

## **Peter Jones**

*With 3 A Levels I took the train in early 1967 to Rhodes University and Jan Smuts Hall where the majority of "Inks" were installed. A relatively mild initiation process followed and, frankly, a fairly wasted academic year as one's South African colleagues (with Matric) caught up with A Levels. In my second and third years I opted to go to Matthews House in Founders Hall (there were a good number of Rhodesians amongst our group including Peter Longhurst (Milton) and others such as Des Harrison and Howard Garmany). We all plodded through our degrees with varying degrees of success without, I suspect, anything approaching the diligence anticipated by lecturers or our parents. Life was something of a frenetic series of laughs, fleeting romances, a deepening relationship with alcohol and last minute panic as exams drew closer. It all ended suddenly with a B.A. (Economics and Psychology).*

*On the sports field I played cricket for the first team for 3 years and the first team rugby for 2 years.... we were not a great cricket side but we were lucky to play against some great players... the Pollock's amongst them... and I also scraped into the S.A. Central Universities rugby team (Natal, Free State, UPE and Rhodes) that played the Australian tourists at Boet Erasmus in 1969.*

*In December 1969 I was called to an interview for a Rhodes Scholarship which was awarded for unknown reasons in what must have been a very thin field and in July 1970 (after bolstering Rhodesia Railways administration in a temporary role) I travelled by ship to UK along with Brian Belchers and Norman "Swanie" Swanepoel (Churchill) to St. Edmund Hall, Oxford which had the reputation of being a sporting college with little academic distinction. Given this reputation, and unwilling to spoil Tommy Bedford's legacy, Swanie and I plunged into what was called the Special Diploma in Social Studies which allowed us a relatively stress free existence (the regime of 3 eight week terms in an academic year was a helpful aid) allowing us to play those sports that attracted us. A cricket blue followed in 1971 after a blissful period of 60 consecutive days playing against the counties in The Parks prior to which I had played for the Greyhounds rugby team with one game for the "blues" against Leicester. We won "Cuppers" the inter college rugby trophy despite having 8 blues and 1 British Lion in the "Teddy Hall" side! In 1972 I captained Oxford University Cricket Club, packed up rugby and wrote my finals with the statutory pass. We got whipped at Lords by Cambridge but went on to beat them in an inter Varsity 50 over competition later in July 1972. In the meanwhile I'd played for a combined Oxford/Cambridge side against Ian Chappell's Australians and my final fling was to captain a Combined Oxford/Cambridge cricket team to Singapore and Malaysia in August 1972.*

*By November 1972 I was back on the ship to Africa with Swanie headed for home reaching Salisbury in early December on the day the first landmine went off in Centenary.... I met Leigh Taberer and we became engaged just in time for me to be called up for my year's national service (the first BSAP intake) and armed, with my rank of Patrol Officer and service number 900122, I entered the fray both domestically and in the bush. It was a most unpleasant period... both the subsequent marriage and the perpetual "6 weeks in and 6 weeks out" regime of military life.... but the saving grace was to be employed by the Rhodesian Iron and Steel Company (RISCO) in the export sales department. I had found*

*my niche by accident... UN sanctions and the export of half a million tons of steel per year in between camouflage kit and "ratpacks" was a godsend in many ways. In 1978 I was sent to Johannesburg as part of a small team to "front" the sales and it was a tremendous success. When independence came, Garrick Fletcher and I returned to Harare and I became export manager of the newly named ZISCO and the marriage to Leigh was dissolved through the kind offices of John Traicos..... out of darkness, through the fire into light!*

*And then Mugabe's government decided to market all minerals via its own creation (MMCZ) which led to Garrick and myself leaving Zisco in 1982 to form our own steel trading and shipping company which we named Ferromar..... and we successfully traded and shipped Zimbabwe steel for our own account. But marriage was looming again... to Catherine Estcourt, and this was achieved in late 1983. A year later Joanna was born and 2 years later Abigail arrived. Two very special daughters. But by 1988 Zisco was in sharp decline and Garrick and I were offered positions with Far East Commodities and Trading (FECAT) [which was owned by Macsteel] in Hong Kong. Reluctantly we sold up in Harare and learnt what life was like working for a colossus of its kind at that time.... 24 expat traders moving 5 million tons of steel a year around the world...it was very exciting period but Catherine was an unhappy resident of the colony which made it impossible to continue living there but not before Alex, our son, was born in the Matilda Hospital Hong Kong....*

*We went to Devon for reasons still not yet clear (I renovated a cob barn) but within a year I was offered work to return to Zimbabwe by Macsteel as it was considered likely that Zisco would be resuscitated under the auspices of British Steel. By January 1995 British Steel had surrendered any pretensions of understanding government expressions of "partnership" and Macsteel formed a joint venture in the international market with Arcelor Mittal where I became M.D. of the Johannesburg operations. It meant commuting from Harare to Jo'burg every week for 5 or 6 years during which the marriage suffered inexorably in conjunction with the land grab by government which started in 2000. A tough time...divorce followed and the family couldn't stay in Zimbabwe so went to Somerset in UK where the 3 children all attended Taunton School. I then continued in my work based in Jo'burg with breaks to see the children as frequently as possible. In 2010 I transferred to Dubai and spent 3 years working there until I retired end 2012.*

*I have travelled the world in a working context, was probably remunerated too kindly, have driven Ferrari's at Catalunya, Monza and Mugello, played poor golf in many places and cannot believe my good luck at finding steel trading when I did.*

*The children are talented academically..... all with Master's degrees... Joanna (Edinburgh and Geneva), Abigail (Oxford, Goldsmiths and School of Oriental and African Studies) and Alex (Canterbury Christchurch and Kent) and who consistently vote Lib Dems or Green Party just to get under my skin. Joanna lives with her husband in France, on the border with Geneva, where they work and where they recently produced my first grandchild. And I now live in Newlands, Cape Town mainly, I suspect, because I feel at home in Africa and because I can travel to see the children whenever practical.*