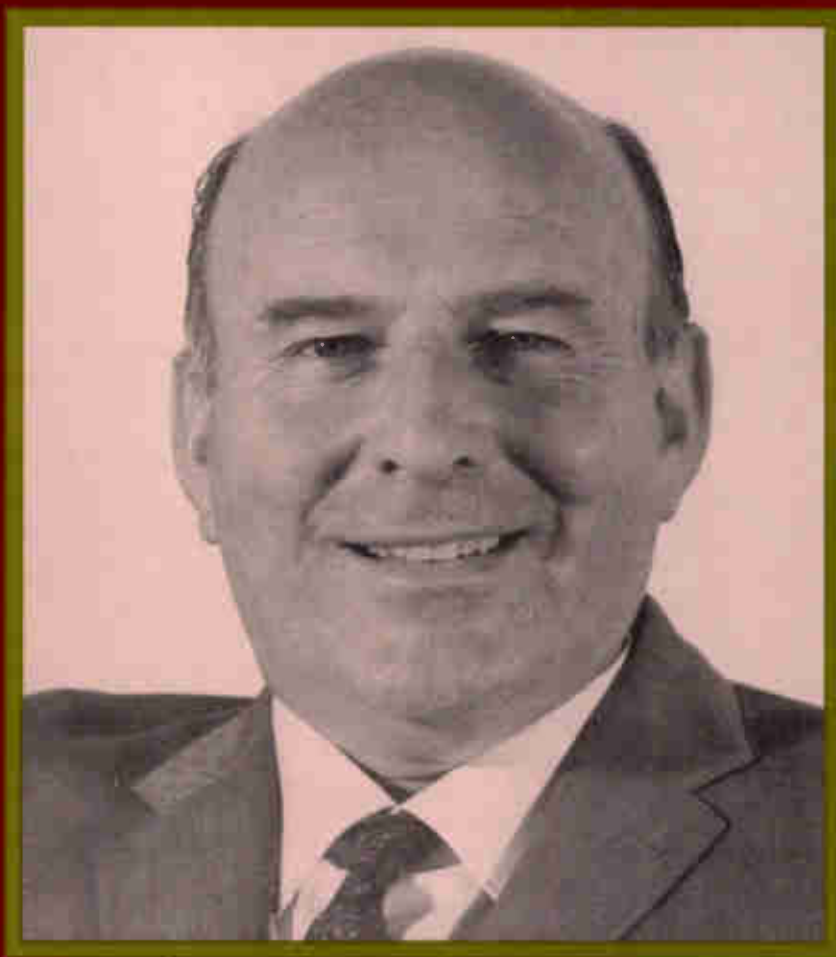


# **A** *Measure of the Man*



**A biography of Henry Howell  
and his broadcasting history  
from 1943 - 1991**

This is the story of Henry Howell's rapid and well-deserved rise in the firmament of broadcasting, his legendary achievements, his dreams, his visions, his heartaches. These have all being gleaned from his private papers, diaries and notes; and from interviews with him, and latterly with some of his colleagues and friends. All who knew him have stated firmly 'we were the better for having known him, and the world of broadcasting is the darker with his passing. He touched us with a special magic, and was without question the greatest broadcaster this country has ever had the good fortune to possess'.

Within these pages filled with laughter, and a few tears, are the post-war days of broadcasting, the golden years of Springbok Radio, the tyrannical years of Verwoerdian power, the excitement of new fields in marketing, advertising and market research, the birth of new broadcasting standards, including the now flourishing Bop Broadcasting Corporation and the effervescent Radio 702, and some sound advice for those wishing to enter this stimulating profession. Through it all moves the loving, visionary spirit of Henry Howell.



Rosemary and Henry were married in 1988 and spent two and a half years together until his passing. She is an experienced writer of poetry, short stories and features, and has researched this book with love and devotion, realising the limitations imposed without the presence of the great man himself.

She has subsequently written a booklet "How to survive Widowhood and what to expect", in the hope it will assist others similarly traumatised. A student and teacher of Ancient Chinese Philosophy she has written a book 'for serious beginners'; and her first novel "A Man's Trust Betrayed" – a 'Dallas-type' tale of fraud, intrigue, lies and treachery – is to be published shortly.

Born in Hertfordshire, England, in 1934, she came to these shores in 1969 and involved herself in promoting South Africa wherever possible.

She is a director of an overseas publishing house, and lives in Sandton. She is currently working on a biography of Taubie Kushlick, the 'doyenne' of South African theatre.

*Back cover: A Scroll presented to Henry Howell by the Lindsay Smithers Agency on the occasion of his retirement from the SABC.*

Henry Howell was born in Pembroke, West Wales, in 1916.

Part 1 of this book, written by Henry himself, describes a happy and adventurous childhood, and some wartime experiences.

Educated at Winchester he went on to London University. During those three years he was a member of the Embassy Theatre Players. Swiss Cottage, London, one part leading him into the West End until parental control was brought to bear. He then quite properly spent a year of practical radio engineering training at the Marconi College in Chelmsford, and then joined Cable & Wireless in 1933 as an Electrical Engineer on their Foreign Service Staff until 1946. He saw service in the island of Ascension, where he was a founder member of that island's Defence Force, then India, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, the Trucial States, West Africa, to name a few.

Henry always played down his war experiences but it can be recorded that he was seconded to the Royal Navy for 'special duties', received secret orders, and travelled alone to remote places crucial to the war effort installing radar stations with which to track the enemy.

An irrepressible sense of humour always allowed Henry to see the funny side of life, and he tells an amusing story about one particular journey. He and his equipment had been picked up by an Australian Naval vessel. Dining with the Captain and officers he was invited to say Grace. Coming from a strong Anglican family background this presented no problem and say Grace he did, on that and subsequent occasions. Some time later he was dropped off in a remote spot and got on with his job. Weeks passed, the job completed, time to go on. Down at the dock there was a ship waiting for him, with more equipment for his next assignment. As he went up the gangway he realised this was the same ship he had been on before. Not only that, they obviously remembered him because a quiet Aussie voice said: "Good Gawd – it's the bleed-in' Curate again"!

He came to the SABC during the hectic period immediately following the War, a period when the SABC was almost permanently 'out of breath' trying to do three things at the same time: keeping the service running, trying desperately to catch up with essential developments which had been shelved during the stringent war years, and trying to stay abreast of new developments and demands which were crowding in – such as a commercial service (Springbok), an independent news service, a service specifically for the black population, and a possible international service. The technical equipment was old, creaky and just crying for renewal. New studios were needed because the Corporation did not own a single space: all its studios were hired premises from the days of its predecessor, The African Broadcasting Corporation. It was a period which made impossible demands on its staff, but for Henry it was stimulating and exciting.



First, the history of "Giddy" history.

There were men & Denny boys in the line,  
Of little old TV and that sort of thing,  
I've learned and more, as a child's property,  
I've also seen because the big picture is

I've also got used to the SABC  
As programs of programmes from TV in the  
I've seen and more - a show that's packed the house,  
Of little old boys that have the name

Chorus

I've seen it's come out, too soon,  
I've seen it's come out, too soon,  
I've seen it's come out, too soon,  
Of little old boys, and all in S.S.

I've seen it's come out, too soon,  
I've seen it's come out, too soon,  
I've seen it's come out, too soon,  
Of little old boys, and all in S.S.

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Of little old boys, and all in S.S.



9 780620 171229



Song to the glory of **G**lenstone

There once was a Henry born to be king,  
On radio and TV and that sort of thing,  
He worked put hours as a radio engineer,  
But his moon became his big panacea

The moon got wed to the SABC,  
His organizer of programmes from A to Zee,  
I'm next door - a show that pined the brains,  
Others no brighter than blew the mains

Chorus

Henry we'll miss you, you know,  
Your energy and voice made a bloody good show  
Henry we say thank you, oh yes  
On behalf of our clients, and all at LS.

Doorte from programming soon set him free,  
To cover the English Service of the SABC,  
But no sooner had he put that one to bed,  
When Commercial Services needed a head

Then along came a maiden all wanted to see,  
Her future was bright, her name Commercial TV  
Henry toiled and schemed and laid his plan,  
To get on top of her - for the good of all man.

His Royal presence was felt on the ISA,  
The SABC and the IAA,  
A man for all seasons he proved to be,  
I do not Henry the eighth - but the first of BCC

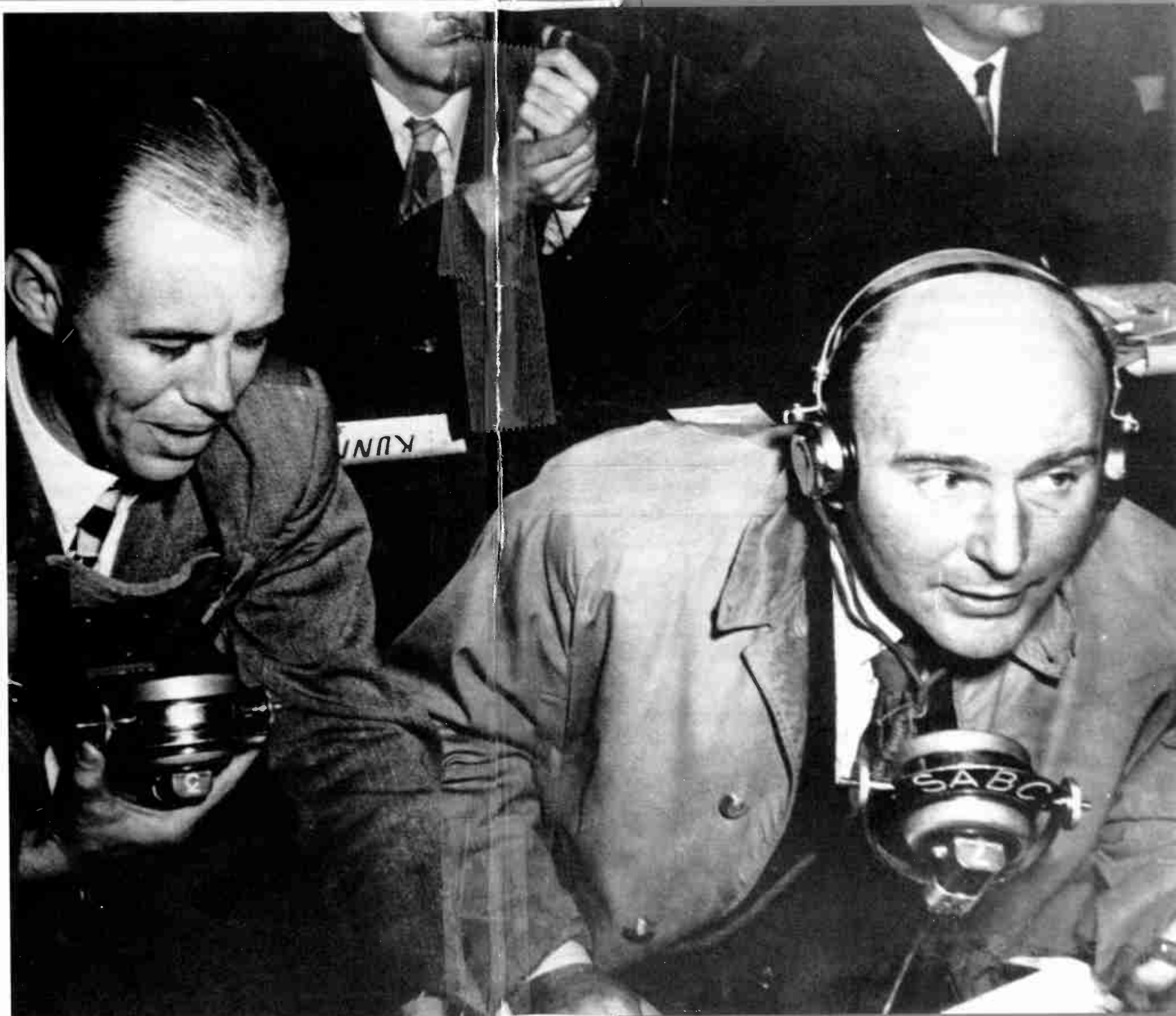
Chorus

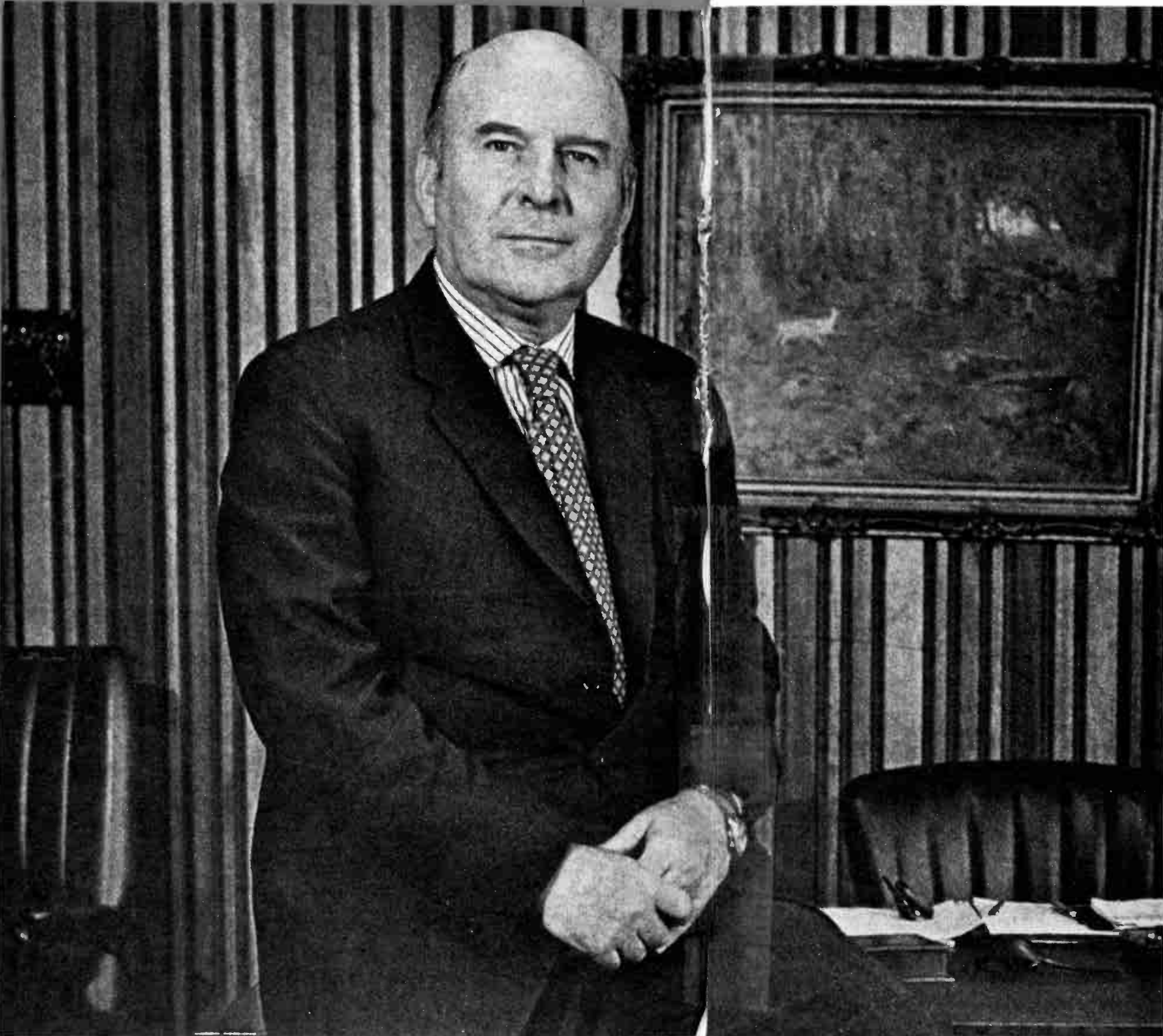
Henry we'll miss you, you know,  
Your energy and voice made a bloody good show  
Henry we say thank you, oh yes  
On behalf of our clients, and all at LS

**B** **B** **C**



*Steve de Villiers  
and Henry  
Howell com-  
mentating at the  
World Title fight  
in 1953 when  
Willie Toweel  
beat the reigning  
Champion Pappy  
Gault.*





# **A** *Measure of the Man*

**A biography of Henry Howell – and his  
broadcasting history from 1943 - 1991**

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**Researched, edited and compiled by  
Rosemary Howell**

# **A** *Measure of the Man*



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This is for Henry, of course...

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HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE STATE PRESIDENT  
OF BOPHUTHATSWANA  
DR. L.M. MANGOPE

## *Republic of Bophuthatswana*

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE  
MMABATHO

### **FOREWORD**

I first met Mr Henry Howell when I set about establishing an environment that would encourage broadcasting in my country.

Mr Howell, who had retired by that time from many years' service with the SABC, was a leading figure in broadcasting in South Africa and I knew that his expertise would be invaluable to my country's needs in that field.

He became my advisor on broadcasting and, later, Chairman of the Bop Broadcasting Board.

There is no doubt that without his knowledge and influence, broadcasting in Bophuthatswana would not be flourishing as it is today.

In his memory I have established the Henry Howell Foundation which, it is ultimately hoped, will encourage the further development of broadcasting.

*L.M. Mangope*

**LM MANGOPE**  
**STATE PRESIDENT**

# Acknowledgements

**M**any people have played a part in bringing this book to fruition – not least of all Henry himself who by his meticulous retention of documents, photographs, notes and diaries made the trail easier to follow. Easier – but not easy, for to attempt such a project was initially daunting, and continued to be awesome for fear one failed to capture the essence of this great man and his achievements.

I must first of all especially thank **His Excellency President Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana** for so kindly contributing the Foreword despite the onerous political pressures of the day.

I must then thank **Wally Langschmidt** (pioneer of listener research in South Africa) for providing the pre- and post-war history of research, and some hitherto unpublished surveys; **Gideon Roos** (retired Director-General) for his insight into the Reithian philosophy; **Pax Moren** (International Advertising Authority) for the material and photographs he supplied; **Jack Siebert** (who succeeded Henry as Head of the Commercial Services) for his offering of material from the early days of Springbok Radio; **Alan Jones** for the photographs and newsclips which have enriched the Bop Broadcasting Section; **Norman Filmer** for his invaluable assistance; and **Colin Adcock**, a dear friend who played such an important role in our personal life.

Another book could be filled with the names of all those who helped – from broadcasting, advertising, marketing and the media. It must be mentioned that if **Cecil Jubber** (well known writer of Documentary and Feature programmes) had not discovered a tape recording of an interview he conducted with Henry in 1986 about his career, for archival purposes, it is unlikely that one would have made a start. Extracts have been taken from this, as have portions from the series "Reminiscences" – Henry Howell in conversation with Adrian Steed for the programme '60-plus' broadcast in 1988.

To all contributors, with your well-loved names and voices, a heartfelt thank you not only for what you gave to this book and the encouragement given to me, but for the inestimable pleasure and joy given to all of us who have loved and followed 'the wireless' over the years.

Finally, I must thank **Kerry-Jane Elsdon** for her loving dedication and professionalism throughout the many weeks of research and tape transcription; and **Jimmy Cowan** for his personal labours.

I am extremely grateful to you all.

Rosemary Howell  
South Africa 1992



*Miss Davydd and 'friends'.*

## Editor's special tribute:

# Kathleen Davydd ... 1913 – 1987

One cannot write Henry Howell's biography without paying a special tribute to Kathleen Davydd, his late first wife who sadly passed away in 1987 after a lengthy illness.

Her broadcasting career spanned forty years, and her influence on her listeners by means of her sensitive grasp of their listening needs, and her deft touch in all her productions for the SABC, have left a lasting impression.

Broadcaster and literati, she was the youngest of four daughters born to Andrew and Mary Camilleri. Her antecedents were Italian, Maltese, Irish and English. Her father Andrew was an officer in the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company, and when he retired the family settled on Malta. Roman Catholicism played a major role in her education and upbringing, and the memories of her childhood on Malta remained vivid in her mind all her life. When her father died, the family settled in Southampton, England, where Kathleen found employment in a record shop – training that was to prove useful when she found her vocation in life.

She applied, in 1941, for a post at the South African Broadcasting Corporation where she was offered, not an announcing post but that of 'effects operator', in Cape Town. She accepted the post knowing this could open doors to microphone work, and she soon became well-known for her programmes for hospital patients, the forces, and women. When the war ended the SABC decided to re-introduce their children's programmes, and Kathleen was the unanimous choice for Presenter. "Your programme, children", "Percy the Pig", "Noddy", "Tales of Beatrix Potter", and "David Copperfield" became required listening with mother, many adapted by Kathleen herself.

Another of her most valuable gifts was her ability to spot talent; the late Douglas Laws, and Adrian Steed, made their first broadcasts in plays of hers. Adrian Steed, whilst interviewing Henry in 1987,

described his first meeting with Kathleen:

"I remember I 'phoned her looking for a job. I was a very poor young man at the time, and she said: 'Well dear, what can you do?', and I said: 'What would you like me to do?' – this was on the telephone before I had met her and I hadn't realised she could be quite formidable – and she said: 'Well, dear, I want people who can do buffaloes, and imitate impalas and snakes. Can you do all that?' and I said – desperate for a job – 'Yes of course', and she said 'Well, you had better come and show me then, hadn't you?' To cut a long story short, that's how I started in broadcasting, doing funny little animal noises in a delightful series of programmes called "Little People's Playtime".

Particularly remembered too will be the poetry programme "Calendar" which filled the listener with peace and tranquillity for a very special time every Sunday afternoon. It was at an announcers meeting where they were discussing new programmes that Kathleen suggested that people were tired of kitchen sink 'avant garde' features and plays; they wanted words of faith and courage, for people like to believe that Man is fundamentally good, and they like poetry they can remember. Everyone laughed, but they gave her twelve programmes! And the then Organiser of Drama said he would take her out to dinner if she received even a dozen letters in response. Within two weeks two girls were helping her to sort out the listeners' letters!

Kathleen inherited her great love of literature from her mother – a woman of great intellect deeply interested and moved by verse and prose. The title 'Calendar' was chosen by Kathleen because of her mother's devotion to calendars of the '40's and '50's which always had a short quotation from a literary source printed on each page.

So 'Calendar' grew, and listeners were invited to send in poems which they liked. Miss Davydd made her selections with the judgement of a connoisseur, and used a little group of 'microphone artists' to make these gems come to life. 'Calendar' was a programme for those who could appreciate the magic of the spoken word, and one of that little group of 'word magicians' was, of course, Henry.

It was Henry's love for Kathleen that brought him back to South African broadcasting in 1946. He records: "There was a bright young broadcaster/producer who is a significant name in the history of English broadcasting at the SABC named Cameron McClure. I had done a little acting for him in 1943 in Cape Town whilst waiting for my posting to India. In 1946 Kathleen was already an experienced broadcaster in the Cape and Mac was keen to bring her up to the Johannesburg studios. But Kathleen did not want to leave her beloved



Cape and nothing would winkle her out. Mac craftily thought about this chap in India and reckoned that if he could be invited to join the SABC in Johannesburg, Kathleen would surely follow. He was right; she did!"

Needless to say, she was adored by her listeners, respected by her colleagues, and loved by her friends. Her personal contribution to broadcasting in South Africa, particularly for young children, deserves a lasting record.

\* \* \*

# Introduction

**P**art 1 I have called "Some stories from the past". Henry started these during Kathleen's illness, and continued them after her death. He said it helped him to handle the shock of losing her; and that (Mac) Cameron McClure was endlessly patient in teaching him how to operate a word processor. Alas the last story has no ending, but is worthy of publication for all that.

Part 2 has been drawn from material discovered and researched, interviews with Henry's friends and colleagues, and from his own notes and diaries.

It must be admitted that it is virtually impossible to adequately research 45 years of such a man's achievements and talents. And alas, many who could have given an additional insight have already passed on.

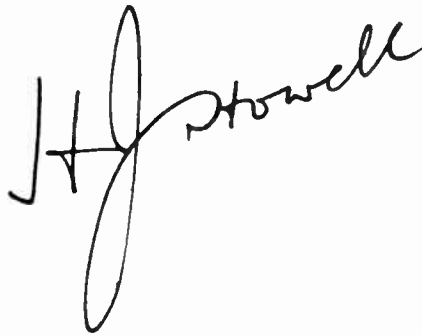
However, I hope that Henry Howell's powerful achievements, talent and sense of humour, his kind yet firm personality, and his goodness, honesty and integrity, are illuminated in these pages sufficiently to give the reader an insight into the 'measure of the man'.

\* \* \*

**Part 1**

Some stories from  
the past ...

by Henry Howell

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "H. Howell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline that extends under the word "Howell".

# 1

## Arthur's story from a farm in Wales

**A**t the age of ten, the old man told me, he, Arthur, being the youngest son in the family, used to accompany his father on winter nights during the lambing season to examine the pregnant ewes which were kept in a fifteen acre field some distance from the home-stead.

To reach the field they had to traverse a densely wooded valley, and when they reached the field they separated to increase the area that they could cover as quickly as possible.

Arthur recalled one night when, lantern in hand, he came upon a ewe which had just given birth to two little lambs. As he was alarmed at the state of the two little creatures, he made noises and waved his lantern to attract his father's attention. Father – Town and County Councillor and Mayor of Pembroke – stumped across the bitterly cold field to find his son, and he needed only one glance to realise that something must be done on this bitterly cold night if the lives of the ewe and the new lambs were to be saved.

His father said, in his warm Pembrokeshire accent which is not truly Welsh but quite distinctively individual: 'Now Boy, go home to Mother and bring back a big flagon of milk and ask her to put some rum in it. She'll know exactly what to do and hurry, now, hurry!'

So Arthur set off down the field and entered the wood. It was a moonless cloudy night and he suddenly began to have fears. He knew the Gypsies camped on the other side of the wood and like all Pembrokeshire people he had a wholesome fear of these strangers. The bracken underfoot seemed to create a thunderous noise as he crept, as stealthily as possible, down to the lane which would take him to the outskirts of Pembroke, and Home.

At last he reached the front door, his mind firmly on the dangers of the return journey. The large, warm and welcoming kitchen seemed more homelike than ever and his mother, whom Arthur and his four

brothers and sisters idolized, was never more lovely and more in command. She had faced the situations many times in her life and she soon had the hot milk and rum in the huge flagon and ready for Arthur to go.

Then she looked at the little boy's face. "Arthur", she said, "I'm coming with you boy".

The Winter had really set in. It seems that the British winter reserves the worst manifestations until after the Christmas holidays which, unlike ours in South Africa, are very short. With the very temporary and conscious uplifting of hearts that Christmas means well and truly over, the land seems to give up hope that Spring will ever come, and metaphorically everyone draws the blankets over their heads and suspends thought.

I was visiting my Uncle Arthur, my mother Sarah's brother, in Pembroke in 1985 – (not knowing that this was to be the last time I would see him, nor that within a short time the family farm would pass to me) – during what was the quietest time for the rural people who need only to see that the ewes that will be lambing from February onwards are well and truly protected against the weather. So there was plenty of time to sit around the heaped-up fire in the range in Uncle Arthur's kitchen, and talk and talk and talk.

We are back in the days of his youth most of the time; his memories have mellowed and the harshness of those days, and his Welsh humour, sees fun in things that probably were rather grim at the time. For he has clear memories of the Century before this one, and he knew men that could have been alive when the Battle of Waterloo was fought.

These talks of his reminded me of similar stories of my own father who, with his brothers, watched the "Wreckers" light fires on the rocky ironbound coast of Pembrokeshire to lure Mariners off their course in the hope that they would dash themselves to pieces on the rocks at the foot of the cliffs.

As I listen to the soft chuckling voice talking on about those days far off, not so much in time as in history, I think I am listening to a novel by Thomas Hardy. For although Hardy wrote about Dorset in far away England, the people were similar to these figures that illuminate Uncle Arthur's stories, and the time and the sense of values and the passions were the same. And so were the prejudices!

Uncle Arthur was the youngest son of my Grandfather Ogleby and his wife Martha, my Grandmother. His older brother was Harold (my Uncle). Barely a year separated these two children, and they bore a

striking resemblance to each other with their blond curls and pink and white complexions. As he spoke of his brother Harold, a tear stood in Arthur's eye for Harold had died many years before on a football field, a young man in his prime. But that's another story....

The time had come for Arthur to go to school, the greystone Primary School for infants that still stands at the top of the 'Well Hill' and infants still go reluctantly.

To this school went my Mother and Father, and for a short period my eldest brother. I remember my father telling me that he kissed Sarah (Arthur's sister) who was destined to be his wife, behind the School-room door at the age of six! "Yes, my boy", he'd said, "I was a precocious lad and knew who I wanted to marry even at that age, and I certainly never kissed another woman all my life". I also remember Father boasting, while Mother looked suitably shy and modest, that the greystone building has produced a number of remarkable successful men in many walks of life; but it looks today what it has always been – a Country School.

But to return to Uncle Arthur.

He had not been long at school before he returned home one evening, with a high colour and a nasty-looking rash. His Mother, that wise woman in her generation, brought up to cook and nurse and be a mother, needed little time to diagnose the dread complaint. Scarlet Fever! Now Scarlet Fever was feared and detested by these simple country people, not because they could not deal with it in their own way but because recent regulations insisted that the afflicted child should be removed from the proximity of everyone else to (speak it with bated breath) – an Isolation Hospital. If you told a mother that her child was to go to Belsen in the years of World War 2 you would probably have produced the same effect as this terrible possibility aroused in the mind and heart of Martha Ogleby.

Nothing was going to separate her from her child when his need was so great, and immediately her mind set to work to prevent such a thing happening. Now this required both cunning and care, and while she wound her way up to the empty attic at the top of wooden stairs two floors above the Main Family Bedroom on the third floor, above the bedrooms for the considerable family and the little Servant's Bedroom, to a room full of old boxes and junk, her mind was calculating the dangers and the difficulties that lay ahead.

Secrecy was the greatest problem, the house buzzed with humanity. Thirty people usually sat down to breakfast and the dinner at Middle-day. They must not know. The school authorities had to be

lulled or deceived into accepting something entirely different for young Arthur's absence from school.

Truancy was not an unusual thing in these country schools, and frequently ignorant parents were only too happy to encourage truancy if it meant another helping hand on the farm. So the school authorities were deeply suspicious of any unexplained absence from school and acted remarkably quickly and efficiently to ensure regular attendance. So as she dragged a bed up the stairs and hung up wet sheets and set herself ready for a state of Medical Siege, her bright cunning mind was planning a series of moves to keep the Enemy, in this case in the shape of "Progress, the Health Authority and the Twentieth Century" – call 'Him' what you may, at Bay.

First, she must have no nonsense from Father; he was a man of influence, a Town and County Councillor, his word was better than most. She quickly explained her problem to her exasperated husband who knew that remonstrance was only likely to make matters worse. Dutifully, as instructed, he called the Village Doctor aside after that evening's Council Meeting. They used to have their Council meetings at night in those days as no-one could afford to waste good working time on 'Civic Matters'.

"Bill", says Henry Ogleby, Arthur's father, "Bill, I wonder if you'd mind giving our Arthur a medical certificate for him to stay away from school a few days; the wife thinks he's sickening for something, probably the 'flu'. She thinks he should stay in bed for a few days."

"Well, I'll come and have a look at the boy", says Bill Williams, the easy-going Doctor.

"Now don't you worry yourself about a trifle like that", says Henry apprehensively, "Here, I've got a bit of paper here somewhere." He was fumbling in his breast pocket. "Yes, here's a bit, write something on that."

So the City Father and the Signatory of the Hippocratic Oath compounded a felony, or whatever you do to a felony.

Mother Martha was relieved to get the bit of paper and the next day Father stopped his high-stepping pony and smart trap outside the School gate and left the Certificate and a letter of explanation at the School door.

The fact that the house so full and so rambling probably helped Martha to keep her secret for several days, and a week passed and then two or more. The worst was now over and Martha felt a sense of growing confidence.

Then one day she was busy in the parlour when she saw a man

approaching up the land. The small maid Mary was dusting the lace curtains and looking out of the window at the same time.

"That man looks like a stranger to me" said Martha.

"No, Ma'am" says Mary, "that's the awful School Inspector, I expect", and then continued in all innocence: "I expect he's come to find out how Arthur is getting on."

Oh, Despair! To be found out at this late stage. What to Do! Then Martha had a brilliant idea.

"Call Harold at once, Mary!"

In a few seconds he had come to the call, as The Man reached the path up to the old farmhouse door.

"Harold, don't ask any silly questions, go upstairs, take off your clothes, put on your nightshirt and get into bed." Harold looked thunderstruck and was rooted to the spot. Such was the power of the personality of that remarkable woman that when she said: "Go, At Once!" he turned and disappeared.

The Inspector was at the door, and of course enquiring about the health of one Arthur Ogleby. One can imagine the rest but one wonders what was going on through Martha's mind as she led the Inspector up to little Harold's bedroom. There, sure enough, a surprised and somewhat bemused Harold was produced for inspection and passed fit for school next Monday.

Next Monday, a feeble young Arthur took his own place in class.

Prejudice and Love had triumphed!

Some of our happiest times were spent sitting around the Winter fire-place in the great kitchen-cum-livingroom. It seemed only a short time ago that we were wandering around the summer fields and lanes, but now that the sun was setting just after four, and the wind and sleet beat against the window panes, one could hardly imagine that the Countryside would look again as we knew it only a few months ago.

Perhaps Uncle Arthur's thoughts are on the sunlit days too, for he often talks about the haymaking and the Summer and the long grass. His descriptions are so graphic that one can see those harvesting days of his youth when the sun seemed so good and strong.

Memory illuminates his thoughts and he can recall the lush strong grass ready for the Cutting. In those far off days long before the machine age, a pair of stout horses would pull a heavy Mowing Machine for many hours until the massive "Swaff", which is the name for the cut grass, lay upon the level ground.

Hour after hour the Mowing Machine would move along the outer



periphery of the great meadow, gradually moving inwards and laying the cut grass to dry under the sun. Then the nightly prayers were for merciful hot days with the sun at its greatest height in the sky. If God was good, He would send a little wind to help in the drying processes. After only a few days the keen Farmer's eye would see the change taking place in the cut grass, and would detect the creating taking place in the cut grass in the rustling stalks that lay about all over the field. Then followed the days of the Gathering-in when the hay was raked up and put into "Cocks" with every cart for miles pressed into service to load the "Cocks" (sheaves stacked upright in groups) and carry them to the "Ricks" (haystacks).

"What days they were", said Uncle Arthur, "everyone in the family and a few more besides had to do their bit. No Shirkers there, I can tell you! For we just had to finish the hay harvesting before the rain returned. But what I remember best about haymaking and later days of the Corn Harvest each year, was what a wonderful sight it was to see the Rabbits and Hares frolicking everywhere."

"Mind you, this was before the scourge of Myxomatosis, the rabbit killer disease which has literally wiped out millions of rabbits in Britain. Many people in Britain, boy, will talk of this rabbit scourge with gladness, and tell you what a pest the rabbits were, but not many will say that in Pembrokeshire."

Uncle Arthur shook his head. "Not a field or pasture escaped the ravages which denuded the country of the rabbit fraternity." I noted the word 'fraternity'.

"Well", he continued, after that little pause in memory of the Vanished Rabbits; "when we were bent upon the harvest, be it Hay or Corn, the sight of those innumerable rabbits and hares gladdened our hearts. For, apart from the fun they gave us, they gladdened our hearts when we thought of the prospect of the good sport during the following Autumn and Winter."

Then he added with his Welsh shrewdness, "We got a shilling a carcase and sixpence a pelt for each rabbit we took to the market, so, mind you, it was worth the trouble, never mind the sport! But what fun it was," he said, his whimsical smile signalling that some new story was coming to his mind.

"During the Autumn and early Winter we would have what we called "a Field Day". Usually they would take place on a Monday – Sundays were for the Lord, and no nonsense. But Monday was a good day for us. Great were the preparations, Mother up early, with Sal – the dear girl".

(Sal was the pet name of Sarah, my Mother, and the heroine of the whole family.)

"So there was the making of hot cans of tea enough to satisfy the thirst of a regiment and mountains of sandwiches of roast beef and boiled Welsh ham, the product of our own Custom Curing. Welsh ham ... there's beautiful it was, as old Tom the Brewery used to say: 'It'll make you deaf, lad!'" (I was so used to the Welsh ways now that I could recognise that this was a superlative accolade.)

Uncle Arthur continued, "Well, while Sal and Muriel (his other sister and my Aunt) prepared the food, Mother and Father were busy attending to the usual farming chores – milking a herd of cows, and feeding about twenty calves with the new milk from the cows. The farm hands would be out ranging the ewes and lambs and we boys would be feeding the pigs. And then there was excitement! Much too excited to eat breakfast. We would set off in the big cart up to the top of Holyland Hill, Mother and Father up front and us young 'uns sporting in the back. No sooner there than the first Great Spread was laid out, and now that we were there, there was no trouble to get us to eat.

"But all the while we were inspecting the Ferrets in their little canvas bags, and stroking the lithe and beautiful Greyhounds who 'whinnied', their legs trembling with excitement at the prospect of what was to come. Then Father would rise from the repast spread on the grass, like the Alderman he was, and led us to the first rabbit 'berrie' (the South Pembrokeshire word for Warren) in the copse at the bottom meadow. We all inspected the hedges and mounds of heather for rabbit holes and then with great care a net was spread over each one of them.

"Someone led the dogs back a few yards for their job was to catch the 'furry-backs' that escaped the nets and the diving hands of the young boys. Then Father raised his finger and with infinite care drew a Ferret out of the bag by the scruff of its neck. Lifting the net he inserted the ferret into the rabbit hole. A moment's silence! Then the sounds of subterranean tumult and then first one net and then another would erupt as a rabbit made a bid to escape the 'berrie' only to land in the net.

"Then there was a scrambling of bodies as we rushed to catch the rabbits. Then a few unnetted holes would release some rabbits into the open air, and the dogs leaping high to see their prey would give chase. By jo, how those dogs could run! During all the excitement one of the ferrets had killed a rabbit and begun to feed upon it down in

the 'berrie' underground. Father had to manipulate inside the 'berrie', his hand far down inside the hole to try to get them apart. When this attempt at separation was being carried out, the other ferret was withdrawn from the warren. A thin cord was attached to its collar and I, being the baby boy, was entrusted to look after it, allowing it to run to the limits of its lease about in the grass.

"There was I, a little boy of about nine with short trousers and socks, enjoying the importance of the occasion in control of the ferret on the end of its line when, suddenly, the ferret turned sharply round and bit me in the calf of the leg! There was a yelling and a screaming I set up and being the youngest in the family I received a great deal of sympathy, and dear Sarah fretted over me and comforted me.

"But Father, annoyed by the antics of one ferret, and now annoyed with his youngest son and another ferret, poo-pooed the whole thing. 'Must have been the boy's own fault', he said. So with a little bandage on my leg I limped after the others who had left that particular warren and restarted operations somewhere else.

"Once again the ferrets were set to work in the warrens and in no time the rabbits were skeltering and popping up like corks out of a hundred bottles, with the greyhounds in close attendance should any escape. But again something happened. One of the ferrets came out of a hole and bit brother Stanley! His screams could be heard fields away! Dear Stanley, he was to lose his life in the Royal Navy in the First World War.

"Again Father came up fuming with frustration. 'It appears that we have the most ferocious ferrets in the county; they have now bitten two of my sons, what next I am asking?' Clearly, he believed that we had provoked the little beasts. Mother suggested that we call it a day, but no, we stopped for a lashing of tea and the luscious Welsh ham, and after that proceeded to the other end of the wood, and once again the ferrets were leased, and the Game was on again.

"All was going well until, suddenly! to the consternation of all, out of the hole popped a ferret. Involuntarily Father put out a hand to grab it, whereupon the ferret sank his teeth into Father's thumb. Father let out a piercing yell, and some rather fierce oaths that we boys did not know that he knew. Mother and Sarah, their faces without smiles now, set about bandaging him up. Stanley, who was a natural born humorist, stood by, his face a study in gravity. But he looked up and caught my eye, and slowly he lowered the lid of one eye. I thought I would burst, but fortunately in stepping back a pace I stepped on Muriel's hand and we had some more tears.

At that Mother said: "Well, I've had enough for one. Let's go home.", and when Mother said that, we all knew better than to disagree. But, Boy, we went home with hundreds of lovely rabbits!"

I was not to see Uncle Arthur again, but when I visit those fields near our Ash Grove, I feel Uncle Arthur's spirit with me, and I remember our talks in front of that great kitchen fire....

(Editor's note: Henry's ashes were scattered, as he requested, along the hedgerow leading to the Ash Grove.)

\* \* \*

# My first years on Malta

**I**t is early in November 1918, the S.S. Gloucester Castle is feeling its way into Valetta Harbour having sailed from Avonmouth on one of the first passenger civilian voyages since 1914. The Grand Harbour Valetta is, apart from being a splendid anchorage, one of the most beautiful in the world. Great sandstone forts and impressive buildings rise from the water's edge to a height of two or three hundred feet to the fortifications used by the Grand Knights of Malta in their centuries long defensive siege against the 'Infidels' who were otherwise spreading like a flood across North Africa and Southern Europe to end in Spain which they dominated for centuries before the Christians of Western Europe counter attacked and threw them out.

What has been left in the Grand Harbour of Malta are several unselfconsciously handsome fortifications which have taken on a unique grandeur.

Aboard the S.S. Gloucester Castle were one of the earliest band of passengers to leave the United Kingdom since the August of 1914. Amongst them was a little boy and his cuddly Mother and his two brothers. They all understood what was happening to them except for the little boy ... his world had been centred upon that warm comfortable figure who filled his whole life not least of all emotionally. They had lived in a small town in the far west of Wales, those three people who more than adequately populated his mind and body. He showered his love and attention upon her exclusively and she in return gave him laughter and knowledge and security. On this particular morning, however, things seemed to be different. She was pent up with emotion and excitement which he had not seen in her before and which had nothing to do with him. His brothers whom he also loved where leaning over the rail of the ship talking excitedly and pointing and exclaiming.

The S.S. Gloucester Castle crept cautiously to the quayside, goaded and encouraged by two tugs. Eventually it came to rest, the passenger gangway was shipped down to the quayside, his brothers reached new heights of noisy joy and his mother, centre of his world, lent over

the rail quivering with suppressed happiness. Nothing of this seemed to have anything to do with him and he had lost the centre of all warmth and confidence to this person leaning over the rail beside her elder sons.

No sooner had the gangway touched the quayside of Valetta Harbour than a lively stocky figure leapt up on to it and three steps at a time came charging up to the ship's deck. His World, his Love, rushed towards this strange person and flung herself into his arms, embracing, kissing, laughing and crying simultaneously. Four years of nightmare separation was ended. The little boy figure stood alone and forlorn looking at the tableau of a man and a woman and his little boys all holding on to each other and totally engrossed in this strange man.

The little boy stood bereft for what seemed an eternity but at last they all turned to him and he was swept up into the arms of this strong man who smelt strangely – Father was a pipe smoker – and suddenly a new dimension was to enter the child's life; an association of deep love and innate understanding which lasted for the next sixty-eight years. Now isolation was obliterated by a new rapturously happy association. Of course, the practical matters of gathering together the meagre possessions of this little family were lost upon him but the excitement of descending the great gangway into the exotic rowing boat that I was to learn to call a 'dghajsa' (pronounced dassa) and which would be probably our most frequent mode of transport – these things were to be indelibly written on my mind,

Either by accident, or as I suspect design, we made the long journey from the shore of Valetta along the length of what was then known as the "Dockyard Creek". From the elegantly beautiful boat, propelled by two oarsmen, one standing and facing forward and the other sitting with his back to the long elegant prow, the most awesome sight met our eyes. This inlet of the Grand Harbour was from a maritime point of view the most ancient settlement on the island of Malta.

On our left hand side was the handsome town of Vittoriosa, named for a great victory by the Knights of St. John over the invading Saracens. On our right, behind its formidable medieval defences was the 'city' of Senglea. This was to be our home town for the next six years. As a great authority of the period wrote: 'Senglea looked exactly as it does now when Roger the Norman chased the Saracens from Melita'.

Of course, this meant nothing to the ecstatically happy little boy sitting in the little arbour of love in a lovely rowing boat plying up a har-



*Henry aged 4.*



*Henry (centre front), his mother and father, and two older brothers.*

bour filled with British naval ships anchored head to tail. At last, and all too soon for me, we drew up at a quayside and everyone stepped ashore. I noticed a boat hoist on its derricks at the quayside, but we were led by my exultant father through a gateway into a towering house of lovely soft stone with wooden balconies on every floor. There were three steps up to the door and when we had all been hustled in, I noticed my Mother looking 'with wild surmise' at this seemingly palatial abode. It could only have been a tremendous shock for this innocent little Welsh woman who, although she had been brought up in a very comfortable home, could never have imagined that she would one day occupy the house of a lessee Grandee of Aragon. I am happy to recall that she and her much loved little family lived happily in the great house for six or more years.

What, of course, none of us realised was the awesome history of this little archipelago of islands. Geographically placed in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, equidistant from Turkey and Spain on its East to West axis, Malta is also half way between the North African Coast and the toe of Italy. As history constantly illustrates, there is no more unhealthy situation than to be strategically positioned. One is reminded of the old Chinese proverb, or is it a curse? "May you live in interesting times".

There are traces of its prehistoric times that seem to go back through three millennia. So intriguing is this period that it attracts constant expert attention. In the course of recent years, I believe that the lovely fantasy with which I grew up – that it was a part of a bridge joining Africa to Europe – has been discredited. There are times when one hopes that the world were less filled with experts all seeking a noble reputation.

There are certainly well established signs of human or animal occupancy that go back as far as 3800 B.C. There are even traces of the fossils of miniature Hippopotami and other African animals. Nevertheless the experts, whilst admitting that the islands of the Central Mediterranean were once joined to Europe, will not admit to the African connection.

Looking back one realises that this was an idyllic place in which to spend one's childhood. The beauty of the island itself, the gentle charm of its highly intelligent people and the security and comfort of the large house of limestone, has not faded in adult life. Perhaps the most vivid memories concern the sea. The sea-bed in those years of my childhood was clear and opalescent, and the sea itself was intimately woven into the fabric of life, calm and benign during all our



days there, the rock pools and undersea ledges were rich in sea-life; a wonderland to an almost amphibious small boy. It is not at all surprising to learn that underwater exploration began in the Mediterranean sea. One hears horrendous stories of the pollution which threatens this treasure house of marine life.

What were the things which made this place such an enchantment to a sensitive little boy? First of all, that blue, blue sea and the sandy beaches and the outcrops of picturesque rock pools which were safe for bathing. There was the extraordinarily handsome architecture that seemed to have flowered in the 16/17th Centuries. The Great Bastions of the Major Cities gave them a secretive, mysterious, enclosed look, in total contrast to the wide freedom of the sea. Hundreds of churches rose majestically above the handsome limestone houses. Perhaps most of all, its fascinating history which accounts for so much of the splendour of everything but the sea and nature itself.

The island bears traces of its most remote history in the setting of one's everyday life; not least of all in the great houses built of limestone. Malta is perhaps the only existing part of what some experts consider to have been a landbridge from Africa to Europe. Nearly 200,000 years ago what was to become the Mediterranean Sea was a collection of freshwater lakes. When, after some monumental terrestrial catastrophe the sea plunged in over what were known in Ancient times as the Gates of Hercules – the gateway from the mighty Atlantic to the Mediterranean which we now know as the narrow straits between Gibraltar and Tangiers – it inundated everything but these small islands in the Central Mediterranean.

Now, deep in the caves of the Island of Malta, you will find fossils of prehistoric animals, and even from a later period of African animals such as the hippopotamus, elephant and others. Little did that small boy who gazed uncomprehendingly at those artifacts in the dark caves, know that he would spend a major part of his life in a land where those great African animals abounded.

Malta's central position in the Mediterranean and her superb harbours caused her to attract many powerful nations to her shores. Possibly the earliest known foreigners to occupy the Island were the Phenazocine. They came from that area now so much in turmoil, the Lebanon. They were a remarkable people; there are traces of their presence in South Western England. They certainly left their stamp on the little Island both culturally and genetically. After the Phoenicians came their descendants the Carthagenians, then the Romans, the Moors, Normans, Angevins, Aragonese and perhaps most famous of

all the great Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The Island was conquered by Napoleon but the French were soon driven out by the Royal Navy – this was the time of Nelson – and the British remained there for more than a century. It was one of the largest and most powerful Naval bases in the old style British Empire. Now it is an Independent state within the Commonwealth. So much history enclosed in so little ‘geography’ has given the Maltese people an international character that lends them an appealing charm. They have a rich culture and a most interesting folk lore.

The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, or as they are now probably better known, the Knights of Malta, deserve an especial mention. They had come to Malta after being driven from the Island of Rhodes by the irresistible tide wave of Islam which ended only in Spain and at the Gates of Vienna before it was driven back. They stayed on in command of the Island for 300 years.

The principal city of Malta, Valletta, was built by one of their greatest leaders, Jean de la Vallette after the Knights had withstood another great siege from the Saracens in 1565. Its great bastions and walls rise perpendicularly from the water’s edge to a height of two hundred feet or more. It dominates one of the world’s greatest harbours, the historic Grand Harbour. In my childhood it was the haven of the mighty Royal Navy’s Mediterranean Fleet. To stand upon one of the handsome fortresses across the Grand Harbour from Valetta and gaze upon that Fleet assembled was an awesome proud sight for a small boy. Five or six mighty Battleships could be moored ‘line ahead’, to say nothing of the Navy’s first Aircraft Carrier whose name was “Pegasus”. There were possibly a couple of Cruiser Squadrons and what seemed like innumerable Destroyers.

The city of Valetta, despite the groups of jolly sailors one continuously came across, seemed to rise above the activity of the fine Harbour both physically and in Spirit. It still had the mantle of the Knights in its exciting narrow streets. The great Residences of the Knights, the pretty shops and the animated people, made it an exhilarating place.

Every Saturday morning I went across the Harbour with my Mother, presumably for her to shop, but as a ritual she always spent a few moments at “Blackly’s”, the charming coffee shop where we had something to drink and some “Pastiss”, the unique cheese cake of Malta. It is eaten piping hot with cream cheese inside a crisp flaky pastry.

The greatest repository of relics of the era of the Knights is to be

found in the Cathedral of St. John. Its simple austere exterior does nothing to prepare you for the breath-taking interior. It was designed by a man who was used to building forts, so there is no unnecessary ornamentation on the outside, but on the inside the decoration and sumptuousness bear testimony to the artistry of centuries of devout islanders who expressed love in stone and marble statuary, tapestries, mosaics, and paintings.

Disraeli, it seems, called Valetta 'a city of Palaces' but to that small boy it was a heart-warming place, a beehive of social, cultural and commercial activity. One hopes that in these contemporary times the latter continues at a high level for the sake of lovable inhabitants. What else was there to delight the heart of that inquisitive little boy? Well, I suppose its exotic foreign atmosphere where English was the second language. Whenever possible the little boy would escape by himself, or in the company of his particular friend who was his Mother's maid, a beautiful young woman he knew as "Chetta". They would roam the streets engaging anyone they met in conversation. If as often happened the language changed to English, everyone's faces lit up with pleasure. They always seemed delighted by the little boy and glad to tell him the way, or discuss the weather or whatever seemed to be an excuse to talk about.

Constant sources of delight were the special Maltese forms of locomotion – on land, the Carozzin, a horse-drawn vehicle with an enclosed cab with the driver perched up high. It would be shining bright inside and had big lamps to light the way at night. The little Arab horses always looked loved and well tended. On the sea, which was the islanders other element, they had the 'dghajjes', an elegant high-prowed and stern-posted boat which in retrospect seemed more beautiful than the Venetian Gondola – and very much a hard-working commercial vehicle. Sadly, over the years the 'dghajja' has discovered the outboard motor and the sight of the graceful boatmen swinging a single oar has become a thing of the past.

There was a great deal more to Malta than Valetta and the Three Cities which surround the Grand Harbour. One of the family's favourite holiday spots was Ghajn Tuffiema, a dramatically beautiful sandy bay set amongst the cliffs. Then there was St. Paul's Bay – where indeed St. Paul was wrecked; the account of this happening as told in the Acts of the Apostles was read out loud as the little family sat around a picnic basket looking at the historic spot. There was also Sliema, where most of the British people seemed to live – a beautiful place in itself – but spoilt for me by my overhearing my Father

describe the place as an overflow from Surbiton. I wasn't quite sure what or where Surbiton was but I detected some form of criticism in his voice.

In the interior there were a number of interesting places. The most impressive of all – somewhat eerie to a small boy – was the utterly still ancient walled Silent Capital named Mdina. Here the towering walls of the houses and the utter quietude of the narrow streets was somewhat too awe-inspiring for me. It was only seven miles from Valetta but in the horse-drawn transport which we used it seemed to be entirely 'other world'. That transport created the impression of a vast universe in my mind of an island that was only seventeen miles long and about nine miles wide.

Mdina consists of Medieval buildings, amongst which are the state-homes of Maltese Nobility. It was quite uncommercialised, and from the great Bastions and walls built by the besieging Saracens, you can see a wonderful view over the lands where rubble walls divide small terraced fields. Farmers used primitive ploughs to till their land. One can see wayside shrines, country carts; all things that add up to the charm of the island – and there on the coast those beautifully painted Gozo-boats which derive from Phoenician times. This was the almost magical world in which I grew.

I had almost no memories of the Welsh farming people from whom we all sprang, and was quite unprepared for life as an English school-boy which was about to begin for us.

One day my Father came home at lunch time and with suppressed excitement took my Mother to the high verandah window of our dining room. He pointed to a distant ship tied up by the stern to the jetty across the wide expanse of water which was the width of the Grand Harbour.

'Do you see that ship, Sal?' he said in a voice unlike his own. Mother nodded without comprehension and he said: 'Well that ship sails at four and we have all got to be on board.'

It would not be quite truthful to say that we had not been expecting to leave. Our beloved furniture was already crated and what had been to that small boy the whole chrysalis of life and love had become a bleak echoing in the sandstone vault. We knew Father was being promoted to some bigger job in Portsmouth – a place that meant nothing to us – but now the moment had come in a manner none of us had even contemplated. That small distant ship, the S.S. Fabian, was to revolutionise our lives in ways none of us could imagine.

(In the event, Henry went to school in Portsmouth where he acquitted himself well. He enjoyed French, English Literature and Prose, and the Laboratory. He played for the second team in cricket and rugby, and supported Portsmouth Football team – entering their scores in his diary regularly each Saturday. He passed all his exams and was destined for Winchester, and then London University prior to joining the Cable and Wireless Company.)



*Henry as a young man.*



# Ascension Island

**O**n a lovely Spring day I boarded the S.S. Grantully Castle at London Docks and after a tearful farewell to my family we set off down river. The Grantully was an 'intermediate' Union Castle ship and her ultimate destination would be the United Kingdom again, but she accomplished this with stops in the Portuguese Colonial Islands, Ascension Island, St. Helena, Cape Town, and a number of points on the African East Coast, the Suez Canal, Malta, and Home. These handy-sized vessels combined a capability of carrying passengers in quite pleasant surroundings and a great deal of cargo. They would be one of the early victims of 'containerisation' – what an ugly 'buzz-word'.

It was a pleasant adventure for a very young man, particularly as I was accompanied by two colleagues who were personal friends. There was even a brief and innocent ship-board romance before the Grantully Castle drew cautiously towards the coast of Ascension. What a grim sight it was. The island is volcanic in origin and except for an acre or so at its very summit it is covered in volcanic ash and rock. In 1938 there were no Americans, no Falkland Islands forces, just the staff of Cable & Wireless Ltd. – British and St. Helenian.

There were about fourteen British staff, many of whom had their wives and young children with them, and more than a hundred St. Helenians who virtually ran the island's services, roads, the farm at the summit, and other skilled and semi-skilled jobs. But from the sea one could only perceive the conical-shaped hills of grey rising up to the central summit which on this day was lost in cloud.

We noticed with awe the great South Atlantic 'rollers' breaking in clouds of spray upon the rocks and even noted a splendid golden yellow beach upon which the surf pounded. There was a small jetty – 'Pier Head' – and behind it some modest buildings which spread widely for about three-quarters of a mile to the North. This was Georgetown, the capital of Ascension. Behind the little town there rose a perfect conical hill with one house upon it, about a quarter of the way up. We were to know that hill as 'Cross Hill' in the years to come.

Large Lighters attached themselves to the forepart of the ship and a sizeable launch attached itself to the gangway which had been lowered. We were several hundred yards from 'Pier Head'. Our fairly modest possessions were lowered gently into the launch and at the head of the gangway we met for the first time a remarkable man to be known to us as "Bubbles" Bramble. He was the island Purser, the Mess President, and a crucially important figure on the island.

A middle-aged bachelor, he was a most delightful, modest, amusing and effective fellow. We would learn to know him well. Fate was to decree that he would die in a hospital in Johannesburg many years later. But this was a jolly day and "Bubbles" at the top of his form. He was responsible for all the paper work and the handling of all passing ships.

The launch took us to the steps of 'Pier Head' where a heavy swell was running. On the word of command from the coxswain one had to jump on to the wet steps and scamper up hoping to keep ahead of the rising waters of the next wave. Not too difficult for a reasonably fit young man and when I enquired what a woman would do, I was told to watch. Several of the staff wives had gone aboard the 'Grantully' to buy things in the ship's shop. I presume they bought the usual girlish things that keep women happy. They were returning to the island with us; in fact we had been introduced to them all by "Bubbles".

When all the men had reached the top of 'Pier Head' safely, we looked down at the launch rising and falling dramatically beside the jetty. A small crane was swung out over the launch and a little canvas cradle was lowered to the deck. One by one the ladies very skilfully seated themselves in the cradle – again at the command of the coxswain who did all the split-second timing – and were snatched off the deck of the launch and deposited gently on the pier. Clutching their precious parcels the women walked briskly away to their respective homes only a few hundred yards away, and we were conducted to the 'mess' which was to be our home.

The Mess was a few hundred yards inland from the jetty and on the way I noticed, apart from a couple of warehouses, a diminutive church, St. Mary's, and a large double storey building which was "The Club". Between the Church and The Club there was a concrete cricket pitch set in the flat clinker dust, and pleasant domestic dwellings spaced generously apart stretching away to the north. The Mess was a single storey building, the rooms named 'cabins', bright, comfortably large, and airy. A wide verandah ran completely around the building and the generous roof overall shaded it from the rays of the sun. We



were at 7 degrees South and 14 degrees West so the sun could have been a problem. In the event I was to discover that Ascension enjoys one of the most salubrious climates I have ever known. An overall tan was *de rigueur* for all inhabitants.

Work was full of interest, for the Management of Cable and Wireless seemed to have convictions of the events to come in 1939 and were preparing Radio Beam Circuits that would be of vital importance in the War years. Work had already begun on these and I was drawn into the team who were already busy with it. There was ample time, however, to sample the 'social' life of the Island. It seems to be that small communities have a more hectic social life than large ones. I have been utterly alone in London, and indeed more recently in Johannesburg where there is every evidence of bustling life, but in a tiny community such as Ascension in those far-off years, the social activities were extremely numerous and you were expected to play your part in them.

There was golf – played on a black clinker dust coarse with 'greens' of white sand; there was tennis – one was drawn into that immediately; bridge was obligatory and the few ladies were ferociously good players. Even 'church' needed to be attended. I was to be licensed to be its Lay Reader by the Bishop of St. Helena – I can only think because, young as I was, I was a fellow Welshman. There was a cinema on Saturday nights – I became the projectionist! The films came to us from the Cape on a Homeward-bound Union Castle Intermediate ship like the 'Grantully' once a month; the North-bound bringing food and all the pleasures of the Cape like wine and fruit. The ladies performed their usual revels in the ship's shop, and we were left with a few films to see us through until the next North-bound ship arrived. South-bound ships carried the films we had seen back to the Cape. The quality of life on the island depended very much upon the support of the Cape Town staff of Cable and Wireless, and London office was also very solicitous and professionally helpful to us.

As a bachelor living in the Mess, my mess bill was deducted from theoretical salary. Any drinks or snacks I ordered at the Club would also be debited against my salary at the end of the month. There was a well-stocked shop called 'the Canteen' which was under the command of the Purser "Bubbles" Bramble. Women did their shopping there and their husband's salaries were debited. I bought razor blades and toothpaste there on the same footing. I cannot recall having occasion to use money for other purposes; as I did not run a household I had no first-hand knowledge of how other things, such as 'freelance

workers', worked. The Senior Office Messenger was the chap who supplied the Crayfish, Crabs, and rock fish. How he was remunerated I cannot remember; perhaps like myself he was 'given the job to do' as I was expected to go out to sea every Sunday at first light and return with a thousand pounds of fish.

It was not too difficult to catch two or three Albacore which would weight a thousand pounds collectively. My problem was that I had to be back, cleaned and properly dressed – cassock and surplice – in time to conduct Matins at the minute Church of St. Mary.

Fortunately my co-fisherman who was the brains behind our Sunday morning fishing adventure was the best fisherman on the island. He was a St. Helenian and the chief 'rigger' on the large antennae systems that were being erected for the Radio Beams. His name was Wallace, and he steered the large motorised dinghy and decided uncannily which parts of that vast expanse of ocean would provide the fish on each particular morning.

Meanwhile I trolled for the huge fish with my large rod and wooden lure – under Wallace's skillful tuition I seldom failed to do the job in the time allowed us. If I was lucky and caught our quota of fish early, Wallace would reward me with permission to fish for a 'Wahoo' This lovely fish, both to look at and to eat is, I think, called a 'Kingfish' in other areas. So, if we caught our quota and if there was time before Matins, he would steer us to a particular stretch of ocean; he took bearings on various hills and buildings and when we had reached the 'correct' spot, he would smile and say "OK, go ahead, let's troll here"! How he had worked out this manoeuvre I will never know. The sea under our keel, although we were well within sight of the island, was more than a thousand feet deep.

We did not necessarily always catch a 'Wahoo' but I cannot recall ever catching one except on this particular 'beat'. The attraction of the 'Wahoo' which hardly ever exceeded 120 pounds in weight was, apart from its delicious taste, that it performed like fish one had seen in Hollywood films. He would muzzle the lure, throw it in the air and when hooked would circle the boat, jumping feet out of the water every few moments. It was a wonderful Sunday when we caught a 'Wahoo'.

Now this for me was a great thrill and an honour, but I hope that Wallace was properly remunerated for his skill and his time.

After a week or so at sea level, walking the clinker covered roads and yearning to see a green tree or bush or flower, it was always a great adventure to go "Up the Mountain". This entailed traversing a

dirt-clinker road which wound amongst the foothills of the Summit. The road had two landmarks called simply 'One Boat' and 'Two Boats'. They were marked by the hull of a dinghy – or in the case of 'Two Boats' two hulls – and at least gave one the sense of having travelled some distance through that dusty terrain. Not that the road was uninteresting but it offered no contrast to the area around Georgetown, the little hamlet where we all lived. Indeed, after 'Two Boats' the road was hair-raisingly steep.

If I recall correctly it required thirty-three hairpin bends to scale the mountain to its summit. At this point I might explain that a colleague and I shared a 1924 B.S.A. motor cycle and side-car. He was an experienced motor cyclist so it did not require too much persuasion for him to do the driving whilst I sat up in the high side-car looking like a sunburnt Dowager Duchess.

About five hundred feet below the summit the terrain began to change dramatically. Large conifer trees appeared, grass grew amongst the stones, bushes began to proliferate. The clinker road was eventually lined with trees and the three or four houses ahead were concealed behind foliage. It may have been the change of altitude but my heart quickened with expectation. We even came to a farm gate that kept the livestock from straying, and the path was now soft and damp for the last few yards to the little farm house and the cluster of cottages around it. We reported to the 'incumbent', a cheerful florid-faced man whose name was Tommy Dodge. He exuded cheer and a warm welcome and guided us to the little cottage that we were to occupy.

What was there to do? Well, one could indulge in the island's favourite pursuit which was to go for long walks to various spots on the stark inhospitable coast line; this form of exercise and exploration was called locally 'a spadge'. "Let's go for a spadge" was the cheerful invitation one received from one's friends. In contrast to the aridness of the terrain, the names of places along the routes were romantic and heart-rending. "Litterbugs", which was particularly inaccessible, was a spot where in the distant past men from passing sailing vessels would climb up from the sea and leave messages, and also empty the box for posting when some 'civilised' place was reached.

There was a little book inside the 'letterbox' in which you were invited to write your name and leave a message. This, of course, was an irresistible temptation to 'wits' down the years. Perhaps the best remark which apart from its humour also captured the utter loneliness of the spot, was: "I detect a noticeable absence of haughty blondes"! I

am sure the author would have yearned for the sight of such a miraculous creature.

Do not imagine that those walks were gentle strolls. One clambered along precipitous mountainous-like cliffs and traversed flat valleys deep in clinker dust and pitmarked by the holes of 'land crabs'. You could sprain an ankle so easily and we were expressly forbidden to walk alone – it was actually an offence.

But the rewards were great. Will I ever forget coming upon "Wide-awake Plain"? It was the only resting and roosting place, I think, in the world of the 'Sooty Tern' – which was also called the 'Wide-awake'. This beautiful small bird traverses the widest expanse of the oceans – certainly the Atlantic – but comes to mate and raise its young on this dusty plain on the South West side of Ascension Island. Eggs lay amongst the fluttering feathers of the female birds in their hundreds of thousands. They were a great delicacy for the Islanders whose diet, if adequate, was somewhat predictable. The Sooty Terns' eggs tasted rather like Plovers' eggs and the ingenious cooks of the island – female and male – made a delectable use of them. There was something of ritual attached to the gathering of the eggs. First a brave soul would crawl in amongst the thousands of disturbed birds. Then scrape a square yard or so clear of eggs, feathers, pecked fish, etc. and retreat, after identifying the spot with his or her initials in the dust. Then the thief would return two or three days later. Every egg in that square yard would be a fresh one.

If the conservationists of the world should arise in wrath at the depredation of a few dozen eggs per year, let them think of the danger to the Sooty Tern presented by the great American Air Force airfield built across 'Wideawake Plain' later in 1943. The island had become a 'staging-post' for American aircraft en route from the American continent to Africa and the East, and no doubt the exigencies of War justified this horrible event. The hardy little 'Wideawake' has, I hope, made other arrangements in the course of time and has come to terms with 'civilisation'.

Another unforgettable spot was the picturesque little bay called "Comfortless Cove" which had successfully absorbed the little shed that housed the 'shore ends' of the cables that came into the island from Freetown, Cape Town, and Rio de Janeiro, and were the 'raison d'être' for our existence there. It was one of the places where one could dare to swim provided a sharp look-out was kept for sharks.

Swimming was technically (and sensibly) forbidden because the sea teemed with sharks and other dangerous fishy predators.

Although the law was often observed, in its breach no one was foolish enough to take unnecessary risks. I never saw anyone swimming without a friend keeping a sharp look-out. One had to pay some price for life on an island that in those years was probably one of the richest fishing grounds on earth. This fact was manifested at the time of the year when 'The Fry' were running.

'The Fry' were the millions of new baby fish suddenly released upon the Island's coastline. The shore of 'Long Beach', that great mile-long sandy bay immediately next to Georgetown, became one of the Wonders of the World. The great fish would harry the hordes of little 'fry' into shallow water and then charge in, snapping up fish as they went. So determined were the Albacore (tunny), Barracuda, and Shark to gorge themselves that they not infrequently drove their great bodies up on to the sandy beach, helped by a huge wave. When the wave receded, the great fish would be stranded. There was always a team of our St. Helenian staff ready to gather the harvest. The sharks were not edible, but the rest provided such a harvest that after a while the men began to throw the great fish back; they would not have survived a moment. It was possible to conjecture at times if there was more fish than sea in certain places in the 'storm'.

\* \* \*



# Under Orders

One day I received my orders. I was to take a South-bound ship for Cape Town and await further instructions. I spent a pleasant interlude in Cape Town and one day the awaited for orders arrived: I was to get myself to Durban Dockside and to follow the instructions that awaited me.

So on a warm January morning I presented myself to a spot on Durban Dockside which turned out to be a large hangar with a slipway down to the water. Floating in rather pregnant fashion some yards out into the harbour was what I was to learn was a "C" Class Flying Boat of Imperial Airways.

I was instructed to join a small group of Civilians who seemed to be gathered like myself awaiting to board the Flying Boat. Except for half a dozen young men, noisy, clownish and clearly Australian, most of the entirely male group seemed to my youthful eyestobe of middle years or indeed a little older.

A large motor-boat came up to the jetty and we climbed aboard – the Australian lads managed to do that with noisy elan – and we chugged sedately out to the Flying Boat. My heart began to beat with excitement as I clambered through the entrance hatch, and after inspecting my papers the male Steward showed me to my seat. It took me some time to realise that the older passengers – no women as I said – seemed to be accommodated up forward and the young Australians and I were towards the rear end of the plane. The accommodation seemed to be on two levels and was very comfortable and even spacious by modern standards.

I tried to relax my questioning mind and my beating heart. This was my first flight in a passenger aircraft, but if I can bestir my memory sufficiently even in those distant years the routine for passengers and Steward was exactly as it is today.

The large motorboat carefully drew away from the aircraft to ensure that it did not damage the great wings or propellers, and after that came the always agonising pause until the first propeller begins to revolve and the fuselage to quiver with the latent power of the engines.

The great hull glided across the quiet waters of Durban Harbour, quiet despite the teeming shipping, and there was a gentle lift-off. What a breath-taking view of that splendid harbour! We must have left at about 6.00 a.m. and hardly settled down and absorbed the strange world of a large Sea-plane when we were informed that we were about to land at Lourenco Marques. What a strange name! and could I have ever imagined that many years later some of the happiest times of my professional life were to be spent there?

The plane landed in the harbour which is the wide estuary of a river and we proceeded to follow the ritual of motor boat, landing and return, which was to make my next ten days so interesting. It soon became clear that Lourenco Marques was Portuguese in style and character. I was to learn much later in my life what splendid 'colonisers' they were, and I was to live through and play some role in the period of their withdrawal from Mozambique during the 1970's. But this was 1944 and 'colonisers' was not yet a word of opprobrium. We were given a splendid breakfast and one assumed that the plane was re-fuelled. Why this should be so necessary after so short a flight I was never to know, but I was to learn that the flying boat only flew for a few hours at a time. The stops seemed to take up as much time as the duration of the flights.

Now once again we were airborne, the coast of Mozambique on our immediate port side as we flew northwards. Lunch was taken at Beira, of which I remember little but a high sea-wall near which the flying boat anchored. Once again there was the thrill of take-off from a platform of water. Only two hours later we were down again – this time for the night – at a minute settlement which gave its name to the whole vast country: Mozambique. This historic spot stood upon a small island of its own. Three hundred miles to the East, across the Indian Ocean, was the vast island of Madagascar. There at about 3.30 p.m. our day's flying was over. We settled down in comfortable wooden huts, had a splendid dinner, the distinguished gentlemen un-bent a little, and the day was over early for we were to be up very early the next day.

We were to turn westward and inland, flying and stopping in the same style as on the first day. Our stopping places were on the great African Lakes, Nyasa, Tanganyika, and our night spent at a place which seemed to have disappeared from the modern maps: Port Henry. It was here that a dramatic change came over the entire gathering. At dinner those quiet distinguished gentlemen broke out into a batch of Rear-Admirals, Major-Generals, Air Vice-Marshalls and other



Senior Ranks. They must have been disguised as civilians to confirm to the ritual, or myth might be a better word, that Military Personnel did not traverse Portuguese Territory. Portugal was, of course, a neutral state in the war. Even those jovial Australians blossomed into Royal Australian Air Force officers. They had been Flying Instructors at a large Air Force base in Rhodesia. I was a lone and lonely young civilian in the midst of a cohort of Service Personnel.

As we stood upon a beautiful terrace that evening, everyone except me resplendent, the young Australians gathered in front of a handsome, immaculate Brigadier with three rows of ribbons upon his left breast. The Australians peered closely at him and inspected him from cap to his shining shoes. Then one of them said in a voice of awe: "J..... C.....! Shepherd's Short-Range Delta Group!"

It spoils the story to explain it but as all this was so long ago, it might be advisable. Shepherd's Hotel was Cairo's most elegant hotel; there were probably some fortunate personnel who never left the comfort and safety of the Nile Delta (Cairo) whilst others fought for their lives in the Desert away to the West. There was a particularly intrepid company of men who were "The Long-Range Desert Group". This was a particularly insulting, indeed insubordinate, remark. There was a long silence while the Brigadier looked the young men over, then he burst into loud and sincere laughter. I was to share a room with the Brigadier at Shepherds two or three days later. In his modest way he revealed to me that he was certainly not a "short-range delta" man. Perhaps that was why he could so cheerfully laugh off the insults of the young airmen.

Our penultimate overnight stop on that flight was Khartoum, and it gives one some idea of how early the day's flights ended that from that impressive city on the Nile we had time to take a trip from our splendid hotel to Omduran, the site of the last battle in which a cavalry charge had been made by the British Army. And wasn't Winston Churchill there? At the time it seemed inevitable that Churchill should be at every British Victory, and one prayed that he would see us through a few more.

I stood alone on that empty stone plain and visualised the thundering hooves and the clash of swords. How man's ingenuity to murder his own species has developed. And so back to the hotel and bed and at first light to take off for Cairo. What inspiring names they seemed to me. Cairo was at that time 'the centre of the world', it pulsed with immense human energy. What was to prove the turning point of the War as far as Britain was concerned – the Battle of Alamein – had been

fought only three months before, and the Allied troops having exploded the myth of Rommel's invincibility were in pursuit of the German and Italian forces across North Africa. Cairo seemed in euphoric mood to a very inexperienced young man who could hardly remember a time when the 'news' was good.

My stay in Cairo was very short. The next day I was back on the banks of the Nile boarding another "C" Class Flying Boat which was bound for Colombo. My orders were that I should report to a very Senior Gentleman in Karachi. So all I really saw of Cairo was the inside of Shepherd's Hotel and the few streets around it.

The Flying Boat was an exact replica of the one which had brought me from Durban but this one came from the West. Could it have come from the United Kingdom? Sadly I do not remember. The passengers were very similar in appearance to those on the Durban flight except that there were a few more civilians aboard. One of them sat next to me, a tall and handsome American probably in his early thirties. He carried about him an air of complete assurance and command, very much in contrast to the young man who sat next to him. I learnt some interesting things about him, the most important was that he was a Courier whose job it was to carry Despatches from Franklin Roosevelt in Washington to General 'Vinegar Joe' Stillwell at Chungking in South China and, of course, back in the opposite direction. The other information he imparted was of a very different nature; he confessed to a sexually athletic appetite that was mind boggling – if that is the right phrase. Admittedly my own experience in this particular field – how inappropriate words seem to be at this moment – was rather innocent and limited but by any standards his achievements must be described as Homeric. Is that the wrong word again? Should it be Herculean?

We took off, on course, for the Dead Sea and as we flew over the Holy Land, my eyes strained to find evidence of its unique History. Sadly it looked like any other semi-desert land and the bleak hills around the Dead Sea added only to the sense of desolation. I was to see this country again under happier circumstances in the mid 1980's and was impressed by how much had been achieved since 1943. From the Dead Sea we flew east again, on course for Basra – then a fine and tranquil City set upon the Shatt-el-Arab which is the mighty Delta of the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The sound of those names which seemed to reverberate with the long, and for us fundamental, history of our own Civilisation gave a glow of magic to the whole experience. There was no hint of the bloodshed and destruction that would devastate this area in the late '80's.

Night passed in Basra and now we were flying over the, then, Persian Gulf to Bahrain. Bahrain seemed prosperous and drab but soon we were off again towards Karachi. Our flight ended, however, at Durbai-Sharjah which is near the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and we were told that the plane had a hole in one of its floats which would have to be repaired before we could proceed. We were taken ashore to a little settlement and on the way I had my first sight of an Arab Dhow. I was to become very familiar with these beautiful craft in the near future.

The accommodation was limited and we were put up in simple wooden huts. I was required to share a small room with my American friend. A pleasant evening passed and it was time to turn in. I undressed quickly and crept into my bed, whispering my prayers furtively into my pillow. My American friend, after undressing slowly, knelt beside his bed in an attitude of deep reverence. Five minutes went by, ten minutes, and more and more until the question in my mind overcame my more than usual shyness. Eventually he got to his feet and I heard myself saying, 'Excuse me asking such a personal question but how do you reconcile your very devout prayers with all those wonderful adventures with all those girls?' Not one whit abashed, he replied simply, 'When I left home I promised my mother I would say my prayers every night before getting into bed.' I could only manage a feeble, 'Every night?' 'Sure' was the answer. Was he having me on? I spent a long time wondering how he managed those splendid devotions on those seemingly many occasions that he had enchanting company!

What ever may have been the problems with the aircraft, (unlike its heirs of the '80's it was repaired overnight), we left again at dawn for Karachi. My world was closing in on me again; I bade goodbye to the adventurous American and faced up to what lay ahead.

Having reported to the local Head of Operations, I was told that my next assignment was to be in the Persian Gulf along which I had flown so recently. This time, as I was to be taking a great deal of equipment, I would be travelling by B.I. Steamer. (B.I., which stood for the British India Line, was a very important shipping company in those days.) One was given to understand that the glamorous P. and O. Line was something of a subsidiary to the ubiquitous B. I. Service.

