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PINELANDS COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 171 | April 2026

Special
Feature
Restaurants
& Eating Out

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Heleen Meyer



Pinelander

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Helen Keller

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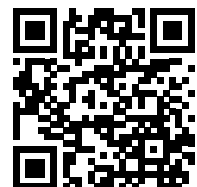
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Max Schutte



African Stonechat

"IN BARNSELEY THEY SPEAK OF LITTLE ELSE"

There is a legend in legal circles which tells the story of Gilbert Gray QC, a British barrister, who was representing a blue collar client from the industrial town of Barnsley in Yorkshire. The stuffy judge at one point pompously asked the barrister *"I take it Mr Gray, that your client is familiar with the maxim: Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"* The quick witted Gray dryly retorted *"Indeed My Lord, in Barnsley they speak of little else."* It's not recorded how the judge reacted to this.

This sublime bit of wit has always stuck with me, but tonight I brushed off my rusted schoolboy Latin to look at that phrase and laboriously worked out that the judge was quoting the phrase "Who guards the guards?" Yes, I could have just googled it, but that would have meant that I had endured two years of Latin classes at school for nothing.

Anyway, this lengthy introduction leads into my thoughts on current affairs from two angles. This April, I am pretty certain that in many towns and cities locally and internationally the talk will be of little else but oil and water, and in particular the lack of it or the abundance of it falling, or not falling, from the sky. The second angle is on the question of "who guards the guards". I am thinking here about a certain Commander in Chief of the most heavily armed military on the planet who also seemingly has the unfettered authority to use it in any way he pleases, regardless of consequences and collateral damage.

Quo Vadis? - Where do we go from here? I don't know and I can't do much about it, so I will take comfort in the time-tested restorative company of friends and family to lighten my mood and soul. On this note, I also predict that there will be much talk of Easter and Freedom Day as we look forward to celebrations and time off with people and pets we love.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

Max Schutte

**Editor and
Advertising**
Max Schutte

**Writer and
Photographer**
Glynnis Schutte

CONTACT THE MUSE MAGAZINE

● 073 644 1288

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NEXT EDITION

172 • May 2026

Published: 28 Apr 2026

DEADLINES

Bookings: 13 Apr

Content: 17 Apr

John McFarlane, author of the regular Muse bird feature enjoys the company of garden birds at his home in Pinewood Village. John feels that the best place for a birdbath is a shady spot near a tree or bush. There will be less evaporation in the shade and will also give the birds an escape route in case of danger.

To attract birds to the garden useful plants to have in the garden are: Wild dagga (*Leonotis Leonurus*), Salvias, Cape Honeysuckle and flowering aloes.





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April



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The Helen Keller Society will open their
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to the general public on the last Friday of
every month between 10:00 and noon.
Friday: 27 Mar; 24 April; 29 May; 26 June.

Call Bev Wroth on 021 531 5311.

Saturday 28 March 2026 THE WILD FIG WINE FESTIVAL AND MARKET DAY from 09:00

There is free entrance to the Market and
Wine tasting at The Wild Fig Restaurant
1 Liesbeek Ave, Observatory. The market
opens at 09:00. Tickets for wine tasting are
R150, available on quicket. (See ad Page 8).

Wednesday 1 April 2026: HAPPY HOUR SOCIAL GROUP 09:30 - 11:00

Meet at the Pinelands Library activities hall.
Enjoy a fun quiz and Bless a Baby (an NPO).
All welcome. Call Santa 083 235 6730.

Saturday 4 April 2026 PINELANDS METHODIST CHURCH "MARKET ON UNION" (CLOSED FOR EASTER)

The market falls on Holy Saturday during
the Easter Weekend - Please note that
there will be NO "Market on Union" this
month.

Wednesday 8 April 2026 PLANT SWAP 10:00 to 11:00

Calling all plant lovers to share plants, cuttings
and seed packs, every second Wednesday at
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Email: library@capetown.gov.za

Wednesday 15 April 2026 PAGE TURNERS BOOK CLUB 10:00 - 11:00

Come to the Pinelands Library committee
room for a book talk with local author,
Dawn Garisch. RSVP Lauren 021 814 1780.

Wednesday 29 April 2026 PINELANDS STAMP CIRCLE

Meet at 18:30 in the Activities Hall above
the Pinelands Library. This will be an all-
members "Postcard Evening".
Email Martin: m.tristan.crawford@gmail.com.

Saturdays 2026 09:00 to 13:00 BRIC-A-BRAC SALES FOR KAPS

Visit Gloria at the Karoo Animal Protection
Society (KAPS) and browse through a
variety of goodies at the bric-a-brac table
at the Pinelands Club. All donations are
welcome including dog and cat food or
warm pet bedding for the cold winter days.
For collection call Gloria 083 450 2782.

Saturdays April 2026 10:30 FAMILY BONDING: STORIES AND SMILES

Join us for Saturday story time and ignite
your imagination with an engaging, fun-
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section. Call 021 814 1780.

Sunday 31 May 2026 CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH AUTUMN MARKET 10:00 to 14:00

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PRINCIPAL'S ARTICLE



By
Julian Cameron

Head:
St George's
Grammar School



SCHOOLS AS ANCHORS IN A CHANGING WORLD

In a time of global uncertainty and rapid change, schools play a vital role in grounding young people in values of respect, dignity, diversity and hope, equipping them to navigate the world with confidence and purpose.

