



Queensland Newsletter

Having excelled myself writing five and half pages for the July Newsletter I took time off to enjoy the other nine weeks of our stay in the UK.

The United Kingdom.

Our first difficulty was a shortage of spending money, although it was augmented by early English birthday presents of cash, which enabled us to travel about the UK visiting friends and relatives. Everyone went out of their way to entertain us, in the manner we were happily getting accustomed to, and the curious thing was that the food generally tasted better in England than it does in Australia, which rather surprised us, but we certainly weren't complaining and made the most of it.

The cost of public transport for visitors to the UK is expensive and that restricted our travel and meant that we were unable to visit some friends and ex-members of the Force that we had hoped to see. It also restricted hiring a car and after travelling as passengers in cars on the B roads I wouldn't have had any confidence driving along these roads in any case which, in many places were so narrow, I'm just not sure how cars passed each other without scraping each other and the hedgerows.

There were three more highlights of this visit:

The first was attending the 80th birthday party of my oldest friend, who I had met, as he lived just across the road from our house in Beckenham, then NW Kent, now SE London, in 1932.

The second was attending a luncheon of the ex-members of the Rhodesia African Rifles at the Rifles Officers Club in London, where I was entertained by Brigadier Dave Heppenstall, Brigadier Vic Walker, General the Lord Walker, Major General Mike Shute and Malcolm Clewer, who was a major when I last saw him, but could have been promoted since then. Peter Phillips, the UK Branch Chairman was also a guest and our own pastor Terry Mesley-Spong was the presiding chaplain of the RAR. Some 21 members and guests sat down for lunch which was graced by red and white South Australian wines! It was indeed a memorable lunch, as I was seated between Dave Heppenstall and Mike Shute and we had lots of reminiscing over the days we served together in Operation Hurricane. Vic Walker is to be congratulated for being elected President of the Rhodesia Army Association.

The third was the day before we left to return to Australia when Rosemary joined me at the annual Veterans Reunion luncheon at my old school, Ardingly College, Sussex. Some 150 veterans and their guests sat down to a splendid lunch

and we were invited to join a table where there were some of my old school friends, who I hadn't seen since the middle 40's, and one even reminded me of a dare I had accepted in 1941 or '42 to kiss one of the lady teachers. The fact that he remembered was amazing, so too was the fact that I had won that dare without retribution!

Whether going to the UK or returning by Air Brunei it was a long 30 hours door to door, but the Airline is highly recommended and one cannot complain about a lack of food or entertainment. There were three seven-hour flights to the journey, the first Brisbane to Brunei, the second Brunei to Dubai and the third Dubai to London, and three security checks on the way plus two meals for each leg. Alcoholics would have had problems, as it is a non-alcohol airline, but they didn't mind if you brought liquor purchased at the duty free to drink on the plane, which we didn't bother with, as both Rosemary and I were quite happy with the continuous supply of soft drinks and water. The food was more than adequate and very tasty.

Brisbane

Having returned to Brisbane it took the best part of two weeks to recover from jet lag, but then it was time to see what members had been up to in my absence and, over the next two months, I was pleased to welcome back John Gold from Europe. Mike King from Africa and Europe and Gerry Dyer from Europe. Both Mike and Gerry managed to fit in a trip to the Memorial site.

As a consequence of all this jetting around, the annual dinner had already been converted to a more casual annual lunch and was arranged by John Gold to take place at the Wynnum-Manly West Sports Club on the 21st November. An auspicious day when I turned 80 and was kindly taken by Gerry and Wendy Dyer to the lunch so that I could enjoy a glass or two of alcohol.

The following attended the lunch: 4727 Mike and Rosemary Edden, 6278 Gerry and Wendy Dyer, 6303 Peter and Carol Nortje, 6604 John and Mary Gold, 6969 John (Billy) Budd, 6994 Colin John and his two guests ex-Internal Affairs Rob and Sandy Knights, 7012 Mike and Ginny King, 10265 Mitch and Debbie Dove, WFR Jenny Jones and daughter Debra (sp), PR David and Alison Catherall and Goofy Lawrence.

