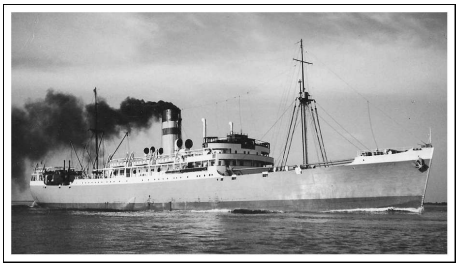
GRANNY'S BOOK

'The Land of the Lake'

Part 7

By Mary Brill

In 1956 we sailed back to Cape Town on the "Umtata", this was quite a small ship only one hundred passengers We enjoyed the journey very much, a nice rest from the travel around the UK. We disembarked at Cape Town with our little Hillman Husky this was quite a



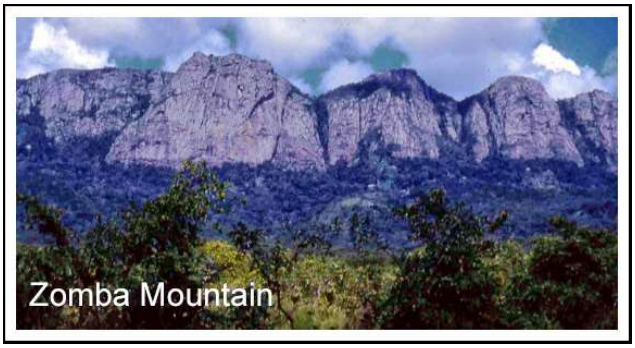
journey to undertake. I was amazed at how quickly we were able to travel with our entire luggage. We took the N1 to Victoria West, then on to the Free State, Bloemfontein, Kokstad and then up to Johannesburg. We stayed at the Jacaranda Hotel at Vereeniging just outside Johannesburg. Then on to Pretoria, renowned for the jacaranda trees, which explode into billowing clouds of purple blossom which rains down forming pools of vivid colour every October.

From Pretoria we drove on up to the NI road to Louis Trichardt where we stayed the night at the Mountain Inn with such wonderful views of the Soutpansberg Mountains. Then on the next day, driving on through Messina and over the Beit Bridge. Then there was a delay at the Rhodesian border, it took us an hour with a stop for food. It was after that that I misread the map, we were now on strip roads, different from the lovely tarmac roads of South Africa. It was a long stretch of road to the next hotel. Thinking it would be in easy reach by nightfall, but unfortunately I miss read a fold in the map and we did not reach the hotel at Hippo River, at a place called Nuanetsi, too late for the evening meal but the night porter managed to get some sandwiches for us. Then the next morning after breakfast we set out for Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia *(now Harare, Zimbabwe)*. Then we went on to a place called Mtoko and eventually we arrived at Tete and here we had to take a boat across the River Zambezi and had to wait a short time whilst a pontoon towed a small motor boat over from the other side. We then had to run down a steep bank and then up rather narrow planks on the Pontoon. There was quite a flow of water on the river and it was amazing at how such a small boat could negotiate the fast flowing water. We came to the Nyasaland Border after going through the Tsetse fly control barrier about 20 miles further along the road.

It was December when we arrived in Blantyre where we stayed at Ryall's Hotel. Handwatch found us there some two weeks before Christmas so he was on hand to look after the children and get the washing, etc, done. Whilst there we contacted Bill and Ann Lamborn who lived close to the hotel and I was asked if I would help in the shop for a few days. This I did but unfortunately Robert became ill with a fever. It was discovered by Handwatch who found him in a delirious state of mind, wandering around the hotel shouting, "They are after me, quick I must hide!". I came back from work to find the poor boy being comforted by Handwatch who had got him to bed and was a few days before the fever left him. Reg and I were getting up to him during the night, he was quite delirious at times, saying that the sand was falling on him and that he must get out. He kept

wandering into the corridor of the hotel, so we had to keep a watch over him for a few days, however, following a visit to the doctor, all was well.

It was there, one day, that the children were playing at the Lamborn's house when Bill's pet monkey escaped from his cage and chased the children around the house, giving them quite a fright. Handwatch just hated monkeys. We were pleased when we left the hotel and went to Zomba, where we waited for our posting to Fort Johnston, which came in the New Year 1957. We were in Zomba for about 3 weeks whilst we waited for our house to become available in Fort Johnston. It was Christmas whilst we were there, it seemed a very strange Christmas, without all our things, as we were unable to unpack for the house. I had no lamp shades so when a boy came selling waste paper baskets I bought these and made them into lampshades, this started a new fashion and were very much admired so I took them on to Fort Johnston with us.


Zomba Mountain