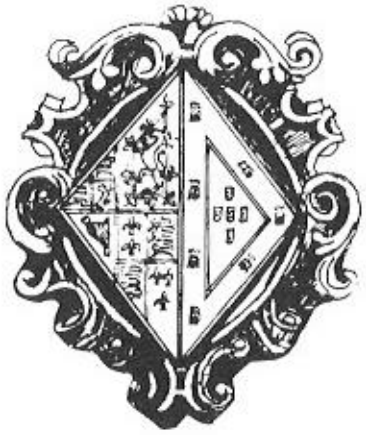




# THE HISTORY OF THE QUINTA NOVA DE STO. ANTÓNIO, CARCAVELOS — 1730 TO THE PRESENT

**By Andrew Bull, Headmaster of St. Julian's School**

The fashion for building Quintas «for taking the waters» between Lisbon and the Royal Summer Palace in Cascais was started by the Marquês de Pombal, Conde de Oeiras, who commissioned Carlos Mardel to build him a palace there in 1759. One of those who followed him was José Francisco da Cruz, Treasurer of the King of Portugal. He bought land from Morgado de Alagoa his neighbour and later the two families merged through marriage (coat of arms over the main entrance of the Palácio) and often entertained the King for luncheon when the latter was on his way to Cascais. The Palace was richly furnished and decorated and the chapel on the West wing was dedicated to Sto. António. The oval window and door to the chapel together with the family's first floor-section can still be seen. Some years after, Cable and Wireless took over the Quinta, the altar was restored to the Alagoa family and the 'azulejos' now ornament the main entrance to the Palácio.

In the times of the Alagoa family, we are told that «it also had a beautiful garden with avenues lined with trimmed bushes, flower beds, ponds and statues. The trees were planted on a big scale. Pinewoods grew in large areas of the land. The vineyards produced at one time 500 barrels of wine. It had a famous orchard and a reputable orange grove». The Alagoa family, one must assume, fell on hard times; the property was not kept up, for after Cable and

Wireless bought the property (for 23 contos — a large sum in those days!) we learn that «the whole compound was without a bush four feet high, much less a tree» (II).

Little other history is known of the Quinta in this period.

But originally the buildings included — apart from the main Palácio, stables and a granary on the Western side beyond the chapel and the great 'adega' (37 yards long) and workshops which were on the Eastern and Northern sides respectively (where the senior school and Hall are now). Beneath the Palácio itself are the cool thick walled cellars (now the Art area) and a well to supply water through an ingenious trough system fed by a pump once worked by an ox or donkey whose track with its roughened flag stones» (II) could still be seen in 1943 and remains of which still exist today.

The Falmouth, Malta & Gibraltar Co. (later the Eastern Telegraph Co. and later still Cable and Wireless) rented and subsequently bought the Quinta Nova in March 1870 «in readiness for the opening of the new cables from Porthournow & Gibraltar which were to be laid in the early summer. These cables together with one from Gibraltar and Malta were the last links in the chain connecting England to India via the Mediterranean and the Red Sea» (II). The Palácio was altered somewhat to fit the company's needs (for example the first machine room was originally placed in the Palácio ballroom) by Messrs. Despecher & de Sauty, and a staff of 10 sailed from Liverpool on May 30th. On June 3rd 1870 the shore-ends of the new cables were laid with much ceremony, the event being marked by the presence of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Portugal. Off the beach lay three cable ships, the «Edinburgh», which had laid the Malta-Gibraltar section, the «Scandria», which had brought the cable on from Gibraltar to Carcavelos and the «Hibernia» having the Carcavelos-Porthournow cable on board and about to leave to complete the expedition. At one o'clock lunch was served in the Palácio, among the guests being the British Minister and his wife, the Marquis de Sá da Bandeira, Marquis de Niza, Viscount and Viscountess de Menezes, Sr. Mouzinho de Albuquerque who had accompanied the expedition from Lisbon to Malta and thence to Lisbon, (and was afterwards the Company's Agent in Portugal) and several members of the Government. The occasion must have been one of much