The ship would not be calling at Karachi for a few days and so I had time to do some intensive study of the work that lay ahead, and at the same time take a look at one of the most interesting cities of India. These were still the years before Partition and although one was

vaguely aware of tensions growing between Mr. Jonnah of the Muslim League and the Mahatma who was almost the Patron Saint of the Hindu Congress Party, one was so ignorant of Indian politics that one had no conception of the great upheavals to come.

My stay in Karachi was made memorable by two charming people who happened to be staying at the same hotel as me. They were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dickens. He was not only a very senior Indian Civil Servant but also a grandson of the great Novelist. They took the time and had the patience to show a very impressionable young man the India that they themselves had known for many years. We visited Muslim and Hindu places of worship, and the things that I absorbed in those so brief days have left a deep impression on the rest of my life. Remarkably I seem to have influenced their lives too.

About four or five years later when, at last, I was a busy and very much 'exposed' broadcaster, I received a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dickens from that very lovely spot in Natal – Howick – informing me that they had decided to retire to South Africa and it was all my fault! Obviously that yearning I had carried around with me had transmitted itself to those observant and sensitive people.

The day before I was due to leave for Muscat I was introduced to Ahmad. He was to be my 'cook-bearer' and I took to him immediately. He was not young; he had a thin aesthetic face and a splendid wide-pointed grey moustache. His head was crowned by a Pugrie (Turban). Despite that he seemed to bear a striking resemblance to my maternal Grandfather and this set the tone of a relationship in which I found it easy to be as friendly and thoughtful for his happiness as he so patently was for mine. I am sure that without his guidance we would never have sustained the correct Sahib/Cook/Bearer relationship so essential, it seemed, in the environment into which I was now being drawn.

I was briefed carefully about my duties and responsibilities, and with large quantities of what at that time was secret equipment I set out upon the B.I. Steamer one morning from Karachi. I had been airily told that Ahmad would travel 'steerage', a word which did not convey a great deal to me at the time. When I had settled into my cabin and gone up on to the upper deck for a breath of fresh air, I looked down onto the forward deck space and to my horror saw among a score or more of others Ahmad preparing his bedding and other possessions in a tidy heap. He was going to sleep on deck! I seethed in my ignorant rage. To him this was the normal way to travel and I would have made a spectacle of myself if I had in any way interfered with

the traditions of centuries. Nevertheless I often, during the short voyage across the head of the Arabian Sea from Karachi to Muscat in Oman, went up on deck to see if Ahmad was alright. If he spotted me standing there, he would acknowledge my presence with a smile and a slight bow and I then retired to look at the sea or some other part of the ship.

After two days at sea we approached an impressive but forbidding shore. As we drew near the steep rocky promontories ahead, there opened up a narrow entrance and we passed between two grim headlands into one of the most dramatic-looking harbours I have ever seen. Some years later I was to be reminded of those "Heads" of Muscat when I saw the Knysna Heads on the South African coast, except that the latter gave access to a benign and gentle harbour whose hills were covered in beautiful vegetation.

The great, historic harbour of Muscat was anything but benign but it possesses a sombre grandeur. On either promontory there was built a huge stony fort that recalled those superb forts of Malta. The harbour opened out so the Town itself had a wide-faced access to the sea. Some splendid buildings dominated the waterfront. I was to know them as the Sultan's Palace, the Customs House, the Residency of the British Political Agent, the Cable Station, and others. But above us towered those great forts which I was to learn were the Army Barracks on the starboard side as we looked at the town, and Prison on the Port side.

The ship dropped anchor and a swarm of what I then called unself-consciously "bumboats" nuzzled around her. I went down the gangway, keeping in close company with Ahmad who was perfectly at home in this environment, into a launch and in a few moments stood upon the Customs House Quay. Here there was a colleague to welcome me and here for the first time I encountered the heat of the city of Muscat, the capital of the Historic State of Oman.

Now I found myself walking through narrow streets accompanied by a small band of Arab 'bearers' with my possessions on their heads. The technical equipment was another matter and would be safely held at the Customs House until we could properly take care of it.

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# Muscat ... A Royal Command

I had been warned by the Political Agent and the Military Adviser on my arrival that I should expect an official invitation from the Sultan of Muscat, Said-bin-Taimur, to present myself formally to His Highness. This was usually to be expected after a lapse of some days to conform with the Protocol usual with such matters, and I was given to understand that I would be accompanied by the Political Agent Mr. Tim Hallowes, or by Major Leslie Hurst, the Military Adviser. I was therefore extremely surprised and not a little alarmed when the scented card announcing the invitation arrived after only two days, and that I was summoned to go alone.

It was understandable that when the great moment arrived I was filled with considerable trepidation. Clad in my finest array I approached the rather impressive entrance to the Palace wondering if I might even be turned away by the guard on duty. He was a splendid physical specimen, of undoubted African descent, clad in white robes, with a fine white turban on his head with a silver jewel pinned into it, a musket slung across his chest. He was a Nubian and a representative of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman – my host.

Rather timorously I explained myself and my presence at the gate and was regally led into the courtyard and eventually into the Palace, to the Sultan's reception room. Clearly he was the short but regal man in splendid robes who sat upon a chair at the end of the room but there were other fine-looking men around him.

His Excellency greeted me very courteously enquiring if my quarters were satisfactory and expressing the hope that my duties in Muscat would be pleasant and successful. In an unnatural voice I explained my work to him and thanked him for his help and for the great honour of the audience he had granted me.

After a few more pleasantries he lent forward and with an earnest expression on his face said, 'Are you Mr Howell? Tell me about the

work you have been sent here to do'. I had enough native Welsh wit not to show the thoughts that were passing through my mind and I was to find out that this remarkable man was anything but silly although in his own way he could be kindly and amusing. My interrogation proceeded and when I was talking about things I knew something about I could make reasonable sense. The Sultan was shrewd enough to draw some of his advisers into the conversation and some of the tension was beginning to subside when he leant forward again and said, 'Mr. Howell – I gather you are an engineer?'. I modestly admitted to that calling; it did not seem the moment to explain that the word 'Engineer' covered a large number of different disciplines. He seemed pleased with this information and said with a smile, 'I wonder perhaps if you might be happy to help us in a difficulty we have.'

I expressed myself honoured and delighted to help him in any way I could. He responded by saying, 'Well, the refrigerators in the Palace kitchens have stopped working. Could you perhaps spare some time to look at them? I would be immensely obliged.'

I hope that the horror and embarrassment did not show on my face. This was the fearful dilemma in which I found myself. In what is possibly the hottest place on earth the failure of the refrigerators in the Royal Kitchen was a real catastrophe. How on earth could I explain to His Highness that I knew something of short-wave transmission and reception, and understood the complicated devices in the Instrument Room that we were busily erecting, but what I knew about refrigeration engineering was extremely rudimentary. What could I say?

Clearly the best thing to do at that moment was to show willing. I asked respectfully if I might be excused to inspect the machines. Permission was graciously granted and I was led down into the inner fastness of the Palace. My mind was in a turmoil and young as I was I knew something near to physical fear.

Eventually led by a huge man that the Sultan referred to without embarrassment as one of his 'slaves' we arrived in solemn procession at what was clearly a huge kitchen. Black-shrouded figures that one assumed were female darted about. My huge escort led me regally to two huge domestic-type refrigerators that stood against a wall. I was filled with despair.

I searched frantically for the source of electric power. There was none. My mind began to work feverishly; could these be paraffin-operated fridges? If so there might be some glimmering of hope. Having lived for too long on the Islands of Ascension and St. Helena, I



had spent a good deal of time keeping our paraffin refrigerators in working order. The source of power was usually a small paraffin burner under the machine and this was a constant source of trouble. It was essential to keep the burner immaculately clean and the wick in pristine condition. Surely the Royal refrigerators could not have been neglected in that way! Was there hope after all?

I asked the huge man who still stood beside me if it was possible to move the machines a little away from the wall. I could then more comfortably inspect the paraffin burners. I breathed a prayer in good Christian fashion in the dedicatedly Islamic dungeon. I felt a lifting of the heart as I inspected the incredibly oily sooty burners and withdrew them and carried them to a stone table which stood nearby.

I asked my guardian if he could get me some cloths to clean these fearsome-looking instruments. The man turned to the little row of black-clad figures and issued a command. Two or three of them darted away and came back with large quantities of what seemed like calico. I could feel but not see the intense interest the whole gathering took in what I was doing. I even felt the dismay behind that deep *Purdah* that the young Gentleman was actually cleaning the horrid smelling things himself. I can only say that I shared their horror, clad as I was in my finery. When the instruments were reasonably clean, I turned my attention to the wicks.

Apart from being incredibly charred, it was clear that there was precious little left of either of them. How could I expect to make anyone understand that I might want them to look for some spares? I raised one of the wicks until I could extract it from the burner. I turned to my Guardian and asked him if there was anything like this in the kitchens – I held it up for all to see. The large man addressed the little band of creatures; there was a great deal of head shaking and Arabian “ooh-ing” and “aah-ing”. I stood rigid, smelly and desolate.

Then one of the little ravens gave out a happy cry and darted away through the archway that led to some other dungeon. I stood in defeated silence while the little gathering chattered away like the small birds that they so closely resembled. My Guard stood silent and looming over me. After what seemed to be eternity the little black figure returned at great speed through the archway waving something in her hand and squeaking with delight. I could have kissed her – which would put an end to my troubles in any case. She stood panting in front of me and unwrapped a little parcel. Inside were six or even more, pristine and unused, wicks.

It did not take long to fix the wicks, and then one of the young

women pushed me aside and gave the two instruments a good thorough female cleaning. I grovelled again under the refrigerators and inserted the burners. There was a moment of frustration when we looked for a match to light the wicks, but even this was solved. Then I remembered that the refrigerators were not standing against the wall. I removed the burners and the machines were manhandled back into place. There was, of course, a perfectly easy way of access to the burners which in my desperation I had not noticed before. The burners were reinserted and I drew breath for the first time in what seemed like hours.

The tension was not yet over, for it would take some considerable time for the effects of the power source to be seen. However, I attempted to clean myself up and swept out of the Kitchen with what I hoped was a dignified exit. Were those twitterings of admiration that seemed to come from my black-shrouded audience?

On my way to the Palace gate I explained to my Guardian that those burners had to be inspected regularly and kept immaculately clean. I hoped that they had sufficient supplies of paraffin. I would be back later in the day to inspect the machines. Would he be so good as to ensure that I could re-enter the Palace? This he undertook to do.

It took me some days to get over this fright. What had seemed to be an impending disaster had turned out to be a very real blessing for His Highness always thereafter seemed to exhibit a particular regard for this callow young engineer.

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# The Sultan's Launch

I was invited to attend upon the Sultan's launch together with other guests.

Everybody went on the State Launch early. This little vessel was a 'dhow' into whose internals a decrepit and highly temperamental engine had been introduced.

It was called 'the Fahr el Bahr', the "Sea Hawk". She ran on a combination of paraffin and a firm belief in the 'Graciousness of Allah'. As the war years drew on and spare parts for the engine became more and more difficult to obtain, Allah was called upon to play an increasing role in her locomotion. The Captain of the craft, whose name was 'Yah Yar' was an engaging ruffian with an understandably disillusioned look in his eye. Although he was no mechanic, he had a most impressive repertoire of excuses for the inefficiency of the Launch, and was never without a good reason for delays and breakdowns.

The Guests stood huddled together on the small deck forward under the awning. The Europeans perspired freely into their white duck suits. When all the Uncles, Brothers and Cousins of the Sultan had come aboard his retainers followed. Fifty brawny men, each one a perfect physical specimen and all bearing traces of their Nubian slave ancestry, were the next to come aboard. The "Sea Hawk" groaned and sank down almost to her gunwales.

Then came the Sultan. A small man, in gorgeous robes, he carried with him an impressive simple dignity. He was a shy man, but he radiated a quiet strength that was not lost on anyone present. His was a personal rule, and he governed his large Kingdom with stern justice, as became a Man who could claim descent from the Prophet. This was revealed in his name 'Said bin Said'. He had a crisp black beard that curled upwards at its point, large reserved brown eyes and an olive skin. He sat down without a word on a draped chair, and folded his small plump hands.

That was the signal to be off. The anchor was weighed and a loud clank came from the Engine Room ... Silence. A handle was being turned fiendishly, and muttered Arabian imprecations and exhorta-

tions came drifting forward through the hatchway. We all looked unconcerned. The Sultan refolded his hands, and one of the functionaries went off to see the cause of the delay. An air of expectancy came over the crowd, the awful clank was repeated, and the cranking handle was turned again.

Another Minister of State went off and disappeared down the hatchway. The air of expectancy faded to one of impatience and the Sultan turned his head and glared aft at the engine room hatch. After about five unproductive minutes his British Military Adviser walked aft and disappeared into the now, no doubt, crowded engine room. There wasn't even a 'clank' this time, only a string of oaths, the sound of a blow and a squeal of pain. The Adviser's head appeared out of the hatchway and he beckoned to me with a forefinger, his eyes full of rage and frustration.

I tried to ignore him but a well-meaning Uncle or Cousin of the Sultan poked a finger in my ribs and noisily drew my attention to it. I glared at him but went aft. I climbed down the ladder into that awful black pit, which smelt of hot humanity, bilge water and paraffin. The engine by this time seemed to have been dismantled to its component parts which lay about the bed of the engine room in attitudes of abandon. Yah Yar was nursing a sore ear and the Military Adviser was breathing heavily in the corner of the engine room. The heat was insufferable and everything was covered with a layer of grease. Somewhat idiotically I said, 'What's the matter?'

Yar Yah turned his eyes to Heaven and shrugged his shoulders. We slowly set about putting the engine together again, and when it had all been re-assembled, with nothing as far as I could see left over, we tried cranking again. The engine was quite dead.

Then I had a look at the sparking plugs; they were covered with a moist pad of oil and the gaps were about a quarter of an inch wide. I looked at Yah Yar with a deep dislike and he cleaned them up wordlessly. When the gaps had been set to what looked like a reasonable distance, we put them back. I turned to the Military Adviser and said, 'Well, I hope it will work now'. Yar Yah said, 'If Allah wills,' and dived behind the engine before we could do him some injury. Once again the engine was cranked up. She coughed, she spluttered, and just as the man on the handle was about to collapse, she fired.

The engine was running, Yah Yar beamed at us in pure joy, and we stumbled up the hatchway blindly; the launch was under way, and we took our places on the Upper Deck.

Eventually we arrived at a place on the Coast where the meeting was

to take place between the Sultan and the recalcitrant Arab chief. The launch anchored in a wide bay with a long golden sandy beach running along its length. Surf pounded on the shore, and as the little dug-out canoes filled with the passengers from the Launch swept up on to the beach, I thought for a moment that they were likely to be drowned. But I had reckoned without the wild-faced Pirate who sat perched on the stern end of the canoe. He kept her stern on the huge waves and allowed us to be swept up on to the beach at a break-neck speed and eventually the little boat slid gently up on to the smooth sand with the last of the foam hissing and swirling frustrated around her.

Burly men held her and lifted us out, carrying each of us to the dry sand. Then we climbed on to the backs of donkeys and rode inland for about a mile up to the gates of an old Arab Fort. Outside the gates of the Fort were gathered about three hundred Arabs armed to the teeth. As we drew near they leashed off their rifles. Bullets ricocheted around us and for a terrible moment I thought we had run into serious trouble.

It was only their way of welcoming us. The Sultan, quite unmoved either to fear or delight by this welcome – he was familiar with it – got off his donkey and walked into the Fort. We followed him, at some distance, and found ourselves inside a dingy courtyard. The place was not nearly so imposing on the inside as it had looked from the sea. The walls were crumbling and as we climbed up the stone steps into what I suppose one would call in Norman architecture the Keep, I noticed that several of the stone steps had crumbled completely away.

We walked into a large vault-like room, with a huge carpet spread upon the floor. On the carpet was laid the most enormous quantity of food I have seen collected in one spot. Whole roasted sheep were dotted down the middle of the carpet at frequent intervals, and arranged around them on plates were mountains of rice, chickens, curry puffs, meat balls, Chupattis (a sort of savoury pancake) and all sorts and conditions of curry dishes. Here and there looking very incongruous were dishes of tinned apricots. The Military Adviser whose job it was to stop smuggling looked a little dubiously at them. I would like to have seen the tins before they were opened. I expect originally they came from South Africa.

We stood sheepishly around for a few minutes and then we found our places around the carpet and sat down. When I say we sat, I mean we sat on the floor. Now you probably find sitting on the floor easy enough, but I can assure you that it is difficult to sit on the floor the Arab way. One leg is placed under you and the other is bent at the knee with the foot flat on the ground. Your knee is rather too near

your chin for comfort. If it sounds uncomfortable, you are perfectly right. There is one saving grace however: if you can stand the agony for five minutes you begin to go numb and providing you can keep your balance you are quite alright until you have to get up again.

In the Arab World, age and severity are very much revered and it is very bad form to laugh on social occasions. Conversation is conducted in whispers. You sit in an attitude that you hope is dignified and glare covertly at those sitting opposite you. In this case, of course, over the tops of the sheep carcasses. After a few minutes the Sultan whispered in sepulchral tones to the British Consul, and this was the signal for everyone to start whispering too.

Seated next to the Sultan were two of the wildest looking people I have seen. Father and son, they were the leaders of a semi-independent Arab tribe from the interior of the State whom the Sultan wished to impress for political reasons. The father was a powerful Sheikh, and absolute despot, ruthless and savage with a fear of no man except his son, the child who sat next to him.

This man had never seen the sea before, never seen a motor car, an electric fan, a wireless set. He was the wildest of wild Bedouin. Aged about thirty-five, his face was hard and cruel. He took in everything, peering across the room at the strange Europeans. He wore a dirty turban of coarse wool and a washed-out looking robe that may once have been orange in colour but was now a sickly yellow ochre. It was difficult to imagine him as a powerful ruler except for that cruel proud face.

Beside him and dressed exactly like him was the young boy, his son. He had as yet not a hair on his face, so he could not have been much more than sixteen, yet this lad had already established a legendary fame for himself. Rumour had it that he was a ruthless killer with several deaths to his name. His personal servants were a short-lived brotherhood, victims of his petulant fury.

Near them sat their Chief Minister, a tired sickly old man. The story was whispered to me that one day the boy, then aged about thirteen, decided that the old man had not shown him sufficient respect, and the boy had led him for execution. His father the Sheikh had to beg for the old man's life on his knees. So much for the Chief Guests.

The two men on either side of me were old friends of mine. On my left was the Minister of Education, a Palestinian Arab who was young and extremely handsome with a very charming manner. One needs to realise that this took place in the middle 'forties and there seemed to be no hint of the trouble which was to come after the Israeli laid claim

to their ancient homeland. I have often wondered what fate had in store for that rather engaging young man.

The one on my right had a smooth manner and an expensive Balliol accent but conjured up memories of P.C. Wren at his most improbable. He reminded me constantly of Charles Laughton in one of his more sinister roles. I was lucky in my companions for they were bulky, kindly men who were glad to help me during the ordeal which was to follow.

The food was spread on the floor and we had to maintain the uncomfortable attitude of squatting our haunches. When the Sultan had seated himself, without a word or further ado we pitched in, and I use the word deliberately for it was a tremendous maul aggravated by what seemed to an outsider an error of judgement on the part of the cook. The sheep had been slaughtered only a few hours before and were fearfully tough. However ignorant the Bedou might be of ships and radio, food was something they comprehended very well and those sheep were as tough and indestructible as the Rock of Gibraltar. No knives and forks are used and only the right hand is permitted in the Homeric struggle which was that particular Arab meal. You attack the carcass which lies nearest to you with the right hand hauling off as much as you require. It is very greasy and your hand slips. It is advisable to get someone to co-operate by hauling on the other side, for it is not impossible to pull the entire animal off its plate.

My two companions were expert at this game. They playfully heaved off about seven ribs and put them on my plate; they dismembered a roasted chicken in quicker time than it takes to tell, and put half of it on top of the ribs. While I goggled at this, they piled rice on top of the whole thing until ribs and chicken disappeared. "Charles Laughton" on my left obligingly bent his enormous bulk to cover up my fidgeting and when we were all ready we started.

The rest was up to me and it was extremely difficult. The rice was cooked in clarified butter – what the Hindus call Ghee – which made it intolerably slippery. To convey that food from the plate to my mouth called forth all my powers of concentration. But, at considerable cost to my clothes, I made significant inroads into the pile in front of me. It smacked more of Civil Engineering than eating and for the first time I thought I understood the meaning of the word 'trencherman'. What made it more difficult was that when I felt I was making headway, my two friends would lean over, grab a curry puff or a meatball, and pop it on the top of my pile. I kept eating steadily using my right hand only, for it would have been downright bad manners to

use both or even my left hand – rather like eating peas with one’s knife. As a matter of fact, I could not use my left hand for I had it pressed firmly on the ground to maintain my precarious equilibrium.

I was haunted by fears of toppling over, which meant that I would knock “Charles Laughton” over, who would have knocked over the man next to him and all our side of the room, including the Sultan, would have gone down like a row of nine pins. By this time I was completely numb and praying for the ordeal to be over. Eventually, the Sultan got up and my two Arab friends on either side of me leapt to their feet. I cast an agonised glance at them and they helped me onto my feet. Slowly and painfully the blood ran back into my legs while the rest of the party, meanwhile, moved off down the steps into the sunlight. Once again the shots rang out and we were on our way home.

In the inscrutable way of the Arab this had been a big Political occasion, but all I remember of it was that awful engine room and that enormous meal.

\* \* \*



# The American Missionary

I had not been in Arabia long before I heard strange tales of the American woman doctor who lived by herself in a small settlement about a hundred miles up the Coast. Stories of her exploits, the fine work she was doing, drifted in occasionally and were discussed and forgotten. I suppose I doubted that any woman from the Western world could have the fortitude to live alone in such an unfriendly, unhealthy part of the world. The fact that she was also a Missionary of the American Dutch Reform Church seemed to confirm that this was a fantasy story.

It is certain that I would never have met her but for a most strange adventure that befell me. I was asked by the Military Advisor to accompany him on a trip up the coast. From time to time it was necessary for him to see what was going on up the coast where a long and almost empty coastline faced on to the Indian Ocean. There was, of course, a war going on.

He had chosen the end of the Monsoon season for then the sea was calm and oily. The coast of Oman can be one of the most ugly and forbidding in the world, and you could not rely on a friendly welcome from the inhabitants if it were necessary to put ashore. All travel in Arabia has to be carefully arranged in advance; permission must be sought and gained from the local Sheikhs. Representatives were usually sent to the tribes whose territory you intend to pass through. One does not use the word 'hostage', but in fact that is what those 'representatives' were. Etiquette, which plays an enormous part in the Arab way of life, has to be satisfied and time must be no object.

The State Launch, the old "Fahr el Bahr" in which we had already had several adventures, was to be used. Leslie, the Military Adviser, said she resembled a pig more closely than a hawk, and was about as sea-worthy. The old Dhow was laden to the gunwales with equipment, the sea was placid and undisturbed except for the darting ripple

of sea snakes and the lazy splash of jumping fish.

Occasionally we went ashore to visit some of the isolated Arab settlements where Leslie had his official duties to perform and although I noticed that most of the places afforded opportunities of a little duck shooting, a good deal of useful work was accomplished.

The nights were beautiful. We sat on the 'upper deck' and watched the bright stars 'swinging' in the sky as the little boat moved at anchor. The cool sea breeze was a sweet refreshment on skins that smarted with prickly heat and perspiration. Two days passed in pleasant idleness for me if not for Leslie. Early on the third morning we were crossing the mouth of a bay in which we could see a few rush huts straggled along the sandy beach, when the Boatswain shouted and pointed out a small dugout canoe being paddled furiously towards us.

We were hailed by the paddlers who called out that they wanted assistance with a dying man. We looked gloomily at each other wondering what on earth we could do, but taking our First Aid equipment with us we went ashore. Lying in the hot sun on the beach was a man and it took very little medical knowledge to see there was nothing we could do for him. He had been stabbed in the lower abdomen with a dagger. It is at moments like this that one realises one's ignorance and helplessness.

Leslie was not a professional Army officer – and a Gurkha officer on secondment to the Sultan – for nothing. He at least had an idea; he groped around in the first-aid chest and found some opium pills. "These might relieve the poor chap's pain" he said. Unfortunately the label supplied all the information one could possibly require except the proper dose to give. We gave him one, then another and then a third. Just as despair was about to grip us one of the Arabs who had been standing about grabbed my arm and started excitedly about the American lady who lived up the coast. We suddenly remembered that she was supposed to live within a few miles of this settlement.

We took the dying man, now quite oblivious of anything around him, on board the launch and set course for Baham where two very chastened young men went ashore again and asked rather sheepishly if anyone knew of the American Lady Doctor. To our surprise, to say nothing of our relief, they said with one voice: "Yes, she lives there in the hospital by the sea shore".

We were led to a large hut built, like the others in this small settlement, of date palms but different from them in that it had a pretty garden in front of it where roses, marigolds, potatoes and even a few tired grapevines grew. The stir and clamour must have disturbed the occupant for there appeared in the doorway a white woman. She pre-

sented a picture strongly reminiscent of "Darkest Africa" circa 1890; a dear old thing with a very ancient and battered toupee on her head leaning on a stick was smiling sweetly and placidly at us. She was wearing a voluminous dress of faded grey printed material decidedly Victorian in cut. Thick lenses to her glasses helped to hide her shyness but I noticed later that she would never look directly at us. She wore an antique watch-locket and brooch. As she limped towards us I realised with disbelief that she had an artificial leg. Her face lit up and her eyes twinkled behind her glasses.

'Why hullo!' she said, and I heard immediately that thirty-five years in Arabia had not taken the edge off her mid-West American accent, nor had it diminished her lovable quaint American humour. Don't think we neglected the unfortunate Arab; he was swiftly brought out of the fierce heat and placed in her clean though simple 'hospital', and Dr Mary Shuttleworth Longman attended to him with swift deftness.

There was little that could be done for him; he was a dying man before we had come upon him, but she made him comfortable and relieved our tortured consciences by telling us that the opium had probably helped him in his pain and would permit him to die in peace. When she was satisfied that everything had been done to help the man, she led us into her 'parlour'.

That room had to be seen to be believed. In that little hut built of date palms, we had stumbled on an American Middle West parlour. I knew the effect would not be lost on Leslie and it was all I could do to contain my laughter. There followed five difficult minutes for us. You will have experienced the agony of wanting to laugh and knowing there is someone else in the room with you in the same state of mind. You avoid each other's eyes assiduously, and yet you find yourself peeping curiously to see how your friend is taking it all.

In the corner of the room was a lovely American rocking-chair, the doors had beaded curtains hanging in them, several chairs had antimacassars, and all the furniture had that solidity and smugness that was eloquent of the closing years of the last century. I was just recovering from the impact of this room upon my startled mind when I looked out of the unglazed window. A few feet away a camel was chewing the cud with that prim self-satisfaction that is the camel's most irritating characteristic. One of the things that I found hard to understand in the Arab is his affection for that infuriating beast. Of course his dependence on the animal may have a lot to do with that.

We sat in that pleasant little room listening to the soft tones of the

voice of the gentle old lady, and a salutary humility came over us. We felt we were in the presence of someone intrinsically Good and Kind. She was a Missionary as well as a doctor, and in addition to her medical work she taught the children of the little village.

In the gathering dusk we heard this woman's story. She had come out to Arabia from a small mid-West American town when she was newly qualified and still just a girl. As she spoke, with gentle humour untouched by wistfulness, I tried to picture what thoughts would run through the mind of a young crippled girl, used to the sweeping fertility of her homeland, when she first saw the barren ugliness of Deserta Arabia. I remembered the impact of Arabia on myself. I remembered the despair, the sense of being cut off from all that one loved and lived for, and felt very humble. This woman had given her life to the simple people around her, she had grown to love them deeply, and had a fine understanding of them.

'My, my, it's time I watered the garden, gentlemen. Perhaps you would care to have a little supper with me afterwards. I think I can give you a little surprise'. We went out into the garden and admired the flowers, admired the vegetables, inspected the seedboxes, and listened to her plans for the next season. I looked up from her garden to the barren basalt hills behind the 'town'. I looked at the drab dark green date palms with their lengthening shadows. The camels were being loaded with dried fish, petulant and protesting either at the smell of the fish or at the prospect of the night's journey.

From the Mosque the voice of the Mullah was calling the faithful to the evening prayer, and the fishermen were washing themselves before answering that cry which came floating across the still air. My eyes returned to the gay little American garden that flourished in the midst of Desolation. I thought of the little parlour with the family photographs upon the walls, and the Bible on a pedestal in the corner. My thoughts were somewhat confused.

'It gets mighty chilly here in the evenings. Let's go inside and have supper. I'm a bit worried about the soup. I don't care to ask you to take it in case you don't like it'. 'Oh, try it on him' said Leslie, nodding at me. 'I always get him to eat anything doubtful, he's a sort of guinea pig!' 'OK Guinea Pig', said Dr Longman to me, 'Come along and we will see if it is fit for human consumption!', and thereafter I was called "Guinea Pig".

After we had washed, we sat down to the evening meal. As usual with me on these occasions, I was caught with the soup spoon in my mouth when Dr Longman started to say Grace. Feeling very gauche and ashamed, I tried slyly to put it back on the soup plate. But it

wasn't lost on her. When she had finished Grace she turned to me, and with a smile said very gently, 'You know, Guinea Pig, Grace means something in these parts; we are real glad to get the food. I guess I should have warned you.'

The supper itself was a culinary triumph over the environment. After the soup we had a chicken, and then with a proud toss of her head she said, 'Well, boys, this is where you give a salute to America. It's not Thanksgiving Day, but I'm mighty glad to see you so we're having Pumpkin Pie!' Indeed it certainly did honour to America and goaded by her encouragement we finished the lot! Her eyes gleamed with pleasure. 'It sure does me good to see a couple of hungry lads. I guess I spend too much time with the sick, one forgets what a healthy appetite looks like.' I think she was amply rewarded for her trouble.

It was now time for her evening round of the sick. A servant brought a lantern and she led the way out of the back of the house to the Hospital. The lantern only dimly lit up the interior of those huts, but there was enough light for us to see the huddled figures on the ground. The Arab patients would have been very uncomfortable in beds. Here on every mattress lay Lazarus covered with sores and in addition suffering from other ailments. She spoke to them in her perfect Arabic. They clung to her as she joked and tended to them; soothed one, teased another, keeping up a running fire of asides in English for us that were at once tender and yet amusing.

I asked if she was ever tired or dispirited. 'Well, you know I love work. I never escape the awful feeling of defeat when I lose one of these dear people, but one just does what one can and that's all there is to it. But I still hate being dragged out at night. I'm awful scared of the dark.'

I knew the Arabian night, the black sinister shadows that lurk in every doorway and the scrofulous dogs that loom out of the darkness and sniff at your legs. Every shadow is an enemy, even your own shadow thrown by the lantern you carry on to walls, which darts ahead of you, or lingers behind to catch up on you and pounce. Yes, I could understand why she hated the dark. When she had seen everyone who needed her attention, we suggested that it was time to go back to the launch. She led us back through the school room, There on the blackboard was a picture of 'the Flight into Egypt' beautifully drawn in chalk. She pointed at it and said, 'I'm quite an artist, aren't I!'. Yes indeed she was, more than she would ever realise, and not only in chalks.

We walked down the sandy beach, the little woman limping between us, her arms linked through ours, telling us what a great day

it had been for her. Leslie, usually a witty cynical soul, turned to her and said, 'It's been a great day for us too. That's miserably inadequate, but it has been'. He held on to her frail hands for a second and then stepped into the canoe muttering to himself. As I chokingly mumbled my goodbye, she pressed two small books into my hands. 'I want you both to read these, Guinea Pig. They make for swell reading.'

I, for one, felt that at last we had stumbled on her secret. She was completely happy, interested in all the events of the world, with a great love and admiration for her homeland, yet without hanker or longing. She was perfectly fulfilled by her Calling and her work in Arabia. Although thoroughly absorbed into her background, Dr Longman was still the same person who had set out so many years ago. She would probably have been at home anywhere.

In a land where women had no position, that woman was loved and respected. In a country of disease and heat and filth, her little Hospital was a refuge for the sick and aged. In a world of ignorance and prejudice she brought enlightenment and skill.

And what a superb Pumpkin Pie it was!

The Arabs have a Proverb that says the Gods a man worships are written upon his face. I hope that in Baham the people looked earnestly at her face.

The boatmen pushed off and paddled steadily towards the "Sea Hawk", chanting softly to set the strokes.

"El Hum d'Allah" "El Hum d'Allah".

Leslie and I faced each other in the moonlight in silence. Presently we peered at the books she had given us. One was the Gospel According to St. Luke and the other the Gospel According to St. Matthew.

"Bless the four corners of this house,  
And be the lintel Blest.  
And bless the hearth, and bless the Board  
And bless each place of rest.  
And bless the door that opens wide  
To strangers as to kin.  
And bless each crystal window pane  
That lets the sunlight in. And bless the rooftop overhead,  
And every sturdy wall.  
The Peace of man, the Peace of God,  
The peace of Love on All."

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# A Cloak and Dagger Affair

**I**n those war years when I lived in the State of Muscat and Oman, it stretched in a narrow strip along the whole Eastern sea-board of the Arabian Peninsular, from the entrance of the Persian Gulf as it was then known – now of course the Arabian Gulf – almost as far as what was still the Aden Protectorate. This was a distance of a thousand miles, but in width Oman was seldom more than sixty or seventy miles deep. What is more, for a considerable part of the way it was dominated by a mountain range running down its narrow spine.

The Sultan claimed complete sovereignty over this whole realm but, in fact, up in the mountains there was a man known as the Imam. He claimed the religious leadership of the people. Over the previous sixty years or so the Imams and the Sultans had been at loggerheads, and now an open rift lay between them.

The Sultan, a direct descendant of the Prophet, was in no need of an Imam and politically he was strongly supported by the British through the British-controlled Indian Government. Anyone who was a friend of the Sultan was automatically an enemy of the Imam, so no British or Indian official had seen the Imam in many years. There were few Westerners in the area except the British, but one who was not was Dr. Wells, the Medical Missionary who lived with his pretty wife in the adjacent town to Muscat of Matrah.

As he was not British he enjoyed the confidence of the Imam and occasionally he received mysterious envoys for the Old Man in his Mountains, seeking medical or other secular advice.

One night, as dusk fell, a lurking figure separated itself from the shadows as Wells was about to make his tired way upstairs from his Clinic to have the final meal of the day and to go to a well-earned rest. The figure loomed up beside almost before Wells was aware of it and grabbed him by the arm. With pounding heart Wells turned on him thinking that his last moment had come.

'Peace, in the name of Allah', said the stranger, his face covered with the folds of his burnoose. 'I come from the Imam who salutes you and seeks your aid'.

Wells, of course, spoke fluent Arabic and when his fright had subsided said, rather irritated: 'This is a strange way to bring tidings from the Imam. You will have our people here think I am an enemy of the Sultan. What can I do to help you – but first let us move out of the shadows and permit me to see your face'.

Normally the approaches from the Imam to Wells came through some local merchant in the town or some Sheik who was passing through. In their devious ways they would introduce some oblique reference to the Imam, and by tortuous means hint the portent of their story rather than reveal it clearly, until Wells grasped what they wanted him to know. He would then equally deviously provide the information, or make up a prescription, or do what he could to help them.

This was something different, however. Here was a direct approach from the Rebel in the hills and things could become rather complicated for the Doctor if he was found to be intriguing with a man that the Sultan considered his enemy. Even harbouring one of the Enemy's Men would also be a rather unhealthy thing to do.

Without having properly recovered from his very distinct alarm at this mysterious encounter, Wells had to make up his mind quickly what to do.

'Go up that flight of stairs, pass through the wooden door at the top and enter the first room on the right. Try not to be seen and wait in that room until I come to you', said Wells.

This was risky indeed, for the corridors bristled with people, and it was vitally important the no-one should see this stranger, not even – for her own safety – Beth, his wife.

Wells turned on his heels and walked thoughtfully back to his surgery, hoping that no-one had seen the mysterious encounter. The hospital had a primitive internal telephone system mainly to allow Tom and Beth to communicate with each other without having to walk endlessly over the four floors of the hospital in search of each other. Wells cranked the handle of the old-fashioned 'phone, and to his immense relief almost immediately Beth answered.

Wells said, 'In the sun parlour there is an ugly looking stranger awaiting an interview with me. I think he bodes no good for us and I think it will be as well if no one knows he's here. Do what you can to see that none of the staff goes near the place, but make some coffee which I will collect from the kitchen after I have been with the man for



some minutes. As far as you are concerned I am still down here doing my rounds of the wards. Got it?’

Beth had by no means ‘got it’ but she was bright enough to say, ‘Would you repeat that prescription again slowly, Wells? I didn’t quite get it’. Wells repeated slowly what he had said, and grinned as he heard Beth say quite calmly, ‘It’s rather complicated but I’ll do my best.’ Then Wells set off up the stairs. When he reached the top, he pushed open the mosquito-netted door and stood on the wide corridor – a verandah really – that led to his quarters. It was now quite dark, and large potted ferns stood at intervals along the verandah – Beth’s brave attempts to get a verdant and homely look into the bleak old building. The whole outside of the verandah was netted with wire mosquito netting, and as is usual in all Arabian houses there were no actual doors to any of the rooms. The nearest archway was the one on the left that Wells had told the messenger from the Imam to enter.

Everything was mercifully dark, except for the harsh greenish light that came from the living room, the windows of which were about sixty feet further along the verandah. Wells imagined Beth sitting in there wondering what on earth was going on. He closed the door from the stairs quietly behind him. Then he turned into the archway of the sun porch.

It was so dark that he could see nothing, but he knew the man was there for he could detect, with his sensitive clinical nose, the smell of pungent musk, sweat, dirt and grease that accompanies even the most refined of the Bedouin. He could also hear heavy breathing.

‘Salaam’, said Wells. ‘Salaam’ rumbled the basso voice of the man who waited in the shadows. ‘Well,’ thought the doctor, ‘with that noise everyone in Matrah will hear us talking, so provided we are not actually overhead, there seems little point in trying to carry on this conversation in whispers.’

‘What is it the Holy Man needs of me?’

‘He bids you come and help him, he needs your help most desperately’ growled the man.

‘Do you mean that he asks me to leave this place and travel up to his fastness in the Jebel Aktar?’

The Jebel Aktar is a large craggy barren mountain range which runs for many miles parallel to the coast in the hinterland of Muscat. For generations it has been the bastion against the Sultans of Muscat used by the forces of the Imams.

‘Yes’, rumbled the voice. ‘That is why he has sent me personally to lead you to him’.

'Is he ill?'

'His body is in perfect order, but he is sick at heart'.

'Does he think I can cure him of such a sickness; only Allah can aid him with such a sickness. In what way is this sickness shown, and why can I help him?'

'This I do not know, I do only what I have been told to do, to beg you to come and to take you there.'

'I can give you no answer now, I must think about this. How can I reach you when I have my reply ready to give you?'

'Hang a white sheet over the balustrade on the roof and that night I will meet you here in this place after darkness has fallen'.

Wells thought: 'This becomes more cloak and dagger than ever and I'm going to get myself into real trouble if I don't watch out'. Aloud he said, 'It could be two or three days before I can reply to you'.

'If Allah wills it so' was the reply.

Tom found his hand gripped in a clammy claw of the stranger, and he let the man slip past him. There was the whispered noise of the closing of the mosquito-proofed door at the head of the stairs and Wells was alone.

He walked in a disturbed and deflated manner towards the living room. There beside the pressure lamp, pretending to be sewing, was Beth. She looked up with fear in her eyes and said, 'Don't you want your coffee?'

It was banal, and loving, and wifely, and anxious, all in one and it broke the spell of unreality. Wells burst into uproarious laughter. This did little to reassure Beth who began to think that the situation might have deranged her husband. Wells sat beside her and as calmly as possible told her what had happened in those last few moments. He finished by voicing his thoughts on the possibly dangerous repercussions, not just for themselves but for the Christian Mission work as a whole that consorting with an enemy of the Sultan could precipitate.

'You must go into Muscat and confide in Tim Hallowes', said Beth. 'There is a war on and our two Governments are allies. The least H.M. Representative can do for you is to help you with this problem. After all, he is our friend'.

With her feminine intuition she had seen the only possible solution to a nasty situation and after interminable discussion that is what they decided to do.

The next day Wells Thoms set out for Muscat along the harbour road and saw his friend, the British Political Agent and Consul, Tim Hallowes. The meeting was not as easy as Wells might have hoped,

for this was one of the few subjects that the two Governments were not necessarily in agreement on. The Imam was as much 'persona non grata' with the British Government as he was with the Sultan.

Tim Hallowes, for all his seeming youth, was a man of considerable wisdom and knowledge of the Arab World.

'Look Wells, I think it would be in everyone's interest for you to go and see the Imam. I suggest that we both go along and see the Sultan and put him in the picture. We must do our best to persuade him to let you go without hindrance – and what's perhaps more important to let you in again when you've finished. We must make it clear that it must seem that you have secretly slipped away from Muscat. It would never do for the old Imam to suspect that you have come almost with the Sultan's blessing'.

'Yes, that seems to be a great idea' said Wells, the American. 'I hope it's actually as good as it seems' said Tim, the Englishman.

So off they went to the Sultan, and even this they had to do secretly in case Wells Thoms was being followed by the mysterious messenger.

After a long debate, the Sultan, a man of great sagacity and political insight, saw the advantage of receiving an objective report on conditions in the Imam's mountain stronghold.

As I listened to this part of the story, I had the feeling that the fact that the Sultan entertained a great respect for both these splendid young men may have had some influence on the decision. The outcome was that the Sultan was prepared to turn an ostensibly blind but in fact strongly observant eye on Wells Thoms' disappearance into the Interior.

Reassured, Wells returned to the Hospital in Matrah and that afternoon Beth walked unconcernedly, yet with a pounding heart, up on to the roof of the Hospital and very carefully draped a sheet over the parapet. There was a bad moment when the sea breeze filled the sheet and nearly blew it away, but she held it down with her hand while she found a few stones to place at regular intervals along its length. Then she went downstairs and, womanlike, made herself a cup of tea.

That night they sat together in the living-room, listening with bated breath for some response to their signal from the roof. It was a moonless night and the only sound was the buzzing of the insects against the mosquito netting as they fought to get at the light shed by the pressure lamp. Then they heard the click of the mosquito-proof door at the head of the stairs.

Silence.

After an interval Wells got up and walked out on to the verandah. A dark figure hid behind the potted ferns.

'I am willing to come,' said Wells.

'Allah be praised', said the shadow, 'the camels will pass at day-break'.

By this time Wells had had enough of the cloak and dagger stuff and had ridden too long on the backs of camels to enjoy the experience. In any case, if he was really to try to get away from Matrah secretly, the last thing he should do would be to be seen on the back of a camel as it left the Northern Gate of Matrah. The really convincing way for him to leave the town was by his own motor car. This was a perfectly normal procedure for he constantly visited the sick and those too ill to be moved along the coast road from the fishing villages to the north. This could be one of his perfectly normal visiting rounds that he did from time to time.

He turned to the heavily cloaked figure behind the potted fern and said, 'No, I will meet you at Rahad on the evening of the day after tomorrow. I will be there before sundown'. The Brigand looked very suspicious, clearly his orders were not to let the Doctor out of his sight.

'I trust the Honourable Effendi will keep his word'.

'I promise before God', said Wells.

'Allah be praised', said the Brigand.

'Can you tell me where the Imam is ill? Is it in his head, his heart, are his joints stiff?'

'Why must the doctor know these things?'

'Because I wish to know what kind of medicine to take with me' said Wells.

'But surely the Doctor will know as soon as he has seen the Imam' was the rejoinder.

'Yes but you see ...' Wells gave up. Clearly it was going to be very difficult to get this chap to understand that for a Western Doctor medicine was based upon science and not exclusively upon the will of Allah. 'I will see you in Rahad two sunsets from now'. 'If Allah wills' said the shadow. 'Indeed' said the Doctor.

Eventually Wells managed to persuade this woolly fellow that he would be as good as his word and the emissary disappeared back into the shadows. The Doctor turned back to the bright light of the living room, and presently he and Beth again heard the click of the mosquito-netted door, and the man had gone. Together they worked out that he could put in a morning's work on the most dangerously ill

patients, then slip away in his rather ancient car along the coast at noon on the next day.

Fortunately Wells was used to working away from base in the wilds of the desert country and was fully equipped. The principle problem was to be able to take enough medicine to cover the wide range of possible ailments from which the ancient Imam might be suffering.

So, as the midday heat hung in folds over the town, when the streets were deserted except for the occasional bent figure picking its way among the shadows cast by the high walls of the houses, Wells loaded up his car in view of any inquisitive onlooker who cared to note his movements.

He dared not take one of his hospital orderlies, this had to be a solo job. Beth watched him from the shadowy interior of the clinic, and when all was completed he ducked inside to give her a swift hug and a kiss, a breathed prayer, and a grin, then out into the car. With a wave of his hand he was off, the dust churned up behind him.

The run along the coast for the first few miles is quite pleasant although the road was not then designed for motor cars. Sometimes it followed the high tide mark of the long sweeping beaches, where the fishing dhows were pulled up. These deep-keeled boats are hauled up at full tide with main force, and then with stout poles propped against the sides so that they do not fall over when the sea recedes, they are left to be cleaned or caulked or whatever these splendid sailors – who virtually invented the methods by which we navigate by the stars – find it necessary to do to their boats.

Sometimes he would pass lone figures casting their circular nets by hand in the shallow waters. Their lithe naked bodies, and the beautiful sweep of the net as it floated up into the water, looked liked figures on an ancient Greek frieze. Sometimes there would be little flotillas of boats made of loosely bound bamboos which lay like waterlogged mats on the surface of the water, each bearing an eagle-eyed fisherman intent on finding his daily food. Occasionally the road would leave the seashore and sweep inland a little way, winding its way through huge date palms dotted amongst which would be the huts of the fishermen-farmers of the seaboard.

The sound of the Doctor's motor car always heralded his approach, and at a bend in the sandy path there was frequently a little group of handsome young boys and grotesque dusty black-clad women who from their movements seemed mostly to be old. The poor creatures did not wear the veil, but many of them wore the 'yashmak' – the

beak-like attachment which covers the face and is intended to keep the heavy folds of the purdah veil away from the nose. They looked like dusty ravens, except that ravens have a perky charm. These grotesques had none.

From time to time Wells would stop and enquire if anyone needed his medical aid and, occasionally, the halt and the lame would be produced for his attention. It might be a young man stabbed in a fight, or shot by some rival, needing expert attention. Wells felt certain twinges of conscience, for much of this was to add a little verisimilitude to his secret and furtive trip. He needed to calculate his timing rather nicely whilst giving the impression of having all the time in the world to spare, for he had to keep his promise to be at Rahad by nightfall the next day.

Another complication was that there was no greater cause of offence than to move through the territory of some local Sheik or Wali without reporting his presence, and also submitting himself to whatever form of hospitality the local 'big-wig', or more probably 'little-wig', had to offer. Wells was a man of experience in these matters, and by keeping up a smiling front and with an occasional show of calculated stupidity, he kept going. He had to make Suq by nightfall if he was to make the rendezvous at Rahad on time tomorrow.

As the sun was setting early behind the foothills of the Jebel Aktar, the range of mountains that was to grow in size as it marched along beside the coastal plain, he sighted the white castellated walls of the little town of Suq. Those foothills aroused forebodings in Wells for further on, where these hills grew in majestic mountains the Imam had his heavily fortified fastness.

All that lay in the future; tonight Wells knew that he would have to spend the night exposed to the kindnesses of the Sheik of Suq, a one-eyed old warrior with an unsavoury reputation, a man who would cross-question him closely about his business.

The Sheik was a relation of the Sultan, in fact Said bin Said referred to this man as his cousin. This was a rather loose term which could mean a near relation or a rather distant kinsman. Wells, of course, knew him well – which was not really a good thing as he knew precious little to his advantage.

Far out on the fringes of the Sultan's direct power he indulged himself in the rather dangerous pastime of a dubious loyalty. With the ebb and flow of power between the Imam and Muscat, the worthy Sheik, Abdullah by name, was enjoying certain amusing intrigues. However, as soon as one or other of the rival factions established itself in force in

his area, Abdullah's head was not going to be the most permanent structure along the Arabian seaboard.

Whatever the outcome, Abdullah was a cheerful rogue and was certainly making the most of the situation. Unusually, he lived a rather sophisticated and worldly life. He greeted Wells effusively when, after a dramatically long delay, he descended into the courtyard of the white fortress home. He advanced upon Wells in a gale of bonhomie and Arabian garlic! He grasped the Doctor, a rather dapper and extremely fastidious man, to his swelling stomach and in his elaborate flowery Arabic put his house, his household, and his worldly goods at the disposal of the 'Great Doctor'. As Wells knew full well that this man was one of the great debunkers of the work of the Medical Mission, he acknowledged this opening gambit with restraint.

It would be, of course, 'a blessing of Allah if the arrival of the Great Healer Wells G. Thoms in their midst meant that Abdullah bin Turki bin Said bin Said would be able to put his humble hovel at the disposal of the Doctor.' Wells, in his neat American crew-cut way, expressed his thanks and said he would be most grateful if he could spend the night in the Sheik's beautiful home.

Abdullah was in many ways untypical of the aristocratic Sheik. The story was told of an occasion when he accompanied the Sultan, then a young man, on a voyage to Europe. It seems that Abdullah behaved with perfect decorum until the party arrived in Paris. Here the attractions of that Western 'pleasure dome' were too much for him to resist and he exploited and enjoyed them to the full. He found them all too much to resist, so when the devout and rather straight-laced Sultan moved on to some other spot in Europe, Abdullah took the elementary precautions of disappearing at the crucial moment.

Great indeed was the wrath of the Sultan. But greater were the joys of the present, thought Abdullah, 'I will face retribution when I must'. Eventually the Sultan's world tour was over and he and his Ministers returned to Muscat. Somehow Abdullah contrived to tarry on in Paris. Eventually, and sadly for Abdullah, the money ran out and he had to beg for his trip home from the stern if youthful Sultan.

Almost everything one hears of the Sultan indicates that he was indeed a wise and enlightened man. Faced with this situation, he commanded Abdullah to return and he would be forgiven. So a wiser, if not necessarily sadder, Abdullah came home. The Royal Favour was now turned from him and he was sent to the outer fringes of the domain on the edge of the desert, and here he was, Master and Sheik of Suq. After the first vociferous greetings were over, Wells was

permitted to dispose of his car in a place of safety, and to clean himself up in his own quarters. He had time to think of a convincing reason why he would be proceeding further up the coast. This was as far as he could go by car for the road, such as it was, petered out at Suq. Fortunately he had attempted to reach the villages in the North in the past on camel-back, so that part of the story would be reasonably easy. The rest lay in the lap of the Gods – although Wells, a religious man, would not have thought of it quite that way.

Sufficient time having now passed so that the needs of Arabian good manners would be satisfied, Wells presented himself in the Reception Chamber. This was a huge room, with usual sumptuous Persian carpets on the walls, as well as over the floor. At one end Abdullah, an expansive smile upon his face, was sitting – surprisingly – on a kind of throne.

Wells again submitted to being enveloped in his embrace, and with a smile Abdullah said, 'You must....'

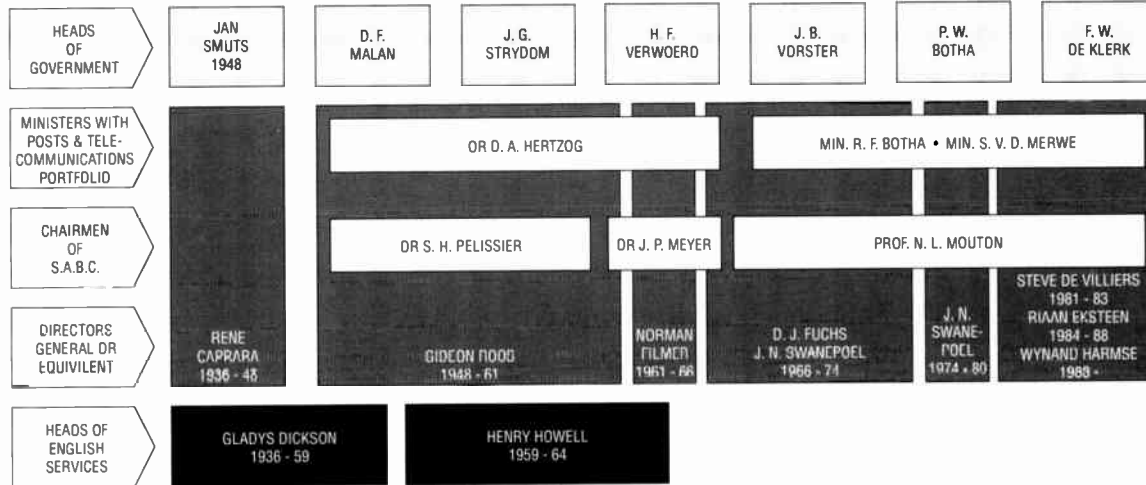
(At this point the stories written by Henry Howells run out. This editor felt that all his tales should be recorded, even this one without an end, as it shows not only his adventures, but his great ability as a storyteller, and his beautiful way with the English language.)

\* \* \*



# Part 2

## Heads of Government, Broadcast Executives - Henry Howell's Career Path



|             |        |  |
|-------------|--------|--|
| <b>THEN</b> | 1964   | TRANSFERRED HEAD SPRINGBOK RADIO   |
|             | 1965   | PROMOTED: ASS. DIR. SPRINGBOK RADIO  |
|             | 1968   | PROMOTED: ASS. DIR. AND SPECIAL F.M. SERVICES  |
|             | 1970   | PROMOTED: DEP. DIR. SPRINGBOK AND REGIONAL SERVICES  |
|             | 1971   | PROMOTED: DIRECTOR ALL COMMERCIAL SERVICES   |
|             | 1979   | RETIRED FROM S.A.B.C.  |
|             | TO     | APPOINTED PERSONAL ADVISOR TO H.E. PRESIDENT MANGOPE ON                                    |
|             | (1990) | BROADCASTING; CHAIRMAN BOP. BROADCASTING ADVISORY BOARD;                                   |
|             | (1991) | CHAIRMAN BOP. BROADCASTING CORPORATION; DEPUTY CHAIRMAN BOP. COMMERCIAL RADIO (RADIO 702). |

# Introduction to the Biography

## A brief history of broadcasting in South Africa

**B**roadcasting started quite literally on 1 August 1924 in Johannesburg in a little studio operated by the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies. On 15 September of that same year, Cape Town followed with a station run by the Cape Publicity Association operating, interestingly, with a transmitter donated by Sir David Graaf, father of Sir de Villiers. On 10 December, Durban followed with a local station run by the Durban Municipality.

The main problem was that there was no law about compelling listeners to take out licenses, and one by one these, certainly after 18 months or 2 years the Johannesburg station, had to put up their shutters; there was no income.

People were listening, they were enthusiastic, but they did not pay license fees.

A gentleman, Isidore Schlesinger, was effectively in control of about 90% or more of all cinemas in South Africa, and his next logical step would be to get control of broadcasting, which would mean that he would then be in control of all entertainment in and outside the house. He was well set to do the job.

He obtained from Government a concession for five years, to operate broadcasting throughout the country combining those original three centres, with an option to renew for another five years.

He started in 1927, but very soon afterwards he went back to Government and said: "Take this damn thing away – I don't want it, its bankrupting me!" The Government then agreed to pass a law making it obligatory to have a licence fee.

From then broadcasting turned the corner. He had called it The African Broadcasting Company and he then exercised his option to continue for another five years, which took him to 1936 when, in the

middle of that second option, General Hertzog – the then Prime Minister – thought deeply about what the future of broadcasting in South Africa should be. He invited Sir John Reith, the then Director-General of the BBC, to come out and take a look at the situation here and make recommendations as to what the future of broadcasting in South Africa should be.

Sir John spent about six weeks here and then submitted a report in which he recommended that broadcasting in South Africa should be operated 'as a public service' more or less the same as the BBC in England, and he concluded his report with the following lines: "As the assegai to the naked hand, as the rifle to the assegai so, and more, is broadcasting; rightly institutionalised, rightly inspired and rightly controlled to any other instrument or power – but always in the service of wisdom and beauty and peace."

He was also on record as saying:

"I have never believed in giving the public what they want; I have always believed in giving them what they ought to want!"

And on the subject of introducing commercial broadcasting in South Africa:

"I realise you cannot avoid commercial broadcasting, so make the best of it. And promise just one thing: that you will try to conduct your service in such a way that you do not throw the ether at the mercy of money, but that you bring the money to the service of the ether!"

Meanwhile, back in 1927 when Isidore Schlesinger took over broadcasting, he needed somebody to be at the head of it and he chose Rene Caprara, who was then first clarinet in the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra. An unusual choice one might think, but Caprara was a most enthusiastic amateur listener. He was appointed Branch Manager in Cape Town. When Schlesinger handed over the African Broadcasting Company to the newly formed Corporation in Johannesburg, Caprara was appointed Director of Broadcasting. Norman Filmer, Branch Manager in Grahamstown, was also moved up to Johannesburg and appointed Regional Director under Caprara.

That same year, Caprara and Filmer represented South Africa at the first Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference in London – travelling in a flying boat which took five days from Durban to London. Whilst there they decided to change the title 'Director of Broadcasting' to 'Director-General'. Caprara became that Director-General. A few months later the Board decided he should have a deputy and Filmer got the job – the first ever deputy director-general, and a post he held until Caprara retired in 1948.

Gideon Roos had joined the African Broadcasting Company in Cape Town and worked under Caprara for some time before he joined the SABC in 1937 as firstly the first bi-lingual announcer, and then as Head of Programmes (Afrikaans) in tandem with Bruce Anderson who was Head of Programmes (English).

Roos ultimately went on to become Secretary to the Corporation. On Caprara's retirement in 1948 he was appointed Director-General over Filmer who remained *his* deputy until 1958.

Just after the war, there was a shortage of equipment and money. The Broadcasting Act did not give the Minister any real power over broadcasting. There were certain things he had to approve, such as which news service would be taken, but he could not determine the licence fees – this was determined by the Board. Unfortunately there was a little provision in the Act that the Board's decision on licence fees could not go into effect until approved by the Minister, who was at that time Senator Clarkson from Durban, then subsequently Mr. J.W. Muchet.

The Board's need to increase fees was not a popular move, but all the Minister had to do was say nothing; not yes, not no, and then the Board was helpless.

As it was obvious the service would not get its increase, the Board decided to introduce a commercial service. Rene Caprara went to Australia to look at how it was done there and returned convinced it could be done in South Africa by the SABC. The Board took that decision and there was nothing in the Act to say they could not introduce such a service.

This decision was taken to the new Minister, Mr. Muchet, who agreed. The Board had drawn up a Press statement, but the Minister insisted on doing it himself, which he did. All hell broke loose around his head, and the Press were down on him like a ton of bricks because they saw the danger to their own advertising revenue. The Minister backed down, insisting he had been misunderstood, that he had not said there would be a commercial service, only that he was considering whether there should; and stated that his intention was 'to appoint a commission of enquiry to decide the whole matter to advise me on the viability or desirability or otherwise of a commercial service'.

This Commission of Enquiry was not a successful one. They took about eighteen months to reach their conclusions, it was all rather hush-hush, and when the report appeared it was a disaster. It was recommended:

- 1) that there should be commercial broadcasting in South Africa;

2) that it should not be operated by the SABC, and

3) that it should be operated by four independent private companies, one in each province, which would of course be disastrous too.

That report appeared in February 1948. Nothing was done about it because there was an election pending and the Government did not want to do anything hasty about the report.

The election took place in May 1948, the United Party Government was defeated, the National Party came to power, and the report was temporarily shelved.

(It was in July 1948 that Rene Caprara retired, succeeded by Gideon Roos with Norman Filmer as his deputy.)

Henry Howell had joined the service in 1946, first with children's programmes, then youth, and then he moved up into the English Service. He always very wisely kept up his microphone work even when he was a Director.

Roos, himself an experienced broadcaster, would at least twice a year after his appointment as Director-General go to a producer/controller and say: 'Now, I am not a Director-General, I am just one of your actors but I must know what the microphone is like and what the problems of the microphone are today' ... 'Otherwise,' he says 'you have no hope of administering things properly because you are in danger of losing touch with the people at the mike. They are the *real* broadcasters, not the administrators.'

This is a story about a **REAL** broadcaster....

# Chapter 1

## Behind the Microphone

**T**here are not many records covering the first 50 years of broadcasting history. "You have been listening to ..." the early history of radio in South Africa by Eric Rosenthal was published by the SABC in 1974 to mark the 50th anniversary of broadcasting in this country. However, missing from its Index are Norman Filmer, Henry Howell, and Cameron McClure – all very important names in the early and subsequent days and years of broadcasting, and important here too.

And this is Henry Howell's story, who himself made history in the broadcasting profession by his particularly fresh approach, his innovative ideas, his dedication, honesty and his integrity.

Although no stranger to communication, he was new to radio. His first experience of broadcasting, in 1943, was in Cape Town. Cameron McClure, a dynamic producer and an extremely significant name in the history of the English Service of the SABC, was on the staff of the SABC in the Cape.

"He suggested I should do some plays for him ; and I did quite a number for him in that brief period. I remember particularly acting in a serial 'The Moonstone' by Wilkie Collins in which I played the lead; and suddenly I was posted and we had to scramble to get it all finished before I left.

"When the war was over, the SABC was very kind – I think due to Cameron McClure again, and also Norman Filmer – to offer me a job in Johannesburg. Norman was then the Regional Director of the Transvaal, and was later to become deputy director-general. It was he who was kind enough to take me on the staff – at a minute salary! – but I was enchanted to accept.

"It was an interesting period at the SABC in those years immediately after the war. Many of the men were back from the war, people like Dewar McCormack and Robert Griffiths. And South Africa itself was in an immediate post war situation with Jan Smuts as Prime Minister.

No-one could foresee what 1948 and a change of Government was going to do to the broadcasting corporation and those members of it who were to be put to the rack."

Henry had been a radio engineer during the war and everyone was surprised that he wanted to become a programmer. 'As an engineer I was a thwarted broadcaster, and as a broadcaster I was a thwarted engineer! But I found it very useful in my career'.

So it started in earnest in August 1946. He was graded as announcer/producer, but shortly after joining the staff it was suggested to him that he should run the youth programmes. "For some incredible reason which I have never quite understood, the SABC seemed to have terminated its broadcasts to youth and children during the war years. It wanted to resuscitate them at the end of the war and I got the job. It was extremely fortuitous, and a wonderfully happy time for me. It was most fulfilling too. Those were innocent days; there were only two services – English and Afrikaans. I remember with great joy that my opposite number on the Afrikaans service was a young man named Steve de Villiers. He and I had great simpatico and very often used to share ideas. And every Friday we did a bi-lingual programme for youth.

"Of course it was a great education for me, too, as an 'uitlander' coming newly into the country. We had a wonderful association which lasted for many many years. The most fulfilling part was that we really believed – and got the feeling – that every youth, every child, was listening to you because there was nothing to distract him; we were the only service. And this was borne out by the fact that we used to run quizzes and so on from that wonderful old building, Broadcast House in Commissioner Street. We used to use the great audio crystal studio for this quiz which held a couple of hundred young things. And when they weren't busy taking the building apart they were causing a great sensation; they held up the traffic in Commissioner Street for example – and this always gave one a feeling of achievement, that you were really getting across to the young people.

"We also used to do interesting things. Nothing daunted us. We used to ask the most distinguished people to come and talk to the youth. One was not inhibited about it. And you didn't feel that your first duty was just to be entertaining; you felt it was a good moment to expose people to youth and youth to people. We used to ask everybody under the sun. For instance A.B. Hughes was an editor of a newspaper, with an enormous sense of humour who used to talk to them about foreign affairs. We used to ask Raymond Dart, and that brilliant young man Philip Tobias who was then a junior lecturer and



a regular broadcaster to youth. They were all most entertaining but at the same time we weren't just supinely trying to build audiences – we were trying to build people. And one didn't realise that the mantle of Philip Tobias' mentor Raymond Dart was going to descend upon him with such great distinction.

"We used to run a Careers Corner and had no hesitation in asking the person who we thought was the leader in his chosen profession to tell children how to set about becoming a great doctor, a great lawyer, that sort of thing".

Henry went on to become the Cross-country Quiz quiz-master: "I was also very fortunate that I had a charming colleague whose name was Michael Kittermaster who was to become one of the world's finest writers both of plays and features. We were a good team: he used to do the writing, and I used to pretend to do the talking! And Michael and I had time to do other things besides the youth programmes.

"I also had the great joy and great honour of inheriting from James McClurg, who was one of the great broadcasters of that time, and any time really, who used to do the serious discussion programmes and that sort of thing. His mantle descended upon me and I took over the discussion programmes, such as Listener's Forum." (James McClurg is the Star newspaper's Ombudsman). Henry also did features and documentary programmes. It was an era when so many towns were celebrating their 50th, 75th or 100th anniversary and he would get out and about visiting them and their distinguished citizens. He said it gave him a wonderful insight into the 'ware' South Africa and he really enjoyed it.

"One of my great memories of that was a man with whom I used to do these programmes – Dennis Mitchell. He was back from the wars, but prior to that had been a journalist on a Natal newspaper before joining the SABC. With great amusement we would see him sitting staring into space at his typewriter from which we used to get some wonderful broadcasting material. A tender memory of him is when we were doing an anniversary programme from a small town in the Transvaal. In my plodding way I set off to interview the Mayor, the Town Clerk, Chief of Police, the Dominee, and so on. I had left Dennis sitting on the stoep of the hotel staring into space, absorbing the atmosphere of the town. When I went back to the hotel, Dennis seemed not to have moved since I had seen him earlier in the day! So I asked him how he got on and he said 'Oh, I had a good day; I discovered a man who had held up the Soutpansberg Coach'. And that is what broadcasting is all about! I had been plodding away – and he had found the

very essence of broadcasting, the very kernel of that little town – that in that town there lived a man who had once been a highwayman! Whatever value that programme had was in that one item, and it taught me that there is no real substitute for genius in our profession. That gift is not something you learn; it is something you are born with.

“And there is so much fulfilment, at every level, and even with little things. And very often it is the little things that hit you with a resounding ‘gong’ and bring you quite disproportionate measures of joy.

“Dennis Mitchell had an incredible flair for thinking of unusual and ridiculous things to do. He used to run a magazine programme each week and I remember one day he asked me would I chair a little discussion – because at that time I was doing the big discussions with people like Nicholas Monsarrat, Uys Krige, people like that – inside his magazine programme. Well of course I said yes. He had this idea of taking them all to lunch at the Rainbow Room in His Majesty’s Building. At that time it was a brand new building, and I remember going to the first night of that great theatre. At the top of that building was the ‘in’ restaurant of the time. Up we went and at this lunch were Nicholas Monsarrat, Philip Hyman, Hannah Bloom, and Adele Lezard, a very successful journalist. And they were all very witty people; he had chosen them very carefully for their quick wit. What we did was, we blindfolded them and served them lunch and they had to guess what it was they were eating! It sounds like a daft idea but it came out brilliantly! In those days one couldn’t edit like one can today, no question of snipping away with a pair of scissors, so the asides, the interplay of witticisms that went on between these four people was really quite remarkable. Of course they never at any time remotely identified what they were eating ... but it was a little piece in the way of broadcasting gone in 4 or 5 minutes, but a lasting memory in my life; very amusing, witticism of a very very high calibre, and a most exciting broadcast. These were trivial things, and of course there were some important things.”

Dennis Mitchell went on to become one of the great television feature men of the Sixties and a man whom Henry always admired. But the person he had the greatest admiration for was not a man but a woman. Her name was Gladys Dickson and she was head of the English Service from 1936 to 1959. She had at one time been controller of all the SABC’s programmes, but as the Afrikaans service developed and quite rightly went off on its own, she had remained head of the English service. She had immense charm, a great wit, a formidable intellect, and was completely incapable of bad taste.

Henry succeeded her in 1959 – with a great deal of reluctance and

not a small measure of trepidation. He was heart-broken that she was retiring as she had been a delight and an inspiration to many broadcasters – such as Gideon Roos, James McClurg, and dozens of other people who were to lay the foundation of South African broadcasting. All were encouraged, inspired, illuminated by her. She was a product of the University of Cape Town and had won a scholarship to the University of Columbia.

But before tackling this very difficult role as new head of service in 1959 – a role which he felt was the most important, the most responsible of any other – Henry was to have many other experiences and was to progress from being youth organiser to programme executive, and then English programme organiser, before this awesome mantle of 'Auntie Lex' as she was once called, was to fall upon his shoulders.

## The Royal Tour and other stories

Henry had 'the great good fortune', he says, of doing many jobs within the service of the SABC.

"It is ridiculous to think that I was once the SABC's boxing commentator with Ian Balfour – also a name to conjure with out of the sports annals of broadcast history.

"My early years with the SABC were associated with the non-commercial services and although I was only too glad to earn money as an artist on Springbok Radio, I declined to read any Radio Commercials. It cost me dearly. One of the earliest major sporting broadcasts ever undertaken by Springbok Radio was the world Bantam-weight title fight between Manuel Ortiz and the South African challenger Vickie Toweel and I was one of the commentators. Someone else read the commercials but once every 3 minutes or so the commentators were expected to mention the name of the Sponsor which was **Old Dutch Beer**. Someone would give you a dig in the ribs and this was your cue to introduce the Sponsor's name. After about four rounds it began to seem possible that South Africa's challenger could win the fight and the excitement mounted as did the excitement of the commentators. On receipt of my next dig in the ribs, I froze, forgot the name of the Sponsor and attributed the fight to a product called **Old Buck Gin**. Only the excitement of the fight concealed from me the rigid shock into which my colleagues had descended.

"When the fight was over and Vickie Toweel had been officially named the new world champion, the awful horror managed to communicate itself to me. The next day at the office, I felt the impact of

ostracism as everyone around me metaphorically withdrew their cloaks as I passed. About halfway through a miserable morning, the telephone went and my secretary said, 'The Chairman of Old Dutch Beer is on the 'phone'. With leaden heart I picked up the 'phone and the voice of a great friend of mine came through, Philip Hyman. 'Henry', he said, 'we've made a big decision. To get some mileage after last night's sponsorship we have decided to buy Old Buck Gin!'" From such an inauspicious start did my commercial career begin.

"And I was once the **Manager of the SABC Orchestra!** It was an illuminating experience! They were an interesting lot of people to deal with. I remember there was a pianist who was called upon to broadcast two concerti in one symphony concert – an experience that I am sure has not befallen any better a musician than she. These concerts were broadcast from a studio we used to call 1A within Broadcast House, and on this particular occasion everyone was invited from the Chairman of the Board down – a very distinguished audience. Edgar Cree was the conductor and on a day of the final rehearsal I think he realised he had a pretty turbulent bunch to deal with. So he invited this lady out of the studio and requested the rest of the orchestra to stay behind as he wished to talk to them. Then he said to them, 'Look, tonight is a very important night and I want you to give of your best because everybody is going to be here.'

"We had a remarkable double bass player, a very fine player who had come from the Halle, and he said – in that broad Manchester accent: 'Well, I hope poor ruddy Beethoven's not going to be here tonight because he's taking a beatin'! Anyway, it was a lovely experience to be involved with the orchestra because they are such a fine bunch and give the SABC such a flavour and a dimension it would lack if it didn't have these marvellous artists on its staff, and I remember this brief time with great affection."

During these years, up to about 1950, the regions ran their own programmes with each one a little separate broadcasting organisation, and each one originated its programmes into a little network of its own. It was a highly extravagant way of running an organisation but the technology was lacking to enable it to become part of the whole. Once the technology improved it was possible to nationalise the originating point of the programmes. Henry was Organiser of Programmes in Johannesburg and it devolved upon him to nationalise. Not an easy task because the people concerned had been totally autonomous and had to feel they were not going to lose the creative opportunities they had enjoyed up to that time.

"It was very wearying as there was very little joy in this operation, but we managed to divert people's talents more creatively because they weren't involved in running three announcing studios around the country – we only had one, and the talents could be pooled."

During this time Henry was also acting in plays, and writing them both for adults and children. "Percy the Pig" and "Henrietta the Hen" were just two that come to mind. He didn't sing, except in children's programmes, but he did almost everything else and was fulfilled at every level.

## The Royal Tour – a personal perspective

The broadcasting coverage of the Royal Tour of South Africa in 1947 was full of incidents and a great source of Broadcasting lore. Henry himself had tales to tell, but one particular story that Henry enjoyed relating concerned the 21st birthday of the then Princess Elizabeth. Quoting verbatim from his notes, it shows his powerful use of words to describe an incident and at the same time reveals his appreciation of the important part the Engineering Staff play in the success or failure of broadcasting. Voices and faces are well-known to the public, but the men behind the scenes are at least as important in any broadcast. The hero of this story is one George Lunnon who was Senior Outside Broadcasting Engineer of the Cape region during this period. He naturally carried a very heavy load of responsibility on his shoulders when the Royal Family was in his territory. Henry tells it thus:

"George was one of those remarkable Kapenaars who spoke both official languages perfectly. In his case, however, he spoke them simultaneously which took a bit of keeping up with. He also had a rich and varied vocabulary of expletives with which he adorned his speech. There had been a big celebration of the Princess's 21st birthday at the showgrounds in her honour in the morning, but she was then to address the Nation and the Commonwealth, and even other countries, from Cape Town later in the day. George and his team had been heavily engaged in the technical side of the Show broadcast and when this was over the Royal and official Cortège left the showgrounds for Groote Schuur, or wherever the Royal Family was staying. As George tells the tale, when the cortège left the showgrounds he was lying 19th, but by the time they reached Groote Schuur he was third. That was typically George. He entered the house and immediately gave his attention to the next most important broadcast.

"A suitable room had been selected for the Princess's broadcast and

in it was placed a round table with a most beautiful and elegant table cloth spread upon it. The table cloth reached almost to the ground. George secreted his equipment in some discreet spot and led the microphone lead across the floor to connect it to the microphone. This having been done, George, with great forethought for the comfort of the Princess in her coming ordeal – for ordeal it would certainly be – began to attach the lead under the table to the central leg to ensure that it did not become entangled in the Princess's feet. He was busy doing this, concealed by the graceful table cloth, when he espied a pair of masculine shoes showing under the cloth. George addressed the pair of masculine shoes in his inimitable fashion no doubt dwelling on the fact that if the owner of the shoes had nothing to do, then George did, and suggesting in his highly charged style that if the owner of the shoes wanted to do something to help, would he kindly hand down George's screwdriver which was lying on the table? A hand holding the screwdriver came under the table cloth and gave the tool to him. In a matter of seconds George had finished the job and clambered from under the table to find himself groping at the feet of H.M. George VI who was laughing his head off! He thought the whole affair very funny! It was another narrow escape!"

## **Dr. Margaret Thatcher**

There was a moment in broadcasting history affecting Henry which, he said, he was never likely to forget. It was 1973 and he was Director of Commercial Services. South Africa had opened a new observatory at Sutherland in the Cape Province. This was a joint South African and British Scientific venture and the British Government was represented at the inauguration by a Cabinet Minister, the Minister for Education and Science. A day or so after this function, Henry was asked by the Chairman of the SABC Board if he would take care of this visitor who had expressed an interest in what South Africa did about broadcasting to the Black peoples of the country.

His diary records the following:

"I pointed out to the Chairman that Radio Bantu did not fall under my leadership, but the Chairman seemed confident that I could handle the situation. He then said 'The Cabinet Minister's name is Dr. Margaret Thatcher'. The name meant nothing to me then but I noted that the lady was **Doctor** Thatcher. Where we got that idea from I do not know, but she is very highly qualified in the Law, and Science, and I think Economics.

"So upon a day I greeted an attractive lady, and the British Ambassador whose name was Mr. Bottomley, at the old SABC headquarters in Commissioner Street. I had briefed my colleagues, the Heads of the individual 'Bantu' Services, and we were all ready to meet Dr. Thatcher in the Board room. Having introduced my colleagues, I then asked Justus Chungu to begin. I knew him to be an excellent speaker and very eloquent. No sooner had he started than I realised I had made a mistake; I should have started with the Head of the Zulu Service – the Senior Service. So when Justus ran out of puff, I quickly introduced the head of the Zulu service and we proceeded in strict seniority for what remained of the morning. We had to adjourn for lunch, then I conducted Dr. Thatcher back to the SABC and my colleagues demonstrated the operation of the studios. They played her some of their beautiful music and Margaret Thatcher watched and listened to men and women as they worked in the continuity and drama studios.

"At last we seemed to have run out of things to show her and the demonstration was over. She turned to me in the presence of my colleagues and said in that attractive soprano voice: 'Thank you Mr. Howell and gentlemen, I am most impressed'. To which I responded in my usual over enthusiastic way that she had seen a most natural phenomenon, that Radio is the most perfect medium for communication and entertainment that could be devised for the peoples of Africa. With their rich oral tradition, they take naturally and skilfully to the microphone which is their friend – white people can become extremely tensed up in front of a microphone but this seldom happens with Black broadcasters. 'How interesting, Mr Howell, but that is not actually what I meant'. 'Oh' says I, took aback, 'what did impress you Dr. Thatcher?' 'You all liked each other so much!' My colleagues and I chuckled happily.

