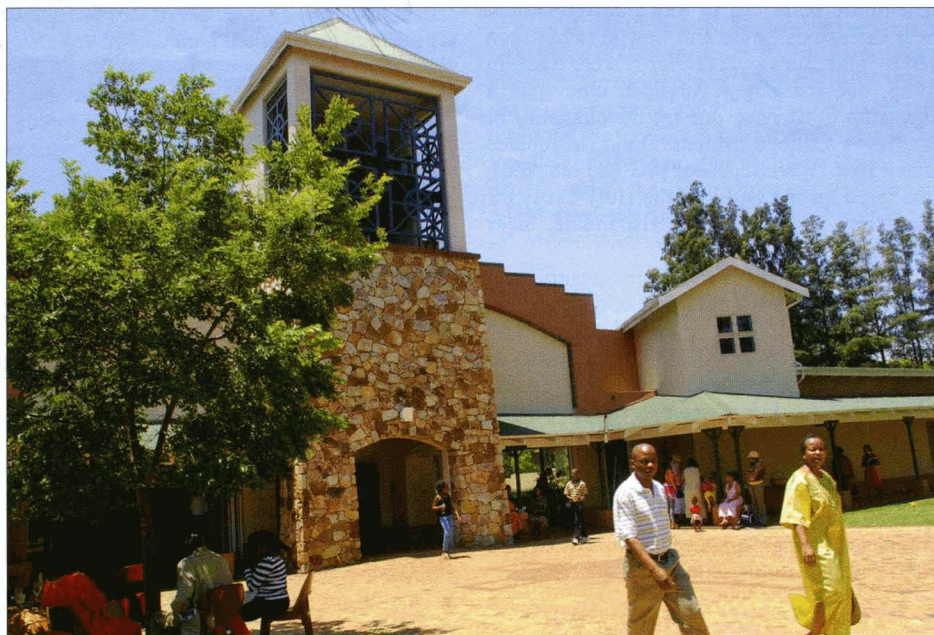


*The Weekly Journal for
Church Bell Ringers since 1911*

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Editor: Robert Lewis

Dedication of Jo'burg's new ring *by Colin Lewis*



*All Saints, Fourways Gardens, Johannesburg on the morning the bells were dedicated
(photo by author)*

Realising a vision

Five years of planning, fund raising and shear hard work came to fruition on the Sunday after All Saints' Day, 2008, when Africa's newest ring of bells was dedicated: the first part of the Jo'burg Project had come to a successful conclusion. The next part of the project is to train a band at All Saints, Fourways Gardens, in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.

During the annual meeting of the South African Guild of Church Bell Ringers in 1995, which just happened to be held in Johannesburg, a Technical Sub-Committee of three members was formed to investigate the possibility of installing new rings of bells in South Africa. The Chairman was Colin Lewis and the other two members were Dick Holmes and Bob Woodhead, both of whom are engineers of

different sorts. The sub-committee was active and, before long, identified a number of towers suitable for rings of bells.

The first project began in 1996, when Dick Holmes declared the tower of Christchurch, Grahamstown, subject to some repairs, to be sound and suitable for a ring of six bells with a tenor of not more than about 200kg. During that year Arthur Jopp was kind enough to allow Colin Lewis to trace the outline of the strickles that he had used to mould his tiny bells at Stoulton, Worcestershire. The Xmeco Engineering foundry in Port Elizabeth then cast a bell for Colin, similar to Arthur's tenor. This bell went to St Andrew's School, Bedfordview, Johannesburg, for the school chapel.

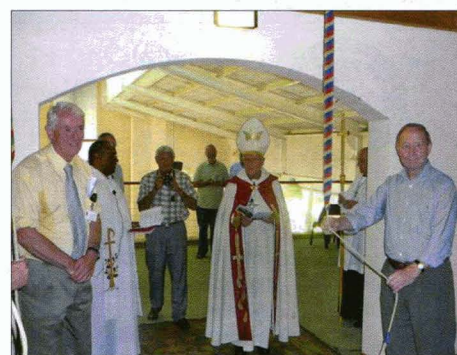
Since the Xmeco-cast bell was satisfactory, and Xmeco was prepared to cast other bells,

Colin negotiated with Eayre and Smith to allow bells to be cast to Eayre and Smith profiles in Port Elizabeth, at Xmeco Engineering. Ray Ayres was very keen that bells of his design should be cast in South Africa. Eventually, after various legal matters had been sorted-out, an agreement was signed between Eayre and Smith, Colin Lewis and Xmeco under which bells designed by Eayre and Smith could be cast at the Xmeco foundry.

