

in Lüderitzbucht. This was to become the pattern he was to follow: half a year with his family in Germany and the other half in South West Africa.

On his next trip to Germany in 1910 he received a warm tribute from the *Lüderitzbucht-Zeitung* under the heading, *Auf Wiedersehen*. The editor wrote, "The name Stauch is known in the whole land in connection with our diamond industry. The day on which the first glittering stones were found by white and coloured railway workers and were given into the hands of Mr. Stauch, is the day on which the discovery of our diamond fields is dated."

He gave a summary of all the people who had travelled over the fields without finding anything and made special mention of Pomona, "the richest fields in the world". The editor praised Stauch, saying that only one who has worked there and seen what Stauch had accomplished could fully appreciate his service to the country.

The large well-founded company that Stauch had managed up till then, was an achievement of which he could be proud. The paper stressed Stauch's industriousness and efficiency, as well as his success in free competition, "in contrast to the Deutsche Diamanten Gesellschaft and its predecessor the Minensyndikat, which in spite of all the professional experts employed by it, could not find one small mineable field." Instead it had to "cling to the jacket ends of the State Secretary" to obtain fields that were discovered by others.

The editor also mentioned the financial assistance that Stauch had received, particularly from Nissen, who contributed 100 000 marks. "The faith of Mr. Nissen in his friend was richly rewarded." In fact both of them benefited through their industry and great courage. Their work also helped others to reap what they did not sow! "We hope that these gentlemen will find suitable acknowledgement in Berlin for their pioneer efforts, an acknowledgement that they have received here." The paper concluded with praise for Stauch's action in buying vast tracts of land and for putting a great part of his riches back into the country. "We will see Herr Stauch as a farmer here in the not too distant future," the paper predicted.

## Stauch's contemporaries

Among Stauch's contemporaries involved in the diamond story at Lüderitzbucht were two well-known personalities, both named Weiss and unrelated to each other.

One was *Hauptmann* Carl Weiss, an ex-captain in the German forces. He also served with Stauch and Kreplin in the first legislative assembly. He was a friend of Stauch's and as colleagues they supported each other on matters pertaining to Lüderitzbucht. Sometimes he joined Stauch on holiday at the health spa Bad Salungen in Germany.

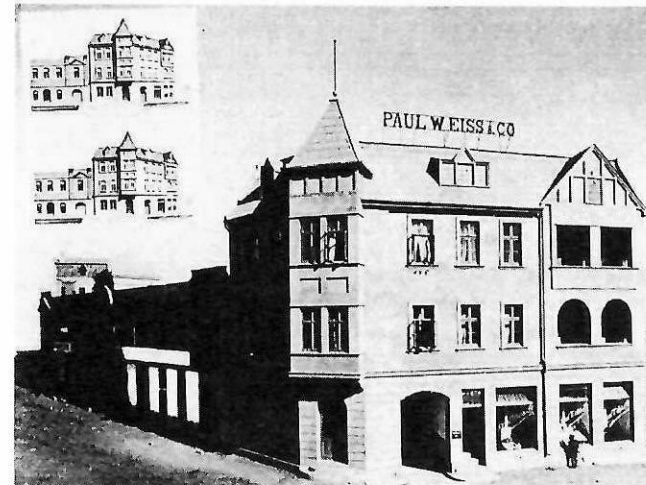
The other was Paul Simon Weiss, who was one of the first to take the initiative in prospecting for diamonds. He had been trained as a brewer in Bavaria and left Germany for Cape Town to take up employment in Ohlsson's Breweries. He arrived in Lüderitzbucht in 1901. He was a reserve officer in the *Schutztruppe* and participated in several campaigns.

Weiss obtained the concession for providing all railway accommodation and stores connected with the building of the Lüderitzbucht-Aus line. At that time there were no sleeping facilities on the trains, and passengers alighted to rest overnight at the station. Weiss was always on the move, erecting a "hotel" of sorts as the line was extended, advancing with it. At first it was just a shanty, with the walls merely plaster of Paris with a covering of painted hessian. Sometimes he used corrugated iron with a glossy coat of paint. If it proved profitable, he built a more solid hotel.

Weiss also operated a mobile store in a railway truck and as the railway line progressed, the truck cum store was pulled along with it. This improvised "shop"



Above: Paul Weiss  
Below: Weiss expands in Lüderitzbucht







contained a wide variety of goods, provisions and liquor and was managed by Paul's brother, Willi.

Because he was responsible for the transport division of the army supplies, both on horseback and by train, Paul Weiss received the nickname, *Der Transport Pauli*.

He was a trim looking man with a moustache and pince-nez. His portrait appeared on a cigar box that he imported which bore the legend, *Diamantfinder Cigarre*. He was a dynamic entrepreneur who pioneered the hotel industry in the German colony. He built the *Europäischer Hof* (later *Europa Hof*), a leading hotel in Lüderitzbucht in the early days. He also built the *Bahnhof Hotel* at Aus, the *Bellevue Hotel* in Seeheim, the *Union Hotel* at Keetmanshoop, the *Warmbad Hotel* at Warmbad and a hotel at Kuibis. In fact, as Lenz and Co. moved forward into the interior, Paul Weiss like the tail of a comet followed the company, providing the accommodation, meals and other necessities.