She went on her way to immortality and we were left with a warm feeling of companionship amongst ourselves."

## **The Water Bushmen of the Okavango**

The following piece is undated but must go on record as one of the most unusual experiences Henry felt privileged to enjoy. Again, his description of what occurred makes the experience all the more real to us, the reader.

"In the years when South Africa was a member of the Commonwealth, we used to contribute programmes to a Programme pool of

the Commonwealth Broadcasting Union, and we used to draw programmes from it for our own broadcasts. It often fell to my lot to make some of South Africa's contribution.

"To this end, I found myself with a splendid young engineering colleague, Jack Schuyfer, in the Okavango Swamps. These were the days before Botswana was created, and the Swamps were in Bechuanaland – virtually unknown territory; certainly there were no tourists.

"We were being guided and advised by a young man, George Silberbauer, who was the District Commissioner for the area. He was a South African, I think a graduate of Stellenbosch and a splendid chap. After he had sized me up for a couple of days, he asked: 'Would you like to meet the Water Bushmen?' Sensing this was something very special, I said I would. He then said: 'Have you any money?' to which I replied I had. 'Good' said George, 'we shall have to buy a quantity of beer and stage a beer-drink tonight'.

"He then guided us in our launch – which looked as if we were about to pick up Dr. Livingstone – to an island deep in the Swamps where there was a trading store. We bought a large quantity of beer and Jack, my engineer colleague, borrowed some oil lanterns. We returned to our own island tracing our way through the unbelievably beautiful waterways between the reeds, and admiring the incredible variety of bird life that lived in this heavenly place.

"When night fell, Jack set up his lanterns around a large fire and the first containers of beer were broached. On what one might call 'the surface of life' in the Swamps there lived an African people; if I remember rightly they were called the Hammba Kush. Once the beer was opened some of these people gathered and began to have a party, singing songs and dancing. Jack Sluyters was busy recording all this and taking shots with his camera – stills, of course, there was no TV in those days.

"I was watching the beer anxiously and wondering whether this was all going to be a waste of time. Then at about 9 p.m. I felt a gentle touch on my elbow and George indicated with his head a minute shining figure standing in the firelight. In ten minutes there were ten of them, then twenty, and before long they had taken the party over.

"Those small perfectly made creatures who wore no clothes were one of the most exciting, nay overwhelming, sights of my life. Unlike the bushmen of the Kalahari whose bodies I believe develop a special shape to help them conserve water because of the scarcity of rain, these little people have a normal shape in a minute body. Their skins shone in the firelight and as they danced and sang – indeed they had taken the



party over – one felt that one was in another world or another dream. I was so emotionally affected that I found it difficult to do justice to the scene as I did a commentary of what was going on before our eyes.

“Well, at about one o’clock in the morning the beer ran out and the party was over. The little people vanished into the darkness and the reeds and we slowly tidied up.

“I had witnessed one of the most rare and beautiful events that Africa has to offer. I was not surprised to discover later that the authoritative work on the Water Bushmen was written by George Silberbauer. That book, together with my memories of the evening, is one of my most prized possessions”.

## The Voice

There was a very special quality in Henry’s voice – warm, compassionate, capable of high drama and great tenderness. It was natural that he should be asked to play leading roles such as Captain Ericson in Nicholas Monsarrat’s ‘The Cruel Sea’, In part 2 of his autobiography “Life is a 4-Letter Word” Monsarrat said:

“In the shadow of a Christmas 1951 we made a radio version of ‘The Cruel Sea’ for Springbok Radio, the commercial step-child of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, and it was the hardest piece of sustained work which had come my way for a long time.

... we taped 26 half-hour episodes in 29 days, rehearsal, sound effects, 200 speaking parts, and all. We finished with a gasp of triumph on Christmas Eve.

Taped is the wrong word to use, and that was part of the trouble; for some reason connected with the durability of the material, it could not be taped, but had to be cut directly onto a master record. For some other reason, whenever we made any sort of mistake, we had to go back to the beginning again ... there was no way of keeping the good part and picking up again in the middle.

If anyone fluffed his lines on the 26th minute of the recording – as I did on one ghastly occasion in Episode 22, by which time we were all getting thoroughly snappish and exhausted – then Cedric Messina, our talented, infinitely patient producer, said ‘I’m sorry chaps’ and we all went back again to the introductory music, the seagulls, the asdic pings, and the sound of water smashing down onto an iron deck, which marked our fade-in.

Cedric Messina, whose later work with the BBC included some masterly productions of Verdi and Puccini operas, was a tower of

strength. The whole rather expensive enterprise was sponsored by the firm of C.C. Wakefield ('Castrol, the Masterpiece in Oils!') and 'oil on the cruel water' became a good gossip-writer's quip.

There was one actor who was outstanding: an SABC news-reader and panel moderator called Henry Howell. He was small, bald and mild; he played the part of Commander Ericson, the 'hero' – large, fully coiffed, and about as mild as Nelson's blood.

A long listening career provides many examples ... of actors who don't look anything like the part, but who do sound it, down to the last semi-quaver. Henry Howell was one, and a real anchor man too."

A fine and well deserved tribute.

And who can ever forget Henry's wonderfully moving reading of "How Green was My Valley"? A story that is asked for by listeners time and time again, but, alas, like some other works by Henry is no longer in the SABC's archives; through no fault of the Corporation but apparently deliberately destroyed in someone's fit of pique. A tragedy indeed that scores of listeners, and their children, and their children's children, will be deprived of great cultural works and entertainment. However, we do still have Henry's reading of 'The Snow Goose' by Paul Gallico which is aired periodically at Christmas time and for which we must be grateful to the incumbent Head of English Service.

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### **Personal Reminiscences: excerpts from an interview with Adrian Steed in 1988 for the radio programme '60 Plus'**

"I well remember those very special years of which you shared many of them with me, Adrian, from say '46 to '58 when I was fully on the microphone and before I became fully involved in administration, and I think it would be appropriate for us to talk about some of the splendid people who were our bosses and our colleagues. They set a tone to broadcasting life that made one vividly aware that we were involved in a calling. I wouldn't go so far as to compare it to the ministry, but there's even a little bit of that in the calling of a true broadcaster.

"So, a few names: Gideon Roos, our absolutely splendid Director-General, Norman Filmer who was Deputy and a most understanding and able Head of Staff, and for me, almost above all, my wonderful, beloved departmental boss, Miss Gladys Dickson. She was a just superb person. She was utterly feminine, and she kept us under com-

mand by the sheer quality of her mind and her personality. I remember once talking to James McClurg about her, who was a very distinguished broadcaster in his own right and had known her many years longer than I had, and I said to Jimmy, 'what makes her so absolutely unique?' and he said, 'Well, take a week off and I'll tell you; but to put it into a very few words, she is absolutely incapable of bad taste.' In broadcasting that is a pretty remarkable accusation to make. She was an inspiration to a young and ardent broadcaster, as I was in the late '40s and the early '50s. When I was called upon to succeed her in 1959 I can say, with absolute truth, that I was heartbroken, I really was heartbroken. Frankly I think there ought to be a statue to her in Broadcast Centre."

### Sir Thomas Beecham

"There's a wonderful story of Thomas Beecham. I happened to be sitting in the studio when this happened. He was rehearsing the final concert of his short tour, and I think it was the Beethoven Fifth, something very obvious, you know, for the last item of the last concert. He conducted rehearsals without a score, but he was conducting away and I'm afraid our *cors anglais* in those days were not the best, you see, and the poor dears started to fumble when they came to a passage where they came to the fore. Sir Thomas petered out, closed them down and said, 'Go back to G', or whatever it was. So the orchestra pages back. 'Right! Off we go again!' By this time, of course, the nerves of the dear little *cor anglais* players were absolutely rattled, because he was alleged to be such a ferocious man, which he never showed here. And, of course, they really ruined the passage when they got to it this time, and he said, 'No, don't stop! Don't stop! It'll be all right on the night!'

"It must have been the Choral Symphony of Beethoven, because there was a choir, and there was the organist, who was sitting at the back, whose name was Rupert Stout, a very famous chap. When the concert was over Sir Thomas addressed himself to the microphone, which, of course, was hanging over his head and made some very charming remarks, and he said, 'I want to say a word of thanks to um, um, the choirmaster and organist, um, who I thought did a splendid job, um, I can't quite remember his name...', and dear old Rupert Stout, right up at the back on the organ said, 'Rupert Stout!'. And Beecham said, 'Ah, that's it. I knew it had something to do with Guinness!'"

## **Taubie Kushlick and "The Eagle has two Heads"**

"If we can try another of those horror stories. I was playing opposite darling Taubie Kushlick in 'The Eagle Has Two Heads'. We were broadcasting live, of course, in those days we didn't record, and we were into about the 33rd page, and it was a big emotional scene with dear Taubie and myself, and, as you know, it's the great conceit amongst radio actors that you should be able to tear a passion to ribbons without flicking an eyelid, or without losing your place in the script. Anyway, dear Taubie, of course, cared nothing for this, you see; she waved her arms around and clouted my script. Bang! All 83 pages of it, and it all went up in the air and it descended live from the air about my feet. And I bent down, picked up a page, and it was the right page, and all the lads and girls in the cast were shuffling and reshuffling, handing them to me, and we lived through it. But I can't tell you what the play was about to this day!"

## **The funeral of Prime Minister Jan Smuts**

"One of the great rewards of a broadcasting career is that you're often called upon to attend historic occasions. It seemed that I was destined to be a commentator at the funeral of our Prime Ministers. But the funeral of General Smuts was my first melancholy experience of this sort of event. He was a great figure in the Commonwealth, and in the whole world because of his leadership during the war, and, of course, at the foundation of the United Nations, and I interviewed him twice on that famous stoep at Irene.

"I think that the most wonderful thing about him was that you so quickly forgot that you were in the presence of this astounding world figure. He became an ordinary, very South African, man. He might have appeared austere, but he was human and I found him very, wonderfully easy to communicate with, and once you'd given him a lead, of course, he spoke so freely, because he had so many memories. And I think that, perhaps, if he'd been less of a statesman and more of a politician, I think he would have been able to have coped with 1948, which was to come the year after, better than he did. I think he lost touch with his own people.

"Because of his greatness and his fame many of our broadcasts on that day were relayed to London and the Commonwealth, indeed to the whole of the English-speaking world. Steve de Villiers, I think it was, or it might have been Paul Bothma, was placed, as I was, outside

the main door of the Moeder Kerk in Pretoria. He was the commentator for the Afrikaans Service at that particular point, and I was the English commentator. We each had a little balcony window in a large building across the street from the church, three or four storeys up. On this particular day, it was a beautiful day, and it was a beautiful vantage point, because we were looking straight across at the door of the Moeder Kerk. On this occasion I'd asked Kathleen, my wife, to come with me, because she, as a very young member of our Cape Town staff, had cued and even edited some of General Smuts's famous, immortal war-time broadcasts, and because it was a historic moment that I wanted her to share with me. The service from inside the Moeder Kerk was being broadcast, and my cue was to begin my commentary when the coffin emerged from the door of the kerk to begin its journey to the Hero's Cemetery. As we sat and listened to the service on our headphones, with our engineering colleague sitting beside us, Kathleen nudged me and whispered, 'Have you got a piece of paper and a pencil?' Well, I found both of these and she sat seriously, writing some words on the paper, which she then handed back to me. Her handwriting was never her best thing, and these words were almost indecipherable, but I did make sense of them in time, before the coffin emerged this very, very moving moment, the coffin emerging, carried by its pallbearers. It was my cue to begin the broadcast, and I read these words from Kathleen's crumpled piece of paper:

"He has outsoared the shadow of our night;  
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again;  
From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
He is secure, and now can never mourn  
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain".

"After that there was precious little that I could add before the cortege left the church, and I handed over the commentary to my colleague at the next commentary point. Those words of Shelley's had gone round the Commonwealth, and possibly round the world."

## **The Dedication of the Voortrekker Monument**

"It's such a delicate, intangible thing, particularly radio broadcasting, you know; you can't finger it, it has to be beautifully poised, it has to be absolutely balanced, your sails have to be properly trimmed, and your crew and your weighty objects have to be beautifully disposed.

Everything has to add to the grace and beauty of the medium. Broadcasting, when it's going well, is like a well-trimmed yacht.

"The days of the dedication of the then newly built Voortrekker Monument were particularly poignant and impressively memorable. Broadcasting, of course, was called upon to do justice to this very historic milestone in our history. It eventually becomes a bit of history itself. The broadcast coverage of this great event was extensive and, I hope, worthy of its subject. The climax was reached on the evening of the day of the dedication, when the Trekkers, who'd come from all over the country, were camped around the monument and set up their tents and built their fires and lit their lanterns, and songs of happiness came spreading through this heart-warming, in fact almost heart-rending, scene.

"The English Service, of course, devoted a great deal of time to covering the event, and on this particular evening one of its best commentators, who we will call Bob, because I need to conceal his identity, was perched right on the peak, the very peak, of the monument, from which he had a breathtaking view of the amazing nocturnal scene. Now Bob was a 'ware Suid Afrikaner', ideally equipped to perform this particular commentary. Never at a loss for words, Bob was in full flight, describing the scene which was spread out hundreds of feet below him, and suddenly he stopped. There was a slapping noise, then another slapping noise. Bob said, 'Oh, these gnats! There are thousands of gnats up here tonight! You wouldn't think they could fly so high!' Well, I was one of the other commentators on the scene somewhere, and I turned absolutely rigid with shock. But Bob, thank heavens, was completely oblivious of the implications of what he had said, and he soared on with his excellent commentary! Bob rose above it, you see, and as far as I remember there was no reaction to it at all, except amongst the broadcasters, who've all dined out on it since!"

## **The Theatre of the Mind**

"The theatre of the mind; it's very trite and easy to say, but, in fact, profoundly true. For those practitioners of it, it was very hair-raising. Particularly in those years when we used to perform live. I've already mentioned that moment I had with dear Taubie Kushlick, who knocked my script up into the air in a great dramatic gesture in the middle of 'The Eagle Has Two Heads', only 83 pages of it. But it was not all stress. I had the great honour of playing opposite Gwen Ffrangon-Davies in my time and, what was more testing, of actually producing

her in radio drama. She was a very awesome woman. Very, very feminine, but, well, she was Gwen Ffrangon-Davies and I was Henry Howell, you see, poor little boy.

"But I suppose the single production that will always remain in my mind is the great serial of 'The Cruel Sea' by, of course, Nicholas Monsarrat. He and I happened to be great friends, but we also had a very stormy relationship. He did a lot of broadcasting, very strong character, and quite difficult, and we had this peculiar, sort of affectionate, stormy relationship. I liked him tremendously and admired him very much indeed. He was the British United Kingdom Information Officer, a very busy and important task, particularly in those years. I think he wrote 'The Cruel Sea' while he was living in South Africa. This particular production was adapted for radio by a wonderful woman called Margot Bryant, a very well known journalist and PR in Johannesburg in those days, and our narrator was Nicholas Monsarrat himself. And Cedric Messina, who was to gain world-wide fame in later years as a TV and radio producer for the BBC, he was the producer of this tremendous serial. Hugh Rouse played the young Lieutenant Lockheart, and I played Commander Ericson. Nicholas, in his autobiography 'Life is a 4-letter Word', has some very nice things to say about all of us. He marvelled at Cedric Messina's patience. I looked through the book the other day to refresh my memory of 'The Cruel Sea' because I think it's a great book. I was astounded to find that it contained very, very little dialogue. Margot Bryant, a delicately nurtured woman, living a thousand miles from the sea, had created dialogue that had the true ring of the Navy, it was real dinkum Navy stuff. Nicholas pays tribute, very gratefully, to her in his autobiography. She was the creator almost, you could say, because how does Lieutenant Lockheart talk to Ericson in convincing naval terms, unless you've heard it in real life? Where she heard it I don't think she did, it was just pure, superb artistry and imagination."

## **The stratospheric John Huston**

"There have been times in my career when I was in the presence of the famous, or present at some historic event, and not even been aware of it. Briefly, to tell of one occasion, I was returning from an official trip on behalf of the SABC to London in 1951, with my engineering colleague and friend, Fred Schuyfer. We'd been over to cover the Festival of Britain, but it also coincided with a very big moment, the creation of a pool between South African Airways and what was then called

BOAC, and is, of course, now British Airways. So we were literally en route in the aeroplanes, collecting a great deal of material for a feature programme to mark this quite important event in our affairs. 'Everything had gone very well and we were on the return leg by South African Airways, flying in those lovely aircraft, Constellations. I had done a great deal of recording en route up in the cockpit with the captain and the engineers and so on, with the stewards and everybody else I could find who was of interest. Fred had put his equipment under one seat in the first row and was sitting in the other, but I occupied just one seat in the second row. Across the aisle was an interesting collection of people, in the front row of which was a very tall, strikingly handsome, dominant man. He looked like an intellectual boxer, and the next 10 or 20 rows were occupied by his hench-people, women and men, who treated him with the utmost respect.

"Fred and I busied ourselves with interviews and recordings from London Airport to Rome and even afterwards, in the evening. But as the evening had drawn on, and whilst I was listening back on the earphones to the material that we'd gathered, the tall, craggy man came across the aisle and sat beside me. He was very pleasant, most interested in what we were doing and affable and charming; he took dinner in the seat next to me, and by this time I'd built up, in that simple mind of mine, such a barrier of shyness that I failed to ask him who he was, perhaps just as well in the event. My antennae, of course, were waving, trying to pick up his name from the number of young people in his entourage who would come up to him and speak to him, and say, 'Yes (mumble)', 'No (mumble)', but I never picked up his name. I gathered that he was something stratospheric in the film industry, and that they were all going to Nairobi to make a film. Most of the night passed before he returned to his seat. By this time I was too tired and dim-witted anyway to go down the aisle a few metres and engage one of the people in conversation and try to find out something about them. At Nairobi they all disappeared and Schuyf and I plodded on to Johannesburg in our Constellation.

"The next day at the office I was telling this tale to one of our most clever staff members, a brilliant lad and a fundi on films, Leonard Brew, son, of course, of the great scientist. As my tale unfolded Leonard's face became more and more marked with disbelief. At last he blurted out, 'Don't you know who that was?' 'No', said I. 'That was John Huston. He and that crew were going to make a film called 'The African Queen' with Katherine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart', and he trotted out a whole string of world famous names. Well, I'm afraid the fact was that even then I didn't quite realise what I'd missed!"



"Today is Tuesday, what would be the day after the day after tomorrow?" asks Quiz - Master Henry Howell in the Young Ideas' Quiz of Margaret—but she wasn't caught napping.



## SSSHHH . . . JO'BURG'S QUIZ KIDS ARE ON THE AIR

By A. SILBER  
(Photographs by him, too)

TUESDAY afternoon at 5.30 is a big moment for Johannesburg youngsters, for as the last few prices on the Stock Exchange are read on the "A" programme, the youngsters know that in a few seconds a familiar signature tune will be heard, and then the voice of the announcer:

"Hullo, boys and girls. Well, here we are again with another Young Ideas' Quiz—a general knowledge competition for our children in the studio here and for our listeners at home. As usual, your question-master is . . . Henry Howell."

This announcement is followed by clapping, cheering and whistling from the two hundred or more children who pack the studio to see the goings-on for themselves.

There was not even standing-room when I squeezed my way in, complete with camera, and I had to watch the proceedings from the bandstand.

Henry Howell stood at the nuke with some boys and girls grouped around him. They represented the cream of the brains of specially selected boys' and girls' teams, pitted against each other in a competition that was followed and listened to with baited breath by the hundreds of youngsters in the studio.

"You're next, John," said Henry to a boy on his right. "Can you name the biggest instrument in the violin family?"

There was an awkward pause. John looked puzzled—from the audience some of his friends whispered "Cello."



Tremendous enthusiasm is shown by the children who queue up outside the S.A.B.C. building as early as four o'clock to listen-in to the Quiz.

Henry Howell told them that there was to be no prompting. "Cello," ventured John, uncertainly.

"No, . . . I'm afraid you're wrong. The bass is the answer."

"Now, one for the girls. Margaret, today is Tuesday. What is the day after the day after tomorrow?"

Margaret hesitated . . . someone whispered "Friday", but Margaret was not to be caught, and yelled: "Thursday."

"That's very good, and gives the girls one point."

The competition went off smoothly, and the girls maintained a slight lead.

★

"NOW, to interrupt the quiz with a little melodrama. We will have to test certain boys and girls for the parts. We have three candidates for each part. The audience will be the judges, and the parts will be given to the candidates who get the most applause. We will first test for the villain. First candidate is Kenneth Johnson."

Kenneth, aged fourteen, took up the script and, twisting his face into a horrid leer (without being in the least self-conscious), snarled into the microphone:

"Aha, my proud beauty . . . ha, ha, ha! At last I have found you, and you will be mine forever . . . do you hear me? Forever and forever."

It was a very fine effort indeed and Kenneth earned the part. The second candidate, a little fellow of about 12, piped the same words in a thin treble, but his voice was against him.

The tests for the other parts raised a good laugh.

The candidates for the part of the hero were lads of about 13 and found that breaking voices can be pretty troublesome when confronting a mike.

Musical effects did much to make "Belinda and the Wicked Rudolph" sound most realistic when the youngsters finally enacted the thrilling melodrama, and for unrehearsed effort, the children were really outstanding. It made me think that if some film company decided to make films of South African youngsters, then they would not have far to look for actors.

★

THE quiz competition continued, and a round of spelling proved disastrous for some of the youngsters, while others found absolutely no difficulty, and spelt words like *calastrophe*, *recept*, *plenipotentiary* with ease. The girls soundly licked the boys at the spelling.

The boys, however, made up quite a few points with a memory test. It

started with a sentence: "An old lady went to market and bought a basket, a tray, an apple, a bag of onions, a . . . Each youngster had to add a different item to the lady's purchases, and then recite the whole lot over again.

A musical quiz followed, and Henry Howell asked the youngsters what dance they would do if they heard a certain tune being played in a dance-hall.

A pianist played a waltz, fox-trot, quick-step and tango. The children were not to be caught napping, and, if anything, these Jo'burg kids certainly know their dance tunes, and there seems to be no danger of any of them trying to fox-trot to a waltz when they grow up.

On the stroke of six Henry Howell made his final announcement, and with the Young Ideas' signature tune being played in the background the programme ended. The youngsters cheered and whistled for some time afterwards, and trooped outside excitedly talking about how the boys just managed to pull up and beat the girls by one point, to win the prizes.

Outside I listened to a conversation between two twelve-year-olds. The little girl screwed up her nose disdainfully at her male counterpart:

"It's because Henry Howell felt sorry for you that you won . . . next week the girls will consent their supremacy and show you that girls is cleverer than boys . . . you'll see." ■■



The Quiz Kids, ready for Henry Howell's question. At this session Peter Louis, who "erred" last April, made a come-back in place of Marius Schoon who was away on holidays.

*John Harris was ultimately hanged for treason.*

**ERIC ROSENTHAL, one of the S.A.B.C.'s quizlings tells about the under-cover work behind Sunday's brightest bit of listening**



Quiz - Master at the Golden Rand and - smooth-voiced Henry Howell.

**I**T was Sunday evening on the Royal Train. The King and the Queen, with the two Princesses, were taking their ease in the privacy of their travelling drawing room, when a familiar voice came through to some members of the entourage. "We now come to Cross-Country Quiz."

Like hundreds of thousands of South Africans in every province Their Majesties and their daughters found relaxation and amusement in the idle hour before supper-time in the most popular programme ever introduced into the Union. We know that they enjoyed it so much that they listened to several times when the programme of their tour allowed it.

Cross-Country Quiz started early this year between Johannesburg and Cape Town and, during recent weeks, the national coverage has been widened by the introduction of Durban as well. It would be hard to give an exact figure of the number of listeners, but a modest estimate is that of the 400,000 licence-holders in the four provinces fully half have the programme turned on at 6.10 every Sunday night. At five listeners each, it means 1,000,000 people.

**A**S a member of the Cape Town team almost from the outset I am constantly being asked to clarify the mysteries which go with the listening so, with the blessing of the S.A.B.C., which has kindly allowed the first photographs of teams in action to be taken, I shall try to answer some of the queries.

South Africa has been extraordinarily lucky in its Quiz-Masters, without whose personality and technical skill the whole thing could never have been worked. I speak of John Fleming, of Cape Town (who is a schoolmaster in private life), Henry Howell, of Johannesburg (who is on the S.A.B.C. staff) and Maurice Gill, of Durban. It is their peculiar genius to make us all feel matey-like and at home. So complete has been their success that the free-and-easy atmosphere is not put on at all. We really are friends and members of the team call each other by their first names even outside the studio.

It all begins more than two hours and a half before the programme goes on the air (or even earlier if we include the mysterious goings-on in the control room of the engineers, where the link-up is arranged between the three cities. Communication is arranged by means of

"land-lines" over the telephone wires, which are hired for the occasion every week by the S.A.B.C. from the G.P.O. Incidentally, the engineers themselves are all as keen as mustard and listen-in to the state of the game while on duty. In fact, even the commissionaires at the front door of Broadcast House, where we have to sign a book, are almost as anxious about the tournament as they are about the fall of wickets with the Springboks overseas.

★

**W**E come upstairs from our distant homes in the suburbs before tea-time on Sunday afternoon, and get going about quarter to four. First of all there is all the chit-chat about last week's score and possible improvements in technique are discussed. Then we Quizlings (as we are more and more being called) take our seats round a table with a microphone suspended over its centre, and each of us puts on a pair of earphones. Meanwhile the engineers dash in from their room next door to see that everything is O.K., and the turning on of a red light tells us that our opponents are coming through. "Hullo, Durban," says somebody. "Can you hear us?"

Not yet—the line is not ready. So they try again until Cape Town can hear Durban and Johannesburg and vice versa. This vice versa business does not follow automatically. Once we had to postpone the starting of a tournament because, while we could hear Durban and Johannesburg perfectly well, Durban could not hear us.

Then begins an exchange of remarks between engineers in the different cities in a mysterious jargon of their own. Cape Town is too low. They want another seven D.B.s (whatever they are). Johannesburg has 11 D.B.s too many, and so on. This forms part of a process known as taking a level. Everybody gives a sample of his voice (which, not being broadcast, allows for the recitation of *Bub-Bub Black Sheep or One Potato—Two Potatoes* or anything else that comes into your head.

Soon after four o'clock everything seems more or less okay and the last few minutes are used by the various teams for the exchange of remarks about the state of the weather in the different parts of the Union where they are located or of lighter badinage.

The announcer (Bill Pritchard, in Cape Town) shows up and gives the word: "Prepare to cut." This means that somewhere in the realms inhabited by engineers the recording is about to start, for the whole programme has to be taken down on records before it can be put on the air. Meanwhile, we Quizlings sit ready with bits of paper and pencils in our hands, ready to write down anything that may be spelt out to us, while John Fleming (or Henry Howell or Maurice Gill) stands by with his neatly-typed sheet of questions, with the answers in red below each.

**N**O Quiz-Master is obliged to put the question in any particular sequence, but he can use his own discretion, and he usually has a considerable stock in reserve which he can carry forward to some future occasion. Only one thing is definite — **WE NEVER HAVE THE SLIGHTEST KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE OTHER STATIONS ARE GOING TO ASK US.** Anybody who wishes to send in questions is welcome to do so, and if they are good enough they are likely to be used. In making up the set the Quiz-Master must take care that there is a judicious mixture — Geography, the Bible, Literature, Natural History, Engineering, Classics and so on.

The quiz has begun. A voice comes from another city. "This one is for Johannesburg: If you were . . ." and so on. You sit listening, thanking your stars if the answer is unfamiliar and praying it will come your way if you know it. We have developed a system

of signals which is similar to that used in the schoolroom. If you are dead sure you hold up both hands. If you think you know, one hand suffices, and if you are going to take a chance a modest finger will suffice. In each case the Quiz-Master has to decide who will reply. (It often happens that more than one member of the team can offer an answer.)

In the matter of guessing it is surprising how often one strikes a bull's-eye. Once I was asked: "Who was Lord Somebody or other?" I took a deep breath and said: "A lawyer." It was correct. On the other hand, I was asked: "How many symphonies did Cesar Frank write?" and not being acquainted with the career of that distinguished musician, I ventured: "Twelve." I am still being ragged by my highbrow friends who cannot understand how anyone cannot be aware that the illustrious Cesar produced only a single one.



**THE ENGLISH PROGRAMME — for the best in broadcasting**  
Well-known international quiz-master

## FIGHT COMMENTARY IN HIGH C



**I**AN BALFOUR (wearing glasses) became so excited during the dramatic commentary on the world championship fight between Vic Toweel and Jimmy Carruthers that his voice rose several pitches higher than normal.



Vol. 1. No. 10. 29 November, 1932

Because of his excitement, Ian gave one of the most dramatic commentaries of his entire career. The very tone of his voice brought many people who do not usually listen to boxing commentaries rushing to radio sets to listen. It was left to Henry Howell, seen in the picture with him, to give a more calm and collected summary of what had happened, but we suspect that Henry Howell had had time to recover from his amazement before the microphone was handed over to him.



Henry Howell as Commander Ericson in the radio version of "The Cruel Sea."

THE true Henry Howell lies beneath a shyness and reserve that, at first, is not easy to penetrate. But get him talking about his travels, his fishing, his garden, or his love of acting, and the shyness drops. Henry Howell leans across, stabs an excited finger, fumbles for another cigarette, gesticulates, and talks rapidly and lightly as only the Celts can do. A puckish, animated man whose pale blue eyes brim with mirth; whose galeety is infectious. Henry Howell at such times is a tonic.

Listeners catch much of this tonic personality over the air during his boxing commentaries and well-known quiz programmes—Cross-Country Quiz and International Quiz on the English programme, and, latterly the Friday "Quiz Kids" programme for Phillips on Springbok Radio. He is also the cheerful if sometimes faltering pupil in the new "Teach Yourself Afrikaans" series. He enjoys it; but wryly admits that it is

hard going back to school at the age of 36. "It's the homework that gets me," he groans. And when he sits down with his bundle of Afrikaans text books at his home in Bryanston it takes great willpower to forget the pottering that has to be done in the garden.

When Henry is not pottering, studying Afrikaans, or broadcasting, he is the extremely efficient Organiser of the SABC's English Programmes. He sits in a largish office in Broadcast House surrounded by charts and timetables, and plans programmes to the last detail. He is responsible for maintaining the high quality of English broadcasts, passing scripts, and co-ordinating with the other two main studios in the national network—Durban and Cape Town. In this work his great knowledge of the technical side of radio proves invaluable. Although many of his listeners might not suspect it, Henry Howell is a highly skilled radio engineer who spent

## BEHIND

his war years in close collaboration with the Royal Navy on high-frequency direction-finding for U-boat detection.

He inherited his love for the sea from his father, a Royal Naval Dockyard official, and spent a childhood surrounded by naval activity. As a small boy he left his birthplace at Pembroke, Wales, and went to Malta with his family for seven years. Later, when his family returned to Southsea, Henry decided to take up radio engineering as a career. He gained a B.Sc., but during his student days developed a passion for acting. He used to augment his pocket money by taking part-time jobs as a film extra at the Denham, Twickenham and Shephard's Bush film studios. He was fortunate enough to appear many times at London's well-known Embassy Theatre at Swiss Cottage. It was here that young Henry Howell had his first big theatrical experience as Danny in Evelyn Williams' "Night Must Fall." This was the actor-playwright's own part in the play and he happened to be present that night in the audience. Henry told me: "I managed to get away with it because I'm Welsh myself—at least he was very kind to me when I met him afterwards."

Undergraduate Howell played in other plays at the Embassy, including "No Exit," and became so immersed in acting that he soon had to choose between the theatre and engineering as a future career. The struggle for a decision was difficult, but at length parental pressure was brought to bear and Henry was persuaded that a "steady job" as an engineer was preferable. Henry still doubts the wisdom of his parents' choice but, as it transpired, radio engineering did not prove to be quite the "steady job" that they may have imagined. Afterwards joining the overseas staff of the Cable and Wireless Company, he was one of the few students of his course to be selected for a post-graduate course in radio and cable engineering at the Marconi College at Chelmsford. In 1938 he was sent out to Ascension, in the South Atlantic, 2,000 miles west of Angola, and spent three isolated years among migrating seabirds and the great shoals of fish which sported round the island shores. Henry counts those years as among his happiest. The 14 men and 12 women ashore made a happy family. Living was cheap and money lost its importance to a chit system. Each member of the small island community had a civic duty to perform in addition to his official job. One at the canteen, another the post office, a third the stores, and it is not surprising that Henry Howell ran the cinema. "It was a perfect Gilbert

# THE VOICE

Tony L'Estrange  
Introduces you to  
**HENRY HOWELL**

and Sullivan atmosphere," Henry recalls. During his off hours Henry would take a boat offshore and chase the shoals of tunny attracted there by the warm waters.

There was daily radio contact with the outside world, and many friends were made in stations throughout the world. But the peace did not last. Political news from Europe became blacker by the day, and one night the island community were stunned into the realisation that Britain and Germany were again at war. The knowledge of the awful vulnerability of this lonely South Atlantic island jolted the islanders into action. Henry, with several others, founded the Ascension Island Defence Force. World War I rifles and an ancient Lewis gun were issued, and a sharp look-out was kept for marauding U-boats. The idea of the "Suicide Squad," as it was called, was to hold off any enemy landing parties long enough to get signals through to the outside world. The feeling of insecurity was heightened by the news that the Graf Spee was cruising around the South Atlantic looking for trouble. Nothing happened, however.

In 1941, it was Island Defence Force Sergeant Henry Howell's turn to go on leave. He went to Cape Town to make personal acquaintance with the many people he had come to know by radio. The SABC welcomed him, and Henry spent much of his leave broadcasting and taking part in radio plays. He was then transferred to St. Helena and made his headquarters at one of the historic houses on the island which had been occupied variously by both Wellington and Napoleon. Henry fell in love with this green, misty island and its roistering, buccaneering past. He also became deeply concerned at the plight of the St. Helenians, who over-populated the island and impoverished themselves further by short-sighted agricultural and feeding practices. He spent nearly two years there interesting himself in all that concerned the island and maintaining the vital radio link with the outside world. "One day I want to write a book about St. Helena," he told me.

In 1943 his tour of duty expired and he was transferred to Karachi, India, under South-East Asia Command, and was later sent to establish a beam-relaying system at Muscat, on the Gulf of Oman. This Arabian capital was one of the last untouched corners of pure Islam, and was ruled by a despotic Sultan. It had not then felt the impact of Western civilisation and there were only five Europeans stationed in this incredibly hot and lonely part of the world.

Life was occasionally brightened by the visits of British political agents accompanied by magnificent bodyguards of Sepoys. Henry Howell had unbounded admiration for the intellectual and diplomatic qualities of these men who spoke Arabic dialects fluently and had intimate knowledge of the Arabic mind. Their prestige and personal relations with the Sultan was widely felt throughout the Far East. "These men represented British diplomacy at its best," he told me.

But the visits of these mysterious officials were few and far between, and Henry's life was otherwise brightened by bridge and investigation into the violent and romantic past of the Oman. One of his proudest discoveries was a forgotten Latin inscription of a "Hall Mary" in one of the dungeons of the ancient harbour forts. He believes it must have been inscribed by one of the early Portuguese explorers who accompanied Vasco da Gama's four 125-ton vessels in 1497 to open up the sea route to India, if not by Vasco himself. Henry photographed the inscription and sent them back to England.

Relations with the Sultan were cordial and the engineers endeared themselves to him by keeping his dozen radio sets in repair—only one of which had worked before their arrival. This, allied with consideration of the Sultan's distaste for tobacco and alcohol and a tactful ear to occasional unpleasant sounds from the local jail cemented a firm and cordial friendship between the autocratic Arab ruler and the resident Europeans.

In 1946 Henry Howell resigned from the Cable and Wireless Company and joined the Johannesburg studios of the SABC as an announcer-producer. He organised the youth programmes and, when Cameron McClure took command of Springbok Radio, he took over the post of English Programme Organiser.

Henry Howell and Kathleen Davydd, his wife, both widely travelled people, have now made their home in the Union, and they are immensely proud of their South African citizenship. "No country to beat it," is their comment.

Henry's first love in radio is drama. "Stage drama is limited to the acting abilities of the people taking part in the play," he explained. "But the only limitation in radio drama is the limit of the listener's imagination—and there is often no limit to that."

Since joining the SABC Henry Howell has become a high-ranking radio actor in South Africa. He has acted and produced many plays, including those he took part in as a student, and lately took the part of Ericsson in the radio version of "The Crested Sea." This South African production has now been taken over by 52 radio stations in Australia and other parts of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, he has not completely lost his allegiance to other acting media, and was extremely disappointed a few years ago when pressure of work made it impossible for him to accept an offer by Sir Alexander Korda to take the part of Father Vincent in the film production of "Cry, the Beloved Country."

In recent years he has welcomed the SABC's national network. "I think this has been an absolute boon to South African radio. The best productions of each station are shared and interchanged, and today producers at each of the regional stations can concentrate on quality instead of quantity," he says.

Every four months Henry Howell meets colleagues from the regional studios at a programme-planning conference at head office. "My job is to translate the conference decisions into terms of practical planning on paper," he told me.

That this is well done is evident from the fact that the SABC's English programmes during the last three years have improved enormously and can compare with similar BBC productions.

Not a little of the credit for this must go to the quiet efficiency and great experience of Henry Howell—one of the SABC's backroom boys.

# Men, Women, Events

A Daily Causerie.....



HENRY HOWELL  
... charm

**N**OW if you will all please open your New Testaments and leaf through to Luke, Chapter xvii, verse 2, you will read that it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Which, in **MODERN PROSE**, means that it were better to be driven out from mankind than to be disliked by children. Now, chaps, I have, as you may have gathered from this column, been showing a young niece around Johannesburg. Easy, I thought. Yes? The view from Northcliff of the lights of the city, the escalator in our leading bazaar, the gallery in the Stock Exchange where dignified fathers might like bigger forwards to get the better price, the top of Escom

Ho! where Uncle was terrified because the youngster leant over the rail crying. "Look at those funny little motor cars down in Rissik Street," the trip down the gold mine, the fun of seeing the Comet at Palmietfontein, the Africa Museum at our Public Library, Othello, the stars in the sky at the Colosseum, the homes in Houghton, and about six other things. Yesterday, before the young lady left, I took her to Broadcast House, and, as we drove home, she said, "Uncle Leonard, that was the greatest thrill of all!"

★  
**B**ECAUSE why? Because Henry Howell, with all the charm in this world, took over Patricia and showed her how the works works. Howell, a busy man, and the **BEST BROADCASTER** I know, showed her how the programmes are packaged, how an ox - wagon can be impersonated by a drum thing, how Peter Chiswell sits on the back of his neck waiting for the moment to beat his little gong, and say, in accents culgong, "It is exactly high noon." We saw how horses gallop by and means of coconut shells, and how ox-wagons creak, and how prisoners' footsteps sound as they walk to the gallows, and how you make a man sound as if he were walking on gravel, and then we saw the S.A.B.C. orchestra playing like mad while an Italian tenor sang in their sound-proof studio, and we saw where Henry Howell does his inter-town quiz, and all the people in white coats operating the most complicated machines, and everything.

Thank you, Henry Howell. The first two sentences of this causerie can be ignored by you.

★  
*Leonard Bright*

## Old year's night

(1) This last day of the year, it seems right to congratulate the English Programme of the S.A.B.C. on one of the most imaginative year-ends it has ever offered. From early in the Christmas season, the English programme has excelled itself, and would compare favourably with anything in the English-speaking world.



Henry Howell his annual contribution to Old Year's Night in the form of "The Year in Retrospect," a summary of the main events of 1937. All who know this distinguished broadcaster's grammae that ends with the nine o'clock news will be well worth hearing.

At 10.45 a most exciting programme starts, produced once again by Henry Howell. The script is by Dewar McCormack. The first major production we have had from his hand since his appointment to Johannesburg from the Cape. His "Around the Union" tour will take in the bells of St. S. Vrystaad striking 16 bells, eight for the old year and eight more for the new, the only occasion when 16 bells can be heard; Old Year's Night concert in front of the Durban City Hall; the first baby of the Patrick O'Malley reporting from the control tower at Jan Smuts, George's Cathedral, Cape Town; and a message from Mrs. Dick Palmer, who arrived at a place called Strom, near Orahama-town, 50 years ago, and is still there.

How does 1936 measure up in your count of past years remembered? What worried you most—Suez, Holland Street, or the Receiver of Revenue? You can watch your own personal memories against those of Henry Howell this evening at nine o'clock when he presents "The Year in Retrospect."

For some three years in succession it was my duty to assist in compiling and producing this annual feature. And an agonizing job it was too. How best to balance the rival claims on a brief 45 minutes of a monarch's death, some deed of private heroism that flared in every headline for three days and then sank to an uly back page; how to reconcile the claims of war and peace, politics and art, a new dam and a new battleship.

Howell's taste is catholic and experienced. There will be something for everyone — no idle phrase for once — in this programme.



HENRY HOWELL

Listening-in with Mike

## Strong acting in fine sea play

**L**AST THURSDAY'S SUPPER was cold and forgotten when they faded the last minute of "Mourning Departure" for the 9 o'clock news. It was good—a perfect play for radio and well produced.

We have heard this submarine drama three times to my knowledge—a workmanlike production back in 1951 by Paul Vernon, a commercial version in which the argumentative scenes ashore were heavily cut, and the present production by Cedric Messina.

Henry Howell's Captain Stanford will be a contender for the intelligent piece of casting repaid with a highly intelligent performance of 1958 stakes—an



# Meet The New Head Of English Service

ON July 4 Mr. Henry Howell, one of the best known radio personalities in South Africa, took up his appointment as Head of the English Service, on the retirement of Miss Gladys Dickson. Prior to becoming a broadcaster in South Africa Mr. Howell was an electrical engineer and in his professional capacity travelled extensively in the Middle East, India and South America.

### Appointments

He joined the SABC in Johannesburg as an announcer/producer in 1946, and the following year became Juvenile Programme Organiser. His infectious enthusiasm, versatility and instinctive sympathy with youth at-

## A Broadcasting Personality ...

tracted a wide following among young listeners. Two years later the position of English Programme Organiser in Johannesburg fell vacant and Mr. Howell was appointed. Notwithstanding his administrative duties he continued to take an active part in programmes, particularly in dramatic productions where his outstanding talents were much in demand.

er in Johannesburg fell vacant and Mr. Howell was appointed. Notwithstanding his administrative duties he continued to take an active part in programmes, particularly in dramatic productions where his outstanding talents were much in demand.

### Became Known

A gifted reader of both poetry and prose his voice soon became one of the best known in the country. As Quiz Master he enjoyed a long and popular association with the "Cross Country

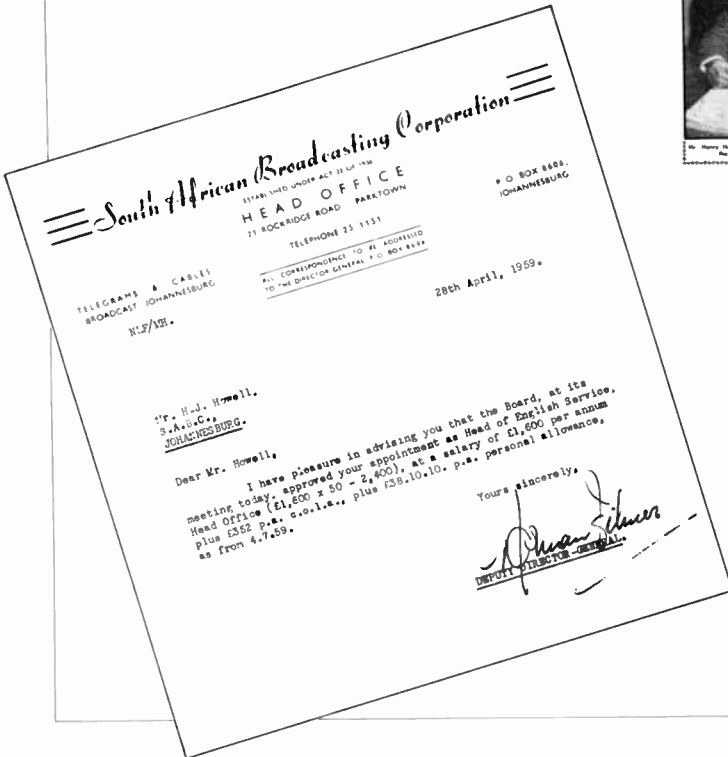
Quiz" programmes which finally led to the international contest in which the South African team defeated all opponents.

### Good Wishes

In 1958 Mr. Howell was chosen to assume the newly created position of English Programme Manager and the duties of his new office became nation wide with the introduction of the integrated programme system. Six full years in consolidating and developing the national English Service gave him much experience in the responsibilities of the high office to which as Head of the English Service of the SABC he is now called. He carries with him the good wishes of listeners, friends and colleagues all over the country.



Mr. Henry Howell, newly appointed as Head of the English Service of the SABC





## Chapter 2

# A Matter of Principle

**H**enry Howell was highly principled, his standards of excellence and honesty surpassing all others, and he was following Lord Reith's Charter of 'public service broadcasting' without influence by Government or any other.

What follows is Henry's article entitled: "Matters of Principle". He was particularly concerned that scripts emanating from Government called "The South African Scene" were being read by SABC presenters and therefore gave the listener the idea or impression that the material contained in them was SABC policy.

"I want to say first of all that I think I speak for all the senior members of the English Service of the SABC who expressed the utmost concern spontaneously to me....

"I also want to stress that it is not least of all my **own** concern. As I understand it, the SABC was created to be an impartial body and on all matters of a controversial nature, especially in political matters, it has always in the past been most careful to present both sides of any case. This, as far as I am able to judge the matter, has not happened with some of the 'South African Scene' scripts. They have clearly put forward and in fact strongly advocated the policies of the Government. They have at the same time either condemned outright, or by implication, policies advocated by other responsible bodies and organisations, including that of the official Opposition. Often they have seemed to me to express as statements of uncontrovertible fact, things that many members of the public would not be able to accept as such.

"Unless I am gravely mistaken, our function is to present all rational viewpoints in matters of controversy and not ally ourselves with only one. On the last day of a recent Conference, senior members of the English Programme Service considered this matter in the utmost seriousness and with a sense of responsibility to both the SABC and the country as a whole, and examined themselves to see whether their judgement was not warped by their own political outlook. Within the limits of human error we believe we are motivated

not by prejudice but by the strongest sense of duty, and by loyalty to a principle upon which we have always believed the SABC to have been built.

"We are not unaware of the dangers inherent in our present political situation and the duties of the SABC under a declared state of emergency. We are aware that at these times certain principles may transcend those of the Charter, but we are unwavering in our belief that if at such a time as this it becomes necessary for us to lend our facilities to the Government to state its views, the material broadcast should be written and presented on the air by a spokesman of the Government and not by an employee of the SABC. We should then be carrying out our high duty without, at any time, endangering the basic responsibility we have to the community as a whole.

"The fact that these scripts are written and read anonymously is giving the impression that what is broadcast is the official standpoint of the Corporation. I do want to stress the fact that if we lose the confidence of the South African community in our high principles we might just as well close down. One further aspect of this problem which exercises our minds considerably is that in addition to thinking that the 'South African Scene' has no place under a state of emergency, we fear the future if this policy is to be continued past the end of that emergency".



Strong words indeed, and Henry Howell had good cause to be worried. Dr. Verwoerd was vehemently against the English language, and was determined that *his* language alone would be the official one in the country. And the use of the national broadcasting network was the only vehicle he could use to insidiously push the principles of apartheid. Henry Howell was having none of it; he had followed the principles of the Charter.

Henry Howell had to go.

In 1964 he was given a choice: be transferred to Durban to run that regional service, or move over to Springbok. Word spread fast, and no-one believed he would accept either proposition.

He felt utterly beaten and with heavy heart walked along Commis-

sioner Street trying to make his decision: Should he resign? Should he accept the ignominy of losing his beloved English service? Fate decreed that he bump into A.N. Wilson – one of Mr. Harry Oppenheimer's closest aides. Arthur Wilson, an *aide de camp* to General Smuts during the war, looked askance at Henry, 'Whatever is the matter old boy?' Henry looked up and said, 'Arthur, I've had it; I can't go on'. He was pale and shaking. Wilson persuaded him to go back to his office at Broadcast House and wait for his telephone call. Within the hour he telephoned 'Come – Mr. O. wants to talk to you.'

Henry duly went and was shown into Mr. Oppenheimer's office. 'Now Henry', he said very kindly, 'tell me all about it'. And Henry poured it out, ending his tale of woe with words of total despair. There was a silence, then Mr. O. looked at Henry and sternly said, 'Stick it; you've got to stick it. Of course you must stick it', and other words of encouragement in similar vein.

So Henry 'stuck it'; he accepted the move to Springbok Radio, and later said: "It was the best advice I've ever had, and my move to Springbok and the Commercial Services was the best thing that could have happened to me."

\* \* \*

# Any room for an English-speaker?

Rand Daily Mail  
ombudsman

**JAMES  
McCLURG**



takes a critical  
look at the media

If you have any complaints against the Rand Daily Mail, or suggestions for the Ombudsman to take up, write to the Editor, PO Box 1138, Johannesburg.

IN THE SABC'S 44 years of existence, only one English-speaking person has held the office of Director-General. He was Major Rene Caprara, who was appointed when the corporation was established in 1936, having previously managed the old African Broadcasting Company. He retired 12 years later.

It is true that the able and popular Mr Norman Filmer headed the SABC's executive staff for four years from 1961. But he was carefully styled "Senior Director", not Director-General, giving the impression that the old, high-sounding title had been abolished. The change was partly designed to show that, following the departure of Mr Gideon Roos, power had shifted from the professional staff to the chairman's office, occupied full-time by Dr Piet Meyer.

Nevertheless, to the surprise of few, as soon as Mr Filmer departed the title blossomed anew. This time it was bestowed on Mr Douglas Fuchs. Mr Jan Swanepoel was later appointed a Director-General in parallel with Mr Fuchs and now holds his post in partiel with Dr Jan Schutte.

Changes in the top echelon cannot be far off. Dr Schutte, whose sphere is programmes, is over retiring age and has had his term of office extended. Mr Swanepoel, the administrative and financial man, will reach

retiring age in two years' time.

Who will succeed them and, in particular, what chance is there that an English-speaking person might be given one of the posts?

This question is not racially motivated. It would be equally valid, in reverse, if the balance over the years had been loaded against Afrikaans-speaking staff members. In any case, no one should let a possible charge of racialism deter him from asking questions that clearly should be asked in the interests of the public — and in the SABC's own long-term interests.

It should not need stating that the SABC is there to serve all sections of the community. (Indeed it is shameful that I should be posing this question solely in terms of the country's two white groups, but there is such a thing as keeping your feet on the ground.)

If the top executive level of the SABC is seen as an Afrikaner preserve, how can the corporation expect to enjoy the confidence of other sections? How can it appear otherwise, in fact, than as a branch of the Government machine and the Afrikaner Nationalist establishment?

It is hard to believe that the newly-renovated board, with the verligte Professor Mouton at its head, can be indifferent

to such a challenge to its integrity.

Whether the right man is to be found within the SABC is another matter. At the moment the only English-speaking person in the upper ranks is the Director of Technical Services, Mr Douglas Mills. He is a highly qualified specialist.

Will the lame answer be that there is no English-speaking person in the SABC's programme or administrative staff sufficiently senior and experienced to deserve the top appointment? If so, it would be hard to imagine a more appalling indictment of the corporation's staff development policy.

There is already a feeling abroad that people with initiative and spirit — Pat Rogers and Donna Wurzel are two obvious examples — find it hard to fulfil their own standards within the rigidities of SABC programme policy. Does the same apply on the executive side? In advancing English-speaking people to executive rank, has the SABC — with few exceptions — preferred pliant mediocrities to achievers?

If a bad situation is not to become worse, with disastrous consequences for the SABC, a sharp look must surely be taken at staff policies as affecting both language groups. And the time for such a look is now.

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SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

( ESTABLISHED UNDER ACT 22 OF 1936 )

HEAD OFFICE

YOUR REF.

OUR REF.

27th January, 1964.

BROADCAST HOUSE  
COMMISSIONER ST.  
JOHANNESBURG  
P.O. BOX 8606  
TELEGRAMS & CABLES  
" BROADCAST "  
JOHANNESBURG  
TELEPHONES 22 4147  
23 1151

Mr. H.J. Howell,  
S.A.B.C.,  
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Mr. Howell,

I have pleasure in advising that as from 1st February, 1964, you will be transferred to the position of Head: Springbok Radio. Your salary and salary scale will not be affected by this appointment.

The confirmation of your appointment in this post is subject to the satisfactory completion of the customary probationary period of six months, calculated from 1st February, 1964.

Yours sincerely,

J.N. Swanepoel,  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE.





## Chapter 3

# The Commercial Services

- 1964 ... transferred to Head of Springbok Radio
- 1965 ... promoted : Assistant Director Springbok Radio
- 1968 ... promoted : Assistant Director Springbok & Special FM Services
- 1970 ... promoted : Deputy Director Springbok & Regional Services
- 1971 ... promoted : Director all Commercial Services
- 1979 ... retired : succeeded by his deputy Jack Siebert

**W**hen one remembers the Commercial Services, one's first thoughts flash back to the exciting, vibrant, golden years of Springbok Radio. It's programmes, writers, and voices are legendary. Even today two generations still talk about it. Who can forget Dewar McCormack in "No place to hide"; Paddy O'Byrne as Mark Saxon; The Quiz Kids with Chairman Henry Howell; Squaddies, Taxi, and the many, many programmes and ideas that literally poured from the pens of, for example, Michael Silver and Michael McCabe? Another book would be required to write a 'biography' of this highly popular and effervescent station. To name only a few here is really inappropriate and a dis-service to *all* the contributors. However, some familiar names and faces will be found among these pages.

The initiator of commercial radio was (Mac) Cameron McClure and in July 1949 he became the very dynamic head of this newly established service. After an extensive international search for programme and technique ideas, he launched Springbok Radio in May 1950.

It had been running successfully for 13 years under the very capable guidance of chief Cameron McClure before Henry came along, after five years as Head of the English Service. Henry was a purist, his language English, his pride its spoken word, and his standards the level of excellence. Springbok Radio was the 'yellow pages' of broad-

casting, albeit a successful one. But Henry had not been experienced in, or exposed to, any marketing media – he was a creative man – and this sideways move not only depressed him, but concerned him that he should be good at it. He was fortunate, he says, that he had many well-established colleagues, such as Cameron McClure, Steve de Villiers, and Jack Siebert (his deputy), to help him in his transition.

And nobody was more surprised than Henry himself that he **did** make such a success of it.

So Springbok gained a valuable and valued treasure: a man with innovative ideas who was never afraid to try something new. Many of the programmes were imported, and Henry set about injecting new life into them.

One successful new programme he introduced was “Deadline Thursday Night” – a sprightly new look at the News accompanied by Calypso rhythms with couplets by Nick Taylor. It was to become the rage of the Nation.

Another was “The Broken Link” put together by psychologist Brian Rose and journalist Bryan Chilvers. The background to this programme is interesting in that it almost turned the SABC upside down!

In July 1968, the first chapter of a sociological report was broadcast by Springbok Radio. It was entitled “The Broken Link” and it provided evidence of the fact that South Africa had not escaped the worldwide youth revolt against the Establishment. It dealt with the widening of the gap between youngsters and their parents, and sought to unblinker the adult generation, introducing them to the facts. Severe critics of the report denounced it with the reply that the problem of drugs was an exaggeration. But by the end of the report some of the dogmatists had changed their tune.

To quote from the preface to the book:

“Dr. Brian Rose is a great believer in the use of small groups getting together under a trainer to improve interpersonal communication. One of his groups was composed of young adults ranging in age from 18 – 22. In a relaxed atmosphere in his Johannesburg study, this group ranged over innumerable problems. And it was in this snug haunt that ‘Broken Link’ had its beginnings. These young people began discussing their attitude towards sex, drugging, their parents, and the older generation in general.

“Dr. Rose was not surprised ... but he *was* startled by the stories he heard of drug abuse....

“It happened that in another part of the city, a newsman, Bryan Chilvers, had heard whispers of the same sort of thing – the deliberate

hooking of youths by drug merchants, of strange goings-on in the rash of Hillbrow clubs.

"The academic and the newsman, who had worked together in close harmony producing other radio programmes, swapped notes, linked forces, and decided to dig a little deeper."

They joined forces with David Barritt, a young reporter who knew his way around Hillbrow and who would be accepted by the youth whose stories they wanted to tape, and Jock Webster, a senior crime reporter who could liaise with the police. (Jock Webster was later to join the South African Tourism Board as media relations executive.) And so it was that this quartet so different in background, age and experience, began their investigations.

Rose and Chilvers took their thesis in the form of an 'overview' to the Head of Springbok Radio, Mr. Henry Howell. Dr. Rose tells of that meeting:

"Those of us who know Henry Howell as a person realise his sensitivity, courage and compassion. It was he who took over the diplomatic front (as uncomfortable a front-line position as anyone can imagine). He piloted us through our many stormy passages, and cleared the way for us to tell on the air, the full truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And so we set about our task.

"At all times we set out to avoid hurting the private individual but we refused to give way before vested interests. We tested and retested our evidence. We called special witnesses, we travelled South Africa. We tried to avoid blame or censure. To you, the listener, we said ... 'this is what we found. These, as far as we can understand them, are the facts. You be the judge. Is this your son, your daughter, your mother, your father?'

"We set out to promote discussion in the home, for such discussion is the cement which bonds families together, and prevents the snapping of links."

A wonderful tale indeed – of heroism, bravery, courage, determination.

Sunday evenings were free of advertising, and Henry seized upon the fact that these were not sponsored. He turned Sunday evenings into a showcase for every programme available for sponsorship during the week. This also gave a stimulus to the production side of the broadcast industry as all production houses were invited to collaborate. The result of this innovation showed itself in the listenership figures: March-April 1964, 7-9.30 p.m: 130,000. July-August 1965: 260,000. For the first time a Sunday evening programme was one of

the top ten on that station. This reflected the freshness of his approach.

## **LM Radio.**

LM Radio was in Henry's portfolio together with Springbok and the three regional stations, and advertising. At this point, the movement of executives and the changes in portfolios should be more carefully explained:

Dr. P.J. Meyer was Chairman of the Board, (and, incidentally, Chairman of the Broederbond). Two directors-general: Jan Schutte (Programmes) (then D.J. Fuchs), and Jan Swanepoel (Administration). Gert Yssel was a Deputy Director-General and had actually been appointed over Henry. Henry was instead promoted sideways through the Commercial Services. Steve de Villiers was Head of Commercial Operations which included the Regional services at one stage and that portfolio was moved across to Henry. Steve de Villiers had been involved in the launching of the three regionals – Highveld, Port Natal and Good Hope. De Villiers then became head of Radio Suid Afrika, with the Black portfolio, and was a Director on the Management Committee. When Henry was moved sideways to Springbok Radio, Tony Falkiner was appointed head of Radio South Africa – as the English Service was then named.

**Piet Lotriet**, now Head: Commercial Services:

"About LM Radio and its conversion to Radio 5.... **Roland Boshoff** was head of **LM Radio** and Regional Services, under Henry, and based in Cape Town. I was working for Roland. **Jack Siebert** headed **Springbok**, also under Henry. In June 1972 the SABC took over the responsibilities of sole concessionaries. Henry convinced Roland to come to Johannesburg to head LM Radio. It was being run from Lourenco Marques which was a bit of an anomaly, and Henry knew that Roland could run it from Johannesburg, because of the sensitivity of the politics of it all.

"**LM Radio** was originally run by **Davenport & Meyer** (see next chapter) and it was taken over by the SABC. Then Henry became involved through the SABC and the commercial portfolio. Roland wrote to me in Australia where I was on holiday and so I came up too.

"I went to LM Radio with Henry twice. He was heavily involved in negotiations with the **Radio Club of Mocambique** in those days, and to a certain extent with the Angolan Government in the transfer of LM Radio back to South Africa. When Frelimo took over they made it very

clear that they wanted the airwaves for their own services. LM Radio had been important to the SA Government because of their desire to be closely linked to the Angolan Government. Now this was all to change.

"What impressed me during those negotiations was Henry's ability to communicate from any level, up or down, which very few people can do. I remember we were sitting in the **Polana Hotel** and at that stage they had already brought in some of the 'ordinary' people for want of a better word – certainly inexperienced people who were now going to run the Radio Club. Amongst them was a chap who was, as Mr. Howell put it 'probably a gardener in his previous occupation' and who fell asleep in a discussion we had had. And yet he could handle it, it was a way he had of working with people.

"It was for me a wonderful opportunity to work with him. I still think he was one of the greatest broadcasters this country has ever had. And he never forgot he was a broadcaster when chairing meetings.

"I shall always remember when Management instituted a system of automatic broadcasting – which Henry, as a broadcaster, was vehemently against, but which he had to support as it had already been decided by Management. And the broadcasters, we all resisted it heavily which gave Management a big problem with us. Henry came down to sort it out and called us into a meeting. He came in and sat at Roland's desk and said, 'Well chaps, this is it and if you don't like it, there's the door' – or words to that effect. He had that kind of way about him – to defend something he knew as a broadcaster he could never accept but that was the way he operated, and this for me was the great thing about him. As a programme man it was his vision and that holistic way in which he approached everything, he always looked for the bigger picture ... he was a mystic, a thinker. He was open, he looked for greater things than just the narrow structures that we were working within, and it was wonderful. I missed him the day he left ... it was a terrible loss for the SABC.... I just wish that as a junior person I could have had the opportunity of working more closely with him...."

So, on the 13th October, 1975, **Radio 5** was born out of LM Radio, and it was Henry who named it. Some of the same voices and faces came down with it – such as Gary Edwards (now a strong and stable force with Radio 702), Gary Saunders, Gerry Wilmot and many, many more who made the move to Radio 5 and Springbok.

**Jack Siebert**, Henry's friend, deputy, and ultimate successor, takes up the story:

"Springbok Radio had been built around a man called Douglas (Duggie) Laws. He was a great 'guru' of broadcasting in those days; the personality of Springbok Radio, and dramatic and unorthodox to go with it. On one particular occasion he had gone on a binge and was nowhere to be found. We needed him for a Friday recording and eventually he called on the Tuesday. 'Where the hell have you been?' I asked him. 'Meet me at the Police Station' replied Laws – coincidentally the very spot where Auckland Park now stands.

"It was like something out of a movie. I drove up and parked there, then he drove up and parked alongside me, and we spoke through our car windows. 'I'm going to be arrested' he said. This was *not* funny, but it was the sequence which followed. Up came the paddy-wagon and the young policeman, recognising the great Duggie Laws, said, 'Come and sit up the front with me'. And Duggie said, in his most dramatic voice: 'You have arrested me ... I will sit in the back like a common criminal!'

"Henry, being a creative person himself understood men such as Duggie Laws, and there are legendary stories abounding broadcast house. Of how he would learn that an announcer was too under the weather to go on air, and he would drive into Commissioner Street armed with black coffee and sandwiches to make sure he could. Or how some young announcers were so afraid of him that if the red light flashed on their desks, they did not pick it up and say hello – they ran down the stairs and halfway up Commissioner Street! He was kind and understanding, and he was firm."

Jack Siebert was totally opposite. He says: 'I did not understand them, but Henry did, and it was our very opposites in nature that made us such a good team.' Siebert had worked in every department in Springbok Radio, from Accounts, Production, Programme Service Manager, Sales Manager, Manager of Sales & Development, Head of Advertising, Head of Advertising Services and so on – eventually to rise to Deputy Director-General of Commercial Services from 1983 until his retirement in 1985. He had known Henry at a distance when Henry was head of English Service. 'He was not a commercial man, he was very much a cultural man. And I think when Henry joined us it was a bit of a shock to his system, because the appointment (and we spoke about it frequently subsequently) came as a total shock, a total surprise ... a culture shock. Henry was to me the personification of culture and the very last person I would have thought of as the next Head of Springbok.

"J.P. Meyer was the Chairman of the Board but the Chairman's role

was always over-estimated at the SABC – except for the present incumbent, I think he tries to play a more meaningful role – but really it's the Director-General who makes the recommendations about staff movements. Jan Swanepoel and Douglas Fuchs were the two incumbents at that time. Douglas Fuchs was responsible for staff changes and Jan Swanepoel was the financial wizard.

"So there was this chap Howell, who I had seen at a distance and I was aware that he was the English Service Head, suddenly appointed Springbok Head. I went along and spoke to him and said, 'Look, I've just heard about it ... I want to say very welcome ... we're glad to have you' ... and we were.

"We fought very well on occasion, but we had a marvellous relationship despite it and we got along very well, I think because we were so totally dissimilar. Henry was a programme man, an artistic person; I was always a figures man, an administrative man, and I learnt a great deal from him. I think we complemented each other very well, worked well as a team, and the main point: we *enjoyed* working as a team.

"He brought a freshness into it which I found very amusing on occasions because I had been brought up in the commercial world of commercial thinking, and suddenly we had a man who had not been brought up in the commercial world, the world of business. We almost put him up on a pedestal and treated him with great awe.

"I remember sitting in the office one day and we were talking to someone from one of the advertising companies. Henry sat there listening, and this chap went on and on about his product and Henry just couldn't take it any more and said, 'You know, listening to you one would think you were talking about Holy Water! It's not, you know – and what's more it stinks!' That was Henry, with a fresh approach, but it was particularly in the programme side that he made his mark. We had many, many popular programmes, but they didn't have any great artistic merit; they were popular, people loved them, the ratings were good, and we were happy with them. But then Henry brought a fresh dimension, with programmes like 'The Broken Link' – the more erudite type of programme. He spent an enormous amount of time on this one because the content of the programme was threatening the whole existence of the SABC. We were broadcasting things we have never touched on before.

"But he was heart and soul into the programming side while I got on with sales. He was setting up new standards and creating a new concept of Springbok Radio. For instance, he got the idea that as

Sunday evenings were not sponsored, he would use it as a showcase for new programmes to sell to sponsors. This led to a completely new approach from Springbok's point of view and we were dealing with programmes that were much, much more interesting with much more character than we had in the past.

"They were marvellous years, because we had that marvellous Christmas Fund going. It was Henry's idea basically, and I fought him tooth and nail on it because I could see myself spending every Christmas Day into perpetuity at the SABC! On Christmas Day the first year we literally ran it from 8.00 a.m to darn near midnight, then we had flaming rows in January and February about this thing because he wanted to do it every Christmas Day! I wasn't wearing it and my staff weren't wearing it. They enjoyed it the first time and then said, 'But not every Christmas Day' so we changed it to a Christmas Appeal.

"But that first one was incredible. It was just the feeling of it. We had this enormous old studio in Broadcast House, the main audience auditorium. People were drifting in and out, making challenges, and we hadn't got the feel of it either because they were bringing chickens, Christmas puddings, God knows what, and we had almost as much in kind as we had in money. Children were bringing in unwanted toys too.. Then we discovered, to our horror, that most children's homes had placed their children out for Christmas. Then we had the greatest difficulty in tracking down sufficient old age homes who could take some of this food off our hands. One chap even offered us a farm! If we could sell it we could keep the proceeds. So after the first year we said we wanted donations in cash, not in kind.

"One of my funniest memories of that night is Adrian Steed. We had collected R55,000-00 in cash and there was a kit bag of money lying on the floor. I said, 'Look, we'll have to take that away'. Adrian said, 'Okay, I'll take it', went to pick it up ... and fell flat on his back! It was so heavy that he couldn't lift it off the ground!

"It really was impractical, and the consequent Christmas Appeal brought order into the situation; it enabled them to sort out their possible recipients better. Then there was 'Toys for Joy' which Henry was very taken with. It was a competition for listeners but they had the most impressive, most beautiful toys being handed in for this, and many were handmade.

"Another thing Henry did: he put the 'Christ' back into Christmas. He invited Eileen Lipkin, the artist, to his office, pointed to her painting of the woman on a donkey going away towards a cloud of dust



and said, 'I want you to turn my donkey around!' So instead of the usual star-spangled Christmas cards, Springbok Radio produced this lovely card of the woman on a donkey facing towards you, and from that year on artists were commissioned to do the Christmas cards for Springbok Radio."

Henry adjudicated the **Sari Awards**. Originally the South African Record Industry awards, it was taken over by Springbok Radio when the record industry wanted to drop it. The 'E' was added and it became the SARIE until 1985 when Springbok closed down. He also adjudicated the **Bokmakierie Awards** for the Overseas Service of the SABC who used the Bokmakierie bird song as their call sign.

One could write and write about Springbok Radio – the laughter, the drama, the personalities it spawned; but with the advent of television, the American sitcom, the movies in one's sitting room, new fields for sponsors to conquer – the closure was inevitable.

How best to close this chapter but with a transcription of a video made when the station closed, narrated by **Colin Fluxman**.

"On Tuesday December 31st 1985, after almost thirty-six years of broadcasting, Springbok Radio closed down. The station which on May 1 1950 said 'Good morning, South Africa, this is Springbok Radio' now said 'Good night South Africa, this WAS Springbok Radio'. It was a time of laughter and tears as the people to whom the station had been a way of life reminisced about a time past.

Henry Howell: 'I arrived in Springbok Radio on my first day with a broken heart. And I was met by a chap I knew well, but not intimately, called Jack Siebert. As I walked into the office he took me by the hand and he said: 'We want you, we are glad to have you, and we want you to be happy with us.' And I jolly well was!'

Colin Fluxman: "Daily serials were part of the entertainment offered by the station and possibly one of the most famous was 'No Place to Hide'."

**Dewar McCormack**, hero of this serial: "I would take my bulldog for a walk in the evenings before dinner, and I would hear the signature tune of 'No Place to Hide' coming out of the window of every flat in Berea! And it was really the start of – dare I say it – my public involvement because I was invited to open school fetes, bazaars, and baby shows. I shall never forget the horrified expressions on the faces of proud mothers when I held their little baby (I had no child of my own) like a sort of cocktail shaker!"

Springbok Radio spawned many writers and actors. The author of *Jet Jungle* was a stalwart of the station, **Brian O'Shaughnessy**: "Young

people are going away. They are coming out of University Drama, joining advertising – marvellous, God bless them! – but what is going to happen to that nucleus of young and old excited creative people? I look back on Springbok with affection, and regret, and a bit of sadness. But I AM sorry it's gone".

Famous people of another sort were interviewed by **Joy Anderson Taylor**:

"Finally the moment came, and I was introduced to her, thanked her for doing the interview, and she said, 'Well, as a matter of fact, I've changed my mind – I'm not going to do it'. Of course I was very hurt, very shocked, very angry, but I kept my anger down for the moment and I said: 'Well **Miss Dietrich**, you know this was on YOUR agreement. We've come out here, brought our equipment, got the room all ready to do it' and she said, 'Well, I'm not going to do it and that's that!' So then I was so cross, I raised my voice quite loud, and I said: 'Miss Dietrich – I will excuse your behaviour on account of your age and for no other reason!' She demanded an apology from the SABC, which they refused to give her. Then, of course, it was in the newspapers here – and even in the London newspapers – and it was headed 'SQUELCH!' "

**Eric Egan**, its first announcer, had opened Springbok Radio that cold May morning some 36 years earlier with his "I looove you!", and possibly two of the best known troupers, **Esme Evrard** and **Jan Cronje** had been on that station since its inception. "It's what broadcasting is all about – communication" said Esme. "People talking to people".

Springbok also gave a lot of laughter and the regions supplied much of the material. **Ken Taylor** in Cape Town with the Caltex Show said: "At the time you had to get licenses for everything – building, carting – everything you wanted to do to your house, you had to get a State license. So, 'Did you got a license?' caught on!" From Durban **Tom Meehan** and his irrepressible crowd of comedians gave us 'The baby snatchers' among many others.

**Percy Sieff**: "I am sorry to see the demise of Springbok Radio, but I don't think we should mourn over it; I think we should enjoy the wake and look forward to other things".

Outside production houses supplied a great deal of the material offered by the station, such as **Henry Dippenthal** in Durban with "High Adventure". And **Michael McCabe** and **Michael Silver** were prolific producers of plays for Springbok Radio Theatre. And who can forget **Elwen Morris** and "The World at 1 p.m."?"

Perhaps this is the place to close, with: "This is Elwen Morris finally

signing off ... and may I say thank you to all the people over all the years”.

The microphones were switched off, the corridors were silent ... it WAS the end of an era.

But is it? Is there a place for a similar, but more fitting, concept in the New South Africa? Another young man came to this country in 1946 and joined broadcasting in Cape Town and Durban for a few months. He was then invited to join the National Theatre Players – a great compliment. He later returned to broadcasting in Johannesburg becoming a well loved figure as “Uncle Bob” for the children and leading “Swing-along” on Sunday evenings for older folk. But he ‘bucked the system’ and was invited to join Michael Silver’s production house where, he says, he ‘learnt everything it was possible to know about radio’.

His name is **Bob Courtney**, and he has a vision to revive a brighter and more appropriate type of station called “Springbok 21”. It would run for twenty-four hours a day, featuring sponsored programmes in regional dialects to suit the differing cultures, and would be extremely cost effective.

Courtney: ‘I have in mind all those people who for some reason or another, either affliction, or choice, or working hours, want to bring back ‘the theatre of the mind’. Serials would be repeated during the night hours for night workers and insomniacs, and there are many big companies such as Lever Bros and Plascon who are supporting this idea because they were certainly left high and dry when Springbok closed down’. He is also backed by the Association of Marketers.

‘Henry and I discussed this quite often in the old days, but no-one would listen. But the time has certainly come now for us to provide a fun station that all the different peoples of South Africa can enjoy, in the language of their choice, twenty-four hours a day, countrywide. And imagine how the blind and the sleepless would benefit hearing serials and plays even during the night.’

At the time of going to print Courtney’s plans for a national Springbok radio station are making progress. Tens of thousands of letters from listeners confirm their support and a well attended meeting of radio artists wholehearted endorsed the scheme. One well-known radio actress was heard to say: ‘Want Springbok Radio back? Of course not – we enjoy starving to death!’

It will be interesting to see whether the New South Africa’s powers-that-be – or de-regulation – will pick up the past, adapt it, and bring it into the present for a bright and ‘golden’ future.

# Memory Lane...

## So that's how it Started!



*E. H. Cameron-McClure, Head of the Commercial Service*

**Y**ESTERDAY you switched on your radio and heard an announcer say "This is Springbok Radio. The time is . . ." Behind that simple statement lies more than twenty-five years of research and achievement, for 1924 marked the birth of broadcasting in South Africa. In that year it was considered clever to talk learnedly of cat's whiskers and crystals, while a man who could say that he had been in contact with 21.0 was regarded with awe.

### Early Days

In those days the studio was one room on the third floor of a Johannesburg store. The moving spirit in establishing the station was the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies of South Africa.

As time went on, broadcasting grew more and more; and in 1936 the Union Parliament passed a special Broadcasting Act, bringing the South African Broadcasting Corporation into being.

### Birth of Springbok

Around 1946, the Corporation's executives realised that, with the post-war radio-consciousness of the listening public, there was a need both for technical expansion and better programmes. Statistics proved, however, that the revenue to be received from licences had about reached maximum, so plans were considered for instituting a commercial service.

Representatives were sent to the Continent and England, to Canada, Australia and the United States and other places where there was commercial broadcasting. They asked questions, noted methods and laid plans. On their return they pooled their knowledge and concrete proposals were put before the Board of Governors of the S.A.B.C. In due time the S.A.B.C. was requested by the Government to introduce commercial broadcasting.

Meanwhile, engineers were experimenting with the transmission of three programmes from the same mast. There were some doubting Thomases, who felt that this was a risky venture and who foresaw disaster should an invitation to use "So and So's" toothpaste intrude into a rendering of "The Nutcracker Suite". However, the engineers said very little but did a great deal; and when Springbok Radio came on the air on May 1st, 1950, it was to make world history, with the first continuous triple transmission ever, over a single mast.

### The Beginning

Around the beginning of 1950, extra staff was taken on, and dummy runs began. Scripts were written and re-written, ideas propounded and scrapped. Countless gallons of tea were drunk, and the staff began to feel the mounting tension as zero-hour approached.

At last! May the First! Promptly at 6.42, the station opening theme, a special arrangement of the traditional South African melody "Vat jou goed en trek Ferreira", was heard, and then Eric Egan's cheery voice announcing the first record in the first breakfast session . . .

*Springbok Radio was on the air . . .*

ON THE MORNING OF MAY 1, 1950, IN THE MONITOR ROOM  
LEFT TO RIGHT SITTING - Maurien Hill (Programme Arranger), Alan Marshall (Copy Executive), Van Fluiter (Presentation Assistant), Biddy Martin (Publicity Executive), Selma Ross (Executive General), A. B. C. (Chief's Dickson (Controller of Programmes), Robert Lord (Australian Adviser on Commercial Radio) STANDING - E. H. Cameron-McClure (Head of Commercial Service), Arthur Burnard (Presentation Executive)





# SPRINGBOK RADIO



E. H. CAMERON McCLURE, the Head of the Commercial Service.

AT 6.43 on the morning of 18 April, "Wat jou goed en trek, Ferreira," echoed through the grey corridors of Broadcast House. The tune which will become known to you all as the station theme for Springbok Radio fell discordantly on the ears of the tired few — the backroom boys of Springbok Radio were in the final stages of full dress rehearsal.

