

Well, they set off on what was to be a most enjoyable shooting trip. A well-known East Londoner, Dr George Smythe, who was practicing in Mafeking was to accompany them. I have known the Smythes for years - George before he qualified - and only a short while before he died he showed me a photograph which was taken on that trip. I have one too of the waggon and camp and old Uncle George proudly shouldering his gun. Of the trip I cannot say much as I was not there but they had good shooting, birds: guinea fowl, pheasant, bush and red head, buck: bush, impala, reid and waterbuck. After a most enjoyable holiday the old man said he had had, he and my Aunt returned to Keiskama and with them I was to spend many holidays. To digress for a while. When the Chartered Company was expanding and to prevent Rhodes from taking over their territory, the Bechuanaland Protectorate as it became, three chiefs - Khama, the old man who was Grandfather to the present Prime Minister of the territory, Seretsi Khama, of the Bamangwato, Bathoe of the Bangwaketse - Bany - and Sebele of the Bahgatla - Boshudi - went overseas, accompanied by Mr Lewis the missionary to see the great white Queen Victoria, to ask for her protection. Rhodes we know, whose goal was far beyond the horizon, visualised an all red railway from Cape through to Cairo.

All went well and the present territory of Botswana became a British Protectorate. The Botswana were always afraid of the Boers and so when a request was made for a grant of land for the railway north the chiefs agreed to a strip along the crocodile river of not more than eight miles and not less than six miles being granted. This they looked upon as a buffer between themselves and the Transvaal. It is along this strip that there are European farms. The names of some: Dead mule, Juices, African Ranches, Martins. Martins is where there is a crossing from the Transvaal north, owned by Capt Martin who had stamped on his milk cans "Capt Martin D.S.O." I believe one of these farms is now owned by Ben Schoeman, Minister of Railways, who is fond of shooting and here he can get all he wants as on the Transvaal side of the Border there is no game - all shot out.

Some years later I went down to the area with a trader George Smith who was buying cattle for the Imperial Storage but of this trip I will mention later. Eventually it was decided that the railway line would have to be north but, although the ground was offered back to the chiefs they said no, it was a gift to the Queen. So this land and that known as the Lobatsi farms was sold to farmers. Further down along the Crocodile or Limpopo as it is also known, beyond the farms in the territory mentioned there is the Tati Concession.

I think that here, although it is a case of going back to our earlier days in Mafeking, my brother Gerald and I were choir boys - I still have a snap of the two angels in their white surplices - not that we were songsters. I could not read music but realised that as the notes went up and down on the five bars so you sang louder or softer and the black notes meant that you sang a bit quicker with jerks. So much for the music but we managed to keep in tune with the organ or the organ with us. Well, we dressed in the custom at that time, in Sailor suits and H. .S Neptune on the cap band. Well, eventually my parents decided to put us both in smart Norfolk suits. And how proud we were