

Mei 2008

Dagsê alle belangstellendes in die geskiedenis van ou Pretoria,

Ek is nog besig om meer uit te vind maar verstaan dat die Nasionale Argiewe nou op aanvraag foto's uit hul versameling skandeer en verkoop teen 85c per foto. Jy moet net jou eie CD of "flash disk" saambring. Ek hoop net dat hulle die oorspronklike foto's gebruik en nie die afdrucke uit die albums nie.

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Onderstaande is 'n **vervolg van verlede maand se brief** oor die Paleis van Justisie. Dit is geskryf deur Adolf A. Landman [Judge of the Labour Court of South Africa] en het verskyn in die tydskrif Advocate van Augustus 2002. Ek plaas dit in die oorspronklike Engels soos hy dit geskryf het. Die twee foto's kom uit my elektroniese fotoversameling.

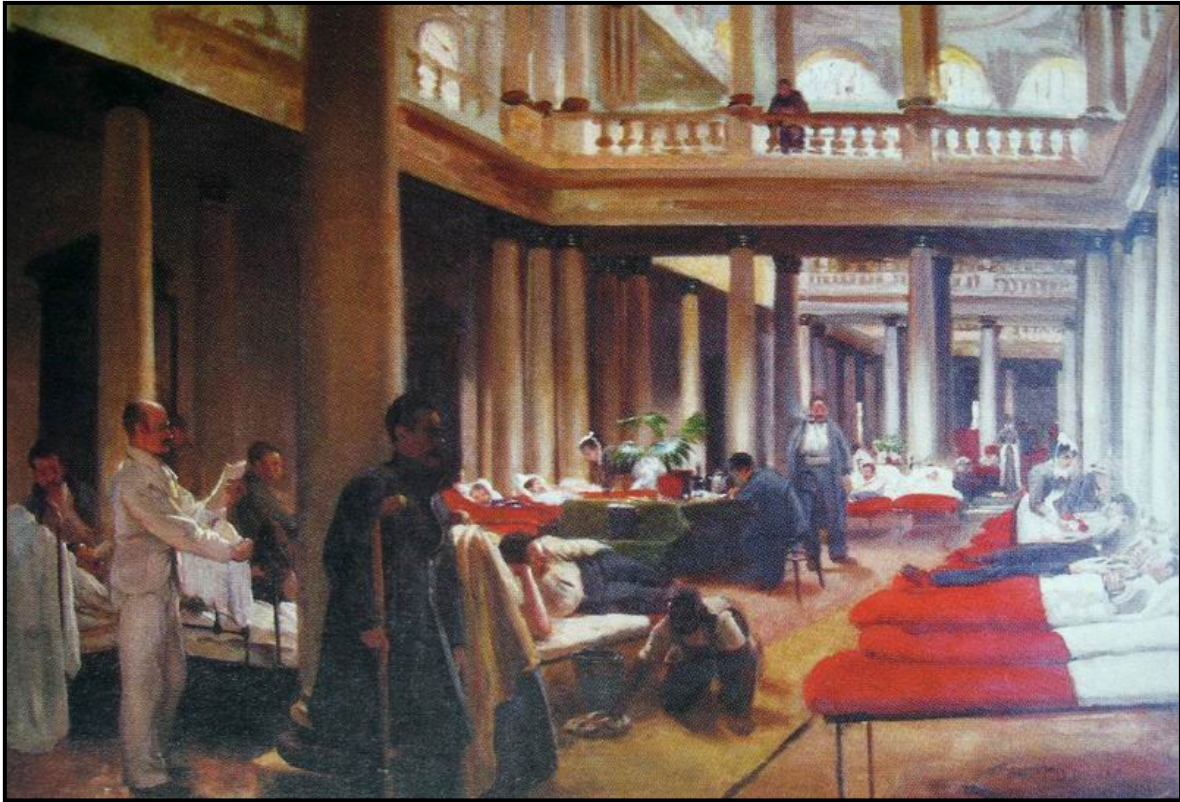
### **The Palace as hospital**

Pretoria fell under the military's jurisdiction and was administered by Lord Athlumney, the provost marshal. The uncompleted Palace was commandeered to serve as a hospital. There were other hospitals in Pretoria. Private citizens had also established hospitals. TW Beckett's house in the suburb of Arcadia was used as a hospital for convalescents. (Could the trip from town to Beckett's hospital have given rise to the expression "Beckett's Trek"?)