A World That Feels Increasingly Uncertain

The start to the global year has been challenging and unsettling. Escalating conflict in the Middle East, trade tariff threats, Epstein files, the proposed grabbing of Greenland, the floods in Mpumalanga, water insecurity in Gauteng and our own province; and so the list can continue. The pace of change is lightning fast. The volume of information that we are exposed to increases exponentially. Throw in AI developments and accessibility and we have a world that can feel very confusing and overwhelming.

How Young People Experience the World

Such overwhelm and confusion can weigh heavily on young people. By their nature, many young people are idealistic, energetic, hopeful and motivated to make a positive impact on the world. The brokenness, imperfections and threats of the present world realities are very much at odds with the hopefulness, sense of justice and respect for life and humanity that are dear to so many young people. As they explore their identity and seek to map out a purposeful, meaningful and fulfilling future, young people may find that the

world realities contribute to a sense of despair, despondence, powerlessness or insignificance.

Schools as Safe Havens for Growth

In the midst of these realities, good schools can, and do provide an anchor and a safe haven for growth and exploration. Each school strives to model and live a set of values. Many highlight respect, equality, human dignity, integrity and ubuntu as cherished values. Such values ground young people and give firm foundation to their hopes and dreams. They give hope of a better way of being in the world. Less obvious aspects like the rhythm of a daily routine and clear, predictable expectations create a sense of safety and security.

Positive adult – pupil and peer relationships affirm the value and dignity of the individual and nurture the courage to explore one's own strengths, identity and gifts. The modelling of forgiveness and fresh starts, the acts of holding people accountable in compassionate ways all contribute to the young person experiencing the world as safe and navigable. Being listened to and taken seriously in the classroom, in the various committees, sports and activities; builds self-worth and belief that one is important and can make a positive impact.

Learning Through Leadership & Responsibility

As young people are entrusted with leadership roles at school and given the scope to take initiatives and foster their

school spirit, they learn that they can have an impact and that mistakes are usually redeemable.

The Strength of Diversity and Community

When schools embrace difference and diversity, when they encourage community service, when they mark and honour the religious traditions or cultural practices of different groups within the community, they provide anchoring hope to the young that living together in respect and community is possible, is enriching for all and is worth striving towards.

Why Schools Matter More Than Ever

The critical role that schools play in creating safe spaces for young people to explore and grow cannot be underestimated. Schools keep alive and model the reality that people can co-exist peacefully, with mutual respect and dignity. In our nation, the fact that young people of different races, different religions, different languages, differing socio-economic backgrounds, differing family and social cultures can sit alongside each other in a classroom and work together generates hope. The playing fields are far from even, the co-existence not perfect nor the interactions utopian. However, they give life, space and credibility to the hope that the human race can do much better than current world realities suggest. Perhaps it is time that we sent some of our world leaders (whom I shan't name) back to school! ■



ATIYA KAPLEN WINS SILVER AT VIETNAM INTERNATIONAL APPLIED MATHEMATICS COMPETITION (VIAMC) 2026.

Congratulations to Cannons Creek Grade 6 pupil Atiya Kaplen who won a Silver Award for outstanding individual achievement in the final round of the

Vietnam International Applied Mathematics Competition (VIAMC) 2026. This took place in Da Nang, Vietnam, from 5-8 March 2026. Atiya Kaplen participated in the finals after ranking in the top learners in the national round. South Africa was among nine countries competing in the final round of the VIAMC 2026, and Atiya was one of the 181 participants. The VIAMC focuses on applied mathematics, modelling, and real-world situations for students from Grades 1 to 12. In the final round, students compete in an individual round as well as a team competition with their peers from other countries. ■



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André du Toit

Fondly known as *The Big Positive Guy*, André shares his journey to healthy living through this article “Breathe.”

Something had to change – urgently

In December 2024, André du Toit sat in a doctor’s consulting room and said the words most people are too afraid to speak aloud: “I feel like I’m dying.”

At 163 kg, he was living with hypertension, diabetes and worsening heart failure. Walking left him breathless. Sleeping flat was almost impossible. Some nights he chose to sleep upright at the kitchen counter simply because it felt easier to breathe that way. His wife, Glenis, sat beside him that day as the doctor confirmed what they had both already suspected, something had to change, and it had to change urgently.



André at 163 kg

There was no dramatic outburst. No heroic vow. Just a quiet, sobering realisation: this was not the legacy he wanted to leave behind. Christmas that year was subdued. André was exhausted. Frightened. Ashamed, even. Not angry, just deeply sad that his own inability to manage his health had brought him to this point. The turning point did not come with fireworks. It came with a line drawn silently in the sand.



André, 50 kg lighter, with his wife Glenis

Being given a second chance

On 1 January 2025, while most people were recovering from celebrations, André began a fast. The first day was punishing. The second day required broth just to steady himself. On the third day, something happened that would change everything. He woke up lying on his back, the pillows had slipped to the floor, and he was breathing. Not shallow, strained breathing. Real breathing. He woke Glenis to tell her, overwhelmed by relief and gratitude. After years of struggling for air, he had almost forgotten what it felt like. That breath became his second chance. It would prove to be the first step in reclaiming his life.

