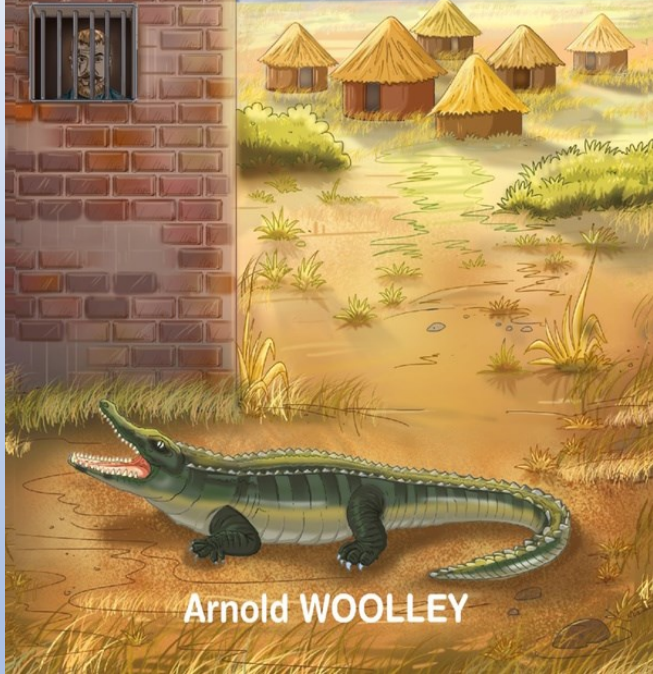


CRIMINALS AND CROCODILES

Policing In Rhodesia



Arnold WOOLLEY

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The Way In

Hooray for the UK tax man; because without him, or perhaps her, I never would have joined the British South Africa Police, or to be more geographically precise, the Rhodesian police force. In 1964, after a tour of duty in Nyasaland, now Malawi, as a probationary member of the UK's Colonial Police Force, I was back in England, aged 25, wondering what next to do with the rest of my life. Prime Minister McMillan's "Winds of Change" were blowing strongly through Africa and Great Britain was busy "Getting Out of Empire." Because of that, permanent and pensionable status within the Colonial Police Service was no longer available, although further tours "On Contract/Gratuity" were on offer. On my way from Nyasaland to Cape Town, to embark on a mail ship to the UK for a six-month long period of accrued leave, I had stopped off in Rhodesia and taken a brief look at the country and at the BSA Police. I was impressed by both, but, with some seven years of police work behind me, holding the rank of inspector and earning £720 per annum, I felt that the recruiting officer's offer of a full seven months of basic training in Tomlinson Depot, with a starting rank of Constable, on a wage of £540 per annum, was a bit of an insult, so I had politely walked away from it. I had an offer from the East Sussex Constabulary to join them; to go on a full year of training at Bramshill and come out of that with a Station Sergeant's rank. That was an attractive offer, but I had enjoyed my time in Africa and the call of sunshine, blue skies and wide open and wild country was a strong one. Besides which, I also had a verbal offer from the Rhodesian Post Office, to join them at a middle management level to help develop their security department.

It was into the middle of my puzzling about the future that the tax man stepped, by way of a formal tax demand, for some £1,000:00, which was quite a significant sum, representing as it did, a year and a half of my Colonial Police Salary. That was not to say that I had failed to pay tax on my salary for three and a half years and on my accrued leave and gratuity. That I had done. However, that payment had been made to the Nyasaland