



4. THE FIRST PHASE—FLOREANT ERRANTES!

1889—1890

The members of the parent Committee of the Wanderers Club—or the Main Committee as it was first called—were confronted with heroic trials and met them heroically. They were all appointed and not elected (Rules were not established until January 1890 to facilitate negotiations with the Government) and were among the busiest men of the town.

At the beginning of 1889, they were in possession of a large area of land (from which a small piece to the south had been removed to accommodate a station when the railway reached Johannesburg) which they had partially fenced and levelled into a “plateau” for playing fields, and a Pavilion forming the facade of a Club House and providentially provided with a Bar. The plateau was constantly washed away by the summer rains so that there were no fields on which the members of the Athletics and Sports Club could play or Sporting Meetings he held for which admission could be charged. By the same token, no member would patronise the Pavilion and its Bar when there was nothing to see. No revenue would be forthcoming from the Brass Band and the Orchestra because they were short of instruments. In the prevailing inflation, the prices of everything had doubled, including building and all forms of construction. Every penny that the Club had raised had been spent on preparations for the English Cricket Team. There was no money at all. In the best tradition of incurable optimism, the Committee decided to spend it like water. It had been engendered among them by Hermann Eckstein and his abiding faith in the gold-producing potentiality of the Reef.

Andersson and Swart pressed steadily ahead. Reid and McCowat were instructed to prepare new estimates for the Club House and to proceed immediately with its construction. Instruments for the Band and Orchestra were ordered overseas and in a burst of generosity, J. B. Taylor, then a very rich young man of 29, undertook to equip the gymnasium in the Club House at a cost of several hundred pounds. By March, the Pavilion or front part of the Club House had been completed. It coincided with the onset of the Great Slump and the Great Drought but nothing deterred the ardent young men of the Committee and its energetic secretary who, living close at hand in Hoek Street (Abe Bailey lived in a little house on the bare *veld* north of the Wanderers Ground), was so overwhelmed with work that Jacob Swart had to be appointed assistant-secretary to help him.

“When the Club was founded”, wrote Swart afterwards, “great promises were made to support it financially and as £2,000 was obtained in a very short time, our hopes rose

above par and being encouraged and advised to go ahead, things were pushed but soon we found ourselves in want of money and the support that was promised was not forthcoming and at last it came to pass that some work had to be stopped for the want of £500. Not one of the five members of the committee appointed with me to carry on the work was of any assistance—plenty of talk but very little work. I was a good bit upset and meeting Pullinger, he asked me what I was worried about and on being told, there and then took me to his office and handed me a cheque for £500. From that day he started to assist the Club financially until at last we owed him in the neighbourhood of £7,000. He thus, with his liberal support, laid the foundations on which the Wanderers Club was built. Later Abe Bailey stepped in and completed the structure. I may here state that in my opinion—in which I know Andersson, the then secretary will bear me out—if Pullinger had not come to the Club's assistance, we would have lost the ground as the Government was doing all they possibly could to go back on the bargain they made with me. The facts were that the Netherlands Railway Company was anxious to procure the ground for railway purposes."

At that time, David Pullinger was only 25 years old but on his way to making a large fortune through his mine at Klerksdorp and through speculation. His loans were converted to £100 debenture shares bearing 15% interest, reduced in 1892 to 10%. (He lent £8,000 to the Rand Club at the same time.) Into the bottomless pit of Wanderers' spending, others soon had to pour, notably W. P. Taylor who in 1894 could describe himself at an annual meeting as "one of the largest debenture holders".

The Wanderers Club "Full Orchestra" under Francis Crane was almost the only revenue-producing instrument at hand but there was nowhere for it to play. In any case, when it gave a Grand Concert at the Globe Theatre on the 3rd April 1889 in aid of the Nurses Home, the hail of the last summer storms hammered so hard on the tin roof that little was heard. Coming sturdily up the rise was the Brass or Military Band under Charles Bain and on the 16th April 1889—historic day—the first Sunday Promenade Concert of the Wanderers Band equipped with new instruments was held in the Grounds and became a much-loved institution in a depressed and diversion-starved town.

"We used to have anything between 5 and 10,000 people on a fine Sunday evening when the band played outside", he remembered. "Overwhelmed with good nature and generosity, the Club told me that the members of the Band could have their drinks free at the Bar which was part of the Club House. It was of course dry and thirsty work blowing into brass instruments for two hours and the members appreciated this benevolent gesture, in fact some of them appreciated it a bit too much as at times, I noticed a very hilarious note on some of the instruments after the interval . . . I rigged my Band out in a white duck military uniform, the collar and epaulettes representing the colours of the Wanderers Club and we looked quite smart and played to the satisfaction of the public, if not quite to my own." In 1965, the epaulettes and neckband of the first chairman of the Wanderers Club Musical Section and conductor of its Military band were preserved for posterity by Bain's daughter, Mrs Q. F. Lardner Burke, donating them to the Africana Museum.

As no balance sheet was issued for the first two years of its existence, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the Club was indebted for its survival to its Musical Section. The early and steady income from the Sunday night promenade concerts was invaluable but the purpose of the Club was primarily sporting and the young men threw themselves into its organisation with enthusiasm. No one was too grand to lend a hand. J. B. Taylor, J. T. Britten, Henri Bettelheim, A. L. Lawley, Gustav Sonn, W. P. Taylor, George Farrar and Julius Jeppe combined to present a magnificent silver cup with laurel leaf design as a floating trophy for the mile. It was known as the Transvaal Challenge Trophy and is the oldest cup in the possession of the Wanderers Club. (It was first won in 1889 by E. Anderson and later four times by the famous T. B. Parker and five times by G. Melville. In 1895, it was shared on a dead heat by B. Mellet and G. Melville.)

On the 8th April 1889, while the scaffolding for the Club House went up behind and alongside the Pavilion, the first "Sporting Meeting" was held on the rough ground. It consisted of athletic events such as walking, running, hurdling, jumping and shot-putting but as, until the end of 1889, there were not more than twenty penny-farthings and tricycles in Johannesburg, there were no cycling events. Nonetheless "some splendid sport was witnessed" and Jacob Swart, finest athlete on the field, was in his element as starter, handicapper, judge and general factotum. W. P. Taylor, C. Aubrey Smith and other Committee grandees acted as judges.

To the miserable, bored and lonely young men along the length and breadth of the Reef it was a heaven-sent diversion. Thence onwards, Sporting Meetings were held every second month and everyone, from the miners to the magnates, participated in them.

Immediately after the first organised games, "the Wanderers Athletic and Sporting Club" fragmented itself into sections and the Rules which it had drawn up, "although revised and improved since, have proved the basis of the rules of all sporting clubs throughout South Africa", recorded a participant sporting journalist some years later. A Rugby Section was formed with C. L. Andersson as captain, and a pioneering Association or Soccer Section captained by C. Aubrey Smith who, coming from England, could join Swart in an expert knowledge of the game. A Gymnastic Section was formed with Harry V. Smith as secretary (although it would be many months before the Gymnasium was ready) and of course the basic Athletics Section. For South Africa and the world at large, it was epoch-making. "It was not until the discovery of the goldfields", wrote G. A. Parker, the athlete-historian in 1897, "that Athletics took a firm hold and meetings of an international character were arranged. The most important outcome of the Johannesburg gatherings was the formation of the South African Amateur Athletic Association." From the outset, the Wanderers Club transcended its role as a purveyor of recreational facilities and became a major formative influence on South African sport and sportsmanship.

