



## 9. TRIUMPHS AND TROUBLES

1905—1911

At no time during the tumultuous existence of the Old Wanderers Club could it be said that a definite pattern emerged—except in the jealous care with which its Committee guarded its good name. It was the one stable factor in a chronicle written by men so spirited and volatile in their views that they frequently came to drastic decisions only to reverse them at the next meeting. But on sportsmanship and good behaviour, there was never any division and, at risk of alienating a whole class of potential members, Committees imposed disciplinary action of astonishing severity. Persons unable to sustain the moral tone of the Club were expelled altogether and those considered culpable of unbecoming conduct were summoned to meetings, often accompanied by their original proposers and seconders, to explain themselves. Reprimands were rare. More frequent were suspensions for one or more months.

As time went on, the apparent peccadillo of temporarily transferring a badge to a non-member friend to gain free entry became more and more heinous and entailed heavy penalties. Some members thereupon resigned but very often, after a decent interval, re-applied for membership. The Wanderers Club carried considerable cachet despite the fact that the great men of Johannesburg who had originally formed it were now comfortably ensconced in their own mansions with tennis courts and other recreational facilities. The Club now had an aura of its own, independent of monetary power and influence.

Inalienable from maintaining the tone of the membership was the question of racial discrimination. Members were admitted by Committee ballot and no explanation for black-balling was recorded. Candidatures were frequently rejected and periodically the cry arose that the Club was anti-Semitic. From the outset, distinguished Jews served on the Committee and threw the lie at the allegation. Rogaly, Ruben, Raphaely, Kallenbach and many others gave their best efforts to the Wanderers Club but as much as James Hyde could publicly declare that the members of his Orchestra had been cold-shouldered, so could Jews at the Club's dances affirm that they felt unwanted. It was a social phenomenon that the Club was to combat for all of its history, and bore no relation to the numbers of its Jewish members.

The Wanderers Club discriminated severely against women, not only originally in denying paying members a vote but in access to its facilities. They could play certain games only at certain times and were otherwise restricted. On the 19th January 1906, the Committee ruled that a gentleman could take a lady guest into the members' enclosure but no lady member could introduce any guest whatever. The next week, the Committee reversed

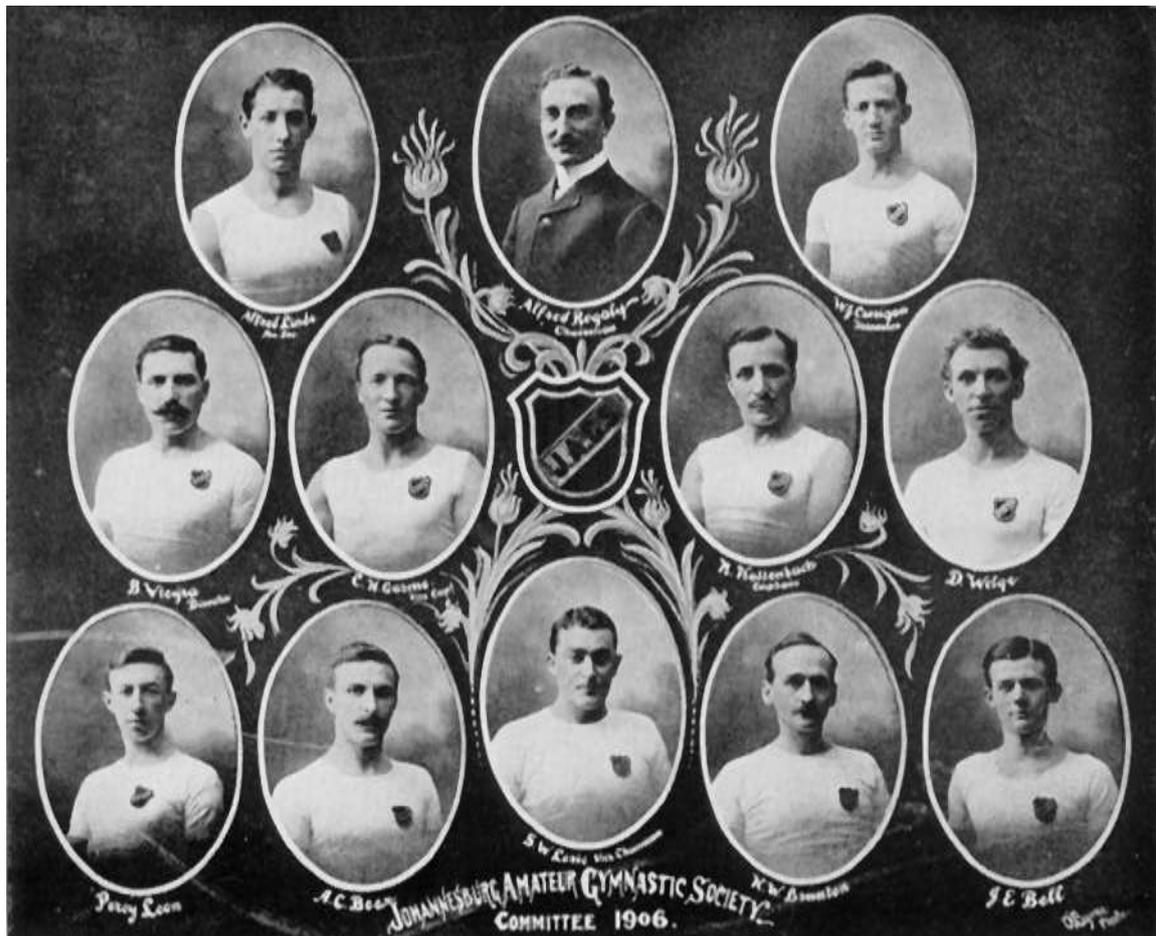
itself and a lady member was permitted to introduce a gentleman guest. The influences that had been at work may be surmised. Nonetheless the Club remained strongly atavistic in its attitude to women and even after they had been given full rights, frowned on their full participation. In the 80th year of its existence, no woman member had yet been found to serve on its Committee.

Uneasiness about non-white members of the public admitted to the grounds was largely dependent on current conditions. It must be admitted that with the exception of the Indian community, non-Europeans in Johannesburg at the turn of the century, under conditions of extreme poverty and lack of education, would not have been capable of sustaining the standards of the Club either as sporting audiences or as lessors of its premises. Nor was the Club, in common with every other public and private institution of the day, prepared to admit the claims of coloured persons of culture and attainment. When Gandhi made application for the Hall for a Public Meeting in September 1906 for the British Indian Association, it was refused outright.

As time went on, conditions changed and public opinion mollified. In 1912, the South African Olympic Committee brought pressure on the Club to admit persons of colour, particularly Chinese (who contributed generously to local athletic funds). The Cyclists' Union was in sympathy. The redoubtable Dr Brennan, a Canadian of pronounced views and energy who served on the Wanderers Committee for many years, moved accordingly for consideration after four weeks' deliberation and discussion. His motion was duly defeated and Allsop was instructed to write to the Olympic Association that 'the time had not yet arrived for admission of spectators other than Europeans to witness games'. The time did arrive after several years but meanwhile the Club delivered its final rebuff to Gandhi. In October 1912, he applied for the use of the Main Hall for a reception for Mr Gokhale, a member of the Calcutta Legislature, and the Committee delayed its decision for a week. Then it found that the Hall was already booked. Gandhi provided no further problem. He left for England in 1914 and arrived at the outbreak of the First World War I - he had fought for his people in South Africa in every field.

