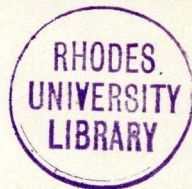


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# RHODES NEWSLETTER

*Organ of the Old Rhodian Union*

RHODES UNIVERSITY

GRAHAMSTOWN

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## EDITORIAL

MANY Old Rhodians will already have learnt with deep regret of the death of Miss L. L. Britten, the Honorary Secretary of the Union. All Old Rhodians, stopping to look back over the years, will feel how indebted they are to Miss Britten for the very existence of the Union, while looking to the future they will hope that the Old Rhodian Union will never lose that very pleasant note of a personal relationship which Miss Britten did so much to develop.

This number of the Rhodes Newsletter is being sent out considerably later than had been anticipated owing largely to the sudden departure towards the end of last year of Dr. E. R. Seary, one of our editors. After 14 years on the Rhodes staff, Dr. Seary has left to take up the post of Professor and Head of the English Department at the Bagdad University. He was well known to numerous Old Rhodians and during the war years, when he saw service in North Africa, he renewed contacts with many of his old students serving in the forces. If we at Rhodes are sorry to lose "Ron" and his inevitable pipe, we cannot but rejoice at his success in obtaining this new post, even though we may regret that his considerable teaching experience will benefit Iraqi students rather than future Rhodians.

The Editor is certain that all Old Rhodians will want to thank Dr. Seary for the part he played in the creation of this newsletter and to wish Mrs. Seary and himself all joy and happiness in their new surroundings.

E.T.V.



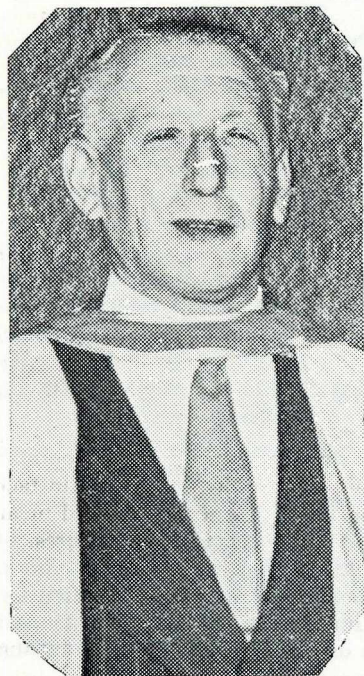
# THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

By Dr. T. Alty

(Vice-Chancellor, Rhodes University)

ON October 25th last Dr. B. F. J. Schonland, C.B.E., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.R.S., was installed as Chancellor of the University.

Dr. Schonland, as well as being a most distinguished scientist and administrator, is peculiarly well qualified to fill the highest office in the University. His father was the first Professor of Botany at Rhodes and Dr. Schonland himself is an Old Rhodian and received his early training under Professors Ogg and Varder. After service in the war of 1914-1918, he spent some years at Cambridge University before his appointment at the University of Cape Town, first as lecturer in Physics and then as professor. During his time there, he began his brilliant researches into the nature of lightning. These extended over a number of years during which he produced a steady stream of scientific papers which earned for him the coveted honour of the Fellowship of the Royal Society, and also led to his appointment as Director of the Bernard Price Institute of Geophysics in Johannesburg. Here he was able to expand and extend his work until the outbreak of the 1939-45 war, when he once more threw himself into the scientific side of modern warfare with such success that by the end of the conflict he held the rank of Brigadier and the appointment of Scientific Liaison Officer to General Montgomery.



Immediately after the war, Dr. Schonland returned to the Union and was invited by the Government to become the first President of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. In this office he had the very important and difficult task of planning the new organisation and building it up from very small beginnings. In his charge it grew to its present commanding position in the scientific life of the Union. After five years of arduous administrative work Dr. Schonland resigned from the presidency of the Council in 1950 and returned to his Directorship of the Bernard Price Institute where once again he is finding the opportunity of personally undertaking original researches.

All at Rhodes, and all Old Rhodians, are proud to welcome Dr. Schonland to the high office of Chancellor of the University. We were delighted to have him and Mrs. Schonland (née Ismay Craib) with us for the Installation and look forward to many years of close association with them both. After assuming office as Chancellor Dr. Schonland marked the occasion by conferring the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on two distinguished men, Dr. L. B. Goldschmidt, an Old Rhodian and an eminent surgeon and Dr. H. J. van Eck, eminent as economist and an expert in industrial management. Both were most warmly welcomed to Rhodes.



