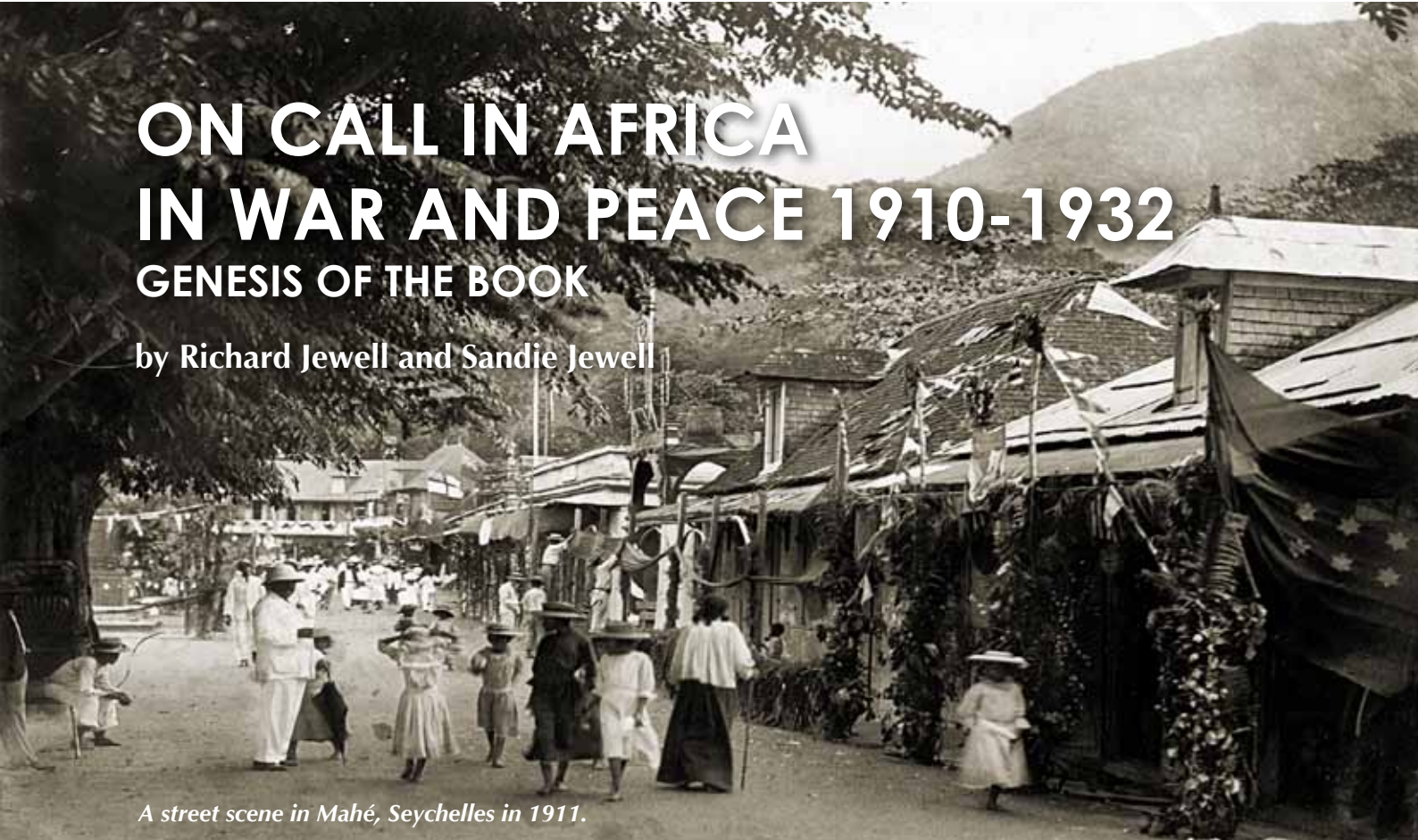


ON CALL IN AFRICA IN WAR AND PEACE 1910-1932 GENESIS OF THE BOOK

by Richard Jewell and Sandie Jewell



A street scene in Mahé, Seychelles in 1911.

The book *On Call in Africa in War and Peace 1910-1932*, which was reviewed in *Old Africa* in issue 64, is based on the memoirs of our grandfather, Dr Norman Parsons Jewell, who served as a medical officer in the British Colonial Medical Service and as a Captain in the 3rd East African Field Ambulance during World War I. Not only was Norman a keen observer of events, and a diary writer, he was also passionate about photography, skills he developed with Cherry Kearton during and after World War I. His photographic record may prove as valuable for historians as his written observations.

