



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg  
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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 222 30<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2024

### GREETINGS:

The first clivias are in bloom, peach trees blossoming and the first green leaves are on the plane trees... But another cold front inbound... South Africa goes green! – No, Mr President, a soft brown – read the Auditor- General's report... Eskom celebrates 150 days no loadshedding – but at what a price!... Ace in the hole – PA Cholota fails to have charges withdrawn... Motsoaledi tries to play hardball on NHI... Justice Minister Thembu Simelane in the dwang: received R575,600 'loan' from VBS... SAPS nabs kidnapping syndicate... apprehend kidnapping ringleader at OR Tambo... Kyiv's Russian incursion is on a knife edge... Russia's biggest attack on Ukraine in weeks kills 4... Kamala Harris pledges to secure a ceasefire in Gaza... Households face higher winter energy bills... Telegram CEO Pavel Durov arrested in France: money laundering, fraud, terrorism, drug peddling, child pornography - sounds like a good comrade... Record number of migrants granted asylum (Labour - as delusional as ever)... Starmer's VAT raid will overwhelm Home Counties education... Starmer's betrayal of those who have saved and worked hard is built on lies - Starmer's approval rating at lowest on record... 'No whites' graffiti investigated by Birmingham police... 'Incompetent' council paints over potholes with double yellow lines (plenty of work in SA for these boyos)... Mike Lynch's family at risk of \$4bn lawsuit... Andrew Flintoff to no longer work with England; Ricky becomes youngest County Player... Palace comment on Harry and Meghan: "we wish them all the best."

### SAILOR MALAN MEMORIAL: SAVE THE DATES – TWO EVENTS! – ALL WELCOME:

Sailor Malan (GB 1924/26) Memorial Lecture scheduled for Saturday 14th September 2024 @ 1100, venue the Royal Cape Yacht Club, Table Bay Harbour. The lecture shall be delivered by Executive Mayor of Cape Town Geordin Hill-Lewis. Although the subject was a famed airman his career started on our training ship moored off Simon's Town Naval Base followed by a period as a seagoing officer before joining the Royal Air Force. During WWII, and in particular during the Battle of Britain, he became a distinguished and decorated fighter pilot. In later years he became a famed South African

activist for which he was awarded Cape Town Civic Honour posthumously in 2023. Details attached. Note: the driver of your vehicle must show his/her driver's license to gain entry to the port. Battle of Britain Commemoration and Remembrance Service scheduled for Sunday 15th September 2024 @ 1030, venue the South African Naval Museum Chapel, Simon's Town. Although this battle took place in the skies over Britain it was a battle for democracy in which many South Africans fought and many died. Details attached.

Captain Tony Nicholas Chairman

South African Training Ship General Botha Old Boys' Association

email: [cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za](mailto:cptchairman@generalbotha.co.za)

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## **BATTLE OF BRITAIN AIR SHOW:**



VISITORS WILL be transported back in time to the summer of 1940 as historic Duxford comes to life once more for this year's Battle of Britain Air Show, taking place on Saturday 14 and Sunday, September 15. Highlights of this year's show include the RAF F-35 Roll Demo Lightning, making its Duxford debut on the Saturday, the RAF Falcons Display Team, and the signature Spitfire and Hurricane finale flypast to

commemorate the 'Few' who defended Britain in the skies during World War II. The air show, for families and enthusiasts alike, will feature historic aircraft displays, including the Bristol Blenheim, B-17 'Sally B' and the much-loved flypast of more than 12 Spitfires and four Hurricanes. This year will also see modern combat aircraft take to the skies – the thundering RAF F-35 Lightning and Typhoon FGR4. Taking place at an airfield which saw action during the Battle of Britain itself, the Air Show offers a full immersion into the 1940s, with vintage-inspired experiences around every corner. Living history groups, live music, swing dance workshops and vintage hairstyling will transport guests back to the era and visitors are encouraged to dress to impress in 40s fashion. New highlights on the ground include the car owned by Flying Ace Douglas Bader, a renovated 1937 MG TA. IWM Air Show event manager Phil Hood said: "September may spell the end of summer, but we always look forward to this month when we can welcome visitors to our Battle of Britain Air Show, one of the highlight events of the Duxford calendar." Go to: [iwm.org.uk](http://iwm.org.uk) for booking details.

