



5. ROARING NINETIES AND DARKLING DAYS

1891—1895

Lionel Phillips always said that after the Great Slump of 1890, life in Johannesburg became not only rough but tough.

Even the elements seemed to conspire against equanimity. Great extremes wrought ravages with the Wanderers' efforts to maintain recreation. They had difficulty in fixing the surface of their grassless grounds and although the blue gums grew phenomenally fast, they were inadequate protection from the high winds that whipped off the surface in blinding clouds of dust. Regularly every year, the playing fields or "the plateau" as it was called, would be washed away by violent storms and the flat cinder-track became rutted and holed.

Such damage was repairable—expensively; but nothing could repair the financial loss on costly occasions such as tennis tournaments, gymkhanas, athletic meetings and galas which were ruined by heavy rain or sudden intense cold. Then there were the locusts. Year after year in the nineties, they swarmed on to Johannesburg and paralysed everything. Even the trains failed to arrive, having slid to a stop as far south as the Karoo. Three months after the Wanderers Club held its first meeting, "the main body of the locust army reached Johannesburg", The Star reported, "One walks on locusts, the walls are barnacled with them but still they come, despite nipping frost in the mornings". Visitors complained of the sickening stench of thousands of dead locusts in the streets, mangled and trodden by traffic. Municipal services were totally inadequate and the stinking mass remained for days. The next year, as Christmas and the Wanderers' customary festivities approached, a cloud of locusts half a mile wide and many miles long darkened the Johannesburg sky after thunderous storms. "What the hail left yesterday", said a newspaper sadly, "the locusts are devouring this afternoon". Not much was left of the Wanderers' gardens and the pleasant places which, through the work of the Italian gardeners from the Klipriviersberg Nurseries whom they employed on a three year contract, they had contrived for the enjoyment of members.

There were great difficulties of transport. Much though the young men on the Reef and even on the adjacent mines, longed to participate in the activities of the now numerous sub-clubs, it was often impossible for them to reach the grounds. Hundreds walked and no one considered their exhaustion when including them in strenuous team games upon arrival, in winter—and Johannesburg and the Reef were still much colder than later when

covered with trees, vegetation, spreading townships and a blanket of smog -- even the hardiest forebore. They might well have died of exposure en route, as some did when going about their ordinary business. It became physically impossible to reach the Club and sometimes the football clubs, scheduled to field first and second teams, could not assemble even a scratch eleven or fifteen from the shivering stalwarts who had made the journey.

There were other powerful influences. Stimulated by the promise of the cyanide process and the continued confidence of the Corner House which was pouring money into deep-level mining, the Great Slump was followed by a Boom and a new influx of adventurers to Johannesburg. They were different from the ardent young men of the eighties, being older and tougher and more unscrupulous. Many in fact were outright criminals but most were concerned with earning their livings by the minimum of effort, preferably in speculating, betting and gambling. They battered on the worthier of their brethren who had come to make a fortune on the goldfields by honest means and who, in their youth and energy, gravitated towards the Wanderers and its sports. It was they who composed the vast confraternity of cyclists and, to a lesser degree, athletes who caused a burgeoning of track events and provided the Club with serious problems.

The Boom brought other effects. The demands of moneymaking while the tide moved towards its full, overbore everything and in the urgent hurly-burly of the Exchange and frenzied speculation, enthusiasm for sport dwindled. The Wanderers Cricket Club captained by Abe Bailey, almost ceased to exist after a scintillating 1890/91 season and at the end of 1892, only the Parent Club sustained it. Other sports suffered similarly.

There was also a subtle change in the social scene. Fortunes were made overnight and their happy owners began to build palatial brick houses with conservatories, gardens, tennis courts and croquet lawns. Beetles, whose youth had been spent in Constantinople, built a Turkish palace in Doornfontein and became the Consul for the Ottoman Empire. David Pullinger built "Pullinger's Folly" on "Pullinger Kop" above the Berea. Julius Jeppe constructed an elaborate Victorian manor called "Friedenheim" in the township called after his uncle Carl Jeppe. Jack Currey built a comfortable mansion above the Wanderers Grounds, now beginning to be encircled by buildings, where he lived until the Boer War. Lionel Phillips outraged public opinion with "Phillips' Folly" (later "Hohenheim") built on a bare ridge in the country overlooking the Sachsenwald. Some of the mansions even had swimming baths and all had billiard rooms. A whole class of previous Club supporters was now so comfortably situated that the earlier desire to go out and do things no longer held.

But in one respect, even on these the Club maintained its hold. In the Wanderers Hall it held a trump card and even when the Ornate Masonic Hall (or Goldfields Lodge), the Standard Theatre and other venues were built in the early nineties, they offered little menace to the meeting place which the town had come to regard as its own. On the 24th June 1891, Alfred Beit, assisted by his brother Otto, Beetles and Dr Simon, gave a memorable ball there and for all its long history, it was constantly used both by the *bon ton* and the bicyclists who sometimes came near to wrecking it. The extraordinarily cosmopolitan population of Johannesburg, now greatly increased, produced many national and sectional associations such as the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association (of which Abe Bailey became chairman), the Cornish Association, the Caledonian Society, German Vereine, and many others. They all held their annual balls and high feast days in the Wanderers Hall which constantly served also for a multiplicity of fund-raising occasions.

The Committee contended with these and a growing number of other changing circumstances. Its eye had primarily to be on revenue producing sources. Most dependable because least affected by the weather was the Bar which was leased; but the oldest and most popular was the Military Band and the Amateur Orchestra (known officially as the Wanderers Dilettanten Orkest Vereeniging). Both contained players whose names became famous in Johannesburg history but, as Bain had foreseen, the available talent was

inadequate without professional stiffening. Bandmaster H. Stockton was therefore empowered to employ about ten leading professionals permanently and the bands proceeded merrily until the end of 1891 (when they earned a profit of £258). Then Stockton resigned.

By great good fortune, the Club was able to engage as its paid musical director an outstanding conductor and musician, James Hyde, a violinist who, first visiting South Africa in 1874 as the leader of the orchestra of an opera company, had returned in 1882 with his wife, Kate Leipold, a noted contralto of the Carl Rosa Company. They settled in Kimberley where they formed an orchestra but, in common with the many vital personalities who found the Diamonds Fields increasingly depressed (Rhodes had not yet accomplished the great amalgamation into De Beers), they were among the earliest pioneers to take the stage coach to Johannesburg. James Hyde was not only a fine musician but also a distinguished and cultured man with great organisational ability. Under his tutelage, the Wanderers Band and Orchestra flourished as never before, thousands attending their indoor and promenade concerts. By 1893, special horse-trams had to be provided at night to return patrons to their homes in the suburbs of Doornfontein, Fordsburg, Jeppe, etc. It was commonplace for an audience of four or five thousand to assemble for a Sunday night concert by an orchestra which, The Star declared proudly, was as good as any overseas.

James Hyde could get the best out of his amateur musicians (the first violins continued to be led by George Caffyn and the second by Ernest Lezard) but he showed equal imaginative talent as an impresario. For incidental items, he engaged the best professionals available, led by his distinguished wife, Madame Hyde-Leipold and by Amy Fenton, as well as amateur soloists, quartets and quintets. His concerts were excellently organised and he was no less assiduous with the Brass Band which enlivened all sports occasions by "discoursing music" on the Grounds and also saluting all triumphs (on rarer occasions, it also intoned suitable music at the funerals of cricketers and other sportsmen). It would assemble at the stage coach terminus in Loveday Street and when a victorious Transvaal team returned from Currie Cup matches, would blare jubilantly at the frightened horses and grinning players. It remained a fond memory in the minds of pioneers.

Sport however remained the Club's main concern and the young men on the Committee poured their energies into what became a stylised programme of annual events—New Year Sports, Easter Sports, Whitsun, the Queen's Birthday, the President's Birthday and a Christmas Carnival, interspersed later with Championship Meetings. Exotic events intervened and sometimes there were overseas touring teams but the Club sporting pattern persisted.

