

## **More than Forty Years in Argentina**

I would love to read about South America and would dream of going there one day. I never realised that circumstances would later push me there and keep me there almost against my will. It was as though you could feel the strong pull of destiny, a force that would make it impossible to do anything other than what it demanded. The only trouble however, what was I, in all this but a complete nothing, a speck of dust, why was it then that I was so dragged along by this destiny. What was in store for me and those close to me?

The karma that led me here was kind to me, compared to how it had treated my two brothers, the younger one who went to Australia first is now dead and the other who followed him there died of a brain tumour and now my sister Sheila who went there also died of a brain tumour, what then would have become of me had I gone there. I am sure if I were now an Australian I would have a craving for a long cold larger after a hard day's work but my life in South America has made me tea-total and work is almost continuous and never ending as one toils away at an unsecure living, in a hostile world of no escape.

Africa had stopped being the place where we were to spend out our lives. I was born in South West Africa now Namibia. My mum was from Cape Town, Her father emigrated from England and he had a timber business, My father was in the Royal Navy based at the Simon Town base in Cape Town where he met my mother and we eventually ended up in Rhodesia now Zimbabwe. There are some ancient Ruins in Rhodesia called the Zimbabwe Ruins, My father when he heard that Rhodesia was to be called Zimbabwe said that, "People come to Rhodesia to see the Zimbabwe Ruins, but soon they will come to Zimbabwe to see the Rhodesian Ruins." Rhodesia was important for its agriculture, an exporter of many products but now as Zimbabwe it needs aid.

I had met and married Sue and we were looking forward to having children. I was working at a research station in Marandellas when we got married.

When I had completely finished a lot of projects the government couldn't stop me from being called up by the army and so Sue was alone and I was on continuous call up. The part of the army that I was in, meant that I knew that the end of our way of life was soon to be, there was no future for Europeans in that country. I knew that Sue was about to have the baby and I begged to be given leave to go and take care of her, at the last moment we left the bush and arrived at army headquarters in Umtali, here the commanding officer told me to take a week's leave.

I went to the orderly to get the pass,

He asked, "How much leave did he give you"?

"Two weeks" I lied. The man wrote me out a pass for a fortnight.

I got home and the next day Sue was in hospital and I held our little daughter in the palm of my hand, it was time to go, to leave the country and build a new world for our family and to give the new life a future forever. On her second day of age I was at an interview for a job in Brazil, the job did not come up.

After the two weeks were up I went back to the army, my group had been disbanded and had gone home but I was put into first one area and then the next, eventually I ended up in mortars near the border on indefinite call up, as a punishment for stealing an extra week's leave. Sue and the baby came to see me in Umtali, the little girl was three months old then. I had only seen her for the two weeks I was on leave. I was eventually released and told Sue that it was time to leave the country. I told my mother and father and all my brothers and sisters, my brothers were very upset to hear that we were going. The men at work were also very sad that I was going.

One man said "please don't go,"

"But you voted for your people to run the country we must go and leave it to you now,"

"Don't you know how bad one black man is to another, you look after us and give us life, please don't go" he begged,

"Then why didn't you vote differently"? I asked.

"Well we were afraid to because of the tsotsy boys they know what you vote and if it is wrong they will harm us and our family"

I knew and saw how the people were intimidated, well that was the Africa that the world powers wanted let them have it.

Fortunately I had done my four years of territorial service and so I resigned. When I was travelling by car to hand in my rifle and kit suddenly I had a large number of cars closely following me, I was in my army uniform and the safest way to travel was by convoy, when we arrived in the city the travellers waved to me and thanked me, I felt a bit sheepish, I was doing the first step, in our move to anywhere but there, we were gone for good, no looking back and the next thing we had got rid of everything and with the little money we were allowed to leave with, 1000 American dollars per family our next stop was England.

We stayed for a time with Sue's parents in England I tried and tried to get work in England, I went to many interviews but to no avail. Once I was in an interviews for a job on a dairy farm in Saudi Arabia and when the person saw I was from Rhodesia he said " what would you do if there was a black man working at the dairy," I answered as politely as I could that, that's all I ever did, work with the people from a different ethnic group to me, I had no part in what people from where I had come from were branded for but I was glad that that had come up because I saw how we were seen to be and that was why even though I was overqualified for some of the job offers I would never get anywhere in the UK.

I had to get to South America I was in agriculture and the southern hemisphere was what I was used to. I went to London from Wales where we were living at that time. It was winter and very cold I went to many embassies but I wasn't happy with any of them eventually I found the Argentine embassy, they were fantastic a shining light compared to all the other ones. They showed me pictures and gave me brochures to take back to Sue, I told them I wanted to immigrate to Argentina and they said "Go to Argentina, Argentina needs you" I have and will always remember those words.

I left Sue and Kariene in England and made my way on a single ticket to Argentina. I drove our little green Morris Cowley station wagon which we had bought quite cheaply in Wales and gave it to some friends in London. I phoned an uncle of mine when I got there but he said he didn't have time to see me, he had to take his daughters twins somewhere and so that was that, he must have passed away by

now. I always make time for people in trouble, once on my way to Salisbury in Rhodesia on route to Beira in Mozambique in my 1956 Hillman Minx I found a lady with her car broken down, it was already dark the road was deserted, I found a piece of wire and towed her all the way to her home in the suburbs of that city. On another occasion I found an elderly couple broken down it was in the small hours of the morning, their car had had an electrical short circuit and many wires were burnt out. I did a rewiring job to get the car to run and to have lights and they were on their way again. I have never refused to help. In Africa a college called me the knight of the road, I would always stop to help someone in distress, and so it was sad that my uncle whom, I was named after, could not see me, I had only heard of him but had never met him, this is something that I will never forget.

I took off from Heathrow for New York, at that airport I had to wait in transit for a connecting flight to Miami, I wasn't allowed to leave the transit area. When I got to Miami I was free to go where ever I pleased but I waited for my flight to South America. The plane I had to board was Aire Peru and as I waited near the dispatch area, I watched the agent in charge telling one passenger after another that they had far too much luggage and they would have to leave it but after a brief argument all the passengers and luggage got on the old aircraft.

I had a broken seat and after a while the plane shuddered down the airstrip how it got off the runway with all that extra weight is still a mystery to me.

Flying down to the airport in Lima Peru was an experience seeing the old plane struggle round the mountains and then suddenly I saw some maize fields and we were on the runway. I stayed in my seat and the next thing we were off to the capital of Argentina, the aircraft was much lighter, there were fewer passengers and it felt like a different craft. Many years later I heard that an aircraft fitting the description of the one I had come here with went into the sea off Peru I'm sure it was the one I had come to Argentina in.

During the whole trip I hadn't slept a wink I was quite worried about what would happen to me when I got to Argentina, would I be able to

enter or would they need proof that I had enough to stay and also would they accept that I was on a single ticket, a lot was going through my mind and it pushed sleep away from me during the 36 hours it took to complete the journey.

## **Buenos Aires**

I did not have much money and no notion of the language. The plane touched down eventually at a very shabby airport and the next thing I knew I was heading into the centre of Buenos Aires all my fears were ungrounded I had passed through the controls amazingly quickly and was soon out of the airport looking for a bus. The chaotic traffic was amazing and all the deafening hooting of horns alarming as the bus went into the city centre.

I found a cheap old hotel right on the pedestrian only street in the centre of the city, and continued to be amazed by the vast continuous flow of people up and down at almost any time of day and night. I was so tired after the long worrying journey to Argentina that I went to bed and slept for what seemed about two days but it was only about eighteen hours. The hotel cost 4000 pesos and I spent a further 1000 on something to eat I had arrived at 4 pm and was in the hotel at 6 pm. The exchange rate was 620 Pesos to 1 US Dollar

I got up eventually and went out I had to send a telegram to Sue and change a travellers cheque. I had bought a Spanish English phrase book and with this I marched off down the street to find the post office, I hailed a passer-by when I came to a junction and shoved the book at him pointing to the part he should read, he looked at me with a worried expression turned and rushed off. After many attempts I finally got a kind person's attention and he helped me out of my dilemma, he read his part in Spanish and understood, he then spoke to me rapidly in Spanish and pointed in the direction where I assumed I had to go. I walked for seven or eight blocks and did the same manoeuvre with the phrase book to a police woman and luckily I was only two hundred yards from the post office, along a street that I had

just crossed to get directions from the woman in uniform. The telegram cost 5000 pesos and my food that day came out at 1200 pesos.

Saturday came I couldn't do anything so I wandered around the city mostly the parks. I met people from overseas sometimes in the same hotel. I was puzzled by a sign on the bus that was ONCE meaning one time.

I asked at the hotel "where is one time,"

They said, "Where did you see this"

"On a bus" I replied

Oh they laughed that's once like eleven in Spanish. Once is a district of Buenos Aires where you can buy clothing quite cheaply.

One companion was from the states, a Bill Paxton and on Sunday we went to Tigre by train, I was amazed by the old cars and I saw people sucking up something in a metal pipe, I thought they were taking a drug like opium but Bill told me it was like a tea which the people shared called ma'te.

Not knowing a word of a language is challenging when getting food to eat and the best thing for me was to go to a workers eating house and to have what the person sitting or standing next to me was having. To pay meant opening ones hands and letting the waiter pick out the coins and notes to cover the meal. I did not eat very often and would let an apple be my meal for two days. I lost fifteen kilos in two weeks.

It was Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> of February I went to the British Embassy to register and on the way back I took a bus that had Florida marked on the front it took me to a part of the city I didn't know, it was a suburb called Florida and I lived in Florida street in the centre, I was confused but a man came up and took me on the sub way to the Anglican Cathedral and I thanked him because I knew where I was but he insisted that I speak to someone there and I found myself with Reverend Cutts he said he would put the word out for me when he went into the interior of the country, which I am sure he did, he also suggested I went to the Falkland's but this didn't appeal to me at all.

I walked the streets of Buenos Aires I put adverts in the local English newspaper *The Buenos Aires Herald* and started to meet people in the agricultural world I was also picking up the language. I had to move to cheaper shared lodgings, I moved into hotel Ocean which was 1200 pesos a day, to make sure the little money I had left would last until I got a job. I shared a room with a young American man from the states he was going to Bolivia to be a cowboy there and he invited me to join him, I declined I had to keep trying to get something in Argentina.

At the time the world cup was going to be held in the country and some Brits who burnt the Argentine flag were jailed, I think the embassy was able to get them out soon after. I didn't follow football at all and people would ask me who I thought would win and I always answered Argentina of course, they would shake their heads, and Argentina won that world cup.

I met Anglo Argentine people in the agricultural world and they put out the word for me to get a position, I met a Mr, Dickinson from Waldron Company and went for an interview with him and a gentleman from Cordoba who took my references with him when he went there. I also would call on a group called CIME who were involved immigration to South America and they were of great help to me. I also called on a gentleman Mr Hampton he sent a letter to Cordoba for me. He contacted me and invited me to lunch this was the 14 of February I had spent about 5 US dollars a day up until then, I was getting very low on funds. The meal was great, steak and salad with puffed up potatoes and soda water to drink. Later that day I was feeling a bit sad, doing such a lot and not getting anywhere yet, the language barrier was what was keeping people from giving me a job. I just went walking and walking and after a while I got my spirits back. The gentleman from the embassy, a Mr Langford, came to see me and told me I could get my mail sent there. It was very important to have a base where mail could be sent in the days before internet and smart phones, if someone saw my advertisement in the newspaper, how were they going to contact me? I went to see Reverend Cutts again, He told me he was going into the country for six days and he would put the word out for me he told me to go back and see him when he

returned. A Mr Bridger invited me to his home for a meal it was a fabulous, such helpful fantastic people. I got a call from Mr Hampton, He had got me an interview on the 16<sup>th</sup> with a Mr Clive Mulville who had a dairy farm 200 kilometres to the south, The next day I splashed out a bit and got myself a haircut. I went to the interview and got the job it was to get trucks ready for contract fertilizer spreading on ranches. Once I got the hang of things I was to be given the job of managing the business, Clive said to me that the sky was the limit. He was a civil engineer and made dairying milking parlours mainly. Mr, Hampton left a message to say he would phone me at seven that evening, When he phoned I was in the hotel foyer waiting for his call, I just hope I thanked him enough for all that he had done for me and my family. When you are in need think of the time when you can help another in need. Thinking back now I just hope all the people who helped me to get started in Argentina, to live and work here and raise my family here know how grateful I am to them for their selfless assistance. We have as a family been through some tough times but we are still here and going strong.

## Tandil

The next day I booked out of the hotel and with my meagre belongings made my way to Clive's house in the suburbs of the city in Acasuso I had to leave from Retiro at 7 am to get to Clive's at 8 am. Clive together with his young 8 year old son and myself travelled south in his car, a Torino. The son was to join his mother and other siblings who were already at the estancia in a place called Napaleofu which is half way between Balcarce and Tandil.

The outskirts of Buenos Aires was rather shabby and broken down and reminded me of parts of Africa, I felt at home and I began to look forward to my new adventure. One thing was very clear in my mind and it was that I had to learn the language as soon as I could. I was not at all afraid of learning the language as I was very used to learning and speaking many African languages and I started to pick up the language by ear. Three months later I was asked how long I had been in Argentina I told the person and I was congratulated on how well I spoke but now when I am asked how long I have been here and I answer forty years I do not get that praise.



I met Clive's brother Julian who lived on the estancia and was shown all around the farm which had four separate dairies or milking parlours the cows grazed on white clover and rye grass pastures. There weren't any bulls and one of the workers would go from dairy to dairy to do the artificial insemination, I also knew how to do this but I was never asked to do it.

We spent the weekend discussing the business and Clive made an asado (barbeque) on Sunday. Clive went back to Buenos Aires and I went to Tandil with Julian the next day Monday to be introduced to the group responsible for the fertilizer business. At first I was to work as a mechanic and when I could handle the language I would take over. I was to be paid 100,000 pesos a month, we found a place for me to lodge at 1000 a day and I calculated that food would be a further 1000 pesos a day that would give me 40,000 saving every month. Inflation would soon drop that to about 150 dollars a month and I would be saving about 50 dollars. I made friends with some neighbours next to the garage where I worked, some preserved meat I had bought to have for lunch seemed to have got worm infested I asked my neighbours about the cold meat and they were aghast and told me to go and have lunch with them in the future. I would pay them every month for my lunch and would look forward to lunch times with the family. There were about seven of them and they all spoke at once I had no idea what they were saying but eventually I started to understand and take part in the conversations, We would have all the cheaper cuts of meat one of the most recurrent meals was mondongo made from the stomach of beef cattle. I only ever ate mondongo with the family I never want to eat mondongo again.

When the mother of the family found out where I was staying she nearly had a heart attack she said it was a brothel and I should move out forth with, so I did, there was a room in the office part of the garage which was full of trash it was very dilapidated, with part of the ceiling hanging down. My living conditions were terrible. I had a broken down bed in a room where the walls were falling in, it was very hard to keep clean and it was also full of junk, I used to squeeze in and sleep there. This was my new place to sleep. Outside in the passage leading to the garage where I worked was a faucet with cold water and at night I would wash in the darkness in the cold. On Friday

afternoon Julian would call and take me off to the estancia, I would ask the kind people if I could use there shower on that day and I would spend the week end at the estancia on Monday he would take me back to work. I would have loved to spend some time alone going round the town but that never happened.

I arrived at the time of the military government in the country Martin La Hoz was the financial minister and Videla the president. Their plan was to reactivate the agricultural sector Peron and Peron's followers always wanted the industrial sector to go ahead but this section would always fail to rectify the economy, they had control of thousands of votes and power through the trade unions. The only way to repair the economy and try to get the deficit lessened was through agricultural production and I arrived in Argentina at exactly the moment when this was being forced to occur. Of course the industrial sector's workers would always be the ones to suffer in the tug of war between the two main producers of wealth. Funds would always come from the ready exports through agricultural production. The only problem with this was that the farm owners would be seen to have too much power and influence in the running of the country. To get the agricultural industry going again money and easy credits were being pumped in and this is where Clive, the fertilizer business and I were to take a part.