## **ATNS CRUMBLES: AIR SAFETY SUFFERS:**

In recent weeks, we've seen alarming announcements from Air Traffic Navigation Services (ATNS), which have led to restrictions on aircraft landings and take-offs at many airport runways across the country.

These developments are deeply concerning for several reasons, not least of which is the potential impact on the safety of the flying public. The effects on the airline industry and travellers have been severe, with planes unable to land at night or in poor weather.

A closer look at what has transpired reveals that senior managers and the board of directors at ATNS have fallen short of their leadership and oversight functions.

Years of established processes designed to ensure good governance, robust internal controls and audits appear to have been neglected. Red flags, concerns and complaints raised by staff and external customers appear to have been ignored.

ATNS appears to be on the path to becoming yet another failed government institution, lacking the foresight, leadership and controls required to remain the world-class organisation it once was.

It is time for new Minister of Transport Barbara Creecy to commission a thorough independent investigation into the conduct and lack of governance applied by the senior management and board of this critical entity.

*DM Opinion piece by Wayne Duvenage at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2024-08-20-as-air-traffic-navigation-services-crumbles-air-safety-in-south-africa-suffers/>*

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## **OBITUARIES:**

### **Air Marshal Sir Peter Norriss KBE CB AFC MA FRAeS:**



who has died aged 80, tested the Prince of Wales during his flying training before flying Buccaneer and Tornado aircraft. He went on to fill senior appointments in the MOD operational requirements directorate and the procurement executive. The eldest of three boys, all of whom served with distinction as RAF pilots, he read Modern Languages at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he joined the University Air Squadron and won the Hack Trophy as the best aerobatic pilot in the annual competition amongst all the university squadrons. He joined the RAF in 1966 and immediately after gaining his pilot's 'wings' he was selected to attend the Central Flying School to train as a flying instructor. On completion of the course, he trained flight cadets at the RAF College Cranwell. During this period, he tested the then Prince of Wales, who was undergoing his pilot training at the College, on his navigation test, which he assessed as 'above average'. He was a member of the college display team, the Poachers, and was the solo aerobatic display pilot. In competition with fellow instructors throughout the RAF, his aerobatic display won him the Wright Jubilee Trophy. Laarbruch

It was common practice at the time that those who had been instructors on their first appointment were able to choose their next flying appointment. Norriss' father had been a production manager during the build of the Buccaneer at the Blackburn factory at Brough so, in 1971, Norriss elected to fly the Buccaneer. After completing his conversion to the strike/attack aircraft, he was posted to join No. XV Squadron based at Laarbruch on the Dutch-German border. This was the first of three tours on the Buccaneer. In September 1974 he was appointed the Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) of the Buccaneer conversion unit based at Honington in Suffolk. During his two years he was the official Buccaneer display pilot. For his services as the CFI, he was awarded the AFC. After attending the RAF Staff College and serving in MOD, he returned to Laarbruch in April 1980 to take command of 16 Squadron. At the time, the Buccaneer force was grounded following an aircraft fatigue failure resulting in the loss of the two-man crew. This was a testing time for a Buccaneer squadron commander as the future of the aircraft remained in the balance for some months. Despite the uncertain integrity of the Buccaneer airframe, Norriss was required to maintain an aircraft at 15 minutes readiness in the nuclear role. The squadron acquired several Hunter aircraft, and these were used to maintain the currency of the aircrew until the Buccaneer was cleared to fly again in July 1980. In June 1982 he was tasked to provide a four-aircraft formation for the flypast to commemorate HM The Queen's official 56th birthday flypast at the NATO headquarters at Rheindahlen. Encouraged by this 'requirement' he formed and led the RAF's only ever Buccaneer display team, which he called the Black Saints, to commemorate the squadron's formation at St Omer during World War I. The formation team performed at several air displays across Germany. Under Norriss' leadership, 16 Squadron deployed from Laarbruch to Exercise Red Flag at Nellis Air Force Base in Arizona, without air-to-air refuelling, crossing the Atlantic from St Mawgan in Cornwall to Gander in Newfoundland via the Azores. The final leg from a base in Texas to Nellis was completed at low level and took the aircraft along the length of the Grand Canyon, before arriving in a diamond nine formation to impress their USAF hosts. In January 1984, Norriss became Head of the RAF Presentation Team before assuming command of Marham in Norfolk, the home of two Tornado strike/attack squadrons and the Victor air-to-air refuelling force. A popular station commander, he became operational on the Tornado and converted to the Victor, his first experience of flying a four-engine aircraft. He was appointed ADC to The Queen. In 1988, he returned to London where he started a long association with the world of procurement. He served two consecutive appointments on MOD's operational requirements staffs as both a Group Captain and an Air Commodore. As Director of Operational Requirements, he became heavily involved in implementing a series of 'urgent operational requirements' for all aircraft deployed for the First Gulf War. Most notable was the installation of secure radios compatible with US forces, many electronic detection and countermeasure systems and significant upgrading of helicopter engine protection to cope with the hostile sand environment. The deployment of a thermal imaging airborne laser designating system and the accelerated introduction of the air-launched anti-radiation missile (ALARM) were key operational enhancements. The need to work closely with industry for the incorporation of these highly effective measures was a vital contribution to the eventual success of the operation. He next served as a Director General to the MOD Procurement Executive in 1991. After attending Harvard Business School, Norriss rejoined the Procurement Executive in November 1995 as Director General Aircraft Systems. On promotion in October 1996, he became Controller Aircraft (CA) and Deputy Chief of Defence Procurement (Operations). For the latter, he was responsible for procuring equipment for all three Services and as CA he was a member of the Air Force Board responsible for delivering an airworthy aircraft to the Services. He retired from the RAF in 2001 and undertook several reviews for the Office of Government Commerce. He was a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and served on several committees before being elected as president for 2003-04. This

