



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 161

5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023

### GREETINGS:

Oops! ... Platitudes, promises and pie-in-the-sky - that's all we seem to get from President Cyril Ramaphosa, as he makes unbelievable promises that power supply will improve (and you thought "Piet Promises" was bad?)... Load shedding: South Africans face cold, dark winter... 'Too many cooks in the kitchen' De Ruyter says: "constant inference" by Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan and the power utility's new board... Eskom evidence shakes de Ruyter's credibility... De Ruyter could land in deeper trouble over "dirty docket" how so? Die koeel is reeds deur die Kerk... Eskom Dirty Docket – "apartheid spooks" raised... Eskom mistakes cause 5 stages of load-shedding... Presidency, ANC retract comments that SA will exit International Criminal Court... South Africa is not leaving ICC... Robert Sobukwe commemorated 60 years on... South Africans safely evacuated from Sudan... what price "African Unity"?... it took a South African to engineer the biggest Bitcoin scam yet... Down the Gupta rabbit hole – how Lamola screwed up... Binder wins Spanish MotoGP...

Tucker Carlson breaks silence after abrupt departure... Hunter Biden's daughter Navy Joan a "non-person" as Bidens distance themselves... Joe Biden "likely to die in office if re-elected", says Haley... Putin will be arrested in the Western Cape, says Winde... Wheels have totally come off – Zimbabwe currency implodes... Koh-i-Noor diamond being used as a political gimmick by India... MayDay: Brits demonstrate in London, French give it horns and riot in Paris... Keir Starmer promises to be "Bolder than Blair"... MPs back UK illegal migration bill by 289 votes to 230... Patients paying a terrible price for lack of care in NHS... Forget the sick man of Europe – Britain is simply a sick country... "a mongrel mosaic of inclusivity"... fourth ceasefire declared in wretched Sudan... Wagner group fomenting violence... Germany accuses UK of delaying its Sudan evacuations... stranded NHS workers get on UK evacuation flights... James not so Cleverly plays the hero on Sudan – but at least he's not in Crete... Britain completes evacuation flights... Wikipedia website could be taken offline in the UK... Zelenskiy condemns 'absolute evil' after missile strikes kill 25... 'I want to share with the world what Ukrainian people are feeling'... Drone strike on Kremlin – Ukrainians say "not us"... China preparing to declare war on the West... Netflix hauled over the coals for "Black Cleopatra" - subscribers leave in droves... Harry and Meghan on separate paths... Has time run out for Prince Harry's case against Murdoch press?... Prince Harry was never going to miss the

Coronation... 'Priceless' moment Princess of Wales's handbag is grabbed by baby... Australia to ban vaping to end nicotine addiction 'epidemic'... My husband won't lift a finger to help me, should I stay or go?...

## CORONATION REHEARSAL:

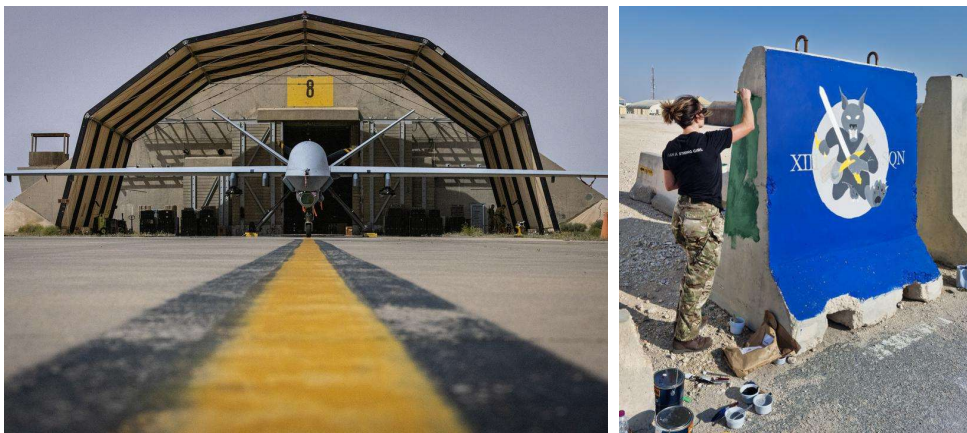


*UK Armed Forces Aircraft Take Part In Rehearsal Before King's Coronation Fly-past*

