



# RHODES NEWSLETTER

*Organ of the Old Rhodian Union*

RHODES UNIVERSITY

GRAHAMSTOWN

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## EDITORIAL

At the end of September the official celebrations to mark the Golden Jubilee of our university will take place here in Grahamstown. As on such an occasion one is inevitably tempted to look back, your editor felt that the whole tone of this Newsletter should be one of reminiscences. This has been done for two further reasons: to incite as many O.R.'s as possible to come to Rhodes on this occasion and to enable the less fortunate, who will not be able to join in the celebrations, to spend a few moments transported back to the good old days.

Reminiscences are always tinged with a certain measure of sadness because of those who are no longer present. In this number we remember Professor Dingemans, probably our greatest scholar. His unbounded energy and magnificent lectures inspired all those who had the privilege to listen to him. It is with sadness we realise that it was perhaps his great affection for this university, which he had so largely helped to mould, that upset his health in his latter days.

But what of the future? How do we visualise the Rhodes to which we shall send our children and our grandchildren? A large university with faculties of medicine, pharmacy, engineering and agriculture, some of which might be in Port Elizabeth? Do we dream of a Rhodes which will be known for its sport or one that will be known for the standard of its work? Do we want it to be an exclusive university reserved for the very rich or for the very brilliant? A university renowned for its teaching, or for its research? Do we want it to become a glorified high school, where students will be made to work whether they want it or not, or a real university to which they will come with the desire to acquire a certain culture?

Whatever it becomes in the distant future its immediate prosperity will be largely bound up with the numbers of students who come up to the University. Because of this the Grahamstown committee feels that most of the resources of the O.R. Union should be used to help promising students, and particularly the dependents of O.R.'s. In our last Newsletter the possibility of launching an appeal for the creation of a Golden Jubilee bursary was mentioned. Some O.R.'s have already shown their approval of this



idea by sending their contributions even before the appeal had been sent out. The committee hopes with this appeal to contact all past students, and not merely members of the Union, in an effort to raise a sufficient sum of money to found a really good bursary. O.R.'s who will not be coming to Grahamstown will have a good way of showing their attachment to their Alma Mater by sending in their contributions before the end of September, while the others should not forget to bring their cheque books!

Our next issue will again contain news of O.R.'s, though, as yet, we have received very little news to be published. Remember there is probably somebody whom you have forgotten who will be pleased, or even thrilled for a few seconds, to read your name again and to know where you are. Why deprive him or her of that pleasure? There is however one item of news which cannot wait until our next number. This is the appointment to the Chair of Physics of Dr. J. A. Gledhill, in the place of Professor Birks who had succeeded Professor Varder. He and his wife are known to all members of the Union, if only by their signatures, and those who have known "Tich" personally as a student or as a lecturer in the Chemistry department, will heartily approve the action of the University Council in appointing him and will wish him all good luck in his new department.

E.T.V.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### PROFESSOR G. F. DINGEMANS

It was with real sorrow that all Old Rhodians who had had the privilege of knowing him learned of the death of Professor Dingemans shortly after his arrival in England, where he had gone some five months after the death of Mrs. Dingemans, to live with his son, Dr. George Dingemans.

Dingy, as he was affectionately known to many generations of Rhodians, was born in Zutphen, Holland. At the Zutphen Gymnasium he received a sound training in Modern Languages and in the Classics and at home he was inspired by his mother with a great love for Hebrew and the Jewish History of the Old Testament. In 1898 he went to the University of Edinburgh where he had a brilliant career, graduating as Master of Arts with 1st Class Honours in Classics and gaining a number of medals and prizes.

He came to South Africa in 1902 and served for a little while on the staff of the South African College in Cape Town. In later years he often spoke of the many interesting Saturday afternoons he spent with the late Dr. J. W. G. van Oordt—one of the most eminent classical scholars South Africa has known—reading abstruse Greek texts and revelling in the riches of Greek literature.