In 1891, 6,000 more trees were planted and the playing fields were continuously improved but they deteriorated almost as fast as the ravages of wind and hail could be repaired. For the New Year Sports, David Pullinger, still riding high despite the Crash, presented a silver Challenge Cup for the 220 yards which was won by that legendary figure of the South African track, G. W. Rolland on his sole appearance at the Wanderers. Thereafter it was won by the Club's own versatile members—rugby players H. O. Bosman, F. W. Smith, C. W. Jones and H. V. Rorke (three-quarters were crack sprinters in those days) and the Blignaut brothers, famous athletes of the middle nineties who combined running with cycling. The Pullinger Cup is the second oldest trophy in the Club's custody.

In March 1891, J. B. Taylor married (as did Jacob Swart) and was lost to the Wanderers as an effective committee member. He became a fabulously wealthy young man and in 1893, at the age of 33, resigned from the Corner House and went to live in England. Although he retained an interest in the Wanderers, it was fifteen years before he revisited Johannesburg. W. P. Taylor, his elder brother and founder of the Club, remained on the tumultuous Reef and continued to serve on the Parent Committee and to finance the Club.

The Easter Sports of 1891 were a customary success with the cyclists increasingly intruding on the programme. The Gymnasium was booming and, as part of the festivities,

an Assault-at-Arms was held at which the gentlemanly J. R. Couper did expert club-swinging and, as an encore, some juggling. Couper was immensely popular on the Rand and especially at the Club of which he was a foundation playing member. At Assaults-at-Arms in the Gymnasium, he and his pupils would give demonstrations of boxing and sometimes he himself would box a few rounds with hardy Wanderers members. One was Gustav Imroth and the spectators complained that he provided insufficient opposition. Couper left for England in 1892 and made use of his varied Johannesburg experiences to write a pugilistic *roman à clef* "Mixed Humanity" which, apart from the fascinated interest it aroused in Johannesburg where its characters were readily recognised, was not without literary ability and was reprinted several times. His end was tragic — believing himself bankrupt, he shot himself while in fact possessed of considerable funds.

However diversified its activities (it even sponsored a Poultry Show in 1891), cricket was the Wanderers' first and abiding love. It was a proud moment in April 1891, immediately after the Easter Sports when, already considered the premier sporting club in Southern Africa, it could play host to the Currie Cup teams of the Transvaal and Griqualand West, otherwise known as the Inter-Town Match between Johannesburg and Kimberley. (Abe Bailey, captain of the Wanderers team was third reserve for the Transvaal but later represented it.) The town lost its head completely and shops were closed at noon to allow all and everybody to attend the match which lasted the whole of a week, £620 being taken at the gate (a South African record), though the Club made only £180 by letting the ground. The field was sodden but dried over the week-end. Huge scores were made during the following week but at a crucial point, the Kimberley crack batsman A. B. Tancred scored a duck. "The excitement which all along had been great", wrote a member of the Kimberley team, "now became almost too intense to be borne. Conversation in the Pavilion and in the crowd round the ropes entirely ceased and all gazed mutely at the game, rigid and absorbed".

On the last day (Saturday), the Transvaal were left with one wicket in hand and 76 to make. An even bigger throng had assembled and "every minute, cabs containing excited men and women dashed up to the Pavilion entrance so that the crowd soon became enormous ...Many were wringing their hands and walking up and down, too worked up to sit still or to speak. Some were even crying with excitement." But the bowlers prevailed and Kimberley won "the most magnificently contested game ever seen in South Africa by 58 runs. If ever sane men were mad, the old Kimberley supporters were then—such a drinking of champagne, such handshaking, dancing, cheering and foolish antics! Such crowing, swaggering and persistent drunkenness!"

The madness continued for days. On the Saturday night, a dinner for both teams was given at the Rand Club and W. P. Taylor, calling himself the oldest Kimberley cricketer present, having played on the Diamond Fields in 1872-73, said that the game had rapidly advanced and nothing better had been seen than the match on the Wanderers Ground. On the Monday, another dinner was given at the Rand Club with Hermann Eckstein presiding and meritorious players were presented with bats, medals, cups, diamond pins, travelling liquor cases and other rewards. On Tuesday, Barney Barnato, not to be outdone, gave a dinner at the Central Hotel with Captain von Brandis in attendance and presented gold medals, jewels and purses to the players. In the atmosphere of high emotion, the partisans of Kimberley (and they practically populated Johannesburg) forgot their bias in the *bonhomie* of true sportsmanship.

Typically of the inexplicable phenomenon that afflicted all sports after the stimulation of special occasion, cricket immediately declined. The season virtually ended with the Currie Cup match and when it resumed in September, the Wanderers Cricket Club was and remained moribund. It lost £40 during the year and no one was interested in maintaining it. In October 1891, the Transvaal Cricket Union was formed with A. B. Tancred who had come to Johannesburg from Kimberley, in the chair. The absent Hermann Eckstein and Abe Bailey were made president and vice-president. George Allsop who had played for

Transvaal, was appointed secretary. Enormous efforts had to be made before the Wanderers Club could become a worthy member.

The winter of 1891 had its excitements. In May, the Club organised its first Dog Show and attracted the exhibition of 160 dogs of which that pet of Victorian times, the Pomeranian, so far preponderated that a special class had to be made for it. Reflecting the Rand's population of gentlemen-adventurers, there were large classes of sporting dogs and Abe Bailey entered his pointers, setters and retrievers.

The number of ant-heap tennis courts was increased (Sam Jameson, brother of Dr Leander Starr Jameson, was the chairman of the Wanderers Tennis Club) and ladies competed in a successful tournament played with the current flat-topped racquets. A Wanderers Polo Club was formed whose members included Henri Bettelheim, Abe Bailey, Godfray Lys, Arthur Payne Gallwey, Frank Spencer, Robert Kuranda, Rimer and a few others numbering not more than twenty but they provided the Club with an income of £96 during that year. The following year, the Polo Club died and was never revived. The Dramatic Club essayed two known and tried favourites "The Pirates of Penzance" and "Les Cloches de Corneville" for which the architect of the Club House, A. H. Reid of the handsome profile, arranged to have the scenery painted but the public was not beguiled and £25 was lost. Even musical comedy failed to compete with the people's passion for orchestral and band music and the Dramatic Club fell back abashed.

It was as a venue of sporting events that the Wanderers maintained its reputation and finances. In August 1891, the high excitement of the cricket match was again evoked by the first visit of an English Rugby Team (enthusiastically sponsored by Billy Simkins and financed by Cecil Rhodes). It was welcomed in typical Johannesburg fashion. The ground in front of the Pavilion was "picked up" (one of the reasons for the decline of the cricket section) and the town prepared to suspend its activities. The coaches bringing the team from Standerton (they had been playing in Natal) were due on the 13th August and a large number of notabilities went out to meet them. Of the Wanderers Club, the chairman J. G. Currey, the Rugby captain R. L. Cousens, and W. P. Taylor, D. J. Pullinger and other members of the Main Committee drove out in their traps. Of the Transvaal Rugby Union, the president Gustav Imroth, the vice-president Jacob Swart and the secretary J. Cooper set forth. The chairman of the Rand Club James H. Abel, the captain of the Pirates team M. van Buuren, leading lawyer Charles Leonard, stockbroker H. C. Trull and many others, journeyed down the dusty Klipriviersberg road to reach the rendezvous.

Of the visitors, there was no sign and those weary sportsmen who had failed to provide themselves with refreshment during the delay, descended like locusts on J. P. Meyer (who had first issued Government mining certificates on the Rand) at his farm and were duly revived. Eventually the heralding clouds of dust were seen and the coaches escorted into Johannesburg where a great crowd had assembled outside the Central Hotel. The vice-captain Hammond came out on to the balcony to acknowledge their vociferous welcome and matches interspersed with numerous festivities (the Stock Exchange organised a reception and the Wanderers an Assault-at-Arms) duly began. "The week we spent there", wrote one of the players ruefully, "was the most hectic of all."

