

The FOTHERGILL treasure trove.

Millennium fame for my new country!

I found the baby I gave away!

Golden find in back bedroom of an Aussie farmhouse



CRATCH the surface and you'll find gold. It's an old saying, but so true.

Well, it was for us, this time around. Late last year we got a whiff, pardon the pun, of a wildlife disaster at Kariba.

With water pouring into the massive dam after years of drought the area's wildlife found itself trapped on ever-decreasing islands, without food.

The inevitable happened but it's obvious things went unnoticed for

some considerable time.

Eventually, a belated effort to save some hapless animals got underway, at the same time a coordinated effort to feed others swung into action. It was codenamed Operation Haybale.

I was reminded, then, of the original Kariba animal rescue operation back in the 1950s and early 60s and the man who became famous because of it.

Rupert Fother gill, true Rhodesian hero, led a band of black and white daredevils to save thousands of animals. But once it was over, Fothergill dropped out of sight. sadly, he died in the early 70s of a heart attack.

Having once known his son Martin and daughter, Hilary, briefly in the 1970s I bought the power of the Inter net to the fore, found both - and his widow - after a short search and discovered a wealth of photographic r ecord mouldering away in a Queensland farmhouse.

True Rhodesian gold-plated history.

Some of the pictures are in this issue, along with an amazing range of southern African talent.

Three contributors are on the cusp of publishing new works; another has given us her heartwarming story of reunion with the daughter she gave up for adoption some 20 years ago; a Durban grandmother has forsaken the bright lights for a life looking after a group of abused American children and yet another tells us of her life in New Zealand - a place she loves with a passion!

We have another mix of the strange, but true happenings that seem to occur only in Africa. Most have been reported in the regular press, so we can only assume them to be true! Either way, they are here to raise a smile and not to point fingers at anyone.

Hope you enjoy this issue. It's been a hoot putting it together.

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I've found the baby I had to give away



Mother and child reunion: Pam and Rosanne meet at the airport

Tears of joy for Pam Allman as she meets the daughter she gave up for adoption

LEFT South Africa a bewildered unhappy 21 year old, pregnant, penniless and unable to confide in my family.

I read that ther e were unmarried mother's homes in the UK and with the help of a friend, bought a one-way ticket.

I had one contact, a fellow South African who had lodged with us for a while.

To say the next few months were difficult would not be an exaggeration! However, with the help of my UK friend and his family, I

survived to give birth to a little girl who was adopted after 10 days in Scotland by a family I liked the sound of.

This was the hardest decision I have ever had to make in my entire life yet I knew I had no choice and had to do what was right for the baby.

By now I had decided to remain in the UK and went through the ritual of work permits etc. and then in 1974 I married an Englishman, had two children and eventually,

after 17 years, became a British subject.

Of course I never forgot about my first daughter and then in 1998 I went on the Internet and decided I would have a go at trying to trace her although I knew the actual contact had to be made by her - at least I could show I was looking.

I registered with every possible site relating to adoption, here and all over the world.

Then in October last year, the unbelievable happened and we made contact.

It is very difficult to explain the emotions and feelings of our first contact but we cried and spoke for hours on the phone, she in Glasgow, me in London. We arranged a meeting for the following week and then subsidised the telephone network with calls all day, every day.



Rosanne and her son, Ethan

Everything turned out perfect - my daughter, now called Rosanne, and I formed such a bond and it was as if we had known each other all our lives.

Her Mum had encouraged her to find me and we too have become close friends.

I am fortunate that her Dad had taken cine films thr oughout her life and these are now on video so I was able to see her whole life unfold. We are still in daily contact, meeting as often as possible and my family here and in SA, all adore her. I was at last able to tell my mom that she is a great grandmother (Rosanne has a young son, Ethan) and she was delighted once she recovered from the shock.

I am telling you this story as I know fom the adoption search lists that there are many, many South African girls who went through the experience of having to



Pam, left, son Greg, Ethan, second daughter, Lauren and Rosanne last November

give a child up for adoption and although the reunions are not always successful, I wanted to share my happiness and let them know that they should never stop trying to find their child.

Not even winning the lottery could bring me this much happiness.

If any readers out there remember me as Pam Riley (now Allman) from Pretoria (1946-1969) or from Loreto Convent, Skinner Street and would like to write, or if anyone needs any help in trying to trace an adopted child, I would be pleased to answer any e-mail I receive.

Jakki and Colin's email address:

coljak@wave.co.nz



Jakii and Colin ... run a 250-cow dairy farm on their own.

Jakki Handcock was born in Salisbury, and raised in Kariba. She emigrated with her family to South Africa in 1979 and settled in Pietermaritzburg. On a trip Germany in 1986, she met New Zealander Colin, a dairy farmer and moved to that country in 1987.

Millennium fame for my adopted country!

EW Zealand was recently described by a top Journalist from Washington as having "an unfortunate positon on the alobe".

Sure we do live in the shadow of our big neighbour Australia, but this New Year's Day, our unfortunate postion paid of f allowing us to romp into the new century a good two hours before Aussie and indeed the rest of the world.

Ahead for once! Never before has such publicity been showered on New Zealand and the world caught a glimpse of life in New Zealand -many for the first time ever.

New Zealand comprises three islands the North Island, the South Island and Stewart Island. We are well known for having a population of three million people and 60 million sheep. Up North ae the stunning Bay

of Islands - a sight to behold from the air as one comes into land at Auckland airport.

Ninety Mile beach is up there - another areat tourist spot and such a flat, good beach that tour buses use the beach to travel down the top of the island rather than

Auckland is south of this area and the largest city in New Zealand. Nearly two million of our three million population live

Auckland is known as 'City of Sails" and one can see why. It has a geat harbour housing thousands of boats.

It is a modern city with many international shops, restaurants, cafes etc... Built recently in Auckland is the tallest building in the southern hemisphere - the Sky Tower, a huge draw card to tourists.

'Auckland is known as City of Sails and one can see why. It has a great harbour housing thousands of boats'

The Americas Cup Village in downtown Auckland is the hub of all activity in the centre of town due of course to the Americas Cup yatching, which we recently won again -

the first time a country has held it in consecutive tournaments.

Auckland is extremly spread out and has the usual upper and lower class areas. Thee are some crime problems in Auckland, but this is not unusual for a big city.

Housing is good expensive in the inner
city areas, but
affordable in the
suburbs if one does not
mind commuting to
work. Roads ae good,
but busy. Auckland
spreads over the
harbour bridge to an
area known as North
Shore.

Very pretty area this with lots of boutique shops and cafes. It is easily reached from downtown Auckland by ferry. En minutes from Auckland Central is a beautiful beach, ideal for children.

South of
Auckland is the
Coromandel Penninsula
where I am lucky
enough to live. Hee
are some of the best
beaches in the country
but you won't see any
highrise hotels or tourist

shops on the esplanades - only sand dunes, native grasses and sea.

Very unspoilt and beautiful. Roading on the penninsula is terrible and in fact due to this big tour buses cannot reach many of the beaches probably explaining why they have remained so unspoilt. As well as the beaches, the Coromandel is home to some of the biggest forest areas on the North Island.

Coromandel is the "green" capital

omanaei is the "green" capital of New Zealand, and

of New Zealand, and the co-leader of our Green Party who recently won the Coromandel seat allowing five of her party members to reach Parliament, lives here.

Rotorua is the North Island's biggest draw card. This is a city literally steaming! It is an area of geo-thermal acitivity, seen nowhere else in the world to this extent. Big geysers and mud pools are everywhere, and walking down the main street of Rotorua you can often see steam seeping up through cracks in the pavements.

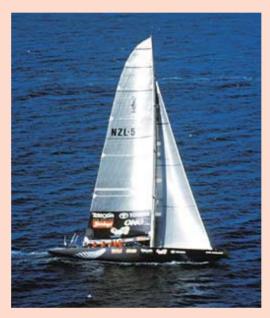
Rotorua has a very prominent sulphur smell due to the thermal activity and there are huge areas of mud pools, geysers, etc.. for tourists to walk through and experience.

The mud pools contain boiling mud and have to be fenced off in case anyone falls in. Lake Taupo is a big natural lake about an hour south of Rotorua and is big for tourism and

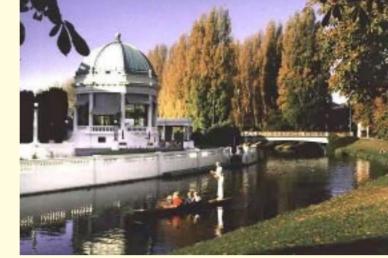
fishing. Over the east side of the North Island is Gisborne - the city that was the first to see in the New Year in this country due to its easterly position. This area is a large Maori area where the culture is prominent and respected.

At the very end of the North Island is our









Capital City Wellington. A relatively quiet city in tourist terms, but a pretty enough place to house our famous beehive shaped Houses of Parliament.

Wellington is known as windy Wellington and landing at Wellington airport is not a mission for those afraid of flying!

Wellington, like Auckland is now very cosmopolitan with international restaurants etc. A short trip access Cook Strait takes one to the South Island.

But there is a rare treat to behold befor e arriving in Picton - the Marlbourough Sounds.

This is an exquisite area of bays, fjords and forests, many only reachable by boat. Nelson at the top of the South Island is the area that receives the most sunshine in New Zealand and is a quaint interesting city.

Christchurch is the South Islands biggest city and known as the City of Gardens.

It has lovely parks and the beautiful Avon River running through the city.

Christchurch is very spead out and can get very cold! Fom Christchurch one can reach many tourist areas - whale watching off the coast being one of the most popular.

From Christchurch driving south you go through the Canterbury Plains and Central Otago - a beautiful aea with many mountains and lakes. Thee is a huge ski industry in New Zealand, but this is not common knowledge. World Class ski teams come and train here and it is a top tourist attraction for visitors to the South Island.

Queenstown is south of this and the adventure capital of the world. A fantastic tourist spot with sports such as white water rafting, bungy jumping, jet boat racing etc.

Bungy jumping was invented by a Kiwi and then taken onto the world stage. Tourists flock to Queenstown and it is a festive buzzing place day and night.

South of this is Dunedin, a student city and the "Scottish capital". Many families of Scottish descent still live here and Dunedin has its own castle where some Scottish traditions are still carried out.

Dunedin is a cold place but one of the biggest cities in New Zealand. Southland is at the end of the South Island - an area of sheep

stations and dairy farms, with Invercargill being the most southerly city.

I came to New Zealand in 1987 after meeting a Kiwi farmer at the October fest in Germany. We married a year later and I have never left. The are bleak sides to life in NZ as there are everywhere. Education and Health are in strife and there are many social problems with young kiwis, due in my opinion to NZ being far too liberal on many issues.

We are a social welfare state with high unemployment and that of course brings many problems too. Noone could ever come to NZ and expect to have a br eeze.

Life is tough here and we hold the dubious record for office burnout in the world. Being a country of pioneers, the Kiwi is used to hard work and those seeking a life here, have to accept this.

Take us for example - we run a dairy farm milking 250 cows, a job worthy of a labour force of 6-8 people anywhere else in the world. But here we run it alone, with my husband doing the lion's share of work.

There is no provision to pay labour so it has to be done by ourselves. This is tough and many farmers struggle, despite farming still being New Zealand's primary industry.

They breed them tough in this country too - young would-be rugby players are forced into two-hour-long training sessions each week, usually bare foot and in freezing conditions - all at the age of 7!

Rugby is not only a sport but a way of life for New Zealanders.

Despite acute homesickness for Africa, which is ongoing, I marvel at how fortunate I am to live in this country - a country where no beach is more than three hours' drive away from any point, and where you can lie on a beach in the morning, hop in your car and be skiing in the Southern Alps that after noon!