My job was to eventually run the fertilizer spreading business, there are many large cattle ranches in the province and the company sold or did the service of putting mainly phosphorous fertilisers on the land. Trucks with fertilizer equipment would travel hundreds of kilometres to a ranch and then would load up and pass over the grasslands spreading the fertilizers, the thing to do was always to avoid the low marshy land or the truck would get badly stuck and valuable time would be lost. First I had to get trucks and equipment ready for the job I was going to partake in, I was very enthusiastic in the beginning but my work companions saw me as a threat and did quite a lot to thwart my progress, I also would have enjoyed a bit of space and not have gone to the farm every weekend. The head of the family where I used to eat would see how upset I was with my lot and he even asked that I be able to work with him he had actually got me a job if I

wanted it, he was a dustman and he would run with a dustbin lorry in the early hours of the morning throwing the rubbish on. I declined gratefully telling him that my bosses were paying the fare for my family to come and join us and so I had an obligation to stay with them.

Meeting Malcolm was a godsend he came by one day and introduced himself he was a friend of my bosses and used to administer their estancia. Malcolm had arrived in Argentina when he was just a boy he was an orphan and use to work in Salta in the North. He told me that he became a little wild and started to chew coco leaves like the locals until his boss found out and gave him a thrashing. Malcolm was about seventy when I met him and he would always call round and he would always help. Malcolm was an example to me and often the occasion would arrive when a person would need someone like Malcolm especially a traveller in South America for the first time. I sometimes had the occasion to gladly give a helping hand. When in need or in trouble in a foreign land the Malcolm's of those worlds willingly without a second thought go in and help solve the problem selflessly. When working on the fertilizer trucks if I wanted something I would ask one of my companions, this man was a large person of local decent and he would say rudely " no eye, no eye" to almost everything I asked him I wanted to know what (no eye) meant and asked Malcolm,

"Malcolm, what does no eye mean?"

"Where do you hear that Reg"

Well whenever I ask that man for something he says, "No eye no eye". Malcolm laughed and told me it was "no hay" meaning there wasn't any. Some time passed and the man in question came to me and asked for something I said "no hay, no hay," in the same harsh loud tone that he always used on me. It was a moment to enjoy.

I received a message from Clive to travel up to Buenos Aires to sort out my immigration papers. The boss where I worked as a mechanic took me to the bus station that night and gave me 40,000 pesos the bus arrived the next morning and I went to see the head of CIME and then Clive who gave me papers saying I was his employee he also

translated my documents for me. With all my papers in hand the next step was to wait in a long queue near the docks. There were about four long lines of people, suddenly an official spotted me and called me over to his desk,

“Where are you from?” he asked.

“I’m from Rhodesia” I answered as politely as I could.

Suddenly he was phoning and seemed quite excited, I didn’t understand much because he was speaking so quickly.

“Go on the elevator, to the top floor the Coronel is waiting for you°

I did what I was told.

I went into the coronels office and he greeted me like a long lost friend, I was quite taken aback. I told him I wanted to get my immigration papers in order he picked up his phone and barked orders soon a group of people arrived in his office, one was a doctor who had to sign, this took only a few minutes and I had all what was necessary to become a permanent resident of the country. The coronel told the people to look at my hands, they were cracked and stained from the work I had been doing, “there! He said “that’s the people we want in this country,” “people who work”, he added He told me to tell more Rhodesians to come, I said that they couldn’t get their money out, he told me he would help them to get their money out. The coronel was very impressed by the Rhodesians because during the terrorist war he witnessed some of the operations and was inspired, Rhodesians were his heroes.

I think it was Malcolm who introduced me to Blurette, she was a widower with two grown daughters and she owned English Institute. Behind this there was a loft with two rooms and a toilet and wash basin, downstairs apart from the loft was a bathroom with a shower and this is what Blurette offered me at a very nominal rent for us when Sue arrived.

A few days before I took a bus up to the capital I had installed myself and my belongings into my new abode. It was a fantastic place for me after the terrible dump where I had been living and I would write to Sue describing how wonderful our new home would be but when she saw it she burst into tears, for her it was the worst dump she had ever seen . Thank goodness she didn’t see where I was living before that.

Bluette was very good and kind to me and later on to Sue and Kariene.

I managed to get some financial help and was able to get Sue and our one year old daughter to Argentina , Sue sailed away from England three months after me on the Lagos Laker an Argentine ship, with her came a few of our possessions in two small crates and two or three suitcases. I was able to meet the ship in Buenos Aries and travelled to Tandil with my family and our few possessions in a fertilizer truck.

Sue the baby and I settled into the flat, I would go off to work in the garage and Sue would get used to our new life, but that was not for long as soon as Sue and Kariene got to Tandil it seemed that I had to go off to some ranch to fertilize. I had a Bedford truck with a hydraulic spreader and so I said good bye to my family and off I went. I was on my way to the ranch when my brakes started to fail. I stopped and checked the brake pipe had been tampered with it had been loosened and the fluid was spurting out each time I used the breaks. I managed to tighten the loosened part and fortunately I had some spare brake fluid. I finally got to the place and loaded up with the fertilizer but the hydraulic spreader was dead I put on a brave face to all the onlookers and made like it was a normal adjustment that one routinely had to do. All the oil had been drained out of the system, so I saw how the people where I worked had sabotaged the truck they wanted me to fail. That made me even more determined to do the very best and I did. The ranch had a room for me to sleep and a bed because I would be a few days until I had completed the job. The digs was the worst I had ever seen the bed wasn't even fit for a dog but after lifting 50 kilo bags high up into the bin and then spreading all day I just collapsed into a dead sleep.

At long last the job was over, I had spread fertilizer with great precision over 500 hectares of land that meant lifting 500, 50 kilo bags up into the trucks bin about 2,5 meters up. It was Friday 12 of March 1978 Sue was given my salary of 100,000 pesos this was about 130 dollars, and off I went home to my little family, when I got back Sue told me that that she was attacked while I was away, my saboteurs were working on two fronts, someone informed the secret

police that Sue was a terrorist, three armed men broke into the home and attacked my wife they slammed a pistol in her mouth and broke her front tooth Sue fought them off and escaped under Bluettes car a 1965 Chevrolet she managed to get out into the street calling out for help. All she got were the closing of windows and shutters nobody to help her. She heard the baby screaming and back into the fray she went, a veteran of a terrorist war, daughter of a wartime fighter pilot and wing commander, she didn't know what fear was. She found our daughter on the ground her cot turned over and the whole place trashed she swore at the perpetrators in all the languages she knew and they actually went away. The next morning Sue went across the road to Bluettes and told her what had happened she also phoned Clive and he got onto his friend the minister of transport from the military government led by General Jorge Videla and they told the traffic police to look out for me and tell me to return home.

The next day Saturday I went with Sue and the baby to the police station, I was very angry, in the reception area quite a few timid looking people sat waiting to be attended, "Where's the chief" I barked out" the subservient people pointed to a passage way, We walked along and I saw a door leading to the chief of police's office, I opened the door and we barged in. He knew why I was there. After greeting him I said.

"How can I go away and work, I can't leave my family alone any more, you will have to pay me now because I cannot go out and earn my living anymore"

"No he said you can go out and work you have my word that you and your family will never be harmed in any way."

He seemed quite ashamed about what had happened and he must have been given harsh words from his superiors and we left with the knowledge that we were free from ever being harassed in that way again.

For the next few days I was back at base I needed to separate from the group and had asked Clive and his brother to arrange it I also started to look for a base of my own to rent. One early afternoon I was heaving with a crowbar at the chains that are responsible for opening and closing the flaps which calibrates the flow of fertilizer onto the drag chain which delivers it to the spreader centrifuge disc. The

fertilizer a very corrosive and hygroscopic agent seizes things up if left abandoned and not washed clean and lubricated. The bin I was working on had been used at one time and then left to jam up. Well the crowbar was above my head and I was heaving away with all my strength and of course it slipped out and came crashing down on my head. I was in problems I walked home after a while when I could see straight. Sue saw the damage and called Malcolm, he took me to his doctor, and the medic put steel clamps in my head I was quite taken aback by this.

After a short while I got quite unwell and staggered home with a temperature of 101,5 Sue put me to bed, I felt so bad that it was an effort to go to the toilet I was so cold. Sue contacted Malcolm and he took me to his doctor again. I was diagnosed with pneumonia and was put onto penicillin injections every day, which poor Malcolm had to give me. After a long while I got better and went back to work, the bang on my head must have lowered my defences.

I was sent to a place called Lincon to fertilize a ranch; I had to tow a home-made bag elevator behind the Bedford truck, I didn't want to do this because the contraption was very heavy and I probably wouldn't use it anyway. It had cost a fortune to make and finally after many months and lots of coats of green paint it was ready to use. I had no hand in the construction; the only part I played was to ask for lights to be provided. I set off for the journey to Lincon which was quite near to Santa Fe, I was told to take the secondary dirt roads, the truck had no papers at all, I was given a letter saying that the papers were being processed.

I set off it was the late afternoon the road was muddy as it had been raining and I felt the constant bumping of the green monster behind me I couldn't see it and relied on the thumping to know that it was still there, at some point we had parted company, the contraption had got loose and ditched itself, after it had gone I carried on still feeling the bumping behind me. The afternoon had turned to night and it was very dark. I stopped eventually to check on everything and was shocked to see it had got itself free and was somewhere back along the dark lonely road from whence I had come. My heart was in my

mouth what would happen if it was across the road and another vehicle crashed into it. I turned back and hurtled back along the way I had come, eventually on rounding a curve in the road I came across it, fortunately it was off the road and not endangering anyone. We were soon on the way again this time I doubly secured the monster.

I finally got to my destination I had to cross a main road to get from one farm to another and the road at the point of crossing had a traffic control post. I was stopped and asked for the papers, I showed the paper I had been given knowing it was completely illegal, They asked me how much money I earned and I told them “diez millones” which was the 100000 pesos this used to have two more zeros on the equivalent note and it was always referred to as Palo so I had a salary of 10 Palos. They looked at each other and a look of sorrow washed over their faces and they said “go, go” off I went; I didn’t go back that way.

Clive dropped into see me he was having trouble with his lights they would not dip so I fixed them for him he told me to go on to a farm in Santa Fe when I had finished where I was working. As soon as I completed the task I loaded up the monster and left for the next province. I had much better living conditions at the farm and the man in charge was very good to me. They were amazed when one day the starter motor packed up on the truck and I took it off, it was Friday and caught a bus back to Tandil via Buenos Aires to get the starter repaired and in the beginning of the week I was back the truck was starting again and the job was completed, the people were so impressed with the way I worked that they told me to contact them if I ever wanted to change jobs. My life was really in farming and agriculture and what I was doing was just filling in until I got to know the land and the ways of the people. Soon I would have to move on. I drove back home it was Sunday morning when I arrived I had the green monster which I never used in tow and as I neared my destination the thing broke in half I just carried on scoring the tarmac road and making a loud screeching noise I got it into their base and dumped it.



I met quite a few farming people with British backgrounds on my trips and it was after the trip to Santa Fe when I approached Julian to tell him that I was resigning and would be going to work for the people of Santa Fe he went white I thought he was going to have a heart attack, but he did not, he told me to come and help manage his estancia he offered me a very good wage, a vehicle, a home, and bonuses. We moved on to the estancia and into a new home.

The estancia was a thousand hectares with four dairies and about six hundred dairy cows and followers I already knew the estancia well because I had spent almost every weekend there. I soon busied myself on the day to day running of the establishment and the workers soon accepted my direction it was similar to what I had been doing in Africa. One thing that usually called me out on Sundays was the electrical installation of one of the dairies short circuiting and catching fire, one dairyman was putting out his fire with the pressure hose used to clean the dairy floor after milking. I used to solve the problem quite easily, electricians was in my blood I inherited it from my father. I also had installed and worked with electricity both in England and Africa I was surprised at the poor electrical installations in Argentina and came to the conclusion that life was cheap here. I rewired all the four dairies and the saving in electrical energy paid my salary each month, the consumption of electrical energy dropped dramatically and the dairymen were happy with their dairies running smoothly day after day.

Peter our son was soon to be born and early one morning Sue told me he was coming, we arranged for a family to take care of Kariene and it was just the two of us waiting for our son to come. When it was time to take Sue to the hospital, I went to get the truck but it wouldn't start, I had to get a farm worker to bring a tractor to pull the truck to start it, poor Sue she didn't need the delay, I was racing to the city Sue was shouting that the baby was coming, "hold on, hold on we nearly there," I shouted above the roar of the pick-up truck and we were at the emergency entrance of the hospital in the nick of time. Sue was put into the delivery room the nurse went to get something and Peter was born without anyone in attendance, when all was well I

went back to the estancia and later went back with our daughter to collect her new brother and her mother.

## **Frost**

I found that the agriculture was behind with what I was used to, I needed a chisel plough to improve the potato production and so I made one at that time it was probably the first chisel plough in Argentina. The potatoes were really doing well but one evening it began to get very cold and at 2am it was about 2° C I knew it was going to freeze the whole of Argentina was going to freeze that night, so I went off and started up the irrigation watering the potatoes from a borehole the sprinklers would block from the ice and they had to be unblocked using flames to melt the ice. Up and down went the boom on wheels spraying the entire precious crop destined for seed. The morning came and the plants were saved but thousands upon thousands of hectares of wheat barley and potatoes were lost in Argentina. We had one of the only bumper crops reaching almost 1000 bags of potatoes / hectare. The owner had told me that his average yield of that crop was 300 bags /ha. and that I would be given 50% of the production after that amount, it would have been more than \$US 5000 at that time.

The promise of a bonus for the extra production in potato seed was not given to me instead the fortune the owner made out of my hard work was used to buy an irrigation farm to the south of Bahia Blanca in Pedro Luro. I was cheated out of a lot of money, this meant, it was time to move on.

Sue myself and Kariene and the baby went by bus down to Buenos Aires. The next morning we were to meet the director, who had met

me in Santa Fe and had told me to go and see him if ever I needed a job. The large agricultural company had estancias in many parts of Argentina as well as in Lujan in the province of Buenos Aires. We spent the night in the Jockey Club hotel, the next morning we were to take a train to Lujan.

I couldn't sleep so I decided to go down to the street below and smoke my pipe. I reached over to the table and put my document in my pocket. The pedestrian street was crowded and I made my way towards a kiosk to buy some matches, then I made a big mistake that could have been fatal I looked a policeman in the eye. He called me over to him and asked for my document I gave it to him. The next thing, I was arrested and was taken into a police station it was about eleven P.M I was given no explanations. I was being detained. Many young people were also being taken off the street and they were being put into a large holding cell. I was getting a bit afraid as yet I was just being detained and my pleas for a phone call or to see someone from the embassy fell on deaf arrogant ears, I was told to wait for the captain, It was about three a.m. the large holding cell had about twenty five young men in it and the so called captain must have been there because they asked this higher ranked person what they should do with me and he said, "Put him in the cell with the rest!". The police came towards me to lock me in the large holding cell with the rest of the unlucky people, I saw red I got terribly angry I went mad and I shouted that they had no right to lock me in the cell I clenched my fists together and shouted that they would never put me in there alive. They stopped, they looked at the captain and they let me go. Most of the people in the large cell probably ended up in the river Parana with concrete shoes. When I got back to the hotel I looked at my document and found that I had picked up my daughters one it had one digit less than mine for one number I nearly lost my life my document ended in 3 and hers in 2. I have never looked a policeman in the eye again.

That day we went off to Lujan and I was given the job, although I was rather worse for wear. The picking up off the street from universities and clubs was what happened to many young people in Argentina in those uncertain times this was the so called "dirty war" where it is alleged that over 15000 people were taken to secret detention camps

and put to death, Many gave birth while being detained, the babies were given up for adoption to military personnel mainly and even in 2019 some children now grown up, are still being found and returned to their families.