As usual the Club laid on a splendid meal with suitable hot snacks passed around by the staff before the meal. The informality made it a very easy occasion and, once John Gold had called us to order, I gave a short resume of events that have taken place since I became Administrator of the Branch, including my attendance at the unveiling of the Memorial to the Force at the National Memorial Arboretum and later proposed the toast to the Regiment. John Gold proposed the Branch thanks to me for keeping things ticking over for the past 18 months.

The Memorial

Returning to the events at The Memorial, I was able to chat to Group Captain Peter Petter-Boyer where he told me he was in hot water for publishing

criticisms of a certain Army Officer in his Book the Wings of Fire. I assured him that he was in good company, which helped to set his mind at rest.

The Old Farts Club

Mike King joined the OFC during the year and we have held a small number of OFC Coffee mornings. At the most recent one in October we were joined by Peter Nortje and Peter Barton youngest son of Assistant Commissioner John (Pug) Barton.

Finance

Mike King still holds the Branch Account, which hadn't moved over the year other than to top up our donation to the memorial and we spent a small sum of money raised by previous raffles to provide the wine for this year's toast and lunch.

News of Members

The following members were due to have attended the lunch but contacted me to cancel and extend their apologies:

5848 David Clinker, whose wife Jean was not well enough to travel from Wooroolin;

5757 Ian and Rachel Milton as Ian had only just had a hernia operation and really wasn't fit enough to travel from Eagle Heights;

PR 25548T Simon and Jacqui Lucas who were unable to come up from Bellbowrie as they are in the process of moving house;

7432 Will and Jacki Keys who were on their annual holiday at the Gold Coast;

5165 Don and Pat Silliss from Coffs Harbour where Pat is recovering from a serious illness over the past year; we hope she recovers well enough to enjoy life once again;

5885 Michael Fitton was unable to travel from Buderim but wished me many happy returns for my birthday.

We hoped that 5147 Wally Wilton would finally grace our function but it was not to be.

I continue to get a flurry of emails from Carole Nortje and she has now been joined by Mike Fitton and 7861 Mike Woods. Most of them are interesting and some important, so I don't begrudge the time taken to read them. I would far rather receive constant contact with members rather than nothing from members whose contact is fading away. Queensland is a big piece of Real Estate but we all need to know how you are getting on.

In this context we have lost contact with;

7445 Michael Bennett

28014Z Michael Hayes

6126 Brian Jeffreys

204738Q Merv Legg

7694 Steve Martin

8324 David Naisbitt

9950 Ron Nimmo

9440 Lindsay O'Brian

10552 Derek Perkins and

16334 Ted Ross

If anyone knows of their whereabouts please send me an email.

Njuzi and the River People

I have had a couple of requests to reproduce the Outpost articles I wrote in 1969 regarding the canoe odyssey down the Zambezi River in 1968 carried out by myself, and two other Detective Inspectors Tony Bradshaw and David Hallward. As they have now passed on and so too have Detective Sergeant Peter Begg, his father George and Detective Superintendent Arthur Lennard who manned the escort boat in Rhodesian/Zambian waters I am the only survivor and had better get on with the job before I join them.

FOREWORD

The Zambezi River is Africa's fourth largest river system. It runs through six countries on its journey from Central Africa to the Indian Ocean. Its unique value is that it is less developed than other rivers in terms of human settlement and many areas along its banks enjoy protected status. Its power has carved the spectacular Victoria Falls. In 1968 the Zambezi Valley on the Rhodesia side only had settlements at Kariba, Chirundu and Kanyemba, the rest was bush land populated by wild animals. There were very few main roads in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to the river, which formed the northern border between Rhodesia and Zambia: one from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls, the second 550 kms away from the Victoria Falls - the road from Salisbury to Chirundu with a road leading off this for 64 km to Kariba. The rest were bush tracks, often following game paths leading off one of the three main roads.

The river supports large populations of many animals. Hippopotamuses are abundant along most of the calm stretches of the Rhodesian section of the river, and many crocodiles are also present. Bird life is abundant, with species including Heron, Pelican, Egret and African Fish Eagle present in large numbers. Riverine woodland also supports many large animals, such as Buffalo, Zebras, Giraffes, Elephants and the occasional Lion.