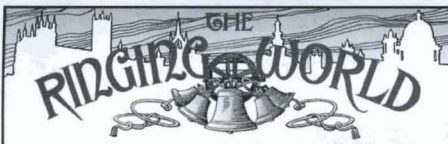
The first Eayre & Smith bell

The first Eayre and Smith bell produced in South Africa was cast in 1996 and was meant to be the tenor of the proposed ring of six for Christchurch, Grahamstown. Ray Ayres came to South Africa to inspect the bell and was sufficiently pleased with it to allow further Eayre and Smith bells to be cast at Xmeco.

During 1996 School House at Kingswood College, in Grahamstown, was destroyed by fire. Luckily one of the pupils chimed the fire-bell and everybody escaped unscathed, even though the building was wrecked. Some of the



*Bishop Buchanan, having handed a rope to Ian Knox, asks him and the Transvaal Society to train a local band of ringers. L to R: Colin Lewis, Rev Michael Oliphant (with open book), present Incumbent of All Saints), Bishop Buchanan, Ian Knox
(photo courtesy of Valerie Hutton-Wilson)*



(Founded by John S Goldsmith)
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**Egleside House,
 7-9 Chantry Street, Andover, Hampshire SP10 1DE
 Telephone: 01264 366 620 Fax: 01264 360 594**

Editor: Robert A Lewis

General Manager: Chris Darvill

E-mail addresses – editorial:

editor@ringingworld.co.uk

letters@ringingworld.co.uk

snippets@ringingworld.co.uk

E-mail addresses – administration:

manager@ringingworld.co.uk

notices@ringingworld.co.uk

subs@ringingworld.co.uk

peals@ringingworld.co.uk

quarters@ringingworld.co.uk

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The Ringing World Limited

(Registered Office) Eagleside House,
 7-9 Chantry Street, Andover, Hampshire SP10 1DE

Directors:

J Roberts (Chairman)

4 Laleham Court, Woking

Surrey GU21 4AX

F J P Bone, P G Davies, W A Hibbert,

C H Rogers, P A G Watts

Company Secretary:

Ian H Oram

(See Central Council Officers box opposite)

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Taylors Eayre & Smith Ltd

The Bellfoundry, Loughborough LE11 1AR

Tel. 01509 212241 Fax. 01509 263305

office@taylorbells.co.uk

<http://www.taylorbells.co.uk>

and

Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd

32/34 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DY

Tel. 020 7247 2599 Fax. 020 7375 1979

bells@whitechapelbellfoundry.co.uk

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boys, who had been in the baths, escaped in their bare skins! All that was left of the fire-bell was part of the mouth and waist. The College authorities asked Colin if he could arrange for a replacement bell to be cast, preferably of the same note as the original bell. From very scanty information, Ray Ayres designed a bell of 590 mm at the mouth that, when cast, weighed 136Kg.

The Head of Music at Kingswood declared that the new bell, cast in 1997 at Xmeco, sounded the same note as the old fire-bell! "And so it should", was Ray's comment. What Kingswood was not told was that Xmeco cast two bells of the same profile, the inscription on the first of which was a little blurred, even though the bell itself was fine. Colin bought the reject bell hoping that, some day, it could be put to good use. Both bells carried the names of Eayre and Smith and the year of casting, as well as the extra inscription required by Kingswood.

Eayre & Lewis

Ray Ayres was possibly a little more enthusiastic than Bob Smith about founding in South Africa, and in 1998 it was decided that future bells cast to Ray's design should bear the names Eayre and Lewis, rather than Eayre and Smith. Five bells were cast in 1998, one for a new Anglican church in a township in Knysna, one for the chapel of St Andrew's College, Bloemfontein (to replace a bell cast at Whitechapel that had cracked), and three for the Order of the Holy Cross for their new monastery at Hillandale, near Grahamstown.