Six-forty-five sounded, the red light glowed and the well-known voice of Bob Griffiths, now commercial manager of Springbok Radio, said, "Springbok Radio, the new commercial service of the S.A.B.C. Good-morning everyone." Pierre Louw, known as an announcer throughout the Cape Province, repeated the greeting in Afrikaans. Eric Egan took over with a cheery call, "Out of bed, everyone, and straighten up on your way to the bathroom. You're marching to the tune 'Our Director', Springbok Radio's breakfast session is on the air."

The weary effects operators raised their heads to smile, and fluff flew as the recording section went to work. Later that day, the full staff of Springbok Radio gathered to hear the recordings played back. They criticised, compared, condemned and praised...

Springbok Radio had come a long way in a short time. When it takes the air on 1 May, less than a year will have passed since the first appointment was made to the commercial service. It will be less than six months since the name "Springbok Radio" was decided, and most of the staff, whatever their earlier experience in radio, will have been attached to Springbok Radio for no more than four months.

As far back as 1945, the S.A.R.C. realised that the cost of equipment, salaries and expenses generally would cause expenditure to overtake revenue. There were two courses open — to raise listeners' licence fees, or to launch commercial radio. Major Rene Caprara, then Director-General, visited Australia to see commercial broadcasting in operation, and he bought some programmes for use on the proposed "C" (commercial) service. The S.A.B.C. advised the Government of their decision to start broadcasting commercially. The Government then appointed a Commission of Inquiry to investigate this decision and other aspects of broadcasting, and a long delay occurred while the report of the Commission was drafted. In

1948, however, the Government formally instructed the S.A.B.C. to establish commercial radio within the Union of South Africa.

At the end of 1948, Gideon Roos, the new Director-General of the S.A.B.C., flew to America to collect information on the practical running of a commercial radio station. He spent four months in Europe, the United States, Canada and Mexico, and received advice and assistance from broadcasting authorities in all countries.

When Gideon Roos left for America, technical planning began in earnest. The vital problem was aerial masts, those structures of latticed steel which stretch 300 feet into the sky. Steel is very costly and practically unobtainable, and masts take time to design and construct. S.A.B.C. research engineers worked out an intricate technical network to connect three transmitters to one aerial mast. Experiments have been made in Britain and America with two programmes on one mast, but the S.A.B.C. is the first broadcasting body to carry three separate programmes in this way. The construction and design have now been completed, and the new Springbok transmitters have joined the "A" and "B" stations on the one mast. The success of the experiment is indicated by the fact that, though these three powerful signals are flowing together in the one mast, there is no mangling in the listeners' set. Springbok Radio transmitters were ordered from overseas, but all programme input equipment was made in the S.A.B.C. workshops in Johannesburg.

The most difficult problems were the new amplifiers, control desks and operating equipment for the four new continuity suites in Broadcast House. Each suite contains a technical control room and a fully equipped studio. Apart from special turn-tables to carry all types of records and transcriptions, each studio has microphones, loudspeaker, headphones and signal lights.



Dull van Harkent and Alan Mandell wait for the red light during the test runs of Springbok Radio. During dual language sessions on Springbok Radio, an Afrikaans and an English announcer will be on duty.

# TAKES THE AIR

BY  
**B. V. MARTIN**



Arthur Bernard stars the effects flag while Hans Landman waits for the leader after an announcement during the trial runs of Springbok Radio.

E. H. Cameron McClure, well-known for his producing and announcing on the "A" programme, was appointed Head of the Commercial Service on 1 July, 1949. He left on a five weeks intensive study tour of America and Canada, and during his absence Bob Griffiths and Pierre Louw were appointed Commercial Managers. Con Lamprecht, whose compositions and arrangements are known throughout the country, was installed as Supervisor of Light Music.

In October, 1949, Robert Lord arrived from Australia, on loan from Artrana Pty. Limited, the largest radio production organisation in Australia. An authority on commercial radio, he was to assist and advise the S.A.B.C. in the launching of Springbok Radio.

The programme code, regulations and catalogues were drafted, and programme auditioning began to prospective advertisers. Time allocations were made on February 1, 1950, by which time staff had been built up to include producers, presentation officers, copywriters, scheduling clerks, effects operators and a nucleus of announcers.

Peak time, from 5.30 to 10 pm was sold out during February and daytime bookings were very heavy. Production of local shows started, overseas transcriptions were checked and "custume" programmes were arranged to fill the time devoted to "spot" advertisements.

Springbok Radio (Northern Region), with four transmitters, will cover the whole of the Transvaal on medium wave and will penetrate at about wave into surrounding territories. The four transmitters have a total power of 17,000 watts. Two are situated at Welgedoort, near Springs, and the others are at Marabburg and Pretoria.

Programmes which Springbok Radio will broadcast range from opera, through speech and variety to modern swing, but the emphasis is on drama and jazz music. Local production transcriptions about thirty per cent of all time. Radio production companies in South Africa have been and still are working at full speed to maintain this percentage, but South Africa has insufficient acknowledged talent to sustain 16 hours of commercial broadcasting each day. It was therefore inevitable that transcription shows from other countries should be used. These overseas pro-

grammes include the best productions of Australia among other countries, where commercial radio has been running for many years.

Commercial radio will give added momentum to the local production of radio programmes, because a sponsor will always buy a well-produced South African show in preference to an overseas programme, provided there is no great difference in the cost. South Africa is a residual market for overseas producers, who can afford to sell their programmes here for much less than it costs to produce programmes in South Africa. For this reason the S.A.B.C. recently introduced a regulation to protect local producers and maintain broadcasting standards. To prevent a prosecuting war in which an overseas producer could obviously undersell a South African company, the S.A.B.C. has ruled that all overseas productions for sponsorship in South Africa must be sold to the S.A.B.C., who will then set a price for the sponsor which is not too far removed from the cost of a comparable local production. A fair price will thus be paid to the overseas producer and the saleability of local programmes will be improved, resulting in an incentive to discover more radio talent in South Africa. When the results of this regulation begin to be felt, South African programmes will probably occupy a higher percentage of air time on Springbok Radio.

The day opens on Springbok Radio at 6.45, when Eric Egan presents the Breakfast Session. Musical shows, human interest serials and programmes for housewives dominate the morning and afternoon periods during the week. Children's programmes, interspersed with light music, occupy until six o'clock, when programming builds up to the "peak" periods.

From six o'clock onwards the complete range of light entertainment is covered: plays, comedies, variety shows, elaborate musicals, quiz programmes, variety serials, talks, sporting commentaries, new record releases and request programmes. All are featured from Springbok Radio. Dance music is scheduled for the late evening periods and Springbok Radio closes down on week-day nights at eleven o'clock to Con Lamprecht's special arrangement of "Yat-ya-god-an-tick, Ferris".

Springbok Radio has ambitious plans. Important among them is the encouragement of local talent, large-scale production of radio programmes and the continual improvement of broadcasting standards in South Africa. Advertisers and advertising agents share these ideals in the realization that their fulfilment can build big listening audiences for the programmes of sponsors.

We think you will agree on Max the cat that a promising start has been made.

**WATCH THAT LIGHT!**

Dot Kember, (center) while the Effects Operator change the dials during Springbok Radio's trial run. Supervising operators are Bob Griffiths, Commercial Manager, and Arthur Bernard, presentation executive. Left to right: O van der Merwe and E. Landman, Effects Operator; Bob Griffiths, Dot Kember, Springbok Radio Africa, announces. Arthur Bernard.



# THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR FOR SPRINGBOK RADIO

**SPRINGBOK RADIO**, South Africa's voice of commercialism, is on the verge of a large-scale face-lift. Mr. Henry Howell is planning innovations designed to raise the standard of broadcasting and boost the dwindling listenership.

Mr. Howell would give no details of his improvement campaign yesterday, but Sunday Chronicle believes it will be aimed initially at revitalizing Springbok newscasts and news features — in particular, Sundays World News and Africa Survey.

It is understood, too, that Mr. Howell plans to take over later a number of weekly "spots" from advertisers so that he can inject fresh culture and imagination into the service's make-up.

Men connected with broadcasting in Johannesburg say that some changes were inevitable after Mr. Howell's appointment as head of Springbok Radio in March. He has a reputation as a showman and a man of ideas. Many regard him as the top brain in Radio South Africa.

## NEWSCASTS

In his previous post as head of the English service, Mr. Howell was responsible for changing the whole face of South African

broadcasting, converting a group of separate regional stations transmitting to limited areas into an integrated unit serving the whole country.



Broadcaster Henry Howell: he plans to give the Springbok service a face-lift.

Apart from improving transmission, he took on the task of raising the standard of English programmes and conducted an opinion poll among listeners to find out what they wanted to hear.

He recently introduced actuality newscasts in which live interviews were incorporated in the regular news bulletins. It is believed that he intends to develop this system further in Springbok Radio newscasts.

Mr. Howell's transfer to the commercial service caused a mild storm of controversy at Broadcast House. His English-speaking colleagues still claim that it was a calculated insult, following on Mr. Howell's refusal to put politics before cultural entertainment.

They say, however, that Mr. Howell himself seems unperturbed by it all. They believe the S.A.B.C. Board's action has made him even more determined to project more culture through the medium of radio — even if that medium must be Springbok Radio.



## Brighter broadcasting



MR. HENRY HOWELL

ALMOST two years ago Mr. Henry Howell was appointed Head of Springbok Radio after five years as Head of the English Service. The change would have daunted many; but Mr. Howell responded to it as to a challenge.

He didn't seem the obvious choice — his interests had always been primarily cultural, especially literary, but in the event what mattered was the loyalty that he could command from his staff. All who have had dealings with him would agree that he has been entirely successful in that. His enthusiasm and drive are so infectious that his staff cannot help responding in the same way. Nor has he allowed his multifarious administrative duties to cut him off from his former interests: he still acts and recites poetry; for example, he played the title role in *Becket* and is often heard in *Calendar*, a programme mainly of poetry and prose readings.

Before joining the SABC Mr. Howell was an electrical engineer. His first appointment to the Johannesburg staff of the SABC was as Organizer of Youth Programmes (English Service) in 1946. Three years later he became Organizer of Programmes and in 1954 Programme Manager. His next appointment was as Head of the English Service. And after less than two years as Head of Springbok Radio he was appointed Assistant Director, Springbok Radio, and is also responsible for the commercial side of the Special FM Services.

MR. HOWELL is essentially a programme man. Consequently he was delighted to find that Springbok Radio is a very efficiently administered service. He was therefore able to devote a great deal of his attention to injecting new life into its programmes. The success of his freshness of approach is reflected in the upsurge of programme ratings.

But what did he do? To change a programme pattern requires finesse from a new Head. He was full of new ideas; to demonstrate their effectiveness he seized upon the fact that the Sunday broadcasts are not sponsored. Sunday evening programmes were to become a Showcase and every programme would be available for sponsorship. This gave a stimulus to the production side of the Commercial Broadcasts Industry as all production houses were invited to collaborate.

In September last year the new pattern of Sunday evening broadcasts began — the result can best be shown by listenership figures. In March-April 1964 between the peak listening hours of 7-9.30 p.m. the figure was about 130,000. In July-August 1965 it was over 260,000. For the first time a Sunday evening programme is one of the top ten on Springbok Radio.

# TOP RADIO MAN HAS "SHOWS ON APPRO." SCHEME

By MERVYN ORCHARD

**A "PROGRAMMES on appro." plan for Springbok Radio — initiated by its head, Henry Howell — is to be introduced soon for the benefit of sponsors and listeners. Its aim will be to ensure brighter programmes, which will take the air permanently only after research has shown they will prove popular.**

Mr. Howell outlined his scheme recently in a letter to commercial production houses, those firms producing commercial radio programmes.

It provides for "demonstration" broadcasting on Sunday evenings, mainly of drama, variety and feature programmes. Commercial production houses would submit programmes—and sponsors would then be able to decide, by listening personally and using listener research facilities, whether to buy programmes in series form.

Mr. John Walker, South African radio personality, said he had received a letter from Mr. Howell.

"I would say Mr. Howell has arrived on the scene at precisely the right moment. Any media such as Springbok Radio needs a little refurbishing now and again, and after 14 highly successful years in radio in South Africa, this is precisely what Mr. Howell is trying to do," he said.

## STATEMENT

Mr. Howell was not available for interview this week. Mr. Norman Filmer, executive director of the S.A.B.C., told me: "We

intend making a full statement to the Press in due course. I cannot say when the scheme will be introduced."

According to Mr. Walker, Mr. Howell indicated that several channels would be made available on Springbok Radio's national network on Sundays, when people such as himself and Mike Silver would be able to make up shows for trial broadcasts, and so demonstrate them to sponsors and public.

"We were doing this in Sydney as far back as 1946," said Mr. Walker. "If a sponsor purchased the programme, he was required to help pay the development expenses."

"By this means, a station was able to put a programme on the air for a minimum of one month, which gave a clear indication whether or not it was going to be a success."

"It also had the advantage of offering a possible sponsor a popularity rating based on the month it had been on the air. In other words, the prospective client got a 'going concern programme.' This, I understand, is what Mr. Howell has in mind."

Mr. Walker also visualised famous stars visiting South Africa and being used as "guests" in these programmes.

## RADIO & TV



**BOB FORD**

*BOB FORD, an American, was for many years famous for his commentaries on Championship Flight. He was also Question Master of "New York's" the S.A.B.C.'s top radio panel game for a long period.*

### COMMERCIAL RADIO

In the frequent Press and Magazine features about the "Business Man of the Year", no one appears to have written the story of Henry Howell, Director of Commercial Services of the S.A.B.C., the man mooted for much bigger things in the new hierarchy of the S.A.B.C., both in Radio and Television.

Perhaps it is because of the quiet and almost self-effacing demeanour of the man who is one of the most dynamic and capable in business in South Africa. And he is in business, though a unique one. As Director of Commercial Services, Henry Howell heads a Radio Empire with an income of over R25 000 000 a year.

In a field where everyone is usually trying to shaft everyone else, Howell has maintained the respect and admiration of associates and advertisers alike, and his unique brand of considerate, elegant, but firm leadership has no doubt contributed to his success, in a varied and very difficult assignment.

There can be little question of Howell's success, for the Commercial Services of the S.A.B.C. are today more extensive than they have ever been and include, in addition to the flagship of Springbok Radio, such additional services such as Radio Highveld, Radio Good Hope, Radio Port Natal, all of the Bantu Services, and Lourenço Marques Radio.

Springbok is the undoubted first in both listenership and income (over R10 000 000 per year).

Surprisingly next, certainly in income, is the Bantu Service, ringing up about R8 000 000 per year, followed by Regional Services with R6 000 000.

Howell's newest baby (and for the moment, the only questionable one) Lourenço Marques radio, is responsible for another R1 700 000, and all of these figures make up about 56% of the Corporation's total income.

In any South African business arena, this is big league money. Even under normal circumstances running a corporation at this size is no easy job, but it must be particularly difficult when it involves the complexities of the S.A.B.C. — a quasi-government organisation, where a senior Director must hew a line between conservative government policy (indeed mandates) and the varied and diversified pace of critical listenership of at least three major networks, including the Bantu.

Springbok Radio is on the air from 5 a.m. to midnight, and employs over 7000 M. transmitters to reach all corners of the Republic.

With the continued dramatic growth and advertising, Howell and his associates have progressively improvised and developed methods to cope with the higher traffic and the constant need for improvement.

**Ralph Boffard.**

For example, one of the principal new innovations on Springbok is less block-time sponsorship and more sponsored spots. Now when a sponsored channel becomes vacant it is usually taken over by the S.A.B.C. and broadcast to include sponsored Spot Announcements, thus making the time channels available to more advertisers. This happened recently to a leading theatre program which lost the sponsor's name and now carries spots instead. This change was designed to provide greater elasticity on a medium which was heavily over-sold.

Springbok radio has a listenership profile of 2.8 million a day, a staggering figure in a country of this size.

Springbok, incidentally, disproves some of the fallacies about radio listening. While unquestionably reaching vast numbers of listeners at peak morning and late afternoon "dressing and driving" times, Springbok's highest listening time is between 2 and 4.15 p.m. (Enough to make any professional radio man's mouth water any where in the world.)

Perhaps the most fantastic success story of all is Radio Bantu, with a listenership of 7 million a day, broadcasting in seven languages on six services.

Radio Bantu includes Drama, Music, News, and all of the types of entertainment featured on the other services.

In these efforts, Howell is assisted by some fairly competent "heavyweights." Principal among them Jack Siebert, who carries the dual title of



*Henry Howell*



*Roland Boshoff*



*Jack Siebert*

head of Springbok and Advertising. All advertising on Commercial Services is in the hands of Jack Siebert, who will also handle this function for Television (assuming the question of whether T.V. is to be commercial, is ever cleared up).

The original services and I.M. radio come under Roland Boshoff, (formerly head of Springbok Radio) in the Cape, and an interview and hardworking program specialist.

Efforts of this professional radio team are now being directed to preparing for the advent of television which will certainly change the personality of Radio, certainly during those hours when I.V. is on the air.

In the coming months we will see other changes in Radio such as the phasing out of AM Stations and the complete conversion to FM (five or eight) Radio which is static free.

Never one to miss an opportunity, Howell is busy now working out new uses for the old AM (medium wave) transmitters.

While the future of I.M. Radio as an Advertising entity in this country, must necessarily be suspect, in view of the new Government in Portuguese East Africa, Howell is "playing it by ear" and continuing to run the most efficient and profitable service he can. It is interesting to note that, with all of the problems during the recent siege of I.M. Radio at the time of change in Government in that area, I.M. lost only 4 Spot announcements and 10 minutes of Radio time.

Henry Howell, born in Wales in 1916 is a trained Radio Engineer, with impressive credentials in equipment installation. He first came to South Africa immediately after World War II, at the invitation of the former Director Deputy General, Norman Palmer. He rose to become Head of the English Service, where he stayed for several years, being succeeded by Anthony Lalkner when he moved into Commercial Radio.

It is clear that Howell is destined for bigger and better things as recent announcements seem to imply. His experience in the development of Bantu Services makes him invaluable in any future planning which may be needed for other parts of the Continent of Africa, and his commercial success must result in his moving strongly into the television picture. After all, there aren't many top businessmen at the S.A.B.C.

## Introduction by

### Mr Henry Howell

May 1950 seems to be a long time ago but I remember clearly that the arrival of Springbok Radio was as startling as a sudden thunderclap and broadcasting in South Africa was never the same again. For with Springbok Radio, the SABC introduced a service which could give itself exclusively to lighter entertainment and it seized its opportunity enthusiastically. It was instantly successful for it not only provided unrivalled light entertainment for its listeners, it opened up a new world of opportunity to so many South African artists. New voices and personalities broke upon the world of radio in South Africa. Australian John Walker and two Americans Bill and Julie Glen brought overseas experience and expertise to the new station, but most of the early stars were home-grown products. Eric Egan of the gravel voice made the first broadcast on May 1st 1950 and stayed on with the breakfast session for fifteen years. He taught a whole generation of South African youngsters to react to him when he said "I Love You". Many of the other stars are very much with us today. Leslie Green, Peter Merrill, Esmé Euvrard, Nan Fletcher, Mike Silver, Ken Taylor, Bill Prince. It seems that Springbok Radio stars don't fade away. We still have Clark McKay, Eric Cordell and Neville Dawson very much with us. Sadly one must end the list somewhere and I am sure I have left out many famous names.

It is fitting to recall the names of the "back room boys": Cameron McClure, Robert Griffiths and Pierre Louw, who set the course which Springbok Radio was to take. It is also rewarding to realise that amongst its early stars are to be found the names of men who are now steering the destiny of the SABC into the second half of the Seventies and the era of television. Jan Schutte, Steve de Villiers, Pieter de Bruyn and Anthony Falkiner, to mention only four of them. They all played a big part in the early days of Springbok Radio. The list of names of artists, announcers, script writers, musicians and producers makes up a "Who's Who" of the South African entertainment industry and we owe them all a debt of gratitude for the warm place they created in the hearts of Springbok Radio's listeners. We hope that we shall not lose this magic touch in the years ahead.



Mr. Henry Howell, Director of Advertising Services.

Mrs. Henry Howell, Direkteur van Advertisiedienste.

## The Sarie Awards

The SARIE Awards — symbol of success in South African music — represent Springbok Radio's contribution towards improving the standard of the country's musical entertainment. In essence they are annual recognition of the talents and achievements of the country's singers, song-writers and music makers, a glittering and tangible goal to which existing and aspiring recording artists strive. The contest was established in 1964 and in 1970 came under the wing of Springbok Radio. It has grown rapidly in listener appeal and encouraged artists to strive for excellence.

In 1973, Mr Henry Howell, Director of Advertising Services, summed up "The standards are set not only by the recording artists, but by the progressively advancing techniques and skills of the fast-growing record industry which creates opportunities for more and more people every year". Winners are chosen by listeners and by a specially selected panel of judges, who cast their votes in secret Entrants' records are broadcast and judged during the build-up before the climax of the contest — the SARIE Awards night, which is broadcast "live". The Awards currently are for the best female and male vocalists, the best instrumentalist, band, vocal group, beat music group, the song of the year, and the best English and Afrikaans LPs. Last year a new award was introduced. It is for the Top 20 Artist of the year — and its roots are in Springbok's popular Top 20 and Hits of the Week shows.

The list of winners is impressive. Notable multiple successes include those scored by Judy Page, judged best female vocalist from 1970 to 1973, and Gè Korsten, who won the male vocalist award from

1966 to 1969. Other multiple winners include the Johannesburg Pop Orchestra, Dan Hill, Des and Dawn Lindberg, Four Jacks and a Jill, Lance James, The Dealans, Virginia Lee, Dana Valery, Alan Garrity, Eddie Calvert, Cliff Jones and Gert Potgieter.

## The laughter shows

Laughter and light entertainment have always been essential ingredients in Springbok's "recipe" for brighter broadcasting, dating back to "Anything Goes", an early all-South African variety show involving such personalities as Peter Merrill, Monte Doyle, Eric Egan, Dennis Lotu and John Massey. There can be few more rewarding talents than the ability to make people laugh, and Springbok Radio is fortunate to be able to call on personalities of the calibre of Pip Freedman, Tom Meehan, Brian Squires, Joe Stewardson, Pat Saunders, Bill Prince, Maureen Adair, Tommy Read, George Korelin, Tony Jay and many, many others.

Today, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban are all prolific producers of laughter shows. Cape Town's present contribution includes "Life of Bliss", "The Pip Freedman Show", and Bill Prince's popular "Telefun Time", and that city's laughter-makers are still well remembered for old favourites such as "The Atlantic Show", "Dear Dr Roy", "For the love of Mike", and "Leave it to Van der Merwe".

Few Johannesburg productions have enjoyed greater success than "Taxi", though its producer, David

Gooden, recalls that the programme initially had some difficulty finding a home on Springbok. Such was its popularity, however, that "Taxi" later was made into a film.

Tom Meehan and his Durban team of John Simpson, Roger Service, Maureen Adair and Tommy Read (and the late Pat Simpson) have been great producers of comedy fare, their current shows including

"The Men from the Ministry", "Friends and Neighbours" and "Father Dear Father".

Durban's laughter-makers today proudly look back on almost a thousand half-hour comedy shows, four million spoken words, studio audiences totalling 50 000, and the satisfaction of knowing that they have kept South Africa laughing week after week, year after year.

*Right: Henry Howell  
– a rare shot 'letting  
his hair down', with  
Bea Reed and Esmé  
Evrard for the Spring-  
bok Children's Fund.*



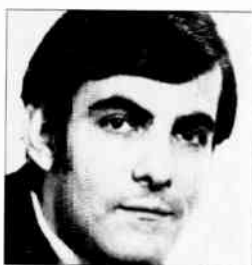
*Below: Toys for Joy  
1966. HJH, Bea Read,  
Esmé Evrard and  
Dulsie van der Bergh.*



## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Presenters*



*Robin Alexander*



*Ray Beresford*



*John Berks*



*Doriann Berry*



*Dr. Arthur Blesley*



*Eric Cordelle*



*Andre Brink*



*Staurt Brown*



*Bob Courtney*



*Jan Cronje*



*Neville Dawson*



*Thinus De Villiers*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Presenters (cont.)*



*Esmé Euvcrard*



*Nan Fletcher*



*Pip Freedman*



*Leslie Green*



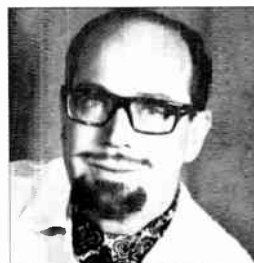
*David Gresham*



*Theo Greyling*



*Douatlina Grobler*



*Vincent Hesse*



*Judy Henderson*



*Ken Higgins*



*Rod Hudson*



*Esther Jackson*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Presenters (cont.)*



*Tony Jay*



*Lowell Johnson*



*Mervyn John*



*Grant Loudon*



*Duggie Latos*



*Peter Lotis*



*Dewar McCormack*



*Clark McKay*



*Heinrich Marnitz*



*Elwyn Morris*



*Gordon Mulholland*



*Dana Niehaus*



## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Presenters (cont.)*



*Cedric Messina*



*Arthur Stuart*



*Tony Falkiner*



*Bob Ford*



*Bill Pritchard*



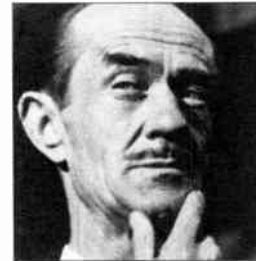
*Bill and Julie Glen*



*Bob Holness*



*Frank Douglass*



*Arthur Swemmer*



*Michael Jackson*



*Gladys Kenyon*  
*("Sister Sunshine")*



*Andrew Kaye*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Presenters (cont.)*



*George Moore*



*Alan Mandell*



*Peter Merrill*



*Sheila Raymond-Jones*



*Paul Vernon*



*John Walker*



*Barry O'Donoghue*



*Ken Shaw*

## *Personalities of the past*



*Eric Egan*



*Pat Bate*



*Leonard Broom*



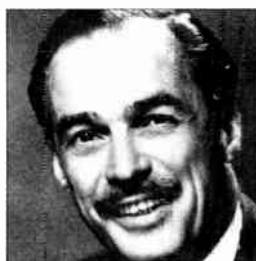
*Bob Griffiths*



*Peter Chiswell*



*Joanne Currie-Wood*



*Don Davis*



*Barbara Evans*



*Tessa Diamond*



*Paddy Doreling*



*Monica Dolphin*



*David Gordon*

## *Personalities of the past (cont.)*



*Monte Doyle*



*Pieter De Waal*



*Puddy Bell*



*Patrick O'Malley*



*Colin Stamp*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Actors*



*Bruce Anderson*



*Gebriel Bayman*



*Helen Braithwaite*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Actors (cont.)*



*Bill Brewer*



*Douglas Bristow-Bovey*



*Ian Calder*



*Anne Courtneidge*



*Dale Cutts*



*Yolande D'Hotman*



*Mildred Doherty*



*Michael Drin*



*Adrian Egan*



*Sadie Festenstein*



*Harold Freed*



*Marjorie Gordon*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Actors (cont.)*



*Elizabeth Hamilton*



*Lance Robinson*



*John Silver*



*Fred Sharp*



*Kim Shippey*



*Percy Sieff*



*Denis Smith*



*Simon Steindell*



*Danie Smuts*



*Ken Taylor*



*Dulsie V.D. Bergh*



*John V.D. Burgh*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Actors (cont.)*



*Johannes V.D. Walt*



*Vic Van Wyk*



*Henry Vaughan*



*Stephen Grenfell*



*John Hayter*



*Shelagh Holliday*



*David Horner*



*Louise Ife*



*Nigel Kane*



*Barbara Kinghorn*



*Ivor Kissin*



*Jack Klaff*

## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Actors (cont.)*



*Lorraine Leftwich*



*Marie Du Toit*



*Victor Melleney*



*Bruce Millar*



*Valerie Miller*



*Brian O'Staughnessy*



*Joanna Palmer*



*Clive Parnell*



*Hal Orlandini*



*Bill Prince*



*Paddy O'Byrne*



*Bea Reed*



## *The Stars of Springbok Radio: Actors (cont.)*



*Cobus Robinson*



*Eric Rosenthal*



*Hugh Rouse*



*Don Ridgway*



*Pat Roseveare-Lowe*



*Heather Simpson*



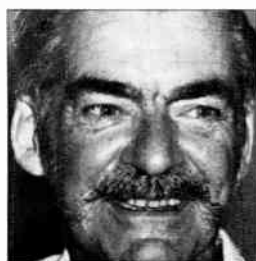
*Lynda Stuart*



*Derek Taylor*



*Mary Taylor*



*Michael Todd*



*James White*



*Diane Wilson*

*From the 'postcard series of the '50's*



From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)



*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*



*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*



*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*



*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*

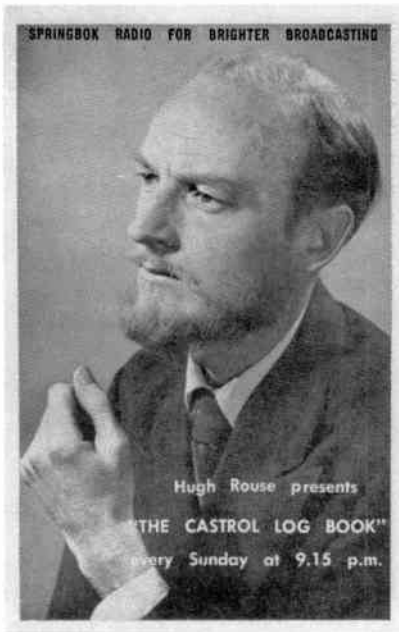


*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*

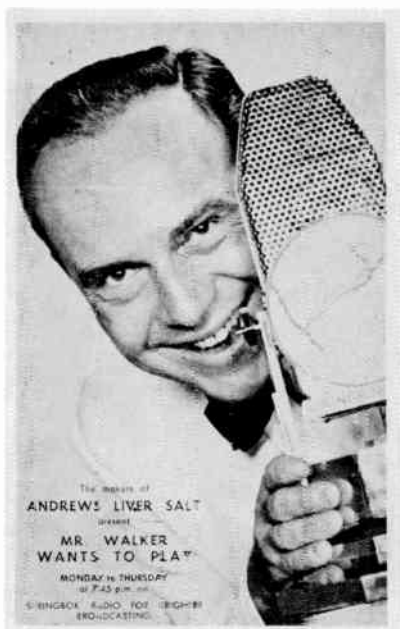




*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*



*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*

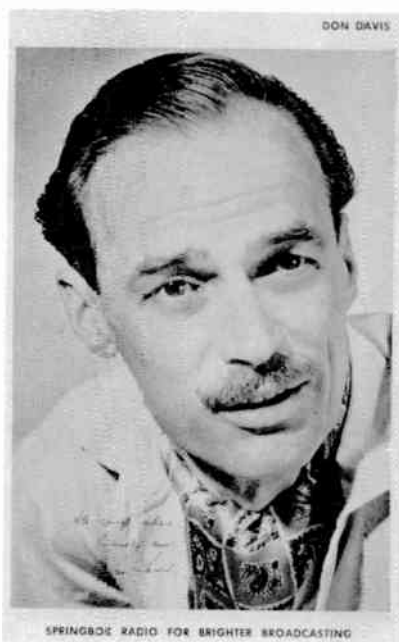


SPRINGBOK RADIO FOR BRIGHTER BROADCASTING  
 Laurel Paraffin Double the Quiz". Sundays, 6.15 p.m., brought to you by the Vacuum Oil Company of South Africa (Pty.) Ltd.

*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*



*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*



*From the 'postcard series of the '50's (cont.)*



LOWELL JOHNSON presents  
SUNBEAM ON BROADWAY  
at 10:45 a.m. every Monday

SPRINGBOK RADIO FOR BRIGHTER BROADCASTING



LUSTER MET LUS NA SPRINGBOKRADIO  
SPRINGBOK RADIO FOR BRIGHTER BROADCASTING



# Chapter 4

## Television

**J**ohn Logie Baird visited South Africa in the early years of television. In the last year of World War 2, a report suggested that the SABC should ensure its financial security in order to support a television service as soon as possible.

By 1952 detailed draft plans had already been drawn up for a television service for South Africa, but politics held up the process. The Minister of Posts & Telegraphs, who did not control broadcasting but would have to issue the licenses, was Dr. Albert Hertzog and he was vehemently against the introduction of television into South Africa. He was not always happy in his anti-television stance, but deep down in him he felt an instinctive danger. Anybody who grew up in sound broadcasting can be forgiven for taking perhaps an old-fashioned view that the wireless was a much richer medium. It guarded the nations morals; parents could leave their children at home alone with the radio knowing it was in a sense 'parentis in loco'. Furthermore, of course, it was the theatre of the mind, it helped the mind expand its imaginative qualities.

In 1963 Norman Filmer undertook a study tour of television in Australia and New Zealand – unbeknown to Minister Hertzog who was furious when he came to know of it. On his return, his detailed report covering four months of research was leaked and a Press Conference, led by Jan Swanepoel, was held at Broadcast Centre.

On April 27th 1971 the then Minister for Education, Senator van der Spuy, made the announcement, and explained the delay:

"On the one hand there was a large number of other development projects and undertakings which merited priority over television. On the other hand the technical development of the medium was far from the required stage of perfection. In recent years, however, political and technical developments at an international level made it imperative for the Government to give attention to this matter. I refer to the development of television by satellite, and the possibility that programmes which in future could be broadcast via satellites would be available for reception in any country in the world without there

being any control. No country, and no government, can allow its people to be exposed to such a situation."

Dr. Piet Meyer, Chairman of the Board of Control:

"A television service for South Africa is, without doubt, the most important challenge the SABC has had to meet in its history to date. It is particularly gratifying to the SABC that from now on it will be placed in a position to put to use the results of sustained specialised study and research during recent years concerning the problems of television."

Senator van der Spuy on the potential evils of television:

"Television as such, that is purely the medium, can have no detrimental or beneficial effect on people. It is the manner in which it is applied and run, the control exercised, the system under which it operates, the people responsible for the application of the medium – these are the things that determine the influence it has on the community."

Senator van der Spuy was asked whether it was intended that eventually each national group would have its own television channel:

"Yes. It is the essence of Government policy and the pattern of South African life that the national identities of the different South African communities should be respected, strengthened and enriched."

Senator van der Spuy was asked whether separate English and Afrikaans services would be introduced as soon as possible?

"Yes. It is essential that a cultural service with its own identity be introduced for each of the two white language groups from the outset, even if, at the beginning, this is to be done in a separate channel. Each of the two white language groups has the right to demand the means by which to give expression to, and to enjoy its cultural life, in its own language."

(Television started in South Africa with one channel which was divided equally into one half English, one half Afrikaans.)

After the announcement that television would be coming to South Africa, it was Henry's analysis and prescience which enabled the SABC to gauge the enormous impact which television was going to have on radio audiences and revenue. In fact, it brought tremendous heartache to many.

Henry had moved across to Springbok in 1964, with Anthony Falkiner succeeding him as Head of English Service until 1978 when Ronnie Wilson took over. Kim Shippey then took over in 1981 until 1983, then Patrick Kohler until 1985. 'The rapid turnover of Heads of Service can be directly attributed to the introduction of television,' Kohler says, 'and the establishment of the various Directorates – (i.e.



Public Affairs/News/Sport, etc.) – which watered down the scope and areas of responsibility.’ Both Ronnie Wilson and Kim Shippey were brought back from Television to run the English Service, but because of the hungry nature of TV, were soon recruited back again although to more senior positions. Patrick Kohler was also promoted to television, in 1985.

Petty problems arose – the time during which the television service should be broadcast was under hot debate. Dr. Jan Schutte and Gert Yssel discussed this ersatz problem in 1972:

“Well, that hasn’t been finally decided. There are various reasons why we’re not quite sure whether we should start at say, five o’clock, or five-thirty, or six o’clock. If you start at six o’clock it makes sense, but then you keep people, perhaps you interfere with their sleeping habits, because then you carry on up to eleven or beyond. Five o’clock would be too early because you drag the kids in from the glorious sunshine, things like that. My guess is that five-thirty would be a good compromise.”

Henry worked out the division of viewing time between English and Afrikaans on a daily basis, with Sunday alternating between both language groups.

Funds for the new Television service had to be raised from overseas loans and the money-raising talents of Jan Swanepoel. From the outset it was clear that TV would be a commercial service.

Deputy-Director Henry Howell:

“There are several ways of financing radio and television services, and they vary from country to country. We in South Africa in the broadcasting profession have observed and examined them for many years. It’s rather interesting to examine how these three systems work and how they differ from each other.

“First of all, let’s take a look at the fully commercial system. Government control is exercised by the issuing of permits to broadcasters only under certain conditions which are set out by the authorities. In America listeners or viewers are not required to pay any licence fee at all, the service being financed entirely out of the profits of the company operating the service.

“Hundreds of different companies compete with each other for viewership, because the number of people looking in is the only real measure of a television service’s success in a purely commercial situation. The size of the audience governs the amount of revenue that any station can expect, so your television service tends to aim at the lowest common denominator in programme appeal, and the result can be the

kind of television that so many people think is undermining the life of nations, particularly of their youth.

"The second system is that which is statutorily controlled and derives its revenue from licence fees only. This system produces some of the best television in the world, but the costs are borne entirely by the licence payer and, in small countries, can be prohibitively high. With this system the danger might exist, in South Africa, that television would become a luxury commodity which could be enjoyed only by the rich. Our hope is that television will be for all the peoples of South Africa, rich and poor.

"I should mention that in authoritarian countries the entire cost is borne by the State. I need hardly say that such a system would find little favour with anyone in South Africa.

"The system which is recommended by the Commission is an amalgam of the statutory and the free enterprise systems."

Staff had to be trained and job categories were divided into two groups, production staff and operational staff.

Some staff were employed after having gained televisual experience overseas – for example Ann Graham had worked for the BBC and ITV before being employed by the SABC as a producer.

At first many staff members taken on for TV production had nothing to do, as Ronnie Wilson notes:

"... we walked around the Country Club picking up pine cones for days, because nobody knew what to do with us, and we certainly didn't know what to do with this new-fangled thing called television, because all we knew was radio."

May 1975 and test transmissions started. At first only two transmitters were utilised, the Auckland Park one and the Kameeldrif transmitter in Pretoria, so only people who were able to get a picture were the people within a fairly close range of the two transmitters. Cape Town, Durban, and other major cities were excluded from this by their lack of TV transmitters, but by July 1975 Cape Town did have a mast at Constantia Berg; and Durban a main transmitting station.

David Hall-Green's voice was the first to be heard on the new TV service.

By November test transmissions were longer by popular demand, and continuity announcers were used for the first time in order to 'humanise' the service. One hour transmission was now stretched to two. From 7 to 8 p.m. one language was used and there was a change-over to the other language at 8. This was a preview of how the service proper would eventually be run.

On January 5th 1976 full service opened with 5 hours viewing per evening.

Television advertising started only in 1978. Policy laid down was of South Africa generating its own advertisements rather than importing them from the United Kingdom, United States of America, and others.

On January 2nd 1978 Henry Howell made the following statement:

"I must say that one is extraordinarily proud of the South African production industry. As you know, none of these are produced by the SABC, everything is produced outside by the commercial production/television production industry and they've risen to the challenge magnificently. There were some horrible moments about three or four months ago when everyone wondered whether they could meet this challenge, but they've done so magnificently. "When you think that we have looked at something like fifteen hundred commercials, and I suppose that less than ten percent of them are made outside this country, and when you think that this industry, which used to make two or three hundred commercials a year is now facing a challenge which looks like two thousand or more commercials a year, and have done so with a great deal of credit, I must say that one's delighted about that."

Videotape was able to be utilised from the inception of the television service. Pre-recorded programmes were frequently used. Canned or live debate raged – many (including Ann Graham) claimed that the invention of videotape was essentially detrimental to the development of television.

It was about this time that Equity imposed a ban on the sale to South Africa of television programmes made by their members. The SABC sent Henry to the United Kingdom, at least twice, to try to persuade Equity to change the ruling. Eventually he asked the Director-General, Jan Swanepoel, to be excused from any further similar attempts. His efforts had not only been fruitless but had turned out to be humiliating, aggravating, and generally unpleasant.

As subsequent experience has shown, it was an impossible task from the outset.

\* \* \*

# ELCON TOPICS

WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 9, 1973

No. 189

## HISTORIC REPORT ON TV WAS RELAYED BY VCR

**CAPE TOWN**—More than 200 convention delegates had an historic preview on TV sets last month of what South Africa's TV service will be like when it is switched on in 1976.

The presentation was made possible by the video cassette recorder (VCR). The programme was recorded in Johannesburg and presented over 8 Colour TV receivers of the type Philips will make in the Republic.

It was the first public glimpse on TV sets of the SABC's behind-the-scenes plans to bring in a top-class service.

The programme was presented by Mr. Henry Howell, director of the SABC's advertising services. He gave examples of TV programmes in the making, the training schemes and details of the TV complex in Johannesburg.

The Cape Argus said: "It was an excellent production. The colour reproduction was of the best."

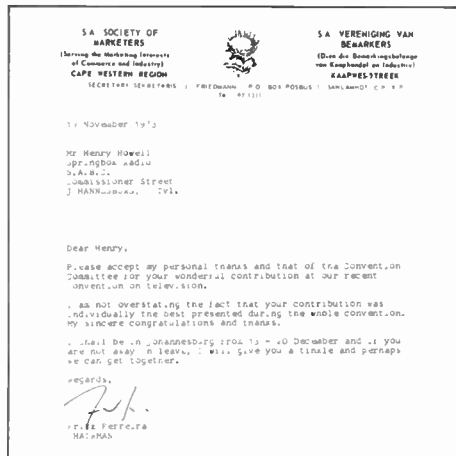
The impact of Mr. Howell's presentation set a mood and standard that was sustained throughout the three-day conference organised by the South African Society of Marketers.

There was equal impact in the closing session when Findhoven VCR group manager Kees Jonghele underlined the rise of VCRs as an important complementary medium to broadcast TV.

"It was a tour de force," said one delegate afterwards.



**SABC man Henry Howell delivers his lecture by VCR (He's the man at left and on screen). Western Cape Marketers Society chairman Fritz Ferreira looks on.**



## Chapter 5

# Of Advertising, Marketing and Research

**H**enry's involvement in, and success with, the Commercial Services led him into new worlds of marketing, advertising, and research – completely new fields for the ex-Head of the English Service, but where he felt very much at home once he had found his feet with Springbok Radio.

So now broadcasting was well established, with a commercial service in place successfully satisfying sponsors, advertisers, and of course listeners.

But how could the sponsors and advertisers judge the success or otherwise of their marketing men? How could they compare how well they were doing against other media? They relied on a market research body, or bodies, which could produce facts, figures, and statistics.

This, then, is the background story of how three men's lives and work became inextricably involved with Henry Howell's, and who remained close friends until his death.

But first we must go back to the war years because a little of the early history of **Lourenco Marques Radio** is here too.

There was a man called **Dickie Meyer** who ran **Radio Luxembourg** and **Radio Normandy** before and at the start of World War 2. They beamed into Britain, but unfortunately these beams also acted as beacons, giving direction to the German bomber aircraft, so the British had to bomb them completely flat. Meyer was then given charge of **Middle East Radio** throughout the war in that region.

Another man, **John Davenport**, who was with the **London Press Exchange** before the war, was undertaking audience research for the **BBC** during the war to find out to what extent people were listening to the overseas broadcasts. He came to South Africa, because South

Africa used to transmit the **BBC News**, and he saw how **LM Radio** beamed its commercial messages to South Africa.

After the war, because Radios Luxembourg and Normandy were no more, Meyer came to this country where he met Davenport. They teamed up and took over the management of LM Radio, and their company was **Davenport & Meyer**. They realised that they needed to know how many people were actually listening and South African **Wally Langschmidt** joined their company in 1948 to pioneer the first media surveys in Southern Africa. These three shared an office in a building called Victory House. When **Springbok Radio** started in 1951 it also needed audience research so Meyer brought out a man who had carried out audience research for him when he ran Radio Luxembourg and Radio Normandy before the war, called **Bill Franklin**. Bill Franklin and Wally Langschmidt then ran what was called **SA Research Services**.

However, when Springbok Radio started, the **SABC** was not keen to make use of the research division of LM Radio. As a consequence, Bill Franklin fell out with both Davenport and Meyer, and left to join the **Lindsay Smithers Agency** and their finance team to form his own company '**Franklin Research**'. To complete the cycle, Meyer was ultimately invited to run **ITV** when that started in Britain, and Davenport was offered the post of Managing Director of the **Readers Digest**.

Meanwhile, Wally Langschmidt had been misled into believing he was a partner with Davenport and Meyer but they reneged on him, he says; there was no drawn-up contract. When he was financially secure and able, he left them to team up with one of the world's top statisticians, **Dr. Sichel**, to start a company '**Operational Research Bureau**'. They had no capital, but soldiered on to carry out the first surveys in Rhodesia and Nyasaland. They followed this with an independent survey in South Africa. Amusingly, because it was new, citizens assumed it was for Springbok Radio, but they were not impressed and telephoned the then Director-General **Gideon Roos** to complain of people prying into their private affairs.

The first ever fully complete survey was carried out by Wally Langschmidt in 1948. It showed what stations people listened to: LM Radio, the English and Afrikaans services, and Mafeking. (Mafeking had a small transmitter run by one man and an assistant and was highly popular). People also listened to the BBC, shortwave, and some other stations further north which could be received here. "Hits of the Week" from LM was the top programme on a Sunday night. Also in the report were details of who was buying what magazines and news-

papers, what makes of wireless receivers were bought; it was extremely comprehensive but the then **South African Government** refused to allow it to be published.

A fascinating section concerned with radio ownership and radio listening is published here for the first time.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N .

This is a Report on the first Union-wide Media Survey. Its object is to provide Advertisers and their Agents with information which will enable them to plan their appropriations more surely than has hitherto been possible. Primarily it is concerned with the readership of newspapers and magazines, but information has also been gathered on the incidence of cinema going and listening to radio stations.

Obviously the readership of a newspaper or magazine bears a relation to the number of copies it sells, but this relation is not constant, and although circulation figures provide the first basic data, an Advertiser is really more interested in people than in copies sold. He needs to know how many people a medium reaches and who they are. He needs to know how they are spread over the country and divided between income, sex, age, and home language groups and what other papers they read. He needs to know that they are in fact in his right market.

This Survey therefore by-passes circulation figures. It is a quantitative and qualitative study of the readership of newspapers and magazines and of the incidence of cinema going and radio listening.

The methods used to obtain the information were in accordance with modern sampling and research technique. Details are given in the following pages.

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MEDIA SURVEY OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

RADIO SET OWNERSHIP.

"Have you a Radio Set?"

BY UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA AND PROVINCES.

| Union of South Africa and Provinces: | Union of S. Africa. | Cape | Natal | O.F.S. | Tvl. |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------|-------|--------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:            | 2911                | 1019 | 276   | 241    | 1375 |
| Number of Radio Sets.                | %                   | %    | %     | %      | %    |
| One Set                              | 67.9                | 65.4 | 70.3  | 67.2   | 69.3 |
| Two Sets.                            | 7.8                 | 6.5  | 14.5  | 5.4    | 7.8  |
| Three Sets.                          | 1.2                 | 1.2  | 2.2   | -      | 1.2  |
| Four Sets.                           | .5                  | .2   | 1.1   | -      | .6   |
| Five Sets or more.                   | - ϕ                 | -    | -     | -      | .1   |
| No Sets                              | 22.6                | 26.7 | 11.9  | 37.4   | 21.0 |

ϕ less than .1%.

BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY.

| Size of Community:        | Cities | Dorp | Rural |
|---------------------------|--------|------|-------|
| No. of Informants - 100%: | 1474   | 549  | 888   |
| Number of Radio Sets.     | %      | %    | %     |
| One Set.                  | 73.2   | 69.6 | 58.0  |
| Two Sets.                 | 10.2   | 6.7  | 4.4   |
| Three Sets.               | 1.9    | .4   | .4    |
| Four Sets.                | .8     | -    | .2    |
| Five Sets or more.        | .1     | -    | -     |
| No Sets.                  | 13.8   | 23.3 | 37.0  |



RADIO LISTENING - DURING THE LAST 7 DAYS.

"Which of these Stations did you listen to during the past 7 days?"

BY UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA AND PROVINCES.

| Union of South Africa and Provinces: | Union of S.A. | Cape | Natal | O.F.S. | Tvl. |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|------|-------|--------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:            | 2911          | 1019 | 276   | 241    | 1375 |
| Radio Stations.                      | %             | %    | %     | %      | %    |
| American Stations                    | 5.5           | 5.2  | 7.2   | 8.7    | 4.6  |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc)           | 21.2          | 23.1 | 30.0  | 23.6   | 17.6 |
| Brazzaville                          | 1.8           | 1.9  | -     | .4     | 2.4  |
| Leopoldville                         | 2.6           | 3.2  | .4    | 2.1    | 2.8  |
| Lourenco Marques                     | 47.9          | 42.9 | 57.2  | 53.1   | 48.9 |
| Mafeking                             | 12.3          | 13.7 | 6.9   | 22.0   | 10.7 |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme               | 65.2          | 61.9 | 77.9  | 55.6   | 66.8 |
| " 'B' "                              | 55.4          | 45.9 | 28.6  | 60.6   | 66.9 |

BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY.

| Size of Community:          | Cities | Dorps | Rural |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:   | 1474   | 549   | 888   |
| Radio Stations.             | %      | %     | %     |
| American Stations           | 5.7    | 5.5   | 4.8   |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc.) | 23.0   | 21.7  | 17.9  |
| Brazzaville                 | 1.8    | 1.5   | 2.0   |
| Leopoldville                | 2.1    | 2.9   | 3.4   |
| Lourenco Marques            | 48.9   | 57.4  | 42.1  |
| Mafeking                    | 8.6    | 17.3  | 15.4  |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme      | 76.5   | 61.2  | 48.9  |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme      | 58.8   | 56.3  | 49.2  |

RADIO LISTENING - DURING THE LAST 7 DAYS

BY INCOME CLASS.

| Income Class:               | A    | B    | C    | D    |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:   | 286  | 714  | 1311 | 600  |
| Radio Stations.             | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| American Stations           | 7.7  | 6.0  | 5.3  | 3.8  |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc.) | 34.3 | 25.8 | 20.6 | 10.8 |
| Brazzaville                 | 1.7  | 2.7  | 1.8  | 1.0  |
| Leopoldville                | 2.8  | 4.2  | 2.2  | 1.7  |
| Lourenco Marques            | 47.9 | 54.7 | 48.4 | 38.8 |
| Mafeking                    | 12.2 | 13.4 | 13.1 | 9.3  |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme      | 85.0 | 77.3 | 64.9 | 42.0 |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme      | 61.2 | 72.1 | 51.3 | 41.5 |

BY HOME LANGUAGE AND SEX.

| Home Language and Sex:      | Eng. | Afr. | Both or Other. | M.   | F.   |
|-----------------------------|------|------|----------------|------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:   | 1367 | 1357 | 187            | 1513 | 1398 |
| Radio Stations.             | %    | %    | %              | %    | %    |
| American Stations           | 6.0  | 4.7  | 5.9            | 6.7  | 3.9  |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc.) | 29.8 | 12.3 | 23.0           | 23.0 | 19.2 |
| Brazzaville                 | 1.6  | 1.7  | 4.3            | 2.8  | .7   |
| Leopoldville                | 2.3  | 2.9  | 3.7            | 3.3  | 1.9  |
| Lourenco Marques            | 51.6 | 43.8 | 51.9           | 48.6 | 47.3 |
| Mafeking                    | 10.8 | 13.9 | 12.3           | 12.4 | 12.3 |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme      | 79.4 | 49.7 | 73.8           | 65.0 | 65.4 |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme      | 48.8 | 60.0 | 70.6           | 58.3 | 52.3 |

RADIO LISTENING - DURING THE LAST 7 DAYS.

BY AGE GROUP.

| Age Group:                 | 16-20 | 21-30 | 31-44 | 45-59 | 60 + |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:  | 233   | 686   | 994   | 701   | 297  |
| Radio Stations.            | %     | %     | %     | %     | %    |
| American Stations          | 4.7   | 6.7   | 5.8   | 4.6   | 3.4  |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc) | 13.7  | 18.8  | 22.2  | 25.0  | 20.2 |
| Brazzaville                | .4    | 2.5   | 1.8   | 2.0   | 1.0  |
| Leopoldville               | 1.7   | 2.5   | 2.2   | 3.7   | 2.7  |
| Lourenco Marques           | 59.6  | 54.2  | 50.6  | 42.1  | 29.3 |
| Mafeking                   | 12.0  | 13.4  | 13.3  | 12.0  | 7.7  |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme     | 62.6  | 64.7  | 66.3  | 68.6  | 56.6 |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme     | 54.9  | 52.6  | 57.0  | 61.2  | 43.1 |

BY MARITAL STATUS.

| Marital Status:                | Single | Married | Other |
|--------------------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:      | 668    | 2108    | 135   |
| Radio Stations.                | %      | %       | %     |
| American Stations              | 4.6    | 5.7     | 3.7   |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave<br>etc.) | 19.3   | 22.1    | 16.3  |
| Brazzaville                    | 1.6    | 1.9     | 1.5   |
| Leopoldville                   | 2.2    | 2.7     | 4.4   |
| Lourenco Marques               | 52.2   | 46.5    | 48.9  |
| Mafeking                       | 13.9   | 12.1    | 7.4   |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme         | 64.4   | 64.9    | 74.1  |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme         | 50.7   | 57.2    | 50.4  |

RADIO LISTENING - YESTERDAY.

"Which of these Stations did you listen to yesterday?"

BY UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA AND PROVINCES.

| Union of South Africa and Provinces:     | Union of S.A. | Cape | Natal | O.F.S. | Tvl. |
|--|---------------|------|-------|--------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:                | 2911          | 1019 | 276   | 241    | 1375 |
| Radio Stations.                          | %             | %    | %     | %      | %    |
| American Stations                        | 1.6           | 1.6  | 2.5   | 1.7    | 1.3  |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave, not via S.A.B.C.) | 7.6           | 7.5  | 12.7  | 13.7   | 5.2  |
| Brazzaville                              | .4            | .4   | -     | -      | .4   |
| Leopoldville                             | .6            | .8   | .4    | .4     | .6   |
| Lourenco Marques                         | 26.7          | 21.4 | 33.3  | 35.3   | 26.3 |
| Mafeking                                 | 4.3           | 5.8  | 2.5   | 7.5    | 2.8  |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme                   | 49.2          | 44.6 | 63.0  | 39.8   | 48.6 |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme                   | 37.2          | 28.7 | 19.2  | 50.6   | 42.6 |

BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY.

| Community:                  | Cities | Dorps | Rural |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:   | 1474   | 549   | 888   |
| Radio Stations.             | %      | %     | %     |
| American Stations           | 1.4    | 2.0   | 1.6   |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc.) | 7.5    | 9.7   | 6.0   |
| Brazzaville                 | .4     | .2    | .3    |
| Leopoldville                | .5     | .9    | .7    |
| Lourenco Marques            | 24.2   | 33.7  | 24.2  |
| Mafeking                    | 2.8    | 6.9   | 5.0   |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme      | 59.0   | 43.5  | 31.9  |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme      | 37.4   | 38.1  | 32.9  |

RADIO LISTENING - YESTERDAY

BY INCOME CLASS.

| Income Class:               | A    | B    | C    | D    |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:   | 286  | 714  | 1311 | 600  |
| Radio Stations.             | %    | %    | %    | %    |
| American Stations           | 3.8  | .8   | 1.3  | 1.8  |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc.) | 14.0 | 9.0  | 7.1  | 3.2  |
| Brazzaville                 | .7   | .6   | .2   | .2   |
| Leopoldville                | 1.0  | .7   | .5   | .7   |
| Lourenco Marques            | 22.0 | 28.6 | 26.2 | 24.3 |
| Mafeking                    | 3.1  | 3.8  | 4.1  | 3.8  |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme      | 68.9 | 57.3 | 47.0 | 28.3 |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme      | 39.9 | 44.9 | 34.2 | 28.2 |

BY HOME LANGUAGE AND SEX.

| Home Language and Sex:     | Eng. | Afr. | Both or<br>Other. | M    | F    |
|----------------------------|------|------|-------------------|------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:  | 1367 | 1357 | 187               | 1513 | 1398 |
| Radio Stations             | %    | %    | %                 | %    | %    |
| American Stations          | 1.8  | 1.0  | 3.2               | 1.9  | 1.1  |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc) | 10.8 | 3.8  | 9.1               | 8.5  | 6.3  |
| Brazzaville                | .3   | .2   | 1.6               | .5   | .2   |
| Leopoldville               | .4   | .8   | .5                | .6   | .6   |
| Lourenco Marques           | 26.6 | 25.3 | 26.2              | 27.0 | 24.9 |
| Mafeking                   | 3.9  | 4.7  | 3.2               | 4.3  | 4.1  |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme     | 62.3 | 31.8 | 58.8              | 47.5 | 48.2 |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme     | 30.1 | 42.2 | 36.4              | 36.9 | 35.4 |

RADIO LISTENING - YESTERDAY.

BY AGE GROUPS.

| Age Groups:                 | 16-20 | 21-30 | 31-44 | 45-59 | 60 + |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:   | 233   | 686   | 994   | 701   | 297  |
| Radio Stations.             | %     | %     | %     | %     | %    |
| American Stations           | .9    | 2.2   | 1.5   | 1.7   | .3   |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc.) | 3.0   | 5.7   | 6.5   | 10.6  | 10.4 |
| Brazzaville                 | -     | .7    | .3    | .3    | -    |
| Leopoldville                | -     | .9    | .1    | 1.1   | 1.0  |
| Lourenco Marques            | 43.8  | 29.9  | 26.7  | 20.8  | 12.8 |
| Mafeking                    | 4.3   | 3.8   | 5.5   | 3.7   | 2.0  |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme      | 43.8  | 47.1  | 47.6  | 51.5  | 44.8 |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme      | 36.9  | 34.7  | 36.9  | 38.9  | 30.0 |

BY MARITAL STATUS.

| Marital Status:             | Single | Married | Other |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| No. of Informants - 100%:   | 668    | 2108    | 135   |
| Radio Stations .            | %      | %       | %     |
| American Stations           | 1.5    | 1.6     | 1.5   |
| B.B.C. (on Short Wave etc.) | 4.9    | 8.2     | 7.4   |
| Brazzaville                 | .4     | .3      | -     |
| Leopoldville                | .4     | .7      | .7    |
| Lourenco Marques            | 32.0   | 24.2    | 23.7  |
| Mafeking                    | 3.7    | 4.5     | 3.0   |
| S.A.B.C. 'A' Programme      | 41.8   | 49.7    | 48.9  |
| S.A.B.C. 'B' Programme      | 32.0   | 37.6    | 34.1  |



Wally Langschmidt went on, in 1951, to be a member of the **Direct Committee** for the **SABC**, carrying out audience research. He was commissioned in 1974 by Director-General **Dr. D.J. Fuchs** to survey Black listenership because it became apparent that they were playing a greater part in the market. This survey was also not published. Langschmidt became more directly associated with **Henry Howell** when he, Henry, was appointed **Head of Commercial Services**. They already knew each other but it was now that Henry relied on him because he himself was not *au fait* with the research side; and Henry was appointed **Chairman of the SABC Research Committee** needing all the help he could get. A deep friendship developed between them. Henry, with his engineering background picked up the research side very quickly because he was, as Langschmidt says, 'an interesting mixture of language and artistry, technical and practical.'

He was now into **RESEARCH** in a big way, and we will leave him and Wally Langschmidt there for the moment.

An Irishman came to South Africa after the war. He had been what was called 'a flying ace' based on Malta, and was considered a heroic figure having shot down ten (known) German aircraft. It might have been more. His name was **Pax Moren** and he became a force in the South African **advertising industry** – which force he has been in that and allied industries ever since.

He guided many 'firsts' in the screen industry, such as production of the world's first Cinemascope advertising films (1955); the world's first 3D advertising film (1960); the world's first curved cinema screen (1963). In 1968 he was elected Vice-President of the Screen Advertising World Association (SAWA) – the body responsible for the Cannes Film Festival; a festival to which he was to take Henry in 1978. He had been voted for the Presidency, but turned it down feeling that so many other countries would withdraw if he did, due of course to the dreadful reputation and standing South Africa had in the world. (Moren was to give the Keynote Address when Henry retired from the SABC in 1979 and this is reproduced in this Chapter.)

So we have a leading light in the **ADVERTISING** industry and will leave him there too.

There was a powerful **marketing** man called **Colin Adcock** who did not hail from foreign climes but was a staunch 'twee-talig' South African. His own rise was meteoric, but at the time of this gathering he was a 'tour de force' with **Lindsay Smithers**.

He was instrumental in the formation of a body called the **Advertising Standards Authority** which was intended to be a protec-



tion of the honesty and dignity and status of advertising. It was an interesting body because it tried to bring in all media on Copy committees and Appeal committees, etc. It was a dignified body because its Chairman was always an ex-Chief Justice; and it was a powerful body because the media as a whole could decide to reject any advertisement it deemed distasteful or misleading or in any way dishonest. Conversely, it was a body ready to meet the complaints of the general public.

Henry Howell was very involved with all this activity because as a body they could also reject radio commercials.

Three people compiled the Constitution, the terms of reference and rules and regulations: **Pax Moren**, **Gerrie Uys**, and **Peter Barritt** now passed on. They wrote to Britain and Ireland and put their constitutions together with a mix of the South African culture, and formulated a standard.

Colin Adcock steered it through the then **Society of Marketers** (later the **Association of Marketers**) because it was very important to get it through that body. Money then had to be found for launches, and that money came from the Society of Marketers.

So now we leave Colin Adcock very involved with the Association of Marketers, and the Advertising Standards Authority.

**ADVERTISING, MARKETING and RESEARCH** were destined to come together through the auspices, and courage, of these three men.

Elsewhere in the world, differing media were conducting their own research, resulting in them being highly competitive with each other. Nowhere was there a record of a body which combined to do it as ONE body, and thus no overall media study in research. Pressure from the **Advertising Standards Authority**, who put forward this idea to the media as a whole, brought about the introduction of what was to be called **The South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF)**, with representatives on board from the whole spectrum. It was agreed by all members that one half percent of all money spent on advertising would go towards the cost of manning such an organisation.

**Henry Howell**, **Pax Moren**, and **Colin Adcock** were founder members of the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF).

The Chairman of SAARF was voted in by all the top heads of the media represented, such as **Hal Miller**, Chairman of the **Argus Group**, the Head of TV, the Head of screen advertising, leading magazines, and so forth. Henry Howell was there in his capacity as head of Springbok Radio.

It naturally had its ups and downs because any particular media not happy with the figures could create merry hell; and naturally the representatives fought tooth and nail for the media they were representing. Being Chairman was no easy task, and Pax Moren, and Henry Howell, both had their share of that particular hot seat.

And this is where Wally Langschmidt and the Marketing Research Authority brought in a totally separate study which really attempted to show what value was got for the money: **All Media Products Survey (AMPS)** which was totally independent of all the media.

It was extremely comprehensive and research was carried out across the country making the AMPS figures meaningful and incontrovertible, and therefore acceptable to all the media representatives of the South African Advertising Research Foundation.

To make the circle complete, an **International Advertising Authority (IAA)** was formed, its committee members drawn from SAARF.

The IAA has its headquarters in America and membership comprises some 70 – 80 countries which each have a Chapter. It was World President **Rudolph Farmer** who first suggested in 1966 that enthusiasm for the IAA be whipped up in South Africa. At that time Colin Adcock was the only one of two members, but they were shortly joined by **Frank Waller** of Cape Town, and **Tommy Young** and two others in Johannesburg. Within three years South Africa was represented on World Council by Colin Adcock.

Membership flourished and in 1972 the Chapter was inaugurated. The Chapter joined with the Argus Group in 1973 on a tour of Europe to study methods of media evaluation and current research techniques which culminated in the 23rd World Congress in Dublin, Eire.

Tommy Young became the National Chairman of the South African Chapter, but because he was ailing in health, he created two Vice-Presidents: Henry Howell and Pax Moren. Henry made the Board Room at the SABC available for all the meetings.

As a body it really went to town and eventually ran up a membership of about 120 – 130: the fourth largest Chapter in the world. After that the SA Chapter took an active role in IAA affairs: participation in talks on training in advertising, Henry Howell's addresses on self-regulation, and so on.

From this initiative grew the influential **COMPASS** Committee of the Advertising Standards Authority. From inception COMPASS raised the status of advertising through the promotion and enforcement of standards of ethics. Said COMPASS Chairman, Hal Miller: "The South African Chapter has achieved a meaning to its existence."

The COMPASS Committee had undertaken an on-going advertising campaign which created useful contact between the public and the advertising industry, resulting in less restrictive rules being applied to price comparisons, and many other developments within the industry.

The Chapter itself was active in setting up workshops to study media and marketing, and in 1978 brought out a comprehensive reference work "Communications Information in South Africa". They mounted exhibitions on public service advertising, and developed this important sector of the communications industry. Throughout the year they kept members abreast of affairs with luncheons to which top flight IAA people, as well as diplomats, captains of industry and commerce, creative people, and newspaper and television personalities were invited speak.

Although the Americans had accepted South Africa into the World body, it was not popular with the other member countries. Its reputation literally stank – it was hated and detested.

However, the local members were determined to stand in line to host one of the IAA World Congresses. They felt it would be a great coup if it could be had. Feelers were put out but the general consensus of other member countries was very negative. However, there was a meeting of the world body arranged in Paris and Tommy Young, Pax Moren, and Henry Howell decided to go to appeal for a vote on the matter. In the event the SABC did not want Henry to go so Moren and Young made the trip. There were only some 25 or 27 countries represented present, and South Africa won the decision by two votes. It was agreed that the 1980 World Congress would be held in South Africa. Having got it and been accepted, a cable was sent to New York and New York tried to renege on it because of pressure by the other countries who had **not** been present in Paris for the occasion; had they attended, South Africa would certainly have lost the appeal.

So the South African Chapter of the IAA set about planning the 1980 Congress with a vengeance. All the media became involved and an endeavour to raise some R200,000 was put in motion. Government was approached on the grounds that this was a world communication congress meeting, with an anticipated 20 foreign countries coming in, and would they consider a form of loan which in the event of a profit would be returned. This was turned down.

It turned out to be the biggest event staged in South Africa – 41 nations taking over three Durban hotels. And for the first time ever, via the SABC with the cooperation of the BBC, there was an inter-

national linkup with a projection onto a screen – unheard of in those days – of speakers who could not be present. These screens were vertical, from ceiling to floor, and some 5 or 6 feet wide. The highlight was that as each of the countries was announced, a 35mm slide of one of the key cities in the country concerned was shown on the screen, and their own national anthem played.

It also had its sensitive moments. Some delegates could not have South Africa stamped in their passport, so slips of paper were stamped and loosely placed inside. Running up to the Congress it was realised that segregated beaches could cause a diplomatic furore if some delegates were refused entry. The solution? Henry and Moren went to the local newspapers and asked them to publish a shark scare whilst the Congress was on, which they did. It is a sad reflection of our politics that this was deemed necessary.

But politics also played an enormous part *before* the 1980 Congress became a reality. The 1978 Congress had been held in Copenhagen. Pressure had been brought to bear on the IAA World Body in New York by an influential Church body that South Africa should not only **not** hold a Congress, but should not even attend the Copenhagen one. A tricky one for the IAA whose philosophy was always devoid of any political influence. Henry Howell was already down as the speaker on de-regulation, in reply to the Danish Ombudsman's support of regulation, and this – to their credit – the World body committee adhered to, but they dare not allow more. Henry's request that the delegates' folders contain information and details of the future 1980 Congress to be held in Durban was not permitted. However, it was suggested that the South African delegation hire a Hospitality Suite in the nearby hotel at which they could disseminate brochures, leaflets, and lashings of good South African wine (kindly donated by KWV). No placards or announcements about this facility would be allowed during the Congress; but a small note could be passed to delegates on their way in to the Congress.

The South African Consulate-General, **Mr. Naudé Steyn**, was of tremendous help. Henry liaised with him prior to journeying to Copenhagen, and the Consulate stored wine and brochures ready for the Hospitality Suite. Mr. and Mrs. Steyn also offered to host a dinner for some of the delegates, particularly those not kindly disposed to South Africa, and the menu arrangements also caused a flurry. A telex from Copenhagen to Henry Howell at the SABC would read:

**"DANISH VETERINARY SERVICE HAS GRANTED PERMISSION TO IMPORT VENISON OF SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN NOT EXCEEDING 25 KILOGRAMS TO DENMARK FOLLOWING CONDITIONS VIZ. THE MEAT MUST BE FOLLOWED BY A CERTIFICATE, SIGNED BY A VETERINARY OFFICER STATING THAT THE GOODS ORIGINATE FROM AREAS AND HERDS IN WHICH CONTAGIOUS DISEASES HAVE NOT OCCURRED DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS AND THAT THE MEAT ORIGINATES FROM AN APPROVED SLAUGHTERHOUSE.**

**REGARDING FRESH FRUIT SUGGEST TWO BOXES BLUE GRAPES, ONE BOX PEARS AND EIGHT PINEAPPLES"**

Proteas were despatched in good time for the dinner party and it was ultimately a tremendous success due, Henry was to record in his diary, 'to the enormously heart-warming and patriotic efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Steyn.'

A retrospective thank-you letter from Henry to Mr. Naudé Steyn:

"Dear Naudé,

Having picked up the reins of life again I can look back upon our Copenhagen efforts and attempt to correct my sins of omission and commission. First of all permit me to thank you for the great assistance you and your wife and your colleagues were to us. Your counsel over the months was, of course, invaluable and I shall be following up some of the advice you gave me about our future activities in due course. The dinner party was a great success and I would want once again to thank your wife for the inspiration and the perspiration that made it so successful. Everyone who attended was overwhelmed – one or two who were not there were rather hurt to have been excluded but there was a limit to the number you could accommodate.

Thank you for the bottle of Scotch which in my delicate frame of health was a benison indeed.

I write this on the eve of our Annual General Meeting and I attach a transcript of my report made to the Chapter on our Copenhagen adventures. I do not think we enjoyed a great triumph at Copenhagen but I think we succeeded in turning a defeat into a success. The reaction of the delegates was very favourable to us and the efforts of our

hosts to sweep us under the carpet only increased peoples' sympathy. We certainly learnt of many things we should not do at our Congress. I hope that when you come on leave you will permit us to return to you both the kindness and hospitality you showed us and particularly me after my debacle in the street. This is the third time I have experienced this unpleasant thing and my doctor's assurance that it does me no harm I find unconvincing. I felt 'stunned' for days afterwards....\*

... From time to time I will send you information on our activities so that you can remain in the picture and induce some of our Danish friends to visit us in 1980.

With warmest regards...."

And so Henry and party had set off for Copenhagen with their plans well laid. On departure a Press Statement was issued:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Press Release</p>  | <p> PR Communications (Pty) Ltd<br/>P O Box 3782 Johannesburg Tel 21-8316</p> |
| <p><u>OUTH AFRICA SCOOPS NEXT I.A.A. WORLD CONGRESS</u></p>   |  |
| <p>News that South Africa would host the next world congress of the International Advertising Association was announced by Mr Henry Howell, Director, Commercial Services of the S.A.B.C. , and Vice President of the I.A.A. on the eve of his departure to this year's bi-annual congress in Copenhagen.</p>   |  |
| <p>"We have lobbied long and hard for an opportunity to host such a congress, as it's regarded as the most important event on the world advertising calendar", said Mr Howell.</p>  |  |
| <p>"We were awarded this honour in the teeth of quite strong competition from other countries.</p>  |  |
| <p>"The I.A.A. is a world-wide association of advertising agencies, advertisers and media top management. The body performs a self-regulatory function on an international basis. It alerts members to important trends of an advertising nature and steps in to lead and advise the advertising community on contentious matters. Its publications on related topics are benchmarks for the entire industry.</p> |  |
| <p>"We are completely a-political and the 1980 congress could well host advertising leaders from behind the iron curtain, as well as the majority of countries in the Western World.</p>  |  |
| <p>The 26th World Congress of the I.A.A. which meets in Copenhagen from May 16-19 will come to grips, in a practical way, with many aspects of "Communications" as it relates to the marketing of goods and services across national borders and its application to public services - be they local, national or supranational.</p>   |  |

\*Henry had collapsed in a Copenhagen street and was rescued by an Irish doctor who diagnosed Hypoglaecemia. This had happened to him on previous occasions in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg.

Under the general heading of "Communications in tomorrows world" the congress programme allows time to examine several topics in depth, such as;

The role of communicaiton in a controlled growth economy.  
The changing norms of society.  
The influence of market research on creativity.  
Legislation versus Self-regulation.\*  
The influence of Social Sciences on Advertising.  
Maintaining advertising standards in a democratic society.  
Access to Communication - a priority goal.  
Communications and Public Affairs.

- \* Mr Henry Howell will be attending the congress as the Vice Chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa and will be putting the case for self-regulation of advertising in the debate "Legislation versus self-regulation" which takes place on 17 May.

The decisions reached at the congress are expected to affect the operation and conduct of the advertising community right around the world.

The South African delegation will comprise;

- A) Sydney Barnett: Chairman and Managing Director of Sterns Diamonds and a member of the Action Group of I.A.A.
- B) Henry Howell: Director, Commercial Services, S.A.B.C. and Vice President of the S.A. Chapter.
- C) Mr & Mrs Ribbink Mr Ribbink is the editor of the South African Medical Journal.

3/....

-3-

D) Jack Siebert  
accompanied by Mrs  
Siebert.

Head of Springbok Radio and  
Advertising, S.A.B.C. and Treasurer  
of the I.A.A. (S.A.)

E) Uwe Varnhorn

Dep. Managing Director and Creative Head  
of Metcalf & Associates Advertising  
Agency.

F) Phillipa C. Ward-Smith Meida Manager Bates Wells Rostrun, and  
Winning youth-delegate.

*Henry v. Howell*  
The 1980 congress will take place in Durban.

Editorial contact: Chairman, Tom Young 41-1261  
Henry Howell 714-0111  
Bill Paterson 21-8316

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8 May 1978.





Back in Johannesburg, IAA members worked like beavers and Hal Miller chaired a Liaison Committee in order to put Congress 1980 on track.

The Clarion published Henry Howell's address to the Copenhagen Congress in full:

## 'Self regulation is preferable to legislation' Howell tells IAA World Congress



Henry Howell

"Before I attempt to talk about the way in which advertising is regulated in South Africa I feel it is appropriate to touch upon the fundamental differences between our philosophy and that of the Consumer Ombudsman of Denmark. He is emphatic that the Danish system is not socialistic and no doubt within the Danish context this is so. There are, however, gradations of socialistic societies and I believe that a "mixed economy" such as he referred to must exhibit some characteristics of a socialist society in some sector or another. I hasten to say that is very much the situation in my own country too; we have state railways, a national steel industry, a nationalised hospital service, and many other state-run services. I, myself, work for a publicly-owned Broadcasting Corporation. "There are still, however, amongst all political parties in my country, strong forces that attempt to stem the march of the bureaucratic control of the economy and up to now the control of our economic affairs has stood up to this encroachment to a commendable — at least it seems commendable to us — a commendable degree. One of the sectors of our economy which is still relatively free is that of marketing and, therefore, advertising.

"So much of what the Ombudsman has said and what he does is, of course, totally admirable and very necessary. In my country we strive towards the same goals but we achieve them by directly opposite routes. So far, the feeling in South Africa is that the free enterprise system is intrinsically a good one; that private business is worth fostering for the good of all our people and that businessmen, given the opportunity, are as conscious as anyone else of the social responsibilities they have to their fellowmen. There seemed to me to be a somewhat depressing lack of belief in the latent goodness and intelligence of businessmen in the Ombudsman's view of advertising and marketing. I hope that what I shall go on to say will dispel any thought you may have at this moment that I am being disingenuous.

"I believe that as the Ombudsman describes his function it is to ensure that the principles of fair trading are not infringed; that commercial people should act in conformity with the Act and he should contribute to raising the standard of all classes of marketing. In all this it seems he relies on negotiation and not on the co-operation of the people concerned and when negotiation fails he can refer the matter to the courts of law.

Where voluntary control operates, therefore, it does so with the sword of Damocles hanging over its head. This, I would imagine, could cause resentment in commerce and industry.

"Whilst the Ombudsman resists the role of a guardian of public morality, he does, in fact, lodge complaints against advertisements which contravene the IAA Code — a voluntary code based upon the premise that advertising has indeed a social responsibility. Comparative advertising, for instance, is left to voluntary control which the Ombudsman feels should be extended. He also refers to guidelines on advertising and it seems that provided the enterprises adhere to the rules thus communicated to them, they do not run the risk of being criticised by the Ombudsman. Mr Chairman, with the greatest respect to the Ombudsman the concept that everyone should abide by guidelines laid down by one man and apparently without any avenue of redress if one does not agree with them is a daunting one indeed and would raise a heated response in my country. I am also impressed by his confidence that should the matter reach the courts quote "... it must be reasonably certain that the guidelines laid down will be upheld."

