



The Senior Golfers' Society South African Tour 2025

The Tour Diary

**Nigel Theyer
March 2025**

Our Leaders



The Tour Party



Tour Leader and Ladies' Co-Ordinator

Ian and Sarah Whittaker

Huntercombe

Barbara and Willie Biggart

Gullane / HCEG

Charles and Heather Cunningham

Prestbury

Steve Dorritt

Royal Cinque Ports

Bill Gott and Rowan Edbrooke

East Devon / Royal Lytham & St Annes

Michael and Cecilia Fleming

West Hill

Guy and Yvonne Gilman

Luffenham Heath

Graham and Gillian King

Troon

Nigel and Caroline Theyer

Yelverton

Giles and Jules Sanderson

The Berkshire / Roehampton

John Saville

West Sussex

Adrian and Cathie Stoddart

Royal Wimbledon

The Tour Party



**Ian & Sarah
Whittaker**



**Willie & Barbara
Biggart**
(“Fine Master” &
unofficial “Tour Doctor”)



**Charles & Heather
Cunningham**



Steve Dorritt
(The opera singing
“Funeral Director” and
“Bag Two”)



**Bill Gott &
Rowan Edbrooke**
(“Flagman”)



**Michael & Cecilia
Fleming**
(“Photography” and
“Tour Poet”)



**Guy & Yvonne
Gilman**



**Graeme & Gillian
King**



**Nigel & Caroline
Theyer**
(“Tour Scribe”)



**Giles and Jules
Sanderson**
(“Treasurer”)



John Saville
(“The Colonel”,
“Bag One” and
“Photography”)



**Adrian & Cathy
Stoddart**
(“Tour Acupuncturist”
and “Photography”)

The Tour Diary

Prologue - Wednesday 26th to Friday 28th February



*Cape Town
Waterside*

*Throughout
our stay in
the Western
Cape, Table
Mountain
dominates*

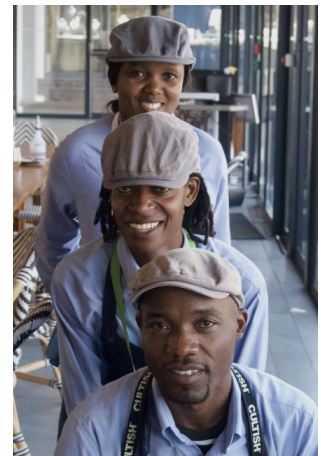
“Peaky Blinders” come to Table Mountain



Early settler and fashion guru Bill Gott begins the long journey by train to Cape Town and confounds the rest of the party by arriving a day early.

No sooner have we arrived at the V&A Waterfront Hotel, than all the members of the staff appear wearing the Gott fashion accessory - the flat cap - which is to become a feature of our tour.

The staff are concerned that Bill might also have his whippets hidden in his room...



Fashion Update

The fashion guru's other hat!

Most of the party have assembled on Friday and amuse themselves with boat trips, bus trips, botanical Gardens and dinner in Balthazar restaurant where we lose control of the wine list on the first leg of the tour (and it wasn't to be the last time!).



Day 1 Saturday 1st March

The Strategy Meetings

The remainder of our ensemble arrives on time, and we are summoned to a meeting by our Tour Leader. We are full of optimism and hope; *"Oh, the joys of youth!"*

Bag tags are distributed – very eco-friendly and attractive – together with very elegant quiches for Match Managers to distribute as gifts to the Clubs / Societies who are hosting us.



A Cocktail party in the evening is hosted by John Brownrigg SGUSA, Derek Magnusson Western Cape Seniors, our tour guide Christine Grant, and others.

It is very jolly but a bit like a game of Chinese whispers.

The Seniors' hearing isn't great. "Whispering Derek" - what did he say?

"Send three and four pence - we're going to a dance" or was it

"Send reinforcements - we're going to advance"?

Fortunately, former Seniors' Captain, Jeremy Mumby, is in the area and eventually heeds the clarion call on Day 3.



Day 2 Sunday 2nd March Golf at Westlake Golf Club

Match Manager Willie Biggart

The Boys are raring to go



Our first golf - the Bagmen burst into action - 'Bag One' - the Colonel with clipboard and 'Bag Two' - the Funeral Director with solemnity - 'unfortunately it is time for us to leave this place.' Woe betide anyone trying to take any baggage onto the coach without proper numbering and labelling.

"Hat free" table mountain lurks above us as we sweep out of the hotel car park.

Breathtaking views of Silvermine Mountains greet us on arrival at Westlake Golf Club

Muffins and coffees set the scene for a splendid day.

**Guy Gilman (SGS), Bill Stephens (SA),
Bill Gott (SGS) & Les Milner (SA)**



Responsibility of tour leadership on the first match day weighs heavily on the shoulders of Ian Whittaker and MM Willie, partnered in the opening match of the tour, and resulting in a report card detailing "*plenty of enthusiasm but could do better!*".

Ian Whittaker promises a lot, mentioning four times "*well that's my best drive yet*". What happens thereafter is best not reported.

Golfing champagne moment on the course is Jules's splendid 4 pointer!

The day concludes with a wonderful braai and all are rehydrated with a delicious Fairway Shiraz

Glenn Gibbons presents the prizes to the winning teams at the end of a most enjoyable day



**Flagman Bill Gott
hoisting the Seniors
flag for the first time
on Tour**

Grateful thanks to Glenn and the Western Cape Province Seniors for a wonderful day and making us most welcome.

Day 3 Monday 3rd March Golf at De Zalza Golf Club

Match Manager Charles Cunningham



The weather is even hotter than Westlake; the temperature reaching 38 degrees in early afternoon.

It is a stunning course with a white washed clubhouse and many white washed villas to be seen off some fairways.

It is definitely a buggy course.

Scoring is much better than at Westlake.

Adrian Stoddart is a casualty on the day through illness. Ian manages to recruit Jeremy Mumby as a late replacement.

Jeremy is on the winning team and walks away with a prize.

Steve Dorritt on the 13th Tee



A change of dress code to smart casual is a good call for the prize giving. Our leader steals the show with his outfit. There are however, several dodgy shirts on display.

