

## **“It was all hard work but the greatest fun”**

### **The Anglo-Portuguese News, 1937 - 87**

*By Susan Lowndes Marques<sup>1</sup>*

As is well known, Major C. E. Wakeham was the actual founder of *The Anglo-Portuguese News*, though my late husband, Luiz Marques, was the official Editor from the beginning as in those days every periodical was legally obliged to have a Portuguese editor, whose name appeared in every issue.

Soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, Major Wakeham went to England and inaugurated a monitoring system at the BBC, by which every foreign broadcast was listened to and a great deal of vital information was thus gained. The British Ambassador, Sir Walford Selby, and his staff soon realised that the paper could be a useful source of propaganda, now a dirty word. but then, as it still is, an essential part of warfare.

So the first issue to be printed in Portuguese as well as in English appeared in October 1939. In April 1941 it changed from a fortnightly to a weekly with many more pages. The paper, still costing one escudo, was distributed free to many organisations, so it had to be subsidised. This was done through the good offices of the British Council. The previously tiny staff was increased and a ground floor flat in the Travessa de Santa Catarina, opposite the offices and printing works of the *Jornal do Comércio* was rented. The official ownership had now passed into the hands of this leading financial newspaper, then owned by Dinis Bordalo Pinheiro, a grandson of the famous ceramicist of Caldas da Rainha, who was a strong Anglophile.

Several of the Portuguese articles were translated from English and there were a large number of photographs of Britain at war, all then printed from blocks. Sir Walford Selby sent a message of good wishes and a leader stressed that it was hoped to make the paper of even more use to the British Community and to the cause of Anglo-Portuguese friendship. Mr. W. E. Lucas came out from London as *The Times* correspondent and succeeded Major Wakeham as Director of the APN to be followed by another *Times* correspondent, Douglas Brown, a very well-known journalist who later joined the staff of the *Sunday Telegraph*. He became co-Editor with Luiz Marques until he, too, returned to London in April 1942 when my husband became sole Editor and Director.

At the beginning of the war, the British Embassy asked my husband if, in addition to his work on *The Anglo-Portuguese News*, he would undertake translations into Portuguese of official documents, such as White Papers, work for which he was later awarded the M.B.E. It was owing to this that he was fortunate enough to obtain the services of a young lady, Maria Luisa Matos, who had just left a secretarial college. Very shortly Maria Luisa became an indispensable part of not only my husband's translating work and the APN, but also of our lives. Owing to the premature death of her mother, she was married from our house to Luis Ferreira and we then discovered to our surprise and pleasure that his padrinhos of their wedding, were first cousins of my husband's. Senhora D. Maria Luisa finally took charge of all the APN accounts, an extremely complicated job, owing to the legal requirements involved.

Ethel Rosenthal, a remarkably versatile woman, contributed to the paper from the beginning. She and her husband, who had retired from a senior post in the Hyderabad railways lived in Estoril and were much loved by their countless friends. Ethel wrote topographical articles and also published a small

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book about Lisbon and its surroundings called *Peeps at Portugal*, for she was very fond of the alliterative title, such as *Queenly Queluz*, *Lovely Leiria* and *Magnetic Madeira*, which were all actually front page articles. This penchant of hers gave rise to many jokes such as that the readers were eagerly expecting '*Orrible Óbidos*' to appear at any moment. But she and her husband, though both well over calling-up age, returned to England and worked in the Censor's Department.

In the middle of the war, the German broadcasting system referred to the paper as 'Churchill's mouthpiece in Lisbon', which was a source of great pride to my husband and his staff. An article *London to Lisbon by Air* came out on April 13, 1940 when the then British Overseas Airways Corporation were scheduled to start a regular bi-weekly service between Heston, Bordeaux and Sintra, for this was just before the fall of France.

The flying time was a little less than six and a half hours, and it is stated that the service was primarily for mail and passengers were to be carried only in so far as there was room for them. The agents for Portugal were Messrs. James Rawes and Messrs. Pinto Basto. The aeroplanes were comfortable, with large armchairs and it was said that the interior was rather like a luxurious Pullman railway carriage.