The following is the complete text of Henry Howell's reply to Danish Consumer Ombudsman, N. Ehrenreich's, case for legislation during the debate "Legislation versus Self-Regulation" held at the World Congress of the International Advertising Association, in Copenhagen, last month. Howell is vice-chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority, director of commercial services, SABC, and vice-chairman of the International Advertising Association (South African Chapter).

"Another interesting aspect of his talk was that he felt that trade and commerce could not arrange matters by self-control because five to 10 per cent of the industry would not acknowledge such self-control. In my country we seem to have solved this problem fairly painlessly.

"I can assure him that our rules for self-regulation are perfectly adequate and whilst I admit that the prevailing political and economic conditions in Western Europe could militate against self-control, one is led to ask the question — "Do these conditions not exist in those countries where self-control is exercised?"

"In essence I would say that my preference for self-regulation stems from the fact that it operates effectively, knowledgeably and fairly and, perhaps, its greatest virtue is the speed with which it operates.

"Now, to tell you about the ASA of South Africa so that I can lay myself open to criticism.

"The regulation of advertising in South Africa is based upon the philosophy of a minimum of legislation and the maximum of self-regulation by the industry.

There is, of course, the very necessary amount of statutory regulation governing or affecting advertising in the Republic

(Continued overleaf)

# Self regulation

of South Africa, the most recent of which is the Trade Practices Act, but the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa ensures continuing liaison with the Government and with statutory bodies in its efforts to ensure the effectiveness of voluntary compliance with its regulations.

"The Advertising Standards Authority was formed nine years ago to bring about a consolidated policy towards self-regulation, and to eliminate discrepancies and differences between the acceptance procedures of the various media. Nine major organisations representing all the media, the advertisers and the advertising practitioners were the foundation members.

"Any organisation which is concerned with the preparation, printing or dissemination of any type of advertising, may be admitted to membership. Where there is no organisation covering the activity any particular company may be admitted to membership of the Authority. Since its formation five further organisations have joined representing such bodies as the Specialist Press, The Grocery Manufacturers, The Pharmaceutical Association and The Package Institute. This I am sure, brings us direct control over more than 95 per cent of all advertising.

"The ASA functions at a number of levels. There is an executive committee beneath which operate the copy committee and the appeal committee. It can be seen from this that there are a number of interests and minds at work and, to repeat what I said earlier, I find the prospect of all these functions being condensed as they are in Denmark into one person very daunting indeed. The present chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority is a distinguished jurist, a retired Chief Justice of the Republic, a Judge of Appeal in the States of Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, Mr Justice N. Ogilvie Thompson. His job is to see that the ASA fulfils its responsibilities to the community, the day-to-day decisions concerning advertising are carried out by advertising professionals. The ASA has gained the widest acceptance as the co-ordinating body of all advertising interests in South Africa. Let me expand on that from my own personal involvement.

"Apart from being the vice-chairman of the ASA I am chairman of the ASA's copy committee. I happen to be the SABC's director associated with Television and Radio Advertising and am involved in the administration of those two media Codes. I would find it oppressively difficult to interpret any of these regulations

without the help of a number of professional and experienced colleagues with whom I can debate the points at issue.

"I am surprised by the fact that the incumbent of the post of Ombudsman when it was set up apparently was not required to have any specific acquaintance with consumer matters and the like.

"To get back to the ASA, I should point out that its representation on the Committee set up to help enact the Trade Practices Act put the seal of Government approval upon its status. It is the umbrella organisation to which all its constituent members are responsible and it is important to realise that self-regulation by the separate industry bodies continues to be significant. Prior to the formation of the ASA, each component had its own mechanisms, and these continue to apply. Newspapers and magazines have their own long-established code of conduct, as do Radio and the new Television Service. Cinema advertising is carefully checked before screening, and is subject to the approval of the Publications Control Board. Advertising practitioners are bound not only by the ASA Code but by their own Code of Ethics.

"I should mention an excellent illustration of how deeply the philosophy of self-regulation penetrates the industry. A system of 'code enforcement' has been created within each advertising agency. It is carried out by senior executives responsible for giving guidance to the copy, art, and production departments on what is permissible under the ASA Code and the other codes in existence."

## Consumer Involvement

"The National Co-ordinating Consumer Council with the co-operation and financial support of the Government, is very active in South Africa. The ASA and various bodies, such as the Newspaper Press Union, the Association of Accredited Practitioners in Advertising and The Society of Marketers, maintain continuing contact with the consumer associations. In particular the ASA maintains a joint liaison committee with consumer interests at which matters of mutual interest are discussed."

## Structure and Function of Self-Regulation

"The Authority bases its activities on the Code of Advertising Practice. This Code, while embodying the main features of the ICC Code and a number of others, is specially conceived to take into consideration the protection of consumers on different levels of sophistication. This is necessary because of the unique population structure of South Africa. Stringent regulations seem, to the ASA, vitally necessary to protect those of a lower standard of sophistication than is normally found in Europe and the United States. *The ASA assumes a moral responsibility to the public and is concerned with ensuring that apart*

*from the truth of advertising it should also be decent and in good taste.* It seems to me to be difficult for a regulating system based upon voluntary or imposed regulation to avoid such responsibility.

"A complaint received under the Code, from either consumer or competitor, is first referred to the advertiser for comment, and then placed before the copy committee. The Committee deliberates and makes a ruling. In the event that the advertising is ruled against, the Committee requests that it be withdrawn if this request has not already been made administratively.

"The advertiser, if ruled against, has the right to appeal to the appeal committee. If the appeal is not sustained the ASA has the power of sanction necessary to extend before the do not accept the advertising in question. The ASA can, if necessary, require pre-publication approval of all future advertising for a specified period of time from an advertiser who persistently contravenes the Code.

"Every effort is made to handle complaints and appeals promptly, within one or two weeks. Normally decisions are communicated only among members of the ASA, and are regarded as confidential. Unless immediate suspension of an advertisement is required, a time period for compliance with a decision against an advertiser is clearly established as part of any decision.

"Beyond the self-regulatory functions, the ASA works actively with Government bodies and organisations from other industries to promote the self-regulation of advertising.

"For example, the South African Medicines Control Council (a Government body) expressed concern over advertising for pharmaceuticals, both ethical and proprietary, and contemplated introducing some form of regulatory legislation. As a result of deliberations in a meeting of all interested parties, the Medicine Control Council agreed to forego legislation and delegate such action to the Advertising Standards Authority on a voluntary basis. Recent contacts with this Council have re-enforced the links that exist between the two bodies.

"The Joint ASA and IAA Compass Committee (Committee for Promotion of Advertising Standards and Status) has continued its work of planning joint action to communicate the social and commercial role of advertising to consumers, businessmen and other authorities."

## Trend

"The ASA continues to press its efforts toward acceptance by Government and by industry associations towards recognition by name as the body to which all complaints against advertising, received by Government and/or consumer bodies, should be referred. It is proud of the success which it has so far achieved."

Henry Howell, on his return, gave an address: "WHAT THE IAA CONGRESS 1980 WILL MEAN TO SOUTH AFRICA":

WHAT THE IAA CONGRESS 1980 WILL MEAN TO SOUTH AFRICA

It is estimated that R30 000 000 000 is spent annually world-wide by Manufacturers and Marketers in bringing their products to the notice of purchasers. In a free enterprise economy advertising, as it is generally referred to, is closely interwoven into the several industries it serves - Press, Electronic and other forms of Media, Market Research, Printing, Industrial Design, Advertising and through all the processes of visual and aural reproduction. Thus it can be said that advertising is one of the vital factors contributing to the growth of industry and commerce in South Africa and throughout the rest of the world.

It is therefore singularly fortunate that the South African Chapter of the International Advertising Association has been asked to host the 1980 World Congress.

THE I.A.A.

The International Advertising Association is a non-profit organisation that world-wide co-ordinates an exchange of information relating to advertising and the communications industry. Its membership is confined to senior directors and personnel in advertising agencies, media owners, leading advertisers, market research, public relations, etc. All are leaders in their respective industries in their own countries. Membership extends to over 80 countries and is organised through 45 Chapters world-wide.

A World Congress is held every two years and regional symposia are held in the intervening years. The main objective of IAA can be said to building bridges of understanding between the commercial people of all nations.

ATTENDANCE

Those who are expected to attend are heads of Government departments who will be invited to attend and participate. Leading experts in their respective fields of activity will address us: these will be drawn from overseas and locally. Participants will include heads of advertising

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and public relations organisations, press, radio, television and other media, international marketers from overseas and from our own country. These people are important in as much as they are largely instrumental in moulding the opinions held in their respective countries. Thus it is vital to the interests of South Africa that these influential people be exposed to every aspect of life in Southern Africa, so that they can see for themselves the vast industrial and commercial potential of our country.

#### ANTICIPATED ATTENDANCE

It is expected that approximately 750 delegates will attend. Previous IAA Congresses, held in various countries, have varied according to the situation of the Congress. In 1973 in Dublin attendance was approximately 650 delegates: 1974 in Teheran 750: 1976 Buenos Aires 1 400. The 1978 Congress in Copenhagen will probably exceed 1 000.

#### THE PROGRAMME

Meetings of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee and the World Council will precede the main functions which will comprise an official opening to be followed by 3 plenary sessions and 9 communications workshops devoted to an analysis of current and future trends in communication. A closing session will also be held summing up the results of the Congress, to be followed by a closing banquet, which will end the week's programme.

Full scope will be given to entertainment and an opportunity will also be afforded those delegates who wish to enjoy pre and post-conference tours in various parts of the country, as well as conducting their own business affairs.

#### FINANCING

IAA South Africa will budget for approximately R250 000 to mount the Congress. We could anticipate a further R500 000 to R750 000 to be spent by delegates on entertainment, accommodation and travel facilities.

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These are the basic facts of the Congress which may be summed up as:

1. Promoting a positive image of South Africa to some of the world's most influential media and marketing men.
2. Cementing personal friendships and business associates.
3. Retaining South Africa's links with an important world body and affording South Africa the opportunity to continue to contribute to the affairs of this world body as it has done in the past.
4. To ensure that the IAA does not deviate from its policy of complete political neutrality as IAA has always held that business transcends politics.

11.11.77.

So South Africa hosted the 1990 Congress in Durban, and Henry Howell welcomed the delegates on 19 May:

## IAA CONGRESS DURBAN MAY 19 – 23 1980

"To the members of the South African Chapter of the International Advertising Association, this week marks the climax of more than two years of hard work and great expectations.

"We extend to all the delegates to the 27th World Congress, and to their companions, a most warm and sincere welcome. We hope you will find the Durban Congress a memorable as well as a happy occasion. We believe we have been fortunate in attracting a distinguished body of speakers to Durban, and have endeavoured to find topics of vitally absorbing interest to the Advertising Industry as it faces into the 1980's.

"We wish to express our thanks to the 32 men and women who will be sharing their thoughts and hopes and even their fears for the future with you. This Congress is concerned about the challenge of the future and we shall be looking forward, with you, in keen anticipation to what will be happening in the next four days in the Congress Hall – the great Elanga Room at the Elangeni Hotel.

"I hope that the glimpses you have had of beautiful Durban Bay and its beaches will have given you a keen desire to sample more of the pleasures of this warm and friendly place. Our Durban Committee has given a great deal of thought to the entertainments which we hope you will share with us this week. The programme for the ladies who have come to grace this Congress is, I think, going to be most interesting as well as entertaining.

*Three of the leading South African personalities responsible for the organisation of the Congress were, from left, Mr Pax Moren, managing director of Cinemark; Mr Tommy Young, doyen of South African advertising*



*agents, and Mr Henry Howell, Congress chairman. With them is Mr Haruo Yoneda, a delegate from Japan.*

"This is the playground of South Africa and I hope you will be delighted by the exotic fragrance of Africa washed by the waters of the Indian Ocean. In the evenings, our Durban hosts have arranged a number of entertainments that we believe you will enjoy; and carry away with you pleasant memories of the South African way of life. We will look forward with you to the delights of the 'Brazilian Evening' which the Brazilian Chapter will present to us on Thursday evening.

"May we again wish you pleasure and intellectual profit from our Congress. The Secretariat and a host of delegate services are ready to assist you with any problems you may have, so do not hesitate to ask for help or advice. We want you to enjoy your stay with us and remember us with affection".

In the Clarion, which covered the Congress so well, Tommy Young mentioned that 'Henry Howell, Chapter Vice-President, has been a speaker on self-regulation at the Buenos Aires, and Copenhagen, congresses.'

Henry Howell: "It is nice to believe that we in South Africa are doing something as well as, if not better than, most other people in the world. It is true to say that, of the way in which we regulate and control advertisements in this country. This is a problem that has exercised many people in many countries throughout the world and in many cases they have failed to find effective and simple solutions.

"I have recently had the honour to represent South Africa at an International Congress of Advertising at which I was asked to read a paper on the Self Regulation of Advertising in South Africa. Forty countries were represented by 1 400 delegates and it is true to say that there was general agreement that of all the methods examined the South African procedures were the nearest to the desired goal. In South Africa we have opted for a system of maximum self-regulation and a minimum of legislation.

"Before I get to that subject however, I think it would be expedient to look briefly at the need for advertising at all. A body such as this one, whose original choice of speaker was Mr. Roelofse is no doubt concerned about the rights of the consumer and as I probably start from a somewhat different standpoint from his I should perhaps introduce some sort of basic justification for advertising itself.

"There seems to be a rosy glow of satisfaction surrounding the cause of consumerism. We are all consumers and so we all tend to support it. Here is a cause that has few political overtones. It's like anti-pollution and love – we are all for it and can safely support it without taking too much thought. One of the targets of consumerism

is the advertising and marketing of goods and services and here one can generate quite a bit of heat without any kind of thought at all and for some extraordinary reason the advertising and marketing industry is not very good at speaking up for itself. So I want to do so on their behalf if I may as I am at the moment the Vice-Chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority in South Africa. That is what I am going to tell you about in a minute but let's get our priorities right: do we really need advertising?

"In South Africa, most people eat because they have a job. Or someone who is responsible for them has a job, a husband a wife, a father or a mother. And jobs are available because society has needs and desires to be filled. Those who work help to make things and provide services people want. Someone has to bake bread, and someone has to serve in the shop that sells it.

"The link between the products and services (the bread if you like) and the people who want to eat the bread in a free enterprise system, is advertising. In a modern society like ours, you simply cannot go down to the market place and see what farmers have brought to town today. You need some way to find out what is for sale and where. This way is advertising – the way sellers of goods for mass distribution announce what they have to sell to a market place of millions of buyers. The upper strata of South African society are to a great extent a society of abundance and we need advertising to help distribute and thus sustain our abundance. At the other end of the scale we have many people who have very little money to spend – they need to be informed responsibly about what they can buy. In societies of scarcity, or if we lived in a regulated economy, as in Socialistic or Communistic communities, there would be no need to advertise anything. In those communities people sign up to buy a car, wait three years or more and take whatever is assigned to them. There people line up to buy bread, they cannot shop among enriched and homogenised and white and wholemeal and rye bread (with or without seeds). Do you see what I mean? If we have a free enterprise system we need advertising. There is a compelling case to be made out for the fact that advertising keeps the costs of consumer goods down and of course helps to keep the economy flourishing.

"So I hope we agree that whatever you imagine may be wrong with advertising we certainly need it. Now let us try to measure the effect of the shortcomings of advertising upon the public. As a matter of fact that is exactly what the ASA has been doing lately. It commissioned a thoroughly scientific piece of research in which the respondents were asked this very simple question:



"Have you recently had any experience of or with misleading advertising?"

"The first answer was either Yes I have or No I have not. If yes, the next question was:

"With what advertising did you have this experience?"

"The results were statistically rather startling. We expected an adverse response of between 15-25% and we received a negative response from only 6%. We should ask ourselves if 6% is serious or not. I should explain that if you research any single product or service even presumably Manna from Heaven, the state of humanity is such that you will receive a negative response of between 5-8%. But 'advertising' is not a single product, it represents thousands of products. There are 16 000 Brand names on the market in South Africa. There are 50 000 Retail outlets and between all those products only 6% of the people – the usual percentage of one product – had a bad experience. The largest single factor in that 6% by the way was that of misleading Retail Advertisements which made up 1,1%. When you think that there are thousands of Retail stores advertising every day that response is nothing less than excellent. And to give you a further dimension to compare with, let us look at a statistic which relates to the Editorial side of Newspapers.

"One of South Africa's most famous newspapers did some research about whether its readers approved of its Editorial policy. It discovered that 21% of its regular readers disapproved. That's rather bigger than the 6% who might or might not have had a bad experience with its advertising. And so I would like to take you further in my argument and say that misleading advertising in South Africa is not a serious menace to society. But we believe that we can improve matters and we must do our utmost to do so.

"We need responsible advertising and I hope you will be glad to know to a very great extent that is what we have got in South Africa, for advertising in South Africa is regulated and watched over by the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa. This body lays down that advertising has a social responsibility towards the community as a whole. All advertising whatever the medium used should be legal, honest, truthful and in good taste. It should not mislead the public. It should rely on positive claims rather than disparaging comparisons. It believes that the success of advertising depends on public confidence and all advertising practice should have and maintain such confidence. And so it is about the Advertising Standards Authority that I am talking now. First of all how it came about.

"We were at that stage of our development which gave us an opportunity to study what is going on in the rest of the world and try to take advantage of other peoples' successes and failures.

"We had a number of advantages but also, as in every other facet of our lives in South Africa, we have some profound problems of our own.

"We enjoy, first of all, the inestimable benefit, from the advertisers' point of view, of a political system which is linked to the principles of Private Enterprise. This doesn't mean that we are not watched over very assiduously by a number of responsible bodies such as the Medicines Control Council and the Liquor Board and so on. Nor that we were not recently viewed rather keenly by the Architects of a new Trade Practices Bill which has passed through the House and awaits promulgation before going on to the Statute Book nor that we are free of bureaucratic controls and consumer consciousness. The Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa welcomes all this attention so long as it is vested with the responsibility of getting on with the job of inducing the Advertising Industry to submit itself to voluntary controls. From our close study of the development of this situation in other countries we have the feeling that we are fortunate in being given the opportunity to do the job at all, and we must make sure we do it properly or someone else will do it for us. We enjoy, as I have said, a situation where there is the minimum of legislation and the maximum of voluntary control. We propose so to conduct ourselves that that state of affairs will continue. Lest you should be attracted to the concept of a large measure of legislative control let me tell you that this does happen in many countries not least of all the United States of America. Here they have over 200 pieces of legislation to control advertising and it is a lawyer's paradise. It took them 16 years to remove the word 'Liver' from Carters Little Liver Pills ... it only took them 18 months to remove their President from office.

"South Africa is a developed country and a developing country and an underdeveloped country. At one end of the scale we have an economy of considerable sophistication and at the other end of the socio-economic scale we have our poorer fellow countrymen whose need for protection against dishonest trading practices is great. Many of them have been enjoying a significant rise in their standards of living and their spending power and are becoming a large, possibly the largest single factor, in the consumer goods field. But they are unsophisticated if, thankfully, somewhat careful buyers. So the South African Advertising Standards Authority sees a particular responsibil-

ity for itself towards the poorer consumers, most of whom are black, a special need not only for careful scrutiny of claims and statements but of the way in which normally acceptable advertising is expressed. There is a basic problem too of communications as you will well realise we speak nine separate languages and this does not take into account the small minorities who speak other languages like Guderati and Tamil or immigrant groups whose home language can be Greek, Portuguese or Italian and so on.

"In the past, advertising was controlled in South Africa by the various media in isolation. The Newspaper Press Union administered advertising in the Press, the South African Broadcasting Corporation regulated and controlled Radio advertising just as it will control Television advertising; the Cinema, Outdoor, Direct Mail, the Printers, the Marketers, the Proprietary Association, the Advertising Practitioners, all have their own codes of practice. There was, however, a certain degree of confusion and frustration and we could see the warning signs coming in from the rest of the world where the Advertising Industry was under assault. Clearly almost everyone concerned wanted advertising to be clean, decent, honest and factual. A way had to be found not only to achieve this but the public and the authorities needed to see that it was being done and by whom. Fortunately the existing systems were not too entrenched and there were no insuperable vested interests in the particular forms of control to prevent us from getting the ASA to work.

"Just a brief description of the ASA:

- 1) It is representative of all sections of the advertising business community with an independent Chairman who is above any sectional interest. The present Chairman is the Hon. Dr. L.C. Steyn, a retired Chief Justice of the Republic and a highly experienced jurist.
- 2) It has a comprehensive Code of Advertising Practice – recently brought up-to-date to meet the needs of this decade. We studied the Advertising Codes of many of the leading Western Countries and distilled from them the latest and best regulations.
- 3) All bodies who subscribe to the Code must adhere strictly to it and maintain the requisite standards.
- 4) The ASA and its Code have teeth, for they can demand the removal of any advertising or part of an advertisement that the ASA considers unacceptable from any medium or all media.
- 5) It has the ability to act quickly and has the machinery to consider appeals swiftly – we all know from experience around the world that voluntary controls are infinitely swifter than control by legislation.

6) The Code and the machinery of the ASA are equipped to protect every section of the Consumer Public.

"Of course there are cases where advertising, acceptable in one medium, is not acceptable in another. These cases usually derive from specific differences in the nature of the media concerned. Particularly the electronic media have problems because of their intrusive character which brings them into the intimacy of the home and they may find certain products and techniques unacceptable, whereas in the printed media or even the cinema these things could be perfectly acceptable. In cases like this the individual codes would apply but if the ASA rules that a product or a statement is unacceptable to it then all the subscribing media would immediately carry out its injunction.

"In practice it has a Secretariat which exists largely through the generosity of the Newspaper Press Union although all media contribute financially to its operations. It has a Copy Committee upon which the Secretariat calls for rulings in cases which it cannot deal with administratively. And finally it has an Appeals Committee to which advertisers can appeal if they feel aggrieved by the decision of the Copy Committee. In practice quite a number of appeals are upheld. One of the most active bodies within the ASA is the Association of Practitioners in Advertising in South Africa, the Agency people. Their representatives are particularly valuable members of both committees. I hotly deny that they were invited to participate on the principle of appointing a poacher to be the game keeper. The ASA Executive Committee has to handle the relationships between the Industry and appropriate Government, statutory, provincial, civic and other authorities. One can say that whilst there is nothing particularly original about the South African ASA it has worked extremely well. Its conduct towards the industry has not been exclusively restrictive; for instance in the case of Price Comparisons it has sought to improve and alleviate unnecessarily restrictive conditions.

"There was a feeling that the ASA might tend to become a passive body that only reacted to situations after they had been created and that ideally it ought to be busy not only seeking out the wrong doers before they could do any harm but also it should endeavour to let the public know that they have a body to turn to when they feel that advertising is failing in its duty. A Committee was set up for the promotion of Advertising's Standards and Status under the mnemonic – the COMPASS COMMITTEE, a sort of 'ginger' group: and here I should digress briefly to say that we are fortunate in South Africa in being a small enough business community to permit us to know each

other fairly well and we tend in the Advertising Industry to get on well with each other and so there is seldom a problem in getting people in rival media, rival agencies, rival companies to sit down together if they can be persuaded that something useful can come out of it. And so COMPASS COMMITTEE set about some of the thornier aspects first of the Standards of Advertising and second of the Status of Advertising. It raised funds from all the interested bodies and invited people who were prepared to work, to join it. As a Committee it set out, for instance, to take a professional look at the advertising directed to Black consumers for all the obvious reasons. The Committee itself generated a number of complaints to the ASA for action and it will continue to do so in the future.

“COMPASS also came to the conclusion that insufficient people knew about the ASA and what it meant to ordinary people. It decided that the ASA itself should advertise in those media, where the advertising takes place, to tell the public that it existed and encouraged them to write in. The three major media undertook to provide time and space entirely free of charge – and prime time and prime space at that – the agencies put their creative and media people to work as a team and produced the advertisements for press, radio and cinema and also the advertising schedules to go with them. All the printing was donated by the printers and so on and so on.

“The Advertising Standards Authority received treatment normally given only to the most prestigious and wealthy of clients.” (A slide presentation followed this talk).

## **THE COPENHAGEN CONGRESS. (Henry Howell’s feedback for the record.)**

“The Congress in general started on Tuesday May 16th in the late afternoon, and ended with a banquet on May 19th. Before the delegates assembled however, there were some other important meetings notably the Annual Meeting of the Directors of the IAA on Sunday May 14th. At this meeting the business of the Association as a whole was discussed and it was illuminating for a South African to listen to the problems which occupy other delegates’ minds and compare them with ours.

“It is clear that advertising is on the defensive worldwide and that we in the South African Advertising Industry lead a charmed life. Indeed I would say that we hardly know the facts of life as they are experienced out there in the modern world. This makes it doubly

important that we so conduct ourselves that the situations that exist abroad do not soon or ever arise in South Africa. We will only maintain this fortunate position, in my view, by being doubly careful and responsible beyond the call of duty. From where I sit I can see the signs of the awakening in South Africa of the same factors which bedevil the advertising scene abroad. The topics which were talked about at the Directors Meeting were dominated by the role of the Sustaining Members in the IAA and the future relationship between them and ordinary members. This arouses in my mind a belief that there is a need for this Chapter to decide whether we should invite a South African organisation to become a Sustaining Member. It would need to be an organisation with international ramifications. There are certain problems which the IAA worldwide will need to solve in the future if the Sustaining Members become preponderantly influential. The whole nature of the Association could change.

"Whether this is good or bad is not for me to comment upon here. So much for Sustaining Membership. The other reports to the Board concerned Public Service Advertising; Advertising and the Common Market; the significance and quality of Advertising; Social Communications; Educational Projects and so on.

"In the midst of all this I was called upon, in the absence of our President, to tell the Congress something of the Durban Congress in 1980. There was general surprise that we had selected Durban as our venue but there was also considerable interest and tangible support. I will have more to say of this later.

"Brazil is making a big effort to secure the 28th World Congress in 1982 and for reasons which I will go into later I believe we should support this.

"After the Board Meeting we adjourned to a splendid buffet supper at the Hotel d'Angleterre by the World Chairman, Bob Devine.

"At about this time I began, for a variety of reasons, to realise that the Copenhagen Congress was hopelessly diffused geographically. The Congress Centre was more than five kilometres from the nearest hotel (the Scandinavia) and this hotel was some 2 or 3 kilometres from the Centre of Copenhagen. I for one never felt a part of a gathering of people of common interests. Furthermore the Danes had attracted only 580 delegates to their Congress and in the event I am not particularly surprised. I may expand upon this later.

"I would wish to tell you here about the banquet by our Consul General, Naudé Steyn and his delightful wife on Monday 15th May. This affair entailed the transshipment of Crayfish, Wildebeest, Proteas,

Fruit and Dried Fruit and even some lemon leaves for the Babootie. It was a triumphant success. The fifty guests included leading members of the IAA and important Danish businessmen. As I said all the goods turned up safely, leaving Tommy Young, his staff and some of his standard bearers exhausted but happy back here in South Africa. I hope when Tommy comes to write the memoirs of a long and successful life he will devote a chapter to this particular adventure. May I say to him that from the point of view of his country and the S.A. Chapter it was well worthwhile. It also gives me an opportunity of expressing our gratitude to Naudé Steyn and his staff and that delicious wife for the part they have played through the months to help us in what was not an easy situation.

"On a personal note may I say that at this point I had been four days in the most expensive hotel in what must be one of the most expensive cities in the world. Wonderful, wonderful Copenhagen as a lyric has begun to assume some rich seams of irony for me but there were compensations. The greatest was the splendid team of people who collected to put the South African Chapter on the map. I have already mentioned the Consul General, but we also had Sid Barnett, Henry van Wyk, Jack and Sally Siebert, Louis Ribbink and his wife, and Uwe Varnhorn and Phillipa Ward-Smith who was our youth delegate. Hans and Hanne Boetius of SAA were invaluable indeed and so was their staff member Hannah. They proved to be magnificent helpers and kept our hospitality suite going throughout.

"... The opening was at the Copenhagen Town Hall, no doubt a splendidly historic place and suitable for Royal occasions but my heart bled for David Ogilvy who after the ceremonial opening by the Prince Consort had to give a talk (in cold blood) on how to make advertising more effective and another speaker who had to deal with the 'Role of Communications in a Controlled Growth Economy'. My only other close-up view of the talks was the discussion on the subject of 'Legislation versus Self-Regulation' in which I was involved with the Consumer Ombudsman of Denmark and M. Raymond Haas of France. I had conjured up a fierce antagonism for the Ombudsman over the preceding weeks only to discover that he was utterly charming, a grave ex-Judge with a twinkle in his eye. We all did our bit but it was not difficult to perform in front of an audience that wanted if it could to support self-regulation. One point we should note here: the Danes had only arranged for language translation in the main auditorium but there were usually two or three sessions running concurrently so that for many of the events no translation facilities existed. In

my own discussion the French speaker knew that he had to speak in English only a few moments before he was due to get on to the stage. We must watch this point in 1980. Language translation must be available everywhere that speakers are to perform.

"A word about our Hospitality Suite. This was in operation from Tuesday to Friday. It consisted of a large, indeed elegant room with an entrance hall and toilet and at each end was a separate bedroom and bathroom suite, one occupied by Sid Barnett and the other by myself. We decorated the rooms with the Proteas, we had two excellent SATOUR films showing on the Television Set operating from a videotape player in the room. We served KWV wine and we handed every visitor a bottle of Fleur de Cap wine on departure. We talked about South Africa, we talked about the air fares, the reasonable hotel rates etc. I would be hiding the truth from you if I did not tell you the difficulties under which we had to operate. We made the mistake of sending all our brochures and invitations to the Chairman of the Danish Chapter's Programme Committee. For local political reasons he chose to keep these out of sight of the delegates until the last two days. Fortunately we managed to get hold of them before then and proceeded to distribute the brochures by hand at the Congress Centre. This brought down upon our Youth Member the wrath of the Chairman and his action brought down my wrath upon him. The atmosphere was fraught but we pressed on and although we did not, by any means, attract as many people as we had wished to our Hospitality Suite we generated a considerable and I hope significant sympathetic support from all delegates. I hasten to say that some of the most vocal of these were Indian, Pakistani, Arab, Egyptian and other delegates who one would not necessarily expect to be sympathetic. It is a fact that IAA members do not necessarily reflect the political stance of their governments.

"One example of our attempts to solve our problems was that our friends from S.A. Airways discovered a complete list of delegates and the hotels they were staying at. They visited each Congress hotel and inserted in the appropriate key slots at the reception counters the beautiful invitations that Sid Barnett had caused to be printed in South Africa. Jack Siebert did the same service at his own particular hotel. Even under ideal conditions we would have encountered problems in attracting guests for the far flung position of the hotels would in any case have limited the number of delegates who would have taken the trouble and expense to taxi to the Scandinavia, although the glass of wine was a powerful attraction.



"Now let me look at the prospects for 1980. I think they are good, I have perhaps more hope for this than when I set out for Copenhagen. The Copenhagen Congress would not have been considered by anyone in this room to have been a success by the standards that we will set ourselves. I believe it will be simply a matter of determination to make a success of it on our part.

"1. We must have outstanding speakers – internationally famous speakers who mean something to IAA members all over the world.

"2. We must have two intensive years of promotion and publicity. We should obtain a list of all S.A. Embassies and Consulates throughout the world and enlist their aid in regard to publicity and other information about South Africa with their local Chapter of the IAA. To achieve this we should supply the South African representatives with the names and addresses of the local Chapter members.

"3. We must stress that South Africa is a cheap place to enjoy yourself e.g. I believe the Maharani in Durban is twice as good as the Scandinavian in Copenhagen at not much more than half the expense.

"4. We must try particularly hard to attract delegates from politically disaffected countries. I had serious discussions with Naudé Steyn on this subject and he told me that provided we go about it the right way we can do a good deal to help this kind of delegate. He gave me the name of the man at the Department of External Affairs who would be able to advise us on this problem. We may need to have representation at the airports during the time of the assembly and departure of delegates. If we succeed in this aspect of the Congress it could be the most valuable thing we can do for South Africa.

"5. It is remarkable how people's faces light up at the thought of coming to South Africa – there are some advantages in being a political pariah, it makes us work harder. I believe the Danes underestimated the problem and their efforts compared very unfavourably with those of the Argentines in 1976 who at that time were up against the same sort of problems that we are.

"6. In the light of experience in Copenhagen, the best thing about Durban will be the proximity of all the hotels to the beach and to each other.

"7. We need to be sure that the Conference Rooms at the Elangeni are up to standard.

"8. I urge the Committee to get everyone in the Chapter involved; we need everybody's help and we need to strengthen our membership not so much quantitatively but qualitatively.

"9. Our strongest allies are in South America. They are likely to send strong contingents and we should give thought to having a separate session for Southern Hemisphere topics and ask their representatives to chair them. We should also, in my view, support the ambitions of the Brazilian Chapter and its President Manuel Salles.

"10. I place on record the request from Spain that they would like to provide the Moderator of a Youth Session.

"For me Copenhagen was not a very pleasant experience but frequently one achieves more when one is conscious of having to put up a fight than when everything seems easy. As I said before, perhaps the nicest part of it all was the camaraderie of our own delegates."

(1st June 1978)

Pax Moren had been heard to say, more than once, that 'to follow Henry Howell as a speaker was always the worst draw because he was brilliant!'

Like it or not, Pax Moren had to follow Henry as a speaker at a combined SAARF and ASA luncheon given for Henry on 14 December 1978 on his retirement from the SABC. This is an extract:

'As I rise to respond to Henry's address, I am conscious of two unusual elements – one unenviable, the other pleasurable. The pleasurable first – this must surely be the only country in the world where an Irishman can stand up alongside a large nondescript parcel resting right here on the table top – and no-one leaves the room! The unenviable is, of course, speaking after Henry Howell which ... is tantamount to going into bat after Barry Richards!

I have been to many places and met a lot of people during the course of my travels. It has been my good fortune to sit at dinner tables at international functions and even informal get-togethers ... and the speakers amongst the best of our time ... but today as Chairman of SAARF and deputy Vice-President of the ASA, and speaking on behalf of these bodies ... I am paying tribute to that South African minstrel with words, that most able of our speakers, Henry Howell.

I have listened to Henry from the stage ... numerous seminars ... hundreds of industry meetings ... at luncheons ... on the television screen ... on my radio.... Whenever there has been an industry need, Henry has always responded to it, and ... fulfilled the two prime requirements of all people ... bread for the body and laughter for the soul. I have seen him introduce the leading dignitaries ... the most hardened industrialists ... just as easily as Picasso worked anywhere

with a brush, so can Henry Howell with his apt remarks speak anywhere in the English world as long as there are people seated around a table and ready to listen to his superb delivery....

'... Henry's ability with words not only made him a superb speaker, but also ... a superb salesman. In fact no man has gone to such lengths to make a deal in marketing SABC programmes and interests. It is whispered at Auckland Park that once, on the veritable eve of the Jewish Passover, he discovered that a group of Jewish immigrants had landed on our shores, and on finding that most of them were near-sighted Henry sold 300 gross of old Perry Como 78 records to them as black Matzos!

'... you are facing up to a long and well-earned retirement ... and there are many things you will still do for the industry. You have received every honour the Advertising and Marketing Industries can bestow upon you – you have made friends throughout the world, and ... if you had never existed on the South African scene, we would have just been forced to invent a person exactly like the one we have all enjoyed knowing and working with for so long....'

\* \* \*

## The advertising services of the SA Broadcasting Corporation

by Henry Howell



Henry J. Howell is director of the SABC's Commercial Services. He is chairman of the South African Advertising Research Foundation, vice-chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority and vice-president of the South African Chapter of the International Advertising Association.

The radio advertising services of the SABC are —

- Springbok Radio
- The Regional Services —
  - Radio Highveld
  - Radio Good Hope and
  - Radio Port Natal
- Radio 5
- and
- Radio Bantu

A total of six commercial services. The average "yesterday" weekday audience to these six stations amounts to more than:

2 067 000 Adult Whites  
792 000 Adult Coloureds  
234 000 Adult Asians

and more than

5 048 000 Adult Blacks  
This means that more than 56 per cent of all adults in the Republic listen to one or more of these stations on an average weekday and makes radio, when viewed as an entity, the most powerful and influential single advertising medium in the country.

The six services differ greatly in character and audience appeal, as well as in audience composition and each station's merits are dealt with separately as each has different advantages for the adver-

tiser as a commercial medium. Taking each service in historical sequence —

**Radio 5 (formerly Lourenco Marques Radio)**

The first radio station to broadcast commercials to South Africa was Lourenco Marques Radio — later to become Radio 5 — which has been transmitting a full day schedule since 1947.

Today, Radio 5 is South Africa's best established pop music station, broadcasting 19 hours a day and using the well-known American "Top 40" format with certain modifications to suit South African conditions.

### Advertising time

Advertising time on Radio 5 is made up of seven-day packages each of which contains 21 spot announcements, details of which are contained in Radio 5's Rate Card.

### Audience profile

The audience profile of the station consists of young adults 83 per cent of its audience emanates from the 16 to 34 age group and only 17 per cent are older than 35.

Because of the type of programming on Radio 5, the station enjoys a substantial non-white audience. The "yesterday" adult audience to Radio 5 on Mondays to Fridays is:

|             |         |      |
|-------------|---------|------|
| Whites      | 243 000 | 40%  |
| Asians      | 76 000  | 12%  |
| Coloureds   | 145 000 | 24%  |
| Blacks      | 147 000 | 24%  |
| Total       |         |      |
| "Yesterday" | 611 000 | 100% |

### Cost structure

Radio 5's advertising rates are costed on total White, Asian and Coloured audiences. The additional Black audience may be considered by advertisers as a very useful "bonus". Rates are based on the audience achieved in each of the seven-Day Package Channels and are updated with each new Radio Listening Index published.

### Springbok Radio

Springbok Radio, which was established on May 1, 1950, and now has a "yesterday" audience of 1,1

million White adults is the "flagship" of the SABC's white stations.

### Character

It is a family station which endeavours to appeal to all age and income groups. The programmes tend to lean more to speech than music, and plays, quizzes, dramatic programmes and serials are its main bill of fare. These are leavened with a fair sprinkling of musical programmes.

### Coverage

Springbok Radio covers the entire country and most of South West Africa.

### Advertising time

The form in which advertising time is made available is rather more complicated than on the other services. Advertising time is made available as — **Time channels** and **Spot announcements** (these are by far the larger proportion of the two).

### Time channels

In the case of time channels the advertiser buys a segment of time of 15, 30 or 60 minutes duration at a given time on a fixed day of the week and is responsible for providing and paying for the programme which fills the period. Ten per cent of the total time may be devoted to commercial content, and the remainder must be straight entertainment.

### Spot announcements

These are of seven-seconds', 15-seconds' and 30-seconds' duration and rotate within specified periods of time known as spot channels.

No product exclusivity is given and competitive products may be placed as little as three minutes apart although every endeavour is made to ensure a seven-minute separation.

### Sessionettes

These are three-minute or five-minute Features containing

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a half-minute commercial. In most instances, the programme content is news, but on Thursday nights it is a Road Report and at 06h45 a speech feature. The advertiser is also entitled to an opening and closing non-commercial billboard.

**Featurettes**

Are items of one-minute duration containing a half-minute commercial and non-commercial billboards. They include the "Thought for the Day", "Weather Minutes" and "News Headlines" as well as a "Sports Star of the Week" feature.

**Time signals**

Are seven-second slogans linked to the time signal and are made available on the quarter, half, three quarter or full hour in appropriate programme breaks.

**Station breaks**

The station retains the right to the last half-minute in every channel sold and quarter-minute station break announcements are sold in these periods.

**Short-term campaigns**

Although these are basically spots they are deserving of special mention. There are different types of short term campaigns on the various services and they are known by a variety of names.

On Springbok Radio there are half-minute Short Term Campaigns with a frequency of five spots a day for six days.

These campaigns are available in three-day units and are primarily designed for the launching of a new product or the advertising of a highly seasonal one.

**Audience profile**

A quick glance at the listenership research figures will reveal that 57 per cent of the total white audience is Afrikaans-speaking and 43 per cent is English-speaking. This is a distorted figure because of the extremely high audiences to the Afrikaans serials in the afternoons. If these figures were to be extracted, the audience would be closer to 60 per cent English and 40 per cent Afrikaans for the remainder of the day. As far as age groups are concerned, the

station's white audience is very evenly spread:  
26% is 16 to 24  
19% is 25 to 34  
24% is 35 to 49 and  
31% is older than 50

Men form 46% of the white audience with women at 54%, and 45% are housewives.

The white audience is relatively well-off with 41% coming from the 'A' and 'B' income groups, 46% from the 'C' and only 13% from the 'D' group.

**REGIONAL SERVICES****Radio Highveld**

Radio Highveld was introduced on September 1, 1964 and is unique in that of all the advertising services it has an audience which is heavily weighted towards the Afrikaans listener. The overall acceptance of the station in its transmission area is demonstrated by the dramatic increase in the size of the station's audience - from 289 000 "yesterday" listeners in 1970 to the most recent 517 000.

**Character**

Radio Highveld is a middle-of-the-road music station with news services alternately in English and Afrikaans on the half-hour every hour. Its continuity announcing has a strong local community service flavour as have many of its promotions.

**Coverage**

The station's transmission area covers most of the Southern Transvaal, Eastern Transvaal, virtually the entire Orange Free State and the Grikwaland West area around Kimberley. With the acquisition of Radio Highveld's new FM transmitters, coverage will now be extended to include virtually the whole of the Orange Free State, a large portion of the North Western Cape and the greater part of Transvaal as far north as Pietersburg, extending east to include Bethal, Ermelo and Standerton on the Natal border, including Lichtenburg and Mafeking in the west as well as the whole of the Lowveld area around Nelspruit, Barberton, Badplaas and Mamelane.

**Advertising time**

Radio Highveld's basic advertising consists of half-minute and quarter-minute spot announcements which rotate within given channels; preferred time half-minutes are made available next to news services;

special features such as the "Helicopter Traffic Report", "Weather Reports" and "Horse racing Results" are also sponsored; snap campaigns and daytime campaigns consisting of six half-minutes a day in three-day units are made available on all three Regional Services.

In the evening request programmes the proportion of listeners by language is 71 per cent Afrikaans and 29 per cent English but other times the proportion is 65 per cent to 35 per cent. 51 per cent of listeners are men, 49 per cent women, with housewives at 39 per cent.

The audience tends to favour the young age groups:

30% are 16 to 24  
27% are 25 to 34  
28% are 35 to 49 and  
15% are 50+

The income percentages are:  
A—B 45%  
C 45%  
D 10%

**Radio Good Hope**

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Radio Good Hope audience profile is the almost total acceptance of the Good Hope format by the coloured community. The station has reached a position where it appears to be regarded by both whites and coloureds as part of the "Cape" way of life. The station was introduced on July 1, 1965 and now boasts a "yesterday" audience of 126 000 whites and 270 000 coloureds.

**Character**

In keeping with its name and Cape tradition, the station has a strongly "Cape" atmosphere in its continuity announcing. It features middle-of-the-road music with request programmes in mid-morning and the evenings.

**Coverage**

Radio Good Hope's new FM transmitters extended its coverage to include the whole of the Western Cape, including the North Western Cape and Namaqualand up to the South West African border in the north west, overflowing into the southern portion of the Orange Free State and extending south eastwards to include the greater portion of the Eastern Cape, Port Elizabeth and East London and

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encompassing a greater portion of the Karoo.

#### Advertising time

Like Radio Highveld, the basic advertising units are quarter-minutes and half-minutes with preferred half-minutes before and after the news. A special sponsored "Surfing Report" is also broadcast as well as Weather Reports and Horseracing Results.

#### Audience profile

As coloured people form such an important part of the Radio Good Hope audience, separate demographics need to be considered for them and the white listeners.

As far as the white audience is concerned, there is an almost perfect balance of the sexes — 47 per cent men to 53 per cent women. Housewives make up 39 per cent of the audience. The most recent survey reflects 54 per cent of the audience as being Afrikaans-speaking and 46 per cent English, but a bias is introduced by the Request programmes, a much more even balance being evident at other times of the day. Because of the influence which high rating channels may have in figures of this type, it is always wise to consider average quarter-hour figures instead of overall figures when making decisions.

The age group figures for white listeners are:

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| 16 to 24 | 30% |
| 25 to 34 | 27% |
| 35 to 49 | 24% |
| 50+      | 19% |

Coloured male listeners do not feature quite as strongly as their white counterparts and form 45 per cent of the audience to 55 per cent women. Coloured housewives are also slightly lower at 29 per cent.

Understandably, 88 per cent of the coloured audience is Afrikaans-speaking and only 12 per cent English-speaking. Youth is predominant in the coloured figures:

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 42%          | are 16 to 24 |
| 26%          | are 25 to 34 |
| 21%          | are 35 to 49 |
| and only 11% | are over 50. |

As far as socio-economic groups are concerned:

|     |           |
|-----|-----------|
| 43% | are A-B   |
| 46% | are C and |
| 11% | are D     |

It must be remembered, however, that different criteria are used for the coloured socio-economic groupings.

#### Conclusion

Bearing in mind the strong parochialism of the station's listeners, it is obvious that both local and national advertisers must benefit from exposure in Radio Good Hope.

The large proportion of coloured listeners is also an attractive feature when it is considered how difficult it is to reach these people and how rapidly their incomes and standards of living are rising.

#### Radio Port Natal

Radio Port Natal was introduced on May 1, 1967. The smallest regional service in audience size of all the services, it comes closest to the normal concept of local radio.

It is, therefore, extremely popular with local advertisers and could be regarded as ideal for the promotion of new products being test-marketed in the area.

#### Character

Like its sister stations, Radio Port Natal runs on a middle-of-the-road music format with hourly news bulletins.

Because of its specific area of transmission, the station is able to give a very strong local image to its presentation and develops this by giving full support and coverage to local events such as the Comrades' Marathon.

#### Coverage

The station offers coverage of almost the entire Natal area and overlaps slightly into the Eastern Free State.

#### Advertising time

Quarter-minute and half-minute non-preferred spots are offered for sale as well as half-minutes adjacent to the News. Sponsored featurettes are Surfing, Weather Reports and Horseracing Results.

#### Audience Profile

Radio Port Natal now has a "yesterday" audience of 91 000 whites and 43 000 Asians.

The white audience is made up of 48 per cent men and 52 per cent women. Housewives account for 45 per cent of the total audience. Understandably, 69 per cent of the audience is English-speaking, but the 31 per cent Afrikaans-speakers are of major significance as Natal suffers from a dearth of Afrikaans advertising media.

The audience does not have the strong youth image of the other regional services as only 19 per cent of its audience falls within the 16 to 24 age group. The 25 to 34 age group represents 25 per cent of the audience with 35 to 49 at 32 per cent and over 50 at 24 per cent.

The 'A' to 'B' socio-economic groups make up 46 per cent of the audience, the 'C' group 43 per cent and the 'D' group 11 per cent.

The Asian audience composition is substantially different from that of the whites. Men make up 54 per cent of the audience and women 46 per cent. Housewives constitute 22 per cent of the audience.

The Asian audience is distinctly youthful with 50 per cent falling in the 16 to 24 age group, and 29 per cent in the 25 to 34 age group, 16 per cent fall in the 35 to 49 group and only 5 per cent are older than 50.

As in the case of coloured listeners, different criteria are applied when socio-economic groupings of Asians are made.

#### Radio South Africa

The All Night Service of Radio South Africa operates from midnight to 05h00 on weekdays and to 06h00 on Sundays and transmits its programmes over all the transmitters of Springbok Radio and the three Regional services.

This service has the same middle-of-the-road music format as the Regional services and two News services are broadcast at 00h30 and 04h30.

Preferred time half-minute spots are made available adjacent to the News and non-preferred half-minute spots in the rest of the session.

The latest listenership figures report an average quarter-hour audience of more than 22 000 listeners.

#### Radio Bantu

The most important aspect of Radio Bantu is its dynamic growth in the past ten years.

The latest survey of black radio listening which was conducted in the first quarter of 1977, reveals that 4 719 000 adult blacks listened to Radio Bantu "yesterday". They have purchasing power — 75 per cent of all adult Bantu, taking into account both the urban and rural sectors, earn over R40 per month and more than three million earn over R100 per month.

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The single most important facet of the station is that it talks to its audience. Although the literacy rate is now up to 69 per cent, leading authorities have estimated that the average comprehension level could be as low as that of a 10-year-old child.

Radio Bantu not only talks to them but it talks to them in their own language — any one of seven — so there can be no lack of comprehension.

**Coverage**

Radio Bantu is, in fact, seven services. The Zulu, Xhosa, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Northern Sotho, Tsonga and Venda are day-long services, broadcasting from 05h00 to 23h00 daily.

These services are transmitted in such a manner that they can be heard in the areas where the languages are spoken.

**Character**

The programme content of Radio Bantu is closer to that of the English and Afrikaans Services than to Springbok Radio, consisting of cultural services which carry advertising.

**Advertising Time**

The advertising content of the station consists of quarter-minute and half-minute spots which rotate within specified rate brackets. These spots are sold as packaged deals and are automatically broadcast on all services transmitting at the time the spot is scheduled for broadcast. In addition, half-minute spots are sold in individual regions if so required.

All spots are broadcast in the language of the service concerned. One spot purchased may require that a spot is translated into, and recorded in, up to seven different languages. This service is rendered by Radio Bantu at a nominal charge. Half-minute short term campaigns of six spots per day known as Impact Campaigns are made available in three-day units, as well as half-minute Regional Impact Campaigns. These consist of five spots per day, Monday through Friday and cover any one of four regions.

**Audience profile**

The young black listener seems to find Radio Bantu particularly appealing. The audience profile shows that 32 per cent of the audience falls into the 16 to 24 age group.

The 25 to 34 age group is next highest with 26 per cent, followed by the 34 to 49 group at 25 per cent and the over 50's who make up 17 per cent of the audience.

The survey shows that 43 per cent of the audience earns more than R100 per month, 34 per cent between R40 and R99 per month and 23 per cent less than R40 per month. (51 per cent of the audience is male and 49 per cent female).

No less than 30 per cent of the audience lives in cities, 9 per cent in towns, 5 per cent in villages and 56 per cent in rural areas.

**TV Viewing in South Africa**

This service came into operation on January 5, 1976 and carried advertisements from January 2, 1978.

Viewership research figures reveal that in the first survey period of 1977, 1 897 000 adults viewed Television "yesterday". Of these 85 per cent are whites, 11 per cent are coloureds and 4 per cent are Asians.

Based on the total adult population (whites, coloureds and Asians) the viewership profile reflects the following for "yesterday":

**Amount of advertising time**

The Government has decided that advertising time will be restricted to five per cent of the overall transmission time in initial stages.

The SABC has decided not to accept advertising on Sundays at the outset, but to use the total commercial allowance on the other evenings of the week and on Saturday afternoons.

This means that 17-and-a-half minutes of advertising time are available each evening from Mondays to Saturdays, and nine minutes on Saturday afternoons. It has also been decided that initially advertising will not be accepted on Good Friday, the Day of the Covenant and Christmas Day. The advertising time for these days will be spread over the rest of the year at the rate of an additional half-minute per week.

**Commercials**

**1. Duration of Commercials**

Commercials of the following durations are accepted for broadcast:

- 15 seconds
- 20 seconds
- 30 seconds
- 45 seconds
- 60 seconds

Advertisers are required to stipulate the duration, or durations, they wish to use when applying for advertising time.

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**Based on white adult population only the figures are**

|            | %  | %  |
|------------|----|----|
| Whites     | 35 |    |
| Coloureds  | 4  |    |
| Asians     | 2  |    |
| Men        | 20 | 48 |
| Women      | 21 | 52 |
| Housewives | 17 | 42 |

**Based on white adult population only, figures are**

|             | %  | %  |
|-------------|----|----|
| Afrikaans   | 22 | 55 |
| English     | 19 | 45 |
| 16-24 years | 10 | 22 |
| 25-34 years | 10 | 23 |
| 35-49 years | 11 | 28 |
| 50+ years   | 10 | 27 |

**Socio-Economic groups**

|     | %  | %  |
|-----|----|----|
| A—B | 22 | 51 |
| C   | 16 | 39 |
| D   | 3  | 10 |

Continued from P19

2. Language Usage of Commercials

The English and Afrikaans Services broadcast for two-and-a-half hours individually each evening and conjointly for three hours on Saturday afternoons.

An equal amount of advertising time (two-and-a-half per cent of the overall time) is available in each language and each service carries commercials only in its own language. On Saturday afternoons an equal amount of time is made available in each language and commercials will be placed at random.

Bilingual commercials are not accepted.

3. Placing of Commercials

3.1 Commercial Breaks

Commercials are broadcast in the natural breaks between programmes, and provided they are more than five minutes apart, all the available breaks will be used for this purpose.

On the present programme pattern this means that most breaks will contain less than two minutes of commercial content, and only in certain cases where long programmes succeed each other, will this extend to three minutes.

3.2 Commercial Channels

The commercial breaks are grouped into spot channels and commercials will be contracted for and broadcast in these channels. The spot channels for 1978 and the language of transmission are as follows:

| Mondays, Wednesdays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, |                       |           |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|
|   | Fridays               | Saturdays |
| 18h00-18h45                               | English               | Afrikaans |
| 18h45-20h30                               | English               | Afrikaans |
| 20h30-22h00                               | Afrikaans             | English   |
| 22h00-23h00                               | Afrikaans             | English   |
| <b>Saturdays</b>                          |                       |           |
| *15h00-18h00                              | English and Afrikaans |           |

(\* The starting time of this channel will be variable depending on the transmission hours.)

Because of changes in the programme structure of the station the starting and ending time of the channels may vary from time to time and in this regard attention is

drawn to Section 3.1 of the Regulations which reads:

**"TRANSMISSION OF ADVERTISEMENTS**

The SABC will accept advertisements for transmission in commercial breaks during specific time segments. If programme requirements displace advertisements from within the segment booked, by a reasonable period, the advertisements will be deemed to have been broadcast within the segment".

This "reasonable period" should not normally exceed ten minutes.

3.3 Order of Commercials

Each commercial break within a Break Each commercial break may consist of commercials of different durations. These commercials will not be broadcast in any specific order within a break and it will not be possible for an advertiser to obtain a specified position.

3.4 Fixed Time Commercials

Fixed time or fixed position commercials will not be made available for sponsorship.

**Conditions**

- a) All contracts arising from the rates are subject to the Broadcasting Act, No 73 of 1976, and the Advertising Code and Regulations of the Television Service of the SABC.
- b) The rates quoted include advertising agency commission. Agency commission is not payable on rebated time costs.
- c) A levy of not more than 0,5

not included in the rates, but will be reflected on each advertiser's monthly statement of account.

- d) This rate card is published for the information of advertiser and agencies and does not constitute an offer by the SABC.

2. Discounts on Rates

No discounts of any type will be offered.

3. Rates for Co-operative Advertising

Allocations of airtime will be made to companies to advertise products which they manufacture or distribute.

Co-operative advertising will be accepted subject to a surcharge of 25 per cent on the published rate being imposed when a commercial advertises or refers visually or orally, to a product not manufactured or distributed by the contract holder.

A further surcharge of 25 per cent will be imposed for each additional such product.

This facility will only be available to manufacturers or wholesale distributors of a product and any allocation made for co-operative advertising will be deducted from the allocations that would normally be made to the products concerned.

**The Allocation of Air-time Allocations on a "per second" basis**

The most commonly used commercial duration on television is 30-seconds, but in the interests of greater flexibility 60, 45, 20 and 15-seconds commercials will also be accepted and advertisers will determine the most suitable duration for their products.

There are certain dangers inherent in this approach. An uncontrolled use of the durations longer than 30-seconds could lead to the permissible commercial time being used up very quickly by a relatively small number of commercials while over emphasis of the shorter durations must, inevitably, lead to clutter.

For these reasons a "per second" system of allocation has been evolved.

Effectively this means that when an advertiser is allocated air-time he will be given a specific number

continued on P21



Continued from P20

of seconds which could be utilised as 60, 45 or 30-second commercials, but in respect of 20 and 15-second commercials a weighting system will apply in terms of which the total secondage will be reduced.

The effect of this weighting procedure will be to give the adver-

tiser who prefers to use 20-seconds instead of 30-seconds, 33-1/3 per cent more spots, and the user of 15-seconds 50 per cent more spots.

To illustrate:

|                 |       |             |
|-----------------|-------|-------------|
| 6 x 60-seconds  | ..... | 360 seconds |
| 8 x 45-seconds  | ..... | 360 seconds |
| 12 x 30-seconds | ..... | 360 seconds |
| 16 x 20-seconds | ..... | 320 seconds |
| 18 x 15-seconds | ..... | 270 seconds |

When a mixture of commercial durations is used the weighting will, obviously, only apply to that portion of the allocation that relates to 15 and 20-second commercials.

Further information can be obtained by application to the Director, Commercial Services, SABC, PO Box 8606, Johannesburg 2000.

**Advertising time**

**1. Advertising Rates for 1978**

|             | Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays |            |            |            |            | Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays |             |             |             |             |
|-------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|             | 15-sec<br>R                  | 20sec<br>R | 30sec<br>R | 45sec<br>R | 60sec<br>R | 15sec<br>R                     | 20-sec<br>R | 30-sec<br>R | 45-sec<br>R | 60-sec<br>R |
| 18h00-18h45 | 1 569                        | 2 092      | 3 138      | 4 707      | 6 276      | 1 386                          | 1 848       | 2 772       | 4 158       | 5 544       |
| 18h45-20h30 | 2 295                        | 3 060      | 4 590      | 6 885      | 9 180      | 1 953                          | 2 604       | 3 906       | 5 859       | 7 812       |
| 20h30-22h00 | 1 428                        | 1 904      | 2 856      | 4 284      | 5 712      | 2 040                          | 2 720       | 4 080       | 6 120       | 8 160       |
| 22h00-23h00 | 642                          | 856        | 1 284      | 1 926      | 2 568      | 1 104                          | 1 472       | 2 208       | 3 312       | 4 416       |
|             | Saturdays                    |            |            |            |            |                                |             |             |             |             |
| 15h00-18h00 | R                            | R          | R          | R          | R          |                                |             |             |             |             |
|             | 1 170                        | 1 560      | 2 340      | 3 510      | 4 680      |                                |             |             |             |             |

## Some Clippings from the Past

# Clarion

(over printing)

South African **MARKETING**

PREMIER  
**advertising**  
AND RADIO SERVICES

Press • Advertising • Radio, Cinema, and TV • Marketing • Public Relations • Print • Packaging • Research • Direct Mail • Outdoor Publicity

## HOWELL IS NEW CHAIRMAN OF ARF



The newly elected chairman of the Advertising Research Foundation, Henry Howell (centre), with some of his committee and the new vice-chairman, Colin Adcock. Left to right are: Chris Filmer, Pat Moren, Claude Heilmann, Henry Howell (chairman), Jeremy Birker, Colin Adcock (vice-chairman), Casper Verrier and Noel Coburn.



Colin Adcock (left); Graham Higgo, the retiring chairman; Henry Howell; and Casper Verrier, ARF general manager, chat after the recent annual meeting of the foundation.

Henry Howell, director of the SABC's advertising services, is the new chairman of the Advertising Research Foundation. Colin Adcock, managing-director, Toyota Marketing Company, is the new vice-chairman. They were elected at the recent second annual meeting of the foundation in Johannesburg after the outgoing chairman, Graham Higgo, had presented his chairman's report and the report of the directors and auditors.

Higgo briefly outlined the achievements of the ARF over the past year and detailed its plans for the future prior to the election of the new board of directors, which is: Messrs J.H.B. van Zijl (AAPA); P.D.J. Moren (Cinemark); H. Miller, R.W.J. Opperman and L.H. Walton (NPU); F.G. Abbott (NSDMA); H.J. Howell and G.J. Yssel (SABC); C.S. Adcock, D. Dawson, C.H. Filmer, T.L. Gawith, T.D. Goodland, G.H. Higgo, C.J. Loubser and D. Sealy-Fisher (SASOM).

Alternates elected for the directors compose (in like order): Messrs J.L. van Zyl, J. Birckett, P.W. McLean, G. Engelbrecht, D.P. de Villiers, N. Harris, D.J.L. Pretorius, J.G.C. Sivart, R.L. Wood, C.J. Ferreira, W. Malherbe, D.W. Purll, F. Meyer, A.J.H. Cloete, Z. Fudakowski and D.E.S. Saunders.

# Clarion

overprinting

South African **MARKETING**

press  
**advertising**  
AND RADIO REVIEW

Press • Advertising • Radio, Cinema, and TV • Marketing • Public Relations • Print • Packaging • Research • Direct Mail • Outdoor Publicity

## HOWELL TALKS ABOUT AMPS '76~ AND THE ARF



The "top table" at the annual meeting of the S.A. Advertising Research Foundation (from left): Honours van Zyl, Wally Langschmidt, Toby Govath, Henry Howell, Casper Venter, Jan Swanevool, Paa. Maren and Len van Zyl.

As "Clarion" believes that Henry Howell's chairman's report to the meeting constitutes a highly important policy statement, we are reproducing it virtually in its entirety.

I wish I could report to you that we have enjoyed a period of untrammelled progress and success. The year has not been without its progress but this has been achieved only with a disproportionate degree of frustration and disappointment. The production of AMPS '76 was achieved at the cost of the resignation of our biggest media member and I am sure that I echo the feelings of the board when I express the deepest regret that the NPU found it necessary to leave the foundation. We hope most sincerely that they will one day return to the foundation and give it their powerful support.

The reasons for its resignation are no doubt familiar to you. They arose finally from a difference of opinion as to whether the AMPS '76 survey should have been published as it is or after further investigation. In retrospect, it seems to be a small reason for abandoning so brave an enterprise but we must try to respect their motives which we are sure spring from a sincere devotion to the highest ideals of research as they see them.

For our part, the rest of the board and the constituent members were equally sure that the best interests of research and the foundation would be served by publishing the research as it had come to us and this body of work has been made available to the ad-

Henry Howell, director of Commercial Services, SABC, was unanimously re-elected chairman of the SA Advertising Research Foundation at its recent annual meeting. Colin Adecock, managing director, Toyota Marketing Company, was re-elected vice-chairman. Other directors elected are:-

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| SABC              | Alt J.G.C. Siebert        |
| G. Yssel          | Alt D.J.L. Pretorius      |
| H.J. Howell       |                           |
| T.S.M.A.          |                           |
| F.G. Abbott       | Alt A.B. Davies           |
| CINEMARK          |                           |
| P.D.J. Moren      | Alt J. Birkett            |
| AAPA              |                           |
| J.L. van Zyl      | Alt T.P. Hamilton-Russell |
| SASOM             |                           |
| C.H. Filmer       | Alt W. Malherbe           |
| F. Meyer          | Alt J.G. Kneen            |
| C.S. Adecock      | Alt G.H. Garbett          |
| C.J. Loubser      | Alt D.W. Parll            |
| T.D. Goodlad      | Alt A.J.H. Cloete         |
| D.R. Sealy-Fisher | Alt D.E. Stuart-Saunders  |
| T.L. Gawith       | Alt F.J. Wulffe           |
| R.L. Wood         | Alt C.J. Ferreira         |

vertising industry and all media users. I think that whatever its detailed shortcomings may be, it is a splendid achievement on which we can build with confidence and I am sure that the future will bear out our faith in it. That it was so ambitious and that it has only minor flaws are things that we should be proud of. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp or what's a heaven for?"

I believe that certain faint hearts outside this body are already suggesting that the foundation and AMPS may not be able to continue. I believe that when you have heard the various detailed administrative reports you will know that the foundation is soundly based and will be very well able to reach its goals and, indeed, seek out some other

**'A man's reach should exceed his grasp or what's a heaven for...?'**

new objectives that it might wish to set itself. I do not want to anticipate these reports at this stage. We have agreed on a new funding system which we will explain and enlarge on in our board meeting, but AMPS is here to stay, will now go on from strength to strength and be the definitive media research of South Africa.

I think we have learnt some salutary lessons in this year. The first is that we need to clarify our constitution, every constituent member must know exactly where he stands and what he is committed to and be prepared to endorse the constitution wholeheartedly. Our present constitution is too woolly and susceptible to a number of interpretations. I would commend to you the work of one of our directors, Gert Yssel, who has been doing some studies of the constitution and I suggest for your consideration the idea that we should consider the formation of a constitution committee under his chairmanship to explore this problem and place before you a revised constitution that we can all live with.

(Continued overleaf)

# Howell on AMPS '76

I do not propose to criticise our predecessors on the board — nothing is so easy as to do that with hindsight but we went into the foundation in the innocent belief that all that was necessary was the desire to succeed and everything would come right in the end. We know better now.

The second lesson is that we will get the research we deserve. Further attention must be given to the problems of the questionnaires and fieldwork and the board must keep in close touch with the research through the technical committees. My personal belief is that those committees should be more advisory and less executive in their performance. They should convey to the contractor our directives and our needs clearly in technical terms, and we should expect him to produce the goods and hold him responsible for the execution of the research.

With the best intentions in the world we seem to have fallen between a number of stools in the past. I do not see that this change of emphasis will detract from the crucial role of the committees, indeed, freed from the need to spell out the details of the methods to be used they should be able to let their minds roam more widely over the various aspects of the work of the foundation. There is a new feeling of confidence and enthusiasm within the foundation and I believe we have come through a troubled time better equipped than before to do a good job.

There are a number of other matters that I wish to comment on. Despite what I have said about the efforts of the technical committees, nothing can detract from the dedication and skill of their contribution to the work of the foundation. I want to take this opportunity to express our thanks on your behalf for the time and talent that they have so generously given to the foundation.

I would like also to express our thanks to the other committees which have played such a vital role in keeping the foundation going. So much of their time was spent in trying to keep the foundation together and if we failed it was not for want of trying.

A special word of thanks to Pax Moren and his finance committee who have steered us through a number of nasty crises. I want also to pay tribute to your vice-chairman, Colin Adcock, who has played such a significant part in the major problem that we have had to

face. After trying both behind the scenes and in committee to save us from losing the NPU, he produced a final appraisal of the NPU's case which not only convinced himself but also those of us who served with him on the special committee created to find an answer to the problem, that their standpoint was based on wrong premises and it gave us confidence to face the inevitable departure of the NPU when it came.

I also want to thank the contractor for the excellent way in which he has discharged the AMPS '76 contract. Apart from the internal problems of the foundation, which seriously hampered his work, he was faced with some hair-raising obstacles in his fieldwork in 1976 — particularly among Black respondents. He certainly deserves our thanks for his unique contribution of AMPS '76.

I should also mention the work of Michael Brown, who we called in to help us appraise and unravel some of the problems of AMPS '76. He was an excellent choice, a cool and experienced researcher who, on his two visits to us in 1977, did much to set the record straight about the validity of our research.

This has not been an easy year, but I want to pay a special tribute to our general manager, Casper Venter. He has approached his job with calm confidence and patient sincerity. He is a diligent and professional man who, when the going was hard, did not shrink from his responsibilities. I commend him most warmly and gratefully for steering us — and if I can be personal, steering me — through some nasty



Casper Venter (left), general manager of the S.A. Advertising Research Foundation, after the annual meeting with Henry Howell, who was unanimously re-elected chairman of the Foundation for a further year.

patches. His office seems to produce a prodigious amount of paper work. Sometimes I want just to go and lie down for a while when I get it, but that surely means that we should also express our thanks to his indefatigable and charming helper, Sue Worth.

Finally, I should try to give an account of my own stewardship. Gentlemen, it was obvious at a very early stage of my year of office that we were heading into serious constitutional problems. It became my chief pre-occupation to hold the foundation together. I may have wasted a great deal of your time in calling so many meetings in an attempt to resolve the problems. Now that we have failed in this endeavour I believe that it was still worth the attempt but I regret that I had not the skill or wit to have found some solution to the problem. But that is now behind us and I believe we are looking at an exciting year of solid progress and expansion.

I wish the new board and its chairman the best of good fortune in the exciting year that lies ahead of us with AMPS '77.

## Clarion

Print • Advertising • Publications • Mail TV • Marketing • Public Relations • Press • Publishing • Research • Staff • Sales • Outdoor Publicity



has rendered sustained and sterling services to the A.S.A. Those services will, I have no doubt, be fully appreciated by those who have worked in close association with Mr. Howell since 1970. Permit me however to add a very brief personal tribute to this man of engaging personality and felicity of expression who possesses that rare, largely rare attribute of combining real ability with tact and persuasiveness. I am confident that all members of the A.S.A. will join me in wishing Mr. Howell well in the new sphere he proposes to enter. Our loss is their gain. (The Hon. N. Ogilvie-Thompson, chairman, Advertising Standards Authority at the annual meeting of the A.S.A. on December 8.)

Today marks Henry Howell's last official attendance. This is indeed a grievous loss for the A.S.A. As a member of the executive since 1970 and vice-chairman since 1972, Mr. Howell

## Chapter 6

# Advice to those wishing to become involved in the Broadcasting profession. A series of talks given at different times

**W**hat follows is a small selection from many of the talks Henry made, both to young persons thinking of entering the broadcasting profession and some already in it. They are undated, but timeless.

### **Broadcasting – the Art of Private Speaking**

“It seems to me to have been an unusual choice on the part of your Association to ask me to speak at the annual contest of the Public Speaking Association for I am peculiarly unequipped to do so. Quite truthfully I can say to your Chairman at the beginning of my talk: ‘Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking ...’ and this would be true to some significant extent. As a broadcaster, all my experience and training is in quite a different art form from public speaking, for sound broadcasting is, in my opinion, the art of private speaking. This accounts for the fact that so few professional public speakers, like politicians or parsons, make really good broadcasters. I suspect that the converse is also true. To illustrate what I mean, and to tell you something about the marvels of the age of electronic media of communication, is what I propose to do now.

“Sound broadcasting, the pioneer in the electronic mass media of

communication, depends primarily upon a device called a microphone. And as I think the microphone is one of the most marvellous devices ever created by man, I should like to talk about it for a moment. Apart from its technical complexity which by modern electronic standards is not great, it is a wonderful device. To me it has some of the wonders of other man-made miracles, like the violin, or the full-rigged clipper ship. The violin is basically a wooden box with a handle and a hole in it and some cat-gut stretched across the hole, but it can be induced to make sounds that will tear at your heart-strings or send your brain whirling.

"The full-rigged sailing ship was surely one of man's greatest artistic as well as material achievements. If ever he created poetry in motion it was in the sailing ship; if ever he conquered the elements and made them work for him it was when he built that combination of canvas and wood and steel, and turned them into horsepower and beauty mixed in equal parts.

"If you have ever seen a full-rigged ship at sea with all her canvas set – and if you haven't its unlikely that you ever will – you will have experienced something only equalled in its emotional intensity by love.

"I believe the microphone is of the same company. It performs a simple electronic function. It merely turns soundwaves into electronic impulses, and once that is done the business of turning this electronic impulse into radio waves which can pass across the country, or the continent, or the world, and are then turned back into soundwaves again, is a straightforward piece of engineering practice.

"But, this is where the things of the mind transcend the technological feat. If heartbreak or love or misery or excitement or rugby-football or prayer is injected at one end then one of those things will come out at the other. Even more miraculously, distance is wiped out, social barriers are exterminated, and the broadcaster is emotionally or intellectually close to, even intimate with, his listener. And interference, or static, or bad reproduction do comparatively little to mar that relationship.

"Unfortunately the obverse is also true. If the broadcaster is not injecting into the microphone the right kind of broadcasting in the right kind of manner, and thus failing to make real contact with his listener, not all the FM, VHF, Hi-Fi or stereo in the world can help. That box in the corner is just making a noise at the listener's room – it is not a 'presence' in the listener's life. And to be able to create a 'presence' in someone's life needs the help of a little miracle.

"What can you do to rationalise a miracle? How should the broadcaster approach his microphone so that he goes across as himself and not as a disembodied voice?

"First of all I believe he should attempt to conjure up his listener in his mind, and he must never forget the one cardinal point that he has a listener, one listener, not thousands or millions or hundreds of listeners. He is addressing himself to just one human being. And that listener is physically separated from him by a distance of approximately three feet.

"What is more, he would be addressing the listener by the most intimate of means – through his ear. I would go so far as to say that the shortest route to a man's soul is through his ear, not his eye. Welfare workers are reasonably agreed that deafness does more to cut off human beings from the life around them than the loss of sight. Certainly in one's own experience one has found that deaf people are frequently more lonely and more difficult to communicate with than blind ones, and it is worthwhile recalling for the moment that the earliest form of communication between a child and its mother is by the sound of the human voice. The baby hears sounds before it can really discern what is going on around it.

"So how does one prepare one's self mentally for a broadcast? If I were talking to you over the air I could not have in my mind the image of a gathering such as this one here tonight. My audience would be, as I have said, a single person and he would be three feet from me. What is more he would be no stranger to me. I would know exactly who I was talking to. I would conjure up the image of some real person whose interest I would actively want to stimulate, and whose regard I would wish to retain. There would be just sufficient formality between us for me to be polite, and as persuasive as possible, and I could assume that this person was interested in what I had to say.

"In the end I would, of course, be talking to each of you as if you were a particularly valuable friend whose attention I wished to catch. If I am lucky, or if I am skilful, you might be induced to stop what you are doing and listen to me, and if you do I would have got you under my spell. For the time that you spend listening to me you would belong to me as I talk to you personally in your own chosen environment. I could not only interest you intellectually – I could stimulate your imagination or even touch your heart.

"The most remarkable thing about sound broadcasting is this ability to stimulate the listener's imagination. If I draw something, or put

it on a photographic screen, your imaginative interpretation is channelled to some degree by mine. But when you are seeing things through your mind's ear, your own imagination has full scope to build, to colour, to dramatise the things that are being said to you. You are making your own pictures. This is radio's unique and greatest single asset. It can take you to Mars, or to early Babylon. It can tell you how to fill in your income tax form, and all of it in a simple, inexpensive way.

"I do not suggest for a moment that radio really does this all the time, or even much of the time. The greatest professional skills are required to capture the listener and to hold him. And yet the essence of good radio is simplicity of expression and clarity of thought. There is an identifiable difference between writing for the eye and writing for the ear. One of the difficulties that has to be taken into account is the nature of the broadcasting medium. One cannot pretend that it has not got certain limitations. The reader can look back and re-read. He can look up a difficult word in the dictionary. He can stop to consider a point before moving on. All these things are denied the listener.

"It is important, therefore, for the broadcaster to make his points logically, lucidly and for the most part in simple language. If that is a truism common to all forms of expression, I merely underline the importance of it in broadcasting which calls for the uninvolved phrase and the short sentence.

"The development and acceptance of the transistor radio in the past decade has immeasurably increased radio's impact even in those countries where television is the principal source of entertainment. It seemed at one time that radio might be forced to take second place, but in the United States of America at least it has regained its position, and today more people listen to the radio than look at television. The reason for this is that with the aid of the transistor, radio is truly wireless. It is no longer tethered to the living room wall, but has moved into the bedroom, the bathroom, the kitchen and into the outdoors. It is equally at home in the handbag, the overcoat pocket and the motor car.

"The value of radio, especially the transistor radio, has never been better illustrated than at the time of the great black-out in New York in November some two or three years ago. With the sudden loss of electricity the New Yorkers lost all their means of communication – except for radio. A survey subsequently conducted in the New York area shows that 77% of the people interviewed had listened to radio at some time during the black-out. Even after power had been restored



the next day radio was still the overwhelming choice for finding out what had happened and what was being done. The survey showed that radio had relieved listeners' fears and helped to avert panic.

"What the future of broadcasting – both sound and television – is likely to be is of course one of the great enigmas of the future, and it is fascinating to speculate what that is likely to be. Of course one of the best guidelines for the future is to look into the past. In 1500 a man developed a thing called 'The Printing Press', the results of which technological advance was so profound that this could have been the most significant in the history of man since the birth of Christ. One can say that there would probably not have been a Reformation without books, for books allowed for man to read for himself the philosophical thinkers in the world of religion, and experience for himself some of the religious revolution first hand. It is certain that the Renaissance would have been bogged down in Northern Italy if books had not conveyed this conversion of thinking across Europe.

"Music might never have developed beyond plain chant for the complexity of modern music could not be communicated across great distances without printing, and only music that could be memorised would have survived. Thus there would have been no symphonic music – no Beethoven. There would have been no Shakespeare without the Renaissance. One could go on citing example of what there might not have been, and I do not wish to expand on this particular theme for you can see the effects of the Revolution that the printing press brought about in the world all about you.

"In 1900, however, a man named Hertz identified and described the properties of the electro-magnetic wave and began a revolution which will probably overwhelm the Gutenberg revolution, and the effects of which it is almost impossible so early in the Hertzian era to assess.

