



SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN



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SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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January 1986

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

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EDITORIAL

The principal objective of the Editorial Committee in determining the content of this Edition was to aim for a reasonable balance between subjects of Naval and General interest and hopefully this has been achieved. We are particularly grateful to Professor O. Pryce-Lewis for his most interesting contribution "An Investigation Into Cape Dutch Buildings Having Three Front Facing Gables". This most commendable piece of research merits close study and inter alia it will come as something of a shock to many members to learn that the Residency was probably not completed until 1777 some five years later than most of us originally thought!

This time last year we made an appeal for more volunteers to come forward to assist the Museum's activities. During 1986 as the remaining exhibition rooms in the Residency are brought into use more help from Society members is going to be required. The figures speak for themselves. Over the first eleven months of 1985 6,000 visitors actually recorded their visits to the Museum. The authorities tell us that experience elsewhere suggests you should multiply this figure by 2 and possibly 3 to arrive at the actual numbers! Guided Tours of the Town are now averaging one a week. When the Museum's needs in 1986 are finally identified and publicised it is hoped that Members will respond with offers of assistance because this is so important to the success of future activities both of the Museum - and the Society.

The Editorial Committee wishes all the readers of the Bulletin a Very Happy and Successful New Year.

PLEASE NOTE:

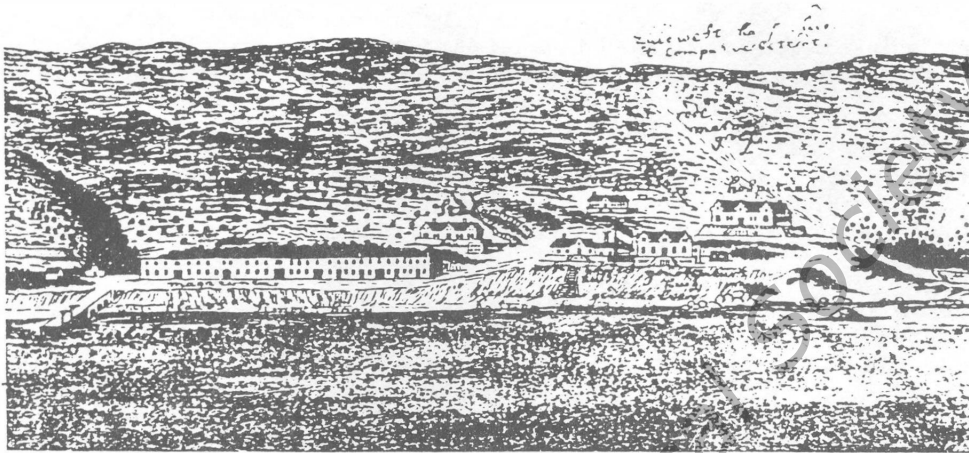
On page 130 of Vol. XIII No.4 July 1985 we published a group photograph featuring inter alia The Earl and Countess of Athlone. We asked if any of our readers knew the name of the Admiral in the photograph. Our thanks go to member Mrs. Gwen Songhurst (nee Gay) who told us this was Admiral Burmeister and the young lady in the centre of the photograph was Lady May Cambridge the daughter of the Athlones.

BOOK REVIEW

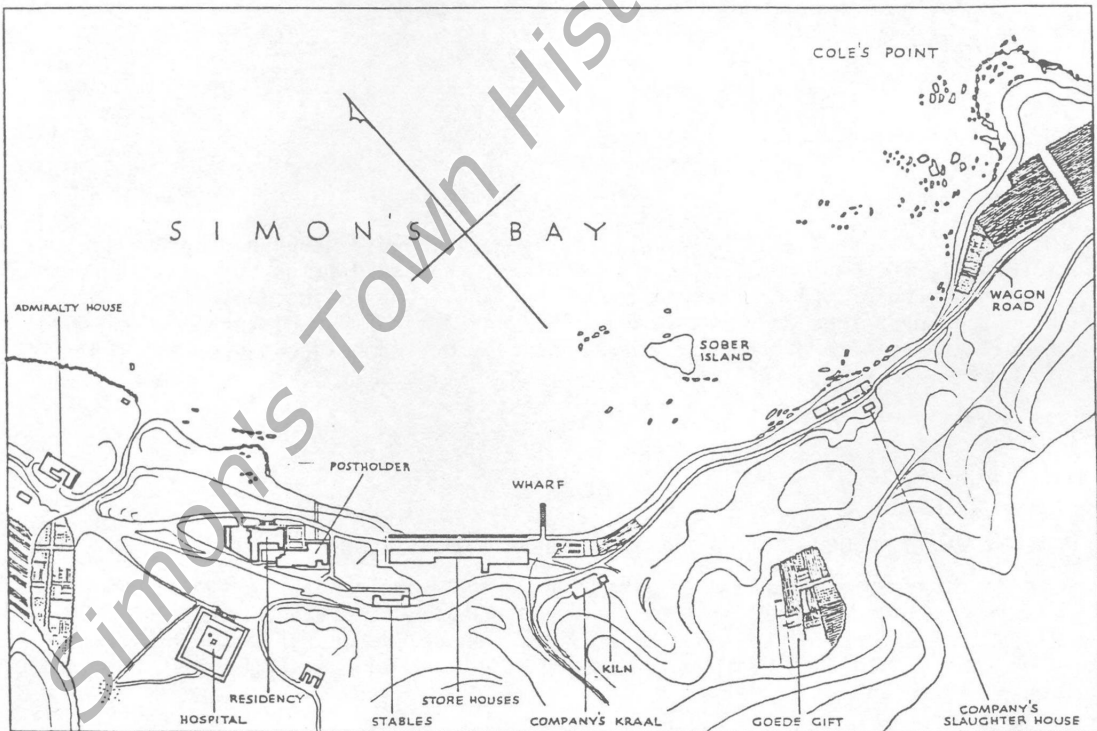
TWENTY WALKS AROUND HOUT BAY by Mike Lundy - R9.95 + GST

The Hout Bay area contains many interesting and scenic walks and Mike Lundy has in his book described 20 of them in some detail. Of particular note is the historical details given and each walk has been timed and graded. This is a book that should interest people who enjoy walking in one of the most beautiful areas of the Cape.

E.A. BIGGS



Col. R.J. Gordon's Panorama c.1777



Major Wm. Kirsteman's map of Simon's Town 1799

AN INVESTIGATION INTO CAPE DUTCH BUILDINGS HAVING THREE FRONT FACING GABLES

O. Pryce-Lewis

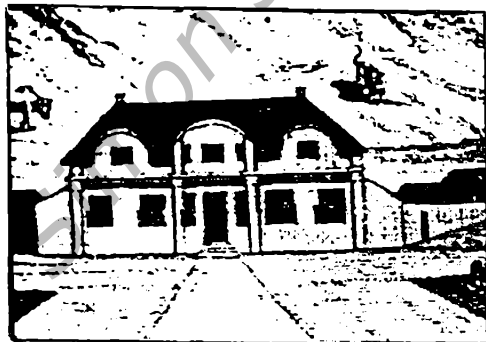
Recent work by the architects Messrs Revel Fox & Partners in the restoration of the Residency formerly the Governor's House at Simon's Town has drawn attention to the one time existence there of two other buildings, the Hospital and the Company's Stables which bore a striking similarity of architectural composition to that of the Governor's House. The three buildings were characterised by three front facing gables of equal height width and detail in contrast to the more accustomed system in which a central gable of one character faced frontally while two gables of a different character on the flanks of the building held the facade between "book ends".

The arrangement has received little notice by historians possibly because the gables were removed from the Residency in 1798 when a storey was added over the front rooms while the other two buildings have long since been demolished. Nevertheless the appearance of these buildings is evident from J. Schumacher's panorama (c.1778) published in Du Bois "Vies des Gouverneurs Generale", Col. R.J. Gordon's "Panorama of False Bay" (c.1777) and several other drawings. Major Wm. Kirsteman's map of Simon's Town (1799) shows in excellent detail the plans of the Hospital and of the Stables. A plan of the Governor's House prepared it is thought in 1808 and investigations conducted during recent building works provide information on the probable arrangement of rooms at the time of building.

Were these buildings unique in their endowment with triple gables? Was their architectural composition derived from precedent? If not what were the operative forces requiring that particular expression? Would they become prototypes for later compositions? These and other questions such as their authorship and dating called for investigation if not answers.

Enquiry showed that although in recent times a plethora of buildings with three gables facing the front is to be found, within the style known as Cape Dutch there are no more than 5 executed works of that type excluding those at Simon's Bay. They are Klein Schuur; Hoop op Constantia; The Drostdy, Swellendam; The Old Government Buildings Graaff-Reinet and Groote Schuur in its garb of 1838. "Vergelegen" will be examined although they are no more than proposals. The Homestead at Fish Hoek and a number of other U-shaped buildings with three gables on their rear elevations are disqualified from consideration for all have or had a single gable on their front elevations.

Vergelegen 1706



If the surviving engravings can be relied upon to represent the designers intentions the original proposal for the Governor's farm house incorporated a

thatched roof hipped at both ends, a central segmented headed gable, obviously intended to dominate the composition, flanked on either side by minor gables. The latter have little more than a cosmetic purpose.

Following on charges of extravagance the Governor had an alternative and more modest elevation prepared, at least so it must be assumed for only the gabled front facing the garden is available. The modified scheme in no way differs compositionally from the original.

Klein Schuur

Although altered many times in its long existence the smallest of the Company's barns at Groote Schuur its elongated H shape is probably original and arose from the decision to compact the plan for convenience or because of site restrictions. The roofs at the ends of the projecting wings terminate in half-hips which create truncated triangular gables bounded at the top by eaves and by verges on the sloping sides. Similar gables marked the centre line of the bar of the H-shape on both elevations. The building is consequently triple fronted. The half-hips put the design in a special class removing it from a specifically Cape Dutch context. Such buildings might be found over a wide area of Europe.

Drostdy, Swellendam 1811-1814

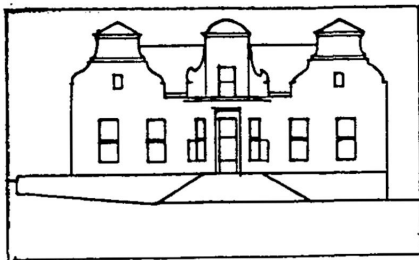


Before 1811 the Swellendam Drostdy a T-shaped building with a customary complement of gables at the ends of the arms and stem of the T, faced the Korenlandsrivier. Alterations and additions between 1811 and 1814 swung the axis of the plan through 90° so that the principal facade then faced the road. In the altered building the gabled arm of the T facing the road was balanced by a new gabled projection of the same dimensions at the other end of its stem. The new entrance doorway found its expected position on the centre line of the new facade and had its importance emphasised by a gable. According to Burchell's small scale drawing of 1815 (above) the central gable had the same width and height as had the gables on the building's extremities but in detail differed from them significantly. By virtue of these changes the building became triple fronted.

Responsibility for the design cannot positively be established. Nevertheless it is certain that J.H. Voorman, District Surveyor, prepared a preparatory sketch which was not executed. There is no reason however to think that that was the end of his employment as an architect. He may well have gone on to develop the final scheme.

Later in the century but before the building passed into private hands the gables were removed and the present bat's eye gables substituted. All three gables are identical.

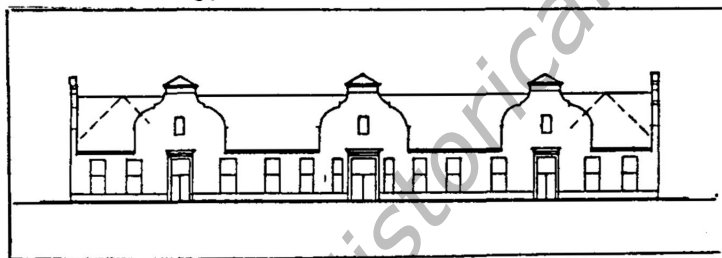
Hoop op Constantia



Originally I-shaped this building bore gabled wings and a central gable on the axis of the stem of the I as was customary. Later additions and alterations turned the axis of the building through 90° and introduced a main entrance marked by a gable on what had been one of the sides of the building. The new gable stood in the same plane as the two gabled wings thus the new elevation was triple fronted. The effect cannot be described as wholly satisfactory

for the narrowness of the space between the wings compelled the new gable to stand as an uncomfortable interloper between its senior relatives, suffering as it did so attenuation of its width. While the three gables had the same height and some similarities of detail they were of unequal width.

The Old Parliament Building, Graaff-Reinet. 1819



The plan of this building was U-shaped. The front elevation was held between book-end gables. The length of the front was however considerable, too great for the composition to be held in unity by a single central gable. Furthermore the internal functions of the building required two other entrances than that on the centre line. These subsidiary doorways determined the positions of the centre lines of two gables in addition to that occupying the central position. As a result the building presented three gables equal in width, height and detailed design in the plane of the front wall.

Groote Schuur 1838



The Company's cornbarn, Groote Schuur, has undergone several radical alterations. By 1830 probably due to its conversion to domestic usage it had become generally two storeyed with single storeyed rooms at either end of a verandah covered by a balcony supported on a simple colonnade. The roofs were

flat and there were no gables or pediments. The building had the same architectural organisation as many town houses in the Table Valley.

A drawing reputed to have been made in 1838 shows the entire building double storeyed under a steeply pitched roof. There are now three gables that in the centre rising in stages separated by string courses and embodying on its centre line in vertical succession, a doorway, a semicircular window and a circular opening in a low-pitched tri-angular pediment. In contrast the gables accorded to the two storeyed stoepkamers conform to the pitch of the roof but do not come to a point at the apex for there the roofs are hipped back. Large semicircular windows similar to those introduced to the central gable with circular windows above them enlivened the fields of these gables. The whole presented an ideocyncratic mixture of motifs some obviously derived from the works of L.M. Thibault. In contrast to Hoop op Constantia the three gables did not rise in the same plane.