## **Lujan**

We moved into a brand new house on the farm in Lujan and we soon settled down and I started to manage and organise the farm. The farm was a mess and it was meant to be the show farm of the company implements were abandoned in fields, dairy cows were up to their knees in mud and there were fields waiting to be ploughed and sown. There were also many workers on the farm but they weren't very interested in working, preferring to be laid off with redundancy pay.

The first thing I did was to concentrate on the dairies, the field work was starting to go ahead but it wasn't until I contracted a tractor driver from the farm where I used to work. He wanted to work and would spend many hours on the tractor turning over the land and preparing it for pasture or crops. The tractor driver brought his friend and the two men worked almost day and night to get the land ready to crop. We were doing about thirty hectares a day in those days about thirty five years ago today. His friend died after about six months we didn't really know why but it was a bit of a sudden death.

The immense effort paid off and the farm started to leap ahead the two dairies had about 250 cows each. There was one good dairyman and one very bad one I made all the major improvements to the bad one which was the original first dairy and the management of the dairy needed vast changes. The new dairy parlour with 12 stations had a good progressive man, it was efficient and he liked to keep ahead, and so whatever improvement I made to the sloppy dairy he would automatically follow suit. If I did it the other way round I would have made only a small improvement and the slack dairy would just go getting worse.

I couldn't bear to see the cows up to their knees in mud the first dairy was built in the old style without any real thought to cow flow. The

cattle after milking had to squeeze through a side opening, the milk tank was in a room directly in line with the 8 station parlour made into the herringbone form. This dairy became a challenge to me. It was run at the complete disposal of the dairyman and his family they seemed good willing people and as they were share-milkers, they could get a lot more income if their production went up, and they went along with the changes that had to be made. All the cattle would only graze every day till milking time and then would be milked and after milking would graze for a short while before being driven into the dairy holding yard most of the cattle here spent their time just waiting to be milked they had such a short time to graze. This was the first thing I changed, the cattle were milked and went out to graze they would only be brought back almost at milking time. I fixed up the holding areas and put down more concrete and improved the areas where the cattle had to wait. I planted better pastures for both the dairies concentrating on the fields closest to the milking shed. The milk production started to get better daily but the old dairy with 8 stations was too slow. I designed an extension I made the cattle flow straight through and I got the go ahead and started modifying the milking area I changed the whole dairy doubled the amount of cows to be milked and carried on milking every day twice a day. When I moved over the bulk milk tank I had to milk the cows in the other dairy and this was for only one milking. This improvement meant that the milk production tripled. The maize crop was the highest production in the history of the farm and there never was a higher wheat yield. Although many slack workers were laid off at great expense, the farm made a handsome profit for the first time ever.

The owner of the company gave me a lot of shares in the company in recognition of the achievements in such a very short time. This award did not go down very well with the director and I was told that I would move into another position I was moved to very nice rented duplex in the town and I would have to commute to the estancia every day. I loved the duplex and it was quite nice to live in the town, I was able to do other things and designed and manufactured industrial fan heaters for a supply company in Buenos Aires.

I continued working on the farm I used to manage, finishing up the technical improvements but Sue and I began to have trouble because of the impending war that was building up over the Islands in the south. The military government was looking for an excuse it was either a war with Chile or the English, history had it that the English had been driven away with hot oil before and the same thing would happen and before we knew it, another war. We had left Africa we had gone to the furthest place where people live far from the warmongers and here we were in another war and we were the English, the enemy, well we rode that storm, many English left but we couldn't we stayed amid insults but when the real truth was known when everyone saw that Argentina was being defeated and the earlier reports were seen to be lies there were not many more insults. The brief war ended and we carried on with our lives. We were getting a bit restless and it was time to move on. But the gods said no.

I had a dream it was about an accident like a premonition. The next morning I told Sue that there would be an accident that it wouldn't be her fault and that a baby girl was involved and to be careful. I went off to work and Sue and the children went off shopping.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning and a young man from the office came to the farm he told me to go with him, I asked him why and he said he couldn't say, the director wanted me there at the office in town urgently and I was to leave my car and go with him, after some argument I went with him. At the office the director met me and told me that my family had been involved in an accident. In that moment all that was me left me, my pride, my cockiness, my carefree attitude, my strength and I begged to be taken to my family at the hospital.

At the hospital I saw Sue she was distraught the driver of the car that caused the accident was there apologising but I was really upset I shouted that it was a life over and over again, Kariene was unconscious Sue had flagged down a passing pick up and had got the children to the hospital but Kariene wasn't breathing so she gave her artificial respiration all the way to the hospital. Now at the hospital it

became clear that Peter was ok but Kariene was in terrible trouble and would have to be taken to the children's hospital in Buenos Aires, at the hospital the stress was too much for us and we started to smoke cigarettes to try to calm us down. I thought a helicopter would arrive but no, it was an ambulance, they put our daughter in and we followed. About half way to Buenos Aires the oxygen system shut down but the nurse with our little girl had the presence of mind to give her artificial respiration. Kariene had to be put onto a monitor to check the cranial pressure build up, a new monitoring system had just been installed in the children's hospital and the first little girl to be put on it died as Kariene arrived at the hospital and so Kariene took the place of the little girl. Our six year old daughter was put into an induced coma, she was placed in an artificial respirator and her brain pressure was monitored she became the first surviving patient in Argentina to take advantage of this innovation. Without this monitor patients would be in induced comas but there was no way of accurately controlling the brain pressure.

When our child was taken off the machine and woken up it was decided that she may survive after all and her broken leg was set in plaster she had also suffered from pneumothorax and by a miracle her collapsed lung was restored to normal function.

Kariene was soon moved into a normal ward full of children in a desperate state, she was in a stupor her big blue eyes were wide open all the time her pupils were fully dilated and she was paralyzed in her right arm and leg. Her prognosis was not good she might be able to get to kindergarten level academically the doctors told us. Kariene was an attraction and every day student doctors would come in and peer into her eyes they could see the retina because her pupils were so dilated. People felt sorry for me I was constantly by Kariene's side I would hold her hand and move her arm and I would tell her to find her arm hour after hour and day after day I did this and one day her arm twitched nobody believed me but I carried on and she got the use of her arm and leg back. Sue and I used to feed our daughter through a tube in her nostril that went down into her stomach,

I wanted to get her home I knew that she was lost and that if I got her home she would find herself again. We were told that in order to get her home we had to be able to feed her with a spoon. She would have to be without the feeding tube, we were also told that she would have to have a doctor in attendance when we took her home. We found the doctor he was related to the director where I worked it was his brother in law, we got Kariene off the stomach tube and everything was ready to take her home but the doctors got together and refused, the doctor we had to help locally also backed down, Sue was also having doubts and was seeing the doctors point of view. I had terrible rows with the doctors but I was convinced of two things the first was that Kariene was a good experiment for them and the second was that soon it would be too late for her to find herself again, I knew that we had to go as soon as possible.

One thing that helped us to make our getaway was the little boy opposite Kariene, we saw the nurses put a sachet of blood onto the drip that was in his vein and Sue went off to rest and I spent the night next to our girl we heard the little boy dying in great pain he groaned and groaned in a most horrible way and then all was quiet he luckily passed away and got out of that hospital. The only way he could, we thought that they must have dripped the wrong blood into the poor little fellow.

One day a doctor arrived to do more tests on our little girl he put freezing water in her ear and counted the times that her eyes would switch rapidly from side to side he put the iced water in both her ears then he went off he did not say a word to me it was just another experiment I supposed at the time and it was my reason to get my child out of there without any more delay I went to the administration and found that by signing responsibility over to me we could take the patient home so we signed and we went home.

Kariene was still in her stupor and we would carry her up and down stairs Sue was now into her own I was more involved at the hospital but now Sue was in charge and she was rehabilitating Kariene. We also found a very nice doctor to control her health one day he was



listening to her heart and he said that he could hear a leak we were to take her to get a cardiogram I prayed and was vehement that she would be perfect, she was. All the mind work that I put in to get my daughter well continued I could put my mind into hers and pray for it to get better I sometimes do this today when any of the family are sick I use a tie and it seems to work. The tie connects the people and the distance is measured three times after that the people get well it can be done without a tie just by touch but the main thing is the great need one has that the other gets better.

I was watching Kariene one evening whilst Peter and Sue went to the grocers at the corner, Suddenly Kariene started to jerk her right hand clutched and her finger pointed out. Her broken leg, still in plaster, was stretched out in front of her and the television was on, suddenly she began propelling herself towards the television her left hand pushing herself along the carpet, her finger out, ridged and me thinking she was having an attack but her finger got to the TV circled around and found its mark, she changed the channel. That was it, we were through, she had found herself, and we were through phew!!!! I couldn't wait for Sue to get back to tell her about our miracle we had just experienced a miracle, one miracle is more than one can expect in a lifetime.

I suppose that the worst thing that could have happened to us in our whole life together as a family was this. It took me many years before I could tell people what had happened because I would choke on my words and would have to stop or I would be reduced to tears. That was it, we were now stuck with Argentina we had to rehabilitate little Kariene and that meant that we were confined to the country, we could not think of moving to another country with the family in the state it was in.

As time went on and Kariene got better and better, I saw that her relation to me had changed completely, she didn't like me at all and would never go with me in the car whereas before the accident she and I were inseparable, this separation carried on up to her adulthood. Now we are good friends but I lost her close companionship that I

used to enjoy so much when she was a toddler. Another thing that changed was her behaviour to others she had lost a lot of her self-confidence and she had a lot of hard times in both school and university although physically you couldn't tell that she had had a bad accident she really got through it all so very remarkably well. It was a miracle.

Kariene is now married she has a beautiful daughter Victoria who now six years old at the time of writing, is as Kariene was before that terrible accident she is very affectionate towards me just as her mother used to be at that same age.



Karien's little girl Vicktoria (Vicky)

## **Mendoza**

We just could not carry on in Lujan anymore and I decided to go and visit Nigel in Mendoza. We met Nigel in Tandil; he was looking at dairy farms in Argentina because he wanted to set up one of those large feed-lot type dairies like the ones being set up in the Middle Este. The military government at the time made it very worthwhile to invest in Argentina. Nigel had to leave Iran because of the political changes. He brought his investors to Argentina and mounted a super dairy here, just like the one he had set up in Iran.

Nigel at that time asked me how much I was earning and offered me double to join him I felt that his project would not last too long because he was going to buy in all the feed necessary and not grow his own feed. The suppliers would keep putting their prices up and he would run at a loss, however the monetary policy of the Government meant that these losses turned into large profits because of the two types of value placed on foreign exchange. Dollars would come in at one rate and go out at another more favourable rate for the investor and Nigel's dairy went on merrily as a great big white elephant.

I kept in touch with Nigel when we lived and worked in Lujan and I used to see him from time to time when he came to Buenos Aires, and he would always insist that I joined him. When I eventually travelled to Mendoza to meet up with him again, we concreted the deal and I was to go and develop all the home grown feed because the military government was on the way out, together with the dollar siphon which helped to create a huge balance of payment deficit and the

dairy had to make a different or real profit margin. This is where I came in and very soon after, the military government went out.

Many fields were rented near the dairy which was situated in an almost urban part of Mendoza next to a town called Lujan. We moved from one Lujan to another Lujan.

When I prepared and planted the fields I respected the traditional form of planting and irrigating but when it came to producing the green chop for the 6000 or more head of dairy cattle the headland travel was far too much and the amount of turns the irregular irrigation made me change everything. I changed the direction of irrigating and harvesting by 90 degrees and following the natural slope of the land meant runs of 200 to 1000 meters and more in some cases. Most fields were laid out with the irrigation going from south to north and the field were always levelled as close to 0 gradient as possible, I would use the natural gradient and irrigate west to east,

One of these fields bordered on a main road and many farmers in the area stopped to comment among themselves and to shake their heads at what they thought was crazy, no one ever asked me anything but then when the crop of alfalfa was established and the machinery cut it every 15 days, many fields in Mendoza started to be sown and irrigated as I had done. It was always the same story in those days irrigators would complain that the water would never get to the other end. I would always answer that the water got all the way to the sea more than 1000 kilometres away.

In the years after I always changed the fields and the irrigation to take advantage of the longest possible run this always made the irrigation more even because there were fewer but longer borders and the water was never contained in pools as in the normal way where the border is then opened and the water flows into another border, making irrigation costly and very uneven. Another side effect of this is the over irrigation and the flooding of the root zone, soil structure is damaged and plants and other life suffer when the soils are poorly drained.

I never saw my family I was always at work solving problems of an impossible task. The animals needed 250 tons of green feed a day from some of the many fields sown with alfalfa I once counted over 50 fields some more than 70 kilometres away but others were closer 8 to 10 kilometres distant to the dairy The dairy itself had about 50 hectares which was not being used because it was thought to be bad soil. Well I got stuck in and after a short period this field was producing fantastic yields.

Maize for silage was the first crop to be planted, on this the home field and it really produced fantastically well, I have never seen such a stand. Nigel insisted on supplying me with abundant nitrogen fertilizer. We waited till the grain was in the starch stage and then we waited a bit more. When we chopped the crop for silage the stalks were still green but as sweet as sugar cane and what silage this made no expense was spared on the compaction. Many prominent figures in the dairy industry came especially to see this silage.

I had had a lot of experience with rye grass in Tandil and followed the maize with this; every time we cut the grass I applied 100 kgs. of urea/ha it was cut more than 10 times and this meant more than a ton of fertilizer was used but the production of green was just enormous. The iridescent green was seen by some military officials as they flew over the field in a helicopter and the dropped down and landed in the middle of the field to get a closer look.

Having to produce green feed constantly for the dairy meant that weekends were non-existent for me and for some tractor drivers who cut and transported the green feed. I would try without any luck to get them to make hay bales or rolls so that this green food production could stop and people could have the week ends free. This was always refused and I had the most breakdowns at the weekends the drivers were happy when the cutting machine broke down because they could go and I would be left to get it repaired.

I took a break of almost three weeks and fortunately we were able to change our car for a new one and we went south for a camping holiday with the children, the car was a new Renault 4S, we went to the lakes in the south to Bariloche and the seven lakes we camped at many but spent a long time camping at the Nahuil Huapi lake the water is freezing cold. I saw many people coming and going trying to catch trout but mostly they snagged their lines on the rocky bottom and broke them and left. I would swim out, the freezing water burnt you it was so cold and I would unsnag the line by following it under water to the rock jamming it. With the recovered fishing line I got a tin and made a reel to cast. Taking Peter with me one morning I said: "Come Pete lets go and catch a fish", I went to a place where I felt a trout would be it was near a large rock, I cast once, then once again and then, wham! I got a huge bite. We landed an enormous trout which we enjoyed eating thanks to Sue's expert cooking.

With great reluctance we travelled back to Mendoza and home. I knew that I did not want to carry on with the dairy and I wanted to never work for an Argentine company again. Their treatment of the staff in the company was really bad, so different from the British treatment of personnel that I used to know and like.

Sue also told me that she was going to open up her own English language institute as soon as we got back; I thought it was a good idea.

Going back along the 40 route was really breath taking with spectacular views we would have to stop from time to time to admire and wonder at the many fantastic scenes along the way.

Soon after arriving back at the dairy and settling back, I realised after seeing my men that they had not been able to produce the feed necessary and this part of the enterprise had come to a grinding halt. I was to blame of course.

The failures by the military government meant their end and democracy was back. The dairy used to operate a lot with strange

dollar deals for the foreign investors and it also had a lot of politicians involved. The change in government meant that the dairy had to make a real profit and that was why Nigel needed me. The shareholders were in two main groups and the one group was trying to get rid of the other one. Nigel picked the group who would eventually take over and was in the process of running the place into the ground to make it easier for his side to take over. Nigel got suspended and I was running the whole show. The dairy picked up and started to make money.

Nigel's group won and he came back he was not too pleased that I had disrupted his plans. His stay was short lived though and his group who he had helped to win sacked him. His right hand men had their own ideas and Nigel left. I was ok while Nigel was around but without him I was toast, so I asked to be sacked too in order to get some redundancy pay and a few other benefits, I also asked if I could continue living in the company house, which had always been empty until I showed up, and this was no problem.

