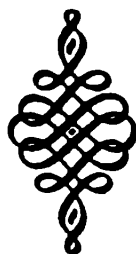




**SIMON'S TOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



**PRICE TO
NON-MEMBERS
R 5,00**

**VOL. XVIII NO.4
JULY 1995**

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ISSN 0037 - 5470.

ACTING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1994

Welcome to this, the 35th Annual General Meeting of the Society. As has become customary, this will be a combined meeting of the Society and of the Friends of the Simon's Town Museum, for as members of the Society you automatically become a Friend - two for one subscription.

Tragedy struck the Society in March last year when our beloved Chairman, Gerry Read, died suddenly and unexpectedly. For 13 years his solid and dependable leadership kept the Society on course and saw our financial position greatly improved. His personal investigation of all outgoing Tour itineraries, with his wife Audrey ensured that these outings went off without hitches. His behind-the-scenes activities were several and unsung and his presence is sadly missed at all our functions and meetings.

I think it proper that we should stand in silence for a moment in admiration, affection and tribute to Gerry for his contribution to this Society and to Simon's Town.

GENERAL:

A Historical Society is obviously concerned with history and history goes up to yesterday. We are now living through one of the most vital of South Africa's moments, second only to the trauma of the South African War. We must ensure that the changes that are happening now, in the local scene, are recorded for the edification of students two generations down the line. The newspaper cutting book, kept up to date by Museum Volunteers, will assist future researchers in this respect.

TOURS:

Our outgoing tours continue to be well supported and, therefore, profitable. They are successful social events that take members to places that they might never consider open to them. In the year under review we omitted the Autumn tour due to the uncertain security position and the very real possibility of having to forfeit our bus and accommodation deposits if we were forced into a late-cancellation situation. Our one-day tour to Elgin last October had flowers as the main theme and was much appreciated.

Our first two-day tour stay-over this year will be to the Cedarberg: it falls outside the scope of this report and is mentioned to re-assure members that planning of this kind of event is still very much an ongoing thing.

We have looked at going to Kimberley, rather too far by bus and rather too expensive by air. Rail travel with discounts for Senior Citizens bring the transport costs down to R268 per person. We shall again have to look into the logistics and costs of such a tour. After all, with Ferney Barnato's wife we have a link with the diamond town.

MEMBERSHIP:

We seem to have peaked at about 750, just up from last year but not confirmed as there are still a few outstanding subscriptions. A warm welcome to all our new members whose names are listed in the "Chronicle". They will find that we are not high-

brow historians but rather interested and concerned citizens. Our social events are a good way for new members and new residents to meet like minded folk at informal gatherings. The Museum's winter lectures are like old-time soirees and are a positive attribute to social cohesion.

We are sorry when members feel obliged to resign because they can ill-afford the subscription, which brings me to my next subject.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Our subscriptions are ridiculously low: single at R15.00 per year, double at R20.00 per year. Our mix is 234 single and 515 double members, giving an average sub per member of R10.83 per year and 90 cents per month. This is less than the cost of one newspaper! For this members receive two Bulletins and two Chronicles free, plus access to our tours and all Museum Functions. Your committee is convinced that this is good value. Yes, we would like more members, but are we prepared to lower our standards? As the subscription does not cover the actual cost of the Bulletins the oft-mooted reduced rate for scholars would mean a financial loss to the Society.

Your committee decided not to increase the subs for this coming year as it was feared that it would be counter-productive by virtue of resignations that inevitably follow any increase, however small, besides which we made a small surplus last year.

FINANCE:

Cas Colgate, our Treasurer, will go through the profit and loss statement and balance sheet with you shortly. We ended the year with a surplus of R1,000.00 compared to last year's deficit of R2,824.00. You will note that a significant source of income is from interest on our "Disaster-fund" nest-egg, which is one reason why we want to build up a solid savings portfolio. Generally we are financially sound, but this is not the time to be complacent; We're going to need every Rand that we have.

COMMITTEE:

No society can prosper without an active and harmonious committee. I can report that after the tragic loss of your Chairman the committee members rallied round and the work went on. Our everlasting Secretary, Dennis Kinkead-Weekes, continues to produce letters and minutes from a special sort of shorthand that he uses, while Cas Colgate worked wonders keeping income and expenditure correctly allocated so that we know exactly how much each activity or project costs - we are sorry that he will not be standing for committee next year as he has proved a useful player these last five years. We were sorry when "Brad" Wallace Bradley decided that he was more of a hands-on man than a committee-sitter and left us early last year. When you see what he has done on the Cable Restorer you will agree that our loss was their gain.

It is also good-bye to Grant Brockman who has been standing in as Acting Vice-Chairman and guiding my arm. Terry Korsten has been a full-bodied committee member able to turn his hand to matters practical. Margaret Cartwright has been helping with the Golden Oldies in Glencairn - who built them and who lived in them. Monica Thorne has helped with social functions while

Peter van Blommestein has kept a watching brief on environmental matters and attended endless meetings called by countless interest groups.

Your committee is strengthened by the very able and hard working Audrey Read, the Representative of the Friends of the Museum on the Board of Trustees and by Cherry Dilley and Cdr. Mac Bisset. Not to be forgotten is your Hon. Auditor, Eric Fry, who was at the first ever meeting of the Society 35 years ago and has never been able to escape. Later this evening you will be able to vote in a new committee to take us through 1995.

BULLETIN AND CHRONICLE:

The Bulletin remains our most prestigious achievement, made possible only by the unremitting labour of Audrey Road, assisted by Dr. Arthur Davey. This publication is produced within cost restraints which deny us the use of high definition photo production. The time might come when we have to seek sponsorship but times are hard for sponsors too. The Chronicle appears effective in keeping members appraised of events past and future and is intentionally very informal.

Printing and postage costs continue to spiral, having gone up 198% in the past ten years with no relief in sight. As the Bulletin is our Number One priority item we shall have to grit our teeth and accommodate these horrific increases.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

I wish to take this opportunity of congratulating member Sandy Myers on her research into Admiralty House and the printing (but regretfully not for publication) of a massively illustrated book called "The Story of a House". She has kindly donated a copy to the Museum where you will be able to read it.

JUST NUISANCE 50TH:

April 1 1994 was the 50th Anniversary of the Great Dane's death and the society joined forces with the Museum, Simon's Town Publicity Association, the S.A. Naval Museum, the HMS GANGES Association and many private individuals to arrange a fitting commemoration. We were honoured to be hosts to the British Consul and his wife. The Simon's Town Municipality must be thanked for their wholehearted support of this event.

100 CLUB

Audrey Read has run this fund raiser for one year during which time R2,600 has been raised for the Development Fund. During this year Audrey has also raised R1,500.00 from Walking tours in the Historic Mile: quite some feat. Audrey, we salute you. Incidentally, there will be another draw later this evening so someone will be the lucky person.

VOLUNTEERS:

The Museum could not do what it does without the volunteers in the shop and those regulars who undertake various projects and tasks for the Museum. These volunteers are all Friends of the Museum/Historical Society Members and I would like to add my thanks to Cherry's to these helpers. The ladies in the shop play a very important role as they are the first persons the visitor meets on entering the building.

S.A. NAVAL MUSEUM:

The S.A. Naval Museum has blossomed this year. A new access gateway from the Main Road has been built and a new collection of guns and range-finders has been mounted just inside the wall. Commander Bisset has had to fight to get what he has and we thank him for these efforts. In Naval parlance: "Bravo Zulu".

PLAQUES:

One of the objectives in our original Constitution was the placing of descriptive plaques on buildings and other places of interest in Simon's Town. We have not done this for many years, but we have been considering plaques commemorating people who left an impression on Simon's Town (like Mary Kingsley and Napoleon Bonaparte (yes indeed!)) and those on whom Simon's Town had an influence (Edgar Wallace and Rudyard Kipling) or those who passed this way (William Bligh, Horatio Nelson, David Livingstone). Plaques cost about R250 each, so it is not expenditure to be undertaken lightly.

Thank you for your patience.

I now call upon the Curator to present her report.

N.K. FARQUHARSON

ACTING CHAIRMAN 9.3.1995.

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H.M. DOCKYARD SIMON'S TOWN: DOCKING BOOK ENTRIES DURING THE 1ST WORLD WAR 1914 - 1918.

CDR. W.M. BISSET

The names of the ships listed in the Docking Book of H.M. Dockyard Simon's Town during the First World War are published on p.127. The descriptions of "any Special Works Performed and Certificate that Draught Marks are Correct" entries are almost all very similar: "Cleaning and coating bottom".

Draught Marks Correct: Three of the exceptions are the entries for s.s. ANTINOE which had a wire hawser removed from her propeller gland, s.s. CLAN MACTAVISH whose propeller was repaired and s.s. TYNDAREUS, mined by the German raider WOLF, which reads "Repairs to our Bottom Damage".

The Docking Book entries in respect of s.s. MOORLANDS and s.s. HEADCLIFFE reveal that the work (cleaning and coating bottom) was performed by contractors.

A tabular statement of all small craft including motor and steam boats and lighters not belonging to ships employed in Admiralty Service in Simon's Town dated 17 December 1919 has survived and made it possible to identify these vessels, whose details are not obtainable elsewhere.