"But there are some existing signposts. In 1955 radio and television finally surpassed the press as the major means of communication in the world. That is a simple statistic, but when you apply it to the nature of the electronic media and their power, you begin to see a glimmering of what that simple statistic is going to do to our future. The imagination boggles at the fact that it was calculated that three hundred million viewers watched Armstrong put his foot on the moon's surface on the very instant that he did it. Armstrong probably could not actually see his own feet – he was groping for firm ground by a sense of touch – but three hundred million people in the northern hemisphere shared with him that first tentative step. What the signif-

icance of this is, and the fact that posterity can now share in it too because it has been recorded upon video tape, is anyone's guess but it has unimaginable consequences for mankind in my view. I am not, you will understand, talking about the deed of stepping on to the moon itself, but the equally remarkable truth that so many people were simultaneously able to share it. That, I think, is as portentous an omen of our future as getting to the moon.

"And yet at whatever level one looks at these electronic marvels, the problem of simple communication of person to person will always remain. In a world where simplicity of language is becoming a lost art we need to be vigilant against it.

"Just to end my talk:

"I have found that the Americans are guilty of turning the language of Shakespeare into a tortuous, polysyllabic, oblique, involuted technicians hells brew. I was sitting uneasily at Los Angeles Airport last year waiting for a plane to New York when the public address system suddenly blared at me: 'TWA Flight No. 271 for Denver, Colorado and New York has moved into an advanced boarding process'. By some lucky chance I remembered that I was booked on TWA Flight 271 and so was alerted to translate what had been said to me. Suddenly I grabbed my bag and rushed to the exit. What the man was saying was 'Flight TWA No. 271 is about to take off!'"

## **The Microphone, and how to use your Voice**

"And don't imagine that I am speaking only of poetry readings or plays or the other overtly artistic forms of broadcasting; it is appropriate equally to the market prices, stock exchange prices and the news. What is necessary is that the broadcaster has firmly in his mind a picture of the person he is talking to.... You should assume as the subject changes, so does the knowledge and interest of the listener. Never allow yourself to be bored, for the moment that happens your transmission might as well close down. And, most important of all, be yourself, your best self, your most charming self, but only yourself.

"Once upon a time the Corporation actually printed a little brochure of hints to announcers which endorsed the belief of the writer of the booklet that one should smile at the microphone when you spoke to it. I cannot think of anything that could have a more powerfully emetic effect for, indeed, can you think of anything more calculated to make you queasy than someone who continuously smiles at you?

"More recently a young announcer decided to be the radio's sex symbol; the result was a phony whisper that apart from all its other irritation produced insufficient modulation in the system and thus you could not tell whether the voice was sexy or just sleepy. This particular adventure in broadcasting has left its mark, in the lack of modulation amongst some of that announcer's colleagues.

"Apart from remembering to be yourself, remember also that the microphone will, late or soon, reveal your true personality to the listener. If you are indeed sexy, or vain, or pompous, or just an ass, your listeners will find it out in time.

"So be yourself, and remember that whatever you are doing this listener of yours will be interested if you are. I am sure you loathe the thought of reading the Stock Exchange prices, but just think of the man who lives in a country town whose life savings are wrapped up in it. He will be listening with maximum interest and excitement for that moment in time when you read 'his' prices; you are just that nice young man or woman who tells him about it.

"It may be past history now, but I remember the zest and fun that Dana Niehaus injected into the market prices back in 1945 and 1947. Some sober and responsible broadcasting official no doubt told him to cut out the expressions of joy and horror and surprise with which he greeted the daily recital of the prices, but people still talk of it and at least one broadcaster remembers it with admiration. By the way, before you set out to emulate him, check with your programme department head!

"What I'm trying to say is that if I had tried this, it would have been a 'performance', an artificial piece of invention and would have flopped; but Dana was his own man and that sort of a man. It was genuine and therefore extremely effective, certainly a MUST for many listeners. To come up to date, Fanus Rautenbach has the same quality in his early morning session, a verisimilitude, the ability to be himself.

"To touch again on the necessity of modulation. Part of the artistic demand of your job is to give sufficient voice level to 'register' and at the same time to be intimate. I have thought about this for some years, and my own personal approach to the problem has been to visualise my listener as someone three feet away from me but very slightly, only slightly, hard of hearing. Thus one doesn't shout, but take care that one doesn't subside into a mumble, and also one takes care with one's articulation without lapsing into an elocuted enunciation of words. You will no doubt work out the solution which suits you best psychologically. One other suggestion: do not wear headphones, you

will begin to listen to yourself and that is fatal. If I can pass on a tip which may help, certainly initially, when you want to find your own best level: cup your open hand behind your ear – just as if you are hard of hearing – you will get a new perspective on your voice in the deadness of the studio, but do not make a habit of it as you will tend to shout if you do it too frequently.

“Now, in this lecture, let us go back to take another look at the microphone. In my formative broadcasting years we used one type of microphone only: the ribbon-type Marconi microphone such as you see in Studio 1B. Perhaps because I am most familiar with it, I still believe it to be the one best suited to giving the broadcaster a perspective, and indeed a ‘presence’. This microphone had been in use for many years before I came to meet it face to face, and those were the years of experimentation in Radio Drama and Features.

“Those were the years of Arch Oboler and Norman Corwin who believed in acoustical stunts, a plethora of effects, lashings of incidental music and other forms of what we have now come to look upon as ‘hokum’. At about the time that I began to learn something about radio production, the revulsion had set in and the trend was towards simplicity, the dearth of effects, the minimum of incidental music, reliance almost entirely upon the human voice for atmosphere and so on. No doubt this has been a good thing, almost certainly it would have been a good thing if the radio actor, and his producer, had really met the challenge. This more modern technique has not, to my mind, been an untrammelled blessing for like modern abstract painting it allowed in the artist – the producer in this case – who may not know the basic skills of his art. Just as the pre-impressionist painter has to demonstrate his ability to draw, so the old-fashioned radio producer just had to know how to use his microphone and the other technical equipment at his disposal, to say nothing of his cast. Those were the days of large casts.

“Now this may seem to be a digression, but I have in fact at last come to the point. In those days, we were forced to familiarise ourselves with the technical and artistic performance of the microphone. We knew how to produce curious acoustical effects with our old ribbon microphone and this knowledge frequently widened the frequency spectrum and the shades of colour of the voices we used.

“Perhaps I have been too long away from the production desk, but I do not recall seeing any speech producer experimenting with the potential of the ‘spade’ or ‘Neumann’ microphones. I would like to recommend demonstrations in collaboration with the Presentation

Department so that everyone who uses the microphone is fully aware of the shape of its fields of sensitivity, the type of perspective that can be expected of it in various circumstances all its nuances and attributes. It is not only important that the Presentation Staff should know these things about our microphones, but also the producers and the announcers.

"Whatever microphone you are facing however, the most important part of your make-up to have well disciplined is your mind. I believe that the moment you lose a slight feeling of awe or shyness for the microphone, the moment the microphone becomes a gadget to you and not a personality in its own right, you have lost your way as a broadcaster. Of course you will become more and more assured, more and more professional in your attitudes, and I am not advocating the dewy-eyed broadcaster concept but the most important thing to retain is the sense of excitement and anticipation in the presence of a microphone.

"Recently a colleague of mine on Springbok Radio had the job of recording a short piece for one of our programmes from one of the most senior broadcasters in South Africa. When the job was over, my colleague rang me up and said, 'Heavens, what a perfectionist, it was a joy to work with him, an education.' This very busy person had found a couple of hours to devote to producing a few minutes of broadcasting time.

"This little episode illustrated for me the enthusiasm and the humility of the really great broadcaster. One wishes as one listens to all our services that we had a few more like that on the microphone to enrich our output.

"I sometimes wonder what goes through the mind of, for example, the announcer on duty when he reaches 7.15 p.m. on the Afrikaans service of an evening. Does he truly realise what an emotional experience the 'Huisgodsdienst' is for his listener? Does he imagine that person, duplicated 400,000 times round the country, composing himself for a few moments of quiet thought? If he let his imagination bring him a full realisation of what will happen when he presses the one button to announce the programme, he should not fail to feel a sense of awe, as well as pride. For if we throw away for a moment the concept of one listener, and think of the thousands of homes into which this strongly emotional message will go, when you conceive of this achievement of broadcasting locking nearly half a million people in prayer, surely the word miraculous is not too strong a term. *But*, if the announcer on duty allows himself to think of the audience as half

a million and loses his contact with the single human being who is his listener, he will subtly, but definably, reduce the impact of that moment.

## **The Radio Actor's approach**

"Apart from your normal duties as an announcer, you are likely to wish to be a radio actor or producer. Perhaps a few remarks on the radio actor's approach to the microphone, as I see it, will not come amiss. The influence of commercial broadcasting, and in particular the daily 'soap opera' has done much to damage the seriousness of our approach to radio drama. A whole generation of performers operating in a climate where too much opportunity pursues too few actors has grown up which has possibly never known what a really true performance should sound like. They belong to the 'one, two, three gash it' school and as a result what they consider to be performances are all too frequently imitations – imitations either of each other, or of people they see on the screen or hear in recordings. How many times does one, as a listener, detect that an actor has stressed the wrong word, or has read a line quite mechanically without making any attempt to think his way into the part he is supposed to be playing. And too often the producer is incapable of spotting the fault when he hears it.

"Let me commend a few things to listen for when next you listen to a play on air. In a dialogue, listen to the pace of the two actors concerned. Have they picked up each other's speed? If they have, and believe me in a majority of cases they do, the scene will take on a glibness, lack any reality and become an imitation to life and not a portrayal. In real life when two people have a conversation each talks at his own speed. Their minds react at different rates, and although they are responding to each other, almost they are not listening to each other. The words they use are being dredged up from inside themselves and they remain separate personalities.

"Contrast that thought with the sort of dialogue you hear in a radio play. How often does a character stop to think? I don't mean the pause that the author has written in, I mean the internal pause, the hesitation that heralds a change of thought and the sudden rush of a new idea. In real life does a conversation trip rapidly off the tongue? Does it not go in fits and starts? Don't people stop to think of a reply, smile at each other, chuckle, speak together or stop together? That is life, but it is not the life you find in Radio Drama. When a radio scene really gets going as a portrayal of life, its as much like the average

radio situation as a Rembrandt is like a toothpaste advertisement. And when one is in the studio during such a moment, you feel an electricity in the air, a quiet attention from fellow actors, and a recognition of the real thing that is almost supernatural. And before I leave it, whatever happened to the long dramatic pause? It is one of the most exciting things in broadcasting and stretches your listener on the rack of expectancy. One of the greatest radio actor/producers I ever knew said to me, 'You can hold a dramatic pause until eternity, as long as you think it'. I don't hear those unbearable dramatic silences any more; every one, producer and actor alike, has this breathless need to press on."

## Careers Guidance for Girls

"I see from the list supplied by the Youth Service Committee of the Rotary Club of Johannesburg that I am required to talk on the possibilities of a career for a girl in the programme side of radio. As these opportunities are not very considerable and are as dependent as much upon an applicant's natural talents as her training, I think I should widen the range of my particular talk to other aspects of broadcasting than just those of the programmes. First let me talk about the programme staff possibilities. I shall be quoting you some recommended qualifications and lines of study, but it is important if you are thinking in terms of being a woman broadcaster to take an objective look at whether you have the basic equipment.

"Let us assume you think you have the right sort of vocal and personality requirements, what should you be doing at this moment about equipping yourself for the job as an announcer or a producer? Well, the most important thing is to get yourself a good all round education, preferably in the arts and languages. It is remarkable the scope of the general knowledge required by an announcer, and there is no quicker way of absorbing knowledge that I know of than by getting down to a University degree. A knowledge of literature, languages, the Fine Arts, any or all of these are excellent bases upon which to build a broadcasting career.

"It is of immeasurable advantage to be fully bi-lingual and will become more so as time goes by. Whilst you are collecting the benefits of a formal education in the arts, I would recommend you join the Dramatic Society and the Debating Society, and any other body which will help you to develop your powers of self expression and your personality.

"One note of warning: if you are serious about being a broadcaster, be chary of elocution and certain forms of speech training. The microphone reveals all forms of affectation and of too precise enunciation. They are both things which irritate listeners. To be a successful broadcaster you must have the ability to be your own unaffected self in front of a microphone. Anything which detracts from this will ruin you as a broadcaster. This ability to be natural is more important than being blessed with the voice beautiful. So I recommend that you spend a few useful years while you grow older – for extreme youth is sometimes a disadvantage in getting a job in broadcasting – building up your educational background and making yourself an interesting and interested person.

"I should mention that one University has a course in BA (Broadcasting), but I do not think this is specially important."

## **Other jobs for women**

"What I have said applies to women announcers and producers – we actually call them women presentation assistants. There are many women whose voices you hear on the air who are freelance broadcasters and who earn a respectable amount of money from their talents. They are really show business people whose gifts have brought them to the microphone as actresses, or personality broadcasters in some form or another. The rules governing their training are those which lead people to go on the stage or show business generally, and I don't think require any elaboration from me.

"I should point out that quite apart from the announcer and producers' posts, there are other jobs for women in the Corporation which are very interesting. These are for Record Programme Compilers, News Reporters, and Librarians, Presentation Assistants, and Receptionists. Librarians and Record Programme Compilers should have specialised training and need a qualification such as a Diploma in Librarianship and a B.Mus. degree. They work as you would expect in the Music Department of the SABC, either with sheet music for the very considerable amount of live music which is performed, or with recordings of which there are a vast number in the various record libraries of the Corporation. Any specialised training required is given while the person appointed draws her salary.

"Presentation Assistants are used in Johannesburg for the technical production of its various programs – they operate the control desks and see to the proper balancing of voices and music in the hundreds of programmes that go out weekly.



"We normally recommend a BA degree for these two types of posts in a range of subjects which will be generally acceptable to other organisations should we not be able to offer suitable employment. Training for all these posts takes place within the Corporation and while the person is receiving her full salary.

"A News Reporter should concentrate on subjects such as history, geography, and probably languages. The starting salary is the same as that for an announcer.

"So much for the more unusual job opportunities which broadcasting offers. There is of course the usual range of administrative and clerical jobs such as typists, telex operators, punch card operators, and filing clerks. A matriculation certificate is acceptable for these positions. Secretaries should be thoroughly bi-lingual and have a knowledge of both shorthand and 'snelskrif' They tend to be promoted to these positions from the girls already on the staff."

### **Broadcasting Religious Programmes.**

"The problems of broadcasting religion are not unique. They may have certain individual aspects to consider, but basically the tenets of good broadcasting in all of its facets apply to those which face men of religion. Basically you must decide that it is worth the trouble – and I say this because from experience I can say that all too frequently churches and their incumbents have looked upon the presence of a microphone in the church as a nuisance.

"You must also make up your minds what you want to achieve with the broadcasting time that is placed at your disposal and the professional problems can be solved fairly easily. Sound broadcasting is one of the most powerful media of communication ever conceived – in matters of the mind and the spirit it can be more powerful than any other medium, including television, provided that it is used properly.

"It is the most personal of methods of communicating to a large audience because it appeals to one person at a time and not to one vast uncounted and unaccountable audience. To the curious human phenomenon called 'A Listener' the radio is as personal as his toothbrush, and it can only come alive when those who use the microphone realise the basic fact that their audience is one single human being situated between 18 inches and 3 feet from him. You can multiply that human being by as many thousands as you like, but unless you address him alone you are talking to no-one at all. This is the first and only rule. The rest is a trick.

"So address yourselves to an individual, and what is more divinely individual than prayer and devotions. So the man who sets out to broadcast invents for himself one listener. That listener is alone in his own home and you are his guest – it's up to you to charm him.

"One can almost go as far as to say that 90% of the problem of getting what the broadcaster wants to say across, can be solved at the writing stage. There is an identifiable difference between writing for the eye and writing for the ear. The broadcaster must make his points logically, lucidly, and for the most part in simple English language.

"To give you some simple examples of what the broadcaster has to do to turn officialese into broadcasting language, here is an announcement as supplied by a Government department:

"The Postmaster-General requests the public to furnish their names and addresses on the back of the covers of mail matter, in order to expedite the return of undeliverable articles to the sender."

and this is how it was broadcast by the announcer:

"I'd like to remind you to put your name and address on the back of envelopes, when posting letters, so that they can be returned to you, if for any reason they can't be delivered."

"If you want to know the best example of good broadcast English that I know – it begins 'Our Father, which art in Heaven....' If I could presume to improve it for broadcasting I would alter it to 'My Father, which art in Heaven....' So remember what you are after is to catch the mind's ear of one man and you have a splendid medium with which to do it.

"Now to more practical things. First let's take a look at broadcast relays from Churches. I think you have too many churches on your roster. Now that the number of broadcasts has been reduced – severely curtail them.

"There are two major aspects of the problem: the first the quality of the Church music and the acoustics, the second is the quality of the spoken word and the idea. The first I would leave to Roger O'Hogan to talk about – I am merely suggesting that you insist upon having a proper balance and rehearsal from each Church that you finally decide upon – not each week of course but certainly when the new roster begins and thereafter at least once a year.

"Now to the spoken word. To some extent broadcasters are born, not made, but everyone needs production and advice. I suggest you institute a listening panel of Churchmen to decide upon those

churches which will be represented in the new roster. You should get one of your enthusiastic laymen to record every Anglican service and arrange to play each recording to your judging committee. First of all throw out the ones that are not good and narrow the field down to the probables. I know that there are problems of provincialism and parochialism but I sincerely recommend you allow nothing to matter but the standard of broadcasting you are aiming at.

“You may decide that one church has excellent acoustics and choir but that the incumbent is not the best of broadcasters. On the other hand, the priest may be a natural broadcaster but his choir and the church music is not up to standard. As a layman one would suggest the obvious compromise of putting the two good factors together – in practice this could be impossible. You may decide upon varying the type of service selecting some good cathedrals for the big and majestic sound, and also a number of parish churches to give a sense of simple intimacy. These are decisions for you to make. One thing you must remember however; when the priest goes into the pulpit he must cease to address his congregation from this point on – the listener ceases to be an eavesdropper, now he has become the object of the exercise. You cannot afford to ignore 60,000 listeners – which is what you will get most Sunday evenings. The congregation should be invited before the service begins to enter the spirit of the exercise, to sing their best, to answer the responses crisply and intelligently; why not hold a rehearsal for them if they are going to be called upon to partake in frequent church broadcasts? If Lever Brothers were involved they would insist upon it!

“Now, what sort of Minister are we looking for? The man who speaks simply, without affectation – it doesn’t matter if he’s a bass or a boy soprano – it’s the simple sincerity that counts. We have the most wonderful gift of Prayer Book English, and the highly burnished tempered simple prose of the Authorised Version, and the New Translation. But so frequently the words are intoned in a meaningless way that takes the personal impact out of them. The man who restores the freshness of thought to the familiar Collects and Prayers is the man who will have the greatest impact.

“The great gift of John Gielgud as a Shakespearian actor is that he can say those lines as if they have just occurred to him. This is the gift you must look for – not the voice beautiful or even the great theological scholar but the sincere speaker.

“There is much more to say about this but I will turn to the Studio Service. Almost everything I have said applies except that the sense of

person-to-person is heightened. Sitting alone in a studio ought to help but it also puts more demands upon the intrinsic skill of the broadcaster. Familiarity with the broadcaster has a strong appeal for the listener – so don't have too many men on the roster.

"Once you are assured that a priest has impact, the more frequently he is heard, the stronger will be his influence.

"This is an axiom of commercial broadcasting where men are concerned with the serious business of selling soap, it applies equally to your problem."

## Writing for Broadcasting

"One of our duties is to encourage the South African writer. Broadcasting gives writers a medium in which to express themselves. It is not an easy medium to use and too few serious writers have chosen to explore it. What are the reasons for this? Well, first of all, let us be realistic about it, the financial awards are small in comparison with other media open to the successful writer. Let's talk about that for a moment.

"The playwright usually hopes to see his play a commercial success and because his play can be produced many times over in various theatres in various countries, the reward is a recurring affair. The broadcast play is said to be ephemeral, and reaching a mass audience in one moment of time does not tend to be repeated frequently. This applies equally to the Radio Feature: that true offspring of the microphone. What is required then? Is it some reckless, enterprising 'beau geste' on the part of the dramatist? I don't think so entirely.

"In South Africa the rewards have been stepped up considerably in recent years by the SABC, and I contend that a play is not a play until the words are spoken and there is an interplay of character. How much better to hear that play come alive on air than to leave it dormant in some drawer. After all you may suddenly realise its imperfections when you hear actors speak the lines and be inspired to re-write it. We broadcasters seek only the broadcast rights to your plays and you can adjust them to make them suitable for the media of theatre or the film or television thereafter. And what of the young playwright? He would find a malleable sensitive medium with which to experiment and set out his credo – if he has one. Finally, what about that unstageable play – that play of 'ideas' that would drive people out of the theatre in droves? Broadcasting may be the perfect medium for it.

"Let us take an example. 'The Dynasts' is hardly ever likely to be

commercial theatre but is splendid broadcasting material. I believe 'Antony & Cleopatra' has greater force on the air than on the stage. The Greek Classics, of course, make wonderful broadcasting and so does Shaw's 'Back to Methuselah' which could have been conceived purely for broadcasting. So to come down to practicalities, and to go back to a point I made a few moments ago – 'The Dock Brief' and 'Under Milk Wood' made the theatre from the broadcast script and this seems to be a growing trend in recent years.

"The creative part of broadcasting work falls somewhere between the theatre and the film. Its hope in the face of a future which includes television lies in its comparative closeness to the very aims of the drama, for if the words are of such importance, in the end you can be certain that the thought will also **have** to be important.

"Let us turn to **Poetry**. There is a pleasing amount of worthwhile poetry being written in South Africa in the English Language. We English-speaking South Africans under-estimate its quantity and quality. From time to time the English Service broadcasts readings of South African poetry and in doing so fulfils its responsibility as a medium for encouragement to the poet. Of course we cannot go on reading South African poetry all the time; there are all the riches of the English language poetry to draw upon, but we certainly do not neglect our own product – as poets like Guy Butler know to their pleasure and, I hope, profit. And it was interesting to see his reaction on hearing his own words read aloud on the air. Immediately he had the urge to polish and re-write here and there, the written word upon the page did not **sound** quite so effective as he may have thought. Thus broadcasting helps the poet.

## The Radio Feature

"This is perhaps the most important achievement of Sound Broadcasting for it is something that it invented for itself and which it exploits better than anything else. The radio feature can take many forms; it can be a form of dramatised history or biography, it can be a documentary, it can enter the realms of phantasy or examine some scientific phenomenon. One of the latest techniques is that of the 'personal portrait' which requires perhaps more the talent of the film writer than the script writer.

"Britain has probably produced some of the best of these feature writers, Louis MacNeice being one of the greatest of the BBC exponents of this – I nearly said 'form of art' but if must avoid disagree-

ment let me say this 'vehicle for art'. I can give you a list of some of the most remarkable features I have heard: MacNeice's 'Christopher Columbus', and two that he has produced in South Africa for the SABC: 'The Dark Tower' and 'One Eye Wild'. Geoffrey Bridson's 'March of the '45' and one with a South African setting 'The Great Trek' which we are reviving this year. Nesta Pain's 'White Ants', Dylan Thomas's 'Under Milk Wood' and so on.

"You may want to know the names of some South African features of merit. Mary Renault's 'The Day of Good Hope' entered for the 1958 Italia Prix; she also did two excellent features on Greek themes 'The Song of Troy' and 'Alcibiades'. Hugh and Peggy Tracey's 'The Lost Valley' entered for this year's Italia Prix. Brian Rose's 'How Deep the Corn'; Percy Baneshik's 'Fugue for South African Voices'. Guy Butler's feature for Remembrance Day, Margot Bryant's moving feature on President Burgers – and some tremendous epics I might mention by Van Wyk Louw in Afrikaans.

"The true radio man probably derives more pleasure from the feature which is so much his own than from any other single form of the spoken word on the air.

"It is the radio feature which gives the broadcaster his greatest opportunity of influencing the social aspects of life in the country to which he is broadcasting. It is in the feature that the broadcaster most successfully holds up a mirror to life for the listener, and although an organisation like the SABC is debarred, understandably, from having any editorial policy, it is in the radio feature that the SABC finds an important place in influencing the life of South Africa.

## **Broadcasting in General**

"Broadcasting has always been quoted, rather loosely, as an organ of mass communication, and yet it is only used correctly when it is fulfilling its function as the perfect medium for the direct personal contact between individuals. At a time when almost every tendency seems to be working in the direction of the mass communication of human beings against the individual, the broadcast has revised that personal contact which was lost with the decline of the minstrel and the story-teller.

"The influence can therefore be for good or for evil, and a tremendous responsibility lies upon the shoulders who wield this influence on behalf of the public. It is difficult for people to be objective about broadcasting. It is a medium that excites extremes of reaction. One

either seems to believe fervently in it or to under-estimate it; but we who work in the medium believe in it unquestionably as one of the greatest potentials of good in a country full of so many peoples as diverse as South Africa, and to people like ourselves who have to go out and influence the coming generation of South Africans we feel we have a common bond.

"I hope that what I have said will stimulate your interest, and not least of all your critical faculty, in the work which we do. Your interest will enrich those of us who strive to interest you, and we hope that we will together be able to achieve standards in South Africa of which we can all be proud."

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## Chapter 7

# A selection of talks, addresses, reviews

**H**is wide ranging knowledge of and respected standing in the fields of broadcasting and advertising, and having an acerbic and amusing wit, Henry Howell was invited to address many conventions, make presentations and address the youth.

To name only a few....

He spoke on 'Automation', the 'Overseas Transcription Service', 'the Uniqueness of Radio', 'the Peculiar Problems of Broadcasting in the English Language', 'The English Language & the SABC'. He addressed the Immigrant Organisation in 1968; he presented the Springbok Silver Trophy, he spoke at Horace Collett's retirement, gave the speech of farewell to Dr. D.J. Fuchs on his retirement, and wished good luck to Denis Jonkers in 1974 on his promotion to Regional Manager, Natal. He reviewed "Facing the Nation" by Grace Wyndham Goldie, and "A Seamless Robe" by Sir Charles Curran – both concerned with broadcasting – for the radio programme 'Talking of Books'. He wrote and gave a fascinating talk on Muscat & Oman; addressed the Listeners Club; the NDMF Speakers Corner, and gave talks about marketing and the media, as well as lecturing on the subject of television in South Africa. He also wrote a moving story about Christmas in hospital which was published in the Mail in December 1973.

These are a minute part of a much greater whole, although alas to 'holes' much has been lost; however, it is hoped to publish all of his available addresses, lectures and speeches under a different format in the future.

Here, then, is a small selection.

**FACING THE NATION** by Grace Wyndham Goldie. Published by The Bodley Head. Reviewed (unedited) by Henry Howell.

"This book has the sub-title 'Television and Politics' and in conformity with modern jargon I should declare my interest. This is a grip-

pingly interesting book, indeed it should be required reading for anyone whose career has to do with broadcasting. It could be useful also to politicians and journalists who may only dimly discern the problems of a national broadcasting service such as the British Broadcasting Corporation or indeed to come nearer to home the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

"It was written by a woman who was associated with broadcasting in one way or another from 1934 to 1976 and who was a major influence in British Television for more than 20 years, and achieved the post of Head of BBC Television Talks and Current Affairs. She knew British Broadcasting from the days of Sir (later Lord) John Reith, the legendary pre-war Director-General of the BBC until those of Sir Charles Curran who has only recently retired from that onerous post. She knew Television from 1936 when it was only an experimental service, to 1976 when it had become perhaps the most important single facet of the British way of life, and in her last 20 years played a vital part in programmes of current affairs which are always the most difficult, indeed hazardous, for a Broadcasting Organisation to handle.

"It is a salutary matter for us South Africans, who are so strongly male orientated, to contemplate that a woman should have been selected to handle such a difficult assignment by the BBC. It is an approach that we could well emulate in our own country.

"What makes this book of such vital interest to anyone who is seriously concerned about broadcasting is its detailed and informed account of the reaction and inter-reaction between a great Broadcasting Organisation and the surrounding political scene as it painfully unfolds. Remember that the years this book covers go back to the pre-war Baldwin and Chamberlain era – the years of appeasement. It covers the Premiership of Churchill, Attlee, Eden, Douglas-Home, MacMillan, Heath and Callaghan. In those years a social revolution of great profundity took place in the United Kingdom and here is a first-hand account of how a great Broadcasting Organisation moved to meet the challenge. It also reveals some surprising insights into the characters of famous politicians in times of political stress and serves as an unusual piece of political commentary. It is not too much to say that the changes not only took place in the country as a whole but also in its Broadcasting Corporation.

"When I started I said I needed to declare my interest, and perhaps my involvement in Broadcasting gives me a heightened perception of the importance of this book, but to anyone who has an interest in the development of the British social revolution here is an impressive

book about one important facet of it. I would like to dilate upon the book to a considerable extent but I think that sadly it is a book that will be of interest only to a minority of listeners. It is, however, eminently readable and well written.

"Perhaps the best compliment I can pay it is to compare it favourably with another book on a kindred topic entitled 'Mass Communication and Society' edited by James Curran, Michael Gunevitch and Janet Woollacott. This is a collection of readings on 'the mass media and society' prepared for the BBC's Open University Course of that name. This, as can be expected of a book for students, is a somewhat furrowed-browed affair much of it made opaque by academic and trans-atlantic English. The titles of some of the readings will suffice to give you an idea of its contents. Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations; Media Imperialism – towards an international framework for the analysis of media systems; Linkages between the mass media and politics; a model for the analysis of political communications systems.

"Much of the ground covered in this awesome and tiresome book is covered with greater wit and more charm than Mrs. Goldie's book, but then I am sure it is good for the immortal soul of students that they should suffer. One is irresistibly reminded of the pre-occupation medieval religious scholars who attempted to assess the number of saints who could be accommodated on the end of a pin. I have never understood what they achieved but no doubt it is important to ensure that the road of scholarship should not be made easy in any age".

A **SEAMLESS ROBE** by Sir Charles Curran, published by Collins. Reviewed by Henry Howell.

"Sir Charles Curran was the Director-General of the BBC for a period of eight years, most of it during the perplexing period of the Seventies. To have been Chief Executive of an institution which the dustcover rightly claims can be as influential in Britain as the House of Commons itself must have been a uniquely stressful position to have occupied. Yet when he visited us in South Africa in late 1978 as the Managing Director of Visnews, the organisation that supplies the SABC with much of its Television News material, he said to me 'when you have been the Director-General of the BBC there is really no other job that will do.' So he must have found it a fulfilling task.

"This book is about the experiences of those years and is a text book, required reading in fact, for anyone involved in the running of a State broadcasting organisation, and also for all politicians and most

journalists. Although one senses that there were great clashes of political thought, of personalities and principles during his period of office, this is not a book of revelations but a calm cool appraisal of the constitution and management, the technical and financial problems and most dangerous of all the editorial direction of the programme men of the BBC. Charles Curran lived for only two and a half years after his retirement, so perhaps the stress of all that responsibility may have taken its toll, but this book is indeed a revelation of himself even if he so studiously and responsibly refrains from revealing others.

"No Director-General of the BBC can escape comparisons with the first great holder of the post, John Reith. I believe that Charles Curran may have been the first man to have made comparisons at last irrelevant and yet one cannot avoid indulging in them.

"The title of this book 'A Seamless Robe' reflects the deeply held religious conviction of his life. Charles Curran was a Roman Catholic – a fact that could well have cost him his chance of the job in the first place and which, when the Irish question reached heights of violence and controversy during his term of office, put him a position of particular difficulty. There were a surprising number of other occasions when his Catholic background introduced special problems for him and his open account of how he overcame those difficulties sometimes within his own conscience, gives one an endearing insight into a modest man of great probity.

"This reader at least could not fail to recall that John Reith was an ardent, passionately religious, Presbyterian who gave his contemporaries the feeling that he knew quite unequivocally what was good for them and for the country as a whole. Not for nothing did Churchill describe him as 'that Wuthering Height'. Curran would never have assumed that role. Perhaps he was operating in a more sophisticated environment than Reith faced in the Thirties, and certainly the dangers of making an irretrievable mistake were greater. For the first time this reader accepted, perhaps with regret, that the Reithian philosophy of broadcasting has ended.

"Here you will read how this great British invention, the State Broadcasting Corporation, faced up to the shifting political tides, the changing political personalities during the Seventies, but it is interesting to note that perhaps one of his most intractable problems was the need to ensure that BBC programmes did not offend against good taste or decency. He devotes a whole chapter to this perennial problem for broadcasters and here again his own religious background was a factor for him to reckon with.

"Much of this book is a professional examination of how to run a vast broadcasting organisation and may require some dedication from the reader who is not professionally involved, but it is all relevant to an understanding, warts and all, of the whole magnificent institution that is the BBC.

"One would have liked to have learnt about Harold Wilson's dislike and distrust of the BBC, or the particular contribution of Lord Hill, or even more about Ted Heath. But this is not the way of Charles Curran or his book. Reading this book I was reminded of another personal encounter I had with him. I had an appointment with him in his office at BBC Headquarters at 10 o'clock one morning and as 10 o'clock is halfway through the day to most South Africans I was sitting outside his office at least half an hour before that time. This was obviously the first appointment and he arrived precisely on time. Realising I had been there some time, he said with incredible modesty and sincerity: 'I hope I am not late, I had to take my daughter's Mini to be serviced'.

"This is the quality of a man who, apart from being the Director-General of the BBC, was for five years the President of the European Broadcasting Union, He was a towering figure in his profession who brought a clear mind, great administrative ability and strength of character to one of the most important jobs that I know of. If you are interested in having a dispassionate account of a most important aspect of modern life, not only in Britain but in South Africa too, I recommend you read 'A Seamless Robe'."

**The Overseas Transcription Service** – a Lecture given to a Conference of Senior Officials:

"The necessity for the introduction of a Transcription Service has been apparent for a considerable time. Over the past few years in a sporadic fashion we have attempted to prepare and circulate a number of programmes on tape which we felt would find a placing in programmes broadcast by Radio Stations in the English-speaking world; the Head of the Afrikaans Service too has done similar work for Radio Stations in Holland, Belgium and Germany. Furthermore we have always responded readily to requests received from other organisations for individual programmes designed for some specific broadcast. On the obverse side of the picture, we have been on the receiving end of a continuous stream of transcriptions from various sources and of varying character and standard. One can judge from our own reaction to these offerings how best to approach the problem of creating our own Transcription Service.

"I think therefore that we should examine some of the Transcription services offered to us by our sister organisations first. At the top of the list has always been the BBC Transcription Service. This has consistently offered radio programmes of the highest standard at a low but not insignificant price. When one considers that for this we get incomparably good broadcasting we can say without hesitation that this is the best bargain available. We certainly cannot match costs per hour with programmes produced domestically. Recently, the BBC approached us for a higher fee. The BBC Transcription Service is in a fact a business concern, run on business lines and represents an investment of the order of one million pounds. Obviously we do not intend to compete but we can learn a few lessons from its success and I will want to return to this aspect of the subject again. I might mention before we leave it here, that the character of the BBC Transcription Service output is to an increasing extent coming under the influence of the fact that Television has become the principal medium of entertainment, not only in Britain but also in most of the countries which are its best customers.

"Another organisation that has been active in this field has been the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. They have supplied us, free, with a number of excellent light and serious music programmes over the years. I note, however, that whereas they started out in a very ambitious way, the supply has dwindled considerably over the years. At one time they sent us a remarkably good series of half-hour plays by Canadian authors and a single half-hour variety programme. I think there is some significance in the fact that the supply has dwindled in recent years. This could be due to two factors, one economic – the service, as I have said, is offered entirely free to other organisations – and the other perhaps a belief that it is possible to swamp your target with too many programmes.

"The Voice of America feeds us with a quantity of material which has not been as acceptable as one would have expected. Only recently have they been able to supply us with the necessary details to permit us to broadcast their music programmes; and their speech programmes have such a strong propaganda slant as to make them difficult to accommodate.

"I will deal with this latter point at some length later, but I will mention here the tape Transcription Service of Radio-Television Belge, the Belgian Radio which has, over the years, offered us an enormous quantity of music, most of it by Belgian composers. Here again, there has been a dropping off in the supply in the last year, although we have just received another batch of thirty tapes.

“Various organisations are prepared to send us on tape recordings of major music festivals after they have taken place. They make available to us such musical feasts as the Salzburg Festival, the Sibelius Music Festival, the Monte Carlo Music Festival and major orchestral and operatic occasions in Italy. One should also note that the Australian Broadcasting Commission has not yet, as far as one can gauge, embarked on a Transcription service. Recently their 1959 Italia Prix winner was issued on a RCA label.

“I have dealt with the work of other organisations at some length, because short of going abroad and studying their methods and problems, it is the only way open to us at the moment to assess our own problems. Before I return to the practical aspects of the scheme, I think we should look at our aims for the Transcription Service.

“What do we seek to achieve? I think there is little doubt that we want to put something of South Africa into the homes and minds of people all over the world who know little about us and what they are told is probably unpleasant. We want them to see us as fellow human beings who are Christian and Western in outlook. If we can get them to realise that we are the same sort of people as they are, however acute and immediate may be our particular problems, we have the same hopes, the same fears, the same amusements, some real cultural achievement, some true sensitivity, we may – to an indeterminable extent – win their sympathy and their understanding.

“How do we do this? Do we explain the intricacies of our native problem? Many of our own fellow countrymen have little comprehension of the issue. Do we attack our detractors? Some of the countries to whom we hope to send our programmes are our bitterest critics, and the issues will have been prejudged and thought suspended on them already.

“My belief is that we should not attempt this, certainly not yet.

“Before we can get onto the transmitters of Radio Stations in countries in the Americas or Europe or the British Dominions, our recordings have to pass across the desk of some programme official. He probably has to fight for listenership in keen competition with other organisations, and, most of all, with that great bewitcher of private citizens, the Television. He wants a programme that will entertain and impress. From our experience here, we know how much easier it is to place ‘My Word’ than one of those propaganda talks on the achievements of the American people we receive from the VOA. We know how acceptable one of the VOA programmes featuring Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney has proved to us. We know too how much

more eager we are to place a superb recording of 'Lucia di Lammermoor' from Italy than 30 tapes of contemporary Belgian music. We have, as I see it, to present the broadcaster with an interesting programme produced to the highest professional standards. Once we have persuaded him to put it in his programme schedule, we have won our battle. We must also remember that he cannot hope to place too much of our material. If I thought we could get an average of a once-monthly placing in the programmes of the seventy or eighty stations I am approaching, I would indeed be highly content.

"We will, however, not get one placing for propaganda or light music or anything else unless our standards are as good or as interesting as anything that our overseas broadcaster can produce in his own country or obtain on commercial gramophone records. If possible we should provide him with programmes he cannot get from any other source. This is our real problem. If I felt confident that we could ensure that kind of standard at all times I would not have the slightest doubts about the success of the future of the service. But, I am sure this gathering would be the first to admit that this is not the case. I would say that only a small fraction of what we are doing for our own listeners is of the standard that I am talking about at this moment. We have to a dangerous extent, and I am speaking professionally now, too captive an audience for our programmes in South Africa and we all know that for sometimes quite indefensible reasons we content ourselves with second best. I know we blame lack of staff, facilities, and a hundred and one things for this. But sometimes these hide a lack of dynamism and dedication. Unless we measure our output against an International professional yardstick, we can save ourselves the waste of time, shellac and paper in our Transcription Service. We are going in off the deep end and unless we can swim we will founder very quickly. I must confess that the programmes I have prepared to launch the scheme are not as good as I would have desired, but they should make acceptable listening.

"Having decided that we should, to use the Springbok Radio term, utilise the 'soft sell', I set about preparing what I thought would be four reasonably acceptable programmes. I felt that we should begin with a half-hour programme by the SABC Symphony Orchestra, in which a South African work was included. We built up the programmes from some master tapes which happened to be available. Although the choice of material was limited, we felt that it was imperative to get started, and the programme in the end includes the Overture to the Marriage of Figaro, 'Slampamperliedjie No. 1', the set-



ting of Leopoldt's words by Gideon Fagan, sung by Nellie du Toit, and a particularly fine performance of the 'Fantasia on Two Angevin Tunes' by Lekeu. This is a thoroughly melodious programme and shows the orchestra off to good effect. The programme occupies one side of two long-playing records and is backed by two separate fifteen-minute programmes of 'Boeremusiek' which are pleasantly and informatively presented.

"We have also pressed the two SABC entries for the 1960 Prix d'Italia, 'Huberta the Hippo' and 'Pictures at an Exhibition'. They are unusual programmes, well-produced and edited down to 45 minutes' duration. Our choice here was limited by the difficulty of choosing works of a suitable standard which would not involve us in complicated copyright negotiations. On this point I will expand later. We are hoping to have ready for pressing in the near future, six programmes by the SABC Orchestra – all including a South African work, a programme of South African poetry in English but including two poems by Elizabeth Eybers in translation. A feature 'The Pattern is Preserved', possibly backed by a portrait type feature of 'Louis Botha'. I have laid claim to the excellent recordings made recently by Jos Clebers. We will issue some six or more fifteen-minute Children's programmes. We would like to include an abridged version of a brilliant actuality feature broadcast last year, 'Cardiac Miracle' and so on. The idea is that we will not dump them all upon our targets simultaneously, but feel our way with them.

"One of the most acceptable recordings we have received from other organisations has been the short magazine type item. With the rivalry of Television, the 'Monitor' type of speech and music programme is usurping many of the more ambitious and 'solid' speech programmes. We hope to press long-playing records with items of general interest on one side and talks for specific audiences on the other, such a Women's programmes, Sports programmes, Youth programmes, etc. Items will not exceed three to four minutes in duration.

"With the assistance of the Organiser of Talks, we have decided upon twenty three-minute talks and have a supplementary list of a further thirteen under consideration.

"I was delighted, and indeed proud, to be asked to launch the Overseas Transcription Service and disinclined to worry too much about the problems which may have arisen. With every step we have taken, however, we have learnt a great deal about the problems involved. The most important is the immediate necessity for at least one staff member to devote his full time to the task of preparing these

programmes for pressing and despatch. The administration at this stage is embryonic and can easily be handled within the office of the Head of English Service. The massive amount of auditioning, editing, rewriting and reproducing involved, however, needs the attention of an announcer-producer grade official of considerable all-round talent. Although staff have shown a commendable interest in helping the Transcription Service, there is a vital necessity for an official to do the practical work. I have managed to do something but am physically unable to do all that is necessary to keep up a constant flow of first-rate programmes.

"I have found that we over-estimated the amount of material that can really be drawn from our domestic programmes; perhaps my remarks in regard to standards have some bearing here. To an increasing extent we will tend to create programmes especially for the Transcription Service. In this regard we will pose special problems for the Copyright Department. To illustrate what I mean, we are endeavouring to prepare a programme of South African Poetry as I have told you. Negotiations for rights to broadcast in South Africa is comparatively simple and inexpensive. The attitude of publishers about World Broadcast rights is likely to be much harder and in the case of the South African Short Stories by world-renowned authors like Sarah Gertrude Millin, Mary Renault, Joy Packer and others, extremely expensive. I think this is a matter which should be borne in mind when deciding upon the estimates for 1962. Furthermore it will be necessary to impose an expiry date on all programmes issued by us. I suggest that this period should be by year from the date of issue. This expiry date will be carried on the label and on the sheet carrying copyright details issued with each programme. This will permit the Copyright Department to have some fixed period for which they can negotiate.

"It will be necessary also to have funds to finance special productions for the service. I will be able to give a forecast of what is required when I have had a little more experience of the pilot scheme. There will be other expenses. We have brought out the records under a simple and comparatively cheap label, we have printed our publicity material and copyright details on SABC letterhead paper, and we are using the ordinary SABC record sleeves. This has produced a 'package' which is not without a simple dignity but as the Service progresses we must expend money on this aspect of its functions. An attractively packaged disc and well printed letterpress does a great deal to impress the man who will audition its contents.

"There are one or two other points to consider briefly. It has been suggested that we should not offer our Transcription Service as a gift. It is possible that the recipients would immediately assume some ulterior motive in such a gift and would be prejudiced against it from the start. This indeed may be true and there is little doubt that the Transcription Service would be in a position to be more ambitious in its aims if it were self-supporting. I have given thought to this aspect and would suggest, certainly initially, that we should offer our wares free. At this early stage we cannot gauge the acceptability of our product and the success we might have in placing our programmes. It would be difficult therefore to know what to charge for the records. The business of costing, charging, would entail considerable work and the development of a department. It would materially alter the situation in regard to broadcast rights. Secondly, if our programmes are patently not propaganda one can assume that their intrinsic attraction should overcome any latent suspicion of motives. What I have said about professional standards has a bearing on this matter.

"We must endeavour to add to the good work already done by the Head of Afrikaans Service in the preparation of programmes for countries on the Continent of Europe. I have in mind the recording of music programmes with scripts in French, Dutch, Flemish, German and Italian which could be distributed throughout the countries of Western Europe. This would permit the countries concerned to present the programmes themselves using the scripts provided and we might enjoy considerable success in this way. We could also present the short talks I mentioned using nationals of these countries resident in South Africa as readers.

"I have been at some pains to ensure that we have maintained good relations with the State Information Office during the creative stages of the Service. At first we encountered some considerable suspicion and even hostility, but this has given way to an enthusiastic desire to help and an inclination to withdraw from the field and allow us a free hand. I certainly do not think this latter stage has been reached yet nor do I think it is necessarily desirable. But I have sought from and found in officials of the State Information Service a desire to help us to get at a world-wide audience.

"It has been a slow business getting the Service into operation and I am sure that when more time is devoted to its creation we will be more effective than we are at present. I would like to ask of you your utmost co-operation; your suggestions and your ideas will not only be acceptable but are an essential to our future success. I know only too

well how difficult it is to find the time to think of problems not closely related to our daily work but this will need to be a collaborative effort if we are to succeed. I do not think anyone here will disagree with me when I say that it is a project that deserves the best we can give it."

**A Talk on Muscat & Oman** by H.J. Howell. Broadcast on the English Service.

"I thought you may like to hear on a cold winter day about a place which is generally supposed to be the hottest place on earth. I am talking of course about sun temperature and humidity, and not the more attractive forms of heat one experiences in places like Paris. So I am going to tell you something about a country in which I was once based for two years – the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. It broke fitfully into the news a couple of years back when with British backing it became involved in a sizeable war which involved Saudi Arabia and indirectly of course Russia.

First perhaps a little geography. The State of Muscat and Oman runs in a narrow strip about 80 miles wide from the entrance to the Persian Gulf to the Hadhramaut just north of Aden. It has many hundreds of miles of coastline on its Eastern edge and no depth at all because, although its Western boundaries are not marked, it is hemmed in on its Western side by one of the most impenetrable and unpleasant deserts left uncharted, the Great Arabian Desert, the Rub-al-Khali, 'Arabia Deserta' of the dark ages. Even this narrow strip is divided down its middle by a range of high mountains – the Jebel-el-Akdhar, high enough certainly to be snow-covered in winter – and this geographical feature is one of the factors in the present struggle. Between the mountains and the sea the narrow and comparatively fertile coastal plain is under the direct control of the Sultan.

From the mountains to the West there has been for several generations, certainly from the beginning of the century, a certain unwillingness to accept his Suzerainty. Now this is no uncommon thing among Arab States, but in this case the disaffection has found leaders, and the transport difficulties have given the disaffected Sheiks the opportunities they seek. The Imams, who have for years attempted to break away from the power of the Sultans, are the spiritual leaders; the Sultans wield the temporal power.

I can best compare the struggle to the state of affairs in Europe in the Middle Ages when Kings and Popes vied for leadership. This particular struggle has been carried on in desultory fashion for sixty years but (now recently, perhaps tragically,) it has provided the

excuse and the opportunity for a much deeper and wider trial of strength between more powerful antagonists. The rivalry between Imam and Sultan is deepened by the fact that the Sultan, Said-ibn-Said-ibn-Taimur, can claim to be a Holy man himself. His dynasty is the only one in the whole of Islam, except for the Aga Khan who leads the Shia sect, which can claim descent from the Prophet. And these things are important in a land that the Faithful believe is the Land of the Book of Job and which has not changed appreciably since his day.

The Muscatis and Omanis are Wahabis, as wild and as primitive a race of Arab as can be found. To illustrate briefly how important and bigoted they are, I can perhaps tell you of a personal experience. A friend of mine imported from India a small Manchester Terrier and one day took it through the narrow streets of the town of Muscat. Word got round that the Infidel had brought a pig to the sacred city of Muscat, and a serious riot was only just averted. This man was the Military Advisor to the Sultan, the head of his army and a brilliant Arab scholar, but it meant nothing to the mad feverish Bedouin of the Bazaar who would have torn the town asunder but for the personal intervention of the Sultan.

Now I have never met the Imam. Being in contact with the Sultan I was 'persona non grata' even as far back as 1944, but I cherish the greatest admiration for the Sultan who, when I knew him, was in his thirties and must now be approaching his early fifties. But more of him later.

Let me tell you something about the history of Muscat and Oman. During the dark ages when Islam sat athwart the land routes from Europe to Asia, the Sultans of Muscat built an Empire that embraced Southern Persia and East Africa south from the Red Sea to what we now call Lourenco Marques (Maputo). They were the greatest slavers who penetrated Africa as far west as Dakar and left the stamp of their features and their religion upon the great continent. When the Portuguese rounded Africa in their search for the Indies, it was not long before they encountered the power of the Sultanate of Muscat, but they were brave and intrepid men as fanatical in their faith as the Wahabis themselves.

Under Albuquerque they sailed North by East and arrived in the harbour of Muscat, the very heart of this wild Empire. They stormed ashore and held their ground and built two great forts that stand today. (One of them indeed is almost certainly the Sultan's Army Headquarters in the present struggle).

The Portuguese held their position for 60 years but in the end they

perished under the swords of the Faithful. One thing they brought back to remind us forever of their stay – the Muscat grape. Small and wizened in its original habitat but having that sweet aromatic flavour that we associate with the Muscatel grape and Muscatel wine.

All that is left of Muscat today is this rugged land the Protectorate of Zanzibar, ruled by a cadet branch and a small piece of territory on the mainland of Asia called Gwador, which is on the coast between Persia and Baluchistan due North of Muscat.

Yet the present Sultan is aware of past glories and great lineage. If any man has the heredity to be Caliph of Islam it is he. But political jealousy prevents the revival of that great post. So he lives in his small Arab palace in a walled town which maintains a constant state of suspicion of any stranger within the gates. He has a small army equipped by Britain and officered by British Officers. When I was there only the Army Commander, a British Major, was British – the rest were Indian officers. Even then this diminutive army ventured forth on punitive expeditions into the interior. Even then the principal anxiety was to prevent too great a proportion of the enormous traffic in smuggled arms reaching the Imam. Now the situation has taken a much more serious turn and perhaps I can be permitted a certain amount of reasonable conjecture on what is going on there now.

The basis of the trouble is oil. The State of Muscat and Oman has for many years been the only Arab state of any consequence which has been bereft of the riches that oil can bring. Sheiks like the Sultan of Kuwait with pocket-size kingdoms have become rich beyond their wildest dreams. The Sultan of Bahrain, a subject of British rule, is one of the richest men in the world, and a comparative upstart like Ibn-Saud now rules one of the most influential countries of the world. The noble, independent and ancient Sultanate of Muscat subsists on the re-export trade of the Persian Gulf. Dates not oil are its chief export, the 'Maria Theresa' not the United States dollar its currency. Naturally the Sultan would like to change this state of affairs.

Now just before the outbreak of the Second World War, a British Geologist identified and prospected an oilfield on the mainland of Arabia just opposite Bahrain. This was to become the great oilfield of Q'atar, probably the biggest in the world, and as it was in Saudi Arabia it would have had little significance for Muscat except that it proved finally and dramatically that the great oil deposits of Southern Persia and Iraq were continued under the waters of the Persian Gulf to the Southern side to Arabia itself. It is not surprising perhaps that the Sultan began to look with keener interest at his hinterland and won-

dered if there was oil in those hills where the turbulent Imam defied his writ. He may have decided to exercise his authority over an area that could be his salvation economically. Hence the recent troubles.

Here is a classic example of a situation that could lead to big trouble nicely compounded of avarice, national pride and religious conviction. But perhaps this is not a situation confined only to Arabs.

I have told you little of the Imam, for the reason that I have never met him. The only Western man I know who has was an American friend of mine, a brilliant Medical Missionary who had been called to his mountain fastness to attend him. His impressions confirmed the legend of a man steeped in the fervour and ignorance and prejudice of the Islam of the dark ages. Make no mistake, this is not a land of telephones or even motor cars except at the coastal ports. Its transport is the beautiful swift white Omani racing camel, famed throughout Arabia as the Arab horse is famous throughout the world.

It is a land of despotic nobles offering a grudging allegiance to a man whose way of life is more enlightened than theirs. I should emphasise that the Sultan is not a product of Eton and Oxford. He was educated, as befits his lineage, in the Holy writ of the Koran at Baghdad and Cairo and so he has no conflicting ideology. He is in every way an Arab but, either by training or by naturally instinct, he has a nobility of bearing and a gentle compelling charm that commands respect. As I came to know him better that respect turned into something warmer and I remember him now with affection. He looked liked Soglow's 'Little King' but he was no simpleton. Although he was hardly more than five feet tall he seemed to tower above his Afro-Arabian bodyguard. At that time he had but one wife and only one small son whose name was Caboos, the name of a certain desert flower, of whom he was tremendously proud.

Two little anecdotes.

One day we were travelling up the Coast in our motor launch when a dugout canoe put off from a little beach with two men in it. The one who wasn't paddling had a large curved Muscati dagger sticking out of his ribs. The other fellow asked if we would take them both a few miles up the coast to someone he referred to as 'the doctor' and this we did. We carried the wounded chap ashore and found to our amazement an American woman medical missionary of about 65 with a wooden leg running a primitive hospital quite alone among some of the most bigoted and fierce people that one could encounter in the whole wide world. We thought we knew the presence of every non-Arab for a thousand miles but she lived there secretly, unknown even

to her own mission, importing her drugs by dhow from Karachi and doing what she thought was her duty to her religion.

She was quite self-contained and highly effective; she even pressed a copy of the Gospel according to St. Luke into my hand when I left her. She was obviously a shrewd judge of character. And that was so typical of life in this strange land.

One other story that may amuse you. The Americans had established a staging post for the Transport Command on an island just off the coast called Massira Island. It had long been an RAF staging post and the move was purely a political one. As soon as the war was over, however, the Sultan politely asked the Americans to leave. We thought at the time that this was not unconnected with the fact that the American forces found the local hideous female talent irresistible. You can be sure it was hideous because even the lads of the RAF had managed to keep away from them!

When the day came for the Americans to withdraw it was decided to sell the food supplies locally and we took down a bedraggled Hindu merchant whose name was Khimji Ramdas from Muscat. We were met by the remaining senior officer of the USAAF, a Major, who greeted us civilly and asked us where all the merchants were who had come to buy up the stores. We nodded at Khimji in his congress cap, his curry-stained black frock coat and his dirty dhoti. The Major looked appalled and said, 'Hell, there's 300,000 dollars worth of stuff here.' We nodded at Khimji again and they got down to business. 'Well' said the Major, 'we want 50% in Rupees.' 'That is perfectly in order' said Khimji, 'it will be 6 crowns, 7 laks, and 86 rupees'. 'Where is all that money coming from?' said the Major. 'I have it in my suitcase' said Khimji, and proceeded to turn it all out on the Major's desk. 'Wait a minute' said the Major, 'we have to have 30% in American dollars'. 'That is no difficulty' said Khimji, 'I have arranged with my bank in Bombay to pay'. The Major looked very suspicious but H.M. Political Agent who was present said, 'H. M. Government will stand surety for Mr Ramdas'. By this time the Major looked slightly stunned but he had one more trump card. 'We have got to have the balance in Marie Theresa dollars; who the hell knows what the rate of exchange for that lot is'. 'That is very simple' said Khimji, 'you see I fix the rate of exchange.' And so he did!

For me it has very personal ties. I remember the harbour of Muscat at this time of the year, the air just translucent with heat and humidity. I remember the curfew drum at nightfall and the challenge of the sentry at my door. I remember the cry of the Mullah in the Mosque



beside my house and the sight of the Frankincense tree which all good Muscatis believe provided the Maji with the gift for the Christ child. Can it be that change is coming to the land of Job? I hope that in its train there will not be grave repercussions throughout the world of Islam, Christendom and beyond.

**It's not so bad, after all** – by Henry Howell.  
(Published in the Rand Daily Mail, 1973)

This is being written on the Sunday morning before Christmas. I have just put down the papers with deep distress. The news is of the stricken miners, the hollow talk of peace at Geneva, the misery and misdirection of modern life piling remorselessly upon itself. At first glance there can hardly have been a Christmas more destructive of the renewal of hope or the faith in man's goodwill to man.

It so happens, however, that I have spent the last few days in hospital being treated for one of the most unheroic of ills that can assail the flesh, and at this moment, insulated as I have been from the day-to-day horrors of modern life, I have become conscious as never before of what Christmas is really all about. All that 'British Booze Up before Disaster'; Watergate, Energy Crisis stuff I can see almost clairvoyantly is not what life is meant to be or perhaps need be if we could just think straight and coolly.

The hospital in which I have spent the last week is run by a religious order. It may be the 'in' place for 1973's fashionable ailments but it is firmly anchored upon a dedication to the pursuance of what some clearly intelligent person has divined as one of the manifestations of God's will; and however you may try there is no getting away from that.

Across the room from your bed there is the crucifix, modern, no doubt deliberately slightly lopsided, but planted where you are not easily going to overlook it. I tried and failed.

This awareness grew with the days to be the single most important object in that little room. But objects, however compelling, were not the most important things about that hospital. People were its burden, its purpose and, so help me, its glory.

Let me start this story where I began it, with a South African doctor. Young, almost defenceless at first meeting but percipient, skilful, tender and strong as I was about to discover. Like his father before him he has been resident surgeon at this hospital for a number of years and is imbued with the spirit of the place. At an age and time of year when home must have been exerting the most potent pressures

upon his emotions and time, that young man was there at the hospital after many hours in the operating theatre doing his rounds four or five times a day.

He came upon you when you were dejected – and spent – and left you buoyant, clean and renewed. My over-sensitive hearing permitted me to follow his progress down the line of wards and to realise that this man was expending his youth, his strength, his compassion recklessly, regardlessly.

Whatever the rewards of his home life, he spread them out over everyone he met, his patients, the nurses, the servants. There was no hint of self-interest or even self-awareness in anything I saw him do. As I came to know something of his background I was made the custodian of a secret even he does not yet know, that his children will put on a special puppet show for him for Christmas. One knows that this will be almost all the recompense he will need.

The medical attention at the hospital was in every practical way exemplary. It was that sort of place but it is not what will always live on in my mind. The nurses come from all over the world. South Africans – Afrikaners and English, Australians ridiculously shy about their lovely robust accents, Germans, and the cosy English tones of girls from the United Kingdom.

Without exception those I encountered were dedicated, efficient, gently and endearing. One wondered at first how it could be done, but not for long.

Running like a thread through all the nursing were 'the Sisters'. Those special selfless women were the fabric upon which the whole tapestry of care was woven. I could hide behind that old cliché of the odiousness of comparisons but I will not resist the need to tell you of one or two of them who crystallise the whole aura of the place for me. First the Patrician (what is the feminine of Patrician?). Matrons calm, elegantly good mannered, yet concerned and involved. If one was looking for some inspiration for the portrayal of the face of Mother Mary after the death of Her Son, here were two women who would well do. Then the young ones.

It is difficult at first to identify them as being people apart for they dress and talk like all their colleagues and were involved in my case in all the onerous tasks of everyday nursing. But again one was not in doubt for long.

Let me write only of two of them. From time to time my rough-hewn friends have come rolling to see me out of the rigours of a Johannesburg Christmas. Without exception they said to me: 'Have

you seen that fantastically beautiful nurse outside in the office?' I always knew who they were talking of, for I have never seen such beauty illuminating a woman's face.

Of course, she was an attractive woman by any standards but serenity, humour, glowing love for humanity and just plain purity transported her beauty to Nazarean heights. The face that looked down at the Babe in the manger must have had these qualities and more.

And so to this morning and the intrusion of the world and the news headlines: 'The British Booze Up before Nemesis', the world's load of hatred and sin and selfishness. I was discussing them with one of the sisters, forgetting for some moments to whom I was talking. In contrast to my gloom and depression she was serene and hopeful.

'Doesn't it occur to you', she said 'that at this moment all the prayer that is going up could turn Geneva into the new hope of peace? It's just prayer than man can do it, and not giving in to man-made despair.

'God uses these occasions to help mankind towards His Kingdom. Just think what a dark world it was that the Christ child was born into'.

And suddenly it really is Christmas, and the sense of goodwill towards all men chokes in your throat. It could yet prove to be the best Christmas we have ever known...."

(This article was a private tribute to Chief Surgeon Tony Rankin – (who was a close friend over a span of some 17 years) – and the staff of the Kenridge Hospital.)

## **A Talk to the Foreign Affairs Association of Philadelphia.**

Whilst you are in South Africa you will undoubtedly be exposed to the mass media in one form or another, and so it would be valuable to you to learn something about them, their backgrounds, their history and their influence. In many ways they will differ from those of the United States quite markedly and in others you will be reminded of your own country. As a generalisation I think it is correct to say that South Africa more closely resembles the United Kingdom in its media than it does the United States. It is certainly nearer to the United Kingdom in many ways than are the other old Dominions of the old British Commonwealth like Canada and Australia. This is a statement that would surprise some South Africans as much as it may surprise

you. Many people assume that because of our history, because 64% of the White population have Afrikaans as their home language, that the mores of British life would be unacceptable. Unconsciously they have been accepted in the business world, and into other aspects of life, but not least of all into the media.

Where the real change is taking place of course, is in the way the media have had to adapt to the emergence, the development of the Black population of over 20 million people. The Black reader, listener, consumer is increasingly a factor; in some instances already the dominant factor to be reckoned with. By American standards there is a ridiculous dearth of media from the advertising point of view, but I am not persuaded that this is too serious a matter.

The dominant medium in South Africa is still the Press. If you use advertising revenue as a yardstick it clearly leads the field. It exceeds the next largest medium which is Television and Radio by at least 33 and  $\frac{1}{3}$ % still. The Press is in the hands of four major groups, two of which are orientated upon the English language and two upon the Afrikaans language. The largest group is the Argus Printing and Publishing Company, which prints newspapers in the English language, but seeks readership in all groups in the country. Politically it is opposed to the Government, but would be considered to be moderate in its overall stance. Incidentally, I should explain that newspapers are published regionally. The major cities: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, even Bloemfontein, Kimberley and East London have their own daily newspapers. The only newspaper which can be considered to be a national newspaper is the Sunday Times and to a lesser extent the Sunday Express of which more later. Back, however, to the Argus Group. Recently their newspapers aimed at Black readers was banned by the Government. One is not sure whether this was for what it said or for whom it employed. There was a strong reaction to this, both domestically and abroad, and one awaits further developments.

The other English language Press Group is the South African Associated Newspaper Group (SAAN), which also publishes papers in the major centres. Their most successful newspaper is probably the Sunday Times which I mentioned earlier. The newspapers of this Group are also politically opposed to Government. One detects a slightly different approach to the Black readership in these newspapers. They tend to invite Black readership to their White newspapers and one gets the impression that politically the Group is more "radical" than the Argus group.

The two Afrikaans newspaper groups are extremely interesting in that they are in strong competition with each other. One is based upon Cape Town, both financially and politically, but publishes newspapers in the Cape and the Transvaal (Johannesburg and Pretoria). They are, in general, supporters of the National Party which is in power, but this does not preclude them in recent times of being critical of details of Government policy and they tend to give space to the thoughts of the more "liberal", if that is the correct word, thinking supporters of Government.

You will be startled to learn that if you live in Pretoria, if you are bilingual and have the time, you could read at least six daily newspapers. I understand that in New York you would find it difficult to read two. There must be a moral in that somewhere.

Most of these newspaper groups publish magazines and there is a startling array of them. Whilst their fortunes fluctuate, they do not seem to make a reasonable living. Whilst I am talking about the print media, I should also mention the remarkable number of good specialist magazines which are available in South Africa. There is much more to the printed media than that, but I need to move on to something I know a little more about before you tend to drop off to sleep.

As in other countries in the world, the Hertzian era of electronics is seen in these dwindling years of the 20th Century as providing the principle communication medium of the future. In Africa as a whole it still has a considerable way to go, but in South Africa it is developing at a remarkable speed. Radio and Television have until recently been overwhelmingly in the hands of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. It faces a monumental task for if you exclude Namibia and only look at metropolitan South Africa, it provides something of the order of twelve separate services in a dozen languages. Apart from English and Afrikaans, it provides services in Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, South Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga and Venda. It provides programmes to people whose origins are in Mother India and Pakistan. It is interesting to note that the South African Broadcasting Corporation was an offspring in the 1930's of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and its structure – of a Chairman responsible to the people through a Minister of State, a Board and an Administration – closely resembles that of its mentor. Politically it is required to be neutral but like all organisations of its type everywhere in the world, it is constantly criticised for political bias one way or the other.

This is no time to indulge in politics, but I would like to expose you to some speculation about what the Electronic Media are doing and

can do for Africa, indeed to the World. You may be accounted fortunate that you have taken the electronic marvels of the Twentieth Century in your stride, you absorbed that ability to do so with your mother's milk – if that old fashioned system of communication is still in force in your country. We who stand to some extent upon the sidelines, can look at what is happening to you and depending on our age and disposition, find it either exciting or daunting. There has been an acceleration of development in every facet of human life in the last eighty years, and this phenomenon of acceleration is, in my view, linked to and indeed strongly influenced by the Electronic Media. We look at you from across the world and are in awe of what the picture shows us, because we are living in a continent in which living people span the whole history of man from the stone age to Electronic Man. In the context of the whole world have the Electronic Media drawn us closer together or have they compounded man's natural ability to misunderstand and mistrust his fellow man?

Forgive me if I try to illustrate the potential for good or ill by one particular development. It concerns the history of Sound Broadcasting in Africa. Within the span of my own professional career, I have seen sound broadcasting go – as far as the African is concerned – and I speak of all Africans from the Sahara southwards, from a remote expensive piece of white man's magic to an ordinary everyday necessity of life. It was brought about by what is now a very ordinary piece of electronic equipment – the transistor. Before the transistor a radio receiver was a cumbersome, delicate – expensive to buy and expensive to run – piece of furniture.

Thirty years ago the transistor miracle proved the ordinary man in the fields or the streets with a small (pocketsize) window on the world. Powered by cheap batteries, this hardy ubiquitous little box could be taken by him into the streets and fields and became as personal to him as his purse or his toothbrush. Suddenly Radio became the major medium of communication, entertainment and instruction for Africa as a whole. It no longer required literacy to allow a man to be in touch with the world. It is difficult, even now, to assess what the effect of this technological triumph upon the hearts and minds of Africa has been, but it is surely not an exaggeration to say that it must have played a major role in precipitating those hearts and minds into the Twentieth Century. Our inability to develop the rest of man's life to keep step with that transcendent fact may be a contributing reason for so much baffling confusion in men's minds at this moment in our history. One very interesting facet of the technical marvel of radio is

that radio proved to be particularly suited to the gifts of the African people. They did not need to be told that the great secret of addressing the microphone is to realise that you have an audience of one. You may be listened to by millions of individuals, but they all listen in isolation, encapsulated against any one else who may be listening with them. It is sometimes difficult to get this concept over to white broadcasters, particularly such people as politicians and parsons, but the inherited skills of a verbal culture make it easy for most black broadcasters to grasp. So we have this magnificent means of communicating; what a pity it is that we have not learnt to use it more successfully to help add to the sum of the world's understanding. I am not talking only about Africa. Let us look at one classic example of tragic inability to communicate effectively and I hope you will forgive me if I choose, cosily, a problem far away from these shores. Since the days of Cromwell – and probably before – the Irish and the English have been busy not communicating. After three or more centuries, the Irish view of the Englishman is basically of an arrogant upper class idiot. The Englishman's view of the Irishman tends to be of a feckless lower class idiot. Remember us with sympathy, we who have to span much wider gulfs than the Irish and the English.

Enough of Radio Broadcasting – this era is now dominated by Television. This is more true at present of other countries and of other continents than our own, but no doubt it will become more and more apparent here. And so potent is the potential of this medium that one begins to compare its possible effects with that of the Printing Press of Gutenberg in the 15th Century and wonder what it is going to do with mankind. Is Television a huge-eyed monster dominating the world's living-rooms with its baleful, flickering glare, debasing cultural values and brain-washing millions? Or is it a potent force for mass education, a powerful ally in the democratic processes? Or is there some neutral ground between the extremes of intellectual – elite hostility and the kind of enthusiasm that Marshall McLuhan used to generate?

You do not want to hear more of this philosophising from me, but I hope that I have said enough to illustrate that what may seem to be commonplace things to you can go to the very foundation of the African society of which we are a part.

In practical terms what is the situation as far as Television is concerned in South Africa? Well, at the moment it is rather in the same condition as Radio was before the advent of the Transistor. There is one highly successful – as far as audience size is concerned – channel which enjoys a popular almost saturation following with White,

Coloured and Asian viewers. The better off Black home has a Television set and as the electrification of Black homes proceeds – and it is proceeding apace – that number will increase markedly. To meet that increasing potential the SABC is in the process of developing a second Television Channel. This service will be in the Nguni and Sotho groups of languages and once the service is in operation, no doubt the incentive to own a Television service will increase. But as I have said, Television is still that expensive, delicate piece of furniture in the corner of the room. What will happen when a technological breakthrough brings Television into the same sort of ambit that the transistor radio now enjoys is a matter for considerable and for me at least, awesome speculation.

Until recently the SABC has enjoyed a virtual monopoly of the broadcasting medium, but the development politically of the Southern African sub-continent has already begun to dilute the position. One of the manifestations of the new South African Government policy has been the creation of new independent countries. Already three are in existence, the Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. A fourth may join them soon – the Ciskei. It is possible that one day there may be as many as a dozen. Each one of these independent countries – independent as far as South Africa is concerned if not the rest of the world – naturally will require to have its own broadcasting services both Radio and Television. They all have one characteristic in common, a large proportion of their population works and lives along the Witwatersrand and in Soweto. These people are legally citizens of their countries of origin and there is a need, a compulsion for these countries to broadcast to them.

I have the great privilege of helping one of these states to develop its broadcasting services and I hope I may indulge myself by telling you about Bophuthatswana, the land of the Tswana people. This is comparatively a new state – it is only in its fourth year and is one of the most economically viable small countries in Africa. It is rich in minerals producing about one third of the world's platinum and many other minerals including coal, diamonds and uranium. But its greatest asset is its people, highly intelligent, non-belligerent, good humoured and hardworking. By great good fortune they have produced a number of dedicated politicians, and a man of outstanding capability in their President, Lucas Mangope. The capital city is named Mmabatho, the Mother of the People, but it closely adjoins a town whose name resounds through the English speaking world – Mafeking. When Bophuthatswana was created, Mafeking was outside



it and was still a part of South Africa. Three years later at the request of the 12 000 White residents, it was incorporated into Bophuthatswana. This incredible achievement was a triumph for racial harmony that has gone almost unnoticed in the world.

Bophuthatswana has a Bill of Rights built into its constitution that mirrors the spirit of the American Constitution and racial discrimination is forbidden in that country. If I may be permitted an ironic remark, not only are its Black citizens protected from discrimination, but also the White citizens and that is something of a rarity in Africa. And so from out of Africa has yet again come something new. Dedicated men of all races are attempting a miracle out in the huge expanse of what was once part of the Western Transvaal and Northern Cape. Hospitals, schools and now a University are rising out of the veld. Even a new Capital City is being built with hope and faith in a successful future for Bophuthatswana in a continent whose future is problematic to say the least of it. Some quite remarkably original thinking has gone into the development of the State. To give you just one example, the University is based upon the philosophy that an academic qualification is not enough. One term out of three each year is devoted to practical work in the profession which the student will eventually pursue. Africa as you well realise needs practical people who can help to create for the continent a heritage of efficiency in all walks of life. I believe this experiment in Bophuthatswana is one of the most promising that I have known.

In the Broadcasting media, Bophuthatswana has established a national service which covers the country with a network of FM stations and broadcasts to its citizens within South Africa on Medium frequency. This service broadcasts in Tswana, English and Afrikaans. It also has a commercial radio service which broadcasts in English into the Republic of South Africa on Medium frequency. Eventually we hope to add a second national Radio network and at least one Television network which can be viewed both within Bophuthatswana and in the densely populated part of South Africa where many Tswanas live.

It is not in the realms of public entertainment, however, that Television will be an imported medium; for Bophuthatswana it is in the sphere of education. You will, I am sure, realise the need when I tell you that something of the order of 60% of the teachers of Bophuthatswana have what we call a junior school certificate, they do not have even a university entrance qualification, let alone a teaching degree or diploma. Radio and Television should be used to overcome

the shortage of teachers and this is what is planned. I have seen some excellent educational Television in the United States – much of it at 5 o'clock in the morning. Our educational programmes must be in prime time!

You, in the United States, are already in the era of Satellite Television, much of your cable television is or will be relaying signals which come to it from a satellite or satellites poised over the United States. Thus you are already exposed to dozens even scores of television channels. I hope you know how to absorb all this information, entertainment, comment, and just plain noise, satisfactorily. We in Africa are many years away from this kind of electronic environment and one prays that we will be ready for it when it comes. That North American guru of the Electronic Media, Marshall McLuhan coined the conception of the "Global Village". I must believe that the extraordinary creature man will create some New Renaissance out of the Electronic miracle but the process could well be an uncomfortable one to live through.

If my guess is right, the rate of change of mankind will accelerate in geometrical progression. Can man keep up? He seems to be going flat out already; where will he find the new intellectual acceleration from? This is the heritage of our time and even more so for our children's time and one can only look into the unknown with hope and confidence based upon the extraordinary powers of resilience that man has exhibited to date.

And yet: "Men in their generations are like the leaves of the trees. The wind blows and one year's leaves are scattered on the ground: but the trees burst into bud and put on fresh ones when the spring comes round". Who said that? Homer, 900 years before Christ. And he thought he had troubles!

### **A talk to SABC broadcasters.**

It is typical of me that I should begin talking to this gathering by telling you of an incident in the history of the English Service which is somewhat blasphemous. It happened at a time in my career that left a mark upon me and I think it is by no means inappropriate to this moment. Away back in 1949 the English Service operated regionally and the regions had a considerable degree of autonomy. Cameron McClure, who was the Johannesburg organiser of the English Service, was promoted to become the Head of a service which was being planned at that time and would one day emerge as Springbok Radio. I

inherited his post and was trying to pick up the threads of what the job was all about after two or three self-indulgent and rapturously happy years as a microphone man. Within the first two days of taking over the desk, upon it there appeared a piece of toilet paper. Written on it were the words "Comment on the A programme", that was the name by which the English Service was known in those days, and underneath the reference Hebrews Ch. 13: v8. I hurriedly looked up this reference and of course discovered that it was "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and for ever", quite a searing experience for a tyro administrator brought up in the odour of Anglicanism, but it had quite a twist to the end of the story. Strangely the correspondent had put his name and address on the piece of paper. After agonising about my reply I sent him a letter thanking him for his constructive comments on our programmes and hoping that he would continue to exhibit the same keen interest in our future plans. He wrote back a most charming and apologetic letter and the incident ended. Can you imagine, however, the frustration and irritation that engendered the initial action of that most unsatisfied customer?

Thus began my association with broadcasting with religious overtones, and perhaps it may have been a blessing for I was left with a strong sense of awareness of the listener out there. You will observe, I hope, that I refer to the listener in the singular. It is an axiom that has always ruled my approach to sound broadcasting and it is one I expound upon at the least encouragement when I have a captive audience of people who use the medium professionally. It is always true and in almost all circumstances, but never more true than in the context of religious broadcasting. What is more private than prayer? In my experience over the years, however, it has been a truth that many religious broadcasters have failed to grasp. And make no mistake about it, not only religious broadcasters. I was listening to an English Service Announcer the other day being interviewed upon the glories of his particular career. May I say an intolerably incestuous proceeding and this young man tended to diminish the importance of this truth. I realised why I had always found him an unsatisfactory performer.

So before I leave the topic may I reiterate, the radio listener listens in isolation even if he or she is sitting in a group. You will in your calling know how isolated deaf people become from their environment, more so I think than blind people. Contrari-wise when someone is getting at you through your ears this can be particularly effective and particularly personal. Do not sweethearts whisper into each others'

ears? When you listen you are not distracted by images except the ones you create in your own mind.

What a boon this can be for the sound broadcaster particularly when that broadcaster is concerned with matters of the heart and the spirit as you are. If you care to look a little more closely at the phenomenon I will indulge myself a little further. The plays of Shakespeare do not in my view readily lend themselves to the sound broadcasting medium. This could be because that incredibly skillful craftsman was writing for the theatre, he knew how to transport those groundlings down there in the pit or those courtiers arranged around the throne. They were viewing as well as listening and group psychology was called for. Contrast that phenomenon with his sonnets:

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate,

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May

And Summer's lease hath all too short a date...."

This is the very stuff of radio, and why? Because Shakespeare was addressing himself to a single person, whoever that person may have been.