coincided with the 100th Anniversary of the first flight in 1903 by the Wright Brothers, an event that generated numerous additional engagements to his busy schedule. Norriss never lost his love of flying and in 2003 he joined No 3 Air Experience Flight as a Flying Officer, where he spent the next eight years giving air cadets an introduction to flying. He was a founder member of the Buccaneer Aircrew Association and for more than 30 years barely missed an annual reunion. He became president in 2015. In May this year, despite the ravages of cancer, he presided at the association's dinner in London and delivered a courageous and inspiring address. Sir Peter Norriss was appointed CB (1996) and KBE (2000) (*RAF News*)

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### **“JENNY WREN” MANETTE JUMPS:**

Manette Baillie, from Suffolk, who served in the WRNS during WW2, undertook the feat to raise money for three causes close to her heart - the East Anglian Air Ambulance, Motor Neurone Disease



Association and Benhall Village Hall. So far, she has managed to raise £9,000 of her £30,000 target. Speaking after her momentous jump, Ms Baillie said: "When the door opened I thought, there is nothing more I can do or say. Just jump. "Well I suppose I jumped, I remember my legs going out and it's a kind of blur. I shut my eyes. "We seemed to travel at a very fast speed." There was an intake of breath from the crowd watching as a tiny white dot appeared out of the side of the plane. For a while only the blue of her parachute was the focus for the group gathered below. She descended to cheers of "there she is", "Oh my God, look at her" and "she's done it" from a group of around 50 family, friends and neighbours from Benhall, the village where Manette Baillie has lived for the last 50 years. Holding "we're proud of you" banners and a "you did it!" balloon arch, the

crowd cheered as the 102-year-old was back on her feet within minutes of landing.

"She's a complete rock, fearless, she does not dwell on complaining or tragedies," said close friend Humphrey Hawksley. Everyone, even the team jumping with her were full of admiration.

"I got quite tearful up there, it's amazing what she's doing," said veteran parachute jumper cameraman Nick Herridge.

There was a worry that the jump might be cancelled due to the wind, instead it was moved forward - nerve-inducing for some but Manette was unperturbed.

Before the jump, while pulling on her jumpsuit and practising her landing the former Wren was relaxed and stoic, saying: "There's nothing to be nervous about. You've just got to keep going. You've just got to do it".

Only after her feet were back on the ground did she admit to being a little nervous: "When the door opened, my stomach did go."

Manette is well known among friends for going the extra mile to celebrate her milestones. "She's an inspiration, what is she going to do for her 103rd birthday?!" said her great-niece Izzy Robinson.