HM DOCKYARD SIMON'S TOWN DOCKING BOOK ENTRIES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR 1914-1918

SHIP	TYPE AND CLASS	DRY DOCKED	UNDOCKED	SHIP	TYPE AND CLASS	DRY DOCKED	UNDOCKED
HMS HYACINTH	HIGHFLYER CLASS CRUISER	17.8.14	21.8.14	C374 (LENGTH : 71')	STEEL LIGHTERS (FLEET COALING SERVICE)		
HMS ASTREA	ASTREA CLASS CRUISER	24.8.14	25.8.14	C378 (LENGTH : 68'3")			
SS BANFESHIRE	ADRIATIC COLLIER	27.10.14	31.10.14	C380			
HMS BARTMOUTH	WEXMOUTH CLASS CRUISER	17.11.14	25.11.14	C381			
HMS WEYMOUTH		15.12.14	19.12.14	C382 (LENGTH : 42')			
HMS GOLIATH	CANOPUS CLASS BATTLESHIP	22.12.14	4.1.15	HMS CHALLENGER	CHALLENGER CLASS CRUISER	12.2.17	20.2.17
+HMS ALBION	CANOPUS CLASS BATTLESHIP	4.1.15	11.1.15	SS TYNDAREUS	TROOPSHIP	22.2.17	25.2.17
HMS GOLIATH	CANOPUS CLASS BATTLESHIP	12.1.15	26.1.15	HMS ORAPA	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	26.5.17	28.5.17
HMS ARMADALE CASTLE	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER AND (LUGGING IN OSMA)	27.1.15	2.2.15	HMS CHALLENGER	CHALLENGER CLASS CRUISER	7.6.17	14.6.17
HMS AFRIKANDER	FLAGSHIP (WIENER TUB)	27.2.15	3.3.15	HMS PRINCESS	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	14.6.17	17.6.17
HMS ASTREA	PATROL VESSEL	3.3.15	23.3.15	HMS KENT	MONMOUTH CLASS CRUISER	17.6.17	9.8.17
+SS CLAN MACTAVISH	DEFENSIVELY ARMED MERCHANT SHIP	23.3.15	27.3.15	COLLIER SHARWELL	2ND CLASS CRUISER (JAPANESE)	16.8.17	21.8.17
+HMS LACONIA	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	1.4.15	6.4.15	HMS TSUSHIMA	KING EDWARD VII CLASS BATTLESHIP	22.8.17	28.8.17
HMS PYRAMUS	P CLASS CRUISER	7.4.15	22.5.15	HMS NITAKA	KING EDWARD VII CLASS BATTLESHIP	3.9.17	10.9.17
HMS CHALLENGER	CHALLENGER CLASS CRUISER	22.5.15	5.6.15	+HMS BRITANNIA			
HMS RATTLER (SPLINT)	ARMED PATROL VESSELS	7.6.16	10.6.15	HMS MACEDONIA	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	17.9.17	29.9.17
HMS CHARON (ECLAIR)	VESSLS			HMS TALBOT	ECLIPSE CLASS CRUISER	9.10.17	7.11.17
HMS STYX (ETOILE)				HMS HYACINTH	HIGHFLYER CLASS CRUISER	7.11.17	29.11.17
REA CHUB	WATER TANK VESSEL			HMS TRENT	TRANSPORT/HOSPITAL SHIP	30.11.17	22.12.17
SERVIAN				HMS MINERVA	ECLIPSE CLASS CRUISER	22.12.17	29.12.17
C375 (LENGTH : 71')				SS MOORLANDS		28.12.17	3.1.18
C378 (LENGTH : 68'3")				SS HEADLIFFE		3.1.18	6.1.18
C379 (LENGTH : 68'3")				HMS TSUSHIMA	2ND CLASS CRUISER (JAPANESE)	8.1.18	13.1.18
HMS HYACINTH	STEEL LIGHTERS (FLEET COALING SERVICE)	9.7.15	19.8.15	SS CLAN MACPHEE	TRANSPORT	21.1.18	25.1.18
HMS CELTIC				HMS MINERVA	ECLIPSE CLASS CRUISER	25.1.18	5.3.18
HMS ARMADALE CASTLE				INTERMEDIATE CAISSON		8.3.18	25.3.18
HMS PIONEER	HIGHFLYER CLASS CRUISER	27.7.15	19.8.15	HMS BRITANNIA	KING EDWARD VII CLASS BATTLESHIP	25.3.18	10.4.18
HMS GLASGOW	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	23.8.15	7.9.15	HMS NEURALIA	HOSPITAL SHIP	25.3.18	10.4.18
+HMS LACONIA	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	10.9.15	17.9.15	HMS NOBLE NORA	MINESWEEPERS	10.4.18	13.4.18
HMS ORBITA	OBSOLETE LIGHT CRUISER	20.9.15	15.10.15	HMS FAIR HELGA		10.4.18	13.4.18
HMS ORBITA	BRISTOL CLASS CRUISER	21.10.15	20.12.15	HMS TRANSVAALIA		10.4.18	13.4.18
HMS CHALLENGER	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	20.12.15	29.12.15	HMS KENT	MONMOUTH CLASS CRUISER	13.4.18	22.9.18
HMS ARMADALE CASTLE	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	3.1.16	31.1.16	HMS HYACINTH	HIGHFLYER CLASS CRUISER	30.4.18	11.5.18
HMS KENT	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	15.2.16	27.2.16	HMS CHALLENGER	CHALLENGER CLASS CRUISER	11.5.18	12.6.18
SS ANTIOPE	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	3.3.16	20.3.16	226 (LENGTH : 68'3")	STEEL LIGHTERS (GENERAL YARD SERVICE)	12.6.15	29.6.18
HMS RINALDO	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	27.3.16	15.4.16	C378	STEEL LIGHTERS (FLEET COALING SERVICE)		
	BRITISH TRAMP STEAMER	24.4.16	29.5.16	C380 (LENGTH : 68'3")			
	(GUARDSHIP)	30.5.16	21.6.16	C381			
	(GUARDSHIP)			HMS TSUSHIMA	2ND CLASS CRUISER (JAPANESE)	1.7.18	5.7.18
	APOLLO CLASS CRUISER	30.5.16	21.6.16	NO 221	MOORING LIGHTER	1.7.18	5.7.18
	ASTREA CLASS CRUISER	29.6.16	7.7.16	HMS BACCHANTE	CRESSY CLASS ARMoured CRUISER	5.7.18	16.8.18
	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	7.7.16	9.8.16	HMS TALBOT	ECLIPSE CLASS CRUISER	19.8.18	23.8.18
	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	9.8.16	11.8.16	NO 229	COOKING VESSEL (LATE HMS TICKLER)	19.8.18	30.9.18
	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	11.8.16	17.9.16				
	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	17.9.16	6.10.16				
	ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER	6.10.16	12.10.16				
	BRISTOL CLASS CRUISER	14.10.16	15.11.16				
	MONMOUTH CLASS CRUISER	15.11.16	23.11.16				
	BRISTOL CLASS CRUISER	23.11.16	20.12.16				
	HIGHFLYER CLASS CRUISER	20.12.16	20.1.17				
	STEEL LIGHTER (GENERAL YARD SERVICE)	22.1.17	2.2.17				

* Described as such in "THE KONIGSBERG ADVENTURE" by E. A. Budge. (Note: this name is by the enemy or as blockships + ships sunk during the war)

It would appear that the late Mr. Arthur Godsiff's privately published memoirs of his life at Simon's Town between 1906 and 1924 "FROM MY WINDOW" contains the only lengthy account of the valuable contribution of H.M. Dockyard at Simon's Town to the war effort of the British Empire during the First World War. Mr. Godsiff remembered that HMS ARMADALE CASTLE was armed with 8 6-inch guns and that Cape Town's harbour tug, LUDWIG WIENER, renamed HMS AFRIKANDER 'had two lifeboats removed and replaced with two 12-pounder guns.' These details are not recorded in the Docking Book.

Mr. Godsiff reminds us that a number of the ships listed in the wartime pages of the Docking Book were later sunk and that many members of their ships' companies perished. Their memorial at Simon's Town, a white cross on top of Red Hill at Klawer Camp, has been repainted by the R.N. Association and is a prominent landmark.

Vice-Admiral the Hon. Sir Edward Fitzherbert, Commander-in-Chief Cape Station from 1918 - 1920, wrote an account of the work of the Cape of Good Hope Squadron during the First World War which was published in the Official Programme and Souvenir Booklet issued by the Cape Town Peace Committee for distribution to schools in the Cape Peninsula in 1919. This valuable record contains no reference to the work done in the Dockyard at Simon's Town but it does explain that the role of the Japanese cruiser attached to the Cape Squadron was to patrol our shipping lanes.

Commander the Hon. Serald Hay's book "HISTORY OF THE R.N.V.R. SOUTH AFRICA" contains the following details concerning the R.N.V.R. 'S Trades Company at pages 148-149:

"The pressure of work in H.M. Dockyard at Simon's Town in connection with repairs and refitting ships, owing to war conditions, became so great that the Engineer-Commander of the Dockyard found it quite impossible with his staff of mechanics to cope with the requirements. It was therefore decided that the best way of dealing with the situation was to expand the RNVR and enrol a Trades Company under the existing regulations. These had to be somewhat amplified to meet the new demands."

The men required were Turners, Fitters, Boilermakers and Shipwrights. The district Staff Officers of the Union were communicated with, to endeavour to enrol suitable candidates and forward them to Simon's Town, where they had to undergo a Trade Test under Engineer-Commander Roseveare. The mine managers at Johannesburg and Kimberley were also communicated with and asked to spare some of their good men for the benefit of the Senior Service.

