

Reg & Mary Brill

By sea to Nyasaland in 1956

On return from UK leave in 1956 we travelled by sea aboard the Carnarvon Castle from Southampton to Capetown together with our new car and family - Robert aged 8 and Maggie 4.



We left port and headed for the Bay of Biscay, the seas were rough and the weather overcast, altogether a dull day and very chilly on deck. It was early and we took a brisk walk around the deck before breakfast.

Once across the Bay and south of Cape Verde the weather started to get warmer and it was good to feel the sun when the morning walk around the deck works wonders to the feelings of well being. I just loved the ship, the size of it and the way it propelled us

through the seas. I just loved the infinite space around us.

As I stood on deck gazing at the sea all about us, I enjoyed the soft breezes and the sound of the waves rushing beneath the ship. Sitting on deck enjoying the early evening drinks, watching those wonderful sunsets. The primeval



oranges and blues that blend into the edge of the earth until you could see no longer where the sea ended and the sky began. Then at night you could sit on deck watching the stars, millions of them in the dark velvety sky. One felt so different away from normal life, just floating along for days and days, fourteen in all with endless sea and sky.



We joined in with deck games whilst the children spent a few hours in the nursery. Our day was busy, we took it in turns to do the children's laundry and taking them to children's meals. I enjoyed making their outfits for the Fancy Dress party and Reg was a great help with ideas and collecting the various materials. After dinner and the lovely food there were events to enjoy, the Captains party for instance, Ascot evening with horse racing which was great fun and bingo some evenings. The days passed by very quickly and too soon it was the Farewell party with sad farewells to the friends we had made. It had been a lovely holiday with good company, good food and the wonderful sea air.

Whichever way you arrive in Africa it is the most exciting experience. This time we were arriving by sea. It was early morning, 6.00 am when we entered Table Bay, Capetown. As the ship came into the harbour there was a rush on deck to see land again. Coming into the bay is so very scenic, with Table Mountain a backcloth behind the city. Quite often the clouds are low over the mountain, a "table cloth" - indeed a most wonderful sight.

It was common then, in the 1950s, when the mail ships came into harbour, hundreds of people used to come down to greet them. Many of the folk would be there to meet friends and relatives returning from Europe or those on board visiting friends and family - such was the excitement, all cheering and waving that we felt sure a VIP was on board. But no, this always happened. Also when the ship sail for the UK, people would come to wave off their friends and loved ones off. People cheered and threw streamers, all so very exciting landing in a new country for the first time with the sight, the sounds and smells so different.



We disembarked and collected our luggage. Some of it was in the hold and this time we had brought a new car back with us, it all took time to be off-loaded but once it was off the ship our car was packed and we were ready for our journey up to Nyasaland, travelling through South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Mozambique. The first day was a short journey, overnight in the wine area of Stellenbosch involved travelling through some of the most breathtaking scenery I have ever seen as we passed through the Hex River Valley. To the south you can see the Holland Mountains with wonderful views looking back over Cape Town Harbour. This is really such a beautiful area of the Cape, with magnificent views. As we motor on we now pass through valleys with vines growing on the mountain slopes, these fertile valleys are really suited to growing grape vines. Unfortunately it was not a time for visiting vineyards or wine tasting (*which came later in our life*).

After a good night's rest in a small Hotel near Stellenbosch. We took the N1, hoping to reach Bloemfontein by night fall. We leave Rawsonville and Worcester behind motoring across the Karoo desert and on through the towns of Colesburg, Laingsburg and Beaufort West. Not such an interesting countryside and very hot through the day. Eventually through Southern Rhodesia and the lovely city of Salisbury, into Mozambique, ferry across the Zambezi at Tete and eventually the welcome sign of Nyasaland at Mwanza. A journey from the Cape of some four days.



Mary Brill

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