With the excitement of the jump out of the way Manette and her family and friends retired to the Benhall Ex-Servicemen's club - one of the charities Manette is raising money for - for tea, cake and big band tunes. (*SkyNews*)

## **AIR VICE MARSHAL JAMES EDGAR – “JOHNNIE” JOHNSON, CB, CBE, DSO & TWO BARS, DFC & BAR, DL - (9 MARCH 1915 – 30 JANUARY 2001)**



An English Royal Air Force (RAF) pilot and flying ace who flew and fought during the Second World War, has left £200,000 to help ex-Service personnel, 23 years after his death. The buy-out of the Johnnie Johnson Housing Association in 2024 by national housing provider Sanctuary Group has triggered a stipulation that his original bequest of £100,000 be gifted to Armed Forces charity SSAFA. And with a top up, the final amount donated was £200,000. Former Air Vice-Marshal James ‘Johnnie’ Johnson built up a formidable reputation during WWII, becoming the highest scoring RAF pilot. In 515 sorties he destroyed 34 enemy fighters and damaged 10 others on the ground. At a time when becoming an ‘ace’ meant five or more successes, Johnson shared in the destruction of seven aeroplanes and probably three more. Leaving the RAF with a CB, CBE, DSO and Two Bars, and a DFC and Bar, he

founded a housing association in 1969 to provide affordable homes for veterans. SSAFA Controller Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory received a cheque from Sanctuary at a ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. He said: “Johnnie Johnson’s legacy has lived on since his death in 2001 and will continue to do so through this donation to SSAFA as it supports personnel into the future.” Managing Director of Johnnie Johnson Housing, Kathryn Fox-Rogers, said: “We are all exceptionally proud of this housing association and of Johnnie himself.” Others attending included Deputy Lieutenant of Staffordshire Colonel David Leigh, Air Cdre Adam Sansom and Rayleigh and Wickford MP former Armed Forces Minister Mark Francois. (*RAF News*)

## **PUTIN IN FREEFALL?**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has suffered a major setback to his image in Kursk, 30 months into the war. Official sources consulted by the independent press, Western experts and Russian military bloggers agree that it will take months for Moscow to drive enemy troops out of its territory. The bold Ukrainian operation has overshadowed the clear Russian advances in the Donbas, where Ukrainian troops are clearly in retreat.

According to the Kremlin-friendly Public Opinion Research Center, Putin’s image has suffered its biggest setback since the so-called “special” military operation began two and a half years ago. The poll, conducted between August 12, six days after the Ukrainian incursion began, and August 18, shows a 3.5% drop in the president’s approval rating, from 77.1% the previous week to 73.6%.

(*MH with Ambar/Source: X/Photo:Pixabay*)

## **FORTRESS BRITAIN:**

AS a debunking exercise Fortress Britain 1940 will doubtless raise the hackles of some Battle of Britain enthusiasts as we approach its anniversary. Because the story we have all been told about the UK ‘standing alone’ against the might of the Blitzkrieg that had swept through Europe is not what we thought it was. Indeed, far from unprepared and weak, author Andrew Chatterton says the reality was quite different. As he writes: “To place all the credit simply on one aspect of the defensive efforts

(namely Spitfires) does a huge disservice to the unsung and secret elements that for so long remained unrecognised. “It was in its essence a mass effort, from every aspect of British life, impacting everyone, every day from 1940.” Thus, it is not until page 195 that the RAF gets a mention, and it is not the narrative of them forming the thin blue line between Britain and Nazi domination. Brave though they were, Battle of Britain pilots had the whole of the UK behind them. It is to the so-called ‘Cinderella’ parts of the Service – from the Dowding System’s network of radars to the plane spotters of the Observer Corps and the role of Bomber Command in attacking cross-Channel barges and Coastal Command’s U-boat war – to which attention is directed. And that is no reason not to read this book. The kit was unsatisfactory, with Chatterton describing the Hampden, Blenheim, Whitley, and Wellington as ‘stop-gap bombers’ before the Lancaster was introduced in 1942. “However, these less-than adequate bombers still played a critical – and often, for their crews, suicidal – role in defending Britain in 1940 and yet they get so little recognition,” he says. And far from the bumbling incompetence of Mainwaring, Wilson and Corporal Jones in Jimmy Perry’s classic Dad’s Army, the Home Guard and auxiliary units were more than prepared had the Nazis executed Operation Sealion and invaded. Indeed, some chapters more resemble Guy Ritchie’s spy action comedy *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare* as Chatterton takes us on a tour of the MI5 and MI6-recruited guerrilla groups often manned by combat hardened WWI vets who faced the Wehrmacht, even if it had got ashore. Before that, they would have had to get past the Royal Navy, which vastly outnumbered and outgunned the German Kriegsmarine. Inspired by his first book, *Britain’s Secret Defences*, through subsequent blogs and newly-discovered information Chatterton seeks to give those forgotten civilian defences the recognition they deserve.