At the beginning of 1904, he was appointed Professor of Modern Languages on the staff of St. Andrew's College and, when in the same year Rhodes University was founded he, together with Professors Kidd and Cory, was transferred to Rhodes. He was Professor of Modern Languages until 1914, when he became Professor of Nederlands, and later of Nederlands and Afrikaans, until his retirement in 1944.

Professor Dingemans served Rhodes in many capacities—on the Senate and Council, as a member of the R.U.C. Development Committee, and as Chairman of student societies such as the Students' Christian Association and Die Hollandse Leeskring. In the wider field of University Education in South Africa his contribution to both European and non-European University Education on the Senate of the University of South Africa, and as Chairman of the Fort Hare Council, was sound and valuable. He served, too, for a number of years as Chairman of the Albany School Board.



Coming, as he did, of a missionary family—his brother had been a missionary in the West Indies—Professor Dingemans took a keen and active interest in the Sudan United Mission, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Students' Christian Association. He often conducted services in the local Dutch Reformed Church and served for many years on its Council. His interest in Native Education and in Zionism were rooted in his deeply religious philosophy of life.

Many a Rhodian will remember with deep gratitude the inspiring example of his simple Christian faith, which coloured his whole life and teaching; his sound scholarship and wide learning; and his rare gift of awakening, even in the most unpromising student, appreciation of the beautiful in literature and in art, whilst ever warning against losing "a sense of wonder" and a sense, not only of "the holiness of beauty", but of "the beauty of holiness". They will also remember his unfailing courtesy, his warm-hearted human qualities and his fine sense of humour, as witness his reception of uninvited guests on April 1st with "Op de 1ste April verliest de Keizer z'n bril". All these qualities appeared at their best in his home where he and Mrs. Dingemans extended gracious hospitality to generations of Rhodians.

When Professor Dingemans retired in 1944 it was hoped that he would continue to give of his wide experience and many gifts through Adult Education Lectures, in which he was deeply interested and which he had planned, but, owing to ill-health, this was not to be.

Rhodes was indeed fortunate to have had a man of his calibre as a Foundation Member.

P.A.H.

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## THE FIRST TEN YEARS

The shadows of time have doubled in length since the 1929 "Rhodian" celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the old College. In that issue Professors Lord and Dingemans, and others, reviewed its career from foundation. But present readers may not have convenient access to their account. Moreover a longer perspective may reveal or clarify new features. Contemporary records tend to mention what then appeared exceptional, and to omit what was taken for granted. Yet in the process of gradual change it is often the latter which acquires greater significance. It is therefore useful, while memory is still in being, to take another look at the early days from this more distant standpoint.

History develops fissures, dividing an apparently continuous period into distinctive phases. Thus we can now see that the pre-union or pre-war phase, as it used to be called, was characteristically different from others in its conditions and effects.

In its first ten years the College quickly found both its mind and its feet. It became a healthy and intelligent child of great promise. In work, in sport, and in its cultural and social resources, it acquired personality, and a reputation that in some respects now seems to deserve understatement.

It began, as we know, with little more than the College department of St. Andrew's. Three fifths of the students belonged to the Survey class which Professor Matthews had made famous. The original staff included Professor Kidd, the only survivor to-day, and Professor Cory who, as a chemistry master at St. Andrew's, had shown a breathless enthusiasm for Cape history that was to gain him a knighthood. The College was the humble tenant of barracks which until 1909 belonged to the British Government. It had no property, no emblems on any wall to denote its existence. The number of students increased from 109 in 1909 to 134 in 1910.

It was, however, richly endowed with negative assets.



There were no motor cars, no scopes, no rag, no radio, and no cosmetics or drunkenness (if you care for cosmetics and drunkenness). If the old firebell had been removed from the Drostdy Arch overnight it is doubtful whether the students would have been suspected. (Perhaps not, because they did not live on the premises).

How dull, but how efficient to the essential purpose of a university! Of course it was easy to work, and to like it; to read the full syllabus, and beyond it.