There was heady support for the war on the British Isles and the colonies. Private individuals endowed train hospitals, hospital ships and mobile and stationary hospitals. Ireland supplied soldiers to both sides. MacBride's Irish soldiers fought with the Boers. The Irish Lord Ivaagh commissioned a 100 bed stationary hospital, with its own transport. The hospital was led by Sir William Thompson with Dr George Stoker as the assistant chief surgeon. They were accompanied by four civil surgeons, four nursing sisters and members of the RAMC and St JAB. A portion of this hospital accompanied the 11<sup>th</sup> Division's march to Pretoria and took up position in the uncompleted Palace on 14 June 1900. On 19 June, 83 patients were admitted [6].



Lady Briggs, who visited it at this time, later wrote: "This Irish Hospital had eighty-three wards, all spacious, light, and well ventilated, the principal bearing the names of great generals or benefactors. But the central hall, with its magnificent pillars and colonnades, was the one to make a never-to-be-forgotten impression. This ward was called the Victoria hall; and gorgeous it was in its grandeur, the colour effects being produced by the stained glass ceiling, by the bright red blankets on the beds and the uniforms of the army nursing and civil sisters" [7].



**Irse Hospitaal. Skildery deur Frans Oerder [Bol-01 p106]**

On 1 July the remainder of the Irish hospital, which had been left behind at Bloemfontein, rejoined the hospital in Pretoria. The hospital was known as the Palace of Justice Hospital or the Irish Hospital. Lord Roberts officially opened the hospital on 11 July. By the end of July the hospital had extended to 500 beds. Private Horace of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Hussars noted in his diary: "Buff's band on Church Square and visited my chum Nobby Grace who was down with enteric in the Palace of Justice Hospital Pretoria" [8]. The Irish hospital staff left for England on 15 October, leaving 180 patients in the hands of the military medical staff.

### **The new court**

The ZAR was formally annexed by proclamation on 25 October 1900. Some civil government functions were restored in the Transvaal Colony before the signing of the peace treaty. Proclamation 14 of 1902 provided for a high court. Judges and staff were recruited and soon the court opened for business.

Sir James Rose Innes, the Judge President, has left us his impression of the Palace: "The court was housed in the new Palace of Justice – an ornate building, the entrance hall rather cluttered with pillars, but the court-rooms were adequate, convenient, and acoustically satisfactory. The well equipped library, with office for the librarian, was in striking contrast to the dingy room in the old Supreme Court block at the Cape ... The judges' chambers were well furnished, my own being on a higher scale of comfort that I had ever enjoyed as a minister of the Crown" [10].

The Judge President must have had extraordinarily acute hearing. Not so his brother judges then or since. They found the acoustics in the large court, later known as “Court A”, unsatisfactory. Mr Rorke, the second person to hold office as registrar, wrote on 14 March 1904 that: “The acoustic properties of the room are so bad that the Court has continuously to ask Council and Witnesses to raise their voices, and Council have very great difficulty in hearing what the judges say”. The judges wanted wires to be stretched across the room. It is not clear how this would have improved the acoustics. But it could have been that a lower makeshift ceiling was envisaged. [When I came to the Bar in 1974 the problem had still not been addressed.]

Another problem, which too was not solved, were the crank handles on the doors leading from the passages into the court. They played havoc with the gowns of advocates and officials of the court, prompting the registrar to request the Public Works Department: “ ... to substitute less obtrusive handles for those at present use.”

Judge Wessels found the judges’ chairs unsuitable. At his insistence the registrar wrote to the Law Department on 21 March 1904: “Mr Justice Wessels and the other Judges sitting today, have directed me to have the Judges’ chairs lowered if possible, and to have ‘castors placed under the legs. In the alternative Mr Justice Curlewis suggests footstools – but this I think will not suit the other Judges”. Mr Rorke took the opportunity to complain about his own chair which he found “... very high and uncomfortable.” Judge Wessels also wanted a small stepladder made for his chambers as he was unable to reach the top shelf of his library.

### **Postea**

The Palace of Justice was used continuously until the 1990s when the Transvaal Provincial Division, which had long outgrown its accommodation, moved across Vermeulen Street into a new court house. The Palace was left to the tender mercies of vandals, vagabonds and schoolboys until a decision was taken to restore it to its former glory. This work was carried out by Holm and Holm Architects in terms of a Public Works Department commission (supervised by architect Mrs Susan Pyke). One hundred years after its official inauguration the Palace of Justice is again functioning as a court of law.