A problem in the morning hoisting the Seniors' flag!



Thank yous to our hosts are given by Charles and Heather Cunningham at the end of an enjoyable drinks and snacks evening.

***MM, Charles Cunningham ,
and VP WP Seniors,
Chris Boyes***



Day 4 Tuesday 4th March — Free Day

Constantia Glen Wine



And Cape Town Time Out



Day 5 Wednesday 5th March Match vs Western Province

Seniors at Royal Cape GC

Match Manager: Nigel Theyer



Our first competitive match as we play against the Western Cape Seniors. Unfortunately, we are a man down as Giles has succumbed to the pervasive Plague that is engulfing us slowly.

Match manager, Nigel reports:

This is the culmination of the first leg of our South African tour. He thanks our hosts for

their most generous and warm welcome from the moment we arrived at Cape Town International Airport. Following the "4Cs" formula he gives thanks first for the Course. Royal Cape GC is the oldest in South Africa - founded in 1885, receiving its royal status in 1910 in December - a timely Christmas present from George V. The course is in great condition, although suffering from the universal South African problem of Egyptian geese which, in the words of one of our opponents "s**t everywhere and are they're not even edible".



The second "C" ; the competition.. Nigel has to admit that no one had told him the score, but he felt it had gone badly which subsequently proved to be the case.

The third "C" - catering and hospitality which was excellent.

And the final "C" - describes our hosts - the company and companionship, which our Irish friends call the "craic". We could not have been made more welcome.

To the list of "Cs" Nigel adds a fifth – Chaos, saying that he had lost an inordinate number of items, most of which the baggage team and sweepers had recovered. Panama hat twice; luggage labels twice; name badge at Westlake not

yet recovered so that he now had to resort to wearing a luggage tag to identify himself; but perhaps the most significant loss has been his house keys and Apple AirTag on the flight from LHR to Cape Town. It still seemed to be in Seat 24F and was now rapidly moving round the world. Since first landing in Cape Town, the AirTag and house keys appear to have been to New York (twice), Johannesburg and are currently in Singapore.

I can't spot my name!



He finishes by saying that he is leaving the oldest club in South Africa in a couple of weeks' time to go to the oldest course in England at Westward Ho! to watch the oldest team golf event in the world between Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He adds that he was delighted

to say that the Cambridge "men's team" was being captained by a South African girl, Chloe Royston, playing off +5.

(Footnote - Cambridge, won the match comfortably)

We then make a quick change and move quickly to the Kelvin Grove Club, adjoining the Newlands Cricket and Rugby Grounds, for a farewell dinner.

The quaiach was handed over to Fio Stecconi



Day 6 Thursday 6th March

Travel Day to Pezula

We leave Capetown mid morning with fond memories of the warmest of welcomes and hospitality from our Western Cape hosts who could not have been more thoughtful or generous.

We have struggled on the golfing front to come to terms with the kikuyu grass which grips both golf ball and club head like Velcro.

We have a coach to Capetown airport for the short flight to George in anticipation of Stage 2 of our trip. There is a "slight baggage" issue at the airport where 'Safair' - the SA Airline - has no record of any checked-in luggage. This issue is sorted 'at pace' by the Tour Leader, the Treasurer, Giles, and a combination of Whispering Derek and John Brownrigg on a multi-way telephone call. The Theyers are asked to carry a suitcase of cheese for the Tour Leader. (the Theyers are well used to smuggling goods for Tourists having two years ago brought back the Flemings' *"Weapons of Grass Destruction"* from Chile).

A short flight and we are met at George airport by John Cooper, the President of Southern Cape Seniors, together with Captain Klaas Kotze and Secretary Cam Boccaleone.

We travel barely ten minutes when (the sixth 'C') Coach Calamity Number One occurs. The coach limps to a halt and a failed fan belt is identified as the problem.

Graeme makes an unrequited request for a pair of ladies tights.



As it happens a replacement coach is summoned and we make our way to the stunning Pezula resort hotel.

We are welcomed by the manager and given a warning about baboons.



Sadly, the funeral director ignores this and the baboons have not been given a similar warning about his future activities.

Welcome from John Cooper and other Senior Cape Seniors at Pezula



Day 7 Friday 7th March Golf at Pezula

Match Manager Graeme King

Knysna Lagoon



Previous talks of exciting plans and movements for the day have now metamorphosed into discussions of movements of an entirely different sort. The newly appointed Tour doctor Barbara is holding regular clinics (triaged by husband Willie). Drug dealing is rife. Pills are passed around with abandon. But we stoically all continue to play golf without complaint.

The Tour acupuncturist is unable to assist and remarks that, as an early casualty, he has lost so much weight that he now has no notches left on his belt and lives in constant concern that his trousers may fall down. Michael Fleming champions alternative remedies (which seem to be efficacious) of drinking tonic and lemon (with the addition of a juniper mixture of some kind).

It is a leisurely start after the delights of the previous night's cocktail party.

Change of tee on the day. But nobody has told Gillian and Yvonne who turn up at the 1st.

Barbara and Ro finish in the dark presumably with miners' lamps on and led by Gott's whippets.

Willie has 2 x 4 pointers. Hence, his ordering Champagne (or equivalent) in the bar.

Giles has won again!

Fortunately we don't need a bus given the previous day's shenanigans.

The quaich is worn out by the end of the night through excessive cleaning with JW Red Label.

Unusual day in that Nigel doesn't appear to have lost anything!

MM Graeme King presents the quaich to Klaas Kotze, the South Cape Seniors Captain



And the winners: Keith Spencer & Francis Blitz (SA Seniors), and our own Steve Dorritt & Giles Sanderson



Day 8 Saturday 8th March Golf at Knysna

Match Manager Steve Dorritt

Match Manager Steve Dorritt



At Pezula Resort we are encountering our first experience of 'load-shedding' where the electricity is occasionally switched off unexpectedly to conserve supply. This can be disorienting especially during darkness.