It appears from the first volumes of the "Rhodian" that during the years 1906 to 1912 Rhodes took first place in the University examinations (of the Cape of Good Hope) no less than fourteen times, and by no means only in the Survey. And the number of seconds, thirds, etc. was proportionate.

And they played with no less surprising distinction. The first team it ever entered in a rugby league, in 1909, defeated all-comers and won the E.P. Challenge Cup—the first college, it is said, to have done such a thing in South Africa.

One and all were very surprised, if you were to ask me. In fact the team seems to have been the first to wear a Rhodes jersey, a jersey artfully designed to magnify the stature of the wearer: green, with a broad white middle band enclosing a red. Yet it was not the jersey that did it. On the contrary the opponents of Rhodes were defeated, not by any fear or humility, but by the belief that they could not lose. It was one of those things that was taken for granted, and which gave Rhodes a fatal advantage, to be exploited by some drop goals, and the grit and gamble of the players.

It may be added that the players were hardy enough not to worry about having to walk a mile to the City Lords and back for a match, and return to a cold shower. There was no Rhodes ground before 1912 and the students all lived at the school hostels. At St. Andrew's many of them were prefects, in the post-matric category, and continued to play for the school. That too was taken for granted, except by the rest of Rhodes. Especially when the Rhodes boys proceeded to play for their school against the Rhodes men. Hence the otherwise cryptic complaint in the 1908 "Rhodian" that "in cricket and football we have been greatly handicapped by the fact that a certain number of students have preferred to consider themselves pupils of a school rather than students of a college". And so too when St. Andrew's beat Rhodes in 1909 the "Rhodian" says that "we had not our full team in as some of our men played for St. Andrew's".

Cold comments they seem now, but they were white hot once. The crisis occasioned the first general meeting of students, and possibly the idea of an S.R.C. to urge the building of a Rhodes hostel. Fratricide was fortunately sublimated in oratory, and in the literature of the "Rhodian" (*quod vide.*) And to be fair to the skeleton of the dispute, it should be admitted that the St. Andrew's boys (there were five in the team) enabled the Rhodes men to win all the cups. The importance of this inset in the picture, or footnote, is that the dissension enlivened the growing *esprit de corps*, and made the Rhodes colours worth wearing.

The College was doing so well in the examinations that it could afford to expand in its sport. In 1909 there were two rugby teams, one soccer, two cricket, one mixed hockey (because of a shortfall in ladies), and a very good tennis team.

The mixed hockey team implies the presence of women at Rhodes. The only thing to be taken for granted about them was that they came there to work, and that they were to be called "ladies". (But they seemed to be foreign bodies, if you care to ask me.) An article in the 1910 "Rhodian" relates the reception of two maiden freshers as follows: "Through devious paths we were led to the office where presided the Registrar. Mounting slowly up the steps, we beheld before his door a seething mass of staring youths who, in puerile shyness, seemed to forget that it is customary for ladies to have precedence. After hours of waiting, we maidens, reinforced by others of our sex, fought our way, tooth and nail, through the bevy of gaping students, and gained the Registrar's office."



The 'tooth and nail' resource seems explained by the absence of that of cosmetics. Yet one and all understood that the undoubted intelligence of the ladies did not exclude the possibility of other attributes capable of slowing down the academic competition of the men (never called 'gentlemen'). What is more, there were 'socials' and even a dance, with adequate safeguards against closer association (in any shape, manner or form). Perhaps it would not be improper to disclose, so long afterwards, that a student was called before the Senate for conduct calculated to show that mixed education was a dangerous experiment. He had been making a habit of escorting a lady student (albeit from the same home town) along Somerset Street to the College, and furthermore had often carried her books! But Rhodes survived any such loss of its good reputation, and the number and quality of the ladies increased, to the advantage of one and all.

The College societies were few but active. There was the "Literary and Debating Society" (1906), inspired by the frequent presence of Prof. Cory, a Students' Christian Association (1906) founded it seems by the present chairman of the University Council, a "Leeskring" (1910), an Athletic Union (1907), and an S.R.C. the first recorded meeting of which was held in 1912, with Dr. Watson as secretary.