The present writer flew to England at the very beginning of 1945 when conditions were more austere. In those days approaching the end of the war; daily flights to and from England were made in old Dakotas with a Dutch navigator and pilot, and no in-flight service at all. Food for the few passengers was kept hot in large thermos flasks at the rear by the tarpaulin-covered machine gun which every aeroplane carried after the shooting down in June 1943 of the plane with Leslie Howard the actor and Mr. T.M. Shervington, who was Manager of Shell in Portugal, among those who lost their lives. In 1945 the planes flew right out over the Atlantic as there was still a pocket of enemy resistance in the south-west of France and we finally landed at Hurn airport near Bournemouth, after a flight of some eight hours.

The visit of the late H.R.H. the Duke of Kent in 1940 to mark the third centenary of the Restoration, was naturally reported in the paper as was the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor after the fall of France. There is a photograph of them meeting the Portuguese and foreign press at the British Embassy and later the Duchess visited both the British Hospital and the Cascais Maternity Hospital in Monte Estoril.

A "Spitfire" dance at Monserrate in Sintra was scheduled for September 21, 1940 with the permission of Mr. Walter Kingsbury on behalf of Sir Francis Cook. Tickets were Esc.50 each which included supper. But this festivity was cancelled as the Embassy considered that the events in France were too serious to allow of a large festive party. However, it was reported in the following month that Lisbon had contributed £10,600 and Oporto £5,000 which totalled £15,600, that sum being the cost of three Spitfires.

### **Famous parties**

The British Embassy, often through the Press Attachés, have always been very supportive of the paper. Marcus Cheke, who was later awarded the K.C.V.O. when he was appointed Minister to the Holy See, was Press Attaché from 1938 to 1942. His vivid personality and a way of saying what he himself thought, rather than what he was told to say, contributed greatly to his success and his popularity, as did his marriage in 1939 in St. George's Church, to Constance Lopes, daughter of the first Lord Roborough. Their beautiful house at Campolide became a great centre for Portuguese journalists and others who were sympathetic to the Allied cause and their parties brought together a wide spectrum of the great number of people who passed through Lisbon, the only free port on the continent of Europe

during the war. The most famous of these parties was at a particularly black moment when some 60 Portuguese journalists and their wives, and visiting British colleagues, were lured to take part in a paper-chase over the then unbuilt-on fields of the valley of Alcântara, part of the chase being over the top of the aqueduct and back, which Marcus characteristically persuaded the Lisbon Water Board to open for the occasion. The pack were led by the Counsellor at the British Embassy blowing a hunting horn. Those of the ladies who were not quite up to the exertions involved stayed at home with Connie Cheke to welcome back the runners.

### **Hiring elephant**

At that time there was so little petrol that only doctors, diplomats and high officials could run cars. Taxis were almost non-existent so we all went about in public transport. My husband and I seriously thought of hiring an elephant from the Zoo to take us to one of the Cheke's parties to add an even more exotic note.

Marcus remained on at the Embassy as First Secretary until the end of the war. He wrote several books on Portugal, including a study of the Marquis of Pombal and another on Carlotta Joaquina. In this paper he wrote on D. Miguel and a lament on the passing of the old Liberal polemicists from Portuguese public life, among other contributions. His talent as a painter can be seen in some of his canvases in the City of Lisbon Museum at Campo Grande.

During the war there were whole pages of Community news in photographs, such as Lady Selby presenting the prizes at St. Julian's school and the Ambassador opening Stephen Gishford's exhibition at the Royal British Club. It was stated that copies of these pictures could be ordered from the Editor.

Lucullus - who can that have been? - contributed a column called 'With Malice Towards None', filled with gossip about community events, an obvious precursor of the later Personal columns. Some of the titles sound almost incredible to our ears nowadays - 'Chit-Chat on Chie' was written by someone who called themselves Chloe.

