

To Ian  
my continual inspiration

# *Diamond Beaches*

*A History of Oranjemund 1928-1989*

*by*

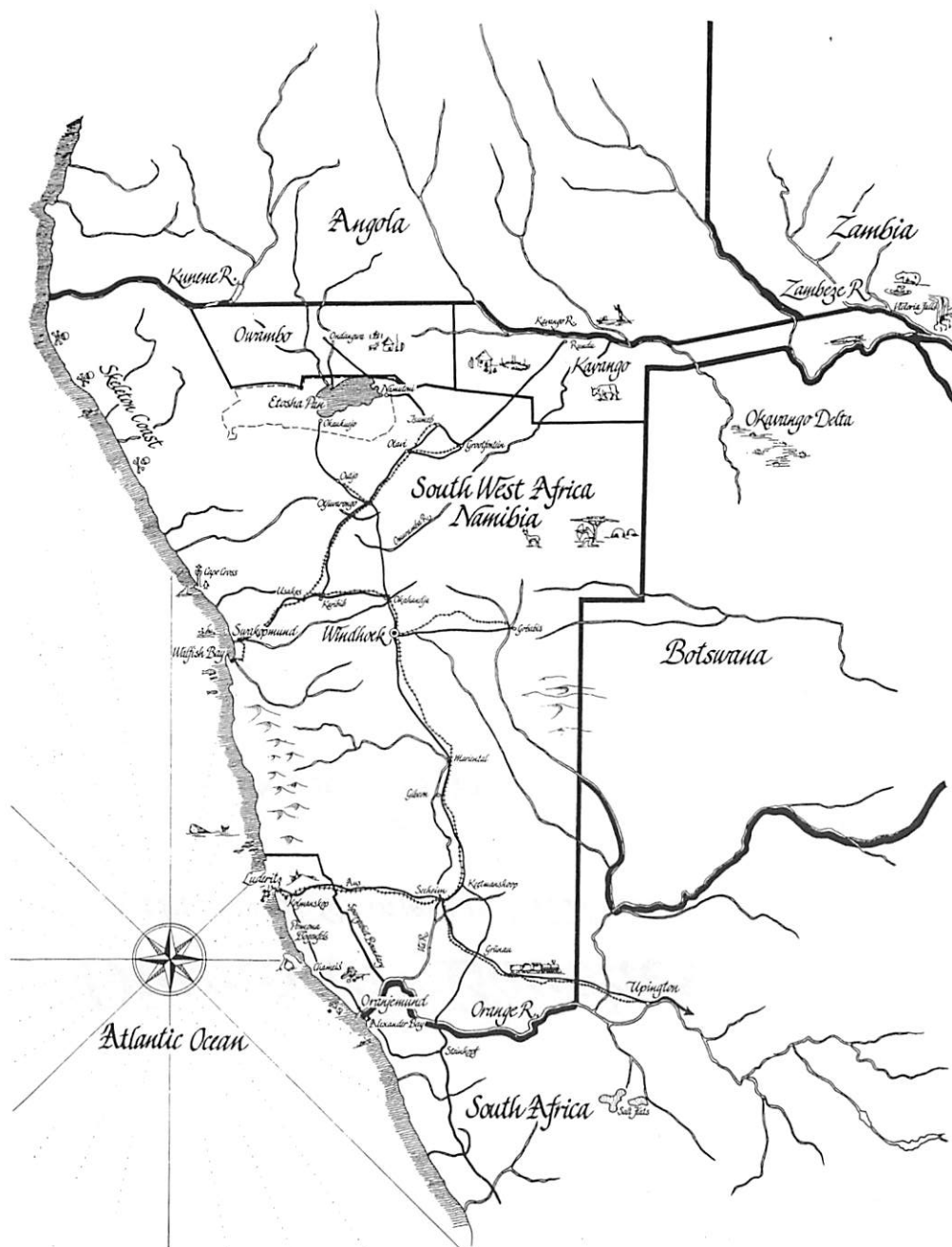
ALISON CORBETT

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from The Publisher.

Copyright © 1989 A. Corbett

Published by A. Corbett, 7 Budock Road, Claremont 7800

Printed in the Republic of South Africa by Ace Printers, Parow.



## CONTENTS

Acknowledgement.....	i
Foreword .....	ii
Introduction .....	1
The Pioneers .....	7
The Developers .....	28
The Innovators .....	55
The Ovango and Kavango .....	72
The Diamond Trip .....	76



## Acknowledgements

In tackling a project of this nature, one is reliant on human memory and assistance from residents past and present of Oranjemund. I am indebted to those folk who have willingly shared their memories and have thus made this book a reality rather than a dream. To you all I hope I have done you credit in this work.

I would like to thank Mr Ken Trueman for giving me permission to embark on this project, for his encouragement and help along the way and for making available facilities and photographs belonging to CDM.

Mr Keith Whitelock has allowed the project to proceed and enabled the publication of the printed work. For this I thank him and acknowledge his speedy decisions and encouragement. I would like to thank most sincerely those folk who answered my questionnaire, your help was invaluable. These people include:

Mrs J. Honeyborne; Mr B. Mitchell; Mr G. Lovett; Mrs E. C. Bruce; Mr R. Leadon; Mrs D. Borchers; Mr and Mrs J. Rademakers; Mr R. Barnes; Mr and Mrs P. O'Brien; Mrs M. Gartner; Mrs Revington; Miss K. Singer; Mr P. Hughes; Mr F. Beresford; Mrs Wessels; Mr J. Hockney.

There are three Oranjemunders without whom I don't think I would ever have completed this work. To Ivan Morrow, Jack Carr and the late Frans Schneider - thank you so much for all your help! Without Jack's intimate knowledge of the mine, the history of mining development in Oranjemund would never have been recorded. Ivan was a continual inspiration and friend throughout the entire project. All who remember "Oom Frans", will recall his delightful sense of humour and during his time in Oranjemund he was always available to help and advise me.

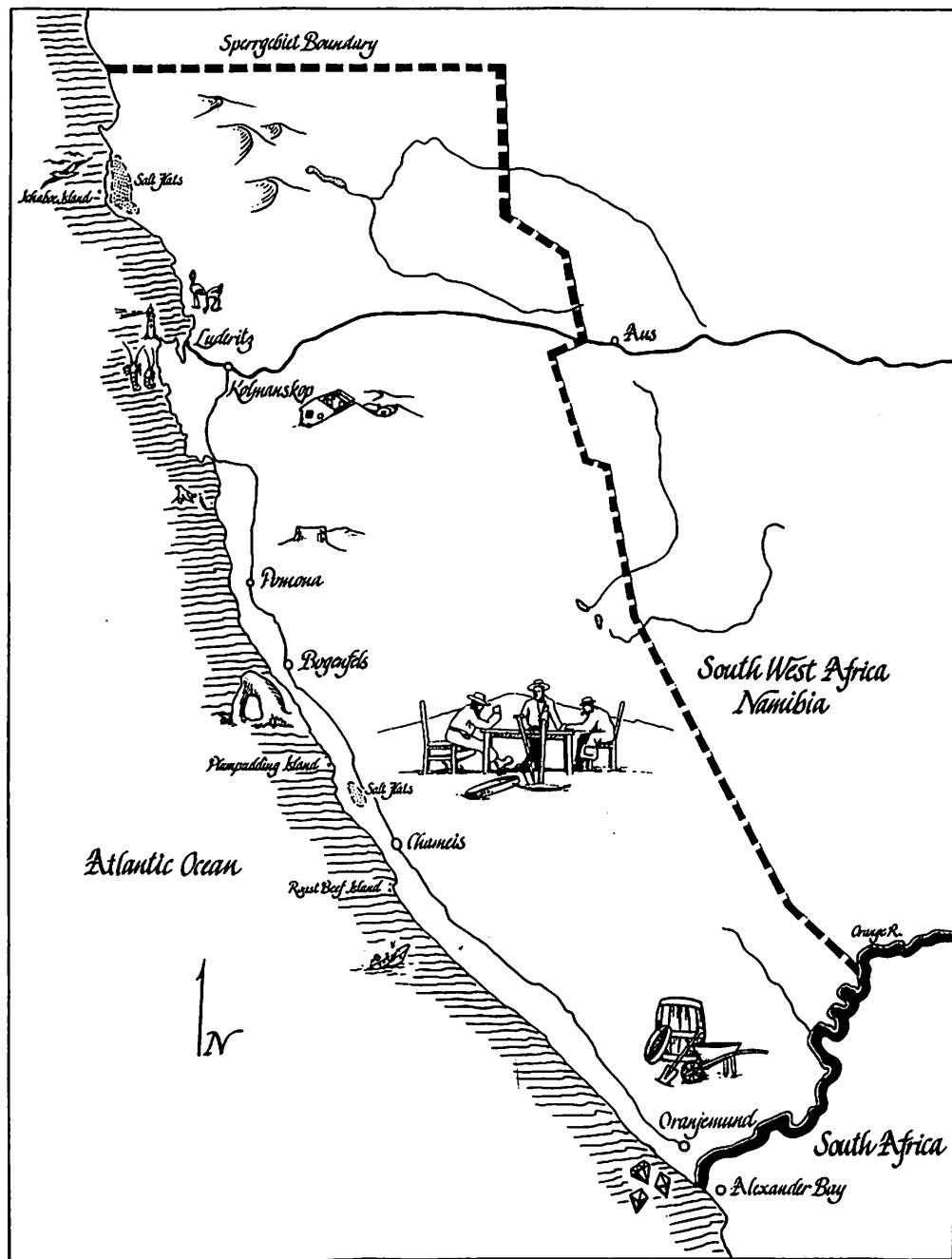
To all the many, many other people and departments who gave me their time and information, I am very grateful. The following were particularly helpful: G. Lottering, Mr & Mrs F. Schneider, Mr & Mrs M. Reschke, the late Mr K. Brink, Mr J. Huish, Mr Stander, Mr I. Kaulinge, Mrs K. Reid, Mr R. Burchell, Sorthouse Staff, Geology Department, Security Department, Mining Department, No 1, 2, 3, & 4 Plant Staff, Beauvallon Farm Manager, Mr G. Houghton, Public Relations Staff, G. Salchow, Anglo American Library, Mr C. Hudson of Anglo American Public Relations Department, Windhoek Archives, Estorff Reference Library.

Mr D. Erickson and my friend Leslee Solomon have had the difficult task of editing this document and making it suitable for publication - thank you both for your time and help.

Adam Carnegie had the challenging task of converting computer generated maps to works of art in a very short space of time. I appreciate his talent and goodwill.

Although many of the photographs in the book are acknowledged as CDM, I would like to thank the photographers, most of whom lived in Oranjemund, for their superb work.

Finally, Ian, my husband, it was worth it - in the end! Without his encouragement and support throughout the project, the book would never have been attempted let alone completed.



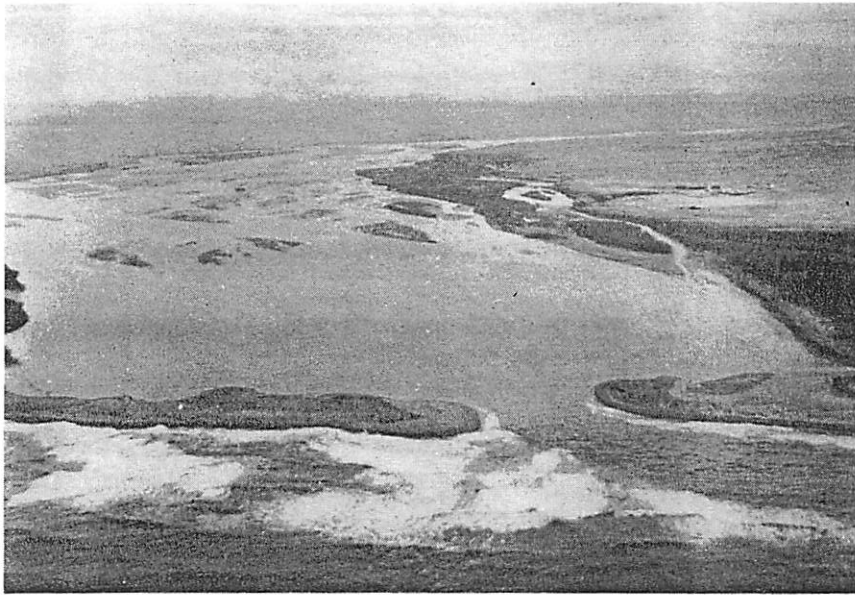
Map showing the Sperrgebiet and the route from Oranjemund to Luderitz. Artist A Carnegie.

## Foreword

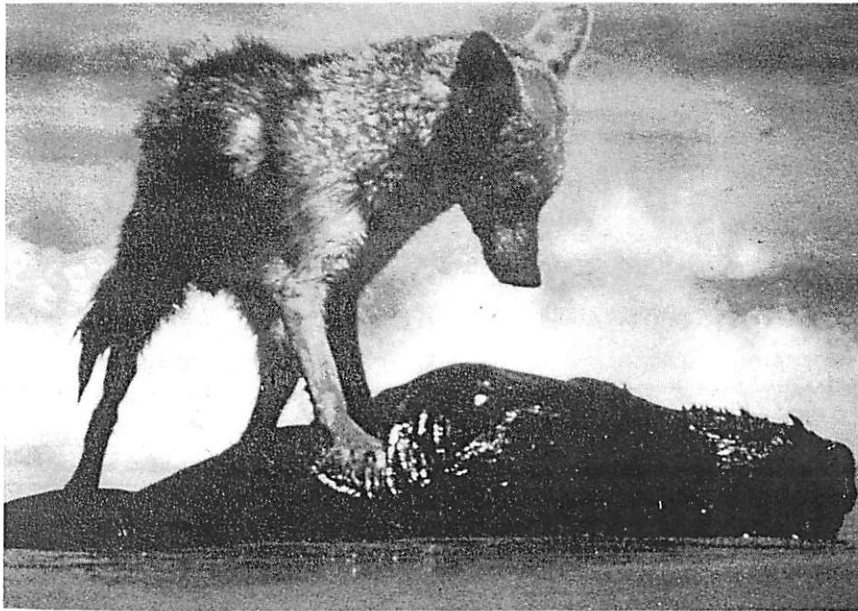
I consider it a great honour to have been asked to write the foreword for book. A history of the Sperrgebiet and Oranjemund is very long overdue. This is a unique area and I congratulate Alison on all her hard work and research.

As the wife of a geologist she has lived in harsh conditions in a most inhospitable environment and as such is very qualified to write about it. I am sure this book will be of great interest to all who have been bitten with Sperrgebiet bug as well as all Oranjemunders past and present.

K.J. Trueman  
General Manager (1986)



*The Orange River (Photo T.McNally)*



*A Jackal at the beach with a seal (Photo W.Shaw)*

## Introduction

The Gariep or Eyn, such were the Hottentot names for the mighty Orange River we know today. It simply means river and rather understates its influence. In 1777, Robert Jacob Gordon, a commander of the garrison at the Cape, who was a Dutch soldier of Scottish extraction, travelled to the river. Two years later he revisited it, near the mouth and renamed it the Orange, in honour of Prince William V of Orange.

The Orange is truly a river of the wilderness - moody, sullen and enigmatic. To the Hottentots it was the mother of all rivers, bringing life to the desert. The river meets the Atlantic on the west coast and it is predominantly this area we are concerned with. The west coast is plagued with haunting, cold southerly to south westerly winds, which, in summer, average about 40 kilometres an hour. In winter, the occasional hot east wind tears across the empty plains searing what little plant growth there is. The cold Benguela current flows along the coast, causing heavy fog and mist which enshrouds the snaking dunes, often stretching many kilometres inland, making the area hazardous to travellers. Rainfall is a rarity, plants and animals are sustained by the water which precipitates from the fog. Close to the river there is vegetation in abundance. However, within a few hundred meters from the river there is merely stony desert and scrub. When rain does occur, the desert stretches and begins to awaken. Peeping from the nooks and crannies come exquisite blazes of perfection. The rather grey, colourless ground illuminates with life, flora rare and common greet the world. The animals prunk with joy and the birds herald the uncommon arrival of water with trills of song. Flamingoes and avocets spot the pools and zoom in to enjoy the microscopic crustaceans which are hatching and wriggling to life.

Desolate, lonely beaches take the human eye to eternity; only occasional flotsam and jetsam remind you of mankind. Black-backed jackals prowl in search of easy prey, seals with squawking babies lumber up and down the sandy slopes becoming lithe spirits when they hit the water. Frolicking and dancing in the surf, they relish their superior safety. The strand wolf, reticent but deadly, wears a path along the coast and rarely comes in sight. Gemsbok roam, contrasting the grey desert with their striking markings. Their markings are unique to this part of the Namib, their brothers in the north having slightly different facial markings. Springbok prunk about the sand dunes, often accompanied by babies with huge fluffy, white tails.

An almost translucent moon rises over the horizon illuminating the patterns of the dunes below her and the stars seem to reach out to touch you. The howling wind, the resonant yell of the jackals transcends time into eternity, the Atlantic breakers crash against the rocks. Who would want to visit



*Thousands of seals perished in the 1800's (Photo W.Shaw)*

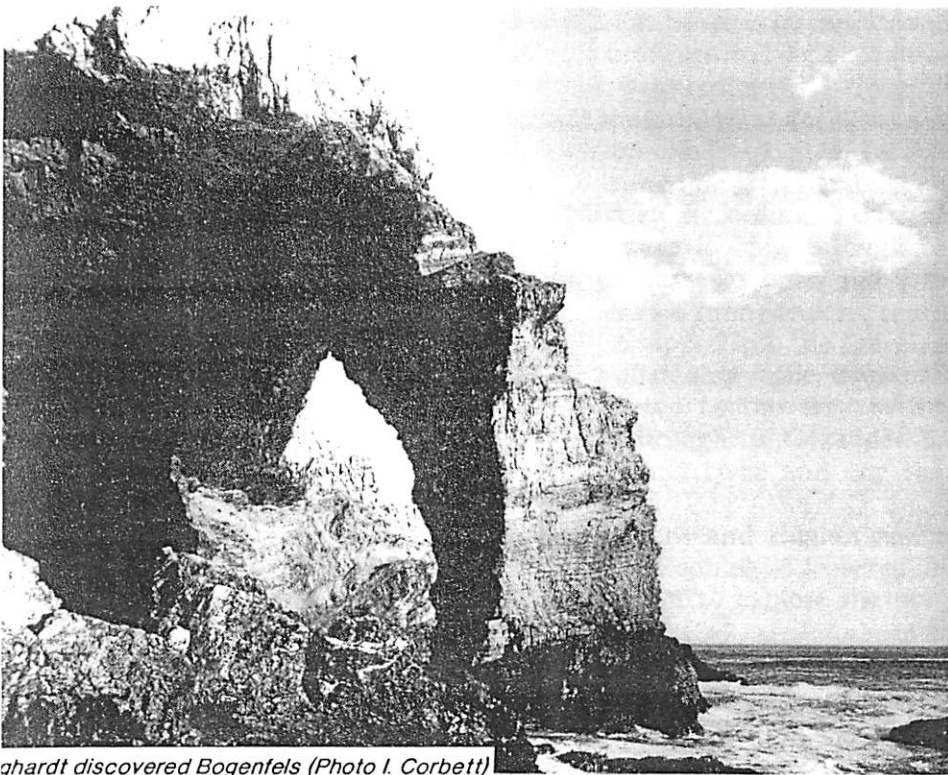
this part of the Orange with limitless desert and its abrasive sand, whistling wind and scarcity of water? Strangely, it has lured all sorts of intrepid explorers to its mystical sands! Coastal adventures took precedence in the early years: as early as 1488, Bartholomew Diaz anchored off Luderitz, left a cross to mark his visit and initially named the bay "Golfo de Sao Christavo". There were a number of expeditions later but with no real success; it was rumoured there were copper deposits. Captain Benjamin Morrell, an American sealing captain, perceived there might be commercial prospects when in 1828, he explored the coast of southern Namibia. He stumbled on the treasure found on the offshore islets: Ichaboe - "white gold" or guano! Guano comes from the Peruvian word meaning dung. It had been used as a fertilizer in South America since early times. Such interest had already been aroused in Britain. This led to a great guano rush in the 1840's. Ruffians, drunkards and other social misfits joined in the treasure hunt which resulted in fearsome fracas erupting; rotten penguin eggs provided splendid ammunition. However, often gunfire was the end result. It is estimated there were 6000 men on the islands at one time - a squalid mass of humanity. The quantities of guano collected was phenomenal; in 1897, 6000 tons were collected from all the islands, 1 718 seals were killed and 762 penguin and other birds eggs were sold. De Pass Brothers, subsequently De Pass, Spence and Co. became involved in the trade and were to have a lasting impact on trade inland too. Trading stations were set up to handle whaling and other commodities.

In 1855 a trader named Fielding purchased a concession from Kaptein Dawid Christiaan of Bethanie to prospect for copper. His area stretched from the confluence of the Fish River to the Orange River mouth - the hub of the Sperrgebiet diamond world today - Oranjemund! John van Reenen obtained the right to prospect south of Luderitz, Angra Pequena as it was known then. Despite all the action along the coast, mother nature managed to withhold secrets a little longer.

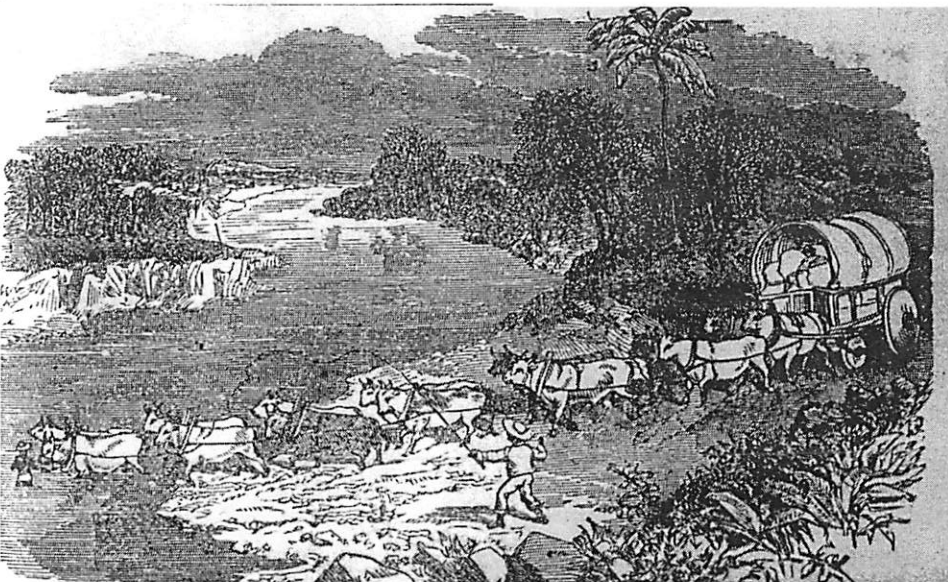
It was at about this time that European powers were experiencing colonial fever and were picking and choosing parts of Africa. The West Coast area was not greatly sought after - a windy, waterless desert - not too desirable! Through the persuasion of Adolf Luderitz, the Luderitz area was claimed by Germany. Prospecting for copper and other ores continued with expeditions venturing into the Orange Mouth - but to no avail.

At last, fortune was to befall an unknown *bahnmeister* in 1908. August Stauch had retreated from Germany to escape persistent asthma attacks and supervised the maintenance work on the railway line from Luderitz to Aus. He is reputed to have asked his men to look out for pretty stones. One of the labourers, Zacharias Lewala picked up a stone which he apparently recognized as a diamond. He handed it over to Stauch. Stauch had unwittingly stumbled upon a treasure trove hitherto unseen in the world before. Diamond fever began!





ghardt discovered Bogenfels (Photo I. Corbett)

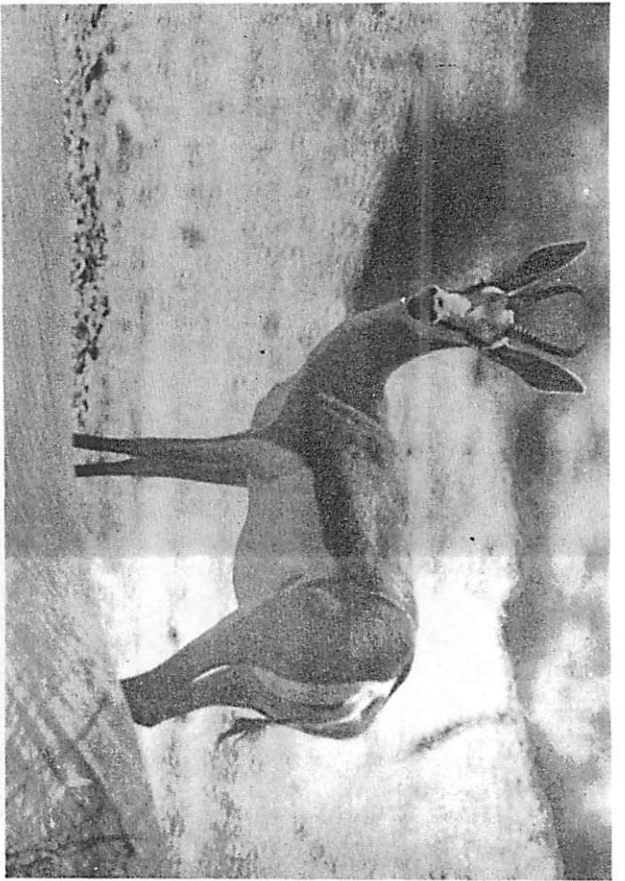


Explorers in the Orange River area (Windhoek Archives)

Febrile prospectors, seamen and others submitted claims and the wastelands became electric with teeming masses. The lure of diamonds surpassed any logic or awareness of conditions. Men coped with the glaring, all-pervading sand; biting, remorseless wind and shocking living conditions all for that scintillating brilliance a diamond evokes. Diamonds, a complete paradox, made from the mundane element carbon, refract light with a dazzling brilliance. Its fragility in appearance counters it being the hardest mineral known to man. So the Bushmen, the animals and the rather beautiful flora would have to share their home.

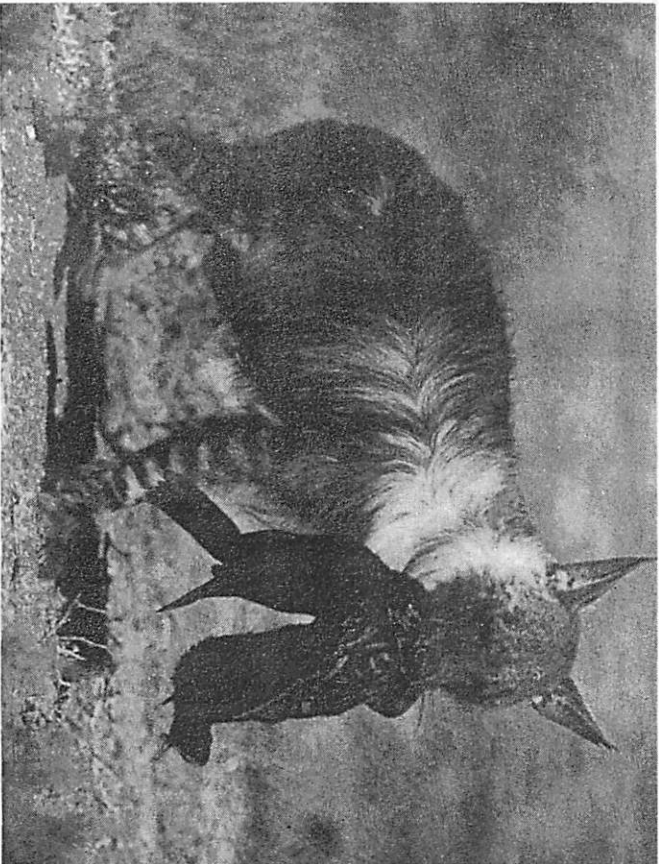
During these exciting times, pioneering prospectors blazed trails throughout the area and their work still stands in good stead today. Georg Klinghardt, whose parents were German missionaries, started life in Little Namaqualand. A love of new places and an incessant desire to learn brought him to Luderitz where he was engaged as a prospector. He would disappear into the Sperrgebiet with a blank map for months at a time. He conscientiously mapped his routes and marked the new water holes. He made friends with the Bushmen through a half-Hottentot, half-Bushman employee of his - Hossob. Hossob acted as an intermediary for Klinghardt, taking the Bushmen tobacco, knives; in return Klinghardt was allowed to use their water holes without the fear of being poisoned. Other prospectors who were not so careful found their camels dying from poisoned water. Klinghardt discovered the diamond fields at the majestic Bogenfels Rock area. He frequently travelled in communication with another Geologist, Dr Reuning. They often travelled separately, meeting at prescribed spots, a rare achievement in an environment where everything looks the same! Throughout the Sperrgebiet there are areas which bear the names of these two intrepid travellers. The two men met at the Orange mouth in January 1910. They investigated the land north of the river and found a farmer, "Giel" Louw living there. Reuning laid out a series of prospecting trenches and employed Louw to dig them with the intention of returning. With that, Reuning and Klinghardt continued up the Orange River, mapping and prospecting. They were intercepted by a messenger who came to tell Reuning that he had been recalled to Luderitz. Reuning never did return to the area. Perhaps if he had he would have discovered the Oranjemund deposits of today!

The long coastline stretching from the Cape northwards becomes progressively more arid as one ventures further north. Yet people have lived there for centuries. Beyond the searing heat, desolation and relentless wind, there are minerals. Sir James Alexander began to mine copper in the late 1800's. He sent it by ox-wagon to the Orange River and floated it to the mouth on barges. The Namaqualand area became swamped with explorers and prospectors. Fred Cornell, a famous pioneer and prospector had scoured the area from as early as 1910. He camped at the Orange River mouth and kept returning to the area. Conditions were harsh and finance was difficult to come




*A Springbok (Photo W. Shaw)*

*A Gemsbok (Photo W. Shaw)*



*A Strandwolve (brown hyena) with a seal (Photo W. Shaw)*



by. In 1922 he returned to England; it was reputed that he went to seek finance to return to the Orange River mouth area on a secret prospecting expedition. However he was killed in a freak motor accident. He was credited by many of his contemporaries with the original discovery of diamonds at Alexander Bay.

Diamonds were on the minds of all the prospectors who frequented the area. It was not until 1926 that the first diamond was retrieved by Jack Carstens and his young cousin Percy Hughes in the Port Nolloth area. According to Carstens in his book "Fortune through my fingers", they were looking through the washed gravels. Carstens had told Hughes to keep his eyes open and "sure enough, after a bit, he (Hughes) burst in with; "There's a funny looking crystal here; shines like the dickens." As he tried to get it, it slipped into the gravel. At last he resorted to using his tongue to retrieve the glistening stone. Eventually they held the diamond in their hands. Chaos erupted as the area became inundated with fortune hunters. The entire district through to Alexander Bay was pegged by hopefuls - maybe a big company would come and buy their claims.

In 1927, acting on the discoveries made by Carstens and Hughes and by following his oyster line theory, Dr Merensky with Reuning discovered big deposits at Alexander Bay. The stage was set for CDM to explore the north bank of the Orange River.



## The Pioneers - Orange Mouth 1928-1950

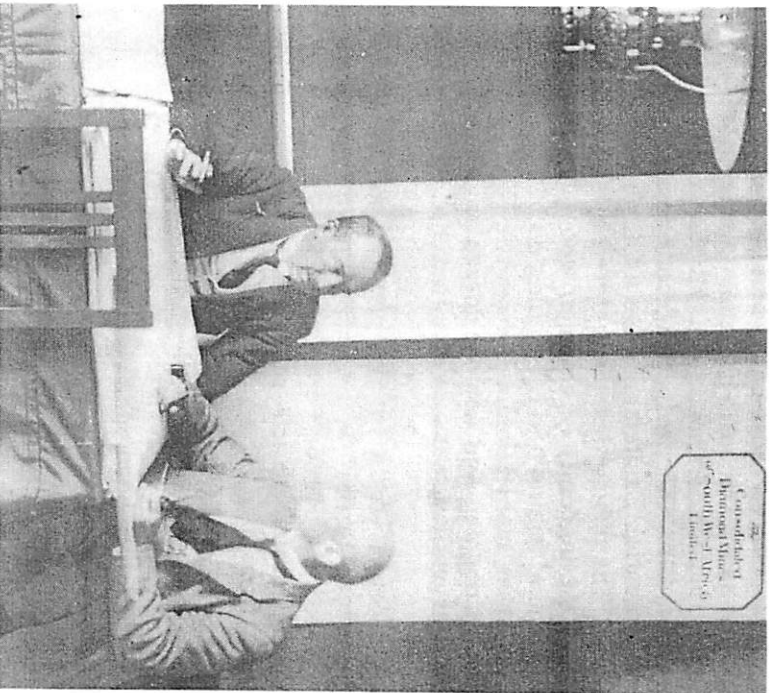
In the Luderitz area, diamond fever reached a high pitch. There were many small companies and the wealth was phenomenal. The various companies had searched beyond Kolmanskop into the heart of the desert. In 1908 Dr Dernberg was sent out from Germany to assess the area. As a result of his findings, the sole right to prospect and mine minerals was given to the colonial company, the Deutsche Koloniale Gesellschaft, in an area from the 20th south latitude in the north to the Orange River in the south and 100 kilometres east. This area was called the "Sperrgebiet", which means "the forbidden territory". Mining continued in a relatively haphazard manner, which was noted by Ernest Oppenheimer on his visit to the fields in 1914. Ernest wrote a comprehensive report after his visit.

In 1915 South West Africa fell into South African hands when Louis Botha's forces overran the country. An interesting discovery was made at this time in the diamond plants at Kolmanskop. According to Major W.J. Thompson's personal diary, he noticed that in the diamond separating plant all bearings in the dry-blowing plant were run in boxes containing graphite. This gave him the idea of applying graphite to the bolt action of his rifle, with excellent results. This was adopted by the regiment and later by all regiments - it was the first time graphite had been used by British troops for this purpose! Conditions were very harsh for the troops and diamonds took a back seat.

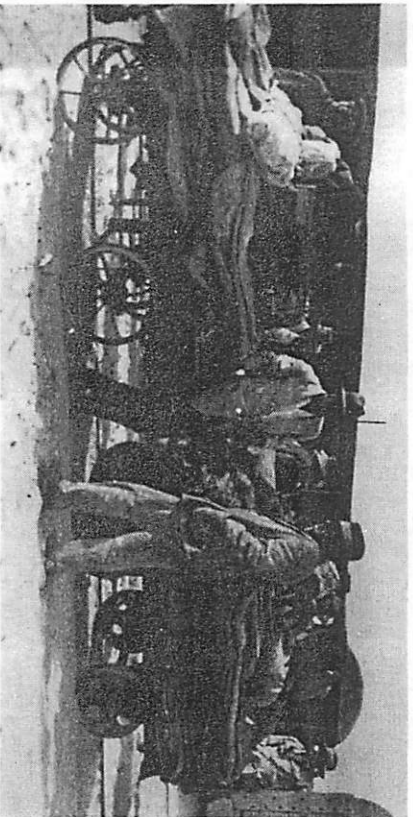
Oppenheimer alert to the ensuing situation, initiated negotiations and Consolidated Diamond Mines was born in February 1920. Anglo American, a very new organisation of which Sir Ernest was chairman, had the controlling interest.

The 1920's proved to be difficult for the fledgling company. There was a bad depression in 1921 when diamond sales dropped drastically and operations were discontinued to conserve resources. Diamonds, seized by the Soviet, had flooded the market as they were offered at practically any price. In 1922 there was a slight recovery with an increase in demand from the United States. Working conditions were hard and there were many technical problems. There was a shortage of Owambo workers and those who did arrive were found to be suffering from TB and scurvy. Epidemics of influenza were common and claimed many lives. The diamond market was continually being affected by world trends. In 1926, newly discovered alluvial fields at Lichtenberg and at Alexander Bay, south of the Orange River, flooded the market as there was no control on the sale of diamonds. The Union Government eventually passed a law to control production.

Meanwhile, the Anglo American geologists were prospecting on the northern side of the Orange. Under the auspices of Dr W. Beetz, rich deposits

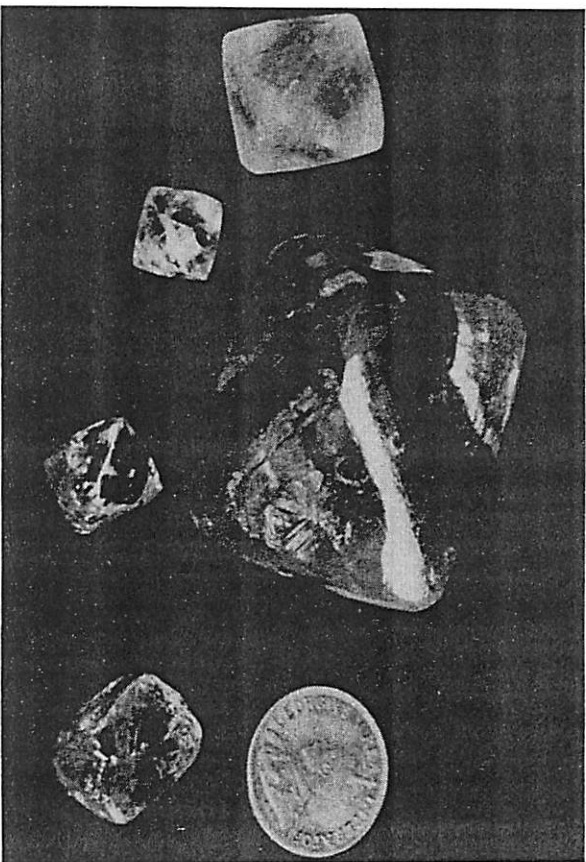


*Early CDM office (1920) (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

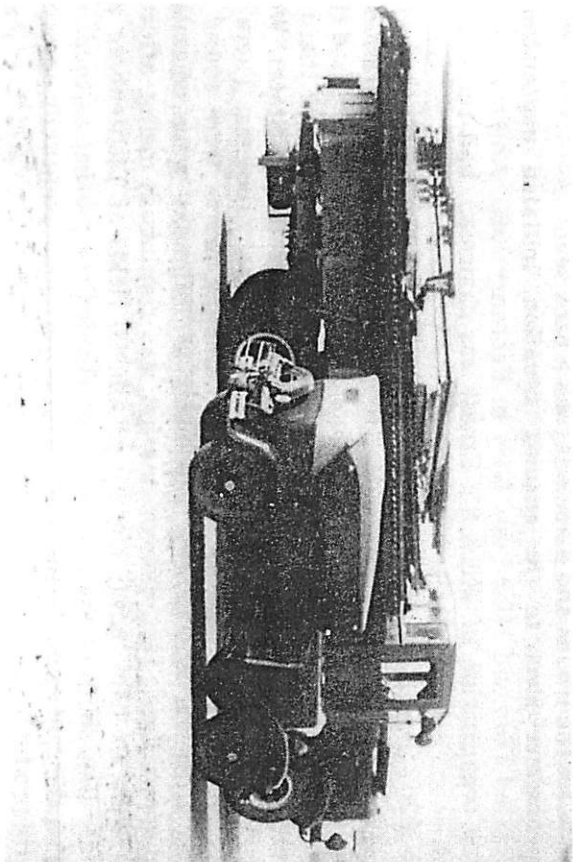


*Dr Beetz arriving at the Mouth (1928) (Photo Windhoek Archives)*





*A 246 carat diamond discovered at the Mouth (1928) (Photo CDM Windhoek)*



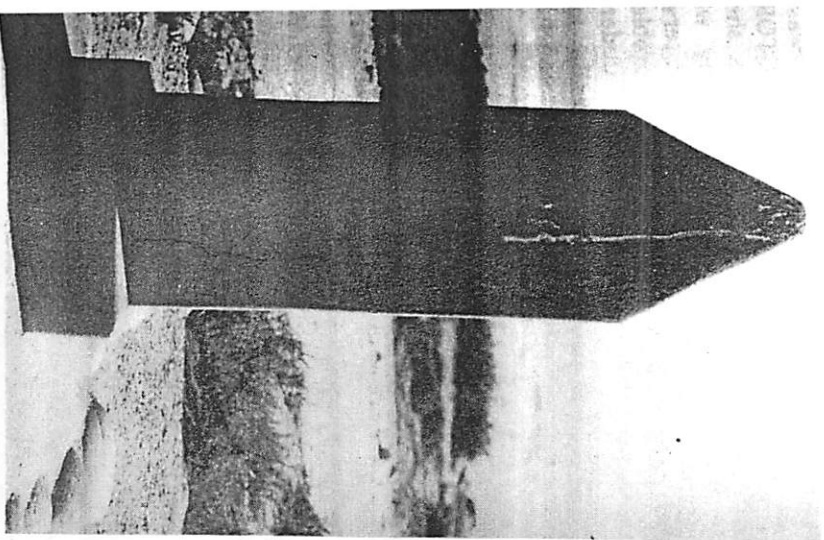
*Transport used in the early days (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

were discovered in marine terraces under blankets of sand. A temporary camp was set up with tin shacks and basic prospecting machinery in the form of hand operated jigs and trommels. Trenching was started and in the first washing 38 diamonds were found. As the prospecting continued, it was ascertained that there was great potential. Excitement rose as large diamonds of 246 and 116 carats were found. The difficulties encountered by the position of the deposits were overcome by the ingenuity of the men who were pioneers of their time. Previously, all diamond mining had been going on in the Kolmanskop, Elisabeth Bay and Pomona areas, many kilometres from the Orange mouth. Mining in the northern areas was ongoing and was considered to be the headquarters of the diamond operations until it was obvious that the Orange mouth was worth pursuing.

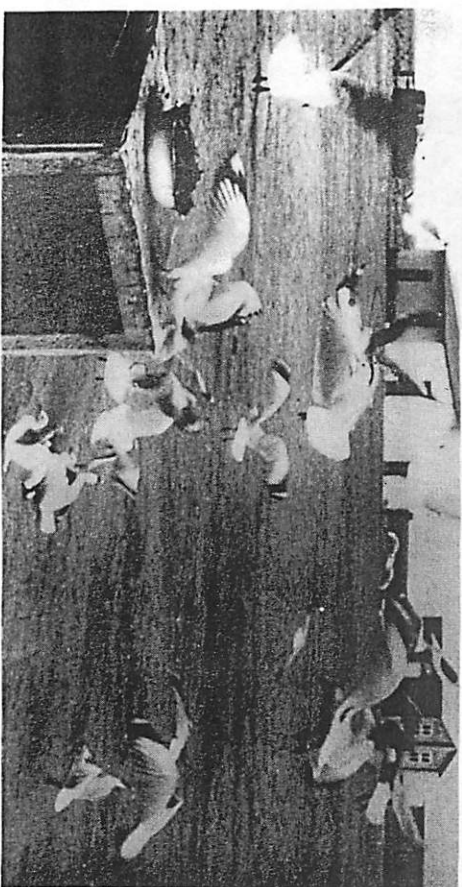
The trackless desert was a formidable obstacle. However, the men were undaunted. A motor "carrier" was constructed at the CDM workshops in Kolmanskop situated just outside Luderitz. Laden with drums of oil, petrol and water this rather unusual vehicle set forth into the hummocky sands and whistling winds. It kept to a line more or less parallel to the coast, zigzagging across the desert to keep to relatively hard ground. Frequently the vehicle came to a standstill, bogged down by soft sand and had to be dug out. Seven days after leaving Kolmanskop its weary, wind-blown crew reached the Orange River. A rudimentary road had been made and diesel lorries ploughed their way through deep sand dunes and corrugations to bring supplies to the camp. Demand exceeded supply and there was a constant cry for petrol and oil to keep the wheels turning. According to L. Green, in his book "To The River's End", one truck which was purchased in 1932 covered more than a million miles by 1948!

Supplies were augmented from "across the river" on a flat-bottomed pontoon propelled by using long poles. In the beginning, Ovambo wagon transport had to walk 135 miles from Pomona to the Orange Mouth taking 7 days. It was far too rough for the women to be allowed south of Bogenfels so the men were allowed to visit home approximately once a month. Protection against the wind was more or less non-existent. The men stooped and hid behind the machines to get some respite from the abrasive sand. Some home comforts were vital so a system, peculiar to Oranjemund, was started. Large, sturdy "wash-boxes", about the size of suitcases were used to alleviate the problems arising from the rudimentary camp. Every week, the men would pack their dirty linen, clothes to be repaired and other personal items in the boxes and these would be transported to their wives either in Elisabeth Bay or Kolmanskop and later to Pomona. The boxes would be returned full of goodies and perhaps a well hidden bottle of liquor to add some cheer. Liquor was strictly forbidden at the camp!

However, the excitement was shortlived as the diamond market was tormented by outside problems. In the latter half of 1929 the American Wall



*Relics of the survey ship "Mowe" next to the beach (1912) (Photo I. Corbett)*



*Seagulls at the early mess (1935) (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

Street crash struck the diamond trade. The depression continued through the early thirties and extreme difficulties were experienced by all. Retrenchment began with 250 whites and 3000 blacks finding themselves with no work. The company tried to keep people on where it could, offering half salaries and basic conditions. Throughout the world people were starving, jobless and homeless and any employment was a blessing. Some folk subsisted on fish, not knowing when the next meal would be. Elisabeth Bay and Kolmanskop were closed and a skeleton staff remained to do maintenance work. Mining activity in the vicinity of the Orange River continued on a very minor scale.