As winter and the longest drought in Johannesburg history (it lasted from May until November when starvation faced the town) closed in on the population, the suffocating clouds of dust from the bare ground—for years men wore veils in the centre of the city and it was frequently impossible to see across the street—failed to quell the sportsmen and the meetings continued. Cricket had ceased but congenial "Smoking Concerts" or "Smokers" (and Smokers they were, with liberal contribution from the oil lamps) were held in the small hall under the Pavilion at which Captain von Brandis and other Club office-bearers including C. Aubrey Smith, presided.

"Round-the-Corner Smith" (so called from his peculiar approach to the wicket as a bowler - he was also called "Razor Smith") was a most versatile good-looking young man whose distinction of bearing and gentlemanly manner upheld the finest sporting traditions. He did no good with the bat in South Africa, being totally unaccustomed to the stamped-mud pitches and vast dusty outfield, but otherwise made impressive mark. As behoves a captain, he was a good mixer and freely took part in all entertainments. His star turn was the singing of "The Man who struck O'Hara" with which he regaled gatherings during his eighteen-month stay.

From March 1889 when he set up as a stockbroker in Johannesburg, he took part in all Wanderers activities. He promoted and captained the first Transvaal Currie Cup team in 1890 and his batting average in the matches of only 9 and bowling 16.6 in no way reflected his great qualities of leadership. As the slump worsened, his fortunes fell, in September 1889, he nearly died of pneumonia and enteric but upon recovery, he again devoted himself to Wanderers cricket, contributing £50 to the £300 needed to restore the ground. The financial crash ruined him and, returning to England late in 1890, he went on the stage with conspicuous success.



The first trophy presented by the Wanderers' foundation members – J. B. Taylor, Gustav Sonn, George Farrar, A. I. Lawley, W. P. Taylor and Julius Jeppe – for the one mile race in 1889 and still in the possession of the club.

† WANDERERS' CLUB †

SMOKING CONCERTS.

THE THIRD OF THE ABOVE WILL BE HELD IN THE PAVILION ON
SATURDAY, the 6th JULY, 1889,
Commencing at 8 p.m. sharp.

CHAIRMAN C. A. SMITH, Esq.

PROGRAMME.

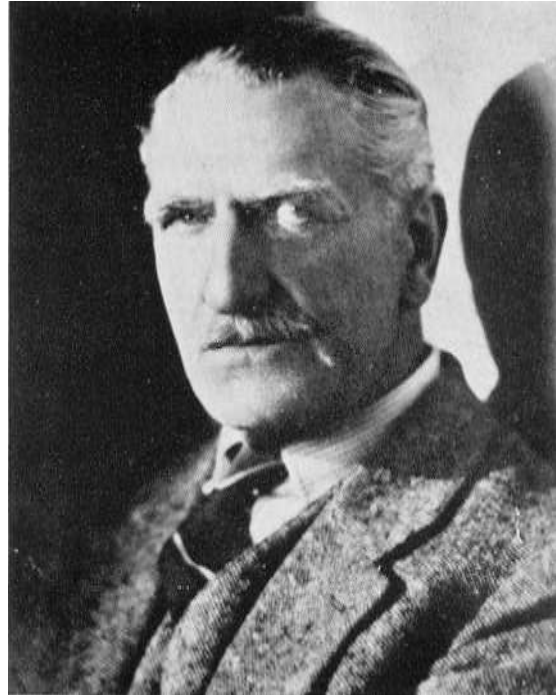
OVERTURE	...	...	...	...	...	ORCHESTRA.
SONG	...	...	"Land of Good Hope."	...	...	Mr. C. JEROME.
SONG (COMIC)	...	...	"The Hen Convention."	...	...	Mr. C. G. SERRURIER.
SONG	...	...	"The Yeoman's Wedding."	...	...	Mr. S. FOOTE.
RECITATION	...	...	"A Yankee Sermon."	...	...	Mr. D. N. McLACHLAN.
SONG	...	...	"The Forester."	...	...	Mr. F. ADCOCK.
SONG	...	...	"The Little Hero."	...	...	Mr. F. CRANE.
SONG (in character)	...	...	"Its all up with Tommy now."	...	...	Mr. MUDGR.
SELECTION	...	...	...	...	...	ORCHESTRA.
SONG	...	...	"White Wings."	...	...	Mr. BASIL GRIEVE.
SONG	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. FOTHERINGHAM.
SONG (COMIC)	...	...	"Our 'armonic Club."	...	...	Mr. F. GREEN.
RECITATION	...	...	"Shamus O'Brien."	...	...	Mr. S. FOOTE.
SONG (COMIC)	...	...	"The Man who struck O'Hara."	...	...	Mr. C. A. SMITH.
WALTZ	...	...	...	...	...	ORCHESTRA.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

*Admittance: Members and Debenture Holders by Ticket ;
 Non-Members 2s. 6d.*

Printed at the "Transvaal Mining Argus" Office, Johannesburg.

C. Aubrey Smith



Many years later, when the cinema embarked on full-length feature films, he went to Hollywood and became one of the world's famous stars in both silent and sound films. He never lost his love of cricket (he always advocated a fourth stump) and formed a club in Hollywood which sundry South Africans joined and which he captained until advanced old age. In 1935 when visiting England, he watched the Springbok team at many of their matches, having himself played for Sussex against South Africa in 1894. Mindful of the semi-centenary of his association (if forgetful of their own), the Wanderers Club sent him an honours tie in 1939 which he gratefully acknowledged. He was knighted in 1944 and died at Beverly Hills in December 1948 at the age of 85, having maintained his interest in South African sport throughout his life.

The burgeoning of the Wanderers Club under adverse circumstances closely reflected the conditions in Johannesburg itself where responsible entrepreneurs were exerting superhuman efforts to establish and prove the gold mining industry. In May 1889, the first meeting was held to institute a Chamber of Mines which was duly founded shortly afterwards. Its first president was Hermann Eckstein with Carl Hanau as vice-president. The Club could therefore claim the highest patronage. The Corner House continued to lead the Chamber and its chairmen to help and encourage the Wanderers.

During the hideous winter of 1889, despite intense cold, violent dust storms and windswept grounds, the Club continued to hold successful sporting meetings under extremely primitive conditions. The grandeur of its concepts was manifest in the splendid building now rising around the Pavilion; but when little Lionel Phillips, respected adviser to Rhodes and Alfred Beit, clattered into Johannesburg in September 1889 to join the Corner House and to live in J. B. Taylor's bungalow facing the Wanderers Grounds, he confessed that his heart sank. It did not take him long to realise that the Wanderers aimed to be the saving grace of the desolate town and, like Eckstein and Taylor (now resident in Pretoria), Phillips did all he could to help it.

Lionel Phillips had always been a passionate protagonist of physical fitness and the value of recreation. Now he shared with Hermann Eckstein the problem of combating the erosive boredom which afflicted mining men the length and breadth of the Reef. No one spoke of it but it remained an enduring problem and as late as 1895, it was possible for a French

11, Portland Place,
London,
W.1.

2nd July, 1938.

Dear Miss Gutsche,

I have to thank you for your very charming letter, and I enclose the photograph for which you ask, with pleasure.

