BEFORE WE FORGET

The Story of Fish Hoek

Cedryl Greenland

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This book is dedicated to the memory, not only of those pioneers whose lives and personalities are for ever woven into the fabric of this sunbright, wind-washed town, but also to a way of life that is almost forgotten.

Above all, it is an attempt at a faithful record of fifty golden years, during which time a town was conceived, born and has grown to maturity.

As I write, in the 1960s the present lies in abundance about us, the future lurks in the mists of the horizon, and I shall try to recapture the spirit of that lovely past -

Before We Forget

FOREWORD

As a relative newcomer to Fish Hoek by comparison with Mrs Cedryl Greenland - I have only lived there twenty years - I am naturally interested in what she writes of its earlier days, and in the photographs she has found. Many of those people of whom she speaks have passed away, many of the buildings in which they lived are also gone, and the youngsters have become grandparents, yet Fish Hoek goes on with its imperishable sea and mountains.

These little sketches may remind older Friends of Fish Hoek of its forgotten youth. I wish the book every success.

ERIC ROSENTHAL
Fish Hoek, C.P.
CHAPTER ONE

How would you like to live in a house with a sandhill in the backyard?” Two pairs of round, childish eyes stared disbelievingly at Dad. It was early autumn in 1918, and a suburban family of four sat conventionally round a linen-white dining-table, while a bobbed, green cloth hung over the back of Minn's chair, awaiting the clearing of the supper dishes and its replacement on the square, solid oak table that symbolised all the decorum and conformity that smugly enfolded every middle-class, suburban family.

“In fact, there will probably be another sandhill in your front garden.” Dad smiled benignly at his own pleasantry and the desirable effect it was having on his little family. The blond-pigtailed schoolgirl was waiting, soup-spoon raised and cheeks bright with excitement. Curly-headed brother began to beat his spoon on the table; while Mum's eyes suddenly became anxious. Mum, whose turn had recently become embarrassingly prominent (totally unobserved by her children, but of growing interest to her neighbours), had, as usual, reached the stage where she only ventured outside for short evening strolls, comfortably supported by Dad, was obviously anticipating difficulties ahead.

“Can we go barefoot?” This question cropped up annually as the Christmas holidays approached and the family prepared for its exciting journey, first by train to the Strand, and then by horse and cart to sleepy Gordon's Bay - redolent with the odour of milkwood trees. Here the womenfolk immediately donned “sun-bonnets” - the equivalent of a Dutch “Kappie,” in pink and faded blue, while the children divested themselves of shoes and socks.

The long, black-stockinged legs of the little girl uncoiled from around her chair and her toes wiggled ecstatically. Barefoot? Sand between the toes? Salty, damp, bathing costumes? A house of their very own at the seaside? It was almost too heavenly to believe.

“The place is called Fish Hoek.” Dad dropped his final surprise as he took up the carving knife and fork that lay neatly either side of a large white dish containing the well-browned joint surrounded by golden roast potatoes and a mound of Yorkshire pudding. This family lived comfortably. “Fish Hoek? Fish Hoek? FISH HOOK!” Three wondering pairs of eyes stared incredulously. “What a
funny name! ”We all began to laugh and laugh and laugh.

And that's how it all began. A town had been born. The lovely valley, lying between the mountain ranges of Glencairn and Kalk Bay, and originally known as Visch Hoek (Fish Corner), had, since the year 1883, belonged to Hester Sophia de Kock who was later to marry Jacob Isaac de Villiers whose family had owned, and still do own, much of the Noordhoek valley. Before this (during the Governorship of the Earl of Somerset), it had been one of the Company's farm gardens for supplying vegetables to the garrison at Simonstown, as well as fresh fish for the Governor himself.

Divided into three parts, it had combined every essential. The Clovelly section “Klein Tuin” was devoted to vegetable gardening, this area being peculiarly suitable with its ever-flowing fresh water from the Silvermyn stream. The middle, called “Herring Fisheries,” was also endowed with a fresh-water spring, and the other, the Great ”Whale Fishery, in the southern corner of the beach (now Sunny Cove). An iron rung can still be seen in the rock where the huge carcasses were hauled up by chains.

Originally, in June 1818, this well-watered, fertile valley had been granted to a private individual, Andries Bruins, and it was then that certain conditions were laid down by the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset. Two of these remain in force to the present day, namely: “Not to keep a public wine house;” and “The right of fishing shall be free.”

As regards the first of these conditions, the story goes that when provisions were sent by wagon from Cape Town to Simonstown a halt was made at our outspan, before taking the arduous mountain road which wound, in those very early days, around the Brakkekloof valley and so down via Glencairn. Here a small inn had been built, where the Outspan Hotel now stands, for rest and refreshment. When this “refreshment” was of the alcoholic sort, well, those drivers rested a lot longer than was expected of them, and the impatient, and probably hungry, garrison, marooned at Simonstown, waited in vain for their provisions. Little did they dream, in those days, that their indiscretions would lay the foundations of so inflexible a group of anti-liquor citizens as the Defenders of Fish Hoek, formed in 1957.
A hundred years later, when the De Villiers family owned this seaside estate, the road had already been well surfaced around the foot of Elsje's Peak to Simonstown, and the terrifying quicksands at the Clovelly end of the beach had dried up sufficiently to allow safe transport via the shore from Kalk Bay, thus eliminating the deviation (die Ou Kaapseweg) through the Silvermyn valley behind the Muizenberg hills. During the previous century many travellers had experienced the treachery of these sands, there being recorded a story of the Dutch Reformed parson from Simonstown who was trapped as he drove across the beach. His cart and horse were lost.

Even the railway line was, by now, running through to Simonstown. In fact, the late Mr Bull Pritchard's father had been in charge of this project during the 1890s when young Bull spent his school holidays camping with papa in a spot somewhere behind Mountain View. Until then, visitors to Fish Hoek had travelled by horse and cart from the railway terminus at Kalk Bay. White-bearded Jacob de Villiers and his family, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Dawid, Nicolas, Nelis, and two daughters, Neelie and Jacoba, lived in the thatched Homestead with its simple picket fence. Although no actual records have been found of the origin of this farmstead, the date 1719 was clearly visible on one of the original gables before this part of the building was destroyed by fire in 1947. The following year, Mr Hudson Cooper bought and restored the building we now know as the Home- stead Hotel.

Old Mr de Villiers was a stickler for convention and a strict watch was kept on all holiday-makers to see that they kept to certain rules. For instance, permission had to be obtained before anyone could camp or picnic on his farm or beach. After a summer Sunday he was often to be seen making a round of all picnic spots, stick in hand, to rout out any litter.

A strict upholder of the Sabbath, he and his family regularly attended the Dutch Reformed Church at Simonstown - travelling thence by horse and cart, while morning prayers were held daily on the stoep of the Homestead. Holidaymakers were expected to attend.

Outbuildings included the low-lying old stables for cows and horses (still known as Whitstable); a small goat house; a cool deep-walled cottage, once used as the bakehouse and now Mountain View; three little fishing cottages standing above
the rocks; and another low cottage adjoining the Homestead, known as Brighton. A large herd of cows, horses and goats were kept on the farm. A farmer, Mr van der Poll, whose descendants are still here today, owned the Brakkekloof area near Sunnydale. Only last year - 1965 - a dramatic bush-fire swept down this valley and surrounded the old homestead, Ou Brakkekloof - now belonging to Mr and Mrs Louis Vogts. The fire was miraculously averted from the house by a party of young adventurers.

Often Mr de Villiers' goats, which were sent up the valley to graze, would trespass on Mr van der Poll's land, much to the annoyance of the farmer. And so an arrangement was made whereby Mr de Villiers presented Mr van der Poll with a goat for slaying each Christmas. The story is told by one of Mr van der Poll's sons that one year when the cart came to fetch the goat it escaped and swam out to sea. Mr Muller offered to row out in one of his boats, rescued the errant goat off the rocks at Sunny Cove, and brought it back to the beach where (Oh, blessings be on him!) he gave it its freedom, saying, “This goat was not meant to be killed.”

Further along the Simonstown Road on the hillside was a single white-walled dwelling where lived the Muller family. The original George Muller had been granted (for about £300) the rights of the herring fishing industry carried on by the boats from the beach since the 1830s, and still today many of his descendants are in Fish Hoek; though trek-fishing is now carried on by Coloured crews the majority of whom live at Glencairn, and, of course, have free rights to this occupation - one of the oldest industries still practised in the Cape; and one of the most picturesque. As the whistle blows from the Outlook high on the hill above the bay, the waiting fishermen run to their boats and launch them into the breakers, leaving one end of the rope on the beach. Guided by the man above, who has a clear view of the movements of the shoal of fish, the boat is rowed frantically out while the net is played overboard until the unsuspecting fish are surrounded, when the boat heads for the beach with the other end of the rope. Here fishermen and onlookers alike help to haul on the two ropes, excitement rising as the churning surface above the net denotes a good catch . . . maybe only haarders; maybe yellowtail or elf; occasionally a dolphin - but these are protected and must be released. Sad to say that, in the 1960s, trek-fishing is becoming a more and more precarious form of existence. We shall have lost a most precious
heritage if it ever dies out.

And so, this fair and virgin valley that until the year 1918 had never been exploited for more than the harvest of its fields and seas, was put up for public auction.

Old Mr Jacob de Villiers had died in 1916, his wife Hester having predeceased him by two years, and the family decided to sell the estate, the first sale taking place in April 1918 after the mammoth task of subdividing this huge area of farmland had at last been completed by Messrs Charles Marais and De Villiers. Now, amongst the regular annual visitors for the Christmas holidays were the Duncan family with their two sons, William and Joe, and their six lovely daughters who stayed in the annexe to the Homestead; the De Smidts, who rented Brighton next door; the young Pritchards (“Bull” had by now married Miss Mabel McKay); the Herrings, with their daughter Kit) and Colonel Stanford with his intriguing wife whom he had brought from the East, his fascinating daughter Madge, and tiny son; all of these took the three Uitkyk Cottages; while the Plant family of Rosebank took Mountain View; and the Gordon Cloetes, also of Rosebank, camped in a tent on sheltered ground near the present site of the Red Roof Tea Room.

It was only natural that these families should attend that first sale. It was a glorious day and quite a little crowd collected around Johnnie Zoutendyk, the well-known auctioneer. The Homestead itself was bought by the Diamond Fields, who were to run it for several years as Fish Hoek's first hotel. Next on the list were the three cottages on their coveted site above the big rocks in the corner of the beach, and here bidding ran high as three families fought for possession. Mr de Smidt, Mr Joseph Mossop and young Mrs Bull Pritchard, whose husband was still overseas in the army. With such keen rivals the price soared to over £1,000 and Mabel Pritchard was forced to drop out. As we now know, the cottages were bought by Mr Joseph Mossop, while his brother Tom, bought a plot higher up where he was to build his seaside home — Balliclyme.

To compensate for his disappointment, Mr de Smidt bought another property on the agenda - this was the low- roofed, white cottage on the hillside, occupied, until then, by the Muller family, who rented the fishing rights. This cool white-washed cottage now belongs to the Van der Riets. Young Mrs Prichard bought a
plot above the beach and it was here their home Orano was built the following year. “Bull” had experienced a dramatic adventure on his return from the war, when the troopship Galway Castle, was torpedoed in the Bay of Biscay (12th September 1918), and many lives were lost. Bull himself, after eight hours in the water, was picked up by the Orano . . . the name to be ever a part of his future life. Here too his daughters were born - Rita, who married Ray de Smidt, and Joan.

Further sales of various plots were held on the hillside and in the valley - prices varying according to position. For these sales the bidders gathered round the auctioneer at the approximate spot where our traffic island at the top end of the Main Road now stands. Mrs C. L. Burton remembers well standing here and looking down over Mr de Villiers' vegetable garden which spread across this fertile, low-lying ground where the Green Parrot has been built. Behind the crowd were the communal taps which were to serve the whole township with water for those first few years. Again it was a glorious day and Mrs Burton and her husband bought a number of plots that now include the business section of our Main Road, though at that time Beach Road was the only hard-surfaced highway through Fish Hoek. Later, the Burtons were to build on another property they had acquired - deep in the bundu.

This was one of Fish Hoek's first lovely homes, Ionia, from where their daughter, Ioline, was married in 1924, and our first smart and sophisticated function held in the garden. In the 1940s and 1950s Ionia was to become our first maternity home.

Those who had any money to spare after the crippling World War I were anxious to speculate on property at this new seaside township, though many of the less venturesome were heard to say, “But will anybody really want to live in Fish Hoek?”

Amongst the buyers were Mr Marcoolyn who acquired a string of plots along the mountainside for little more than a few pounds a plot, and people craned their necks to see where this unearthly property could be. Yet in the 1930s our lovely highway was built to abut on these plots; and in the 1960s they are worth around R2,000 each! Another man who did things on a grand scale was Mr E. W. Rice of the Standard Bank who bought up large tracts in the western area. It is interesting to note that some of this ground was later bought by the Provincial Administration for the splendid new Fasle Bay Hospital which was erected in
1964. Others of those early pioneers were the Zoutendyks, the Cloetes, the Peers (of whom you will hear more later), the Dunsters and the Dempseys, the Rickards and the Cobers; the Carslaws, the Gordons, the Nichols - with little Tommy and his sister. The Nobles, the Giblettes and the Turners; the Greenlands and the Robertsons, the Fudges and the Fishers. The Beamishes and the Castlemans; the Oldfields, the Mathews, the Murches and the Gillespies. The Lacks, the Goldings, the Enderbys; the Whiteheads and the Prices; Mr Reg Kemp and Mr Foster - a trim figure, often on horseback.

The Ayres, of Bellaire; Mick Commaille - so famed in the cricket world that at least one small girl thought it was “Gentle Jesus, Mick Commaille” to whom she prayed! And Cooper Partridge, who was to become a well-known professor. Mr Ross was our first cartage contractor, and his grandsons - Steve and Karl van Rooyen - made names for themselves as lifesavers in the 1950s. The Wardleys and the Daniels. The Martins - whose son Frank was to be tragically drowned while fishing near Smitwinkel's Bay; and the McConnels, with auburn-haired little daughter, Ethne, who built Troy at Sunnycove, later to be bought by the Eadie family. The Ashwells, the Carlsaws, the Bishops, with their tall, lovely daughters and the Elliotts, whose hospitality and open house every Old Year's Eve on the Hillside became a feature of Fish Hoek. Teddy, the eldest son, who was engaged to Freda Lowdell (our first plumber's pretty daughter), died of a rare disease before they could marry, and David, the youngest son, was killed in World War II.

Ah, well! Our small family knew little of all this. All they knew was that Dad had bought three glorious plots on the sandhills - each costing £20 - later to be demarcated as Corner of Second Avenue and De Waal Road - and that Fish Hoek was the loveliest place they had ever seen. The sea was bluer, the sand was whiter, the sun was warmer and the sky was wider than anywhere else in the whole wide world!

Until now Muizenberg had been the mecca for all who felt like a little ozone. The more daring donned bathing-costumes (no such thing as a “swimsuit” in those days), the men with a vest-type top to hide their hairsute, manly chests, the women in loose-fitting, cotton, two-pieces with an overskirt, and plunged through the waves in front of the old wooden pavilion where crowds sat watching
this free entertainment. Women in well-corseted costumes and large, unwieldy hats and men in white flannels and straw boaters, while the children rode donkeys on the beach. Some even brought binoculars for the express purpose of a better view of those embarrassed females whose wet, clinging costumes revealed a lot more than our provocative, built-up, youth-line bikinis of today. Except for the very brash and youthful, most of the women hurried out as quickly as possible, many of the married ones making their husbands wait at the surf edge with a large towel in readiness to cover their confusion.

But Fish Hoek had no such sophistication. We spent an exciting winter watching the erection of our little wooden bungalow. Four deep holes were dug, one at each corner, to plant the supporting posts to which were attached this former shooting box. The war was just over and Dad, as Henry Darling Robertson, a senior official in the S.A. Railways, had been able to acquire one of these redundant huts for a mere song and it had arrived in one piece by goods train at the little wooden siding that was Fish Hoek Station - situated near the crossing to the beach. At either side long, narrow rooms were built on and we kids delighted in opening the tiny shutters of the shooting apertures to chat to each other.

The south-facing shutter was removed and a large, cool safe where Mum kept the perishables, such as butter, milk, meat, etc., attached to the outside wall. Beside it hung Dad's old army water-bag, while in the kitchen-cum-living-room stood a sturdy, red earthenware water-monkey. On the north side a shiny corrugated-iron water-tank awaited the winter rains. Inside the small enclosed stoep hung a storm-lantern and an intoxicating smell of paraffin and solignium (with which the woodwork was treated) greeted us, while, to cap all this primitive fun, we slept in bunks - one atop the other.

Another, still more unique, dwelling was brought to a plot below us (now Second Crescent) by another railwayman, Mr Charles Ohlssen. This was a discarded railway-coach, and this home was the envy of all Olaf's and little Thorbjon's playmates!

By now Mum had quite forgotten to be selfconscious about her increasing bulge. There were far too many things to do. Trimming the wicks of the two primus stoves; seeing that the lanterns were filled each night; sweeping the floor of sand after two barefooted children had been outside - or the southeaster had been
blowing; finding somebody to fetch a bucket of water from the communal taps below the old spring-reservoir (opposite the present traffic island at the fork of the Simonstown-Kommetjie Roads), or hurrying down to the sandy corner off the Beach Road where the vegetable cart from the Silver-myn valley had brought its dew-fresh load of greens.

Mum's arms and legs, like ours, were bronzed by the sun and she even concocted a bloomer-type bathing-costume to cool off in the lovely, warm, white-capped waves. As there were no bathing facilities at home, this was a matter of hygiene as well as pleasure, and Mum, who was no swimmer, kicked out merrily as she clung to the biggest and clumsiest of our surfboards—which had been bought in three sizes.