The Oporto News appeared in the very first issue and was written by Miss Tait and later by Mrs. Ronald Symington and others. Coimbra also had a correspondent who sent in reports of lectures and items of interest to the readers. Sport was well represented with golf and cricket matches featuring in most numbers by the kindness of participants who sent in lively accounts of games played with the results. Activities of various organisations such as the British Hospital, the Royal British Club, the Lisbon Ladies Club, the W.V.S. before it became under Royal patronage, the International Home and the Churches were all reported. William Marston Seabury contributed a weekly Bridge Letter which was very popular, as were the short pieces by Cyril Twyford entitled 'Pussies in Portugal'. My husband, who was a good cook, enjoyed writing an occasional cookery column which he called 'Sweet and Sour'. Later on music was brilliantly reported by Bruce Dawson, who happily still contributes his evocative pieces. It is curious that Letters to the Editor only became a regular feature around 1975.

### **Rose at Guincho**

Mrs. Aubrey Bell, a brilliant gardener, started the first gardening column in 1939. When she and her husband and their two sons went to Canada soon after the beginning of the war, Mr. Edward Summers, another dedicated gardener, went on with it for a time and later Enid Mitchell of Sintra wrote of her fascinating experiences with flowers and particularly herbs.

Among the distinguished contributors to the Portuguese half of the paper during the war were João Gaspar Simões, Pedro Correia Marques, Tomás Kim who signed his work just 'Kim', José Lino, Adolfo Simões Muller, Joaquim Paço d'Arcos, Amorim Ferreira, Pardal Monteiro, architect of the Diário de

Notícias building in the Avenida da Liberdade, Maurício de Oliveira, João Barros, Virginia Rau, Luiz de Freitas Branco, Eugénio Navarro, Manuela Porto, Aquilino Ribeiro and Vitorino Nemesio.

A remarkable number of well-known English authors also wrote for the paper - Rose Macaulay, who became a cherished friend when she was in Lisbon researching her book 'They Went to Portugal', now reissued in paperback. She had a passion for bathing and I well remember she and I both gingerly stepping into the turbulent waters of the Guincho beach, holding between us the tiny hands of my then very young elder daughter of whom she was especially fond. I was with Rose on the only occasion in my life that I have been literally stoned. She did look very strange, tall and angular with a hat set firmly flat on her head, indeed not unlike the English Miss of a French farce. We were walking together below St. George's Castle in Lisbon and were not unnaturally pursued by a gang of small boys who, when we refused to give them the *tostões* they demanded, picked up handfuls of gravel from the unpaved lane and hurled them at us.

Other noted writers included Ann Bridge, the novelist, in private life Lady O'Malley, the wife of the British Ambassador just after the war, and Harold Nicolson. In the war years the British Council and British Information Services provided an excellent stream of articles by noted people.

### **Great eccentric**

Charles David Ley, then on the staff of the British Institute, was a frequent contributor. He was a remarkable poet, writing verse in both Portuguese and Spanish as well as in his native language. In later years Roy Campbell was another poet who wrote for us. Aubrey Bell, also a great eccentric, was another contributor as were Professor Edgar Prestage, Gordon Waterfield, Ann Livermore, Professor George West first Director of the British Council in Lisbon, Santiago Kastner, Michael Gardner, John Gibbon, Elaine Sanceau, John Lehmann. Dame Una Pope-Hennessy, Michael Maclagan and the Dame of Sark.

Two members of the British Institute, Mr. Charles de Winton and Mr. G.A. Phelps, started a practical course in English in January 1942. This very useful feature, in addition to a series of British songs printed with music and competitions on English literature, continued for a considerable time.

Luiz Marques' brother, Henrique de Oliveira Marques, started a long association with the paper in a column entitled 'Portuguese Backchat' in December 1943. The first 'Going to Market' consisted of an amusing conversation between an Englishwoman and her maid which incorporated Portuguese terms for many English foodstuffs. Later conversations took place in a garage, a restaurant, with the electrician and so on. The paper was lucky in its advertising agents. Arthur Bass, who opened the English Bar in Monte Estoril which he later sold, was brilliant. When he returned to England, the APN was fortunate in obtaining the services of an even better Advertising Manager, Mr. Jacques Courtel, who greatly increased the advertising revenue, enabling the paper to go up from 8 to 12 and even 16 pages. It was a tragedy not only for his family, but also for us, when he died prematurely in 1969 after a heart attack.