Aircraft from across the UK Armed Forces soared over RAF College Cranwell today in a rehearsal for Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla's Coronation Fly-past that will take place over Buckingham Palace on Saturday 6 May 2023. The Royal Air Force, British Army and Royal Navy were all represented as over 30 aircraft took to the skies to practice the formations which will form part of the Coronation celebrations. The full fly-past will see over 60 aircraft, including the iconic Red Arrows and historic Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, put on a spectacular show over London. The formation today flew over RAF Cranwell's iconic College Hall, which stood in for Buckingham Palace. The first aircraft to fly over College Hall, a Juno HT1 from RAF Shawbury, did so at 14:30 BST and the full display was reviewed by Air Vice-Marshal Mark Flewin, the Air Officer Commanding the Royal Air Force's No.1 Group. Watching on from the ground was 93-year-old RAF veteran Squadron Leader (retd) Terrance Devey Smith who flew in Her Late Majesty the Queen's Coronation 70 years ago. At the time of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation, Terrance was a 23-year-old RAF Flying Officer flying the Meteor 8 with 56 Squadron. On 2 June 1953, Terrence was requested by his Wing Commander to take a magazine photographer on the Coronation Fly-past. Due to his position in the formation, he switched from his Meteor 8 to a dual-seater Meteor 7 to capture the Squadron in formation with Buckingham Palace in the background. "I was honoured to have been a part of the historic fly-past, paying tribute to our Queen back on 2 June 1953. It was never just about the aeroplanes, ground crews or the pilots, it was and still is, about the spirit of service and dedication that drives us to do what we do. To serve our country. To honour our King. As pilots, we know that our actions can affect the course of history, and have the power to inspire others, and today, 70 years on from my last coronation, we hope to inspire a new generation to reach for the skies and guide us all to achieve our dreams," said Squadron Leader (retd) Terrance Devey Smith. The fly-past on Saturday 6 May 2023 will follow the King's Coronation Parade, a major display of military pageantry involving Armed Forces from across the Commonwealth and the British Overseas Territories, and all Services of the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom, alongside The Sovereign's Bodyguard and Royal Watermen. The Armed Forces coronation fly-past will take place over The Mall and Buckingham Palace at 14:30 BST on Saturday 6 May 2023 subject to weather,

serviceability, and operational commitments. Wing Commander Noel Rees, Officer Commanding 6 Squadron, who is the fly-past's Mission Commander said: "We are very proud to be able to showcase our capabilities to our Commander-in-Chief, on this historic occasion for His Majesty the King. We have planned a fitting and appropriate tribute for the new monarch, that should be a true spectacle for the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth." "It is a great honour to be part of His Majesty the King's Coronation, where the Fly-past is an opportunity to showcase Tri-Service aviation excellence to our Commander-in-Chief, on this very special occasion." While the full spectacle will not be unveiled until the Coronation, the practice with more limited aircraft numbers is an ideal opportunity to review the Fly-past from a safety and execution perspective, while making sure that the timing, spacing, and the broad structure of the Fly-past is visually appropriate for His Majesty the King's Coronation on the 6 May." *Air Vice-Marshal Mark Flewin, Air Officer Commanding No.1 Group*

## REAPER DECADE OF SERVICE:



*The Royal Air Force's unmanned MQ-9A Reaper has reached the milestone of 10 years of sustained global operations controlled from the UK.*

The remotely piloted air system, or RPAS, has been controlled by XIII Squadron based at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire, since 2013. Squadron staff marked the achievement on 24th April, while deployed personnel in the Middle East, where the Reaper is physically based, recognised the occasion with the long-standing military tradition of painting a blast wall. The RAF's XIII Squadron is responsible for providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to troops on the ground. The Squadron's pilots can control the Reapers from either Static or Mobile Ground Control Stations to deliver time critical information and support attack missions to allied forces such as the British Army or NATO. In 2024, XIII Squadron is due to operate the RAF's new MQ-9B Protector aircraft, an advanced 'medium altitude long endurance' RPAS replacing the Reaper. They will be joined by the reformed 31 Squadron, which will also be based at RAF Waddington. Before basing operations from the East Midlands, the RAF's Reapers were controlled by UK personnel based at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, USA. XIII Squadron continues to play a crucial role in conflicts worldwide and currently operates the MQ-9A Reaper for Operation Shader, combatting Daesh in Syria and Iraq, and other operations and exercises in the Middle East. In a long-standing military tradition, the occasion was marked by decorating a blast wall at 83 Expeditionary Air Group HQ, the RAF's operational headquarters in the Middle East, and where ground staff handle and maintain the Reaper. At 13:13 local time the final brush strokes were laid. Blast walls are designed to protect military personnel and equipment from explosions, making them an essential part of any military operation, however painting them with commemorative artwork has become an international military tradition. "I am proud of the what the Squadron has achieved over the last 10 years, delivering a



steady drumbeat of operations 24/7, including Operation Herrick in Afghanistan and Operation Shader combatting Daesh in Iraq and Syria". *Wing Commander Stuart McAdam, Officer Commanding XIII Squadron*

## RAF TYPHOONS POLICING NATO'S EASTERN BORDER:



*Royal Air Force Typhoon fighter jets have recently returned to Estonia to police the airspace of NATO's Eastern border with a backdrop of conflict in Ukraine.*

Operation Azotise began in March 2023 and is the second deployment of Typhoons to Eastern Europe since the Russian invasion in February last year. In March 2022 the RAF deployed to Romania for Operation Biloxi to cover the southern portion of NATO's East border. Both rotations were planned well before Russia's incursion as part of an ongoing NATO commitment to provide air policing across its Eastern flank. The 2022 Typhoon detachment to Romania contributed to 24/7 cover of the region's airspace, but also took part in various exercises. These included a multinational tank exercise involving 250 armoured vehicles; a huge US-led training effort based in North Macedonia but stretching across Eastern Europe involving 17 nations; and travelling to Turkey to test pilot capabilities with the Turkish, Pakistani, Jordanian and Azerbaijani air forces. 9000 military personnel from 17 NATO and partner countries participated in Exercise Swift Response 2022, training together in the Arctic, the Baltic States and the Balkans. RAF Typhoons went to North Macedonia, until last Tuesday the newest NATO member, where they helped ground forces suppress a simulated enemy. Concurrently, RAF C-17 Globemaster III and C-130J Hercules transport aircraft delivered British and Italian paratroopers using high altitude low opening (HALO) and traditional parachute jumps, while Chinook helicopters landed troops and heavy weaponry. Exercise Scorpion Legacy 2022 took place in Romania with 1800 troops and 250 armoured vehicles and had the Typhoons providing close air support to ground troops and vehicles, as well as working closely with Romanian Puma helicopters. The Exercise culminated with the Typhoons giving a live fire demonstration to enable an attack manoeuvre by the ground forces against a simulated enemy. RAF Typhoons flew to Turkey to take part in Exercise Anatolian Eagle. They joined Turkish, Pakistani and Jordanian F-16 fighter jets, along with SU-25 aircraft from the Azerbaijani Air Force. The exercise tested the operational training level of the pilots with Typhoons employed in multiple realistic combat scenarios, acting as allied forces conducting combined air operations against a peer adversary.

## NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEMBERS EXPERIENCE QRA:



*North Atlantic Council members experience what it is like to be intercepted by the defenders of UK airspace – RAF Typhoons on Quick Reaction Alert.*

The NAC representatives, flying from Brussels to Glasgow, were met by two Typhoon fighter jets over the North Sea just off the east coast of England as part of their regular training.

These practices ensure that QRA teams are ready to respond to potential threats in or near UK airspace, such as a commercial airliner not communicating or an unscheduled military aircraft. QRA also regularly collaborates with our NATO neighbours to ensure a coordinated response is given to any potential threat travelling from one country's airspace, known as their Flight Information Region, to another. The UK's Quick Reaction Alert is conducted by Typhoons based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire and RAF Lossiemouth in North Scotland. Crews are on standby 24/7 and are ready to react at a moment's notice to reach a threat within minutes, no matter the location within or just outside the UK's airspace. In addition, the UK is committed to NATO Air Policing in Eastern Europe. RAF Typhoons are currently based in Estonia patrolling the eastern border of NATO and responding to potential threats in the same way they do when conducting QRA over the UK.

## **POLISH FLAG DAY:**

The 2nd of May was the Day of Polish Communities and Poles Living Abroad and Polish Flag Day 78 years ago in May 1945, during the Allies final onslaught onto Berlin, the Polish flag was raised on 2 May 1945 on Berlin's Victory Column by a Polish soldier.



*2 May 1945, raising of the Polish Flag on the Victory Column in Berlin.*

My father, Jan Szewczuk, passed onto me the campaign medals awarded to his parents, Stanislaw and Teresa Szewczuk. My grandparents were awarded a medal for their participation in the final onslaught onto Berlin. Here it must be noted that those Polish Deportees who did not serve in Anders' army, there were Deportees who fought in the Red Army and participated in this final onslaught onto Berlin. Consul Robert Rusiecki from the Polish Embassy in Pretoria has posted a request for the Day of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad and Flag Day of the Republic of Poland. Please take note of the Consul's request to take and publish photos and to also email them to the Polish Embassy in Pretoria on [pretoria.amb.sekretariat@msz.gov.pl](mailto:pretoria.amb.sekretariat@msz.gov.pl). Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to remind you that May 2 is the Day of Polonia and Poles Abroad and Polish Flag Day. I would therefore like to heartily encourage you to join the #WhiteRedFlag and #UnitedUnderPolishFlag action and take and publish photos in white and red frames marked #WhiteRedFlag and #UnitedUnderPolishFlag, which I am sending in this message. I also ask you to use the above hashtags in your publications.

*(Stephan Szewczuk)*

## GWYNETH ASHLEY ROBIN:




For those who were living in Rhodesia before Independence in 1980, the name Gwyneth Ashley Robin would have been well known because of her numerous visits around the country to sing at concerts to entertain the troops. One of her favourite songs, particularly amongst the younger generation, was 'Little Jimmy'. (This actually referred to Jimmy Osmond who was a singing star in the US at the time.)


Gwyneth was also extremely popular in her home country of South Africa where she recorded her songs in both English and Afrikaans. On 21st of May 1976, she and members of her backing group took off in a Cessna Centurion from Randfontein to Phalaborwa but for unknown reasons the aircraft crashed midway, the crash report stating: "Classic case of controlled flight into terrain!" Gwyneth was just a few months short of her 16th birthday when she died. It was a tragic loss of this young star, one who had such a promising singing career ahead of her.

**ASN Wikibase Occurrence # 34440**

This information is added by users of ASN. Neither ASN nor the Flight Safety Foundation are responsible for the completeness or correctness of this information. If you feel this information is incomplete or incorrect, you can [submit corrected information](#).

**Date:** 21-MAY-1976  
**Time:**



**Type:** Cessna 210K Centurion  
**Owner/operator:** Unknown  
**Registration:** ZS-JPW  
**MSN:** 21059466  
**Fatalities:** Fatalities: 7 / Occupants: 7  
**Other fatalities:** 0  
**Aircraft damage:** Written off (damaged beyond repair)  
**Category:** Accident  
**Location:** Penge, Limpopo -  [South Africa](#)  
**Phase:** En route  
**Nature:** Private  
**Departure airport:** Robinson Lake, Randfontein, W. Rand  
**Destination airport:** FAPH (Phalaborwa)  
**Narrative:**  
 This was the accident in which 15 year old South African pop star, Gwyneth Ashley Robin and her backing group Danie Schoeman, Vic Rall and Robby Potts were killed. The pilot, Pieter van Rooyen, his wife and their infant were also killed. Apparently this accident was a classic case of controlled flight into terrain, while en route to Phalaborwa.

