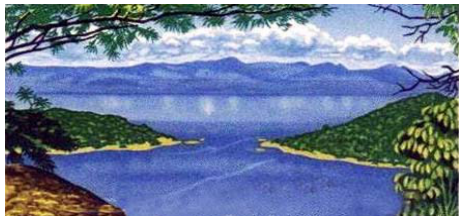


The Lake and its Resorts

By Cynthia Magee

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I recall the old Monkey Bay Hotel - a main dining room-cum-lounge in an enclosed khonde, and wattle and daub huts encamped around, creaky wooden doors, netted wire windows



and the swarms of visiting mosquitoes. It was all what today would be called the African Experience. Its original owner was a Major Harvey, before the 1940, later taken over by the Dalys. Ma Daly had been the school headmistress at the tiny pre-primary school, housed in a double garage in Zomba.

Fairly near on the same shoreline was the Yiannakis fisheries and I recall as a child at early nightfall for Mr daily shining his torch along the shore and capturing sets of red crocodile eyes - much to guests excitement. The Yiannakis family had sole commercial fishing rights for the whole of the lake. Their fish lorries did daily runs to Blantyre, stopping at Zomba market on the way. Our night watchman left his 'sleeping post' in front of the Rhodesian boiler or in the kitchen - both were warm places - and went fish buying for



chambo fish at 3p to 6p each. As my father just wasn't the type to holiday at Monkey Bay, travelling up those broken mud tracks, sharing the middle of the road with cyclists loaded and overloaded with baskets full of chambo and smelly dried fish for marketing wherever they could, my mother, being the positive fun-loving person she was, we also became 'fish' and were

transported in the front seat of the Yiannakis lorry. I cannot remember being fussy about our transport because to arrive at Monkey Bay - to see the lake - to swim - was pure joy. Many years later I spent my honeymoon there.



The Grand Beach Hotel, at Salima, was on a grander scale - old colonial brick double storied building with accommodation in the main building and again wattle and daub buildings with rooms. The train chuffed from Limbe to Salima.

The Palm Beach Hotel, owned during the 50s by Pixie Sweetman and Ted, an ex DC or ADC, which was always popular with weekenders from Zomba. Later, possibly in the



1960s with Government regulations on the quality of accommodation, the hotel could not continue. It was sold to the Langdons - Patty Pink's sister - and with the lake rising it was flooded out

Then there was Cape Maclear Hotel, the original home of Sir Alfred Beit.





We spent many hours sitting in a dugout canoe piloted by a fisherman. We went out into the lake around the island at Monkey Bay, saw the crocodiles sunning on the rocks slither into the water. Or stopped, and saw the wonderful coloured fish, darting among the rocks. As a child brought up in Nyasaland it never occurred to me until much later that if we wiggled a bit in the

canoe over it would go and we would be a crocodile's meal or two.



Pictured left is **George Magee**, Cynthia's husband. George was a very experienced officer having served in the RUC from 1947 to 1950 and in Malaya 1950 to 1959. He joined the Nyasaland Police in October 1959.