His elder brother, Martin, had preceded him to Lüderitzbucht, but only remained for a short while. Another brother, Ludwig, became the chief prospector for Knacke's company, Namaqua Diamond Co. of SWA. Then came Willi who had learnt the coffee trade in Hamburg and served as the first commercial traveller for Paul Weiss and Co.

He used to ride some 4 000 miles with three horses and three pack mules to do the rounds. His itinerary included Lüderitzbucht, Aus, the Schwartzrand, Berseba, Keetmanshoop, Kalkfontein, Namaland and across the Orange River to Pofadder, Steinkopf and Alexander Bay, then back again to a German police station at Witputz, to Aus and home once more to Lüderitzbucht. As can be imagined, it was virtually a test of endurance. Another brother, Arnold, became an attorney in Lüderitzbucht, while lesser known members of the family were Carl, killed during the First World War, and a sister, Rosa, who returned to Germany.

The family business, Paul Weiss and Co., is one of the oldest still existing companies in the territory. Paul Weiss stocked a wide variety of goods, from flowered cotton material and bangles to Mexican concertinas, made in Czechoslovakia!

He also specialised in liquor, mainly beer, red wine, gin and rum. With his past

experience and training in breweries, Paul Weiss became the largest importer of beer, representing all the famous international breweries, such as Spatenbräu, Löwenbräu and Pschorrbräu. He played a rôle in the later development of the Swakopmund breweries.

Beer was the most popular drink at that time, often accompanied by a *Kleine-Kleine* chaser. Beer bottles arrived from overseas in individual straw coverings in bags with 48 bottles to a bag. The straw coverings were dampened and the bottles hung up to keep cool. Later the beer was dispatched in cases which served a number of unexpected and versatile purposes. Some were converted into furniture, others were utilised as suitcases or improvised as coffins. In the case of the latter the customary wording on the lid had a macabre twist, "Stow away from the heat".

Paul Weiss was amongst the first Lüderitzbuchters to peg claims on the diamond fields. He founded an active and well-known diamond company, Weiss, De Meillon and Co. His partner, Captain De Meillon, was a British geologist but the Great War broke up their partnership. Paul Weiss served on the German side while Captain De Meillon joined the intelligence section of the South African forces. De Meillon is said to have master-minded the landing of the South African troops at Pomona and Elisabethbucht and their taking of Lüderitzbucht. He was killed near Klein Aus.

Weiss was an early agent for General Motors in Lüderitzbucht, where he was a leading figure, a town councillor and the first chairman of the Chamber of Mines. He became one of Lüderitzbucht's diamond millionaires, but eventually lost most of his fortune. He died in Cape Town during the Second World War and was cremated and buried at Lüderitzbucht.

His son Jackie followed in his father's entrepreneurial footsteps and is one of the best known pioneer personalities in Lüderitzbucht. He was born there in 1911. His mother died in 1918 in the influenza epidemic that swept through South West Africa.

Jackie Weiss grew up as enterprising and versatile as his father. He took an in-



Above: Paul Weiss sitting left and beside him De Meillon. Second from right Captain John Spence (standing) and in light suit (sitting on right) Daniel de Pass  
Left: The journey's end at Keetmanshoop. Willi Weiss is in the centre





terest in hotels, buying Kapps Hotel and Rümmler's Hotel, both leading establishments in Lüderitzbucht. He also entered the motor business and was a pioneer of the fishing and seaweed industries. He has become a living link with the past, blessed with a singular memory and a wry sense of humor.

In complete contrast to Paul Weiss in every way was another remarkable personality, Georg Klinghardt. His parents had been German missionaries who settled in Little Namaqualand. In 1897 he set off with his wife, children, ox-wagons and livestock to farm at Kubub on the edge of the Namib. There they suffered many privations, living in an ox-wagon until he could build a simple dwelling.

Klinghardt possessed a restless nature and had an insatiable desire to explore new places. He travelled in an ox-wagon as a salesman for a trader in Lüderitzbucht. He acquired an intimate knowledge of the desert and became friendly with the Hottentots at Bethanien. They revealed to him the sites of their precious waterholes. After the discovery of diamonds he was engaged as a prospector by the DKG. He travelled widely through the desert to the remote areas, both by horse and by camel, conscientiously mapping all the way. He provided the information for the first map of the *Sperrgebiet* printed in Berlin in 1913.