Education on metabolic health

Not long into his journey, André received an unexpected call from the Noakes Foundation. Invited to join a diabetic study, he found himself immersed in education – not just about weight loss, but metabolic health. For six weeks, the program tracked his progress while teaching him the profound impact of sugar and insulin. Jana Retief, the general manager of the Noakes Foundation, became the first of what André calls his “angels.” As his understanding deepened, his sugar levels dropped, his inflammation eased, and even his skin changed. This wasn’t just a diet anymore; it was a profound shift in his health and angels like Jana were guiding him along the way.

Emotional factors and eating habits

Even though he had embraced discipline, it was Tiffany Whitesman, a long-time friend, who elevated his journey. She offered to coach him, and while André initially believed he didn’t need it, he soon learned otherwise. Tiffany became his second “angel” and her expertise reshaped his mindset. She guided him not only through nutrition, but through the emotional, social, and lifestyle factors tied to eating.

Understanding the need for support

In April, Tiffany suggested a walk at Groot

Constantia. André, once unable to walk far, was apprehensive. But Tiffany knew when to push and when to pause. Alongside a friend, she made that walk possible, resting when needed. It wasn’t the distance; it was the transformation. Tiffany showed André that weight loss is never just about food. It’s about self-awareness, habits, and support. She tracked his progress, challenged his thinking, and when monotony struck, she sparked motivation with new recipes or encouragement. André often says “You don’t walk this road alone.” Tiffany embodied that, walking beside him as he became not just lighter, but a new man.

Couch to 10km programme

After months of steady weight loss, André experienced a new turning point. Movement. After shedding around 25 kilograms, people began to notice. His clothes shrank from size 52 pants to size 40, and his once round face slimmed. At this pivotal moment, another “angel” appeared, Erica Terblanche. Erica, a world-renowned endurance runner and winner of the gruelling seven-day Cross Sahara race, is also a psychologist and professional speaker on happiness.

Her belief in movement and nature, as keys to well-being, resonated deeply. Erica volunteered to train André, guiding him from gentle walks to a structured couch-to-10 km programme. Under her expert mentorship, a 400 metre walk soon extended. Today, André walks over 20 kilometres a week, speed walking and aiming for a 10 km race within two hours. You can often find him walking around the canal early in the morning.

And now to swimming

Thanks to Erica’s guidance, movement has become central to his happiness. Beyond walking, André recently took up swimming, completing his third lesson with a 300 metre swim. With each step and each stroke, he continues becoming the best version of himself.



A great transformation!

After 13 months of dedication, André stands 50 kilograms lighter, with boundless energy and a new lease on life. No longer reliant on most medications, he credits his transformation to a series of key choices – making a firm decision, crafting a sustainable plan, and most importantly, surrounding himself with expert support.

Free online presentation

Now, he wants to help others do the same. To do this, André has teamed up with Tiffany Whitesman, his coach, to host a free online presentation. In this session, André will share his journey. How he made the decision to change, built a plan, and stayed accountable. The session is open to anyone who feels stuck – whether in weight loss, health, or any major life challenge. If you're ready to take a step toward change, email André at andre@bigpositiveguy.com to receive the Zoom link and details. This is more than a weight loss story; it's about reclaiming your life.

Don't wait. Take that step toward a future full of possibility.

Written by André du Toit. ■

CANNONS CREEK WINS ANNUAL TRIANGULAR ATHLETICS MEETING

Cannons Creek Independent High School recently won the annual Triangular Athletics Meeting between itself, St Joseph's Marist College and St George's Grammar School, with a total of 235 points. The event was held on 6 March at St George's Grammar School, where St Joseph's placed second with 178 points while St George's came third with 88 points. Cannons Creek boasted a 45-strong team, and broke four records.

Athletes from Cannons Creek Independent School took part in the various disciplines – 1500m, 800m, 100m, 400m, 200m, and the 4 x 100m relay. Four noteworthy accomplishments were achieved where the following Cannons pupils broke records in their age categories and races:

Grade 11 pupil Liam Ingram broke the record for the Boys Open 800m race, in a time of 2:20.28 (previous record 2:25.12).

Grade 11 pupil Liam Ingram broke the record for the Boys Open 100m race, in a time of 12:12 (the previous record was broken in 2025 by a Cannons pupil - Zahid Hamdulay with a time of 12:25).

Grade 12 pupil Belle Laithwaite broke the record for the Girls Open 400m race, in a time of 1:17.13 (previous record 1:17.87).

Grade 11 pupil Lehanna Achilles and **Grade 8 pupil Solana Mohr** broke the record for the Girls Open 1500m race; in times of 6:59.32, and 7:10.94 respectively (previous record 7:34).



Above:

Grade 11 pupil Liam Ingram started like a bullet, ending like a freight train during his running event.

Head of Sport Ms Lucy Twani, commented: "The Athletics event at St George's demonstrated incredible determination and high spirits from all our pupils. Each pupil gave their best, pushing through the heat with unwavering focus and enthusiasm. It was inspiring to witness such a positive and energetic atmosphere, where our pupils not only competed fiercely but also supported one another, showing true sportsmanship. It truly highlighted the spirit of perseverance which made it a memorable experience for all of us. It's been a few years since Cannons Creek has won this event, so I am extra proud." ■

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The unwritten rule: why tipping matters in South African restaurants




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On a busy Friday evening in a South African restaurant, plates arrive steaming, glasses are topped up and orders are remembered with impressive accuracy. For most diners the ritual ends with the bill. Yet for the person who delivered the meal, that final moment often determines how they will make it through the month. In South Africa, tipping is not merely a polite gesture. For many waiters it is an essential part of their income.