It is tempting to name the most prominent students of the time. But in which year, and in what respect? And what of those who became prominent in after life? The feature of their education was its breadth. Arts and science could be mixed. One student taking a mixed degree in honours had no less than 20 lectures a week!

The names and photographs of the early staff are familiar to us. We must leave it to the fathers and mothers of present students to remember their intellectual and imaginative influence, an influence undiminished by personal idiosyncrasy, even that of appearing to lecture on Latin in the kilt of the First City Volunteers.

When the war came at last to end this first period, it added a lasting honour to the College, and not without the name of the killed professor.

H.F.S.

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## THE EARLY TWENTIES

By 1921 Rhodes, then only a University College of the University of South Africa, had already recovered from the war years when there had been no more than a handful of men students. Though few in numbers they seem to have included, judging from the stories I heard, a large number of "characters".

The student body in the early twenties was of unusual composition for it included a substantial number of ex-soldiers and airmen, a very good influence on the youths fresh from school: for one thing they prevented us from thinking ourselves of any importance.

The increase in student numbers created accommodation difficulties. College House, the only one of the present men's residences then built, was not large enough so the old Drostdy was used, and very cold and draughty it was. Swottingell Mansion in Prince Alfred Street was also used, as well as the house next to it, which has just been bull-dozed to make way for the new Great Hall. For the women there was Oriel House and a small annexe down the road. The dining halls now used by Oriel and Founders' Halls had recently been built and these years also saw the erection and occupation of both Jameson and Botha House. Of the present teaching and administrative buildings only the wing near the Botanical Gardens had been built. All on its own it looked very queer and was far from adequate so lectures had to be given in odd old barrack buildings, one of which houses today our precious, internationally known fish, while others have made way for Matthews and Cory Houses.



Of the present members of the staff, Dr. Watson had just been appointed but was still allowed to play hooker for the first fifteen. Professor Wild and Mr. King were there, but as students, while Major Walker, of beloved memory, was already an institution.

There were fewer distractions and sidelines than there are today and students probably worked harder than they do now. Initiation of inks was intense but over quickly; after the first week I do not remember having to submit to anything but a nocturnal visit from thugs. The motor car had not yet revolutionised our life and virtually without motor transport, we only got away from Grahamstown once a year in term time. This was when the rugby teams and the women's hockey team (did we call them "women" then?, I am not sure, but I am certain it was not "ladies") spent a long week-end at Port Elizabeth, travelling by train. We must have known Alicedale much better than the present day Rhodian! During the short vacs we generally went to Kowie and Mrs. Mark's boarding house was always crammed, but once a party of us went down to Bushman's river by ox waggon.

We had far fewer societies than now exist but it seems to me that those we had were better supported, the Dramatic Society in particular. Every term saw one or two plays produced. It is true we were less ambitious and indeed it was during my first year that plays ceased to be read. However we had plenty of fun and I was an adept at concealing pieces of paper with my lines at strategic points about the stage, or, when carrying a hat, inside it. We even had a "first night": it was "Cogwheels" by a Rhodian, the Rev. C. C. Tugman. With all due respects to the author, my most vivid memory of it is of such a fine representation of inebriation by Professor Bowles, that one could have suspected it not to be acting at all had he not appeared sober in the next scene.

There were also far fewer games clubs but everybody played rugby, a heart disease or a wooden leg being the only acceptable excuses for not playing this game. Inter-Varsities were almost unknown although once we did have a visit from U.C.T. It was in the days of Osler and Truter and I can honestly say that I have forgotten the score!

We had an amiable weakness for having our photographs taken and presenting them to friends. I thus still have a photograph of the "Bolsheviks" (they were still a joke then), a group of six to which I belonged. I remember how one night we planned an incursion on the sleeping residents of Drostdy. Unfortunately someone had blundered and the secret having leaked out the six of us, creeping up the ancient staircase, were suddenly washed to the bottom by torrents of water poured on us by our intended victims. From a photograph of a women's hockey team which I have also kept, I see that they wore a costume consisting of a white shirt with open sailor collar and Rhodes tie worn over a dark and discreet skirt; Lenglen bandeaux seem to have been optional.

