

# HERITAGE of ZIMBABWE

PUBLICATION No . 18

1999



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Publication No. 18 — 1999



**Founded 1953**

THE HISTORY SOCIETY OF ZIMBABWE  
Harare  
Zimbabwe  
December 1999



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*HERITAGE OF ZIMBABWE* is the journal of The History Society of Zimbabwe. It replaces *RHODESIANA* which was the journal of The Rhodesiana Society which Society absorbed the National Historical Association and Heritage of the Nation, and later became the History Society of Zimbabwe.





*Edited by*

**MICHAEL J. KIMBERLEY**

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# Foreword

Once again The History Society of Zimbabwe is pleased to present to its members in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, the annual volume of its journal *Heritage of Zimbabwe*.

There are five major contributions in this issue. Firstly, a biography of Colonel Hoel Llewellyn is presented by B. H. Taylor of Banket who is the proud owner of Colonel Llewellyn's medals which caused him to carry out the research resulting in this excellent article.

Secondly, regular contributor Rob Burrett, now teaching at Peterhouse, contributes an outstanding paper on Events in the Second Anglo Boer War in the Tuli Area.

Thirdly, Ian Tomes presents another well researched and copiously illustrated article on The Midlands and occurrences at certain places in that area in 1896. Ian, of course, was stationed in Gweru for a few years after Independence as a member of the British Military Advisory and Training Team.

Fourthly, Dr Bob Challis produces a scholarly paper on the machinations of the Education Department and the Municipality vis-a-vis two teachers at the Salisbury High School, namely, Kerr and Garcia.

Finally, John McCarthy writes a moving article, no pun intended, on the Thousand Guinea Trophy which was competed for from 1914–1997 and stolen in 1998 from the Bulawayo Museum, never to be seen again.

R. D. Taylor, a railway enthusiast writes on the Railway and Peter Jackson presents a paper on the Chimney at the Athens Mine in Mvuma town which has been a conspicuous landmark since it was built 86 years ago.

The long established policy of our Society is that the content of our annual journal should ideally consist of equal parts of original articles and the text of talks given to members in Harare or elsewhere on expeditions arranged by the Society to places of historical interest.

This issue contains the text of some of the excellent talks given at Triangle on the Society's expedition to Zimbabwe's Lowveld in June 1999 by a number of talented speakers. The text of more of the Triangle talks will be included in later volumes of this journal.

Most of our members enjoy biographies and we are pleased that Colin Saunders has decided to write a series of biographical articles on notable characters of the Zimbabwean Lowveld which he has offered to submit for publication over the next few years. The first of these on J. Whittall is included in this issue.

Finally, we include a talk on the Hindoo Temple in Harare written by its architect M. Pearce.

In conclusion, grateful thanks again are once again expressed to our Benefactors and Sponsors, all of whom have so generously committed themselves to assisting us financially to meet the ever increasing printing costs in inflation-ridden Zimbabwe.

**Michael J. Kimberley**

Honorary Editor, *Heritage of Zimbabwe*



# Colonel Hoël Llewellyn DSO, KPM, DL A Life

by B. H. Taylor

## PREFACE

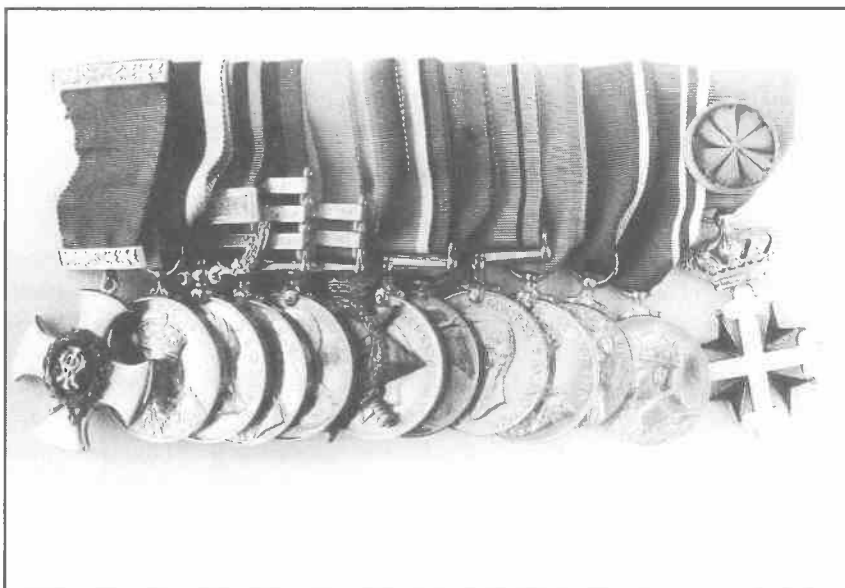
To those who have a working knowledge of the history of Rhodesia between 1893 and 1901, the name of Hoël Llewellyn will be familiar. His activities as an Officer in the service of the British South Africa Company have been fairly well reported upon in contemporary books and publications. There is even a passing reference to his previous service with the Royal Navy as a Midshipman.

Following his departure from the British South Africa Police (BSAP) in January 1901, mention of him in Rhodesian literature is sparse and culminates in his brief obituary published in the May 1945 issue of *Outpost*.

This scenario is not unusual in relation to many of the personalities of those early days in Rhodesia. As a collector and researcher of medals awarded to the BSAP the whereabouts of the medals of those men is always of some interest and in many cases of envy!

So it was with some surprise, followed by anticipation and most of all, pleasure, that in May 1997 I was able to obtain Llewellyn's medals, which reflected the varied and interesting career that he had enjoyed.

Having achieved this objective, and with the intention of making the group the "star" of my collection, I embarked upon the research of his life.



The medals of Colonel Hoël Llewellyn DSO, KPM, DL

During the course of early research a purely fortuitous meeting with a local historian in a small Wiltshire village, resulted in my meeting up with Llewellyn's stepson, Major Timothy Morley, at his home, also in rural Wiltshire.

The fact that Major Morely's home was a farmhouse known to have been built about 1670 added to the pleasure, apart from the vicarious link with those early days of Rhodesian history. I am indeed indebted to Major Morely for all the assistance he has given me in the compilation of both this story and the enhancement of the medal group with additional artifacts.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Mr Clifford Rogers, a former member of the BSAP and currently very involved in the preservation of BSAP history with the National Army Museum in London. Neither would my acknowledgements be complete without reference to the assistance I have been given by Mr Alaistair Massie of the National Army Museum.

## **EARLY DAYS**

Hoël Llewellyn was born on 24 November 1871 at Burrington, in the District of Blagdon, Somerset, one of five sons of Colonel Evan Henry Llewellyn, and Mary Blanche (nee Somers).

Colonel Evan Henry Llewellyn was later to become the Member of Parliament for North Somerset.

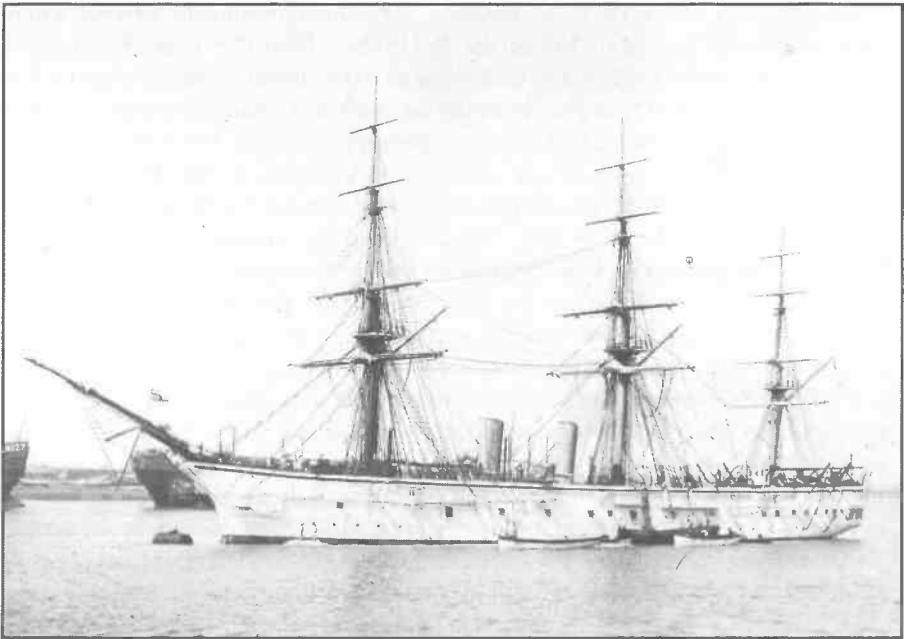
Hoël entered the Britannia Royal Naval College, then a moored hulk in the River Dart, on 15 January 1885 aged eleven where, after completing his two year course and rated as of very good conduct and of fair ability, he was sent to H.M.S. Iron Duke of the Channel Squadron, as a midshipman.

After eighteen months with the Iron Duke he was signed aboard the 4140-ton iron cruiser H.M.S. Boadecia, Capt. Curzon-Howe, to serve on the East Indies Station, which encompassed East and West of the Indian ocean.

H.M.S. Boadecia was engaged in blockading Zanzibar Island and the Kenyan Coast in efforts to suppress the slave trade. Whilst employed on these duties Midshipman Llewellyn was commended for creditable conduct during an engagement with a slave dhow. Also whilst with Boadecia he went down with fever, which may have influenced his leaving the ship on the 11 September 1889 and joining H.M.S. Undaunted, Capt. Lord Charles Beresford, in the Mediterranean on 18 February 1890.

In the following months Midshipman Llewellyn served aboard other ships including H.M.S. Victoria and H.M.S. Amphion in what must have been a pleasant and enlightening time visiting various places such as Tangier, Malta, Gibraltar, Sicily, Naples and Salonika.

A combination of illness and service in remote parts finally resulted in Llewellyn leaving the Navy on 29 November 1892 having failed three times to pass the required examination to Lieutenant. Despite this he was reported as a zealous and promising officer.



H.M.S. Boadecia, 1875  
(R. N. Museum)

## AFRICA

### **The Rhodesian Rebellions 1893 and 1896**

Hoël Llewellyn is next heard of in Rhodesia where he was employed as a Government surveyor. His presence here may have been influenced by the fact that his elder brother, T. E. Llewellyn, was then a Lieutenant with the Cape Boys Regiment in Mashonaland. It was probably also no coincidence that the first Surveyor General of Rhodesia, and currently Chief Magistrate in Bulawayo, was Andrew H. F. Duncan, who had served on H.M.S. Boadecia as a Lieutenant, although prior to Llewellyn.

When the Matabeleland rebellion broke out in August 1893 Llewellyn was embodied as a Lieutenant in the Salisbury Horse, being put in charge of the artillery and maxim guns. The "artillery" consisted of 2 maxim guns, a 7 pdr field gun and a Gardner gun.

It is of interest that the gun invented by Hiram Maxim of the USA was at that time a relatively new weapon and had yet to be tested in action. It had only been adopted by the British Army in 1891. Subsequent to the 1893 campaign Capt. Llewellyn compiled an eight page discourse on the merits and demerits of the two types of carriages in use for "higher authority" (see the transcript at the end of this article).

The Mashonaland Column sent to the relief of the Matabeleland settlers was despatched from Salisbury on the 5 September 1893, under the command of Maj. P. W. Forbes. Union with a similar column from Fort Victoria was arranged for the Iron Mine Hill near the modern village of Mvuma.

A stop-over of a few days was made at Fort Charter, South of Salisbury where the

column paraded before Dr. L. S. Jameson, the column eventually arriving without undue incident at Iron Mine Hill on the 16 October. Thereafter opposition from the rebellious Matabele slowly grew, with frequent night alarms, skirmishes and hit and run raids. The Battle of Shangani, in which the combined columns repulsed five impi and a smaller division of the Matabele occurred on 25 October. The Salisbury artillery troop was in the centre of the laager and faced the main thrust of the Matabele attack.

By this time there had been considerable rainfall *en route* thus there was no shortage of water in the field for either side, a situation entirely different today!

The column continued to progress South until 1 November when they outspanned to water the horses and cattle at the headwaters of the Bembesi River. On this day came the major clash between the two sides resulting in total defeat of the Matabele and the subsequent abandonment of the Royal Kraal at Bulawayo. This affair is known as the Battle of Bembesi (Egodade) and resulted in considerable Matabele losses as against only a few of the Rhodesians, largely attributable to the work of the Maxim guns whose reputation was now established.

Once again the Artillery troop was in the centre of the laager and faced the main onslaught. Lt. Llewellyn seems to have escaped without injury on both occasions.

The column shortly after arrived at Bulawayo and not long after this Hoël Llewellyn went back to surveying, although still in command of Rhodesian artillery and Maxim guns. However, in July 1895 he returned to England to recuperate from malaria, perhaps it was because of this that he did not become a participant in the Jameson Raid that December?

By the time the Rebellion broke out in March 1896 Hoël Llewellyn was back in Rhodesia and on 6 April he was the Artillery Officer of a column that left Salisbury under command of Col. R. Beal CMG, to assist the beleaguered residents of Bulawayo. On the way to Gwelo the column was involved in a fight with the rebels at Maven, which was successfully resolved before they met up with Col. Napier's Column at Gwelo, from where they advanced South to Bulawayo.

When based at Bulawayo patrols were sent out in various directions to locate and harass the Matabele rebels. Llewellyn was a member and again Artillery Officer of a strong patrol led by Col. H. Plumer, later to become Maj. Gen. CB, ADC, which patrolled down the Eastern Matopos during July.

The first serious action was the attempt to dislodge Babiyaan and his Impi, with limited success as the rebels were safely holed up in the rocky fastnesses of the Matopos.

The next major action came on 5 August in the attack on Sekombi's stronghold near Fort Umlugulu on the Tuli Road. The patrol was attacked by a large force of Matabele and in danger of being overwhelmed. Llewellyn ran forward and operated an abandoned Maxim which stopped the Matabele in their tracks. It is interesting that contemporary reports suggest that the maxim crew had all been killed or wounded, but a later comment by Llewellyn says that when surprised by the Matabele the men had deserted the gun. A Trooper Holmes was killed going to Llewellyn's assistance. For this incident and general conduct Llewellyn was Mentioned in Despatches and recommended for a gallantry award, which did not materialise at that time.

Consequent upon his service both in the 1893 and the 1896 rebellions Llewellyn was to receive the BSA Company medal for 1893 with the 'Mashonaland 1896' clasp.

## AFRICA

### The South African War 1899–1902

Thereafter Llewellyn remained in Bulawayo becoming an Inspector in the BSA Police, Matabeleland Division (II). Here he remained until the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in October 1899. In anticipation of this war special service officers from Imperial Regiments had been sent to various parts of South Africa to supervise preparations for war, and so it was that Colonel Baden-Powell was at Mafeking in this capacity. Such officers wore mufti until after hostilities commenced when they went back to uniform.

Hoël Llewellyn, by then a Captain, was immediately involved in the modification of railway rolling stock to provide armoured trains for the defence of the route to Rhodesia from the South. The railway had arrived in Bulawayo in late 1897, at the welcoming Badge ceremonies of which, Llewellyn was an invited guest. A contemporary photograph shows him in uniform holding discussions aboard an armoured train in company with Col. R. S. S. Baden-Powell and Col. J. S. Nicholson, Commandant General of the BSA Police, the latter two being in mufti.

Llewellyn was in charge of the first armoured train that left Bulawayo for the South on the 11 October 1899, arriving at Crocodile Pools (now Notwane) on 13 October.

Whilst still at this location on the 20 October the train was attacked by the Boers and forced to retreat back to Mahalapye following destruction of the bridge over the Limpopo River at this place.

In addition to operating the armoured trains, Capt. Llewellyn was commander of the entire artillery available in Rhodesia at that time, consisting of 3, 2.5" guns; 2, 7 pdrs, one 12½ pdr Vickers-Maxim and eight Gatling and Maxim MGs.

Llewellyn continued operating with the armoured trains supporting Plumer's advance South to relieve Baden-Powell, under siege in Mafeking. The relief of Mafeking was finally achieved on 14 May 1900. For his part in these operations Capt. Llewellyn was awarded the DSO (LG 19 April 1901.)

Thereafter Capt. Llewellyn continued to operate in the Western Transvaal and North of Pretoria. On 3 September he was in charge of artillery and accompanied by two companies of the Royal Munster Fusiliers who engaged a Boer Commando under Piet Coetzee at Buiskop Pass near Warmbaths.

Coetzee was launching an attack on General Paget's camp, but was repelled at this action, being killed together with Tpr Finan of the BSAP.

The day following the action General Paget sent his usual daily telegram to Lord Roberts at Pretoria. In reporting the action at Warmbaths he said, "... a kopje on our left which was defended by my two mountain guns under Capt. H. Llewellyn of the British South Africa Police and a Company of the 1st Munster Fusiliers. The guns were fought with great determination under very heavy crossfire..."

Towards the end of December 1900 he was withdrawn with his artillery to Bulawayo because of the perceived restlessness of the Matabele.

By October 1900, Baden-Powell was already involved in the proposed formation of the South African Constabulary (SAC), and applications for recruitment were then being considered. Thus it was that Captain Llewellyn transferred to the SAC on 12 January 1901, being placed in command of a mounted column in the field. This duty was followed in June 1902 by the position of Commandant of Lichtenburg, in the





**South African Constabulary**

Northern Transvaal, and generally in the area that he had operated in both with the BSAP and the SAC.

His services in the Boer War resulted in the award of the Queens Medal with three clasps and the Kings Medal with two clasps.

In 1949, Lt. Col. Jules Ellenberger, CMG, who was a Resident Magistrate at Gaborones in October 1899 recorded his recollections which were subsequently published in Journal No. 11 of the Rhodesiana Society, December 1964. He appears to have thought highly of Capt. Llewellyn, variously referring to him as “that fine fellow Llewellyn” and “brave Llewellyn”.

### **RETURN TO ENGLAND**

The following year 1902 was an eventful one for Capt. Llewellyn. He went to England on leave in September 1902, and then on 14 October he married his first wife, Winifrid Berens, who died later in 1931. He remained in England on leave until December when he resigned his commission in the SAC.

He applied for the post of Chief Fire Officer of the London Metropolitan Fire Brigade. He was one of a short list of five to be interviewed. Whether this was before leaving for England or whilst on leave is uncertain.

In support of his planned career Capt. Llewellyn had taken the precaution of obtaining references from those under whom he had served.



3 July 00

I have known Capt. Hoell Stewellyn<sup>280</sup> since 1899, as an officer of the British South African Police in the Matabele Campaign during the past seven years.

First as an officer of the British South African Police in the Matabele Campaign 1896-97 when he was in charge of the 9th Battery of Artillery, and was commended for personal gallantry in action.

And again in the Boer War in charge of Artillery and of Ammunition Trains under General Buller 1899-1900 when he again displays ability in action.

I afterwards, in 1901, appointed him as an officer in the South Africa Campaign, in which he served up to the present year as a Captain in command of a very smart Troop, and lately as a District Commandant in the Transvaal.

Capt Stewellyn was, I believe, born in the Royal Navy.

This record thus speaks for itself, but I shall be happy to answer any further inquiries that may be put to me.

Yours sincerely  
R. S. S. S. S.

Col. Baden-Powell outlined his association and ended with the comment, "his record speaks for itself". Dr. L. S. Jameson described him as "carrying out his duties in a cheerful, tactful and thorough manner", whilst Maj. Gen. H. Plumer confirms that in 1896 he recommended Llewellyn for the Victoria Cross and said, "he is an exceptionally brave and resolute leader and an Officer I should always be glad to have under me". The originals of these testimonials are with the Llewellyn papers at the National Army Museum.

In 1903 he commenced an attachment to the Hertfordshire Constabulary studying police work in general and administration of this Force in particular, which lasted for nearly a year. He then moved on to the City of London Police for a further seven months, studying administration and gaining experience in control of traffic and large crowds.

This attachment was followed by a two month spell with the Metropolitan Police at Scotland Yard where he became acquainted with the relatively new science of finger printing and its applications. To round off this period of training Capt. Llewellyn attended a Fire Course with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade at their HQ at Southwark Bridge.

Capt. Llewellyn was then appointed as Chief Constable of Wiltshire early in 1908. The Police HQ being at Devizes. With this appointment he became the first of several ex members of the BSAP to become Chief Constables in UK Forces. At one time during Llewellyn's tenure there were five such in office.

His experiences with the other Police Forces were brought to bear as soon as he took up his new appointment, his first act being to inform the Force that he would be using his own car, AM1, to travel round the County. The advent of motor cars in the rural areas was then a fairly rare occurrence.

His next innovation was the issue of whistles to all members of the Force, quickly followed by a suggestion that patrolling constables should take their pet dogs with them especially at night.

Col. Llewellyn had always had an interest in dogs, he was at that time the owner of two fine bloodhounds, named "Shadower" and "Moonlight", who had demonstrated their ability several times. However after working on a murder case in Swindon, one of the two later died as a result, Col. Llewellyn thought, of being brought home in an open vehicle.

He considered that bloodhounds were too highly bred, resulting in a delicate constitution, and decided to replace them with interbred dogs with a temperament ideal for Police service. He obtained two fell hounds, dogs that are used for hunting hill foxes and renowned for their ability to follow a cold trail. He crossed these two fellhounds with labradors, eventually crossing the results of that with bloodhounds. The results of that breeding were then sent out to be trained by dog handlers on the beat. They proved ideal although found to be fast for the men when working on foot. This was the first time that dogs had been used by the Wiltshire Force. Further breeding and experimenting was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War.

Some of the highlights of his early tenure as Chief Constable, were the visit of the King and Queen to the County in June 1908, the death of King Edward VII in January 1910 and the upsurge of the suffragette movement.



**Hoël Llewellyn 1910**

Some of Capt. Llewellyn's orders reveal a chauvinistic streak, common perhaps amongst many at that time. Prompted by the activities of the suffragettes he forbade the entry of any woman into a polling station during polling hours in the 1910 General Election. He also forbade members of the Force from walking out with their wives when in uniform!

It is obvious from the history of the Wiltshire Constabulary that in these early years of Llewellyn's tenure the Force was subjected to considerable efforts on his part to drag this rural Force into the 20th Century.

Together with the application of stricter discipline upon it's personnel, his drive and innovation obviously were successful.

In 1910 Capt. Llewellyn submitted his printed CV, a copy of which is still held at Devizes, presumably in support of confirmation of his appointment. Then in 1911 he was awarded the Coronation Medal, County and Borough Force version. The photograph shown above must have been taken sometime between 1911 and 1914, as indicated by his medal ribbons. This is an interesting example of the practice at that time of placing Royal Commemorative medals ahead of campaign medals in the order of precedence. It was only after 1918 that this category of medals were placed after campaign medals.

## 1914–1918

When the First World War became imminent in late 1914 Captain Llewellyn was 43 years of age, in addition to holding a senior civil position. Nevertheless he was keen to enlist and “do his bit”, so set about securing the aid of his former comrades, who by then were holding senior positions in the military.

With his papers at the NAM are letters of recommendation from Col. (later Brig. Gen.) Bodle, and Field Marshall Lord Methuen. Llewellyn’s letter to Lord Methuen, stated that he already had permission from the War Office and Lord Radnor.

It is not therefore surprising that he was commissioned into the 3rd County of London Yeomanry on 14 September in the rank of Captain. He embarked with the Unit from Avonmouth, Bristol on 14 April 1915, arriving at Alexandria on 28 April. They were part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

Shortly after, the unit carried on to Gallipoli where on 21 August 1915 he was wounded in the left foot by a shell fragment . The wound was described at the time by the medical men as “severe, not permanent”, but it was to trouble him on occasions for the rest of his life.

As a result Llewellyn was embarked on the 24 August for Mudros *en route* for the UK in H.M.S. “Soudan”.

After leave and recuperation in the UK, Llewellyn again embarked for Egypt on 14 January 1916, and by 28 January had rejoined his unit at Abbassia.



3rd Co. of London Yeomanry



By 5 June he was at Ismailia and on 7 June 1916 was appointed Provost Marshall, Egypt.

On 31 August 1916, Wiltshire Police General Orders reported that he had been promoted to Lt. Col., on the General Staff and up graded to AAG.

Lt. Col. Llewellyn's duties took him all over Egypt, including Sollum and Matruh, until on 1 December 1916 he was Mentioned in Despatches for 1 October 1916 by General Murray, GOC Egypt (LG 29845).

He was promoted to full Colonel late in September 1917 and again MID by General Allenby on 16 January 1918 (LG 30480).

On 17 August 1918 he ceased his appointment as Provost Marshall, Egypt and embarked on H.M.T. "Indarra" from Alexandria for the UK, being struck off the strength of the EEF effective from the 15 September 1918.

Col. Llewellyn was not allowed much time on home soil before landing in France at Boulogne on 16 October and attachment to 9th Battalion, Tank Corps HQ at Beaucourt.

This was for an instructional course, but its necessity fell away with the Armistice and he returned to the UK on 27 November 1918.

On 16 December 1918 Wiltshire Police General Orders reported the award to Col. Llewellyn of the Italian Order of St Maurice & St Lazarus, 4th Class, and the same Gen. Orders reported his return to duty as Chief Constable on 23 January 1919.



**Wiltshire Constabulary**

### 1919–1945

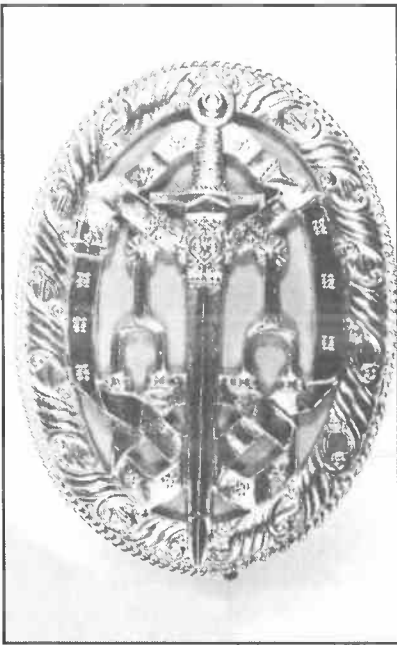
Col. Llewellyn actually returned to duty with the Wilts Police on 19 January, with the rank of Colonel/Chief Constable, in which position he was to spend the rest of his days.

The first post-war problem, and perhaps a portent of things to come, was an outbreak of police strikes throughout the Kingdom which resulted in the formation of the Police Federation. The Wiltshire Force appears to have survived this period with minimum upheaval and retained its personnel.

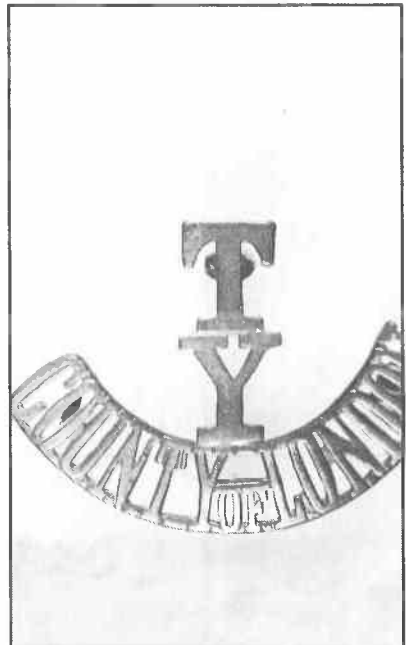
In 1922 Col. Llewellyn introduced leather leggings for men on the beat, a move said to be deeply unpopular with them, but undoubtedly of use in inclement weather. Was this perhaps as a result of Llewellyn's experience in Rhodesia, where leather leggings were standard uniform for District and mounted men of the BSAP until the late 1980s?

Events of note during these years were the troublous times of the depression years towards the end of the 1920s, the death of his first wife in 1931, his marriage to his second wife Mary Constance Morley (nee Sandeman) in 1933, the 1935 Jubilee and the 1937 Coronation, both medals of which were awarded to him and to various members of the Force.

At that time there was no Police Long Service medal awarded by the Wiltshire authorities, the Royal Commemorative medals appear from the rolls to have been used



**Knight Bachelor's Badge**



**Yeomanry Shoulder Button**

as a means of rewarding long and efficient service. There were only 20 of the former and 17 of the latter medals awarded, of which only six men received both.

A family photograph shows Col. Llewellyn with Sir George Herbert and others at Lynham Air Base, standing talking to the Duke of York, later to become King George VI. The event took place sometime in the early 1930s.

The outbreak of World War II brought a heavier burden upon the Force testing Col. Llewellyn's administrative abilities, Wiltshire being a County particularly heavily populated with military bases. It has been stated that he ran Police H.Q. "with military precision" during this period, but he had probably been doing it that way from his original appointment!

When the Special Constabulary was augmented by the establishment of the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps (WAPC) to take over administrative and clerical duties, Llewellyn's chauvinism again showed through as it is said to have been against his wishes.

The outbreak of War in 1939 found Llewellyn in a difficult situation, he was too old to enlist, his expertise was to be sorely needed and replacing him would not be that easy either.



**Hoël Llewellyn with shotgun**

However by the end of 1942, he was the Senior Chief Constable in Britain, there was talk of retirement and perhaps in anticipation of this he was awarded a Knighthood in the 1943 New Year's Honours.

The exigencies of the service kept him at his post allegedly without any leave since 1939, the pressure told and he died suddenly on 2 April 1945 at his home in Devizes only a short while before he was finally due to retire.

A memorial service held at Devizes on 6 April was attended by a large number of service and policemen of all ranks with many deserved tributes being paid to him.

The Chairman of the Quarter Sessions (Viscount Finlay) at Salisbury on Tuesday 10 April, before commencement of business said, *inter alia*, "Sir Hoël was eminently fair and invariably kind", and "it would be difficult to imagine a criminal court in Wiltshire without his familiar presence".

Some family photographs taken in the 1930s when he was in somewhat portly middle age are held at the Trowbridge Record Office. They show Col. Llewellyn in various poses, fishing in Scotland, cradling a shotgun, and apparently watching field sports with the traditional "plus fours" and hose, every inch the "country squire", but always with a short back and sides haircut. He was undoubtedly a man of his time.

## FOOTNOTE

When I visited Maj. Morley at his home in October 1997 he produced from among Col. Llewellyn's effects, the breast star of a foreign order, of which no previous mention had been made. Upon enquiry Maj. Morley stated, "Oh, that's his Egyptian Order". The mystery was compounded shortly after when David Erskine-Hill of Spinks promptly identified the piece as the Order of The Star of Afghanistan, Fourth Class, 1920-30s type.

So I am left with the mystery of whether it was awarded to Col. Llewellyn, if so when and what for? The pushtu inscription of the piece translates as "Award of The State of Afghanistan".

The King of Afghanistan paid a state visit to England in the Summer of 1928.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Major Timothy Morley of Wiltshire; Lt. Col. David Strong, TD of Aldershot; Mr Clifford Rogers, BSAP Regimental Association; Mr Alaistair Massie, National Army Museum; Miss Deborah Potter, Royal Naval Museum, H.M.S. Victory; Wiltshire County Record Office Trowbridge; Mrs Valerie Hartridge, Portsmouth; Mr Ronald Flux, Wiltshire Police Authority; Mr David Erskine-Hill, Spink & Son, London; Mr Jonathan Tombs, Military Medal Society of South Africa.

## **Transcript of a Report Rendered by Captain Llewellyn on the Merits/ Demerits of the Maxim Gun**

26th January 1894

The Avenue Hotel,  
Salisbury,  
Mashonaland

Sir,

The following is a report of my experiences in the Matabele war regarding the Maxim gun carriages.

In the Salisbury Column we had two maxims on galloping carriages. One was the old pattern carriage *viz.* the 14 belts being in one tier, 7 on the near & 7 on the off six. The other carriage was a new pattern one judging from the newness of it as it came up to Fort Charter in packing cases, its belts (14) were in 2 tiers.

The Victoria Column had 3 maxims all mounted on the latter pattern (new) carriage. They had in each, 4 horses ridden postillion and we had 4 mules in each, driven by a Cape boy assisted by No. 3 of the gun on the carriage. Their horses soon knocked up owing to the work but our mules bore out the whole campaign, especially mine.

The mules in the new pattern carriage under Lieut Biscoe (late Royal Navy) found the balance extremely trying. I was in charge of the old pattern carriage & the weight & balance was perfect. Each maxim carriage carried 1000 to 1500 spare rounds behind the rack.

Nothing could alter the balance of the new pattern ones, it gave the mules (wheelers) sore withers & made them unable to go any distance. The old pattern is much lighter than the new pattern, also it has the tremendous advantage of not being top-heavy. The new pattern on several occasions turned over injuring either the horses, mules, carriage or gun. I have been down sides of rocky dongas & hills at a gallop when the other carriages could not even walk at them. My wheels were very bad owing to the carelessness of storekeepers allowing white ants to get at them but they held out perfectly they certainly could be slightly stouter. The country we traversed, skirmishing or on the march was an extreme test to any cart owing to the spruits or dongas, rocks, bush, hills & stumps. The latter are most dangerous but the old pattern carriages, they caused no inconvenience as regards upsetting owing to the centre of gravity being far lower than on the new pattern carriage.

They certainly could be constructed with sunk axles like the water cart principle only to be off the ground a certain distance to prevent collision with stumps and stones.

The old pattern has a tremendous advantage over the new with reference to the situation of the belts, always having them handy & ready for use by having a belt always through the gun as we used to have to be ready at an instants notice whilst trekking through the bush doing, flanking, rear or advance duties.

The men on the gun are protected more on the old pattern as experience showed us, also to mine & and fitted & so it was to every other carriage afterwards, a tripping bar & chain like a handsome cab.

In fact a handsome cab gave me the idea, fitted just below the cross bar on the tessel boom or pole, so as No 3 jumps off the gun he just tilts the carriage & the bar assumes a perpendicular position & when on the carriage you find it as steady as a rock.

Otherwise without the tripping bar an animal moving a head or a leg turns your sights clean off. Taking mules or horses out of the carriage to fire takes time & is certainly a very risky proceeding i the bush or even in the open.

As regards the mountain gun and the new pattern ones are useless as 3 if not the 4th were smashed by the jolting & had to be bound up by bullock's hide & wood. The old pattern was not even strained in the slightest degree, also another thing, all the axles of the new pattern carriages were bent owing to the direct weight on them. The most important thing is this, it tried us more than anything else in the whole campaign



*viz.* “the levelling of the gun” whereby the whole usefulness of the gun depends.

Could not a small level in a brass mounting be fixed to the slide or rather the training slide? As it was, one had to guess it, & when you have even 3 seconds to spare you could level it very easily if one had a level. I had to, when taking up my position in the laager to sink or block it when to level the gun.

Owing to the gun carriage being open at the bottom the levelling screw got clogged by the dust flying up & to remedy this the bottom of the cart could easily be covered in. One could not clean the levelling gear unless the gun was dismantled which took a good deal of time, which we could ill afford.

The wheels soon run dry of grease but this is easily overcome by leather washers. I am certain that even in the small space for training you could, by having the training slide slightly curved and get a bigger firing arc. The arc at present is so small: In fact it would only take an experienced man in gun carriages to design a carriage on the turret principle to fire 270 deg or more. All through our campaign we had not the faintest hitch with the maxims of any descriptions. The general opinion was that the tremendous rush these niggers make would prove too much for the machine guns of course maxims not having been tried people said “oh they will jamb”, but the maxims did the war without the slightest doubt.

The Matabele always retired if a maxim went out to support the skirmishers the “choc-a-choc-a-choc” as they call it, (from the noise no doubt) is “strong medicine” they say. At the 1st Battle (Shangani) at 3.50 am the 5 maxims playing about stopped them & in the 2nd & 3rd rush it proved too much for them. I tried, with Capt Lendy and Lieut Biscoe one day, some cartridges marked GKB we had 17 cases blown in two out of 43 shots but some other ammunition marked the same but in different boxes was exceptionally good.

I went through the campaign with no extractor & no tools except a punch & a hammer, we were tremendously handicapped owing to not having good oil & having innumerable dust storms giving the gun a perfect test.

Capt Lendy R A who was the Artillery Off'r in Charge was going to write you a report but to my sorrow I hear he died at Bulawayo only a few days ago. We often discussed an improvement for a carriage.

Maj Forbes is now leaving for England & should you be able to see him he would, I think, agree with everything I have said as he understands & took a keen interest in the maxims & expressed himself thoroughly satisfied with them. Alan Finch is also with him, his Adjutant & he tells me he is going down to see you personally. He also understands the maxims. Any further details I shall be only too pleased to forward you.

I have the honour to be,

Sir

your obedient servant,

(Sgd) Hoël Llewellyn,

Late Sub-Lieut Royal Navy.

Maj Forbes's address is:

Whitchurch,

Reading.

Maj Forbes has just made another suggestion, *viz.* that a moveable, collapsible cover to shelter the gun from rain would be exceptionally useful. Of course should the carriage be made with a turntable or turret action you would have to ride postillions but with good horses this would be very simple. The horses we had were poor & that time of the year no grass was obtainable owing to the veldt fires & dryness of the winter seasons.

(Sgd) Hoël Llewellyn.

By throwing back one of the seats of the old pattern carriage you have an excellent ambulance cart for a disabled man, this is very handy in retiring when skirmishing, with a wounded man.

H L

## **Summary of Contemporary Press Comments about Col. Llewellyn and His Doings**

*The African Review*, August 8th 1896

Dateline, Bulawayo, August 6th, 3.10 pm

“Plumer attacked Sekombi, and three other impis, and a desperate fight ensued lasting seven hours...The position was saved by Llewellyn’s coolness and pluck in slinging the Maxim around and killing numbers of the rebels.”

*The Cape Times*, Weekly Edition, Aug 12th 1896

Dateline Plumer’s Camp, August 5th, (Tuli rd, 8 pm by special cyclist to Bulawayo).

“Captain Llewellyn practically saved the gun by his smart and plucky action. He was one time completely alone. The fire was heavy and well directed...Captain Llewellyn’s Maxim fired 900 rounds and the screw guns 32 rounds. It is difficult indeed to know what was accomplished. The rebels were routed and must have lost quite 300. There are hundreds of hills yet to be taken.”

Dateline, Sugar Bush Camp, Aug 6th

“On the left of the lie the rebels charged up to within five yards of the Maxim and were shot down at that range by Capt Llewellyn who stuck to his guns with great bravery.”

(This was a Reuter’s Report.)

*Standard & Diggers News*, Johannesburg, Aug 15th 1896

Dateline, Bulawayo, 6th

“The fight on the 5th at Sekombos lasted from 8 am to 3 pm...Inspector Llewellyn on an adjacent kopje with a mountain gun and a Maxim gun made a most plucky stand against a rear attack, the rebels coming within 20 yards of the guns.

Llewellyn turned the gun and did great execution...”

Dateline, Inzesi Camp, 7th

“General Carrington’s fight at Babyaan’s stronghold was an especially heavy blow. A large number of the best men were killed, including five Chiefs and the Commander of an Impi...”

Col Plumer in his despatches praises all ranks for bravery, dash and gallantry.

The following were especially mentioned in his despatch...Hoël Llewellyn who worked and managed his gun admirably under very heavy fire...”

Unknown-SA-Dec 1896

“...Major General Sir F Carrington’s despatch to the Governor is dated Umtali Dec 12th 1896 and...Captain Llewellyn Bulawayo Field Force (late Royal Navy) July 20th, during a rush on Beresford’s force (in an attack on Sekombo) ran to the Maxim which was for the moment without a firer, and remained alone on it keeping it in action, with the enemy within a few yards. Displayed great coolness in working his Maxims under fire at the attack on Babyaan’s stronghold, and on other occasions...”

*The Times*, 10th March 1897

Repeats Genl Carrington’s despatch in detail from Umtali on Dec 12th 1896.

*The African Review*, 13th March 1897

Repeats Genl Carrington’s despatch of Dec 12th 1896. Includes photograph of Captain Llewellyn in Midshipman’s uniform.

*The Daily Telegraph*, 1st December 1899

“The assisting hand which Col Baden-Powell may expect from the North will possibly... be lent by Captain Llewellyn who is in direct command of the railway from Bulawayo... has seen previous service in the Matoppo rebellion... His record in the present war is an interesting one so far as the North Western border is concerned.”

*Daily Telegraph*, Feb 1900

Dateline, Plumer’s Camp nr Crocodile Pools, Feb 15th 1900

“EXCELLENT WORK BY CAPTAIN LLEWELLYN.”—Details events along the railway line to Mafeking including involvement of Chief Linchwe and his men.

Unknown – (British) Dateline ‘Belfast, Wed, Sept 5’ (1900)

Headline, “HARASSING THE RAILWAY”—Paget reports that in an engagement with the enemy near Warmbaths... The enemy directed their fire chiefly against a kopje, which was ably defended by two mountain guns under Capt Llewellyn, British South Africa Police, and a company of the Munster Fusiliers...

*Daily News*, March 7th 1901

Headline, “The Chartered Company and the War”. Reports on alleged BSA Company involvement in the war in Bechuanaland, and Chief Linchwe’s activities. Captain Llewellyn allegedly slandered, according to the Editor of *Rhodesia*.

*Rhodesia Journal*, June 1st 1901

Writing from Bank Station, Transvaal, Capt Llewellyn addresses a long letter to the Editor, clarifying events involving Chief Linchwe and his men and rebutting allegations made in the *Daily News*.

*Wiltshire Gazette*, 7th January 1943

“CHIEF CONSTABLE KNIGHTED—Lt Col Hoël Llewellyn, DSO, DL, Chief Constable of Wiltshire since 1908 is among those whose names appear in the New Year’s Honours List... Senior Chief Constable in the Country, he having held his position longer than any office in any county.”

*Wiltshire Gazette*, 12th April 1945

“THE LATE CHIEF CONSTABLE—MEMORIAL SERVICE AT DEVIZES... Address by the Rector: His experiences, as you all know, were so varied, the work given him to do in the different positions in which he was appointed in the service of his Country was often difficult and demanded the utmost attention, care and diligence. He gave it. He gave of his best. He put his whole heart into his work whatever and wherever it may be... his devotion to duty, his energy, his drive, his determination to carry out as efficiently as possible the work with which he had been entrusted... his great unselfishness, his wonderful thought for others, his kindness, his desire that everything should be done for the welfare and happiness of those called to serve under him... his hatred of everything that was not straight and above board...”

‘Quarter Sessions Tribute’— It was difficult to imagine a criminal court in Wiltshire, whether the Assize or Quarter Session, without his familiar presence... Sir Hoël was invariably fair and kind...”

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## Who is She?

This picture has just come to hand by courtesy of a former National Honorary Secretary (1972–1976), Colin, W. H. Loades, who poses the question:  
Who is this glamour girl on the edge of the Empire?

# Events in the Second Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902, in the wider Tuli Area, Zimbabwe-Botswana

by Rob S. Burrett

This year, 1999, marks the centenary of the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War. Much has been written about the events of that era, yet very little has been said about the “Rhodesian element” in the conflict. Most of the innumerable publications which have appeared tend to focus on events which happened further to the south — Mafeking and Ramathlabama, the Natal Battlefields, etc. However, at the time forces in this country played a very important part in inflaming passions prior to the conflict, as well as in the war itself. Really it is only the writings of Hickman (1970) which have dwelt in any detail with the events of the north-western Frontier between the Transvaal Republic and the “British territories” of Bechuanaland, the Tati Concession and Southern Rhodesia, (Figure 1). Yet Hickman’s writings are incomplete and contain several errors, but this is only to be expected since the work represents an initial investigation which, unfortunately, has not seen further research since publication.

The story of the War in this area is a long and complicated one with the drama being directed from afar, London, Cape Town, Bulawayo and Pretoria. Many events are tied up with that central element of late Victorian passion, the siege and relief of Mafeking in the Northwest Province of South Africa (formally Northern Cape). However, that side of the story is better told elsewhere and by others. Here we dwell with events along the Limpopo near the junction of Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The area witnessed some of the earliest clashes between the rival forces, yet these events have largely been forgotten in the wider chronicles of the War — probably because the British forces didn’t suffer the devastating setbacks which happened elsewhere in the first months of the conflict — the encirclement of Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith; the routing of Spionkop etc. It is a British peculiarity which dwells on military disasters making ideological honour from what were inexcusable blunders on the part of their establishment. Since Plumer was “successful” in carrying out his orders, while his Boer opponents were not militarily adventurous, the War in this part of the world has been effectively forgotten. Also it is probably true that media coverage on this front was under-represented (Hickman 1970:98). There were no Churchills or Conan Doyles here. Only a Reuters correspondent who was injured in the fray, as well as correspondents for local newspapers in the Cape Colony and Rhodesia. The roll of media hype is not new.

It needs to be pointed out that this chronicle of events is, like Hickman’s, merely a starting point. There are still many questions which have to be tackled, while the material is undoubtedly one-sided, dwelling mainly with the British perspective. This is unfortunate as there are always two sides (at least) to any War, but to date I haven’t had much luck with tracking down material from the Afrikaner point of view here in Zimbabwe.

# Erratum

Page 22, *Heritage of Zimbabwe* No. 18, 1999

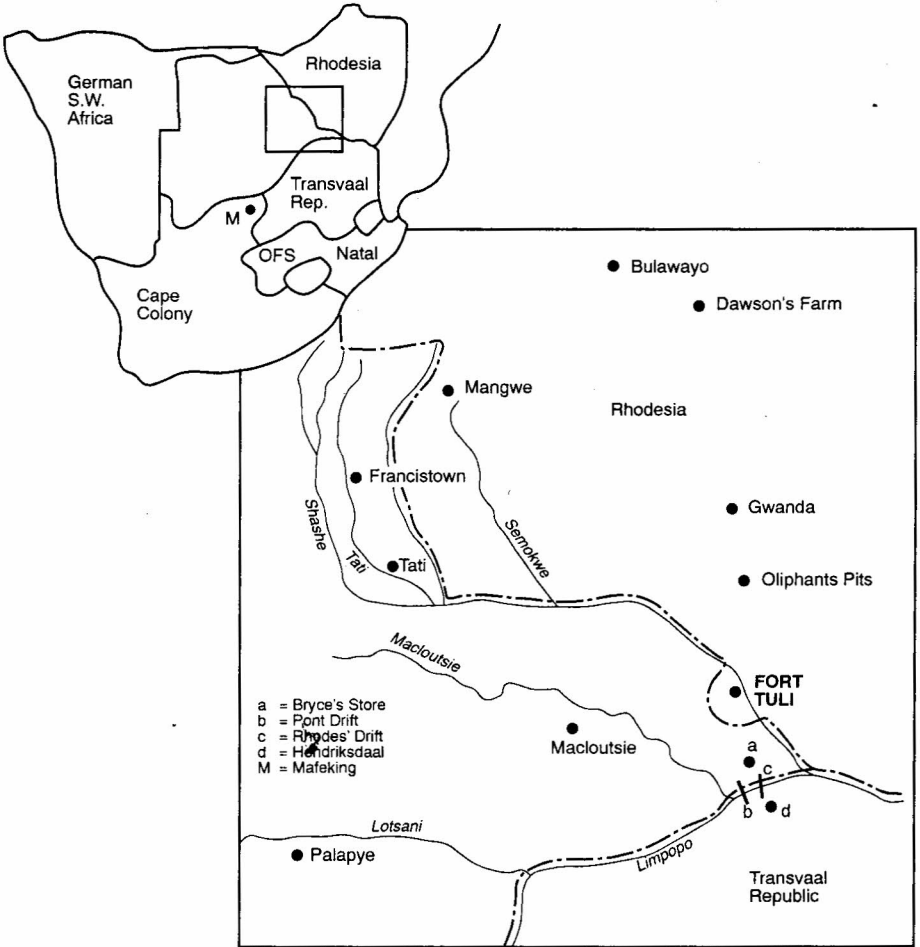
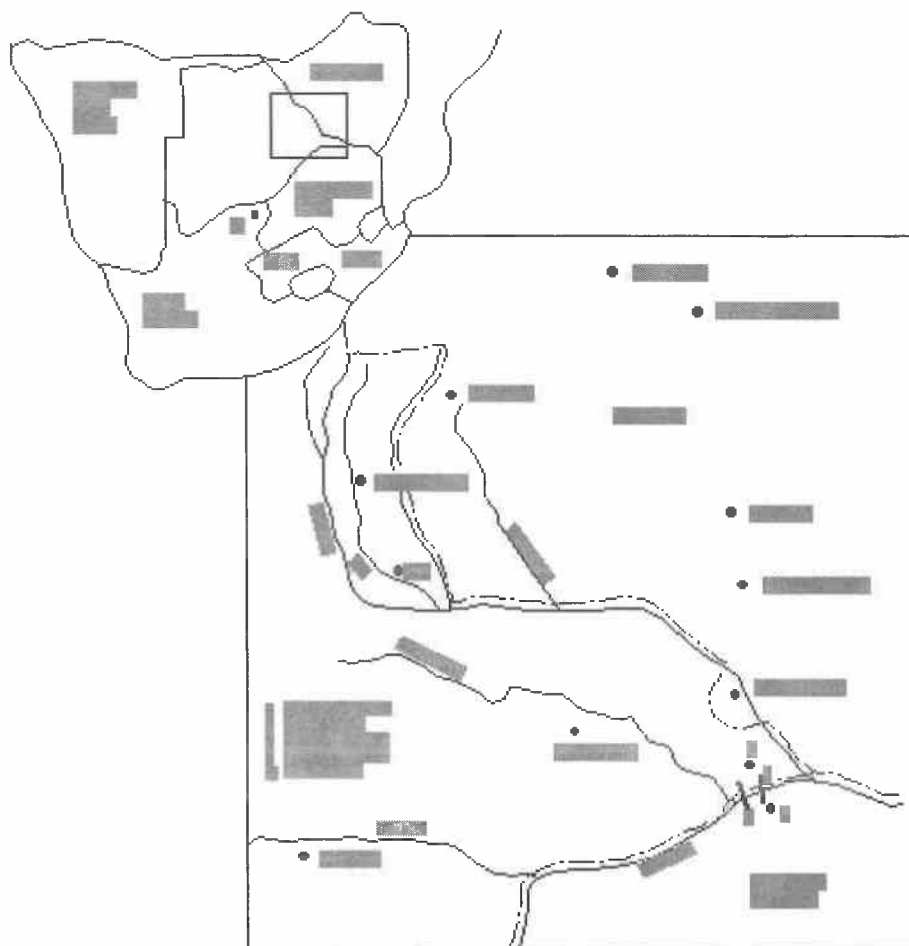


Figure 1: General location of places named in the text



**Figure 1: General location of places named in the text**

The conflict is best viewed as a clash between the two Settler communities here in southern Africa. One side representing the interests of International Capitalism, the other local settler interests more concerned with the preservation of their developing identity and independent access to the territory which they had recently colonised. Yes, to a large extent it was a clash of British verses emerging Afrikander identity and aspirations, however, even within this there were many other elements at play — Imperial verses local Anglophone interests; while many other “foreigners” also saw the extension of their conflicts into this arena. Irish nationalists, and German, Russian and French Imperialists all had their own reasons for participation (Hickman 1970:46). Also it was not entirely a “Whitemans’ War” as it has often been portrayed (cf. Gann 1965:151; Hickman 1970:52).

British control in Bechuanaland, the Tati Concession and over the Limpopo remained a very sore point with the Boer leaders in the Transvaal Republic (cf. Preller



1963). They had unsuccessfully resisted their encirclement in the late nineteenth century and as late as June 1891, in the guise of the Adendorff Trek, they had sought to challenge the rights of the British South Africa Company (BSACo) in occupying what became Rhodesia. Many of the Boers who assembled at Main and Middle Drifts at that time, later regrouped during this conflict once again challenging their British Opponents across the Limpopo. It must be pointed out that I have used the term “Boer” in this article to include all those fighting on the side of the Transvaal Republic. This is before the formalisation of the Afrikaans *Taal* and thus identity. Likewise I use the contemporary term “natives” when discussing the indigenous peoples of the area — who were a mixture of Tswana, Sotho, Kalanga and Venda identities. In both cases they are merely historical terms without negative connotations.

To get things in perspective it is necessary to describe some of the main locations involved in this story. Most of the action occurred in that area west of the modern towns of Beit Bridge and Messina where Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa meet, see Figure 1. At that time Rhodesian authority did not stop at Tuli (on the Shashe River, formally spelt Shashi) but extended to the Limpopo (also called the Crocodile in contemporary sources). This section between Tuli and the Limpopo is now the Tuli Block and is part of Botswana. Along the Limpopo there were several drifts. Of importance here there was Main Drift (about 15km east of Beit Bridge); Middle Drift (about the riverfront junction of River Ranch and Nottingham Estate west of Beit Bridge); Massabie’s or Massibi’s Drift at the junction of Nottingham and Sentinel Estates (still further west but still in Zimbabwe); the most important at that time Rhodes’ Drift (on the Botswana-South Africa border and 40km due south of Tuli); Pont Drift (8km upstream of Rhodes’ Drift and still a border crossing); and Baines’ or Bain’s Drift (well upstream beyond the Motloutse, formally Macloutsie River) (CR 27/10/99; Hickman 1970:124; Surveyor General 1929 Map 20).

### **JUST GETTING THERE: EVENTS PRIOR TO THE WAR**

The Jameson Raid of 1896 has rightly been seen as the first real act in the Second Anglo-Boer War. This failed escapade heightened tensions between the Transvaal and the Imperial Authorities. The constant fear of another backdoor attack from Bechuanaland or Rhodesia lingered in the minds of the Boer Military leaders who, as a result, ordered large numbers of their fighting population to this arena once War seemed inevitable. The Raid, as it became known, also alerted the Imperial Authorities to their weakness in the region. In 1896 there were only 3000 men enlisted in British operations throughout the whole of Southern Africa. Their numbers were thus gradually increased to 9000 by 1899 (Amery 1900:304). Then, in 1899 in what must surely be seen as open provocation towards the Transvaal Republic, two large military corps were established along the north-western border — part of the story here. Surely knowing Boer sensitivities concerning the Raid, the British Authorities were taunting their opposition to declare war. Such was in fact the consequence.

Let us, however, return to prior events. As early as June 1899 it became clear that both sides were building up substantial stocks of military hardware and provisions. From France and Germany the Boers imported huge quantities of arms and long distance guns which were added to their growing arsenals in Pretoria and Johannesburg

(Hickman 1970:46). However, the British were also busy stockpiling in Cape Town and Durban, while railway goods-traffic from the Cape Colony heading northwards through Mafeking to Rhodesia became unusually heavy with many extra trains running, although passenger traffic was slack. (CTW 5/7/99).

In the meantime the Imperial Authorities manoeuvred towards the inevitable. On 7 July it was announced in London by Lord Wolseley, Commander-in-Chief at the War Office, that the General Officer Commanding in South Africa had been authorised to “make arrangements in case the failure of political negotiations rendered necessary the sending of an expeditionary corps” (Amery 1900:301). Transport for the necessary troops were to be put in place, and several “Special Service Officers” were ordered to proceed to South Africa at once (LT 7/7/99). Included were Brevet Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell (5th Dragoon Guards); Brevet Major Lord E.H. Cecil (Grenadier Guards); Lieutenant A.H.C. Hanbury-Tracy (Royal Horse Guards); Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel H.C.O. Plumer\* (York & Lancaster Regiment); Brevet Major A.V. Jenner (Rifle Brigade); Brevet Major A.F. Pilson\* (Royal Dublin Fusiliers); Captain H. McMicking (Royal Scots); Brevet Major W.D Bird\* (Royal West Surrey Regiment) (LT 7/7/99). Officially their duty was to organise the residents, police and other local forces at various points along the Bechuanaland and Rhodesian frontiers (BU; LT 7/7/99).

