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## **Publication Credits**

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## **Foreword**

**Message by  
His Worship  
Alderman Julius Gelb**

To-day, the 1st July 1980, signifies what I regard as the first important milestone in the history of Milnerton as a Municipality. This auspicious event assumes all the more significance by the publication of the History of Milnerton written by the well-known Author and Historian, Eric Rosenthal.

I am indeed proud to be associated with this handsome and most impressive publication because, after an intimate involvement in the civic affairs of this Municipality, extending over a period of 20 years, I feel, perhaps with some justification, that I have earned a certain complicity in shaping the destiny of Milnerton as a Municipality - and I believe Council saw fit to acknowledge this complicity when it conferred on me the honorary title of Alderman of Milnerton. I certainly admit to a single-minded and at times parochial affinity with the eventful and colourful history of Milnerton, its vibrant vitality and dynamic potential for the future.

Permit me to record my admiration and congratulations to those responsible for the production of this outstanding publication which indeed redounds to the credit of Milnerton and all its people.

And may I conclude by reiterating my unqualified faith in the future of this Municipality. I make bold to predict that Milnerton stands on the threshold of spearheading unprecedented progress and expansion through this Gateway to the West Coast - and I believe that this Book which traces Milnerton's unpretentious beginnings and its momentous development over the years, will serve as the catalyst that will stir and activate those at the helm and indeed all our people to bigger and better things for the future.

**JULIUSGELB-MAYOR  
1st July 1980**

## **In Acknowledgement of the Sponsors**

A number of leading industrialists and commercial enterprises in Milnerton responded in a tangible manner to an invitation to participate in this publication and in appreciation of their support the following mini histories of their association with and development in Milnerton are published. Their sponsorship is gratefully acknowledged.

### **BASILE PROPERTIES**

Way back in 1970 Vincenzo Basile saw the potential of Table View, at that stage an area with a low building profile. Today it is a much sought after area - with a typical holiday atmosphere constantly prevailing. This quiet, unassuming gentleman has contributed much to Table View with the development of at least 80 homes ranging from some of the most palatial and prestigious to the everyday average type. With personal supervision and more than 40 years' experience, he takes great pride in the construction of all his projects.

In 1979 Brenda Longo and Vincenzo joined forces to provide services of Estate Agency, Builders, Building Society Agency and receiving depot for Dry Cleaning, all housed at the premises, viz. 5d Marine Circle. The latest addition is Giovanni Basile, son of Vincenzo. The trio will live up to their motto "Our clients become our friends", for the benefit and well-being of Table View and its bordering areas which form a part of the outstanding Municipality of Milnerton.

### **BLAAUWBERG HOTEL**

Mr & Mrs Fritz Brink, owners of Blaauwberg Hotel, Table View, are well known in Malmesbury for their catering for parties, weddings, dances, dinners and buffet suppers.

The Table View Hotel, as it was then called, intrigued them when they realised how beautifully it was situated and what possibilities it had. They bought it in 1979, called it the Blaauwberg Hotel and like in Malmesbury, Mrs Brink has already become famous for her exquisite cooking and on Sundays they often have up to 250 guests for lunch and reservations, have to be made weeks in advance. No one can resist Maureen's seafood dishes, her waterb10mmetjie-bredies, afval, roast pork, beef and delicious salads.

The Brinks have indeed been an acquisition to Table View and we wish them luck.

### **BELLINZONA RESTAURANT**

Bellinzona Restaurant was first opened by two brothers from Bellinzona which is the Italian sector of Switzerland. Bellinzona was run as a small cafe until Mr P. Maroux took over and successfully ran the restaurant for a period of 6-7 years. Since then Mr Silbernagl and Mr Ferris have run the restaurant for 5 years - for the last two with the help of Swiss chef, Mr Nanny. The name Bellinzona, literally translated, means Nice Area - a very appropriate name when looking at the fantastic view across the Bay and Table Mountain.

Milnerton/Table View is an ever-growing Municipality and has certainly developed since we have been here at Bellinzona Restaurant, and with the new roads and excellent facilities we feel that it will continue to grow and prosper in the future.

### **BP SOUTHERN AFRICA (PTY) LTD**

The Cape Town Terminal in Milnerton is the largest BP depot in Africa and possibly in the Southern Hemisphere.

Building started in April 1977 and was fully completed when its large tank farm was installed in July 1978. The enormous Terminal covers about 16 hectares and almost 200 people are employed there.

It is the most modern BP Terminal in South Africa and is the first to use on-line computers for invoicing and stock control. BP products, as diverse as jet fuel, illuminating paraffin and petrol, are distributed from here. The Terminal also has the largest automatic LP gas-filling plant in South Africa.

### **CAL TEX OIL SOUTH AFRICA**

The Texas Company of South Africa was founded on May 16 1911, with a capital of £10 000. It operated under that name until 1941 when it became part of the Caltex marketing group. Initial sales were mostly

kerosene (paraffin) but the advent of the motor car soon brought about rapid developments and some revolutionary changes in the selling of petrol.

To meet Western Cape requirements for petroleum products, a grassroots refinery with both oil storage and crude import facilities through Cape Town harbour, was constructed by Caltex Oil South Africa (Pty) Limited at Killarney and commissioned in 1966. Subsequent increasing demand for products necessitated significant additional facilities in 1970, and in 1978 a further major investment by Caltex saw the capacity of the refinery doubled. Major refined products today include three types of petrol, kerosene, jet fuel, both automotive and marine diesels, furnace and bunker fuels, liquid petroleum gas, and various types and grades of roofing and road asphalts.

The refinery also produces sulphur as a by-product and supplies a local fertilizer factory with feedstock. Important aspects of operations include environmental control, close liaison with local and national authorities and extensive forward planning to meet local supply and quality requirements in refined products.

### **CANDAC CONSTRUCTION (PTY) LIMITED**

Candac Construction was first incorporated in South Africa in 1938 under the name of the Danish firm of Christiani & Nielsen. On 1st January 1971, a 750/0 holding in the company was acquired by Murray & Stewart who then, with effect from 1st July 1977, acquired the remaining 25% shareholding and the company's name was subsequently changed to its present one.

The company is primarily engaged in the design and construction of civil engineering works in the marine environment such as offshore terminals, breakwaters, quays, docks, jetties, slipways and pipelines. Other important activities are the construction of bridges and silos. The company also has specialist divisions carrying out piling, pipejacking and concrete sleeper production.

Although the company's design and head offices are situated in Cape Town, it has branch offices at Epping, Johannesburg and Durban.

Its operating spheres in Southern Africa include Transkei and it also carries out extensive projects overseas, especially in Australia.

Within the Milnerton Municipality, Candac was responsible for reconstructing some 3,6 km of road between the new West Coast Road and Koeberg Road, including the construction of a 98 m bridge over the Diep River. In 1980 it also constructed an unusually designed circular cement silo 24 m in diameter and 50 m high plus ancillary buildings for Messrs Cement Services (Pty) Limited.

### **CAPE PORTLAND CEMENT COMPANY LTD**

To establish cement storage and packing facilities for Cape Portland Cement Company Limited in the Peninsula area a R 7 million distribution plant is nearing completion in Milnerton.

The plant will include a novel type of concrete silo design, 50 m high by 24 m diameter, capable of storing two different types of cement to a total capacity of 17 500 tons.

The cement will be supplied by the cement factories at De Hoek and Riebeeck West.

Below the storage area, two packing machines will deliver up to 4 000 bags per hour to road vehicles. Next to the packers, two bulk loading installations will fill road tankers at a maximum rate of 250 tons per hour.

All operations will be electronically controlled, the various process and administrative functions being co-ordinated by two linked computers. Special equipment is provided to control dust and noise emission once the plant goes on stream in October this year.

### **CAPE QUARRIES ASSOCIATED (PTY) LTD**

#### **CITY TRAM WAYS (PTY) LTD**

Steadily increasing ratepayer funding for public transport, a growing headache in most western municipalities, does not apply in Milnerton. The bus system serving the whole of the Cape Town metropolitan area, of which Milnerton forms part, is provided by private enterprise under 'unified control, with obvious advantages in

respect of service co-ordination and reliability, specialist management and engineering expertise, bulk purchasing facilities for costly components, streamlined computerised administration and the ensuring of high standards of maintenance and public safety.

City Tramways Limited traces its origins to South Africa's first tramway company which was established 120 years ago.

Six years after motor competition forced the closure of the old Milnerton railway in 1930, City Tramways acquired the small company running buses in the area. Since then its familiar green and cream vehicles linking Milnerton with its vast network of routes have provided a consistent, safe and reliable service.

#### **S. DE JONG MARINE & GENERAL ENGINEERING WORKS (PTY) LTD.**

This company was founded in 1967, as a general and marine maintenance operation. During the past 13 years it has grown into one of the larger engineering works, with sub-divisions like De Jong Marine & Boating, Reineveld Laundry Equipment and Tohatsu South Africa.

The rapid expansion brought them to Montague Gardens Milnerton during 1975, where they built their own factory, now producing large mechanical equipment. Their motto is "If it is steel, we make it".

Among their customers are Municipalities, the Fish Industry, Fertiliser-Petro Chemical Industry etc.

They are suppliers of the smallest to the world's largest diesel engines, pumps, axles, outboard engines, winterising plants for the vegetable oil industry, laundry equipment etc. They have also recently added shipbuilding to their operation.

#### **DOUGLAS GREEN OF PAARL**

Douglas Green of Paarl's start in life was a humble one. . . in a cellar at 360 Main Street, Paarl, long the ancestral home of the KWV. Here, shortly after the turn of the century, a wine farmer called Piet le Roux sold wine to customers in their own containers - buckets, tin, cans or bottles. In 1930 the winery was bought by the Forrer Brothers of Paarl, who started a bottling line and opened a retail outlet, which is still known today as Stukvat Bottle Store. In 1940, Douglas Green bought out the Forrer Brothers and changed the name to Douglas Green of Paarl.

In March 1975 it was bought by Rennies (who also took over J. D. Bosman & Company in Johannesburg and Avrons Proprietary Limited in Cape Town), to form a new producing merchant and national liquor distributor, Douglas Green of Paarl Proprietary Limited.

Every season they select only the finest wine available and it is skilfully blended to their vintner's recipe. In the "stable" there are nine white wines and nine red wines. Some of them are household names like Douglas Green Premier Grand Cru, St Augustine, St Raphael, Paarl Valais Rouge and St Anna Schloss.

During July 1980 Douglas Green will move to their new R1 million Montague Gardens plant/depot sited on three acres. The depot includes a bottling plant, warehousing, sales, distribution and administration and certainly is a fine monument to the development of a flourishing company headed by an aggressive and enterprising management team.

#### **EDWARD L. BATEMAN LTD**

Edward L. Bateman Limited is a South African owned company established in 1919, with branches and subsidiary companies throughout the Republic, S.W.A., Zimbabwe, Zambia, Israel and the U.S.A.

The Cape Town branch was established 30 years ago and moved to Montague Gardens in Milnerton during 1976.

The company supplies capital equipment, contracting and engineering services and spares to municipalities, mines, quarries, chemical and general industries.

Due to increased business activities, it was recently found necessary to enlarge the Milnerton premises and to establish an office in Springbok to service the millions of rands worth of company's equipment recently installed in the mines in the Namaqualand area.

Edward L. Bateman Limited has, for the past number of years, featured in the Royal List of Companies as well as being listed in the top 20 of the Business Times "Top 100" survey.

#### **FANIE KOTZE PROPERTY ENTERPRISES (PTY) LTD**

This company is the oldest established estate agents in Milnerton, having opened its doors to the public in June 1967.

From its tiny premises in Reidhof Centre, we have grown to the biggest building society agents in the entire Western Cape, with modern premises in Centrepoint. We also operate the only travel agency in Milnerton.

The firm played a leading role in the development of the central business district of Milnerton, having participated in one way or another in the development of Arnhem, Atlantica, Palo Alto, Centrepoint, Milnerton Centre, Rietvlei Centre, as well as Highveldt and La Paloma in Table View.

In the last 4 years the company has spread its wings into property development and its associate company, FGK Developments, is currently building two luxury townships at the rate of a house every 3 days.

We are proud to have been associated with Milnerton during the 25 years that it has been a Municipality.

#### **FEDMIS (PTY) LIMITED**

The first nitrogenous fertilizer factory in South Africa was built by Fisons at Milnerton in 1967 and taken over by Fedmis in 1970. The project was made possible by the construction of the Caltex refinery that produces gas, which is the basic raw material of a nitrogen plant, during the conversion of crude oil to petrol. Nitrogenous fertilizer production is a continuous process, three shifts of eight hours per day, and provides employment for 170 Europeans and 160 Non-Europeans.

#### **FLAMINGOVLEI ESTATE AGENTS**

Mr H. J. Koen is the owner of Zonnekus Holiday Resort at Philadelphia. He has been building in the Table View area for approximately 20 years. He, more than anybody else, knows how land and property values have escalated over the years, but despite the escalation the area has remained very popular and even at today's prices it is one of the few areas where one still gets value for money. Mr Koen can still remember when plots were selling for £50, 22 years ago, whereas today prices vary from R5000 to R25 000, depending on the area.

Mr Koen has built many magnificent homes in this area and he is also responsible for building the Wonderland Creche and several blocks of flats and maisonettes.

#### **HAGGIE RAND LTD**

Haggie Rand Limited commenced operations in Metro Industria, Milnerton, in July 1975 after outgrowing their premises in the adjacent Paarden Eiland.

The parent company, located in Jupiter and Germiston, Transvaal, commenced steel wire rope manufacture in 1921 under the name of "Haggie Son and Love". The group, now one of the largest wire rope manufacturers in the world, also manufacture prestress steel for bridge construction, mattress wire, spring steel wire, stay and fencing wire, and is involved in the sale and service of ships' fittings, industrial rubber products, diatomaceous earth as a filtering agent, and all types of chain and chain blocks.

The area serviced out of Milnerton is the entire western and north-western Cape as well as the rapidly developing mining area in Namaqualand.

#### **HOECHST (SA)**

For 12 years Milnerton has been the home of Hoechst South Africa's Trevira plant, the largest and most sophisticated manufacturer of polyester staple fibre on the African continent. It is also the home of Hoechst's Cape regional sales office which, apart from fibres, also deals with the company's other products such as plastics, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, agricultural and veterinary products, dyestuffs and pigments as well as textile auxiliaries.

Trevira is the registered trademark of one of the most technologically advanced man-made fibres. The plant commenced production in March 1968 with an initial capacity of 4 600 tOns per year of staple fibre and is aiming for a capacity of 18 000 tons per year by the end of 1980.

Today, the Trevira plant in Milnerton produces a variety of fibre types and specialities for the South African cotton, woollen and worsted industry. Due to its versatile properties Trevira is used in manufacturing fashionable dresses, suits, blousing and shirting materials, as well as luxurious carpets, curtains and other domestic textiles such as bed linen and tablecloths. Trevira has become famous for its advantages over other products in duvet fillings, sleeping bags and anoraks. A major area of activity is concerned with industrial fields of application.

The highly technical and specialised production process calls for well-trained, responsible and skilled personnel. The South African team of this Milnerton factory has been built up over the years, to meet the stringent quality standards set up by Hoechst AG, Germany. Plant performance is monitored on a monthly basis by its German principals to ensure that the local Trevira fibre is produced to the highest international standards.

### **IMPROV AIR (CAPE) (PTY) LTD**

The Cape Town branch of Improvair (Cape) (Pty) Ltd was established in March 1978, from the merger of Associated Air, Cape Air, Viking Automatic Sprinklers and Minerva Fire Defence, all Murray & Roberts companies whose various histories in Milnerton go back to 1970. Now situated in Metro Industrial Township with a labour force in excess of 240, Improvair are a major employer in the area. The Golden Acre and Good Hope Centre complexes are amongst their more notable installations and they are also responsible for the air conditioning and ventilation systems to the industrial areas (including the reactor) of the Koeberg nuclear project. Improvair are looking forward to a greater involvement in the development of Milnerton's industrial areas.

### **IRVIN & JOHNSON LIMITED**

When one talks of frozen foods in South Africa, one automatically thinks of Irvin and Johnson. The company's beginnings date back to the turn of the century when the founders began quite independently to trawl the abundant ocean harvests around our coasts.

Charles Johnson and George Irvin formed the company in 1910 and today it is a financial holding, trawling, food-processing enterprise incorporated in South Africa and listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

In 1975 the Cape regional office was established in Milnerton to control sales and distribution activities for the Cape Province. The main attraction was the modern environment and pleasant surroundings of this garden municipality combined with the availability of a high calibre workforce.

### **KILLARNEY MOTORS**

The present Shell Service Station, Killarney Motors, replaced what is believed to have been the first petrol station in the Milnerton area on the old road to Malmesbury.

It is unfortunately not possible to say exactly when the original garage started operating, but it became a Shell outlet in 1951, and remained virtually unchanged until it was replaced in 1974 by the Killarney Motors we know today; an operation with a vastly wider range of facilities in line with modern requirements, and offering service to residents of Milnerton, Table View and, of course, passing traffic. Regrettably the new Killarney Motors could not be on the exact original site, as its development had to fit in with the Municipality's Koeberg Road widening programme, but at least the name of the business has been retained by the present operator, Brian von Hage.

An interesting point uncovered by research revealed that at one stage the old Killarney Motors possessed what is believed to have been the first-ever woman pump attendant in South Africa - and this way back in the early 1950's.

### **OK BAZAARS (1929) LTD**

### **ONS HUISIE RESTAURANT**

Ons Huisie Restaurant is to be found on the ever pounding Atlantic shore in Bloubergstrand and its whitewashed stone, wooden and thatch roof structure creates a rustic feeling. Copper kitchenware, lamps and cast-iron implements contribute towards a vivid and warm atmosphere of the past century.

This seaside cottage was built by the StadlerBoonzaier family in the 1860's and was one of the first homes constructed in this area. At the time the Stadler brothers, originating from Germany, were well known in Cape Town for their fresh fish supplies to the public. Usually fish was traded against a certain amount of cash and the remainder in brandy. In spite of that the Stadlers all died at a very old age.

About a hundred years later Ons Huisie, then in a derelict state, was saved from final destruction by a far-sighted Capetonian. In due course it was restored and transformed into a restaurant, opened as such and became a public amenity. A few years later it became a national monument. Swiss-born caterer, W. Blochlinger, tendered successfully for this undertaking in 1970 and the official opening took place during April 1971. It took a further six months to streamline the operation and soon after the restaurant was granted a wine and malt licence. Since then local and overseas visitors have been steadily attracted to the quality of food, hospitality and service provided by Ons Huisie.

### **PICK 'N PAY STORES**

Immediately after closing our small Brooklyn store, which opened during 1968, we moved into the Milnerton area during 1974 and opened our 38th store in the Centrepoint shopping complex. We have received tremendous support, not only from the Milnerton community, but from the Council and Municipality as well. Milnerton was one of the first suburbs who agreed to late-night shopping on Friday nights.

Because of the French who are involved with the construction of the nuclear plant, Pick 'n Pay have imported a small range of the most popular food items from France especially for our Milnerton store.

At present no plans for expansion are envisaged for the Milnerton area.

### **RENNIES SHIPPING (CAPE TOWN)**

Among the many activities related to the major activity of shipping, is the allied service of warehousing and distribution, which initially operated in Paarden Eiland. The development of the Rennies operation, coupled with the advent of containerisation of cargo, obliged them to review the existing arrangements, particularly so in respect of the handling of containers in the narrow streets in the area in which they were located.

Early in 1974 it was decided to obtain premises at Montague Gardens, within a requisite radius of Table Bay harbour. Construction commenced on an extremely modern and functional warehouse, complete with the installation of dock-levellers for the effective handling of cargo containers. On 16 June 1976 these premises were formally opened.

### **ROBERT LESLIE AND PARTNERS**

We are gratified to be able to claim that we have been associated with the Council in the capacity of Consulting Engineers since the year 1956, or virtually from the inception of the Municipality. Our initial appointment was to advise on, and subsequently to construct, the sewerage reticulation and the sewage treatment works at Potsdam Outspan, whilst subsequent appointments have included such major roads as Otto du Plessis Drive, Loxton Road and Koeberg Road.

These works - together with the provision of the Municipality's water supply system and several township developments in "old" Milnerton, Bothasig and Table View - have seen the Municipality progress from the small village which only reached from Rugby Road in the south to Erica Street in the north, to the bustling Municipality of today, and we are proud to have been associated with this advancement.

### **S. RACITI**

S. Raciti Builders is strictly a family concern started by Salvatore Raciti, an Italian immigrant, in 1963. He was later joined by his two sons and the firm then expanded from small renovations to major renovations and the building of houses. Table View was chosen as our main area because we realised its potential with its proximity of beaches (and later the vlei) especially as South Mricans enjoy outdoor life.

We have so far constructed 150 homes and have built up a reputation for quality and efficiency.

### **SA CONTAINER DEPOTS (PTY) LTD**

SA Container Depots (Pty) Ltd is now in its third year of operation. Situated at Montague Gardens, Milnerton, SACD is the Customs licensed depot which handles all LCL cargoes. A wide variety of services connected with containerisation are performed at the depot. These include FCL unpacking and packing, full and empty container repair and container and bulk bag cleaning. Unrestricted access to and from the harbour and industrial areas is of prime importance for the movement of cargoes which pass through the SACD facility.

### **SAFCOR-HUTTON**

Despite being in operation in the field of clearing and forwarding since 1872 (as J. T. Hutton & Company) in Cape Town, only on merger with the nationwide Safcor Group was a decision made to centralise our entire operation - sea, air, road and rail services - at Montague Gardens. This move was made in the face of much criticism, as the locality was considered by many to be too far from the centre of the city and the harbour.

With very easy access to all the freeways as well as the northern industrial and the west coast areas, Montague Gardens is proving an ideal situation for our centralised container facility and we believe that our investment here will be rewarded in the future.

We look forward to a long and happy association with the Milnerton Town Council and to playing our part in the growth of Montague Gardens as an industrial force.

### **SAPPIKRAFT (PTY) LTD**

Sappi Kraft (Pty) Ltd, an operating subsidiary of Sappi Limited, South Africa's largest pulp and paper manufacturer, is currently engaged in the construction of a paper mill in Montague Gardens for the processing of waste paper. It is anticipated that this mill will start production early in 1981 and it will supply packaging materials for the corrugating industries of the Western Cape.

The mill will have a capacity of 28 000 tons per annum and will provide employment for approximately 140 people. The capital cost will be in the region of R15 million.

### **SFF ASSOCIATION**

#### **C. G. SMITH SUGAR LIMITED**

Building commenced in January 1978 with the first sugar shipments arriving in July the same year. All Hulets and Protea brand sugars and Illovo syrups are marketed through this new warehouse where our current throughput approximates 80 000 tons per annum. Storage capacity is close to 20000 tons.

This company also controls the Natal Cane ByProducts Limited depot in Bolt Avenue where industrial alcohol and methylated spirit is stored in many underground tanks and drums.

### **THE CAPE TURF CLUB**

For 72 years the Cape Turf Club has been closely linked with the growth of Milnerton - a town which it has endowed with a great tradition of horse racing, horses and horsemen.

The building of a racecourse at Milnerton, then a waste of bush, was the idea of the Langerman brothers. Negotiations began in 1904, but it was not till May 29, 1908, that the first meeting was held, packed trains bringing more than 2000 people to the course.

Since then the Cape Turf Club (it changed from the Milnerton Turf Club in 1968 when incorporating the Durbanville Turf Club) has provided a first-class course and every innovation that can improve racing.

The greatest achievement perhaps was the establishment of the Cape Guineas in 1957. Now sponsored as the R 75000 Richelieu Guineas, the race has come to be regarded as South Africa's premier classic.

The club has had only six chairmen, Major G. B. van Zyl, followed by Mr Justice R. B. Howes in 1918, Ralph Price 1936, Sidney Benjamin 1947, Jack Stubbs 1954, and Alderman Abe Bloomberg 1959 under whose chairmanship the club has made its greatest changes.

At the end of the year the first phase of the club's R4-m rebuilding programme will be completed and a computerised sell-pay tote system is then to be installed - providing race-goers at Milnerton with the most modern facilities in the country.

### **THE MILNERTON ESTATES LIMITED**

The Milnerton Estates Limited founded Milnerton and has been closely associated with the town ever since. It is still active in the area and is the owner of the Montague Gardens Industrial Township, a conveniently placed and well designed industrial area with full facilities, including sites served by rail. The company intends to remain, as it has been in the past, in the forefront of Milnerton development.

### **THE STANDARD BANK OF SOUTH AFRICA LTD**

The Standard Bank of South Africa Limited has been active in Milnerton since 6 December 1960 when the Agency to Maitland branch was officially opened. In those days attendance was only given on Tuesdays and Thursdays. As the town grew so did the demand for extra banking facilities which resulted in daily attendance being provided from 11 December 1964.

On 17 March 1980 Milnerton Agency was upgraded to a branch providing full banking facilities of every description. "Come in - We'd like to be your Bank".

### **UNICORN LINES (PTY) LTD**

The Cape Town container depot is the first custom built container depot in South Africa. It occupies an area of 24 829 square meters and started trading in mid 1974. The depot offers the following facilities:

Handling and storage of both 20' and 40' containers. Floodlighting has been installed to cater for a 24-hour service.

A repair workshop for containers. It is the only repair establishment in Cape Town recognised by Lloyds of London.

A refurbishing complex consisting of a shot blasting tunnel and the various refurbishing facilities which go with it. It has a vibrating floor shot recovery system to streamline the process and can handle 150 container refurbishings per month.

Chemical and water washing facilities for reefer and fruit containers, and repair facilities for reefer containers.

### **3M SOUTH AFRICA (PTY) LTD**

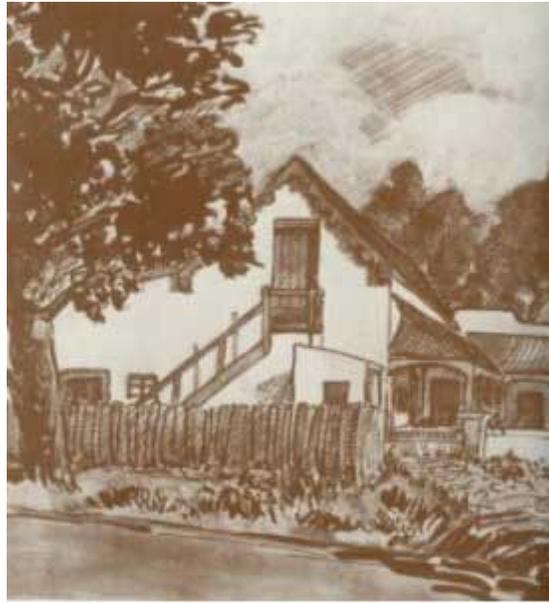
3M South Africa (Pty) Ltd erected its first plant in Johannesburg in 1959 to manufacture locally the famous "Scotch" Brand cellulose and masking tapes. This initial plant was moved to Elandsfontein where it has grown to produce a wide variety of adhesive tapes under the same "Scotch" Brand label as well as 3M coated abrasives, adhesives, coatings and sealers, "Scotchbrite" floor polishing and stripping pads, "Light Water" aqueous film forming foam, surgical and health care products, electrical splicing kits and resins.

True to 3M's diversification policy, additional plants have been established, notably, a printing plate and chemical plant in Pinetown and a magnetic recording tape plant in Atlantis. Overhead projectors, copying machines, microfilm, "Scotchgard" Brand textile and paper chemicals, "Scotchlite" reflective sheeting, "Scotch" Brand video tapes and a host of other products are also supplied to cater for the demands of the local market.

3M's renowned film processing laboratories operate throughout the country and offer top quality combined with incredibly fast service. There are some 1 500 people employed by the company which has branches in all the main centres.

In 1975 the local office moved to Milner Street, Metro Industrial Township in Milnerton, from where it conveniently services the Peninsula and Western Cape.

## Chapter 1 - Township in the Wilderness



**The original Jan Biesjes Kraal Homestead**

In the same year that saw the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, on October 26, 1897, a meeting took place of the now-vanished Town Council of Woodstock, in due course to be merged into that of Greater Cape Town. Before it, awaiting attention, lay a communication from a company, Milnerton Estates Limited, "notifying the purchase of the properties known as Paarden Island and Jan Biesjes Kraal respectively". The letter also informed them that it was intended "to layout the estate as a township, to be known as Milnerton and also to open up railway communications from Cape Town to the centre of the property. . ."

Dominating the news of the day was the arrival in Cape Colony of the new High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Alfred Milner (afterwards Lord Milner), for which reason, the promoters of the new venture decided to embody his name in that of their new enterprise.

The founding of Milnerton Estates Limited, on August 30, 1897, under the Cape Company Act (adopted only five years previously), reflected a temporary wave of optimism and an urge towards development, which had been sweeping the whole country as the trauma of the Jameson Raid receded into the background. Among the 25 shareholders were several personalities, prominent not merely in local affairs but in those of the sub-continent, among them the chairman, Sir James Sivewright, a close associate of Cecil John Rhodes. Born in Scotland in 1848, Sivewright had come to the Cape as an engineer in its Telegraph Service, and had risen to be its General Manager in 1877. Two years later he won distinction as a soldier in the Zulu War, had entered Parliament, and became Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works. In that capacity he had been responsible for completing the first railway line from Cape Town to the newly-established Witwatersrand Goldfields. Already a man of great wealth, Sivewright, during the post-Jameson Raid upheaval, had left the Government, and had developed a magnificent farming enterprise near Somerset West at Lourensford.

Also on the Milnerton Estates board was the celebrated Sammy Marks, mining magnate, personal friend of President Kruger, pioneer industrialist and founder of the town of Vereeniging, of the Union Steel Corporation and of many other enterprises. No less prominent in the community were Anders Ohlsson of Cape Town, of Ohlsson's Breweries fame, and James D. Logan, "Laird of Matjesfontein", who had made his money in the

liquor and catering trades, from his refreshment contracts with the Cape Government Railways. Still remembered as the godfather of the Johannesburg suburb of Jeppestown was Julius (afterwards Sir Julius) Jeppe, already a household word in early Johannesburg, to say nothing of his cousin Carl, a successful merchant in Cape Town and Consul for Denmark.



Sir James Siverwright, K.C.M.G. – First Chairman of Milnerton Estates Limited      Anders Ohlsson of Ohlsson's Breweries fame – Director of Milnerton Estates Limited      James D. Logan, the Laird of Matjiesfontein Director of Milnerton Estates Limited

Of the subscribers for shares no fewer than three bore the name of Langerman, notably F. J. B. (Frikkie) of Cape Town, the largest single investor, with 9505 (out of 42010), followed by J. W. Stuckeris, with 2 500, and James with 2000. Prominent in horse-breeding circles was F. H. F. Mellish, who had taken 5005 shares, five more than Sammy Marks' 5 000! All the way from London came the investment of John Hays Hammond - Cecil John Rhodes' senior mining engineer in his Consolidated Goldfields until a conviction for trying to organise the Jameson Raid caused him to leave South Africa. Mention must also be made of W. Hare, the brick manufacturer, and head of a family still prominent in Cape Town, as well as of Major Frank Johnson, who had commanded the famous Rhodesian Pioneer Column in 1890, and T. N. de Villiers of Pretoria. Rather surprising too, in that era of unchallenged male supremacy, was the participation of two women, Mrs J. Johnson of Cape Town (500 shares) and Mrs Ella Scholtz of Pretoria (2000).

Even in 1897 both properties acquired by the Milnerton Estates had a long history. Paarden Island, at any rate as a geographical feature, had received this name in honour, according to some authorities, of the "wild horses" or zebras which flourished there in the days of Van Riebeeck; and, according to others, of the more familiar mokes pastured by the settlers! As for Jan Biesjes Kraal, this commemorates an early headman of the district. A "Chart of Table Bay" in 1786 already shows it, while, significantly enough, in the earliest South African newspaper, the "Kaapsche Courant" for April 14, 1804, issued in the days of the Batavian Republic, appeared an advertisement adorned with a picture of a horse, and reading:

"Publieke Vendutie  
Op Saterdag den 28, April, aanstaande,  
aan de  
JAN BIESJES KRAAL  
van  
Een groote quantiteit bastaart,

Vaderlandsche Trek-Ossen, ditto Koeyen,  
Wagens, Bouwgereedschappen, Jongens,  
waaronder een beste Veewagter,  
Huisraad etc. etc.  
Alsmede, ter zelve tyd en plaatse, vier  
Spaansche Paarden . . ."

Another farm, destined to be associated in after years with Milnerton, figures in an advertisement in the Cape Government Gazette of June 16, 1834:

"Peremptory Sale

Of a TANNERY, DWELLING HOUSE AND PREMISES NEAR THE SALT RIVER, in the Cape District. . ." Then followed a description: "All that desirable freehold Property, now called 'LA BELLE ALLIANCE', being the chief part of the place RUSTVLIET, situate at the Salt River, in the Cape District, together with a piece of perpetual quitrent Land adjoining thereto. . ."

On this ground, which extended over about 6 morgen, and was known as Welgelegen, were located the earliest buildings in this part of the World: "A DWELLING HOUSE, containing four Rooms, two Halls, a Kitchen and Spacious Loft; with two stables, a cottage containing three Rooms, a Hall and Kitchen, two cottages, each containing two Rooms, a Pantry and Kitchen, with a small Garden in front. A TANNERY, comprising a spacious Range of Buildings, about 190 feet in length, containing numerous Tan Pits and other Conveniences. . . This property to be sold in the Insolvent Estate of John Brown".

