping thousands of other SAWs around the world. I know in those first few months of being in a strange country (even with my loving husband to help) that SAWmail helped keep me sane. Until one experiences it first hand, I don't think anyone can understand how it feels to pack up and move to another part of the world.

I am also in the process of revamping the SAW Web site – your home from home – and will be visiting South Africa later this year for an extended business trip.

Yes I will be missing my dear Captain Ken but for the good of SAW (and my personal satisfaction!) I want to get the site finalised so it can be the 'one-stop shop' for things South African.

We don't intend or proclaim ourselves to be the only site out there, but rather see ourselves as facilitators of all things SAW.

SAW website: [www.saw.co.zw](http://www.saw.co.zw)

# That's Africa!

## All at sea over lost navy

**I**T HAPPENED in the Swaziland parliament in Mbabane: "The situation is absolutely under control," said Transport Minister Ephraem Magagula. "Our nation's merchant navy is perfectly safe. We just don't know where it is, that's all."

Replying to an MP's question, Minister Magagula admitted that the landlocked country had completely lost track of its only ship, the Swazimar:

"We believe it is in a sea somewhere. At one time, we sent a team of men to look for it, but there was a problem with drink and they failed to find it, and so, technically, yes, we've lost it a bit.

"But I categorically reject all suggestions of incompetence on the part of this government.

"The Swazimar is a big ship painted in the sort of nice bright colours you can see at night. Mark my words, it will turn up.

"The right honourable gentleman opposite is a very naughty man, and he will laugh on the other side of his face when my ship comes in."

- The Star, Johannesburg

## Plane passengers deflated by flat tyre . . .

**W**ESEKA SAMBU asked a hastily convened news conference at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport: "What is all the fuss about? A technical hitch like this could have happened anywhere in the world. You people are not patriots. You just want to cause trouble."

Sambu, a spokesman for Kenya Airways, was speaking after the cancellation of a through flight from Kisumu, via Jomo Kenyatta, to Berlin:

"The forty-two passengers had boarded the plane ready for take-off, when the pilot noticed one of the tyres was flat. Kenya Airways did not possess a spare tyre, and unfortunately the airport nitrogen canister was empty.

"A passenger suggested taking the tyre to a petrol station for inflation, but unluckily the jack had gone missing so we couldn't get the wheel off.

"Our engineers tried heroically to reinflate the tyre with a bicycle pump, but had no luck, and the pilot even blew into the valve with his mouth, but he passed out.

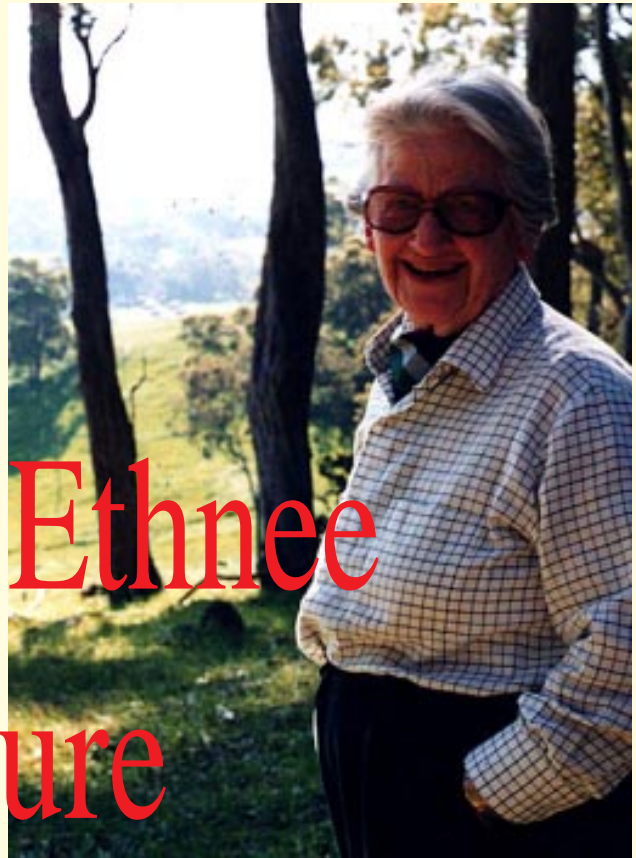
"When I announced that the flight had to be abandoned, one of the passengers, Mr Mutu, suddenly struck me about the face with a life-jacket whistle and said we were a national disgrace. I told him he was being ridiculous, and that there was to be another flight in a fortnight.

"And, in the meantime, he would be able to enjoy the scenery around Kisumu, albeit at his own expense.

- The Standard, Nairobi

These reports seem to be in the same genre as that of the pilot locked out of the cockpit - one that has been doing the rounds for years, and which led recently to an aspiring US travel writer's downfall after she heard it and wrote it in the first person as an African adventure. If they can be either verified or denied, we'd be most grateful!

# Undaunted Ethnee looks to future



Ethnee Holmes a Court looks back on a remarkable life which has taken her from the wilds of colonial Rhodesia to the foothills of Perth as matriarch one of Western Australia most famous families.

Vanessa Gould of The West Australian reports. Photographs: Tom Henshaw

**E**THNEE Holmes a Court looks up at the watercolour portraits of her sons Robert and Simon, aged 12 and 10, hanging in the hall of her cottage on the Heytesbury Stud beneath the Darling Ranges at Keysbrook, south of Perth, Western Australia.

Outside guinea fowl and peacock roam free around the white-painted fences of the horse paddocks.