At night, of course, the only lighting was from the flickering candles or swinging storm-lanterns of those first intrepid campers, but as a treat Dad would take us occasionally to Kalk Bay Bioscope (The Olympia Theatre, even then) to see Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, the Gish Sisters, Houdini - the miracle man of hair-raising escapes - Mary Pick-ford or Elmo Lincoln (the first glorious Tarzan) in a gripping, if somewhat flickery, silent film; and, of course, at the end of each performance the audience stood to sing “God Save our King.” Never to be forgotten was the first of these outings when we dared not leave a candle or lamp alight in our wooden bungalow and spent a nightmare half-hour scrambling over those endless dunes to find our isolated little home.

When we returned the following year we found a palatial house going up on the sand dune behind us. This was to be Dynevor - the home of Mr. E. W. Rice of the Standard Bank in Cape Town, who, with his three younger children, Vernie, Normie and Bonnie, was to make quite an impression on the new township.

Mum, whose embarrassing bulge had at last dissolved into our baby sister Midge, had been looking forward to our return as eagerly as the rest of us. With joyous abandon we threw off all the stuffy conventions of suburban life that still bound our less venturesome friends and laughed at their dire forebodings. Such primitive goings-on were quite beyond the pale! To us they merely added spice to our lives - all except the problem of “the pondok in the bundu.” Nobody actually enjoyed those urgent daily visits to the unobtrusive, corrugated hokkie hidden somewhere behind a hillock or a rooikranz bush. There were three types amongst
One of the few photographs ever taken of the venerable Jacob de Villiers “Die Vader van Vishoek”

This was the Homestead (with “Brighton” on the left) as it was in 1900 when the De Villiers family were in residence
Fish Hoek, taken from Clovelly, about 1910

No “Catwalk” in those days
A view of Fish Hoek from Simonstown Road, looking west. In the foreground are the Homestead buildings, with Mountain View behind.

The Duncan family (there were in all six girls, four boys) out on a picnic with Nelis de Villiers (on driver’s seat), Colonel Stanford (in helmet), Madge Stanford standing in front, and Marion Louw (coyly holding a leaf of bracken over her head), now Mrs Smuts de Villiers, Bill and Joe Duncan.
Trek-fishing, even in 1910, was a great attraction though there were fewer spectators. For many years the handsome Peter Boltman of Glencairn, a descendant of the Filipinos, was captain of the trek-crew on Fish Hoek beach, until his death in 1955.
those early pioneers, whose attitude to this compulsive daily event differed accordingly.

The Prim, who wandered by devious ways and ingenious pretext, often found themselves embarrassingly delayed by tactless neighbours or delivery boys. The Timid, who tried desperately to inveigle another member of the family to accompany them, or else armed themselves with a broomstick for unexpected spiders! Those with pooches were, of course, ecstatically accompanied on this welcome outing - the faithful hound waiting patiently, if somewhat obviously, outside the door! The “Couldn't-care-less” ones, who took the morning paper with them and left the door wide open to the fresh air and sunshine. This often invited such minor incidents as a cheerful greeting from the early-morning milk-boy, or a visit from a wandering donkey.

If one did lock the door, there was always the horrid uncertainty that the salt air had rusted the key so that it would refuse to unlock again, as happened later to a tearful schoolgirl who was imprisoned until after the train had left for Rondebosch!

At night, of course, the hazards were even greater. Torches or storm-lanterns were essential, and the weaving lights of pedestrians, on whatever nocturnal bent, could be clearly seen on the hillside or the sand dunes. First consideration was a thorough scrutiny of corrugated-iron walls and dark interior of open seat for any creepy-crawlers, such as spiders, lizards, scorpions, or even, possibly, a snake! (I tell you, we had to be tough in those days!)

Even more embarrassing was the unexpected arrival of the “thunder” cart, as it was so aptly called. To hear and feel a bucket being removed at this untimely moment was quite an experience! Water sanitation was not fully installed until the late 1930s so that eventually we became inured to the fact that if we went out on a Tuesday or Friday night and did not get back in time we were liable to meet this gruesome, clanking horror on the road. Children would then be herded together with a hissed injunction. “Close you mouths, hold your breath and . . . RUN.”

A story was told, in shocked tones, of an incident concerning the fully loaded night-cart and a carload of distinguished personages returning to Admiralty
House at Simonstown — though full details were never released. Apart from this, the simple life was something that appealed to the spirit of adventure in all who revelled in those carefree, pioneering days.

By this second summer, an enterprising Coloured man had organised a Donkey-Team Water Carrying Service. For sixpence a time these placid animals would carry two paraffin tins of fresh water - strung on each side for balance - to our doorstep. And the donkeys soon became a part of our little community, often peering with gentle curiosity into our open doorways in the early morning. Our water-tank, too, was brimful of soft water from the winter rains.

The village taps, by the way, served as one of our first sources of revenue, as they were opened at certain times only and a charge of 1/2d per tin was made if you fetched your own. Quite often young Baxter Wright (now our Town Clerk) was put on duty by his father, who was secretary to the first Village Management Board. Some of the bigger boys fetched water on little wooden carts, and much fun was had en route - not to mention much spilling of precious water.

CHAPTER TWO

That Christmas we went further afield. Nobody who was not there to witness it can possibly imagine the beauty of those untouched dunes. The virgin sand was covered with flowering creepers, shrubs and veld blommetjies . . . wild pelargonium, babianas, gousblom; blue lobelias and dainty nemesias; showy clusters of pink cineraria and fat, rosy moederkappies; our “darlings of the sandhills" - the mauve and pink, geometrically-patterned clusters of flowers whose name was as enchanting as themselves - zaluzianskia! And masses of blue felicias.

All these were ours for the picking outside our front door. A short run down to the valley, where Upper Recreation Road now runs, and we were walking knee deep in peaty verdure. Here grew great bushes of leucodendrum, the golden-leaved protea, and sweet-nectared, pink sugar-bush; perfumed moreas and giant candelabras from the huge-leafed elephant's ear; ixias and kal-koentjie; and the blue vlei-afrikander. Tangled Cape mistletoe with its waxy berries and true Christmas-card bushes of brilliant green sprinkled with the crimson berries of the
skilpad-bessie.

Frogs croaked in full-throated chorus during the winter months as this was a marshy valley. Another half-mile walk and we could be across the Kommetjie Road and climbing the wild hillside slopes (now Ranger and Berg Roads). Here the sugar-birds and long-tailed widows flaunted their early-spring plumage and ecstatically plundered the lavish store of proteas that covered all this area. Unrestricted by any laws, we could bring home great bunches of flames and nerinas, painted ladies, antholizas and everlastings, exotic brown afrikanders that lured us with their haunting elusive perfume; and brilliant heaths of every kind - our favourite being the crimson erica. The dread killer - the rooikranz bush, planted by the well-meaning, as a windbreak, had not yet made its greedy way over this lovely land.

We children, who had known so little of nature, were enchanted to find the fascinating study of plants and animals unfolding around us. Little alabaster lizards clung to our doors and windows at night; huge white and gold moths flew in from the darkness to fan our lamps and candles; fireflies, like jewels, pricked the darkness of the dunes, and solemn, pale frogs made a soft cacophony of sound as they emerged from their sandy beds. Large, yellow-and-black spiders spun wide, shining webs across the bushes, and green-and-gold protea beetles bumbled onto our laps as we sat in the sun. We watched fierce battles between rapier-quick wasps and grotesquely hairy spiders, while shiny-black dung-pushers criss-crossed the untrodden sand with their delicate footprints.

In fact, these early-morning patterns on the sand led to months of anxiety in our little household. Mum was quite uncontrollably terrified of snakes. And snakes there were - of all types, from the harmless little grass snake and big brown mole, to the more deadly skaapsteker, ringhals, garter snake and even an occasional cobra. We soon discovered that she believed that the uniform scratchings of those tiny beetle feet at dawn were the slither marks of snakes over the sand around our home, and so, until one day that black-beetle culprit was seen steadily crawling across a sandhill, a pig-tailed schoolgirl crept outside early each morning with a broom to sweep away the tell-tale marks before Mum could find them and be afraid.

But beetles were not the only midnight pedestrians to cross those open dunes for
A Sunday morning on the Big Rock (about 1915) No bikinis in those days!

Our old “Puffing Billy”
rounding the Sunny Cove corner - taken about 1915
“The bulge” that was to dissolve itself into our little sister, Midge, sitting in our sandhills garden. In the foreground are some fat pink Moederkappies.

A Sunday morning group on the Big Rock. Amongst these are Harold Sparks, Tina le Sueur and her brother Ferris. The Linley girls with little Patty, Percy Pope, one of the Blackmans, Guy Lawton, Jackie Hall (at the back).

Ablutions (a la 1918 in Fish Hoek. Young ‘Bull” Pritchard stands by while Mabel has her weekly s/s
the first light of dawn showed a maze of tiny footmarks round our bungalow. Lizards, snails, frogs, the tiny perforations of field-mice claws; larger pads of wild-cat and little heart-shaped hoof-marks of the timid buck. All these messages were written on the sand in the cool, still dawn, and many a time my brother and I tracked them through the bushes.

We discovered the Silvermyn River. Over the sandhills we would go, running easily across the firm, shrub-covered dunes until we came to the great mounds of shifting sands that filled the valley to the north-west of our residential area. Here we laboured up the soft white slopes and cascaded pellmell, in a tangle of arms and legs, down the sheer slopes on the other side.

Beyond these again we came to the river . . . wide and full, even in the summer, with its peat-gold water and reed-fringed banks. At the bend grew clumps of pampas grass and in the shadows lay cushions of fresh watercress, untainted by any sort of contamination in those days. Here, too, we found bushes of rosy Chinese lanterns (Sutherlandia).

From this point we took to the water and waded up and up beneath overhanging wattle and over water-worn stones. Huge, brown river crabs nipped at our toes and quite often we caught a glimpse of a brilliant kingfisher. Our goal (if we had brought a rucksack) was the lovely sunwarmed flat rocks that formed a natural picnic site, complete with shallow pools and cascading waterfalls.

We invested in a portable gramophone that Christmas and in the evenings sat on the doorstep of our bungalow, playing over and over again our few treasured records. Each time the needle had to be changed and the handle turned round and round and round. Our selection was not exactly highbrow but gave us immense pleasure, and our first neighbours, the Rices, who were to become such close friends, joined us, in the warm dusk before we lighted our lanterns, to share a selection of our latest “hits” - “K-K-K-K-Katie,” “Yes - We have no Bananas.” “When it's Night Time in Italy, it's Wednesday Over Here.” And of course the sentimental war songs - “A Long, Long Trail,” “Tipperary,” “Pack up your Troubles in your Old Kit Bag” and “Keep the Home Fires Burning.” And oh, those romantic “Indian Love Lyrics!” Mum and Mrs Rice would sit with eyes abrim as these tunes throbbed (a little tinnily) through the dusk. Then Dad insisted on a selection of his home-country ballads - by Harry Lauder. To show
our good taste we had three “classics:” “Destiny,” “Barcarolle” from Tales of Hoffmann, and Rubinstein's “Melody in F Major.”

At the end of our little concert we would sit relaxed, loth to make a move, and from down below us, amongst the bushes, lights would be bobbing and other gramophones sobbing their sentimental tunes. “When the Harvest Moon is Shining, I Wanna go Home - I Wanna go Ho-o-o-ome!” “Oh, you Beautiful Doll, you Great, Big Beau-u-utiful Doll!” “Margie - I'm always thinking of you Ma-a-argie!” “If you were the only Girl in the World and I was the only Boy!”

Ah! those were sentimental days, and many young people came to spend their holidays camping in that verdant Fish Hoek of long ago. Most of the camping sites were around the low-lying, grass-covered area near lower Recreation Road. Some of the gay young bachelors were Ernie Lanz, Claude Fitzpatrick, Leslie (Bantam) Ayres, Dickie Williams, Stanley Ayris and Mick Commaille. Amongst the “flappers” were Di Stigant, Winnie Johnson, the Tilly girls, the Cooper sisters and the Mabins.

CHAPTER THREE

That year I cried bitterly when we had to return to suburbia. We all missed the freedom and beauty of our new home - despite the good old south-easter that whirled so much sand about in those days. The Beach Road could become a streaming river of sand on the bad days, while the railway line was almost obliterated in places and gangs of men were perpetually digging the sand away.

And so, in 1921 we moved into our “proper” house, Sandhills, with its white-pillared stoep facing the sea and its teak-beamed pergola facing the Silvermyn valley. By now water had been laid on, and a swinging lantern graced our stoep. In the kitchen a great black coal stove with a shining grate and a cheery fire was kept burning most of the day, while in the bathroom we had a wood- and-paper geyser. The “loo” was still outside and the night-cart still paid its ominous midnight visits.

We found the winter quite as fascinating as the summer. There was no south-
easter, and everything dried up so quickly after rain. The sandhills sparkled and
glinted with jewels as the sun came out and the clean sand soaked up the rain. A
few hazards were caused with individual water-tanks that remained beside our
homes, when they overflowed or burst and emptied their contents over
everything. In fact Mr “Fatty” Whitehead well remembers the day when a huge
boulder was dislodged above their home on the Outspan and crashed into their
tank, thus releasing a stream of water that flowed unchecked down First Avenue
into the Beamish's house! The four Beamish boys, George, Robin, Roy and
Ronnie (sister Pat being the only girl) were to become a renowned sporting
family - especially in the hockey field.

With friends we used to run down to our rendezvous on the beach with grubby
“tackies” on our feet and bobbing “jelly-bags” on our curls. Curls were an asset in
those days; though, if you were not so blessed, there was no remedy, except for a
few curling-papers at night. Hair was dark or fair, just as it came when you were
born. Eyes but orbs with which to see. Lips were nature's shape and hue. We wore
the clothes that “didn't matter” while we were having fun at the seaside. Bull
Pritchard and his family kept an eye on the safety of the happy bathers, and many
a time Bull was called from his home above the beach to rescue a would-be
swimmer. Swimming was not of the standard it is today. The overarm stroke had
only recently been introduced, and Dad still cleaved the waves manfully with
wide-arced breast-strokes.

Mr Tom Mossop had helped to acquire a sturdy little raft for us which
was anchored off shore and we youngsters had the time of our lives swimming out
to and diving off it. The huge, jovial, handsome “Fatty” Whitehead never tired of
adding to our fun by climbing aboard so that his extra weight sent us all asplash!
Unfortunately this simple and popular amenity lasted little more than a season
with the continual buffeting of the waves and washing onto the beach. The big
boys, who loved to tease and make us giggle, played a boisterous game called
“bok-bok” in the evenings. One of the sturdiest would duck his head between his
arms against a rock. The next would take a flying leap onto his back, and so on -
one by one they would come, until a great mound of vigorous humanity would be
tottering under the living weight of all those bodies. Last on top would hold up
fingers while the unfortunate victim underneath had to guess the number. More
often than not the mound collapsed long before this grand finale and a melee of
arms and legs, sand and laughter would result - much to the joy of the admiring girls.

Indeed, the beach was the hub of activity in those days, and on a summer evening a ukelele would be sobbing out its tunes. Another tough game was “Battle of Waterloo.” Pairs of “horse” and “rider” would attack each other, in no uncertain manner, and try to dislodge the opposing rider, thus providing some real thrills for the onlookers, and I am sure some mighty stiff muscles! Amongst the “young bloods” of those carefree days were the Sparks - Fred and Harold, George Ings who married Ursula Rickard, Eric Price, Norman and Ferris le Sueur, Eric Wagstaffe, Darter and Bert Brunt, Sam Hunter, Ginger Smith, Joe Ohlsson, Ronnrie Heathorne; Blockie Blockpool, Bill Glover and Cecil Smith who married Edna Rother; Vic and Eric Noble, and the Lawton boys; Bill Wardley, whose family lived in the attractive, thatch-roofed Periscope on the hillside.

Bill was an excellent swimmer. He worked at the dockyard in Simonstown and, getting up earlier than most of us, would come out onto his doorstep overlooking the entire small community spread below him and at six o'clock each morning he would blow “Reveille” on his bugle.

Two young men were a little different. These were “Clovelly Jack,” whose real name was Ivor Boam, and who kept beehives at Clovelly where he lived. A small but muscular fellow, he always collected a crowd of admirers to watch his amazing acrobatic feats on Fish Hoek beach. At the other end of the scale was a quiet, self-effacing young man who shunned all publicity and kept to himself. This was Dick Hyland, whose only love was fishing. Except that he is forty-odd years older, Dick still spends all his spare time fishing and, if he can be persuaded to talk, there is little he does not know about this solitary but absorbing hobby. In the sixties, while other, younger men grumble at the lack of fish, Dick uses all his knowledge and experience, with that quiet patience that only the true fisherman knows, and he usually gets something, even if it is only a sweet-fleshed dassie.

There was no Catwalk in those early days and the only way to the Big Rock, where everybody assembled on Sunday mornings, was indeed a hazardous one, for it was the well-trodden edge of the railway track, and many a time hearts stood still as the Puffing Billy made its noisy way from Simons-town while somebody was still running desperately along the track to the only spot that led to safety at
the crossing. Loose rocks fringed this end of the beach and it was not until about 1930 that the rock path itself was laid, and later named after the councillor who had inspired it - Mr H. S. Jager.

Guy Fawkes' Night was a gala event in Fish Hoek in the 1920s. A group of public-spirited men had formed itself into a committee for entertainments on the beach. Some of these remembered names being Peers, Daniels, Wardley, Rice, Sparks, Beamish, Zoutendyky, Mitchell and Isemonger. (This was to be the nucleus of Fish Hoek's sports club.) They collected contributions towards a really slap-up show of fireworks and, through H. D. Robertson of the Railways, were able to acquire redundant sleepers from the railway sheds and pile these on the beach with loads of brushwood, topped by a gloriously hideous guy! Whew! Did we enjoy ourselves! Everybody “pooled-in” with their fireworks and nobody seemed to mind a bit of wind!

A diving-board was installed off the rock near the present men's bathing shelter, and this proved a most exhilarating pastime for the more courageous until young Mr du Toit plunged into the shallow water at low tide and injured himself. It was then deemed necessary to remove this second amenity.