It was during these years that the term "dancing class", a name presumably chosen to give a studious tinge, was openly replaced by a "dance" while today I see that it has become a "ball". Generally we were more formal in dress and decorum and gowns were required for lectures, battle-dress not having been invented. In all my time at Rhodes I do not think there was any instance of disciplinary action against a student.

Of the notable events that occurred in those years I recall the visit of Sir Frank Benson with his Shakespearian company. Some of us helped as extras in Julius Caesar and I remember that the present Lord Mayor of Kingwilliamstown (at least I think he is) was a particularly impressive legionary. Then there was the visit of Pussyfoot Johnson, the Apostle of Prohibition, who is probably not known among present day students. As a hot-gospeller he was a disappointment, but certainly he had courage for he had already lost one eye in an encounter with students.

Extolling the virtues of the past I have exceeded my allotted space. If I have been biased I must plead the privileges of an "old-timer".

C.C.G.C.



## REMINISCENCES 1931—1937

These years in the short history of Rhodes University correspond somewhat I feel to that brief period in European history just prior to the first world war which the French call "La belle époque" and the British for some reason known only to themselves the "Naughty Nineties". It is in the French way that I like to think of that period, as one of the happiest periods of our existence.

R.U.C. was then twenty-five years old. It had become conscious of its young manhood and established traditions; South Africa was comparatively tension free and very far from the rest of the world; we could still laugh at Hitler and Ghandi in our "Rags" and ape the Oxford Union by deciding that we would not fight for King and Country. The depression had hit the college but as students we were hardly conscious of it; we knew nothing of concentration camps; the Reader's Digest was still unknown and had not yet disseminated throughout the world the American way of life and the American fear of the atom.

After, well after, there came the war which was to take away so many of those who had made Rhodes during that happy period. "And some we loved, the loveliest and the best . . . ." said the bard which we were so fond of quoting in our more sober moments in Alf Gilder's Farmer's Home. Of these there is one name I must mention, that of "Trilby" Freakes, probably one of the most outstanding footballers Rhodes has seen. Handsome, sad faced Trilby who thrilled us so often during those rugby matches when we shouted ourselves hoarse and who never forgot that in his first year he had not been chosen amongst the 40 best looking inks out of a total 50 for one of the choruses of the 1931 inky concert, which was the worst in history!

In those years Kaif was not only the cultural but also the geographical centre of Rhodes, where Mrs. Harvey looked after us with loving care and all too often gave us credit. I must confess I never quite forgave Major Walker in 1936 for not letting the S.R.C. extend the kaif by taking over the second court yard of the old powder magazine which today still serves no purpose. Nor for that matter have I forgiven the Chemistry department for having transformed Kaif into an efficient Physical laboratory. Kaif of all places where we acquired any culture we might have picked up during our stay at Rhodes, kaif where we learnt the art of small talk, kaif where we spent some of our best moments at Rhodes now a chemistry laboratory. Alas, yes alas, poor Yorick!

As I write I am looking at a photographic album started somewhere after the first world war and ending with the Mikado of 1938, and which was recently found amongst some old S.R.C. things. Turning the pages I come to 1931. Undoubtedly the most successful of that year's rag is one Hugh Chapman looking very paternal in a frock-coat and top hat surrounded by five inkettes not quite so correctly dressed. I shall not divulge their names. A little further amongst team photos there is one of Colin Bennie leading a lot of wet looking Rhodians giving the war cry at the cup final in 1932. I can still see Scotty Morrison, who had so much difficulty with the wet ball that afternoon, sitting in one of the hotel lounges that evening looking the very picture of despondency. Somewhere too is the historic photo of Dannie Joubert beating the world's hundred yard record on the Rhodes field at the 1931 Inter-Varsity. I remember I did not see this feat because, being an ink at the time, I had been thrown out of residence to make room for the visitors. As luck would have it I had to go and stay with Professor and Mrs. Dingemans, where I spent one of the most interesting week-ends of my life, listening to Professor Dingemans and forgetting everything else.