The first European to see the Victoria Falls was the Scottish Explorer David Livingstone on 17 November 1855, during his 1852-1856 expedition from the upper Zambezi to the mouth of the river. He dreamed of harnessing the river; the first part of that dream was met when the Central Africa Federation constructed the Kariba Dam between 1955 and 1959 and for the second, the Portuguese constructed the Cabora Bassa Dam in Mozambique, from 1968. Plans for another dam at the Batoka Gorge have been shelved

In 1967, three Detective Inspectors, Tony Bradshaw, David Hallward and Michael Edden, serving in the British South Africa Police, Rhodesia, decided on a final adventure before settling down to their responsibilities as married parents and tackling the demands of the ever increasing war against terrorism. They set themselves the goal of retracing by canoe David Livingstone's, journey down the Zambezi River from Lake Kariba to the Indian Ocean. This challenging objective was the first canoe expedition over this distance since David Livingstone.

The length of the river from Kariba to the sea is 1216 km in a straight line but, their journey, which went from bank to bank and around islands and sandbanks took 7 weeks and was carried out in the midst of a civil war in Rhodesia, a hostile Zambia, and between the rebels and the Portuguese Government in Mozambique, which added to the already dangerous peril of meeting wild animals both in and out of the water.

CHAPTER ONE

There were much more important things to be seen by the small party of tourists avidly soaking up the sights of Kariba, and the almost insignificant flurry of activity at the river's edge near the dam wall, if noticed, might have been dismissed by the idle watcher, as some sort of routine maintenance being undertaken by the Power Corporation employees. There was nothing routine, however, about the operations on the river bank. Those who were now scurrying about almost frantically had, an hour before, been lazing at the Cutty Sark Hotel and absorbing the winter sun after a pleasant and filling lunch. They had been meditating on the prospects of another 24 hours spent in the same way until someone had dropped the bombshell that the river was due to start a rise of some eight feet at 4pm. This stark statement of fact had galvanised them into action.

At the time when office-workers in faraway Salisbury were glancing at their watches and preparing to wend their way homewards, two small boats slipped, with the assistance of local policemen, into the oily waters of Kariba Gorge and started on a journey which was to take the smaller of the craft over 1,600 kilometres to the sea. To those who watched and waved goodbye, it seemed that the frail canoe had little hope of completing the journey; from the start, a whirlpool picked it up and flung it in ever-increasing circles, then it seemed that the craft would be treated like so much driftwood by the hammering torrent from the turbines and the rocks, which poked their ugly heads through the swirling waters, posed another threat which only the foolhardy could ignore. But the miracle happened. The watcher on the dam wall lost interest as the two boats slid out of view on the seething waters and he focused his glasses on the nearer spectacle of a mini-skirted tourist. The sun sank lower on the horizon. Spectators and helpers, relatives and friends, walked slowly from the river bank and turned their thoughts from the disappearing mariners to the more immediate prospects of cold beer.

The water spirit, Njuzi, floating up from the depths of the timeless river, gazed kindly on the intruders into her domain and vowed to take care of the craft that bore her name and the three men within its shell who were now paddling so earnestly downstream.

As the black mantle of the oncoming night softened the harshness of the rocks standing majestically out of the water; the six voyagers stepped ashore on the South Bank at a small bay opposite a fishing camp. Njuzi, the canoe, her bows pointing upstream and her stern anchored in the soft sand, settled down to rest and let her mind wander back on the events that had now brought her to the quiet violence of the great Zambezi.

As far back as 1966, two men had swapped thoughts over cold ale on a winter's night. In their friendly chatter, a mutual dream had been voiced, the possibility of doing something worthwhile before it was too late, before the responsibilities of wives and children settled the tempo of life into the well-worn, routine, unexciting groove of middle-age. They spoke of having an unusual holiday on the Zambezi in 1967 but, like man's best-laid plans, prohibiting factors emerged. The trip was postponed, perhaps for ever, and only one thing became definite. If the trip, in its entirety as planned, was ever to get off the ground, a third member would have to be recruited. And so the dreaming duo became a trio and mid-

1968 became the provisional date on which these three men would attempt to navigate the Zambezi River from Kariba to the Indian Ocean in a flimsy canoe. As the poor innocent canoe involved in the project, I knew nothing of the proposed adventure when I was born at Suters Boatyard in Gwelo in November, 1967. Any inspiring thoughts I may have had then about my future were submerged in a whirl of transportation and the growing pains of adaptation which followed my appearance into the world. I was railed to Salisbury to meet my owners.