The Hillandale bells were subsequently hung for ringing in a six-bell frame designed by Winston Robinson, in a tower designed by Dick Holmes. Agri-Mech Engineering of Grahamstown fabricated the frame and made the headstocks. Eric Tasmer made the wheels. Colin guided the whole project. Taylors very generously donated two smaller bells and the Fred Dukes Trust and the Central Council donated the treble, all cast in Loughborough, to complete the ring. Ringers in South Africa paid for the fittings for these three bells.

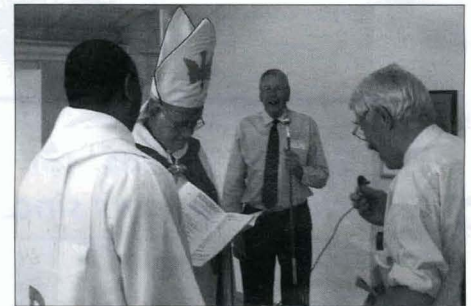
Bells for All Saints'

During May 2003, Gerald Steward, the Incumbent of All Saints' Church, Fourways Gardens, Johannesburg, attended a retreat at Hillandale and heard the bells ringing. He met Colin Lewis, who wasted no time in suggesting that All Saints' should be graced with bells! On 20th May Colin wrote to Gerald, enclosing "a few copies of articles on bells and ringing in South Africa, just to give you an idea of what goes on." He added that: "It took five years to complete the ring of six bells [at Hillandale] ... One has to take a long term view of matters concerning churches! ... As soon as I have seen your tower plans I shall advise on what appears to be possible at your church."

Duncan Buchanan, who had been Warden of St Paul's Theological College in Grahamstown, became Bishop of Johannesburg in 1986. During his time at St Paul's, ordinands were always welcomed to the cathedral ringing chamber, even though few learnt to ring.

Duncan was faced, in Johannesburg, with a rapidly growing city. He soon decided that a new Anglican church was needed to the north of St Michael's, Bryanston, which had been built in 1957.

Gerald Steward was an assistant priest at St Michael's when, in 1998, he was asked to implement Duncan's decision. In the following year the land on which All Saints' Church now



*The Bishop being asked to dedicate the bell.
 (l-r): Revd Michael Oliphant (present
 Incumbent of All Saints, back to camera),
 Bishop Buchanan, Churchwarden David
 Hutton-Wilson, Colin Lewis
 (photo courtesy of Talfryn Davies)*



*Proud achievers after the service of dedication
 at All Saints (l-r): Ian Knox (Ringing Master,
 Transvaal Society, who guided hanging of the
 bells), Revd Gerald Steward (the founding
 Incumbent at All Saints, on whose initiative
 the bell project began), Emeritus Bishop
 Duncan Buchanan (formerly Bishop of
 Johannesburg, who consecrated the bells),
 Chris Robinson (who helped hang the bells),
 David Hutton-Wilson (local leader of the bell
 project, who also helped hang the bells)
 (photo by author)*

stands was purchased. Initially services were held at St Peter's Preparatory School Chapel and then in the gardens of the new church grounds "whilst we watched the All Saints building arise out of the ground". The church, still minus windows and doors, was consecrated on 17th March 2002.

**Officers of the Central Council of
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President: Anthony P Smith

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The Cottage, School Hill, Warnham,

Horsham RH12 3QN (01403 269743)

ihoram@hotmail.com

Website address: www.cccbr.org.uk

During 2003 and 2004 John Powell, the architect who had designed All Saints' Church, had a number of discussions with Colin about the suitability of the church tower for bells. Structural engineers were consulted and then it was announced that an anonymous benefactor had donated R120 000 for the installation of a ring of bells. After considerable discussion the Parish Council agreed to the installation of a ring of six bells, with a tenor of just under 150Kg.