I started advisory work in agriculture working for myself and Sue was helping, with the income from institute. We were lucky to find a plot of land to buy and as it was the price of our newish car if we didn't manage to pay for it we would hand over our car. We were still living at the dairy and every free moment we would drive over to our land and clear the shrubbery and make an entrance. One weekend I decided to spend the night in a shack we were making it was getting late and Sue went off with the children. Later it got quite cold but I had left all my clothes in the car, I spent the night shivering away waiting for the dawn to come.

I had asked for a year in the house so as to be able to set ourselves up with work and living quarters but only after a few weeks we were asked to hand in the house. The agreement had been broken.

A neighbour lent us his loft which was almost empty to store our things and we moved out. The neighbour was the son of the person we had bought the land from. One day I happened to be in the loft while he had lit a fire in the boiler down below to heat water for a bath. He used cardboard and paper, he was enormously lazy and

would always find the easy way to do things, I saw sparks coming out of the pipe that went through the cane roof and I started to take out some of our furniture. I told him if he carried on like that the place would catch fire.

Sometime later he told me that I could put the furniture back as he had repaired the pipe. Soon after that I was shaving to go to the institute to help Sue when he came running to me, the loft had caught fire. He asked if his two little girls could stay in my shack, the whole house was going to burn down. I ran to a neighbour across the road asked them to get the fire brigade, next I called a group off builders close at hand to come and help, I then pulled my water pump out of my tank filled by irrigation water to put in his tank to pump water to put out the fire. His tank was all silted up I just got an electric shock and proceeded to get a bucket chain going, I had to go into the fire and I began to put it out I managed to throw our coffee table out but although I put the fire out long before the fire brigade arrived we had lost everything. The house was safe. The firebrand stood mesmerised not lifting a finger throughout the whole proceeding of getting people, the fire brigade and the putting out of the fire. Later people started to come round to offer condolences which he accepted happily. He told his grandfather who was still alive at that time that it must have been arson probably by someone who didn't like the British. What a waste he was, His father was German he was from the Graf Spree which was scuttled during the Second World War in the battle of the River Plate.

Sue got back from work later that evening and I told her the bad news, she went across and let rip the man stayed well away and would not come out of his house to face Sue. Later on a very kind gentleman Rex gave us a small wood stove this we put in our hut and were able to pass winter.

One morning I got up and saw that our little car had been stolen, it was the end for us. I used to concentrate when I was a teenager and mother was taking us to school in a Bedford transit van, made into a minibus. My mind concentrated on the van breaking down and it



usually did, especially when I didn't want to go to school that day. My mum and my brother and two sisters would hitch a lift and I would stay to fix the problem and get out of going to school that day, We lived on a small-holding about seven miles from the town. I did the same thing when I noticed the car missing. I concentrated on it breaking down.

The newspaper delivery man came past and I begged him to look out for our car he knew it well. The car wasn't insured against theft and they take the car and strip it down for parts a complete loss for us. Later on that day the newspaper seller came by to say that he had seen a car like ours on the road to the south. We went to the place yes it was our car and it had broken down. I fixed it up in a friend's garage, after the police had released it, the car was full of fingerprints but they didn't take any notice of them. Argentina claims to be the first country to develop the use of fingerprints, but they do not seem to want to use this method to help solve crimes.

We decided to carry on in Argentina. If we had not found our car we would have left.

While Sue worked in the institute, I built our house, I decided to sleep in the construction site the car was very near, during the night I heard some noises I got up slowly, I had a stone lamp in one hand and a bottle in the other. I was naked, I crept out and saw two men trying to break into the car, their faces were covered, unfortunately they saw me and ran away down the stony road, I gave chase making a lot of noise, lights started to come on in houses, I gave up the chase but they never came back again, the little car slept peacefully after that.

The house was constructed in three stages. First was the central section with the most amount of reinforced columns twelve in total. To ensure that it would resist earthquakes which are quite common in Mendoza. All this was for a bathroom kitchen and one bedroom. Sue and the children would come home in the evenings to be amazed at the height of the walls. After this first section was completed and we could live in it and when funds became available, the sitting room and

dining room were added on the east side and later the west side was built for two more bedrooms.

We had to build clandestinely because the municipality would not let me build because they said the land was in an industrial area. When I wanted to connect to the power grid I needed permission from the municipality and they wouldn't give it. We had to resort to asking the firebrand for a connection to his power source he agreed so long as we paid the whole bill his and ours. One winter he put in an electric water heater and had about seven electric heaters in his house the electric lines caught fire and we were all without power. I had to travel to Buenos Aires that day and so I connected us up to another source, I had some months earlier let this neighbour have access through my property for his power line; this neighbour also said that I should pay for the whole electricity bill. I had to agree and he bought an electric mowing machine and mowed his extensive lawn twice a week, the bill every month was enormous. I eventually managed to get some help from a friend in the municipality and he got me the paperwork to install our own power supply. The whole area that was supposedly designated an industrial zone has today, many housing estates.

I carried on building the house sometimes Peter would pass the bricks up to me he was only 9 years old at that time but we thankfully were going to have our own house on a large plot of land relatively close to the town where Sue worked.

I would work as an advisor and would be on constant call, sometimes I would have to bus out to distant towns to be then met and taken to the farm where I gave indications on how prepare the land, how to grow the crops and how and when to harvest.

During this time I met a young man who seemed to be very well off and he took me on as an advisor. He had just bought a farm 25 kilometres to the north of Mendoza and I showed him how to prepare the land and sowing mostly alfalfa. He put a vast fortune into levelling large desert sand dunes with caterpillar bulldozers. The

irrigation water in the area was sewage water and the crops just loved this water .One thing I noticed was the amazing way the alfalfa seeded in this area I had been advising on the production of alfalfa seed for some time now but I had never seen such fantastic pollinating all the flowers were opened and they bore fruit. Normally vast amounts of flowers were not opened and just withered and died hundreds of florets could be observed on the ground and if you shook the plant hundreds more fell off. This poor pollinating meant that yields of seed were extremely low and the farm would face losses.

The lack of the flowers being sprung open to release their pollen was put down mostly to an insect called trips and the crop would have to be sprayed with chemicals to rid it of the pest. I however was always against the use of sprays and observed that the pollinating bees, hired for the job, would not spring the floret, instead they would cheat and be able to suck out the nectar without opening the flower. With no nectar the floret was worthless to the other pollinators and so would not get sprung open to be fertilised, so it would die and drop off.

On the farm in the Lavalle area, on Peps farm, I had a free hand and started to do seed production, mainly of course alfalfa, but without bees. The wonderful pollination proved that the bees were responsible for poor seed production and so whenever I had anything to do with seed production or advising I would tell them to get rid of the bees. Bees are great for pollinating many crops but because they have to provide so much honey for their keepers and because any pollen they bring is removed by apparatus designed for this, the bees know how to just get the nectar, without having to face the hit from the floret when it springs open. I have observed other pollinators hanging onto the flowers in such a way that they get all the florets to open one after another and they don't fly off until this is done,

I ran into a problem when I contracted people to harvest the seed so I had to get a harvester and harvest it myself. I had to travel to the grain belt of the country and was able to buy a smallish harvester manufactured in Argentina. I had been researching somewhat and had come to the conclusion that this type of machine would be ideal for

the job, I travelled to Santa Fe where this machine was made and called on a machinery salesman, He took me to a farm and I negotiated a price for a second hand machine and all its accessories. The machine was to be made ready for me; I would arrange transport and would be there to pick up the machine the following week. I managed to hire a small truck with an articulated body that would just about be able to bring the machine back from the farm where it was to be loaded on; actually the farm was in the province of Buenos Aires.

I went with the transport person in hi small truck to load on the harvester and its accessories we were completely illegal and we had to pass through three provincial check points, whenever we saw traffic police I would warn the driver not to look at the police to look away. I remembered my experience with the police in Buenos Aires when they wanted to lock me up or drop me into the Parana River with concrete shoes. When we got to the Mendoza San Luis border we were stopped and I had to negotiate with the border control police chief and we were soon on our way again.

The harvester was very good for harvesting seed because it had double cleaning fans and did a wonderful job. When I got it home I stripped it down and put it into good working order.

When I was advising on seed in the east of the country I wanted to try to get alfalfa to reach the water table and not be irrigated, so I selected a wet area and told the man in charge not to irrigate that field. On one of my visits I found that the field had been irrigated the trial I was doing died, my plans had been stopped by the owner without even consulting me; I walked off that farm never to return. I was able to start the experiment on Peps farm and I did the experiment and four years later I harvested almost 1000 kilos of beautiful alfalfa seed per hectare. This experiment showed how important the water regulation was to the production with the use of natural local desert insects to pollenate the seed. (Pep asked if the experiment had finished I said yes so he went ahead and got the field irrigated and all the plants died).

The reason for this being that the irrigation moved the saline top soil into the root zone which was already supplying the plants with water and nutrients suddenly became too saline for the normal osmosis to take place and the reverse took place. The plants dried up.

Peps brother was always against me advising on their farm Pep made him a partner when he finished high school and my fee for more or less running the farm was 100 dollars a month. I would vaccinate the cattle against foot and mouth disease according to a government programme and organise the cattle's grazing schedule we were always faced with bloat.

It became known that some farmers would get the vaccine and instead of using it on their cattle they would discard it. This meant that a law was passed only selected veterinary surgeons were allowed to vaccinate. This was good news for Peps brother and he told me that they couldn't pay for two professionals and so I had to leave.

Now when we were mastering the production and harvesting of alfalfa the local government started to promote seed production as a diversification away from wine production, Seed cleaning plants were set up and loans were provided, but as soon as this started to get off the ground vast amounts of imported alfalfa seed began to flood the country at a price that local producers could not compete with and alfalfa producers who wanted to buy seed, preferred to buy imported seed thinking it to be better. Our enterprise came to a grinding halt. My harvester and my pick- up truck sat sadly in the garden, a depressing scene at that time one peso was equal to one dollar.

In answer to a prayer a gentleman came to my house and asked if I could thresh his onion heads to remove the seed. He had heard from his cousin that I had a machine which had done a wonderful job of harvesting his carrot seeds in the field. That was the first time that carrot seed had been directly harvested in the province before it was always carried out by hand. The most important thing about threshing with the machine is that it removes the hard calyx; it is very difficult to separate this later in the seed cleaner sieves or vibrators. In some cases even today the heads are cut by hand and then threshed.

I thought of the work involved for small numeration and all the adapting I had to do and so I said, “buy the machine from me”, He did so on the condition that I set it up and threshed the seed, He promised to pay me the 11000 dollars if the machine did the job. I had no experience with onions but the man had a technician who supposedly knew all about it and I let him guide me as to how he wanted the final product. I followed his instructions and the first batch of seed was ready for sale to the United States; however the owner noticed that the seeds were marked and that this meant that they were no good, they would germinate as soon as they were wetted. It was 60.000 dollars down the drain. The technician wanted to blame me, the man did not want to pay for the machine and I wanted to travel to South Africa to see my brothers and sisters and their families who I had not seen in 25 years. I told the man to pay up as it was the technician who was in charge and should have known what was going on, I went on to tell him that when I returned from my trip I would adjust the machine and not a seed in a million would suffer damage. I was true to my word and the machine finished the job giving him perfectly clean seeds ready for the people from the states and he collected more than 750000 dollars. He still uses the machine to this day on his onion seed production. Many other producers have copied my modifications and also the make of machine for their onion seed production but with no credit to me. If you ask the man who got 750000 dollars for his seed he will tell you that I caused him a loss of 60000 dollars.

### **South Africa**

Fortunately having no ties I was able to travel to South Africa to see my brothers, sisters and a cousin and her family. It was wonderful to see them all. The only sibling I didn't get to see was my younger brother who had already moved to Australia.

A year later I took our son Peter to see the family this time we joined my sister Carol and her family on a trip to Zimbabwe where we had grown up. I went into the bank that had frozen all our assets to see if I could claim something back but my name and account was inexistent. I will never wish to visit that country again it is exactly how I imagined it would have become.

I enjoyed Cape Town my mother's birth place and organised how to take groups to Cape Town during the summer months when schools were closed in Argentina the exchange rate was like five to one against the South African Rand, and rising.

I organised trips to Cape Town, alfalfa seed, was imported on a large scale and could be bought for \$3 a kilo much cheaper than we could produce it for.

My first two trips were great. The first was the best, the people I took over were great and they enjoyed it. However on organising the third trip one of the clients, I'll call him Turk asked me for a reduction on the price if he brought another married couple along although it was almost at cost price the three week guided stay, with two meals included, what I got was a free passage and stay for my work of looking after and organising everything. Sometimes I was short of a passenger so I couldn't get a free seat and so I would take my daughter along with us to take advantage of one free seat,

The people on my tour had to always meet at the international airport in Buenos Aires, All the tour group arrived except for this married couple I waited and waited and eventually Mr Turk told me they weren't coming, I found out later he was a friend of a really big tourist company and was out to put a stop to my enterprise.

Some months later the person phoned me he wanted his money back I arranged to meet him he was a lawyer and worked with a municipality where Mr Turk lived he wanted his money back I gave it to him, he asked me if I would take them on a trip I said never, I will never forget him or Mr Turk. I think I took just one more group, the worst and that was the end never, never, again.

The exchange rate with the Rand was seven to one and to the American dollar one to one now at the time of writing the peso dollar rate is at 43, 5 to 1. It is such a shame that there are people who are in power, milk the general public, the ignorant and the uninformed. They destroy well-being, businesses, small holdings and farmers because of their greed. They can take millions from the gullible and the few that know and care can only watch and despair, while they are taken for a ride time and time again in a country that before the Second World War was the one of the richest in the world to now one of the poorest.

How they claim to be able to reduce poverty build homes for all, make sure there are good wages and reduce inflation but once they are in power all the promises are shelved and the people are faced with rising costs and low or no wages.

The corruption starts on the lowest levels and goes on to the highest, in many provinces most of the people are government employees and to keep their jobs and perks they vote for their party and so nothing can change, we are doomed to struggle and witness corruption with our hands tied behind our backs.

### **International Exams**

I would work with Sue in the institute we rented a place and I would be in one classroom and Sue in the other. The worst part was to pay the rent during the three months, when it was the school holidays. We had no income.

We had to be able to offer our students an international exam and at first would go to an Exam Centre which held the international exams; however the exams were carried out Argentine style, outside students made up the failure rate necessary for the centre to seem legitimate and ensure their students did well. I noticed two things, in the listening test the centre's students were left within earshot while the teacher, who was also the invigilator, played the tape to make sure it worked. This meant that these students heard it three times instead of twice and they would discuss what they heard with one another. My daughter did the exam and she was disqualified because the centre informed the providers that she was a native English speaker, after a battle we managed to get her the certificate but it just shows one what one is up against. The other thing I noticed was that the director of the centre was modifying the seating plan so not to show that some copying was going on, we had to find another way.

We were in Buenos Aires and we were chatting with a friend who had a brother in England with an international examination centre who was thinking of doing spoken English exams, we were indeed interested and were the first centre in Argentina to do the exam. We were also asked if we would like to represent the exam and we



accepted, promoting the exam up and down the towns and cities along the Los Andes Mountains.

The fees for the exams would be paid into our Lloyds Bank current account and I would transfer it on to England one day I felt the need to transfer the money on. It was in the dollar account and off it went to England the next day all bank accounts were frozen and the withdrawal of money was restricted the peso dollar rate changed and dollar accounts were prohibited the dollars were changed to pesos at half their value. I managed to save the examiners money but mine was trapped and worth half. This soon meant the end of those exams for us because the exchange rate made it too expensive for the more humble people we targeted. Dollar accounts are once again allowed I wonder when they will be stolen again.

### **GAP**

While we were working with the examiners of the international exams we met an examiner that we really got on well with, he wanted to know if we would be interested in looking after young people doing their gap year, most of them were 18 year olds and we took on this job for the following ten years when we finally resigned we weren't even given a thank you.