CHAPTER FOUR

The beach in those first years was a wide stretch of glorious white sand dunes, fringed with reeds. There was, naturally, no pavilion, and the only “buildings” to mar this expanse were two unsightly pondoks (pieces of tin held together with sacks and rags) on the sea side of the railway crossing which were used by the fishermen during the summer months.

At low tide there was a tremendous expanse of firm, damp sand that beckoned to those youngsters who were bursting with energy, and it was only natural that our first sports were played here ... by far the most popular being hockey. Mr E. W. Rice presented about two dozen somewhat crude and heavy hockey sticks to the youth of Fish Hoek to encourage a love of sport. Little did Mr Rice guess that this friendly beach game was to form the nucleus of one of the strongest hockey teams that Western Province has produced.
First and foremost amongst these young boys were the Beamish brothers. Led by George, the eldest, Robin, Ronnie and Roy rapidly followed in his footsteps. Others were the Sparks family - Fred, Harold and Cliffie (who was to die so young), Sonny Enderby, Gordon Cloete, Joe Cartwright, Scott Eadie, Nobby Bevan, Sonny Grade, Johnnie Zoutendyk, Stanley Linley, Cooper Partridge, with much of their success being due to the interest and encouragement of two fathers - both fine sportsmen - Mr Beamish and Mr Sparks. (Many of these names were to become household words in the homes of sportsmen.)

So keen were these Sunday morning games that more and more joined in and it became too utterly frustrating to wait for the favourable low tide. And here Fate stepped in. Up the valley in a direct line from today's High School and below the huge white sand dunes, was found an almost natural hockey field. The surface was hard and flat, quite obviously the sun-baked peat of a one-time lake or river bed (for this valley, between two oceans, is believed to have been completely covered by the sea). Here the practices were continued and quite often there were girls playing as well in the happy friendly Sunday games that were to become such a feature of those early 1920s.

The Earp girls from Glencairn (Gladys, Ruth and Lickie) were to become team players. Mary Lyon, Bonnie Rice, Helen Ross, Ceddie Robertson, Nelly and Joan Zoutendyk and Beryl Cloete, were amongst the amateurs, while others of the enthusiastic men were Trevellyan, Jack and Len Gordon, the Rice boys, the Castlemans and the Le Seuers - whose half-sister, Tina, was to marry Harold Sparks. (Two other Fish Hoek girls were to make names for themselves later on the hockey field and these were “Baby” Zoutendyk and Stephanie Stigant.) Inseparable friends were the two Cecils, Greenland and Lack, Eric Price and Sam Hunter.

As early as 1921 Mr E. H. Sparks arranged a meeting at his home Onze Rust on the corner of the Main and Kommetjie Roads, and Fish Hoek's first men's hockey club was formed. Mr Sparks was elected president of the club and held this office until 1938, when they were winners of the Western Senior Championship.

With their hard training on the heavy-going beach and the sometimes slippery
“black pitch” these young players rapidly became the toughest of our Western Province teams and many were the exciting matches played and won in the years to come.

Hockey headquarters were at Wynberg then and, as Fish Hoek had no proper ground of its own, the matches were all away; some at Simonstown where the Navy entertained them royally - at times on one of the warships. Other matches were very much further afield and it was no hardship to these enthusiasts to catch a train from Fish Hoek at 6.30 a.m. to reach Stellenbosch by lunch time - and then travel home by train after the game! There was no motorised transport in those days! In fact, so popular were these matches that the daily Press would publish not only the venue of the Saturday's match but also the times of trains to be caught.

Yet, in spite of all this, we were a robust side, with the burly, fleet-footed George Beamish and his younger brother, Robin, who would often cause amusement by his size. “Is that your mascot?” onlookers would ask. But once they had seen this little schoolboy in action their amusement would turn to admiration. And so, our black-and-gold colours on the hockey field were to bring fame and glory to Fish Hoek. Their success followed them down the years, and by 1938 they were at the height of their fame, having won the senior championship for four successive years - a record for any hockey team since 1902!

When war broke out in 1939, Fish Hoek had a bigger membership than any other club (with five teams in the field) except the universities, and by 1940 nearly every member of the Fish Hoek Hockey Club was on active service. Although there was a keen revival at the end of the war, many of the experienced players did not return to the game and it took some years to build up our strength again, yet, in 1948, when a first-ever touring team visited South Africa, our club was indeed proud to have three of its members included in the Western Province team - Roy and Ronnie Beamish and Alan White.

The original Fish Hoek Sports Club that had formed itself in those very early years, with the help and encouragement of those fine sportsmen, began to realise that things were beginning to get a bit out of hand. Hockey was not everybody's game. There were a great number of people - both young and older - who wanted to play tennis. An old, disused tennis court (probably built by Mr de Villiers) still
stood in the grounds of Mountain View, and two private courts had been laid, one by the Burtons at Ionia and one by Mr and Mrs Bull in Third Avenue. But we wanted a club. And tennis courts cost money; for Nature had not provided for our tennis as the “black pitch” had provided for hockey. And so the Fish Hoek Sports Club split up into the Hockey and the Tennis Clubs . . . each to be fully independent.

Up to now fund raising has been a joint affair, as well as a very joyous one. Every New Year's Day we had a gala on the beach. Everybody took part and what fun we had! There was no pavilion in those days, so that we could utilise the whole of the sheltered corner of the beach. There were aunt sallies, chocolate wheels, dips, bobbing apples on strings, slippery bars for pillow-fights, electrified coins in a bucket of water, fortune tellers. formed an entertainments committee.

Mr Turner (whose daughter, Elsie, was already a talented young pianist), Mr Daniels, Mrs Winnie Mansfield (our own Gracie Fields), Mrs Chambers (always the life and soul of any entertainment with her amusing repertoire), Mr Giblette, Mr Peers and Mr Cobern. We had no hall, but that did not daunt us. We erected an open-air stage on the grass near Mountain View, and we came in our “jelly bags” and jerseys, still with “tackies” on our feet while each family brought cushions and rugs and, of course, our storm- lanterns. We paid our bobs and we enjoyed ourselves with joyous zest. Mr Daniels managed to augment our own artists with others from Cape Town, such as Mr Madden, who gave us a stirring repertoire of songs from the sea and humorous ones such as “Old MacDonald had a Farm - Hee-i-Hee-i-o! ” A very young girl who was to become one of our best-known singers, with her deep contralto, Sigrid Wallander; and auburn-haired Isabel Brodie, who later came with her family to Fish Hoek.

Amongst our own artists were the celebrated Shakespearian scholar and elocutionist, Kenneth Pritchard, whose dramatic arrival with a scarlet-lined cloak over his shoulders always aroused a stir of excitement, and his powerful rendering of those classic poems was something we never forgot. His was pure drama . . . until one hilarious episode when a rough-haired terrier jumped onto the stage and enjoyed a good scratch during one of Kenneth's more tragic scenes.

To give him his due, he never turned a hair, and carried on unperturbed! Mr Carlton McConnell with his inspired violin-playing and the two Smallman girls
also did their bit. Gladys would give us an exhibition of dancing and Violet sang in a sweet soprano “When Grandmama met Grandpapa in the First Minuet.” Arthur Morom - with a carnation in his buttonhole even in those days - also sang for us and later little Ruby Sylvester with the raven hair played the piano. After the concert the lanterns were retrieved from the stage and their bobbing lights accompanied us home. Highest of all lived Mr Giblette, and we could watch him weaving his way up the mountainside for quite a while.

As we grew more sophisticated we were to have a spate of bridge drives. Nobody ever seemed to tire of these functions which were held at the Homestead Hotel, where nothing was ever too much trouble for the Diamond Fields who had three children, Theo, Kathleen and Jack. Another venue for these affairs was the new Milton - first built as a convalescent home for railwaymen, and later taken over by the Lamudes, whose blond son Teddy was a very popular young man. What excitement to win a round at one of the bridge tables and to move up to the next with cheeks pink from excitement and waving a gay little flag!

Well, maybe it took a little time, but it certainly did not seem long before we had our tennis court, and no court can ever have given more pleasure to any group of people. Amongst the better players were Mrs Sparks and her sister Chummie Newman, Mrs Cloete; “Bantam” Ayres; Di Stigant; Lulu Pearson; Mr Ernie Lanz (who married the lovely young singer Sigrid Wallander). The two Cecils also joined, and five years later Cecil Greenland was to gain this Press publicity for the 1928-29 tournament: “C. Greenland was the outstanding player, winning no fewer than six events.” Greenland was the singles champion for many years, and, in fact, is still playing in the singles events at this club forty years later!

By this time there was a large membership. Bubbles Langton was close runner-up to Greenland and Jack Packham was another formidable player. Mr and Mrs Douglas Harcourt had come to Fish Hoek by now and were amongst the keenest players, as also was the Rev. Fred Dennis who, with his wife, was running a small boarding school at Sunny Cove; Dr Arnold Raff and his brother Barnie played a fine game when they could find time to come over from Kalk Bay; and a strange personality Mr Bill Sykes, became quite a character at the courts.

Mystery surrounded this rather grubby little man who was said to own a yacht and an aeroplane as well as his impressive car, though all his wealth had by no
means improved his tennis nor provided a clean cap! In direct contrast was the mysterious and handsome Count von Hemert, who arrived as regularly as the south-easter for the summer months - “Following the strawberries,” was his only explanation; and this bronzed giant of a man certainly had the ladies all in a flutter! Jack and Annie Coram were to join us later and provide the good players with some strong opposition and, years later, little Anne was to make a name for herself.

We cannot leave the tennis club without reference to a few of its best-known characters through the happy years. First came “Colonel” Williams. His life was devoted to the club with its little wood-and-iron shelter and its bevy of enthusiastic players. “The Colonel” was always there, to supervise the court, to encourage the youngsters, to flatter the ladies, and to enjoy every moment of the play and the good fellowship. With his slow, deliberate step, his inevitable pipe and walking stick, and his faithful little dachshund, Mannie, he was a familiar figure to all and was sadly missed when he passed away.

In the 1940s we were to have another devotee. This was Mr Briggs and his wife, who must still be well remembered by many of the younger players. Their interest and tireless voluntary work built a fine and united club.

There were no league matches for us in the 1920s, but no holiday passed without a tournament being arranged and even an occasional all-day fancy dress competition would be held - the fun and hilarity of these events far exceeding the standard of play! Lastly - no history of the Fish Hoek Tennis Club would be complete without a tribute to its venerable chairman for at least thirty years - evergreen Mr Frank Gould, and such fine players as Leslie Gray and Bernard West, the Davies and the Spengler brothers.

CHAPTER FIVE

So much for our social pleasures. During this time, however, another equally enthusiastic group of people were taking on the responsibilities of our spiritual needs. Those who had always been devoted and regular church-goers were conscientiously attempting to keep up this habit by attending the Holy Trinity.
Church at Kalk Bay. (Canon Hogarth was the rector in those days, and Mrs Dale had a small school). This was a major undertaking, for everybody depended on the trains. The station was merely a wooden platform situated in front of the present art gallery, and trains were few and far between. Those women on the sandhills side would plough over the loose sand in their canvas “tackies” carrying their smart shoes until they reached the station, where they would change and hide their “tackies” under the end of the platform where they would be perfectly safe until their return.

This gradually became more and more of a burden, when there were Sunday dinners to cook and many other household chores, and so, irrespective of denomination, it was decided to hold services of some sort in Fish Hoek. Two basement rooms in private houses were put at the disposal of those who wished to worship. These temporary churches were Mr “Bull” Pritchard's room beneath Orano, and soon after, Mr Brunt's room under Delft, a lovely house behind the Pritchards, built by the Zoutendyks, who were related by marriage to the Brunts, who had three children, Bert, Darter and the lovely Vere.

On winter mornings we arrived for Communion with our storm-lanterns. Candles lighted the cold, bare interior of the little “Church.” The first visiting clergymen to minister to our needs were the Rev. Cyprian Brooke and the Rev. Burgess. Amongst these devoted church-goers were the Oldfields, the Lacks, the Greenlands, the Castlemans, the Mathews, the Robertsons, the Fields and the Cloetes. Mr Frank Mathew presented us with a small harmonium, and this, and the prayer books, were kept at the Oldfields' little stone house higher up the hillside (no road as yet) and the Castleman boys carried it down in time for the services.

Mr Oldfield, who was a born entertainer and raconteur, with a mellow baritone - particularly suited to the “Cobbler's Song” from Chu Chin Chow, loved nothing better than a crowd of young people round the piano, and on Sunday evenings, some weeks before Christmas, he would gather us all together to practise the lovely Christmas Carols that have never lost their magic down the years. With joyous voices we sang lustily and not untunefully, led by his rich, rolling tones, while Mrs Oldfield supplied us with refreshments before we all wended our way home by lamplight. I am pretty sure that few young people, before or since, have
The first block of shops has appeared on the Beach Road (the Greek, the chemist and the butcher), taken about 1923

*Fish Hoek en fete for the Prince of Wales (1925)*
Fish Hoek is beginning to grow. “Milton” is in the foreground—with 2nd Avenue running down from Kommctjie Road, and “Wot-a-lark” is in the centre

Picking water-cress in the Silvermyn River
A lovely stretch of the Silvermyn River in the early 'twenties

Our stalwart Ladies' Hockey Team, resting beside the “Black Pitch”. Left to right: Beryl Cloete, Nelly and Joan Zoutendyk, Di Stigant, Dorrie Lyon, Ruth Earp and May Gracie—the three at the back cannot be identified

Fish Hoek Second XI winners of Knock-out Competition 1925.
Left to right (front row): J. Zoutendyk, J. E. Grade (captain), R. L. Beamish, E. Price
enjoyed Christmas Eve more than this happy little band who trudged so joyously from house to house, over the rough, unmade roads and across the unlighted sand dunes - the boys carrying the little harmonium.

Along the Kommetjie Road, where there were very few houses, we would go to the furthest point, which was the Halls' house. Mr Hall was a chemist, and one Christmas Eve we had our first taste of sorrow when his son, Jack, came out and asked us gently if we would not sing for his father lay dying.

Half-way house on Christmas Eve was Sandhills, the Robertsons' home, where little sister Midge would be waiting up and Mum would supply cool drinks and cake to the starving horde, Mr Lack, Mr Oldfield and his daughters, Dorothy and Sue; the Castlemans - Oswald, Eric and Vincent; the Men- muirs - Marjorie and Joyce; Beryl Cloete; Helen, Winnie and Dorrie Lyon; Cecil Lack; Cecil Greenland; Ceddie and Douglas Robertson, Dick and Molly Byrne.

Vincent would stuff a few pieces of cake in the bag with the Carol sheets so that on the second half of our rounds everybody would have sticky fingers.

I suppose the south-easter must have been with us in those faraway days for I can remember the storm-lantern flickering and sometimes blowing out altogether, much to the delight of the boys, who hastily tried for a few stolen kisses! But we never minded the weather, and what fun it is to be young.

It was not long before we all started fund-raising once more - this time for a church. The Diamond Fields (Mr. Field by the way was no mean artist) very generously allowed us to use the Homestead grounds for the church fete which became an annual affair. (We never seemed to tire of fetes.) Thanks principally to the tireless energy of the stall-holders with their cakes and jams, sweets and needlework and the unforgettable good humour of such men as Mr Oldfield and Mr Lack, it was not very long before we had an Anglican Church hall, St Margaret's, in Fourth Avenue. Immediately this was commandeered for dancing (the Fox-trot, the Blues and the Charleston) and more funds rolled in. It was also hired by a Mrs Berry for the first private school in Fish Hoek. Until then, children who were not already at schools in Wynberg and Rondebosch attended Mrs Dale's little school at Kalk Bay. Later, the Rev. Dennis and his wife were to open their boarding establishment at Sunny Cove, and Miss Jones had a small school
in Second Avenue. Later still one was run by gentle Mrs Tayler, mother of the now famous Colin who is in charge of the Oceanarium in Port Elizabeth.

Our Primary School was to be built later, in 1928, and our High School in 1957. By 1960, the Paul Greyling Afrikaans-medium School had been opened and, including St Imelda's Convent School, over 1,000 children St Margaret's Anglican Church Hall was to serve us until 1934, one of our best known ministers during this period being the Rev. Allen and his well-loved wife. From here Sue Oldfield was married to Lionel Bardo, and their eldest daughter Deirdre, was christened. By now other devoted workers had come to Fish Hoek. The Rev. and Mrs Ruske, who was to become one of the pillars of St Margaret's, their two sons, Barney and Bobby, and their little daughter Mary, who was to die of diphtheria when eight years old. Mrs Kathleen McCormick was another well-known and philanthropic personality, with her son and daughter, David and Elizabeth. Mrs Ashwell and Mrs Wilhemina Burton, as well as Mr and Mrs Douglas Harcourt who had come to Fish Hoek in 1927 when Mr Harcourt was in charge of the building of the tremendous new pavilion and promenade at Muizenberg.

By 1935, the simple, white-walled, high-gabled Church of St Margaret's was completed. Designed by the well-known architect Mr P. C. Walgate, and built by Mr J. Gordon, father of Sheila, Len, Molly, Jack and Kathleen, this modern church lent grace and dignity to our village. Mrs Daisy Lack, who lived next door, was to have her name perpetuated in the little church garden where she worked so devotedly for years.

Another rector was to stay with us for many years and become a part of Fish Hoek. This was the Rev. Dollery and his wife; and, after Mr Dollery's death, Mr Halvorson was our padre for another twelve years. Mr Halvorson had been an Army Chaplain and, in 1948, brought a fresh, modern outlook into church affairs.