Everything worked smoothly, and Lieut. Shadwell was again mobilized and put in command of the company at Simon's Town. This officer was on 21st March appointed "Officer-in-Charge of Works", Simon's Town Dockyard, in addition to his duties with the Trades Company, thus relieving Mr. Caldicott, who left for England to take up his work in another sphere of activity.

Mr. Girdler Brown, who was working for the Admiralty in the

capacity of Deputy-Director of Ship Repairs, was given a commission as Honorary Commander, RNVR, and he assisted in recruiting in the mining districts, appointing Mr. McIver as his assistant. A scheme, however, of further expanding the Trades Company at Simon's Town, and enrolling other companies for work up the coast, did not materialise.

Altogether 42 men were enrolled, and rendered useful service until the conclusion of the war, when on 31st December, 1918, they were disbanded, and Rear Admiral Rowley Hill inspected and addressed them before they dispersed.

The Docking Book mentions the collier SHADWELL and it seems very probable that this vessel was named after Lieutenant (later Commander) Lancelot H.A. Shadwell. This officer was later harbour engineer of Durban and commanded the Durban RNVR from 1915 until 1924. He was awarded the OBE for his work at Simon's Town.

In their book "THE SEA AND SOUTH AFRICA" Surgeon Captain T.T. Jeans and Lt-Cdr Charles Struben reveal that the Royal Navy was unprepared when the German raider WOLF laid 25 mines off Dassen Island and 29 mines off Cape Agulhas. They wrote "Not for a considerable time could extemporized 'sweeps' be fitted to local trawlers in Simon's Town Naval Dockyard and crews trained to use them."

Capt. Taprell Dorling's history of the Royal Navy's minesweepers in the Great War "SWEPT CHANNELS" records at pages 182-183 that the Dassen Island minefield was swept up by 'four whaling steamers fitted out for that purpose' and that only seven of the mines in the Agulhas minefield were swept up. A whale was killed by a mine in that area.

F.J. Dittmar and J.J. Colléde's book "BRITISH WARSHIPS 1914-1919" contains more details concerning the four minesweepers which were converted whalers at page 219: HMS NOBLE NORA (25.6.17 - 13.3.19), HMS FAIR HELGA and HMS FAIR MAGDA (3.8.17 - 13.3.19) and HMS TRANSVAALIA (6.17 - sold 3.19). The latter ship was a minesweeper in the R.N.N. during the Second World War.

This important chapter in Simon's Town's naval history is worthy of further research.

END NOTES:

Marischal Murray in "SHIPS AND SOUTH AFRICA" lists the armament of HMS AFRIKANDER as one 12-pounder gun and one 6-pounder gun. Cdr. Hay in "HISTORY OF THE RNVR SOUTH AFRICA DIVISION" lists only one 12-pounder gun which belonged to the RNVR. He adds that the crew was drawn from the Corps.

HIJMS KONGO (Japanese battleship) was based at Simon's Town from December 1915 until November 1916..

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A typical scene in Simon's Bay just before World War II. H.M. Ships lying at their moorings (from L.to R.): 2nd class cruiser FORTE; corvette PENELOPE dismantled and awaiting disposal for breaking up; the sloop MUTINE; the 3rd class cruiser PANDORA; and the visiting light cruiser GLASGOW. In the foreground at the left are various dockyard tugs, coal and ammunition lighters, and, on the right, the water tank vessel CHUB.

THE WORK OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE SQUADRON 1914 - 1918.

THE LATE ADMIRAL FITZHERBERT (THEN C-IN-C)

When war broke out in 1914 the Cape of Good Hope Squadron was under the command of Rear-Admiral H.G. King-Hall, and consisted of HYACINTH, ASTRABA and PEGASUS. This force was much too small for the work it found itself called upon to perform. The area it was responsible for was a very big one, extending from British East Africa right down the coast and up to Walvis Bay on the West Coast, between which the distance by sea is no less than 3,525 miles. At the outbreak of war there were two large German Colonies on the station, one of which possessed a naval base, namely Dar-es-Salaam, on which a modern light cruiser was based. The Squadron was very largely increased the following year, and from that time fluctuated in size until at the time of the Armistice it consisted of the cruisers HYACINTH, CHALLENGER, TALBOT and MINERVA, the sloops THISTLE and RINALDO and eleven armed whalers.

The work the Navy found waiting for it at the beginning of the war may be placed roughly under four headings:-

1. To find and destroy any enemy ships on the Station.
2. To protect the trade routes passing the Cape, and to round up any of the enemy's merchantmen still at sea.
3. To blockade the coastline and prevent the enemy receiving

supplies.

4. To assist the army in transporting troops and to protect them whilst at sea.

The first of these duties was a difficult one to perform, as the enemy's force was represented by the KONIGSBERG, a modern light cruiser possessing a speed far greater than any of the ships which we had on the Station at the time. She was actually seen at sea on the 31st July 1914, and passed within 3,000 yards of the HYACINTH; but as the relations between the two countries were only strained at that time and war had not yet broken out, the ships separated without fighting, the German going into harbour at Dar-es-Salaam. There she remained for some time, and only came out once more to dash across to Zanzibar to sink the PEGASUS, which was then lying in harbour cleaning boilers and unable to move. The KONIGSBERG eventually steamed away to the Rufigi Delta, where she ran up the river, to be of no more practical use as a sea-going ship. She was here subjected to heavy bombardment, in which aircraft came into prominence as a means of observing the fall of our shot, without which observation our bombardment would have been a matter of chance, so cleverly had the Germans concealed her. Two shallow-draught monitors, the SEVERN and the MERSEY, were then sent out from England to deal with her, and quickly reduced her to scrap iron and left her lying on her side up the Rufigi River, where she is to-day. The destruction of the KONIGSBERG cleared the air considerably, and allowed our ships to act with absolute freedom.

The second duty, that of the protection of the trade routes and the destruction of enemy commerce, was of extreme importance. The trade of the Eastern World had only two ways of getting to Europe, firstly by the Suez Canal and secondly by the Cape of Good Hope. As the Suez Canal was threatened by a Turkish Army almost as soon as war broke out, and as later in the war enemy submarines began to operate in the Mediterranean Sea against our merchantmen, more and more traffic was diverted to the Cape route, until nearly all the trade of the world was going via the Cape. This state of affairs lasted until the end of the war. In the early days the protection of these waters entailed very arduous and monotonous work, ships being constantly kept at sea patrolling the trade route lines. The HYACINTH had to perform this duty without relief. This meant that she had to go to sea on patrol and stay there while coal lasted, then rush back to harbour to coal and go out again immediately. Later on, when the chances of enemy raiders attacking the lines of trade became less, it was possible to allow our ships to remain in harbour at short notice; even then they had to be prepared to go out immediately any intelligence was received of enemy interference on the trade routes. This duty was mainly performed by the Japanese cruiser attached to the Cape Squadron during the later stages of the war. Of course, patrolling had been absolutely revolutionized by giant strides that have been made in the development of wireless telegraphy. In the days of Nelson all the news they got of the presence of an enemy was entirely by observation, i.e. they had to remain at sea off the enemy's base in the hope that he would come out. Nowadays practically every ship, man-of-war and merchantmen alike, carries wireless telegraphy, consequently the sighting of an enemy ship can be flashed thousands of miles in a few minutes, with exact details of position, course and speed. Thus it has become possible for

men-of-war to wait for such information and then go straight to the spot they calculate the enemy to be in from the news received. This has been particularly valuable from the point of view of coal fuel, which has had to be economized to a great extent, and, had it not been for wireless telegraphy, continuous patrolling at sea would have had to continue.

The blockading of the enemy's colonies, the third duty, was of course equally important, but exceedingly difficult to perform. The blockade of German East Africa was particularly difficult and dangerous work to carry out effectively. This coast is lined with coral reefs and small islands, with various narrow channels between them. Also, the equatorial current runs up and down the coast at a considerable speed (which speed is constantly changing), and thus navigation became a very difficult task, and patrolling at night where the coast is entirely without lights is a dangerous operation, requiring a high standard of knowledge and judgement to allow of its being carried out without accident. Some of the channels were far too shallow and intricate for the heavy ships to watch, so small ships had to be found to work on an inner patrol, the heavy ships keeping farther out to sea with a view to coming in to the assistance of the small craft if required. These small craft were obtained by buying or hiring several small whaling steamers, which were then mounted with guns, fitted with wireless telegraphy, and manned from the fleet. The question of manning them was rather a problem at first, as the large ships had to be drawn upon to supply their crews and the places of these men taken by the reserves available. Here the great use of that splendid corps the South African Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve made itself felt. Two companies from Cape Town had been mobilized when war broke out and sent to Simon's Town, and a large number of these men, together with others from Durban, were sent up the coast to fill vacancies, where they rendered valuable service. When more men were sent out from England it became possible to relieve the majority of the South Africans and allow them to return to Simon's Town, where they were kept until the greater part of them were sent to England to take part in the bigger game being played in the North Sea. This corps has set a standard of courage and keenness which cannot be surpassed, and had it consisted of 2,500 men instead of only 250 there would have been room for them and to spare in the Navy.

The blockade of German East Africa was maintained until the end of the war, the whalers having carried out exceedingly heavy work in the operations, especially when one considers the conditions which existed on board. Imagine a small steamer of about 150 tons on patrol for three or four days, completely battened down, no accommodation worth speaking about, no fresh provisions and a horrible motion, and it will give some small idea of the real hardships of the men who served in these craft. As regards the blockade of German South-West Africa, this was comparatively easy on account of the lack of small harbours which might have sheltered small ships bringing provisions, arms and ammunition.