Simon's Bay as a port.

Simon's Bay had been declared a port in 1742. In the following year a single long building called by some the Magazine containing barracks stores workshop and hospital was built. A low-ranking postholder was appointed to conduct the business of the port. These arrangements minimal and somewhat temporary served until 1753 when it became compulsory for climatic reasons for visiting ships to use Simon's Bay in preference to Table Bay between 15 May and 15 August. This decision and an increase in traffic around the Cape by both Dutch and foreign ships compelled the Council of Seventeen in 1755 to order the then Governor at the Cape, Ryk Tulbagh, to improve the shore facilities.

Progress was slow. By 1760 workshop and warehouse accommodation and a bakery had been added to the Magazine, a slaughter-house constructed at some distance to the east and more efficient victualling arrangements provided. At an unknown date but before 1760 a house for the Postholder was built to the west of the Magazine and overlooking the road by which the latter building was approached. This was the port's command post. The single storeyed building followed the general pattern of country houses, having a centre gable and two "book-end" gables. On its centre line a broad flight of steps descended the bank to the water's edge where the Postholder embarked and disembarked in the course of his duties in the Roads. A flag on a tall staff proclaimed the position of the command post.

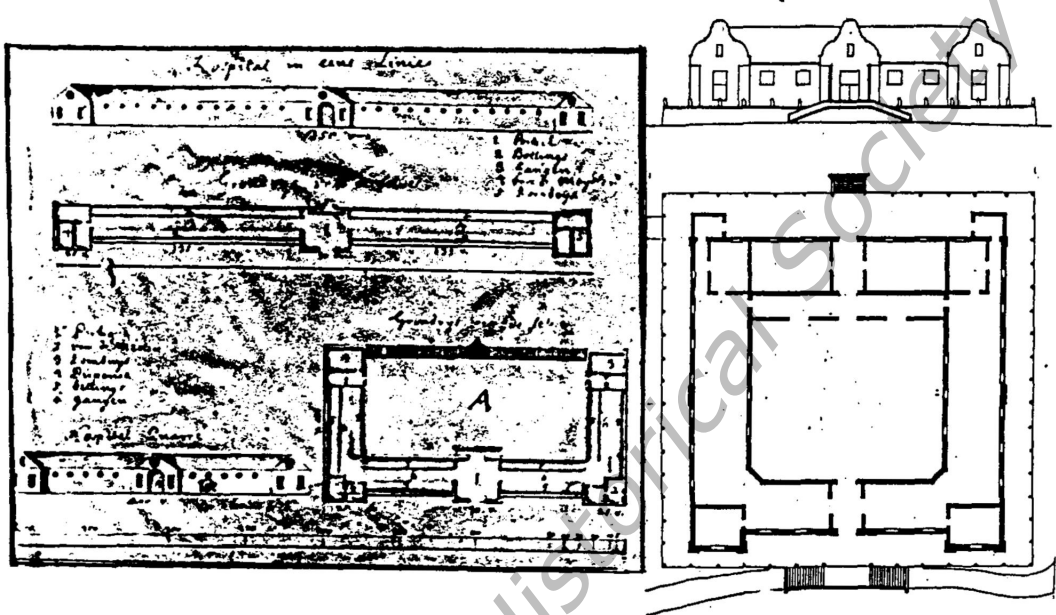
The Hospital at Simon's Bay. 1765

A larger hospital than then existed at the Bay was among Tulbagh's priorities. Its design entrusted to Joseph Pontée, an Engineer by training and Equipagie-meester at the Cape started in 1759. Lieutenant J.F. Kirsten advised on technical matters. Preliminary sketches showing the location of the new building relative to existing installations and two different plans, one showing the building's element strung out in a straight line, the other, the Hospital Quarré, a U-shaped building, were submitted to the Governor in Council on 10 December 1759. The Governor chose the second scheme which became the basis for subsequent developments.

In the chosen plan the widths of the service rooms at the corners of the wards were made equal to those of the wards themselves. Consequently the gabled pavilions at the extremities of the front elevation were expressions of the arms of the U-shaped plan. A central and wider pavilion, also gabled, expressed an unnecessarily large entrance hall. The unequal pavilion widths resulted in unequal roof pitches which together with a mixture of rectangular, circular and arched openings made for a design which required a good deal of

adjustment before it could be declared entirely satisfactory.

A more serious defect however was its failure to take the levels and other characteristics of the site into account. The rectification of that fault is an important factor in the building's history.



Whether between December 1759 and May 1760 Pontée did further work on the scheme is not known, nevertheless it can be said with certainty that when construction commenced after an unexplained delay of fully two years in 1762 the design had undergone many changes. Two additional wards had been added. These converted the U-shape into a hollow square enclosing a square central court where patients could enjoy fresh air away from infection and yet remain under supervision lest they were tempted to escape to the fleshpots of the small settlement, such as they were. The important change however was the reduction of the frontal width of the structure from 63m to 40,2m forced upon the designer by the realities of the building site. The contraction was made at the expense of the entrance hall which was narrowed and of the wards on either side of it. These dimensional alterations naturally demanded a re-appraisal of the design for the respacing of the pavilions consequent upon them altered the buildings proportions. It was surely with that realisation that it was decided not only to adjust the width and spacing of the pavilions and to make them equal but to reduce the projection of the central pavilion in the interests of a more spacious concept. The abandonment of Pontée's circular openings and the introduction of Cape Dutch elements rolbol gables for instance may or may not have occurred at that time.

Despite these changes there still remained a disproportion between the quantity of material in foundation works and that needed for the superstructure. It appears that no one fully appreciated the configuration of the site and from its inception an ill-advised procedure was adopted.

The site now bounded on the S-E and N-W by Arsenal and Waterfall Roads respectively is described in contemporary records as garden land acquired from Cornelis de Leeuw. Its configuration resembles a cylinder inclined in its

length and sloping with increasing steepness on either side. The subsoil is clay. When building operations started instead of cutting and filling to form a level site, the floor level and that of the ground at the rear of the building were made to coincide thus on the central axis at the front of the structure the floor was located at a considerable height above the ground and because of the cross-falls at a very much greater height at the north and east corners. At the north corner it was no less than 17 feet above the ground. All might have been well had the underfloor space been left a void or usefully devoted to other accommodation but following common practice the whole of the volume was filled with earth.

In June 1763 while the building remained unroofed, exceptional rains irrigated the filling. Despite a general thickness of 1,5m of brickwork, the surcharged rising walls slid or otherwise shifted sufficiently to cause the collapse of the superstructure at or near the north corner. The north gable and part of an internal wall fell in this débâcle. The Company's building surveyor and supervisor of artisans accompanied by the master bricklayer reported on the damage and analysed the cause of failure. They recommended not only the immediate buttressing of the rising walls but also the construction of a wall some 3 to 3,5 m beyond the faces of the building. The space between the new and existing walls was to be filled with earth in order to equalise the pressures on both sides of the foundation walls. This recommendation was accepted, so, when the work was completed the building appeared to have been built on the top of a level platform or podium.

A very different spatial concept from that envisaged by Pontée had come about for the building no longer grew out of the irregular surface of the ground but was, so to speak, served up on a plate. Its square plan shape could be more easily read for its geometrical properties were clarified. In this connection it will be noticed that though the front-rear axis was always clearly defined, not until the introduction of the podium could the small gables on the centre line of the building's flanks acknowledging the cross axis assume the value intended for them. The new dispensation created a welcoming fore-space on the surface of the podium which was reached by a double flight of steps and which was defined by the building's main face and the projecting lateral pavilions. From the level surface the wide entrance doors soared upwards to the dominant central roolbol gable.

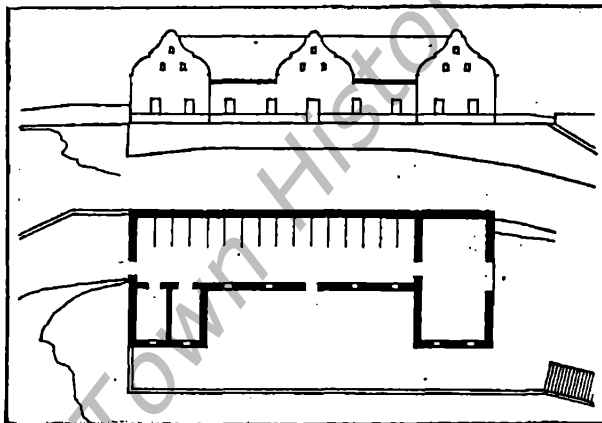
J.S. Stavorinus, post-captain and later rear-admiral in the Dutch Navy had the opportunity in 1774 of inspecting the hospital. His report mentions the loftiness of the rooms open to the thatched roof; the benefits accruing from the internal courtyard and the low mortality rate as compared with that of the equivalent institution in Cape Town. At the time the hospital had been in operation since 1765 when regulations governing the administration and the behavior of patients were promulgated. From the point of view of this essay the most important of Stavorinus' observations is his comment on the building's possession of a triple frontage, with the possible exception of Klein Schuur, the first of its kind at the Cape.

No major building was undertaken at Simon's Bay for some 9 or 10 years after the completion of the hospital, although this interval may have been shorter but for the death in 1771 of Ryk Tulbagh who may have had further building projects at the Bay in mind. Some hint of such intentions is contained in the instruction given to C.F. Brink the Company's Surveyor to make a survey of the place in 1771. As it was van Plettenburg who acted as governor instituted no new works at the Bay until he was accorded substantive rank in 1774. During the interregnum ships came and went and the hospital cared for their sick doubtless playing a part in controlling the small-pox epidemic of 1767. Otherwise the port slept in summer and awoke when the weather was at its worst.

With van Plettenburg's accession a general shake up of government appointments took place. Kirsten gave way to Christoffel Brand as Postholder at the Bay where he found, as Stavorinus was to find shortly afterwards that the shore installations comprised the Magazine, the slaughterhouse, a few houses including his own official residence and the hospital. Neither the stables nor the Governor's House were included in the Post-Captain's list. Nevertheless preliminary works for these buildings were soon to be undertaken for the Muster Roll of 1775 shows a large body of stone cutters and their labourers, 28 men in all employed on "new buildings at the Bay". For the same year the balance sheets show a marked increase in government expenditure on building. The same crew appears on the Roll in 1776 but the public expenditure is even greater for in that year the major part of the building programme was carried out. Only 15 men appear on the list in 1777 and for the following three years.

These works must have been in progress in August and September 1775 for Captain Dalrymple surveyed and mapped the coasts of False Bay. He produced two maps one more detailed than the other. All the port installations listed by Stavorinus are shown with the addition of the Company's Stables. The Governor's House is not shown which indicates that of the two proposed buildings the Stable was built or started first presumably in 1774-1775. There is some indication that he was aware of the site selected for the Governor's House.

The Company's Stables. 1775



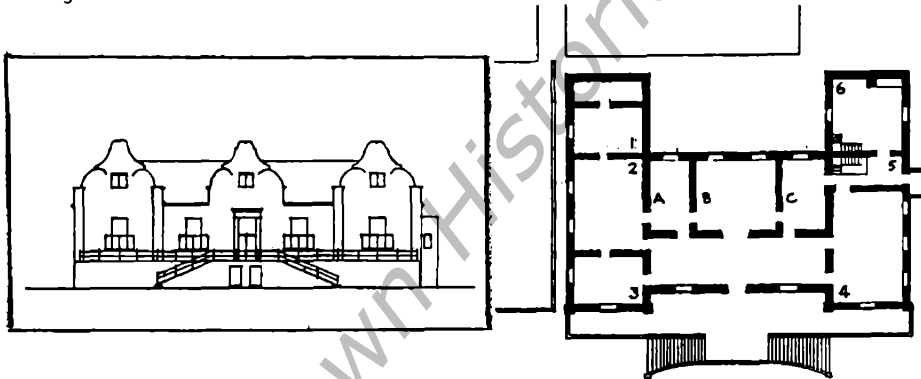
The site selected for the Stables lay between the western end of the Magazines and the wagon road on the hillside to the south of that building. The ground sloped steeply towards the sea but was fairly level in its length, parallel to the wagon road, nevertheless it sloped from side to side. Avoiding the mistakes in site preparation at the hospital, a level platform was created by cutting and filling, both retained by a stone wall. As a consequence the floor of the building for some if not the whole of its length, lay below the levels of the road. This was not disadvantageous for there were no windows or other openings on that side. The road levels dictated the position of entrances for horses and vehicles, which must occur at the building's east and west ends respectively. The relationship to the Magazine required pedestrian approach on the seaward side effected obliquely by a long flight of steps.

The building comprised four compartments, a coach and cart house, stabling for possibly 16 horses, a harness room and another room probably used for fodder or litter storage. If there was a loft it would be situated over the coach house. The stable appears to have been ventilated by openings on the sea side and by chimney-like flues. Examination of the plan shows that the accommodation is most conveniently arranged in the shape of a U. In that form the length

of the building is minimised and the gabled ends of the arms of the U-shape become an obvious choice. Whether or not influenced by the triple fronted hospital, a third gable of equal width, height and detail to those already mentioned marked the central doorway in the base of the U. With the completion of the building the port installations received a second triple fronted building which like its forerunner if not prototype rose from a level platform retained on its front by a high stone wall. The building was no insignificant addition to the existing scene for it was well elevated above the Magazine and its length 32,75m rivalled that of the hospital.

