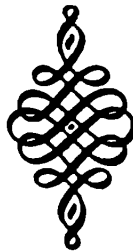




SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN



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**VOL XIII No. 2
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SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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Articles dealing with matters of historical interest to Simon's Town and surrounding area will be considered for publication.

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Please address correspondence to: The Hon. Secretary, Simon's Town Historical Society, P.O.Box 56, Simon's Town 7995 (Telephone: 86-1195)

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EDITORIAL:

1984 is a truly 'Historic' year in the annals of the Simon's Town Historical Society. April 2nd saw the opening of the first room - The Naval Room - in the 'new' Museum premises in The Residency, appropriately on the 7th Anniversary of the opening of the first Museum in the old Headmaster's House in the present Municipal complex. As some readers of the Bulletin are doubtlessly aware the idea to form a Museum was not new - it had been around for some 50 years as a short article which follows later in this edition will show.

The other event for which 1984 will surely be remembered is the proclamation of our 'Historic Mile' running almost the entire length of St. George's Street from Admiralty House to the East Dockyard Gate - as "An Area of Special Historical and Aesthetic Significance". The successful implementation of this concept will entail a very considerable effort by all members of our Society and our community and the results will certainly not be apparent for some time but at this stage it is only fair that tribute is paid to the Town Councillors for their initial achievement particularly to the two Councillors who are on the Committee of the Society.

SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY: TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

Presented by the Chairman Mr. G.B. READ, CBE at the Twenty-Fourth Annual General Meeting in the Soldiers and Sailors Restroom on Thursday 22nd March, 1984.

This meeting again follows the pattern established last year and the year before by which Society Members attend in their dual roles as Members of the Society and Friends of the Museum. This report hopefully will be shorter than some of its predecessors - not for want of content for there is much to report - but to enable Major Philip Erskine to present his talk on "The Development of 18th Century Architecture in Virginia and South Carolina" and then to get back to Idas Valley near Stellenbosch. Major Erskine will of course be a familiar face to those members of the Society who went on last year's winter tour to Stellenbosch and who will doubtless recall how he brightened up a very damp Saturday afternoon with a fascinating talk on the restoration of his house "The Homestead". It is also a great pleasure to welcome Mrs. Erskine to Simon's Town and to these proceedings, also their guest Miss Ivie Price.

1983 has been another very busy and successful year for the Society's Members and as was foreseen at the last A.G.M. the main focus of activity has been the move of the Museum exhibits, equipment and records etc from the Old Headmaster's House in the Municipal complex to The Residency. I am sure all who were involved in the operation will join me in expressing the Society's sincere thanks to The Mayor, The Councillors, The Town Clerk and all his officials for the great assistance rendered by the Municipality. Without it the move could not have been completed so expeditiously and successfully so much so that it is planned to open a part of The Residency on 31st March, 1984.

The other highlight was the most generous response by Gold Fields South Africa to the Museum Development Fund's countrywide appeal. The presentation of a cheque for R50,000 was made at a very successful occasion kindly organised by Commodore Beddy at Admiralty House and on behalf of the Society I would like to express our special thanks to him. A more detailed exposé of the present position of the Museum Development Fund will be given during another part of the proceedings tonight.

It gives me great pleasure to report that our new president Admiral Biermann has taken a very close interest in our activities and he has kindly consented to open the first phase of the new Museum premises at The Residency on 31st March, 1984. This is the Navy Room which has been established in the old Court room. The activities of two of our other Vice Presidents deserve special mention. The Hon. John Wiley, MP who has continued to render valuable assistance during the past year and Professor Eric Axelsson who has been closely connected with the planning of celebrations to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the discovery of and rounding of The Cape.

As usual the past year was not without its sadder moments. One of our Vice Presidents and founder members Mrs. Helene Scott passed away. In addition to her many other activities she contributed to the very first Edition of The Bulletin (and subsequently to many others) Vol. I No.1 January 1961. A tribute will appear in the next Bulletin.

Eric Rosenthal who was a very distinguished member of the Society and a close reader of the Bulletin died during the year and his passing deprives us of a wonderful fund of historical information.

Very recently, yesterday to be exact, Society Members were saddened to learn of the death of Commodore John Fairbairn, a former Officer Commanding of the Dockyard and a very considerable contributor to the Society's affairs: a short tribute will also appear in the next Bulletin.

above last year's figure. It is interesting to note that while a substantial number of New Members joined a considerable number of the older members fell away - in some cases so it turned out only temporarily because they overlooked the necessity to renew their subscription! May I make a special plea that when the Hon.Secretary/Treasurer's annual circular arrives Members respond promptly. It will save him a considerable amount of work!

2. PUBLIC RELATIONS TOURS: 1984 has been even busier than 1983 and the pressure on the Curator, The Museum Staff and 'The Town Guides' is becoming nearly intolerable. Members will have seen a circular requesting "volunteers" to train as Tour Guides and the Committee is pleased that the response has been good as current indications lead us to believe we shall require a much larger 'pool' of Guides. We will shortly be making arrangements for the appropriate 'training' to begin.

The Society mounted a very successful Spring Tour of The Overberg which took members to Swellendam, Port Beaufort and the heart of The Barry Country. I have already mentioned that there was a successful one-day Winter Tour in the course of which Mr. van Huyssteen took us on a fascinating 'walk-about' of old Stellenbosch and of course Major Erskine entertained us at Idas Valley.

Members will be interested to know that STHS was able to assist its sister Society The Historical Society of Cape Town in mounting "A Tour of the Bays" and Gordon Wilson took what I suppose one could call a Busman's Holiday and once again acted as Tour leader. The 'know how' provided by the STHS and Gordon's research and presentation were much appreciated by the HSCT.

3. HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND PRECINCTS: There are two very pleasing developments to report. First - the last of the 'Pot Luck' quarters has been taken over by the Voortrekker Movement and is being dismantled, transferred to Sun Valley and re-erected there. The second - though very recent development is that our Historic Mile has been proclaimed by the Provincial Administration 'An Area of Special Historical and Aesthetic Significance'. Members will appreciate however that with this proclamation our problems are not going to disappear nor will the condition and appearance of those buildings which offend in The Historic Mile be automatically improved - far from it. A set of guidelines will first have to be drawn up and then thought given to the not insignificant problems of how they can be effectively implemented. Already where a similar proclamation is under consideration for Long Street in the centre of Cape Town members will have seen from the press some property owners are already calling for compensation in lieu of 'hardship' and restrictions which would allegedly deprive them of development rights. Even Prof. Brian Kantor has entered the lists. It seems some people usually in favour of conservation until it hits their pocket! In Simon's Town we may have won a battle but we have certainly not won the War - not yet!

4. THE BULLETIN: Our thanks go once again to a very hard working Editorial Committee and in particular to The Curator, Mrs. Ray Kramer, Mrs. Audrey Read and Nigel Fawcett. On the face of things it still seems to be very well received and read with surprising attention to detail but the Editorial Committee would welcome more feedback. Costs continue to increase at about 10% per edition. A working party is giving active consideration to its production within the resources of the Society.

5. THE SIMON'S TOWN CHRONICLE: Under Nigel Fawcett's able Editorship the Chronicle in its new format has developed well. Our thanks go to Mesdames Biggs, Grant, Sanderoff and Barnes for their continuing efforts in producing this successful publication.

as you will hear from the Hon.Secretary/Treasurer. This stems principally from the surplus generated by the Spring Tour of The Overberg and of course the increase in 1984 subscription should assist. Nevertheless this is an aspect of our activities which will have to be kept under constant review. Even at the new level of R3 and R5 our subscriptions are still low compared with our sister societies and it must be emphasised that the single adult subscription of R3 barely covers the cost of the Bulletin on the basis of two editions per year. However, unless things go sadly awry it is not the Committee's intention to recommend a further increase, at least not for the time being!

7. THE NEW MUSEUM PREMISES IN THE RESIDENCY: Last year I highlighted the additional call on the human resources available to the Society and the Museum the move to the Residency would demand. If anything the Committee and I underestimated the position as we assessed it then. To develop the new Museum premises in the Residency in the way the Board of Trustees of the Museum and the Committee of the Simon's Town Historical Society would really desire, assistance is required in the following areas of activity:

- a) Special Projects: Members willing to take on a specific project e.g. the restoration of the Waiting Room of the Cable Car which needs carpentry, painting, glazing and a new roof;
- b) Handymen: who can put up shelves, repaint showcases, hang the bar mirror, renovate the bar counter etc;
- c) Specialist Restorers: Members who have specialist knowledge of restoration, repair and cleaning of guns, swords, models and other artefacts;
- d) Generalist members (or two or three) to work under a Committee member to sort out Society material at present stored in the old Translator's office;
- e) Cells Working Party: the cells need attention - cleaning, whitewashing and the flagstones sealed - a group is really needed to tackle this.

The Society will shortly open a new Meeting Room in the Residency where members can meet every Saturday morning.

8. CONCLUSION: Each year seems busier than the last and 1983 was no exception. May I on your behalf once again thank the Vice-Chairman Gordon Wilson for his tremendous contribution to almost every facet of our affairs, our hard working Hon.Secretary/Treasurer Dennis Kinkead-Weekes, our Committee Members Margaret Cartwright, Malcolm Cobern - Malcolm has just published a most readable book which I strongly recommend to your attention "Story of The Fish Hoek Valley" - Nigel Farquharson, Mac Bisset - Mac has just been promoted to the rank of Commander - Alf Glover, Nikki Holderness, Gloria Hutchison, Cherry Dilley, Liz Biggs and her Museum staff. Sadly we have just said au revoir to Ruth Barnes and her husband Neville who have left us for pastures new. I would also like to thank Iris Hutchings and Lonah Fawcett and all the other ladies who have assisted at the Information Bureau. I have already mentioned the great assistance and cooperation we have received from the Municipality and so it remains only to thank the South African Navy for the very considerable support they gave us in 1983.

The Society achieved a lot in 1983. I sincerely trust it will achieve even more during the coming year to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Inaugural Meeting of the STHS which was held on 22nd February 1960. The Society has come a long way since then!

HMS AFRIKANDER

Johan G. Louw

On 26th February, 1919, the TICKLER, an iron steam gunboat of 265 tons, 85 x 26 ft, which had been used as a dockyard lighter, YC 229, since 1902, was re-named HMS AFRIKANDER and was commissioned as depot ship in Simon's Town. She remained thus till she was transferred on loan to the Union Government as HMSAS AFRIKANDER.

What was the AFRIKANDER, what role did she play, how many ships bore this name and how did the RN conduct their affairs at Simon's Town prior to her commissioning? The answer to these questions are provided in the three Chapters that follow:-

CHAPTER I A BRIEF HISTORY OF HMS AFRIKANDER

In his book "The Andrew and The Onions" - The Story of the Royal Navy in Bermuda 1795 - 1975, Lt. Commander Ian Stranack RN (Retd) writes:

"There is one factor - unique to the Royal Navy and those Navies developed under the same system - which requires explanation. Owing to the wording of the Naval Discipline Act, it is necessary for all members of the Royal Navy to be borne on the Books of one of H.M. Ships in order that the Act should apply to them.

For this reason, with the establishment of the many Naval Training Schools, Air Stations and other Shore Establishments and Bases throughout the world, each was given a Ship's name, and was Commissioned at a formal ceremony, in the same way as a floating ship. Such Establishments have become known - for obvious reasons - as 'Stone Frigates'." (1)

In the past it was often the practice to have a Vessel of the same name afloat and attached to the Establishment concerned, just to maintain the illusion (and probably the confusion in the minds of the uninitiated) of what the RN was really about!

From February 1919 to the beginning of 1922 HMS AFRIKANDER, ex TICKLER, quietly played its roll as RN Base Depot until the further development of the RNVR (SA Division) was to bring about change. Personnel recruited locally enrolled in the RNVR (SA Div). All such officers and men, later SANS, were entered nominally on the books of HMS AFRIKANDER, to bring them under the Naval Discipline Act.

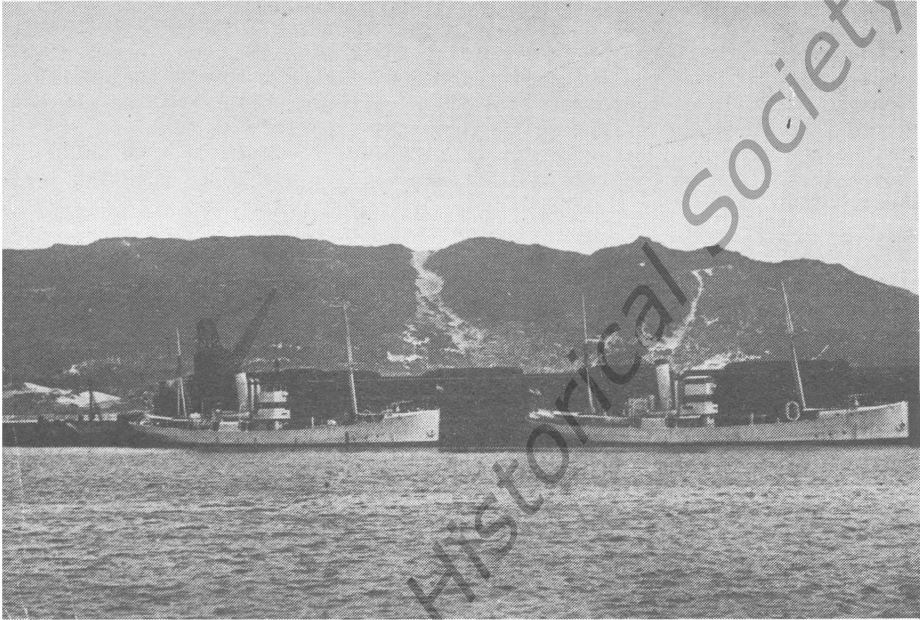
"This was later considered undesirable and to confirm the position of the OC, SANS, as a Commanding Officer, it was decided to provide the SANS with a separate nominal ship. The office of the Commander SANS set up in three iron and wood hutments in Simon's Town, 1921, soon after changed to Officer Commanding, SANS, commenced to function officially as the administrative headquarters of the SANS on April 1, 1922." (2)

In The Times of 12 April 1923 the Admiralty announced administrative changes, to take effect on 19th June, 1923, in the Naval Force of South Africa:

"The base ship AFRIKANDER, at the RN Base at Simon's Town, and on the books of which all the officers and ratings on duty at the Cape Dockyard and the other Establishments within the African Command have been borne, is to be transferred on loan to the Union Government, for duty as the nominal depot ship of all the SAN Service personnel. The surveying vessel PROTEA, and mine sweeping trawlers IMMORTELLE and SONNEBLOM will become tenders to the AFRIKANDER, and the Commander of the SA Division of the RNVR Commander N.H. Rankin, to be appointed by

the Union Government to the Command of the new depot ship."