The next occasion which brought the area into the news was of a less pleasant kind. . . figuring in Baron von Buchenroder's "Account of the Earthquakes which occurred in the Cape of Good Hope in the month of December 1809 . . .". Here we read:

"Much interest was excited by what was said to have been observed at Jan Biesjes Kraal, and at Blaauweberg's Valley. It was stated, 'that the earth had opened, that volcanic eruptions had taken place, that craters had been formed, and that lava had issued!' Numbers of persons flocked to these spots, and I went also on the 9th to examine them, but what I found fell considerably short of what I expected from the wonderful accounts I had heard. Yet was nevertheless remarkable and interesting. Near the Kraal I found rents and fissures in the ground, one of which I followed for about the extent of a mile. In some places they were more than an inch wide, and in others much less. In many places I was able to push into them, in a perpendicular direction, a switch to its full length, of three or four feet. By the people residing in the vicinity, I was informed, that they had observed these fissures on the morning of the 5th December, in some instances three and four inches wide, and that one person had been able to push the whole length of an iron rod, used to fix curtains upon into them, and that others had been able to do the same with whip-handles - even ten feet in length.

"The house at the Kraal in question (the residence of a Mr Bantjes), I found to have suffered so much, that it was not habitable, and consequently had been evacuated. In the walls were numerous clefts; by which they were rent completely asunder, so that I could put a stick from one side to the other in many places. The clefts extended from the top to the bottom, and corresponded with fissures in the ground.

"At Blaauweberg's Valley, I found the sandy surface studded with innumerable holes, resembling in shape, but in nothing else, craters in miniature. These holes were from six inches, to a foot and a half, and some even three feet in diameter, and from four inches to a foot and a half deep of a circular form, and the sides sloping to the centre. They were lined with a crust of bluish clay, of about a quarter of an inch in thickness,

which had been baked by the sun, and according to its nature had cracked and curled up in fragments, which however adhered still to the sloping sides of the holes. I reckoned seven of these holes, of different dimensions, in an area, contained within a circle, which I drew around me with a walking stick, and which might have been somewhat more than ten feet in diameter.

"The appearance of the bluish baked clay, which had given rise to the story of lava was easily accounted for, from the rain (a great quantity of which had fallen in the preceding season) having been prevented by the substrata from penetrating and sinking deep into the ground, so that under the sandy surface, a considerable quantity of water had collected, in which a portion of the substratum of clay had become dissolved, and which had been forced up through the loose sand, by the concussions which took place.

"The people at Blaauweberg's Valley, stated that 'they saw jets of coloured water spout from these holes, to the height of six feet, in the night of the 4th of December, at the time that the shocks were felt'."

After changing hands repeatedly the farms had come into the possession of F. J. B. Langerman, from whom they passed into the hands of his wife, who shared them with E. H. F. Mellish, the "Landing, Shipping and Commission Agent", and incidentally also a well-known horse breeder. The family link was further maintained by the appointment of F. J. B. Langerman's sons, James W. and J. W. S. (Willie), partners in Langerman Brothers & Lawrie, as secretaries of the Company.

On October 1, 1897, Jan Biesjes Kraal was transferred and before the month ended the "Cape Argus", of October 25, carried an historic item in its advertising columns:

"MILNERTON ESTATE COMPANY LIMITED

Notify that they have bought Paarden Eiland  
and Jan Biesje's Kraal  
for a Township  
and intend connecting it with a Railway."

Charles Marais, Land Surveyor, had already been instructed to layout plots, while R. Esdon, Civil Engineer, also of Cape Town, had been engaged to define the route of the proposed line. On the very same evening that saw the appearance of the above notice, the Town Council of Woodstock, presided over by its Mayor George Conrad Behr, were even informed of details: "This junction will be near the present Gas Works. The survey is being proceeded with and the Secretaries ask whether any objection will be made to the railway passing through unoccupied land vested in the Municipality? Councillor Searle cautiously proposed a meeting with the promoters to find out what was going on. The immediate reaction was cool, William Hare reporting in December that "the Council would on no account allow the railway to go that way, though they would have no objection to its skirting the Municipal ground". And so it was arranged.

Even if the survey had not been completed, specifications of the railway had been worked out. It was to have an initial length of four miles, and would cost £11 299 3s, the only actual building involved being a "pointmen's cabin", costing £50! The next step was an approach by Milnerton Estates to the Government, which insisted on the passing of a special Act of Parliament.

Still surviving is a copy of the original diagram prepared by Charles Marais, showing a startlingly ambitious project, extending from the North bank of the Salt River, along the sea front, to the banks of the Riet Vlei and occupying almost as much ground as central Cape Town itself! (Most of this afterwards became part of present-day Paarden Island and was separated from Milnerton.) As for the lay-out, no fewer than 12 different plans were produced by Marais for the directorate to choose from.

May 1898 saw the submission, through their attorneys, Messrs Van Zyl & Buissonne, on behalf of the Milnerton Estates Limited, of a petition to the Cape Parliament, requesting leave to build the line to a terminus on Jan Biesjes Kraal, as well as to "construct, maintain and work lines of telegraph and telephone. . .", also "to effect certain improvements by blocking up and closing a certain channel for water existing upon the boundary of the Company's said property by means of dams or walls. . . and also for the purpose of erecting a certain weir across a stream or river, known as the Diep River, flowing through the said property. . ."

At this point opposition appeared from several quarters - the Cape Town and District Gas, Light & Coke Company Limited, jealous of interference with their premises at Woodstock, the Cape Government Railways and the other neighbouring Municipality of Maitland. Woodstock itself complained of interference with its proposed drainage scheme and in the House of Assembly a Select Committee ploughed through endless supporting evidence.

Craig's Crossing having been defined as the junction for the Milnerton Railway, some illuminating information was furnished by Charles Marais: "The area of the new estate," he said, "will be 940 morgen, or nearly 2000 acres." Mr Buissonne went back to a basic question: "What was the object of the Milnerton Estates Company in proposing to construct this railway?"

"The object," came the surveyor's answer, "is to cut up all this land into a township, and to build a railway in order to give the people who will reside there facilities for getting to town."

Valuable evidence was furnished by the Company's consulting engineer, George Lacey Good, who had formerly worked for the designer of Table Bay Docks, Sir John Coode. "Will you," enquired Mr Buissonne, "tell us whether you consider that these weirs and dams that the Company propose to construct will be an improvement to the Harbour as well as to the Foreshore and its surroundings?"

"Oh, yes. I can give you that information. I can safely say that, instead of being detrimental to the shipping, these works will be a distinct advantage, because at present the detritus brought down through the Salt River is deposited over the anchorage, and as the general trend of the current is Northward, if these works are constructed, all this matter will be carried directly out to sea. . ."

"And will the construction of a railway embankment and the building of a weir tend to open the mouth of the river?"

"Yes. That is the only way you can hope to keep it open and to carry this matter out to sea. . ."

Unlike modern township developers, the fathers of Milnerton began their sales campaign in a manner that could almost be described as casual. In the weekly journal of Cape Town gossip and politics, the "Owl", on February 17, 1899, there appeared on the back page a modest advertisement for "46 Plots of Land, near Milnerton Estates and the Beach", mentioning "Milnerton Estates Company's land which will soon be connected with the Government Suburban Line". Two months later, tenders were called for the construction of the Milnerton Railway.

By this time negotiations with the General Manager of the Cape Government Railways, Sir Charles Bletterman Elliott, had been brought to a successful conclusion, not only in regard to the link up with the existing network, but to the proposed method of operation. Likewise, of the 12 alternative schemes that had followed Marais' rough plan of the "Township on Paarden Island and Jan Biesjes Kraal", submitted for the first time on February 4, 1898, one had been accepted.

Unfortunately preliminary roadmaking and general opening up were hampered by a factor which had already occurred in June 1898, and was destined to manifest itself many times in the years that followed, namely the flooding of the Diep River. Along with this went occasional storms, like that of September 1898, which caused the Secretary to report: "The roof of the stables (of a farm) at Paarden Island has been blown off."

Unable to provide rolling-stock or any other facilities, the Directors of the Company were only too eager to grant running powers free of charge to the Cape Government Railways.

No fewer than 14 different tenders were received for the first contract for the Milnerton line, prices varying from £4 350 to £9 400, the final choice being left to the engineers of the C.G.R. As the man on the job, Mr Eden, who was to work under their supervision, received the quite considerable salary of £60 a month, besides £4 a month to pay for the cost of an office. For all this additional expenses a loan had to be raised by the Milnerton Estates.

While the first visible signs of construction were the earthworks started between Craig's Crossing and the Salt River, across which a bridge was to be constructed, publicity for the new township was launched through the production, by lithography and at the cost of £38, of a plan, "reduced to a scale of 600 feet to an inch, such plan to show Woodstock and portions of Cape Town, including the Docks and Cape Town Railway Station".

So far not a single plot had been sold, but on April 7, 1899, appeared a reference to the provision of another essential amenity, when Langerman was requested to arrange an interview with J. A. Watson, Mayor of Rondebosch, "in regard to obtaining water from the Steenbras River".

International events were now to affect the affairs of the Milnerton Estates. On October 11, 1899, tension, which had been steadily building up between the authorities of Britain and the Boer Republics, culminated in the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War.

Only a few days before, on September 29, the earliest recorded photographs of Milnerton are mentioned, an amount of six guineas being paid to A. J. Fuller for taking them. Notwithstanding their unique historical value they do not seem to have survived.

Meanwhile, eager to escape from the oncoming catastrophe, thousands of refugees were streaming down to the coast from the Goldfields of the Transvaal and elsewhere, aggravating the overcrowding already created by the demands of the Military.

Yet the Milnerton Estates carried on amidst the turmoil. Not only was the building of the Diep River Bridge, based on plans by Mr Esdon, "approved by Mr John Brown, C.G.R. Engineer-in-Chief" (as usual, there were squabbles about the fees), but on November 3, Esdon was "authorised to engage a competent bridge-builder at a salary not exceeding £4 per week, to watch and check the work of pile-driving".

Even if the Anglo-Boer War was to slow down the project and to hamper sales of plots, work was anything but at a standstill.

In his Official Report for the year 1899 the General Manager of the Cape Government Railways, Sir Charles Elliot, wrote: "The short line of Railway from Craig's Crossing to Milnerton is very nearly finished. A draft of the agreement for working the Railway was prepared in 1899, but has not yet been signed, and the Milnerton Railway Company has asked for reconsideration of some of the clauses. I fear that, while the Military

requirements are so great, it will be impossible to provide rolling-stock for the purpose of working even this short line of railway.

"The viaduct which has been constructed across the mouth of the Salt River is a new class of structure for South Africa, namely Jarrah, which has been used for the piles." The last remark refers to the growing popularity of this hardwood from West Australia which was to rival that of Karri wood from the same country.

As far as can be discovered this structure, erected by the Fortress Company of the Royal Engineers, has vanished but a similar one, also "temporary", put up by the same unit to carry the road to the "island" on the sea side of the lagoon is still in excellent condition after nearly 80 years and still known as "The Wooden Bridge".

Not only did the Cape Government Railways remain prosperous during the War, they even offered to supply - and the offer was gladly accepted - the required four miles of rails from second-hand stock (priced at £2838 2s 4d), and to build a viaduct across the "Salt River Swamp".

Among those who applied for employment was H. H. Johnson, brother of one of the directors, who wished to be "Inspector of the Pile Driving Operations". Although the engineer in charge informed him that he had "already engaged a gentleman for this position", the Board found it "better in the interests Of the Company that an Inspector, with whom they are personally acquainted, should be appointed. . . and that. . . the present holder be requested to relinquish his duties at the end of the week" .

Rights-of-way across Paarden Island next created trouble, mainly because of the activities there of lime-burners, who were only allowed to continue, in return for their voluntarily maintaining the existing track.

For a sum of £819 the contract for the building of the Diep River Bridge went to a firm named McAllister & Ross, using timber supplied by the Company, in return for which they remained liable for maintenance.

On the outskirts of Cape Town developments of various kinds were meanwhile taking place, though complicated by the fact that the city was still made up of numerous rival administrative units, each independent in its arrangements. Thus Milnerton Estates had to allow for the fact that Woodstock Municipality was engaged on its own drainage scheme, while Cape Town proper and Maitland had equivalent projects. Other decisions were under way, of far-reaching importance to us today. On March 2, 1900, it was learnt that "the suggested Kaffir Location is to be placed on a piece of land named Ysterplaats" .

Reference to the close contact kept by the Milnerton Company directors with what was going on is made in the arrangements for a personal trip to the estate by cart, the party to leave Salt River Station at 11 in the morning of March 8, 1900. At intervals changes occurred in the composition of the Board, starting on July 25, 1899, when Major Frank Johnson, having submitted the name of a Mr Scholtz as his alternate, was embarrassed by the arrival of a letter from the latter declining the appointment, whereupon his place was taken by E. H. F. Mellish. Trouble also attended the membership of J. D. Logan who, despite his prosperity as "Laird of Matjesfontein", not only refused to pay up the price of his qualifying shares, but even became involved in litigation with Milnerton Estates.

Two major decisions were taken during 1900 - firstly the agreement with the Cape Government Railways authorising the Company to operate the line as soon as it was finished; and secondly the consent by Sir Charles Elliott, to modify conditions so that the line might eventually be taken over by the C.G.R. However, the Company was already talking of extending "to the boundary of the Company's property on the Koeberg side". Here, in days to come, the Milnerton Racecourse was to be laid out.

## Chapter 2 - Wartime Worries

As early as May 11, 1900, a step was taken, which profoundly affected not only the history of Milnerton, but that of Cape Town as a whole. To appreciate this it must again be stressed that the original township included the entire stretch of ground from the vicinity of the present-day Salt River Power Station to the boundary of present-day Milnerton, in other words the big industrial area of Paarden Island.

One of the directors, William Hare, conveyed to the Milnerton Estates a request from the South African Cold Storage Company Limited - forerunner of the Imperial Cold Storage & Supply Company - for "the letting of a small portion, about 30 lots, of land at the north-western corner of Paarden Island. . . at a rental of £25 per month. . ." Despite considerable hesitation, the transaction not only went through but marked the beginning of the island's industrial development, and of the process which culminated in the separation of that area from Milnerton proper.

Wartime congestion was the main reason for this request by the South African Cold Storage, of which other signs were to follow. Explaining to shareholders the reason for the slow progress on the building of the railway during 1900, Carl Jeppe, as Acting Chairman, made reference to the viaduct over the Salt River marshes and to the Diep River Bridge. "The arrival of the timber was much delayed owing to the number of vessels waiting discharge in Table Bay. . . But for the kindness of the Government in lending the Company some timber pending the receipt of the Company's consignment, the railway would not now be, as it is, practically completed." Although Esdon, the engineer, had already completed a survey of the proposed extension from the original terminus at Jan Biesjes Kraal to Duiker Vlei, involving an extra three miles and another £9 821, no decision as to whether to go ahead had been made. However, with so much extra money needed, steps were taken immediately to borrow £30000, setting a precedent henceforth followed fairly frequently. In contrast to these substantial transactions were such minor details as the authority formally given to Mr Esdon, who "had no further use for the horse belonging to the Company", to sell it for a sum of £25! Another unusual deal involved the borrowing of Jarrah logs by the C.G.R., pending arrival of a shipment from Australia.

And so the Boer War years ran on, with the Milnerton Estates spending money and receiving very little in return. Indeed extra ground had to be purchased at Woodstock, on the suggestion of Mr Hare, that an area near Paarden Island Beach be used for recreation grounds. Floods of the Diep River and the vested rights of people, mostly Coloured, who made their living by gathering shells for lime burners, were the subject (')f frequent arguments. Then there was the Village Management Board of Maitland, which, learning about the proposed establishment of a Black Location, asked for the co-operation of the Company in opposing the scheme. In this connection an alternative suggestion brought to mind a calamity still fresh in the memories of that generation, when E. F. H. Mellish and H. Hands were deputed to "give evidence before the Committee on the subject, recommending the Rinderpest abattoirs as a suitable site". As recently as 1897 the whole of Southern Africa had been smitten by this gigantic plague, which had swept away over 4 500 000 head of cattle. In a despairing and fruitless attempt to stem the calamity, livestock had been slaughtered everywhere - hence the establishment of this installation outside Cape Town, now fortunately no longer needed.

So too the Uitlander Council is another forgotten institution which, curiously enough, figured in the proceedings of Milnerton Estates at this time. Set up for the purpose of providing employment in Cape Town for refugees from the Rand, this body had put in a tender for constructing the first road to Milnerton, but on November 16, 1900, confessed its inability, owing to shortage of funds, to carry out the work. Unfortunately history is silent as to how the job was undertaken, but we do know a bridge was built by the Uitlander Council across the Salt River mouth at a cost of £200.

This and other crises eventually convinced the Milnerton directors that the scale of the Company's operations was inadequate and that it required drastic reconstruction. So Major Johnson was deputed to go overseas and investigate the prospects of financial support in the City of London. The result was disclosed on November 20, 1900, in the form of a cable: "Telegraph authority to enable me to arrange formation of a Company to purchase Milnerton on the following terms: Capital £340 000, vendors £226 000, promotion £24 000, reserve £90 000, purpose ultimate conversion £120000 debentures. Arrange with Standard Bank of South Africa Limited. Telegraph immediately London Branch to this effect that Milnerton titles in perfect order in freehold. Send at once Power of Attorney to be made in name of Sivewright to enable us to arrange register new company. Copies, Titles, Trustees, Acts of Parliament. Shall do my best in your interests. Send full authority."

Back went the Board's reply: "Your telegram to hand yesterday. Scheme meets with approval, but must have the consent of members. A meeting of the shareholders will be held on the 28th November. We have no doubt they will consent. Board controls majority. . ."

Sure enough authority for the reconstruction of the Milnerton Estates was forthcoming, the final negotiations being left in the hands of Sir James Sivewright. Early in February 1901 came a communication from the Commissioner of Railways, confirming that the Government had no objection to the transfer of any Parliamentary powers held by the original company and that it would give support. Sure enough, W. P. Schreiner, the Prime Minister, put through a Private Act of Parliament.

The new Company was duly registered, but alas, according to an official statement "a slump in the Money Market, together with a continuation of the War beyond the expected period brought further progress to a halt".

More encouraging happenings followed including promises of a Railway loan of rolling stock and other facilities, but there were still signs of abnormal times. Thus on February 1, 1901, a letter arrived from Captain C. M. Stevens, O.C. of the Civil Service Company of the Town Guard, "asking permission to use the Estate for field operations". With Boer raiders, particularly those under the command of General J. C. Smuts, penetrating so far into Cape Colony that they were at one stage in sight of Table Mountain, the need for local defence grew urgent. Hence the Milnerton directors gave the permission, though warning that the troops would be without facilities for reaching the ground by train, "as we have as yet no rolling stock".

Despite the War, the first steps were taken in March 1901 for the beautification of the township through tree-planting, while negotiations began with Cape Town on the possibility of drawing water supplies from the Municipal reservoirs on Table Mountain.

Quite suddenly, in April 1901, something of a crisis arose, through the announcement of its intentions by the Maitland Village Management Board. Not only did it propose becoming a Municipality but of changing its name to Milnerton and of having the Company's land included in its area. Led by a Mr Day an urgent deputation waited upon Mr (afterwards Sir) John Graham, the Colonial Secretary - corresponding to the Minister of the Interior - who however expressed neutrality on the issue. Fortunately the proposal did not come off and a year later on February 28, 1902, the Secretary reported that, though the grant of Municipal status to Maitland had been approved, only a small portion of the Company's territory was involved, and there was no question of taking over the name. Nonetheless one can only marvel what the position would be today if this ambitious scheme at the commencement of the present century had materialised - there would certainly not have been a Milnerton Municipality in the present-day sense.

Some idea of the rural character of the area was furnished when, again in 1901, repeated action against trespassers was taken against members of the public who went shooting on the land earmarked for development.

How frustrated the pioneers of Milnerton were at this stage is indicated by the report of Carl Jeppe as Chairman when he emphasised the extent to which development had been "retarded by the effects of the War". Although the Railway had been completed, it could still not be worked owing to "dearth of trucks and suitable rolling stock". For this reason the Company had confined itself to "carrying out such minor work such as the reconstruction of the bridge leading to Paarden Island, development of gravel pits and the commencement of tree-planting in the streets".

The most cheering note struck by Jeppe was in regard to the prevailing boom in real estate. "Notwithstanding the disturbed conditions in South Africa, property in and about Cape Town continues to rise in value, such increase being most pronounced in the suburbs adjoining the Company's estate, and also at the seaside resorts. . ." Hence he and his colleagues had "the brightest anticipation as to the future of the Company".

One firm still in existence figured in the proceedings of the Milnerton Estates at that remote stage - namely the Salt River Cement Works, whose request, however, for leave to gather material from the Paarden Eiland Beach "could not be entertained".

Undeterred by this refusal, the Salt River Cement Works Limited made its first attempt to purchase land for industrial purposes from the Milnerton Estates - five acres at £100 per acre near the seashore and £50 for the remainder near the Vlei. "Such an inadequate offer cannot be entertained", was the reply.

Although he had dealt satisfactorily with a difficult situation, Carl Jeppe now resigned his chairmanship, under the plea that he was going overseas for at least a year. His place was taken by William Hare, to whom fell the duty of supervising the arrangements for a debenture issue in London, involving a welcome injection of new capital. Indeed the position suddenly began to improve, with the end of the Anglo-Boer War obviously approaching.

Further encouragement was received when the redoubtable Sammy Marks in Pretoria indicated his willingness to participate financially in the expansion of operations, and, following the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging in May 1902, hopes soared that better times lay ahead. Unfortunately it proved a false dawn. "The money market", William Hare confessed ". . . has never recovered sufficiently to allow debentures to be issued with any hope of success."

## Chapter 3 - Sales Campaign

The only visible signs of progress in the first half of 1902 was the completion of the railway track as far as Jan Biesje's Kraal and the planting of 10 000 blue gums and 2 000 tamarisks on each side of the line. Yet the decision was taken to hold the first sale of Milnerton plots, 1 160 in number.

Hitherto the ordinary Cape Town public had known little of the enterprise; now a policy of intensified publicity was inaugurated. Not only were there announcements in the newspapers, involving, by January 23, 1903, the then substantial expenditure of £261 12s, but, at least one very unusual other channel was attempted, the secretary being instructed to "approach the manager of the Operatic Company with a view to obtaining an advertisement on the curtain on the night previous to the sale".

Typical of the methods used is an entry on January 30, 1903, in the "Cape Register", a local weekly.

"UNDER THE HAMMER. . .

THE MILNERTON ESTATES LIMITED.

"The difficulty of obtaining sites for warehousing the rapidly-growing import trade is being generally realised. Ground space at pounds per foot is a handicap under which the Cape commercial importer cannot be expected to prosper. But as wholesale warehouses demand peculiar positions for transport and railway conveniences, it is becoming daily more difficult for merchants to acquire suitable sites. Consequently the sale of 119 splendidly-situated business stands along a quarter of a mile of frontage to the Main Road between Salt River and the Maitland Bridge is an event of some importance. Directly parallel to the main line of Railway and the new siding accommodation contemplated on the Outspan\* opposite, the Milnerton Estates property occupies a distinctly advantageous position for the erection of warehouses for the storage of imports for the upcountry trade.

"The size of the stands ranges from 100 feet by 50 feet and upwards, and keen competition may be expected. Messrs. J. J. Hofmeyr & Son will wield the hammer at 10.30 a.m. next Thursday, February 5, on the spot, and a big attendance of the investing public is expected."

On February 4, the "Cape Argus", in an historic article, announced: "Perhaps the finest and best-situated estate in the suburbs is that lying between the main line of railway, beyond Salt River Station, and known as the Milnerton Estates. Looking at the property from a distance, or from a passing train, it appears to be quite infertile waste, in fact, marshy, but on closer inspection, such as was afforded the representatives of the Press yesterday morning, this impression is altogether dispelled and, instead of a vast stretch of barren land, one finds an expanse of rich soil, planted advantageously with abundant trees, and irrigated by the river, which cuts right across it, a land capable of and eminently lending itself to cultivation, development and improvement.

"The phrase, 'capable of development' may perhaps suggest a vague indefiniteness, but there need be no uncertainty about its development, for many a large sum has already been expended by the proprietor in effecting improvements.

"The extent of the estate may be judged by the fact that on the Main Road from Maitland it has a frontage of four miles, on the Diep River a frontage of five miles, and it sweeps round the shores of the Bay for a frontage of four and a half miles, beginning a little beyond Woodstock, reaching out to a point beyond where the wreck of the "Hermes" now lies. The estate also possesses, or rather will, when need requires it to possess, excellent facilities for reaching town.

"The proprietors have already laid a railway line, branching off from the Cape Government Railways at Woodstock, and running right through the property. This line has been laid up to about the centre of the Estate and three miles more are required to complete it. The Railway Department will work the line, and, as soon as ever building commences, trains will be run for the transportation of supplies according to requirements. When the houses have been finished and they have begun to be occupied, Morning, Lunch and Evening trains will be run, and this service will be further improved, as necessity demands.

"The Diep River runs through the estate and it is intended to pile the river banks and, by erecting a weir, to exclude salt water from the sea, while providing an outlet for the stormwater, thereby keeping the water in the river entirely fresh, and rendering it particularly suitable for boating. When it is remembered that nowhere in the vicinity of Cape Town have we a fresh river, or indeed one which is in any way suitable for boating, the advantages afforded by this scheme will be readily appreciated.

"These, however, are but a few of the contemplated developments of the property, as the whole estate has been mapped out in roads, public parks, municipal offices etc. with all the adjuncts of a modern model township.

"As regards the view afforded by the situation, seldom, indeed, is one so striking and artistic. Looking seawards, the ocean, dotted with craft, stretches far away, until the skies, as it were, fall down as a screen and shut out a further expanse of rolling, heaving and tossing seas, which one knows is there, yet cannot see. Turning towards Cape Town one beholds a beautiful panorama of the city, snugly nestling at the foot of the mighty Mountain, which in its stern grandeur forms a striking background, lovely in its natural ruggedness. In the far corner one sees the Docks, the masts of the shipping scarcely discernible in the distance, and by them rise the tops of the higher and more prominent buildings. Looking backwards along the road travelled from Maitland, the Mountain again presents itself to view, gently led up by the rising slopes, and now standing alone and unrelieved, its jagged tops lined bold behind the fleecy clouds that dot the blue sky.

"As a residential quarter the Estate possesses the exceptional advantage of being within easy reach of the city, while lying at the shores of the Bay, almost fringing the ocean, from which the healthy invigorating and cooling sea breeze is wafted up."



Beach at Low Tide

Then came the climax of the article:

"For the first time the proprietors of the Milnerton Estate have decided to place a portion of it on the market, as an initial step, and on Thursday next, February 5, Messrs. J. J. Hofmeyr & Sons, auctioneers, Hout Street, will put up 119 plots, suitable for business or residential sites, for public auction. These plots possess the additional advantage of being, of the whole Estate, the nearest to the railway, situated as they are on the Main Road, just beyond Salt River Station. Their value is further enhanced by the fact that the Government

have acquired all the land in the immediate vicinity for railway works and extensions, so that stores may be transported direct from the Docks, almost to one's door with the utmost facility.

"It will be seen from the above remarks that a great future lies before the Milnerton Estate as a township, and the plots to be offered next Thursday, situated as they are so near the town and affording such convenience, present an excellent opportunity to the investor, who may one day wake up to find a large and populous township surrounding his holding, and, needless to say, enhancing its value."

The first actual bid was received, a fortnight before the event, from Carl Jeppe personally, when he offered to buy a block of stands at £200 each, provided that he be allowed the choice. Unfortunately for him his colleagues of the Board decided that his proposition "be not accepted".

What might be described as a matter of conscience also came into the picture, when somebody suggested the sale plan should show the "old roads", indicating a denser system of communications. A compromise was reached - they should be shown "but marked as being disused and abandoned". On the other hand there was at least one private road, officially opened by the Maitland Municipality and running from "the bridge at Salt River to the house at Paarden Island", indicating how empty the neighbourhood still was.

Stimulated by these and other pieces of propaganda there was a good turnout at the auction, which took place still under the effects of the prevailing wartime boom.

Out-of-hand offers were now also coming in, including a request for at least one enterprise not likely to be regarded as an amenity, namely a guano store. Prices quoted ranged from £160 to £200 per lot, but it does not appear that any business resulted.

Behind a transaction in March 1903 lay a remarkable piece of South African commercial history. Messrs Weil & Co. purchased two blocks of land on Paarden Island on which they proposed to erect "a pier for the discharge of goods". These goods turned out to be petroleum, and it so happened that Julius Weil, head of the firm, was the nephew of Mr Marcus Samuel in London, the future Lord Bearsted. In closing the deal it was specially recorded: "The Company will give all the assistance it can to promote the interests of the Shell Oil Company". This step marked the advent of the great corporation in South Africa.

Encouraged by the commencement of actual sales, E. R. Syfret, on behalf of Sammy Marks, placed additional funds at the Company's disposal, thereby enabling Milnerton Estates to pay, among other things, for the provision of water from Cape Town, for the construction of roads, and for the building of a retaining wall along the Diep River. So too, in the realm of communications it was decided, apart from the railway to the completion of which everyone was looking forward, to acquire from a Mr B. Gunn, for the reasonable sum of £15, a pont measuring 10 feet by four feet by two feet, "complete with oars, chain and padlock".



Arrival of buyers at the first sale of stands - 1904

*\* The Outspan referred to in this write up has been identified. It is the present parking area in Maitland, beside the Salt River and under the Black River Parkway viaduct. The Siding was probably the one formerly called Montagu Road Hall.*

## Chapter 4 - The Coming of the Railway

Much to the general disappointment, the Milnerton railway line during the post-war depression, notwithstanding completion of the track, still lay unused. Hence in February 1903 a Mr C. H. Wolfe asked permission to run a train, only to be informed that "owing to the want of facilities, the Company will be unable to entertain his request". How exactly Mr Wolfe intended to do this was left unexplained, but he evidently helped to speed up Government action, for shortly afterwards the first experimental trains were run. The fact that only 45 pounds rails were used indicated the lightness of construction. Soon however the decision to replace them with others of 60 pounds, allowed the use of heavier rolling stock. .

In October 1903, Carl Jeppe, now returned from his overseas trip, resumed his duties as chairman and accompanied by the Secretary Mr Langerman, called on Sir Charles Elliott, General Manager of the C.G.R., "on the question of engaging pleasure trains".



At milnerton Station - 1903

"I am glad to tell you," Jeppe told his colleagues, "that the Railway Department will be prepared to give us a train consisting of an engine and about six carriages in three weeks' time, to run to Jan Biesjes Kraal and back at £7. 10s. It is intended to make a charge of 1/- per head return, with which this Company wants to be credited by the Railway Department." The homely nature of the arrangements was again emphasised when the engineer reported that, on his own initiative, he had "engaged a special train for construction purposes". He was thereupon authorised to pay the guard a couple of shillings over and above his railway tariff each week, "in order to obtain special facilities and thus prevent any delay".



Milnerton Station

For the attraction of visitors the Milnerton Estate Company now also decided to spend £290 on a "Tea Pagoda" and a line of bathing houses along the river.

The first effort to provide staff housing was the erection of four "Clerk's Cottages" near the sea. In the light of present prices, it is interesting to note that each of them, with four rooms and bathroom, cost £600 and that they were followed by others costing £500 apiece. Telephone communication was also planned, the Postmaster-General being asked in November 1903 what it would cost to run a line out to the new township for a single instrument.

The true start to actual operation of the Milnerton Railway was Boxing Day 1903 when despite the virtual absence of any residents, the Cape Government Railways provided pleasure trips on the new line. In order to further stimulate traffic the Company purchased three boats, "complete and suitable for river working" at the total cost of £28.

Public response was indicated by the returns for tickets sold. No fewer than 540 bookings took place at Cape Town Station on December 26, 1903, plus 542 at Woodstock. This dropped to an unimpressive 59 and 86 respectively the day after, though we learn, "a fair sum was collected from passengers travelling without tickets".

In the newspapers we also read: "The Milnerton Estates Limited tender their extreme regrets to the several thousand people who visited the estate on Boxing Day, for lack of sufficient train accommodation. It was not anticipated that the advantages of Milnerton would be realised in so speedy and satisfactory a manner, and the one train placed at the disposal of the public was believed to be ample. As it is now evidence that the attractions of the estate have already received the attention of the public, the train services for the 1st and 2nd January have been considerably augmented. The floating house and landing stage have now been completed and the boat moved to the mouth of Diep River, where there is deeper water for bathing and boating even during the present neap tides. Plans are now being prepared for the construction of retaining walls and a weir across the Diep River, with the object of maintaining the river at an average depth of about five feet."

Besides this, the engineer received instructions "to fix up the old coach-house so as to make it suitable for a caterer to use as a bar, to devise some means whereby the mouth of the river and the backwater can be closed, in order to conserve water after high tide", and lastly, "to build a temporary bridge over the backwater for foot passengers, at the cost of about £20".

The flow of people desiring houses was stimulated by an arrangement with a Mr Nettelblatt, local representative for prefabricated "Norwegian" timber villas. Whether any of these were ever built seems doubtful, although Mr Nettelblatt, by special request, sent in his catalogue. No less unusual was the plan in 1904 to appoint an official mole-catcher for the Milnerton Estates. Why this should have become necessary remains unexplained, nor is there any record that a suitable man was found.

