

3. THE REAL BEGINNING

1888—1889

In the two years of its existence, Johannesburg had engaged in enormous speculation but little production. By the end of 1888, only 266,000 oz. of gold had been mined with primitive equipment and many feared that not much more was to be had. The mining camp now meandered all over the veld but it still boasted only one double-storied building, the Central Hotel. Hardship afflicted the diggers but burning brightly among them was the faith and organisational genius of Hermann Eckstein. He had built his squat Corner House into a bastion of strength and confidence and, watching him riding on horseback about the Reef and presiding urbanely over meetings in his office, the young men took heart from his example. Despite the gloomy prognostications, there was an enduring spirit of optimism.

Adventure continued to call and as the winter of 1888 faded, the attractions of the mature and pedestrian Kimberley dwindled in the minds of many vital personalities and a new cohort clattered into Johannesburg by stage coach and mule wagon. Among them was Jacob Swart, perhaps the most versatile athlete and able administrator of them all.

In his six years on the Diamond Fields, Jacob Swart had helped to transform the sporting life of the area into an efficient and rewarding feature of community existence. On the 1st August 1888, at the age of thirty, he returned to the Transvaal where he was known and respected and, in the company of Kimberley colleagues such as the bearded Henri Bettelheim and Carl Hanau, and other old friends met at cricket and football matches such as Julius Jeppe, Andersson, Pullinger and Bailey, he challenged the chaotic sporting scene and proceeded to organise it.

Less than three weeks after his arrival, a meeting of sportsmen was again convened at the Bodega Bar in Commissioner Street (their usual haunt) to resuscitate the idea of a consortium of clubs in general and of cricket in particular. Pressure was upon them. It was known that Billy Simkins and W. H. Milton in Cape Town had been negotiating with Major Warton, now in England, to bring the first team of English cricketers to South Africa for the 1888/1889 season. Milton was making all arrangements for a tour, including financial, and Simkins was moving among the cricket enthusiasts of Cape Town to co-ordinate them into a practical body. On the 17th September 1888, he was elected captain of the newly-formed Cape Town Cricket Club with headquarters at Newlands and preparations began for the reception of the visiting team and the provision of adequate grounds on which they could play. It behoved Johannesburg to act speedily if local sportsmen were to take advantage of the manifest benefits of the tour.



Jacob Swart, who confirmed the allocation of the ground and signed the first lease

THE RAND WANDERERS RUGBY FOOTBALL TEAM

Back: Wilmot, Maclear, Smith, Fraser, Cousens, Fielding, Walton

Middle: Dowling, McGee, D. J. Pullinger, C. L. Andersson, Jacob Swart, Bosman

Front: Stamford, Furze, Adams, Visser, Steyn



In later years, Jacob Swart established precisely that the relevant meeting was called on the 18th August 1888. One of those present remembered that it had been his twenty first birthday but the event was recorded in the newspapers of the time so that, upon reference, the date was established beyond dispute - and the anniversary thereafter celebrated. Swart himself commemorated it in articles and correspondence whose terms were always confirmed by Llewellyn Andersson, and there was other eye-witness evidence including that of E.J. Platnauer, sporting reporter of the *Transvaal Mining Argus* of the time and himself an ardent athlete.

"When the meeting on the 18th August 1888 was held", wrote Swart fifty years later at the age of 80 when the destruction of records and the death of foundation members had rendered the origin obscure, "it was called together because it was essential to form a Cricket Club but it was the object of the promoters that this should be the first section of a Club embracing all forms of Sport. The old Rand Wanderers Rugby team at once joined up and it was left to the Committee to form the other branches (virtually Andersson and myself). Well, within a week, some gentlemen from Natal (only Association football was played in Natal in those days), came to us. They had just started a small Association Club and asked to join us. This was agreed to. Then Captain Winslow came and saw us and stated that he and a few others had met together to form a Tennis Club and wanted to join us. This was also agreed to. Further, an Amateur Orchestral Society also joined us..."

In his unpublished reminiscences, Charles A. O. Bain continued the tale of accretion. "I got Smith and his Brass Band to join and also Francis Crane, and I was appointed Chairman of the Musical Section and formed a committee chosen from the Band and Orchestra. I used to attend meetings of the Wanderers Club Committee sometimes as representing the Musical Section but I don't think I was ever a member of the Committee myself. Later, Smith handed over the Band to me and I increased the membership and provided more instruments supplied by the Club. When I had got the Band into shape and we had mastered a small repertoire, I suggested to the Wanderers that we give Sunday evening concerts, entrance a bob a time for a two-hour concert from eight to ten. This we did and these concerts were quite successful and later contributed largely to the Club's funds."

The process of consolidation proceeded with astonishing speed with the aid of an ad hoc committee but it was pointless without Club grounds. Remembering the grant made him, Charlie Pietersen wrote to the Landdrost in the name of the combined Wanderers Football and Cricket Clubs to ask why there had been no developments. The grant was considered to have lapsed by default since no person or body deriving from the original petitioners had offered to fulfill the conditions of fencing, planting trees, establishing playing fields, etc. The pallid Wanderers Club which had emerged from I Zingari had come to nought.