Unlike cricket, rugby had not advanced and in nineteen matches throughout South Africa, the English team had one point scored against it - by Cape Town Clubs—despite their unfamiliarity with rock-hard grounds so dusty that the ball frequently disappeared from view. They themselves scored 218 points of which 22 were against Transvaal, 15 against Johannesburg and 9 against Johannesburg and Pretoria on the Wanderers Ground. (Scoring in those days was 1 point for an unconverted try and 3 for conversion, 3 for a dropped goal, 2 for a penalty and 3 for a goal from a mark.) The Wanderers benefited by £79 but their main field was ruined.

Preparations now began for the annual Christmas/New Year Sports which had attained unparalleled importance throughout the divided land and which in 1891/92 were to mark

the slow decline of athletics and the new empire of cycling. The type of young man who had now come to Johannesburg was no adventurer but a seeker after work in a five-year-old, developing town whose population now approached 40,000. He took avidly and immediately to the novel sport of cycling which, unlike athletics, required no particular coaching and provided in addition a convenient means of transport. Cycles or "ordinaries" as they were called, had heretofore been only the cumbersome penny-farthings which were difficult to mount without assistance. Now the "safeties" with wheels of equal size, appeared—at first with solid tyres and then with variations of "pneumatic" and "cushion". Laurens Meintjies had ridden the first pneumatic-tyred safety at the July Sports at the Wanderers and had managed to beat Papenfus on an "ordinary" by only 1 3/5th seconds over a mile.

At the end of the year, most of the new cracks lined up on the flat Wanderers track hitherto reserved for running, to compete for the opulent Silver Shield awarded for the 25 miles Cycling Championship of South Africa and a ten-guinea gold medal for the winner. They rode a variety of machines under threatening clouds so that an historic photograph of the start is far from clear. A thunder storm with heavy rain broke over the race, turning the track into a quagmire. Incredibly C. E. Brink ("who revelled in the mud") on a penny-farthing won in 1 hour 19 minutes 8 and 3/5 seconds, followed by Papenfus similarly mounted. The "safeties" made heavy weather of it but the day of the ordinaries was done. (Brink actually rode from Johannesburg to Kimberley on sandy paths that could hardly be called roads, on a penny-farthing or "ordinary".) They disappeared from the race track and future cycling contests which now proliferated to the exclusion of almost everything else, were ridden between machines with equal wheels. The handsome Championship Shield first won by C. E. Brink in 1891 and subsequently by many others, ultimately became a permanent ornament of the Wanderers Club House.

"The craze for cycling" seized the whole town and even the magnates cycled from their mansions to their offices from 1892 onwards, Lionel Phillips and W. P. Taylor being among the earliest. Ladies daringly bought "bikes" and soon there was a Wanderers Ladies Cycling Club which, after some years, ventured to participate in comic races. The South African Cyclists Union was formed in 1892 to keep the sport "pure" but neither its efforts nor those of the Wanderers fully prevailed and abuses began to mar the glamorous mystique of the early riders. Bending before the blast, the Club in 1892 converted its flat athletic track into a banked cycling race-course, the chairman remarking in his annual report that "a great measure of the success of the cycling sports is due to the energetic and practical manner in which the cycling section manage their internal affairs and the keen interest they show in the welfare of the Parent Club. A banked track has been laid down for them which has already in great part been paid for. The balance will be paid off during 1893 by the holding of special cycling sports."

As 1891 ended, the Wanderers prepared again for a major event and the chairman J. G. Currey, Hermann Eckstein, Abe Bailey, Gustav Imroth, J. H. Greenlees and W. P. Taylor of their committee joined with Lionel Phillips, the Leonard brothers and other notables to prepare for the visit of a powerful English cricket team early in 1892. It was not a success (some said there were too many professionals—there were in fact only two amateurs) but it marked an outstanding event—playing for the first time for Johannesburg in a team of 18 as a bowler was a tall gangling 16-year-old schoolboy from Marist Brothers called J. H. Sinclair. He took two English wickets for 37 runs but his batting was negligible. The English team was so strong that they played against local teams of 15, 18 and 22. The Wanderers profited by £122 but cricket died on the field.

At the second annual meeting in February 1892, the chairman Currey felt that "the Club may be congratulated on its status". It had indeed become a unique institution on the Rand and throughout the land. The old Committee, now fortified by representatives from the sub-clubs presented itself for re-election and it was agreed to form an Executive Committee from its number. (With the exception of Abe Bailey whose passion for cricket never dimmed, most of the earliest members including Jacob Swart, had given up active participation in sport and, now mature men of stature in the town, served as starters,

judges, handicappers and general factotums for the Club whenever they could. Andersson on the other hand was coerced by his friend William Dalrymple to train for the Caledonian Sports and regularly ran with him up Hospital Hill, down the present Empire Road and round the Sachsenwald in preparation for the marathon. Dalrymple also tossed the caber. Andersson took unkindly to these exercises which he ruefully remembered half a century later.)

Currey was re-elected to the chair. There were now 465 members of whom 56 belonged to the bands. They faced a trying year during which the Parent Committee met 12 times and the Executive 56 but the chairman bewailed the absence of what the newspapers called "esprit de corps". The *corps* of the Club was in fact disappearing under an onslaught of cyclists. New Rules were printed of which one copy survives in a massive Scrapbook kept by a zealous later Secretary. The body politic was restive and the Rules were amended year after year.

The usual sports were held throughout the year in which cycling predominated. When the railway reached Johannesburg in September 1892 (the "station" consisted of a small tin shed on the flat ground and there was no platform, the locality being designated merely by a board stating PARK), a special Sports Meeting was staged and the prizes duly inscribed "Railway Opening to Johannesburg". The cyclists were unrelenting in their demand for handsome prizes and even second prizes for boys over a great variety of distances took the form of fine silver cups, one of which survives in the Club's custody. The young men of the day were more concerned with their own interests than the welfare of the Club as a whole. It had a difficult time in the dual role of entrepreneur and lessor.

The leading men of the town were deeply preoccupied. They stood on the threshold of great developments and huge fortunes but the Government crippled them with monopolies, concessions and restrictions and denied them the right to make their voices heard at elections. Hermann Eckstein, worn out by long labours, planned to leave on a lengthy overseas holiday and refused re-election as president of the Chamber of Mines. He sat for his portrait to the local photographer-artist William Duffus (it was intended to hang the work in the Chamber of Mines) and Lionel Phillips became president. Kruger came to Johannesburg and the inhabitants gave him a gala dinner in the Wanderers Hall. He made no effort to conceal his distaste of the diggers and the *congerie* of gamblers, speculators, traders and felons who obscured the work and honest intentions of a new coterie of professional men and public-spirited individuals. In August 1892, 3,000 disgruntled men met at Fillis' Amphitheatre to form the National Union to redress their grievances. The mining industry took no part.

The atmosphere of unrest and discontent was reflected in the Wanderers activities. Attendance at the Gymnasium dwindled to a point where it became necessary to close it. Intense cold crippled the Rugby teams but they managed to complete the season. Abe Bailey made strenuous efforts to find an English professional to stimulate the defunct Cricket Club and after initial failure, engaged W. Bates of Yorkshire on a two-year contract. He arrived in October 1892 but failed to combat the strain and distraction of the times and returned to England after only one year.

Temporary titillation and not team enterprises was what the public wanted. All forms of racing flourished, particularly the Turf and any kind of gambling. The Wanderers bands waxed in popularity and showed a profit of £358 at the end of the year. Anyone who could present a spectacle was assured of an audience, especially if it had elements of novelty, noise or violence.

