

# Mirrilees Visitors in South Africa!

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By Mike Mirrilees

Our Cousin Kathy and her husband Robin had invited us to South Africa during one of their visits to see us in Chicago. Over the years, we got to meet two of Kathy's three children, Tanya and Andrew but had never met Nicole or Kathy's sister Sheila and her family.

In mid-January, my son Iain and I took the opportunity to leave our Chicago winter behind and visit our cousins in Cape Town, South Africa. Many of you may have met Kathy & Robin Marten at the 2013 Merrilees International Gathering Cruise to Alaska. More of you may recall that her Dad, the reverend James Mirrilees was a key influence in the Merrilees Family Association's beginning back in 1994.



We took a 21 hour flight from Chicago through Amsterdam and on to Cape Town. The first day of our trip, Iain's cousin and his wife (Chris & Emily Lund), who are doing a year of Christian Outreach



in Cape Town, took us all around the beautiful city and countryside. We had lunch in the

charming seaside town of Fishhoek on our way down to the Cape of Good Hope, where Iain and Chris did some free climbing on the giant rocks of Dias Beach, at the very tip of the African Continent later in the day. The beaches are incredibly beautiful, the water ice cold and the weather warm and sunny every day. There is usually a pretty good breeze so hang on to your hat! We had a treat in seeing penguins, seals, and baboons on our first day.

I stayed with Kathy & Robin who live in the seaside town of Muizenberg near Cape Town and learned that Chieftain, Bill Merilees of Nanaimo, BC and one of his sons stayed with them a few months earlier. Kathy & Robin are perfect hosts, we enjoyed many delicious meals at their home and also at local wineries. In fact, the wine was so good that it left Iain researching how to become an importer!

Muizenberg is a big surfing destination, and Iain and I took the opportunity to test out our skills. He was quite successful at it, while I just got a good work out. We also went abseiling down

table Mountain, a scant 400 foot descent, but when you start 4400 feet above the nearby sea, it seems really high!



The highlight of our trip was a family brai (barbecue) at the home of Kathy's son Andrew and his lovely wife Jess, who happens to be a great former collegiate tennis player.

Andrew and Jess had all the family in South Africa there for us to meet. We got to meet Kathy's daughter Nicole, her husband Steve and their crop of blond headed children, Tanya and her husband Mark and their son and daughter, Andrew and Jess and their children and also Kathy's sister Sheila and her son Paul. We enjoyed great conversation, great food, and fantastic local wine. I had a keen sense that our forbears were looking down from heaven with happy hearts to see all their great- great grandchildren together at a family do. I have now met all of My great Uncle Jimmy's children, and nearly all his grandchildren and great grand children. One from my bucket list!



Steve & Nicole Rennie & family



Mark & Tayna



Shelia & Paul