The young volunteers would work in English language centres until the end of November and then they would go travelling to other countries and I would go off to find new placements, Sue had a young gentleman Jim working with her and when he heard I was off, on my travels he asked if he could go with and so we set off agreeing to split the expenses or each would pay his own way. Jim had planned to join up with two other volunteers and the three of them were to get together later so he was at a loose end and joined me, we travelled to the next province north of Mendoza, San Juan and from there we took a shared taxi to a town near the mountains called Jachal. We had an examination centre in this town and volunteers had worked there in two placements. I initially wanted to travel along the route which followed the mountains north to a town in the next province north which was La Rioja home to the ex-president Carlos Menem. We stopped at the centre and here after chatting to the couple found that it wasn't possible at that time to get a bus north along the route we wanted to take, Jim and I decided then to cross to Chile using the

Agua Negra Pass, the centre put us up for the night and the gentleman was going to take us to the first town over the border in his car. We slept on the floor of the garage and the next morning I filled the man's petrol tank and off we went.

Getting to the control post our host told the Argentine customs that he was just taking us to where we could use public transport in the neighbouring country, there was a problem he had lost his document but had a piece of paper saying it was being processed and that was that, of course he was turned back he left us at the control and told us that many cars passed that way and we were sure to hitch a lift. We watched him drive off into the distance with a full tank of fuel; I think he was very happy with his little scam.

We waited until the afternoon, no cars came by, so we walked down to a small town close by called Las Flores and went into a service station that had a café where motorists could have something to eat and drink when they stopped for fuel. Jim and I were a bit down in the dumps, Jim looked up and pointed out a man ordering from the service bar, "He looks as if he is going across," said Jim, "Well go and ask him for a lift, you are young and he will probably take pity on you and maybe give us a lift, it's our only chance or we have to go back."

"No," said Jim "I'm too embarrassed, you go."

I went up to the bar and spoke to the man I told him what had happened to us and he agreed to take us all the way to La Serena a coastal city in Chile. The border with Chile is the Agua Negra Pass we got out to appreciate the altitude. The distance between the two control posts is about 80 kilometres we call this no man's land, the mountains are breath-taking and the sheer drops from the road hugging the mountain at times is awe inspiring.

The kind gentleman and his wife dropped us off at the bus station in the early evening and we looked for and found a lady offering a room we followed her to the tiny abode and settled in, I think Jim cooked our first meal. We spent a few days in La Serena We would go by bus to a stop and then walk down to the sea.

We then travelled to Iquique. This city is also a coastal city in the north of Chile and backs onto the Atacama Desert. Most of the shops and dwellings are constructed in wood so when a fire breaks out

everyone is panic stricken, the whole place could go up in smoke. Once when I was there with my son Peter we went to the same beach where I was taking Jim when Peter and I were there I decided to try and surf with the smallish waves that were hitting the beach I dived into one and I was turned head over heels under water and it was a battle to regain a foothold and breath. So when Jim was going in I said "be careful Jim those little waves are quite dangerous" he laughed at me and surfed the next one that came along. I lost sight of Jim for a while and then he surfaced looking very bedraggled "wow" he said "it is terrible and so dangerous I thought I was going to drown."



The Agua Negra Pass

I phoned Sue to tell her where I was and what I was doing, she told me that Jim's travelling partners were a bit upset because he was meant to be with them and that it was time for me to come home, I said goodbye to Jim he was in contact with his companions through internet at cyber cafés and they were soon to meet up.

This voluntary job gave rise to many adventures, the youngsters wanted to know about Bolivia. I couldn't tell them whether it was safe or not so I went there.

The trip was to the north of Argentina up past Jujuy and on through a crossing point at La Quicaca crossing to Villazon in Bolivia. I got to the border in the evening and the town on the Argentinian side was brightly lit with street lamps, shops and restaurants brightly lit but crossing over to the Bolivian side it was dark, getting near some shops, I noticed that they were still open but they were dimly lit by candles. I stayed the night and the next day was travelling by train towards La Paz. The train didn't go all the way and I had to finish the journey by bus.

The city is in the very high plains of the country and stands at more than 3600 meters; a new football field where international football is played is at 4000 meters. Arriving at the bus station you notice the height and you can suffer from mountain sickness just a few steps and you have to sit or lie down. I didn't get the chance to get this problem because after a short walk a Bolivian lady called out to me and asked me to help a young woman in distress. I found out that she and her brother had come to the city but her brother was in the hotel with mountain sickness and couldn't move, she had left him and had gone to buy some ice creams for them, when she took out the wallet to pay a young boy hit it out of her hand into the waiting hands of another and they ran off happily. She was devastated, because she couldn't speak the language, I took her to a police station, they sent us off to the tourist police and so with a form from the police she was able to get a refund from the insurance company. She and her brother later invited me to a meal when he felt better.

I stayed in a type of hostel where you had to share with others it was freezing cold at night, the mattress was lumpy and I had to go and buy some thick woolly leggings to help keep my legs warm. I stayed there

so that I could let the GAP youngsters know what they could be in for. In the hostel I met quite a few young people and they told me about what had happened to them. One got his rucksack stolen when he fell asleep on the bus, another told me how they were looking for a place to stay and some locals pointed out a place across from where they were and when they weren't paying attention to their kit and also feeling weak and sick from the height the locals made off with a lot of their stuff. I also met a young smallish Scottish boy who told me when he got off the bus he wasn't feeling too strong and started off to the city centre, a little later he was accosted by a man who grabbed him round the neck and he fainted when he came too he had lost everything he had. I felt that something had to be done.

I bought a cheap old second hand camera and a T shirt that said GAP on the front.

I asked one of the young men if he would like to help catch the mugger, he had done a gap year with the same company that I was representing but a few years before. I also got the chief of the tourist police to get his plain clothes operatives to watch out for the mugger. The police nearly called off the operation but eventually they came, I sat in the police car with the chief and off went the gapper. Only what seemed a few minutes went by and there was excited buzzing on the police radio, they had caught the mugger. My plan had worked, but the gapper had been forgotten about in the excitement and it was quite a job to find him, He was over the moon about what we had done because we were able to get back at these fiends.

I stick out as a foreigner and so I was able to see the tricks people got up to, to cheat the innocent tourist. One day I was walking along quite a crowded street and a roll of money was dropped in front of me I did what all the people did I just kept on walking taking no notice at all I heard someone cursing and smiled to myself, one more thing to warn the gappers about when they travelled here.

On another day I was accosted by a European looking woman who said she had been robbed and had nothing, she said she was from Canada I saw through her and her answers to some of my questions were dubious, but one thing I noticed were the stall holders in the square were giving me signs to be careful. I broke off quickly with the woman after telling her to go to the Tourist Police. I questioned some

of the people who had warned me of an impending danger and they pointed out a local man of large athletic structure who would be at the ready to intervene and snatch and run off with your money. You wouldn't be a match. Some gappers who went to Bolivia who were briefed by me reported back that they had indeed been accosted by a woman and were able to just walk off quickly and not get involved, others were careful not to be distracted by rolls of money or people offering help, I told them to always just do what the local people did.

I had spent quite a bit of time with the tourist police and one day when I was there an Australian professor was saying how all his photographs and equipment had been stolen he was so terribly upset because he had spent a great deal of time and money on a lifetime's ambition to photograph the flora and fauna of the Bolivian equatorial forest and all was lost I really thought the poor desperate man was going to have a heart attack. He had nothing to take back to his students, the untold damage that these low life thieves do to unsuspecting and disadvantaged people.

When you can get one of them caught it's truly worth it. The tourist police chief would interrogate the man we had apprehended about each new case that got reported with a few good kicks to find a connection or name. Usually in countries like this the thieves never get caught because a backhander is being paid out and a blind eye given because the insurance gives something back to the victims, however in the case of the Australian professor no amount of money would be able to compensate for his loss and the perpetrator would sell what he could for a paltry sum.

I was reminded time and time again how La Paz had such a Chinese atmosphere one of the things was men carrying things on their backs with an apparatus just like the ones they used to use in China. One felt that you could close your eyes and it was China, then there were the shops that sold coffins you could go and buy your coffin and have it in your bedroom next to you, it would give you comfort just like in China, also many people had the similar eyes to the Chinese. I haven't been to China but I have read a lot about it and found it always very interesting. The continent of America was probably joined where the

Bearing Straits are and this could have been where people moved to and fro between the continents.



## **The Amazon**

It was time to move on and I got a bus to the Capital of Bolivia. Santa Cruz de la Sierra. On the way the bus stopped at Cochabamba and I spent the day there. I would travel by night on busses and explore new places during the day but almost never stay in hotels or hostels I got so used to sleeping on busses. Then it was on to quite a modern city the capital it had two ring roads like Canberra in Australia I spent the day and that night I was off again heading to the north to the Amazon and across through to Brazil and then down to Argentina through Misiones, so my next stop was Trinidad, here I got a bus that would take me on the way to Riberalta in the Beni district. While I was waiting on the crowded bus in Trinidad a man sitting near me started chatting to me he invited me to join him on a trip up one of the rivers going up through the Bolivian Amazon. He told me that I should get some provisions that people needed and to accompany him to exchange the goods for gold that was panned in the higher reaches of the rivers the goods would be swapped for gold. I was tempted but I didn't have time to go and get supplies and so respectively declined the offer.

Our large bus took us to a small town near a river and we were put on a smaller bus which could hold about 15 people and a few chickens a sheep and two goats. The small bus went down to the edge of the river and soon we drove onto a small boat which had a tiny outboard motor and this tiny apparatus took us along the river for quite a stretch before letting us off on the far bank it was quite amazing. We had to be ferried along and across rivers quite often and then we were on a dirt road heading north passing through small villages and being squeezed more and more by an overflow of passengers, sardines had nothing on us.

From Riberalta I went to a small village called Guayarmerin a border town with Brazil Here there were no cars only motorbikes and they were the taxis as well. You signal a motorbike it stops get on the pillion seat and it takes you where you want to go. For me it was to the crossing point I got on a boat and was taken across Rio Mamore to Guajar -Mirim. Getting there I realised that my passport hadn't been stamped and so back to Bolivia I went. I hailed a bike taxi and told him what I needed and off, we went through a jungle path to come

across a shack where a man who didn't look at all official took my passport and stamped it after receiving a fee. Once more it was back to the river, across and on to the bus station. I needed some Real's but the cash point didn't recognise my card I managed to pay for the ticket by credit card as far as Campo Grand and had to travel with nothing to eat, I couldn't get money out of any cash point at any of the stops we made.

I was in what was the Amazon jungle but it had been cleared for dwellings and farming. Sometimes a tree would be left standing a tall slender tree of more than 40 meters in height, waiting for a slight wind and it would topple over leaving a hole where it had been standing, it was once with thousands more trees to protect it and help with the ecology but now it faced death with no *thank yous* for its contribution to life.

This rain forest will soon be gone, the work of trees, some reaching a height of more than sixty meters is not thought about only the money that can be made by planting transgenic crops. The fertilisers to contaminate the soil and the pesticides that pollute the air we breathe. The tree on the other hand is so important to life, on a hot day a few hundred liters of water will be transpired out from its foliage this water is in the form of vapour it is passed up into the atmosphere and takes part in cloud formation. The tree moves dirty water from many meters below the surface, purifies it, so it can return as rain. To do this task, using pumps, energy, purification equipment and to put it into the sky just as the tree does would have to use a pressure of from 10 to 12 atmospheres 150 to 160 psi just to pump the water up there and then it has to be purified and vaporised to a weight lighter than air so that it can float and coalesce into cloud will prove daunting and expensive. When these trees have gone or replaced by trees for palm oil as is happening now in Borneo, the trees will never reach the altitude required for a rain forest.

Trees are important to atmospheric pressure they are areas of high pressure and stop storms from being created. As we wipe out trees we lose their protecting pressure barrier the doldrums.

Pure water evaporates from a dam at a similar rate as the same area of tree cover but all the salts are left behind whereas a tree uses up salts through its system. Dams are also areas of low pressure and

attract rain clouds when the moisture is high above the sheet of stored water it experiences lift; vapour condenses to, ice and falls sometimes as hail causing damage.

Towns cities farming ploughed land produce low pressure areas and attract large winds hurricanes cyclones and terrible storms as seen now in the 2018 and 2019 areas most hit have no trees left; they were all made into charcoal.

Mountains are important for this water cycle and the formation of breezes due to night and day breezes just like the land and sea breezes from the sea



. These mountains, where I am, are the highest in the continent of America. Living in the shadow of The Andes Mountains in Mendoza South America and working in the plains, irrigating with the water

from them and crossing them to go down to the sea gives one an appreciation of all the natural forces at work.

The mountains in the north of Chile shadows the driest desert in the world, yet out of them pour millions of litres of clear pure drinkable water which is used for irrigation, industry and households. Some of the water is provided by snowfall on the high mountain crests but go to San Pedro de Atacama here it never rains or snows but out of the mountains flow a large amount of water. Most of the water use to flow into the sea, but today rivers are dammed and cannot flow into the sea as nature designed. Now only contaminated sewage goes into the sea.

Rivers like the river Nile, the Amazon, or the Rio Colorado all have their source in mountains and as they make their way downstream to the sea, they carry with them vast amounts of silt. Early farmers made good use of this resource but today these rivers are all dammed and the silt is trapped in the dams. For thousands of years before modern man rivers took soil down to the sea and the continents grew and grew, mountain ranges were eroded down and new ranges were pushed up to carry on the work of nature but modern man saw that rivers were a source of wealth and dam after dam was built putting nature's plans on hold. The Andes Mountains have risen up and the water that once covered the place where this occurred drained into the oceans that wash on the east and west shores of the American continent, the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Darwin when he was here found evidence that this land was indeed covered by water at one time.

Water flows from the high areas of these mountains it seeps out and joins more small streams and they all coalesce into a large river transporting vast amounts of water for thousands of years but the dams have caused many problems and the amount of water is becoming less, the dams interrupt the cycle, imagine the vast amount

of energy needed to accomplish this cycle to provide for life, being destroyed by ignorant and avarice man. Springs in some areas are drying up, the springs feed the glaciers which in turn formed the river beds slowly tearing away obstacles in their path so that water flowed to the sea, many glaciers are still active today but where glacial activity has ceased the same springs which fed them are still pouring water down into the rivers. The dams are constructed thinking they will preserve the water from rainfall and snowfall not much interest is taken in the water provided by the springs, indeed the thought that the glaciers are fed from springs would not be taken seriously, as geography texts and general knowledge points to the fact that glaciers are formed from snowfall.

Water vapour feeds the rain clouds in the sky, underground the vapour moves towards the highest points condenses and seeps out on the surface of the high mountain to flow out as a spring which form rivers which drain into the sea. This means water moves upwards from a low level to a high level, or against the force of gravity it travels along underground depositing sediments in reefs and comes to the surface at the high part of the mountains. We all know that water finds its own level and that it moves downhill never uphill due to the force of gravity, then in order to explain the water moving upstream against the force of gravity it must be realised that there are other forces at work and that is the force of pressure. The high altitudes are zones of low pressure, while the deep ocean floor is an area of high pressure and this is the pump formed by nature to preserve life. The work of the glaciers was the means by which the water once it had condensed could flow through the mountain ranges and subsequently into the sea. Nature needs abundant fresh uncontaminated water to flow into the sea to preserve life in the sea and consequently on land. The vast amounts of silt that is brought down to the coast by rivers causes the land to increase in size but damming stops many processes dearly required by nature.

These were the thoughts that crossed my mind as I travelled through South America I had been on a trip to see how safe things were for the young people we were looking after and also to find answers to questions about our natural world, I was getting a far different message from what one learns through the education system.

I eventually arrived in the city of Campo Grande this was close to the north western part of Argentina Misiones and one crossed the border near the Iguassu falls. I never spent time in hotels I would always be travelling from place to place and would sleep on the bus when I got to a new destination I would spend the day and early evening sight-seeing before getting the bus to the next city I got so used to sleeping on busses that whenever I had difficulty to sleep at home I would go bussing around for a while.

