

THESEN CENTENARY.

FLAG RAISING CEREMONY 6TH APRIL, 1970

In perfect weather members of the Thesen Family, friends and many members of the Staffs of Thesen & Company and its subsidiaries met at 11.45 a.m. at the Company's Head Office buildings in Long St, Knysna.

A tall flagstaff had been erected in the garden there with a background of the Stinkwood, Assegai and Yellowwood trees planted nearly 40 years ago by Mr. Harry Thesen.

Mr. HEE Stent, the Chairman of the Company, made a short speech explaining the reason for the function, saying:

“You probably all know that the main feature of our Centenary Year is to be the launching of the 42' yacht Albatros II sometime towards the end of this year.

We felt however that there should be some simple ceremony to mark the arrival of the Thesen Family at Knysna, so today we are raising the Thesen Flag here and another at noon at Thesen Industries, as exactly 100 years ago the Thesen Family arrived at Knysna in their schooner Albatros to make their home here in South Africa.

This scarlet flag with its five pointed white star was not their flag then, but was adopted by them some years later as the flag of the Thesen Steamship line which they established towards the end of the 19th Century, their schooner Albatros having been the first ship in this venture. The flag still later was used as their trademark for Stinkwood furniture.

It is not hard to imagine the excitement and interest of the Thesen Family as they sailed up the Knysna Lagoon from the Heads to tie up at the wooden jetty, now the site of the Yacht Club. Only one or two of them had seen Knysna before and it must have been rather overwhelming to think that this rather beautiful small town, so much smaller than it is today, was to be the home of their future and a starting place for a new way of life, after Norway, for them selves and. their descendants. An old lady who died some years used to tell the tale of seeing them walking up from the jetty carrying bundles of clothes and so on, to the house in the Main Street which was to be their home, all talking hard in a language foreign to her!

Among them as a boy of about ten years of age was Charles Wilhelm Thesen, the father of two and grandfather and great grandfather of many here today. He with his father and brothers founded the Company of whose 100 year record so many of us are proud.

I am now going to ask Charles Wilhelm Thesen's youngest daughter, Mrs. Marie Tose, who will be assisted by one of his great granddaughters, Georgina Thesen, daughter of Hjalmar Thesen, to raise our Flag.”

What a charming picture that was! Mrs. Tose in a pale blue linen costume with small, blonde haired Georgina, in a frilly pink frock, gradually pulling up the scarlet and

white flag, with a background of trees and gaily dressed spectators. It was an occasion that all there will remember.

The whole crowd then moved down to Thesen Industries. There were no speeches there but the Chairman introduced the Company's Managing Directors wife, Mrs. Rosalind Thesen who, to short blasts of the factory hooter starting exactly at noon, charmingly raised the gay flag. These flags will fly throughout the Centenary Year.

The ceremony ended in a cheerful family party with a few friends and senior members of the Staff of long standing who had attended the function, in the Company's head office boardroom where a member of the Staff proposed a toast to the family here and elsewhere, and extended good wishes to the Company in its second 100 years.