I am afraid it is all perfectly true, what Mr. Boonzaier says in the South Africa Review. I didn't remember that we did the nigger business ashore - I know we did it on the boat, and, Heaven help me, I was guilty of singing "The man that struck O'Hara". Those days were long ago.

Yours sincerely,

C. Aubrey Smith

observer to write of the men on the Reef that, "isolated like lighthouse keepers, the arrival of a visitor from the outside world was to them a stroke of the greatest good fortune. The engineers and white employees on the mines far from Johannesburg lived the life of the condemned. Unlike their colleagues in town, they had no access to the distractions which provide the spirit with its elasticity. The heat of the day and the discomfiting chill of the night in their tin houses, the spiced diet of their coolie cooks, the same conversation with the same people day after day, the constant *ennui* were", thought Mermeix, almost intolerable. From the date of his arrival, Lionel Phillips exerted himself to organise sporting teams on the Reef mines ("Barberton" Halliwell, "prince of wicket-keepers" joined the cricket team of the May Consolidated Mine when he came to Johannesburg) and to bring them to town for competition at the Wanderers. His personal passion was cricket and he later instituted a League which still competes for the Lionel Phillips Cup.

When the rains came in November 1889, there were floods and the Wanderers Grounds were again washed away but the completed Club House stood firm. It was a splendid sight, despite its fashionable chalet-like features being executed in galvanised iron. Cattle still grazed on unprepared ground in the vicinity but Victorian opulence had unmistakably been imposed on the dismal scene.

One rode or drove one's carriage under an ornate *porte-cochere* surmounted by a bell-tower. Dismounting, one climbed a flight of steps, pushed open swing doors (to keep out the dust) and entered a vestibule with cloakrooms on either side. Thence one advanced into a magnificent Ball Room, commonly known as the Wanderers Hall. It was 85 feet long and 35 feet wide and the floor was made of yellow-wood from Natal. A large stage confronted the entrance and below it were dressing rooms and scene docks. Galleries ran right round and an audience of 1,000 could be seated. A supper room, kitchen and domestic offices ran along one side and there was also a Bar. Later an outside balcony was added for "promenading". The Gymnasium was later to be accommodated in a separate building but for the time being, gentlemen did their exercises in the main hall.

Nor was this all. A cinder track of 34 laps to the mile was being prepared for the runners, gardens were being laid out and trees planted. Fountains fed by a water-mill were contemplated. Entrance gates were being built and pay-boxes (which preceded turnstiles) installed. The provision of a Promenade Park was as important as that of a sporting venue.

"After the Club House was built and the Great Hall provided", wrote Charles Bain, "Francis Crane and his Orchestra used to give their concerts indoors on each alternate Sunday. They were quite well attended but of course the open-air concerts were the most popular." They were also—at a bob a time—very rewarding. The Military Band was also rented for various occasions and sometimes travelled in two coaches to Pretoria to fulfil engagements. Once, they were commissioned by Eddie Bourke to play in the garden of his mansion Barton Keep in aid of the Pretoria Hospital, which they very successfully did, being entertained afterwards at the Transvaal (Polley's) Hotel. The proprietor, Wernher Jahn, requested something special for his wife. "Of course the Band obliged with a couple of pieces", wrote Bain, "and in the effort, nearly blew the roof off the dining room. I had little control over their fortissimo as they had dined and wine well but they didn't care what happened. I was relieved when it was over as there were a lot of us and we were lusty blowers. The two coaches picked us up between 10 and 11 p.m. and we arrived home safely in the small hours after an enjoyable day."

The opening of the Wanderers Club House towards the end of 1889 with the entertainment facilities offered by the Ball and Supper rooms inaugurated a new era in Johannesburg. The share market might be stagnating and ruin lacing the Rand but here was a focus for the ebullient spirits of the young adventurers and a decent outlet for everyone's surplus energies.

J. B. Taylor, vice-president of the Club, taking full advantage, celebrated his thirtieth

birthday on the 20th December by a Grand Costume Ball in the new hall, now lit (at a cost of £2,876) by the most beautiful incandescent lamps, used in Johannesburg for the first time (they also illumined the front of the building). He was garbed as a Master of the Hounds and the president, Hermann Eckstein, as a Cavalier. Abe Bailey appeared in "the evening dress of the twentieth century" which unfortunately was not described for posterity and George Farrar was appropriately dressed as a jockey, having been chairman of the Turf Club since 1887. To Jacob Swart, its secretary, he was an old friend. In Kimberley, Swart had been the starter at athletic meetings in 1887 at which George Farrar had run the mile. He was reputed to be the best miler in South Africa (4 minutes 38 seconds in 1881 on a cinder track and he was still clocking it at the Wanderers meetings and elsewhere in 1890) but the Turf increasingly beckoned him.

Times might be bad but no red-blooded young man, according to the veteran Carl Jeppe, lacked in his devotion to sport. "Hard as he worked and made others work, he never allowed Jack to become a dull boy." The town made itself the headquarters of sport in South Africa. In slack times at periods of depression, or when a boom gladdened the heart of the speculator (and who did not speculate in Johannesburg?), races, cricket, and football matches, tennis and polo tournaments, were supported as they are in no other community of the same population. It is due to this devotion to manly sports and to the generous assistance of men like Abe Bailey and David Pullinger (to name only two out of many who deserve to be chronicled) that Johannesburg can boast the Wanderers, as fine a recreation ground as any south of the line, and that cricket and football in South Africa have made such progress.

The development of 1889 had been phenomenal but Jacob Swart, sole signatory of the lease of the Wanderers Club, worried that its title would not be granted. Covetous eyes were on the grounds—N.A.Z.M. (the Netherlands Railway Company which was bringing the train to Johannesburg) wanted the land. In October 1889, Swart had gone to see his friends Jan Eloff and Charlie Pietersen, the Mining Commissioner and his secretary, and offered to demonstrate from the Club's books that it had fulfilled the conditions of lease. Eloff had refused, saying it was patent to all that the Club had spent far more than it had contracted and that manifold sporting and other facilities were now available. Even the eucalyptus trees planted all round the grounds were beginning to grow. He had accordingly informed the Government by official minute that title might be given. Nothing happened.

Swart persevered and was told that the minute had been lost. He was fully aware of the circumstances and indignantly rejected a suggestion that the Wanderers should move from Kruger's Park to the adjacent Joubert Park so that a station and other railway works might be built on its grounds. Jiggery-pokery was afoot and there was only one way to deal with it. He went to the offices of the Executive Council in Pretoria and bribed a clerk to produce the minute. It had not been lost. Then he waited for the President outside his office and accosted him as he got out of his carriage.

Paul Kruger had no objection to being buttonholed by the urgent young man whose parents had been his friends. They entered the Raadzaal together and Swart described the Situation of the club of which Kruger was Patron. The President called the State Secretary, Dr W. J. Leyds who dutifully stated that if any minute had been sent by the Mining Commissioner in Johannesburg, it must have been lost. "Oh no, it hasn't!" said Swart, "I'll show you where it is!" and the obedient clerk duly produced it. No accurate description survives of what then ensued between Kruger, Leyds and the Chief Clerk but it was reported many years later in an interview with Swart as "something of a scene". Kruger gave instructions for the immediate confirmation of the lease and the granting of title.