When she walks around her sanctuary of 27 years with her "shadow", her rhodesian ridgeback Lara, sometimes, through the haze of memory, burst glimpses of Robert riding one of his stallions through the avenues of lemon-scented gums he planted, or of Simon fishing beside a dam.

The portrait of the young Robert has his brown hair combed neatly over the distinctive high forehead which would hatch dreams of a mighty financial empire.

He wears a pin-striped suit and tie. His brother Simon wears a short-sleeved blue shirt.

The 84-year-old mother touches the image of Simon's messy blond hair

"Typical of both of them," she says, her voice rich and warm in the crisp tones of the

English in Africa. Mrs Holmes a Court's autobiography, *Undaunted*, provides an insight into the man who would become Australia's most impressive gentleman tycoon, art collector, and horse breeder, Robert Holmes a Court.

Or, as his mother remembers on a small memorial plaque in her memento-packed lounge room, "A leader of men. He had courage, wit, style compassion and integrity".

He died after a heart attack on Father's Day, 1990, aged 53.

That plaque sits next to Simon's memorial, which says: "A sculptor, lover of wildlife and the oceans of the world":.

She runs her hand over the ridge along the back of a bronzed elephant he sculpted, each wrinkle in the skin understood as a game warden, wildlife photographer and documentary maker.

It was this she brought back unfinished from Africa instead of the son she had gone there to find.

He disappeared at the age of 38.

While Mrs Holmes a Court outlives many of her loved ones, her story remains a simply-told, fast-moving narrative of life in colonial Africa crammed with the adventure, joy and





Dam fine place: One of the stud's reservoirs.

heartbreak of any potboiler. In her frequently chuckling, warm and grandmotherly way, Ethnee Holmes a Court concedes she hadn't really thought about whether writing her memoirs, with the help of her newly-acquired computer skills, had been cathartic.

Her "ghost writer" was Liz van den Nieuwenhof.

"Possibly it was," she said.

"It certainly brought back a lot of memories, and of course I'm a hoarder.

I have hundreds of photographs, throughout my life."

Her writing took her back to those places: "It became very close to me. I could almost feel I was there.

"There are a lot of things there I've never talked about. I've, you know, sort of skimmed over the top. One or two things were difficult to write. But, it's all true."

Ethne Holmes a Court's story began in 1915 on a farm in Rhodesia, in the "snug and silken world" of her grandparents' home.

They were descendants of South Africa's first British settlers.

Her mother left her father when Ethnee was an infant and he was never spoken of again.

"I hadn't spoken about him before, no. It was just something that didn't exist," she said.

When she was 10, her mother Florence married the man who came to be her father, Harry Robert Cumming, whom everyone calls "The Old Man".

They moved to the wilds of Southern Rhodesia, where pith helmets were the fashion, and she was taught to run, ride, shoot and go on safari.

With an instinctive connection with

animals, she became a champion equestrienne, and horses and pets assumed the importance of people in her life of privilege and position.

In 1936 she married "the love of my life", Peter Holmes a Court, a tall horseman of British aristocratic stock (good breeding, be it of people or animals, is always noted) whose name she kept.

Heytesbury was the name of Peter's ancestral home in England.

They settled into married life in Johannesburg and had children.

Peter demanded independence of his sons at a young age.

"He wasn't the sort of person who would pick them up or kiss them," she said.

"As little boys arriving on the train, I can remember other fathers going over and holding them or picking them up or giving them a hug, and Peter would stand there and shake hands.

"Very, very English. Always been bought up by a nanny and so on."

They bought the local newsagency near her parents in Rhodesia.

When Peter went to war, the business went under.

He returned psychologically scared and suffering from diabetes.

Ethnee started a riding school with a borrowed horse.

The most searing blow came after 16 years of marriage when Peter abruptly left her and the boys, then 15 and 13 and boarding at the prestigious Michaelhouse School in South Africa.

Peter cleaned out their joint bank account and moved away with another woman.



Now, Ethnee can be philosophical about why he left, saying she was very busy with their sole income, the riding school, and that Peter wasn't very well.

"I was terribly hurt, and if he had turned up at any stage, (she gives a small laugh) I'd have been only too happy for him to come back," she says.

"I don't think I ever got over it. Even now. Well, up to a point.

"I mean, all these things fade, don't they?"

Her arms are crossed and her eyes appear a little moist behind dark-tinted glasses, perhaps with the realisation that writing about things intimate to her is one thing, but having to discuss them with a stranger in her home - a living, breathing shrine to her own adventuring life and to lives which should have been lived longer - may be quite another.

Her sons were deeply affected by their father's desertion; Simon was silent, while Robert talked constantly, "making fabulous and quite fanciful plans for our future".

Later, determined to make one last try at reconciliation, Ethnee put on a new dress and took the boys to the town to which their father had moved.

He stood them up in one final, painful insult.

In response, the young Robert borrowed clothes and shoes from hotel staff and took his mother to the ballet followed by dancing at a nightclub.

It was an insight into his protectiveness of his mother and early propulsion into the role of man of the family.

A disastrous marriage "on the rebound" followed and collapsed.

Then, in 1956 Ethnee married Charles Trevor.

The couple visited Simon, a game warden in Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana) and returned to pioneer a camp, then a hotel, on the Chobe Game Park (now the Chobe National Park) at the point where four countries meet near Victoria Falls.



Rural peace: A pony stands sentinel on a dam wall.

They entertained European royalty as well as celebrities and white hunters from Kenya.

Robert, supposedly studying law at the University of Cape Town but also opening, and then being forced to close a restaurant there, left for Perth in 1961 to finish law at the University of WA.