That's Africa!

'Muti' goat stops president in his tracks

OU don't mess with black goats carrying "muti" bags. Zimbabweans know the power of these animals and give them plenty of space when they're around.

Enough power, even, to stop a president.

So it was one Friday when President Mugabe was heading off to see his new love, Grace, back in the early days, according to an informant.

The motorcade was speeding along near Lake Mac when out stepped a black goat with an afor ementioned "muti" bag around its neck.

The whole motorcade screeched to a halt. The goat sidled up to the leading vehicle and just stood there.

A pickup full of heavily armed soldiers came from the back of the motorcade to see what was going on.

They saw the goat and they were given orders to kill it.

No way, José. THEY weren't about to get on the wr ong side of the spirits.

Mr Mugabe it is said to have screamed at them from his car. But he was a mere mortal – they weren't about to have a spell put on them for anyone!

A motorcycle outrider is said to have eventually plucked up enough courage to nudge the goat to the side of the r oad and the motor cade was able to get going again.

This is all apparently happened in front of a petrol station and the local populace were just killing themselves laughing.

Zimbabwean witchdoctors use the black goats to dispose of evils.

Doctor dead set on payment

OURNERS at a Ghanaian funeral wer e astounded when the "dead" man arrived for the cer emony, says a report from Accra. It began when Cujoe Gokah, 32, from the Volta region had had surgery for a hernia and could not pay the \$120 hospital bill.

After several fruitless attempts to get the family to pool the cash to pay it, surgeon Dr A K Tachie, according to the Ghanaian T imes, sent a message to Cujoe's family saying he had died.

The family promptly settled all the medical bills, and arranged for the body to be handed over.

A few days later mourners arrived chanting funeral dirges and singing Cuioe's praises. They even brought a coffin.

Suddenly Cujoe appeared in the door, to the astonishment of the mourners. The doctor then explained it had been a trick to get them to pay Cujoe's bills.

Their joy at finding Cujoe alive was much stronger than any anger at the doctor's trickery and the "funeral" turned into a party.

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Heather standing next to a billabong off the Murray River, South Australia in 1999.

Heather's in clover!

Heather Shearer is no stranger to moving countries. She has left South Africa twice - once for New Zealand and a second time for Australia. She is now happily settled in NSW

HO would have thought back then, in those idyllic days of the early 1960s that Africa would change so much, and that her children would be scattered all over the world?

Those were such innocent days then; a perfect time warp, or so it seemed to my young self.

I had the sort of childhood that could not possibly exist anymore, and if so, would be the feature of many a documentary on Wild Children or something equally ludicious.

My father, John Coleman, was a game ranger in the Wankie National Park, and my two younger sisters and I were raised in the bush.

We cut our first teeth on biltong

(perhaps why I am now a vegetarian), had orphaned wild animals for pets and knew nothing of television or fast food.

I don't think we even ate sweets until we went to school, where, for the princely sum of 5c a week, we got a whole bag of such delights as 'niggerballs', sherbet and liquorice.

I sometimes visit agricultural museums and recognise kitchen equipment that we used to use...and I am only 37!

My father left the National Parks in the late 60s and started his own professional hunting business, something which he still does, on and off.

We lived mostly in Matabeleland, at various places in the bush, including Mazunga Ranch on the road between Beit Bridge and

Bulawayo, and on Sentinel Ranch west of Beit Bridge on the Limpopo River.

We were true wild children, rather unsocialised from having little contact with other children.

I remember we had a pet eland that hated r ed bicycles, and we always took great delight in letting any little visitors borrow our bikes and then sitting on the stable fence in fits of laughter when this enor mous antelope would come thundering out of nowher e and butt them of f, luckily unharmed.

My middle sister and I once took great delight in stealing our youngest sister's baby doll, filling it with tomato sauce, hanging it in a tree and then shooting it with our .22 rifles. I recall we got rather severely punished for our little escapades.

When I was in Std 2 and my sister in Std 1, my mother was no longer permitted to teach us at home, so of f we went to boar ding school, St Christophers in Gwanda, whose headmaster, Mr Walsh, I still emember as a wonderfully inspirational teacher.

We were very put out that Nini, our baby sister could stay at home, and even more so one year when the Limpopo came down in flood, and everyone had to evacuate the camp on the river bank and move to high around.

The chickens were in the trees for a week or more until the water subsided, and my grandparents lost many valuable old papers. Stuck in boarding school, we missed all the fun.

That was a fantastically interesting area for a young person interested in science and the environment.

Surrounded by ancient red sandstone hills, with bizarre vegetation and



Sunset - 1996: My sons and I on my paents mountaintop far m near Aurora, W Cape, watching the sunset over the Atlantic.

a myriad of caves, I dreamt of finding archaeological treasure like the golden rhino of Mapungubwe, just over the river in South Africa.

The usually dry river had fantastic semi-precious gemstones, agates and amethysts and rose quartz too.

We dreamt of finding diamonds. We slept in a rondavel on top of the hill,

when the generator was turned off, listening to Squad Cars and A Twist in the Tale on short wave Springbok Radio; and then to the lion and leopard calling through the night.

Eventually we left Sentinel Ranch and moved near the Matopos near Bulawayo, where I started high school at Townsend High, a school I loathed passionately.

From a tiny school of 60 pupils to an all girls school of 1200 or more, it was a great culture shock.

In retrospect, the education was excellent, and the streaming policy of the school encouraged the children to work as hard as possible, particularly if you were in the top stream, as I was.

This was in the middle of the bush war by now, and whenever we drove, we used to fight over who could sit by the window and hold the gun!

My father had brought two rifles from the USA, AR15's and we adored those guns, and lived for the day when we would be caught in an ambush and could shoot some terrs.

Just the other day I spoke to my middle sister, Jill about those days, and she told me she had been terrified all the time...all I remember is excitement!



About 1975, myself and my sisters Jill and Janine, on our farm near the Matopos, Bulawayo.

'We adored those guns, and lived for the day when we would be caught in an ambush.'

My cousins lived out near Fort Vic, and they had a terrible time, having to have Adams Grenades and 8 foot security fencing around their house.

One day in 1977, in the middle
Form 3, my father come to visit us at the hostel, and told us to pack up, as we were moving to South Africa - the next day!
We moved to

near Nelspruit vocados and

where my father farmed avocados and pecans in the off season and hunted the remainder.

I finished off school at Lowveld High School – much slacker than Townsend. I was absolutely delighted to drop some of my 13 subjects like Latin and Chemistry, for only 6 subjects. We stayed there some three years, then moved to Umhlanga Rocks, where I attended the University of Natal for about six months until my father told me I was wasting his money.

For a farm girl from Rhodesia, who assumed that university would be all about people dressed in cloaks discussing philosophy, UND was a bit of a culture shock... all the students discussed was parties. Unfortunately I adapted very well... it was much more fun than philosophy any day!

We then left Umhlanga and moved to Howick, where my parents bought a smallholding. I stayed in Durban for a while, then moved up to join them.

I met my first husband, Leslie Sheaær, who managed a r estaurant in Pietermaritzburg. After we married in 1986, we moved to Empangeni, wher e I had my first son Oliver just after Hurricane Demoina.

Many years after the Limpopo, I finally



Oliver and Robin on top of Lion's Head, just behind our house on Signal Hill Road, Cape Town.

got to see some floods! By then the rest of my family had moved to Hout Bay, and we soon followed.

It was then that I decided to study again, and registered for a BA with UNISA. I worked for Seeff Properties in Noordhoek, until I had my second son, Robin, in 1991.

We briefly moved back to Natal then, then back to Cape Town where we owned a small restaurant in Hout Bay.

In 1995, we sold everything and packed up to move to New Zealand. Whilst Leslie looked for work in Auckland, the boys and I hired a campervan and set off to explore New Zealand.

It was a lovely time, and we spent about three months on South Island. I remember the time when the boys and I climbed a mountain near Queenstown, about 1800m high.

Oliver was 7 and Robin 4. Brought up in Cape Town, the boys had been dragged up mountains all their life.

I carried Robin the last few hundred metres and we sat on the top to look at the view and have a drink of water.

We soon heard voices, and a group of American students came into view, congratulating each other on their great achievement on climbing the mountain.

Their faces certainly fell when they saw a rather small woman and two small children already on top!

Having run out of money, we then moved back to where Leslie had found a job at the Hotel du V in near Pukekohe. I was very unhappy there though, and could not get a work permit.

I was desperately homesick for Cape Town, and wondered, if I loved it so much, why had I left yet again?

I wrote a poem there, watching the endless rain (no wonder it is so given there!), which ended...

"Come home to me my darling
And my flowers will blossom again,
And my cold waves caress
The warm white sands,
And my winds whisper
Sweet love songs to you;
And I shall hold you tight,
And never ever let you go."

The children and I moved back to Cape Town at the end of 1995, where I enrolled at the University of Cape Town to do Honours in Environmental Science.

My poem wasn't very prophetic, as no sooner did I arrive back home that I began making plans which culminated, two years later, in me sitting on a plane on my way to Australia!

During that time, I met my second husband, Andre du Plessis, a ranger on Table Mountain.

We lived in a beautiful house on Signal Hill Road, just below Lion's Head and the Cableway station.

I was working for the Wildlife and Environment Society at the time, as a conservation ecologist.

During this time, I spent a lot of time on the Internet looking for work in Australia, partly because of increasing crime in the area, and partly so my sons could be closer to their father who was by now living in Papua New Guinea.

After two years of trying, and three telephone interviews at 7am, I finally landed work and sponsorship to emigrate to Australia.

My contract stated that I had to commence work by 23 July 1998.

By the beginning of that week, my visas had still not been granted, so I booked my flight, paid for it and flew to Pretoria to camp on the Australian Embassy steps until they gave in, which mercifully they did, in time for me to catch my plane.

I arrived in Melbourne, and got to Echuca by means of just about every sort of public transport available in Australia.

Totally jetlagged, I made the meeting half way through. We flew back to what was



Myself watching Robin play in an exhibition cricket match at the MCG. just before Australia thrashed England.

going to be my base,
Mildura in Victoria by small
plane, and I was half
horrified by the flatness of
the country and half
excited to finally be in
Australia, even if I had
never set foot in the place
before.

I worked for the Murray Wetlands Working Group for 18 months or so, until I heard on the grapevine that my current organisation Wetland Care Australia was looking for someone to run their wetland communication network . . . based in the lovely little town of Ballina on the NSW North Coast

So my sons and I upped and moved to the North Coast, which I had also never seen before, although I did look it up on the Internet first.

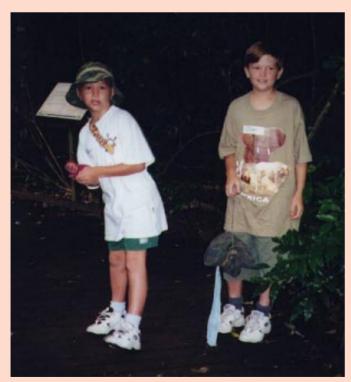
So now at the beginning of the 21 st century (or the end of the 20 th, depending on your viewpoint) I work in a small town, connected to people all over the world by the internet and email, but there's no hippo and crocs in this river, and I long for the sound of the nightjar.

I did mostly cure my
homesickness for Cape Town though,
when I spent a week solo
bushwalking in Wilsons Promontory in
Victoria – I could never do that in
South Africa!

So, only sometimes now, after a few reds, or watching news of Cape Town fires, do I feel a quickly suppressed pang for home.

Australia is very diferent in many ways, and much more placid, but you soon get used to the slower pace of life.

I intend to travel back later this year, for a visit, and after two years, will probably find it a bit like returning to school after you have left, somehow smaller maybe, the same yet strangely different.