St Margaret's, in 1960, with a congregation of five hundred, was to make a deep impression with its fine choir of both men's and women's voices - culminating in a magnificent annual Easter performance of “The Crucifixion.” This was inspired by the Rev. Miller and enhanced by the brilliant young organist Stanford Thomas. As I write in 1966 the Rev. Lovegrove is warmly welcomed as our new rector.
During this same period another band of early pioneers were building a hall for worship in First Avenue. These were the Wesleyans - now known as Methodists. In fact, the exact date of the laying of this foundation stone was 29th October 1921 by Mr Tom Mossop. Other faithful members were Mr Gordon Leverton and his wife Amy, who, not only were instrumental in acquiring the ground, but also offered pound for pound in the building. Others were “Mother” Edith Warner, Mrs Katie Sleep, the Giblettes, the Turners, and the ever-musical Sylvesters. Over the years, two of the best known and loved ministers have been the Rev. McKenzie-Frazer (who married Denise Gray) and the Rev. Boyd who, in the 1960s presides over a congregation of three hundred, and he it was who was instrumental in raising funds to build their fine church in 1953.

Many Sunday school children of those days will remember with affection the founder of the Methodist Men's League, and few members of the church can have given longer and more devoted service than Gordon Leverton. Sunday school picnics were popular in those early 1920s and many a sub-bonneted group of young girls would come down to Fish Hoek for the day. Amongst these were the Cobb sisters - Muriel, Milly and Vi, who were to become staunch members of the Methodist choir in later years.

By now, of course, we have many other churches. There is a fine Catholic Church of St John the Evangelist, of which the first priest for many years was Father Doran. This church has magnificent stained-glass windows, the sanctuary ones being donated by Mr Stinton-Jones, and the symbolic windows throughout the church itself were given, in memory of her husband, by Mrs Nell Alexander.

At the same time, in the year 1952, our beautiful Dutch Reformed Church was built, next to the little cemetery which contains the remains of Hester and Jacob de Villiers. The first minister to serve in this church was Ds. Louw. We were also to have a Presbyterian and Baptist Church, a Gospel hall, and an Apostolic Church.

But I am racing ahead far too quickly. The days we are writing of knew no such variety. In the 1920s our lives were simple and our needs were few.

Well do I remember a midsummer Sunday evening, running down over the sun-warm sandhills to the little church hall in Fourth Avenue for Evensong. On my
way I met a “tok-tokkie” beetle bumbling his way over the soft sand. I stood entranced. My love of nature had become a sore trial to my family and I deeply appreciate their tolerance in those faraway days.

I never tired of the fascinating bugs and beetles that inhabited those untouched dunes, and this gorgeous, glossy, round-bodied “tok-tokkie” with his gangling legs plodding through the soft sand was too magnificent a find to pass by. I had to have him. But where to keep him while I was in church? There was no time to lose, so I snatched him up and ran on holding him gently in my hand, where he immediately prostrated himself, with stiff, lifeless legs. At the church door I hid him in the only place I could think of - my glove! And then, slightly breathless, I entered the comfortless, bare hall and, being late, sat in the front row of wooden chairs. I placed my gloves carefully beside me. All went well for the first half of the service. My “tok-tokkie” still feigned death.

However, after half an hour of this discomfort he must have taken courage and decided he had better do something a little more constructive.

Unfortunately his first move put him into a still worse predicament. He walked into a finger of the glove! The first knowledge I had of this was when I noticed a slight faltering in the devout voice of dear old Mr Allen who was just beginning his sermon, and I saw his eyes bulging as he watched with fascination while a somewhat shabby leather glove on an empty seat suddenly came to life and the fingers clutched at the air in wild abandon. With burning cheeks I hurriedly hid the offending gloves under my chair and, to my undying gratitude, the kindly old parson never once referred to this embarrassing incident. Are there still “tok-tokkies” in Fish Hoek, I wonder?

CHAPTER SIX

Weekdays saw the office workers and children hurrying over the dunes and down from the mountainside to catch the eight o'clock train from our fine new station with its double platform and ticket office. (Sunny Cove and Clovelly were unheard of in those days.) A tubby little porter with a friendly smile and a kindly nature - known to us all as Cosgrove - encouraged us on if we were late, and often
refrained from blowing his whistle until the last laggard had tumbled pell-mell into the waiting open door. Not even electric trains in those days. Each coach was divided into separate compartments with no intercommunication, so that once in you were committed for the rest of your journey to your travelling companions. Naturally, we school-kids did our best to avoid the “Methuselahs” of thirty and forty, and how desperately they must have tried to avoid us.

Our own particular “crowd” seemed mostly composed of “Rusty-bugs” (Rustenburg Girls' High), and 'Dead-cats” (Diocesan College). Amongst these were the regulars from Glencairn who looked out for us at Fish Hoek. The Earp girls - Gladys, Lickie and quiet Ruth. The Cartwright boys. Merry Tommy and his two older brothers, Jack and the handsome Joe, who set many a heart aflutter beneath a gym tunic. Joe was to marry Gladys Earp and, much later on, became Father Cartwright of St Francis' Anglican Church at Simons-town.

May and Sonny Gracie were sometimes with us too. Others were the two Cecils and the Lyon girls - Winnie, Helen and Dorrie. (Little sister Mary was to marry Ralph Mossop who is now managing director of his father's tannery at Rondebosch), the Castleman boys - Oswald, Eric and Vincent. Younger brother Douglas and little sister Esme were too young for travelling and went to school in Fish Hoek. Douglas was to cause quite a sensation in later years by running away from the Dennises' boarding establishment (as strict as any Dotheby's Hall!) at Sunny Cove, and thereafter carried an aura of romantic adventure, much envied by us less venturesome types. Harold Sparks and Tina le Sueur were also regulars on the school train and were sweethearts even in those early days; attractive Bonnie Rice and her brother Normie; the Cloetes - Beryl, Sonny and little Lorna.

Douglas and Ceddie Robertson were usually accompanied as far as the station, by a large and excited black dog. At Kalk Bay another little group joined the train for school. There were the Toys - Doley, Winkie and Sheila, whose parents ran Seahurst Hotel, later to be named the Robin Gordon. Three brothers, “Haasie” (Neil), Desmond and Vincent Hare also travelled up to Bishops every day, though their little brother Teddy was yet too young. The Hares were then, and still are today, one of the best known Peninsula families. Mr Will Hare owned the brickfields at Mowbray, and spent most of his time in Kalk Bay where he kept a big motor-boat, the Voyager, for his favourite sport - fishing. His four sons were to carry on the tradition and, in the 'sixties, have built up a fine name for
themselves, not only in the big-game fishing world, but also as intrepid and ever-willing rescuers in any sea drama in False Bay.

With the new sport of tunny fishing that has unexpectedly taken False Bay by storm, the Hares and their tuna craft, Speranza, have achieved international fame. As children these boys spent many a glorious holiday on the Atlantic side of the Cape Point coast where they hired a cottage - Bright - waters. When the estate of Blouberg was sold about 1930 (another of Johnnie Zoutendyk's auction sales), Mr Will Hare bought this large tract of land and later presented a big area to the Divisional Council to be included in the Cape Point Nature Reserve.

An interesting sequel is the fact that two Hare brothers, Vincent and Teddy, married the two daughters (Eveleigh and Betty), of Mr Frank Brooke, whose brother was Canon Brooke - an early rector of Holy Trinity, Kalk Bay, before the Rev. Hogarth arrived in the early twenties.

CHAPTER SEVEN

While these giggling teenagers continue their train journey to school, let us stay for a moment to look at Kalk Bay - in those days, the first stop after Fish Hoek and so closely linked with us. This sun-drenched, seafaring harbour was already steeped in history before Fish Hoek was conceived, and many of us had spent a school holiday at one of its select boarding establishments. There was Castle Hill owned by the Allans; Chartfield run by the amazing Miss Tottman who also managed to care for an overflowing family of adopted children; and Strathmore, in Colyn Road, at the top of which lived the McGhies, Donald, Mildred and Roderick in Girdleness.

Their father (a building contractor) had constructed the two popular water polo player and a member of the False Bay Swimming Club. The Teddy la Mude. In those days Harry was a member of the choir at Holy Trinity Church, under Archdeacon Brooke, and in the sixties he still sang in the same choir! Opposite the McGhies was a young girl, Dorothy ten years old and who became one of Western Province's leading divers, becoming Western Province champion; while another young lady who is now a well-known Fish Hoek resident, was chosen to represent Western Province as a diver, with a touring team. This was Winnie
Johnson who married Leslie Ayres. Winnie spent many holidays at Kalk Bay with the Nash family . . . two brothers, Sonny and Jack, and two daughters, Florence and Baba who won fame as a swimmer and was chosen, while a schoolgirl at Rustenburg, to represent South Africa at the Olympic sports.

Another still more famous schoolgirl from these parts was Peggy Duncan, trained by the swimming coach, Mr. H. Miller. A big, blonde girl with cropped hair, she was the first woman to complete the swim from Robben Island in 1926. Other fine swimmers who brought much honour and glory to Kalk Bay were Ruby Anderson, who died young; Helen and "Kata" van Blerk - whose family had been in Kalk Bay so long that their ancestors had owned the farm Klein Tuin (now Clovelly) as well as the area over the neck into Kalk Bay. Mr van Blerk, senior, who had married a Miss Colyn, had owned the property stretching up the mountainside behind the station which included the natural mountain spring. This incorporated the water rights, and, until recently, Mr Leslie van Blerk was the proud possessor of the original key which his father used to unlock the tanks when the steam engines, which turned at Kalk Bay in those last years of the nineteenth century, were in need of filling before their return to Cape Town. Another family who excelled at swimming were the Williamses . . . George and young Owen who was to make a name for himself on the football field, and their twin sisters, Peggy and Amy. Water polo games were played at the Long Street swimming baths, as well as exciting league competitions, with False Bay coming top one year.

Amongst other families who dated back were the Hugos, whose father was in charge of the harbour fisheries and cold storage, the Pitts, the Cottams who lived round the corner overlooking Wooley's Pool. Rae became the wife of Cecil Wightman, of “Snoektown Calling” fame. Here, too, lived - and still do - the Ladans . . . Louis, Cato, his red-headed sister, and baby Edward who forty years later was to be one of Cape Town's leading exponents of modern art. It was Cato who married Mr John Williamson, pioneer of flying, who is remembered as “the man who opened up South Africa's skyways”.

The well-known Steytler family owned the old thatched homestead on this corner. Miss Joan Steytler was a great worker for the Girl Guides. The Harrises had a couple of stores in the village, and the Coopers kept the pharmacy - later to
be run by Reggie Seager, a friend of ours, who died before his time. And, of course, we must not forget the homely little police station on the Main Road opposite the harbour gates. In charge of this station for many years, and friend to all, was Sergeant Villett, while a member of the police force, Mr Smallberger, lived in Fish Hoek where he married a young Miss Muller, whose father was a small dairy farmer who originally lived at Clovelly. One of the Mullers was foreman on Fish Hoek station.

A familiar figure in this area for many years was Captain Gentry, always mounted on horseback, who had a daughter Sybil and a son Jack. They ran St James' Hotel.

Mr Calder, senior, had recently taken over the fine new King's Hotel overlooking the harbour and he prided himself on providing his guests with ocean- fresh fish every day. To accomplish this he owned his own fishing boat. One evening, however, a record surprise catch was made when old Christiaan, a Norwegian who was a well-known member of the establishment, saw a huge fish swimming close to the beach. Hurrying to the home of one of Kalk Bay's keen fishermen, Mr Jack Moore, he brought him down post-haste to the beach, where Mr Moore cast in and caught, single handed, a kabeljou weighing 134 lb. Giving it to Christiaan, as his “find,” the residents of the New King's were to enjoy some fine meals the next day.

Those were the days for fishing at Kalk Bay. The pier itself had not long been completed ... in fact the derricks could still be seen near the slipway where the fishing boats had to be hauled up out of the tide's way when it swept right up the beach and under the causeways, before the shelter of the long concrete harbour wall gave added protection from such hazards. Dad, like hundreds of other suburban fathers, would come down to Kalk Bay by train for a Saturday afternoon's relaxation and the pleasurable certainty of returning home with a basketful of still-twitching fish. They were pulled in by the hundreds on that popular harbour wall where fishermen of all ages and both sexes stood shoulder-to-shoulder.

After we came to Fish Hoek we would often walk over to the harbour at Kalk Bay as the fishing boats returned - about noon - with their overflowing, leaping silver hoard. The harbour itself would come alive with noise and colour as the Coloured people crowded round and, on holidays and highdays, the brightly “doeked”
women would sell peanuts (or “kachengorrie” as they were colloquially called), “lofliemela” (pink and white coconut-ice) and “tameltjies,” a delicious toffee sprinkled with “danepits” (seeds of the pine), and there would be joyous pleasure trips round the bay to Seal Island.

The fishing community at Kalk Bay and Simonstown is richly coloured with Filipino blood - a number of these fine-featured, straight-haired men having come to the Cape during the past century. They are still distinguished by the musical names Delcarme, Padua, Gomez, Fernandez, Mazonki, Pipino and Ferreira. It will be a sad day if the Coloured folk have to leave Kalk Bay where for generations they have filled the harbour town with colour and joy, warmth and unquenchable humour. For a century, “Tweede Nuwejaar” has been their day of days.

On our way home with a couple of mackerel, a bunch of haarders, an elf or a snoek - none more than sixpence - we might pick a bunch of thickstemmed wild asparagus where it grew on the lush, moist, sunless cliffs of Clovelly and add the extra load, with our fish, onto little sister Midge's pushcart as we trundled her along with us.

Once a week, on the Outspan at Kalk Bay would stand the crawfish cart. This was driven over from Kommetjie by red-bearded Mr Albertus de Villiers with his red-headed, red-skinned daughter beside him, and his heap of red-clawed produce behind ... in all, quite a colourful combine! If we were lucky, we might catch them in Fish Hoek where they stopped for a short while for our benefit before continuing to Kalk Bay. In 1966 old Mr Henry de Villiers still enjoys a day out in the boat off Witsands during the crawfish (or “kreef”) season. The full rights of “kreefing” in this area have been taken over now by Mr Tommy Louw, of Sunnydale, who has just signed a contract to supply live crawfish to a restaurateur in Paris. These 'kreef’ are sent by air in salt-water tanks - and will cost the Frenchman a little more than the tickey or sixpence of the 1920s!

CHAPTER EIGHT

But hurry! That school train of long ago is pulling in to Rondebosch station, and homework, which has been spasmodically rehashed, is flung into cases and the
Winners of Western Province Senior Championship, season 1938.

A fine vista of our new Main Road, taken in 1929 by Mr S. Peers. The little wall on the right (mid-way along) is where Ray Fashions now stands. Beyond that is the first shop—Sam Brenners. A few houses have appeared on the hillside
No transistor sets in those days, but we had our music nevertheless. Left to right: Ceddie Robertson, Stan Linley (hidden), Elizabeth McCormick, Cecil Lack, Vincent Castleman, Cecil Greenland, Angus Duncan (who was killed in action during World War II when a Major in the Cape Town Highlanders) and Eric Castleman.

The author, Cedryl, just after her marriage to Cecil Greenland in 1935.

“The graceful young man on the flying trapeze” is Bill Wardley—one of our finest swimmers. The diving-board is becoming a little tatty by now!
boys noisily erupt, while we girls travel on more sedately to Rosebank. This was a strict school ruling in those days, for our tiny but tyrannical school principal believed strictly in apartheid of the sexes. All you “do-as-you-darn-well-pleasy,” uninhibited, co-ed, teenagers of today will probably not believe that a mere forty years ago our Matric dances at Rustenburg were for Girls Only!

One common denominator we did share though, and this was our music master, a prominent figure with an individual limp and an inevitable baton in his hand. Dr Barrow Dowling - who taught music throughout Peninsula schools for at least three generations, while he was also organist at St George's Cathedral.

Few young ladies went to work in those days, but we had our regular “eman- cipated” women travellers whom our housebound mothers must often have envied. Amongst these were Miss Schutjies, Miss Chard and the Linley girls. * Christian names were not yet the vogue amongst the mature set. A distinguished and impressive traveller from Fish Hoek station was a well-dressed, heavily built man who arrived in a chauffeur-driven limousine from Kommetjie each morning (much to the envy of our hardworking fathers, none of whom had as yet aspired to the prestige of a motor car). This was Mr van der Horst, from Imhoff's Gift, his model farm near Kommetjie, who was a director of Imperial Cold Storage, as well as chairman of that illustrious firm of Fletcher & Cartwright's.

As I write, in 1966, this gracious and venerable building on the corner of Darling and Adderley Streets is being bludgeoned into the rubble and dust of the past that must give way to the brash, characterless edifices of the future. But, in the 1920s, Fletcher & Cartwright's was a name that spelled dependability, elegance and opulence. Its clientele were exclusive, and its prestige high. For us teenagers its claim to fame was the popular balcony tearoom where we could get those forerunners of today's frozen delights - banana-splits; peach-melbas; and cherry-topped parfaits - when our pocket-money allowed!

If our mothers did not buy their hats at this exclusive milinery department, we could not care less. But today it is of great interest to know that we have in Fish Hoek the chief milliner of those peak years - from 1926 to 1947. Madame Geyer, mother of Mrs Rose Solomon, was in charge of that huge and select workshop where all the exclusive chapeaux of those days were designed and created for society women all over the Cape Province. The days were long and the work was
arduous, with some temperamental and demanding clients, but “Oh! What wonderful people to work for.” Their kindness and generosity will never be forgotten by older members of that happy staff. Another link to be forged later was the fact that Poppy Cartwright married Vernie Rice.

Cartwright's corner was also the scene of a deeply moving ceremony which was continued for some years after World War I, when, at the first stroke of the noonday gun, a bugler would appear on the balcony to play the heart-catching lament of the “Last Post” while the whole of Adderley Street would come to a standstill and people would bow their heads in honour of those who had lost their lives. Woe betide the man who kept his hat on - for there was every chance some irate female would knock it off with her sunshade!