How much should you tip?

The widely accepted standard tip at South African restaurants is between 10% and 12% of the bill, with many diners rounding up to 15% for good service. Some customers leave more when service has been exceptional, while others leave less if the experience falls short. A growing number of establishments automatically add a service charge for larger tables, but for most meals the decision still rests with the diner.

What waiters actually earn

Unlike in many other professions, restaurant waiters in South Africa often earn very little in base wages. In some cases they are paid a small shift allowance, sometimes as low as R20 to R50 per shift, while in other restaurants they receive a modest hourly rate that falls far below a living wage. As it stands, minimum wage in South Africa is R30.23 – which isn't a great deal, especially if diners have expectations of a certain standard of interaction at their table.

For that reason, tips form the bulk of their income.

"One slow week can really hurt," said one waiter working in Pinelands. "Without tips I would not be able to pay rent or transport. The basic pay barely covers anything."

Another waiter at a busy venue in the surrounding areas put it even more bluntly. "If customers stopped tipping tomorrow,

most of us would have to find another job. It's not extra money. It's survival."

Do tips get shared?

Many diners assume that the tip goes directly into the pocket of the person who served them. In reality, that is not always the case. In a number of restaurants, waiters must share a percentage of their tips with other staff, including bartenders, runners, kitchen assistants or bus staff who help clear tables. This system is designed to reward the entire service team, though it also means the amount a waiter takes home can shrink considerably. "People think we keep the whole tip," said another local waiter. "But we often tip out the bar and the runners. If someone leaves 10%, we might only keep part of that."

Is tipping universal?

Tipping culture varies widely around the world. In countries such as Japan, leaving a tip can actually be considered rude because good service is seen as part of the job. In Australia, staff generally earn higher wages and tipping is less expected, although still appreciated. Meanwhile in the United States, tipping is deeply embedded in hospitality culture, often at 18% or higher. South Africa sits somewhere in the middle, where tipping is technically optional but strongly expected.

Service reward or social responsibility?

This raises a familiar debate. Should a tip be purely a reward for excellent service, or should it be treated as a near obligation because of the economic realities of the industry? For many waiters, the answer is clear. While good service should always be the goal, the system relies on customer generosity to function. "We try our best every shift," said one waiter. "But when someone leaves nothing, it can be tough because we still shared our tips with the rest of the team and paid transport to get to work." For diners, the final decision comes down to a small gesture at the end



of the meal. For the person delivering the plate, it can mean the difference between getting by and falling short.

What counts as good service?

While tipping is an important part of the restaurant economy in South Africa, it is also tied closely to the quality-of-service diners receive. Most customers expect a basic standard when they sit down at a table, and waiters who consistently deliver it generally earn better tips. Here's a quick overview of what diners should be looking for:

- **Attentiveness** - Good service usually begins with attentiveness. A waiter should greet customers promptly, explain specials if necessary, and ensure drinks and food orders are taken within a reasonable time.
- **Knowledge of the menu** - Diners often ask questions about ingredients, portion sizes or preparation methods, and a confident answer can make a big difference to the overall experience.
- **Efficiency** - also matters. Orders should arrive correctly, waiters should check the table periodically without being intrusive, and empty plates or glasses should be cleared in a timely manner
- **Communication** - is crucial - If a kitchen delay occurs, customers generally appreciate being informed rather than left wondering.

- **Remembering repeat customers** - Outstanding service, however, tends to go a step further. This might include remembering repeat customers and anticipating needs before they are asked for, or handling problems calmly and professionally if something goes wrong with a meal.

Small details often stand out. A waiter who notices a diner celebrating a birthday, and offers thoughtful recommendations or simply maintains a friendly and genuine attitude throughout the meal can transform a routine outing into a memorable experience. In those moments, many diners feel that leaving a generous tip is not just customary but well deserved.

It is important to remember that a waiter is the interface between the restaurant and the diner. A lot of what happens behind the scenes is beyond a waiter's control; the important thing from diners' perspective is how the waiter handles the issues that occur and minimises their impact on the overall dining experience.

In many ways the waiter is like a ringmaster at a circus, he doesn't do the actual performing, but he is key to ensuring that the whole experience makes sense for the patrons.

By Anthony Pascoe ■

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THE BLUE SCHOOL CELEBRATES 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY 1926 TO 2026

The Pinelands Primary School (Blue School) begins its Centenary celebrations with a Thanksgiving Assembly.

The Pinelands Primary School marked a special moment in its history with a Thanksgiving Assembly on Friday 6 March, as part of the school's centenary celebrations. The assembly was attended by many special guests who shared meaningful messages with the learners and staff. Father Rus Blassoples (Resident Priest at St Stephen's Church, Pinelands), Riad Davids (Ward Councillor), Miss Elaine Holmes (served the school as an educator for 42 years - see *Muse magazine* July 2014, page 13 at www.pinelandsdirectory.co.za), and Kiern Thompson (Sports News Anchor for EWN Sport and past pupil of The Blue School) addressed the learners, reflecting on the school's rich history, its values and the importance of community, gratitude and service. Grade 7 monitors



Ameera Mowzer and Georgia Zeederberg did readings from the Bible and Quran relating to thankfulness. Following the assembly and the mid-morning break, the celebrations continued outdoors with a symbolic ceremony. The Centenary flag was hoisted, marking 100 years of the school's legacy and achievements. A particularly memorable moment followed when doves were released, representing peace, hope and unity within the school community. The event formed a meaningful part of the centenary festivities, reminding learners and staff of the strong traditions and shared spirit that have shaped The Pinelands Primary School over the past century. ■