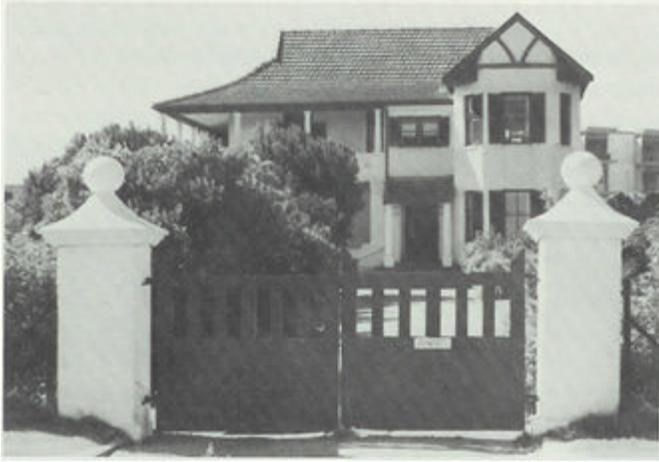
Another quaint transaction took place as the result of a shipwreck, when a deputation of Milnerton Estate directors "interviewed the owner of a stranded vessel at Paarden Island, with a view to purchasing it for the purpose of constructing a pier". The price however was so exorbitant as to preclude all idea of buying. "It would be a wise policy," added Carl Jeppe, "to purchase if we could buy the steamer for £50 or £100."

Encouraged by the success of the first auction, Charles Marais was instructed to layout further plots, on which occasion it was disclosed that his remuneration was two guineas each, portion of which being made over to him in the form of shares.

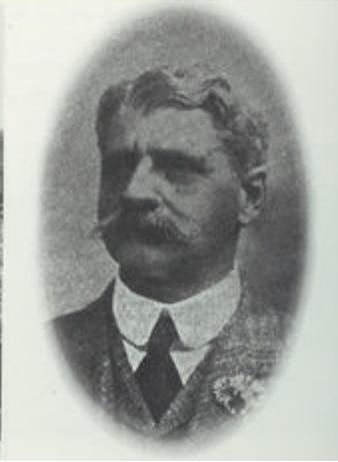
Advertising was also resumed, but only in the "smalls".

"For Residential Sites Apply Milnerton Estates", while publicity was likewise given to the fact that the company's shares were now traded on the Johannesburg and Cape Town Stock Exchanges.

All this, along with negotiations for the purchase from England of an extra locomotive and of passenger coaches (£60 each), was preliminary to a new sales campaign, heralded by the commencement of discussions with the Western Province Rugby Union, "to purchase a football ground on the estate", and by a visit from representatives of the Swimming Association to Diep River on Saturday, to see "whether it would be possible for them to hold their sports there".



Arnhem - the original home of J.W.S Langerman



J.W.S Langerman

Tenders were called in March 1904 for the erection of the first place of business, an "Estate Shop", to be hired out, while a few days later a contract was placed for a Concert Hall at a figure of £2 071 12s 6d. For the first time, too, there was reference to security, a complaint being lodged about the dilatory behaviour of the constables at the Maitland Police Station.

Practical encouragement to the opening up of the township was furnished by the action of J. W. S. (Willie) Langerman not only in buying a block of substantial size but in erecting on it his own large home, called "Arnhem", complete with stables. In this fine house all his five children were born, among them Dr "Dickie" Langerman, the now retired Chief M.O.H. for the City of Cape Town. There too he ended his days, after a life largely devoted to the well-being of Milnerton. Even today a block of flats on the same site bears the name of "Arnhem".

Something which today would be called a press release appeared in the "South African Review" on April 8, 1904:

"LAND FOR SALE BY PRIVATE TREATY.  
MILNERTON ESTATES LIMITED.  
RESIDENTIAL AND FACTORY SITES.

"Before selling by Public Auction, the Directors are desirous of beautifying and improving their Estate by actively pushing on their schemes of development, such as Road-Making, Dredging and Deepening of the Diep River, Tree-Planting and completion of arrangements for a regular Train Service.

"These will be well advanced in the Spring, when steps will be taken for holding an Auction Sale.

"To meet the continual present demand for Residential Sites, the Directors are prepared to entertain applications for land by private treaty. Such applicants will receive exceptionally easy terms and facilities in respect of both purchase price and advances for Building.

"For further particulars apply to:

J. W. LANGERMAN,  
6, Savings Bank Buildings,  
CAPE TOWN."

In spite of this, however, considerable time was to pass before the actual auction, mainly on account of the slump setting in after the departure of the British troops at the end of the Anglo- Boer War and the reaction to the spending spree to which South Africa had been subjected during the previous three years. Indeed there was increasing hesitation as to whether the whole sale should not be indefinitely postponed, as property prices dropped more and more and the number of insolvencies increased disturbingly. A rare glimpse of daylight was an application for permission to build an hotel, both Ohlsson's Cape Breweries and the South African Breweries asking for a monopoly. The Milnerton directors hesitated but were won over by the personality of Mr. Anders Ohlsson, who further agreed to take a block of 20 stands at £60 each. Good news also came from the Cape Swimming Association who had satisfied themselves as to the depth of water in the Diep River.

Revenue for the year 1904, modest though it was, for the first time included £24 10s 7d in respect of "Boat and Bathing Receipts".

With the "Clerks Cottages" finished and rented at from £2 10s to £5 a month, they became a source of revenue. A new road 15 feet wide was laid out to serve them, and a pathway cut to the beach. Pending the laying of a pipeline for water from Cape Town, boreholes were sunk.

With some surprise one discovers that the Milnerton Railway had hitherto only been operating on Sundays and Public holidays. Not until the middle of 1904 were the Cape Government Railways persuaded to undertake a daily service, bookings on a typical Sabbath being given as 140. With the prospect of trains running right through the week, in accordance with a timetable, oddly enough drawn up, not by the C.G.R. but by the Secretary of the Company, the directors rightly felt: "It will go a long way towards the more rapid development of the property, by facilitating building operations to a very great extent."

"We have four miles of sea frontage," announced the Chairman proudly. "We will shortly have five-and-a-half miles of railway running through the centre of the estate. We also have three miles of main road frontage and about three miles of river frontage."

Trains, it was also made known, would run at "20 miles an hour", two carriages being held sufficient for the time being to cope with the weekday flow of traffic.

September 22, 1904, having been fixed as the date for opening the improved service, a quotation was obtained from Messrs. Humphrey & Martin for a luncheon, to be served in the open air near the terminus to about 100 guests, arriving by special train. So high was the standard set, that the then formidable price of 12/- a head was accepted, inclusive of foreign wines, "the champagne to be charged for on the basis of what is actually consumed".

The inaugural notice read:

"CAPE GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS  
Opening of  
MILNERTON RAILWAY  
23rd September, 1904.  
Until Further Notice."

The advertisement showed, besides Cape Town and Woodstock, three stations - Paarden Island 3.20 miles from Cape Town, Yzerplaats 4.14 miles and Milnerton Terminus at 5.40 miles. The journey itself took 20 minutes each way.

Four trains ran on weekdays, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, leaving Cape Town at 6 a.m. and 7.35 a.m. and at 5.08 p.m. and 6.20 p.m. These returned from Milnerton at 6.35 a.m. and 8.10 a.m. and again at 5.35 p.m. and 6.15 p.m. On Saturdays the 5.08 p.m. was scrapped but there were two extra ones in the afternoon, at 1.20 p.m. and at 3.05 p.m. from Cape Town, while on Sundays traffic was restricted to a mere two trains, leaving at 10.05 a.m. and 3.05 p.m., with corresponding return Journeys.



The original Cambridge Hotel,  
built by Ohlsson's Breweries

How reasonable do the Passenger fares seem to us. The full trip either way cost 1/1d (13 cents) First Class, 9d (71f2 cents) Second Class and 5d (4 cents) Third Class, while the return trips were respectively 1/10d (18 cents), 1/3d (12 cents), and eightpence (8 cents). Children over three and under 12 travelled at half rates. In addition to this there were Monthly, Half-Monthly and Weekly Season Tickets, the most expensive being 18/- (R1,80) First Class, 14/6d (R1,45) Second Class and 10/- (R1) Third Class. "No concessions are granted over the Milnerton Railway," said the notice. "Season Tickets will be issued at Cape Town and Woodstock." Besides all this there was also a notice, under the hand of T. S. McEwen, General Manager of the C.G.R., of Saturday and Sunday excursion tickets.

That year the engagement of a Military Band added lustre to the gaiety of Wiener's Day, as did the advent of a Shooting Gallery belonging to a Mr. Lemensich, who paid 10/- (R1) a day for the privilege. Another healthy sign was the purchase by the Dutch Reformed Church of a site for the erection of a place of worship. Thereupon the Anglicans and Roman Catholics also submitted requests, though with the accepted proviso that there should be no delay in the commencement of building operations. Judicious publicity in the daily papers drew attention to the fact that investors wishing to purchase plots were at liberty to ask for them, and that, following the acquisition of an acetylene plant, arrangements had been made for the running of "Night Trains".

Though now taken for granted, there was one innovation connected with the laying out of the new "Football Ground"\*, in the instructions to the engineer "to lose no time in the preparation of the surface and to get all possible information as to the best means of fertilising the soil for the purpose of growing grass, and generally to leave no stone unturned" - a delightful expression - "to make the field a success". Such was the advent in South Africa - at a cost of £340 - of Rugby played on turf.



Military Band at the concert and dancing pavilion in the park

Cocksfoot grass, mixed with Kweek grass, was the formula strongly recommended by Mr. Ayres, the nurseryman. This and further vigorous action greatly pleased the Rugby authorities, with the result that, early in February, the formal agreement was finally ratified at the General Meeting of the Western Province Union. There followed a slight embarrassment when the Honourable W. P. Schreiner, not in his capacity as Prime Minister, but as a senior office-bearer of the Rugby Union, demanded a "guarantee from the Company that the Railway fares for football purposes would never be increased beyond 1/- return". Since there was always the possibility that the Government might take over the line, the matter had to be referred to the authorities, but an amicable arrangement was reached.

To the amenities was now added a Skittle Alley (estimated to cost £390), besides "six ordinary swings, with poles and ropes in suitable spots". So encouraging too was the attendance on the Diep River that two more boats were acquired.

The King's Birthday in 1904 was celebrated even more joyously than in the previous year, the Company earmarking no less than £50 towards hanging up Chinese lanterns in the grounds of the hotel and arranging a Fireworks Display and a Promenade Concert.

After lying low for a considerable time, the Maitland Municipality suddenly revived its scheme for taking over Milnerton, much to the alarm of the directors, who, by exercising their maximum political influence, managed to frustrate the project. Another curious cause of trouble was a series of complaints received about thefts of sand from the Company's beaches, by whom legal action was taken.

## Chapter 5 - An Old Time Outing

That once well-known Cape Town journal, "The Owl", at Christmas 1904, carried a memorable article, "A Flutter to Milnerton", by a writer calling himself "Wayfarer". He began by telling how the Editor, having shown him a press report stating that on the King's Birthday, 5000 people had made their way there, asked him likewise to visit the new suburb.



Holiday makers on the river bank

"I sallied forth to consult with the 'Owl's' cameraman and make enquiries how to get there.

"'You go by train,' said someone, and therefore, down to the Railway Station I repaired, and easily happened upon an obliging guard, who, when I told him it was my intention to visit Milnerton on the coming Saturday, enlightened me. .

"'There is a train at 1.20 p.m., another at 3.05 p.m. and another back at 5.35 p.m.'"

Wayfarer next described how he, the photographer and a lady friend, who was there to liven up the pictures, set off from the Main Line platform. "The train, comfortably freighted with pleasure seekers - so much so that we had a compartment all to ourselves - sped along merrily, Woodstock being soon reached and left behind and, then, as the straggling and unpicturesque environs of Salt River hove in sight, the locomotive veered away rapidly to the left and was presently hugging the low, sandy foreshores of Table Bay. Away to the right the village of Maitland receded from view and we were soon ploughing along through a solitary region of rank tussocky grass country, whose general dinginess was, however, somewhat relieved by big patches of bright yellow heather in full bloom that had a gorgeous and pleasing effect by contrast. Hereabouts the country, as my fair companion more than once remarked, strongly resembled the veld, being solitary, treeless and weird. Away to the north-west, as the train rushed along, we caught glimpses of curling rollers running up the white sands of Blouberg Beach, so playful and harmless on this serene and beautiful day, but capable of cruel destructiveness on occasion, as testified by the grim looking wreck of the 'Hermes'\*, lying not many cables distant. . .

"The eastern aspect of the country now presented a marked change, dense belts of Port Jackson willow and Minnatucka trees taking the place of the musty-coloured moorland and giving grateful shade, in which groups of sleek dairy cattle grazed or chewed the cud with an air of sweet content".

The journalist described their arrival: "Milnerton Station. We alight upon a well-constructed platform, adorned with a small but picturesque and convenient station-house built of wood and plaster, and, while taking in the rural surroundings, find it difficult to remember that we are but 20 minutes journey from the heart of the Metropolis. Following a narrow pathway through the dense vegetation, swarming with chameleons, beetles and other creatures dear to the heart of the entomologist, we presently emerged in an open space upon an eminence where the Tea Bungalow and the Concert and Dancing Pavilion\*\* are located. In front of this a terrace had been formed, and this, with its gravelled, level surface, its many rustic garden seats, its grassy banks, evergreen shrubs and clumps of beautiful marguerites, like great balls of snow, with their many and

brilliant white flowers, is one of the prettiest portions of the Estate. The prospect from this commanding elevation is remarkably fine. . ."

After a further account of the view Wayfarer continues: "No point can be so comprehensive. . . We lingered here a while to get a thorough mental picture of the unique scene, then sought relief from the Sun's rather marked attentions in the cool recesses of one of the leafy arbors nearby, where we were regaled with delicious tea and cake in Messrs. Humphrey and Martin's best style. This well-known firm is entrusted with the whole business appertaining to the wants of the inner man at Milnerton, and their methods, even to the smallest detail, must gain approval from the most fastidious, everything being apparently of the best, nicely served, and at most reasonable charges."

Fresh improvements were under way.

"The hotel\*\*\*, which lies in the rear of the Tea Bungalow, I was informed, is to be completed in a month or two and should prove a decided boon to visitors, especially as it is intended to cater for family visitors. After tea we visited one of the swings, of which there are several in different parts of the Estate, and later on traversed a breezy strip of moorland dotted with many varieties of lovely wild flowers and reached a sandy bank of the river, where we forsook terra firma and embarked in one of the many river punts, flat-bottomed, roomy, uncapsizable concerns, provided, for the pleasure of visitors, at a moderate charge." Wayfarer regretted not having brought along fishing tackle. "Nevertheless we thoroughly enjoyed our outing in the calm waters of the river. A word or two about the Pavilion. This structure is in keeping with the general effect of elegance and thoroughness about every improvement in the estate. The interior is decidedly handsome, the coved ceiling and the many columns supporting it being of alabaster whiteness. The central portion of the floor has been specially laid for dancing, and the devotees of the Terpsichorean art will find ample space in an area that is 60 by 30 and both smooth and fast, while the many anterooms, the bandstand, and the long, deep stoep, commanding a superb view of the city and its surroundings, complete the equipment of this building the place of future amusement in almost all conditions of weather. "



Concer Hall and Dancing Pavilion - Known today as the Jansen Road Hall

Brief reference is also made to future plans. "It is intended to dredge the river for a distance of five miles, and, when this is done, there will be provided an ideal course for boat races. I suspect the daytime is not too far distant when Cape Town's two boating clubs will hold their annual regattas at Milnerton. Close to the mouth of the river and hard by the railway line, the Western Province Rugby Union are preparing a football ground and

the near future should see many of the important engagements of the Union carried out at what promises to become one of the most popular watering places in the Cape Peninsula.

"It should be mentioned that intending visitors to Milnerton on Sundays can leave Cape Town by train at 10.05 a.m. and return by one leaving Milnerton at 6.02 p.m.; while on ordinary weekdays the timetable is fairly convenient for those who desire to spend a longer time there." The article closes with a word of final praise: "Go to Milnerton, I say, but for one day, and then you will comprehend, as this scribe now comprehends, why 5000 persons wended their way to Milnerton on the King's Birthday."

Along with this account appear some charming old photographs, done by no less a celebrity than the late Arthur Elliott, whose name is remembered for his unique record, now carefully preserved in our National Archives, of South African History. On this occasion he was happy when the train reached Milnerton, to do a view of Cape Town, besides shots of the swings, the river boats and of the tea drinking.

As for the catering, a Mrs. Grunberg paid £2 10s a month for the privilege of the Pavilion during the first year, her rent rising to £5 10s in the second year. Increasing demands for transport now prompted the provision of a special train for Sunday School Picnics, but a proposal that a "Railway Velocipede", in other words a bicycle on rails, be acquired for the convenience of the Company's directors, was turned down.

Meanwhile the train service was increased, additional boats were acquired for holidaymakers and improvements suggested along the course of the river, in the construction of which the Woodstock Municipality was asked to participate. On the other hand a Mr. O'Brien, who wished to install a form of amusement, then very popular, known as a Water-Chute, was told that the Company would not entertain his proposal.

*\*The British steamer "Hermes", of 3 500 tons, with 11 passengers and a cargo of forage from Argentina, for the British Cavalry horses in the Anglo- Boer War, dragged her anchor in Table Bay on May 12, 1901 and was wrecked on Blouberg Beach.*

*\*\*Both are still standing and very little changed, in Jansen Road.*

*\*\*\*The old Cambridge Hotel, now Centre Point Shopping Centre.*

## **Chapter 6 - A Rugby 'Ground' and other schemes**

Attention was now concentrated above all on the auction sale of plots, for the advertising of which in the daily and weekly press the large amount of £300 was earmarked. Another stunt was the employment of photography and the display of pictures in "prominent parts of Cape Town". In addition no fewer than 1 000 printed plans of the township were distributed.

Occupying an entire page of the "South African Review" in December 1904 was the inaugural advertisement for the next big event.

"MILNERTON ESTATES LIMITED  
IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT!  
Preliminary Notice of  
GREAT AUCTION SALE  
UNEXAMPLED EASY TERMS

"The above Company have now decided to place a number of their magnificent Sites at the disposal of the Public, and an Auction Sale will be held at an early date.

"The Land to be offered will comprise Residential Sites, along the river and sea, Business Sites, specially suited for Shops, along the Main Koeberg Road, and Sites for Warehouses, Factories etc., adjacent to the Railway and only about two miles from Town.

"No Site of any kind will be offered which does not adjoin a Street 40 Cape feet wide, 24 feet of which is metalled. Twelve miles of streets are now being made.

"The Company's Boring Operations have fully proved the existence of an abundance of Pure Water, the first four boreholes yielding about 200 000 gallons daily.

"An efficient Railway Service has been inaugurated, and will be expanded when necessary, to cope with the anticipated increase of traffic.

"The Dredger to be used for the purpose of deepening the river will be landed within a week, and Dredging Operations will commence at once.

"Unparalleled Terms. Conditions of Payment to be 25 per cent Cash, and the Balance in Three Equal Instalments at four, eight and 12 months.

"The Sale will be a conditional one, with the option to the bidder of declaring that he will enter into a 20 years' Lease that will then be equal to six per cent of the bid, with the right of purchasing at the amount of bid, at any time during 20 years. The Company will also accept part payment, and make a corresponding reduction in rent.

"The Company is willing to assist lessees or purchasers to improve their property, inter alia, by constructing and maintaining fences for them at cost price, and by supplying them with a reasonable number of young trees from its own nurseries, gratis, for planting on such fenced ground.

The Company also proposes to advance, on reasonable terms, the major portion of the cost of approved Buildings.

"A limited number of Lots are available now for Lease and Sale out of hand on above terms.

J. W. LANGERMAN (Secretary).  
Savings Bank Buildings,  
St. George's Street,  
Cape Town.

Further details were released on April 21, 1905:

"MILNERTON ESTATES LIMITED  
IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT!  
GREAT AUCTION SALE  
Unexampled Easy Terms

"The above Company has now decided to place 107 of their Magnificent Sites at the disposal of the Public and an Auction Sale, Without Reserve, will be held on the 27th April, 1905, at 3 o'clock  
AT MILNERTON

"A SPECIAL FREE TRAIN will leave Cape Town for MILNERTON at 2.30 p.m.

"The Land to be offered will comprise:

RESIDENTIAL SITES in the vicinity of the River and the Sea;

BUSINESS SITES, specially suited for Shops, along the principal streets.

... "THE COMPANY'S RIVER IMPROVEMENT OPERATIONS are now in full swing, and a powerful Steam Dredger is daily at work to ensure an average depth of four feet of water, on completion of which a two-mile boating stretch will be assured.

"THE WESTERN PROVINCE RUGBY FOOTBALL GROUND promises to be the best in the Peninsula, and ample provision will be made to encourage every branch of sport.

After setting out again the basic plans of sale already given, the notice mentioned that the reduced prices were not applicable to shop sites. The sale was again entrusted to J. J. Hofmeyr & Sons. On the previous day, April 26, 1905, the weekly edition of the "Cape Argus" devoted a special write-up to Milnerton, headed "An Ideal Marine Resort".

"Nature has provided South Africa with a splendid natural watercourse - the mighty Zambezi - upon which a race of South African oarsmen may in time be developed, of a quality fit to hold their own against the pick of the amateur oarsmen of the Old Country and Australia. Unfortunately Nature has not been generous to us at this end of the Continent, but the energy and enterprise of man is rapidly doing its best to nullify this shortcoming.

"By aid of dredgers, a splendid two-mile course of still water is being provided within 10 minutes of the city, and when that is accomplished, which, according to general opinion, seems possible of attainment in the course of a few months, the suburb of Milnerton will afford attractions that will be formidable rivals to those of other marine resorts.

"Five years ago Milnerton was waste land, but its proximity to the city, its splendid sweep of sand, the possibilities of the Diep River, which runs through the estate, and its general excellent situation, caused attention to be directed to the possibilities of the district. Consequently a syndicate was formed, who, since the purchase of that extensive tract ground, just across from the Salt River, have worked wonders. The completion of the Railway and the inauguration of a regular service of trains at once assured its ultimate success, and even in the teeth of the Depression one thing is certain, and that is that, in one short year, Milnerton has become a rising suburb of Cape Town and one of the most popular pleasure resorts.

"Strong opposition was expressed, but in spite of all that could be brought to bear against the development of the property, it is now patent to all that Milnerton now has a great future before it.

"One of the first to realise this was that powerful athletic body, the Western Province Rugby Union, which has acquired 13 acres of land, which is being laid out as an up-to-date football ground. Villas are springing up everywhere - and little wonder when the Company offers such favourable terms. On Thursday next further opportunity will be afforded of obtaining a suitable residential or business site, in close contiguity to the River, the Railway and the Beach.

"Milnerton itself is well-sheltered from the North West gales, far more so than is Sea Point, while the South Easter has practically expended itself before it reaches that part. Trees have been planted in every direction, and with the regular service of trains it is inevitable that a demand for building sites should be experienced. This demand has led the Company to offer some of the best sites at the extensive estate on Thursday next.

"The sale will take place on the ground..."

Having set out the terms offered, the "Argus" commented: "Anyone with reliable credentials can acquire a most desirable plot for practically nothing save the interest on the amount of his bid, while the Company will advance, on reasonable terms the major portion of the cost of approved buildings. These are terms that are bound to attract the thrifty purchaser, who desires to live in his own house in one of the healthiest marine suburbs in the Southern Hemisphere. There is no reason why in time Milnerton should not be the Brighton of South Africa, as the proximity to Cape Town - 9 minutes train journey - places rivals at an immense disadvantage.

"Today a Sacred Concert takes place at the Pavilion and grounds during the afternoon, while on Monday the attractions are such that a huge crowd of holiday-makers is bound to assemble."

The great day came and went, duly again recorded in the "Argus" of May 3, 1905:

"MILNERTON LAND SALE.  
GOOD PRICES REALISED.

"The special free train, which left Cape Town for Milnerton on Thursday afternoon, was crammed with passengers, some intent on business, and others merely influenced by curiosity to see whether the new marine suburb possessed the natural advantages that have been claimed for it. The run-out was uneventful and convinced all that Milnerton is no further removed from the heart of the metropolis than is Observatory Road, while the added attractions of beach and river at once likely to become one of the most popular suburbs of the capital.

"Many persons came for an afternoon's enjoyment, and these thoroughly explored the extensive estate, watching the steam dredger at work on the river, the building up of the sluices, the draining of the backwaters of the river and the improvements which are being placed in operation in every direction. Others again inspected and admired the Rugby ground, which is rapidly being covered with a splendid green carpet of turf, and adjoining which some of the best plots of the estate, when put up for auction, attracted special attention.

"The bidding, though never at any time brisk, was always high; those who had come on business intent had come to purchase, and thus at the end of the afternoon, 63 lots had been disposed of at an average of £92, the gross total realised being £5 714 which was deemed in every way satisfactory.

"The first bid of the sale was £40 for a residential plot near the station, and this was finally knocked down at £105, while seven other adjoining plots realised an average of £80 each. Thence a move was made to some plots overlooking the Football Ground, where some capital prices were the outcome of steady bidding, the prices ranging from £85 to £110 each.

"The lots put up for competition were dotted about in all parts of the estate and another group of 10, between the Football Ground and the terminus, brought an average of £96. Four stands for business purposes were offered, of which two went for £113 each, while the others found purchasers at £93. Four plots near the sea front brought £364, a very satisfactory result, which is proof conclusive of the opinion of business men as to the future of Milnerton. The opinion of all on the return journey was unanimous, that other seaside resorts will have to look to their laurels. "

Amplifying this report was a whole page of pictures in the weekly edition of the "Cape Argus", showing inter alia "Sale of Plots by Auction", "Dredging Operations", "On the River", "The Hotel Cambridge", "The Pavilion", "On the Way to the Sale", and "The Dredger at Work".

As far away as London the "African World", published by the well known Leo Weinthal, who had been closely associated with President Kruger, devoted a four-page report to Milnerton, illustrated by photographs and written by another pioneer journalist, Charles Cowen, while its rival London weekly, "South Africa" on September 9, 1905, produced something similar.

Now that development at Milnerton had really begun, a special Railway Timetable was issued for commuters, featuring additional trains. "The Milnerton line promises well", said Mr C. G. S. Clerk, Traffic Manager for the Cape Government Railways, in his report for the year 1905, "and the advent of buildings, the opening up of a

Football Ground, the lake and the Racecourse should attract a large number of people. To show the enterprise of the Company, we are now running a daily luncheon train, which is fairly well patronised. . ."

Hitherto the Estate Office had been housed in the homestead of the original farm, Paarden Island, but in June, 1905, was moved out to Milnerton itself, Mr Easton, the engineer, advising the Board that "the cost of fixing the telephone will be about £8".

Particularly encouraging, in view of the prevailing slump, was a report by Mr Langerman that "frequent enquiries are being made for land," but he added that the lack of an up-to-date detailed plan for customers was still something of a handicap.

Eager to encourage developments, the Milnerton Estates approached the Government for the establishment of a post office, to which the Postmaster-General, Sir Somerset French, responded on June 30, 1905: "The postal business at Milnerton is not yet sufficient to warrant this expenditure." He suggested however that the Company subsidise the Department in the appointment of Mr Greig - the shopkeeper cum postmaster - who should be entitled to a remuneration of £ 12 per annum, subject to one month's notice. For the first time, in the "General Directory of South Africa", published that year, Milnerton is classified as: "Post Office Agency. Letters to be addressed via Maitland, which is also the nearest Money Order Office." Of inhabitants only two names are listed - that of the Cambridge Hotel and that of Charles Greig, General Dealer, his Manager being D. W. Ganton.

Although Charles Greig remained in business for several years, he had in 1907 moved to Koeberg Road, and in 1908 was replaced by Harry Saacks, also a general dealer.

Notwithstanding the primitiveness of conditions in the township at this early stage, an application had already been received for the commencement of a major industry. Langerman reported in J u l y 1905 that he had "interviewed the representative of the Metropolitan Amalgamated Railway Carriage Works on the subject of the purchase of land at Milnerton". At least 1 0 acres would be needed and the Secretary explained: "They propose to erect a huge factory, which will necessitate the employment of about 800 men!" Nothing remotely on this scale then existed in South Africa and the prospect grew even more glamorous on account of the severity of the Depression. Yet there were already elements of doubt. "It has come to my knowledge," said Langerman, "that Mr Moore, the Carriage Works Representative, is also negotiating with the Kensington Estate Company (Cape Town) for the purchase of land, which has been offered at £50 per acre." He even produced a plan of the rival firm's properties. Discussion followed and then the Milnerton directors decided: "The advantages to be reaped will in no way warrant them in quoting a price in anything like that named by the Kensington Company", though they authorised the Secretary to negotiate on the basis of £100 per acre, subject to the condition "that a factory will be erected within an arranged time and that the land offered. . . will be utilised for factory purposes only and not to be sold, as against the Company, for residential purposes".

Hopes rose high, when in September 1905 the principle of purchase by the Metropolitan Amalgamated Railway Carriage & Wagon Company Limited, was accepted, though it still needed ratification by the London Board of that enterprise. Sir James Sivewright and Carl Jeppe were granted full powers to finalise the deal and on December 1, a letter arrived "from which it would appear that, as a result of the negotiations. . . there is every prospect of the Carriage Company becoming landowners of Paarden Island".

Within a few more days there came further notification that "all that now remains to be done is the drawing of the Deed of Sale". That document was finalised in February 1906.

Alas, the fates were against fulfilment of the scheme: South Africa was not yet ripe for the local building of rolling stock.

On the other hand the township now acquired at least one railway official, namely its own stationmaster, Mr McLeod, of whom we learn that he had "been in charge of Lourensford, Somerset West for a considerable period". In his occupation, Mr McLeod explained, he would also be able to "devote to the interests of the Estate during the hours of 9 to 5, as well as attend to his railway duties". For all this he would receive £11 a month, besides permission to occupy J an Biesjes Kraal homestead, two rooms of which however were to be furnished by the Company and reserved for the use of directors!

So rigid, incidentally, was the control of operations from Head Office that one reads with some astonishment on July 28, 1905: "The Secretary was instructed to purchase a suitable hat-rack for the Company to be placed in the Board Room!" Much to the regret of those who remembered his role in early Rhodesia, Major Frank Johnson now decided to give up his seat on the Board.

By this time six miles of road had been added to the existing network, while the extended train service was in full operation. Of the 114 lots so far disposed of, no fewer than 86 were represented by the "Football Ground", though the World was assured it "promises to become the finest in the country".

With two miles of navigable waterway now available, the Milnerton Estates gave £10 towards the costs of a Regatta for the World Sculling Championship, due to be held up North, on the Zambezi River. Not only was what was described as "a satisfactory Agreement" reached with the Table Bay Boating Association but no time was lost in erecting a boathouse, while assurances were received that regattas would shortly also take place on the Diep River. Thus stimulated, the Company ordered a second suction dredger and gave its blessing to the Model Yacht Club, which also chose Milnerton as its future home. Incidentally one of the two rooms in the Paarden Island homestead was given over to this institution in return for the cover for storage purposes, "at a rental of 2/6d per month"!

## **Chapter 7 - A Racecourse is Born**

On November 18, 1904, an idea germinating for some time had begun to take shape. "It is generally understood," said a director, Julius Weil, "that it will be in interests of Milnerton to have a racecourse. With this in mind, an application has been made to the Jockey Club for a licence, which I regret to say, has been refused. However, the Company has been approached during the week by brokers for the purchase of ground on which I believe it is proposed to have an Unlicensed Racing Club. Being against this on principle, I suggest a new approach to the Jockey Club Executive, to whom we should emphasise the benefits the sport would derive from the establishment of the new enterprise. Only if there is a renewed refusal should we, as a last resort, consider the idea of an unlicensed club."

After consideration of these ideas approaches were also made to the senior body in the country, the South African Turf Club, suggesting a preliminary meeting. Not only did the South African Turf Club respond in an encouraging fashion, even appointing a Sub-Committee to deal with the scheme of a course at Milnerton, but from Johannesburg a director of the Auckland Park Racing Club also made approaches, suggesting a lease of land, with an option of purchase, and submitting, in support of his arguments, a balance sheet of the Transvaal institution, "which shows same to be in a very prosperous condition".

With this further possibility in mind, a sub-committee was set up at Milnerton, consisting of Messrs. Langerman, C. Marais and Martin, the two groups meeting at a lunch on December 12, 1904, to discuss the project. Agreement in principle was reached and early in the New Year a suitable tract of land was found on the farm Rietvlei.

Only a few weeks after the auction sale a further big step was taken, to deal with the demarcation of the site of the proposed Milnerton Turf Club, and, at a cost of £50, to equip the Rugby Ground with its own railway station - admittedly only a single platform.

During September 1905 an agreement was hammered out with the S.A. Turf Club, based on a lease on an area not exceeding 80 morgen, for a period of nine years, occupied with an option of purchase at £100 per morgen, to take effect by 1914. Mortgage facilities were promised by the Company, which furthermore undertook to lend up to £10 000 towards equipping the course. It was also agreed that, should the South African Turf Club abandon the ground at some future date, the Milnerton Estates might be allowed to take over its Racing Licence. Powers of appeal to the Jockey Club of South Africa in Johannesburg were accepted by both parties and the Turf Club undertook to hold at least 10 race meetings yearly. In return the Company undertook to "connect the course with the Milnerton Railway at its own expense. The erection of a covered way to the Course shall be at the Company's option". The engineer prepared a detailed lay-out, while, as a pleasing gesture, the South African Turf Club sent complimentary tickets to the Directors of the Milnerton Estates for their November meeting at Kenilworth.

Promising though the situation appeared, unforeseen hitches occurred. On December 1 a reminder was addressed to proposed Lessees enquiring: "What steps are being taken to give effect to the provisional arrangement entered into, since the Company is now prepared to submit plans and specifications for the proposed Course." (Incidentally the estimated expenditure, as a result of the prevailing drop in prices, had been cut to £10 000.) Even by the time of the Annual General Meeting, the Milnerton Board considered it inadvisable to make public reference to any definite Racecourse transaction, restricting its announcements to the fact that the completion of two additional miles of roads had raised the grand total to nine miles, that work

had been done in stabilising the banks of the river, that a quarry had been opened and that "several well-built houses" had been erected by purchasers of lots.