However, there was certainly a more subversive reason. On that day Sir Evelyn Wood communicated Lord Wolseley’s full orders to Baden-Powell. He was instructed that in the case of inevitable hostilities he was “to endeavour to demonstrate with the largest force at your disposal, in a southerly direction from Tuli, as if making towards Pretoria” — a rerun of the failed Jameson Raid. For this purpose he was to raise a regiment of 590 irregular soldiers in Rhodesia and the Cape Colony. Not long after this order was amended to two regiments (BU; Jeal 1990:211). Clearly it was Imperial intention that Baden-Powell’s presence on the Frontier should scare the Transvaal Authorities, while it would divert a considerable number of Boers from action elsewhere along the Natal and Cape borders (Pakenham 1979:399). In addition these regiments were also expected to protect Rhodesia in the event of War, and to discourage the native population from supporting the Boers or seeking their own autonomy (Jeal 1990:211). Remember that it was only two years after the ending of the First Chimurenga and European sensitivities in Rhodesia were still rather anxious, especially since there had recently been dissension near Victoria where Hut Tax (one of the instigating factors in the recent Uprising) had been reimposed (BU). Baden-Powell was given title “Commander-in-Chief, North-West Frontier Forces” and was allowed to act, effectively, more or less at his own discretion in line with these general orders (Jeal 1990:211).

In addition several local Defence Corps were established in many of the small railway towns along this sensitive border. In early July 1899 vigorous recruiting for the Bechuanaland Rifles was openly proceeding in Mafeking (CTW 5/7/99). On 19 July suggestions were mooted by the BSACo authorities that a Volunteer Corps, which developed into the Southern Rhodesia Volunteers (SRV), should be organised in Bulawayo consisting of five troops of mounted men (LT 20/7/99). Regulations governing this force were published in Bulawayo on 24 July and at a mass meeting

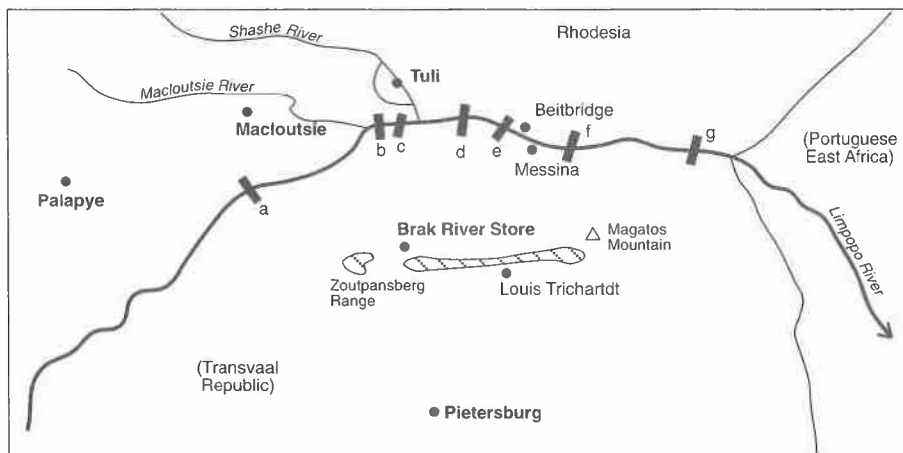
held there that evening many volunteers signed up. It was hoped that this troop should eventually number about 600 combatants for “the defensive of Rhodesia in the case of Boer aggression” (CTW 2/8/99). In addition to this the BSACo began arming many of the outlying mining camps in the southern parts of the country (LT 20/7/99). Locally tensions were rising.

Baden-Powell, Cecil and Hanbury-Tracy set sail for southern Africa on the mail steamer *Dunottar Castle*, arriving at Cape Town on 25 July (CTW 2/8/99). In the meantime changes in the initial staffing were announced. McMicking was withdrawn (LT 14/7/99), while the following additional officers were to be sent out: Brevet Colonel C.H. Bridge (Army Service Corps); Lieutenant-Colonel G. Stanley (Army Service Corps); Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel C.O. Hore (South Staffordshire Regiment); Major C.B. Vyvyan (The Buffs); Brevet Major A.J. Godley (Royal Dublin Fusiliers); Veterinary-Major E. Day (Army Veterinary Department); Captains K. MacLaren\* (13th Hussars), C. FitzClarence (Royal Fusiliers), L.D. Blackburn\* (The Cameronians), F.C. Marsh (Royal West Kent Regiment), R.J. Vernon (King’s Royal Rifles), S.P. Rolt\* (York and Lancaster Regiment), E.R.O. Ludlow and W.H. Foster (Army Service Corps), and C.A. Stone (Royal Army Medical Corps); and Lieutenants R.W. Hare\* (Norfolk Regiment), and E. Harland (Hampshire Regiment) (LT 20/7/99). It was rumoured that Lieutenant-Colonel E.A.H. Alderson (Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General Aldershot) would go out later in support (LT 14/7/99), this, however, never happened. Those marked with \* in the above lists saw action in the Tuli area, while the others were besieged in Mafeking. This list differs slightly from that of Hickman, but it is derived from contemporary sources and by his own admission Hickman was somewhat selective in his final choice of Imperial officers cited in his book (Hickman 1970:60).

On 15 July the Union Line steamer RMS *Norman* left Southampton for Cape Town carrying most of the remaining Special Service officers (Harington 1935:32), arriving there at 03h00 on 1 August 1899 (LT 2/8/99). In the meanwhile Baden-Powell sped northward arriving in Bulawayo on 2 August. His visit aroused much interest, and local gossip suggested it was to counter possible “native eventualities” which were expected once troubles in the Transvaal broke out (LT 3/8/99; CTW 9/8/99). Not long after on 4 August an Advance party of British South Africa Police (BSAP) under Sergeant J. McGee, 2 corporals, 24 men with 27 horses left Bulawayo for Tuli (Hickman 1970:95). The main party were followed the next day by McGee, one of the corporals and two men who accompanied a 12.5-pounder gun (Hickman 1970:95).

This advance party would have begun re-establishing the defences at Fort Tuli which at that time was an abandoned backwater since the rerouting of most communications northward through what is now Francistown and Plumtree. The small cemetery, an old Stone prison from 1891–2, and a number of collapsing huts occupied by the local Magistrate and Native Department were all that remained of a once thriving town. While the Fort constructed in 1890 by the Pioneers had long fallen into disrepair (DE; Hickman 1970:157–165). This Fort was revived, the outer trenches being redug. Later when numbers grew it was extended northward onto an adjacent, much larger, flat-topped hill and a series of outer defence works were also built on the hills round about, see Figure 2 (Hickman 1970:157, 164).

Colonel Plumer and eight officers arrived Bulawayo on the evening of 8 August



Drifts along the Limpopo

- |           |              |          |          |
|-----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| a Baines' | c Rhodes     | e Middle | g Malala |
| b Pont    | d Massabie's | f Main   |          |

**Figure 2: Locations along the Limpopo River**

(LT 10/8/99, CTW 16/8/99). The next day, 9 August, a new training camp for the proposed Special Service Corps was established on the site of the former 1896 (Umvukela) Hussar camp on the eastern boundary of Bulawayo — essentially the modern Suburb of Kumalo (CTW 16/8/99). From that date until 30 September there was active recruiting of men for this new corps in Bulawayo. While some local men volunteered, numbers were limited given the small European population and the fact that most were already employed. Thus from 14 August (CTW 16/8/99) additional volunteers were sought from the Eastern Cape, Kimberley and Cape Town bringing the final total to 450 men (Hickman 1970:63).

This corps was placed under the direct command of Plumer and boasted of ten Imperial and six Colonial Officers. Throughout the recruiting exercise the official pretence was it was a precautionary force “in case trouble should occur with the natives”, while it also stressed that it was not connected with the BSACo Volunteer Force (LT 11/8/99). The men were enlisted initially for a three month period on the following conditions: pay for privates 5/- per day; corporals 6/-; sergeants 7/-; and staff-sergeants 8/6d per day; and in addition there was the provision of all rations, clothing and equipment (CTW 16/8/99).

On 11 August a large number of horses arrived Bulawayo for the new force (LT 12/8/99). On 15 August twenty eight men left Kimberley to join, while another twenty enlisted in Grahamstown where Bird was recruiting (CTW 23/8/99). Queenstown was visited by Bird on the 16th (CTW 16/8/99) and Port Elizabeth on 30 August (LT 30/8/99). Recruiting was also active in Cape Town where more than 500 applications were received, while in East London FitzClarence signed up 90 men (CTW 23/8/99). All of this was in direct conflict with the wishes of the then General Officer-Commanding the Cape Colony, Sir W. Butler, as well as the Cape Parliament where the Afrikaner bloc remained dominant (Hickman 1970:61–2; 73–4). Butler later

resigned in protest against “what he believed was a calculated policy to wage an unnecessary war against the Transvaal” (Hickman 1970:81).

Many of these Cape Colony men did not actually get to Bulawayo but were instead enrolled in a second Special Service Corps which was then being formed at Ramathlabama just north of Mafeking (LT 17/8/99, CTW 23/8/99). In addition several men who had previously served with the Bechuanaland Border Police (BBP) also arrived at Ramathlabama from Pretoria (CTW 23/8/99), while “a number of men .... arrived on foot from Johannesburg and Krugersdorp seeking to join the frontier force, but the recruiting officers, not being admirers of the average Rand tramp, rejected the majority” (CTW 6/9/00). Such was the documented snobbery of the Imperial Authorities at that time. This Ramathlabama corps later move to Mafeking where, under Baden-Powell, it was besieged.

Still some of the Cape men, especially those from the Eastern Cape, were enlisted in Bulawayo (BU; Hickman 1970:61) where Plumer’s corps, alternatively called the Special Service Corps or the Frontier Force, were kept hard at drill (CTW 23/8/99). On 21st August Baden-Powell, Cecil, and Pilson left Mafeking for Bulawayo to discuss strategy and to inspect preparations in the north (CTW 23/8/99). Given the small size of force it was decided that a further Troop of local Volunteers should be enlisted, but that these men would continue in civilian employment and that they would not be called out unless hostilities actually transpired. On 23 August the conditions of service for these additional volunteers was published in Bulawayo. It was emphasised that training would be as and when they were available. Lieutenant-Colonel J.A. Spreckley, Lieutenant Colonel H.F. White and Captain Knapp took formal command of this special Troop (LT 24/8/99, CTW 30/8/99). By 8 September about seventy men had enlisted in this additional Volunteer Troop (CTW 13/9/99), which became known as E Troop.

The whole Special Service Force under Baden-Powell’s command was renamed the Frontier Mounted Force on 25 August 1899. It in turn was divided into two regiments. Plumer’s northern corps became the Rhodesia Regiment, and Hore’s more southerly Ramathlabama corps became the Protectorate Regiment (CTW 30/8/00). However, there was much confusion in the use of these names by various authorities which makes reading the contemporary official and newspaper reports very difficult. On 7 September Baden-Powell arrived at Ramathlabama, back from his inspection tour of the north, later proceeding to Mafeking by mail train on 8 September (CTW 13/9/99).

A decision was made on 10 September to move Troops A, B, C, & D of the Rhodesia Regiment 36 miles to the south since there was insufficient water for the Bulawayo camp (LT 11/9/99). All members, including E Troop, were kitted out at the time (CTW 13/9/99). The move was initially due to take place on 11 September when 385 men and officers were supposed to leave for Dawson’s Farm, Essexvale which was down the Bulawayo–Tuli road (CTW 13/9/99). However, the departure was delayed due to transport problems. Instead on that day Lieutenant-Colonel W. Bodle, who was in charge of the Matabeleland section of the BSAP, left Bulawayo for Tuli with 100 additional policemen to strengthen existing police arrangements along Border (Hickman 1970:95).

A draft of farriers from the Royal Horse and Dragoon Guards arrived in Bulawayo

on 17 September to join Plumer's troops (CTW 20/9/99). The following day the Rhodesian Regiment finally shifted camp (LT 18/9/99, CTW 20/9/99). War efforts in Bulawayo now reached full swing. The railway authorities began preparing an armoured wagon for use in the event of war, while on 19 September a Maxim squad and a volunteer medical corps were also formed (LT 20/9/99).

In London, on 20 September, several additional Lieutenant officers were now selected for service with Colonel Plumer: C.H. Rankin (7th Hussars); S.G. French (Royal Irish Regiment); O.D. Blunt (Connaught Rangers); and A.J. Tyler (West Riding Regiment) (LT 20/9/99). They departed immediately and although they missed the initial stages of action in the Tuli area, they played an important part in Plumer's subsequent push south towards Mafeking in 1900 (cf. Hickman 1970).

Baden-Powell again, on 22 September, travelled to Bulawayo for an inspection of developments in the north (CTW 27/9/99). On 23 September it was decided that the Rhodesian Regiment should finally move southward towards Tuli (LT 25/9/99). Baden-Powell had concluded that since he had inadequate troops and arms of war to guard the entire border of 500 miles from Mozambique to the northern Cape, he would rather concentrate his forces at two strategic locations with the hope of focusing Boer attention. Mafeking and Tuli were chosen (Gardner 1966:89; Hickman 1970:62). The next day (24th) Plumer was supposed to set out from Dawson's Farm, but as with the earlier move there were delays (Hickman 1970:95 is wrong to say that they departed from Bulawayo on this date).

In the meantime Bodle and Captain Tracy of the BSAP who had arrived at Tuli a week earlier, proceeded to Rhodes' Drift on the Limpopo to inspect developments there. This Drift is today in Botswana but was at the time considered Rhodesian territory in an area controlled by the BSACo. Clearly the Police had already determined this was a strategic location on the Border and established a fortified camp. After returning to Tuli on 24 September Tracy left for BSAP Headquarters in Bulawayo, while Bodle remained at Tuli participating in the subsequent action (CTW 4/10/99). To facilitate communication with Rhodes' Drift the construction of a telephone line from Tuli was begun on 27 September (CTW 4/10/99), finally reaching its destination on 4 October 1899 (CTW 11/10/99).

It was only with a shortage of water that the Rhodesian Regiment finally left Dawson's Farm, Essexvale on Thursday 29 September 1899 for an unknown destination 50 miles nearer to Tuli (LT 2/10/99). Clearly water was a serious problem at the time, placing a severe strain on the well-being of men and animals as well as the whole communications system throughout the early phases of the conflict prior to the onset of the rainy season. To help alleviate the problem the BSACo arranged for a series of wells to be opened along the entire route between Bulawayo and Tuli (CTW 4/10/99, LT 2/10/99).

In Bulawayo war preparation continued unabated. On 29 September the town began preparing for the arrival of an Imperial Column which was to encamp on the same site as the former Rhodesian Regiment on the edge of town (LT 2/10/99). The next day, 30th, Colonel Baden-Powell left Bulawayo by train for Mafeking. On the same day the local Bulawayo Municipal Police were armed with Lee-Metfords and began training as soldier reserves (CTW 4/10/99).

While all of this was happening to the north of the Limpopo or Crocodile River as it was called by the Boers in those parts, preparations were also taking place in the Northern Transvaal. The Boers had a well defined military structure which had developed over the years to fight the many African insurrections which broke out in the Transvaal Republic. All able-bodied men were expected to serve in the forces if called to do so. Those in the north and north-west who fought along the Limpopo served in two regionally based Commandos — the Zoutpansberg Commando (1287 men) and the Waterberg Commando (732 men). These were placed under the joint command of Assistant Commandant-General F.A. Grobler (Hickman 1970:47; 132). His position was not an easy one as there was considerable friction between the Commandos and an even greater reluctance to cross the border in force — so different to General Cronje's forces around Mafeking and elsewhere in Natal and the Cape Colony.

In the final days prior to the Declaration of War all able-bodied Boer males were called to camp. Some men closer to the border took up position there, although most of the Zoutpansberg Commando came together on 11 October 1899 at the Brak River Store some 50km south of the Limpopo on the western end of the Soutpansberg Range. The Waterberg Commando, members of which were very disinclined to action, gathered near Nylstroom (Gardner 1966:93; Hickman 1970:133; LT 2/10/99, 28/10/99; Potgieter n.d.). On receiving news on 12 October of the Declaration of War Grobler joined the Zoutpansberg Laager to discuss strategy (Hickman 1970:133; Potgieter n.d.). This talking only with one portion of his force undoubtedly ostracised the Waterbergers and their reluctance to subsequent action should be interpreted in this light (cf. Hickman 1970: 176–8).

It was agreed that the Waterberg Commando, with Grobler to push them on, would move directly west to destroy the railway in central Bechuanaland. The Zoutpansberg Commando would move across the dry plains of the Limpopo to face Plumer. The latter were placed under the command of Assistant-General H.C.J. van Rensburg and large groups of men began arriving on the Limpopo from the 15th reaching full commando strength by 19 October. Their main camp was on a farm called Hendriksdal on the Transvaal side of Rhodes' Drift. This was under Veld-Kornets J. Kelly and H.W. Alberts. Other forces were placed at Middle Drift (under Commandant Botha), Massabie's Drift (under Veld-Kornet Venter), and Pont Drift (under Veld-Kornet A.Z.A. Briel who was to prove the most problematic for the opposition) (Hickman 1970:133, 177).

The first official British comment on possible Boer strengthening of the Border dates from 1 October. Reconnaissance reported that the Zoutpansberg Commando was forming a laager on the Brak River, while outlying parties were already noted at all of the drifts along the Limpopo/Crocodile River (LT 2/10/99, LT 28/10/99). By the 2nd further British reconnaissance from Palapye in Bechuanaland, suggested that there were 350 to 400 well-armed Boers on the border at the Crocodile River opposite Selika and all the drifts along the River were said to be well guarded (CTW 4/10/99, LT 4/10/99). Clearly Pretoria was on its guard in case of another backdoor attack in the style of the Jameson Raid.

Returning to the Rhodesian side. The 3rd October 1899 finally saw Plumer's column

moving to Tuli itself (LT 5/10/99). On the same day the additional Bulawayo Volunteers under Spreckley were called upon to assist and all other forces in Bechuanaland were requested to strengthen their border posts with the Transvaal (LT 3/10/99). The E Troop volunteers were, on 4 October, advised to take leave of their employment, sell all their private effects and to hold themselves in readiness to move to Tuli on Saturday 7 October. That afternoon they undertook a sham fight with the BSAP as part of their preparations for battle. Additional SRV (remember this is a different unit which was officially backed by the BSACo) were also warned that they might be called out early in the following week. War fever-jingoism gripped Bulawayo. However, Spreckley stated he was unable to fall-in at that time due to business commitments in Bulawayo and thus he would not command E Troop and ex Police Commissioner H.F. White was to go in his stead (CTW 11/10/99, LT 5/10/99).

A number of police wagons and stores arrived at Rhodes' Drift on 5 October, further strengthening the Rhodesian base camp along the Limpopo. From Tuli the local Native Commissioner, who had just returned from a circuit of inspection of the various native kraals along the border, reported that he had been informed that ten armed Boers had recently crossed the border and raided native cattle in Bechuanaland near Rhodes' Drift. In addition all the drifts along the Limpopo remained securely guarded by Boer outposts (LT 7/10/99, CTW 11/10/99). If this raid is true then it must surely be classed as the first cross border action in the Anglo-Boer War in the Tuli area, predating even the official Declaration of War. However, in all probability it was unsanctioned livestock raiding, something which ALL sides were involved in throughout the conflict.

On 6 October Lieutenant Blunt was seconded to assist in the training in Bulawayo of the mounted infantry of Southern Rhodesia Volunteers (LT 6/10/99). After leaving Bulawayo on the 7th E Troop, now again under the Command of Spreckley, joined the remnants of the Rhodesian Regiment at the latter's camp near Essexvale, proceeding from there direct to Tuli. Fortunately, for both the men and horses, by then there had been good rains along the route which had cooled temperatures and improved the water and grazing conditions considerably, however, the resultant mud caused some transport delay (LT 11/10/99).

Scouts of the Rhodesian Regiment column began to assemble at Tuli on 9 October (CTW 11/10/99), with Plumer arriving ahead of the main column on the 10th (Hickman 1970:122). The first full troop arrived on the 11th, camping just outside the decaying settlement on the west bank of the Shashe River (LT 13/10/99). The approach of this troop was undoubtedly one of the final acts of provocation in the War. In fact the final Boer ultimatum issued just prior to the Declaration of War specifically refers to the need for the withdrawal of troops and their reinforcements from along the Borders of the Transvaal (Hickman 1970:92). With British rejection of these demands, War was finally declared at 17h00 on 11 October 1899 (Hickman 1970:92) .

### **RING-A-RING-A-ROSES: THE WAR IN OCTOBER 1899**

Once War had been declared Plumer began to press on with his instructions. That evening, he, together with Bodle of the BSAP and several other senior staff, left Tuli for Rhodes' Drift (CR 20/10/99; CTW 18/10/99). With them marched A Troop of the Rhodesian Regiment. This consisted of 250 mounted men under Pilson. About the



same time the C Squadron consisting of 55 men under MacLaren, as well as 20 BSAP, departed for Macloutsie (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:35).

Further Rhodesian Regiment forces arrived at Tuli on the 12th, while a large quantity of much required of much needed forage arrived from Palapye, Bechuanaland. On the same day the miners on the nearby Tuli Coalfields abandoned their claims and sought refuge in Tuli bringing with them all their stock (CTW 18/10/99).

Fighting began in earnest along the railway line near Lobasti, southern Botswana on 14 October 1899 (LT 19/10/99), but that is outside of our interest here. On that same day D Troop of the Rhodesia Regiment under Blackburn arrived at Tuli (Jarvis 15/10/99). Matching this the Boer forces were similarly increasing, reaching full strength by the 19th (Hickman 1970:133). In the meantime on 16 October Pilson reported that 50 Boers, on the Transvaal side, had passed the British positions at Pont Drift, one of them calling out that they would soon make the British “sit up”. A similar number of Boers (although initially rumoured to be 700 men — LT 28/10/99) were said to have crossed at Baines’ Drift and were marching on Macloutsie. In response the Macloutsie community (5 Protectorate Police, 7 other whitemen, and 12 Native Police — LO) went into garrison, throwing up rough entrenchments around the earlier BBP Fort Matlaputla (LT 23/10/99). Several native runners were then dispatched from Macloutsie to Tuli to warn Plumer of the threatened attack (LO). Most of these Boers were from the Zoutpansberg Commando (LT 28/10/99).

The afternoon of the 16th also saw the final arrival at Tuli of E Troop under Spreckley (CR 20/10/99; LO). With these newly arrived men to guard the Fort, Plumer dispatched D Troop to join the others on Limpopo. Initially this troop had been meant to go to Macloutsie-Limpopo junction, but their destination was altered to Rhodes’ Drift to help the squad already there in the face of unexpected Boer opposition. Boer numbers had grown considerably in the last few days with constant arrivals at their camp which was only 4km away on the Transvaal side of river. There also appeared to be considerable reinforcements arriving at the nearby Pont Drift (CTW 25/10/99, Jarvis 20/10/99; LT 1/11/99). Accompanying these Boer forces were numerous armed Shangaan and Zoutpansberg natives (CR 20/10/99; CTW 28/10/99).

The Rhodesian forces at the time were still preparing their defensive positions and strategies of War — they were not yet ready for action. In addition the Rhodes’ Drift troops were desperately short of fodder for their horses. There was a deep sense of anxiety and most men slept fully kitted in case of an anticipated surprise Boer attack (Jarvis 20/10/99, CTW 25/10/99). Rhodesian forces in this initial phase of the conflict were distributed as follows: 2 Troops Rhodes’ Drift (A & D); 1 at the Shashe-Limpopo junction (B); 1 at Tuli (E); and 1 at Macloutsie (C) (LO). However, for the first week of the War both sides kept to their own sides of the river and there was no fighting (CTW 25/10/99).

Throughout the conflict provisions were to be a major problem for both sides. I have no information on the Boer logistics but there were undoubtedly difficulties given the distance from their main regional settlement of Pietersburg. The Rhodesian centres were also a long way from any settlement of size, however, early on stocks were laid up and by the time of actual conflict they were fairly well provisioned. Macloutsie had stores for 8 months of meal and flour and 35 days for preserved meat.

While at Tuli Plumer had 43 days worth of full rations, while further 2 month's worth of stores were kept in Bulawayo (LO). In terms of artillery he had one 12.5 pounder; two 2.5 inch guns and two maxims (Hickman 1970:122).

About this time a Boer spy, P. Viljoen, impersonating an English Officer to avoid detection, moved along the Limpopo visiting various native kraals on the Bechuanaland side of the Border seeking support for the Boer cause. On hearing this the British authorities seized three of the dissenting chiefs holding them hostage to ensure the good behaviour of their tribes, while a fourth, chief Hans Maoela, escaped to Khama's country seeking protection there (LT 28/10/99). Viljoen was later arrested at Figtree and was handed over by the Rhodesian Authorities to the police at Palapye, Bechuanaland (S 25/8/1999).

The 17th October saw Boer occupation of Lobatsi Siding in southern Bechuanaland (LT 1/11/99), although Macloutsie reported that the rumoured threat had dissipated and all was quiet (LO). Repeated threats were again shouted across the Limpopo from Boer positions at Pont Drift (CR 20/10/99). The first fighting along the border occurred on 18 October 1899 (i.e. day before Hickman 1970:125 suggests). On that day the Rhodesians sent their first cross border reconnaissance party to spy on Boer positions in the Transvaal (BU, Jarvis 20/10/99). Starting 04h00 a squad from D Troop under Blackburn and Captain A.W. Jarvis crossed the Limpopo. It was a "trickish job", and Jarvis "had to cover Blackburn's retreat". The accompanying statement "there were no casualties" suggests that there may have been a skirmish, which would make it the first in the Tuli area (J 20/10/99; CR 20/10/99).

Later in the day D Troop again clashed over the Limpopo near Rhodes' Drift. The Rhodesian version suggests that a watering party consisting of A and D Troops was ambushed (J 20/10/99; LO) with the remainder of the troops then joining in in support, initially D Troop and later reinforced by Pilson and Rolt of A Troop. In total nearly 250 Rhodesians were involved with a Boer force estimated to be 3 to 4 times larger. The Boers were also at an advantage for they were firing from height on their side of the River (J 20/10/99, 25/10/99). Two of Pilson's men were wounded in the ambush (LO), while Rhodesian reports suggest some Boer casualties (J 20/10/99), although this can not be confirmed. Also on the 18th an additional 46 days worth rations sent to Plumer from Bulawayo (AD), while at Macloutsie the telegraph office was moved into Fort (LO).

On Thursday 19 October a D Troop reconnoitring patrol was moving along the north bank of the Limpopo in a westerly direction through the dense bush when it met up a party of the Boers on the Rhodesian side of the river. This Boer group had advanced to cover a watering party in the Limpopo. Given the numerical superiority of the Boers the Rhodesians retired but were fired upon while doing so and Trooper J. Matthews was injured (J 20/10/99, RRR). Captain Glynn of E Troop in the meantime crossed the border with a patrol to spy on Boer positions. He reported that a large Boer column was gathering at Rhodes' Drift possibly for attack (LT 28/10/99). On the same day the telegraph lines in Rhodesian controlled territory near Macloutsie Siding and between Tuli and Victoria (now Masvingo) were cut by Boer Patrols (LO).

By Friday 20 October the Tuli-Victoria telegraph line was repaired (LO), but tensions were high. It probably seemed to Plumer that the Boer establishment was

about to go on the offensive yet he was not entirely ready. Later that day there was another skirmish near Pont Drift. A Boer patrol under Briel was moving along the Transvaal side of the River when they were fired upon by the Rhodesians from the thorny thicket on the northern side. The shots failed to strike any of the burghers, who, however, lost an ox, three horses killed and one wounded. The Rhodesians were said to have had two white and two black troopers killed. At the same time another skirmish occurred near Rhodes' Drift and 4 black sentries on the Rhodesian side were killed (quoted in Hickman 1970:137). It is, however, difficult to confirm these particular casualties in these actions as there is no record in the relevant Rhodesian documents, papers or the Regimental Roll (RRR). Of course it is a sad fact that "native casualties" were generally ignored in the records, but clearly they played a large part in the war efforts of both sides in what has been misconstrued as the "Whiteman's War".

It may also be about this time that the Boers under the guidance of Commandant J. du Preez began to fortify a prominent hill on the Rhodesian side of the river between Rhodes' and Pont Drifts. This hill lies above the river outside of the dense vegetation and it was probably purely a defensive position — to guard Boer watering parties which were now under frequent attack while exposed in the Limpopo. However, once it was discovered the Rhodesians interpreted it as strictly offensive, while it played a significant part in several actions which followed (Hickman 1970:137; Potgieter n.d.). But at this time it was still unknown by the Rhodesians, although the increased Boer activity was interpreted as indicative of an imminent cross border raid. In response all the troops were placed on standby that evening (J 20/10/99).

Saturday 21 October 1899 saw some of the most intense fighting to date. Early that day Captain Blackburn (D Troop) led a sixteen man patrol along the River towards Pont Drift. A two man picket was left at Rhodes' Drift while five men under Sergeant-Major G.A. Yonge travelled slightly inland along the border road, taking with them the patrol's horses with the aim of meeting the remaining nine who were scouting on foot along the thickly wooded banks of the Limpopo (cf. Hickman 1970:125–6; LO).

On that morning, however, Veld-Kornet Briel decided that there should be a determined push into Rhodesian territory from Pont Drift to try drive away the Rhodesian menace which had attacked his watering parties. Thus he sent several Boer patrols over the river. One of these ambushed Yonge's party on the road as it neared Pont Drift (Hickman 1970:137 — although some details have been confused). Yonge was killed (shot in stomach) and the Boers captured the horses, several guns and the remaining four troopers — J. Forbes, W. Kelly, R. Warren, G.P. Cook (CR 27/10/99; LT 1/11/99, LT 31/10/99). Meanwhile Blackburn and his foot patrol came up on the rear of the Boers and a "sharp skirmish ensued". In this action Trooper G.H. Nethercott (shot in head) was killed and Captain Blackburn was severely wounded (in chest and thigh) (CR 27/10/99; Dr.).

On hearing the fire Pilson (A Troop) arrived from Rhodes' Drift to support the Rhodesians, accompanied by an ambulance cart. In the face of increased opposition the Boers then retired to their already fortified strong position on a neighbouring kopje. While the Rhodesian casualties were being placed in the cart the Boers again opened fire. Being in a more commanding position they soon got the upper hand. Two horses were killed instantly, including one under the Reuter's correspondent. The battle now

switched from the ambush site to the kopje. Meanwhile Sergeant F.A. Shepstone and two of the other men of D Troop sought to see to their wounded colleagues. Under sharp fire they carried the wounded to safety in the thick bush (CR 27/10/99; LT 28/10/99; Norris 1902:27). Another patrol under Rolt (also A troop) then arrived on the scene. The shooting continued. Two of these A Troop men were now seriously wounded — Troopers N.S. Dold and H.J. Levy (in stomach, and in head respectively, CR 27/10/99). At this point the Rhodesian forces opted to retire, taking with them their injured (J 25/10/99). That evening was a very anxious one in the Rhodesian camp at Rhodes' Drift, not made any easier when Levy succumbed to his wounds followed by Dold early the next day. Boer casualties in this fight were put as only two wounded (Hickman 1970: 137), although subsequent native reports collected at Tuli suggested that between seven (CR 27/10/99; LO; LT 28/10/99) and twelve (LT 31/10/99) were killed with many injured.

Plumer now received reports that there was an intended Boer push north on 22 October with some six hundred Boers amassing at Pont Drift (AD). Other reinforcements were reported to be assembling at Massabie's Drift to the east, while the Waterberg Commando together with several maxim guns had finally arrived along the Limpopo with the aim of forcing those Drifts further west (CR 27/10/99; Hickman 1970:138; Jarvis 25/10/99). It was an unpleasant situation and Plumer decided that in the face of a growing Boer threat he would withdraw his Troops from all the Limpopo bases (LT 31/10/99). Not only were there concerns of vulnerability of small numbers, extended communications and inadequate heavy artillery, but Plumer also hoped to set a trap closer to Tuli where he felt more secure (J 25/10/99). The Rhodesians departed from Rhodes' Drift at 17h00 on the 22nd taking with them all their stores and the wounded Blackburn, burning the remaining valuable fodder (Hickman 1970:138; J 25/10/99).

Early on the morning of 23 October, Blackburn died of his injuries while on the road to Tuli (CR 27/10/99; LT 31/10/99). The troops finally arrived at 07h00 (J 25/10/99). A number of mounted Boer scouts were seen that day at various places near the border which only increased tensions still further (AD). Also reports were received from a number of native refugees from the Transvaal (seventeen of Mpopu's people having crossed to seek shelter with Plumer) that there were many more Boers arriving accompanied with a large group of armed Zoutpansberg natives (AD). Accordingly, Lieutenant H.J. Kinsman (BSAP Francistown) was ordered to MacLoutsie to reinforce that vulnerable position since MacLaren and his C Troop had returned to Tuli (CR 27/10/99; LT 31/10/99). Plumer also sent out a strong patrol under Glynn of E Troop to investigate if the Boers had in fact crossed *en mass* (AD).

Undoubtedly, had the Boers pressed their advantage at this stage they would have achieved greater success, but they failed to follow up. They were well aware of the Rhodesian flight and Briel visited the smouldering remains of the Rhodes' Drift camp early on the 23rd. However his commander van Rensberg failed to take the initiative, rightfully being wary of a trap — suspicions probably fostered by the captured Rhodesian prisoners. Rather, he sat awaiting instructions from Grobler and requested that more guns be sent from Pretoria. An opportunity was thus lost (Hickman 1970:138).

Returning to Glynn's patrol of the 23rd, he scoured the country for eight hours

including the Transvaal side crossing over at Massabie's Drift — here he only encountered 4 Boers — before retiring to Tuli (CR 27/10/99; LT 31/10/99). He was able to report no evidence for a supposed Boer thrust into Rhodesia. On the basis of this, and further native information, it seemed that the Boers were in fact retiring and not pushing their advantage northward (J 25/10/99). As a consequence late in the afternoon of 23rd, 2 Troops (B & E) were ordered back to the Limpopo, Plumer accompanying them (CR 27/10/99; Jarvis 25/10/99). A and D Troops, under Pilson and Jarvis respectively, remained at Tuli, while C Troop under MacLaren was again ordered back to Macloutsie to further strengthen that garrison, arriving there on 26 October (AD; Jarvis 25/10/99; LO).

Around 20h30 on 24 October 1899 Rolt, who had accompanied Plumer and the troops to the Limpopo, arrived back at Tuli (AD). It was now widely felt that the Rhodesians had won the day, and that the vital Limpopo Drifts were being abandoned by the Boers who were returning southward leaving only small outposts. This was apparently confirmed by several native reports (CTW 8/11/99, LT 6/11/99). For this reason Spreckley (E Troop) was to reoccupy the strategic position at Rhodes' Drift (AD, Hickman 1970:138), while B Troop under Bird was ordered to the Macloutsie–Limpopo junction where they pitched camp under a prominent overhanging rock embankment (CTW 15/11/99, LT 16/11/99; Hickman 1970:138). Also on this day Shepstone, who had assisted the injured Blackburn into shelter and later carried the wounded to the ambulance under enemy fire, received his commission as Lieutenant in recognition of his bravery (AD, LT 31/10/99; Norris 1902:27). What is interesting about this is that there was no medal awarded which says something about the attitude of Imperial War Office to this locally raised force — they were obviously not treated seriously.

News of the earlier withdrawal to Tuli had sent shock waves through Bulawayo. Nurse G.F. Redrup and Doctor Roscoe both volunteered their service (AD; CTW 15/11/99), departing with much required additional Gun detachment which left Bulawayo on 22 October. This consisted of a mounted 2.5 inch mountain gun and 2 maxims as well as several trained gunners of the BSAP (LO). On 26 October, it was announced that in the event of reinforcements being required along the border the BSACo assisted SRV would be called out for immediate action, together with the entire BSAP. For the safety of the town a Bulawayo Town Guard would then be formed of those men remaining (CTW 8/11/99, LT 30/10/99). Several training exercises for these groups were held on the 27th (CTW 8/11/99, LT 30/10/99).

Along the Limpopo, however, Plumer was beginning to feel increasingly confident of success. Only a few Boer outposts (reportedly only two men — AD) remained and with these periodic shoots were exchanged as Rhodesian patrols reconnoitred up and down the river near Rhodes' Drift. The final arrival on the 25th at Tuli of the additional artillery which had lumbered down from Bulawayo probably increased Plumer's confidence at this stage still further (J 25/10/99; AD; LO). This strengthened the fire power of force considerably. However, the journey down was not without incident. Somewhere near a former Zeederberg Coach staging post called Oliphants Pits (Elephants Pits which according to maps in my possession must be about the present day settlement of Guyu) two BSAP Troopers, R.P. Chrystal and R.M. McBean who

were trained to operate this artillery, were lost in the bush on 23 October (CTW 8/11/99; Dr.; LT 7/12/99). The men were separated from the column, possibly while hunting, and it is likely that they perished from thirst. The Native Commissioner at Tuli, did send out a patrol to search for the missing men (CTW 8/11/99, LT 6/11/99), but there are no reports that they were found, alive or dead.

While these developments were going on there was continued cross Border harassment of the native people. Several reports indicate that the Boers, who may or may not have been under official orders, were crossing the Limpopo to attack proBritish villages, shooting at their inhabitants and looting cattle (LT 28/10/99).

On the afternoon of 26 October an E Troop patrol encountered a Boer watering party in the River near Pont Drift (AD). A sharp skirmish ensued and the horses were stampeded, the Rhodesians capturing five while as many as twenty were wounded or killed ( CR 3/11/99; Creswicke 1900-2, vol.3:27; CTW 8/11/99). In addition six Boers were reported killed and four or five captured (BU, LT 6/11/99). On the Rhodesian side Trooper A.F. Lord was wounded slightly in the arm (AD; CR 27/10/99). Later native reports suggested that two additional Boers who had been injured in the action died at their encampment (CR 3/11/99; LT 6/11/99). About this time Troopers H. Carpenter and J. McLaren of B Squad were lost in the bush between their camp at the Macloutsie-Limpopo junction and Rhodes' Drift (AD). I can not establish what happened to them. For Carpenter there is an additional note next to his name in the Nominal Roll to the effect that he was "struck off strength far absence" (RRR). Did they just abscond, they certainly do not appear in the POW lists.

On 28 October 1899 White and Glynn, together with 39 men drawn from E Troop, reconnoitred the same kopje near Pont Drift which saw action during Blackburn's fight (AD). Reports had been received that the Boers were again fortifying this position in Rhodesian territory and these troops were sent to ascertain its strength (Creswicke 1900-2, vol.3:27; CTW 8/11/99; LT 6/11/99). The group was divided into two sections and left the Rhodes' Drift camp at 03h30 proceeding by separate roads and meeting within 250 yards of Pont Drift (CR 3/11/99; CTW 8/11/99). Glynn then began to approach it on one side and White the other (LT 6/11/99). However, their approach was detected and the Boers opened fire which was at once returned. Action continued for five minutes and the Rhodesians decided to retire a short distance. A body of about sixty mounted Boers then left the kopje, and a further brisk skirmish, lasting twenty minutes, took place in the heavy bush near the base of the kopje. Four men with the Rhodesian force were wounded and the Troop then retired to Rhodes' Drift (CR 3/11/99; CTW 8/11/99, LO). Rhodesian wounded were E. St. M. Hutchinson War correspondent for Rhodesian Herald hit in foot, Captains G.A. Calder and A.H. Bullock, and Trooper E.F.W. Friemond all of E Troop and all wounded in the legs (AD; CR 3/11/99). Boer losses were minimal, Trooper C. Kloete slightly injured (Potgieter n.d.).

On the 29th an additional fifty men commanded by Colonel W. Napier left Bulawayo to assist Plumer in his actions along the Limpopo (Hickman 1970: 127). Also that day Trooper L. McSherry of A squad died after having been accidentally wounded by a revolver shot in the stomach the previous day (AD). It is probably the horrors of this operation under makeshift conditions which are described by Redrup as quoted in Hickman (1970:167):

“one of our men was accidentally shot through the kidneys with a revolver and it became necessary to operate. I would not dare to tell you all the details of that terrible operation, which was carried out in a hut with packing cases for an operating table; and everyone pouring with perspiration in the heat; but the man would have died in any case.”

On 30 October a BSAP patrol near Massabie’s Drift was surprised and chased by a party of about fifty Boers (AD). Later that day a native prisoner who had escaped from the Boers came into the Rhodes’ Drift camp. He reported that the main body of the Boers had gone westward towards Mafeking, while others had retired inland to a large laager at Brak River Store (AD, CTW 8/11/99). He also provided the first confirmation that Troopers Warren, Kelly, Cook, and Forbes, who had been taken prisoners during Blackburn’s fight were alive and well, being held in the Boer laager opposite Rhodes’ Drift (CTW 8/11/99). Undoubtedly they played a part in scaring their Boer captors by exaggerating the numbers of Rhodesian forces and their military hardware (cf. Hickman 1970:138).

Plumer left Rhodes’ Drift returning to Tuli on 31 October (AD; Jarvis 5/11/99). He had ascertained to his satisfaction that, with the exception of Pont Drift, most of the Boers had now left the northern border of the Transvaal (LT 15/11/99). It appeared that about one hundred Boers were still encamped on the kopjes on the Transvaal side of Pont Drift where they controlled access to the drift, as well as the associated store. In addition they held the nearby kopje on the Rhodesian side. Plumer felt that these positions were too strong and difficult to attack, however, they did not appear offensive encampments. The Boers present merely seemed interested in holding their positions (AD; CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:141). Macloutsie now reported that there was no longer a Boer threat to its security, although there were still isolated raids on native villages near junction of the Macloutsie and Limpopo Rivers (CTW 15/11/99, LT 16/11/99).

However, the Rhodesians had misread the situation. On 31 October Khama’s scouts reported that a small body of Boers had been seen near Baines’ Drift moving northwards along the Limpopo (AD). A further ominous sign of subsequent events was the Telephone line between Rhodes’ Drift and Tuli suddenly went down (AD).

#### **BLACK THURSDAY: ACTION AT BRYCE’S STORE AND RHODES’ DRIFT.**

When Pilson had earlier withdrawn from Rhodes’ Drift after the Blackburn incident, what stores and fodder could not be removed were burnt to prevent them falling into the hands of the Boers. Now Plumer decided to restock the camp as well as Bird’s position at the Macloutsie-Limpopo junction (Hickman 1970:141). It was decided to form an advance depot at a place called Bryce’s Store. This lay about 30km south of Tuli and about 10km from the Rhodes’ Drift camp (AD; J 5/11/99). It was also at the junction of roads leading to the Macloutsie River and Pont Drift (Hickman 1970:141). Late in the afternoon of 1 November 1899 a small column of six wagons carrying the necessary supplies set off from Tuli with twenty five men drawn from both the BSAP and A Troop of the Rhodesian Regiment. They were under the joint command of under Lieutenants Hare (as Quartermaster) and A.E. Haserick (Rhodesian Regiment) (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:29; CTW 15/11/99; J 5/11/99; Hickman 1970:141; RCHC;

RRR). Also that day the Telephone line between Rhodes' Drift and Tuli was repaired and Plumer ordered Spreckley to begin reconnoitring the Shashe River in addition to the Limpopo. A further Police Patrol was then dispatched from Tuli to Massabie's Drift in the light of events on 30 October (AD). In fact so confident were the Rhodesians that SRV, who had been in camp just outside Bulawayo for more than a week, were discharged from further service although they were warned to hold themselves in readiness at a six hours' notice (CTW 15/11/99).

While this was going on there were significant changes in the Boer camp. On 31 October Police Commandant S.P. Grobler arrived bringing reinforcements and an additional field gun. They were joined on 1 November by Captain S. Eloff, a grandson of Transvaal President Kruger (Gardner 1966:93; Hickman 1970:179). Eloff brought from Pretoria a further two maxims as well as a trained German gunner (probably Baron A.F. von Dalwig) to operate the gun delivered by Grobler (Hickman 1970:142; J 16/10/99). Spurred on by the newcomers, van Rensburg was encouraged to act (Gardner 1966:94). It was decided that there should be a concerted Boer push into Rhodesian territory, Tuli would be captured and Plumer put to flight (Hickman 1970:139).

Three to four hundred Boers then crossed the Limpopo near Rhodes' Drift early on the morning of 2 November, taking with them three heavy guns (CTW 15/11/99; Gardner 1966:94; Hickman 1970:139). The blustery, drizzly conditions prevalent at the time served to hide all noise (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:27). They then divided into two sections with the aim of outflanking Spreckley's camp. One section, under van Rensburg, Grobler and Kelly with the maxims, made through the bush to positions to the east of Spreckley's camp. The other, under Briel, Alberts and Eloff, taking with them the heavy artillery, moved along the main road to the west which led to Bryce's Store (Hickman 1970:139, 143).

The Rhodesians were, however, totally unaware of these developments. Early on the morning of the 2nd Glynn and his E Troop men were reconnoitring Tuli-Rhodes' Drift telephone line which had again been cut. They noted that there was a fair amount of unusual activity in the Boer camp at Pont Drift but could make out what was happening so they proceeded. However, they soon heard heavy firing coming from the direction of Bryce's Store and Glynn returned to the Rhodes' Drift camp reporting to Spreckley (CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:143; LT 16/11/99). The fights at Bryce's Store and at Rhodes' Drift had begun. First let us deal with the former.

It would seem that Plumer's wagons had reached Bryce's Store around mid morning, inspanned and the men had only just settled down to a late breakfast. The Boer forces (numbering about two hundred with large field guns) then, unexpectedly, came across this Rhodesian party (AD; BU; J 5/11/99). As a result they began to take positions on the various hills which surround the store which, although on a slight rise next to the Pitsane River, was in a depression with little strategic value (Hickman 1970:150–154; LO), see Figure 3. Two Rhodesian scouts then galloped in reporting unknown movements along the road. The wagons were drawn into a laager and the men took cover both in the store and between the wagons. A message to Tuli was attempted but the telephone line had already been cut (BU). Initial firing came from a hill some distance away, but with no impact (Hickman 1970:142). A mounted group of Boers



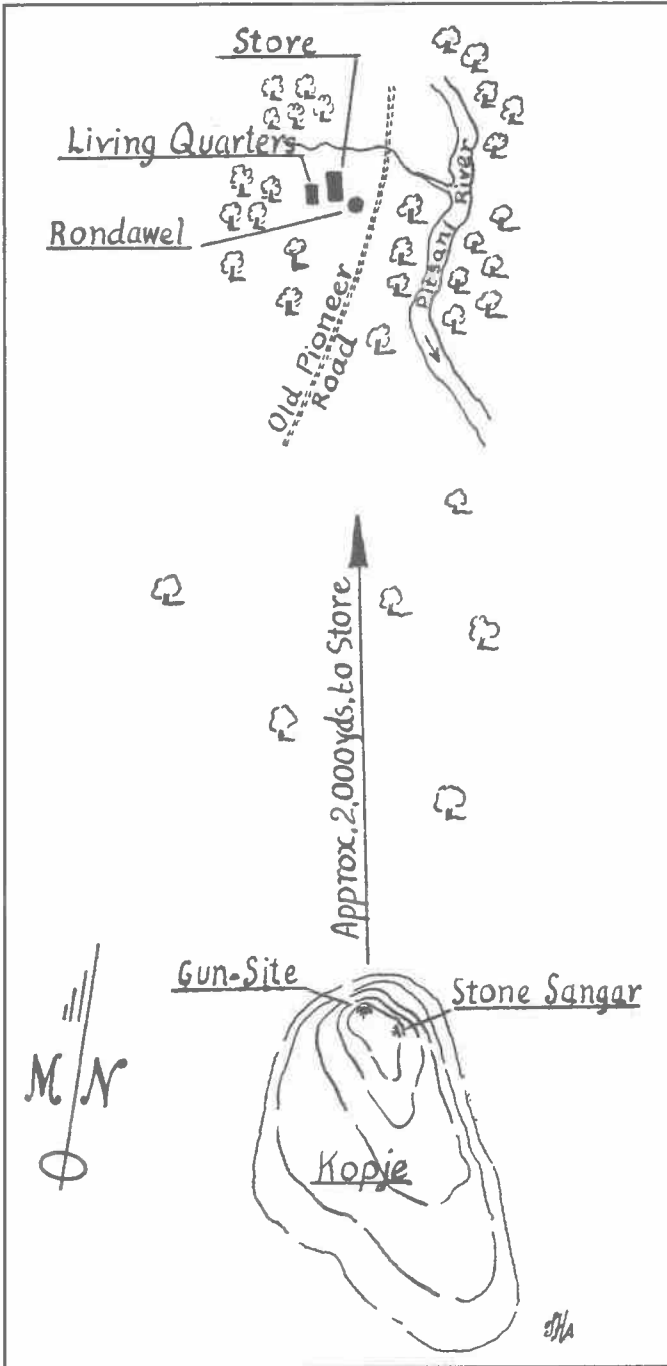


Figure 3: The site of the battle at Bryce's Store, in Botswana, near the Tuli Circle  
 (after Hickman, 1970:154)

then approached the Store from the north along the Tuli road showing two flags, one white and one white and red which was most prominent. Mistaking them to be Spreckley's men the Rhodesians emerged and cheered. At about 150 to 200 yards off the Boers dismounted, took cover behind a small stream bank which cut through the road, and commenced firing on the bewildered defenders who retreated back into the Store (AD; BU; LO). At this point the heavy gun, now positioned on the hill to the rear (south) of the store, began shelling. The second shell hit the store, blowing off the roof and crumbling the walls (Hickman 1970:150–154; Potgieter n.d.). Hare ordered a retreat into the bush, but the message failed to reach Haserick and some of his men who continued to resist until forced to surrender (Hickman 1970:1142). Those that could, however, fled into the thick bush — it was no ordered textbook retreat (J 5/11/99; LO).

Most of the Rhodesians managed to make good their escape. However, 7 men were taken prisoner by the Boers including Haserick and the Tuli Chaplain J.W. Leary who was wounded through the ankle by shrapnel from the shell which hit the store (J 5/11/99). Others included Troopers G.F. Gubbins (BSAP) and W.H. Waller, W. Hyde, L.G. Van Eyssel, and D. Pierce (Rhodesian Regiment). Of these three were injured, two seriously (CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:139). Gubbins was a particularly serious loss to the Rhodesians as he was a trained telegraphist who had with him a military telephone (LO). This vital instrument fell into Boer hands who then used it to listen to Rhodesian plans — for instance they record for the first time in their documents names of Rhodesian casualties which were official correspondence sent from Tuli, which they would not have had access to otherwise. Also lost were six wagons and large quantities of stores (LO) which were much appreciated by the Boers — their supply lines across the dry Limpopo valley to Pietersburg being very precarious. Boer casualties were three wounded (Hickman 1970:139).

One of the defenders must have got away on horseback for he galloped back to Tuli reaching it about midday. Initially it was rumoured that everyone had been killed or captured. About 14h00 Pilson cautiously proceeded in the direction of the Store with A Troop, some BSAP and an ambulance. Jarvis was placed on standby in case the need arose. Pilson came across several men and was able to assist them back to Tuli. Others arrived back under their own steam — having hidden in the bush until under the cover of darkness they felt safe enough to avoid Boer detection (AD; CTW 15/11/99; J 5/11/99). Amongst the injured who managed to escape were Sergeant D. Leigh and Troopers J.F. Carr and Jones (all BSAP) and J. Harkney (Rhodesian Regiment) (AD; Hickman 1970:139, 142; RRR; SAFFCL).

Now let us consider the action which was happening at the Rhodes' Drift Camp nearby. When Spreckley got word of a fight at Bryce's Store he took precautions. At about 13h00 the horses, which were out grazing, were brought in and fifteen men were posted in the thick bush on low ground in front of the camp in the direction of Bryce's Store (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:27; Hickman 1970:143). However, he was unaware that he too was being surrounded. In this broken country it was easy for the Boers to creep through the gullies around the small undulating ridge on which the camp was built and then attack it from the sides and rear (J 5/11/99). Once in place they opened fire, at first maxim and rifle fire only but later the heavy artillery (Hotchkiss, 7-pounders)

came into play once action had ceased at Bryce's Store. The guns having been brought up the road and positioned on a wooded kopje 800 yards to the north-west (CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:140; J 5/11/99). Thus began a constant bombardment which lasted from midday to sundown — nearly 6 hours. Some of the first shots hit the ambulance wagon which was fortunately empty, others were aimed at the animal lines, killing, maiming, or stampeding every horse and mule except one. The Rhodesians had to take cover and the many large boulders on the kopje, as well as a big baobab tree at one end, afforded excellent protection and there were no serious Rhodesian casualties (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:27–8; CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:143).

At one point a white flag was raised by the Rhodesians and the Boers came out to take their prisoners, however, the Rhodesians then resumed firing and two Boers, G.J. van der Merwe and H. Bong, were killed instantly (Hickman 1970:140). Firing and shelling then continued. At about 15h30 Spreckley sent a message with a native runner through to Tuli to report his predicament, and indicated that he intend to retreat that night (AD; CTW 15/11/99). It was delivered that evening, but no help could be sent at the time. After dark the Boers sent off a final volley with one shell landing in the camp to which the Rhodesians replied firing into the darkness (CTW 15/11/99). Then things settled down to an unnerving silence. In fact van Rensberg, rather than pushing the matter, retired for the evening with most of his men to their camp in the Transvaal, taking with them their two dead and four injured — Sergeant H. Lee, Troopers du Preez, Bates and Lee (AD; CTW 15/11/99, 29/11/99; Hickman 1970:140; Potgieter n.d.).

As they were seriously out numbered Spreckley decided to withdraw and, abandoning everything but their rifles, at 20h00 they quietly stole away heading, single file, north-east through a thorny and rock strewn landscape in the black of night towards the Shashe River. Clearly, Spreckley wanted to avoid the most direct, and obvious, route along the main road believing that it would be heavily guarded by the Boers. After twelve hours they reached the Shashe River (including a one and a half hour halt for sleep) and after a short break for breakfast (nothing other than water as they had no provisions) they trudged a further four hours upstream towards Tuli, finally reaching Crocodile Pools a few kilometres short of their destination (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:28; CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:143–4).

That the Boers did not leave the Rhodesian camp surrounded was a serious tactical error — their quarry escaped to fight another day. At day-break the next morning Jarvis and D Troop left Tuli along the main road in the direction of Rhodes' Drift to try locate the retreating force, spending an anxious but unfruitful day for that was not the way that Spreckley chose. They also intercepted several natives who had escaped from Rhodes' Drift and who informed them that Spreckley's troop had been wiped out. General gloom settled over the Rhodesian forces (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:29; CTW 15/11/99; J 5/11/99). In the meantime Glynn, using the only horse that E Troop had secured, rode ahead of the weary men to Tuli to ask for help, arriving there at 10h25 (AD). In response a delighted Pilson and A Troop rode out to Crocodile Pools and dismounted, loaning their horses to allow E Troop to ride the remainder of the distance to Tuli (Creswicke 1900–2, vol.3:29; CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:144). Spreckley returned with all his men, but he lost his stores, a telephone, wagon, cart

and an ambulance wagon, as well as all his horses and mules. Although some of the former which had stampeded in the heat of the battle, and which were not captured by the Boers, later made their own way back to Tuli (CTW 15/11/99; J 5/11/99; LO).