*The Cable and Wireless children, c. 1903.*

enthusiasm as the value to Portugal of rapid telegraph communication with the outside world was very properly realised. Their Majesties arrived after lunch and were received by Mr. Despecher who explained the operations then being carried out. To quote a contemporary newspaper report: «Their Majesties examined the hut which has been provisionally established on the beach for the reception of messages whilst a definite station is being organised and all the work connected with the reception and transmission of messages, which is really most interesting». On arrival and departure of Their Majesties at the provisional station, the employees cheered with an enthusiasm in keeping with British tradition. Their Majesties acknowledged this enthusiastic reception with a gracious smile!»

Soon afterwards the signal for the departure of the ships was given and they steamed away with «Hibernia» paying out the cable. This ship arrived off Porthournow on the morning of 9th June, and the same afternoon saw the Cable put through to the Porthournow office and from the Carcavelos cable hut to the Carcavelos office, communication being established at 6 p.m. At 7.15 p.m. a telegram was despatched from Porthournow to the Count of Mafra requesting him, on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty to greet H.M. Dom Luis on the establishment of telegraphic communication by submarine cable between Portugal and England. The message was received at the Royal Palace of Ajuda at 7.25 p.m. The public were able to use the service to Gibraltar from June 11th and to England the next day.

A further message of greeting was received at Carcavelos for the King and Queen of Portugal on the 23rd June from the Prince of Wales, as part of the celebration of the completion of the submarine cable route to India held that evening at the house of Mr. (as he then was) John Pender. Greetings were also sent on this occasion, the first of its kind, to the Viceroy of India, the Khedive of Egypt and the Governors of Gibraltar and Malta — a demonstration of the possibilities of the Company's system in which Carcavelos played a good part.

The Prince of Wales' message 23rd June 1870: «I offer you my congratulations on the completion of direct telegraphic communications between England and the East by way of Portugal.

I thank you for the aid your Majesty's government has rendered to this great enterprise, and trust that, by bringing our two countries nearer together

in point of time, we may cement more closely the old bonds which unite England and Portugal». The same day the King replied as follows: «Thanks for the good wishes you expressed in your telegram. Equally I congratulate myself for the completion of the telegraph. Luiz» (III).

Two events of those early days are of interest now — the joining of all the cables through to Alexandria from London during the observation of the transit of Venus, September 3rd 1874, and the Daily Telegraph's enterprising «Christmas Round the World»... in 1873 when messages were sent from all parts on Christmas Eve. The Portuguese message referred to the prevalence of peaceful conditions after «the recent fatal riots at Tavira and the tremendous gale of the night before». (II).

**Life at the Quinta Nova in the early days**

A staff of about ten came to open the station at Carcavelos. The accommodation for them in the Palácio was not complete until the Autumn of 1870 and then was barely adequate; there were no frills, they had to find their own bed linen and for a year or so no common room existed.

The men had not been at Carcavelos many months before they approached the company to provide them with «amusements» to which Sir James Anderson replied, in his characteristic manner «the Company cannot be expected to pay the staff and amuse them as well. Surely your men can club together and buy books, or chess, or bagatelle or matters of that kind». The Secretary, Mr. W.T. Ansell, added that «quoits and ninepins» would be as jolly for the staff as he had found them in China years before.

Whatever the staff did to try to amuse themselves in those early days does not appear to have been too successful. An eight hour duty was worked and little advantage could be taken of Sundays off since the Superintendent F.S. Harwood, was, in harmony with the times, a strict sabbatarian and was sternly set against any deviation away from the «Victorian Sunday-at-Home» towards the continental Sunday. There was even a famous row when the staff had as



*A Sunday outing, c. 1900.*

their guest at a Sunday dinner a distinguished Irish senator and drank his health with musical honours, an action that was deplored as «common, vulgar brawling». Even Harwood himself described life at Carcavelos as a «living death» and it can be imagined how dull and quiet it must have been when there was no railway into Lisbon and a carriage cost a pound sterling for a long wearisome journey.

