

ENGLISH FOOTBALL SUCCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA!!

By PETER BOND



Below is an account of part of a fantastic trip a group of friends and I took to South Africa during the World Cup.

On our third day we played a pre-arranged 11-a-side game at Camps Bay Football Club in Cape Town, a surreal setting to play football with Table Mountain on view one side and Palm trees and the beach on the other! We beat a South African Eleven 4-1 – surely England's best performance of the World Cup!

Taking in a trip to Robben Island – a must for all visitors, a club night with Fatboy Slim as DJ – a very strange affair, the painful matches against Algeria, Slovenia and Germany as well as Portugal 7 North Korea 0, plus many more highlights, not least the wonderful hospitality of every South African we met, exploding the myth that we would be mugged, stabbed, burgled etc by every poor black local encountered – the media have a lot to answer for on that score, not to mention one of our group who emigrated there a couple of years ago putting 13 of us up in his house for 4 nights – he has a very understanding wife and 2 gorgeous children.

The best and most humbling part of the trip is described below courtesy of 'Jono' who organises all our football trips including World Cups and Euros to Italy, France, Portugal, Germany, Holland etc. A special mention goes to Martin, Dave (both Carlisle) and Rich (Barrow) for raising money, see below, Jimmy (QPR) for supplying one school with a full Rangers kit, plus Nick (Chelsea... shame), Martin (Liverpool), Greg (West Ham), Ed who lives in Cape Town (QPR), Moose, myself (both Arsenal) and Jono (Everton).

If you get the chance you must visit South Africa – you won't regret it!

ENGLAND FANS GIVING TO THE LOCAL SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY
In line with FIFA's Mission Statement

to 'Develop the game, touch the world and build a better future' nine independent England fans (all supporting different teams in England) organised a 'Football Coaching Session & World Cup Tournament Day' for local South African children at Samara Game Reserve in the heart of the Great Karoo desert.

- England supporter and FA Registered Coach Jono Vernon-Powell (visiting South Africa over the World Cup) arranged through his travel company's contacts to run the 'Fans Friendship Day' at Samara Game Reserve www.samara.co.za
- The England fans ran a full day's football coaching course and World Cup Tournament for local Graaf-Reinet children on 24th June (between the Slovenia and Germany games).
- Homeless children from the Vuyani Safe Haven (www.vuyanisafehaven.co.za) and ten local schools (accompanied by Mayor Jafta) enjoyed one of the World Cup's more remarkable events.
- The travelling England fans set up the event before departing the UK with a charity fund raising football match at Brunton Park, England. They raised enough money to purchase footballs, bibs, cones, prizes, medals, football shirts, T-shirts and other football memorabilia – which were all donated to the Children after the Coaching Day in South Africa.
- With Graaf-Reinet (www.graaffreinet.tourism.co.za) remotely located in the heart of the Great Karoo desert over 60 children had an opportunity to experience the World Cup first hand in their own back yard.
- If the England team failed to raise the average fan's heartbeat – certainly their fans have.

If you would like further information please contact – Jono Vernon-Powell @ Nomadic Thoughts (World Wide Travel) – +44 (0)20 7604 4408.



NO CHANGE SHALL CONTINUE?

By MICK GROOM

The great Peter Tosh once sang "400 years and it's the same philosophy, 400 years and still the people can't see". Wise words I'm sure you'll agree and so relevant here, now in 2010, as the same failed system chugs along the road to ruin. In the late seventies, at the tender age of 13, my older brother took me to an event that changed my whole perception of life completely.

The Rock Against Racism Carnival Staged at Brockwell Park in Brixton, in September 1978, literally changed my life. For a young naive bumpkin growing up in rural Rutland, the images of that day are still clear, the messages even clearer. Yet how far have we actually moved on? Sadly this is the question I still ask myself on a daily basis and the answer is always – not that far really.

Next year 2011, marks the centenary of the Liverpool Transport Strike. A dispute which was the culmination of many actions, not only in Liverpool but also across the whole Kingdom. The impact of mass solidarity led to better pay and conditions for many working class men and women. Trade Unionism was strengthened by the unity of workers from different trades, amalgamations swelled numbers from thousands to tens of thousands, forcing employers to sit up and take notice.

