



7. THE UNHAPPY INTERREGNUM

1898—1901

The Wanderers Club had started as a “recreation park” on the bare periphery of a mining camp. In ten years, it had become the largest sporting centre in the southern hemisphere with a worldwide reputation. Below it lay the commercial and administrative centre of the biggest gold mining industry ever developed and above, on either side, were the “best” suburbs, notably Doornfontein. It was within walking distance and a short drive by carriage, trap or horse-tram of the maximum number of Johannesburg’s people, including the socially elite. The loss of its Club House and particularly the Dance Hall/Gymnasium was a calamity of the first order both to the people of the Golden City and to the Club itself.

The Committee was immediately confronted with three major problems which it attacked with unwavering energy—the re-building of the Club House, the institution of new forms of revenue-production while the major source was incapacitated, and the increase of its loan raising powers. The £15,000 which it was entitled to raise in the terms of the revised lease was manifestly inadequate to its grand ideas of reconstruction.

The Norwich Insurance Company quickly paid £7,649 which was only £150 less than the amount claimed but every day that passed without a revenue-producing Club House with hall, Bar, supper-rooms etc. involved the Club in loss. Much was improvised in the Social Club and Skating Rink. Ernest Lezard arranged for the hire of a Steinway Grand at £6 a month (it could be bought for £225) and the Sunday Concerts at 2s. a head (the early days of “a bob a time” were over) were held at limited capacity, but desperate urgency inhered in the provision of proper premises and the money to pay for them.

The Committee turned to its architect-foundation member, A. H. Reid who immediately prepared plans for a Pavilion-Club House costing £8,629. It is not now known whether the Committee considered it unsatisfactory or whether, as subsequent events indicated, the local architects strongly objected to being excluded. The matter was reconsidered and on the 28th April 1898, an advertisement was published in all newspapers calling for anonymous entries in a competition for the design of a new building, the closing date being the 15th June. The first prize was £200, the second £100 and the third £50. Friedie Eckstein contributed £100 on behalf of the Corner House. When the time came to inspect

the twenty entries, the Committee called in the Town Engineer, C. A. Aburrow and his assistant G. S. B. Andrews to act as judges of the unnamed competitors. No one could have been much surprised when the winner was revealed to be A. H. and W. Reid. The second prize was awarded to W. Leck (who, with Emley, designed much of Johannesburg in the nineties), the third to Reid's previous partner, P. H. McCowat and the fourth to Ebler and Beardwood. All four were then asked to submit detailed estimates before the award of the contract could be made.

Three months later, while agonising over the Government's dragging its feet in granting increased borrowing powers, the Committee rejected all the designs with estimated costs. Nothing further could be done until the money could be raised. Johannesburg's architects then threatened to sue the Club for failing to make an award and Jacob Swart was hurriedly sent to consult the famous silk, J. W. Leonard and ensure that he demanded no fee. The architects derived cold comfort from the letter they then received stating that "although the Committee do not wish in any way to be rude to you, they cannot recognise your Association in the matter". It was then December 1898 and the Club's affairs had become desperate.

Nearly a year had passed since the destruction of the Club House and frenzied attempts had been made to induce the Government to amend the lease. In May, Julius Jeppe (a burgher and *persona grata* in Pretoria) went to see the State Secretary, Dr Leyds who promised all assistance. A month later, nothing had happened and Jeppe buttonholed the previous Surveyor-General Johann Rissik who promised to bring the Club's application before the Volksraad. Then Jeppe went to Pretoria and again saw Dr Leyds who assured him in July that it "would be considered by the Executive at an early date". In August, the Committee sent a telegram to Rissik, begging him to expedite the loan facilities but obviously jiggery-pokery typical of the times was again afoot.

Then the blow fell. Jeppe received a letter from Dr Leyds stating that the Volksraad declined to increase the Club's borrowing powers. He went immediately to Pretoria to interview the State Secretary and discussion revealed that the decision was due to a misunderstanding. If the Club sent a delegation, Leyds said, the Executive Council would receive it favourably. Julius Jeppe, Jacob Swart and H. A. Rogers duly waited on the Uitvoerende Raad and made their case. A torturing delay ensued. After three months, the Committee moved among its friends in high places and late in October Johann Rissik wired that the Club's application had been referred to the Burgomaster and Mining Commissioner for report. Both were friends but the ball was obviously being passed. Then in November, the Government telegraphed permission to the Club to raise only £5,000 additional to the £15,000 the lease permitted. It was not enough.