All courses are within very easy reach of the hotel and the weather remains warm. Knysna has a very nice members' club feel about it.

The clubhouse is fairly new and is really good; it is spacious and flows well. The course is quite unique in that it is built around the lagoon, very flat and easy walking, lots of colourful bird life, and tidal pools on almost every hole.

Due to the various lurgies that have plagued the squad to date, this is only the second time that we managed to field full teams.



**MM Steve Dorritt,
Alister Simmonds (SA),
Tour Leader Ian Whittaker,
and South Cape Seniors President,
John Cooper**

Having said that, it was noted that at least 3 gentlemen were, for some reason, carrying large rolls of white tissue in their golf bags.

It is a hot sticky day, approx. 33C, but most players walk with caddies. The caddies wear white overalls à la Augusta!.

Everyone thoroughly enjoys the day .

We stay at Knysna Golf Club after the game to watch Ireland v France in the penultimate round of the Six Nations matches. Sadly Ireland lose 27- 42, which leaves the final weekend delicately poised.

South Cape Seniors President, John Cooper presenting prizes to the Men's winners.



The Lady Winners



We are then transported by coach to the Sirocco restaurant in Knysna, overlooking the lagoon, where we are joined by other Seniors who were staying in the area on holiday.

We have a very jolly evening and, although we are struggling to match the South Africans on the golf front, we are making progress on the singing when we have renditions of "King of the Road" from Michael and "Il Sole Mio" from our new operatic star - Bag Two.

A very convivial atmosphere and excellent food.

And the hard working scribe updating the Tour Diary



Day 9 Sunday 9th March

Free day at Plettenberg Bay

A free day. Some play golf at Samoula but the majority opt for lunch at Ristorante Enrico in Keurboomstrand, in the company of the winter Senior Swallows led by the Excells, Passmores, Scotts and Mumbys, who have organised a gathering at this most popular beach side restaurant.



We eventually make our way back via Goose Valley GC to Pezula where some opt to watch England play Italy in the Six Nations.

Willie B, his Match Manager duties now over, has been appointed Fine Master - a role which he embraces with the unadulterated zeal of Fraser in Dads' Army - not so much "doomed" as "fined" and, to boot, fined with a machine gun rapidity and enthusiasm.

The Scribe finds himself heavily fined for refusing to engage in a Jaegerbomb drinking challenge with a sturdy Frau from Northern Europe who takes exception.

Day 10 Monday 10th March Golf vs Southern Cape Seniors at Plettenberg Bay

Match Manager Bill Gott

MM Bill Gott planning his golfing future



We arrive in glorious sunshine with the course looking a picture.

Briefed by SA Vice Captain Peter Becker, we set about the South Africans like mad hyenas.

Indeed, Stephen Dorritt's approach shot to the 16th hits a baboon on his head. This provokes a mad fight amongst the troop and one of them runs off with Stephen's ball—local rule 7C applied. And the baboon is still complaining that "Dorritt never shouted 'fore'".

Early winners, Giles Sanderson and Charles Cunningham are by this stage relaxing in the bar with a long cool beer celebrating a job well done.

However, the rest of the UK Seniors cannot follow suit - it is in truth, a pretty poor display. One loss follows the next and the overall result is a 5 -1 defeat.



The attack is unexpected by the baboons.



South Africans Tony Taylor and Tex van Beuge, with Seniors Graeme King and John Saville

This is very troubling for the match manager Bill Gott whose rousing quotes from Henry V's Saint Crispin's day speech on the bus beforehand seems to have no effect at all. Still, on the positive side we have doubled the number of points we gained in Cape Town and if we keep doing that we will win our fourth match in Jo'burg.

The ladies enjoy an alliance competition, best two from four, with the most hospitable Plett ladies, some of whom are members of the Ladies Seniors, which exists in South Africa. Our winning ladies are Cecilia Fleming and Rowan Edbrooke.

Match Manager Bill thanks the Southern Cape Seniors and Plett for hosting us and shares a

large whisky with VC Peter, who drinks from the quai in a well received symbolic act of friendship between the UK Seniors and the Southern Cape Seniors.

An eventful day - Willie Biggart has taken total control of fines and champagne moments.

And with spirits high again, off we go to Barringtons to enjoy some beer tasting and a jolly final meal.

On arrival at Barringtons we are greeted by some of their waiters, who are modelling fashion guru Bill Gott's latest range of caps.



Our beer tasting is followed by dinner at Barringtons.

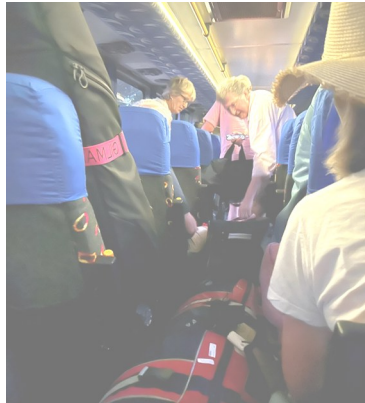


Day 11 Tuesday 11th March

Travel Day to Durban

We fly from Port Elizabeth Airport to King Shaka Airport Durban where we are met by KZN Seniors' President Frank Agg, Captain Leigh Mann and Secretary Hugh McGibbon.

A short trip in a coach where we have little room for luggage.



Where's Willie - he's under here somewhere

The Oyster Box Hotel in Durban, our home for the next few days



A very warm welcome for the Seniors from the Oyster Box Hotel



Cocktails on the the upper level of the hotel - possibly one of the best hotels in the world - a wonderful ambience.

And a welcome to Durban from the KZN Seniors' Captain, Leigh Mann



Day 12 Wednesday 12th March

Golf at Royal Durban GC

Match Manager John Saville



Royal Durban is reminiscent of Musselburgh or the Northumberland GC - situated within a racecourse.

MM John Saville



becoming Royal Durban in 1932, so the perfect place to start our matches with the KZN Seniors.

