

## REVIEWS:

### PRESIDENTS' BIOGRAPHIES PORTRAYED

The Old Pretoria Association has brought out a special edition of its journal, "Pretoriana", to mark the fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Republic.

The issue, which is contributed to by well-known historians and other personalities, deals with the history of republics in general in South Africa, and more specifically with the biographies of their presidents.

Well known details of well-known men, and little known details about little-known men alike are portrayed.

The Old Pretoria Society has expressed regret that lack of funds have prevented the production of two issues, one in each official language. The articles have been published in the language in which they were written.

— THE PRETORIA NEWS, 23/5/1966.

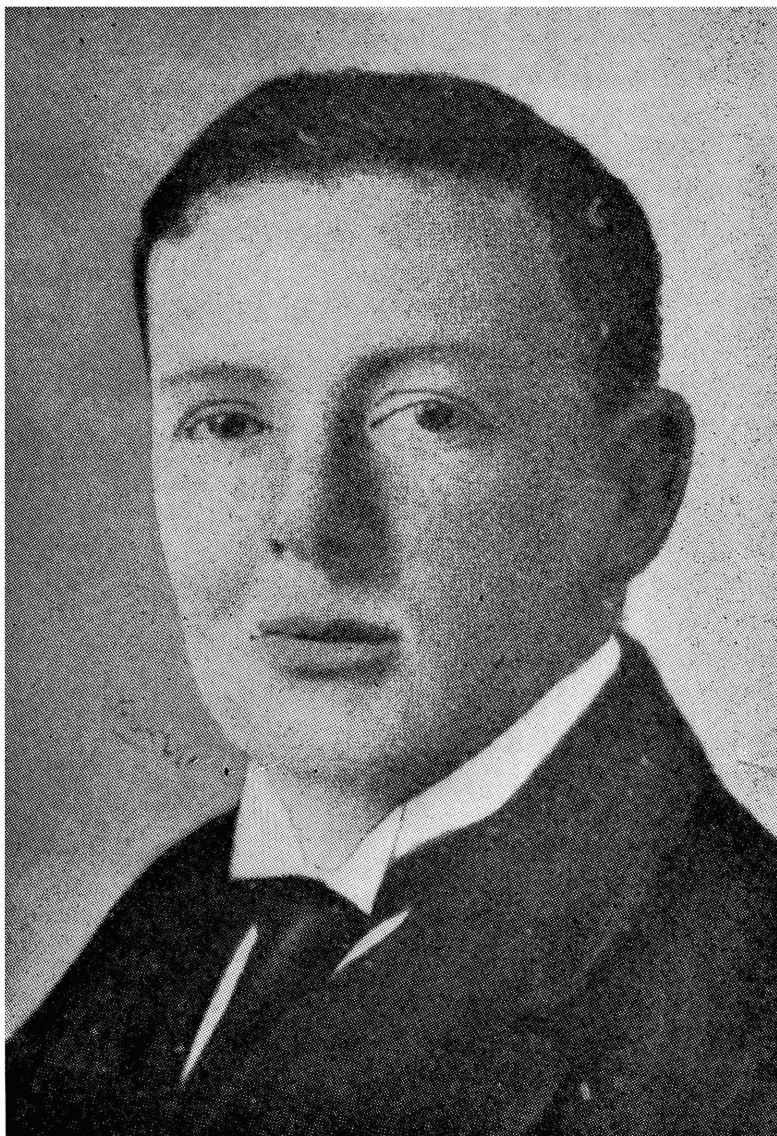
### Esteemed Members of Old Pretoria Society (Behrens, Davey and Ploeger) Quoted by Randolph Churchill in his Biography of Winston S. Churchill

**T**HE eagerly awaited first volume of Randolph Churchill's biography of his famous father, "Winston S. Churchill: Youth 1874—1900" has now been published and is being avidly read throughout the English-speaking world. The story of Sir Winston's famous escape from Pretoria during the South African War is related and discussed in detail — and this alone makes the book a "must" for any collector of Pretoriana.