## MISS LILIAN L. BRITTEN

By Mrs. M. E. McKerron

(Vice-President Old Rhodian Union Committee)

STUDENTS of every generation in the history of Rhodes University will have heard with great regret of the death of Miss Lilian L. Britten on 1st January, 1952. She had been connected with the institution in various capacities from its early days to the time of her death.

Miss Britten's passion for botany apparently dated from the age of five, and never abated throughout her life. After distinguishing herself in Botany in the final honours examination of the B.Sc. degree, she occupied important posts in various schools for some years, and later continued her botanical studies overseas. In 1918 she returned to Rhodes University College, as it then was, as a lecturer in the Department of Botany. Here she displayed the fearless intellectual honesty of the true scientist, and she was always ready to admit that she might be wrong even in some pet theory. The famous Dr. Marloth once said of her that she knew more about the flora of the Eastern Province than anyone in South Africa. This knowledge was always at the disposal of student and expert, and she built up a network of enthusiasts who exchanged ideas and specimens. The success of her work as a teacher is not to be estimated only by the narrow standard of examination passes but also by the fact that many of her students found a life interest in botany. It is not surprising that some of these students have distinguished themselves in botanical research. She herself spent years of joyous labour on *Streptocarpus*, and it is to be hoped that some of the results of this work may yet be published.

Her knowledge of botany made her a useful person on several public organisations. She was one of the prime movers in the formation of the Nature Reserve situated on the slopes of the Mountain Drive, and was Honorary Secretary of the Albany Museum Board of Trustees.

But Miss Britten was best known to Old Rhodians as the first and only Honorary Secretary of the Old Rhodian Union during the 30 years or so of its existence. In fact, it is not too much to say that she was the Old Rhodian Union. The card record of all past students — in the building up of which she took the greatest pride and interest — provided her with an unrivalled knowledge of the whole student body of the institution. In one year alone, the number of circulars she sent out ran into five figures. In addition, she always tried, wherever she could, to write a personal letter or at least, include a personal note. Past students returning to Rhodes after some years sometimes found that almost their only link with the institution they had known was that at 133 High Street.

Miss Britten looked after every halfpenny of trust money with jealous care though her own money meant little more to her than a means of helping others. It is an open secret that she often paid Old Rhodian bills out of her own pocket so that the funds of the organization should not lose interest. It was almost impossible to stem the tide of her reckless generosity. Instead of bemoaning the smallness of the pension she received after years of service, she constantly wondered whether she was justified in accepting it from the community.

In spite of her modest and gentle nature, Miss Britten was an intrepid fighter for what she believed to be right. She was one of South Africa's early suffragettes who did much to secure the franchise for women in this country. Throughout her life, she was a vigorous and outspoken supporter of a great number of schemes for helping the less privileged.

An incident that occurred a few days before her death will illustrate her quality. Because her birthday fell very near Christmas Day, she had never had a special party for it. In 1951 she was determined to have a party to celebrate the occasion. The party was duly given — it was for the family's African servants and their friends.

The humble and the lowly particularly have lost a friend it will be difficult to replace, but all who knew Lilian Britten will be grateful for her disinterested service to the community and for the gracious simplicity and fresh wholesomeness of her life.

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## THE RETIREMENT OF PROFESSOR R. W. VARDER

By Dr. S. W. Watson

(Senior Lecturer in Physics, Rhodes University)

**P**ROFESSOR VARDER, who retired from the Chair of Physics in June 1951, has completed an active and memorable period of teaching service, and one unequalled in length at Rhodes.

He was appointed lecturer in Physics and applied Mathematics under Professor A. Ogg in 1909, shortly after graduating at Rhodes with honours in Physics. He later completed the M.A. examination and spent a year's research leave working at Manchester under Sir Ernest Rutherford, later Lord Rutherford. The results of his work over this period were published in papers dealing with the absorption of beta-rays and the transformations of Actinium C.