Back in her lounge, Mrs Holmes a Court sits surrounded by Simon's bronzed wildlife sculptures; a lioness, a charging bull elephant, a cheetah chasing an impala, and fighting sable bulls swirling with extraordinary, lifelike dynamism.

She says with pride: "Simon particularly had a wonderful way with animals. And he was not afraid of anything.

"I think I said in the book the game scouts all said he was the bravest morena - their word for boss - they'd ever known."

The man whose only suit was a wetsuit made wildlife documentaries in Africa and then sailed the world for years making more.

Ethnee Holmes a Court's life was shattered once again when Charles, her husband of seven years, died after being attacked by wild bees.

In 1964, she set sail for Australia to visit her son and his new friend Janet Ranford, the future Janet Holmes a Court.

They settled her into a South Perth high-rise flat.

"That was a horrible time in my life, coming from 6000

square miles of wildlife, to a little flat like that," she said.

"I didn't know anyone, there was no telephone, there was no money, there was no car."

Miserable, she would take long walks to the zoo and talk to the animals, an outsider in a strange new country.

Eager to meet people, she took a job, which turned out to be mucking out horse manure - an unimaginable shock for a lady from Africa brought up with servants who had never even seen anyone cook, clean or sew.

She was equally shocked to find Australians sat down to a meal in their



Favourite place: Ethnee among the horses..

kitchen, a place she had never entered as a child and only as an adult to give orders to the “cook boy”.

She lasted a week.

It was just as demoralising when she worked as a doctor’s receptionist.

Three months later, in 1965, as Rhodesians joined queues for immigration visas out of the country, she returned to her homeland.

But in November 1967 she was lured back to Australia by Robert and Janet with the offer of work in their new legal practice.

So for the second time, she threw herself into life in her new country, growing to accept that her African experience was over.

She remained widowed for 15 years, running the Heytesbury stud from the first 1000 hectares Robert bought in 1971.

Robert Holmes a Court was chair man of

Bell Bros and of the Albany Woollen Mills.

In late 1977, a late-night phone call from Simon’s worried friends in Botswana said Simon had gone missing on a trip to Johannesburg.

His vehicle, stripped of plates and with the engine number filed off, was later found hidden under leaves in Tsitsikamma Forest National Park, west of Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

There was no passport, there were no clues.

“I went there. When I was standing in Tsitsikamma forest I really felt he was there, somewhere.”

She writes: “It seemed as if the forest was shrouded in a conspiratorial silence .

But whatever happened to my son in that remote, eerie forest remained concealed to us on that agonisingly sad day.”

Ethnee returned to WA for what was to become a tortured three-year wait.

She credits her fourth husband Ronnie Critchley for helping her get through the terrible time in 1980 after her son’s remains had been identified in the forest.

His death remains a mystery.

In the study, where she spent a year writing, she describes all her photographs; holding a salmon she caught in Alaska almost as long as her own small 152cm frame; Ronnie in the cavalry, and during his polo days in India.

Her four grown-up grandchildren.

A photo of Ronnie and



Field of dreams: Mares and future champions enjoy the lush paddocks at Heytesbury Stud.



Ethnee greets her son, Simon, in 1967.



In her Women's Auxiliary Air Services uniform (1943).



Son Robert, in 1988.

herself meeting the Queen Mother has fallen behind a bookshelf.

She points out the stud's famous racehorses, "our beautiful Mercurial Madam," and "Black Knight who won the Melbourne Cup, nobody else from the West has done that!"

She has photographed every foal born at the stud since 1971.

Robert offered to build Ethnee a house on the property but she and Ronnie opted to stay in the cottage which had so many memories.

As Ethnee drives around the manicured property she feigns an indignant huff when asked if she is able to jump on to the back of a ute for a photograph of her feeding the horses. She whips the car around in a neat u-turn.

When we finish she virtually springs off the high tray to the ground. She sometimes swims at 6am, plays tennis, rides when she can and goes to yoga classes.

She judges at horse shows and takes tours of Heytesbury to collect money for Riding For The Disabled (RDA).

As we pass by the two red-flowering saplings which are memorials to her sons - just replanted after being ringbarked by sheep - she is, above all things, practical when asked how she has managed to rise above so much tragedy.

"I don't think I get angry, I get very sad at times.

"But I'm very busy and I've got so much to do I don't dwell on it."

Skilfully and repeatedly she avoids answering when pressed for the sorts of personal qualities that have enabled her to survive so much.

Is she particularly determined, or strong, or has she just learned how to roll with the punches?

"I think that's more like it," she finally concedes.

"Take it day by day. I think you cope when it happens, you've got to. You should do. Although, some people don't, do they? No I think you've just got to, or SHOULD cope, as things happen.

"Something always good comes out of things, you know?

"Yes I am, I am an optimist."

Ethnee's website: <http://www.southwest.com.au/~ethnee/>

©West Australian Newspapers



Ethnee in the plotting of fice at Thornhill Air Station during World War II. Fit Sgt Colin Campbell is in the foreground





Cottage home: Ethnee turned down Robert's offer to build her a new house. "This one has all my memories in it", she says.

By Tom Henshaw

**E**THNEE Holmes à Court meets me at the electronic gates of Heytesbury Stud south of Perth with an apology: "We're in a bit of a mess," she says. "Follow me and mind out for the branches on the road."

She's not joking. Trees lie across paddock fences and branches litter the road bearing mute testament to a wild storm that ripped through the property the day before.

I follow the diminutive 84-year-old to her home near the stables – a modest cottage covered in ivy and wisteria and surrounded by towering bluegums with dappled skins.