On 2nd November 1914, the news came of the sinking of the GOOD HOPE and MONMOUTH off the Chilean Coast by the ships of the German China Squadron. This squadron consisted of two powerful cruisers and two light cruisers, under the command of Admiral

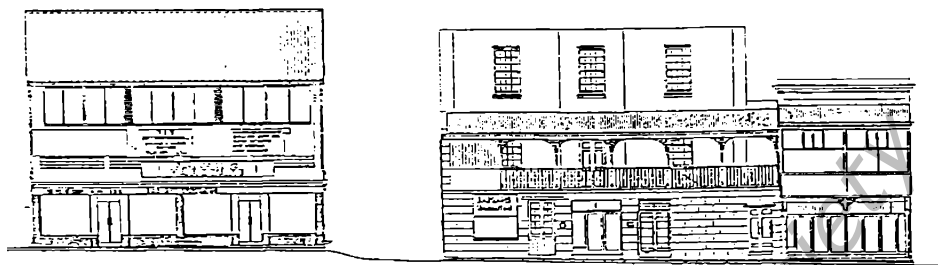
von Spee. After the destruction of our ships they became a menace to the Cape trade routes, and it seemed more than probable that they would make for one of the German Colonies and, using it as a base, commit wholesale havoc on our shipping. Another possibility that loomed large at the time was that they might come straight across and bombard the Cape Peninsula. This naturally led to the strengthening of the Cape Squadron. The ALBION, one of the older battleships, MINOTAUR and DEFENCE, armoured cruisers, and WEYMOUTH and DARTMOUTH, light cruisers, were sent over from other stations to give the necessary preponderance over the German Squadron. When von Spee's squadron was sunk at the battle of the Falkland Isles, the German menace to the Cape disappeared, and the Cape Squadron was again reduced.

The question of the protection of transports whilst at sea was not a very serious one as far as the Cape Station was concerned, as the submarine, the greatest danger to a convoy of transports, had not worked so far afield. The Imperial troops were the first convoy to be guarded by the Cape Squadron, the HYACINTH and ASTRAEA performing this duty from Cape Town to well north of the Equator before they were both relieved. The convoys taking the Union troops to Luderitzbucht were the only others which were considered open to attack. Transports taking men up to German East Africa proceeded without protection. The ships of the Cape Squadron both on the East and West Coasts of Africa carried out many bombardments, and frequently covered the landing of our troops from transports.

On several occasions during the war troops had to be landed in the presence of the enemy, which meant that the ships of the squadron had to be present and engage the enemy with gunfire whilst the troops were landing in boats. This was arranged for at Walvis Bay, but no opposition was experienced. Another method is to land a small force from the ships and take up a position on shore and defend it whilst the soldiers land. This is very risky work as a rule, as it has to be done often without knowing what defences exist and what force is in opposition. In addition, men in boats whilst landing are quite helpless and unable to defend themselves. However, this system of landing was carried out in German East Africa, the principal instance being Saadani, which was captured with only slight resistance by a landing party from the squadron assisted by some King's African Rifles from Zanzibar, who were shipped specially to assist. The same force took Bagamoyo, where there was some sharp fighting. The capture of this place was very important, as it enabled troops to land there and organise their advance on Dar-es-Salaam, the principal seaport of the country, which surrendered two weeks later, having been bombarded from the sea whilst the troops advanced upon it over land. Kilwa Kivunge and Kisiwani were also captured in the same way, but a show of force was all that was required in their cases.

The foregoing is merely a brief description of the work carried out by a small Naval force in African waters, where enemy naval activity was very restricted. The main work of the Fleet was, of course, in the North and Mediterranean Seas, where not only had the enemy's battle fleets to be confined in their ports but the submarine danger, which seriously threatened the Allies' prospects of winning the war, had to be held and overcome."

BERYL ROBERTS



CADER'S
BARBER'S SHOP

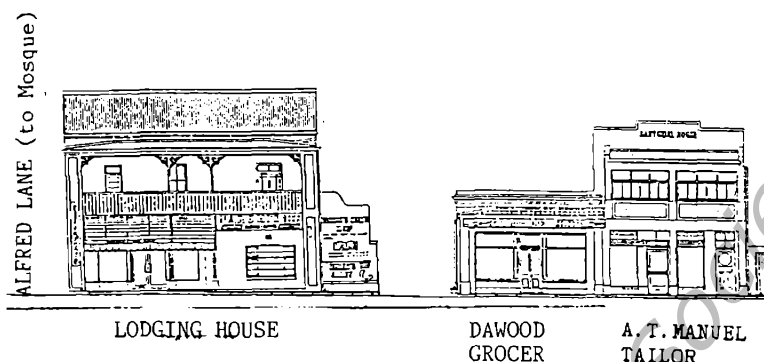
KAYE'S HARDWARE

KAPLAN'S
GROCER

Although much has been written and recorded about the military aspect of life in Simon's Town during the war, the story of what life was like for the civilian population has so far largely gone untold. This is remarkable, because the ordinary residents of Simon's Town during that time were in a unique position. They were in fact living in a British naval base which was totally dedicated to the needs of the war effort, and as such, had to abide by decisions and restrictions which did not apply to anyone who lived beyond the barrier at Glencairn. This was manned by military police who controlled the entrance to Simon's Town 24 hours a day. Indeed anyone who lived in Simon's Town during the war years had to have a permit to be there, and, furthermore, if they wished to receive visits from friends and relatives, they had to obtain permits for them too. If they arrived by train their permits were checked by a two-man naval patrol who had boarded at Fish Hoek. Col. Robertson, ex British Army, was in charge of all these security arrangements, so rules were strictly adhered to and there were no exceptions to the permit requirement, as far as one can discover.

All this was understandable if one considers that right from the start of the war, Simon's Town was the only port in this part of the southern hemisphere that was fully equipped to play an invaluable part in the Allies' war effort. As soon as war broke out, the men of the Simon's Town dockyard began working day and night to repair crippled warships, convert liners into armed merchant cruisers and transform trawlers and whalers into efficient minesweepers and patrol boats.

Meanwhile, in the town, the civilian population had to settle down to make the best of the difficulties which ensued for them as a result of this unprecedented war effort and the consequent need for a black-out, a curfew and strict restrictions on information relating to naval movements. The ordinary man or woman in the street, living in such close proximity to the naval base and the ships which limped in for repair, must all have realised, only too well, the dire consequences of any "careless talk". The clever catch phrase used to remind everyone of the need for discretion was "Zip your lips, don't talk about ships"! Added urgency was given to this exhortation by rumours of the existence of a spy living in a house overlooking the bay near



the Glencairn quarry, who was reportedly in touch with the German armed merchant cruisers and U-Boats which lurked off the west and south coasts of the Cape waiting for convoys to leave.

But to offset these curtailments on individual freedoms, one must remember that the war years were, for the vast majority of Simon's Town residents, a time of great prosperity. With every able-bodied man of whatever race fully employed in the dockyard and most of the young men and women in the services, there was plenty of money around. And this does not take into account the spending power provided by the shore-based naval personnel, visiting sailors and any other members of the armed forces who arrived in troop ships rounding the Cape en route to the Middle East and Europe. The town's shops and hotels, not to mention the many pubs in the town, enjoyed a boom period, despite the fact that some goods and services were in short supply.

At this time the actual local inhabitants of the town mainly consisted of white, coloured and black South Africans who all lived together in close proximity and, in general, harmoniously. Most of the families had been settled here for many years and, for the main, they depended on the dockyard for a living. There was also a floating population of white British artisans and their families who had come out to man key positions in the dockyard, as well as the British naval personnel who had been sent out to administer the naval base. These then were the mix of people who for six years shared a unique experience.

Talking to those who are old enough to remember those stirring times has been a fascinating exercise, and not surprisingly, it is the "good times" that everyone remembers best. Elderly ladies I have interviewed, all cited the dances for visiting sailors and other servicemen, as one of the war's highlights for them. Some of them, of course, met their future husbands on such an occasion, so it is hardly surprising that they should have instant recall of these particular events.

The dances and other kinds of entertainment, such as visits by concert parties from other towns in the Peninsula and from Cape Town itself, were organised by a group of matriarchs who formed "The Good Companions Club". It was led, naturally, by the wife of the Captain-in-Charge and on its committee was Mrs.



ST GEORGE'S HOTEL.

ROWLAND'S
FISH SHOP

JUTER'S
CHEMIST

AMLAY
BUTCHER

Geraldine Kaye, of "Bay View House". Mrs Kaye's son-in-law (ex R.A.F.) who met his wife at one of the dances, recalls that these stalwart pillars of the establishment had sixty or more girls on their books who came from as far afield as St James and Muizenberg. They would call on them when a dance had been arranged, either in The Soldiers' and Sailors' Rest Room in the town or in the Recreation Hall in the East Dockyard. The same good ladies provided all the food and organised the band. A band called "The Burchells" was apparently a popular choice. To fund all this activity, the same team organised fetes, church bazaars, and bingo evenings which were very popular with all sectors of the population.

Usually Jubilee Square (then unpaved, of course) or church halls were the venues, but sometimes the bingo evenings were held in private homes like Bay View House. Some of the money raised was also given to the Municipality's fund which donated "Bundles for Britain" - parcels of tinned food and the like which were sorely needed in that beleaguered land.