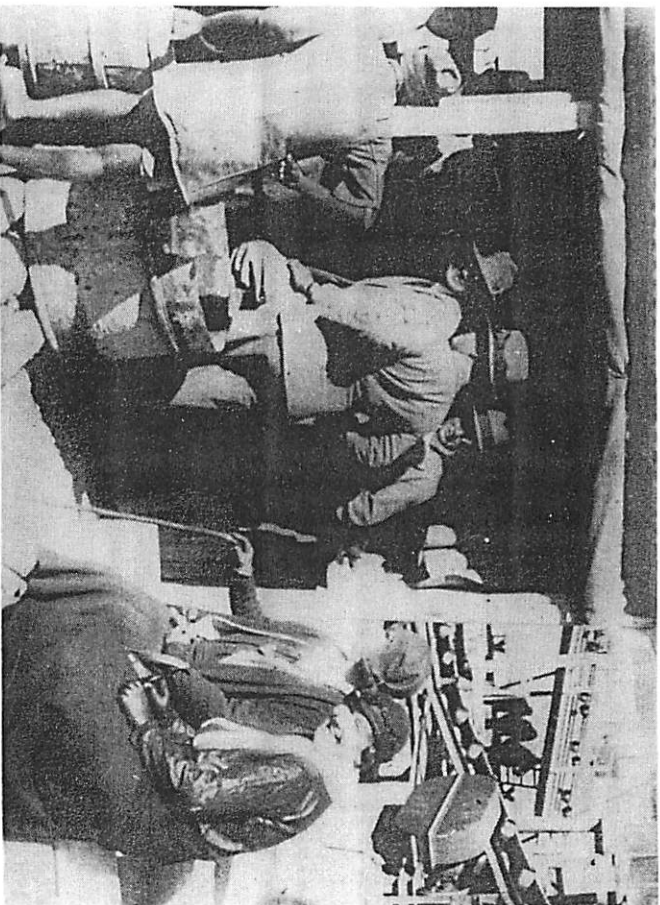
It was in 1933, when Wilhelm Kaiser was walking along the banks of the Orange, that he found relics of the survey ship "Mowe", which had apparently been in the vicinity in 1912. He collected the relics and insisted that a monument be erected. This was duly done close to the river.

At last, by the end of 1934, there was a glimmer of hope as markets began to improve. In January 1935 operations, on a minor scale, began in Area G and in August 1935, a small recovery plant was put into operation at Bogenfels. By 1936 rough buildings had been established and marked the inauspicious beginnings of *Oranjemund*! Although the old-timers knew the area as Oranjemund it officially adopted the name Orange River Mouth in 1930. This led to many years of postal and rail confusion as mail and other goods were invariably sent to the Orange River station in the Northern Capel. In 1940 the "River" was dropped and it became the Orange Mouth. Oranjemund became official in April 1951.

Fifty wooden "pondoks" had been erected and a shed served as a mess. From early times, the mess was divided into two sections. One section was for the "daily paids" who were predominantly contractors and artisans and the other section was for the "beampten" (officials). The staff dining room adhered to strict etiquette; no-one sat down before the Sectional Manager did, nor did anyone dare to smoke before he lit his cigarette! The men were coerced into laughing at his jokes regardless of their degree of hilarity. When one left the table it was not without a bow and the due apologies. The food was good and plentiful, this was vital since the men worked from sun up to sun down. A flock of seagulls were constant visitors to the mess each morning. They became quite used to humans and would provide entertainment by catching in mid-air the tibbits thrown to them. According to Mr Pat Honeyborne, the numbers reduced considerably when a bright spark rolled beecham pills in bread pellets and shot them into the air for the seagulls to catch.

A small mudbrick building served as the main offices because Luderitz was still the headquarters of the operations and the General Manager resided in Luderitz. A two-roomed mudbrick building housed the Section



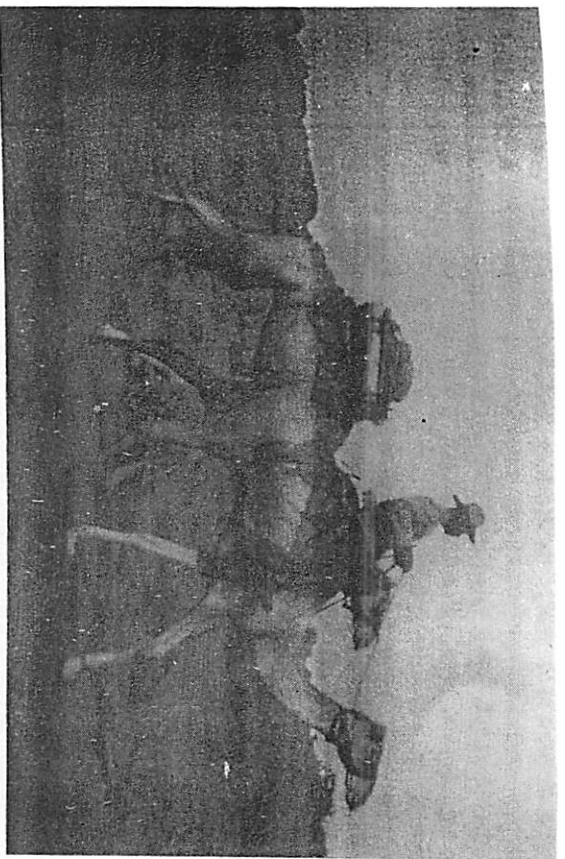


*The first women to visit the Orange Mouth (1932) (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

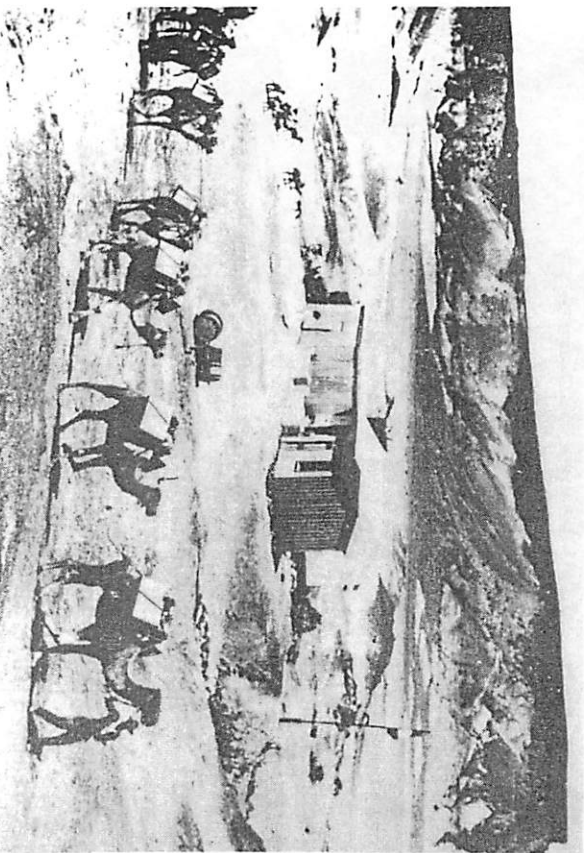
Manager and in an even smaller building lived the doctor. There was a primitive butcher shop and a corrugated iron building bore the word STORE. In the store one could buy the basic requirements like tobacco, soap, shoes and other necessities. There was another corrugated iron building with windows which were high up against the roof, German style, and this served as the hospital. No operations were performed and if there was a problem the patient was transported in a 5 ton lorry over the sandy road to Luderitz - if you survived that you would survive anything! Consequently the men took pains not to become sick and as one "old timer" put it, "we didn't have time to be ill."

The Owambos were also housed in a collection of ponds. The permanent workmen lived in a long shed east of the mess which was known as "the Bull's Convent". The rooms were poky and badly ventilated which meant that on east weather days, when fine dust fills the air, the men suffered horribly. As you went up in stature so did your accommodation. More senior men were housed in wooden ponds, usually two to a shack. Of course ablution facilities were more or less non-existent in the early days and a bucket of cold water from the drinking troughs served for washing requirements. If one had a primus stove you could even have a hot bath. Later the company constructed four baths and four showers where the present bakery is situated. At 6 o'clock, residents gathered for a chat and bath! Home comforts were rough and ready, paraffin lamps were used by the men and to find a rusty nail was exciting as it could be used to hang clothes or fix furniture. A paraffin case was also a sought after possession as it was a useful chair, table or cupboard. All materials, men and draught animals had to be transported from the northern areas as there was no crossing over the Orange River except by barge.

On a Friday night, after work, small groups of men could be seen making their way slowly to the building that was used as a "post office". Chatter rose above the howling wind and laughter echoed over the nothingness. Small glows of cigarettes lit the sky and the week's happenings were discussed and debated. Gradually a hush came over the men and suddenly shout electrified the air, "There's the lights, can you see them?" It was post night and the lorry lights could sometimes be seen over an hour away. A anxious, excited burble filled the air as the men's anticipation of receiving mail rose. The standing rule was that if the lorry arrived before 10 o'clock the post would be sorted that night, otherwise they would have to wait until the following day. The inevitable question was banded about, "Who is driving tonight?" "If it was Hermann he was sure to be in good time. If it was Fidi he might just make it but if it was Willi, we might as well give up. At last the lorry arrived and the mail was sorted and handed back across the crowds of men. The first post boxes were established in 1947. The post



*Early camel patrols (Photo CDM Windhoek)*



*An early camel station (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

office was then housed where the bottle store stands today. The boxes were not locked! Huddled in their coats with their hands up to protect themselves from the wind, they hurried back to their little homes to immerse themselves in the paradise of contact with the outside world. This was the men's only link with their families and friends and allowed them to hold onto reality.

There was a radio station north of the camp which linked them with Luderitz but it was used solely in the internal interests of the company. Orders for the mine as well as the hiring and firing of personnel came by radio from the head office in Luderitz. It was only in 1944 that some form of internal telephone system was installed. The General Manager had a phone installed in his residence in 1948.

Almost from the beginning, the Administration of South West Africa established a police post at the Orange River which formed an integral part of the community. The men used to patrol the area on camels and were sometimes mounted for ten days at a time. The area they covered was huge and their duties were rather broad. Mr Honeyborne who was stationed at Oranjemund at the time, described the difficulty they had in sheltering the camels from the heavy mists. Corrugated iron and timber were not commonly found commodities. So, necessity being the mother of invention, they transported wild tobacco trees growing by the Orange and tied these together with baling wire from the lucerne bales! This framework was covered with flattened out cement drums, holes were punched into the drums and laced onto the framework and the camels had a serviceable shelter. These men had to accompany the barge as it crossed the Orange. This was often a hazardous occupation as frequently the barge would get stuck on a sandbank and they would have to get off and push arriving at the other side covered in mud! The barge was used to transport animals, materials and humans. Owambos were stationed at each side to carry the men, women and children to the barge without getting their feet wet!

It is fascinating to study the "Conditions of Work" document of the early days. Conditions were harsh in comparison with today's standards and yet the men were content and happy. Considering the world trends at the time and the difficulties the company was experiencing, the conditions offered were often better than could be found elsewhere.

"The standard working hours shall be 54 per week at the working place. The time in going to and returning from his work shall not be counted by a workman in calculating the number of hours worked per week." Overtime then was paid for as straight time EXCEPT between 10pm and 6am and on Sundays when time and one half basic rates were paid. It was assumed that all workers would naturally work overtime and the order of the day was to rise when the sun did and finish when the sun went down. Frequently the men were called upon to work until 11 o'clock at night and they accepted it



as part of their job. Indeed to many in the very early days, prior to the women being allowed at the Orange River, it provided them with something to do. Basil Smith who started life in Oranjemund as an "appy" in 1942 said he spent his leisure time "mostly working overtime! I never had one Sunday off for about 6 months when I was in my first year as an apprentice electrician - my rate of pay was two shillings and sixpence per eight hour shift."

The rates of pay have changed substantially. The artisans started at 16 shillings per shift and the unskilled employees started at 13 shillings per shift. The salaries rose according to the amount of time worked. The expenses one encountered were relatively few. Electric current was supplied free up to 20 units per month, thereafter a charge of 1 shilling was made. Mess rooms were provided and the company contributed 10 pounds a month and any other expenses incurred had to be borne by the employee. The employees and their families were given one free trip to Luderitzbucht every three months. "The workmen shall not be entitled to the free conveyance of alcoholic liquor." On the mine fields where there was a shortage of women and recreational facilities, alcoholism was obviously a problem the company had to deal with. Consequently they were quite severe. "Drunkness - will give the Company the right to discharge a workman immediately without first giving notice." Considering the lack of shopping facilities and the different values the men held, one was able to save quite a bit.

Leave was obviously not considered to be too important and the workers really had to earn their days off! The annual leave on full pay was allocated as follows:

- After 1 year uninterrupted employment - 5 days
- After 2 years uninterrupted employment - 6 days
- After 3 years uninterrupted employment - 7 days
- After 4 years uninterrupted employment - 8 days
- After 5 years uninterrupted employment - 9 days

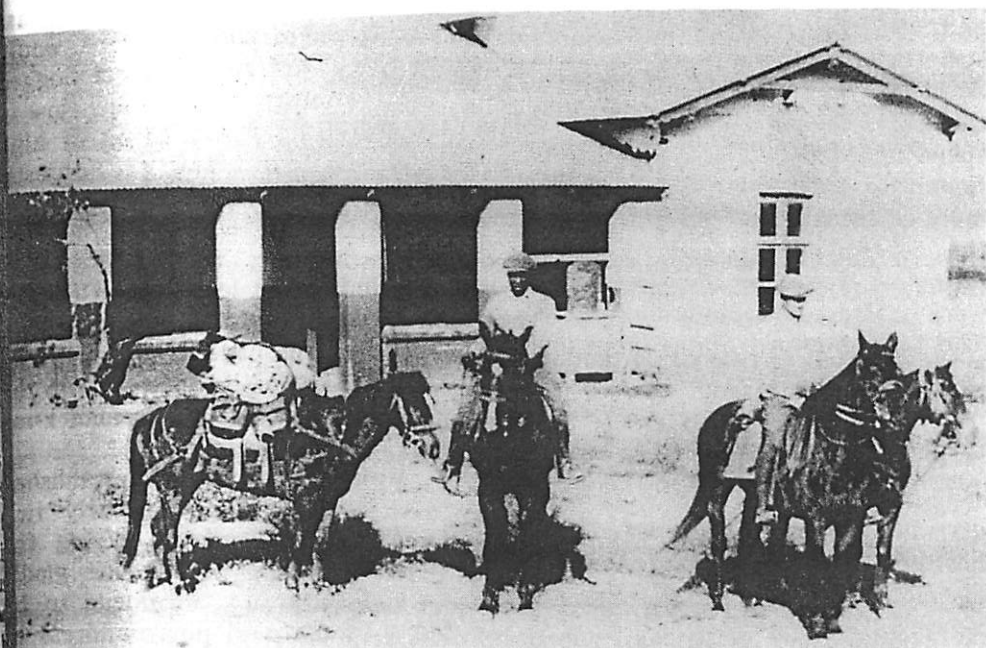
A maximum of 30 days could be accumulated if one could survive 5 years with no leave! However, "A workman shall not be entitled to any compensation for any leave which he may have to forgo by having allowed his leave to accumulate to a total of more than thirty days." As the years passed the Company made the necessary adjustments to the conditions of work to fit in with the changing times and values.

Prior to 1935 it was still decreed that no women should be allowed south of Bogenfels. The Section Manager and his assistant had obtained permission for their wives to live at Hohenfels which was the nearest point any woman was allowed to Oranjemund at that time. Hohenfels, which is situated some 20 kilometres up the river, was built by the German military authorities in 1908. It was used as a frontier post to guard their southern

boundary. It was a stately, castle-like building and was erected on a rock outcrop commanding an excellent view of the surrounds. A beautiful garden had been planned with lovely trees. However, no-one would live in it! The section manager and his assistant soon found out why. Their wife complained of opening and shutting doors and weird noises at night. Carpenters were sent out to secure the locks and doors and could find nothing wrong. Matters continued to get worse until the men received an ultimatum from their wives; either they provide transport to return the ladies to Luderitz or the gallant ladies would walk! The house was obviously haunted. Other stories substantiated the wives fears. The surrounding Namaqualanders had apparently spotted a headless female apparition flitting about on moonlit nights. The Hottentots had seen a huge snake with a diamond embedded in its head. According to Mr Honeyborne, a Namaqualand family had tried living in the house. He spoke to the van Zyl family who had been one of its tenants. Apparently, one afternoon their year old daughter was ironing and saw a uniformed rider on his way up the house. She called to her mother as these visits were social occasions. Her mother went up to her daughter as she hadn't heard the horse approaching. On reaching her, she found Martha in a faint on the floor. When she questioned her daughter, apparently she had looked up from her ironing seen a "hideous, mutilated face of a coloured woman peering at her through the window" and immediately fainted. On investigation no trace or spot could be found.

The ghost did not appear to be discriminatory in her choice of victims! On one patrol, Mr Honeyborne and Sergeant Eaton had gone to fetch a new recruit, one Petrus Julius who knew nothing of the history of the house. They camped at Hohenfels among the trees and below the building. At 4 a.m. Petrus could be seen huddled by the fire, fully clothed. He refused to go near the stables under any circumstances, even when threatened with being fired. After coaxing him to answer questions it came out that he had seen a headless woman, walking on air about the house!

Apparently, as the story goes, in 1908 after the building was built German Wachmeister and a corporal were stationed there to patrol the area. The wife of the Wachmeister came out to join him with their 7 year old daughter. Apart from the monthly camel patrol they saw no other people and it must have been an awfully lonely life for them. The wife was extremely lonely and died in childbirth the year after she arrived. The father sent his daughter away to school in Namaqualand and then on to a convent in the Cape. On her annual return trip home in 1914, the fifteen year old daughter realized that all was not as it should be at home. The Hottentot housekeeper had obviously risen above the call of duty and was more than housekeeper to her father. While the Wachmeister was out one day the



*Hohenfels - is it haunted? (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

housekeeper and the daughter had a difference of opinion. The daughter, not being able to stand the fact that her authority had been usurped, went into her father's study, removed his revolver and killed the Hottentot woman. It is allegedly the ghost of this woman who haunts the house. Thus it is not surprising that the company hurried to provide married accomodation in Oranjemund!

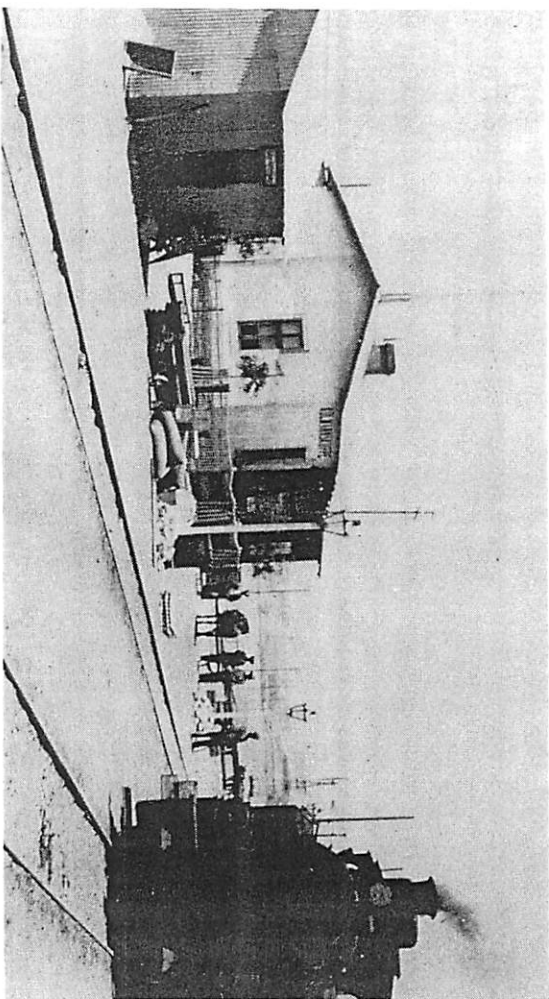
In 1937 there was some married accomodation, dwellings that had been shipped out from Germany and erected on site. The houses were brightly painted and the Mine Manager's house still stands today and is in the process of being converted into a museum - Jasper House. A store building was erected. There were 320 Permanents and 2619 Migrants in the mine area and community life began. A power station had been erected which made the mining operations a little easier. There was still not a tree in sight in the township, the wind howled and whipped up against your body. Everyone walked with bent legs to try and protect themselves from the elements. The men worked hard and arrived deadbeat in the evenings. The few women were kept constantly busy coping with the ongoing battle of the sand. Paraffin stoves which billowed with black smoke made cooking a challenging task! The bakery, butchery and store provided the necessities and luxuries weren't really considered. There was only fresh milk available for pregnant women or hospital patients. The little community lived like one big happy family, providing companionship and love for each other. The highlight of the week was still definitely Fridays. At about 6 o'clock, families pulling prams through deep sand, with picnic boxes and liquid refreshments slowly made their way to the building that was used as a "post office". The post was still their only contact with the outside world. Newspapers less than a week old were unheard of so the families were kept current by their mail. Clutching their precious letters the families would hurriedly make their way back to their pondoks to make it before the lights went out at 10 pm, thereafter candlelight would suffice.

Mrs Lisa Salchow recalls that security was not very strict. There were prospecting trenches in town and in 1938 she picked up a diamond at the shooting range. When her father took her to hand it in at the Mine Manager's house, she was rewarded with a cookie from the crystal biscuit barrel!

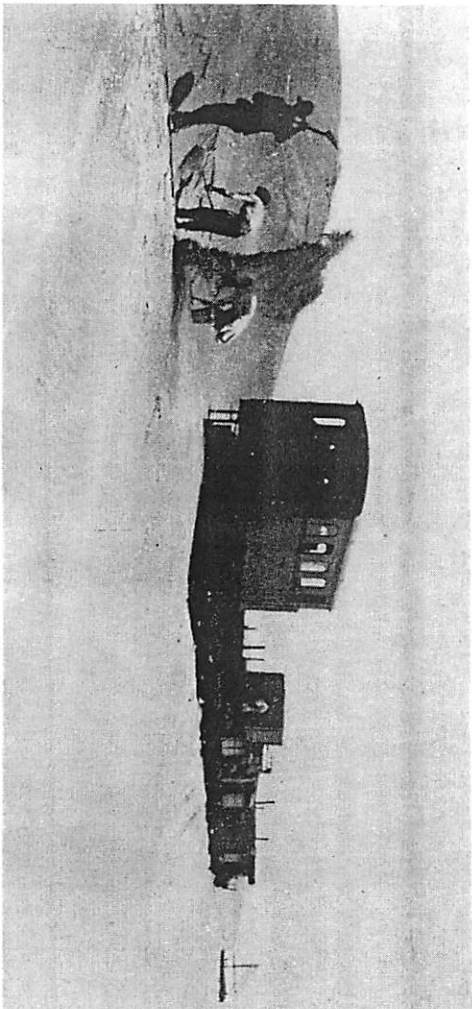
She also remembers that Mr Pheipher had the only private car in Oranjemund. This vehicle was also used as an ambulance. When a woman was due to have her baby, the dutiful husband would borrow the keys and take her to the hospital where she would have to clamber over the sides as the doors didn't open!

The only entrance to the town was via Luderitz and security was necessarily strict. It was a closed town so no private articles could be taken





*The Kolmanskop station - last stop before the diamond fields (Photo Windhoek Archives)*



*The train to Pomona - sand was a hazard (Photo Windhoek Archives)*

out of the town. Those folk lucky enough to have cars had to park them in garages at Swartkop (beyond the main gate) and were allowed to go and service them once a month. There were very few company vehicles - by 1948 there were 19 in total - so most people used "shank's pony" (by foot)!

A trip to Luderitz or going on holiday constituted a major expedition. Cases were packed with care as they would all be scrutinized by the security department. Picnic baskets were packed as the journey would take a day at least. The families would clamber into the lorries with cushions to alleviate some of the discomfort and off they would set amidst much excitement. Gradually their little pondoks would fade from view and the tussocky grass and sand dunes filled their path. Herds of gemsbok and springbok would sometimes obstruct their way and at times the old lorry would get bogged down by sand. If it was windy, the wives and children would crouch low in the lorry to try and lessen the pinpricks of sand hurtling along at high speeds. At last the road branched off to the coast and the majestic Bogenfels rock came into view with the little houses tucked away, hidden more often than not by the swirling mist. The road wound down parallel to the coast, through nondescript scenery. Occasional rock sculptures came into view eroded by the awesome sand-laden wind. Relics left by the Germans were scattered throughout the area and the cairns highlighted the skyline. The lorry bumped along manoeuvring carefully over little sand dunes and rocks, it was not a journey for people with fragile constitutions! At last the lorry climbed the last hill and there in the distance was the Pomona x-ray station and community.

Pomona, named after the Goddess of fruitfulness, was an established community with a fully equipped treatment plant and extremely rich diamond deposit. A railway network ran through the area defying the hostility of the natural conditions. At the x-ray station everyone gladly disembarked from the lorry and took their position in the queue to be x-rayed. A tin shed was provided where one was expected to undress in underwear and don a white coat. Hair pins had to be taken out as they showed on the x-ray plates. Thus ladies with the long hair in vogue at the time had considerable difficulties trying to re-establish their coiffure in a 6 km wind! The people were required to lie on a cold table and take a deep breath which they were required to hold until told they could breathe. While the performance was over, no-one was allowed to dress until the picture had been developed! Needless to say it was a long and involved procedure and one which was to continue until the x-ray unit was moved to Oranjemund and more modern equipment installed!

At last, when everyone had been checked, they returned to the lorry and continued on their journey to Luderitz. It was a rather time-consuming and uncomfortable way to start a holiday but no-one gave the discomfort much



*Early river transport (Photo T.McNally)*



*A monument to Eberlanz (1937) (Photo I.Corbett)*

thought.

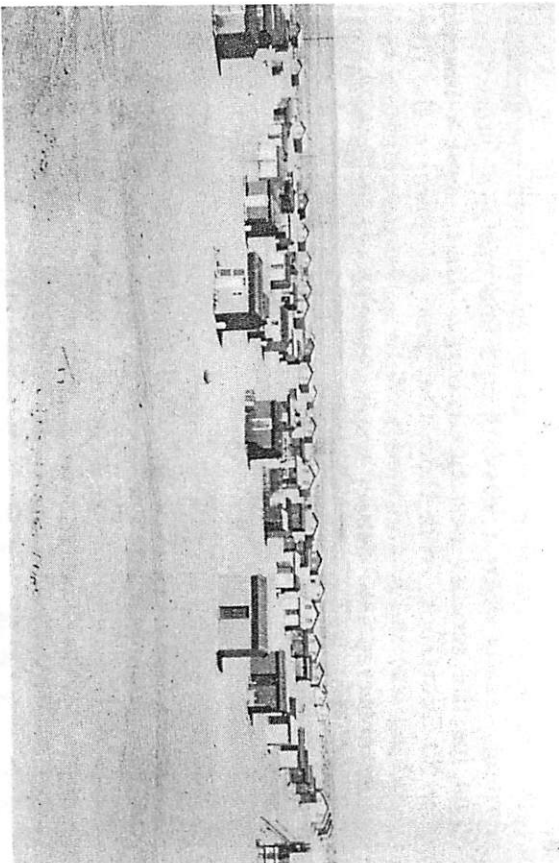
The other mode of transport was to be found over the Orange River. Every morning, usually when it was still cold and misty, a "protection bloke" (early name for the security personnel), barge "driver" and a few migrants were driven to Swartkops. From there they trudged down to the river bank where everything was slushy and muddy. With active participation by all, the barge was manoeuvred into deeper water and the crossings began. Human, animal and industrial cargo was transported several times a day. Frequently the barge would hit a sand bank and the "crew" would have to clamber out to push the barge into deeper water. On some days when the wind was high and the water turbulent, waves lapped against the side of the boat and soaked the passengers who arrived clammy and cold at the other side. Occasionally mule-cart transport was used to cross the river when it was low. Mules were commonly used in the mine area prior to the war. In this way, before 1950, some supplies reached the little Orange River community.

The Orange River, turbulent and dangerous at times has claimed a few lives over the years. On St Valentines day in 1937 it proved treacherous. Kurt Eberlanz, aged 30, and an all-round sportsman actively involved himself with Oranjemund residents in the sports line. He encouraged young people to train in all sports. He saw one of his pupils in difficulties in the river and he unhesitatingly went to his assistance and saved his life. Unfortunately the river was running fast and overcome by his exertions, he was swept out to sea not to be seen again. A fitting monument near the river mouth bears his name.

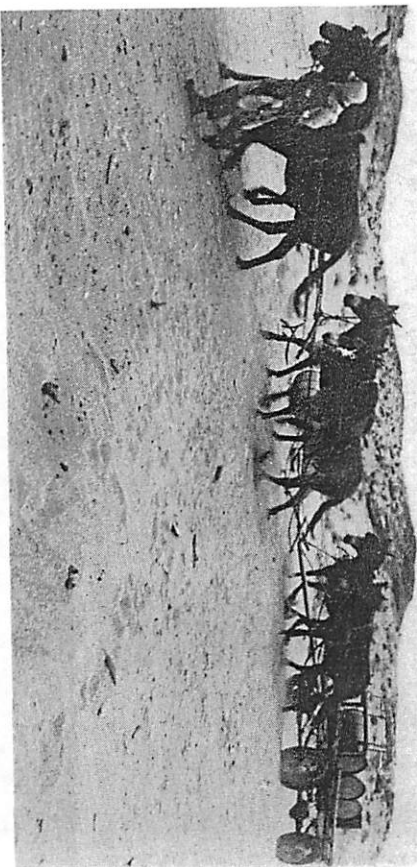
Towards the end of 1937 the diamond market began to decline. Europe was in turmoil and there was a serious trade recession in America. Once again, the little Orange River community was going to be plagued by world trends. As the decline continued, output from the mines was curtailed and the numbers of permanent and migrant labour reduced. Political tension in Europe grew and the sales of diamonds declined accordingly. All production ceased and a skeleton staff remained for maintenance purposes. The Second World War broke out in 1939 and for a while all sales ceased. Only 122 permanent employees and 449 migrant labourers remained.

Even in these turbulent times, diamonds didn't lose their grandeur. There was an exhibit of diamonds in New York where one and a quarter million visitors exclaimed over their beauty and it aroused great interest among the American public. As a result, it was decided to initiate a dignified advertising and publicity campaign which resulted in the increase of sales. It was the beginning of De Beers long association with NW Ayer Advertising, based in New York. Diamond sales had been decreasing and De Beers wanted to know if the situation could be checked. The Ayer firm did several surveys and then embarked on an intensive marketing project that went from





*Oranjemund - 1940 Photo CDM*



*Mules were used to deliver water and collect rubbish (Photo T. McNally)*

strength to strength and is ongoing today.

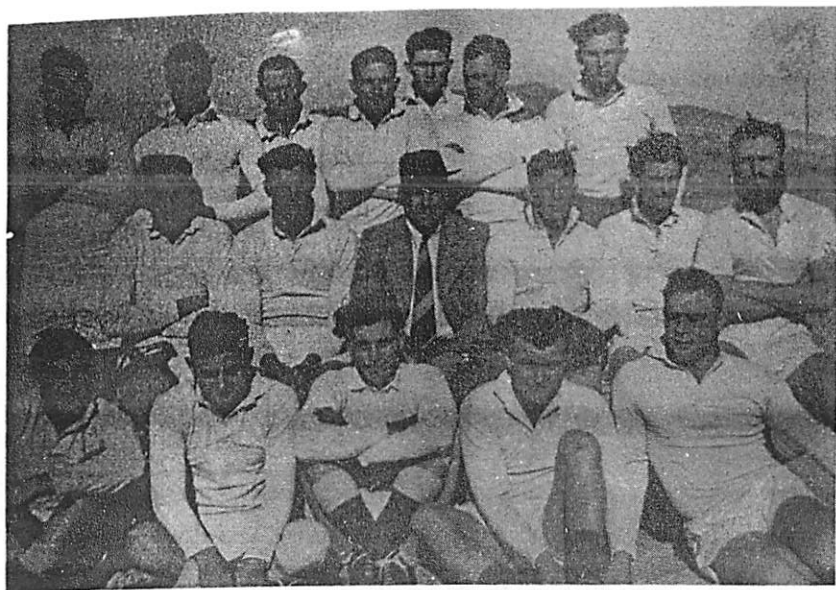
It was round about this time that a rather intriguing incident took place at the Orange mouth. Captain D.C.T. Bennett, in the aircraft Mercury touched down near Oranjemund on the 8 October 1938, having just broken the world seaplane distance record! British aircraft engineers were trying to discover a way of making flying non-stop across the Atlantic a commercial proposition. By the mid-thirties, only airships had flown commercially across the Atlantic. The method chosen was to have a small seaplane carrying sufficient fuel for the trip. But it was to be borne aloft on the back of a flying boat. The trip went well except that there was insufficient fuel to get to Cape Town and so Bennett put Mercury down in the Orange River Estuary after flying 9 652 kilometres in 42 hours 5 minutes from separation! Drums were floated out and Bennett then took Mercury to Cape Town. Local residents were excited at witnessing the epic voyage!

By 1938, a small school with 12 children had begun. The children were of differing ages so teaching was a real challenge. The school room was a small pondok! A far cry from today's beautifully equipped Oranjemund Private School.

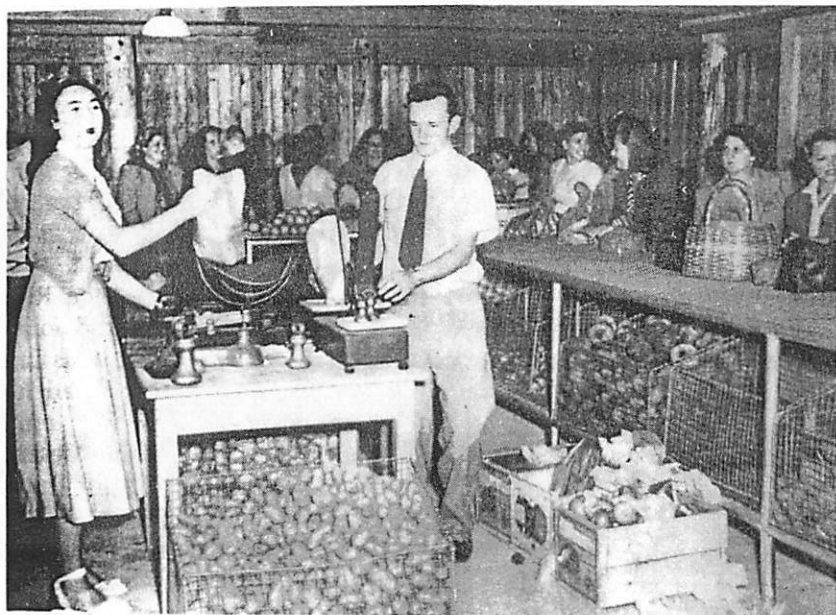
Although there weren't too many people in Oranjemund at this time development of the town continued. The recreation club was completely furnished and equipped and the fencing around the area was finished. The security in those days was known as the Diamond Detective Department and new quarters were built for them. During the war years there was a shortage of skilled labour as most young men had enlisted or been interned. Mining operations continued on a small scale in Area "G" and better facilities were added to the town. In 1941 it was decided that since most of the interest was now in the southern regions, the mine office should be moved from Luderitz to Oranjemund and the General Manager should take up residence in Oranjemund. The building of such a residence began along with improvements to other buildings.

Community life was beginning to take real shape. Although there was no church building the "hall" was used for most occasions and the different religions made arrangements in private homes. Once a month various ministers came down to take church services. The first club to be established was the tennis club in 1943. Indeed Oranjemund's only outstanding feature in the 1940's were the old power station and one hard tennis court. As there was only one tree in the area at the time tennis must have been an extremely challenging game amidst dust and swirling winds.

At the hospital in 1943 there was a doctor, Dr Behne and 2 permanent sisters, Hilda Starke and Ursula Kahle. The first baby known to be born in Oranjemund was Dr Behne's. Miss Starke married Fritz Heiser. The sisters often had to work day and night shifts. A library run by volunteers was



*1949 rugby team (Photo The late Frans Schneider)*



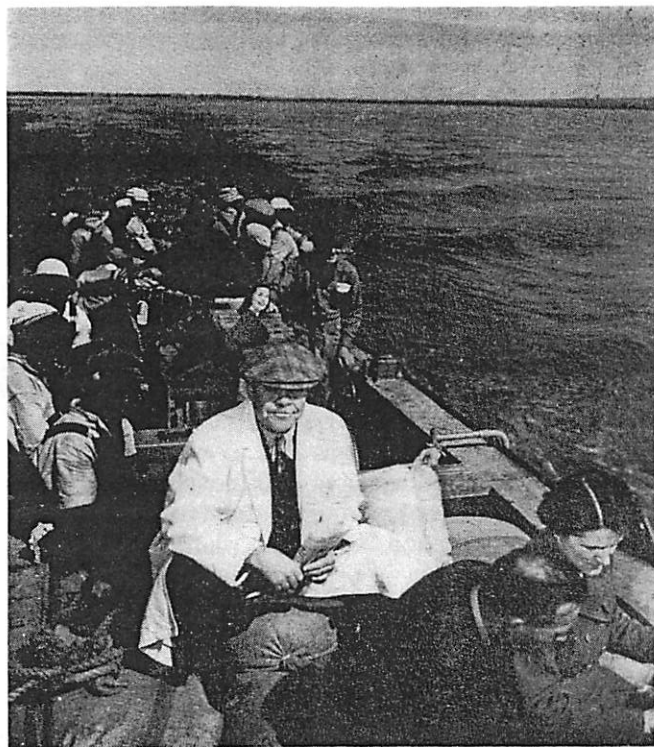
*Early vegetable market (Photo T. McNally)*

opened in 1944 and was extremely popular as there was no television, videos or even telephones to occupy one's time. There was, however, approximately three hours of listening to a very crackly reception on the radio!

The cricket club was founded in 1946, with the late W. Anderson and "Vennie" Venske being the prime movers. Anderson was known as the Father of Sport in Oranjemund. The first grass rugby field was named after him. According to the late Frans Schneider, rugby in the forties was quite an occasion. No teams were allowed to visit Oranjemund so all the games were played at Alexander Bay. The rugby team would meet where the current x-ray unit is today, and would strip to undergo the necessary x-rays and security search. Climbing into a lorry, usually without any back, they headed off to where the pump station is at Swartkops. There they offloaded all their paraphernalia and gingerly clambered into a donkey wagon which would transport them to the river's edge. They would jump onto the barge and pray for good weather or else they would get soaked! Arriving at the other side, they went to Alexander Bay - the spirit already high. After the game, each man had to pay 2/6d, a lot of money in those days, to Pop Anderson. This would buy brandy and beer. Singing in high, festive voices they would begin their voyage back to the Orange Mouth! The cricket club had rather inauspicious beginnings with borrowed gear and a sandy pitch where the dry cleaning depot now stands. Their chequered history continued in the 50's! From there the potential Vince van der Byl's moved to the river banks where they had a pitch parallel to the river. The cricket pitch was washed away and was then moved to its present site. It is possibly the only ground in the world where a dust storm actually brought play to a standstill! According to Ivan Morrow, the site was levelled and hard padded, with a matting wicket. The fierce wind blew the mat away and the dust made it impossible to play. The soccer and boxing club were started in 1947. They were popular sports. Any travelling that was done went via Luderitz.

Housewives had no problem with choice in the forties as there was none! The store had the basic essentials and shopping was virtually an all day affair as there was no self-service. One would take one's place on the benches and chat to get up to date with any news about. Gradually your turn would come and it was your chance to give your list to the shop assistant who in turn would collect up your things. Invariably there would be things "on order"! The grocery list would then be laboriously added up - by hand of course - and then checked. Finally you could pay and receive your change. It was then time to go to the butchery and the same procedure would begin again. Many hours later, with screaming kiddies under one arm and the trolley handle under the other you would start laboriously pulling the trolley through the thick sand. With the wind whipping against your legs and sand obliterating your vision, the trip home often seemed interminable.





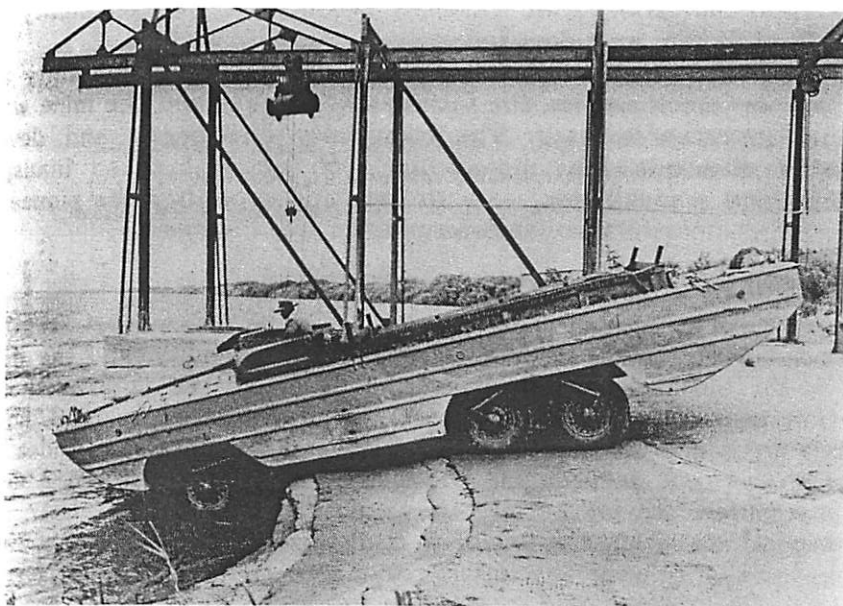
*The barge used to transport people (Photo T. McNally)*

However, as most people were in the same situation it didn't seem to matter. A housewife in the early days had to have a tenacious nature! Apart from antiquated stoves which billowed out black smoke, the only known form of refrigeration was a cool chest which was packed with charcoal on three sides and "the slight drip from a ten gallon tin was the cherry on the top" as George Lovett, a former Oranjemunder described it! Shortages and a flooded Orange River ensured that plenty of necessities were "on order"! There was a vegetable garden at Swartkops where fresh vegetables were grown for the community. When the river flooded, bouncy orange carrots and other delicacies could be seen bobbing down the river out to the frolics seals in the Atlantic ocean. No doubt they developed superb night vision! Mule-drawn carts were used to remove household rubbish twice a week. A rather comical sight occurred when the consultants were down from Johannesburg. The township officer used an official van and had many willing helpers brandishing braai forks to pick up the paper rubbish which was blown about by the wind!

In 1942 there were only two single girls on the property who worked in the grocery shop and were greatly sought after by the many single men. There were often parties held and great fun was had by all. There was one pub in the Rec Club which was frequented by the men solving the world's problems. One of the barmen was known as "Old Pop Porter" and he took no notice of the rowdy men, he would counteract their orders with "The more you bamboozle me the less you get to drink!" A great camaraderie existed between them all. Films were shown in the hall, everyone brought their own cushions and chairs and found a place where they could see satisfactorily. The machinery frequently broke down and folk would find themselves wandering home rather later than anticipated. The Christmas tree party was started by Mrs McHardy, wife of the General Manager, with a total of 56 children. It soon became the highlight of the year as it still is today.

Although transport was in short supply, visits to the Orange River were always exciting. The company used to provide an open-backed lorry which would transport people down to the Orange River over week ends under the supervision of the DDD. The damming of the Orange River had not been considered so flooding was a frequent occurrence. The river provided a sanctuary for many animals and birds from the harsh Namib desert. Many islands were covered with shrubs, and grass provided grazing for the herds of wild horses (left over from police patrol days) and wild donkeys.

The reeds provided a perfect breeding home for a variety of birds. Wading birds were most common, including the Purple Gallinule, a wonderful bird with ornate colouring. Several varieties of geese could be seen flying overhead the area. Pelicans and flamingoes tiptoed through the river



*Sophisticated river transport - the DUKW (Photo T. McNally)*

gobbling any unsuspecting fish in their path. Closer to the mouth terns and commorants flew in perfect formation as they skimmed the waves of the mighty Atlantic.

Families would enjoy the river for fishing, picnics and a change of environment. In the late 40's the company purchased DUKW's (wartime amphibious landing craft) to transport cargo across the river. In 1944, a new house was built for the General Manager, (now the AGM's house-32-6th Ave.). This heralded the change to brick homes. In 1945 there were 55 houses in the Orange Mouth community and only 12 permanents were employed in town, the rest worked on the mine. The town was always expanding, as the community grew more permanent it was necessary to make changes to the temporary building structures. On November 5th 1947, three men landed on an airstrip in Oranjemund to complete a contract to build 18 brick houses. They were from a Pretoria based firm under the auspices of John Rumble. The three pioneers were Mr "Boet" Bothman, Mr Herman Bosman and Mr George van der Merwe. Building operations were severely hampered with post-war shortages, difficulties in transporting of material and labour problems. At last the first house was completed at 24 - 4th Avenue. Gradually more houses were built and the wooden pondoks became obsolete.

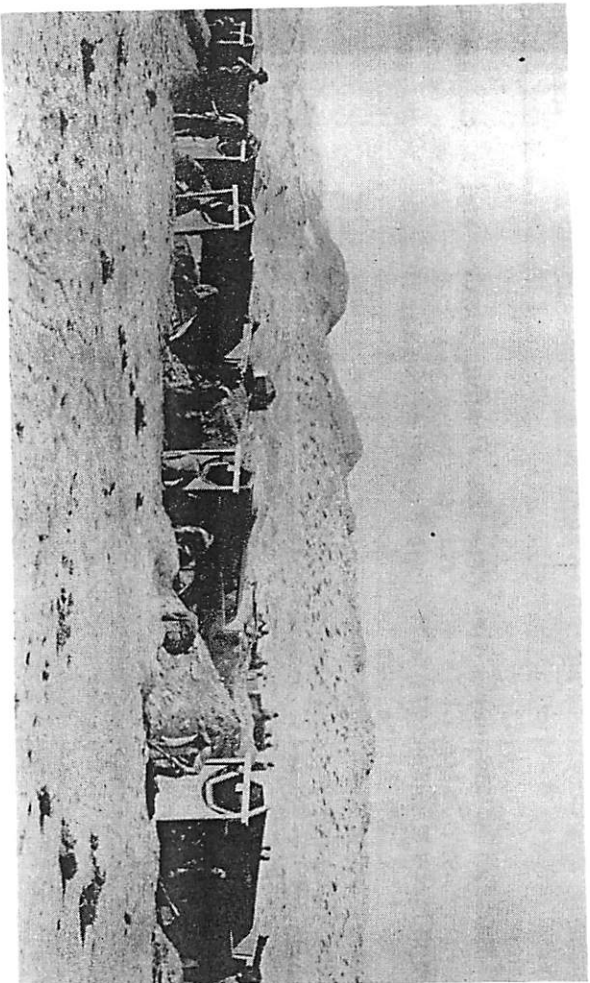
They began to plant trees and the first ones to be tried were Port Jacksons. Numerous people complained that the trees caused allergies, in fact a visiting dentist preferred to sleep in Alexander Bay, rather than suffer!