Although not a battle in the real sense, there was another event on that day worthy of record. Hickman (1970:143) in writing about it, was at a loss as to who or where, but he cites a Royal Commission schedule which indicates that three men were captured escorting a wagon on this same day. The problem is simple. The three men were Troopers W.E. Ainsle; P. Betram and W.C.H. Saxby (RC; LT 12/7/00). From the Rhodesia Regimental Roll we discover that they were from B Troop. This Troop under Bird was then located at the Macloutsie-Limpopo junction. Clearly, these men were escorting a wagon (possibly in the hope of receiving supplies for the Troop) towards the road junction at Bryce's Store. They heard firing, hid and waited until all was quiet. Then resuming their journey they were surrounded and captured by the same group of Boers who had attacked Bryce's Store (Hickman 1970:143).

Early on 3 November the Boers returned to the Rhodes' Drift camp which they were unaware had been deserted. They resumed shelling the ridge which lasted for some time before they realised their error. For them the actions at Bryce's Store and Rhodes' Drift were a success. They had captured stores, a total of nine wagons, an ambulance, a cart, fifty six horses, seventy nine mules, eighteen oxen and they had driven the enemy from the Limpopo (Hickman 1970:140). They again had the upper hand and could have been even more successful had they pushed onto Tuli, but they again failed to take the opportunity. Grobler felt he could take Tuli and beyond with only 400 men, but van Rensberg was more apprehensive, feeling that they had insufficient supplies for an extended thrust. In addition there was a general feeling that the area had been extensively mined (a misconception "cheerfully fostered" by the captured Reverend Leary — J 16/12/99).

Divided councils held back Boer initiative and it is very little wonder that the Boer Military Leaders in Pretoria despaired of the weakness of their Commanders along this Frontier (Gardner 1966:94; Hickman 1970:140; Potgieter n.d.). In fact they soon took fright when, about noon on the 3rd, a rumour of a substantial Rhodesian counter attack sent the men scurrying back to the Transvaal abandoning the artillery and ammunition on Rhodesian soil. This panic followed the sighting of a huge cloud of dust seen approaching from the direction of Tuli. The Boer commanders misconstrued this as the approach of a large column, although it later proved to be a huge swarm of locusts. In the meantime Native Commissioner D. de Preez had a tough job trying to persuade some men to return to recover the guns and ammunition (Hickman 1970:140, 253-4; Potgieter n.d.).

#### **HANGING AROUND: EVENTS AFTER THE ATTACK ON BRYCE'S STORE**

The Boers soon realised that their flight had been for no reason and on 4 November 1899 they again took possession of the two captured positions (Hickman 1970:141). Van Rensberg then informed Pretoria that he intended to attack Tuli the next day, and would then raid deep into Rhodesia and destroy the rail links. But nothing came of this. He did not have the military nerve, while Pretoria subsequently rejected his plan suggesting that it would be a waste of resources since the Rhodesian force was small,

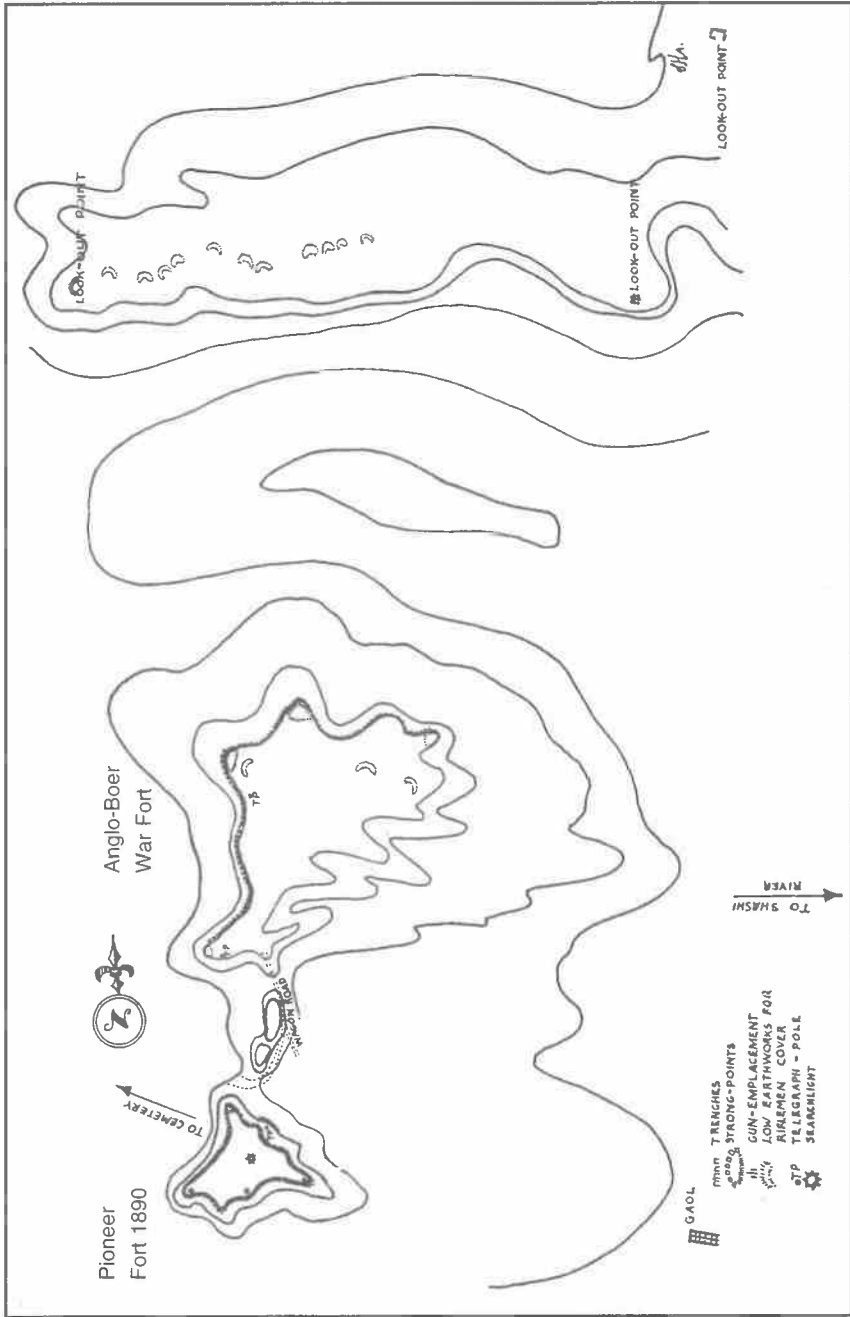


Figure 3: Sketch plan of Fort Tuli (after Hickman 1970:164)

and that the real dangers to the Transvaal lay to the south (Gardner 1966:94; Hickman 1970:141).

After the Boer attacks Plumer determined that it would be best to concentrate his forces at Tuli. In this he was supported by Baden-Powell who sent a message from beleaguered Mafeking to the effect that Tuli was a desirable point to hold in the face of danger (Gardner 1966:95; RCHC). On 3 November Bird and B Troop, who had been regularly patrolling west of the Macloutsie for some time now without seeing any opposition, were recalled to Tuli in case they too were attacked (AD). The Limpopo Drifts were abandoned and instead the Rhodesians opted for a regular series of patrols which were sent out from Tuli on a daily basis. Most were routine reconnaissance, but there were a few skirmishes. On the 4th it was Jarvis and D Troop who set out before sunrise to locate the Boers (J 5/11/99). Reconnoitring to within three miles of Bryce's Store, Jarvis and his section saw no Boers although there was fresh spoor and assumed that they still held the position. In addition a separate section under Shepstone caught glimpses of a Boer patrol moving southward (AD; LT 20/11/99)

At this time the Rhodesians became suspicious that the Boers were tapping into their communication lines using the two instruments which they captured at Bryce's Store and Rhodes' Drift. Several bogus messages were sent, and one assumes thereafter that coded messages were used (LO).

On the 5th Pilson and A Troop undertook the same patrol as Jarvis and were able to establish for certain that the Boers still occupied Bryce's Store (AD; J 5/11/99; LT 20/11/99). In the meanwhile MacLaren reported from Macloutsie that everything was quiet in his section, and that he had been joined by 150 men sent by Chief Khama to support the British campaign (LT 20/11/99). Later that afternoon Bird and B Troop arrived from the Macloutsie-Limpopo junction, reporting that there are only a few Boers in the neighbourhood (LT, 20/11/99).

Jarvis and D Troop again patrolled on the 6th, followed by Pilson and A Troop on the 7th (J 11/11/99). Pilson was able to establish that Bryce's Store had been strongly fortified and was occupied by a fairly large force of Boers with two large guns (LO; LT 20/11/99). Pringle (New South Wales Lancers) was now given the position of subaltern by Plumer who also sent an urgent request to Bulawayo for 20-30 reliable Matabele scouts, since he considered the local Native Commissioner's men, drawn from Mpopu's tribe who were refugees from the Transvaal who were under the control of R. Trevor of the BSAP, to be useless. This request was granted and at once Mr Posselt set out with the native scouts (AD)

Bird and B Troop joined the sequence of patrolling on the 8th. This took some of the pressure off A and D Troops (J 11/11/99). Spreckley's E Troop was obviously still being permitted recovery time. Jarvis' letters to his Mother in England gives us a general picture of these patrols:

“day is up 3.30am, saddle 4am, march 4.30am and back 8.30pm. ... Our aim is to work up to Boer positions as close as I can. ... I have formed a good scouting section in my squad of 12 picked men (6 at time). We work our way through the bush as far as I think safe with the troop. Leaving others in the troop in support, I go forward myself with 6 men and leave the troop in position to cover. ... When I and my scouts are pretty close we get off our horses and

crawl on through the bush with 1 at the most 2 men to get to a place where we can spy on the Enemy digging entrenchments and making forts, as well as getting guns and other engines of destruction in place” (J 11/11/99).

On his patrol Bird was able to establish that the Boers had entrenched three kopjes near Bryce’s Store and that they had 2 maxims and field gun. A particularly large entrenchment lay about 1000 yards from the Store (AD).

Meanwhile Pringle left Bulawayo for Tuli on the 8th with twenty five additional volunteers, mostly on their own horses, as well as 26 additional horses of which 20 had been transferred from the BSAP to Plumer’s Force (AD). This was probably to help alleviate the serious lack of horse power after Spreckley’s losses.

Jarvis and D Squadron were again reconnoitring on the 9th, on this occasion west, north and for the first time east of Bryce’s Store. The weather was extremely hot and dry. Boer forces were considerable and the Rhodesians still dared not attack, hoping instead that the Boers would take chances and be drawn into an attack on Tuli which was a Rhodesian strong point (J 11/11/99; LT 20/11/99). In fact later reports indicate that the Boer objective had been to attack Tuli on this day, but nothing came of the plan (J 16/12/99).

Pilson patrolled on the 10th and Bird the 11th. Although Bryce’s Store was still occupied there were signs of a withdrawal (AD). Also on the evening of the 10th Trooper T.C. Fenton of the BSAP who was stationed at an isolated police camp at Gong’s Poort north-east of Tuli, was mauled by a lioness. Although his comrades tried to assist him and were moving him by cart to Tuli, he died on the 11th before reaching the hospital and is buried in the Tuli cemetery (LO; SAFFCL). Jarvis and D Troop again patrolled on the 12th, while MacLaren at Macloutsie transmitted earlier native reports to the effect that a party of 78 Boers with 15 wagons had been sighted at Baines’ Drift heading northward (AD).

This was probably Commandant-General Grobler and his column who returned on the 12th to Hendriksdal in order to discuss strategy with the Zoutpansberg commanders. Grobler had spent most of the time, largely unsuccessfully, since the Declaration of War further to the south-west with the Waterberg Commando. This force proved very reluctant to take action and Grobler had problems with several insubordinate Waterberg Commandants, who were frequently replaced and unsuccessfully threatened by the High Command in Pretoria. The tying down of Grobler in the south-west effectively deprived the Zoutpansberg Commando of any real military leadership — it may have even won the stand-off for the Rhodesians (Hickman 1970:177-8). Although Grobler may have considered van Rensburg’s plan to attack Rhodesia, it was not to be. A reply to the plans submitted earlier to Pretoria on the 4th were rejected by the State-Secretary. Pretoria felt that the forces would be better used elsewhere on the many fronts which they were then fighting. The small Rhodesian force was no real threat to the State. The Northwest Commando was divided. A small detachment would be left to guard the Limpopo, while most were recalled to Pretoria. There they were split into two groups, the larger section under Grobler were sent to Modder River, while one hundred men under van Rensburg went to Colenso. A few weeks later the Limpopo numbers were reduced still further (Gardner 1966:94; Potgieter n.d.; Van Rensburg n.d.).

On the Rhodesian side there was an offer received from the General Manager of

the Tati Concession, U.P. Swinburne, of an additional twenty white and thirty black volunteers. This Concession lay to the north-west of Tuli and as a British, landed, Company, it had vested interests in maintaining Imperial dominance in the region. These men would all be paid by that Company who would also ensure that they were armed, provisioned and provided with the necessary horses and other transport from the Concession. This offer was, however, turned down by the Rhodesian Authorities who felt it might have otherwise jeopardised the defence of Francistown (the main settlement in the Concession) which was also under Boer threat (AD).

The first heavy rains fell on 14 November (J 19/11/99). The Shashe was flowing strongly and it was thought that the Limpopo would no longer be passable (AD; LT 27/11/99). The Anglican Archdeacon, J.H. Upcher, was now assigned to Tuli to replace Leary who had been captured. While Messrs Bryce was ordered from Tuli under escort, Plumer directed that no civilians would henceforth be allowed access to the camp (AD).

On the 15th Khama's Macloutsie based scouts reported one hundred and fifty Boers at the Macloutsie Junction and a further hundred, with ten wagons, at Baines' Drift (AD; CTW 29/11/99). Clearly, there were plans afoot to raid across the border at this point, possibly to destroy the railway line so as to cut successful Rhodesian train communications to the south (Hickman 1970:192-3). This objective was always a key issue which the Pretoria High Command desired from its forces along this border, and which had not been acted upon as yet (cf. Hickman 1970: 133-135). In response Rhodesian security along the railway from Bulawayo, through the Tati Concession and beyond into the Bechuanaland Protectorate, was strengthened considerably (LO), while Khama sent another hundred armed men to Macloutsie to help with scouting (AD). However, by the 16th reports received from Macloutsie indicated that this supposed Boer force had broken up, and that a portion was proceeding down river towards Tuli (CTW 29/11/99; LT 25/11/99). The fact that they had gone was confirmed by MacLaren who, together with C Troop, then visited both Baines' Drift and Grobelaar's (or Martin's) Drift which lies much further upstream (AD).

While this episode was being played out Plumer's Tuli reconnoitring patrols continued. There were daily reports of constant activity in the kopjes around Bryce's Store (CTW 29/11/99; LT 27/11/99). The heavy rains continued, the rivers rose, and many become impassable (AD). Meanwhile Pringle with the additional men and remounts arrived at Tuli on the 16th (AD).

The last substantive action in this part of the world happened on 18 November 1899. A reconnoitring party under Jarvis was ambushed on the Rhodes' Drift road about 20km from Tuli towards Bryce's Store (AD; CTW 29/11/99; LO). Here I cite Jarvis' own letter to his Mother describing the incident:

“our patrolling in this terribly difficult country still continues and we have been wondering amongst ourselves often lately whose fate it will be to get chopped. The country lends itself so especially to traps and ambushes of every description. I was nearly the victim ... they nearly had my patrol out in the early morning by lying in a donga in the bush in a frightfully difficult place, where the squad patrols from here (Tuli) MUST pass to get a view of THEIR position. I luckily posted the men with me on a kopje just before I came to this place and was



going forward from there with only five of my scouts. We had just got there when a lucky incident just showed us a HAT move on a ridge to our right. We saw nothing else but just as we thought to move a hat bobbed down below the sky line. We laid up in the bush, spied with glasses three men in the rocks & bush. I sent four men to reconnoitre the sides to see numbers. We moved 800 yards. The Boers realised that something was up as they spotted my scouts. Others joined them. One Boer went to the hill and waved his hat (signal). Seeing me and company were being surrounded we went back into the donga and moved out. The shooting now started. We had to go over the kopje where the troop was. We had to scramble up and over in the open with our horses. Shot at heavily, it rained mauser bullets. All the Troop horses stampeded in fright so I had to get all the men together to hold our position. Luckily horses captured by another troop six miles off. They came at once. We retreated. Three men killed, lost three horses. Recovered bodies of two of the poor fellows and of course not certain if the third WAS killed, but fear so" (J 19/11/99).

The dead were D Troop Troopers G. Cook and G.H. Perrett, while Trooper M. Barthropp was missing. After the ambush the Boers retreated towards Bryce's Store (AD; LO; LT 24/11/99). On the 19th and 20th Jarvis and D Troop scouted the area for Bathropp's body but failed to locate any information as to his fate (AD; J 19/11/99). In fact Barthropp had been taken prisoner by the Boers, being transferred to Pretoria with the other POWs and released from there by British Troops in June 1900.

About this time there were large movements of Boers — families or independent groups of men — moving northward through the sparsely populated northern areas of the Transvaal, some entering Bechuanaland, the Tati Concession and Rhodesia (LO). Possibly some of these people were genuine refugees trying to escape the war, but others had ulterior motives. Certainly on 19 November reports were received that three hundred Boers were raiding native cattle along the Limpopo near the Zimbabwe–South Africa–Mozambique junction (AD). This was, however, too far for Plumer's patrols to deal with.

Of more concern to the Rhodesian Authorities were reports of imminent treason amongst the resident Afrikaners in Southwest Zimbabwe (contemporary reports use the term "Dutch" as opposed to Boers for the Transvaalers, although they were kith and kin). Local spies reported that fifty to sixty Rhodesian Dutch in the Mangwe area had stockpiled arms and would assist their Transvaal brethren in simultaneous attacks on Tuli and Palapye, then moving on to Bulawayo coming up the Semokwe route via Mangwe. A prominent Mangwe rancher, J.C. Van Rooyen, was reported to have said that he had undertaken to guide Grobler with eight hundred men by this back route. This was said to be planned for 3 December 1899 (AD; RC). Later reports of 24 November suggested that the Dutch were preparing to sabotage the internal communication lines, while four Mangwe residents (Botha, two Griefs, and M. Herba) were planning to ride down through what was called the Mopaniveld (Semokwe Valley) and guide Grobler and his Boer forces to Mangwe (LO).

The Authorities, who were less aware of the actual border situation at that time and who were still blinkered by the earlier military setbacks at Bryce's Store and Rhodes' Drift, must have reported this to Plumer suggesting that he may wish to withdraw

from Tuli towards Bulawayo in order to deal with these supposed rebels. Plumer refused the advice declaring that he would remain at Tuli which was strong enough to defend itself. Instead he suggested that the Mangwe area must be reinforced with a strong BSAP presence, that they disarm all the Dutch and that Martial Law be declared in the southern parts of the country to deal with such cases of civil unrest (AD).

Meanwhile, patrolling from Tuli continued. Bryce's Store was still strongly held by the Boers, but otherwise there was relatively little to report. Again I quote Jarvis' letter from this period:

“no collision since scrap last Saturday. The same game of hunting and stalking each other. Now march out at 2:30 am, back at 8 pm. ... We have tea & bullybeef and bullybeef & tea breakfast, lunch and dinner. ... You never saw anything like the number of beetles, scorpions and creepy things generally that there are about this place. Men worried about bathing in the river because of crocodiles” (J 24/11/99).

By 20 November continual heavy rains made movement difficult. The Shashe was in flood and only just passable at Tuli (AD; LO). On the 21st Lieutenants French, Blunt and Tyler left Salisbury (now Harare) via Bulawayo to join Plumer at Tuli (AD). MacLaren at Macloutsie was sent twenty five men (presumably Pringle's recently arrived party) and was asked to increase his patrols southward upstream of the Limpopo (AD). There was good reason for this, for again on the 24th Khama's scouts reported to Macloutsie that another large party of Boers and sixty wagons had passed Baines' Drift moving towards Rhodes' Drift (CTW 6/12/99). In addition two independent native reports suggested that sixty two Boers had camped on the south bank of the River near Baines' Drift (AD). There was some concern that these movements may have had something to do with the rumoured Dutch revolt in Mangwe, Rhodesia.

On the basis of Plumer's earlier suggestions the Rhodesian Authorities decided to act. On 25 November 1899 Martial Law was declared in south and south-western Rhodesia covering the administrative districts of Bulalema, Mangwe, Malema, Matoppo, Mawabeni, and Tuli. (CTW 13/12/99; LT 9/10/99). This would allow for the disarming of the local Dutch and commandeering of any stores deemed necessary. Fifty BSAP under Major M. Straker and Sub-Inspector Buller were sent from Bulawayo via Plumtree to do the disarming. However, only twenty rifles and a thousand rounds were collected, while there were no incriminating documents found. An additional one hundred mounted and three hundred unmounted men from the SRV were then called up and were to be based at Van Rooyen's farm to prevent any collusion with the Boers in the Transvaal. Later this group was moved on 28 November to Fort Mangwe. At the same time a BSAP outpost was to be established in a prominent location in the Semokwe Valley at Thaba Imyoni and was placed under the charge of Straker (AD).

### **THE TULI FINALE: RETREAT AND ABANDONMENT**

Back at Tuli Jarvis' patrol of 26 November 1899 had been in the direction of the Macloutsie River, but on the way back he briefly investigated Bryce's Store which was found deserted (AD, J 2/12/99). This was confirmed on the 27th when Bird's scouts found no sign of Boers at any of their strongly entrenched positions around

Bryce's Store (J 2/12/99). It seemed that the Boers had, if somewhat recently, evacuated their positions (CTW 13/12/99; RC). On 28 November the Rhodesians, still wary of a trap, pressed forward. An E Troop patrol under Spreckley went as far as the old Rhodes' Drift camp where again there were no Boers (J 2/12/99). Other patrols then established that Pont and Baines' Drifts were also abandoned. Plumer sensed victory and began to make suggestions that he should leave Tuli and move with a large part of his force to operations along the Bechuanaland railway (AD). By this time action in central and southern Bechuanaland had become heated and two hundred and seventy SRV and fifty six BSAP had left Bulawayo by train for this front (LT 8/12/99).

To ensure that the Boer retreat was real, on 29 November Jarvis and D Troop left Tuli at 02h30 patrolling until 21h15. They covered 100–120km, travelling along the Limpopo River posting men as they went so as to watch and, if necessary, order retreat. In the end Jarvis had only ten men. They crossed into the Transvaal and found the main Boer camp at Hendriksdal deserted. He describes it as well fortified and speculates that it would have housed up to 1500 men (BU; J 2/12/99). Old Dutch (Afrikander although at that time written in the language Dutch) newspapers gave the Rhodesians the first indication of what had happened to those of their number who were missing. The names of these POWs were recorded, as well as the fact that they had recently been sent to Pretoria (AD; RC). Further Limpopo patrols were sent out on 30 November and it seemed certain that no Boers remained along this section of the River (AD; CTW 13/12/99; LT 7/12/99). Accordingly Plumer laid plans to lead a six day patrol with a hundred and fifty men deep into the Transvaal (AD; J 2/12/99).

This cross border patrol, sometimes referred to as "Plumer's Flying Column", left Tuli on 1 December 1899. After thoroughly checking the vicinities of Bryce's Store, Rhodes' and Pont Drifts, it crossed the Limpopo into Transvaal territory on 3 December at the junction of the Limpopo and Macloutsie rivers. They then rode through the veld for eighteen hours to a point on the coach road 80km north of Pietersburg. However, the extremely hot and dry conditions, made worse by a scarcity of surface water and grazing for the weakening horses, meant that this reconnaissance had to be terminated and the party moved back to Rhodes' Drift. During this patrol no Boers were seen, clearly, they had abandoned the area (BU; CTW 20/12/99; Gardner 1966:95; LT 33/12/99; RC).

Plumer now moved his men to Pont Drift and made plans for another patrol to the Brak River *via* Warmbachuk (Warmbaths) and Gulumpies with a hundred men (AD; RC). This should have departed on 7 December (CTW 20/12/99; LT 33/12/99), but the Limpopo came down in flood and would have prevented the wagons, stores and fodder from crossing. The projected reconnaissance was abandoned and Plumer returned to Tuli on 8 December, a guard post under Pilson being left at Pont Drift (AD; CTW 20/12/99; LT 33/12/99).

Pilson now organised for a new raft to be built to allow access across the flooded River, the old pont which gave the name Pont Drift having foundered on the 7th and was now damaged beyond repair (AD). This allowed groups of twenty five men and horses to patrol south of the Limpopo to check in case the Boers were returning (AD; CTW 20/12/99; LT 33/12/99). Meanwhile at Tuli life became routine and uneventful for both men and officers, although the onset of the rains did bring malaria and horse

sickness. The only highlight being a special dinner which was given on the evening of 10 December by the Officers to welcome Archdeacon Usher — it consisted of “tea and bully” (AD; J 10/12/99).

Continued heavy rains now made most roads impassable. A strong patrol eastward on the 12th was able to report that Massabie’s and Middle Drifts were likewise deserted (AD). Since there was clearly no longer any danger as the Boers had evacuated the area, Plumer sent a note on 13 December to Baden-Powell in Mafeking requesting advice about the possibility of leaving Tuli and moving SW to relieve his besieged commanding Officer. However, Plumer had in fact already decided to move and when approval was received at Tuli (30 December) he was already two days gone (Gardner 1966:96).

Meanwhile the apparent danger of a Dutch Insurrection in Mangwe had passed and on 13 December the SRV were withdrawn to Bulawayo (LT 28/12/99), although most were immediately entrained for Mochudi (Bechuanaland) to assist with the southward push along the railway (AD). However, there was strong Afrikaner resentment about the way they, as citizens of Rhodesia, had been treated by the BSACo Administration, whether or not the plot was real or fictitious. Passive resistance became the order of the day in most areas where there was a strong “Dutch element”, while in some, notably Gwelo (Gweru) and Enkledoom (Chivu), resistance was more open with the frequent cutting of telegraph lines and the denial of water and grazing (LO).

Back on the Limpopo several reports were now received from natives in, and leaving, the Transvaal to the effect that the Boers had abandoned the whole of the Northwest district as far south as the Brak River and Pietersburg road (LO). In response Plumer began a regular series of long distance patrols using various African refugees from the Transvaal (mainly Mpufo’s men) under Rhodesian commanders Lieutenants Taylor and Trevor. One of these patrols under Taylor returned on 15 December having scouted as far south as Warmbaths. They confirmed all earlier reports of Boer abandonment (AD; LT 28/12/99, 29/12/99). As a result Plumer transmitted his intentions to the Authorities in Bulawayo that he would leave Tuli, cutting across country via Macloutsie to reach the railway line near Mochudi. A hundred and thirty men would be left at Tuli and Macloutsie. Before leaving, however, Plumer proposed to lead one final crossborder patrol to the important Northern Transvaal settlement of Pietersburg (AD).

On the 16th Trevor and his native patrol reported there were no Boers at the Brak River Store, although a small watch post was in the vicinity of the Blauberg range (CTW 27/12/99; LT 28/12/99, 29/12/99). On 17 December Trooper E. Wennerstrom of D troop died of dysentery (Dr.). The Camp Diseases which plagued so many other Imperial camps during the War, and which killed more men than bullets, had arrived at Tuli. By the 19th Plumer was at Pont Drift planning to make his cross border reconnaissance (AD). However, I can not locate any evidence to the effect that he actually crossed, but he may well have done so as he only returned to Tuli on 23 December 1899 (AD).

On 24 December Plumer made his final arrangements to move. With him would go fifteen Officers, two hundred and forty three NCOs and men, two hundred and forty horses and three heavy guns and a maxim. Forty BSAP would also accompany him. Initially he proposed to leave a detachment of the BSAP and a hundred men from

the Rhodesian Regiment split between Tuli and Macloutsie, although, after concerns from the Administration that this was weakening Rhodesian defences, he agreed to sixty at Macloutsie and a hundred and thirty at Tuli, together with a large BSAP presence (AD; J 24/12/99; RC). Christmas and Boxing Days were marked by various sporting events between the various Troops and the BSAP, a huge campfire and concert (BU; J 31/112/99).

On 26 December a patrol from Tuli to the Umzingwani River and Middle Drift established that there were no Boers at Langa's kraal on the Rhodesian side of the border, rumours of which were rife. In addition the local people indicated that the Boers had shifted their focus down stream to near the Portuguese border (AD). On the 27th native reports suggested that a party of Boers had laagered 6km south of the Brak River Store. At the same time Taylor, Trevor and their native scouts were reconnoitring to Magatos Mountain where they clashed with Boer native scouts. The Rhodesians lost three men, Malamitzi and two of his followers (AD). All this worried the Rhodesian Authorities, who concluded that there would be a renewed attack on their southern flank. However, Plumer was undisturbed and began his move starting with D Troop on 28 December 1899, Plumer accompanying them (J 31/12/99).

Plumer and D squad arrived at Macloutsie on the 30th after a heavy trek (AD; J 31/12/99). Later MacLaren and C Troop also arrived. One presumes that they had been moved down to the Limpopo, possibly the Macloutsie junction, earlier in the month (AD; Hickman 1970:254). On the 31st B Troop arrived at Macloutsie, while C and D Troops pressed on overland reaching the 1016th mile post along the railway near Mochudi, on 5 January 1900. E Troop arrived on 1 January followed by A Troop on the 2nd. Plumer, his senior Regimental staff, A, B and E Troops then made for Palapye from Macloutsie on 3 January arriving on the 6th. On 7 January they departed back up the railway line for the 1016th mile post to join the rest of the Regiment already there, arriving on 11 January 1900 (AD; CTW 24/1/00; J 8/1/00).

Action now effectively passes from Tuli and the Limpopo Valley. Plumer, the BSAP and the SRV moved down the railway to try and relieve Mafeking. There were major clashes along the way, most notably at Crocodile Pools and Ramathlabana, but those are other stories (cf. Hickman 1970).

At Tuli there remained one officer, four sergeants and thirty men from the Rhodesian Regiment, and one officer, one sergeant and seven BSAP. However, there was only thirteen horses (RC). Official documents indicate that Plumer had very little faith in those of his force remaining — “... as the least efficient of Colonel Plumer's force”. Given their small numbers and limited horse power, this group was hard put to maintain a regular system of patrols and outposts on the Limpopo, but they did try. One of their main activities, however, was the guarding of seven Boer POWs (RC). These men were captured in earlier skirmishes or were local sympathisers, but unfortunately we have little other information. They were held in the old Goal and had a wired-in square enclosure for exercise (Gilbert 1901:301). However, health of both captures and captives was poor, with dysentery, malaria and later enteric fever immobilising more than half at any one time (RC).

On 9 January 1900 reports were received that a substantial number of Boers were trekking to the north-east towards Mozambique and what is today the Lowveld in

Zimbabwe. As the depleted force at Tuli was too far from this area to investigate and put a stop to these migrants, it was decided that a Troop of SRV should be dispatched from Melsetter (Chimanimani) in Eastern Rhodesia (RC). There is no further information if this was followed up, or what happened.

Back at Tuli on 22 January it is reported from Rhodes' Drift that the Limpopo had come down in flood, rapidly rising 12 feet and washing the Pont 50 yards down stream where it was wrecked. The troops stationed along the River were thus withdrawn to higher, and supposedly healthier, ground at Bryce's Store. Tuli based patrols continued, but it was generally felt by the Authorities in Bulawayo and Salisbury that there was little chance that the Boers would return, at least not before March by which time access across the Limpopo would be possible (LT 3/2/00). Their position of the Tuli defence was further reduced on 4 February when the 12.5 pounder gun was withdrawn to be sent to Plumer who was having a tough time at Crocodile Pools (LT 15/2/00). On 7 March Corporal R.P. Mead died of some unspecified disease near Tuli (Dr.). Two days later on the 9th a "Dutch" transport rider, A.H. Hartmann, who was prisoner at Tuli awaiting trial, died of heart failure (Dr.).

On 7 March 1900 there were reports of renewed cross border raiding by Boers said to be short of food. A party of about sixty to seventy were said to be encamped opposite "Malala Drift" and that they were looting Malibi's and Marongusa's cattle. Since Tuli was no longer in a position to help, the BSACo Authorities ordered that a commando be sent from Victoria to this remote area along the Limpopo. However, there were insufficient BSAP remaining in that town (being Captain R.C. Nesbitt and five men) thus Colonel J.T.E. Flint was dispatched on 9 March from Salisbury with eleven additional BSAP and fifty Mashonaland Native Police (MNP). After combining with Nesbitt at Victoria they were to proceed to Malala Drift where they would be joined by a patrol from Tuli which was asked to assist if possible. However, this force did not get to their destination since, on 4 April, they received counter orders to proceed to Bechuanaland where Plumer was having trouble (RC).

Shortly after on 9 April 1900 Lieutenant L.S. Spain at Tuli reported to Bulawayo that two of Native Commissioner's messengers had arrived from the Buby River-Limpopo confluence, the proposed destination of Flint and Nesbitt's patrol. They indicated that the earlier reports had little substance and that no Boers had in fact been seen. In addition, they interviewed a native bound from Johannesburg to Chibi's (southern Zimbabwe) who had come via Pretoria and Pietersburg. He indicated that Pietersberg was being abandoned by the Boers. Some families going to Pretoria, while others with wagons containing all their goods were trekking eastwards to Portuguese territory (CTW 9/5/00; LT 26/4/00). A member of the Rhodesia Regiment, J. Wales, died of "natural causes" at Fort Umlungula while on his way to Bulawayo from Tuli on 13 May (RRR). The reason for his journey is uncertain, but he may have been ill and was being transferred.

Mafeking was finally relieved on 16 May 1900 and the War now moved into its second phase, the Guerrilla Warfare of the "Bitterenders" with isolated attacks on strategic targets, cattle raiding, reprisals and counter attacks etc. The Rhodesian Authorities felt very concerned about the safety of its southern border. The Tuli force was clearly inadequate. Thus, on 25 June the Authorities decided to recall fifty of its

BSAP, then at Mafeking, who would be sent to Tuli. This was later rescinded and it was decided rather to send a squad of the newly arrived Australian Bushmen (RC).

On 16 August the Native Commissioner at Tuli, Posselt, reported that there had been three armed Boers sighted on the Transvaal side of Pont Drift moving down river, apparently scouting the country. Posselt and his men had followed the group as far as Middle Drift, when the Boers left for the interior of the Transvaal. On the 17th three more Boers and a "Basuto" crossed the Limpopo at Middle Drift, while another eight appeared on 21 August. On each occasion they scouted about then rode back to the Transvaal. Subsequent reports received from passing natives indicated that on 19 August a large party of Boer had arrived from Pietersburg at Magatos Mountain. This party consisted of men, women and children, but had two guns and a maxim. The scouts which had been seen were apparently from this group (RC). Clearly, these were displaced people seeking the safety of the mountains as their Republic was overrun by the British forces. They may have been looking for food or even an escape route northward.

The Rhodesian Authorities viewed these developments as threatening and it was decided that the forces along the Limpopo should be increased still further. On 22 August it was proposed to send an additional twenty BSAP, although when it departed on the 24th it had grown to one hundred men. Boer crossings at Main Drift, Massabie's Drift and Middle Drift now become regular, although no shooting is recorded, it became merely a watching and waiting game (RC).

On 13 September 1900 Corporal A. Shepperd shot himself at Tuli, the last fatality of the Rhodesian Regiment (Dr.; RRR; SAFFCL). Once Mafeking was relieved there was not much call for the Force to continue. Initially, they patrolled the Mafeking District and along the Bechuanaland railway protecting both from isolated Boer attack, while a small section remained at Tuli. However, as a unit they had become redundant as more regular Imperial Forces poured into Southern Africa. Thus, the Rhodesian Regiment was disbanded on 17 October 1900, many of the men then joining other regular and irregular forces fighting on the British side (Norris 1902:29).

Since the Rhodesian Regiment was no more, the BSACo Authorities, who were still very concerned about a possible invasion along the Limpopo, diverted to Tuli another of the Imperial troops which were passing through its Territory. Several squadrons of Imperial Yeomanry (67th, 70th, 71st & 75th) were sent to guard the southern border. The 75th arrived at Tuli on 20 September and was followed by the others not long after. However, their arrival brought with them enteric fever which had broken out amongst the forces travelling along the Beira-Marondera railway. Already some of their number had died of the disease and most of the troop were effectively quarantined on arrival in Tuli. On 27 September those healthy enough were moved closer to the Limpopo, occupying Bryce's Store and Pont Drift. These positions were held with no record of any further skirmishes, border crossing etc., although this may be simply a lack of data. By the end of November 1900 these men were recalled to Bulawayo and entrained for Mafeking (Gilbert 1901:300-305). However, one of their number who they had left as sick, Trooper P.B. Russell, died at Tuli of enteric fever on 3 December (LT 8/12/00).

Thereafter official interest in and militarisation of Tuli falls away. Clearly, nothing

came of the supposed Boer invasion, while I know nothing of the fate of the Boer POWs. It is likely that there was later some action at Magatos Mountain for it so happens that a Rhodesian R.H. Summers was killed there on 2 May 1901 (Dr.). However, that was not an attack launched from Rhodesia. All that remained at Tuli at that stage was a small Police Station and a Native Department presence much the same as anywhere else in the country. And no doubt many ghosts from this period, the Second Anglo-Boer War, joined others from its earlier heyday as the centre of Pioneer (White Settler) entry into the Country.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a great deal of thanks to many people who assisted me with this paper. In particular two people have provided me with masses of data from sources not otherwise available to me — Ken Hallock in the United States of America has given me so freely of his time, knowledge and ran around getting things together for me; then there is Geoff Quick in Botswana who is the cause of all this and should be made to share responsibility. Geoff has done a great job cutting through my earlier drafts and I cannot thank him enough.

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### Periodicals:

- CR = Bulawayo Chronicle, issues dated.
- CTW = Cape Times Weekly Edition, issues dated.
- LT = London Times, issues dated.
- S = Star Newspaper, Johannesburg. "History 100 Years Ago", 25 August 1999.

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 J = Correspondence to his Mother. A.W. Jarvis. Historical Manuscripts. JA 4/1/2  
 LO = London Office Correspondence. Public Archives Pre 1923. LO 7/1/1.  
 RC = Resident Commissioner telegrams to Administrator. Public Archives Pre 1923. RC 7/2/1.  
 RCHC = Resident Commissioner telegrams to High Commissioner. Public Archives Pre 1923. RC 7/2/5.  
 RRR = Rhodesian Regimental Roll. Public Archives Pre 1923. B4/6/2.  
 S152 = Pioneer & Police Graves Register. Public Archives Pre 1923. S152.

## NOTES

1. Plumer was an interesting commander. Physically he was small and very retiring, quite the antithesis of Baden-Powell. He kept to himself and made little, if any, effort to popularise himself with his men. He was also very short-sighted and wore a monocle which he would fix to his eye to glare at any offending officer or trooper. He was an elegant dresser and was a stickler for health, always wearing gloves no matter where he was in the field, even when sleeping. His tactics were often interpreted as a sign of indecision by his Officers, although with time they came to appreciate his cautious analysis of the art of war (Montmorency quoted in Gardner 1966:89; Holt 1958).
2. An interesting point is the issue of supplies for Plumer's Troops. It was decided early on that the force would not purchase supplies in Bulawayo for this would inflate costs to the general resident as store keepers cashed in on military demand. It would also seriously deplete supplies which the town had in store since their normal source — the Cape — would be inaccessible once the railway was cut. Instead, Plumer arranged purchase of supplies by agents in Durban. These were then shipped to Beira, railed to Marondera and then brought by wagon *via* Bulawayo to Tuli. A grand 2500km trip (Gardner 1966:92).
3. This breakdown would make sense of the casualties, the prisoners taken and the Royal Commission schedule quoted in Hickman (1970:125–6). The latter document is incomplete and this accounts for previous misinterpretations.
4. In the various documents there is much confusion as to the casualties and prisoners in this skirmish. This was probably due to the poor communications between Tuli and the outside world. The telegraph line was literally thrown together and transmission quality may account for some mistakes, others are clearly transcriber error. Errors reported included N.S. Dodd and Trooper Newton told (Newton Stanley Dold), while Lery is in fact Levy (SAFFCL; LT 1/11/99, 31/10/99). Yonge is also sometimes spelt Younge or Youngs (LT 31/10/99). We use the names which appear in the Official Southern Rhodesia Death Register (Dr.). The list of prisoners is likewise confused. Corbes (LT 31/10/99) and Forkes (LT 31/10/99) are clearly meant to be Forbes, while the listing "George Paarl and Cooke" (LT 31/10/99) is not two people but the first names and surname of George Paul Cook. Cook also at time incorrectly had an e added to the end of his name, while other reports give his name as Crooks (CTW 8/11/99). Also G.P. Cook is later confused with another G. Cook — see footnote 15. I must acknowledge at this point the work of Geoff Quick and Ken Hallock who worked this all out, I can not take any credit.
5. Bryce had opened the store to serve the local African (Semelale) people as well as passing European traffic. His local name was either Mehlongwenya (Hickman 1970:141) or Ramokwena (father of crocodiles — Hickman 1970:150), given on account of his favourite pastime — shooting crocodiles in the Limpopo. Hickman suggests that he may have been at the store at the time (p141). This is incorrect. Like most Anglophiles he would have fled to Tuli for protection in the early days of the conflict. In fact he may have later made a bit of a nuisance of himself, possibly looking for compensation for the damages, and Plumer ordered him, under guard, from Tuli on 14 November (AD).
6. Again there is a problem with Hickman's (1970:141) figures and his text is a bit weak and rambling at this point. He seems to suggest that there were only 12 men (6 BSAP, 6 Rhod. Regt) together with two officers. It is plainly wrong. If anything there were 12 BSAP, 12 Rhod. Regt, 1 chaplain and 2 officers which would match the contemporary numbers. This is confirmed by a letter received later from the captured Rev. Leary who states "our convoy of 27 men" (J 16/12/99), see also other relevant references. Also Hickman is wrong to suggest Hare was BSAP; he was in fact an Imperial Officer and member of the Royal Norfolk Regiment.
7. There is a problem with this flag story. It is the same day repeated from a Boer perspective at the fight at Rhodes' Drift. Did both parties fail to uphold the normal standards of battle, abusing the sanctity

of the white flat? It would seem so. This malpractice is also recorded near Mafeking and in the various battles all the way down the Bechuanaland railway line. General Buller at one stage stated that the British would no longer respect the signal, but its misuse was on both sides, see Creswicke 1900–2, vol4:207.

8. Again official communications have distorted some of the names of those captured. Official announcements give the following errors: Hasserick, Hazerick, or Harenick (= Haserick), Gubbet (-Gubbins), Swailer (= Waller), Van Eyssen, Van Eyson, Varleyson, Vaneysson (= Van Eysssel), and Pearce (= Pierce) (CTW 15/11/99; Hickman 1970:139; LT 12/7/99, 20/7/99; SAFFCL).
9. Leary was obviously one of the seriously injured, but the other I cannot establish. A later letter from Leary says that one was “badly shot”... “back of head and out near nose” although after “three days he recovered” (J 16/12/99).

There is some difficulty establishing just how many were captured. Three references give this list plus Trooper Cooper (BSAP) — AD; Hickman 1970:139; RCHC. This figure of 8 obviously was reported to the Royal Commission (Hickman 1970:142). Others give 5 missing plus Haserick & Leary, which makes 7 — J 5/11/99; LO; CTW 15/11/99. Of these captured 3 were wounded (Hickman 1970:139) — these lists would exclude Cooper. We know that after both skirmishes on this day the Boers had captured in the end 10 men, 7 healthy & 3 wounded (Hickman 1970:140). Three healthy men were captured later, see note 12. This leaves only 4 men in a healthy state captured at Bryce’s Store. 4 healthy plus 3 wounded makes 7 captured at Bryce’s thus Cooper’s name is wrongly included. He may well have been missing initially and later got back to Tuli and the earlier report was not corrected. This ties in with the Pretoria POW lists (LT 12/7/00) as well as later references to the captured which were found in Dutch newspapers at Rhodes’ Drift (AD; RC) and Leary’s letters to Plumer & Jarvis (AD; J 16/12/99). Also his name initially appears in the SAFFCL as missing but in the Addenda & Corrigena it indicates delete the entry, so he must have got back to Tuli otherwise he would have appeared as POW as are the others who were captured in this event (SAFFCL).

Hickman gets himself into an increasing muddle with these figures introducing others which obscure it more. The one subsequent Boer report written by a non-combatant and after the event suggests a total of 18 were captured on that day (Hickman 1970:145). This is wrong as Spreckly lost no men so the figure must be 10 in total (7 + 3 wounded). Rereading the figures cited in the book Roll Call it ties in 7 wounded in total — 3 captured and 4 returned to Tuli, and 9 missing — I think he means combatants plus Rev. Leary which makes the magic figure of 10 again.

10. The Lee family have strong associations with Rhodesia and had reason for fighting the BSACo. Their Father, Jan Lee — hunter, trader, settler, Matabele official, and transport rider — was given a large area of land in usufruct in the upper Mangwe area by Mzilikazi. This was confiscated by the BSACo because he refused to partake in the war against the Matabele Nation in 1893. Jan Lee is supposed to have again fought the British in the Second Anglo-Boer but it is unlikely given his age. It is more likely that this refers to his sons, in this case Hans Lee who had previously guided several important English dignitaries around Mashonaland and was a senior member of the Mangwe Laager during the 1896 Umvukela (Uprising). The other Lee may be Karl or Piet, both sons of Jan Lee (Tabler 1966:93–95).
11. Hickman 1970:144 incorrectly gives departure at 23h00. This must have been a typographical error for otherwise his other times do not match.
12. Ainsle is sometimes given as Ainslee or Ansley (LT 12/7/00; RRR). In addition he is given as dead in the Rhodesian Regimental Roll. Usually I admit without any reference to location or date, simply “deceased” (RRR). However, he was certainly captured and was later released in Pretoria in July 1900 (LT 12/7/00). He may of course have died after that date before the Regiment was disbanded in October. Although I hope note 9 above has “solved” the POW name game, there is still a discrepancy in the wagons captured. The Boers who took possession state they captured nine (Hickman 1970:140; Potgieter n.d.). Six were from Hare & Haserick’s column, one at Spreckley’s camp and this one in transit. We are thus one short. It maybe that there was an additional one at the Store belonging to Bryce? But it is not possible to say.
13. These are probably the fortifications discovered by Hickman when he revisited the site in 1967. It is unlikely that the Boers would have constructed such elaborate structures for the battle of 2 November, which was after all a chance meeting. Bird’s description of 8 November fits nicely.

14. There are many stories about Fenton's demise, and with time urban myths have grown increasingly elaborate. What is known from the official Southern Rhodesia Death Registers is that he died of blood poisoning from injuries received from a lion (Dr.). Hickman's version is typical of the story: "Fenton had had a convivial evening with one or two other men; he also had a large dog. During the night he heard disturbances outside his hut, and, thinking it was caused by his dog, went out to administer a kick in the rump. But the intruder proved to be a lion which objected to this sort of treatment and promptly set on Fenton, who was badly wounded. Next day he was placed on a wagon in an attempt to take him to hospital at Tuli, but he died on the way (Hickman 1970:161)". If is of ironic interest that the death register lists his only possession to be passed on to his family as a lioness skin!
15. Although George and George Paul Cook are both recorded in D Troop they are in fact different Cooks. No e at the end of either name. The former died and is buried at Tuli and this is marked as such. He also appears in the Official Southern Rhodesia Death Register (Dr.). The latter was a POW in Pretoria and is recorded as being released from there on 6 June 1900 (LT 12/7/00) and was discharged from the Rhodesia Regiment when it was disbanded in October 1900. There is no Death Register entry. G.P. Cook is incorrectly said to be buried at Tuli under the date on which G. Cook died. The markings need to be changed. The George Lock reported to have died in this incident is clearly another transmission error (LT 6/12/99).
16. Wennerstroom was a Swedish student who had volunteered to join Plumer's force. His name has a huge variety of spellings with almost every document giving its own version. Here I have used the one which appears in the official Southern Rhodesian Death Register of the period and is otherwise most frequent (Dr.). Woenestroun is derived from one document and on its basis, his grave is incorrectly marked in the cemetery.
17. It is not clear just where Mead died. Two references point to it being away from the main camp at Tuli — "buried on Bank of Shashe near Tuli camp" (S152) or "near Tuli" (SAFFCL) both suggest that he may have died while out patrolling.
18. It must be remembered that many of the Boers living in the northwest of the Transvaal were once part of the Adendorff Trek which tried to cross Middle and Main Drifts in 1891. They would have known the area well and may have been thinking about it again. Well that is probably how the Rhodesian Authorities viewed it.

### **INFORMATION REQUIRED**

As part of my research into the Tuli area I am looking for further information on the settlement and its associated cemeteries. If any reader can provide personal recollections, sketches and photographs (no matter how indistinct you think they are) please could they contact me at the address shown below. I will make arrangements to see the material. There are several issues which we hope to clarify—things that have altered through time so the date of the material would be useful, but not necessarily so.

Mr R.S. Burrett, Peterhouse School, P.O. Box 3741, Marondera  
e-mail rburrett@nsala.icon.co.zw

## BOOKS

In May, 1993, the History Society of Zimbabwe resuscitated what was the original purpose in the formation on 12 June, 1953, of the Rhodesia Africana Society (later the Rhodesiana Society), which was "to further the interests of collectors of Rhodesiana, and assist in the preservation of books and documents relating to the Rhodesias and Nyasaland in particular." The History Society of Zimbabwe, as it is today, encompasses a much wider sphere of activities and interests in Zimbabwe and Central Africa. The non-availability of relevant books here became cause for concern as many books were leaving the country, or were lost for various reasons. The present generation of genuinely interested readers, ardent new collectors and history-related people are unable to source further books.

The BOOKS scheme has proved its worth in these few years. Thousands of books have been sourced and are available. It is not necessary to be a Member of the History Society to participate. There is no charge involved to Buyers, but a 15% commission is asked of Sellers to the benefit of the History Society funds. Book Sales were held at six-monthly intervals with increasing support and response, but these are no longer necessary since the Society now has a Book Room at the above address which opened on 1st January 1999, making the books available at all reasonable times – but it is necessary to phone 885885 first to arrange your visit. No Traders, Speculators or Exporters. No posting or Delivery. No Catalogues. Correspondence will be minimal. The books are housed privately, and the scheme is run voluntarily. Right of admission is reserved. If you have books for sale you may specify your own prices, or the Society can price these at fair market value for you. Books are not purchased by the Society, but sold on your behalf and paid for after the end of regular periods.

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### SOME OF THE BOOKS WANTED AND AVAILABLE IN THE SCHEME

All early historical books, first or later editions, Rhodesiana, Zimbabwe and relevant Africana also covering our neighbouring countries and Central Africa. Gold, Silver, Hunting, Men of Our Time and other Series and printings of Books of Zimbabwe/Books of Rhodesia Publishing Co. Heritage Series. Oppenheimer. Pioneer Head, National Archives and Frank Read publications. Original and rare material, Diaries – published and unpublished. History, Natural History, Sport, Hunting, Animals, Dassie Books, Pre Pioneer, Pioneer, Early Exploration and Travellers. Biography, Autobiography, Political Personalities and characters. Anecdote material. Rhodes, Selous, Lobengula, Beit, Allan Wilson. African life and customs, Rock Art, Prehistory and similar. Leading figures, Adventurers, Women, Missions and Missionaries, Area Histories. Documents of the Portuguese in Mocambique and C.A. Series. Early Portuguese and all Central Africa. Bundu books and Early fish and Animal. Early local Poets and Poetry. Transport, Police, Army, Air Force, Stamps, Farms and Farming. 1820 Settler Material, Certain South African Africana. Van Riebeeck Society Series, Brenthurst Press. Collectors' Reference material.

**JOURNALS** such as C.A. Historical Association, Geology Bulletins, Rhodes-Livingstone, Schools Exploration Society Reports, Rhodesiana Scientific Association Proceedings, Nyasaland and Malawi Journals. Rhodesiana, Heritage, N.A.D.A., especially any out-of-print numbers. The Territorial.

**MAGAZINES** Illustrated Life Rhodesia, Outpost (pre-1980), In Flight, early Skyhost, Rhodesian Annuals, Rhodesia / Africa Calls.

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**AUTHORS:** Michael Gelfand, Jeannie Boggie, T.V. Bulpin, W.D., Gale, G.H. Tanser, Hugh Marshall Hole, Oliver Ransford, Robert Cary, Neville Jones, A.S. Hickman, Roger Summers, Allan Wright, Baden-Powell, E.C. Tabler, Peter Gibbs relevant to this area, Lawrence G. Green, Laurens Van Der Post, Doris Lessing, Eric Rosenthal, Baines, Hartley, Selous, Livingstone.

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# The Midlands in 1896

by I. Tomes

## INTRODUCTION

This article is not intended to be a history of the 1896 Matabele uprising, but a look at what happened at certain places in the Midlands area. It deals in particular with the events at Gwelo [now Gweru], the forts that were built in the Midlands, the Shangani Staging Post and the two local memorials – the Pongo one at Shangani and the one in Gweru.

## PART I

Gwelo was sited by Dr Jameson in 1894 and the first pegging out of stands was done in about June of that year on Jameson's orders, by two American scouts, Burnham and Ingham who were two of the three men who escaped from the Wilson patrol near its end. There was an early suggestion to call the town Jamesontown, but this proposal was hastily dropped following Jameson's abortive 1896 'raid' and it remained Gwelo [now Gweru].

Gwelo now seems to have developed a reputation as a pretty thirsty town as apparently, within six months of it being established, it boasted six hotels. These were initially little more than mud huts and during the rains, as one account says "these were regularly washed away and when this happened the guests had to stand around miserably after a deluge waiting for staff to rebuild their bedrooms."



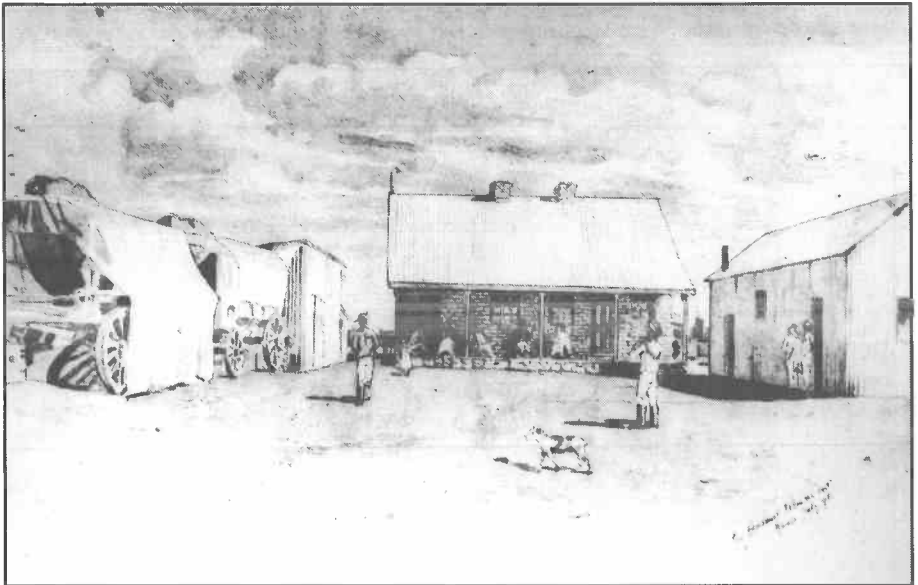
Gwelo in 1894

The first rumours of murders reached the town on Tuesday 24 March, but it was only the following day when 'young Ronald Napier' rode in from Shangani with solid news that things were suddenly taken seriously. Everyone from the outlying districts who could be contacted was called in and the town went into laager at 11 p.m. that night. It was a worrying time; there were only 40 rifles and 2,000 rounds of ammunition available. Surprisingly though the Matabele had not cut the telegraph to Bulawayo, and did not do so until 1 April. News therefore came over the line from Bulawayo saying that the Matabele were close to that town which had also gone into laager.