Various impediments continued to be put in Swart's way but his friends at court were superior to the monopolists and concessionaires prepared, among other things, to sacrifice the Wanderers Club to Mammon. It was not however until the 3rd March 1890 that Dr

Leyds put his signature to the relative instrument and Jacob Swart and his friend David Pullinger added theirs and became the two Trustees.

The sworn translations varied remarkably in language and content (in one, "planting trees" is given as "a tree nursery") but in combination, the terms in English were as follows:

"In accordance with a Resolution of the Executive Council Act 242 dated the 2nd May 1888, the portion of ground known as 'Kruger's Park' in Johannesburg is hereby leased for a period of 99 years to the Wanderers Club of Johannesburg represented by DAVID JOHN PULLINGER and JACOB SWART for the purpose of enclosing the same, planting trees thereon, preparing portions of the ground for Athletic Sports and other purposes such as Cricket, Football etc and erecting a Pavilion and Gymnasium for the Public of Johannesburg, upon the following conditions

1. that the fencing-in, cultivation of trees etc shall be to the satisfaction of the Mining Commissioner,
2. that the Public shall have free access to the ground between sunrise and sunset unless the Club requires the ground for matches or athletic sports when the Club shall have the right to charge admission fees, the amount to be fixed by the Club and to be approved by the Mining Commissioner,
3. that one half of the admission fees shall be applied towards the improvement of the grounds, buildings, etc and for the maintenance thereof,
4. that for the following five years, the Club shall spend £500 (five hundred pounds) per annum on arboriculture and horticulture,
5. that the Club shall pay an annual rental of £50.

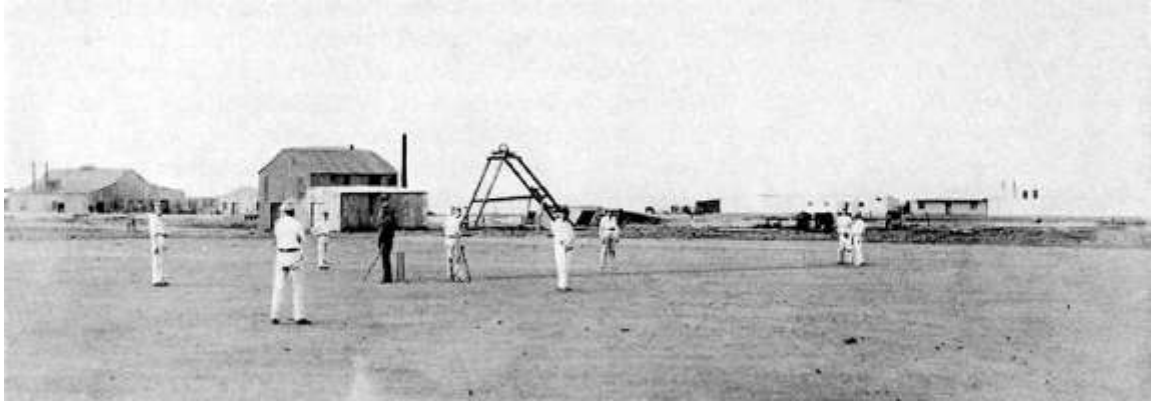
Should these conditions not be complied with or should the Club cease to exist, this grant will lapse."

This historic title supported by official plans of the Ground certified by the Surveyor-General Johann Rissik, was a personal triumph for Jacob Swart. Despite his professional occupation with the Turf Club, he worthily served its conditions. His colleagues on the Wanderers Main Committee, preoccupied by the vagaries of gold production, the unproved nature of the Reef and the stagnation of the share market, failed to equal him. Their attention became so desultory that the chairman, J. G. Currey, was forced to appoint from their number a small Executive Committee consisting of himself, Swart, Bettelheim, Sonn and another (whom it has proved impossible to trace) to administer the Club's affairs.

For all this time, the Club had been running on an ad hoc basis but in January 1890, 'The Rules and Regulations of the Wanderers' Club, Johannesburg' were printed for the first time. They constituted a curious mixture of Constitution and Bye-Laws and even entrenched the existing Committee in office, though stipulating an annual election. The Club was given full powers to build, organise sub-clubs, arrange sporting meetings, and numerous other functions. Every member had to belong to at least one sub-club. The entrance fee was the very large amount of £5 and the annual subscription £2. There was no mention of lady members. The "Rules", devised by the sporting young men from procedures in operation elsewhere, proclaimed their relevance from the 27th January 1890 onwards though they had been neither considered nor approved by the members. At the same time, a programme of events for the year was outlined for what had become the focus of the Rand's recreation. Already it was becoming something more.

Despite the uncertainty of the times, the need for relaxation and diversion was being met. There was still money about and strong inclination to spend it on distraction. In 1889, Luscombe Searelle had opened his Theatre Royal and in September 1889, Frank Fillis opened his enormous Amphitheatre for circus and other performances. In 1890, the new Rand Club (also designed by Reid & McCowat) opened. There were always the Races. The population had increased so enormously that it was no longer a big bonhomous club but diffuse and already diversified into "class" and status. Only at the Wanderers Club were

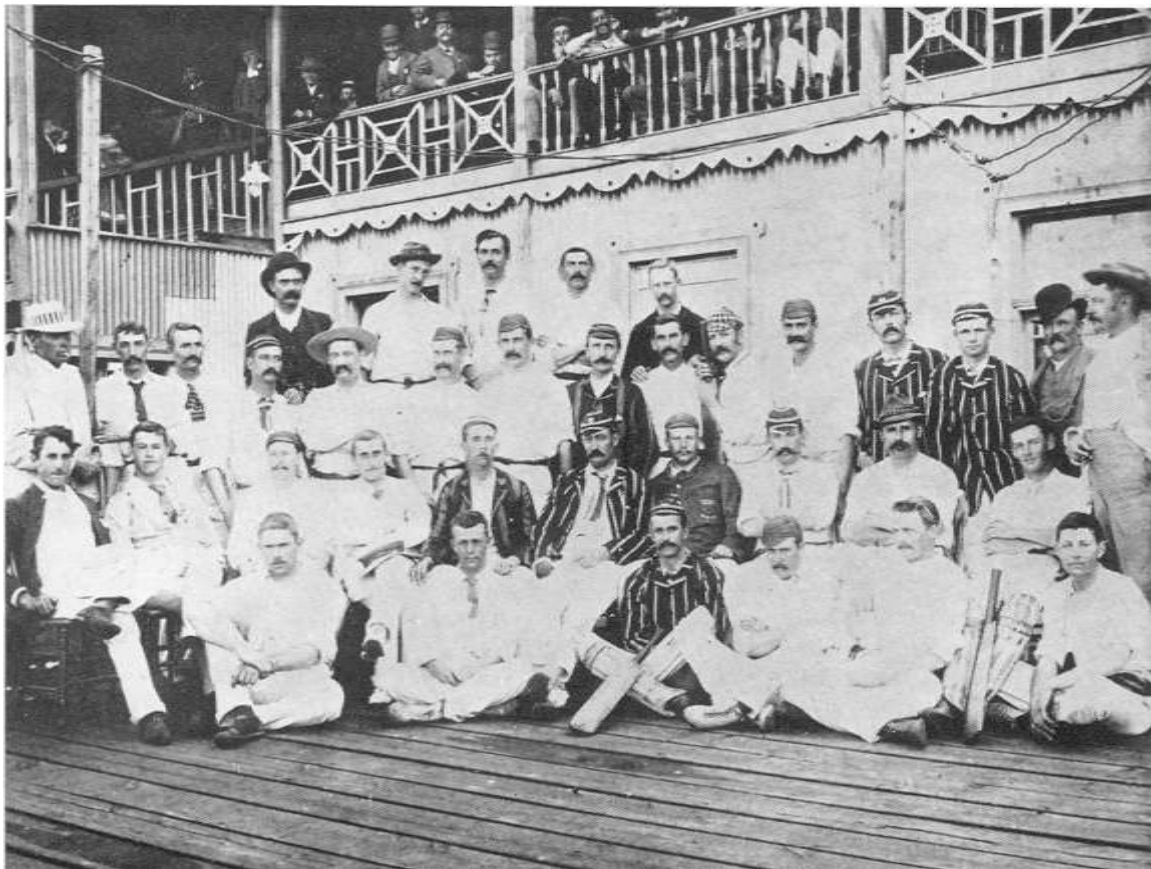
distinctions forgotten and the high and the mighty hobnobbed with the poor and the lowly. Only at the Wanderers Club also, despite the competition of new venues, did the population customarily foregather for high occasions.