The Governor's House

Prior to the building of what is now the Residency, whenever the Governor came to the Bay he used a house situated on the mountain slopes above the Magazine and to the south-east of the hospital. Its character differed in no way from that of a farm house of its period. Single storeyed it had the accustomed voorsaal, gaandery in the centre, three rooms on either hand, a central gable, thatched roof and "book-end" gables. The substitution of a more imposing structure expressing the status of a Governor may have been the motive for embarking on a new house for him. The decision may however have been influenced by the need to house the Hospital Superintendent in the old building when it became available.



It has long been held that the new building was constructed in 1772. This cannot be so for neither Stavorinus nor Dalrymple recorded its existence at the time of their visits to the Bay in 1774 and 1775 respectively. Anders Sparrman lived at the Bay until August 1772 and at Alphen until December of that year as teacher to Kirsten's children. After his return with Captain Cook in 1775 he stayed in Cape Town sufficiently long to hear of the new building had it existed, yet writing in 1784 he states that "about the time of my departure from Africa they were building another....residence for the Governor." He left the Cape in April 1776. Col. Gordon's panorama said to have been drawn in 1777 includes the new building while Isaac Strombom's plan of the Governor's House prepared in late 1808 has a bald statement to the effect that building took place "about 30 years ago". We have already noted the large number of stone masons employed on new buildings at the Bay in 1775 and 1776 and the significant increase in governmental expenditure on building works in 1776. When all the foregoing are taken together the likelihood is strengthened that building started in 1776 and continued at least into 1777.

In siting the house advantage was taken of the dead level ground created at the time of building the outbuildings attached to the Postholder's house. These lay to the west of the latter building. Such was their shape and form that the Governor's House could be compositionally united with them although

that meant its being thrust forward towards the sea and in close proximity with the road, leading to the port installations, which passed across its front.

The site available without further excavation of the hillside to the west compelled or suggested the adoption of a building in two storeys yet the impression received from the front was that of a single storey structure standing on a podium, for a stoep at first floor level extended the full width of the facade. The ground floor accommodated extensive storage spaces and the main part of the kitchen while the upper floor or piano nobile contained what might be termed the state apartments. Here the Governor when in residence conducted the business which had brought him to the Bay, entertained and had his private life.

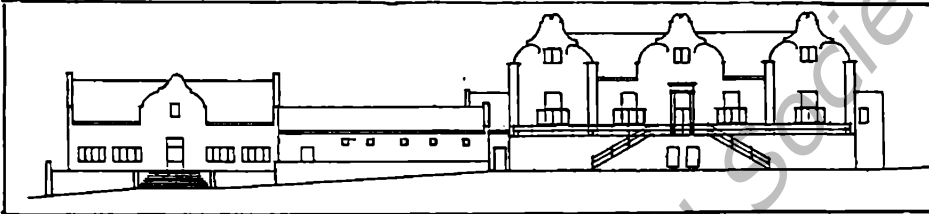
The accommodation might be expected to echo in some formal particulars the Governor's quarters at the Castle for the functions of both buildings were in essence similar. In fact there is no detectable similarity. At the Castle the Governor's suite has become intermingled with other accommodation so that no clear-cut scheme is to be found. At the Bay the prospect of a new building gave an opportunity for formal definition of the three principal aspects of the Governor's existence mentioned above.

The Plan shows the building to comprise two parallel rectangular wings containing Rooms Nos. 1, 2 and 3 in the south-east wing and 4, 5 and 6 in the other connected by a gallery in parallel with Rooms A, B and C. The Gallery and the wings had thatched pitched roofs, the span of which over the Gallery was significantly smaller than that over the wings. Rooms A, B and C were flat roofed. The usage of the rooms is not known although from the existence of fireplaces, now altered, in and under Room 6 and of a staircase in that room giving access to the roof space, it appears certain that here were the kitchens. Room 5 was certainly a servery communicating with Room 6, with that section of the kitchens on the ground floor and with Room 4 which would be the dining room. It also served the necessary which could be approached from the remainder of the building through Room C.

The axial position, the importance of the large doorway by which it is approached and the disposition of the windows on either side of a central length of walling make of Room B what in another context might have been a throne room or audience chamber. As it was it afforded the Governor a formal setting in which to receive in state. Seen in that light the Gallery was no mere corridor but an ante-room, a place of assembly, a waiting room for those seeking audience, even perhaps in itself a function room. For the rest the usage of the rooms was not immutable. A certain anonymity of architectural character permitted changes in furnishing to be made in response to changing requirements. This facility is to be found in most if not all of the early buildings at the Bay and was probably general throughout the country. Rooms A and B could serve as offices or interview rooms. Room A would do well for that purpose for it was equally accessible from the Gallery and the Governor's domestic quarters which almost certainly were situated in the south-east wing. There the Governor could hold private conversations unbeknownst to those awaiting his pleasure in the Gallery. Room 3 could at one time become a withdrawing room from either the Gallery or the large room No. 2. As a bedroom it had further usefulness. Only the kitchens need retain their fixed purpose for even the dining room could serve as committee room on occasion.

Apart from aesthetic considerations the functions of the Gallery determined the projections of Room 3 beyond the main front of the building. The need to approach Room 3 independently of passage through Room 2 saw to that. The

dining room for the sake of symmetry must follow suit. However that may be, the impression remains strong that the Governor's House was seen by its designer in compositional competition with the neighbouring Postholder's House and a vital element in a group which had grown rich with the advent of triple fronted building higher up the hill. The Governor's House had to be distinguishable from its neighbour however much it may be linked to it physically. The hospital in particular afforded the precedent on which the new building could rely. The Governor's House became triple gabled, thrusting itself forward beyond the face of the Postholder's house, above which it towered.



The buildings in review

It is hardly necessary to state that once forward projecting pavilions at the extremities of a building were required or provided for whatever reason, the customary system could not be adopted. Forward facing gables were inevitable at Klein Schuur, the three buildings at the Bay, the Swellendam Drostdy, Groote Schuur and surprisingly at Hoop op Constantia where there is an implied projection of the wings. The forward facing gables at van der Stel's "Vergelegen" were deliberately chosen without the excuse of projecting elements in the plan while at Graaff-Reinet the combination of the building's excessive length and its accommodation of three departments of government suggested the solution adopted. Otherwise the Old Parliament Building is an overblown conventional composition with "book-end" gables.

While it is probable that the hospital set the tone for the other buildings at Simon's Bay, there appears little likelihood that they in any way acted as exemplars for designs elsewhere or that that kind of interaction occurred between the other six buildings. Yet one cannot escape the fact that seven of the nine buildings were associated in one way or another with government agencies. It would be dangerous to build on this observation and to suggest that here was a stereotype for the buildings owed their character to their individual design processes in which the designers' cultural background and skills played a part within the conventions of the time. Nevertheless it is difficult not to conclude that an intention to differentiate a public building from a private house did not operate. That Hoop op Constantia and Groote Schuur have been caught up in this investigation is due to nothing other than the owners saying more in architectural terms than the situations warranted. It is that realisations which caused later owners to remove the flanking gables at Hoop op Constantia and to transform the ideosyncratic qualities of Groote Schuur.

At the Bay where the buildings form a group their public character speaks with greater emphasis than do the others. It is as though, to the ships of all nations anchored in the Roads, the authority of the Government was through their forward thrust to be expressed.

The buildings' authors

In making the foregoing notes there was no doubt that Joseph Pontée prepared the sketch designs for the Hospital at the Bay. Nor is there doubt over the authorship of proposed alterations to the Drostdy at Swellendam. Pontée owed his appointment to his engineering skills while holding the post of Equipagiemester, Voorman to his official position and to his being on the spot with draughting and related skills required of a surveyor. We note that Pontée succeeded Carel David Wentzel as surveyor in March 1760 and that he may, if he did indeed develop the scheme for the Hospital, have done the work in that capacity. Thus far the ground is firm beneath us - thereafter it quakes.

Between Pontée's death in May 1760 and the completion of the hospital lie at least 4 1/2 to 5 years. In that interval the plan was altered substantially, the structure suffered damage in the course of building and the elevation transmogrified. None of the changes could have taken place without the authority of persons in responsible positions advised by persons with technical skills or themselves qualified to make technical decisions. It appears reasonable therefore to look for those who at the time had engineering qualifications.

Wentzel must be considered for he held the rank of Lieutenant Engineer but the date of his return from Europe is not known nor does it seem that he was in employment until in June 1771 he was appointed as supervisor and surveyor charged with the task of enforcing the provisions of the Proclamation of 1742 which sought to improve public services, roads and the like. If he is discounted we turn to Carel Frederik Brink a trained engineer, surveyor and cartographer who accompanied Captain Hop's expedition to the Orange River and beyond. He returned to the Cape in April 1762 at about the time of the start of the construction of the hospital. He was immediately appointed to the surveyorship although he had acted in that capacity shortly after Pontée's decease. While no connection between these events has been discovered it is clear that Brink was in a position to have control of or at least a major role in building activities.

We have noted Brink as the surveyor of the settlement at the Bay in 1771 and may even then have engaged in the preliminaries leading to the Stables and the Governor's House. In 1774 it was decided to survey large tracts of relatively unknown and unnamed country in the interior. Brink who had been assigned to urgent military duties could not be spared to do this work. The newly arrived Christoffel Heironimus Leiste was given the surveyorship on the understanding that while he was away from Cape Town Brink would continue to act in the City and in the immediate hinterland. Later Leiste took part in managing matters to do with the new hospital at Cape Town which prior to his appointment had become confused.

It follows that around the time of the commencement of preliminary works on the Company's Stables, there were at least three prominent persons with engineering qualifications, Wentzel, Brink and Leiste. The date was 1774. Leiste only just arrived had his hands full and may be discounted leaving us with Wentzel and Brink. The former as one in charge of the upkeep of roads and similar works may well have undertaken the design of site works for the Stables but if Brink had had a hand in the later stages of the hospital's design it is at least possible that he had a hand in the design of the Stables.

Wentzel died on 11 May 1776. Three days later Brink was promoted to Lieutenant Engineer in his place. Such promptitude denotes urgency. Could this in part have been occasioned by the works at the Bay, specifically those in progress on the Governor's House? To declare Brink as its architect is going too far. He may however and probably was in Civil Service terms the director of operations.

The role of surveyor as architects at the Cape in the 18th Century may well prove to be more important than that played by them in the 19th Century. Their training as engineers made them invaluable in a society of pioneers which their status as important servants of the Company gives the possibility of designing more buildings than at present they are given credit. The buildings at the Bay must be considered in that context.

The official title "architect" is not found at the Cape until 1793 when J.W. Wernich, the serving surveyor, was promoted to surveyor-architect. If that was not a manifestation of the indifference shown to Louis Thibault by the government which had so astonished and revolted that gentleman, it was no less than an acknowledgement of the status of the surveyor as the designer of

buildings.

No claim is made

The author cannot claim anything like accuracy of detail in the figures he has drawn for he has been compelled to rely in all cases on the evidence of more or less contemporary drawings made by persons with no special architectural knowledge. In adopting gable profiles he has been guided by the principle of likelihood.

He is in debt to Mrs. Margaret Cairns for her assistance in the matter of the surveyors, to Mr. Dirk Visser for allowing him to peep into his vast store of knowledge of 18th Century affairs and to Messrs. Revel Fox & Partners who have given unstintingly of the fruits of their researches in connection with the Residency and to Mr. Colin Cochrane for letting him into the mysteries of the Swellendam Drostdy's history. The opinions expressed above are however those of the author.

HMSAS NATAL'S UNIQUE FEAT RECALLED - AFTER 40 YEARS.

Roger Williams (a member of the frigate's original ship's-company)

An event unique in the annals of the Royal Navy, or any other navy for that matter, and involving a ship's company of 120 South Africans who took part in the closing stages of the Battle of the Atlantic was commemorated at a 40th anniversary reunion at the Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town, on March 14, 1985.

It was March 14, 1945 that the newly commissioned Loch-class frigate HMSAS NATAL (laid down as HMS LOCH CREE) sank a German U-boat in the North Sea, a bare four hours after leaving the builders' yard at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

NATAL commanded by Lt. Commander D.A. 'Stoker' Hall, DSC (to which a Bar was later added for the U-boat 'kill') was on her maiden voyage heading for the Western Approaches training base at Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, via the Home Fleet base at Scapa Flow.

A merchantman was torpedoed in the vicinity of the frigate as she steamed up the east coast of Scotland and HMSAS NATAL equipped with a then highly secret anti-submarine weapon known as "Squid" (the more lethal successor to the ahead-firing "Hedgehog") was diverted to the area. The Squid team (of which I was a member) had been trained in secret only a few weeks previously at HMS VERNON the RN's torpedo and anti-submarine (TSD) school at Portsmouth. Two boatloads of survivors were sighted from NATAL's bridge off St. Abb's Head, near the Firth of Forth, and soon afterwards the frigate gained a strong and positive underwater contact on Asdic. With the destroyer HMS WIVERN standing by, she closed in for the attack.

Two salvos of NATAL's Squid mortars, dropped in the target area, brought a quantity of oil to the surface, together with a cylindrical container and a tank. Asdic contact was lost after the second attack and NATAL, after picking up some of the "evidence" was ordered to Methil in the Firth of Forth, to drop this off for identification by experts.

On the way to Methil, Surgeon Lt. Reg Skea of Bloemfontein applied his stethoscope to the cylindrical object (later identified as a U-boat's liferaft container) in its temporary housing on the cleared quarterdeck, after a pumping sound emitting from it had aroused suspicions that this might be an explosive booby-trap device of some sort. The doctor was able to produce a reassuring diagnosis of the condition of his inanimate 'patient', whose heavy-breathing, caused by an air-pump of some sort, occurred only when a small hatch at one end of the container was opened.