There was only one *Uitlander* who unhesitatingly had the ear of President Kruger and enjoyed his complete confidence—Sammy Marks. Once a peddler but now one of the biggest land-owners in the Transvaal, a gold mining capitalist and the concessionaire of liquor-brewing and other industries which he worked hard to develop, Sammy Marks had established so close a relationship with the State President that Mrs Marks was now about to have a baby on his farm Zwartkoppies outside Pretoria but was bidden to come to the Presidency and there Joe Marks was born. The firm of Lewis & Marks enjoyed high favour. Its head was a lawyer Jacobus Nicholaas de Jongh whose office was in Johannesburg and whose interest in the Wanderers had resulted in his election to the Committee in the place of a resigned member, W. J. Blake.

Samuel Marks, vital intermediary and Life Member
of the Wanderers Club



It was to de Jongh that Julius Jeppe now turned and they both went to Pretoria to lay the Situation before Sammy Marks. As a result, Allsop was instructed to write to Marks confirming the request of the Club that he intervene with the Government in securing increased borrowing powers. Word then came that the Club should also write again to Johann Rissik which was duly done. The wand was waved and at its meeting on the 22nd December 1898 the Committee received a letter from the Mining Commissioner proposing alteration of Clause 5 of its lease of Kruger's Park to enable increased loan. Lawyers Frost and Botha were instructed to alter the lease accordingly and in the absence overseas of his co-trustee David Pullinger, Jacob Swart went alone to Pretoria and signed the altered lease document (see Appendix III). It was confirmed by the Club's chairman, Julius Jeppe, on the 12th January 1899 and at the annual meeting ten weeks later, Sammy Marks, proposed by Jeppe and seconded by Ernest Lezard, was made "a Life Member in recognition of his valuable services in connection with the Club's application to the Government for increased borrowing powers".

All had been planned beforehand and upon authorisation, the loan was immediately raised. Abe Bailey, David Pullinger and Friedie Eckstein for the Corner House had already promised £2,000 each to which Bailey proposed adding £3,000 on guarantee, making a total of £9,000. The Committee members had canvassed the remaining £6,000 to reach the earlier-authorized total of £15,000 which they proposed greatly to exceed.

Disregarding everything previous, the Committee then appointed R. H. McCowat & G. A. H. Dickson as architects to the Club and instructed them to produce detailed plans for a Club House. It was more than a year after the fire that building began. That it began at all was due to the tireless energy and faith of Julius Jeppe. Only on one other occasion was the Club so closely brought to the brink of bankruptcy as in 1898.

All kinds of troubles afflicted Johannesburg and, sympathetically, the Wanderers. In March 1898, a questionable character, Kurt von Veltheim, who had interviewed Barney Barnato in Cape Town, gained entrance to the office of his nephew Woolf Joel, elder brother of Solly, in Johannesburg. In the presence of his manager Harold Strange, Woolf received him. Von Veltheim began his customary blackmailing tactics, the discussion grew heated and suddenly all three drew revolvers. Von Veltheim killed Woolf Joel instantly but missed Strange who ducked. He was arrested, tried and acquitted in a case which remained a *cause célèbre*. The Wanderers Club immediately wrote a letter of condolence to Solly Joel, member of its Committee, and five months later, under the pressure which his brother's

death had caused, he resigned, Harold Strange being elected in his place. (In earlier days, Strange was a noted swimmer.) The interest and support of one of the great mining houses (Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Corporation) was therefore maintained and for many years, the Committee met in its offices, Harold Strange eventually becoming chairman.

The fervid atmosphere of the times was reflected in other ways. Tempers easily flared and none more readily than the cyclists'. The S.A.A.A. frequently advised the Club of the names of competitors whom it should warn off the grounds for malpractices and the Witwatersrand Amateur Cycling Club became so offensive that it was impossible to deal with them. Their periodic Sports Meetings produced satisfactory revenue but they then became excessively demanding and the members of the Committee correspondingly incensed. Sober men like H. Duval (who had befriended J. H. Sinclair) proposed returning the Cyclists' objectionable letters without answer and both Andersson and Cousens refused to deal with them unless they withdrew them as a preliminary to discussing a new track.

The temper of the times was recollected fifty years later by a young man, Victor Kent, a soccer player of the day—"It was at the 1898 meeting of the Caledonian Sports that the only riots ever to take place at the Wanderers occurred. Some of the spectators climbed on to the Gymnasium roof which was unsafe and George Allsop tried to persuade them to get down. They refused and the ZARPS were called. With more zeal than tact, they proceeded to pull the offenders down. This action incensed the crowd which herded the ZARPS into a corner near the dressing rooms. There were frequent blasts on police whistles. Soon the mounted police from the Fort appeared and, unable to get to their companions, they charged the crowd. The position became ugly and several people were injured. Arrests were made and the sports came to an abrupt end."