Sport and recreation on the Reef – the cricket field at May Consolidated Mine

Players in the First Cricket Tournament at the Wanderers between Barberton, Pretoria and Johannesburg, Easter 1891

Bottom Row: H. Tudhope, Abe Bailey, J.H. Piton, H. S. Turton, J. A. Johnstone, W. R. Solomon
2nd row: J. Wallach, P. J. Korsten, E. A. Halliwell, G. Lomas, F. W. Smith, Doolie Morkel, Peter H. de Villiers, A. E. Prince, D. J. Schuurman, A. E. Ochse
3rd Row: A. Soames, D. G. McGriell, Rob Templeton, A. E. Meadway, J. P. Fitzpatrick, J. T. Harrison, C. Gordon, J. L. Greenlees, H. Brown, J. W. Zulch, Ed. Steele, Dan J. Sim, C. J. van Leenhof, Chas Meintjes (Umpire)
4th row: Donaldson, Bobby Klinck, Sam Field, C. S. Wimble, W. C. Webb



On the day following the signature of its lease, Paul Kruger came to Johannesburg to meet the suffering citizens and hear their grievances. It was natural that they should assemble at the Wanderers and that he should address a gathering assessed at 10,000 from a platform erected outside the Pavilion. It was said that a large proportion of those present were starving hopeless young men, broken by fluctuating share values and the failure of the Government to introduce the facilities that would enable profitable gold production and stabilise the market. Be that as it may, they behaved outrageously. They sang "Rule Britannia!" and when the President shouted "Blij stil!", they laughed at him. He stamped off to Captain von Brandis' house without addressing them and ugly incidents ensued, including insult to the Transvaal flag. The days were darkening but in both light and shadow, the Johannesburg public gravitated towards its Club.

By the winter of 1890, the Great Depression had settled on the town. All sorts of fund raising affairs such as Balls (a long line of men awaited the chance to dance a few steps with the few ladies who had come to Johannesburg) were held in the Wanderers Hall. Club diversions such as Magic Lantern Shows were assiduously arranged by Andersson, the secretary. The Gymnasium in the main hall, magnificently fitted at J. B. Taylor's expense (it was said to be the best-equipped in the country) was opened and *mirabile dictu*, a Ladies Gymnasium Club was successfully started. The Committee emphasised that the ladies were not members and had no privileges. The men enrolled in scores and were trained by E. P. Garcia.

The most remarkable innovation of 1890 was the Cycling Sports inaugurated at Easter and subsequently a feature of all Sporting Meetings until, by July 1890, meetings were devoted exclusively to them and a new type of athlete emerged. The first were L. C. Papenfus and Laurens Meintjies and, lacking local heroes or film stars, the public lavished adulation on the "Peds" as they were called. The meetings were organised by the independent Witwatersrand Cycle Club with seventy members, which rented the track from the Wanderers. Champion cyclists captured the popular imagination to an unprecedented degree and vast crowds came to watch their performances on penny-farthings and the new "safety bicycle" with hard tyres, on the cinder track. Other forms of sport correspondingly suffered but it was some time before Athletics fell from their high estate. In 1890, Georgie Farrar was still running the quarter and the mile.

The Football situation was complicated. On the ground fronting the Pavilion, Rugby and Soccer were played on the same afternoon while at the back, the Pirates Football Club to which the Wanderers leased another ground, played Rugby and Cricket. The arrangement became an incubus for animus and clogged the Club with ill-feeling for many years.

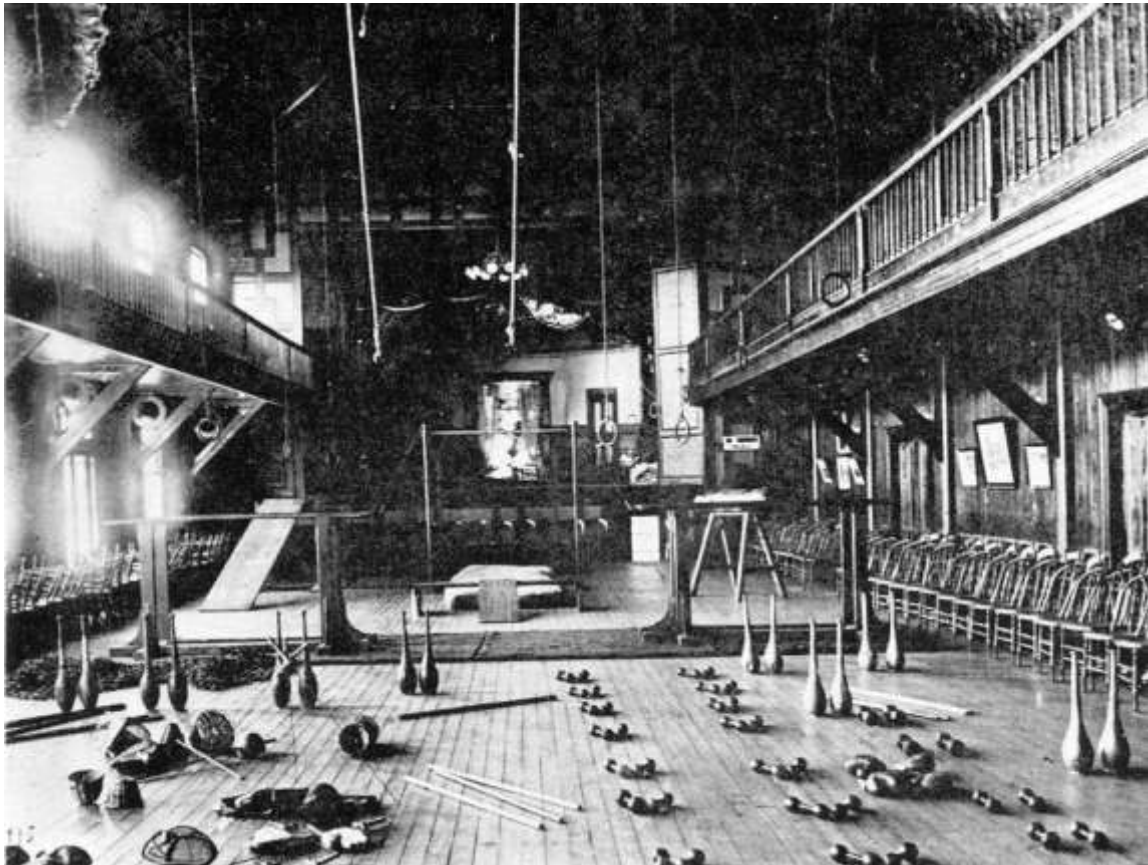
Carefully watched by Currey, Sonn and Bettelheim of the Executive Committee, the Cricket Club held its annual meeting in July 1890 with Charlie Pietersen seconding its report. (Two months later, he married Jane, daughter of Captain von Brandis and subsequently left the Mining Commissioner's office to join the South African Republican Police or ZARPS.) George Allsop was secretary of the Cricket Club which, the Main Committee severely remarked, was indebted to the Wanderers for an expense of £14,000 on their ground. Its members, particularly Abe Bailey, were keen players but the public took little interest and its fortunes slowly fell.