I was introduced to three middle-aged gentlemen on the railway platform and my first impressions were not entirely favourable. I was the object in question when "where the devil is IT" was voiced and the insult was followed up with the unnecessarily practical comment "how on earth are we going to get IT to Northwood". Like any boat, regardless of size, I was not flattered by the constant reference to IT. After all, even a fibreglass canoe, three feet wide and eighteen feet long, painted white on the outer shell and light blue on the inside next to the bright red seats, must have pride. I was enough to satisfy the most fastidious canoeist but to these three worthies I was merely IT. My sinking morale was only saved by the degree of care with which I was conveyed to the mysterious "Northwood" and I thankfully completed the journey without suffering any physical harm to add to my injured pride. Lying on the grass under the pines, with nothing more than a dripping tap to remind me of my natural medium, was restful if seemingly pointless.

But, not for long, "growing pains" had their onset. Firstly I acquired a tail, a novel, home-made rudder similar to that on a sailing dinghy. In the nights following the unwarranted imposition, I flicked the appendage in the moonlight, just to remind myself of its unwelcome presence. Small pieces of wood appeared on my interior and little runners along the outer frame gave me a knobby look. I couldn't understand the purpose of them until I eventually reached the water and found that the runners would take the ropes which controlled the rudder. That first outing and the launching which followed will never be forgotten. I was carried on the roof of a car to the Police Yacht site at Lake Mcllwaine, some few kilometres outside of Salisbury and, as I slid into the water, I was unceremoniously boarded by two of the trio and there was a distinct absence of champagne to celebrate the launch, although my crew seemed merry enough to judge by the way they rolled me from side to side in the water. Finally they got the hang of the canoe's stability problems and settled down. I was paddled out into the lake where I found that the rudder meant the paddlers could work on either side and still maintain a straight course. The most amusing touch came when one of the Lake Wardens ploughed through the water in his launch in our direction and demanded to know why I wasn't licensed. The feeble excuses that this was the first time out and that they hadn't decided to keep me were airily dismissed by the ranger and I didn't feel too comfortable at this blow to my sense of belonging.

The chill that went down my spine, I later discovered, was due to the fact that water was seeping in under my backbone. High and dry again at Northwood, I was plied with screws and putty. Another outing took me as far as the premises of the Rhodesian Bonded Fibreglass Company where I acquired a couple of watertight compartments, had my buoyancy chambers checked, and received the luxury of foam filling to my seats. The latter addition was through the generosity of Police Reservist Brian Jarvis, the first of many passing acquaintances, who

were to equip me for my ordeal. It was, at this time, that I first gained an inkling of just what the ordeal was to be. The Zambezi River was mentioned, and from the discussions and attention lavished upon me, it was clear that the trip was to be no Sunday afternoon outing.

I began to have a healthy respect for my owners and started thinking of them as individuals instead of a trio of rather inexperienced amateur sailors. First, there was Tony Bradshaw; he was the dreamer and the skinniest of the three. Not a bad chap at all, good with the hands, which spent day after day, night after night, fashioning and fitting bits and pieces to me; the same hands, which polished and generally cared for me; knowing that there was at least one of the three, who would treat me with respect and ensure that no harm befell me in his presence, was a great consolation.

David Hallward was a one-eyed pirate if ever I'd seen one. He seemed pleasant enough and very considerably disposed towards me, until I found that the canopy he proposed stretching over my bow was not for my protection but to shield his photographic equipment. It then transpired that I was to carry in my front compartment five cameras and all the paraphernalia that went with them - light meters, telescopic lenses, tripod and all manner of awkward items. The passing remark that the lot were valued at over £500 gave me a sense of dubious pride at being entrusted with such wealth but it didn't seem to matter to the crew that I was to be trusted with the transport of the gear in the end and should be treated accordingly. At one stage, David mentioned the possibility of adding a couple of 16mm cine cameras to the load plus some three thousand feet of film. Fortunately, a friendly goblin muttering something about Import Permits put paid to that little lark.