A few months after the discovery of diamonds, Klinghardt told his employers that he remembered seeing interesting stones that could have been diamonds during his excursions in the desert. He was asked to organise a camel expedition into the Namib to investigate this possibility. So he set off on the hazardous venture. After enduring many hardships, he eventually arrived at Bogenfels, a unique and spectacular 52-metre high rock arch on the coast, about 110 kilometres south of Lüderitzbucht. The only one of its kind in the world, it stands like a colossus astride the coast, with one monumental leg on the mainland, the other in the sea, carved and battered by the remorseless wind.

It dominates a wild, exciting and barbarous part of the *Sperrgebiet* with wind and waves playing virtuoso scales on the rugged rocks in a pyrotechnic display of sound and spectacle, the foaming spray leaping into the air like dervishes.

It was near this spot that Klinghardt found his diamonds. Some were large stones. Later stones of up to 22 carats were mined there. Klinghardt, a scrupulously honest man, delivered the entire fortune into the hands of his employers, ignoring secretive approaches from diamond buyers.

On another expedition Klinghardt was accompanied by an outstanding geologist, Dr Ernst Reuning, who had arrived in the German colony in 1909 on contract to the Deutsche Diamanten Gesellschaft. Klinghardt worked under Reuning, who thought so highly of him that he named a mountain-range in the Namib, north-east of Lüderitzbucht, the Klinghardt Mountains.

He described Klinghardt as "a great man and an idealist, yet determined and never happy unless he was going where no man had ever set foot before". Reuning was young and new to the country when he first travelled with Klinghardt, who became like a father to him. In some ways the two men greatly resembled each other. Both were conscientious and possessed unwavering integrity. Klinghardt could have joined the ranks of the diamond millionaires but eventually retired on a small pension.

Reuning reported to his employers about diamond terraces at Elisabethbucht, in the Pomona area, at Bogenfels, Frohe Hoffnung, Angras Juntas and at Chamaïs. He came to the conclusion that at one time the Orange River mouth had been situated much more to the north, possibly at Buntfeldschuh.

On one extremely adventurous trip Reuning was in charge of a camel expedi-



Dr Ernst Reuning, a distinguished geologist at the diamond fields

34. By a strange coincidence Reuning had attended the same school as Ernest Oppenheimer at Friedberg in Germany. A year Oppenheimer's junior, he knew him well.



tion to explore the coast between Lüderitzbucht and Walvis Bay. This was a completely unknown area, inaccessible to any form of transport other than camels. About a year earlier, in December 1910, Reuning and Klinghardt had explored the area south of the *Sperrgebiet* and the lower reaches of the Orange River. They had with them only a chart of the coast as everything inland was a blank on the map. They took daily compass bearings and made notes. They had great problems with transport and water supplies. They met at nameless places to which they gave names.

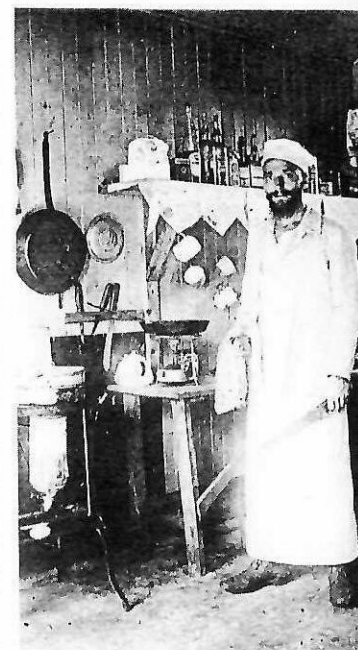
Reuning had arranged that the two groups should meet to celebrate Christmas at the mouth of the Orange River. His group, however, encountered such difficulties that they only arrived there on January 1, 1911, having suffered from a shortage of water for some ten days. They were utterly exhausted. After celebrating their reunion, Reuning and Klinghardt, with the help of a farmer, Giel Louw, explored the country just north of the Orange River.

Deposits of the old bed of the Orange River were all around them. Reuning believed that if the Orange River had once carried diamonds, these would be found in the deposits, so he marked out a series of trenches and told Louw to start digging. His intention was to return at a later stage and examine the pits.

He and Klinghardt travelled up the Orange River, mapping and prospecting as far as Sendelingsdrift (missionaries' drift). There a messenger awaited him with the request that he proceed immediately to Lüderitzbucht to take charge of the pegging of numerous claims for the DKG. Had he returned as planned to the trenches dug by Louw to wash the gravel, he would undoubtedly have discovered the untold riches in diamonds that lay less than sixty metres away. These were found almost two decades later by Consolidated Diamond Mines and were worth countless millions of rands.

Reuning had been specifically asked to trace the origins of the South West African diamonds. His researches led him to believe that the theory that the diamonds had been carried by coastal currents was less likely than that they had been washed down the old river beds. He believed that diamonds would be found not only on coastal terraces, but also in river deposits and that the source of the diamonds should be sought upwards from the Orange River.

It was necessary to determine whether there was any relationship between the



Above left: A more sophisticated stop-over  
Above: The chef at the Europäischer Hof in Lüderitzbucht