Apart from "Arnhem", mentioned earlier, these included at least another still standing today at No. 10, Marais Road. Formerly the property of Albert Coates, the famous musician it now belongs to a former Mayor of Milnerton, Alderman Theo Marais.

More than a year passed before a notification was received that the Stewards of the South African Turf Club would hold a meeting, at which "the Milnerton Race Course question will be finally settled".

One entertaining glimpse of the original inspection was furnished on January 19, 1906, when the Company's engineer was instructed "to put up a rough structure to give a better view of the whole ground, also to have a man on horseback in attendance so that he could ride round the proposed course, which would prove that a Race would be in full view of the Grandstand all round the course".

In March the South African Turf Club authorised their representative "to enter into an agreement with the Company to provide racing at Milnerton", and in this connection an arrangement was proposed arising from an unsuccessful previous scheme. At a place called, in honour of its English counterpart, Goodwood Park (this was the beginning of the present municipality of Goodwood), another race club had endeavoured to establish itself. Hence the Milnerton Estates decided to "obtain an option on the Goodwood Park buildings, which would be followed by a joint inspection with the Stewards of the South African Turf Club. Yet on April 20, all the Secretary could report was that the Turf Club Agreement had not been signed.

Both sporting rivalry and economic slump were responsible for the slow progress during 1906. With the Great Depression at its worst, with the revenue of the Cape Colony down by nearly 50 per cent and thousands of people leaving the country, even the South African Turf Club, though already in existence for a century, became hesitant. Yet at this point another group of sportsmen, to their permanent credit, decided to show their confidence by starting on their own account the Milnerton Turf Club, one of the most important being John William Stuckeris (Willie) Langerman, father of Dr. R. M. Langerman and, as mentioned, a member of the firm of Langerman Brothers & Lawrie, became one of the original stewards. Born in Cape Town in 1878, he had started his racing career in 1895 at the age of 17. He gave his personal backing to this project, and mainly through this, made it possible, on February 13, 1907, for Mr. Jeppe to express the Board's appreciation of the good news that "a Racing Licence had been granted to the Milnerton Turf Club by the Jockey Club of Johannesburg".

James W. Langerman, his elder brother and partner, private secretary of Sir James Sivewright as a young man, also played a major part in starting the Turf Club.



The Grand Stand of the Milnerton Turf Club



The Earl of Athlone and Mr Sidney Benjamin, president of the Milnerton Turf Club



Well heeled punters at Milnerton Race Course.

Within a matter of weeks, however, the fact that the Milnerton Turf Club had the financial support of Milnerton Estates gave rise to serious rows, the Company taking legal advice "as to whether the Court could restrain us from holding race meetings at Milnerton, as it had been stated that the Jockey Club had acted illegally in granting us a licence". Carl Jeppe, vigorously opposing this view, declared on March 15, 1907: "I do not fear any possibility of the Licence to have been illegally granted, and if it were so, I feel sure that the Jockey Club, as a body of men, would simply define Milnerton as a Racing District and reissue the Licence to us." With the prospect of a special meeting of the Jockey Club on April 3, 1907, Jeppe, accompanied by the Secretary, went especially to Johannesburg to put the case. Back came the news that "efforts made to reconsider the granting of the Milnerton Licence have failed", the Jockey Club reaffirming that the Milnerton Licence could in no way be interfered with. "Any arrangements which the South African Turf Club desires to make with the Milnerton Turf Club will have to be done between the two clubs without instructions or interference from the Jockey Club." And so, in May 1907, it became possible to set up a new Turf Club Company, for which 'Articles and Constitution were drawn up by J. Bennie Keyser, a well-known Cape Town attorney.



The grand stand at the Turf Club in more modern times.

Construction work was vigorously taken in hand and, although not yet completed, the first meeting on the new Milnerton Race Course took place on May 28, 1908, thereby inaugurating what can be described literally as a new era in the progress of the Estate.

## **Chapter 8 - Travelling Salesmen**

The increasing frequency with which the name of Milnerton had figured in the news in the period while the Turf Club was being established had beneficial effects in other directions. On April 5, 1906, sightseers, to the number of no fewer than 200, were taken by special train and, we learnt, "expressed themselves as surprised at both the development that has taken place and the natural beauty and charm of the Estate". Besides the Rugby Field, now approaching completion, there were several additions to the facilities for amusement, including, curiously enough, a Maze, which came into operation on Wiener's Day\* 1907, to the mystification of appreciative crowds.

Independently of the Cape Automobile Club, the Cape Town Motor Cycle Club asked leave on February 8, 1907, "to use our road from the Main Road to the Bridge and thence parallel to the Railway to the Central Station for sports to be held on March 2 next". One condition was made that the Motor Cycle Club be responsible for the attendance of the necessary police to regulate the traffic and do any repairs to the road.

Only a short while previously the well-known Van Riebeeck Mineral Water Spring had been located in the Tygerberg, for whose product a market, still existent today, was soon to develop. Hopes rose in Milnerton in July 1907, when there were reports of something similar within the bounds of the estate, samples being submitted to a Dr. Petersen, who however, as far as can be determined, gave a non-committal verdict, with the result that nothing more happened.

The Alfred Rowing Club agreed to hold its Regatta at Milnerton in November 1906, with the Company guaranteeing the organisers against loss. A Shooting Club asked for a piece of ground on which to set up a range, while an organisation calling itself "The Suburban Social Club" also manifested interest.

Among the less cheering events were the occasional incursion of the sea, of which a particularly bad instance was reported in October 1905 after a great storm. "The water," reported the Secretary, "rose to an unprecedented height, 2 feet 6 inches above the level of ordinary Spring Tides. The water dashed like a sea against the bank, which I am glad to say stood the severe strain to which it was put." Nonetheless, "in view of the immense volume of water in the river in flood time and the evident strain on the bank", a report was secured from the engineer as to whether a new channel should not perhaps be provided.

Despite the unmistakable goodwill with which a large section of the public regarded the new suburb, the continuance of the Slump could not be ignored and led during 1906 to the introduction of a new sales technique which, the management hoped, would help to neutralise the prevailing financial stagnation. This was described as "Sales of Land by means of Travellers", who today would be described as itinerant salesmen. According to the instructions given, these emissaries were allowed to travel round Cape Colony, quoting for inside lots £100, for corner and shop lots, £130 and for corner shop lots, £150.

The first travelling salesman appointed was a Mr. Udall, who received a bonus of £5 for each plot disposed of and was granted the sole right for the ensuing six months to market these properties. By the end of June, 13 plots had been thus disposed of, with several other possibles pending, while during the following month a further refinement was introduced when the New York Life Insurance Company, one of several big American concerns then still permitted to operate outside the boundaries of the U.S.A., agreed that a Mr. Westmacott should combine the sale of its policies with that of plots at Milnerton. Considerable success seems to have attended this experiment, even if only tantalisingly little was recorded of the details and terms under which he operated. Obviously, however, Westmacott was granted several privileges as long as he managed to dispose

of land. Hence, on November 2, 1906, he successfully submitted an application to dispose of no fewer than 25 residential plots and to set up, for the first time, an agency for Milnerton Estates in East London. In Mr. Westmacott's wake there reappeared Mr. Udall, who wanted also to sell plots in other townships on the instalment system, but, notwithstanding the times, Milnerton Estates were in no mood for such new-fangled ideas and turned down his proposal.

Renewed publicity was however forthcoming in the press, the "Cape Times Weekly" on January 23, 1907, carrying an item:

"BUY NOW!  
IT WON'T GET CHEAPER!  
MILNERTON

The Popular Marine Suburb  
Reserved for European Residents.  
15 Minutes from Cape Town  
Connected by Railway.  
Boating, Sea and River Bathing.  
Roads Made, Water Laid On.  
Free Life Insurance Policy given away  
with every Plot of Land.

Apply to:

Eric J. S. Westmacott,  
3, Savings Bank Buildings,  
St. George's Street,  
CAPE TOWN."

## **Chapter 9 - Better Times**

Dimly plans for a local administration were meanwhile taking shape, implying the evolution of something of a community. Under the heading "Village Management Board", there was reference, on March 30, 1906, to a possible petition to set up such a body and Langerman informed the Directors on April 10 of the necessary qualifications to become Members. On finding however that such a dignitary must be a "resident of the Estate", it was decided that "the proposed establishment at Milnerton be dropped for the present". So the Milnerton Estates Company continued to handle these matters, a fact to which it gave definite expression when a request arrived from the Woodstock Municipality to establish a burial site for dead animals. "This was not entertained." Considerable suspicion was soon after manifested when Maitland Municipality proposed extending its boundaries, and a sub-committee was set up to prevent as far as possible the inclusion of Paarden Island.

On the transportation side too developments occurred, including a proposal, from the old bill-posting firm of Gilchrist & Powell, to place advertising on Milnerton station, for which privilege they were prepared to pay £10 a year, while in May 1906 the introduction of petrol-driven "Motor Trains" was investigated.

Anxious to be rid of the burden of financing the Railway, the Secretary was instructed to persuade the C.G.R. to take over the Milnerton line, wherein he was ably assisted by a member of the Divisional Council, Mr. Starke, described as "the most influential farmer in the Koeberg district", who joined in canvassing support from nearby agriculturists. Sure enough, at a meeting of Koeberg farmers, a committee was appointed to take whatever steps might be needed, hoping from their own point of view that the railway would then be extended further to their district. But the Cape Government Railways, while still fulfilling their obligations with reasonable efficiency, were not prepared for any such development.

On the other hand the progress of the Horseless Carriage in these parts was unmistakable, one manifestation being a proposition from the Automobile Club (later renamed the Royal Automobile Club of South Africa) to hold a "Motor Carnival". Hence on June 21, 1907, the Club asked permission to hold Speed Trials on the road between the bridge at the Diep River and Paarden Island Road. These necessitated closing the thoroughfare to public traffic for about an hour, while another section of some 200 yards, between the central station and Mr. Gunn's property, would not be available to traffic for two hours "in order to carry out certain tests etc. in connection with Motoring". Milnerton Estates gave their blessing as long as the Company's engineer did not see any practical objections. Obviously the Motor Carnival proved a great success, for a special letter arrived from the organisers, "expressing their appreciation of the Company for the facilities and assistance rendered". Better still, it added that there was every prospect of the Club holding another Carnival at Milnerton during the Gala Season, provided they were allowed to make an admission charge. This too was willingly accepted.

As a measure of economy the Stationmaster was asked also to carry out the duties of Postmaster for Milnerton. More significant still was an all round reduction in salaries in August 1907. Yet hope still persisted that new sources of revenue could be developed, ranging from a scheme to import some 200 live Mossel Bay oysters, "with a view to putting them down at the most suitable spot of the river and thereby inaugurating a colony of these useful and tasty creatures", to selling a plot for use by the Colonial Oil Company for the erection of a store.

Rather surprisingly, although a decision to introduce reduced rates for children on the Milnerton line under the C.G.R. tariff was approved, the Board of the Company considered in February 1907 "the time premature to establish a school", and that notwithstanding approaches made to Dr. Thomas Muir, Superintendent-General of Education for Cape Colony.

Military contacts were stimulated in May 1907 when no fewer than 300 members of the Cape Colonial Volunteers, under Colonel Shadwell, examined the ground as a preliminary to setting up a Rifle Range, which Mr. Laurie, the new Secretary, considered to be "a tremendous acquisition" .

Other sections of the population also began to be interested in Milnerton. Thus during May 1907 a Mr. Smuts wrote in, enquiring "whether the directors would favour holding Coloured football matches on the Football Union's ground", giving as a reason that, while the Western Province Rugby Union had no direct interest in the matter, he (Mr. Smuts) would use his influence in persuading the Coloured Union to play there. In addition he suggested that the Milnerton Estates spend £30 on the erection of a corrugated iron shed. Startled at the novelty of the idea, the Board asked for further particulars, including the days on which the Coloured Union usually held their matches. Mr. Laurie found that they would take place on Saturdays, whereupon the Company gave its approval, "provided that the Rugby Union is satisfied that the playing of Coloured matches and Union matches on the same ground at the same time will not be taken exception to . . . "

Later in the same year there was a dispute between a Mr. McGregor and a Mr. Reading on the presence of Coloured people in the Milnerton Park, something of which the latter approved and the former did not. In the event Mr. Reading was informed that, "whilst admiring his philanthropy, we have serious objections to his breaking the rule, of which he is perfectly well aware, that he will be held responsible for any claims made onus..."

Otherwise football matches were welcomed, as adding a stimulus to the Railway traffic, with no fewer than 120 players apart from spectators attending in a single afternoon.

Complaints of misbehaviour by the increased number of strangers brought about a visit to the Commissioner of Police in Cape Town by Mr. Laurie. Colonel R. M. Crawford was most helpful, informing his visitor that not only did Milnerton fall directly under his control but that, if at any time it was thought that the Estate should receive additional policing, such policing would be given. In the meantime the Commissioner was in communication with the Heads of Police at Woodstock and Maitland, who would supply him with their reports dealing with policing at Milnerton.

The Company also showed its appreciation of the services rendered by the Secretary, when, on the occasion of his wedding in the same year, he was given the choice of any two plots for his own residence. Having picked Nos. 1503 and 1509 Mr. Laurie enquired at what price he could buy them and was told that the figure would be £60 each, payable only after a year. Incidentally, it emerged that his annual salary was £350.

As for the English Church, this too now acquired an additional plot, "adjoining Mr. Greig's Grocery Store", on which it was in December 1907 "proposed to erect a small hall, in which to hold Sunday School and an occasional Service". To its credit, the Company agreed to make over the land free of charge, on condition the structure was put up within five months.

Imperceptibly the country's economy was improving and the worst of the Slump receding. Although the Railway was still losing money, the traffic created by the new Turf Club was of such great benefit that F. J. B. Langerman, who had succeeded to the position of Chairman, proudly announced on November 26, 1908: "A new road has been made leading from the Koeberg Road to the Racecourse, by means of which carriages and motor-cars have easy access to the Course. In addition to this several other roads have been completed, making a total of 15 Miles on the Estate." Moreover 30 000 trees had been planted, most of which were thriving. He also revealed that "a number of travellers" now employed on a commission basis, had to date sold 45 lots, being assisted by a new system, allowing "instalment debentures" carrying seven per cent in-

terest. Another promising symptom was the arrival of a Mr. Russell, a professional race-horse trainer, whose intention of building his own stables and other facilities was likely to be copied by professional rivals.

To counteract the Depression, the newly-established Cape Publicity Association - the first in South Africa - became responsible at the close of 1908 for the Cape Gala, forerunner of something very similar in modern times. Its official "Guide Book Souvenir", an ambitious and well printed book of over 200 pages, included a section devoted to the new suburb. "On the Eastern shores of Table Bay is the well-known and popular resort known as Milnerton. Some years ago this place was one upon which only shooters and campers found recreation. For, while the scenery was magnificent, access was very difficult. The building of a railway line to Milnerton, however, changed everything. Houses sprang up, on every hand; and the seclusion, added to its natural beauties, drew thousands to Milnerton on each public holiday.

"There are some 15 miles of excellent, gravelled road in Milnerton, and those which lead to it are level enough to please any motorist. As a matter of fact, the road is much frequented by those who like a swift ride without the danger of a sudden death. Many trees have been planted on the Estate, and a fine stretch of water is gradually being deepened by the dredging of the river. The beach is excellent, and good fishing is said to be easily procurable. Of course the bathing is one of the attractions of the place.

"On holidays there are generally a number of events at Milnerton. Special trains with cheap fares run from Cape Town, and visitors picnic, bathe and dance with gusto. Among other things Milnerton has a fine Concert Hall and Club House; a field of the Western Province Rugby Union; a Racecourse. and a first-class hotel. The residences are of a distinctly good class, and a satisfactory supply of water is obtainable."

Along with this the Cape Gala brochure had several attractive pictures and a full-page advertisement:

"MILNERTON THE MAGNIFICENT.  
Three Miles from Cape Town.  
Reasonable Fares.  
Good Roads.  
The Killarney of South Africa.  
Racing, Rowing, "Rugger", Recreation,  
Relaxation and Rural Rambles.  
Unsurpassed as a Health and Pleasure Resort.  
SEE YOU GET THERE".

No less noteworthy was the first appearance of publicity in the other official language, not yet Afrikaans but High Dutch, which figured in "*Ons Land*", the famous paper founded by Onze Jan Hofmeyr, the celebrated Cape statesman. Entitled: "*HET PRACHTIGE MILNERTON*", this was embellished with five excellent photographs entitled respectively: "*Roeien te Milnerton*", showing a young lady climbing in her long skirt out of a boat on to the beach; "*De Konsertzaal te Milnerton*", with an appreciative crowd awaiting a performance outside the wide verandah; "*Aankomst van Trein in Milnerton*", with passengers emerging on to the very home-made-looking platform; "*Muziektent te Milnerton*", in other words a bandstand with performers; and "*Woonhuizen te Milnerton*", showing both single and double storied residences of a very superior type. The story ran thus:

*"Kaapstad, de Metropolis van Zuid-Afrika, heeft vele voorsteden, oude en nieuwe, die elk op zich zelf aanspraak kunnen doen gelden op zekere populariteit, hetzij door ligging, klimaat of prachtige omgeving, doch een grote moeilijkheid was het tot nu toe, om een voorstad te vinden, welke deze en anders voordelen, gekombineerd aanbod.*

*"Het gebrek aan een voorstad, binnen gemakkelijk bereik van Kaapstad en waar permanente huizen gevestigd kunnen worden onder volmaakt gezonde toestanden en te midden van prachtige omgevingen, werd lang scherp gevoeld. De opening echter van Milnerton, aan het strand van Tafelbaai, dat een prachtig vergezicht beheerst op de grote oude Tafelberg, voorziet de lang-gevoelde behoefte.*

*"Milnerton kan niet overtroffen worden als plaats, voor wat betreft een permanent verblijf en als verblijfplaats voor gezondheid en ontspanning.*

*"De ongewone voordelen van Milnerton werden reeds in 1898 door de invloedrijksten van Zuid-Afrika erkend, toen het landgoed het eigendom werd van de 'Milnerton Estates Limited'.*

*"Geen kosten werden gespaard ter verbetering, voor welk doel tot op heden een bedrag van £175000 werd besteed. Onder meer werden vijftien mijlen van de weg begruisd en 500 000 bomen geplant. Voorziening werd gemaakt voor gezondheids ontspanning, zoals men die in elk ander deel van Zuid-Afrika tevergeefs zoekt, terwijl grasperken werden aangelegd, die beloven de Promenade des Anglais te Nizza te zullen overtreffen. Milnerton belooft te zullen worden het roeiers paradijs der sportmannen.*

*"Het strand is prachtig, terwijl vermeld kan worden, dat de Leander Zwemklub zich te Milnerton heeft gevestigd en dat haar sports, waterpolo, enz., daar gehouden worden.*

*"De Westelike Provincie 'Rugby Football Union' heeft te Milnerton grond verkregen voor voetbal en atletische spelen.*

*"De Milnerton Renbaan behoeft voor geen andere onder te doen.*

*"De Tafelbaai Roeiers Vereniging heeft Milnerton tot haar hoofd kwartier gemaakt.*

*"Het Hotel Cambridge, dat te Milnerton gebouwd werd, kostte £14 000 en is zo goed als enig hotel in de Kolonie.*

*"Tal van prachtige huizen en villas zijn te Milnerton gebouwd, waaronder die van de heer J. W. S. Langerman, de heer Fred Botha en de heer Llewellyn van Breda. Tot diegenen, die voornemens zijn binnenkort aldaar te doen bouwen en die tot dat doel hun plannen reeds voorgelegd hebben, behoren Sir James Sivewright en de heer Carl Jeppe.*

*"Milnerton staat bij het publiek dan ook reeds hoog aangeschreven. Op sommige publieke vakantiedagen werd Milnerton per trein bezocht door ongeveer 8 000 personen.*

*"Zij die zich van het boven medegedeelde overtuigen willen door zelf te gaan zien, zullen niet beter kunnen doen dan gebruik te maken van de uitstekende spoorwegdienst naar Milnerton, en het landgoed persoonlijk te gaan bezoeken.*

*"De Sekretaris, de heer J. F. C. Lawrie, 6, Spaarbank Gebouwen, St. Georgestraat, Kaapstad, zal volgaarne te allen tijde, alle mogelijke informatie verstrekken".*

Amplifying these particulars in English, was the most authoritative publication of its kind in South Africa, the "Racing Calendar for 1908-09". Under the heading of "The Milnerton (Cape Town) Racecourse" it said: "The

Course is situated about 8 miles from Cape Town, in the Koeberg district. It is about one and a half miles round, has a 6 furlong straight, and is 100 feet wide.

"There are numerous training tracks. The Course is easy of access, being connected by road and railway with Cape Town. . ."

A famous institution, dating from the First British Occupation, made its debut at Milnerton in October 1909. This was the Cape Hunt Club, to whose inaugural meeting in these parts the "Cape Argus Weekly" devoted a full page of pictures. These included the Hurdle Race Handicap marred by a few falls by riders, but won by W. T. Wilson's "Waif", the Famous Race, won by C. F. Louw's "Silver Domino", and the Farewell Handicap in which "Paddy", owned by V. van der Byl, proved the victor.

Within a few months another scheme was submitted, namely the establishment of a Golf Club, "on a piece of ground adjoining the Estate and in the vicinity of the Hotel". This was sponsored by A. C. F. Gore,

who asked furthermore that the amenities of the existing Pavilion and Pagoda should be made available to future players. Though a general blessing was given, several years were to pass before anything definite happened.

One change in the community, also in 1903, was the disappearance of the name of Charles Greig as General Dealer, on the Koeberg, Road and the institution of that of Harry Sacks, who likewise became a "Universal Provider". As yet, however, Milnerton was still only a "Post Office Agency. Letters to be addressed via Maitland, which is also the nearest Money Order Office". Fresh developments were to be noted, when Carl Jeppe proposed promoting "camping out", by purchasing and hiring out tents or building small huts. Rather to his disappointment, his colleagues blew cold on the scheme but "felt it would be sufficient to advertise that campers "could erect cheap buildings on the estate at a very nominal rent".

## **Chapter 10 - Shaping a Community**

Undoubtedly one of the leading personalities of Milnerton then and for a long time to come, and one whose name deserves to be specially commemorated, was Frederick Henry (Frikkie) Langerman. Born just over 100 years ago, in Sea Point in 1875, he was the son of F. J. B. Langerman, a leading citizen of that as yet independent municipality, of which he became Mayor, besides establishing the original Sea Point Tramway Company. Since the day of the electric car had not yet dawned, Langerman Senior gained a reputation as "the best judge of horseflesh at the Cape", incidentally securing the tractive animals of the company's fleet from those famous Malmesbury breeders, the Melck's. Frikkie in due course developed similar tastes, but his earlier career took him a long way from home. After finishing his education at the South African College, he went to Rhodesia, as a member of the famous original 1890 Pioneer Column. Next he tried his luck on the newly-opened Witwatersrand, where he worked on several well-known properties, including the Langlaagte and the Randfontein Estates. But in 1899 he was back in Rhodesia as manager for several gold companies, for which reason he was elected a member of the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines.

Frikkie's real chance to show his inherited interest in horses came when, returning to the Cape soon after the Anglo-Boer War, he built himself a magnificent house in Rosmead Avenue, Kenilworth, equipped with extensive stables, in close proximity to the course of the South African Turf Club.

"As a successful owner," we read in 1905, "Mr. Langerman has no equal in the Colony and his efforts have done much to bring racing to its present high standard of efficiency. He is a strong supporter of the movement for doing away with bookmakers on all South African courses, preferring the Totalisator as a medium for ensuring fair racing."

From the very beginning Frikkie Langerman was deeply interested, not only in the horsey possibilities of Milnerton, as manifested on its Race Course, but in the Milnerton Estates as a Company, whose Board he joined at an early stage and of which he successively became Sales Representative in town and in 1907 Managing Director. The link held to the end of his days.

At last, in January 1910, things began to move in regard to the Golf Club, when no less a dignitary than Mr. Vos, a senior official of the Surveyor-General's Department, went over the ground in person to help in the proposed lay-out. His advice was that the Company should assist in every possible way, particularly by providing a Club-House free of charge. Yet Vos's first idea was frowned on, of asking an option on ground for a Club still to be formed.

On February 2, 1911, a group of prominent Cape Town men gathered at two in the afternoon in the old Opera House facing the Parade. Among them were J. C. F. Gore, the father of the entire project and in ordinary life Manager of the local branch of the Guardian Assurance Company, and Lachlan Mc Lean, General Manager for South Africa of the Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company, renowned too as a pioneer of trout acclimatisation. There was also C. W. H. Kingsley, Law Agent, A. I. Little, manager of the Kitson Cape Lighting Company, F. S. Green, another prominent Sea Point man; W. Pegram, the mineral water manufacturer, and William Hay of the Southern Life. Confronted with Vos's scheme to set up a Country Club they considered it out of hand as impracticable. On the other hand it was "quite feasible" for a Golf Club to be laid out, provided the Milnerton Estates gave a 21-year lease at a rental of £50 a year, for an area, equivalent to about" 1 000 lots, situated opposite the bridge between the Diep River and the Sea". And so it came to pass. Another year had gone by before, on May 6, 1912, a report arrived that operations had been commenced on the Course. Trees were cut down to create the necessarily perfect surface and by 1913 the Milnerton Golf Club was in full operation.

Despite a modest original nine holes, it soon gained acceptance and, having attained its full statute of 18, became the venue for important tournaments.

All through this time, though with varying intensity, the sales campaign of the Milnerton Estates continued. Hopes had flared up in August 1910 when Mr. Lawrie informed his Board that he had been approached by "the representative of a powerful American Land Syndicate", ready to handle the campaign. Whether this visitor was responsible for the result is not clear, but the fact remains that a list of buyers recorded soon after showed an increasing number of successful transactions, covering a far wider field. With a new team of travelling agents at work, 17 plots had been sold - five of them on the "debenture system" and 12 on instalments. Prices ranged from £90 to £500, the customers coming from Cape Town, Vereeniging, Kroonstad, Lady Grey, Barkly East, Adelaide, Kimberley, to say nothing of Milnerton itself. With such a revival it was scarcely encouraging for Mr. Lawrie to be confronted with the prospect of a cut in his pay, even if he was to enjoy the use of an office and permission to take in outside work. Not surprisingly, he resigned, leaving the management to make whatever arrangements they could. These included the appointment of a new Secretary, to share an office at £2 a month with the Milnerton Turf Club in Cardigan's Chambers.



Mr F.H. Langerman

For the convenience of the general public a fresh amenity was furnished, on the suggestion of the Government Telegraph Department - "the erection of a Telephone Call Office at Milnerton, allowing a reduced rent of £15 per year, instead of the £24 paid previously". Along with this, though in a different 'field of endeavour, went another improvement. "Owing to the scarcity of drinking water at Milnerton a pump costing the Company £3, has been erected and this is giving a splendid supply."

On the transportation side too improvements were under consideration, more particularly a proposal to acquire for the Railway a "petrol-electric car", in place of the present steam engine and coaches". Here a memorandum was prepared, but the idea was a bit too progressive for that age. Instead came an increase in First Class fares on Race Days, from 1/3d to 1/6d between Cape Town and Ascot, the new name, since 1912, of the Milnerton terminus. Stimulated by the consistent losses sustained, discussions arose at fairly regular intervals about the possible transfer of the line to the Government. By 1913 these feelings prevailed. "It would be of the utmost advantage if the sale takes place during the ensuing Parliamentary Session," declared Carl Jeppe, pointing out that the money would come in handy to "organise and focus the general demand by the public for the extension of the railway to the Koeberg district". He added: "Although practically everyone living there is strongly in favour of such a measure, as being urgently required for development, individuals cannot be expected to incur expenditure in connection with the matter." Jeppe also favoured payment of a two per cent commission to any person who found a suitable buyer - particularly the Government.

With fresh proposals under examination for the extensions of the Milnerton Railway all the way to Philadelphia and Kalabas Kraal, the services of Sammy Marks, now a Senator, proved particularly welcome. But the policy of the South African Railways & Harbours, with which the old Cape Government Railway system had been merged since Union, did not envisage such an idea, and its engineers recommended a different route.

One old and influential friend passed away in September 1912. This was Anders Ohlsson, the brewer, who in a quiet way had done a great deal for Milnerton. His association with the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town Water Company rendered it possible to secure a useful 5 300 gallons a day for the Hotel Cambridge. Periodic arguments with the neighbouring Municipality of Maitland flared up again when a dispute arose about access to the road to the Paarden Island Beach - a subject of argument for a long time to come.

Development of a permanent community at Milnerton now took place at an increasing rate. A newcomer in 1910 had been Thomas Gallagher, builder and contractor. In the following year control of the Cambridge Hotel passed to D. W. Panton, previously the manager and now proprietor. Other arrivals included L. Langerman, dairyman, and his rival F. Schippers, the address of the latter being given as "off Koeberg Road". An additional firm of builders set up in 1911, namely Patters on & James, as well as a locksmith named F. Hall. For some reason Mr. Schippers gave up in 1912, when he was replaced for a short while by J. Munchmeyer.

Donaldson & Braby's Cape Directory for 1912/13 gives a crisp account of Milnerton, describing it as "a rising residential suburb, five and a half miles by rail from the Metropolis. A good supply of water is laid on from Maitland, the estate being divided by the Diep River. It lies within the Municipalities of Woodstock and Maitland, and is partly under the Rural Council. There is no Post Office, and all letters should be addressed per private bag. Policed by a mounted patrol, it boasts of a first-class hotel, dancing hall and a park. A few minutes from the hotel is situated the charming Ascot Racecourse."

Then follows a list of residents, namely: F. Botha, T. Gallagher, W. Cason, J. H. Cooper, C. Craig, D. Gunn, W. Langerman, W. Mathews, D. Panton (Proprietor of Hotel), J. G. Reid and Mrs. Steyn. In the following year, 1913, another Public Call Office was recorded being at Cambridge Hotel, Number 02 Central, "with extension to Station". Milnerton's parliamentary representative was Advocate B. K. Long, afterwards editor of the "Cape Times", for the constituency of Woodstock. Along with this went the information that Milnerton fell under the jurisdiction of the Woodstock Magistrate's Court and administratively under the "Rural Council for Road and School Board Rates".

Two churches had been built, an Anglican one, St. Oswald's under the Reverend O. J. Hogarth, Bachelor of Divinity, as Rector; and a Mission Hall belonging to the Wesleyans. Miss Baker was the principal of the A3 class school. A. van Niekerk of Vissers Hoek was both the Field Cornet and Justice of the Peace; and Dr. R. Sharp the District Surgeon. Already the number of residents had shot up to over 50, a figure raised to 54 in 1914.

## **Chapter 11 - The First World War and After**

In the light of after events there was a grim significance when, on May 26, 1913, the Department of Defence, then only a few months old, saw fit, through the Secretary for Lands, to claim from Milnerton Estates a tract of ground for military purposes. With the amount of £1 000, tendered by the Government, considered grossly inadequate, preparations were made for possible expropriation proceedings, the service of the famous advocates, Beauclerk Upington and Sir Henry Juta being retained to act for the Company. Meanwhile data was accumulated "as to the value of the property and the extent to which the same would probably be affected by the erection of a Battery of artillery on the estate. . .".

Less than a year later, with the outbreak of the First World War, the true meaning became clear of the steps taken by the Government. Already on March 17, 1914, there was a letter from the Army "requesting permission to offload material for the Fortification work, at the railway siding near the bridge". Despite arbitration proceedings already in progress, a block of 60 plots and sections of road were taken over. Hostilities had been in progress for some months, when, on January 6, 1915, concession fares (single fare for the double journey) were granted to members of the Defence Force stationed at Milnerton.

Political influence available to the management of Milnerton received a fresh boost through the election as Chairman of Sir David Graaff, father of Sir De Villiers, and one of the most important personalities in public life at the Cape. Beside being a close neighbour, on his famous farm De Grendel, Sir David was Chairman of the Imperial Cold Storage & Supply Company Limited, and a member of the Union Cabinet, first as Minister of Public Works, then as Minister without Portfolio, and later as Minister of Finance and of Posts and Telegraphs.

More and more soldiers were now stationed around Milnerton, some for training purposes and some as garrison troops, besides many who made voluntary use of its amenities. Hence a fresh enquiry from the Army, as to whether members of the Regular Forces stationed at Milnerton "would be allowed to travel Second Class on our line with Third Class warrants, when on duty". Although the Company had no objection, the S.A.R., rather surprisingly, refused to agree and so the matter was left to be fought out between the two rival Departments of State.

One sign of the times was a Race Meeting held at the Milnerton Turf Club in October 1914 in aid of Red Cross Funds, setting a precedent repeated several times during the War.

Notwithstanding the upheaval a certain amount of development continued. In 1916 ownership of the Cambridge Hotel passed to F. W. Glover, while there were two new dairy proprietors, G. Cloete and G. Griffiths, also J. Pentz, blacksmith, and J. Succa, "crayfish factory".



Sir David de V. Graaff

Above all there was a very important new public institution - a Public School - "Miss Prowse, Principal", her post being taken in 1917 by W. Miller J.P. So too we find, after a lapse of years, the familiar name of Charles Greig back in Milnerton. No longer a general dealer, he was now representative of the New Zealand Insurance Company Limited, a post he continued to hold till 1921.

Of permanent importance were the economic effects arising from South Africa's need to industrialise in compensation for the loss of overseas communications through enemy U-boat action. This meant that Paarden Island rapidly developed into a factory area, separated from Milnerton proper. Nonetheless the abnormal times did not prevent an "Electric Light Agreement" being signed, under which a power line was also run from Cape Town to the residential areas, collection of accounts being left to the Company. As for the Railway, enquiries were carried out by Mr. McEwan, a senior official of the S.A.R., about "Motor Carriages", employed in England by the Great Western Company and recommended for use on the line to Milnerton. "The proposal is not one which I would recommend," was Mr. Evans' verdict.