"The trunks look beautiful when they're wet, the colours really come out then," she says as we shake hands. "We planted those when we first came here 28 years ago – this was Robert's first weekend cottage".

In fact, everything around us has been planted and laid out by the Holmes à Court family and helpers.

Avenues of tall lemon-scented gums, native bushes, fenced paddocks of lush grass and stables have all developed from a bare patch of ground.

"Robert planned it," she tells me. "It came together slowly, but he wanted it to be natural – where horses could run without being hindered."

Inside the cottage is pure Africa. Mementos fill every available space. Photographs by the score, bronze sculptures of elephants, fighting sable

antelope and a hunting cheetah in full flight made by her son, Simon, during his days in Botswana, sit on the shelves, hi-fi and fireplace. Paintings of the Cape adorn the walls.

"I'm a hoarder," she says with a chuckle.

It's hard to miss this point.

Ethnèe offers tea and biscuits and we settle in, interrupted briefly by a blue wren pecking at the window. "They are so tame," she laughs, "I had one sitting on my hand the other day."

Then, matter-of-factly: "Now, what would you like to know?"

I know much of what she has done from reading reviews of her biography, *Undaunted*.

What, I wanted to know, is next?

"Well," she says, "I'm thinking about writing a sequel to the book and I'm working on that. We have a big wedding coming up here in November, I'm going to the eastern States at the end of that month and next year will be going to a Greek island owned by friends and to New York to see my twin great-grandchildren."

This is one octogenarian who's not letting the grass grow under her feet. Not even that of one of Australia's most renowned studs.

Since the June 1998 launch of her book, Ethnèe has travelled constantly. First to the eastern Australian States.

It was a whirl of television talk shows,





Memories: Ethnee pauses at the foot of the memorial to her son Robert. It faces directly west, towards Africa.

press interviews and appearances in towns and cities in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Most recently she launched the book in three African countries – Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa where, she says, sales were very strong.

Answering fan mail is almost a full-time job now.

"I answer every one," she tells me. "Here," she holds up some correspondence, "I have two here I will answer tonight."

Brought up by a man who knew Cecil Rhodes in the 1800s, Ethnèe is heading into the 21st century a thoroughly modern woman.

She has a computer in her study, communicates with friends, colleagues and fans by email and has her own website.

"I'm not too up-to-date with that side of things," she says candidly, "But I plan to be soon."

You can bet on that.

Up until a few weeks before I spoke to her, Ethnèe shared her life at Heytesbury with fourth husband Ronnie Critchley. He died on August 27.

"Ronnie would have been 94 yesterday," she says. "You know, he had many problems, but never complained. In the end he said he was ready to slip away. I wouldn't let them take him to hospital." Ronnie – Lieutenant-Colonel Ronald Asheton Critchley, DSO, MC to his subordinates – was a man to be reckoned with in his prime.

He had a distinguished career in the British Army before championing the cause

of conservation in the then Northern Rhodesia.

He was founding president of the Northern Rhodesian Wildlife Conservation Society.

From 1959 to 1963 the society played a pivotal role in mounting Operation Noah, which rescued thousands of animals trapped by the rising waters of the new Lake Kariba.

Ethnèe's constant companions now are her beloved ridgeback, Lara and blue russian cat, Zhivago.

Lara goes everywhere with her, travelling in the back seat of the car.

The only time Lara leaves her side is when she's taken for her after noon walk by a staff member. And then, only under protest.

Zhivago, Ethnèe says, is an intelligent cat.

"He never catches birds, and we have hundreds coming to feed every day.

"But he sometimes brings in baby rabbits. He doesn't hurt them. I take them off him and let them go. I'm afraid we have quite a lot of them here."

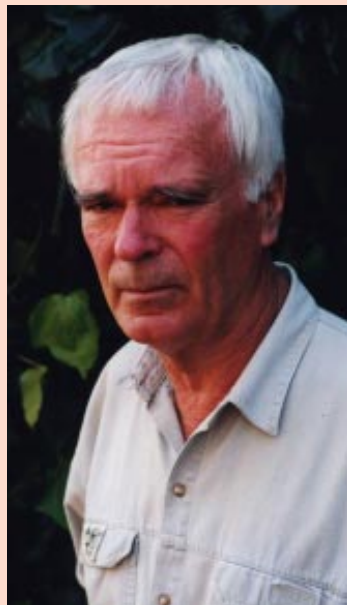
Outside, the late afternoon sun lights up the Darling Ranges.

"We have a monument to Robert at the top," she says, "and sometimes we go up there by 4WD for a picnic or barbecue." It seems a fitting time to leave.

"Would you like a drink before you go," she asks, then with a smile, "perhaps not, you are driving, aren't you?"

# The Great Trek

(No. 2)



Mike White: Latter-day trekker

**O**NE of the reasons for the Great Trek of 1835 to 1848 has a parallel in the circumstances which prompted the mass migration of whites from South Africa during the second half of the 20th century.

At the core of the discontent of many people such as myself was a frustration born out of a lack of meaningful representation in government.

Just as the English colonial authority had ruled the Cape Province without giving sympathetic consideration to Boer grievances, so the National Party dismissed petitions for a more reasonable approach to domestic and regional concerns.

When my family and I decided to move to Australia in the early 1980s, it appeared that there was no hope of reconciliation between black and white political factions in the Republic. Furthermore, there was nothing that I could envisage that would alleviate or break down the impasse.