However, "The Good Companions Club" were not responsible for another form of entertainment provided by "the ladies of the night" as another elderly gentleman carefully explained to me. These were involved in offering their own brand of comfort for the troops and were mainly based in the appropriately named Paradise Road area, though like many of the young people in the town, they could always get on a train and go further afield, if the need arose. For everyone, travelling by train in those days and coming home late was no problem because, despite the total black-out, it was perfectly safe both on the train or walking home in the dark. In any case anxious mothers knew that a two-man naval patrol met each train and went as far as The Soldiers' and Sailors' Rest Room before turning back to the station. Incidentally the train service was better than to-day - a train left for Cape Town every 45 minutes and vice versa and a monthly return ticket for civilians cost the princely sum of £2 ! Servicemen only paid 10d a trip.

All the people I spoke to emphasised the fact that even petty crime was very rare - and physical assault just never happened. All this despite the presence of hundreds of visiting sailors and other servicemen from around the world. One man recalls coming home very tired from a double shift at the dockyard and



H. B. MANUEL
GROCEER

UNCLE'S
SWEETS

MUNICIPAL OFFICES CRITERION CINEMA
& LIBRARY

GREENBLATT
MEN'S OUTFITTERS

falling off his bicycle in the Main Road at the bottom of Belmont Road, Seaforth. He left it where it fell and the next morning, it was still there waiting for its owner!

The fact that going out at night presented no problems for anyone, either young or old, meant that everyone flocked to the Criterion Bioscope. It was probably the most popular source of entertainment for the civilian population of Simon's Town of whatever colour. With a frequent change of programme (some say 4 times a week) it was always full. Even though "Apartheid" was not official policy at that time, an unspoken rule decreed that the coloured patrons sat upstairs in the balcony, while the whites sat in the stalls. The most faithful patrons even had their own regular seats! All, however, thoroughly enjoyed a full programme of two newsreels, a black and white cowboy serial, which ensured that the audience came to see the next episode, and a full length glitzy Hollywood film or a British war epic. An interval gave everyone the chance to visit "Uncle's" a little shop owned by Mr. Amlay and run by a relative "Uncle" whom the children particularly liked. Ice-cream, cracker-jack popcorn and nigger balls kept everyone sustained for the second half of the show. Incidentally the seats cost adults 1/- and the children had an 8d. matinee on Saturday afternoons.

Simon's Town residents also did their best to offer some live shows to entertain the visiting ships' crews and other servicemen. Different artists would come from quite far afield (there is even mention of Noel Coward at a ship-board concert) to perform in the Soldiers' and Sailors' Rest Room. At some point there was enough talent available to put on a show at least once a week. This venue was manned from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. by a team of volunteers to provide refreshments for all visiting servicemen - it was always full and often the men were invited back to visit private houses as well for some home comforts.

As most of the naval personnel, ships' crews and troops on visiting convoys were members of the armed forces and therefore white, it followed that it was left to the Indian shopkeepers in the town, both Muslim and Hindu, to occasionally entertain Indian crews of ships, especially if any of them happened to be from the area in India from which their family had originated. Any Muslims amongst them were always invited to visit the Mosque for prayers. The Merchant Navy ships, like the oil

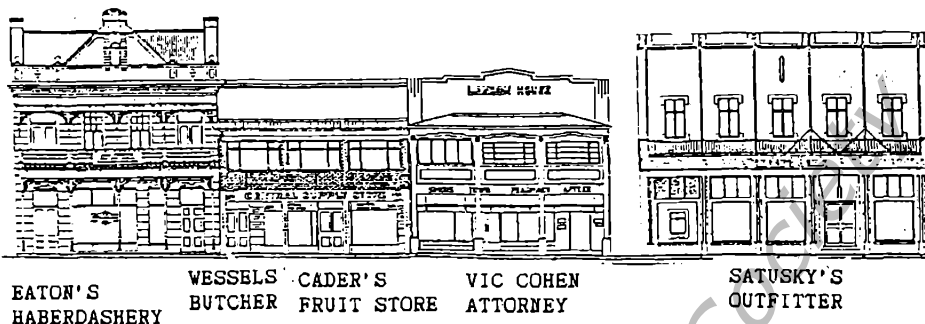


tankers, were usually the ones which had Indian crew aboard and they were specially welcome if they came ashore with some much needed scarce spices in their pockets!

But the daughters of the Indian households were not encouraged to mix with any of the sailors or visiting troops and were not allowed by their families to attend any function which might have been arranged unless they were chaperoned. They were, however, allowed to visit the bioscope, and to go to the bazaars held on Jubilee Square or the fetes in the church halls, along with everyone else. But even a visit to Cape Town on the train, perhaps to buy something which was in short supply in Simon's Town, was not undertaken without an elderly relative to accompany the young girls. For them life in wartime Simon's Town was a time of hard work, because their parents' shops were very busy, and the burden of looking after the younger children fell on them when they were not at school. On the other hand their parents' growing prosperity, which resulted from all the increased trade which the war had brought, meant a general upliftment in their standard of living even if they were still confined to the immediate vicinity of the shop.

However, even the stay-at-homes had one great source of news and entertainment. Nearly everyone I have talked to stresses the part played by radio in keeping them up to date with the progress of the war, and for providing much-needed comic relief. One Indian shopkeeper recalls that his family had a large, powerful Pye radio to which they all listened every night. This picked up not only the relayed Daventry station which gave them war news from the B.B.C., but also the notorious German station Zeesen on which one heard Lord Haw-Haw's chilling and distinctive drawl announcing the German version of events, and, if gossip was to be believed, the names of ships currently in Simon's Town's dockyard. But the wireless, (it was rarely called the radio then) had another great role to play in the lives of the people of Simon's Town. It provided the easy listening which was essential to maintain the morale of anyone house-bound, especially those whose war effort mainly consisted of knitting endless pairs of much-needed sea-boot stockings to help warm the feet of sailors who kept watch on steel decks on freezing nights.

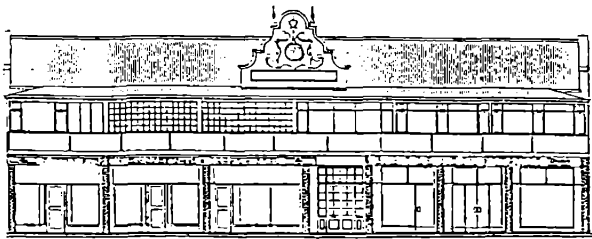
The favourite comedy programme was the B.B.C's ITMA starring



Tommy Handley, whose very name evokes all those catch phrases which became part and parcel of the war effort. One can imagine how many navy divers shouted "Don't forget the diver" as they disappeared into the murky dock water to inspect yet another damaged hull. ITMA and other popular BBC programmes such as "Much Binding in the Marsh" and "Music While You Work" were relayed from Daventry, while the SABC also did its best to keep up everyone's spirits with their own brand of humour. "Snoek Town Calling" saw many Simon's Town families settling down in their blacked-out sitting rooms to listen to Cecil Wightman's satirical version of events. For the youngsters who wanted to listen to "pop" music, Lourenco Marques ran the first commercial station in Southern Africa.

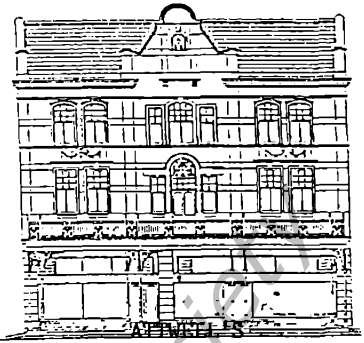
The news, of course, as in every other country involved in the war, became the focal point of everyone's attention and woe betide the child or visitor who had the temerity to interrupt the grave tones of the news reader who was announcing the latest disaster to befall the Allies on one of the many battle-fronts in the early days of the war. Many Simon's Town families had sons and brothers who had joined up to serve either at sea or in the army "up north" - and this included some from the coloured families who had volunteered for the Cape Corps. Those who were not accepted for the armed forces, joined the C.P.S. (Civilian Protection Service) which was the equivalent of the Home Guard in Britain.

It was men from the C.P.S. who made sure that the citizens of Simon's Town complied with the rules which ensured the nightly black-out of the town. Not only were black-out curtains compulsory, but motorists had to drive with masked headlights which only emitted a narrow beam of light. In actual fact there were few civilian-owned cars in Simon's Town during the war. Lucky car owners had to nurse their ageing models through years of petrol rationing and spares shortages. Petrol rationing was introduced following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour and the subsequent threat to the tanker lanes in 1942, although a ban on week end sales of petrol had been introduced earlier. After 1942 motorists were only allowed to buy enough fuel to travel a basic maximum of 400 miles (640 km) a month. Fortunately the bicycle was the preferred mode of transport for shopkeepers and civilians alike - and pedal power remained firmly unrationed! This was just as well, for the shopkeepers depended on the



DOBSONS ESTATE
& RENT COLLECTORS

CENTRAL HOTEL & PUB



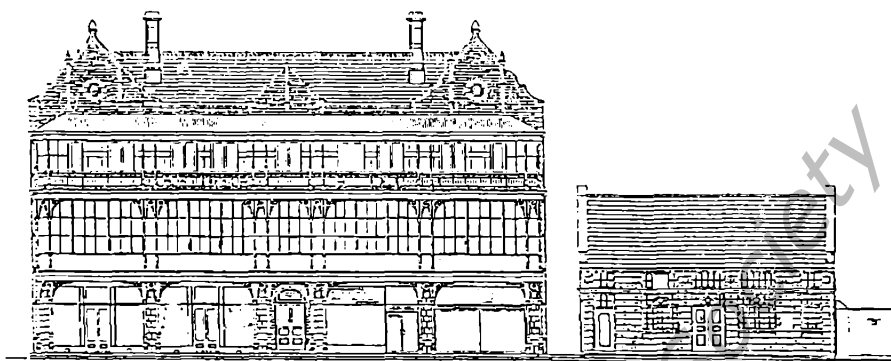
BAKERY

pedal-pushing delivery boys to carry groceries and other goods to their customers.