Kim (Shippey – the incumbent Head of Service) has given me a wide brief and almost an invitation to indulge myself, but I will try to confine myself to those things that may be of interest to this gathering. In retrospect perhaps the most significant part of my career in broadcasting was that I was the Head of the English Service at the time when South Africa left the Commonwealth and became a Republic. Without dwelling too heavily upon this time I am sure you will remember or realise that this was a traumatic period for English speaking South Africans, and the English Service had a sensitive and important role to play. The old order was changing, South Africa had been a senior member of the Commonwealth, the SABC a highly honoured member of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Union. Events followed one upon another and I remember many incidents along the way. One poignant moment was the evening that General Smuts died.

The 'oubaas' was gone, the very personification of Commonwealth. I rushed into the studio wondering what we could do at short notice that was worthy and appropriate. Then I remembered; there was a minister of religion who stood out above all his contemporaries for his ability as a broadcaster. He was the Rev. Dr. J.B. Webb, "Joe Webb". If only I could find him. Inevitably by Murphy's Law he was not at home but by diligent search as the minutes ticked by I traced him to a dinner party somewhere in Johannesburg. Could he come to the tele-

phone? Yes he could. I poured out my problem to him and asked if he could come to the studio and redesign the epilogue to suit the occasion. Yes of course. There was a pause. 'Can you get into the record library?' he said. Yes I thought so. 'Well, find hymns number so and so and thus and thus. I will be there in fifteen minutes, and then I would like to have twenty minutes to compose my thoughts after that'.

And thus there came on the air the most moving, spontaneous, and professionally expert tribute by a masterly broadcaster.

So much of broadcasting is a gift. There is only a certain amount that you can learn. I remember with great joy my first years in the SABC just after the war when the English Service seemed to be particularly well endowed with tremendously gifted broadcasters.

The Head of the Service was Gladys Dickson, one of the most brilliant people who ever worked for the SABC. She was incapable of bad taste and she had a genius for inspiring young men to do great things.

But down at my level there were a number of chaps and women too who had a great deal to contribute. Some of them were to become world famous. At this moment I am thinking of one of them whose name was Dennis Mitchell, destined to become one of the world's greatest TV documentary men. He used to sit crouched over his typewriter deep in thought seemingly doing nothing. I remember being sent with him to do a feature programme about Potgietersrus or Warmbaths or somewhere along the North Road. In my busy bossy way I interviewed the Burgermeester, the Town Clerk, the two dominees, the Head Master of the School and so on, and returned to the hotel to find Denis Mitchell seemingly where I had left him on the stoep looking dreamily down the main street. I rattled off the list of all the interviews I had done and said to Denis, "Did you have any luck?", probably slightly accusatively. He said, 'Just a little. I recorded an old chap who was once a highwayman and held up the Soutpansberg Coach'. There is no substitute for flair in this profession.

One of the many pleasures that I remember from my English Service days was that I used to sit on the Religious Advisory Committee for Broadcasting and made many friendships which were dear to my wife and myself. I remember so well a charming young man who was the secretary to the Anglican sub-committee. He was the chaplain at St. Albans school at the time. How delighted we were subsequently to know him as Timothy, our Bishop of Johannesburg.

But perhaps my association with that committee provided me with one of my most memorable broadcasting experiences. The year was 1963 and the representative of the Roman Catholic Church had heard

that my wife and I were contemplating a holiday trip to Europe beginning in Rome. He very charmingly arranged for us to be present at one of Pope John's audiences. Our contact was to be a Monseigneur Deskur, Head of the Vatican Television and Radio Services. And so upon a day in 1963 we arrived in Rome and prepared ourselves to meet the Monseigneur and subsequently Pope John, but alas the Pope was ill. Nevertheless Monseigneur Deskur invited us to present ourselves at the Vatican to see over the Vatican's Broadcasting Organisation. Jack Dunlop, a colleague of ours on the English Service was also holidaying in Rome and so we three presented ourselves to the Monseigneur in his office; the office of the Head of the Broadcasting Service. It was a white monastic room, bare except for a very functional desk and one large illuminated scroll upon the wall in Latin. This was the Charter of the Broadcasting Service. That room had once been occupied by Palestrina. We heard to our alarm that in fact the Pontiff was dying and the slender white-clad aesthetic man before us was engaged in preparing Television and Radio coverage for this world shattering event. Monseigneur Deskur was a Pole – he is, by the way, a Cardinal now – and his English was particularly strange, slow and stilted. He told us that he had learnt it clandestinely by listening to shortwave broadcasting during the various occupations of his homeland during the war.

He invited us to step down from his office into the studios. And suddenly we were precipitated back into our world again. Figures clad in monklike habits were rushing around manipulating lights and cameras and dollies and microphones. A scene of 20th century organised chaos. Those men were preparing for a massive broadcasting operation, both TV and Radio, with all the professional skills of their secular brothers. But it was taking place within the seclusion of a world dedicated to contemplation and devotion. A greatly humbling but inspiring experience. When we left them we drove our little car around the precincts of the Vatican for a long time, reluctant to break the spell of what we had seen.

In our subsequent days in Italy we saw the drama unfold on the Television screens. At the time of the funeral we were staying in a small, inexpensive pensione in Venice and the little family who ran it permitted us to sit in their private room with them. The family themselves were on their knees before the Television set, turning the moment into an act of devotion. We thought back to those scurrying figures in the Vatican that we had seen a few days before and felt we were face to face with a Twentieth Century miracle. There are

moments, many moments, when broadcasting can bring you fulfillment that few other professions can.

Of course, it can play the most dastardly tricks on you too. For years I had dined out on the famous gaffe perpetrated by a BBC announcer back in the 1930's who, after announcing the first news of the abdication of King Edward VIII, proceeded to announce as the next record a selection from "The Merry Wives of Windsor". It couldn't happen to me, I thought. But one day a newsman dashed into my office with an announcement of the engagement of the Princess Elizabeth to the Prince Phillip. The announcement was to go out at once. Self-importantly I dashed down to the studios, burst in, quelled the proceedings and announced the engagement and waved the announcer on duty to resume the programme. He announced "Bess you is mah woman now". The programme I had interrupted was devoted to the music of "Porgy and Bess". 'Well', said the announcer, 'it was the next record on the turntable'.

I remember vividly the first Christmas that we had after South Africa had become a Republic. The English Service listener had been used to a "Round the Commonwealth" broadcast, which reached a climax each year with the annual Christmas Day Broadcast of the Monarch. This would happen no more, so what should we do in its place? After taking great thought, I came to the conclusion that we should do an epic programme on moments in man's history when he stepped out into the unknown. Professor Raymond Dart would recall that moment in man's history when he rose above his primitive surroundings – not, incidentally, the moment when he discovered how to make fire, but when sitting on a log he pushed himself off from the bank and floated into a new element, all very appropriate because the space age had only just begun. I tried to think of times and places in our own history of South Africa when we had taken significant steps forward. The Great Trek was easy and it was appropriate, of course, to turn our thoughts to the saga of the English Settlers in the Eastern Cape. Then I had a really bright idea. What about old Bartholemew Diaz, wading ashore in Algoa Bay and setting up a cross in the dunes? So off to Grahamstown I went, consoling myself with the thought that we had one of our most senior script writers stationed there, who was steeped in Settlers lore.

So on a day the Regional Director, the script writer, and I drove along the tumbled sands of Algoa Bay until we reached the mound upon which a Diaz Cross had once been raised. We climbed the mound and looked out to sea. The surf came gently up the beach. For

once it was not blowing a howling gale. I addressed myself to my colleague: 'Richard' said I, 'I want you to sit here for twenty minutes and think back to that moment when Diaz and his men came struggling up that beach with the Cross. What was in their minds? Were they not on the edge of the world? They must have felt they were bringing light into a dark world.' My colleague grunted non-committally and I left him to think about what he had to say.

Twenty minutes later we returned. 'Are you ready to record' said I. 'No' said he. 'Why not?' said I. 'I have sat here like a charlie for twenty minutes and all I could think about was that tanker away out there on the skyline' said he. 'I can't think what you are trying to get at'.

Well we had come a long way to that spot and I had my heart on this piece so I said, 'Well you go for a walk and I'll have a shot'. I cannot remember now how good or bad the idea eventually became but it was a terribly deflating moment. But better things were to follow that day. We went to the village of Salem, the scene of one of the great moments in Settler history when the little settlement found itself surrounded by the warring impis of the Xhosa people. When we arrived the little place was basking in the warm summer sunshine. I remember as I walked around the graveyard surrounding the little church coming upon a Boomslang sunning itself on a flat tombstone. The little church still retained its cowdung floor and we looked out at the village green with its cricket pitch – one of the oldest in Africa I believe. It was from here that the tiny community sent messengers up the steep hillside to talk to the impis and find out what they wanted. The answer came back "Food". So the women baked bread and the small collection of people prepared food and up the hillside returned those two messengers; one a member of the Gush family and one symbolically was named I think Coetzee. He was a transport rider. They handed the food over and miraculously the impis moved on. Now this was just the stuff for my colleague Richard; he really found this was something that switched him on and he produced a lovely evocative piece. That Christmas programme is now sunk without trace but at the time it seemed to be so important. One should never forget what an ephemeral medium radio is. You don't get a second chance.

It is perhaps this ephemeral quality that has always appealed to my Celtic make-up. Anyone who was Welsh and spent his boyhood in the late twenties and thirties in South Wales has an inborn caution about life but death we seemed to understand. Our jokes are mostly about death and the chapel, not necessarily in that order. But we always seemed to be familiar with death; it seemed almost cosy to us. There is



the story of the little band of Pembrokeshire people filing past the coffin of one of the elders of the chapel. One little lady, Miss Griffiths, said to the other, Mrs Hughes, as she looked down into the coffin, 'there's well dear Dai looks; that fortnight he had at Barry did him a lot of good'!

May I say in conclusion what a pleasure it is to be back with my old, or rather young, colleagues who in my view are doing a splendid job of work. I believe that the standard of Sound Broadcasting in South Africa is as high as anywhere in the world and I am delighted to think that the English Service sets such a splendid example to its peers within South Africa. Long may it last.

*Sir James Redmond, a former Director: Engineering at the BBC was visiting from England in 1980 to deliver the Bernard Price lecture.*

### **Henry Howell's Reply:**

"As an ordinary man who only dimly discerns the Electronic frontiers of Broadcasting that you, Sir James, have been exploring for us tonight, but whose professional life has been spent in Broadcasting, may I say how impressive and arresting are the insights that you have shared with us. We have received a glimpse of the astounding work that is being done by Scientists and Technologists; work which gives new dimensions and new capabilities to this business of Communication so that Broadcasters, Politicians, Dramatists, Philosophers and Academics – but not necessarily in that order – can speak to the people. I do not want to cast a shadow on this illuminating talk, but I must confess to a profound fear of what all those people are going to do with your gifts. Even now, the speed at which we can all communicate seems to me only to add to confusions in men's minds. We fill ourselves with myriads of slightly or indeed largely inaccurate impressions of what is going on in the world and in the minds of our fellow human beings.

One cannot but be inspired and heartened by the achievements of the Scientists and Engineers and their communications miracles, but I have grave doubts about people like myself who have had the job of using these technical marvels. Perhaps one example of what I mean will suffice. I have never lost my awe of the effect that the Transistor had upon the world of Radio. Those of us who have been involved in Broadcasting in Africa saw at first hand what the transistorised radio did in the 50's and 60's to the social habits – and therefore the political habits of the ordinary African man in the street or in the fields. For the

first time he could take the world with him so inexpensively and so portably. Suddenly he was not only in the world, but of the world and for good or ill he had joined the Twentieth Century. When Television becomes as ubiquitous and accessible as Radio, then surely we shall witness a revolution in men's minds such as not even the great leap forward which followed the Gutenberg miracle of the 15th Century, or the Sound Radio miracle of the first half of this Century can be compared to.

Can we possibly conceive what the effect of it all will be? Will Television provide a potentially cataclysmic advance in the fields of education and human understanding? Will it widen the potential of man's intellect and increase his wisdom and capacity for peace? Or will it create a better world for 'J.R. Ewing' to live in – or die in? Shall we enjoy only endless vistas of 'Sha Na Na'? I can only say that if it is to be the latter, will you kindly use your knowledge and skill to stop this planet to permit me to step off it.

I know, Sir James, this is not the first responsibility of the Scientist and the Engineer. The Challenges that you have put to us are primarily for the Philosopher, the Educator, the Politician and even confused Broadcasters like myself to meet, but can not you Scientists give a hand in that area too? Your clinical and analytical – I almost said digital – minds might fruitfully take a thought about that.

Sir James, thank you again for sharing your visions with us; may we have the vision to use these gifts wisely.....

On behalf of all of us present I thank you for a most thought provoking and memorable experience."

### **Address to the Marketing Research Association.**

I am sure everyone will want me to congratulate SAMRA on a first-class conference. May I say that these two days have been not only most interesting, but most enjoyable and valuable in every way. It is not only a great honour to be asked to talk to you at this banquet, but rather a daunting experience. I should warn SAMRA that they are in danger of creating a reputation for eccentricity. Their first speaker had no time for Market Research, and what this last speaker knows about Market Research is positively dangerous! This adventure at Sun City started for me on Saturday when I had the pleasure of attending the fight between Coetzee and Weaver. It is a sign of advancing years that I find it difficult to remember that I once was the SABC's English Service and Springbok Radio's boxing commentator!

I have listened with great attention during these few days we have been together to a number of high level discussions and I am confirmed in my belief that the level of Research of all kinds in South Africa is of a remarkably high standard – disproportionately high for a country of our size and complexity. I believe we have every reason to be proud of the Research Industry in South Africa and I see in it a possible role for Research in the future which transcends the role which it is playing now. And so to my tale.

Three weeks ago I had the privilege of hearing Sir James Redmond, until recently Director of Engineering with the BBC, deliver the 1980 Bernard Price Lecture. The technological advances he described in Broadcast Engineering will in the very near future make Television as ubiquitous and as pervasive as Sound Radio. Marshall McLuhan's Global Village will soon become the Global Tenement. If that thought does not terrify you, let me tell you what the effect of the transistor was upon Sound Radio....

Suddenly the man in the street, the man in the fields, had a window on the world. The 20th Century had arrived and was beginning to communicate with him. Suddenly those men were not only in the world, but also of the world and we all know what the political effect of that was upon Africa.

I have a fixation that one of the world's greatest problems is the speed at which we can now communicate with one another. This phenomenon instead of adding to the sum of the world's happiness, only adds confusion to men's minds. To put it very briefly, we collect more biased, processed, inaccurate information about subjects we don't really need to know about than we can possibly absorb. This applies as equally to the so-called sophisticated people as it does to the simple, dare one say, primitive peoples of the world. We are all so full of misinformation about the world and it leads us into error.

Let me first of all share with you an experience I had some years before I retired from the SABC. At that time only the Commercial Services paid serious attention to listenership figures, but the non-Commercial Services were encountering difficulties with a section of their listeners who seemed to have disappeared. With some reluctance they consulted us about the problem. When we looked at it, in one of those rare manifestations of head counting research, not only did the problem stand out from the figures, but they even indicated what to do to solve the problem.

The solution as it happened had some hairy political overtones, but with great good sense and courage the suggested solution was

accepted at the highest level of the Corporation and I believe that the SABC's effectiveness in this area was materially improved. The incident left a marked impression on me and I have ever since had a desire to read more into listenership and later viewership figures than simply whether "Verbode Liefde" should be taken off the air, or how riveting is "Sha Na Na" to the people on the Turffontein bus.

This feeling encourages me to share some doubts and fears I have about our world, because I believe that people such as you could and should do more than you choose or are permitted to do to reduce the confusion in men's minds about themselves and about their fellow men.

This splendid work that you are engaged in tends to provide information that describes your respondents in the most minute detail. How old he or she is, what language he speaks, what percentage of him is female, whether she is a housewife, where they live, how much they earn and so on and so on. There she stands, poised at the supermarket shelf agonising about which striped toothpaste to buy. We know everything about her, except what is really going on in her mind.

Let me deviate for a moment from this train of thought. I am sure everyone of us here tonight is dedicated to the cause of Democracy and would like to strengthen it and make it more efficient as we approach the end of the 20th Century. Democracy began to emerge as a recognisable ideology in the 18th Century and the processes of the Democratic system were invented in the 18th and 19th Centuries. For over a year now we have been witnessing the Democratic system at work in a weird, almost fatuous trauma, which is the American Presidential Election, and unless I am much mistaken this is an unedifying prospect. That great Democratic country has been emasculated and immobilised for months on end by a process of Democracy which was probably tremendously clever in 1777 when it evolved. But we are living in the 20th Century. Democracy stands challenged by other powerful ideologies whose processes were developed in the 20th Century at least 150 years later than the American Revolution. Those farmer soldiers who defeated George III could never have imagined the world we live in and so we see this curious archaic spectacle played out before the eyes of the world. No doubt those chaps did a great job on George III, but how successful are their descendants with Mr. Breshnev? Or with the Ayotollah Khomeini?

If you were an unsophisticated African or Asian, would you be impressed by what you saw of Democracy in the '80's? I submit with humility that the processes of Democracy need to be jerked into the

20th Century. What applies to the United States applies in greater or lesser degree to the rest of us. The Democratic processes are more important than just to provide the mass media with endless copy with which to disport themselves.

Now what has that to do with you or me? Well, I believe that the tools you and other Research people around the world are fashioning should be harnessed to the cause of Democracy. I am aware that anyone who suggests that there is something wrong with Democracy is in danger of being considered an outcast of society, a political heretic, or worse, so I hasten to stress that it is only the machinery that I am dubious about and not the principle. We should use your skills to strengthen and simplify, to clarify the processes which provide us with Government of the people, by the people and so on.

You are no doubt sitting there saying to yourself that all this is being done already; there are two or three surveys a week being conducted in the United States at this moment. With incredible impertinence I would say to you that these are the kind of surveys that give Research a bad name.

Just to give you an example. In the U.S.A. between August 26 and 28 – note the time span – a survey based on a national sample of 1,644 registered voters was conducted. It was claimed that this sample had only a plus or minus 3% error in it. From what seems to be a minute sample, forecasts were made not only of how Mr. Reagan and President Carter and Mr. Anderson stood overall, but how they would do State by State, Region by Region, amongst males and females and a host of other details. Not only how many voters were pro, but how many were anti. I know Wally Langschmidt has long despaired of explaining to me how Research works, but like the lady who saw the ostrich for the first time ... I just don't believe it.

And as the weeks have gone by, survey after survey has made similar claims. Are the American people as volatile, as easily stampeded, as these surveys would have us believe? Can last night's appearance on Television switch people's allegiances as facilely as they would have us believe? Or will the American voter go to the ballot box and vote stolidly for the man of his choice despite what the surveys or even what he may himself have said to the Research Field Worker?

Last week the Australian polls were forecasting with some confidence that Prime Minister Fraser would be defeated in the Australian Election. The result? Ian Fraser was returned with a not insignificant majority.

All around the world we see examples of governments losing touch

with the basic feelings of their people. The Shah of Persia was but one example. Nearer home, it seems probable that Ian Smith, the British Government, General Walls, et al, persuaded themselves that Bishop Muzorewa would win the Zimbabwe Election. There may be examples of lack of real information nearer to hand than those. I will content myself with one class example of man's tragic inability to communicate. Let us cosily choose an example as far away from our own shores as we can get.

Since the days of Cromwell – and before – the Irish and the English have been busy not communicating. After three or more Centuries of trying to understand each other, the Irish view of an Englishman is basically of an arrogant upper class idiot. The English view of the Irishman tends to be of a feckless lower class idiot. It is not easy any more to be light hearted about this problem.

Proximity does nothing to help us understand each other so, in desperation, we look around for ways of reducing the ignorance and therefore the prejudice against each other that could present grave dangers to the Democratic way of life. At the moment, Electorates all round the world are being forced to choose more and more between personalities, not basic policies. Few Governments seem to know what are the real aspirations of their people. So where can we turn to? I think that the Research Industry could well be the answer, but it needs wide breadth of imagination ... we must research the Research and find arresting new ideas. The man or men who do it might well be the first Nobel Prize winners in Marketing that Prof. Lipstein was speculating about yesterday.

As far as Southern Africa is concerned, here we have a body that seems to unify, to co-ordinate, the Research Industry in our country. It is non-political, totally objective. Why not consider adding another dimension to your Market Research, put the academics together with the practitioners, the qualities with quantities and build up a body of information in depth about ourselves that could give guidelines to our political systems that we can depend upon?

We need to give ourselves a new vision. Our lives may well depend upon it. I say to you: "Give the people vision lest they perish".

## **Communication and the History of Man.**

May I say that it is a pleasure to be here today even though one is somewhat daunted to be addressing what sounds like such a professional body.

Even under the simplest of circumstances, choosing a subject to talk about these days can be a hazardous business. Back in the good old days before every dawn brought a world shattering event for us to think about, it must have been quite a job for newspaper editors to find topics to write their editorials about and speakers must have been at a loss to find subjects to talk about, but it was probably quite simple to know which were the good topics and which, on the other hand, were the bad ones. A surefire formula would surely have been to come out against the man-eating shark and stand in favour of motherhood. In these confusing times you will hardly be astonished to recognise that being against the man-eating shark and being in favour of motherhood could put one into an untenable position.

The man-eating shark is, for all I know, an endangered species; it could represent a vital link in the balance of nature and an irreplaceable element in marine ecology. Motherhood, on the other hand, as we are constantly being told, is a function which is leading us to overpopulation, worldwide starvation and other evils too numerous to mention.

There has not, as far as I know, been a Gallup poll on man-eating sharks versus motherhood, but if I were running for Parliament I would be very careful not to offend those in favour of the man-eating shark. I would like to share with you first a conviction I have that those of us who are involved in Broadcasting are deeply privileged to be taking part in one of the most miraculous developments in the whole history of mankind. I also believe that those events are connected with man's ability to communicate with his fellow-men and I believe that you and I are involved in communication so I hope you will find my theories interesting.

I suppose there is not likely to be any escape from talking to you about Television. The fact that this must be the most over-discussed subject in South Africa at the moment does not give one any possibility of escape. I intend, however, to try to avoid discussing the charms or otherwise of its programmes. I want to examine with you some of its more philosophical and perhaps most important aspects. The advent of Television is one of the most important events in the history of man, and if you think that is a rather florid sort of statement perhaps you will let me defend myself.

My argument begins 50 000 years ago when man lived in a cave. 50 000 years sounds an unconscionably long time but if you compute that an average lifetime of man is 62 years, it was only 800 lifetimes ago that man began to live in a cave. And the ridiculous fact is that he

continued to do so for 650 of those lifetimes. He began to emerge from the cave only 150 lifetimes ago. He battled on unable to communicate in any other way but verbally for another 80 lifetimes. Yes, it was only 70 lifetimes ago that he invented the system of writing things down. Here we have Important Event No. 1. Man could now communicate his thoughts and his knowledge to people he would never see. People who came after him didn't have to reinvent everything, it was already recorded and so knowledge and technology grew. Very slowly of course but man began to build up knowledge about himself and the world he lived in.

Thirty-two lifetimes ago Christ was born into the world. I expect he sometimes seems to be a remote figure when you think of his birth as nearly two thousand years ago. But when you think of him as only 32 lifetimes away it's a very different matter. Here is Important Event No. 2 and from here things begin to become exciting.

Only during the last six lifetimes has it been possible for masses of ordinary men to see the printed word – that's about 375 years ago – but let's keep thinking in lifetimes it's easier and more exciting. And what followed upon that important event was the spread of the Renaissance across Europe. The Reformation and a whole host of great works that changed the whole course of our lives. I won't stop to expand on that printing press but it was probably the most important event since the birth and life of Christ. Only during the last four lifetimes did it become possible to measure time with any degree of precision. Only during the last two lifetimes has anyone anywhere used an electric motor. Hold on to your seats. The overwhelming majority of all material goods we use in every day life today have been developed within the present – the 800th lifetime – my lifetime very nearly. You can now see how important a single life is. Let me express that story in another way just to make it even more exciting. The world today is as different from the world into which I was born as that world was from the world of Julius Caesar.

You probably think I'm a bit of a nut I expect, but what I have said to you is absolutely true. Now I hope I'm not going to confuse you from this point onwards because I'm going to try and relate all that stuff to us and our lives. It seems probable that this present lifetime – let's call it the 800th lifetime – marks a complete break with all past human history because in our lifetime the boundaries have burst. Everything that happens in the world immediately reacts upon everything seems to be happening at once. And now we come to the nub of the matter. Many clever people have said modern life is shaped more



by all the instant ways we have of communicating with each other than any other force. Those ways of course are the telephone, the radio, and the Television. Millions of people saw Neil Armstrong step on to the moon at the exact moment that he did it. Not only was the event important but the fact that millions and millions of people all over the world saw him do it at that exact moment is almost more important.

Every evening for years on end people watched the day's events in the War in Vietnam on Television and so people in Peking and Washington and London and Moscow and a thousand other places all had a personal reaction to an event taking place thousands of miles away from them. And so the speed at which things change grows greater and greater. This may not worry you as much as it disturbs me but then you are near the beginning of your lifetime and I am nearer to the end of mine and you may find the 800th lifetime perfectly normal and natural – I find it a bit scary.

Now I'm sure I don't have to emphasise what an important part Television is going to play in all our lives, for you and I will sit in our own homes each evening and watch the world pulsating before us. Television has some marvellous things about it, its plays, its sport, its funny programmes, its interesting documentary programmes and all that, but its most important function is that it lets the world into your sitting room. And if the invention of the printing press caused the rate of knowledge of the world to increase what on earth is Television going to do to us? To say nothing of the permanent effect those TV dinners are going to have on your indigestion.

The effects of Television will not be obtained by studying Television alone. There are a hundred different areas of life that need to be studied, for example, child development, the psychology of perception, what factors play a part in moral development. The field is so vast and so unplumbed that this is likely to produce more opinions than statistics. But it is in the areas of the unfamiliar, the uncertain and the unknown that Television may have its maximum effect on attitudes and values. There is need for great caution in the use of the words 'good' and 'bad' for those words are indications of value positions, moral or otherwise. Just to give one example of how uncertain are the effects of Television upon its audience. A British TV company broadcast a series called "The Nature of Prejudice". Research showed that audience members saw in the programme what was uppermost in their minds rather than what the programme itself stressed most. I won't dwell on this too long but it would be ironic indeed if it were

found that the way in which problems were presented by Television led to a reaction which expressed itself in Television being blamed for the existence of the problems.

In this sort of way we could look at the political effects of Television. Does it or does it not undermine the processes of Democracy? I'll not expand upon this hot potato but trust that you will discern the profound potential that the medium must have upon the matter. We could look at its effect upon the Arts. There is an idea that one can classify works of art in three or more kinds. In traditional formulations they tend to be referred to as 'lowbrow', 'middlebrow' and 'highbrow'. And along with these labels goes the notion that 'highbrow' is intrinsically aesthetically superior to the lower sorts. I am sorry to be asking questions and not answering them but it is only possible today to sketch the problems, not postulate answers. In any case the answers have eluded cleverer men than me so I will take refuge in the thought that very often it is some technological advance that resolves or exacerbates the sociological or the philosophical dilemma.

## **The Primary Function of the SABC.**

The primary function of the SABC is to provide programmes for listeners. It must do this with the utmost efficiency and as economically as possible as far as the people of South Africa are concerned. When one considers that the Corporation provides thirteen separate internal services in nine languages and that this remarkable fount of entertainment and information is enjoyed by listeners for little more than 10c per day, some measure is gained both of the problem and the achievement. It was realised as long as twenty years ago that to permit the Corporation to develop in step with the needs of listeners and to keep the licence fees within reasonable bounds would call for sources of revenue other than those provided by the licence fees. Having studied the problem with care it was decided to introduce advertisements into certain of the programme services which would supply this additional revenue.

The first experiment was the introduction of **Springbok Radio**, which this year celebrated its twentieth anniversary. It began as a Regional programme for the Transvaal only but swiftly its impact became so great that it was extended to give national coverage within a short space of time. It is remarkable to look back from 1970 when radio advertising has become a multi-million rand business and is

probably the most effective and inexpensive advertising medium in the Republic to an era when the newly-appointed administrative staff faced immense problems in selling this new concept, in advertising, to the South African business men. The advertising profession was made up in those days of people who were extremely experienced in the visual forms of advertising, press, cinema, and hoardings – and who knew the results achieved by them.

But to most of them Broadcasting was an unknown quantity, and they were, understandably, loath to advise their clients to invest in this new, and, as yet, unproved medium. The situation was saved by the fact that many of the major advertisers had American affiliations and these men were fully aware of the traumatic potential of Broadcasting as an advertising medium. Thus a start was made with those companies who had either the experience or the foresight to buy time on the new medium in the fullest confidence that the expenditure would be justified. All the sponsors in those early days did not, however, fall into this category. Many of the smaller advertisers were attracted by the novelty of the new medium and even when it was expanded to a National Network continued to support the medium and thus reap its benefits. One example should suffice. In the year 1950 a small jeweller with one shop in Joubert Street, Johannesburg, decided to concentrate upon Broadcasting as his medium of advertising. As Springbok Radio grew, the growth of this concern ran parallel and today Sterns the Jewellers controls a nation-wide chain of shops with branches abroad. The Management of the company has stated quite categorically that their success is attributable directly to Broadcast Advertising as they continue to use the medium extensively.

Historically the next service to introduce advertisements was **Radio Bantu** which started cautiously to make them available in January 1962. This was, again, a completely new concept for the advertiser. The Bantu Press was quite well established and carried some weight of advertising – mostly in English. Broadcasting offered an opportunity to reach the Bantu in his own language and by means of the spoken word. The significance of this becomes clear when one considers that only approximately 50% of the Bantu are literate.

The major advertisers immediately realised the vast potential of this new medium and gave it their whole-hearted support. There were the Jonahs too, of course, who were filled with the direst forebodings and forecast that this new service would never attract listeners for a variety of reasons, among them, that the “Bantu” would not be able to afford an FM set. I shall be giving you more statistical information

later on in my talk, but I should tell you at this point that a recent survey of listenership reveals that Radio Bantu has an evening peak time listenership of one million six hundred thousand listeners; that during the course of a day nearly three million Bantu listen to the various Bantu Services.

Then in 1964 the Corporation introduced the first of its Regional Services, **Radio Highveld**, to be followed by **Radio Good Hope** and **Radio Port Natal**. An all-night service was introduced and all these programmes contained advertisements.

Now what does this mean to the economic life of our country? I am sure you would all agree that, properly controlled, advertising is vitally important to oil the wheels of our economy. It is a fact that in the field of consumer goods, broadcast advertising is a particularly potent medium for it has special virtues, which other media do not possess. Through its use of the spoken word it enters the homes and private lives of our people. It produces action by the consumer by virtue of the fact that it employs that most natural, friendly, sincere, persuasive, personal and above all, the most easily understood means of communication – the Human Voice. In economics it is said that the value of money depends on the speed at which it circulates. One authority has extended this thought by saying that the efficacy or power of words and ideas, equally depend on the speed at which they circulate. It is for this reason that broadcasting, during the relatively short period of its existence, has caused as profound a revolution as did the discovery of printing in its time.

Perhaps you will permit me to elaborate upon the power of broadcasting a little more, for it is this power which is made available to the business men through the broadcast of his advertisements. Radio has erased boundaries that had been in existence for centuries before its inception. The boundary, for instance, between the literate and the illiterate sections of the community. Today the non-reader can be as well-informed as most members of the reading public purely by listening to his radio set. To be "well-informed" is no longer synonymous with being well read.

The radiated spoken word has wiped out the boundaries between urban and rural areas. Through the immediacy of Radio the farmer, days away by rail from the nearest city, can be as well informed as his city cousin.

The emotional appeal of the spoken word need hardly be stressed. I need not tell you that many South African families arrange their daily activities around their favourite programmes. The housewife plans

her housework around her favourite serials, children leave their play to listen to a special programme. When into this compelling environment advertising is introduced, the effects can be dynamic.

Because of this powerful weapon which broadcasting can put at the disposal of the advertiser there is a particular responsibility upon the SABC to ensure that the medium is not abused. Apart from a stringent set of regulations which govern the acceptance of advertisements the SABC maintains a constant vigilance over the quality and quantity of advertisements it broadcasts. For instance the advertisements on Radio Bantu are limited to essential services and products, so that listeners are not encouraged to dissipate their monies on non-essential or luxury items. On the other services, to cite some more examples, the SABC does not accept claims for medicine with which the S.A. Medical Council would not agree; or advertisements from members of professions in which it is deemed unethical to advertise or advertisements from morticians or matrimonial agencies and the like.

Looked at from the business man's point of view, however, the great gift that Radio advertising gives him is "value for money". As you probably know the cost of advertising is gauged by the number of people that it reaches. This is termed the "cost per thousand" – i.e. per thousand listeners or readers, depending upon the medium. This cost per thousand in South African Radio is around the figure of 20c per thousand for Europeans and half that figure for the Bantu peoples, figures which compare very favourably with that of other media. Furthermore the SABC expends many thousands of rand annually upon an independent research into, and analysis of, the listenership to all its services. This information is available to the advertising profession and to the advertisers. The information given not only tells the advertiser how many listeners he can expect but also details of his language, age, sex, where he lives, what he earns and so on. This is a valuable guide to the advertiser in gauging how best to spend his money. No other advertising medium provides such comprehensive information to its clients.

Thus the advertiser, well aware of the strength of broadcasting as an advertising medium, has bought up almost every available piece of time on all the services which are open to him. He reaches daily through those services which carry advertising, one million seven hundred thousand Europeans, two million eight hundred thousand Bantu, one hundred and fifty thousand Asiatic people and four hundred thousand Coloureds. That makes a total of over *Five Million* advertising contacts every day.

Some measure of the growth of these services is given by the increase in revenue over the years. In 1960 the revenue received from advertising by the SABC was just over R800,000; in 1969 this figure had reached nearly eleven and a half million rand. It has achieved this without in any way detracting from the revenue of other media.

Thus over the years there has grown up between the South African Broadcasting Corporation and the public sector of the Republic, particularly with the commercial sector, a mutual respect for each others needs. The SABC has always appreciated goodwill it has received from its clients, and from its side, whilst protecting the needs of the South African public, it has done its best to provide an efficient advertising medium at reasonable cost”.

In July 1989 Henry was asked by “Radio Today” for his tribute to **Clark McKay** who had passed away the night before:

“Clark McKay, who was of course known to us all as Clacky, was an Australian by birth and he first came to Africa as a broadcaster to join Davenport & Meyer who were the people who ran Lourenco Marques Radio in those years. He very quickly established himself as a very pleasant and likeable broadcaster, I think, basically, because he was a very pleasant and a very likeable person and these qualities came across to his very many listeners.

He joined the SABC and he served on Springbok Radio and quickly built up a very affectionate and loyal following. One of the most memorable things about him to me was not only his very considerable success on the microphone, but that he was such a splendid staff man. He was loved by everybody on the staff, he was always cheerful and he was always hard-working. He got on with it, he didn’t grumble or moan about anything, he just got on and did his job, and I must say that it seems to me a very great loss to sound broadcasting that this dear chap has died.”

Henry – in company with Hugh Rouse, Taubie Kushlick and Des and Dawn Lindberg – was asked to say a few words at **Michael Silver’s** ‘farewell party’. One could well call it a wake for Michael had left a request in his Will for a large party to be held at the Inanda Club. It was a very large gathering, movingly starting and ending with a lone Piper. Henry’s eulogy once again indicates how very capable he was of expressing himself warmly and with feeling:

“At moments like this, when one is facing the loss of a friend and colleague, one stops to think of life, of the passing years, and the sad-

ness of his loving ones who are facing a time of loneliness and emptiness. But most of all one looks back at the man who filled such a unique and important role in the history of broadcasting in South Africa.

Looking back on Michael's professional life, one marvels at the amount he achieved. One discovers again the incredible length of his career. He far outstripped the history of Commercial Broadcasting in South Africa for his career goes back to the war in the Middle East. Whilst recovering from a wound sustained in the Tank Regiment he helped to launch the Middle East Forces Broadcasting Service. He was associated with such men as Norman Corwen.

After the war he wrote and produced for Radio Luxembourg, probably the leading Commercial radio service in Europe. His gifts lay in the field of writing and producing radio plays and serials. It was in 1947 that he arrived in South Africa, three years before Springbok Radio was introduced by the SABC. There was a popular radio service broadcasting out of Lourenco Marques much beloved by South African listeners in which he played a leading role. And then came Springbok Radio in 1950 and the whole face of Broadcasting changed. Michael Silver's productions and plays played a leading part in the popularity of that highly successful service, and many well known broadcasters were to begin their careers in those Studios of his in Panama House, Commissioner Street.

Yes, Michael Silver played a crucial and important part in Broadcasting in South Africa, and strong as his personality was, I remember him as a quiet voiced, good humoured man. I believe his gentle exterior influenced those around him as much as his clear cut professional manner.

Of course he will be missed by his many colleagues, but at this moment one's mind dwells upon dear Ethel and his other loved ones who in their sadness can be proud of the man he was.

Goodbye Michael, and may all go well with you."

And finally Henry Howell's **Address to a St. David's Day Dinner** in 1983:

"I have seldom approached an invitation to speak with so much trepidation as I do this evening when I have been given this signal honour of addressing you on the occasion of St. David's Day and proposing the toast to our much loved motherland. I think it is because I feel singularly ill equipped to do so. Now why? I believe my credentials are pretty fair. Born and bred in Pembrokeshire, that place that once existed but is now Dyfed, I am as Welsh as laver bread and

yet there is this uncharacteristic diffidence. It was only a few weeks ago that I realised that if we Welsh have a characteristic look then I even look Welsh! I was browsing through a historical atlas in search of information about the last Crusade and on page 1 I looked at a curious map of Europe that showed the distribution of the human race in Europe in the darkest of dark ages. The map was entitled "Europe – showing the distribution of Cephalic Index and Pigmentation". So ancient were the times delineated that no tribes were named on that map. No Gauls, no Celts, no Saxons, no Huns, just types. And written across that part of Europe where the Celts were eventually going to appear was the Legend "small nests of Dark Broad Heads". I expect if were to look carefully at each other this evening, those of us who still have hair would qualify to constitute a small nest of Dark Broad Heads! And there were precious few of us on that ancient map but plenty of fair haired long heads.

And that is not the only curious thing about us. We are in many ways comparatively, perhaps surprisingly, unchauvinistic. Oh all right! We have and are rightly proud of our own language. We break into song at the drop of a harp; we share with the Afrikaner a mystical religious political approach to that curious game Rugby Football – a strange pursuit invented by the upper class English. But just think of the Scots, if you can bear to at this moment. They have an horrendous musical instrument of their own which is matched only by the curious pudding that they eat which causes them to write poetry. Grudgingly I must admit it is rather good poetry. Yes, we break into beautiful song and as I said, down in South-West Wales where I come from, we have laver bread. But is there something quite intangible that binds us together? Can it be the leek? It is said that it was St. David who suggested that the Welsh fighting under King Cadwallader should distinguish themselves from their Saxon foes by wearing a leek in their caps and, as they were victorious, the leek was thereafter reputed not only to be delectable but lucky. Presumably, anyway, it not only engendered a great respect for the Welsh in the breasts of those flaxen haired long heads, the Saxons, but also an inordinate desire by the Welsh to eat leeks for ever after.

I would not detract for one second, certainly not tonight, from the belief that we owe our emblem to St. David, but I would suggest that its charms were enhanced in the minds or perhaps palates of the frugal, prudent, Welsh by the fact that it is a perfectly wholesome useful inexpensive vegetable that can help to fill empty stomachs. Can you imagine chewing on a thistle, or a shamrock or indeed a rose for



that matter? It is certainly a valid fact that to celebrate the custom of Cymhortha, when farmers met to assist each other with the ploughing, they all brought leeks to the gathering as the most popular and nourishing addition to the common feast.

Mention of St. David reminds me again that we are here tonight to do him honour. I am proud to say that I was born not very far away from that beautiful spot from which he conducted his ministry and yet he remains to me a somewhat shadowy figure. As I received what education I managed to expose myself to in far away England and outposts of what was then called the British Empire, I was deceived into thinking that it was St. Augustine who brought Christianity to the British Isles. Of course it was no such thing. Those Celtic saints St. David, St. Patrick and St. Columba certainly looked after the conversion of the peoples of the West and the Isles, and St. David was perhaps the Doyen of them all. Certainly he exerted great influence over St. Patrick who, if I am not mistaken, was also a Welshman. Certainly we have reason to be proud that our Patron Saint was a home grown Welshman in contrast to St. Augustine who was a Carthaginian born in North America, or St. George who came from the Middle East. Some say that David was the son of Xantes, a prince of Ceretica, which you and I once knew as Cardiganshire but which now is also a part of Dyfed.

So he was on familiar ground at the place we still know as St. David's. If one is to believe the legends about him, never was there a saint so well looked after. It was even claimed for him that he was a descendant of the Virgin Mary, which is a pretty impressive genealogy even for a saint, and that an angel foretold his birth thirty years before it happened. It is said that an angel accompanied him through life and ministered to all his wants. Even among saints he seemed to have struck it pretty rich. When he was baptised, a spring miraculously bubbled up to provide holy water for the purpose, and when he preached the ground beneath his feet rose to form a sort of natural instant pulpit. Can't you imagine what effect that would have on the people of Cwm Rhondda if those Welsh politicians could perform that sort of miracle!

But seriously, there is no question that David was a very learned and a very good man. It is said that he was "mirror and father" to all in his preaching and work. He was a doctrine to all, a guide to the religious, a life to the poor, a support to orphans, a protection to widows, a father to the fatherless – and so on. What better epitaph can be written even for such a saintly man.

If I may strike a cautionary note on this festive evening however. The monastic order to which he belonged forbade the imbibing of any liquor whatsoever except water. I detect very few followers of that splendid example here this evening!

So what note should one try to strike upon this happy occasion? Surely one is permitted a little nostalgia. And perhaps a certain amount of reminiscence from me may awaken similar warm thoughts in your minds. Much of my memory is stored by the tales handed down to me by my father and mother and their generation. For instance, I distinctly remember listening as a little boy sitting quietly beside the fire, to my father and his brother whilst they recalled a boyhood adventure. My father would have been 103 years old this year which may help you place this incident in time. I became aware that those two sober and responsible citizens, who since they left their little home town of Pembroke and the little grey school at the top of the Well Hill had built two very fine careers, were talking of something very exciting. What they were remembering was the night, as small boys, they heard that the Wreckers had struck once again on the Pembrokeshire coast. As soon as the house was quiet they had crept out into the dark wet windy winter night and made their way the seven or so miles to the towering cliffs of South Pembrokeshire. They hid in the hedgerows when anyone rode by lest they should be apprehended by the Excisemen busy this night to catch the Wreckers who had lured some innocent ship upon the rocks by lighting fires to deceive her into believing she had rounded St. Ann's Head.

When they reached the spot, they climbed down the precipice to a small wind- and surf-torn beach. This was no tale of "brandy for the parson, baccy for the clerk"; those two little boys were in search of oranges – to them the ultimate in exotic fruit, the epitome of luxury. What fixed the story in my mind was that one of those mellow middle-aged reminiscing men was at that moment the Departmental Head of His Majesty's Department of Customs and Excise!

Perhaps one of our strangest characteristics is our Welsh humour. Has it occurred to you that so many of our jokes are concerned with death and with funerals? You will of course know the story of the two worthy ladies passing the body of their dear friend Dai lying in his coffin in the chapel while all the village paid "last respects". Looking lovingly into the coffin, Mrs. Hughes remarks to Mrs. Griffiths, 'There's well poor Dai looks, that week he had in Barry did him a lot of good'!

To the Welsh, particularly those of us whose childhood was passed in the days of the depression of the Thirties, life presents many insoluble and comprehensive problems, but death is a familiar that is almost cosy. Certainly one of the most vivid memories of my childhood was to accompany that marvellous woman Martha my grandmother to the little graveyard up the Lamphey road every Sunday after church. A bounteous woman, she had armfuls of flowers – I always associate sweet peas with Martha and her churchyard. This was no place of sorrow, it was a place of reunion.

Many years later I visited that little graveyard with Arthur my uncle, now a man of years and like his mother armed with a big bunch of flowers which he had cut so tenderly from his back garden. He was a chrysanthemum 'buff'. As he passed from one grave to the next – they were not graves to him they were his beloved folk – his gentle hands would take blooms from the bunch and lay them on the gravestones.

"There's a few for little Rose, God bless her – she died when she was only six of the measles. Your mother loved her like her own daughter, boy. She was the youngest – pretty little soul, sweet as an angel which is what she is now. And here is George, how I loved that man, my own brother but a King he was to me. Here's a few chrysanthus for you, your favourite they were. And here's his mother bless her, she was your grandma boy, and you loved her. She was the best mother in the world with her proud spirit. Do you remember the way she had with a horse? There wasn't a colt she couldn't break in, riding bareback too. Us boys used to watch holding our breath – but no matter she never came to any harm". And so on as the careworn hands arranged the flowers in immaculate urns on the gravestones. And for a few brief moments not only Arthur but those who walked beside him were looking back through his eyes to a life of laughter and tears and hard work, and the beauty not lost but almost immortal in his images of love as they live again tonight for me.

But enough: back to St. David and his day. The officers and men of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers observed St. David's Day in this fashion:

The drum-major, as well as every man in the regiment, wears a leek in his busby; the goat is dressed with rosettes and ribbons of red and blue. The officers have a party and the drum-major, accompanied by the goat, marches round the table after dinner carrying a plate of leeks, of which he offers one to each officer or guest who has never eaten one before and who is bound to eat it upstanding on his chair, with one foot on the table, while a drummer beats a roll behind his chair. All the toasts are coupled with the name of St. David.

I think we will excuse you the need to stand upon your chairs and the tables, but now I call upon you Ladies and Gentlemen to be upstanding to drink a toast to Wales, and to our Patron Saint St. David!"

\* \* \*

## Chapter 8

# After retirement a new career

**“Y**our Excellency,

I am sure I speak on behalf of all my colleagues on the Bophuthatswana Advisory Board when I say that we are honoured by the trust you and your Government have placed in us. It is an inspiring challenge to create and guide such an important facet in any nation's life as the Broadcasting Services, and particularly so when one has the privilege of and the responsibility for helping a new and emergent country such as Bophuthatswana. We are very sensible of this responsibility and will dedicate ourselves to the development of the Broadcasting Services so that they may become all that you hope for them, and a source of pride to your country.

We are all indeed conscious of the potential for good and evil inherent in a Broadcasting Service, Mr. President, and we will do our utmost to ensure that it will bring goodwill, friendship, entertainment, and information not only within Bophuthatswana's boundaries but to its neighbouring states. We note your desire to uphold the principles of freedom and expression ... and we will see these as our main goals.

One of our responsibilities will also be to make the service as economically viable as possible and in as short a time as possible. You will, I am sure, realise that there are elements of this problem which are not entirely ours to control but we shall not fail through lack of attention to those problems.

From what I have seen of the technical plans for the future development of **Radio Bophuthatswana**, I am optimistic that there will be a satisfactory coverage of the areas where the Tswana people live in a reasonable space of time, and when this has been achieved **Radio Bophuthatswana** will be the force for good in this continent that you are hoping for.

May I express again the thanks of the Committee to you Mr.

President, and to our new colleagues in the Secretariat for the help we have already received.”

So it was, on October 31 1978, Henry Howell as Chairman of the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Advisory Board, and personal advisor to His Excellency, President Lucas M. Mangope, took up his new, challenging and exciting appointment. Over a period of ten years he was to draw up, with the late Professor Carmen Nathan, the new Charter for Broadcasting, (based on Lord Reith’s Charter for the British Broadcasting Corporation), and to see grow before his eyes, out of the dust, a Broadcast Centre, and ultimately the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Corporation.

He added credibility to the broadcasting activities of Bophuthatswana because he was such a well respected man. The advertising industry and the public knew that if Henry Howell was involved with something, then it must be good and fine, because of his tremendous status and standing.

Gert Yssel recalls approaching Henry on behalf of SAARF in the mid 80’s because of some problems they were experiencing. He asked Henry to introduce him to the right people. It was only then, he said, that he became aware of the enormous regard in which he was held, and of the great role he had played in establishing that service as well as Radio 702. (He adds that ‘the award of the Order of the Leopard was most appropriate.’)

Before Radio 702 was so called – and it was Henry who named it – it was in embryonic form created by Issie Kirsh who, with his brother Natie Kirsh, was controlling Swazi Radio. In 1974, when Swazi Radio just started, Issie Kirsh felt he should make himself known to the Head of Commercial Services at the SABC: Henry Howell. They met at Broadcast House, together with Jack Siebert, Henry’s deputy.

They did not meet again until 1979 when Henry was in Bophuthatswana, and Radio Bop had just been launched there. Issie Kirsh had established a company called Bophuthatswana Commercial Radio. (BCR). Licenses had been granted and they were almost ready to roll. Henry took a great interest in what they were doing and joined BCR’s board. BCR was permitted to broadcast, out of Johannesburg, on AM only, to the PWV region. ‘BCR’ or ‘PWV Radio’ seemed an unwieldy name for a radio station and Henry suggested it should be called Channel 702, and 702 it became. From the time he suggested the name, which was accepted by everyone who heard it, he played a major role in everything that the station did.

He was a tremendous sounding board for Issie Kirsh, and whatever plans Kirsh had, Henry was his confidante.

In the meantime, on the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting side, Henry was concerned about frequencies being withheld from Bop TV by the South African Government and the South African Post Office, and prepared these notes on the subject in January 1980:

"... I am of the opinion that notwithstanding the appointment of a 'Technical' Committee, the whole matter (between the two Governments) is still firmly and exclusively political at this stage. I have the perhaps unworthy thought that the Committee itself is a ploy to delay and complicate the issue. If the basic political issues had been decided in 1979 we would have been well on our way to a Television Service by this time. The most serious point at issue is our desire, indeed our requirement, that to have a financially viable independent Television Service we must put our signal into the opulent Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area. This would enable us, or the organisation contracted to run the Service, to generate sufficient commercial revenue. The stand of the South African Post Office and the SABC is that the Geneva Convention specifically debars the beaming of Television (and other high ultra frequency) signals across international boundaries. In my discussions with them I have said that over 60% of Bophuthatswana citizens live within the Republic and the bulk of that 60% would be within range of our Main Transmitter, so that we are justified in expecting the South African Government to concur in our transmission of Television signals across its borders. International Regulations admit exceptions to its rule if both parties agree. There are many precedents for this state of affairs (Switzerland receives France, Germany and Italy; Canadian viewers in densely populated Ontario are dominated by United States Television Stations).

"As I see it this is entirely a political matter complicated by the Bosfontein aspect. This is the most suitable spot for our Main Transmitter to reach the PWV area, on the Magaliesberg Mountains and just within South Africa. It has certain strong emotional and political ties for Bophuthatswana and once belonged to the President's family. It is still largely owned by Bophuthatswana citizens.

"I believe if we were to be determined about it and decided to go ahead without Bosfontein, the South African GPO would find it difficult to withhold frequencies from us, but they would probably give us the UHF rather than the more effective VHF band.

"... my own enthusiasm for the project springs from my hope that we can use the TV and Radio Services to assist the Education

Department of Bophuthatswana with its difficult task.... One of the conditions for the award to a successful tenderer (to erect the transmitter station) should be that the successful Tenderer would be required to provide facilities and production skills for the Schools Television Programmes.

"There are a number of other points, but my guess is that the issue of 'crossing of International Borders' will be put to us in an attempt to control and contain our ambitions...."

These notes were turned into an Address to the South African Minister responsible for Broadcasting, and his team, and ended:

"The function of this report is not to impinge upon political matters but, patently, in the fast changing political situation in Southern Africa, time is an important element in achieving stability and adding to the sum of human progress and happiness".

In the event shields *were* raised to prevent the Bop TV signal being transmitted into PWV homes.

Radio 702 had agreements with the Bophuthatswana Government wherein during their own negotiations with the South African Government to bring the shields down, they would endeavour to get an FM wavelength for the station. Issie Kirsh says, 'The South African Government had reneged on its agreements with Bophuthatswana Broadcasting and had erected shields to prevent broadcasts reaching into South African homes. It was a potential threat to the revenue of the SABC – also Government controlled. It was a sticky time for everyone'.

Issie Kirsh was under a lot of pressure politically because 702 was an independent station watched very carefully by the SABC; and he was very concerned that his license should not be forfeit due to his outside news people possibly touching a subject which offended. He derived a great deal of comfort from Henry to whom he could talk about this and other problems. Invariably Henry would say: 'Issie, give it a go', and was a tremendous support.

702 started broadcasting in 1980 and Henry was part and parcel of it all. Kirsh and Henry were more than colleagues or friends – they established a permanent, warm and close relationship, (and it was Issie 'who is a brother to me' Henry asked for when he knew he was dying.) It says a great deal for their liaison that 702 became an up-to-date, vibrant, scintillating station, renowned particularly for its hard-hitting talk shows – a platform for everyone to air their views, without fear or favour. Today it is the only radio station broadcasting up-to-the-minute news twenty-four hours a day.





*Bill Otto, Henry, Issie Kirsh.*

Shortly after joining Radio 702, and whilst he was still Chairman of EMI, Henry was invited to address the 26 Club. It was an address full of prophecy. This is a small extract from his 12-page dissertation:

“It is clearly an honour to talk to the 26 Club and I hope that what I have to say will interest this distinguished gathering. At the outset I have a fear that what I am going to say might reveal some of my personal trepidation about where broadcasting is heading in the next thirty or forty years.

“It was suggested that I should tell you about broadcasting in Bophuthatswana and dear as the subject is to my heart I doubt if I could need more than five to ten minutes to tell you about it. So I propose possibly presumptuously to widen the basis of what I have to say and deal with Bophuthatswana Broadcasting as a part of a much wider story. To try to encapsulate what I will talk about in a few words, I would say that I am preoccupied with the explosion of knowledge ... and the sad disarray of the custodians of wisdom ... who have to turn this explosion of knowledge and technology to the

good of Mankind and to avoid the dangers of the reverse.

"I won't burden you with what I believe the perfect broadcasting organisation should be because these ideas were part of a history upon which they made little impression.

"The introduction of television ... a great turning point and it is the cost of Television which is the biggest single factor in reducing broadcast organisations of all types to a desperate struggle for advertising and other revenue. The advent of television has changed the situation irrevocably. Immediately the effort to increase audience becomes transcendently important, and even Sound Broadcasting becomes involved in a struggle to compete for its existence; both media are forced to broadcast as much as possible those programmes which are likely to meet the popular taste. On Television, intelligent, serious, adult programmes are under extreme pressure or are often relegated to times of the day when a 'saturation' audience is not likely to be available. Ironically, in Television the need to prolong the period of peak viewership very often results in the delay of some of the best programmes to a later hour in the evening in an attempt to stretch high viewership levels as far as possible, and thus lengthen the period when the highest advertising rates can continue to be charged.

"So what of Bophuthatswana Broadcasting? It has a tremendously important task to fulfil in the development of Bophuthatswana in the midst of the growing diversity and sophistication of the Southern African Universe.

"Broadcasting has a particularly important, indeed poignant, role to play as far as the Batswana people are concerned. History, particularly in the early nineteenth century, caused pressures on these cheerful unworldly people whose spiritual home is T'BaaN'chu that scattered them across the Southern and Western Transvaal. It is a great tribute to them that they retained their sense of nationhood. Broadcasting, as you can easily imagine, is a miraculous way of helping to build these family and national bonds again. The spirit of innocence and seriousness in Broadcasting is re-awakened.

"And so in 1978 Bophuthatswana introduced a Radio Service which by means of FM and medium wave broadcasting, began radiating on an FM network within Bophuthatswana and externally on Medium wave to reach those Batswana scattered around the Southern and Western Transvaal, and the Northern Orange Free State and Northern Cape.

"You will be aware of the advent of the Bop TV service. It is a modern miracle that the organisation put on a first class service in

Tswana and English in a mere eleven months. At present its range is limited to the areas around Mmabatho, and has just expanded to the Pilanesberg – the Sun City and Rustenburg area – and not least of all to Soweto. It also has reached two of its largest towns: Ga-Rankua and Mabopane. Apart from developing its own domestic network we are engaged in discussing and developing a network that will cover those parts of South Africa where the Tswana people live in significant numbers.

“Apart from Radio Bop and Bop TV which are most satisfactorily successful, there are two other radio services operating out of Bophuthatswana. One you will know a great deal about as its name is “702” and it is probably the most widely publicised service in this part of the world. I may say that it is extremely successful with its listeners, and also financially.

“There is also a medium wave service that broadcasts to Southern Africa with totally religious programmes. It is operated by an organisation known world-wide as Transworld Radio. It operates in many countries and its programmes are heard in the Soviet Union, Red China, South East Asia and South America. The local broadcasts are of course of special interest in this area.

“So to turn to the technological advances that are likely to affect the lives of us all individually as well as collectively, we will leave behind the remarkable FM developments of the past and work as far as possible only on what lies ahead.

“Let us not forget, whilst we concentrate on broadcasting, the tendency of video and audio material becoming more readily available in the home. The Broadcasters will have to move towards material not available from video sources such as actuality news and specialised productions. I mentioned video first because it is the first black box to stand linked to your TV set; there will be others over the years.

“We must not forget the incredible explosion of information technology which will become a major asset in our lives. Broadcasting must play a role in this new field, particularly in the aspects of education and training, and an incomparable vehicle for the transfer of all this information to the man in the street.

“I should hasten to say that Southern Africa has so many fundamental developments to pursue that some things could be a long way away. I will only touch very lightly upon them. Out there in the high high-tech world at the moment there is tremendous battle about which methods to use for the great complexities that lie ahead should the electronic information service go over to what is called a ‘digital’

system, or develop further the present basic process which is called the 'analogue' system. I will certainly not debate on that complicated matter except to say that so much depends on its outcome as to what the big box of tricks in your study or sitting room will be capable of doing ten or twenty years from now.

"Let us turn our minds to a subject which never fails to excite interest in everyone's head alike – the scientist and the viewer. Direct broadcasting from a satellite is just round the corner and a decision has already been taken in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany to use such systems. This system represents the opportunity of using new methods of transferring the video and audio information and eliminating some of the deficiencies in the present television systems. It also presents the opportunity for high definition television. Direct broadcasting from satellites for South Africa also has the attraction of covering the whole country from the start of the service. These broadcasts are obviously very interesting but also very expensive and will come to the highly sophisticated Europeans and Americans before they come to the more sparsely populated rural areas of Africa where the need, ironically, is very much greater.

"But the deciding factor is always the countries' size, wealth, and technical resources.

"As one who has the great honour to be Chairman of EMI, one of South Africa's most famous record manufacturing and sales operations, I must also touch upon a new revolution taking place in that world. It too will have a significant effect upon the quality of life that is lived out in your home.

"Those revolutionary digital techniques have been applied to audio, and just recently digital techniques in audio have appeared on the market where astounding quality is obtainable from a disc 100 millimetres in diameter. This disc is also far more robust than the conventional long-playing record. The disc, which is scanned by a laser beam, will probably make the conventional analogue recording of 45 and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  long playing discs obsolete. We will have to react to this vast increase in quality ... and see to it that our internal systems are capable of making use of this quality so that it can ... be passed on to the listeners.

"I believe this will see not only a revolution in the popular appeal of records but will give an appreciation of the serious music such as not even Mozart or Beethoven era had. Could we hope it will lead to a resurgence of musical appreciation of both serious and popular music?

"There are so many other changes lying ahead that it is difficult to think of all the possibilities. What will happen to shortwave transmissions when the satellite rules the ether?"

"It is evident from this rather short look at broadcasting that there is a lot in store for us. Things are not at all static or even slowed down. The broadcaster is in the very middle of the electronic revolution and the information technology explosion. It is important to stand back from the technical aspects of the situation and look at the responsibility of the broadcaster in this environment.

"We live in an environment where a sophisticated, industrialised and developed society is superimposed on an unsophisticated developing Third World society. To many people, broadcasting is one of the few sources of entertainment, information and education. This contrasts very significantly from Western industrialised countries which have many sources of information, entertainment, education.

"Our responsibility is, therefore, so much the greater."

(It would have been noted that Henry mentioned his Chairmanship of EMI. Clive Kelly, a former Chairman, recently had this to say: "My own involvement (with Henry) quite apart from the warm friendship which developed as I got to know him – really revolved around having the good sense, with Norman Filmer's encouragement, to be able to offer him a Directorship and subsequently (on Norman's retirement) the Chairmanship of EMI. He was a true and stalwart friend and support not only in the way of SABC but also particularly with regard to the Advertising world".

On another occasion Henry addressed the personnel of Radio Bop:

"You are the pioneers, the first spokesmen for your country. This is not only a great honour, it is a grave responsibility. Your Motherland is emerging into full nationhood and you are the voice of the nation. Those people who listen to you will judge your country by the sort of people you are. The President, you will remember, on our opening day reminded us that we have a commitment to your fellow citizens who live outside the borders of Bophuthatswana, most of them within the Republic of South Africa. We have to forge links of brotherhood with them so that they are proud of their country and delighted to be part of Bophuthatswana. They will want to know what is going on in their own land, the developments, the achievements. In building this bond you will also be building an audience for your station. The way in which you approach your job will influence them strongly for from the moment that you cue in that microphone and speak you ARE Bophuthatswana. That is why it is important for you to be aware of

the sort of person you should be. Be proud of your talk but always be modest indeed humble ... the moment you begin to feel important, from that moment your success will decline.

"Be modest, be enthusiastic, it is the job that is important. Remember you have only one listener and he will begin to dislike you if you are conceited, careless, bored, or indifferent. Always treat him with courtesy through the microphone and remember that the market reports are as important as that big personality programme.

"Never lose your awe, your respect for the microphone. You have a great responsibility to your station, to your People and to your Country. Let that keep you modest and hardworking. If anyone is to be proud of you let it be your station manager, your director-general, or myself. We are very proud of you already – let us always remain so."

In 1984 Henry collapsed with what was thought to be a fatal heart attack, and was forced to resign. Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, Mr. K.C.A.V. Sehume wrote to Henry on 12 September 1984:

... 'accepting your resignation with great sorrow. It is not possible to express in words my appreciation and gratitude for being associated with you in the activities of Radio Bop and Bop TV over the past years, and also for what you have meant to my Government in this regard'.

His Surgeon and friend for 17 years, Tony Rankin, said: 'We knew he just could not recover, and my assistant and I were watching him die, with tears in our eyes. His recovery was a miracle.'

It was Henry's great determination and 'true grit' that put him back on his feet: he was determined to see all of Bophuthatswana's broadcasting services come into being, and most importantly of all the passing of a Bill in Parliament making the Corporation a reality. He was back in harness within the year, totally involved and committed.

In April 1989 he accepted, proudly, the Chairmanship of the fully-fledged Bop Broadcasting Corporation.

Under the guidance and inspiration of Henry Howell had been born Radio Bop, Bop TV, Radio Mmabatho, Edutel and Mmabatho Television, and of course indirectly Radio 702 for which he also struggled so hard to obtain an FM frequency. It is pleasing to his memory to know that this might well happen in the near future.

# A Bop Broadcasting picture story:

## MAFEKING MAIL and Botswana Guardian

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1978

No. 10510

Price: 7 cents

REGULATED BY THE G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER

ESTABLISHED 1968



Henry Howell

In a surprise move yet to be announced, President Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana has succeeded in acquiring the services of distinguished radio executive, Mr. Henry Howell, soon to retire as Director of Commercial Services of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Howell will act as Chairman of the President's Advisory Radio Board and arrives in Mmabatho on Tuesday morning, 24th October, for his first official meeting. His visit heralds the formal beginning of radio programming and policy for the new homeland Republic whose radio station will go on the air at 5 p.m. on December 5th of this year.

The new service, known as Radio Bophuthatswana, will be inaugurated with a 300 watt FM (frequency modulation) station now being built at Montshwa, next to the Parliament Buildings. The first of approximately 8 transmitters to be installed, to blanket the whole of the Tswana Republic, the initial station will cover an area of 50 kilometers or more, reaching Mafeking, Zeerust, Lichtenburg, and all other areas within this radius.

The main content of the broadcast will be music of varying types, depending on listeners at different peak periods, interspersed with brisk and concise news reports in Tswana, repeated in Eng-

lish. It is expected that 90% of the broadcasts will be in Tswana. Since FM (frequency modulation broadcasting) reaches only line-of-sight, and utilizes the same line-of-sight sound carrier as TV, the new 300 watt transmitter with power boost is sufficient to reach each area more efficiently than a smaller number of high powered stations.

Officials of Radio Bophuthatswana have applied through the South African Post Office Department for an authorized radio frequency which will not interfere with adjoining frequencies assigned to Botswana. These frequencies are assigned by the International Communications Union in Geneva.

#### New Station for Mafeking:

This means that Mafeking will virtually have its own radio station with a local flavour and coverage. Hence the Mmabatho station of Radio Bophuthatswana will serve an audience of approximately 100 000 Tswanas as well as the white populations of Mafeking, Lichtenburg, and Zeerust.

#### Howell Fortunate Choice:

Radio Bophuthatswana's appointment of Henry Howell would appear to ensure that this will grow into a successful radio network. Format will be commercial, with announce-

ments at regular intervals. Mr. Howell is the man responsible for the development and success of Commercial Services at the SABC. These started with Springbok Radio, extended to regional radio services such as Highveld, Natal and Good Hope, included Radio Bantu, and finally SABC-TV. Today Howell is responsible for approximately R60 000 000 per year in advertising revenue for the SABC.

A professional self-effacing radio executive of international repute, Henry Howell was born in Pembroke, Wales, in 1916, and after war service in the Middle East, started with the SABC in 1964 on the English Service. An accomplished and skilled broadcaster of inordinate charm, Howell rose quickly to become Head of English Programmes, and finally Head of Commercial Radio Services, extending his responsibilities with the advent of commercial television in the Republic, in January 1977. Howell is now recognized as a world authority on commercial broadcasting and spends much of his time travelling from country to country to deliver addresses to influential television and radio executives.

Henry Howell will act as Chairman of a new Radio Advisory Committee in the Department of the Presidency. Working with him, will be the Rev. S. C. Kgoboko, as Deputy Chairman, Mr. A. T. Maslape, ex-lecturer in African languages at the University of South Africa, and Mr. S. W. Sebopede, a Taung businessman. One board seat remains open to be filled by a Tswana representative from Soweto or a similar urban area.

The presence of Mr. Howell as Chairman will probably mean an increased emphasis on commercial broadcasting.

When Mafmail spoke to Mr. Howell in Johannesburg today he indicated there were no plans for a high voltage power station to blanket the Reef and the rest of South Africa. Howell's experience with I.M. Radio stands him in good stead and he will probably build a competent and profitable radio service for the new Republic. Spots should cost advertisers about R10 each.

Meanwhile, at Mmabatho, plans are going ahead for the installation of necessary equipment so that it may be aired on the scheduled date of December 5th. In charge is Chief of Radio Services of the Department of the Presidency, Mr. Jan Ackerman, an SABC executive seconded to Radio Bophuthatswana, and a resident of Mafeking since November of last year.

Originally from the news department of the SABC, Ackerman was transferred from Johannesburg to Pretoria, where he worked in the Tswana service, and a year ago was posted to Mafeking. He first met President Lucas Mangope in the 1960s when Mangope was Deputy Chairman of Territorial Authority. Ackerman has a deep knowledge of the Tswana people and their customs. He is 38 years old, lives in Mafeking with his attractive wife Rita, and "three lovely daughters". Says Ackerman, "in Tswana tradition my riches are called bogati, the riches of a man with three beautiful daughters." Ackerman is thrilled at the prospect of working with Henry Howell.

From December 5th Radio Bophuthatswana will broadcast from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. every day and should add much to the cultural and educational life of all of us in Mafeking.

# RADIO BOPHUTHATSWANA SET TO TRIPLE LISTENERSHIP

... report Don Sergeant.

When Radio Bophuthatswana's new high-powered medium wave transmitter is switched on in Ga-Rankuwa early this month it will have the effect of tripling present listenership to that station.

This was recently announced by Henry Howell, chairman of the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Advisory Board. He was commenting on the steady progress made by the BBAB since its inception in November 1976, when broadcasting in the Tswana language opened with a single transmitter in Molekane.

There are now seven FM transmitters ranged across the sprawling territories. The new high-power medium wave transmitter at Ga-Rankuwa will be the eighth, and current planning envisages a further six FM transmitters by the end of 1980.

Howell told "Clarion": "We're after the 62 per cent of Bophuthatswana citizens who actually reside outside the homeland. And since roughly 60 per cent of these are to be found in Soweto, this is where we are going to reach them with the new transmitter. We calculate that listenership will be at least tripled."

During daylight hours the powerful 1098 kHz MW transmitter will blanket an area embracing the entire Witwatersrand including Soweto and Pretoria. When night falls the night sky wave service will extend the coverage even further, easily penetrating to Bloemfontein and Tlhaba Xebu and the isolated segments of Bophuthatswana in the vicinity of the Northern Cape. During the hours of darkness it will be possible to receive a signal as far south as Port Elizabeth.

Broadcasting hours will be from 0500 to 1100 and from 1700 to 2300 on weekdays from 0500 to 2400 on Saturdays and Sundays. No commercials will be broadcast on Sundays.

The emphasis for listening Tswana and for the Sotho who readily understand Tswana will be on fully-studded entertainment. Spearheaded by music, are more music programmes will include news bulletins twice daily, plays, women's programmes, maga-

zine items, programmes on public health, and programmes for children.

Into this well-balanced package will be slotted twelve 30-second commercials per hour, for the advertiser who desires to reach this rapidly emergent market.

Radio Bophuthatswana's studio and back-up staff which is entirely black, has been finely trained to cater to the tastes of the exclusively black, increasingly well-informed audience. Music programmes which will form the bulk of broadcast material will be carefully selected for their appeal and will contain a high proportion of "Soul" and "Motown" music, which is the genre preferred by this listener ship.

The station's language breakdown will favour Tswana, with 80 to 90 per cent of air time using this language. Of the balance, 10 to 12 per cent will be English, with Afrikaans making up the total.

"We shall be reaching a very large number of Tswana in the Transvaal during the day," said Howell, "and an even greater number by night when broadcast reach the Orange Free State and the western area of Bophuthatswana in the Limpopo, Kuruman districts. And the bonus is that we shall also be reaching something like 50 per cent of the Tswana in Botswana in places like Ficksburg and Gaberones, which makes our potential listenership an extremely attractive proposition for advertisers who are seeking this market and who recognise as we do that it is poised to become a very significant market indeed."

Geared to answer questions on the extended service, Adrian Vincent Mathius and Arjan Walters of Greenberg Mathius and Associates, advertising brokers, who will be handling the medium at agency and client level, justifiably excited by the prospect of high volume listenership and its implications for the media market. Mathius and Walters can hardly wait for SABS 1981 and the figures which will confirm the extent to which the station has penetrated to listening Tswana.



Henry Howell

For then however, there is much comfort to be gained from a recent survey conducted by MRA in December 1979 in which a random sample of 200 male and 200 female blacks was questioned about radio listening. The survey posed the question: "Give the name of any radio station at which you have heard, which broadcasts to blacks." 25 per cent of the sample named Radio Bophuthatswana.

Since the sample was truly random and thus included an unknown proportion of non-Tswana respondents, it is considered that this positive response was encouraging.

high, indicating considerable awareness and expectancy in the area which has now become the target for the new transmitter.

Questioned about rates for the service, Howell replied that these had been constructed to reflect its growth from an embryonic station to its present potency as an advertising medium. Prevailing rates will be maintained until at least the end of 1980, when the position will be reassessed in the light of performance and adjustments made if these are called for.

Director of broadcasting at Radio Bophuthatswana is Ian Ackertman.



Henry 'walking' the Bosfontein site.



# New Bop TV to aim for Black viewers only

By DAVID RAATH

THE NEW Bop TV network will be exclusively directed at Black townships in the PWV on January 1 next year with the minimum of "spillage" in areas immediately surrounding the target areas.

Viewers not included in these target areas — especially Whites who are continually searching for a greater variety of viewing material — will need expensive and sophisticated antenna "adaptors" to be able to pick up the signals.

But if yesterday's "Luncheon Presentation" by Bop TV in Johannesburg of what can be expected is anything to go by, few — if any — Whites, will really be interested in the new service.

At a rather disappointing — if not confusing — news conference, it was learnt that the programme content would not differ much from what South Africa has had since the inception of TV here.

## Extended

It will contain, among others, programmes for children, for the housewife, two news bulletins, adventure-type movies, situation comedies, dramas and detective stories.

It appears that very few "home-made" programmes will be seen in the initial stages of the service and that most programmes will originate from America.

The intention is that Bop TV's first broadcast will cover most of Bophuthatswana, as well as So-

weto, Dobsonville, Kagiso and Garankuwa. During the course of next year it is anticipated that the service be extended to cover Alexandra, Tembisa, Atteridgeville and other places in the PWV area.

The licence fee for viewers in Bophuthatswana is R30 a year, but viewers elsewhere will still pay R42 as set down by the SABC.

The Bop TV network will beam from a high tower in Mmabatho and will use the strong ultra-high frequency signal, unlike the very high frequency signal used by the SABC. Bop TV's signal will be boosted to South African areas by the Brixton mast with the use of directional antennas.

The TV network has started giving away part of a consignment of 40 000 specially-built "bunny ears" to prospective viewers — and this appears to be the only effective and comparatively "cheap" device which will enable viewers to pick up the Bop signal.

## Advertising

The network will broadcast for five hours a day, every day, starting at 5 pm including Sundays. The advertising content will be 10 percent of airtime. There will be advertising available on Sundays.

There will be different advertising rates for different time channels and prices have been set on the basis of their expected audience. It is estimated that advertising on Bop TV will cost about R3 per 1 000 viewers reached, or 1 cent per person.



The little gadget which appears to be the vital link between Bop TV's transmission tower in Mmabatho and Black townships in South Africa. The "bunny ear" has been specially designed for viewers in the Bop TV target area and a model was yesterday introduced to media representative MYRNA DOPITA by Bop TV engineering representative, Mr ALAN JONES.

## Mangope tells of ambition to set up channel

CITIZEN REPORTER

ALTHOUGH Bop TV will officially be launched on January 1 next year, the network will kick off with a "New Year's Eve celebration".

Test signals will already be screened as from this week. The first advertising spot — a 30 second presentation — was yesterday auctioned for R5 250 to OK Bazaars.

It will feature "within the first 30 minutes" of the official opening presentation on January 1.

In a pilot programme shown to newsmen at the Wanderers Club yesterday, President Lucas Mangope tells viewers that the establishment of Bop TV is "the result of an ambition I have long entertained".

Bop TV will be aiming at areas with "massive buying power". A projection by the network says that in 1983 Blacks are expected to account for 45.6 percent of all food sales in South Africa — a total of R3 billion.

Black spending supports 55 percent of the non-edible grocery market, worth about R727 million, and 50 percent of the TV/radio market worth R285 million.

Black spending on retail goods is expected to be R8,6 billion in 1983 — 40 percent of the total spend and only six percent less than total White expenditure.

# SABC holds key to TV for homeland

By **GEOFFREY ALLEN**

**INDEPENDENT** BoputhaTswana will get television . . . if the SABC says so.

And the TV service, if established, will be headed by former SABC director Mr Henry Howell.

The Broadcasting Board of BoputhaTswana, of which Mr Howell has been appointed chairman, has commissioned a technical viability study for a TV service.

Mr Howell said he did not see the tentative service as rival to the SABC, even if it could beam to

the Reef services unobtainable to the SABC.

The SABC's virtual control over the future of the homeland's TV service emerged this week after a Mmabatho newspaper report that President Lucas Mangope had introduced a Broadcasting Amendment Bill approving commercial television and radio.

SABC and post office spokesmen confirmed that a TV channel would be granted only after consultation between the two South African organisations.

Despite BoputhaTswana's independence the International Telecommunications Union in Geneva, which allots frequency spectrums to member countries for radio and TV broadcasts, refuses to allot separate spectrums to the homeland because it is not internationally recognised.

Mr Frank Woolley, information officer of the ITU, said from Geneva that BoputhaTswana would have to be allocated a TV channel from the "South African allocation."



Boputhatswana's proposed new television service, scheduled to start in January, took a major step forward when a modern mobile broadcasting studio arrived in Johannesburg from Britain yesterday on a chartered aircraft. Preparations for the service have been shrouded in secrecy and a spokesman for the new television service would not name the suppliers of the R1.25 million unit. "This unit is the most

modern television equipment available. It is a complete studio on wheels — a direct link between the camera and the transmitters. It has sound, visual, colour mixing and editing equipment," he said. At the airport yesterday to "meet" the unit were (from left) television director Mr Rob Bannoche, Bop-TV cameraman Mr Stanley Mofokeng, and television engineer Mr Alan Jones. The unit is in the background.

# Radio Bophuthatswana to take air

**MMABATHO** — Radio Bophuthatswana goes on the air on the eve of the former homeland's first independence anniversary on December 6.

South African engineers are installing a transmitter and equipping a studio in the National Assembly complex in Mmbatho at a cost of R50 000. Other transmitters will follow later at Lehurutsha, Madikwe, Tlhabane, Ganyesa and Garankuwa near Pre-

toria, and finally at Thaba Nchu in the Free State.

According to the head of Bophuthatswana's radio services, Mr David Mothibi, the station would initially broadcast in Tswana.