So we sold our townhouse in Pietermaritzburg on a falling market, lost heavily on a partnership in a residential development scheme and realised about half

of what we had been offered a year previously for our highly successful steakhouse. Hardly the stuff of happy memories or an auspicious beginning in faraway, hostile climes.

We arrived in Perth, Western Australia, in January 1986 under the now-defunct family unification scheme. My sister had married an Australian she met in London in the 60s and she guaranteed our financial commitments, which made us personae grata.

My wife, Aliko, is a radiographer with experience in hospitals and private practice in England and South Africa. We assumed that she would have no trouble finding a job in that field, but had reckoned without the intervention of hospital unions and medical insurance agencies.

After several exhausting weeks, we abandoned the idea and she found work in the fashion industry. She is still happily and gainfully

employed in a small boutique owned by an Italian family, selling designer labels to those who can afford such luxury.

Our sons, Justin and Paul, enrolled at university immediately on arrival and had no difficulty finding work when they graduated.

Justin has a B.Comm and an MBA which took him into finance and business management and Paul has a B.Sc in Computer Science. He works as a contractor to agents in Sydney and London.

Paul lives in Perth with a charming lady who came across from Johannesburg at much the same time that we did. Having them here again with us after periods of absence in London, Canberra and Melbourne is a source of great happiness for Aliko and me.

Much to our disappointment, Justin went back to South Africa in 1995 for a holiday and returned there permanently a year later to marry a fine girl he met while at school at Maritzburg College. They are doing exceptionally well in Johannesburg and serve as a reminder that parents have little or no influence on decisions their children might take in later years.

After working as a sub-editor for West Australian Newspapers for 11 years, I quit structured employment at the end of 1996 and joined a team of freelance writers who contribute house reviews to the paper's real estate section.

Seeing some of the city's magnificent homes is interesting, but my satisfaction comes from writing a weekly sports column for The Natal Witness, the morning daily in Pietermaritzburg.

Now that sporting links between Australia and South Africa have been renewed, there are lots of opportunities for comment - and a chance for me to revive an association which started in 1975.

Would I return to live in South Africa? At my stage of life and in the diminished circumstances in which my wife and I find ourselves, Medicare - the superb government subsidised health care system - is central to our well-being.

We could not afford to be ill anywhere else, no matter how much I might pine for a day on a Drakensberg trout stream or a sight of the fairest Cape of all.

We're here- although in fairness I should add that Aliko would not move if she could.

For her, Africa is gone. Home is a three-bedroom town house we own in a quiet suburb a short stroll from Perth's beautiful Swan River.

Sadly, some South Africans still see migrants as deserters of the greater cause.

I prefer an image of the trekkers who crossed the Orange River into the wild unknown.

The only difference, surely, between what they and we did lies in distance and direction.

Michael White,  
Perth, Western Australia.

# The Wild Wild Wet!



... and the guys who get you that way



**AFRICA'S** scope for adventure does not get better than rafting down the thrashing rapids which surge from the mighty Victoria Falls on the Zambia-Zimbabwe border.

But behind the hype of a thrilling whitewater ride is the reassuring brawn and bravado of the rafting guides who make a mission out of giving tourists the ride of their lives while conquering their personal fears. Rochelle Mutton talks to a guide to check what they're made of.

**E**XCITED chatter rises from the 100 metre gorge where several dozen tourists with lifejackets firmly tied, pile into rubber rafts. Few have any real concept of the whirlpool adventure which lies around the bend from the tranquil starting point.

Each guide picks a raft, checking out his crew and deciding whether the for eigners before him need reassurance or are daredevils at heart.

Rowdy youths from the overlander trucks

are likely to be given a good run for their money and shown why the river deserves respect. The company rule - that guides are not to deliberately flip their raft - may just get bent.

The fine line between an adrenalin packed adventure and flirtation with real danger is in the guides' hands and they know through years of experience that the powerful Zambesi River offers both in abundance.

Eliam Mushamboza, 27, has been a



Zambesi whitewater guide for eight years and finds patience and a cool demeanour to be essential to his trade. His impressive body, taut with muscle, combined with charisma and good humour, no doubt goes a long way in gaining the trust, respect and attention of his crew.

There are two types of rafts. In one, a guide rows with oars while the tourists hang on.

In the other, the guide sits at the back with a paddle and shouts commands to his crew of about eight tourists, each with a paddle, who sit on the rim of the raft.

For the latter type, successful communication is just as vital as working out which path to weave through the torrents.

"The paddle boat's a mission - you need to be in total control of your clients," Eliam said.

Some Japanese tourists who thought they were in for a river cruise turned up for white-water rafting in suits and cocktail dresses. It demonstrates how mentally unprepared some tourists are.

Before the journey begins, each guide gives detailed instructions to his crew and puts them through the paces of paddling left and right. The oar boat passengers practice flying pile-ups from one side of the raft to the other, without appreciating it is serious business, in the art of rafting rapids.

Falling out or having the whole raft flip is a fair bet during the course of the trip which may include three metre waves. But if the guide's instructions are followed, there is no need for alarm.

The sheer ferocity of the under currents while doing some "downtime" - the experience of tumbling through the rapids as if in a giant washing machine for up to 20



Eliam Mushamboza: You have to be in total control of your clients.

seconds - can terrify rafters to the point they refuse to continue the trip.

The \$US95 upfront payment be damned!

Eliam said one of the biggest hurdles was language barriers with non-English speaking foreigners. At times he would urgently yell for his crew to paddle right, only for them to paddle left, directly into disturbingly turbulent waters.