The same day, the 25th, the news reached Salisbury and at only a couple of hours notice, Captain J. A. C. Gibbs, formerly an officer in the West Riding Regiment, together with a Mr Tennant [possibly the same man who had been with the Salisbury Column's 7 lbr gun in 1893?] left with a small relief force for Gwelo. This Rhodesia Horse force, including Gibbs and Tennant, was only 12 strong, but took with them (using a coach) 2 Maxim guns, 50 rifles and 21,000 rounds of ammunition. They moved pretty fast, were met beyond Iron Mine Hill by a party from Gwelo, and got to the town after four days on late afternoon on Sunday 29th.

The day before, the 28th, and it is rather curious why it left at such a late date, the last Zeederberg coach left for Bulawayo.

When Captain Gibbs reached the town, he found there were by then 350 men, 27 women and 22 children who had taken refuge in the rough wagon laager. They included



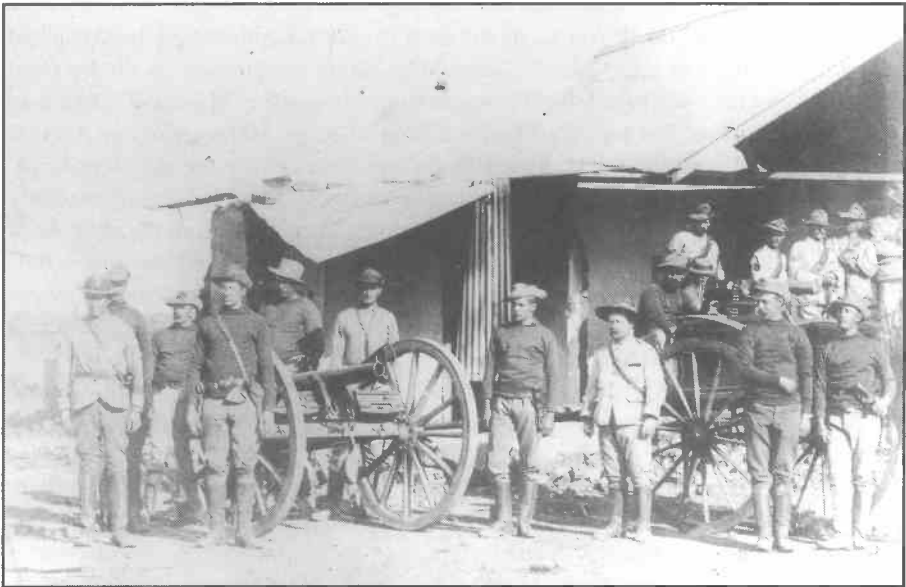
**Information from Mrs A. Hurrell. Looking towards the western side of the Gwelo Laager from the Parade Ground, July 1896. Left to right: Cecil Rhodes waggonettes; the Officers' Mess; Percy Brown's office, later purchased by Jack Ferguson, added to and formed residence on the corner Lobengula Avenue and Fifth Street; Sergeants' married quarters; Guy Hurrell at left centre; Mrs Hurrell's dog at right foreground**

a party of 70 from Selukwe [now Shurugwi], who had arrived on the evening of the 26th, and 23 from Shangani who arrived the next morning; the Shangani party having been brought in by a patrol of 6 men and a mule wagon that had left Gwelo early on the 26th. [The laager apparently was sited at the junction of present Lobengula Avenue and 5th Street (i.e. the junction where the main Gweru Police Station is on one corner and Nathoos store on another). There is a well, now filled in, in the open space on the north-west corner of this cross roads that may well have been in use at that time].

It seems Gibbs found a bit of a mess as one person there later wrote, "Captain Gibbs was disgusted with the state of the laager. He formed fatigue parties and commenced fixing us up. It is a Godsend he came to camp." Perhaps, however, he was not that popular at first as, having arrived late p.m. on the 29th, he had a 'stand to' at 0440 hours the next morning! Anyway, one week later he appears to have got everything shipshape, as the laager was reported to be fortified and in good order. Gibbs also at that time formed the Gwelo Volunteers.

Meanwhile, on 6 April, another relief force of men of the Rhodesia Horse under Lt. Col. Beal left Salisbury with supplies for Gwelo. Accounts vary as to how strong it was. One says it was 150 strong, but another states it was 312 Europeans and 250 Africans. It would have set out earlier had it not been for a shortage of oxen due to the massive rinderpest outbreak that was sweeping the country (in the Gwelo laager alone, 80 to 100 cattle were dying each day).

Cecil Rhodes accompanied this force which had engagements or skirmishes at Enkeldoorn and Makalaka Kopje before it finally reached Gwelo on 2 May. Some days later it had a sharp fight at Maven [a settlement area roughly around the area of the present Lower Gweru Farmers' Association hall and the Ingwenya River some 36



Gwelo Laager (presumably some of Lt Col Beal's Force)

kms North West of Gweru]. Gwelo then being considered secure, it moved on and on 19 May, it linked up with a force from Bulawayo near the Pongo Store.

## **PART II – FORTS IN THE MIDLANDS**

During the 1986 uprising, three forts were built in the Gweru part of the Midlands. These were:

- **Fort Gibbs.** The best preserved, built early June 1896. About 32 kms ENE of Gweru (Grid Ref 983547).
- **A fort at Shangani.** No trace remains, built late June 1896. Site unknown but probably at GR 524154 adjacent to the 1893 Shangani Battle site.
- **Fort Ingwenya.** Few traces remain, built September or October 1896. Adjacent to the Lower Gweru road about 40 kms North West of Gweru (GR 735776).

### **Fort Gibbs**

By early 1896 it appears the original road taken by the 1893 Salisbury Column from Fort charter to Iron Mine Hill had been abandoned. Enkeldoorn [now Chivhu] had been founded and the road now ran from Charter to Enkeldoorn and then roughly followed the line of the present road to Iron Mine Hill and on to Gwelo.

Although Fort Gibbs was not built on Makalaka Kopje until June 1896, it is worthwhile mentioning some events that took place where it now is, in the preceding couple of months.

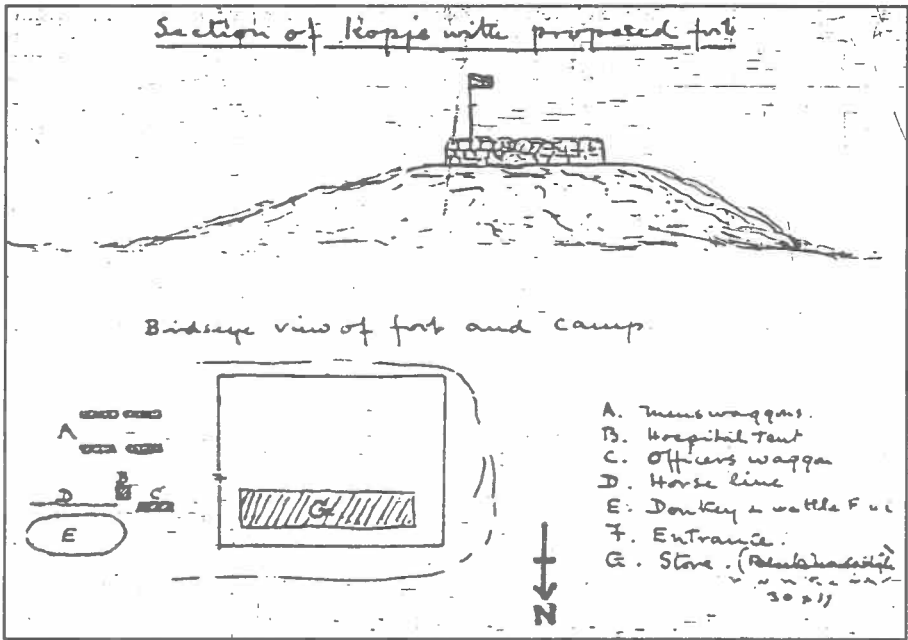
Had you been standing on the kopje (Makalaka) where the fort now is, soon after dawn on Saturday 28 March 1896, you would have seen a party of 9 men, under Dan Judson, moving quite fast eastwards past the site. They had come from Gwelo to meet Captain Gibbs and his party and the next day, the 29th, you would have seen both parties come past, having linked up, and heading for Gwelo.

Some weeks later, on 30 April, colonel Beal's relief force from Salisbury reached the area and there was some 'heavy skirmishing.' Some scouts were in the lead and reached the, by then destroyed, local store about a mile north of Makalaka. They then reconnoitred forward but found a Matabele impi of about 500 warriors on another kopje about a mile south west of Makalaka (where there were some old 'zimbabwe' ruins), and retired to the store. A little later two scouts moved forward, almost certainly onto Makalaka. They had to make a hasty withdrawal when another, or the same, impi appeared at the foot of this kopje and moved onto it peppering the retreating scouts with lead. Shortly afterwards a mounted troop of 40 men arrived, drove the Matabele off the kopje, causing a number of casualties. The main column then passed through and reached Gwelo on 2 May.

A little later, on 20 May, Captain Gibbs with a force of "66 troops and 120 others" (the others, one assumes, being from those not involved with the Rhodesia Horse and newly formed Gwelo Volunteers) left Gwelo and on the 22nd sited a fort, to be named after him, on Makalaka kopje. At that time the whole area, in particular on the northern side, was a Matabele grain area, and a fort on Makalaka would not only overlook this, but also the Enkeldoorn-Gwelo road.

Captain Gibbs's contemporary sketch shows what was proposed. In one week his men had prepared the ground and put up the outer wall. They were helped in this by





Gibb's sketch

the fact that the slope on the north-eastern side was quite gentle, so it would have been quite easy to haul waggons filled with stone to the top. The builders must have included a number of men who were stonemasons in civilian life as this fort was apparently of far better workmanship than any of the other forts established throughout the country at that time.

Work then started on 1 June to build a brick iron roofed store within the fort, which according to Gibbs's sketch, occupied the northern part of the inside area. During the first two weeks of June various other works went on. Accommodation was built for the men which consisted of a hut inside the walls, in the southern half. This was probably made of either corrugated iron entirely, or of pole and dagga with a tin roof. In addition, on the relatively flat space just outside the entrance on the east side, pole and dagga huts were built for an officers' mess, a hospital and the telegraphist. These were all protected by sods and sandbags. A cattle kraal was also built and which one presumes would have been at the bottom of the rock kopje.

All seems to have been completed quickly, as on 14 June the flag was hoisted and appropriate celebrations held. As an aside, the inscription, 'Fort Gibbs 1896' on the bastion protecting the entrance, and which can still be clearly seen today, was carved by a Trooper Nicholson.

After that, life must have got a bit boring, as nothing really happened. There was no action here, except for a skirmish on 6 June when a coloured scout killed three Matabele in the area. There were apparently no other deaths apart from a transport rider, but no details have come to light as to who he was or where he was buried.

Gibbs stayed at the fort until 25 June when he left to build another fort at Shangani.

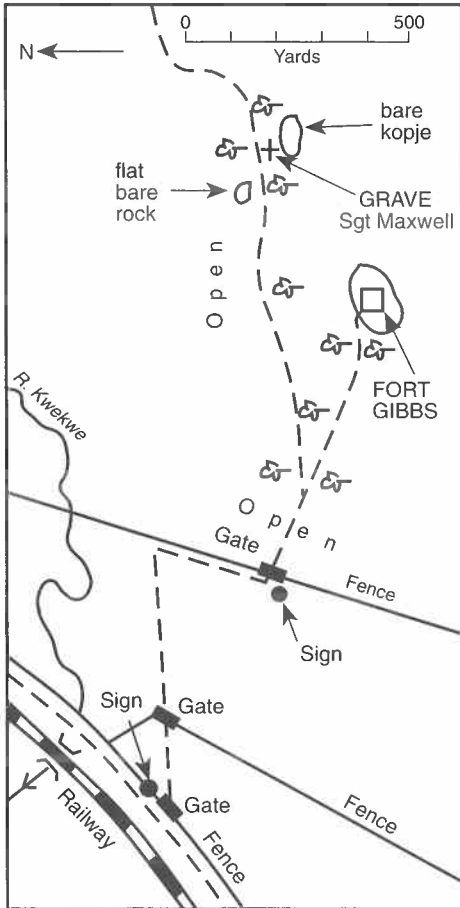
He left a garrison behind, but it is not entirely clear for how long the fort was occupied thereafter. It seems that it was garrisoned by men from Gwelo until, in early October, under command of a Major Thorold, they returned to the town. After that the fort was then garrisoned by the BSAP until the latter part of 1897 when it was finally abandoned.

The fort today is still in excellent condition and worth a visit. Built as a square (about 25 × 25 metres), with an entrance on the eastern side (with an external protective bastion marked 'FORT GIBBS 1896'), the walls still remain intact. The huts though have disappeared without trace and all that remains is a depression inside the northern part of the fort where the store building must have stood.

A sad footnote. In the official BSAC Report on the Uprising, the list of casualties in Mashonaland includes "Maxwell, William, Sergeant, BSAP. Found dead on the veld near Fort Gibbs, 16 June 1897." He was very probably a member of the garrison and one source says he died of malaria. His grave can be found today some 5/600 metres ENE of the fort (at GR 987549). This bears two adjacent markers. One is an iron cross with a superimposed iron ring marked 'SERGEANT WILLIAM MAXWELL. BSA POLICE. NO 80. DIED 1897.'

The other is a stone concrete block with (on the North side) 'SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF SERGT WILLIAM MAXWELL' and (on the East side) 'BSAP WHO DIED AT FORT GIBBS ON THE 20 JUNE 1897;' and which conflicts with the BSAC Report entry.

To get to the Fort, turn south at the 'Fort Gibbs 7 kms' sign by the 49 km peg on the Gweru-Mvuma road. Continue south, curve left around the farm (Mr Len Harvey), across the base of a dam and on to where you cross the railway (just after a gate). There turn left and a little after 2 kms there is a sign 'Fort Gibbs' on the right. Turn right there (through a gate), continue straight through next gate (after about 200 metres) for further 400 metres. Then sharp right at fence, after short distance sharp left through gate (further sign here). Then follow track straight on across open space, then through scattered trees through to the base of the bare kopje where the fort stands on top at the eastern end. To get to the grave, after passing last gate and after crossing open space, where the trees start, a track bears half left. Follow this for about 700 metres (becomes open on left) and there is a small (20m or so square) flat bare rock



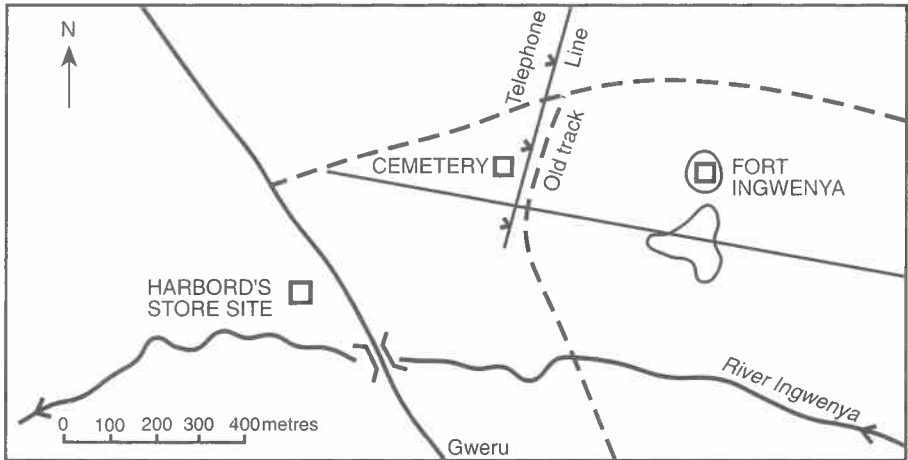
area just to the left of the track. Just beyond, on the right about 100 metres away is a bare kopje and the grave is some 20 metres or so from the track, in some trees, towards this kopje (i.e. to the north west side of this kopje).

### Shangani Fort

There seems to be very little known about the fort at Shangani. I have found two references only; one that states "Captain Gibbs, having left the Makalaka Fort [i.e. Fort Gibbs] went on to Shangani on the Bulawayo to Gwelo road, where a standard earthwork fort was built. This was at a site where the Salisbury Column [i.e. the one that linked up with the Bulawayo one near the Pongo Store on 19 May] had reported a "strong Matabele concentration." The other reference merely states; "another fort was built at the Shangani River."

It does seem reasonable to assume it must have been near the river (for water) and on a site with a commanding view, and thus was very probably on the top of the low kopje just west of the river (from where the Insukamini attack came in from during the Shangani Battle). Clearance of the trees and bush on the west side would give a good all round view for some distance. There is there today a squarish earth wall side (about 20 by 20 metres) on the kopje top, but only one side is actually on the brow of the hill and there is no sign of any old bottles, tins and so on. The top and east side of the kopje have seen surface quarrying (either mining or for the present modern road) and it seems any remains were probably destroyed when that took place.

### Fort Ingwenya



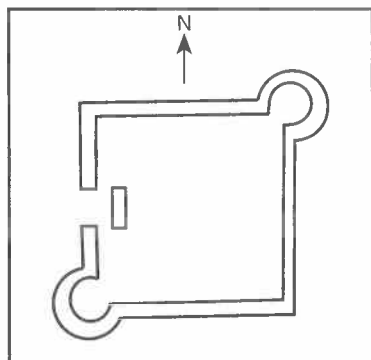
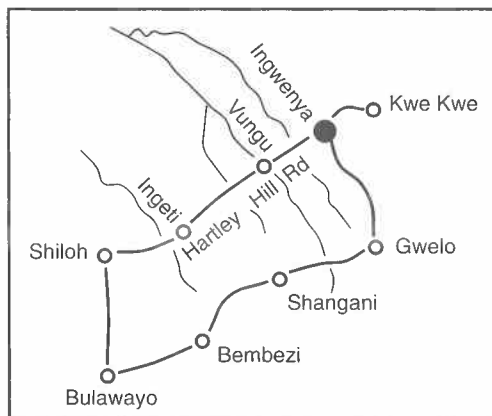
I have only found one source about this fort which is in "Pioneer Forts in Rhodesia 1890-97" by P. S. Garlake (originally published in *Rhodesiana* No 12 of September 1965). An extract from this reads [with comments in square brackets];

"Two patrols under Lt. Col. Baden Powell [later founder of the Boy Scouts] and

Lt. Col. H. M. Ridley entered the area in September [1896]. The latter found bodies of men killed six months before at Harbord's Store where the Hartley Hill Road, originally the Hunters Road [see sketch above], crossed the Ingwenya River. On 26 September Baden Powell's patrol built a fort where the road crossed the Vungu River [this would be about 50 kms downstream of where the Vungu crosses the present Gweru-Bulawayo main road]. This was in a poor position, being in broken country, water supplies being exposed and communications with Gwelo, the Headquarters, difficult.

Soon after therefore [say about late October?], the fort of Ingwenya, on the site of Harbord's store, replaced Vungu as the main post [implication is that it was there already?]. A further minor fort was built at Cactus Poort [SE of Redcliff] where the Hartley Hill road crossed the Kwe Kwe River.

Forts Rixon and Ingwenya are similar constructions of rough, dry stone, walling and below both are small cemeteries containing the graves of settlers and troops killed in the vicinity. Below Ingwenya the foundations of Harbord's store are still visible."



Garlake's diagram

The following notes are as a result of a visit of a small party, led by Ivor Wilkinson, a farmer of Lower Gweru, on Saturday 1 May 1993 to the site.

Today, not much is seen of the fort although the small cemetery is of interest. In his article, Garlake shows a diagram of the fort, but this is now difficult to trace on the ground. The 1:50,000 map (Sheet 1929 B1) shows the location as just south of a cattle fence at GR 735775. This is wrong as the fort is some 50/100 metres to the north of the fence on the highest point of the low kopje. All that can be seen now are the poor remains of very rough walls, and not in very straight lines, which obviously just consisted of stones piled roughly on top of each other. The 'observation post' in the north east corner is clear, but this may have been 'rebuilt' during the Independence War when it is understood the position was used as an observation post at times.

To the south west of the fort, on the kopje, some very rough walling can be made out and these may have been where horses or cattle were corralled.

The small cemetery (about 30 metres west of the old track and telephone line)



just short of the Somabhula Forest. Next there was definitely one at Shangani, adjacent to the 1893 battle site and variously referred to as 'Napier's Store', 'Werrett's Store' or more simply just as the 'Shangani Store.' Further on was the 'Pongo,' 'White's' or 'Hurlstone's' Store about where the main road now crosses the Pongo River. Thereafter there was 'Davis & Graham's Store,' the 'Bembezi Hotel,' 'Graham's (or Lee's) Store' and 'Armstrong's Store.'

The remains of the Shangani Store can still be clearly identified. If you travel between Gwelo and Bulawayo and look north at the Matabele monument at about the 59 km peg, you will see two gum trees breaking the skyline about 400 metres away. The remains of the store are at the base of those trees and the remains of rough concrete floors, together with old tins, broken bottles and pottery can be found. (The site is at Grid Ref 517153 but is on private land. Permission to visit should be sought from The manager, White Kopjes Section, Debshan (Pvt) Ltd, P.O. Box 35, Shangani (Tel: Shangani 0-1111).

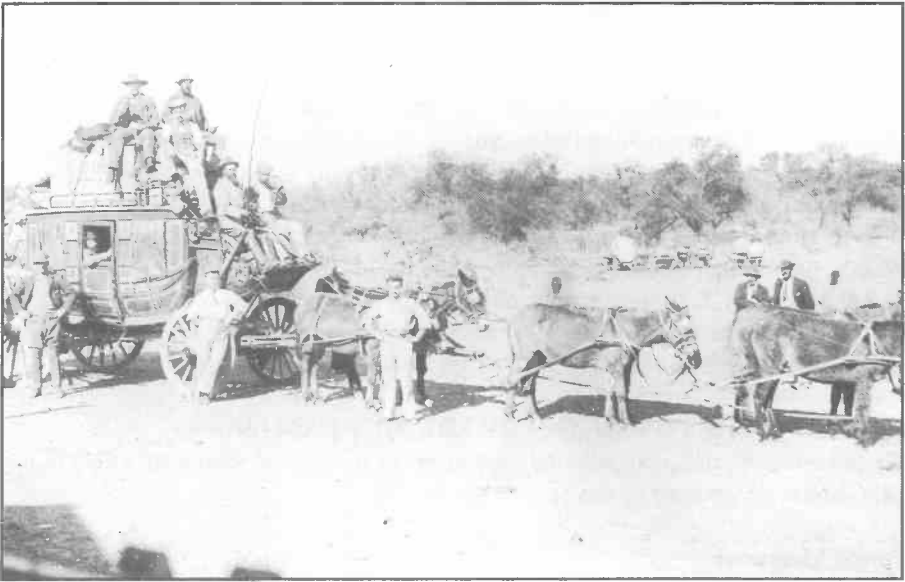
Its first mention in the 1896 Rebellion is on Wednesday 25 March when George Gray (later to form Gray's Scouts), on his way to inspect mining properties, reached the Pongo Store. There he found the store looted, the outbuildings burnt and a large pool of blood in front of the store. The same day he continued on to the Shangani Post, rescuing a wounded miner on the way, where he found 17 Europeans in laager there. Gray left soon afterwards to warn Bulawayo and a few hours later the laager was augmented by the arrival of 6 men (including a Mr Egerton, English MP for Knutsford) who had been on a hunting trip. On the same day at 6 p.m., 'young Napier' rode into Gwelo from Shangani with the news of murders and of the Europeans that had gone into laager there.

At 5.30 a.m. the next morning, the 26th, a patrol of 6 men with a mule wagon left Gwelo to rescue them. Meanwhile the Shangani laager sent out two patrols of three men each, one visiting the Pongo Store and finding two victims' bodies there, but not the third at the time (3 men were killed there), the other finding a body at a local mine. On their return they found the rescue party had arrived, and the complete laager left for Gwelo at 5 p.m., travelling overnight and got there the next morning, the 27th at 8.30 a.m.

The following day, the 28th, the last Zeederberg coach, with nine Europeans and two coloured boys, left Gwelo. That it left at such a late date seems odd, as by then Gwelo and Bulawayo had been in laager for three days and refugees had been pouring in to both places.

However, two separate sources are firm on the date so one can only conjecture as to why it still travelled. It arrived early the following morning, Sunday the 29th, at the Shangani Store where the occupants were horrified to find the place looted and to see a recently murdered, stripped naked body of a white man in the middle of the road in front of the store.

On seeing this the coachmen decided to drive straight through without stopping. Soon the apprehensive occupants realised that there were Matabele in the bush on either side and keeping pace with them. By firing at them the occupants managed to keep the Matabele from getting to close quarters but who did not attack, but bided their time following and flanking the coach. Eventually the coach reached the Pongo



**The old-time mail coach which ran between Bulawayo and Salisbury**

Store. By this time, the mules were extremely tired but the occupants, with the Matabele on either side, feared to halt at the store and the coach continued. A further three miles on the poor mules came to a standstill. The coachmen and occupants had no choice but to continue on foot, keeping in a tight group and firing at the Matabele. Behind them they heard yells and screams as the Matabele killed the mules and looted the coach. Luck was on their side as, with dusk approaching, a patrol from Bulawayo, under Captain Napier, reached and rescued them.

The final event concerning the Store are contained in a diary of an early Pioneer, Dan Judson, who was in the Gwelo laager during the uprising.

He first relates that on the 30th news came through from Bulawayo (the telegraph line curiously remained open until 1 April) "Napier's Store at Shangani looted and body of white man found near it." One can surmise that the news of this came as a result of the rescue of the Zeederberg coach and was sent over the telegraph line the next morning.

He then was a member of a 28 man patrol, under a Captain Hurrell, that left Gwelo on Thursday, 2 April, to endeavour to repair the line. They spent that night short of the Shangani River, seeing the glare of a fire in the hills beyond, which several patrol members from the Shangani area said must be the Shangani Store and Hotel going up in flames. The next morning, at dawn, they "crossed the river at the telegraph line and then cut across to the store which was situated on the Shangani battlefield" (Note: In fact about 200 metres west of the 1893 laager site).

There Judson says they found the whole place, which he describes as a store, hotel and outbuildings, a smoking ruin having been set ablaze the previous night. They too found the "naked, assegaid body of a white man, a horrible spectacle, but none of the patrol could identify him." They stopped, had breakfast, and were about to bury the

body, when the sentries reported that a Matabele force was very close and attempting to outflank them. They left the body, beat a hasty retreat back across the River and went back to Gwelo, getting there that evening.

It was to be a further six weeks until a strong force, under Colonel Napier (Victoria Column in 1893), sent out from Bulawayo on its way to link up with one from Salisbury, could reach the Pongo Store, on Tuesday 19 May and bury the three settlers (Hurlstone, Reddington and Zeeburg) who had been killed there on 24 March. Who the dead man at the Shangani Store was is not clear. Two books name him as a prospector called Woods, but no such name appears in the 1896 list of casualties nor is the name on the Pongo Memorial. Judson says some of the patrol thought he was a cattle inspector. It is probable that the Salisbury Force, which linked up with the Bulawayo one two miles east of the Pongo Store on the 19th, passed through there and buried the remains.

#### PART IV — THE PONGO AND GWERU MEMORIALS

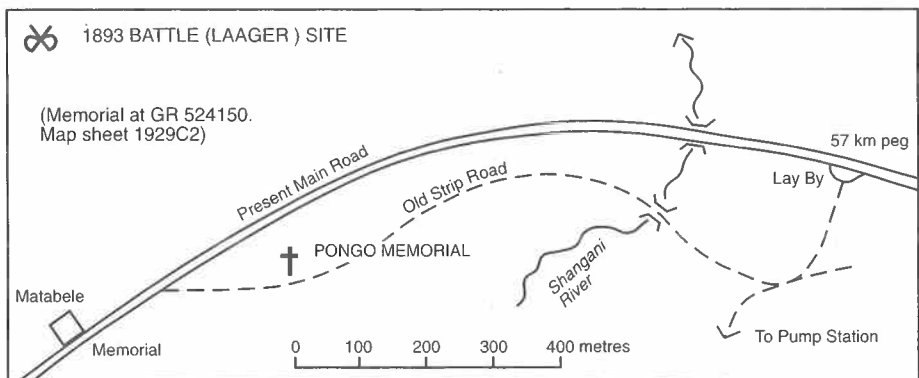
These two memorials commemorate a number of the settlers who were killed in the 1896 Matabele uprising in this part of the country.

##### Pongo Memorial

Why this memorial is sited at this point and why it is given the name ‘Pongo’ are two mysteries. The Pongo river is not here, but some 15 kilometres further west towards Bulawayo. Originally this river was called, in 1893 anyway, the Manzimnyana, but an 1897 clearly shows it renamed the Pongo River and this was where the Pongo Store was. Perhaps the memorial was put here at the site adjacent to where the settlers had defeated the Matabele in 1893 rather than somewhere else which would have had no special significance. And where did the name ‘Pongo’ come from — the dictionary defines Pongo as an early name for a large African ape, the orang-outang; and it is also what British sailors call British soldiers!

Again when was it erected? Presumably after the coach road was changed to follow what is now the old strip road — but when was this?

Listed below are the names on the plaques. Most names have been carved onto the stone, but it would appear the metal plaques were added later as these contain some additional names. One name, Moonie, has a line carved through it and the story is that





Moonie was thought to have been killed, but wasn't and re-appearing some years later he cut the line through his name.

Interestingly in 1991 and up to early 1992 the metal plaques covered the carved names, but someone moved them onto the other two faces.

### **Gweru (Gwelo) Memorial**

The memorial at Gweru is similar to the one at Shangani and is located by the road in front of the main entrance to the Gweru Military Museum in Lobengula Avenue. It lists settlers killed, as well as soldiers who were killed or who died in 1896.

### **Sources and Mysteries**

The information shown against the names has been primarily taken from two sources; firstly, 'The '96 Rebellions. The BSAC Reports on the Native Disturbances in Rhodesia 1896-97' published in 1897 and 'Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia' by F. C. Selous published in 1896. Both differ quite considerably in detail, although the first being published later is probably more accurate. Even so there are many small mysteries; names of those killed in the areas appear in one or both lists but not on memorials and the other way round, why are some names on one memorial when (by where they died) they should be on the other, why are some names on a memorial when others killed in the same area are not and so on. It would be an interesting future study for someone.

### **PONGO 1896 MEMORIAL**

The list below groups these alphabetically into the areas where they were killed, together with other known details.

'N' or 'S' before names below indicates carved in stone on North or South face as well as on (later?) metal plaques. 'M' indicates names on metal plaques only.

#### **SHANGANI**

M. BERTELSEN, Paul Emal, wife Hannar & 4 sons	end Mar	) Farming 12 miles north of Hartley ) Hills road
M. COMPLOIER, 'Pete'	26 Mar	Prospector
M. GRANT, James	end Mar	
M. GRACEY, Robert	end Mar	From Ireland. Ex BSACP and prospector. Killed with his coloured wife.
M. HAMMOND, Andrew Robert	30 Mar	) Engineers,
N. JOHNSON W H	30 Mar	) killed
N. PALMER H N	30 Mar	) together.
N. JENSEN, Charles	30 Mar	Swedish
N. KEEFE, Charles	end Mar	) Brothers )
N. KEEFE, Christopher	end Mar	) " ) Killed
N. WEBSTER R	end Mar	) together.
N. MATTHEWS, Benjamin	30 Mar	) Jewish, From Rotterdam ) Killed
N. VAN DER DOORTEN	30 Mar	) Jewish, From Melbourne) together

N. O'REILLY T	end Mar	Killed on Leechdale Co's property
N. ROWE, Frank R	30 Mar	Miner from St Austell
N. RADFORD, A	30 Mar	Partner of Leech
N. RAYNOR, Ben Pte	11 Sep	York & Lancaster Regt. Missing since that date.
N. TAYLOR, George	end Mar	) Partners Ex Navy
N. McCABE, William	)	Ex 6th Iniskilling Dragoons
S. WIENARD, -	end Mar	Cattle Inspector
S. WREN, -	25 Mar	Cattle Inspector
S. MOONIE T	?	On memorial but not on BSAC Uprising Report list.

### PONGO

S. HURLSTONE, Frederick	end Mar	"Pongo River Hotel") All From ) Coventry
S. TALMAN, Frank [Francis?]	end Mar	"Pongo Store ) same From ) London
S. REDINGTON, Reginald	end Mar	"Hurlstone's Store ) place?
S. VAUGHAN, Thomas	25 Mar	Pongo River
S. ZEEBURG H	26 Mar	Pongo River A trader
(BARR W A)	end Mar	) In BSAP report. Not on this
(DUPUA, William)	30 Mar	) memorial, but both on one in ) Gweru.

### TEKWE

S. FOURIE, Stephanus his wife & 5 young children	2 Apr	) Dutch farming family. He was ) building house for J. Ross (below) ) when killed.
S. KIRK, Agnes	2 Apr	Step (or adopted) daughter of J. Ross (below)
S. ROSS, Joseph & wife	2 Apr	

### INYATI

S. WEST, Cyril	end Mar	Not clear why on memorial as others also killed at Inyati are not listed on it.
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### MISCELLANEOUS (Neither in BSAP list)

S. SUMMERVILLE, George Tpr	29 Sep	Notice on Memorial ("BSACP. Died 29 Sep 1896 near Shangwa River")
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### GWERU 1896 MEMORIAL

The Gwelo Memorial (similar to the Pongo one at Shangani) records the names of a number of settlers killed in the Gwelo area. The names are carved onto the stone, but





- Fort Charter.** Capt. Gibbs passes; in evening Judson plus 8 leave for Iron Mine Hill to meet Gibbs.
- Sat 28 March – 6.00 a.m. Judson's party reaches Iron Mine Hill, finds store and telegraph office broken into. Seven stay there, Judson + Sgt. Reid continue on towards Blinkwater meeting "waggonette of refugees" from there a.m. Last coach leaves Gwelo for Bulawayo.
- Sun 29 March – Early a.m. Gibbs party reaches Blinkwater and meets Judson. News received 'Marvins' [25/30 kms NNW of Gwelo] looted, 3 or 4 people killed in area. Two bodies found within 6 miles of Gwelo. Late afternoon. Capt. Gibbs reaches Gwelo. Capt. Tennant sets up maxims. Gibbs takes over command. Near dusk. Capt. Napier's patrol rescues occupants of last coach from Gwelo beyond Pongo Store.
- Mon 30 March – 4.40 a.m. Capt. Gibbs has practise 'Test Alarm ['Stand To']'. News received [via rescued coach party over telegraph?] that "Napier's Store at Shangani looted and body of white man found near it."
- Wed 1 April – Gwelo-Bulawayo telegraph line cut. Napier patrol back in Bulawayo.
- Thu 2 April – Patrol from Gwelo to Shangani. Spend night short of river.
- Fri 3 April – Shangani patrol reach Store. Find it burnt down and body of white man. Return to Gwelo.
- Sun 5 April – Gwelo-Mashonaland line restored.
- [Note: Items in square brackets are comments/queries; with modern names in upper case. Events are in Gwelo (Gweru) unless otherwise shown.]

# Passenger Trains on Harare Branch Lines

by R. D. Taylor

The introduction by the National Railways of Zimbabwe of new passenger coaches between Harare and Bulawayo in November 1998 and the hoped for renaissance in rail travel in Zimbabwe led me to question what passenger services were run on the branch lines out of the capital in years gone by.

Two branch railway lines leave Harare using a common line to Mount Hampden Junction and thence to Chinhoyi and Shamva respectively.

## **SALISBURY TO AYRSHIRE**

Pauling & Co. built the first line in 1902 from Salisbury to the Ayrshire Gold mine a distance of 83 miles. It was 2 foot narrow gauge. The line, which went under the name of the Ayrshire Gold Mine and Lomagundi Railway, reached the mine on the 13 August 1902 and was opened to public traffic on 1 November 1902.

The locomotives, wagons, passenger coaches and track were from the original Beira Railway. This stock became redundant when the Beira line was widened to 3 ft. 6 in gauge in 1900. The coaches built by Brush Electrical Engineering and classified as first class had open balcony ends with iron gates and longitudinal seats, which meant passengers sat with their backs to the windows. The train was classified as a mixed i.e. goods wagons and passenger coaches on the same train and its load was restricted to 42 tons to be loaded in not more than 8 vehicles. In 1904 trains left Salisbury at 09.00



**Ayrshire railway narrow gauge train of ex Beira rolling stock at El Dorado in 1912**

*(D. M. Rhind)*

hours on Tuesday and Fridays arriving at Ayrshire at 17.00 hours. The return was on Thursdays and Saturdays with departure from Ayrshire at 09.00 hours and arrival in Salisbury at 16.30 hours.

At that time the only intermediate siding was at Gwebi near where the line crossed the Gwebi River not far from the present village of Darwendale. The original Gwebi siding should not be confused with the present day Gwebi siding at the entrance to Gwebi Agricultural College.

When first built, the line to Mount Hampden left Salisbury around the eastern side of the town to cross the present Mutare road near the P.T.C. works yard, Samora Machel Avenue west of Dura Building passed David Livingstone School thence between the Police Depot and Prison, between the Veterinary Department and Army Barracks through Gun Hill suburb, across the Borrowdale road through Alexandra Park, across the University campus to Broadlands road and parallel to the Lomagundi road out to Mount Hampden.

The present Halt Way marks the site of Avondale Halt. This line with its many level crossings and consequential accidents was closed in September, 1953 when a cut off line was opened from the then new Lochinvar marshalling yard through Tynwald to Mount Hampden. One early accident at the Borrowdale road crossing took place in March 1927 when a motor trolley overturned as a result of a stone wedged between the travel rail and the check rail. The District Traffic Superintendent and District Engineer were injured and taken to hospital. Two other railway employees were unhurt. A much more serious accident occurred in 1952 at the Jameson Avenue crossing when four young men were killed when the car they were travelling in hit a train at night.

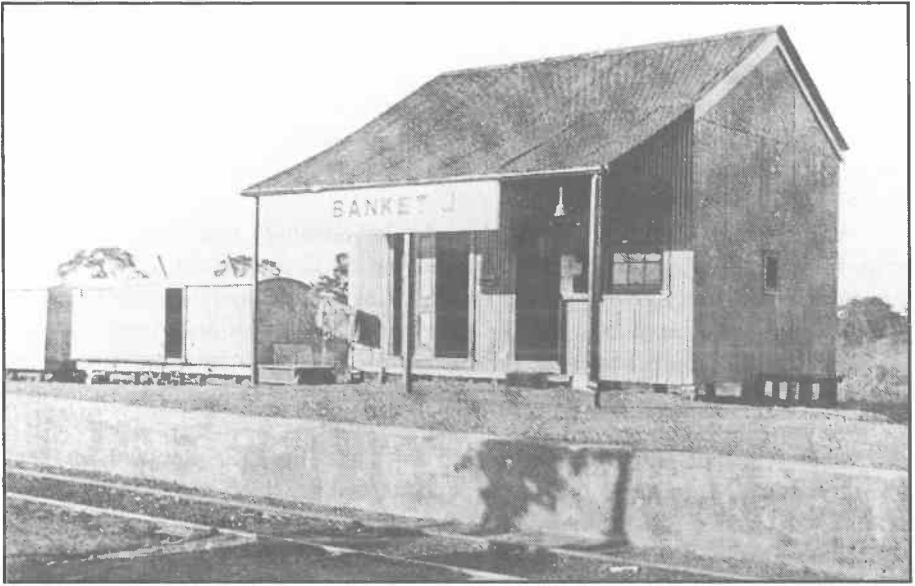
### **AYRSHIRE TO ELDORADO AND SINOIA**

Returning to the more distant past in 1905 the Eldorado mine had come into production and Paulings built a 12-mile line from a point on the Ayrshire line 67 miles from Salisbury. This was later to become Banket Junction or today's Banket. The new line was opened on 12 July 1905 and enabled rocks to be taken from the Eldorado mine to the Ayrshire mine for crushing. A weekly mixed train to Eldorado was introduced and in 1908 the train left Salisbury at 10.30 hours on a Sunday calling at Banket at 16.30 to arrive in Eldorado at 17.40 hours. The return service was on a Monday departing at 09.30 with arrival in Salisbury at 16.50 hours. In 1908 the Ayrshire reef came to an end and the line between Banket and Ayrshire fell into disuse but was only lifted in 1915.

Several mines had in the meantime opened up around Sinoia and pressure built up for the line to be extended from Eldorado the five miles across the Hunyani River to Sinoia. This was agreed to and High Commissioner Gladstone in Cape Town signed Railway Extension Ordinance No. 5 of 1913 on 17 May 1913. Pauling once again carried out the work and the first train ran into Sinoia Station on 22 June 1914.

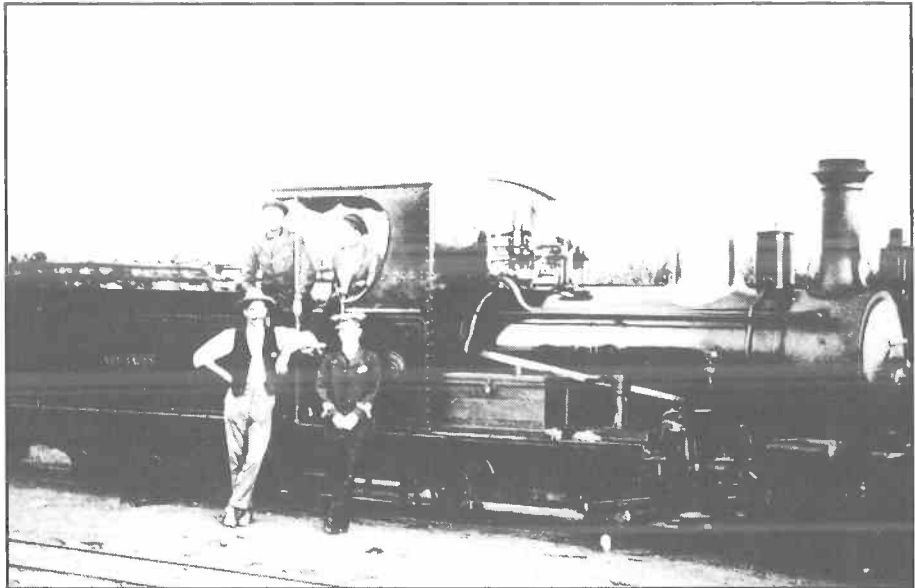
### **MOUNT HAMPDEN TO JUMBO AND SHAMVA**

In the Mazoe area the Jumbo mine had also become an important gold producer and the Mashonaland Railway therefore decided to construct a 3ft. 6in. gauge line north from Mount Hampden. The new section from Mount Hampden to Jumbo was opened



**Banket Junction 1916. Building also served as Post Office**

*(D.M. Rhind)*



**“Hans Saver” at Banket Junction with Stationmaster Hale, Driver Spolander and Fireman Q. Siebert**

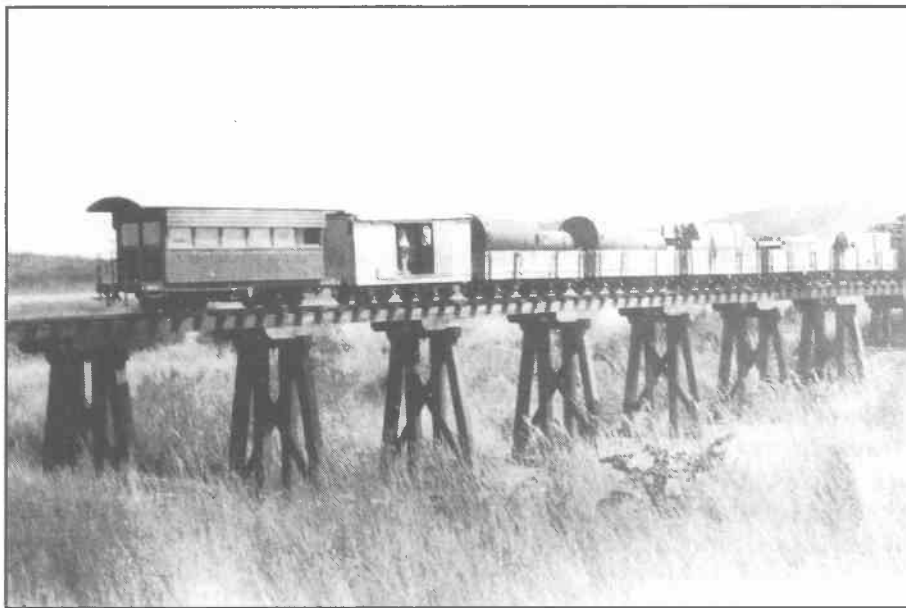
*(Croxtan Collection)*



on 15 December 1911. The narrow gauge Salisbury Mount Hampden section needed to be widened to 3ft. 6ins to accommodate this development and the work was completed in August 1911. The track and equipment on the original narrow gauge line to Eldorado was deteriorating rapidly and the natural consequence of the Jumbo line construction was to widen the Eldorado line to 3ft. 6ins. Widening was completed by 30 August 1913. Mining development was also taking place in the Bindura and Shamva areas and the then new line to Jumbo was extended a further fifty-two miles to Shamva. This extension was opened on 23 April 1913.

### **PASSENGER SERVICES 1914–1920**

It can be stated that at the start of the momentous year 1914 the basic pattern of railway development on the branch lines out of Salisbury had almost been completed. The original narrow gauge had been widened to standard gauge, the line to Shamva opened and construction of the last few miles into Sinoia was well under way. It is appropriate therefore to look at the passenger services being operated by the Beira and Mashonaland Railway over these new lines. The timetable effective from 1 February 1914 offered a train leaving Salisbury at 10.02 every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday for Shamva. The train arrived at 18.30 having called at the following Avondale 10.46, Mount Hampden at 11.08 for a ten-minute stop, Jumbo at 13.14, Concession 13.58, Glendale 14.53 and Bindura at 16.57. The return train left Shamva at 08.00 on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays calling at Bindura at 10.02, Glendale 12.08, Concession 13.01, Jumbo 13.58, Mount Hampden 15.40, Avondale 16.14 arriving in Salisbury at 16.35. On the Eldorado line the timetable read depart Salisbury at 08.00 on Monday, Wednesday



**Ayrshire Gold Mine and Lomagundi Railway train crossing Gwebi River near Darwendale**

*(National Archives of Zimbabwe)*

and Saturday calling at Avondale at 08.27, Mount Hampden 08.49 for an eleven minute stop, Stableford 09.17, Gwebi 11.39, Banket Junction 13.47 arriving at Eldorado at 14.40. Trains returned from Eldorado on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays leaving at 08.40, calling at Banket Junction at 9.45, Gwebi 11.49, Stableford 14.12, Mount Hampden 14.25.

### **PASSENGER SERVICES IN THE 1920S**

Moving forward into the early 1920s the services had been speeded up slightly but the possibility of Salisbury residents travelling by train to spend Saturday night in either Shamva or Sinoia had been removed! In October 1922 the Shamva train left Salisbury at 10.15 and called Avondale at 10.41, Mount Hampden 11.01, Jumbo 12.27, Glendale 13.46, Bindura 15.22 to arrive in Shamva at 16.35 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The single fare from Salisbury to Shamva was £1 5s. 6d. On the return the train left at 07.00 to arrive in Salisbury at 14.00 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. On the Sinoia line the frequency had been reduced to two services per week. Trains left Salisbury on Tuesdays and Fridays at 08.00 called at Banket at 12.59 to arrive in Sinoia at 14.15 hours. The return train left Sinoia at 09.15 on Wednesdays and Saturdays, Banket at 10.55 and arrived in Salisbury at 15.45. The single fare on this line was £1 4s. 3d. Locomotives permitted to operate on the two lines at this time were 7th class hauling 300 tons, 8th class hauling 360 tons and 9, 9A and 10th classes with loads of 400 tons. Maximum speed was restricted to 40 miles per hour. Revenue from passengers and parcels for the year ended 30 September 1922 on the Salisbury Sinoia line was £9039 and the Salisbury Shamva line £11017. Revenue declined over the years 1921 to 1924 and the 1924 Beira and Mashonaland and Rhodesia Railways General Manager's report commented "that notwithstanding decreased scale of fares a very heavy falling off in the number of European passengers took place".

The 1925 General Managers report records that 6539 African passengers used the Sinoia trains and 4018 used the Shamva trains. This same report also records an accident on the Shamva line, which could have had serious consequences. On 17 March 1925 a wheel flange on a wagon on the mixed train from Shamva broke, derailing the wagon some 60 yards from the Poorte River Bridge. The wagon struck the upright on the bridge and fell into the river taking four other wagons with it. Fortunately the passenger vehicles at the rear of the train remained on the rails and the occupants sustained no injuries.

Time tables changed again with effect from Monday 4 June 1928. A mixed train for Sinoia left Salisbury at 06.00 Mondays and at 08.20 on Wednesdays and Fridays. The return from Sinoia was at 12.00 on Mondays and 06.00 on Thursdays and Saturdays. On the Shamva line trains were scheduled to leave Salisbury at 09.20 on Wednesdays and Fridays and 17.00 on Sunday. The train returned from Shamva at 07.15 on Thursdays, 06.00 on Saturdays and 10.05 on Mondays. At least weekends in Salisbury for Sinoia and Shamva residents became practical.

### **ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE 1930s**

The economic problems which beset Rhodesia and indeed the whole world became evident when in April, 1932 it was announced that passenger services on the branch

lines had been reduced by one per week due to the overall reduction in the volume of passenger traffic. The General Manager in his Annual Report for 1932 records that passenger traffic over all sections of the system had declined by 31,8 per cent.

In the August 1932 Railways Bulletin, Fitter J. Lister of Mutare made a number of points, which will be familiar to Zimbabweans of the late 1990s. Writing about planning a 3 weeks holiday in Southern Rhodesia he commented "Owing to the adverse rate of exchange operating against us in the Union of South Africa many cannot afford to suffer the loss in currency involved and are compelled for economic reasons to spend their holidays within the borders of this country". Referring to the attractions of Salisbury he continued that "We can take a trip to Sinoia Caves about 88 miles from town. From Sinoia station to the caves is five miles, the fare by motor car being 15 shillings".

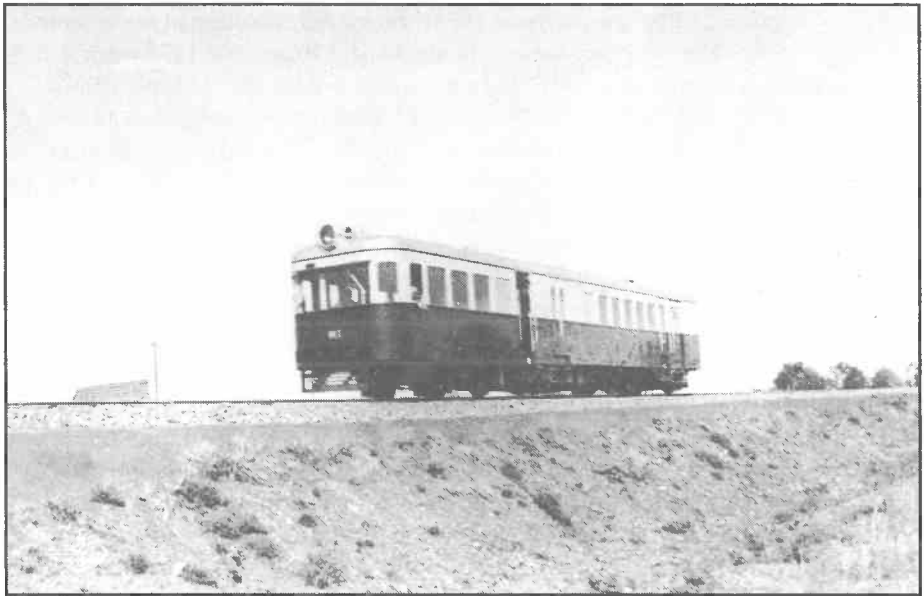
In that period the Railways took advantage of long weekends such as Easter to offer all-inclusive round the country tours. These tours which started from Bulawayo proved popular and the Easter 1935 tour of 1500 miles included Sinoia in the itinerary.

The economic situation was improving once again and in order to accommodate requests for more frequent transport facilities the Railways arranged from 27 June 1935 a Road Motor Service for mails, general traffic and passengers to Bindura leaving Salisbury at 11.00 on Thursdays returning the same day. A similar service was run to Sinoia on Wednesday and Saturday arriving in Sinoia at 12.30 with the return journey starting at 13.30. The Sinoia R.M.S. run was however withdrawn from 7 July 1937 and an additional mixed train per week substituted. From 7 June 1937 Trains left Salisbury at 08.00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays calling at Darwendale at 10.58, Banket 12.45, Sinoia 14.30 to arrive in Zawi at 15.55. Departure from Zawi was at 16.40 on the same day to arrive back in Sinoia at 17.52. The crews then over nighted in Sinoia and the train resumed its return journey at 07.30 the next morning to arrive in Salisbury at 15.35 hours. Trainloads had been increased to 450 tons. The extension from Sinoia to Zawi being opened on 1 August 1930.

### **THE GANZ RAILCAR**

A major speed up in the passenger service on the Shamva branch took place in September, 1936 when railcar number M1 costing £5,700 and in a green and cream livery with aluminium coloured roof went into service. The railcar left Shamva every morning at 07.15 hours except Sundays and arrived in Salisbury at 10.45. It returned from Salisbury at 16.00 hours daily except Saturday arriving in Shamva at 19.30 hours so giving time for shopping and business in the capital. On Sundays the railcar left Salisbury a little later at 17.00 hours and arrived in Shamva at 20.30 hours. The railcar supplied by GANZ of Budapest was powered by a diesel engine and weighed 36 tons in full working order. It carried 16 first class and 40 third class passengers plus two and a half tons of freight.

The new service was very well patronised taking three and half-hours for the eighty-six mile trip. Top speed was 40 miles per hour. Mr Lex Southey of Concession recalls that his great uncle, Gilmour Southey used to enjoy his sundowner and timed his first drink to the passing of the railcar, which could be seen across the valley from his farm. Great Uncle Southey became very agitated if the railcar was running late thereby



**Ganz Railcar M1 1936–1945**

*(National Archives of Zimbabwe)*

delaying his first drink of the evening. Mr Southey used to be taken shopping in Salisbury on the railcar by his mother and later when a pupil at David Livingstone School the passing of passenger trains going in the direction of home sometimes gave rise to bouts of homesickness. The railcar proved to be so successful that in February 1939 an order was placed for four rail cars powered by GANZ engines. The bodies were to be built by Metro -Cammell Carriage Wagon works in the U.K. These were for use on other branch lines and should have been delivered early in 1940. The outbreak of World War II put a stop to these deliveries and the original railcar continued in service on the Shamva route until the non availability of spares forced its withdrawal from service in 1945.