I find it disappointing although not surprising, that nearly a century on, the kind of unity, courage and determination seen back then is clearly lacking in a general sense now, especially as pay and conditions are not much better in a relative sense. Does anyone seriously believe that working people are actually better off these days?

- Are we working less? No
- Do we have more prospects? No
- Are we any less expendable? No

If you believe the propaganda, we are having the time of our lives! A slab of lager, 20 ciggies, being sold to-on the plasma HD 3D telly, on the DAB Digital radio, on the phone and online; a bit of the liquid cosh and a dose of brainwashing – life of riley! The comparison to one hundred years ago lies beyond the illusion that the system updates as time passes, and is evident in the policies that are now heading our way. Same shit – different decade.

Of course there have been many advances in working practices, conditions and pay, so it's not all doom and gloom, but as the double dip approaches the resolve of many working people will be tested to the full.

Many believe, myself being one, that working people can and will stand united once again, however, with the amount of debt imposed on us nowadays our numbers may be too few.

I'd like to use the taxi trade as an example here, as that is my profession. During a recent campaign by the Liverpool Cab Section of UNITE, various major towns and cities were visited by our team of activists. We targeted ranks and spoke to many cabbies, the vast majority of whom had issues and grievances similar to our own.

However, we found the difference was that, because they were represented by local

associations, run by those with vested interests, and not a nationally recognised trade union, very little was being achieved.

You see, when local authorities are approached by a trade union they are more likely to sit up and take notice and work with you, rather than just palm you off with a large pile of bullshit.

Here's an example for you; when a customer undertakes the hiring of a black cab, he or she will have certain expectations of service, including knowledge, trust and professionalism, just because of what it is – a black cab. The same example can also be levelled at trade unions.

When unions approach an organisation, such as a local authority, there is an immediate understanding of what to expect. They understand the knowledge and influence that trade unions possess. It is this that gives trade unions the edge over smaller, less familiar trade associations. The proof is in the pudding of course and we discovered that during our campaign. Many of the problems that drivers related to us from around the country, our branch in Liverpool had already addressed in one way or another. All this to the astonishment of those we talked to. This only goes to show that organised trade unionism works.

Maybe it is now time to amalgamate the Licensed Taxi Trade, all representative bodies joined into one strong trade voice, with a national identity and cross trade support numbering hundreds of thousands of workers. This not only adds weight to national issues but gives an opportunity for local differences to be addressed with the same support. It's about empowering the worker, giving him or her confidence, reassurance and knowledge that their rights are not being compromised.

The benefit to the service that cabbies provide would improve if this were to happen, thus earnings and customer satisfaction would increase. Unfortunately the "can't be arsed" attitude that exists today makes our task even harder, apathy rules the ranks and the mistrust that people vent towards MPs and Local Councillors is sometimes aimed towards union officials as well.

I believe that a nationally united trade would and could force through the changes urgently required to lighten the heavy load being carried by the poor cabbie in 2010. Back in 1910 the unions and the workers understood that lots of small associations and representative groups had no real future, but united together they had power in numbers.

That is how change happens, and change needs to happen. Of course the powers that be are always trying to break things up into smaller, more easily managed portions, that works fine for them, a little bit of divide and rule goes a long way.

To conclude, I would like to put the above to the test and challenge drivers, owners and hackney associations to put their own self interests aside for a minute and think about what I have said here.

What have you got to lose?

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Dear CTN

Have just returned from the world cup and picked up my copy of CTN & Branch Newsletter.

I just want to confirm my support for the union over the different markings for sector drivers; it would be ridiculous to start to turning driver against driver over such a trivial matter when we face so much over biased regulation or

lack thereof by the so called authorities that are meant to represent to us. I really don't care if the public use a yellow or green badge driven cab, at least they have been able to get into a licensed vehicle without the aggravation and harassment of a chaotic free for all system that for far too long the PCO, Police etc. seem to think doesn't exist.

Michael Beckingham, UNITE London Cab Section member. (All London Badge) Via email