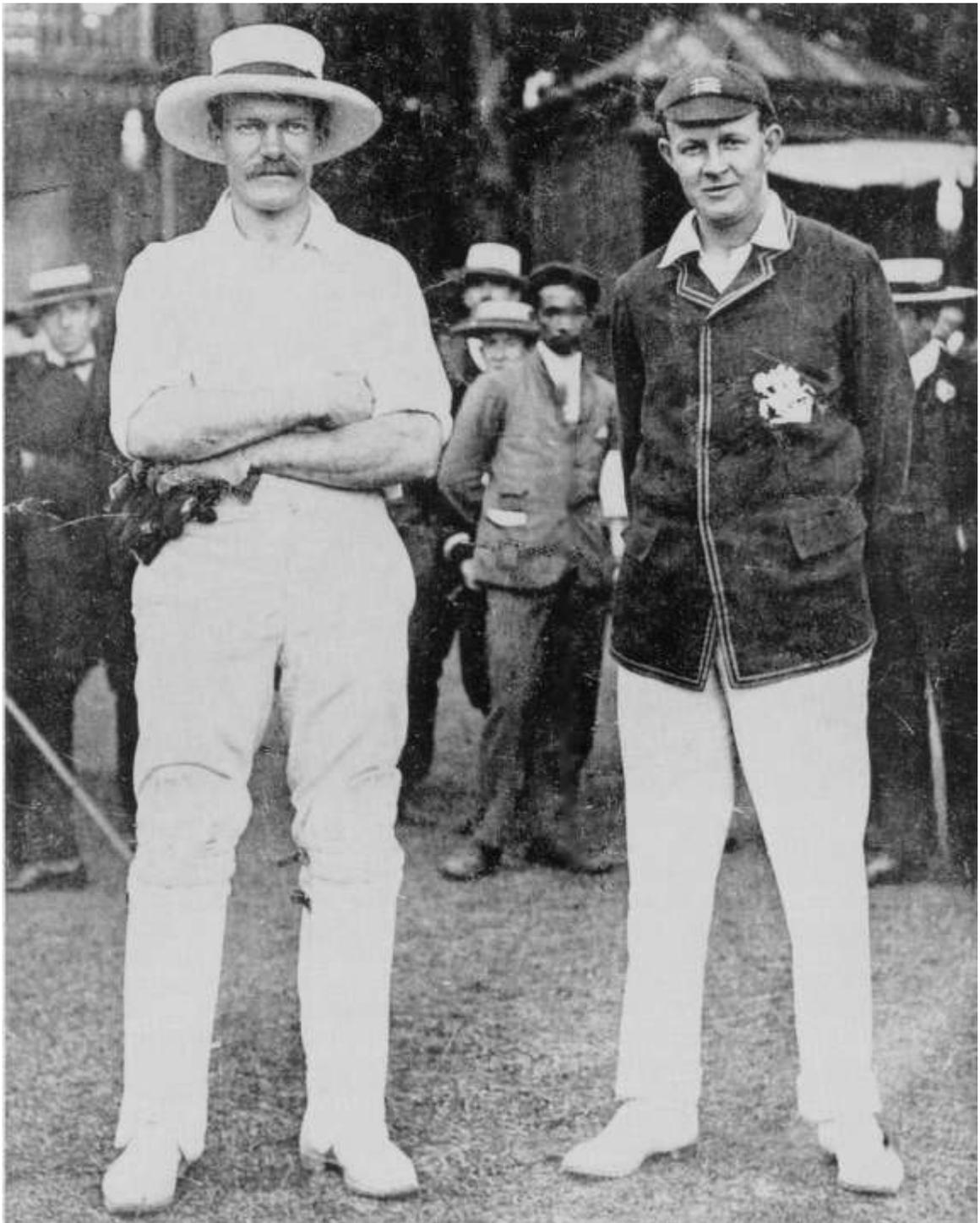
The problems of administering a huge sporting area to which the public had access proved manifold. Apart from drunkenness and unruly behaviour among the spectators, the Committee in general and Allsop in particular had constantly to deal with thefts and burglaries. "Beware of Pickpockets" had to be placarded in dressing rooms but the climax was reached when a gentleman proposed for honorary membership was caught *in flagrante* going through the clothes of the teams of the Police and Bank of Africa then playing a match. He was taken to the Detective Department.

There were other chronic issues, headed always by money. Harold Solomon was followed as chairman by Harold Strange in 1905 and the veteran Jacob Swart took the chair in 1906. All tried to reduce the debenture debt but continuous expenditure on improvements was necessary and it diminished hardly at all. In 1906, the original £5 debenture debt fell by 4 contributed by J. G. Currey, 4 by Gustav Sonn and one each by Solomon and C. O. Curtis; but the massive total of £100 debentures remained. The Club faced very dark days and as the gloom descended, it rejected the long-proposed swimming bath and a new enthusiasm for bowling greens.



Whatever its difficulties—and they were not fully apparent in 1905—it retained its character as the heart of Johannesburg. The citizens flocked to the Sunday Concerts given by no less than a dozen different regimental bands from the Imperial forces and one or two South African, and the Hall was constantly used for the highest occasion. The Mayor George Goch hired it in 1905 to receive the new Transvaal Governor, Lord Selborne, who became the Club's Honorary President. The Wanderers stipulated that 50 seats must be reserved for its Patrons, and Committee members. It was beginning to have *folies de grandeur*, culminating in official protest if its Chairman were not *ipso facto* appointed a member of all Committees entrusted with public occasions.

Sporting activities took a peculiar turn. The tennis courts were still overcrowded but the Sports Meetings were a failure. After long resistance because of the damage it would cause to the track, the Club at last admitted motorised sport. Passmore had insisted on practicing cycling while paced by a motor-Car and had been warned off the track. Then the Club grudgingly allowed a ten-mile motor-paced cycle race but finally banned them completely. By the end of 1905, it was running joint sports meetings with the Transvaal Automobile Club and the Johannesburg Motor Cycle Club. The era of the bicycle was over. An attempt to meet the temper of the time with a Roller Skating Rink laid on the floor of the Gymnasium, failed through the incompetence of the lessor and the Gymnasium itself ceased to have attraction.



The South African captain Percy Sherwell (left) and the captain of the M. C. C. Pelham Warner after the toss on the eve of the historic test match in January 1906 which Percy Sherwell won with a stroke to the boundary

The Club now entered the most crucial period of its existence. There were unexpected assaults upon its resource and its revenue. Although it professed to be "the only place in Johannesburg which really catered for public amusement", the Municipality refused to reduce its valuation and imposed high taxation. There was now the competition of the Drill Hall which was let to persons and bodies who previously patronised the Wanderers. The military authorities refused to withdraw its facilities. There were other clouds on the horizon but, before they materialised, the Club gloried in a record membership (1,401 as against 1,252 in 1904) and a balance in the bank of £2,544—the most successful year since its inception. Even more glorious was the first visit of an M.C.C. team led by Plum Warner which surprisingly was defeated by the Transvaal with many Wanderers players, at the end of December 1905. All South Africa awaited the result of the Test Matches. England would see whether she had a new and worthy opponent on a level with Australia. Eight members of the Wanderers Club were to be in the South African side for the first Test—Sinclair, Tancred, Shalders, Faulkner, Schwarz, and Hathorn who played for the cricket club, and Percy Sherwell and Gordon White who inconsequently played cricket for the Pirates Club.

On the 2nd, 3rd and 4th January 1906, the M. C. C. played South Africa on the Wanderers Ground in "a wonderful match, deserving to rank among the classics of cricket which", said Plum Warner, "I shall remember to my dying day." No one who saw it ever forgot it. More than sixty years later, old men were still recounting a boyhood thrill which only the grave would efface. Its heroes were the huge-handed Dave Nourse (he could pick up and hold a soccer ball with one hand) who carried his bat to a victorious end and the South African captain, Percy Sherwell who, through Nourse's tenacity, was able to hit the winning boundary.

Writing twenty years later, Nourse was able to recapture the blood-tingling excitement of that immortal day—"Shall I ever forget it?", he said, "I have played in many close finishes since but never in anything approaching this one for excitement . . . In the second innings, we required about 284 runs to win. We opened fairly well until Shalders was run out. Gordon White settled down but lost Snooke, Sinclair and Faulkner. When I went in, I felt that all eyes were on me and that I was looked upon as one of the last hopes as there were only three—Vogler, Schwarz and Sherwell—to follow. I went in grinding my teeth and determined to stay if I could. I left the off balls severely alone as injudicious nibbling at that stuff had been my downfall many a time before.