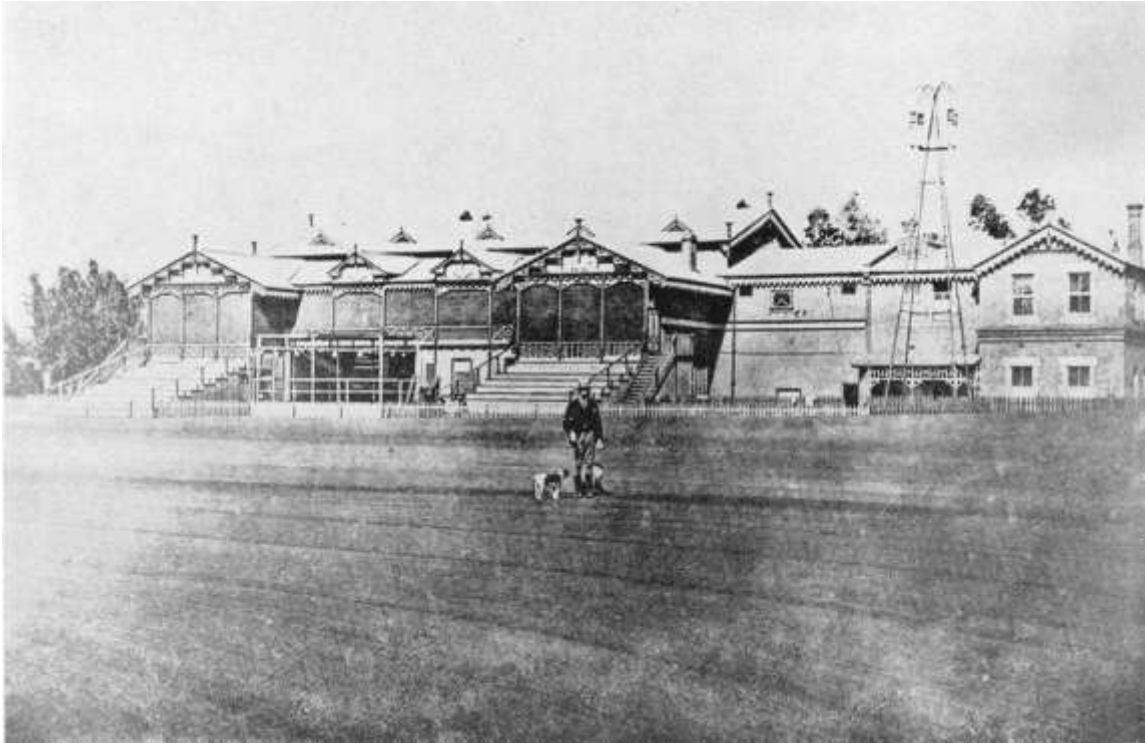
Determined to expand and to increase revenue, the Executive Committee organised the first Wanderers Horse Show and Gymkhana Sports on the 10th October 1890 in honour of the President's birthday. Hermann Eckstein won the first prize in the class for a pair of carriage horses. It was one of his rare appearances. He and his mining colleagues—including most of the committee members—could devote little time to the Wanderers when Johannesburg itself was menaced. The Main Committee, reported its chairman Currey

James B. Taylor, (with small fair moustache) one of the foundation members of the Wanderers Club and partner in the Corner House



The Wanderers Gymnasium, equipped at the expense of J. B. Taylor, in the early 90's





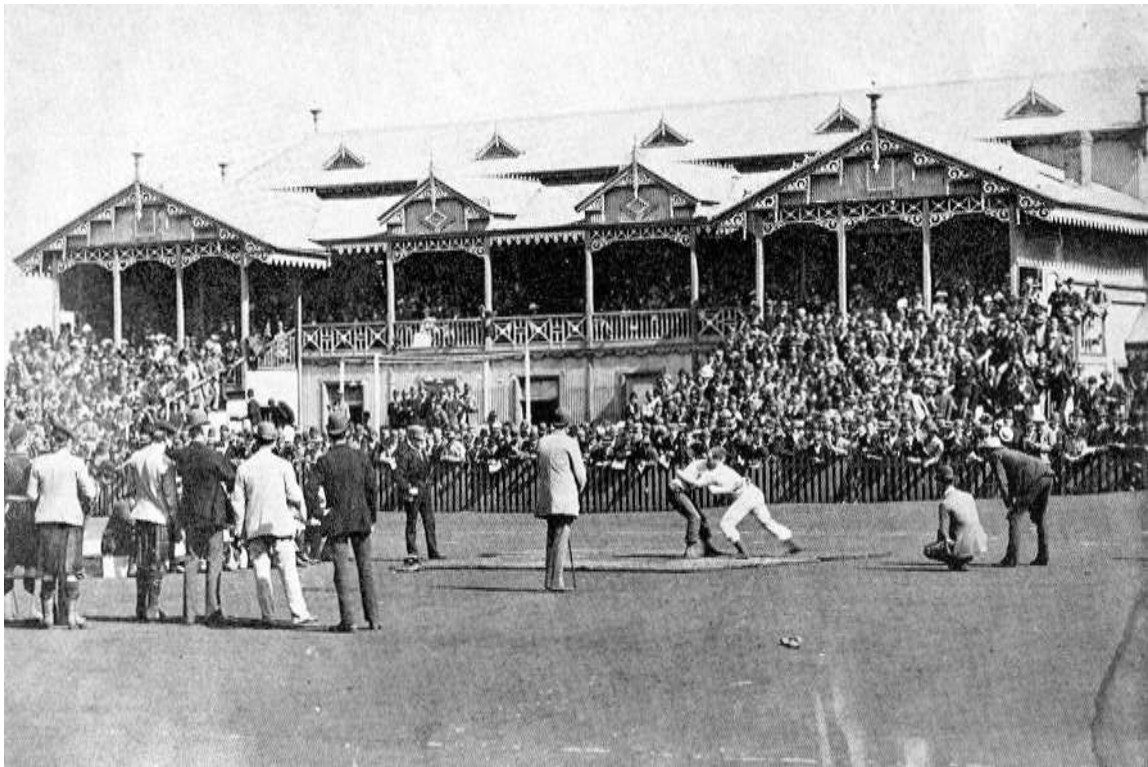
The Wanderers Pavilion, with the semi-detached Assembly Hall and Social Club on the right, The tall standard supports the incandescent electric lighting

later, "was so engrossed with its own affairs that everybody's business was nobody's and the Club's situation became critical".

