

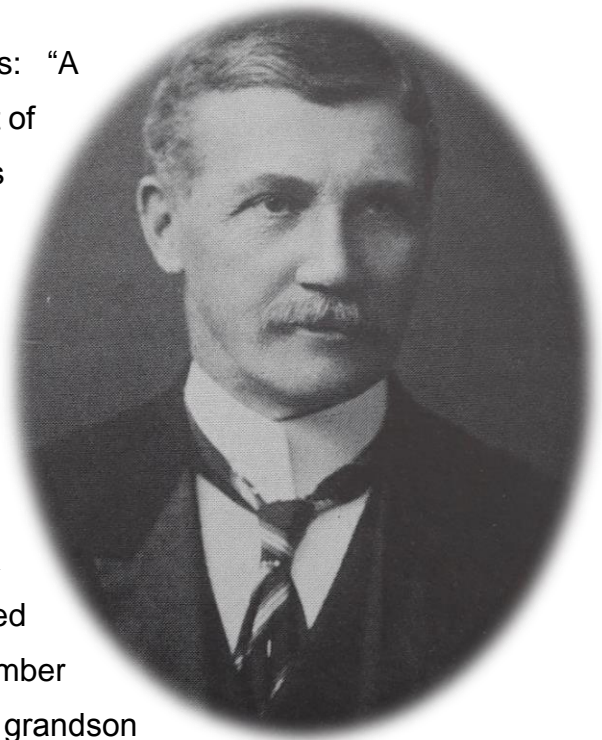
## **REMARKABLE OD – MALCOLM SEARLE**

Our feature this week is the very first president of the OD Union, the Honorable Mr Justice Sir Malcolm Searle (1896-1902 and 1922-26).

Dr Paul Murray (Bishop's Archivist) reports: "A stained-glass window – depicting the "Judgment of Solomon" – has been installed at St Saviour's Church, Claremont, in memory of **Sir Malcolm William Searle**. From 1922 until his death in a railway accident at Salt River station on 9 June 1926 Malcolm Searle was Judge President of the Cape Provincial division of the South African Supreme Court.

At Saviour's on 10 June 2017 a ceremony took place to dedicate the window. It was conducted by Father Michael Keggie and attended by a number of Sir Malcolm's descendants, including his grandson

**Jeremy Lawrence (1953F)**. Malcolm Searle's youngest son **Charles Stratford St Leger Searle** was at Bishops, as were three of his grandsons: Warham St Leger Searle, **Christopher Lawrence (1952F)** and **Jeremy Lawrence (1953F)**."



Further references about Sir Malcolm include:

*Coming Home to Roost* by Jean St Leger Lawrence

Malcolm William Searle was born at Blackheath, near London, in 1855 and voyaged with his parents to South Africa in 1860. He turned out to be brilliantly clever and also a keen sportsman.

After a good start at the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, gaining both the White prize for Classics and Gorham prize for Mathematics, he won, on his matriculation results, a scholarship to St. Catherine's College, Cambridge. There he passed both Mathematical

Tripes and the Law Tripes. He was called the Bar of the Inner Temple in London and then returned to practice at the Bar in Cape Town.