With characteristic dash, Jacob Swart had Charlie Pietersen introduce him to the Mining Commissioner, Jan Eloff on the 20th August 1888 and made so plausible a case that Eloff recommended to the Government that the revived Wanderers Club be granted the north-lying land previously designated. It was now somewhat diminished in size from the area originally granted to Pietersen. "The Government for various reasons into which we need not now enter", he wrote definitively in 1908, "arbitrarily withdrew the right to the eastern portion—now Joubert's Park, Wilhelm (King George) Street, the stands between that and Keizer (Wanderers) Street—giving as its reason that we had not enclosed same or planted trees, and that is how the Wanderers Polo Club ceased to exist owing to their losing their playing grounds — but that is another story.."

Four days later, the Mining Commissioner sent for Swart and informed him that "in consequence of the former fiasco, the ground would not be granted to a Club". The Government was not prepared to enter into an agreement with an ephemeral body unlikely to fulfill its obligations but, wrote Swart, "If I undertook this job and undertook to carry out certain conditions and then the conditions were not carried out, they would know who to deal with. I agreed to take the ground and thus the ground became the Wanderers property."

Writing twenty years later, a pseudonymous contributor ("Pneumatic") to *The Star* reported that before Swart received the Government's proposal, he was offered land by speculators in many parts of the town including Von Brandis Square at a rental of £50 per annum which he rejected as too small unless it could be extended to the Wemmer Mine property!

The Government refused to confer title to the ground, then known as Kruger's Park, until £5,000 had been spent on it within five years and its purpose as a Sporting Club established. It would be leased at £50 a year for a period of ninety nine years. "Pneumatic" recorded that on the 25th August 1888—the day following his agreement to the

Government's terms— Swart went again to the Mining Commissioner's office and paid the first year's rent.



Group of Gentlemen in 1890 concerned with the foundation of the Wanderers Club. Left to right:
Back row: C. L. Andersson, Littlewort (a visitor), J. N. Greenlees, W. A. Tilney, Jacob Swart, Gustav Sonn
Middle row: Julius Jeppe, L. E. B. Homan, J. G. Currey, Hermann Eckstein, J. B. Taylor, David Pullinger, A. H. Reid, Gustav Imroth
In front: F. N. Rorke, Murray Webb
Absent: W. P. Taylor, Henri Bettelheim, Carl Hanau, Abe Bailey, George Farrar and C. Aubrey Smith
This famous picture is alleged to be the First Committee of the Wanderers Club but is not in fact so. Littlewort, Greenlees, Tilney and F. N. Rorke were interested participants but not committee members.

Now was the time—at one of the most unpropitious periods of Johannesburg's financial history—to collect money. Swart, Andersson and their cronies moved about the town "consulting some of the leading men" and of course the longstanding president of the Club, Hermann Eckstein. He promised his full support and on the 8th or 9th October 1888 (Swart was never able to remember the exact day but was positive that it almost immediately preceded President Kruger's birthday on the 10th October, a public holiday when a significant cricket match was to be played on the still unprepared ground), a meeting was held under Eckstein's chairmanship to discuss finance. Until that moment, following the practice of the times, the young men had made arrangements and staged sporting contests in the names of the various "Clubs" without any formal organisation or the enrolment of members and the payment of fees. If money were required, the hat was simply passed around and enough was always forthcoming. Things were different now. An ambitious enterprise needed massive funds and the moment could not have been more unfortunate.

Andersson and Swart had developed their plans to the point of invoking the assistance of Arthur Henry Reid who, coming from Port Elizabeth in 1887, had been one of the first architects in Johannesburg and had established the firm of Reid & McCowat. They were asked to estimate the cost of building a double-storey pavilion or Club House with outside seating and of levelling the ground by contractors. It was assessed at two or three thousand pounds—an immense sum in those days and doubly so in times of depression. Encouraged by the example of Hermann Eckstein, men of stature and social conscience attended the meeting. It was decided to issue £5 debenture shares with special facilities for the holders including half of the nett profits of the Club and a Provisional Committee was formed. Inevitably the Landdrost Carl von Brandis was president as he was of every

other club in Johannesburg. Eckstein was vice-president and the members were "that bright spark" Carl Hanau who, now 35, had forsaken commerce in Kimberley to come to Johannesburg to involve himself in numerous gold mining enterprises, Mark Lowinsky who was associated with J. B. Taylor in stock broking, Dr T. G. Lawrence, foundation chairman of the Rand Club (he soon left Johannesburg), J. G. "Jack" Currey who was associated with



Henri Bettelheim (above) and Abe Bailey dressed as Mexican Hidalgos for a costume ball given by Lionel Phillips in 1893