Our match at Royal Durban Golf Club is the first of our three with the Kwa Zulu Natal (KWN) Seniors, and is played as a Mixed Golf match, the only such on the tour. Royal Durban is surrounded by the Greyville horse-race track and Turf Club. It's the sixth oldest golf club in South Africa, founded as Durban Golf Club in 1892, and

The course has had quite a bit of damage from recent floods, but this does not stop us from having a great day's golf and renewing the SGS's warm ties with the KZN Seniors and with Royal Durban. The day finishes with a delicious braai in the clubhouse.

Speeches include John Saville's thanks to the KZN Seniors and to Royal Cape, in which he is also able to mention his Grandfather who had raced horses at the Turf Club in the 1950 / 60s.

The mixed golf is played in Fourballs as an Alliance with South African couples. There are some good scores, with the Cunninghams and their partners taking the spoils with 86 points.



**Les Orchard,
KZN Seniors MM**



**John Saville and Les Orchard
presenting the prizes to the day's
winners: Charles Cunningham, Jeff
& Gail Leaver (KZN Seniors), and
Heather Cunningham,**

Day 13 Thursday 13th March Match vs KZN Seniors at Durban Country Club

Match Manager – Giles Sanderson

Established in 1922, DCC had a major overhaul following devastating floods in 2022 which closed the course. It was reopened on the 1st March 2024 after a significant upgrade, which included a wide burn being built, which snakes through a number of the holes at the far end of the course, and 18 new greens being built and then seeded with bent grass, which was used for the first time at a coastal KwaZulu-Natal ("KZN") coastal course.

The club recently held its 17th South African Open (27 Feb to 2 March), more than any other SA course, with the first being held at DCC in 1924. KZN experienced terrible weather and rain at the beginning of this month, and, despite the recent extensive course work and the burn, the fourth round was cancelled due to a partially flooded course. Dylan Naidoo won the championship with a birdie on the Sunday on the 18th hole in a sudden death format.

*John Terry-Lloyd (KZNSs),
Ian Whittaker, Giles Sanderson,
and Alistair Forbes (KZNSs)*



Luckily for us, nine holes had reopened the previous week and all 18 holes were reopened only the day before our visit and so we had a match on the full course, which was in remarkable condition all things considered.

The plucky visitors battle hard but go down 4½ to 1½, with Tour Leader Ian Whittaker having a strong back nine with some gritty putts to wrestle back a looming defeat from three down at the turn, at which point one of the oppo has to give up. John Terry-Lloyd had left his golf shoes at home, bought a new pair in the pro-shop, but a size too small, and the pain after nine holes of walking is too much. No buggies are allowed on the soft turf, so he heads in for an early bath / beer.

With a generous concession on the 18th for a halved match by Ian and his partner Giles Sanderson against the now solo-oppo of former Springbok hockey player and R&A

member Alistair Forbes, Ian achieves his first (part) point of the tour.

In fact, there are two other halves in matches three and five, with a couple of pastings up front in the first two matches.

Giles is delighted to have been asked by Ian to be match manager on the day, a nod to his late father's Durban origins and former membership of DCC, and golf is followed by a fine evening of drinks, dinner and speeches.



*Jules and Giles Sanderson present
the quaich to the KZN MM, Frank Agg*



Quote of the day: This comes in match six, when a 21-handicap attorney (who apparently had six pars, of which three were net birdies!) mentions he'd been married 20 years to his second wife and that they had two children. When then asked by Michael Fleming if there were any children by his first marriage, he replies, *"no, as I couldn't breed in captivity"*.

*Finally Steve Dorritt
decides a song is in
order.*



Day 14 Friday 14th March

Another 'C': Cancellation of golf at Mount Edgecombe and Travel to Phinda Game Reserve

Unfortunately after heavy overnight rain the golf is cancelled, and we are unable to play Mount Edgecombe. On the positive side, at least we are able to leave the Oyster Box at a more leisurely pace rather than the scheduled 6am start. Never has the cancellation of a Seniors' golf match been more universally appreciated.

On the bus journey to Phinda Virtual MM Guy Gilman imparts much learned information about Mount Edgecombe which will no doubt come in handy one day, and considers the different roles on a golf tour with words ending in 'age'. So, we have John and Steve as Baggage. Bill Gott as Flaggage and Beerage. Two new roles are established due to a stomach virus that most tourists suffered at some stage. So Willie Biggart assumes the role of Triage and his wife Barbara, has been outstanding at dispensing advice and medications, is assigned Corkage. And the ladies who were so elegantly attired in the evenings could be Dressage.

We cross the Tugela River which brings us into Zulu country - a matter of supreme indifference to the somnolent tourists. We sing Happy Birthday for the third time to Graeme. He is milking this day. We also pass hundreds of lorries taking coal to the coastal port for export to Europe.

We arrive at Phinda and abandon the coach for jeeps to take us to Mountain Lodge.

Out with the wet weather gear



Today we celebrate a Royal Birthday – Graeme shares a birthdate with Michael Caine: *"Not a lot of people know that"*.

We all see a cheetah and her two cubs who are completely unfazed by our presence.



Rain then sets in for the evening.



First evening in Phinda and already bogged in!

More partying in the restaurant as the birthday celebrations continue. Bag 2 - now firmly established as the 'opera singer' - gives a rendition of 'On the street where you live' from My Fair Lady.

The staff at the Lodge treat us to an exhibition of Zulu dancing and singing reminiscent of the attack on Rorkes Drift - quite an evening.

*Birthday boy
"Send me to the moon"*



Day 15 Saturday 15th March Phinda Game Reserve

Another birthday!

It is now the turn of the opera singing *"Funeral Director."* Happy Birthday Steve!



Off we go



Lion cubs on a morning stroll

As we follow several elephants down a narrow muddy track, Nigel asks our guide, Sibou, and tracker, Bongo, - *"Do elephants ever charge the jeeps?"*. To which he replies: *"Only if they get separated from the rest of the herd"*.



Moments later Graeme chirps up from the back of the truck: *"Nigel, you know the question you just asked: we seem to have several elephants behind us"*, It is fair to say our guide is a little anxious. Happily we emerge unscathed from what we are told later was an *"elephant sandwich"*.