Father Rus Bassoples



Mr Riad Davids



Ameera Mowzer & Georgia Zeederberg



Mrs Elaine Holmes



Mr Kieran Thompson



By
Sue Torr
Director
Crue Invest



Why the 'retirement number' matters less than the life you're building

For decades, retirement planning has been thought of as a neat, linear exercise: study, work, climb, accumulate, and then somewhere around 65 – a hard stop. It is a comforting narrative because it implies predictability and gives people a single finish line to aim for. However, the modern retirement landscape is no longer shaped by predictability, but rather by longevity, shifting family structures, changing work patterns, and a generation that is less willing to postpone living until 'later'. When your future could reasonably span multiple decades beyond your peak earning years, "when do I become financially free?" feels like a more appropriate question than "when can I retire?"

We crave choice

If we strip retirement down to first principles, what most people really want is not a retirement date, but choice. They want to wake up on a Tuesday and know their time belongs to them, whether that means they keep working, explore a new career, consult selectively, volunteer, travel slowly, start a business, or simply work less without fear.

Financial freedom

Financial freedom is the point at which your assets can fund your lifestyle on your terms, without you being trapped by a pay cheque or debt-fuelled obligations. However, the liberating truth is that financial freedom is not reserved for the last chapter of your life. It is a destination that can be reached at different ages, in different ways, with different iterations of 'enough'.

Making goals more tangible

Having said that, it's important to know that language matters – and we find this especially with our young accumulators. While 'saving for retirement' can feel like a somewhat distant, abstract sacrifice for a future self that you cannot yet fully imagine, 'saving for financial freedom' creates a different psychological anchor: it frames your daily decisions as a trade between short-term consumption and long-term freedom of choice, thereby making the goal more tangible.

The experience economy

We believe the pressures faced by the old retirement model are partly demographic

and partly cultural. People are living longer, which means the funding requirement for later life has expanded – despite the fact that formal retirement ages have not moved in alignment. At the same time, we have seen the rise of what economists have called the 'experience economy' – a growing preference for meaningful experiences rather than simply accumulating 'things.' This shift is largely driven by people no longer willing to defer travel, learning, and adventure until they are older. Rather, they want a financial plan that supports a life being lived now, not merely endured until retirement. Add to that more fluid careers, remote work opportunities, side hustles and flexible lifestyles, and the traditional 'work hard for forty years, then stop' model stops being the default and instead becomes just one option among many. Rather than being a cliff-edge event, financial freedom is in fact a continuum. Each step forward changes the nature of your choices. Many high-functioning investors can surprise themselves here: they may have sizeable incomes and healthy balance sheets, but still feel constrained because their monthly commitments keep them in a narrow corridor of "must". We find it helpful to think of progress toward freedom in phases – not because life fits into neat boxes, but because phases help you identify what is driving your stress, and what would most improve your sense of agency.

What defines 'enough'?

We have found that people do not fail to reach financial freedom because they lack intelligence. They fail because they never decide what freedom is worth to them. They drift into a lifestyle that consumes their margin and then wonder why they feel trapped despite earning well. Once you define what 'enough' looks like, you stop making decisions in isolation – and every major purchase becomes a conscious trade-off: is this worth delaying my freedom for? This one question cuts through the noise and helps focus on what really matters to you. Life is already happening, and achieving financial freedom will allow you greater choices with the time you have now and in the future. ■

KNOW WHAT YOU OWN...AND WHY

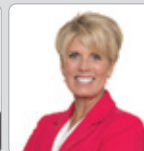
Many people accumulate financial products, investments and policies over time without regularly reviewing how they all fit together. This can result in a complicated portfolio that feels fragmented or hard to understand.

A well-structured financial plan brings clarity. Each investment, policy and strategy should serve a specific purpose – whether it is providing income in retirement, protecting your family, or building long-term wealth.

Taking the time to review your financial affairs helps to ensure that every component of your portfolio works together in support of your broader financial goals.



Craig Torr CFP®



Sue Torr



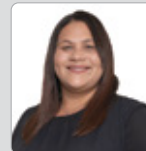
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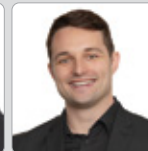
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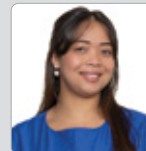
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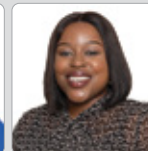
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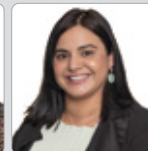
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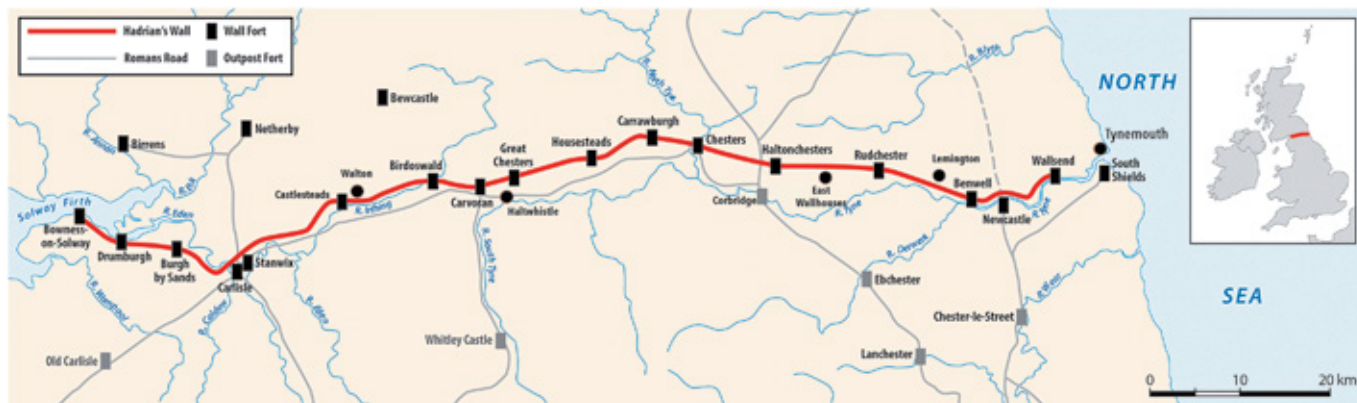
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by Brian Watkyns

