

Watsonian Club of South Africa - Cape Town, Annual Report 2019-2020

Over 100 years ago, around the time of the Spanish Flu, there were over 30 named Watsonians in the Cape and up-country. The names of which remain embedded in the Club's minute book of that time.

Today in South Africa, while we all hibernate our way through the 2020 Coronavirus, there are now significantly fewer members of the South Africa Watsonian Club.

Over the past years, reading the same minute book, the Club has maintained good and generous contact with the School.

The first recorded subscription to the School was in 16 Dec 1910 - minutes of the meeting chaired by Professor J Barry Low refer. However, in reading there is a clear indication that there had been such subscriptions to the School and the Watsonian Club prior to this.

'Mr Brydone then proposed that the usual annual subscription to the school be sent to Mr Alison (Principal at the time) forthwith. This was recorded by Mr Morris (James Morris 1895) & unanimously agreed to. The amount of the subscription was fixed at £3 .3/- as heretofore & the Secretary was instructed to advise the head master that the prize this year would be for an essay on "the influence of South Africa as an integral part of the British Empire". The Secretary was further instructed to inform Mr Alison that the essays were to be handed to him on or before 30 April 1911 & posted forthwith to the Secretary of the Club in Cape Town to be adjudicated on by a special committee.'

It subsequently states - from at the same meeting - that:

' the books given to the prizewinner should as far as possible deal with South Africa' and ' Mr Morris recorded that subscription of £2. 2/- be (also) sent to the Watsonian (Club)'

Globally many things have changed since the early 1900's - not to mention inflation and political issues. Yet with 100 years passing, we all have a very similar virus to contend with!

South Africa has been resolute in controlling the Covid-19 virus and so far showing much better statistics than many European countries. However, South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa still has a long way to go, particularly now that the necessary opening of the economy, albeit cautiously, has commenced.

Should we need reminding, the "second wave" of deaths from the Spanish Flu were greater than the first wave!

Returning to more recent and pleasant times. During the past year we had a further memorable visit from Marion (Class of 1958) and Sandy Davison and also Martin McLaren (Class of 2001). Also professional golfer Jane Turner (Class of 2008) returned and again was kindly hosted by Gavin (Class of 1969) and Tanya Allan. Jane did exceeding well in the annual South African Sunshine ladies tour.

Donald McGougan (previous head of the Junior School) was found relaxing, with his golf clubs on hand, at the Cape Vineyard Hotel, Colinton Road, where incidentally, the Cape Town Club has held a number of gatherings in recent times. During these gatherings fond memories of Edinburgh, Colinton Road and George Square are always abound.

The School's July/Aug 2019 rugby tour of the Cape did not go unnoticed and was enjoyed by a number of our Club members. Again bringing back memories of the Myreside turf - particularly on cold and frosty Saturday mornings.

The Cape and the rest of South Africa remains as beautiful as ever during these questioning times. When the world opens up once again - as it will, albeit a different place for a while - we look forward to meeting up with Watsonian visitors to the Cape and once again enjoying great South African vintage wine together.

Douglas G Scott