Robin and Oliver Shearer bushwalking in a local nature reserve near Ballina, NSW

That's Africa!

Sex bet wife gets judge's blessing

high court in Zambia ruled that a wife could commit adultery to honour a bet of nearly \$200 with her husband to see which of them was infertile.

The Times of Zambia newspaper reported that 37-year-old Dorothy Mapani and her 56-year-old husband Effas Ondya had accused each other of being infertile after their marriage remained childless.

The extraordinary bet was revealed in court in the capital, Lusaka, when Mr Ondya said he had to prove his wife's allegation that he was impotent was untrue.

In order to do that he said he had allowed her to have sexual intercourse with any other man to prove that she was not barren.

"We bet 500,000 kwacha and I am ready to give her the money if she conceives," he told the court.

"We made the bet on 22 November [1999] and if she won't be pregnant by 22 February [2000] then she should give me the money," Mr Ondya said.

The couple approached the court in the capital, Lusaka, to rule on whether the marriage should continue or whether they should separate.

Judges Sainet Chiutambo and Joseph Mumba ruled that the couple should stay together, but that the bet still stood.

"There is clear indication that you have allowed your wife to have sex with other men to let her fulfil her challenge and as such the bet remains a bet," the judges said in their ruling.

The newspaper did not say how long the couple had been married

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Easy does it: Rupert Fother gill carefully handles a rescued warthog.

African treasure!

Pictorial history of an amazing animal rescue mission lies idle in a family's back bedroom

By Tom Henshaw

TREASURE trove of central African history lies dusty and almost forgotten an ocean and continent away in far north Queensland, Australia.

A mahogany kist full of photographs, newspaper cuttings and film sit in a bedroom/study belonging to Hilary Drysdale, daughter of one of Souther n Rhodesia's most colourful game rangers - Rupert Fothergill - hep of Operation Noah.

The massive animal rescue operation was launched as the waters of Kariba dam rose inexorably up the Zambesi Valley floor, marooning the area's wildlife on everdecreasing islands in the late 1950s.

Many hundreds of animals owed their survival to the untiring efforts of Fothergill and a small band of rescuers and their efforts became the stuff of legends.

Operation Noah was the first conservation effort of its kind and planted the seeds of similar rescues that were to follow around the world.

My interest in Operation Noah and the Fothergills was eignited late last year after news filtered from Zimbabwe of a wildlife disaster unfolding at Kariba.

Animals were starving to death on islands in the man-made lake and a combined operation by Government and



Point taken: rescuers try to bag a porcupine

private organisations called Operation Haybale had been launched to save at least some (see pages 21-22).

If only Rupert Fothergill and his helpers had been there ...

It was then I thought of the Fother gill family and wondered where on earth they'd ended up - and if they had any photographs of his exploits.

I'd met Hilary once in Durban back in the '70s and her brother, Martin also had moved to Durban, after Hilary returned to Salisbury on the death of her father.

Martin worked as a dolphin trainer at the Oceanarium and later, I heard, he and his wife had moved to New Zealand.

After some Net surfing I managed to contact him.



He and wife Jackie are both in the real estate business in Tauranga, on North Island. They have a daughter, Jessica, aged 13.

They have been in New Zealand six years and, although initially found it a struggle, now love the country.

When I asked him about pictures of his father he pointed me towards Queensland.

"Hilary and mum

Cornered: Fothergill confronts an angry rhino in this old newspaper photo. The arrows point to those who decided a tree was a safer bet.



All creatures: A lizard gets the Fothergill treatment.

have all the photos and stuff," he said.

And sure enough, that's where I was to discover the historic pictorial hoard.

I called Hilary at the family property outside Mackay. where she, husband Bruce and daughters Kirsten, 15, Bridget, 13, and Courtney (9) farm cattle and grow hay. In addition, Bruce runs his own fertiliser business in Mackay. She laughed at my question about how and when she went to Australia.

"Well, it was like this," she said. "Bruce came to Australia first – landed here the day Mugabe took power.

"About six months later he decided he couldn't do without domestic help and called me," she said with a laugh.

"At least, that's my story,!"

She told me: "Bruce is the eldest of the four Drysdale boys a well known (infamous) farming family from Bindura.

"All four were in the army during the war .

"They are all in Australia now. Bruce's dad Ron lives on the farm with us (his mother Kate died in 1984).

"Scott - Bruce's twin lives in Maitland, Rusty in Rockhampton and Forbes in Cairns.

"We were married in Atherton where we lived for about two years; from there we moved to Ayr and then on here to Mackay.

"We run a fertiliser and chemical business in Mackay which involves supply of



Soggy tails: Fothergill and an African ranger save two more animals.

fertiliser and chemicals as well as a spreading service, soil analysis service and chemical recommendations.

"We have a small property about 15 km south of Mackay. We have about 160 acres which has about two kilometres of creek frontage.

"It is a tidal creek
- we are about 6 km
from the sea and only
about 100 metres walk
from the house to the
creek where the fish
and mud crabs are
abundant, so needless
to say not much
housework gets done!

"We also have a fresh water billabong which is full of bird life. We get pelicans, black swan, wild ducks, geese, jabiru to mention a few.

"We run a herd of about 100 simmental cross brahman and also make and sell hay so as you can imagine we don't have much spare time never the less we love it here and have no intention of ever moving.

"The three girls are all very Aussie, think we "speak funny" and are always correcting our pronunciation (which I find very irritating).

"They are very involved in playing hockey and are also great socialisers and since they are not old enough to drive on the roads yet I find myself spending a lot of time taxiing them around.

"We are well settled and very happy in Australia and have absolutely no regrets about leaving Zimbabwe. The only thing that I miss is not knowing what happened to all the people I went to school with and knew.

"Mum (Christine) is 77 now. She came to Australia in 1986 to join the family and to be near the grandchildren.

"She still corresponds with many old friends from Africa and until recently was an



In the bag: Another buck is saved from the rising waters.

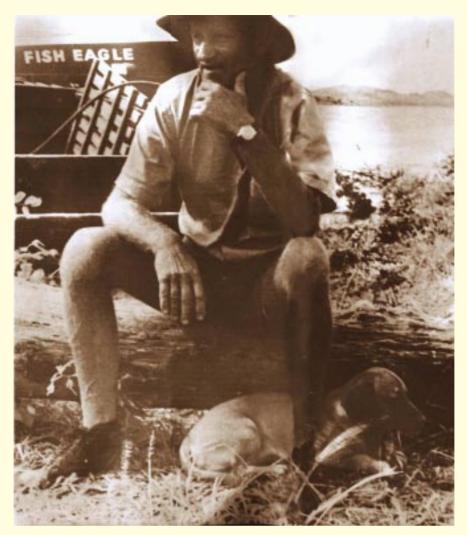
active member of the Mackay RSPCA, Friends of the Library, the Hospice and the Bonsai Club.

" She has a very good collection of bonsai.

"She lives on her own here in Mackay with her two cats and a very fat dog but will be moving into a new retirement village as soon as it is completed.

And the "treasure trove" of old photos and film?

"Well, we really should do something," said Hilary. "The humidity here is bad and could ruin it. It should really be in a temperature-controlled environment, "We'll get round to doing something about it one day . . ."



Time to reflect: Rupert Fothergill and Crackers take a break from chasing wildlife.

Crackers of Kariba

By Bill Higham

T WAS a tense moment. Rupert Fother gill and his men were fanned out across the summit of the granite kopje, the rising waters of the Zambesi River set to swamp the island. The trouble was, telling that to a 40-strong herd of buffalo caught in the tail-end of this man-made flood of biblical proportions.

The wildlife team's task was to force the herd into the water and 'muster' it to the mainland by 'herding' it from two outboar d-powered boats.

Left alone, the animals would be swamped by the rising water and, unable to find their bearings, most would drown from exhaustion trying to find dry land.

The problem was - time. There were further islands, more trapped game, yet the tried-and-the tested tactic of for ming a skirmish line and 'beating' the herd into an ever-decreasing corner of the island and from there into the water -was going nowhere.

This herd was led by an old bullet-scarred, stubborn bull. There is nothing more dangerous in the African bush than a bull buffalo with a healthy hatred for man. Rupert knew this only too well as man and beast stared at each other across 30 yards of tall savannah grass, destined shortly to become the muddy bottom of the (then) biggest man-man lake in the world. "Bass up, boss," a Shona game scout warned.

Rupert nodded wearily. The only trees on the island were the tall, straight mopane, the iron wood of Africa, not an easy tree to climb in a hurry.

He glanced regretfully down at his rifle. If the old bull charged there would be nothing for it.



Lion tamer: Fothergill with a trapped lioness

Those curved horns could impale and toss a grown man 10 feet into the air. And there was no point in drugging the buffalo with a rifle-fired dart.

They needed him to lead his herd to the mainland.

It was a touch and go situation as Rupert pondered on the alternatives. Suddenly the grass in front exploded as something - like a torpedo rippling the surface of the sea - headed straight for the old bull.

"What the ...?"

Rupert looked around. Then realised it must be - had to be - the little stray dachshund they had picked up a few days earlier.

The little sausage dog, left behind by tourists maybe, had become a camp follower and between Rupert and ranger T inkey Haslam had grown an amicable rivalry for rights to become the unnamed hound's 'human'.

"Where the hell ..." This from Tinkey.

The buffalo thrust its giant head into the grass to scare off the approaching 'torpedo' and - forgive the cliche but nothing explains it better - all hell broke loose.

The buffalo roared with pain and threw its head and horns high on its rippling black shoulders, the little dog flapping on the end of

its huge nose like a limp bown rag.

There was a stunned silence from the game department men.

With the little dog's jaws clamped onto his big black snout and, unable to shake him off, the enraged buffalo turned and made a strategic bolt for the water.

A full-throated cheer went up fr om the men as the herd, bellowing and kicking, followed its leader. As the bull hit the water the little dog let go, cartwheeling into the water, swimming frantically to avoid the smashing hooves of the herd.

He made it ashore, shook himself, and looked up at Rupert as though to say, "How'd I do?"

Rupert picked up the wet little dog and cradled him in his arms. Nearby, Tinkey Haslam shook his head. grinned, and uttered the immortal words, "He's crackers."

And a legend was born.

Crackers became Operation Noah's unofficial mascot, riding on the bow of Rupert's boat around the diminishing islands of the lake, alerting the men to trapped snakes, distracting peeved and drug-darted lions while the men dropped nets from trees, snapping at the heels of disgruntled rhinos and generally making himself indispensable in the continuing rescue of Lake Kariba's trapped game.

Postscript - 'Who's Crackers?'

In 1964 Marangora wildlife station was situated northeast of the Chirundu Bridge road (opposite side of the road to today's station).

Perched on the lip of the Zambesi escarpment and overlooking the tangled lowveld Zambesi Valley, one of the last strongholds of African game, Marangora was Crackers' retirement home, living with Senior Ranger Tinkey Haslam and his wife, Margaret, and was a daily visitor to the office block below quarters hill, spending time each day with my father, Jack, the station's tourist officer.

One day in March, Crackers alerted staff to a cobra in the grass and, slowing down with age, took a bite for his trouble.

I reached Marangora the next day, fr esh from London. Dad came up fr om the office and told mum heavily, "Crackers died this morning."

I saw mum's look of anguish and asked, "Who was Crackers?" And so the tale began ...

OPERATION



HAYBALE

It was a desperate attempt to save hundreds of wild animals from starvation. Some lived, many died, But the exercise showed Zimbabweans of all races still pull together when the need arises



By Tom Henshaw

HEY called it Operation Haybale. Zimbabweans, black and white, united late last year in a desperate attempt to rescue and save from starvation many hundreds of wild animals trapped by the rising waters of Lake Kariba.