And one of the most persuasive arguments for his thesis comes from a war game at Army Staff College. It featured, among others, ex-Luftwaffe ace General Adolf Galland and Battle of Britain Hurricane pilot DSO winner Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris. Recreating conditions at the time, the accuracy of bombing, the laying of sea mines, (known by the RAF as ‘gardening’) and even railway timetables and the weather, the results are surprising. They show that even if the Germans had landed their first wave of barges on Britain’s beaches, the second and third would have been intercepted by the Royal Navy. “Isolated and attacked by the regular forces and Home Guard, the invading force’s position was untenable. “The Germans suffered terrible casualties. Of the 90,000 troops successfully landed, only 15,400 made it back to France.” The rest were captured, killed, or drowned. There has been a trend of ‘what if?’ stories that take a Nazi takeover of Britain as a starting point – certainly in fiction, Robert Harris’ *Fatherland* springs to mind. This is not one, nor is *Fortress Britain 1940* a political argument posing as history. By using otherwise dry-as-dust official accounts to lend its argument authority and gripping first-hand accounts, this book turns what we think of as the past completely on its head. Perhaps it’s something to think about at the annual Battle of Britain parade?

- *Fortress Britain 1940 Britain’s Unsung and Secret Defences on Land, Sea and in the Air* by Andrew Chatterton is published by Casemate, priced £20

## **BAYESIAN TRAGEDY:**

Bayesian’s captain should have taken more safety measures, claimed the boss of a firm that built the boat. Giovanni Costantino, the chief executive of the Italian Sea Group, said: “The torture lasted 16 minutes. It went down in 16 minutes. You can see it from the tracking chart. The passengers reported something absurd, that the storm came unexpectedly, suddenly. That is not true. Everything was predictable. Why were none of the Porticello fishermen out that night? The disturbance was completely readable.” Three people are being investigated by the Italian authorities for manslaughter after the sinking of the Bayesian yacht off the coast of Sicily.

On Monday, the boat's 51-year-old captain James Cutfield, from New Zealand, was put under investigation. He declined to respond to prosecutors during questioning on Tuesday. Two other British crew members are now also being investigated.

Ship engineer Tim Parker Eaton and sailor Matthew Griffith are being investigated over the same crimes. A source told Reuters that Parker Eaton is suspected of having failed to protect the yacht's engine room and operating systems.

Being investigated does not imply guilt and does not mean formal charges will follow.



Lynch considered selling doomed superyacht before trip: Superyacht crew 'had 16-minute window' to avoid the tragedy.

### **SPIN, THE AUSTRALIAN WAY:**

No matter what side of the political fence you're on, this is funny and very telling! It just all depends on how you look at the same things.

Judy Rudd, an amateur genealogy researcher in south east Queensland, was doing some personal work on her own family tree. She discovered that ex-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's great-great uncle, Remus Rudd, was hanged for horse stealing and train robbery in Melbourne in 1889. Both Judy and Kevin Rudd share this common ancestor.

The only known photograph of Remus shows him standing on the gallows at the Melbourne Jail. On the back of the picture Judy obtained during her research is this inscription: 'Remus Rudd horse thief, sent to Melbourne Jail 1885, escaped 1887, robbed the Melbourne-Geelong train six times. Caught by Victoria Police Force, convicted and hanged in 1889.'

So Judy recently e-mailed ex-Prime Minister Rudd for information about their great-great uncle, Remus Rudd.

Believe it or not, Kevin Rudd's staff sent back the following for her genealogy research:

"Remus Rudd was famous in Victoria during the mid to late 1800s. His business empire grew to include acquisition of valuable equestrian assets and intimate dealings with the Melbourne-Geelong Railroad. Beginning in 1883, he devoted several years of his life to government service, finally taking leave to resume his dealings with the railroad. In 1887, he was a key player in a vital investigation



run by the Victoria Police Force. In 1889, Remus passed away during an important civic function held in his honour when the platform upon which he was standing collapsed."