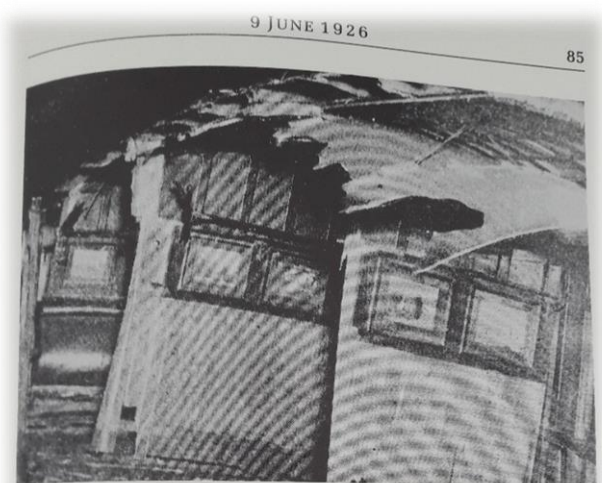
### 9 June 1926

On Wednesday, 9 June 1926, Sir Malcolm Searle, Judge President of the Supreme Court, Cape Western Division, took his usual train home from Cape Town; the 5.02pm express to Claremont and then all stations to Simonstown. It was a train especially popular with professional men and because of the small population of the Cape Peninsula nearly everyone knew one another. The train was fully crowded, as usual.

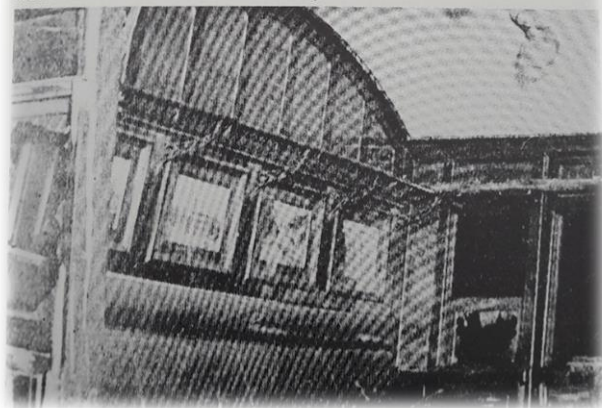
The train had passed Woodstock and was travelling at approximately 30mph when a coupling connecting the fourth and fifth coaches from the end broke. The chains caught in the checkpoints and the rear wheels of the fourth-last coach were derailed. While the front portion of the train continued its journey as if nothing had happened, at the entrance to this station the four rear coaches crashed over the sleepers and careered madly towards the Salt River Bridge. Altogether 17 people were killed and 26 very badly injured, many of them losing limbs; many more had lesser wounds.

### Bishops 150 pg 13 under Scholarships:

In 1874 Malcolm Searle simultaneously won a university exhibition at Matriculation and a scholarship in literature at BA level!"



Above: all that was left of the second-rear coach of the 5.02 express from Cape Town on 9 June 1926; my father was killed in this coach. Bottom: the third coach from the rear suffered extensively too.



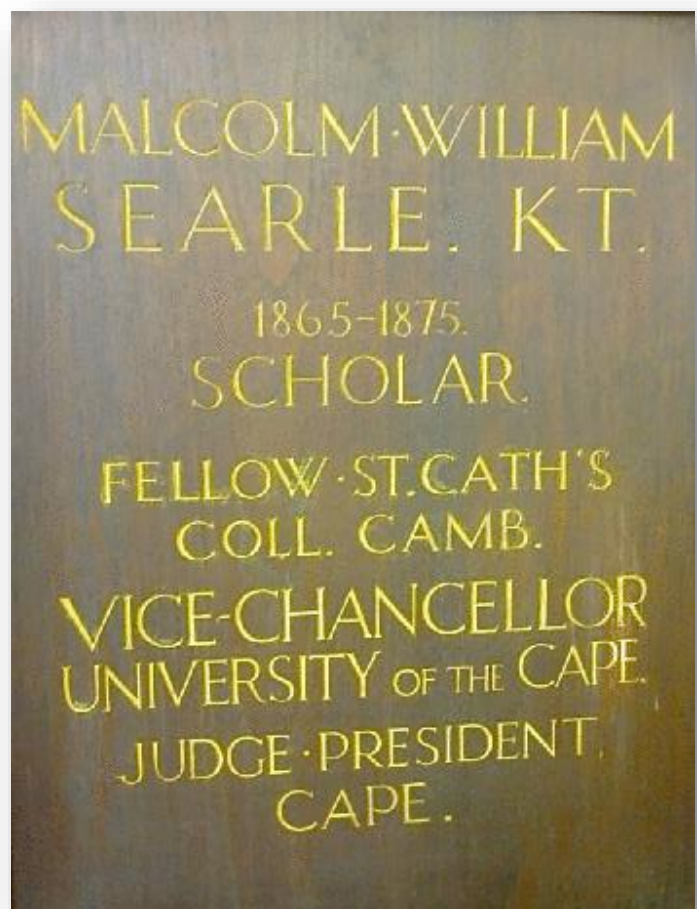
Pg 96:

“The Saltriver railway accident at evening rush hour on 9 June 1926 took the lives of two distinguished ODs, Sire Malcolm Searle, Judge-President of the Cape and President of the OD Union, Frank Molteno. Both had been College Counsel members. “

Pg 225:

1886 Meeting: “In 1886, at the suggestion of the Bishop of Cape Town, West Jones, and planned in Syfret’s Chambers by a committee consisting of M Searle, W Syfret, P Molteno and H Hull, and with the co-operation of the Principal, Sedgwick, and John X Merriman, a ‘Smoking Concert’ – favourite social event of the time – was held, with over 60 men present. Great enthusiasm in ‘the cloud of smoke raised by about 60 pipes’ for College loyalties; cheers for ‘Old Gog’ (unable to attend); suggestions be Merriman, Richard Brooke and Searle for old boy participation; more cheers for Gog; formation of an association – lots of hope. But nothing much happened. Something that did happen was the subscription by 150 ODs led by Searle and Hull to a testimonial for Canon Ogilvie, which he requested should be used for the Ogilvie Scholarship. But the magazine of August 1887 in a leader said: We believe there is still an “Old Boys” association, but for want of a leader and a purpose it seems in a fair way to end as it began – in a cloud of smoke.

A subsequent letter complained in similar bitter vein, though the magazine was carrying news of old boys, as indeed it had done from its first number, and in 1888 there was a





list of old boys who were to be agents for the magazine in Kimberley, Johannesburg, Worcester, Oudtshoorn and Port Elizabeth. Henry Hull died in July 1888 and his obituary was referred to as Secretary to the Old Boys' Union.

Searle urged 'revival of flagging interest' in 1890, comparing Bishops old boys unfavourably with those of the SAC. He suggested an annual dinner at the College, fundraising for the cricket field and forming a committee. The magazine backed this, pointing out that the magazine was stronger than the body for which it was to have been, in part, a voice.



This window, depicting the  
Judgment of Solomon,  
is dedicated to the memory of  
**Malcolm William Searle,**  
born at Blackheath, London, on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1855,  
Judge-President of the Cape Supreme Court 1922-1926,  
died in a railway accident at Salt River,  
Cape Town, on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1926.

From the Bishop's Museum:

Malcolm Searle attended Bishops from 1865 to 1875 and in the year of 1874 he won a university exhibition at Matriculation and a scholarship in literature at BA level, to the University of the Cape of Good Hope. He was Vice Chancellor of the University of the Cape of Good Hope and appointed Judge President of the Cape Provisional Division of the Supreme Court. He and Jenny Searle led an active social life and frequently entertained at their home, Highlands. His accidental death in a rail accident in 1926 left his widow not only with 6 children, but also a large house to manage and maintain.

**Sir Malcolm Searle's two trowels** - one commemorating the laying of the corner stone St Anne's in Maitland 5<sup>th</sup> August 1925 by him and the other presented to the Hon. Mr Justice Searle for the laying of the foundation stone of the Church Hall, Roodebloem on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1912.

**Silver medal** awarded to Malcolm Searle for his first place in Literature (1872 Competition of Schools, Board of Examiners in Literature and Science)

**Wallet** - leather carrying an elaborate set of Searle's initials in silver plate; Plate used for marking his clothes whilst he was in the army - you had to ink the plate which carried his name cut into it while the plate was placed on the clothes being marked.



