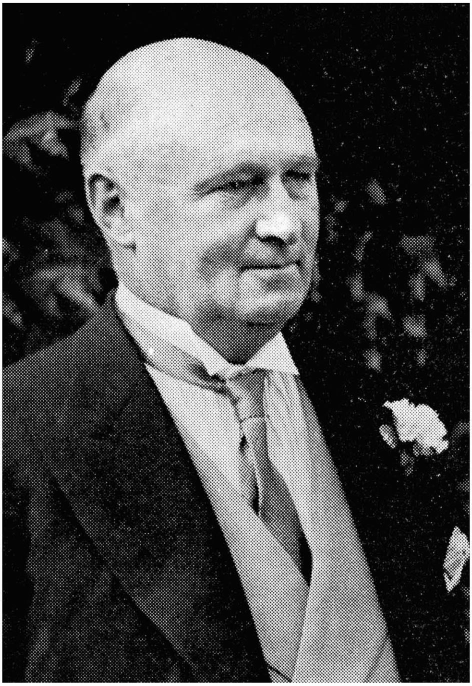


Alexander Henry van der Byl
25/2/1887—29/6/1956
First came to Irene in 1895

in all sorts of ways with the war efforts such as serving in the canteens at Lyttelton and Voortrekkerhoogte.

Towards the end of the war the Hon. Dr. E. G. Jansen came to live in Irene and not long thereafter became the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa in which high post he served the country well for a number of years. Mrs. Jansen still lives in Irene and has converted her home at the corner of Pioneer Road and King Street into a fine residence in the old Cape Dutch style.

Shortly after the war D. G. and J. H. van der Byl erected on Cornwall Hill a memorial to their friends who fell in the war; this is a monolith visible for miles around. Standing on a hill on the other side of the valley and known as Koppie Smuts is the obelisk where General Smuts' ashes were strewn; a memorial service is held here each year on the Sunday nearest to the General's birthday at the end of May. In the valley are many of the Transvaal's indigenous trees, particularly thorn trees, and there is little doubt that this part of the valley or "kloof" was the feature which gave the farm its name more than a hundred years ago — "Doornkloof".

Digitised by the University of Pretoria, Library Services

MODERN TIMES

AFTER the war Irene continued to grow until now nearly all the erven have houses on them. It has proved a popular area to live in as it has an excellent climate, not being as hot as Pretoria and not having a smog problem. There used to be a dust problem in winter, but most of the principal roads in the township have now been tarred and the dust has been greatly reduced. The tarring programme was made possible through the functioning of the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board which is the Local Authority for the Irene area.

A. H. van der Byl (Henry) was known as one of the most progressive farmers in the Transvaal and won a number of prizes for his farming including one for the best managed farm in the Highveld area. Not long before he died in 1956, having lived in Irene for more than sixty years, he succeeded with Dr. F. N. Bonsma in persuading the Government to establish the National Dairy Research Institute on part of his farm at Irene and Pinedene. Already a number of buildings have been erected and it is hoped that the Institute will develop into a world-famous research body designed to benefit the dairy industry of our country and beyond.

Mrs. A. H. van der Byl still keeps a large garden around the farm-house on the Irene Estate and in the springtime the bulb-beds are ablaze with the exquisite blooms of daffodils, hyacinths, tulips, etc. and many visitors make a special journey to come and see them.

J. H. van der Byl (John) is now the farmer on the Irene Estate and he has assisted in the promotion of the Transvaal Artificial Insemination Co-Operative which has been established on Jan Smuts Avenue to the East of the railway line under the charge of Dr. A. B. La Grange and is proving of great value to the dairy industry.

In 1958 Extension No. 1 to Irene Township was proclaimed; this included Hack's Stores, the garage and café in Vredenburg Buildings and two other erven designed to meet Irene's business requirements. It will probably not be long before Extension No. 2 to Irene Township to provide more residential erven is established.

Another recent development in Irene was the establishment of the Irene Film Studios near the Irene Homes. The studios have become well-known in the film world and a number of films have been made there. Irene has even been referred to as Little Hollywood!

