

Austin is making a splendid recovery from a recent setback in health and we look forward to the occasional glimpse of her in town when she is up and about again shortly. Reg Austin is looking fit and well and obviously enjoying his retirement at Rocklands.

Pickwick Tavern is in full swing on the site of the old Standard. We would like to see more of the sea staff enjoying the roast beef or steak and oyster pudding a la Pickwick.

We are all very pleased to have the Neil Sempills with us in Cape Town where they arrived recently. Needless to say, these doughty Scots have selected Lochiel Road as their place of residence in Rondebosch.

"Mac" McCarthy has settled in to life in Natal where his stories are unfolding to the delight of all the banana boys. In the general post involved in these moves, Neil Matheson heads the CISA office in Johannesburg, reports Laurie Hilton.

Hamers elected chairman

JOHANNESBURG—The annual general meeting of the Dromedaris Club was held at the New Club on February 2. A committee of the following members was elected:

Miss S. Assad, Miss L. De Kock (Castlemarine), N. Matheson (Cayzer Irvine), H. De Villiers (Aero Marine Forwarding), D. Williams (Aero Marine Air Freight), J. Cluver, E. Gibson and P. Hamers (Castlemarine). Mrs. J. Blamey is honorary secretary and M. Tullener honorary treasurer. At a subsequent committee meeting Paul Hamers was elected chairman and Hynie de Villiers vice chairman.

We extend our congratulations to Henry Irving on being appointed president of the Dromedaris Club for the Johannesburg area.

A very successful dinner dance was held at the Ming San Chinese Restaurant in Johannesburg, where about 40 members and friends enjoyed prawn chop suey and sweet and sour pork.

Our monthly film shows are proving popular. We have recently seen "Pink Panther" and "Shadow of the Land", reports J. H. Irvine.

Snooker friendly

A stag evening was held at the New Club recently when 12 male members of the Dromedaris Club assembled for an evening of snooker. A friendly competition was held and Henry Irving and Eric Gibson emerged as overall winners.

PE Dromedaris votes

PORT ELIZABETH—The recent annual general meeting of the Dromedaris Club in PE elected the committee for the coming year. Those appointed were: president, D. G. Russell; chairman, P. N. Patchett; vice-chairman, Capt. S. L. C. Hutchings; hon. secretary, Miss S. Plenderleith; hon. treasurer, Mrs. E. C. Lambson; committee: A. L. Robertson, H. Witz, P. Smith, B. Whale, R. Winearls, Capt. L. Hamer.

Members are looking forward to another year of high-standard functions, reports D. E. Flack.

CLANSMAN

readers' letters

Willie the pigeon sails to Lobito

Sir,

Sometime after we had disembarked our pilot off Folkestone on October 31 a lone pigeon was observed on board *Argyllshire*. It had flown round the ship several times before alighting. We thought no more about it; expected the pigeon would leave shortly as the ship was only about 5 miles off the coast.

Having entered the Bay the following day we were quite surprised to see the pigeon still on board. It appeared to have adopted the boatdeck as its base. We fed and watered it. As the days went by "Willie" (as my wife christened it) became very friendly to the extent of eating out of our hands.

On the second night out I found Willie perched outside, brought it into my dayroom and placed it on an open bookshelf where it settled down quite happily for the night. At daybreak next morning it found its own way out to the boatdeck. Same procedure next night. From then onward Willie came into my dayroom each dusk, perched on my raised fireside fender, preened itself for several minutes before retiring for the night on the same bookshelf: quite oblivious to my wife and I who were fascinated by its unconcerned attitude.

We called at Tenerife for bunkers on November 5 during daylight hours and expected Willie to leave us there, but when we sailed early afternoon we were amazed

to see Willie reclining in the shade on the boatdeck, taking no notice of the flocks of local pigeons which flew around us.

During the 10 day passage: from Tenerife to Lobito Willie very rarely took to the wing, preferring to flop down in the shade on the boat deck close to my hall entrance.

Willie remained with us all the way to Lobito, arriving there on November 15. The last we saw of Willie was when it joined a pair of local pigeons in flight, shortly after arrival.

Willie must have come from a racing loft as it had a ring on its left leg marked as follows—Nos. 302 SHU NW PU N70. On its right leg was a yellow tape marked 89. I would be interested to find out who the owner is and from which part of the country the bird came. It may have been taking part in a race.

The weather was good all the way from off Folkestone to Lobito with very little wind at any time during the passage. I should imagine that it is quite unusual for a pigeon to remain for so long on board a ship, especially calling at another port en route and passing within sight of land several times.

CAPT. G. S. COCHRANE,
Argyllshire.

Footnote: Can anyone help to find out where Willie came from? The Magazine Office has already contacted the Racing Pigeon Publishing Co., in London, who suggested Willie was a Scottish bird (could he read the ship's name?). But the Scottish Homing Union at Bathgate said his code number seemed incorrect and could not be traced.

■ Below: Willie the pigeon struts on the fireside fender in *Argyllshire's* day cabin. Picture: Capt. G. S. Cochrane.



Macdougall found at firemen's college

Sir,

Readers may be interested to know that on a recent Royal Observer Corps course I attended at the Fire Service Technical College at Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, I came across a model of *Clan Macdougall* in one of the corridors. It had been presented by the company to the Kent Fire Service Brigade in appreciation of their services rendered to *Clan MacLaren* which was on fire off Dover between May 27 and June 2, 1948.

I. ROBERTSON,
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