I stayed with White a long time until I had the misfortune of losing him after a brilliant innings of 81. When Vogler who followed was clean bowled by Ernie Hayes after making 2 and Schwarz almost immediately after was caught and bowled by Relf everything seemed lost.

We still wanted 45 when our skipper, P. W. Sherwell, the last man, came in and everyone seemed downhearted. It must have been a terrific strain on him, being skipper and having to come in last at a time like that. If it were so, then he certainly concealed it well for he came in, as usual, laughing and full of confidence. His plucky manner certainly bucked me up and probably had the same effect on every South African supporter. Both of us put our shoulders to the wheel and brought off a sensational win by knocking off the number of runs required.

In the final stages, Warner brought all his men so close in that it looked as though they were all on the mat. While watching the ball, I was conscious of a sea of faces looking at me and when at last Relf bowled a full toss on the leg side to Sherwell from which the winning hit was made, I heard Warner say—"Good God, Bert!"

In the massed crowds, strained and silent on the Wanderers Ground, the tension snapped like a bowstring and the multitude rushed on to the pitch. "Men and women were screaming hysterically, some even were crying, and hats and sticks were flying



SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKET TEAM

v

M. C. C. 1906

*Back row:* B. de R. Malraison (scorer), A. D. Nourse (Natal), S. J. Snooke (W. Province), A. E. Vogler (E. Province)  
*2<sup>nd</sup> row:* L. J. Tancred (Tvl.), J. H. Sinclair (Tvl.), R. O/ Schwarz (Tvl.), P.W. Sherwell (Tvl.), W. A. Shalders (Natal), M. Hathorn (Tvl.)  
*In front:* G. A. Faulkner (Tvl.), G. C. White (Tvl.)

The huge crowd, hysterical and weeping, which gathered outside the Wanderers Pavilion the conclusion of the match against the M.C.C. in 1906



everywhere", wrote Warner, "The crowd simply flung themselves at Nourse and Sherwell and carried them into the pavilion. For some time afterwards, thousands lingered on..."

"As soon as I saw the full toss bowled and that our skipper had hit it", remembered Nourse, "I started to run but never saw the ball after it left the bat. It seemed lost in the immense crowd that swept over the ground. I don't think the ball ever reached the boundary for when the match was won, the crowd encroached far into the ground from all parts and as soon as the ball was hit, knowing there was no fieldsman on the on side, the crowd was all over the ground before I could reach the other end. They made a bee-line for Percy to shoulder him in. He said 'No! Go after Dave!' but although he did not know it, a crowd had got me already. I had made a rush in the opposite direction towards the Tennis Courts but was barricaded in by the crowd and shouldered into the pavilion. They took off my pads and gloves, took my hat and everything and I cannot say how pleased I was when they at last let me down on firm earth again in the Wanderers Pavilion. I think that was one of my happiest moments when they dropped me.

I had to go upstairs into the Pavilion. The stairs were packed with people going up and down and as I pushed my way up, one of the first men I met was a well-known cricketer, George Kempis who held out his hand to congratulate me with a 'Well played, Dave!' It was a very nice hand for me to cross for there was a golden coin in the palm. As soon as others who were coming downstairs saw what he had done, they also did the same thing. They put their hands in their pockets and shook hands in the same way (There was also a collection amounting to £87.)"

The whole South African team came out on the Pavilion balcony. Abe Bailey spoke, Warner spoke. Nourse and Sherwell spoke. The crowd remained hysterical with joy. Somehow in the *melee*, Harold Strange managed to capture Nourse's bat and buy it from him. The next day— 5th January 1906—the Wanderers Committee attended its weekly meeting at the Pony Club and formally "RESOLVED that a letter be written to the Captain of the South African team congratulating him on his splendid victory in the first Test Match played on the Clubs grounds on January 2nd, 3rd and 4th 1906. The Chairman stated that he had secured the bat with which Nourse played in the recent match and wished to present it to the Club'. It was gratefully accepted and, with the ball from which the winning hit was struck by Sherwell, has been displayed in the Club House ever since.

It was at the same time resolved to buy four hats, not exceeding 25s each, for Juniors and they were from time to time presented to promising young cricketers on whom George Allsop, as secretary both of the Club and of the South African Cricket Association, kept a close eye. It fell one day in the season of 1909 on a young man in an under-21 team who played an attractive opening innings of 89 with Harry Pegler on a back ground against a Municipal team. Allsop leant on a turnstile and appeared to devote only desultory attention to the cricket but when the young man came off the field, he congratulated him on recently joining the Club and making a fine debut. "Come and see me on Monday night", he said and when Algernon Sidney Frames duly called at his house, he presented him with a voucher for a bat awarded by the Club to meritorious Juniors. A close bond of friendship grew between the young Railway employee and the 50-year-old secretary whose mantles he was to assume nearly a quarter of a century later.

For the Club, unsuspected menaces were appearing. On the 16th February 1906, the magnificent Carlton Hotel opened in Eloff Street and threatened to become an entertainment centre— particularly for balls and banquets among the magnates—depriving the Wanderers of some of its revenue. At the end of the year, a number of citizens, disgruntled by the hurly-burly of the Wanderers Club and the congestion of its courts and stands where members had few privileges, formed the Country Club at Auckland Park and provided further competition. It behoved the Club to set its house in order.

Under Harold Strange's chairmanship, meetings were transferred to the offices of the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company and a cheque of £10 was sent in gratitude to their previous hosts with a request that it be accepted as a donation to some charity connected with the Pony Club. Handsome bonuses had been paid to the staff for their work during 1905 (Allsop received £100, Pearson £50 and all others generous sums) and now it was decided to regularise their position with formal letters of appointment in the following terms:

George Allsop, Secretary	£50 p.m. with free occupation of a house
Joseph Alexander Felix Pearson, Assistant Secretary	£40 p.m. with a house at a rental of £2 a month
Leonard Emanuel, Clerk	£20 p.m.
Carl Frederick Wilhelm (Fritz), Groundsman	£4 12s 4d a week with free quarters
George Wilhelm (son of Fritz), Groundsman	£3 a week with a room
William Henry Creese, Groundsman	£3 4s 8d a week with a house at £1 a month
Arthur Gregory Sims, Groundsman	£3 9s 3d a week with a room
William Creese, Senior, Groundsman	£2 6s 2d a week with a room
Sydney Cans, Gymnasium Instructor	£12 a month

(although the Gymnasium was moribund. Cans soon resigned and was replaced by D. McLeod).

Throughout its existence, the Club retained faithful and faithless servants. Many drank, some quarrelled with the Secretary, others resigned and were induced to withdraw; but despite dismissal and repentances and the vicissitudes of several Wars, the majority remained for exceptional periods and many died in harness. They included the women whom the Club daringly employed before the First World War.

It was otherwise with the lessees and in 1906, complaints against the caterers, Levy and Klugman, who leased the Bar and dining rooms and provided incidental refreshments, were reaching a climax. There was little the Club could do to determine the quality of the catering on its own premises.

A tariff was also fixed for the Halls. The great Ball Room or Dance Hall was let until 4 a.m. for £25 but only £17 10s 0d for a Cinderella Dance and fifteen guineas for a *Conversazione*. The Gymnasium Hall, a most popular venue for every kind of occasion, had a top tariff of £50 for Professional Boxing Contests and £25 for Political Meetings. Dog, Flower and Poultry Shows were £20 and Concerts £12 10s 0d. The Ball Room was leased by Mrs Lionel Phillips in February 1905 for a Farewell Ball at the end of her first visit to South Africa after the Jameson Raid. Lionel returned at the end of the year for a short space to throw his great weight into the resuscitation of the gold mining industry but decided to remain, giving customary assistance to the Wanderers and to cricket in particular. He was made a Life Member and his wife, brutally determined to stimulate rehabilitation, bent the Committee to her will and even effected structural changes.