Higher working costs made increases in fares inevitable. Despite concessions" for soldiers and schoolchildren, ordinary tickets went up substantially in 1917. Although few residents had cars of their own, for the first time the Milnerton Estates joined the Cape Provincial Administration in helping to finance the construction of a main road, the Marine Drive, to which the modest amount of £250 was contributed, plus 3000 cubic yards of local gravel.



Cape Peninsula Rifles Pioneers and Band at Milnerton Station – 1914

Discussions also began in 1917 with the Surveyor-General, on a matter destined to hang fire for 60 years. This was the opening up of the riverside section of Rietvlei.

Much to the satisfaction of the Milnerton Estates, the Milnerton Turf Club, having now completed the term of its initial lease, asked a renewal for another 10 years, as from 1917, the first of many to follow. In return the Club not only encouraged improvements, but gave a useful £8 000 in cash. As Messrs. Louwrens & Stephen put it: "The expenditure of so large a sum will be the best guarantee of the Turf Club's goodwill towards the Estates".

Scared by reports of contaminated water in 1917, the Company sought the advice of the eminent chemist and bacteriologist, Dr. Rudolph Marloth. "Having inspected the site of the borehole near the Race Course on Friday," he said, "I regret I cannot afford you any definite explanation for the occurrence of the impurities found in the water which I analysed . . ." Beyond identifying "organic matter of animal origin", the doctor was baffled in tracing where it came from. "As at present no stable or kraal exists near the site of the borehole, the polluted water must either come from a great distance or be due to an old deposit of animal matter at the very site of the borehole . . ." Marloth recommended digging a shaft, after which the trouble seems to have cured itself without ever having been properly explained.

Although, to the immeasurable relief of Mankind, the First World War drew to a close, it was not without the occurrence of another major ordeal, the pandemic "Spanish Influenza". In the closing months of 1918 this carried off more of Cape Town's population and that of its suburbs than had the recent conflict. Nor did Milnerton fail to suffer. As the Troops came home and the community strove to adjust to a new economic situation, dominated by the higher cost of living, there was social unrest, to which indirect reference was made on August 18, 1918. Mr. Salmon of the Milnerton Railway informed the Company: "With regard to the over crowding of the trains from Woodstock during the recent Tramway Strike, I will endeavour to prevent this happening again, but you must remember that the Company does not pay for the trains from Woodstock and is not entitled to any portion of the revenue from that service. . .". For the first time too there was talk of a sensational novelty on April 9, 1920, when the South African Railways received a request from the Company. "In connection with electrifying the other Suburban Line you should take into serious consideration the advisability of electrifying the one to Milnerton." Economic factors, however, intervened, however successful the new service promised to be on the Simonstown and Bellville routes. Yet the personal influence of Graaff created a useful contact with another department. "The Government," said Sir David on June 25, 1920, "is granting £500 000 at four per cent for building purposes and I suggest we apply for £100 000 thereof to spend on erecting buildings on the estate." This was duly approved, and the firm's attorneys duly notified the authorities.

Even now, in 1920, there was still no Post Office, a fact recorded in "Donaldson's Directory" in a fresh account. "The New Marine Drive from the foot of Adderley Street, Cape Town, passes right through Milnerton. It has water and electric light from the Cape Town Municipality. It has excellent surf bathing, and also still-water bathing in the Diep River estuary. The residential portion lies outside the Municipality of Greater Cape Town. There is no Post Office, but a daily delivery from Maitland, via which office all letters should be addressed." No reference was made to the continued existence of the Call Box, but there was mention of a new school principal, Mrs. M. E. Skinner.

One glimpse of the future was furnished by implication on March 21, 1921, when it was laconically noted: "The proposal of Aviation Limited to take photographs of the property of the estates was not entertained". Neither, incidentally, was a governmental project for the creation of a Convict Station. This was duly installed on the site of "King George Fort" and proved to be a useful amenity since its inmates were not only available for the construction and maintenance of roads and other public works, including the wall along the East side of the Diep River, but small gangs could be hired by private citizens at one shilling (10 cents) per head per day.

## Chapter 12 - Housing Schemes

Though still very tiny, Milnerton was already in 1922 assuming the outlines of a community. The truth of this statement was shown on November 11, when Mrs. F. Botha applied "on behalf of the residents for a piece of ground to construct two tennis courts, with a view to forming a Tennis Club". Her request was acceded to and a piece of land in the Park earmarked for the purpose. In addition the Company agreed to advance up to £200 at six per cent per annum "repayable within a reasonable period". About the same time too Sir David Graaff agreed to sell Groot Rietvlei to the Milnerton Estates for £1 437 7s. 6d., in order to round off their holdings.

Following the recent completion of the Steenbras Water Scheme to meet its needs, Cape Town was at last in a position to improve both the quantity and quality of its supplies to Milnerton, through a new main on Koeberg Road. The agreement ran for four years from February 26, 1923, Milnerton Estates accepting a minimum of 2 000 000 gallons a year which could be raised to 6 000 000 gallons, though the maximum for any single day was not to exceed 30 000 gallons.

Revolutionary implications likewise underlay steps taken in the closing days of 1922 when the services of Mr. A. J. L. Thompson were engaged as the first South African Town Planner. Only recently he had been responsible for laying out the country's first Garden City, Pinelands, and on December 20, 1922, he attended a Board Meeting to discuss the future lines of Milnerton's development. "Existing roads," Thompson pointed out, "will be utilised as far as possible, and I will only advocate making new ones, where warranted, by the actual building operations." He also explained the two courses open with regard to building - "either the company can put up the money or it can form a subsidiary to buy plots and erect houses". After undertaking to furnish further details on the alternatives, Thompson handed in plans and specifications for "three specimen houses of average proportions". Sure enough, Graaff announced, on January 11, 1923, that the directors were "considering a Housing Scheme and the advisability of raising money for developing the estate". As for Thompson, his name was not mentioned, though Sir David described him as "a gentleman of repute regarding the development of the estate", indicating that it was hoped soon to reach an agreement.

Among the ideas put forward by this consultant was the establishment of a Country Club, of which an important sponsor was Major Brand van Zyl, a leading Cape Town attorney and afterwards Governor-General of South Africa. The proposal was approved early in 1923 and simultaneously another novelty made its appearance when a Mr. Fripp became the first occupant of an official camp site at Milnerton.

Giving as the their reason the "contemplated development of the Estate", the management now decided to engage a full-time Secretary, Gordon Bird, while the registered office of the Company was moved from Cape Times Buildings to the township itself, with effect from February 1, 1923. Changes were also taking place at the Milnerton Race Course, where the original Milnerton Turf Club Company Limited was liquidated and the lease taken over by its successor.



Mr Abe Bloomberg, President of the Cape Turf Club,  
and the Hon. G.B. van Zyl, Governor-General of the Union of South Africa – 1945

For the first time too there was a definite proposal for establishing a local Administration, the duties of which had in practice been carried out by the Board of the Milnerton Estates Company Limited. Here the initiative

was largely due to a director named Hector McKenzie, who on April 19, 1923, cross-examined Thompson on the function of a Local Board. Among the advantages emphasised by the Town Planner was the fact that such a body would have the right of levying a Rate of up to 3d in the Pound for purposes of Road Maintenance, Repairs, Removals, the Disposal of House Refuse etc. It would also see to Water and Electric Light and could enforce its regulations regarding Sanitation etc. "I am however of the opinion", added Thompson, "that a Local Board would not have the power of taxing unsold plots of the Company on which no buildings have so far been erected"

Further encouragement was furnished by the willingness of the Cape Town City Council, to make advances to Milnerton, provided its pending application for a loan from the Government Housing Authority proved successful. Here an amount of £30 000 was mentioned, to be used for the erection of cottages. Before the year ended, Milnerton Estates were actually putting up houses for resale, under the supervision of Thompson, all of a standardised pattern. By February 18, 1924, there was already talk of the purchase, by Mrs. Malan of Stellenbosch, of one of them (Type A), for which the mortgage rate of eight per cent per annum was charged. Unfortunately there were hitches, and in May 1924 it was reported: "Building plots are not selling as readily as anticipated, and none of the houses built by the Company have yet been sold". This fact, combined with the slowing down in the development of the whole township, led to the decision to terminate Mr. Thompson's services, though not before he had completed the plan for the general layout of the Estate and of the proposed Country Club.

Another piece of bad luck was encountered when, on December 3, 1924, a newspaper reported the proposed establishment of "a Country Club at Newlands". Suggestions followed of an alternative site at Milnerton, but in the event, not even the availability of a golf course would make the sponsors change their minds. Once again Sir David Graaff did his best to help the interest of Milnerton, by including, amongst others, the Mayor of Cape Town to pay a personal visit to the suggested site. But Kelvin Grove won the day.

In contrast to this was another project, with which Graaff was linked through Governmental channels, namely the establishment by the Marconi Company of South Africa of a huge international wireless receiving and transmitting installation. Discussions began in May 1923 about a 10 morgen site near Ascot Station and the Race Course and here presently arose the famous Klipheuwel Beam Station, for many years South Africa's major link with Europe. With changing radio techniques, however, the Beam System was ultimately replaced by other methods, and the huge masts, after many years of service, were ultimately demolished.

The rising population slowly brought increase in the Milnerton train service, yet its returns continued too low to yield a profit. Advertising was resumed to stimulate the sale of plots, while it was learnt with much satisfaction that no less than £17 000 had been spent by the Turf Club on additional buildings at the Race Course. New residents recorded in 1934 were W. S. Caw, plumber, S. Harris, carpenter, and F. Botha, the Secretary of the Milnerton Turf Club.

About this time too fresh possibilities for expanding the township were brought about by the efforts of A. W. Koenig, who owned an area next door, known as Rugbyville. Though actually a hotelkeeper, he had ambitions of creating a new township which he hoped would become part of Milnerton Estates. The price he asked was not a very high one £5 000 for 1 000 plots. The Company succumbed to the temptation.

Besides his land speculations Koenig was not only responsible for the erection of the first block of flats near the Cambridge Hotel (incidentally equipped with the earliest recorded septic tank), but he pioneered the idea of a motor bus service along the Marine Drive, "at such times of the day as there are no trains". While refusing to finance or participate directly, the Company had no objection to Mr. Koenig going ahead.

In more than one respect the year 1925 brought a certain amount of stimulus to the progress of Milnerton, one of the most important incidents being the acquisition, from the deceased estate of H. C. F. van Niekerk, of a very substantial 256 morgen on Koeberg Road for £2 800. Apart from the direct enlargement of the Company's own holdings, this put a stop to the sale of nearby land without restrictions on the quality of buildings.

As against this a new 30-year lease was granted to the Milnerton Golf Club at a peppercorn rent of one guinea per annum. In return the Company contributed £1 500 towards the cost of a Golf House.



Milnerton Golf Club – the only true links in South Africa – situated between the Lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean



Opening of the new golf clubhouse by the Honourable B. J. Vorster, Prime Minister, on 26th February 1977.

Back row: J. E. Pothecary, J. Ratcliff, E. B. Horak, I. van Niekerk, J. H. Nel (Vice-Captain). Middle row: N. C. Sterley, J. Dick, G. S. Mellet, J. Gelb (Deputy Mayor), R. N. du Toit.

Front row: P. P. W. Voges (Captain), F. G. Kotze (President), B. J. Vorster (Prime Minister), Theo Marais (Mayor), A. Buirski (Vice-President).



Seen at a dinner in honour of Alderman Abe Bloomberg at Milnerton on 10th May 1979, celebrating his unbroken service of over 40 years as a Steward at the Milnerton Turf Club and the Cape Turf Club, serving as

Chairman of both clubs for more than 20 years. Left to right: Mr G. M. Basson (Vice Chairman), His Honour the Administrator Dr. L. A. P. A. Munnik, Mrs A. Bloomberg and Alderman Abe Bloomberg.



Milnerton Race Course, Milnerton, the Atlantic Ocean and Table Mountain – an unbeatable view.

The rising popularity of the Course prompted the Company in April 1926 to raise the amount of its gift to £2 000, besides a loan of £3 000, repayable at the rate of £120 per annum.

For the first time there were now official and separate figures regarding Milnerton's population, the 1926 census giving 247 Europeans, of whom 107 were listed in the Directory. The area, however, could scarcely be regarded as undergoing a land boom. In Rugbyville the basic price of 5000 square foot plots was fixed at £25 with those on corners slightly higher!

Symptomatic of the growing population was the increase in traffic on the new Marine Drive. But T. S. McEwan, who, since his retirement as General Manager of Railways, had come to live in Milnerton and was now also on the Company's Board, warned that the vehicles were too heavy for the surface and that much damage was being done. "If the hard road to Ascot is reconstructed 'as contemplated, it will only invite similar heavy traffic, and experience now gained has led to a decision to abandon such construction for the present. A well-built road, having a solid bottom, will probably cost from £4000 to £5000 per mile, which the Company cannot undertake at the present juncture."

So too the directors frowned at the idea of the Turf Club's offer to buy their racecourse at £15000. One of the few who recommended such a deal was R. B. Howes, the well-known K.C. and afterwards Judge. He thought this amount could be used to finance "a building loan scheme", and suggested that the sale should be made conditional on the Company's repurchasing the ground "if racing should ever be discontinued or if it be required for building plots". Finally it was agreed. "The time has arrived for carrying out a policy of energetic development on Milnerton Estates. For that purpose:

'A. A material reduction on the price at present charged for building lots on the Estates should be granted to desirable purchasers, who intend to erect buildings upon such lots in the course of time.

B. Such reductions should be increased up to 50 per cent if the purchasers undertake to build decent houses within a reasonable time.

C. Building loans should be granted by the Estate up to two-thirds of the cost of buildings to be erected, with interest of about six per cent, repayable in instalments on building society terms."

Following the acquisition of "Rugbyville", a policy of tree-planting was promptly commenced there, particularly eucalyptus. One of the first applicants for land after this transaction was the well-known pioneer storekeeper, Charles Greig, already living there, who wanted to erect an interdenominational place of worship. While the idea itself was accepted, its realisation was postponed.

Simplicity of conditions at Milnerton Estates was again reflected in a letter from A. W. Koenig, the hotelkeeper, who on November 25, 1925, sent in an application "on behalf of Milnerton residents", for a

loading platform for goods and livestock, besides a station attendant, sanitary conveniences and a few seats on the passenger platform.

## **Chapter 13 - The First Local Board**

By far the most important event of 1926 was the establishment of the Milnerton Local Board, with effect from December 31 of that year. Pending its inauguration far-reaching subjects came up for prompt discussion by the Company, one of the first being put forward by Sir David Graaff on October 14, 1926. "Though the time," he said, "when sewerage for Milnerton will be essential is still some way off, it is necessary to look ahead. I think the Board should consider obtaining the advice of the City Engineer on the matter, so that a plan may be prepared which can be worked to in future developments." Along with this went a complete revaluation of plots. Completed by January 20, 1927, this showed a total figure of £124 830 with a rateable value of £123 190. Milnerton Estates Limited accounted for 61.6 per cent, representing £75 895.

Much to the regret of all concerned, Sir David Graaff now decided that his other commitments prevented his continuing as Chairman, but there was corresponding satisfaction when Major G. Brand van Zyl agreed to take over from him. Another traditional link was broken in February 1927, when Louis Marks, son of the redoubtable Sammy, who had passed away in 1920, also severed his connection.

The social standing of Milnerton was being raised by the advent of prominent men as inhabitants - among them T. S. McEwan, former General Manager of the Cape Government Railways, who retired here.

Matters of basic significance confronting the Milnerton Local Board included a proposal for a bus service to Cape Town.

Hopes of an improved train service rose during 1927 when Dr. H. J. van der Bijl, Chairman of the Electricity Supply Commission, provided an estimate of the cost of electrifying the Milnerton Line, to fit in with the similar conversion in progress in other parts of the Cape Peninsula and Western Province. When economic factors prevented its inclusion, the Company tried to persuade the S.A.R. to take it over as it stood, but that day too had not yet dawned.

For the first time an accident was recorded, on September 5, 1929, when "a train approaching Milnerton Station from Tygerberg collided at the Cambridge Road level crossing with a motor van belonging to Garlick's Limited". According to an eyewitness, Mr. Rust, "the responsibility lay entirely with the driver of the motor van," but the Magistrate charged with the investigation ordered the warning boards at the crossing to be illuminated.

Relations between the Milnerton Local Board and the Milnerton Estates remained amicable, and when the former, at the beginning of 1929 suggested the Company's providing some bathing boxes on the Milnerton beach, "either of wood or of other material, one containing from four to six cubicles, the answer was in the affirmative.

Reviewing the whole situation in regard to the Milnerton line, Sir William Hoy, General Manager of the South African Railways, wrote on May 3, 1930: "It is the opinion of the Railway Department that the loss is occasioned solely through bus competition and not through excessive working costs. . . The present rail fares are over 100 per cent above the bus fares, but I do not think that any appreciable increase in traffic will result if the rail fares are reduced, because of the unattractiveness of the train service. . . I am unable to recommend any of the proposals submitted by the Company, namely:

A. The acquisition of the line by the Government.

B. The working of the line by the Government on its own behalf, at a basic rental for the land and buildings to be agreed upon, or

C. The institution of a road motor service by the Government."

Returns on goods traffic as far as Paarden Eiland would also involve a loss. Directly as a result the Company took legal opinion as to its position.

Henceforth the affairs of Milnerton were for a long time dominated by the weal and woe - mostly woe - of the Railway. Unsatisfactory as the returns had been for a long time they were to be rendered even worse by the onset of the Great Depression, which, starting in October 1929 in the U.S.A., swept round the world and was already very much in evidence in South Africa within less than a year. With the entire South African Railways losing millions, the average shortfall of £300 to £400 per month on this particular route appeared trifling - but not to the Company, and all kinds of expedients were proposed as a remedy. One idea was to limit the trains to Race Days only, in return for which the Club was to provide a minimum of 23 meetings a year, with an expected average of 1400 passengers each time. As an experiment, it was suggested that trains should travel at not more than 20 miles per hour.

As against this V. S. Hughes, proprietor of the Cape Town Motor Omnibus Company (Pty) Ltd., one of the many independent and privately-owned concerns engaged in a furious internecine war prior to the introduction of the Road Transportation Act, had an interview with the Secretary of the Milnerton Estates, "in regard to the establishment of a bus service to Milnerton and Tygerberg, in the event of the Railway Passenger Service being suspended". Mr. Hughes expressed his willingness to set up an adequate service provided the Company guaranteed a minimum revenue of £8 per day for each bus. He was also ready to put in an additional vehicle at peak hours, not falling under the guarantee and to make provision for the conveyance of light parcels. Passenger fares, as suggested, were 8d for a single trip, or 6 shillings for a book of 12 tickets as far as Milnerton and one shilling to Tygerberg or nine shillings for a book of tickets. Despite a friendly reception, the Company made it clear that any guarantee would be merely in the nature of an experiment, "to afford the local residents another opportunity of making the transport service a payable proposition". Should the returns prove inadequate after two or three months' trial, the whole idea would be stopped.

Surveying the situation generally on June 2, 1930, Major Van Zyl, as Chairman, declared: "Three points emerge with clarity:

1. The continued heavy loss in running the Railway service cannot be accepted.
2. In the interests of the Company's efforts, some alternative transport system should be seriously tried before the district is cut off from an adequate means of access to the city.
3. At worst - that is, even if the guaranteed bus fails to earn any revenue - the Company will be better off financially than if it continues as at present. . ."

Efforts were accordingly made to mobilise the support of the Milnerton Turf Club, which was in itself considerably more prosperous than the Estates Company! What really brought matters to a head was the news that, as from July 31, 1930, normal passenger traffic by the Bus Service would cease. This could only be averted if the Club and the Milnerton Estates made good half the loss by operating only on race days, and even this would be subject to six months' notice. Regretfully the arrangement was accepted, while simultaneously the new service of the Cape Town Motor Omnibus Company came into operation with effect from August 1, 1930. Subject to three months' notice on either side, Milnerton Estates guaranteed an average revenue of £8 a day per bus.

Inevitably there were regrets among the inhabitants, particularly those who remembered the beginning of the century when the Railway had first come into operation. But the facilities provided by Mr. Hughes were greatly welcomed and altogether there was a note of philosophical acceptance. Unfortunately this note soon

changed, for, as early as August 12, Hughes complained that his bus, via the Marine Drive, was being so poorly supported that it ought to be withdrawn, leaving the one via Koeberg Road to cope with the entire traffic. At the same time the price of monthly season tickets was reduced to 30 shillings between Cape Town and Milnerton.

Three months later, Milnerton Estates were asked to take up £5 000 to £6000 worth of shares in the Cape Town Motor Omnibus Company's new issue of capital. Alas - Mr. Hughes was duly thanked but informed "The Company is not at present in a position to entertain your proposal". Moreover, as the reduction in season ticket prices appeared inadequate, prices were cut still further to 21 shillings a month, while single fares fell from 8 pence to 6 pence.

With the decline in general prosperity and nationwide unemployment, sales of plots dropped, yet, to its credit, both the Company and the Local Board did their best to maintain development. Thus on August 12, 1930, Graaff's Trust Limited submitted a sketch plan "of a sceptor tank approved by Dr. De Villiers, provided that he is satisfied that suitable soil is available for a French drain". While road-building unfortunately had to be reduced as part of the economy programme, some effort was made to fill in "stagnant pools" below the weir, and to remedy the more than primitive conditions prevailing at the station lavatory, even if it was only used on race days.

For the first time too there was mention of a Ratepayers' Association, which in June 1931 held a meeting in connection with the possibility of diverting the bus to another route. Not only did V. A. Hughes reveal that it was costing him 10d a mile to operate the service, but that pirates were also running. Since two of them, however, had their Transportation Certificates cancelled, "owing to malpractices", he now hoped to put in two more of his own.

At last, and with some hesitation, the South African Railways agreed to take an option to purchase the assets of the Milnerton Railway, which, at any rate from a legal point of view, still belonged to the Milnerton Estates, but with the continuance of the Depression, Sir William Hoy gave the owners to understand they must await payment for many a day.

Losses on the bus service, and corresponding inflow of deficit accounts, forced the Company, towards the end of 1931, to withdraw its guarantee to Hughes, a step which aroused considerable anxiety among the inhabitants, few of whom were possessors of motor-cars. To make matters worse, the S.A.R. informed the Milnerton Estates that, "owing to a series of errors in estimating the train mileage, waiting time etc., the rate per train mile had erroneously been estimated at 4/6d whereas the actual cost was approximately 9/- a mile. In consequence of these errors the Company has been undercharged an amount of £800 from 1st August 1930 to 31st October 1931 . . .!"

As though this were not sufficient, notification came from the Cape Town Motor Omnibus Company that the Transportation Board had refused to renew the certificates for two of its buses on the Milnerton route, leaving them with no alternative but to withdraw the service as at the end of January 1932. A petition from the inhabitants to the Road Transportation Board bore no fruit, and altogether the picture continued as one of increasing gloom. Yet the Company agreed to contribute, for the first time, to the revenue of the Cape Peninsula Publicity Association an amount of five guineas!



### **ZONNEKUS, MILNERTON**

An offer to purchase this property, made by the late Sir David Graaff in November 1928, was accepted by the Board of

Directors, under the chairmanship of the late G. B. van Zyl, later Governor-General of the Union of South Africa. The purpose: "To erect a high class private residential property at an estimated cost of £10 000 as practical proof of Sir David's confidence in Milnerton Estates Limited and in the belief that such development should provide an incentive to development generally". The architects were Messrs Waldgate and Elsworth and the builders Messrs H . Wier & Co.

The house was built in 1929 and used by Sir David Graaff and his family as a seaside residence until his death on 13 April 1931 . Thereafter it was leased to the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom , Sir Herbert Stanley. In 1951 a portion of the land, including the buildings, was sold to the late David Graaff, the second son, who occupied the property until his death.

## Chapter 14 - The 'Winton'

Milnerton - or more accurately Milnerton Beach - made a spectacular entry into the legal annals of South Africa on the night of July 28, 1934, with a shipwreck that aroused attention, not only in this country, but also overseas.

The origin of the trouble went back years earlier and was of quite a different character - none other than the establishment in 1920 of the once famous Klipheuvel Wireless Telegraph Station. Its group of giant masts, each over 250 feet high, were then the tallest structures in South Africa, if not in the Southern Hemisphere. Even airmen bound for Cape Town had to take notice of them, particularly at night, and for this reason, to comply with safety regulations, red lights were affixed.

Unfortunately some of these lights were also visible at sea and so brought about the destruction of the freighter "Winton".

Owned by the Avenue Shipping Co. Ltd., an English concern, the "Winton" was of 4 388 tons and was bringing a cargo of Australian Wheat to Britain. Her Master, Capt. C. J. Mordaunt, was an experienced seaman, but he had never before visited Table Bay. Hence he was unaware, when he entered these waters in quest of bunkers, and was feeling his way towards the Docks, that, in addition to the navigation lights erected there by the Harbour Authorities, there was a very similar and very misleading one at Milnerton.

Shortly before 9 o'clock on Saturday evening, July 28, 1934, the "Winton" was slowly moving into Table Bay when Mordaunt confused the red light on the Wireless tower overlooking Milnerton with the light on the breakwater. Next moment the vessel was ashore on the Milnerton Beach with her 6000 tons of wheat.

Back in 1901 the Houston liner "Hermes" had been lost almost in the same place and only three months earlier, in 1934, a similar calamity had occurred to another steamer, the "Indian Prince". Immediate requests for help from the "Winton" were sent to the Docks and the Harbour authorities ordered out three tugs, the "Ludwig Wiener", the "J. W. Sauer" and the "Eland", to pull her off, unfortunately without success. Though the crew of 34 managed to reach the shore, they lost nearly all their belongings and as they departed, it was found that there was 23112 ft of water in the forward hold and 26 ft in the aft one.

Hundreds of sight-seers and others found their way to Milnerton Beach, normally a fairly lonely place in those days, while the Cape Town papers were full of the latest news and latest rumours.

Behind the scenes discussions proceeded as to the possibility of salvage and great attention was aroused by the news that Capt. H. C. F. van Delden, the famous expert, who had already made his name with several successful jobs along the South African coast, most recently with the vessel "Rosandar", was thinking of taking on the "Winton". Despite preliminary discussions nothing fresh happened for a week, when it became known that through spontaneous combustion, the wheat forming her cargo had caught fire and that there was considerable danger of an explosion. Cables flashed between the Avenue Shipping Company in London and their agents in Cape Town. On August 10, 1934, the "Winton" was offered for sale to the highest bidder. Although the ship itself had broken her back and giant seas were rolling over the hull, hopes still existed that the cargo, valued at 42 000 pounds, might be saved and on August 14 it was announced that she had been sold as she lay, for 500 pounds.

Fresh excitement arose about the formation of a salvage syndicate, including members of the well-known Knysna firm of Thesen, but there was no more question of saving either the ship or her cargo and M. I. MacFarlane, C. L. Schuddingh, Cape Town contractor, and Norman Jeffes, who had bought the wreck, found that their money had been lost.

In terms of the Law an enquiry began into circumstances of the wreck by a tribunal under the chairmanship of the Chief Magistrate of Cape Town, Mr. J. M. Graham, along with two nautical experts, Capt. G. Cruickshanks and Capt. R. Hardy.

While the acrimonious arguments proceeded additional excitement was caused when another vessel, the "Dacre Castle" under charter to the Elder Dempster Line, was nearly wrecked in the same place.

Repercussions continued for a long time and three years later on November 23, 1937, proceedings began in the Cape Provincial Division of the Supreme Court by the Avenue Shipping Co. Ltd. (which itself was now in Liquidation) against the Administration of the South African Railways & Harbours, as owners and operators of Table Bay Docks and of the country's lighthouses and navigation lights. Mr. Justice A. v.d. Sandt Centlivres was on the Bench and several leaders of the Cape Town Bar were in action, headed by the famous Beauclerk Upington, K.C., with him Harry G. Lawrence (afterwards a member of General Smuts' Cabinet) and Donald B. Molteno, the well-known legislator, on behalf of the Plaintiffs, and W. H. Mars, K.C., with him Frank Reid, K.C., and Graham Duncan for the Railways.

For over three weeks the proceedings continued, providing many columns of reading matter in the Cape Town press, but the main dispute hinged on the action of the Civil Aviation authorities in placing the red warning lights on the masts at Klipheuvel in such a way as to create confusion with those of Table Bay Harbour.

Another major issue was to determine the limits of responsibility of Overseas Communications Ltd., owners of the Wireless Station, and of the S.A.R. & H. Not only did Capt. Mordaunt testify to the care which he himself had taken, but evidence was given by such witnesses as the Signaller in charge of Table Bay Look-out Station and various experts, nautical and other.

As it happened, it was destined to be Upington's last major case. Not till January 25, 1938, did Mr. Justice Centlivres deliver his judgment, which began with these words: "On the night of July 28, 1934, the motor vessel, 'Winton' carrying a valuable cargo of wheat, stranded on the beach at Milnerton in Table Bay and became a total wreck. This event gave rise to six actions, which were consolidated for the purposes of trial. The first two actions are brought by the company, now in voluntary liquidation, which owned the 'Winton'. In each action the owner of the 'Winton' claims the sum of 104 500 pounds, which is said to represent the value of the vessel, together with the freight payable in respect of the cargo carried in the vessel. The remaining four actions are brought by companies which claim to have been the owners of the cargo of wheat carried by the 'Winton' at the time of her stranding, the amount claimed in each case being .42000 pounds. All six actions are grounded on negligence."

At great length and with a vast application of learning, His Lordship analysed the evidence, going back to December 1933 when the first air lights had been installed on the masts. .

"The conclusion," he said, "at which I arrive is that the co-existence of the Breakwater and Milnerton Lights did not constitute a danger to the 'Winton' when she entered Table Bay on the night of July 28, 1934, that in these circumstances there was no negligence on the part of either of the Defendants and that the stranding of the 'Winton' was due solely to the grossly negligent manner in which she was navigated. Judgment must therefore be entered with costs for the Defendants in each of the six cases. "

By this time the "Winton" had completely broken up but even after close on half a century, the memory of the case survives. What is more, shortly after the Second World War, the "Atlantica", a small ship under the Brazilian flag, went ashore very near where the "Winton" was lost. Fortunately she was successfully towed off.

Milnerton Beach now has its own lighthouse to prevent any further such incidents.

## **Chapter 15 - A Leap Forward**

Fortunately the Depression came to a sudden end with the close of the year 1932, when South Africa's departure from the Gold Standard brought an enormous increase in mining revenue, and with it not only a boom on the share market, but a vast influx of capital. Once 'again there was plenty of money available for mortgages while people, back in jobs, were eager to buy houses. This change of climate explains the issue in 1934 by the Milnerton Estates Limited, 40, Burg Street, Cape Town, of an attractive 12-page pamphlet adorned with photographs. Its cover said:

"SUN AND SHADE. OPEN SPACES.  
SEA BATHING. LAGOON BOATING.  
TENNIS. GOLF. THE SPORT OF KINGS.  
CHEAP LAND. LOW RATES.  
SITES TO BUILD.  
SELECT NEIGHBOURHOOD."

An ecstatic account followed of the place itself:

"Milnerton, one of Cape Town's most select Marine Suburbs. Incomparably the best view of Table Mountain and Table Bay.

"Life is at its best at Milnerton. No hustle, no bustle, yet within very easy reach of the city.

"Nowhere else in the Cape Peninsula, so far as the Company knows, can better residential advantages be secured.

"Each day is truly a 'joy' day at Milnerton.

"Recreation means - 'Re-Creation' - a rebuilding of the troubled mind and body. Milnerton's pure and exhilarating air, restful surroundings and sporting facilities secure this.

"That is one reason why the select band of Residents at Milnerton keep to their choice. .

"Of the future of Milnerton there is no doubt. Ask those who live there.

"Now is the time to buy your home -site."

After further details of the general attractions, several useful facts were listed:

"Water:

Cape Town's Municipal supply is connected. The charge to residents is 3/- per 1 000 gallons.

Electrical Current:

Here also, Cape Town's Municipal supply is connected. The charges are those which operate in Cape Town, plus 25 per cent.

Rates:

A further advantage, which the prospective purchaser should bear in mind, is that the Milnerton Local Board at present levy a general rate of 1/8th of a penny in the pound on the valuation of property in their care, compared with the adjoining Municipality of Cape Town, whose rate stands at present at 4.14 penny in the pound. The Divisional Council rate 4 1/2 d and the Provincial Property Tax of 1/4d in the pound are the same as within the Cape Town Municipal area.

"It will therefore be seen that the total rates payable at Milnerton at present amount to 7/8th of a penny in the pound, as against 4.85 penny in the pound in the Cape Town Municipal area.

Bus Service:

"A bus service operates between Cape Town and Milnerton.

Golf:

"A good 18-hole Golf Course, said by those well competent to judge to be one of the finest in the country, has been constructed, with an excellent Club House.

Tennis:

"There are two gravel Courts - well placed and well kept.

Sea Bathing:

"Cubicles have been provided for sea-bathing facilities.

Boating on the Lagoon:

"The Estates have expended a large sum of money on the construction of a Weir across the mouth of the Lagoon - to the bed of which they own title over the area concerned. In consequence, a fine sheet of water has been impounded. The Estates are prepared to issue permits for boating to Residents, but not to Non-Residents. This decision means a loss of revenue to the Company, but the underlying idea is to preserve, without objectionable crush, the attractive features of the Estates to those who make Milnerton a home for themselves and their children.



**The Weir across the mouth of the lagoon.**

The Turf:

"The Milnerton Turf Club is situated on the Estate. This feature regular Race Days - is one of the great attractions of the Cape Peninsula.