The gentry who purveyed such sensations on the Wanderers Grounds in the nineties were not of the kind who recorded their experiences; but a rare account survives in the reminiscences of the gentleman-horse trainer, Captain M. H. Hayes, F.R.C.V.S., who spent some time on the Rand with his equestrienne wife in 1892. He was *persona grata*

everywhere and commented on the fact that "men of the better sort in South Africa are eminently clubbable". He was surprised to find that every Club had a Bar which would categorise it elsewhere as "a pot-house" and commented severely on their attitude to women. "When South African society has assumed a more permanent and a more cultured form than it has up to the present attained", he wrote, "and when its ladies have increased in number and have become less afraid than they are of each other, the Club committeemen will see the advantage of catering for the amusement of the members' womenkind by, for instance, allowing them the entrance into certain club-rooms during certain hours of the afternoon or evening, having lawn tennis courts at which they might play and getting up periodical dances. Such a desirable consummation, outrageously improbable as it may now appear, will no doubt come to pass in time." The Wanderers could hang its head. It had done a little for the ladies but it was still pre-eminently a man's Club.

Captain Hayes' forte—and indeed, method of subsistence in South Africa—was the breaking of intractable horses and mules, a subject of exceptional importance and interest to a community only recently favoured by the arrival of the iron horse and as yet unaware of the existence of horseless carriages. There was therefore ample promise in an exhibition in Johannesburg. "I engaged the Athletic Grounds of the Wanderers Club which were to be lighted with electricity", he recorded, "and, having fixed the evening, I left Bonamici to fill up the newspapers with advertisements of the most thrilling kind, to get editorial puffs under 'Local Intelligence', to placard the town and to distribute handbills broadcast. My wife arrived, the evening came to pass, I had the animals all ready near the ring, the electric light was on and three turnstiles were opened for admission but they proved so inadequate to clear the way in front of the ever-increasing crowd which sought admittance that half an hour before the performance was advertised to take place, the gates yielded to the pressure from behind and thousands entered on the free list. This was an unforeseen accident for which excess of patronage alone was to blame.

"When the throng of miners, Boers, roughs and gentlemen, all mixed up together in a tangled mass, saw a pretty, slight young woman of middle height and faultlessly attired in riding costume, step into the ring and walk up to the horse that no one had been able to ride, they began cheering and yelling as if they were all mad. Some shouted out words of encouragement, other entreaties to leave the horse alone, while the Boers loudly encouraged the animal to do his best against the accursed "Rednecks" as they were pleased to call the English. In the midst of this row, my wife was hoisted into the saddle which she had hardly touched before the horse began to buck and plunge as if he were possessed of an evil spirit. When he was tired of this amusement, I gave him a lesson in jumping and then my wife rode him quietly about the place and made him jump hurdles for the first time in his life. Her fine horsemanship, the like of which had never before been seen in South Africa, created a great sensation. We then did a lot of interesting work with some other horses and a mule and finished a very trying evening in a satisfactory manner. Despite the giving away of the gates we did not do very badly for we took £173 out of which we had about £140 profit. Had the gate stood firm, the sum might have run into four figures."

("It should in justice be added that Mrs Hayes achieved a similar triumph in Pretoria—as such a fine riding feat by any man, let alone a lady, had never before been seen by the assembled Boers, their habitual stolidity gave way to enthusiasm and they warmly praised and cheered the Englishwoman. So pleased were they that the men of the Boer Artillery which was the only corps that wore uniform, always saluted my wife in military style whenever they saw her as long as we remained in Pretoria.")

The leasing of its Grounds for such enterprises, the Hall, the Bar, lockers and other amenities, together with subscriptions and entrance fees, provided the Wanderers with revenue of £2,770 in 1892. It was the biggest consortium of sporting clubs and recreational interests in the sub-continent but its income never kept pace with the bounding ideas of its Committee. The growing population of the town — tensed, uneasy and unstable—clamoured for diversion and the Wanderers conceived its provision as a holy duty. Now it had recourse to a further issue of £100 debentures to finance the building of the long-promised Social Club which, said the chairman confidently and breathlessly, “should prove a great boon to the members of the Club as well as materially assist in pulling the Gymnasium together and afford more dressing-room accommodation for the athletic and cycling sections and tend in great measure to establish *esprit de corps* among the members besides increasing the number of members of the Parent Club and adding to the general revenue.”

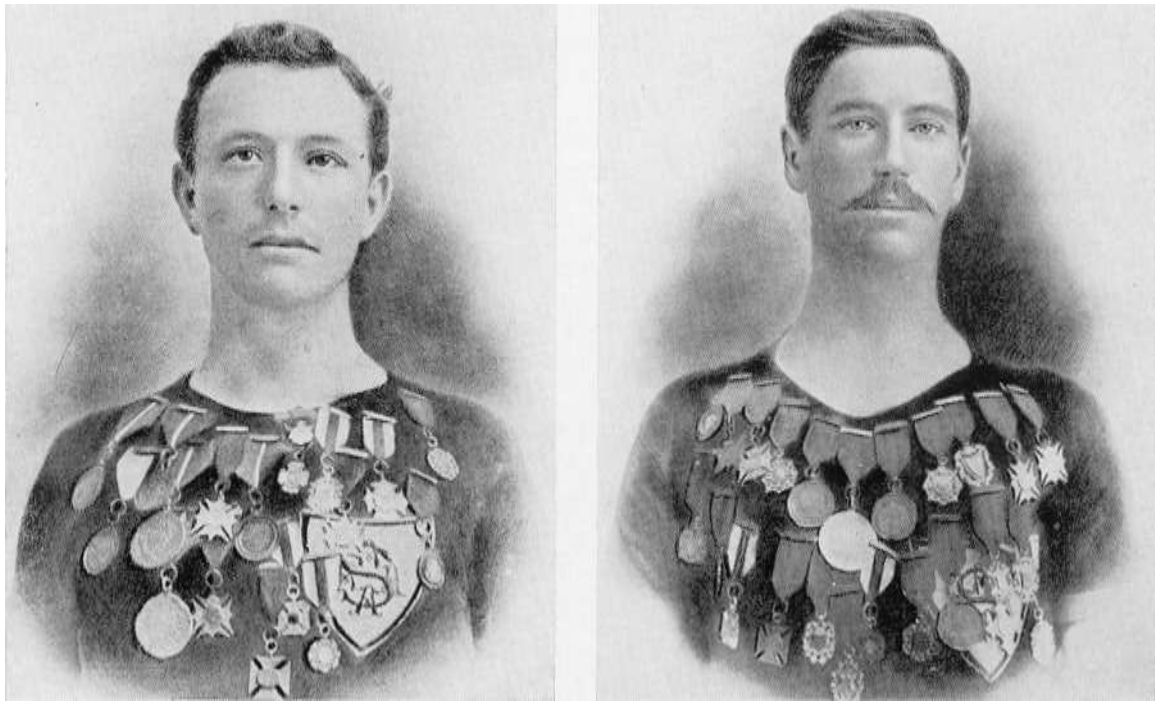
Then a heavy blow fell. Hermann Eckstein died. No man had worked harder to establish and stabilise the gold mining industry with a settled community to serve it. His quiet confidence and unimpeachable integrity had been one of the rocks on which Johannesburg was founded and the Wanderers Club was similarly indebted to him. The weight of his work and responsibilities had ruined his health but no one construed his attacks of faintness as a failing heart. He went to Germany to take the Kur at Kissingen but Kissingen killed him. Its regimen was totally unsuited to coronary affliction and on the 17th January 1893, at the age of forty four, he suddenly died in the arms of his wife. Johannesburg came to a full stop. No comparable tragedy had yet occurred in the raucous city and the shock was paralytic.

At the annual meeting of the Wanderers Club a month later, Currey announced with emotion—“Your Committee have to record with deep sorrow the death of the President of the Club, Mr Hermann Eckstein. He was one of the founders of the Club, assisted it in every possible way during trying times and was its President for four years. His loss will be deeply regretted by every member.” The portrait commissioned by the Chamber of Mines had been almost completed when Eckstein had left and Duffus now finished it from photographs. “All who have seen it”, wrote the *South African Mining Journal*, “concur both as to the excellence of the likeness and as to its high artistic merit. We are glad to hear that a duplicate is in course of preparation at the request of the Wanderers Club of which Mr Eckstein was also president.” The annual meeting confirmed the Committee’s suggestion that it be hung the hall of the Club House.