NOW That's how it's done, Folks! That's real POLITICAL SPIN. *(Sent in by Mike Haupt)*

## **A FINE CATTLE OF EISH...**

A different cattle of eish: Eastern Cape farmer insists skin found in homestead belonged to his cow



An Eastern Cape farmer is seeking justice after one of his cows was allegedly killed and slaughtered by fellow locals in Ezibeleni, Komani. (Queenstown)

It's a fair cow as they say in the Australian classics...

*(Picture: Luvuyo Mbizweni/Supplied)*

## **CHEERS FOR NOW:**

Comrades Marathon Association has been embroiled in controversy in recent months, which culminated in the resignation or expulsion of a number of Board members. See piece at end of Ramblings.

We look forward to the Warsaw Flights Commemoration Service on Saturday 7 September, and then the Battle of Britain Ladies Lunch at Wanderers on the Second Friday, 13 September, 12h30 for 13h00. (Closest to Battle of Britain Day on Sunday 15 September) We will have Colonel Conor O'Hara OBE, the Defence Attache at the British High Commission as our Guest and Speaker, subject as always to the "Exigencies of the Service."

At 13h00 sharp the traditional "Missing Man" formation will be flown by the Flying Lions. Please reserve the date in your diaries now, book, and plan to get to Wanderers in good time to view the Flypast. Book now for you and your guests at [bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org) and please indicate your guests names as we will have allocated tables. Cost is R300 pp which can be paid into our bank account.

## **TAILPIECE:**

The thoughts of the rabbit on sex,  
Are seldom, if ever, complex,  
For a rabbit in need,  
Is a rabbit indeed,  
And does just as a person expects.

## **MAMPARA OF THE WEEK:**

"Shawn of Shame" While all upstanding South Africans are rightly incensed by the growing criminality that has seen armed gangs disrupt and even halt infrastructure projects, one person not

at all fazed by the phenomenon is Shawn Mkhize, the Durban businesswoman famous for flaunting her wealth, facing R37 Million tax evasion charges.

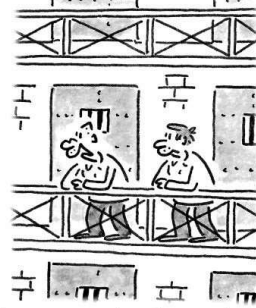
"Somebody remind Starmer that Brexit wasn't just a 'policy' of the last government but mandated by an actual referendum of the people and put into law."

MATT

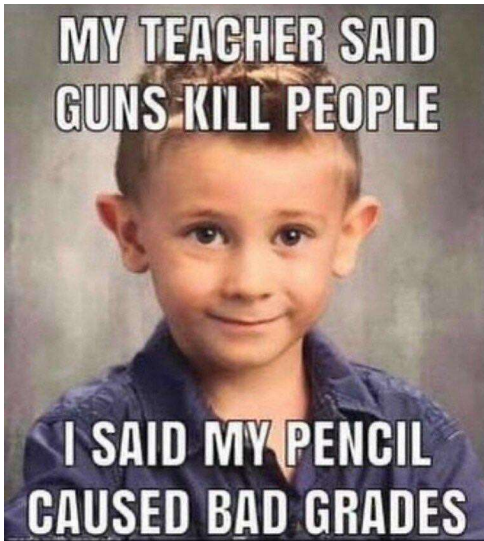


*'My son failed his GCSEs!  
He's leaving school so  
I won't have to pay  
VAT on the fees'*

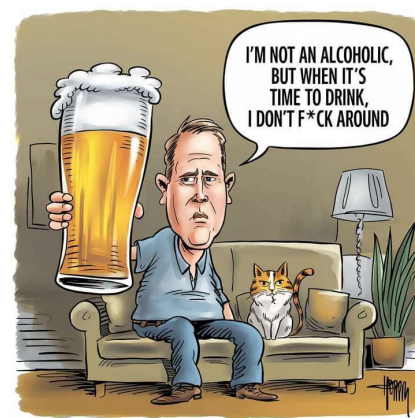
MATT



*'Prisons used to be universities  
of crime, but these days  
nobody's inside long  
enough to learn anything'*