A Saturday treat was to go into town for a morning of shopping. Before coming home we usually walked up Plein Street to Lewis Sims where we found some epicurean delight for the family. It might be half a dozen large, green-hued, penguin eggs, fresh from Dassen Island; or a couple of dozen crawfish claws. None of the pallid, compressed, characterless pieces of flesh that one can only buy in a tin today, but the “real McKay” - red-shelled, rumbustious, ocean-scented claws that were all the more mouth-watering for the tantalising delay as we broke the hard shell and delicately extracted those toothsome morsels so beloved by our family. Fat, pink prawns were another favourite and would be ladled out into a paper bag by the ounce, or half a dozen frozen penguin eggs from Dassen Island, or else Mum would decide on a nice, young chicken - for a weekend treat.

This would involve quite a bit of shrewd, housewifely concentration regarding age, sex and condition. In those days chickens retained all their personality - as well as their heads, feet, and often their feathers too, even as butchers' corpses. . . . No force-fed, well-ripened, cellophane-wrapped nonentities that come to tempt our jaded appetites today.

If it was a hot day, and we were not too heavily laden, we would all walk to ment Station, and down onto the cool, lovely pier, where the deep, rest the cool ocean breeze, while there were usually a few intrepid swimmers we were taken dutifully to the Opera House to sit somewhat unwillingly through a magnificent performance of Shakespeare by Frank Benson (later to be knighted) and his
company from London, and I well remember giggling uncontrollably with Mum and her sister at the first-ever exhibition of paintings by a new and somewhat startling, young artist who was setting the art critics of Cape Town by the ears with her distorted (to our eyes) forms and shapes - Miss Irma Stern, who has just died as I write this in 1966, after a lifetime of controversy and renown.

And no memories can be complete without the Rosebank Show week. Those big, oak-shaded grounds that stretched up from the Main Road near the old match factory (and how many of you knew that our Ralph Egenes who has just completed another big block of shops in Fish Hoek was the little son of the manager of that factory in Rosebank, next door to the College of Music).

Show week in early March seemed to epitomise the very heart of a Cape Town summer's day. The sun beat down on that colourful crowd, with schoolchildren milling in their masses on that glorious half-holiday (always on the third day - Thursday) - icecream vendors and band music, gay tents and side booths, great, cool halls redolent with the hot, sweet smell of grapes and water-melon “konfyt”; and higher up under the trees the gentle lowing of sleek cattle and the slushy mire of the grotesque pig pens. We vied with each other over our collections of samples and always seemed to be eating huge bags of popcorn.

CHAPTER NINE

Well - I am meandering again. However, no township grew overnight and a true history is composed of many small human happenings as well as world-shaking events.

While we youngsters were growing up - playing, giggling, swimming, hiking and unconsciously sinking our roots deep in the soil of our untrammelled, natural playground, our elders were taking on more and more responsibilities that must needs go hand in hand with the development of any town. Some of those civic-minded men (Jacobson, Rice, Wardley, Daniels - amongst others), formed a small committee which met in a downstairs room at Warwick House, and later at the newly erected Greek shop on the Beach Road, run by a family who were to become an integral part of Fish Hoek ... Mr and Mrs Costa Pnematicatos and their four sons. In 1921 a Local Board was formed with Mr Jacobson (later to change
his name to Lewis), Mr Rice, Mr Golding and Mr Daniels.

By 1927 this had developed to the status of Village Management Board with Mr E. W. Rice as Chairman and Mr A. J. Wright as Secretary. Another staunch member on the Board by this time was Mr H. S. Jager, who was to become a leading figure in our town and our first Mayor in 1940 when the growth and development of Fish Hoek brought about the next step in municipal jurisdiction and we were proclaimed a municipality.

Municipal services were rapidly taking over from our crude existence. Though water-borne sanitation was not to come in full to Fish Hoek until the late 1930s we already had water laid on to our homes ... a tremendous undertaking and a tremendous boon. Although Mr de Villiers had been granted the rights of the freshly-flowing Silvermyn River, as well as his own little reservoir on the hill near the Homestead, it was soon obvious that we would have to supplement this with the Cape Town supplies from the Steenbras River, near Gordon's Bay in the Hottentots Holland Mountains. Despite this development, certain clauses in the deeds were still strictly adhered to - i.e. the rights of fishing off the beach, and the ban on any liquor sales, while another clause in Mr de Villiers' will debarred any Coloured person from owning property or business rights in the municipal area: and these clauses remain as municipal law today.

Town planning and road mapping was being imposed before the siting of buildings and properties got out of hand, and a certain pattern of law and order was taking shape on the grass-covered dunes in the heart of Fish Hoek.

The Main Road came into being. Running past the low-lying camping sites and cottages of those first visitors to Fish Hoek, it immediately rivalled the Beach Road so far as business rights were concerned and such sites inevitably became more valuable.

Not long after this the first auxiliary arterial road was opened up from a point to the north of Fish Hoek station and ran diagonally across this “flat” area to wind round the demarcated recreation ground. First known as “Rice's Cutting” - as his huge mansion above it was to be affectionately termed “Rice's Folly” - this road through the dunes took a team of pipe-smoking Natives months to excavate by hand-wielded spades, and gave intense pleasure and pastime to all children in the
vicinity as the soft, white sand was exposed to their eager hands and feet, much to the annoyance of the harassed workmen.

This road is now, of course, De Waal Road and Crescent. Immediately, private properties became more accessible and gained better rural status, while proud owners became conscious of their duties and responsibilities as citizens. Those with public-spirited leanings attended meetings of the first Local Board and the names of two outstanding personalities will for ever be remembered by those who attended any such gathering during the next thirty-five years - Mrs Constance Fudge and Mr Henry Fisher, who brought much colour, humour and shrewd common sense to these discussions.

The Robertsons, as a family, did not contribute very much to the development of Fish Hoek. Dad was to suffer the isolation and frustration of almost complete deafness as he grew older (no wonderful surgical cure for the afflicted in those days) and Mum was a dreamer. Scraps of paper covered with poetry would flutter from her desk and drawers, though she became one of the staunchest followers of modern emancipation for women in those post-war 'twenties. She was one of the first brazen “hussies” to bob her hair and the wind blew gaily through her pretty curls. No exclusive coiffures in those days. No perms or tinting, no highlighting or bleaching. Hair grew as it came and to “bob” one merely inverted a pudding bowl over the head and cut around the edge. Our hair stylists of today - seven of them in Fish Hoek in the 'sixties! - will shudder at the sheer crudeness of it all, yet our mamas revelled in the new-found freedom from all the “pads” and hairpins that had bedevilled their mornings every bit as much as the demoralising pink “life-jackets” (laced and boned) and sturdy “hug-me-tights,” not to mention the heavy cotton stockings - brown, black, or white for summer, without which no lady was ever seen.

Mum even took up the latest craze amongst women - smoking! - while many of her conservative friends held up hands in horror, and a group of keen auction bridge (the newest game) players was formed with Mum and the handsome Mrs Coral Huntly organising many afternoon functions for various funds, at which some very “naughty” stories (mostly gleaned from their husbands) were exchanged. One of the naughtiest concerned the shocking new trend of knee-length skirts! Oh, yes indeed! history is merely repeating itself forty years later.
However - no nice girl yet used lipstick, rouge or eye makeup; and busts were necessary, but quite unmentionable appendages of the female form; while “vital statistics” were mentioned only in private.

The foxtrot and the Charleston were causing the grey-heads to predict the worst for these young people who so forgot their genteel upbringing. The Rices gave a splendid dance in their high-ceilinged, upstairs ballroom for their two distinguished Sandhurst soldier sons who had come back from the war - Colonel Cameron Rice and Major Eric Rice. Their eldest son Eddie had been killed.

Dancing classes were started by two handsome young naval men, one being Mr Bert Costick - well known in Fish Hoek until his death in 1965. Parents and teenagers alike gathered at the home of the Byrnes on the Kommetjie Road - Reve Realise - and all the fun and excitement of these evenings was shared for many months while we mastered such intricacies as the saunter and the tango, the quickstep and the blues. And we cranked our gramophone handle to the tunes of “Ma-a-argie - I'm always thinking of you, Mar-rgie! ” and “It ain't gonna Rain no mo no mo. It ain't gonna Rain no mo.”

As we wended our way home along the dark deserted roads, swinging our storm-lanters, we would sing “By the Light of the Silvery Moon, I want to Spoon-Spoon-Spoon! ” The Menmuirs were with us by then, Annellie, Phyllis, Marjorie and Joyce; and, of course, Dick and Molly Byrne.

Though our pastimes were simple and our pleasures mainly outdoor ones, we were beginning to grow up, and soon began “dating” each other. At a “proper” dance - sometimes held on the outdoor balcony of Delft - the Brunts' home, or at the Homestead, we would have printed programmes, each with our own name, and a tiny tasselled pencil attached. Great embarrassment often ensued as the “wallflowers” waited for a partner to come and bow politely before taking that precious card and signing his name against a dance. The supper and last-dances were the coveted ones and, when the Homestead held one of these exciting evenings, lanterns were placed strategically in the garden. The dancing venue in the 'twenties and 'thirties was St James Hotel, where Vic Davis was famed for his popular dance band.

Tunes that brought stars to our eyes being “Always” (made famous by Bert
Ralton, who died tragically while on a tour of Africa with his band). “Carolina Moon,” “Blue Hawaii,” “Goodnight, Sweetheart,” “Tea for Two,” “Charmaine,” “Button up your Overcoat,” and the lovely waltz tunes that made the couples cling so romantically together, as the lights dimmed and the music dropped to a seductive whisper. Supper was an elaborate affair in the middle of the evening with the girls all seated in the lavishly set basement, and the boys chivalrously fetching the claret cup and the plates of trifle and meringue - the cream cakes and the sandwiches. What appetites we had! And then - home by the last train to Fish Hoek.

CHAPTER TEN

Oh, yes! There is no doubt about it. We were growing up now. However, before we go further, two events occurred during the 'twenties that must be recorded.

In April of 1925 the Prince of Wales (now Duke of Windsor) visited Cape Town. Fish Hoek was certainly in no position to entertain celebrities in those days, but we could not allow the heir to the British throne to drive through our little village without some sort of recognition.

Prince Edward was to be entertained to lunch at Admiralty House, Simons-town, by Admiral Goodenough and Fish Hoek decided to give him a rousing welcome as he passed through. His route lay through Hout Bay and round Chapman's Peak, so that the strategic point was the Kommetjie Road where a few little stores were already doing a steady trade. One of these was Corner House, run by Mr and Mrs Slarke and their two daughters Enid and Ina. Another was a general store run by the Bermans. Mrs Berman and her two beautiful sisters were from Poland and much admired for their flawless complexions. Little daughter Hilda caught the train to school with us and later married Hilly Seftel whose brother, Ben was to marry Ethyne.

Well, here the banner was raised in all its glory, and here the proud citizens of one of South Africa's smallest townships gathered to pay their respects. What excitement burned in the breasts - and cheeks - of the few teenagers who awaited this fleeting glimpse of one of the most romantic figures of the twentieth century. As eagerly, if not as noisily, as any of the 1960 Beatle, Mod, or Rocker fans! Two blonde and excited young girls had tied little posies of red roses with blue
ribbon and written, with great daring “Love to David” - the intimate name by which he was known to his family . . . and the long wait seemed endless as we all stood in the sunshine. A false alarm stirred the anxious crowd as a gaitered horseman trotted towards us along the road. Was this an outrider? We craned forward. But no! It was nothing more than young Albert Wakeford coming on his rounds to fetch orders for his little grocery store round the corner - where Cash and Carry later took over. Poor Albert - it was an embarrassing moment for him.

Unbeknown to us in Fish Hoek, another loyal little band awaited the Prince of Wales on his return trip after lunch through St James. This was Miss Emmie Mills with her troop of Girl Guides, who had made a gay “daisy chain” (in the 'sixties Miss Mills still raises money for Guide funds with her posies). This was strung across the Main Road at St James, and was to be lifted on high by the uniformed girls as the illustrious visitor drove underneath. Much to their chagrin, this charming tribute was foiled by our over-zealous traffic department, who refused to allow any such hazard to remain on the roadway.

However, there was nobody at Fish Hoek to prevent our lasses from throwing their posies right in the open car at the feet of the boyish young prince who looked - oh! so weary and disinterested as he sat there, shackled to a life that we all were to realise, just ten years later, was sheer purgatory to this unhappy young man. In fact, at this distant date, I have no illusions about those floral messages ever being read by that Royal Prince. However, lovely, blonde Bonnie Rice (who was to die so tragically young) and Ceddie Robertson, never, by word or look, admitted the sad disillusion of that brief and eagerly awaited moment.

To cap the excitement of this week, the Robertsons - plus their excited daughter - had received an imposing invitation to meet the Prince of Wales at a Ball to be held in the City Hall. When the great night arrived, we left home in all our glory - except for our feet: carrying our dainty satin shoes - Mum's black and mine green, we plodded through the sand in walking shoes to Mr Tommy Downes's Garage on the Main Road (now the Triangle).

Mum had smiled fondly at her pink-cheeked daughter as she stood in her first proper evening gown - a strange creation in varying shades of green georgette, from palest eau-de-nil to emerald, where the skirt swung in deep points against my green stockinged legs! The shining blonde hair (my only asset) had been well
washed that afternoon, with a squeeze of lemon in the rain-water rinse (Mum's unfailing standby) and she was obviously pleased with the result.

The drive to town in Mr Downes's taxi was an event in itself and we were enchanted with the jewelled lights of Cape Town as they lay below us - until I began groping for our evening shoes. Mum's were there but, of mine, there was only ONE!

The story takes too long to tell of the anguished cries, the desperate attempts to beg, borrow, or steal another pair of shoes, and the never-to-be-forgotten denouement of a red-eyed young lady in a floating green evening gown and a pair of school brogues being presented to a Prince! Mum's frozen smile had lost all its warmth while Dad did his best to hide me in the queue. However, it would have taken more than a pair of brogues, or even a head of shining hair and two flaming cheeks to rouse the interest of that weary Prince, and the disillusioned Fish Hoek Cinderella found her satin slipper when she returned at midnight, lying unromantically on the floor of the garage!

The second event was of a very different nature. In 1926 a tragedy occurred that rocked the whole country and gave many Fish Hoek wives and mothers a desperately anxious few hours while they awaited news of their husbands and sons - and even a few daughters.

This was the Salt River train disaster. It happened on Wednesday, 9th June as the popular commuters' homeward-bound train left Cape Town Station at 5.2 p.m. - travelling express - and crashed into the bulwark of the Salt River overhead bridge as a coupling broke and jammed the points. It was the worst disaster in railway history and caused the greatest disruption to traffic that had ever been known. Forty thousand people were stranded and families at home waited anxiously for news. Hundreds caught that same express train each day and many Fish Hoekites were amongst them although, as far as can be ascertained, none of these were amongst those killed or injured.

One very young lady, Miss Winnie Carter, however, was in the train on her way home to Wynberg, and woke many hours later in hospital. She will never know exactly what happened to her during that ghastly time, but she recovered completely - and married the young man she was engaged to - Mr Reg Clark, who
Another victim who lost a leg in this accident was to become closely associated with Fish Hoek, for he married the Oldfields' elder daughter, Dorothy (or “Peanuts” as we so elegantly called her!). This was the well-known footballer Ryk Melck. Sir Malcolm Searle, the Judge President, was amongst the eight killed and many more were seriously injured. Cape Town was in mourning for many days.

This was the first time that wireless was used as a news transmitter and one of its best-known foundation members, Mr Rene Caprara, who, incidentally, lived in Fish Hoek at that time (known to his listeners as Uncle Bonzo - when he was not playing the clarinet in the orchestra) was to be the first broadcaster of “Up-to-the-minute News” as Cape Town Studio came on the air in its first splendid public service effort - remaining on duty for many hours while he kept the public informed of the latest developments or further casualties, and sent reassuring messages to those who were waiting at home - ears glued to the headphones of their crystal wireless sets.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

And now, before we go any further we must recount the wonderful story of the Peers' Cave. Probably the most exciting thing that will ever happen in the history of Fish Hoek.

A young family had come to Fish Hoek because of their little daughter's health. Dulcie was a pretty, curly-headed child, adored by her mum and dad, Mr and Mrs Peers, and her big brother, Bertie. It was not long before the two menfolk, who loved nature in every shape and form, began exploring the wide unspoiled valley that surrounded their new home in Fifth Avenue. Their hobby of collecting plants, animals and strangely-shaped stone flints, became more and more absorbing; and they soon discovered the historical significance of these findings as their explorations widened and their excitement grew.

They realised that they were discovering relics of an age and a long-forgotten civilisation that once existed in this virgin valley. By now they had covered most
The new diving board was a great attraction—as you can see. At this date we only recognise, the pretty girl on the right—Miss Hilda Bishop

Yet another team of stalwarts used the free-for-all sports ground on the foreshore in the early days, and thanks to Mr C. H. R. de Stadler, Fish Hoek's soccer “king”, here is a record of the first-ever soccer match played against “Postals” in 1931 (and beating them 4—1, what's more!)

The Royal visit to Cape Town, February, 1947
Our “Fire Brigade”—posed for action. Left to right: Bill Henessey, V. A. Villet, Jack Ashley, and Alex Johns

A happy party of tennis players after one of their all-day fancy-dress tournaments about 1930

Kalk Bay as it was at the turn of the century
Our stalwart S.A.W.A.S. of the 1940s. Left to right (front row): “Timmy” Clark, Mrs Winnie Clark, Mrs Madge Montgomery, Mrs Joan Graham (commandant), Mrs Rickard. Left to right (back row): Mrs Vi Enderby, Mrs Elsie Bussell, Mrs Eileen Grimwood and Mrs Olga Kavanagh

11th Dec., 1957.—Presentation of clock on Beach Pavilion to the Fish Hoek Municipality by the Fish Hoek Women's Association
Another group of enthusiastic workers (on the Entertainments Section of the S.A.W.A.S.) outside their canteen at Clark's Garage—about 1944

A group of workers at the exciting spinning-wheels
of the sugar-white sand dunes that lay across the western part of Fish Hoek, until one day they came across a shallow cave in the rocky ledges of the highest dune. Dark, muted dust lay thick on the floor of the cave, from the entrance of which they could view the whole valley, from one ocean to the other.