Later, RN escort vessels despatched to St. Abb's head blasted the sea-bottom at the exact location of the attack, indicated on the chart by NATAL, and this brought debris to the surface including a hand-carved U-boat shield which was later sent to NATAL as a trophy. This was subsequently mounted in pride of place in the frigate's wardroom.

Before the South African frigate arrived at Tobermory, a congratulatory signal was received from Admiralty crediting her with the earliest-ever 'kill' by a vessel serving with the RN. German records after the war revealed that NATAL's victim had been U-714, a Type VII-C vessel built by Stülcken Sohn, Hamburg, and commanded by Kapitänleutnant Schwabke.

Apart from the decoration conferred on Lt. Cdr. Hall, a DSC was awarded to NATAL's Asdic Officer Lt. Spencer Richards of Pretoria and two key members of his Asdic team Able-Seamen Terry Scott of Durban and Michael van Breda of Cape Town received DSM's. There were also a number of Mentions in Despatches. Ex-Lt Richards and ex-AB (SD) van Breda were among the 21 members of HMSAS NATAL's original ship's company who attended the 40th anniversary reunion at the Mount Nelson. Also there were NATAL's first Navigator ex-Lt Ron Pedley of Durban, ex-Sub-Lt John Moir, leader of the Squid team and one of those mentioned in despatches, and Mrs. Roberta (Bertie) Hall of Rondebosch, Commander Hall's widow.

Other special guests were Vice-Admiral J.C. Walters, former Hydrographer and Chief of the Navy, who commanded NATAL after the war when she was converted to a hydrographic survey vessel, and Miss Arderne (Dicky) Tredgold of Kenilworth who, as a member of the staff of the Argus Group's London office, travelled to Newcastle-on-Tyne to report the formal commissioning of HMSAS NATAL on March 9, 1945. The reunion was also attended by ex-Sub Lt. W.R.F. (Bill) Step of East London, who as a liaison officer attended the commissioning ceremony and was on board NATAL when she sank U-714.

One of the organisers of the event was Rear-Admiral S.C. (Chips) Biermann, who served in the frigate as an Able Seaman (Coder) on her first commission.

Messages received from many parts of the country - most of them from members of HMSAS NATAL's original ship's company who were not able to attend the reunion were read out at the lunch. In a special message from Pretoria the Chief of the Navy Vice-Admiral A.P. (Dries) Putter said: "In congratulating you on your unique and outstanding performance on March 14, 1945, I want to give you the words of the late Lt. George Heard: "Let us remember in our salutations the men of our own little Navy, so young in years, so worthy in seafaring achievement. But it is not enough that we should honour it for what it has done in the past, rather let us keep and preserve it for what it may yet do in the future."

"BLUE GUMS" FORTRESS OBSERVATION POST, SIMON'S BAY FIRE COMMAND 1942-1955

Commander W.M. Bisset

The 2nd World War was the 'finest hour' in the history of coast artillery in South Africa. It was a period of hectic activity and phenomenal growth but it was also, fortunately, a great anti-climax because South Africa was spared an attack on her coastal cities and towns by enemy warships and aircraft.

A recent request for information about one of the many coast artillery buildings erected in South Africa during the Second World War revealed that relatively little information about it could be found in the SADF Archives. When the file on this topic was discovered in a tin trunk containing old files at Fort Wynyard recently, the lack of information in Pretoria became easier to understand!

Blue Gums Fortress Observation Post is 400 feet above mean sea level on the mountainside between Miller's Point and Smitswinkel Bay. It is above the house "Blue Gums" which was the home of the Rev. Leonard Green, an Anglican RN Chaplain.

Although the date when Blue Gums Fortress Observation Post was built has not been traced it seems likely that it was completed in 1942. It was of six FOP in the Simon's Bay Command. Cobra at Slangkop, Bosch at Olifantsbosch and Vasco at Cape Point covered their respective water areas on the Atlantic side of the Peninsula, while Diaz at Cape Point, Crow at Scala and Blue Gums did so on the False Bay side.

The Historical Record of 2nd Heavy Battery, S.A. Artillery (a misleading term as it was really the regiment manning all the batteries in the Simon's Bay Fire Command) reveals that the FOPs at Cape Point, Olifantsbosch and Slangkop were in action by the middle of 1941.

On 10 June 1942 proposals regarding an agreement with Mr. A.H. Day and his partner for the construction of an access road from the Marine Drive to the mountainside site of the FOP at Blue Gums were submitted to the Quartermaster-General for approval. The terms of the agreement provided that the right of way should be granted for the duration of the 2nd World War and 12 months thereafter but should not exceed nine years and eleven months.

A very thorough investigation carried out in June 1956 revealed that the available documents confirmed that Mr. Day was the owner of the property on which the FOP had been built.

In a letter dated 21 July 1942 the General Staff Officer I at the Castle requested that accommodation for one White NCO and 20 members of 1 Battalion, Native Military Corps be provided at Blue Gums. Ten days later the Fortress Commander submitted the request to the QMG and advised him that the Director of Fortifications and Coastal Works had been requested to prepare plans and an estimate of the costs. He added that the acquisition of sites was being investigated by Major Halse of the office of the Secretary for Defence.

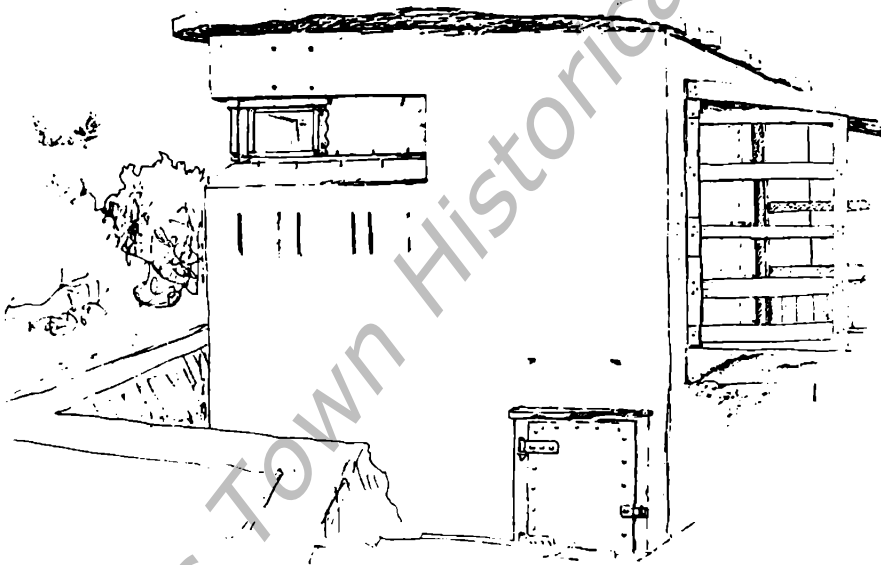
Drawing No. QF 2024/2 dated December 1944 indicates that the FOP was a concrete structure and that the kitchen and mess were housed in the same wooden building. Between the two were wooden ablutions and an iron water tank. (This plan was copied in September 1954 by WO1 C.E. Allen of the SA Corps of Marines). A kitchen was requested on 9 February 1943 but was only Priority A (i.e. works which can fall away). It is not clear whether the kitchen requested was a separate building which was never built or whether the mess was altered to include the kitchen.

The most important item of equipment at the FOP was a Fortress Position Finder

'Y' Mk 1 which had a maximum range of 28,000 yards. Target data was transmitted by telephone through the rangefinding exchange.

After the Allied victory in North Africa it became clear that the danger of an enemy attack was greatly reduced. In January 1944 Vasco and Cobra FOPs were closed down due to shortage of personnel.

On 13 June 1947 two ex-servicemen who had served in the SA Air Force, applied in writing to the Secretary of the War Stores Disposal Board in Pretoria to "acquire the use of the complete block" at the Blue Gums FOP. They had paid several visits to Cape Point and inspected a small, deserted U.D.F. hut. Despite its dilapidated state they considered it ideal as a headquarters for their weekend fishing trips. Their letter contains a description of the buildings: 'a small concrete blockhouse, a woodshed, a water tank and a latrine adjoining it'. The buildings were numbered from T1 to T5. However, on 13 September, 1947, the Acting Officer Commanding Cape Command advised the Quartermaster General that the hutments of Blue Gums FOP were still required.



A Sketch of Blue Gums F.O.P. by Mr. A.N. Dromas

On 20 December 1948 the Administration Officer of Coastal Works and Fortifications inspected Blue Gums FOP and submitted a report to the O.C. Cape Command the following day. He reported that there were no boundary stones or beacons indicating the extent of the property. He added that the security fence was in excellent condition and that the buildings were in fair condition. The FOP was very well kept and everything was found in good order. There was no caretaker.

On 5 September 1949 Brigadier Zinn, the Actg. QMG, advised the O.C. Cape Command in writing that the application to spend £3.15/- on repainting the number plates on all buildings at Blue Gums FOP had not been approved because of "the need for drastic curtailment of expenditure".

By 30 June 1950 it had become necessary to remove the stove, sink and wash basin from buildings T2 and T4 because hooligans had tampered with the stove. The Public Works Department estimated that the work would cost £5. Although permission was granted for the items to be removed and handed over to the Public Works Department for safekeeping, the O.C. Cape Command informed the O.C. 2 Coast Regiment (formerly 2 Heavy Battery) that one of his artisans must do this work.

The wartime agreement was due to expire on 27 May 1953, so the Secretary for Defence timeously requested the QMG to advise him whether it should be extended. On 1 August 1952 the O.C. Coastal Command advised the QMG and Naval and Marine Chief of Staff that Blue Gums still formed "a link in the general framework of the Simon's Town defences" and that it was essential that the road be retained. He requested that "negotiation should be opened in order to secure occupation for a further period of 10 years".

Coast Artillery became obsolete in South Africa in 1955 and resulted in the disbandment of the SA Corps of Marines on 1 October 1955. Thus on 31 December 1956 the Naval Chief of Staff advised the QMG that Blue Gums FOP was "no longer a requirement for coast artillery and did not justify the purchase of the site". The site and FOP were to be returned to Mr. Day.

HMS NEPTUNE's WAR TIME VOYAGE TO THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

Nigel Fawcett

On October 7th 1940 the British light cruiser HMS NEPTUNE, last peacetime flagship of the Africa Station, slipped stern first past the bullnose at Simon's Town, swung round and pointed her bows in a southerly direction to clear Hangklip and head down towards the 'roaring forties' and south polar ice cap.

Why was it necessary to send such a valuable fighting ship far down below the regular shipping lanes at a time when she was urgently needed to help keep Britain's sea routes free of U-boats and commerce raiders?

NEPTUNE had proved herself to be an extremely efficient fighting unit of the Royal Navy in her first year of active service, from the moment she left Simon's Town on August 26th 1939 to take up her war station based on Freetown until her return 'home' (for Snoekie was still thought of as 'home' by most of her Devonport recruited ship's company) just over one year later. The first few months of the war had been spent patrolling the South Atlantic for weeks at a time with occasional brief spells in the tropical port of Freetown on the west coast of Africa to replenish stores and pick up eagerly awaited mail. Even refuelling was usually done at sea. The monotony of endless patrols was occasionally enlivened by incidents such as the hunt for the GRAF SPEE, but regrettably not the kill, and the interception of the German line ADOLF WOERMANN which scuttled herself before a boarding party could get to her.

But most of NEPTUNE's renown had been won in the Mediterranean where the ship had spent a hectic six months with almost daily Italian bombing attacks both at sea and in harbour at Alexandria. Her gunners had bagged an aircraft or two as well as bombarding positions along the Libyan coast in support of the army. Her big moment was her part in the fleet action off Calabria on July 9th 1940 when NEPTUNE had the honour to be the first British man o' war to hoist the signal "Enemy battlefleet in sight" since one of Nelson's frigates at Aboukir in 1798.