The charges for the use of the Club's premises (there were also small halls and rooms) were amended from time to time but the highest charges were always for Boxing and Political Meetings. A guarantee was also demanded and damage was often done. A considerable body of legend grew around the performers who graced the Wanderers Halls. They were of international repute (but did not include Sarah Bernhardt, as a reminiscent chairman stated in print) and extraordinary adventure befell them, mostly of a nature that excluded itself from their autobiographies. From the number of times that the Committee had to authorise Messrs Mackays to repair or replace the Steinway grand piano, credence may be given to the legend that its leg fell off while either Mark Hambourg (who came in 1905 and 1907) or Paderewski were playing. The pianist Madame Carreno was

also reported to have been handicapped during one of her performances by the appearance on the stage of a large St. Bernard dog.



The Stage versus The Press, 1913 – This historic group includes in the second row (left to right) the actress Dora Naisby (holding parasol), Eva Moss, Freda Godfrey, a journalist, Leonard Rayne, two unidentified ladies, J. Langley Levy (later editor of the *Sunday Times* – George Allsop is standing one row behind him) and at the end, holding a baseball bat, "Doc" Brennan

The great contralto, Clara Butt accompanied by her handsome husband, Kennerley Rumford, made her Johannesburg debut at the Wanderers Hall in October 1911. The programme was supported by an orchestra and other singers. It was very hot and, the ventilation being notoriously bad, all doors and windows were left open. The statuesque prima donna, over six feet tall and of immensely commanding presence, had no scruples in recording what occurred. As the orchestra and company sat ranged across the stage, "dog after dog strolled in until there were a whole row, noses on paws, in front of the platform where they had the benefit of a slight breeze. The singers were hopelessly disconcerted and stopped singing to join in the roar of laughter from the audience!"

Worse was the predicament of Paderewski in March 1912 who stalked on to a completely bare stage backed by rows of empty red-clothed benches, without foot-, wall- or bracket-lights and devoid of the palms or flowers customary to such occasions. "The magic of a great performer" overcame these detractors but the future Prime Minister of Poland was unable to impose his personality on the pigeons which roosted in the rafters of the Hall (there were gaps where the beams rested on the walls by which they entered) and they fluttered about while he was playing. The event was recorded by a renowned journalist of the day, Hedley Chilvers and remained a hallowed if hilarious memory.

Bohemianism was a feature of Edwardian Johannesburg and under the influence of J. Langley Levy, later editor of the *Sunday Times* and a member of the Savage Club, comic cricket matches were regularly played on the Wanderers Ground between the Savages and the Thespians in fancy dress. They began in 1906 and, enthusiastically supported by that pillar of the local stage, Leonard Rayne, continued for several years, "The Press versus the Stage" being annually held. It stands in the records of the Club that in 1907, the comedian

George Robey was made an honorary member while performing at the Empire. He was a longstanding member of the M. C. C. for whose teams he frequently played.

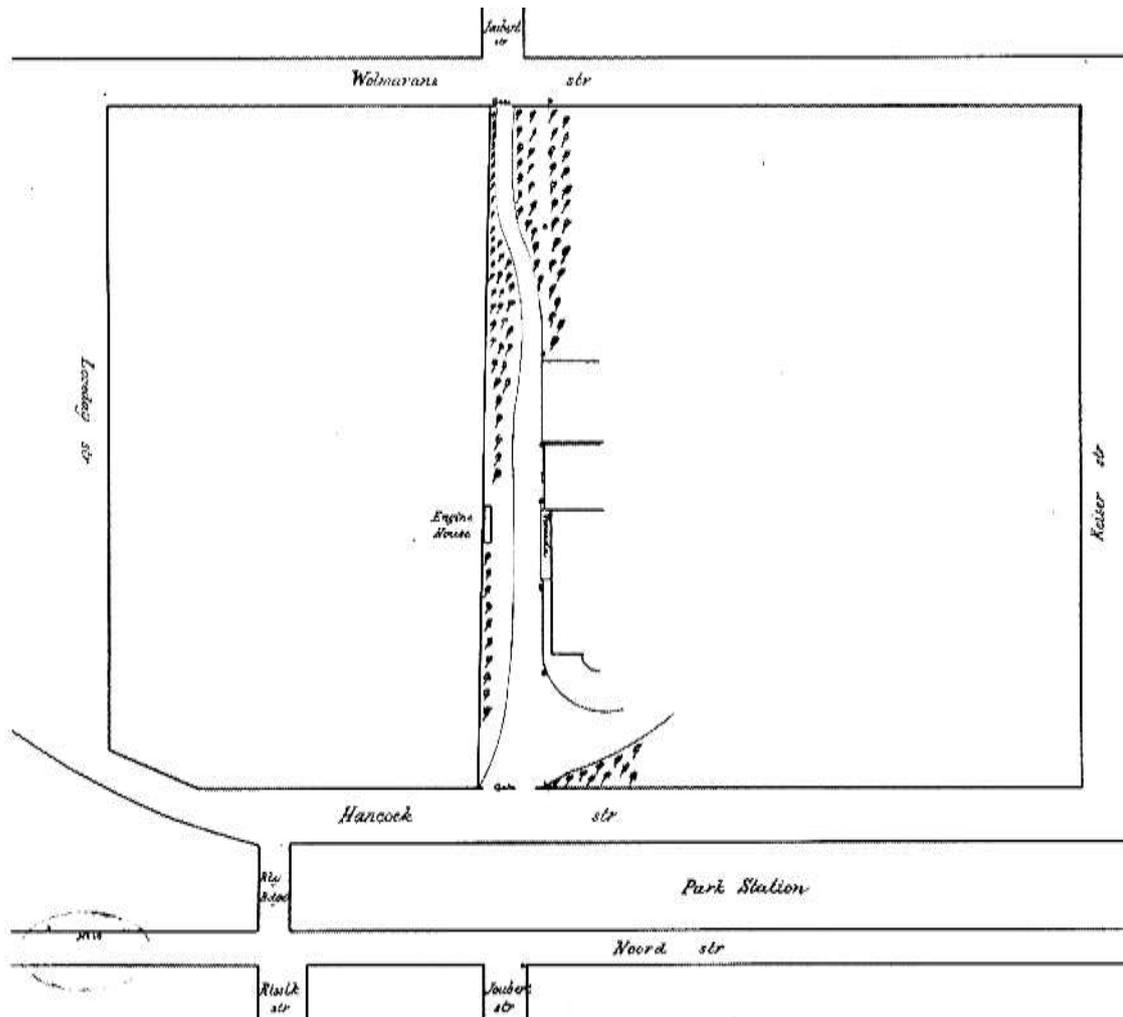
Such incidental diversions were financially rewarding but the Club presciently prepared for more august occasions. In 1905, it had expended the extraordinary amount of £156 on five cases of "decorations" from England and in February 1906, the great moment came. The Mayor leased all Halls to entertain Royalty in the persons of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. The Municipal reception was "a stupendous event" with an accompanying musical programme and the decorations were carefully put away again as against future occasion. There were many. Only the Wanderers' Halls and Grounds could accommodate the public en masse and they retained that function until the end. Like the Coliseum in Rome, surrounded by the town, the Club remained the scene and centre of public expression for nearly sixty years.

It was always very aware of its responsibilities but all was not well within its structure. The powerful personalities of the pioneers still figured in its administration and clashes were bound to occur when new and younger men began to dominate its Committee. A disastrous *contretemps* occurred in 1906 with which the charming ingenuous Jacob Swart was quite unable to cope as chairman. It had become the practice for past chairmen to be elevated to vice-presidency and then to the presidency which Abe Bailey had previously occupied. He was now Honorary Vice-President with Jeppe as President and Strange as Vice-President. Bailey, without whose financial aid the Club could not have survived, could be forgiven for conceiving his status to confer privileges beyond the discretion of the Committee. Although the finances of the Club were largely sustained by letting and Sunday Concerts ("very lucrative", the chairman reported, they made a profit of £541 in 1906), its purpose was primarily sporting and Bailey took it upon himself to engage A. F. (Ernie) Vogler as cricket professional. The development of the Wanderers Cricket Club had in fact always come out of Bailey's pocket.