Below L to R: HMSAS SONNEBLOM and IMMORTELLE, Simon's Town 1932



SONNEBLOM and IMMORTELLE were Mersey Class, Admiralty Trawlers of which 112 were built. Their displacement was

42 tons gross 148' overall, 138 1/2' between
perpendiculars. 23 3/4 ft x 12 3/4 ft depth of hold TE 600 IHP = 11 knot

SONNEBLOM 9.21 to 6.34 ex JOHN EDMUND, ex FOYLE 9.20. Delivered to RN
22.10.1908. Built by Goole Shipbuilding and Re-
Pairing Co. Ltd., Goole. 1 x 12 pdr. Sold 1946
Cramond Island.

IMMORTELLE " ex THOMAS JOHNS, ex EDEN 9.20. Delivered to RN
3.9.1918. Built by Cochrane & Sons, Selby. 1 x
pdr. Sold 1945.

Accordingly on 15 June, 1923, the old gunboat GRIPER, renamed HMS FLORA, was
commissioned as the nominal depot ship of the Simon's Town RN depot on the
transfer of the AFRIKANDER, ex TICKER. She was the sister-ship to the TICKER
and had been on harbour service since 1905, renamed YC 373.

"The conditions of this paper transaction were in sense remarkable
in that the Union Government firmly insisted that the deal should
not cost them anything and the Admiralty were quite adamant that
they should retain the use of AFRIKANDER as a floating cooking
galley and that the ultimate scrap value of the hull should accrue
to them." (3)

"The 3 sister ships HMS GADFLY, GRIPER and TICKLER arrived in Simon's
Town in July and August 1885 and remained on the station. In 1900-01

guns were removed from all of them - and from the GRIPER the engines and boilers too - and they were used as coaling and general service lighters until the 1930's" (4) The TICKLER served as a cooking vessel in the 1914-18 War for the use of RN ships undergoing refits in the graving dock or undergoing other major repair work.

"In 1891 these small ships, commonly called 'flat-irons' were officially ribed as 3rd class coast defence gun-boats of 265 tons. They had twin masts and a draught of 6 ft for operating in shallow water. Their main function was to discourage enemy warships from raiding the coast, they were armed with a single heavy ten-inch, 18 ton muzzle-loading gun, firing a 400 lb shell with a bursting charge of 20 lb of gunpowder. A disappearing mounting enabled the gun to be lowered into the hull to improve the vessel's stability at sea. It had a limited arc of training, and in practice it was found to be more satisfactory to leave the gun on the fore and aft line and to aim it by pointing the vessel herself." (5)



Simon's Bay circa 1900 - HMS Gadfly, Griper and Tickler in foreground.

From June 1923 to December 1932 HMSAS AFRIKANDER served as SANS Base Depot and simultaneously HMS FLORA (ex Griper) served as RN Base Depot. By October 1932 most of the RN ratings on the SANS ships had been replaced by SA ratings. There was however some difficulty over replacing senior ratings particularly in the engine room branch which necessitated the secondment of RN ratings from time to time.

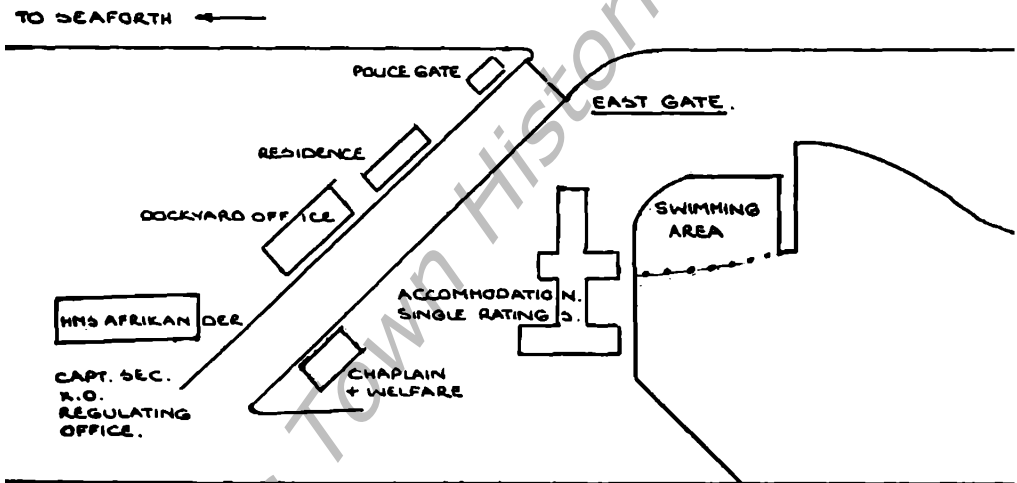
With the onset of the depression in 1929-30, the S.A. Government Defence Department, and particularly that of the Naval Service, came in for severe pruning. In 1932 all continuous training of Active Citizen Force units, including the NVR (S.A. Div.) was suspended. In November the appointment of OC, SANS, ceased and the SANS and RNVR (S.A.Div.) came directly under the British Admiralty. The ships became independent commands instead of tenders to HMSAS AFRIKANDER." (6)

"As a result of this change it was decided that the Headquarters staff of the SANS were to come under the Commander-in-Chief Simon's Town for disciplinary purposes, and it was approved for HMS FLORA to revert to the name HMS AFRIKANDER, the SANS office being called AFRIKANDER II. Lt. Cdr. T. Ellis, RN was appointed Staff Officer, SANS, on January 1, 1933." (7)

HMS AFRIKANDER (ex GRIPER, ex FLORA) was sold circa 1937 and sunk by gunfire of HMS DAFFODIL, thus severing all illusionary ties with anything afloat.

HMS AFRIKANDER was finally housed in an office block in the East Dockyard. The accommodation in the East Yard was for single ratings who were victualled and housed there. Married men were expected to find their own accommodation and were given an allowance.

Location of HMS AFRIKANDER in EAST YARD, C 1956
(info by CPO L.J. Tubby Parsons)



One of the tasks of those on the station was to man the Radio Stations which were situated as follows:

Cape East - on the Cape Flats near Faure

Cape South - at the top of Red Hill, which was also the training school

Slangkop - situated at Kommetjie.

The stations were used to relay global communications, Slangkop also being used by the G.P.O. Signal ratings were accommodated at the various stations but were administered by HMS AFRIKANDER.

Among the ratings at HMS AFRIKANDER was the Master at Arms, whose duty it was to see to the Detention Quarters and the Africa Station Club, the social gathering point of RN ratings, particularly on a Sunday evening when visitors came from so far a field as Cape Town. The Master at Arms lived in the house next to the

Detention Quarters in the West Yard. Many of these men on retiring were asked by the Breweries to manage their pubs. The Regulating Petty Officer had to control the Ships companies for defaulters and requestmen. Other Chief Petty Officers were on the Staff of the C in C, and carried out inspections and training in their particular branches to the RN ships on the station.

The peacetime complement of HMS AFRIKANDER was not large for in June 1939 the Navy List entry for AFRIKANDER gives the names of five RN Officers borne on the books, and AFRIKANDER II with two SANS Officers and two RN Officers. By March 1940 her wartime complement had swelled the ranks to 246 officers borne on the books of an AFRIKANDER divided into VII sections (one of these an hotel in Cape Town occupied by the Women's Royal Naval Service). The strangest rating to be borne on the books during the war was "Just Nuisance", a canine sailor of excellent character.



Master at Arms

"Since 1885 when the old Cape Colonial Parliament passed an act transferring the assets of the original Simon's Bay Dock and Patent Slip Company to the British Admiralty - or rather, in the quaint language of the law, to 'the Commissioners for the executing of the office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom' - diplomatic exchanges had continuously taken place between London and South Africa about this vital point on the world map." (8)

It could be said that the culmination of these exchanges was the Simon's Town Agreement, which entailed the handover of the Dockyard by the RN to the SAN.

"Transfer proceeded with a minimum of friction and a maximum of goodwill. The date of March 31, 1957 was adhered to and on April 1 the Simon's Town Dockyard was formally transferred to the SA Navy, the official ceremony taking place on April 2. So important was the occasion considered to be by the British Government that the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Selkirk, came out specially to be present at the formal handing over" -

to the SA Navy. The last Officer Commanding HMS AFRIKANDER in Simon's Town was Captain H.F. Bone, DSO and bar, DSC and bar. ADC. The base depot moved to Youngsfield, Wynberg, about midway between Simon's Town and Cape Town. For ten years a large naval contingent remained with a Commander-in-Chief, and RN ships were still 'on station' at Simon's Town.

On 11th April 1967 the Royal Navy's South Atlantic and South America Station was closed down, breaking a tradition which was started by Vice-Admiral Sir Keith Elphinstone in 1795 at the Battle of Muizenberg. The flag of the Royal Navy's last Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral J.M.D. Gray, CB, CBE, was lowered at 6.28 pm on the 11th and the pennant was raised at 8.30 am on the 12th, of the Senior British Naval Officer South Africa, Commodore J.W.D. Cook. The Admiral's staff gave him a lunch at the officer's mess at HMS AFRIKANDER and then towed away his car as the traditional farewell symbolising his departure. The SBNOSA responsible to the C-in-C Western Fleet, also filled the role of British Naval Attache. The staff of HMS AFRIKANDER was reduced to three officers, six ratings and a small civilian staff.

In June 1967 the closure of the Suez Canal, as a result of the Arab-Israeli War, placed an unexpected burden on the SBNOSA and his staff. In the C-in-C's days

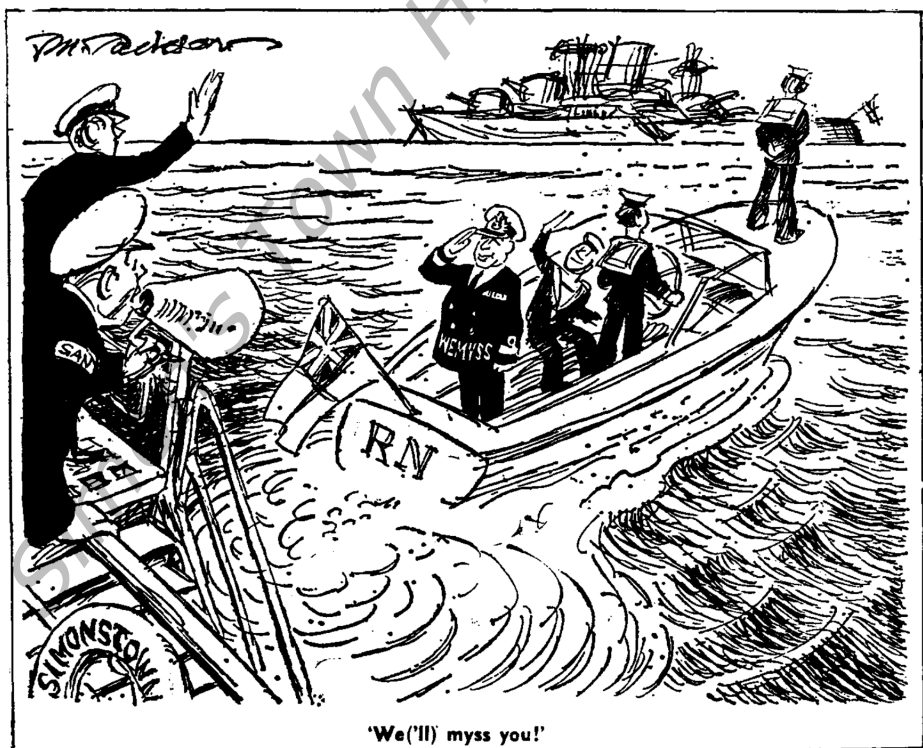
there was an average of two ships on the Station, now with a Commodore and a very small staff, a total of 150 RN ships and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries passed through in 19 months. The crew of HMS AFRIKANDER dealt with the needs of all these ships on their way to the Persian Gulf or the Far East. The hospitality to thousands of sailors was no less than ever and surely long remembered.

The Cape Times of Wednesday December 10, 1975, carried, tucked away on page 5, the following report: Naval Link to part next year. - Defence Reporter.

"In February next year HMS AFRIKANDER, the last ship of the Royal Navy to serve in South African waters, will sail into history as the final links of an old naval friendship between Great Britain and South Africa are snapped.

That is when HMS AFRIKANDER, the shore establishment at Young's Field military training base which is the H.Q. of Commodore A.F.C. Wemyss, OBE, the Senior British Naval Officer South Africa, finally closes its doors after an 18-year old 'cruise' that began when the RN handed over Simon's Town to South Africa in 1957.

HMS AFRIKANDER formerly occupied more of Young's Field base than its present office block. Its extent shrank after the post of Commander-in-Chief South Atlantic and South America was abolished in 1967. The Office block itself will revert to the South African Defence Force after February 13. Relics of HMS AFRIKANDER's long stay at Young's Field will not be lost to posterity," a spokesman said yesterday. 'Anything of historical interest will go back to Simon's Town which we consider to be the right place, since it came from there.'



The Cape Argus - 20 June 1975

Commodore A.F.C. Wemyss, addressing a farewell function for the RN given by the Mayor and Councillors of Simon's Town, said that the withdrawal of the RN from Simon's Town was part of a much wider withdrawal by Britain who since 1957 effectively had ceased to be a World Power. Some 55,000 men had been paid off and some 400 ships taken out of commission. He said that Britain's withdrawal from the Simon's Town base was not unique: similar withdrawals were also taking place in Singapore, Hong Kong, the West Indies and Mauritius. The British Government in 1974 had decided to terminate the Simon's Town Agreement because the political disadvantages of the Agreement, outweighed the naval/military ones.