It was about three in the morning and the bus station of this Brazilian city was quite far from the centre of the city so I got my kit and walked off to the centre hoping to find cash point and get some money, I was being able to communicate quite well in Portuguese. As I walked down towards the town I noticed three men of colour walking ahead of me on the other side of the road, one of them looked back and broke off from the others he walked back and suddenly he was behind me. He asked me what the time was I knew then that an attack was pending I heard the quick intake of his breath and that was the moment of attack and I was ready, he grabbed me from behind putting his arm round my neck, I slammed my elbow with great force into his solo plexus this winded him the next thing I did was to go down onto the ground face up to protect my back and kick into venerable places I was also shouting at a guard nearby to help, he just stood idly by, after a few more kicks and screams the wide eyed attacker ran off, I gave chase for some stupid reason I think it was because I was so very angry, I stopped after a while and went back to the guard, I gave him a thousand words and then carried on my journey to the centre. I found a police station to report what had happened but it was in lock down all the doors and windows blocked up but with the police safely inside. I spoke to some people about what had happened and they told me that it was a very bad place and that many had been stabbed and killed in the area where I had been

attacked. I hadn't had a choice I didn't have enough money for a taxi. I was able to draw out some money from a cash point and was able to get something to eat and drink.

I took a bus that evening to Argentina and on eventually home after a long adventure.

I knew what to tell the volunteers when we briefed them on their stay in Argentina and beyond.

## **The Gap Managers**

Our first manager came to look at possible placements and to see how the volunteers were coping and to be able to tell new recruits what lay in store for them I would accompany the person to all the places and also show new opportunities.

We would have to travel great distances, once the manager John who would come once a year had to go to La Rioja with me. We took a small twin propeller plane that took about 20 people. The flight would be to Cordoba and then on to Rioja, We were sitting on the right and the aircraft was going east to Cordoba we were watching the sun ahead on a beautiful morning, John said “look they feathering that engine.” It was on our side and I said “no they are trying to start it”. After a few attempts the pilot gave up we then only had one engine. I looked out the window and asked John “where’s the sun gone and he said, ”we must be turning back,” I looked at the passenger behind me he crossed himself and closed his curtain, well at least he is praying for us, I then looked at John with my heart starting to race and he was calmly reading a newspaper I looked round at other passengers, one of them I knew quite well he was a rep for a sweet company and they all looked very worried. John and I were sitting near the front of the plane, I looked back at John and he was still calmly reading his newspaper so I picked up a newspaper too and outwardly calmly seemed to be reading but I couldn’t read a word, I was watching the only engine and could see smoke start to come out of it, it wouldn’t be long before that one gave up, I also thought that I didn’t want to go with John to the next life, suddenly the crippled craft was going down and approaching the airport, I could see people rushing out to see and we were going down at a terrific speed, incredibly we landed, when we came to a stop and started to get off the pilot came out and shook hands with us, the relieved passengers but the most surprised of us all that we had touched down safely, was the pilot.

We went back into the reception area and we were offered a bus ride for free to our destinations all the passengers and John agreed very happily to go by bus but I said, “sorry I booked a flight to La Rioja and I’m afraid you will have to fly me and my companion there,” John wanted to go by bus like all the others, I called his bluff. We were soon on a flight to Rioja via Buenos Aires.



Reflecting later and talking it over with John we felt that the pilot shouldn't have taken such a risk and should have brought the aeroplane down at a landing strip much closer rather than risk the longer haul all the way back to airport where we had taken off.

On John's next visit we hired a car for the trip to La Rioja.

Sue and I also had a frightening experience on a flight over the Andes from Santiago to Mendoza. Sue and I had taken a few days off and had gone to the Chilean coast for a few days during the winter holidays, The weather turned very bad it was snowing heavily in the mountains and the pass through by road was cut off, it meant our bus trip back being cancelled and we had to get back so we had to fly back. Luckily we got a place on the packed flight and in the early afternoon departed. We were soon bouncing around in a storm I was quite worried along with all the passengers it was the 18<sup>th</sup> of July my birthday and strangely enough the day of the attack by terrorists on the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, a van filled with explosives was blown up at their centre AMIA and many people lost their lives. We only heard about the attack later. There was a Rabbi on the plane and the pilot told us that the flight across the Andes would take 40 minutes; I saw the Jewish gentleman looking at his watch for the whole time the aeroplane was in the turbulence. I thought of the Uruguayan rugby team that had crashed on the mountains. I looked out our window and saw that the right engine had a ring of ice round the intake where the turbine is this worried me and I turned to Sue, once an air hostess to ask her, if we were going to be ok but found her to be in panic mode, well that was it for me, if it was bad for her, we were going to crash as the whole group of passengers felt, Suddenly we were through the storm many passengers were in trouble and ambulances had to come and get them, the Rabbi put his watch away and got up with a wide relieved grin as people filed passed him thanking god that they had got through that ordeal. I learned later that a Lancaster Bomber converted to a passenger plane which had crashed somewhere in the Andes on the day I was born 18 July 1947 was found on Tupungato Mountain with a tyre still inflated. The sudden winds and storms that hamper air travel and connecting flights means those passengers should have at least an extra day between connecting flights because of this.

Home again and back to the English teaching, the volunteers and exams. The farming shelved until imports and the low peso dollar rate changed.

The international exams that we handled changed the organisation and it was felt that it should be run by a person in Buenos Aires we couldn't go on with this and so we parted company we were doing the less privileged but the dollar peso rate was climbing and the Argentine currency was devaluing exam fees were dollar orientated and we were against this and so we gave it up.

The volunteer company also wanted to get into Buenos Aires and we were against this because of what had happened to the examination company so we would not remain if this happened I insisted that here it had to be run by us or we would resign.

Gap changed the manager John was replaced by James who would visit with his wife I would always travel with the manager but on one occasion James and his wife organised it so they could go alone to Salta. Here in this province they organised that someone other than me would be responsible for the volunteers and had to report directly to him cutting us out.

I had always insisted that I was to be contacted should a volunteer need any kind of medical attention I was on 24hour call and Sue and I solved many life and death problems over the years. James must have felt that we had too much to say and wanted many locals to take my place and he had started in Salta.

One day the phone rang it was Salta a beautiful young 18 year old gap volunteer had died they didn't know what to do. They had tried to contact James but he didn't want to be disturbed as he was on holiday with his wife. I took the next flight to Salta with a stop in Cordoba. While waiting for the connection to Cordoba I bumped into Pep my old employer I told him what had happened and off we went in different directions.

When I got to Salta I met up with the other two gappers they were in a dreadful state and I spent a lot of time with them to calm them. I was in contact with gap, the forensic people and the people who had been told to take over from me.

I found out that the girl was having trouble to breath she became breathless with the least of exertions, and so she was taken to see a

doctor who prescribed a psychotic drug because the consensus of opinion was that she must have been missing home. The second day after seeing the doctor she was found dead in the bathroom. The child had locked herself in and her host was walking about in the town, the maid had raised the alarm.

At the morgue I was shown her body and was told that she had died of a heart attack. This is why I wanted to always be in charge I am sure the deceased young lady, who had just started out in her new world would still be alive today, if Sue and I had been responsible.

There were many times when I would accompany the adolescents to the doctor and I would be present while the person under my care was examined and treated. Once or twice a host parent would go over my head and take their lodger to the doctor if they weren't feeling well, this would make me a bit angry because they were not responsible and I was pretty experienced with local doctors and their diagnosis. At one time a girl who had a face that naturally looked as if she had mumps was diagnosed with it; this was at a hospital casualty section because it was after hours. I got a frantic and irate call from the host mother telling me to take the volunteer away as she was going to pass on the disease to her children; I calmed the woman down telling her that I would take the sick girl to my doctor the next day. I would have loved to admonish the person for taking it upon herself to have the adolescent in her charge taken to the emergency section, but just hoped that she would get the message. We would always tell the hosts that on no circumstance should they take their charge to the doctor, they had to call us.

The following morning at the doctors we calmly came to the correct diagnosis which wasn't mumps and a bad situation was rectified. Not surprisingly manager James was replaced by another manager and volunteers were told to make sure they went through Sue and I for any medical problems that arose. The third manager Wales was the worst of the three, he had once worked in Buenos Aires and he knew everything after very stressing rounds with Mr know all we said good bye to him and then to the volunteer company, they didn't even give us a thank you or goodbye, for ten years of voluntary service we dedicated to them.

## **Pep**

Strangely enough Pep was always contacting me and one day he asked me to go and run the farm for him and his brother. We agreed on the terms but as time went on some of the monetary agreement fell by the wayside.

I went back to a shambles, there were about 250 head of cattle, they were in a corral and they were being fed on all kinds of waste. There had been many losses and there were flies everywhere, the brothers had come to the conclusion that they were losing too much and they were about to hire the farming part of their enterprise out. The brother had tied a red flag to ward off the bad luck he thought was being wished on them, A man was spraying with insecticide using a knapsack sprayer and the animals were all mixed up, the little ones being trodden into the muck by the bigger ones, the mortality was at an alarming rate, a eucalyptus tree nearby was black with buzzards which fed off the dead animals, there was more than enough of the rotting meat to go round.

Farming is generally left to a charge hand and he is controlled by radio or phone and today by **Whatsapp**. I was used to farming where you were always on the farm seeing to the daily running and being on hand to solve problems.

The first thing I did was to stop the spraying then it was to get the animals out of the corral and organise their feeding in long rows with the feed being rationed by electric fencing. Then it was the fields that needed planting organizing and irrigating.

The charge hand was not up to managing the stock as I needed it to be so I had to change him for a person who I could train.

Pep was much relieved in that his farm started to work again and so he bought an adjoining piece of land that had some hectares of vineyard, and we were to go 50 :50 on everything, so I started managing the establishment, one of the men I used to do the pruning would show me how and why he did what he was doing and I realised he would be very good at looking after the cattle and so for the next almost twenty years I taught him, he must be one of the best cattle men in Argentina today.

Today there are more than 1000 head all on rotational grazing with almost zero mortality, the cattle are for beef production it has been a

long uphill road but it now is probably the oldest surviving beef producer in the region many producers feel that the way to do it is by feedlot and zero grazing I did not want any cutting at all and kept the use of fuel to a minimum.

The pastures were in a mess and so I renewed the worst of them, the main thing was the irrigation, my experimentation had shown me that the irrigation had to be minimal because there was a lot of subsurface water and at many places was on the surface of the land, Nothing had been done to the pastures I had organised and during the time I was away they had deteriorated and the cattle had weeds and dried up Bermuda grass to graze upon. I only irrigated during the winter months and did not irrigate at all during the summer this meant that the alfalfa could get into the underground water and be self-sufficient for its water requirements. I had been working on and experimenting with saline soils and how to deal with them according to my speciality which was raising cattle on irrigated pastures and seed production. Irrigating only in winter was unheard of here in this region my reasons for doing this was not to have lush alfalfa stands in summer to cause bloat and to make sure Bermuda grass would have to battle to survive. Farmers who bale and sell alfalfa to horse and feedlot owners irrigate the crop after each cut in summer when the production is high and this means that the weed grass will be in its element getting nitrogen nutrient from the legume with plentiful sun and water to compete easily with the cash crop and win!!

The Bermuda grass (*cynodon dactylon*) and couch grass (*agropyron repens*) collectively known as chipiqua by the locals loves an abundance of water in the summer months while alfalfa (*medicago sativa*) suffers and many plants wither and die. The reason for this is that alfalfa is deep rooted and in this western part of Argentina the soils are alkaline and saline especially in high water table regions. During the cold season the salts precipitate out of the soil solution and can be seen as a white powdery layer resembling snow, in the warm months this is absorbed into the soil solution and plants that grew in the cooler months die off. This is because the salty solution is greater in concentration to the liquid on the plant side of the root hair membrane and osmosis takes place forcing the plants life blood out into the soil, the plants bleed to death. It follows then plants with tap

roots like alfalfa can be watered vigorously in winter but when watered in summer the salts are forced into the zone where the deep rooted plants are feeding and the increased salinity destroys them. The couch grass and Bermuda grass however enjoy less salinity as the irrigation water maintains a watered down effect on the surface layer of the soil the irrigation creates an ideal environment for sturdy growth and the salts in their diluted form feed the weeds.

This pasture management means that the alfalfa pastures last for many years and by grazing them correctly they will last indefinitely I have one pasture now that has never been replanted since my return to Pep's farm well over 14 years now.

The farm is divided east and west by an irrigation canal this runs through and borders the property, the water is from the Mendoza sewage plant and the water has been treated but it is very good for irrigation, the farm usually has an abundant water supply and in winter there is more water available as no one irrigates in that season. I had greatly improved the pastures and had lush growth in the winter months; I had very good results with rye.-grass of which I had had a lot of really good results on all the dairy farms I ran.

## Seed Production

I noticed once more how the all alfalfa flowers were fertilised and that amazing yields seed could be harvested, Pep wanted to keep a young man a relative working with him and he asked me to look for a harvester and I was to go shares with the young man called Carly who really wanted to go overseas and try his luck. I followed lots of leads looking for a harvester, I wanted one of the same make that I had had before, GEMA was the make and eventually I found a suitable machine. I told the seller that I would get back to him, I found the asking price a little too high and phoned to tell him I couldn't buy it for that reason he asked me to make an offer, I offered half his asking price, fortunately he accepted and Pep financed the purchase, Sue went with me to a town called Rufino in Santa Fe to see the machine loaded on to a special vehicle for the job and off went the harvester to Peps farm some 800kms away, while Sue and I spent a few days holidaying. I was going back to farming and harvesting seeds again the markets were coming back the imports were too expensive.

Our first harvest came in we were getting really good yields and after sieving the seed by hand we bagged it and sold it. There seemed to be quite a large difference from harvest to bagging that couldn't be accounted for so I decided that it would be better for me to take the seed home directly from the harvester. I always weighed the seed and processed the seed for sale the income was split three ways.

I didn't want to be stuck with just one egg in the basket and oil seed rape was always on my mind I managed to get two bags of seed and I planted it. Rape wasn't grown much at all in the country and as the crop started to grow rude comments abounded, I did not have any first-hand experience with the crop but it amazed me, I invited a friend who produces a weekly local newspaper to see the crop it was truly amazing, he took some photos and published it in his paper.

From that point on things went viral all sorts of people came to see the crop, the government research and extension institutes and farmers were encouraged to grow the crop.

I harvested the rape I had planted and it yielded very well, we direct harvested the crop and much of the seed I harvested was used by the people promoting the crop for local landowners to grow the crop.

There was no provision for the harvest of the crop and I was asked to

provide the harvesters I had acquired two more Gema machines and I put all three to work harvesting, the yields were not as good as the yields I had achieved the year before. The interest at fever pitch continued for a while with people hoping to do well and compete with soya bean production, an oil press was being set up and the idea was to produce bio diesel, as a new law was being passed requiring a percentage of the diesel fuel to be from a vegetative source.

A lot of research and promotion was done but in Mendoza rape like many other things just fizzled out, I had three combine harvesters to try and find work for in a grape growing region. In other parts of Argentina the crop started to gain ground at the same time as Mendoza, before this it was a virtually unknown crop but today it is doing quite well in some provinces and the vegetable oil produced from it can be purchased in supermarkets. I feel that I was the reason for rape to be grown on a commercial scale in Argentina but this you will only hear from me.

Carly my partner after a while lost interest in the machine so I bought him out. He was happy and so was Pep because he was getting a truck and would start in the transport world which suited Pep down to the ground because he had a business that needed a lot of trucking. After a while I managed to buy out Pep and his brother, and carried on with the management of their farm and a fifty- fifty split with the seeds I harvested.

I was looking for a seed cleaning machine my main thing was the production and sales of alfalfa seed. The man whom I had bought the first machine from became a good friend he had heard of another Gema for sale and the same person had a seed cleaner for sale, so I went back to Rufino and my friend took me to a farm where the machine was. It was raining and the poor machine was in the rain and water was going into its exhaust pipe, I was with the son of the owner and I told him to put something over the pipe to save the machine I decided to give the machine a miss and the seed cleaner too it was in a bad state of repair and they were asking far too much for it.