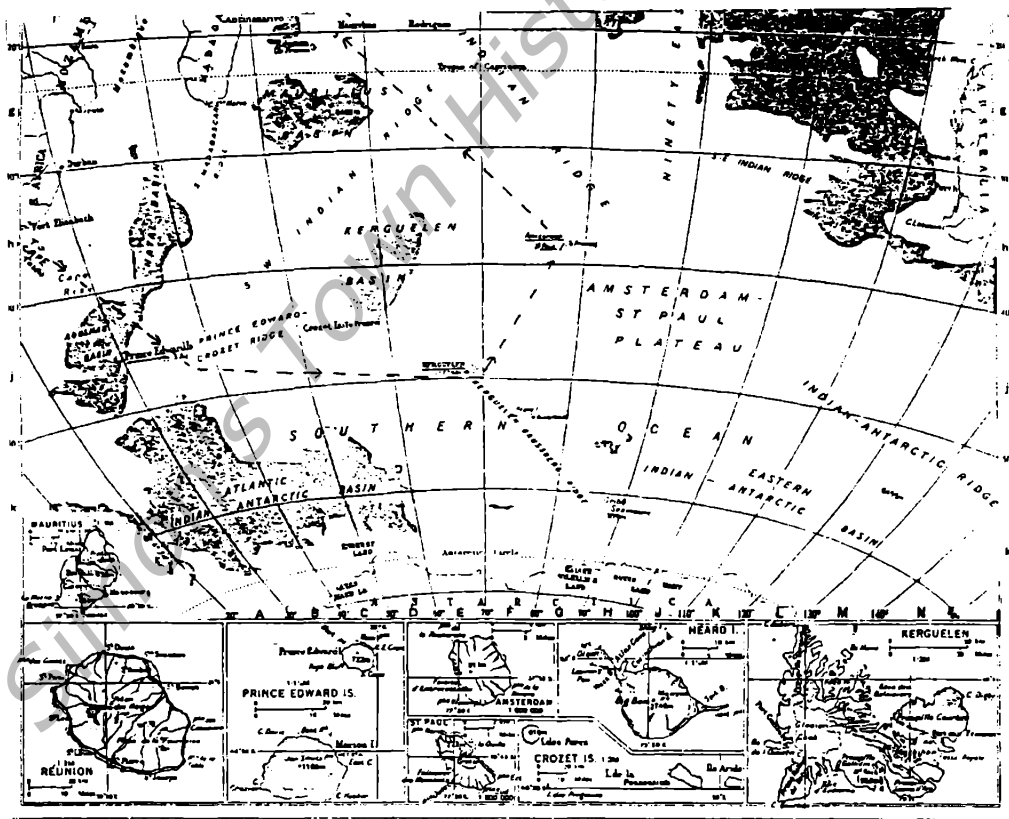
t the Med. in August, long overdue for home leave with everyone on board
nt that NEPTUNE's return the long way round via the Cape heralded her
eeded refit and recommissioning.

powers that be had other plans.

raiders had been extremely active in the South Atlantic, sinking British
g, and some were still at large. The question puzzling the Admiralty was
d they done with the British survivors?

aiders, designed to spend months at sea without returning to base, had
amped quarters and could not possibly imprison hundreds of seamen as well.
ere not many islands in the South Atlantic where prisoners could be hidden,
Helena, Ascension, Tristan, the Falklands and even South Georgia were all
and in radio touch with the outside world. But in the Southern Ocean,
ld sea that circles the globe in high latitudes, there were islands where
possible to conceal men for months. A study of charts showed that the
kely hide-out was Kerguelen, a large, lonely island situated almost 50
south.

ays out of Simon's Town, the temperature dropped alarmingly and was soon
the 30's. On the fourth day they sighted Prince Edward and Marion Is.
mpletely deserted but now manned by S.A. Government weather stations. The
ve-to as close inshore as she could manoeuvre with safety, but there was
of human habitation.



TRACK CHART "HMS NEPTUNE" - OCTOBER 1940
SCALE 1:40,000,000 (1cm = 400km)

The only living creatures in evidence were sea elephants, penguins and a variety of sea birds whose cries broke the eerie quiet of the place.

Once it was established that there were no survivors on the islands NEPTUNE set off on a course more easterly than southerly, heading into steep seas and gale force winds. The weather deteriorated rapidly now they were well into the "roaring forties" and the five-day passage to Kerguelen proved rough and unpleasant.

At noon on October 16th 1940 the beautiful barren island was sighted. A place rarely visited even in peacetime, Kerguelen, the largest island in the Antarctic area of the southern Indian Ocean is about 80 miles long with an area of about 1,400 sq miles. It is so indented with long narrow inlets, resembling Norwegian fjords that no point on the island is more than a dozen miles from the sea.

Kerguelen was discovered in 1772 by a French navigator and nobleman, Kerguelen-Tremarac, a Breton, who thought he had found the mythical Southern Continent that everyone was looking for in those days.

Captain Cook disposed of that theory when he traversed the whole Southern Ocean in 1773/75 and in 1776 this greatest of all British navigators landed at Christmas Harbour, Kerguelen, the same landfall HMS NEPTUNE made nearly two centuries later. Cook wasted no time there, and the island has since been left in solitude except for visiting sealing and whaling parties.

Our 20th century naval explorers did not have to venture into the unknown like their 18th century predecessors, for once the island's northern shore had taken shape, NEPTUNE launched her seaplane. The ancient Fairey Sea-Fox had proved invaluable on many previous occasions and now was to prove its worth once more. Four hours later a message was received from her pilot that all the fjords had been searched and there was no sign of life ashore. That short afternoon's work would have taken Captain Cook almost a month to perform.

There was still Royal Sound, shown on the charts as Baie de Morbihan, to explore as well as the island's south coast. Royal Sound was a likely base for a raider, being a magnificent sheet of water at the eastern end of the island capable of sheltering the entire German Navy. With its numerous inlets it covers an area of 200 square miles. NEPTUNE steamed northward and clear of the island that night, preparing to enter Royal Sound at dawn the next day. With all her guns at the ready and the Sea-Fox airborne, she steamed through the narrow Passe Royale at 6.30 on the morning of the 17th and everybody on deck forgot the cold and greyness of the hour while gazing with interest at the scene unfolding before them. All around were snow-capped peaks, dropping sheer to the water's edge and the Sound itself was dotted with small islands and rocks. The captain and navigator had no time to waste admiring the scenery as they coned NEPTUNE up the badly charted fjord. The aircraft flashed a message to the ship that there was no sign of a raider in Royal Sound so NEPTUNE continued up the fjord, a leadsmen in the chains shouting the depth at regular intervals, until they had gone up as far as was prudent.

Once anchored, a whaler was lowered and a landing party, armed to the teeth, went ashore. They saw nothing but seals and penguins but brought back geological and botanical specimens including the famous Kerguelen cabbage (*Pringlea antiscorbutica*), first discovered by Captain Cook, as well as shooting a couple of petrels, all of which were presented to the S.A. Museum in Cape Town.

NEPTUNE weighed anchor at one o'clock and steamed out of the sound, then turned south and west to circle the whole island while the aircraft was flown off again only to signal another negative report. This time they had crossed the 50th parallel. By nightfall NEPTUNE was steaming north, heading for Mauritius where an oil tanker was waiting her at Port Louis. On the way was another diversion to St. Paul and Amsterdam Islands, two historical French posts of France which

lie about 38 degrees south, midway between South Africa and Australia. They being off the beaten track, were likely dumping grounds for unwanted prisoners

-: 23 :-

St. Paul was a delightful island. Though they failed to find any survivors there, parties were landed to examine a disused crayfish cannery and provision depot, and found the huts still in excellent repair. They were amazed to find the remains of an un-washed-up meal and some French newspapers, still legible if somewhat yellow with age, on the tables.

A story went around that the settlement had been hurriedly abandoned owing to the jealousies of five women who accompanied the crayfish canners and who started such feuds and rivalries that the men were compelled to leave their paradise to the penguins. Judging from what they left behind them, they certainly cannot have wasted much time when they decided to leave.

St. Paul island is the top of an extinct volcano peeping out of the Indian Ocean. At the northern end there is a gap through which boats can pass into the crater lake which is incredibly deep and abounding in fish, as is the whole area. The men left in the ship were soon hauling in record catches on hastily rigged hand lines. All were sorry when it was time to leave the beautiful solitude of St. Paul.

They anchored in Port Louis harbour on October 26, having steamed over 6,000 miles since leaving Simon's Town without encountering a single ship on their journey across the lonely Southern Ocean.

The result may have been fruitless, but the cruise was one that no one who served in NEPTUNE at that time will forget. Their Lordships' theory was not so far wrong, however, for German raiders used Kerguelen as a base the year after this cruise. Merchant Navy survivors were found in the same year on the other side of the Indian Ocean on one of the Dutch East Indian Islands. So both theories were proved correct and NEPTUNE's epic voyage had not been a waste of time

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Information has just come to light concerning the somewhat hurried abandonment of the crayfish factory and provisions depot on St Paul Island. This will appear in the next edition of the Bulletin.

FARMER PECK'S INN

R.R. Langham-Carter

For most of the 19th century Peck's Inn on the eastern side of the main road in the fishing hamlet of Muizenberg was one of only two places of lodging or refreshment between Cape Town (15 miles) and Simon's Town (seven miles). Here stopped passengers and crews of ships, Royal Navy personnel and other folk travelling on business or pleasure. Many of them referred to it in their memoirs.

The brothers:

Arthur Davey, in his article on the Inn in Janus (University of Cape Town, 1974) called the brothers Peck, Yorshiremen. But in fact their death notices in the Cape Archives show they were born at Rye Farm in Culham, a village on the Oxfordshire bank of the Thames about 10 miles downstream from Oxford, their parents being Simon Peck and his wife Sophia Williams.

Henry was born in 1788 and Simon in 1790. Both worked as farm labourers and Henry also as a shepherd on an uncle's farm on Salisbury Plain. Henry remained quite illiterate though Simon did manage at any rate to sign his name on his will in 1840. In his "Seven Years Service on the Slave Coast" (London 1850) Sir Henry Huntly wrote that Henry Peck received nothing except "scanty fare and the reversion of his uncle's outworn habiliments" and therefore ran away to sea. Henry Keppel (later Admiral) wrote in his autobiography that the brothers had been shipwrecked shortly before he reached the Cape in 1827. They had, however, arrived separately. Simon landed from the JANE on 9 April 1817 and was granted permission to settle in the Cape Colony on 17 February 1819, with Edward George and Matthew Fysh as his sureties. In her interesting work "Bay Between the Mountains" (Cape Town 1985) Arderne Tredgold thought Henry could have arrived when the ships EMMA and DORA were wrecked in 1820. This could be so as his residence permit, with George Hurter and Simon Peck as his sureties, was issued on 29 December 1820.

Peter Philip, however, has shown in his "British Residents at the Cape" (Cape Town 1981) that Simon had arrived before that, landing from the JANE on 9 April 1817 and being granted permission to settle on 17 February 1819, with Edward George and Matthew Fysh as his sureties. Henry could have been wrecked in 1820 as his permit of residence, with George Hurter and his brother Simon as his sureties, was dated 29 December 1820.

Opening the Inn:

By one account "savings from the wreck enabled them to erect a shelter at Muizenberg" while Tredgold states that they first rented Government cottage number 7 there but soon purchased it and in 1828 Henry obtained a quitrent grant of the land on which it stood. The site was adjacent to the camp ground where troops rested on the march between Cape Town and Simon's Town which Cape Town City Council later made into a bowling green. Then or later the Pecks came into possession of two morgen of land as shown in Simon's will.

In addition to farming their land Simon ran a service of boats which handled the cargoes of ships in Simon's Bay and Henry was reported in 1846 to have been "a famous smuggler" in his younger days.

Their next step forward was, when as Keppel says, they "commenced by selling ginger beer to midshipmen". But they soon were fined and Henry was imprisoned for vending liquor on Sundays and for other licensing offences. However, the Simon's Town Licensing Board gave them and also one Samuel Roberts a licence to sell malt liquors in 1828 and the Inn (which started in 1825) came into full

operation from about that date. The Pecks were certainly in full business by March in that year when Keppel drove a tandem down from Wynberg. "At Farmer Peck's the horses stopped without consulting me and Peck Junior (? Simon) suggested they should each have a bottle of ale" and this was supplied. "It was evident that it was not their first performance." Not surprisingly when they resumed their journey towards Simon's Town the vehicle careered over the rocks onto Fish Hoek beach, though fortunately with no serious injuries.

Five years later, in July 1833, the wife of an officer in the 16th Regiment of Foot recorded that they "stopped for an hour at Farmer Peck's cottage to rest the horses and to refresh ourselves with excellent Constantia etc." Sir Henry Huntly also observed that Henry Peck "supplied liquor in the most unlimited manner, yet he carefully abstained from it himself." Henry Tracey, a visitor in 1838, was surprised to find that the rather humble building "contained delicacies and a good attendance with clean linen."

The hostelry was advertised as late as 1837 as Peck's Travellers' Inn but it was normally known as "Farmer Peck's". This name probably referred only to Henry and Simon seems to have little to do with the Inn. No doubt he worked their small farm and on his death notice he is described as a farmer and not as an inn-keeper.

Simon had his will written out by a Notary Public named Alexander Hutchinson and signed it on 12 May 1840, with seven witnesses, Raven, George Baker, Charles Viles, Dirk Jurgens, George Coline, Elizabeth Potts and Wilhelmina Jurgensen. He left his half share in the farm to his brother and made him the sole executor. Henry had built himself a house near the Inn. When asked why he had done so, he had replied with a wink "for change of air for Mrs. Peck". Simon had no home of his own and lived in Henry's house where he died on 27 May 1840. He was buried on the same day by Holt Okes, the Colonial Chaplain of Wynberg whose parish included Muizenberg.

One, Rosina Margaretha Peck of Muizenberg, who had been born in August 1807 was buried by the Wynberg Minister T.R.A. Blair on 9 November 1852. No wife or children are listed in Simon's papers. Henry had married Elizabeth Mary Collings and they had a daughter Sophia Sarah Ann. Both ladies worked in the Inn and they are described in 1831 as "extremely popular in their avocations."

Rosina Margaretha's first names suggest that she was not a Peck sister but a member of one of the Muizenberg fishing families but I have been unable to identify her further.

Henry's last years:

Lawrence Green in his "Tavern of the Seas" stated that "the Peck's advertised their inn for sale, with six acres of land, in 1841. This was probably on account of Simon's death in the previous year, Henry feeling that he could not run both the hotel and the farm. The land may have been sold but Henry continued at the Inn until he died. Someone who lunched there in 1841 noted that "the old fellow was a regular character.....He had not the least air of being obliged to you for your custom." At about the same date Louisa Bagot recorded that Henry served her with good champagne. "He waited on his guests, talking to them while they ate. He was said to be very rich but was always to be seen only in his shirt sleeves." The establishment probably became even better patronised five years later when a horse bus service for mails and passengers was opened between Cape Town and Simon's Town and soon ran every day and still more in 1850 when a daily mail cart service began.