Twenty years later, when the Rand had endured a Raid, a War, strikes, near-revolution and infinite vicissitude, there could still be said – “Among the men who will be a pleasant memory to all pioneers is Hermann Eckstein—the whitest, most gentlemanly man who ever wore boots in Johannesburg”. His portrait endured similar vicissitude. No one knows how it escaped the great fire of 1898 or what then became of it but in 1965, it was rescued from perdition and restored without ceremony to the hall of the Club House.

George Farrar was elected to his place and singular departures were made from the previous structure of the Club’s administration, embodied in a new set of printed Rules of which one Scrapbook copy survives. The original Parent Committee of 15 members was abolished and an Executive Committee instituted consisting of twelve members, seven to be debenture holders elected by members and five to be ordinary members not necessarily holding debentures. The office-bearers for 1893 were:

<i>Honorary President:</i>	Captain von Brandis
<i>Honorary Vice-President:</i>	J. B. Taylor
<i>President:</i>	George H. Farrar
<i>Vice-President:</i>	Carl Hanau
<i>Committee:</i>	J. G. Currey, G. Sonn, Abe Bailey, F. Eckstein (Hermann’s brother), J. Jeppe, Harold Solomon, D. J. Pullinger—debenture-holders; and S. W. Jameson, F. Schloesser, A. D. Dowling, H. W. Fox and J. C. Kirkwood.



The famous brothers Phillip J. and Pieter Blignaut who were equally proficient as athletes and cyclists for all distances and dominated the track from the early 90's onwards

A more startling departure was the admission of ladies as full members but without a vote, and of persons who were not active participants in any of the sub-clubs. Finally, "after a great deal of discussion, a bonus of 100 guineas was voted to Mr Andersson, the Secretary, whose services to the Club were highly spoken of and the Committee were recommended to pay the bonus when the finances would permit".

Mr Andersson was faced with the most trying period of his service. The cyclists and their satellites had got out of hand. From 1892 onwards, the era of the pedalists extended and Laurens Meintjies held sway over a growing gathering of aspirant champions. Popular excitement at the races had reached the proportions of mania and all kinds of unscrupulous characters invaded the Wanderers Grounds to take advantage of it. Not only was betting conducted on a large scale but the "fixing" of races began to mar a previously clean sport. On the 5th January 1893, the following appeared in all newspapers:

Notice to Bookmakers and Others
NO PUBLIC BETTING

Will be permitted within the Ground of the Wanderers Club. Anyone found contravening this regulation will be peremptorily expelled from the grounds and prosecuted according to law.

By Order of the Committee

Despite the cooperation of the Cyclists Union, Tattersalls and all decent interests, it had little effect and the Club continued to be bedevilled by gambling and malpractices until well into the twentieth century. One of its most sacred aims was the maintenance of "pure" sport but the tension and tumult of the nineties made its fulfilment almost impossible. Gambling had become endemic, one of its favourite forms being ratting. Terriers were specially imported and, on a signal recorded on a stop-watch, were introduced into pits containing a given number of rats, the time taken to kill 6, 8, 12 or 20 being clocked against the performance of contestants. 300 rats (always in good supply in the Golden City) might be killed in this manner in an afternoon's "sport". Dog-fighting, though illegal,



A typical Sports Meeting at Wanderers in the 90's with Jacob Swart (right) acting as starter for the cyclists

Left to right: Meintjies, Ochse, Celliers and Clews

was equally popular and though men were fined for setting one dog against another, clandestine contests were continually arranged with heavy wagering.

The number of regular Sports Meetings had now increased and if Andersson were not responsible for the organisation of the highly successful and popular Caledonian Sports and the official Championships staged annually, he was bound to watch the meetings arranged by his own Athletic and Cycling Sections and to fill the gaps with revenue-producing diversions. Great care was given to letting the Wanderers Grounds as the public inevitably held the Club responsible for whatever occurred. There were some very extraordinary events staged by lessors for which it could not have vouched.

Andersson could be happy with the historic exhibition in January 1893 in the Wanderers Hall of a model of the U.S.S. *Scot* (Union Steam-Ship Co.) to which the public was admitted at the customary "bob a time". The *Scot* had broken all records by making the voyage from England to South Africa in 14 days—a feat that stood unchallenged for a great many years. 400 miles from the sea, the inhabitants of Johannesburg could marvel at the racing lines of the wonder ship in the most reputable hall in town. Exhibited elsewhere, it would have ranked as a vulgar peepshow or cheap stunt. No riots ensued.

Disturbances occurred on many other occasions. Much advertising proclaimed the ascent by balloon of "Professor Price" on the 13th January 1893 at the Wanderers. He had failed elsewhere through lack of gas but the gas factory was conveniently on the other side of the Wanderers fence and success was assured. The public was invited to pay 3s 6d for a seat in the Pavilion and 2s 6d to stand in the grounds—high charges for those days—and at an additional fee, they might make ascents in the gas-filled captive balloon before the intrepid aeronaut took off. On the great day, a mighty wind blew and the inflated envelope strained against its containing net. Many men were holding it down when, suddenly, a gust

blew the balloon out of its net "capsizing those holding it. It went over the iron fence surrounding the Gas Works, fell on a wagon—first tearing a hole in the texture about twenty feet long—and then, to make the damage worse, bounced over on to a barbed-wire fence." The affair was a debacle and the public clamoured for the return of its money. The balloon had cost Price £120 and he was ruined. A "benefit" was staged for him at the Theatre Royal and he made numerous other attempts with a hot-air balloon but the Wanderers had learnt its lesson and never leased its grounds to him again.

It had a harder one to learn. In March 1893, Andersson contracted with a certain G. C. Hoffman, "late Pyrotechnical Officer in the German Navy" for a fireworks display and arranged with James Hyde for the Wanderers Orchestra to provide a programme. Much play was made of the fact that as Herr Hoffman had himself manufactured the exhibits, local industry should be supported. Thousands of people paid admission on a beautiful still dark night (£350 was taken) to see a show that "will excel any display of fireworks hitherto seen". It did—but not as Andersson had anticipated.