Mrs Devlin describes their arrival in Oranjemund in the early days, "We had use of a wooden house which comprised a lounge, a kitchen, dining room, two bedrooms and an outside bucket lavatory. As Stan was the assistant manager, the Company kindly built on a bathroom. To take a bath was quite a procedure. Water, heated in a petrol tin on a blue flame stove was poured into a large, portable bath - in fact the kitchen temporarily became the bathroom." Mr Stan Devlin subsequently became the General Manager.

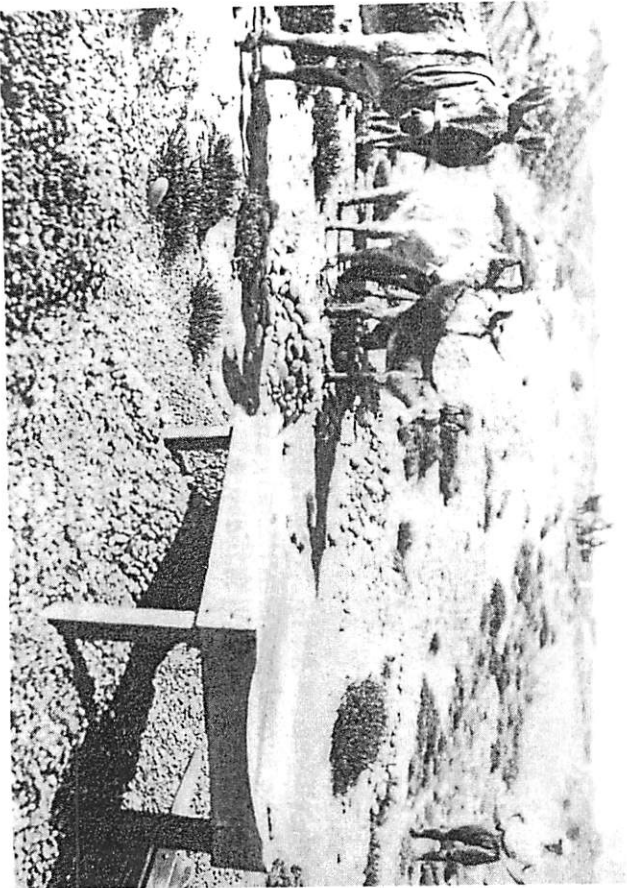
The community was beginning to take on a unique culture and lifestyle which would be with it until the town "opened" in 1975. Everyone helped everybody else and the family atmosphere prevailed. Families "adopted" single men to make sure they weren't lonely and the community worked together to build Oranjemund to what it is today. A band was formed in the late forties. The company bought most of the musical instruments. It was originally called "The Diamond Diggers" and used to play on Sunday afternoons and at special occasions.

Towards the end of the forties, camels were no longer considered practical to be used on patrols and so they were shot. The humps were used for soap. In this harsh environment the folk were resourceful to the last!

In 1928, Mr. Scholtz purchased a large piece of land along the Orange River and carried out weekend farming. The manager on the farm was Mr Maans



*A bank of trommels often seen at sites (Photo Windhoek Archives)*



*Baby screen to separate gravels from sand (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

Rossouw who began the real layout of the farm. He remained on the farm until 1939. Mr George Olivier succeeded him. The farm had been divided into sections; dairy, fruit, fodder, vegetables, and a butchery. Mr Scholtz, who had taken an active interest in the farm, which was known as "Groofterm" (large Intestine), died in 1941. His wife took over the running of the enterprise until the severe drought of 1946/7 when many animals died. In 1947, CDM negotiated the purchase of the farm and a small cottage was built for Mrs Scholtz. The sale price was 16 000 pounds (R32 000) Mrs Scholtz was asked to give the farm a new name and she chose "Beauvalloir" (Beautiful Valley). CDM put Mr Olivier on the farm as their first farm manager and the farm began to supply produce for the community at the Orange River Mouth, as it does today.

The General Manager had far more to do with the community as the population was much smaller, the facilities were fewer and the mine was just beginning to establish itself. The community had begun and developed because of diamonds. Diamond mining techniques also had inauspicious beginnings and gradually evolved with time and expertise. The pioneers had laid the foundations for the developers in the years to come.

## Early Mining

Diamonds have always been a sought after commodity, and the deposits found on the west coast are amongst the richest in the world, with a high proportion of top quality gem stones. In order to understand how the diamonds are mined in Oranjemund, it is necessary to have some idea of the geology of the area. Between the Orange River and Affenrucken, a distance of approximately 92 kilometres, the deposits rest on a narrow marine abrasion platform which consists of four distinct wave cut surfaces. Each of these surfaces or ancient beaches is covered by marine and later terrestrial deposits.

In order to retrieve the diamonds, the marine and terrestrial deposits have to be removed to reach the bedrock where the greatest concentrations of diamonds lie. The mining operation consists of eight different sections and over the years each process has been developed and improved upon. So what was in the beginning a rudimentary and basic operation, is now highly complex and sophisticated.

Until 1928, the mining operations in the northern areas, originally conducted by the German companies, were continued by CDM. They were extremely sophisticated for their time and only the best equipment was utilised. When diamonds were discovered on the north bank of the Orange River, extreme difficulties were encountered in the form of lack of machinery, harsh environmental conditions and difficulties in transport.



# CROSS SECTION THROUGH CDM RAISED BEACH DEPOSITS

WEST

EAST

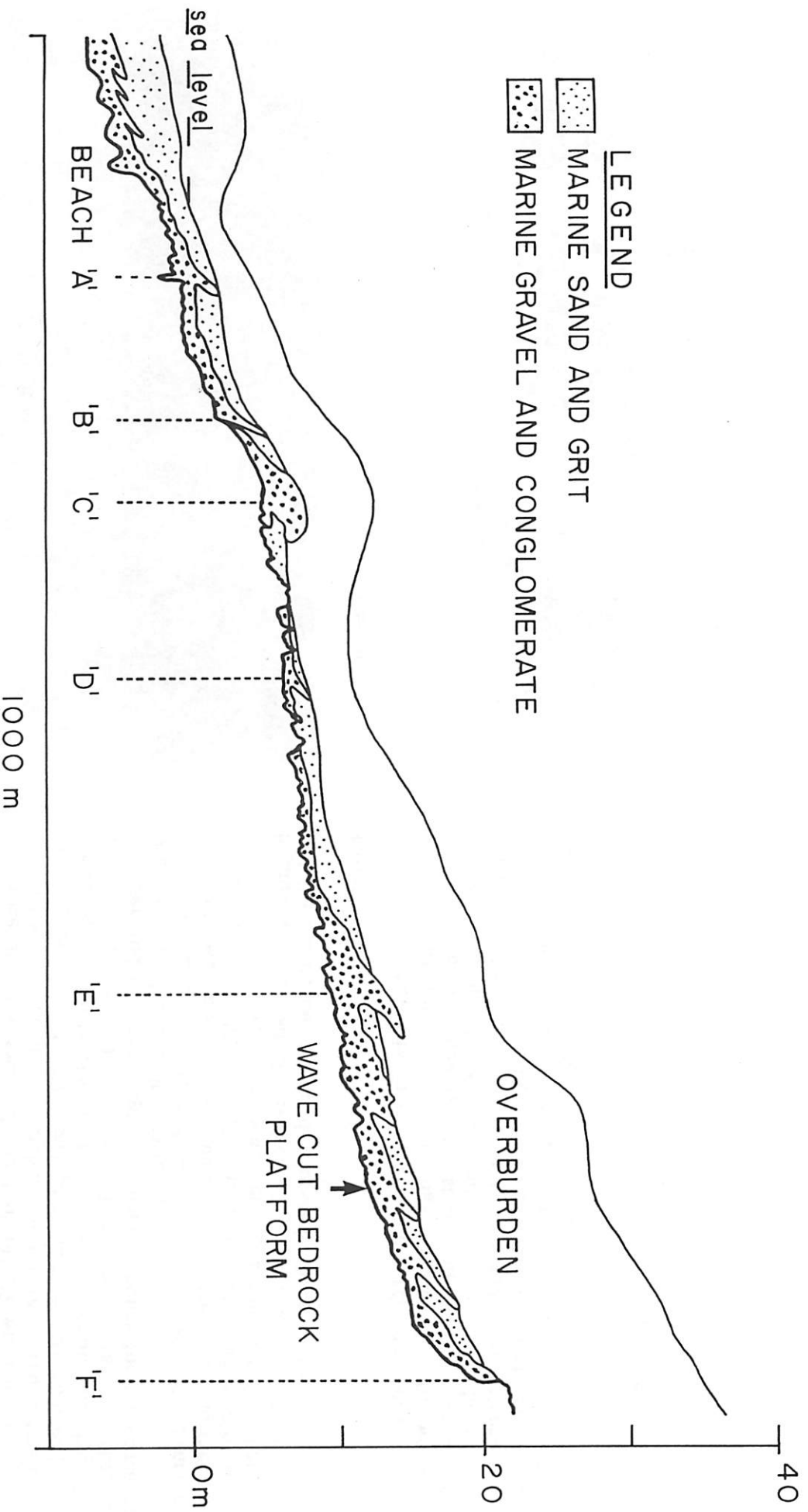
## LEGEND



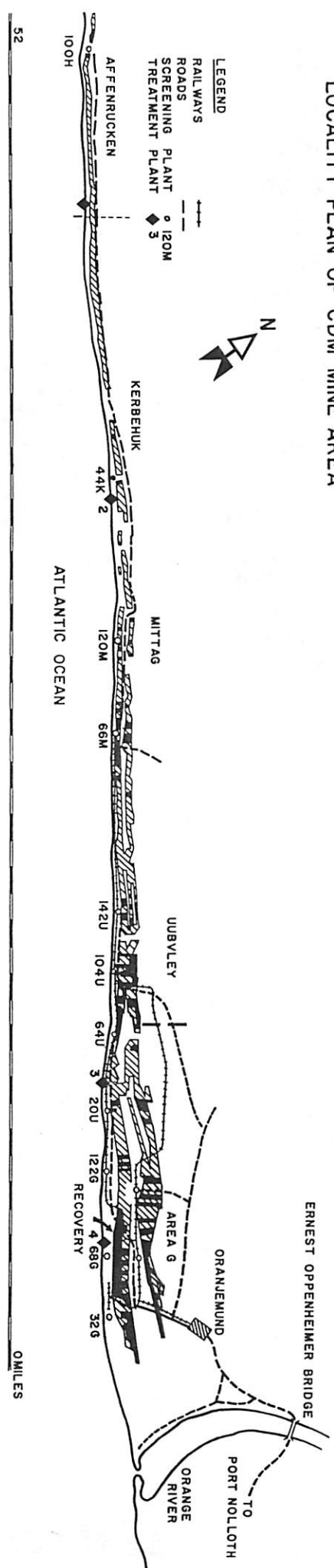
MARINE SAND AND GRIT

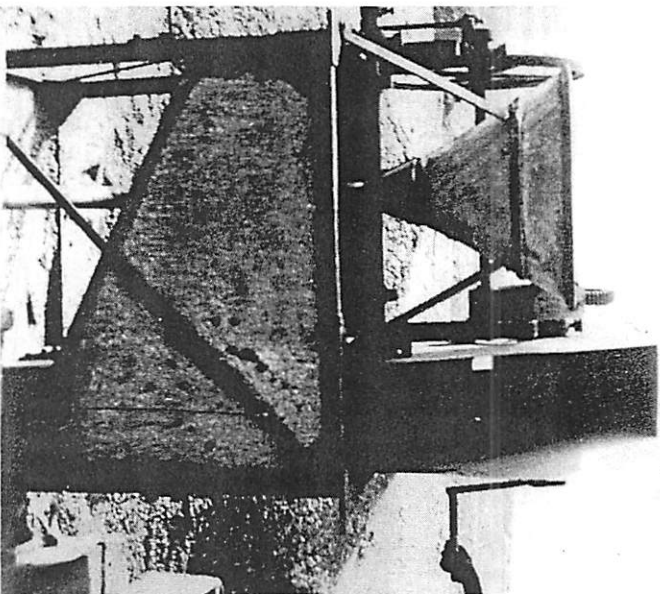


MARINE GRAVEL AND CONGLOMERATE

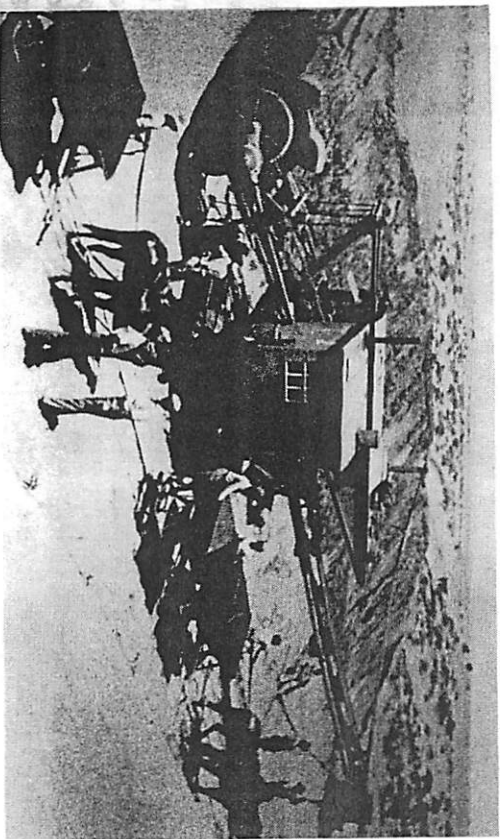


# LOCALITY PLAN OF CDM MINE AREA





*An early jig used in prospecting (Photo CDM Windhoek)*



*Early scoop (Photo CDM)*

Everything had to be transported from Luderitz to the new mining area through the trackless desert.

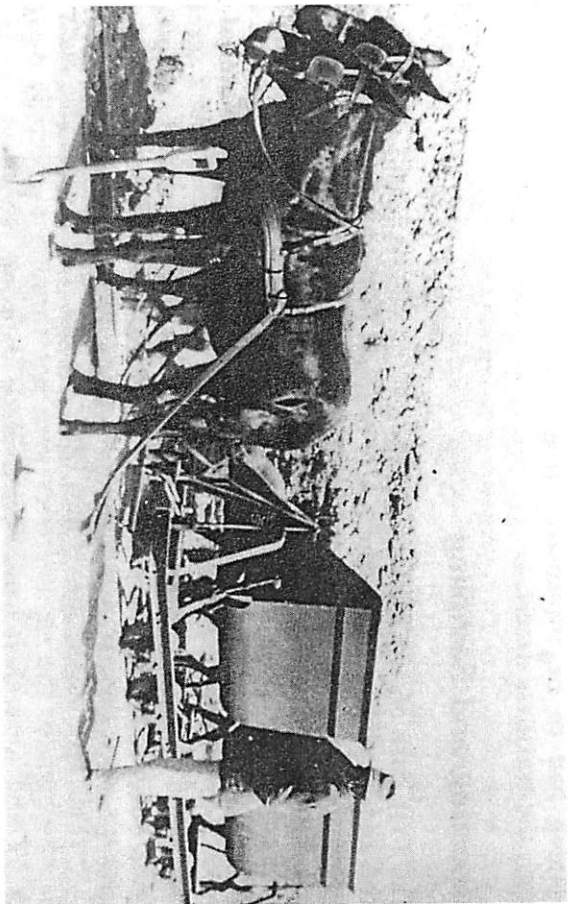
## Prospecting and Sampling

The first part of any mining operation is to ascertain where a deposit is located and in what quantity the ore is present. In the 1930's through to the 1950's prospecting was carried out in "Area G". Owambos with pick axes and shovels dug 1,5 metre wide trenches at 500m intervals at right angles to the coast. Each trench was divided into 5m long sections, with each section individually excavated from the surface to the bedrock. The material was then put into a hand-operated dry trommel (cylindrical sieve) which screened out the sand. Everything smaller than 1,6mm was discarded, as well as anything bigger than 30mm, except the cemented gravel called conglomerate. The gravels were then transferred into a hand-operated classifying trommel which further divided the gravel into three classes. The largest size class was hand sorted whilst the smaller ones were put through a specially designed Pletz jig and were then hand sorted. Each diamond recovered was logged against the section and the zone from which it came, which later allowed a drawing to be made which would assist in decisions regarding where to mine. Having ascertained the viable areas mining could proceed. In 1928 a small hand-operated treatment plant was installed in Area G. However, difficulties were soon to occur with the Wall Street economic disaster in 1929 and all mining operations were suspended. Trenching and hand operated equipment continued to be used. Mule carts were used to cope with the overburden. In 1935 small scale mining operations began in Area G again.

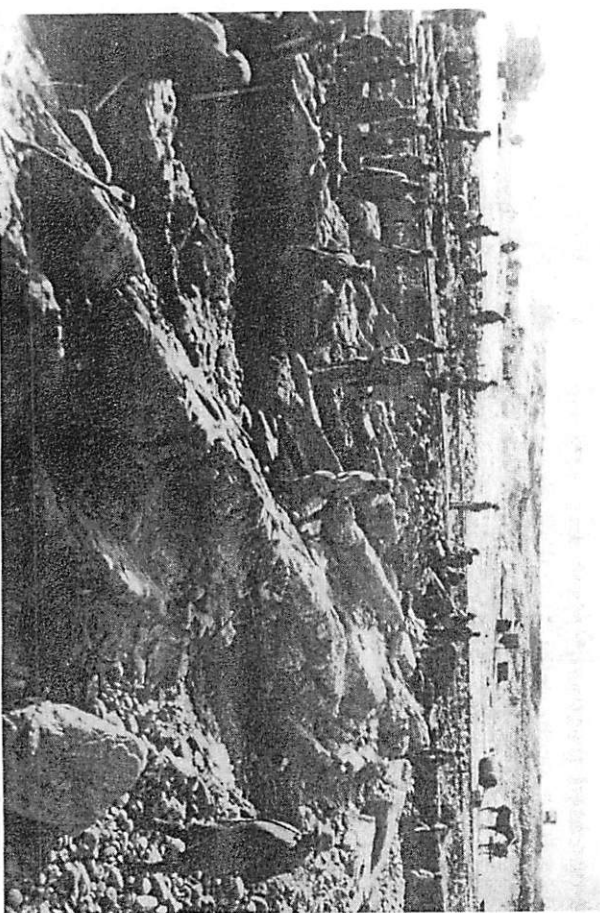
## Overburden Stripping

The overburden or material that covers the diamondiferous sediment varies greatly, from windblown sand to gravel or even rock composed of partly cemented red dune sand. In the early years it was extremely difficult to remove the overburden efficiently. Rotary scoops and a mechanical dredger were introduced in 1935. The sand was then carried off by mule-drawn trucks and dumped. As it can be imagined this was extremely slow and the working conditions were harsh. There was relatively little protection from the wind and sand and no protective clothing was provided. The working hours seemed interminable and there was a constant cry for supplies from the north. Two "large" excavators which could move 80 to 100 tons of sand an hour were installed in 1936 and 1937. During the war years shortages were experienced with labour, equipment and transport but gradually the mine developed.





*Loading terraces into cocopans (mule-drawn) (Photo T. McNally)*



*Bedrock sweeping - Labour intensive operation with considerable rehandling. Boulders thrown back onto swept out area (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

After the war an ingenious idea of converting the old Sherman tanks to tractors to cart the overburden was implemented. This idea worked extremely well and the mules were duly replaced! The tanks were later converted into stackers used in conjunction with small bucket excavators to remove loose sand overburden. As early as 1942 the throw back method whereby overburden was dumped onto mined out areas, was used in certain places quite successfully.

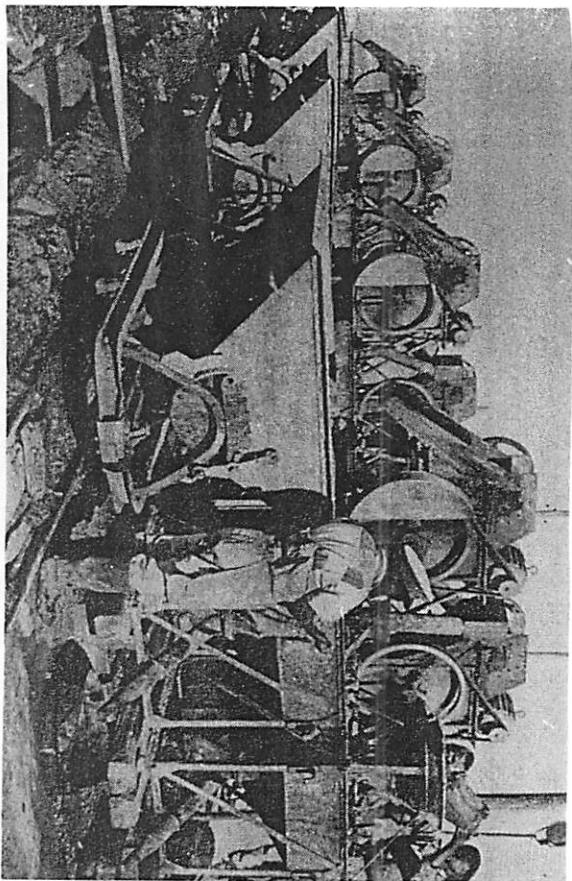
One of the early pioneers, Bill Mitchell recounts the following story which shows peculiar ingenuity! "Whilst in charge of the maintenance of thirteen Sherman tanks and carryalls at the Mining area of 100G and through a misunderstanding between the Prospecting Superintendent and the Central Fields workshop I was left to my own resources to make my own way back to town. As it was very late afternoon and too far to walk through the heavy sand after a hard days work, I unhitched the carryall from the Sherman Tank and transported those left behind, into the residential area, lived in a small flat between the present AAC guest house and the local mess and my very noisy arrival was greeted with amusement by some and consternation by others. Needless to say I was not commended for my ingenuity nor was I ever left behind again!"

## Loading and Hauling

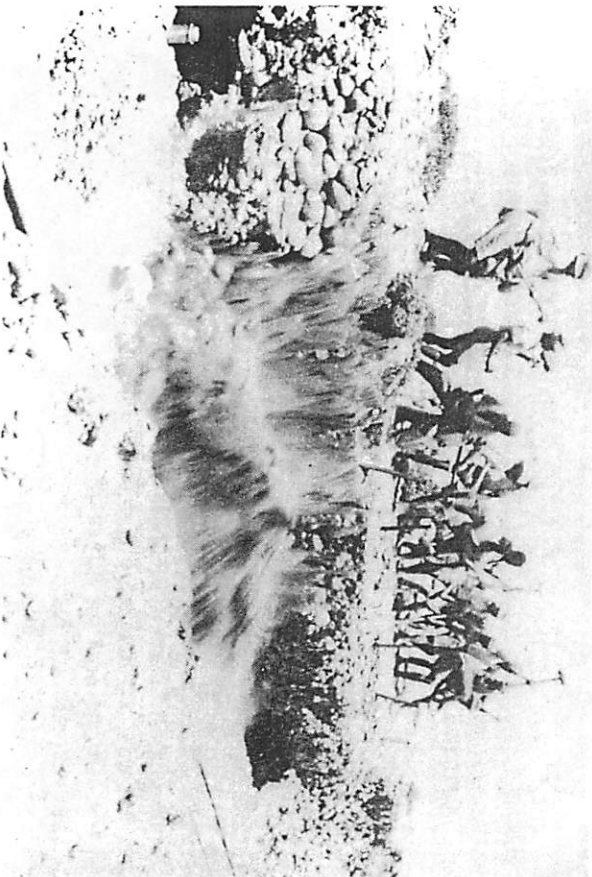
Initially the hauling was done by mule-driven trucks, but by the 1940s small, diesel driven locomotives and cocopans were in use. One locomotive would haul six, one cubic metre cocopans. One driver and two breakmen operated each locomotive and there were approximately six teams per plant area. The cocopans were loaded from different mine areas and would arrive at the plant where they were pulled up a ramp by an electrically operated winch. The material from the cocopans was then emptied into a bin and the cocopan was reconnected to the locomotive for the return trip to the mining area.

## Bedrock Cleaning

Ironically, this job has always caused problems on the mine and continues to do so today. A vast number of the diamonds are to be found in the bedrock gullies and thus, once all the gravel has been cleared, the bedrock has to be "swept" with brooms to collect the last of the gravels. This part of the operation was done by hand in the beginning and is still largely done by hand today. There are severe difficulties involved as it is a tiring and time-consuming occupation and the bedrock sweepers are continually faced with the temptation of actually handling the diamonds. The sweepers were



*Central Recovery Plant - banks of jigs used to concentrate the materials (Photo CDM)*



*Method used to break up partly cemented terrace deposits using wedges and hammers (Photo Windhoek Archives)*

in gangs and glean what they can from the mining area in which they are working. Prior to the mid 1950's no incentive scheme was used and it was difficult to motivate the workers. They were working in cold, misty conditions often with a biting wind to contend with and abrasive sand hindering their progress. The temptation to pocket a few diamonds didn't go unheeded. By the 50's it was recognized that some incentive scheme was essential. The diamonds were collected by security and handed into the sorting house where they were duly classified, a reward having been paid for the diamonds handed in by the sweepers.

## Screening

From the 1930's until the four major conglomerate plants were commissioned, all the screening was undertaken at a number of small screening plants. These plants covered the mining area, with as many as eighteen in operation at any one time. They were all wet plants (using water to aid processing) with the exception of three in Area G. The cocopans would bring the material from the mining areas and tip it into a bin which was covered by bars spaced 15 inches apart called a grizzly. All material bigger than 15 inches in diameter was broken up by men using hammers. The material fed through the headreed at an average rate of 950 cubic metres per 10 hour shift went through a series of systems to remove the sand and the undersize material. Once the screening was complete the gravel was sent to the central recovery plant.

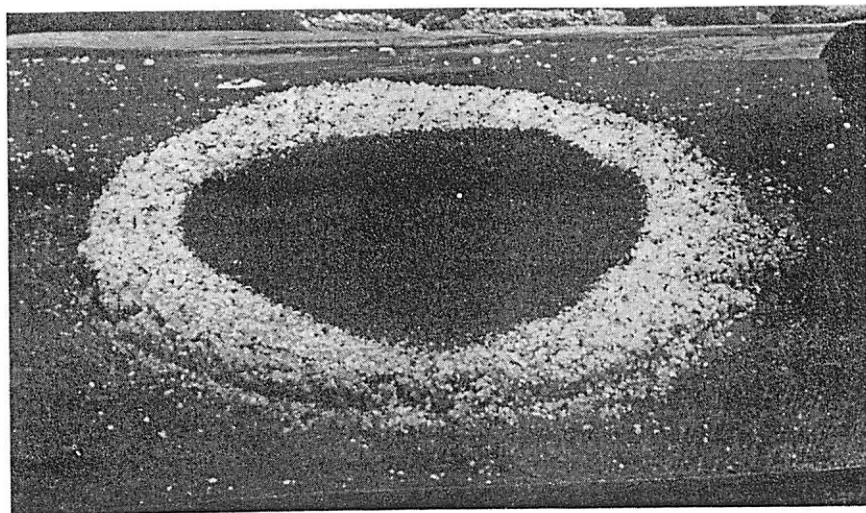
## Gravel Transport

Locomotives were used in the Sperrgebiet in the early diamond times and played an important role in the diamond areas. In 1950 it was decided to build a railway line between Oranjemund and Milttag. The locomotives south of Uubley were electric units, whilst those operating in the Milttag area were diesel driven. They were used to transport men, stores and gravel throughout the mine.

## Recovery Processes

Finally the material arrives at the treatment plant where the aim is to concentrate the heavy mineral component in the gravels and recover the diamonds. The material is crushed, washed and classified according to size prior to being sorted by gravity and ultimately hand-sorted. Hand-operated jigs were used in the early days. They were placed on wooden sleepers so that they were on a firm foundation and level. In the middle of the jig was a





*Concentrate from jigs (Photo I. Corbett)*



*Recovery plant showing sorting tables (Photo CDM Windhoek)*

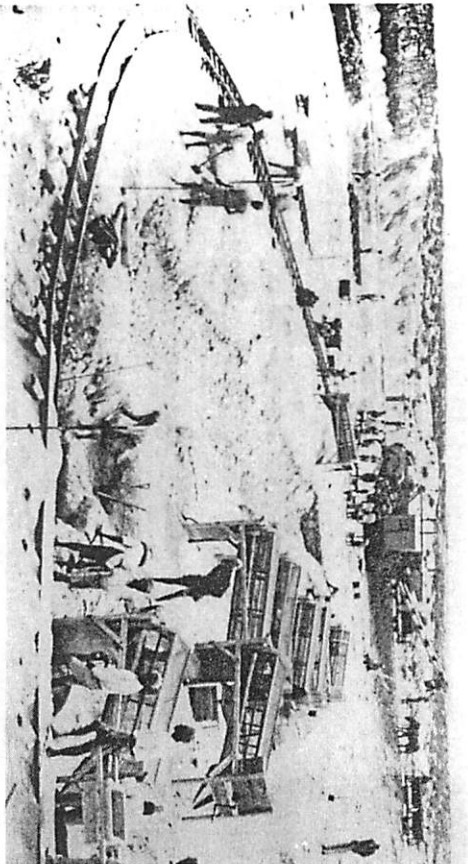
circular frame which held the sieves or trays. The jig was filled with water and as the handle was turned the frame would move up and down. Heavy minerals would concentrate in the centre of the sieve while the lighter material would fill the outer part of the sieve. Once the operation was complete excess water would drain from the sieve and the sieve would be turned upside down on the sorting table. The darker coloured heavy minerals would duly be sorted for diamonds by hand. Experiments were made during the late forties on the electrostatic separation of diamonds and heavy media separation techniques. In 1946, the first tests using grease tables were conducted and were found to be unsuccessful. It was puzzling to find that unwettable diamonds, which were brought from Dutoitspan Mine in the Kimberley area stuck immediately, whilst CDM's diamonds dropped from 2 feet in the air rolled off! With much research it was established that the CDM's diamonds have a molecular salt coating making them wettable which first has to be removed with fish acid oil and caustic soda in order to be successfully recovered on the grease belts. Experimental work of this nature was ongoing for all aspects of the operation and as early as 1945 Mr. Louwrens was sent to the USA to investigate developments in excavating techniques and the hauling of material.

## Sorting

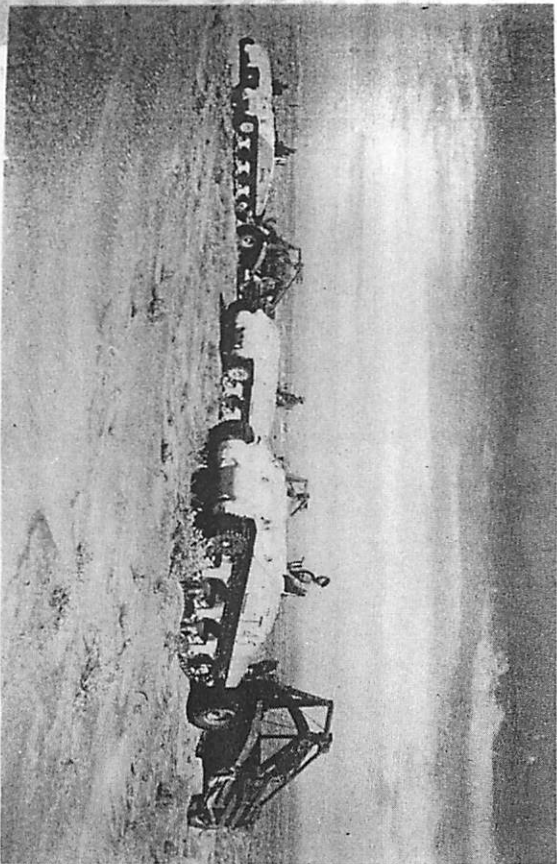
The final part of the mining operation is the sorting of the diamonds from the surrounding heavy mineral concentrate. It is still done by hand although recovery processes have changed somewhat! In the prospecting days, a corrugated iron shed was erected close to the jiggling plants. It had one open end but was otherwise totally enclosed. The amount of light which could penetrate the shed was usually paltry and thus the eyes of the sorters were under considerable strain. A wooden sorting table was covered by a piece of rubber conveyor belt and the sorter had tweezers and sorting knives as his tools. The sieve from the jig was upturned and the heavy minerals gleamed. Any diamonds found in the concentrate were picked out with tweezers and packeted. The packets were sealed and the details recorded on the outside. The seal was usually accompanied by the headman's thumb print and company number. The rest of the material on the sorting table was also checked, it was a slow and time-consuming job. The diamonds were then sent to the central sorting house where they were weighed.

At the central recovery plant diamonds were also sorted on wooden tables under similar conditions. Once the diamonds were weighed and accounted for they were parcelled up and sent by rail or road to Kimberley by ordinary mail!

Transport was not always readily available and men had to travel



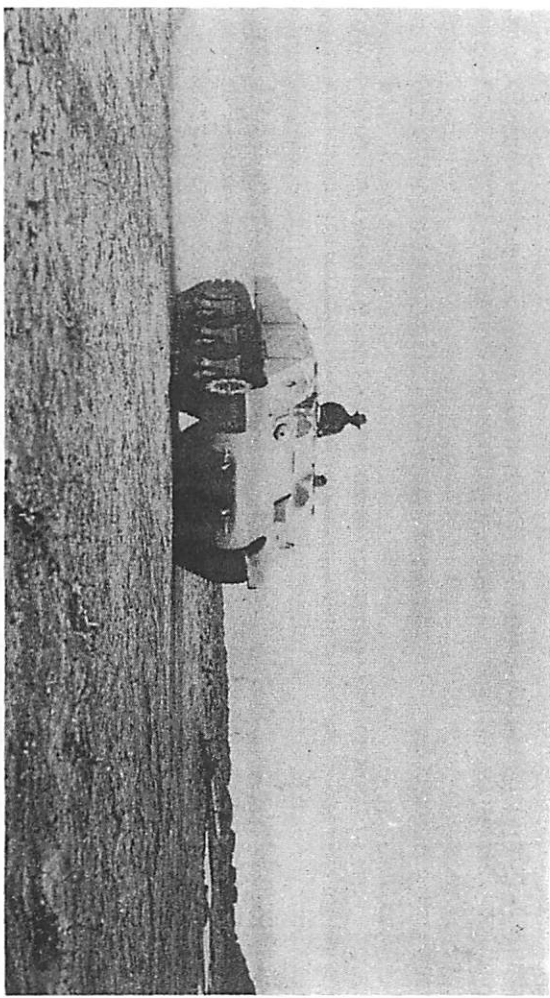
1934 - Background - small scoop removing overburden. Foreground - positioning trommels to remove sand to catch gravels. Note the spur line for cocopans (Photo CDM Windhoek)



Sherman tanks used for stripping in the late 40's (Photo B.Mitchell)

through heavy sand and fierce winds to their place of work. It was decided that accommodation should be laid on at the mine area and hostels were built accordingly. Men came into town once a month.

Up until the 1950's, the diamond mining operations were relatively unsophisticated but had coped marvellously with the hindrances and problems of their day. In 1949 it was decided to build a bridge across the Orange River and this was to lead the pioneers to become developers.



A lone Sherman on its way home (Photo CDM)



## The Developers - Oranjemund 1950 - 1975

### The 1950's

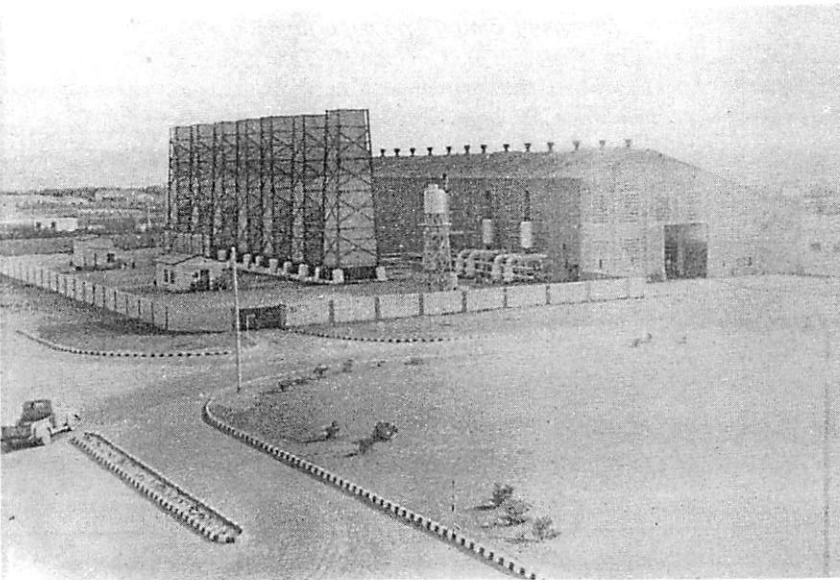
The Orange Mouth community was well on its way to becoming established. Activities in the northern areas of the Sperrgebiet had more or less halted. In the early fifties many families from the north came to the mouth. The headquarters had already been moved there from Luderitz in 1943. However, the community was still hindered by transport problems - the 180 mile trip from Kolmanskop being the main access route. Various possibilities were looked into. Finally it was Mr Royden Harrison, consulting engineer and Mr J Bone, consulting mechanical engineer, both of Anglo American, who evolved the concept of a bridge. A bridge would link the north and the south banks and thus give access to the road from Port Nolloth. The idea was strengthened by the knowledge that the wharf at Port Nolloth had been rebuilt and extended by the O'kiep Copper Company. Once the idea had been formulated, plans rapidly went ahead to construct a low level bridge. This step was to launch the community into another stage in their development as it gave them independence and accessibility to the outside world.

At this time there were 363 permanent employees and 2487 migrants, increasing all the time. The average salary for the permanents was R121,07 per month and for the migrants was R5,65. These salaries were generally above wages offered outside. There was still no indoor sanitation and 500 000 gallons of water was being pumped and 430 000 kwh of power was consumed per month. The township was rapidly becoming more sophisticated. Big extensions were added to the hospital; a laundry, store room, indoor sanitation, a labour ward, operating theatre and an anaesthetist's room. The old wood and iron out-patients room was replaced by more up-to-date buildings. Consulting rooms were unheard of and patients attended clinics. They gathered in a large room amidst children, prams and other paraphernalia and a cacophony of sound. As their turn arrived they would see the doctor individually. The doctors, from early records, were reputed to be superb and would often visit their patients at home.

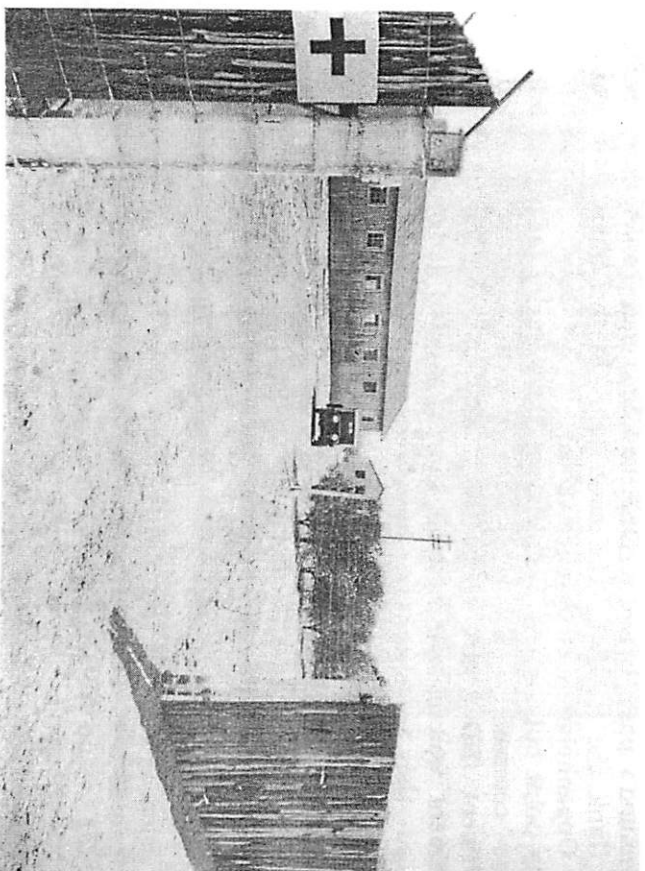
The system for pregnant women was different to say the least! Apparently a special room existed where all "preggies" gathered in various stages. Mrs Audrey O'Brien describes the scene thus: "In one corner was a scale, and there was a table at which a sister sat and to whom one handed one's "specimen". The sister in charge of the scale would weigh the patient and call across to the other sister the exact weight of the victim. Mine was one of the very red faces whose weight was publicly announced. We were



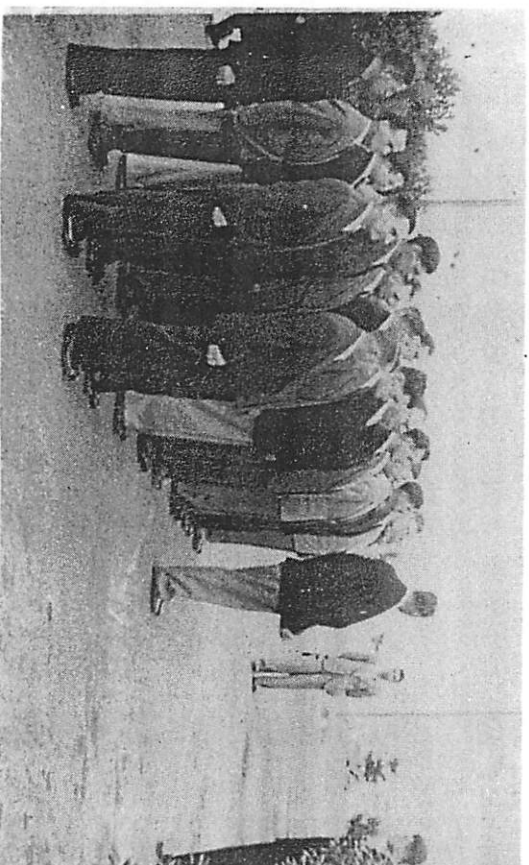
*Transport to Oranjemund before the bridge (Photo T.McNally)*



*The Power Station (Photo CDM)*



*The hospital in the 50's (Photo T.McNally)*



*MOTH's Sunset Parade (1950's) (Photo B.Mitchell)*

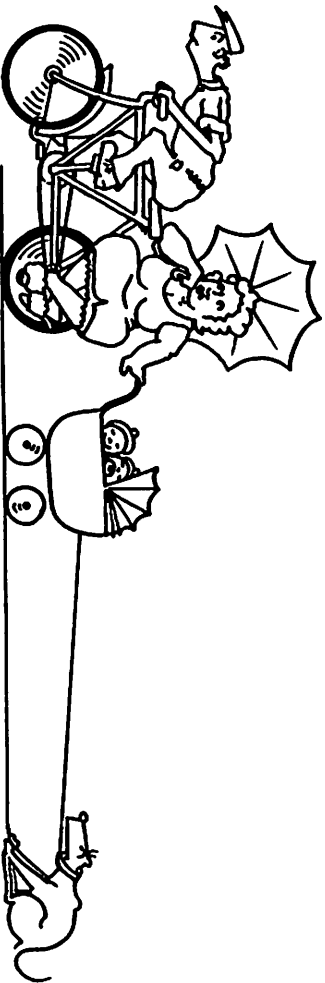
examined in curtained cubicles, with no sound proofing, and the audience outside could hear every word!"

The new Recreation club was in the process of being built with a dance floor, lounge, library, saloon and bar - a great improvement after the mess hall! The new post office was opened in October and there were queues for the new hairdressing salon - a great innovation!

The school which had started with less than 12 pupils had risen to the awesome number of 80 pupils. There were two teachers, Mrs Revington and Mr van der Westhuizen who worked under the Principalship of Mr Anderson. The school was beginning to take shape and would soon move to their new premises. At this time, it was difficult to attract teachers and as one old timer recalls, "they were usually rather old!" High school children underwent an equivalent of the Great Trek when leaving for school. Due to the security system, parents were not allowed to see their offspring off. The children were collected at various bus stops and from there were taken through security checks and x-ray. They went on a long, overnight bus trip to Bitterfontein, from where they continued by train to their various destinations.

Religion had not been neglected and various denominations met in the mess hall when the priests came down. In February, a church council was formed with the idea of making arrangements for worship more permanent. Reverend Wratten became the first resident minister. Dominee P.A.M. Brink ministered to the Dutch Reformed under the Luderitz Diocese while Mr Percy Green took care of the Methodists. Owambo and Kavango worship was predominantly Lutheran and took place in the hostels.