Henry and his wife made their joint will with Alexander Hutchinson on 25 October

1853 and, being illiterates, both applied their marks. On 18 August 1855 they got him to add a codicil which cancelled the nomination of Dr. Henry Drew of Wynberg as an executor and this was witnessed by John Jordan and W. Serbt. Henry was gravely ill by 6 July 1857 when H.M. White the principal of Diocesan College in Rondebosch called in on his way to hold a service. "Today I have ridden to Kalk Bay to see Farmer Peck once more." Peck in fact died in his home only three months later, on 6 July, and was buried by the Wynberg chaplain W. Burton Phillipson two days afterwards. There are no Peck gravestones in Wynberg cemetery and they were probably buried on their own land. The kloof immediately above the hotel site is still called Peck's Valley. The head of the valley was thought to be shaped like a woman's head and some local residents felt that it rather resembled Mrs. Peck!

The building

During its nearly one hundred years of life the Inn building was altered and enlarged and there are views of it at different stages. The English visitor Henry Tracey who was there in 1838 thought it "a mean structure". The pencil sketch reproduced in his "A Visit to Cape Town in 1838" (Johannesburg 1980) shows the main (west) front from the road. The southern half of the inn is slightly loftier than the northern and has a separate thatched roof, with the lower ends of the roofs flush with the top of the walling. At the extreme southern end a brick hearth with a chimney projects from what was no doubt the kitchen wall. There is one shuttered window to the left of the entrance doorway and there are two on the right.

A sketch made by Emma Baillie Hamilton at about the same time (which the South African ambassador Dr. Henri Luttig purchased in London in 1971) shows the Inn from the south side. The tallest part is at the west end and a blank wall bears the words FARMER PECK in very large lettering. A long low building with its own thatched roof extends eastwards, with the kitchen chimney about halfway along. Part of a separate building appears to the south, probably Henry Peck's residence.

Laura Cole who lunched there in 1841 called it "a little low house that seemed unlikely to offer the accommodation offered in the verse" (on the Inn's sign-board). "The household furniture was rough and plain and yet Peck could produce a show of goodly plate." By 1846 Mrs. Bagot noted "the dining room walls were covered with glaring coloured prints." And there had been other decoration. As Huntley related, in about 1831 "an officer undertook to delineate in a succession of most ludicrous portraits painted in oil what he decided to be the ancestors of Henry Peck." Perhaps these did not last long as no later visitors have noticed them.

Two photographs, taken by Arthur Elliott after 1900, are preserved in the Cape Archives. The walls were of Cape brick, probably protected by white lime wash. The south wall had four upright un-shuttered windows and the words FARMER PECK'S painted in large letters above them. The front had two shuttered windows on either side of the entrance. By now the thatched roof projected over this frontage and also over the north wall. It was supported by thin iron posts and the space between the posts and the walls formed a covered stoep. A bench just to the south of the entrance enabled guests to watch the traffic passing along the road. And a photograph reproduced in JANUS in 1974 showed the south side with three windows and the words FARMER PECK'S over the lefthand window.

After the Pecks:

After Henry Peck's death J.G. Rathfelder of the Halfway House at Diep River bought the Inn and later it belonged to the Auret family of Muizenberg. Queen Victoria's son Prince Alfred landed in Simon's Bay on 24 July 1860 and started northwards next morning with a suitable retinue, the author of the book "Progress of His Royal Highness Prince Alfred" (London 1861) remarking that "the objects of

special interest on the road were.....and the quaint old hostelry of Farmer Peck's, celebrated in many a traveller's tale." Flags, flowers and arches decorated the royal route and at Peck's "the front of the house was decorated with evergreens. Couched above the door was a stuffed South African leopard, springing upon an antelope."

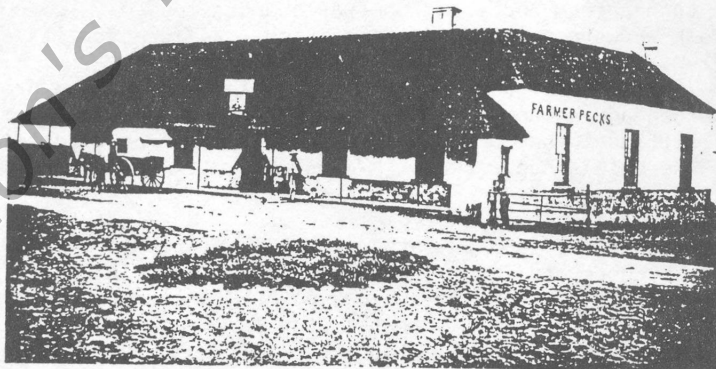
A writer of 1879 said the inn was "notable for the fat woman who lives there and draws the ale in the bar" and another that she was one of the sights of the district: one would like to know more about her.

The railway from Cape Town reached this locality in 1882 and Government sold off its first plots of land in July 1883 and seaside houses began to be erected. Among the first "developers" was Isadore Hirsch and he also bought the inn from the Rathfelders in 1887. The Jagger Library of the University of Cape Town has a photocopy of the letterhead of a printed bill of his, dating from this time. Farmer Peck's continued to come into literature, with J.J. Aubertin noting in his "Six Months in Cape Colony" (London 1886) that he had "lodged comfortably" there for two nights in the previous December. By 1894 the hotel had its own bathing box on the beach and this was the only one there for some years. Three years later a Kimberley syndicate bought the inn for £12,000.

The end:

Farmer Peck's was demolished in 1904 and the Grand Hotel erected on the site. The Inn sign was preserved and put on show in the hotel foyer and when the Grand was in its turn pulled down in 1965 the sign was acquired by the Africana Museum where it can still be seen.

Peck's had been widely known for two factors in particular, the good fare it produced and the bizarre nature of its signboard. The latter is fully described in numerous memoirs and would require a complete article to itself.



Farmer Peck's Inn at Muizenberg as it was late last century, with the famous sign still displayed over the entrance

SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE ROYAL NAVY 1955

Lt Cdr. F.C.Windsor RN (Rtd)

I arrived in Simon's Town in March 1955 to take up the duty of Senior Officer Reserve Fleet, relieving Lt Cdr. Wheeler. Reserve Fleet then consisted of one ship HMS WAGER and I had been told by Admiralty that there was every likelihood of WAGER being taken back to England under tow. Within six months this indeed happened. However, Captain Bone, then Captain-in-Charge of the Dockyard arranged that I stay on as First Lieutenant HMS AFRIKANDER, the shore base for the Station. I would add here that I had served with Captain Bone as one of his Commanding Officers in the 10th Minesweeping Squadron in the Far East from 1950 to 1952 and he had asked Admiralty for me to be sent to Simon's Town when I completed my commission in HMS BOXER in 1955.

The ship's company of AFRIKANDER was very small - I forget the exact number - and my Chief Bos'n's Mate was "Tubby" Parsons who later transferred to the South African Navy when Simon's Town Dockyard was handed over to the South African Navy. The Commander-in-Chief South Atlantic and South America was Vice Admiral Campbell and he and his Staff were borne on the books of HMS AFRIKANDER.

In addition to my duty as First Lieutenant AFRIKANDER I also served on the Staff of the C-in-C as Fleet Sports Officer and as Provost Marshall, Cape Town, also standing-in as Fleet Intelligence Officer on occasions when the Fleet Intelligence Officer, a Colonel of Marines, was absent. The F.I.O. was then situated in the Castle in Cape Town where a small staff was borne.

On first arriving in Simon's Town married quarters were provided in the old Naval Hospital Flats above Runciman Drive, but, on assuming the duty as First Lieutenant AFRIKANDER I moved to a "named quarter" which was at the corner of Arsenal Road and was called "Sunnyside" and I occupied it until Captain D. McEwan was appointed as Chief of Staff to the Admiral prior to the handing over of the Dockyard.

An interesting incident about the Hospital Flats Residence in which I lived was that just prior to my family and I taking up residence there it was exorcised by the Chaplain of the Dockyard. We were not told of this until some time later when one night my wife hearing footsteps in the passage and thinking it was our daughter went to her room and found she was sound asleep. On recounting this to other naval folk we were told of the exorcising - so much for its efficacy!

Baboons on the mountainside were wont to come down and raid the grape vines which grew in the garden and on one occasion one baboon was found in our lounge by the maid; it was sitting in one of the armchairs turning over a letter which happened to be there. The maid disappeared with a scream!

One of my duties was to sit on the Committee of the Royal Naval Club, situated on the right of the slope leading into Simon's Town opposite the West Dockyard Gate. On transfer of the Dockyard, we the Committee, decided that all furniture and fittings together with £500 capital be bequeathed to the Club on the understanding that Royal Naval Officers have use of the Club in perpetuity. An interesting item about the existing Seven Seas Club is that it cost £4,000 to build!

When Captain Bone retired, a party was held for him and in addition to the song which follows, sung by three of us, the following signals were read out:

"Admiralty to C-in-C SA & S.A.: Following reduced estimates utmost economy to be effected."

Reply: "C-in-C SA & S.A. to Admiralty: Economy cut to the Bone, Bone despatched via Union Castle ship."

The Song For Massed Male Choir and Piano
(Tune - Much Binding in the Marsh)

1. At Simonstown in the Cape
We feel the transfer business very deeply,
At Simonstown in the Cape,
And think the Union's getting off too cheaply.
For three-quarters of a million they can hardly have a moan,
They are getting the whole Dockyard from the very bottom stone,
For another hundred thousand we'd have thrown in Captain Bone.
At Simonstown in the Cape.
2. At Simonstown in the Cape
We're a happy band of busy little workers
At Simonstown in the Cape.
There isn't any room down here for shirkers,
No matter if its office work or one of many trades,
Our interest never falters and our energy ne'er fades,
But all are left astern by our dashing Harry Blades,
At Simonstown in the Cape.
3. At Simonstown in the Cape
The ladies lead a life of ease and leisure;
At Simonstown in the Cape
They fill in all their days with idle pleasure.
If hubby's eccentricities disturb the family calm,
They can always flirt with somebody on board the "PELICAN"
And if the ship is not in port there's always Uncle Sam
At Simonstown in the Cape.
4. At Simonstown in the Cape
The South Atlantic Fleet is always busy.
At Simonstown in the Cape
It's dashing in and out makes us quite dizzy.
The mighty vessels come and go, the windlass heaves and groans,
The Captains call on potentates and presidents and thrones
And all is wild confusion thanks to Loftus Peyton-Jones
At Simonstown in the Cape.
5. At Simonstown in the Cape
We cannot boast that we are very wealthy;
At Simonstown in the Cape.
That matters naught, however, if we're healthy.
But if the worst should happen and you think that you are ailing
Your breathings very difficult, your pulse is slowly failing
Then ring up Desmond Bluett and you'll find that he's gone
At Simonstown in the Cape sailing
6. At Simonstown in the Cape
Our gamemanship is rightly very famous.
At Simonstown in the Cape
We play the game from Wynberg to Hermanus.
At each and every sort of game we've many well known names,
At manly sports like football and at all the indoor games;
But there's not one who can compare with Geoffrey Hopkin-James
At Simonstown in the Cape.

7. At Simonstown in the Cape
The N.O.I.O. works like twenty niggers;
At Simonstown in the Cape
He fools around with shells, and guns, and triggers.
But to an age old question he can open wide the door,
So if you find a cannon and then peer into its maw,
Why then you'll know the answer to just what the Butler saw
At Simonstown in the Cape.
8. At Simonstown in the Cape
The Q.H.M. is always making movements;
At Simonstown in the Cape
The Dockyard heads are needing great improvements,
There's anchors, cables, chains and buoys all piled up -
that's a fact
And Dougal Mathers serving charts in shining bowler hat
As well as learning Afrikaans, he'll have to learn some tact.
At Simonstown in the Cape.
9. At Simonstown in the Cape
On holiday we're all as mad as hatters
At Simonstown in the Cape.
The distance covered is the thing that matters.
We set off in the mornings and we drive until it's dark
In an effort to see Durban, the Zambezi and the Park
But if you're in no hurry you can go with Brian Stark.
At Simonstown in the Cape.
10. At Simonstown in the Cape
A final verse before you must dismiss us
At Simonstown in the Cape.
We'll sing about Sir Geoffrey and his missus.
We know that you're expecting it. You think it would be fun
If we poked a little Charlie at our big chief, Number One,
But we all know that that's a thing that simply isn't done
At Simonstown in the Cape.

The Massed Choir consisted of Lt. Cdr Dougal Mathers (his son Jeremy is now a Captain in the SAN), Lt Cdr Nicholson, Naval Secretary to the Captain-in-Charge, and myself. There was NO musical accompaniment of any kind. The author of the song was Lt Cdr Nicholson who on his departure from the Station took early retirement and I have heard nothing from him since.

Dramatis Personae

- Verse 2: Harry Blades was Naval Stores Officer - a large man who disappeared into limbo after leaving the Station.
- Verse 3: "Uncle Sam" was the Fleet Dental Officer, a bachelor and a very keen Rugby Referee who on retirement emigrated to New Zealand where he died of a heart attack while refereeing.
- Verse 4: Loftus Peyton-Jones was Staff Officer - Operations and he eventually retired as a Commander. He is now Secretary to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in the U.K.
- Verse 5: Desmond Bluett was the Medical Officer and also Sailing Officer - hence "gone sailing". He specialised in gynaecology although there were no Wrens on the Station! He now practices in London and has rooms in Harley Street.
- Verse 6: Geoffrey Hopkins-James was the Fleet Padre - a rather large man who played no games at all!
- Verse 7: "the Butler" was Cdr Butler - the Naval Ordnance Inspector - a rather dashing man with the ladies.