Over the daily *sturm* and *drang*, the urbane and powerful figure of George Allsop presided and helped to give the Club its tone. While the Committee battled with high finance, it fell to him to ensure that sport was kept "pure" and that no taint of professionalism infected the performances staged at the Wanderers. Many a man was "turned off" by Allsop for bad language, unseemly behaviour or unsporting conduct in races. If the Club served a social purpose by "keeping the hooligans off the streets", it gave itself a serious problem on its own grounds. The Cyclists' Union cooperated and advised him of the names of riders who were suspended, some for life. Occasionally a man became professional like Andries van Heerden who rode in competition with a horse in a show presented by Texas Jack in June 1898 at the Wanderers but he was barred from all other participation. Tattersalls collaborated in combating the betting evil and even advertised that its members were forbidden to attend Sports Meetings but it continued to flourish. Allsop's burly commanding figure, his quiet authority and gentlemanly approach gave meaning to the spirit of the Club but his problems were hydra-headed. Somehow during the 1898/99 season, he managed to captain the Wanderers Cricket Team.

The Club was rapidly drifting towards bankruptcy. With no Hall, James Hyde's best effort could evoke little revenue from concerts (in winter, promenades were impossible) and his Section began to show a loss. He dismissed the professional musicians but the cold weather defeated him and in June, all concerts were stopped. Great efforts had been made to prevent it. "The Queen's Nightingale", Madame Albani had been engaged for concerts under Bonamici's aegis in the Rink Hall. They were very successful, rewarding him with £328 and the Club with £129 from which the cost of a bouquet was deducted. Madame Albani, gracefully deferring to the status of the Club, wrote a letter of thanks. In depressed times, other divas were unfortunately not available.

Hyde went to Europe (a Benefit was given in his honour and £54 was raised) where, during a four month visit he bought large supplies of music, On his return, the Sunday concerts were resumed in November 1898 with both brass band and orchestra to whom four professionals had been added. Admission reverted to 1 shilling (members free of charge) and in summer weather, the performances were an immediate success—to the joy of all.

Miss C. L. Gluyas, Wanderers Lawn Tennis Club
Lady Champion and Champion of the Transvaal



Both the musical and the sporting sections suffered from the destruction of the stands fronting the old Pavilion. In bad weather, Hyde would transfer the Sunday promenade concert to the Rink Hall with varying success.

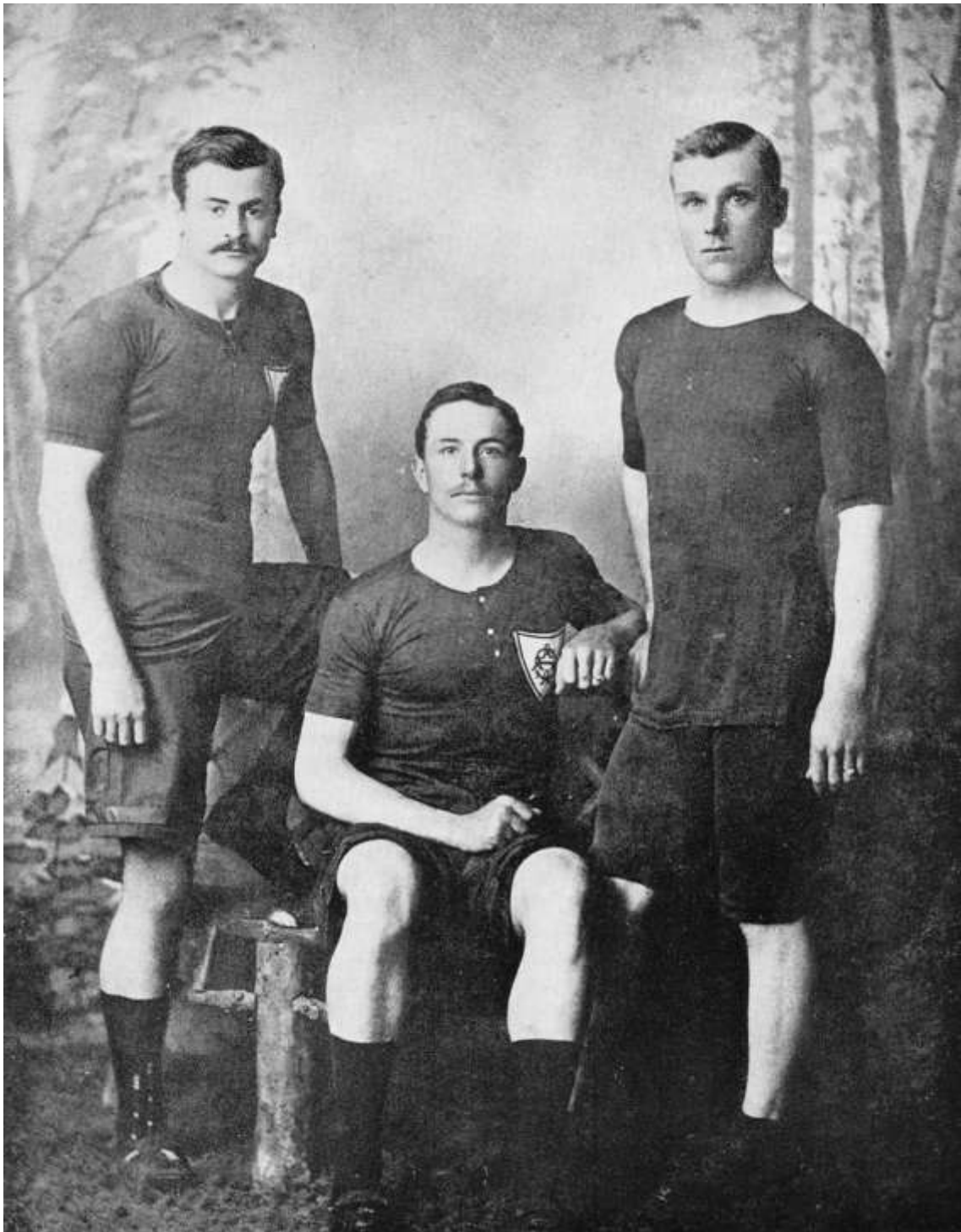
On the 16th January 1899, heavy rain interrupted the programme and the second half was played in the Hall almost inaudibly with the battering on the tin roof. The torrent continued and the audience, without carriages, trams or other means of transport, stayed in the hall until 2 a.m., becoming rowdier and rowdier. Names were taken and the Committee was greatly upset by bad behaviour which ruined the good tone of its premises. Two members of the public were warned off indefinitely and their names publicised in the Press. Always jealous of the Club's good name, the Committee never shirked its duty or counted loss of patronage and revenue in taking drastic action. As many as four cyclists at a time would be warned off for life for malpractices at Sporting Meetings.