The town had now sunk into new depths of depression (to which locusts contributed) and the Club was confronted with new and serious problems. The Committee refused to accept Vogler's appointment although he had already arrived. Enraged, Bailey attended a meeting and had his way. Vogler, reacting to high words that flew about the premises and elsewhere, refused to accept the appointment. Bailey resigned as Vice-President but was induced to withdraw it. Swart, incapable of dominating his turbulent committee which had expressed strong opinions on the individuals involved, resigned as chairman on the grounds that it had no confidence in him. Jeppe resigned as President because of attacks made on him. The clash of personality resounded and the very existence of the Club was threatened. Maturer judgments prevailed but it was evident that the chairman of the Wanderers Club would always have to be a diplomat of no mean order. Bailey, generous to a fault but "a little jumpy" as Swart put it, took long to recover from the hurt. Worse was to follow.

While the Committee dickered with the Town Council and the Railway administration over 8 feet of ground to be taken from its property (destroying all the lavatories) to improve Hancock Street, the Club's revenue drastically fell. From the end of 1906 onwards, members—and particularly the now redundant Imperial civil servants and military men who departed—resigned in scores and poverty and distress ruled Johannesburg. For several years, public and private patronage of the Club rose and fell:

	Public	Members
1905	163,463	33,695
1906	205,982	50,747
1907	183,995	47,538
1908	140,898	52,160
1909	190,227	31,216



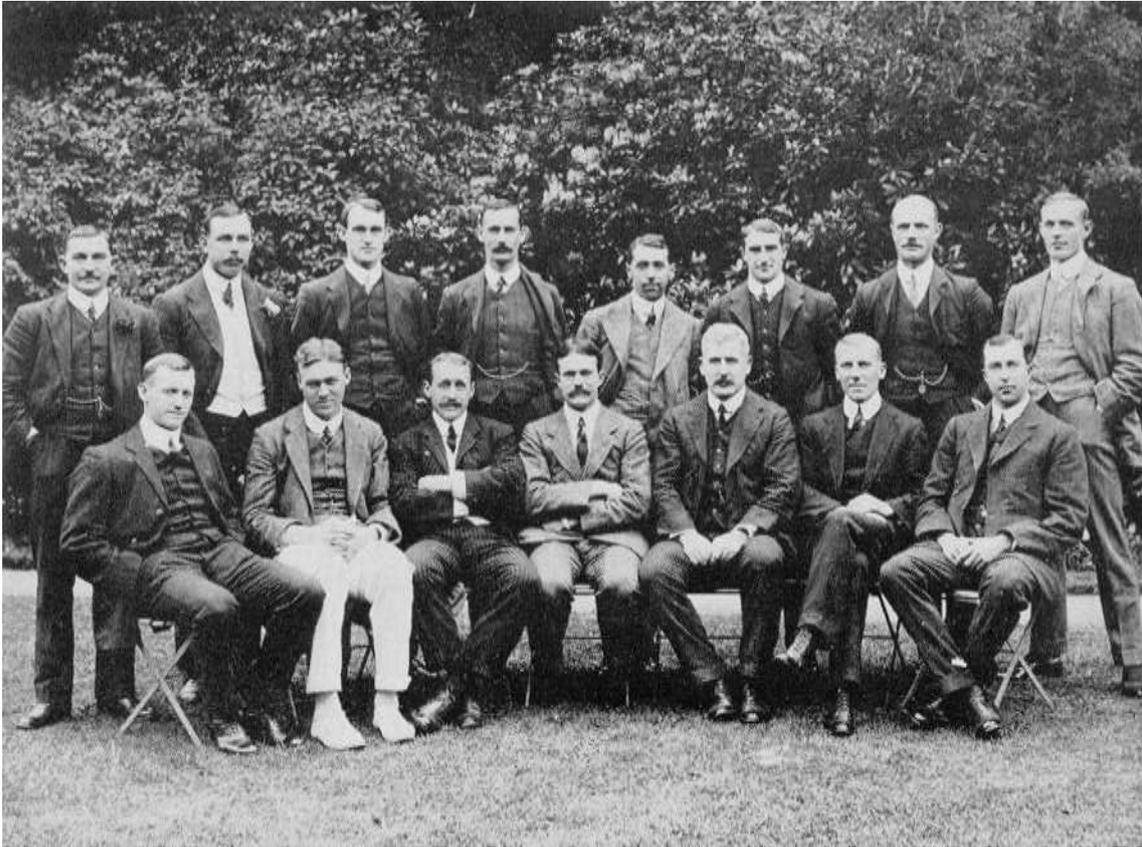
The old Wanderers Ground bounded by Loveday, Wolmarans, Keizer (Wanderers) and Hancock Streets with Park Station preventing direct access to the town. In 1908, the railways sliced 8 feet off the ground to widen Hancock Street

In 1907, when elections were held and the Transvaal attained its own Government under Botha (with Georgie leading the Opposition Progressives), conditions were deplorable. Unemployment was widespread and the Rev. Kelly's indigents were grateful for the work of mending the Wanderers' wooden stands and improving its sewage. A Miners' Strike impended. The annual bonus of Allsop (touring England as manager of the South African cricket team) was reduced to £30 and those of his colleagues (some of whom had been retrenched) likewise.

When Jacob Swart stood up in 1907 to deliver his annual report, he spoke of the glorious days of the past and reminded the Club that it would celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1908. He dwelt on its founders and the historic meeting of the 18th August 1888 and defended present expenditure "in bad times" as necessary to sustain original ideals. (The swimming bath had been shelved again but a stand had been built, the track improved, Allsop's house completed and other benefits.) Then he and Andersson did a deadly thing—they proposed that because of his continual absences, David Pullinger be removed as a trustee and Julius Jeppe elected in his place. The meeting agreed and Pullinger became only a patron in the company of Botha, Smuts, Georgie, Dalrymple, Fitzpatrick and a score of others.

Pullinger, ranging the world in an attempt to make a new fortune out of other mines, was furious. The Club was riding on the back of his debentures and making little effort to repay them. His affectionate interest became bitter resentment which increased as his speculations failed and finally all his money was lost in mining ventures in Nicaragua. From 1907 onwards, he brought pressure to bear on the Club and demanded payment at least of interest. It was unable to do so. Times were too bad. Pullinger was adamant and it seemed that he might take legal action. The new chairman C. Aburrow (now in private practice as

an engineer) went with Llewellyn Andersson to interview his local representative, the barrister J. Waldie Peirson, and tendered the pathetic amount of £50 on account and the balance in instalments. When he heard of it, Pullinger demanded full payment. Bailey, owed as much in interest, was still sulking in his tent but less exigent. The Club's struggle to meet its financial obligations went hopelessly on. Debentures were duly drawn for payment in 1908— Bailey £400, Pullinger £400, Solly Joel £100, Julius Jeppe £100—but the owners were all advised that payment could be made only when funds allowed. In 1908, it was possible only to pay some interest.



SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKET TEAM IN ENGLAND 1907

*Standing:* A. E. Vogler, J. J. Kotze, S. D. Snooke, R. O. Schwarz, G. C., White, G. A. Faulkner A.D. Nourse, H. Smith

*Sitting:* S. J. Snooke, J. H. Sinclair, L. J. Tancred, P. W. Sherwell, G Allsop (manager), W. A. Shalders, M. Hathorn (captain)

David Pullinger had made himself responsible for the education of two very much younger brothers, Ernest and Essex, and had consigned his Wanderers debentures to a Trust Fund administered by solicitors in London to care for them. As his personal fortunes dwindled the need to redeem his Club investments became acute and the Wanderers were in a sense morally responsible for the welfare of two young men. With troops in the street suppressing strikes and a near-revolution in 1913-14, with economic depression strangling the country and political unity an apparently unattainable ideal, there was little the Committee could do. At one stage, it even considered going into liquidation and realising its assets. Bailey recovered his good humour but the Pullinger pressure remained. There was good reason for it but until conditions changed, "the permanent floating debt" constantly bedevilled the Club. Its only hope was to maintain its amenities and continue to attract the public to compensate for the huge number of resignations and members in arrears.