It will be a source of satisfaction and pride to all members of the Old Pretoria Society to discover that three of their fellows, Mr. H. P. H. Behrens, Mr. A. M. Davey and Dr. J. Ploeger, are mentioned in the text, not, as it happens, in connection with the escape. They are quoted on he vexed question of who captured Churchill when the British armoured train with which he was travelling was ambushed by the Boers near Chieveley, in Natal, on November 15, 1899.

Churchill himself, as is well known, declared in "My Early Life" that his captor was none less than General Louis Botha and said that he was told this himself by Botha after the war.

Randolph Churchill says: "A cloud of testimony . . . shrouds this particular subject . . . (and) makes it very hard for the historian to determine who was the actual physical captor." He quotes Dr. Ploeger as suggesting that it was Field-Cornet Oosthuizen, killed later in the war,



*WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL.*

*Vyf-en-sestig jaar gelede/Sixty five years ago.*

*Spesiale Korrespondent/Special Correspondent "Morning Post".*

and mentions that Mr. Davey has done extensive research on the point.

Mr. Davey reached this conclusion: "Louis Botha's command of English was poor; he probably failed to make his meaning clear to Sir Winston. My guess is that Botha intended to indicate that he was in overall command of the area in which the armoured train affair took place . . ."

This is very much Randolph Churchill's view, but it was never accepted by his father who, he says, "to the end of his days remained obdurate in his conviction that it was Botha who was his captor."

On April 30, 1960, "The Star", Johannesburg, published an article by Mr. Behrens saying that it was certainly not Botha but probably Oosthuizen who had effected the capture. In July of the same year Randolph Churchill drew his father's attention to the article. He replied: "The writer is mistaken and I was captured by Botha *personally*, as stated in my book . . ." The word "personally" was inserted in his own handwriting in what was otherwise a typed letter.

All this, of course, is not strictly Pretoriana, but it is fascinating stuff and inextricably bound up with the escape, to which it was prelude.

The story of the escape is exhaustively dealt with and hitherto unpublished documents shed some new light on one or two minor details of it that have been in dispute, but essentially it is the story as we all know it and as it has been written about in Pretoriana (No. 18, December 1955, p. 19; No. 20, July 1956, pp. 2, 8—10, 18—19; Nos. 32 and 33, April—August 1960, pp. 83—93; No. 35, April 1961, p. 12; Nos. 42 and 43, August—December 1963, pp. 47—50).

W. S. ROBERTSON.

## MEV. A. W. (TISSA) EYBERS IN MEMORIAM

**M**EV. TISSA EYBERS, die eggenote van dr. G. v. W. Eybers, wat vanaf 1960 tot 1964 die tweede Voorsitter van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria was, is op 4 Julie 1966 te Pretoria oorlede en op 7 Julie in die Silvertonse Begraafplaas ter ruste gelê. Enkele van ons lede het die Genootskap op die begrafnis verteenwoordig en namens die Genootskap deelneming aan die agterblywende familielede betuig.

Aletta Wilhelmina Eybers, gebore De Klerk, het in die loop van 'n lang

en vrugbare lewe voortreflike werk as onderwyseres en maatskaplike werkster verrig, maar sy sal veral onthou word as 'n gewaardeerde vriendin en 'n liefdevolle eggenote en moeder. As onderwyseres verbonde aan die personeel van Kaaplandse skole soos Gill Kollege op Somerset-Oos, op Cookhouse en Graaff-Reinet, sowel as op Zastron en Kestell in die Vrystaat, het sy met groot bekwaamheid en besielende ywer gearbei. Ook aan privaat studente het sy meermale die

helpende hand gerek.

In Pretoria het die lede van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria haar in die loop van die jare leer ken as iemand wat opregte belangstelling in die werksaamhede van die Genootskap aan die dag gelê en vir dr. Eybers trou bygestaan het in sy werk as tweede Voorsitter van ons Genootskap. Veral tydens ons jaar-

vergaderings was sy trou op haar pos met die voorsiening van keurige verversings aan die publiek wat jaarliks in groot getalle opgedaag het.