The popularity of cycling, as far as Club members were concerned was beginning to wane in the face of an astonishing development in Tennis. Of Wanderers members, 105 cycled in 1898, 92 played Rugby, Soccer had become negligible, 83 played Cricket but 249 played Tennis. It was a non spectator sport, needing no stands, and the six courts were always thronged. The Section showed a profit of £188 and the Committee proposed to build two more courts. A lady member, Miss C. L. Gluyas in trailing skirts with a perpetual border of red dust and long-sleeved high-necked blouse, covered herself and the Club with glory by winning the Club Championship and then becoming Lady Lawn Tennis Champion of the Transvaal. In due course, her photograph was proudly hung in the hall of the new Club House, the responsible Lawn Tennis Club somewhat ungallantly reporting - "Your Committee during 1905 recommended that Miss Gluyas and Mr G. Parkes, two of our oldest members, should be thus honoured".

Similarly honoured were P. J. Blignaut (sprinter), J. M. Griebenow (cyclist) and Harry Morkel (hurdler) who were sent to England for championship meetings and, if they failed to do well (they had insufficient time to acclimatise themselves), nonetheless earned Springbok colours for the Club.

As the calamitous year ended, all Johannesburg awaited a second visit, in February 1899, from Lord Hawke and an English cricket team, destined both to enliven a glooming atmosphere and to restore the Wanderers Club's finances. It did both. Lord Hawke had lost

none of his glamour and his team (much stronger than the previous owing to the improvement in South African cricket) included such famous players as the young Plum



South African Athletes sent to England 1898. H. Morkel (hurdler), P. J. Blignaut (sprinter), J. M. Griebenow (cyclist)

Warner among the amateurs and Tyldesley and Trott among the professionals. Already mortally ill, George Lohmann went down to Cape Town to meet them and to assume managership of the team. Once again Lord Hawke chaffed the Customs officials at Vereeniging into passing the team's baggage without search and once again he arrived at Park under menacing political skies. This time, his hosts including Abe Bailey awaited him and there was much badinage about their previous absence. Hawke refused to go to Pretoria to meet Kruger but two of his team were received at the customary hour of 6 am, and found the President in top hat and frock coat, smoking strong tobacco in a pipe, and adamantly opposed to coming to Johannesburg to watch the matches.

The Wanderers Club had done what they could with their dusty ground and the comment of the English cricketers was unanimous. "It is really faster than any other I recollect, perfectly true but the merest chip shoots to the boundary and as for a blade of grass, it would be more precious than an emerald", wrote Lord Hawke. "Once the ball passes the fieldsman, it is nearly impossible to prevent its reaching the ropes."