Mike Edden was the one I feared most. His berth was in the stern, shared during experimental loading with vast quantities of tinned food, fishing rods, bait, mealie meal and heavens only knows what else. The prospect of such bulk surmounted by Mike, who was no lightweight himself, meant enlisting another friend who persuaded the three mariners to tone themselves up and slim their figures down (Mike especially) under the watchful eye of another Police Reservist, Herbert (Herbie) Gibbons, who ran a gymnasium in Salisbury. Herbie was a man after my own heart and, with weights and exercises; he sweated those blighters for four solid months. There was a whisper that one of the crew preferred the steam bath to the more violent exercises, but I wasn't very concerned. As long as my tonnage was kept down and my "engines" were capable of answering calls for emergency power, I was reasonably happy. Developments slowed somewhat; Tony was trying to get himself lost among the terrorists in the Zambezi Valley and Mike kept muttering about the Marlborough Murder. The earlier pace of preparations was reduced to such an extent that I was afraid the scheduled deadline would never be met. Then I was introduced to a companion for the proposed journey. A few bits of marine ply and some aluminium tubing were joined together with fibreglass and laid beside me. I asked the newcomer just who, or what, he thought he was and received the evasive reply of "outrigger". It seemed a pretty apt description for the box-like figure sitting on a pair of home-made keels and I was glad of the company until the day he was bolted to my side and "my friend" became a parasite I would never be able to shake off. It wasn't that he was a demanding chap, but his inelegant figure slowed me down and did nothing to enhance my own trim profile. The crew seemed to think likewise and there was some discussion about

whether the outrigger was to be a permanent fixture. With no thought for my finer feelings, the outrigger stayed. I was literally stuck with him. By now I had acquired an identity to the world at large (although it was only a number at this stage, "R 235") and my role, which had hitherto been that of almost passive observer to the more general preparations, became more active. On Lake McIlwaine I was subjected to all sorts of indignities. I would be rushed up and down the banks, turned over and dunked in the water. I would be righted and turned turtle again and then surveyed dispassionately from a distance to see if I was riding correctly. The only relief on these occasions came when I managed to connect with the head or a more sensitive portion of my torturer's anatomy. There were still mutters about the efficiency of my watertight compartments and several days were spent on improvements. One day, with friend outrigger firmly attached, an aluminium mast was implanted in my rapidly hardening skin and a small yellow sail blossomed above. I would have loved to have seen "seamstress" Tony working at the sail on his sewing machine but the pleasure was denied me. My seats had been extended and Robray plastic covered foam cushions had been added. The canopy was placed in position.

Finally they gave a thought to outward appearances and I was painted a "dark blue" with "old gold" edging, the colours of the BSA Police... The Rhodesian flag was mounted on the forepeak and a BSAP pennant flew at the stern. With the assistance of the outrigger, I was as steady as a rock and, dressed overall in Buffalo Paints' Super Glatex; I was as smart a craft as had ever graced the waters of Rhodesia. The only thing missing now (and long overdue) was a suitable name. I was tired of being referred to as IT. To give my crew their due, they discussed the problem long and hard; parents couldn't have given the matter more thought before a christening.

They finally agreed on Njuzi.

This is the name of the Shona water spirit and the story goes that Njuzi will not allow harm to befall anything falling into the water and that she will put it safely ashore again as good as before its immersion. Perhaps this wasn't an entirely accurate interpretation, but it suited my personality. The one large remaining problem now was that of weight and space. My buoyancy restricted the load to 1,000 lbs but the combined weight of my three passengers was 550 lbs and, after adding the weight of essential equipment, the cameras, rifles, sleeping bags and a minimum of clothing, there was little room left for food. I was relieved to hear that they had dispensed with the idea of taking along tinned food in favour of a basic survival ration pack. In the final event, I was to carry only half the rations on the initial part of the journey and the remainder was to be railed to Tete.