Although in these modern times we look forward to the future we must not forget the past. To this end J. H. and D. G. van der Byl are preserving a herd of Blesbuck in a camp near the golf course. These buck are descended from a few obtained from the Van Riebeeck Nature Reserve. The species inhabited the Irene area in the wild state and it is hoped they will continue to thrive and so serve to remind us of the past out of which the happy community at Irene has grown.

—D. G. VAN DER BYL,
"Highcloud", IRENE.

Digitised by the University of Pretoria, Library Services

Daffodils and Hyacinths at Irene Estate.

LIVE AT

IRENE

THE GARDEN VILLAGE WITH A HEAL HY CLIMATE
AND A HAPPY AND HISTORIC
ATMOSPHERE

INSERTED BY THE

IRENE ESTATE

FOUNDED IN 1889
SUPPLIERS OF RICH TB-TESTED MILK

Digitised by the University of Pretoria, Library Services

R. E. SCHORMANN

36½ JAAR IN DIENS VAN DIE ONDERWYS EN OPVOEDING IN IRENE

R. E. SCHORMANN is op 3 Mei 1902 in Johannesburg gebore en het sy hoërskoolopleiding aan die Potchefstroom Boy's High School voltooi. Daarna het hy aan die Witwatersrandse Universiteit sy B.A.-graad en die destydse O.1.-diploma verwerf.

Gedurende 1926, die eerste jaar van sy lang onderwysloopbaan, het die 24-jarige Schormann 'n verskeidenheid van poste beklee en is hy van suid na noord en van oos na wes deur die Transvaalse Onderwysdepartement gestuur. Sy eerste aanstelling was as hoof te Brakspruit, naby Kinross, toe as hoof van Groot Spelonken in die noorde en daarna weer as hoof van Toevlucht (Devon). Teen die einde van daardie selfde jaar het hy diens gedoen as assistent in 'n skool aan die Wesrand.

In Julie 1927 is hy aangestel as die eerste manlike hoof van Irene Laerskool. Destyds was dit maar 'n tweemanskooltjie met slegs 31 leerlinge. Die skool het egter vinnig gegroei en na twee jaar was die leerlingtal al meer as 100. Intussen is aangebou en het die personeel uitgebrei.

Deur die instelling van skoolbusdienste vanaf Lyttelton, Valhalla, Zwartkop en Clubview-Oos, het die skool met rasse skrede vooruitgegaan. Binne enkele jare het die leerlingtal tot meer as 300 aangegroei.

Aangesien daar nie genoeg klaskamers beskikbaar was nie, is drie vertrekke in die dorpsaal as klaskamers ingerig. Gevolglik moes mnr. Schormann vir 'n aantal jare, tot in 1944, oor twee persele, wat 'n halfmyl van mekaar verwyder was, toesig hou. Die ou eertydse polisiehuis op erf 21 is mettertyd ook deur die skool in gebruik geneem en drie klaskamers kon daarin ingerig word. Die gebou is later verskuif en dien tans as filmkamer van die huidige skool.