Other tourists on the paddle boats fail to

realise the need to paddle hard through rough patches. Some sit on the raft's floor and hang on for dear life when trouble hits.

There are definite spots to be avoided, none more so than a treacherous wedge at the notorious seventh rapid, Gulliver's Travels, called Patella's Gap.

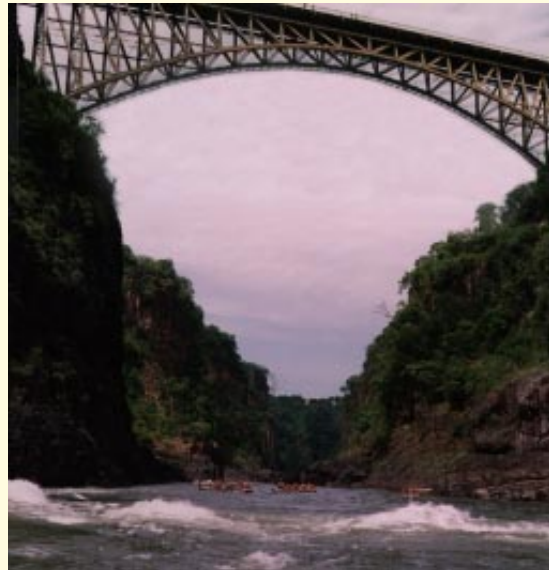
Its name is derived from an incident in which a tourist went overboard and dislocated his knee-cap in the wedge. It holds claim to numerous broken arms and legs.

Eliam was horrified during one trip through Gulliver's Travels when one man went overboard and his entire crew threw their paddles in the water in a bizarre attempt to aid him.

Bruises, aching muscles, severe sunburn and cuts from stray paddles are commonplace.

But with the benefit of lifejackets and nearby rescue kayakers, the odds of serious injury are slim. About 60,000 people whitewater raft down from Victoria Falls each year and deaths have occurred about once every year or two.

The most recent victims included an American who apparently untied his lifejacket and another who had a heart attack.



Bridge over troubled waters:  
Raffers pass under the link  
between Zimbabwe and  
Zambia.

Tourists who emerge from a day's whitewater rafting feeling courageous should spare a thought for the blind and paraplegics who have taken up the Zambezi challenge.

Eliam said the disabled were allocated a personal guide who had a key rule: "If they go in, you follow".

There has been need for special attention to the tourists who have fainted climbing out of the gorge at the day's end. A septuagenarian had to be carried up by several guides.

Shooting rapids on the Zambezi River has only become a commercial sport since 1981 when an American company set up the first whitewater rafting business.

The locals looked on in disbelief as their young men would try their hand at guiding rafts down the torrents which had remain unchallenged since time began.

"Ah! You guys are crazy! You can't play around with the river," was the typical response to greet the Zambezi rafting pioneers.

Eliam said he had seen many aspiring guides throw in the towel as the pressures and dangers got the better of them. Their mettle is tested long before they are allowed to take responsibility for tourists with a gruelling training program in which only the courageous and committed pass.

No kidding, these guides are tough.

When Eliam signed up as a 19-year-old, the test was to withstand a six-week training program without chickening out.

The guides had to quickly learn to read the rapids or face the turbulent consequences and were literally thrown in the deep end.

"You had to swim rapids and see how brave you were - a good couple of kilometres on your own," he said.

"At some point you would think 'when am I going to reach the surface again'.

"The drop-out rate for guides used to be 80 per cent (but) people now know exactly what they're getting themselves into. You need to have a passion for it to keep going or you can easily give up or become susceptible to fear."

Eliam's zeal has made him a Zimbabwe whitewater rafting champion he has competed in several international competitions in the last four years.

When asked whether the adoration which guides receive from women was perhaps also an incentive to keep paddling, Eliam dismissed the notion out of hand.

"I have a few drinks with my colleagues after work and that's all," he said.

"I just love to play with water."



Tall order: The downstream view from  
the Victoria Falls Bridge.

# Knock, knock . . . who's there? Just the hippo from Hell, that's who!

## From CV in the UK

AM eight. Mother is in hospital leaving me in care of doolally uncle. Uncle informs me we are going camping in Kariba. Funny thing about eight-bed chalets. They don't take nine.

Which bod is gonna sleep in the car?

Our brave little hero says it's OK - he will...

All goes well . . . The pyjamas, the teddy, the sleeping bag, the final farewells, the assurances of assistance et al.

About 02h00 some philandering cousin flushes the loo en route back to his own bed.

General awakening. General realisation of something knocking the car (not a small one either). Look out of back window to be confronted by hippo - jaws agape and war ming up for the mating cry . . .

When the windows stopped vibrating, and before the hair had time to settle the night was pierced once more, with our eight year old hero shrieking for said cousin.

Partial amnesia occurs until waking up in bed in chalet in comfort in the morning

After three-year judgment to stay the hell away from wild animals of any sort, (rigorously enforced so I am told by Parks officials up and down the Zambesi), I was allowed to return, sans parental control.

Eight in two vehicles pitch up at camp site in Mana Pools (where apparently three years previously there'd been a huge influx of animals from upstream).

First thing to do when you decamp is for adults to fish out a beer . . . Well, and good.

Then an elephant lumbers through the camp site calmly munching from every second tree. Time to make a run for the cameras and shoot - I mean this beast is going to walk past about 10 metres away.

Women clinging to various men for support (sometimes not their own).

Then the sky caves in and someone douses the sun..

It's dark! Look out the car to find the elephant standing the thickness of glass away and reaching over the vehicle for a second course . . .

