

I was at the top of my form at cricket and played for Buffaloes in the first league and at Soccer played for the leading Club Crescents.

To keep up to scratch in these games one has to, of course, attend practices regularly. As a matter of fact if you do not, no matter how good you are, you are dropped from the next match until you decide to attend practices regularly. Also one must keep fit.

There is nothing of any interest to write about for the next year or so excepting that I had become engaged to a girl by the name of Nellie Dodge. She had as a child suffered from Rheumatic Fever and this left her with a wonky heart. It was, however, going to be a fairly long engagement by today's standards. In any case I was not yet earning enough to get married on and in those days it was not usual as today for the wife to work as well.

I had got on very well in the Passenger Department being second on a staff of six. In view of this I was asked if I would go to the Beira Office to relieve their chief passenger man who was going overseas on six months (no four months) leave. It would, however, be six by the time I got up there and the time coming back. This was in 1923 and as I have mentioned it was to be for about six months but I had an idea that it would be for longer as, knowing that I had had experience in the East London Office of all departments, others would be sent on leave to be relieved by me. For that is exactly what happened for when Goodman, the man I was relieving got back their Accountant had to go on leave so I was kept to relieve him. Mind you I did not mind for there was an East Coast allowance of £15 a month.

I sailed from East London in the Guildford Castle for Beira. On the way we called in Durban where I spent a pleasant evening with Peter Muil who was at one time Correspondence Clerk in East London. It was very nice meeting him as he was a most entertaining chap up to all sorts of pranks. I well remember the occasion we were having a staff photo taken on Peter's transfer to Durban. The photographer was writing down the names and when he came to Boosy, a German, he spelt his name out "B O O S Y and one dot over the second "O" please". Next came Peter Muil: "M U I L with one dot over the "I" please". Boosy was mad and would not speak to Muil for years, I believe, even when he was transferred to the Durban Office with Muil as his assistant.

We stopped for the night in Lourenco Marques and I went ashore with some friends to have dinner at the famous hotel, the Polana, and then on to the Casino to watch the gambling. Not being a gambler I just enjoyed watching the Croupier taking in and paying out money. It was years later that I again visited this Casino but of that later.

The Guildford, eventually, arrived off Beira. I say "off" because the ships anchored out at the mouth of the Busy River miles from the Port waiting for the pilot. Actually, it is the mouth of two rivers: Busy and Pongwe which joined near Beira. Though this estuary is very wide the channel up the river to Beira is very narrow and twisty as this channel is continually changing and there is no dredging done. It took us nearly an hour after taking on the pilot, to reach the actual harbour anchorage for there were no quays then. The ships anchored and lighters were used as in East London. Today this is quite a harbour with quay cranes.

On arrival I was met (or rather we), for in Durban I had been joined by a young lad, Saunders, who was coming up as a junior clerk in the passenger department, by the chap I was relieving, Goodman, and Jerry England who was acting manager while the manager, Cleghorn, was away on leave. Saunders was the son of a previous manager of the Beira office where he died. There was also in this office another Saunders, Charlie the eldest son of a born gambler who in later years got into a lot of trouble not only with the Union-Castle by whom he was eventually sacked and also other businesses he joined.

I think he might have been a very fine chap but had an unfortunate life. He was a very fine soldier gaining the M.C. and other decorations in France in 1914/18. It was while in France his half section, a young officer was killed. On his next leave to England, Charlie called on this young

fellows mother/