In 1917 Professor Varder succeeded Dr. Ogg in the Chair of Physics. He maintained the impressive reputation which Dr. Ogg had established for this subject at Rhodes, kept in close touch with the rapid advances which were taking place in that science, and attracted to his senior courses many of the ablest students of the University. A remarkable number of these won overseas scholarships and now occupy prominent posts in university and scientific life. Under his guidance the new Physics Laboratory was built; it was opened by Sir Ernest Rutherford in 1929.

In addition to playing a very active part in the senates of Rhodes and the University of South Africa, Professor Varder served for many years on the College Council and as Deputy and Acting Master. He was also for a long period a member of the South African Native College; he was chairman of the latter body for a number of years. He was both an active worker and a strong and constructive critic of policy.

Professor Varder's devotion and loyalty to Rhodes were most notable and the interests of both students and staff were of deep concern to him. His relations with his staff and students were extremely pleasant. In his earlier years on the staff he was Warden of College House and chairman of the Old Rhodian Union; for a long time he was president of both the men's and the women's tennis clubs and at one time spent many hours in coaching players.

Professor and Mrs. Varder, together with Professors Isaac and Monica Wilson, were entertained by the staff at a farewell dinner in their honour shortly before his retirement and a handsome presentation was made to them.

Both inside and outside Rhodes Professor and Mrs. Varder have made a wide circle of friends who will wish them all happiness.



# THE CONSTITUTION OF RHODES UNIVERSITY

By A. E. Shields, M.B.E.

(Registrar, Rhodes University)

I HAVE been asked to describe shortly the changes brought about in the constitution of Rhodes on the assumption of independent status.

As is well known, of course, the most important change is that Rhodes is now in a position to confer its own degrees and may lay down for itself the conditions under which such degrees are awarded. Control over degree syllabuses, standards and all other matters incidental thereto, is now in the hands of its own Senate, which thus takes over powers previously vested in the Senate of the University of South Africa. Apart from this, the powers and functions of the Senate remain more or less as they were before. The powers and functions of the Council, too, are largely unaltered: as before, this body is responsible for the general control and the financial administration of the institution.

There have, however, been some changes in the constitution of both Council and Senate, particularly in the case of the former. The size of the Council has been reduced from 31 to 22. This has been achieved largely by reducing the number of representatives of miscellaneous bodies which had supported the institution financially from 7 to 2; by reducing the number of representatives of past students from 5 to 2; by reducing the representation of various local authorities from 6 to 5; and by reducing the representation of various local schools from 5 to 1. On the other hand, the representation of the Senate on Council has been increased from 2 to 4. The Senate has increased slightly in size by the addition of 2 representatives of lecturers and by increasing the representation of Council from 1 to 2.

As a University, Rhodes now has a Chancellor and a Convocation for the first time. The Chancellor is elected by the Council. He is the official Head of the University and as such is empowered, in the name of the University, to confer all degrees. Convocation consists of the Principal, Registrar, Librarian and teaching staff of the University, and all graduates of the University (including, subject to certain restrictions, all graduates of the University of South Africa who took their degrees at Rhodes University College). It is required to meet at least once a year: it elects two members of Council, and it may discuss and express its opinion on any matter relating to the University.

The former Master has now been renamed the Principal and he is also ex-officio the Vice-Chancellor, in which capacity he performs the functions of the Chancellor when the latter is absent. The former Deputy Master becomes the Vice-Principal and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and performs all the functions of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor whenever the latter is absent.

The University is divided into eight Faculties, namely Arts, Science, Education, Commerce, Divinity, Law, Social Science and Music, for each of which there is a Board which acts as a Committee of the Senate in respect of all matters affecting that Faculty. The Chairman of the Board is the Dean of the Faculty.

# ACADEMIC COSTUME

By H. H. Smith

(Senior Lecturer in Commerce)

It is exceedingly difficult to trace the evolution of the present day gowns, hoods and caps from their mediaeval ancestors, and it is certain that the present day robes bear little similarity to those worn when universities were founded.

There was originally no official costume for the undergraduate. Every student was supposed to be a clerk in Holy Orders and, as such, wore the tonsure and clerical habit. The distinguishing features of the latter were the length, that it was closed in front and that it was of one colour only. Regulations aimed at preventing excesses in dress, but the shape varied with the wearer's taste or with changes in fashion.