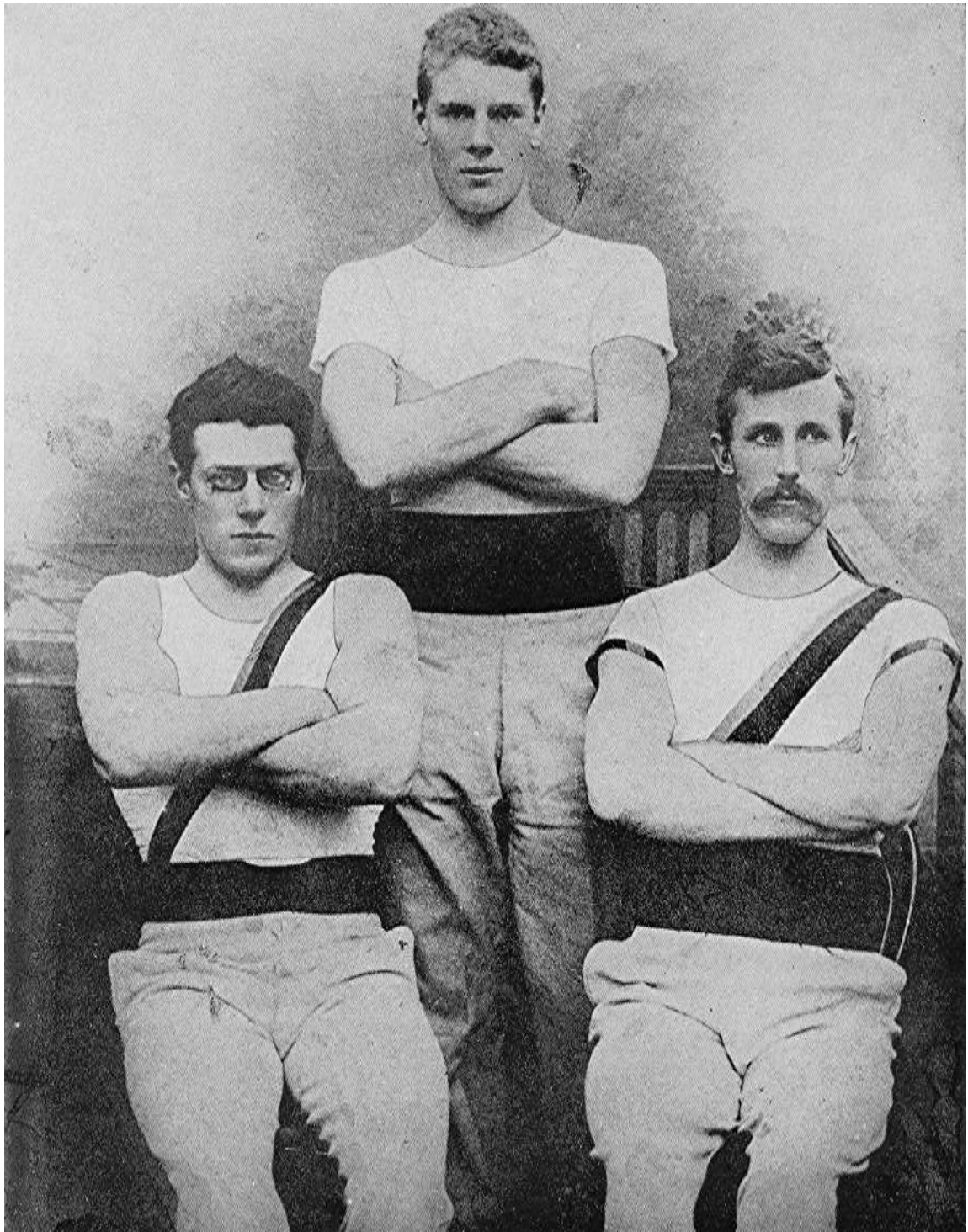
"The programme luxuriously advertised for last night's fireworks display was one of the finest works of fiction ever produced in South Africa barring a few company prospectuses of the dear old days", wrote *The Star*, "It is to be regretted that the Wanderers Club has again been associated with one of these impudent assaults on the public pocket. It was not a private venture with the ground merely hired from the Committee but one directly under the auspices of the Club. The Club risks unpopularity by such fiascos..." All that had occurred was "a miserable feeble squibby show" saluted by derisive cheers, jeers and laughter. "If a few damp squibs could have been affixed to the coat-tails of the managers of the show", said *The Star* severely, "they would have got nothing more than their deserts". Fortunately the crowd was good-humoured. Herr Hoffman endeavoured to exonerate the Club in a published letter saying it was all his fault and he would redeem himself at another display but the Wanderers gave him no further opportunity.

Instead—in July 1893 when another financial crash had depressed the town—they leased the grounds to Mr W. B. Gardner for a series of displays. The Johannesburg public adored fireworks and at a time of gloom and despair, noise and spectacle were ideal distractions. Mr Gardner also manufactured his own pyrotechnics and his first display was a success. Andersson and his wife confidently went off to the Cape for a six week holiday.

On the night of the 5th July, in perfect weather, thousands congregated on the Wanderers Grounds to see Mr Gardner's second display. The piece de resistance was to be "Versuvius in Eruption" which he had contrived from a 40-foot length of iron piping intended to erupt slowly in a fountain of fire. When Mr Gardner lit the "bomb", the whole instantly exploded hurling shrapnel into the crowd and grievously wounding a large number of people. The legs of a man named Retief and of a Chinaman were so badly broken that they had to be amputated. Most of a boy's foot was "taken nearly clean off" and surgeons removed almost all the remainder. The legs of other spectators and the wrist of a lady were broken and there were many minor casualties from the hurtling fragments of iron piping. The Club was deeply distressed but could not be held responsible.

Even this calamity failed to cure the Johannesburg public of its passion for pyrotechnics and more displays on the Wanderers grounds were promised. It mattered to no one that the deafening noise and blinding flashes of light excruciated the patients in the General Hospital, recently arisen a few hundred yards from the Grounds and the Wanderers jealously defended their right to promote public displays, however noisy.

The Club had fought its way through a tentative stage and had indisputably become the social centre of the town. It might be disastrously in debt to its debenture holders but it had the backing of the high and the mighty and could even afford to be hoity-toity about its status. When Lionel Phillips, president of the Chamber of Mines, went on long leave to Europe in April 1893, he gave the most memorable Costume Ball ever held in Johannesburg at the Wanderers Hall. The whole *bon ton*, both local and *uitlander*, attended



Wanderers Amateur Gymnastics Society, 1894; Louis Wertheim, Hon. Instructor; R. Cruickshanks, Hon. Boxing Instructor; Duncan McLachlan, Captain

and many a magnate was to be seen in very strange attire. (One of Phillips' tasks in England was to arrange a visit of a South African cricket team to the "Home Country" which duly took place in 1894 with the indefatigable Billy Simkins as manager and "Barberton" Halliwell as wicket-keeper.) Even more prestigious was the ceremonial visit of Her Britannic Majesty's High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Cape, the heavily-bearded Sir Henry Loch who, with Lady Loch, was officially received at the Wanderers Grounds as the appropriate meeting place for the people of Johannesburg, later attended a Sports Meeting and was entertained at the Wanderers Hall in July 1893. The local committee, entrusted by the State President with his reception (it included several Wanderers officials), commanded a concert and James Hyde, his Orchestra, the new Wanderers Choral Society and various soloists surpassed themselves for the distinguished audience. The programme began with "God Save the Queen" and ended with the republican "Volkslied". The Club gained cubits in stature.

Its sponsorship of sporting activities went on unabated and, before the whole of Johannesburg was brought to its knees financially by the end of 1893, it had made of its sporting meetings a veritable treasure-hunt. The costliness of the prizes exceeded all previous inducements and the champions were weighed down by chestfuls of gold and silver medals and cartloads of trophies. This was the heyday of the runners and cyclists—of the Blignaut brothers (of whom it was said of Philip that "really it is time he got married, he must have a houseful of silverware", and Pieter was no less well endowed) and of the cyclists Laurens Meintjies, Papenfus, Brink, Ochse, McLachlan, Newby Fraser (later the Club's auditor) and others. A "second-class" rider of the time was Frank Connock. Magnificent floating trophies of cups and shields for the various cycling distances moved from one champion to the other and the personal prizes were extremely rich. Now museum pieces in the Club's custody are a beautiful plated tea kettle on a spirit tripod awarded as a first prize at the Wanderers Club Sports of May 1893 for the 2-mile Walking Handicap, and a fine silver inkstand awarded as a second prize at the June meeting to C. Southey in the 3-mile Safety Bicycle Handicap.

The riding of Laurens Meintjies was so outstanding that the Wanderers Club contributed £400 (which should have reimbursed debenture holders) to a fund to send him overseas. In England and America, he rode in every distance from 3 to 50 miles, breaking records all the way. During August and September 1893 in the U.S.A., he broke sixteen records. At home, Club cyclists chucked their chests and became more uppity than ever. The betting evil on tire track was no better, indeed worse, and the crowd grew larger and larger. In the middle nineties, there were only two popular idols—the Queen whose birthday was always wildly celebrated, and the racing cyclists.

As 1893 deteriorated into the blackest year of the Rand's history, the Wanderers suffered severely. The Social Club, built in 1892 at a cost of £3,000 of which only £900 was met by subscriptions, and including billiard, reading, smoking and card rooms, proved a dead loss and Currey mournfully reported that if the Committee had been able to foresee "that times would be so bad", they would never have built it. The influx of new people had not meant an increase in income but, in the picturesque language of a disillusioned member, "the average cash pressure to the square inch decreased as the surface over which it was spread expanded". There were protests at the Club's extravagance but it pressed gamely on and sponsored an ambitious Christmas Carnival in honour of its fifth anniversary, duly commemorated in a special brochure. This historic publication had the courage to report faults and failings and the deterioration in the spirit of sportsmanship first engendered by the gentlemen players which the Club had been constituted to encourage and had tried to preserve.