A few months later Pep and co asked me if I would like another machine they were doing a trade and they thought this machine would be good for me for spares they put a price I accepted I would pay it off with seed- The machine arrived it was the one I had gone to see in



Rufino only it was minus the Injector pump. I bought one from them I wonder who had taken the injector pump. I got the machine working fine and put it to harvest rye seed.

Some gentlemen came to see me they worked for an important local engineering firm and were interested in doing rape I suggested they buy a harvester there were five of them I joined in and with a bit of money from each I went to Santa Fe and bought the next machine.

This machine I eventually used to harvest rape locally eventually the five gave up on me I bought most of them out another was transferred to another country but I was holding the bills. This machine was used to work in the east of the province harvesting carrot seed for a Brazilian firm in summer and maize in winter.

Now there were three machines to harvest and they were quite far apart but it meant that there would be less transport charges and less risk when driving it on the highways. The machine in the east was in great need of repairing so I brought it back and restored it completely. The man who had maize to harvest some 60 kilometres away needed his maize harvested and had hired a truck to tow the machine, I drove the machine out of the gate and we hooked it up to the lorry I asked a lad who was helping me if the machine was hitched up correctly, it was renovated completely and looked like a brand new machine, standing there, showing off its new coat of paint. The truck went off behind followed my machine and in the rear the farmer with his warning lights on. I felt uneasy the lad and I sat down to a quick lunch before following we would soon catch up to them, "Nell" I asked the young man, "I've got a bad feeling is it properly hitched up" "yes" he reassured me, "That's a professional driver he knows what he is doing its his work," I wasn't at all at ease and after a hurried lunch we went off chasing at high speed, just then my phone rang I stopped to answer, "yes" my heart banging, "there's a problem" It was the farmer, he said "the machine has crashed it became unhitched" fortunately the machine had gone off the road into some trees the tow bar a strong triangular construction had dug into the ground and the machine made mostly of sheet metal had suffered incredible damage. When I got there I Just sat on the back of my pick up, looking, wordlessly, both my hands shaking uncontrollably.

The truck driver turned to me and said. "I'm going now" he and the farmer left I was about 40 kilometres from home the front axil was completely destroyed it could not be towed. I phoned Pep, he had all sorts of tow trucks and he sent one to help me. We lifted it by the damaged part and damaged it even more but we got it home and placed it on the front lawn by three o'clock in the morning.

That same day we started to repair and rebuild the broken part after about ten days I went back to the farmer and we went to see the same trucker I told him to come the next day to deliver the machine as he had been contracted to do, everyone was surprised but I found what was wrong with the man's hitch he didn't use a locking pin which stops the latch from moving. The truck arrived and I drilled and repaired the locking pin, every so often on the trip I would stop and check the hitch points but the machine reached the farm without any problems. I always check now when my machines are being towed. The crashed machine I sold to a farmer friend it was the one I had bought with the group now disbanded, I was down to two machines again.

## San Juan

A large bus passenger firm contracted me they were interested in rape for bio-diesel I went to the farm in the next province San Juan where my son Peter and his family lived. The farm was truly amazing, there four artesian wells which poured out water without need of pumping, the farm produced alfalfa bales for sale and was making a loss but that didn't matter much because the taxes of the company could be written off on the farm expenses. This scheme was coming to an end and so the farm had to now produce income and this is where I came in.

The irrigation was very costly on labour and inefficient I changed the direction of the irrigation 100m long borders became ones of 1000m or more just irrigating from the headlands and the labour requirement went to almost nothing as the gated pipes did not need to be moved. Valves would distribute the water.

San Juan is a hot dry place much hotter than Mendoza and with strong winds blowing north to south so the fields that were prepared form east to west would have the rows of raked hay ready for bailing blown off like tumble weed and often losses would occur, changing the layout of the fields stopped this problem, the lines of raked hay

were in the same direction as the prevailing winds and weren't affected.

The farm had suffered a tremendous loss a few years before I was contracted, the shed where the tractors were parked was also where hay bales were kept, a fire broke out and the tractors and bales were destroyed. I advised that they should not bale the hay but instead use a roller bailer to make rolls of hay and not to use manpower at all, just the tractor drivers. This was a complete success.

I was asked to go off to the province of Cordoba to see and purchase the machine if I thought it was ok. It was a bit worse for wear but it was repaired in the company's vast workshops and it made hundreds upon hundreds of rolls of hay. I also went to see and organise the farm tractor which was sent off to the manufacturer to fit it with a front end loader this would load the rolls onto a trailer and transport them to an area to be stacked out in the open.

I suggested that we put a harvester on the farm, I asked a friend in Santa Fe I had already organised the sale of and purchase of four machines of the same make and this was to be the fifth. At first I suggested that I own the machine but it would be complicated to harvest from such a distance and so I would not purchase the machine for myself but I would find the harvester and train the tractor driver to harvest. I found a really suburb machine, the owner of the machine dropped the price, he was happy that it would be put to good use instead of sitting in a barn. The machine was duly delivered to the farm and was soon collecting large amounts of alfalfa seed.

I organised and implemented a beef enterprise on the farm and went to many ranches in the Mendoza and San Juan area to find stock to grow and fatten. I noticed that the animals grazing on alfalfa would suffer from watery faeces and after an analysis of the blood found that the magnesium levels were low, I realised that the phosphorous levels were very high and so I looked for a mineral supplement to increase the magnesium in the cattle's blood stream I was able to find the mineral in the city outskirts and the animals began to thrive.

One day I was at a ranch selecting young stock for San Juan and the cowboys invited me to a barbeque I asked them not to put salt on my piece of meat, this was to them completely unbelievable and they cooked me a large piece of meat much larger than anyone else, they

thought they were calling my bluff. I ate the huge piece with relish with lots of eyes on me, they couldn't believe what they were seeing, to them it was unheard of to have unsalted barbequed meat. If I ever had to eat at one of these events I would not be able to eat the meat because it was so salty I would choose instead to eat a sausage which is salted on manufacture but less salty than the roasted meat on red hot coals,

The company wanted to feed the some of the heavier stock to finish them off although they finished quite well just on the pastures and so I went off with a 3 ton ford truck to Cordoba to load a tractor powered hay bale role mill which milled up the hay and other ingredients in this case it was maize weighed it all and mixed it ready to feed the animals.

I had left at night after finishing my teaching and it was eventually 10pm when I got underway, I was at the factory before they opened and eventually I set off in the early afternoon for San Juan taking a direct rout via San Luis. There is a border post called Encon a dreaded place because if you are stopped there you have to do a lot of not very honest deals to carry on with your journey, I was stopped.

"You cannot carry on with that rig"

"Why not", I asked the policeman who was looking at my driver's licence.

"You have exceeded the weight stipulated on your licence."

"What can I do," I asked tiredly with a sinking heart.

"Leave the rig here and take a bus," he barked out.

I had not slept since the day before there were no telephone signals so I couldn't phone the company, I also had contacted my son from San Luis to tell him I would pass by and he was probably getting worried, so I did what many others did and will carry on doing for a long time to come, and I was on my way. Not long after that I got a heavy duty truck and trailer licence.

The mil mixer worked well the cattle being supplementary fed put on amazing weight gains and the local market who used to ask for heavier animals now said they were too heavy,

I had finished being useful I had solved all the problems the charge hand, a relative who disliked me enormously did everything in his power to get me to leave, so I did and I haven't heard from them

since. I heard that they sold the farm once an enterprise takes off it is then sold.

When I take on the job of teaching and showing these well off landowners how to make their farms produce and make a profit I also tell them that, once they see how it all works they will have no further use for me. Time and time again this happens.. It seems that when the business becomes viable it is sold because it is easier to sell a going concern rather than a run down or profitless enterprise.

### **San Martin Mendoza,**

I was recommended to a Chilean firm by a college who I had harvested for to harvest their seed. The firm was run by their local accountant and the farm was producing hay bales and they had decided to do seed production. I went to see a field growing alfalfa for seed. I saw that the yield would not justify the harvest because by the time they had decided to harvest most of the seed was lost. I told them that they have to have a harvester on site if they wanted to get anywhere. I had a harvester which I wanted to buy so I asked my friend in Santa Fe to check it out. He said it was fine and so I told the owners of the machine that I would buy it if they could take it to my friends place and I would pay them when I went to Santa Fe. I was planning a trip with Sue that July.

The accountant wanted to buy a machine for the farm on my advice one of the machines I had acquired for a farmer in our area was selling his, but his price was high, I offered the machine I had in Santa Fe and found out how much the transport costs would be, before I brought the machine I had a meeting with Ed he would want to buy the machine but less the transport costs, I laughed and thought he was a good accountant for the firm but I couldn't lose almost half the value of the machine just because I was selling it to his firm. We ended the meeting with him agreeing to pay the transport costs and he would have the first option to buy the machine if and when I wanted to sell it, we also agreed on a percentage of the seed harvest which ended up at 15% of cleaned seed for me. I also had to visit the farm once a week to help manage it and for this I would be paid a monthly fee towards expenses. I brought the machine which I had never seen; I didn't know what I was getting. When the machine arrived I was pleasantly surprised.



In July we went to Santa Fe and paid for the machine I also made contact with a firm who used to manufacture and supply parts for the make of machines that I used, the company Gema closed down in about 2005 Gema stood for Grand Empredamiento Maquinaria Agricola. This did not matter because of the contact I had made I would always have help in keeping these machines going.

Sue and I carried on to Buenos Aires then we went down to the sea near Necoehia we had managed to contact our old friend Blurette and we called on her, before returning home. It is a pity that we can't see more of them but they live on the other side of Argentina and the distances are vast. Sue got a bit ill on the trip and on the way home I seemed to have picked up the bug, I couldn't carry on driving and handed over to Sue who had recovered slightly, we were thankful to be home after the long journey.

A few months' later two speeding fines appeared in our letter box, we had exceeded the speed limit by a very small margin in two obscure little towns off the beaten track, and what a hard job it was to eventually get them paid for. We are not very happy to go back that way.



Bluette and her family with Sue and me in the background

## **Seed cleaning.**

I needed seed cleaning machinery new equipment was much too expensive I went to a lot of second hand machinery auctions in Santa

Fe, I was looking for ways to process my seeds so they were free of debris, at one of these events I was approached by an acquaintance who said they had two machines that used to belong to a seed company and to pass by and see if they were any use to me. I went to them and they took me to a farm where the cleaners were I saw that I could restore one of them to useful working order they were vibrating screens that used a large axial fan to pull air through the material being processed and the machine was complete except for the electric motors that had been removed, I made an offer for one of the machines but was asked to take them both or leave them, I took them both. Carly, my ex-partner with the combine now a full blown trucker brought them to Mendoza for me. The machines were unloaded on Peps farm. I later loaded them one by one onto my pick up and one is working cleaning seed and the other I sold.

We started to produce seed on the Chilean farm I would go once a week and my third machine was put to work. Shortly before harvest though, a hurricane swept through the farm and did quite a lot of damage the barn roof was completely ripped off and bits of it landed up in the field planted to seed alfalfa 100 meters away.

I was lucky that the harvester was not damaged by chance I had left it out to be cleaned.

The eventual harvest was not very high because of the storm but the seed was duly harvested cleaned and dispatched to the seed merchants in the province of Buenos Aires.

After the subsequent harvest the accountant wished that we travel down to the merchants with the seed and see first-hand the classification. When I was there I found a cleaning and sizing seed processing machine that was not used anymore and asked if they would consider selling it to me. It had quite a lot of it missing but I was sure I would be able to get it going After my return to Mendoza I phoned and was told I could purchase the machine it was a very reasonable price and so I transferred the money. A friend later was returning from the area with an empty truck and was able to load and bring the machine all the way to my base at no charge at all.

I now had all that I needed to clean and process seed of many different types; so far I have processed alfalfa, onion, carrot, lettuce, pumpkin, parsley, rape, and celery. The machinery is set up in a shed



which I built with a floor finished in ceramic tiling this makes it very easy to clean, sometimes the seed is humid and the floor is ideal to spread it out to dry before processing.

The person who had bought my machine together with a man who had worked with me when I harvested carrot seed for a Brazilian company approached me to offer me the job of harvesting their carrot seed growing in about six different areas around Mendoza, It would involve all three of my machines, this would have to fit in with all the alfalfa seed harvests I had to do in the same period

Eduardo Rojas who had bought the machine that had crashed in the end did all the harvesting, sometimes it was so slow and only one row a a time could be harvested. The huge amount of seed was then processed by me, but in order to have the seed acceptable for export to Brazil it had to be completely free of weed seed and have a good germination this took months and the seed had to be processed time and time again before it was finally accepted for export.

We all had to be paid but Brazil wasn't paying up, they had the seed but wouldn't transfer the funds, Eduardo and I were going to go to Brazil to try and get paid and we were already in the red with our higher than expected costs but no money arrived to defray these expenses. Eduardo sent the Brazilians a very strong voice message on "*Whatsapp.*" Months passed and we were eventually paid out. It wasn't worth the effort we put into supplying the seed and the Brazilian seed company would have to go somewhere other than Eduardo and I to procure their seed.

My three machines were in need of a lot of repairs and maintenance after the gruelling carrot seed harvest and then I was harvesting alfalfa seed in three different places, I would harvest in one area for a few days and then I would go back to base or home and the next day I would be harvesting on the other side of Mendoza the good thing was that I went to the combines and they would be in the area to be harvested and so instead of using just one machine to do the job the three machines would be used. The tremendous risk and cost of moving the machine from place to place and back again was avoided.

One thing that was missing or didn't work on the machines was that the breaks didn't work and I always had my heart in my mouth when I had to cross over a motorway because the machine would

have to climb up onto the bridge over the motorway and then down the other side, If the drive belt broke, or as it happened to me on one occasion, the gear jumped out you were helpless, the machine would just obey gravity and you would go backwards at a speed according to the slope, if you were lucky, come to a halt or on the other less fortunate outcome, crash into a vehicle in your way. I once had to swing a machine up onto the pavement to avoid hitting a new Mercedes Benz car. The worst was when I came up from a dirt road to cross a national road I slackened off as I approached to wait for passing cars and it jumped out of gear, with the engine running I still had hydraulic steering and the machine went backwards down the hill I steered it along the road until it finally came to rest after about 200 meters, only when the machine stopped was I able to put it in gear again. Back we went and this time I kept the gear lever firmly pressed in gear with my leg, I do this automatically whenever I am going up a hill. I have now made two of the machines breaks work and when I can get the third one back to base I will make sure it leaves with breaks. In the flat lands where these machines used to work there is a general consensus that there is no need for breaks.

I harvested and looked after the Chilean's farm after three harvests and the only thing that made money on the farm were the seed harvests but they decided to expand on producing hay bales for sale they were giving up seed that was me out. I had two of my machines stored in the barn which had lost its roof I supervised the building of a new shed and also replaced the roof that blew off. My son Peter, now a civil engineer, designed, calculated and drew up plans all at no charge at all for a new roof and also plans for an adjoining shed to house tractors and combine harvesters,

I would soon be asked to remove my machines from the farm. I wrote a letter to the people from Chile telling them that they were making a mistake and why, but to no avail I heard later that the farm was up for sale and the production had wound down to making a loss as I had predicted.