			S. 1320 (JUNE 1972)
P 101251Z FEB FM FO MALTA TO SBNOSA BT UNCLAS URG RTT			
PERSONAL FROM ADMIRAL AND FLAG LT. ON THE SAD OCCASION OF YOU HAULING DOWN YOUR PENNANT AND THE DE-COMMISSIONING OF HMS AFRIKANDER OUR THOUGHTS ARE VERY MUCH WITH YOU. WE REMEMBER WITH GREAT NOSTALGIA THE HAPPY DAYS THAT WE AND SO MANY OTHERS HAVE HAD IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WONDERFULL SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND CO-OPERAT- ION THAT THE NAVY HAS ALWAYS ENJOYED. OUR PARTICULAR GOOD WISHES GO TO ALL THOSE WHO SERVED IN AFRIKANDER FOR SO MANY YEARS AND HAVE GIVEN SO MUCH TO THE ROYAL NAVY. WE ARE SURE THAT BETWEEN US ALL THE SPIRIT OF AFRIKANDER WILL LIVE ON IN THE HEARTS OF ALL WHO HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING IN SOUTH AFRICA. BT			
IN	HAND	FOR ON/O 11 FEB 76	CARTER

Above: One of the final signals to HMS AFRIKANDER from the Flag Officer
 Malta to the Senior British Naval Officer South Africa
 11th February, 1976.

CHAPTER II TWO SHIPS WHICH ALSO BORE THE NAME AFRIKANDER

It is appropriate to record also the existence of two ships which bore the name AFRIKANDER during the First World War. The first the Cape Town tug LUDWIG WIENER, the second the German Whaler, BISMARCK, seized in South Africa.

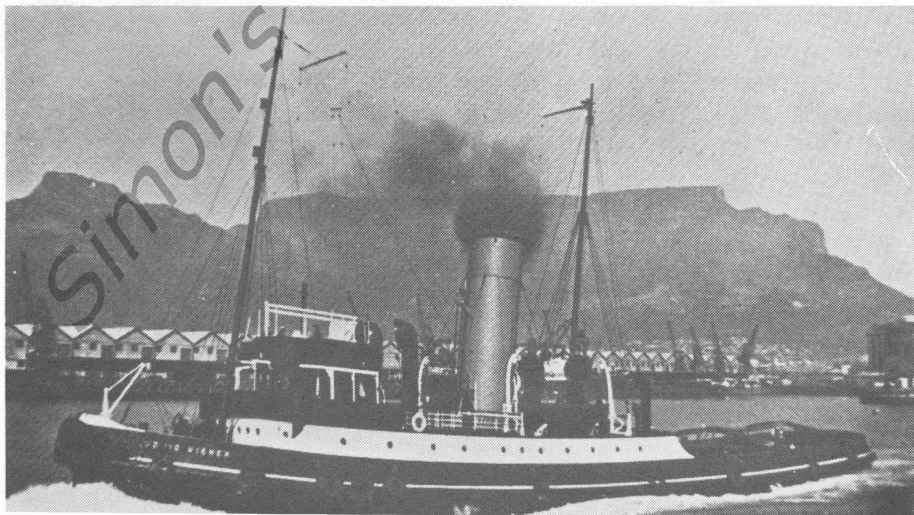
During the campaign in German South West Africa August 1914 - June 1915, the British navy mobilised the Table Bay tug LUDWIG WIENER. She had arrived in Table Bay from the Glasgow builders' yards in 1913. During August 1914 she was taken round to Simon's Bay. On the 17th she was taken into the basin, her lifeboats were removed to accommodate on 12 pounder and one 6 pounder. A more powerful searchlight was added. She was renamed HMS AFRIKANDER and sailed on the 29th August.

The 12 pounder 12 cwt gun belonging to the RNVR (S.A. Div) which was brought from their headquarters, was manned by a crew drawn from the Corps. She was also fitted with wireless telegraphy, and no active service rating being available, Petty Officer Wileman, of 'A' Company, volunteered to work the apparatus, which he did in a very satisfactory manner during the whole time she was in commission.

Although there was great excitement generated by expectations of an attack on the Union, there was, in reality, very little for the tug to do. She was despatched to the Bredasdorp coast to search for an aircraft which had been reported to be snooping in the area. Escorted by HMS HYACINTH, HMS AFRIKANDER searched the coastline for three days and nights before returning to base. On 2nd November she was coaling in the dock. During that month she was despatched to attempt to refloat the steamer CLAN STUART which had run aground off Dido Valley, Simon's Bay. The vessel was later refloated, but her captain was forced to beach her again to prevent sinking. The tug was confined to base to protect the harbour installations when her consorts escorted the 1st Expeditionary Force to German South West Africa. A short time later she accompanied the 3rd Force to Walvis Bay.

At daybreak, December 22nd, the fleet of transports steamed out of Table Bay bound for Walvis Bay, taking station on HMS HYACINTH, ASTREA and AFRIKANDER. The distance from Cape Town to Walvis Bay is approximately 720 miles and the speed of the convoy, restricted by the slowest vessel, the Den of Glamis, barely exceeded 8 knots. On the afternoon of the 24th the GALWAY CASTLE escorted by HMS HYACINTH and AFRIKANDER parted company with the convoy, pushed ahead, and cast anchor in Walvis Bay in the early hours of December 25th.

The same morning HMS AFRIKANDER gave landing troops the protection of covering fire. After the successful landings HMS AFRIKANDER and HMS ASTREA were left as guardships in the area, but steamed to sea at nightfall to keep an eye out for the German raider KARLSRUHE, which was expected to put in an appearance. During the Swakopmund landing HMS AFRIKANDER had a narrow escape. When the town had been over-run it was found that a torpedo, pointing seaward, had been hidden in a small shed on the beach. This was later exploded. With the excitement dying down and the invasion a success HMS AFRIKANDER returned to Simon's Town. On the 27th February 1915 HMS AFRIKANDER was docked for bottom cleaning, undocked on the 3rd March. She was to be fitted out to search out and destroy the German raider KONIGSBERG, which had taken refuge in the Rufiji river delta. She was found to be too deep for the operation, the monitors MERSEY and SEVERN drew only 4'9", and it was called off. The vessel was returned to her owners on 19 March 1915 after only seven months' duty as a warship.



LUDWIG WIENER - HMS AFRIKANDER	Dimensions	160 x 32.1 x 16.1 ft
	Tonnage	658 gross 165 nett
Builders:	Ferguson Brothers, Port Glasgow	
Engines:	Twin triple-expansion NHP 433 IHP 2,400 13 knots	

BISMARCK - HMS AFRIKANDER

In November 1914 the German whaler, BISMARCK, of 126 tons built in 1883, ex VICTORIA, was seized in S.A. She was commissioned as HMS AFRIKANDER from 1915 till sold as VICTORIA in February 1919. In Simon's Bay HMS AFRIKANDER was used as an Examination vessel. The ship did a 24-hour stretch anchored just off the Flat White Rock, in line with Queen's Battery. When on duty an Examination Officer, RN, and two ratings were also on board. The Examination vessels were tenders to HMS HYACINTH.

CHAPTER III : WHAT WENT BEFORE THE RN DEPOT HMS AFRIKANDER?

Instead of the 'Stone Frigate' officers and men for service in the Naval Establishments and various other shore services were borne on the books of commissioned RN ships stationed at Simon's Town. It may be appropriate to start the list of such commissioned ships with the ship name which again, true to RN tradition, was to play a part in the history of HMS AFRIKANDER.

HMS FLORA: She was a 5th Rate (Frigate) of 36 guns, launched on the 11th September 1844 at Devonport - 1,634 tons BM, 160 x 49 ft. She was relegated to harbour services from 1851. She was guardship at Simon's Bay in 1878 and 1879 and sent two officers to the Zulu War on 20th April, 1879. She was again guardship at Simon's Bay in 1881.

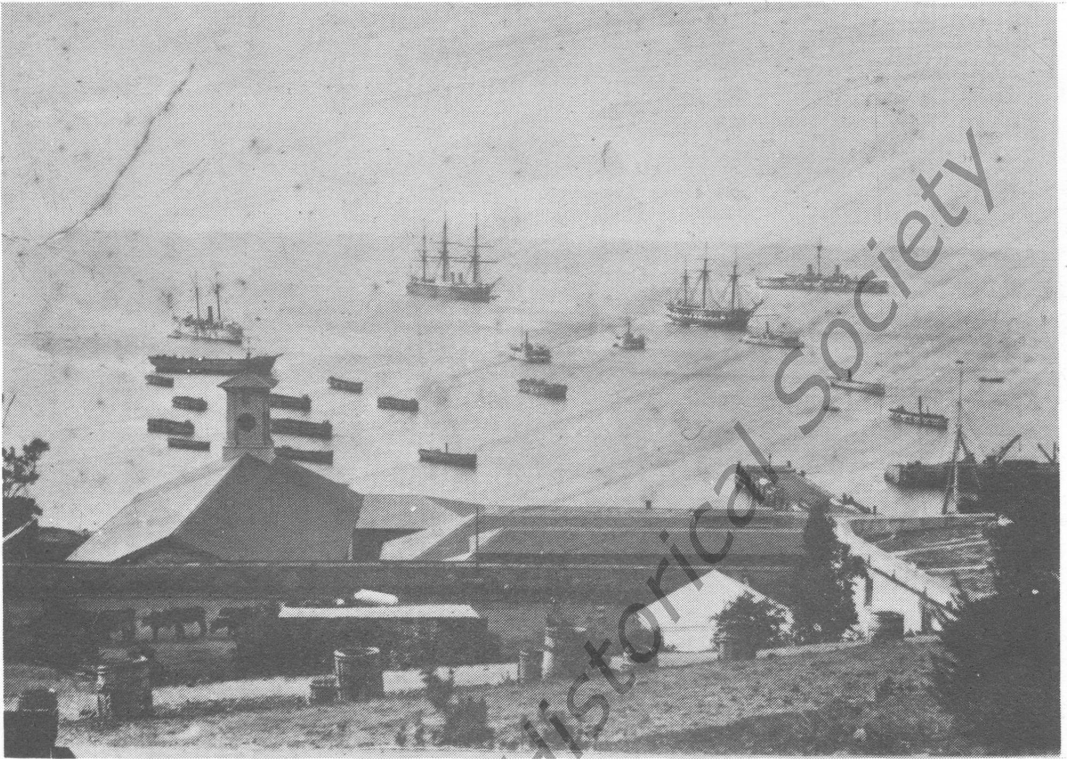
In 1884 from THE GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND LOCAL ORDERS FOR THE SQUADRON AND NAVAL ESTABLISHMENTS on the Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station by Nowell Salmon, Esq., VC CB Rear Admiral in Her Majesty's Fleet, we find that the Gunners of HMS FLORA were to be in charge of all consumable stores for Gunnery and Rifle exercises.

From the LOCAL REGULATIONS, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, SIMON'S BAY, we learn that HMS FLORA was to perform the following duties:.....

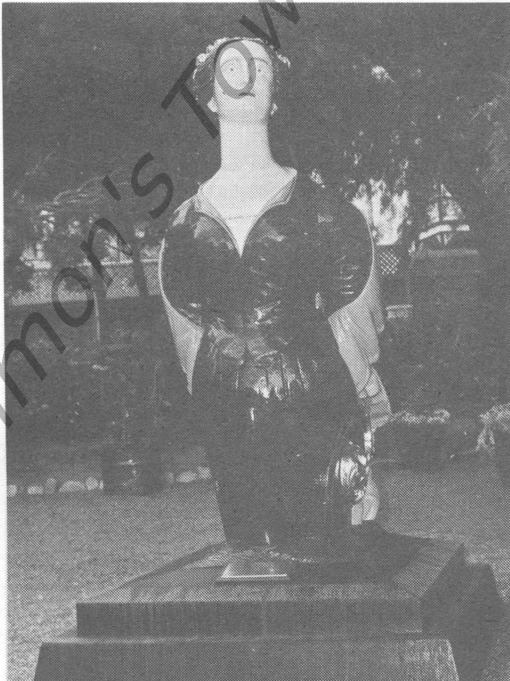
8. Until the military authorities could return salutes, the FLORA was to undertake this duty. A temporary saluting battery had been placed aboard.
15. A Naval Prison was established on board HMS FLORA for the confinement of offenders against the Naval Discipline Act.

From: NAVAL YARD INSTRUCTIONS: -5. Ships in the Bay were to land three-fourths of their Kroomen for service in the Naval Yard, lent to the FLORA and victualled by her at the Kroo quarters in the Yard.

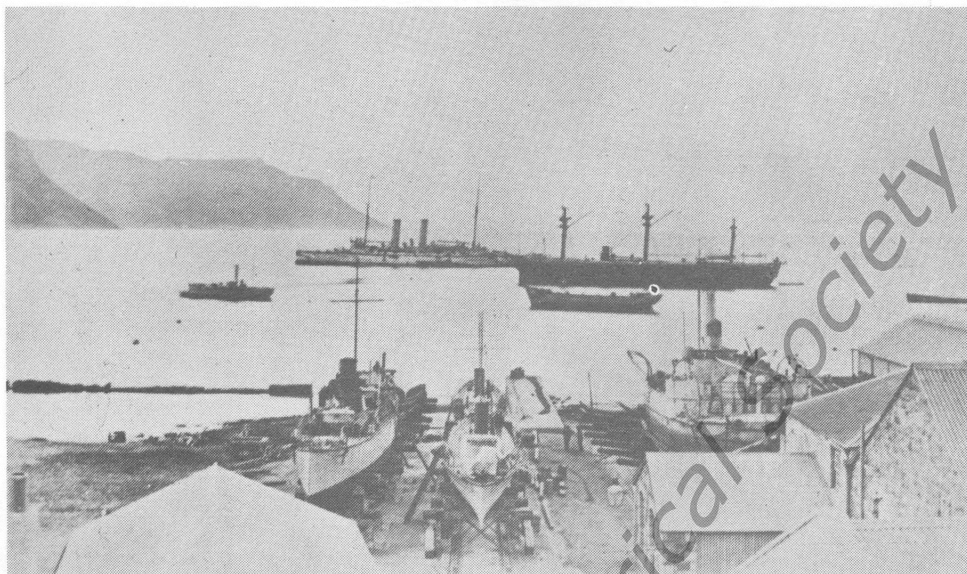
HMS FLORA was sold to be broken up at Simon's Town on the 9th January, 1891. On 3rd September 1891 she was on the Patent Slip to be broken up. Her figurehead was for a time stored at the farm 'Oatlands' at Simon's Town. During the South African War of 1899-1902 the figure-head was placed inside the old West Yard Gate. From Youngs Field in 1975 it was brought to stand in the garden of Admiralty House, Simon's Town.



