



Mountain river: Maureen and her sister explore the water running down from the Swartburg Pass.



Natural wonder: Maureen Delandro arrives at the Goukamma reserve

A stunning holiday... then one of the last flights home

Maureen Delandro, of Brighton Road, N2, took The Archer with her on a recent trip to South Africa and here she recalls how she managed to return just one step ahead of the coronavirus lockdown.

In March, my sister Kathleen and I visited our other sister Sheila in South Africa. Our first week on arrival was spent in Goukamma, a nature reserve and marine protected area situated on the Cape's Garden Route. This is a coastal dune forest area consisting of dense thickets of milkwood, yellowwood and candlewood trees on either bank of the Goukamma river.

Hiring canoes we journeyed upriver, seeing iridescent kingfishers and swimming in the warm Coca Cola-coloured river. Giant otters, porcupines and vervet monkeys also inhabit this beautiful reserve.

Week two was spent in Prince Albert where my sister lives. We drove through the dramatic Swartburg mountain

pass, the heat increasing as we journeyed inland. Prince Albert is a town famous for its artists, my sister, her husband and son among them.

The coronavirus crept into the area whilst we were there, closing cafés, restaurants and galleries. We managed to catch our flight from Cape Town, with 500+ people on the plane, elbow to elbow, nobody looking up!

Being quarantined on my return to the UK I have not been able to visit Long Lane Pasture at the northern end of East Finchley, where I am a volunteer. I do hear that frogspawn fills the ponds and a lovely variety of birds and butterflies inhabit the blossoming trees. I am looking forward to connecting again with this, our own beautiful local reserve.

Jennifer Bate

11 November 1944 –
25 March 2020

By Geoffrey Hanson, director of the East Finchley Arts Festival

With the passing of Jennifer Bate, the world of music has lost an internationally famous organist and recording artist, who travelled the world giving acclaimed recitals. Equally in demand at home, she performed on several occasions at the BBC Proms, and at a long list of venues across the country.

Seminal in her career was her meeting with the French organist composer Olivier Messiaen, who came to hear her play on the organ at St James's, Muswell Hill, in 1987. Messiaen was so impressed by her playing and her interpretation of his music that a rapport grew up between them. She was to make recordings of his music which have become recognised as authoritative.

Yet her roots were here in North London. Her father Horace Bate was organist at St James's for 54 years, and she continued to live locally throughout her career.

She was active in the com-

munity, heading a fund-raising campaign to restore the Muswell Hill organ, whilst attending All Saints', East Finchley, which she regarded as "my church".

She took part in many East Finchley Arts Festivals at that same venue, opening the first in 1997, and it was typical of her that one of her last recitals should be in aid of All Saints' recent roof appeal.

Her talent and achievements were variously recognised by the award of the OBE, and by France making her Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur. The University of Bristol, where she had been a student, awarded

her an honorary Doctorate of Music.

It was late in the 1960s when I first met her, and thereafter our friendship blossomed. As a person and as a musician, it was her integrity that marked her out. Always supportive, she gave of her time and talent to the Arts Festivals on many occasions: events which remain in the memory, always without fee.

She frequently accompanied the annual All Souls' Day performance of the Fauré requiem at All Saints', once hurrying back from abroad to do so. We remember her with affection and gratitude.



Organist Jennifer Bate

Fear, loss and families separated... then joy that it was all over

Celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8 May will be a little muted while the lockdown persists but that doesn't stop the wartime memories being as strong as ever. Here, two Archer readers share theirs.

Vivien Mallindine writes: I went to a convent school in Muswell Hill during the war years and usually cycled. On the 8th May we all decorated our bikes with red, white and blue ribbons to celebrate VE Day. That evening I went up to London with my parents and it was wonderful. I had not seen such crowds before. We stood outside Buckingham Palace and saw the Royal family come out on the balcony. I was a Cadet in the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and during the summer holidays we used to spend a fortnight working on a farm in Dorset. We slept in tents which was fun if it did not rain too much. We mainly picked potatoes but also helped with the harvest. For some, whose fathers were away, this was a holiday and something to look forward to away from the bombing. While there we heard about the surrender of Japan and the war was over! The gentleman farmer hired a coach and took us all to Weymouth for the day to celebrate.

Jeanne Wray writes: Being the eldest child I had always felt quite responsible for my younger

sister and baby brother. When war was imminent in 1939 I was eight years old and remember the windows being shuttered and a barrage balloon installed in the playground of our infant school in Crouch End, as well as gas mask practice.

The day before war was declared we children were evacuated with our mothers and teachers to a village in Sandy, Bedfordshire, travelling by train from Hornsey Station. It was quite a frightening experience as we stood in a circle when we arrived and were told to go into a van which I thought was to do with gas. In fact it was to collect 'bully beef' and various rations to give to our hosts where we were to be billeted.

We only stayed for a few months. We didn't eat with our hosts as the wife was not used to children but her husband was very kind and showed us the contents of his market garden with fruit, veg and flowers plus a horse in a stable and chickens. He also had a ferret which was quite frightening but they did not have any children of their own.

We finally returned home but unfortunately the Battle of Britain started soon after so we

had to sleep downstairs in our Nan's flat. The bombers arrived every night at about six o'clock and sirens were blaring. My Mum, sister and baby brother slept downstairs in the cellar wrapped in thermal wadding to avoid chest problems and I slept in a big bed near my Nan and Dad.

One night the air raid wardens alerted us that we had had an incendiary bomb on our top floor bedroom. All our belongings were destroyed including dresses that our Mum made for both herself and we children to join the school's dancing and drama classes. From then on and even until the present day I felt a great sadness about all our new interests being bombed out of existence.

After this episode my Dad decided that we ought to move away again from London. We found rented accommodation in a Norfolk village whilst my Dad stayed in London to do fire-watching and keep his job in the City. I never forgot, however, the stonework image of the Morse code for V for Victory which was plastered on some walls next to my school in Crouch End and I will remain a patriot all my life.