Hadrian's Wall Path coast to Coast Across England

Rudyard Kipling, a regular visitor to Cape Town, wrote of Hadrian's wall in his classic book *Puck on Pooks Hill*.

In AD 43 the Romans invaded Britain. Seventy-nine years later the Emperor Hadrian ordered a fortification to be built across the north of England to protect the northern frontier. It took six years to complete the 135 km (84 Roman miles) wall from Bowness-on-Solway to Wallsend and included forts, milecastles, turrets and an elaborate system of ditches known as vallums. The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail follows the line of the wall from the Irish Sea at Bowness-on-Solway in the west to Wallsend in the east. However, we completed a true sea-to-sea crossing of England by continuing to walk from Wallsend to the North Sea at Tynemouth. We purchased Hadrian's Wall Path "passports" which were stamped at various points along the route and purchased a guidebook for the Path but found the distances were frequently understated.

Day 1 – 30.4km

Bowness-on-Solway to Carlisle

Bowness-on-Solway is a tiny village on the coast. The limited accommodation was already booked up, so we booked a B&B in Carlisle. The first day was a long, straight, rather monotonous road walk from Carlisle to Bowness, made worse by heavy rain most of the way. We were however slightly encouraged by the well-used quote "If it hasn't rained while you are walking Hadrian's Wall, you haven't walked Hadrian's Wall!" We passed some quirky place names such as the Sourmilk Footbridge. Arriving in Bowness around 6 pm, we had our passports stamped. We then caught the last bus of the day back to Carlisle where our attentive hosts put our soaking clothes in the tumble-dryer and dried our boots by stuffing them with newspaper. It was an exhausting day!

Day 2 – 22.5km Carlisle to Walton

Leaving Carlisle and heading for Walton, we were surprised to see fields of maize outside the town of Linstock. Maize became a large-scale crop in Britain after hybrid varieties were introduced in the mid 1940s. We were still struggling from the previous day so enjoyed a gentle walk

across farmland with sheep and cows, quiet lanes and a gradual ascent alongside the River Eden. We were very conscious of avoiding cows after a walker had recently been killed by a cow on the path. Previously we had been charged by cows on the South West Coast Path – escaping by vaulting a barbed-wire fence! Bovinophobia is the fear of cows!

Day 3 – 25km Walton to Haltwhistle

Today we walked with other hikers who were heading to Once Brewed. The weather was cool – ideal for walking. Near Birdoswald was a milecastle ruin, one of the 80 small forts placed at intervals of one Roman mile. Just beyond Birdoswald is the longest continuous surviving stretch of the wall. Next we came across Great Chesters Fort which is a grassy ruin where we enjoyed the view across the Northumberland countryside and North Pennines. At this point we left the path to walk down 2.5 km to our overnight accommodation at the Centre of Britain Hotel in Haltwhistle. Despite the name of the hotel, the exact geographical centre of Britain spot is in the laundrette next door to the hotel!

Day 4 – 21km

Haltwhistle to Housesteads

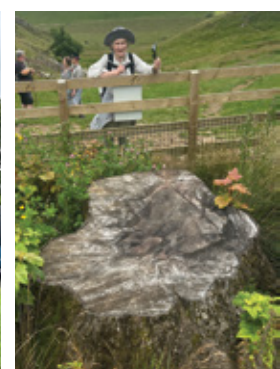
We started the day with an amazing breakfast at the hotel consisting of the usual buffet plus extras such as five-stack flapjacks. The day was overcast but no rain, another day of ideal walking weather. The path took us past Once Brewed village and we eventually stopped at the remaining stump of the iconic Sycamore Gap tree. The tree had been voted England's Tree of the Year in 2016 and became the emblem/symbol of the Northeast of England. During a storm in the middle of the night in 2023, two men cut down the 300-year-old tree, which caused a national outcry. In 2025 they were each sentenced to prison terms of over four years. On reaching Housesteads, we were able to see the best-preserved Roman fort next to the remains of the wall. Our overnight accommodation was 5 km beyond Housesteads, where we stayed at an isolated, renovated telephone repeater station. Our host, Les, was described in our guidebook as laconic,

generous and a good cook. We enjoyed his superb lamb shank. He had endless stories and enjoyed snappy bantering with us and two other guests. We smiled at his terse manner which reminded us of Basil in the *Fawlty Towers* TV series.