SIMON'S BAY 1887 - 1888 L to R The Flagship HMS RALEIGH, HMS FLORA and HMS IMPERIEUSE. Centre Front - are moored the Gunboats Griper, Tickler and Gadfly



Figurehead of HMS FLORA taken in its present position in Admiralty House, Gardens.



Above: The Slipways in the Dockyard. Ships in the Bay are HMS ST GEORGE, PENELOPE and the mooring vessel SWIFT. On the slipway L to R. the large Torpedo Boat No. 28 or 29; the two smaller Torpedo Boats Nos. 6 and 15 and a Gunboat of the Griper Class. Taken around 1895-1898 (Africana Museum)

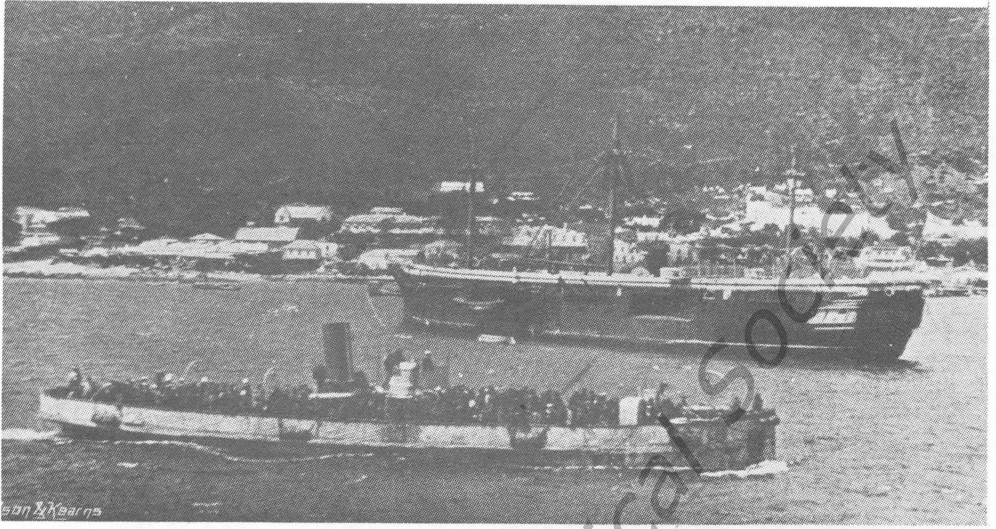
HMS PENELOPE: a twin-screw Battleship, 3rd Class, Armoured, 4,470 tons. Receiving ship and Guard Ship of Reserve at Simon's Bay. Officers whose appointments bore a date prior to February 1889 were transferred from FLORA. FLORA became tender to PENELOPE. PENELOPE was commissioned for service at Portsmouth on 23rd October 1888 and was relieved by HMS MONARCH by 1897 when PENELOPE became tender to MONARCH.

From the Simon's Town and District Chronicle of 28th October 1899 the following report: War Prisoners on the PENELOPE.

"We learn upon Imperial authority that preparation is being made on HMS PENELOPE to accommodate the prisoners of war taken at Glencoe, Dundee and Elandslaagte. The carpenters have been at work day and night in order to fit the ship up with a reasonable amount of accommodation."

PENELOPE appears on a list of ships to be sold at the Cape in 1903. In July 1912 she was sold. On 25th April 1913 a crew refused to sail her and she left the next day in tow of the tug OCEANA. She left Cape Town in 1914 for a breaker's yard at Genoa.

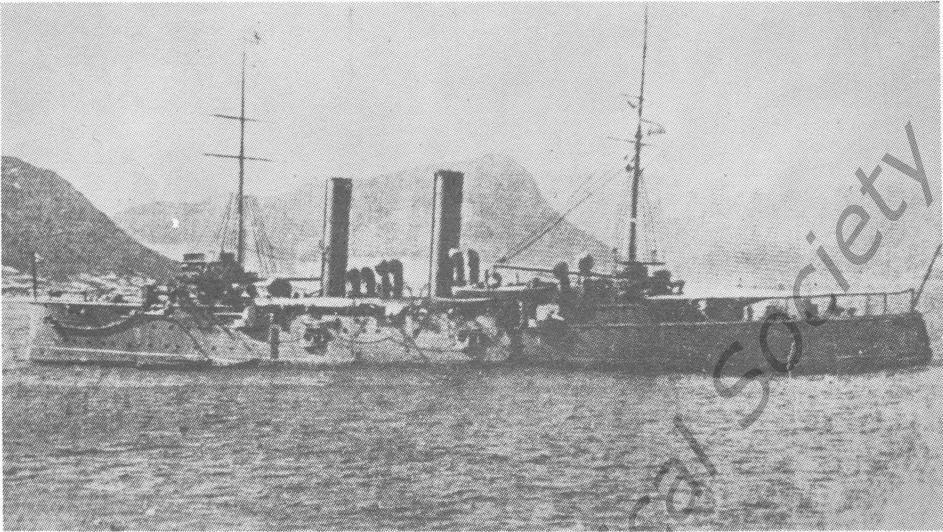
HMS MONARCH: Screw Battleship, 3rd Class, Armoured, 8,930 tons. Commissioned at Chatham on 26th January 1879 with a half complement to proceed as stationary guardship, to Simon's Bay Naval Base, an unfortified harbour. A party of her men provided one of the contingents comprising the Naval Brigade for the South African War. In 1902 she was reduced still further to the status of a depot ship and removed from the effective list; and as such remained at Simon's Bay. She was renamed SIMOON in March 1904 to free her name for a new battleship. On the 1st December 1904 she sailed for England with the crews of HM ships PEARL, PARTRIDGE and ODIN and sold to Messrs Garnham on April 4th, 1905 for breaking up. She was replaced as depot ship in 1904 by HMS CRESCENT.



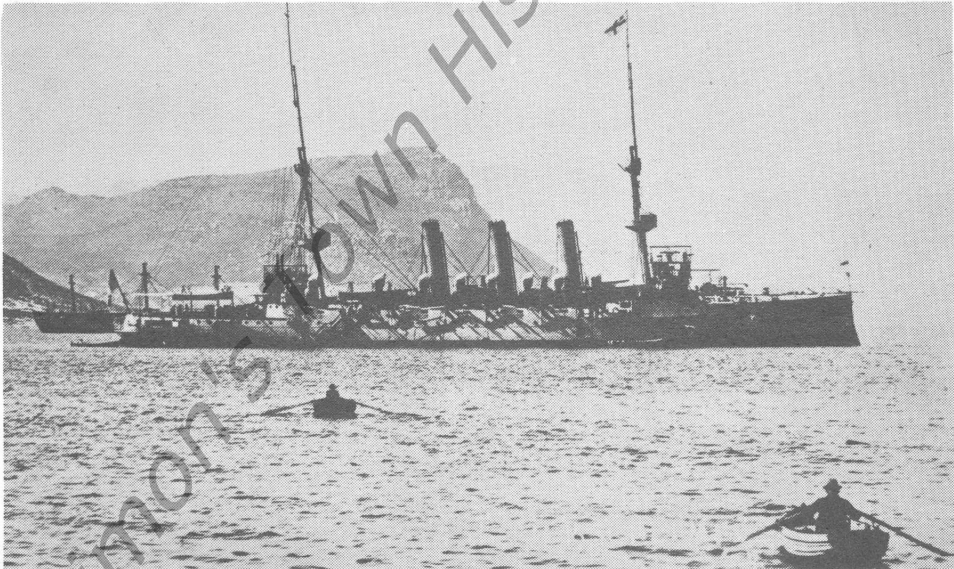
ON THE WAY TO PRISON.
Boers being Conveyed to the Floating Prison.



HMS MONARCH IN GRAVING DOCK, CAPE TOWN



HMS CRESCENT: Twin screw Protected Cruiser, 1st Class, 7,700 tons
TE 12,000 IHP. 560 Officers and men. 1 x 9.2 inch, 12 x 6
inch, 2 x 12 pdr., 19 x 6 pdr., and two submerged torpedo tubes. She com-
missioned at Portsmouth February 25th, 1904. She was the Flagship at the
Cape arriving on 18th April, 1904. On 20th April 1907 she sailed for England
to be paid off at the end of her commission.



HMS HERMES sister ship to HMS HYACINTH with PENELOPE moored beyond her stern.

HMS HERMES: 2nd Class Cruiser, 5,600 tons, IHP 10,000 ND. 11 x 6 inch
8 x 12 pdr., 2 x 18 inch TT. Completed to full crew at Ports-
mouth on 17th February 1906. She was the Flagship at the Cape arriving on 18th
April, 1907.

During August 1907 she escorted the liner AFRICA with the Crown Prince of
Portugal on board out of Table Bay. On 1st August 1909 she sailed from Durban
in search of the Blue Anchor liner WARATAH which was overdue.

On the 28th March 1913 her replacement HMS HYACINTH flagship to Rear-Admiral H.G. King-Hall arrived and secured in the basin. HMS HERMES sailed for England on 27th February 1913. She was sunk on 31st October 1914 by U-27 off the Ruytingen Bank.

HMS HYACINTH: 2nd Class Cruiser, sister ship to HERMES, completed to full crew at Portsmouth on 17th February 1913. She was Flagship at the Cape and served as base ship through the hectic war years until 25th February, 1919.

References:

1. Ian Stranack Lt. Cdr. RN(Rtd) "The Andrew and The Onions" The Story of the Royal Navy in Bermuda 1795 - 1975. Island Press, Bermuda.
2. Commodore J.C. Goosen, SM "South Africa's Navy, the first fifty years" W.J. Flesh & Partners, Cape Town 1973
3. Ibid
4. H.C. Willis Rudyard Kipling and Simon's Town S.T.H.S. Bulletin Vol II No. 1 Jan. 1963
5. Ibid
6. Commodore J.C. Goosen, SM page 16
7. Ibid
8. Ibid
9. Ibid

The Cape Times Dec.10,1975

The Cape Argus. The Times 12 April,1923

Miss Molly Wright MBE

The Curator, Simon's Town Museum, Card Index of RN ships at the Cape since 1795.

REGULATIONS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SIMON'S TOWN - DUTIES OF THE LAMPLIGHTER.

The Lamplighter shall repair and keep in order all the street lamps the property of the Simon's Town Municipality, and shall paint the Posts and Lanterns when required to do so. He shall also fill and trim, and clean the Lamps daily when in use, and shall commence to light the lamps in sufficient time to allow all the lamps to be lit before dark, and they shall not be put out before 11.30 or until the arrival of the 11.25 train from Cape Town, except when the moon gives sufficient light to allow of the lamps being put out earlier. The lamps shall be lit every dark night, and on such nights as the moon may be obscured by clouds, or on such nights as the Town Clerk may direct.

From: The Cape Town Gazette 31/3/1826.

Notice is hereby given to such Persons as may be desirous to furnish a strong serviceable BAT HORSE (*) required for the Service of the Garrison at Simon's Town that Tenders for the same specifying the Price in British money will be received at this Office until 12 o'clock Saturday 8th April next. The Horse to be subject to the approval of the Commandant of Simon's Town.

* A BAT HORSE is a packhorse for the conveyance of an officer's baggage.

SIMON'S TOWN's WAR-TIME EPIC (TORN SHIPS MADE FIT TO FIGHT)

The following article which appeared in the "Thank You Britain" Programme in November, 1945 (by permission of the Cape Times) gives an interesting account of the wonderful work performed by the Dockyard during the years of the Second World War 1939-1945.

"Something of the outstanding part Simon's Town was called upon to play in returning war-torn ships to sea in fit condition to fight again is being revealed. Normally employing about 500 men, the demand on Simon's Town so greatly increased that on V-day there were 5,500 men and women on the books. The first need was skilled men in large numbers. Until 1941 Simon's Town had to depend solely on South Africa for recruits. From all parts of South Africa and Rhodesia men streamed in to the Naval Port. The numbers increased to about 3,500 of whom 3,000 were South Africans. Another 2,000 men and women were recruited, mainly in the Union, to man the various outlying establishments created in the Cape. Many had never worked on a ship previously but under expert leadership the greatest ship-building and repairing force ever created in Africa was built up. From all corners of the seven seas ships of every ally limped in and sailed again fit to renew the battle.

"Here in the first months of the war the Seaward Defence Force, later to become South Africa's Navy, was born. SOUTHERN MAID and SOUTHERN FLOE, destined to win fame and the latter to be sunk by enemy action in the Mediterranean, were among the first S.A.N.S. ships fitted out in Simon's Town's big dock. Three days after war was declared the CARNARVON CASTLE one of the Union's luxury mail fleet, went into dry dock at Simon's Town. Seven weeks later HMS CARNARVON CASTLE completely transformed, armed and equipped as an armed merchant cruiser, sailed on her maiden voyage as a unit of the Royal Navy, eventually to secure her battle honours in her fight with a German raider off the coast of South America.

"The 7,000 ton Australian liner BULOLO then came into the dock and in six weeks became a merchant cruiser. BULOLO served with distinction on the Northern Arctic patrol. Later she was one of the headquarters control ships at the landings in Italy, and on D-day was one of the principal headquarters control ships in charge of the Normandy landings.