Generally the people of Simon's Town shopped locally because the town was very well served by the variety of shops available, which could supply not only every-day necessities, but also the luxury items like the dance dresses and smart shoes needed for the dances in the Soldiers' and Sailors' Restroom. Indeed it may be appropriate to mention here that though the imported materials like velvet, chiffon and silk were in short supply, which especially affected the Indian community when a new Sari was needed, shoes, dresses and most dress fabrics were still freely available and Satusky's drapery store continued to do a good trade throughout the war. Stockings were a scarce fashion item however, and silk stockings disappeared altogether. As in the rest of the world, short skirts, square shoulders and functional shoes all made their appearance in Simon's Town's drapers shops. Lipsticks, nail polish and perfume were three other items essential to feminine morale which went under the counter in the local chemist shops but Mr. Juter and Mr. Thelwell did alert their favoured customers when new supplies arrived!

For more mundane items like food, the local population relied either on Runciman's big grocery store or the many local Indian shops. Generally South Africans did not suffer unduly from food shortages during the war, although at times tea, coffee, sugar, butter, cheeses, white flour, potatoes and rice were in short supply. Chickens also were hard to find, though other meat remained plentiful. White bread was not available at all, but brown flour sifted through a fine sieve was used by home bakers to produce an edible substitute. Incidentally, it seems that the sieves were a home industry, being manufactured in the dockyard in someone's spare time! Some of the shortages were alleviated by a government truck which came once a week to Jubilee Square to distribute subsidised commodities like rice, sugar, powdered milk and tinned foodstuffs. Although this service was intended mainly to help the coloured and black members of the community, whites also found it a convenient way of beating some of the shortages and joined the queues.

The Indian families had a special problem because their diet included so many imported ingredients all in very short supply - like dal, dates, chilli powder and dried coconut, not to



BRITISH HOTEL & PUB

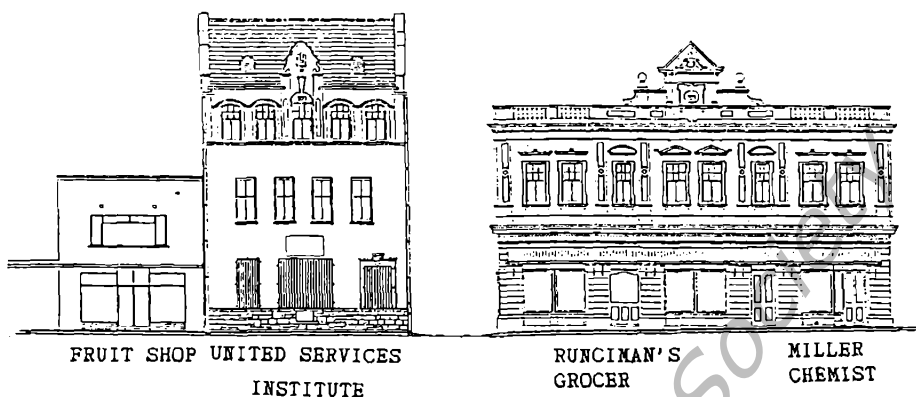
BARBER SHOP
(SELBY)
PHOTOGRAPHER

STANDARD BANK

mention rice. Sometimes visiting crews from Indian ships would come ashore with their pockets full of these precious items and were assured of a very warm welcome from their local hosts and, no doubt, a gift of a packet or two of cigarettes - for these too were hard to come by and, like sweets and chocolate, were on a strict quota to the local shops. One other shortage needs to be mentioned. In the winter coal was in short supply because it came from the Reef and coal-burning ships naturally had first call on all deliveries. Householders were forced to rely on compressed sawdust logs, which were an expensive substitute, if they could not obtain enough wood to keep the home fires burning.

While their mothers wrestled with such everyday problems, many of the young women of Simon's Town were determined to do their bit for the war effort by joining the Services. Unfortunately, in those days, only white girls were allowed to join the armed forces but those that could joined the SWANS (South African Womens' Naval Service) and the WAAS (Army girls, some of whom were sent "up north" to Egypt). Nearer home, a lucky few were even allowed to serve in a combat capacity in the gun batteries. One of them remembers the day when someone up on the hill above Queen's Battery (where the Medical Institute is now) dislodged a rock which fell and hit the observation post causing a great panic but fortunately no real damage. Another recalls the incident when the gun at the North Battery was fired and broke every window in the town. This was the gun which was reputed to be able to fire a salvo which would land on the other side of the peninsula. Fortunately, for the sake of Simon's Town's windows it never seems to have had to be put to the test again.

While many of the local SWANS had mundane jobs in naval administration, all felt very proud to be actively contributing to the war effort. But other men and women in the town were playing their part too. They concentrated on carrying out their own brand of war work, mainly running the canteens for the servicemen. The busiest were the Soldiers' and Sailors' Rest Room, The United Services Institute (where "Just Nuisance" originally lived) and the Soldiers and Sailors Home run by Mr & Mrs George Barralet for the Methodist Church. The last two establishments provided beds for the night for sailors and servicemen who had permission not to return to their ships. The Soldiers and Sailors Home charged 6d for bed and breakfast and



Mr. Barralet as befitting a pillar of the Methodist church, also used the opportunity to encourage the men to see the error of their ways. The United Service Institute and The Africa Station Club offered beds to sailors of the rank of Chief Petty Officer and below.

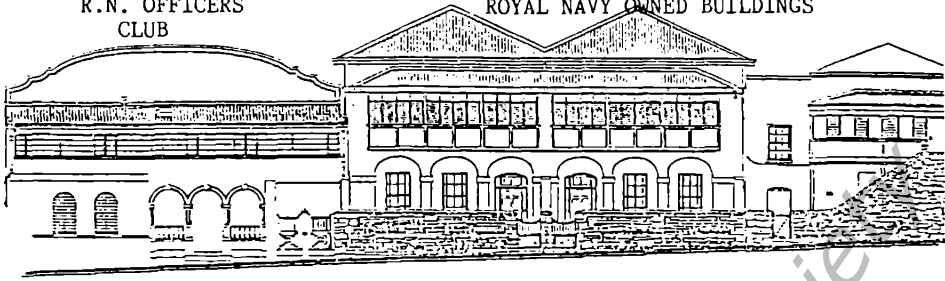
All the people who ran these establishments not only had to serve the refreshments, but also raise funds to buy it in the first place. Altogether it made for a very active and very tiring life. Indeed one lady's death shortly after the war ended was attributed to exhaustion from her wartime voluntary service in the canteen. Even when these stalwart ladies did have an evening off, they spent their time attending to their own families' needs, knitting those endless stockings or attending first-aid classes to ensure that they were ready for any emergency that might happen. Some of the young mothers who had small children found an unusual way of contributing to the war effort. They wrote letters to the families of the sailors and other servicemen whom they had entertained in their homes when they were allowed ashore from their ships. These first hand accounts of loved ones were greatly appreciated by the recipients and often resulted in pen friendships which lasted long after the war had ended.

There were also women who, unencumbered by family responsibilities, seized on the war as an opportunity to escape from domestic routine and undertake jobs which had previously been done by the men who had now joined the forces. For the first time there were female bus conductors and women ticket collectors on the trains - and women clerks became a familiar sight in the banks and offices in town, whether naval or civilian.

But occasionally, even in wartime, even the busiest of Simon's Town's civilians had a chance to pick up a book and rush to the Lending Library or the rather elite Subscription Library (Simon's Town Public Library) situated where Mr. Patel's shop is now. These were able to provide the latest best-selling novels. "For Whom the Bell Tolls" by Ernest Hemingway and "The Power and the Glory" by Graham Greene, were two books published in 1940 which were guaranteed to make one forget the war for a little while. For those looking for something lighter and more redolent of the England people liked to think of as "home" there were the novels of authors like Dornford Yates and Francis Brett

R.N. OFFICERS
CLUB

WESTGATE TERRACE
ROYAL NAVY OWNED BUILDINGS

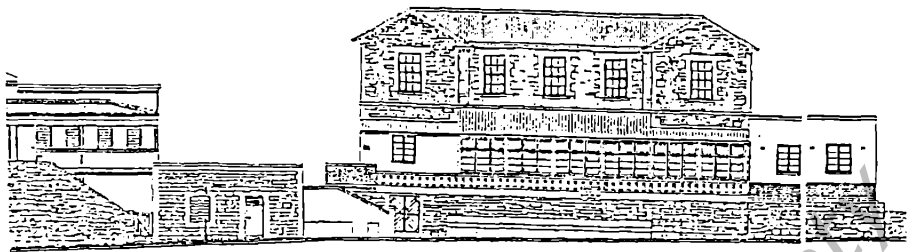


Young which were very popular. And, of course, Agatha Christie crime novels and Daphne du Maurier romantic fiction were in great demand. For those short of time for any kind of serious reading, there were also the ever popular magazines like "The Outspan" and "Huisgenoot" or collections of short stories published in "The Strand" or "Lilliput". Their soft covers invariably became dog-eared and tatty as they were passed on from one reader to another, but if any survived, they are now collector's pieces.