The membership was now 600. A veil was drawn over the defunct Cricket Club but hard words were printed about the footballers. "The lessons which the combined play of the English Rugby Team of 1891 and their absolute obedience to the Captain's authority, should have inculcated, must be admitted not to have borne much fruit. The Wanderers team lacked in great measure that unity of purpose and pure unselfishness of play which do so much to strengthen a team by the force of cohesion and indifference to personal glorification. The material of the Rugby team is excellent but that silent respect with which it is customary to treat instructions from the Captain or decisions of Umpires, is largely conspicuous by its absence."

The Soccer players fared no better—the play was of good class but the men seemed unable to rely on one another and failed in combined attack. No one is too old to listen to and profit by competent coaching and it is very much to be regretted that individual selfishness and a desire to earn the plaudits of the gallery, should interfere with silent obedience to the decisions of Umpires and Referees.

The Tennis Club which had staged a Transvaal Tournament attracting players from Natal, was almost immaculate and the reviving Gymnasium which was specially active in winter, also passed muster except for the enigmatic statement—"Some of the members have attained a great degree of proficiency, though in such branches as squad-marching and club swinging, the lady members run the men very close"

The Bicycle Club "flourishes apace and its periodical sports attract large crowds. It might be wished that the betting fraternity were a trifle less prominent at the meetings detracting as it does from the purely amateur aspect of the affair."

The Dramatic Society tottered on but Hyde had made of the Choral Society (or Wanderers Zang Vereeniging) of 90 voices a remarkable success. He had also deeply entrenched the Orchestra and Military Band (which alternated at concerts every Sunday) in the public's affection and it was now possible successfully to stage a Promenade Concert every Wednesday evening as well. He had his own troubles. Several of the amateur members of the Orchestra stamped out in a pet. When asked at the annual meeting for the reason, he replied—"The Committee never take off their hats to us, ask us how we are getting on or say the music is very nice." Virtue needed to be rewarded but the Committee's eyes were only on the gate. The debenture holders were not being exigent about their interest and W. P. Taylor, one of the largest among them, proclaimed that he had wanted to encourage sport, not to make a profit— but dark days were ahead.

The old war-horses—Currey, Jeppe, Pullinger, W. P. Taylor, Bailey and Jacob Swart—were now reinforced by W. H. Rogers, Harold Solomon, J. C. Kirkwood, F. W. Smith, Woodthorpe T. Graham (a man of very varied interests connected with Rhodes and Beit, and a director of the Argus Group), and S. White on the new committee. They elected Rogers to the chair. The trees around the ground had grown tall the membership had increased and the town itself, despite bad times, had expanded in all directions and looked upon the Wanderers as its heart. Carl Hanau went overseas and never returned to the Club as an office-bearer. Abe Bailey, as usual, went to England where in July, he received a cable from the Club congratulating him on his marriage. He was trying to find a cricket coach. In the Golden City, discontent and fury at the Government's failure to meet basic needs fermented and bubbled and angry meetings of the National Union were held at Fillis' Amphitheatre.

The Wanderers went its way. It had become "a thoroughly representative and useful institution, the equal of which probably does not exist anywhere else in the colonies. The interest which all sections of local society from the financier to the clerk and the store assistant manifest in the Wanderers Club continues just as keen as ever and it is in a fair way to show an even better record for 1894 than it has done for the last year", chirruped *The Star*. In a sense, the Wanderers provided a safety valve to the boiling flood of emotion that swept through what were now mature men of the town. They were expected to deal with all their own ills—smallpox, lack of sanitation, inefficient police, lack of public amenities, damaging impediments to the gold mining industry—and restraint was an unfamiliar virtue. The mining moguls stood aloof but the rank and file of the town increasingly raged. They found only temporary surcease in the unending diversions of their Club (now including a large Conservatory with "commodious summer house adjacent") which was constantly attended by crowds numbering thousands.

New heroes arose on the track (the first Championship Meeting of the S.A. Amateur Athletic Association which Llewellyn Andersson had helped to found with Abe Bailey as president, was held at the Wanderers Grounds in March 1894) and beguiled the crowds and the bookmakers. T. B. Parker and the Blignaut brothers dominated athletics and also invaded the cycling Section (for which the Club, with the help and advice of Laurens Meintjies, had built a new banked track) where Frank Connock had risen to the top and with Greathead and Griebenow, challenged the supremacy of Papenfus, McLachlan and Brink. New and handsome trophies were offered for competition - the Mappin & Webb Challenge Cup for the 440 yards Championship was first won in January 1894 and ultimately reverted to the Club's custody.

Sometimes the Contestants behaved like real heroes. In May 1894, the 50 mile race for cyclists was ridden during rain followed by a driving hailstorm. Battered, frozen and excoriated, the competitors fell out one by one, leaving only Brink automatically pedalling in a state of coma. After nearly three hours, he had completed the course but, totally unconscious, pedalled on. Men ran on to the track and caught his cycle but could not lift him from it until his rigid fingers had been prised from the handlebars. When he regained his wits, he was presented with a purse by the incredulous bystanders who had watched his display of courage and energy.



The Wanderers Pavilion and grounds in the middle of the 90's when Johannesburg had bloomed

The supercharged atmosphere of the sporting meetings produced undesirable results and the Committee was hard put to maintain the Wanderers' devotion to "pure" sport, especially in cycling which tremendously appealed to the young. It was then, as Frank Connock always pointed out, the fastest thing on wheels and captivated adolescent imagination. Yearning to emulate the bemedalled feted champions, racing youths resorted to foul means to dispose of adversaries and Wanderers track officials had to be both keen-eyed and brawny to deal with them. "We have had to perform some painful duties", the chairman Rogers duly reported, "in meting out rather severe punishment on some members for questionable conduct on the track. These judgements were only arrived at after very patient and careful enquiry by the combined committees of the Parent Club, the Cycling Sections and the Cyclists' Union and it is hoped that this will put a stop to these malpractices. If we could only get hold of some of the blacklegs who tempt the boys to do wrong, we are prepared with some very condign punishment for them." Cyclist members were warned off the track for varying periods and some were expelled altogether.

Worse were the bookmakers whom the Committee wished to prohibit altogether although some members thought that their activities should be regularised. "This cannot for one moment be thought of", Rogers stated, "as apart from the damage it is bound to do amateur sport, it is in direct conflict with the laws of the S.A. Amateur Athletic Association". The bookies remained and in time became a minor factor in the Wanderers' struggle to maintain the values of true sportsmanship.

The creeping tentacles of other changes now beset them. In 1894, the Railways summarily closed the level crossing which gave direct access to the Club along Joubert Street. The Club obtained an interdict which was not sustained by the High Court and access from the town was then confined to a temporary crossing from Rissik Street. The Committee found it difficult to understand why the Club, an amenity and an advantage to the town and much beloved by all its Citizens, should thus be harassed but even the rudimentary Town Council, the Sanitary Board, failed to help it.



The Wanderers Amateur Orchestral Society – with its organiser and conductor James Hyde, in the centre and Ernest Lezard, (standing extreme right front)

In other fields, developments were satisfactory. In March 1895, the Club inaugurated a series of four Cinderella Dances of which a circular to all members still exists. A Roller Skating Rink had been inaugurated in a new hall which was also let for meetings and other events and produced satisfactory revenue. Even if the Wanderers cricket team could no longer hold up its head, all matches organised by the Transvaal Cricket Union were played on its grounds. Tennis boomed and was rewarded by the building of a special pavilion. The Transvaal Rugby Union refused to come to terms over a lease of the Wanderers fields and began a dispute which lasted for years but the Club recouped its loss by leasing the fields to Soccer teams who were becoming increasingly popular.