Its caterers were bankrupt and owed the Club a large sum in lease fees. When in December 1907, a Retail Liquor License and a Club license were at last granted, the Club made the revolutionary decision to undertake its own catering and advertised for a manager. Symptomatic of the times, 91 men applied. H.J. Tucker was appointed. It was hoped that his services would stimulate the hiring of Halls for Balls and Concerts. There

was now heavy competition from the town and even the famous sports grounds no longer stood alone. Playing fields and tracks were available all along the Reef and Duncan McLachlan had left the Club to become secretary of the Krugersdorp Wanderers. "The time has gone", said Aburrow from the chair, "when the Wanderers was the only ground available for outdoor exhibitions and sports." It suffered too from inaccessibility - the Municipality refused to bring its new electric trams to the Club doors and no tram-tracks were ever laid along the surrounding streets despite an unrelenting campaign. Men who remember these terrible times testify to the transcendent importance of the Wanderers Club in providing recreational facilities. The boredom, the loneliness and the overwhelming sense of depression drove young men from the nearest mines and suburbs on foot, in grave danger of assault and robbery from those worse afflicted than themselves, to rejoice in distraction and companionship at the Club. The winter games were not very successful (J. H. Sinclair was now chairman of the Hockey and was joined on the committee by the 29 year old Victor Kent for Soccer) but the tennis courts overflowed with players and the Gymnasium, inspired by B. Vieyra and the success of the Johannesburg Amateur Gymnastic Society, began to revive under the ardent stimulation of Arthur Ruben. Cricket flourished under Ernie Vogler who led both the batting and bowling averages and the Club was inflated with pride when *Wisden's Almanack* listed Vogler and Reggie Schwarz as among the Five Cricketers of the Year. The Club House itself was a haven to the weary in mind and spirit and well worth the dangerous trudge through the night to return to Booyens and other outlying places of work.



Celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wanderers Club, Cricket match between Wanderers Club and the Rest of South Africa, 25, 26 and 28 September 1908. The Wanderers Team:

*Back row:* J. H. Piton (Umpire), V. Green-Wilson (Hon.Sec.), J. H. Tandy, A. E. Vogler, B. de R. Malraison (scorer), J. Wood (scorer), F. W. Grey (umpire)

*Middle row:* M. Hathorn, W. A. Shalders, J. H. Sinclair, E. A. Halliwell, H. E. Smith

*Front row:* N. V. Lindsay, J. W. Zulch, jr, O. Tomlinson, R. Beaumont

There were flickering signs of improvement. A National Convention would begin sitting in 1908 to consider the unifying of South Africa and people took heart. The Club appointed a subcommittee to draft plans to celebrate its 20th anniversary. They were wildly extravagant - the Government was to declare a public holiday, Lord and Lady Selborne,

Lord Methuen commanding the Imperial troops, Botha, Smuts and every known notability were to be invited; Balls, Illuminations, Concerts, Sideshows, Matches, Tournaments, a Battle of Flowers and a dozen other occasions were to be organised. The new chairman, John Reid, became so alarmed at the proposed expense of £1,000 and the complete lack of interest that he questioned the advisability of proceeding but in company with Swart, Hilner, Sonn and Lamb, he duly found in favour. Still convinced of its importance in the social structure, the Club issued its invitations to the grandees but the Selbornes were away (Lord Selborne returned in time to attend the cricket match), Smuts had to go to a ball on the eve of the National Convention meeting, Botha refused and only the Methuens could come to one event, the Ball.



Rest of South Africa

*Back Row:* F. W. Grey (Umpire), B. de R. Malraison (Scorer), A. S. Knight, I. Stricker, J. P. During, J. H. Piton (Umpire)

*Middle row:* A. Difford, S. J. Snooke, Rev. C. D. Robinson, D. S. Lumsden, A. D. Nourse

*On Floor:* H.V. Baumgartner, G. Hartigan, S.V. Samuelson

The occasion was everywhere heralded. Reminiscent articles (not fully accurate) appeared in the Press and Charlie Pietersen (now attached to the Transvaal Department of Native Affairs - he had applied for the use of the Wanderers Grounds for a native war dance) set the record straight in several important details. He was concerned that proper credit should be given to the founding father, W. P. Taylor, then in Johannesburg. The Club itself cooperated with one of its oldest members, E J. Platnauer, the doyen of sporting journalists, who edited and published "Sport and Pastime in the Transvaal" in 1908, by contributing a definitive article on its history in which it stated that it was founded in October 1888. This excellent and now rare book also recorded a great deal of Wanderers history in sub-clubs and personalities. (Two years later, the history and activities of the Club were magnificently vaunted in the Johannesburg Royal Presentation Volume given to the Duke of Connaught, in an article written by Allsop and approved by the Committee. It confirmed the foundation year of 1888.)

The celebrations began in September with a Massed Gymnastic Display of schoolchildren in different coloured uniforms organised by Barend Vieyra which so took the public fancy that it had to be repeated. Nourse was specially paid to come from Durban to play for South

Africa against a Wanderers team and a Club Ball, Tennis Tournament, Baseball Match, Carnival, Sports Meeting and Automobile Show were staged. The results were dismal:

Profit on Gymnastics Display	£76 12 9
Loss on Club Ball	£34 7 0
Automobile show	£19 4 2
Cricket Match	£48 14 2
Carnival	£2 2 7

The total loss was £27 15s 2d and in tribute to his outstanding work Mr Vieyra was given £25. The Club had made a brave gesture and most of the members had a good time except Maitland Hathorn's sister whose foot was badly cut by a splinter from the Ball Room floor. Other ladies complained that their gowns were ruined by the polish and money had to be spent on overhauling the floor.

The Celebrations signalled a distinct upward trend. The Chamber of Mines and other bodies began to rent the premises despite the competition of the Drill and Masonic Halls. An English tennis team stimulated the local enthusiasts. Arthur Ruben had succeeded in 1907 in amalgamating the J.A.G.S. with the Wanderers and forming a powerful and popular Gymnastic Section of which he became chairman and thus a member of the General Committee. (When he finally severed his connection with the Gymnastic Club in 1914 to settle in Europe, they presented him with a beautifully decorated and touchingly inscribed address signed by the men and lady members of his committee in separate columns. It is proudly preserved by his family.)

The Club was still so poor that it was able to pay neither the debenture holders nor bonuses to the staff but it was very much alive. On the principle of spending money to make it, considerable works were proposed, notably in sewerage (which was in a deplorable state) and additional stand accommodation. The membership had fallen to 1,284 and was to sink to 1,220 in 1909 but never again reached so low a level. To retain its interest and attract the public, improvements were essential.

Bailey had buried his hatchet. He was now a member of the Transvaal Legislative Assembly and, mindful of the dangers confronting his cherished "M. C. C. of South Africa", had come to the annual meeting and rallied the members with a call for cooperation and an end to secessionary talk (some of the sub-clubs were considering breaking away when prosperity came). As Honorary President, he attended meetings for some time, clearly evidencing his support and interest. Then he paid his customary visit to England to arrange, among other things, another visit from the M.C.C.

During his absence, conditions failed to improve. Early in 1909, the old hands at the Club had welcomed J. B. Taylor on the first visit from his English home in fifteen years. His brother W. P. Taylor was also in Johannesburg and reminiscences of the mad bad days of the Diamond and Gold Fields gushed from the surviving pioneers. They could look lovingly on the Wanderers Club which, essential to the life of the community, had not only survived but attained such eminence that the Chairman felt insulted when he was not invited to meet visiting dignitaries and let it be known that he should *ipso facto* be a member of the Mayor's Reception Committee. Its buildings were shabby, its grounds unkempt and its finances chaotic but J. B. Taylor failed to take the hint. When he returned to England, he sent the Club a signed photograph of himself.