A little while before I was told there was no need for me and my machines I had found a later model machine it had its engine removed and was just rusting away. The combine was one that I had helped the owner to buy I had also unloaded it on his farm in the

province of San Luis and taught his personnel how to work it. The combine harvester was a Gema 90 it had a bigger Deutz 160 hp. engine and was a very good machine I thought he would have been able to make good use of it but they had tried to transform it into something that it was not designed for and the modifications they were doing to it didn't work so they took out the engine and hydraulics the engine was then adapted to run an electrical generating unit. I realised that it had disc brakes and as I had converted one of my machines to disc brakes which worked well. I would need to use the main axel and gearbox differential and put it in one of my harvesters that didn't have brakes, so I approached to owner and offered him a thousand dollars for the machine he readily accepted and transported it for me on his low loader to the Chilean's farm. I couldn't take it to my base because the low loader wouldn't have been able to unload it there and I needed a tractor to pull it off as it had no engine or steering,

The accountant told me that there was no rush to remove all my machinery and parts that were stored on the farm, but not long after this assurance he asked if I could remove the machines from the shed as new contractors needed to put their tractors away in the sheds and there was no room for my stuff. I asked Eduardo to help and we brought the newest machine back to home base, It was wonderful to have this combine at home because I was able to do a lot of work on it I even got the drum brakes to work,

The other two machines Eduardo towed to his farm, The accountant had been at the farm that morning and Eduardo must have arrived only minutes after he had left, he hitched up one machine and towed it to his farm some 50 kilometres away and then he went back and towed the one without the engine, I had cleared off the farm for good. Strangely enough, Eduardo contacted me to say he had taken all the machines off the farm I was both thankful and amazed, ten minutes later the accountant phoned me to ask me to please remove my harvesters. I said: "There is nothing left on the farm."

"Yes there is" he said "I have just been there".

" Well I can assure you that everything has gone"

He couldn't believe it, I smiled happily to myself "up yours" I thought. I was very grateful to Eduardo.

I thought a lot about the machine without an engine sometimes I needed a part but I couldn't bring myself to take it off that harvester, I would rather get the part made or get it sent from Santa Fe, One day I would get it running and harvesting again.

Eduardo put me in touch with Javier, a farmer in the district who had parsley and celery to harvest, this was a job for one of my combines I had a small cutting header in Lavalle on my other harvester and when the time came I would transport it to and fro on a trailer I made for the purpose, I would use the back roads because the header stuck out and one had to be very careful. I harvested these crops when the time came it was one of the most difficult harvests I have ever done we were not allowed to use a drying agent and the fields had to be direct harvested. The growth was rank and the crop lodged I had to harvest one row at a time reversing back to the start of the next row, Javier paid me by the hour he is always very good about paying the seeds were destined for Holland.

The following season I had onions to thresh and celery to harvest I used the older machine to thresh onion seeds and the new machine to harvest crops of Swiss chard and the celery. All the new harvests and threshing jobs were passed on to me by Eduardo he has always been a friend in need. I also was given a lot of the threshed onion seed to clean.

## **Peps Farm**

Peps had lots of daughters he didn't have any sons after the sixth girl he stopped trying, Pep just went to junior school he never went to secondary school, his schooling was the street, his sister became a gynaecologist and his brother finished school. Pep is brilliant in business he knew all the right contacts and he has done extremely well for himself. His main line of business is his scrap yard he deals with scrap metal and has farming on the side like many successful businessmen in Argentina. Pep's daughters all did very well in school and university he probably has two left to complete their education and they are sure to do well. Two of his daughters studied agronomy in the local university the one daughter at first tried to run a farm Pep had acquired in the east about 130 kilometres from Mendoza city, she couldn't make a go of it and started to come to where I was, she

would never ask me about anything and thought she was above me she had the title of engineer.

I had planted acacia trees along the entrance road and in an area of high water table the trees grew well and dropped the water table, the farm was difficult it couldn't be managed by text book reference.

The girl fresh out of university, bought a lot of olive saplings and planted them along the same road. The small trees all died. She would plant things but nothing seemed to get going. The next thing I know a young man that I use to work with and train in alfalfa seed production was advising Peps daughter how to produce seed. It was all very strange to me, but I said absolutely nothing. Pep told me that one part of the farm a new area that he had cleared and levelled was going to be used by his daughter, I would continue with the part that was in the north and south east side and the south west side his daughter would be working the north west side.

She seeded it with the advice of my ex – acquaintance to Alfalfa for seed and he supplied the seed for multiplication. A tractor driver showed me the seed and asked me what a certain weed seed was that was in the seed it was Cucuta commonly known as Didders or Amarbel the dreaded parasite with its seed mixing with alfalfa seed and very difficult to remove. Bees were also brought to the farm it seemed that my days on the farm were numbered. I stayed on though and watched what happened. Every year I harvested a lot of seed which I shared 50/50 and I lent my harvester to the girl but she had disappointing harvests. After three years of poor harvests her adviser left she was on her own. She asked me to harvest a field of seed she had put the drying chemical on and it was ready to harvest, I took my machine to the field the crop looked as if it had seed but all the pods were empty not one seed could be harvested, I stopped and called her, she came, I told her there was no seed, it happens, she would not believe it, she told me to harvest the field anyway but I refused I would not let my machine go round for nothing. She told me that it would be a good thing when I left the farm. Sometime earlier her father had bought her a combine the exact same make and model as mine it was ready to do her harvest but I don't know why it wasn't used.

The following year the girl had a very good harvest because the farm hand said why don't you do exactly as he does, meaning me and this man was able to regulate the growth the watering and the harvest as he had seen me doing year after year, their machine would not thresh the seed and so they asked me to lend them my machine, I did this without a qualm and they had a good harvest. The third harvest I know absolutely nothing about because I left the farm. I must mention that the girl gave me a present for helping to harvest and that was a jar of honey.

I left the farm because months and years went by and my remuneration was never settled I would ask for my monthly fee but would be given just a fraction of what I was owed. I had all the details on cards that the secretary lady a relative of Peps kept in her office at the scrap yard, where I would get paid. When I asked for a rendering of my account she told me that all her records had been taken away for checking by Pep's brother, these records never came back, I would insist from time to time but nothing happened. I was getting a bit desperate, eventually, Pep found time to have a meeting with me to discuss a new role he and his brother have worked out for me, He said that I would only be needed for specific tasks with the cattle and would be paid for the day I went and that my bonus on the cattle which was 1% of sales would be stopped, He went on to say:

"Of course the seeds on my side would be 50/50 as usual"

"Oh," I said, "Well in that case I resign, but please will you close our account and pay me what is owed to me." Why they could have contemplated me accepting a new deal when they wouldn't settle our account up to date,

Pep said he didn't want me to go and that he would talk to his brother about everything. I went home after that and told Sue,

she said. "Don't go back there and don't phone them."

I did what Sue told me to do I never went back, I did not even hear from them after about three months a friend of theirs phoned me to ask for my advice on his farm and asked me what had happened, I told him that I could have died for all they cared, in my mind they could just keep what they owed me. Their friend told me that Pep was having trouble with his brother and his daughter, the two that were so against me, it is so strange because when his brother tried to run

things, the outcome was so bad they were giving up, the last ditch effort was to get me to pull the farm together, when things are going well you forget who put it all together to achieve this, I'm sure the brother always felt a deep jealousy while the daughter was happy not to have me around because Pep would always compare me to her and she might not have liked that.

I was harvesting a field of alfalfa on the 50/50 basis I harvested, cleaned and gave the person 50% of the finished article, most people enjoy this deal, it's either that or nothing. I then have to sell my part sometimes it can be a long wait and the funds that one needs to run dwindles down to almost nothing.

The property is opposite to Pep's scrap yard and office, I was going back to the farmhouse where I parked the machine for safety and on the way back I swerved to miss a tree and down went the harvesters two wheels into a deep canal I thought I was going to turn over, there was no way I could get out, I tried but the machine listed even more and was sure to turn over on its side, the seed in the bulk tank above the machine was also helping to turn it over. I could have bowed my head and gone over and asked Pep to help me he had mobile cranes that he used to move his scrap around but I would not eat humble pie I would rather leave the machine in the canal before I lowered myself to the level of begging him for help. On the same east side and a short distance to the south of me was another scrap yard he used to be Peps friend but I think they were not on speaking terms, the man wasn't there and his charge hand said they weren't allowed to take the crane off the property, I asked for his boss's telephone number and phoned. "Hi Reg" he said he knew me well a lot more than I knew him I explained the situation and told him I was no longer with Pep. He got hold of his man and sent him off to rescue me. The machine suffered minor damage and I was able to repair it, fortunately I have a lot of spare parts.



I needed a spare for my harvester and I still have a lot of my things stored on Pep's farm behind the scrap yard. One day soon after I ditched my harvester in the canal I sent a message to him to tell him I was going there to get a spare he used this opportunity to arrange a meeting with me. He knew I had a machine without an engine and so to square with me he offered me an engine he had seven of the engines I needed and I went off and selected one of the seven. He loaded it on my pick-up and I brought it home and made it run. Eduardo towed the machine back to my home base we took a roundabout way to avoid traffic and now I am busy getting it ready to have the engine fitted.

The engine is now in place and running, I am now waiting for Covid 19 lockdown to go so I can acquire the hydraulics for the machine. At last restrictions were lifted and back I went into seed cleaning and some harvesting.



The pandemic meant that we had to shut down the language centre and agriculture now is the way in which we will hope to survive in the future.

The last harvests we did were maize and lettuce seed, now we will prepare for the onion seed harvest.

When the onion seed is ready to be harvested a gang of labourers pick the seed heads off the plant, these are then laid out on a floor or on plastic to dry. When the heads are dry enough they are threshed by one of the harvesters. The seed comes out quite clean but most of the producers have me to process their crop to get a very clean sample with very high germination, most producers do not want the second and third grade seed and this gets used for compost.

Today in Argentina it is very difficult to get people to work on the land it can also be very expensive. So I am preparing machinery to mechanize the complete onion seed harvest. This will lead to changing the way the seed crop is managed how it will be planted.

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## **Politics.**

The situation in Argentina is pretty bad at the moment and the general elections are going to come up in October. A new character has come on the scene, he started only two years ago and he might just make it, to be the next president of Argentina,

I have been fed up, along with millions of others with the present government they have been in power for decades and the

economy has been going downhill as quickly as their pockets have been filling. Their main idea is to run a popular movement; to do this they have to print out bank notes to be distributed via groups of leaders to the unemployed people in the country. This means that generations of people do not work, or to work means earning less. These organisations use these people to take part in protests in areas where the opposition party is predominant. They are also used to block people from working in factories and causing chaos. A group of people at the beck and call of the politicians lackeys to cause disruption whenever needed. If a person does not attend one of these protests they could lose their plan of payments. A role call is taken and the protesters are made to feel that they are actually performing a useful job.

Not only is money being constantly printed to keep things going, and causing inflation to run to more than 100% per annum, no all the small businesses are constantly forced to pay more and higher taxes, they are also forced to play lump sums to their workers. Many of them fold and close down.

There are almost no reserves in the central banking system and there is very little money for essential imports, things like cartridges for printing and photocopying, so it's difficult to get this service. One can through internet purchase what you need. pay for it and pay the heavy tax on it, only to find the customs has seized the order and is proceeding to fine you a ridicules amount of money while it is their hands and the only option is to disown the article and hate the government even more. These measures force law abiding people into criminal acts of trying to smuggle the essential goods from a neighbouring country, or close down.

The labour market is very one sided and this is on the side of the worker, it is so expensive to employ anyone an employee has to pay the government about 50% of each employee's salary so in order to pay a salary of \$1000 the tax will be about \$450, if they are on the books, so almost 50% of this market is informal and not taxed. Even in the public sector a good deal of the workforce is casual and not registered.

Politicians such as the Vice president has two old age pensions this is the same as 142 ordinary old age pensions, deputy

representatives and senators get about 10 times a normal person's salary. They are never behind on their remuneration, always the first to fix themselves up. Corruption is so imbedded in this government it will take a truly remarkable person to break this stranglehold and put the country in a position it once enjoyed before the times of Peron from 1946 to 1955 and then from 1973 to 1974 when he died as did Argentina through very bad popular governance.

If you earn some money you have to quickly go and buy dollars these dollars are called blue dollars in the time that Menem was president 1989 to 1999, this was 1 peso for 1 dollar now it is over 780 pesos for one dollar. There are many different dollar values in Argentina and this is used for corruption and dishonest dealings, however the ordinary citizen if he wishes to keep his monetary value will have to buy what they call the blue dollar and this he can get at one of the many money exchange enterprises or from a person on the street who offers to change the money one way or another. The official dollar rate of exchange which is not open to the general public is about 50% less in value to the blue so it becomes obvious how certain entitled people can print money and get rich.

Crime has been on the increase and rising, the prisons are full and the system allows for thieves to be let off without having to pay for their crimes, sixteen year olds are not allowed to be processed and are often used in the crimes. Mostly it is armed robbery and the perpetrators often kill the victim even though they have got what they want. Some areas are deemed free, meaning there is no police presence. It is often wondered why the army isn't used to help fight crime but the soldier is not allowed to use his weapon, even if subjected to a knife attack. The Capital city is very dangerous and many people are leaving and moving into the provinces to get away from the danger here. In Santa Fe province and especially the capital city of the province, Rosario crime is rampant this is due to the increase of drug use and trafficking, again the young and vulnerable are recruited to do the dirty work, the very high corruption means that the authorities are probably paid or threatened and so they take a back seat and let this happen. According to Bard (*the drug-related crime here is high. As of August 30 2023 there have been 259 homicides in Rosario this year of which 70% are believed to be drug related. This*

*is a significant increase from the 241 homicides recorded in 2021. The homicide rate in Rosario is currently four times higher than the national average.)* The people in power at the moment are unable or will not address these growing problems in Argentina today. The long rule of the populist government has meant that whole families have taken over the governance of provinces and have encroached into the legislature.

It seems that the people involved with the governing of the country are incapable or not interested in putting some sort of order in their management, but because the people in power are there due to favour and family they are not good managers but they are very good at making sure they are voted in time and time again. The ways this is carried out is by levelling off the society by causing the middle class to drop into a lower level and become poorer, inflation helps this. To get votes from the prisoners by making life easy for them, to let criminals go because they are only doing what they do because they are hungry. The many nationalised companies which run at a great loss because they are being plunged. Members of the legislature, the town councils, new ministries opening up, the provincial governments all occupy thousands of people that are only necessary for voting or to pass some of their earnings on to their benefactors. Time in power has led to entities, said to be private, such as the vehicle registration to be handled by families of those in power and this group plunders owners, buyers and sellers who have to use this market.

The young people are leaving the country in droves and making a new life for themselves in mainly Europe, their parents are sad but do not see a future for their descendants here. The country seems ripe for a change in governance and most of the population want this but time and time again the system defeats the aspirations and the hopes of the people that wish to live in a prosperous country as it was over a century ago, so anything new is a very difficult if not impossible to install.

It is in this backdrop that a youngish controversial economist called Milei started to voice his indignation and open the eyes of the population, in just two years this new comer to the political world is now well placed to be the next president of Argentina. In the recent

primaries he pulled of the most votes even though he is without the financial backing that the traditional popular movements have. Opposition destroyed thousands of ballot papers and cheated him out of and stole probably more than 5% of his vote. It is a pity that a predominant catholic society can breed such dishonesty.

When I first started to hear about Milei and the renewal, after a hundred years of the liberal party I tried to find a representative here in my province and was able to find a group of people quite near to my home. Through them I joined the party and worked hard with them in the primaries and now we are working towards the final elections in October. If Milei gets in he will take over in December.

It is amazing the propaganda that is being raised against Milei he is in a very dangerous position because many politicians and organizations are going to be axed. The Government at the moment has 22 ministries and a number of other agencies and entities not considered as ministries (they must have been using Gorge Orwell's 1984 as a text book) Milei says that he is going to reduce this to only 8 ministries. He has laid out a plan of exactly how he is going to manage the government, the only one to have put forward a plan, the social media, face book, Instagram, tick tok, What's app and many others are a great help in furthering the liberal movement, giving people hope for the future of their country.

We are working with our own individual funds, unlike the established parties which wastes millions of tax-payer's money on giving gifts such as fridges bicycles computers and even land to indigenous groups some of them that don't even originate in Argentina.

In the run up to elections thousands of bill boards are printed and plastered all over, billions more tax payer's funds poured down the drain, while thousands of children go hungry. People who can still think are thus subjected to brazen insults on their intelligence as the politicians add insult to injury, forcing the closure of one business after another as thousands of young smart young people leave the country for ever.

Will this newcomer preform the miracle will he be allowed to save the country and the people?

This a brief history of my life so far in Argentina.