Two factors worked against the staff settling down; resignations were common in those days of rapidly developing telegraph systems and shortage of skilled men who too were always on the look out for opportunities of improving their immediate lot, and transfers soon became frequent as Carcavelos was used, as it always was subsequently, as an intermediate step between the Porthournow school and stations farther East, and the place where a final polish was put on trainees. The latter were not always welcomed by Superintendents jealous of their stations' record when so much depended on the skill of the staff. It was not therefore surprising to find Sir James Anderson writing in the summer of 1871 to the Superintendent at Carcavelos, «I cannot help feeling that the game of leap-frog and a blue pill are what your men need. If they will not exert themselves and create amusements but give their minds up to brooding upon trifles their case is hopeless. I am ready to send you a billiard table when you can accommodate it». The billiard table arrived soon afterwards and room was made for it by converting the granary where it was installed in the position it remained in to the end of the days of the Carcavelos club.

Sir James also saw that the staff was supplied with periodicals from home and himself sent books to add to the library which had been started — mostly old friends of his such as Todd's *Students Manual* — while books were also bought from the fine money collected for breaches of the company's regulations. Quoits appear to have been played and a cricket club was formed in 1874 when the staff was almost doubled by the advent of the Brazilian Cable. Extra quarters were made by the conversion of the chapel, granary and stables into living rooms, and the Secretary seemed to think that an opportunity had been lost by not including the conversion of the long wine cellar into an American Bowling Alley in the estimates. Footballs and gymnastic apparatus were also in demand by the staff but they did not find outside opponents at

football until 1892, although the formation of the Lisbon Cricket Club in 1884 provided them with opposition at that game.

«Bones» writing in the *Zodiac* of November 1924 gives a good picture of Life at Carcavelos in 1876 when he first came to the station. He said that sanitary arrangements left much to be desired and there was no hot water and only sponge baths, while accommodation was such that some of the staff had to «double-up» in rooms. There were thirty members of the staff then and «it would be untruthful to say it was a completely happy colony — it was always hoping for the best and marking time until a move to a more interesting station». A gravel tennis court had by then been laid in the courtyard, bathing was popular and there was a reading room with 120 books but the «oasis in the desert of the week» was the expedition into Lisbon in a four horse bus every Sunday ostensibly to carry staff to church. «The whole compound was without a bush four feet high, much less a tree» and the big flagstaff erected in the garden of the Palácio and used for communications with cableships must have been a very conspicuous object.

In 1877 just before Christmas the famous fire broke out in the East wing of the main building which was the Manager's (later Manager in Portugal's) quarters. It began on the morning of December 21st due to a faulty fireplace and aided by the strong North wind that was blowing soon gained a good hold. Contemporary accounts are conflicting as to exactly who got there first to assist the staff but help came before very long from literally all directions, from Oeiras, from the nearby estate of the Marquês de Pombal, from Cascais and from Belém. The company's agent on hearing of the fire brought six shiprights from the Arsenal at Lisbon with him in carriages from the capital while the Lisbon volunteers' fire corps (an international body) put their engine aboard a barge and had it towed by tug to Carcavelos beach where unfortunately they were unable to disembark it owing to the low state of the tide. They themselves came ashore to render assistance.

The C.B. «Chiltern» was working off the beach and the Captain landed with a party to fight the fire.

The direction of the wind helped the work of isolating the outbreak and although the Superintendent's quarters were burnt out, the office was saved



and no interruption was caused to the service, despite lack of water hampering operations. The fire was no sooner out than an unseemly wrangle began in the Lisbon press as to who could claim to have had the greatest hand in dealing with the situation. The soldiers from Fort S. Julião who had provided sappers and a pump as well as a squad of infantry to mount guard, were particularly indignant that their part was not rightly appreciated in reports of the occurence. Letters of thanks from the Chairman and Board of the Company were sent to all those who had been present and this apparently settled the affair.