By then, affairs had become desperate. An enormous number of members was in arrears and were struck off. The remainder complained bitterly that they had less facilities than the ordinary public, especially in attending matches. Revenue had dwindled to a trickle. The old wooden stands were falling down and the public lavatories were a disgrace. There was no money to pay for repairs and increased seating. In its extremity, the Committee cabled Bailey in England in August 1909 asking for funds to build new stands and improve the sewerage before the M.C.C. came. There was no reply.

The consent of the debenture holders to raise a further bond on the property was necessary and they all ultimately agreed, including the much mortified Pullinger. The chairman John Reid and Julius Jeppe drafted another cable to Bailey\_-"Will you advance £4,000 to enable immediate erection stands urgently required visit English team stop Debenture scheme still awaiting consent Pullinger Beit" (Otto Beit, Alfred's brother, held £500 worth of shares.) There was no reply from Bailey.

At the eleventh hour—30<sup>th</sup> September 1909—Bailey's secretary in Johannesburg, J. H. Ryan (whose tiny sister had married J. H. Sinclair, her head hardly surpassing his top waistcoat button), advised receipt of a cable "Advance Wanderers £4,000 when required". The day was saved. The Rev. Kelly and his men immediately installed a new sewage System costing £700, a members' stand costing £1,500 was built, new tennis courts were added at £200 and improvements to the lighting and cycling track costing £500 were effected. The members were gratified and their interest retained and Leveson-Gower and his team (including several immortals such as Jack Hobbs, Woolley and Strudwick) duly played to large crowds. Once again the Club contributed with distinction to the South African team in the persons of Zulch, Faulkner, Sinclair, Schwarz and Vogler. Bailey was incensed. He had lent £4,000 at 5% secured by the grounds on the understanding that it was to improve the main Hall for balls and receptions. He strongly objected to its having been used on sewers. Eventually, he was placated and even tried to find a way out of the Club's difficulties by offering to buy Pullinger's £100 debentures at £80 but the Trustees refused to sell and insisted on payment of interest. At this crucial stage of the Club's affairs, Bailey concerned himself closely with its finances and the General Committee, with H. J. Lamb now in the chair, met at his house in Belgravia. The financial crisis had been accentuated by the Town Engineer's condemning and prohibiting the use of the old wooden stands. The Committee, confronted by the visit of an English Soccer team, had paid the Rev. Kelly and his men £160 to repair them but a big new stand was obviously an urgent requirement. Obsolete and insufficient accommodation was alienating the loyalty of members.

Apart from the trying times, the public was susceptible to new attractions. it was greatly feared that both Soccer and Rugby would make their home at Ellis Park (the Club bickered constantly with the Transvaal Rugby Union over the lease of its grounds). Transport had so far improved that people preferred to go to Orange Grove and other country places for their pleasures. The Sunday Concerts, always a regular revenue-producer, had had to be stopped through lack of patronage. The Press—and particularly the *Rand Daily Mail* (whose editor, Ward Jackson, the chairman Reid had tried to dissuade) had taken to attacking the Club for mismanagement though it conceded that it suffered from lack of access by tram. The members had become egocentric and interested only in their particular sports, having no regard for the Club as a whole.

Bailey dealt with it all. He approved of the Committee's refusing, in its financial extremity, to lease its grounds to a speculator who intended flooding the main field and converting it into a pleasure lake with gondolas. He proposed a financial policy and he strongly suggested that the Club's *esprit de corps* be re-established, possibly by an annual Club Ball.

Moves to consolidate Club tradition had already been made. In April 1910, Arthur Ruben had suggested that a Club badge or crest be devised and the matter had been referred to the Music and Dance Committee which threw the design open to competition by members. The closing date was twice extended to stimulate entries and Ruben himself submitted several. A man of infinite drive and resource, he was incapable of sketching but propounded his ideas to a friend who duly made designs. 31 designs were submitted by 14 members and J. H. Sinclair, F. L. Brayshaw and Ruben were appointed adjudicators and enjoined to seek the opinion of members. On the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1910, their recommendation was accepted by the General Committee and put to immediate use. It was one of Mr Ruben's own designs. Impressed by the ideals of the Olympic Games, he had simply copied the device of a charioteer from one of their medals. In the course of time, it suffered much bowdlerisation, even becoming so feminine as to be confused with Boadicea, but its purpose was abundantly justified. Members wore it proudly and it was soon recognised throughout the world.

Ruben himself, one of the Committee's most ardent members, served only for a short while longer. In 1911, he resigned to go overseas. While in London, he dived off a Thames bridge on the 12th June 1911 to rescue a drowning woman and was later awarded a Certificate from the Royal Humane Society. The event was reported by cable and created a considerable stir in Johannesburg where Ruben was well known. The Wanderers Committee recorded "a hearty vote of appreciation". On his return, Ruben rejoined the Committee, contributing his customary verve and energy but in 1913, he suffered a serious operation and in 1914, went overseas for a prolonged period after receiving

expressions of "the deepest appreciation" from the annual meeting. Other hands were at the helm when he returned and he died in Johannesburg in 1964, no longer a member of the Wanderers Club.



Arthur Ruben outside the Johannesburg Stock Exchange after he had won the competition for designing the Wanderers badge and shortly before he left for England

Before proceeding to other expedients to consolidate its membership, the Club devised other improvements. It was in the presence of heroic events in which the public expected it to participate. Economies were essential. Municipal water cost it between £25 and £30 a month and despite initial heavy outlay, it decided to find its own by boring through solid rock. An excellent supply was struck at 300 feet and only half was used. The Municipality kindly watered Hancock Street during Sports Meetings to keep the dust down.

In January 1910, the office administration was regularised by putting Allsop in complete control as Manager/Secretary with Pearson as assistant and a shorthand typist (a man). Miss Edith Walpole was later appointed at £8 1 0s a month and served the Club faithfully for many years. The caterer Tucker immediately resigned and from 71 applicants, G. A. Turrell was appointed and soon dismissed, being replaced by Westphalen and his wife who served for eleven years. The main feature of the changes was the appointment of a Finance Committee without whose consent no expenditure could be incurred. Its work was exceptionally onerous and never abated.

In the sporting field, the Club defined its policy in several respects. It decided that motor cycle racing was not a sport in the terms of its aims and declined to lease its grounds for the purpose. It sets its face even more strongly against professionalism and despite financial straits, withheld facilities from various such enterprises. Abe Bailey cheered the Committee by telegraphing approval. Shortly afterwards, it was able to congratulate him on the award of the K.C.M.G. in the New Year's Honour List of 1911 - some compensation for being defeated in the first Union Parliamentary elections.

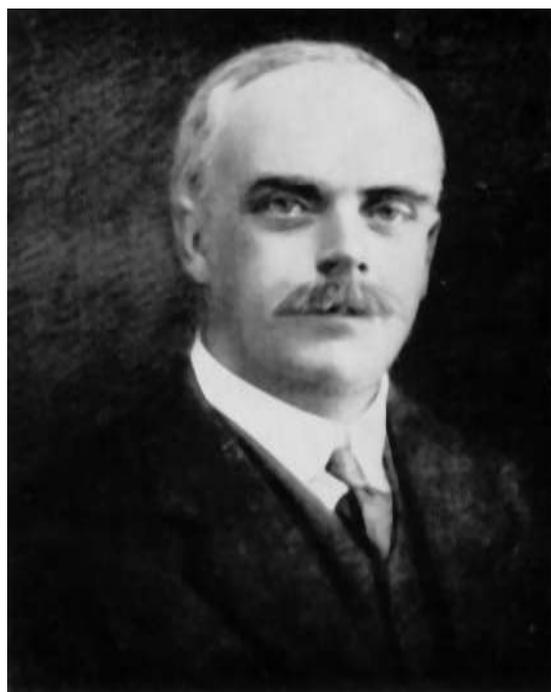
With H. J. Lamb, "the father of South African tennis" as its chairman for nearly ten years, it was to be expected that the Wanderers' already burgeoning Tennis Club with its packed courts, pleasant gardens, comfortable wicker chairs and pavilion would develop even more. Special courts were laid to stage for the first time the South African Lawn Tennis Championships in March 1910 at which Charlie Winslow, A. Kitson and other Club members distinguished themselves. While "doleful reports were received from some of the sub-clubs" (notably Athletics and Baseball), Rugby, Soccer and Cricket flourished, greatly

stimulated by the visit of English teams. Eleven members of the Cricket Club had been selected for the first South African team to tour Australia - T. Campbell, S. J. Pegler, L. Stricker, J. H. Sinclair, P. W. Sherwell, A. E. Vogler, R. O. Schwarz, J. W. Zulch, G. A. Faulkner, M. Hathorn and S. J. Snooke. It was an unprecedented sporting contribution from one Club to the new nation.