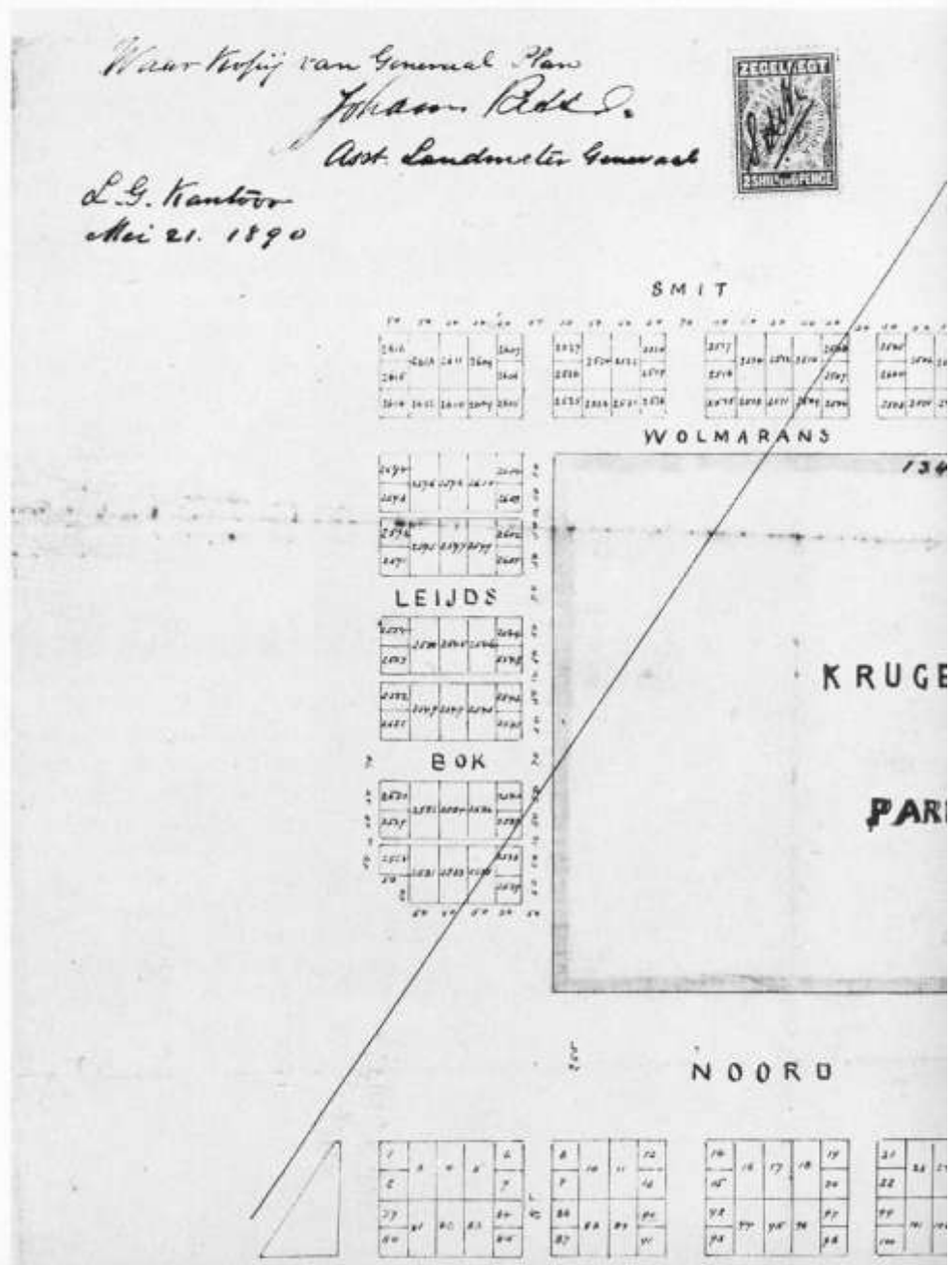


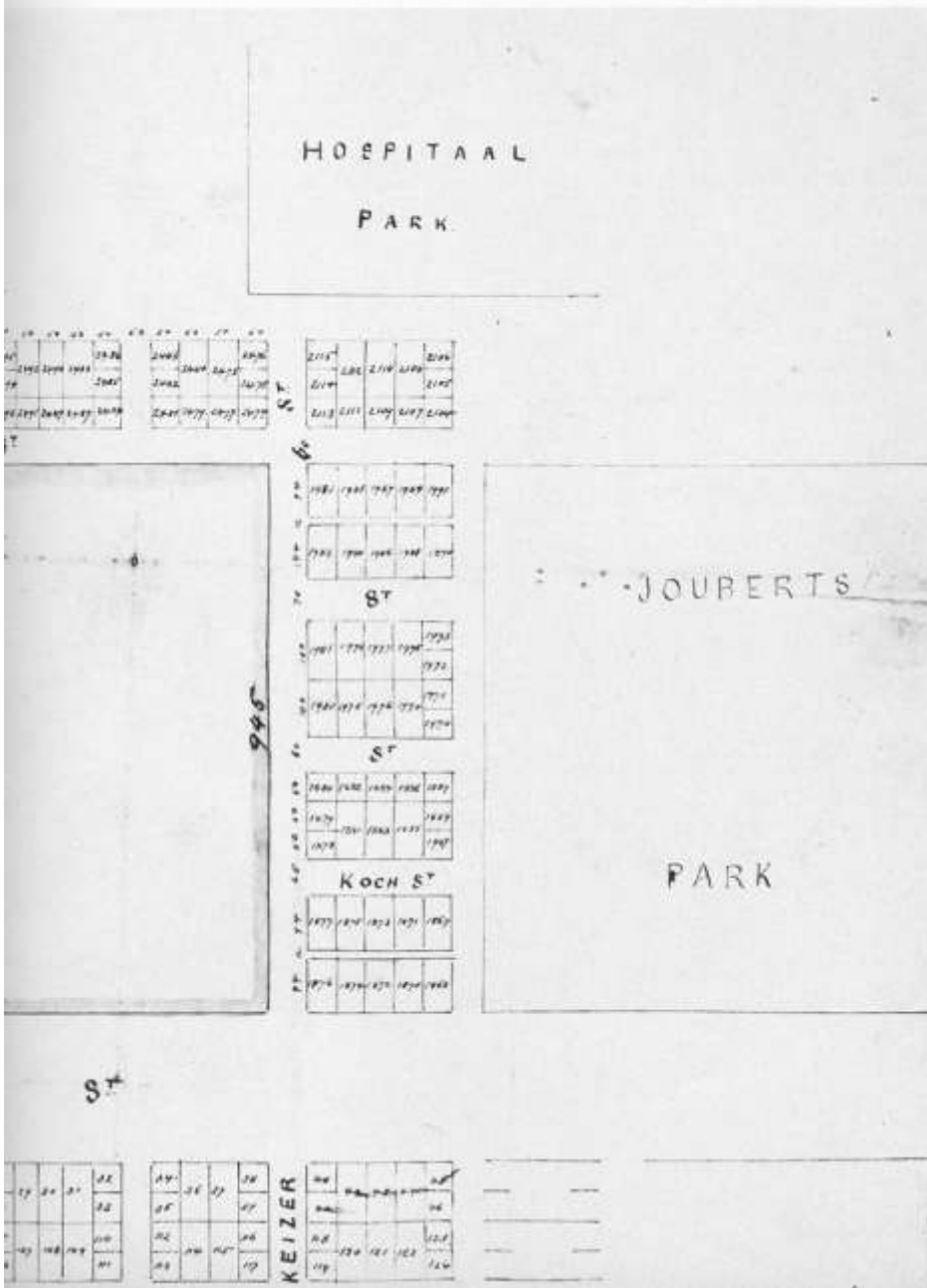
Abe Bailey and soon became the guardian of the multifarious interests over which that grasshopper mind ranged, and Jacob Swart. Lowinsky and Swart were appointed Trustees and the indefatigable Llewellyn Andersson, ostensibly honorary secretary, did all and everything to hasten the development of the revived Wanderers Club. It was barely three months before the arrival of Warton's English Cricket Team.

Eckstein gave the fund-raising a heartening start by purchasing seventy-five shares (£375) followed by Hanau with fifty; Edward Lippert of Pretoria (the German concessionaire of dynamite and other monopolies), W. A. Tilney, an enthusiastic sportsman and especially proficient at athletics, and Godfray Lys (who married one of the Taylors' sisters) with

twenty-five each; Carl Jeppe (a member of the Volksraad) and his nephew Julius of Pretoria (where he played cricket many years before Johannesburg was founded) twenty each; Abe Bailey, J. B. Taylor & Lowinsky, Gustav Imroth of Kimberley and H. B. Marshall (who is commemorated in Marshall Street and Township) ten each; and numerous subscribers of five each including D. J. Pullinger, Henri Bettelheim, Thomas and George Sheffield (who, a year before, had started *The Star* in Johannesburg) and many others. The ardent young men were for the most part too poor to contribute though Captain J. Andersson the footballer (Llewellyn's brother) and Charlie Pietersen bought one share each and Spranger Harrison the cricketer, two. C. L. Andersson reserved the historic Debenture Number One for himself and it was duly issued to him on the 13th December 1888, In time, he also had Life Membership Certificate Number Two and his son Vivian Number Three. They were issued to financial contributors.

Opportunity immediately knocked on their door. J. S. Curlewis who had learnt his cricket at the Diocesan College and himself a good bat, had done much to revive cricket in Pretoria (he later became Chief Justice of the Union), brought a team to Johannesburg on the 10th October 1888 to play a match against the Wanderers Cricket Club. They played on the rough veld used by local teams and the rivalry was intense. With nothing to do on a public holiday, a large crowd of men assembled. As they sat in their dogcarts and traps or stood along the ill-marked boundaries (there was no seating whatever), Andersson and his friends moved among them. On that single afternoon, they collected nearly £2,000.