### **WAR TIME SERVICES**

On the Sinoia line during the Second World War the pre war pattern of trains continued with slight changes to the timetable, mixed trains left Salisbury at 08.00 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and called at Mount Hampden at 08.49, Darwendale 10.58, Bantek 12.43 to arrive in Sinoia at 14.00. After half an hour stop the train continued to Zawi where it arrived at 15.55. After shunting the train returned to Sinoia at 17.57. Crews continued to overnight in Sinoia and left on the return run at 07.30 to arrive in Salisbury at 13.55 hours. Locomotives were normally class 9A or 9B straights and class 13 Garratts hauling maximum loads of 450 tons. On the Shamva line services also followed the pre War pattern with a passenger train being substituted when the railcar was withdrawn.

### **POST WAR IMPROVEMENTS**

By March 1947 after the very difficult period of the Second World War life began to

return to a more normal pattern and Rhodesia Railways was able to provide a much faster service on both branch lines. The Sinoia train left Salisbury every day except Sunday at 07.00 hours after the arrival of the mixed trains from Bulawayo and Umtali. The journey took four and a half-hours. This was promoted as a most useful facility as mail, newspapers and perishables could be delivered much earlier. In the reverse direction the train left Sinoia at noon and arrived in Salisbury at 16.05 to provide connection with the nightly trains to Umtali and Bulawayo. Likewise on the Shamva branch the train left Salisbury at 16.30 daily except Saturday and arrived in Shamva at 21.10 hours. The return left Shamva daily except Sunday at 08.10 and arrived in Salisbury at 13.00 hours. Trains at this time consisted of one or two fourth class passenger coaches plus a first and second class composite coach and passenger guards van. No goods wagons were normally attached to these trains. It was possible therefore to speed up the service as no shunting took place *en route*.

It was the intention to introduce new diesel railcars but some difficulty was experienced in obtaining suitable vehicles of this type.

Ganz railcar M1, having been refurbished, returned to service on the 25 October 1948 this time however on the Sinoia branch. The new daily railcar service left Salisbury every morning at 08.45 and arrived in Sinoia at 11.55 returning from Sinoia at 13.00 hours to arrive in Salisbury at 16.10. The railcar did not run on Saturdays and Sundays. The railcar was withdrawn from service in April 1949 and was finally scrapped in 1959.

Mr Ronnie Struthers of the Umboe Valley has told the writer that in the early Fifties he and other members of the Umboe Polo team used to load Polo ponies on to the train at Zawi late on a Wednesday. Often the train was running late and loading had to take place in the dark using car lights. Grooms travelled with the ponies and on arrival in Salisbury on Thursday afternoon they used to ride to the Showgrounds for stabling. After a weekend of Polo the ponies would return by train to Zawi. Four horses were loaded per short cattle truck and up to six cattle wagons were used to move the team. Mrs Sybil Struthers who grew up in Sinoia recalls catching school trains into Salisbury to connect with another school train on her way to boarding school at Guinea Fowl. These every day happenings illustrate how dependent rural residents were on the train service at that time.

### **THE 1950s AND THE EFFECT OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION**

A number of special passenger trains were run in the latter half of August, 1955 to take school boy cadets to the Annual Camp at Inkomo Barracks. A 16 coach special ran from Bulawayo carrying 555 cadets from various Bulawayo senior schools. Another 11-coach train brought 107 boys from Plumtree, 118 from Guinea Fowl and 143 from Gwelo. Umtali boys went as far as Salisbury by train and then by road transport to Inkomo. Many of the cadets dispersed by private road transport at the end of the camp to start school holidays. However a 14 coach special ran from Inkomo to Lochinvar with the coaches then being attached to normal trains for the return journey for those boys who hadn't made alternative arrangements. How many other troop specials have run over the years to and from Inkomo?

The year 1957 saw a number of structural changes on the Sinoia branch as from

January that year the Signal and Telegraph section of Rhodesia Railways took over from the Post Office the maintenance of the telecommunication route and its associated apparatus. In May Darwendale Station was re-sited about a quarter of a mile east of the old station. The original site was on a curve and was not really suitable. In March Lion's Den which had been previously classified as a siding was re-opened as a Station. This was to cater for the big increase in goods traffic caused by the building of the Kariba dam.

Lion's Den was last classified as a station in 1937 and 1938 due to volume of traffic being generated by the construction of the Chirundu Bridge. Incidentally the station is named after a pride of lions which lived in the kopje about a quarter of a mile away.

In January, 1956 the adverse effects on rail passenger traffic of the rapidly improving road network which was taking place under the direction of Eng. J. H. Durr the Chief Road Engineer became evident. The Sinoia service was lowered in status to a pick up goods with accommodation for fourth class passengers and a composite guards van with second class accommodation. The train continued to run daily except Sundays. Trains left Salisbury at 07.10 arriving at Sinoia at 15.19 and finally at Zawi at 17.35 hours where crews over-nighted. A Porters asbestos cement prefabricated building was erected to provide accommodation. The return was from Zawi at 06.20, leaving Sinoia at 09.00 and arriving in Salisbury at 17.15 hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The single fare for second class was £1 1s. 0d. and return £2 1s. 9d. In 1957 the frequency of service was reduced with trains leaving at the same times on Monday, Wednesday and Friday returning on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The Shamva line continued to enjoy a service six days a week with the train leaving Salisbury at 06.40 arriving in Shamva at 16.40. Return from Shamva was at 06.25 to arrive in the capital at 16.50. The fare being £1 1s. 6d. single and £2 3s. 0d. return. The generous timings were due to the need to shunt goods wagons *en route*.

Time tables on the Sinoia line changed again in January 1958 with the train leaving Salisbury at 08.30 arriving at Sinoia at 14.39 and Zawi at 18.20. The return working from Zawi was at 08.00 hours leaving Sinoia at 10.13 and arriving in Salisbury at 17.30 hours. A speeded up service but I can imagine that Zawi at 18.20 hours on a dark winter evening was not a very hospitable place to arrive at unless a friend was waiting to pick one up.

## **THE 1960s AND DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES**

The turbulent decade of the sixties opened at least in Sinoia on a positive note with a report in April 1960 that a new fertiliser shed was being constructed at Sinoia station. The highlight of 1960 was no doubt the arrival in July of the Boswells Circus train. This train consisted of twenty-two coaches and goods wagons carrying 155 performers and staff together with 60 to 70 animals. One can imagine the excitement generated among the townspeople by this arrival and as the train passed stations such as Darwendale and Banket. The circus train visited Sinoia again in October 1962 and the railway staff commented on the efficiency of the setting up and taking down the big top and all the other facilities.

In January 1961 work started on a new Station building in Sinoia and this was

completed by October 1961. The building was opened by Mr. B. Ewing the local Member of Parliament. It was also announced that a kiosk was being erected for African passengers. The Sinoia train service in November 1960 was again daily except Sundays with very minor changes to the actual timetable. Inflation wasn't a major factor at the



**Branch line passenger train arriving Salisbury station early sixties. Fourth class coach with composite second class guards van** *(D.M. Rhind)*

time with the return fare now £2 10s. 0d. and a single for £1 5s. 6d. Shamva trains also continued to run six days a week with very minor changes to the timetable. Fares had also increased to £2 12s. 0d. return and £1 6s. 0d. for a single trip. Permitted loads had increased to 700 tons for class 13, 14 and 14A Garratt locomotives and 1000 tons for class 16 and 16A Garratt locomotives.

Diesel locomotives had also made an appearance with the first diesel locomotives Class DE 1 being permitted on the two branches hauling 425 tons or 1200 tons when worked in tandem. These diesel locomotives first entered service on the Railways in late 1952.

### **WITHDRAWAL OF REGULAR PASSENGER SERVICES**

The political developments of the mid sixties took some time to affect the passenger service on the two Salisbury branch lines. However on the 8 August 1969 Railway Headquarters in Bulawayo announced the withdrawal of the Salisbury–Sinoia, Salisbury–Shamva and Gwelo–Selukwe passenger services. A railway spokesman said the services were being withdrawn because a decline in passenger patronage was making them uneconomic to run. He said the locomotive power released as a result would be

used to move essential goods traffic which it would now be possible to fit into the schedules. The withdrawal would be effective from Monday 8 September 1969.

The final timetables in 1969 were as follows:

**Salisbury/Zawi/Salisbury  
Train 452 Pick up Goods**

<i>Daily</i>		
Dept	Salisbury	08.40
	Lochinvar	09.40
	Mt Hampden	09.54
	Darwendale	12.24
	Banket	15.34
Arrive	Sinoia	16.45
Dept	Sinoia	03.45
Arrive	Zawi	07.30

**Salisbury/Shamva/Salisbury  
Train 446 Pick up Goods**

<i>Daily except Sunday</i>		
Dept	Salisbury	08.00
	Lochinvar	08.24
	Mt Hampden	09.09
	Concession	11.40
	Glendale	12.47
	Bindura	15.25
Arrive	Shamva	16.30

**Train 457 Pick up Goods**

<i>Daily</i>		
Dept	Zawi	08.30
Arrive	Sinoia	10.40
Dept	Sinoia	13.05
	Banket	14.36
	Darwendale	16.26
	Mt Hampden	18.19
	Lochinvar	18.56
Arrive	Salisbury	19.10

**Train 445 Pick up Goods**

<i>Daily except Monday</i>		
Dept	Shamva	06.00
	Bindura	08.09
	Glendale	10.23
	Concession	11.26
	Mt Hampden	14.02
	Lochinvar	14.36
Arrive	Salisbury	14.50

### PASSENGER TRAVEL FOR PLEASURE

The cessation of regular passenger services on the branches did not however mean that chocolate and cream coaches would no longer run on the metals leading from the capital city northwards. On the 29 October 1972 the Rhodesiana Society in conjunction with the Rhodesia Railways Historical Committee arranged the Mazoe Valley Special the last steam journey on the Salisbury–Shamva line. Steam locomotives were being phased out from Salisbury at the time and 12th class locomotive numbers 251 and 258 pulled the train to Glendale and back. The train carried some 400 passengers. Steam locomotives finally ceased to operate in Salisbury in May 1973. On the 10 March 1985 the History Society of Zimbabwe organised a seven coach special train from Harare to Glendale and return. This time two DE 7 diesel locomotives hauled the train. This class of locomotive has since been withdrawn from service.

The Harare Railway Circle a small group of rail enthusiasts has also arranged specials on the branches. The first was on 12 October 1991 when one coach attached to a goods train carried forty passengers to Banket and return. Two DE 10 locomotives numbers 1044 and 1052 hauled the train. On Sunday 16 May 1992 the Railway Circle



ran seven coaches plus buffet car to Glendale and back with the train being hauled by DE 10 locomotive number 1056. This is a most scenic line and well worth travelling on.

The next trip on the branches was to Banket on Saturday 11 September 1993 with a five-coach train. The locomotives on the outward journey were two DE 9s and on the return DE 2 number 1218. The DE 2s have also since been withdrawn and this must have been the last time this class of locomotive hauled passenger coaches. On Sunday 4 May 1996 the Circle arranged a trip on the Kildonan Branch. This branch which was built on 1930 leaves the Harare/Chinhoyi line at Maryland Junction and serves Chrome mines along the Dyke. Passenger trains never ran on this particular branch and therefore the four coaches and buffet car carrying some 260 passengers made for a unique occasion. The locomotives were DE 9As numbers 1920 and 1951. The Railway Circle visited Bindura on Saturday 31 May 1997 when a train of five coaches with 380 passengers made the journey behind DE 10A locomotive number 1009.

Two specials were run to Banket in 1998. The first an eleven-coach train organised by the Railway Circle ran with a large number of school children on 13 September. The following Sunday the 20 September Prince Edward School as part of its Centennial Celebrations organised a seven coach special with 200 passengers from Mount Hampden to Banket and return. This train was hauled by DE10 locomotive number 1020. From Banket participants went by road to Lake Mazvikadei for lunch.

It can be said that while on occasion passengers still travel on the Branch lines out of Harare the purpose of the journey is for pleasure as against the more serious business of farming, mining, public administration and schooling of the passenger in the earlier decades of the century.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# The Thousand Guinea Trophy, 1914 – 1997\*

by John McCarthy

## PREAMBLE

A magnificent golden prize, conceived in an age of endeavour and exuberant optimism, it was to be competed for by succeeding generations of competent and hardworking cattlemen. Sadly, despite strenuous efforts to ensure its security throughout its latter years, it was to end up (so all the available evidence would suggest) as a few lumps of melted down metal at the hands of a gang of petty thieves.

## INTRODUCTION

As will be seen the history of this trophy is inextricably linked with that of the Bulawayo Agricultural Society, and the telling of this story was only made possible through its sponsorship of the writing of the Society's history by the late Mr Robin Rudd. The full history of the Society, entitled *Show Business*, is readily available through the Society's offices in Bulawayo, and the History Society of Zimbabwe is grateful both to the Agricultural Society and to Robin's family for allowing this distillation of the Trophy story to be published in *Heritage*. The initial suggestion that the story of the Trophy needed to be more widely told came from Mr C. G. Tracey, who is the proud possessor of the miniature that was awarded to the 1929 winner, Mr John Mack of Kadoma. He, along with many other members of the cattle ranching and farming communities, was particularly concerned at the news of the theft, and his sentiments were relayed in turn to the History Society of Zimbabwe by Mr Roy Lander. The latter, a former Chief Executive of Anglo American in Zimbabwe, was (as it transpired) the last person to present the original Trophy when he was Guest of Honour at the 1997 Bulawayo Agricultural Society Show. A couple of years earlier Roy had been asked by Robin Rudd to have a look at the draft manuscript of his history, when the Show Society was looking for sponsors to have it published, so he knew of the existence of the chapter dedicated to the Trophy. The History Society of Zimbabwe is grateful to both these men for the initial interest shown by them. Without it this article would probably never have been written.

## THE TROPHY

Successive droughts and East Coast fever in the years 1910 to 1913 had a seriously debilitating effect not only upon the cattle industry in the district, but on the fortunes of the Society. Fortunately it was at that time that one of the Society's more committed members, Louis Dechow, put forward the idea of initiating a magnificent trophy to be awarded annually to the Champion Bull of Rhodesia. On the face of it the idea was perhaps rather a bizarre one, given the rather economically stretched circumstances of the time, but Dechow had lived in Australia for a number of years, prior to settling in Rhodesia in 1894. While there, he had become caught up in the annual racing fever

\*Adapted from Chapter 3, *The History of the Bulawayo Show Society*, by Robin Rudd

Rhodesia in 1894. While there, he had become caught up in the annual racing fever that had surrounded the running of the Melbourne Cup and had been struck by the sheer grandeur of the Cup. He had also been impressed by the enthusiasm and determination that had characterised the efforts of all those competing for the Cup, and he was convinced that a similar trophy would help stimulate not only the cattle breeding standards in Rhodesia, but, by association, would also raise the profile and morale of the Society.

Louis Dechow was a leading cattle farmer and entrepreneur and his original idea was to solicit for 40 donations of 25 guineas each, so as to provide for a one thousand guinea cup which would be open to competition at the Annual Show from any recognised breed of animal, of any age and from any part of the world. However, before putting his idea officially to the Society's Executive Committee, he canvassed local farmers and businessmen and was no doubt overwhelmed at their ready response – they promptly contributed to the tune of 300 pounds. At a meeting of the Executive Committee on 11 June 1913 the principle of awarding a Gold Cup, to be valued at 1000 Guineas was adopted, and a subcommittee formed to turn the idea into reality. Membership of the Committee co included Messrs R. A. Fletcher, C. R. Edmonds and B. Wrey (later Sir Bouchier Wrey), and included in its deliberations were such matters as the limit of subscriptions to the trophy fund, the subsequent inscription of donors' names on the trophy, winners medals, and publicity.

Wrey, who was to prove one of the prime movers in the whole enterprise, decided early on that the idea of a Cup was very crude and old fashioned. Instead he favoured



**Louis Dechow with his wife, and two children in 1914, the year the Trophy was first presented. The little girl, Jessie, was later to be instrumental in having the Trophy put on public display** *(National Archives of Zimbabwe)*

a much more grandiose trophy and began passing around sketches of Ceres, Goddess of Agriculture and, even, the Parthenon in Athens in the hope presumably that likenesses of these might be incorporated into the design of the trophy.

An early move by the Committee was to invite designs and tenders from several London goldsmiths – companies like Garrards, Goldsmiths & Silversmiths, and Mappin and Webb. As Robin Rudd put it, even “that purveyor of all Settler needs – from solar topees to the wrought iron ‘broekie-lace’ on early settler buildings, the Army & Navy Store” was also included. Local Bulawayo jewellery firms like Basch, Caie (later to become T. Forbes), and Blackler were not forgotten, and all were advised that the amount available for this trophy would be £900.

Another decision taken at that time was that trophy winners should be given a bronze replica of the trophy, plus a £50 cash award. Determined that the judging criteria should be of the highest order the committee also approached not only the Society of Judges, but also wrote off to dozens of different cattle breed associations in both the northern and southern hemispheres for advice and many encouraging responses were received. A measure of the enthusiasm and commitment of the organising sub-committee can be gained from the minutes kept of their deliberations which were exhaustively researched by Robin Rudd. He estimated that within an eight day period after the commencement of their deliberations they had met in total for the equivalent of an eight hour working day – “out of office hours, in their own time, for no financial reward, all for the sake of implementing an idea for the benefit of the Bulawayo



**R. A. Fletcher, President of the Rhodesia Agricultural Union, 1910–1914, and one of the prime movers behind the Trophy project** *(National Archives of Zimbabwe)*

Agricultural Show Society. ...it was an example of selfless service to the community for which those connected with the Bulawayo Agricultural Show Society came to be renowned over the years.”

The enthusiasm of the Committee was matched not only by the contending jewellers, but by the many subscribers as well. Sixteen possible designs were submitted for consideration and £1 200 was raised from 68 initial subscribers, with only 20 of these being firms and organisations.

At a meeting of the full executive in early November 1913 the design submitted by the Bulawayo firm, Blackler, was chosen as being the best compromise between cost, actual gold content of the proposed trophy and, importantly, the feasibility of manufacturing exact replicas as floating trophies thereafter, and at reasonable cost. An official description of the Trophy, drawn from a 1927 Show Supplement, was as follows:

“The Trophy contains over 175 ounces (5 442 grams) of 18-carat gold and is made throughout from Rhodesian gold, contributed by many small mines throughout Matabeleland. It represents a group denoting ‘Agriculture’, consisting of a bull restrained by a female figure Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, modelled from the fresco discovered at Pompeii, together with agricultural emblems and products. This is mounted on the summit of boulders, which are again supported by a series of four ranges of steps representing granite, each range of steps widening out towards its base, and providing spaces in between the ranges for four enamelled plaques representing Rhodesian scenes; the Victoria Falls, World’s View in the Matopos with a model of Rhodes’ grave in the foreground, the Zimbabwe Ruins (Great Zimbabwe), and the Bulawayo Agricultural Society’s coat of arms. Below the view the base widens out still further, terminating in four massive feet symbolically treated to represent the harvest, the whole standing on a granite plinth. Engraved on the base are the names of the committee and those who subscribed towards the cost of the trophy. This great trophy – the most valuable of its kind in the world – has been the greatest asset the Society has possessed. It focused attention on the Bulawayo Show and from 1914, when it was first competed for, it has been the main attraction at every show.”

The actual work of manufacture was entrusted to a Birmingham firm, Haseler & Restall, and their hallmark dated 1913 was clearly stamped on the outside. Upon its arrival in Bulawayo in late April 1914, the finished Trophy was given over for display by Mr Blackler in his own shop window. So impressive was it that, when the Bulawayo Chronicle published a list of its initial subscribers, there was a further rush of offers by firms and individuals, some of whom appear to have felt that they had been “left out in the cold”. These additional offers, however, were gratefully received by the Committee and their names were added to those of all the earlier subscribers already engraved on the base of the Trophy.

While all this was going on, and no doubt in anticipation of a resurgence of interest on the part of cattle breeders in participating in the Show, new cattle pens were being planned. Equally importantly anew railway siding and ramp was surveyed. In those days the railway line ran into Bulawayo from Harare via Suburbs Halt, situated roughly where the hotel school is today, and continued parallel to 12th Avenue. Two and a half



**The Thousand Guinea Trophy**

kilometres of rail were ordered, so as to be able to shunt off cattle trucks into a siding at the boundary of the Showgrounds. The costs of these essential rail improvements, fortunately, were borne by the Railways and this arrangement continued until the late 1950s, when the main railway route was diverted to the west of Bulawayo.

This resurgence of interest, brought about in large measure by the advent of the Trophy (now known officially as the Thousand Guinea Trophy), coincided with the lifting of most of the veterinary restrictions on cattle movements that had been imposed after the outbreak of East Coast Fever some years earlier. This relaxation in turn made possible the introduction of another innovation in 1914 which was the institution of cattle sales as an integral part of the Show. These sales were to include many of the animals sent for exhibition, and the first official auctioneer to the Society was Mr. A. G. "Tottie" Hay. As with everything else to do with the Show in these early years the rules for the conduct of these sales were carefully worked out in advance.

The 1914 Show eventually got under way on Wednesday 26 May with the Thousand Guinea Trophy as the main focus of attention, despite the fact that it was surrounded in the main display area of the Main Hall by a whole host of other newly donated cups and silverware. Doubtless, as Louis Dechow had clearly intended, these donations had been sparked by the whole Thousand Guinea initiative, and together they all made for a very fine display, under close police guard. The first three judges in this inaugural

competition were Messrs. Bradshaw, Gledhill, and Diessel, each representing a different cattle breed society. There must have been real difficulty then, as in subsequent years, in judging between bulls from different breeds – how to judge for example between a dairy bull in particular, which can really only prove itself by the milk-producing qualities of its heifer progeny, as against a magnificent Aberdeen Angus or a fine Hereford.

Despite that there seems to have been unanimous approval of the judges decision on that day in favour of the Hereford bull, Dovenby Dreadnought, which was judged to be the Champion Bull of Rhodesia. It was owned by an 1894 settler, Mr C. S. Jobling, whose name was already on the base of the Trophy as a subscriber, and who was also a member of the Show Society's Executive. Indeed, as the owner of Dovenby Ranch in the Umgusa Valley and the founder of the first herd of pedigree Herefords in the country, Jobling was already a well known figure in farming circles. He went on to become one of the largest cattle owners in Rhodesia, he became the elected Member of Parliament for the Inyathi District in 1929, and the Minister of Agriculture in the Huggins Government of 1933. Not satisfied with cattle ranching, Jobling extended his interests into tobacco growing and was to become the winner of 14 growers medals. With his increasing government commitments he eventually moved with his family to Salisbury where they lived at Ranche House.

In his acceptance speech at the Farmers' Dinner at the Palace Hotel, after the presentation ceremony, Jobling is reported to have said, "I am intensely proud of having bred the champion bull; I am prouder still that the bull has been bred in Matabeleland and I am proudest of all that the bull was bred in Southern Rhodesia, the land of my adoption.



**Mr C. S. Jobling, the first winner of the Thousand Guinea Trophy, in 1914**

*(National Archives of Zimbabwe)*

Throughout the course of its history the security of the Trophy was always a major concern. As its value rose with the rising gold price it became increasingly difficult to put a value on it for insurance purposes. Whereas initially the winners were allowed to keep the Trophy for nine months, later holders had to be content with their 10cm high bronze replicas. Despite this it was to be allowed out of the country on two occasions in the 1920s – once for display in 1922 at the Rand Show, and again in 1925 for the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley Park in London, where it was reported not only to have been a main talking point, but a good advert for both the Show Society and for Bulawayo.

For many years, and because of its unique place in the Bulawayo Show Society, as is illustrated by the fact that its image appeared on all its official documents, and had long ago taken the place of its coat of arms, it was stored between shows in the vaults of a bank. Its symbolic worth far transcended its actual value, but in 1982 (sadly as it has transpired) it was put permanently on display in the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo. When Robin Rudd wrote up the story of the Trophy it had yet to be stolen, so his praise for the initiatives to make it more visible to the public now seems a little ironic, with the benefit of hindsight. The first moves to have it put on display were initiated at a council meeting of the Society. With support from Senator Sam Whaley, then President of the Show Society, and backed up by the fund-raising efforts of Mrs Jessie Greaves (the daughter of Louis Dechow), the Trophy was mounted in a bullet proof glass case protected by burglar alarms. In 1991, with the backing of the Society's Executive, the Trophy was relocated in its case to an even more prominent position at the top of a staircase leading to the Hall of Mankind in the Museum. However, the Executive also insisted that the Society update the insurance value very substantially from the previous level of \$9 000 — the problem for the Society was how to arrive at a replacement value which, in the context of this particular Trophy, was probably incalculable.

Apart from concerns about possible theft, the only other threat to the trophy over the years came rather surprisingly from within the Society's own ranks. In 1934 one farmer on the Executive suggested that the Trophy might be melted down for its gold content, with the funds being generated then be put towards the building of a Motor Hall. The then Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. J. H. Downie, who was also the new Patron of the Society, overruled the idea. Then, in 1974, when there was a move to abolish interbreed competition and to judge a bull on its progeny rather than its formation, it was Sir Patrick Fletcher who came to the defence of the Trophy. At the time there had also been suggestions that it be melted down so as to pay for a multiplicity of smaller awards. Sir Patrick, also a former Government Minister and the son of R. A. Fletcher (a member of the original Trophy sub-committee) was characteristically blunt on the subject saying, "Other than changing the sex of the Trophy it is difficult to imagine a more drastic step than to reject universal competition, the basic principle... Why rob the twilight halls of history of one of its brightest and most precious jewels?" He went on, "The men of those times did not bum around for a trophy or rob the vaults of history, they were up and did it themselves..."

In all, the Trophy was awarded on 74 occasions. An abbreviated list of award winners is shown at the end.





Mr Dirk Buitendag (second left) with his Limousin bull, Hwai Chips, which was judged the Champion Bull of Zimbabwe in 1997. Also in the photograph are Mr and Mrs Dennis Norman, and Mr C. P. D. Goodwin (extreme right), President of the Show Society.

*(The Bulawayo Agricultural Society)*

## POSTSCRIPT

The Thousand Guinea Trophy was stolen during the night of Wednesday, 18 February 1998, from the Bulawayo National Museum. As will be seen from the adjacent extract from the Bulawayo Chronicle of the next day, the theft made headline news in the City, and a reward for \$10 000 was immediately offered for information leading to the arrest of the culprits. This amount was later increased to \$150 000. In what appears to have been quite a well planned robbery, some of the gang responsible probably remained behind in the building from the previous day's public hours, before breaking open the display cabinet around 2.00 a.m. Ropes left trailing from a first floor balcony would suggest that they made good their escape that way, complete with a very large and heavy bag containing the trophy. In the process of removing their prize they appear to have triggered a silent alarm, which was apparently responded to some five minutes later by the security company responsible for monitoring its signals, but neither they, nor the guard from another security firm tasked with patrolling the Museum grounds, found any sign of the thieves.

Eight days later, however, according to newspaper reports, six men were arraigned before the courts, charged with stealing the Trophy. Three of the men were from the

one family - Michael Kim Handson , and two of his sons, Sebastian Kim Handson and Gerald Leslie Handson. The other three charged were Brett Dereck Ball, Marven Charles Ismail, and Tremayne Paul Williams. The State case against them, based largely on finger print evidence from the crime scene, on the fact that there were confirmed reports of them having purchased the getaway ropes from a particular shop a few days prior to the theft, and on abrasion marks found on the hands of two of the suspects, appeared very strong. Despite several applications for bail, one of which went to the High Court, they were detained in all for eight months pending further investigations. Then, on 5 October 1998, they were freed when the State announced its intention to withdraw the charges before plea, while further investigations, "which were expected to take some time to complete", were carried out. The men were warned that they were free for the time being, but would be summoned to court once the State was ready. Over a year later it would appear that the State is still to complete its investigations. The culprits remain free, and the Thousand Guinea Trophy would appear to have gone forever. Whether in the end Handson and Co., or someone else entirely, will be found guilty of this theft, it is clear that they will have achieved a level of historical notoriety, quite beyond their wildest imaginings!

## Councillors reject MZWT request to

**Chronicle Reporter**  
**BULAWAYO** City councillors have rejected a request from the Matabele Water Trust for the council to carry \$500 million in loans for the construction of the Gwayi-Shangani dam. It has been reported that the request was shot down on Tuesday night at an emergency meeting attended by 20 of the 25 councillors. The council leaders noted the Council could not finance an extension of the Matabele Water Trust Limited, a private company, the Matabele and Zambesi Water Trust Limited. The company will be launched on Saturday and on Saturday next week.

The incoming followed a letter written by the local authority by the MZWT. Cde Danus Dabwani, only the first time was in August 1995 when the \$500 million was to be raised. The MZWT has been established by the Executive Mayor.

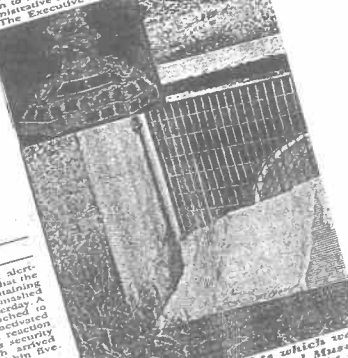
Mr Abel Stomba, said letter requesting the Council to negotiate the loan on behalf of the did not explain how funds would be secured for or mentioned. According to the minutes of the meeting, the mayor said he was not aware

## \$1 million trophy stolen

**COVETED** 84-year-old trophy, the Gold Trophy of the Bulawayo Agricultural Society, was stolen from the councillors' national headquarters in the early hours of yesterday morning. It was reported that the trophy, which was valued at \$1 million, was stolen from the headquarters of the society in the city.

By JONATHAN MAPHENDUKA

An annual event that attracted competitors from all over the country and the region, Zimbabwe said the \$1 million trophy was stolen from the headquarters of the society in the early hours of yesterday morning. It was reported that the trophy, which was valued at \$1 million, was stolen from the headquarters of the society in the city.



## Gold trophy theft charges withdrawn

**Court Reporter**  
**AFTER** spending about eight months behind bars, five suspects in the \$900 million gold trophy theft from the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo yesterday heaved a sigh of relief when the State told them they were free — but they may not enjoy their freedom as they could be summoned to appear in court when the State completes its investigations.

Announcing the State's decision to withdraw charges before plea, the senior public prosecutor Western Division, Mr Nathaniel Sibanda, said the withdrawal of the charges before plea were intended to facilitate further investigations which were expected to take time to complete.

The court informed the five men that they were free for the time being and would be summoned to court once the State was ready. Allegations against them were that on February 14 this year, the five broke into the Museum and stole the trophy tampering with the em.

## Six in court over theft of trophy



OUR of the six suspects shy away from the camera while a police detective monitors the situation.

**Chronicle Reporter**  
**SIX** Bulawayo men yesterday appeared in court on allegations of stealing the \$900 million Gold Trophy from the Natural History Museum on Wednesday last week.

The trophy, belonging to the Bulawayo Agricultural Society, has an initial value of \$900 million, according to the State outline. Five of the accused, Michael Kim Handson (23), Gerald Leslie Morgan (29), all of 382 Ney, Brett Dereck Ball of 20 Fort Street, and a

Zimbabwean national — Eusebio Mavema Charles Simani — whose address was given as 5 Laurens Road, Morning Side, Bulawayo, were remanded in custody to today. They are expected to apply for bail today but the State said it would oppose it.

A sixth man, Terence Paul Williams (19), of 2 Adala Street, Road in Handa, was remanded in custody to March 11. He was arrested on Tuesday, while the rest were picked up on Sunday. Four of the accused are unemployed. The State case will be heard in the museum and tampering with the alarm system. They allegedly used the first floor window of the building to enter, removing and installing the window.

It will either be alleged that they used two

Cuttings from The Chronicle  
 (Courtesy: The Chronicle)

**WINNERS OF THE THOUSAND GUINEA TROPHY**  
**AWARDED TO THE SUPREME CHAMPION BULL OF ZIMBABWE**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Breeder</i>	<i>Name of Bull</i>	<i>Breed</i>
1914	C. S. Jobling Bulawayo	DovenbyDreadnought	Hereford
1915	C. Drummond-Forbes Sandown	Lomond	Shorthorn
1916	C. Drummond-Forbes Sandown	Lomond	Shorthorn
1917	C. Drummond-Forbes Sandown	Lomond	Shorthorn
1918	G. C. Woodforde Gatooma	Raithby Blenheim	Shorthorn
1919	G. C. Woodforde Gatooma	Raithby Blenheim	Shorthorn
1920	Drummond-Forbes & Freeze Bulawayo	County Magistrate	Shorthorn
1921	C. S. Jobling	Dovenby Damocles	Hereford
1922	Capt H. L. Philips Balfour, Transvaal	Village Editor	Aberdeen Angus
1923	J. R. Stewart Shangani	Black Band II of Castle-Craig	Aberdeen Angus
1924	NO CATTLE SHOWN		
1925	NO CATTLE SHOWN		
1926	Dalton & Taylor Gatooma	Bridgebank Condor	Shorthorn
1927	Dalton & Taylor Gatooma	Bridgebank Condor	Shorthorn
1928	George Mitchell Bulawayo	Spring Grange Craftsman	Hereford
1929	John Mack Gatooma	Hampton Court Line Clear	Hereford
1930	De Beers Cons Mines Ltd, Kimberley	Chepstowe Challenger	Shorthorn
1931	NO CATTLE SHOWN		
1932	C. Roberts & Letts Maldon Farm, Heany	Tullyveage Marksman	Shorthorn
1933	J. R. Stewart Shangani	Emblazon of Bleaton	Aberdeen Angus
1934	Duncan Black Salisbury	Brisling	Aberdeen Angus
1935	C. Roberts and Letts Maldon, Heany	Maldon Kismet	Shorthorn
1936	NO CATTLE SHOWN		

<i>Year</i>	<i>Breeder</i>	<i>Name of Bull</i>	<i>Breed</i>
1937	A. L. Millar Salisbury	Estes Park Mariner	Aberdeen Angus
1938	Duncan Black Salisbury	Escudero of Selby	Aberdeen Angus
1939	J. G. & T. Phipps Mooi River, Natal	Calrossie Janitor	Shorthorn
1940	NO CATTLE SHOWN DURING WORLD WAR TWO		
1946	I. Forbes Bulawayo	Craig Rennie Robin Hood	Hereford
1947	A. L. Millar	Estes Park Eritrea	Aberdeen Angus
1948	J. Jamieson Bulawayo	Thibet Park Martyn's Nasfeed	Friesland
1949	A. L. Millar	Pacemaker of Fordhouse	Aberdeen Angus
1950	A. L. Millar	Pacemaker of Fordhouse	Aberdeen Angus
1951	Black Bros Salisbury	Cluny Caesar	Shorthorn
1952	Black Bros Salisbury	Cluny Caesar	Shorthorn
1953	Conolly Bros Figtree	Vern Borage	Hereford
1954	E. MacArthur	Millhills Jeff	Shorthorn
1955	A. H. G. Hampshire	Beaufort Border Earl	Shorthorn
1956	Matopos Research Station Bulawayo	Brakfontein Bootsma II	Friesland
1957	Matopos Research Station Bulawayo	Brakfontein Bootsma II	Friesland
1958	Mr & Mrs P. H. Nesbitt Figtree	Eustwin Peter Pan II	Red Poll
1959	Mr & Mrs E. G. Wevell Milsonia Ranch	Knockout of Roseways	Hereford
1960	Mr & Mrs P. H. Nesbitt Figtree	Eustwin Peter Pan II	Red Poll
1961	Kenilworth Estates Bulawayo	Doornspruit Voetpad	Africaner
1962	Heyns Bros Hartley	Doornspruit Witpens	Africaner
1963	Debshan Ranches Shangani	Kismet of Roseways	Hereford
1964	A. L. Millar Salisbury	Evarist of Fordhouse	Aberdeen Angus
1965	A. L. Millar Salisbury	Evarist of Fordhouse	Aberdeen Angus
1966	A. L. Millar Salisbury	Elfred of Netherton	Aberdeen Angus
1967	Debshan Ranches Shangani	Ingezi Seaman	Hereford
1968	B. E. Lobel Salisbury	Lobenvale Bel 765	Brahman

<i>Year</i>	<i>Breeder</i>	<i>Name of Bull</i>	<i>Breed</i>
1969	G. Willemse Salisbury	Kelvingrove Laddie 293	Africaner
1970	V. G. Milward Norton	Vipya Zorro	Sussex
1971	B. E. Lobel Salisbury	Lobenvale Bel 9	Brahman
1972	B. E. Lobel Salisbury	Lobenvale Bel 9	Brahman
1973	Mr & Mrs F. W. van Beeck Nuanetsi	Wintersvlei James Bond	Afrikaner
1974	Rhodesia Tobacco & Ranching Bulawayo	Balquhidder Glow-worm II	Sussex
1975	NO INTERBREED CLASSES		
1976	Mr & Mrs G. F. Whaley Salisbury	Masasa Drummer	Hereford
1977	Eric York & Sons Figtree	Poltimore Jumbo	Sussex
1978	Henock Ranching Bulawayo	Lazy 3 Baron 18	Brahman
1979	Eric York & Sons Figtree	Circle-Y Lion	Sussex
1980	B. L. Calderwood and C. P. D. Goodwin	Bedza du Lys Fearless	Afrikaner
1981	Heany Junction Farm	Koce Llewellyn	Hereford
1982	Peter Grant Broadwell Farm	Rhoman Rogers Baron 19-79	Brahman
1983	R. Pilosof	Mr Red V8	Brahman
1984	Peter Grant Broadwell Farm	Rhoman Cherokee's Baron 11-82	Brahman
1985	R. Pilosof	Rhuvale 24's Grand Saddle	Brahman
1986	Pioneer Santa Gertrudis	Lilfordia Lil 82-51	Santa Gertrudis
1987	Peter Grant Holdings Pvt Ltd	Rhoman Cherokee's Baron 11-82	Brahman
1988	Ruvale Brahmans	V8 Ruvale Mr Red Mayro 2/44 VR20-83	Brahman
1989	Ruvale Brahmans	Ruvale Navegante's Scott RV 28-86	Brahman
1990	NO PEDIGREE CATTLE SHOWN		
1991	Ruvale Brahmans	Ruvaale Navegante's Scott RV 28-86	Brahman
1992	Ruvale Brahmans	Ruvale Navegante's Scott RV 28-86	Brahman
1993	Mtangala Farm Esigodini	Jason	Jersey
1994	Peter Grant Holdings Pvt Ltd	Lazy M3 Red Detering 90-82	Brahman
1995	Ace Property & Investments Pvt Ltd	Ace Bergamo	Limousin
1996	J. C. Connelly & Sons, Figtree		Hereford
1997	Dirk Buitendag		Limousin
1998	Heany Junction Farm		Hereford
1999	Pama Farm		Limousin

# Jimmy Whittall of Humani

by Colin Saunders

James William Whittall was born in 1911 in Istanbul, Turkey, where the family was very well known and had extensive business interests. He was the youngest of seven children. His parents had to move to Rome for the duration of World War 1 from 1914 to 1918, as Turkey was “on the other side” in that great conflict. Consequently he spent a few of the formative years of his young life in Italy.

When the time came to start his schooling, his parents sent him off to England by rail on The Orient Express, and for many years he travelled backwards and forwards to school on that fabled train in the great years of mighty steam locomotives. He was initially a boarder at Eagle House Primary School, and when the time came for him to enter high school, he was enrolled at the famous Rugby School.

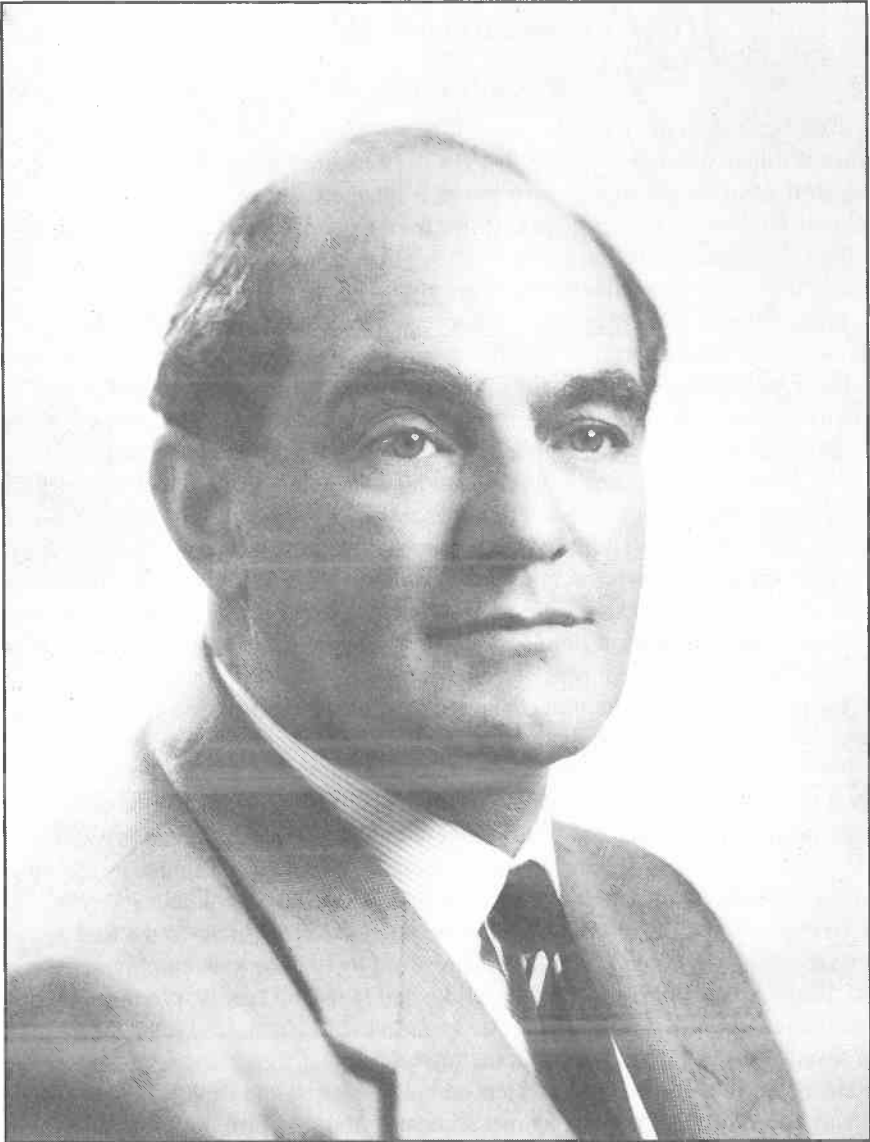
The young Whittall showed himself to be a very independent and self-sufficient soul, highly talented on the sports field, where he captained the Rugby 1<sup>st</sup> XV in the game of that name. This sporting skill no doubt explains to a certain extent the athletic talents of two of his grandsons, who currently represent the Zimbabwe national cricket team. He was also very energetic and adventurous, and, as it was too far to travel home to Turkey in the short holidays, he spent some of those leisure days on walking tours on the European continent.

When he left school, he immediately determined to fulfil a life-long ambition to travel out to Africa, his interest in the so-called “dark continent” having been stimulated by the hunting exploits of Frederick Courtney Selous. The legendary hunter was a friend of Jimmy Whittall’s grandfather, Sir James William Whittall, himself a keen hunter who had been Selous’ host on hunts in Turkey. He had been given a set of F. C. Selous’ books on African hunting, personally inscribed and signed by the author, and the Whittall family of Humani still have these priceless volumes today.

To return to the life of young Jimmy, he proceeded to Africa *via* the Red Sea and the east coast, arriving in present day Zimbabwe in 1930 to seek employment on the land. He secured a position with the well known Howland family, prominent farmers in the Umvukwes (Mvurwi) district. He soon found Mashonaland to be far too tame, and decided to seek employment in the lowveld.

He managed to locate job prospects on both Nuanetsi and Devuli Ranches, but on his way down to the southeast he met someone who told him not to go to Nuanetsi “because the food is not good”, so he opted for Devuli. Here he was taken on as a learner rancher, working for Despard Bridges. In the custom of that time he did not receive a wage, but instead had to pay the owners for the privilege of learning the ways of a lowveld rancher.

He was blissfully happy in the lowveld, and proved to be an avid pupil, turning his hand to all of the tasks and skills without which ranch life would not have been possible in the huge remote area of Devuli. He took great pride in his part in the construction of one of the historic ranch-houses at headquarters, a comfortable residence complete with lowveld hardwood ceilings, floors, and window- and door- frames, and surrounded by a verandah along all sides of the house.



**Jimmy (J. W.) Whittall, 1958**

The year 1932 was a landmark in the life of Jimmy Whittall for two reasons: firstly, to celebrate his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, he went on a fishing trip to Chipinda Pools with Denis Townley by donkey cart; time was not an important consideration, as the journey took a week in each direction, and the two youngsters were away for a month. The fishing must have been reasonable, but the trip was memorable for the 15 foot crocodile Denis shot when they went across to the Sabi River. This was probably a defining incident in Townley's future career, but that is another story.



Secondly, in the same year Whittall travelled back to Turkey to see his widowed mother, and he was informed of the details of his inheritance from his late father. He brought the money back to Zimbabwe, and he joined Don Somerville, his senior colleague on Devuli, in a partnership which purchased a vacant tract of land across the Turgwe (Turwi) River, which was the southern boundary of Devuli Ranch.

Thus it was that in 1932 he left Devuli and took up residence on the completely undeveloped expanse of lowveld bush which they named Humani, after a hill called Gumani just south of the Turwi. He had no neighbours to the south, and life was very lonely, but he set to work to carve a viable ranch out of the wilderness.

He established a site for his home on a piece of flat land near a string of spectacular pans, rich in waterfowl and wild life, which, along with the fabulous riverine gallery forest along the Save River, had attracted the young Whittall to Humani as soon as he laid eyes on the place. This site is the centre of Humani's residential area to this day.

In lonely isolation he attended to the myriad of tasks required to establish a ranch in a remote area—construction of a home, outbuildings, store-rooms, workshops, fencing, roads and stream crossings, cattle dips, pens and handling facilities, and housing for the labour he hired from the local Changana and Ndaou people.

Cement was unavailable in the early years, so Jimmy Whittall made a kiln in which to burn lime. He located a deposit of rocks bearing a rich lode of calcium/lime, and this material was quarried and transported by wagon to the site, where the rocks were broken into the correct size, and then placed in the kiln with dry mopani wood. The intense heat in the kiln converted the rocky material into builder's lime, and this was the cementing material used on all the original buildings on Humani.

He soon set about stocking the new ranch with cattle. He built up his herd by purchasing hardy local Save Valley indigenous cattle initially; later, in the 1950s, he commenced a policy of crossing them with Hereford bulls, and although he tried other breeds favoured by some of his lowveld ranching colleagues, he always favoured the trusty Hereford to add quality to indigenous breeds.

The lot of a cattle rancher was not easy in the lowveld in the early days. Cattle were hard to come by, stock diseases were rife, markets were far distant, veterinary help unobtainable, and the herds were harried by lion, leopard, wild dog, hyena, and crocodile. Of all the predators, lions posed by far the greatest problem, and many were the adventures Jimmy experienced in endeavouring to protect his precious cattle.

He kept a pack of approximately sixteen dogs for lion hunting. One day whilst out hunting he heard his dogs barking at something in thick bush nearby. As he approached, a large lion rushed out and ran off, pursued by his smallest terrier. The other larger dogs beat a hasty retreat, and were soon nowhere to be seen. Jimmy laughed so much that he forgot to shoot the lion!

Humani teemed with wildlife of many different species, and the youngster revelled in the constantly changing scene which featured the animals he had read about in his grandfather's books by Selous. He grew to love the wild animals around him, although the lion population was an expensive threat to his early ranching activities. He was an excellent shot, and took full advantage of the hunting available in the area; in so doing he soon became an excellent outdoors man.

When the cattle market was particularly flat in 1934, the young Whittall augmented

his meagre income by instituting a service for travellers, whose vehicles he pulled with a span of sixteen oxen across the extensive stretch of deep sand and through the drift on the Save River, which was the only way for travellers to and from Manicaland to cross the great river before the construction of Birchenough Bridge.

As people were often very bad about paying him for pulling them across the wide Save drift, he soon learnt that the best way to ensure payment was to ask for it in the middle of the vast sandy river bed. If payment was not forthcoming, he could there and then unhitch the oxen! When the huge bridge was completed in 1935, Jimmy Whittall took over the contractors' huts and let them out to travellers, and thus was born *The Birchenough Bridge Hotel*.

Whittall's replacement on Devuli was a young man called Ian de la Rue, who was courting Violet Bridges, a beautiful young ballet dancer and daughter of Devuli's owner Despard Bridges. The couple were soon married, and Vi de la Rue invited several of her former dancing colleagues out from England to visit the family on Devuli. One of these young girls was a lass called Elfrida ("Elf") Hingston, who came from a distinguished and well-to-do family in Nottingham, and she and Jimmy Whittall were soon attracted to each other.

The mutual attraction duly progressed, and in 1939 he travelled to England to seek her hand in marriage. Elf's family background was fascinating. Her great grandmother was Lady Frances Fitzwilliam, whose uncle was the Earl of Bradford, while her grandmother was a sister of Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman RN, First Sea Lord in the Royal Navy shortly before World War 1.

Sir Francis, who had become a naval cadet at the age of seventeen, had enjoyed an illustrious career in the navy, culminating in his appointment as First Sea Lord by King George V. One of his closest friends was Captain Robert Falcon Scott, of tragic Antarctic exploration fame. In March 1912, as he lay slowly freezing to death, Scott wrote a poignant farewell letter to Sir Francis, in which he stated "how extraordinarily pleasant I found it to serve under you", and implored him "to secure a competence for my widow and boy". He had gone on to say "I leave them very ill provided for but feel that the country ought not to neglect them — after all, we are setting a good example to our countrymen, if not by getting into a tight place, by facing it like men when we are there". He concluded by apologising for his hand-writing, "but it is minus 40 and has been for nigh on a week".

Sir Francis did his best to ensure that Scott's widow and son were cared for, and the son was incidentally Sir Peter Scott, a distinguished naturalist, author, and artist, who founded The Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire, and with Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands he was responsible for establishing The World Wildlife Fund, of which he became President.

As First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman served under a brash and intensely ambitious and outspoken young politician named Winston Churchill, appointed First Lord of The Admiralty by Prime Minister Asquith. The experienced professional sailor clashed severely with his young political master, and they disagreed strongly on the naval policy required to prepare the fleet for the inevitable war with Germany which was looming in the background. Outgunned by the eloquence of Churchill, who was an extraordinarily resilient figure and a ruthless political survivor, Sir Francis had

opted to resign his post shortly before the outbreak of war, to be replaced by Prince Louis of Battenberg, father of Lord Louis Mountbatten.

We have wandered a bit from the story of young Jimmy Whittall, seeking to marry the beloved daughter of a conservative and well-connected English family, and to carry her out to the wilds of Africa. His interview with his prospective father-in-law was inauspicious to say the least: when questioned as to what fortune he could lay claim to, he replied unimpressively that he "had a few cattle", while his answers to searching interrogation as to what sort of life-style he could offer the damsel in a remote corner of Africa impressed Elf's father not at all.

Nevertheless, the young couple were married in England on the day before the Second World War broke out in 1939, and they travelled back to Humani in an atmosphere of considerable uncertainty. The life of enforced isolation in the lowveld in the 1940s was not easy for a ballet dancer accustomed to city life in Britain, but Elf soon made the best of it, setting up a home, and learning to plan and cope with the self-sufficiency necessitated by Humani's great distance from any shopping facilities. Until the end of the second world war in 1945, Jimmy and his wife went on shopping trips to Masvingo (then Fort Victoria) only once every six months to stock up with provisions. Their main bulk shopping list contained just the six essential items: flour, sugar, salt, tea, cooking oil, and soap. More delectable grocery items were hard to come by and expensive, and most were considered a rare treat.

In those days the only road into Humani was from the north, which necessitated crossing the Turwi River. On one occasion, returning from a shopping trip, Jimmy and Elf found the river in full flood. Jimmy had no option but to choose a place where he thought there were no crocodiles, and swim across to fetch his boat in which to ferry Elf and their provisions across. She was always nervous of the river. Its crossing remains a problem to this day.

The couple occasionally visited the folks at Devuli, and it was only in later years that they were able to go shopping more frequently in Mutare, and then, when the nearby Umkondo Mine was opened near the Save River in 1953, they were able, with their family, to enjoy occasional social visits to the club which was established for employees of the mine.

The Whittall's son Richard, first of their four children, was born in Harare in 1941, to be followed by Roger in 1942, Jane in 1944, and Sally in 1947. Richard, Roger, and Jane live on Humani to this day.

In 1946 Don Somerville sold his shares in the Humani ranching venture to Roger ("Bob") Hingston, brother to Jimmy's wife Elf, and ten years later Jimmy bought out his brother-in-law and was at last the sole proud owner of the ranch of his dreams.

In 1950 Jimmy acquired the adjacent ranch Chigwete, which he amalgamated with Humani to form one of the lowveld's most successful ranching enterprises. His sons Richard (who qualified as an agricultural engineer before returning to the ranch, where his mechanical and technical expertise have been invaluable) and Roger (always a skilled and devoted hunter, who founded a very successful safari company) had both joined the family team, while Jane married Arthur Davies, a skilled electrician, and they also settled on the ranch, where he could see to the maintenance and repair requirements of the burgeoning array of vehicles and equipment.

Jimmy had over the years developed a deep interest in the wise utilisation and conservation of the natural resources of the Save Valley, and he was an enthusiastic supporter of the work of The Natural Resources Board. He was a founder member of the Sabi Valley Intensive Conservation Area (ICA) Committee, and remained an active member until 1978.

He also served his fellow farmers in organised agriculture. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, despite the enormous distances he had to travel, he was Chairman of the Victoria (Masvingo) branch of the Rhodesia National Farmers' Union (Commercial Farmers' Union), and in that capacity he served on the National Council for several years. In addition, he served as a trained Section Leader of the Police Reserve in the Save Valley.

Although he worked hard in developing the ranch which he loved, and served his colleagues in the wider farming community in the lowveld, he also found the time for relaxation and family pursuits. He continued to refine his bushcraft skills, and developed further his love of hunting and fishing. He once went on a fishing and duck-shooting trip to the lower Shire River in Malawi, with Cecil Howland and Peter Vining. The trip was proving to be very successful, except that their only method of moving about was in a small boat, which was decidedly unstable. The Shire River's banks were lined with floating islands of vegetation and debris, which made access into and away from the bank extremely hazardous.

In a moment of excitement one of them stood up quickly to shoot something, and the boat over-turned. They all fell in and had to swim for it. By good fortune there was a cleared area on the bank right opposite them, so they made it in safety, but the boat and all their possessions therein were lost.

While his children were growing up, Jimmy and Elf Whittall took them to Mozambique during most of the August school holidays, travelling through the bush and on rough tracks to the coast in the vicinity of the Bazaruto Archipelago. Here they travelled across to all the islands – Bazaruto, Benguerra, Magaruke, and Santa Carolina – in the small boat which they towed down from Humani behind one of the ranch Land Rovers, and they set up camp on the unspoilt beaches of each of the islands in turn.

Before crossing over to the islands, the family had great fun bartering goods of various kinds for chickens and a variety of produce, which was necessary to add to their seaside holiday diet of abundant fresh fish. The fishing which they enjoyed in those happy days can only be described as stupendous.