This is a write-up by Malcom Lombard 1997. "Little Jimmy" reached No.1 in the Lyons maid Hits of the Week chart and stayed there for two weeks in December 1973. The song reached No.1 in the

Springbok's Top Twenty Hit Parade in March 1974 and spent 14 weeks in the charts. Little Jimmy garnered Gwyneth for two Gold Discs – one in SA and one in Rhodesia, where the single sold 33,000 copies – a record in Rhodesia for a single at that time. Although Gwyneth was popular in SA, she enjoyed super-star status in Rhodesia, where she toured several times before undertaking her first country-wide SA tour. She was so popular with the Rhodesian soldiers engaged in the bush war at the time, and she often performed for them in the operational areas. Her second hit, Little Soldier Blue, reached No. 3 in the Rhodesian charts: it peaked at No. 9 on the Springbok Top Twenty and spent 9 weeks in the charts. Gwyneth received the 1974 Springbok (mini-Sarie) Award as SA's most popular female vocalist. She toured Rhodesia regularly with a host of artists in the popular Meet the Stars shows, including Jody Wayne, Gert Potgieter, Alan Garrity, Barbara Ray, Murray Campbell and others, and she was also a regular guest on TV in Rhodesia."

## **BITCOIN BILLIONS:**

When we first recorded problems with MTI, back in Week 46, 19 Feb 2021, we said that there would be more to follow... Back in July last year, the U.S. Commodities Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) has charged South African resident Cornelius Johannes Steynberg in a Bitcoin fraud scheme case totalling \$1.7 billion. In a Press Release published on its website, the CFTC alleges that Steynberg, through a South Africa-registered company, Mirror Trading International Proprietary Limited (MTI), created and operated a global foreign currency commodity pool. The pool, which had a value of \$1.7 billion, only accepted bitcoin from users who wanted to purchase participation in it. According to the litigation details, from approximately May 18, 2018, through approximately March 30, 2021, Steynberg, individually and as the controlling person of MTI, engaged in the international fraudulent multilevel marketing scheme, using promotional websites and social media to solicit bitcoin from members of the public. The CFTC's Commissioner Kristin Johnson stated that instead of trading forex as represented, Steynberg and MTI misappropriated pool funds, misrepresented their trading and performance, provided fictitious account statements, and also created a fictitious broker at which trading purportedly took place. Johnson said Steynberg in general operated the pool as a Ponzi scheme. She further pointed out that the little trading that Steynberg and MTI did was unprofitable, and they misappropriated essentially all of the at least 29,421 bitcoins accepted from participants. In the litigation, the CFTC seeks full restitution to defrauded investors, disgorgement of ill-gotten gains, civil monetary penalties, permanent registration and trading bans, and a permanent injunction against future violations of the USA's Commodity Exchange Act and CFTC Regulations. The CFTC cautions victims that restitution orders may not result in the recovery of money lost, because the wrongdoers may not have sufficient funds or assets. Steynberg is a fugitive from South African law enforcement but was recently detained in Brazil on an Interpol arrest warrant. It is unclear how the CFTC hopes to extract the money out of Steynberg, as he still appears to be detained in a Brazilian prison. The CFTC cautioned victims that restitution orders might not recover lost money because the wrongdoers may not have sufficient funds or assets. *(Bloomberg)*



## SOUTH AFRICA FROM ABOVE - AERIAL SURVEYS:



Visible Pretoria University 1960 Iscor lower right



SAAF Wapitis over Pretoria West 1933:

### Southern African Aerial Photography History:

Ironically, not much research has been done on the history of South African photography in general. The one exception, however, is aerial photography. While the information on early aerial photography is not cohesive from a historical perspective, much information on this topic is available online. The interest in the topic is primarily aviation related.

Southern African Aerial photography history can loosely be divided into four categories, namely -

- From first use until the end of World War I (1918)
- The period between the two World Wars (1918 – 1939)
- World war II (1939 – 1945)
- Period post World War II (1945 – the 1970s)

Due to aerial photography having a reconnaissance focus during periods of conflict, the periods between the two world wars and post-World War II have become less romanticised. Full Article at <https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/southern-africa-above-aerial-photography-historical-overview>

### SPAD S.XIII C.1:

27 April 1921: Louis G. Meister, Chief Test Pilot, McCook Field, completes his report on the flight tests of the Société Pour L'Aviation et ses Dérivés SPAD S.XIII C.1, best known, simply, at the "Spad."

The SPAD S.XIII C.1 was a single-seat, single -engine, two-bay biplane constructed of a wooden framework with a doped fabric covering. Sheet metal covered the engine and cockpit. Designed by Société Pour L'Aviation et ses Dérivés Technical Director Louis Béchéreau and manufactured by SPAD as well as eight other companies, this was an improved and slightly larger version of the earlier SPAD S.VII C.1. It used a more powerful Hispano-Suiza 8Ba engine instead of the S.VII's 8Aa, with an increase of 50 horsepower. (Later versions used 8Be engines.) Armament was increased from a single .303-caliber Vickers machine gun to two. The S.XIII was first flown by René Pierre Marie Dorme, 4 April 1917.