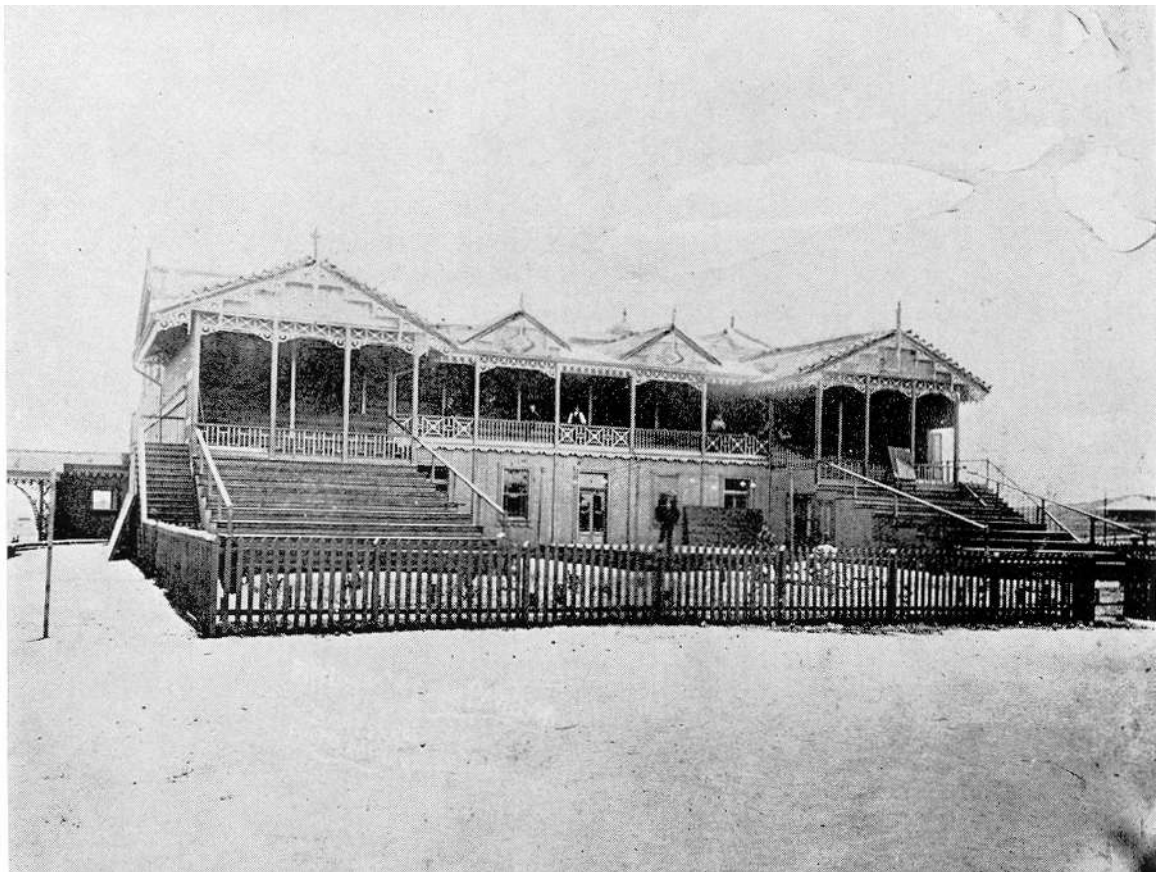






Arthur Henry Reid, foundation member of the Wanderers Club and architect of its first Pavilion

Front of the Wanderers Pavilion which was completed in January 1889 in time for the visit of Major Warton's English Cricket Team



Subsequently there were many interesting contributors such as Mrs A. V. Francis who bought ten £5 shares, and Isabella Charlton and Mrs J. P. Meyer (whose husbands' Meyer & Charlton Mine was one of the earliest) who bought five shares each, and other ladies. In an exemplary exhibition of cooperation, the Kimberley Pirates Club also bought five. The seven original lists of subscribers to the £5 debentures are still in existence, tattered and worn but bearing the signatures of the pioneering men and women who made Johannesburg.

The Wanderers Club Redivivus was considered to have been formed in that month of October 1888. A large committee was appointed (not elected) with Eckstein in the chair from which an Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Henri Bettelheim (known to everyone as 'Beetles") was drawn. It consisted of Andersson and his friends Hudson and Stonestreet, Swart, Carl Hanau, Mark Lowinsky, J. G. Currey and D. Fraser. In raising funds and, through Jacob Swart, entering into an agreement with the Government, the Club had undertaken to act as a kind of holding company for numerous sub-clubs to be formed under its aegis, and to enclose a certain piece of ground in extent 200 yards by 300 yards leased by the Club from the Government of the South African Republic for a period of ninety-nine years,

1. to build and erect on the said ground a permanent Pavilion and Gymnasium,
2. to lay out Cricket, Tennis, Football and Pleasure Grounds, and Running and Cycling Path,
3. to cultivate a Park by the planting of trees, shrubs, etc,
4. to utilise the said ground for all branches of Athletics embraced by the said Club,
5. to charge the public for admission thereto, entrance or gate money on such days as the ground may be in use,
6. to let on special occasions the grounds and erections to other Clubs or persons.