Mr. Gary Rush then took over and was also very successful as was Inez Brattel, in cajoling more and more firms to use the APN, for the value of the paper to advertisers has always lain in the fact that the readers consist of people who can afford to buy or use the goods and services presented. Thus at one time the advertising rates in London for Punch, with a comparatively small circulation, were higher than those for the News of the World with a readership of over two million.

### **Shopping notes**

The Small Advertisements, now and for many years such an essential part of the paper, really only got started in the middle of 1945. A furnished flat near S. Sebastião in Lisbon with a drawing room, dining room, two double bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen and linen, silver, china and glass was to let for Esc.1,600

a month while a fully furnished house in Monte Estoril was Esc.1,250 the month. In September of that year there was almost a column of these advertisements which were inserted free for subscribers. But by July 1946 a charge was made of Esc.20 for six lines and each additional line was Esc.3. The price of the paper had gone up to Esc.1.50.

The shopping notes, originally called 'In and Around the Chiado', first appeared in October 1939. The Loja das Meias had recently opened on the corner of the Rossio and the Rua Augusta and was the first shop where smart, ready-made clothes could be found, as is still the case today. Their dresses started at Esc.390 and three-quarter length coats were Esc.450.

That same year good plain chocolate was Esc.16 the kilo and *Triplíce Ancora*, the excellent Portuguese Cointreau was Esc.28.20 the bottle. *Bénards*, the still excellent toy shop in the Chiado, had a teddy bear, playing the violin when he was wound up, for only Esc.25. Or you could buy a Brownie camera in the Rua Nova do Almada for Esc.36. *Alfredos* then one of the best hairdressers in Lisbon was charging Esc.5 for cutting, Esc.20 for a shampoo and set and permanent waves started at Esc.70.

The *Frutaria Bristol* in the Rua Eugénio dos Santos was selling fresh salmon, always a luxury, at Esc.60 the kilo. The Praça da Figueira then contained the best fruit and vegetable market in the city and I see that Portuguese truffles could be got there at Esc.6 the kilo. Smoked pigs' tongues, now almost unobtainable, were Esc.2.50 each in the good food shops of which there were many in the Baixa.

*Sacavém* the well-known pottery manufacturers, still in the Avenida da Liberdade, specialised in dinner services. These started at Esc.220, while sets of twelve coffee cups with a pot were Esc.95. *David and David* in the Chiado was selling natural corded silk, 1.30m. wide, at Esc.60 the metre. 'Lovely for curtains' as I remarked, for except on rare occasions, I always wrote this feature. Wilfred Mitchell of happy memory was then the agent for Robbialac paints and the writer praised the washable qualities of their enamel as well as noting that their *Cuprinol* wood preservative was Esc.70 the gallon.

The prices of antiques were mouth-watering. The *Galeria de Arte*, above the Lisbon Ladies Club in the Rua Nova da Trindade, was noted for its elegant pieces which at that time included a Sheffield plate teapot for Esc.350 and an early cut glass and ormolu coffer containing three scent bottles for Esc.150.

### **Australian girls**

When the paper was owned and printed by the *Jornal do Comércio* we were fortunate "in having two very pleasant offices in their building with a lovely view of the Tagus over the Alto de Santa Catarina and there my husband sat at his desk. The corner desk was occupied by a succession of first-class secretaries, among them Valery Glynn Forman, for whom later my husband got a good position with the British Council in Lisbon, for the APN could never afford to pay exceptional staff more than the going rate. Valery worked for the Council for many years until she retired and now lives in Lisbon.

Shortly after her departure a number of Australian girls came over and some of them worked for us. Two later happily married Portuguese husbands. Maureen Buttle's fiancée, a career Army officer, was serving in Mozambique and sent all the relevant papers to his bride-to-be so that she could be married by procuracy as it would not have been considered suitable for her to travel alone as a single woman out to Africa. My husband stood in at the civil ceremony in Cascais. The bride went out to Africa and on her arrival the happy couple were married again in church. Both my husband and I were very pleased when they asked us to be godparents to their eldest child who is named Jorge Luis. He is now in his last year at University, the younger children all doing very well, and their father a full Colonel on the General Staff.

