



McBEAN, Margaret Ann (nee Flemmer)

Margie McBEAN | 3 April 1940

MARGARET ANN⁸ FLEMMER (OWEN JOHN⁷, MARIUS TOGER⁶, HANS CHRISTIAN⁵) born on 3 April 1940 in East London, South Africa. She married DUNCAN MATHIE McBEAN on 10 December 1966 in Blantyre, Malawi, son of LACHLAN McBEAN and GERTRUDE O' MEARA. He was born on 23 June 1934 in Salisbury, Rhodesia.

My twin brother, Brian, and I were born in East London to Owen and Heyla Flemmer at the Mater Dei Hospital on the 3rd April 1940. A year after I was born, my father enlisted in the army to fight in the Second World War. My mother, brother and I went to live with my grandparents, Marius & Kathleen Flemmer, and my aunt, Patsy Flemmer, in their spacious home on the Nahoon River. My cousin Terry Herbert, and his mother, Auntie Kath, joined us and we have very happy childhood memories of fishing and swimming off the jetty, going out on the river in our old wooden rowing boat, and playing on the little island which was also owned by my grandfather. In addition he had a dilapidated beach cottage at Bonza Bay, where we would all go for weeks on end. We would swim in the lagoon or spend hours in the sea or exploring the many rock pools. I think it was during this time that I developed a great love of the sea. At the age of five I went to the Convent in East London and a few months later my father returned home at the end of the war. Some time later Dad was given an ex-service man's house, where we lived until 1950 when we moved to Rhodesia. In 1947 my brother John was born, so he was only three years old at this time. I missed the East London family terribly and found it difficult to make friends, but we eventually settled down, especially when we brought our own home in Highlands, Salisbury. I did my secondary schooling at the Dominican Convent, where I passed my Cambridge School Certificate and then completed a Commercial Course at the end of 1957. My sister Kathleen was born in 1954, and was much loved by her older siblings. I had several secretarial jobs, and enjoyed a hectic social life with a large group of teenagers. I loved the rock & roll era and had lots of fun.

The mid sixties and seventies were very difficult years politically. The African Nationalists were wanting independence from Britain's colonial power and the Rhodesian Government, led by Prime Minister Ian Smith had no intention of handing over the reins to the black majority. As a result UDI was declared in 1965 and so began the bloody war of liberation and sanctions placed on Rhodesia by Britain. After great strife and loss of life on both sides the country became independent in 1980. Salisbury became Harare and Rhodesia became Zimbabwe under the present President, Robert Mugabe.

The war affected the family personally inasmuch as it was necessary to travel in convoy to any areas outside the main centres as ambushes by terrorists were frequently encountered. Duncan was required to do stints for 3 week periods guarding bridges, leading convoys in armoured vehicles etc. Many young soldiers were killed during this time. With sanctions imposed on us, Rhodesians became very inventive and many items were made locally which had previously been imported. We had strict petrol rationing and mothers formed lift clubs to get the younger children to school and back until they were able to ride.

In 1963 I joined the Shell Company as a shorthand typist, and became a member of the Shell Sports Club where I began playing tennis; a sport I found to be very enjoyable. My parents were transferred to Bulawayo, naturally taking Johnny and Kath with them. I then lived in a flat with a girl friend. It was at this time that I met my future husband, Duncan McBean, as he also worked for Shell and belonged to the Club. After going out together for sometime he was transferred to Northern Rhodesia and later Malawi. We became engaged while he was in Lusaka and were later married in Blantyre, Malawi where we lived for several years before returning to Salisbury. Our marriage took place in 1966 on 10th December and our first daughter, Nola Eileen, was born on 22nd December, 1967. My parents were still in Bulawayo at the time, so this is where she was born. We returned to Malawi when she was two weeks old. The years spent in Blantyre, Malawi were a lot of fun. It was a very cosmopolitan society, with many of the friends we made there on contract. It seemed that we were always sadly bidding them farewell or welcoming new arrivals. Life centred around the Sports Club, where I played tennis and swam and Duncan played golf, often after work.

By the time our second daughter, Carol Ann, was born on 8 July 1969, we were back in Salisbury and had built a house in the new suburb of Mandara. When the girls were half way through junior school, we moved literally around the corner (using wheelbarrows and a borrowed truck) to a bigger house that had a swimming pool. Nola and Carol attended Courtney Selous School and later Oriel Girls High School. They were able to safely ride the 3km there on their bikes from about the age of nine.

Almost 25 years later with both girls having flown the nest and with families of their own, we decided to build a retirement home on a more secure property. We opted for the golfing Estate, Borrowdale Brooke, which was being developed at the time.



Duncan, Margie and Angela Botha