Now Albert had 'eard about lions, that they were ferocious and wild, and seeing 'em lying so peaceful, I didn't seem right to the child

A bit of relaxation before the evening game drive and Steve's birthday party in the jungle.



We return to Mountain Lodge for a braai in the Bomba! Steve treats us to *"Some enchanted evening"*.

And France clinch the Six Nations Championship.

Day 16 Sunday 16th March

Good bye Phinda and Travel to Johannesburg

An early 5.30 am game drive in search of the elusive leopard. Unsuccessful but instead some delightful giraffes at dawn.



Guess who's lost their card

A quick bite and farewell to our Phinda hosts - 3 hours to King Shaka Airport Durban where we have a chaotic check in for our 1.15 flight. Amazingly all our baggage (including the Tour Leader's cheese) makes it through to Johannesburg (although we do lose a few bag tags and Cathy's suitcase arrives in pieces in a plastic sack). We are met at Oliver Tambo Airport by John Brownrigg, Jonathan Narayadoo (President Gauteng Seniors) and Derick Finlayson.

It is fair to say that everywhere we go in South Africa we are treated like a valuable jewel, passed by one group to the next in a seamless manner.

Coach Calamity no.2!

We are a little disappointed in the transport and seem to have been allocated a school bus with minimal legroom. Derick apologises for this and introduces us to Gauteng when suddenly there is a loud bang and scraping noise - those sitting in the left hand side of the bus see a wheel flying by!

This has come from the trailer.

We move to a new bus. The younger Seniors help with baggage transfer. The others join a chorus from Michael of "Trailer for sale or rent - rooms to let 50 cents".

Has anyone seen a wheel?



Is this one OK?

Arrival in Johannesburg

We settle in to the Sandton Sun and Towers Hotel and are met for a reception in the adjoining hotel. Most retire for an early night.

Day 17 Monday 17th March

Golf at Johannesburg Country Club

Match Manager Michael Fleming



On a sunny St Patrick's Day, the tour party heads for the Woodmead course of the Country Club Johannesburg. The club was founded in 1906. William Kidger Tucker (the Mayor of Johannesburg at the time) was not exaggerating when he said that the official opening had "great social significance for Johannesburg, the Transvaal colony and South Africa". A reporter for the Rand Daily Mail

waxed lyrical about The Club's grounds saying, "To state that the grounds are picturesque very inadequately describes the real beauty of their situation".

We receive a very warm reception from the club members who had arranged a St Patrick's day theme for the day in their palatial clubhouse, which has no fewer than 15 function rooms.

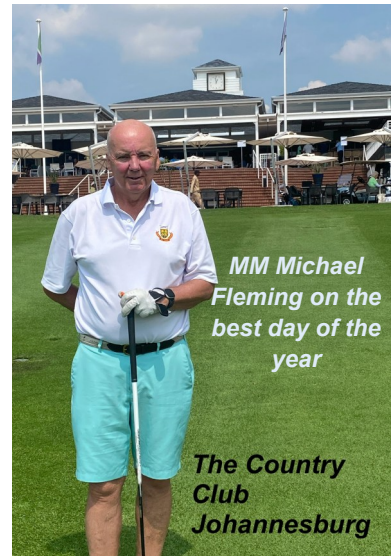
The course is in excellent condition and great fun is had at our prize giving which ends with a rendition of The Wild Rover, and a presentation of a bouquet of flowers to Wendy Huddy. Michael also tells an interesting story about 'Mad Mary' and her unorthodox method of gauging people's ages.

Once again, we play a fourball alliance. The Colonel and Giles, with their partners, Zane Oberholzer and David Moshapalo win the Gent's 4 ball alliance with 79 points with Fleming and Whittaker coming 2nd (quite remarkably) with 77 points with Pat Cronin and Rob Parkin.

The Ladies 4 ball alliance is won by Sarah and Ro with Cheryl Brownrigg and Cornelia Bonney on 79 points, and Barbara & Cathy and Jetske Kingma & Anne Finlayson come second with 75 points.

Very kindly Rob Parkin invites both the Flemings and Whittakers to his home for dinner the following evening, a wonderful gesture by our Senior host, which we hope to repay someday.

A big thank you to all involved in hosting us on St. Patrick's Day: it was thoroughly appreciated.



MM Michael Fleming on the best day of the year

The Country Club Johannesburg

MM Michael Fleming presents the quaich to John Balderson, Gauteng Seniors Captain for the day



***Michael Fleming presenting prizes to the winners:
Zane Overholzer (Gauteng Senior), John Saville,
David Moshapalo (Gauteng Senior), & Giles Sanderson***



***Second place:
Pat Cronin (Gauteng Senior), Michael Fleming, Ian Whittaker & Rob Parkin (Gauteng Senior)***

Day 18 Tuesday 18th March

Free Day

The Royal family played golf (again), the scribe and Caroline and the Stoddarts had a quiet day, the Flemings caught up with friends whilst the rest of the party went on a poignant and emotive tour of Constitution Hill, until 1985 a brutal prison in the apartheid years and now the site of the highest court in South Africa.

After a guided tour of Soweto (no bungee jumping), a tour around downtown Johannesburg's no go areas and a visit to the World Cup soccer stadium, we returned in reflective mood to our Sandton safe house haven.

A day of contrasting experiences.



*The FNB Stadium in Johannesburg
where the 2010 World Cup final was held*



*Nelson
Mandela
Square*

Bag One has arranged an early evening mind-improving talk by two local historians Spike Becker and Alan Gordon who speak with fascinating insight about the Border Wars and the Boer War where John's grandfather, Captain R C Saville of the Durham Light Infantry, fought. A good attendance by most of the group.

Day 19 Wednesday 19th March Golf at the River Club

Match Manager – Adrian Stoddart

This 11th match of the series is played at the River Club. The course is relatively new, being built from scratch in the mid-1960s after its founder, Punch Barlow, was unhappy at not being able to get a tee time to play with his family on a Sunday afternoon at his own club, the Johannesburg Country Club. It was designed by Bob Grimsdell, a friend and pupil of Harry Colt.