Because several members of the staff suffered from obscure skin diseases attributed to the infection carried in washing done in the village, the Company started the staff laundry in 1880 with gear sent from England and the building has existed to this day. The villagers when they did the washing were reported to keep clothes for some three weeks and were not above wearing them in the meantime.

The construction of the railway from Lisbon to Cascais in 1889 with the Carcavelos station actually built on land ceded by the Company, added considerably to the amenities of the place and enabled the men to travel more frequently to Cascais for tennis, and Cruz Quebrada for cricket and football matches, as well as to Lisbon for pleasure. Carcavelos in turn began to be popular as a summer bathing resort and was reported some years later to be full of visitors.

In 1890 the crisis over Mozambique and Lord Salisbury's ultimatum meant anxious times for the staff as anti-English feeling was very high and there were demonstrations before the British Consulate in Lisbon. Anxiety was felt at home and Sir James Anderson writing to Mr. Harwood said «Pray say to the staff from me that I strongly urge them to keep within the limits of their grounds for some time. They should avoid being out in the dark as it is so easy to use knives and revolvers. I advise them also while they remain in Lisbon to keep their mouths shut on all international matters. We are Telegraph Companies and only want to be paid for carrying messages». Soldiers were sent to guard the Quinta and remained there for 2 1/2 months before the excitement died down.

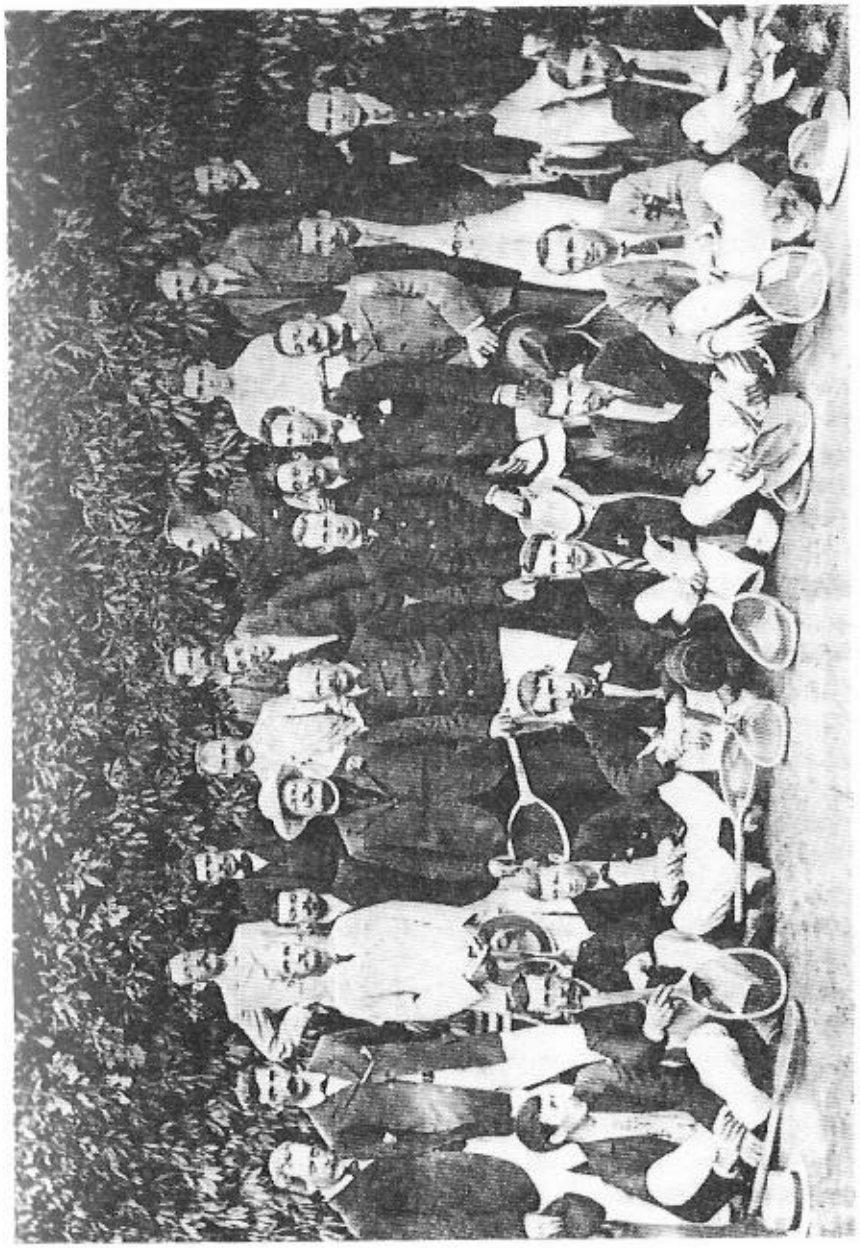
Cricket always was the favourite Carcavelos game. For over 50 years each summer has seen a continuation of the matches with Lisbon and with Oporto, varied by games against touring teams such as the «Cryptics» and with visiting warships. Perhaps the most enterprising «out» match played by the staff was that against the Englishmen at the mines at Huelva in 1902, the team on that occasion being captained by Hardwick, one of the best all-round sportsman of his day in the Company (whose name is still remembered here through the fine tennis cup presented to the Mess by his widow).