By the 1960s Jimmy Whittall had built up his cattle herd to approximately 2500 head, and more than twice that number by the time of the first great drought of recent times in 1982–3, when the number was very substantially reduced. He also tried raising sheep from early days, and he gradually built up his herd to over 1000. However, they did not really thrive on Humani, and the numbers were gradually reduced to about 300, a similar number still being farmed today.

After the end of the second world war, Jimmy had also begun to develop a pioneer irrigation scheme on the fertile alluvial soil flanking the Save River. He grew lucerne for cattle feed, maize, vegetables, and cotton. The irrigation scheme has subsequently been developed much further by his family, to the point where Humani is now a major

productive irrigation enterprise, producing today substantial harvests of sugar cane, citrus, horticultural produce, and cotton, amongst other crops. It is of course also a very significant employer in the remote Save Valley.

The safari hunting and ecotourism potential has also been imaginatively and vigorously developed, and is now producing valuable facilities for the country's burgeoning tourism industry; Humani is a prominent component of the Save Valley Conservancy.

Well satisfied with the development he had brought about on his beloved Humani, and confident of its future prospects under the generation to follow, Jimmy Whittall handed over the property to his family in the late 1970s, and he and Elf "retired" to the cooler uplands of Penhalonga to settle on a small-holding which they named "Horseshoe". Here Jimmy continued his farming activities, sinking two boreholes, and developing a minor infrastructure to support a few cattle and to grow various vegetables. He pottered around in quiet contentment on "Horseshoe", keeping himself busy, though on a vastly different scale to the farming venture he had created in the lowveld.

Elf died at Horseshoe in 1991, and Jimmy Whittall, pioneer of Humani, followed her three years later. Together they had in difficult circumstances lovingly created a substantial multiple land use agricultural enterprise, and had had great fun and satisfaction in so doing. Humani today stands as a proud legacy of their vision and perseverance.

Place Johnston Ad here

# The Falcon Mine Chimney, Mvuma

by Peter Jackson, RIBA MIAZ

Since the Falcon Mine chimney at Mvuma was constructed in 1913, it has stood as a dramatic landmark; a sentinel from another era. Erected on a prominent kopje of rock and spoil within an undulating wooded landscape, it is visible for many kilometres around, both to travellers on the Harare–Masvingo road, and a distinctive aid to navigation for the Air Force pilots training out of Thornhill.

In recent years the mine has been known as the Athens Mine, and owned by Lonrho Zimbabwe. It ceased operating some three years ago, due to the low price of gold on the world market. During 1999 it was sold to Auld Mac Mining (Pvt) Ltd., which has expressed interest to restore the old Falcon Hotel. Gold was discovered at Umvuma in 1896, and by 1914 the mine had been sunk to 213 metres underground. The smelting methods used were considered unusual at that time, and the plant was the only one of its kind in the world. At that time Falcon was the largest gold, silver and copper mine in the country. In a description of a visit in October 1914, R.C.E. Nissen\* referred to “the sulphuric latitudes of Umvuma, which hamlet presides over the destinies of the Falcon Mine. From afar off can be seen the huge chimney stack belching forth a dense, yellow mass of poisonous smoke, which as we draw near drifts earthwards and irritates the lungs.”

Retired forester Mr Lynn Mullin has confirmed that the vegetation surrounding the town was almost totally destroyed by the sulphurous fumes at the time that William Pienaar de Klerk first started the Mtao Forest in 1922, the area being quite barren and wasted. It took some thirty years after the cessation of smelting operations, for the bush to have recovered by the mid-1950s.\*\*

The 40,28 metre high brick chimney was constructed to provide the necessary draw for combustion in the large smelter at the foot of the hill, to which it was linked by a brick tunnel. Only the foundations of the tunnel are to be seen today. The cubic plinth which forms the base, is 5,65 metres square and almost cubic in volume. The internal diameter at the base is 2,89 metres, reducing by an estimated one metre to the top. The maximum external diameter of the shaft is 4,50 metres. The brickwork at the top of the chimney is secured and protected by a heavy cast iron ring. A few hundred metres to the west stands a ruined brick plinth, all that remains of a second, smaller, chimney. Architecturally, it is a handsome example of industrial architecture; less a chimney than a Tuscan column of fine proportions. It provides almost classical proportions, with maximum diameter of shaft to height in the proportion 1 : 7. The base is handsomely corbelled both top and bottom, while the apex of the flue is corbelled outward to provide a capitol, as an elegant termination of form. The brickwork is of high quality and very competent craftsmanship; its construction was a significant achievement in the bush of central Africa in 1913.

The present perilous state of the chimney is a result of the numerous lightning strikes it has received since the theft of a section of the original copper lightning earth. Local resident Mrs Cathy Sharp advises that born and bred Mvuma resident Tony de

Klerk informed her that the original lightning conductor was cut and the bottom six or seven metres stolen by Italian prisoners of war, towards the end of World War II, when they were being given time out of the prison camp. Somehow the Italians managed to cut and remove a section of the copper earth, apparently for use in craftwork.\*\*

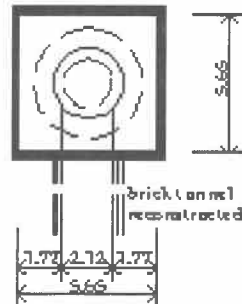
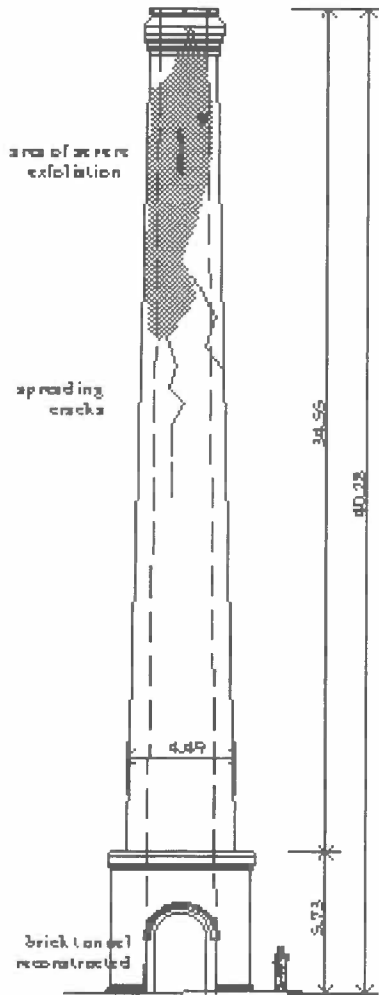
Although disused since 1925, the chimney has been important from an environmental point of view, for years providing a nesting site for the Peregrine Falcon. Cathy Sharp last year investigated the base of the chimney for signs of their occupation. There was no sign of the falcons, but the chimney floor was deeply littered with owl pellets, probably those of the Barn Owl. There have been no recent sightings of either bird – maybe nature’s indicator of the derelict and perilous state of the structure.\*\*

In February 1999, the author, with structural engineers Ian Hargreaves and Rob Butler were able to view the top of the chimney at close quarters from a Robinson R22 helicopter, generously provided and flown by John McTaggart, a mining engineer from Gweru. Our observations were summarised in the engineers’ subsequent report prepared by Stewart Scott Africa:

“The chimney is founded on a rocky outcrop and the foundations are sound.

The chimney base exhibits damage which appears to be the result of vandalism or lightning, but which could easily be repaired. The internal bricks at low level have exfoliated as a result of heat when the chimney was in use. This damage is not structurally serious.

The bottom half of the chimney is in sound condition requiring only minor repairs to jointing.



**Falcon Mine Chimney  
Mvuma 1913**

Scale 1: 900

The top third of the chimney is seriously damaged with large areas of the middle and outer skins of brickwork have exfoliated from the top third of the chimney. The inner skin is also seriously damaged in places. Cracks emanate down to approximately half the height of the chimney. This damage was caused primarily by lightning strikes. Ingress of water from the environment is now however causing further serious damage.”

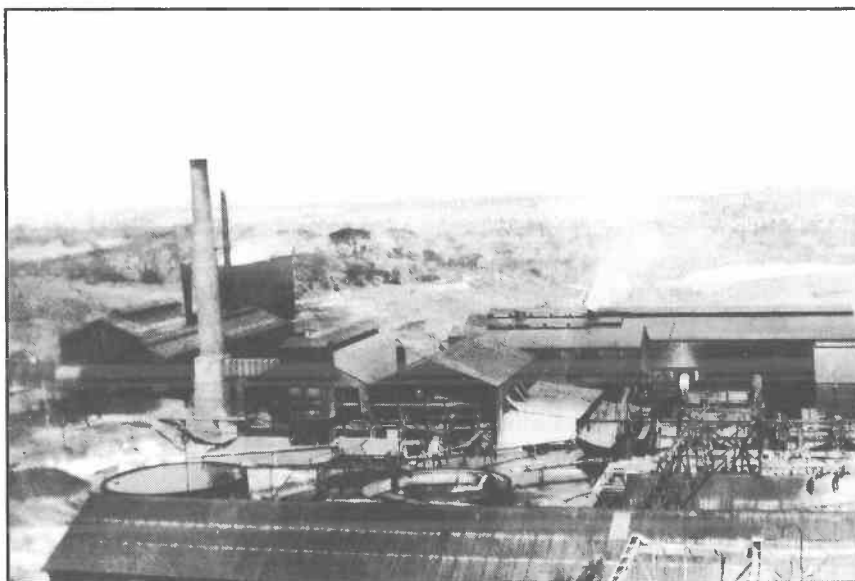
The engineers recommend that as the chimney is structurally unstable, it is imperative that the chimney site is fenced off to protect the public. In order to prevent further lightning strikes, the structure must again be earthed.

Remedial works to the chimney in it's unstable state would be extremely dangerous, requiring the demolition of the top third of the chimney, followed by extensive scaffolding for reconstruction. It might be possible to lift the cast iron ring with a heavy-duty or military helicopter; otherwise if the ring were to fall it is likely to be irreparably broken, as well as causing significant damage to the intact lower half of the structure. Reconstruction would also be subject to the further problem of matching the original bricks. Subject to the miracle of a munificent benefactor, it must regrettably be concluded that the chimney is now beyond any practical possibility of repair or preservation.

## NOTES

\* “A Visit To Umvooa and the Falcon Mine”, R.C.E. Nissen, *The African World*, December 1914.

\*\* Correspondence from Mrs Cathy Sharp.



**The Falcon Mine c.1920. Only the base of the visible small chimney survives today.**

*(National Archives)*

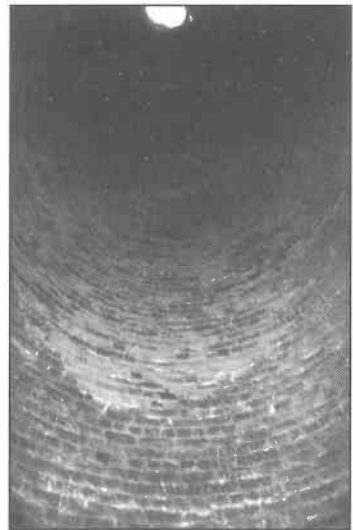




All that remains of the base to the small chimney.



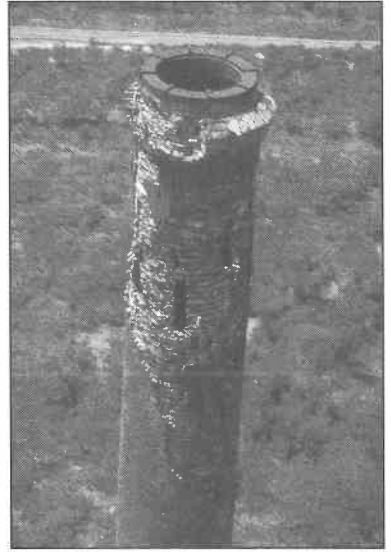
The base showing the arched opening into the former brick tunnel to the smelter.



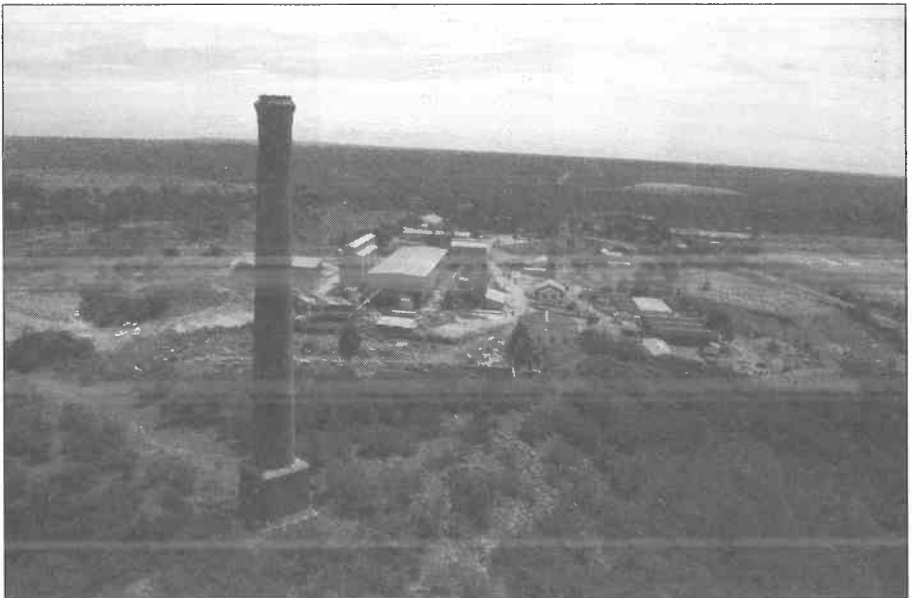
Internal view, showing exfoliated brickwork.



**Exfoliation, with cracks progressing down the chimney.**



**View of the top showing the cast iron ring, and extensive exfoliated and unstable brickwork. Several large holes through the structure are clearly visible.**



**Aerial view of the chimney against Athens Mine. The present buildings are on the northern slopes of the hill.**



**The site of the original Falcon Mine was to the southwest of the chimney, with Mvuma town beyond. The alignment of the brick tunnel is still clearly visible.**

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# A Visit to Umvooma and the Falcon Mine in October 1914

Special to *The African World Annual*, by R. C. E. Nissen

From the Arcadian restfulness of Rhodesdale I was rudely hurled into the sulphuric latitudes of Umvooma, which hamlet presides over the destinies of the Falcon Mine.

From afar off can be seen the huge chimney stack belching forth a dense, yellow mass of poisonous smoke, which as we draw near drifts earthwards and irritates the lungs. On a closer acquaintance with the town I find this sulphuric atmosphere responsible for the consumption of endless quantities of spirits; and it occurs to me that here originated the fable of Rhodesians being responsible for half the world's output of whisky – a matter I will treat on later.

The mine is situated a few hundred yards east of the village. It was discovered in 1896, and has gone through many vicissitudes. The process of discovery is so different to any I have seen that it is worth describing in detail, more especially as I am told it is the only plant of its kind in the world.

The mine is down 700 ft., and the ore, after being graded coarse and fine is conveyed by mechanical haulage to crushing station. The fine stuff is sent to the trommel, whilst the coarse goes to the crusher direct.

The fines are then sent by means of belt conveyer to the mill, whilst the oversize goes to a sorting belt. The high-grade ore is sorted out by hand as it travels on this belt, and sent direct to blast furnace, the remainder going to the mill.

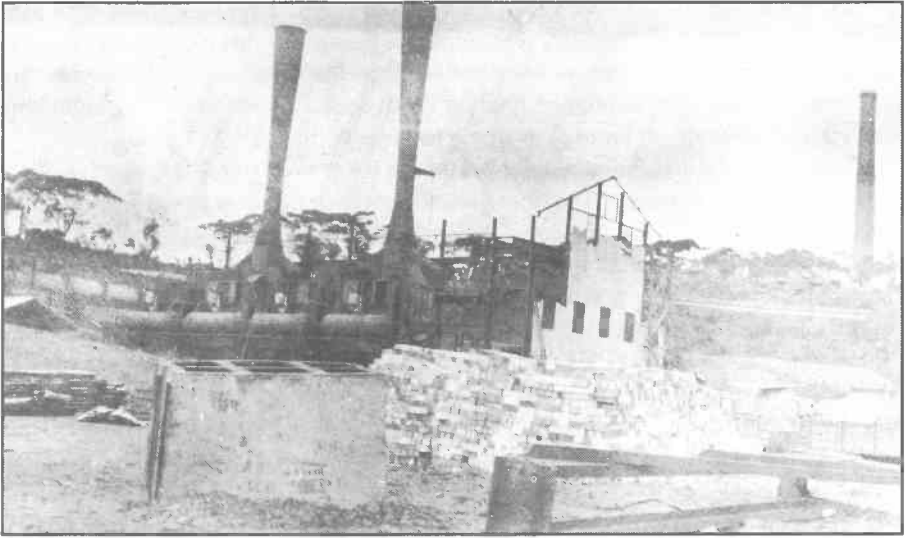
The mill house is equipped with thirty-six 2,000 Nissen stamps, provided with 3-16 in. mesh screening; eighteen of these are in use. The ore passes through at the rate of 22 tons per stamp per day, and runs direct on to eighteen record pans (concentrating tables).

The concentrates caught on these tables run into belt and bucket elevators, which raise them to a sufficient height to allow them to flow to a number of 32 × 6 ft. collecting tanks, from which they are delivered to sintering plant.

The tailings from the fanners run to a 5-inch centrifugal pump, and are elevated into the feed cones of three 18 × 5 ft. tube mills, two of which are in use, the remaining one being in reserve as a stand-by. The oversize tailings, after passing through tube mills, flow on to fourteen record fanners, the concentrates saved on which flow to concentrate collecting tanks before-mentioned.

The tailings from the second row of fanners pass over blanket tables, set with a face of 2 ins. to the foot. These blankets are taken up and washed at stated intervals – about once every two hours – and the concentrates caught flow to the same tanks as those from the fanners.

The tailings, after leaving blanket tables, pass to 6-inch centrifugal pumps, and are elevated to another set of blanket tables, the concentrate again going to concentrate tanks as others. The tailings from these again flow to four 6 ft. deep by 8 ft. diameter sand cones, the overflow of which passes to four 35 × 10 ft. Don thickeners, the clear



**The Falcon Mine complex under construction in February 1914, showing the chimney.**

overflow of which is pumped back to the mill supply tank; while the thick slime underflow, together with that of the sand cones, is pumped by a 4-inch centrifugal to a mineral separating oil flotation process.

In this unit the concentrates floated off the oil are settled in two 35 × 6 ft. collectors, while the tailings, now practically denuded of their copper and gold contents, are run to waste.

This oil process (the first of its kind in South Africa) is the latest embodiment of various oil processes that have been tried during the last ten years. It consists of eight frothing boxes, in which the pulp is agitated by a four-bladed propeller. The amounts of oil used at the Falcon is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  lb. oil to a ton of ore treated. The oil is a special preparation supplied by the Mineral Separation Company. The theory of this process is that minerals have a tendency to cling to oil, and by agitating oil and mineral concentrates the minerals rise to the surface as froth and float over the top of the frothing boxes.

The average value of ore milled to date is worth about 60s. per ton, half in gold, half in copper. Extraction obtained on ore fed to mill by wet crushing plant, fanners, and mineral separation plant shows about 84 per cent. of the gold and 92 per cent. of the copper contents.

The concentrates are now trucked to the blast furnaces, and with 25 per cent. moisture fed direct to furnaces, it being found that this amount of moisture, combined with the fact that the other coarse products delivered direct are fed with the concentrates, prevents any serious loss by dust being forced out by blast.

The concentrates from fanners and mill, after being collected in tanks and drained

until they contain about 12 per cent. moisture, are emptied out into trucks, and, after being mixed with 30 per cent. fine iron stone, are elevated by lift to sintering pots. The addition of this stone is necessary to make the charge porous and to accelerate sintering. The plant consists of eight hoppers holding 8 tons each, superimposed over eight large cast-iron pots swung on turnons, with a blast pipe on the bottom of each.

The mixture of concentrates and ironstone is fed from hoppers into pots, in which a coal fire has been lighted. The blast pressure of 20 ozs. is then turned on, and the 8 tons of concentrates turned into pot. After eight hours sintering is practically complete. The pot is then capsized on trunnions, and charge falls about 20 ft. into floor beneath. These are now ready for blast furnaces.

The smelting plant consists of a series of binns for sinter, picked ore, iron stone, limestone, and coke (wankie). Trucks are loaded from these binns, passed over scales, and elevated to electric lift to charge floor of blast furnace. These are two in number, one 120 ft. long, the other 160 ft. The smaller one is at present in use. The ore fluxes and coke is now fed into the furnaces and subjected to a pressure of 20 ozs. per square inch.

Slag and matte flow into a fore hearth, the slag overflowing into slag cars holding about 5 tons slag, and dumped. The matte in the forehearth is tapped periodically in large ladles holding 6 tons matte and lifted by large overhead electric crane and the contents discharged, where the copper is blown up to blister copper and poured into moulds, sampled, weighed, and shipped.

The property is properly equipped with the usual electric power, etc., and the water is pumped from a dam about a mile distant. There are 110 white men and 1,500 boys employed. The copper ingots are expected to be worth £50 to £90 per ton, consisting of £56 copper and £30 gold. The mine, when running full time, expects to crush 15,000 tons per month (gold and copper), reckoning copper at £56 per long ton. It is anticipated that a profit of £10,000 to £12,000 per month will arrive from the output. Working costs, including redemption, royalty, realisation charge on bullion, is expected to be about 35s. per ton.

# A Manifest Impropriety\*

## The Salisbury School Scandal, 1901

by R. J. Challiss

For the greater part of 1901 Salisbury settlers were as much preoccupied with a controversy over the dismissal of the Principal of the Public School as they were over the closing stages of the Anglo-Boer War. This controversy is not only significant in the history of education in Southern Rhodesia, but also in the wider context of settler relations with the British South Africa Company Administration. For a proper perspective of the dispute which raged that year between the Salisbury Municipality and the Administration it is necessary to go back to the inception of the Public School and to examine relevant events in its subsequent history.

On 26 May, 1898, the Municipality and the government agreed to share the expense of establishing an undenominational school in Salisbury. Two government and two municipal nominees were to sit on the School Board of Managers and a fifth member of it was to be elected by the parents of pupils.

The first Board consisted of Justice J. P. Watermeyer, Chairman, and Major J. D. Tennant, as government nominees, the Mayor, W. E. Fairbridge, Councillor H. J. Deary, and Dr. R. J. Wylie acting as municipal nominees. In June Fairbridge wrote on behalf of the Board to Dr. Thomas Muir, Superintendent General of Education at the Cape, and requested him to select two teachers for the proposed school. In this letter Fairbridge stated that a man suitably qualified for the post of Principal in a Class II Cape School at this time would 'fulfil the highest requirements of the school for its immediate future'. The school opened on 14 November 1898, with Mr John Kerr as 'Principal' and Mrs Mabel Garcia as 'lady Assistant'. The teachers agreed to contracts with the Board to serve in these capacities for one year and thereafter to be subject to the termination of their appointments with three months notice on either side. Although she held no professional qualification apart from teaching experience in private schools in the Cape and in Natal, Garcia did hold a certificate in music. Kerr on the other hand, in addition to over ten years of teaching experience in Scotland, held a diploma of the Church of Scotland Training College, Edinburgh. The school opened with only four pupils in attendance but by the first term of 1899 the enrolment had risen to twenty-two. This increase is explained by the closure of the Anglican Church School at the end of the previous year. Bishop Gaul had allowed this to happen in order to avoid unnecessary competition between schools in such a small community and on the condition that Anglican ministers would be allowed free access to the new school to give religious instruction to their young flock 'at fixed times during school hours'. In March, 1899, six of the pupils were over twelve years of age and sixteen were under this age, so the School Board allowed Kerr to teach the older boys and girls together as their numbers were too few to warrant separate instruction of the sexes. In the following year, when

\**The Rhodesia Herald*, 26.x.1901, words attributed to Councillor W. E. Fairbridge to describe the action of the British South Africa Company Administration in Salisbury.

the school was made to conform with the regulations of the Education Ordinance, 1899, the Inspector of Schools, H. E. D. Hammond, endorsed the arrangement, even though it was not in strict conformity with a clause in the Ordinance which stipulated that schools should arrange 'if possible for the separation of the sexes by having separate apartments for the female section under a female teacher'. In August, 1900, a new School Board was appointed. Watermeyer continued to be Chairman, the Assistant magistrate, R. McIlwaine, was the new government nominee, the Mayor, J. Van Praagh and Deary were the municipal nominees, and the Solicitor, W. P. Grimmer, Member of the Legislative Council, was the parental representative. Apart from holding the position of Honorary Secretary to the Board, McIlwaine, in October was appointed Acting Inspector of Schools, for by now illness had compelled Hammond to return to England. In September the School Board unanimously approved of a scheme whereby Garcia was to concentrate on Kindergarten work, while Kerr would take on more work with the senior girls in preparation for the Cape School examinations of May, 1901. It is important to note here that McIlwaine personally consulted with Kerr and Garcia when it was decided to adopt this new scheme.

As regards the controversy over Kerr in 1901, it is also important to note that so far in the history of the school, Kerr had been appointed Principal with Garcia as his assistant, only Kerr was professionally qualified, that the number of pupils stood at twenty-two in March 1899, and that coeducation had been officially sanctioned. It is also important to mention here that although she had no legal right to the title, perhaps out of mere courtesy, Garcia was constantly described in official documents from August, 1899, onwards as the Lady Principal. Before the immediate events leading up to the dismissal of Kerr are examined, it is also important to note an apparently high official esteem for him which existed up to the end of 1900. In January that year, Hammond, who had until recently taught at the Edinburgh Academy and therefore had something in common with Kerr as far as their background was concerned, referred to him in a letter to Dr. Muir as follows:

'I like Mr. Kerr the present principal of the Salisbury Public School, and I think he will do well. The school is growing'.

Sometime later, according to Kerr, Hammond was reported to have informed the Governor of Gordon's College, Khartoum, that he thought the Public School to be 'the best and most up to date under his charge'. At the end of 1900, the Mayor, Van Praagh, at the school's Christmas prize-giving ceremony, roundly praised the Principal and his services to the school. Within a few months of making this speech it will now be seen that the Mayor radically altered his opinions of Kerr, and if George Duthie, who was appointed Inspector of Schools in August, 1901, is to be believed, Hammond underwent a similar change of opinion, for in September that year he reported to the Administrator as follows:

'As regards Mr. Kerr's fitness for the post of Principal of Salisbury School, I have the opinion of... Mr. Hammond that he did not consider Mr. Kerr a proper person for the post'.

Like Hammond, Duthie had taught at the Edinburgh Academy, and with this British Public School background in mind, the use of the term 'proper person' here, reflects on their opinion of Kerr's social status rather than his ability as a teacher.



The first step on the road to the dismissal of Kerr was taken on 19 February, 1901. In school that day he found occasion to reprimand his assistant for reading a novel when she should have been attending to her teaching duties. According to Garcia, she 'refuted the accusation of novel reading altogether, to which [she] received the most insulting answer'. According to Kerr, it had often been brought to his notice that Garcia 'spent a great deal of her time in school in such occupations as dressmaking, letter-writing, reading of novels and stocking darning, when she should have been actively employed in her school duties. Despite several hints... [Kerr]... was at length forced to put the matter plainly before her and threaten to report her to the Board of Managers... [which]... had the desired effect'. As it happened, this incident was to have an effect which was far greater than either of the two teachers could have ever imagined possible.

Over a month afterwards, on 11 March, Deary referred the School Board 'to the position of the Lady Principal in the school and reported that discourteous and ungentlemanly behaviour had been exhibited towards her by the Principal. It was resolved that Mrs. Garcia should be given an opportunity of making a formal complaint which would receive the attention of the members'. At the same meeting, in his capacity as Acting Inspector of Schools, McIlwaine reported to the Board that the requirements of the Education Ordinance in regard to the separation of the sexes was not being complied with. Watermeyer now stated that the founders of the school had intended to have 'complete separation of the sexes, that two teachers were engaged with that object, and that the Lady Principal was given sole control and teaching of the girls'. McIlwaine was immediately instructed to order Kerr 'to observe the requirements of the Education Ordinance in regard to the separation of the sexes'. From these proceedings, it would appear that the Board had decided, without making any investigation into the affair, that Kerr was at fault as regards the friction between himself and Garcia. Consequently, it was decided to suddenly revoke recent and earlier agreements made with Kerr and Garcia which had formally sanctioned co-education and recognised Kerr as the Principal of the school. While McIlwaine was correct as regards the letter of the law, his proposal was, practically speaking, a revelation of his ignorance of matters connected with educational theory and practice. A separation of the sexes in such a relatively small school would mean that small groups of girls and boys respectively would require separate instruction, thereby losing the benefit of the stimulation of competition of a larger group, while the work of the teachers concerned would at the same time be unnecessarily duplicated. As for the claims made by Watermeyer on behalf of 'the founders of the school', the agreement between the Administration and the Municipality drawn up in 1898 makes no mention of the separation of the sexes. Indeed, the only intention mentioned in this agreement, apart from the simple establishment of a school, is that it might in time make some provision for 'industrial training' of pupils, should this be deemed necessary at any time in the history of the school. As for his claim that the two teachers were engaged with the object of the separation of the sexes in mind, and that 'the Lady Principal was given sole control of the girls', it has already been seen that, according to the evidence of the Minutes of the Board itself, the judge was being entirely dishonest. Naturally, Kerr must have been astonished, and must have also felt deeply insulted, when he received the following abruptly phrased letter which represents the first of a number of unjust

actions on the part of the Board composed mainly of men trained in the interpretations and practise of the law:

‘I am directed by the Board of Managers to inform you that the Acting Inspector of Schools has reported to them that the boys and girls are not kept apart in the school house as required by the Education Ordinance, whenever such separation is possible. The Managers therefore desire to point out that when the opening of the school was first contemplated it was distinctly intended to have separate departments for boys and girls and to place the girls under the teaching and control of a Lady Principal, and you were informed of this at the time of taking up your duties. The school rooms were accordingly built and two teachers engaged with the express object of carrying out this principle.

The teaching and control of girls in no way falls within your duties. For this the Lady Principal is solely responsible to the Managing Board.

The Managers therefore request that you immediately comply with the intention of the founders of the school and the requirements of the Education Ordinance in regard to the separation of the sexes’.

The most important point to make about this letter is that according to the Ordinance, the school was in receipt of aid ‘from the public funds a sum not exceeding one-half the salary of the Principal Teacher and of such Assistant Teachers as may be certified by the Inspector to be necessary...’. In short, McIlwaine was writing on behalf of the Administration as Inspector of Schools and also of the Board a letter which ordered Kerr to comply with a situation which was not in accordance with the terms under which the school received government aid. Moreover, McIlwaine was not only suggesting that Garcia, who had no teaching qualifications, should assume responsibilities for the school as the co-equal of Kerr, but also, he was, by demanding a division of the school into two independent units, going beyond the requirements of the Education Ordinance, 1899.

In reply, Kerr obediently stated in the first paragraph of his letter that the separation of the sexes would be carried out. He then, very politely, enquired about the moves towards co-education which have already been described. With the academic interests in mind of the girls who had the May examinations just ahead of them, Kerr pointed out that it would ‘greatly handicap them if the proposed change [was] carried out immediately, besides being an injustice to [himself] after all [his] careful preparation’. Kerr then correctly stated that Garcia was not qualified for the post of principal of even a third class [Cape] school, and asserted that to have two principals in one school was ‘an impossibility’. He begged to meet the Board to discuss the whole matter and stated that in the meantime he would ‘respectfully continue to exercise full control over the whole school’ as he had always done. In conclusion, he reported that parents had complained about the lack of progress of pupils in the care of Garcia. He described her neglectful habits and the incident which had caused him to rebuke her in the previous month. He ended his letter as follows:

‘If a teacher of such tendencies is to be allowed full and absolute control... (it is)... my duty to warn you that it will be neither for the good of the school nor for the proper education of the pupils’.

The Board now appears to have dropped the matter of co-education, but not the

matter of friction between the two teachers. At its next meeting, on 15 April, nearly a month after this reply from Kerr, Deary again referred to the discourtesy by the 'Principal to the lady Principal' and now made a definite charge against Mr. Kerr of having called Mrs. Garcia 'an unmitigated liar'. It was then resolved to adjourn for a few days to give Garcia an opportunity of replying to the charges made against her. Garcia was presented with the letter in which Kerr had criticised her abilities and conduct. In her defence she untruthfully stated that she had been appointed Lady Principal of the Girls' school on the understanding that there was to be no connection between this school and the boys' school under Kerr. She went on to claim that she had objected to Kerr taking senior girls for certain subjects in 1899, 'but the members of the Board understanding that the sexes would be still instructed separately overruled my objection'. All that needs to be said here is that it seems highly unlikely that Watermeyer and Deary, who had been members of the Board since 1898, even had they objected to co-education, should have failed to notice that Kerr was not giving instruction in this highly impractical manner to the handful of senior boys and girls in the school during the past two years. Garcia denied the charge made that she neglected her duties, yet in a rather self-condemnatory passage admitted that she kept sewing material, magazines, books and letter-writing equipment in her school desk so that she could occupy herself during the half-hour break between eleven and eleven-thirty every morning. Again, rather contradictorily in view of her claim to exclusive authority in the school, she makes the following statement:

'... there seems some grave mistake as to my having admitted that I had no qualifications or certificates to allow me to take the position of Principal of my Department'.

Although this letter by Garcia would have in itself been evidence enough in the eyes of unprejudiced judges that Garcia lacked integrity, the Board thought otherwise. On 22 April, it summoned Garcia and Kerr to its meeting, and subjected them to what can only be described as a mockery of a trial. Kerr adhered to his allegations against Garcia, but rather lamely stated that he could not remember the names of those parents who had complained to him about her. Of course it may have at this stage of proceedings not have been at all clear to Kerr that his employment at the school stood in jeopardy, and he therefore may not have felt inclined to involve persons who had no doubt confidentially intimated to him their reservations about Garcia. Kerr did admit to the Board, however, that he had over a month earlier referred to a statement made by Garcia as 'an unmitigated lie'. For her part, Garcia informed the Board that she was unaware of any complaints having been made about her by parents. The minutes of the Board meeting then record that upon enquiry being made as to her teaching experience and qualifications, members 'received satisfactory replies'. The Board now adjourned, ostensibly in order to allow Grimmer time to gather evidence from parents themselves. Four days later Grimmer reported to the Board that some parents had testified to the fact that their children had from time to time complained to them that Garcia had neglected her duties in the manner already described. The Board, however, decided to ignore this evidence on the pretext that the witnesses against Garcia 'had been already approached on the subject and were not altogether unprejudiced'. Indeed, the Board came to the astonishing conclusion that the charges made by Kerr against

Garcia were 'not proved and that she was quite competent to perform her duties as a teacher'. As for Kerr, he was judged 'on his own admission, guilty of most ungentlemanly behaviour towards Mrs. Garcia, (and) that his general conduct and demeanour, disqualified him from the position which he held'. In the 'best interest of the school and of the public' his engagement was to be terminated and McIlwaine was instructed to contact Hammond in England with a view to him obtaining for them 'a more suitable teacher'.

That the whole procedure by the Board had been nothing more than an exercise in victimisation with an ulterior motive in view and which had nothing to do with the merits of the case in hand, is made clear in the following extract from the letter which McIlwaine now sent to Hammond:

'With regard to Kerr no fault was actually found with his teaching qualities, but he got on very badly with Mrs Garcia and was guilty of most ungentlemanly behaviour towards her. In addition to this Kerr's manner is considered unsatisfactory and he is regarded as not possessing those social qualities which are likely to attract the children of a certain class of parents to the school.

I mention these facts as some guide to you if you are so good as to assist us in the manner desired. A single man is wanted as the quarters and salary (£300 per mensem [annum]) are entirely inadequate for a married man.

If obtainable the Board desires a University man, and one who has had experience in a good class English Public School... you are at liberty however to engage a man and send him out without any further reference to Salisbury, the engagement will be for two years certain, subject to three months notice on either side thereafter'.

In view of the fact that Grimmer was later to claim that Kerr had not been dismissed by the Board and that in terms of his contract his appointment had been merely 'terminated', it is important to note that on 27 April, McIlwaine wrote on behalf of the Board to tell Kerr that 'existing circumstances' rendered it necessary 'to dispense with' his services.

Because he was a member of the School Board as well as Acting Inspector of Schools, McIlwaine instructed Kerr to address his appeal for the precise reasons for his dismissal directly to the Administrator, W. H. Milton. In this letter Kerr explained that he had considered it his duty to rebuke Garcia for her neglectfulness and that he suspected that his dismissal arose from the manner in which he had addressed the lady on that occasion. He went on to say that both Muir, who had recruited them, as well as Garcia 'until quite recently' had recognised him to be the senior teacher at the school which had prospered under his charge. In the space of just over two years the number of pupils had grown from four to forty-four, and he regretted that in this time the place had never been formally inspected, so that he might have more direct evidence of his competence as Principal. He concluded his letter by pointing to the unfairness of his dismissal without any prior warning or even complaint against his teaching ability and that in the absence of any reason for such dismissal, his subsequent career would be seriously jeopardised. In a marginal note to this letter, McIlwaine, two days after it was sent, informed the Chief Secretary, under whose responsibility the administration of education in the country fell, that he had seen Milton 'in connection with this matter'.

Milton then turned to Van Praagh, no doubt because he represented the Municipality on the Board, for his side of the story. Despite his interview with McIlwaine, Milton claimed in this letter that he was 'quite unaware of the merits of the case', though he felt sure that the Board had acted in the interests of the school. As Kerr had appealed to him, however, he felt 'bound to make some enquiry', before he gave his necessary approval of the decision of the Board under the terms of the Ordinance. In view of the deceitful reply which Milton received from Van Praagh in response to it, the following extract from Milton's letter is worth quoting in full:

'I wish particularly to enquire whether Mr Kerr's statement which I have marked — that the Lady Principal has claimed to be independent of the Principal — is correct and whether she received the support of the Board in her claim. The Education regulations governing grants provide for a 'Principal' and 'Assistants', and it is in the latter capacity that Mrs Garcia was engaged and receives a grant'.

Van Praagh explained to Milton that Kerr had been 'dismissed' on account of his ungentlemanly behaviour towards Garcia and because the 'state' of unconcealed hostility between the Principal and Assistant (was) detrimental to the welfare of the school'. In reply to Milton's enquiry about Garcia's claim to be co-equal with the Principal, Van Praagh had the following to say:

'The Board, during the time I have been connected with it, always looked upon Mr Kerr as the Principal and, as such, responsible for the general conduct of the school and I can confidently say that there has not been produced a tittle of evidence in support of Mr Kerr's contention that Mrs Garcia arrogated herself duties or rights which properly belonged to the Principal.

Some time ago it was decided to separate the sexes and the teaching of the girls was naturally confided to Mrs Garcia but the Board is not aware that she ever claimed to be independent of the Principal, neither has the principal, previous to the present investigation, ever complained to us that such was the case'.

Before this reply was made, however, Milton appears to have been satisfied that the Board had acted correctly, for on 4 May McIlwaine, no doubt with the approval of the Administrator, wrote to Hammond for a new master. Van Praagh ended his letter to Milton with the somewhat astonishing promise, which reveals that the Board was not entirely easy in its conscience over their treatment of the Principal, that they would furnish a testimonial 'framed in such language as to have no prejudicial effect on Mr Kerr's future career'.

In the meantime Garcia had sought refuge in hospital, apparently on account of a sudden indisposition. She remained absent from her duties for a month, and Mrs Kerr had to take her place at the school until the end of the term, for which service the Board paid her £15.

On 6 May, Kerr forwarded to Milton a declaration signed by four parents of girls aged between thirteen and sixteen years who testified to the fact that Garcia had neglected her duties as a teacher in the manner already described. Milton, however, was not to acknowledge this and previous communications from Kerr until half-way through the month, by which time, as has already been seen, it would appear that he had decided to support the Board on the side of expediency rather than on the side of

justice. Councillor G. Bates, however, had a keener sense of justice than did the Administrator and the School Board. On 8 May, he insisted at a Town Council meeting that satisfactory reasons for the dismissal of Kerr should be given by the School Board. He argued that as the municipality had a financial interest in the school, it should have been consulted before such an important decision had been made. It was reported to the meeting that Grimmer had said that if allegations against Garcia were proved the Board 'would certainly have to dismiss the lady Principal'. Van Praagh argued that it was not necessary for the Board to furnish anyone with its reasons, and when a motion was passed by the Council that it should 'institute a thorough investigation into the cause' of Kerr's dismissal, he stubbornly asserted that he would take no part in such proceedings. In defiance of the Mayor, the Council resolved to send a letter to the Board which demanded an explanation of its actions, and furthermore, the public was invited to a meeting on the following Monday to discuss the reply to this enquiry. No reply, however, was forthcoming, and Bates reported to the next Council meeting, which he chaired in the absence of Van Praagh, that a large number of parents felt that there had been 'a miscarriage of justice' as far as Kerr was concerned. Bates now successfully carried a motion that the Council would appoint a Committee which would operate in camera and seek a definite answer from the obdurately silent Board.

Meanwhile, on 15 May, and the day before this Council meeting took place, Kerr made what appears to have been his last attempt to persuade Milton to act in the cause of justice. He complained to him of rumours that were circulating to the effect that the real reasons for his dismissal were being kept a secret because they were 'of a shameful nature and would create a scandal'. Kerr pleaded that, for the sake of his reputation and family, all the facts should be brought to light and complained that 'hints thrown out by some members of the Board' as to the real reason for his dismissal were having an ill effect on his wife. Milton was now moved at last to at least acknowledge receipt of this and other communications from Kerr. He was curtly informed that nothing further could be done in the matter until Watermeyer, who was away from town at the time, had returned.

A few days later, on 23 May, the School Board met to discuss the enquiry which had been sent by the Town Council a fortnight earlier. In reply, it merely announced to the Council that in the interest of the school and in terms of his contract, Kerr's appointment had been terminated. It also informed the Council that a new master was to be appointed from England to replace Kerr. Bates now succeeded in having a resolution passed to the effect that the Council required a more satisfactory explanation from the Board. Furthermore, the declaration from parents on Garcia's neglectfulness, which has already been mentioned, was now forwarded by the Council 'for the Board's investigation'. The Council also wanted to know from the Board when the new master would arrive, while it was decided to ascertain from previous members of the Board the relative positions of the two teachers as far as their respective responsibilities were concerned.

The Board made no response to these actions of the Council, which met on 1 June to again occupy most of its time on the school affair. At this meeting a letter to the Mayor and Council from nine parents who represented twenty-one of the children at the school was read. These parents stated that while they felt a change of staff at the school was desirable, it had been wrong of the Board to dismiss 'so competent and

conscientious a teacher as Mr Kerr'. They went on to threaten to withdraw their children from the school unless good reasons for the dismissal were given to them. Councillor John Strachan then accused the Board of being 'ungentlemanly' for not answering the last letter from the Council, and testimonies from previous members of the Board were produced which confirmed that Kerr had always been the Principal of the school, with Garcia as his assistant. These former Board members also attested to the fact that Kerr had always run the school satisfactorily. Even though it was thought that he was 'a very nice man', McIlwaine was criticised on account of his dual capacity as Acting Inspector of Schools and member of the Board. The meeting ended with a resolution that the Council be allowed to inspect the Minutes of the School Board unless satisfactory answers to their enquiries were quickly forthcoming.

By now strong feeling against members of the School Board was expressed in letters to *The Rhodesia Herald* whose editor, Fairbridge, had over the years already made a reputation for himself by exposing irregularities in the conduct of public affairs which the Administration might otherwise have allowed to pass without notice. Early in June, 'A Brother' criticised the fact that a judge sat on the School Board as a government nominee. 'A Sister' endorsed this criticism, while 'A Ratepayer' outspokenly described members of the School Board as 'principally... counter jumpers and civil servants — autocrats in a way' who treated the public in accordance with the 'old serf law, or that emanating from the Star Chamber'. The latter demanded that a petition from the 'commoners' of Salisbury be sent to the Colonial Office, and confidently asserted that justice would be seen to by their 'friends of education in the British House of Parliament'. More mildly, 'Pater Familias' urged Milton to order an official enquiry into the affair, while 'Justice' underlined the fact that although Kerr himself invited an enquiry into his alleged misdemeanours, Van Praagh lamely deprecated 'the washing of dirty linen in public'.

The effect of the controversy on Municipal affairs generally, can be described as almost revolutionary. Hitherto, municipal affairs had evinced nothing but apathy from the general public. In April, *The Herald* had lamented the difficulty which existed to 'find sufficient men to accept the dignity of office'. For several weeks two vacancies on the Town Council had been advertised, but no nominations were made. As a result, the municipal elections had to be postponed, and early in May it appeared that the Administrator would have to exercise his power of nomination in order to fill the gaps in the Council. By the middle of June, however, *The Herald* announced that interest in the municipal election had increased considerably, and this was hailed as the 'birth of public spirit' in the town. Large numbers of ratepayers began to pay their assessment arrears and *The Herald* was prompted to comment appropriately that 'it is an ill wind that blows nobody good'.

The Council meeting of 7 June, was marked by a particularly bitter debate between Van Praagh and Bates, and revealed also a marked growth in public agitation over the school affair. Van Praagh opened proceedings by reading a reply from McIlwaine to the Council demands of the previous week. McIlwaine merely informed the Council that the Board would consider its demands at its next monthly meeting. The Town Clerk then read a petition to the Council signed by forty-three ratepayers who not only demanded the reasons for the dismissal of Kerr, but also the resignation from the Board

of nominated Council members as well as the cessation of Council payments towards the running of the school. Bates immediately pressed for a public meeting to discuss this petition, which proposal Van Praagh opposed on the grounds that the municipal elections were imminent and that 'no good purpose would be served by further enquiry'. Van Praagh announced that he intended to resign from the Council in July and that if its nominees resigned immediately from the Board, they would have to automatically resign from the Council as well and he could see 'no good purpose that could be served by having an election just now'. Bates and Van Praagh then proceeded to indulge in an acrimonious argument until at length a motion was carried to the effect that at the next meeting of the Council the question of replacing their representatives on the School Board by electing two others would be discussed.

In the face of this rising tide of public pressure upon it to explain its actions, the Board responded in a manner very different to that which it displayed when it ostensibly sought justice on behalf of Garcia. In April it had met on three separate occasions in order to see that its particular notion of justice was done on her behalf. Now, in the face of concrete evidence of her guilt and in the face of the opinion of the public whom the school served, it chose to meet only once a month in strict accordance with its constitutional obligation. Unhurriedly, on 10 June, the Board met to discuss the letters from the Town Council, as well as an application for a testimonial from Kerr. In the latter regard they presented Kerr at the term's end, over a month later, on 17 July, with a reference which by no means fulfilled the promise which Van Praagh had made in this connection in his letter to Milton. Indeed, the effect of such a communication, if presented to a prospective employer, would have certainly prejudiced his chances of employment. The Testimonial bluntly stated that during his two and a half years as Principal of the School the Board had 'no fault to find with [his] teaching qualifications'.

Meanwhile, in connection with the communications from the Town Council, the Board immediately responded by stating that it regretted that the reasons which it had already furnished for the dismissal were 'considered insufficient' and asserted that it could not 'admit to the Council's right to inspect the minute book recording their proceedings'. The Board also reminded the Council that its payment towards the upkeep of the school was now overdue. The most interesting feature of this meeting of the Board, however, was a letter from a Mrs Nesbitt, who gave the only piece of independent evidence that has come to light in defence of Garcia against Kerr. This might have been Mrs Jack Nesbitt who was to serve as the school's first hostel matron in 1902. Nesbitt stated that she hoped the Board would not let itself be overruled in the matter of Kerr, who she claimed, maltreated her two 'nervous and sensitive children'. She criticised Kerr because he did not give children at the school 'a thrashing or anything very just' but instead he pulled their noses and their ears and 'thumped' them on their backs. On account of 'a party feeling at school' her children were bullied by the others and so she had removed them and would not send them back until Garcia had returned. The letter ends as follows:

'I would sooner be thought silly than have my children unhappy, you may do as you please with this letter. I am the only one who is standing up for the little ones — I know some more parents who are situated the same, but on account of the unpleasantness of it all they won't say a word'.



The Board for the moment did nothing with the letter, and Nesbitt was informed that the services of the Principal were to be 'dispensed with' at the end of the term.

Later that week, on 14 June, Bates was to receive an unexpected set-back in the Council in his contest with the Board over Kerr. After its letters to the Town Council were read, he failed to carry a majority vote to put the case for obtaining satisfactory reasons for the dismissal of the Principal before a public meeting of all ratepayers. At the last moment, Dr. H. E. Hicks, who had hitherto supported the Bates party on the Council, 'ratted' and supported the mayor who had argued that it was incorrect procedure to act against the Board through the Council and that complaints should be made directly by the ratepayers themselves.

In the following week, however, any fears that Bates might have felt that his cause was now ended were dramatically put to rest. On Wednesday, 19 June, the Commercial Hotel was crowded with ratepayers anxious to see justice done. The meeting was chaired by William 'Mazoe' Smith, and notable amongst those who spoke were Fairbridge and Bates. It was announced that Grimmer intended on the following day to furnish the public with the long-awaited reasons for the dismissal of Kerr. Meanwhile, it was resolved unanimously that the ratepayers wished to record their protest against Council nominees on the Board for failing to give them the required information, and that Milton should be appealed to for an investigation into the affair. Fairbridge informed the gathering that as a former mayor of the town as well as a former nominee on the School Board, he had been the only official who ever visited the school during working hours and had been 'perfectly satisfied' by what he had seen. He felt that 'a hasty conclusion had been arrived at and somebody had to back down'. A petition, which was signed by one hundred and twenty ratepayers, was then drawn up which asked Milton for a public enquiry into the circumstances attending Kerr's dismissal.

On the following day, Grimmer gave his explanation. He emphasised the fact that he spoke only for himself, and he also claimed that the use of the word 'dismissal' was too strong, for it implied that Kerr was 'guilty of some gross misconduct' for which charge, he confessed, the Board had no evidence. He rather naively suggested that the use of the formula 'Terminating their agreement with Mr Kerr', was 'quite another matter' and reflected no 'discredit' upon him. He went on to claim that he had been unable to decide 'who was telling the truth' in the matter of Garcia's alleged neglectfulness 'except by hazarding a guess', and so he had laid this question aside. In order to come to a decision he had instead considered the individual circumstances of 'Mrs Garcia, a widow, and her child' and 'Mr Kerr and his wife and child'. He concluded his remarkable confession by stating that he had voted against Kerr for the following reason:

'The chief thing that turned the scale, in my mind... was the fact that he had been guilty of making use of offensive words to a lady... in Mrs Garcia's defenceless position'.

This letter was not to be published until a fortnight later, on 6 July, along with a statement from the parents to whom it had been addressed and who publicly expressed their dissatisfaction with a judge who had 'run the risk of hazarding a guess and gave judgement accordingly' and who had also 'considered the welfare of Mrs Garcia to the detriment of [their] children'.

Meanwhile, a week prior to the publication of this explanation, Milton received the petition from the ratepayers. After some delay, and prompted no doubt by the publication of the letter by Grimmer and the continued dissatisfaction of the public with the School Board, Milton consulted the Attorney General, Justice J. Kotze, on his legal powers in regard to the Board. In reply, Kotze informed him that under the terms of the Education Ordinance, 1899, he could not interfere with Board decisions on the internal working of the school, but he could withhold grants pending a satisfactory explanation of its conduct. Deceitfully, Milton ignored the latter part of this piece of legal advice and the petitioners were informed that Milton had no power to interfere with or rescind Board decisions. That this deception fooled nobody is made clear in a letter to the paper soon afterwards in which G. A. K. Marshall pointed to a clause in the Ordinance which allowed the Administrator the right of 'enquiring generally into the efficiency' of all schools in receipt of government aid. In response to the evasiveness of Milton's answer, Smith, who headed the petitioners, reminded Milton 'that the petition did not ask that the resolution to dismiss Mr. Kerr should be rescinded, but simply that a public enquiry into the circumstances attending the dismissal should be instituted'.

It was now clear that Milton intended to support the School Board entirely in its decision to be rid of Kerr, and despite the fact that they were executing this aim in a manner which was not only unpopular and distasteful as far as the general public was concerned but which was also grossly unfair to the principal himself. On 17 July the Board met and decided to inform Kerr that 'reasons of the nature indicated in Mr Grimmer's letter to the parents compelled them to terminate his engagement' with them, and they also dispatched to him the testimonial which has already been mentioned. The most important decision made by the Board at this meeting, however, was in connection with a cable it had just received from Hammond which informed them that he had selected a new master who would be leaving for Southern Rhodesia on 3 August. McIlwaine was instructed to cable Hammond to urge the new master to sail by the east coast route so that he might arrive in Salisbury as soon as possible. As far as the Board was concerned there could be no turning back on its decision now.

As far as the Bates party on the Town Council was concerned, however, the issue had by no means been finalised. At its next meeting the Council decided to defer consideration of its quarterly payments towards the up-keep of the school until the following week and on Saturday 20 July, *The Rhodesia Herald* carried an advertisement for a new school called The Salisbury Academy. Under the Principal Mr Kerr, and with his wife as assistant teacher, lessons were to begin in the Masonic Lodge on the 29th of that month. Milton suspected that the Bates party had 'given some guarantee as to salary' in the new school. A week later an advertisement in the paper, signed by McIlwaine, announced that the Public School would also open on 29 July. It is perhaps significant to note that Garcia was not mentioned as the Lady Principal in this notice. The same edition of *The Rhodesia Herald* published letters on behalf of Kerr from the School Board which instructed him to vacate the school premises, refused him recompense for expenses which he had incurred when he travelled to Southern Rhodesia to take up his appointment and for grants earned by the school in connection with his conduct of evening classes, and furnished him with his testimonial. Below these letters

Kerr roundly attacked the School Board for the way it had rewarded him 'for three years' hard and conscientious work in Salisbury'. He accused the Board of neglecting the school by never once visiting it during school hours and thereby 'infringing their own standing rules' which required one of their number to do this once every month. In this regard, he pointed out that the Board out of sheer ignorance could not say more than it did in his testimonial. He concluded his attack by thanking Bates and others 'for interesting themselves in a proceeding which (was) clearly contrary to the elementary principles of justice and fair play'.

When the new term opened on the following Monday, Garcia found herself with only two pupils, for Kerr had taken 'practically... the whole school with him' into his Academy. The Municipal elections, which took place in the following week were a foregone conclusion. In a letter written to his wife soon after they took place Milton described their significance as follows:

'There has been great excitement this week over the Municipal election. The Bates Party came in with flying colours, Fairbridge being one of them. Van Praagh is now going to resign so S. Williams will be the only one of that party left and he is very sick about it. We shall now have ructions on the School Board. Old Berry has just been nominated by some of the parents as their representative and the Kerr party have put up Mazoe Smith. If the latter gets in the Bates party will have a majority'.