Norman settled in Pinner, Middlesex, in 1932 following his premature return from medical service in Kenya due to the Great Depression. He practiced medicine in Pinner and Harrow and from consulting rooms in Harley Street.

Norman started writing his memoirs in the early 1960s working with his son-in-law Eric Woolnough, an Australian journalist and husband of his youngest daughter Daphne. Norman wrote the memoirs in longhand, working through his old diaries and reliving events. Norman and Eric selected photos from albums. This determined start then languished. Norman's memoirs, photographs and the book project might have ended there, in a desk drawer, following Eric's untimely death.

Fortunately, our cousin Michael McCartney, son of Norman's eldest daughter Norah, knew of the work with Eric and took the initiative to preserve the memoirs and some unpublished poems by Norman's wife Sydney Elizabeth Auchinleck.

Michael typed and circulated chapters from the memoirs and poems by Sydney, as he progressed.

This alerted us to the rich documentary material Norman had accumulated and the great insight and humour of his observations that deserved formal publication. As many of the photographs were more than 100 years old, there was also an urgent need to scan and preserve them.

The four children of John Hugh Auchinleck Jewell, Norman's eldest son, took on this work. John Jewell spent much of his professional life after World War II as a surgeon in Mombasa, Kenya, where he was a keen photographer and authored books in his spare time, most notably *Dhows at Mombasa*. The project team was steeped in East African lore and felt closely connected with the events recounted. John's daughter Sandie, a keen genealogist and family historian, had already explored and documented the Jewell and Auchinleck

sides of the family, work that continues to this day.

Before we started work on the book in earnest we sought independent opinion on the material from Christine Nicholls, who has written extensively on East Africa and is well known to readers of *Old Africa* magazine. Christine was very positive and encouraged us to proceed. We knew Christine from the Mombasa European Primary School Association [MEPS] who meet in large numbers in London almost annually; MEPS is organized and run by Shaun Metcalfe, Christine's brother, and Tony Chetham, both friends of ours from Mombasa.

Sandie drove the book project forward by identifying and linking the people and places photographed with the written memoirs. She filled in gaps and made connections, often with help of willing and supportive people knowledgeable about events during this period of history. She returned to the original albums to select additional photographs.

Tony edited the memoirs and assembled and delivered to print the final manuscript, footnotes, index, references, maps and illustrations.

Christine Nicholls wisely advised we seek expert help with editing and organising the manuscript. We contacted Dr Anne Samson, who runs the Great War in Africa Association (www.gweaa.com) and Anne kindly agreed to help us. She promptly transformed the book project into something much more valuable for historians. Through her knowledge and experience with research on World War



Field ambulance training drill for carrying the wounded at Tembo Camp, Kenya 1915.



Motorised transport in 1916 used to carry medical supplies where possible. They also used oxen and mules.

I in Africa, Anne knows both the personnel and the records at the main military museums and archives in the UK and abroad. This allowed Anne to locate the official war diaries Norman had written during the World War I campaign, reporting on medical matters under his command and other events, safely filed and stored in The National Archives, Kew.

Armed with this direct connection between the personal memoirs by Norman recorded in his own diaries and photography (our original material) and the official facts, figures, dates and events recorded in the official war diaries, Anne established and confirmed Norman's World War I itinerary with precision. The official war diary added highly valuable new information to the story and this rich vein of

material is partly responsible for the detailed footnotes and references provided throughout the book.

Many others helped identify or confirm photographs of people and places, providing supplementary information on many of the events described or photographed by Norman. We have tried to name and thank all who contributed in this way in the Acknowledgements of the book. There is a remarkable camaraderie among this diverse group of people, all passionate to document the events and people involved in this still largely-forgotten theatre of the Great War.

We also enjoyed essential moral support from Ann Crichton-Harris. Ann celebrated the life of her grandfather, Major Harris, also a medical officer, by

researching and visiting key locations in East Africa where he served. She wrote her book *Seventeen Letters to Tatham*, which became our model to follow and our beacon as to what could be achieved. In return, we shared with her Norman's first hand descriptions of his hair-raising adventures with Major Harris in the line of duty, complete with photographs of them both.