It was not the purpose of the Club to organise matches or sports meetings or other athletic events. The actual promotion of sports and other forms of recreation was the business and function of the sub-clubs: the Parent Club merely provided the venue and facilities. Failure to appreciate this point in later years caused complete misapprehension, particularly in anniversary dates.

Prodigious work was done in the next few weeks by the ad hoc committee whose names were not made public for some time. One of their number was the architect A. H. Reid who, with his partner McCowat, immediately started to build the front part of the wood-and-iron Pavilion "in the Swiss style of architecture". A corrugated-iron fence (each sheet—and there were many heavy hundreds—brought by ox-wagon from Pietermaritzburg and Kimberley) was erected around the ground and the considerable slope was leveled. Then the rains came. Time and again, the 1,500 tons of upturned earth, laboriously moved by pick and shovel and spread on a new flat surface, were washed away, leaving gullies and ravines in a swamp which, within weeks, was to be a cricket field. Andersson and his cronies despaired but pressed on. In the prevailing slump, costs of labour and materials increased by 50% and the capital derived from the sale of the first debentures quickly evaporated.

Meanwhile there was progress in other fields. In November 1888, the Right Honourable S. J. P. Kruger, State President, received a letter.

Honourable Sir,

At a General Meeting of the Wanderers Club, you were nominated as one of the Patrons of the Club and I have been requested to ascertain whether you will permit your name to be used as such on Our Roll of Honour.

At the same meeting, it was decided to increase our capital to the sum of £5,000 by increasing the number of shares--over £3,000 has already been subscribed.

An exceedingly competent Committee (including the Provisional Committee named in the Prospectus) has been duly appointed to carry out the work of the Club and we are hoping within a few weeks to start building our Pavilion.

Trusting that you will, Honourable Sir, be kind enough to stand as one of the Patrons of our Club,

I have the honour to be, Sir
Your obedient Servant
C. L. ANDERSSON
Secretary.

The State Secretary, J. B. van der Bok, asked "What is the will of Your Honour?" and on the 12th January 1889, the Honourable the State President Paul Kruger accepted the honour of being the first Patron of the Wanderers Club.

The "exceedingly competent committee" to which Andersson referred consisted of Hanau, Pullinger, Gustav Sonn, Jacob Swart, Julius Jeppe, A. H. Reid, Abe Bailey, J. G. Currey (chairman), Henri Bettelheim, Murray Webb (a Kimberley cricketer), W. P. Taylor, George Farrar (a noted miler and importer of mining machinery), L. E. B. Homan and Andersson himself who also served as honorary secretary. They were essentially an appointed working committee.

There was also progress among the groups which it was proposed to organise as sub-clubs. Bain's Brass Band and Francis Crane's Orchestra, now both under Wanderers' aegis, were providing very welcome entertainment in the amusement-starved town. The members of the Wanderers Cricket Club, now captained by Jacob Swart (who, on the 1st December 1889, accepted employment as secretary of the Johannesburg Turf Club) were frenziedly practicing as against the arrival of Major Warton and his team.

They came at the end of January 1889. The front part of the Pavilion with bench seats on either side and a hall or dining room below ground level, was ready to receive them, the ground was in perfect condition ("with very few bumpers"), there were no stands but men sat happily on the banks and scores paid three guineas each to attend the whole week of the matches with the privilege of a seat in the Pavilion.

The excitement almost paralysed the town. "Although not the best team England could put in the field", the contemporary athlete and sporting historian G. A. Parker recorded, "it was a team capable of beating the majority of the first-class counties." Captained by C. Aubrey Smith of Cambridge and Sussex, it consisted of seven amateurs and seven professionals. Twenty-two Johannesburg cricketers including Jacob Swart took on the English eleven (teams of 15, 18 or 22 were frequently fielded in those days to match powerful visitors) and in one innings, the English players, totally inexperienced in such barbarous playing conditions, registered the tour's lowest score—22 all out!—but immediately recovered. The professional players were rewarded by enthusiastic local sportsmen with nuggets, mining shares and generous cheques and splendid banquets were given the team when they departed.

From that week onward, Transvaal cricket, with a few initial reverses, prospered and developed. Had there been no Wanderers Ground on which their men could measure their skill against overseas opponents, it might have stagnated indefinitely. There were even greater benefits. When the tour ended at the Cape in March 1889, the captain Charles Aubrey Smith returned to Johannesburg to become a stockbroker and to captain the Wanderers Cricket team in summer and the Soccer Club in winter. He was also co-opted onto the Main Committee of the Club. Monty Bowden, Surrey's crack wicket-keeper and batsman, also became a Johannesburg stockbroker. Their influence on Wanderers and Transvaal sport and diversion was great.

When the dust of the cricket visit died down, stock had seriously to be taken of the situation. Money had been made but prices had risen so high that it would be impossible to complete the Club House (only the front pavilion existed and there was no sign of the Ballroom, Gymnasium and other amenities) and the Grounds. A Reorganisation Committee was appointed and it was decided to double the debenture issue and to encourage revenue from other sources, notably by staging Promenade and other concerts and by organising Sporting Meetings. Music was well organised but the sporting members of the Club as distinct from the non-playing debenture-holders, were disorganised. The loose groups and

associations to which they belonged were in no position to promote the sports which had brought them together.