The football ground at Quinta Nova was the first in the country and the game soon began to appeal to the Portuguese who first played against the staff in mixed Anglo-Portuguese teams, before constituting clubs of their own. When the first football league was organised, the Carcavelos team won it for two successive years, 1907-8, and for a good many years afterwards continued to hold their own with the best Lisbon teams. «In the first years of the Century it was in the Quinta Nova that the big international football games were held —Portuguese versus English. Special trains to Carcavelos were run, so great was the attendance for those games! The Portuguese, new to the game, made their way to Quinta Nova as lambs to the slaughter house. They always lost. Once, probably in 1906 they won by a single goal — and so great was the crowd's enthusiasm that, on the way back they smashed the seats and windows of the train» (I). It was in Carcavelos that the friendly country bathers watched the sporting spectacle of men and women in their light suits, agile bodies loving movement for the pleasure of it and for the expansion of their muscles. That beach of English and athletes came to be regarded by the Portuguese bourgeoisie (of the time) as a box of samples of life in a superior civilisation, as a scene of new, modern, fascinating pleasures, as a Portuguese stage where every day was acted out an English Comedy, for free» (I).

But it is interesting to note that on many occasions e.g. in 1878 when a Mr. Cross took four men from a boat that went ashore and in 1928 when Mr. Rutter was involved in a particularly brave rescue Cable and Wireless staff were officially commended for their bravery in rescuing fishermen from the sea.

Sports as we can see loomed large in the life of the British at Carcavelos. «Early in the century the gravel tennis court in the Pátio was replaced by two (later three) sand courts at the side of the then cricket ground. King Carlos was





*A royal tennis tournament. King Carlos I with the Cable and Wireless players.*

a frequent visitor to Carcavelos for tennis, a game of which he was very fond and he was usually accompanied by the Pinto Basto brothers both of whom were good sportsmen ... various members of the [Cable and Wireless] staff won the Portuguese tennis championship when they were instituted; 1912 and 1913 being notable years in that P.J. Byrne won the singles and, with R.L. Perkins the doubles championship. A feature of the Quinta at that time was the cycle track laid round the cricket ground and very popular during the craze for cycling ... There is even a record of one member of the (C. & W.) staff overdoing this form of exercise to the detritment of his health» (11).

«The vineyard was replaced by the 9 hole golf course ... which originally had artificial bunkers of reeds and sand and these were not replaced by more natural hazards without protests from the old hands. The Lisbon Golf Cup which dates from 1918 was for many years regarded as the unofficial golf championship cup of Portugal, and it was always keenly played for by Cable & Wireless staff; the members of the Lisbon Sports Club and the Oporto Cricket and Law Tennis Club being eligible to compete» (11).