But the effort proved to be too late for

Nobody will ever know how many perished - it would have been an impossible task to monitor the entire shoreline of the massive man-made lake.

But they did what they could. Far mers donated tonnes of free hay, boatowners





dipped in and shipped the fodder to the islands and local organisations provided the labour to distribute it.

A former environmental education officer with Wildlife Society of Zimbabwe Innocent Paradzayi Hodzonge said the animals' predicament was first noticed last June. Many were seen starving on a number of islands after grazin and browsing them almost bare.

"In July the Department of National Parks captured some animals and moved them to the mainland," he said.

But not all of them were taken off.

"Later in August we were told trapped animals were dying.

"The hippos were the first to go because there was nothing left to eat," he said. The Wildlife Society sent out an SOS to farmers in the region, who responded with tonnes of free hay.

Local residents then joined the rescue. Said Mr Hodzonge: "The scenes on the islands, especially on Betse Island, were not pleasant.

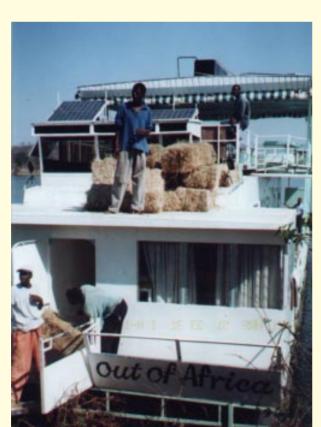
"A total of 58 hippo, 12 impala, eight water buck and two buf falo were found dead.

"Even the scavengers had stopped eating," he said.

Wildlife disasters are not uncommon in Africa. Drought, flood and fire exact an annual toll.

This particular disaster was just one more.

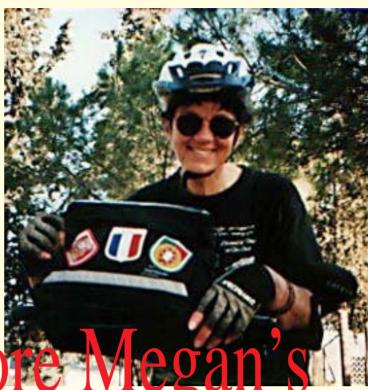
But it demonstrated quite clearly that co-operation can reap lasting dividends.







Photographs courtesy of the Wildlife Society of Zimbabwe - Kariba branch



Saddle-sore Megan's 10,000-mile odyssey

Rhodesian movie actress MEGAN TIMOTHY swapped her comfortable Hollywood lifestyle early last year for a life on the road, determined to complete a round-Europe bicycle marathon in nine months.

Y decision to close my business, sell my house, my car and most of my possessions and go on a bicycle ride around Europe the summer of 1999 was greeted by a bewildered chorus of 'why?' from family and friends.

'A belated mid-life crisis,' they cried. 'Get help!' Indeed, I did feel life was closing in. At



nearly 60, many of my contemporaries were frantically dyeing the grey out of their hair and keeping very busy having various gravity-stricken body parts surgically resurrected.

Conversation centred on cellulite, cholesterol counts and menopausal hormone therapy.

Seems to me, all this chasing around after long lost youth is pretty much a waste of time, unless you're Dorian Gray. Why look back? You've already been there.

But a bicycle? Why a bicycle?
Because I was weary of being
trapped in the insulated lifestyle of the
nineties, weary of communicating



electronically instead of eye to eye, weary of looking at the world through a pane of glass and never actually feeling the reality of it any more. I had a deep need to be exposed to, and made vulnerable to, that reality again.

I needed to go at a leisurely pace that allowed for reflection and detailed observation. Besides, bicycles don't run out of gas and they're easy to park.

When those I knew, realised I was planning to embark on my odyssey alone, they barraged me with dire warnings about all the terrible things that could happen to me 'out there' and gave a lot of advice on how to 'act my age.'

I listened and thought you've got to watch out for that lipo suction, it sucks out all sense of adventure along with the fat cells.

I took off to buy a bicycle. How things have changed since I last rode a bike as a kid growing up in Rhodesia.

Back there at that time, a bike was a bike and it came one way big, black and solid. Gears were for complicated machines like cars and they only had four or five. Why then did modern bicycles have to have twenty-one or more? And what the heck was a 'derailleur'?

Did I want a bike in sea green, sun gold,

Ham radio: Megan and honorary Mayor of Hollywood, Johnny Grant at the microphone, This picture was taken in the late 60s. At the time Johnny was doing a show for the armed forces radio and television service. Megan had just returned from a USO singing tour of Vietnam. Says Megan: "Johnny presides over all things of earth shattering importance in Hollywood i.e. The stars leaving their hands and footprints in wet cement and/or having their names immortalised in Terrazzo on Hollywood Blvd. Such responsibility!!"

royal purple. chartreuse or bubblegum pink? Did I want a plain finish, or one that sparkled? Did I prefer white-wall tyres or solid black? And then there was the price. My bank account shuddered. A bicycle has grown to be a serious purchase - you can pay up to thousands of dollars for a bicycle. **Titanium** frames, front

suspension, gel-filled seats, toe clips and handlebars in more configurations than you can shake a stick at.

All I wanted was a pair of wheels connected to a pair of handlebars and something to sit on. I ended up with a sleek, dark blue Specialised Crossroads bike without any fancy parts that might conspire to break down in the wilds of Turkey or Romania where they couldn't be fixed or replaced.

There seemed no way to get around having twenty-one gears and after a while on the road I was glad to have them. By the end of ten thousand miles I'd learned to use them all to my advantage and have to confess I'd probably still be out there in the wilds if I hadn't had their help.

Within two weeks of wobbling uncertainly around my neighbourhood in the table-flat San Fernando Valley my bike, Roadie (Road Runner) had suffered four

punctures. Not a very promising beginning even though it did force me to become proficient at taking the wheels on and of f.

At first I was just going to take a ride around France beginning and ending in Paris. But looking at the map of Europe, Spain beckoned. It would be nice to see Spain again and after all, it was just next door to France.

My eyes drifted west to Portugal. I'd always wanted to visit Portugal and what the heck; it was just next door to Spain. And so my route evolved - it's wickedly easy to make

grandiose travel plans on a map on your living from floor.

Though I did stick to my original plan of starting and ending my trip in Paris. I ended up adding 18 countries, one principality and the remains of the British Empire.

I bought a lot of maps, mainly to try and find out where the biggest mountains and the busiest roads where so I could avoid them.

Languages? I had to wing it -English is the only one I sort-of know and I'm still struagling with.

No visas or shots were required for the countries on mv route.

Leery of the rumoured Y2K chaos, I decided to take my

ride in 1999 instead of 2000 which meant I had only a matter of months between concept and departur e.

The spontaneity of my endeavour buoyed my spirits and terrified my friends. What should I take? As little as possible, for no matter how hard I tried to avoid them, I knew that sooner or later I was going to have to lug my stuff over a mountain or two.

My arrangements made, I set out for Paris on the 1st of March 1999 in high spirits. There's nothing like the promise of a great adventure to get adrenalin pumping. I was an Arthurian knight heading out on a quest. Off into the dark forest, like Parceval himself, to seek my Holy Grail. It was good to be alive! PARIS: I peered over the fluffy down comforter at the rain-streaked window. I couldn't even see the tile roofs across the courtvard of the hotel. Was cycling off into the unknown such a good idea after all? It's one thing to have high-minded schemes of embarking on Parcevalian quests in the warm comfort of your own home, but it had come to seem a pretty dismal idea in the cold light of an early March morning in a strange city.

The hotel put a stop to my wavering when they informed me they had no rooms

> available for the next three nights. I loaded Roadie, humming Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again" to bolster my courage and took off shakily in the direction of **Boulevard Jourdan** hoping I looked like I knew what I was doing and where I was going for the benefit of the hotel quests gathered on the steps to see me

The outskirts of Paris are about as bleak and depressing as you can get. The miles upon miles of grimy, time in my life. It was

soot-stained apartment blocks looming out of the grey drizzle forced me to appreciate graffiti for the first the only thing that attempted to cheer up the dull cityscape.

Thankfully, due to the roaring, snarling traffic, there wasn't much time to spend

looking around. I found I was fully occupied with a fight not to end up a r oadkill statistic, [not to] have my fingers freeze off and to keep from drowning.

Rain! Rain! Some coming straight down, some coming sideways, some bouncing up from the road and big trucks fantailing enough water to knock you flat. Quite a baptism!

After 80 soggy miles, I polled into Chartres just as dark was falling and the rain was turning to sleet. To heck with camping. I



Running repairs: Megan fixes a puncture.

pulled into an Ibis Hotel. It was warm and dry inside and that's all I cared about. My hands were so cold I couldn't hold the pen to sign the register. My brand new passport was a sodden wad of paper.

Once in my room, I found my hands were still too cold to remove most of my clothes. I ended up 'defrosting' in a hot bath wearing my helmet and gloves, my sweat short hanging around my neck and wondering what in the heck I'd got myself into. The quest for the Holy Grail seemed a lot less important than it had a week ago.

I woke with the painful realisation that I should have made the time for some serious physical conditioning back in California. The previous day's roller coaster hills had exacted an excruciating toll - I was as stif as a board and I swear my joints creaked at the very thought of moving.

Rain drummed against the window. I decided then and there that my plan to ride for six days and lest on the seventh needed a lot more thought. I closed my eyes, pulled the comforter over my head and went back to sleep.

Unfathomable rules governing the arbitrary shopping hours of provincial France plagued me from day one.

I rolled into the village of, Melle, just as the shopkeepers were closing for lunch. For the French, a people who take their food very seriously, lunch hour is, in eality, two to three hours long and may start at noon or one, sometimes even two.

The shops reopen any time from three to five and don't expect anything but the boulangerie to be open on Mondays.

Thirty seconds after noon I screeched to a halt in front of the Melle greengrocer and stared in panic at the locked door. I banged on it desperately. No answer and no indication when it was due to reopen.

Perfect, shiny red tomatoes, big fat zucchinis, sensuous bunches of grapes, pears,





apples and cucumbers mocked me from their open display crates on the sidewalk. You do have to admire a place where goods can still be left out in the open without fear of anyone making off with them.

However, when you're dropdead hungry it is a trial of monumental proportions to keep honour above your gnawing basic needs. There was no indication of how much things were, or where to leave payment if you could figure it out.

I tore myself away and headed for the only restaurant in town. The snooty maitre d' let me know he was doing me a great favour by allowing such a travel-worn creature into his hallowed halls and tucked me away behind a potted palm at the end of the patio by the kitchen.

All he had to offer a vegetarian was an appalling salad bar of cooked vegetables swimming in oily mayonnaise. I walked out.

God I was hungry! I went back to the green grocer's and drooled over the cornucopia of perfect fruit and vegetables. The torture of it all-but reduced me to tears and I seriously debated embarking on a life of crime for the love of a tomato.

Before stomach rumbles could drown out cries of conscience, I left town a clean, albeit, a starving woman.

By the time I arrived in Aulnay, an ancient town on the old pilgrim road to Santiago de Compostela, the shops had magically reopened.

I raided the boulangerie, the cheese shop and, of course the green grocer and rode out of town looking like a rolling Josephine Baker with all manner of fruit, vegetables, bread and cheese tied to various parts of my person and Roadie.

Stopping on a hill overlooking the town, I admired it impressive Romanesque church with its handsome tower and steeple, and made myself a sandwich. I had neglected to buy greens, but a nearby field provided me with delicious young dandelions.

Sitting on that hill that fine, early spring day with a big sandwich in hand and a spectacular view of Poitou-Charentes awakening to new life, I felt truly blessed.