When Bordalo Pinheiro sold the *Jornal do Comércio* at the beginning of 1954, he offered *The Anglo-Portuguese News* to my husband as a gift as he did not want to include it in the package deal, but my husband insisted on paying a token sum and from then was proprietor and editor until his death in October 1976. In that decade two or three optimistic people started rival English papers in this country, but the longest time which any of them survived was for six months. After the sale of the *Jornal do Comércio* the APN went on being printed by the new proprietors.

At the end of 1971, the owners, no doubt wishing to have the use of the APN offices, increased the printing costs so much that it would have made the paper uneconomical to run. So Luiz Marques had to look around for both new offices and new printers. We were fortunate in finding the *Tipografia Abílio Barroca* in the Rua Carlos José Barreiro near the Praça do Chile. Senhor Barroca's estimate was a reasonable one, so he printed the paper until after I sold it to Mr. Nigel Batley in November 1980. In 1982 Mr. Batley started his own printing works not only for the APN but for many other publications, reports etc.. Being an experienced professional journalist, he has enlarged the paper, returned to weekly publication and greatly improved the news coverage.

### **Bank guarantee**

At the end of the war when my husband was told by the British Ambassador that naturally the subsidy had to come to an end and that therefore the paper would close, Luiz asked for a month's grace, returned to fortnightly publication and got the paper back on to a commercial basis with fewer pages.

But when we had to leave the *Jornal do Comércio*, the big question was how to get a bank guarantee covering the printing costs for six months which was then a legal requirement. So my husband went to Ricardo Espírito Santo, head and owner of the Espírito Santo bank, who at once said that he would give the guarantee on his word alone. But the problem of offices remained. It proved impossible to find a couple of rooms near to the new printers, so a wise decision was made to move to a large room in our own house in Monte Estoril and my husband had his study on the same floor. We rented a dining room in a flat opposite the printer, in which we read and corrected the proofs and made up the pages of the paper on the three days before publication. After my husband's death, I moved over to a table by a window in one of the printing shops. This had the advantage of being near the linotypist and the actual printing machines were in the basement so the noise was not too great.

### **On microfilm**

As the British and other foreign communities have moved more and more out of Lisbon, the fact of the office being in Monte Estoril was an advantage and as is well-known the present owner has his office and printing works in the same Avenida de São Pedro, but rather lower down the hill. *The Anglo-Portuguese News* was the only English newspaper which was published right through the war on the continent of Europe and the files of the paper have proved of great use to several historians of the period. A microfilm of the issues of the first forty years up to 1977 was made and a number of libraries both in Britain and the United States have copies. Professor Guy J. Riccio and Mr. Lloyd McCune compiled and published an Index for those years, with the aid of the Gulbenkian and other Foundations. This has proved of the greatest use to researchers and will be essential to anyone writing about the British community in Portugal. At the time of the Revolution in April 1974, the paper was still selling at only Esc.5. The issue following April 25, 1974 carried a photograph of General Spínola with a short article on the immediate governmental and other changes which ensued. Subsequent issues carried news of the President's activities and any new regulations which could affect the readers.

But on the whole the paper kept a low profile and continued its chosen role of being a record for the British and other foreign communities in Portugal as well as publishing articles by local residents

and topographical pieces on other parts of the globe as well as on Portugal. For many years the paper had only two permanent employees, Senhora D. Maria Luisa Matos Ferreira and a secretary who usually only left to get married. My husband did all the sub-editing and making-up of the paper and I did the proof-reading with some outside help, the Shopping article in every issue, the Personal columns and any odd article that was needed as a fill-in.

After my husband's death I became proprietor, editor, sub-editor and general dogsbody. I never had to worry over the accounts for I knew that they were being most ably cared for. My secretary dealt with the ever-increasing number of Small Advertisements, not easy to keep in order, and received the endless callers who came in to the office, though these were sometimes passed on to me, including one subscriber who asked me for my advice on which of two candidates she should marry! It was all hard work but the greatest fun.