It is also privately owned, and its membership is small and exclusive. It was modelled on Cypress Point with only 200 members who pay all the expenses at the end of the year.



We were all very grateful to be able to spend a day at this iconic Club which has "special rules". These include a complete ban on cell phones on the course and in the clubhouse. They also have a strict dress code of smart casual when not on the course. The clubhouse is spacious and cool with a wonderful verandah giving fine views of the opening and finishing holes. After a day of golf on an immaculately presented course, most of us have considerable sympathy for these rules.



**Ro Edbrooke, Jo Joubert (SA),
Cathy Stoddart, & Cathy Bean (SA)**

The match is played as an Alliance with 12 South African Seniors, very few of whom are actually members of the River Club. I (Adrian Stoddart) am lucky enough to play with the President of the Gauteng Seniors, Stuart Morris and a former Captain, John Marshall. Stuart is a retired banker and John a retired executive of a gold mining enterprise.



As has been the case in all our Tour matches, the ladies are very well looked after by their playing partners, so it is fair to say that all tourists have had a memorable day and I'm sure they would hope that the River Club be included on any future tours.

**Adrian Stoddart presents the
quaich to Stuart Morris,
Gauteng Seniors MM**



**Stuart Morris (Gauteng Seniors MM on the
right) presenting the prizes to The River Club
winners Giles Sanderson & Guy Gilman, and
Rob Shimmin & Doc Watson (Gauteng Seniors)**



Day 20 Thursday 20th March Match vs The Gauteng Seniors at Royal Johannesburg GC

Match Manager – Ian Whittaker

Royal Johannesburg GC is a club steeped in tradition having been founded in 1891, receiving its Royal Charter in 1931, proudly boasting 2 courses, The East and The West, and is the home of South African golf and The Gauteng Seniors.

Two plaques to commemorate the first UK Seniors tour in 1935/36 were given to the club and attached to two jacaranda trees on the course.

Unfortunately, both have been lost but a replica was made and now stands proudly in the trophy cabinet at RJGC.

And so, to the final match of the tour and the last opportunity to show our true colours in the heat of battle. Regrettably our hosts have different ideas. The Gauteng Seniors line up comprises 5 current winners of their 6 major annual competitions and 2 recent winners of the South African Seniors championship. Tough competition. The early optimism that the tour leader and his partner, Nigel Theyer, display on seeing that they are to be playing against Haydn Thomson, age 89 and his formidable partner Denis Jones, the President of The South African Seniors soon disappear when Haydn unfortunately has to withdraw. An early half point is secured by Charles Cunningham and Guy Gilman and a victory for Bill Gott and Michael Fleming sees our hopes rise, only to see them dashed when we lose the remaining 4 matches to some spectacular performances by our hosts. Of note, David Rigby, born in Cheshire, an overseas member of Royal Lytham and aged 78 goes round in 2 over par. He attributes his success to something called 'bio-kinetics' which left most of us totally confused but wondering where we could buy some.



In the Ladies 4 ball alliance match, played on the West course, Yvonne Gilman and Heather Cunningham with their partners win the day with Barbara Biggart and Sarah Whittaker in second place.

David Rigby (SA), Giles Sanderson, Graeme King, and Alan Field (SA)



Immediately after the match Jonathon Narayadoo, President of the Gauteng Seniors, hosts the customary prize giving and quaich presentation on the terrace before we adjourn for the farewell dinner and presentation ceremony..

We are told that there may be an 'Agterskot' which translates to the fact that we may be due a refund because we haven't drunk enough on Tour - this is a surprise to some of us who think we have been doing our best...

Day 20 Thursday 20th March Farewell Speeches

*John Brownrigg, Pat Cronin, Chairman SGUSA,
and Tour Leader Ian Whittaker*



*Ian Whittaker presents the quaich
to Derick Finlayson, the
Gauteng Seniors Tour Organiser*



*Sarah Whittaker gives heartfelt thanks
on behalf of all the Ladies for the wonderful
hospitality they received throughout the Tour*



*Tour Leader Ian Whittaker with
Gauteng Seniors Captain,
Alan Houghton, with the
presentation from the first SA
Tour (1936)*



*Ian Whittaker presents
the Warthog Trophy back to the
SGUSA President Denis Jones*



*Another match lost but Willie leads
an international chorus with Michael
and Steve of "The Bonny Bonny
Banks of Loch Lomond"
- who will take the high road?*



Day 21 Friday 21st March

The Final Gathering

We awake to news from the UK that there has been a fire at the power station serving LHR and that the airport is closed. Much anxiety but we can't do much about it. Nigel's AirTag is blamed but it is not guilty as it is now in the Maldives.

We host our own farewell in the Butcher's Shop in Nelson Mandela Square and amuse the other clientele with a round of Auld Lang Syne.



The River Club



Reminiscing



The final Dinner



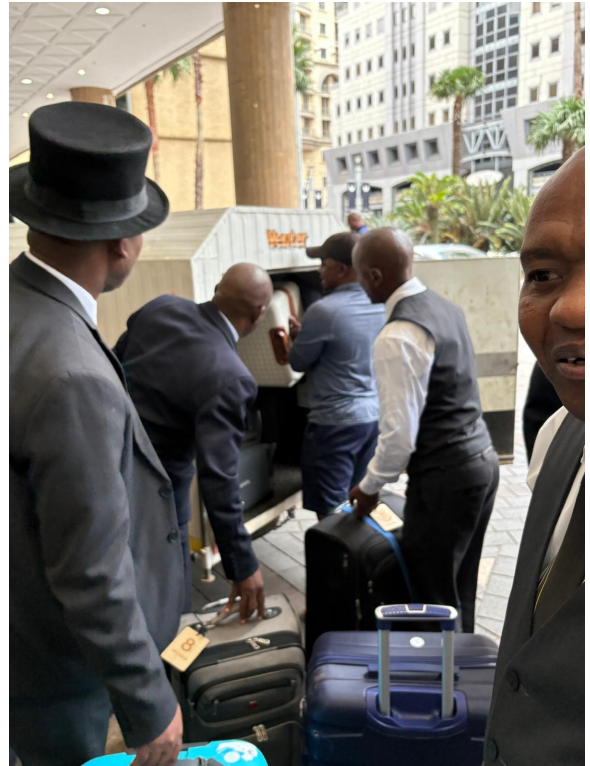
Back to the Sandton for the Finemasters court. The Tour Leader is presented with his international cap and a shield as a final thanks to Ian and Sarah for their leadership,

Saturday 22nd March

Departure Date

Departure Day.