No balance sheet reflected its continued dependence on its Musical Section. "The Sunday evening crowds increased", Bain wrote, "Nobody, as far as I know, ever complained about our programmes but I felt it was impossible to go on playing the good old stuff forever and I was not competent either as a conductor or cornet player nor for that matter, were the rest of the Band, to put on high class stuff. So I approached the Committee and asked them to appoint a qualified and experienced man as conductor. They were amazed and asked me whether I was in any way dissatisfied. 'Only with my own music', I said. They wouldn't listen to me and said I was doing fine and they pointed towards the splendid gates we got on the Sundays when the Band played in the open air. I was disappointed and depressed because I realised that the majority of the Committee looked only at the Gate and were only faintly interested in the music quality. However I knew that we couldn't go on as we were so I stuck to it and pestered them individually until I got them to agree and they asked me to find someone.

"I was lucky in my search. I came across a man named Stockton who had been a Band Sergeant in the Hussars, a nice fellow, a good musician and a competent conductor. He was appointed and took over from me whilst I continued to play the first cornet. He soon got better music and difficult, and I was hard put to it to render the leading part in some of the pieces. However by steady practice, I managed but it began to take up too much of my time and from being a relaxation and a pleasure, it began to be a strain and a bore and I urged Stockton to get someone else. This he did but how!!!"

At that time Maritzburg was an English garrison town and there were always one or more regiments stationed there and each had its Band. Stockton happened to know a first cornet player in one of the Bands and induced him to slip away and get over the Border and come up and join us. Of course both Stockton and this new man were both professionals and paid. This chap was a magnificent player and made rings round me. His double-fingering was a treat to listen to. I of course wanted to retire but Stockton wouldn't let me go. He

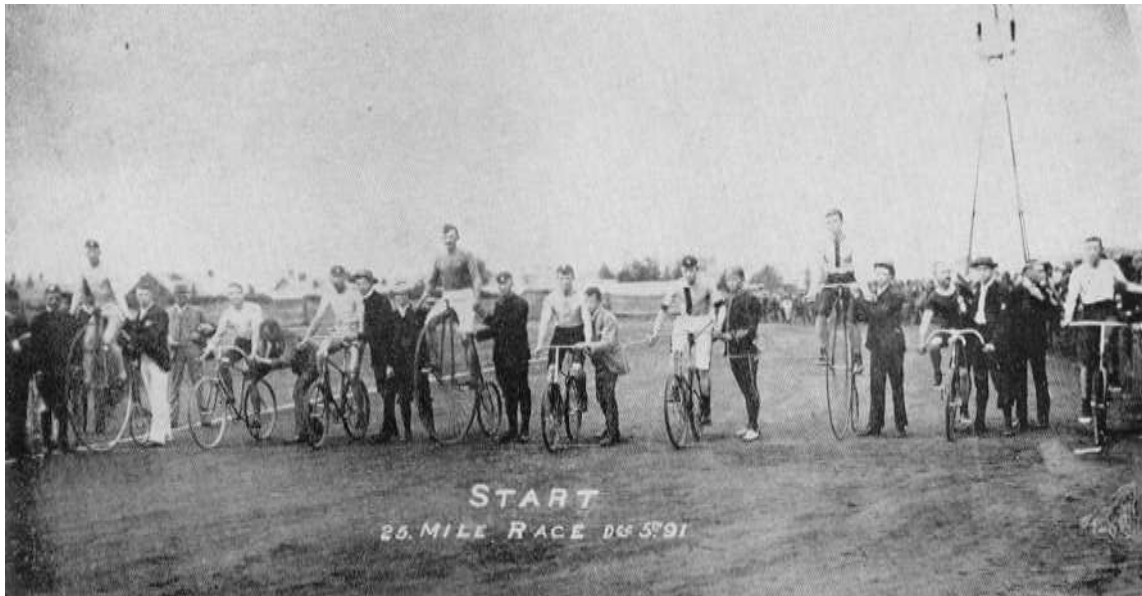


Amateur wrestling bout outside the Wanderers Pavilion in the early nineties

persuaded me to take over the euphonium which up to then had been played by Gustav Sonn. I did so and Sonn transferred to baritone.

Then the Crash came. The market collapsed and towards the end of the year, three banks — the Union, the Paarl and the Cape of Good Hope—closed their doors despite frenzied efforts by Rhodes and other financiers to maintain them. Few escaped the debris. Many of the young men left Johannesburg, ruined and broken in spirit. One of them was Bain who, architect of the Wanderers' musical tradition and much of its finances, never resumed his close relationship with the Club (he died in 1938). "Numbers of the richest and smartest men on the Rand", wrote the *Transvaal Mining Argus* in its annual review, "have been temporarily ruined on account of the confidence they have shown in mining and other ventures. But they have not thrown up the sponge and abandoned the mines and the town." A fairy godmother was floating above the stricken scene but it was many months before she waved her wand and the McArthur Forrest cyanide process proved payable gold in large quantities.

Paradoxically the Wanderers Club flourished. It provided a rare antidote to slump conditions for every kind of person. Currey and his little band showed persistent enterprise and the burden of work was ably borne by Andersson. The Ladies Gymnastic Club had become so popular that it interfered with their patronage of the tennis courts "on the days set apart for their admission". (The Wanderers were always wary of women.) A Wanderers Dramatic Club was formed and very successfully made its debut with the comedy "Two Roses" on the 3rd December 1890. At the New Year, the customary Sports were held over several days and everyone turned out. J. B. Taylor was time-keeper, Currey, Pullinger and Sonn were judges, and Jacob Swart and Abe Bailey were starters. In brilliant weather, the new cycling races and athletic sports were held and when it came to throwing the cricket ball, "Mr Brolin hurled the pillule 117 yards 2 feet" while David Pullinger took second prize for hurling the hammer 83 feet and one inch. At an Assault-at-Arms in the Gymnasium, more exquisite exercises were staged. Hermann Eckstein and Gustav Imroth presented cups. Mrs Eckstein distributed the prizes.



