

## Madge (Nettle) Tomsett

What fun to hear from the class of '62! - way back in the dinosaur days. Days of fun in the sun as I remember them. Things have certainly changed for those of us who stayed here since then. So here we are older, I don't know about wiser.

I want to thank all the eager beavers for the wonderful way in which you have tackled the momentous task of putting a book together - and succeeded!

Brian and Elaine when you had tea with dear Mrs. Gordon did you remind her of how our whole class stood up and sang "*goodbye*" to her, to the tune of "I hold every little star...." she was quite overcome. I think Derek Roux was one of those who wrote the lyrics.

And "Pete", English was a lesson to which I used to look forward. You always entered the classroom with a swish and great aplomb and the lesson began and ended too soon. I remember attending the play where "standing on the corner watching all the girls go by" was sung. It was all such fun and I was quite sorry to matriculate I enjoyed it so much.



My career:

This lasted a total of 41/2 years, which was a great pity as I loved teaching, and dare I say I really found my metier there.

I taught in the Southern Suburbs of Johannesburg for 2 years before I got married. That was a lovely time; most of the children were Portuguese. What darling, lovable, loving children (even the boys). It was a lot of fun and very successful. This is where I did the cricket and netball too as I explain below.

I taught for 6 months after we were married and was then ousted by an unmarried girl applying for my post (in East London at the time).

Years went by and I only returned to teaching when my sons went to school: Art----- what a joke! The best art teacher is one who can't draw! Got fabulous results from standards 1 through 5. Lots of fun.

Also taught woodwork (imagine this ----me!) and wire-work to the std.5 boys! Best joke was I had to take cricket and netball after school! Me! Who can't see a rugby ball unless it hits me in the face and as for rules - well! I used to just sing dumb running up and down next to fields trying to look intelligent. All the reffing (is there such a word?) was done by the opposing-side teacher.

Then I was put down to take swimming, but explained to the principal that there was a bigger chance of me drowning in my attempt to save a kid. This poor woman was Marge Holmes, (from our class - remember her?). So she, in exasperation, asked what I could do ----- so I said "crafts". So I was on my home ground at last and the craft club was formed.

Later on, for a while I taught standard 1 at Bezuidenhout Valley. All the children were Portuguese barely speaking English and they had to learn Afrikaans too! So I made up songs for everything. It was the easiest way to learn, to music. We'd walk to the pool in 2's singing "ons gaan park toe ---" etc.

So much for career.

I did try my hand at writing and had one article on '*how to study*', published in the Women's Value magazine.

Now for nomad existence;

Entirely due to Alan's career. In all we have had 14 homes so far. Rolling stones!

We married in Jo'burg, honeymooned in PE. Alan was an assistant engineer on the SAR in East London for 18 months. Then he joined The Oude Meester Group in Stellenbosch as engineer and was transferred to Cape Town 6 months later, 3 1/2 years in Parow and he was then transferred to Germiston, as group engineer in charge of 3 factories and 7 distribution depots. Travelled a great deal.

The local school was shocking we moved to Kensington to be able to get the boys into a better school and we stayed in Jo'burg for 4 years and Alan having left Oude Meester and starting his own company designed the Ceres Fruit Juices factory and was then offered a job as engineering manager of Ceres Fruit Growers Co-op. which he accepted as we wanted to get our sons out of Johannesburg.

So, we, Alan, I and our 2 sons moved from Johannesburg to Ceres in the Western Cape in '82. Beautifully situated in a valley surrounded by exquisite mountains. Only 3 ways in or out by passes. The main one, on the way to Cape Town, was built by Thomas Bain after a bad hair day, I think. When we moved there the shops were primitive. The '*Fashion Salon*' had only one till which still had *pop-up tags* with £-s-d on them! I could not believe my eyes. Hardly any English literature. We had to go to Cape Town or Somerset West for that. Ceres, proved as far as the boys were concerned, to be very successful, with Brett coming 1st in the high school as 1 of only 4 English speaking kids in his matric class. He won a bursary from armscor and studied Electronic Engineering with computer sciences at Stellenbosch. Justin also came in the top 5 in his matric year and studied Engineering in Port Elizabeth.

Twelve years later on to PE for a few years. A lovely place to live.

Then, back to Gauteng. Benoni for 7 years. Lovely there, very friendly like PE.

We then 'retired' to Pretoria North to be near my sister but 'juslike' as they say in the classics, the heat was unbearable, so after 2½ years back to PE.

We looked like a small circus travelling down to PE. Alan and I with 4 dogs, a kitten in a carrier, and my miniature Yorkie on my lap all the way, the others in the back of an old Audi 500 towing my red Renault Megane (egg-shape) with seats down and 9 cats in cat boxes. We got some very strange looks as the SUVs sped past. However at a certain age one just gives them a haughty stare.

We left at 5am and arrived in PE at 7.30pm. Poor Alan still had to blow up our mattresses. Poor guy. I just collapsed on the bedroom floor and said "that's it"! At 6.30 the next morning the phone goes, "*the truck is here!*" Never saw such a scramble! Sorting all the animals out and locking them away, before they could start moving us in.

We've been here nearly 7 years now and love it. Best place!

Our eldest son, Brett, has lived in London for the past 15 years and is an Assistant Director at Deutsche Bank. He has a German wife and 2 daughters. The eldest at 2½ is already fully bilingual. Well I can say "2schweinevleis en kartoffels" - my co-mother in law can't speak English, so you can imagine Skype!.



Our youngest son Justin, travels the world and Africa as a director of his company. Touches down at his home in Gardens in Cape Town approx. 1 week a month. Not married, says women come with too much baggage. Married instead to his mountain bike which is state-of-the-art and he participates in all major mountain bike events and will be riding his 5th Cape epic this year.

We live opposite a nature reservation alongside the N2 as you leave PE for Cape Town. Currently we have 6 dogs and 7 cats. No shortage of laughs.

Looking forward to the catch up. Toodleloo  
Madge.