The only supplies for the whole trip consisted of 20 lbs of biltong (dried meat), 5 lbs each of rice, salt and sultanas, 2 lbs of coffee, a small quantity of powdered milk, vitamin A and C tablets, some lemonade powder, a gross of "Nutrovite" powdered soups and some high-protein tablets, which were to be tested for the same firm. A comprehensive medical kit, prescribed with the help of the Police Depot Hospital, Doctor Cummings and C.A.P.S. (a chemical company) of Salisbury, completed the load and, incidentally, pushed me into the water within three inches of my gunnels.

There was just nothing else which could be discarded; certainly not the firearms, a .22/.410 combination and an 8mm rifle - they were as much a means of protection as a source of food; certainly not the clothing which was the barest minimum for warmth and decency as well as protection from the sun.

No, this was the final inventory. If the food supplies were scanty, then it was a case of eating heartily before the trip and just hoping that enough grub would be found along the way to sustain the effort of paddling.

On the second day in July, 1968, it happened. I was strapped to the top of Tony's car and the outrigger was similarly superimposed on David's. Both vehicles were stuffed full of humanity and equipment and, shortly before dusk, we started on the long ride to Kariba. The journey was uneventful with little to see other than a large elephant and several species of smaller game, who watched our progress with typical animal impassiveness near the Makuti airstrip. When we reached Kariba, a small town on the Zambezi River bordering Zambia, in the small hours of the morning, it was decidedly warmer than the Salisbury we had left behind. Even so, I spent a chilly few hours before being carried down to the water's edge at daylight. The outrigger and I were placed on some very uncomfortable rocks and then we were deserted. It was a while before I discovered that we had been abandoned for one of those superior motorised vessels, and that the owner of the particular boat was Detective Section Officer Peter Begg from Marandellas. His companions were George, his father, and ex-Detective Superintendent Arthur Lennard of the BSAP. The increased complement was puzzling until I gathered that "terrorists" and "Zambia" meant that we were to be accompanied as far as Kanyemba by the motorised Makonikoni. There is much to be said, for and against; the powered variety of Kariba craft and Makonikoni was, at that moment, very much in the second category. It transpired that she was having gear trouble and her ailment meant that there was little chance of us getting under way the next morning. One of Peter's friends undertook to make some temporary repairs but this would take time. In the intervening period, it was hoped that spare parts could be obtained in Salisbury. With Arthur catching a suntan and trying his hand at tiger fishing, the rest of the party went their various ways, which included a session at "The Jam Jar", the Kariba Police pub, and other licensed hostelryes.

The next morning brought no improvement in Makonikoni's condition and poor old Peter was most despondent when news arrived that spares were not available even in the capital. The bombshell about the river's programmed rising at 4pm set the choice of either starting out with Makonikoni in her unreliable condition, or of moving both boats further up the bank. The motorboat's size and the fact that I was fully packed settled the question. The mechanical genius, relying on the fact that necessity is the mother of invention, sweated over Makonikoni's innards and managed to affect a temporary repair just in time.

The river seemed to come up to meet us as we were precipitated into the whirlpools and eddies of Kariba Gorge. Makonikoni, with her engine spluttering away as she charged ahead, seemed to underline the battle with nature which had just started. My own two-manpower engine, hampered by life-jackets, was in serious danger of overheating as Tony and Mike paddled desperately in the wake of the motorboat, while David twisted in the bow to photograph the receding wall of the dam. There was no going back and we were on our way down the Zambezi. There could be no second thoughts now until we reached Chirundu, about 35 miles away. A few miles down the river we arrived at the site of the first night's camp, a large and beautiful sandbank amid the rocks. There were huge quantities of driftwood just waiting to be fed into a roaring, warming fire. The heat of midday, which had sent the mercury over the hundred degree Fahrenheit (37.7C) mark, was forgotten as the chill of the evening drew on.

As I lay beached on the rapidly cooling sand, I was thankful that my structure made me more immune to the falling temperature than my shivering crew. Getting acclimatised was the one aspect of the preparations which hadn't and couldn't have been covered. Darkness covered the river and while my three passengers slept a sleep of unaccustomed tiredness and Makonikoni' s crew slept in their relative comfort a few feet away, I rested on the sand and conversed with my namesake who was becoming much more than a mere water god. The spirit of the Zambezi water sprite entered my shell.

**Best wishes Mike Edden
ADMINISTRATOR**