

LORRAINE DE KLERK (ADAMSON) 1982

(written after their 25 year Reunion)

Well, eventually the weekend of the 12th May dawned and I travelled South around lunch time to get to Mooi River for a quick change before heading off for Pietermaritzburg and our arranged dinner at Lizard Rock! Being the first to arrive, I called Lynette and found they were at the School safe and sound, showering etc. and would be along shortly. While standing around in the front of the restaurant, I looked up and in walked Tully. The happy, LOUD, just-the-same, Tully. An enormous hug from a still small person. With a loud and most sincere "it's great to see you", the evening began.

We sat and the words just came tumbling out. Then Margaret arrived. We have actually all been in contact off and on; the two of them both living in Hilton and I see Mags at most of Wendy's large gatherings! Chatting continued, only stopping at the sight of Jilly arriving. More loud whoops of greeting and hugging before she laughed saying she had a surprise in her car. Off she went and came back into the restaurant sporting the most amazing of black wigs! A fright she was and it was poor Wendy who came in next and had that awful feeling of "is this really Jill and is this really her hair!" The ever-tactful Wends handled it perfectly and off came the wig during the entrance of Brenda and Lynette. Hot on their heels was Colleen and the noise level increased! As talking took priority over eating, the menu wasn't given proper attention and then as time ticked by and everyone took a glance at it, we all ordered the same! It was decided that was the easiest and no one wanted to waste time choosing! A really great time was had by all and once the other poor patrons had left the restaurant we continued along our merry way.

Finally winding things up, we all dispersed. Jill, Lynette, Brenda and I driving back to Epworth where we stayed overnight in what we all knew as Rhodes. Wendy, Colleen and Tully joined us for a night cap. The cubicles were just the same; the bathroom though had been 'upgraded' and tiled throughout; a nice long vanity with basins and mirrors had been dressed with small posies of flowers and it was spick and span. Lynette had come prepared with the cooler box and we all sat with a glass of wine or the like and continued the chatter in the lounge (read 'landing'!) There were others staying in the B&B as well; a few girls celebrating their 10 year anniversary but we outlasted them and they threw in the towel and went off to bed. The others left for home and it was 2 o'clock before we all headed for bed. The narrowest bed in the world, I think? The linen was better than in our day but the bed seemed so, sooo narrow. Mine squeaked and so I didn't move much.

Morning came quickly and it was off to the showers! Actually most of us opted to bath though only one had hot water. Jill and I agreed that the roughness of the bottom of the bath left one feeling truly 'exfoliated' in all those places one never gets to! Breakfast in the staff dining room – we all skipped the eggs but went rather for the yoghurt and toast table. Another big group was the 1957 crowd who were having their 50th anniversary reunion. Then it was off to the squash courts where Lynette and Colleen were kitted out and played against the youngsters (winning by the way) before there was a little ceremony to open up the new Squash Court Lounge area. There are 3 squash courts now and then this lounge

area. More like a canteen really, where there is a serving area with fridges and urns etc. and then the lounge has its walls adorned with pics of the past squash teams. We saw them all! Lynette, Colleen, Janet & Pippa Gibson, they were all there. Of course the whole thing had been arranged by the Sports Director ~ Sally White. She is still there, still the same, still heading up the best team in the district.

During this Reunion weekend the School had arranged a market which had fun and colourful stalls dotted all the way down the main Chapel Drive. The field below the Haley Hall was a bit of a mess as it has been lifted for the fitting and laying of an Astroturf Hockey Field ~ well, they are certainly keeping up with the times and have all the facilities. A brilliant sports centre for indoor hockey, basket ball and the like. I am glad we didn't have to knit for the fête raising funds for the building of that!! A marquee had been erected above the tennis courts for teas and there were school bands playing on the lawn in front of the Headmaster's office: a brass band and then an excellent Marimba band. All this and a beautiful sunny day made wandering around great. I walked all over the place wishing the Jacaranda trees were in bloom but still, the gardens were lovely. The library has been enlarged and looked well-used. The science and biology labs were just the same really and the lecture theatre exactly the same. The old typing room had been totally renovated and was now spacious and airy and lots happening there with an art display and things.

The girls all sleep in Grades now and not Houses. So you may sleep in Jubilee being a senior but you are in Somerset House. Somerset House (now Senior House) houses the juniors, funnily enough. Very much the same; I think difficult to change, really. Tiled bathrooms and carpeted stairs. Mirrors on the walls make the landings lighter and we all poked around and reminisced.

A fashion show of all the matric dance dresses on the front lawn did highlight the changes though and I am sure our parents are glad they didn't have to fork out the cash for a "magenta silk frock with gold satin in-lay designed by Alexandra"! Anyway that was fun and unfortunately due to our looking around and squash participation we missed the Uniform through the Ages parade which I think must have been a bit of a laugh.

All off then to gather for lunch and the others began to arrive. Cathy (James) Oldacre and Marywin (Dowse) Parkin made up the table of 10 we had and it was so good to be together and just look at everyone and take in the changes and the growth and the age and the lives that we have all lived.

A highlight for me was to see Mrs Gardner. I felt almost overwhelmed and was totally surprised. She was exactly how I remember her and have thought of her so often when I have related stories to my own children about how she made books and stories come alive. We all remembered The Pearl, Romeo & Juliet, To Kill a Mocking Bird, she was to me really fantastic. Then Miss Metcalfe appeared. Nearly the same and I am sure just as quiet in the passages. Mrs Klug is the Headmistress now and it was her voice and speech that we smiled at. We remembered her "etc etc".brought back memories! Even Prof Bredenkamp came to the lunch with his wife, though he appeared very frail.

After lunch, a Chapel Service, with Mrs Cameron playing the organ as brilliantly as ever. We had the same old blue felt kneelers with the buttons popping out, hard and rough from all the tossing onto the polished floor! Jill had been asked to do a reading; we listened to the obituaries: Miss Makkink, Mrs Schlosser, others we didn't know. We sang Oh Joyful Light and it was all memories – millions of memories.

The afternoon ended soon after that with more pictures in the sun. A few of us popped up to the 'dorm' for a last coffee and wine/beer. Fearful that I may forget something I had heard (I had heard a lot over a very short period of time), I jotted down a few reminders which I will add in another note as this has become a very long account of our time together.

I had wondered how it would be; I wondered if I would be anxious; I wondered if it would be difficult. But it was so easy. There was no pretence, no barriers, everyone knew everyone well and it was wonderful. It was like seeing family again. You listened to the stories; you told your stories and everyone heard and everyone cared. It was good.

I wish you had been there.