First Lieutenant Edward V. Rickenbacker with his SPAD XIII C.1, 94th Aero Squadron, American Expeditionary Forces, France, 1918. (U.S. Air Force)

The McCook Field test aircraft, designated P-154, was built by Société Pour L'Aviation et ses Dérivés. Its manufacturer's serial number was 17956, and it was designated A.S. 94101 by the U.S. Air Service. It was surveyed 14 January 1924.



The SPAD was faster than other airplanes of the time and it had a good rate of climb. Though a product of France, it was used by both the Royal Flying Corps and the U.S. Army Air Service. In France, the airplane type now considered a “fighter” was called a chasseur (“hunter”). The letter ‘C’ in the SPAD’s designation reflects this. The ‘1’ at the ending indicates a single-place aircraft.

### **PILOT’S OBSERVATIONS ON SPAD 13**

This airplane taxis very easily even in high wind and has no tendency to turn in either direction on the ground. It should be taxied with the control stick held forward to lessen the weight on the tail skid. The tail skid is too straight and has broken on two different occasions while taxiing over rough ground. It is a difficult airplane to take-off because of a tendency to swing to the right immediately upon opening the throttle, and if given left rudder too fast will swing to the left. In order to make a good fast take-off it is necessary to push the control stick slightly forward to raise the tail from the ground. This feature is noticeable after having flown other pursuit plane of approximately the same power. In flight the airplane is very steady, but requires a good deal of left rudder, as the engine torque is very pronounced. It is tail heavy flying level, and also climbing with wide-open throttle, but this tail heaviness is not so pronounced above 15,000 feet. The cockpit is very roomy, although the rudder bar is too close to the pilot and tires the legs in a long flight. It is a very warm and comfortable airplane to fly at altitude or on cold days, but not on warm days or low flying with wide-open throttle, such as contact patrol. The airplane manoeuvres easily and shows no tendency to spin in very tight banks. The visibility is good to either side and above the top wing but is blind straight ahead and below. *(This Day in Aviation)*

### **PRESIDENTIAL PIE-IN-THE-SKY:**

Platitudes, promises and pie-in-the-sky – that’s all we seem to get from President Cyril Ramaphosa. But even by his waffling and fantasy standards, there was one promise he made in his Freedom Day speech which had the experts shaking their heads. Referring to the current energy crisis – and even that term sounds euphemistic, given the huge damage load shedding is doing to an already fragile economy – Ramaphosa said: “When we emerge from this crisis, our energy system will have been fundamentally transformed. It will be more stable, more reliable, more affordable and more sustainable. It will not be hard to make our national grid more stable, more reliable and more sustainable... because the bar is so low, even small improvements will be noticed.” Ask yourself how it feels to hear that it is “only” stage 2 and instead of higher ones... Yet, how on earth – as opposed to Planet Dream Land on which Ramaphosa seems to be spending much of his time – do you manage to make electricity “more affordable”? Eskom was given an outrageous 18% tariff increase (or about three times our current rate of inflation) but it wanted even more – something around 35% – to make a dent in its financial losses. If the country is going to have to refurbish coal-fired power stations or even bring in vast new renewable energy projects – never mind the ruinously expensive Karpowership floating generation idea – does the president think this will come cheaply? We have certainly been kept in the dark, like mushrooms, and now our leader is ladling on the manure. Perhaps that is why our electricity minister has, seemingly, been pushed into the background – because he was too open and honest about the horrible load shedding winter which lies ahead of us. Marie Antoinette-like, our president seems to be saying: Let them eat hope. *(Citizen)*

### **OPERATION G-STRING:**

Cash-strapped Johannesburg Metro Police plans to use speeding cameras to raise funds for underpaid traffic cops. The plan, titled ‘Operation G-String’, is based on a complete departure from

traffic control to solely focusing on ways to increase fines on unsuspecting motorists and essentially legitimising the bribe trade. Operation G-string involves hiding more traffic officials behind roadside bushes, armed with state-of-the-art speeding cameras. JMPD boss Thulani Khanyile said he got the inspiration for the new operation while watching a Victoria Secret commercial. "The G-string is such an underrated underwear garment. G-strings don't use as much fabric as spunks, yet they can cost more and they don't offer much coverage for the main goods," Khanyile explained. "Just like a G-string all we need is a line. Most motorists cross the trap line at higher speeds and only slow down after seeing the officer behind the camera, poorly concealed in the roadside shrubbery. But by then, we have already clocked the driver's speed." The city plans to invest heavily in new speeding cameras and it's expecting a 400% return on investment within the first month. "Operation G-string will be very successful because motorists won't know we there until it's too late. Then, when we flag them down, we will offer them a chance to settle the speeding fine in person or pay it online with the rest of the fines," explained Khanyile. Either way, JMPD will be coining it and officers can postpone their Christmas bonus hustling to later in the year.