I was actually trapped in there for about 20 minutes - I didn't dare move, although I did take about three rolls of film.

Sadly, even a simple 35mm lens doesn't allow you much more than a square metre of an elephant at a time when it's that close to you . . .

I have some great molar shots! The bugger was in my light for the rest, and I didn't fancy using a flash.

The poor woman in loco parentis nearly wet herself and wasn't able to have children of her own until her early 40s.

If any of you have been to Nyepi Camp in Mana Pools, you'll know the jumbo I mean.

Friendly sort - isn't he??



Carolyn at the mike,  
recording for BBC  
Southern Counties  
radio course.

# Stand by for the UK's new Radio Carolyn!

Return to Britain sees SA journalist  
seeking a new career on airwaves

**I** AM Carolyn Howie, a British-trained journalist, who went to Durban, South Africa in 1969 to join the morning daily - The Natal Mercury - and later the afternoon newspaper, The Daily News.

They were exciting, turbulent years in newspapers. I was one of the first women reporters in the Mercury's newsroom and when I left, having done many of the beats - shipping, education, municipal, the arts, pictures editor - half the reporters were women - that says something about our ability to work hard!!

After a stint as PRO for the Mercury I went to The Daily News as Promotions Manager and I really learnt what hard work was - running exhibitions, competitions and promotions.

When I married Eddie Howie in 1970, I married a Scotsman by birth, a journalist by profession, a South African by residency, but a Rhodesian at heart.

Eddie was copytaster on the Mercury when I arrived and later he became Chief Sub and Deputy Night Editor. He too "crossed the street" (there are only two dailies there!) and became features Editor of The Daily News and Sunday Tribune.

Having done his "time" on the Bulawayo Chronicle and lived there in the 1950s, he told me he would take me to "God's





Carolyn and Eddie in his specially-built Lions pub in their country cottage in the village of Byrne, Natal, where they hosted so many Rhodesian friends.

country” and for 22 wonderful years he took me once or twice a year to enjoy the fabulous company of friends and work with some of the finest Lions it has been my pleasure to meet.

All during this time Eddie was president five times of Lions Clubs - Durban, the Ridge and Richmond (Natal), and it was through his work for the folk in Rhodesia during UDI, that we had our happiest times.

He raised money in SA and on two occasions we went to London to buy supplies. Firstly, it was measles vaccine to send up to the rural areas because destruction of the clinics during the war meant children were dying. Then we bought equipment for the blind like white canes, but the most spectacular were the surgical instruments.

The surgeons at the Sharp End were working in Casevacs (mobile operating theatres) and having to amputate using crude instruments, because the correct ones were unavailable. Eddie got clearance from Prime Minister Ian Smith personally and we flew up to Salisbury one Friday evening. The next day we were taken to regimental headquarters to see the instruments being placed in the Casevacs and watched them pull out to the front.

Then in 1980 Elfie Eltherardis, who was District Governor of 412 (Rhodesia, Botswana,

Mozambique and Malawi), explained to Eddie that Kariba had no ambulances - pregnant women were being driven to hospitals in Land-Rovers!

With the help of the Lions Clubs of Somerset West, Richards Bay and the Ridge, he raised enough money to buy an ambulance on a Durban municipal second-hand auction. He had it overhauled and fitted out with

stretchers and railed it to Salisbury. Petrol was rationed but Dave Kay (who became a dear, life-long friend) filled the tank and Eddie drove it to Banket and stayed the night with tobacco farmers, Yvonne and Arthur Larter.

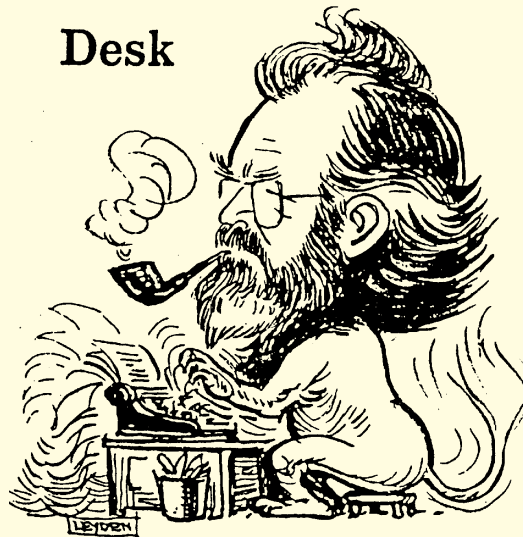
There he was met by an old chum and member of the Lions Club of Kariba, Jet Baker, and Jet rode gunshot out the passenger window as they joined the convoy. The convoy before was “revved”, as was the one after. But whether it was the Red Cross painted on the side or the hand of

the Almighty, I leave you to speculate, but they got through. The Medical Superintendent cried when he saw the ambulance, he was so thrilled.

Years later we went back to Kariba and the ambulance was still doing yeoman service.

Eddie couldn't have done all he did in Rhodesia without the wonderful support of the

## From the President's Desk





(From left) Jet Baker, then Lions President of Kariba, with Yvonne and Arthur Larfer of Banket, and Eddie in front of the ambulance, saying goodbye at dawn to join the convoy on the last leg of the journey to Kariba.

Lions Club of Marlborough - one of the most successful clubs in Salisbury. Regularly 95 to 100 Lions sat down to meetings. No wonder they were so successful with their service and care in the community! We were proud to be made honorary members.

But I am supposed to be telling you about how I settled down in my new home after I left Africa.