Namens die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria word meegevoel betuig aan dr. Eybers en sy gesin en hulle sterkte toegebied.

DIE REDAKTEUR.

### **Korrespondensie/Correspondence:**

## *Mnr. A. M. Davey Skrywe uit Kaapstad*

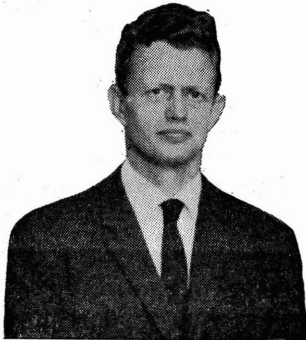
**M**NR. A. M. DAVEY, tans Senior Lektor in Geskiedenis aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad, vir geruime tyd 'n getroue en ywerige bestuurslid van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria en in 1961 redakteur van „Pretoriana”, is deur die Redakteur genader vir 'n bydrae vir hierdie uitgawe maar was ongelukkig nie in staat om aan die versoek te voldoen nie en daarom moet volstaan word met die publikasie van

'n kort briefie wat hy op 31 Oktober aan die Redakteur uit Kaapstad geskrywe het:—

„Baie dankie vir u brief van 23 Oktober. Ek is bly om te verneem dat die eerste twee gedenkplate al onthul is, en sien uit na my volgende besoek aan die administratiewe hoofstad.

Dit is jammer dat u versoek met 'n krisistyd saamgeval het. Ons staan in die teken van eksamens en nasienwerk. Hierbenewens is my bejaarde moeder (84) ernstig siek en ek vertrek dus môre per vliegtuig na Grahamstad. Onder hierdie omstandighede kan ek ongelukkig geen bydrae lewer nie.

Ek wil graag my persoonlike waardering teenoor u uitspreek vir toegewyde diens aan „Pretoriana” oor die jare. Dit was grotendeels u ywer en inisiatief wat die sukses van die blad verseker het.”



*A. M. DAVEY*

*In a letter to the Editor, written on the 22nd January 1965, Mr. C. J. Beanes of 435 Kirkness Street, Pretoria, an Old Pretorian with "an inordinate love of Pretoria", refers to the Johann Rissik Edition of "Pretoriana" and suggests . . . .*

## A MONUMENT TO JOHANN RISSIK IN ARCADIA PARK

THE article on Johann Rissik in the December issue of "Pretoriana" gave me much pleasure.

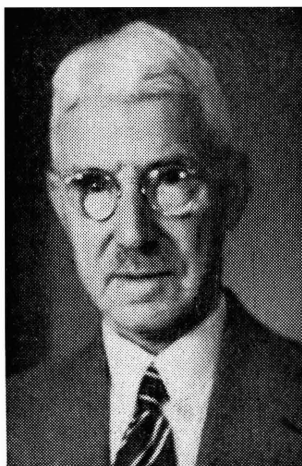
Johann Rissik was undoubtedly a most able man and it is well that a record of his public services should appear in "Pretoriana". It is strange, however, that this outstanding man was almost unknown to most Pretorians principally because he never sought publicity. Notwithstanding the many changes during his public life in the governments of the Transvaal—the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, the Crown Colony Government, the Transvaal Responsible Government and the Union of South Africa, his services were sought by the heads of these Governments. This alone shows his great ability as an administrator — he thought in terms of the whole and not of parts. The following is an instance of his great foresight:—When the gold fields were about to be proclaimed it was at the suggestion of Johann Rissik that no licence be issued until a base line from which all claims could be measured, was put down. The advantages of this act is that mining companies cannot intrude beyond their own boundaries. This has, therefore, eliminated any boundary dispute.

A monument in the grounds of

the Art Gallery, facing Linschoten, would certainly be a fitting tribute to the memory of Johann Rissik.

The statement that Linschoten was three miles from Church Square is probably a typographical error — both houses are under two miles from Church Square.