Other collector's pieces are the aged, strangely-shaped wooden tennis racquets which are still discovered in the odd attic or storeroom in old Simon's Town houses. Tennis was played on the Royal Naval courts at the corner of Arsenal Road and Cornwall Street or on grass courts in the gardens of the houses of the more well-to-do. There were also two courts in the Naval Hospital grounds which civilians used; the home of the Simon's Town Lawn Tennis Club. There was a croquet field behind the Post Office. The Dockyard Athletic Club ran soccer and cricket teams for their workers, and their matches, either with visiting navy teams or other local league teams, were keenly supported by everyone in the town. The Navy had a soccer "field" within the dockyard which was constructed from coal cinders retrieved from various boilers. There was also a cricket pitch between the East Dockyard and Seaforth beach and football matches were also played on this. The West Dockyard boasted a boxing ring in the building which housed the old Sale Floor and their competitions were popular events too.

The schoolchildren also had their favourite pastimes. Soccer and netball were played in coloured and white schools, while at home there were always the "IN-games" of the moment, such as street-cricket, hop-sotch drawn on the street, kite-flying or the ever-recurring marbles. Incidentally there must have been plenty of children around, because there were six schools catering for the coloured, Indian and black children, as well as the Convent and the Simon's Town Secondary School (where the Municipality are now housed). At the latter they practised air raid drill - the shelter being the school toilets!

For the young adults (nobody had yet coined the word "Teen-agers") going for a picnic was probably one of the most popular



AFRICA STATION CLUB

outdoor outings during the war years - especially for those of a romantic turn of mind! A favourite spot was Camel Rock, only an hour's walk away using the old Redhill road. If an expedition further afield was arranged, then a group would band together and hire a lorry and all pile in the back with their blankets and picnic baskets. Coming home in the dusk they could admire the searchlights which roamed the sky in the unlikely event of an air attack at night on the dockyard. For the same reason there was also a Bofors anti-aircraft gun mounted on the dock wall which was continually manned by volunteers from the dockyard attached to the Cape Garrison Artillery.

Anyone who lived in Simon's Town during the war years was very aware of the dangers which all ships faced when they left the safety of the dockyard walls. The dockyard workers, who saw great warships like HERMES, NEPTUNE and ORION limp in carrying their dead in their shattered decks and hulls, had no illusions about the grim reality of naval warfare and the necessity for strict security in the area in which they worked night and day. M.P's and Dockyard Police had been told to shoot on sight if anyone failed to identify themselves, and many of the coloured workers preferred to remain working on board ship or in the workshops at night because of the risk of confrontation during the black-out.

And then suddenly it seemed, it was all over. At 7p.m. on Sunday 2nd May 1945 the BBC interrupted its programmes to report the surrender of all the Germans in Italy. South African families, whose sons had fought their way across North Africa and then from the toe of Italy to Milan, received the news with great rejoicing and profound relief. On the 8th May Churchill's voice crackled from countless wireless sets in Simon's Town when he announced to the British House of Commons that "The German war is at an end" and from then on most people felt that the war was all over bar the shouting, because the hostilities in the Far East seemed very far away and with the reopening of the Mediterranean and the Suez canal, the Cape route lost its importance as a supply route. In August that year, the Japanese also surrendered and Simon's Town dockyard returned to its peacetime role as a base for the British Navy until it was handed over to the South African Navy in 1957.

While people flocked to Cape Town to meet returning troopships,



SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' HOME (Left) Built 1900
METHODIST CHURCH (Right) After Enlargement

celebrations in Simon's Town were generally of a low key. On the day that Churchill made his announcement, every one stopped work and then celebrated either in the hotels, the pubs or at home. Later there was an official service of thanksgiving on Jubilee Square led by the Mayor and the Naval chaplains but for the inhabitants of Simon's Town the end of the war meant an end to all the excitement and a return to a quiet way of life which had almost been forgotten.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I would like to thank all the patient folk of Simon's Town who have responded to my enquiries and searched their memories to enable me to write this short account of what life was like for the civilian population of Simon's Town during the years 1939-1945, when their little town played such an important role as a British naval base during the 2nd World War.

In particular I would like to thank Mr. Ray Cader of Simon's Town and Mr. Fred Beukes of Ocean View who gave me such a vivid picture of the commercial aspect of the town during that time and the role that the Indian and coloured communities played.

N.B.

The drawings which appear at the top of each page of this article come from a Streetscape of the Historic Mile, owned by the Simon's Town Historical Society, and depict the shops on the mountain side of the Main Road from Old Hospital Terrace to the corner of Chapel Street.

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(At the lower level of war-time literature does anyone remember
"Blimey" ? Editor)

D. WATSON - 1st TOWN CLERK OF SIMON'S TOWN.

Late G.J. Wilson.

D. Watson was Town Clerk from 1883 - 1889. The first mention in Council Minutes was purely fortuitous. After an inaugural meeting on 22nd February 1883, the Council's next meeting was held on 30th March 1883 and adjourned to 2nd April. One of the first letters ever read by the Council was from a Mr. D. Watson who applied to Council for a grant of a piece of land. A Commission of two Councillors was appointed to look into the application. There is no record of the Commission reporting back to Council a success or not of Mr. Watson's application, but later we find he was paying Municipal rates on a property valued at £400, which at that time must have been a fairly substantial dwelling, situate in the Kloof area (adjacent to present day Mount Pleasant).

At the same meeting, Councillors Budge and Storrier reported that the Simon's Town District Council had asked if the offices of the Secretary to the District Council and the Town Clerk could be amalgamated. Council agreed thereto provided it did not cost the Council more than £75 p.a. So we find Council deciding at its meeting of 18th April to call for applications for a temporary Town Clerk for a period of three months at £6.5/- per month and on 23rd April 1883 at noon, a special meeting was held to select this temporary Town Clerk. There were two applicants: Mr. Charles Rees (a well-known resident of Simon's Town and former Chairman of the Simon's Town Village Management Board) and Mr. D. Watson - the latter being selected. Who was this "D. Watson" ?

Was he an Englishman or was he perhaps Canadian or American? The question arises from the way he consistently spelled the words "labor", "laborer" "harbour" "honor" "odor". He had, however a fine command of English - he liked using his Latin expressions. He consistently spelt our town's name in the solid form "Simonstown" and misspelt place names such as "Steenbrass" Bay instead of "Steenbras" and "Good Gift" for "Goede Gift" etc.

A sample of his minuting is that of the Council meeting held on 8th June 1883:

"Copy of a report upon analysis of water from various sources with the Municipality was kindly submitted to the Council for its information through the favour of the Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief at the request of the Chairman, through one of the Councillors, upon which a good deal of desultory conversation took place, but nothing definite having been arrived at, it was suggested: that a special meeting be convened for the purpose of ventilating the whole water question."

One wonders what present day Councillors would say if their discussions were recorded in the Council Minutes by to-day's Town Clerk as "a good deal of desultory conversation with nothing definite being arrived at" !!

When no individual tendered on two occasions of calling for tenders to do a valuation of properties in Simon's Town for the Valuation Roll, the Town Clerk was commissioned to do this very necessary requirement for the Town Council to obtain its

necessary funds for income to meet expenditure and Council resolved that his remuneration therefore was not to exceed £15. In the event the Council saw fit to resolve to pay him £12 !

Another amusing example of his minuting of Council decisions is in connection with the Meeting of 23rd January 1884, where the action of the Chairman (the Mayor) Councillor G.R. Budge, in directing the Town Clerk to write to the Resident Magistrate about the cancellation of all Sufferance Grants (rentals paid by individuals for occupation of Crown land) within the limits of the Municipality, without the consent of the Municipality, whereat "a great deal of discussion ensued in which such act of the Chairman was considered reprehensible".

When the next ordinary meeting of the Council took place on 6 February, only three Councillors - the Chairman (Mayor Budge) and Councillors Edwin Turner and Fred Hugo turned up. Councillor Budge took umbrage at the Town Clerk's manner of reflection of the proceedings in the minutes of the previous meeting for the Town Clerk recorded that the minutes were read and confirmed, but the Chairman refused to sign these as he considered there had been some unnecessary reflections cast upon him with reference to a certain act done or sanctioned by him without the consent of Council - "although correctly recorded" the Town Clerk shortly added to the Minutes.

The Mayor's feathers were definitely ruffled, so he put it to Council that this meeting, barely boasting a quorum, should be adjourned for a week - which was agreed to by all present when the fully attended adjourned meeting of 13th February was held, the Chairman promptly referred to the reflections cast upon him as recorded in the Minutes of the meeting of 23rd January and the Town Clerk then faithfully recorded that "the Council expressed themselves to the effect that no reflections were meant, or intended", and perhaps the Town Clerk had worded the Minute in question rather strongly - the Chairman then signed them as previously confirmed!!

Poor Mr. Watson - the variety of jobs he was given: to chase up defaulters regarding amounts due to the Council in respect of rates, dog tax and water levies, and he was appointed Municipal Prosecutor to obtain redress. The Town Clerk was also "empowered" to make a house visitation and employ a person to accompany him to see if all dogs were registered and to report on the sanitary state of the Town generally." Hereafter he was "authorised to employ a scavenger to clean drains and other places" etc.etc.!!