The Park:

"There is a fine park set aside - covering an area of some 10 acres. There one may bask in the sunshine or rest in the shade; with one's children at gleeful play, imbibing the tempered but fresh sea breezes from the Bay or the clear air from the surrounding open country.

Entertainment Hall:

"There is an attractive Entertainment Hall (set in the centre of the Park) which can be hired for Dances, etc., on very reasonable terms." Mention was likewise made of excellent hotel accommodation.

Turning to the actual position of the land, the Milnerton Estates emphasised that they would not dog the steps of any would-be Purchasers seeking residence, who were genuinely attracted. Indeed they were inclined to hold back the ground rather than sell it to speculators. Hence it was a condition of sale that all buildings must be completed within an agreed time of the date of sale, in return for which the Company would provide the necessary finance.

Finally came the actual terms.

"The usual size of a Residential Plot at Milnerton is 100 by 50 feet (5000 square feet). The usual price for 5000 square feet is £100 for a corner plot and £90 for a non-corner plot; subject to the detailed building conditions which can be seen at the Office of the Secretary, or at the Estates Office at Milnerton, or will be

furnished on request. Special terms will be offered to intending purchasers of four or more lots." Restrictions were set out in regard to architectural standards. "The Company will see that the individuality of each house is artistic. Monotony of type of residence will be prevented. All plans must be approved by the Company and by the Milnerton Local Board. The natural charms and beauties of the locality will be preserved."

Largely to emphasise and celebrate South Africa's return to prosperity, Johannesburg in 1936 held the famous Empire Exhibition at Milner Park, where the Company took the opportunity for another burst of publicity. One new amenity featured was a children's playground in the Park, while steps were under way to prevent the recurrence of the floods which had marred the opening of the Koeberg Road area.

Of permanent importance too was the attainment by the old Marine Drive of National Road status, for which the necessary legislation had only recently been passed. Running along the edge of the sea towards Blouberg, it was an attraction, not only for this district but for the entire Western Province. Preparations however involved lengthy negotiations with the Central Government, the Divisional Council and the Province. It took several years to reach finality but by 1937 there was already a Marine Drive bus service from the foot of Adderley Street.

In 1938 the further extension of the National road was approved, despite considerable criticism of the original plan. \* Opponents argued that this would:

- "1. Mutilate and practically destroy the Golf Course.
2. Mutilate or completely demolish an exceptionally fine and expensive private residence, and spoil the grounds attached thereto.
3. Knock down the bathing boxes.
4. Cut off Milnerton Village from ready access to the sea - unless the old wooden bridge was replaced by the Divisional Council, which the engineer (Mr. Fox) said was not contemplated. \*
5. Reduce the value of lots adjoining the proposed 300 feet road for through and quick traffic, compared with those adjoining a normal road for slow and much less traffic.
6. Place the proposed road at the mercy of the sea, with the unknown factor of its effect on the Foreshore Scheme.
7. Involve a costly bridge over the wide mouth of the Diep River."

After a violent set-to, in which there were involved no fewer than six different parties - the Cape Town City Council, the Divisional Council, the Milnerton Local Board, the Milnerton Estates Limited, the Estate of the late Sir David Graaff, and the Provincial Roads Engineer, a compromise was agreed upon which gave more or less all-round satisfaction.

Less violent but nonetheless audible was the controversy about street names. The original proposal was that roads should be called after old Cape Commanders and Governors, but in 1937 this proposal was replaced by one substituting place names in South Africa, particularly in the Cape Province.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Milnerton, an ambitious project was under way, to be called Table View Township. As events were to show, this was ill-starred. Fathered by an organisation called the Porterfield Estates Ltd., it covered many hundreds of hectares, which had been divided into several thousand plots. By reason of proximity, at any rate on its outskirts, to the older township, a contact had been made between the two directorates, and it was noted on October 5, 1939, "the rights of the Milnerton Estates are being watched".

Even if the traffic on the Milnerton line, at any rate on race days, continued fairly normally, there were some curious ancillaries; among them one mentioned on June 1, 1939 - the S.A.R. "Horse Specials", to Kenilworth Race Course at 5/2d per train-mile. However the idea of the horse-carrying motor lorry as a substitute for a railway was no longer merely a theoretical one.

Only three months later, however, the prospects of the entire World were radically altered by the outbreak of the Second World War.

## Chapter 16 - Another World War

Inevitably effects of War showed themselves in the affairs of the Milnerton Estates which, on December 13, 1939, contributed £25 to the South African Mayors' Fund, £50 to the Union Unity Fund and five guineas for "Comforts for Naval Men".

Within a few more weeks, in February 1940, came an enquiry from the Defence Department for five morgen of land required for some unspecified purpose. That ill-starred year ran on, with the launching of the Blitz in Europe, the collapse of France, and the entry of Italy into the struggle.

Ever since World War I the military authorities had owned a battery site in Milnerton, purchased in 1914 and transferred on April 7, 1915.

Not without reason did the Secretary on June 17, 1940, report that the military authorities "required to take across the weir two guns of say four tons each". The execution of the plan was semi-comic, for a 12-ton Army crane stuck in the mud and was disinterred only after many hours of effort!

Apart from the steady growing list of subscriptions by the Company to War charities, including Comforts for Naval Men, The Merchant Navy Fund, the Netherlands Relief Fund, the Finnish Relief Fund and the Y.M.C.A. War Fund, other items in the Company's minute books showed the local effects of the conflict. In July 1940 for example 10 guineas went to the Civilian Protective Services for the Milnerton area, the local equivalent of Britain's Air Raid Precautions. Fresh negotiations with representatives of the Defence Department occurred in 1942 about an area, 350 yards square, required for "military purposes" again with no further explanation, while, surprisingly enough, even the Milnerton Railway came into the picture when, on five or six occasions, it was required in association with Messrs. Mann George & Co. "in connection with the salvage of a certain shipwrecked vessel".

Since the death of his father and the passing to him of the Baronetcy title, the traditional family link with Milnerton had been maintained by Sir De Villiers Graaff, who came into the news, in December 1939, for catching "two European men shooting at wild fowl on the lagoon" and duly handing them over to the police. Almost immediately afterwards Sir De Villiers was in the Army, sent up North and, alas, was taken prisoner by the Germans and fated to spend a long time in the hands of the enemy. Substantial numbers of men and women from Milnerton were likewise in the Forces, or otherwise contributing to the War effort. Yet somehow or other life continued in the township and there was even a certain amount of development, more particularly in connection with the new National Road to Malmesbury. "Defence requirements", it was reported on June 26, 1942, "have created unexpected difficulties and delays in these important matters and much detailed negotiation has been and will still be needed with particular reference to the Marine Drive. . ." So too came reports that, for defence purposes, "the Government may in the near future construct a bridge across the Diep River".

As for the Milnerton Local Board, this became involved during 1940 in a dispute with the Cape Town City Council and the Divisional Council on a proposed Joint Town Planning Scheme, bad feeling being caused by the decisions of the last-named two larger bodies to work out the details on their own, without consulting any of the landowners, including the Milnerton Estates. Arguments continued to rage right through the war period.

According to a return prepared in 1940, the Milnerton Estates holdings in the area of the Local Board now covered 1 171 acres, of which nearly half, namely 525 acres, located on Jan Biesjes Kraal, was still available for sub-division. Beyond the Golf Course, covering 221 acres, were the 199 acres (excluding the roads and public spaces) of the General Township Area, and the 127 acres of Race Course. Though officially classed as a section of Paarden Island, another 88 acres lay within Milnerton and 14 were used as a park.

One unforeseen and by no means trifling emergency confronted Milnerton in 1941 when, owing to some obstruction at the weir, the flood gates jammed and the entire area fronting on the river was suddenly submerged, with the prospect of a real disaster to most of the town. Unable to cope with this unaided, the officials had to call in the Army and the South African Engineering Corps appeared with praiseworthy speed.

So urgent was the position that they were obliged to blow up the Eastern section of the weir, and the accumulated waters escaped in the nick of time and Milnerton was saved.

Hints of prevailing troubles were given on June 15, 1942, when an enquiry was lodged with the Cape Town City Council as to whether, "in view of the extreme difficulty in obtaining building materials, owing to the War", the Council might grant certain concessions.



The Weir during the floods- 1940.



Damage caused by the floods in 1940.



The palm site under water – 1940

On November 6, 1942, the Military authorities asked the Divisional Council to proceed with the survey of the long-hoped-for coastal road past Milnerton. Indeed, on a small scale a certain amount of house-building was

still in progress, there being mention of a group of five dwellings financed by the Company, but at a cost stated to be 60 per cent above the estimate. So too the Golf Club complained about "unprecedented difficulties due to war conditions", one of them being the fact that the proposed widening of the Marine Drive would radically interfere with its operations. As a result the Milnerton Estates set a new precedent in 1943 by making a further grant in aid to the Club of £250.



Major-General F. H. Theron – as seen by the official British Army portrait painter in Cairo during the Second World War.

Strangely enough it was at the height of the War that one of the best known personalities in the South African Forces became a landowner, when, on April 14, 1943, it was noted that Lots Nos. 137 and 138 in Milnerton Extension No. 1, had been sold to General Frank Theron for the sum of £414. Several years were still to pass, however, before this famous military leader could fulfil his ambition to retire. Not long after another outstanding Milnerton personality passed away - Fred Botha, for many years Secretary to the Turf Club.

Following his elevation to the position of Administrator of the Cape Province, Major G. B. van Zyl had to resign from the Chairmanship of the Milnerton Estates, though he still lived in the township, but the idea of electing Sir De Villiers Graaff as his successor had to wait his release from an enemy prison camp. During the long years of detention in Germany, the place of Sir De Villiers was taken on the Board by his mother, the Dowager Lady F. de Villiers Graaff, while, only a few days before the end of hostilities, his brother D. P. de Villiers Graaff became a director.

All this while, though on a very reduced scale, activities at the Milnerton Race Course continued, even if, in consonance with the policy of the South African Railways, both the fares for passengers and the charges for conveying horses were in September 1944 increased by 10 per cent.

Significant of the approaching end of hostilities was the action of B. Porzig, a member of the "Ex-Servicemen's Aid Committee". In April 1945 he requested facilities for the men returning from up North to buy land and build houses at Milnerton, plus a relaxation of the rule requiring a minimum expenditure on construction of £2000. But as to Mr. Porzig's suggestion that the figure be reduced to £1500, the Company regretted it was not possible to depart from their policy. "To break this rule," he was informed, "would be to open the door to many similar requests and would also be contrary to the arrangements made with many earlier purchasers of land."



Scenic view of Table Mountain, looking across the bay towards Table Mountain.



A typical Milnerton residential area.



The apartment blocks overlooking the Milnerton lagoon.

## **Chapter 17 - Chances for Ex-Soldiers**

Only a few days after the Second World War came to an end with the Allied victory in Europe, Milnerton received a tacit tribute to its importance in the solution of certain current problems. Major J. C. Collings, Government Director of Housing, telephoned asking for "an urgent meeting to discuss the matter of houses for ex-Servicemen". At the interview the Major, who was accompanied by Mr. D. Thomson of his department, "outlined the whole housing problem and stated that his position had been rendered unnecessarily difficult by the existence of a multiplicity of well-intentioned local Committees. The Government's main difficulty is to find really suitable land within reasonable reach of the City. To build on hillsides is expensive and in some ways undesirable."

"My attitude as Director of Housing," he continued, "is a desire to co-operate, wherever possible, with landowners and with local authorities. The Government has clear and very wide powers under the recent Emergency Legislation, but will only exercise such powers if and when necessary." Milnerton Estates regarded this as a compliment and, to an expression of appreciation by its Directorate, Collings replied: "In brief, the Peninsula urgently needs, in round figures as a basic minimum 1 000 new houses. Of these the Cape Town area will provide about 400, and other centres between 400 and 500, leaving approximately 100 to 200. These, I feel, could easily be arranged at Milnerton, where it is well known that large tracts of privately-owned and suitable land are undeveloped."

On learning from Milnerton Estates Limited of recent negotiations with the B.E.S.L. and Moths, Major Collings expressed the view "that the Company offers to the Ex-Servicemen's Organisations were generous". After a long and detailed discussion he then agreed to reduce his request to 50 houses "for superior types of South Africans, who will be desirable residents in a good class residential area, each such house to be on two lots". Moreover they were not to be "of a monotonous or standardised type", and would have to comply with the Company's general conditions. Essential services, namely roads, water and electric light, were not yet available but he would see to it that the Government provided "that the houses will be dotted about, not placed close together like a settlement."

Thenceforth the scheme was vigorously put into effect, some of the first transactions being dated October 1945, when Major P. J. Jooste acquired no fewer than four lots at the astonishing inclusive price of £288, Major Langerman another four at £368 and it was announced that further transactions were pending! Such were the high standards maintained that a set of four plans, submitted by the local representative of the National Housing Commission, was rejected "as they do not conform to the arrangements come to with the Director of Housing and to the Company's requirement as to design and value".

Early in 1946 an interview followed between the Chairman of the Milnerton Estates and the National Housing Commission, when it was agreed:

"A. To accept fresh plans produced for two types of four-roomed houses (Type B 5 and B 7) and to permit five houses to be built to each of these two plans.

B. To cancel the offer of sites, previously made, for 10 houses and to substitute sites in two blocks between Algoa Road and Beaufort Road.

C. To sign the Agreement of Sale and Purchase as received from the Commission, subject to amendments as to the substituted lots, and subject to the embodiment therein of the Company's standard conditions of transfer."

Henceforth too representatives of the National Housing Commission submitted plans for approval for any further five-roomed houses. Apart from the original Military project, Milnerton itself joined in the official National Housing Scheme, the pleasant atmosphere being further stimulated, in June of the same year, when after a further deputation from the Ex-Servicemen's Organisations, it was agreed to sell land at pre-War prices, less 20 per cent, to 12 approved applicants. This policy, we learn, was "highly appreciated". Following a Parliamentary grant of additional statutory powers, the National Housing Commission completed its proposals for the erection of 50 homes at Milnerton, and by June 28, 1946, ten of these had already been built or were under construction.

This additional influx of population was accompanied by a spurt in business, enquiries being received for the erection, on a rental basis by the Company, of a garage, a cafe, a grocer's shop, a chemist shop and a butcher's shop, in what was, strictly-speaking a residential area.

Growing interest in the progress of the township was shown by the Government in its purchase of two lots for the erection of a Police Station, while the sense of civic spirit was stimulated by the setting up of a Ratepayers' Association. (August 1946)

## **Chapter 18 - Scheme for a Municipality**

In keeping with the burgeoning spirit of enterprise that marked the immediate post-War era were the reported ambitions of the City of Cape Town to annex some of its neighbouring communities. It was therefore with relief that the inhabitants of Milnerton learnt that, notwithstanding a petition from some of its inhabitants, the Administrator of the Cape had refused to countenance the incorporation of the Bishopscourt Estate into the Municipality of Cape Town. A similar movement was launched on the northern side of Table Bay and revived at intervals, but, notwithstanding the annexation of the Paarden Island industrial area (belonging originally to the Milnerton Estates), the residential section, further out, retained its independence.

In the preservation of this independence technical difficulties in providing transport undoubtedly played a role, and of these difficulties, the Marine Drive remained in the forefront. "Constructive work", we learn on June 30, 1947, "is proceeding apace within the City area. Detailed discussions are still proceeding with the Divisional Council, affecting a line for the road beyond the City area." Hints were added: "There is reason to hope that this long-discussed subject will be settled and that construction work up to the entrance of Milnerton Village will be started within six months. . . Many conferences have been held; but the Divisional Council is faced with erosion, due to the change of tides in Table Bay." Much of this trouble, according to the Milnerton Estates, was due to the reclamation of 300 acres for the establishment of what is today known as the Duncan Dock. "Apparently the Local Bodies directly concerned are unwilling to face the Government with the fact of its own responsibility for the trouble and to request that the State itself shall meet the extra cost of providing safe roads."

Fresh confusion was caused by the news that the Marine Drive from Cape Town to Milnerton would shortly be demoted from a National Road to ordinary main road status. "Two of the three local Authorities concerned (the City Council and the Divisional Council) fell into line with the views of the National Road Board," said the Chairman, "notwithstanding honourable agreements spread over the last 10 years. The Milnerton Local Board stood its ground and stoutly fought the issue, but was out-voted. As a result, no National Road will pass through Milnerton." This was not perhaps an unmitigated disaster. "In some ways this may be all to the good, privacy being worth something in these days of mad rush. But it means that the Milnerton Local Board will have to pay 10 per cent on the cost of constructing and maintaining the Main Road. . ."

Although years were to pass without any settlement of this issue, road transport was nonetheless making progress, as shown by the growing obsolescence of the Milnerton Railway. Early in 1948 the S.A.R. itself decided to provide a fleet of six buses to the Ascot Race Course, under a subsidy, from the Milnerton Estates, of £2 10s per round trip. To put an end to the amusing dispute with the Company as to whether the earnings above this modest amount should or should not accrue to the Department, the Milnerton Estates decided to provide facilities on its own. Ignoring complaints of inefficiency and other faults, the S.A.R. continued however to stand its ground, but, in May 1948, received an enquiry "as to the possible acquisition of the Company's railway line". The auditors, Messrs. E. R. Syfret & Co., prepared a statement covering no less than 50 years, from September 1897 to March 31, 1947, on the basis of which, and after due reference to the 1898 Act of the Cape Colonial Department and the Act of 1930, the price was fixed at £117 464. Shortly after on June 30; 1948, the shareholders gave formal authority "to negotiate and enter into an agreement with the Government of the Union of South Africa and its Department of Railways and Harbours respecting the proposed sale of the Company's railway line. Railway reserve land and relevant buildings to the Government of the Union."

To the surprise and disappointment, however, of the Milnerton Estates, a reply arrived on July 8 from Mr. B. M. Marshall Clark, General Manager of the S.A.R. "After further consideration, it has now been decided that the question of the Administration acquiring this Railway should remain in abeyance for the time being. Negotiations will, as soon as possible, be opened with your Company in connection with the deviation, at the expense of this Administration, of the Milnerton Line to fit in with the new layout of Cape Town. . . and it is hoped that your Company will see its way clear to agree to the deviation of the line in the manner which will be proposed."

Despite this implication that the railway would continue to run, Sir De Villiers Graaff, as Chairman of the Company, had to announce on June 29, 1949 that the Government had given notice to terminate the working agreement entered into in 1904, under which the service had hitherto operated.



Sir de Villiers Graaff

Stations between the Milnerton Estate and the Milnerton Turf Club now also came into the limelight through the outbreak of a serious fire at Ascot on February 28, 1948, which had destroyed some of the stands overlooking the course. As Chairman of the club and ground landlord, J. W. S. Langerman lodged a complaint with the Company, that "The Club will be put to a very large expense in replacements and improvements", and that, since the lease was due to expire in 1958, the stewards would "greatly appreciate an extension of, say 10 or 15 years . . ." Sure enough, within a few months a new agreement had been reached, extending the lease of the course to 1973, at a gradually-increasing rent - £2 120 per year from 1958 to 1963; £2 620 per year from 1963 to 1968 and £3 370 a year for the remaining period. Significantly too, in the light of what lay ahead, the Club henceforth became responsible for the payment of rates.

A new 25-year lease was entered into with the Milnerton Golf Club involving the expenditure of £11 000 on improvements, of which £7 000 was lent by the Company. The encouragement of other branches of sport included that of motor racing at Paarden Island and the lease at Milnerton of a Naval Sports Ground of five acres at a nominal rent.

Overshadowing all however came a piece of news in January 1949, when the Board of the Company were informed, under the heading of: "Proposed Status of Milnerton as a Municipality", that a "change in status in the Local Authority at Milnerton had been raised by the Administrator's Office. The matter is under negotiation between the Milnerton Local Board and that Office."

Such was the excitement in the little community during the ensuing months that in October 1949 a meeting was held of Enrolled Voters and a unanimous decision taken "against an early change of status from that of a Local Board to that of a Municipality". As a result, it was announced that, contrary to previous intention, "the Administrator has agreed to leave the matter in abeyance until early next year".

Eight months later, on June 28, 1950, as Chairman of Milnerton Estates, Sir De Villiers Graaff made it known: "It is now understood that an alteration in the law is proposed, under which complete power would be vested in the Administrator to decide the local Government status of certain areas without consulting the ratepayers concerned or even advertising his intentions."

A striking tribute to the charms of Milnerton was furnished in 1951 when the former Governor-General of South Africa, Major Gideon Brand Van Zyl, took possession of Cotswold House, designed in 1947 in the old Cape Dutch style. Here he spent the next five years, until his death in 1956, and here his widow remained until she too passed away in 1973.

Meanwhile the town's ordinary life continued. On the never-ending subject of the Marine Drive to Blouberg Beach the Divisional Council indicated "the possibility of this road being constructed within the next few years is extremely remote, but the effects of future storms over the whole length will be carefully watched. . ."

The Milnerton Estates next found themselves involved in an unexpected dispute with the Post Office, through taking the initiative in selecting the name Heatherton for its proposed Paarden Island Extension No. 1. Mr. L. C. Burke, Postmaster-General, pointed out that "as an existing overseas place-name, this is contrary to the principles enunciated by the Place Names Commission".

Arguments also arose with the Cape Town City Council which, though it had undertaken to supply water to the Milnerton Turf Club, seemed unwilling to meet the needs of Milnerton residents. Then too there were disputes between the Company and the Milnerton Local Board, represented by its Chairman, A. H. L. Burmeister, concerning the ownership of land required by the latter for administrative purposes.

Steadily the community was meanwhile developing into a coherent whole. On June 29, 1951 "A Civic Association has been formed for the residential area of Milnerton. There is a marked increase of interest among residents in all local Government affairs. The Enrolled Voters recently gave their unanimous approval to the Local Board's proposal to raise a loan of about £27000 for roads, storm water drainage and water mains."

On behalf of the Company, however, F. H. Sargeant, sounded a note of caution. "It is," he said, "to be hoped that the Ratepayers (many of whom are relatively new to the district) will not attempt to force the pace too rapidly in respect of heavy expenditure on public services. Milnerton is still a Local Board area, but may at any time be forced into the status of a Municipality, with attendant increased costs of administration". Indeed the growth of the Local Board's staff was illustrated six months later when discussions were started on the possibility of their being enrolled in the Joint Municipal Pension Fund, sponsored by the Provincial Administration.

Complications of a different kind arose at the same time, when proposals were made under the Group Areas Act to have the entire township classified as "European". As a sign of goodwill the Company on February 29, made over to the Local Board a substantial area on the Koeberg Road for playing fields, the forerunner of a still more ambitious project, set off on April 22, 1952, when the Milnerton Local Board and the Directorate of the Milnerton Estates met "to discuss the acquisition of land for a Civic Centre, and land for recreational purposes for the Milnerton community". Not only was agreement reached, under which further ground was handed over, including the so-called Park Area covering 216000 square feet leased at a nominal yearly rent of £1, but another 80 000 square feet was disposed of for £2 060, and 62 500 square feet, on Jansen, Koeberg and Jeppe Roads, for £1 675. Most of this was earmarked for schools and playgrounds, under a friendly arrangement with the Administrator.

So too an important financial question was clarified about the revaluing, for rateable purposes of the whole area. On this the Company's Chairman commented: "In actual fact this step is long overdue from a public point of view, but it will obviously result in a heavy increase in rates. And Milnerton will also probably be forced into the status of a Municipality, with heavily increased expenses on Local Government affairs. Whilst unfortunate in some directions, these steps are the inevitable corollaries of the marked development in the area which has taken place in recent years. . ."

Another link with the past was broken when, in October 1952, J. W. S. (Willie) Langerman passed away, with his unique record as an original founder of the Township, of the Milnerton Turf Club and of other closely associated institutions, to say nothing of his longstanding membership of the Milnerton Estate directorate.

Big events were brewing throughout the year 1953. "The Milnerton Local Board," it was announced on June 29, of that year, "is actively engaged in the preparation of a scheme to provide main drainage facilities for the village. This highly desirable step will inevitably mean heavily increased rates. It is, however, expected that the scheme will be so planned that certain neighbouring areas will join therein and thus provide essential services at much less cost than would be the case if each separate local authority had its own scheme."

Commenting on the recent revaluation of the Milnerton Local Government area, Mr. Sargeant renewed his warning: figures would not be available for some time, but valuations for rateable purposes would rise considerably and Milnerton be "forced to accept the expense of Municipal status".

Another significant change in outlook was the decision to reserve and sub-divide 80 acres of land for industrial purposes, distinct from the already well-established township at Paarden Island. Fresh signs of a

developing and established community were the operations of the School Board which in 1953 hired the Milnerton Hall "for educational purposes, until the completion of the school building in Zastron Road" . . . Encouragement too in another field came from the increasing attendance at the Race Course, the service to which was substantially improved, with the completion, in 1953, of the new Railway Station on the Cape Town Foreshore. This so encouraged the trustees of the Turf Club that they even offered to buy outright the land on which they operated, at a figure around £200 000.

## Chapter 19 - The New Town

A considerable stir was caused in the Milnerton community in 1954 when, despite a good deal of resistance, the Administrator took advantage of existing legislation to order the Local Board "forthwith to prepare a Town Planning Scheme", thereby emphasising the increasing involvement of this rural area in specifically urban matters.

Urban problems were also reflected in a complaint received by the Company in May 1955 from F. Maxwell Arnot, a well-known publisher's agent, then living in Alamein Road, about the actions of a neighbour "in keeping dogs for breeding purposes on her premises". Inspection showed "Mrs. Marshall is keeping two male and two female Alsatians and their kennels are at least 15 feet away from the common boundary". Accordingly Arnot was informed that the matter would be passed to the Local Authority.

Radical changes of many kinds occurred early in 1955. One of them was a relatively happy ending to a long-standing dispute with the Divisional Council of the Cape, thanks to the support of what was officially described as "certain influential people". One of these was none other than the Rt. Hon. G. Brand van Zyl, already mentioned in these pages, who, in company with one of the chief senior commanders of the South African Forces during the recent War, Major General Frank H. Theron, joined the deputation that waited on the Administrator. Their purpose was achieved, of preventing the Divisional Council from diverting the Main Road between Milnerton and Blouberg Strand, from the coastline to the landward side of the Milnerton Lagoon.

Unfortunately natural forces decided the issue, namely erosion stimulated by new harbour construction. As a result, within another seven years, by 1962, the road had to be relocated in its disputed position along the east shore of the Lagoon.

About the same time too agreement was reached between the Company and the Milnerton Turf Club under which the latter purchased 80 morgen at £2 500 per morgen, involving the cash payment of £30 000 against transfer and the balance of £170 000 on mortgage, available incidentally in those happy days at 5 1/2 per cent per annum!

Under the conditions of this contract, "the land is to be used exclusively as a Course for Horse-Racing purposes and matters directly incidental thereto. No portion of it shall be disposed of unless, (a) the Club is dissolved as a Horse-Racing club, or (b) Horse-Racing is banned by Law or (c) for any other reason it becomes uneconomical or inadvisable for the Club to carry on its activities as a Horse-Racing Club." In such unlikely events the Milnerton Estates Ltd. would have the right to buy back the ground.

But the most important change of all took place with the issue of an historic document, reading:

"PROCLAMATION.

By the Honourable Philippus Jacobus Olivier,  
Administrator of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope.

"Under the powers vested in me by Section 3 (1) (a) of Ordinance No. 19, 1951, I hereby declare that, as from the 1st July, 1955, the areas at present constituting the Local Board of Milnerton shall be a Municipality with the name 'Municipality of Milnerton', and that the number of its Council shall be six.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

Dated at Cape Town, this 22nd Day of February, 1955,  
P. J. Olivier,  
Administrator. "



The first Town Council, July 1954, from left to right: Dr G. G. Futeran, Messrs P. D. Vlok, W. J. Savage, G. H. Titterton, Mrs M. A. Taylor and Mr A. H. L Burmeister (Mayor).

For the inaugural election of the Town Council no fewer than 12 candidates came forward. This great occasion took place eight days before the big changeover, at which, in the absence of a Town Clerk for the new authority, the Returning Officer was borrowed from Pin elands, in the person of its Town Clerk, F. L. B. Bouchet.

The votes cast ranged from 422 for the most popular candidate to 39 for the most unsuccessful, and at the close of the poll, the Returning Officer announced, in order of success, the original Councillors to be G. H. Titterton, A. H. L. Burmeister, P. D. Vlok, W. J. Savage, Dr. D. G. Futeran and Mrs. M. Taylor.

The inauguration of the new Municipality on the morning of Friday July 1, took place in the Milnerton Hall in Jansen Road. Such was the interest that a number of personalities from outside attended, including the acting Provincial Secretary, G. A. van Oordt, along with the Mayor of Durbanville, Councillor Van der Westhuizen, also C. V. Emms, Secretary of the Divisional Council, Dr. J. P. de Villiers, its Medical Officer of Health. Since Major Jooste, the local member for the Provincial Council, happened to be unavailable, he sent his wife as his representative, while F. H. Sargeant deputised both for the Milnerton Estates Limited and for Sir De Villiers Graaff M.P., with C. A. Raats there on behalf of the Graaff's Trust Limited. Besides all these we are told "about 50 ladies and gentlemen, being residents of Milnerton, helped to fill the hall when, on the stroke of 11 a.m., Mr. G. O. Owen, took the Chair and opened the proceedings". Having formally read the Proclamation establishing the Municipality, he called for nominations for the position of Mayor. Only one name was put forward, that of Councillor A. H. L. Burmeister, who achieved the position unopposed, while G. H. Titterton became his deputy.



Mr A. H. L. Burmeister – Mayor: 1955 – 1956.

August Henry Ludwig Burmeister belonged to a family prominent in Cape Town, where he had been born on July 28, 1883, and educated at three different well-known old establishments - Doualier's once-famous "Educational Institute", St. George's Grammar School and the South African College School. As a young man he had been prominent both in Rugby and Cricket. Later on he was a leading golfer.

Mr. Burmeister's career had been in manufacturing. Not only had he risen to be General Manager in South Africa of Price's, the country's most important candle manufacturers, but he had been elected President of the Transvaal Chamber of Industries. Since his retirement he had made his home at Milnerton, where he had been manager of Porterfield Estates, then engaged in developing Table View Township. He was also prominent as a Rotarian, had been a member of the Milnerton Local Board, and had been appointed by the Government to the South African Shipping Board. Not surprisingly his election as Mayor gave widespread satisfaction.

Four basic Committees were set up at the same historic inaugural meeting - Finance and General Purposes, Works, Health and Town Planning, while the first Administrative action of the new Municipality, at a cost of £434 a year, was to join the Divisional Council's "Health Control Scheme" and put a representative on its Combined Health Committee.

As for office accommodation, approval was duly given to hire, at £35 per month, the three rooms on the First Floor of Nassau Buildings. Along with this went the purchase, from the well-known furniture manufacturers G. H. Stark & Co., of three office desks and 13 chairs at the cost of £90 12s. 3d., besides a second-hand board-room table for £30 from the Cape Chamber of Industries. Printed letterheads and envelopes to an amount of £8 4s. 6d. were obtained from the Eclipse Printing Company, while, as Acting Town Clerk, G. C. Owen, received permission to buy "the necessary essential law books needed. . . such rubber stamps as may be required; coir mats for the office, curtaining material and fittings therefore. . . and two electric heaters".

Office hours, as far as the public were concerned, were 9 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. and 2 to 3 p.m., from Mondays to Fridays, and on Saturdays 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Staff however was to stay on till 5 p.m. on weekdays and until 12.30 on Saturdays. It was also revealed that Mr. Owen, though previously Secretary to the Divisional Council of the Cape, had now agreed to work at an inclusive fee of £50 per month, which even His Worship the Mayor stated was "considerably less than the figure he himself had suggested". At this point Owen gave warning that he was not likely to stay longer than a month, at the end of which he hoped the permanent Town Clerk would take office. The first office employee, Miss Du Toit, also from the Divisional Council, undertook to work as a typist, mornings only, for £25 a month.

Because of its healthy state of growth, Milnerton required the immediate adoption of a system for the approval and passing of plans, a matter brought before the Health Committee appropriately chaired by Dr. Futeran. On the administrative side the old Milnerton Station, now converted into a store for such goods as the Municipality possessed, was, on July 4, 1955, hired for the reasonable sum of £1 a month. A letter arrived from the Cape Asphalt Company of Bellville, enquiring "whether the Council is interested in the purchase of an asphalt distributing appliance known as the 'Patchmobile'. The answer was that, until further notice, the council was "not in the market for such a machine".

As for the second-hand Board-Room table, for reasons not further explained there were difficulties in moving this piece of furniture from the 6th Floor of the Grand Parade Centre, Cape Town, to the Council's offices at Milnerton. Happily, the Secretary of the Divisional Council arranged for a D.C. lorry and a number of their employees to collect the table and deliver it at the Council's offices. The Councillors, destined to sit around the table, were moved to record their appreciation of such brotherly action.

Steps were also taken to acquire the first piece of Municipal transport, a lorry, to replace the existing arrangement, under which "Killa Brothers undertook the collection and removal of the garden and other refuse from the streets of the town". With some perspicacity Councillor Savage pointed out that, once such a vehicle had been obtained, it would be necessary to provide it with some kind of shelter, as well as engage the services of a driver and labourer.



The first Town Clerk – Mr T. A. Koen

Numerous other matters of basic importance demanded attention, among them the preparation of an up-to-date street plan and a list of their names, to purchase a safe, and erect office shelving. There was likewise the vexed ownership question of the famous wooden bridge over the Diep River, the raising of a possible loan for £131 230 to finance a sewerage scheme and, above all, a Town Planning Scheme. Less essential items likewise took up time - for instance an application from I. N. van der Byl for permission to erect a Wendy House in his garden, and a letter from the Society of Heraldry, regarding the acquisition by the Milnerton Municipality of its own Coat-of-Arms. (Matter postponed for 12 months.) The first attempt to control traffic dates from August 1, 1955 when a notice board was authorised, in both official languages, "indicating that cycling within the Park is prohibited".