Roger Peters, of Grahamstown Engineering, designed a slightly modified version of the Hillandale bell frame, which his company subsequently made and installed, with the tenor bell, at All Saints in August 2005. The same company made the headstock for the tenor, which was the bell of somewhat blurred inscription that had originally been cast to replace the old fire-bell at Kingswood College. This bell had hung, for a number of years, at Hillandale, enabling the local Grahamstown ringers to practise Minimus there before the new Taylor bells arrived. The wheel for the bell was made by Eric Tasmer, a gifted craftsman who had taught carpentry to girls from Diocesan Girls' School, Grahamstown, where Duncan Buchanan's wife had been a member of staff.

Before 2005 ended the number five bell for All Saints had been purchased, at a generously low price, from Xmeco. This bell had been cast in 2002 for a church in Sarawak but was not exported due to some slight surface discolouration.

An appeal for donations to "The Johannesburg Project", published in *The Ringing World* of 3.3.2006 produced a most generous response from ringers in Britain. As a result, a bell cast in 1999 by Xmeco for Eayre and Lewis, in memory of Elizabeth Ralph, a wonderful Irish lady and a member of the Alexander family of Old Ross in County Wexford, intended for Christchurch, Grahamstown, was bought for All Saints. The Christchurch project, due to a change of incumbent, had been aborted.

Elizabeth trained as a nurse at Dr Steven's Hospital in Dublin before serving in the army during the Second World War, in Britain, France and India. She subsequently nursed in Rhodesia before moving to South Africa, where she married. Elizabeth worshipped for many years at Christchurch and her funeral service there was one of great praise and thanksgiving.

Grahamstown Engineering made the headstocks for the Grahamstown and "Sarawak" bells, while Eric Tasmer made the wheels and other wooden fittings. Chris Robinson and David Hutton-Wilson of All Saints hung the bells under the guidance of Ian Knox of St George's, Parktown, Johannesburg. Ian is the Ringing Master of the Transvaal Society.

Help from Keltek, the Central Council and the Fred Dukes Fund

There was then a wonderful stroke of luck. Taylors, Eayre and Smith cast a bell in 2006 for West Heidelberg in Australia, which proved too deep toned for that ring. The bell was just right for All Saints, however. The Keltek Trust very generously bought the bell and donated it to All Saints. The Trustees of the Fred Dukes International Bell Fund and the Central Council



Ready to ring: Bells by Taylors Eayre and Smith, Eayre and Smith, and Eayre and Lewis; wheels by Eric Tasmer; headstocks and frame by Grahamstown Engineering
(photo by author)

graciously agreed to pay for the second bell and the Transvaal Society paid for the treble, both of which were cast in 2007 by Taylors, Eayre and Smith. A member of All Saints parish donated space for the bells in a container travelling from Britain to Johannesburg, and dealt with the necessary documentation and clearances.

Teething problems

As with the other bells, headstocks and wheels were made in Grahamstown. Parishioners, under the guidance of Ian Knox, hung the bells. When the bells were rung, some of the sallies caught on the top of the rope holes at backstroke, due to the low height of the ringing chamber. Colin, who had provided the calculations for bell hangs, wheel diameters and other technical matters, all of which were very generously checked by Andrew Higson and Stephen Colley of Taylors Eayre and Smith, suggested installing pipes, extending upwards from the floor of the bell chamber, to guide the ropes. These were installed just before the service of dedication, and proved very effective.

On 2nd November 2008 choral Eucharist was celebrated at All Saints' "to commemorate the first decade in the life of All Saints Anglican Church and to acknowledge those who have given their time, money and effort in the success of the development". Kate Dryden, a parishioner who learnt to ring at Parktown, participated in rounds and call-changes before the service commenced. A touch of Plain Bob Minor and an extent of Grandsire Doubles were then rung by Ian Knox, Maureen Roberts, Sue Ottley, Colin Lewis, Richard Roberts and John Kempe.

Concluded on p.29



The Stedman band. L to R: Ian Knox, Colin Lewis, Maureen Roberts, Sue Ottley, John Kempe, Richard Roberts
(photo courtesy of Talfryn Davies)

Editorial

It is a matter of regret that the late Ray Ayres (*see obituary p.44*) did not live to see the completion of the Fourways Gardens project in Johannesburg, but his contribution to bell projects in South Africa will remain as part of the legacy of a distinguished career.