Amazingly all our flights leave on time, with the majority of the party returning to London on the 19.25 BA 0056 flight to London Heathrow.



What an unforgettable trip !

A huge thank you to all our hosts in Western Cape, Southern Cape, Kwa Zulu Natal, Gauteng, and the Senior Golfers of South Africa for their most thoughtful, generous and attentive hospitality. We cannot thank you enough and look forward to reciprocating in the very near future.

Ian and Sarah Whittaker

And all of the Seniors' travelling party

Footnote

I cannot recollect participating in a more harmonious and convivial tour and the continuing WhatsApp dialogue is tribute to the companionship which we are reluctant to lose.

Phill and Rosemary Merry had to pull out of the Tour at the last minute through personal circumstances but Phill remained as a virtual Tourist on our WhatsApp group. He has helped produce this report with great industry and patience and Ian and I cannot thank him enough.

All errors are my responsibility. It was almost impossible to cram our incredible three week experiences into a manageable document.

Nigel Theyer Scribe 1 May 2025

Our Memories

Cecilia Fleming

Across South African skies we flew,
A band of seasoned golfers were the crew
Ten couples, plus two gentlemen bold,
Embarking on a tale to be told.

In Cape Town's warm embrace we met,
Three courses played, our laughter set;
Sunlit greens and seaside air,
And some with swings that showed great flair.

Next, to George our journey soared,
At Pezula's haven, our spirits roared;
Another three fairways under skies so wide,
Where camaraderie and passion did coincide.

In Durban, clouds gathered, to stop our best,
But some were happy to have a rest.
But every cloud has a silver lining,
Which meant early to Phinda for some fine dining.

A private game reserve, of wild, rare delights
Two days of wonder and nature's sights.
Four of the Big Five on majestic display,
A treat that etched memories in every way.

Our tour headed to its final destination,
Off to Jo'berg with little hesitation.
The wheels on the bus go round and round
But the one on the trailer hit the ground.

Four Scots and three Irish, a vibrant crew,
The rest of our ranks, proud English through and through.

Ten lovely ladies, bringing their grace,
With laughter and charm that lit up the place.

Six captains to guide with wisdom and cheer,
Two bag men hard working, and always near.
One wee man dishing out fines with delight,
Kept us all laughing morning, noon and night.

At the helm, Ian — our leader so grand,
With flawless planning and a steady hand.
Guiding us all with patience and pride,
Ensuring our journey was a smooth ride.

And Sarah, so lovely, with a heart so true,
Organising the ladies, the glue of the crew.
With kindness and care, they made it just right,
A trip to remember, pure joy and delight.

A team so perfect, a journey so bright,
Friendships made that feel just right.
Through fairways and laughter, sunshine or rain,
We'll cherish these memories again and again.

Under endless African skies so grand,
We found a haven, a welcoming land —
South African hosts, with hearts so kind,
Ensured we were all well wine and dined.

Their gracious touch, and genuine delight,
Made each day and every night
A treasured memory, a heartfelt toast —
For all you did, we thank you most.

Match Results



SENIOR GOLFERS' SOCIETY

versus

The Western Province Seniors

MM Nigel Theyer

at: The Royal Cape Golf Club
on: Wednesday, March 5th 2025

NAME	Win Half Lost	NAME	Win Half Lost
Guy Gilman & John Saville	0	Glenn Gibbons & Fio Stecco	1
Charles Cunningham & Adrian Stoddart	0	Gwyn Phillips & Vadi Pillay	1
Michael Fleming & Steve Dorritt	1/2	Les Millner & Derek Magnussen	1/2
Ian Whittaker & Sarah Whittaker * (* sub for Giles Sanderson)	0	Ed Raubenheimer & Bill Stephens	1
Graeme King & Bill Gott	0	Kit Vaughan & Kerr Cruickshanks	1
Nigel Theyer & Willie Biggart	0	Dave Hansen & Schalk Burger	1
TOTAL	1/2	TOTAL	5 1/2

Result

Western Province Seniors beat Senior Golfers' Society
by 5 1/2 matches to 1/2



SENIOR GOLFERS' SOCIETY

versus

The Southern Cape Seniors

MM Bill Gott

at: Plettenberg Bay Country Club
on: Monday March 10th, 2025

NAME	Win Half Lost	NAME	Win Half Lost
Giles Sanderson & Charles Cunningham	1	Nico Westraat & Dermot Stobart	0
Steve Dorritt & Willie Biggart	0	Peter Becker & Graham Ebendes	1
Bill Gott & Ian Whittaker	0	David Milton & Cameron Boccaleone	1
Nigel Theyer & Adrian Stoddart	0	David Brown & Ric Snowden	1
Graeme King & John Saville	0	Tony Taylor & Tex van Beuge	1
Guy Gilman & Michael Fleming	0	John Cooper & Neil Scott	1
TOTAL	1	TOTAL	5

Result

Southern Cape Seniors beat Senior Golfers' Society
by 5 matches to 1



SENIOR GOLFERS' SOCIETY

versus

The Kwa Zulu Natal Seniors

MM Giles Sanderson

at: The Durban Country Club
on: Thursday, March 13th, 2025

NAME	Win Half Lost	NAME	Win Half Lost
Graeme King & Nigel Theyer	0	Charles Reid & Bob Daya	1
Gus Ferguson * & Guy Gilman (* sub for Willie Biggart)	0	James Dixon & Brian Attwood- Smith	1
Steve Dorritt & Charles Cunningham	1/2	Dave Attwood-Smith & Rae Stewart	1/2
Giles Sanderson & Ian Whittaker	1/2	Alistair Forbes & John Terry-Lloyd	1/2
Bill Gott & Adrian Stoddart	1/2	Brian Stokoe & Bruce Pringle	1/2
John Saville & Michael Fleming	0	Mike Mun-Gavin & John Mackinnon	1
TOTAL	1 1/2	TOTAL	4 1/2