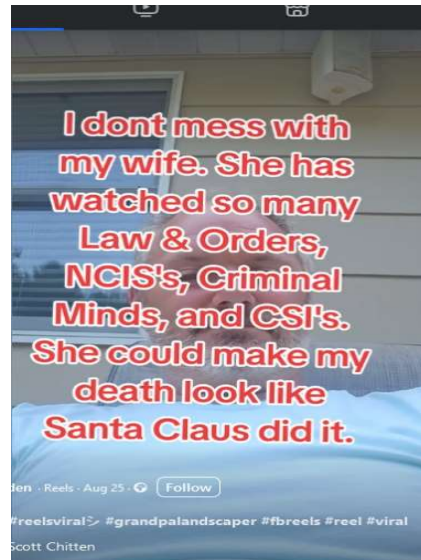
Wise man 🤔😂

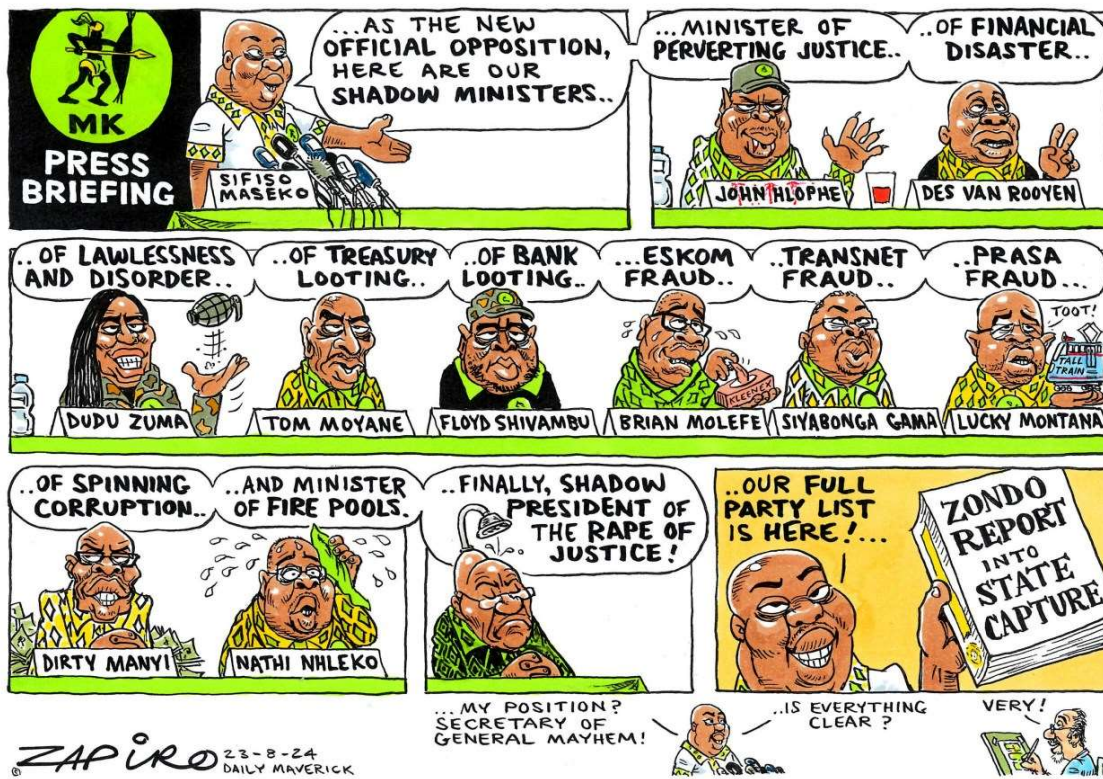




Your wife expects six things from you. **Sincerity, Affection, Love, Attention, Respect and You** in total.

Now problem is that, it is very difficult to remember all the six in a sequence. So they have invented its short form. **"SALARY"**





## TROUBLE AT THE MILL:

Those of you who follow the Comrades Marathon will know that trouble has been rumbling away - not always behind the scenes - in recent years, especially around confusion with race cutoff times again this year, and culminating in the arbitrary termination of Race Manager, the diminutive but feisty Ann Ashworth.

A statement calling for a Special General Meeting was issued by Barry Holland on 18 July, on behalf of a group of highly qualified and experienced runners and volunteers who are extremely concerned about the actions of the Board of the Comrades Marathon Association (CMA) over an extended period of time. They also have grave concerns about the suitability of certain Board members to hold office.