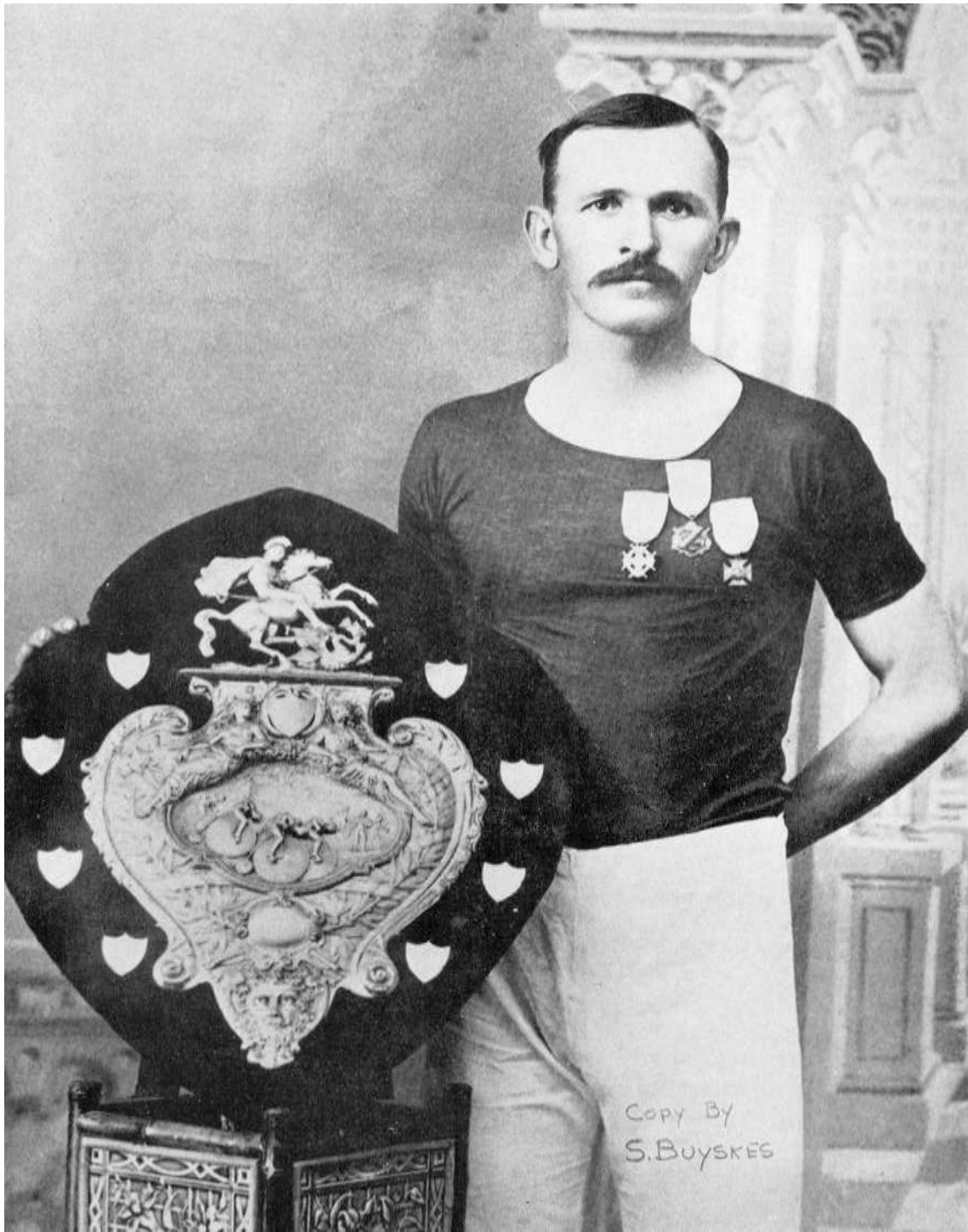
The Johannesburg Amateur Cycling Association, with both "ordinaries" (penny farthings) and "safeties" (ordinary bicycles)
 The start of the historic 25 mile race at the Wanders on the 5th December, 1891
 L. Papenfus ("ordinary"), C. Cawood, C. Southey, C. E. Brink ("ordinary"), McLachlan, L. S. Meintjies, P. J. Melass ("ordinary"), W. Newby
 Fraser, F. Hilner

A new tone was beginning to permeate the sporting atmosphere. The gentlemen-sportsmen trained in English or local public schools were beginning to be shouldered off the track by a vast army of nondescript cyclists and their supporters who, organised into the Johannesburg Amateur Cycle Club, clamoured loudly for bigger and better prizes and swaggered about in the role of popular heroes. The Wanderers Bar prospered so strikingly by their attentions that the bar-keepers in town demanded that it be closed on some occasions. As cycling developed into a popular mania, the evil of betting appeared with consequent malpractices. It behoved the Club to take this upstart into its bosom and to regulate its activities.

The Wanderers Amateur Cycling Club was accordingly formed with Henri Bettelheim as president and Jacob Swart as vice-president, the committee consisting of L. C. Papenfus, M. H. W. Richards, C. C. Cawood, W. H. Carlin, A. C. Fordred, Frank Hilner, J. L. Marshall and R. J. Judd, the captain being W. J. Blake—all famous names in Wanderers annals and commemorated in the splendid silver shield with a penny-farthing cycling scene at its centre which formed the trophy for the 25 Mile Cycling Championship of South Africa. In time, it returned to the custody of the Club after passage through many hands since its first award in 1891.

Within thirty months, starting from scratch, the Wanderers Club had achieved an incredible feat. It had provided the town—and the whole country—with an indispensable venue for organised sport and it had established itself firmly as a capable and successful entrepreneur. During the dismal months of 1890, seven Sporting Meetings had been organised which had not only demonstrated the highest standards of Athletics but had also shown a substantial profit. The Club had proliferated and expanded its activities and earned the gratitude and the plaudits of the public. It had spent money like water on beautifying its grounds and providing recreational amenities. But it had not held an annual general meeting.

Exactly two and a half years after its founding, the Wanderers Club held its first annual meeting on the 10th February 1891. The atmosphere was stormy. There was no printed report and no financial statement. E.J. Platnauer, an ardent supporter and reputedly the best handicapper in athletics and cycling in the country (he also played for the Pirates first Rugby team), protested loudly and was over-ruled. J. G. Currey who had borne the burden



The winner C. E. Brink with the trophy for the 25-mile cycling championship subsequently used as a decoration at the Wanderers Club

of chairmanship and responsibility throughout, reported that the Club's liabilities were £15,765 consisting of £12,457 in debentures (of which a large number of £100 were due to David Pullinger) and sundry creditors. The Club cost between £170 and £180 a month to run and C. L. Andersson's" service had been satisfactory. It was decided to give him a bonus if the Club could afford it. The Main Committee had been so elusive that to prevent a debacle, a smaller Executive Committee had been constituted and it had saved the day".

Mr Platnauer protested even more vigorously. An administrative body that was appointed and not elected was *ultra vires*, he said. Jacob Swart talked and talked. Platnauer was overruled. The Executive Committee had wrought wonders. It had even reduced the debenture debit by £1,022. There were ninety-seven new members making a total of 278 (excluding the 55 musicians of the two bands who were honorary members). It was proposed to start a Social Club as an annexe to the main building to deal with them. It would include a Reading Room, Billiard Room and other amenities and would increase both the membership and the revenue. The gathering urbanely elected the previous band of workers to office:

Honorary President:	Captain Carl von Brandis
Honorary vice-President:	J. B. Taylor
President:	Hermann Eckstein
Vice-President:	Carl Hanau
Committee:	D. J. Pullinger, G. Sonn, J. Swart, J. Jeppe, A. H. Reid, C. Aubrey Smith, At,, Bailey, J. G. Currey, H. Bettelheim, Murray Webb, W. P. Taylor, G. H. Farrar, L. i. B. Homan and C. L. Andersson.
Trustees:	D. J. Pullinger and J. Swart
Secretary:	C. L. Andersson
Office:	9 Goodman's Buildings

Lest anyone mistake their feelings, the abused and hardworking chairman received at the end of the meeting a silver salad bowl inscribed:

"Presented by the Members of the Committee of the Wanderers Club to their chairman Mr. F. G. Currey in thorough appreciation of his services – Johannesburg 10th February 1891"

Then they put the luckless man back into the chair to continue the tradition of long-serving conscientious Chairmen which he had initiated (see Appendix V).