Wine making, as has already been mentioned, «was also given up in the Quinta although grapes continued to be grown some of which were shipped home annually for the benefit of the Directors. In its hey-day the Quinta had produced as much as 500 pipes of the finest Carcavelos wine but had then suffered severely from the incidence of phylloxera — the disease of the vine which by its ravages eventually almost destroyed the market for Carcavelos wine. When the estate came into the Company's hands it had been undoubtly neglected and although some parts of it were let for cultivation by outside farmers others were in the possession of squatters and gypsies. The Company continued to let some land but endeavoured to improve the output of wine from grapes grown on the better land to the West side of the Quinta. An American vine was introduced, immune to phylloxera, and production slowly went up during the eighties although the yield varied and never exceeded about 30 pipes. Later, American mildew attacked the vines and made wine making unprofitable.

Sir John Pender had a good opinion of the wine and thought that it would in time again be popular in England; however, it always proved too sweet for

British palates. Attempts to sell the Quinta product to St. Vincent and other stations failed and the bulk of it was purchased for many years by an Oporto firm who probably used it to blend with port — a customary use for Carcavelos wine since Pombal ordered such blending and shipped this wine to Oporto for the purpose from his Oeiras estate.

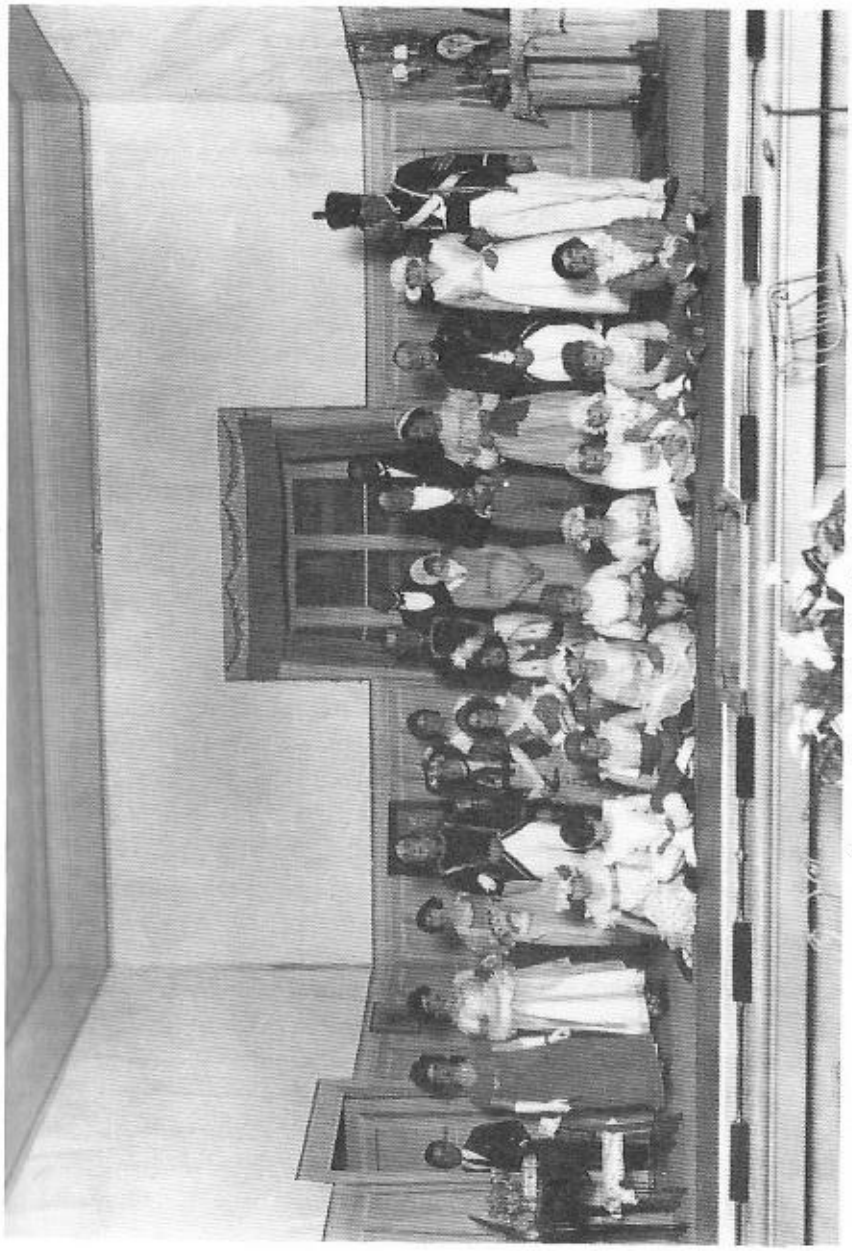
Numbers of staff fluctuated, being constant at about 55 before World War I, when two married staff houses were built in the village in 1899 (and are still to be seen immediately to the West of the former main entrance) and rising to 110 British and 45 Portuguese staff in 1924. In 1923 the Peak Houses, twelve houses in six pairs were built and by 1924 with the doubling of the staff the remaining original buildings in the Palácio courtyard had disappeared; the adega and the barn until then were used as an engine and store house.