- Verse 8: Lt Cdr Dougal Mathers was the Queen's Harbour Master and was about to retire hence the reference to "shining bowler hat" !
- Verse 9: Brian Stark was the Flag Lieutenant. The verse alludes to the endeavours of most officers to see as much of Southern Africa as possible during their two years on the Station. One of his most brilliant "gaffs" was on the occasion of the inspection of one of three Radio Stations by the Admiral. One Station was called Cape South and was at the top of Redhill where the existing Signal Station is, another was called Slangkop at Kommetjie and the third was Cape East away over in the direction of Somerset West. The Flag Lieutenant took the Admiral to the wrong Station which was about 20 miles away from that one due to be inspected!
- Verse 10: The Sir Geoffrey and his missus were Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Robson, the C-in-C and Lady Robson. After retirement from the Royal Navy he became Lieutenant Governor of Guernsey, Channel Islands.
- Verse 11: Additional Verse found in my archives but never sung

At Simonstown in the Cape
 Our wives have social graces to remember
 At Simonstown in the Cape
 Their duties last from Jan thro' to December
 Cocktail parties, dances and Braaivleis they have in any weather
 Creche meetings, Guild and tennis keep them going hell for leather
 And so dear guests a toast for you
 Our hostess Grannie Heather
 At Simonstown in the Cape.

The occasion was held on Captain Bone's retirement (date unknown) in Belmont House. Number present about 100.



Looking down Seaforth Road from the Main Road. Where the two men are

NOT QUITE A STORM IN A TEACUP!

A.E. Read

A reference to a severe storm in Simon's Town and considerable damage done by it was seen by the writer when reading Laurence Green's books. Peter Humphries kindly agreed to search in the Archives for the relevant copy of the Cape Times and this is what he found:

"Friday June 16, 1905. Heavy Rains: Floods in the Peninsula: Roads and Houses damaged.

"The severity of the downpour which began on Wednesday night and extended far into yesterday morning, is amply demonstrated by its effects all over the Peninsula. The Cape Flats especially, from their low-lying and level nature, speedily showed evidence of the flood, and large sheets of water were nearly everywhere seen.(The report then continues to detail damage etc in Green and Sea Point, Woodstock, Salt River, Observatory, Mowbray, Rondebosch, Wynberg, Plumstead, Retreat, Kalk Bay and Muizenberg and mentions that the heaviest rainfall was registered at The Quarry, Woodstock, where 3.2 inches were measured.) The whole of Fish Hoek beach was converted into one great lake, the road representing one of its banks.

Simon's Town:

More damage appears to have been done at Simon's Town than any other place in the Peninsula. The rains for the last couple of days have not been characterised by violent outbursts, but it has been incessant. The proverbial old inhabitant opines that never has there been such a fall of rain - that is of course taking the week as a whole - since 1862.

In various parts of the town, walls have been falling almost daily. Just above the main road, a house came down the other day, due to the heavy torrent of water rushing down the mountain. Repairs were only effected yesterday. Another house is said to be in a precarious condition. In Cole Point Road on Wednesday morning, a kitchen suddenly collapsed without warning. Fortunately all the inmates were out of danger at the time and no one was hurt. Yesterday a wall in Budge's Lane collapsed. Similar occurrences have also been reported from other parts of the Municipality. But the most damage has been done at what is known as Seaforth. Here the Council had just completed the laying of a stormwater drainage system, also the kerbing and channelling of roads in the vicinity, a work costing many thousands of pounds.

Early yesterday morning the whole of this work was completely swept away by the rush of water from the mountain. Three pipes were broken, and immense damage was done. The damage is of the most serious nature, and will cost a considerable amount of money to replace. The Engineer was on the spot until late last night. Numbers of sluices have been constructed to carry away the torrent of water. The whole of the mountain thereabouts has been torn by the water into ravines, by means of which a torrent rushes across the road, which is blocked by large masses of sand and stones. There are numerous holes thereabouts, and part of the road is considered dangerous for pedestrians.

As one resident put it, "half the mountain has come down", but though that is not strictly true, an enormous amount of rock, sand etc. has fallen. Gangs of men are at work in order to prevent further damage. It is estimated that there is 14,000 cu.ft. of stones, mud, etc on the road. In some places it is piled up 10 feet and in other parts 7 feet.

A curious affair happened at a house on the mountain side the other day. A resident stopped at the door of his cottage the morning before last, as was his

usual custom, to light his pipe. He placed it in his mouth and immediately he did so, a descending stone struck it and smashed it in half. On looking up, he discovered that a portion of the wall was falling. But slight damage was done to the house.

At yesterday evening's meeting of the Simon's Town Municipal Council, communications were read from Messrs. D. McKay, Jenkin Brothers, and Struben, complaining of the damage being done to their properties by stormwater. The latter case was at Seaforth. After a short discussion, it was decided to refer these matters to the Public Works Committee for its consideration and report. It was stated that owing to the damage to the Seaforth drainage, the Engineer would be unable to attend the Council meeting. It was further mentioned that steps were being taken to deal with the matter."

In the Cape Times of June 17 it was stated that it will cost over £1,000 to repair the stormwater system at Seaforth. Gangs of men were being employed for the purpose of clearing the road.

The writer then visited the Government Archives and looked up the relevant minutes of Simon's Town Municipal Council Meetings for the year to see what had transpired.

At a meeting of the Public Works Committee held on Wednesday 14th June, 1905, at 4 p.m. (Present Councillors R.S. Whyte - Mayor, W. Runciman, MLA, B. Anthony, J.W. Budge and P.F. Hugo) the Town Engineer submitted a report as requested dealing with the stormwater flowing down the steps between the Central Hotel and the Attwell Baking Co. premises. It was resolved that the Town Clerk go to Cape Town on the morrow - put the case before the Council's attorneys and ask what steps should be taken to effect a remedy and to instruct them to carry out such steps as they think necessary.

Regarding the Seaforth Road damage, the Town Engineer reported that he had made arrangements with Sir John Jackson Ltd subject to the approval of the Council for bringing down from the Quarries, stones and clay for filling in the ravine washed out, for about 8/- per cu.yd. The rubble to be taken to the corner of the Blockyard from which place the Council would have to cart it to the road. Resolved to recommend the Council to adopt this arrangement. (STM 3A/53 - Ref. 1/1/1/8 Cape Archives).

The damage had been caused right down Seaforth road as far as Seaforth House (Mr. Chas. Struben) and even into what is now Kleintuin Road (Water's Edge House of Mr. Syfret). Mr. McKay's property was in Smith's Lane and the Council agreed to divert future stormwater.

Full meetings of the Council (with Mr. Howells also present) were held in June and after considerable discussion it was decided to instruct the Town Engineer to prepare specifications and call for tenders for carrying out the work in 6 weeks, the kerbing, guttering and a new surface drain on the South-East side of Seaforth road to be left over for after consideration. Eight tenders of widely varying amounts were received from: G. Burton; Barrabel, Glass & Co.; J. de Villiers and van der Poll, Wilson; P. McPherson; Jenkin Bros; Dowden & Co.; and Mr. C. Robins. Sir John Jackson wrote in asking to be excused from tendering but stating that they were quite prepared to stand by their original arrangement with the Town Engineer to supply rubble from their quarries for 32/- per truck delivered in the Blockyard. It was agreed to accept the tender of Barrable & Glass and the contractors were asked to commence work the following Monday.

On 23rd June it rained again and further damage was reported from behind E.K. Green Building and D.G. van Breda wrote in claiming £16.3/- for his tenant for damage done to tenant's furniture and personal effects. Mr. Meyer wrote in

regarding stormwater flowing through the Old Rectory. The Town Engineer was instructed to purchase the necessary pipes to divert this water across the main road to the Divisional Council drain. Mr. R. Lankester wrote in claiming £800 for damage and this was referred to the Public Works Committee and Town Engineer for a report.....At the meeting of the P.W.C. on Monday 26th June Mr. Lankester's claim was turned down. The P.W.C. mentioned in their meeting that "there had been an unprecedented fall of rain....more than has fallen during any month since the Municipality has been constituted.....and which caused damage in all parts of the Peninsula." It was noticed in later minutes that Mr. Lankester settled for £60 and for some strange reason part of this was paid by Barrabel & Glass. Perhaps they were held responsible for some of the damage.

Heavy rains on Monday 16th October 1905 brought down more sand onto the Main Road at Seaforth from land approximately where the present High School stands. This partly blocked the road and made it very difficult for the carts to get to and fro. At a meeting on 22nd February 1906 the Divisional Council had written to the Municipality to say stormwater drains would be laid at Seaforth and it was resolved to write to the War Department to get them to construct stormwater drains from their property above the main road (where the helicopter base now is).

At a meeting on 8th March 1906 Mr. Runciman decided to proceed with the completion of Seaforth Road. It was decided to treat Seaforth Road as an "existing road" and use the Municipal Amendment Act of 1899 as their authority to construct the side-path and channel. The Council would pay one quarter of the costs and the proprietors of the adjoining land three-quarters. Also a channel to be laid on the upper side of Kleintuin Road to the end of Syfret's property. Poor old Mr. Shand whose firm is still involved in the affairs of the Council as a Consultant, was dragged along to an inspection in April 1906, as well as the full Council. It was decided on inspection of the Town Engineer's plans in situ to instruct him to go ahead on those lines. The Council also decided to write to the Officer Commanding the Royal Engineers and to get the Divisional Council also to write, holding the Royal Engineers responsible for the accumulation of water on War Dept. property and for further damage after that date.

At a meeting on 31st May 1906 it was reported that "work is at last proceeding" and in July 1906 the Council stated that it would hold Divisional Council responsible if the War Dept. do not build a stormwater drain. The Council reported that they had now completed their drainage and works.

Hardly a storm in a tea cup and severe enough damage to cause considerable discussion and debate to say nothing of the disruption! Unhappily the problem is still with us - 80 years on!

In 1985 it seems the lessons of 1905 regarding stormwater still remain unheeded. During the 1985 winter we have seen tons of our precious mountainside pour into False Bay and disappear in a brown stream past Ark Rock!

GOOD-BYE TO THE ST GEORGE

Extracts from The Cape Times obtained by Peter Humphries.

"Amid hearty cheers from the inhabitants on shore and the crews of the other ships afloat HMS ST GEORGE, the late flagship on the Cape of Good Hope station, steamed out of Simon's Bay on Thursday morning at 11.30 on her voyage Home. In accordance with time-honoured custom in the navy, the paying-off pennant floated from the mainmast all the day previous to sailing."
Cape Times Weekly Edition January 5, 1898.

HMS ST GEORGE - AN EVENTFUL COMMISSION

"The story of the ST. GEORGE's commission is one connected with many events in the development of several parts of Africa. Of the many ships that have left England for service abroad, none - certainly within recent years - have had a more eventful commission than has had the ST. GEORGE.

On 25th October, 1894 Captain Forsyth hoisted his pennant in the ST. GEORGE to take her out to relieve the RALEIGH as flagship on the Cape station. On the 3rd December she arrived in Simon's Bay, and two days afterwards Admiral Bedford, the then Commander-in-Chief, transferred his flag to her. The substitution of a new first-class cruiser for the obsolete RALEIGH was a considerable addition to the strength of the Cape squadron. When early in January 1895 the ST. GEORGE went to Cape Town and was thrown open to the public, the keenness the latter evinced to see her, and the numbers that thronged her decks, showed that this fact was not lost upon the Colonists.

The First Cruise:

On the evening of 8th January 1895, the Admiral commenced his annual West Coast cruise, going by the islands of St. Helena and Ascension to Bathurst on the Gambia, the most northerly point of the station. While at St. Helena the flagship was honoured by a visit from Dinizulu, the son of the late redoubtable Zulu king. There seemed but little prospect of an expedition during this cruise, as the West Coast chiefs had lately been behaving themselves with becoming decency and propriety.

When at Sierra Leone, however, news reached the Admiral of the rising of the Brass men and the looting of Akassa. The Brass men, it may be mentioned, are so called because they inhabit the basin of the Brass River, a tributary of the Niger. In consequence of this news, the ship proceeded with all despatch to Brass. A few days after her arrival the punitive expedition was commenced.

West African expeditions are soon forgotten, and it is therefore unnecessary to say much about the Brass River expedition, which has long since lost its interest. The fighting consisted chiefly of boat attacks on the stockades in the winding creeks of the Brass River. These stockades were all armed with smooth-bore ordnance, varying from 3-pdrs to 7-pdrs. The loss sustained from the ST. GEORGE was the first Lieutenant, Lt. George John Taylor, and two men killed. One of those extraordinary coincidences which sometimes occur was that Lt. Arnold, of the RALEIGH, was killed in the Gambia expedition on 22nd February, 1894 and Lt. Taylor fell in the Brass River expedition on 22nd February 1895, the anniversary of his predecessor's death.

On completion of the Brass River expedition the ST. GEORGE proceeded south, and arrived at the Cape on 9th March. Here two uneventful months were passed. Early in May Rear-Admiral Sir Frederick Bedford, KCB received orders to go Home to take up his appointment as Second Sea Lord at the Admiralty. The ST. GEORGE proceeded to Cape Town to give the Commander-in-Chief his farewell "send-off". An impressive "send-off" it was too, as the ST. GEORGE three times circled the TANTALLON CASTLE.

Pending the arrival of the new Commander-in-Chief, Rear-Admiral Rawson CB, Captain Gamble was appointed commodore.

Early in May 1895 the ST. GEORGE paid her first visit to Port Elizabeth. The unbounded hospitality and cordial reception extended by the Port Elizabeth people will not soon be forgotten by those who served in the ST. GEORGE.

East Coast Cruise:

On June 5, 1895, Rear-Admiral Rawson CB (now Vice-Admiral Sir Harry Rawson KCB) arrived and assumed his duties as Commander-in-Chief. For the first month with the new Commander-in-Chief the ST GEORGE swung peacefully round her moorings in Simon's Bay. On the evening of July 2, 1895, however, the annual East Coast cruise was commenced.