The first distinctively academical garment was worn by Masters of Arts, i.e. those who had been granted a licence to teach. This was a sleeveless garment, called the **cappa**, black at first but later frequently red or purple, with a border, shoulder length tippet and hood of white fur. An almost exact replica of the cappa is worn by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University when presiding over graduation ceremonies. It is impossible to trace the stages by which the cappa was discarded and the present day gowns evolved, but it seems certain that they are derived not from the cappa, but from the **toga**, a garment worn under the cappa.

The present day gowns are distinguished, broadly, by the shape of the sleeves. Bachelors' gowns have sleeves which are wrist length in front and fall to a point at the back. Masters' gowns have long closed sleeves, slit at elbow level to free the arm and with a peculiar semi-circular "cut-out" at the bottom. Doctors' gowns are usually of scarlet and often have coloured facings down the fronts and on the sleeves. At Oxford the sleeves are wrist length, back and front; at Cambridge they are pointed at the back and looped up in front at the wrist.

The **hood** was originally part of the ordinary mediaeval dress and was not restricted to those who possessed a degree. Hoods were a practical necessity in the unwarmed schools and colleges of mediaeval times. The cut and method of making were left to the wearer's choice and only the colour and the material were prescribed to indicate degrees or offices. Many changes have taken place in the shape of the hood with the passage of time and at present the existing variety of shapes can be reduced to two basic shapes—the "simple" shape (identified with Bachelors' and Masters' hoods at Oxford) and the "full" shape (identified with Cambridge hoods).

In mediaeval times the elevation of the bachelor to the mastership was signified by his teacher placing a **biretta** upon his head. Authorities differ on the origin of the "mortar-board" cap, but it was certainly part of the seventeenth century academic dress. The eighteenth century replaced the tuft on the top of the mortar-board with a silk tassel and modern usage has specified a round cap of black velvet for Doctors, though this is not universal practice.

At Rhodes, the Bachelors and Masters will wear an Oxford Master of Arts gown, while Doctors will wear scarlet gowns, without facings, of the Oxford pattern, except Doctors of Philosophy who will wear a Cambridge Bachelor of Arts gown in scarlet. Hoods are of the "simple" pattern for Bachelors, of black lined with the Faculty colour. Masters' and Doctors' hoods are to be of the London pattern, i.e. a "full" shaped hood with rounded corners to a tippet. Masters' hoods are of black, lined with



the Faculty colour and Doctors' hoods, other than Doctors of Philosophy, are of scarlet lined with the Faculty colour. The hood for the Ph.D. degree is black, lined with scarlet. The colours of the various faculties are:

Divinity	- - - - -	Purple
Arts	- - - - -	White
Fine Arts	- - - - -	Ultramarine
Social Science	- - - - -	Silver Grey
Music	- - - - -	Adonis Blue
Law	- - - - -	Old Gold
Science	- - - - -	Bottle Green
Hygiene	- - - - -	Apple Green
Commerce	- - - - -	Primrose Yellow
Economics	- - - - -	Buttercup Yellow
Education	- - - - -	Terra Cotta

## THE S.A. WOOL TEXTILE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

By R. C. Palmer

(Director of the S.A. Wool Textile Research Institute)

**S**OUTH AFRICA is fast becoming an industrial country. The growth of industries of all kinds since the war has been quite remarkable, particularly for a country of only about two million white population. Among the industries that have come to the Union, one of the most important is the wool textile industry. South Africa is, of course, one of the largest wool producing countries in the world, but until recently it has had very little wool processing—spinning, weaving and the making of cloth; though there has been for a long time an extensive wool washing industry, particularly in the Cape Province.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research judged this a particularly appropriate time, therefore, to start research into wool processing and has accordingly set up the Wool Textile Research Institute. This Institute is financed in the same way as the Leather Industries Research Institute, which is well known to all Rhodians. The C.S.I.R. doubles whatever industry contributes. So far the Institute has a Director and two members of the staff, who are both at Leeds University in England taking special training in textile technology. The final location of the Institute has not yet been finally decided, but will probably be at Rhodes University, which is the nearest University to the main centre of the wool textile industry at Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.