Clubs and recreational facilities continued to grow. The Namib Shell Hole was founded in October 1956. The Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTHS) is a brotherhood built on the comradeship of the men who fought for their country. It was started by C.A. Evenden (Evo or Motho as he was commonly known) in 1927 in Durban. The idea quickly spread throughout South Africa. The Chairman of each shell hole is known as "Old Bill" and the lady MOTHWA is Lady Billie. Their three ideals include true comradeship, mutual help and sound memory - true comradeship meant sound memory expressed in terms of mutual help. The anthem is usually "Old soldiers never die". Their emblem is a tin hat surmounted by a lighted candle surrounded by 12 stars flanked by reversed crossed rifles. They had a great influence on the town especially in the early days. With the immortal words from Kipling, "With the going down of the sun, and in the morning, We will remember them," the gruff, emotion-filled voices of ex-servicemen reverberated in the desert air. The spluttering light on the tin hat symbolised the historical significance of the brotherhood. The building in which they stood had started as the mess hall in the early 30's and thus was an intricate part of



*Cartoon from old newsletters showing the mode of transport*

Oranjemund's past. Later in 1963, two Sherman Tanks were presented and these flank the building. The main table in the Shell Hole was originally Harry Oppenheimer's conference table.

Any point outside the periphery of the security fence was out of bounds to the community. Security were known as the Diamond Detective Department (DDD) and they had a multiple role to play. Although the department was relatively small they conducted patrols along the fences, operated the x-ray system and did all the transporting. There were approximately 30 vehicles belonging to the company and the rest of the community had to be transported. Most people went by foot to their destination, however bicycles were also very popular. It was not unusual to see a couple arriving at a dance dishevelled and sandy having fallen off on the way! A cartoon appeared in the newsletter showing a couple who frequently travelled with their dog and baby in tow!

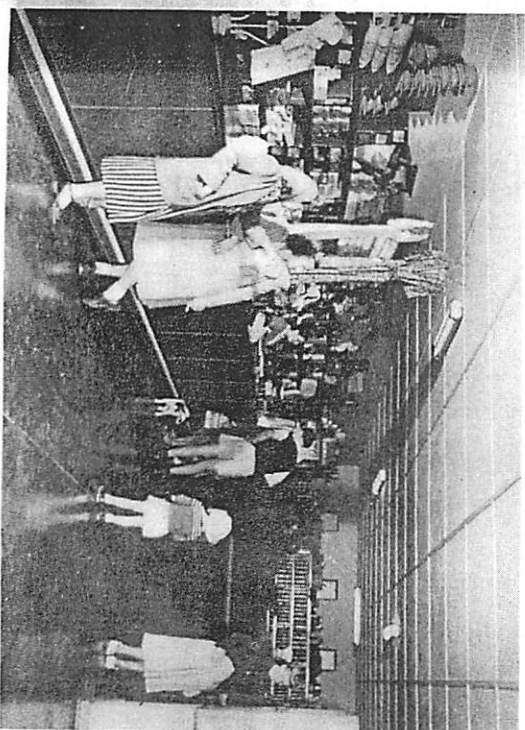
Once a month folk were permitted to visit the river mouth under DDD supervision. A flat-bed lorry with no hood or seats was provided. The DDD accompanied trips across the river before the bridge was built and escorted transport to and from Kolmanskop.

Illicit Diamond Buying (IDB) was a lot more difficult due to these transport difficulties. However, IDB did take place and one of the more colourful cases occurred in 1952. Prospecting was still an important part of mine life and prospectors were often sent to lonely outposts with little supervision. One such prospector was sent to Chameis Bay where he set up his tents and was cut off from Oranjemund apart from occasional visits. His responsibility was to count, weigh and keep the diamonds which were recovered from the bay by his assistant. Once a week a senior geologist would come and collect the diamonds. He was sitting on a fortune and obviously had a lot of time to contemplate his future. One thing led to another and he decided to try and take a hoard of diamonds out with him. Various methods came to mind. He decided it was too risky to try and buck the x-ray system or to bribe the radiographer. He contemplated trying to get a landrover through the area but abandoned that. Finally he decided to hide the diamonds and come in by plane or boat. Having made his decision and built up his supply of diamonds, he went on annual leave. He arranged for a pilot to fly him into the area and did all the other preparations and then resigned. The men flew in and made a perfect landing at Chameis Bay. They collected the diamonds and then attempted to take-off. As they were about to get airborne, the left wheel hit a rock and they crash-landed 150 yards further on. When the men were located no diamonds were found either on them or in the aircraft which made conviction difficult. Finally, more evidence was found and on Dec 24 the men owned up and the DDD were shown where the cache was to be found. There were 1400 diamonds and they





*Produce from Beauvallon (Photo T. McNally)*



*The early store before self-service (Photo CDM)*

would have been worth 40 000 pounds (R80 000)! The prospector got 9 months hard labour and the pilot got six when they were prosecuted under the Diamond Industry Protection Proclamation of 1909.

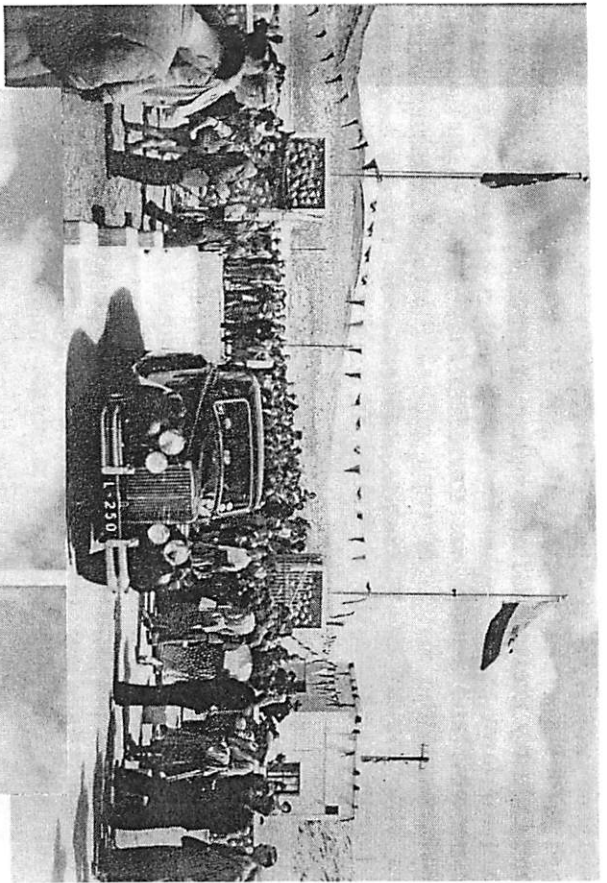
The company farm at Beauvallon was doing well, it provided 274 tons of vegetables per year and a dairy was started in 1950. A few years later the housewives heralded the arrival of fresh milk, hitherto an unseen luxury! There was little variety of vegetables, cabbage and carrots being the mainstays, but they were usually plentiful. The store still operated by serving the customers and as the town grew so the wait became longer! A few trees had been planted but were still saplings so sand was an ever present gripe. Sand was trailed into the houses by children and visitors and on east weather days the washing had to be bought in early. Doors and windows were kept closed and children were not allowed out. Residents in Oranjemund today, with all the mod cons, can sympathise as the East wind continues to leave its dusty mark throughout the houses and town itself.

In February 1951 the Ernest Oppenheimer Bridge was formally opened. Flooding of the river had hindered progress but it had finally been completed. It was 3 000 ft long with a single roadway 10 ft 8 in wide. Colonel Hoogenhout opened the "Bridge of Sighs" pointing out that it represented a sad time for Luderitz folk as this meant they would no longer have contact with Oranjemund. Visitors from all over the world attended the opening including Sir Ernest Oppenheimer. It was the longest privately owned bridge in the southern hemisphere and symbolised the tenacity of man overcoming the hostility of the desert.

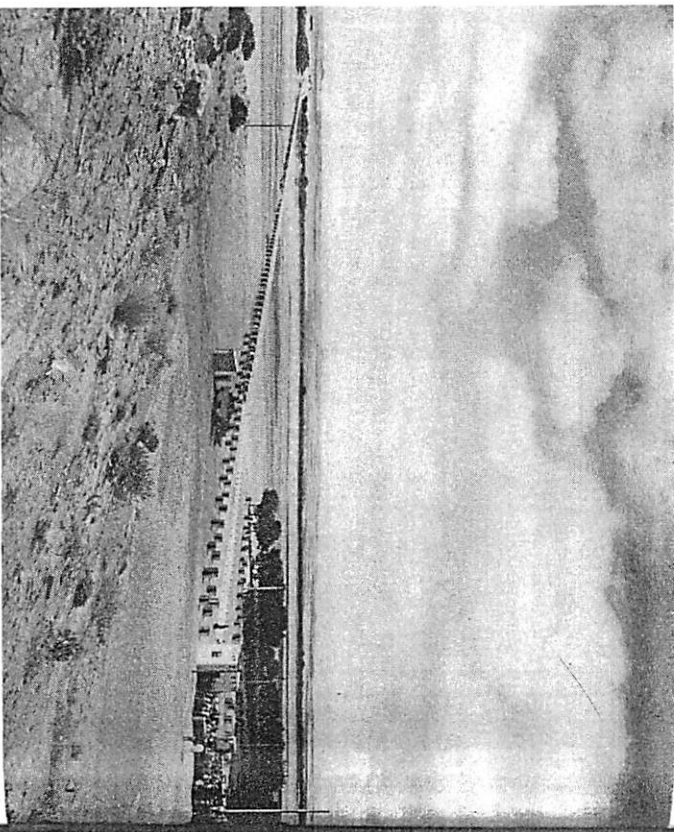
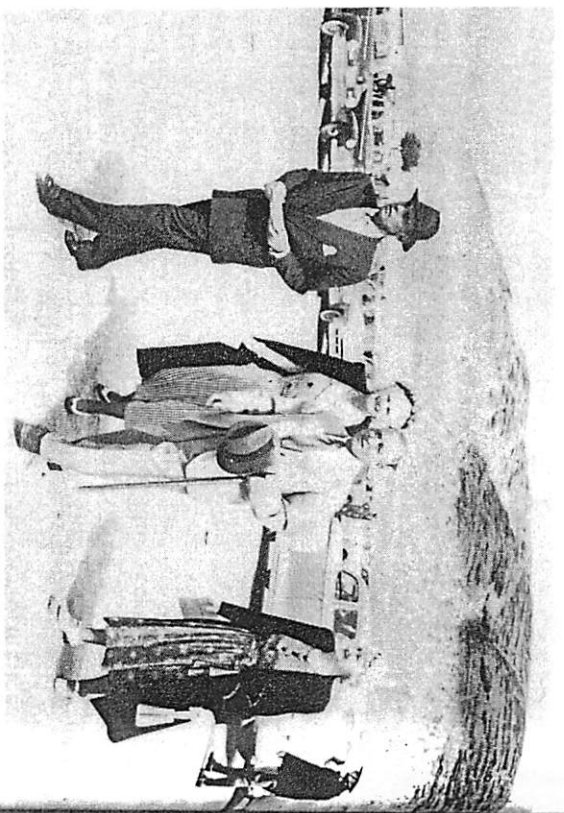
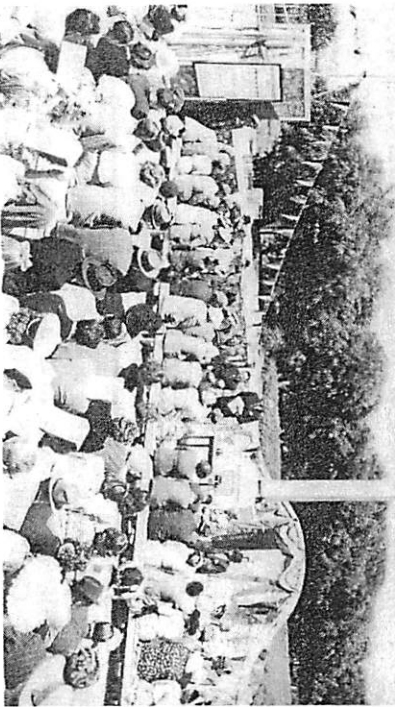
In April 1951 Orange Mouth formally reverted to Oranjemund, the name it has been known as ever since. The stage was set for great development and stabilisation. Amenities and buildings were continually being added to the town. A large mine store was erected with 500 000 pounds of stock, the building having been dismantled and brought from Kolmanskop. A swimming pool was built and opened at the end of 1952 and a bowls club was opened by Mr Louwrens who paid tribute to Audrey van Onselen and Frank Beckman for their contribution. At this time it was common practice for members of the community to get actively involved in the building of the various clubs. Often Saturdays and Sundays would be spent putting up buildings and planting grass.

In 1952 the new school was occupied with the clock tower being brought down from Kolmanskop. It was opened by the Administrator Dr A.J.R. van Rhyn. There were eight classrooms, a kindergarten section, a woodwork room, a library, washrooms and a concert hall. Much to the delight of the 90 school children the school was given a holiday! With the help of the community a school song was chosen and a badge was made. The school held its first ever Prize Giving in 1956. It was an important moment for the





*The Official Opening  
with Sir Ernest Oppenheimer  
and his wife*



*(Photos T. McNally and CDM)*



*The new school was opened in 1952 (Photo CDM)*

children, parents and staff. Rapt little faces gazed up as the speeches were given, lumps in throats were felt by proud parents as the little desert lambs timidly went to fetch their prizes. The school started with a high standard which it has upheld ever since. It has kept current with passing trends and new equipment, and has always been an intricate part of the community.

It was decided to tar some of the roads, much to everyone's delight. The process was slow and expensive but essential to keeping the dust at bay. Street lights were erected which greatly aided "under the weather" party-goers on their way home. At this time there were already 266 houses with 457 permanents resident.

A players and dramatic society was started and plays and concerts were performed in the mess hall until the Little Theatre was built. It played an important role in the society which had no entertainment other than films and sport. It was quite an effort to produce a play prior to the Little Theatre as the Players had to compete with church meetings, films and other activities. Often sets had to be taken down and rebuilt several times during a show! The floor was flat and individual chairs formed the seating! However, totally undaunted, many plays and variety concerts were produced with great success. Marge Gilmour and George Lovett were two of the very early players who had a hand in getting the society established. Philip Bruce produced many of the early plays in the 50's. "Quiet Weekend" was produced in 1952 and was described as "Well presented and the performance excellent". Plays were produced in both official languages. Some of the other plays included; "The White Sheep of the Family", "Jack and the Beanstalk", "As Ons Twee Eers Getroud Is". Frans Schneider, Hennie Du Toit and Herman Bosman made many appearances. "Lock up your daughters" was chosen as the play to open the new theatre in 1961. It was a raving success. The audience was asked to dress properly for first night performances; "a dinner jacket or the tuxedo and smart evening frocks".

MOTH instituted the "Diamond Queen Ball" under the auspices of Old Bill Basil Raine and his wife. This ball was the highlight of the year as it still is today. The first Queen was Muriel Richardson. The score sheet had three criteria:

General Appearance: 10

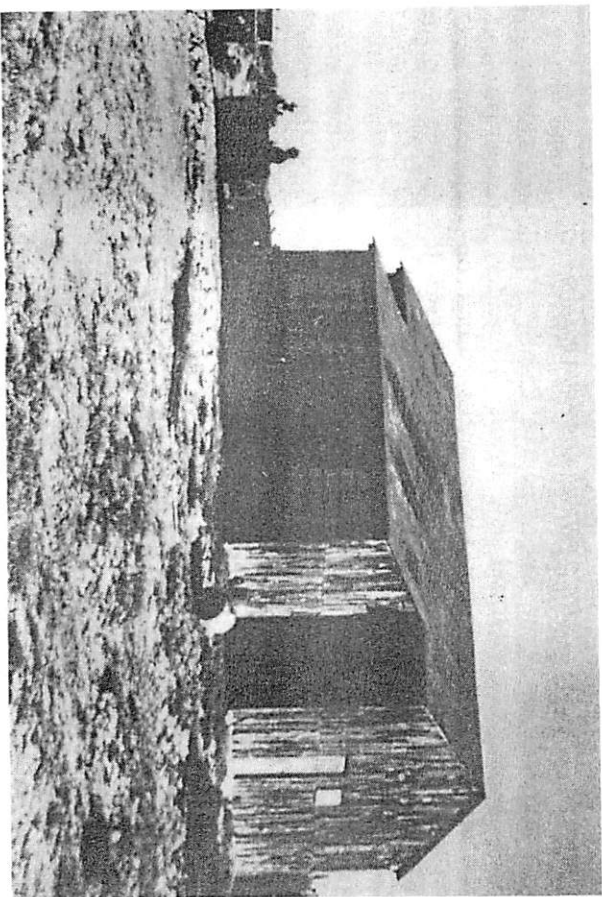
Poise:10

Curtsey:3

An orchestra played in a "blitzed house" complete with a smashed window which was hanging loose. Air raid sirens wailed at the start, lights went out and a searchlight picked up a raider. Anti-aircraft fire boomed from backstage until the raider was shot. An "all clear signal" started the dancing. What a night was had by all! A tradition was born. The proceeds of the ball went towards the troops fighting in the Korean War.



*A new mode of transport for the Migrants (Photo CDM)*



*The first golf club house (Photo CDM)*

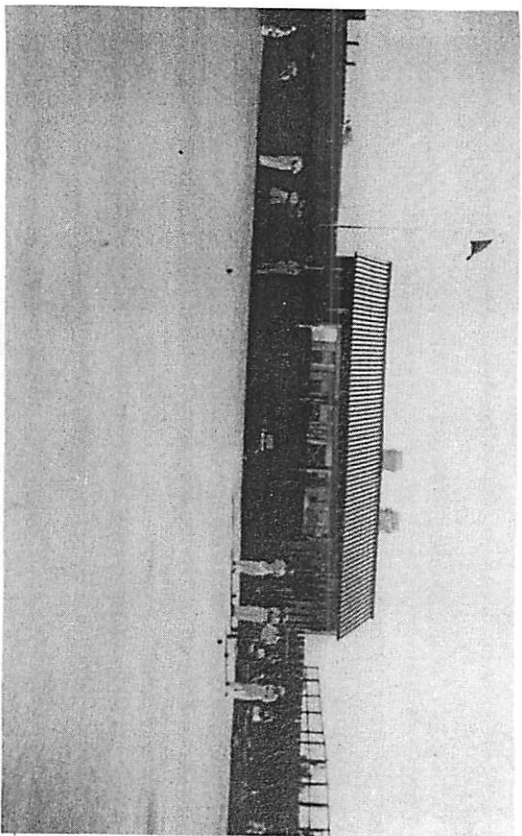
Prior to 1953 the Owambos were transported by bus and train to Oranjemund and the journey took several days. Thus the decision to transport the labour by air was a great innovation for the company and for the Owambos!

The first ever all grass nine hole golf course in South West Africa was opened at Oranjemund in 1953, only to be swamped by floods from the Orange River. This was to be a relatively frequent occurrence until the Orange River Scheme got underway in the 60's when the river was dammed upstream. The golf clubs were bought by CDM and then were supplied to new members and a deposit was made. If the member resigned, the deposit was returned. The golf bags were made in the local upholstery shop by Mr Jan Nel. Later, it was decided that the clubs should be weighed and stamped to avoid any diamond smuggling. If one was departing from Oranjemund, the clubs had to be handed in to be scrutinised at least 3 weeks before. Prior to town "opening", the town was fenced off at the present entrance and guard and guard dog patrolled the area. The gates closed at 8 o'clock during the week and at 10 o'clock during the weekends. Thus, as Iva Morrow remembers "the 19th hole was really controlled and the dash from the golf club at 8 minutes to 8 or 10 was quite a sight! If one missed the closing time, the number of your vehicle and name was taken and duly reported to the golf club committee and to security." No-one was allowed to take any belongings out of Oranjemund when they finally left.

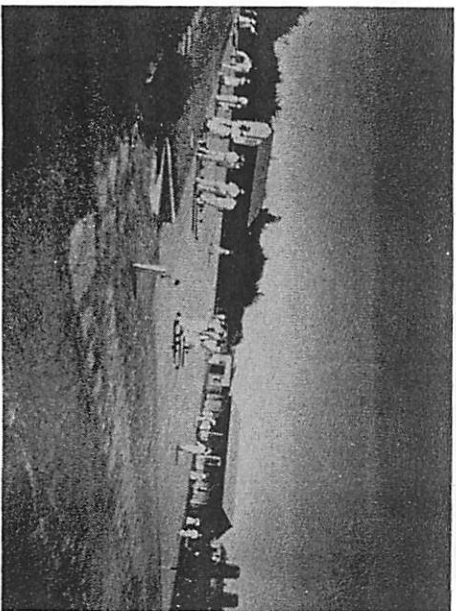
Girl Guides were started by Mrs W Bartholomew who was the Guide Captain; Brownies were run by Mrs Molloy. There were 4 guides to start with. A Boy Scouts troop was formed by Mr V Rathbone, Mr W Richardson and Mr T Wardby. Mrs Barratt formed the wolf cub pack. The log cabin was a project which was started by the Boy Scouts to provide an area where the could go camping. The MOTHs came to their assistance and then the company put the roof on. These groups were to go from strength to strength and had some great successes. Music exams were started at the school through UNISA and there were six successful candidates in the first year. Extensions to the school were necessary to cope with the increasing number of children.

The x-ray unit had been moved closer to the town and new stations were commissioned to be built. People going on holiday had to hand in their baggage at least three days prior to departure. Metallic objects were asked to be placed in one case and near the top to aid searching. Cameras also had to be handed in to be scrutinised. On the day of departure a bus would fetch the family with all their bags and deliver them to x-ray where they would join the queue. X-raying in the early days took place in the horizontal position. It was a long and tedious process. After x-ray, luggage had to be identified in the courtyard. Then the family would board a bus which took





*Bowls in the early 50's (Photos CDM)*

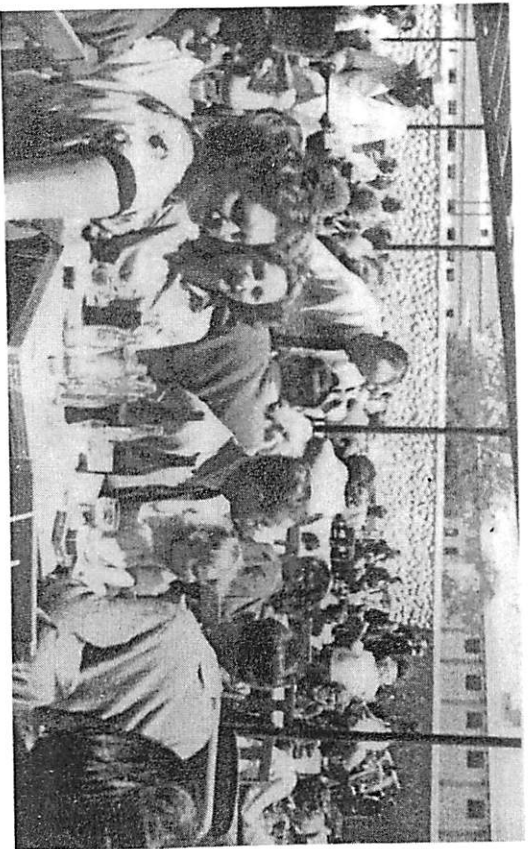


them to Swartkops. Finally the family would reach their car which was held in a garage in Swartkop. Batteries would have to be recharged as owners could only check their cars once every 6 weeks! A very good car club existed and members were allowed to borrow equipment to work on their cars. It was always a great rush to get through the procedure and get away. A mine foreman, rushing as usual, went to collect his wife and child to go away. It was only after they had left their home that they realized they had left their son locked up at home! At last the journey could begin, provided the bridge hadn't been damaged by flooding. The roads to Cape Town were appalling with the tar only beginning at Clanwilliam. Going on holiday was certainly a long-winded affair.

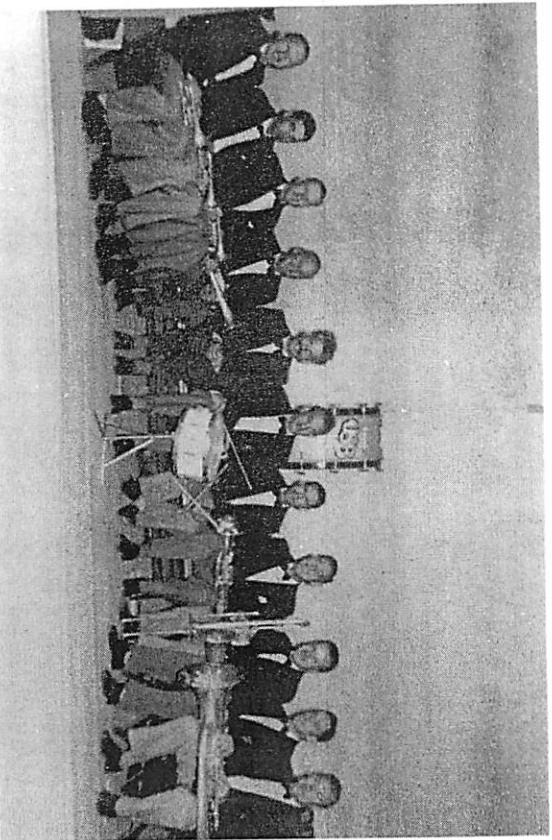
The Garden Club was formed in 1954 and was to be an extremely active one with visitors coming to advise frequently. The shows were amazing, especially considering the environment the members were living in. An article appearing in a newspaper in the North of England would no doubt encourage gardeners to dig a little deeper!

"In Oranienmund, SWA, there are diamonds at the bottom of the garden! Local diamond mining companies extract diamonds from gravel. This gravel is then spread over the gardens of Oranienmund, which stands as an oasis in the centre of the desert. Now, gardeners digging their plots are finding diamonds which have been missed by the extraction process. They sometimes find over a hundred a day. One weighing five carats has turned up. The mining companies are paying the gardeners a shilling for each diamond they find."

The company encouraged householders to develop their gardens by providing soil and manure at very reasonable prices. A lorry load of silt was delivered for 20c. Rocks and slate were easily available for making pathways and rockeries. Garden implements and wheelbarrows were "borrowed" on a permanent basis. In fact, at one time the company issued a circular asking for the barrows to be returned to an area near the cinema. No questions would be asked. "It was quite amusing to see wheelbarrows arrive, per Owambo delivery, from all areas at dusk!" Some folk had the audacity to change their rusty barrow for a newer model! The Garden club was instrumental in getting people to grow a variety of plants and fruit trees for the various shows. The club apparently used to germinate all its own seedlings - the seed boxes were manufactured from old fruit boxes from the vegetable market. The Garden Club was prepared to germinate seed from private owners; they would take half for sale and germinate the rest for free. Orchids and violets were well known in Oranienmund. One Christmas, Norfolk pines were brought in as Christmas trees, about 3' tall. These were then sold to the public and were planted in private gardens and are the pines you see today! Many of the gardens became show pieces in their own right.



*Lamb's Park on a Sunday (Photo B. Mitchell)*



*The Silver Band (Photo J. Hockney)*

The community was delighted when an area including the river mouth was opened up and company vehicles were allowed to visit. Many clubs started their lives down by the river.

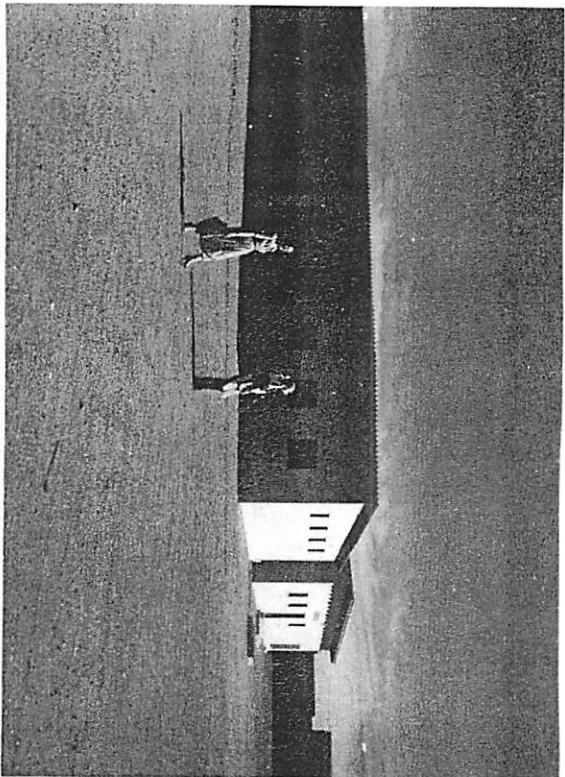
The Oranjemund community were invited to become members of the SW Mine Union but 75% were not interested. The labour turnover of staff had begun to stabilise; in 1950 there was a turnover of 30% and by 1956 it had dropped to 15.8%. The community was contented and most people were actively involved in developing their town. Wives were already practising a variety of arts and crafts and the exhibitions were most successful. Later the Recreation Club organised well known artists and other groups to exhibit in Oranjemund. Otto Klaat and George Enslin were two of the early exhibitors.

An area outside the Recreation Club was opened and George Lovell called it "Lamb's Park", after a nursery school. It was an open air cafe where mothers could bring their "lamb's". The Silver Band, started in 1938, conducted by Jack Hockney played at the opening. It was a very popular area and was frequently used on a Sunday morning. This was the only eating place open at this time. Families wandered along on a Sunday, met with friends and sat down at the tables that were dotted about. Gentle conversation flowed in equal proportion to the drinks and at times it was hard to imagine it was all happening in such a remote desert environment. Entertainment played a big part in the lives of the people and well-known entertainers often visited the town. Hypnotist, Max Collie, still a popular visitor today, paid his first visit in 1955.

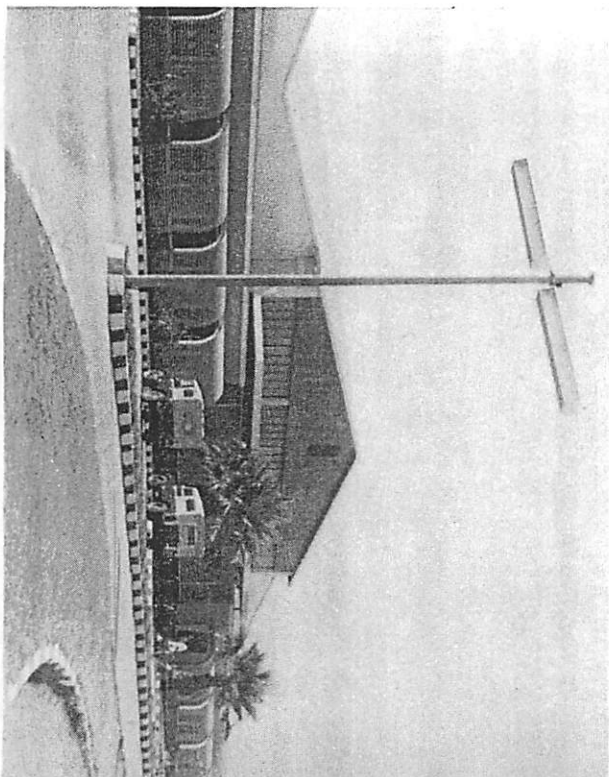
During the fifties the post office was extremely busy handling the finance of the community. Each hostel had an Owambo representative who would bring in the various savings books at the end of the month to be amended. Sometimes there were as many as 750 postal orders! The mail went by train to Bitterfontein and then with Jowells to Oranjemund. Airmail was introduced as early as 1952. Until 1958 telegrams were sent by radio morse code. There was a small telephone exchange handled by CDM with a line to Port Nolloth. The post office staff also used to advise the aircraft pilots about the weather in Oranjemund!

In 1956 the newsletter was inaugurated, the prime mover being Mr. S. Devlin. The newsletter encouraged letters to the editor, some of which touched on highly emotive issues. There were two categories of workers: staff members and the "daily paid" who were predominantly artisans. Staff were not entitled to overtime but did receive a Christmas bonus; the daily paid scored on the overtime! A daily paid apparently could become a staff member when he reached the salary of 45-00 pounds (R90-00), he was then given a free Chesterfield suite and a fridgel! There was much debate over social hierarchies and in one of the first issues, Vic Cummings wrote an article





*Early CDM store (Photo CDM)*



*The new store with the Palm trees (Photo CDM)*

called "The Centre Path". This was met with indignation from most directions as Cummings was criticising social class! Apparently there was quite a lot of snobbery among some groups but generally speaking there was a happy atmosphere. General Managers frequently had open-house on Christmas Day to which everyone was invited. The community was much smaller and allowed for more personal interaction. The newsletter provided an outlet for the community's gripes. A person could write in with a problem and it would be answered by management in a column known as "The Management Angle". Similarly, management could make their problems known in the same way. Many of the letters were amusing and people were encouraged to contribute poetry and articles. It was a monthly paper and has continued through Oranjemund's history to present day.

A play school was started by two mothers in a garage on 6th Avenue which delighted mums with little children. Mrs L. Snow and Mrs Brinton were in charge and they limited their numbers to 25. It was very successful but as the numbers grew so the premises had to change and later on the present nursery school was created.

The first ever airlift to Cape Town for high school children took place in December 1956 amidst great excitement. The children were the envy of their friends. It ended the long and tedious train and bus journeys and parents were greatly relieved.

The new store had been built much to everyone's glee, at a cost of 90 000 pounds (R180 000) and was called The Oranjemund Store. Prior to 1957 all legal matters arising in the community had to be dealt with in Luderitz or by a visiting magistrate. This was often very frustrating to all concerned. Thus, on September 6 1957 when a new Magistrates Court was opened in Oranjemund, it was another stepping stone towards a developing and sophisticated society. Eyes were agog when the magistrate was allowed to drive his own car into Oranjemund and offload his belongings - it was a beautiful Chev and was the envy of many! The first magistrate was Mr Nel who was accompanied by his wife. He was presented with the key in a silver casket.

An equally satisfying institution to some was "Casey's Bar" which was opened in 1957. It derived its name from St Casey, the Patron Saint of the prohibition era - Bootleggers! Casey's was only for males and had a parrot on the bar which would talk to the men. A famous Casey's character, "Kannie Worrie" Groenewald found he could not get out of town one Easter, so he decided to set up his tent on the centre island outside Casey's and proceeded to camp there for the weekend! The tree under which he camped was nicknamed after him, but it blew down in 1979! Undaunted, Groenewald planted another in its place in 1985 when he returned to Oranjemund for a brief spell. Prices for alcohol were extremely cheap.



There were a great many animals in the area including some big cats. Spoor of a leopard was picked up in the dunes outside town and followed to Area G. A team of lathers who were cleaning a bedrock gully in the mine area looked up and to their absolute horror, saw a leopard relaxing on the bedrock above their heads! Needless to say the area was cleared in record time while the leopard watched completely undaunted. The animal still refused to move and it was there that it was shot by Mr du Plessis. It was displayed in the police station and old timers still remember the event.

The first mule derby organised by the cine club was held on the present cricket field before it was grassed. It then moved to a site near Twelfth Avenue before occupying its present site. Mules and Owambo jockeys paraded through the town preceded by a drum majorette and a clown. The races started at 2 pm and were hilarious - some mules bolted, some only raced halfway while others left their jockeys behind! 300 pounds (R600-00) was raised and a great time was had by all, so it was decided to make it an annual event.

To the delight of the housewife the horrendously smokey paraffin stoves were replaced by gas stoves which burned Handigas. A poem submitted to the newsletter showed their delight.

"Oh what joy, the bliss the boon  
no more blackouts in the small back room  
for shining brightly, proud, erect  
That ultra modern super jet  
Restored our faith and calmed our fears  
to CDM three hearty cheers.  
"Housewife"

A population census showed there were 280 single men and only 19 single girls in 1958! The cartoons in the newsletter and the letters and poems illustrate what the young men thought of this situation!

Dear Sir

I notice that the girls of Oranjemund  
are very shy and reticent. Is it not  
possible that Leap Year, and particularly  
Feb 29, be held every second year?  
This will give the girls more scope.

Leapingly yours,  
Fused Fred (Newsletters)

Girls, girls, girls, girls,  
My blooming brain just whirls and whirls  
Why don't you boys officially adopt them,

Or ask the Daily Paid Committee to co-opt them.

A dead jackal was found outside the ladies' single quarters  
This makes a change from the usual wolves!  
(Newsletters)

Families took the single men under their wings and welcomed them into their lives, thus alleviating much of the loneliness. At the many dances the lack of ladies often led to friendly and not so friendly brawls between the single men. While two men were out debating as to who should claim a particular lass, they often came back to find her in the arms of someone else!

A discussion group was started in 1957 with the first topic being "The merits or otherwise of possible effects of automation". It was a popular group and they covered a wide variety of topics.

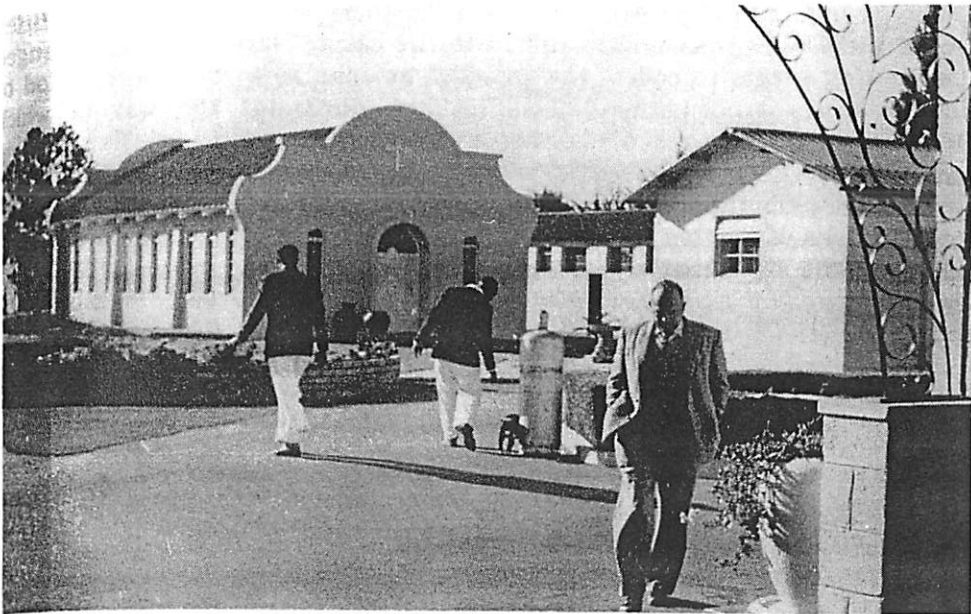
The low-level bridge was not standing up to the floods very well as the debris which collected under the bridge caused havoc. The bridge was often closed and Oranjemund was completely cut off in the 1958/59 floods. Dakota was used to dump provisions and keep communications open. The pilot apparently said the aircraft had done more drops than in the second world war. It was at this time that Dave Lineker, still resident in Oranjemund, performed a courageous deed. Apparently a milk truck was coming across the Bailey Bridge over the Orange River, when an Owambo stepped back and fell into the swirling water below. Dave dived in and managed to rescue the man and was awarded with a cheque from the company for his bravery.

A ladies bar which had been redesigned and opened in December 1958 was named Katey's. Apart from the Desert Inn Cafe which changed hands many times, there was no restaurant.

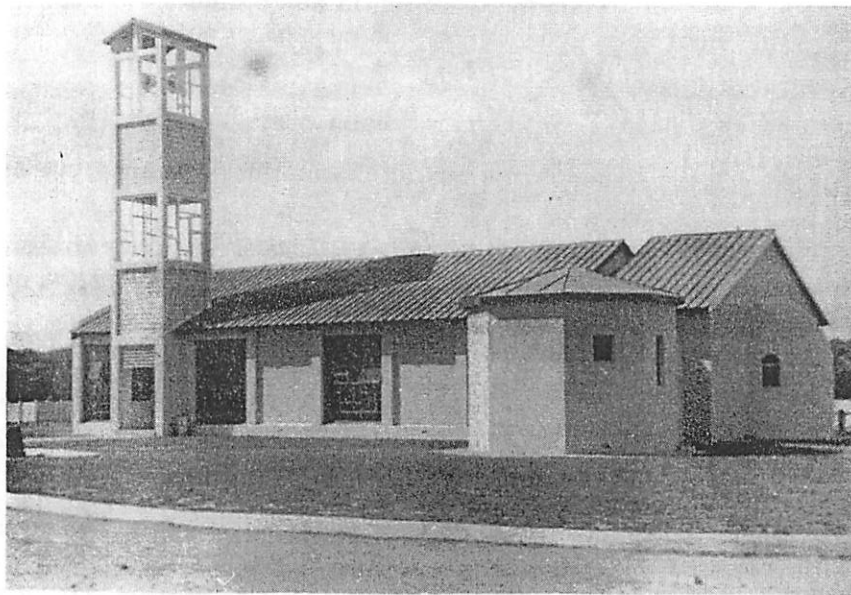
## The 1960's

Churches were built, often using the funds collected by the different congregations. The Dutch Reformed Church was consecrated by Domine Rensberg on 20 August 1960. A new cinema came into operation in 1960 at the old cinema was turned into a theatre. It was a very well run cinema. Films were shown twice weekly and often they would get films within a year of them being on circuit.

Four thousand trees and shrubs were planted to offer protection from the wind and sand. Special palm trees were imported to Oranjemund and the folk remember when fully grown trees were uprooted and planted in front of the Shopping Centre! The trees were removed by riggers under the



*The Owambo Church (Photo Windhoek Archives)*



*The Community church (Photo CDM)*

supervision of a Cape Town nursery man and placed in their current position.

There was a public meeting held to form a PTA at the school which was to become quite active. A youth club was formed in April 1960 to cope mainly with the high school children who wanted more to do during school holidays.

By 1960 the labour complement had risen to 913 permanents and 4401 migrants. The average permanent's wage was R189-82 and the average for the migrant was R13-61 per month. There were 225 earthmoving machines on the mine and 339 transport, road and supervision vehicles. There were 532 houses in town. Improvements to various buildings was ongoing and new buildings were continually erected as the need arose.

Prior to 1960, there were building societies and the post office to handle the population's finances. In approximately 1960, a branch of Barclays Bank was set up in Oranjemund close to where the current Data Processing building is situated. It was a very small branch in the beginning. However, as the town grew, so it increased and in 1968 moved to its current premises. The South West Building Society only came into being in 1970.

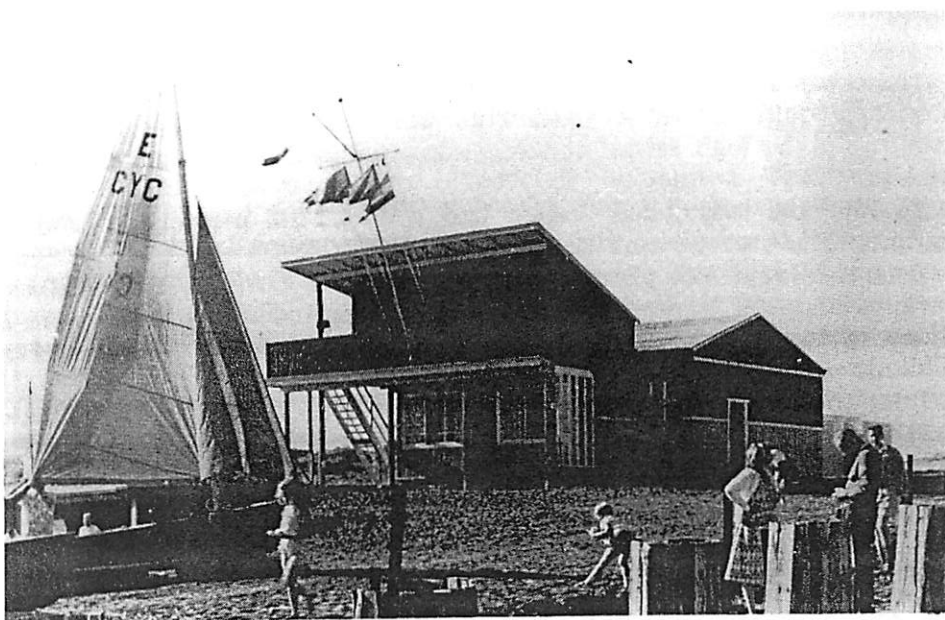
The Roman Catholic Chapel was built in 1961 - it was created by volunteers among church members, mainly composed of Portuguese and Italian craftsmen. On the south wall is a mural depicting Biblical scenes designed and painted by Ivan Morrow. The church got its name St Ann for the following reasons. St Ann was the mother of the Virgin Mary; Anne is the Patron Saint of Miners and Ann was the name of the Reverend Father's late mother. Father Deveney was mainly responsible for the erection and the completion of the chapel.

Much to the delight of the housewives, "self-service" was introduced into the store and later into the butchery, vegetable market and other places. Although there were initial teething problems such as not allowing sufficient space for prams, it was generally well accepted.

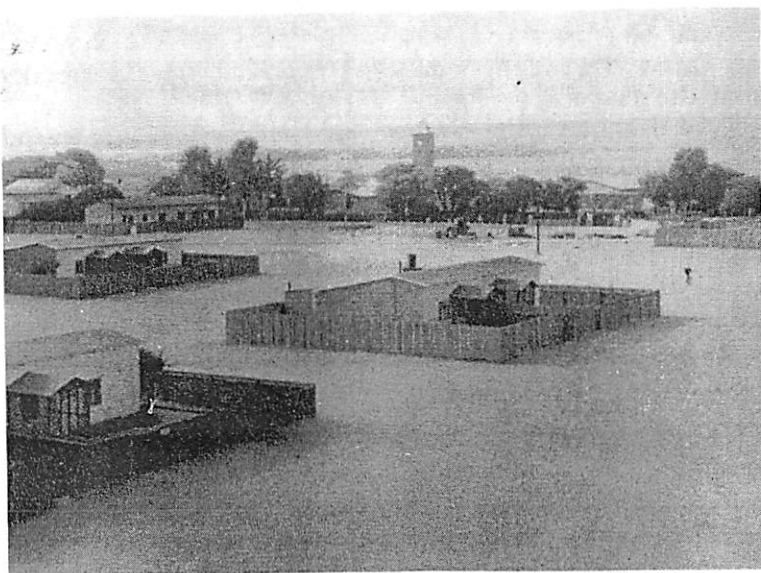
A sewage system was laid in 1962 and 330 houses were connected. Great trenches could be seen all over the town. One chap, returning from a party actually fell in and had to walk home in the trench until he thought he was near home. Shouting for his wife aroused his neighbours and they duly came to his rescue!

