



Looking back over the years I have been recollecting some of those New Year's Eve parties which we attended in Nyasaland. However, we were moved about quite frequently, we never stayed much more than two years in any one posting. The first posting following my husband, Reg, joining the Nyasaland Police was one of the longest and this was at Blantyre.

The New Year celebrations there started off well with the Police Ball and it was 1954 and our first one to attend. It was very popular and always well supported – a great evening to start the year. We were living in a lovely old colonial house at the time on Hospital Hill, quite near the Blantyre Sports Club where the function was held that year. We were late arrivals though, Reg, having drawn the short straw that evening, was on duty and responsible for organising and supervising the car parking. Things were in full swing by the time we arrived and being stone cold sober I felt slightly out of place when everyone else there was getting very merry. After awhile and a drink or two I got more in the party mood and went on to thoroughly enjoy the evening. The Police Band was playing, they were excellent, wonderful to dance to and Reg being a good dancer we both enjoyed ourselves and the rest of the evening went with a swing.



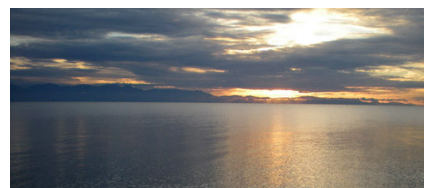
In 1967 we were in Fort Johnston for the New Year. There was a party at the Gymkhana club in time to see the old year out and the New Year in. Many of the Greek residents, traders



and fishermen from Namwera and the Lakeshore joined us. Certainly plenty of drink flowed and I recall Ouzo being very popular and certainly the Greeks added to the occasion with their dancing. It was great fun and we all joined in to enjoy a splendid evening.

The club there tended to be the centre of the social life of the district, a great meeting place for us all. There was a well used snooker table, we played tennis and it was not unusual for us to get up very early on Sundays to play the game in the cool of the morning and barman Ali and his staff were always on hand to supply cool drinks. *(Pictured – Reg, Mary and Maggie in Fort Johnston and the club now the Lake Malawi Museum)*

It was Karonga in 1959. There was no club there and the New Year celebrations were spent in the company of friends and neighbours with the District Commissioner (Gordon Landreth) often holding a dinner party, always ending the occasion by the traditional rendering of AuldLang Syne. In general, throughout the year, we had to make our own entertainment with parties and meeting up in the cool of the early evening to chat and play tennis at the tennis



court. Sometimes on Sundays there would be a beach party at lunch time (including Keith and Brenda Watson) cooling off with a swim in the lake in the hot and humid conditions - but with the danger of crocodiles ever present, never at or after sunset.

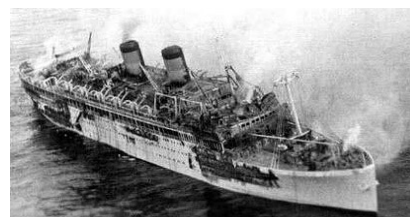
In 1961, following long leave in the UK we were posted to Lilongwe and the New Year



celebrations there were held in the Lilongwe Golf Club. Friends and colleagues joined us on those occasions and, in particular, I remember Mike Fraser and his wife among them. A record player provided the music for dancing. It was always an enjoyable occasion although, at the time, I was secretary of the club and kept busy replenishing stocks of mainly drinks! The New Year of 1963 was to be our last in Africa and it was with a sad heart we left Nyasaland at the end of that year.

Our last New Year in the Colonial service was spent off the coast of the Island of Madeira. Whilst there we picked up a few passengers who were survivors from the Greek Cruise ship

Lakonia (right), sunk on 29 December following a fire. They had lost everything and a request was made for clothing for these most unfortunate folk to, at least, have something reasonable to wear for the New Year's Eve party on board. It was a wonderful and most enjoyable evening, we spent it in company with Mike and Maureen



Bowery who had also left the Police at the same time as ourselves and we hope our added Greek passengers were able to put aside memories of their terrible experience aboard the Lakonia. Mike and Maureen returned to South Africa the following year after visiting us in Cornwall and we travelled to Southampton to see them off on the Mail boat to their new life in South Africa.

*Mary Brill*