Like all photos these pictures fail however to give a true picture of those years. They give no idea for instance of the excitement when, in 1933, the S.R.C. successfully steered a motion through a general meeting to abolish ragging, which deprived the men of their third rate entertainment during the first few weeks of the year. Neither do

they depict the interest centred round the first debate with Fort Hare. This debate was not thrown open to the house, there were five speakers from each side and Professor Bowles was in the chair. The motion was that European Education is unsuitable for the African. I remember one Fort Hare student speaking to the motion, who, in order to prove his case, quoted in Latin some classical author for some full five minutes, much to the astonishment of Professor Bowles who knew that none of his students could do as much. This speaker then capped it by saying "now all this means so much to you Europeans but you see it means nothing to me, an African".

Another event not reported in the album is the naming of the "Rhodent" which put Rhodes so much in the press this year: It all took place in the Grove, where Major Walker had relegated half a dozen of us until it was pointed out to him that the place had long been condemned by the medical authorities. Gordon Key, at present in the R.A.F., had decided to launch a new magazine to be sold during the rag on Founders' Day. He had not been able to hit upon a suitable name in spite of all our thinking, when one night returning from scope we found two large rats sitting on the table where we had prepared our tea. What a responsibility to be the godfather of a banned publication!

Talking about the Rhodent makes me think of the minor sensation that was created one year at the Inks' concert when a pretty young thing sang a song of which the two main lines were:—

*"Thank you for taking me out to Owen's car,  
Remember mother said I must not go too far . . . ."*

Owen Strong's smart two seater was almost put out of bounds there and then.

Of the staff one remembers Professor Lord walking down Lord's hill followed by his band of dogs, crossing the football field and stopping for a chat with students at the swimming pool. Professor Dingemans whose public lectures drew the whole college even though they were twice as long as anybody else's. Professor Bowles who, though Master of the College, was almost one of us and of course Professor Hobart Houghton who was warden of Milner House for the major part of those years and with whom we came in contact more than any other member of the staff. Outside the staff one remembers Mr. Edge and his son who welcomed us when we arrived at the station and said goodbye to us when we left and last but not least Mrs. Harvey who agrees with me that "those were the days".

Of course she is right, those were the days, when Rhodes University College, just out of its adolescence, seemed to have the world at its feet, when one still knew all one's fellow students, men and women, and all the members of the staff; when college societies were better patronised than they are today, even if most of the women only went to knit; when blazers, black or otherwise were not tolerated in the dining rooms; when there were no such things as Boards of the Faculties to review June examination results but when students nevertheless worked at least as hard as they do to-day . . . . Naturally those were the days, simply because "we were at Rhodes then". Ewe amadoda!

E.T.V.





## THE EARLY FORTIES

A vexed topic of 1954 is whether there should be more staff sub-wardens in the men's residences. The war broke the firm hold which Major Walker and his henchmen of the teaching staff held over the (then) four houses; graduate students began to infiltrate the positions. The current to-be-or-not-to-be is whether the earlier state of affairs should be reverted to. Many students think not. And lately they have taken to appealing to history to show that staff sub-wardens would be not merely a disagreeable but a very novel encroachment on the rights and perks of super-seniors. History for the student tends to mean (as it always did) what has happened at Rhodes in the past three or at most four years—a simplification which is pointed out with odious alacrity by Wise Ancients of the *entre guerre* (more *guerre* than *entre* for your correspondent, who came up in 1939). Sententious reminiscence begins to take the place of argument. "Now in my time, there was Bolly—the late Major Walker, you know; and Professor Roberts—perhaps you knew him, though he's now at Belfast—no, Ireland, not Transvaal; and Professor Morton, and Mr. Ruddock. A student sub-warden was unthinkable, unless of course in Botha House where he was just a second-floor extension of Bolly's personality . . ." The Ancient Mariner (never in need of much encouragement) has already taken over. The transfixed opponent begins to wilt under the weight of hallowed anecdotes of the Golden Yesteryears.