A primary school was completed at Beauvallon and a clinic was started. Soup rations were organised for the children.

In October 1962 the Scouts experienced an extremely proud moment. Rory O'Brien was awarded the Springbok badge for Scouts and became the first ever Springbok Scout in Oranjemund. His mother feels he achieved this honour largely because "of his happy relationship with and the co-operation of Ivan Morrow." In 1963, he was chosen to attend the International



*The Yacht Club in the early 60's (Photo Windhoek Archives)*



*Homes in the 60's (Photo CDM)*

Jamboree in Greece. The expense of getting there was high and Mrs O'Brien recalls the way Oranjemunders rallied to the cause; "various bodies arranged fund-raising events to collect the required amount. In a very short period of time this was accomplished." This incident illustrates the way in which Oranjemund people worked together as a community and were like one big family.

In June 1963 the Voortrekker Hall was inaugurated. It was constructed from portions of the old wooden houses and was built largely by parents and friends of the movement.

On Saturday 7 November 1964 the CDM Apprentice College was officially opened by Mr CF Marais, Secretary of SWA. The motto for the college was "Suma Petamus" (strive for the highest) and its objective was to train potential apprentices for the mine and outside. It had a very high standard and in the first few years it had no failures.

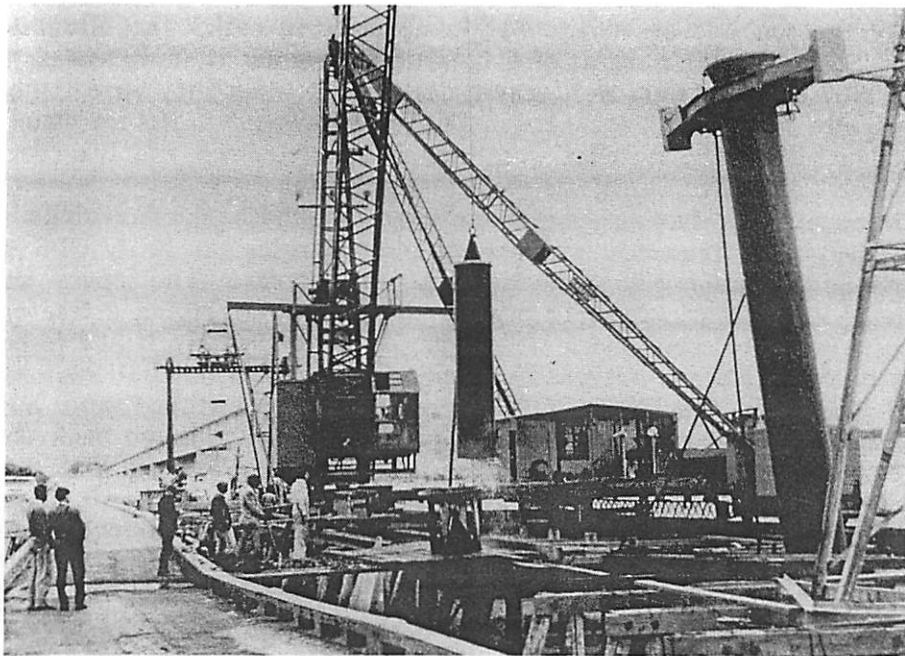
Transport became more freely available when vespar scooters were allowed into town and the introduction of a car hire service for recreational purposes was initiated. A fleet of 17 cars was made available to all CDM residents. The cars could be hired for any length of time up to 30 consecutive days.

Before it was banned, many of the residents used to go on "treasure hunts" on the waste dumps and found all sorts of useful items. Company furniture was not so plush and often people would supplement their furniture with goods from the dumps. Lawn mowers and fridges were among some of the items found!

Apart from gossip parties, many of the women in Oranjemund were actively involved in associations and projects. The WAA was very active and in their Hobbies Fair in the 60's, they proved how many talents were lurking in the mists. Some of the demonstrations included weaving, how to operate a knitting machine and pewter work. Wood carving and electro plating were among some of the more unusual hobbies. Often both husband and wife were involved and sometimes the whole family. It was a way to spend the evenings together, and catered for the non-sporty type family.

Around the beach area and the pan, there was initially a tangle of scrub, animal bones and droppings, salt crystals and evil smelling mud. The beach was inaccessible as there were dunes and salt bush with no hard roads or parking spaces. Once the area had been opened to the Oranjemunders, imaginations began to run rife as to how they could utilise the area. There were many abortive attempts to fill the pan with water. A channel was dozed from the beach to the pan in the hope that the Spring tides would fill the pan. Silting was so rapid that this attempt had to be abandoned. Then a waterline was draglined between the beach and the pan. Seepage kept this full and a pump transferred the water to the pan. Constant pumping took





*The old and new bridge (Photo CDM)*

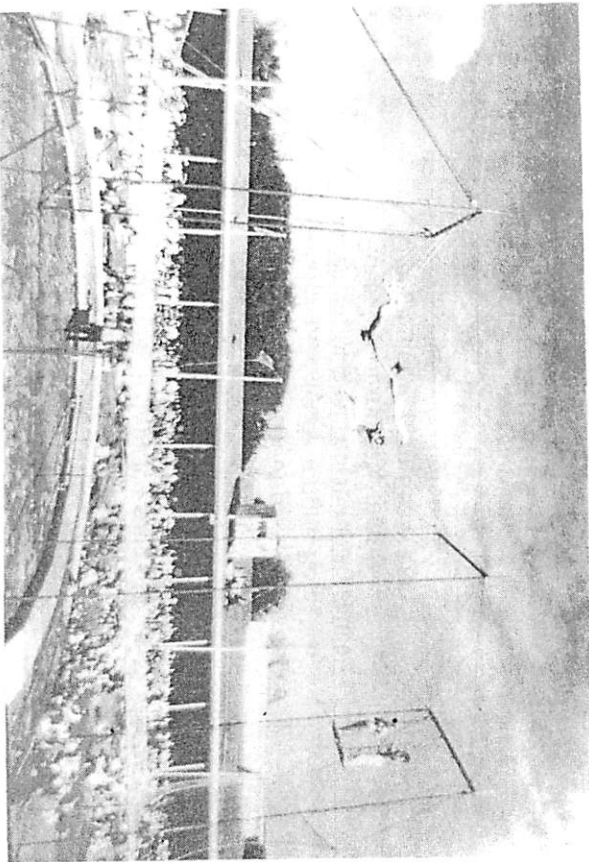
place. In the meanwhile, parking lots were laid out and roads were pushed through. However, the pan was not deep enough. Eventually the ubiquitous Sherman tank was resurrected and fitted with a winch. This and a harrow made from the old railway lines and a crescent-shaped bucket solved the problem! All this activity took place over several years and was mainly done by community members themselves. A "pre-fab" wooden building from the golf course was the first club house. Home-made boats were built at a rapid rate utilising every spare garage in town! It was with great jubilation that the new clubhouse was opened in 1964 by Mr Devlin and much fun and hilarity was enjoyed by all the yacht club members.

The new high-level bridge was opened in 1964. This made a difference to transport and communications.

Many of the parents were very unhappy about their children attending boarding school and complained to Management. Thus, it was decided to hold a referendum to decide whether or not to have a junior high school up to and including std 8. Arguments flew about the town and the debate became quite heated. Finally the figures were released from the referendum. 176 parents said yes (51%) and 173 parents said No (49%). Only 78% of the eligible parents voted. As a decisive majority of 66% in favour was required, the project was abandoned! It was during this time that the town gardens were being developed and in 1965, Bertie Hawkins became Township Supervisor. He also controlled the Parks and Gardens Department. Mrs Hawkins recalls: "It was he who started the gardens firstly in the then new North Hostel and then later he started the tremendous gardens at the old piggery. He supplied all the churches, cinema and the Recreation Club with flowers for weddings and functions." Many of the houses in Oranjemund already had beautiful gardens, through hard work and loving care. Wild animals were more prevalent and sometimes played havoc. One resident woke up one morning to find his lawn a mass of holes. Furious he banned the hound to the back garden. To his amazement, the next morning there were more holes - "blasted jackals this time I suppose," he mused. On the third morning, much to his consternation, some of his pigeons had been decapitated. On inspecting the loft, it appeared the culprit had dug underneath the loft. He duly closed up the hole with boulders - but the next morning more pigeons had bitten the dust. The hole was now closed with bricks and timber and the resident was determined to catch the culprit. At about midnight movement alerted him and there in the shaft of light thrown from the garage could be seen a SKUNK! An air gun blasted and the skunk leapt into the air and escaped through the hole in the fence. Thinking the skunk may return the following evening he set a trap and waited. Sure enough, another member of the family came to try his luck and went for the bait near the trap door. Just when the gentleman thought he had at last met with success, the skunk



*Men and dogs were used for security purposes (Photo T. McNally)*



*Circus Hi-Fli comes to Oranjemund (Photo CDM)*

managed to escape through a small hole! But it never returned.

On another occasion, a resident decided to befriend a "wounded" red kestrel and fed it meat every morning. The bird certainly took advantage of the situation and became rather familiar: "One afternoon, the man, returning from work had just closed the door of his car, when without warning he felt a sharp pain on top of his bald head. The kestrel really took a shine to this man's bald head. The wife of course, coming out to meet her husband was at first shocked by this approaching apparition, then amused and finally the whole neighbourhood was echoing with her laughter. The man on the other hand was not amused as he could feel the claws tightening with every step. Finally the son was asked to fetch some meat to entice the bird off the brain!" Such were the hazards of living in a remote desert town!

In 1967 tennis players were given a rare treat when they were visited by Bob Hewitt, Martin Mullingar, Helen Cowley, Pat Walkden, Robert Maud and Frew Macmillan. The matches were magnificent to watch and the coaching the players gave afterwards was particularly helpful.

Oranjemunders have always been aware of those less fortunate than themselves and frequently support various charities. In 1967, OPS came second in a nation-wide collection for cancer care. The opera singer, Hannelie van Niekerk, came to present the prize and planted a tree in the school grounds to commemorate the occasion. Unfortunately, it had to be cut down in the 80's because it was threatening the school's foundations.

In 1968 the first IBM 360/30 computer was installed and a data processing team was chosen and went into training. It was the beginning of the computer era which has led to the use of one of the most sophisticated systems about.

At this time security was still a relatively small department. Migrants were selected as guards and were used to patrol the enormous Sperrgebiet area. Trained dogs accompanied them. The x-ray system was still the main IDB deterrent. Men in security were carefully chosen, preferably with police background. In the 60's the men went on courses to improve their knowledge on x-rays and there was already on-the-job training. As more and more people arrived it was imperative to increase the numbers of the Security Department.

The Christmas Tree party continued to be an annual event; one that was looked forward to by all. In 1969 the Circus Hi-Fly came to town and was a talking point in the town for years to come! Keith Anderson was responsible for bringing the circus to Oranjemund. Many preparations had to be done first. The trapeze used was built at Central Fields in the mining area. Keith had added an extra 6' to the design height, making it one of the highest aerial rigs in the world! Keith thought it was the best constructed rig he had ever seen. After the event the rig was donated to the YMCA in Observatorij.

## SOUP

Consommé aux sherry

## FISH

Crab á la Coral Reef  
Rock Lobster Bellevue  
Smoked Canadian Salmon  
Oysters in Tabasco sauce

## COLD DISHES

Roast stuffed turkey favorite  
Sucking pig and roast loin of pork, apple sauce  
Mayonnaise glazed ox tongue Romaine  
Roast sirloin of beef, horse radish sauce  
Roast leg of mutton, mint jelly  
Orange glazed ham Beauvallon  
Fillet Wellington  
Salami

## HOT DISHES

Chicken peri peri Vol au Vent  
Tripe Lyonnaise and rice  
Steak and kidney pie

## SALADS

Waldorf, tomato, potato, beetroot, carrot, cucumber,  
Mixed salad bowl, egg salad, asparagus princess

## SWEETS

Baked Alaska, milk tart, fruit salad,  
Cream Chantilly, rum and raisin bombé,  
Gooseberry cream slice, whipped cream

Rolls

Assorted cheeses  
Coffee

Biscuits

*Visit of the Prime Minister  
The Honourable B.J. Vorster, M.P., and Mrs Vorster  
March 27th, 1969*

Cape and was used to train young fliers.

Politics had always played an important part in the lives of local residents. Elections were carefully followed and it was important which party you belonged to. In 1969, a fascinating event in the history of Oranjemund occurred. Mr Henry Delpont who was very interested in politics decided to invite the Prime Minister, Mr B.J. Vorster to Oranjemund. He went ahead and Mr Vorster accepted. Chaos erupted and the General Manager was immediately informed! The invitation should have come from Johannesburg so it was rather an embarrassing situation. Plans got underway for the historic visit. Special emblems were made for the lamp posts. Flowers and food were ordered from different parts of South Africa. Elaborate decorating transformed the Rec hall. Special security was arranged for the entourage. The whole town buzzed with excitement and as the time drew closer they could hardly contain themselves! Special menus and itineraries were printed. At last there was only one day to go - would they be ready? Then the impossible happened. Only a day before the momentous visit, the Prime Minister cancelled as he was not able to fly due to health reasons. Can you imagine the disappointment? What a lost opportunity!

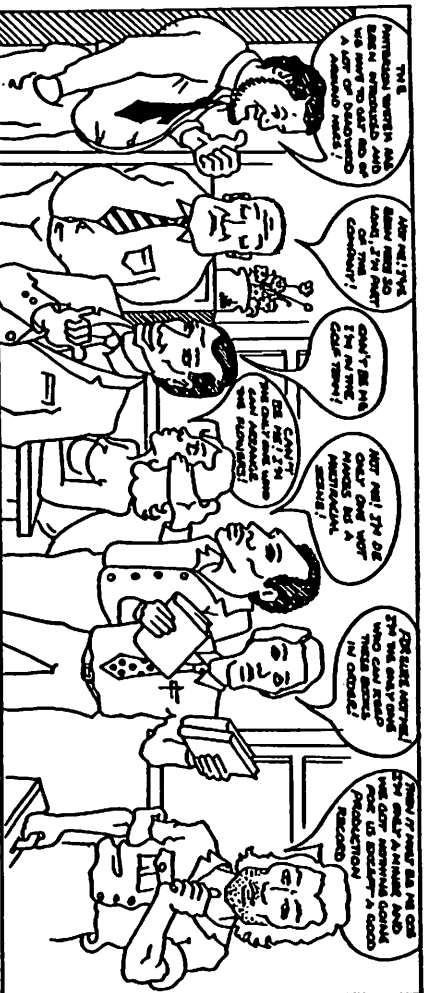
## The Early 1970's

By the early 70's most of the development in the town was complete and Oranjemund was a little self-contained city. Many of the children and adults had done extremely well in sporting activities. In 1972, Coreen Swannepoel was selected as a Springbok and represented South Africa in the Heidelberg Paraplegic Olympic games. It was a terrific thrill for the community and for Coreen. Coreen is also one of the few people to have swum across from the mainland to Robben Island in Cape Town and for her efforts she was awarded a gold medal at the Sportsman of the Year Award in 1986.

In the mid-seventies, the helicopter was being flown around the area when a leopard was sighted hiding behind some low bushes. It was decided to fly low to take photographs, so the helicopter hovered above the animal. Suddenly, without warning the leopard jumped and for a few seconds clung to the nose of the helicopter! With extreme haste the helicopter retreated - claw marks were clearly visible on the nose end and the adrenalin in the two occupants was pumping overtime!

During the development of the town, the type of person employed gradually changed. In the beginning, qualifications were not a prerequisite. Men were employed if they were prepared to work hard and learn on the job. Consequently men and women were very versatile and could turn their hands to a variety of skills. Generally, folk came and stayed for extremely





Cartoon taken from old newsletters (Artist P. Turner)

long periods of time, often until retirement, with the result that today the are third generation Oranjemunders. This gave the town stability, continuity and the family atmosphere it has always been famous for. In the 50's, learner officials came onto the mine and went through stringent and diverse training. The General Manager was responsible for the entire running of the mine as he is today. However, he did not have highly structured departments with well-qualified people to assist him; it was rather general. As the mine became more sophisticated and tertiary and university education became more commonplace, so too the work force began to take on a new structure. People were more specialised in their fields and departments became more structured. This became very noticeable in the early 70's. It was obvious that some system would have to be introduced to grade the different responsibilities. The Patterson system was chosen which in this instance, works on levels of responsibility regarding decision making. By 1975, three very influential happenings had occurred: television followed by video hit Oranjemund; Patterson grading was introduced and in October 1975 it was decided to OPEN the town to enable people to come and more freely. These three factors were to change the town radically and was never quite the same again. When television was first introduced reception was shocking and many Oranjemunders wrote to the SABC to complain. However, they got no joy, as SABC wasn't prepared to consider their complaints! It was only when antennae were set up at Beauvallon, that reception improved. On the mining side, great development had taken place and the developers had paved the way for the innovators who would have and still have today, a challenging task.

## Mining 1950 - 1975

It is impossible to mention all the development that took place during this time or to mention all the people who played a part. However, we can trace the main developmental features, which improved processes used previously.

According to Mr Louwrens (former General Manager of CDM), the operating conditions on the West Coast in South West Africa "are probably amongst the most severe and rugged in the world." Firstly the soft sand caused many problems with earth moving equipment. The resistance to a rubber-tyred scraper in sandy conditions is four times more than on a normal dirt road. Thus the routes had to be built up with clay or shale and kept watered and scraped - this is an ongoing problem.

Further, there are high winds which carry vast quantities of sand and dust, necessitates special cleaning processes for machinery. From the very early mining times, it was necessary to erect huge workshops and the maintenance



*Drag line opening western end of prospecting trench removing overburden (Photo T. McNally)*



*Trenching - foreground - removing soft sand to expose diamond bearing material  
(Photo T. McNally)*

of vehicles was closely monitored. The proximity of the Atlantic Ocean increases corrosion which is further aggravated by the salt-laden mists. Often the winds sandblast the surfaces of machines which immediately rust thus the surfaces have to be protected. Electrical equipment, like switchboards and starters had to be specially protected against dust, moisture and dew. These were the conditions the men had to endure.

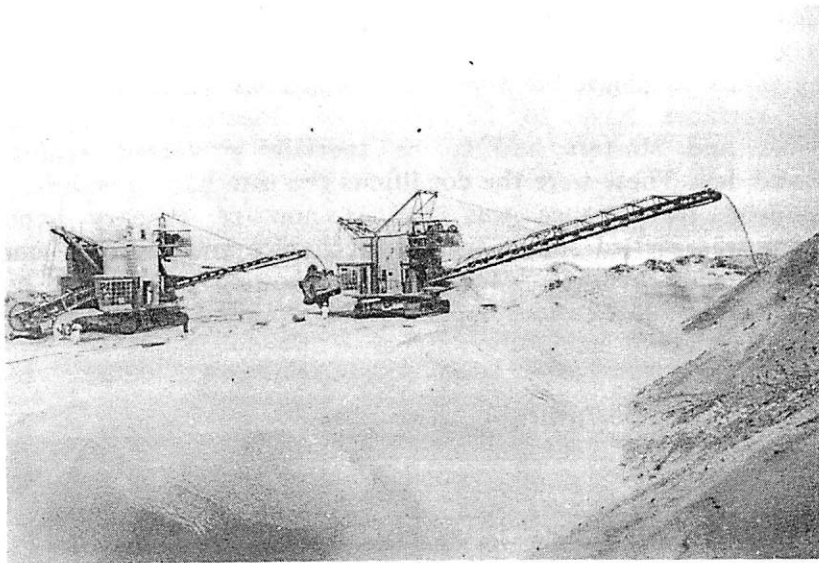
Thus, good maintenance was and is now of primary importance. Maintenance was carried out by trained mechanics and carefully monitored, with records being kept for each machine showing its output, hours of operation, fuel and oil consumption and running costs. By 1957 a sophisticated system of machine maintenance already existed.

## Prospecting and Sampling

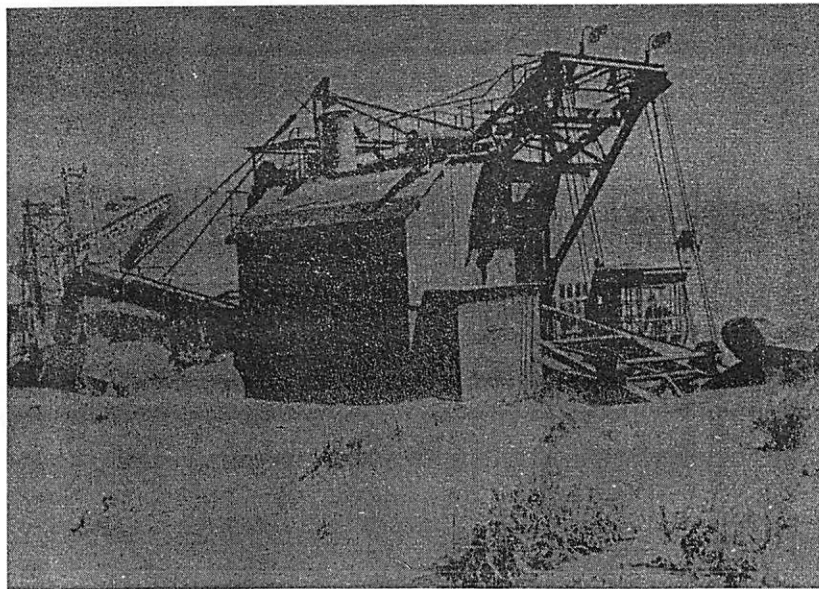
During the 50's, prospecting and sampling was carried out in much the same way as earlier covering an area from Area "G" to Affenrucken. Prospectors led a lonely, wind-blown life while working the jigs and trommels. The diamonds recovered were duly logged and plans were compiled to decide upon future mining areas. Large sections of the mine area were largely undisturbed and on first appearance seemed to be barren wastelands. However, it was teeming with wild life; gemsbok and springbok filled the horizon. Walking was a hazard as the desert was alive with field rats and their burrows were everywhere. Snakes were prolific, so much so that the prospectors had competitions to see who could bring home the most snakes - sometimes the competitions took precedence over work! Horned adders, cobras and mole snakes were the most common. The snakes often hid under the large wooden boxes used for holding samples. For many years, the prospectors had the privilege of living close to a family of cheetah which lived on a rocky outcrop in Kerbehuk.

Four lonely prospectors were living in the Mittag area and took turns to make the coffee in the evening. One dark, misty night, one went out and stumbled over a "dog" - he gave it a kick to get it out of the way and then to his amazement found it was a Strandwolf (Brown Hyena)! The coffee was duly forgotten!

In 1964 the Benoto drill was introduced and the sampling area was increased to encompass the entire foreshore area from the Orange River mouth to Luderitz. This machine reached depths of 20 metres or more and the hole had a diameter of 0,94 metre. The drills were used in another project in the late 1960's in the western block. The results from the drills were deemed unreliable but indicated the presence of diamonds in payable quantities. During this period, the men worked 12 hour shifts in very trying conditions. The access roads had to be made well in advance of the drills -



*Scoops in tandem removing overburden (late 40's, early 50's) (Photo T. McNally)*



*Scoop cutting overburden bank. Stackers discharging into worked out mine (1960's) (Photo CDM)*

this was done by a D8 bulldozer. One evening, the dozer driver refused to go on shift because demons were after him and he was afraid of being eaten alive! The foreman asked for a volunteer to go with him on the shift and the two duly set off. During the early hours of the morning they were surrounded by eyes glaring at them. When the dozer stopped, half a dozen strandwolves attempted to climb aboard! They dumped everything and hastened for the camp!

One morning, a young prospector was preparing for the day when a great commotion startled him. It was coming from the trenches. When he arrived he found the Owambos had killed a wild cat and were bringing him 4 little kittens, barely able to open their eyes. As supplies were sometimes short, he was forced to feed them on diluted condensed milk! They grew rapidly but only one became the slightest bit tame. Only one of the kittens ultimately survived the hazards of a field camp and it was last seen sitting quietly on the roof of an old hut as the prospectors moved to another camp. Prospecting in the early days was certainly a life of excitement.

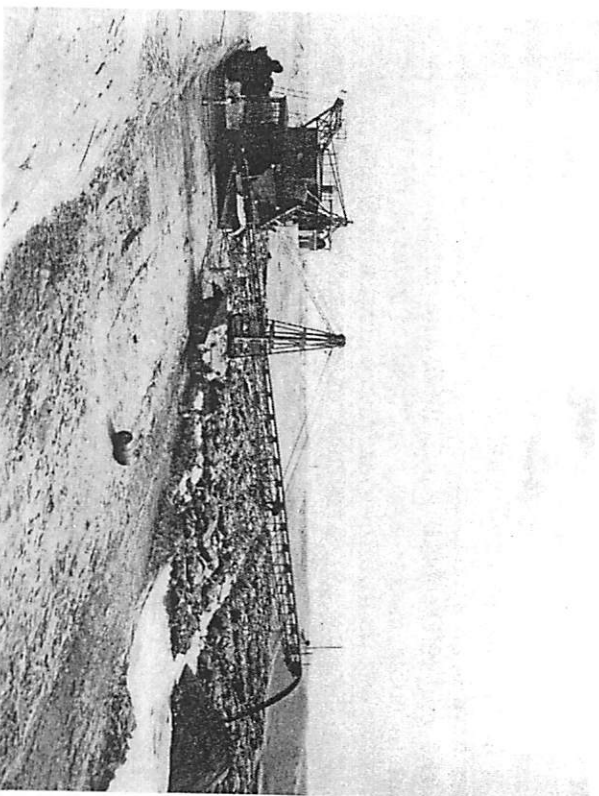
In 1972, the first linear assay from a current mining face was taken in the western block. In 1973, the sample trenches were increased to be 10 metres wide and were spaced at 1 000 metre intervals in order to sample the bedrock gullies which are usually about 8 metres apart. Prospecting and sampling are an important part of mining activity, enabling estimates of diamond reserves to be made and to predict which new areas to mine.

## Overburden Stripping

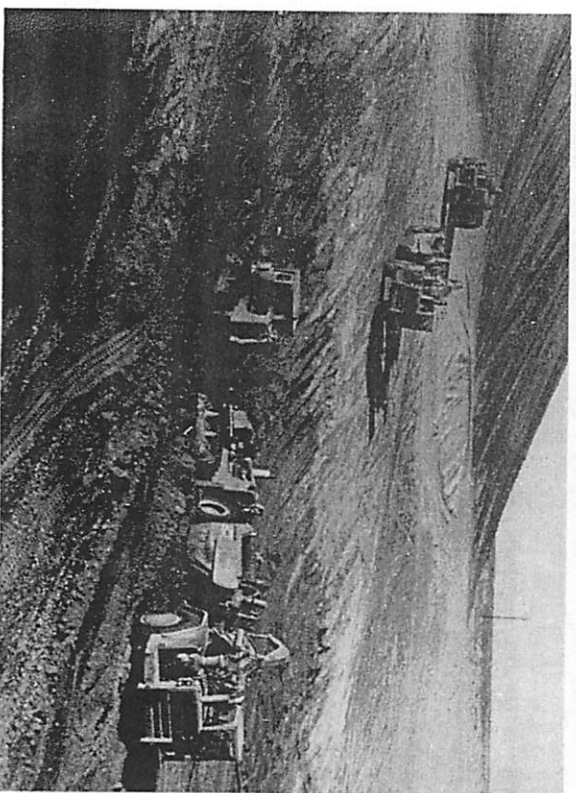
In the early 50's the overburden was stripped by using bucket excavators, which could move 80 - 100 tons of sand an hour. The Sherman tanks were converted and used as tractors. The tanks were then converted to stackers and were used with rotary bucket excavators to remove the loose sand. The throw-back method was used and they usually worked in an area that had already been opened up. A bulldozer was used almost continually to prepare the areas. It was a cumbersome way of mining as time was lost moving the scoops and power points had to be set up at each mine face. Diesel generating sets were required to move each scoop. In the early 1960's the first Lubecker scoop arrived, capable of moving between 180 and 200 cubic metres per hour. Manoeuvring problems were still experienced and the scoops were phased out in the mid-sixties. In 1974 the first bucket-wheel excavator was introduced. It had a 110 metre bridge to allow for a continuous operation. The bucket-wheel has a target efficiency of 1 000 cubic metres per hour and a monthly call of 400 000 cubic metres. The machine requires 3 operators and works for about 22 hours a day. The system cost approximately R 3 million.

Other machines used over the years include the draglines which were





*Throw back system clearly illustrated (Photo T. McNally)*



*Scrapers removing secondary overburden (Photo CDM)*

used on the western ends of prospecting trenches. The Sauerman Tower Scraper, comprised of 2 large towers which operated in the upper terraces in the 50's was scrapped in 1956 because it was largely impractical. The first openbowl diesel driven scrapers with push dozers appeared on the mine as early as 1952 - the Le Tournneau "D". They were fast and relatively inexpensive. The Caterpillar DW 21 scraper was introduced in the mid 50's with a stripping capacity of approximately 100 cubic metres an hour. Larger dozers, including the Caterpillar D9 and the Euclid TC12 arrived on the mine in the late 50's.

Larger and more effective scrapers were purchased in the 1960's and early 1970's until the present day fleet was established. Ongoing tests are prevalent on the mine, attempting to find the most cost-effective way of stripping overburden. Maintenance and servicing was and is always strictly controlled. Outstanding workshop facilities are situated throughout the mine area, the main shops being at Uubvley. Safety is always an important factor, as has always been the case.

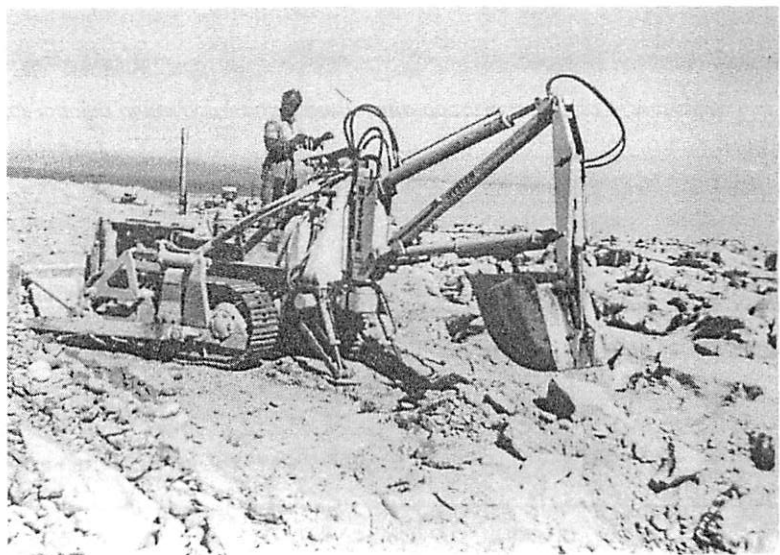
## Loading and Hauling

Cocopans were the earliest method of hauling and the loading was later done by a 19 RB or a 24 RB excavator. In 1952, the first diesel driven dumper, Le Tournneau rocker, with a carrying capacity of 5,5 cubic metres was purchased. Until 1968, small screening plants (18 in all) were placed in strategic positions throughout the mine. Thus the distance to travel was not so great. In the mid 60's, Michigan 210 dumpers, with a carrying capacity of 12 cubic metres were bought and excavators were replaced by front end loaders.

In 1968, the first centralised conglomerate plant replaced the screening plants in the northern areas and thus the haulage distances increased. To cope with these new conditions, various hauling units were investigated; WABCO HAULPAK LW50, TEREX R45 and INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER 180 PAYHAULER. These were found to be unsuitable for various reasons and the tests continued. Finally, very fast vehicles, the Ralph trucks and Kenworth's were purchased but to accommodate them on the mine special haul roads had to be laid to each mining site. After much trial and error, with many mechanical difficulties, these vehicles proved to be unsuitable. The Caterpillar 769 was to be more successful and was used on the other plants.



*Bedrock Cleaning - note amount of physical handling of material (Photo T. McNally)*



*The Cat D4 - an attempt at mechanisation prior to the introduction of the Poclain (Photo CDM)*

## Bedrock Cleaning

This has always been a difficult job on the mine and the problems are ongoing. It is difficult to know what incentives should be used and a variety of schemes have been attempted.

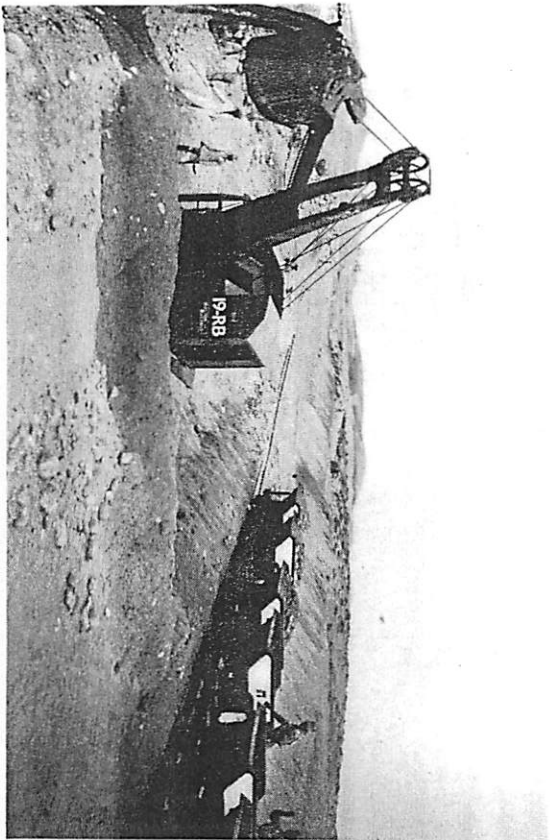
From the mid-1950's until April 1966, the scheme used was to measure the output in cubic metres and pay bonuses related to the average volume produced per man shift. However, there was a problem with the lack of mechanical assistance and accuracy in measuring the material excavated. Apart from a small dozer, much of the work was done by hand which resulted in much of the material being rehandled, especially in the deep gulleys. Mechanical assistance was found with the purchasing of Vacuveyors which were basically large, electrical vacuum extractors. It involved a three man team: the suction nozzle was operated by one man, the removal of material to prevent blocking was done by another and the third man controlled the moving and the positioning of the unit. Having removed the loose material the lashing gang would follow to loosen the remaining ground. There was a 32% decrease in efficiency using this method so it was duly scrapped.

During the late 60's, other methods were tried and tested; monitoring and jet-lifting proved to be more expensive and less efficient as did the use of mini-conveyors.

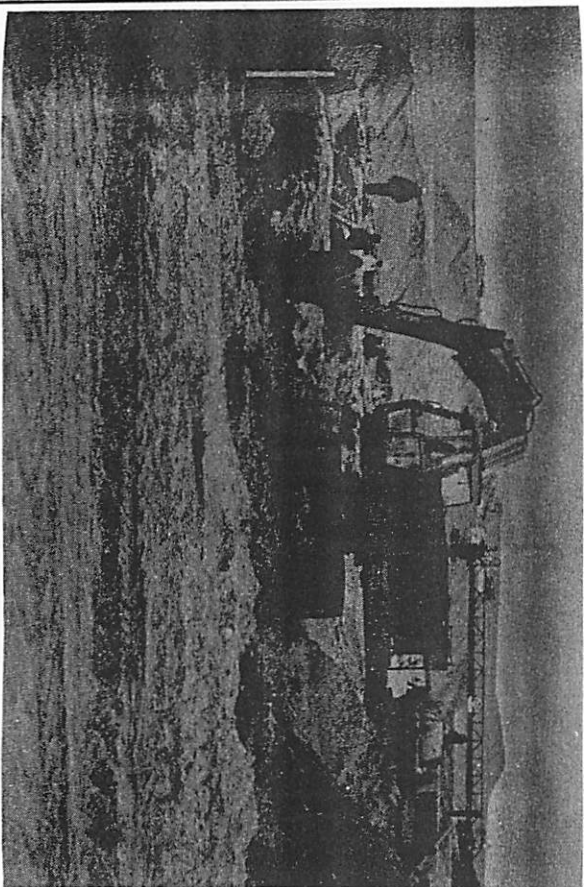
In the earlier days, baboons could often be seen near the various hostels and going down to the beach. The baboons at Affenrucken lived in the "lap of luxury", as they stayed just behind the mess! A baby was caught by an Owambo who decided to keep it as a pet. They became inseparable, and could be seen driving up and down the haul road in a Ralph truck - the baboon often sharing the wheel! In the same area, a team of lashers was cleaning a beach paddock. One day a large male baboon pitched up. He was fascinated by the activity so decided it was his duty to stay around. As the Owambos got used to him so he became more and more daring. Eventually he would arrive in the morning when they did, walk among them during the day, share their lunch and then knock off when it was time to go home! This went on for months, then it was decided he may well become dangerous so the police were called in to shoot him. The baboon's uncanny natural instinct saved him - he could discriminate between "friendly" vehicles and "dangerous" ones. Every time the police arrived he was nowhere to be seen. Happily he eventually left of his own accord.

In mid-1968 a new incentive scheme was introduced where the number of square metres swept per man shift was rewarded. This was coupled with other mechanical improvements. A Poclain LY2P Hydraulic Excavator was tested in areas where there were deep gulleys. An area was divided into

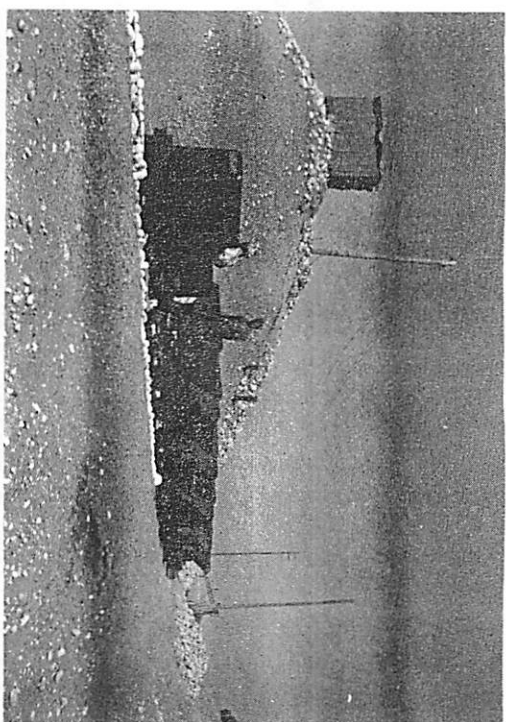




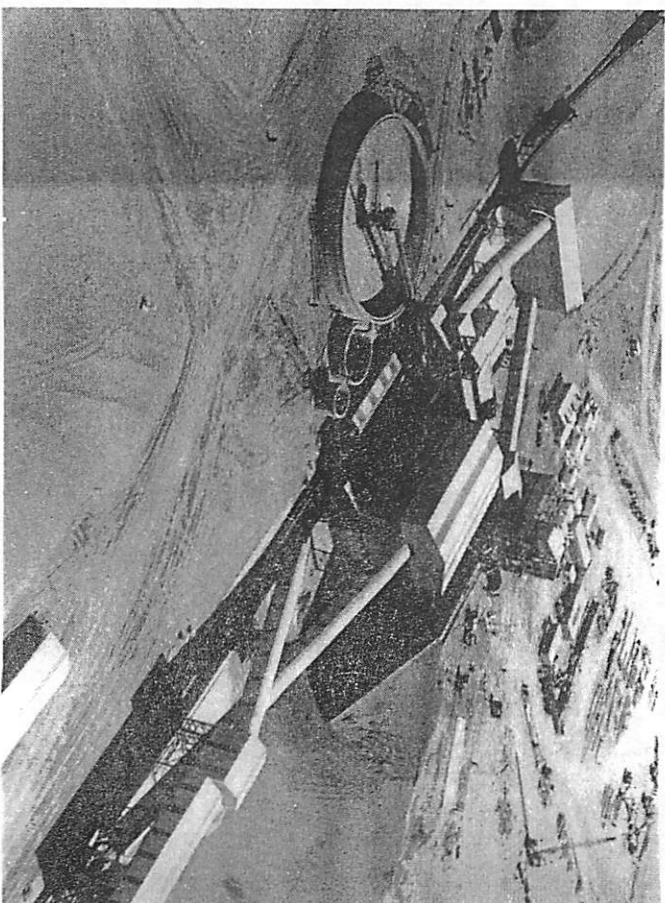
*Small excavator loading diamondiferous material into cocopans (Photo T. McNally)*



*Poolain removing bulk of material from gullies before lashing commences (Photo CDM)*



*Empty cocopans returning to mine, drawn by locomotives (Photo T. McNally)*

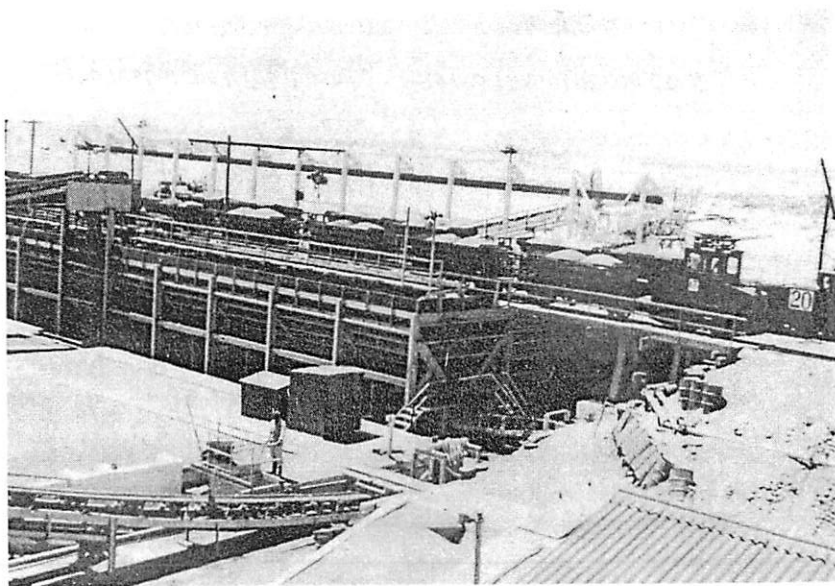


*Sampling plant (50G) for treating all megatrench samples (Photo CDM)*





*Early screening plant (late 40's to early 50's) (Photo T.McNally)*



*Gravel being transported from screening plants and arriving at No 4 Plant recovery bin (Photo CDM)*

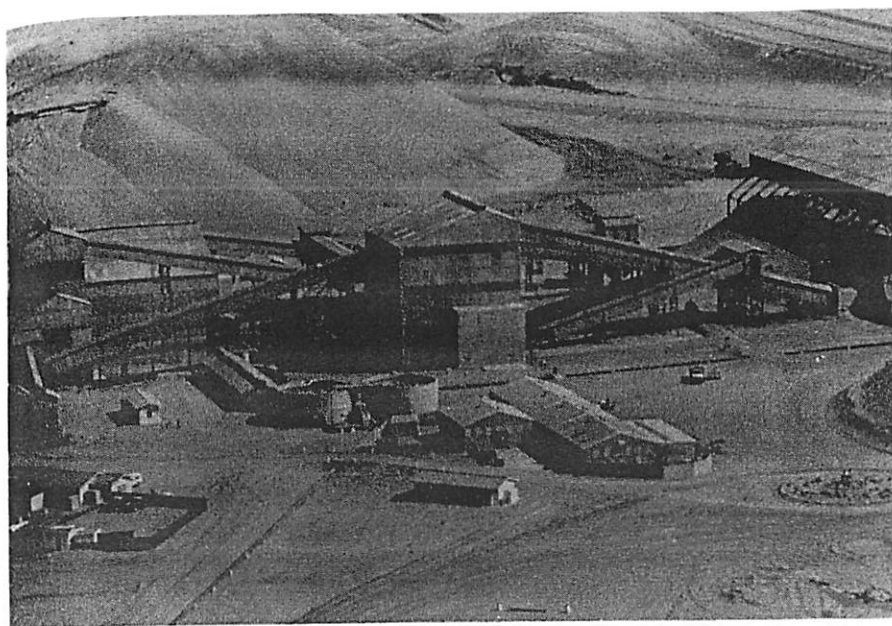
panels four metres wide in a north-south direction. The excavator, with a backactor attachment and a standard size bucket, excavated the north end of the first panel removing 85% of the bulk of the ground. The lashing gang then cleaned the remainder of the ground from the crests and threw it into excavated gullies. Having exposed the ground, it was then swept. The excavator moved to the next panel, removing the ground accumulated by the lashing gang and the next bulk of ground. Once the second panel was complete the lashing gang finished the final sweeping in the first panel, thus eliminating any rehandling. This ingenious system worked well, was 30% cheaper and was very efficient. The experimentation had at last paid dividends.

