

A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE.

A couple of years back, on a Good Friday, we decided to take a walk to the beach as it was so hot. We were forbidden to swim as it was the day our Lord was crucified. But as one can imagine, children can be very disobedient, and we slipped on our bathing-costumes and put our clothes on again. When we got to the beach, to our parents astonishment, we started getting undressed. Our mother, thinking we were playing striptease, started up from where she was sitting and started scolding us. But soon she found out why we were undressing.

The water was as cold as ice. Only a few people out of the hundred that were on the beach were swimming or paddling. Among these was a man (unable to swim, we were to find out later) and his son. The little boy was playing with a rubber duck, a kind of tube one could say. He pushed it out to sea and on trying to get it back, he failed. He called his father and asked him to swim out and get it. The father was too ashamed to say he couldn't swim so made an attempt but failed. My brother, who at that moment was on the beach, saw this happen and asked my parents whether he could go after it. My father said "yes" as the tube was still close to shore. He swam quite fast, but as his hand stretched out to grab it, it was taken by current. He swam further, and further and further still, but had not yet been able to get hold of it. Later he was a good half-mile out at sea.

People were now running up and down the beach shouting for a boat. The only boat, however, was a stranded, battered thing. At length, the only thing to do, was for my father to strip and swim after his son. We shouted to John to come back, but he only shouted back and said he couldn't as he was swimming with the current.

My father, in his vest, underpants and socks dived into the water. He hadn't swim for three years and now... the half mile swim. My brother, by this time, had disappeared under the water a couple of times. Three quarters of the way my father got a cramp from the cold water. John had managed to swim a little way back to shore. He reached my father and clung onto him. They both kept on disappearing on the journey back.

From somewhere out of the blue, a lady came. (There was, by this time nobody swimming and quite a crowd watching.) She swam out to my father and relieved him of the strain. John could hardly walk and was blue with cold. He cuddled up on the sand while my father was resting upon the water on his back. After he had regained his breath he came out. John, my father and mother were bundled into a car by a kind gentleman. My mother put them to bed and they soon fell asleep, soon to forget the happenings of that 'Good' Friday.

That day, everybody thought that was going to be the end of the two elder males of the Webster family.

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[From *Duineland*, the school magazine of the 1995 Std 6 class of the Hoogenhout Premier School, Walvis Bay. This will be the first class that went to the next level as the school progress to Secondary School status.]