And yet the appeal to history of a decade and half or two decades ago is just. What could have been more amiable or profitable than warden-student relations then? They certainly didn't demonstrate that age and tyranny are necessary complements, that a senatorial house warden is more oppressive than an honours degree one. The reverse, possibly. Possibly the fun was faster. Numbers were pitted against experience and cunning: there was a challenge to the ingenuity of both sides.

Recall the occasion when the 1st XV sweated and grunted Hanneltjie Steyn's Baby Austin up two terraces and a flight of steps to the Milner verandah. The car was then wheeled into the common room, and a musician installed in the front seat to conduct an obligato for hooter and giggles, largely if not entirely for an audience of one. But Warden Roberts, talented musician though he was, did not react to the fanfaranading horn as expected and the performers found their score cloying after half an hour. It had become positively hateful by the time the quiet voice of the Professor of History suddenly spoke behind them: "Gentlemen, you may rest from your labours for a while; I am now going out to tea", and if he left behind a sense of defeat there was the compensation of a useful lesson in tactics.

The same warden once walked into his rooms to find a goat tethered to the piano. He had no sooner closed his door than the perpetrators came out of cover and brought their ears as near to the door as would be compatible with retreat when the warden should reappear speechless with rage or anguish, or clamouring for aid, or even boldly leading to pastures new and malodorous ruminant. The minutes passed. No voice of goat or warden was heard to signify the victory of either party. No scuffle rewarded the jokers for the tedium and the dangers of procuring the beast. Perhaps they were making friends. Perhaps the goat was being pacified with a M.S. lecture on the Star Chamber or an Albany cake. And then anxiety grew out of the silence. Had the goat attacked with diabolical swiftness and sureness and (goats are supposed to eat anything) was it even now making a meal off the warden? And then the door opened, and an unmasticated, maddeningly unruffled warden emerged with an armful of books and gown slung over the shoulder and drove off to a lecture. A quick search was made of the rooms for the carcase of the goat. The animal had vanished. But the low-silled bathroom window was still open, and at the end of the back terrace the goat was eyeing some geraniums.



There was take as well as give. All four house wardens were active amateur musicians whose enthusiasm sometimes led them as far beyond the rules as any ward, hoping for an opening for *tu quoque*, could have hoped. A piano once started tinkling in a warden's flat at 11 p.m., was still going at midnight, and—incredibly—at 1 a.m. At such an hour the soft pedal was merely an insult. An then the night was rent with clamorous ringing. We flew to the window, expecting the fire-brigade. Instead there was an alarm clock dangling outside the house. Dimly discernible was a rope coming from Cramb's window. Slowly the clock descended till it stopped outside the warden's window. The piano ceased and a sash flew up revealing the accusing face of the clock. The sash was lowered, silence descended, and we could all sleep. Graceful apologies were forthcoming next morning in an atmosphere of increased mutual respect.

As we point out to the presumptuous generation of today, there is a direct proportion between the degree of ingenuity employed in residential skirmishes and the amount of mutual respect and understanding. They should clamour for experienced wardens to test their mettle. Things are not what they were, and advancing middle-age makes us recommend them to turn back the clock.

A.D.H.

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#### 1944 — 1954

A varied decade, this, characterised by a great cataclysm, occurring exactly in midstream: at the end of that portentous year, 1949. It was in November, to be precise, that two almost coinciding events occurred which changed the face of Rhodes: on the night of the 4th, the Great Hall died, like the Phoenix, in a glorious burst of flame. A few weeks later, the last cohort of ex-servicemen packed their bags and migrated. The later species is, I believe, not entirely extinct; but it has lost its vigour, its group consciousness is no more. And as for the Phoenix, the ritual has been a tardy one, the new bird has not yet risen from the cinders.

For those of us who remember the explosive compound that resulted from the happy contact of Great Hall and ex-servicemen, the contemporary period is likely to be known as the Lost Years. Much as we loved them, we hope that there will never again be ex-servicemen at Rhodes; but that several generations should pass this way without the joys of our other institution seems to us nothing short of calamitous.