Result

Kwa Zulu Natal Seniors beat Senior Golfers' Society
by 4 1/2 matches to 1 1/2



SENIOR GOLFERS' SOCIETY

versus

The Gauteng Seniors

MM Ian Whittaker

at: The Royal Johannesburg and Kensington Golf Club
on: Thursday, March 20th, 2025

NAME	Win Half Lost	NAME	Win Half Lost
Bill Gott & Michael Fleming	1	Gorson Huddy & Peter Solomon	0
John Saville & Willie Biggart	0	Vaughan Sammons & Richard Spencer	1
Ian Whittaker & Nigel Theyer	0	Jonathan Narayadoo & Denis Jones	1
Adrian Stoddart & Steve Dorritt	0	Maveli Diamini & Dean Harding	1
Guy Gilman & Charles Cunningham	1/2	John Hare & John Brownrigg	1/2
Graeme King & Giles Sanderson	0	Dave Rigby & Alan Field	1
TOTAL	1 1/2	TOTAL	4 1/2

Result

Gauteng Seniors beat Senior Golfers' Society
by 4 1/2 matches to 1 1/2

Golf Results

			Seniors	South Africans	Points
Sunday 2nd March					
Westlake GC	Men	Winners	John Saville & Giles Sanderson	Chris Boynes & Burger	81
		Runners Up	Nigel Theyer & Steve Dorritt	Danie Ellis & Denniss Thane	80
	Ladies	Winners	Barbara Biggart & Cathy Stoddart	Sue Milner & Lynette Cochrane	79
		Runners Up	Caroline Theyer & Gillian King	Morag Magnussen & Tessa Granger	77
Monday 3rd March					
De Zalza GC	Men	Winners	Steve Dorritt & Jeremy Mumby	Schalk Burger & Edwin Hertzog	85
		Runners Up	Giles Sanderson & Michael Fleming	Alan Strang & Deon Minnaar	83
	Ladies	Winners	Heather Cunningham & Cathy Stoddart	Marion Koster & Xanthe Gibson	81
		Runners Up	Sarah Whittaker & Caroline Theyer	Sandy Dommissie & Meryl Guilfoyle	77
Wednesday 5th March					
Royal Cape GC	Men		Men lost to Western Province Seniors 5 1/2 - 1/2		
	Ladies	Winners	Cecilia Fleming & Jules Sanderson	Sue Milner & Olivia Kennedy	45
Friday 7th March					
Pezula GC	Men	Winners	Steve Dorritt & Keith Spencer	Giles Sanderson & Francis Blitz	91
		Runners Up	Charles Cunningham & Cameron Boccaleone	Michael Fleming & Alister Simmonds	87
	Ladies	Winners	Heather Cunningham & Caroline Theyer	Heather Worrol & Silvia Bernini	87
		Runners Up	Sarah Whittaker & Jules Sanderson	Lise Dean & Julie Peacock	81
Saturday 8th March					
Knysna GC	Men	Winners	Giles Sanderson & John Blythe-Wood	Bill Gott & Tony Taylor	81
		Runners Up	Adrian Stoddart & Richard Buchholz	Guy Gilman & Cameron Boccaleone	80
	Ladies	Winners	Sarah Whittaker & Ro Edbrooke	Bev Strain & Judith Humphrey	82
		Runners Up	Jules Sanderson & Heather Cunningham	Lisa Dean & Hilda Hoffmeyer	81

Golf Results (ctd)

			Seniors	South Africans	Points
Monday 10th March					
Plettenberg Bay			Men lost to Southern Cape Seniors 5 - 1		
	Ladies	Winners	Cecilia Fleming & Ro Edbrooke	Vicky Johnson & Alet JV Rensburg	76
		Runners Up	Caroline Theyer & Jules Sanderson	Wendy Becker & Helga Streicher	75
Wednesday 12th March					
Royal Durban GC			Charles Cunningham & Heather Cunningham	Jeff Leaver & Gail Leaver	
	Mixed	Winners	Giles Sanderson & Jules Sanderson	Lynton Beckett & Roanne Scott	
		Runners Up			
Thursday 13th March					
Durban CC			Men lost to Southern KZN Seniors 4 1/2 - 1 1/2		
	Ladies	Winners	Cecilia Fleming & Caroline Theyer	Aline Jamme & Diane Gammie	
		Runners Up	Rowan Edbrooke & Heather Cunningham	Judith Patterson & Rose Jensen	
Monday 17th March					
Johannesburg CC			Giles Sanderson & Zane Oberholzer	John Saville & David Moshapalo	
	Men	Winners	Michael Fleming & Pat Cronin	Ian Whittaker & Rob Parkin	
		Runners Up	Sarah Whittaker & Ro Edbrooke	Cheryl Brownrigg & Cornelian Bonney	
	Ladies	Winners	Barbara Biggart & Cathy Stoddart	Jetske Kingma & Anne Finlayson	
		Runners Up			
Wednesday 19th March					
The River Club			Giles Sanderson & Doc Watson	Guy Gilman & Rob Shimmin	
	Men	Winners	Steve Dorritt & Peter Hird	John Saville & Stewart McLean	
		Runners Up	Yvonne Gilman & Sharon Leith	Barbara Biggart & Ash Pagden	
	Ladies	Winners	Heather Cunningham & Santi O'Neill	Sarah Whittaker & Lisa Louw	
		Runners Up			
Thursday 20th March					
Royal Johannesburg GC			Men lost to Gauteng Seniors 4 1/2 - 1 1/2		
	Men		Yvonne Gilman & Cheryl Brownrigg	Heather Cunningham & Anne Finlayson	
	Ladies	Winners	Sarah Whittaker & Ina Sanders	Barbara Biggart & Val McKenzie	
		Runners Up			