We have some good news about BBC Radio 4's *Bells on Sunday* programme. The Central Council's Public Relations Committee has been working hard to re-establish a close relationship with the programme's production team, and has been successful in gaining input to the announcers' commentaries that accompany recordings and, to some extent, the selection of recordings for broadcast. We hope to be able to publish advance notice of broadcast schedules on the *Ringing World* website. The next two broadcasts will be from St John the Baptist, Egham on 11th January and Winchester Cathedral on 18th January.

Comments are sometimes made to the effect that it is a pity that we cannot have more advance notice of 'live' ringing – particularly peal and quarter attempts (*e.g. see paragraph about Worcester Cathedral on the back page*). While there may be limited scope for providing this information in the paper, we are considering introducing a facility on the *RW* website to do just that at will. First we would like some feed-back about whether organisers of ringing will provide this information on a routine basis and, if so, what level of detail they would wish to include. If you are interested please write to editor@ringingworld.co.uk by 30th January. We will only proceed if there is a sufficient demand for the service.

First Peal Congratulations

Richard A. V. George, Mark A. Collings, Tony Dell, Christine Marrant, Gary Joce

BBC Radio 4's *Bells on Sunday* is broadcast every Sunday at 05:43 and repeated the following Monday at 00:45
You can listen again at:
www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/bellsonsunday

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unusual “v” section on the outer sides. The bell has a flat crown. The inside of the soundbow is curved down to the lip with a hint of a flatter portion by the lip. The leading dimensions are diameter 20 $\frac{3}{8}$ ”, shoulder circumference 35”, lip to shoulder tangent 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ ”, and unworn soundbow thickness 1 $\frac{7}{16}$ ”. The combined Pickford/Dalton view was that this bell is indeed of c.1310-1320.

The smaller bell is hung for swing chiming between posts inside the opening in the west wall. The larger one is hung for swinging chiming between a pair of softwood beams placed at the level of the belfry window openings. It fitted with an oak stock, drive-in gudgeons, stock hoops, plain bearings and a nineteenth century wooden wheel. As on the smaller bell, the stock has a slot for a wooden chiming lever. The bell is secured to its stock with nailed straps and a U-bolt through the argent.

What’s up that tower? One of the earliest surviving bells in Warwickshire – seldom visited, but still heard calling the parishioners to worship as it has done for some 700 years.

BEER MATTERS

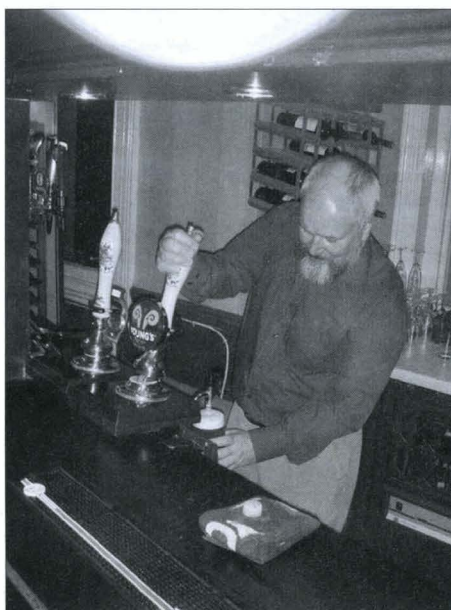
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Jolly Good Ale and Old

*“I cannot eat but little meat, my stomach is not good;
But sure I think that I can drink with him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care, I nothing am a-cold;
I stuff my skin so full within of jolly good ale and old.
Back and side go bare, go bare; both foot and hand go cold;
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough, whether it be new or old.”*

I am indebted to Tom Lawrance for drawing my attention to this delightful verse from *Gammer Gurton’s Needle*, attributed to John Still (1543-1608), Bishop of Bath and Wells. No doubt the killjoys would have us believe that drinking in cold weather is a bad idea, since alcohol dilates the blood vessels, but I shall stick with my romantic images of the noble St Bernard padding through the snow to sustain the stricken traveller with his little cask of brandy and of homely inns with inglenooks and tankards of strong, dark ale before a roaring log fire. We’re talking feel-good factors here.