Radio Bophuthatswana will be on the air from 5 am to 10 am during the week, from 2 pm to 10 pm on Saturdays and from 8 am to 10 am and 3 pm to 10 pm on Sundays. The programmes will include news, sports and educa-

tional features.

The radio is Government-owned, and except for three white technicians seconded by the South African Defence Force for three years, is entirely staffed by Tswanas. There will be four announcers, two news reporters, three librarians and two programme assistants when Radio Bophuthatswana goes on the air for the first time on December 5. —Sapa.

# Talks on new TV channel

By IAN REID  
TV Editor

PLANS for a second commercial television channel for South Africa — beamed from BophuthaTswana — are still in the planning stage, says the chairman of the Broadcasting Board of BophuthaTswana, Mr Henry Howell.

He was commenting on Press reports yesterday that South African viewers could be receiving high-quality light entertainment from across the border by 1981 or 1982 at the latest.

The allocation of television and radio frequencies comes under the control of the Inter-

national Frequency Registration Board (IFRB) in Geneva but every country has control of the frequencies within its own borders.

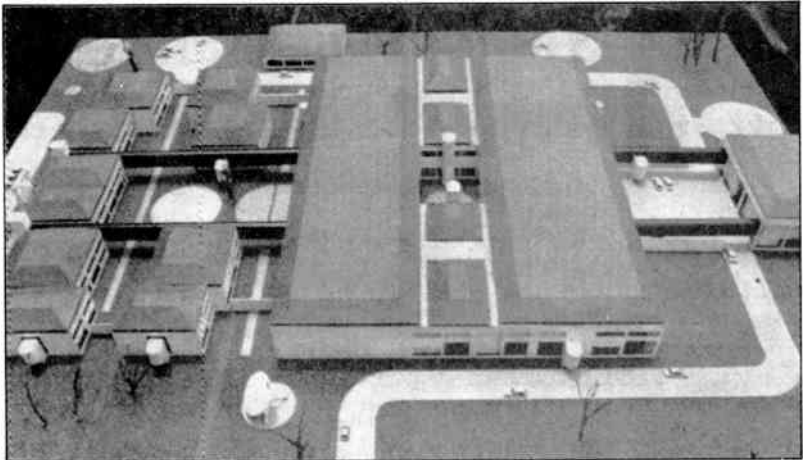
The SA Post Office will have to decide whether or not to grant the proposed station a frequency to beam its broadcasts into South Africa.

Mr Howell said plans were at the diplomatic stage. "The Government of BophuthaTswana is negotiating with the South African Government at the moment for a television frequency and a site. When these have been concluded a report will go to the Broadcasting Board."

Should the Post Office grant a frequency and the IFRB recognise it, this will amount to de facto recognition by an international organisation of BophuthaTswana as an independent country.

However, the BophuthaTswana Government is understood to be negotiating the purchase of a farm, Boschfontein, as a site for the transmitting station.

Most of its programmes would have to be imported and while Swaziland has no trouble getting British programmes, it is questionable whether Equity would allow BophuthaTswana to broadcast to South African viewers.



An architect's model showing the design layout of Bop TV's Mmabatho studio complex, which will be completed in the course of next year.

## Bop TV waits for SA accord on switch-on

By J MANUEL CORREIA

BUGBEARS still bedevil the signing of the final agreement between the South African and Bophuthatswana governments on Bop TV.

But agreement is expected to be reached "within the next few days".

This emerged from a Press conference given yesterday by Bop TV in Johannesburg, where the wraps were partially lifted on what the new station will look like.

Mr Henry Howell, chairman of the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Advisory Board, said there was no precedent for the agreement between the two governments and certain problems were bound to arise.

But he emphasised that the climate of agreement was one of "high cordiality and co-operation".

Other points to emerge were:

- The station will carry advertising and even sponsored programmes on Sundays.
- The first test signal will be sent out this week.
- There will probably be accidental signal "spillage" but it was not possible to say when or where.
- Bop TV would take satellite feeds but not from SABC-TV. It was building its own

receiving dish.

● Eventually Sun City will also be able to receive Bop TV programmes.

● Bop TV licences will cost R30, significantly lower than in South Africa, but it is not clear at this stage how the licence problem will be resolved outside sovereign Bophuthatswana territory, such as Soweto. The licence would be "collected by the territorial authority".

● Bop TV will be handing out free 40 000 UHF set-top aerials as part of its initial promotional campaign.

● Bop TV is unlikely to buy any programmes bought by SABC-TV.

● The service was not primarily aimed at whites.

● The official opening is on January 1, but on December 31 Bop TV will be on the air with a special New Year's Eve programme.

The director of TV services, Mr James Neill, would not disclose the names of programmes bought thus far.

But large segments would be broadcast in English.

He discounted the possibility of Bop TV screening films banned in South Africa because the station had a responsibility to its viewers not to screen material of a dubious nature.



Mr David Mthibi, head of Radio Bop, holds up one of the 40 000 set-top aerials Bop TV will give away.

## WHITE AREAS IN BEAM'S PATH SHOULD PICK UP HOMELAND SERVICE

SEVERAL 'white' areas were named this week as possible recipients of Bophuthatswana TV.

'Spillage' from Bop-TV when it begins broadcasts on January 1 could reach 'white' areas lying in the path of its beam and on the fringes of the fragmented homeland.

Sources at Bop-TV and telecommunications experts said these areas were:

● Areas in the west of Johannesburg in the shadow of the Brixton Tower such as Melville, Newlands and Westdene.

● Moodeer in the south.

● Krugersdorp and Roodepoort on the West Rand.

● The Vaal Triangle.

● Areas on the fringes of Bophuthatswana such as Rustenburg, Tarlton and Marikana.

● Areas in the 'white corridors' of South Africa between land masses designated to Bophuthatswana, such as Zeerust, Lichtenburg, Vryburg and Brits.

On January 1 broadcasts will start to Soweto, Dobsonville, Kagiso and Ga-Rankuwa. Later in the year, Bop-TV intends extending the signal to cover Alexandra and Tembisa east of Johannesburg and Atteridgeville outside Pretoria.

It is expected that by 1985 the service will be available as far as Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp and Thaba N'chu, to reach all the Tswana workers in these areas.

Test transmissions began this week, but Bop-TV officials said it was still impossible to define areas of 'spillage'.

A telecommunications expert who has had some involvement with Bop-TV said an ultra high frequency (UHF) signal was able to "bounce off objects" which would act as mirrors and deflect the signal to unpredictable areas.

"Only Bop-TV's chief technical consultant, Mr Alan Jones, knows where all Bop-TV's equipment has been placed," said the expert, who asked not be named.

"If I knew where everything was and examined the sites I could make an educated guess."



● Board chairman Mr Henry Howell ● Technical chief Mr Alan Jones

# Several suburbs likely to catch Bop-TV's 'spill'

By ANGELA GILCHRIST

Mr Jones said: "We won't know until we are fully operational which 'white' areas will be able to pick up Bop-TV.

"People will have to have a UHF aerial and one of the channels on their set tuned to UHF before they will be able to receive it. I can't tell you anymore than that."

Agreement on the terms of Bop-TV's broadcasts had not been reached by Friday.

The chairman of the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Advisory Board, Mr Henry Howell, said he expected the agreement between the South African and Bophuthatswana governments to be signed "within the next few days".

However, it is generally believed that South Africa refused to allow Bop-TV access to the lucrative white areas of the PWV, because it feared it would cut SABC-TV's advertising revenue.

Mr Howell this week said Bop-TV was happy with negotiations and that the climate was one of "high cordiality and co-operation".

Asked whether Bop-TV had wanted to broadcast to

'white' areas, Mr Howell said: "President Lucas Mangope expressed a desire to reach and unify his Tswana people, and only half of them live within the boundaries of Bophuthatswana. It is upon that basis that we will reach agreement with the South African government."

Mr Howell said the South African government had stated it would not place any restrictions on programmes, because the mores and aims of both societies were close.

He said he did not think Pretoria would "be so petty" as to take measures to block 'spillage' into white areas of the PWV.

"You are over-concerned with the question of 'spillage'," said Mr Howell. "We shall have to be satisfied with the advertising revenue that we get. We will be reaching one million people, after all."

The public relations chief of the SABC, Mr Hein Jordaan, said Bop-TV had not given SABC-TV any indications as to where 'spillage' would be.

● Media Spot looks at Bop-TV and advertising — See

# Bop-TV issue: You don't kid us, Pik is told

By J MANUEL CORREIA  
TV Correspondent

THE Progressive Federal Party's media spokesman, Mr David Dalling, yesterday accused the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pik Botha, of treating Witwatersrand residents like children over the Bop-TV issue.

"Mr Botha and the SABC conveniently forget that they are here to serve South Africa and its public — and not to dictate to it," he said.

Mr Dalling was responding to a statement by the Minister, who is responsible for the SABC, that suburban viewers would never have been able to receive Bop-TV had the necessary technology been available to the SABC right from the beginning.

Mr Botha also said that people who now demanded that Bop-TV be freely relayed to all areas of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand should realise that such action would be contradictory to an inter-state agreement and to internationally accepted practice.

By implication, he appeared to have dismissed a big petition still to be handed to Parliament over the issue.

Mr Dalling said agreements could always be changed by mutual consent and if enough people wanted a change he felt it wrong for anybody to try to pre-empt a decision.

A spokesman for the organisers of the petition said yesterday: "Irrespective of what Mr Botha has to say, we shall continue with the petition and it will be handed to Parliament, which is sovereign.

"Copies will be sent to Mr Botha and Mr Riaan Eksteen, director-general of the SABC, as a matter of courtesy.

"Mr Botha has also not explained why it is that people who are not Tswanas can watch Bop-TV in the target areas and why some sections of the population have a choice of four channels while others can watch only three."

Mr Dalling told the Rand Daily Mail yes-

terday: "I seriously question Mr Botha's attempts to treat the residents of the witwatersrand as children. He says that a clause in the South Africa-Bophuthatswana agreement limits the SABC to transmit Bop-TV signals only to areas heavily populated by Tswana citizens.

"Of course this is true, but at the same time very misleading.

"What happened was this: Bop wanted to run an independent TV station. This did not suit the SABC at all because its monopoly on advertising revenue and political propaganda would have been challenged — but the SABC held the trump card.

"The South African Government controls the airwaves available in South Africa and it is the only country in this region with the expensive equipment available to transmit high standard signals.

"But the South African Government needs to project an image which allows Bophuthatswana to appear to be an independent country, so negotiations were opened.

"The end result was that Bophuthatswana was allowed to broadcast provided the SABC did the relaying and that the target areas were strictly defined.

"Bop-TV had no choice but to agree to these terms. It was either that way or no way at all. So the SABC is acting strictly in terms of the agreement dictated by itself,

broadcasting Bop-TV to closely defined target areas.

"In this, Mr Botha is correct. The SABC is abiding by the letter of the inter-state agreement.

"What he doesn't tell us is that it was the dictatorial attitude of the SABC which set these unacceptable terms.

"Both Bop-TV and the South African public would be delighted if a more equitable agreement had been finalised.

"What we would like to see is a destruction of the TV monopoly, which would lead to less propaganda, more entertainment and better programmes for all."



MR DAVID DALLING  
"Destroy the monopoly"

# South African Whites Want Access To Black Homeland TV Broadcasts

By ALAN COWELL

Special to The New York Times

JOHANNESBURG, July 29 — South African whites have recently found themselves on the wrong end of apartheid, excluded from access to a lively television station limited to blacks.

As a result, they are seeking ways to receive programming from the station, Bop-TV, based in one of the nominally independent "homelands" that South Africa created to keep the races apart.

The homeland, Bophuthatswana, is an incomplete jigsaw of a place scattered among white-occupied land and theoretically home to people of Tswana ethnic origin. Bop-TV started beaming programs last January. As it did so, the limits and potential embarrassments over the kind of independence South Africa grants to its vassal states were highlighted.

Before the showing of the first programs, senior South African officials went to Bophuthatswana to seek assurances that the programs would not infringe on the standards of Calvinistic morality that South Africa sets for itself on its own generally uninspired television station.

#### Negotiated an Agreement

At the same time, Bop-TV negotiated an agreement with the South African Broadcasting Corporation whereby South African transmitters would be used to beam Bop-TV's programs to Tswana-speaking viewers outside the homeland, in places like Soweto, Johannesburg's black satellite.

Then the programs started, and, according to white viewers, a revelation took place: "If you are lucky you can find one decent program an evening to watch" on South African television, said Steve Roos, an activist campaigning for greater access in South Africa to Bop-TV.

The new channel, by contrast, he said, "tries to please 90 percent of the people 90 percent of the time," mainly offering American comedies and series such as "Gimme a Break" and "Falcon Crest."

Overnight, in areas where the Bop-TV signal spilled out beyond its black target areas, white viewers like Mr. Roos began erecting forests of broadband antennae to improve their reception of the new station, settling in comfortably each evening to watch news programs that were not as self-censored as those on South African television and entertainment programs they had never seen before.

#### Refining the Signal

The South Africans struck back, gradually refining the Bop-TV signal until it reached only its target areas among blacks and did not spill over into white areas. "I spent about 350 rands on four new antennae," Mr. Roos said, "but I can't get the signal properly anymore." The sum is the equivalent of around \$250.

"This," said Mr. Roos, "is segregation the other way round."

On Saturday, Mr. Roos and eight friends started gathering signatures for a petition to Parliament, demanding access to Bop-TV. They took up positions at a shopping area in Johannesburg's white suburb of Randburg and, in the space of a few hours, he said, they collected more than 3,800 signatures, mainly from irate whites who want their Bop-TV soap operas and news bulletins.

The drive is supported by the opposition Progressive Federal Party, whose media spokesman, David Dalling, also went to the Randburg shopping mall to offer support and sign the petition.

In a conversation with the activists, wider issues crept in.

Television came to South Africa only in 1976, Mr. Dalling said, because the people in charge of broad-

casting regarded "television as an evil which would corrupt the spirit of the people."

"They believed it would expose South Africa to evil influences and resisted it," he said. Then, Mr. Dalling said, an official commission looked into the feasibility of television and "discovered it was very controllable and could be harnessed to the ideology of whoever controlled it."

#### Television as a Vehicle

Thus, he said, television became a vehicle of the National Party, the group that represents the bulk of the 2.8 million Afrikaners, South Africa's dominant whites who have held power since 1948.

The white opposition, Mr. Dalling said, believes it is wrong for "a Government to dictate which programs we should be allowed to see."

Mr. Roos had other objections. South African television divides its time, he said, between English and Afrikaans, but many immigrants speak only English so they understand only half the programs.

"South African television is not of the highest quality," he said. "News is suppressed, and they cater for a very narrow group of people." Thus, he said, Sunday night is largely taken up with "church and classical music" on South African television while Bop-TV "is going for entertainment."

Bop-TV also beams news roundups supplied by UPITN, a British-based television news agency jointly owned by United Press International and Independent Television News, providing what he called "open news coverage."

As a result, the Bop-TV signal is suppressed, he said, for fear that "the white viewers are going to hear something that they should not." For example, Mr. Roos said, Bop-TV screened a documentary on the late black nationalist Steve Biko, some

# SATV 'should give up the fight'

**Switch On, Randburg, writes:** Well done and we wish you luck. I hope you get the support you require.

I feel that those who are able or were able to pick up Bop TV, should be left to watch the station.

All this money that is being wasted to block out certain areas should be used by SATV to improve TV 1. Even TV 2

## SABC is not an independent organisation 'Arrogant attitude'

**G R McGregor, Randpark Ridge, writes:** I am so glad that the Sun is doing something about this dreadful SABC/Bop TV scandal. It is more evident now than ever that the SABC is no longer an independent organisation providing an unbiased service to the public.

For some reason or other as it is incapable of providing what we want, it goes one way, that is to destroy its competitors.

## Switch off SABC

**Irise Visser, Randburg, writes:** Thank you for the effort. If the petition does not help,

and TV 3 have better programmes, but then there is the language problem. I am Afrikaans speaking and I find the Afrikaans programmes and I actually switch off the TV. I feel SATV should rather admit they have failed and take some advice and ideas from BOP TV which has put TV 1 to shame.

## Some questions for SABC

- G Bowen, Sandton, writes: Just a few questions
- I Do the SABC public servants think they are above serving the public?

## Domestic can't watch

**Walter, Randburg, writes:** May I say that I am delighted to register my total disapproval of the high-handed arrogant "baasskap" of the SABC.

## Why do we have to be

**Irise Visser, Randburg, writes:** Thank you for the effort. If the petition does not help,

We have now spent more money to buy our third bigger and better aerial, because we are determined to watch

## Lack of interest in water saving

**Disillusioned, Randburg, writes:** As soon as the water crisis began I became very conscious of trying to save as much as possible. When the time came to empty our swimming pool for repairs it hurt to see the water running away

## Water saving

Our neighbour told us that he too intended to repair his pool and suggested using the water to refill ours. I won't go into the boring details about the complete lack of interest I received from the authorities at the Randburg Water Board. Fire

## Water saving

then I suggest one big switch off for a few days. What is there to lose. Best of luck

So all I can say to SATV is to give up the fight, save the wasted money and spend it on improving their programmes, or alternatively I feel viewers should all have a big switch off.

## Lack of interest in water saving

- 4 I thought Bophuthatswana was an independent state
- SABC makes a mockery of this country and policy
- 5 Surely SABC actions are a violation of people's freedom of choice and privacy

## Lack of interest in water saving

Station and Traffic Department in my efforts to achieve this. All I can say is that it makes the system of obtaining water permits a farce. All the information received on these documents could, for water, be used to transport, at least some of it, from swimming pool to swimming pool. If we could do it with the antiquated equipment loaned to us by swimming pool company (free of charge) then a little effort and interest from the Council could achieve wonders.

## Lack of interest in water saving

then I suggest one big switch off for a few days. What is there to lose. Best of luck

# SABC-TV 'is scared of Big Brother'

**Ian Campbell, Blairgowrie, writes:** It's nice to have the airing and publicity that the Randburg Sun puts forth — the present Bop TV arrangement and the "open avenues" survey a little while back, quite apart from other subjects of particular bearing to all in this area.

I refer to your headlines "We want Bop TV" August 2 regarding the present issue. It is a common consensus of the public

## Lack of interest in water saving

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## Lack of interest in water saving

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opinion that the SABC-TV is government controlled, although there are strenuous denials from the quarter that this is the case.

I don't really think that the powers that be are really "frightened" although this appears to be the case. They are quite capable of being more than a match for Bop, particularly in that much of the material comes via SATV one way or another.

## Lack of interest in water saving

A number of the programmes are good, and, despite some unreasonable criticism levelled about locally produced shows we have enjoyed them.

## Lack of interest in water saving

then I suggest one big switch off for a few days. What is there to lose. Best of luck

be properly implemented when the possibility exists where by other information is just as easily acquired which could strain the credibility of what is supposed to be the true and would be accepted as so, if there were not for those "other misguided" news items from elsewhere."

Although a number of countries — the industrialised and civilised world (so to speak) — are basically fortunate enough to have access to other foreign broadcasts in this context, there is still, and will be increasingly so, a great deal of information which the citizen is required to know.

## Lack of interest in water saving

Cynical? Yes, but also truthful. We are here already (in a coming, its name) — the new World Order.

## Lack of interest in water saving

then I suggest one big switch off for a few days. What is there to lose. Best of luck

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## TV/RADIO

# Bop-petition: N Y Times debates some wider issues



Pieter Dirk-Uys signs a Bop-TV petition. A similar picture was printed in the *New York Times* last week when a full page article headlined "South Africa Whites Seek Black TV" was published.

By **JANINE WALKER**

Former diplomat Riaan Eksteen could hardly have foreseen the repercussions when the SABC became the instrument through which Bop-TV was relayed to certain target areas as agreed by the governments of South Africa and Bophuthatswana.

It must have seemed simply a matter of technicalities at the time.

Instead it has become one of the most emotional areas of television since the introduction of the medium eight years ago, with SABC Director-General Eksteen right in the middle — and seen by many viewers as the villain of the piece, especially after the Bop signal was cut from some of the spillage areas.

Even the *New York Times* has taken an interest in the affair.

In a full page article headlined "South African Whites Seek Black TV" it looks at the question pegged on the efforts to collect signatures for a petition demanding that all South African viewers should have access to Bop-TV.

The story by Alan Cowell reads: "South African viewers have recently found themselves on the wrong side of apartheid, excluded from access to a lively television station limited to blacks.

"As a result, they are seeking ways to receive programming from the station, Bop-TV, based in one of the nominally independent 'homelands' that South Africa created to keep races apart."

Cowell knocks the SABC for its "Calvinistic morality" and its "generally uninspired television station". He talks to the organisers of the petition who deplore the "self-censored" television avail-

able to whites in this country.

However, the article fails to point out the emotional issues involved. It would have been better if the organisers of the petition had protested to the SABC about the quality of its programmes rather than protesting to allow a foreign station to be beamed into this country.

The debate in the *New York Times* goes further than the Bop petition and other wider issues creep in.

In an interview Progressive Federal Party media spokesman, Dave Dalling, tells Cowell why TV was introduced into this country at such a late stage.

"It only arrived in 1976 as those in charge of broadcasting regarded television as an evil which would corrupt the spirit of the people.

"They believed it would expose South Africa to evil influences. However, a com-

mission discovered that it (television) was very controllable and could be harnessed to the ideology of whoever controlled it."

Thus, Cowell says, television became the vehicle of the National Party.

The article points out that the South African Government still has control over Bop-TV (even if it is only beamed to blacks) and that "Alex Haley's 'Roots' was shelved at the behest of South Africa".

After all the furore and bad publicity, Eksteen, the diplomat, must be asking himself whether it was really worth "refining" the signal to Soweto thereby cutting out, at the most, a quarter of the 250 000 Bop viewers.

After all, Bop's viewing audience — both black and white — was the equivalent of four percent of the SABC's total viewership.

# Stop bid to block Bop-TV, SABC told

**VIEWERS START A HARD-HITTING PETITION, REPORTS PETER MALHERBE**

A HARD-HITTING petition has been launched by a group of angry television viewers calling on the SABC to stop trying to suppress Bop-TV transmissions to Reef suburbs.

The petition, along with a letter sent by an irate viewer to the SABC's director-general, follows the public outcry this week over the Bop-TV blackout in certain white spillage areas after the SABC erected screens around the Bop-TV transmission aerial.

The SABC has claimed that the aim of adjusting the signal was not to deprive viewers of the chance to see Bop-TV, but to improve reception in the "target" areas.

But others see it as a move to curb the growing number of white viewers who have switched to Bop-TV at the expense of the SABC's TV1.

Mr Steve Roos, one of the organisers of the petition, said he had become incensed about actions taken by the SABC.

"A lot of people have spent a lot of money on erecting aerials to get Bop-TV, and we don't see why the SABC should spend more of our money to prevent us getting that signal.

"We are now paying for our own suppression," said Mr Roos.

He said the petition would be circulated from next week among employees in large companies, in shopping centres and at railway stations.

The independent group of 10 viewers who have formulated the

petition are hoping to get at least 10 000 signatures.

Mr Roos said the group felt that the SABC should improve the quality of its own service rather than obstruct an opposition channel.

Since he constructed a UHF aerial on his home in Fairlands at a cost of R350, Bop-TV has become a firm favourite with his family.

"If you can find one reasonable programme on TV1 every night you're lucky.

"On Bop-TV you can get two or three hours of entertainment almost every evening."

Under the heading "Should all South Africans have the right to watch Bop-TV?", the draft petition says:

"We, the undersigned, hereby express our protest against all the costly efforts that the SABC is making to suppress the spillage of Bop-TV to all but a privileged few.

"We support the view that the SABC-TV transmissions are totally inadequate in terms of news and entertainment value.

"We want the right to choose whether we view Bop-TV or any of the other SABC channels, as well as any future channels that may become available.

"We object to being dictated to by the SABC with regard to the programmes that we may or may not watch.

"English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans only have half a channel while many viewers who are multi-lingual already have three channels to choose from.

"We pay the same licence fee as do those viewers who are permitted to receive Bop-TV transmissions.

"We object to the fact that they can view four channels while we are restricted to three, of which 2½ are totally useless to many viewers.

"We therefore insist that all efforts to suppress Bop-TV transmissions cease immediately; that the SABC remove all screens designed to reduce Bop-TV spillage; that the SABC ceases to spend taxpayers' and/or licensees' money to deprive those very taxpayers and licensees freedom of choice; and that the SABC allow and encourage the extension of Bop-TV transmissions while doing its utmost to improve its own news and programme quality."

Another viewer, Mrs C A Honey, has sent a letter to the director-general of the SABC, Mr Riaan Eksteen.

She wrote: "The amount of money — taxpayers' and licensees' — that has been wasted, I repeat wasted, in providing this service/disservice to the public runs into thousands of rands.

"As a white English-speaking South African, I find the small-mindedness of your corporation incomprehensible."

A spokesman for the SABC, Mr Willie Visagie, said the petition did not concern the SABC.

"The whole Bop-TV question has nothing to do with us. The SABC is merely relaying the signal for Bop-TV," he said.

# Govt warns Bop-TV on banned coverage

By ANTON HARBER  
Political Reporter

THE South African Government has sent a special note to the Bophuthatswana government complaining about last week's interview on Bop-TV featuring Mr Oliver Tambo, the leader of the African National Congress, it was reliably learnt yesterday.

The South Africans have warned the Bophuthatswana government not to allow a repetition of such interviews with people who may not be quoted in South Africa.

This comes only a few days after Dr Lucas Mangope, the President of Bophuthatswana, said Bop-TV would continue to quote banned South Africans if what they had to say was newsworthy.

Mr Tambo is "listed" in terms of the Internal Security Act and may not be quoted in the Republic.

Last week, Bop-TV showed a lengthy extract of comments made by Mr Tambo during a Press conference in Harare.

Mr Tambo spoke about his attitude to the recent car bomb in Durban which claimed four lives.

The South African Press was refused permission to quote his comments,

On Monday night, Dr Mangope said in a major Bop-TV interview that the South African Government had previously complained to him about the broadcasting of an interview with Mrs Winnie Mandela, who is also banned.

"However, I am not perturbed," he said.

Bop-TV is relayed to certain parts of the Reef by SABC-TV in terms of two agreements. A technical agreement signed with the SABC and a political agreement with the South African Government.

In terms of the latter agreement, Bop-TV is obliged not to broadcast material that undermines law and order in South Africa.

Since the SABC relays the Bop-TV signal, it is technically in contravention of the law if it assists in the broadcast of illegal material.

Mr J C Neal, director of Bop-TV, last night referred queries on this matter to Mr K C A V Sehume, the Bophuthatswana Minister of Post and Telegraphs, but he not available for comment.

Spokesmen for the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria could also not be contacted for comment.

The column that keeps you on the inside track

## The dozing SABC giant twitches

SWITCH ON

by Ian Gray



So the Bop mouse has roared and the slumbering SABC giant has jumped.

Apparently worried by the minuscule spillage from the Bop signal relayed via the Brixton Tower to Soweto, the SABC has moved once more to refine the beam and ruin the little pleasure some viewers gained from an alternative channel.

There is no legal reason why the SABC should not confine the Bop signal to Soweto as agreed to by the governments of South Africa and Bophuthatswana and which, in theory at least, had nothing to do with Auckland Park.

And there is no legal or moral reason why the SABC should assist a foreign television service poach its viewers. After all, what commercial organisation would willingly assist a rival company to steal its customers?

But as a public relations exercise the latest trimming of the Bop spillage was a disaster. First came the announcement at the weekend that we would be denied coverage of the Olympic Games (through no fault of the SABC), then came the latest move to cut Bop in those few areas that had enjoyed it.

But then the SABC has seldom conceded anything to public opinion according to the non-stop stream of callers to this office from Monday onwards last week and if they ever get to carry out their threats, the government will fall at the next election and the SABC had better in-

crease its security measures.

Against all advice to the contrary, thousands of people invested in expensive aerial equipment in order to pick up the Bop spillage and they now find their antennae quite useless. Naturally they are upset.

But it seems to go much deeper than money; those viewers who enjoyed Bop and who now cannot receive it feel they have been cheated and they see the SABC as the villain of the piece.

However, there is more to it than that.

When Bop-TV was launched, Bophuthatswana claimed it was because it wanted to give Tswanas both inside and outside its borders their own voice. Well, up to now that voice has had a distinctly American accent and will continue to have one for some five or six years before the station starts producing its own programmes in any quantity.

Also, when it was launched, Bop had a target viewership of 50 000 and based its commercial calculations on that figure.

However, survey figures for the first three months of this year showed that Bop attracted 250 000 viewers at peak times. That, of course, constituted a mere 4 percent of TV1, 2 and 3's combined nightly audience of more than 6 million.

But the SABC's apparent unconcern at this small dent in its monopolistic armour was obviously not genuine, hence the moves



to cut down on the spillage even more incidentally. Bophuthatswana bears all the costs of relaying Bop's signal via the Brixton Tower transmitter and presumably all the expense of refining the signal too.

Why the concern?

When Bop's popularity became apparent soon after it went on stream in January the SABC reacted quite strongly. It gave its TV1 schedules their first major overhaul since its inception by pumping in major entertainment series almost every night of the week, improving quite dramatically the standard of its film-fare and seemingly decided for once to offer viewers what they really wanted - entertainment with a capital E.

It seems the SABC will have to go back to the drawing board.

Cutting Bop's signal is not going to increase SABC audiences. Those viewers who can, or could, get Bop-TV tune

into the rival network because they are dissatisfied with what TV1, 2 or 3 are offering.

If the SABC cannot come up with something better, those same Bop viewers will turn more and more to the video outlets for their entertainment.

Only in South Africa, where prices rise in times of surplus, could a TV network threatened by a rival, move to cut off the rival rather than offer something better itself.

But what can you expect from a station that schedules an adult programme in a children's slot because "it's the only one available" and then refuses to review the situation when it becomes obvious to everyone else it has made a mistake?

It seems it will take more of a roar from a bigger mouse to make the SABC look to itself for the solution to the problem of disappearing viewers.

# Bop-TV lists its programmes

By J MANUEL CORREIA  
TV Correspondent

BOP-TV has decided not to buy "Dynasty", the mega soap-opera which has knocked "Dallas" off the top ratings in the United States.

Bop-TV's director, Mr James Neal, told the Rand Daily Mail in Mmabatho yesterday the station had considered buying the series but had decided against it as it was on the video circuit.

"There was no point. It would be a little silly for us to start screening a series which most people have seen anyway."

More details of Bop-TV programmes were announced at a Press conference in Mmabatho yesterday.

They include:

● "The New Avengers" — the super adventure series. The episodes are understood to be new to Southern Africa.

● "Switch" — a series about a sophisticated conman gone straight and a retired ex-policeman who team up as private detectives who join forces to con the conmen.

● "Sierra" — an action story about park rangers confronted by various disasters.

● "Combat" — an action series set in World War II.

● "Mod Squad" — a series about three young people who work undercover for the Los Angeles Police.

● "Sword of Justice" — a series about a man seeking revenge after being framed and unjustly jailed.

● "The Rockford Files." —

the popular series with James Garner as the private eye with a knack for getting into awkward situations.

● "Different Strokes" — a family comedy about a wealthy widower whose calm life is shattered when two swift-talking streetwise young brothers arrive from Harlem and move in to be raised as his sons.

● "St Elsewhere" — a medical drama series.

● "The Partners" — a detective comedy series.

● "Gimme a Break" — a series in which an over-worked police captain and widowed father of three girls matches wits with a house-keeper who tries to maintain law and order in the home.



Mr Henry Howell, chairman of Bophuthatswana TV, and Mr Alan Jones, a senior technical consultant, stand proudly before a sophisticated device for receiving film distributed around the world by satellite.

Picture: JIM Edelstein

Alan Jones: 'Henry Howell, with his love of broadcasting and belief in its power to communicate and educate, and his knowledge of commercialism and free market forces, probably changed the face of the South African Broadcasting Corporation more *after* he retired to become Chairman of Bop. Broadcasting than whilst *in* the service of the SABC.

'The advent of Radio 702 and Radio Bop (10.98) brought many changes to the SABC's radio channels and programming. The start of Bop TV on December 31 1983 changed the face of television in South Africa for ever, galvanising SABC TV into a series of channel and programming changes in order to compete. Had Bop TV been allowed to broadcast as widely as was envisaged by Henry, the effect would have been even more dramatic.'

And so the story of Henry Howell's broadcasting career ends where it began in President Mangope's Foreword. The fruits of his labours will continue with the Bop Broadcasting Corporation, Radio 702, and the growth and changes within the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The Henry Howell Foundation Trust should encourage many young faces and voices to enter the profession; and with the standards he has already set there is a wonderful legacy for a 'new Southern Africa'. Henry Howell's name and achievements must indeed live on.

On November 27 1991, Henry Howell collapsed as he was about to chair a Bop Broadcasting Board meeting. The President's helicopter flew him to a Johannesburg hospital, to be assessed by his heart specialist. He was allowed home some 10 days later.

After he was admitted, Robin Alexander at the beginning of his all night radio programme, paid this tribute:

"Well, there's a bit of a dampener on the morning for me, just at this particular point, because I have learned, a few minutes ago, that Mr Henry Howell took ill yesterday and is in hospital at the moment and we're, well, we're saddened by it. He is fortunately in very sound health overall, and we hope he will be home very soon, but it was a very alarming incident.

"What is so special about Henry Howell? For English language broadcasting in South Africa he is probably the great pillar of English language broadcasting in our country, having joined the SABC after having served, with great distinction, in World War Two. He joined the SABC in Cape Town, was very soon Head of the English Service, was very soon on the Board, and then made a wonderful success of

Springbok and Commercial Radio in the years prior to his retirement. He has, since then, been consulting to H. E. President Mangope as Advisor to the Broadcasting Authority of the Government of Bophuthatswana. In fact it was there, at Mmabatho, that he took ill yesterday, and was brought back to Johannesburg by helicopter.

"We all of us love and revere that very great man who played a great role in all of our lives, particularly men such as myself and Adrian Steed who have know him since we were very, very young men indeed, who have admired and tried, one way and another, to model ourselves upon him, or better still, to aspire to things he was, is able to do.

"Always a man able to walk into any studio at any time and take over from the announcer on duty, and do better than that man what he was doing at that moment.

"An astonishing mind and a brilliant artist, a wonderful manager, and what is special about Henry Howell is that his personality, his style of management, his extraordinary talent, his great wisdom is in every single respect utterly impeccable. He has always set very high standards for all those who have ever been privileged to work with him, and certainly our prayers are with him this morning in the hospital in Johannesburg. We hope that the days that lie ahead, hopefully before Christmas time, will see him relaxing at home in his garden."

On another morning, Paddy O'Byrne broadcast:

"I went to see that great man of the wireless, Henry Howell, yesterday and his many friends and admirers will be glad to hear that he looks marvellous and is coming through all his tests with flying colours, but like all of us who has to spend however short a time in hospital, needs a little encouragement perhaps. And I've got just the thing.' (Paddy played Burton's wonderful rendition of "Do not go gentle into that good night" followed by ... 'the clear treble of James Rainbird with the Ambrosian Junior Choir, directed by John McCarthy, in the Welsh Lullaby "Suo Gan" )....

"... all by way of saying 'get well Henry Howell, isn't it'"

Henry went home on December 9th, tired but full of good cheer. We had planned a quiet Christmas, but had a feeling it should be extra special. We bought a tree, lights, Welsh music and Christmas Carols. We asked his cousins to spend Christmas Eve with us rather than the planned reverse, to enable him to rest early if need be, which he did. On Christmas day we listened to his touching rendering of "The Snow Goose" which was broadcast - with thanks to Patrick Kohler - on the English Service during the afternoon.

Henry had arranged to go into hospital at the end of January for a minor operation. He survived it very well, but it was discovered that he needed another more serious operation for the removal of a malignant growth. With his cardiac history, and two operations so close together, it was, as he said 'a battle I'm not going to win this time, darling.' I knew that his survival in 1984 had been a miracle, his living and moving among us a precious happening. He died peacefully in his sleep a week later.

Rodney Trudgeon – Sunday Supplement Magazine radio programme:

"It's been a particularly sad weekend in broadcast history, sad because we've lost one of the giants of broadcasting in South Africa, Henry Howell, who died earlier this weekend. One of Henry's close friends and colleagues was Adrian Steed, who's joined us in the "Sunday Supplement" studio, to talk about the legend we know as Henry Howell ... Adrian:

"Southern African broadcasting is infinitely poorer for the passing of Henry Howell. I've been in broadcasting a long time, having started under Henry a long time ago and I haven't met a man in broadcasting who is his equal for caring about broadcasting. He had a passion for it, and he cared very much about the kind of service that he delivered to the listeners of what was then his beloved English Service. Not only was he a consummate broadcaster in his own right, being able to turn his hand to anything, from boxing commentaries to acting in plays, he was also a superb broadcaster, when promotion elevated him to become a 'desk jockey'.

"I think he missed the microphone a great deal, but having become an administrator he set his stall out to be one of the best in the business, and he was. I say that he cared about the kind of service his listeners got, so much so that he had a radio in every room in his house, in those days, and if a broadcaster, a hapless broadcaster, was unfortunate enough to make a mistake he very soon knew about it, because the little light would flash on the desk, you would pick up the telephone, you didn't say, 'Yes, hello, who's speaking?', you knew who was speaking, you said, 'Yes Mr. Howell', and he would tell you about the mistake that you had made and he'd put you right. A lot of the time it was done very kindly, but firmly, but he could be a tiger. "I remember, on occasions, thinking of him running his radio service as Captain Bligh ran The Bounty and I well remember, too, the severe tongue lashings that I received from Henry, richly deserved, I might say, but I think it says a lot for the man, as soon as he had delivered his



chastisement he bore no grudge, and from being an employee of his, I became one of his dear friends. He was very much like a father to me.

"One of the saddest things that happened to Henry was when he was at his height of his powers, running the English Service as it was then, his politics were deemed not to be acceptable by the National Party in those days, I'm talking about a long time ago, and he was elbowed out into the Commercial Service as Head of Springbok Radio. He was mortified, he was in despair, he thought the end of the world had come and he sat, bemused and dazed, for about three months, and then he started to get the hang of it. He took up the reins and the rest is history; he became the leading authority on commercial broadcasting in Southern Africa.

"Not only did he run Springbok Radio very successfully, but, after his retirement he went onto the Board of Bophuthatswana Broadcasting, and he was a Board Member of Radio 702. As you said, Rodney, he was a giant and I very much fear that we shall not see his like again."

"'Howell was the boss' says O'Byrne (Citizen newspaper headline). Indeed he was, was Henry Howell and there was no mistake about it. And that beautiful voice, which made his valley greener to radio listeners than it had ever been heard before, was capable of viperish wit, if you put a foot wrong. As Adrian Steed said yesterday, the telephone would ring and you didn't have to ask who was on the other end of the line.

"Shortly after I began my career with the English Service of the SABC I was the regular presenter of "Sunday at Home", and one Monday morning I met Henry Howell in the corridor – I don't think I was actually summoned to the presence – and he said, 'Are you working for Lever Brothers now, dear boy?' and I said, 'Sorry?' He said, 'Lever Brothers, you're working for them are you?' and I said, 'No, why?' He said, 'Well then, why do you puff their products?' I had been talking to Lillian Randall about her garden, and she had mentioned Lifebuoy soap, an unforgiveable sin in those days, but then, of course, he smiled, clapped me on the shoulder, and all was forgotten until the next time.

"The Welsh really have it when it comes to talking, and to them death is a challenge, like any other.... (Here followed Richard Burton reading "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night):

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

"We are going to miss a dear friend and an inspiring leader in Henry Howell, but then we've had to do without him for quite a long time now. Requiescat in pace."

Here followed Richard Burton's reading of Dylan Thomas' poem "And Death Shall Have No Dominion":

And death shall have no dominion.  
Dead men naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the west moon;  
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,  
They shall have stars at elbows and foot;  
Though they go mad they shall be sane,  
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;  
Though lovers be lost love shall not;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
Under the windings of the sea  
They lying long shall not die windily;  
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,  
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;

Faith in their hands shall snap in two,  
And the unicorn evils run them through;  
Split all ends up they shan't crack;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
No more may gulls cry at their ears  
Or waves break loud on the seashores;  
Where blew a flower nay a flower no more  
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;  
Though they be mad and dead as nails,  
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;  
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,  
And death shall have no dominion.

Paddy ended his tribute, as he had done before, with the moving Welsh lullaby 'Suo Gan'.

On the day of Henry's funeral, Radio 702 broadcast this tribute:  
Stan Katz, Station Manager –

"Time now for us at 702 to pause for just a minute to bid goodbye to a friend. This last weekend saw the passing of Henry Howell, veteran broadcaster and deputy Chairman of Radio 702's Board of Directors. Henry Howell had been ill for a short while at the time of his death but those of us who knew him remember the keen intellect and sharp wit undiminished by his 74 years of age. As well as his association with 702, Henry Howell was Chairman of the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Corporation and a past head of both the SABC's Springbok Radio and English Service.

"Issie Kirsh, Managing Director of Radio 702 and a friend and colleague of Henry's for the past 12 years remembers him:

... 'Henry Howell was one of a handful of men who was instrumental in bringing 702 into being. He was a guide. He was a man who set high standards. He was highly professional in all respects. But he was also something more: a man who had a wonderful presence. You knew when Henry Howell was in the building, and you and your work were the better for it. All of us here at 702 will truly miss him....'

"Henry Howell's funeral service is under way at this moment. As broadcasters, especially radio people, we thought it would be fitting for us to interrupt our programming for a moment or two at this time as a mark of respect.

"Henry Howell – from all at 702 – rest in peace"

As I write the ending of this story I am reminded of a letter written to us by Gideon Roos after an exhilarating dinner party. Also present had been Steve de Villiers and his wife Ninon, Wally Langschmidt and his wife Marge, the indomitable, formidable, adorable former journalist and broadcaster, the late Adele Lezard Dreichmeier, and ourselves. We three wives sat back and soaked up the incredible atmosphere created by these five stimulating people – the words flowing back and forth with memories from a world they had all shared.

"Although it is nearly midnight", wrote Roos, "I cannot retire without writing a few words ... what an inspiration you two had to bring together our little group of 'microphone crackpots' that shared so many experiences and memories stretching over so many years – Adele, of whom I went in awe and admiration when, as a 'cub announcer' in the SABC heard her effortlessly answering questions as a member of the "Quiz Team"; Henry, with whom I shared so much of the philosophy and idealism and dreams of 'public service broadcasting'; Steve, one of the most generous-hearted colleagues I ever knew – an expert in his own sphere as a sports broadcaster, yet never seeking the limelight for himself; and Wally, the man of figures and logic who laboured to measure the success of our artistic endeavours by the relentless statistics of 'listener research'!

"And that we broadcasters shall always continue – if I may be allowed to borrow a simile from a now forgotten fellow-broadcaster of the early thirties: 'to paint our dreams in delicate pastel shades on the bottom of a cloud, only to be blown away by a puff of wind, but never to be eradicated from the hearts of those listeners whom we touched for a moment with our magic' ...."

There is little to add, except to mention a man who has not been a broadcaster, nor understood anything of that world, but only that he loved Henry Howell, and he deserves a place in Henry's biography. His name is Sixpence Macia Tembu – an ex-lightweight boxing champion now over eighty years of age. Innocent, without judgement, without guile, yet he knew instinctively who to trust, who to love, and who in turn loved him. He served Henry devotedly for over 40 years as valet, cook, houseman, housekeeper, brother, guardian and friend. After Henry died in 1991 he was himself frail, but he refused to leave me. He nursed me through my grieving – in truth we grieved and cried together, and reminisced as the sun went down for we had both shared the love of a very special man.



*Sixpence Tembu and Mrs Howell.*

And in a diary of Henry's dated 1931 when he was fifteen years of age, there is an entry:

"Today I have a cold. I shall fight it! Let battle begin!"

... THAT was the measure of the man ...

\* \* \*



## Chapter 9

# A Miscellany of Memories

**A**part from the broadcasted tributes, hundreds of letters, telegrams, photographs, old news-clips, and other memorabilia filled the mailbag for weeks. They came from many remote corners of the country and the world and a selection of these, and extracts from interviews not included in previous chapters, has been chosen with which to end.

### **Dominic O'Byrne:**

"... from the age of about four or five ... Perhaps my most enduring impression of him was of somebody who was more than just "the man Daddy worked for". He always appeared to me as a man of infinite power – but also infinite wisdom and kindness. Later, in the middle 80's when my career brought me into a remote kind of professional contact with him, I was always terribly proud that he thought it important to talk with me and show an active interest in what I was doing. I must confess I basked in his attention! In a profession where heroes are increasingly dubious and insubstantial, the loss we feel in the industry he left behind is even harder to bear."

### **Michael Silver's daughter, Judy:**

"... and remembering the marvellous speech he made at my father's memorial evening at Inanda ... I remember him from early childhood as always being such a very warm and gentle man...."

### **Norman Filmer:**

"In looking back over the past few decades of the development of Broadcasting in South Africa one is certain to remember and be grateful for the contribution to the success of the Programme Division of the SABC rendered by Henry Howell.

"The part he played, including personal performances of a high standard, centred on the friendly co-operation and assistance he

afforded his colleagues throughout his long and very distinguished career."

**Sir James Redmond:**

"I first met Henry when I did a lecture tour on broadcasting for the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers in October 1980. In June 1983 Henry rang me in London and asked if I would join a small team to help recruit senior staff for the soon to be formed Bop TV.... We flew to Mmabatho with the interviewing group: Vera Mayer of NBC, Howard Abrahams of ABC and Les Cowie of Visicon Visual Learning Systems. We met Mr. Sehume, Minister of Posts & Telecommunications and spent two or three days interviewing candidates for senior posts in Bop TV. Henry chaired the interviews.

"In January 1984 we were invited back to attend the opening of BOP TV which was already working in one studio and broadcasting daily news bulletins plus other programmes. I remember being impressed with the progress they had made in such a short time. Henry of course was the Chairman....

"We met again in 1985 ... and later in 1986 ... he was visiting relations in Wales.

"We had much in common as he, like me, remembered people in broadcasting before, during and after the war. We both knew Ascension, he with Cable & Wireless, I with the BBC...."

"He left a vast inheritance of broadcasting excellence ... a reservoir from which we and all students to come will be able to draw on indefinitely...."

**A listener in Cape Town:**

"... I will always remember him as vital and strong. He was a wonderful man who lived a very fulfilling life. The people of the nation will miss his presence and talents. We all admired him tremendously...."

"... we got to know him over many years as a man of absolute integrity for whom all of us had the highest respect" – **Thys Roux, Willem Malherbe, Kallie Buys and all his friends at Rembrandt.**

"Henry Howell was totally dedicated to goodness, honesty and unselfish helpfulness... I salute and bless his memory as one of the "Real Greats" in my life...." **Dr. Jan S. Marais.**



"... 'Beauty is the evident pleasure derived by a man performing a job well done'.... In the early days of our acquaintance sitting on a committee with Henry, I was immediately struck by the force of his logic and the genius of the man's rhetoric, both matching his evident enjoyment of the proceedings. There was no other word for it: Beautiful! Indeed, the synergia that was Henry working with the spoken language ALWAYS suggested the same equation. Especially was this the case with his broadcasts, of course. And above all with what, for me, was his *piece de resistance* "How Green was my Valley". Surely to goodness the hearts and minds that have appeared till now to be so obdurate can be expected to soften in the months ahead and grant Henry's many thousands of fans the special delight of a repeat broadcast.

"I met Henry in the early 50's ... a rapport with one of the warmest and sincerest people it has been my pleasure to meet in over three-quarters of a century. If Beauty is only in the ear of the beholder ... it wouldn't have found its way there without Henry Howell; not without the beauty of his fine, rare brand of stimulus, it wouldn't." – Jimmy Cowan, pioneer of Direct Mail Advertising.

"All his many friends and colleagues of the 1932/34 entries to Cable & Wireless (I & IC at the time) will be sad.... He was an outgoing young man, more oriented to the arts than submarine cables, and very popular with us all. Both of us being in 'digs' in Hampstead in the middle 1930's, we took pleasure in roaming the silent and empty London Square Mile on a Sunday morning to find out its treasures....

"All who knew him will appreciate our loss, myself in particular. On a dark night in December 1937 I had an accident while trying to help an injured passenger at Godalming station in Surrey. I went down into the middle of the road some 40ft below. Henry rescued me – and possibly saved my life. He was a great chap." – taken from a published obituary by Robert F.C. Thomaë, Cable & Wireless.

"... I have fond memories of him as 'Uncle Henry' on the radio during the late 1940's. Radio only started at 4 p.m. then and the first programme was "Boys and Girls come out to Play". Uncle Henry always told his farmyard stories and did all the animal sounds himself. This is something I have never forgotten" – listener in East London.

"Memories of 'Uncle' Henry? Erudite ... twinkly-eyed ... a gentleman and a gentle man ... that wonderful voice – and the way he *always*

called me 'little one'." – **Stevie Godson**, Bop Broadcasting Media Relations Chief.

"... For over twenty years as colleagues he commanded my late husband's unflinching respect and affection as few people ever did. For my own part ... I treasured his warmth, his kindness, his unfailing courtesy and his wicked, wonderful wit. He was a very special man...." – **Alexandra (Timothy) Bungey**.

"It was with great sadness and shock ... We, on the External Radio Services, always had the highest regard for Henry not only as an outstanding broadcaster, but as a pioneer of external broadcasts from South Africa. The Overseas Transcription Service, which he established, became the forerunner of Radio RSA, the Voice of South Africa. We were honoured to have him as a Jury member during our Bokmakierie judging...." **Fanus Venter** – Head: External Radio Services.

**Peter Dimmock** – veteran BBC sports commentator, now Chairman of Television Enterprise & Asset Management, London:

"I shall never forget the kindness shown to my late wife Polly (Polly Elwes, BBC TV presenter) and myself by Henry and Kathleen Howell whenever we visited South Africa. He was a wonderful ambassador both for Broadcasting and South Africa in general.

"On one occasion, when Polly was in the first stages of cancer, Henry gave up his saloon on the Blue Train in order that she would be more comfortable on the journey. This was typically generous of him. He was such a kind and gentle man. His thoughts were always for others rather than himself. On my very first visit to South Africa it was Henry who explained the difficulties of resolving the problems of apartheid. He outlined the need to make haste slowly in order to establish and maintain a vigorous multi-racial society in South Africa that could once again enjoy a respected place in world affairs.

"Henry's lunch parties at his beautiful and tranquil home were occasions always to be savoured. There was always a cross section of interesting and distinguished characters, full of exciting conversation and enhanced by Kathleen's delicious cooking and accompanied by enjoyable wine from the Cape...."

**Cecil Jubber:**

"... He left the English Service with great rue ... but Henry being

Henry made certain he was going to be a success as the boss-guy of Springbok Radio, and he went on to greater things, and became Senior Director of the SABC. My contact with him began in 1961 when I was transferred to the old Commissioner Street studios. He started me off as an announcer/producer ... one of his lieutenants under his flag-ship. I will be forever grateful to him for always providing me with a sound and sane man and a reasoned bridge to broadcasting, which he so kindly did. He was an extremely fair man to those on his staff and I never, ever recall having a cross or disheartening word from him.

"I remember very clearly the monthly meetings of the entire staff in the Conference Room – a staff of about 70 around a vast table – and as he walked in, on each occasion, the entire staff rose ... the respect that the man commanded without even trying and there was nothing false about it. I have never seen it happen with other Heads of Service, it only happened to him....

"When one is writing a book about someone, one should show warts and all ... but Henry didn't have any 'warts' – not one."

The late **Pamela Deale** wrote a letter to Henry after her retirement in 1972:

"Thank you very much for your letter. I cannot tell you how touched I was to hear that you had listened to my last programme and that you thought I had handled it well. When I was scripting it I wished that you could listen to what I had to say about you, but I never dreamt that you would have the time to do so. It was a sad session for me but I was determined not to show this on the air and I was glad to hear that you felt I had succeeded.

"I was so delighted to have you in my last programme, and to be able to listen at home the following week to the final chapters of 'How Green was my Valley'; like many other people I was nearly in tears. The whole reading was a masterpiece of broadcasting and many of the farewell letters I have received from listeners referred to it and asked me to pass on their thanks and congratulations. We have never had such a reaction to a book; never a day went by during the readings without a letter from someone saying how much they were being enjoyed, and I am told that at the end of the broadcasts a whole lot more came in.

"Thank you very much for letting us repeat it in **Woman's World**. I can't help feeling that this fantastic reaction in the morning, and then again in **Woman's World**, should teach us something about listeners' tastes!....

"Thank you again for your letter and for the encouragement you have given me over the years. One of the reasons I liked working for you was that you were always appreciative of my efforts."

**Patricia Kerr** – veteran broadcaster and first lady television news-reader/presenter:

"I know I was in awe of him, and a little bit frightened but I found his enthusiasm infectious, and he had this wonderful quality of saying 'well if we don't succeed, it doesn't matter; we have tried', which I thought was a lovely way for a Head of Service to be, in fact I think he was the best Head of Service that we ever had.

"I remember I had my first 'meeting' with him at an announcers meeting when he decided we would introduce "Forces Favourites" and that Heather Mennell was going to present it; I was to be given "Music in the Morning". After about a year, during which I had been going through a lot of personal emotional problems with an invalid mother, I did not realise how tired I was. One day he called me in and said, 'My dear, you are sounding just like Queen Victoria talking to Disraeli!' Of course I was dismayed but explained that my mother was dying ... and he said, 'Right. You are going to have a rest; Clive Payne will take it over for three months.' And he was wise. He realised that broadcasters **do** get tired. You don't realise it yourself, but the brain gets tired and you lose your vitality.

"Another memory: I never had that little light flashing on the desk but I can remember one which didn't affect me but he was so right to do it. Heather Mennell was reading the Stock Exchange prices and one of them was "Beatrice" and Bea Reed was actually sitting in the studio with her. Heather started to giggle because Beatrice was worth only 6d or 9d, and Bea naturally joined in but she was able to leave the studio and giggle outside. Heather proceeded to read the rest of the Stock Exchange with a series of hiccups, and the light flashed on the desk. She cued off and picked up the phone to hear: "STOP GIGGLING!" and a click as the receiver was replaced. Of course it brought her round completely. She stopped giggling just like that, that was his power.

"For myself, I was presenting "Music in the Morning" and because my husband and I had been mocking a certain commercial that seemed to be so repetitious I thought I would make a skit of it as an introduction – I did not realise the awful complications. I started my programme, 'There is a commercial on the other station which my husband said if they don't change it he's going to go berserk, and it

begins ... I didn't mention the product. About a month later Henry called me into his office – he was now with Springbok Radio – and he said, 'I want you to read this letter.' It was from the advertising agency saying the sponsor objected to my derogatory remarks. I asked him if he wanted me to reply and he said, 'No, I shall reply, and I'd be very grateful if you didn't knock the service that pays your salary'. He was very fair, he didn't tear a strip off me, he just said those words and they hit home. It taught me a lesson that you can't do that sort of thing.

"He had to deal with the good, the bad, the misdemeanours, and the good behaviour, and he did it all extremely fairly."

**Steve de Villiers**, former Director-General, sports broadcaster and author:

"He was very happy with the English Service. He had this cultural background, he acted in so many plays, an artist, a wonderful actor. He was also one of the finest readers of English poetry and prose, and in those days his reading of "How Green was my Valley" was a *tour de force* as far as I am concerned, and one of the finest reading efforts on the English Service that I can remember, and I think that many other listeners remember. He read it so beautifully, so well. I'm an Afrikaans speaker and I never missed his readings, and by popular request it was repeated some time later. I think his Welsh background stood him in very good stead, and in reading this book he made the characters live, and the dialogue he read beautifully.

"So when he was moved from the English Service to a totally new world for him it was not an easy transition. As a matter of fact I can state quite categorically that if he'd had a choice he would have wanted to remain with the English Service – not only for what he had done there. And as an administrative person I must say that he was held in very high regard. He could also handle his staff extremely well, he was decisive and something of a disciplinarian, but at the same time he had empathy with his people, and a sense of humour, and he could lead....

"And then, all of a sudden, he came across to the commercial world where you had to deal with sponsors, and advertising agencies, etc. etc. so it was not easy. But what was wonderful for me was that I was already there, I had run the gauntlet ... and had started enjoying it, so here was Henry and I thrown together again, and we had our little meeting every week and I think to a certain extent I helped him a little, paving the way into a new world.

“Once Henry got his bearings and got his foot in the door of the commercial world he became an outstanding success, especially as Head of Springbok. There was the question of relationships with the heads of advertising agencies, and the fact that he could get along with people easily, and he had that alert mind, so after the initial period of becoming acclimatised he became a natural. And he could offer many of the people in the agencies his expert advice on the sort of programme which would sell their product because he’d had that vast experience. He moved up to become Director of Commercial Services and I became Director-General in 1981 so we didn’t see so much of each other, except socially.

“Looking back, the two of us started working as colleagues in 1948, and we became almost instant friends until he died, and we spoke about so many things. We often discussed sporting events, and as far as rugby was concerned, with Wales being a rugby playing country, we had a lot to say to one another about that and often talked about Wales versus the Springboks many years ago.

“I always found Henry to be a very good South African, and I’m not talking politically at all, I’m talking about his love for the land and the way he associated himself with it, whether it be nature, business, or languages. He was very proud of the fact, for instance, that the Welsh language somehow still existed, and he was interested in Afrikaans as one of the official languages in this country. And on a certain day he came to me and said, ‘You know, I also want, in more ways than one, to be part of this country because it has been very good to me and it is wonderful living here’ etc. And ‘Now, please translate something for me’, so I said ‘By all means’. ‘What is green pastures in Afrikaans?’ he asked. So I said, ‘Well, you’re going to find it difficult with the guttural ‘g’, but it is ‘groen weivelde’.” I didn’t know why he asked me. But lo and behold, shortly afterwards I paid a visit to the house and there was the name on a copper plate or something.... “Groen Weivelde” the name of the house, which gave an indication to what extent he felt he had become a part of this country and wanted to indicate it in some way.

“There was a sensitivity about him; he couldn’t have read poetry as beautifully, and he was very warm ... so our friendship enriched me in more ways than one....

“He also spoke to me about the wonderful offer to go to Bophuthatswana as Chairman of their new broadcasting set-up. Then I retired in 1983 so we had the opportunity to talk about the job one had to do and he enjoyed it immensely. I think the fact that he was

asked was a tribute not only to his undoubted qualities as a broadcaster, but also as an administrator, and having had the opportunity of having an overview as far as broadcasting is concerned in Southern Africa he was the ideal choice for the job.... He had so many strings to his bow: an outstanding quizmaster – no easy task; an actor – he played in “The Cruel Sea” brilliantly; the reader of poetry, of prose; the chap who could conduct could also commentate on sport which he did on more than one occasion – and where we first got together.... But Henry as a man was a balanced person in every way which was of the essence: he was firm, and his staff respected him for that, and he didn’t mince his words when it was necessary at times. But then on the other hand kindness, sincerity, warmth and sensitivity were all there too ... they had to be there.”

### **Bea Reed:**

“I was very young when I joined the English service. Henry was a bit doubtful about me because I had no academic qualification. I had done an audition and failed ... but I didn’t give up; I tried again about nine months later and I was lucky because Judy Henderson was leaving so the word had gone out to find another woman broadcaster. Hugh Rouse did my second audition and he was very, very nice. It must have been quite a good report because I had a ‘phone call to come back. Gladys Dickson, who was Henry’s boss, liked me – that was a good point, she liked my voice – but I knew Henry wasn’t happy with my academic qualifications and I hung by a thread waiting to hear. I had already had an interview with him and on leaving his office I said – not knowing him well – ‘Have I got a chance?’ and he said, ‘Well Miss Reed, you have half the qualifications. You have a voice.’ And on that note I left, my heart going thump, thump, thump. I always used to say I was not Henry’s first choice, he was very keen to have Heather Mennell, but she was still in London. So my anecdotes about Henry are all memories of when he was at the top of the ladder and I was on the lowest rung!

“I remember being interviewed by the Star when I was appointed and the reporter said how lucky I was; that there are no broadcasters today. Can you imagine! I said to her that I started with Henry Howell my boss, and Dewar McCormack trained me, and then there was Hugh Rouse.

“I wasn’t fond of cricket, but cricket was Henry’s life and baby in those days. We had no television and the English Service got its listeners through news and sport mainly. Some superb drama of

course, and there was Springbok, but everyone knew to tune in to the English Service on a Saturday. When I joined we were still part of the British Empire so we took an awful lot of English cricket too. Charles Fortune joined the same day as I did – they used to call us ‘the heavenly twins’ except he was famous when he started and I wasn’t, and I didn’t like cricket and he did. I didn’t know the first thing about it – I had to ask what ‘lbw’ meant! We had a group of announcers who weren’t keen on it either and one of them was always compelled to produce the sports programme on a Saturday; it had a vast listenership. But I was willing to sit in and to be the producer with ‘cans’ on my head and listen to the commentators, and give some little bits of talk in between. I had to know the difference between football and rugby. Well, I knew one had two poles and the other a net ... and Henry turned round and said, ‘What on earth do you mean “Bea Reed’s going to be the producer of Sports Round-up?”’

“Then I made a terrible mistake when I was transferred to Springbok. Now Henry hated commercial radio – it wasn’t his baby then, and I think he thought anyone who joined Springbok had deserted the English Service and him, and I said, ‘Mr. Howell, may I come and talk to you about my possibly joining Springbok Radio?’ and he said, ‘Miss Reed, there’s nothing to discuss. I’ve always thought that you were a commercial announcer!’ I think he said later that it was the greatest insult he could think up, and the greatest insult he could have given me!

“A year or so later he was moved over to the Commercial Services and everyone said: “Howell wont take this – he will go. He wont stay”. Well, give him a challenge and he’ll rise to it, and it was the best thing that happened to commercial radio.

“I remember we were running a series of big BBC discs, massive records that played quarter of an hour on each side and we were running “Winnie the Pooh”. And the timing! Again as Henry said afterwards, this was the essence of those little angels in heaven for broadcasting. We happened to tape the last episode of the BBC’s “Winnie the Pooh” on the day A.A. Milne died. Half the English Service staff were in the studio. I was the announcer on duty, weeping copious tears at the end because the final words were, I think, ‘Don’t forget us, Christopher Robin.’ I remember Henry had tears in his eyes in the studio, and the word had gone out: don’t kill this with words. Henry used to say, ‘Treat your listeners with intelligence, they know exactly how marvellous this broadcast is. We haven’t jumped a couple of episodes, we happen to have the last episode on the day, but



DON'T KILL IT WITH WORDS! Put it on, let Pooh say 'don't forget us Christopher Robin'. Stop. Take a pause. Then say, 'This is the English Service, the time is four o'clock'. That's what he taught us.

"And if we were interviewing someone and the speaker said: 'That's a good question, Miss Reed', he would say, 'Edit that out – NOW!'. Edit out the questions to give the speaker more time. The broadcast came first.

"Henry would say, 'If you can make me listen to your weather forecast you can communicate'. Communication was what he taught us, he was a good teacher, and if you can make the weather forecast interesting, that was the ultimate test.

"And he'd say, 'I know my South African broadcasters, because you say you work for the 'South African Broadcasting Corporation. You drop your d's, you don't dot your i's, and you don't cross your t's'!"

"What else can I say about Henry? Well whether you were working in the studio, or at home, or wherever, when that tape came on at 11 o'clock of Henry Howell reading "How Green was my Valley" I wouldn't miss it for all the tea in China!"

**Annette Bower** joined the SABC in 1956 and was secretary to Henry Howell from 1968-1978:

"He was the very best boss I have ever had. He had compassion and caring for all those under him. He was very trusting; he would leave all his cupboards and drawers unlocked when he went away saying, 'I've nothing to hide! And you can tidy them all up while I'm away!' Nothing was ever the same when he left. He missed the English Service terribly but worked hard to meet new challenges. He really enjoyed the Television research.

"I never saw him really cross; he was a wonderful boss and I missed him – nothing was ever the same".

### **Charles Fortune:**

"Essentially Henry had all the attributes of the inimitable broadcaster. He had a good memory, he could ad-lib, he could also read very well. That's why he was so successful.... In my experience he was the best administrator that the SABC ever had.

"Henry was remarkable in his ability to switch from being a programme man to becoming a commercial man and it was his success as a commercial man ... that he made the grade. I thought he'd be trounced by the Afrikaners, it wasn't so, he stood up to them. And no-

one was more surprised than Henry that he made such a success of the Commercial Services."

**Dewar McCormack:**

"It has often been said that radio, in contrast to television, is 'the theatre of the mind', allowing the listener's imagination full rein. Henry Howell was a consummate performer on that stage, with a voice of great flexibility, and an interpretative ability, that enabled him to convey subtleties of mood in, for instance, radio drama and serial book readings. While his administrative functions in the SABC removed him to a large extent from the microphone, he made enough appearances to label him as one of the real 'stars' of South African radio.

"There will still be those who remember his daily readings from various Dickens classics, such as "Dombey & Son". He had great ability in creating and holding an atmosphere, and this was never displayed to greater advantage than in the early days when he was broadcasting to young people. Who will ever forget - if they were fortunate enough to hear it - his readings from that children's classic "The Wind in the Willows" and his interpretation of the various animal characters?

"I have never liked the description 'cultured' which tends sometimes to be bestowed in a rather facile fashion. Thinking back, I would prefer the term 'cultivated' for Henry Howell; he had indeed cultivated many talents, not least a talent for informed and stimulating conversation that was a joy to his many friends. To put it contradictorily, he was an intellectual without being "an intellectual".

**David Lloyd:**

"It is difficult to comment on Henry Howell without ascending into realms of pure praise, acclamation and homage, without extolling him as assuredly the greatest broadcaster this country has harboured.

"Not only do I honour and esteem the great man but I owe him my presence in this country. I was working in the disintegrating Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963 when Henry, as Head of the English Service, offered me a position as an announcer-producer. Unhappily, the day I joined, 2 January 1964, was the day that he left the English Service to take charge of Springbok Radio. And so I was denied the opportunity of working under him. For years, though, he was one of the readers in the radio series "Calendar" ... he was clearly the first among equals in that team of readers. I provided the recorded music which underlined the poems.

"In Bible readings particularly, and of course in Welsh stories such as "How Green was my Valley" he was majestically commanding.

"As a broadcaster, and as a broadcasting executive, he was well loved, and renowned far beyond the borders of South Africa.

"He was my friend and I love him. He once wrote to me: 'live NOW – enjoy life NOW – enjoyment is something to experience today not in some future time!'. I like to think that he lived by that rule himself."

**Gert Yssel**, Managing Director of the South African Advertising Research Foundation:

"When I joined the SABC in 1964 Henry was already one of the great broadcasters, in charge of the English Service. I had to get acquainted with many aspects of broadcasting quite quickly. I have never ceased to be grateful for the enormous amount of time and effort which many old hands, Henry prominent amongst them, took to try and instill some of the lore, methodology and philosophy of broadcasting into the new nuisance who had been foisted upon them.

"One of my responsibilities was broadcasting research, which brought me into closer touch with Henry, particularly when he moved to the commercial services. We served together on research committees for many years. When with the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) he and I were the SABC Directors. Henry was invited to serve as SAARF's second Chairman for a period of two years. During that period the Newspaper Press Union became dissatisfied with the work of SAARF and eventually announced in a Board meeting that they were resigning. Henry thought they were utterly wrong to do so. When he was angry, he was formidable! He told the NPU Directors what he thought of their decision in the strongest terms – and yet he did so in a manner which did not preclude continued personal relations with the persons concerned, who remained his personal friends. (He was a member of one of the SAARF committees to the end).

"I had the enormous privilege of travelling around the world (literally) with him. When one shares most of your waking minutes for weeks on end, working, travelling, sight-seeing and experiencing wonder, aggravation, fatigue and strange diets, one gets to know the real person. And as I write this the memories come flooding back. In the late sixties we were looking for radio automation equipment, and we circumnavigated the globe in 28 days on one of those trips. I think we set up a record as the first persons to do so on commercial flights,

mainly in the southern hemisphere. The SAA South American flights had just been inaugurated. Our route took us across the South Atlantic to Brazil, north to Miami and across the USA to Hawaii, across the Pacific to Japan, south again to Sydney and back home across the Indian Ocean. By that time we were very tired, and he often spoke of that endless day chasing the sun from Australia as one of his worst flights.

"During the three minutes we were in the water at the Copacabana Beach Henry's watch was stolen. In Rio, the only available taxis were very small Renault cars and, with large suitcases we were jammed in under the luggage. In Miami, I think the first time Henry had set foot on American soil, he was made welcome to the USA by the friendly immigration officer. Henry's opinion of Americans had not been very high but he said that any country which had civil servants of that calibre could not be too bad.

"In New York ... we went to the Theatre in the Round near the southern tip of Manhattan to see 'Fiddler on the Roof'. After the performance ... we decided to walk to our hotel near Central Park – quite a distance. We nearly froze ... Henry's room was about fifty storeys up. That night a pipe burst, his room flooded, and he was moved into the most magnificent suite that I have ever seen.

"The next morning ... an appointment with one of the leading advertising agencies on Madison Avenue ... one entered through a Moor-ish arch. Henry said it must have been modelled on a harem!

"In Tokyo we were entertained in typical Japanese executive style ... Henry managed to sit properly through the extended and extensive meal ... but I think the evening was torture for him, not only because of the required posture and the food which was not much to his liking, but ... subjected all evening to a small orchestra which, played on Japanese instruments, produced sounds which to our uncultured ears was painful.

"... the broadcasting organisation which we visited had automated ... as a result large numbers of staff had to be retrenched. The Japanese official who led the group which explained matters to us was the epitome of cartoons of their officers which we saw in World War 2. Henry asked him how they had dealt with those staff members. Recounting the story afterwards, Henry, great actor that he was, could assume the ruthless character of a Japanese gentleman instantaneously. One sensed the slit eyes and stainless steel teeth as he responded "It was an operational necessity"!

"On the subject of Henry as a presenter and actor, I think one of the

greatest tributes to him is the number of people who were around at the time who still remember his reading on radio of 'The Cruel Sea' – Henry couldn't forgive Nicholas Monsarrat, whom he knew, for never again achieving the same standard of writing.

"With no props at all, Henry could become the character about whom he was telling a story. One of my favourites, which I heard more than once, involved a Chief Petty Officer of the Royal Navy going on shore leave with a bottle of gin in his pocket. I forget the details of the story. They were unimportant. What was unforgettable was to see Henry change before your eyes into a squat, bow-legged and not entirely sober CPO with a rolling gait and the most atrocious accent, making his way up the hill from the docks.

"In 1974 I was suddenly and unexpectedly promoted over Henry. I have treasured a note which he wrote to me afterwards and which I think displays his greatness ... there is no note of complaint in it. I am happy to think that our mutual regard was not disturbed by this occurrence."

**David Hall-Green** – the first 'voice' of Television:

"I was with the External Services (Radio RSA which Henry pioneered) when Television was introduced. We had just moved into Auckland Park. I remember walking along the corridor towards the TV studios when I met Henry. He had not been involved in choosing the first voice on Television, but he said 'I'm so glad it's you ...' or words to that effect.

"He always had the personal touch; he would always stop and have something appropriate to say. Like all good employers who know things about their employees, he remembered everyone. He was a great man".

**Joy Anderson-Taylor:**

"I have always been drawn to men with beautiful speaking voices, and I suppose the thing I will remember most about Henry is that voice. If I close my eyes and ears I can hear it now – deep and mellifluous with an enchanting Welsh lilt. When I first knew him and he was my 'big boss', sometimes that voice could be terse and tough and, accompanied by the flash of those cold blue eyes, sometimes quite awesome. However, in later years and especially after his marriage to Rosemary, it assumed a special gentleness. It lost none of its power as do so many older men's voices who become weak and quavery, but remained strong and compelling and listening to him always a pleasure."

**Betty Mishelker, Israel:**

"I remember him as the perfect gentleman, the perfect host, erudite, witty, with a wonderful sense of humour. I remember so clearly one rainy night when we were all visiting at the house, how he put on his mac and saw each of his departing guests to their cars and safely on their way. And of course, I often think of his delightful readings of Dylan Thomas' short stories, and in fact on several occasions urged him to have them recorded commercially. Apart from 'Under Milk Wood' and recorded readings of Thomas's poems, I know of no other of the short stories available, and they could not be more expertly read. Does the SABC still have the tapes? IF... they are available, and IF... they would permit the tapes to be used, what a fine tribute to his memory, his ability and beautiful speaking voice that would be."

**Jill Mills – The Star TONIGHT!**

The death last week-end of the great Henry Howell, loved and respected by countless radio listeners as well as the broadcasters privileged to have been guided and inspired by him, was a sad loss to the country he served so well.

As head of SABC's renowned English Service before it was commercialised, he set standards unsurpassed to this day and still faithfully upheld by broadcasters lucky enough to have passed through his hands.

An incomparable radio man, he is most fondly remembered by listeners for his poetry readings in the long-running "Calendar" programme and for talks on his early life in Wales.

But he was also a gifted administrator, becoming a leading au-

● ● ●  
**ON THE AIR**  
with  
**JILL MILLS**



thority on commercial broadcasting and dynamic head of Springbok Radio before Retiring from SABC as deputy director-general of commercial services. Sadly, his great courage and integrity were unappreciated — possibly feared — by the puddingy bureaucracy of his day.

His outstanding ability and vigour undiminished by his 74 years, Henry Howell worked to the end of his life as chairman of the Bophuthatswana Broad-

casting Corporation and deputy chairman of the board of Radio 702.

His last two years were enriched by the great happiness he shared with his second wife, Rosemary, whom he met as a lonely widower.

The beautiful voice has been silenced, but what it taught us will live on in the fine traditions a superb broadcaster established and maintained throughout a brilliant and selfless career.

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This chapter opened with Dominic O'Byrne, it closes with his parents Paddy and Vicky.

It will be remembered that Paddy was chosen as 'The Voice of South Africa' judged initially by the general public, then finally selected by Henry Howell, Gideon Roos, and Horace Flather (then Editor of the Star). He joined the staff in May 1962.

**Paddy:** "A funny story here; the bait they used to make me give up my job with an insurance company to join the full-time staff was the offer of a job with Springbok Radio because they needed someone to read the 7 o'clock news. At this time Henry had nothing to do with Springbok – perish the thought – but Victor Mackeson who was on the English Radio staff working under Henry was doing so much work for Springbok that he was never there when they wanted him. This was annoying Henry a bit so he went to Bertus van de Walt, deputy director-general in charge of Springbok Radio (which was the only commercial service at that time) and said, 'Look, let's do a bit of horse trading. Mackeson is of little practical use to me at the moment, but he's got a good commercial voice; you take him and I'll take this new chap'. So really I was screwed in a way because I didn't make as much money – to begin with anyway – as I would have done if I had gone straight to Springbok. And the irony of it was (and this was 1962) that in 1966 or '67 Henry nobbled me at the Wanderers at the Artes Awards. 'My boy, when are you going to come and join a decent radio station?' And I said, 'Well I approached you a few months ago and you said "No, no, stay where you are, you've got the best of both worlds."' (I had been doing a lot of freelance work : Mark Saxon, the 21 quiz program et al). 'I know, I know', he said 'but things have changed since then.'

"What had happened was that he had lost Adrian Steed to Michael Silver's production house, but he didn't tell me that then. .

"I thought this was 'pub talk' and I said so. 'Well, if that's what you think I suggest you come and see me tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock and remind me!' So of course I did. He was very crafty! When he wanted something he knew exactly how to go about it. He laid his plans and it was all done with this gorgeous voice, this suave debonair manner, but you didn't realise you had to be very careful because he wasn't playing footsy!

"So having worked for him originally in 1962 – against my will – I ended up working for him very much in accordance with my will five years later!

"Henry always wanted people who were broadcasters rather than clerks because we were good at chatting up the clients, the advertising agents, and we spoke a language which was understood and we could make programmes for them.

"We worked very well together ... there was a great mutual regard. One couldn't but respect him and one sensed one was in the presence of a shaker and mover...."

**Vicky O'Byrne:** "He was lovely with children. With a garden full of guests he would spend the whole afternoon talking and playing with John-John. And he would console us (John-John was retarded and tragically died at a very young age), and talk to us and say 'Well you are blessed really' and he would sit with us on the lawn ... he was wonderful with John-John...."

**Paddy:** "Not every year, but there would be parties for the staff at Groen Weivelde and chaps who would not normally meet one another because they were not in the same line of business were all there disporting themselves. Dominic was about 5 or 6, cheeky, hyper-active, very small. Henry had been playing the jolly Uncle and couldn't get away – nobody called him Henry – always Mr. Howell – and there was Dominic running around all over the place saying, 'Henry, Henry, catch me, catch me!' Dominic adored him. One day Henry turned to Paddy and said: 'One thing I love about Dominic, he reminds me so much of you – not in appearance, but wherever he is people are laughing'.

"One day Dominic was with some of his contemporaries, brash young people, and one of them said, 'Who's that funny old chap with the bald head?' Dominic was quite indignant and said, 'I'll tell you who that "funny old chap" is.' He felt personally insulted and was furious, and proceeded to give a thumbnail sketch...."

This has been a 'thumbnail sketch'....

**THE END**













