

wanted meat. After a very fine holiday I returned to East London. Page-Wood took the opportunity of offering to drive me the 36 miles to Palapye Road Station to catch my train. My Mother and Dad accompanied us. I do not know why my Mother was not too keen on Alf. Later on, after my Dad died and Madge had married Alf or Kissie as he was known, they were very good to her and actually built a comfortable hut off their verandah so that she would feel she had her own room. When I arrived back in East London I was told that I would be transferred from the Marine Department to the Passenger Department.

In a small office as ours was, compared to the other offices in Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, to learn what the other departments were doing and learn their work as we often, when slack gave a hand. So I was well up in the passenger department and looked forward to meeting many people in that department among the many passengers we had travelling between South African Ports and abroad. I was to find the work most interesting.

I had found a new home in East London and went to stay with the Adkins family who had five other young chaps staying with them, or is it boarding at £6 per month. Today the cost would be about five or six times that amount.

The chaps staying there were a pleasant lot and we got on very well and used to go to the Bio and other shows together. We were always up to some prank (good clean fun). There did not seem in those days to be the one thought of sex as there is today among so many people. Not only the male sex but the female too.

If we had a party on the beach, a braai or similar, we always had to have a chaperone. If you went to a dance you booked a partner and after the dance escorted her back to her parents or friends. Today nix. The Adkins, were relatives of the well known Mrs. Henry Adkins of Fort Jackson Chutney fame. One never sees that old apricot chutney today.

It must be remembered that at this time, 1919, and for some years on, the larger vessels, mail ships etc did not enter the harbour as today but anchored out in the roadstead and the cargo was discharged into lighters by the ships derricks and same applied when cargo was shipped. Passengers were conveyed, as were the officials and labour, by the Company's two tugs, The Stork and The Penguin from the landing jetty near where the dry dock now is. From the tug onto the ship and visa versa they were conveyed in a large basket which carried about ten at a time. This was great fun.

The smaller ships were towed into harbour and did not enter under their own steam as today.

I must say that at times the poor Harbour Staff on the lighters worked under very difficult conditions when the sea was rough and there was quite a range. Now and again the weather got too rough and work had to stop and the ship proceeds on her voyage and finished her work on her return. There were occasions when, owing to very rough weather, the anchor chains parted and the ship had to sail on. Later attempts would be made to recover the anchor. As soon as an anchor was lost the London authorities had to be notified as to the number of the chain for insurance purposes.

When the ship drops her anchor there is a line attached to it and at the other end is a buoy which floats and gives the position of the anchor should the chain part, this gives the salvage party an idea where to dredge for the lost anchor.

As I have mentioned, the East London Union-Castle offices was quite a small office compared with the others with a staff of about thirty at that time. After the Second World War it was about 60.

Salaries by today's standards were miserable but then good. For instance I remember one of our staff, Jacobs, married on £20 a month. He rented a house in St. James Road for £3 a month. That house today is rented at R90 (£45) and he said they managed very well. They of course had no car which they did not need. Today everyone must have a car which costs a fortune to run. Note the present day young chap cannot walk any distance. They must have a car or the girls will not look at them.