On 9 August, two days after the Council Elections, a large number of Salisbury residents gathered in the Masonic Temple to do honour to Kerr and his wife. After a speech by Smith, the Principal was presented with a testimonial and £92.2s which had been collected as a token of esteem for himself and his wife by those assembled. When the Council met the next week, however, it was presented with a bill for £98.18.6 which represented its current and outstanding dues towards the up-keep of the Public School. A motion put by Fairbridge, nevertheless, was agreed upon to the effect that the whole position of the Council as regards the School Board needed to be reviewed before they could 'pay a single cent' of this debt. Deary as well as Van Praagh were now no longer on the Council, and when the School Board met on Monday 19 August, M. E. Cleveland and Fairbridge had taken their places. Watermeyer, who had been Chairman of the Board since its inception in 1898, was now asked to give way temporarily to Cleveland pending the election of a permanent Chairman as soon as the new parental representative was elected. No doubt because he could not be sure that the parental member elected would be Smith, Fairbridge not only tried to discuss as much of the school affair as possible during this meeting, but also obtained the reluctant concurrence of Watermeyer and McIlwaine, who Milton had re-appointed as government nominees, to the presence of a representative of the press at the meeting.

McIlwaine complained to the Board that Kerr, on vacating the school premises, had removed school books and household furniture. As Secretary to the Board, McIlwaine had refused the offer of payment from Kerr for these books pending the consent of members, whilst some doubt existed as to whether Kerr, who had been given furniture by the Board some years earlier, was in fact entitled to take it away with him or not. Watermeyer condemned these appropriations made by Kerr, while Fairbridge defended them as in the interests of the children and in accordance with the

principle of the 'greatest good for the greatest number'. After it was agreed to postpone discussion of this matter, Fairbridge proceeded to comment on the contents of the Board's Minute Book. In this connection he remarked on 'irregularities which certainly could not bear the light of day' and asked what right the Board had to describe Garcia in it as The Lady Principal. McIlwaine had to admit that there was no substance for this description of the assistant teacher. After further debate on the procedure adopted by the Board *vis-à-vis* the dismissal of Kerr, it was at length decided to defer the matter to a later date when Watermeyer promised to give a full account of his actions.

A few days after this meeting, the election of Smith as parental member took place under somewhat unusual circumstances. According to McIlwaine, who conducted the election with Cleveland on 24 August, on the day before the election there were twelve children on the school roll. On the following day, seven more children were enrolled. After the election, however, only nine of the original twelve children continued to regularly attend classes. Three of the original dozen had been sent so that their parents could nominate a candidate for election, and the seven subsequently enrolled allowed their parents to vote this candidate in. Two days afterwards the Board met again, and Smith, proposed by Watermeyer and seconded by McIlwaine, was unanimously elected Chairman for the year. After Smith had read the original complaints made by Deary about Kerr, Watermeyer claimed that the only complaint which the Board had against Kerr was his use of 'ungentlemanly language' when he had reprimanded Garcia. Watermeyer then added further arguments against the retention of Kerr as Principal of the Public School. He used the evidence of Nesbitt to support his contention that Kerr maltreated children, and then used the testimony of another parent to support his claim that Kerr had run evening classes for his own benefit and to supplement his salary, to the detriment of the progress of the school beyond the merely elementary level. He pointed to the success of the Salisbury Convent in the latter regard, to which Fairbridge retorted that the Public School suffered from the disadvantage of having no boarding facilities. After considerable discussion the meeting adjourned to the following day, when Smith asserted that in face of the evidence produced against Kerr, and here it might be stressed that most of the arguments used against him by Watermeyer were based on evidence gathered after he had already been dismissed, a reprimand might have been justified, but dismissal was too extreme a step. By a majority vote of three to two, the Board now decided to reinstate Kerr as Principal of the Public School. As for the engagement of the new master, who was already on his way to Southern Rhodesia, the Board decided that the question of his appointment would have to stand over until he had arrived in Salisbury. Watermeyer and McIlwaine now announced that they intended to resign from the Board, and it looked for the moment as if justice, as far as Kerr was concerned, would at last be done. The matter, however, now lay squarely in the hands of Milton, who, as Administrator of Rhodesia, was required to give formal assent to the Board decision to reinstate Kerr.

Nearly three weeks, on 14 September, later Milton informed the Board that he could not assent to the reinstatement of Kerr. It is necessary to examine how Milton, who only a few months earlier had claimed that he could not interfere with Board decisions, now showed that he had not been entirely truthful. In the first place, McIlwaine and Watermeyer were persuaded to withdraw their resignations and to

temporarily remain on the Board 'until the controversy over the principal came to an end', or in other words, until the Administration had its own way in the affair. The appointment of Smith to the Board was then queried on the basis of his *bona fide* parental election. This move was important because it rendered the majority vote to reinstate Kerr doubtful, in view of the fact that Smith acted on the Board before he had received the formal assent of the Administrator to his election. Moreover, knowledge of this fact must have undermined his self confidence and may help to explain his subsequent actions on the Board, which amounted to a betrayal of Kerr and his supporters. The third move on the part of the Administration was to go through the ritual of ostensibly conducting an enquiry into the merits of the case for or against Kerr. In this regard, George Duthie, the newly appointed Inspector of Schools, played an important part in the proceedings. The fact that he was unlikely to make any recommendations which would displease his superiors, especially within the first few weeks of his new appointment, must now also be borne in mind.

On 4 September, Duthie wrote to McIlwaine to ask why the School Board had earlier in the year dismissed Kerr, and now had decided to reinstate him. In reply to this enquiry McIlwaine, in a letter endorsed by Watermeyer, presented Duthie with a very biased account of events which have already been examined. To correct the distorted picture presented by McIlwaine, Cleveland forwarded an account of the affair which gave a fairer picture of events as far as Kerr was concerned. In the lengthy account of the affair given by McIlwaine it is important to note here that he now tried to pass off the question of the separation of the sexes as being 'a mere incident'. He claimed that 'had Mr Kerr quietly brought... to light' the fact that the previous Board had sanctioned co-education 'no doubt a satisfactory and harmonious arrangement would have been arrived at'. The fact that McIlwaine had not himself bothered to find this out informally, either from Kerr or from previous Board members, and amongst whom Watermeyer and Deary were still on Board, before he wrote a letter to Kerr on the subject which was phrased in such a manner as to amount to a reprimand, was now conveniently forgotten about in the report to Duthie. Moreover, the fact that McIlwaine had himself sanctioned co-education only a few months before he had penned his abrupt orders to Kerr is also not mentioned in this report. Indeed, while Duthie was furnished along with this report, with copies of the letters which Kerr and Garcia had written to the Board on the questions of the separation of the sexes and their mutual antipathies, the letter from McIlwaine which ordered Kerr to separate the sexes was not forwarded to Duthie. Indeed, McIlwaine gave the hollowness of his explanation to Duthie the lie, by constantly referring to Garcia in his report as the 'Lady Principal'. Moreover, McIlwaine reveals quite clearly in his report to Duthie that the Board had not been concerned with the justice or otherwise of the case against Kerr when it decided to dismiss him, when he produced evidence in his report against Kerr which only came to light after the dismissal had taken place. In this regard he cited one parent who claimed that Kerr had advised him not to send his child to the day school, but instead, he should attend evening classes which, apart from the small grant that they earned for the school, were a means of supplementing the income of the Principal. McIlwaine also enclosed with his report the letter from Mrs Nesbitt. Finally, McIlwaine reported that when Kerr left the school he took furniture with him from the school

house as has also been mentioned already, together with school textbooks, as well as shrubs and plants from the school garden. For his part, Cleveland pointed out that the Board had deliberately ignored evidence against Garcia and had admitted that its reasons for the dismissal of Kerr were the same as those given by Grimmer, and so were based on mere guess work. Moreover, no complaints against Kerr had been made by parents prior to his dismissal, while the fact that he had taken with him to the Academy practically all of the children who had attended the Public School, was evidence enough that they considered him to be a most competent teacher. Finally, Cleveland suggested that Duthie himself examine the minutes of the Board which covered the dismissal of Kerr. He submitted that such treatment 'excused to some extent' the subsequent actions of the Principal, while there was nothing in the minutes of the Board to say that the furniture was not, in fact, given to Kerr as his own private property.

The fact that Duthie reported to Milton that he did not consider the reinstatement of Kerr as desirable on the same day that Cleveland had written his defence of the Principal, suggests that he did not take time to examine the minutes of the Board as Cleveland had suggested he should do. Indeed, Duthie, like everyone else on the Administration who was involved in the affair, revealed in his report to Milton on the inadvisability of accepting the reinstatement of Kerr, no interest in justice whatsoever. Expediency, not justice, was all that interested the Administration. Duthie argued that the strained relations between Kerr and Garcia would not benefit the school, and claimed that he had Hammond's opinion 'that he did not consider Mr Kerr a proper person for the post' of Principal. He went on to claim that if the Principal recruited by Hammond, who happened to be his brother, H. G. Duthie, was not appointed, it would in future 'be hard to induce more teachers to come from England'. The School Board was now informed that Milton approved of the election of Mazoe Smith, even though this had been conducted 'contrary to the spirit of the rules'. This move on the part of Milton, as ensuing events will show, must have been part of a scheme which was calculated to win Smith over to his side in the affair. A week after Smith was granted this recognition, the School Board was informed, on 16 September, that Milton could not agree to the reinstatement of Kerr. Milton claimed that he had made this decision after considering the 'independent' report of the Inspector of Schools, as well as the recommendations of the School Board. The Board was informed that Milton considered that the decision which the Board had made in April, and to which he had so quickly consented, namely to entrust Hammond with the selection of a new Principal, 'must be regarded as binding'. Moreover, he could not concur in the resolution 'adopted by majority vote to reinstate Kerr when his dismissal arose from a unanimous vote of the previous Board in the interest of the school'.

On Thursday 19 September the Board met to consider the decision which Milton had at last arrived at. By now Cleveland had been called away to Beira on business, and was replaced on the Board by the new Mayor, namely Bates. It is not clear, however, why Fairbridge was not present at this meeting of the Board. In response to the dictum from Milton, Smith informed members of the Board that they must 'recognise it as final'. McIlwaine then stated that as a matter of form H. G. Duthie, who was 'idling about town', should immediately be told that Milton had confirmed his appointment because 'it would look like questioning the Administrator's decision if there [was]

any delay'. When Watermeyer tried to resort to legalistic subterfuge by pointing out that the Board could not recognise the reinstatement of Kerr anyway until the Principal elect had first been dismissed, Smith showed that he still had some reservations on the matter by reminding the Judge that as yet no formal agreement by Bates with H. G. Duthie had been made in Southern Rhodesia. In the face of objections by Bates as well as this uncertainty over the matter revealed by Smith, the Board decided to adjourn for a week so that members could assess their positions in regard to Milton's decision.

At the next Council meeting, held on 27 September, Bates summed the position up as follows:

'As I take it, the Administrator has not only confirmed and approved Mr Duthie's appointment, but he has also made the appointment, which, under the Education Ordinance, he has now power to do'.

Fairbridge suggested that the Council should stop contributing to the Public School and should instead support its own institution under Kerr. He then asked:

'Would the Government make any financial or other arrangements that would enable the Council to get free of the school, and let the Government carry it on as a high class establishment and find scholars?'

Finally, in view of the new situation caused by the action of the Administrator, the Council decided to take legal opinion on its position in relation to the Board, particularly where its financial responsibility for the payment of the newly recruited master was concerned.

A few days after this Council meeting, the Board held its adjourned meeting. Bates moved that McIlwaine had had no authority to write a letter to Milton three weeks earlier which was tantamount to asking Milton to approve of the appointment of H. G. Duthie. Bates successfully carried a motion that this letter, which McIlwaine had written in his capacity as Honorary Secretary to the Board, had not been authorised and Milton was to be informed of this. Bates then had a long motion passed, to the effect that as the Board had not yet considered the appointment of Duthie, Milton's approval of his appointment was out of order, and before any decision could be arrived at in the matter, the Town Council must be allowed to take legal advice as to its position in regard to the recruitment of the new master. Bates then failed to have a motion carried to the effect that, as there were so few children at the Public School, the services of Garcia should be dispensed with. A fourth and final motion was then carried that the Town Council and its Solicitors should be allowed to examine all correspondence and Board Minutes relating to the controversy.

Four days later, on 4 October, Milton responded to these latest moves on the part of the Board with a directive in which he stated that he could 'not consent to any further postponement in assumption of duty by Mr Duthie, which had been agreed to by the Board on 19th September!'. Smith now held a meeting with parents and announced that the time had come for a parting of the ways between himself and the Bates party. He stated that the reinstatement of Kerr was impossible as the Administrator would not confirm it, and that all he now desired to do was to put the Public School back on its feet. Some of the parents present at the meeting said that this would be possible as long as Garcia was dismissed. Smith stated, however, that while he was opposed to the dismissal of Garcia, he was determined to get an honourable settlement

for Kerr. Finally the parents agreed with him and entrusted him with the task of arranging acceptable terms for Kerr.

Before the Board met again, Smith then officiated at the installation of H. G. Duthie as Principal of the Public School, for which action he was roundly criticised by Bates at the next Board meeting which took place on 14 October. Smith argued that as it was no longer possible to reinstate Kerr the school 'must go on' without him. A long argument then ensued between Watermeyer and Bates over the appointment of Duthie. Neither the newspaper report, nor the minutes of the Board record whether a vote was taken over the appointment of Duthie on this occasion. By now Garcia had submitted her resignation from the school and Councillor A. J. McLaurin had replaced Fairbridge on the Board.

Although Fairbridge had resigned from the Board, as the Councillor considered to be the most knowledgeable about the dispute, he was requested by Bates to personally consult Advocate C. G. Ward in Bulawayo. It was subsequently reported in *The Herald* that Fairbridge had found that 'in all parts of the country the stand made by Salisbury against a manifest impropriety met with sympathy'. Fairbridge hoped that 'the Government would have the good sense to relieve the town [council] from a school, which, through no fault of its own, had become such a failure'.

In a letter sent to his wife on 30 October, Milton summed up the situation as it then stood as follows:

'I have been very well and much troubled with the school question which however will I think now drop as far as Kerr is concerned. Duthie the new master will open the term next Tuesday and we are going to try to get something for Kerr in the Cape through Dr. Muir who chose him for Salisbury. The Town Council say that they will not be responsible any more for the school and that has still to be fought out. Fairbridge leaves tomorrow for Bulawayo where he is going to take charge of the business as Howard has not been satisfactory lately and I do not think there will be much fighting after he leaves... I have just been interrupted by old Smith who is wearing himself to a shadow over the school business. He tells me that he thinks he has persuaded Kerr to withdraw from his present position and to try to get work in the Cape. Kerr will tell him tomorrow what he will do'.

At a special meeting of the Board held the day after this letter was written, Smith announced that Kerr had agreed to close his Academy as soon as he was offered a permanent post somewhere in the Cape. By a majority vote of three to two, the Board then decided to pay Duthie's salary as Principal of the Public School. On Tuesday 12 November, at a meeting of the Board which Watermeyer and McIlwaine, for the first time during the year, did not attend, Smith informed Bates and McLaurin that Kerr had agreed to take up an appointment shortly in Vryburg. Before he accepted this new appointment, however, Smith had arranged with Kerr that the Board should furnish him with a testimonial. This was now signed by Smith and the newly appointed professional secretary of the Board. At the same time the secretary was instructed to write to Garcia to inform her that her services would no longer be required after the coming Friday of that week and she was to be given her salary in lieu of her three months notice. The most significant feature of the meeting, however, was raised by



Bates who stated that he 'understood Mr Kerr was getting a bonus as well as payment of his expenses' to Vryburg, which money was not coming from the coffers of the Board. It is not known how much money Kerr received, nor is it plainly stated anywhere who paid him this money. It can only be assumed that the Administration provided the money, and one presumes that it did not come out of funds from the public revenue.

It now remained for only one thing to be decided on, namely the relationship between the Town Council and the School Board. When the Council was informed by its lawyers that it could not legally withhold payment towards salaries and up-keep of the school, it decided on 23 December, to send an ultimatum to the Administrator to the effect that the Council must either be given extra representation on the Board, or it must sever its relationship altogether with the Public School. The Inspector of Schools, Duthie, urged the Administration to encourage the latter alternative in order to avoid any repetition of the 'occurrences of the past few months' which would be 'disastrous to the educational interests of the community'. The Town Council was subsequently informed that as the Administration contributed most towards the up-keep of the school, it had greater claims than the Council did for increased representation on the Board. By 7 January, 1902, the Administration offered to make the total cost of the school a charge from public funds from the first of January onwards and by 4 February, when their respective financial interest had been sorted out, the Council and the Administration agreed to this proposal. Consequently, H. G. Duthie M. A. (Aberdeen) has the distinction of being the first Principal of a Government school in Southern Rhodesia. As for the strained relations between the Administration and the Municipality, it would appear that by January, efforts were being made by both sides to co-operate amicably with each other. At a Council Meeting on 8 January, 1902, Fairbridge described the government offer to take over the Public School as 'extremely satisfactory'. He felt that Milton 'had evidently gone out of his way to come to an understanding with the Council on the matter. They should be grateful to the Administrator for acceding to their request'. By now the Council was seeking large sums of money and capital in order to effect improvements in the town, and this no doubt influenced it in its desire not only to be rid of its financial obligations towards the school, but also to establish better rapport with the representatives of the British South Africa Company.

The conclusion to this unsavoury episode in the history of Southern Rhodesia is that in the hands of officials who had no special qualifications for the direction and understanding of educational affairs, simple problems were allowed to provide a source for a major public controversy. From the start it should have been made clear to Kerr that he had only been appointed for the 'immediate' needs of the community and that as the school grew in both size and importance, some modifications of his senior position, on account of his moderate qualifications, would in time be rendered necessary. Moreover, the position of Garcia should never have been confused in the manner in which this had been allowed to happen. As for the unethical actions of Milton and the Government members of the School Board, they provide evidence of the Administration's contempt for the settlers which helps to explain why the latter would have welcomed an end to Company rule in Southern Rhodesia long before 1923. An ironic outcome of the ruthless efforts on the part of the Administrator and his underlings to have their own way in 1901 is revealed in the subsequent history of the school during

the years which immediately followed upon the controversy. In December, 1902, H. G. Duthie had to be relieved of his post as Principal on account of his 'injudicious' treatment of female pupils. While his successor, Mr Dugald Blue, no doubt satisfied the desires of Kerr's critic, Mrs. Nesbitt, by the administration of 'very just' thrashings of boys with a five-thonged leather strap, the school did not otherwise prosper under his control. Indeed, the number of pupils on the roll, which had risen so rapidly under Kerr, had by 1908 only reached fifty-five, a mere increase of eleven pupils since 1901. The Government Treasurer, F. J. Newton, in his concern about this lack of progress was moved to complain to Duthie as follows:

'What is wanted is a good plain working school... I frankly think the staff wants ballast'.

In 1908 it was decided to separate the sexes. Under new Principals, the Salisbury Boys' and Girls' High Schools rapidly developed into renowned white settler educational institutions. Their founding Principal's connection with Southern Rhodesia was not forever severed in 1901. Educated in the South African College School and the University of Cape Town, John Vass Kerr, M.C., in 1921 returned to the land where he was born in 1899 and where he played rugby for Southern Rhodesia, cricket for Mashonaland and was appointed Secretary for Native Affairs in 1954.

#### *Editors Note*

For reasons of length the footnotes containing the source of statements made in the paper have not been included. They are, however, available for perusal upon request to the Honorary Editor or can be pursued with the author at St. George's College, Harare.

# Denis Townley Lowveld Naturalist Extraordinary

by Colin Saunders

*This is the text of a talk given to members of the History Society of Zimbabwe  
on 26 June 1999*

***“This is private property.  
The owners are not at home.  
In other words get the hell out of here.”***

This startling message on the workshop door greeted the weary visitor emerging from his vehicle, after a hot and slow seventeen mile drive along bush roads and tracks from Birchenough Bridge to the remote spot on the Devure River where Denis Townley had made his home.

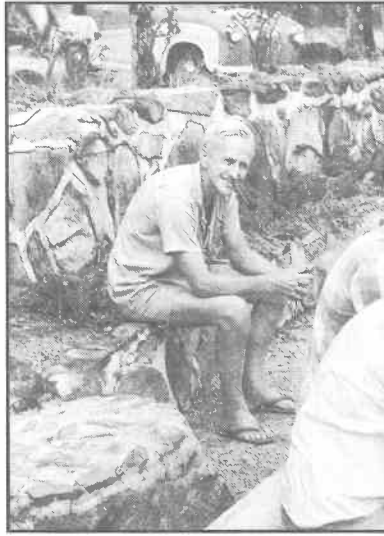
Townley and his wife had constructed a neat cottage overlooking a beautiful permanent hippo pool lined by large riverine trees, a stunning and tranquil oasis in the harsh climate of a rugged and rocky tract of country in the southeast lowveld. Here they lived an idyllic life, surrounded by a host of wild creatures whose world they considered themselves privileged to share.

The message on the door expressed unequivocally the resentment Townley and his wife felt when the serene privacy of their private sanctuary was invaded by guests — most of whom were thoroughly unwelcome; in fact the Townleys, on hearing an approaching vehicle, would often climb an adjacent hill and wait there patiently until intruders who elected to ignore the explicit message, and had found nobody at home, departed disappointed from the scene.

Visitors normally arrived at the Townley retreat for one of three reasons: because they wished to meet this most unusual couple (and sometimes, according to Denis, to gape and gawk as if they themselves were animals); because they wanted to fish in the pool; or because they wished to view the famous crocodiles, about which more will follow later. The Townleys had a reputation for being “mad”, and this image they cultivated, sometimes by firing a shot over the head of fishermen who had ignored the hint that they were unwelcome trespassers, and had settled comfortably on the shady bank, fishing rod in hand.

Denis Townley and his wife were anything but mad; in fact they were decidedly normal and bright in their mental outlook — they had just chosen to remove themselves from the rat race of “civilisation” to live out their lives in contented isolation. They could quite justifiably be classified as eccentric and non-conformist, but, to those who knew them well, they were highly intelligent and warm and entertaining companions.

Denis Townley, whose roots lay in the aristocratic Toonlays of Toonlay Hall in Lancashire many centuries ago, was the son of a couple who were both freelance journalists; he remembered being “dragged around” by his parents as they sought those elusive news items which would make their name and fortune, and from them he inherited a love of good language.



**Denis Townley 1964**

He was a talented youngster, and according to his wife he had rowed stroke in a winning eight at Henley, played centre forward for Reading City, and won the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire men's singles tennis championship.

He was very good with his hands, and his parents wisely decided that he should be apprenticed in a trade; so it was that he joined a firm which specialised in the manufacture of scale model locomotives and steamships for display in the windows of travel agents, an attractive feature of window-shopping which older readers may remember. Here he developed extraordinary dexterity in the manufacture of precision components, a skill which was to prove of great value in his future life.

Townley was an avid reader, and he eagerly devoured everything he could find about Africa. He developed a fascination for the lions of Africa as portrayed in the books by big game hunters of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He yearned to go to out to Africa, and was overjoyed when his parents, through a well-connected source, managed to arrange that he should travel to the then Southern Rhodesia, there somewhat surprisingly to be accommodated at Government House in Bulawayo while he sought a position.

He was apparently unable to find employment which interested him, and he must have over-stayed his welcome in His Excellency's residence, because he told me that he was prevailed upon to move into the BSAP mess at the other end of town. However, he did not stay long in Matabeleland, and soon moved to the capital city, where he found employment as a tobacco manager for a prominent farmer named Vereker on "Rumani", a farm in the Enterprise area a few miles north of Harare.

Here he worked diligently and successfully, becoming a highly valued employee. In his off-duty hours he roamed widely in the musasa woodland and grasslands and became familiar with the birds, small mammals, and insects of this rich environment.

He taught himself to prepare specimens of small creatures which he collected, and his activities attracted the attention of Capt. Cecil D. Priest, a noted ornithologist and general naturalist of "Mashumba's" in the district of Marondera. Priest was preparing the manuscript for his landmark four volume publication *The Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, and it was inevitable that the energetic and observant young Townley should become an important source of collected specimens and recorded observations.

During the winter months of his life as a tobacco manager, when his employer's crop had been reaped and graded and was awaiting sale, Townley wandered off on his own down the Angwa and Mazowe river systems, sleeping out where he found himself, collecting specimens and recording observations, meeting the rural African folk who lived in these remote areas. He related to me a thrilling and dangerous adventure he experienced when hunting a notorious man-eating lion at Rusambo's, and the joy of the local people when at last he succeeded in slaying the cunning beast.

One year he trekked down into the Sabi (Save') valley, and found its ecosystems and wild denizens even more fascinating than those of the great tributaries of the mighty lower Zambezi. This proved to be an important factor in his future life.

He revelled in the great outdoors of unspoilt Africa which he had dreamed about for years, finding it difficult to tear himself away and return to his employer to plant seedbeds and prepare lands for the new season on "Rumani". He resolved that one day he would forsake the civilisation of the plateau to live in the hot low country which had fascinated him from the start.

Back in civilisation for two thirds of the year, he worked more busily for Priest, and became firm friends with his wife. Iris Priest was the third wife of Cecil Priest. Her parents were wealthy landed English country-folk who owned a large proportion of Exmoor. She had met the young Townley in earlier days in England, and she told me that she remembered him as a youth who was wont to "show off" on a motor-cycle of which he was inordinately proud, and with which he was always tinkering in an effort to squeeze an extra couple of miles per hour from the cherished machine.

She was an avid naturalist from a very early age, but she found the English countryside to be rather tame, and she too yearned to travel out to Africa and to have the opportunity to "be where the lions are". She was a very good-looking young lady, and when, at a social function with her parents, she met Captain C. D. Priest, a knowledgeable naturalist and retired soldier who had served time in the armed forces in Nigeria, she was swept off her feet. They were soon married, and she moved to Africa with great excitement.

Here she immersed herself in her husband's activities, particularly in ornithology; she rapidly learnt about the local avifauna, was energetic in her collection of bird specimens in the field, and soon developed considerable taxidermist skills, preparing study skins and mounts of whatever species her husband required.

Her bliss in her new and stimulating environment was short-lived, as her husband revealed himself to be insanely jealous to a paranoid extent if ever she talked to a man. Priest watched her every movement, and even contrived to imprison her in her home at times; she never gave him any cause for his suspicions, but eventually she had had enough of the stressful existence.

She had by this time found a soul mate in the person of Townley, a frequent visitor

and highly productive associate of Capt. Priest in his assembly of observations and specimens to contribute to the *magnum opus* on birds then in an advanced state of development. It was probably inevitable that the two young people should develop a deep and lasting affinity. She eventually divorced Capt. Priest, and married Denis. She and Townley made a momentous decision to move away from the developed areas of the country, to build a new and exciting life for themselves in the wild country of the southeast lowveld.

The new Mrs Townley, always unhappy with her very feminine name Iris with which she had been christened, preferred to be known as “Bill”. She was a refined, handsome and well built person.

Although I would not describe her as masculine, she was often comfortably dressed in decidedly male attire of long khaki trousers, khaki shooting jacket with large pockets, rugged boots, and a pith helmet. She also enjoyed smoking a pipe, which certainly startled people meeting her for the first time in that age when members of the fair sex were not yet liberated from male dominance.

Over the next few years Denis and Bill lived a permanently itinerant life in the Save’ valley, camping out, and scraping a living from the cash rewards offered to successful hunters of “vermin” — lion, leopard, hyena and crocodiles which killed livestock on the huge Devuli, Nuanetsi, and Angus ranches. They also received payment of a government-funded bounty from the local Native Commissioner’s office for every tail they produced as proof that they had killed baboons and wild dogs, also then officially classified as vermin. It was remarkable how in later years they grew to love these creatures, after many years of hunting them.

Denis, blessed with a superb command of English, and the natural eye for composition of a good wildlife photographer, supplemented their uncertain income with payments for articles written and prints published in a variety of publications, including the prestigious “Blackwood’s Magazine” and a number of outdoors periodicals which long ago disappeared from the shelves.

The Townleys built up an impressive collection of birds’ eggs for themselves, beautifully presented in home-made cabinets and accurately recorded and catalogued, and in so doing learnt much about the birds of the lowveld. They also collected birds’ eggs for sale to discerning collectors through then reputable dealers in England, in an age when orderly collectors of birds’ eggs were respected “oologists”.

Denis learnt to tan game and crocodile skins for sale, developing his own techniques for preparation of superb hides. He would take his most prized skins to bed with him, there painstakingly to break down every stiff fibre by kneading them with his fingers. He was famous for the quality of his incredibly soft and supple leopard skins, each one of which he would submit to his own unique quality control test: they had to be capable of being passed easily through a carved wooden serviette ring which he kept for that purpose. He once demonstrated this to me with a beautiful skin which adorned a chair in his home.

George Smith-Wright told me that Townley’s tanned leopard skins also had to pass another criterion: the whole skin had to be capable of being folded up into the head skin, a test easily passed by a magnificent skin sold to George by Denis for one pound and a dozen eggs!



**Bill Townley 1964**

He experimented with lowveld hardwood timbers which he cut and used to manufacture the furniture for his home, and he became much more than a skilled carpenter; his wood carvings, and trays and platters, inlaid with images of the lowveld's wildlife, were creations of great beauty and artistic merit. He also carved ivory and other tusks, and antelope horns, with great imagination and precise skill. Some of these artefacts he sold, but all too often, despite his condition of what would today be labelled "poverty", they were given away on the spur of the moment to itinerant admirers who were struck by their craftsmanship and intrinsic beauty — Denis Townley was the most un-materialistic person I ever encountered, and placed little value on "things".

In developing his pursuit of stock-killing crocodiles for reward, he progressed in the 1920s to become probably the first commercial croc hunter in southern Africa, as he found a ready market for crocodile skins.

His nocturnal crocodile harvesting technique was simple but almost unbelievable: with his wife in close attendance behind him, he would carefully stalk crocodiles whose eye reflections he had picked up with an old-fashioned "bulala lamp" worn on his forehead, until he was a few feet from them (usually on the water's edge or in the shallows). From a range of a few feet he would then kill them with a shot into the brain, *via* the eye, using a .22 rifle, whereupon Bill, with a rubber poncho over her shoulder, would swiftly move forward into the water and grab the reptile by a front leg before it slipped under. If the croc was of only moderate size, she would rapidly dive

in to the water, seize the tail, sling it over her shoulder, and haul the creature out of the river.

Denis recounted with great relish one incident in which she was removing an apparently dead six-footer in this manner, when the croc “came alive” and grasped her firmly by the buttock. Her agonised yell attracted the attention of her husband, who rather unkindly laughed uproariously at the sight of the two parties holding each other by the tail, but it took considerable time and effort to prise the crocodile’s jaws apart to release its sharp teeth from his wife’s posterior.

It was little wonder that Townley developed a reputation as a cruel wretch who used his wife as croc-bait — another of the fables they did little to discourage.

In the mid 1920s they were commissioned to conduct a survey of the wild area known as the Gonarezhou, and in this remote region of the country they recorded the presence of only five small groups of resident Changana people, from Umfitshan’s on the lower Lundi (Runde) through Chitsa’s lower down, to Marumbini’s at the Save-Runde junction and on down the Mozambique border to Kapiteni’s.

In 1928 Director of Forestry Kelly-Edwards appointed them as the first game wardens of the Gonarezhou at the behest of Minister of Lands Gilchrist, an interesting character who was responsible for constructing a road known to all and sundry as “Gilchrist’s Folly”, linking the main Masvingo-Birchenough highway to the lowveld and on to Chipinda Pools.

In those days it was customary for the Governor of Southern Rhodesia to spend a few days each winter at Chipinda, resulting in the main pool being known for many years as “The Governor’s Pool”. Here the Townleys, along with Murray MacDougall of Triangle and one or two other lowveld characters, became valued fireside companions of successive Governors on Their Excellency’s annual bush trip.

In due course the Townleys acquired a property called Chichindwe, a small plot of land adjoining Angus and Devuli Ranches on the Turgwe River. Here they built an attractive home on the river bank, and continued their rustic lowveld existence, living a full though uncertain and arduous life in absolute contentment.

A complication arose when she became pregnant. This was not in their plans, and after much heartache they decided that their chosen place of abode and life-style were incompatible with the presence of a child. With heavy hearts they requested a kindly doctor friend to arrange for the baby to be adopted at birth, and this was duly done. Their son, discovering the identity of his parents, visited them at their home in later years.

They continued to roam widely, being welcome and useful guests on the major ranches, and they said they regarded the unoccupied State Land on the Mkwazine as “paradise on earth”. They were certainly not the last people to hold this view.

They became expert ornithologists, and wrote up for the journals many original and at that time unique observations. They were the first to find and describe Blue-throated Sunbirds (a species not seen again for thirty years), which they collected at Malipati in 1934, and they were also the first to describe the relationship between Red-billed Helmet Shrikes and Thick-billed Cuckoos, their brood parasites. They recorded the wild fowl riches of the fabled Save’ Valley pans, and they noted and sketched the presence of both White-collared and Red-winged Pratincoles on the lower



Save'. Denis Townley's highly entertaining and informative series "The Chronicles of Chichindwe" in an outdoor magazine of the time would be highly prized Africana if available to collectors today, for his humourous though expert writings were eminently readable.

Denis had by this time built up close relationships by correspondence with a number of naturalists and museum curators of the day. He corresponded with all-round naturalist Capt. R. H. R. Stevenson of Selukwe (Shurugwi), to whom he sold his superb collection of birds' eggs for nine pounds (\$18). As a small boy I would often help "Stevie" sort out and tidy his extensive collections, and it was he who first told me of the "mad" fellow who lived with his wife in the wild bundu of the Sabi valley.

Townley also collected thousands of insects for Dr Elliot Pinhey, an entomologist of world renown stationed at the museum in Bulawayo. His technique for collection required day-time sleep sessions in the summer rains, and entailed busy night-long vigils behind a very bright mercury vapour lamp shining on white bedroom sheets hung from trees to reflect the light and attract the myriads of nocturnal insects. Interesting or unusual specimens were seized with forceps and popped into collecting bottles, all the while dodging scorpions and other unfriendly creatures attracted by the activity and hoping for a meal.

Pinhey told me that Townley had collected almost a hundred species of long-horned beetles from the area surrounding his home "Chichindwe", as well as contributing a host of other valuable specimens to the great entomological collection now housed at the natural History Museum in Bulawayo.

Townley's instinctive shunning of the limelight, and his impish sense of humour, were demonstrated well in an incident where Pinhey found one of the specimens submitted from Chichindwe to be a species of louse new to science, and distinguished by a bright red rear end.

He proposed to name the insect *townleyi*, but told Denis he would leave it to the creature's discoverer to decide finally on the name to be applied to the new species. Most naturalists would give their eye teeth for the opportunity to have named after them a species new to science; Townley, viewing its anatomy, decided on *haemorrhoidalis*, and thus is it known to this day (incidentally, it appears on the front cover of a popular book on insects by Ian Lowe).

Speaking of Chichindwe, it is noteworthy that this is the property, now owned by the Whittall family of Humani Ranch, where Karen Paolilo carried out her well known rescue of hippo in the great drought, and her subsequent interesting observations and recordings of aspects of the lives of both the hippo and other denizens of the Turgwe River.

At Chichindwe the frugal existence enjoyed by the Townleys was entirely dependent on the goodwill of the manager of Angus Ranch, Dick Dott, for he collected their monthly supplies of flour, sugar, salt, oil, and other essentials on his periodic trips to the nearest shops in Masvingo. However, their idyll was rudely shattered when in 1947, for some reason they never explained, Dott and the Townleys fell out, and he refused to co-operate any further. Don Somerville, Manager of Devuli Ranch, also declined to assist them. With the limited logistic resources at their disposal, they were unable to remain where they were.

Disconsolate, and in search of somewhere else to live, they walked up the Save' to the junction with the Devure, and then up the latter river, and discovered a beautiful permanent pool in a totally uninhabited and rugged area of minimal agricultural potential, whose northern bank was in the southern extremities of the communal lands of Buhera, and southern bank in a remote area of the giant Devuli Ranch. There was abundant wildlife, and there were no inhabitants for many miles. It was an ideal spot to which they could relocate.

They straightaway travelled to the capital, sought and were granted an audience with the then Governor, Sir John Noble Kennedy, and were provided with a letter from His Excellency in the form of a decree empowering them to live in the chosen area, and to be his agents as protectors of its wildlife.

This was of course a highly irregular procedure, but the couple was indeed fortunate in that the incumbent Native Commissioner (District Commissioner) at Buhera, who could have made life difficult for them, was the kindly Bernard Masterson. He himself was a good all-round naturalist with a particular interest in birds, and his wife Gillian was an excellent botanist.

Masterson, believing that the unusual couple could do no harm through taking up unofficial residence in this uninhabited and inhospitable tract of land, and sharing their desire that the wilderness should be protected, turned a blind eye to His Excellency's extraordinary assumption of unauthorised powers. Denis and Bill immediately started to move their few belongings to the place where they would establish their new home, having first to cut a road to the site through rocky mopani country.

I first visited the Townleys at their home on the Devure in 1959. Late on a Friday night after casualty duty at Harare Hospital, I travelled down to Birchenough Bridge, for a weekend in the bush in search of nests of such lowveld bird species as Yellow-bellied Bulbuls with Alex Masterson, who as a young lad had spent time at Buhera when his father was the "NC" stationed there.

After spending a blissful night under the stars on the old Meikles Mine road, Alex suggested that we should visit the Townleys. Alex remembered the way along the bush tracks to the pool on the Devure about 25 kilometres distant, and within the hour we were descending on a rocky access road to their river-side home.

Our reception was extraordinary. Alex alighted from my VW Beetle, and, seeing Townley working in a motor mechanic's pit under a motor vehicle, approached him, bent down, and said "Good morning Mr Townley". The man under the car apparently did not hear, immediately turned his face away, and carried on working. Alex went around the pit to the other side, again bent down, and again greeted the workman politely, whereupon Townley again ignored him, repeated his previous manoeuvre, and continued working with his back turned.

I was embarrassed by the frosty reception, and whispered to Alex that perhaps we should proceed elsewhere, when the stalemate was unexpectedly broken. About thirty metres away we heard the back door of the cottage open, and a cultured female voice called out "Did I hear a car Denis?" There was no reply, and soon Mrs Townley emerged, saw us standing near the workshop, and called out "Who's that" in a not-very-friendly tone of voice.

Alex approached her and identified himself, and Bill Townley was genuinely pleased to see him again after many years. She invited us in for a welcome drink of cool water, and then went out to summon her husband. We sat chatting in the lounge of the attractive compact cottage for a while, and eventually Townley entered, a cigarette dangling from his mouth, and dressed only in a pair of khaki shorts and home-made sandals. Mrs Townley introduced us. He nodded silently, and continued chain-smoking. I was riveted by the sight of the best set of varicose veins I had ever seen, and the spectacle (no pun intended) of a constant stream of cigarette ash falling on the lenses of the reading glasses suspended from his neck, and thence tumbling on to his bare and well-tanned chest. Townley smoked over 100 cigarettes per day for most of his life, lighting each new one from the one clamped in his mouth, just as it smouldered down to the end and appeared to be in imminent danger of burning his lips.

Thus began a cherished association with this remarkable couple, and we became firm friends. Townley later told me that my acceptability as a visitor to be welcomed had been greatly improved by the fact that I had been mad enough to drive at midnight from Harare to the Save' Valley to seek a nest of the Yellow-bellied Bulbul.

The deep pool on the Devure, lined on one bank by large shady trees, and then perennial but now probably a silted victim of upstream land abuse, was a haven for all manner of lowveld creatures. Pel's Fishing Owls, Peters' Finfoot, Green-backed Herons, Wattle-eyed Flycatchers and a solitary Fish Eagle typified a bird population guaranteed to delight any enthusiast, and shy bushbuck were often to be seen in the dappled shade. The grunting of a herd of about twenty hippo was a fitting serenade for anybody sleeping close by. Kudu, sable, impala and zebra drank on a daily basis, and there was always the chance of seeing one of the big cats.

But it was the large crocodiles which were a particular attraction. Bill Townley was a keen fisherman (I refuse to say *fisherperson*). When she went fishing, she would often be accompanied on one side by the Fish Eagle, and on the other by a wild cat, each fed alternately with portions of the catch. She had to tiptoe quietly down to the water's edge lest she be heard, and her peaceful angling disturbed, by a large and infuriating crocodile. This shameless creature, three and a half metres in length and rejoicing in the name of "Waidoko", would float around on the surface of the water to ambush any succulent bream which took Bill Townley's bait. It would totally ignore her protests and requests for it to "go away!", and often misappropriated her supper, and, to make matters worse, it would disappear with precious hook, line, and sinker.

Waidoko was one of three large crocs which responded to calls by the Townleys to come to the shore of the pool to be fed. This might not be a novelty today, in this age of many commercial crocodile farms and their numerous pen-reared animals, but in those days it was a most remarkable relationship with an old couple living in solitude amongst totally wild animals.

Privileged were those who, like myself, were able to stand silently by and watch as Townley or his wife would softly call out "Waidoko, Hijoko, Cuthbert" (yes, those were their improbable names) and the huge creatures would appear from the depths as if by magic and waddle ashore, to be fed in turn with whatever offering was available. Their tastes were catholic, and included fillet steak or lamb chops sneaked by Denis from our braai menu when we were not looking.

Asked how it came to pass that totally wild crocodiles would respond to calls to be fed, Bill explained that it came from talking to the animals while sharing their wilderness. She always talked in friendly tones to the hippo when she was on the bank, and, remarkably, they often gathered around in the water below her and softly grunted back at her. Presumably through such habituation these wild things lost their innate fear of humans, and developed a trusting attitude towards these friendly souls. The Townleys revelled in their peaceful co-existence with so many wild creatures in this tranquil spot.

This unusual mutual trust was not restricted to the crocs and hippo, for they also fed (and talked to) the fish eagle, numerous dassies, a nocturnal family of thick-tailed lemurs which fed off the roof outside the bedroom window, an elephant shrew, a large water monitor (leguaan), and many different species of birds. Denis and Bill were obviously recognised as harmless individuals. It was remarkable that the same crocs, hippo, bushbuck, dassies, birds, and other wildlife which were relaxed in the presence of the Townleys, were wary and suspicious towards other human intruders.

Bushbuck, bushbabies, and birds were all very well, but I often wondered how far Townley could trust the crocs and hippo. I asked him. He told me a chilling story: once, during a period of heavy flooding with muddy water, the foot valve of the water supply pump became blocked, and as they had no water in the house, he had no option but to dive in to clear the valve about three metres down. As his head broke the surface again, he was horrified to see the large head of an enormous crocodile within a metre of himself. Frozen and extremely apprehensive for a second or two, he shouted "Go away Waidoko", the beast backed off, and he leapt from the water before it changed its mind. He regarded himself as extremely fortunate. He had no illusions about lasting trust, and was certain that one of these opportunistic creatures would happily make a meal of its benefactor if the time was right.

The hippo, too, were also not so harmless. One bull was very aggressive. If a stranger approached the edge of the water, it would mount a noisy and terrifying challenge, charging through the shallows to the margin of the pool with its enormous mouth wide open, roaring ferociously, and skidding to a halt at the edge. It would do this almost to order, and I was one of a small number of permitted visitors who were photographed and filmed "escaping" from a terrifying charging hippo at the edge of the pool.

And then one weekend I was told by Townley that within a few days of my previous visit a young boy was killed by the hippo when he failed to run fast enough away from its charge, thinking, mistakenly and tragically, that it would not emerge onto dry land to continue its pursuit.

The Townleys did not only live in contentment with their diverse wild neighbours; they were also very observant, and conscientiously recorded many valuable observations.

Fifty years ago the standard view of crocodiles included an assertion that they were cannibalistic and ate their own young — after all, they had been observed digging up nests on sandbanks and scurrying back to the water with a mouth full of squawking hatchlings. Waidoko happened to be a female, and each year she would nest on a bank near the house. At such times she was constantly on guard near the nest, and unusually wary.

When hatching time was announced by the characteristic squawking under the sand, Townley observed her digging up the babies, and ferrying them gently to the water by the mouthful. He told me that on more than one occasion she swam up to him, hatchlings in her mouth and on her nose, like a proud mother showing off her new infant.

When first it was rumoured that such behaviour uncharacteristic of a loathsome creature had been reported by a lonely fellow in the Save' valley, it merely served to confirm that he was a trifle mad. Townley told me in scathing language of the visit of a well known and supposedly "respectable" scientist who had rudely rejected his account of such surprising animal behaviour, and he was understandably (and amusingly) cynical when some years later a similar "first" reported observation by a scientist was hailed in professional circles as a great pioneering discovery.

He also observed other fascinating behaviour on the part of his crocs: when occasionally the peace was disturbed by the baying of a pack of domestic dogs hunting from a lonely outpost on Dèvuli Ranch across the river, the crocs would come to the surface and cruise excitedly around on the surface, as if knowing that a meal was headed in their direction; twice he witnessed a remarkable harvest as a desperate and exhausted antelope, once an impala and once a bushbuck, leapt into the pool and swam across unharmed, while pursuing dogs were dragged under and drowned as they leapt into the water in pursuit. Townley applauded their good taste and their efficient "vermin control".

The reptiles did not always share Townley's value systems: more than once he awoke to find the crocs feasting on a favourite and confiding kudu bull which had taken up residence in the vicinity of the cottage.

Denis told me that the same excited swimming around on the surface by the crocs at times of intense heat, under cloudless skies at the end of the dry season, heralded the impending filling of the shrinking pool by flood waters up to twenty four hours later, from storms far upstream in the catchment area. Townley was convinced that the crocodiles must have been able to detect faint tremors from the distant rumbling flood waters many miles away, as they were never wrong.

In the last twenty years there have been a small number of reports of hippo "rescuing" stricken animals from crocodiles which have caught them; most prominent has been the much-published story of an impala saved from a croc by a Samaritan hippopotamus which took it from the jaws of a crocodile and attempted to revive it on land. Long ago, Townley observed that hippopotami in his Devure pool "liked chewing gum", in the form of meat from croc victims. He had on several occasions witnessed the hippo appropriating prey, whether alive or dead, from the jaws of crocodiles, to mouth them, sometimes for extended periods, only to release them eventually to be reclaimed by their captors.

A colony of hyrax, of two species, lived cheek by jowl with the Townleys in a rocky fastness within a few metres of their house. The black-spotted rock dassie *Procavia* and the yellow-spotted rock dassie *Heterohyrax* (both of which incidentally are expert climbers of trees) lived closely together in apparent harmony, though it is said that they cannot interbreed due to incompatibility of their genital organs. Be that as it may, Denis Townley observed on several occasions that they *are* compatible in

other ways, as females of one or other of the two species were seen at close quarters suckling babies of both species.

Before the days of apparently unlimited time, financial resources, and video cameras for “respectable” research, it was the perhaps inevitable lot of lone and allegedly eccentric “unscientific” observers that their valuable field observations were dismissed as fanciful by their more “acceptable” colleagues.

The one area where there was little room for arrogant dismissal of amateurs by professional scientists lay in the procurement of authentic type specimens and rare and valuable museum specimens, and here nobody could argue with Townley’s collection for the respected Dr Elliot Pinhey, master entomologist, who paid tribute to “Denis and Mrs Townley” in many of his scientific publications. The names of both of them also feature frequently in Priest’s anecdotal four volume work “The Birds of Southern Rhodesia”.

Enough of Townley the wild life wizard; let us consider further some remarkable facets of his extraordinary personality. Perhaps most striking was the very deep affection and close companionship between Denis Townley and his wife. They were inseparable. Nowhere was this more dramatically demonstrated than during two painful periods of enforced separation in the early 1940s.

In the one drama, Denis Townley was “called up” — conscripted — to enlist in the army in the second world war. He steadfastly refused to co-operate with the military authorities. He was forcibly removed to the capital (just how, he never did confide in me). He was impossible; he refused to obey any commands or to answer any questions, and was put uncomplainingly through every sort of legitimate punishment.

Solitary confinement on reduced rations bothered him not at all, and he could not be bowed by incessant and exhausting parade ground drill fully clad and carrying heavy weapons and ammunition. When not confined indoors, he sat silently inside the fence awaiting visits from his wife, totally uncommunicative.

He was eventually dishonourably discharged, and returned to the Save’ valley.

Worse was to follow, for Bill developed a lump in her breast, and consulted a doctor friend who was a keen hunter and wildlife enthusiast. She was referred to a consultant surgeon in Harare, where she underwent a mastectomy for an apparently incurable cancer. Denis was again almost impossible, and the exasperated nursing staff experienced extreme difficulty in persuading him to leave the hospital at the end of official visiting hours. Eventually she was discharged from hospital to return home to live out the eighteen months which the unhappy couple had been told was the maximum future life span allotted to her by an unkind fate.

Denis was devastated. However, she lived a further twenty years, most of them in splendid health and energetic activity, while he cursed the name of the surgeon who had thrown a constant shadow over his otherwise deeply contented life. However, the memories of her hospitalisation were not all without humour, as the following tale will tell.

Denis had constructed on a small rocky rise some forty metres from his front door a “PK” (loo) which must rank with the most delightful outdoor toilets ever conceived anywhere. It was constructed of local stone above an apparently bottomless (again no pun intended) fissure in the rocks, had no door, and faced north to take advantage of

the winter sun. As one sat enthroned, windows of clear glass at each elbow afforded scenic views of the goings-on upstream and downstream in the great hippo pool in the Devure.

Townley had mounted a stuffed Spotted Eagle Owl on the apex of the cone-shaped roof, and inside the building was a lever marked “vacant” and “engaged”. In the former setting the owl averted its gaze from anybody approaching up the path, but when the loo was occupied the incumbent’s privacy was protected by the owl glaring down the path at anybody intent on access. Even more imaginative was the crowning glory of the establishment: when the owl was staring down the path, anybody approaching was confronted by a prominent sign on the bird’s head which read “B O”.

This was the abbreviation which Bill Townley had been intrigued to see marked on her hospital chart each morning; when asked to explain, the nurse had told her it meant “bowels open”!

Denis Townley and his wife built their cottage by hand without any outside help. Christened “Tuturuku Towers” (the name actually appears on several of the Surveyor-General’s large scale maps of that era), it was named after a small stream bed of that name which entered the Devure at the top of the pool. It was a substantial flat-roofed structure, constructed of local stone which the couple hewed in the immediate vicinity. They had also cut their own road to their home through rugged rocky terrain, skilfully constructing stream crossings, adequate mitre drains, and reasonable gradients.

The little cottage was comprised of a lounge-dining room, a bedroom, a bathroom, and a kitchen, all with stunning views over the pool, where intriguing intermittent wildlife scenes kept one spellbound. The details in the home were delightfully innovative. The stone lintels revealed large numbers of neatly arranged fossil ferns which they had found in establishing a small quarry; the stout front door, fashioned by Denis from solid pod mahogany cut with a bow saw, boasted a substantial handle made from the horn of a testy old buffalo bull “dagga boy”, which had in earlier days been rude enough to ambush Denis, tossing him off its horns onto a large umbrella thorn tree, from whose thorny embrace he had great difficulty removing himself - even more difficult apparently had been Bill’s subsequent attempts over the next two weeks to remove stubborn thorns from her husband’s hide.

There were no conventional locks on doors or cupboards, for the Townleys lived in an area and an era when house-breaking and theft were almost unthinkable. However, once when they were away in the valley collecting something or other for somebody, an intruder had invaded their home and made off with some food. Denis, realising that it would be pointless to use ordinary locks — he would be certain to lose the keys — designed an ingenious security system.

When the door was closed, one was confronted by a heavy and solid mahogany structure, with no lock or keyhole visible. However, there were several heads of four inch nails visible, sunk neatly in rows into the door. If you grasped in your finger-nails the head of the third nail in the fourth row from the top, and pulled gently, there was a soft click as a spring-loaded catch was released, and the door swung smoothly open.

The bathroom also revealed glimpses of inventive genius. Unable to afford a steel bath, Townley fashioned a large and comfortable tub from concrete. Hot and cold water gushed into the foot of the bath through the mouths of two large bream heads

set into the wall, and which had been cast in cement from a pair of large tilapia which had been fished from the pool below.

Townley disapproved of the energy expenditure and inconvenience required in sitting up to replenish the hot water by opening conventionally situated taps at the foot of the bath, and so the water supply was controlled by two neat little mahogany wheels conveniently located on the wall at the right elbow as one was lying in the bath. For further comfort of the bather, a beautifully carved concertina fixture, fashioned from mahogany, was installed in the same location, and it could be drawn out over the bath to reveal a bookstand complete with neat adjustable brass clips to keep the pages open when lying reading in the bath. A built-in ash-tray completed the facilities on offer.

When the time came to let the water out, it left the bath with a roaring gurgle reminiscent of two male hippo fighting — Denis was childishly intrigued by the various noises made by water draining from a plug hole, and he had experimented with the bends, constrictions, and openings responsible. I have a tape recording somewhere of the performance of the auditory masterpiece he had fashioned from the plumbing.

The hot water was supplied from a wood-fired bush boiler. It was of the design in common use at that time, but what distinguished it from similar models was a small A-frame structure on top, bearing a sign which read “Dassiefontein”. This was the winter abode of a domesticated hyrax which had the run of the house, and which refused to huddle for warmth with its wild neighbours nearby. It was from this animal that I first learnt of the almost unbelievable habit acquired by tame dassies in jumping up and efficiently using the family’s pedestal toilet, without soiling the seat - an attribute shared by Norma Jeanne Sparrow’s tame dassie on Lone Star.

The Townley cat — not exactly a truly wild cat but a feral creature which had been rehabilitated from the bush — was, like its owners, intolerant of strangers. On hearing an approaching motor vehicle or footsteps it would rush out of the house and up the hill. It had its own entrance built into the wall of the lounge at ground level, lined with green baize and controlled by a swinging trap door which it had learnt to operate.

Denis Townley had an amazing workshop, filled with home-made machines and tools. One which I particularly remember was a lathe fashioned from old car parts, and operated by a foot pedal from a cast-off dentists’ drill. The workshop was surrounded by an extensive scrap yard, in which he would prowl around seeking that elusive component for one of his inventions or repairs.

Although normally highly anti-social, he was not infrequently prevailed upon by local communal people requesting assistance with the removal of marauding leopards or crocodiles killing their stock. This he did with alacrity, always using his amazingly accurate trusty .22 for both species. In his later years he became more tolerant of approaches for assistance of a different sort, and he made a modest living from repairing scotch carts, maize grinders, peanut shellers, and ancient vehicles. He charged the extraordinarily modest fee of 2/6d (25 cents) per job, but he enjoyed the mechanical challenge and his needs were modest.

In the 1960s, when his increasing age was beginning to slow him down, making it difficult to continue doing mechanical repairs to bring in a paltry income, he asked me to help him register for an old age pension. All of his personal documents had been burnt in a fire some years previously, so there was no birth certificate, but his age



qualified him for a pension. The Registrar agreed to accept a document from me certifying that he was over the pensionable age, and thereafter he was able to go to Chipinge once a month to draw a pension, which was adequate for his very modest requirements.

Denis and Bill usually travelled in to the little hamlet at Birchenough Bridge each week to collect their mail and to purchase essential provisions. They normally would also call in for a social chat at the hotel, then a quaint, homely, and popular pub which was the regular meeting place for a number of interesting local characters.

The Townleys had a long association with the successive proprietors of the hotel, owned for many years by Dick Stock and his wife Ruth. Dick was an enthusiastic hunter, and seemed to do little work in the hotel. His wife, known as "Reckless Ruth", wore a monocle, smoked a cigar, and could swear like a trooper. She was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable botanist, and she was in the habit of corresponding with scientists at Kew Gardens in England.