Some years earlier a small hospital had been made by extending the quarters building out over the gateway to the Adega and as this now came into the new scheme it was replaced by a detached and fully equipped hospital to the East of the Palácio built in 1923. On the site of the workshops rose a large recreation hall complete with stage, bar, etc., and beyond it, to enclose the quadrangle and match the older part opposite, a two storied building divided into rooms opening off a central corridor. Despite these provisions for a larger staff some of the bachelors had to be boarded out with members of the married staff in the Quinta, the village and as far afield as Parede.

This was perhaps the happiest period in Carcavelos' long history. The majority of the staff were young and active and full advantage was taken of the added amenities. Dances were held frequently, a Dramatic Society flourished (opening in 1925 with *French Leave* and there was enthusiasm for every kind of game including Rugby and Hockey, probably new then to Portugal but still played by the Portuguese.

The electrification of the Linha de Cascais in 1926 caused some Anglo-Portuguese friction. This affected the working of the Company's cables to a much greater degree than had been anticipated, indeed, so seriously, that after working for only five days the railway company reverted on August 20th to steam trains at the request of the Government pending an investigation into





*Amateur theatricals. «Quality Street», 1926*

means of overcoming the disturbances. A commission on which the Company was quickly appointed and the close-cooperation between the Company and the Railway Company resulted in the line being re-opened to electric trains on December 28th. Although the Manager handled the whole affair with great tact his position was not made easier by an outburst in the press. The serious journals took a rational view of the difficulties but the more sensational papers developed a virulent anti-British attitude drawing such absurd conclusions as that asserting that the cables were at fault, being obsolete after fifty five years' service. There were also hints that Quinta Nova was coloured red on British maps while the telegraph staff were caricatured as large flat-footed, pipe-smoking Englishmen bedecked with all varieties of sports gear and usually accompanied by wives who pushed delapidated perambulators with one hand and hauled a squalling child with the other.

All this arose from a natural disappointment that an essential part of the plan to develop the Costa do Sol, and Estoril especially, as an international playground and tourist centre had had to be postponed even for a short while. This plan went steadily ahead, a modern coast road was made to supplement the electrified railway, and the removal of wartime restrictions on travel and the return of tourists was bound to affect life at Carcavelos even more than it had done so far, and how much that had been could be judged by photographs of the beach «before» and «after».

From 1932 onwards staff of Cable and Wireless progressively declined until by 1939 there were only nine British staff and the space vacated was taken over by St. Julian's School described by Tyson then «as a mainly preparatory school for boys and girls run in connection with the British Council».