### **Endnotes**

6. See Peter Prime, *The History of the Medical and Hospital Services of the Anglo-Boer War 1899 to 1902*, 57-58
7. Lady Biggs, *The Staff work of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1901*, 394
8. See *Military History Journal Vol 10 no 6*
9. See BA Tindall, *James Rose Innes (Chief Justice of South Africa, 1914-27) Autobiography*, 207-208

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Die volgende navraag van Louis Chadinha,

Ons was gister in Bloemfontein. Terwyl ons by Mej Elria Wessels op kantoor was in die Oorlogsmuseum van die Boere Republieke 1899 - 1902, kom daar 'n mnr Conradie aan met 'n navraag oor die betekenis van 'n pleknaam VERRAAIERSNEK, tussen Lydenburg en Ohrigstad. Die pleknaam word nie op die padkaart aangetoon nie.

Weet iemand miskien waar die naam vandaan kom?

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Hier is 'n antwoord op Lauren Ross se navraag [Brief April 2008]. Sy wou graag weet of Sir Herbert Baker moontlik in Beckett Straat 151 gewoon het.

Antwoord van Peter Wood: Re query from Lauren Ross about Sir Herbert Baker - there have been a couple of books published about Baker's work & it is possible that some clues to where he was staying during the building of the Union Buildings could be either in these books, or in the Wits University thesis by Doreen Greig, on which her book on **Herbert Baker in South Africa** was based. For interest, see attached story about Baker buildings on the East Rand.

Dennis Radford - who researched the Baker commercial & industrial buildings - consulted a lot of **Baker correspondence** that is housed in the Howard Strange library in Johannesburg. **(I have an email address for the former librarian of the Strange library, who knows the collections there well.)**

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### Tudorgebou

Die Tudorgebou op die suid-oostelike hoek van Kerkstraat en Kerkplein het onlangs van eienaar verwissel. Die nuwe eienaar is tans besig om die gebou te laat restoureer. Is dit nie wonderlik dat een van ons mooi ou geboue bewaar gaan word nie?

Dit het my aan die volgende gerug laat dink. Op die dak van die Tudor gebou lê daar glo 'n paal wat oorspronklik deel van die Time Ball was. Dit was te moeilik om dit weer van die dak af te haal en toe word dit sommer daar gelos. Een van my broers het dit iewers gehoor maar hy kan nie onthou by wie hy dit gehoor het nie.

Ek het Anton Jansen gekontak om te hoor of hy nie miskien iets daarvan weet nie en die volgende interessante antwoord van hom gekry.

### Van Anton Jansen

Wat die paal van Timeball Hill betref twyfel ek of dit waar is maar sal môre by my vennoot uitvind want die dak se sink kom af en hy ken dus elke vierkante meter van die dak. Wat ek egter vermoed waarna jou broer verwys is die windvaan wat bo-op die toring was. Ek sal in my argief moet duik vir wat presies gebeur het maar die toring is weg. 25 Jaar gelede het ek restourasiewerk in die binnehof van Tudor Chambers gedoen en toe vind ek 'n staalstaaf van ongeveer drie meter lank versier met krulle. Ek vra toe vir Ian Cowley (mede eienaar van die gebou) wat dit is en hy vertel toe die verhaal van die toring en windvaan en vra my sommer om die staaf weg te gooi. Dit is nog steeds by my huis en waarskynlik gaan ek dit aan Tudor Chambers skenk want die toring gaan weer heropgerig word. Die koper windvaan in die vorm van 'n draak het ek opgespoor en dit behoort aan 'n Italianer, 'n sekere Beppe, destydse eienaar van Beppe's Restaurant. Dertig jaar gelede het 'n jong prokureur wat by Shapiro in Tudor Chambers gewerk het Beppe se restaurant ingestap met die draak onder sy arm. Almal was natuurlik nuuskierig en toe hy die verhaal vertel dat hy dit by die werk gevind het begin van sy ander kollegas hom bang praat en dat hy van diefstal aangekla kan word. Na sy vierde bier stap hy uit en los die draak net daar.

Beppe het die draak, ek die staaf en my besigheid gaan die toring oprig. Moontlik word dit nog 'n verhaal met 'n 'happy end'.



Anton het die foto van die draak gestuur. Is dit nie 'n lieflike ding nie. Ek het 'n hele paar foto's van die ou gebou waar die draak duidelik op die dak gesien kan word, maar is nog in die proses om die foto's op te soek. Ek het 'n wonderlike liaseerstelsel vir my foto's maar op die oomblik wonder ek of 'n kat haar kleintjies daar tussen my foto's sal opspoor. [Wonder waar kom ons aan al die snaakse spreekwoorde?] Dit is regtig baie makliker om iets op 'n rekenaar te soek.

Groete tot volgende maand,

Rosa Swanepoel