Plum Warner was more specific – "The Wanderers Ground is the fastest run-getting ground I know. There is not a blade of grass anywhere, the colour of the soil being a reddish-brown. The wicket is exceptionally fast and the ball simply 'fizzes' to the boundary when hit. The fielding ground is as level as a billiard table and although the ball comes very fast, it always comes true. The pavilion had been recently burnt down but a new one was in course of construction and for the time being, we were made very comfortable in a temporary dressing room."

Popular excitement was greater than ever and the crowds yelled when their idol, J. H. Sinclair, six foot four and twenty-three years of age, came on field as opening bat for South Africa. Sinclair greatly impressed the English team both as a bowler and as a mighty hitter—"one of the best all-rounders in any company I ever met", Lord Hawke reported. Coached by Lohmann, his bowling was very similar and he was able to make the ball "hang". The bat, said Warner, looked like a walking stick in his hands and he used it so mercilessly that at the Test at Newlands, with one gigantic stroke, he smashed it from end to end.

One of the matches in Johannesburg provided the finest finish ever seen and the Wanderers trembled again with almost unbelievable tension. With seven wickets down, the Englishmen were only 67 runs ahead of a combined South African XI when, resuming his innings on the last morning, Plum Warner was dropped. He went on to make a total of 132 not out, leaving the local team to make exactly 132 to win. Once again, Johannesburg came to a standstill as crowds numbering 6,000 flocked to the Wanderers and people wept with excitement. Sinclair and V. Tancred failed and one by one the wickets went while local partisans wrung their hands. "We just got home by 33 runs", wrote Warner modestly. Lord Hawke gave him an inscribed signet ring. The Wanderers might have presented similar testimony—they made £1,606 on the matches and put £200 aside to pay for a cricket coach.

The team continued its tour and at Matjiesfontein in the Karoo where the Scots enthusiast J. D. Logan who had sponsored and arranged the visit, had laid out a primitive "field", George Lohmann got into flannels again though his lungs were fast failing. He "showed his old attractive style of batting, bowled as beautifully as ever with a very short run, and caught yet one more of his brilliant catches at slip", wrote Hawke sadly.

When the dust had settled, the Wanderers prepared for their annual meeting—the last for five years. Although Swan had signed the new financial agreement, the lease had not yet been officially amended and in despair, Jeppe wrote to his friend Melt Marais in Pretoria. Nothing happened and the meeting was held without official confirmation. On the 13th April 1899, Allsop wrote to Sammy Marks requesting his further good offices in getting the



Lord Hawke's Cricket team fielding at the Wanderers (rock hard) grounds in 1899 when the ball "fizzed" to the boundary at almost every stroke

amended lease passed through the Registrar-General's office (it had already been approved by the Executive Council) and within a week, the deed was done. By then, approval had been given by the members to fantastic schemes of improvement and the Club was far advanced in setting its house in order after the great fire. It lacked nothing in confidence for the future which, in the light of Milner's forthcoming conference with Kruger at Bloemfontein, boded no good.

The Committee consulted its lawyers and drafted another set of Rules which was printed for submission to a special meeting prior to the annual on the 24th March 1899. The Club's aims were now even more comprehensive and it was even enabled to traffic in sporting goods. Strict regulations governed amateur status and the candidature of members who could be blackballed by the Committee and who had to belong to sub-clubs. The Committee of twelve was to consist of three Life Members and nine ordinary members elected at the annual meeting. Entrance fee was two guineas and annual subscription £2. "Ladies", said the Rules magnanimously, "shall be eligible for election. The entrance fee for all Lady Members shall be one guinea and the annual subscription shall be one guinea and all Rules and Regulations in the premises shall apply to such Lady Members, it being understood however that such membership shall carry no vote". Rule 25 declared "The colours of the Club shall be old gold, scarlet and black". They had been flying from the Club's masthead for more than ten years.

87 members (squashed into the J.C.I. boardroom) approved the new Rules with minor amendments and Jeppe rose to give his annual report. "Although the result of the past year's working shows a greater loss than any previous report", he said with unbelievable optimism, "I am safe in stating that never in the history of the Wanderers have the Club's prospects been so bright and hopeful." He was not alone in pathetic faith that the Transvaal Government would find a way through the impasse that was rapidly developing. The Corner House, Consolidated Goldfields (Rhodes), David Pullinger, Abe Bailey, Henry Nourse and Jeppe himself were prepared to subsidise the Club in large sums at a time when it was common property that hostilities were unavoidable. It was also common



LORD HAWKE'S CRICKET TEAM IN SOUTH AFRICA - 1899

Back row: G.A. Lohmann, W. R. Cuttall, J. Mitchell, J. Milligan, A.G. Archer, A. A. White
Middle row: S. Haigh, H. R. Bromley Davenport, Lord Hawke, A. E. Trott, A. N. Other
Front Row: I. T. Tyldesley, C. Wilkinson, P.F. Warner

property that should war prove inevitable, the South African Republic would quickly be forced to submit.