During its occupancy of the Quinta Nova the Cable and Wireless ceded part of the land in order to assist in the development in the area. The first concession was in 1888 to the Linha de Cascais although this meant the severance of the Lodge and Lodge gates from the estate itself and the erection of a level-crossing on the main avenue to the Palácio. In 1902 a strip of land was given as a personal present to Queen D. Amélia to allow the widening of the road from the village to the Sanatorium (then just built on the site of the old Junqueira Fort) in which the Queen was keenly interested. In 1936 the

Company ceded a further considerable grant of land on what was then the Western end of the cricket ground to allow this road to be widened. In celebration of the British Monarch's Silver Jubilee this road was called the Avenida Jorge V. The last concession before Cable and Wireless sold the whole Quinta in 1962 was in 1938 when they ceded the whole of the Quinta's beach frontage for the construction of the Avenida Marginal, «the magnificent road that connects Lisbon with Cascais along the cliffs above the sea and the shores of the Tagus». At the same time the old fortified wall on the cliff top was also demolished to make car parks and steps to the beach.

During the war years the Cable and Wireless installations in the Quinta Nova were protected by the Portuguese police. Nevertheless the Germans infiltrated Cable and Wireless cables as was discovered after the war. Cable: «How Nazi espionage service obtained valuable information concerning American-British plans revealed today when Portuguese authorities located point where Germans tapped cable from London. Cable station located near beach at Carcavelos few miles from Lisbon. Early war German diplomatic officials rented villa nearby as social club. When war ended they abandoned villa but recently club composed of British residents Lisbon hired place. In basement they discovered shortwave radio set and found wires leading from cellar towards cable station. They asked Portuguese investigate and labourers dug trench to where wires tapped cable. Important messages sent over cable to British American Embassies here because governments entrusted secret messages to wireless which nazis could uppick. However biggest war secret affecting Portugal North African landings November 1942 were complete surprise to Berlin although vast armada proceeding towards Mediterranean passed near enough Portuguese coast to be visible through binoculars».

After the war Cable and Wireless continued though technical changes meant that the installation and staff needed in former days were less and less required. Between 1946 and 1958 attempts were made in the British Community to combine the Carcavelos Sports Club (which was the club for Cable and Wireless and whose company owed the Quinta Nova) and the Lisbon Sports Club (which was being expropriated from its land at Ajuda and therefore had money from the expropriated land) and create one central sports and leisure complex in the Quinta. It seems to have been an ideal solution for a



*President Carmona visits the Quinta Nova, c. 1930.*

unified British Community's need for sports and social events and those who have seen the plans will agree that it was sad that in the event these plans never came to fruition. Had the original designs gone ahead the club would have comprised a nine-hole golf course planned by Mackenzie Ross, a cricket pitch, football field, tennis courts and a club house though surprisingly enough a swimming pool was not mentioned. The managers of Cable and Wireless Bolsover and Ivan Smith were strongly in favour of the plan. However, it ran into all the usual problems concerning land development here; the Câmara's detailed approval; legal problems over the fact that the land belonged to an English nationalised company; the raising of the money was of course a major problem and also the amount of land actually available for a club within the Quinta.

However the final blow to the idea came in February 1958 when the Carcavelos Sports Club, despite the support of Ivan Smith for the plan voted by 25 votes to 23 not to join in the scheme. The British Community Council considered that the amount of land to be made available would probably not be enough to accommodate the proposed sports club and finally at an extra-ordinary General Meeting of the Lisbon Sports Club held in 1958 the members decided to look elsewhere for their premises and went eventually to Carregueira.

Finally in 1963 Cable and Wireless put the whole Quinta Nova up for sale. The School bought the buildings and sufficient ground for its playing fields and the surrounding area of the Quinta was sold to the property company Savelos which has plans for a major urbanisation project. These plans, if and when they materialise, will transform the historic Quinta Nova with its roots so deep in the Anglo-Portuguese history of the 19th century out of all recognition.

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