## **ELECTRICITY MINISTER: DONATE BRAAI COALS TO ESKOM:**

Minister in the Presidency responsible for Electricity, Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, has made an impassioned plea to South Africans, asking the nation to donate their braai coals to ailing parastatal Eskom. He was visiting the Matla and Komati Power Stations when he made the request. Earlier this week, Ramokgopa disclosed that Unit 1 of the Koeberg nuclear power station will only return to service 45 days after the latest deadline of 23 July. The new target date of 13 September is a full 90 days after the original date of 8 June, when the 180-day outage was supposed to end. This means a shortage of at least 900 MW during the peak winter period. Ramokgopa, while acknowledging citizens had already been through enough of load shedding-induced trauma, begged for the nations understanding as government once again "trespassed on South African's resilience." "We estimate that one bag of coal, per family ought to reduce the load shedding stages at least until the middle of winter," he said. He discouraged citizens from donating briquettes charcoal because it is not suited for the industrial strength generators, saying briquettes might even cause additional breakdowns. "During the winter months, we noticed that South Africans tend to braai less than they would in summer months, but if you must braai, we encourage the use of wood so that you will be able to make your donation to Eskom," said Ramokgopa. Acting Eskom CEO Calib Cassim has welcomed the electricity minister's intervention saying this type of political interference was much more productive than just enabling wide scale looting and forcing the parastatal to provide feeding troughs for officials "that need to eat." "Eskom would essentially be able to free up additional capital for renewables if the existing paying customer base can also subsidise part of the coal supply needed to keep the lights on their homes," said Cassim. Both men agreed that wood-fired braais tasted better anyway, and by making South Africans subsidise their own coal supply, it would enable government to send more coal at cheaper prices overseas. *(Neither of the above two stories are in any way true or accurate and was sponsored by White Monopoly Capital and groups exposing 'things mainstream media doesn't want you know,' as part of our April Fool's Day coverage).*

## **CHEERS FOR NOW...**

By the time you read this we will possibly already have had our May lunch. For the first time since Covid, the numbers who have booked for this Friday's lunch do not warrant us having a guest speaker, as it will be poor form to have around 12 - 15 in the audience after he has taken the trouble

to prepare an address for us. We have pencilled in Hamilton Wende's talk for 7 July when we hope all the holidays are over and we have our normal compliment. More to follow nearer the time.... The menu for Friday is Durban Curry followed by Chocolate tart. If you do not eat curry and have booked, please advise so we can have an alternative prepared for you.

If you want to come along for future lunches, then please book 'IN GOOD TIME' using the normal manner at [bookings@rafoc.com](mailto:bookings@rafoc.com). Please note that we close the list on the Wednesday evening before the lunch. Late bookers give us a logistical headache, not to mention the catering issues.

## TAILPIECE:

A blonde wanted to try out ice fishing. She went out and purchased all the gear she would need and headed to a local spot to try to catch some fish. She went out onto the ice with her gear and after getting comfy on the stool, she started to cut a circular hole in the ice as she had seen on the internet. As she was cutting, she heard a voice from the heavens speak out, saying, "THERE ARE NO FISH UNDER THE ICE." The blonde was startled. She stood up and looked around but saw no one. Cautiously, she moved a little further out onto the ice and set up in a different spot. She sipped some hot chocolate from her thermos and then started cutting another hole. Again, the voice called out, seemingly from all around her: "THERE ARE NO FISH UNDER THE ICE." Now feeling quite scared and starting to get a bit frustrated, she moved all the way to the far end of the ice and laid out all her gear, sat upon her stool and started cutting another hole. Right away, the heavenly voice boomed out, this time louder than ever, "THERE ARE NO FISH UNDER THE ICE!" She jumped off her stool and looked all around her. She shouted to the heavens, "IS THAT YOU, LORD?" The voice answered, "NO. THIS IS THE MANAGER OF THE ICE-SKATING RINK. THERE ARE NO FISH UNDER THE ICE!"

MATT



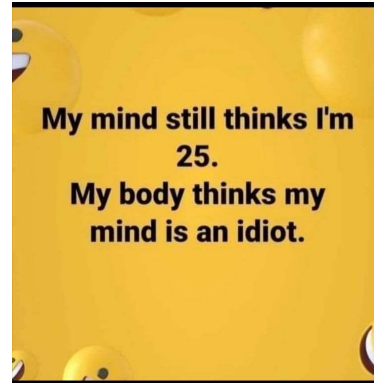
*'I didn't get a phone alert.  
Did you?'*

MATT

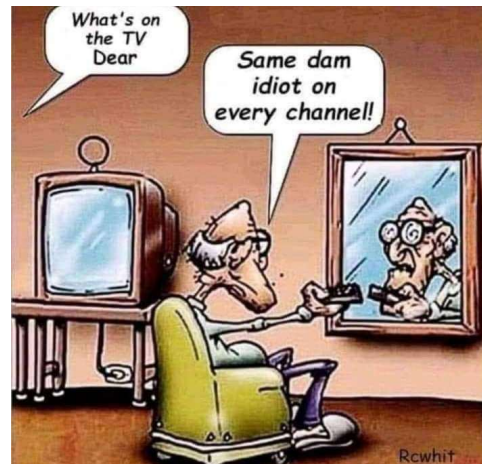


*'I'm clapping for the  
lawyers who stopped  
next week's NHS strike'*





**The Math teacher asked Johnny, "How many feet are there in a yard?" Johnny responded, "It depends on how many people are standing in the yard!"**