It was exhilarating to be liberated from the mountains of superfluous material possessions I had come to think of as necessary. I was externely comfortable having only what I could easily carry. I didn't miss not having a house, car phone or TV.

After sweating and swearing 3,300 feet up to the Alto Plano, Segovia came into view through the haze with a backdrop of big white clouds stretching across the southern horizon. I nearly fell of Roadie when I realised the 'clouds' were actually the snow blanketed Sierra de Guadarrama.

I'm not talking about pretty little snow capped peaks, I'm talking about great

mountainside 'blankets' of the stuff at eye level, no less! I was not expecting it and the surprise was not one I welcomed.

I mean, that white stuff is frozen water, for heaven's sake!

The
campground,
situated on the
crest of a hill
south of town had
a fabulous view
of the snowcovered Sierra de



Plain sailing: Megan catches her breath next to one of Europe's many canals.

Guadarrama, which was even more breathtaking at sunset. With the snow turned a lovely warm pink by the setting sun you could kid yourself it was Oz and that you were looking at cotton candy.

Forget about lingering over pink cotton candy mountains, I had a more urgent need, which required my immediate attention. I scurried over to the ladies' 'servicios,' opened the first door in the row of stalls and stopped short. The stall was obviously the victim of extreme vandalism. Not satisfied with mere graffiti, someone had made off with the whole toilet, leaving just the hole in the floor. I went on to the next.

Those vandals had been busy. The third was the same. I was fast reaching a state of pretty high anxiety, even muttered a little prayer as I opened the door to the forth - it was of no help. The prayer, I mean.

I stood with my legs crossed, trying to

figure my next move when two young girls entered and, without hesitation, disappeared into the 'vandalised' stalls and close the doors. Had I missed something? I cautiously peered into the fourth stall again. Indeed I had. There were two grooves of moulded plastic in the shape of footprints either side of the dark hole in the floor. It was my introduction to the 'squat' toilet.

Now, if I had been familiar with the term 'squat' at the time, it would have been easier to figure out the procedure, especially under mounting pressure. As it was, I didn't know whether I was supposed to stand up or sit down. Either way, what did you do with your pants? For those in need of education on the matter, you tie them in a bow around your neck.

I looked around for toilet paper and groaned. I had forgotten... there is no such thing as toilet paper in far off places on the roads less travelled.

It was far from a chamber-ofcommerce-day the morning I pedalled up the French Riveira from San Raphael toward Cannes.

As I crested the hill at La

Napoule the sun came out and the Mediterranean turned a sparkling blue - it was if the Big Director in the sky had yelled, 'Action!'

I sailed down the hill slap into the midst of the Cannes Film Festival. It was glorious chaos with fever pitch pretty off the chart in anticipation of the big awards, only three days off.

After having \$2.50 extorted from me for two teaspoons of Hagen Das ice cream I squatted on the Croisette with all the other gawkers and sat back to enjoy the show.

The four lane Croisette was cut down to two lanes to handle the heavy festival pedestrian traffic and the remaining two car lanes were blocked by an army of traffic cops who couldn't seem to agree on who had the right of way.

The wide oceanside sidewalk all the way up to the Theatr e Palais was crammed

with press. Legions of them stalked the beat, armed with still cameras and video recorders with lenses half a mile long and mikes wearing big furry windscreens that looked like baby 'Chewbacas'.

There was desperation in their eyes as they scanned the promenade for a famous face, or even one that might become famous ten years from now. They didn't look like they were in a mood to be fussy.

Mingling with the press were hordes of movie folk, all dressed in 'de rigueur' black, marching purposefully up and down trying to look important. Black was appropriate when you consider it's the 'chambre funeraire' for anyone going home without a fat distribution deal tucked under their arm. It must have been gridlock on the airwaves with all those cell phones in action some had two going at once.

Anyone who ranked as anyone had a

laminated ID tag around their neck and an official festival canvas satchel with the Palm d'Or logo on it. Of course the really big cheeses were chauffeured around in limos with smoked windows and a pair of Palm d'Or pennants on the front fenders.

However, the disadvantage of being the hoi-paloi was, that until the traffic cops came to a decision on who had the right of way, the smoke-glassed limos weren't going anywhere.

Their perky
pennants wilted in the
muggy heat and the
full blast air

conditioners overheated more than one engine turning the luxury transport into impossible sweat boxes.

As you can imagine, escapees from the stalled limos were not looking their best and the press ended up having a field day.

There were plenty of long legs, short skirts, stiletto heels and sleek yachts to go around. Boy, and were those skirts short and the heels high!!

Having worn my share of micro minis and high heels in the 60s I member well the problems of such an ensemble. When

wearing a radical mini you prayed the whole time that you wouldn't be asked to sit down for there is no way to stop that strip of fabric, called a skirt, from ending up around your waist.

If, on the other hand, you found yourself perched atop stilt-like stilettos you staked out the first chair you came across and prayed equally hard that you wouldn't be expected to walk more than five steps.

The conflict facing these Cannes starlets braving both these items at the same time gave me a headache.

On the Cannes beach a three foot high white picket fence divided the 'haves' and 'have nots'. The 'haves' had splendid, white marquees gourmet food, beach umbrellas, towel boys and plastic chaises lined up in neat rows. The 'have nots' had, sand. I saw a few sorbets on sticks, but that was stretching it. The 'haves' better watch out, that three-

foot picket fence is not going to last forever - already it's leaning where two big 'have-nots' were using it for a backrest. The frantic activity quite tired me out so I got back on Roadie and we headed up the coast through Cap d'Antibes where the super-haves live. As beautiful and extravagant as the homes were, the area reminded me of an upscale POW camp. High fences, electronic gates, closed circuit TV and guards. I mean, what's the good of all that money if you have to lock yourself up? I was

happy to be on



Duty call: Megan at the site where so many American soldiers fought and died during World War Two.

Roadie with a few pounds of luggage and the freedom to go where I pleased.

Southern Italy was baking. I left Vasto Marina at sunrise to try and beat the heat. I turned inland at Termoli to avoid the monstrous mountains of the Promontorio del Gargano and headed towar d Foggia through endless fields of tomatoes and onions. An excessive amount of tomatoes and onions - enough for the world!

I was riding along minding my own business dodging gigantic trucks loaded with tones of tomatoes and onions when I saw a beautiful young woman, standing in a field of wheat stubble, twirling a colourful beach umbrella on her shoulder.

She was made-up to the hilt and wearing next to nothing. Ah-ha! A far m-girl ditching tomatoes and onions for the big city bright lights. But strangely she was Ethiopian? Oh, well???

Another mile, another flamboyant Ethiopian! I began to lose count after eight or nine, but by then the penny had dropped. They were ladies of the night on the day shift, twirling umbrellas in purgatory.

While I would be the last to deny farm workers and truck drivers their pleasue, I couldn't honestly say that hanging around in a field of wheat stubble on a hot day looked like the high end of the business.

And what if business did come alona? Where could it be conducted now that the fields had a buzz-cut? The trucks were roomy enough, I suppose just bad luck if you aot one full of onions or too many ripe tomatoes.

One thing, I'll never look at Italian tomato sauce again in quite the same way and I realise Fellini is not the surrealist I thought he was - his movies ARE Italy.

Choosing your

route over the Pindos Mountains in norther n Greece is pretty easy - it comes down to a two-lane blacktop or a goat track. Everyone, including the livestock opts for the blacktop.

The road is also choked with Greeks, Bulgarians and Turks returning from shopping sprees in Italy. Their cars are CRAMMED with everything from refrigerators to stuffed toys to bicycles, none of which is sufficiently tied down and whole roof-racks of merchandise frequently fly off on to the road leaving it looking like a bad day at a garage sale.

This, plus the many large herds of sheep and goats, cause recurrent and lengthy traffic jams. The situation is accepted pretty good naturedly in a place where road rage is considered a waste of time.

Instead of using the wait to escalate blood pressure it's used to get acquainted with the occupants of neighbouring cars and trade goods with folks whose cargoes are still intact. The locals also do auite well with impromptu lemonade, coffee and tea stands.

The other major hazard is the melon truck. Come summer, Greece is awash with honeydew and water melons. While there is great competition to see who can pile the tallest pyramid of melons on a pick-up truck, no one ever thinks to secure the pyramids with a tarp or a net. When these overloaded vehicles hit a pothole (an abundant selection) or takes one of the numerous hairpin bends too fast (more often than not), melons go flying. It is particularly hazadous riding behind these trucks on an upgrade.

Looking up to see a load of watermelons flying through the air towards

you is quite an experience. While the honevdews sometimes roll. watermelons can be counted on to explode on impact and if you're close enough, expect to be sprayed top to toe with sticky pink shrapnel:

I imagined the headlines in the **Bicycle Tourist Victim of Melon**

Well, that's road life in northern Greece.

hometown paper -Avalanche.

Hard to believe, but I did it! I cycled nearly 10,000 miles in eight months through 18 countries, one principality and the remains of the British Empire.

I started out from Paris on a cold rainy morning early March and ended back in Paris riding triumphantly through the Arc de Triomphe on the 1st of November, a gloriously sunny day with golden autumn leaves falling like confetti.

No, it wasn't easy, camping "wild" in remote forests and mountains, dealing with hostile border guards, money running out, food not always easy to come by - but then, there were also a lot of laughs and why would you want to try anything that wasn't a challenge?



Above: Bush war babe . . . Megan visits Rhodesian troops.

30 out of africa April 2000

That's Africa!



Apologies for the poor quality of this picture - it was scanned from the paper and emailed to us with the following report...

The day the wheels came off . . .

This report was published in a "Zimbabwe's national paper" on 24/11/99, the paper which also headlined on July 26, 1999 that "All Blacks beat New Zealand"! (We've no idea which paper it was, but it seems to have an anti-Mugabe slant, so it COULDN'T be the Herald, could it?)

ADICAL evolution in Zimbabwean revolutionary mechanics now results in wheels that are intelligent enough to "get of f" by themselves.

Obviously this is an advancement on "wheels which come off", a random form of revolution and chaos which all Zimbabweans are all too familiar with. Wheels which "get off" tend to do so befor e the driver breaks them off, or the vehicle plunges off a bridge, into a ravine or into an oncoming eighteen wheeler.

Having wheels which get off, therefore preventing the vehicle from moving forward, is much safer and will prevent many accidents and undoubtedly save many lives. If you would like to have your vehicle fitted with this revolutionary safety system, simply bring it to Zimbabwe.

Take it to the nearest RG Mugabe or ZANU-PF service centre where world beating specialist mechanics who have been training wheels to come off for twenty years have recently perfected this new system of intelligent revolutionary mechanics!

Jill's email address: johnlamb@ozemail.com.au Website: www.belovedafrican.com



Jill Lambert: Coming to Australia left a huge hole in my heart

The soil of Africa

Media star Jill Lambert (neé Baker) tells of her anguish at leaving her beloved country and how she has adapted

FRICA and Australia are both in the Southern Hemisphere - they both have a British colonial background and they are both mad about - and very good at - sport and the outdoor life.

But there the similarities end.

I was born in Rhodesia and my father instilled into us the importance of the work we had to do in that country.

It was our country and I loved it fervently
- I remember riding through the bush on my
bike with my brother and dreaming of a future
dedicated to helping the black people usually in the role of wise and gentle doctor. It
didn't last, of course,

I became a typical teenager, went to London and came back with my sights

focused in very different directions.

But the urge to do something for my country was a deep and integral part of me and when the chance came (during the bush war) to become a driving force in the formation of Co-Ord-A-Nation it was just what I wanted.

It was an extraordinary organisation in what it achieved, with an ar my of volunteers around the country in every village, town and city.