It was now possible to assess the damage done by the fire. In 1897, the public had attended to the number of 141,332 and non-paying members 768. In 1898, after the fire, public attendance had been 89,594 and members 612. The shortfall of 52,000 had been ruinous.

Jepe spoke with pride of the continued high standing of the Club as a sporting venue and particularly as the scene of Cycling Championships. To applause, he said—"The racing has been of the highest standard, the proof of which is to be found in the fact that every record from a quarter mile to 50 miles has been reduced in Johannesburg and that in spite of the fact that Cape Town possesses a cement track. The single records from a quarter mile to 11 miles and from 30 to 100 as well as the world's amateur tandem record from one to 30 miles are held here.' There were other triumphs. The Wanderers Cricket team under the captaincy of George Allsop was about to win the Lionel Phillips Cup.

The fascinated members were further told that the Club had been promised £19,500 in £100 debentures but that it was proposed to spend £25,000 on

a new Club House with Grand Hall	£10,000
a banked cement Cycling and Racing Track	£8,000
re-building the Skating Rink	£2,000
Two new football fields	£250
Tennis Courts	£1,000

All this work was already in progress. Work on the cycle track was proceeding and ground was being levelled for two rugby fields. Eight tennis courts were being laid, two asphalt

and six ant-heap, the work being undertaken by that famous Johannesburg character, the Rev. Clement Kelly who had set up a home for indigent Old Men and Young Boys at Auckland Park and who offered their various skills under contract. The Club employed them in the amount of £250.

The new Club House was almost completed and was informally opened on the 14th May 1899. It had been built of brick on the site of the old Hall and Skating Rink and was by comparison of majestic dimensions, seating 2,500. Its iron roof was wood-lined which muted the thundering rain and hail and the acoustics were excellent. The ventilation, as many famous artistes were later to testify, was bad and heat and foul air sometimes rendered it very uncomfortable.

The opening night was a remarkable success. James Hyde presented his orchestra in full force and the guest artiste was the popular Miss May Pollard. Both the event and the prevailing tension encouraged attendance and the Hall was packed, scores standing against the walls. Thereafter all events of public significance in Johannesburg, concerts, political meetings, exhibitions, celebrations, civic receptions and rallies of the citizens— took place in the Wanderers Hall until the opening of the City Hall nearly fifteen years later. At the moment of its opening, war was five months away.

The financial structure of this leap into the future was based on a mortgage loan of £30,000 which was raised on the Club's property together with a further issue of debentures. The Club already owed David Pullinger £15,000 converted into £100 debentures. Additional subscribers to the new debentures bearing 10% interest were initially:

David Pullinger—£2,000
Abe Bailey— £2,000 plus £3,000 as a second subscription
Henry Nourse— £1,000
The Corner House— £2,000
Consolidated Goldfields— £1,000
Julius Jeppe— £1,000
Sundry smaller contributors

The trustees for the debenture holders were the Club's president and first chairman J. G. Currey and David Pullinger whose varying fortunes were to cause inconvenience and trouble. While the world fell about its ears, the Club proceeded with its plans and builders of every kind populated its grounds.

Many new members now joined the Parent Club and the sub-clubs, particularly Gymnastics which had languished through the loss of its equipment but which now revived under the energetic attention of its highly-qualified instructor Barend Vieyra and the enthusiasm of Arthur Ruben. The Sunday Concerts were resumed in the new Hall and the Committee encouraged revenue-producing entertainment additional to the Concerts. From its earliest days, the Club had flirted with the latest electrical devices, then a popular novelty, and apart from Magic Lantern Shows and other established favourites, had leased its hall and grounds to the nascent "bioscope" in the form of "Electroramas" and other rickety projection machines. Now in May 1899, it entered into a contract with "the South African Biograph and Mutoscope Company" by which sixpence-in-the-slot moving picture peepshows like parking meters, were installed in the Grounds and weekly film exhibitions were given in the Rink Hall. The films, even by modern standards, were exceptionally good and the shows were mutually profitable. "Biograph Nights" became a Wanderers institution.