## COST OF THE CROWN:



*A mainstay in the community has departed.*

Without much fuss and fanfare, a mainstay in the community, possessing of boundless energy, liveliness and an indomitable spirit, quietly slipped away recently. More than six decades ago, Mainstay cane spirit was born in KwaZulu-Natal. Over the years, it became unique and special to South Africa just as tequila is to Mexico, vodka to Russia and rum to Jamaica. Now the once top-selling liquor brand is no more - it was taken off the shelves as sales had dropped in favour of more expensive brands of liquor for bulging wallets and sophisticated palates. While there was no race classification for Mainstay cane spirit at birth, it was not long before the liquor that was distilled from fermented sugarcane juice became a firm favourite among Indians. It was a combination of several factors that endeared Indians to Mainstay cane spirit. Chief among these would be the link to the cane fields which Indians, with their sweat and toil, had turned into a veritable economic engine room for then Natal. Compared to other alcoholic drinks such as whiskey and brandy, cane spirit was relatively cheap and affordable for the lower economic group that was more prone to imbibing hard liquor in large quantities regularly. Also, cane spirit has a flavour that is very neutral - not sweet - and this paired well with traditional Indian dishes such as pungent curries. In the 60s, a 750ml bottle of Mainstay cane sold for less than R3 and in the 70s, it could be bought for about R5. This may be regarded as a small amount of money when considered today but the mirth or mayhem a bottle of cane caused could be significant. After a week of hard work, many men would head home on a Friday afternoon with oily brown paper bags of sev and nuts, chilli bites and an assortment of cakes that filled children with glee. As his own reward for his loyal labouring, the head of the household will also have tucked under his arm a bottle of "blue top", a nickname Mainstay cane spirit earned because of the blue cap on the bottle. Like a magic potion, a couple of tots of cane dashed with Coke soon calmed frayed nerves and relaxed stiff and sore muscles. "Cane for the pain" became the mantra that many factory workers recited as they drank their troubles away. There would be those who became jolly after a few drinks and got their families laughing hysterically with their tall stories. Some would sing rather well because with the intoxication, inhibition was lowered and all tension was gone. And then there would be a small group whose members were usually never violent but after a good few drinks, became aggressive - using foul language and threatening all and sundry with a bush knife. One personality who put Mainstay to good use was the late sports activist R K Naidoo who was a sales representative for liquor company Henry Tayler & Ries. The company was keen to promote its Mainstay cane spirit brand and Naidoo managed to secure a small sponsorship to promote non-racial soccer. By getting some money in the name of Mainstay for the

South African Soccer Federation Professional League which he headed, and coupled with his success as a liquor sales rep, it was not too long before Naidoo came to be regarded as “Mr Mainstay.” Fifty years ago, it was easy to know that Mainstay was the most popular drink of the time. The majority of bottles used when buying cooking oil that would be decanted at the local grocery store with a hand-operated siphon from a battered 44-gallon drum, had formerly held Mainstay cane spirit. Mainstay reigned supreme among the Indian community for several decades. However, for some reason that I cannot easily fathom, cane spirit fans in Pietermaritzburg preferred the Sundowner brand over Mainstay. Could it have had something to do with KwaZulu-Natal’s capital city being referred to as Sleepy Hollow? Soon enough, whites learnt that for a reasonable price, you could get a mule’s kick from cane spirit, never mind that it gave you a hangover of note. Cane and Coke came to be known as “spook and diesel” while cane and cream soda was referred to as a “green mamba.” Within a few years after its launch in 1954, the Mainstay brand had built an enviable national footprint. By the late 60s, volumes had exceeded 4.5 million litres, with initial production being handled by Henry Tayler & Ries, followed by Sedgwick Tayler and then by Distell’s predecessor, Stellenbosch Farmers’ Winery (SFW), before the merger of SFW and Distillers Corporation which became Distell in 2000. Volumes peaked in the early 80s, making Mainstay the number one-selling spirit in South Africa. Mainstay, often regarded as a sugar cane-based vodka, was voted as best vodka ahead of its Russian, Polish and Finnish competitors at the International Wine and Spirits Competition in 2007. Until its recent demise, the label on the Mainstay bottle featured a sailing vessel whilst the neck of the bottle had a seagull. In nautical lingo, a mainstay is a stay, or line, extending forward from the mainmast, supporting it and holding it in position. I was recently reminded of Mainstay’s long association with religious fervour among some Hindus. My daughter was battling toothache. A teetotaler cousin surprised me when she suggested she would make available some Mainstay to be swished around the mouth to ease the pain. When I asked why she had stashed away Mainstay when it had been discontinued, she said she offered it to Lord Madurai Veeran who is worshipped for his valour and courage, during the annual Amman or “porridge” prayer. I guess for the mythical warrior of Madurai, who is reputed to have protected the people of the South Indian city against thieves and bandits, a tot of Jameson’s Select Reserve Irish whiskey will just not match up to old, legendary Mainstay. An old friend of the community may be gone - but will not be easily forgotten. The jingle I heard on the radio since boyhood still rings in my head: “You can stay as you are for the rest of your life...or you can change to Mainstay!”