When they saw the mounds of broken shell on the cave ledges (mostly big limpets which could only have been brought from the Atlantic coast) they realised that they were standing on the site of a prehistoric dwelling.

Sunday after Sunday for close on ten years the little family of four - for mother and Dulcie had now joined the explorers - packed their lunch and their tools in rucksacks and literally wore a pathway up through the scrub and bush to the cave. Sometimes it was late at night, after a long day of digging and sifting the fine dust, that the weary explorers arrived home, glad of the darkness so that the neighbours might not see the state of their clothes and bodies!

It became more and more difficult to guard their secret as more and more discoveries were made and it was found necessary to blast away some of the rock that had fallen during the passage of time and blocked the way to further progress. But it was in these lower stratas that enthralling relics were found - ornaments and shells beautifully shaped and trimmed, some pierced and still strung together with shreds of twisted gut; crudely fashioned, fire-baked pottery and implements of hard stone; while sharp-pointed bodkins, fashioned from the bones of birds had evidently been used to stitch together well-cured pelts of animals.

With trembling, reverent hands, this Fish Hoek family were bringing to light the most amazing story of an extinct race of primitive men and it was not long before they came upon the actual skeletons themselves . . . Carefully buried, perfectly preserved, they had been placed on their sides - head touching head - knees drawn up to the chins. The most heart-stirring discovery of all was the finding of a baby. Not more than a few months old this tiny child had been wrapped in skin. With it had been placed its simple toys - little skin bags filled with rattling stones, pieces of mother-of-pearl, and ostrich-shell beads were still there, strung with gut. So well was this skeleton preserved that even the tiny “peppercorns” of hair still adhered to the skull and half-grown milk-teeth were found in the jawbone!
Still more exciting however was the day in 1929 when our amateur archaeologists exposed the little skeleton that was to make world-shaking news.

Blackened almost to the point of calcification, these bones had been found in the lowest strata of all and the small skull differed in shape from the rest. The family felt that such a find deserved special treatment and care, and so, after much deliberation, they set off for home with the precious skull reposing in Mrs Peers' hat!

And so, overnight, the Peers - father and son - became famous and archaeologists all over the world acclaimed them. This last find was classified by scientists as being at least fifteen thousand years old and many of these men wanted to see the Fish Hoek Man (as it was called) for themselves. By a freak of chance, a team of British scientists were visiting South Africa and, with them the Abbe Breuil - famous French archaeologist. Imagine the excitement in the Peers home when they heard he was coming to visit them - and their consternation when he arrived, bringing forty-nine other interested scientists to see the little head that now lay so quietly on a shelf in Bertie's bedroom - amongst his many other grisly finds.

The “Fish Hoek Man” is now in the keeping of the South African Museum, and the Peers' Cave area is being preserved as a Nature Reserve; but Bertie was to die tragically from the bite of a poisonous snake, after some years of running a snake park - both in Fish Hoek and Cape Town, and Mr Peers did not survive him very long.

Another “snaky” young man in the 'twenties was Mr Cyril French who lived with his brother (both schoolmasters at Wynberg Boys' High) and who later went over to Australia as keeper of a snake park. It was here that he was bitten in the hand by a deadly reptile, the diamond snake, for which bite there was no serum, and therefore no means of saving his life. Through this tragedy, a new serum has been produced. Now, in the 'sixties, we have another keen lover of snakes who has an up-to-date snake farm on the Kommetjie Road where he produces much valuable serum. This is Mr John Wood.

CHAPTER TWELVE

But what of our bodily needs in these early days - I hear you ask. We were doing
very nicely, thank you. In fact, I am convinced that we were getting far more fresh vitamins in our food than we do today - for all our hygienic packing and deep freezes. Without electricity we could not have used fridges in any case, but this lack in no way affected the housewife's catering - except perhaps during a long week-end in the summer. (Apart from Christmas and Easter, our most popular holiday was 10th October, Wiener's Day, when the “walkers” came through Fish Hoek. What a royal welcome we gave them. We lined the roadway from just after nine and spent the morning cheering them on their arduous way.) With only the Beach Road and the Kommetjie Road made up, our two small shopping areas were limited and deliveries were by no means the simple services they are today. However, we were by no means neglected.

The musical (!) clank of metal milk cans woke us at dawn and our breakfast jugs would be bubbling with fresh, creamy milk - still warm from the cows. Our first deliveries were from the De Beers' small dairy at Glencairn, where the Seagers also had a small farm. Doris and Monty de Beer were soon to move out to Ohio at Noordhoek (a lovely farm once belonging to one of the De Villiers' sons). Also in time for breakfast - and school lunch - was our bread. A creaking basket was slung down from bent shoulders as the delivery boy came to the door and waited patiently for us to choose from the lavish variety of oven-fresh bread. Golden-topped cottage loaves and shiny twists; brown and white rolls; and the never-to-be-forgotten Hovis. For a short while after the First World War there was also an off-white, but very soft, loaf of ration bread, and, as a treat, we could have a deliciously fragrant cheese loaf. My mouth is watering as I write at the memory of that long-lost baker's bounty. In late summer, huge golden bunches of grapes would be brought to our door from Constantia - at 6d. a basinfull.

All these deliveries were, of course, done by horse-drawn vans. A still more popular one being the bi-weekly vegetable cart from Noordhoek. This was driven by genial, bearded Mr Smit, while his lanky son, Bokkie, served the eager housewives who crowded round while the gentle horses had their nose-bags on to reward them after the long trek from the lovely farm, Silvermyn, in the valley above Noordhoek and below the Silvermyn waterfall. Dewy-fresh from fertile, hand-tended pastures, those greens had no need of fridges or cellophane packing before they Were put on our tables.
The Smits were our friends and many a time we entertained them to morning tea before their return journey away up the winding road above the river at Clovelly. Today the third generation of this fine family of farmers, young Theodore, with his brother, Ivor, runs the greengrocer store that their father, Bokkie, started in our Main Road soon after it was laid. As 1966 draws to a close Theo (number three) and his young wife, Gillian are renovating the lovely old home Ionia to be one of Fish Hoek's most impressive properties.

And - while we are reminiscing about the abundance of vitamin-fresh farm produce - we must not forget our splendid little Coloured community from Noordhoek, who were always dependable for a cart-load of dawn-picked vegetables at fantastically low prices. Of these, two prominent families were the Barrons (Johnnie is farming to this day) and the well-loved “Darby and Joan” couple who sat smiling, side by side, on their little cart - George and Sarah Daniels.

On the Beach Road a family had opened a homely little grocery store — cum — tearoom. These were the Harwoods with their two daughters, May and chubby little Gracie. Mrs Harwood was a replica of Beatrix Potter's “Mrs Tiggy Winkle,” and my brother and I loved a visit to her cosy shop. Here, one Christmas Eve, we bought an overflowing brown paper bag full of small, sugar-coated biscuits for sixpence!

This little shop was in the Bon-Bon Cafe premises while further along Mr Pnematicatos provided the hub of all activity in his up-to-date Greek shop. His wife already had three sons, Johnnie, Jerry and Stanley, while little Neoklis - now the proud owner of Fish Hoek's magnificent art gallery - was born here.

In this shop, Mr Chambers had started the first Fish Hoek estate agency (later to become J. J. de Kock - “the oldest firm on the spot”) and often the Village Management Board held their meetings here. Across the sandy waste that is now Lower Recreation Road, were three tiny shops (on the site of Calder's King's Hotel), one of these being our first chemist - run by Mr Smith, who had as his assistant-cum-messenger boy, young Dick Hyland. This shop also contained a small library of tatty books which were eagerly read by all. Mr Botes, the rosy-cheeked butcher, came to Fish Hoek with his wife and three children, Mary, Kathleen and Pieter and opened a shop on the Beach Road.
About this time Mr A. E. Linley, who had a pharmacy at Mowbray, built a beautiful home on the mountainside where he lived with his family - Everard, Vera, Margery, Stanley and little Pattie - and his eldest son, Evvie who had also qualified as a chemist, took over from Mr Smith, and moved into the fine new shop next to the Greek. His pharmacy later moved to the corner of Recreation and Main Roads.

On the Kommetjie Road, besides the Bermans and the Slarkes, was a Mr Stevens in a grocery store (started by Mr Mills) and young Mr Albert Wakeford joined him, after spending a fortnight's holiday camping at Fish Hoek that first-ever summer. And Albert has never left since then! When building started on the Main Road, Wakeford took on his own grocery business (where Cash and Carry was until recently) and, incorporated with this, he gave us our first little post office agency; while our first-ever postmistress was Miss Ironsides (now Mrs Clarke of Kalk Bay). In those days, not only was there no self service, but the grocer would come to the door for your order! And Albert found it easier to do his rounds on horseback! It was not long before the three Wakeford sisters and twin brothers, Fred and George, joined him in Fish Hoek. This enterprising family have been in the bakery business, the garage business and a car hire business which George and Fred are running today, while Albert's two sons, Douglas and Clive now run a furnishing store.

Many of us continued for some years to deal with firms “up the line” and were so pampered that the order man would come all the way to Fish Hoek! Once a week, Mr Taylor, from Bennet and Baker's at Wynberg, would step decorously out of the train, a coat and umbrella on his arm if it looked like rain, and, with measured tread, would negotiate those sandy, unmade paths and knock deferentially on our humble, bungalow door. After the inevitable discussion regarding the weather and our health, he would casually and tactfully hint that Mum might like to give an order! He too would be invited in for a cup of tea and nobody would dream of skimping this pleasant weekly interlude.

Where are the gentle Mr Taylors of long ago? And where are the family grocers who could afford to be gracious and hand out gifts at Christmas time? Why, even when Mum paid her bill at the end of the month we would be given some sweets
or a slab of chocolate!

After 1925, when the Main Road was laid and tarred through the virgin sand, another grocer's shop made its appearance. This was run by Mr and Mrs Sam Brenner and it was convenient for the Robertson's in Second Avenue to run over the sand hills to shop here. A homely aroma of candles, coffee and paraffin would assail us as we waited for pretty Mrs Brenner to cut a piece from the huge round cheese, or slice a little home-cured ham. Big bags of flour, sugar, and mealies would stand near the doorway and lamps and paraffin stoves cluttered the corners. Coal was kept in the yard, for much of our cooking was done this way.

Not far from Brenners our first barber shop opened. This was Mr Sacree's and he managed the ladies as well as the men. He was as proficient a talker as he was a barber, and would pin us to the mirror with his large, hypnotic eyes while he held forth on some vital subject before continuing the bob, the shingle, or the “short back and sides.” His wife is still courageously carrying on the business, though Sacree himself died young.

It was in April, 1925, with Cape Town en fete for the arrival of the Prince of Wales, that an excited, bright-cheeked young lady, fresh from a lovely farm in Penzance, Cornwall, arrived in Cape Town to join her childhood sweetheart who had come to seek his fortune in South Africa. He was young Mr A. P. Jones who, although working in town, was living in Fish Hoek. Within three years, the courageous young newly-weds had decided to open a small grocery business in the Kommetjie Road, but, after experiencing the difficulties of delivering coal to those unelectrified homes with no access but sandy tracks, this enterprising couple felt that a drapery store might prove a little less arduous. Their first of several moves was to a small shop where Rabkins now is; and when they heard that Oxleys was for sale, they moved again. Oxleys was our first “select” drapers. Its windows overflowed with such items as cottons and shoelaces; tape and elastic; hairnets and safety-pins; knitting needles and embroidery silks; ribbons and lace; oh-so-unglamorous nightgowns, petticoats and large “bloomers.”

The latest government silk stockings were greatly in demand - as were materials called government linen (a strong durable cloth) and government silk - a lovely, uncrushable, pastel-coloured material with tiny “knots” in it. Amongst other materials were dainty floral and spotted voiles and soft, clinging georgettes-
many at the princely price of 1s. 6d. a yard (15c) while real Fuji silk and heavy shantung were popular for dustcoats. A gay splash of colour was provided by richly-embroidered genuine Japanese silk kimonos, at 7s. 6d. each which many wore to the beach over their costumes. And, of course, those shapeless, cotton bathing-costumes themselves, that clung when wet to a completely unsupported figure. These were strictly for utility as were our hats which drooped depressingly over our faces, like large, inverted pudding bowls.

Three friendly sisters ran this busy, ever-helpful little shop - auburn-haired Mrs Oxley, who had a son, Jack; and her twin sisters, Mrs Willan and Mrs Williams (wife of old “Colonel” of tennis court fame). So alike were these two that when they arranged to meet in town one day, the first arrival at the rendezvous in an Adderley Street store went up to a mirror and greeted herself!

From this period (around 1934), the A. P. Joneses with their four children - Hazel, Geoffrey, Michael and Jennifer, never looked back and have become one of our best-known families, as well as the owners of two large and prosperous stores.

The two Mendelsohn brothers, Albert and Monty, built a fine tea-room on the Main Road, at the corner of Recreation Road and the first proprietors, the Butlers, called it the Santoy.

It was in 1928 that the Barton-Smiths changed the name to the Green Parrot, when Mrs Cherry Barton-Smith introduced her real, live polly - then a middle-aged bird of about forty summers, and polly only died in 1966. The Green Parrot Tearoom has changed hands several times. In a caravan behind the tearoom, Mr Harry Allcock started an estate agency about this time, and another tearoom opened on the Simonstown Road which was run by Miss Gwen Lewis-Jones (later to marry Bob de Beer).

After 1930 Mr and Mrs Benbow and their daughter, Marjorie (now Mrs Ken Henry), took it over and, with the advent of Miss Hughes-Hughes incorporated a popular lending library, during the latter 1930s before this was moved to the Beach Road.

Friday night was gala night in Fish Hoek, for the shops kept open until nine
o'clock, and the Robertsons mingled with all the window-gazing crowds, spending most of their pocket money on brandy-balls and peanut-clusters!

If the night was balmy we would go to the beach where the lads would probably be having a sing-song with their ukelele; while frequently there would be joyously noisy moonlight bathers, splashing in the phosphorescent waves of midsummer.

Another family to make their mark on Fish Hoek were the Peter Cronwrights. Their home had been an old farmstead, Patmos, redolent with history, that stood on the rocks beyond the railway crossing and overlooking the harbour. This had been used in the previous century as a half-way resting place for travellers after leaving Farmer Peck's Hotel (later The Grand) at Muizenberg and before proceeding to Simonstown. And here the Cronwright family with the proud blood of the 1820 Settlers in their veins, lived. Papa's interests all being in the fishery business and Mama keeping a few cows in a little shed attached to the house. When the pier was under construction at the end of World War I this fascinating homestead was demolished and the “Crons” decided to move over to the new little seaside village around the corner, and to take Mama's few cows!

They made their home in Second Avenue and kept the cows, and of course, some horses for drawing the milk cart, in Fifth Avenue where there was a well-supplied spring and drinking pool. (The little shed still stands here). This has all dried up over the years; and by 1960 no cows or horses may be kept in Fish Hoek. But “Cron's” milk - now supplied by young Morthland Cronwright, grandson of that original tall, distinguished old gentleman, and son of Louis, whose hard work helped to put this well-established business where it is, has by no means dried up; and this enterprising young man is laying out the first of Fish Hoek's subsidiary business centres in the new western area of the township.

Motor traffic was increasing by leaps and bounds, and by the end of the 'twenties Messrs Dracup and Vincent had built another garage in the centre of the town (later to be taken over by Mr Reg Clark). Quite a number of handsome young bachelors frequented Fish Hoek at the turn of that decade, and one such group became known as the “fire brigade” on account of a couple of 'smoky’ incidents! Amongst these were three Bills - Hennessy, Asher and Kingswell, Canny Wood, Jack Ashley, V. A. Villet and Alex Johns. Full of the joys of bachelorhood, they
tootled around in Billy Kingswell's open car.

Now Billy, besides having two famous, hockey-playing twin sisters, Elsa and Elma, also had a fair share of worldly pleasures and he enjoyed sharing them with all his friends. He also gave some very good parties - mostly bachelor ones. There was another confirmed bachelor in Fish Hoek who was not averse to a convivial party - if it was a bachelor one! During one such party, a fire broke out on the hillside behind Kenneth Pritchard's little cottage at Sunny Cove, and the story goes of a somewhat confusing denouement concerning the merry bachelors, a somewhat dilatory constable, and an extremely harassed Sergeant Smallberger, ending up with the arrival of the Navy from Simonstown.

However, the outcome was a happy one as far as the bush fire was concerned, and not long after “our brigade” were responsible for putting out a fire in a house in Second Avenue. In this instance, Mr Baxter Wright was one of the voluntary firefighters, too, and our heroes certainly earned their honorary title, especially as they were somewhat limited regarding equipment and had to make do with some rather embarrassing household utensils from under the beds!

It is only since the 1950s that Fish Hoek can boast a fine voluntary firefighting team, and an up-to-date engine of its own, run by our traffic department.

And what of our health? We were a young community in those days, for it is only the young who are pioneers. Many families still bore scars from the terrible 1918 Spanish 'flu epidemic, but in Fish Hoek we were a robust community. However, we were only human, and as such, could not be without medical aid. Though the False Bay Hospital served the civilian population of this area (the Naval Hospital being up on Red Hill), it was a small and homely establishment and old Dr Clarke had been succeeded in 1916 by Dr Hayes, who was District Surgeon for Simonstown and Superintendent of False Bay Hospital. His area included Glencairn and Fish Hoek and his daughter, Marjorie (now Mrs Mair) well remembers that her father attended the De Villiers family at the Homestead and was in attendance on old Jacob de Villiers when he died in 1916.

Fortunately for Dr Hayes, he was one of the first medical practitioners to drive a car (although his family did a lot of horse-riding), because he was also responsible for the convicts at the convict station at Smit's Farm (it had
previously been below Sir Drummond Chaplin's lovely home at Noordhoek). Another well-loved practitioner at Simonstown in those days was Dr Arthur Bull - all of whose children became doctors in his footsteps and one of his sons is now a Professor of Anaesthetics at Groote Schuur Hospital.