"We have today, hand delivered to the CMA a request to the Board to call a SGM at which Resolutions covering our concerns will be put to the vote. I have also emailed our request to call a SGM to the Chairman of the Board Mr. Mqondisi Ngcobo. We desperately need change to protect and ensure the future of our wonderful race. A race that has been a passionate part of my life for over 50 years"

The document calling for an SGM was handed over to acting Race Manager Alain Dalais at Comrades House. It addresses four issues:

- Racism by the Board members Zinhle Sokhela and Isaac Ngwenya
- Vote buying, bussing in of 'voters' and alleged financial irregularities within the Community Marshals Portfolio headed by Isaac Ngwenya
- That a logical explanation for the sudden termination of Race Manager, Ann Ashworth's, contract is provided

- That the Comrades constitution is amended to allow remote / online attendance and voting at the next AGM.

The full document calling for an SGM with supporting information can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/.../1snN6S0BS3y.../view...>

The existing Comrades constitution can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/.../1VBeJE.../view...>

As per the Comrades constitution, a SGM must be convened within 30 days of the Board receiving the resolution (i.e. 30 days from today) and the Board must issue a written notice including the agenda 21 days in advance (i.e. within the next 9 days).

According to a well-placed source, around 980 new CMA membership applications from a diverse group of runners were received in June alone. We trust that the Board will ensure that these applications are processed ahead of the SGM.

I think it's also symbolic that this is happening on Mandela Day: "On 18 July every year, we invite you to mark Nelson Mandela International Day by making a difference in your communities. Everyone has the ability and the responsibility to change the world for the better! Mandela Day is an occasion for all to take action and inspire change." United Nations statement on Mandela Day. Enough is enough, it's time to take Comrades back to an event that places the best interests of the runners first.

The SGM was duly held on Thursday this week, with the following outcome:

DURBAN - Four board members have resigned from the Comrades Marathon Association. General Manager Mqondisi Ngcobo and Deputy Les Burnard resigned, following the explosive special general meeting in Pietermaritzburg. The meeting was held to discuss the running of the association after allegations of racism, vote rigging and misuse of funds. One board member was banned for life while another escaped with sanctions.

KwaZulu-Natal Athletics President Steve Mkasi confirmed the resignations. Ngcobo said the past few weeks have taken a toll on the members of the Association but added that the embattled Association and the race were in a very good space.

Elders, Jeff Minnaar and Peter Proctor, as well as CMA Member, Busani Ndlovu, have been appointed as Appointee Board Members. Minnaar will serve as Interim Chairperson and Proctor as Interim Vice Chairperson until the Annual General Meeting is held in November this year.

Legend Hardy Ballington: DYNAMITE COMES IN SMALL PACKAGES:

In 1932, 92 years ago this year, when Comrades was Comrades and mem were men, Durbanite Hardy Ballington ran the Comrades Marathon for the first time after being encouraged by a fellow runner to enter the race. For this debut run he managed to finish 4th in a time of 08:01:14. The next year this athlete surprised everyone with his spectacular run in poor weather conditions, scooping up 1st position in a time of 06:50:37.



This was followed by another win, in 1934, thanks to a spectator who, while Ballington was stopping to take a break, remarked that his 1933 win must have been a fluke. This resulted in Ballington's determination to prove that he could win again, saying after the race that it was such a thrill to pass everyone that was ahead of him. Unfortunately, he didn't manage to win the next year, but he still managed a valiant 2nd place. He came back in full force in 1936 to claim another victory

and even managed to knock off 11 minutes and 32 seconds from Harry Phillips' 1926 Up Run best time of 06:57:46. Ballington didn't enter in 1937 but in 1938 he was back again and was declared the Comrades Marathon Champion for the 4th time in his running career, smashing his own 1936 Best Time with nearly 14 minutes, despite stomach cramps along the way! After the race Ballington remarked to a reporter that it would be his last run, that he had had enough and wanted to focus on his work. However, the Comrades bug bit him again in 1947 when he indeed ran his last race, ending his long-time involvement with the Comrades Marathon on a high note, claiming victory when he crossed the finish line in 06:41:05. According to Ballington it was the most gruelling of all his runs. In his race number 41, Ballington was certainly a small but dynamite package. His name is now up there with the other Comrades Legends.