*(By Yogin Devan – POST newspaper Yogin is a Media Consultant and Social Commentator. Share your comments with him on: [Yogind@Meropa.co.za](mailto:Yogind@Meropa.co.za))*

## **AG PLEEZE DADDY...**

*Editorial from Daily Maverick*

*Ag pleez Deddy won't you take us off to Durban*

*It's only eight hours in the Chevro-lay*

*There's spans of sea and E. coli*

*And sharks in the aquarium*

*And drive-by shootings in the afternoon sun*

*Tow trucks, heroin, mandrax and methamphetamine*

*AK47s, Glocks and rifles for fun*

Dear DM168 readers, Forgive me for bastardising Jeremy Taylor’s lyrics from his hit recording that sold more than any Elvis single in South Africa, but was banned by the SABC. I have been working from Durban this week and that song twisted into an earworm in my head as I walked through the



vibrant, rich, pulsating, humid, sweltering hot, rough, sewage-seething streets of the eastern seaboard town of my birth and childhood. A tree grew brazenly off the dome on one of the Edwardian baroque buildings in the decaying City Hall precinct, nature's flag staking its primordial claim on a monument to a British colonial era. This city straddles so many pasts in its present, so many strands of culture... Zulu, Zanzibari, Indian, English and the sprinkle of mixed masalas like me. You see all these entanglements of belief and beauty in the Grey Street mosque, the Emmanuel Cathedral, the Hindu temples, the scent of agarbatti mingling with impepho, the muti shops, the markets, the Zulu beadwork, the mural of the dynasty of Zulu Kings, art deco buildings overlooking the yacht basin and the fishermen casting their lines at Blue Lagoon. Ethekwini has an energy and edge like no other city. It's bold, brash, young, verdant and alive with possibility, but all of its promise is being held up at gunpoint by a violent underbelly. A violence that wrecked lives and homes and destroyed shops through looting during the unrest after Jacob Zuma was imprisoned in 2021. A violence that sees the KZN province still bloodied by the murder of politicians, izinduna (Zulu regiments and traditional leaders) and public officials. And Durban, KZN's main urban heartbeat, a hotbed of hits and drive-by shootings of rival taxi businesses, tow truck businesses and drug dealers. The latest Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime report (GI-TOC) shows KZN had the highest number of recorded cases for political assassination in 2022 with 21, which is more than half the country's total number. The author of the report, Rumbi Matamba, writes that violence has become a monetisable criminal market in its own right, one that facilitates other criminal markets within the country's organised crime ecosystem, such as illicit drugs, extortion, organised corruption, organised robbery, illegal mining and others. Worst of all we have a police minister, Bheki Cele, from Durban who despite the Moerane Commission of Inquiry into political assassinations in KZN and a task team on political killings that he established is unable to stem the proliferation of guns, ammunition and assassinations that continue unabated. Independent violence monitor and academic, Mary de Haas, told News 24 that the reason murders continue unabated is because killing in KZN had become "so easy". She cited the proliferation of hitmen who emerge from the unregulated taxi industry, dysfunctional crime intelligence, which allows hitmen to remain undetected, guns and ammunition which isn't properly regulated. To top it all there are several allegations of police involvement in killings. In this weekend's DM168 our Ethekwini correspondent, Greg Ardé has written an explosive story about an ex-policeman who sought a court interdict against the Durban police, begging them not to kill his son – after he obtained information that the police had a hit on his son – but before the ink had dried on the interdict, his son was dead in a pool of blood in an upmarket apartment in Morningside, mowed down by the police. The police version is that the son and his companions were wanted criminals who shot at police first, but the father claims a prominent tow truck operator had put a R2.5-million bounty on his son's head. This story is a frightening exposé of the dark side of Durban, of drugs, gangsters and tow truck operator turf wars, brutal murders, brazen brandishing of automatic weapons and the repeated allegations of police complicity in all of this. This violence has a chilling effect on the people of Durban trying to pick themselves up from the wreckage of both the 2021 looting followed by the floods, which ravaged the city even further. I was at a bank in Dr Pixley ka Seme Street when gunshots pierced the hubbub and the street fell silent. Everyone around me told me to stay away from the door entrances, saying that nowhere is safe. Rapper AKA was assassinated in Florida Road, and there have been a spate of drive-by shootings and assassinations of tow-truck operators in what clearly looks like a turf war. A well-known tow truck operator survived a drive-by shooting at a bakery in Cowie Road. Another tow truck driver was gunned down in Sandile Thusi Road. Police are doing very little to put an end to this violence. Thugs and murderers own the city. Its beautiful people are sitting ducks. Collateral damage. This city under siege by thugs was once Cele's stomping ground. The public drive-by shootings and assassinations are out of hand.

The turf wars serve no one's interests but a few drug and tow truck barons (and those in their pockets) who benefit from rivals being killed off to secure market dominance. Minister Cele, you and SAPS Commissioner Fannie Masemola need to get your house in order. Every complicit cop needs to be investigated and charged. Taxi, gun and ammunition regulations need to be tightened and strictly enforced. And those sitting at the top of the food chain of the drug and tow truck wars need to be caught, charged, face court time and sit behind bars. It's a long weekend so all the more reason to get a copy of DM168 at your nearest retailer or if you are a Maverick Insider read the e-edition version that is freely available to you. I'm praying that the e.coli levels in the Indian Ocean are safe enough for me to take a dip and cleanse myself of the bloodiness of this week's lead story. Please send your views on this or some bright idea you might have to fix our broken country to [heather@dailymaverick.co.za](mailto:heather@dailymaverick.co.za) Yours in defence of truth, Heather.