## Screening

Prior to 1968, all the screening of the ground was done by small plants strategically placed throughout the mining area. There were 3 dry plants in Area "G", and all the others were wet plants. The head feed into these plants was 950 cubic metres per 10 hour shift. The tipping bin had a 15 inch grizzly which fed onto a conveyor belt. The plants screened off the +25 mm and the -2 mm undersize. Any material bigger than the prescribed size was pounded with hammers. Flared bars controlled the size distribution and helped to prevent blocking. There were 2 desanding screens with varying apertures. Material considered too small was pumped out to sea. The intermediate size range was transported to a central plant for further treatment. 142 U screening plant was once the pride of CDM's plants. It got its water from a rocky outcrop in the north. A new mine was opened up south of the plant and the overburden was dumped in the sea. A month later the plant ceased to work as no water was coming in. On investigation, the foreman saw thousands of crayfish, trying to get away from the sand which had covered the intake pump! The men watching managed to extricate many that were being buried alive and the majority made it to the fresh water north of the rocky outcrop. Those unfortunate few who didn't escape were enjoyed for lunch! The west coast was living up to its reputation of crayfish famel

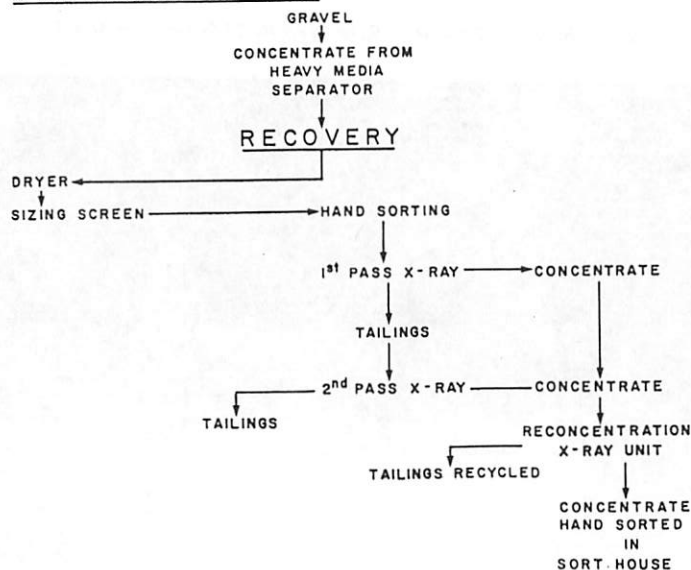
Early in 1964, the Yuba jigs were installed at many of the plants to decrease the load which was going through to the recovery plants. After 4 years, these jigs were considered to be unsuitable as there was considerable diamond loss.

After extensive testwork it became obvious that a large, centrally located conglomerate plant was economically more viable. In 1968, No 1 Plant near Affenrucken was commissioned. The crushing, screening and milling sections of No 4 Plant were commissioned in 1969/70. It has always been the centre



*The first of the large crushing plants (No 1 Plant) (Photo CDM)*

#### X-RAY RECOVERY FLOW SHEET



of the final recovery and hand sorting operations. No 2 Conglomerate Plant was commissioned in 1975. The most modern and sophisticated of CDM's Conglomerate crushing plants, No 3, was brought on stream in 1977.

## Gravel Transport

Locomotives have always played a part in the diamond industry and were extremely important in Oranjemund until 1972. Locomotives were used on the Kolmanskop to Pomona run until 1940. In 1950 a railway line was constructed from Oranjemund to Mittag, costing R 1 374,00 per mile. There were offshoots to the various screening plants. The line was used to carry supplies to the hostels and workshops, gravels to the screening plants and men to their place of work. As many as 860 men were transported to their sites daily. Keeping the track free of sand was a fulltime job! The amount of gravel to be transported averaged about 1 500 cubic metres daily.

When the large conglomerate plants were introduced, it was decided that it was more viable to introduce road transport and thus the rail system was phased out in 1972.

## Recovery Processes

The Treatment Plant concentrates the material fed into it until only heavy concentrates remain. The material goes through the processes of being crushed, washed, classified, x-ray sorted and hand sorted. Prior to 1954, the gravels at some of the smaller plants were jigged and hand sorted on site. Many tests were tried to improve upon the methods of recovery. In mid-1952, heavy media separation was introduced at the central recovery plant. The slurry was at a density of 2,7 to 3,1. After many frustrations, grease belts were installed to treat the large and medium size fractions of concentrate in the Central Recovery Plants. They remained in operation until 1975 and were advantageous as they did not have to be stopped at frequent intervals.

By the early 1960's it became obvious that the present heavy media separation cone was insufficient and so a new HMS plant was commissioned in 1964. However, due to high costs it was closed down in 1971. In 1950, an electrostatic precipitator pilot plant was erected and tests were performed. This plant required extremely high voltage and treated the small concentrate size fractions. It was installed in 1953 and remained in operation until 1964.

## Sorting

After the rather primitive sorting conditions of the forties and early



*Hand sorting (Photos T.McNally)*



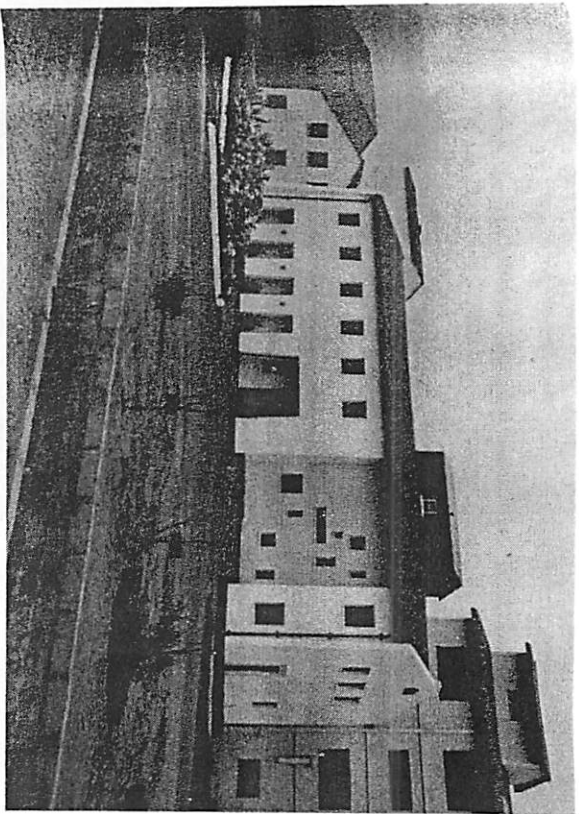
fifties, it was essential to find a better method of sorting. Until the x-ray method of sorting was introduced, hand sorting was done from the grease tables. X-ray separation was introduced in 1975. The gravel is screened into 4 size ranges, any material below the cut-off size is rejected. Each size goes through a double pass route through XR112B x-ray machines. Concentrates from this machine pass through XR22 or XR23 concentration machines. The resulting concentrates go through a series of pipes, along a conveyor belt and into the sort house where the diamonds are picked out by hand.

It was during this era that two other spectacular feats of engineering took place. By the early 60's it was obvious that a regular and accessible fuel supply was urgently required on the mine. Mechanisation was taking place fast and furiously and fuel was being used accordingly. As a result, the concept of a pipeline under the ocean was conceived and later executed. It was a highly complex and difficult project. The Atlantic, fog and difficult weather conditions were a few of the hindrances which faced the team. Storage tanks were constructed on the mine and it was decided that undersea pipelines would be laid, thus allowing fuel to be pumped onshore from oil tankers to the storage tanks. At last after many anxious months, the project was complete.

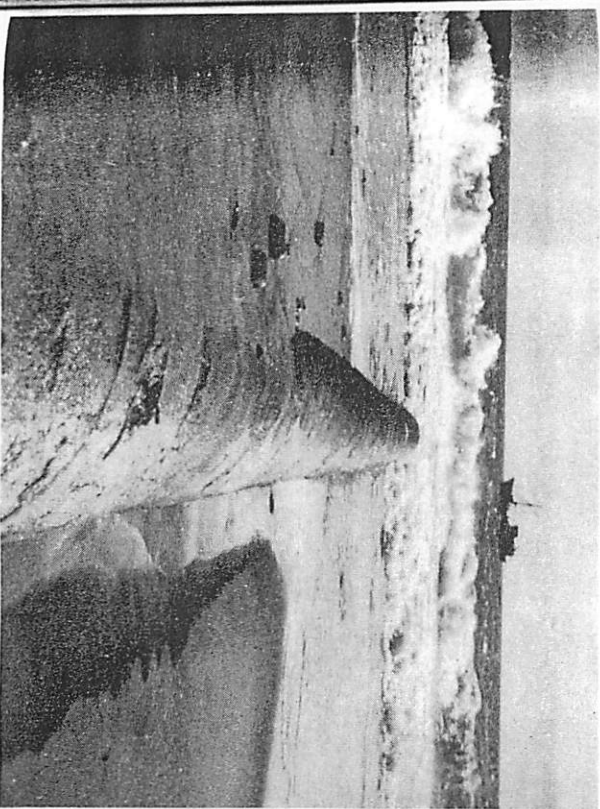
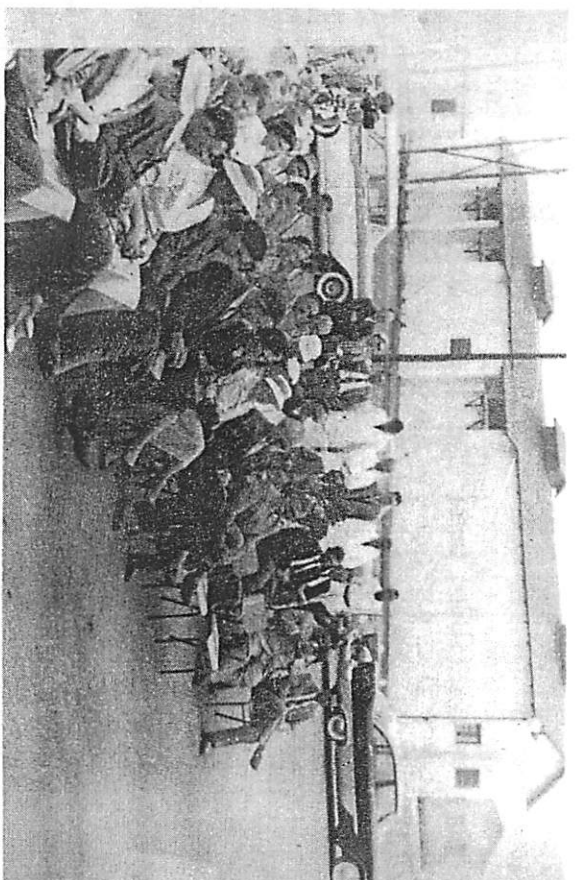
While mining next to the sea, the obvious question arises as to whether it is possible to hold back the sea so that the beaches below sea-level can be mined, a daring suggestion. In July 1971, an area was being stripped by Cat 657 scrapers which were push-loaded by D9 dozers. The overburden was being dumped in the sea. It was realized that it was indeed possible to hold the mighty Atlantic Ocean back. By January 1972 644 000 cubic metres of sand had been dumped and G85-90 came into production. The original team, steered by Gunther Salchow were highly excited by the project. Another 553 000 cubic metres were dumped and by April 1973 the old high-water level was reached for bedrock sweeping. However, problems set in. The Atlantic was not going to give in so easily and seepage into the mine area was huge. This was solved by sinking well points and pumping some 33 million litres of water back into the ocean every hour. By January 1974, the sea had been pushed back to the original low water mark and the Atlantic had been tamed. Devotion to duty was witnessed when a pump collapsed and Chris le Roux was seen trying to hold it up until a crane arrived. It eventually gave up and ended up in the water below ... with the pump!

During this time on the mine, single men were housed at the various hostels. Apart from the lack of single girls which was frustrating, the men enjoyed their life. Trained chefs were employed at the various hostels and the food was "out of this world"! Facilities were gradually added until the hostels became extremely well equipped. The men amused themselves by playing various sports and enjoying quantities of beer.

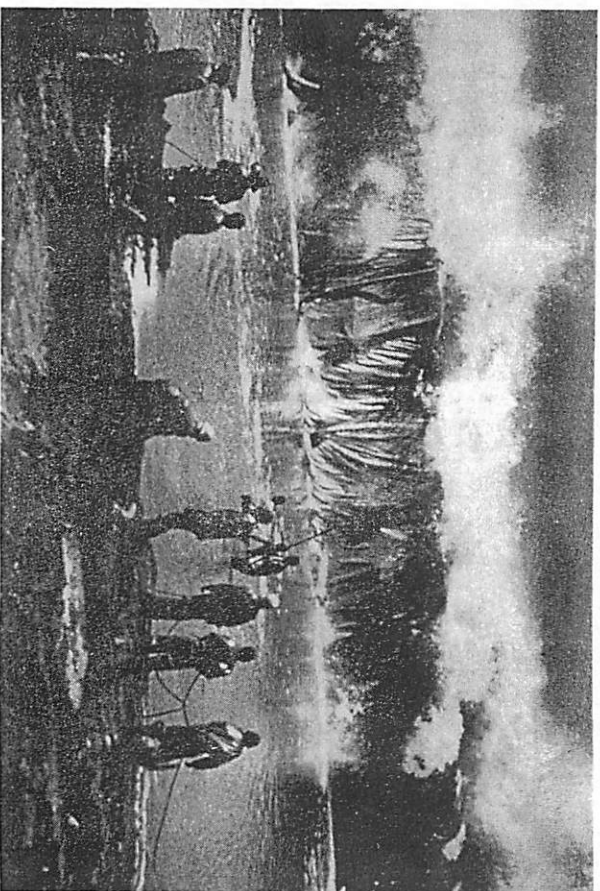




*Opening of the New Sort House (Photo CDM)*



*The Pipe Line (Photo CDM)*

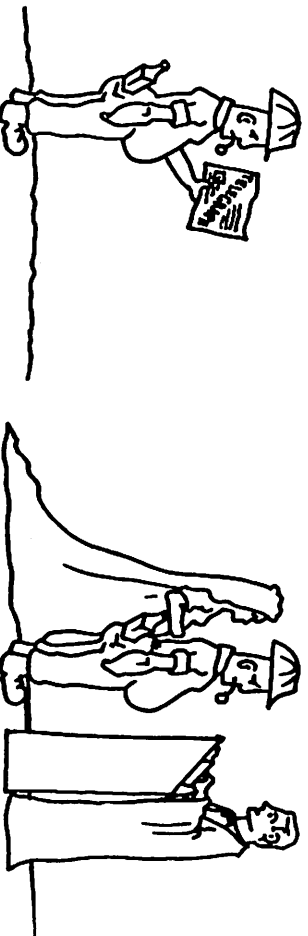


*Skew prism wall covered with canvas being battered by heavy seas (Photo CDM)*

009VLEI 708



36 DAYS AND 36 NIGHTS LEAVE!!



3 MONTHS AFTER RETURNING FROM LEAVE ?

Cartoon from old newsletters

One man so enjoyed the quiet life that he opted to stay on the mine. Ebbie Heiser served an apprenticeship with CDM in 1938 at the Kolmanoko workshops. He was transferred to Uubvley as foreman in 1950. It was customary for foremen to live in town and commute to and fro. Instead Ebbie built a bungalow on the small hill near the workshops. The house was beautifully furnished and he always took pride in serving beautifully cooked three course meals to his friends. Ebbie eventually moved to town in 1960 when he got married; but he will long be remembered for his bungalow on the hill.

Single men lived on the mine until the town opened. They were then moved back into town. This period in the life of the mine saw lots of experimentation and development in mining techniques and left the people coming behind a chance to innovate in order to cope with all the forthcoming challenges.

## The Innovators 1975-1989

People cheering, vehicles racing off to the bridge, doors slamming as the word spread - town was open! Imagine the excitement - free movement, cars allowed in town - no more tiresome trekking down to be x-rayed by security; trying to start cars that hadn't been used for months. What a change. Folk went to see if it really was true and to savour the feel of crossing the bridge in their OWN car! From the beginning, in 1928, the mine had been open to all, but the town had been closed - one could only leave twice a year - Christmas and Easter. Suddenly the mine was closed but town had been opened - the very concept took some getting used to. It had been a well kept secret but rumours had been in the air for awhile. What changes did this mean? A security check-point was now in force at the mine entrance and monitoring the flow of people in and out of the mine became more stringent. To some it was the end of fences and sand and the feeling of claustrophobia. But to others, it was the end of a secure family orientated era, a change they found difficult to accept. Freedom of movement obviously meant that residents were no longer reliant on each other for entertainment - they could seek it outside. It took a while for the changes to make themselves felt. There were not many major alterations in the town itself. The repercussions of the open town were to make themselves felt years later, indeed to current day.

Oranjemund was to experience other more worldly changes too, which would, in time affect the town more drastically. The town has always been affected by fluctuations in the diamond market, twice during its relatively short life it had to reduce its staff to skeleton proportions. The early 80's were to prove no exception. From 1976 there was a steady increase in sales which peaked in 1980. During this time there was much planning of projects and expansion in Oranjemund, both in town and on the mine. From 1980 until fairly recently diamond sales declined, the market bottoming-out between 1981 and 1982. In Mr H.F. Oppenheimer's words, "Well, it's been an extremely difficult year for De Beers." (1982). But this time stringent cost cutting replaced retrenchment.

The end, however, was in sight. "1985 marked the turning point in the market for rough diamonds and underlined the strength and resilience of De Beers' Central Selling System." (Mr Ogilvie Thompson - De Beers Annual Report 1985). Subsequently, in the last two years the situation has improved greatly and once more development is the name of the game, although constant awareness of costs continues.

Oranjemund is no longer a sleepy little oasis, political factors have always influenced the desert town, but perhaps never as much as today. After

speculation for many years, Namibia/ South West Africa is now on the verge of Independence, after the Angolan Cease Fire Agreement, the peace negotiations and the South African Government's confirmation of its commitment to Resolution 435. There are different political parties involved. SWAPO is dominant and the work force in Oranjemund is now far more politically aware than in the past. This has culminated in the official opening of Oranjemund's MUN (Mineworkers Union Of Namibia) branch on 9 April 1988. This was seen as the opening of doors to sound labour relations in Oranjemund. The Vice President John Shaetonodi, Mr Ulenga and Mr Kemba addressed the rally. The MUN office, in the old social welfare office, serves branch members and deals with day to day union affairs. Rallies are held and negotiations between the company and MUN frequently take place. The Recognition Agreement signed on 28 June 1988 was heralded as the first major milestone, whilst the successful wage negotiations concluded on 8 October 1988 were seen as an important achievement. During 1988, for the first time in CDM's history, shop stewards were elected as spokespersons for Union members thus providing them the opportunity to vote for their representatives. They, in turn, negotiate and communicate with management; hopefully improving the communication channel. UNTAG are now present in the town as the November elections loom. No doubt more changes will occur when the country becomes independent.

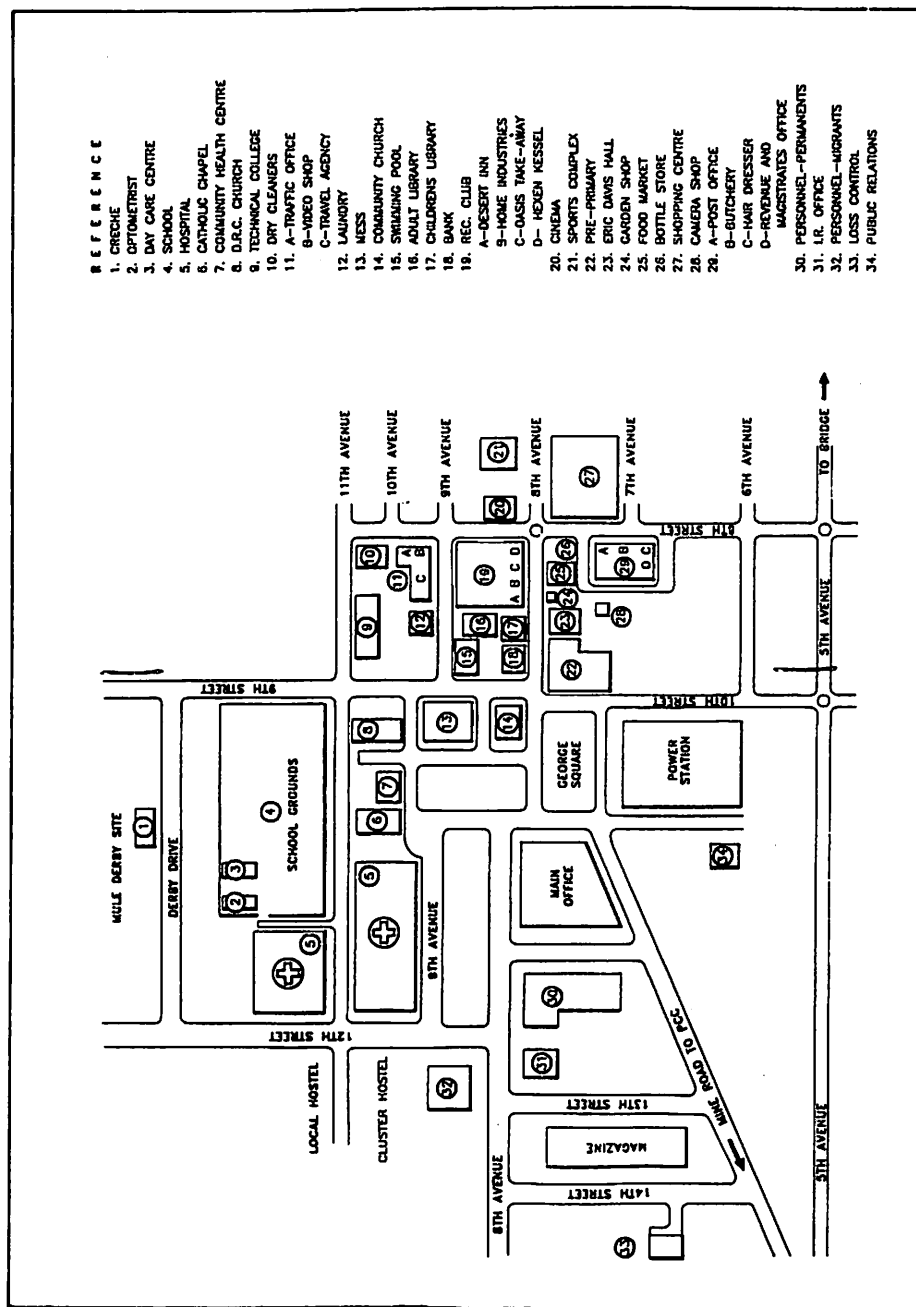
Bombings present an ongoing threat throughout the world; unfortunately, Oranjemund is no exception. Some signs of the changing times include the posters throughout the town warning the public to be on the alert and security officers manning metal detectors being utilised at the doors to the shopping centre.

The political scene has directly affected recruitment - all non-Namibians, as from 1 April 1988 require work permits and fixed term contracts were applicable as from 1 July 1988 for certain employees.

In 1982 a commission was appointed "to enquire into alleged irregularities and misapplication of property in representative authorities and the central authority of South West Africa/Namibia." This was known as the Thirion Commission. The report was published on 7 March 1986, and CDM was accused of "having breached the provisions of its mining title, namely the Halbscheid Agreement..." (Annual Report 1985). This caused poor publicity and extremely complex investigations. Subsequently, the SWA/Namibia Government Interdepartmental Committee's Information Document rebutted the allegation.

South Africa is currently in a state of flux, and turmoil and uncertainty exist in many areas. This has resulted in numerous ex-patriots and South Africans choosing to leave the country in search of greener pastures. Since a fair proportion of CDM's employees are acutely aware of the delicate





Map of Oranjemund

situation, many have chosen to leave too. This uncertain time obviously affects the company. In the early days, men and women would come to work for many years, in some cases a lifetime. Today, the work force is far more transitory. It is against this brief backdrop that we trace the development of Oranjemund during the last fourteen years. Many changes have taken place, some small, some fairly major. Long staying residents have often found it difficult to adjust to the "new" Oranjemund. Newcomers have never known anything different and thus adjust more quickly.

Oranjemund is an ordinary, well-equipped town with beautiful amenities inhabited by a variety of people. It is, however, unique in that it is wholly owned by a company. Through the years, a management structure has emerged which is responsible for running both the mine and the town. The General Manager heads the operation and reports to Head Office in Johannesburg. A team of managers comprising the following report to him on all aspects of the town and mine:

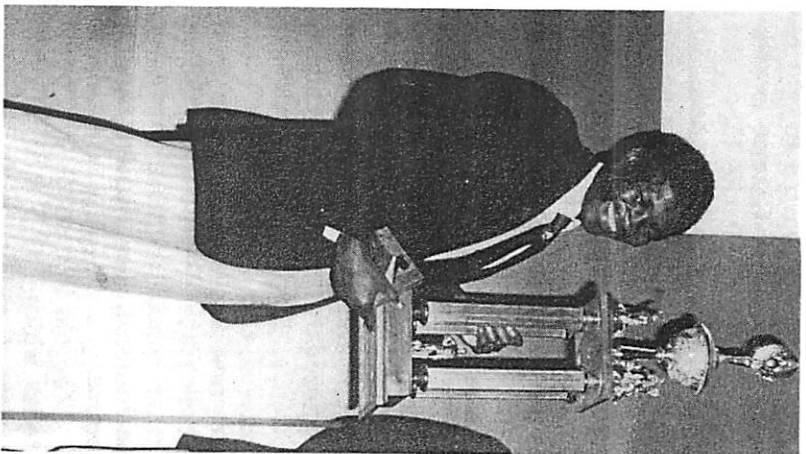
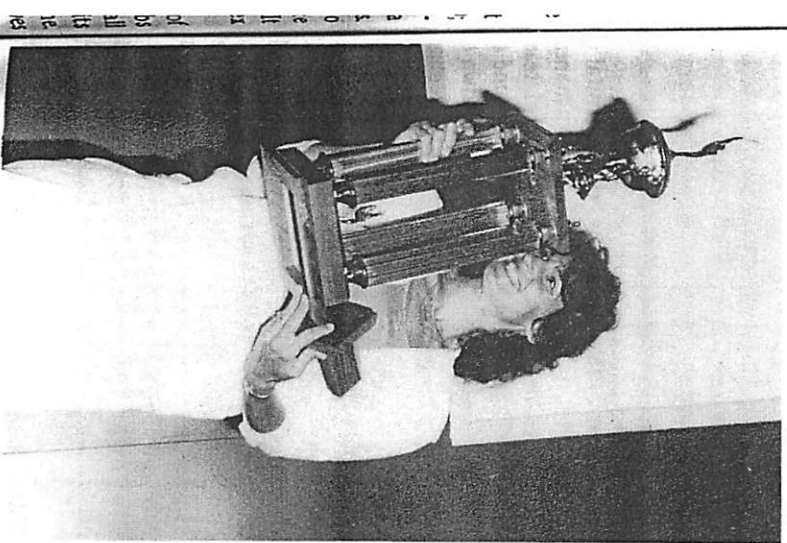
- Assistant General Manager:
- Engineering Manager
- Personnel Manager
- Administrative Manager
- Senior Medical Officer
- Chief Security Superintendent
- Mining Superintendent
- Metallurgical Superintendent
- Ore Reserves Manager

This team forms the Executive Committee (EXCO), and all personnel on the mine and in town report to them through line management.

The Patterson system is used to grade every job in Oranjemund with respect to the level of responsibility. In a town of this size; permanent families - 75; children - approximately 2271; single permanent employees - 367; migrants - approximately 3737; the organisation and responsibility is enormous. Being a mining town some of the problems differ to those affecting normal towns. The community varies from "old timers" who have been in Oranjemund up to 32 years and consider it their only home, to youngsters who are in transitory ships passing in the night. Sometimes their values clash. Oranjemund represents a fascinating microcosm of society, which is made more complex by the presence of different race groups and numerous contract workers.

The Rec Club has always played an important part in the life of Oranjemund and continues to do so. There are now 35 affiliated clubs catering for almost every conceivable sport. Although the clubs are well-equipped, the subscriptions are very low and each club has developed its own culture. Despite Television and videos, sport is still a popular pastime. Through the years, numerous people in Oranjemund have proved themselves

*Sportsman of the Year - 1986 - Vaino Amukwa  
(Photo Newsletter CDM)*



*Sportswoman of the Year - 1986 -  
Sharon Holland (Photo Newsletter CDM)*

to be outstanding in their sporting achievements, for example Ivan Morrow played for South West Africa against the All Blacks in 1960. Many sportsmen and women reach provincial status. The company has a policy which allows sportsmen and women participating at a provincial level to take special leave to pursue their interest. In 1980 it was decided to recognise outstanding sporting ability by introducing an annual "Sportsman of the Year" award. Each club can nominate a sportsman or woman whom they consider meets the requirements set down. There are three main criteria which are considered; personal achievement, level of difficulty, and willingness to motivate others. Usually, a panel of 7 impartial judges rate each nominee in each category. The ratings are then scrutinised and the winner's name is put into a sealed envelope to be opened on the night. The first recipient of this prestigious award was Lazarus Kapola. It has proved to be a highly competitive event and one which continues to be held annually. In 1982, it was decided that sportswomen should also be rewarded. Thus, the competition is now for both men and women. Edna Carr was the first "Sportswoman of the Year". The various clubs are also rated in order to select the club of the year.

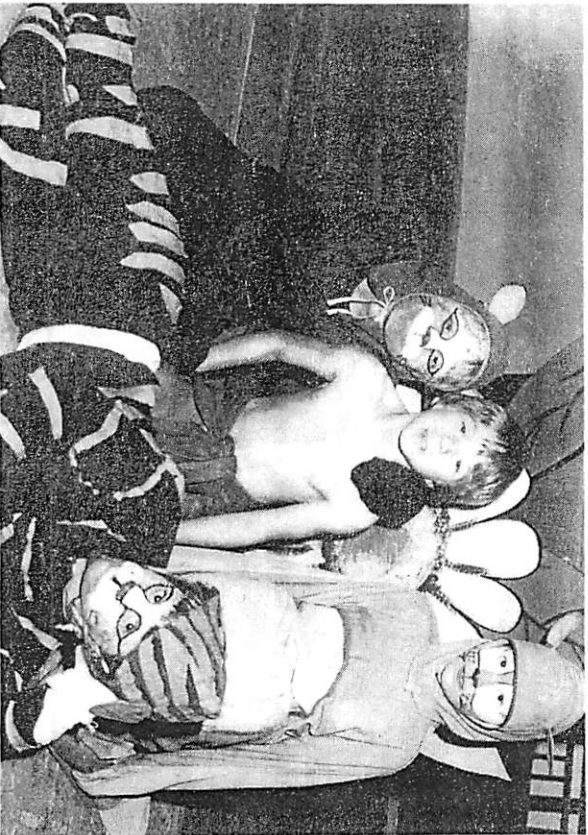
A club which was only started once the town opened is the Riding club. Many of the riders have won prizes and rosettes at various shows and gymkhanas. The yacht club continues to lure enthusiasts to its waters; racing takes place during the season and socialising carries on throughout the year! Wind surfing has taken off and the young and old can be seen with bent backs and aching hands. The golf club is extremely popular, with the Sperrgebiet Competition being one of the highlights on their annual calendar, attracting golfers from all over Southern Africa. The annual golf championships are also a popular event. With the general populous becoming more health conscious, a beautifully laid out Trim Park was opened in February 1983 at the edge of town. Unfortunately, interest waned and this amenity is no longer used. The Nicky Oppenheimer team continues to challenge the Oranjemunders annually, an event which started in 1972. Golf, squash and cricket are played and closely contested!

An interesting aspect is found with the Oranjemund children. Those who have participated in sport in Oranjemund have coped well at high school and have often had the opportunity to try far more sports than their contemporaries.

In the mid 70's the Stauch's Lager, a smart bar named after August Stauch, the Bahmeister whose workers discovered the first diamond in 1908, was opened. The Hexen Kessel (witches cauldron), named after a valley containing an extremely rich diamond deposit in the Sperrgebiet, was the first real restaurant to be opened and was heralded with joy by Oranjemund housewives! The cafe had been open for tea and snacks only. In 1980, the



*Mrs Zietsman and staff with pre-schoolers (Photo Newsletter CDM)*



*Junior Primary concert - 1986 (Photo Newsletter CDM)*

Desert Inn was started to provide a more casual steak house atmosphere and remains popular. Casey's is still a useful watering hole for men - women prefer to frequent the "Sportsman's", which has taken the place of Katey's. Pub nights are held here which everyone joins in with great spirit. Socialising at the pub is a homely feature of life in the desert.

Recently, an open air area near Sportsmans was dubbed "Kannie Worrie Court" after the famous camping incident outside Casey's in the 1960s. The Log Cabin was taken over for private enterprise and a delightful steakhouse is now open to the public on three nights a week. A privately run take-away cafe, called the Oasis also operates in town, so there is a reasonably wide choice of eating places, compared to the early days.

There is a well-equipped nursery school set in the open plan design, which caters for approximately 200 children. A creche is available for children younger than nursery school age. The school caters for all race groups and maintains a high standard. The Oranjemund Private School now accommodates some 546 children. It has a well-equipped library, Maths, Science, English laboratories and a large auditorium. In 1984 the school entered the computer age with an Apple computer, and numerous courses are now available. Children in the school have the opportunity to travel to other places representing the school in music and sport. Although the only other school in close proximity is at Alexander Bay, a high standard is maintained. The Scouts, Guides, Voortrekkers, Cubs and Brownies are still active.

The old iron shack and public cubicles are a far cry from the hospital of today which has 5 medical officers, 2 dentists, 1 matron and 33 permanent sisters. A radiographer and 2 physiotherapists are part of the medical team. The hospital is well-equipped and specialists are brought to Oranjemund to consult. When cases cannot be dealt with locally, the patients are flown to Cape Town or Windhoek in the company aircraft. In 1988 the Oranjemund hospital was linked to a laboratory in Johannesburg by computer. This means that specimens can be sent daily to the lab which operates on a 24 hour basis. The results are entered onto the lab's computer, and the information is printed out at the touch of a button in Oranjemund. Community health plays a big part in the town and fully qualified nursing sisters are permanently employed to care for the welfare of the community. Unfortunately, even a desert town is not immune to the killer disease of the 80's - AIDS. As a result, educational posters and contraceptive dispensers appear in public places - rather ironic in such isolated surroundings.

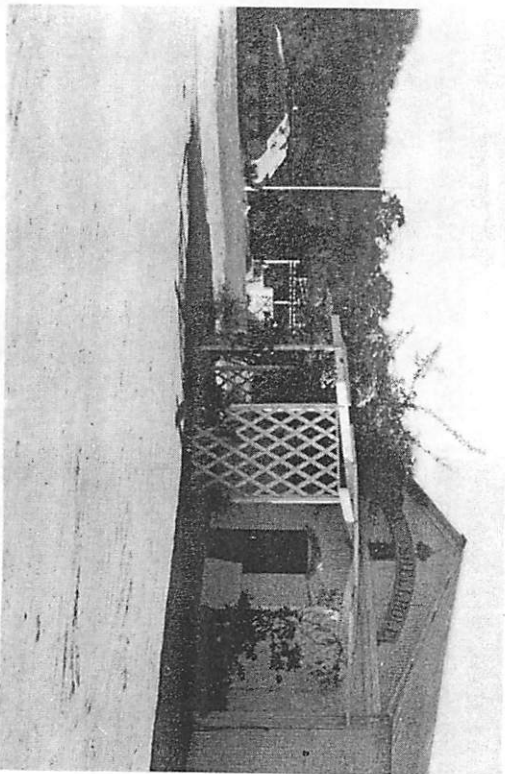
An unusual variety of events constitute the Oranjemund annual calendar some dating back to the forties and fifties, while others have developed during the 70's and 80's.

The MOTHS continue to be very active today. The Diamond Queen Ball is





*Diamond Queen - Sally Kennedy - 1984  
(Photo Newletter CDM)*



*MOTH Shellhole (Photo J. Corbett)*

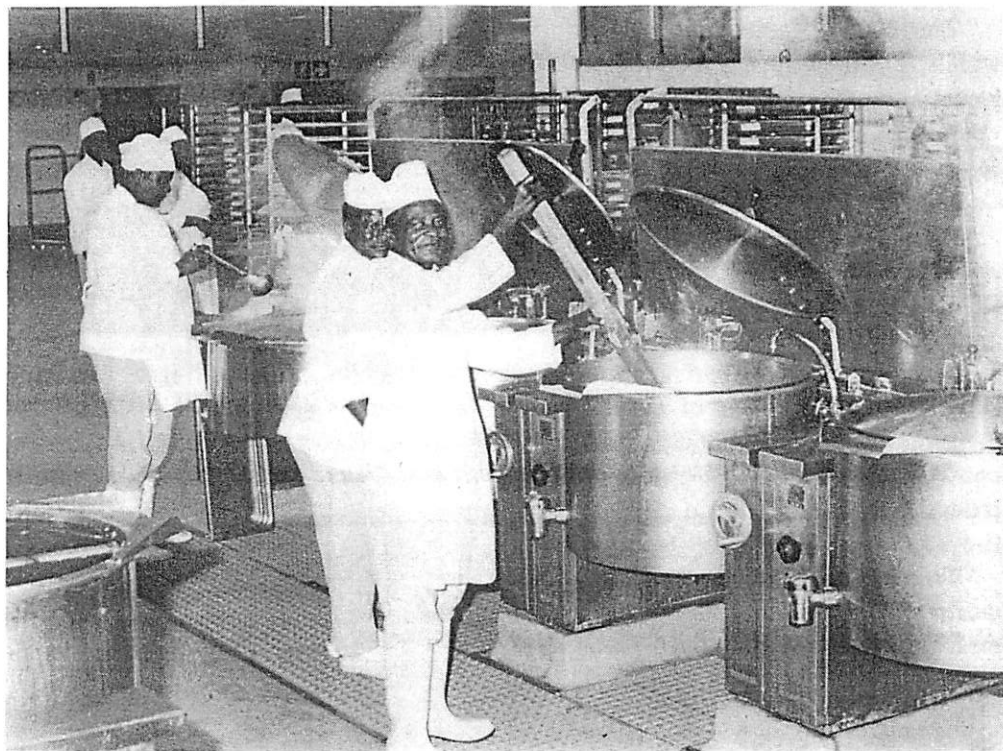
still a highlight of the social calendar. The funds from the ball now go to MOTH charities. In 1988, the Diamond Queen, Ronel Pieterse, decided to raise money to reinstate hippopotami in the Orange River. However, after extensive investigation it was found that this wasn't feasible. So she then went on a 8 day hike along the north bank of the Orange, alone, and the proceeds went to conservation. She was followed by a film crew from "Graffiti", and the trip was shown on SABC later in the year. It was a brave and challenging gesture.

The MOTH variety concerts of the 60's included a Barbershop quartet in which Eddie Jones played an active part, and he still appears today in variety concerts such as the Kristmas Kaleidoscope. Roy Fields was one of the original "Andrew Sisters". The Benefit Fund was started by MOTH Eddie Jones in 1976. There are no longer any World War 2 servicemen left in Oranjemund; the oldest left include: Korean Campaign - Eddie Jones; Royal Artillery - Roy Fields; Borneo campaign - Cpt. Jim Reid. The rest of the MOTHs are border boys. The MOTHs are always actively involved in the Remembrance Day activities and any other events in town which require their assistance.

The Kristmas Kaleidoscope was the brain-child of Lilian Gray in 1985. During the four hours of entertainment, a dinner is served and residents are invited to sit back and immerse themselves in the world of music and entertainment. Local talent is used; the show is slick and professional and in true Christmas spirit. In 1985 Lilian handed over a cheque for R1623.76 to the community chest in Oranjemund to be used for various charities.

Training for apprentices, a feature that started in the 60's is perhaps more important now than ever before and Oranjemund has managed to maintain a high standard over the years. Indeed in 1986, they had the highest trade diploma pass rate ever with an average mark of 77%. The "Appies" are awarded for their hard work at an annual Appies Dinner. They are an integral part of life on the mine and in town and many are 2nd generation Oranjenmunders.

Oranjemund youth have always formed an important part of the community. They are far more sophisticated than their predecessors and lively entertainment is essential during the holidays to ensure that they are usefully occupied. Thus, the company employs four undergraduate social workers to achieve this aim. Most of the activity takes place in the Eric Davies youth hall, named after one Eric Davies who came to Oranjemund in 1946 as a Pit Superintendent. He was later promoted to Assistant General Manager and he dedicated much of his time to the youth.



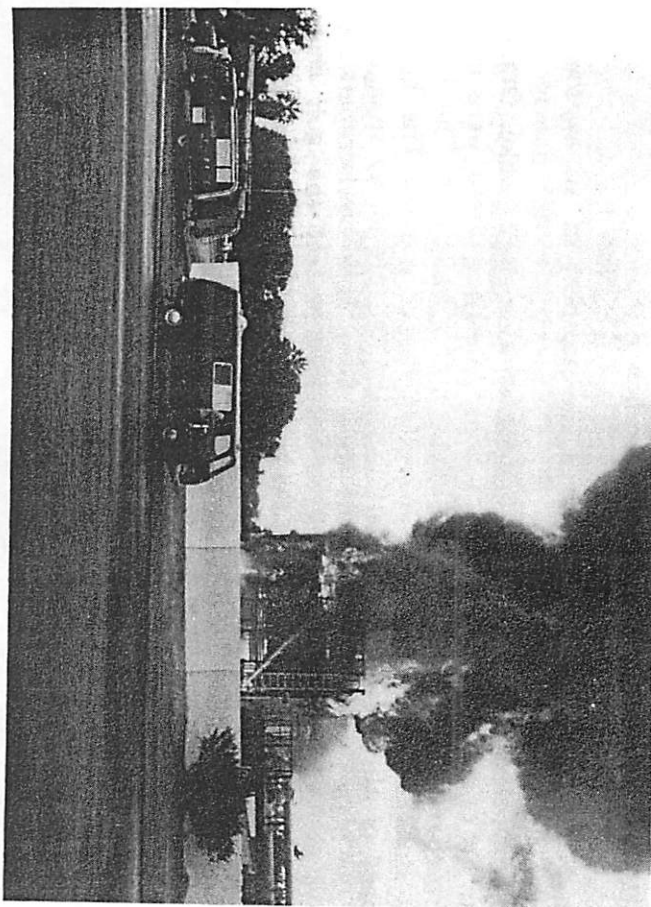
*Central Kitchen serves 407 398 meals per month (Photo Newsletter CDM)*

In the 70's quite a lot of building development took place. A new housing area was finished near the old piggery, in a suburb now known as Pigsville by the locals. Later, in the early 80's a housing development was started on the West side of town and Parks and Gardens were kept busy adding windbreaks and developing gardens. Recently, it has become necessary to increase the amount of accomodation available again. The large Cinema Gym was completed in 1979. It seats up to 800 people and is the venue for a variety of occasions. Improvements and bottle stores were added to the hostels and a new single quarters was erected to cope with the influx of people.

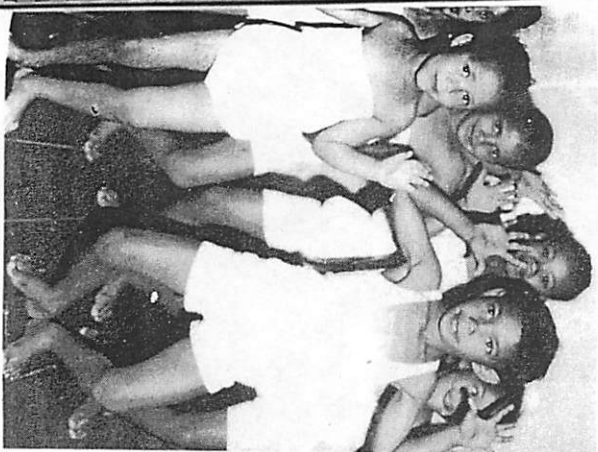
Until 1980 the company garage with a private sector was responsible for the maintenance of private vehicles. However, the facilities were inadequate to cope with demand so it was decided to allow an outside company to take over. Jowells, the biggest transport company and car distributor in Namaqualand was chosen.

Prior to the installation of a new telephone system in 1980 the telephone system in Oranjemund was rather dated. All calls to the outside world went through an exchange which was a tedious process. New buildings were erected, technicians attended courses and finally, the PABX, called Phillips EBX 8000 was introduced. This was the first electronic PABX system to be installed in Southern Africa. It has some outstanding facilities; follow me; automatic ring back and others. On the 19 May at 06h45, 1982, CDM obtained a direct dialling facility.

There are large numbers of people to be fed during the day on the mine and at the local messes. Previously each mess had its own chef and kitchen facilities and there was no consistency in the types of meals that were being served. Some messes claimed the food was not good enough while others were quite happy. There was quite a lot of wastage. As a result it was decided to build a Central Kitchen where all the food could be prepared ahead of time and taken to the various destinations and then reheated. The Central Kitchen started operating in 1983. In the beginning there were many teething problems due to the variety of tastes being catering for. All groups were approached with questionnaires to find out their preferences so that menus could be drawn up. One of the problems encountered was the dietary requirements of the migrant. Since the migrant is only here for a 6 to 8 month tour of duty, it was felt that the food should not vary too much from his home diet as health problems might ensue. With careful analysis, the Central Kitchen now attempts to satisfy most of its customers. The open market is used to buy most of the vegetables and some of the meat. A computer was installed to cope with the vast figures that are dealt with daily. Meals are carefully monitored for correct diet and wastage has been considerably reduced. The kitchen serves 407 398 meals on average per



*The fire at the Power Station (Photo Newsletter CDM)*



*Beauvallon Dancers (Photo Newsletter CDM)*

month.

Until 1978, CDM generated its own electric power from the town power station and the 172M power station on the mine (36,8MW). It was decided that Escom should take over, and the power station literally went out in a blaze of glory when a huge fire developed causing tremendous damage. The power station was recommissioned in 1981 and now acts as a standby.

Water is supplied to Oranjemund from well-points along the Orange River. The quantity of sewage discharged began to overload the line so it was decided to build a new activated sludge sewerage works west of Jewels Garage. The water is aerated with oxygen and chlorinated and is then re-used for watering the golf course and some of the gardens. The town's drinking water supply is kept completely separate.