Day 5 – 35.9km

Housesteads to East Wallhouses

Back on the Path, we headed for Chollerford, passing the ruins of a Mithraic temple. Mithras is an obscure religion of the Romans dating back to around 1400 BC. We reached Chollerford ahead of time and decided to push on towards Halton, which was slightly off the trail, to catch a bus into Newcastle where we were due to stay overnight. Just past midday, the light rain turned into a persistent heavy downpour. Eventually the GPS stopped responding on our drenched cell phones. To add to our problem, we were unable to find the direction sign to Halton. As a result we walked approximately 10 km beyond Halton in miserable weather to East Wallhouses. By then we had missed the last bus of the day and spent some time



outside the remote Robin Hood Inn, hitch-hiking in the heavy showers until a friendly motorist stopped to give us a lift to Wylam railway station. We eventually reached Newcastle late – tired but safe.

Day 6 – 18.5km

East Wallhouses to Lemington

To continue our walk on the following day we returned by bus to the Robin Hood Inn. As we had already walked 10 km of today's walk, we were able to walk past our planned stop at Heddon-on-the-Wall and continue on to Lemington. It was perfect hiking weather – cool and overcast. From Lemington we took a bus back to our hotel in Newcastle.

Day 7 – 10km Lemington to Wallsend

After a good breakfast we bussed back to Lemington and set out for Segedunum Fort in Wallsend which is the official end of Hadrian's Wall Path. Romans ended the wall here as they considered the River Tyne to be a natural defensive barrier from this point onward to the sea. The path today was uneventful, primarily on the urban fringe, busy with locals enjoying a stroll along the River Tyne.

Day 8 – 9.6km Wallsend to Tynemouth

To complete our sea-to-sea crossing of England we continued the next day alongside the River Tyne to the North Sea at Tynemouth. Here we ended at the Collingwood Monument, a tribute to Admiral Collingwood who was Nelson's successor at Trafalgar. To celebrate the end of our journey we sat down outside a pub to enjoy a refreshing craft beer named Neck Oil. Along the Path we met walkers from all over the world; the most numerous visitors were Dutch. We also chatted to people from Norway, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, Israel, USA, New Zealand and Australia. There were couples, mother-daughter pairs, fathers and sons, grandparents with young grandchildren, friendship groups and a few solo walkers. It is a wonderful, varied and surprisingly demanding walk – highly recommended!

Note: the distances given are the actual distances we walked including visiting sites off the path. ■



PNPS CHESS – A STRONG OPENING



Under the expert guidance of passionate coach Kurt Willenberg, the Pinelands North Primary School Advanced Chess Team has seen an exciting start to the year. Although coaching sessions only began in the second week of school, the team wasted no time in putting their skills to the test.

The players' first challenge of the year was the Individual Chess Tournament, held over the weekend of 7 and 8 February. Eight dedicated players proudly represented PNPS: Daniel Roux, Samuel Lun, Benji Whyatt, Hoajia Sun, Kendal Rockman Gonzales, Adam Lun, Charlie Whyatt and Rose Roux. The team showed exceptional preparation and resilience, with seven of the eight players successfully advancing to the next round of the competition.

The second round of the tournament, held over the weekend of 7 and 8 March, saw the players step up to an even greater challenge as they represented the District. Wearing their school uniforms and sporting their district caps, they demonstrated both pride and sportsmanship. The second round offered valuable lessons and experiences for all involved.

While fewer players progressed beyond this stage, the tournament results were a testament to the dedication and hard work of the team. Each player showed focus, strategic thinking and perseverance. Coach Willenberg often reminds the team, in chess you either "win or learn" (Though he encourages learning through winning too). Several players earned special recognition for their outstanding performances:

Rose Roux (U9) entered her first-ever tournament this year and made an incredible impression. She secured 1st place in the first round and went on to finish 14th in the second round. A remarkable achievement for a newcomer.

Adam Lun (U9) showed excellent improvement, finishing 7th in the first round and climbing to 5th place in the second round.

Benji Whyatt (U13), one of our more experienced players, demonstrated consistency and skill by placing 3rd in the first round and 4th in the second round.

Hoajia Sun (U13), who earned her Junior Master title last year, continued to shine by claiming 1st place in both Round 1 and Round 2. An outstanding accomplishment.

The school is incredibly proud of all their players. Chess is a sport that demands patience, concentration and dedication. The PNPS team continues to embody these qualities with enthusiasm. ■

by Shanique Adamson, PNPS Head of Grade 5.

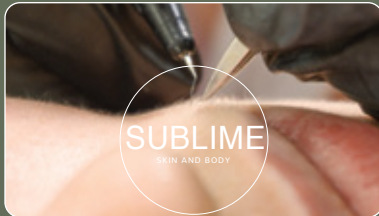


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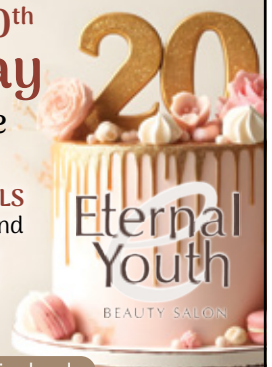
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By **Heleen Meyer**

Pinelands resident, foodie and author of *Food from the Heart*, and *Make five/Maak vyf*.