"In August 1940, residents at the naval port rubbed their eyes. Steaming up the harbour was the most peculiar-looking vessel ever to enter False Bay. HMS HERMES one of the Navy's few remaining aircraft-carriers, had been in collision with the armed liner CORFU and had limped into Simon's Town for repairs. For 120 feet from her stem HERMES' bows had disappeared. Instead a crumpled mass of twisted steel remained. Flight deck, mess-decks, stem and other structures presented an amazing picture of destruction.

"When HERMES dry-docked in August practically all the 700 tons of steel plates and sections necessary to build new bows were waiting at the dockside. In less than 12 weeks HERMES was back at sea, completely restored in record time. A special signal of commendation and thanks was received from the Admiralty.

"They came faster and faster as the tide of war rolled on - HMS DIDO and HMS ORION battered in the battle of Crete and striking examples of the magnificent work of Britain's shipbuilders - torn and wrecked by bombs but still afloat. Many grim reminders of the 200 men killed by one bomb in ORION came to light when the men at Simon's Town patched her up to go to the United States for full repairs in time to have her glorious revenge at Matapan.

"In 1942 from the Far East, a victim of Japanese treachery, came the lost ship of

afloat by determination and refusal of her officers and men to accept defeat. Ripped and torn from end to end, MARBLEHEAD had all the resources of Simon's Town diverted to her and three weeks later sailed fit to cross the Atlantic and reach the United States after one of history's most amazing voyages across the world.

"MARBLEHEAD was hardly clear when HMS HECLA, Britain's newest and most useful Destroyer Depot ship, rounding the Cape on her maiden voyage eastward, struck a mine near Agulhas and was blown almost in two. Only the excellence of her construction and a dead calm saved her from becoming a total loss. On 16th May, 1942 HECLA was placed in dry dock.

"The explosion occurred under her great workshop and storerooms. Dozens of torpedoes and mines were scattered and destroyed, but happily none exploded. A hole 80 ft long and 40 ft wide was blown clean through HECLA's bottom, decks and bulkheads, clean through to the upper deck 50 ft above. Twenty-four men lost their lives and about 112 were wounded. The dead were buried in False Bay. Two months later HECLA - a new ship - was ready for sea again. The job ranked with that of the HERMES as the two biggest ship repair jobs ever carried out in South Africa. A few months later, while participating in the North African landings, HECLA ran into a submarine pack near Tangier and was sunk, victim of half-a-dozen torpedoes. Two hundred fine men, many with friends at Simon's Town went down with her.

"The Merchant Navy also made for Simon's Town when in difficulty. In 1943 the s.s. TIBIA was torpedoed off the Union coast and had a huge hole blown in her bottom. After two weeks' day and night work in the naval dry dock she was fit to go to America for permanent repairs.

"SOLFONN, a big tanker, piled up on Bird Island off Port Elizabeth. She was refloated and reached Simon's Town with huge rents in her bottom. Another two weeks' dynamic drive and SOLFONN headed for home and permanent repairs.

"BRITISH RESOLUTION, a 10,000 tons tanker, was in collision in November 1943, when in convoy off the Cape and was almost cut in two. Ship's sides, bulkheads and decks were cut through from keel to upper deck. Again Simon's Town was ordered to do its best. This time it was decided to do permanent repairs to the hull and leave the inside work to be completed in America. By a drive in which men worked until they slept exhausted on the job, BRITISH RESOLUTION was undocked 23 days later. This was another record achievement in which South African artisans played a large part.

"From the East came the destroyer PALADIN, her side rent in an encounter with a Japanese submarine which she sank.

"HMS JANUS, damaged by Vichy French gunfire off the Syrian coast, HMS CUMBERLAND hit on the waterline by a French shell during General de Gaulle's attempted landing at Dakar, and later HMS RAPID, scarred and needing repairs after a desperate battle with Japanese shore batteries, came for repairs. Meanwhile the routine work went ahead. Ships had to be kept in commission. During the war approximately 330 vessels of all descriptions were repaired or docked at Simon's Town.

"World-famous visitors to the port were the QUEEN ELIZABETH, QUEEN MARY, MAURETANIA, AQUITANIA and the EMPRESS OF BRITAIN. All told something like 2,000

in World War II Simon's Town's contribution can be classed as international."



HMS HERMES IN DRY DOCK.

PORT AFTER STORMY SEAS

What if some little paine the passage have,
That makes fraile to feare the bitter wave?
Is not short paine well borne, that brings long ease
And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet grave?
Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please.

EDMUND SPENSER.

HMS "ATLANTIC ISLE"

by H.S.G. Taken from "Thank You Britain" Programme 1945.

On the first day of the war the U-boat menace raised its ugly head and ships were forced to maintain wireless silence so as to avoid giving their positions away to the lurking enemy. This meant that no news was coming in from wide stretches of the South Atlantic Ocean. But news was needed.. We wanted to know where the bad weather was in order that our aircraft might hunt the Hun and protect our shipping. We chose Tristan da Cunha, snow-capped and enveloped in cloud, the world's loneliest island, as the most suitable spot for a Wireless and Meteorological Station.

In November 1941 a survey party went out and after examining all the islands of the group, chose a spot on Tristan itself near the settlement. Then the fun began in Simon's Town. Offices, wireless masts, houses, canteen and recreational hall had to be designed and all the materials assembled ready for shipment. Nothing could be forgotten as there were no shops on the island. No one would be likely to forget the huge electric generators, but how many of us would have thought of all the minor details, such as putty for the windows? A year's supply of food and stores caused many a headache. Not only were many tons of oil fuel included but even such items as baby powder were remembered. For the men were taking their wives, and the stork can visit Tristan as well as any other island.

In a few months all was ready and an advance party of South African engineers set out to build a road from the beach and a pipeline from the nearest water supply to the chosen spot. Landing was an adventure, and getting gear ashore a major operation. There was no dock nor jetty and the angry sea made sure that none should be constructed. Everything had to be landed from rafts onto an open beach, and the weather was so bad that work could only be carried out on one day in three. Nevertheless, all was landed with remarkably few losses. In record time a complete naval establishment was created and manned, and in April 1942, the much-needed information was being sent to Simon's Town by W/T.

Everything that could be done for the little colony was done. All houses and offices had electric light and they were furnished with the best furniture from a luxury liner that had been converted to an armed merchant cruiser. Extra livestock was imported and the naval flock of sheep is still flourishing. More potato patches were begun and valiant attempts were made to grow green vegetables, but the hordes of slugs and caterpillars made the gardeners' lives such a misery that the tin opener has had to replace the garden fork. The Navy provided a doctor, who also acted as magistrate of the Island, a padre, and nursing sisters of Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service.

In due course it became necessary to commission the establishment as one of His Majesty's Ships. An island boat was selected and in the presence of the whole population and an armed guard provided by the Tristan Defence Volunteers, she was christened "HMS Atlantic Isle". The ceremony was conducted in the time-honoured manner except that, in the absence of champagne, a bottle of fruit salts laced with rum was broken across her bows. Not since HMS DIAMOND ROCK in the West Indies was commissioned in the French Wars has such a ceremony taken place. And what of the islanders? For the first time they can work for pay. Money has been introduced so that they can use the reward of their labours in buying such things as socks and tinned peas from the naval canteen. A Post Office Savings Bank is conducted from Simon's Town. There are regular services

in the little church and the padre runs an elementary school, getting what help he can from the doctor's wife and other volunteers.

Now that the war is over, the Navy may soon have to withdraw, but the weather station will remain for the lasting benefit of South African Meteorology. Many a farmer will thank God for his weather forecast, but how many will realise how much its accuracy owes to HMS ATLANTIC ISLE?

EXTRACTS FROM INVOICES, ACCOUNTS AND CORRESPONDENCE IN CONNECTION WITH MILLER BROS. FOR OATLANDS AND FOR FROGGY POND FARM, SIMON'S TOWN.

- 22.2.1935. Letter from Messrs. Penny for Property, Adderley Street, Cape Town to Mr. L.D. Miller advising that to advertise the property Froggy Pond Farm to secure a purchaser will amount to £15.

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- 25.3.1935 Letter from L.D. Miller now living at "The Firs", Queen's Road, Simon's Town to Paymaster Comdr. R. Worthington, HMS AMPHION, Portsmouth - in reply to a query re accommodation stating that a furnished house at Oatlands with 2 garages and servants quarters and fitted with electricity is available at £20 per month. In addition "The grounds are kept in good order by my own men and the house has its own supply of pure spring water and has patent drainage. It is in all respects a gentleman's residence with large grounds and a very fine view of False Bay".

The Paymaster Commander replied that £20 a month was more than he could afford!

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- 28.6.1935 To Simon's Town Municipality for the supply of Water to Miller Bros. Oatlands for half-year ending 31 December, 1935 = £2.0.0d.!!

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- 3.11.1934 Telephone a/c - Miller Bros. Oatlands
40 local calls for months ended 26.10.34 = 5/-

- 5.12.1934 Telephone a/c - Miller Bros. Oatlands.
24 calls = 3/-

- 21.8.1935 Post Office Telephones:
Exchange rental for period 21.8.35 - 31.12.35 = £1. 6. 2d.

oooo0oooo

- May 1934 a/c from Runciman (Pty) Ltd
250 Flowering Gums 12/6d
Railage -/5d
12 lbs Seed Rye 2/6d
Railage -/6d
31.10.1934 a/c from Runciman (Pty) Ltd.
1 Mule £4.-/-d
1 Bedroom Suite £4.-/-d

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The book from which these are taken was presented to the Museum by Miss C.A. Taylor, granddaughter of Mr. Miller. We are grateful to the Curator of the Simon's Town Museum for this information (which was researched by Mrs. S.M. Kinkead-Weekes).

TRIP TO SIMON'S TOWN

Yesterday morning, shortly after nine o'clock, the DUNBAR CASTLE, with not less than 300 excursionists on board, left the (Table Bay) Docks for Simon's Town. She was towed outside in the bay for a short while to enable five tons of gunpowder to be taken on board, but by ten o'clock she had cleared the Apostles, and many of the passengers were squaring their accounts with Neptune. The fare for the trip was stated to be half-a-sovereign, but we believe that steps had been taken by a liberal dispensation of orders to ensure a numerous company, and if there were any regrets, they were on the part of those who had, unlike their less fortunate companions of the voyage, parted with that pleasing souvenir of Her Majesty's Mint. The weather was calm, and if there were a few faces belonging to the self-called 'leading citizens' of this town conspicuous by their absence, those who were on board soon became on good terms and evidenced a determination to make the most of the opportunity. At twelve o'clock a simple lunch was served, and a rush was made to the cabin by as hungry a crowd as ever sat down to cold meat and pickles. The lunch was free, but the liquor, of which a considerable quantity was consumed, had to be paid for, and the bulk of the passengers shelled out like men, and kept the stewards hard at work with cork-screw and tumbler. The saloon being small it could not accommodate all at once, but no sooner was a seat vacant than it was filled, and this order was kept up until the vessel was fairly in the Bay, the sick even of the forepart of the voyage coming up to dine towards the end, and doing their part manfully at the crumbs which remained. A happier lot of mortals scarcely ever assembled. A political campaign was carried on aft, and Murison and Combrink came in for the entire share of approbation as candidates (for the Legislative Council); Neethling and Ross being completely forgotten on the occasion. The vessel reached Simon's Town shortly after two o'clock and the passengers were quietly landed by three o'clock. A large number of vehicles had gone from town early in the morning, and these were quickly filled by those who either came straight through to Cape Town or preferred to leave the cart at Kalk Bay or Muizenberg, and take the train thence. The latter had the advantage of a two hours' ramble to the sea-side, and then reached Cape Town before those who had stuck to their carts for the entire journey. Some few of the more hardy of the passengers preferred Shanks' pony, but all, by whatever way coming back, expressed themselves as having been delighted with their trip, and thankful to Captain Murison who had placed the ship at their disposal. On board a handsome purse was got up for the stewards, and the Jolly Jacks were none the less fortunate in the donations which were dropped into a bucket that was "stationed" at the gangway. Of the vessel's speed and steadiness we cannot speak too highly, and we are sure that no one who went by the DUNBAR CASTLE yesterday will refuse a vote of thanks to Captain and crew for their courtesy, nor fail, should another opportunity occur, to take a trip by such a splendid boat as this latest addition to the Castle Packet fleet. The DUNBAR CASTLE, 2837 tons, Captain Rigby, went on to other coastal ports.

"The Evening Phoenix" 3rd December, 1883.

From: The Cape Town Gazette 22.5.1824.

TENDERS for the Supply of sixteen waggon loads of Firewood of 2,000 lbs each (Witte-boom) to be delivered at the Wharf at Simon's Town, free of expenses on or before Friday next, for the use of His Netherland's Majesty's ship DAGERAAD, Captain VAN DER HART. Tenders for the same will be received by Mr. R. Witzen, 21 Church Street, until 12 o'clock on Monday next.

THE RECREATION HALL, EAST DOCKYARD, SIMON'S TOWN

We take so many things for granted in this life and for nearly forty years this has been the case with the Recreation Hall. Whenever there was some important function, weekly Scottish Country Dancing meetings, Anchor Players production etc these were held in the Recreation Hall. It was also marked out as a badminton court and on Sunday evenings during the Royal Navy days some very good film shows were held there.

It was a wooden structure with a stage at one end and at the opposite end there was a kitchen with serving hatch and goodness knows how many snacks were served from there during the 1939-45 war. Outside stood a model of HMS VICTORY of very generous proportions some pieces from the prow of which are preserved in the Naval room of the Simon's Town Museum.

On Tuesday 3rd October, 1939 a Musical "At Home" was held at Burleigh House, Kenilworth, the home of Mrs. Mundy to raise money to build the hall. The participants were Miss Floy Williams, Miss Flower Felthun, Messrs. Cecil Wightman, Norrie Sowman, Ernest Schutte, E.H. Cameron-McClure, Harold Hart and Wensley Pithey. An unexpected item on the programme was the delightful singing of three charming scenes of his own composition by Mr. Percy Kahn, accompanist to Mr. Richard Tauber. Miss Blanche Gerstman was the accompanist for Miss Williams and Miss Felthun. After the concert sketches by the Australian artist Scott Whittaker were put up to auction.

