

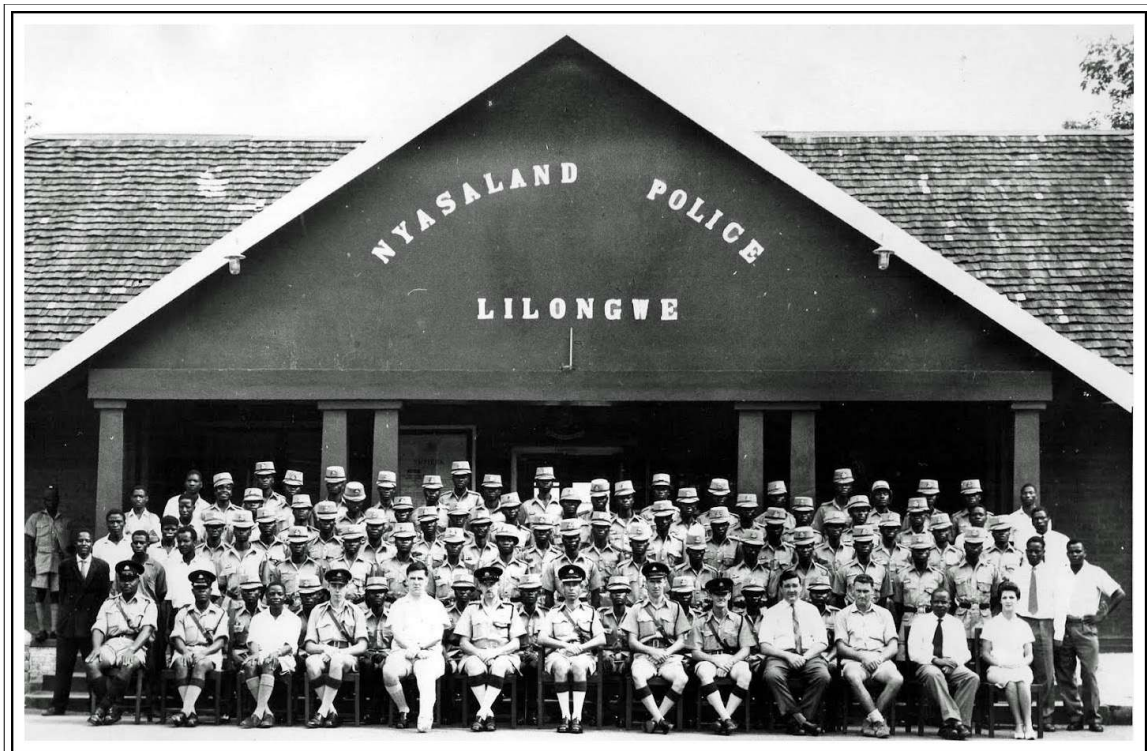
# GRANNY'S BOOK

## 'The Land of the Lake'

### Part 15

*By Mary Brill*

This time we were posted to Lilongwe in the Central Province, our first time there, it was a fast growing township to become the capital of Malawi when Dr Banda took over. Much to our surprise Bill Lamborn and his family were also in Lilongwe where he was the manager of the Mandala Store, so it was really nice to have our old friends around us again. Mike Fraser was the Officer in Charge of Police, Reg knew him well, we were



*Mike Fraser front row centre, Reg immediately on his right.*

also to meet the Le Mesuriers again, just as they were retiring and going back to the UK. (When we returned to the UK in 1964 we visited them at the Royal Chelsea Hospital while we were staying in London). We had a nice house in Lilongwe, quite near to the golf club. I became Secretary of the golf club and helped to run the bar in the mornings, buying in all the stock. I found that if there was to be a function then I was called upon to be there with the keys to get extra stock out of store for the bar. The bar staff were all Africans but Harold Wrigley, a member of the committee, helped a lot.

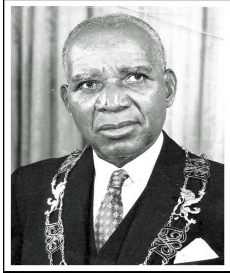
The Golf Club Committee decided to have a bowling green, so with a lot of hard work and digging African prisoners laid the green. Harold Wrigley did a lot of the planning and organising with the help of another younger chap who was in the CAA, Dave ??? - can't remember his surname – and we have photos of me bowling the first bowl on the green, it was a wonderful day for the club. I can still remember that Reg played his cricket and I played a lot of golf. I had been playing golf and bowls whilst living in Blantyre before Ken was born. So it was about 1960 that I started to enjoy playing bowls. A very good player called Sam Goatley, who had played bowls for Southern Rhodesia in the Empire Games,

gave me a bit of coaching. He was a fine teacher, I was a quick learner and in later years I became a champion and was rated as a very good player - including the winning of the Dorset Ladies Singles Championship and in the Pairs, with my partner Sheila Jones, we went on to become runners-up in the All England event of 1986.

Back in Lilongwe, the year 1963 became one of the most difficult years when we had to make so many decisions about our life.



Nyasaland was going through so many different changes running up to Independence. Dr



Banda had taken on the running of the country and great changes were taking place, there was talk of multiracial education with the lowering of standards in schools to accommodate the Africans and so on. We made a very wrong decision in sending Rob back to school in the UK. It was to a private school in Bacton, Norfolk, which went bankrupt. Rob was saying how unhappy he was there and what little food he was getting, so much so that my mother was sending him packages of food. Further, he was getting little or no education at all. Subsequently we arranged that

he should leave the place at the end of term and stay with my mother in Chesterfield where, lucky for her, that Aunty Nelly Ingoll lived at Caister not far from the school.

In Nyasaland everyone in the police force seemed very unhappy at the way things were developing and often felt unable to do their job properly. So, in the end, when we got the choice for staying on for two more years or getting compensation for loss of office we decided, rightly or wrongly, to take early retirement and go back to the UK. With hindsight we should have stayed. However we knew too little of what lay ahead for us in the country we loved so much which had been our life for fifteen years and where our children had grown up. Now it was all changing, there was hatefulness around us and where there had been love and a great bond between the Africans and the colonial whites, it was splitting apart. Consequently we were afraid for our children in particular, so really we felt we had little option but to leave. The day we left for ever was the saddest I have ever known. Saying goodbye to Handwatch and Ronald, the two boys who had looked after us and been our family for all these years. In particular Handwatch, who had been with us since the age of fourteen, all his grown up life, wept as saying goodbye to the children – they hugged 'their' baby Ken "Oh bwana Ken we shall never forget you" - just not wanting to be parted and Reg and I were really feeling down. And so we duly set out on our journey south to Cape Town and the end of our time in Nyasaland.