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May 10th 1989.

To the Mayor and Council
Town. of KNOCKE/ SUR/MER.
near Ostend. Belgium.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

This is going to be a rambling story, from a man over 60 years ago spent two happy summers in your lovely city. It was then being rebuilt from the first World War, how did you fare in the SECOND??

In 1977 I was coming back from a trip to Wales my birthplace on the QUEEN E. 2 out of SOUTHAMPTON. On board was all the regular fare that is afforded to a traveller, among them a lovely young lady who was one of the entertainers. I remember well she had a lovely silver necklace, built into it was a rickshaw wheels as well. During conversation as generally happens where people come from everywhere the question was asked where did we come from?? When it came to her turn to answer, she replied. No one has ever heard of the place where I was born" Then she said "KNOCKE" everyone said WHERE'S THAT, and she smiled as she felt that no one knew where it was. So was she surprised when I told her I knew where it was, she did not believe me at first, thought I was coming on to her. Well I said what about Blankenbergh, Ostend, and then she was hugely delighted to find someone who not only knew of the place but had spent happy holidays there.

Recently I have been going over snaps taken on those two eventful olights, , FIRST I was then 20 years of age, working on the railroad in Cardiff, bring a little adventurous, and was a little fed up with visiting the various holiday spots in England, always wanted to see the Continent, although finances were not the best, we decided to make the trip via Harwich, on the S.S. Rulers to Zeebrugge, and that was as far as I had planned.

When boarding the boat at Harwich I met a fellow traveller and we engaged in conversation, he was most helpful on board the boat, because we had a terrible journey overnight to Zeebrugge, the cabins were awash with water spilled through portholes left open. He asked me where was I going, I said I had no idea, so he suggested he was going to a pension in Knocke, why not go there, at least ans see if I liked it it would be a starting off point. The groups of ladies in the pictures were the four sisters who ran the Pension quite near the beach, well do I remember seeing the COMFORTERS they used on the bed, so I agreed, and after many A FIGHT WITH THE TAXIS WHO WANTED VARIOUS AMOUNTS of money to take us us, we settled on the trolley which you will see a picture of, and I think we travelled there for 8 francs. It turned out to be a fabulous holiday as you can see from the beach activities and the photos showing us with the girls on the beach. At night we used to dance to the organ grinder, and watch the phosphoros breaking on the water.

Then the following year we met again this time we journeyed via Calais staying overnight there, my friend knew the ex mayor of Calais, he had a wonderful family

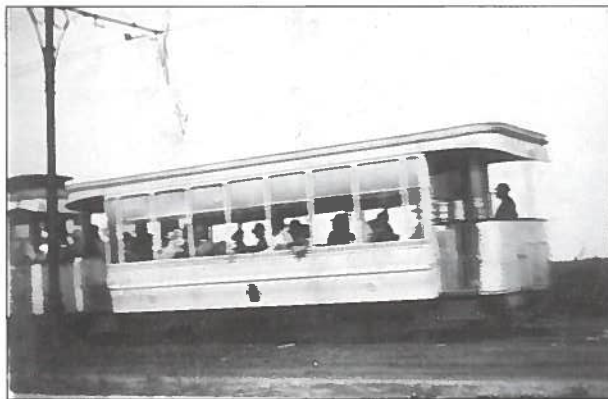
In 1989 stuurde Henry Cavill uit Ontario, Canada, bijgaande brief en een reeks foto's van zijn herinneringen van zijn bezoek aan 'Knocke' in 1927.



In de duinen.