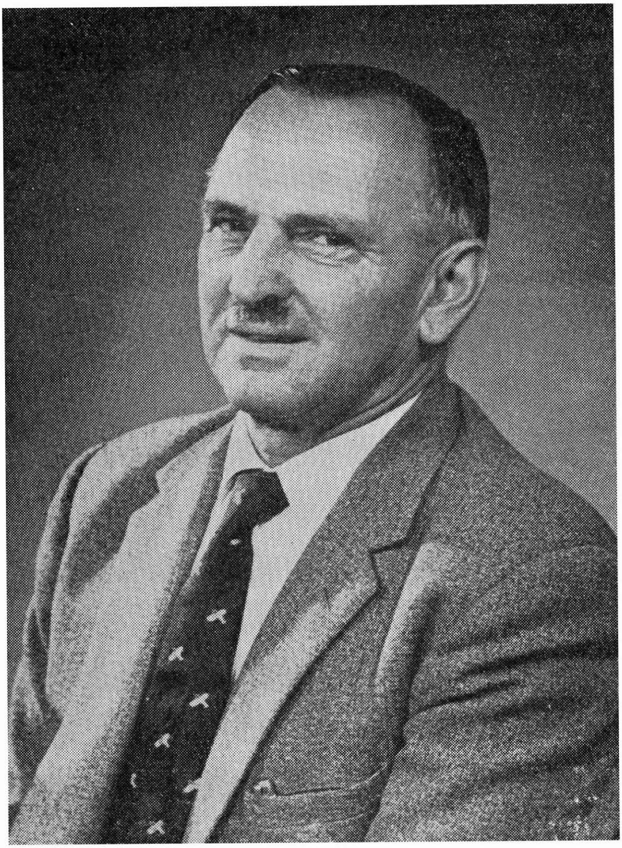
In 1944 is drie bykomende klaskamers, 'n kantoor, personeelkamer en 'n voorradekamer aangebou. Die drie gradekamers het in 1953 tot stand gekom terwyl twee siekekamers, 'n kunsvlytkamer en kleedkamers by die swembad in die loop van die afgelope drie jaar aangebou is.

Die leerlingtal het nog al die jare uit Afrikaans- en Engelssprekende kinders bestaan. Die verhouding was feitlik altyd ongeveer 50/50. In 1951 het die skool met 144 Afrikaans- en 148 Engelssprekende leerlinge geopen.

Die moeilikhede wat die busvervoer opgelewer het, was legio maar mnr. Schormann het, deur sy kenmerkende kalm maar besliste optrede, hom nie deur die baie probleme laat afskrik nie.

In 1951 was die uitbreiding baie vinnig, maar in 1952 daal die getalle weer, veral van die Afrikaansmedium-afdeling, as gevolg van probleme met

Digitised by the University of Pretoria, Library Services



R. E. SCHORMANN

die busvervoer. Destyds is die busvervoer vanaf die Lyttelton-area afgeskaf. In November 1952 het die ouers van Zwartkop en Clubview 'n petisie opgestel om die skoolbus na Irene te mag behou. Hierdie versoekskrif het egter nie geslaag nie en as gevolg van die beëindiging van die skoolbusdienste na Irene-skool, het die leerlingtal van 300 na 245 gedaal. Hiervan was 140 Engels- en 105 Afrikaansmediumleerlinge.

Onder leiding van mnr. Schormann is fondse ingesamel vir die bou van 'n puik swembad. Die hoof en sy personeel het die hartlike samewerking van die leerlinge en hulle ouers gehad, in so 'n mate dat dit onnodig was om enige departementele fondse vir hierdie projek aan te vra. Vanaf graad 1

Digitised by the University of Pretoria, Library Services

word die leerlinge geleer om te swem. Teen die tyd dat hulle die skool verlaat is hulle gevolglik almal tuis in die water.

Mnr. Schormann is die enigste hoof wat Irene nog ooit geken het en gedurende sy lang skof van 36 jaar in hierdie pragtige en skilderagtig-geleë dorpie het hy diep en onuitwisbare spore op die gebied van onderwys en opvoeding getrap. Met sy ingebore liefde vir die kind en sy diep godsdienstige benadering van sy opvoedingstaak, was hy altoos die een na wie daar vir rigting en leiding opgesien is. Hy was nie alleen opvoeder en vriend nie, maar ook op die gebied van sport, het hy steeds toegesien dat die fisiese ontwikkeling van die kind en die sportmangees wat so 'n belangrike bate in elke kind se lewe is, nie skade lei nie. Self is hy 'n kranige sportman wat nou nog gereeld aktief aan buitebedrywighede deelneem. Hy is tans kaptein van die Zwartkop-golfspan.

Om hoof van 'n skool te wees waar albei taalgroepe op dieselfde skoolterrein omgang met mekaar het, was vir hom die verwesenliking van 'n ideaal, 'n ideaal waardeur die fondament van volkseenheid en samewerking tussen die verskillende taalgroepe, gelê kan word. Dit is dan ook die geval aan die Irene-skool.