The Gymnasium, long a variable factor, began a new life under the captaincy of Duncan McLachlan assisted by Louis Wertheim, R. Cruikshank (a talented boxer), Jacques Lelie (famous for his work at Marist Brothers) and the able and energetic E. J. Platnauer. Greatest joy and ornament of the Club remained James Hyde with the Orchestra, Military Band and Choral Society which not only delighted the public but produced solid and regular revenue. It was always intended to give the long suffering Hyde (whose salary was £40 a month) a handsome honorarium but the state of the Club's finances perennially prevented it. Shamed by constant empty praises, his musical colleagues organised a "Benefit" for him in 1894.



Officials of the Wanderers Club who controlled the cycling sports of November 1894, Jacob Swart, seated on the right

The Club's finances were always disturbing. Successive committees protested that they had to keep pace with the developing sections and spend money on appropriate amenities. They could manage to pay the 10% interest on debentures and the holders continued complaisant, but there was nothing with which to face the redemption of shares totalling £12,300 (many of the owners accepted £75 for their original £100 shares). Liabilities totalled £17,000 but they went gaily ahead, proposing to establish a "sinking fund" whose interest would meet the amounts due on debentures. There were slight variations in committee members (Pullinger became a vice-president and Henry Nourse joined the Committee) but the financial nettle was not firmly grasped. Nothing was very stable in those troublous times.

The beautiful simplicity of the Government's lease of 1890 entailed what the Chairman called "several hampering obligations". The public's right of access to Kruger's Park prevented the Club from taking action against malefactors, especially vagrants, inebriates, trouble-makers and of course the bookmakers. It was obliged to spend half of its profits on improvements without being empowered to raise money on either grounds or buildings. Despite the prevailing unrest—and for the whole of 1895, the explosive atmosphere was at trigger-touch—a determined effort was made to have the lease altered to give the Club appropriate powers. Dr Leyds was in Europe but the Acting State Secretary, Cornelis van Boeschoten, dealt with the persuasive Swart and other members of the Committee. The matter was laid before the Uitvoerende Raad in Pretoria and on the 17th October 1895—when detonation was imminent—it resolved to cancel the previous lease and to replace it by another giving the Club additional powers, notably in raising loans secured by its property to a maximum of £15,000 and in reserving the right of admission and controlling persons on its grounds.

After selling his racing interests to Friedie Eckstein, David Pullinger had gone to England and Jacob Swart remained the sole trustee of the Club. On the 26th November 1895, he went to Pretoria to sign the new lease on its behalf (see Appendix II) and vistas of expansion and improvements appeared to open. The market had slumped disastrously but at least the way was clear for the Wanderers to extricate themselves from their multiple debt to the debenture holders (all of whom were made Life Members) and to provide new revenue-producing amenities.

Every known calamity afflicted Johannesburg and the Wanderers Club during 1895—torrential rains which ruined the tennis tournament and some cycling meetings, continuous public unrest, a declining market, even locusts. Llewellyn Andersson, pioneer of the Club and its able and enthusiastic secretary from the outset, resigned after six years of devoted and distinguished service on the 30th April 1895 "to take up the appointment of responsible clerk in the firm of Messrs McNellan & McCallum". In deference to his early efforts on the Club's account, the newspapers described him as 'the popular secretary of the Wanderers Club for the last eight years'. His place was taken by L. Balgarrie.

The ominous political situation brought Alfred Beit in May from London to Johannesburg as well as a large number of overseas notabilities. The Wanderers Hall and the competitive Masonic Hall constantly rang with banquets, balls and receptions. Life was still hectic and gay and when "little Alfred" gave a splendid farewell Costume Ball at the Masonic Hall in June 1895, the president of the Chamber of Mines was garbed as "Folly". Within six months, Lionel Phillips had earned the title. Beit's visit temporarily steadied the market but when he left, it began its downward trend until, by October, a crash had supervened. Years of discontent had produced a situation which could be resolved only by drastic event. A large proportion of the Wanderers' senior members were involved but outwardly, the Club proceeded along its appointed ways showing no recognition of the state of affairs except in the letting of its halls for political meetings.

The usual Sports and Championship Meetings, even more heavily attended than previously, were held throughout the year and all Johannesburg hung on the cable news and later the overseas newspapers to hear how the team of athletes which the S.A.A.A.A. had sent to England would fare against world champions. It consisted of H. D. Gradwell of Graham's Town, P. Hunter of Kimberley and the Blignaut brothers of the Transvaal. As representatives of South Africa (then only a name without actuality), they wore green and gold blazers with the S.A.A.A.A. badge on the pocket. One of the blazers owned by a Blignaut survives as a treasured item in the Wanderers' collection of sporting Africana and is considered historically to be the first Springbok blazer. The Blignauts ran extremely well at many meetings throughout the British Isles and proved that South Africa could produce world-class athletes. "They returned, the record states, "full of honours and laden with prizes. Their fine performances were acknowledged at a banquet in Johannesburg."

For the increasing membership, now standing at over 700, the Club built a bowling or skittles alley which immediately showed a profit. The Skating Rink had proved an outstanding success and the Gymnasium, fired by new instructors and mounting enthusiasm, resumed its old popularity but the Social Club remained a failure. Intense and troublous times, people wanted to let off steam, not sit around. For the same reason, they loved the sound and verve of James Hyde's orchestras which had become a Johannesburg institution, and the noise and spectacle of Fireworks Displays which, conducted by D. Mitchell, the Club itself now staged.



SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKET TEAM IN ENGLAND 1894

Back row: D. C. Davey, C. O. Sewell, W. V. Simkins (Manager), G. Rowe, G. Glover, C. Mills
Middle row: G. Kempis, G. Cripps, H. H. Castens (Captain), C. L. Johanson, A. W. Seccull
Bottom row: F. Hearne, J. Middleton, E. A. Halliwell, D. C. Parkin

A tremendous sporting event stood on the horizon. Toward the end of the year, Abe Bailey had gone to England to arrange, among other things, a tour early in 1896 of an English cricket team led by the famous Lord Hawke, idol of the overseas cricketing public. The Wanderers Cricket Club might still be moribund but there were first-class players along the Reef and in the Transvaal generally. Excellent matches could be anticipated and the local teams might be reanimated. The Club Committee began to make preparations. By the end of the year, millions had been lost on the Stock Exchange and disgruntlement reached a new zenith. It was common property that leading men unconnected with the mining houses, planned violent action to force the State to meet their demands. Then, in November 1895, when opening the new building of the Chamber of Mines, its president Lionel Phillips made an inflammatory speech implying that patience had run out and that if the Government would not do so other agencies would enact immediate reforms. Men of the Wanderers were implicated in all the plots and plans that were made. Those who could afford it, sent their wives and children over the border. Hundreds left in a mass exodus. Soon hundreds more streamed in from the isolated mines along the Reef and took what lodgings they could.

The Club gave the appearance of going on as usual. Ostensibly the Christmas and New Year Sports would be held routinely but actually arms and supplies for an insurrection were cached in the north-west corner of the Wanderers Grounds and many of the members held themselves in readiness for catastrophic event. Men and boys came to the Grounds to drill and parade under *Uitlander* officers for police duties and possible action. Abe Bailey, returning from England on the 20th December, joined the Reform Committee which, with one or two exceptions, the mining houses now wholeheartedly supported. Many of its leaders, including the Club's president, George Farrar, were Wanderers members and office-bearers.

On the 31st December 1895, when all hope of a diminution in the state of crisis had vanished and the Wanderers had been forced to cancel their New Year Sports, the fuse was lit. Jameson, standing on the Transvaal border with a small force intended to supervise the building of the railway to Rhodesia, crossed into the Republic ostensibly to protect the women and children of the Rand whose safety was menaced by the state of unrest and the advantage which might be taken of it by the thousands of natives working on the mines and in the town.

The Wanderers Club, like every other public institution, came to a dead stop. The town was in an uproar.