She had discovered a rare Sabi Star plant with pure white flowers out in the bush, and had transported it back to the hotel, where it was a prized exhibit when in flower in the winter months. This led to many requests for seeds (which of course grew into plants with flowers of a normal colour) and cuttings. Requests for the latter were always refused, but nevertheless the long-suffering plant was intermittently mutilated by unscrupulous visitors. One of the tragedies of Ruth Stock's life was that she was unable to locate again a yellow-flowered variety which to her dying day she swore she had found somewhere out there. In spite of wandering many miles and spending long hot hours searching, she never again saw the elusive plant she sought.

The Townleys and the Stocks became good friends, and several times when the Stocks went off on hunting trips to Mozambique, Denis and Bill Townley looked after the hotel in their absence. One day, on returning from such a trip, Dick Stock accused the Townleys of misappropriating seven shillings and sixpence from the till. This was an unforgivable insult to the Townleys, who had little need for cash or material things, and they vowed never to return to the hotel until Dick Stock had died, AND Denis said he would drink a cup of tea to celebrate that event!

Denis Townley's dietary habits were unusual. He had an extraordinarily sweet tooth. On our visits we would take him two or three pounds of mixed confectionery, and a cake, all of which he would take to bed with him, there to be totally demolished in comfort through the night.

He lived mainly on water, bread, boiled eggs, and other odd items, and, unlike his wife, he always refused to share our meal when we camped nearby. He drank **only** water ("that's all lions need"), but he had resolved to drink a cup of tea in celebration when two mortal enemies died — they did, and so did he! When visiting our camp, Denis would squat cross-legged in the dust, never on one of our camping chairs or on the tarpaulin, though in his own lounge he sat in the comfortable chairs he had constructed from local hard woods — he was a gifted carpenter.

He was blessed with extraordinary dexterity and ingenuity approaching genius. He loved using his hands to make things. I have in my possession a set of personalised ivory paper knives which Denis carved and decorated and presented to my wife Jenny and me on various visits.

One of them, surmounted by a frog with eyes of garnet gem stones, which Townley had picked up in the bush while prospecting near his home, depicts the life of the amphibian from egg to tadpole to adulthood, through the medium of delicate depictions fashioned from crushed malachite and epoxy-resin, and skilfully inlaid into the ivory. Another, with a handle beautifully made from the most attractive wood of a vegetable ivory tree on the banks of his pool, features a picture of that tree inlaid alongside my initials, and an insect with a body of garnet. The third knife has a handle of golden hippo hide, and features four hippo inlays made from epoxy-resin mixed with the crushed gold of Bill's wedding ring!

This last item demonstrates better than any words could do the complete disregard Denis and Bill Townley had for material possessions. Although as poor as the proverbial church-mouse in terms of his financial wealth, he once gave away a Leica camera to a visitor who admired it, and he disposed of his 6.5 mm Mannlicher Schoenauer rifle as a free gift to a truck driver from the Railway Motor Services who he met while out fishing on the Devure River.

George Smith-Wright of Devuli Ranch confirmed the Townleys' total disregard of material values, and he recalled that on a visit to Tukuruku Bill Townley had once given his wife a beautiful set of jewellery which had belonged to her mother, while on another occasion Denis melted down some of the surviving family silver to adorn a brooch made of lion's claws for Mrs Smith-Wright.

Townley was a skilled motor mechanic, adept at converting bits and pieces of old cars into highly functional purpose-built vehicles for his own use. He had a home-made open shooting brake in which he travelled around the lowveld bush. It had an unusually high clearance, in an age when such attributes were limited to heavy trucks and were not common - in contrast to today when high clearance "4x4s" are commonplace. The Townley-mobile, known as "The Jug" (short for juggernaut) and fashioned from an ex-army vehicle which had been scrapped, was skilfully geared so that it purred along at 30 miles per hour with the engine just ticking over. The dashboard ignition and oil pressure lamps were set into the eyes of a mounted owl head, and on the bonnet was a large rampant lion sculpted in silver metal.

We enjoyed several stimulating rides purring quietly through the lowveld bush on game drives, before Denis gave the vehicle away to a National Parks Warden.

Another well known Townley vehicle was an old VW kombi which he had restored and adapted in his bundu workshop. I cannot recall any notable mechanical features, although I am sure they existed, but one thing which I found amazing was his concealed gun cabinet. This particular model VW had a perforated air vent and heating delivery system, which directed warm air behind the front seat through a much-perforated metal panel containing a large number of rows of small holes about 3 mm in diameter. If you inserted a matchstick into one of the holes (you had to remember which one!) the panel opened with a well-oiled soft click to reveal a huge and fearsome home made blunderbuss pistol, with which Townley was confident he could fight off a horde of invaders in the event of hostile action.

Interesting as the shooting brake and VW panel van were, they were as nothing in comparison to Denis Townley's *piece de resistance* — a Rolls-Royce lovingly restored for its owner, George Smith-Wright of Devuli. It was a 1926 Phantom I Rolls, which

had been converted into a hearse, and had then been purchased by an artist, who had installed a Ford cab and allowed the vehicle to deteriorate. George had seen it standing in the street in Harare bearing a "For Sale" sign, and he bought it for fifty pounds. He had it carted down to Birchenough and on to Tuturuku, where Townley agreed to overhaul it and convert it into a high quality open touring vehicle for the bush.

Denis completely stripped and over-hauled the car, making many replacement parts on site from his scrap yard, and he constructed a beautiful body out of hardboard. The restoration and conversion took a year of hard work, and he charged Smith-Wright the modest sum of two hundred and forty pounds for the whole expert job.

On another occasion the Townleys were surprised to see a span of oxen approaching their home pulling a large Packard motor car. It belonged to another interesting character called Paddy Power, a trader from Bikita, and he had been unable to get the vehicle to run properly. He sent a note asking Denis to look at it, and Townley accepted the challenge. He found that it required a new set of valves, and as there was no prospect of acquiring authentic spares, he manufactured a set on his home-made lathe from scrap, and the Packard gave its owner many years of ostentatious pleasure in the Bikita district.

In 1959, while travelling slowly down the steep and rocky slope approaching Townley's home, the front brakes on my VW Beetle seized. In no time at all he had stripped the wheel assembly and made and installed new parts created from his scrap heap. On another occasion some years later, Ken Cackett and I were on a camping trip to the pans on the east bank of the Save, enjoying the wildfowl for which the area was famous. Disaster struck when the ignition key of Ken's Peugeot 404 station wagon broke off in the lock of the tailgate.

We were unable to release the steering lock or start the vehicle, and we sent a message off to Birchenough Bridge Hotel, requesting that a distress signal be passed on should anyone see Denis Townley. Within twenty four hours he arrived at our remote camp site, and with great ingenuity stripped all the relevant parts and got the car going again.

Throughout the time during which they lived on the banks of the Devure, the Townleys continued their observation and study of the local wildlife, concerning whose welfare they were fiercely protective.

They once caught an Afrikaans man from Enkeldoorn (Chivu) who had shot an eland, and Denis was required to travel to that town as a witness for the prosecution. When requested to take the oath by placing his hand on the bible, Denis declined, telling the magistrate that he would not take the oath on a book "comprised entirely of fairy tales and dirty stories", but that he would undertake to tell the truth!

Both of the Townleys were excellent entomologists, and with his skill as a craftsman he perfected a technique not only for lifting butterfly wing scales onto a sheet of paper intact, but also reversing them onto another sheet of paper so that they were the right way up. He made several beautiful pictures with this home-devised method.

The Townleys took several years to prepare a manuscript and illustrations for a book on the spoor of all the animals of the lowveld. Judging by some of Townley's documents in my possession, the text must have been extremely interesting and well written. The illustrations were photographs of a series of foot-marks framed by copper

rings of various sizes placed over spoor in the sand, after Denis and Bill had prepared and smoothed the wet sand and then waited with infinite patience to observe animals coming to drink.

It took many seasons for them to complete their comprehensive collection of footprints of most of the lowveld's wild animals, and the precious manuscripts and photographs were eventually sent off to a publisher in the USA, only to be lost, reported to have been stolen *en route*.

Both of the Townleys read widely whenever they could get their hands on good books, and Denis had a particularly lively grasp of the English language. He wrote most amusingly, as well as providing graphic descriptions of his many observations. His limericks were hilarious, even outrageous, and when in her last years his wife's illness finally caught up with her, and she was virtually bed-ridden, he kept her entertained in the dark hours by reading to her from his assembled manuscripts. During these sad weeks they reminisced together wistfully about the satisfying and exciting life of deeply bonded companionship they had for so long led in special wild places.

One morning, having not been able to get out of bed for a few days, her legs and face severely swollen by oedema, Bill told Denis that it was time for him to take her to "Dr Bob", their friend Dr Robert Carshalton of Chipinge. Denis helped her out, and she stopped for a rest on the stone bench he had made outside their front door. Here an extraordinary thing happened: the wild cat, never demonstratively affectionate in all the years it had lived with them, yowled loudly and climbed up and lay across her shoulders.

Denis helped her into the car, and they set off together for the last time. As they were approaching Birchenough Bridge, she slumped onto his shoulder and said "Denis, I am so tired". He stopped at the hotel to make a quick phone call to Dr Carshalton, asking him to meet them on the road. When he returned to the car, she appeared to be asleep on the seat. He lifted her up gently to lean on his shoulder again, and she murmured softly "Denis my love", and died.

Dr Bob met Denis on the road, and Townley, utterly devastated, persuaded the doctor to take Bill's body and to "do whatever is necessary", and he turned around again and went back to the home by the river.

Life for Denis Townley was unbearable after the death of his wife, and he was very lonely on his own in the cottage on the Devure. One day, while working in his workshop, he was attacked by a band of guerillas. He managed to repel them, but was then evacuated by the police, who refused to permit him to return to his home.

He was taken in as a boarder by Mrs Jo Scott on Busi Farm, Chipinge, and she was extremely kind to him. Eventually he became ill, and he died in Mutare.

I flew over the pool on the Devure some time later, and was greeted by a scene of desolate devastation. The pool had almost silted up with choking sand, there was no sign of the hippo or other wildlife, trees were being felled, fires started, and the surrounding area was in the process of being settled by people who hoped to scratch a living from the shallow rocky soil in this arid place.

I was glad that the scene could not be witnessed by the Townleys, who had spent much of their life loving and protecting this once very special place.

# The Story of Mkwesine Estate

by John Wilson\*

*This is the text of a talk given to the members of the History Society of Zimbabwe at Triangle on 26 June 1999*

One of three large Zimbabwean sugar estates in the southeastern lowveld, Mkwesine lies on the west bank of the Mkwesine river, which rises in the Matsai communal land and drains relatively dry lowveld country in a southeasterly direction, before flowing through the Sangwe communal area to join the Save river. The mean annual rainfall of the area is of the order of 550mm, and by the early 1960s, some 100 000 ha within the Mkwesine catchment lay unallocated owing to the scarcity of surface water. The Mkwesine river is a dry sandy bed for most of the year, and subject to occasional flow in the wet season. However, the area was well stocked with game, and it was also used for drought relief grazing for cattle as the need arose.

Hunting parties frequented the area in the dry season, with Senuko Pools on the Mkwesine river being the favoured camping site. A regular visitor was D. C. (Boss) Lilford, the successful farmer and businessman from Nyabira, who some years later took up ranching land in the area.

## **PROPOSAL TO GAME RANCH THE AREA**

In 1959, J. H. R. Eastwood, a sugar planter from Triangle, made a formal proposal that the area be utilized as game ranching land, but this was strongly rejected by neighbouring cattle ranchers on the grounds that such land use would endanger their herds through the spread of Foot and Mouth disease. Official measures to counter the spread of the disease followed, and these included the elimination of all buffalo in the area, as they were considered the chief harbourers of the disease. In addition, game-proof fences were erected to curtail the movement of game. These resulted in bad publicity from press reports that game was dying of thirst, in some instances being denied access to scarce water during droughts by these fences.

Typically the vegetation in the region is lowveld open woodland dominated by mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*) and knobthorn (*Acacia nigrescens*). However, in contrast to this woodland there existed several hundred hectares of open grassland in the Jete Vlei, which now lies in the middle of the present day estate. The Jete Vlei was heavily populated by game including, interestingly, the Kori Bustard, which was subsequently adopted as the emblem of the estate. The older Shangaan people from the Save still refer to Mkwesine Estate as 'Jete', their name for the place.

## **START OF LAKE MACDOUGALL**

Apart from hunting, little happened in the area until the dissolution of the ill fated Central African Federation in December 1963. At that time, monies remaining in the Federal Water Development Fund were allocated to the Southern Rhodesia Government to construct Manjirenji Dam in the upper reaches of the neighbouring Chiredzi river,

\* John Wilson was General Manager of Mkwesine Estate from 1981 to 1989.

the plans for this dam having already been drawn up. Water was to be canalised down the watershed between the Mkwesine and Chiredzi to serve the proposed Nandi expansion to the lowveld sugar industry which lay further downstream. So work soon started on the construction of Lake MacDougall, as it was first named in honour of the Triangle pioneer. This was to prove a decisive step in the development of the area.

The crisis of sanctions which followed UDI in November 1965 threatened a shortage of wheat in the country but, happily, agricultural research at the Sabi Valley Experiment Station had already shown that wheat could be grown successfully under irrigation in the lowveld winter. Fortuitously, the proposed Nandi project had recently collapsed. The Manjirenji water was available for other development. The S. R. Government had recently set up the Sabi Limpopo Authority, a statutory body, to coordinate and promote the development of irrigation in the lowveld. The SLA, through its subsidiary, the South Eastern Lowveld Development Company, undertook to develop land urgently for wheat production, using water from the Manjirenji canal currently under construction.\* John Wilson was General Manager of Mkwesine Estate from 1981 to 1989.

### **INCEPTION OF THE ESTATE**

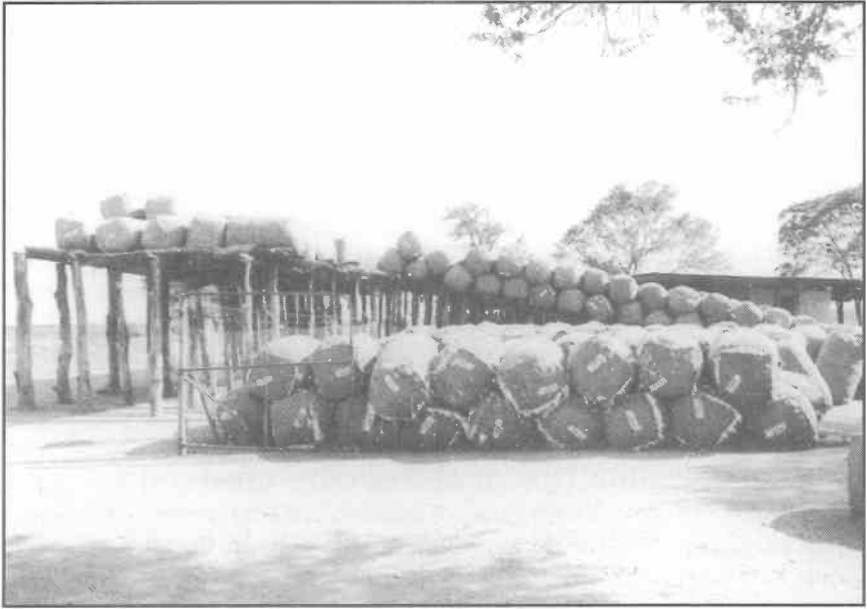
By this time, the canal 37 km long, had reached the vicinity of the Jete Vlei where formal pedological survey showed the land to be suitable for irrigation. Bush clearing and land preparation commenced and the urgent programme soon brought ESC power to the area. The rapid installation of overhead irrigation enabled the first wheat crop to be sown on the estate in May 1966, a short six months after UDI, and a remarkable achievement by Jack Quinton, Chairman of SLA, and his team notably Bob Hack, L. Jaklitsch, and Oscar Ashton among others.

Wheat, being a winter crop, was grown initially in rotation with several summer crops including cotton, soyabeans, groundnuts, and rice. Cotton proved the most suitable and, importantly, it offered extensive employment to pickers recruited in the region. Being hand-picked, the quality of the cotton lint was excellent. To facilitate the marketing of these new lowveld crops, a cotton gin was constructed at Triangle, and the railway line was extended from Chiredzi to Nandi siding where a Grain Marketing Board depot was established.

Mkwesine Estate, with its now permanent and substantial water reserves, enabled the opening up of the neighbouring unallocated land for cattle ranching by the provision of stock-watering pipelines, which SLA constructed to the account of the new landowners. These ranches, aptly named Senuko ranches after the permanent pools on the Mkwesine river, were quickly taken up and stocked. 'Boss' Lilford purchased significant land naming one of his holdings Hammond ranch after the Hammond dip tank which had been built there many years before by an early cattle grazier.

### **SETTLEMENT OF PRIVATE FARMERS BEGINS**

It was Government policy that settlement by private landowners should feature strongly in the development of the irrigation estate, and 40% of the water allocation was earmarked for this purpose. In 1971 the first eight settlement farms were allocated within the estate then managed by Dave Hewitt, and these were autonomous and self financing. Initially, they followed the wheat/cotton rotation as practised on the estate.



**Cotton bales awaiting transhipment**

This settlement had the effect of widening the local community to include private farmers and company employees. The new community required amenities, and it was not long before the company had provided a handsome recreational club and golf course which have remained hallmarks of the district ever since. Commercial and administrative services were available in Chiredzi 50 km away.

### **SALE OF THE ESTATE**

It was also Government policy to offer the estate for sale to the private sector. Bids to purchase were made separately by Hippo Valley Estates, and Triangle Limited (both being established sugar millers in the region), Hippo and Triangle in a consortium, and by Lonrho, the latter having recently developed sugar estates in Malawi. The successful bid came from the consortium of Hippo and Triangle, which purchased Mkwesine Estate in November 1974 with the intention of expanding their sugar production exploits, jointly, as marketing allowed. The estate was 13 700 ha in extent, about half the land being classed as irrigable.

Soon thereafter, in the face of a sharp drop in world sugar prices and other difficulties associated with trade sanctions, the new owners postponed establishing sugar-cane on the estate and continued to grow cotton and wheat. Nevertheless, in anticipation of committing the estate in the longer term to sugar growing, the consortium embarked on two costly development projects in 1976. Firstly, an extensive programme was launched to convert the overhead irrigation to furrow irrigation, which was preferred for sugar-cane growing at that time, being easier in respect of irrigation labour management. This required the levelling of the land together with the provision of suitably engineered infield canals and furrows, as well as night storage dams.

The second major developmental project was the extension of the national railway from the GMB depot at Nandi siding to within the estate, a distance of 35km. This work was undertaken by the National Railways of Zimbabwe to the account of the consortium, as it was planned that when the estate was put down to sugar-cane, all Mkwesine cane would be shipped to the mills using conventional rail transport. This means of cane transport had never been tried before but the NRZ were keen to get the lucrative business. However, there were further delays and it was not until four years later that commercial sugar-cane was planted in earnest on the estate.

Interestingly, this extension to the conventional rail system was developed exclusively to haul cane from the estate and to return the heavy chains used to bundle the cane. It was never envisaged that it be used for other traffic, because of the seasonal nature of the cane haulage and because no NRZ staff or buildings were provided at the cane loading sidings. This was despite the substantial tonnages of cotton and fertilizer that required moving. It was to be a cane-train service only.

### **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION OF SUGAR-CANE COMMENCES**

Starting in April 1980, over 30 000 tonnes of certified seed-cane, sufficient for planting 3 000 ha, was transported by RMS lorries from Hippo Valley to the Mkwesine fields, a distance varying between 40 and 50 km. The crop was planted in record time ready for harvest a little over a year later. A single planting on this scale had never been attempted before in Southern Africa and the logistics were formidable, especially as the estate staff had no significant previous practical experience of sugar-cane. The successful outcome was a credit to the Mkwesine team, ably led by Oscar Ashton who was General Manager at the time. The balance of the land, some 3 000 ha, remained down to cotton.

Once planted, the growing of the crop was relatively straightforward and successful. The next major hurdle was the harvest, which commenced in May, 1981. The cane was cut and stacked by hand into 6-tonne bundles, which was the system used throughout the sugar belt at that time. Using hydraulically operated self-loading Perry trailers drawn by agricultural tractors, the bundles were hauled from the fields to the rail sidings, three of which traversed the estate. This method, too, was reasonably straightforward and well tested on the parent estates.

However, the logistics of handling several thousand tonnes of bundled cane each day on the sidings, and then loading the trains, with no previous experience by the railways or estate staff, was taxing to say the least. Hydraulic cranes constructed on conventional agricultural tractors were used to load the 6-tonne bundles on to conventional 40-tonne rail wagons to make up trains, or 'rakes' in railway jargon, of 1200 tonnes each. Derailments were commonplace in the early phases, some spectacular, and all disruptive. But with improvement in skill all round, the system, untried anywhere else at that time, finally proved successful, and some 400 000 tonnes of cane were moved to the mill at Hippo 50 km away between June and November of the 1981 harvest season. Since that time, each harvest season has been characterised by the daily transport from Mkwesine of three train loads totalling 3 600 tonnes split between the Hippo and Triangle Mills, a distance of 50 and 75 km respectively.

The eight settlers soon changed across to the more profitable sugar-cane production,





**A six tonne bundle of sugarcane being loaded on to a Perry trailer**



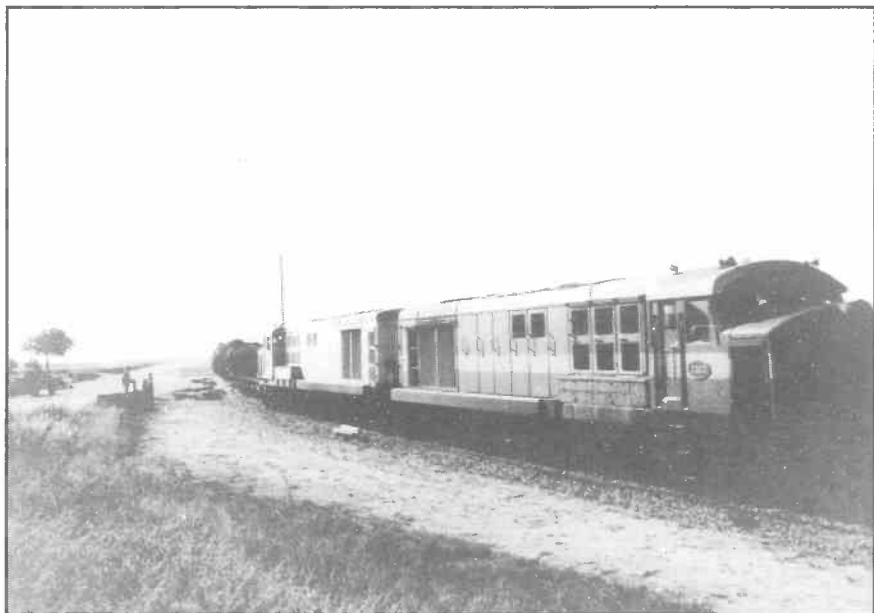
**The bundle loaded and ready for transhipment to the rail siding**



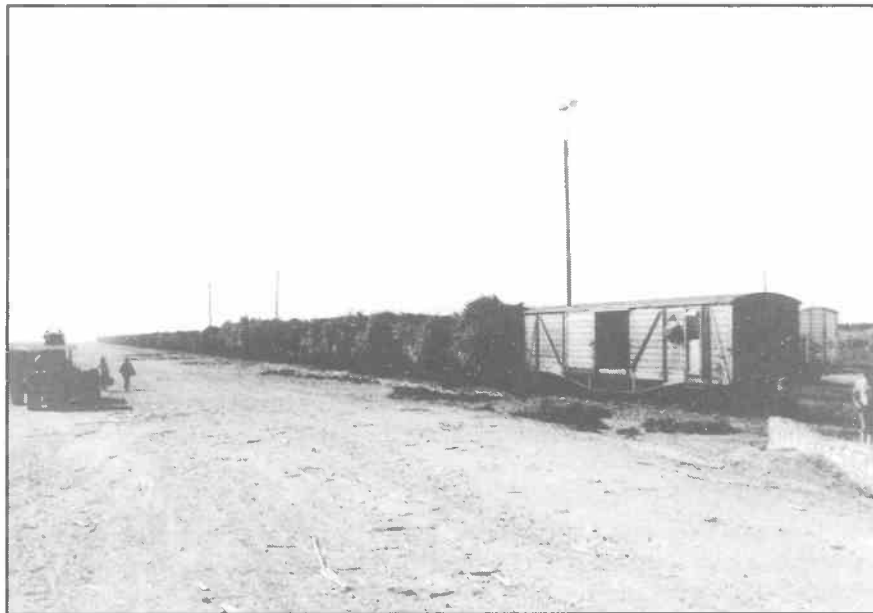
**Bundle being offloaded at the train siding**



**Hydraulic crane loading bundle on to train wagon**



**A fully loaded train (1200 tonnes cane) was hauled by two diesel locos**



**A fully loaded train with guards van ready to leave the siding for the mill**



**Derailments were common in the early years**

forming themselves into the Mkwesine Mill Group, their cane being carted to the mills in the same way on rail, once they had delivered it to nearest siding. Their cane production was governed by a quota system imposed by the Millers.

### **SUBSIDIZED RAIL TRANSPORT**

An important and interesting consequence of the unsuccessful Lonrho bid to purchase the estate in 1974 was that, following their intention to provide a sugar mill on the estate, whereby transport of cane for processing to the neighbouring lowveld mills would have been unnecessary, a clause was included in the Agreement of Sale to the consortium to the effect that growers, settled within the 40% of the overall estate water allocation, would not be required to bear the cost of transport of their cane from the estate to the mills at Hippo and Triangle. This meant that growers within the settlement schemes on the estate had only to haul their cane to the nearest cane loading siding where subsequent loading and rail transport was to the account of the consortium. In this respect they equated with similar settlers on Triangle and Hippo, where the private farms were not far from the mills. Excluded from this concession were any growers outside of the formal estate settlement schemes.

### **WHEAT AND COTTON PHASED OUT**

Wheat production continued at Mkwesine until 1979 when it became economically unattractive. Yields were lower under the warm lowveld conditions compared to the cooler highveld where irrigation had expanded considerably since the days of UDI, and where wheat could be grown in rotation with soyabeans very successfully. Lowveld wheat was no longer critical to the economy of the country.

Cotton production had proved very successful at Mkwesine using high quality lint

varieties developed at the Chiredzi Research Station. Seasonal picking labour was plentiful from the neighbouring communal areas and the cotton was ginned at the Triangle Gin. However, as the cane crushing capacity of the two mills was expanded increasing the need for cane, cotton was gradually replaced. At peak nearly 4000 ha of cotton was grown annually at Mkwesine including 700 ha by the Settlers which would have yielded over 10 000 tonnes of top quality cotton making a substantial contribution to the foreign exchange earnings of the country.

### **FURTHER SETTLEMENT**

In order to fulfil its obligation to settle private growers to the full 40% level of the RWA water allocation, suitable land was cleared in the Scott block on the western flank of the estate in 1980 and developed for overhead irrigation, which was selected in this instance because the soil was light in texture and the land slopes were generally too steep for furrow irrigation. The Manjirenji canal was raised at the estate's expense to provide more water and, in June 1981, this land was planted to sugar-cane.

Over the next two years 191 smallscale growers, selected by the new post-Independence Department of Agriculture, were granted plots of irrigated sugar-cane in the first smallscale sugar settlement scheme of its kind in Zimbabwe. The essentials of the scheme were that the sugar-cane plot size approximated 10 ha in extent, that core houses were supplied in nearby villages on half hectare plots with running water and electricity where the farmers could grow their vegetables and poultry, that Mkwesine staff undertook to train the plot-holders in sugar-cane growing as most had no previous experience of the crop, and that the estate further undertook to harvest and haul the plot-holder's crops, given that they did not have the resources to carry out that work. The responsibility of financing the scheme was carried entirely by Mkwesine Estate. The capital loan of \$25 000, covering the cost of the sugar-cane plot and the core house, was repayable over 15 years, after which time the plot-holder could take title. An annual cropping loan was recoverable out of crop proceeds and in addition the plot-holder was provided with a living allowance paid in advance of crop proceeds. The plot-holders soon formed themselves into the Chipiwa Mill Group and set about providing schools and a clinic.

In consequence of the fact that the cost of the irrigation conversion work undertaken in 1976 had been capitalised into an overall developed land charge including the land provided to Chipiwa growers, and that this conversion work had been limited to the heavier soils on the estate which remained outside the Chipiwa settlement scheme, the estate undertook to subsidise the power used by the Chipiwa growers, who used electric power in the overhead irrigation of their fields.

### **WATER SUPPLIES**

Water to the estate and the settlement schemes is supplied and controlled by the Regional Water Authority, which developed out of SLA and which is responsible for the upkeep of the dams and main canal of the system. Including regenerated water, there is sufficient irrigation for a total of about 7 400 ha of sugar-cane within the estate and its settlement schemes, and this yields over 860 000 tonnes of sugar-cane annually which in the mid 1990s was about 23% of the total annual crush in the lowveld.



**Core house with domestic power and water as provided in the  
Chipiwa Settement Scheme**

Interestingly, although the estate is riparian to the Mkwazine river, that river has never contributed to the water requirements of the estate. The catchment is not strongly yielding, and only limited quantities could be abstracted from the sand.

### **THE IMPACT OF DROUGHTS**

Since development started, the region has been subject to at least three serious droughts, resulting in the severe impairment of irrigation water supply. The first two in 1982/83 and 1984/85 were overcome with difficulty by the strict rationing of the meagre irrigation reserves, but the drought of 1992/93 proved too severe and all the cane was lost. When irrigation reserves were restored later, strategic seed cane supplies had to be brought in from outside the lowveld sugar belt to commence re-establishing the crop.

### **THE FATE OF THE GAME**

The non arable areas on the estate were paddocked for cattle ranching and game preservation, with fine herds of eland, sable, wildebeest, kudu, and zebra. Impala and warthog occurred in profusion.

During the droughts, game migrated to the Estate from neighbouring land where they were able to find temporary sustenance from the perimeter of the irrigated cane fields and, in the worst cases, the abandoned cane fields. In addition, cane tops were fed to both the cattle and the game in order to ensure their preservation in the region.

A particularly unpleasant feature of the large canals associated with an irrigation scheme of this size was the frequency of game falling into and becoming trapped therein. This occurred quite commonly in the dry seasons, and even more so during

the droughts when grazing and water were scarce in the paddocks. The animals fell into the canal either attempting to cross or to drink from the canal. The canals were steep sided and cement plastered with an abrasive finish and the unfortunate animals being out of their depth, were mostly unable to extricate themselves, often wearing their hooves to the bone in their struggles. Some were saved but most died by drowning, it being difficult to monitor the many kilometres of canal especially at night when the game tended to encroach on to the canal servitudes despite the presence of cattle fencing. The problem was later overcome by the erection of gameproof fencing along the main canal. The game areas were incorporated into the Save Conservancy in 1994, a part fulfilment of the game ranching proposal made by Eastwood in 1959.

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESTATE IN REFLECTION**

The estate arose out of expediency to produce wheat in the face of sanctions after UDI. In that context, it fulfilled an important role not only in savings of foreign exchange had it been possible to import wheat, but also in its contribution to foreign exchange earnings through cotton production.

There is, however, more argument in its position as a sugar-cane producer. Normal planning would favour sugar-cane fields being located close to mills to minimise the heavy annual costs of transporting the cane to the mill, providing suitable soil and irrigation water are available. In this respect the original Nandi project was well placed being located on suitable soil near Hippo Valley. Irrigation water was to be canalised from Manjirenji dam. The question arises as to whether it would have been more economical in the long term to have extended the canal and located the estate nearer the mill at Hippo and so cut down on annual transport costs, or, as happened in practice, to have extended the railway to the estate to enable sugar-cane to be grown there.

Had the Lonrho bid to purchase the estate been successful with the provision of a mill on the estate the need to transport the sugar-cane off the estate would have been negated. However, the mill would have remained relatively small with an annual crush of about 860 000 tonnes. The trend has certainly been over the last two decades or so to increase the size of sugar mills to cut down on overheads, principally staff. Such expansion was not possible at Mkwesine due to limitations of irrigation water.

There is no doubt that the estate has remained economically viable as a sugar-cane producer and there was insufficient water from Manjirenji to have satisfied both Mkwesine and Nandi. This illustrates the strength of the local sugar industry which has the advantage of approximately half the annual production being consumed internally in the country which lends strength to the industry whenever export prices on the world market are weak.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Mr. D. Ashton, who had a long association with the Sabi Limpopo Authority and the South Eastern Development Company at the time the estate was started, and who was General Manager of the estate from 1976 to 1982, supplied much of the information recorded in this paper. This was supplemented from my own experience as General Manager from 1982 to 1989.

Reference was also made to J. H. R. (Ritz) Eastwood's book entitled *After MacDougall: from tick bird to guinea fowl*. The recollections of a "Pioneer Sugar Planter" (1954–1964) of the beginnings of the Rhodesian lowveld sugar industry. Published by Triangle Ltd.

# THE HINDOO TEMPLE

by M. Pearce

*This is the text of a talk given to members of the History Society of Zimbabwe at the Hindoo Temple on 21 July 1998. The text was written by the temple architect, Mr M. Pearce of the Pearce Partnership and read by Mr Vijay Patel.*

In June 1987, my partner, Bennett Fothergill of Cathcart Fothergill and Pearce, walked into my office and asked if I wanted to design a temple for the Hindoo community. He had come from Savilles the Tailors where Mr Magan Senior had asked him if he knew of an architect who could help them. I accepted the challenge immediately and worried about the consequences later.

At my first meeting with the building committee of the Hindoo Society, I was pleased to be allowed to answer to one member of the committee who would work with me and at the same time represent the views of the whole community. This was Mr Magan. Good architecture results from a triangular relationship of the equal forces: the client, the architect and the contractor. Each has an equally important role.

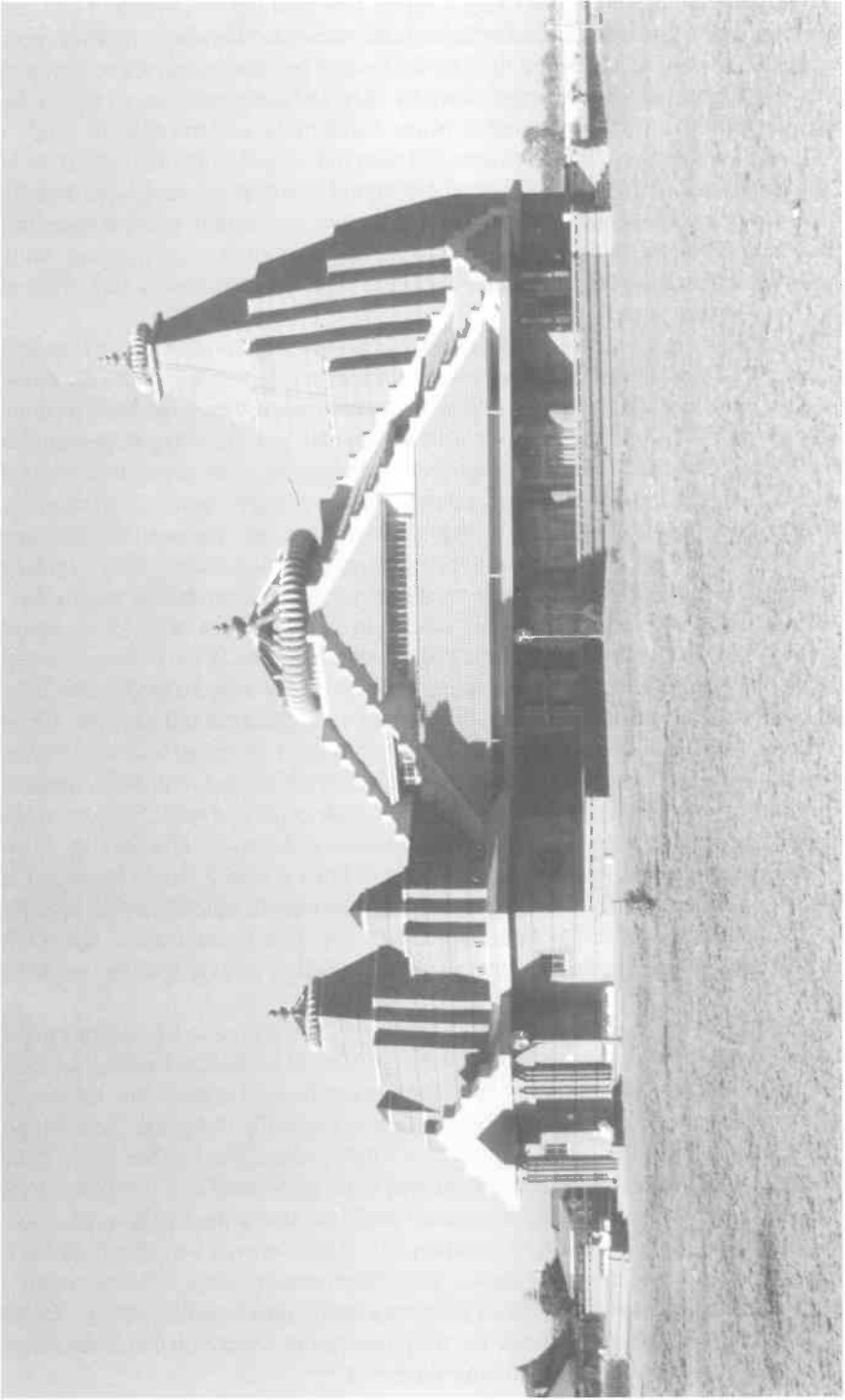
This temple was an act of faith by the community which had to be lead by a few who carried the enormous burden of credibility in me, and of convincing the members of about 2000 families that a Zimbabwean born architect of English origin and training could deliver a temple in an architectural language very different from his own. At this first meeting I was presented with a sketch done by a member of the community. I don't have this sketch because they asked for it back but it had the essence of the image I ended up with after a long battle with my own origins. They wanted the tower — Gharbhgriha, a hall — The Mandala — to seat 900 on a carpet, and an entrance — the Pravesh dwara. One member of the committee asked me with great eagerness if the entrance could be composed of three towers.

My mother, who had been to Agra in 1984, had sent me a great bundle of photographs mainly of the architecture of the Great Moguls but with one snap of a new Hindoo temple being built just outside Jaipur. She also sent a copy of Bamber Gascoigne's, *The Great Moguls*. These photographs influenced the design and colour of both the Land Management Building at the University of Zimbabwe and of Batanai Gardens in Jason Moyo Avenue, which were both completed in 1986 and designed before the Temple. In a sense I was already in India. However, the Islamic architecture of the Moguls is very different from Hindu architecture.

When the Moguls invaded the fertile plains of the Indus Valley in 1398, the Hindu religion had been established for at least four thousand years. In very broad terms the architecture of India can be divided into three historic periods.

1. The Architecture of the Indus Valley Dravidian civilisation from about 2500 BC to the Aryan Invasion about 1500 BC.
2. Hindu Architecture from the Aryan Invasion to the Mogul Invasion in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century AD.
3. Mogul Architecture from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.





**The Hindu Temple**

Hindu religion as we know it today, I learnt, was born out of a fusion of this early Dravidian, highly sophisticated and urbanised civilisation and the more primitive Aryan, of nomadic origin, who enslaved the Dravidians and became immersed in the fertile plains of the Indus which were surrounded by deep and dangerous forests full of dark spirits. One quite out-spoken member of the community told me that the circle of rings crowning the tops of Hindu towers had been introduced by the Bahamans during the Mogul invasion because they resembled Mogul head-dresses and were therefore some form of appeasement to the conquering Islamic invaders to prevent them from destroying every temple they came across. I found that such crowns appear on the towers of the Kandariya Mahadeo temples dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD so I am not sure of the historical truth of this.

The form of the tower shaped like hands in prayer may have origins in the early shrines made from bundles of tall papyrus reeds which were anchored into the ground in a square and then bent inwards to join at a central point where the ends were tied in a great knot. This was then capped with a large clay pot. Archetypes, perhaps like words, become detached through usage from the circumstances which brought them into being and gather, in their passage through time, different meanings. The golden pots placed one inside the other and topping the crowns are very similar to the same pots placed in ceremonial positions in the traditional Shona kitchen. They symbolise wealth and food. The golden coconut on the very top is the symbol of prosperity.

The pediments were stepped and are waiting to receive statues of the Hindu images of deities. The base of the temple is boat like and was originally to be lying in a moat of water. This idea came from my reading about the great Surya Temple which was visualised as the Sun God's chariot rolling across the firmament and has great wheels carved into its base. It also has a great chain of animals; elephants and bulls pulling the chariot from the front. The pictures of temples which I found in libraries appeared to me to have grown out of the sea encrusted with coral and shell like forms and statues expressing the sensuality, the erotic fantasies and above all the fertility of life. I went on holiday about this time to Mombasa where I visited 5 Hindu temples. One of these was an immaculate Jain temple made of white marble which had been imported stone by stone from India. My boat-like temple was, in a sense, formed around the idea that it had floated, like this one, in from its Indian origins into the garden in Harare.

This garden (which still has not been landscaped according to my design) was to be surrounded in a wall of vegetation which is to hide all of the surrounding suburban buildings so that only the images of Indian origin can be seen surrounding the temple. The courtyard formed in front of the entrance was originally designed like a stepped well with water at its centre surrounded by a dance area. The famous chain dance performed at the harvest festivals of light was to be performed in a complete circuit around the temple following the balustraded walkway under the overhanging roof.

Inside the hall you feel the non-directionality of this form of worship. You can sit in lotus facing any direction you choose and wherever you choose. The ceremony is performed on the far stage like a family preparing a meal on a sandalwood fire. Anyone from any religion can attend. Inside the deep resonating tower you can walk around the altar and meditate, focusing on your inner self.

## **COSMIC SUN**

The cosmic sun surrounds the Umla; a Sanskrit symbol representing the universal source of energy. Normally a temple would be dedicated to one of the deities. In this case, for political reasons, the Umla was chosen to avoid showing favour to any particular deity.

## **THE MANDALA**

In the centre of the dome spanning the hall there is a Mandala or an ancient meditation diagram which I found in a book of Tantric symbols. This one symbolises regeneration. The triangles are the vulva penetrated by the rod. This construction is carried in a lotus flower which floats on the sea.

## **COMMENTS ON CONSTRUCTION**

The great temples of Northern India from where most members of the local community came originally were so embedded in their social, natural and economic environments as to appear to be organic; like living organisms. In fact the Kailasa temple in Dravida style is carved out of the mountain of rock. This takes time and money but it does avoid the need for scaffolding! We chose brick construction; the building team comprising myself, Mr Vieira of Central African Building and Construction Company and Robin Smallwood, the Engineer.

Forming the towers in coursed brick became possible once we accepted stepping inwards at each course. This was only possible once we accepted allowing the rainwater to penetrate the stepped brickwork and to form a drying out cavity void with another brick skin on the inside. The towers are thus formed with two skins of one brick thick walls with a 230 mm wide cavity between them. The cavity is formed by holding the two skins apart with cross diaphragm walls. Incidentally in the case of the old stone temples the rainwater is simply allowed to penetrate. The protrusions appearing in the towers which look like dove cots are air vents to dry out the cavity between the two brick skins. In fact, if they became inhabited by birds this would be acceptable in religious terms. In the Jain temple I visited the birds were encouraged to carry plaques to the gods.

Hindu Architecture is based very rigidly on a square grid. The square is sacred and cannot be compromised. It can be hidden by embellishment but the basic geometry must be pure since each square is thought to be the abode of a deity and the location of the square in the overall grid of squares should accord with the importance attached to that deity.

I am not a priest architect as I would have had to be in India. I simply followed the rules by working them out from photographs of the great temples. Working with Robin Smallwood and Mr Vieira, we drew a plan of each of the towers at every 700 mm vertical interval. The brick layers were able to set out each 700 mm level by measuring off the vertical plumb bob in the centre of the tower. We built the small entrance towers first so that when we started on the big one we had worked out all the problems. However, the scale of the 30 m tower together with the complexity of its geometry, and the vast array of scaffolding surrounding the tower was not fully appreciated until we reached two thirds of the way up.

Then the rains and the lightning came continuously for three weeks, and at times sections of brickwork would collapse inwards and fall to the bottom inside. Because the whole tower was hidden by scaffolding it was impossible to see its shape. The result is a not quite a perfect top section. It tapered too soon, resulting in the slab on top sticking out too much. We could not reduce this slab because by this time we had already made the crown which was ready to be craned into position. The central crown over the hall is made of precast concrete steel and fibreglass. Each concrete ring weighs half a ton and was lifted into position by a mobile crane. The whole crown weighs 40 tons and is supported at mid-span by the four concrete arched portals.

The Mandala on the ceiling inside the hall was made in plaster by Coventry Road Plasterers. Each petal of the Lotus measures 2 m across.

The Cosmic Sun and Umla is made of wood and covered in 18 carat gold leaf.

Hindu temples do not lie in formal garden landscapes, they tend to grow out of their environment like plants. The great gardens in India tend to be Mogul in origin, and maybe it is for this reason that the building committees who took over after Mr Magan retired were not particularly interested in raising enough funds to complete the landscaping. However, over time I hope this will happen.

The process of designing and building this temple was not only something which I enjoyed doing immensely but it was important in the development of my architecture which followed. I now see that Architecture can be a combination of many influences which fall generally under three headings: Nature, Language and Resources. In this case language dominated and my interest in the way buildings 'mean' has led me towards the belief that an architecture for this age needs new metaphors. When I was taught at the hard-line modernist school, the Architectural Association in London, the metaphor for architecture was the machine. 'The machine for living in'. My metaphor for these times is more biological. The building is like a living system.

This temple's form which was born all those centuries ago growing out of the tropical rainforests and marshes of the Indus Valley embodies nature as we have now begun to construct it in the west. Like Lovelock Gaia hypothesis, a living system in which the evolution of life and the evolution of its environment is so tightly coupled together as a single and inseparable process.

# The National Tapestry A History in Needlework

by Edone Ann Logan, National Hon. Archivist, NFWIZ

“The history of a country has been likened to a tapestry: there is a warp to it and a woof. In the case of Rhodesia the warp has been furnished by the nature of her soils, the structure of her rocks, the course of her rivers, the shape of her hills, the benison of her climate. These features combined to create a geographical entity and allowed her story to unfold in separate and individual lines. The woof of a country, which is super-imposed on the warp, is represented by a series of human initiatives. Their weaving together in Rhodesia has created a distinctive pattern and allowed the emergence of a nation that is utterly different from any other. By a happy inspiration the whole texture of the Rhodesian past was captured through the endeavours of the country’s Women’s Institutes when they created the National Tapestry...”

These words serve to introduce the collection of photographic reproductions of the panels of the National Tapestry, printed in 1971 in a booklet by Books of Rhodesia Publishing Co.

The National Federation of Women’s Institutes of Zimbabwe celebrates its 75th Anniversary in the year 2000. A history of the organisation, through which members have contributed in innumerable ways towards the development of this country, will be published in our next issue.

Various projects have been undertaken to celebrate the anniversary of the NFWIZ, one of which is the reproduction of some of the photographs of the panels in an ‘any year calendar’, and a set of post cards both of which are available from W.I. Head Office in Harare and the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo.

The story behind the Tapestry, which is now housed in the Bulawayo Natural History Museum, is one of meticulous planning and painstaking craftsmanship of several hundred members of the organisation.

The work had its origin in 1946 in a suggestion of Lady Tait, wife of the then governor of Southern Rhodesia, that the Women’s Institutes of the country should combine to create a tapestry which depicted the cardinal events in Rhodesian history on the lines of the famous Bayeux Tapestry.

In all forty-two panels were designed and embroidered on linen specially woven in Switzerland. It was stipulated that these panels should show a harmonious uniformity of design, of materials used, of colour shading and of stitching techniques.

When completed, the National Tapestry was presented to the Speaker of the House of Parliament, for housing in the Member’s Dining Room, where it hung from 1963 until Independence. The last panel depicting the new era was worked recently by members, completing a unique record of the history of this country.

# Journal Notes

by Michael J. Kimberley

## **ZIMBABWEAN PREHISTORY**

This is the journal of the Prehistory Society of Zimbabwe, and Number 23 (July, 1999), edited by Rob Burrett, has recently appeared. Its 64 pages of standard A4 size contain 8 illustrated articles by local and overseas archaeologists and prehistorians. Subjects include Water Furrows at Nyanga, a surface collection at Mazowe, Iron Age Sites near Chirundu, the work of Tano M. Bent at Great Zimbabwe, and four papers on aspects of Rock Art. Copies of this volume and of available back numbers may be purchased from The Prehistory Society of Zimbabwe, P. O. Box 876, Harare.

## **JOURNAL OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF ZIMBABWE**

This is an annual journal published by the Mountain Club of Zimbabwe which was founded in Harare in December 1995. Eighteen annual volumes of the journal have appeared since the first issue in 1981 and back numbers are available from the Mountain Club of Zimbabwe, P. O. Box 1945, Harare. The last issue seen by your Editor offered 80 pages containing about 25 articles.

## **THE SOCIETY OF MALAWI JOURNAL**

This journal of The Society of Malawi historical and scientific appears biannually and back numbers are available from the Secretary, The Society of Malawi, P O Box 125, Blantyre, Malawi.

A worthwhile aspect of the journal is that each issue contains not only articles on a wide range of topics relating to Malawi but also a mix of historical articles and articles on natural history subjects.

### **CORRIGENDUM NO. 17, 1998**

We had a problem with Publication No. 17, 1998 in that the M. E. Cleveland paper on his first impressions of Rhodesia ended rather abruptly on page 107. In fact two pages, namely 107a and 107b went missing. We reproduce them on the following two pages.

never knew what sort of an old 'buckskin' might turn out the winner – than later when horses were imported from all over the country and many of their performances were well known on other tracks. At any rate a fine piece of ground had been secured adjacent to the surveyed township and a grandstand was an urgent necessity. I secured the contract to build a brick, wood and iron grandstand which, by the way, is still doing service today after a period of nearly forty years. The one outstanding thing about it was that I paid transport rates on the timber and iron – and there was a very considerable amount of it – at 10 pounds per 100 lbs from railhead to Salisbury. At that time I paid as high as 7 pounds per bag for mealie meal which of course was grown in the country.

I mentioned before about Mr Rhodes bringing cattle from Australia to Beira and holding them for some time on the Pungwe flats in order to acclimatize them before bringing them into the country. Later on, they were brought up as far as Umbali and some few farther and distributed to farmers and others when, all at once, they began to die and communicated the disease to others in the country. A great controversy arose as to what this mysterious disease or fever was. Many old South Africans claimed it was 'red-water', others, 'gall-sickness', both diseases caused by ticks. The mortality was so great that I remember well the then Director of Agriculture in the Administration, Mr Orpen, an old Cape Colony man, claimed it was red-water, and the only way was to let it sweep through the country. Other professional men and veterinarians did not agree with him and eventually Dr Koch, the great German scientist, was brought out to study the disease. For a long time it went by the name of 'Rhodesian Tick Fever'. It was afterwards found out that this fever was endemic on the East Coast of Africa in Portuguese territory and the few cattle that were there had become immune to it and later the stigma of 'Rhodesian' was removed from it and it has since been known as 'East Coast Fever'. It did spread not only through the length and breadth of Rhodesia, but through all southern Africa even to the Cape Province and proved even more disastrous than rinderpest, and the greatest cattle scourge in the history of cattle raising. Later it was found, largely through Dr Koch's investigations, that by a process of dipping in an arsenical bath and by isolation it could be stamped out, and dipping has been made compulsory for many years. Unfortunately it is still with us after nearly forty years and there are still sporadic outbreaks; although aside from the cost of dipping it is not a serious menace to the industry.

Again the transport question stared the country in the face although not so serious as before because the railway had reached Bulawayo and had about reached Salisbury from the East. Still there was the question of internal transport and as usual we had to fall back on mules, and principally donkeys, as this hardy animal can exist under conditions almost impossible for mules or horses. 'Horse sickness', a term well-known from the Cape to the Zambesi I have not yet mentioned. This 'peculiar disease' – for as yet there is no certain cure, or in fact after years of research by the most brilliant veterinarians in the world has its cause been discovered although a mosquito is suspect – is, in most cases, fatal to horses, to a less extent to mules, but the poor donkey seems immune.

After the rebellion as I mentioned there was a great fear of the cancellation of the Charter and many advocated that the country should be taken over and administered as a Crown Colony. This was not done for various reasons but certain restrictions were placed on the functioning of the Charter. The control of the Police was taken out of their hands although they had to pay for the cost and a resident Commissioner was appointed

in Salisbury. The first one to occupy that important position was Sir Malcolm Clark, an elderly soldier who had seen service in various parts of the world and had lost an arm in the service. Lady Clark was the first titled woman by virtue of her husband's rank to reside in Rhodesia and later I shall describe an amusing incident connected with the dignity of her social position. I shall now revert to more personal matters.

Having been away from home for nearly three years I was very anxious to see my wife and children, so decided to return home. I left my business in charge of my foreman and the business part was attended to by the Salisbury Board of Executors. As I was anxious to see Johannesburg I decided to go there and take a ship from Durban. This was, as far as I recall, in March 1898. As there was no railway from Salisbury to Bulawayo I went by coach. As far as my memory serves it took us about five days to do the trip of 300 miles. It was the end, or near it, of the wet season and as the road was only a veldt track, if it became impossible in one place it was always easy to cut out onto the veldt and make another track. I remember in one instance the wheel on one side got into a mud-hole and the coach stood on its 'beam end'.

The railway had reached Bulawayo some months before, and it seemed wonderful to be in a railway carriage once more. At that time there were few dining cars on South African railways and none on the Rhodesian. We were told that the train would stop at certain places for meals, but unfortunately we were held up at the Shashi River for some hours without any prospect of a meal. There were very few passengers and the General Manager of the South African Railways, Mr Elliot, happened to be in the next compartment to me and he borrowed a loaf of bread and some tea from one of the railway staff and shared it with me.

As I wanted to go to Johannesburg I left the train at Mafeking as one had to travel from there to Johannesburg by coach. Before I left Salisbury a friend had presented me with a very fine Smith and Wesson 35 calibre revolver. So naturally I carried it with me. As I stopped in Mafeking over night I called on Julius Weill who was then a big man in business and transport in the North as I had a letter from his representative in Salisbury. I told him I had a revolver with me and he strongly advised me not to attempt to take it across the border into the Transvaal as since the Jameson Raid no arms or ammunition was allowed to be taken in under very severe penalty. He pulled out a drawer in his desk full of revolvers which had been left with him. Anyway I decided to trust to luck. There were only two of us passengers and before getting in I threw away all the cartridges except what was in the chambers, unlaced my boot and pushed the muzzle down alongside my ankle so that my trousers leg fell over it. When we reached a place called Ottoshoep on the border the coach drew up before a customs and police station and we were asked to get out and open our baggage. I only had a bag with me with just enough clothes to last me until I got to Durban. They searched all our things, turning out the cushions of the coach, then stood us up and pressed their hands all down our pockets only to discover nothing. I often think what a foolhardy thing it was to do, as the Boers had no love for any Britisher then and had they discovered my revolver it might have caused me serious trouble and certainly legal troubles and delay, and as I had booked my passage by steamer it would have been certainly inconvenient. Johannesburg in those early days was a real 'mining' town. I put up at the old Goldfields Hotel, which has long ceased to exist. Two days there were sufficient to see all I wanted and I left by train for Durban.



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