At this stage, the book evolved into two main parts; Norman's memoirs as Part 1 and relevant excerpts from the official war diaries with supplementary details that Anne Samson was preparing as Part 2. This provided a very satisfactory and well-documented setting and context for Norman's experience of World War I from a medical perspective.

However, the memoirs in Part 1 covered much more than the events of 1914-1918. The book also describes the idyllic pre-war period in the Seychelles where Norman was originally posted as a medical officer and administrator, and where he was married and three of his four children were born (1910-1918). The book needed to touch on Norman's background before the Seychelles – his family in Ireland, his education and study of medicine at Trinity College, Dublin, and his medical work there. During the post-war period, Norman served widely over many years as a doctor at different locations in Kenya including Nairobi and Mombasa (1920-1932).

Norman's wife, Sydney Elizabeth Auchinleck, also deserves a memoir of her

own. She published a book of poetry when sixteen years old, and she was part of the first group of women to gain admission to study at Trinity College, Dublin, and was the first woman to graduate in Chemistry. She showed remarkable fortitude and resourcefulness in travelling alone to the Seychelles to marry Norman. She raised their family largely cut off from Ireland, friends and her family, and alone while the children were very young during the four years Norman was away fighting in East Africa. It was Sandie who drafted Part 3 of the book about Sydney and her children, with additional information on Norman's family background.

The book contains 145 of Norman's original photographs to which we have added scans of original documents and letters, some wartime cartoons and explanatory maps. The photographs that accompany this article provide a taste of what is available in the book with some examples from the Seychelles, World War I in East Africa and from the post-war period illustrating life in Kenya up to 1932.

To encourage further reading and research, we have created a website with additional background, links to the books and resources we used and supplementary material about the period – www.oncallinafrica.com.



*The last gun from the German warship *Konigsberg* that was sunk in the Rufiji Delta. The Germans salvaged the guns and used them in the land campaign. This gun was destroyed at Masasi in 1917.*



The main road from Mombasa to Malindi in 1922.



Daphne Jewell, Norman's youngest daughter, with a rafiki (friend) in Mombasa in 1924.



A portrait of Dr Norman Parsons Jewell in his Harley Street consulting rooms after his return to the UK in 1932.

We have entrusted the high quality digital images from more than 200 of Norman's photographs to the Mary Evans photo library so that these will be available for research and other purposes at www.maryevans.com. The photographs are also listed in a 25-page catalogue complete with thumbnail images at www.oncallinafrica.com

We are grateful to Edward Paice, who wrote the Foreword, and to many others who have themselves written about this period and who directly helped with or

endorsed the book, including Ross Anderson, James Willson, Christine Nicholls, Ann Crichton-Harris and a new generation of researchers such as Dr Anna Greenwood and Dr George Ndege. We are very pleased that William Boyd, whose book *An Ice-Cream War* has done much to alert a wider audience to events in German East Africa during World War I, has also endorsed the project.

During our work we were surprised to find relatively little written on medical matters during the period described by Norman in the book, which increases the value of his account. We were also surprised to discover a significant controversy that will require further research: the long suppressed Pike Report on medical and troop support during World War I in East Africa was apparently judged sufficiently incendiary by the British Government to deserve classification as top secret for no less than 100 years (although changed legislation has now provided access to this report).

Researchers still have much to discover about events in East Africa during the Great War. Norman met and wrote about people like Dr Francis Brett Young, a doctor and one of the few authors who did refer to the health and medical issues experienced (*Letters to Jessie* and *Marching on Tanga*) and later became a prolific and well-known novelist. Other exceptional people in the forces that Norman met include AW Lloyd, Frederick Selous, Cherry Kearton and the controversial John Boyes. Norman met General Jan Smuts during the conflict. By

pure coincidence, Jan Smuts was later at the same hotel in London where Norman was hosting the wedding reception for his eldest son John in 1942, and he joined the party for a drink.

Now that the book is published, we will be satisfied if we have helped preserve the memories of our remarkable grandparents and their experience of the period and events during 1910 to 1932 in East Africa. We will also be pleased if we have contributed to the documentation and wider awareness and understanding of early 20th century East African history including World War I.

What we stated in the Dedication about Norman and Sydney applies equally to others: "Only by delving into the past, and uncovering facets of their lives which were previously unknown to us, have we come to appreciate more fully the challenges they faced and how much they achieved." Norman Parsons Jewell and Sydney Elizabeth Auchinleck are the inspiration for our work.

The website www.oncallinafrica.com also gives details on how to order the book, including free airmail postage to Africa.