The original name of Rissik Station was Sunnyside although no part of the station is in the suburb of Sunnyside. When given that name part of the station was on the farm 'Koedoespoort' and part in the suburb of Arcadia. The University and



C. J. BEANES

Boys' High School are on the Sunnyside Commonage but when the British Army reached Pretoria most of the commonage was covered by Nos. 2 and 7 General Hospitals and the Rest Camp. This fact no doubt caused the new station which was used for Red Cross trains, to be named Sunnyside. About 1904 Pietersburg Road Station was changed to Pretoria West and Sunnyside to Rissik. This probably came about through a misunderstanding. The suburb Hillcrest was laid out in 1902 — the vendor being Johann Rissik, but generally this suburb was known as Rissik and not Hillcrest. A military bungalow was erected by Johann Rissik and was

known as the Rissik Town Hall. Had the change been made a year later the new name would have been Hatfield. This is my opinion only.

Another very interesting item is that in 1904 Johann Rissik was appointed to a commission which had been established to decide on the building of (1) a new Post Office on the site of the old one, where the present Post Office is and (2) an Agriculture Building on the old Volkstem site at the corner of Pretorius Street and Fountain Lane. Obviously nothing came of the proposal of the Commission, for the old Post Office was not vacated until June 1909 and 60 years later the old Volkstem Building still remains."

## "THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST TRANS-AFRICAN PLANE IN PRETORIA"

**M**R. CHAIRMAN, ladies and gentlemen,

When Mr. Getz asked me to talk to you, I was completely taken aback. Apart from my admiration for the work our Air Force has been doing, and is still doing, there seemed to be nothing I could talk on. But you know Mr. Getz. He is both eloquent and tenacious. The termination of that monologue on his part was that I agreed.

In my search for a suitable theme, I recalled one day being telephoned by the late Professor M. W. Henning, better known as 'Giel Henning'.

Professor Henning was then research officer of the Agricultural Research Institute at the University

*Talk delivered by Mr. H. P. H. Behrens, Director of Cultural Affairs at a South African Air Force Association Luncheon on 11th March, 1966.*

of Pretoria. He was writing a biography of Sir Arnold Theiler, the founder of Onderstepoort, and I was collaborating with him on points of general Pretoria history.

Professor Henning asked me:—"Where did Sir Pierre van Ryneveld land in Pretoria on the first trans-African flight?" Without thinking I answered "Swartkop". A short discussion convinced both the Professor and myself that Swartkop was not the right answer. But my curiosity

had been aroused and Mr. Getz's request recalled my search. The results thereof will be, I hope, of interest to you.

As it so happens on Thursday next week it will be precisely 46 years ago that that historic landing took place in Pretoria. It was reported in a short stop press announcement in the "Pretoria News" on Wednesday, 17th March, 1920. The announcement, consisting of one short sentence, simply stated: "The aeroplane Voortrekker reached Pretoria from Bulawayo at 4.35 p.m. today."

Behind this bare statement, indicating that the penultimate stage of the first ever trans-African flight had been reached, lies an epic story of the courage and enterprise, of the initiative and tenacity of purpose of two men. One of them has become, as far as I know, the only South African who during his lifetime had a statue erected in his honour. I refer to the group of the two pioneer aviators in the main building at the Jan Smuts Airport.

All of you know their names — Sir Pierre van Ryneveld and Sir Quintin Brand. But I'll hazard the opinion that very few of you know Sir Pierre's Christian names. For Pierre, or Pierrie as I believed he liked to be called, was a nickname. He was actually christened Helperus Andrias, the names selected for his only surviving son by his father who was then farming at Theunissen, in the Orange Free State.

Early in life, whether it was at school in Winburg already, or subsequently at Grey College in Bloemfontein or at the University of Cape

Town, Helperus Andrias shed his names, to become Pierrie. He was described as a "gay dog", and A. P. Cartwright says, that even today there are grandmothers alive who remember Pierrie's taking ways.

Queerly enough, no book has been written about Van Ryneveld. However, Cartwright devotes one chapter of his book "South African Hall of Fame" to Van Ryneveld. This is the only biographical article of any length I have been able to trace.

You are aware of Van Ryneveld's



*H. P. H. BEHRENS*