Tea was served in the writing-room and there were five attractive tea-helpers, dressed in red-white-and-blue aprons and hair-ribbons. They were Mrs. Donald Ratcliffe, Mrs. L. van Niekerk, Miss Joy Shields, Mrs. J.J.F. Russell and Miss Phyllis Barker.

During the interval the naval chaplain, the Rev. E.H. Rae gave a short talk on the needs of the sailors in the dockyard at Simon's Town.

The tea arrangements were made by Mrs Eldred Bisset (Miss Williams' sister), Mrs. Graeme Duncan and Mrs. R. Beard. Also during the interval the honorary treasurer of the war-charity committee Mr. G.R. Paterson, announced that over £60 had been raised at the concert. The concert began at 2.45 p.m. as many of artists had broadcasting duties later. A bouquet was presented to Miss Williams by Elizabeth MacGillivray small daughter of the Canadian Trade Commissioner.

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Note: We are grateful to Commander Bisset, Staff Officer S.A. Naval Museums for providing the above information in the form of newspaper cuttings and photographs from the Cape Times of that period.

From: The Cape Times 15th February 1878

The KAFIR struck on Albatross Rock off Olifant's Bosch yesterday afternoon at half-past five. In a few minutes her front compartment was full of water and the steamer was run ashore where she struck. Last night five boat loads of people were landed, but fifty were left on board during the night. Those on shore heard at midnight the crash of funnel and masts as they went over; at three o'clock in the morning anxiety was increased by Kroomen who swam ashore with the news that the vessel had parted in two. This occurred at half-past ten. The sea swept over the ship with terrific force and daylight was waited for with painful anxiety by those on the beach. As soon as day broke the lifeboat was launched and in four trips all the remainder were landed with the exception of four Kroomen who were drowned, possibly washed overboard. The captain was the last to leave the ship; nothing now remains but a portion of the stern. The mails were all lost.

THE ROYAL NAVY AND THE ZULU WAR

In April 1877 the new Governor of the Cape Colony Sir Henry Bartle Frere landed at Cape Town. He was an impressive choice as Governor. He was an Imperial administrator of vast experience with a distinguished career in India behind him. The post of Governor of the Cape held few attractions for a man of his position especially as he was on the point of retirement but he consented to take on the position because of his profound belief that he might lead an intractable land towards the harmony of a confederation which would be a fitting achievement with which to crown a life's work.

In August 1877 Frere visited Natal and did not like what he saw. The situation in the colony reminded him of nothing so much as the build-up of unrest and disaffection which had preceded the Mutiny in India - in which he had participated with distinction - and it became apparent to him that a settlement of the native question was the key to stability in Southern Africa.

The state of affairs in Natal was indeed perilous. Out of 12 million acres, only 2 million were owned by some 300,000 natives while 20,000 Europeans owned most of the rest. In 1877 a vast area of the Transvaal, Natal and Zululand was afflicted by a serious drought which became more serious as it continued into 1878. In October 1877 the 9th Kaffir War erupted but was soon extinguished.

The General Officer Commanding Her Majesty's troops in South Africa Frederic Augustus Thesiger first became cognizant of impending hostilities with the Zulus in June 1878 and it became apparent to him that he ought to hasten to Natal. On 21st July he wrote "I leave for Natal in the ACTIVE on 25th instant. Reports regarding the Zulus are very conflicting. I am quietly doing all I can to be ready for active operations against them....." Thesiger shortly became the 2nd Baron Chelmsford. He arrived in Pietermaritzburg on 9th August and plunged straight into the task of encompassing Cetewayo's downfall.

In order to eke out his infantry firepower - the backbone of the force - Chelmsford applied to Commodore Sullivan of the Africa Station for assistance from the Navy. On 19th November, 1879, a naval brigade was landed from HMS ACTIVE consisting of 795 sailors and marines, with 2 12-pounder Armstrong guns, a Gatling gun and 2 rocket tubes, under the command of Commander Campbell, RN. The Gatling gun was used for the first time by the British Army in Zululand. Invented by the Americans in 1862 it was a multi-barrelled weapon made in a variety of calibres and capable of firing upwards of 800 rounds a minute. The cartridges were fed into the action from a hopper on top of the gun which was mounted like a small field gun on a wheeled carriage.

The naval brigade or bluejackets as they were called, acquitted itself well at Rorke's Drift and Isandhlwana. Many survivors owe their lives to the fact that Cetewayo before the battle told his men to kill off all those in redjackets and not to go for those in bluejackets. What he meant was that the lesser important participants would be dressed in blue, not just the naval brigade.

One of the few names mentioned in the action is that of Midshipman Cadwalader Coker who was in command of the Gatling gun. The Naval Brigade supported by a company of the Buff's stormed a kraal, drove the Zulus out of it and set fire to the huts. This move effectively knocked the centre out of the Zulu line.

At the relief of Eshowe there were 350 sailors from HMS SHAH and BOADICEA with 2 24-pounder rocket tubes and a Gatling gun. The suspense of waiting for the battle to commence was too great for the petty officer in charge of the Gatling at the left front angle of the laager, who implored Captain E.H. Buller to let him open fire on a body of Zulus now only half a mile away "Beg your pardon Sir last night I stepped the distance to that bush where those blacks are and its

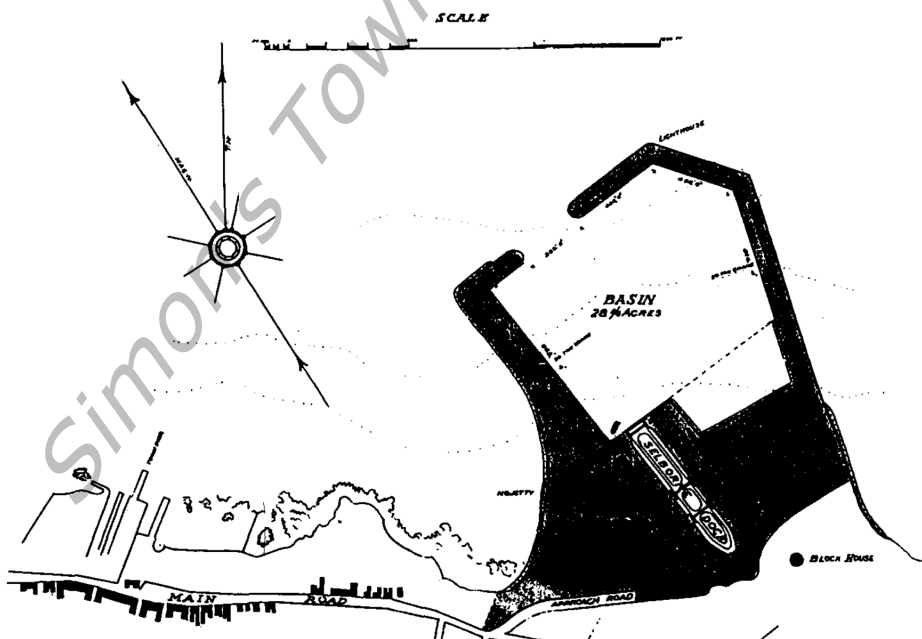
just 800 yards. This 'no firing' seems like throwing a chance away. I've got her truly laid for them, may I just give her half a turn of the handles?" Chelmsford who was near gave his permission for the range to be tested by a short burst. The effect was devastating - a lane was cut through the Zulus. Lord Chelmsford quixotically wearing a red nightcap was on foot encouraging the men and directing them to fire low. Some of the warriors came very close to the trench and one of the Gatlings was nearly taken - a Zulu actually fell dead against it. A little 'uDibi' boy ran right through the fire and reached the trench. (UDIBI boys were those too young to serve in the fighting line but who carried the sleeping mats and meagre food of the warriors). A bluejacket from BOADICEA grabbed him, beat him into submission and sat on him till the battle was over. The boy later became the ship's mascot and entered the Royal Navy.

It had been impressed upon the sailors that they must not under any circumstances leave the laager; particularly severe punishment had been threatened to any blue-jacket who left his post. The sight of the retreating impi, hounded by the horsemen, was too much for the senior naval officer; forgetting his own orders, he called upon his flag-lieutenant and joined energetically in the pursuit, hacking and slashing in all directions. The sailors, mindful of the threatened penalties never stirred but yelled with delight "Go to it Admiral". (This was Admiral Sir F.W. Richards who commanded the naval units and after whom Richards Bay was named).

The rocket tubes were more likely to set the tents on fire and frighten the horses than do any serious execution upon the enemy but the Zulus were at first frightened of them. As the rockets skimmed over the grass, emitting tails of flame, some of the warriors were seen to fire at them and those in the line of fire began to fall back, but the warriors soon realised they had little to fear from the rockets.

Bibliography "The Zulu War" by David Clammer.

SIMON'S BAY DOCKYARD EXTENSION





Extension of H.M. Dockyard.

THE SELBORNE DOCK.

SIMON'S BAY,

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE,

1901—1910.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE: SIMON'S BAY DOCKYARD EXTENSION

In 1895-6 a list of Naval Works proposed in various parts of the world was prepared and considered by the Board of Admiralty, in accordance with the directions of the First Lord (Viscount Goschen). At the request of the First Sea Lord (Admiral of the Fleet Sir Frederick Richards GCB) a Dock &c, at Simon's Bay was included in the list, and after surveys had been made on the spot, and general designs prepared by Mr. William Shield, MICE, the matter was further enquired into by a Special Committee at the Admiralty, who reported fully thereon in May, 1898. The Board having considered and approved the report, Treasury sanction to proceed with the necessary purchase of land was obtained in November, 1898.

In the same year the Cape Government passed the "Simon's Town Naval Defence Act, 1898" which provided for the better management and control for defence purposes of a portion of the Port of Simon's Bay, authorized the construction of Docks there by the Admiralty, and also enabled the Governor in Council to make Regulations in connection with the Port, which Regulations vest the control of the inner anchorage in the Senior Naval Officer. The "Naval Works Act of 1899" authorised the construction of the Simon's Bay Dockyard Extension, at a total expenditure of £2,500,000.

The designs for the Extension Scheme were prepared for the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty by Major Sir Henry Pilkington, KCB, RE, Civil Engineer-in-Chief, who was responsible for the Works until his retirement in April 1906, when they taken over by Colonel Sir Edward Raban, KCB, RE, Director of Works, who superintended the Works to their completion.

Detailed drawings were prepared on the lines suggested by the Committee and tenders were invited for the general construction work, that of Sir John Jackson

Limited being accepted on 27th July 1900, the time allowed for completion being seven years from commencement, which time was afterwards extended. The main operations were commenced in January 1901 by the contractors under the superintendence of D. Macfarlane, Esq, MICE, Admiralty Superintending Civil Engineer, who remained in charge until the completion of the main work; the Local Resident Agent of the Firm being H.R. Stockman, Esq., MICE, until August 1902, when he unfortunately lost his life by an accident on the Works: his successor from that date until the completion of the Works was A. Brooks, Esq., AMICE.

Separate contracts were made for caissons, penstocks and engines.

The Works consist of a Graving Dock, the East Breakwater and the West Pier which together enclose a sheltered tidal basin of 28 1/4 acres, and a reclaimed area of 35 acres, on which are built the necessary factories and shops &c, for repairing ships in Dock. The whole of the Works have been constructed on the sea front of the old foreshore and project out into the sea, thus forming in themselves a Breakwater, which provides a safe anchorage for the ships in Simon's Bay.

The Graving Dock has a total length of 750 feet on the blocks, the width at the entrance is 95 feet at the coping, and the general width of the Dock is 120 feet at the coping. The depth over sill at low water Spring Tides is 30 feet (Spring Tides rise 5 ft. 4 ins.) The Dock is divided into three sections by three Caisson Grooves. This is with the object of enabling two ships to be docked independently and with a view to economy in the cost of pumping when a short vessel requires docking. The amount of water contained in the whole Dock when full is approximately 22,000,000 gallons, which is pumped out by the main pumps in four hours.

The Dock was built entirely in the dry inside a cofferdam 800 feet long and 30 feet high above the sea bed. The dam was first built in the sea, the enclosed area of sea bottom being then pumped out before the construction of the Dock was commenced. The excavation for the Dock was almost entirely blasted out of solid granite, building operations being carried on continuously day and night practically during the whole time of construction, viz. about two years.

The Foundation Stone of the Dock was laid by H.E. the Earl of Selborne (after whom the Dock is named) on 15th November, 1906, the Inscription on the Stone being as follows:-

"This Stone was laid on the
15th November, 1906
by

H.E. The Right Honourable the Earl of Selborne, GCMG
High Commissioner for South Africa
First Lord of the Admiralty, 1900-1905"

An interesting event in connection with the excavations for the Dock was the discovery of an old wreck which was lying completely across the area now occupied by the Dock-head. This was a sailing ship, the CARPENTARIA which some years ago came into False Bay leaking badly and was beached at this point. The East Breakwater is about 2,500 feet long by 86 feet wide and is built of concrete blocks on a rubble mound foundation. The level of the foundation of these blocks is 52 feet below the coping. The blocks, which weigh from 28 to 35 tons each, were lowered by a "Titan" capable of lifting 40 tons at a radius of 75 feet and were placed in position by divers. On the outer angle of the East Breakwater is a Lighthouse of the "Third Order" which was built under the superintendence of Trinity House. The focal plane of the light is 56 feet 5 inches above high-water ordinary spring tides. A portion of the foundation of the East Breakwater had to be cut out of the solid rock, and this was done with the aid of a diving bell.

The West Pier is 1,200 feet long, and is formed on the outer side by a mound of

stone tipped on the sea bottom and faced from low water outwards with large stones set to a uniform slope, and a wall of dovetailed concrete blocks on the inner or basin side. The Tidal Basin has an area of 28 1/4 acres with an entrance for ships from the open sea 300 feet wide, and has a depth of 30 feet below low-water ordinary spring tides. The Works are also equipped with a 20 and a 50 ton fixed crane on the breakwaters, and a 30 ton travelling crane round the Dock. Accommodation is to be provided on the East Breakwater for storing and handling 10,000 tons of coal.