In the same month the whole subject of the Railway Service was revived, following the request from the Milnerton Turf Club that "the horse trains be suspended as from the end of September". Accompanying this, went an argument as to the policy to be adopted in regard to racing stables, now that the population was steadily increasing and losing its rural character. "Milnerton's problem," said Dr. De Villiers, "is somewhat different from that of the other Peninsula authorities. It has been developed with emphasis on the country town aspect and its interests are linked with its Racecourse. This has resulted in Milnerton attracting persons wishing to get away from the purely urban areas. . ." To maintain the traditional link of the community with the Turf he suggested establishing a "buffer strip", half a mile wide, to prevent encroachment by flies. Instead however a system of zoning was adopted.

With the appointment of a permanent Town Clerk, in the person of T. A. Koen, the administrative machinery of Milnerton began to move faster, and to widen in scope. Of considerable benefit to the staff was Milnerton's decision, on Mr. Koen's initiative, in 1956 to join the Western Cape Joint Municipal Pension Fund.

Now that its new reservoir at Wemmershoek was near completion, Cape Town was approached with the request for an increase in the water supply. Milnerton's possibilities as a seaside resort were recognised afresh, though marred by several casualties amongst swimmers in the lagoon. Here something of a problem arose through the rights of ownership held by the Milnerton Estates Limited, the Municipality and the Department of Lands. Brought before both Houses of Parliament the settlement also involved governmental policy in regard to lighthouses. When provision was made in the Railways & Harbours Estimates for 1956 for a new, automatically-operated installation on the beach, Milnerton Estates protested that this would interfere with local amenities, but found itself overruled. Fire-fighting too claimed renewed attention from the authorities, the old arrangement with the Cape Town City Council having lapsed. In this, help was provided unexpectedly by the neighbouring Municipality of Goodwood, through its Town Clerk Mr. Treurnich and its Firemaster, Mr. Marais. Both proved "most co-operative". For the time being agreement was reached, permitting the Goodwood Brigade, in case of need, to serve Milnerton, and this state of affairs continued for years. Fresh problems however arose. When it was discovered that the Goodwood Brigade required at least 12 minutes to get to Milnerton, complaints were rife that, in an emergency, this might prove disastrous. Hence, early in 1957, a campaign was launched for volunteers living in Milnerton, but, notwithstanding the

appointment of a Chief Fire Officer and of two Firemasters, the response from the public was inadequate, despite the offer of 5/- per practice turn-out and one guinea per turn-out in respect of an actual fire.

From a report-back to the Council it soon appeared that, while improving enrolments, this office had failed adequately to stimulate efficiency. The fact was brought home in a remarkable memorandum from the Town Clerk dated July 15, 1957.

Headed: "Outbreak of Fire: Property of R. V. Ritchie", it deals with events at a house in Alamein Road on the evening of July 3, and embodies information furnished by Mr. G. K. le Grange, the Firemaster.

"At the time of the fire," said Mr. Koen, "I was on my way home from the office. My wife received a call from Commander Wileman, who had been alerted by the Police. I contacted Sergeant Weyers of the police and established from him that the call was received at the Police Station from Mrs. Ritchie at 7.59 p.m. The Constable on duty immediately telephoned Commander Wileman, who in turn immediately contacted my wife. The reason that the Police telephoned Commander Wileman instead of myself (T. A. Koen) was that, in the hurry of the moment, the constable referred, not to the circular giving telephone number, but to a copy of a note to Volunteers which had accompanied the notification to the Police, merely as an example of how the system works. Fortunately the actual loss of time involved was only approximately one minute."

Thereupon the memorandum described how Mrs. Koen phoned through at once to B. F. A. Schumann, whose wife took the message that a fire had broken out. Unfortunately Mr. Schumann, though a member of the crew, was not on duty, so she was referred to Mr. Le Grange. Mrs. Koen rang him and then proceeded to call up other Volunteers, with the result that 13 in all answered the call. In the excitement of the moment, Mr. Schumann apparently did not wait to receive the full message from his wife, but hurried to the Fire Station and took out the machine as driver. Because of this the actual driver on duty, Mr. Ballan-Watson, did not know about the fire until the following day. Strongly reminiscent of the Keystone Cops on the films, were the events at the actual scene of the outbreak.

"Members of the Brigade," we are told, "immediately started searching for the hydrant, and Mr. Schumann tried to take the machine into the grounds of the property, in order to use the auxiliary hose on the machine. In doing so the extension ladder on the machine caught the arch over the entrance gate, with the result that the mountings for the extension ladder and the hose reel were broken and bent. The top platform of the machine splintered at the one end, and one of the rear panels of the machine broke." Mr. Koen added that, on his own responsibility, he had the damage repaired the following day, at the insurers' cost of £22. Despite these calamities the Brigade was on the scene of the outbreak in less than 10 minutes after Mrs. Koen had taken down the message. When Mr. Koen himself arrived, "the Brigade was already in action and handled the matter efficiently and well".

"At one stage," he added, "the Firemaster requested permission to call out the Salt River Brigade (Cape Town), but I refused to grant the necessary permission as I was convinced that our own Brigade was able to handle the matter. This proved to be the case."

From these events the Town Clerk deduced several valuable facts, the most important being that "the Volunteer Fire Brigade, established by this Council, can and does operate efficiently and can give adequate fire protection". Additional fire hydrants however were essential, the nearest to the scene of the conflagration being in Pienaar Road. 1 100 feet of hose were also needed. "The telephone position," Mr. Koen added, "must be improved. An Exchange with a special Fire Number has been allocated to this Council, yet, unless extensions can be put through to the homes of certain Volunteers, the Fire Number becomes valueless. . ."

Ludicrous though the situation was, it was destined to continue, being again brought to a head in August 1957 when a certain citizen refused to allow an extension line to be taken off his telephone for the benefit of one of the firemen. Fresh trouble followed in January 1958 when, during the practice run by Driver W. F. Ballan-Watson, the rear axle of the engine broke. Within a few more weeks, on February 9, 1958, the Town Clerk discovered that the Fire Station, complete with equipment had been found standing open on a Sunday morning. Closer investigation revealed that the building did not, "as appears on the face of it, have a snap-lock but one that has to be locked with a key". "Consequently," said Koen, "I made an entry into the Log Book for the guidance of the person concerned, in response to which, other entries, uncalled-for and rude, were made in the Log Book by the Volunteer driver on duty."

Peace having been at length restored, the Volunteer Brigade continued to lead a relatively uneventful existence, but it was declining in effectiveness and before the 1960's ended was disbanded, its engine, very appropriately, being sent to the Veteran Car Organisation.

For the time being Milnerton depended for its fire services upon an agreement with the Goodwood Municipality for the town itself, while those newly-established industries, the Caltex Oil Refinery and the fertiliser works of Fedmis were, until further notice, protected by Cape Town. Not till June 1970 did Milnerton acquire its own full-time and very efficient Fire Brigade.

## **Chapter 20 - Municipal Advance**

One pioneer who passed away on April 19, 1956, was the former Chairman of Milnerton Estates, F. H. Sargeant. "He was a kindly man," said Sir De Villiers Graaff, "beloved for his considerateness and friendliness to all with whom he came in contact. His principles were of the highest and he had set a fine example of business integrity to all his associates. His keen and discerning intellect, though trained in other spheres, revealed great business ability and acumen. It was his genius that he could not only grasp the big issues but gave the most meticulous attention to detail. Even when his health had broken down," he added, "he never relaxed his efforts in the interests of the Company." Now that he was gone he was succeeded by another veteran of the firm, C. A. Raats, who had worked himself up from office boy to the position of Chairman.

After a highly-successful period of office, during which both he and his wife devoted much time to the welfare of the community, A. H. L. Burmeister in November 1956 handed over his duties as Mayor to his deputy, G. H. Titterton. One of the first duties of the new incumbent was to arrange a Carol-singing function, "to serve the dual purpose of bringing together particularly the children of Milnerton in a Christmas celebration, and of raising funds for the Red Cross Hungarian Relief Appeal by means of a silver collection". This appeal was the outcome of the tragic ending to the revolt in Budapest, which had recently been beaten down by Soviet troops. Against a more homely background was a braai, held with the approval and assistance of His Worship, for the staff of the Fire Brigade on February 14, 1958.



Mr G. H. Titterton – Mayor: 1956-1957

Indicative of the usually peaceful condition of the streets was a complaint received about damage done to gardens at night by unattended horses, most of them strays from the racing stables. To remedy this, the novel step was taken of awarding a bonus of 5/- per head to any labourer who succeeded in impounding any of these animals.

One satisfactory step taken at this time and brought to speedy fruition was the setting up of Milnerton High School. Here the first tenders were called in 1958, the building itself being completed and formally opened by Mr. D. J. Liebenberg, Cape Director of Education, on October 24, 1960.

By far the biggest pending project for the Municipality was the provision of Sewerage, estimated to cost the then gigantic sum of £250 000. Delays were mainly due to the Housing Schemes, fathered by the Divisional Council and already discussed with the old Local Board. With Milnerton Municipality now legally in a position to administer its own scheme, work began in 1957, while in 1958 it was possible to complete the needful

arrangements for the outfall on the farm Potsdam. Within another 12 months this highly-important amenity was in operation, the expenditure having reached £290 000.

June 1956 was a milestone in the transportation history of Milnerton, for it brought the end of the old Railway service. Latterly it had been restricted to conveying race horses and now even this was stopped. "This means," the Company was informed by the S.A.R., "that all traffic on the Company's line, from beyond Paarden Island Township, is suspended indefinitely." Moreover the Department declined to make use of its statutory powers to purchase the installation. Instead the management of the Milnerton Estates learnt that the section of the line was to be abandoned.

One immediate problem was the future use for the 60-foot strip running through the township. North of Zastron Road, so it was felt, it could "probably be integrated with the adjoining land. . ." but southward the situation was complicated by public roads. Fortunately however the strip was found useful in providing for wider highways, some of them used by the extended bus service installed by the Cape Town Tramways Company in 1958. Another piece of derelict land, triangular in shape, and East of the Koeberg Road came into the news about the same time in consequence of the abandonment by the Post Office of the Beam Radio Station at Klipheuwel. The Department however retained ownership and ultimately converted it to other uses, as the terminal of its overseas cable.

Important from the view of administrative efficiency was a step taken in 1957, when the first full-time Town Treasurer, M. V. Whitwam, was appointed, with an adequate staff followed in 1965 by Harold Hulley.

All things considered, the affairs of the young Milnerton Municipality were running smoothly and time was even found in February 1959 to acquire a Municipal Coat-of-Arms, the design of which was placed in the hands of Frank Waller, well known as a heraldic artist in Cape Town. Later in the same year steps were taken to have the emblem formally registered, in time for the forthcoming 50th Jubilee Celebrations of the Union of South Africa.

So steady was the growth in administrative activities that hired accommodation was no longer adequate and several Councillors in November 1959 put proposals, "that serious consideration be given to buying a suitable property and converting it for use as an office".

It was therefore to the dismay of local patriots that Dr. A. C. Levenstein, another of the Councillors, raised the question of incorporating Milnerton into Cape Town. Though he was ruled out of order, the subject was revived several times in ensuing months, amongst others by Major A. Z. Berman, who, as a member of the Cape Town City Council, launched an open attack on Milnerton and its activities. "There is a strong movement afoot at Milnerton," he told his colleagues at a meeting on April 27, 1959, "to join Cape Town. They are already paying higher rates than Cape Town and they are broke to the wide world."



Mr P. D. Vlok – Mayor: 1957-1958



Mr W. J. Savage – Mayor: 1958-1959

Considerable annoyance was felt at these sentiments and the Milnerton Council publicly expressed its regret at his action in using "such slang expressions as 'Broke to the wide world', which suggested insolvency to those not aware of the full facts. Close study of the Major's explanatory letter elicits the fact that he intends merely to convey contempt for a newly fledged local authority, which has not the resources that a city of long standing, like Cape Town, has or should have". Further rebuttals of Berman's accusations followed, and a warning issued against "Milnerton ratepayers being stampeded by the Major's distortion of the facts into seeking incorporation into Cape Town". The protest ended: "This Council records that Milnerton is well able to pay for all necessary amenities and that the overwhelming majority of its ratepayers have come here, not to enjoy low rates, but to find the peace which is absent in the ill-planned and commercialised Mother City, and expresses its hope and that of the citizens that our town will be spared further vindictive and malicious remarks from Major Berman".

"Such statements," added Dr. G. Futeran, the Acting Mayor, "have done harm to public interest in Milnerton and are bound to affect market values of properties in this town." He warned that it might be necessary to take legal action.

Happily, having had his say, the Mayor took up a more moderate attitude. While still expressing regret that Major Berman's accusations had been published at all, and that the press, more particularly the "Cape Argus" and "Die Burger", had given so much prominence to the affair, he added that he had received the assurance of the News Editor of "Die Burger" of his willingness to get all the facts from the Municipality and print them.

"My object," said His Worship, "in referring to these press reports is to focus attention on this position, which has obtained in Milnerton for some time. I would particularly appeal to the Councillors to deal with the matter in a calm and dispassionate way. . . The function of a Municipal Council is to administer the town under its control in a businesslike manner and to the advantage of the community as a whole. We can only act in terms of the powers given to us by law, and these laws contain very explicit and very stringent provisions to ensure that we do this. . . A town cannot be administered by a number of different bodies working at variance with each other. The proper function of a Ratepayers' Association as I see it, is to ensure, first of all, that the most suitable Councillors are elected to run the town, and secondly, to act as a medium through which individual ratepayers can put forward suggestions. . . The Council is at all times willing to consider the views of Ratepayers, as expressed through their Association and to cooperate as fully as possible." The uproar now subsided and normal activities occupied the attention of the Council.

Hints of things to come in days still a long way ahead were given in April 1960, when Councillor Mrs. Taylor enquired whether anything further had transpired in regard to plans for the erection of a Shopping Centre on the property known as Reidhof. As it happened the matter was still classed as confidential, and a later generation was to enjoy this amenity.



A night view of Milnerton's industrial area, focussing on the Caltex oil refinery.



The administrative heart of the Milnerton Municipality.



Headquarters of the modern and efficient Milnerton Fire Department

In keeping with the practice of most other Cape Municipalities, Milnerton now also started contributing towards the famous Nelspoort Tuberculosis Sanatorium, in the Karoo, while improved relations with the Mother City were implied in the discussions for participation in the conference, on February 29, 1960, to settle details for Milnerton's use of the new Cape Town Abattoir, about to be constructed. While refusing to bind itself indefinitely, Milnerton undertook, for the next 25 years, not to set up any slaughter facilities of its own.

The first local news-sheet dates from 1960, when "The Milnerton Bulletin," made its debut, an attractively printed 8-page account of local affairs, in both official languages published by the Milnerton Ratepayers' Association.

Higher standards in road-building were now adopted, commencing with the signing of a contract for bitumenising certain thoroughfares, while, to finance future capital works, an inaugural loan of £20 000, for 30 years at six per cent, was arranged with a Johannesburg house.

Changes of universal importance provided a theme for a gathering on June 3, 1960, at the Parow Civic Centre, and under the Chairmanship of Mr. F. G. Tindale of the Cape Provincial Administration, on Decimalisation of Currency. Today, when pounds, shillings and pence are only a memory, it is worth noting that complaints were received that it would be "impossible to work to the fifth and seventh decimal point of a cent", and that losses would therefore be incurred by conversion, which will have to be met from a special fund. "Furthermore, in the change over, it is not impossible, that, owing to the pressure of work, officials will, on occasion, make mistakes which will lead to losses. It will be unfair under the circumstances to expect these officials to make good such losses. The Provincial Audit Office has agreed that such a fund would be justified and would be accepted in the audit."

Like every other local authority, Milnerton Municipality entered vigorously into the celebrations of the Union Festival, which ran from May 22, 1960 till June 4, 1960, marking the first half-century of South Africa as a united country. It began with an interdenominational church service in the Milnerton Hall, conducted by Dominee H. A. Heyns, of the Dutch Reformed Church, being attended, not only by the Municipal Council but by the Milnerton Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, Cubs and Voortrekkers. Two days later, on Tuesday 24, a ceremony took place in Acacia Drive, now rechristened Union Avenue, while the new name of Unitas Park, the result of a competition, was formally bestowed by Mayor.

On this occasion two old inhabitants of Milnerton and a pupil from each of the local schools planted a memorial tree, and festival badges were presented to scholars and elderly people. An Inter-Schools Sports Meeting' also took place on May 25 while the crescendo was the Union Day Handicap on May 31, 1960 at Ascot Racecourse, where the Milnerton Turf Club had organised a special programme with a Gold Plate as first prize.

Still on the subject of parks, Milnerton, in January 1961, became a member of the National Botanic Society of South Africa with its headquarters at Kirstenbosch. As Dr. G. Futeran pointed out, at the modest cost of £35 per annum "the Council can, amongst others, obtain free seeds as well as valuable advice in the development of its own Parks and Gardens and possibly a Nursery". The following year permission was also given to G. Potgieter, a local resident, to start the systematic ringing of birds for scientific purposes, in order to trace the course of their migrations.

Nor was the Council unaware of the details that add to the status and dignity of its Municipality. Two portraits of early Mayors, W. J. Savage and P. Vlok, were purchased in 1961, while, almost immediately after, a quotation was accepted for "cleaning, polishing, upholstering covering the Mayoral Chair". Even more substantial was the amount disbursed in 1964, when the Council unanimously agreed to spend R340, plus the cost of a Presentations Box for a Mayoral Chain done in solid silver, besides another R120 for a similar one, in the same material, for the Deputy Mayor. A coat-of-arms was also ordered in full colour, mounted on wood, 18 inches in height, at the cost of R42.50. For the first time too in 1960 Milnerton acted as Host to the Regional Meeting of Town Clerks in the Western Cape, an action repeated on August 24, 1962.

With the whole subject of Municipal office accommodation steadily becoming more urgent, a lengthy investigation was carried out in 1963 by the Town Clerk on the question of putting up a Municipally-owned building. As a result he recommended that such a structure should be provided without delay, though he warned that the time was not yet ripe for what already many citizens were suggesting - a Civic Centre. The immediate needs were for the Town Clerk's Department, the Municipal Treasury, a "Council Chamber of ample proportions", room for the Town Planner and his staff, records, typists and other personnel. The only department, Mr. Koen considered, that could be separate, was that of Engineering and Works, which ought to be nearer the scene of their actual operations.

Search now began for a suitable site, by a Committee set up under the Mayor, Councillor J. Gelb. Early in 1964 they recommended "the whole of the present playing fields area. . . excluding that portion required for addition to the High School, be set aside for Civic Centre purposes". An architect was appointed to work out a programme and so it came to pass.

## Chapter 21 - Table View and other Expansion

At this stage the entire prospects of Milnerton were radically changed through two developments: the prospects of a major expansion of boundaries, and the opening of a distinctive industrial area.

The extension Programme had its origins in the establishment, already referred to, of Porterfield Estates Limited, under the auspices of the late Saul Garlick - no relation of the department store family. With its wide variety of interests, this enterprise would today be called a conglomerate, its activities ranging from the operation of bottle stores to land development. Unfortunately Porterfield Estates found themselves in financial difficulties, and were placed in liquidation. On June 22, 1959, Milnerton Estates Limited learnt that Table View Township, originally registered on October 3, 1942, together with its several extensions, covering altogether 1 860 morgen, was shortly to be disposed of. Since this directly adjoined its own property, Milnerton Estates felt a keen interest in the outcome of the auction sale on August 5. Such was the slump in values that one block of 350 morgen was provisionally disposed of to them for £17 500, a figure which, owing to the receipt of a rival offer from another source, was then raised to £22 500, duly accepted by the liquidators.

The possibility of such an extension of its boundaries had already been closely discussed in the Planning Committee, and as early as November 4, 1958, the Administrator had been informed: "The Council considers that, as and when the time is opportune, Table View Township should also be incorporated in Milnerton".

The management of the Company were still confronted with problems, to which reference was made by its new Chairman, C. A. Raats, on June 27, 1960. Having pointed out that the prime cost of the land was a very satisfactory figure of under £15 per morgen, and that even survey fees and other incidentals raised it only to £16 13s. per morgen, Mr. Raats explained: "This was sub-divided by Porterfield Estates Limited some years ago and the sub-division into four residential townships was approved by the authorities. But none of these sub-divisions has been registered. There is a claim for a considerable amount by Mr. H. M. Shaw, Surveyor, against Porterfield Estates Limited (in Liquidation) for preliminary work done by him to layout these townships. . . it is regarded as advantageous to our Company to adopt these sub-divisions rather than risk fresh ones, bearing in mind the onerous requirements under the Township Ordinance . . .".

All this brought home to the Municipality the immediate need for including Table View within its boundaries and urgent approaches were made in 1962 to Dr. Nico Malan, the Cape Administrator. His first response was unfavourable.



Dr D. G. Futeran – Mayor: 1959-1961



Mr P. J. McCarthy – Mayor: 1961-1963

Frustration and indignation were mingled in the reply by the Town Council, which recorded its "huge sense of shock and disappointment at the contents of his letter" . . . They reminded His Honour how, at a meeting held not long previously: "You were satisfied that Milnerton cannot remain confined to the narrow strip between Koeberg Road and the sea, and that its boundaries must be extended in an easterly direction to the Malmesbury National Road.

"Having regard to the fact that an oil refinery, if established, in the position presently under consideration, will affect Milnerton more than any other area, and that most of its services will have to be obtained from Milnerton, the Council also finds it difficult to appreciate why the Refinery should be incorporated in Cape Town merely because it should happen to abut the Cape Town Municipal Boundary. It would be appreciated if Your Honour could see his way clear to clarifying this aspect of the matter as well. . ."

Then followed an analysis of the financial implications of the refusal and its effect on any future ideas of Town Planning. The letter closed with an urgent plea for another discussion.

Early in October 1962 a meeting of Ratepayers took place in Milnerton, in order to convey the facts to its members and to give them an opportunity of also putting their views. "I am convinced," said Mr. P. J. McCarthy, the Mayor, "that this is very necessary, because there has been a lot of loose talk on the subject, and quite a number of people appear to have a completely wrong idea as to the state of affairs. . ." From this meeting it emerged that there was a section of the local population which disagreed with the idea of incorporating Table View into Milnerton, "until such time as the amalgamation of Milnerton with Cape Town has been finalised". One of the principal protagonists proved to be Professor W. H. Hutt, holder of the Chair of Economics at the University of Cape Town. Though his proposals were rejected by a substantial margin in favour of the proposal sponsored by Mr. Dowling the Administrator's attitude was unchanged: "His Honour regrets that he does not see his way clear to grant a further interview or to postpone action on the lines decided by the Executive Committee (of the Ratepayers' Association). He wishes to point out that it is against the general policy of the Administration to incorporate undeveloped rural land in Municipal areas, and that it is unlikely that your Council will be unaware of the development on its borders. Apart from its normal sources of information, it will be consulted in terms of the Township Ordinance, about industrial, housing and other layouts which might affect it. Moreover, as a member of the Joint Town Planning Committee, it has every opportunity of keeping in touch with and taking part in the planning of any contemplated development."

The only concession which His Honour was prepared to make involved the submission of a memorandum incorporating objections to the Oil Refinery. Categorical as was his refusal, there followed a certain weakening in the Administrator's attitude when he later agreed to Milnerton's absorption of a portion of Table View.

Milnerton Estates watched these transactions with much attention and decided in 1963 to layout another industrial township of its own, distinct from Paarden Island, to which the name of Heatherton was originally attached. Now it was renamed Milnerton Industrial Township on account of its discovery that there was already a development under the other name in the vicinity of Plumstead.

New complications arose when the Government announced its intention of laying out an additional fishing harbour on the Northern shore of Table Bay, a matter regarded as of such importance to Milnerton that a prompt request was submitted to the Minister of Economic Affairs to receive a deputation. On June 13, 1963, Mr. J. F. W. Haak met the Mayor of Milnerton, Councillor P. J. McCarthy, the Deputy-Mayor, Mr. J. Gelb, along with Councillors Dr. G. Futeran, P. J. O'Sullivan and J. Allen, also the Town Clerk, Mr. T. A. Koen, and the Consulting Engineer, Mr. Robert Leslie.

Explaining the Government's policy, the Deputy Minister emphasised that no finality had yet been reached as to the location of the proposed Fishing Harbour. "Tests have however been carried out in regard to the possibility of siting it at Rietvlei or in front of the Eskom Power Station at Paarden Island." Both had already shown that, if a harbour were constructed in either place, the already acute range action in Table Bay would become worse. Hence a smaller fishing harbour was contemplated.

Moreover the General Manager of Railways decided that it would not be advisable to carry out further tests until the end of the year, in view of Mr. Haak's information about the objections raised by Cape Town as well as Milnerton. "Yet both," he added, "have major projects in hand, with which they cannot proceed until finality has been reached in regard to the siting of the harbour, so the matter must be dealt with as one of urgency."

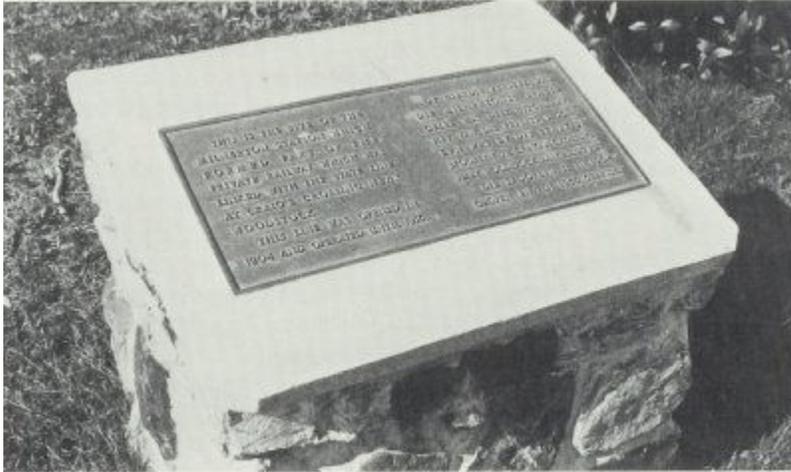
Directly as a consequence of all this, fresh tests were undertaken, and in a conciliatory vein the Deputy Minister added that he would not allow a final decision to be taken without first affording Milnerton Municipal Council a full opportunity to put its case.

By unanimous agreement the authorities were duly informed: "This Council favours the establishment of a Fishing Harbour, in conformity with Council's accepted policy, not in Rietvlei but at Paarden Island. . . In coming to this decision the Deputy Minister is requested that, should this scheme be finally accepted, proper and adequate safeguards be employed against coastal erosion, silting of the Lagoon mouth, traffic problems and problems rising from obnoxious trades."

Still one of the most vocal individual objectors, Professor Hutt was informed the scheme for a coastal road, actually accepted by the Province, on the collective advice of a Board of Engineers, would cost only £305 000 as against his own so-called "Coastal Scheme" of £705 000. Both made provision for a four-lane divided highway, including a central island and adequate parking within the Municipal area. As for the Provincial Roads Engineer, he emphasised that due provision had been made for parking facilities within the Municipal area. "In estimating the cost of the protection work along the coastal road, I am handicapped by the fact that no information is available regarding the actual depth of rock. Borings made by the Divisional Council to a depth of approximately 30 feet below shore level, reveal no sign of rock. It is therefore not unlikely that I have underestimated the cost of the coastal protection works. . ."

Supplementing these discussions in 1963 came a pioneer Traffic Survey of Milnerton, which drew from the investigating officials a warning against "indiscriminate erection of stop signs", which, it was stressed, were "inclined to lull motorists into a false sense of security, so that on a through road they will not reduce speed at an intersection. . ." The investigators accepted the continuance of the otherwise unpopular system of dish channels. Along with this went a warning about the old wooden bridge, lately linked up with the recently constructed Otto du Plessis Marine Drive. Narrow as it was, the time had not yet come for its demolition. But time had more than come for the removal of the last visible link with Milnerton's Railway Age. Since the end of the service, the platform, from which untold thousands of race-goers and others had embarked, had become a mere obstruction. As the Town Clerk pointed out: "The whole surroundings are overgrown with weeds and bushes. . . The land in question cannot be sub-divided and sold or built upon, as it is too narrow. All that can be done is to clean it up, keep it tidy, and if possible, beautify it. . . On railway stations the name of the station is often laid out in flowers on a grass background. As the intention is to retain the Old Platform for historical reasons, this could be done here. . ." Support was also forthcoming from the South African Railway Administration itself, with the result that the idea was adopted.

Since then, however, the platform has been removed though a commemorative plaque has been erected to mark what was once the Milnerton Railway Station.



Commemorative plaque erected to mark the site of Milnerton Railway Station.

## Chapter 22 - Residential Growth

Now that it was accepted that Table View would inevitably be merged into Milnerton, the practical implications of this process demanded increased attention. Some of the most important were of a financial nature, with the Divisional Council exercising its rating powers in competition with those of the Municipality. As frequently happens, acrimonious and long drawn-out arguments arose as to the limits to be observed by the rival authorities. Already on November 27, 1963, the news that the Divisional Council "proposes to reduce the Domestic Water Tariff in the rural areas by 2.75 cents, to 40 cents per 1 000 gallons", aroused protest from Milnerton. "As matters stand at present," complained T. A. Koen, the Town Clerk, "the urban local authorities are not consulted in any way, nor have they any control over the development of these uneconomic water supply systems. What is worse is that the schemes do not comply with ordinary standards for urban water supply schemes, so that, when these areas are subsequently incorporated into the urban areas, the urban local authorities not only have to take over the outstanding liability on these schemes, but are faced with the very heavy burden of replacing unsuitable schemes developed on inadequate pipe sizes.

"The case in point is the water supply scheme to Table View Township, where the Divisional Council allowed the sale of plots on 2 200 erven served by a supply line of only three inches diameter, extending over a distance of close on nine miles. . . I recommend that the Provincial Secretary be informed that this Council objects most strenuously to any increase in the Divisional Council Rate Levy in the Milnerton Municipal Area in 1964 . . ."

Less controversial was the action taken by the Municipality in bitumenising the roads in Table View Township, where, as early as March 1964, it was recorded that "work is proceeding rapidly". Once this had been completed, "residents in this portion of Table View (between Gill Road and Schreiner Road) will have a ring road, giving them access in and out of the township". While this was acknowledged to be costly, it would, at any rate, "give the residents of Table View Township a much needed amenity".

The "Cape Times" of July 29, 1964 reported that, in view of the fact that the new township of Bosmansdam would come into being in January 1965, tenders were already being called for 300 wooden houses, as a first instalment in an estimated programme designed to accommodate 4 000 families.



Mr L. Gelb – Mayor: 1963 -1965 and 1977 – 1980.



Mr F. G. Kotze – Mayor: 1965-1968

Though still thinly-populated, sufficient population had accumulated in the area to warrant a Table View Ratepayers' Association, a deputation from which, comprising Messrs. J. P. Bester, S. F. Streicher and A. L. Ritchie, waited on the Mayor of Milnerton on May 5, 1964. As spokesman Mr. Bester began by acknowledging that they "could not expect the Council to supply us with all the services enjoyed by the Milnerton ratepayers", instancing water-borne sewerage and storm-water drainage. "Initially," he acknowledged, "people had been prepared to build at Table View, for the reason that it would be cheaper to live there." Unfortunately this had not proved to be the case. "No regular bus service is available at Table View; there are no schools and no doctors, and consequently residents have to do a great deal of travelling." For this reason the inhabitants asked for Differential Rating. In reply Councillor J. Gelb, the Mayor, explained that even should such a principle be adopted, it would necessitate a revaluation of Table View, at a considerably higher level, and he was doubtful whether this would be worthwhile.

One unusual method of attracting residents to Table View was submitted to the Council for approval in July 1964, when a request was received for leave to erect wooden houses, relying on the precedent set at Bosmansdam. With understandable caution however the Municipality referred the would-be investors to the Department of Health in Pretoria, whose approval was essential.

Notwithstanding the ever-increasing involvement of Milnerton in the fortunes of Table View, doubts of its value continued to persist in many quarters. "For many years," remarked the Mayor on June 22, 1966, "the Council has assumed that Table View is a speculator's paradise and many owners of property in that Township do not intend developing it themselves. Numbers of people wanting to build there are handicapped through lack of services. The fact that landowners in Table View do not want to develop their properties, is something I want verified." He then made a suggestion: "Plot owners should be circularised with the question as to whether they would be prepared to develop their properties if the Council provided the necessary services." Such owners, he emphasised, should give the Council both the necessary undertaking that they would effect improvements within a stipulated time, and a guarantee that they would forthwith pay rates on the same basis as though a house had actually been built.

Certain inherent merits of Table View helped to ensure that the place went ahead, and Councillor H. G. Dowling, a later Mayor, viewing recent events on September 3, 1969, declared that already an average of six to seven plans for new buildings were being handed in monthly. "Unfortunately," he added, "these are spread over the entire estate, and it is not easy for the Municipality to service about 250 buildings scattered across an area of 2 300 plots, only 12 per cent of which are developed." Nonetheless the Council set about installing services, wherever possible providing leads to water mains. No less important was the commencement of "semi-permanent surfacing to the streets". His Worship, having taken the opportunity, a short while previously, of addressing a meeting of Table View residents, now himself approached the Provincial Administration with a scheme for Differential Rating.

In order to finance the expensive services still required in Table View, as well as to meet a substantial demand for land in those parts, it was decided to subdivide the commonage of the township into an extra 160

plots. Despite opposition from certain quarters the scheme not only went through but the profits helped to pay for other development, including storm water drainage, sewerage and improved water reticulation.