The departure of the flagship was timed to reach Delagoa Bay for the opening of the railway. The Transvaal Government had issued an invitation for the Admiral and staff and five officers to visit Pretoria. The reception in Pretoria was cordial in the extreme. There were representatives from the American, Portuguese, Dutch and German navies, but it required little discrimination to see that the British officers came in for more than their share of enthusiasm.

A visit to Johannesburg had been arranged. Unfortunately, however, a telegram arrived which necessitated the Admiral's immediate return, and in consequence he and his officers had to forgo their visit to the Rand. The cause of the Admiral's premature return was the rising in British East Africa. A few days afterwards the flagship arrived at Zanzibar, and immediately preparations were commenced for landing an expeditionary force. The necessity for this was that one of the most powerful Arab chiefs in British East Africa, the Sheik Tembaruk, had caused his people to rise.

Space forbids us to describe the expedition, which resulted in the downfall of Tembaruk. On the morning of the 17th August, 1895, his stronghold, Mwch, was successfully stormed and captured by the force under Admiral Rawson. On the conclusion of the Mwch expedition, the ST GEORGE returned to Simon's Town. From Durban she made a record passage - in 42 hours.

Prempieh:

When on the West Coast, early in 1895, those in the ST GEORGE learned that the vagaries and malpractices of King Prempieh of the Ashanti, had rendered an Ashanti expedition a very probable eventuality. Little surprise was therefore evinced when about the middle of November orders were issued to prepare the ST GEORGE for a West Coast cruise. On the 6th December 1895, the ST GEORGE proceeded to Cape Coast Castle to take part in the Ashanti expedition. On Christmas Eve she arrived off that dismal, fever-haunted West Coast town. Keen was the disappointment felt when it was announced that there would be a naval brigade in the expedition, but that the fleet would be assigned the irksome task of patrolling the coast. This was a part, however, destined not to be played by the flagship. Certain more stirring events, just then in embryo in the south, were about to be the cause of the ST GEORGE's presence being required elsewhere.

On Guard:

On the afternoon of 2nd January the squadron were preparing for sea when a cablegram arrived for the Admiral. Immediately the signal "Annul previous orders" was sent flying from the flagship, and steam for full-speed was ordered in the ST GEORGE and PHILOMEL. Very soon after these two ships left for an unknown destination. Considerable surprise as well as excitement was caused by the sudden and altogether unexpected departure of these two ships. It required but little discriminating power to conclude that something had happened beyond the

ordinary. Speculation covered every possibility and national emergency to account for the ST GEORGE's mysterious departure. Not until the ST GEORGE's arrival at the Cape on 8th January did those on board her learn the cause of her hurried departure. IT WAS THE JAMESON RAID.

Owing to the unsettled state into which South Africa was thrown the Admiralty issued orders for the flagship to remain at Simon's Town until further orders. Consequent on this a long spell ensued in South African waters. With the exception of a short visit to Cape Town, the flagship did not leave Simon's Bay until about the middle of April. During this month she was sent to East London in connection with the disembarkation of the 7th Hussars, then bound for active service in Rhodesia.

At Zanzibar:

On the 14th August, 1896, the Commander-in-Chief, having at last obtained permission to leave the Cape, commenced his annual East Coast cruise. Nothing characterised this cruise until the morning of the 26th, when off Zanzibar, considerable surprise was caused by seeing a steam cutter manned and armed approaching the ship. In the harbour nothing seemed unusual except that while the ensigns of the ships in harbour were half-masted, the red Arab flag was flying from the top of the staff on the Palace tower.

Soon, however, the state of affairs was learned. Upon the death of the late Sultan Mohammed bin Shwain - sudden as the deaths of the Sultans of Zanzibar generally are - his nephew, Sayid Khalid, attempted a coup d'etat. Having the advantage of early knowledge of the Sultan's demise, he seized the Palace before the Consular authorities could interfere, and proclaimed himself Sultan. Sayid Khalid's claim had never been recognised by the British Government, who had announced Hamid bin Mohammed bin Said as heir apparent. Such was the state of affairs, then, on the flagship's arrival.

Failing Sayid Khalid's unconditional surrender, it would be necessary to seize the Palace by force. The authorities were face to face with one of the gravest crises in the history of the Protectorate. The Admiral issued an ultimatum to Sayid Khalid, commanding his unconditional surrender, failing which the fleet would bombard the Palace. Meanwhile seamen and marines were landed for the protection of the inhabitants from the rebels. Nine o'clock the following morning was the hour at which the time allowed the usurping Sultan would expire. At that hour Sayid Khalid's flag was still flying. At five minutes to the hour the signal "open fire" was hoisted in the flagship. Scarcely had the hour pealed from the Palace tower when the signal was struck from the flagship.

The guns of the cruisers PHILOMEL and RACCOON and the gunboats THRUSH and SPARROW thundered forth simultaneously. The reply from the Palace was prompt. Nothing for the next ten minutes could be heard but the roar of artillery, while heavy smoke clouds hung over the ships and the Palace. The Admiral then deeming that the rebels had enough of it ordered cease firing. Still, however, could be seen the flash of guns through smoke of the now burning Palace. The fleet again opened fire and in ten minutes silenced forever the guns of the Palace.

The attitude of the Sultan's ship, the GLASGOW, was at first doubtful. Suddenly she opened fire on the ST GEORGE. Crash through her wooden sides came the flagship's 6-inch shell. In a few minutes her boats and anchors dropped from her and she sank in a cloud of smoke and coal-dust.

On occupying the Palace and Palace square there could be seen the effects of the shell. Strewn about in various attitudes and every conceivable state of mutilation were dead bodies, while several of the guns had been dismounted. Wreckage from the buildings was scattered everywhere.

Most of the rebels fled and attempted to join the native quarter of the town, but were intercepted by the various picquets. Unfortunately Sayid Khalid escaped, and obtained shelter in the German Consulate. That the German Government refused to give him up is well known, and needs no comment now.

After the bombardment the Admiral continued his cruise to the north and on the 24th September 1896 left for the Cape. Upon his arrival at Durban he disembarked and went on a visit to the Governor of Natal. In the ST GEORGE's commission, however, it was always the unexpected that happened. The Admiral had scarcely left when a cable arrived ordering the flagship back to Zanzibar. The GIBRALTAR, a sister ship to the ST GEORGE was also sent there. First it was thought that the reason for the Admiral's return was a native rising. Consequently when the ship arrived in Zanzibar harbour her seamen and marines were fallen in on deck ready to land at a moment's notice. There was, however, no necessity for landing. The salutary lesson of the bombardment had already borne fruit. The reason for the naval demonstration at Zanzibar must be sought elsewhere.

After a three weeks' stay at Zanzibar, the ST GEORGE turned her head to the southward once more, arriving at the Cape about the end of November. Here the last few weeks of 1896 were spent in peace.

At Benin:

It was not, however, for long that the ST GEORGE was to remain inactive. Early in January news arrived of the Benin massacre, and preparations were at once commenced for the punitive expedition. On 20th January 1897, the flagship left Simon's Bay for Brass. Space does not permit even the briefest account of the Benin expedition. When, however, it is remembered that all the stores, ammunition, provisions &c were drawn from, and prepared in the ST GEORGE, some idea of the work that fell to the flagship may be gleaned. On Captain Egerton, who was Chief of Staff, fell most of the work of organising the expedition. Among those of the ST GEORGE who fell were Surgeon Fyfe, than whom no one could have been more popular, and Sydney Ansell, torpedo instructor.

On the 4th March the ST GEORGE left Brass for the Cape. None too soon did she leave the fever-haunted coast, for soon the effects of the climate began to tell. Practically on the voyage down the ship was a floating hospital. The Cape climate, however, has a by no means unmerited reputation, and soon men recovered their wonted health and strength, although unfortunately some deaths occurred.

At Delagoa

Scarcely a month had passed after the ship's return when orders were issued for her to be once more in readiness for sea. The Commander-in-Chief had gone on a well earned holiday to Johannesburg, and had scarce arrived there when he was recalled. The ship's destination and the reason for their going was a closely guarded secret.

On the 14th April the ST GEORGE left Simon's Bay under sealed orders. On the morning of the 17th a surprise was in store for the people of Durban. At daylight ships of war could be seen approaching Port Natal from all directions. On this day the Admiralty had concentrated nine ships in Port Natal from three different stations - three different portions of the globe, without a soul outside the official circle being aware that such a movement was ever in contemplation, until the ships hove in sight of Durban. A few days afterwards the squadron proceeded to Delagoa Bay, and there remained for six weeks.

The excitement that this demonstration caused in South Africa is fresh in the memory of most people. Comment on it is now out of place. On the 21st May the Admiralty ordered the dispersal of the squadron, and the ST GEORGE left for the Cape. One of the leading features of the Jubilee procession in Cape Town was

the Naval Brigade and the models of the two ST GEORGES - the old and the new. The arrival of the DORIS on Christmas Eve has practically finished the ST GEORGE's commission. On the 30th she left for Home to pay off in Portsmouth. In a short time those who served in the ST GEORGE will be scattered on the four quarters of the globe, but in their hearts will live the memory of Admiral and Lady Rawson, and the friends they made, and the kindness with which they were received in South Africa."

Editor's Note: One of these models is in possession of the Simon's Town Museum.

A 'SOBERING' THOUGHT

A.E.READ

Have you often wondered how a small rock almost alongside the shore in Simon's Town came to be called Sober Island. It has often made me sit and think. This was where the first patent slipway in South Africa was built in 1856 and has just been dismantled and because of the earthworks required for building this slipway the island disappeared.

I am of the opinion that an early arrival to our shores who had probably sailed in the Royal Navy to Ceylon, christened this rock in one of his more whimsical moments. Trincomalee, a former naval station in Ceylon, has never been considered a 'desirable' posting and in fact when my own father came home and broke the news to my mother that he had applied for a position in Trincomalee, she was less than polite and he was under no misapprehension that should he take the position he would go without the pair of us!

Trincomalee came under the East Indies Station. Sober Island is not far from the harbour. It is a rounded fragment of dense jungle which looks as if at some time long ago it had broken away from the mainland and drifted with its crop of freshness into the open sea. On this unspoilt natural paradise naval men became children again and as children they prowled around bird-nesting and tearing their clothes as they made their way through bushy undergrowth. They bathed, climbed trees, knocked down coconuts and ran around half naked until, exhausted they stretched themselves in the long arm-chairs in front of the Clubhouse. Here for generations officers sought sanctuary from their nerve-racking messmates, and henpecked husbands, thwarted lovers and confirmed bachelors found peace; for here no mellow voice of female was allowed to break the stillness - the place, in fact, was woman-proof. Sober Island it was called. Yes, maybe it was - when the Squadron was at sea!

Bibliography: A Curate's Egg by Edgar Rea, one-time Chaplain, St. George's Church, H.M. Dockyard, Simon's Town.

SAILOR'S DELIGHT

John Beckett

Reports of a seaman's chest, tucked away in a Maritime museum and reputedly "covered in cigarette cards" had all the allure of buried treasure, too tempting to be ignored. So it was that the author found himself in the Simon's Town Museum, wondering if the journey round False Bay from his home in Somerset West would prove to have been worthwhile.

The museum is housed in a charming old building. Although it was firmly closed, being cleaning-up day, the Curator Mrs. Biggs and her staff could not have been kinder. My wife and I were let in as 'researchers' and were conducted through a maze of rooms to where the chest was, along with items of personal kit, in a large display case. Rumour had not lied; the open lid, about 900 x 510 mm, was so densely papered with cards that no timber was visible, with a double line on its inner sides for good measure. All except fifteen were early Americans and all, alas, firmly stuck down so that the backs could not be examined, even if I could have come within reach. Although a side panel in the display case was removed (another kindness) to allow me to wriggle my way in, I could not get really close to the lid itself. With only a slight knowledge of U.S. issues this made identification difficult, and comments on the "grey areas" in the list below would be most welcome:-

A. Positively Identified:

- (a) Allen & Ginter. Actors & Actresses, A36-41.1.A (30)
- (b) Duke. Fancy Dress Ball Costumes, D76-14A (23)
- (c) Duke. Yachts Colors of the World, D76-51A (Set of 50 plus many dups.)

B. Speculation:

- (a) Allen & Ginter. The World's Champions (4) (Wm. Muldoon, Wallace Ross, (Jos. Dion, John McKay)
- (b) " " " American Indian Chiefs (2) Names illegible (far end)
- (c) " " " Natives in Costume. One card, Bavarian Hunter.
- (d) Duke. Great Americans (2) William H. Lewood and Joseph Mulvey.
- (e) Allen & Ginter. Wild Animals of the World (2L) Polar Bear & Zebra.

C. No Idea

- (a) Beauties (A) 80x70 approx. Large heads with tiny bodies, all with fish motifs - e.g. Garfish. Bigger and more attractive than the BAT Marine & Water Girls.
- (b) Dogs. Highly coloured, no maker's name, all horizontal format. Appeared to be same size as above. (13)

There was no difficulty in recognising the British fifteen. Eight Taddy Orders of Chivalry 1st., presumably pasted in years after the others to fill spaces, and - the cherries on the top - seven of the Royalty, Actresses, Soldiers series! Made up of:- Prince of Wales, Tsar of Russia, King of Italy and Jessie Bond (as Yum Yum), plus Uhlan, the Cossack and the Zouave from the Soldiers. All of them, like the rest of the cards with few exceptions, in excellent condition as regards the fronts.

The last lot alone justified the trip, apart from the fact that the museum as a whole is fascinating and very well worth a return, and less specialised, visit. Besides, one could always dart back to have another few minutes with those Taddys!

The above article was written originally for a Collector's Club in Cheshire, U.K. The Curator of the Simon's Town Museum provided a copy with the author's permission to publish. Editor.