Of the materials used in the construction of the Works, most of the stone was obtained from the Quarries, which were opened on the side of the hill, and was brought down the mountain by an inclined railway; most of the granite was imported from Europe, and the Portland cement, steelwork and manufactured materials were obtained from England.

The Dock is capable of taking the largest ships in the British Navy, including those of the "Dreadnought" type. The Works were commenced in 1900 and completed in 1910. The total cost of the Works when complete will be approximately £2,200,00 of which about half a million will have been expended on the Dock. The Inscription on the Completion Stone is as follows:-

"This Stone was laid to record
the completion of the extension of
H.M. Dockyard, Simon's Bay
by
HRH The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, KG,KT,KP
on the 3rd day of November, 1910.
Major Sir Henry Pilkington, KCB, RE
Colonel Sir Edward Raban, KCB, RE
Civil Engineers-in-Chief, Admiralty.

D. MACFARLANE, M.Inst,CE
Superintending Civil Engineer

Sir JOHN JACKSON Ltd
Contractors

A. BROOKS, AMInst, CE
Chief Agent. "

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ADDRESS : BY SIR JOHN JACKSON TO T.R.H. THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT
On the occasion of the Opening of the Simonstown Dock and Harbour
Works.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, These Works were commenced in 1901 and completed this year. The estimated cost of the Works is somewhat over £2m. Sterling. The approximate quantities of the work done and materials used are:-

Concrete 600,000 tons Portland Cement 80,000 tons
Stone about 1 1/2 million tons

The number of men employed averaged during the busy time
about 3,000.

The whole of the sandstone was excavated from a large quarry specially opened for the purpose upon the hill in front of us, and at one time we brought down from these quarries no less than 2,000 tons of stone per day.

I beg to refer to the fact, that my Firm were also the Contractors to the Admiralty for the great Dockyard Extension at Keyham, Devonport, involving an expenditure of £4m sterling and are now carrying out a contract in connection with the Portsmouth Dockyard Extension. We are also the Contractors for the first section of the new Government Harbour at Singapore.

In concluding these remarks I wish to refer to the pleasant relations which my Firm has had with the Admiralty and its Officers throughout the whole of the time of the progress of the Works. On behalf of all those who have been

associated with me in carrying out the Contract I can assure Your Royal Highness they fully appreciate the great honour you do us by graciously coming down to open these Works. As a souvenir of the occasion I ask your gracious acceptance of this Casket, which contains a picture of the Works.

(Details of the Inscription on Golden Casket:

"Presented to FIELD MARSHALL H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT & STRATHEARN K.G. etc. by SIR JOHN JACKSON on the occasion of the Opening of the NEW ADMIRALTY DOCK, TIDAL BASIN AND NAVAL YARD at SIMON'S TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA. 3rd November, 1910."

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Reply of H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn:-

"We have passed far beyond the old conception of the Cape Peninsula as nothing more than a convenient Naval base, of which the occupation found its justification and its necessity in the safeguarding of the communications between India and the West. In the number and loyalty of her people, in area and in natural wealth, South Africa forms no inconsiderable portion of the Empire in which she has now taken her part as a single and united Dominion.

She is willing and able to take her share both in her own defence and in the defence of the Empire, and her contribution to the Navy is evidence of her appreciation of the interdependence of her own interests in this matter with the wider responsibilities of Whitehall.

But though it would argue an almost ludicrous want of the sense of proportion to regard her any longer as merely a link in the chain of Imperial communications, her importance as a Naval base survives: and of this importance the dock which I am opening to-day is the practical recognition.

The Dock itself, which has cost half a million, is part of a larger scheme on which approximately £2,200,000 in all has been expended, consisting of a graving dock, a sheltered tidal basin of 28 1/4 acres, formed by the erection on the east of a breakwater 800 yards long and on the west a pier of about half that length, and in the rear the factories and shops necessary for repairing ships in dock, grouped on an area of 35 acres reclaimed from the sea.

The main operations were commenced in January 1901 and it is due to those concerned in them that I should mention a few details to show the magnitude of the work. The breakwater forming the eastern wall of the basin was built of concrete blocks weighing 30 tons and over, partly on rubble mound foundation and partly on foundations out of the solid rock. The West Pier is formed of a mound of typed stone on the surface and a wall of dove-tailed concrete on the basin side.

For the dock itself, the excavation was almost entirely blasted out of the solid granite. The foundation stone was laid by Lord Selborne, whose name the dock bears, on November 15, 1906, and for the whole time of construction building operations were carried on almost continuously day and night.

The total length of the dock is 750 feet on the blocks; its width at the entrance is 95 feet and its general width 120 feet at the coping. The depth over the sill is 30 feet at low and 35 feet at high water; when full the dock contains approximately 22 m. gallons which can be pumped out by the main pumps in four hours and it is capable of taking the largest ships of the British Navy.

I am glad of the opportunity of congratulating the contractors, Sir John Jackson Ltd and all those responsible for the design and construction of the works, on the consummation of their arduous, skilful and unsparing labours. The importance of the object for which they have wrought is fully commensurate with the difficulty of its achievement, and the result is one of which they may well be proud. I have now much pleasure in declaring this dock open."

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Memories evoked by Johan Louw's article on Captain M.P.T. Smith, RN, formerly of HMS CENTURION (STHS Bulletin Vol.XII No. 4) prompted Society Member A.F. Moore to write the account which follows of an incident involving HMS CENTURION in World War II whilst sailing with one of the Malta Convoys.

Arthur Moore as Lieutenant Moore as he ultimately became was a member of the RNVF (SA) and was seconded to the RN for his entire wartime service. He was drafted to HMS BIRMINGHAM in the first week of March 1942 after she had been in dry dock in Simon's Town. She put to sea on or about 21st March but some minor defect obliged her to put back into port which was fortunate because it enabled Arthur Moore to catch a glimpse of his second child - a son- born on 23rd March, before the ship finally set off.

HMS BIRMINGHAM spent some time based at Kilindini Mombasa doing patrol work during which period she called at Diego Suarez. Subsequently she took part in the assault on Majunga and Tuléar which ultimately resulted in the capture of Madagascar.

After the Malta convoy described in his article HMS BIRMINGHAM sailed for Colombo and Trincomalee where she saw service in the company of such old battleships as ROYAL SOVEREIGN as part of a naval force attempting to divert Japanese attention from General Macarthur's island hopping campaign which was about to begin.

In October of that year there was considerable excitement among the South African members of the crew as HMS BIRMINGHAM once again headed south. Unfortunately while she ultimately got to Simon's Town Arthur Moore and several of his fellow crew members did not. They were taken ashore when the cruiser hove to off Durban to go before a Board and subsequently take a commission.

At the end of the war Arthur Moore was finally demobbed in Cape Town by a member of the South African Army who described him rather quaintly as "Captain suitably dressed in Naval Uniform!"

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THE DIVE BOMBING OF HMS CENTURION IN 'THE MED'

by A.F. Moore

After completing repairs at Simon's Town, where many South Africans joined her ship's company HMS BIRMINGHAM did patrol duties in the Indian Ocean for several weeks and then, quite obviously, set out on some more definite mission. Early in June 1942 she anchored close to Port Tewfik at the head of the Gulf of Suez. "I told you so" said each Wise One "we're going to the Med." Looking around it was obvious we would not go alone.

Out of the blue plodded a complete stranger and dropped anchor some distance away. "CENTURION - World War I battlewagon" informed the Pundits. "Well, she won't be going to the Med," asserted the Wise Ones, "no armaments; not even fit to frighten a dhow." Indeed CENTURION had no guns other than those innocuous ones supplied by paint and artifice. Very soon lighters swarmed around and provisions of all kinds began to pour into her. There followed a day or two of alternate watches going ashore afternoons and evenings to taste the dubious pleasures of Pharaoh's latter-day Egypt. CENTURION continued to gorge the contents of the lighters non-stop.

Morning saw us moving towards the southern entrance of the Canal. The busy bees were ceaselessly hustling honey into the CENTURION's gargantuan honeycomb. At the other end of the Canal de Lesseps still had his place of honour, but we sailed on and came alongside in Alexandria. Not far away were the QE and VALIANT, one still on the bottom where both had been sent by Italian frogmen, and both

out of action. Even nearer were French naval vessels, urgently needed, but idle and hence, impounded.

One late afternoon brought the thrilling sight of warships in line ahead to left and right turning towards the sunset. Then followed the inspiring experience of a great armada of R.N. and merchant ships weaving and manoeuvring to station with the intricate precision and the confidence that is born of centuries of practice. Thus was the convoy formed. And there, plumb among the merchant ships, was CENTURION, disguised to resemble the ANSON, innocent of fire power but loaded with supplies. Malta was the call, where the need was great. Apart from BIRMINGHAM only NEWCASTLE, which carried the Flag, had 6-inch guns; all the rest were smaller. No battleships, no carriers, no air cover. Such was the stress at the time.

Darkness brought the flares, searching and following. Soon it brought E-boats and U-boats as well. NEWCASTLE was struck and had a gaping hole in the bows large enough for a cutter to pass through. The Flag was transferred to BIRMINGHAM. HERMIONE, on our immediate starboard beam, stopped a torpedo meant for us. At daybreak she had vanished. Then the Stukas came, plus Italian torpedo bombers. Air raid warning yellow! Air raid warning red! Attacks again and again. This was the daily pattern. Losses mounted, merchant and RN - few escaped damage. Near misses peppered BIRMINGHAM's sides and knocked out two of her guns. Every armament available was used against the aircraft - 4-inch, pom-pom, oerlikon, .5 machine guns, even 5.25 and 6-inch guns. The convoy kept course. Again the Stukas swarmed. This time CENTURION was the target. They dived; she disappeared in a great white fog. "Flour" grunted the Pundits. One imagined the feverish activity on board: care of the wounded, securing water-tight doors, shoring up bulkheads. Slowly CENTURION emerged as from a smoke screen. She listed perceptibly but plodded on undaunted.

The convoy kept course. Malta was getting closer; the stakes were high, and the Italians played a precious card. Their fleet, battleships and 8-inch cruisers, left port and made for us. We hadn't a chance. Then followed a cat-and-mouse game. The great convoy turned and headed east, the opposing fleet in hot pursuit. Darkness fell - our course was altered 180 degrees. Now the Italians retreated. They would not face the RN destroyers and frigates at night exercises. Morning found us heading for Alexandria until sunset, when we turned once more. And so the game proceeded accompanied by constant air attacks.

Fuel and ammunition were running low. A simultaneous convoy from Gibraltar, two carriers included, got some supply ships into Valetta harbour, and we made for home, the attacks continuing, but slackening. CENTURION listed more and more but plodded on and reached port.

"To suffer, as to do, our strength is equal" wrote Milton. Fit motto for CENTURION; for the RN as a whole; yet Cowper's words echo: "Toll for the brave - The brave that are no more". The brave of friend and foe. Forty-one years have passed since CENTURION limped back scarred and listing, but afloat and ready to answer the next call when it came. Was the venture a success, or a failure? A point of view! However, we may be sure that Captain M.P.T. Smith must have envied those who were privileged to be able to serve in her at that time. Perhaps he was there in spirit.

From: The Cape Argus, Saturday 27/6/1857.

THE WYNBERG AND SIMON'S TOWN CAVALRY CORPS is now in the course of formation. A meeting of the members was held at Wynberg on Wednesday last, when the following officers were elected: W. Hope, Commandant; R. Cloete, captain commandant; A. van Breda and E. Judge, Lieutenants; D. Cloete, adjutant; G. Rathfelder, quartermaster and A. Smyth, treasurer.

OBITUARIES:

ERIC ROSENTHAL

The death of Eric Rosenthal brought to an end a career of incredible variety - he was a scholar, historian, journalist and broadcaster and his interests seemed boundless as anyone who has had the privilege to accompany him by car or train will bear witness. It usually took the average mortal the rest of the day to digest the information which had poured forth from Eric's wonderful mind.

His publications, his activities and his achievements are too well known to the Members of the Society to bear repetition here but in expressing their condolences to his wife Jenny and his family, the Society would like them to know that his passing has deprived them of a great guide, philosopher and friend.

COMMODORE JOHN FAIRBAIRN SAN (retired)

With the death of Commodore John Fairbairn South Africa lost one of its most distinguished sailors and the Society one of its most devoted members.

The great-great-grandson of John Fairbairn the celebrated fighter for press freedom in South Africa and founder of the Old Mutual, John was educated at Diocesan College, Rondebosch and joined the S.A. Division of the RNVF before transferring to what was then South Africa's fledgling Navy shortly afterwards.

In the early 1940s he served with considerable distinction in command of South African 'little ships' in the Mediterranean. He was appointed Naval Officer in Command Saldanha in 1944. He had the honour to lead the South African Naval contingent in the Victory Parade in London in 1945.

Whilst in command of the Loch class frigate HMSAS TRANSVAAL he took part in the Annexation of Marion and Prince Edward Islands in 1948. He unveiled a commemorative plaque there five years ago naming the base 'Fairbairn City' when he revisited Marion Island with members of a National Monuments Council delegation.

His wife died in England in 1963 whilst he was commissioning the frigate SAS PRESIDENT STEYN and it was a measure of the quiet but steely determination evident in everything he did that he elected to carry on and bring the commissioning to a successful conclusion.

He was appointed Naval Officer in Command Simon's Town Dockyard in 1965 and Commanding Officer of the Dockyard three years later. He retired in 1972.

To his daughter Tessa and all who were close to him the Society expresses the deepest condolences of its Members.

THE MUSEUM

Among the aims set out in the original prospectus of the Simon's Town Historical Society (founded 1961) was "The Society has rooms in King George's Way where the collection is open to the public on Saturday mornings. The Society is actively pressing for the establishment of a staffed local museum".