Being so terribly involved in the country - as we all were - made it so very much harder to leave and coming to Australia left a huge hole in my heart.

I wept with the anguish over it for days and days before we, my husband John and

my 12-year-old daughter Nicky, left - forcing myself to stay awake at night and willing the minutes and the hours to drag so that I didn't have to face it.

Numb with the horror of it all, we arrived at the airport (Harare) in November, 1983, to find Qantas passengers coming through customs and immigration and I spotted Geoff Atkins who had left for Perth a couple of years before me.

Flinging myself round his neck, I wept uncontrollably and begged him to assure me, "Australia isn't that bad - is it?"

We left with \$800 and it was all we were allowed to take out apart from one bed per family member and one lounge suite.

I'm sure many of you will remember that routine.

We arrived in Perth beaten and exhausted - en route for Sydney. I had been offered a job with the ABC and we had looked at settling in Bowral because there was an excellent school there for Nicky - but it meant commuting two hours each way - and television shifts are late at night.

We were so battered at leaving our home we just didn't think we had the strength to cope with the size and distances of Sydney at that stage, so we re-routed our container to Perth.

Everyone had been wonderful to us - but I remember playing golf with John in Perth and it seemed every time we hit a bad shot a kookaburra would cackle at us, or a great black crow would croak out the most dismal and unfamiliar call. My mood was very hard to lift.

My cousin Jon SwireThompson and his wife Sue had
very kindly put up with us - and put us up for
several weeks by this stage, so it was time to
look out for somewhere to live.

We opened a bank account to deposit our measly allowance and the Commonwealth Bank manager took one look, realised that that was all we had, and that no more money would be coming through - that we had no job, no home, no car - and took us in hand. He found us a flat

for \$17 a week and a free car for as long as we wanted.

The kindness of that man was our first major impression of Australia.

In fact, the kindness of Australians everywhere we went, was almost overwhelming. But it still didn't overcome that early ache.

When my cousin from Adelaide, Anne Hetzel, phoned to invite us for Christmas (as our air tickets were booked to Sydney) we

were delighted to accept and be with family again. Therein lay

Jonny and Sue were going away that Christmas, but they had been simply wonderful, fixing us up with a friend's house to rent.

John had job interviews lined up and we had found a school for Nicky.

Then we fell in love with Adelaide.

Its graciousness, the beauty of its hills and coastlines, the depth of its culture and its wacky way of creating the most serendipitious events won us over.

We walked on the North Adelaide golf course for two hours - how could we let Jonny and Sue's friends down - what about the job interviews - the place we had reserved for Nicky.

But we knew that if we were going to make a move, this was the time it had to be made as we could not expect to be able to make another move in the foreseeable future.

So after much agonising, Adelaide it was.

And we have never regretted it.

Perth is a very beguiling city, and we were sorely tempted but somehow Adelaide just took

it - for us.

We re-routed our container once again, rented a house up in the Hills - and our landlord lent us mattresses, a fridge, a radio, two chairs and a table.

New acquaintances filled other gaps in our much-needed basics - and again we were overwhelmed by the kindness of Australians.

John had a job in two months, Nicky

'I wept for

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days and

we left -

had a good school for the first term of the year and I started as Director of the University of Adelaide's radio station 5UV on the 1st April, 1984.

We found new soul-mates in Lauriel and Otto Gilbert and they introduced us to other de-tribalised Africans.

We needed to talk, to understand that they had all been thr ough it too.

My first few weeks at 5UV were horrifying - apart from the nightmare of trying to get my head around the acronyms that punctuate Australian business, I found I was immediately labelled a racist, intolerant and right wing - because I had left Zimbabwe.

Nobody was interested in the fact that my father had spent his entir e life trying to help and encourage the African people.

No-one could relate to the war we had just been thr ough. No-one could understand the agony of just keeping going in those first few months. I was dealing with things I had never come across before.

A bunch of women in the station took me out to lunch, congratulated me on my appointment and said, "Now that we have a woman in the top job - this is what we want to see happen."

I said I'd only award honour or position on merit.

After that statement - it was war.

One of my competitors for the job was an employee of the station, and although he was a really nice guy, he was resentful, and it showed - and in my over-sensitive state I felt it deeply.

To make it more difficult, I was appointed to the job in an acting capacity for two years and things were happening in that station that I disapproved of deeply, but it was too soon to make changes.

Nicky was sufering too - she only wanted to talk about Zimbabwe and how wonderful it was - and nobody wanted to listen. She didn't make any friends and she was absolutely miserable.

Then one day she came home and said, "Noi!" instead of No! She had made the transition. After that, she made countless wonder ful friends who remain friends today. She has now married the most exceptional Aussie, Jason, and with many plans for the future, life looks good for them.

John coped possibly better than both of us - but then he was Englishborn and had only been in Zim for 20 years - so he had already made one move and was not as deeply grown into the soil of Africa.

Eventually, I was put onto permanent staff and I built an exceptional team around me. We had huge targets to meet, and when, eventually, we launched the new state-of-the-art studios on Adelaide's main cultural boulevard, I knew the time had come to leave.

I started a company specialising in tourism on the day the headlines screamed, 'Tourism in Australia set back 10 years by pilot's dispute'.

In retrospect, I don't disagree with that statement that the r ecession we 'had to have' and South Australia's disastr ous State Bank debacle has meant the last ten years have been pretty tough.

Yet we own our own home, we have wonder ful friends, we love Adelaide and its sophisticated cafe-society, its superb depth of culture and its style.

But the ache of Zimbabwe doesn't go away.

I love going back. I lelish the familiar crisp smells of the dawn, of the rain, of the bush fires and the sights in that beautiful, beautiful countryside. I love my lifelong friends. Friends of my childhood, friends with whom I shaled so much anguish, so much celebration.

And I resent deeply that I can no longer claim citizenship as my birthright. I am an Australian now - and very happily so - but my birthright still haunts me.

● Jill Lambert is currently vice-president of the Australia and New Zealand chapter of SITE (Society of Incentive and Travel Executives). She was awarded Asia-Pacific Incentive Personality Of The Year for 1999.

Face from the past a real jolt

Bill Higham looks back . . .



Jill, during her days with the RBC

HE Arabs have an ancient proverb, "He who has tasted of African water must return to drink of it once more." Little has changed. Anyone who has been fortunate enough to spend time in Africa knows you don't have to be a 'whenwe' to be stopped dead in your tracks now and then with sudden, unsolicited memories of clear sunlit days laced with the hint of woodsmoke, of night skies teeming with stars so close it seems you can reach out and touch them.

A piece of music can do it, a letter from an old friend, or a picture of a former RTV newsreader - like Jill Baker

When Rhodesian-born Jill's face flashed onto my computer screen in Sydney, Australia, I was pushed back - physically in my chair and mentally 25 years - with the force of memories it brought. It seemed every night in Salisbury that young, pretty face would be on the box, telling us what kind of day we'd had.

Twice a night she was a part of family life and, for a moment, I could almost smell that ubiquitous woodsmoke drifting through the window on the evening air, mum's cooking from the kitchen, hear the clink of ice in my sundowner Mellowwood brandy and Coke and hear Jill say, with brevity, "Combined operations report the deaths of four members of the security ..."

And we would all freeze - waiting to hear which Rhodesian families would be grieving a loved one that night, and for evermore. But it would be unfair to remember her and fellow RBC/RTV newsreaders (such as Geoffrey Atkins and Donna Wurzel) only as sombre messengers of death in those dark days when both our white and black citizens were losing their lives in what was to prove a militarily unwinnable war.

During the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia civil war (1972 - 80), along with that heart-breaking job

of reading war casualty lists, Jill founded Co-Ord-A-Nation - an organisation set up to help the wives of serving officers (black and white) - operating canteens for the security forces around the country.

"It was a huge amount of diverse work with a wonderfully loyal team of volunteers," she says.

She was also known far-and-wide on Rhodesia's radio airwaves.

Jill first walked into Salisbury's Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) studios in 1967 to compile classical music for the record library. But it was not long before her vocal talents were recognised and she was given her shot on-

air, presenting
classical music
programmes such as,
Music for the Morning,
Young Performers and
The Art of the
Instrumentalist.

Commercial shows followed, from the pop 'Top Ten' to bright and breezy breakfast radio and, with voice and name spreading country-wide, Rhodesia Television chiefs came a'head hunting down from Pockets Hill (RTV studios in Borrowdale).

They took one look at their sister radio's new personality and liked what they saw. What was not to

like? Standing before them was a tall, slim, attractive young lass with - loads of class.

Having recently seen a young, classically trained English actor Geoffrey Atkins, soar in viewer popularity stakes they knew the erudite Jill Baker would fit right in with their concept of intelligent BBC-type presenters.

But first, the baptism of fire. An RTV show, AdMags, in which the presenter sweated under fiery studio lights before the taunting eye of the camera for ten agonised minutes of a living, sweating hell delivering live-to-air rapid-fire vapid commercials. Okay, Jill, keep a straight face and go slo-o-ow on, 'Pluck the tasty duck at the ...'

"Ghastly," is the way she remembers it.

But she won her spurs and was
catapulted into newsreading, where she went
on to become anchor TV newsreader, a

position she held for 12 years.

In between, she presented shows such as Bric-a-Brac, In Studio Minor Forum, and she struck out and moonlighted in the business world.

She opened a PR firm, Jill Baker Associates and, in 1979, went on to handle the public relations and marketing for bluechip companies such as TAP; Air Portugal; Holiday Inns; The Rennies Group; Allen, Wack & Shepherd; Coopers; and Zimbabwe Olympic Association.

She also managed the radio production division of Blackberry poductions and ran the pre-independence Zimbabwe-Rhodesia

Broadcasting
Corporation's in-house
radio and television
production house.

Then came the Lancaster House talks, the welcome end to a bloody war, and the launch of ZBC's Radio III, which Jill spearheaded to become manager and host the morning shift in 1981. She also found time to train announcers for Radio III.

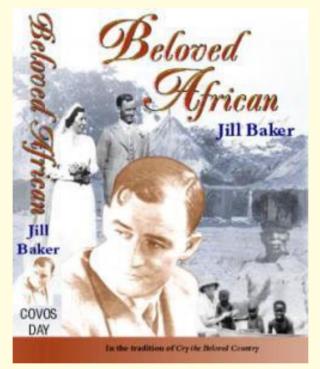
In 1983, she married John Lambert and emigrated to Australia where, in Adelaide, South Australia's city of churches, Jill Lambert is today a successful

management and marketing consultant in the tourism industry.

And she has written a book, Beloved African, inspired by the life and work of her father, John Hammond, a Rhodesian pioneer in African education.

"I've written it as though it's my mother writing," Jill says. "And she was a very typical, rather naive little English girl, thrust into the depths of the Gwaai Reserve, Tjolotjo and Nyamandhlovu. Enough to test the most indomitable spirit."

Recently published by Covos Day, Jill the first-time author is promised a heavy schedule in the next few months, with Beloved African set to launch shortly in Australian capital cities and later this year at the London International Book Fair.



Maureen's email address: mdelah@ozemail.com.au



Maureen: It was all very wonderful, as long as one did not pause to think about jacarandas

From politics to publishing...

Elephant Road - the result of a love affair with Africa

ROM Robert Mugabe's Harar e to (then Australian Prime Minister) Bob Hawke's Canberra. From a city where political paranoia ruled - and to criticise the colour of the president's socks was to earn a one-way ticket to Chikurubi – to Old Parliament House, where a naïve Zimbabwean listened openmouthed to the vitriol heaped daily on PM and politicians from opposition benches.

Such was my introduction to Australia in 1983. I had been in Perth no more than ten days when I started my first job – as secretary to newly-elected Australian Democrat Senator Jack Evans.