That much of the area was however still fairly wild was shown when, at the end of 1969, W. Adams, a woodcutter, "undertook to clear plots at RIO a plot, which amount is recovered from the owners concerned, plus a 15 per cent administrative charge". The following year this figure was raised to R15. At the same time a more promising sign was the establishment of a Post Office at Table View.

## **Chapter 23 - Civic Spirit**

The humane attitude adopted by the Council in regard to its own employees was demonstrated in a curious incident in 1964. It was discovered that "for some inexplicable reason, 100 miles travelled by the municipal Ford van could not be accounted for by the driver". The only explanation he put forward was that, owing to some faulty mechanism, the speedometer had "jumped". Confronted with this story the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer set about the preparation of a revised Log Book to ensure that such errors could be spotted immediately. The Council thereupon accepted the driver's explanation.

Milnerton's municipal machine was running with smoothness and efficiency, a fact that added significance to the instructions given on February 19, 1964, for the preparation, by an architect, of plans for new offices with approximately 10 000 square feet of space. Improved relations with Cape Town were shown by a loan from its Treasury of R200 000, repayable with interest at 7 per cent, in half-yearly instalments of R9 365.46 each. Another loan of the same size followed within a few months.

May 1965 marked a milestone in the progress of Milnerton when the tender of Beekman & Theunisen (Pty) Ltd. at R165 000 was accepted for constructing the first section of the Municipal Offices. Roof-wetting took place on February 25, 1966 and five months later, on July 20, came the formal inauguration, when Councillor F. G. Kotze, the Mayor, welcomed leading citizens from his own and also neighbouring communities, the whole event, as he put it, being the result of three years' intensive work.

"For my councillors and myself," said His Worship, "this is a very proud night, for we, who have done so much spade-work amidst the most adverse conditions, rightly have the honour of being the first Councillors to meet in this Chamber. . ."

The Administrator of the Cape Province, Dr. Nico Malan, who attended the ceremony, declared his supreme confidence in the prospects of Milnerton, adding that, if he had money to invest, it would be his first choice.

After the formalities, the Town Clerk was given authority "to call for quotations for moving office furniture and equipment to the new Administrative Block or alternatively to use Municipal vehicles and labour".

With the migration to the new Municipal Offices also went an increase in the formality of civic proceedings, the regulations adopted included a whole series of sartorial provisions.

"At every Council Meeting every Councillor and the Town Clerk shall be properly gowned and the Chains of Office worn by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, unless the Mayor directs otherwise.

"At all Meetings of the Council and of occasional Committees appointed by the Council, Councillors shall be suitably attired, provided that, where inspections in the field are required to be undertaken, dress appropriate for such inspections may be worn, the determination of being suitably attired to be at the discretion of the Mayor or Chairman." Moreover every Municipal employee appearing before the Council or Committee was also to be "suitably attired", and, in the case of those entitled to wear such a garment, in uniform.

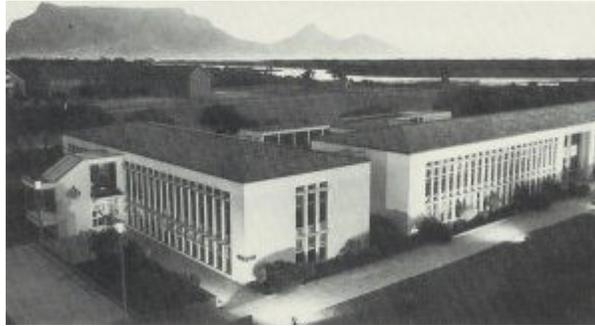
Mayors and Mayoresses were entitled to a commemorative medallion.

Several experts were consulted by the Municipality in connection with the coat-of-arms, including the well-known sculptor, Ivan Mitford-Barberton, the former Chief Archivist, Dr. Coenraad Beyers, and Dr. C. Pama.

Milnerton's 1966 Municipal Election was unusually exciting since there now were eight Councillors in the place of six. A number of new "Independents" aroused fresh public interest in civic development, namely A. S. Sher, Mrs. E. Waddington and Vic Bird who stood against the eight nominees of the Ratepayers' Association. Crowded meetings were held in the Jansen Road Hall and voters were brought in from many distant points to vote at the election. New schemes in township expansion, traffic control, etc., were taken in hand, to say nothing of the new municipal offices. A dynamic period in Municipal administration had commenced.



The original house used as offices of Milnerton Municipality.



The civic complex today.

Scarcely had the settling-in process been completed than further improvements in efficiency were undertaken, notably the acquisition of an electronically-controlled accounting machine. Following the establishment of the new suburb of Bosmansdam, presently renamed Bothasig, after Mr. P. W. Botha, then Minister of Community Development and now Prime Minister, which gave change to the make-up of the population in the Municipality it was necessary to increase the staff acquainted with "Snelskrif" since "more and more correspondence will be done in Afrikaans". Regrading of personnel was also undertaken. Reviewing the progress of the first 10 years of Milnerton's existence, the Town Clerk reminded the Council that, on September 1, 1955 "The staff consisted of myself, a Junior Clerk (I. Parkin), a Shorthand Typist cum Telephonist cum Records Clerk, and one Foreman (A. G. Soule), as well as a Plumber named Van Schalkwyk".

Further territorial adjustments were periodically needed and the Director of Local Government was asked to take up settlement of rival town-planning schemes. To one such complication Councillor F. G. Kotze drew attention on May 29, 1967. "In view of the proposed development by the Cape Town City Council of the whole of Sanddrift, Montague Gardens Residential Township and a portion of Tygerhof for housing, Council should agree to negotiate on the basis of a possible readjustment of the boundary between Milnerton and Cape Town."

On this occasion His Worship put forward the suggestion that a future line of separation should run along the De Grendel Road from Koeberg to the Malmesbury National Road.

So too approval was given in 1967 to the incorporation into the Municipality of 1 610 morgen of unsubdivided land, owned by the Milnerton Estates, north of Table View Township.

Spectacular progress in the physical growth of Milnerton in these years is brought home by the remark of the Mayor, who indicated that during 1966 and 1967 the Municipal valuation had risen from R12 000 000 to R27 000 000, a spurt rarely, if ever, equalled in the history of South Africa.

Memories of bygone days were revived among older citizens as they watched the railway construction teams at work. Covering a distance somewhat longer than the original line from Cape Town to the Racecourse, the

new privately-owned Milnerton Railway to Montague Gardens was entirely industrial in its purpose, being designed to serve a series of sidings, in the new Petro-Chemical Complex. Fisons Fertilizer Works and Caltex were to provide the initial traffic. This involved building two rail-over-road bridges; one crossing the national highway to Bellville and the other the section between Milnerton and Bothasig. The cost was estimated round R1 000000, and construction began in the middle of 1967.

Not only Milnerton but South Africa generally lost one of its best liked citizens in August 1967, with the passing of Major-General Frank Theron. In its tribute to that distinguished soldier the Council expressed deep personal regard but also gratitude for "the great and valuable services he had so frequently given to the town and people of Milnerton, particularly in his capacity as a member of the Ratepayers' Association".

## **Chapter 24 - Black, Brown and White**

One new factor in the affairs of the community was the increasing number of its Black and Brown citizens. In 1956 representations were already made in the Council, following discussions with the Station Commander of the South African Police, concerning Africans unlawfully sleeping in servants' quarters, but little change occurred in the situation until 1961, when, following a request from the Government for comments on the "Bantu in European Areas Bill", it was decided to refer it for discussion by the United Municipal Executive for the Cape Province. Early in 1965 a proclamation was issued declaring Milnerton a "White Area", with beaches reserved for Europeans. For this reason, on May 18, a public meeting was convened by Councillor J. Gelb "to test public opinion and to stimulate discussion". The principal speaker, Councillor P. V. Faure, began by pointing out that "the Salt River and Woodstock Beaches have always been used by Coloureds. From the Total Tanks to Blouberg, there is a seven-and-a-half-mile strip of beach and the major use of this is in the vicinity of the Golf Course used by Whites and Coloureds". His suggestion was for "a portion of the beach, measuring approximately half a mile from the Milnerton Municipal boundary in the south to the Lagoon Mouth, to be set aside for use by Coloureds. As it is not safe for anyone to swim in the Lagoon, I suggest they do not go as far as the Lagoon Mouth . . . If Milnerton takes the initiative, other municipalities of the Peninsula would also consider giving this facility to its Coloured people. Even if they are living outside the Milnerton area they should be allowed to make use of the suggested portion". This drew comment from the Mayor: "If the beach is granted to the Coloureds, provision will also have to be made for Bantus. The half-mile of beach proposed by Councillor Faure is totally inadequate. Should separate amenities be provided, extreme difficulties will be experienced in demarcating the different areas. Signs will have to be erected, and there may have to be beach constables with power to arrest."

In contrast to these discussions was the decision to allow the Western Province Coloured Championships on the Milnerton Golf Course on February 8th and 9th, 1965. Three years later came the enquiry from the Department of Transport, asking Milnerton's views on the matter of bus services for Whites and Non-Whites.

An outspoken plea was voiced in 1966 by the Mayor, Councillor S. Kotze, against the official ban on a Coloured Township, which was proving a real handicap on industrial development and in 1974 Milnerton once again set an example to the whole country when it provided, on its beach, the venue for the First Multi-National South African Surf Life Saving Championships, in the presence of the World President of the Association of Life Saving Clubs, Mr. Osborn of Durban. From every part of the Republic there were teams - White, Coloured, Indian and African, all the participants being entertained at a Cocktail Party by Councillor A. Sher, the Mayor, with the blessing of the Government Sports Department.

Economic effects of certain actions by the authorities were less gratifying. The principle of reducing the number of Bantu brought about what Mr. Raats described as "a reluctance to agree to the establishment of any industrial townships in the area with which the Company is concerned, presumably because it is of the opinion that such action would lead to an influx of Black labour".

In common with virtually every other municipality in the Western Cape, Milnerton was deeply stirred by the implications of that official memorandum, released in 1967, known as the Slater Report. Prepared by the former Provincial Secretary, Dr. W. J. Slater, this monumental document surveyed future prospects of urban development, particularly in and around Cape Town.

Commenting on the Report, Mr. F. G. Kotze, the Mayor, said on March 20, 1967: "In my view, Dr. Slater has done a splendid job and it is obvious that a great deal of study, research and application have gone into it of which he may be justifiably proud. Only a man with his tremendous capacity for work and his knowledge of Local Government could have undertaken this task." From the Milnerton point of view, however, the Mayor considered the findings did not go far enough and that in certain matters the Commissioner "had been too hide-bound". His Worship drew special attention to Dr. Slater's ideas on the backlog of 30 000 Coloured houses in the Cape Peninsula. "He recommends that the responsibility for the provision of Coloured Housing be placed with a Metropolitan authority to relieve Cape Town Municipality of this unfair responsibility, since the Coloureds work all over the Peninsula and not necessarily only in Cape Town. The first question that springs to mind is: From where must Milnerton, the fastest-expanding Municipality, which has no Coloured township, draw its labour, more especially in the light of the Government's policy of no Bantu in the Western Cape? From where must our industrialists draw their labour? Or was this policy formulated to discriminate

against other municipalities with industrial townships?" Mr. Kotze also wanted to know: "Why does Community Development allow this to continue, since these houses are built with State funds lent to Cape Town. . .?" He also complained that, because employers, situated at a distance from Coloured townships, had to pay higher wages to cover travelling expenses, any Municipality like Milnerton, without residential facilities, was at an obvious disadvantage. He also disapproved of allocating particular beaches to Non-Whites, since, amongst other things, this involved extra expense, for which the Central Government should be responsible. Future planning, he demanded, should be left in the hands of a "Committee of young, radical thinkers under the wise chairmanship of Dr. Slater".



The Theo Marais Park – home of rugby, cricket, hockey and indoor sports in Milnerton.



The Milnerton Tennis Club, situated in its beautiful parkland setting.



The Milnerton Aquatic Club, situated on the Rietvlei, world renowned for its birdlife and its recreation amenity.

## **Chapter 25 - Planning Ahead**

In common with most of South Africa's other towns and cities, Milnerton had now decided that, as one of its basic sources of future prosperity would be through industrialisation, increasing attention must henceforth be devoted to this aspect. Already on December 12, 1962, the Council expressed its "satisfaction with the siting of the Oil Refinery in the area of land approved by the Administrator. This site is in conformity with the general wishes of our ratepayers, in that it is now removed from the original intended area, which we felt would be a definite hazard to this town, insofar as the prevailing winds are concerned. . . This Council is satisfied that all services for the proper functioning of the Oil Refinery are available and can be rendered by Milnerton. Furthermore, it is a recognised fact that local authorities must depend on revenue from sources other than the general body of Ratepayers, comprising house owners. The establishment of the Refinery on the site allocated must boost our own resources and provide a more balanced economy for the town."

In the wake of this decision came the prospect of other manufacturing enterprises, more particularly a fertiliser plant, and a survey was carried out by the Town Planning Officer as part of a Joint Scheme with Cape Town and neighbouring areas. Here the ruling was that the new works should be "in the proposed industrial zone to the north of the Oil Refinery. . .".

Supported by the advice of Dr. F. C. Halliday, air pollution expert of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Milnerton agreed to let the area known as Duikersvlei .be rezoned "from residential to industrial purposes, in order to permit the establishment of a Nitrogenous Fertiliser factory by Messrs. Fisons (Pty.) Ltd."

Of fundamental importance was Dr. Halliday's verdict: "The factory can be designed and operated so that there will be no discharge of noxious gases at ground level, and the only gases which could cause problems are Oxide of Nitrogen, which will be discharged from the stack and will not cause pollution."

Since there were already prospects of further industrial newcomers, negotiations were put in hand with the Electricity Supply Commission for the bulk purchase of current. Likewise looking into the future was the action initiated by the C.S.I.R. on the "utilisation of municipal and industrial wastes in the Western Cape, the purpose being a system of coordinated and co-operative collection and the treatment of such material". Milnerton gave this a friendly reception and in due course joined in the realisation of the project.

While continuing to maintain its popularity as a residential area, Milnerton was ever more closely being drawn into the economic changes affecting South Africa as a whole. A striking example of this was the public announcement on August 11, 1966, on the initiative of the Milnerton Estates, of the layout of the new Industrial Township of Montague Gardens. Already several leading organisations had staked their claims, among them, Caltex, two other great oil companies, BP and Esso, and in another field, the FCU (Farmers' Co-operative Union). No less noteworthy was the fact that, notwithstanding the abandonment of the old Milnerton line and its traffic in racehorses and punters, the S.A.R. decided to resume operations through the provision of a railway for the convenience of factories, warehouses etc. In this, as in a number of other basic questions, Professor Julian Beinart, holder of the Chair of Town Planning at the University of Cape Town, was called in as adviser by the Municipality, and successfully prevented, in Milnerton, some of the errors of judgment committed in other places.

Unfortunately the matter of the Fishing Harbour still remained in limbo, despite a personal visit to Pretoria by the Mayor. "Now that the Government has for nearly five years frozen a large part of our Municipality," said the Mayor, Councillor F. G. Kotze, "there is as yet no solution. If the Government took the question seriously it should never require so much time. I regard this as most unjust. . ."

However his successor, Councillor H. G. Dowling, struck a more optimistic note in 1969: "I believe that this is the last time that this needs to be mentioned," he said. "Firstly it was to be a Fishing Harbour, then a Commercial Harbour. A Government Commission was appointed and, earlier in the year, they decided against it. We immediately made enquiries so as to get the areas de proclaimed for future development. We finally heard from the Department of Industries a few weeks ago that they are no longer interested in a Fishing Harbour at Rietvlei . . . The suspense about a semi-industrial development in the midst of the Municipality's residential area is at an end."

Reviewing the industrial aspect, the new Mayor commented: "Apart from our petro-chemical area, which is well known, other industrial giants, like Fisons and Hoechst Fibres, north of Killarney and the Montague Gardens industrial area, to the south of Fisons, have been approved. This last is 700 acres in extent and will take up heavy but non-noxious industries. Planning is at an advanced stage and municipal services will be installed next year. Our own work yard and stores will also be erected here. "

When he explained the new Town Planning Scheme to the Council, Professor Beinart, in his capacity as its consultant began with the challenging 'question: "Do Councillors want to change the character of Milnerton or do they want its present character to remain?" After all Councillors had given their views, there was a clear conviction that the character of the town should not be changed drastically, even if the question of higher density, bigger bulk factors and taller buildings still had to be allowed for.

Higher standards of living produced another problem, to which Councillor Marais gave expression. Inadequate facilities within the town itself caused many of the public to do its shopping outside the Municipality, across the Koeberg Road. Hence, Councillor Marais argued, "attention should be given to rezoning certain areas for shopping purposes", an idea incorporated in the Beinart plans, which led to the establishment of some impressive new stores and retail complexes.

Out of all these town-planning discussions arose the further startling possibilities of erecting high rise buildings, in other words skyscrapers in what had hitherto been a rural environment. Sure enough a beginning was made soon after at the corner of Loxton Road and Ascot Road, which became not only a landmark for the entire neighbourhood, but a symbol of future trends in architecture, and it was soon destined to be followed by others. With the finalizing of these Town Planning Schemes, Milnerton had now emerged as not just a dormitory town to the Metropolitan Cape Town, but a town in its own right, independent and self supporting with its own viable industrial and commercial areas and its own economic base. On the site of the house where, as far back as the 18th century, the Langer\-\mans had lived, there now arose - by a strangely significant change Milnerton's first high rise block of flats - Arnhem of 10 floors.

Some of the advances made were furnished when Councillor Dowling, as Mayor, talked of Bothasig, "an ideal township development from the municipal point of view". No fewer than 1 000 houses, he said, had been erected, with the prospect of at least 300 more being added yearly, the township's ultimate size envisaged as 3 200 houses, with a total population of around 15 000. Along with this would go a Civic Hall, costing approximately R100 000, for which tenders were already being called. Whereas older residents of Milnerton proper had in some cases waited 20 years for tarred roads, most of those at Bothasig were already provided with them. Particularly gratifying too was the financial stability of the entire Municipality, whose valuations in the last five years had risen by no less than 300 per cent and whose budget was yielding a substantial annual surplus.



Mr H. G. Dowling – Mayor: 1968-1970-  
1970  
Mr Theo Marais – Mayor: 1970-  
1973 and 1975-1977  
Mr A. S. Sher – Mayor: 1973-1975

Of interest to a wide section of the population was a matter taken in hand on September 29, 1965, when a meeting was held by the Town Council to consider "library facilities". As early as August 28, 1957, a letter had arrived from the Regional Librarian of the Cape Provincial Administration's Library Service, asking when the Council proposed to set up a branch of its own. He was informed that, for lack of finance and of suitable buildings, nothing could be done, but that it was hoped when, some time, a Civic Centre was established, suitable provision would be made. Now eight years later offers had once more been received from the Director of Provincial Library Services, to include the Municipality within the scope of its operations. This time there was no hesitation, and support was given by individuals such as Mr. Theo Marais, willing on their own account to contribute books. At a meeting, also attended by an architect, Brian C. Orme and by representatives of the Ratepayers' Association, lengthy discussion ensued as to the scale of the proposed building, some conservative Councillors even recommending the continuance of the existing system of relying for facilities on Cape Town itself.

Endless delays occurred and a variety of sites became subjects for argument. The increased vigour of the Council overcame the various obstructions by allocating to this purpose portion of the new Municipal Offices then under construction, though it was limited to 800 square feet on the ground floor and 1 000 square feet on the first floor. The latter was taken over by the newly-established Town Engineer's Department but on July 1, 1968, the Milnerton Public Library opened its doors to the public. Staffed by Municipal employees, it was at the outset restricted to the area immediately behind the Reception Desk. Yet books stocked amounted to 8 500 and the response, with 2 000 registered borrowers at the start, was so encouraging that the need was acknowledged for something more adequate as soon as possible. Not until June 17, 1970, was finality reached on the layout, and the real big day came on July 9, 1972, when His Honour the Administrator of the Cape, Mr. A. M. Vosloo, formally inaugurated the new Milnerton Library in the extended block, amid the enthusiasm of a substantial crowd. Both staff and book stocks had reached more impressive dimensions. Today corresponding figures are 25 000 books, with 9 978 readers.

Particularly welcome was the news in 1968 that a new Automatic Telephone Exchange would be installed both at Milnerton and at Bothasig but although the buildings were erected, four long years went by before the equipment was actually installed in the Milnerton exchange. Bothasig had to wait a further two years until 1974, while Table View only received its own Automatic Telephone Exchange in 1977.

One useful new institution was the Milnerton Life-Savers Club, which, besides supplying recreation for a number of energetic people, was doing much self-sacrificing work and successfully forestalling a number of fatalities on the Milnerton Beach.

For a long time a vigorous dispute raged on the subject of a separate Milnerton Fire Brigade, the Council protesting that the expense would be too heavy. The Government disagreed and the late General Retief, as Head of Civil Defence, officially and personally notified the Councillors that the authorities at Pretoria insisted on such a step. As an encouragement, however, the Government promised, once Milnerton had, at its own cost, erected a Fire Station building, it would receive, as a free gift, three fire engines.

Already in 1966 the old agreement with Goodwood about the loan of its Fire Brigade came to an end, but Milnerton tried to stave off the change as long as possible. Another three years went by before the Deputy Mayor, Councillor T. Marais, accompanied by the recently appointed Town Engineer, Mr. S. P. Wood (previously a Principal Engineer of the Cape Town City Council who was closely associated with the construction of the Wemmershoek Reservoir), visited Pretoria, "to discuss the question of the proposed Fire Brigade".

In this connection, incidentally, an important new factor was the progress made by Milnerton as an industrial area, with resultant increase in hazards.

R. B. Muir became the first Chief Fire Officer, appointed from July 1, 1970, and the three Fire Engines offered by the Government were now delivered to the Temporary Fire Station in the Municipal Works Yard. An immediate start was made with the installation of a radio communication system for the new Fire Department, established Traffic Department and Works Department. All these units can be integrated into a single system in the case of major disaster, civil disturbance etc., and as such form the backbone of the Municipal Civil Defence organisation.

When at length the Brigade came into existence it was a model establishment but the new Fire Station Complex, opened by the Minister of Defence, the Hon. Mr. P. W. Botha, on 30th August 1973 cost nearly R600 000 with an operational cost today of over R400 000 p.a.

Now that the Railway, albeit in a very different setting, was about to return to Milnerton, it was laid down that the new station, to serve the township of Montague Gardens, was to be known as Chempet - derived from the first syllables of the words "Chemical" and "Petrol". Ultimately this line would also serve the new Coloured industrial city of Atlantis while the new Access Line would link the Cape Town Harbour with Montague Gardens as well as with the Marshalling Yards at Bellville.

After various disputes and arguments on technical aspects, construction began in 1975, necessitating one road-over-rail bridge on Otto du Plessis Drive, besides another on Koeberg Road and at the northern end of the airfield runway at Ysterplaat. Yet another bridge - rail-over-road - is planned for the southern end of Montague Gardens across the National Road to the North.

The first reading in Parliament of the new Milnerton Railway Bill took place on May 25, 1972, making provision for an expenditure, over another eight kilometres, of no less than R9 000 000.

When in 1972 the land-owners applied for the incorporation into Milnerton of the farm Rooseboomhoogte, the authorities, finding that it lay outside the municipal area, rejected the request as premature.

November 1972 saw the appointment of J. S. de Villiers, previously of Bedford in the Eastern Province, as Town Clerk of Milnerton, a position he still holds. His wide and varied experience, covering over 30 years, in three different provinces, has proved of great value to the community.

Civic and other patriotism was stimulated by plans for a Central Sports Field Complex. As support increased among all ages and both sexes, a further concept took shape - the Milnerton Sports Foundation, offering facilities for virtually every manly (and womanly) game. The constitution specified that it was "not formed for the purpose of carrying on any business or enterprise" . . . but that it hoped to foster all forms of recreation, particularly through affiliated clubs. Anybody over the age of 18 could enrol in one of the three categories. Much time was taken up with the preliminaries, but in 1974 the Foundation was formally launched, and in 1975 the Central Sports Field Complex was inaugurated.

In 1973 the Milnerton Estates became interested in the scheme for laying out a Marina in the Rietvlei area, to which the Municipality gave its hearty approval.

Unfortunately a viability study showed that the idea was premature, but, independently of this, the configuration of the coast was changed by the action of the South African Railways Administration in setting one of its suction dredgers to work, as part of the new harbour, on land purchased from Milnerton Estates and Nico Pentz (Pty) Ltd.

After many delays the suction dredger started its huge task of removing 5 000 000 cubic metres of spoil from the bottom of Rietvlei in May 1973, this being accompanied by the clearing of a large area of bush, measuring one and a half kilometres by half a kilometre. Immediately an eloquent plea was put forward, and duly accepted, for preserving the lives of birds and other creatures. As so often happens, there were unforeseen difficulties, and on one occasion exceptionally low tides nullified the work of the dredger and its pumps.

Within another two years, in August 1976, the Milnerton Aquatic Club was founded, with the blessing of the Milnerton Sports Foundation, operating on the Rietvlei Lagoon. An ambitious programme including construction of ablution and toilet facilities, a boatshed, a launching ramp and a clubhouse was completed during 1978.

Contrasting with this was the proposed establishment, in July 1975, of a Pistol Range at Table View, the organisers being cautioned to conform to the safety requirements as specified by the Department of Defence and by the South African Police. (Apropos of firearms, Milnerton had decided in October 1973 to include under that term airguns, air-rifles and airpistols.)

The 100th Anniversary of the Afrikaans language was celebrated in Milnerton with enthusiasm, the Dutch Reformed Church at Zonnekus holding a special commemoration service, attended by the Councillors in force, while the Municipality was presented with "a gilded Afrikaans Bible", to be used on official occasions.

When on December 17, 1975, Milnerton decided to join the Civil Defence Organisation, the convener of the Metropolitan Rescue Organisation was informed that the town fully supported the proposal to coordinate the efforts of all participating bodies in the entire Cape Peninsula Metropolitan area.

Many and varied were the indications of a new era into which Milnerton, in common with the rest of the country, was moving. Thus it participated in 1972 in preparing a plan for combating pollution in all its forms, and lent its fullest support to the Cape Province Municipal Association.

Statistical proof of Milnerton's progress was furnished in September 1974, when it was made known that, of its original 1 110 plots in the township, only 10 remained vacant, although in Bothasig 2 000 of the 3 400 still awaited the builders, while at Table View the corresponding figures were 4 134 vacant out of 4 894. The official opening of the Centre Point Complex, with its shops, offices and flats, representing an expenditure of over R2 000 000, represented a new dimension in the scale of local commerce.

With due appreciation of the aesthetic aspect, work started in 1973 on "beautifying the road verges of Table View beach", experiments being carried out in planting succulents in suitable places and in stabilising the moving sand.

Even more dramatic and of still greater historic significance was an instruction received by the Town Engineer in March 1974, in consequence of the decision by the Electricity Supply Commission to set up nearby South Africa's first Nuclear Power Station. He prepared a detailed memorandum upon its possible effects on the community.

Milnertonians will not forget the emergency that confronted them on 22nd August 1974, when the historic "1 00- Year Flood" took place and when for a period of 24 hours the only outlet to the north not under water was the narrow bridge across the Diep River at Table View. Even in that Township houses in certain sections had to be evacuated, while gangs of hastily summoned workmen toiled to strengthen the defences.

In November 1977, Mr. H. Hulley, the Council's second Town Treasurer, suddenly passed away, his position being filled by Mr. R. Grace who joined the Council staff from Bellville. Another tragic loss occurred in September 1978 when Mr. Ken Louis, the Deputy Town Clerk, succumbed to Leukaemia.

The passing of the years was brought home to Milnertonians on June 14, 1975, when the very first official of the Council, L. J. Duckett, the Building Surveyor, reached the retiring age. Indeed the town could no longer be regarded as a newcomer but as part of the scheme of things. Branches of commercial banks were operating in the town, to say nothing of a "chapter" of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce and Industry; while traffic had now become so heavy that an educational campaign particularly addressed to youngsters, was launched by the South African Road Safety Council.

Coinciding with the introduction of containerisation in South African ports, one of the largest cargo depots in the country, ranking only after Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth, was erected in Montague Gardens Industrial Township, Milnerton, complete with bonded stores and full Customs facilities and put into use in 1977. The site covered seven hectares, with ample provision for expansion.

A second container depot in the Metro Industrial Township was designed to handle coastal traffic together with the maintenance and repair of the containers. This container depot has however recently extended its activities into international trading due primarily to the efforts of a leading shipping line (Unicorn) specializing in service between the Far East and South Africa. In all probability this depot will also have to provide its own Customs facilities.

## **Chapter 26 - Milnerton Today**

Milnerton, Gateway to the West Coast, is where you would be if you were to photograph South Africa's most famous landmark, Table Mountain, with the Mother City nestling in its lap and the bustling harbour sprawling across the bay.

Known as one of the fastest growing towns in the Western Cape, development in Milnerton has escalated at a phenomenal pace over the past decade. From what was primarily a scene of pleasant residential tranquillity in 1964 (with a total rateable valuation of some R13 million), Milnerton has grown into a vigorous and bustling new town, with a total Municipal valuation in excess of R200 million.

Because of its ideal location, Milnerton is served by excellent road, rail, sea and air communications. Fast transport by sea, rail, road and air maintain high-frequency movement of products and services over economical distances.

Essential services, including water, electricity, waterborne sewerage, a refuse removal service and a public transport service, are highly developed and available throughout the Municipal area.

The Town Council actively encourages a balanced development in that residential development in Milnerton proper, Table View and Bothasig caters for all tastes and pockets.

Commercial expansion is progressive to meet all community requirements.

Industrial development is actively encouraged in Metro (light) and Montague Gardens (heavy) industrial areas where a number of important manufacturing and service industries are already established. The presence of a major Oil Refinery (where an R100 million expansion programme was recently completed) establishes Milnerton as a major distribution centre for petroleum products. .

The obvious advantage of being on the doorstep of a premier port is evidenced by the establishment of a number of important manufacturing and export industries in Milnerton.

Civic administration is progressive in outlook and continuously strives to improve and expand to meet the demands of progress and development.

Milnerton enjoys an enviable reputation as one of the most sought after residential areas in the Cape Peninsula. The Municipality comprises three major residential areas, namely that of Milnerton proper, Table View and Bothasig. The latter two residential areas each have a large number of fully-serviced sites available for immediate residential development.

The progressive and dynamic residential development over die past 25 years features among the main ingredients contributing towards a happy and stable community life.

Milnerton is a town of "view sites", from a residential point of view. This is due to the topography of the land which lends itself to magnificent scenic views of land, sea or lagoon and particularly South Africa's most famous landmark, Table Mountain.

There are at present approximately 4 000 houses and 54 blocks of flats in Milnerton, while a total of 3 000 fully serviced sites are available for immediate further residential development, ranging in price from R2 500 to R15 000. Ample land is available for future residential expansion and new townships are planned and serviced commensurate with the dictates of need and desirability.

Milnerton is well equipped with educational facilities at all levels. These include two co-educational high schools and eight co-educational primary schools. There is a Secondary Trade School while a Technical Training Institution for the training of Telecommunication Technicians has been established by the Department of Posts and Telecommunications.

Milnerton is generously endowed by nature in all its breathtaking scenic beauty. It is undoubtedly one of the most sought after residential areas in the Cape Peninsula, enjoying a most equable all-the-year-round climate plus the reputation of a popular holiday resort with a five kilometre stretch of sparkling white beaches, a popular playground for both resident and visitor.

Its natural beauty complemented by the sea and the Milnerton Lagoon, against that awe inspiring backdrop of Table Mountain and the extensive sporting, social and entertainment facilities, are the main ingredients contributing towards a happy and stable community life.

Milnerton's reputation as the Mecca for the staging of national and international sporting events in the Cape Peninsula has spread far and wide.

All this has been made possible only because of the far-sighted vision of the Municipality, which has set out with deliberate intent to establish Milnerton as one of the major sporting centres in the Western Cape.

The Killarney Grand Prix Racing Circuit features on the national racing map. Similarly, the Cape Turf Club annually stages prestigious and classic horse racing events that attract an international galaxy of punters and enthusiasts.

The Milnerton Golf Club features the only true Golf Links in South Africa, where leading and prominent international exponents of golf assemble annually to compete with dauntless courage against the vagaries of the elements, for stakes of international significance.

The Rietvlei Water sport area comprises one of very few lakes in the Peninsula capable of accommodating regattas, either power or sail, at national level, while the Milnerton Lagoon is a popular home for the canoe-racing enthusiast.

Theo Marais Park offers extensive playing facilities for Rugby, Cricket, Hockey at Provincial level, with Badminton, Softball and Squash for the indoor enthusiast. The Trim Park, established within the precincts of Theo Marais Park, is another popular amenity frequented by many keep-fit enthusiasts. This complex enjoys international status.

The Abe Sher Sport Stadium in Bothasig caters adequately for the needs of Soccer and Baseball enthusiasts, while the Milnerton Tennis Club features prominently on the amateur circuit for the Western Cape.

Over and above there are several Horse Riding Schools established in Milnerton, while the Milnerton Surf Life Saving Club plays an active role in patrolling and safeguarding the local beaches.

Because of its amenable residential status, agreeable climate, adequate educational and recreational facilities, Milnerton encourages family life with the obvious contribution towards happiness and stability in community life.

The town is well served by an excellent Public Library which is renowned for its leadership in cultural activities.

Several splendid restaurant establishments contribute towards the agreeable social life that is prevalent in Milnerton.

The commercial centre is highly developed and progressive, with modern stores catering for all community requirements.

Civic administration is progressive in outlook and continuously strives to improve and keep abreast of the demands and needs of a growing population and rapidly developing industries.