The research that will be done will be mainly on wool textile processes such as washing, carding, combing, spinning, weaving—in fact, all the processes between the bale of wool and the finished fabric. This kind of research is something rather new, not only to South Africa but to the world. The wool textile industry is, after agriculture and building, probably the oldest in the history of mankind. Most of the processes are traditional, and it is only recently that scientists have turned to examining them. There appears to be almost unlimited scope for the improvement of these processes or the development of new ones. It is this world-wide task to which the young Wool Textile Research Institute has set its hand.

## **RHODES UNIVERSITY**

### **New Appointments, 1951**

1. Mr. J. R. G. Fick, Lecturer in Mathematics vice Mr. W. J. Pretorius from 1st January, 1951. B.Sc. (S.A.) 1947, Hons. B.Sc. (S.A.) 1948 and M.Sc. (S.A.) 1949 at Rhodes University College. Lecturer in Mathematics at Huguenot University College in 1950.
2. Mr. G. T. B. Bertram, Lecturer in Law vice Mr. D. D. V. Kannemeyer from 1st January, 1951. B.A. (S.A.) 1942 (Rhodes University College), B.A. (Hons.) (Cantab.) 1946, LL.B. (Cantab.) 1947. Worked for firm of solicitors in Johannesburg 1947-50.
3. Mr. F. G. Butler, Senior Lecturer in English (new post) from 1st January, 1951. B.A. (S.A.) 1938, M.A. (S.A.) 1939 both at Rhodes University College. Awarded Queen Victoria Scholarship. B.A. (Oxon.) 1947. Served with Union Defence Force 1940-45. Lecturer in English at Witwatersrand University 1948-50.
4. Mr. J. J. Gerber, Senior Lecturer in Education vice Mr. J. W. S. Steyn from 1st April, 1951. B.Sc. (Stell.) 1935, U.E.D. (S.A.) 1936, M.Ed. (S.A.) 1947, the latter two courses at Rhodes University College. Taught in various Technical High Schools 1937-1944. Temporary Lecturer in Education at Rhodes University College 1946-49. Professional Officer in National Bureau of Educational and Social Research 1949-1951.
5. Dr. E. McC. Callan, Senior Lecturer in Entomology (new post) from 1st July, 1951. B.Sc. (Manc.), Ph.D. (London), A.R.C.S., D.I.C. Lecturer and Senior Lecturer at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad, 1937-1951.
6. Dr. N. du Plessis, Senior Lecturer in Mathematics vice Mr. A. H. Harcourt Wood from 1st July, 1951. B.Sc. (Hons.) (Wits.) 1944, M.Sc. (Wits.) 1944, Ph.D. (Cantab.) 1951. Temporary Lecturer in Mathematics at Witwatersrand University 1945-1946. Lecturer in Mathematics at Natal University College 1947-1949.
7. Dr. J. B. Birks, Professor of Physics vice Prof. R. W. Varder from 1st July, 1951. B.A. (Oxon.), Ph.D. (Glas.), A. Inst. P. Senior Scientific Officer in the Telecommunications Research Establishment 1940-1945. I.C.I. Research Fellow at Glasgow University 1945-1947. Lecturer in Natural Philosophy at Glasgow University 1947-1951.
8. Dr. E. S. Twyman, Professor of Botany vice Prof. W. E. Isaac from 1st September, 1951. B.Sc. Hons. (Birm.) 1937, M.Sc. (Birm.) 1940, Ph.D. (Birm.) 1945, Assistant Lecturer and Lecturer in Botany at Birmingham University 1941-1951.
9. Dr. D. G. Southgate, Senior Lecturer in History vice Mrs. W. A. Maxwell from 1st September, 1951. B.A. (London) 1944, D.Phil. (Oxon.) 1950. Assistant Lecturer and Lecturer in History at Exeter University College 1947-1951.

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### **OLD RHODIAN UNION COMMITTEE (1951 1952)**

Hon. President: Professor C. W. Bowles.

President: Mr. S. B. Hobson, M.P.C.

Hon. Vice-Presidents: Professor A. S. Kidd and Professor G. F. Dingemans.

Vice-President: Mrs. M. E. McKerron.

Acting Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: Miss M. J. Kannemeyer, Rhodes University.

Committee Members: The Vice-Chancellor (ex-officio), Dr. E. E. A. Archibald, Mr. D. Butler, Miss M. G. Richardson, Dr. E. T. Verdier.