In 1980 it was decided that the women in town needed a voice. So a Women's Forum with a consumer council was started, under the auspices of Miss Angela Jones, the social worker of the time. It was very well received and 145 women attended the first series of meetings. The women's forum was active for several years. In 1986, a Residents Council was created for the residents to voice their problems. This was active and served a useful purpose. Unfortunately, both the women's forum and the resident's council fell by the wayside in 1987, only to be reinstated in 1989. In the latter part of 1988, it was decided to begin a Community Information Centre run by the librarian and her staff. They hope to act as a "link up, or clearing house for information, between all the community organisations and bodies including those departments which serve the residents". Once again the women of Oranjemund are rallying to improve the spirit of the town in which they live.

Beauvallon Farm has continued to develop and has incorporated many up-to-date farming practices. The dairy and piggery have outstanding performance records. The dairy herd was rated 8th in the outstanding performance category and top of the unregistered milkers in South Africa. Samples of milk are regularly sent to Cape Town to be tested. An average of 64 834 litres of milk are sold monthly. The farm also provides cream and yoghurt to the community. The entire system is computer controlled. In addition Beauvallon offers a pretty camp site for CDM employees. Apart from being close to the river for fishing, there is also a swimming pool and many residents go camping over weekends. The community at Beauvallon has expanded; there is now an active school, clinic and store. The farm managers' wives hold dressmaking and sewing lessons for the Beauvallon women. The late Joy Jonker, who was tragically killed in a road accident and who had served the Beauvallon community for nearly 25 years was remembered recently. The clinic at Beauvallon was renamed The Joy Jonker Clinic - dedicated to the selfless service from the lady who was rightly known as the Mother of Beauvallon.



## Features of Desert Life

In March 1988, Oranjemund faced the prospect of an awesome flood. Further up country, the Orange River caused dreadful damage, leaving people homeless, crops destroyed and devastation in its wake. Oranjemund began to take the necessary precautions. Low-lying areas were evacuated and preparations were made to protect vital installations. The Beauvallon farm stock and personnel were moved to higher ground. The bridge was stripped of all the wiring and netting which had previously snagged debris and the horses were stabled at the mule derby. Four bowldscrappers and two dozers worked around the clock to try and protect the golf course by building an eight metre high wall. As the river began to come down in flood, wild animals were herded to safety by the helicopter, flown by Trevor Troup. Roger Burchell (Chief Security Superintendent) could be seen dangling from the helicopter with a baby donkey in tow! He was later awarded the SPCA's accolade for bravery for the part he played. Roger insisted the award belonged to the entire security department. He paid tribute to Trevor Troup and Fanie van Staden: "Flying low over the river, he prodded the backs of the swimming animals with the helicopter skids, guiding them when they tried to go the wrong way." He also tells the story of how a young gemsbok was rescued, "Myself, Cherry, Jan and "Doep" managed to haul the gemsbok onto the boat. We tied its legs and held its horns. We pushed the dingly wading through swirling water to dry land where the reluctant passenger was most unwilling to disembark!"

Sightseers caused minor traffic jams as they rushed to the bridge at lunchtime and in the evening to see the rising water. Although the flood never reached the expected level, it nevertheless caused much excitement. Beauvallon was affected because of the shortage of water! The borehole in the river was lost so the residents had to rely on the delivery of fresh water from Oranjemund. The milk production was adversely affected as the muddy river water was unacceptable. As a result more cows had to be milked and their supply of fodder was not readily available because the supplier in Vloosdrif had also been hit by the flood. The other animals were also affected and the camp site closed until water was readily available.

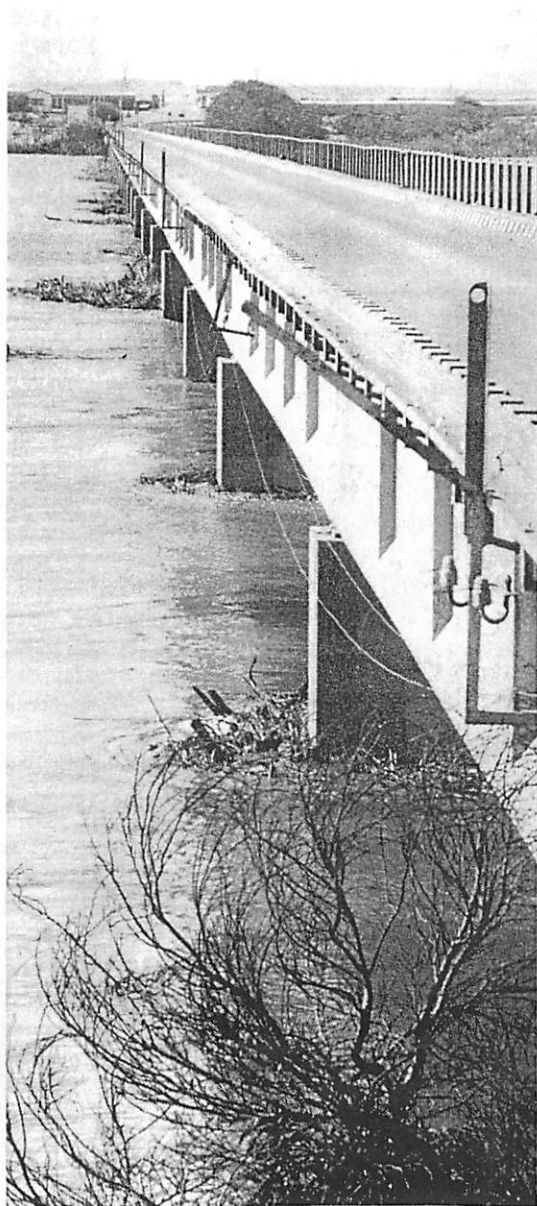
However, these catastrophes always have positive effects and the response of Oranjemund residents to the Community Chest telethon again proved how the desert dwellers will rally to a cause. Four telephone lines were headquartered at the library and the phones rang continuously. R28000 was raised for flood relief and clothing and food was sent to the Red Cross. The General Manager, Mr Keith Whitelock, didn't escape unscathed. He was kidnapped by the "desert femmes" and a ransom note was given to let



*Roger Burchell dangling from the helicopter  
(Photo Newsletter CDM)*



*Gemsbok caught in the flood (Photo Newsletter CDM)*



*The Orange River steadily rising at the Oppenheimer Bridge (Photo Newsletter CDM)*

Johns for R1000 for the flood relief fund. After gobstoppers, beer and marshmallows and a payment of the ransom the GM was allowed to return to work!

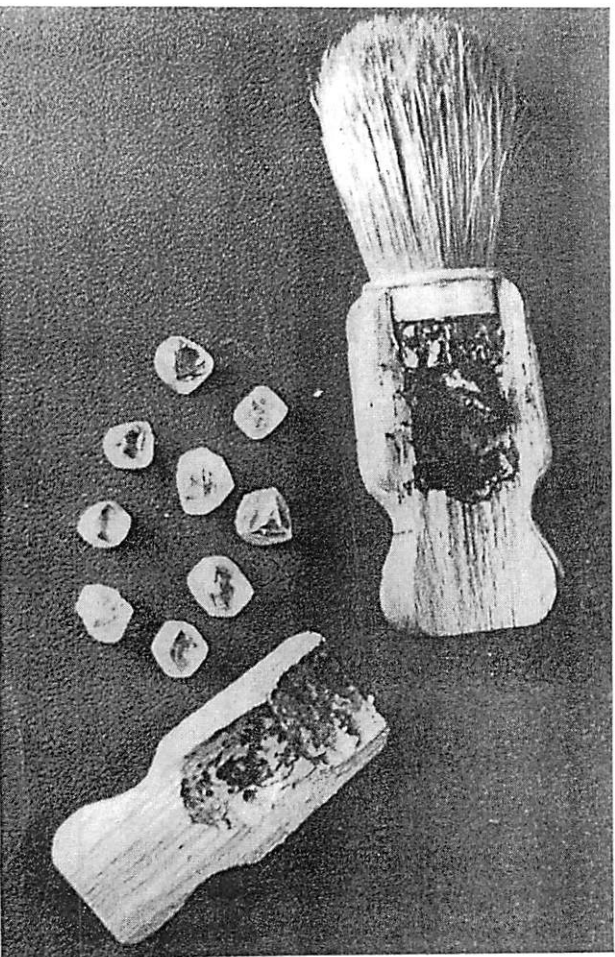
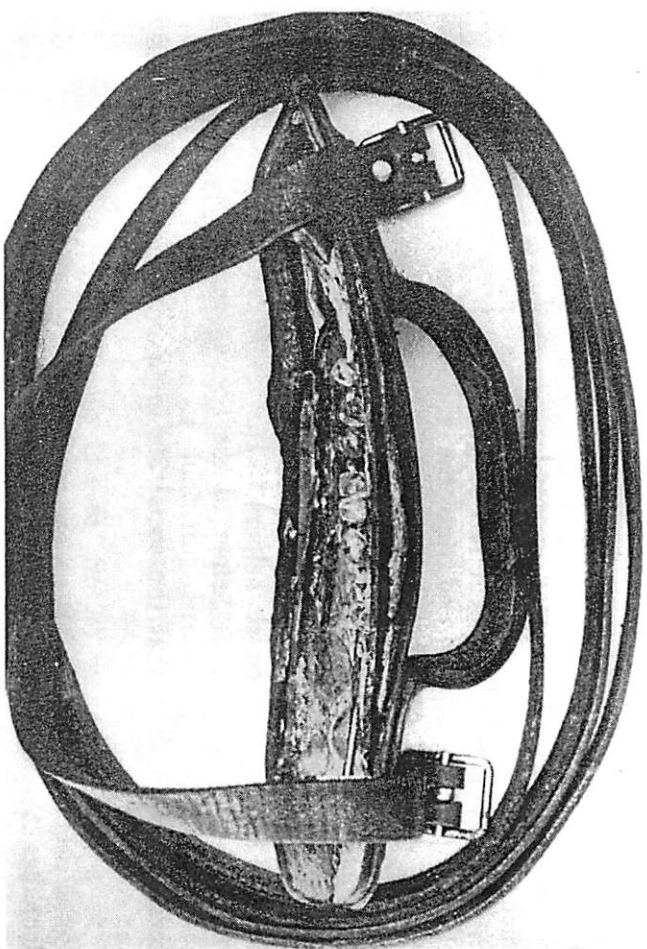
Although Oranjemund may appear to the outsider as an ideal place in which to live, the residents experience pressures relatively unknown in a city environment. The new resident has to get used to the idea that everything belongs to the company and thus the code of behaviour accepted is in keeping with the company limits. It is impossible to separate work from your social life, the town is too small to allow for it. The remoteness of the environment is awesome to some; Cape Town is 8 hours away by car, Johannesburg is 16 hours drive. Privacy is difficult, the Oranjemund grapevine is extremely active and at times inaccurate. Life is easy, the company subsidises domestic helpers so that every family in Oranjemund can afford to have a full time helper in the house, which is a rarity in towns these days. Everyone earns sufficient money and the facilities are so accessible and cheap, that the social life in Oranjemund can be hectic and time consuming.

As a result of these factors, several social problems arise. There is an alcohol problem which is largely the result of boredom and easy accessibility. Alcoholics Anonymous are in town and deal with the problems where they can. Many women find the town restricting, especially those with young children and those who are ambitious. There are relatively few high positions available to women on the mine or in town. Private enterprise is allowed by the company but the market is naturally restricted. Flea Markets have become a feature of the 80's where residents are invited to put out their wares on a Saturday morning for others to buy. A charming atmosphere prevails - excited chatter from children and adults alike. Candy floss streams and enticing smells tickle the senses. Every type of craft is usually represented from pot pourri to jewellery making. There are many very talented folk in this little desert dorpl

Numerous parents can afford to spend time playing sport and socialising and children are often left to their own devices, usually watching videos and television. Studies conducted elsewhere indicate that this has serious repercussions on the development of the children, but unfortunately is a feature of the 80's.

However, being in such an isolated environment also has advantages. Many people have developed hobbies and have achieved unusual successes where perhaps in a more "civilized" environment their abilities would have remained latent. Residents have built sea-going boats in their back gardens, kit aeroplanes in their garages and all sorts of other interesting things! Graham Williamson, a dentist in town, is an authority on plant life in the Richtersveld and has written 3 books on the subject. People have done trips





*Everyday objects make brilliant hiding places (Photos Security Dept. CDM)*

through the desert while others have canoed down the Orange River. Oranjemund has produced some truly innovative people in the 53 years it has been in existence.

Many people, famous and ordinary have visited the desert town. There are frequently visitors from all over the world. In 1987, Archbishop Tutu paid the town a visit and held services. On Monday morning, back at school a young child was excitedly telling her news, "Guess what, guess what - we had a very important visitor this weekend." "Oh and who was that?" the teacher replied. "It was Tutenkamen, Miss, he came to church!" A history lesson quickly followed.

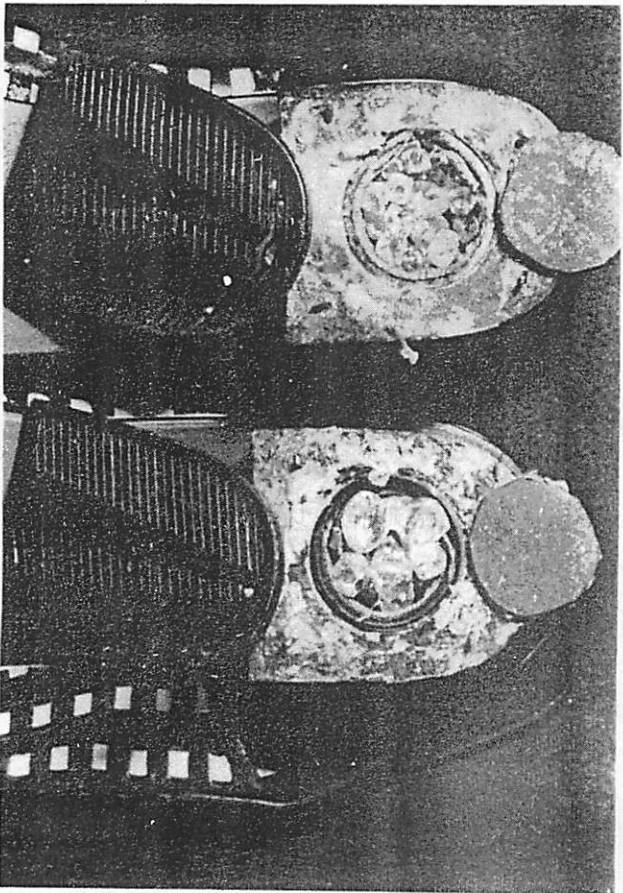
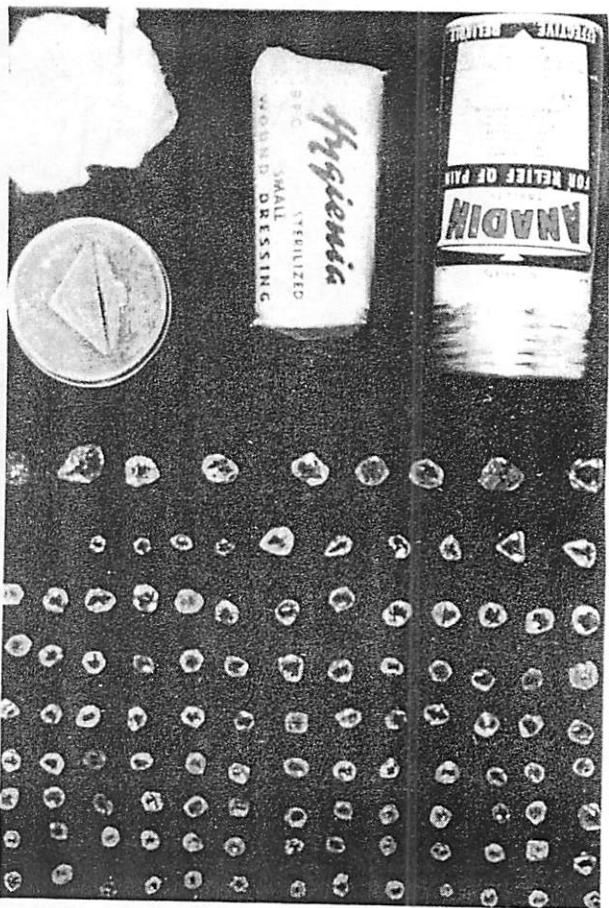
As long as diamonds are mined in Oranjemund, the temptation to procure them for Illicit Diamond Buying (IDB) will continue. Through the years more and more devious ways of smuggling diamonds out of the mine area have been attempted. Undoubtedly some are successful, whilst many have been thwarted by the Security Department which spends many hours trying to stay ahead of would-be criminals. It is interesting to note that the Security Department success rate has increased substantially over the past two years due to technological advances in surveillance.

The intrigue of IDB captivates many and indeed some of the methods are ingenious, bordering on the bizarre. Less imaginative cases include diamonds that have been swallowed or secreted in body orifices. The sophisticated x-ray system on the mine quickly highlights these wrongdoers. However, unfortunately this is required to be done on random selection. The use of a micro-dosage technique is being investigated and will, in time, allow security to x-ray individuals daily, thus preventing this form of smuggling. Potential dealers spend hours carefully converting everyday objects into brilliant hiding places for their caches. Shaving brushes, old shoes, milk cans with false bottoms and even the De Beers 100 year commemorative diamond box have not escaped the attention of these folk. Recently a man sauntered through and placed his "note-pad" on the desk. Upon X-raying, the top of the pad showed up opaque. It had been painstakingly converted into a lead-lined hiding hole where diamonds valued at R63,586 were nesting.

Larger caches are sometimes parcelled and taken out by even more devious means. December 1988 will long be remembered by many for the huge recoveries. CDM had an unexpected Christmas present when a truck loaded with gravel came out of the mine area to the town garage. The tipper truck wasn't functioning properly so a Roads Department Foreman went down to see what the problem was. As the gravel tumbled off the truck so too did a neat little parcel! Grabbing it quickly the employee alerted Security and over 3 million Rands worth of diamonds were recovered.

However, the diamonds were not safe for long! Old Years Day was rudely interrupted for Security personnel, golf games were halted and Oranjemund





*Some of the tried and tested methods of illegally removing diamonds from the mine area  
(Photos Security Dept. CDM)*

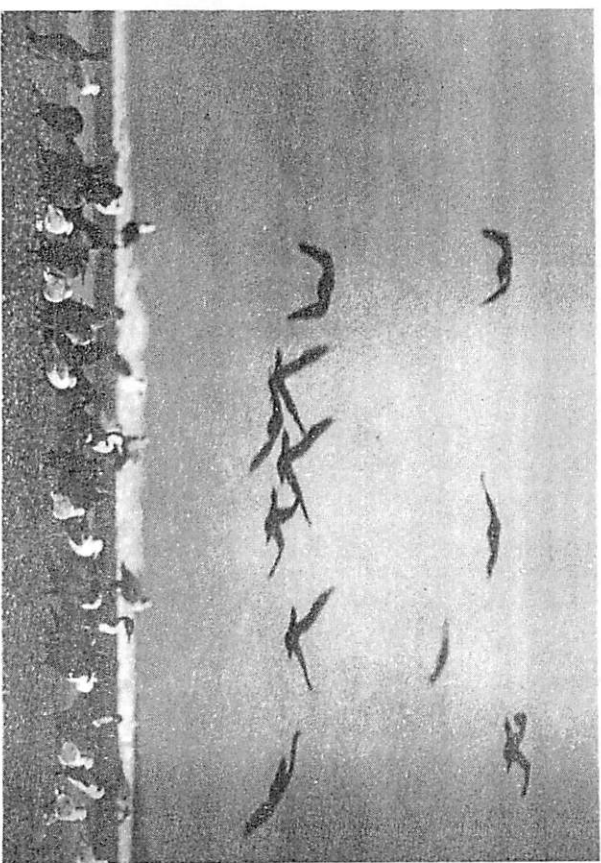
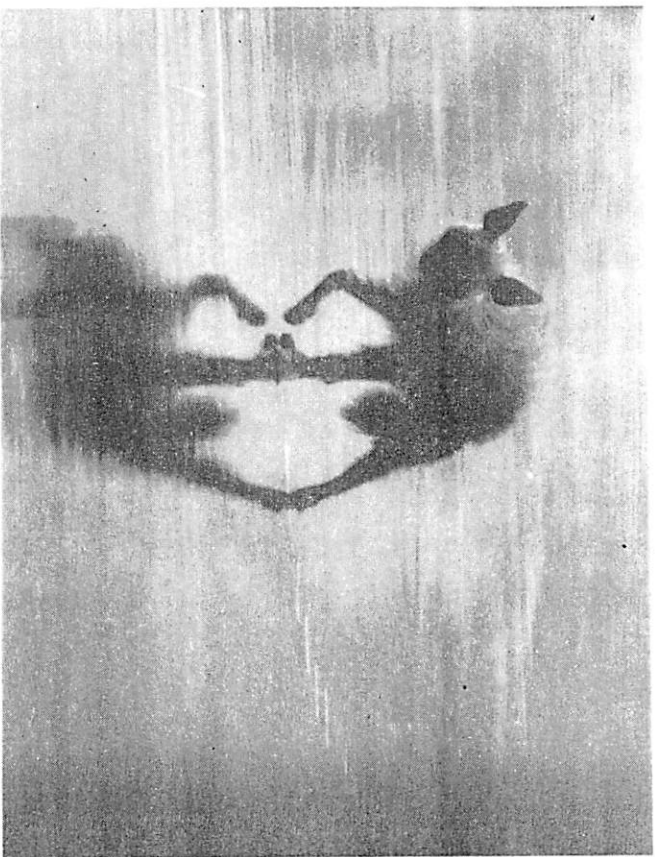
was abuzz with speculation. The diamonds and R38 388 were missing from the safe in the police station. SWA police officials were flown down from Windhoek, Oranjemund hit the headlines and the hunt was on. Clues were followed up and close detective work led to exhibits being revealed near the Orange Mouth. On Tuesday 3 January 1989 "Wimpie" van Greunen, acting head of the Oranjemund diamond branch, was arrested and charged. Interrogation finally led to the gems being recovered in van Greunen's back garden and R38 288 was found on the banks of the Orange.

Some folk will go to any length for a "sparkler" or two. Recently the entire safe from the police station was loaded onto a welding trolley and was pushed through town towards the Orange River bank to the left of the bridge. Occasionally thieves abandon finesse! The river was low and all would have been well, however they had not bargained on deep channels in the river. The safe sank. Tracks were followed and the safe was recovered, diamonds intact.

In the early 80's footprints were found crossing the security fences enclosing the mine area. The Crime Section of Security immediately tackled the problem. Cold nights, sleeping bags and camping out by the fences followed. A brilliantly simple alarm system of beer cans on nylon fishing line was erected. In the dead of night, the haunting rattle of cans meant the search was on. Would-be villains were confronted, not withstanding an innocent gemsbok or jackal harmlessly wandering in the desert. This system led to recoveries, the first being 810 diamonds. Technology advanced and so too did alarm systems.

Razor ribbon wire, developed in Vietnam, superseded ordinary barbed wire. Various configurations were tried and tested by brave security personnel until the current system was devised. This system, in conjunction with other highly technical devices brought fence crossings to a standstill. Smuggling techniques subsequently entered a new era. Innovative security systems throughout the world are continually tested in Oranjemund, and if found to be satisfactory are duly installed. Movement detectors, radar systems and other surveillance gadgetry operate continuously to win the battle against IDB.

Patrols and dogs, methods dating back to the 50's, still have their place. The helicopter is also used. Indeed Oranjemund dogs have been shown to be among the best trained in the sub-continent. This was borne out when a sniffer dog was taken to the school to seek out suspected explosives. Three times the dog fell flat (indicating the presence of an explosive) in a tiny room near the school stage. Upon investigation, an athletic starting gun, which hadn't been used for three years, was found to be lurking in the drawer of an abandoned desk. Such efficiency is reassuring in a world plagued with bomb threats.



*Wildlife in and around Oranjemund (Photos W. Shaw)*

The very nature of diamonds has enthralled smugglers for centuries. Thus, it is no surprise to find that Oranjemund houses one of the most sophisticated, privately owned Security Departments in the world - fitting for one of the world's greatest diamond deposits ever discovered.

However, First National Bank also has to have tight security when the van bringing money into Oranjemund arrives at the gate. The van is escorted by security to the bank; an area is cordoned off and cleared and no risks are taken. On one occasion a van arrived at Dunvley gate and the poor unsuspecting driver was told to wait. He appeared a little confused. Security duly arrived, slowly escorted the van to the bank. The area was deserted, guards stood by and the back of the van was opened... only to find it was full of meat destined for the butchery!

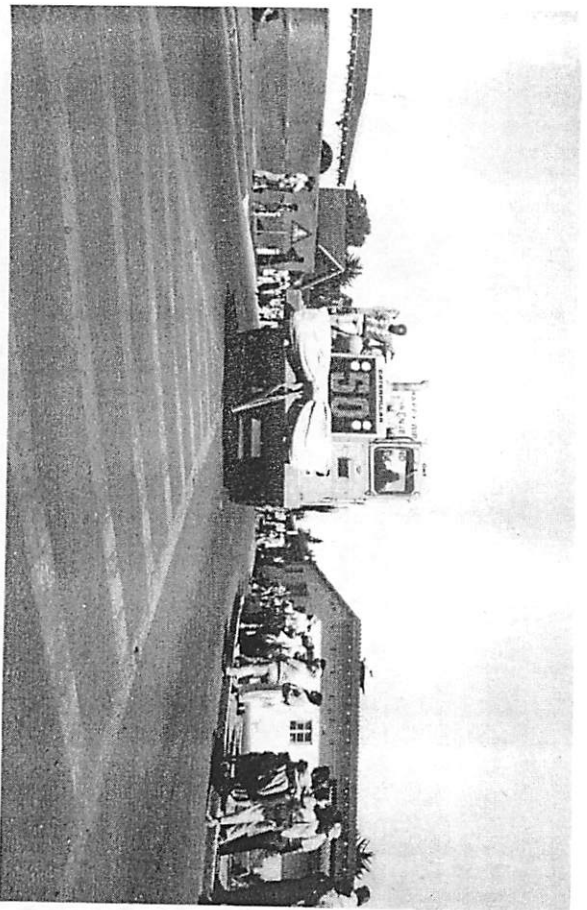
Although the town is primarily in a desert region, it is situated only 12 kilometres from the Orange River mouth. One of its unique features has always been the diverse animal and bird life and despite all the activity, these animals are still prominent in and around this desert oasis. Only one horse remained from the German patrol days. He frequently galloped across the golf course, making many natural hazards! He was unfortunately found dead in September 1988, supposedly having drowned.

Wild donkeys, also from time gone by, stroll along the river's edge but do not frequently venture into the town itself. The gemsbok is totally undaunted by the cars and buildings and as twilight glimmers, they saunter into town, graze in the parks and stare defiantly when a car stops for the passengers to gawk! Many visitors are taken on night drives to see the beautiful animals. Howling jackals interrupt the silence of the night and may betide any stray cat who gets in their path or any bag of rubbish put within reach. A lynx has recently been seen slinking in amongst the reeds but its appearance is very rare as is the strandwolf. Families of ostrich often hold up cars as they strut across the road followed by 10 or more babies.

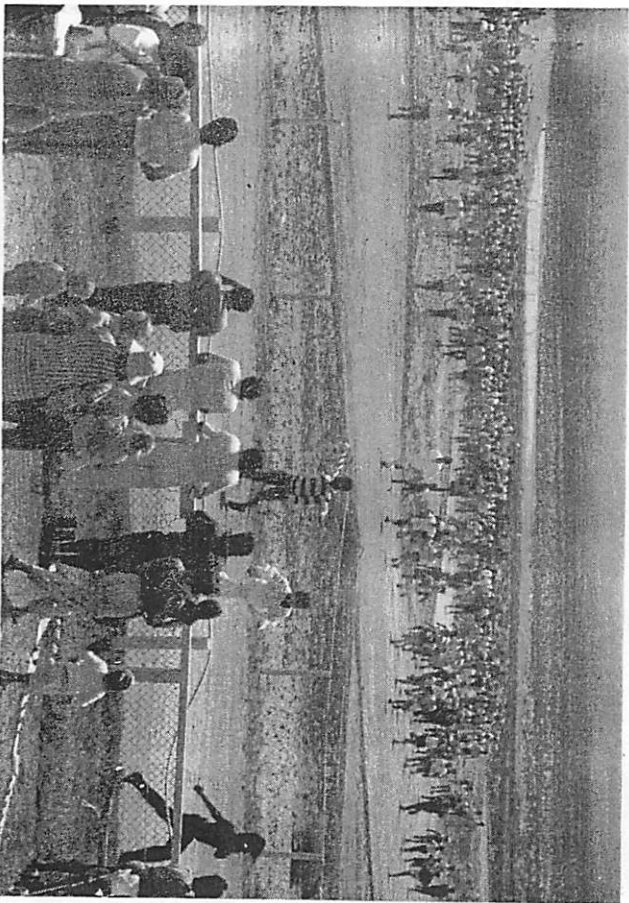
The bird life is equally impressive; the river mouth is like balm to the restless soul. Terns, seagulls and cormorants swoop into the turbulent surf following the shoals of fish. Elegant, beautiful flamingoes fill the evening sky with hues of soft, delicate pink as they fly in to roost for the night. Pelicans with their bellycan beaks rest on the islands the mouth has created. A host of other birds trill in the gardens and make their homes in the reeds and grasses on the river. Fishing is often good along the banks and in the surf; indeed the beach sometimes resembles Brighton with brightly coloured umbrellas and dancing children while dad tries to persuade some poor unsuspecting fish onto his line.

In October 1986, the town celebrated its 50th birthday and what a birthday! The excitement reached a crescendo when the week of celebrations began. A committee had been set up to plan the proceedings and they tried





*The Birthday Bow (Photo Newsletter CDM)*



*The rush is on (Photo I. Corbett)*

to cater for all the tastes in town. A special logo designed by Dave Forshaw featured on every aspect of the celebrations. Special dinners transported you for the night into a country of your choice - Spain, Italy, India or Austria. A diamond rush attracted many hopefuls. A procession through the centre of town reminded residents of the many features their little town had. The culmination of the week was an exquisite ball. The only dampening feature of the celebrations was that not all Oranjemunders took part.

Oranjemunders have managed to harness the elements and create an oasis in one of the harshest environments in the world. This could only be achieved with the ingenuity and hard work of man - Oranjemunders, through the 53 years of the development of the town, have proved themselves to be tenacious people. The terms pioneers, developers and innovators span the entire history of Oranjemund and are not solely applicable to the chapters they head. Great strides have been made in every department and continue to be made. Despite the changing diamond market over the years, the diamond has been responsible for providing employment and homes for thousands of Oranjemunders, of all races and colours. The CDM diamond has also brought happiness to people throughout the world where it represents love and commitment.

One of the most rewarding features of Oranjemund is the social integration between all races. There is no discrimination and the trend through the 80's has been to see more and more black people complete courses and enter into responsible positions on the mine. However, due to their special contribution and unique culture a special chapter will mention more of their achievements.

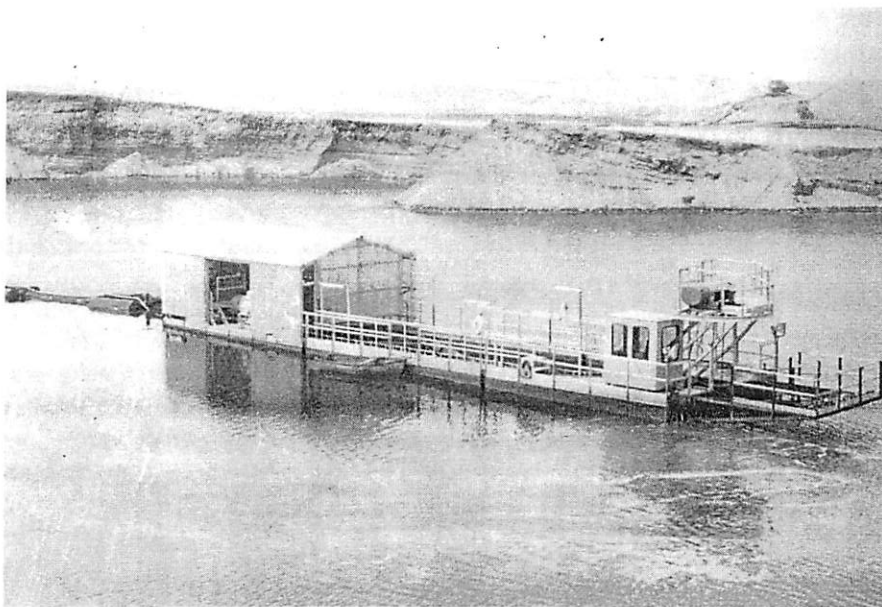
## Mining 1975 - 1989

The mining processes were laid down by the developers. More efficient equipment has been purchased but the basic principles have remained the same.

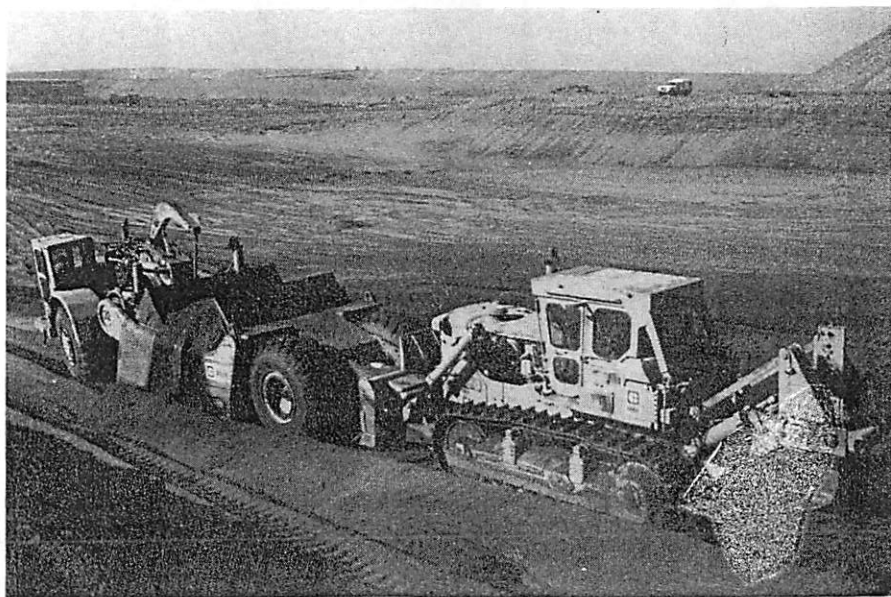
## The Overburden Stripping

The overburden sand can vary in depth from a metre to twenty five metres. It is removed by earthmoving machines, bucket wheels or the latest innovation - the dredge. Dredging as a method of removing overburden is not a new concept. The cost of removing overburden has always been one of concern to CDM and they are always looking for ways to reduce it. In 1983 a jet pump was commissioned on an hydraulic excavator for sampling the surf zone - this was CDM's first introduction to the jet pump principle and put them in contact with Anthony Wakefield. Wakefield is a partner in a





*The Dredge removing primary overburden (Photo Newsletter CDM)*



*Conventional stripping methods - Cat D9 and 631 open bowl scraper (Photo Newsletter CDM)*

consulting engineer's firm in England which has done a lot of work on pump and dredge design. In 1983 Ken Owen went over to the UK to see the dredges in action. In 1985 it was decided to commission Wakefield to design a dredge suitable for CDM's conditions. It was built at Uubvley on the mine. Many telexes later, with some component parts flown out from the UK, the dredge was completed and put into operation in April 1986. A floating plant was later attached to the dredge to treat the diamondiferous gravel extracted from the overburden sands.

An earthmoving stripping team now usually consists of:

5 or 6 Caterpillar 631's

D9 C-blade dozers

1 Michigan 280 dozer

1 service truck

1 compressor.

In 1983 the Holland Loader was purchased to try and reduce the cost of overburden stripping. Another bucket wheel has recently been purchased. This machine was commissioned in May 1986 and is used for removing the deep overburden sands along the coastal strip in the delta area.

## Loading and Hauling

Once the overburden has been stripped the beach terrace is dozed. Front end loaders then dump it into rear end dumpers for transport to the treatment plants. Caterpillar 988 loaders and Caterpillar 769C trucks are the standard loading unit. New machines often undergo experiments on the mine. Recently the RD 65 which has the head of a 769 dumper truck and is capable of hauling 65 tonnes was put on trial.

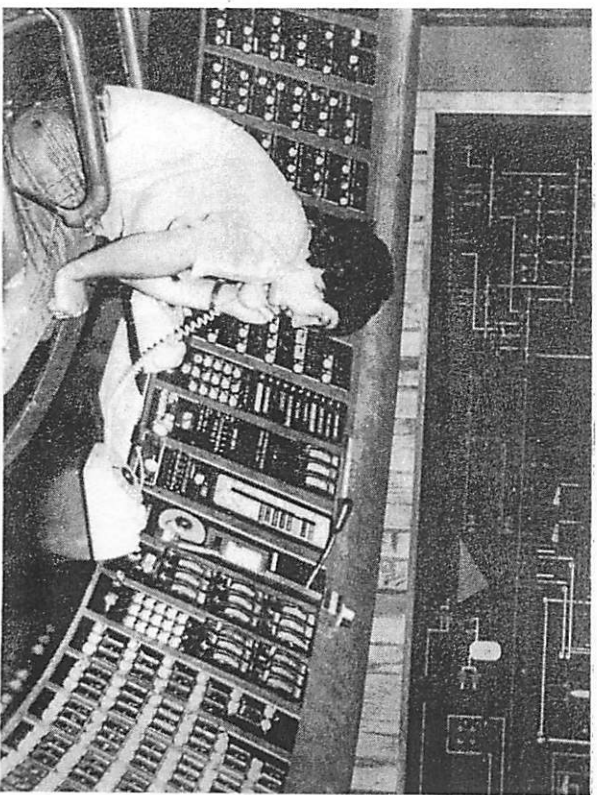
## Bedrock Cleaning

A sweeping team usually consists of about 15 employees under the supervision of a headman. Incentive programmes are utilised and mechanisation is continually looked into. The bedrock cleaning works on the principles described in an earlier chapter.

Innovations and experimentation are ongoing and engineers of today are constantly aiming to improve upon techniques and where possible - cut costs. The latest innovation used for cleaning the bedrock is known as the gravel transporter. This was locally made and was first introduced in January 1988. It is capable of sucking up small boulders and gravels, and delivering them to a point 100 metres away without difficulty. It is effective in dry and wet conditions and is driven by compressed air. It aims to reduce operating costs significantly.



*Modern treatment plant (No 3 Plant) (Photo CDM)*



*Modern technology - control panel (Photo CDM)*

## Metallurgy

The conglomerate and gravels are sent to the nearest treatment plant. NO 4 plant has always been the centre of the final recovery and handsorting operations on the mine. Various sampling plants have also been commissioned. Activity on a plant is rather complex but exciting. The conglomerate first goes into a primary crusher and from there it is sent to scrubbing bins. The process continues through secondary crushers, heavy media separation and then various other processes. Each plant has utilised different methods to get water. At No 2 plant there is a tunnel which is 36m below sea level and runs 410 metres out to sea.

The operator is assisted in running the plant by the use of a process computer system. The advantage of using a computer is that it can monitor the entire plant all the time. The computer has three main functions:

**Control:** The computer controls densities of the HMS sections, the level in the scrubber head tank and various other movements on the plant. The operator can see at a glance everything that is going on.

**Alarming:** If anything goes wrong the computer can warn the operator and he can make the changes necessary.

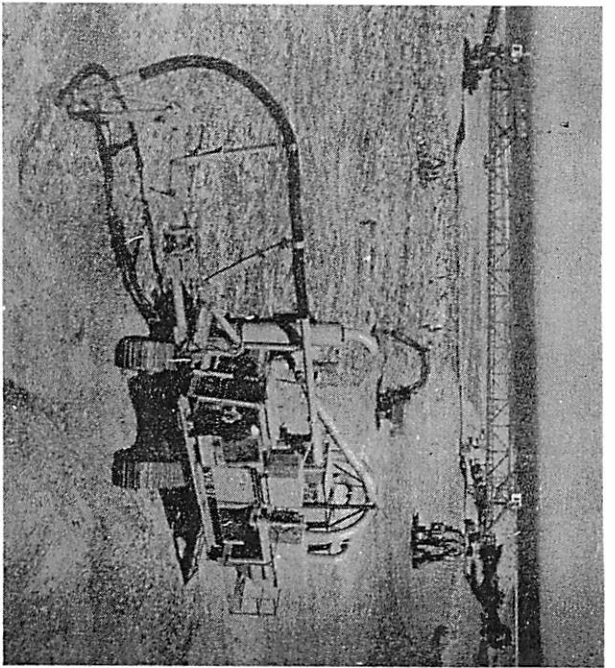
**Logging:** Detailed reports on the progress and plant performance can be performed by the computer.

A computerised maintenance control system (MCS) has now been set up. It is dependent on the feedback from the men on the shop floor. The MCS merges and supercedes 3 or more outdated systems that were previously used. It will give a "unified overview of maintenance planning as all data will be captured on one system operated from the Central Maintenance planning office at Uubvley."

## Recovery Plant

The concentrate is then sent to the Recovery Plant which treats concentrate from each plant separately. X-ray machines are used to recover the diamonds. The concentrates are passed on to the sorthouse where trained sorters pick out the diamonds. The diamondiferous material passes through a shoot and onto a conveyor belt. The sorters put their hands through gloves, and using tweezers, pick out the diamonds and toss them into bins at the bottom of the belt. They can control the speed at which the material passes them - they work at a rapid rate! Due to the eye strain they break at frequent intervals. The diamonds are logged and weighed and checked before being sent away. Most of the diamonds found at Oranjemund are yellow or white, although some coloured ones have been retrieved.

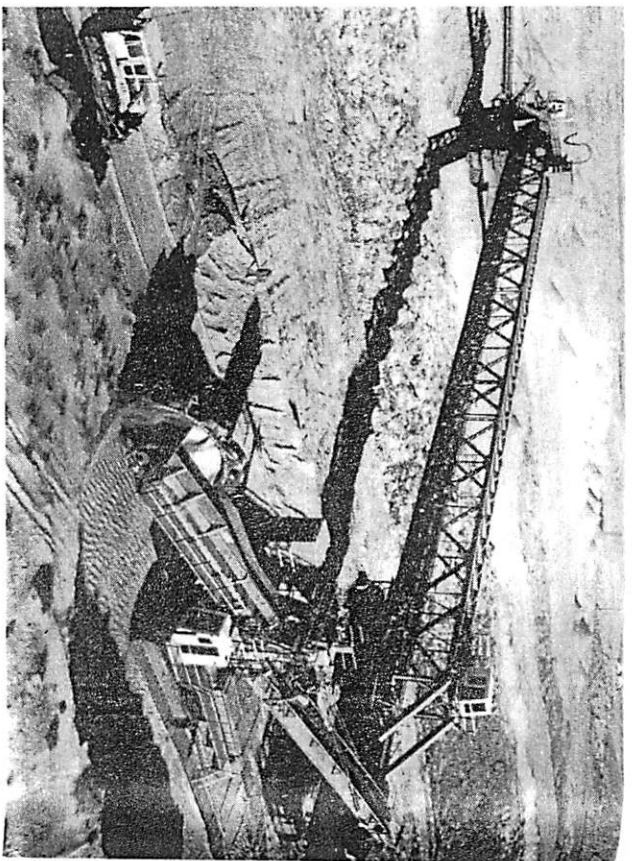




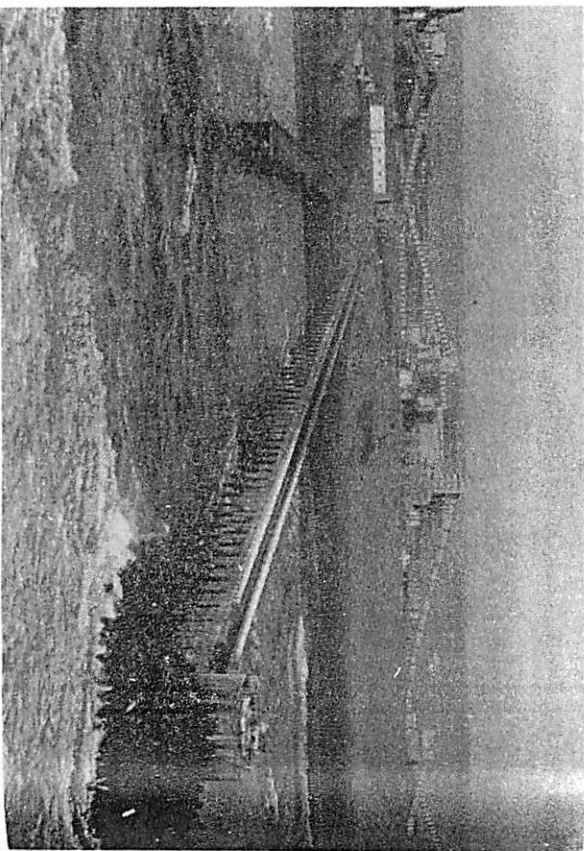
*Modern vac sucking gravels off bedrock (Photo CDM)*



*Clearly illustrates the sea wall protecting the mining operation which is currently in progress (Photo CDM)*

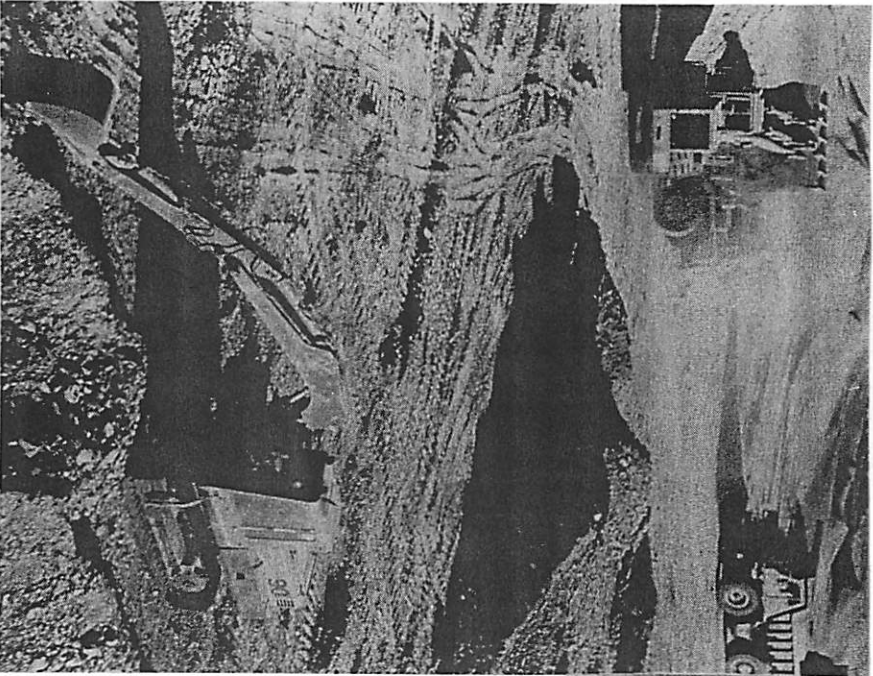


*Bucket wheel with bridge system (Photo CDM)*



*Sea water intake jetty at 3 Plant (Photo CDM)*





769 being loaded by 988 front end loader (Photo CDM)

During 1986 there were several interesting projects on the go. It was decided to boost the morale of the stripping teams and try to increase productivity so a "Stripping Competition" was initiated - the first ever at Oranjemund. 11 teams doing conventional stripping in 3 plant areas took part. Judges were chosen from Work Study, Barlows and CDM representatives. Various heats were held and the morale was high as the competition became keener. In the end No 2 plant team won, led by Mac Shoyer and Willie van Zyl. The winners managed 408 cubic metres per scraper per hour. Prizes were awarded accordingly.