On the Muizenberg side, old Dr Ted Wood, whose arduous rounds were all done by train and on foot before World War I, had recently died and his place was taken by Dr Melrose. The first doctor to reside in Fish Hoek was Dr Rickard of the Royal Navy, whose wife had been Dr Clarke's daughter, and who had two children, a son and daughter, Ursula, who married George Ings. By the mid-twenties we had a new doctor at Kalk Bay and his young partner, and, forty years later we are well served with many distinguished medical practitioners, as well as having been chosen for the fine new False Bay Hospital that was completed in 1964.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

And now, on carefree, joyous footsteps, we are dancing our way into the sophisticated 1930s.

This decade was to see great progress, both in Fish Hoek and in our way of life. Maybe we did not mature as quickly as the teenagers of today, but by now, even "nice” girls were using lipstick! World War I was forgotten and World War II not even a cloud on our horizon. Romance and sentiment coloured our lives as we sang the lilting tunes of those days: “Who Stole My Heart Away,” “Let Me Call You Sweetheart,” “Jealousy,” “Cruising Down the River,” . . . and suddenly, the greatest entertainment-value revolution had hit the film world. “Talkies” had arrived.

The days of silent films had gone for ever, and we all rushed in to the Alhambra (still an excitingly new “bioscope”) to weep copiously over the first talkie ever - Al Jolson, dripping with sentiment, in “The Singing Fool.” And close on its heels, at the splendid new Astoria, at Woodstock, we all went to see the glorious, romantic extravaganza that caught us all in a noose of adolescent delight, “The Desert Song.”
We enjoyed lavish musicals at the Opera House - “Rio Rita” and “Chu Chin Chow,” and were enchanted with the light musical comedies: “Tea for Two” “Funny Face,” and “The Belle of New York.”

Roads were slicing up tracts of our wild dunes and more and more houses had mushroomed over the flats and on the hillside. Flowers and fireflies, longtailed sugarbirds, and gentle little frogs were fast disappearing. Electricity had waved its magic wand over our rapidly growing little village, and storm lanterns were rusting in sheds, though packets of candles and oil-stoves were kept on hand . . . just in case!

Cecil Greenland, at Dilton on the hillside above Sunny Cove Station, and Ceddie Robertson, at Sandhills, in Second Avenue, discovered that they could signal each other by switching their respective stoep lights off and on to the Morse Code - used so much by those young boys whose hobby was the fascinating new craze of assembling masses of wires into crystal wireless sets - complete with earphones and large black loud-speaker horns.

Though water sanitation was not yet fully installed, more and more people were sporting motor cars. Cecil Greenland became the proud owner of a B.S.A. motor-bike and raced to and fro - frequently with Ceddie Robertson clinging to the pillion. More ambitious road construction was under way in the 1930s - the first, and biggest, being the Hillside Road, and in the latter part of this decade, the beautiful scenic roadway from Sunny Cove, right through to the far end of Kommetjie Road - the Highway, which entailed long stretches of retaining wall beautifully executed by a constructional engineer. This, in turn, opened up a new and much-coveted area on the hillside that had until now been almost inaccessible.

With the excavations afoot on this project, a story was unfolded of the original excavations along the coastal road to Simonstown which was completed in 1885. At the bend around the Sunny Cove point was an enormous boulder - still there today - and during a terrible storm one night, a group of seven fishermen took shelter under this rock. Loosened by the recent excavations, as well as the drenching rain, the huge boulder toppled over, crushing all seven men underneath. Without hope of recovering their bodies, this has been their burial
ground for all these years, and the rock itself was known as Sewe Manse Klip.

A project which was to become one of Fish Hoek's finest amenities, was started. This was the pathway running around the rocks at Sunny Cove. Inspired by one of Fish Hoek's foremost citizens this was built in two sections and, although it has always been colloquially called the “Catwalk,” is officially named after Mr H. S. Jager. A wooden pavilion was built on the beach, and one of its first managers was Mr Watkins, with his young wife Ella and tiny daughter, June, whose activities on that lovely beach around her home were tireless! Mr Watkins was killed in action two weeks before World War II ended.

The old bathing boxes that had served us for so long under the brow of the Simonstown Road embankment - now a gaping, derelict piece of ground that is privately owned and its future undecided - were demolished and little wooden huts were erected on the foreshore. Fortunately for the residents of Fish Hoek, this part of our beach had been, and still is, officially proclaimed public property. Thanks, primarily, to Mr “Bull” Pritchard, as well as to the co-operation of the Local Board of those days, and a number of public-spirited residents, a near disaster was averted when it was discovered that plots on this area had been sold and negotiations were afoot for private building.

In 1932 a grand new Recreation Hall was built to the north-east of the tennis courts and the youth of Fish Hoek derived great pleasure from this, with gay fancy-dress dances. The very latest in wide, flappy, pyjama-suits were heralding the “trouser era” for women. The next year we built ourselves some very select Municipal offices on the Main Road near the station which gave tone to this rather unkempt area. Where Isabel's hairdressers now is, an agency of the Standard Bank, Kalk Bay, which had opened on 1st November 1929, was now extremely busy and Mr Steve Visser arrived as agency clerk.

In 1936 Mr Peter Rutherford was transferred to Fish Hoek as manager and was to settle in our town with his family who were to sink their roots in Fish Hoek, while his eldest daughter, Lynette, was to marry young Mr Dennis Barling, both of whom were to make a vital contribution to the social and artistic life of Fish Hoek. Mr E. P. Gaylard arrived the following year as teller, and Mr Tim Howie, who married Hilda Bishop, was next manager. In 1952 a modern building was erected and “Gay” Gaylard is the present manager. By 1960 there was, of course,
also a fine Barclays Bank across the road.

Other shops were gradually filling in the gaps in our still somewhat sandy main street and houses galore were being built. Besides the Gables and Zee-zicht, built by the De Villiers family; Delft, by the Zoutendyks, and Orano, by the Pritchards, other hillside houses were winking in the morning sun - one of the most attractive being The Periscope, built by the Wardleys and also Glamis, built by the Lyons. Mr Reg Kemp built a fine home further along on the hill above Kommetjie Road and the Linleys' gracious residence was another landmark.

The two De Villiers daughters, Neelie and Jacoba, built the first block of flats - Belvedere (each occupying one); while a Mr Romain put up a very modern block opposite the beach railway crossing, and called it Tel-Aviv. This building (now Marine Flats) was to have the first private water sanitation, and how proud were those tenants of their new flush toilets!

Water sanitation for all was only to come at the end of the 1930s and cost property owners quite a substantial sum, but did more to improve living conditions than any other project.

Amongst these Mr Ben Gannon is one of the sprightliest, keenest players on the greens - in great demand at any of the famed social get-togethers where he is a wizard at the piano - though bowls is by no means ranked as an old men's game today. Apart from the condition of our greens, Fish Hoek Bowling Club is famed for its colourful setting amidst a riot of flowers due entirely to the devoted attention of Mr George Stagman - groundsman. Going from strength to strength, our bowlers have won many awards over latter years - both ladies' and men's teams; in 1963 the Men's Flag Competition Shield for the season was won, while this 1966 season has seen a stalwart team win their section: George Stagman (Skip), D. J. Murray, F. E. Bolt, H. V. Whitehouse and H. P. Sharwood.

Soccer enthusiasts formed a team under Mr Fred Noble, and, not long after, another group united to form a cricket club. Prime mover of this was Mr Philip Sweet, a former Mowbray player. Two gravel patches were first used on the foreshore with much back-breaking work put in by the members as they rolled the pitch with a home-made concrete roller and a nice splash of seawater for firmness! A surprisingly good surface was attained. Dressing rooms, being non est, except for a box-like cupboard, many hardy players used stationary railway
coaches conveniently left at a nearby siding!

Enthusiasm eventually won the day, and a more accommodating venue was eventually found on the recreation ground, near the tennis courts. Once again it was with the sweat of their brows that these keen young fellows began to lay out and level their own cricket pitch. A deep depression had to be filled and a conveniently handy sandhill banished. And so, week-end after week-end, whole families spent their time with coco-pans and shovels and a pretty respectable, home-made cricket ground took shape.

This area is now the approach to our fine new Civic Hall (built in 1960). And here many a happy game was played by those enthusiasts, until the Fish Hoek Town Council of 1946 made available the present ground, with its gloriously spacious surroundings, between Thirteenth and Seventeenth Avenues. Several of those founder members are still connected with the club at the present day . . . Mr A. P. Jones (whose son-in-law, Mr Fritz Bing, is a prominent Peninsula player), Mr N. B. Edwards, and the Payne brothers, Jack, Ronnie and Wilfred. Indeed Jack is still a playing member; and the club, in 1966, is fielding five teams. (N.B. That famous first roller, made thirty-five years ago, is still in daily use during the season!)

By this time, too, there are football and hockey fields laid out on our installed for evening matches, with ladies' hockey being an attraction. One of today's keenest and best lady hockey players is evergreen Phoebe Kiley.

But apart from the men's sport, the women of Fish Hoek, too, are becoming very civic-minded, and, in 1934 a small group met at St Margaret's Hall to form an association that has continued to grow in quantity and quality ever since. With an attendance of about ten to fifteen in those early days, and despite a word of advice at the very first meeting, from Mr E. W. Rice, the Chairman of the Village Management Board, that they would be of far more value to the town if they took more interest in municipal affairs, these determined ladies carried on with their scheme for doing all the hundred and one jobs that every community so badly needs - keeping an eye on the welfare of all and providing for many needy causes.

The first Chairman was Mrs Bull and the meetings continued to be held once a month for discussions and tea. Others of those early Women's Association members were Mrs Gill, Mrs Huntly, Mrs Holgate, Mrs Ruske, Mrs McCormick,
Mrs Walker, Mrs Montgomery, Mrs Sweet, Mrs Bussell, Mrs Carmichael, Mrs Noble, Mrs Roxborough, and a little later Sister Hornabroek and Mrs Paris. The Parises had come to Fish Hoek as a young married couple, both teachers, and had three children, Joy, Mignon, and Kevin. As soon as she was able, Mrs Paris began to devote herself to civic work, and became one of our most public-spirited residents, until her death in 1962. She was at first on the Women's Association, then on the Council, and finally our first Lady Mayoress in her own right. Another devoted worker was Mrs Ethel Nefdt whose interest in V.A.D. work (when in the early 'thirties one of the first detachments was formed in Fish Hoek), has continued to this day, although she is now Mrs Louis Cronwright.

Much has been achieved by this splendid band of women over the years and many charities have benefited. Though names of devoted workers are too many to pay tribute individually, certain ones who have served over the last twenty-five years deserve mention: Mrs Nel Tromp, Mrs Hilda Howie, Mrs Hetty Bolitho, Mrs “Tea” Warren, Mrs Meg Sutherland (present Chairman), Mrs Lawrie, Mrs Ina Louw, Mrs Soref, Mrs Staak, Mrs Stanley Dunn and the late Miss Sheffield. Well, well!

The 1930s are slipping away and many a youthful romance has culminated in the story-book manner. Amongst “our crowd” - Sue Oldfield had married Lionel Bardo, Beryl Cloete had married Bill Hennessy, Marion Metlerkamp had married Canny Wood and Ceddie Robertson married Cecil Greenland in St Margaret's Church in 1935 - and were exiled to Port Elizabeth for eleven long years.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

World-shaking events were changing the way of life that we had known for so long and undermining our security. King George V died in January 1936 and his eldest son, the romantic Prince of Wales who had caused such a stir in Fish Hoek ten years before, came to the throne for his short and dramatic reign, and made history with his heart-breaking broadcast on his abdication “all for the love of a lady,” less than a year afterwards.

And then, irrevocably and frighteningly another world war overshadowed our
horizon as Hitler's name blazoned itself across Europe. But - before we tell of those war years, we must catch up with the progress of our rapidly growing village which was to attain the status of a town in 1940, when the Village Management Board was dissolved and a full-blown Municipality formed - with its first Mayor the public-spirited Mr H. S. Jager, who had built a lovely thatch-roofed home at Sunny Cove, Sea Drift.

This is an appropriate place to mention a few of those staunch municipal officers who served loyally through the years. Mr A. J. Wright, as Secretary throughout all the changes, was eventually made Town Clerk, while his son, Baxter, whose business career started in our offices after leaving school and has continued, except for his war service years, unbroken, until 1966 when he holds the position of Town Clerk.

Also a very young lady, Miss Laura Stride, was the first lady clerk to be employed in 1932 and continued in this capacity until she retired in 1955. The Stride family had won our compassion, and our admiration, for the courage with which they had born much sorrow. Left fatherless in 1928, yet another tragedy struck in 1934 when Charlie, the elder brother of Laura and Harry, was drowned in Fish Hoek Bay with his young friend Billy Farrant.

Their love of boats and sailing had started in the early 'twenties when Harry paddled a tin canoe in the popular winter-sport vlei behind Tommy Downes' garage (now First Crescent) and Charlie and Billy had acquired a small sailing boat in their adulthood. The tragedy was unseen and the bodies never recovered. A plaque to the memory of these two boys is in St Margaret's Church.

About thirty years later another young Fish Hoek boy was to lose his life this way . . . red-headed Peter McIlrath. Fortunately we have had few drowning fatalities in our bay. And now we give you a list of those fine men (and women) who have served us so faithfully over the past twenty-six years of our mayoral history, during which time Mr Wright retired as Town Clerk and Mr Ben Raberg took his place from 1947 to 1962. First, as I say, was Mr Jager and his wife; then came Mr and Mrs Peter Carmichael who served cheerfully and tirelessly throughout the difficult war years.

Next came Mr and Mrs S. J. Castleman who had recently returned from a term of
office in the Union Castle office at Lourenco Marques. They served for two consecutive years, until, in September 1947, Mr and Mrs G. L. Harrington were elected and are now remembered in Harrington Circle. From 1951 to 1954 Mr and Mrs Hayward were Mayor and Mayoress, for three years in all, to be followed by Mr and Mrs Louis Cronwright; and then Mr and Mrs R. W. Carlisle from 1956 to 1958. Their name will long be remembered in Fish Hoek, because a dream of this little lady Mayoress became a wonderful reality. Thanks to her inspiration and efforts, the fame of Carlisle Lodge, our model home for the elderly, has spread far beyond the boundaries of Fish Hoek.

In 1959 we had Mr J. J. de Kock whose wife was an invalid, and her place as hostess was taken by Mrs Nell Alexander. It was at the end of this term that a full electoral change-over took place and a complete new Council of eight ratepayers' nominees was voted in with Mrs Euphemia Paris elected as Mayor (for the first time in our history). As her Mayoress she chose Mrs Ethel Nefdt (later to become Mrs Louis Cronwright). The following year Mr Cyril Bircher and his wife, Sylvia, took on these mayoral duties, and from 1962 to 1963 Mr Harry de Stadler and his wife, Lucy, stepped into the breach, a little diffidently. The Birchers were back in 1964; and then for the second time we elected John de Kock, who was a widower now and therefore needed a hostess again.

This time it was Mrs Nel Tromp who filled this position very graciously; and through her unfailing and tireless interest in older people, much has been achieved in Fish Hoek for the welfare of elderly folk. In 1965 with Mr de Kock in the office of Mayor yet again, Mrs Edna Mossop took over from Nel Tromp, whose health did not permit a second term of work; and now, in 1966, our latest mayoral dignitaries are Mr R. W. A. Yeld and his charming wife, Jessie.

**CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

It was not until 1942 that the war effort reached its peak in Fish Hoek. Many of our young men had joined up - as well as a few lasses; but a great number of women were to play a supreme part on the home front by forming a S.A.W.A.S. contingent. In fact, Fish Hoek ranked as No. 1 Contingent in the Peninsula and was famed for its wonderful spirit and its unforgettable hospitality. Many men made life-long friendships and treasured memories of their visits to Fish Hoek.
and Simonstown, where many of our women went to entertain them.

Among these was a sturdy little lady, Mrs M. Dyer who, as a transport driver, often went up as far as Pretoria. At first the Recreation Hall was put at the disposal of the Entertainments Committee - however short the notice that a troopship was in but when Mr Reg Clark joined up in 1942, it was decided to take over his garage (half the rental to be paid by the Municipality) and to transform it into a full-time canteen, complete with a well-laid floor - made possible by the intervention of Mr Max Sonnenberg - whose wife did so much for S.A.W.A.S.

An amazingly efficient organisation grew into being under the directorship of the Commandant, Mrs Joan Graham and her splendid adjutants, Mrs Madge Montgomery, Mrs Elsie Bussell, Mrs Winnie Clark, Miss Peggy Eadie, Mrs Eileen Grimwood and Mrs Rickard. Each in turn would contact all workers in their particular zone and, within a matter of a couple of hours, everything would be laid on for another “invasion.” And what fun they all had; and how those weary and often homesick men appreciated their warm friendliness. Sometimes it might be a practice march over the mountains from Pollsmoor, and the sweating, footsore men would arrive with thirsts as deep as a bottomless pit, and our women would be there to quench and refresh them. Before setting off again, those men would line up outside the canteen and send up a ringing cheer for the ladies of Fish Hoek.

It took courage, those first few times, to drive into Cape Town and present themselves at the docks (strictly by permit) where they would see the war-weary, land-starved troops disembarking and would have to pluck up courage to offer them a lift and a day's outing to Fish Hoek! Not as easy as it sounds. However, they got used to it - and to the various types of men they encountered, most of them extremely nice, and many heartbreaking young.

Simonstown, of course, was a closed area during those war years, with a barrier this side of Glencairn, and only workers, and of course doctors, were given permits. During the latter part of the war blackouts were enforced right round the False Bay coast, and strict measures of security regarding shipping kept lips sealed, though the ladies of Fish Hoek took a very keen interest in the handsome young sailors who brought so much glamour to False Bay. As did other branches, we “adopted” one of the Naval Corvettes at Simonstown, H.M.S. Jasmin, and
gave its crew a lot of extra “mothering.” In fact Mrs Joan Graham was presented, at a ceremony, with a pennant in gratitude to the women of Fish Hoek. Another group of workers, calling themselves “The Good Companions,” helped to entertain young seamen at the Homestead Hotel - kindly thrown open by Miss Knowles.