At the same time, Milner and Kruger finally parted after their Bloemfontein Conference, having failed to find a *via media*. The intransigence of the old embittered President who had exclaimed to Milner—"It is not the vote you want but my country!", infuriated the *Uitlanders* who, already organised into militant associations, proposed venting their



Arthur Ruben – ardent Wanderers gymnast and later a member of its committee

Ladies section of the Wanderers Gymnastic Society with their famous instructor Barend Vieyra and Arthur Ruben



feelings in protest meetings. They wanted the Wanderers New Hall and the Committee met specially in Julius Jeppe's office (he himself was absent) to consider their request, H. A. Rogers taking the chair. There was also present W. T. Graham, F. Hilner, Percy Greathead, D. J. Pullinger, H. Duval, T. B. Parker, J. N. de Jongh, J. Swart, H. F. Strange and E. Lezard and the historic minute of the 10th June 1899 reads:

The chairman said the meeting was called for the purpose of considering an application from Messrs H. Hull, W. Dalrymple, C. H. Mullins and W. H. St. J. Carr to obtain the use of the Concert Hall for the purpose of holding a public meeting therein, the object of which meeting was to pass resolutions expressing approval of Sir A. Milner's actions at the late conference at Bloemfontein. He read a letter from them dated the 10th June and conveying their personal security for any damage which might be done to the Club's property.

The Secretary (George Allsop wrote the Minutes in a copybook hand) submitted a copy of the Club's agreement of lease with the Government.

Mr de Jongh said that as the lease was between the Club and the Executive Council, the consent of the Council was necessary before the Club could let the Hall for a public meeting.

Mr D. J. Pullinger said that several townsmen with himself had yesterday seen Dr F. E. T. Krause, First Public Prosecutor, and had requested him to send a telegram to the Government at Pretoria, asking the Government's sanction. This morning, he, with Messrs H. C. Hull and C. H. Mullins had again seen Dr Krause who informed him that the Government had been pleased to grant the permission asked.

RESOLVED that the concert hall be let to Messrs Hull, Dalrymple, Mullins and St. J. Carr for a public meeting to be held therein on the evening of the 10th instant at a charge of £17 10s including lighting, subject to these gentlemen arranging with the South African Biograph Company to give up their engagement of the Hall for that evening and on their personal responsibility for any damage which may be done."

The Club also officially advised Dr Krause of its action and he replied in writing that the Government had no objection to the meeting's being held. On the 10th June 1899, the *Uitlanders* met in the Wanderers New Hall and many inflammatory speeches were made. Public feeling was now dangerously roused.

Every effort was made to compensate the Biograph Company for the postponement of its "Concert" and the *Uitlander* Committee even wrote letters to the Press under the signature of William Hosken "trusting that as many of our friends as can possibly do so will attend and give the Biograph people the 'benefit' they deserve for their public spirit". The Press itself referred to their altruism in permitting "Saturday night's great meeting" and urged the public to attend the postponed performance. Basking in this glory, the Biograph Company advertised its Wanderers film show "under the patronage of the Committee of the *Uitlander* Meeting". It continued these shows, with the cooperation of the Club and the active participation of Ernest Lezard with the Choral Society and Orchestra until the 30th September 1899 when Johannesburg was all but empty. Until the last moment, the Club had provided entertainment for the public.

The *insouciance* which has always characterised the Golden City, was notably reflected in the Wanderers' affairs as collision came daily nearer. New members continued to join. In August when the Government, in a public appeal for divine intervention in the developing crisis, declared Sunday the 20th a Day of Humiliation, the Wanderers had to cancel its Sunday Concert and again on the 27th August for a similar dedication to humility. The Great Exodus from Johannesburg was already in progress (the train service was totally

inadequate and hundreds escaped in open trucks) but during August, the Club received many applications for membership including nineteen for the Gymnastic Society. On the



Last days of the Wanderers Club – The start of the 120 yards race for married men of the Caledonian Society (one in kilts) – in the background the tent put up by the S. A. Biograph Co. to house the peepshow (Mutoscopes)

day that they were considered, the Committee resolved that "in view of the unsettled state of affairs and the absence from Johannesburg of many of the Committee, the members attending meetings shall form an Executive Committee provided not less than three members are present, and proceed with the business of the meeting".

Jeppe remained at the helm but Jacob Swart and J. N. de Jongh took one month's leave and failed to return. On the 21st September 1899 when Johannesburg was virtually depopulated, the Committee recorded that "the Contractor's request to be allowed to discontinue building until such time as the Committee call on him, be acceded to." They also resolved that "in the event of hostilities, the Secretary be entitled to his full salary as current as long as he remains in the Club's service in Johannesburg and in the event of his being ordered to leave the country, he is to have one month's full pay and thereafter half-pay for a period of three months." It was not stated how he was to be paid. The assistant secretary Pearson was given notice from the end of September and a promise of re-employment when affairs are settled". James Hyde and the groundsman Fritz Wilhelm remained on full salary as long as the Club itself remained in operation. Hyde and his Orchestra officiated at the Biograph Concert three nights later. At a bob a time, it raised £93 19s 0d. The people remaining in a distraught town flocked to distraction.