Six months earlier at an art exhibition launch in Harare, I had been hauled off to Harare Central Police Station, along with the other guests, by leather-jacketed Special

Branch heavies who accused us of holding a political meeting. The reason: Ian Smith was one of the guests.

Now I was accompanying a senator to Australia's national capital, where politicians vilified each other with impunity. And I was earning more as an executive secretary in this affirmative-action climate than I had in my previous position as director of the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe.

It was all very wonderful, as long as one did not pause to think about jacarandas, the smell of the first November rains, or Zambesi sunsets . . .

While I struggled with the complexities of state and federal politics, my teenage daughter Lara, was coming to ter ms with no school uniform, not calling teachers 'sir' or

'ma'am', and students who tur ned up to class with rings through their noses.

Together, we struggled with unfamiliar technology like slot machines, and self-serve fuel stations, and suffered acute anxiety attacks when confronted by 14 brands of rice on supermarket shelves (having been accustomed only to the weevil-enriched Korean variety).

We revelled in the wonders of Western Australia: the beach, the turquoise waters of Rottnest Island, the multiplicity of ethnic restaurants, the West Australian Ballet, opera in the park, fireworks, the friendliness of the people.

We confused Australians when we absent-mindedly used words like 'tackies' and 'muti', and they confused us with words like 'wog' (a virus) and 'wagged' (as in 'wagged classes'). I invited a couple to 'tea', and was bemused when they arrived at 6.30 with a bottle of wine - they were expecting dinner. . . .

And when a radio announcer said, "It's a lovely day – why not take a 'sickie'?" I thought perhaps he was suggesting taking the ferry to work.

After familiarising myself with Aussie politics for a year I re-entered my own world of PR and publishing with a job at the Western Australian Museum, where I learnt about WA's intriguing flora and fauna, its historic Dutch shipwrecks - and academic bureaucracy.

The latter finally impelled me, five years later to take off on the round-the-world working holiday I had missed out on during my early twenties.

By this time, Lara had a BSc and had started work (she has just completed a Y2K project with St John of God Hospitals around Australia).

And my son Philip, and wife Caroline, had joined us in Perth, where Philip launched his own IT company a few years later. Following a merger last year, it was floated on the stock market in December.

Lara joined the company in February.

We are now in the happy position of having most of our extended Zimbabwe family here. Only one son, Derek, and his family, remain there (Derek is director of Malilangwe Conservation Trust in the south-east of Zimbabwe).

I live in the hills east of Perth, and freelance for a number of publications – a precarious way of earning a living, but one that gives me the freedom to travel, especially across the Indian Ocean to the continent that still exerts a power ful pull.

During those first months in Perth, at the peak of homesickness, I began writing about my early years of married life on a remote farm in the Zimbabwe bush. The result was 'Msasa Morning', published in 1992.

That gave me the impetus to consider a novel set in Zimbabwe, and an idea for a plot emerged when I read about the experiences of two English nurses who - in the early 1890s - trekked from Beira to Umtali to open a hospital in the new colony of Rhodesia.

As I had to earn a living, researching and writing 'Elephant Road' (due for publication in



Family affair: From left, Maureen, David and Lara, Car oline and Philip, Derek and Tishie and son Russell (the Zim branch). In front Sarah and Jenna, daughters of Philip and Caroline

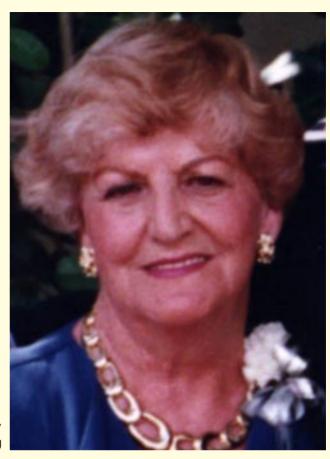
the next few months) had to be undertaken in my spare time over about five years.

Set in Zimbabwe in the 1890s and 1950s, it is the story of two women snared by the spell of Africa: Clarissa Hamilton who goes out to nurse in Rhodesia in the late 19th century, and her granddaughter Elizabeth, who retraces her footsteps half a century later.

And the irony of it all is that I never would have written books about Africa if I had not left. There must be a moral in there somewhere.

www.elephantroad.com

Joy's email address: joycev@sanmarcos.net



Joy: The children they were my reason for living

My wonderful adopted grandchildren . . .

JOY ASPIN VERMAAK left the hustle and bustle of a Durban real estate market for a life in Texas looking after abused children . . .

OW I became an American citizen and came to adopt five wonder ful grandchildren. It started off when my daughter Jennifer completed her training as an RN at the Entabeni Hospital and soon after visited my two sisters (American citizens) in California and decided to stay in the USA and nurse in Texas, where she met her husband.

When my grandson was born, who has just graduated as a pilot with the US Airforce and is flying C-17s (apparently the largest carriers in the world), my late husband and I travelled every two years while Jason was growing up.

This carried on for a number of years and when they last visited us in South Africa, we then decided we would like to be with them.

However my husband died rather suddenly and Jennifer divorced her husband.

My life changed .

Jennifer telephoned to tell me that she was working with abused children and asked me to visit again.

I did and she brought home a little six year old for the weekend from the hospital where she worked.

She decided to foster Victoria and I left



Happy family: Victoria, Shane, Timmy, Terry and Shea raid the Christmas tree

to return with heavy heart thinking of that frightened little girl.

Soon after Jennifer telephoned me again with the news that she was fostering a little four old boy, Timmy.

Then the wheels started turning, Jennifer filed for me and as a mother of a US citizen I was able to get to the US in about six months.

I then found out that T immy had a half brother and we traced himto an orphanage and immediately sought to foster T erry, then six years old.

Some time later we heard about a nine month baby girl and she too came home.

We immediately sought adoption as we could never let these beautiful children leave, they were my reason for living.

The telephone rang one evening about 9 p.m. and Jennifer was asked whether she could take in two brothers who had to be removed from where they were.

Of course we agreed without hesitation. William was brought to us at about 10.30 pm.

He was clutching a brown paper bag with his worldly possessions.

He was four years old.

Unfortunately we learned that his brother was sent somewhere else until they could trace his father and eventually he was returned to his father who had divorced his mother years ago.

We immediately adopted William too. These children are now 9,11,14,15,16.

Jason is now married.

My daughter Marilyn is now with us too having waited five years from the date we filed for her.

Jennifer is married again and we live on five acres plus, with two homesteads.

Marilyn and I live in the smaller (2 beds 2 bathboms etc.) and Jennifer and Bill in the other where each child has their own room.

We have two horses, six rabbits, 8 dogs, (Bones an emaciated mutt black lab/retriever) recently became number 8 and we fear ed he would not make it. He is slowly making progress, 2 pygmy goats, 5 birds (African Grey, Cockatiels, parakeets) Marilyn's garden is a bird



Jennifer and husband, Bill

paradise. Red cardinals, mockingbilds, blue jays, sparrows, road runners, robins and not forgetting squirels and butterflies.

We never have to lock our doors at night.
I never thought I would get used to country life where you cannot see a thing when lights are turned off and no moonlight, not a sound other than the barking of a dog (we have a lot of deer visiting at night because we leave water and corn for them and encourage them) having been used to bright lights and the hustle and bustle of the Durban beach front.

I love the sound of the rooster (far distant) in the morning and have come to love this life.

WHAT DO I MISS IN SOUTH AFRICA My friends, and colleagues at JH Wakefield and Sons where I was employed for many years.

I loved every minute selling real estate.

I miss the week-end jaunt to the Wild Coast.

I miss the odd week-end at the many glorious guest farms in Natal.

I don't miss locking doors and windows and peeping through the peep-hole to answer a knock at the door.

I don't miss the pavement dodging downtown Durban.

Having visited Addington Hospital when I was in Durban last I could not believe what I was seeing.

Travelling by bus to the city from the Berea down Umgeni Road what a ghastly sight.

Getting to the station for a bus or train! I live where I live in the US because it is platively safe and I would never choose to live in or around the bus terminuses in the cities and travel in the interstate buses, unescorted.

However I miss the old South Africa and will continue to do so for a long time.

I take my hat off to those stalwarts still in South Africa and who will try to help in making South Africa what she was and can be.



Flying high: proud mum Jennifer with newly graduated pilot son Jason

Where you can find us . . .

E are now living in San Marcos about an hour from Austin the capital of Texas. We originally lived in Dallas about four hour s' drive from San Marcos.

My address in San Marcos is 735 Oak Meadows, San Marcos, TX 78666. Incidentally, our children are home schooled - hence their interest in Africa (South Africa) in particular.

Marilyn worked for one company only whilst she was in Durban, that being the Bayer Group where she had many many friends.

Both my sisters Eileen Moomau and Maureen Hardison have lived in California since arriving in 1951 and 1953 respectively.

Eileen was the Dental Nurse at Addington Hospital where she met her husband and was the Betty Crocker Bride of the Year.

Maureen worked for Metro Media as an executive secretary for many years until she started working for Life and Time magazines as a freelance typist/proofreader.

Jason, my biological grandson, is stationed at Charleston Airforce Base, South Carolina.

The presidential election process has started and keeps me glued to my computer, all very exciting right now.

That's Africa!

Cleaner polishes off patients . . .

This one's been around for a while and I'm told it appear ed in the Cape Times. Maybe someone could verify this .

OR several months, our nurses have been baffled to find a patient dead in the same bed every Friday morning, a spokeswoman for the Pelonomi Hospital (Free State, South Africa) told reporters.

"There was no apparent cause for any of the deaths, and extensive checks on the air conditioning system, and a seach for possible bacterial infection, failed to reveal any clues."

"However, further inquiries have now revealed the cause of these deaths...

"It seems that every Friday morning a cleaning lady would enter the ward, remove the plug that power ed the patient's life support system, plug her floor polisher into the vacant socket, then go about her business. When she had finished her chores, she would plug the life support machine back in and leave, unaware that the patient was now dead. She could not, after all, hear the screams and eventual death rattle over the whirring of her polisher".

"We are sorry, and have sent a strong letter to the cleaner in question.

Further, the Free State Health and W elfare Department is arranging for an electrician to fit an extra socket, so there should be no repetition of this incident. The inquiry is now closed."

Oh, sh*t!

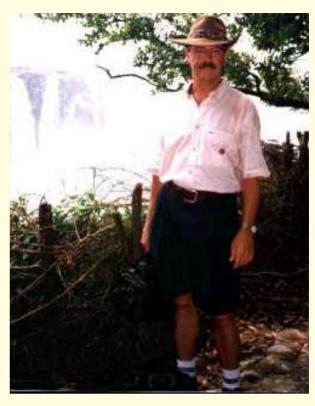
WAZILAND asked its parliament Speaker to resign for taking cow dung from the royal yard. Swazi Royal House governor Bibanisa Dlamini said Mgabhi Dlamini, Speaker of the House of Assembly, was asked to step down after an unidentified man was found gathering dung from the royal cattle enclosure, where King Mswathi III and other members of the royal family had attended a traditional ceremony.

"When we questioned him, he led us to a waiting car, where we found the honourable Speaker waiting," Dlamini said.

Superstitious beliefs are rife in Swaziland and traditional leaders believe the dung, potentially imbued with special powers because it came from the king's property, was taken for use in witchcraft.

Dlamini said the Speaker was one of the people vying for the position of Prime Minister in the tiny southern African kingdom.

Anne and Dennis Cook's email address: Anne.Cook@stpaul.com



Falls feast: Dennis Cook takes in the wonders of Vic Falls.

Game galore in Botswana

Anne and Dennis Cook recently moved from Johannesburg to Gaborone, Botswana. Dennis is South African and Anne has lived in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa plus a few other places in between. They recently spent a few days at Mowana Safari Lodge at Kasane in Northern Botswana. Here is Dennis' account of their journey.