As usual, with any world-shaking war, a host of gay lilting songs were composed, and, with the rest of the world, we were all singing and whistling those never-to-be-forgotten tunes - given such heartbreaking appeal by two singers in war-torn London - Gracie Fields and Vera Lynn, “Wish me Luck as you Wave me Good-bye,” “Lili Marlene,” “Waltzing Matilda” (those Aussies certainly made an impact on Cape Town!), “We'll Hang out our Washing on the Siegfried Line.”

A well-known canine character in those hectic years, surging with men in uniform, was Just Nuisance, the friendly Great Dane who made his appearance in Simonstown, and became the staunch friend and faithful companion of all the sailors. Following them into Cape Town, he would board the train at Simonstown and accompany them wherever they might be going.

Those who perhaps enjoyed themselves a little too well, were loyally guarded until such time as they were in a fit condition to return to Simonstown. In fact, so well loved was this dog that the naval ratings clubbed together and bought him a railway season ticket from Simonstown to Cape Town. Nuisance was often a visitor to our canteen, though he does not appear in our picture.

Another venture which was to become such a success was the Spinning Contingent. Inspired by Madge Montgomery, whose mother, Mrs Doctor Wood (the well-known eye specialist) of Plumstead had done so much towards the entertainment of troops in World War I, and had used these fascinating machines which were procured, and yarns and yarns of pure wool were spun for the knitting of all those garments so welcome to men in the forces. The original venue for this was a room where Jan's now is. Parcels of clothing and Red Cross parcels were despatched. Fund raising and hospital visiting were shared by all (the naval hospital was, and still is on Red Hill, above Simonstown).

Even before the war, Mrs S. F. Waterson was greatly interested in V.A.D. work, and had been associated with Fish Hoek in this capacity. During the latter part of
the war her husband was High Commissioner in London, and it was she who inspired the women of Fish Hoek, when she visited Cape Town, to take an interest in a new form of hospitalisation that those who were shell-shattered had to endure.

Plastic surgery was a wonderful medical achievement that was to give new life and hope to men who would otherwise have been social exiles. Yet, even so, their future had been shattered almost as much as their bodies and a readjustment to life was as necessary as any novice's training. It required months of patience and courage to return to a useful, normal way of life once more; and for this special treatment, special equipment and extra special nursing was required. So deeply stirred were the women of Fish Hoek at the heartbreaking stories told by this splendid ambassador, that this was to be the inception of our finest war effort.

It resulted in our sending enough money over to the East Grinstead Hospital in England, to build and equip a small hutment in the grounds of this big military establishment to be used for physiotherapy and occupational therapy. A plaque is set outside this building to the effect that it had been donated by the Fish Hoek Women's Association. Also, with tireless perseverance and negotiation, Mrs Joan Graham, of the S.A.W.A.S. was able to pull strings and get food parcels, fresh fruit and cool drinks over to the East Grinstead Hospital.

We were proud of our Fish Hoek men who went to fight, and gave them a royal welcome on their return home. The few who did not return are for ever honoured in our lovely little Garden of Remembrance, laid out on the Outspan and dedicated by our present-day Battle-Dress Shellhole Company of M.O.T.H.S. (from both wars) by the building of a stone cairn incorporating an ever-burning flame of remembrance and the emblem of the Order of the Tin Hats. On this are inscribed the following names: A. Buchanan; D. J. Donaldson; R. Dickson; David Elliott; R. L. Lawson; A. Mace; E. Mace; J. E. J. Lewis; B. Button; H. C. McCallum; D. K. Price; D. Patterson; R. Rutherford; E. C. Satchell; J. Watkins. Thanks to our fine Battle-Dress Shellhole members, we hold a Memorial Service every year in November to honour them.

Of these, three at least left very young families. Ted Satchell, who had married Olga le Cordeur, left two small sons; John Lewis, who was married to Dulcie Reid, left an unborn daughter, Annabelle, when he was tragically blown up by
Bertie Peers with some of the bones during sifting operations in Peers’ Cave

A group of those V.I.P. scientists who came to view the little skull of the “Fish
The Queen of Mardi Gras (Mrs Lynette Barling) With one of her helpers

Mardi Gras day in Fish Hoek
The late Mrs Maud Hartley is on the left. Amongst the staff of Fish Hoek grocers are (left to right): Mrs Fabing, Mrs Grebe (nee Joan Scagell), Mrs Hurrie and Mrs Woulters
This picture taken from the air in 1966, by Mr Charles Field, was loaned by Mr Schneider of the Fish Hoek Publicity Association
mines on his ship, the Southern Floe, off Tobruk; and big, happy Joe Watkins, whose young wife and little daughter, June, who were running the Beach Pavilion all through those uncertain yet exciting war years (coping with black-outs and restrictions on their own), was killed at the very end of his splendid service of six long years in Italy.

A fourth, who is not listed here, but whose wife and baby daughter were to stay on in Fish Hoek after their few months here, is Gordon Duffett, who had married Helen Evans the year before he so joyously joined the Air Force and was killed on a flight over the treacherous Cape mountains, leaving blue-eyed little Sandra - too young to remember her fun-loving father.

As after World War I, when the dreaded Spanish influenza epidemic circled the world; we were to have a yet more frightening pestilence - polio - or, to give it its scientific name, acute anterior poliomyelitis. Before this it had been known as infantile paralysis, and the majority of its victims were still children. It swept the world and even stabbed at the heart of Fish Hoek, and, as usual, we rose to the occasion generously when a campaign was started to raise funds for polio research - “The World's Most Elusive Public Enemy” as it was called in America.

Dr de Villiers was our Medical Officer at that time and he wrote a leading article in an emergency news sheet called The Clarion which was surely the first little newspaper to be published in Fish Hoek (1949).

Not only our Town Council but every single home in Fish Hoek associated itself with this “£1 per Home Scheme,” and, with their usual great-heartedness, many prominent residents led the fund. A committee was immediately elected. The Mayor, Mr P. S. Carmichael was chairman; Mr Philip Sweet and Mr Charles Playfair, vice-chairmen; Mr A. E. Raberg (town clerk), treasurer; Mr W. H. Chalmers, secretary. Committee members were Mesdames R. Wade, S. Juter, J. Poppe, Jessica Ritchie, M. Graham, Bissett and Fanny Rabkin, and Messrs E. Brassell, Jack Wade, Frank Gould, P. J. Coetzee, C. W. Roxborough, H. L. Roberts, E. Zweistra, C. J. Daly, G. L. Harrington and Dr Ben Seftel.

Members of the Fish Hoek Business Association (forerunner to the Chamber of Commerce), combined “with pride” to respond to this invitation. I shall list these to give you some idea of the growth of the business centre of Fish Hoek by the end
of the war. Central Hardware (Egenes); Corner House (Chalmers); Cron Dairies; J. J. de Kock (estate agent); District Bazaars (Goldblatt); Fish Hoek Garage (Wakeford); Green Parrot Tearoom (Miss Lea Friedlander); A. P. Jones; Kent's Stores (Holwill); Geoff Morris; Parker's Stores; Mr Judel Rafakin; E. H. Sacree; Smit Bros.; E. R. L. Stevens; Thomas and Ohlssen; Warren's Pharmacy; Westbrook's Pharmacy; Master Electric (Seftel).

The town was divided into three sections and groups of members took on a section each. Heading the Hotels and Business Division were Mrs Fanny Rabkin and Mr W. H. Chalmers and by now we had three new hotels, The Avenue, The Lanark and the Panorama. Tribute was paid to the Business Association who made the printing of this newspaper possible and a voluntary (note this well, after five years of imposed parking tax for cars on our foreshore) levy was called for from cars wishing to park on the beach during the season.

A grand finale target was given - as £5,000; and a campaign clock erected on our traffic island at the top of the main road; while many plans for fundraising by various associations were afoot. Of course, as you may have guessed, great-hearted Fish Hoek reached its target in record time, after the initial subscriptions had been made by Fish Hoek Council, £300; Street Collection (Women's Association), £23 10s.; Sea Scouts (Mile of Pennies), £38 1s.; Ladies' Badminton Club, £10; Fish Hoek Primary School, £17 11s. 8d. Total £560 2s. 8d.

A very happy interlude in our lives also occurred after the war, and this was another Royal visit, when King George VI with his wife and two young daughters, Princess Elizabeth (who was to celebrate her 21st birthday in Cape Town in April), and teen-age Margaret Rose, who won all hearts with her spontaneous smile. Though the drive through Fish Hoek was a far more formal one than that of the Prince of Wales twenty-two years earlier, there were few of us who did not see that delightful family as they toured the Peninsula and endeared themselves to all with their warm, family unity and obvious delight in this happy visit. The month was February 1947, the weather was ideal and many joyous functions were held. Our then Mayor and Mayoress, Mr and Mrs Sidney Castleman, never forgot the hectic week they spent travelling to and from Cape Town - often by train and carrying a complete change of clothing to participate in the various official events laid on for surely one of the most memorable Royal Tours in history.
The business men of Fish Hoek had become warmly united through their efforts and difficulties during the war years. Rationing and import restrictions affected all sections of our community and housewives had grown used to queuing for such things as butter, sugar, potatoes, tinned stuffs, etc., when the weekly rations came down in a van. A fine job had been done under the direction of Mr Geoff Morris, Mr Fred Leih (of Leih's garage) and Mr Ted Holwill (of the new Kent's Stores), who headed the Civilian Protection Services. To keep Fish Hoek well alerted for any unexpected emergency, a siren was sounded every Monday morning from the centre of the town.

It was now that these business men decided it was time we had an advertising medium for the shopping and business section of this rapidly growing resort, and once again the late Mr Morris was ringleader. With the co-operation of Mr Fred Westbrook and Mr Charles Playfair, who died later in Natal, they started a small monthly paper, the Fish Hoek News.

This little newsprint, kept in circulation by its advertisers, was continued by Mr Francis, who changed its name to the Fish Hoek Echo, until his death in 1963, when it was taken over by Mrs Cedryl Greenland (nee Ceddie Robertson - alias Dolphin). During her editorship the Echo has increased in size to 34 pages, and in circulation to 2,500 copies, finding its way, not only all along the False Bay Coast, but also to many parts of the world where exiles from Fish Hoek eagerly await its message of news from home!

Soon after this, the Business Association became the Fish Hoek Chamber of Commerce - a strong body that has grown in strength with the years. With them, faithfully recording their minutes and keeping their books is Mrs Alma Bishop (sister of Euphemia Paris) whose loyalty through the years certainly deserves a tribute.

It was after the war too that the post office was moved from its cramped premises where the Cycle and Hardware now is, and near Mr Morris's spacious general store-cum-art-and-library building which closed down not long after, to its recent site at the corner of Main and Central Roads. As we go to press in November 1966 these premises are being vacated for the magnificent new post office building
next door to Barclay's Bank and in front of our smart new telephone exchange.

We also acquired one of the finest libraries in the Peninsula. Built to the stipulations of the Provincial Administration, and supplied by them with books and services, this was completed in 1958 and the books moved from their temporary old quarters next door. Chief librarian is Miss Ethel-May Gillard who combines the charm of story-telling to the little ones once a fortnight, with the experience of a fully-qualified librarian.

And, of course, there's our Mardi Gras. Inspired by our fun-loving Lynette Barling, the Queen of Carnival, who has become such a well-known personality in Fish Hoek (with her beautiful home on Kommetjie Road, her artistic husband, Dennis, and her three daughters, Beverlie, Lannice and Vanessa), this annual event, held on 2nd January for the past eight years has become one of the highlights of Fish Hoek's summer season, and our busy streets are given over to the joyous Spirit of Mardi Gras as the young people vie with each other to produce the gayest, happiest, most colourful float. Each year the collections taken from those eager crowds are given to charity.

During this decade the “Defenders of Fish Hoek” fought many a “Battle of the Bottles,” in order to prevent a liquor licence being obtained for our quiet, peaceful town, and thus far, their efforts have not been in vain. Credit for this must go to Mr Ben Fine for his unceasing vigilance, backed by a dauntless committee, amongst whom are the Rosenthals - Jenny and Eric, whom we are proud to count amongst our prominent citizens. Having come to Fish Hoek twenty years ago with their family of four, Elizabeth, Richard, Gerald and baby Alison, they now have a lovely home, White Horses on the hillside where this eminent historian, broadcaster and unbeatable quiz entertainer with the uncanny memory for facts, has a wall-to-wall, roof-to-ceiling, stacked library. It is indeed an honour for me to include a foreword by this brilliant historian for my modest little book of memories.

From the end of the war another great upsurge in development and population had been created, as many returned soldiers came to settle here and many of the older folk retired. A new Pavilion was built on the beach in place of the wooden one; and, as the De Villiers family had pulled down the double row of bathing boxes below the old flats, on the beach side of the Simonstown Road, the Council
now built some attractive wooden boxes on the beach and a small caravan park was started.

Two well-loved donkeys were becoming a feature of our holiday fun beside the sea. Mr and Mrs Leslie Ayres of Bellaire had acquired two baby donkeys at the beginning of the war and named them appropriately, Spitfire and Hurricane. This happy couple, who brought so much joy to the children of Fish Hoek, and also played a big part at any fund-raising event, produced an adorable foal - Meteor - who, after Hurry died, continued to accompany Spitfire on her visits to the beach, for just on twenty-five years; while old Tek, their custodian, became a familiar and popular figure in his white jacket and with his gentle, steadying brown hand for the tiny tots - “Hup - Speetfire. Hup Meetchor! ”

How those two shook their ears and trundled along at the sound of their valiant names. It was not until the 1960s that these two gallant little donkeys were pensioned off — after they had been found wandering from home. The second time they were discovered serenely grazing outside the gracious new old-age home, Carlisle Lodge, and this hint seemed pretty obvious to their kindly owners!

By 1950 the Catwalk (as Jager Walk is still so affectionately called), was becoming a popular feature of our beach, while the first inspector (Mr Danvers Williams - ex-R.N.) took an immense pride in this area and spent much of his time cultivating colourful garden beds along this seaside path. In fact it gained almost as much fame as Mr “Bull” Pritchard's miniature garden above the beach which was lovingly set out with little figures, animals and a wishing well during the Christmas Holidays (the takings from the well going to the Sunshine Homes). As usual, there was some healthy controversy regarding the cultivation of this erstwhile natural part of the rock path, and an irate resident wrote to the Echo under the caption “Flowers or Freedom.” “Who asked for flower-beds on a beach walk where there is so little natural recreation space for visitors?” However, flowers won the day and Mr Williams will always be remembered for the beauty of springtime in his lovingly tended seaside garden.

And no story of our town can be told without mention of our famous dolphins - Fish and Hoek - who made their appearance regularly for three summers, between 1951 and 1953. Swimming in on the waves these two playful mammals
(dolphin or porpoise? It has always been a dubious point) would mingle with the bathers, leaping and twisting amongst them as though thoroughly enjoying themselves and becoming so bold that several young swimmers were able to stroke and tickle them! Mr Bolitho, of the Hillside wrote several letters to the Press about their antics, until the whole community were sad to hear that they had apparently been accidentally caught in the wide-flung nets of our trek-fishermen.

Today we not only have a huge township (as can be seen in the overall picture taken from the air by Mr Charles Field), but we have a progressive and enterprising community.

Apart from our splendid sportsfields, churches and schools, we have clubs and associations for all tastes and hobbies, not to mention an active group of older folk, both in the Seniors Club and the newly formed Goodfellowship Club at Nieuport.

There is an enthusiastic Women's Agricultural Association which encourages all sections of domestic science, as well as the aforesaid Women's Association. There is a Photographic Society and a Cultural Music Society inspired by our talented operatic singer, Ethyne Seftel.

An exceptionally talented Dramatic Society has been lucky to have had the tireless interest and enthusiasm of such fine actors as Margaret and Alan Wray, Helen and Tony Isted, Gordon and Margaret Sixsmith, Val Mulligan and George Thompson. A flourishing Art Society was created through the hard work and devotion of a few enthusiasts such as Dennis Barling, Anne Petrie and Ina Slarke. In fact, Fish Hoek has always attracted artists of both sexes, and Mr Andrew, of Kommetjie also has some talented adherents who have each donated a picture to the non-white section of our big, but somewhat bare, new hospital. The new art gallery, so lavishly filled with beautiful, true-to-life pictures by contemporary artists has captured the delight of all who pass by, and young Mr Pnematicatos is to be congratulated on his initiative in bringing the works of these contemporary artists to us in Fish Hoek, where, until now, we have been a little cut off from such culture.

And now I shall leave you to study this fine picture of Fish Hoek - our town - as it is today. Well planned, artistically laid out with its network of roads, avenues and
crescents. You can pick out its main centres. The sports-fields, the schools, the civic centre - which was completed in 1960 - and the graciously laid-out hospital completed in 1964. The foreshore is less picturesque than it was long ago, but nevertheless gaining some law and order. The houses cover half the hillside today and the new business centre to the west is there in embryo. We are a town of 7,000 inhabitants today and have topped the 2,000 mark with buildings. A far cry from the country estate of old Isaac de Villiers half a century ago.

_I hope that I have recaptured for you a little of that lovely past. I hope that you feel you have met some of those grand pioneers, without whom the Fish Hoek you know today would not have been, and whose spirit will always be a part of the pattern of this lovely seaside town. Today, in the 1960s a third generation is growing up. Learning to know and love the mountains and the seas, which, as Eric Rosenthal has said in his foreword, will endure for ever - no matter what changes man may make. We, who were once so joyously young, are growing old, and it is with great joy that I have recorded, as faithfully as I am able, a Past that is already growing dim for a Future that has not yet dawned._

_I am deeply grateful to all those who have helped me remember: to those who gave me photographs; to Mr Schneider, Chairman of the Fish Hoek Publicity Association for the loan of the fine aerial picture taken by Mr Charles Field, and to my husband for the colour picture on the cover._