Do you remember our General Meetings? Unlike the G.L.T., built for the lone lecturer, the Great Hall favoured the orator. We sat in wide circles, from which any speaker could harangue the crowd. Our post-war comrades made full use of the situation. Nowadays students, being students, are often irritated. We were always furious. Now to be irritated is not a pleasant situation; it is perfectly delightful to be furious—especially if the object of the group fury is not particularly important. Not that the student body, led by some of the soundest S.R.C.'s known to Rhodes—remember those old soldiers, Staff Glass and Michael Tatham?—didn't busy itself with many worthwhile matters, in the conduct of which we prided ourselves on our serious intent and sense of responsibility. N.U.S.A.S., still multi-racial, was at the height of its influence, and Rhodes, the moderate between two extremes, often held the balance of power on important questions. In domestic affairs, the acquisition of privileges (a steady process begun, I imagine, when Rhodes was founded) continued. Front door keys became available to increasing numbers of women students, student sub-wardens were set up in men's residences, S.R.C. powers were extended, and so on. As might be expected, many a relaxation of rules was but the temporary result of the rise in the



average age of students. Already, in 1949, first-years, hitherto unmolested, were limited to two nights out a week. The recession had begun.

Academic work was held in high esteem. Our ex-servicemen were serious about the business of qualifying themselves for the post-war world, and their attitude had a salutary effect on the rest of us. At the same time, never has Rhodes been better entertained. Back from amusing the troops, we had our own composers, like Rollo Scott and Brian Burke; we had our own Rhodes band, our own seasoned showmen and dancers. We nearly had our own films—but the new Rhodes Film Unit, after two enthusiastic committee meetings, keeled over and sank. Should anyone wish to salvage it, I have a stack of its notepaper, complete with letterhead. New Societies sprang up like mushrooms: some, like the Geology (pronounced Gee-ah-logy, and founded by one of our ex-GI's), became comfortably established; others, notably the General Semantics Society, were gruelled for lack of matter.

The focal point for all this activity was, of course, the Great Hall. None of your Inky Concerts briefly sandwiched between the supporting programme and the Wild Western — we took a whole night over ours, and being strictly internal, it was highly hilarious. Kaif didn't seem to have financial difficulties—but it did have Mrs. Harvey. Everyone had tea there in the intervals between Great Hall occupations. You could go down there any afternoon and find Tech. Staff, efficiently organised by "Fergie", building its latest set, Leon Gluckman rehearsing Dramsoc's play (where now we use deserted common-rooms), Brian Burke's wire-recorder making a precious record of the best crooners from the location—they danced for us too, and how they loved hearing the record played back to them! There was even a tricycle in the Great Hall—the race-track: the outlines of the badminton courts, where people didn't always play with standard equipment. A professor was once known to ride this tricycle twice round the track—for a bet. Then, of course, there were our dances. And whenever a residence gave its Annual Ball, those not involved were consoled by a "dancing class" at G.H.—supper at Kaif.

All was not, however, prosperity. Came the Economy Drive. We ate less, we launched money-making campaigns, Olive Schreiner was closed—and the goat that had been trained to ring its front door bell to the discomfiture of the inkette-on-duty, unaccountably disappeared. Wool was stored in Olive Schreiner, but it returned to an active life when someone in a ground-floor room of the Old Music School saw a foot appearing through the ceiling and it was decided to abandon the building. Yet even the lean years had their compensations—did not the crisis bring forth "Sixty Glorious Jeers"?

Lest the reader should think that I regard Rhodes today with nostalgic pessimism, one last word: 1949 did, in fact, represent a peak. But I incline to the opinion that the tail is curling upwards again. There are symptoms of new vigour—fresh Great Hall plans, the birth of our cultural magazine, "Universitas", and, most significant of all, our recent coming-of-age as a fully-fledged autonomous University.

P.C.





RHODES UNIVERSITY FROM THE AIR