PROSPECTUS

ISSUED BY THE

WANDERERS' CLUB,

For the purpose of raising Two Thousand Five Hundred Pounds (£2,500) by the issue of Five Hundred (500) Debentures of the value of Five Pounds (£5) each, redeemable by the said Club at any time within a period of Ten (10) years from the date of issue.

L.L.

President :

CAPT. CARL VON BRANDIS.

Vice-President :

H. EKSTEIN, Esq.

Provisional Committee :

C. HANAU, Esq.

M. LOWINSKY, Esq.

DR. T. G. LAWRENCE, Esq.

J. G. CURREY, Esq.

J. SWART, Esq.

Trustees :

M. LOWINSKY, Esq.

J. SWART, Esq.

Secretary :

C. I. ANDERSSON, Esq.

Architects :

MESSRS. REID & McCOWAT.

PRINTED BY THE CLERK.

We, the undersigned, hereby subscribe for the number of Debentures to be issued by the Wanderers' Club, set opposite to our respective names, subject to the conditions above set forth, and the terms of the Trust Deed to be hereafter subscribed by us.

NAME	RESIDENCE	No. of DEBENTURE
<i>H. Eckstein</i>	<i>Pretoria</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Carl Hanau</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>W. A. Tilney</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>E. Lippert</i>	<i>Pretoria</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>William H. Adler</i>	<i>Solomonville</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Taylor & Lowinsky</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Abe Bailey</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Carl Jeppe</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Julius Jeppe</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Ben H. Hart</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>5 (5)</i>
<i>H. A. Rogers</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>W. A. Rogers</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>D. Alexander</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>N. Morris</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>W. A. Randall</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>Wm. Goddard</i>		<i>10</i>
<i>W. A. & W. A.</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>H. Hughes</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>Robert Otter</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>H. Dehlerlein</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>for Bismarck</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>Blumroelck</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>W. C. Stoyan</i>		<i>5</i>
<i>H. Parker</i>		<i>5</i>
		<i>335</i>

The original Debenture Subscriber List of 1888 headed by H. Eckstein—75, Carl Hanau—50, W. A. Tilney—25, E. Lippert—25, William H. Adler—20, Taylor & Lowinsky—10, Abe Bailey—10, Carl Jeppe—20, Julius Jeppe—20, Ben H. Hart—5, H. A. Rogers—5, W. A. Rogers—5

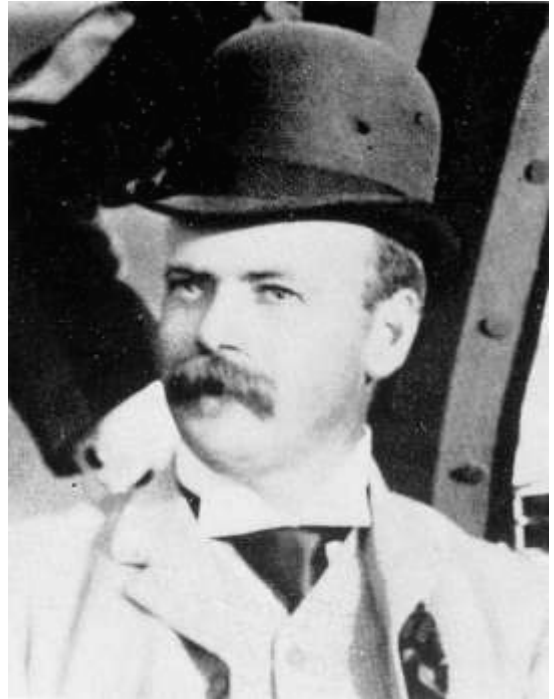
Accordingly on the 13th March 1889, a meeting of 27 gentlemen was held in the Wanderers Pavilion "to consider the advisability of forming an Athletic and Sporting Club" and upon the motion of Mr G. E. Smith in the chair, seconded by C. L. Andersson, it was resolved that "a Club be formed for the promotion of Football, Cricket, Tennis, Gymnastics, Athletics and all other forms of field sports to be called the Wanderers Sporting and Athletic Club" and having nothing to do with building a Club House or administering property or other functions of the Parent Club. A committee of 7 was to draft a scheme and appropriate Rules and Regulations and, upon 10 being nominated, a ballot was held and Jacob Swart, W. P. Taylor, C. L. Andersson, H.J. Stonestreet, K. White, O. Smith and H. O. Bosman were elected. L. Cripps was appointed secretary on the motion of Andersson and Charlie Pieterse.