E recently took a few days off and went up to the north of Botswana to Kasane where the borders of Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia converge. It is a rather impoverished town, with mostly black people who have migrated in from the neighbouring countries.

The only work opportunities are in the tourist trade.

Kasane is well known, of course, for being adjacent to the Chobe National Park, home to some 45,000 elephants.

The Botswana government has staunchly resisted pressure from conservationists to thin out the herds, preferring to let things take their natural course.

Kasane is about 9-10 hours' drive, and some 950km from Gaborone.

Distances here between towns and villages are huge. We took two days to motor up, stopping of the way at a little town called Nata.

We stayed overnight in a lodge that was very pleasant and worth another visit, because it is on the fringe of the Makgadigadi pans.

These are remains of a vast inland sea that dried up millenniums ago.

The sand is white and fossilised









crustacae may be found. Part of the pans ar e salt, which gives the place a desolate appearance, and makes it both exciting and dangerous to drive on.

After the rains there are migrations of zebra and various antelope through the pans.

When the rains come November / December the pans are full of vast flocks of migrating birds.

This we will definitely try and experience next year.

Whilst we were there, there were absolutely no birds to be seen.

We did see the first of the baobab trees that this area and Zimbabwe are famed for.

Right on the edge of the pans was this large mysterious tree.

The locals believe that God made the tree upside down and that its roots are in the air. You will no doubt see from the picture, above, why they think so.

Onwards next day to Kasane along a really good tarred road, and making such good speed that we nearly ran into a her d of kudu crossing the road.

Beyond Nata it really makes little difference if you are in a reserve or not as wild animals abound.

We saw several herds of giraffe and elephant from the road.

The photo (next page) shows elephant crossing the road as we stopped.

The photo will not show that just a little

further up was a crew mending the road and neither the animals, nor the people were perturbed at being in close proximity to one another.

Because of a lack of rain, the surrounding countrside is really desolate, brown and barren looking. Most trees do not even have a green shoot on their branches - it is difficult to imagine that the trees will ever grow again, but they will come some rain. In the interim it is rthe best time to see game as there is little to hode them.

They are also attracted to the last remaining waterholes, which makes them easier to spot.

As we approached Kasane, just to make our day, was a young elephant in the town, looking for fodder (above).

He did not seem fussed at the presence of people, and ambled on over to a lar ge green tree to the consternation of the locals who lived in a house shaded by it.

We arrived at our hotel on a morning that had seen the temperatur e rise to nearly 40C.

Although our plans for next year centre around camping in our newly acquired Land-Rover that still has to be done up, for now we were intent on enjoying the luxury of an hotel very obviously geared to overseas tourists.

With over 100 bedrooms, there were only about six cars in the parking lot - most tourists would have been flown in. We were

also enjoying the rate of Southern African residents who were prepared to book long in advance to take up capacity.

Effectively we were paying in Rands what the tourists were paying in dollars.

The hotel is called Mowana Lodge, named for the baobab tr ees called Mowana by the locals and is built around a 1000-year old baobab in the inner court area.

The pictures show that in a bleak and barren area, the water from the Chobe River enable them to create a virtual paradise.

Although there had been no rain for about six months, the Chobe is still flowing strongly, and there is lush grazing on its banks, as well as on an island in the river nearby the hotel. We had a trip up the river into the Chobe on our first day, stopping near the island. The game

swims across the river to the island to feast on the lush grass.

Lying off on the boat we were able to come up close to hippo, crocodiles, herds of buffalo and even more herds of elephants.

We saw quite rare antelope species such as the puku, which is now almost wiped out except for the herds in the Chobe, and red lechwe.

In many trips to the Kruger park, I think that I have only once seen a sable antelope there.

We saw a number of herds of sable, water buck and kudu.

The photo (top) shows some buffalo grazing whilst an indolent crocodile saves his energy for when he is really hungry.

There were many herds of elephant drinking and bathing at the river, and lots of young that were really too cute.

We saw a tiny little one grab his mother's tail to cross the river to the island underwater.

Next day we went on an early morning game drive in the hotels vehicle, and early in the day said hello to about half of the 45 000 elephants.

The scene looking over the banks of the Chobe is indescribable. There were numerous hippo, grazing out of the water, whilst others just lay in the water on the banks chomping their hearts out.

There were at least a dozen elephant herds spread out over a few squar e kilometres, all manner of antelope, and we even came upon a pride of lions that had just gorged themselves on a small buffalo.

One female was lying sleeping in the road and with four vehicles around her did not even move.

It was a pity that, because of the sand, they were probably the dirtiest lions that we had ever seen.

We came upon a cleaner pride later in the bushes, but because they had cubs, did

not get too close to them as they kept moving away

We waited around for a while as one female looked like she was getting ready to make a kill, but nothing came of it.

Next day we went over the border to the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

Although spectacular, they were not as good as one has seen on TV, because the river is quite dry and not flowing so strongly as when there have been rains.

Around Vic Falls it is just like any tourist attraction, numer ous

souvenir shops, restaurants, hotels and lots of foreign accents.

I think that one must see the falls once, but I doubt that ther e is any reason to return.

We really enjoyed our little bleak, but have developed the yen to get right into the wilds and experience the real unspoiled Africa next year.

I think that Anne has now become used to the idea that in the parks in Botswana the most that you can hope for is water, and that you take your toilet roll and spade and go off into the bush.

She has even started buying bits and pieces for our future camping trips.





'Buffalo grazed whilst an indolent crocodile saved his energy for when he was really hungry'

Wood artists carve out a living at Botswana roadside

By Anne Cook

E ARE fortunate indeed to live and work in the capital of Botswana, Gaborone. It is a peaceful and prosperous country offering a relaxed and interesting lifestyle to all. Before coming here, we had lived in Johannesburg, Increasingly the crime problems were a cause of concern and work very difficult for

middle aged people to find. My husband, Dennis and I arrived here last May. He had accepted a two-year contract as the Materials Manager for Botswana Power Corporation.

The first month was very frustrating, I am not used to being a stay at home housewife!

Luck was on my side, Botswana Telecomms were busy putting in a new computer system and wanted a business analyst for a three-month stint.

I went for the interview on the Friday and started on the Monday!

It was an interesting and varied three months with many surprises. I was amazed to find how well educated the staf f are, many middle managers at Telecomms are studying for MBA degrees through institutions around the world - it was a stimulating and informed environment that I had become a part of. The system went in and my contract expired - I am now part way through a one-

year contract with Botswana Insurance (short term) where I am the IT trainer. Another company, another new computer system there is progress everywhere here and many new challenges as a result.

But Botswana is a country of extremes currently we are experiencing flooding and high rainfall. Generally, though, the country suffers from drought and stock losses due to water shortages. There is high-tech progress all around, but many subsistence farmers and people earning low wages or battling to make a living at all. One cannot help but be amazed at the local art. Wood carving, weaving, hand tooled leather goods and pottery are made on the side of the road. There are no proper facilities or factories.

The people are trying to make a modest living with the skills they have and their enterprise and initiative fascinated me.

I was curious and started talking to two talented wood carvers, Shelton and Jobe who sell their goods at the edge of the road near the main roundabout in town.

They live 30km away in a small village and daily pack their old truck and travel to town to try and sell their beautiful goods.

When it rains they pack their wooden items back in the vehicle and sit in the cab, hoping that the rain will stop so they can put out their display again on the bare grass.

Somehow, this touched me - they work so hard under adverse conditions to try and support their families.

After some discussions, I asked them if I could take some photographs and market their products on the Internet - they cannot understand the concept but hope that it brings them in some orders!

There are many other talented and hard working people here who need exposure for their goods and I slowly hope to include more goods and people on the website I set up to market their crafts.

<u>Please visit it at http://www.homestead.com/AfricaArtCraft/Anne.html</u>

or drop me a line at Anne.Cook@stpaul.com.





Mailbox



Thank you very much for a most informative and positive publication. The whole family thoroughly enjoyed the read and are looking forward to more South African contributions. Vaughan Moss Auckland, New Zealand vmoss@russellpharm.co.nz

Your eZine looks great. Can't wait for #4!! "Chez Slater" <dayal@direct.ca>

Thanks for sending telling us about Out of Africa. I did as you said and downloaded it, read it, and enjoyed it. Now I will look forward to the next one.

"Gerry Thompson"

<Gerry.Thompson@Verbier.ch>

Thanks for this. It was super reading the articles about various people and would love to receive this regularly. How does one go about it??? I lived on a far m near Fort Victoria (Masvingo) for most of my life in Zim. And knew Megan Timothy well. We used to compete in horse gymkhanas together, and she played castanettes as she danced, so it was a real surprise to read

About her. I had a hell of a boyhood crush on her, reckoned she was really sexy, so there you have it!! I look forward to receiving more news.

"John Mitchell-Adams" <johnmitchelladams@bigpond.com>

Thank you so much for putting us in touch with such a super ePublication. We will spread the word around Perth (West Oz) to tell all of our Rhodie and South African friends about it, thanks again! Don & Nobie Spice.

Donald E Spice

<sales@SpiceAssociates.com>

Great idea! Very interesting stuff in the last issue. We currently live in the USA and I started a web site where people can download free South African wallpapers for their PC's. Could you mention something about my site in your next issue? The web URL is http://people.ne.mediaone.net/masboykie. Let me know what you think. Ugo Armstrong

It's nice to know that some people make an effort to keep memories of Africa alive when moving abroad. I am certain I shall one day move back there. A thought shared by a lot of my friends. I will get back to you when more time is available. "darrel allan" <darrel allan@hotmail.com>

The magazine is fantastic we really enjoyed the first part and I am already passing it on. Please send us the second part. Well done on some great stories. How do you finance it? regards Mandy

And in a separate message:

Thanks so much. It's so great we had such a great laugh. Send us the rest. What happens now. Do we subscribe?

Would YOU like to be in

Mandy

(No, Mandy. Just download it off the net - FREE! - Ed)

our next issue? It's easy - just send us your story - who you are, where you are and how you're doing these days, add a couple of photos and we'll get you in! THAT EASY! Stories and pictures can be emailed directly to henshaw@iinet.net.au. or penny.willis@diamond.co.uk If you can't email, the postal address to send copy to is:c/o Tom Henshaw 21 Osmaston Road, Carine, Western Australia 6020

Cash and carry bid fails Post Office test

WO men totter into an East London (South Africa) post office supporting a third. The third isn't saying much. In fact, nothing at all.

The three stand in the queue, nonchalantly awaiting their turn.

The guy in the middle doesn't join his two buddies in conversation and seems pretty relaxed, despite the fact that it's he who is being "helped" to the counter to draw out his life savings - R760.

The two men prop Nonjaduja Kinikini, 61, against the counter and tell the clerk what's required.

The clerk, suspicious, to say the least, calls PO officials who try to take his fingerprints. But old Nonjaduja's fingers are too stiff.

They ask for his signatue, and it's then that his sister, Ethel Tlodi, 54, arrives on the scene and fesses up, saying he had "just died".

"My brother visited a clinic and he was told to eat nutritious food because he was under nourished. That is why he decided to draw out the money," she said.

Needless to say, the family of the recently departed left the post office without the dead man's savings.

THIS just has to be true - it was found in the "It must be true . . . I read it in the tabloids." column of Britain's The Week magazine . . .

Groundbreaking chauvinist

ZAMBIAN farmer will not be prosecuted for yoking his three wives to a plough to cultivate his maize fields. He said he was forced to use his wives because his 20 oxen were diseased.

A spokesman for the labour ministry said: "None of the wives complained, so we recommended that the farmer pay them for their labour."