Only Ernest Lezard, H. Duval, Frank Hilner and V. T. Graham in the chair came to the meeting on the 28th September in Julius Jeppe's office when Allsop recorded that construction work had stopped and that the Town Council had written requesting suspension of the erection of the urinals, to which the meeting agreed. On the 2nd October, with the war a week away, they met again with Lezard absent but T. B. Parker present and Hyde and Allsop in attendance. Hyde reported that nearly all the bandsmen had left and that the Biograph Company was packing its equipment. It was agreed to pay

him off. Of the Club's staff, there remained only Allsop and Rae, the junior groundsman, but no decision was reached in the discussion on closing the Club altogether. Three days later, a pistol was held at their heads.

For their devotion and sense of responsibility to its interests, the Club never paid tribute to W. T. Graham, H. Duval, T. B. Parker and Frank Hilner who remained in a deserted Johannesburg under threat of internment and found time to conduct its affairs. Julius Jeppe had arranged with the Bank of Africa for them to overdraw up to £250 and in his absence, they met in his office on the 5th October 1899 to perform the obsequies of the Wanderers Club.

In his beautifully clear handwriting, Allsop recorded that the Sheriff, Mr. T. J. Smith attended the meeting to request the use of the New Hall for the storage of provisions by the Republican Commissariat. The place would be properly guarded and the Club's property protected, he said. Graham requested his credentials and Smith produced his letter of authority. The Committee evidently bore in mind that they owed their tenure to the generosity of the Government and the chairman wrote politely to the Sub-Committee of the Government Commissariat Department that they "had much pleasure in acceding to the request provided they have the assurance of the Honourable the Government that the buildings and property of the Club, will be protected and returned in the like good order. Should the Government at any time require the use of any further buildings or property of the Club, my committee are agreeable to grant the same on the same conditions". It was proposed that Fritz Wilhelm should remain as caretaker.

The Committee adjourned for the last time. Allsop remained and on receipt of a letter from the Pretoria Commissariat Head Committee, handed over the keys of the Hall. He had one last request to fulfil. On the 7th October 1899, the Commissariat appropriated the Skating Rink and finding it uncongenial, asked for a properly furnished office. Then, having arranged for the Clubs documents to be sent to Durban, Allsop took the train to Lourenco Marques, boarded a ship for Durban and enlisted.

On the 11th October 1899, the ultimatum of the South African Republic expired and war was declared against Great Britain. The Wanderers Club ceased to exist for nearly two years and its Committee and members endured every kind of adventure and vicissitude. Many served in the Imperial Light Horse which had surreptitiously been organised as against the occasion. Llewellyn Andersson was in England at the time and came at once to join the I.L.H. but was detained by Milner in Cape Town to organise communications. Then he raised the South African Light Horse (recruiting George Allsop) which he later commanded. Abe Bailey, Henri Bettelheim and George Farrar were in the field together with most of their sporting comrades. "Barberton" Halliwell was captured and made prisoner. Dick Cruikshank, handsome boxing instructor of the Gymnasium, was so badly wounded that he was never able to box again but maintained a keen administrative interest in sport.

J. H. Sinclair was with General French's Scouts when he was taken prisoner and endured great discomfort trekking about with the commandos as no boots could be found big enough to fit the feet that went with his huge frame. Then he escaped and rejoined the British forces. Eventually at the age of only twenty-five, he was made Superintendent of a huge refugee camp at the railway junction Springfontein in the Free State. Conditions were appallingly unsanitary and the state of all refugee camps scandalous; but Captain J. H. Sinclair showed exceptional imagination by instituting a local Committee of a chairman, two men and two women from the refugees themselves who conducted a daily inspection. His camp was outstanding for its organisation and hygiene.

Jacob Swart, forty-one years old, had got away early and enlisted in the T.L.H. Hands damaged in an unarmed struggle with a native burglar prevented his going on active

service and he was appointed Superintendent of a refugee camp at Potchefstroom which, with his famed gifts for organisation, he converted into a model self-running establishment with the women working as nurses and the men tending a vegetable garden.

Frank Connock became a Transport Officer and was one of the first to re-enter Johannesburg behind the army commanded by Lord Roberts. He was billeted in the empty house of A. B. Chauncey, the famous race horse owner, friend of Jacob Swart and member of the Wanderers Committee, who had fled.

The town was utterly empty. Lord Roberts had gone on to capture Pretoria and presently Lord Kitchener returned to Johannesburg and set up his headquarters in Julius Jeppe's abandoned house 'Friedenheim'. He appropriated the Wanderers premises and grounds and converted them into No. 6 Military Hospital.