But first I must tell you that just six months after retiring in 1993 my beloved Eddie died of a heart condition. He was only 57. I had by this time left the newspaper and started my own public relations consultancy but through this work was able to keep in touch with all my old friends on the newspapers, and that's what kept me going.

In June 1998 I returned on holiday to see my family in England and four days after landing, my only sister was diagnosed with renal failure. My stepfather, by then 86, needed my support too, so it was clear that I must return to the UK.

I found a perfect flat (still only at roof height) half way between my sister's home and the hospital to which she has to go for dialysis treatment so that during the cold, snowy months, she can stay with me. (I bought it only 2 weeks before I left but even found a solicitor who got all the paperwork done in that time...because he was going on holiday the day before I flew back to SA!!!).

While in Surrey I went to a concert and the comperes were on Radio Redhill, a hospital radio station - something I had never heard of. I told my sister that's what I would

like to do when I returned.

After seeing her through an operation and into the dialysis treatment programme, I promised my sister that I would be back in three months. I returned to Durban with the daunting task of closing my business, selling my flat and some of the contents, packing up after 28 years there, shipping my furniture and above all saying goodbye to friends of 30 years.

Whether you believe in guardian angels, fate or whatever, I can tell you each step of the way was planned for me. i.e. I sold my flat within 10 days of my return, when there were FIVE in the block of EIGHT flats for sale at the same time. It was pre-election time and the property market was flooded. But not only did I find a buyer, but he paid me cash - unheard of in South Africa at that time.

I mention this to illustrate how my next steps were plotted for me too. Within five days of returning to the UK I read in the local paper that Radio Redhill, was looking for volunteers to train as broadcasters. Out of 18 trainees I was one of six chosen for training. I gained my "stripes" in May.

The following week I went to Radio Redhill's AGM and the programme director asked for volunteers to join their News Programme. He thought I was manna from heaven, I knew I was lucky to be getting experience.

He later asked me to join the news team of Susy Radio, an RSL (temporary licence radio station raising money during two months a year for The Children's Rainbow Trust for the



**Breakfast in the Matopos: (from left) Ewart Armstrong, former manager of the Bulawayo Chronicle, a friend of his, Eddie and Carolyn.**

physically handicapped.) My experience in a newsroom and recording and editing books for Tape Aids for the Blind in Durban stood me in good stead. I was sourcing and writing stories and reading the hourly news bulletins. I did another month's stint in May.

By this time I was hooked on radio and in March I was invited to join a team preparing for Reigate FM, a 24-hour classical music station for the Reigate Music Festival. Once again it was run by volunteers, but many were BBC-trained, and once more I learnt a great deal.

I was asked to record and produce ten 14-minute programmes entitled "A day in the life of..." This was a real learning curve and the editing was horrendously long winded but it prepared me for running (almost single-handed) the news for the daily 15-minute News Report. This included actuality inserts, which were recorded in the afternoon and edited before we went on air at 5pm.

To keep up with the news I listened to local radio stations and one day driving along I heard on BBC Southern Counties that they were to run a six-month radio competency and journalism course for unemployed, mature students in September and were looking for applicants. The course is a City and Guilds qualification.

Just five days before I was due to take some holiday, I was called for an interview to Guildford. On returning home the phone rang and I was told that they had had 60 applicants but if I wanted one of the only seven places on the course, one was mine. I

grabbed at it.

Now this OAP has a chance of a new career in radio. There are no illusions. There are no places as staffers but hopefully by the end of the course I shall be competent to create (and hopefully sell) programmes to local stations.

Granny here is holding on by her fingertips while computer-literate 30 and 40 year-olds pick up the technology like geese lightning. It is 40 years since I last wrote exams and the thought of writing (not typing) examinations, let alone studying for them, gives me nightmares.

But life's a challenge - that's what Africa has taught me. I am grateful for all those wonderful years. My heart aches for the bush, the mopani trees and breakfast over a braai in the Matopos, but I have those wonderful memories to sustain me through the horrid British winters and I have email to chat to all my friends in Australia, Canada and South Africa and now Out of Africa on the Inter net!

### Christmas story

**T**his brief Christmas story with a difference is from the notebook of the Political Commissar of a group operating in the Mr ewa district of Rhodesia in the late 1970s. Names have been changed - because I don't recall them but the message remains after all these years.

Dated Dec 26: "Comrade Phineas today given 10 lashes for unacceptable behaviour as yesterday he became very drunk and went around the town shouting 'Pamberi ne Jesus, Pamberi ne Christmas' - Rough translation "Forward with Jesus, Forward with Christmas"

No doubt Phineas would have been extremely embarrassed and upset receiving lashes on top of what must have been a mighty hangover.

Ian D



Province of Inhambane  
Ministry of Fish and Wildlife  
MOZAMBIQUE

### WARNING

Due to the rising frequency of human-lion encounters, the Ministry of Fish and Wildlife, Inhambane Branch, Mozambique is advising hikers, hunters, fishermen and any motorcyclists that use the out-of-doors in a recreational or work-related function to take extra precautions while in the bush

We advise outdoorsmen to wear little noisy bells on clothing so as to give advanced warning to any lions that might be close by so you don't take them by surprise.

We also advise anyone using the out-of-doors to carry "Pepper Spray" with him or her in case of an encounter with a lion.

Outdoorsmen should also be on the watch for fresh lion activity, and be able to tell the difference between lion cub shit and big lion shit. Lion cub shit is smaller and contains lots of berries and dassie fur. Big lion shit has bells in it, and smells like pepper.

Enjoy your stay in  
MOZAMBIQUE

(Hey, I didn't write this . . . it came in an anonymous email!