Vanaf die kleuterjare word die kind geleer dat hy of sy in die eerste plek 'n Suid-Afrikaner is afgesien van die taal waarin die leerlinge onderrig word. Selfs gedurende die afgelope oorlogsjare het mnr. Schormann se absolute onpartydigheid verseker dat daar hoegenaamd geen botsings onder die gelukkige leerlinggemeenskap voorgekom het nie. Leerlinge van die Irene-skool ontvang onder sy leiding van kleinsaf daardie insig wat daartoe bydra dat die twee taalgroepe mekaar leer ken op die speelgronde, op die sportvelde, in die swembad, met konserte en in die algemene samelewing van Irene. Hierdie idee word deur die kinders na hulle ouerhuise gedra en sodoende word daar 'n homogeniteit gekweek wat vandag so kenmerkend van die Irene-gemeenskap is. Hiervoor het ons mnr. Schormann met sy breë insig en sy nougesette onpartydigheid te danke.

Die gemeenskap van Irene, die kinders en personeel kan hulle nie indink in die situasie wanneer die Irene-skool binne afsienbare tyd sonder mnr. Schormann sy werksaamhede sal moet voortsit nie. In die jare vanaf 1927, het mnr. Schormann, trou bygestaan deur mev. Schormann, deel geword. nie alleen van die opvoedingstaak aan die kind nie, maar ook deel van 'n gemeenskap wat hom sal onthou en respekteer en hom dankbaar sal bly vir sy onbaatsugtige diens wat hy in die jare vanaf 1927 aan die kinders van die volk van Suid-Afrika bewys het.

Die gemeenskap van Irene sê vir hom en mev. Schormann baie, baie dankie en ons bid hulle toe 'n aangename rustyd na 'n vrugbare dienstydperk van 36 jaar. Die herinnering aan hulle arbeid sal in die vrug op hulle werk voortlewe.

Aan mnr. en mev. Schormann bid ons God se rykste seën toe.

— P. J. PISTORIUS.

Digitised by the University of Pretoria, Library Services

Irene Head retiring after $36^1/_2$ years as Principal.

HISTORY will be made at the end of the 1963 Transvaal school year when a man who has been headmaster of the same school for 36½ years retires.

He is Mr. R. E. Schormann, who took up the post of principal at the Irene School in July, 1927, and has been there until today. He was the first male principal of the school, appointed after studying at the University of the Witwatersrand and at the Johannesburg Teachers' Training College.

"I was very pleased that I was principal of a parallel-medium school, as this is, where the children of the two language groups can get to know one another," said Mr. Schormann. "Not only do the children learn the second language easier, but they are also able to learn and respect the traditions, customs and outlook of the other language group."

In his lifetime, Mr. Schormann has seen Irene grow from a small village into a major residential area.

"When I arrived here Irene was a very small place. There were only 31 children at the school. They came mainly from the village itself and the surrounding farms. Their parents were either farmers or civil servants who worked in Pretoria."

"Lyttelton just did not exist. There was one house just opposite the railway building. The area did not develop because there were no water supplies. There was also no Waterkloof air base; just open veld and farms," he said.

Although he is retiring as principal of the school, Mr. Schormann hopes that he will be able to continue teaching in another school.

"I feel so active and I could still be of great value as a teacher," he said.

A farewell function for the retiring headmaster will be held in the Irene Village hall on December 18 at 6.30 p.m. Both parents and ex-pupils will be present.

—*"The Pretoria News"* 7-12-1963.

DIEPER WAARDES UIT ONS VERLEDE

Faktore wat die Geskiedenis bepaal

INLEIDENDE OPMERKINGS

DIT is sekerlik onmoontlik om die hele veld wat in die onderwerp geïmpliseer word, in 'n kort lesing soos hierdie af te handel. 'n Mens

Digitised by the University of Pretoria, Library Services