Easy marinade for fresh fish

Serves 6

1.5-2 kg whole, fresh fish like yellowtail, hake, dorado or snoek, head removed and butterflied (aim to purchase a fish that is on the SASSI green list)

60 ml (¼ cup) olive oil

45 ml (3 tbsp) apricot jam (*homemade is best*)

7.5 ml (½ tsp) cumin seeds

5 ml (1 tsp) dried chilli flakes (optional)

20 ml (4 tsp) finely grated lemon rind

30 ml (2 tbsp) lemon juice

salt and black pepper to taste

lemon wedges & fresh rocket leaves to serve

1. Whisk the oil, jam, cumin, chilli flakes (if using), lemon rind and juice together in a jug, until well combined. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Brush a braai grid with some extra oil & place the fish, skin-side down, on the grid.
3. Brush a thick layer of the marinade on the cut open (butterflied) side of the fish.
4. Braai the fish for about 15-20 minutes over medium coals, with the skin side facing down the whole time.
5. Brush more of the marinade over the fish during this time. The flesh of the fish will turn to a solid white opaque colour as it starts to cook. Note: the thickness of the fish will determine the cooking time – the thicker the fish the longer the cooking time, so watch the cooking process closely.
6. Turn the fish over and brown on the other side for only a few minutes. Take care not to burn or overcook the fish at this point. Cooked fish should flake easily with a fork but still be juicy.
7. Grill the lemon wedges over medium coals until well charred, during the last few minutes of the cooking time for the fish.
8. Serve the fish with rocket, the charred lemon wedges and a side of your choice. Braaiied mushrooms and a salad or baby potatoes or potatoes in the skin, will be delicious sides. Alternatively, a coleslaw or veggie kebabs will be perfect too.



Portrait and food shot: Adel Ferreira
Food image: courtesy of LiG Magazine

Fish marinade for Easter!

When last have you braaiied a whole fresh fish over the coals? Many people are hesitant to do this, but it's really not difficult – just follow the steps in this recipe. One thing is true – the fresher the fish, the better the end result.

Two other important things to consider when braaiing a fish is the choice of seasoning and how you decide to prepare it. Fish can overcook easily, only to become dry and tasteless very quickly. The special flavour of fresh fish should definitely not be overpowered by a sauce or marinade – rather use a simple seasoning to complement it, like in this recipe.

A fish marinade made with a touch of apricot jam is well known in South Africa, and is delicious on almost any fresh fish, not just snoek. In this recipe, the jam creates a delicious sweet and sour combination with the lemon, cumin and

a touch of chilli – it's so good! Don't be alarmed by the chilli flakes in the mixture, it just adds a little oomph to the marinade and doesn't burn your mouth at all.

The aromatic flavour of charred or grilled lemon wedges is a fantastic accompaniment with braaiied fish. The heat brings out so much more of the juice and flavour. Braai it over the coals with the fish or grill the wedges in a pan, to serve on the side.

If you really don't feel like cooking the fish over the coals, then oven-roast it. Brush a large piece of foil with a bit of extra oil and place on a baking tray or in a large, flat oven dish. Place the fish, skin-side down, on the foil and brush with the marinade as described. Bake at 180° C for 20 minutes or until cooked. The top of the fish will brown beautifully in the oven, but keep an eye on it, so that it doesn't overcook.

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Heleen has a passion to inspire, encourage and teach everyone about the joy of food that is good for you. She uses everyday ingredients and her recipes, tips and creative ideas will make you feel like a chef in your own kitchen. She recently added practical, health-related blogs on **meal planning** to her website, on the Tips & Tools page. SCAN the QR code to find these blogs and to SUBSCRIBE to her WEBSITE. Follow her on Instagram & Facebook @heleenmeyerfood for delicious ideas and more.



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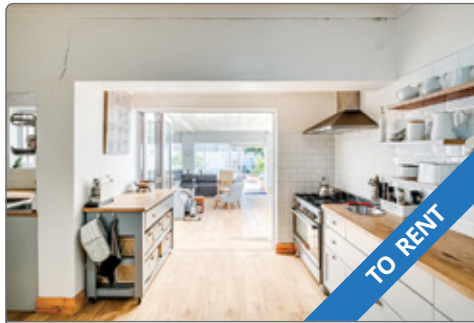
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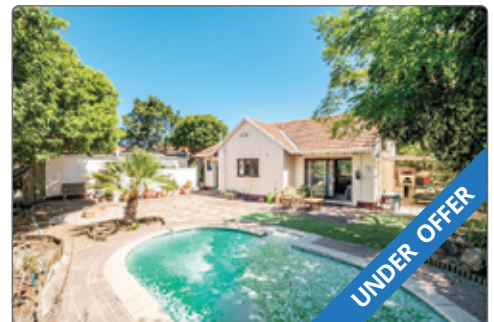
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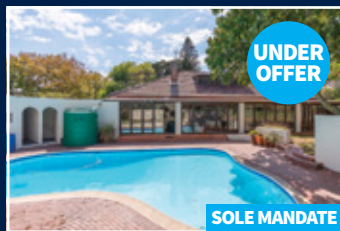
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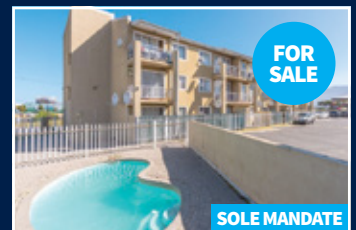
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