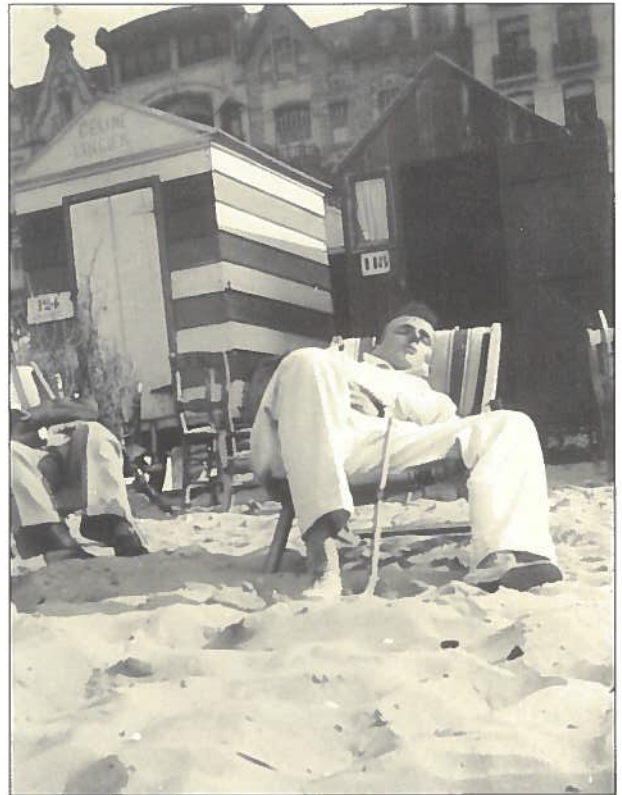
Op het strand.



Tramcar Zeebrugge.



De dijk te Knokke.



Rustend bij de badcabines.



*Knoeke 1927.
Herbert Wise, Lai Van den Wijngaert, John Hiel*

P.S. my address is my home in Toronto, where I now reside, I go to Florida in the winter, which reminds me of Knocke. I love the salt air

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they wanted us to stay, but we went by train down to LILLE and then north to Ostend and then back to Knocke. With all our friends from the previous year, we had such a grand holiday all over again, well do I remember a sign they had on the beach for swimmers which literally read. FRENCH AND BELGIAN SWIMMERS only go as far as the boat(the guard sat in the boat watching the swimmers) ENGLISHMEN CAN GO AS FAR AS THEY LIKE.

We had all our meals in the Pension so we never needed the restaurants, anyhow we had no money we paid I think 40 Belgian francs a day, they used to put up the rate of exchange in the places such as 168.95 belgian francs to the English pound.. In those days can you believe it for 80 francs a day you could have your pension, go out drink the best liquor smoke best cigars, and really enjoy yourself.

There is so much more I could say about those happy days with our friends at Knocke, but I shall let the pictures which I AM enclosing for your "archives" give you the visual story.

The three young ladies were residents of the town, when you see if you examine the pictures I am the one holding up a little book which was FRENCH ENGLISH dictionary, which was our means of communication. The only name that comes to my memory is the picture of winter at Knocke with the snow, her name was Yvonne Wassenhove, she was the lady with the hair do that was parted down the middle, a very lovely person, and we had great times on the beach during the day time. Often wonder what happened to them because my trip the following year was changed as I had decided to emigrate to Canada, where I have been ever since, but the other day I was going through snaps, I have been married twice, unfortunately lost my two wives and now I am alone so pictures like this only have a reason for me and if anything happened to me no one would know anything about them and would throw them, so I am taking the liberty of sending them to you, as you can see what your area looked like in those days. Everytime I look at the Beach guard, who used to chase us into the water to get our tickets for our cabins, he became such a good friends.

Some of the pictures shiw our trips through Belgiem, those were the days when you were rebuilding your area, such a job, we visited the battlefields, which even this day amazed me of the stupidity of war.

If I can be of any service in requiring explanations of these pictures please write I will try to answer. Th gentleman I was ffriends with is the in the picture with the Greyhound dog, holding the head of the dog, I cannot even remember his name, as we did not maintain a writing after I came to Canada, we were then in the midst of a depression, when you concentrated on living.

So nice to share these memories with you maybe someone over there remembers me, I AM the one seated between Yvonne and her friend, I have on a sweater (english style) and with my haircut crew cut style you will see me through the pictures. The other group of young men were Bank Clerks from London, who went to Blankenberg, did not like it and came up and stayed in our pension, we all had a wonderful time but it was your "Plage" that made it all possible.

As Bob Hope would say "THANKS FOR THE MEMORY", may you enjoy these photos of your Beach and Town, and the lovely people we met there.

SINCERELY Yours. *Murray N. CAVILL.*