One of the developments that has taken place on the mine has been to take a more active interest in safety and loss control. Although this has always been the policy, with so many machines being utilised all the time, safety practises are now vital. In 1971, CDM enrolled with NOSA. The first official safety grading took place in 1976 when a 4 star rating was attained. The Artisan Training Centre was the first section to be awarded a 5 star rating in 1978. In 1979, the mine as a whole achieved the 5 star rating and has retained this grading. Courses are run and awareness programmes for personnel are an integral part of on the job training.

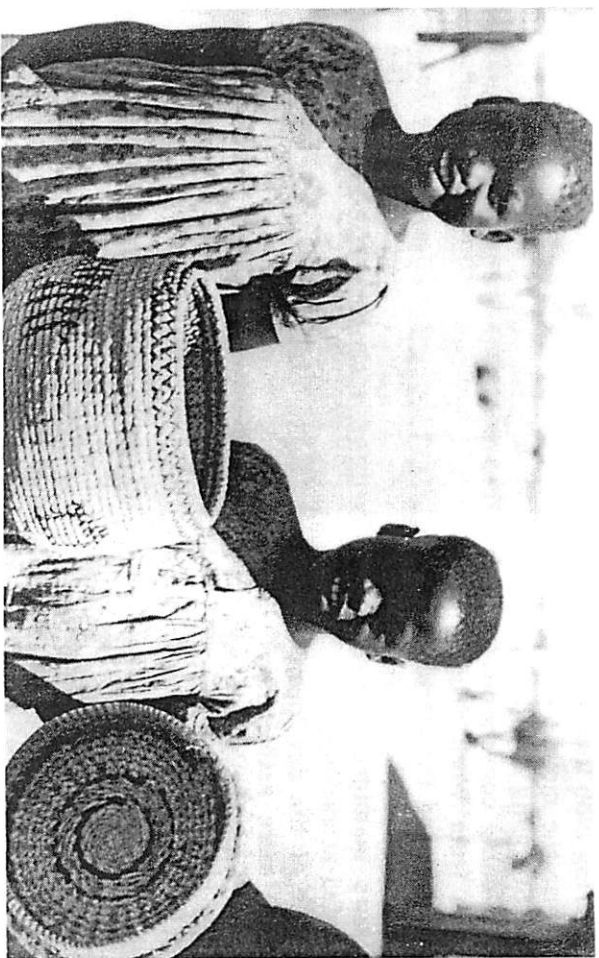
Animals are still seen in the mine area - flamingoes daintily tiptoe through the mined out areas, comorants and terns rest on the jetties and gemsbok watch the proceedings from afar.

In 1976, CDM was prospecting in the Arrisdrift area, some 30 kilometres upstream from the Orange River mouth. The gravels in the pit yielded a large quantity of vertebrate, invertebrate and plant remains. An archaeologist was called in and the fossils were dated as Middle Miocene. In the fossils was a diamond! This is significant because it was the first time that the arrival of diamonds on the coast via the Orange River course could be dated. The presence of diamonds in ancient Orange River sediments supports the early theory that the diamonds were transported to the coast from the Southern African interior by the Orange River (Dr Lotz Theory).

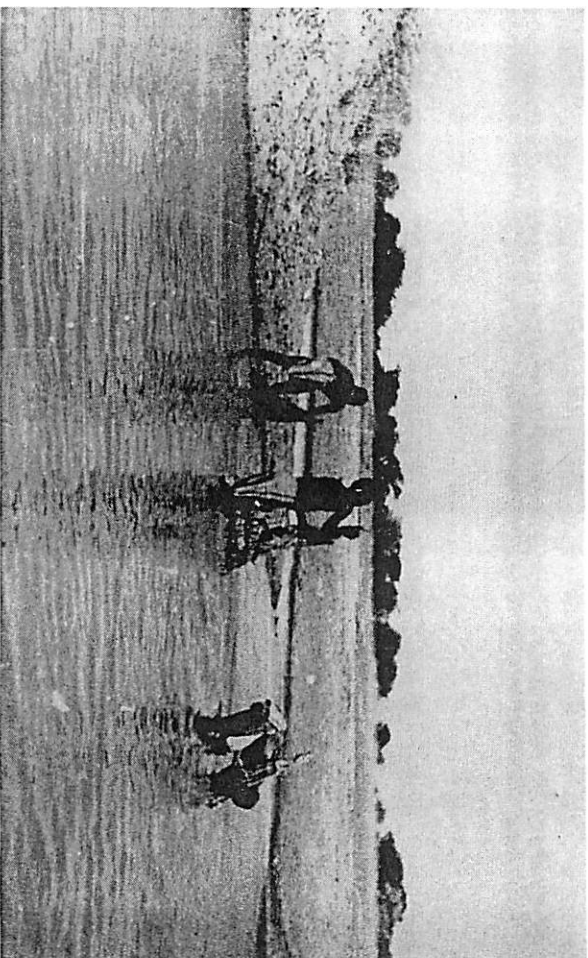
At Elizabeth Bay, near Luderitz sampling continues and the evaluation of the deposit has been concluded and the decision has been taken to open a mine. At Bogenfels bulk sampling is underway and the men are housed at Bakers Bay.

The CDM suggestion scheme that was started in 1982 has recently been revamped. This scheme recognises the many suggestions that are made which are worthwhile and beneficial to the company.

Where do our diamonds go now and how do they get there? From the bowels of the earth they are destined for far more exciting places. Their 'trip' will be covered in the final chapter.



*Beautiful Baskets - hand made (Photo Windhoek Archives)*



*Fishing in the flood water (Photo Windhoek Archives)*

## The Owambo and the Kavango People

The Owambo people are intimately linked with the history and development of Oranjemund. Since the discovery of the first diamond in 1908, they have been involved with the industry. CDM and various headmen agreed verbally on a working contract in the early days and this is honoured today as the Owambo provide the majority of the work force.

The term Owambo applies to 7 kindred tribes which inhabit Owamboland. The Owambo are a branch of the great Bantu family and are predominantly an agricultural people. Traditionally all the tribes believed in a Supreme Spirit, KALUNGA who, although he has the form of man, moves invisibly amongst them. All good and evil that befalls the Owambo people is attributed to him. Apparently he created a man and a woman from the soil, the man's name was Noni (meaning spear). Their first son was a man of the cattle, the second took care of the fields and the third looked after the Holy Fire. Missionaries who have been working in the area for many years have changed many of the traditional beliefs and oshidhila (prohibitions).

The country in which they live is sandy and flat with water courses, known as oshanas, which are flooded during the rainy season. Tasty bass found in the flood waters are caught in nets and wire-baskets. After the floods, the oshanas provide good grazing for the livestock. The average annual rainfall in the area is about 500 - 600 mm.

In times of drought, the country can appear very barren and stock lose condition. The women perform the agricultural work and they devote much of their time to preparing the fields and tending to the crops. The staple food is a variety of millet (omahangu) which is stamped and eaten as porridge. Corn is grown extensively and is used predominantly in the making of beer. Animals represent wealth so they are rarely slaughtered. Fruit is used to supplement the diet.

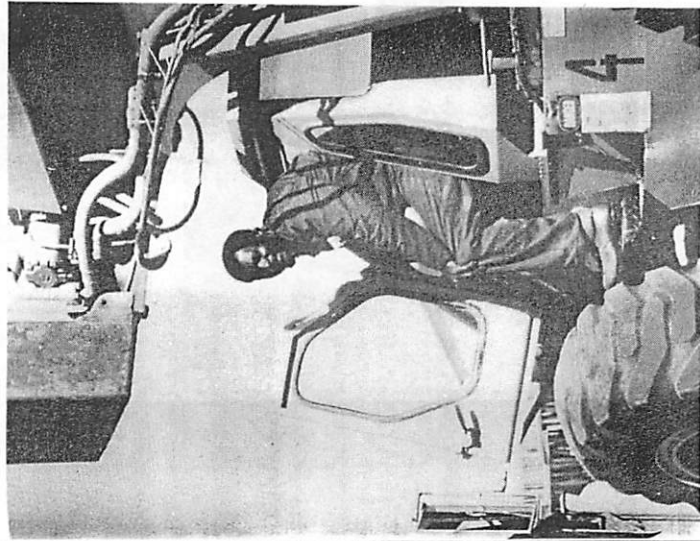
The principal industries include basketry, pottery and metal work. In earlier times, Owamboland was quite forested. However, cultivation has left little of the original vegetation. The Eastern areas still have forests, the most common trees being kiaat which are used in furniture making. A furniture factory is found at Oshakati. Palm leaves are used in basket making. The work is of a high standard and is often sold. However, the men choose to leave their families to find work in the south to supplement their annual income.

Prior to 1929 the contracts for migrant labour in the diamond fields were 6 months. They were extended to 12 months until 1938. Between 1938 and 1953 the contracts fluctuated between 18 months and 2 years. From 1961 until 1972 the contracts were for a year. Currently, there is no contract





*Men at Work CDM*



system in Namibia. Tours of duty last between 6 to 8 months. The contract system was the cause of the labour unrest in the territory during 1971. It was understood that wives and children would stay in Owamboland. This makes it hard for the families but gives them an opportunity to accrue funds to improve their standard of living whilst maintaining their homestead. Owamboland, situated some 1 500 kilometres from Oranjemund, makes travelling a tedious task. In the early days, the Owambos had to travel by train for 3 days to Kolmanskop and then wagon transport was used from Pomona to the Orange Mouth - it took 7 days! By 1945 the transport system had advanced to buses and lorries. Finally in 1953, air transport was introduced.

It has been the policy of the Management in Oranjemund to provide good accommodation, excellent amenities and equal opportunities for the migrant labour, and improvements have been made over the years. There are opportunities for them to continue with their education at the training and technical establishments. Many Owambos have achieved success in a variety of fields both on the mine and in the town. Their loyalty to the company is shown by the number of people who have been recipients of gold watches for long service. Gratuities on a completely non-contributory scheme have been paid out to 2526 migrants since 1974.

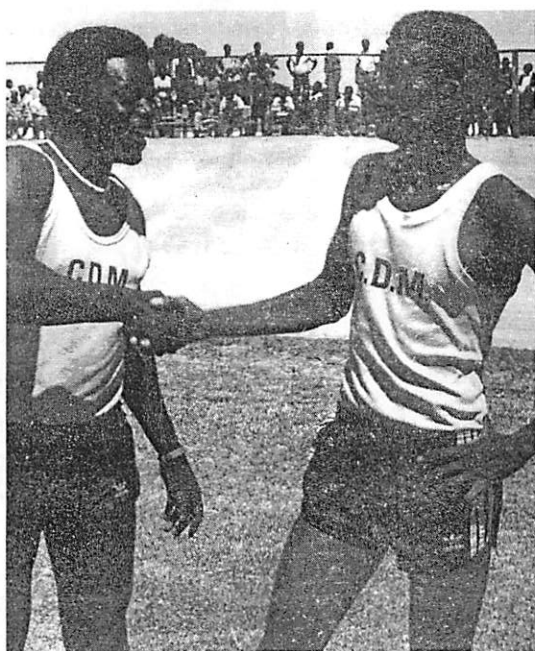
In the late 1970's the migrants were asked whether they would like permanent status; however the offer was declined because it would mean giving up their home in Owamboland so they opted to continue with the old system. From 1979, 1764 former migrant employees have transferred to permanent status. Further, a number of these employees have reached managerial positions within the company.

It is interesting to note how the responsibilities of the various jobs have changed over the years. In the early days the men had to work with relatively unsophisticated equipment and conditions - hand-operated jigs, Sherman tanks to mention a few. Today, the scene has changed radically. The mine now supports an extremely sophisticated and highly mechanised fleet of machines which are predominantly handled by migrants. On-the-job training is provided throughout the mine, safety training is a very important part of the training and it is a credit to the labour that they have adapted to the new scene. Long service is a characteristic of the workers. Many of them have experienced all the changes. Mr Nyambali, who retired in 1980 after 17 years of service was asked to comment on the changes: in the early days "communication between black and white was peaceful although the pay was bad. But later the pay was good, although relations sometimes not so good". Sebastian who came to CDM as a "boy" in 1936, was employed as a mule driver. He gave 22 years of service and compared change and development at CDM to a man building a home: "that home will be difficult





*Another athlete, 400 m star, Daniel Hailemutu (Photo Newsletter)*



*Comradeship and sportsmanship (Photo Newsletter)*

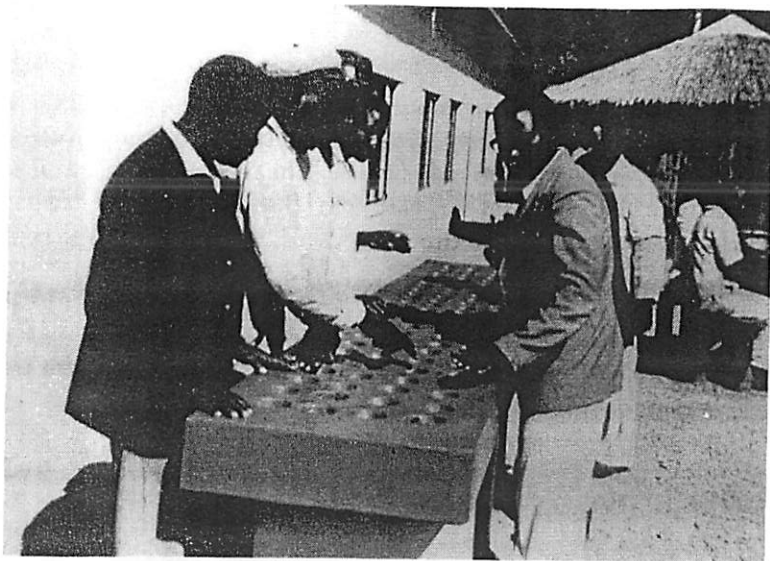
and long to build if it is to be good and lasting one. But when the home is completed, it would be worth all the labour." These two comments are astute and meaningful. Changes have occurred politically which have affected the attitude of all race groups in Namibia. Due to various pressures, migrants are far more aware of politics and upheavals in the country, which has influenced their attitude. Management constantly attempt to keep attuned to the needs of the people and where possible, make the necessary adjustments. It is largely due to the hard work and dedication of all people in Oranjemund, past and present that has made Oranjemund what it is today.

Many of the Owambos working in Oranjemund are superb sportsmen. Although it impossible to mention them all, several names should be acknowledged. Lazarus Kapolo, an outstanding athlete, won the coveted "Sportsman of the Year" award in 1980. Lazarus's achievements are far-reaching and he is an excellent ambassador for CDM. Daniel Haitembu was awarded his junior Springbok colours in 1980 for his brilliant achievements. Haitembu became the first black Sportsman of the year in the history of Namibia; "when my name was mentioned, I just could not believe it.... (Newsletter). There have been many other sportsmen in the soccer and boxing field. Vaino Amukwa, of the Boxing fraternity won the "Sportsman of the Year" title in 1986. He was awarded a silver medal at the South African Open Boxing Championships in 1985 and followed this up by winning the Namibian Amateur Boxing Federation light welter weight title in 1986.

Religion has not been neglected. The Owambo are predominantly Lutheran and there are frequent visits from bishops and pastors. Bishop Auala was a very influential figure and visited Oranjemund. On May 16 Reverend Titus Ngula was installed as the ELCIN (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia) pastor of Oranjemund. The very Reverend K Dumeni, Bishop of Owamboland presided. The old "west" shopping centre has been converted into the ELCIN.

Oranjemund schools cater for black children. Where possible they begin at the nursery school under the auspices of Mrs Noreen Zietsman where they have an excellent grounding. From there, they are integrated into the primary school. They are placed in preparatory classes until they are proficient in English and are then moved into the English medium classes. The children do very well and excel on the sports field. Many of them continue their education at Concordia College in Windhoek.

CDM, recognising the work that has been given by the Owambo people has endeavoured to improve opportunities for them both within Oranjemund and Owamboland. The Valombola Technical Centre, named after the late Headman Valombola, is situated 20 kilometres S-E of Oshakati at Ongwediva. In Sir H.F. Oppenheimer's words, conceived as "a mark of appreciation to the people of Owamboland on whose hard work CDM has always depended", the



college gives the people an opportunity to study for the NTC certificate. Concordia College was opened in 1983 for children of all race groups to study from std 6 - std 10. The bursary scheme offered by CDM allows men and women with potential to carry their studies further.

Credit must be given to many of the domestic workers who have become involved with Oranjemund families. Their caring attitude towards the children can hardly go unnoticed and many families "adopt" their domestic as one of the family, and look forward to his return when he has gone on repatriation. This rather unique situation has subsequently changed during 1988. All new permanent employees are now given an allowance, and are given the opportunity to employ coloured ladies to help them at home.

Recently, the various hostels have been renovated to upgrade the accommodation for the migrant workers. Games rooms with snooker tables, darts and a TV lounge have been built. The men have been given lessons in snooker and darts and the traditional Owambo games continue as well.

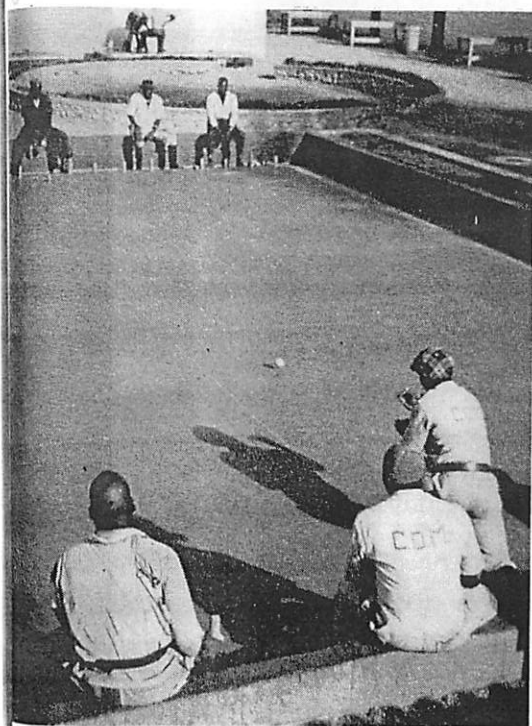
The Kavango people are named after the Okavango River although the prefix "o" has now been dropped. The Kavango area is vast and large areas are largely uninhabited. Traditionally, the people of Kavango adhere to a hierarchical tribal life. Many still believe in ancestral spirits. There are five main ethnic groups; Kwangali; Mbunza; Sambyu; Gciriku; and Mbukushu. Each tribe is headed by one or more "captains". The captains are aided by councillors who are usually family members or people who have proved their worth. There are two developed dialects in Kavango; Rukwangari and Thibukushu. Since the Kavangos live along the Angolan border many families have been subjected to war time stress.

There is both a short and long rainy season and much of the land is fertile. Rundu is the main artery of communication between the north and the rest of Namibia. Agriculture plays an important part in the life structure, the main crops being millet (durra), sorghum (wilia, tumbi) and maize (l'pungu, mundere). Other crops are also cultivated. Animal husbandry is practised by the men. Many of the young men work in the "police zone". The Kavango territory is in a state of transition to new forms of economy, social life, politics and religion. The two major influences on the lives of the Kavango have been the Christian Mission and the South African Government.

There are numerous institutions which have been opened, including many primary schools, technical and secondary schools and a well-equipped hospital at Rundu.

While the Kavango people make up a relatively small proportion (10%) of the Oranjemund work force they have, nevertheless, played an important part in the development of this town and its mining community.

*Relaxing at the hostels (Photo Newsletter)*



## The Diamond Trip

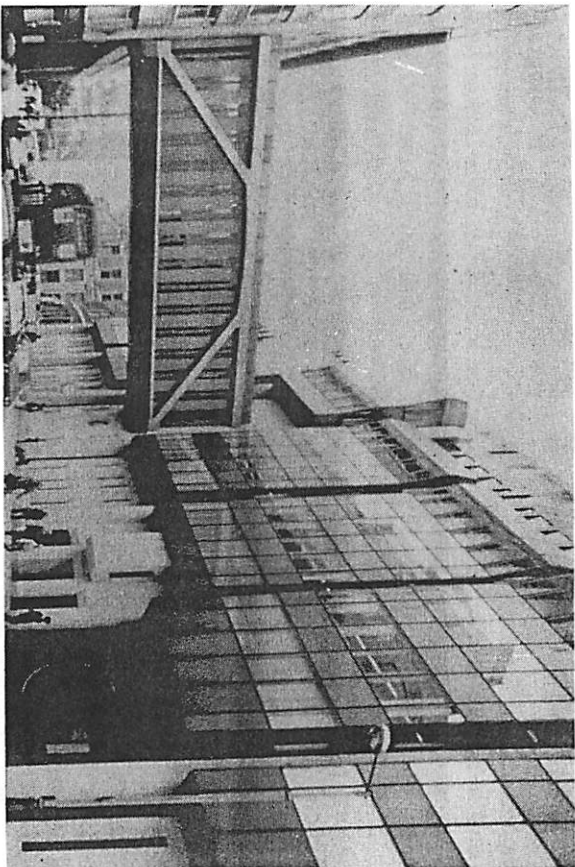
The diamonds retrieved from mountains of sand having gone through a multitude of processes, have only just begun their journey into the public world. They have an exciting adventure ahead of them and the CDM diamonds from the West Coast of Namibia find themselves transported all over the world. Some will adorn the fingers of the famous whilst others will signify the declaration of love for some young couple.

In the sorthouse at Oranjemund, they are sorted into various sizes. They used to be transported to Kimberley, where they were subjected to further sorting in Harry Oppenheimer House. An exciting development during 1987 was the decision to open a sorthouse in Windhoek. The operation was officially opened on the 5 October 1988 by Mr Andreas Shipanga, the Minister of Mines and Fisheries. The CDM Chairman, Mr Ogilvie Thompson said, "The opening of this facility is thus another example of co-operative consultation and the positive role CDM has played and will play in the development of Namibia." Mr Shipanga commented, "The decision in 1987 of the cabinet of the JGNU in consultation with the De Beers group of companies to establish this sorting and valuation facility in Windhoek should be seen as a first and timeous move to bring home what belongs to this country."

Sorters are highly trained men and women who are able to identify variations in the quality of diamonds. It is an exacting and tiring job. The sorters all require good light, so the benches are all at south-facing windows. The gems are broadly sorted into sizes above a cut-off weight, and melee which are crystals under this weight. The crystals are divided into about eleven different size groups using sieves. Each size fraction is then sorted into categories, for example crystals can be divided into five groups:

- Stones      -unbroken crystals
- Shapes      -unbroken crystals with less regularity.
- Cleavages   -broken crystals
- Macles      -twinned crystals which are roughly triangular.
- Flats        -irregular crystals with flat parallel sides.

After various other sorting procedures the diamonds wing their way to London where they are taken to 17 Charterhouse Street in London's Holborn district, which is near St Paul's Cathedral. This building houses the Central Selling Organisation from where the diamonds are marketed.



*17 Charterhouse Street - London (Photo De Beers)*



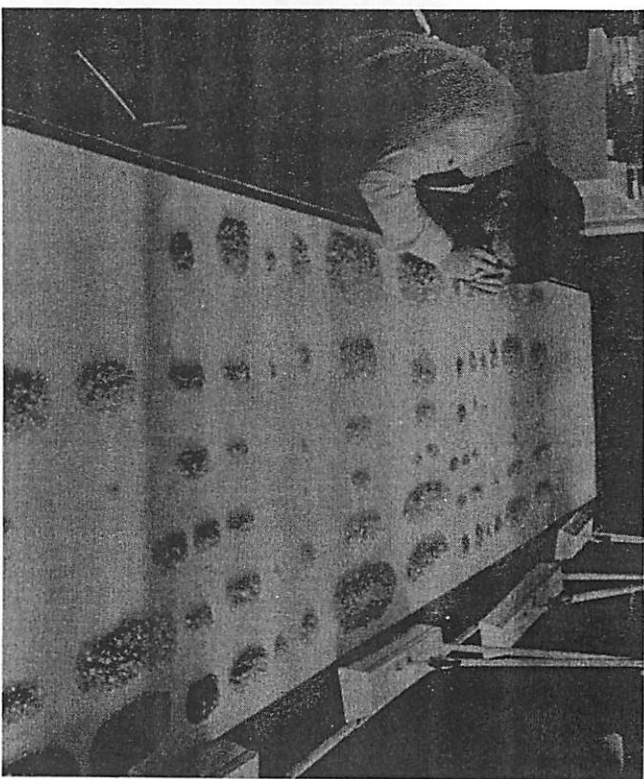
## Central Selling Organisation

From early times it was recognized that there should be some control on the sale of diamonds to stabilize the market. Sir Ernest Oppenheimer was instrumental in achieving this objective. In July 1926 he became a Director of De Beers and in 1929 he became the Chairman. In 1930 the Diamond Corporation came into being. Between 1930 and 1935 Oppenheimer had to deal with the gravest crisis the diamond industry had ever confronted. He faced the collapse of world economic order and as a result had to contend with huge stockpiles of diamonds during the periods of general instability. However, it was partly as a result of this that the entire diamond trading system was restructured. From these foundations came the CSO which seeks to control most of the output of rough diamonds and to market them through a central channel.

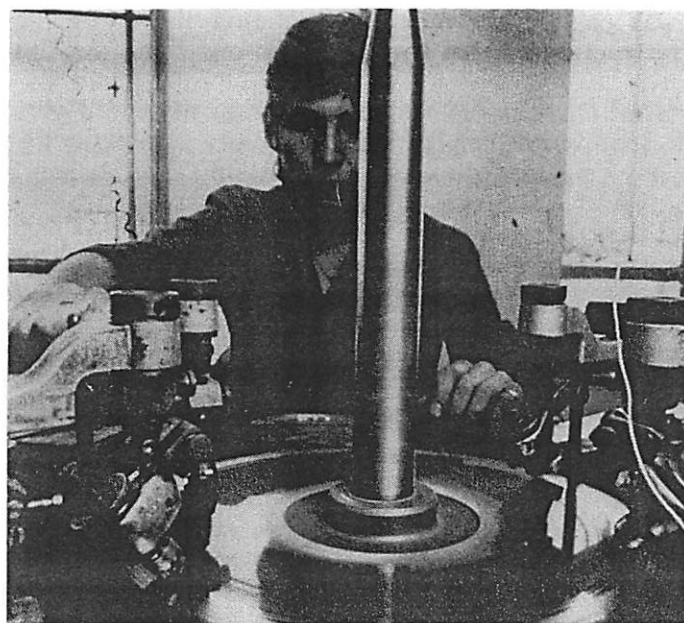
The CSO is presently headed by the Deputy Chairman of De Beers, Mr Nicholas Oppenheimer. He succeeded Sir Phillip Oppenheimer who filled the post for 30 years and still acts in an advisory capacity. The rough diamonds are sent to 17 Charterhouse Street from all over the world and are known as "roughs". The CSO has a select number of "clients", approximately 300, from all over the world. These clients are carefully chosen and are predominantly from the major diamond cutting centres. The clients are invited to the CSO to buy "roughs" at the "sights" which occur about ten times a year. The "sights" are so-called as it is the first time that the clients see the goods the CSO is offering them. There are two rules pertaining to the sights: the buyer must take the whole box; and they must pay the price requested by the CSO.

The clients are notified three weeks prior to a sight and are invited to apply. They arrive at a reception desk escorted by security men and are given ID badges. They move through a pleasantly appointed reception room where they meet other clients and swap diamond gossip. They meet their broker in this reception room. The broker is the middle man who deals with the CSO for the sightholder. The broker makes all the arrangements for the clients' stay in London and handles most of the communications. Each client must have a broker who is a member of one of six broker firms the CSO deals with. He reserves one of the thirty six showing rooms for his client.

The showing room is spotlessly clean and clinical. It has a large window which dominates the room and there is a table, three chairs, three neon lamps and a scale. The sightholder settles down at the table and shortly after the broker appears with the box! The glamour leaves the business now as it is simply a cardboard box about the size of a shoebox, and sometimes holds millions of dollars worth of diamonds! The box may or may not contain what the client asked for. It will depend on the market, what is available and what the CSO is interested in marketing. The week prior to the sight, the CSO staff make up the allocations for each sightholder. The stones are



*The CSO - final sorting (Photo De Beers)*



*Diamond Polishing (Photo De Beers)*

wrapped in white paper, put in white envelopes and marked according to category.

In this room the sightholder scrutinizes his parcel. He may take 2 hours or 2 days. He will check the grading and the weight and decide how the stones will fit in with his own business requirements. If there is any disagreement, the broker will discuss it with the CSO salesman and can arrange for his client to meet the salesman.

When the client has finished examining the box the sight is over and he must make arrangements to transfer funds to the CSO's London bank. Sightholders spend from \$200,000 to several million dollars for a box of roughs. In his hey day, the late Harry Winston is said to have taken sight valued at \$20 million consisting of several boxes sprinkled with "specials" particularly outstanding diamonds.

Once the bank confirms the transfer of funds, the London secretariat authorizes the dispatch for the roughs.

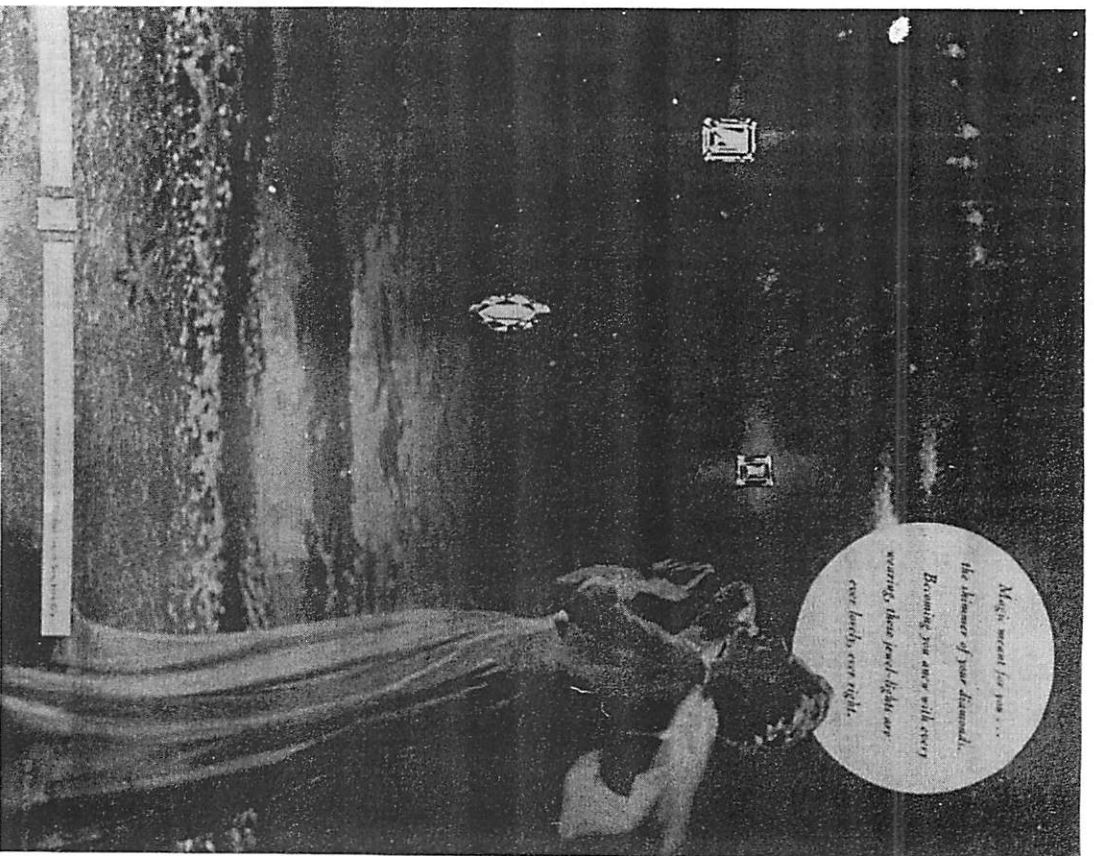
Our CDM diamonds have found a new owner who may be from New York, Tel Aviv or Hong Kong but they still have a long way to go before they are ready to sparkle to the world.

## Diamond Cutting

The most prized diamonds are colourless, and thus their beauty depends on the optical qualities of the crystals. In order to produce a diamond with clarity and lustre, it is important to make the best cut possible. Thus our diamonds have to undergo a number of processes to change them from their rough form to a sparkling jewel. Modern techniques have evolved from traditional cutting techniques used in the big cutting centres over the centuries.

While diamonds were considered to be a talisman there was little incentive to cut and polish them. Diamond polishing seems to have originated in Venice, some time after 1330. Cutting (also known as bruting) was originally done by rubbing one diamond against another until they took on the required shape and polishing was achieved by clamping the diamond to a steel wheel which had a covering of diamond dust and oil. Cleaving was also carried out in early times but only octahedral forms could be produced.

To get a rough diamond ready for the market a long and involved process is carried out by a series of diamond workers, all of whom are highly specialized. To produce a diamond with brilliance depends on two factors: life and fire. Life is the amount of light which is reflected back to the viewer and fire is the amount of colour that is caused by the stone splitting white light into other colours. The amount of light entering a diamond may be as much as 83% and it is up to the designer to trap this light by cutting



*Fashion Advert - 1947 (Photo De Beers)*

the correct angle on the diamond, 24 degrees 26 minutes is the refractive index for diamond. There are a variety of well known cuts which have evolved. Some of these include the Rose Cut; the Brilliant Cut; Step Cut and Bead Cut. It was calculated by Marcel Tolowsky in 1919 that the best compromise angle was 40 degrees 45 minutes as it provided the best refraction. Once the designer has decided which is the best cut for each individual stone, according to the market needs and the type of diamond, the intricate process begins. It's an extremely exacting technique.

To gauge the value of the diamond 4 factors are taken into consideration. The colour, clarity, the cut and the carat weight - the 4 C's. In the early days the weight was determined by using the weights of dry seeds that were fairly uniform. The carob seed was commonly used and was called the CARAT. From these humble beginnings come the careful calculations for the weight of the diamond. A carat now represents 0.2 gram.

The Oranjemund diamond, now beautifully cut and polished is ready for the jeweller and the public market. Who will buy these glittering gemstones and why?

## Marketing and Advertising

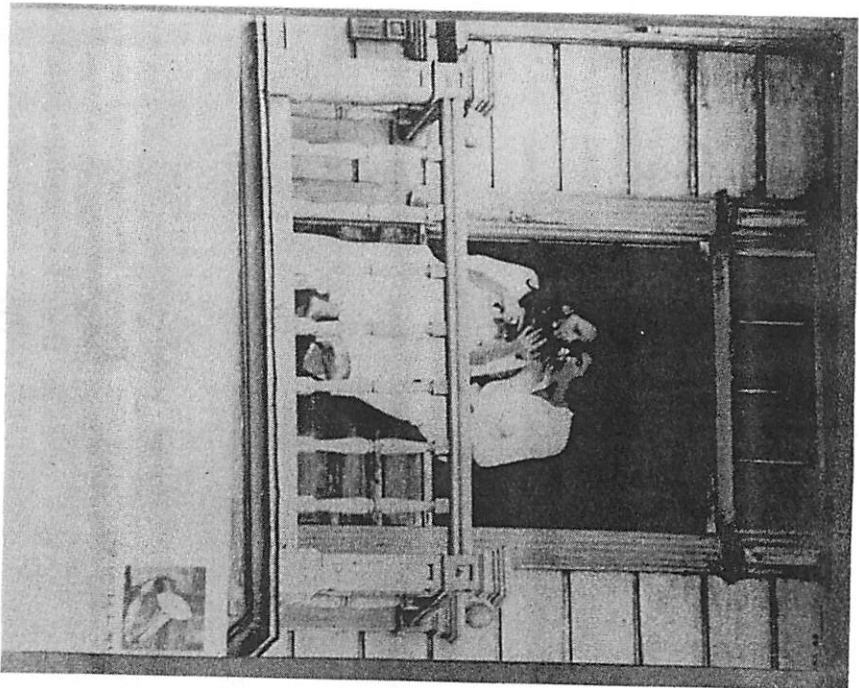
Love between two people is as old as mankind and through the centuries man has found different ways of demonstrating his love for another person. In Wales it was the custom for the young Welshman to present his girl with a wooden spoon on which he had carved symbols of his love such as knots and initials. If the girl accepted this, in the eyes of the community they were engaged. From this the term "spooning" came to mean any show of affection. In Japan, the marriage ceremony was consummated by the bride and groom both drinking rice wine from the same wooden bowl.

Exchanging or giving of rings to mark engagement goes back to the earliest years of the Christian era. Before this in some places engagement was marked by taking a piece of silver or gold which was broken in half and shared by the couple as a token of their love and intention to marry. The choice of the third finger appears to have arisen because of the mistaken belief that a special vein ran from it directly to the heart!

There have been many types of engagement rings over the years but the single band set with precious stones has proved the most popular. Superstition claims that there are various stones which are most appropriate for the month in which you became engaged; the diamond symbolizes innocence and is the stone for April, the emerald signifies success in love and is the stone for May.

In 1477, according to history, Maximilian asked advice from his councillors as to how to ask his beloved Mary of Burgundy for her hand in





*Campaigns in Japan were very successful (Photo De Beers)*

marriage. The councillor suggested that he give her a gold ring with a diamond set in it. He duly acted upon the advice, Mary accepted and a tradition was born!

De Beers was perturbed about the state of diamond sales in 1938 and the tarnished reputation they had and decided to seek a solution. In September 1938, Harry Oppenheimer travelled to New York to meet Gerold Lauck who was President of N.W. Ayer, one of the leading advertising firms in the United States. The diamond was not very popular in Europe as the diamond price had collapsed and the confidence of the public was at a low ebb. America was obviously the best market. The idea of giving a diamond engagement ring was still accepted in the States, but the American men were rather reticent about buying large stones. Could advertising change this trend perhaps. After several surveys, Ayer replied that it could.

The Ayer company accepted Oppenheimer's proposal and set to work to analyse the market and to see where and how the adverts should take place. Two men were predominantly responsible for the success of the campaign that followed. They were Charles Coiner and Paul Darrow. Coiner had joined Ayer at a young age and by the time he was 31 he was head of the Art Department. He was made vice-president of Ayer when he was 38. Darrow joined Ayer in 1928 as a young painter and headed the team that took on the De Beers project. These men decided to strike at the emotional connotation of the diamond and aim at outstanding presentation. They decided to use top artists in the fine art field and started with Maillol and Derrain, two top contemporary artists. Contented with the results they proceeded to use top world artists like Picasso, Dali and Matisse. It was decided to romanticize the image of diamonds and inculcate the idea that diamonds represent a gift of love. Motion pictures, still relatively new in those days were used to put across the new image. Plush advertisements were placed in elite magazines and stories about diamonds went to the press. By 1941 the campaign was having great success and sales had improved by 55%. There was obviously a need among the people to have a symbol which could express their feelings.

De Beers needed a slogan or catch phrase to epitomise their philosophy and in 1948 an N.W. Ayer copywriter called Francis Gerety was ordered by the Vice President to sit down and think of a slogan for diamonds. She sat down and doodled with various possibilities. She had "a diamond is...." and was beginning to despair. At last in exasperation she exclaimed, "Oh Lord, this could go on FOREVER!" and thus came up with the caption "A Diamond is Forever". This became the logo for De Beers. Between 1939 and 1949 sales of diamond jewellery had increased by approximately 100%. The Ayer company continually looked for new ways to stimulate their campaign, careful analyses were done of public opinion and thought and the campaigns



*The 80's advertising trend (Photo De Beers)*

kept up with day to day trends. By the 1950's most people in the USA saw the diamond ring as synonymous with engagement. To develop the market for diamond engagement rings it was decided to invite young ladies of worthy social backgrounds to pose for outstanding painters. One such painting had just been completed when the young lady in question broke off her engagement! However, she assured the company she would get engaged again when the advert was due to run - which she duly did!

In the 1960's it was decided to internationalize the advertising campaign and the prime areas chosen were Germany and Japan. They met with great success in Japan. The agency J. Walter Thompson was engaged to handle the programme and by 1981 some 60% of Japanese women wore diamond rings. Diamond sales are booming currently in Japan with the 1984 retail sales of jewellery totalling 950 billion yen (\$4.9 billion). By the end of 1985 the sales had reached one trillion yen (\$5.16 billion). De Beers is spending an annual 4.5 billion yen on advertising in Japan with increasing attention being given to Diamonds for Men.

Gradually the campaigns extended to provide for the "later in life" gifts as a demonstration of continuing love. In the 80's the trend has been to encourage men to wear diamond jewellery. In 1985 the number of Diamonds for Men nearly equalled the number of diamond rings sold in the USA.

Through careful advertising the diamond has become synonymous with caring. In this unsettled world of today many people desperately need a symbol which signifies permanence, caring and love. But more than that, the Oranienbund diamond has provided employment for thousands during the past 53 years. It has resulted in a tract of desert being harnessed and developed for the benefit of many and it has created an oasis comprising a microcosm of society, where folk of different races, colours and creeds have learned, and are learning to live in harmony. Oranienbunders; innovators, developers and pioneers alike, share the rare phenomenon of being responsible for the development of a few wooden ponds into a bustling modern town, all for the sake of that enigmatic mineral - the diamond.

## REFERENCES:

### BOOKS:

Ernest Oppenheimer and the economic development of Southern Africa - Gregory.  
Death of a diamond - Edward Epstein.  
Diamonds - E Bruton.  
Oppenheimer and Son - A Hocking.  
Diamonds in the Desert - Olga Levinson.  
Diamond Smugglers - Ian Fleming.  
Namibia - Anthony Bannister and Peter Johnson.  
Living Shores of Southern Africa M& G Branch.  
The Mammals of the Southern African Subregion - Reay H.N.Smithers.  
South West Africa - Cubitt Richter.  
Diamonds - Myth Magic and reality - Crown Publishers.  
Africa's Harsh Paradise - Bannister.  
The Glamour of Prospecting - Fred Cornell.  
To the River's End - Lawrence Green.  
Look Beyond the Wind - Olga Lehman.  
Discover Namibia - Michael Brittan.  
Deserts, Paths, and Elephants - Michael Iwanowski.  
Great River - A.R. Willcox.  
Fortune through my Fingers - Jack Carstens.  
Old Soldiers never die -Autobiography of MOTHO - C.A.Evenden.

### PERIODICALS,

### PAPERS AND MAGAZINES:

Modern Jeweller July 1985.  
1986 De Beers Advertising.  
In Sight Spring 1986.  
Statistical Review 1945-1960 D Borchers.  
A day in the life of a sight holder - J Thompson - Modern Jeweller March 1983.  
Oppenheimer Interview Modern Jeweller March 1983.  
Opening of Ernest Oppenheimer Bridge Feb 1951.  
Diamond Deposits of German South West Africa - P.A. Wagner.  
Oranjemund Newsletters 1956 - 1988.  
SWA Year Book 1985.  
The Owambo - C H L Hahn.  
Reports on the Government Guano Islands :1897,1896,1898.  
Annual Reports 1920 - 1986.  
Diamonds - Rob Hudson.  
The Diamond Deposits of Luderitzland, German South West Africa - Merensky,H, 1909.  
Notes on the German South West African Diamonds - Krause,C; 1910.  
The Origin of the German South West African Diamonds - Wagner, P.A. 1910.  
The Kavango: The Country, its People and History - K.F.R. Budack.  
World Air News - Piggy back to the Orange - J. House.  
Rand Light Infantry - Hopkins.

Earthmoving in the Diamond Mines of Southern Africa - C.P. Louwrens - The Institute of Certificated Engineers Journal.  
Diamond Line - December 1986.  
CDM Brochures.  
Palaeoecology of Africa and the surrounding islands -Vol 10/11 - Gudrun Corvinus.  
A new Miocene vertebrate locality at Arrisdrift in South West Africa - Q.B.Hendey G.Corvinus.  
Annals of the South African Museum - Volume 76.