On Andersson's motion, seconded by Swart, it was resolved to hold a programme of Athletic Sports (or what came to be called "Sports Meetings") in April 1889. The same gentlemen secured agreement to a motion that anyone joining within the following week would become foundation members and that the Committee would then report progress. Scores of gentlemen enrolled during that week (see Appendix I) and became foundation members of the "Wanderers Athletic and Sporting Club". They included, in addition to the founding members of the Club itself such as Swart, Andersson, Jeppe, W. P. Taylor, Pullinger, etc., many names subsequently famous in sporting and Rand history such as George Allsop the cricketer and his brother J. Allsop (soon to die of enteric), M. Brolin the rugby player, Henry Milford Barber of 1820 Settler fame, H. G. Bosman the rugby player and sprinter, E. M. Garcia the gymnast, Louis Melville the cricketer, the Morkel brothers who were both auctioneers and athletes, T. B. Parker the sprinter, Laurens Meintjies the cyclist, C. Aubrey Smith who had returned from the Cape, and a large number of versatile young men proficient on both track and playing field. Perhaps the most memorable among them was the pugilist J. R. Couper who opened a school for the manly arts near the Wanderers Club which the pugnacious Abe Bailey joined after supporting Couper in his historic fight with Wolff Bendoff (backed by Barney Barnato) on the 26th July 1889.

On the day following the first meeting (14th March 1889), the members of the seven-man committee met under the chairmanship of Andersson in his stock broking office with Cripps in attendance as secretary and Swart, Smith and White present. They agreed to Rules and Regulations for the new sub-club which established its colours as old gold, scarlet and black, the form of its administering Committee and many other details. No one was allowed to join it who was not an active member of at least one of the separate groups governing a particular sport. The subscription was to be 10 shillings per annum.

On the 20th March, a due week after the first meeting, Jacob Swart presided over another at which Captain von Brandis was elected president of the Athletics Club and Hermann Eckstein vice-president. Bettelheim became chairman. Cripps was confirmed as secretary. On the 23rd March, Swart took the chair at a further meeting in Andersson's office at which the Rules and Regulations were confirmed and the numerous applicants formally admitted as foundation members. The first Sports Meeting organised by the new sub-club took place on the 8th April 1889 on the Wanderers Grounds.

First Chairman of the Wanderers Committee – J. G. Currey



THE FIRST ENGLISH CRICKET TEAM IN SOUTH AFRICA 1888-89

Back: J. H. Roberts, M. Read, F. Hearne, J. Briggs

Middle: A. J. Fothergill, H. Wood, Major Warton, C. A. Smith (captain), Hon. C. J. Coventry, B. A. F. Grieve

Front: E. McMaster, M. P. Bowden, A. C. Skinner, R. Abel

Owing to the destruction by fire of all records except the Minute Book of the Wanderers Athletics and Sporting Club beginning in March 1889, it was subsequently quite erroneously assumed that the Wanderers Club was founded at that time. (The Athletics Club subsequently fragmented itself into sub-clubs.) Jacob Swart always hotly denied it and as late as 1938 when the Club should have been celebrating its semi-centenary, he finally stated definitively in a letter to the Secretary—"It seems to me that you people have forgotten that in 1908, we celebrated the twentieth birthday of the Club in August of that year. At this anniversary were a number of members of the Club who were present at the first meeting or joined the Club during 1888. The meeting you referred to on the 13th

March 1889 must be the one when we formed the Athletics Section (I was in the chair) in the dining room of the Pavilion. We had our first Athletic Meeting on Easter Monday the 8th April 1889."

The confusion continued to cloud the Club's thinking despite manifold evidence to the contrary and the presence of Sir Charles Llewellyn Andersson to clarify it. The Club was in fact founded on the 18th August 1888 and the foundation members were not those of the Athletics Section of March 1889 but the little band of young men who constituted it under Hermann Eckstein, its first president, and the debenture holders they canvassed in 1888. The historical course of events established that fact.

On the 8th March 1889, Henri Bettelheim, signing is chairman of the Executive Committee and for the Committee of the Wanderers Club, wrote to C. L. Andersson:

Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in informing you that on the recommendation of the Reorganisation Committee, you have been appointed to the General Committee as permanent Secretary to the "Wanderers Club" from the 1st April instant at a salary of £450 per annum with a bonus of £50 for the first year, should the finances of the Club permit same.

Your salary will be payable monthly viz £37 10s and you will understand from this that the engagement between yourself and the Club will be terminable at one month's notice on either side. All clerical assistance will be provided by the Club if it should be found necessary.

On behalf of the Club, I have to convey their thanks to you for the services you have so readily and willingly rendered since the formation of the Club in October 1888.

It must be assumed that October rather than August was chosen as the date of the formation of the Club through the formal acceptance of a Constitution or Rules and Regulations on that date, records of which perished in the fire though reference to them exists in the first printed Rules of 1890. When the 20th anniversary was celebrated in 1908, the month was August.

Andersson, while continuing to run his stock broking business, accepted the position of secretary of the parent Wanderers Club while Cripps and others administered the Athletics and other sections. The Club's colours however, varied from the original red, yellow and black agreed in 1888 to the old gold, scarlet and black adopted by the sporting members in March 1889 (though many of the 'old blazers' were still to be seen twenty years later) and thus they have remained.