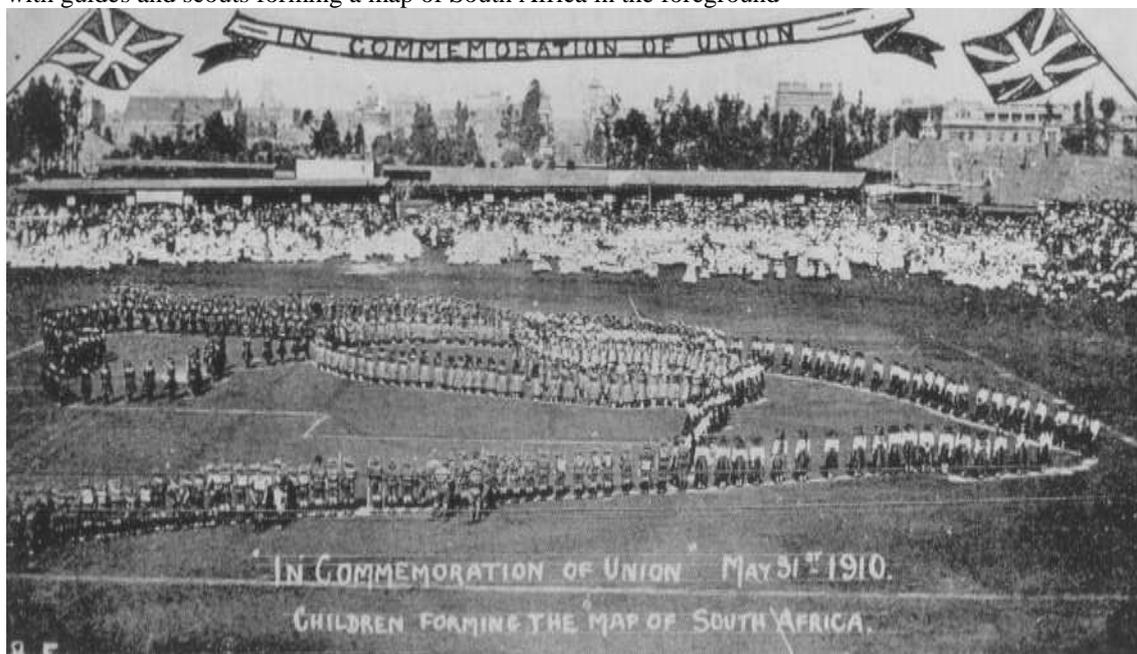
'1910", said Lamb, "was an exceedingly good year for the Club, in fact one of the most prosperous and interesting in its history". It had been very much wanted for high occasion and its office-bearers could well complain when the Club was omitted from civic entertainment or its chairman excluded from reception committees.

By 1911, the Wanderers Club was riding high. It had been the scene of an immense Farewell Banquet to Lord Selborne (for which it had granted its premises free of charge) and, for a whole month, of an Arts and Crafts Exhibition dominated by Mrs Lionel Phillips (who had insisted on painting everything Reseda green) which inaugurated the art life of Johannesburg. It had been the centre of the Celebration of Union in May 1910 and of the mourning for King Edward when it had again waived its charges. Huge demonstrations had been given. From July 1910 onwards, politicians thundered from its platforms, Generals Smuts and Botha included, in the first Parliamentary elections and in November, the grounds were occupied by 8,000 schoolchildren and the Royal Procession, marshalled to salute the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and Princess Pat. Within weeks, they were also occupied by a Mass Meeting to protest the Black Peril (white women were constantly subject to rape by unemployed natives) and were infested at night by vagrants and indigents. Times were still bad but ploughing its profits back into improvements, the Club was fast moving forward. In February 1911, the Corner House presented to it (certainly at the instigation of Lionel Phillips) twelve £100 debenture shares and lifted some of the load which the Finance Committee was trying to diminish. The staff received a small bonus. The annual meeting had considered a letter suggesting that the Club lay a turf wicket. South African cricketers trained on matting, were greatly disconcerted overseas (including Australia) by grass and took some time to find their form. The Club entered into negotiation with the Cricket Associations and consulted its own members when they returned from Australia (Sinclair was welcomed back to the Committee and a banquet was given to him and his Club colleagues in the team). A ground was selected for planting and the work was put out to tenders. None was received and the matter dropped but was regularly revived. The Club had enough trouble with the lady cricketers who insisted on playing the game seriously. After Mrs W. M. Kingswell, wife of the fiery editor of the *Sunday Times*, had joined in November 1911, the Wanderers rang with unwonted trebles as its Ladies Team under her captaincy, played similar teams from Bloemfontein and elsewhere and sometimes took on the men.

H. J. Lamb, chairman of the Wanderers Club 1910 to 1919



The Wanderers grounds during the celebrations of the passing of the Act of Union on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1910, with guides and scouts forming a map of South Africa in the foreground



The time had come to salute Abe Bailey who was getting married again and to take his advice about fostering *esprit de corps*. Early in 1911, a monthly "Club Circular" had been inaugurated—little more than a few printed sheets merely recording the fixtures and teams of each section and Allsop's peremptory notices about presenting badges and other rules of the Club. There were often gaps owing to the dilatoriness of the sectional chairmen in submitting material but its regular publication helped to unite the members. Now Lamb summoned a special meeting of all sectional committees to discuss a proposed Annual Club Gathering to which he contributed the idea of honouring outstanding members, each section to nominate its candidates for a Roll of Honour. The proposal was accepted but proved embarrassingly disputatious, partisans protesting vigorously at the exclusion of favourites.



"The Roll of Honour" of Wanderers members of 1910/1911

By now the Club thought so highly of itself as a local, national and international institution that it invited to its Annual Gathering with Musical Programme no less than the Governor-General Viscount Gladstone and Lady Gladstone, Lord and Lady Methuen, the Prime Minister General Botha and his right-hand General Smuts, the Transvaal Administrator Johann Rissik, the Mayor Dowell Ellis and the Mayoress, Lionel Phillips and other dignitaries. None except the Mayor and Mr W. Hoy, general manager of the Railways, could come but the occasion held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1911, was an outstanding success. Sir Abe Bailey (to whom a presentation was made) unveiled Mr Duffus' composition of the "Roll of Honour" and the Club could indeed congratulate itself on its sporting successes even if it still owed £23,100 in debentures and £4,000 on second mortgage to its President. It could truly be called "the leading nursery of South African cricketers" and in their honour, a turf practice pitch was being laid. Cycling was "a dead letter" in the chairman's words, Athletics tended in the same direction but the team sports were holding their own. The swimming bath proposal was again postponed lest it dry up the borehole. In the ten years since its revival, the Club had become again a living organism of unique identity. As it approached a quarter century of meaningful existence the hands that had first guided it began to fail. Harold Strange died. J. N. de Jongh was killed by entering his fumigated house too soon. A. B. Tancred, one of the first great cricketers, died and J. H. Sinclair began to miss meetings. Three unexplained absences meant expulsion according to the Rules but the General Committee which he had served so long, simply re-elected him each time. A new country, beset by economic and political dangers, was on its way. Early optimism soon evaporated and dark days confronted the Union. Once again, the

Wanderers fought its own battle for existence and actively shared in the historic events affecting the whole country.