Beer, surely, is a seasonal thing and it has long been a mystery to me why some people persist in pouring pints of cold, fizzy lager (or, even more perversely, supercooled* stout) down their throats *all year round*. As a general rule my preference is for a light, well-hopped bitter. I’m not entirely averse to the occasional glass of good quality lager, lightly chilled, on a summer’s day and, when



Maximising a pint of Young’s Bitter

on holiday in warmer climes, have been known to drink all manner of local brews which wouldn’t merit a second sip back home. But on a cold winter’s evening there is just no substitute for a strong, preferable dark, and heart-warming ale.

I had half a mind to report on this year’s new seasonal offerings but I’ve yet to find one worth writing about. Any recommendations would be gratefully received. Of those I’ve reviewed before, *Rosey Nosey*, with the flashing LED pump clip, and the execrable *Santi-freeze* are still doing the rounds but Hopback’s glorious *Pickled Santa* is so far nowhere to be seen (although according to their website it is available this month). Young’s *Winter Warmer* seems to have finally found its form following the move to Bedford two years ago. My lovely local, now under the skilful management of the long-serving barmaid Sarah who has just taken over the licence, has had the *Warmer* on for a couple of weeks now and I’ve almost forgotten what the *Ordinary* tastes like.

“No frost nor snow, nor wind, I trow, can hurt me if I wold;

I am so wrapped and thoroughly lapp’d of jolly good ale and old.”

* Before the pedants leap to their feet, I do know what supercooled means and those “extra cold” beverages are actually a degree or two above freezing. But it might be rather amusing if they were delivered to the glass as supercooled liquids. I guess the act of swallowing would cause enough turbulence to precipitate the formation of chunks of ice in the drinker’s oesophagus. That’d learn ‘em.

A couple of postscripts to my last column about the pint:

Charles Wells now appear to have abandoned the “full English pint” and reverted to the ubiquitous 500ml bottle – shame!

Although I have downed many thousands of pints in the past 40 years, I had never pulled one – until a few weeks ago.

Maximus Bibendus
(maximus@bibendus.org.uk)

Jo’burg dedication *Concluded*

The service can only be described as wonderful. The congregation sang lustily, Bishop Buchanan preached an inspired sermon that was acclaimed with a standing ovation, much to his surprise. “I’ve never been given an ovation for any of my other sermons”, he said, “Shall I start again?” “NO”, the congregation roared! Gerald Stewart, now retired, beamed from ear to ear as he was asked to assist in celebrating the Eucharist. David Hutton-Wilson, originally from Helmsley in Yorkshire, and who was the local driver behind the bell project, was one of the Churchwardens who escorted the Bishop, immediately before the Peace, to the Ringing Chamber.

Colin Lewis then asked the Bishop, on behalf of the South African Guild of Church Bell Ringers and the bell founders, to consecrate the bells, handing him the tenor rope: “But please don’t pull it, or you might ascend rapidly, My Lord”. “I don’t think my mitre would fit through the hole”, was the instant reply!

After blessing the bells, Bishop Buchanan handed a rope to Ian Knox, Ringing Master of the Transvaal Society, adjuring him and his Society to train a local band. A plain course of Plain Bob Minor was then rung as the Bishop processed back to the chancel.

At the end of the service the bells were rung to Plain Bob Minor and, finally, Stedman Doubles conducted by Richard Roberts. They go like tops and their little tinkling sounds are a joy to listen to. They are a credit to their founders, to all those who designed and built the tower, made the frame, the fittings, undertook the necessary calculations, and hung them. They are also worthy of all those, in many parts of the world, who made it possible for this project to come to fruition by their financial generosity and practical aid, including gifts of old ropes from towers in Wales and England to get ringing started.

Finally, the stirring service of dedication ended with a massive brunch, where hungry ringers probably ate far too much! They were also bombarded with questions: “When can we learn to ring?” for example. The architect was delighted: his tower had not collapsed! He has already designed more churches, but none of them with towers. Obviously he needs to speak seriously to his clients! Last, but not least, the African sun shone brightly on us all, the peacocks screeched on the lawns, and the gathering clouds promised future rain, and thus prosperity and, we all hope, more rings of bells for this beautiful part of Africa.

COLIN LEWIS

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