Although ultimately this expression of intent developed into something which hopefully can now give the Society's Founder Members considerable cause for satisfaction it was by no means the first occasion on which the idea surfaced as the following extracts from the minutes of the Simon's Town Council show. A brief review of the events leading up to the formation of the Museum may be of interest to readers. It began on Monday evening 10th July, 1933 at 7.30 p.m. when the Simon's Town Council met for its regular fortnightly meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting read:

"No. 8599: OLD PHOTOS OF SIMON'S TOWN: A letter received from Mr. W. Runciman suggesting that copies be made of old photographic negatives in the possession of the Council and which he had recently examined. The Council were in favour of Mr. Runciman's suggestion and referred the matter to the Finance Committee. The Mayor A. Mustart stated that Mr. Bleach had recently approached him with regard to the establishment of a museum. This was also referred to the Committee."

From: Minutes of 8th August 1933:

"No. 8664: MUSEUM: The Mayor said that considerable interest was being taken locally in the establishment of a local museum and he suggested that a Committee might be formed to consider the matter, but that the said Committee do not have the power to commit the Council to any expenditure. The Council agreed with the Mayor's suggestion and it was decided that the Mayor and Councillor A.H.C. Miller be members of the Committee and that Messrs. Runciman and Bleach and Mesdames A.B. Bull and Grant be asked to be Members of the Committee."

From: Minutes of 9th May 1935:

"No. 149: PICTURE OF OLD SIMON'S TOWN: A framed copy of old Simon's Town was presented to the Council by Mr. W. Runciman with a letter containing certain suggestions for the collection and preservation of literature, pictures and other records of Simon's Town which would not only be of general interest, but a valuable historical record. The Mayor, Councillor Lewis C. Gay moved, seconded by Mr. D.W. Hopkirk, that the thanks of the Council be sent to Mr. Runciman for the picture and he be informed that the suggestion contained in his letter to collect old pictures and records of Simon's Town would receive the Council's sympathetic consideration. Also that the best wishes of the Council for his speedy recovery to health be conveyed to him together with the Council's suggestion that he place on record in writing his own personal reminiscences of Simon's Town. Further that he be congratulated on being the recipient of the King's Jubilee Medal."

From: Minutes 1st July, 1935:

"No. 269: re: RECORDS OF OLD SIMON'S TOWN: Read letter from Mr. Runciman re records of old Simon's Town. The Mayor Lewis C. Gay said he agreed that the town should be in possession of copies of the old records lent by Mr. Runciman and the letter was referred to the General Purposes Committee and the Town Clerk was instructed to obtain copies of the records."

The onset of World War II and indeed the War itself halted developments for some time as the Town Council and indeed the Community in general was pre-occupied with rather more important matters but appropriately enough when the dust had settled it was the Memorable Order of Tin Hats Snoekie Shellhole who got things moving again. In the mid-fifties they were occupying a sparsely furnished room

next to The Soldiers and Sailors Restroom and they decided to create a "Warriors Room". Thanks to many generous donations the leadership and guidance of the late Mr. L.J.D. Gay, an outstanding collection ultimately numbering well over 1,000 items of militaria was gradually built up and the Room became a popular visiting place of historical interest in Simon's Town.

A renewed call early in 1960 from a prominent citizen of the time the late Mr. D. St.C. Wagner, for steps to be taken towards the collection and preservation of old records of Simon's Town prompted the Town Council to adopt the recommendations of a Sub-Committee for the foundation of an historical society coupled with the promise of support and assistance whenever this proved possible.

The Society's formal existence began in 1961 (though the Inaugural Meeting was held on 22nd February 1960) and a 'permanent home' was established with the opening of the Society's Rooms in King George's Way on 25th January, 1964. Under the able Chairmanship of the late Mr. H.C. Willis, the Society's collection of historical material gradually grew.

The next step was the formal establishment of a Museum to house the exhibits of the Warriors Room and the Society. In October 1969 at the instigation of Councillor L.J.D. Gay the Council applied for recognition of the Warriors Room as a national museum but the application was refused as under the regulations existing at the time the premises were considered inadequate. As the discussions continued, however, it emerged that the two collections taken together constituted on a viable basis acceptable to the then authorities for the establishment of an "Assisted Museum" and following the passing of the Museum Ordinance 1975- the Council was able to apply on 9th March, 1976, for the establishment of a local museum and after the identification of a suitable building - the old Headmaster's House - the Museum was declared to be a "Province Aided Museum" with effect from 1st April, 1977. It did not take long for the number of exhibits to outgrow the new premises.

Fortunately in 1980 The Residency once again became available, thanks to some heroic efforts, principally on the part of the Hon. John Wiley, M.P. Agreement regarding a lease was obtained from the Department of Community Development in January 1982 and in early 1983 the move began. The first Museum premises closed in July 1983 and the 'new' premises opened on 2nd April, 1984, the 7th anniversary of the first working day the previous premises were formally opened.



EDITOR'S NOTE:

One of the more colourful personalities to hold the position of Commander in Chief, Africa station was Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton. He is well remembered to this day as the Admiral who first granted permission for the Sail Loft in the West Dockyard to be used as a Church on Sundays. In doing so he expressed the wish that it would not be used in this manner for "too long". A considerable number of our readers were POW's at one time or another during the Second World War and to them the account which follows of Jahleel Brenton's experiences and those of some other distinguished POW's when in the hands of Napoleon should prove particularly interesting - things were a little different in the previous century!

NAPOLEAN AND HIS BRITISH CAPTIVES

Captain Brenton was illegally detained. Brenton was in several ways a key figure in the story of British prisoners of war. Soon after his capture in July 1803 negotiations covering only Brenton and a French officer of equivalent rank had been - or so was thought - successful. So the British authorities, still innocent as babes, selected, and despatched to France, a captain of equal seniority named Jurien. And, for one whole year, that was all they heard of it. No Brenton turned up in Britain, indeed we now know that the first Brenton heard of the whole transaction was in January 1805 when a Senior Prison officer at Verdun, he received a copy of the British Government's protest concerning him, which had been despatched in August 1804. Meanwhile Captain Jurien who was evidently a gentleman, was so ashamed when he heard Brenton was still a prisoner that he applied to return to England. Napoleon refused permission: but not only that. The officer, honourably enough (but still playing in the old rules) had refrained from applying for an appointment until his full exchange was effected. Hearing this, Napoleon curtly ordered Jurien to rejoin a ship. Brenton did not regain his liberty till nearly two years later but the lucky French officer was not Jurien. Brenton was exchanged finally for a Captain Infernet, captured only at Trafalgar. Throughout his captivity Brenton was a very sick man.

In those days if a prisoner of war was taken in action he got his pay and allowances. If only a 'détenu' (among these were Lord Elgin and the Hon. Mr & Mrs Robert Clive) i.e. not having been taken in action, they were merely detained receiving no pay and sometimes this forced them to sell estates in England in order to pay debts.

When taken Brenton was a naval post captain, one of the ten who fell into French hands. The standard of treatment was below the norm for that rank. Brenton was the first of his rank to be taken when his frigate, the MINERVE went aground off Cherbourg on July 2nd 1803. The local French authorities had no sort of routine for handling prisoners; which meant in effect, that the captives' fate depended almost entirely upon the whim of the commanding officer in whose district they found themselves. Brenton was a conscientious, responsible, intelligent, far-sighted man. The captain made his travels to his final place of detention at Verdun harder than they might have been because he never thought of himself, always worrying about his men. They marched some 600 miles between early July and mid-December - from Cherbourg to Epinal in the Vosges, then to Phalsbourg near Strasbourg and only then to Verdun. Brenton was not permitted to travel actually with his men; on the first and longest leg of the journey they were one day's march ahead, and on the other two a day's march behind: only his officers were with him. This, however, did not prevent one half of his active mind from leaping forward (or later backward) plotting and planning for those who needed him most, while the other half watched the interests of his immediate comrades. He had no time left for self-pity. Even at Verdun, when he reached it, he seldom if ever complained on his own behalf, though he had plenty of cause. He was still too occupied with the welfare of others; for, as the first

senior officer of prisoners in France, this fine officer, more than any other man, was responsible for most of those sad little indulgences which at last came the way of the seamen and the younger officers.

There was no fine horse for Brenton; no horse at all, no luggage-train, not even any distinction between post captain, lieutenant and midshipman. All were marched off together on foot, the near-fifty of them guarded by three gendarmes. Nor had these worthies the least cause for alarm, because Brenton had given his parole for all his party, and the word of such a man, had they realized it, made any surveillance unnecessary. One thing they soon learnt on their march was that if the commandant of the area had a 'de' before his name it implied "ancien régime" so that their owners, having been born gentlemen, were apt to treat gentlemen in adversity with sympathy and quite the reverse occurred with other commandants!

The prisoners suffered many privations on the march but later, due to Brenton's foresight, remittances of cash reached the marching column. Some of the midshipmen in their youthful exuberance hired carriages with their new-found wealth. So did Brenton: but with this difference - the midshipmen rode in theirs: the captain sent his one to take up the lame and shoeless men in the column ahead. Thereupon the midshipmen leapt out of theirs, and did the same. It should be mentioned that if an officer, having given his parole, then managed to escape to England, his return was viewed with suspicion and a court of enquiry was held, the breaking of parole being frowned upon by the British authorities.

Conditions were certainly very bad. Whilst marching they received a fivepence-halfpenny travelling allowance which ceased as soon as they were off the road! Whilst the officers were quartered with their men they might receive the men's daily ration of a pound of meat and an allowance of a penny-halfpenny per day but if they moved to their own quarters their ration of meat ceased to exist. Brenton fought for the officers' right to the men's ration: then, though not without a prolonged and tedious struggle, persuaded the commandant at Verdun.

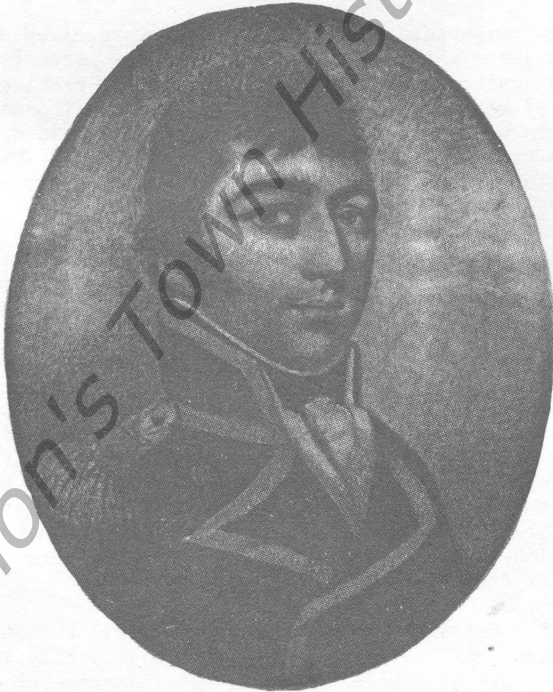
Brenton greeted all new arrivals at Verdun personally. As there were many ship's boys incarcerated- many of the age of only 14 - he worked wonders for these poor souls for whom life was cruelly hard. Among other things he had persuaded the authorities to segregate the boys from the rest, and had established a school for them under trusted petty officers of his own. They were allotted special barracks.

Brenton even made a round of visits to the other depots where British prisoners were incarcerated. He was accompanied on these visits by a gendarme. When he arrived at Givet he found his men living in the dungeons, awaiting the conversion of the stables into prison-quarters and getting them moved out was his earliest success at getting better conditions for the prisoners. Brenton also managed to persuade the commandant at Givet to let him leave one of his young officers W.T. Bradshaw behind to look after those of Brenton's men who were at Givet. Givet was situated not far from Verdun.

Exchanging Brenton cost the British Government a high price: 2 French post-captains, and distinguished ones at that. In all probability only 40 officers were exchanged in the 11 years of Napoleon's time. It is interesting to comment on the detention of Lord Elgin. He had been representing Britain in Turkey and was travelling to the U.K. at the end of his period of service there. He had obtained permission from Napoleon to journey through France but on his arrival at the French frontier was made a 'détenu' - how different it might have been if he had not shipped his famous "marbles" home by sea from Greece! The 'détenus' lived "out" i.e. in ordinary houses if they were civilians. They had to carry a lighted lantern after dusk and in 1806 an "A" order was imposed whereby a

the front of their residence. Later on this order was rescinded for naval officers but the 'détenus' and merchant officers continued liable. It should be mentioned at this stage that in those days British naval officers for whom there was no ship were frequently put on half-pay for anything up to two years or until a ship turned up. They mostly went to live on the continent as they could live there more reasonably than if they were in England.

Some 'détenus' were so desperate to escape even though they had given their parole. One of these was Sir Beaumont Dixie. He thought of a very clever idea. He went down to the river Meuse, ostensibly to bathe, leaving his clothes on the bank. He did not return, because he had arranged for a new supply farther down stream. He had quietly slipped away, hoping that the authorities would take him to be drowned. And so they did, at first. Unfortunately a naval officer who was present by chance guessed what the game was and informed the Senior Officer, Brenton. That worthy man instantly passed on the news to the Commandant, whose sleuths gave chase and caught Dixie before he had gone far. Some thought this was overdoing the "honour" side of it but Brenton would have none of it. A gentleman's word was, or should be, his bond, even among the 'détenus'. The Transport Board in England made a point of asking every escaper "Were you on parole at the moment of breaking out?" True, the escaper did not have to be able to answer "No. I first handed in my parole to the Commandant". That would have been a little too much. But he did have to be able to say "I was shut up in the locked cells of the Citadel" or "I was confined to the Porte de Chaussée". Only two men in the region of seniority of Brenton succeeded in escaping and they were Captain Nesbit Willoughby and Captain Henry Gordon.



REFERENCE: NAPOLEAN AND HIS BRITISH CAPTIVES by Michael Lewis, CBE, MA, FSA, FRHist S Late Professor of History, Royal Naval College Greenwich and President of the Society for Nautical Research. Published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1962. Presented to the Simon's Town Museum by Peter Humphries and made available to the Society by the Curator. The photograph of Captain Brenton above appeared on page 96 of the book.