Then on 24th April 1884 came a bit of a bombshell: Mr. Watson tendered his resignation as Town Clerk. A special meeting of the Council was held to consider it, but it was decided to pend discussion to a later Council meeting. Eventually at the meeting of 14th May, the Town Clerk recorded that his resignation "was descanted upon by the Chairman, but was considered by Councillors Fred Hugo and Black that they were informed he should give three months' notice and not one, to which the Town Clerk demurred. (Obviously the Council wanted to retain his services for as long as possible). The Town Clerk stated he required some further augmentation of his salary, such as what the market fees would allow and if that were agreed to

he had no wish to resign." The Town Clerk recorded: "The Council blamed the late Government and due to the non-proclamation of the Water regulations which prevented them from carrying out the provisions of C IVI (sic) Section of the Municipal Act of 1882, they were considering sending in their resignations en masse and requested the Town Clerk to remain a little longer and to leave the question of further remuneration in their hands. The Town Clerk having no doubts, he recorded, "in the integrity of the Council, agreed to do so and with reference to his resignation in the matters remain in status quo!"

How misplaced was Mr. Watson's trust in the integrity of the Council in regard to an augmentation in his salary is reflected in the Council records, for on eventually leaving the Council's service more than five years later, we find this faithful servant's salary was still £7.5.-d per month!! But when the long-suffering, patient and efficient Mr. Watson went off into limbo and his successor as Town Clerk on 1st August 1889 was appointed his starting salary was raised to £8.6.8d. This was the redoubtable William Smaile Gillard who will appear in the next edition of the Bulletin.

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ERNEST WILLIAM ATTRIDGE C.E., F.I.S.E., M.S.A. - SIMON'S TOWN'S FIRST TOWN ENGINEER.

Late G.J. Wilson.

When searching far and wide for something, sometimes, suddenly out of the blue it falls into one's lap. Such was the case when I was researching details of the men responsible for the establishment of our first Municipal services such as water reticulation, sewerage, stormwater systems and, of course, our roads, following the proclamation of our Municipality in 1883.

A detailed reading some years ago of the early Council minutes lodged in the Cape Archives revealed that a chronic shortage of funds permitted only minimal progress in the early years. Services such as water catchment, reticulation, sewage and refuse removals etc had to be put out to contract. Thus the Town water tank to impound the water from Goede Gift stream, the first dam to capture water from the Klaver River above the waterfall, were built by contractors. The provision and installation of water pipes was undertaken by J.W. Budge, a member of our first Mayor's family. The removal of refuse and nightsoil and its subsequent burial on Long Beach was handled by cartage contractors such as Gerrit Frieelaar.

A decade and a half passed before the slow improvement in the Council's financial position provided the opportunity to create a Works Branch and to appoint a Town Engineer. For our renowned Town Clerk of the time, William Smaile Gillard, it was apparently a comparatively easy matter to recruit one of Sir John Jackson's team of professional engineers being assembled, at the turn of the century, to begin the construction of the East Dockyard. His choice was Ernest William Attridge.

When I was young my father had mentioned Mr. Attridge's name on one or two occasions but two major factors hindered my progress in researching his personal details.

Firstly, with the passage of some 80 - 90 years there is nobody in Simon's Town who would remember him and secondly, such personal details that might still exist are, according to law, buried in the crammed vaults of the Archives in Cape Town and no longer are retained by our Municipality. Anyone who has conducted research in the Cape Archives will agree that to undertake this is a most time consuming exercise, especially if one's base is Simon's Town! Thus I despaired of acquiring the details of our pioneer Town Engineer. The only indications of his tenure of office available locally are his signature of approval on building plans, general plans of subdivision etc., kept in our Town Engineer's plan safes, and which are dated from about 1902 onwards.

And then arrived a letter dated October 1989 from the only surviving child of Mr. Ernest Attridge, Edward. He wrote to the Town Clerk seeking personal details regarding his father as his personal papers had not survived. The letter was handed to me because of my interest in history and the fact that my father had succeeded Mr. Attridge as Town Engineer, Simon's Town.

Edward, the son, was born in Simon's Town in 1908. He needed his father's date of birth, place of birth, the date he left Simon's Town etc. Over a period of 18 months we exchanged 5 letters and from investigations conducted on both sides, the following details emerged.

ERNEST WILLIAM ATTRIDGE was born on 30 August 1872, at Harwell, Middlesex, England. The date of his arrival in Simon's Town is not precisely known, but Ernest often told his son that he was in the Admiralty and engaged in the Dockyard construction works. We know Sir John Jackson commenced assembling his team at the end of the 1890's so it seems probable that Ernest was recruited at that time and brought to Simon's Town and after a short period thus engaged, he resigned to join the Simon's Town Municipality as its 1st Town Engineer.

He was a Civil Engineer, Surveyor and an Architect. From the last surviving personal visiting card in existence we know he had the following initials after his name - C.E., F.I.S.E., M.S.A. to which he added "etc.". He had 5 children (three girls and two boys). Two of Ernest's brother also came to settle in South Africa and were renowned apiarists. The publication "Beekeeping in South Africa" was written by Alfred and Hendry Attridge. Apparently Civil Engineering was in the family blood, for an uncle of our Town Engineer, another Hendry Attridge, became Town Engineer of Pietermaritzburg.

His religion was Plymouth Brethren - so there are no family entries in our local registers. His hobby was sailing.

I now had to establish where Mr. Attridge had lived in Simon's Town. The son Edward, less than four years of age when they left Simon's Town, "believed they lived in a double storey house on Red Hill". Luckily the Cape Times Directory of 1909 gave the address of Mr. Attridge as "Mount Pleasant". The 1910 Voters' Roll gave his address as "Hope Street, Mount Pleasant". We knew from Edward that it was a double storeyed house as he remembers falling down the lower flight of stairs and biting through the tip of his tongue. His teeth also penetrated his bottom lip and he still bears the scars. The second clue was that in furtherance of his interest in sailing, father decided to build

a yacht. It was large; approximately 2 tons and it took five years to complete. It was built in a walled yard next to the house which was well below the level of the abutting street. Neighbours dubbed the Town Engineer "Noah" and could not believe that so large a craft could be hoisted out of the sunken yard over the stone retaining wall and onto the abutting street. All this was achieved and after launching the craft in Simon's Bay, it was sailed round to Table Bay, named "Sirius" and was moored there for many years. There are also references to Mr. Attridge's sailing activities in two South African publications. One, "Beneath the Lion Bold" mentions Mr. E.W. Attridge as being a member of the Green Point Amateur Boat and Canoe Club that held regattas on the winter vleis on Green Point Common which was about 1/4 mile wide and rather more than that in length. Here he sailed a small craft called "St George". Another book which refers to him is "Fair Winds at the Cape".

Now to identify the house! after a thorough search of Mount Pleasant. Hope Street thankfully is a short street starting at the intersection with Barnard Street, crosses Wilfred Street and ends at the Cardiff Road intersection - just two blocks. On the upper side there were no double-storeyed. On the corner of Hope and Barnard there is a house named "Rob Roy" - which has a sunken yard where a yacht could have been built and abuts onto Barnard Street. However, the house is single-storeyed and had to be rejected. But at the back of the plot behind "Rob Roy" there is a double storeyed house which has the necessary sunken and walled yard abutting onto Barnard Street. Photographs were sent to Edward, now living on the Natal South Coast. He too is fairly convinced that this is the house.

On leaving Simon's Town Mr. Ernest Attridge, in February 1912, moved to Cape Town and joined the Cape Town Municipality and, according to his son, was engaged in the construction of Steenbras Dam, above Gordon's Bay. He left Cape Town in 1920 for Vryburg, where he carried out the construction of a reservoir and the water reticulation scheme for that Town. In 1926 he became Town Engineer of Krugersdorp where he remained until his retirement in about 1932. In retirement he practiced as a consulting civil engineer right up to his death in 1942.

His son Edward, has presented us with a portrait of his father copied from an old sepia print."

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WILFRED STREET, MOUNT PLEASANT:

We have reason to believe after researching this article that the above street may have been named by the first Town Engineer after his first born son - Wilfred Ernest Attridge.

ARTISTS IN SIMON'S TOWN THROUGH THE AGES - PART IV (continued)

GEORGE SALISBURY SMITHARD (1873-1919) - Artist

In the January 1995 edition of The Bulletin we wrote on the above man. Carryl Shear, one of our members, has drawn our attention to what E. Burman has to say in "Arts and Artists of S.A." 3rd edition 1993.

"Smithard was born in Derby, England and died in Johannesburg. He studied on a bursary at Slade School, London; Academie Julian, Paris; Hoger Instituut voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. He was of Irish descent. He taught at several London art schools. On his arrival in Cape Town in 1901 he immediately became active in local art-life; his approach was relatively progressive and he identified himself with Edward Roworth in opposition to the conservative Crosland Robinson (see previous article) in the SASA. On settling in Johannesburg he lectured at Normal Colleges, Johannesburg and Heidelberg. From 1908 - 1917 he was extremely influential, painted, taught privately and wrote reviews; he was also one of the selectors for the first national exhibition of art in Johannesburg and was a founder-member of the first Johannesburg Art School."

When the tall red-bearded and bespectacled Irishman arrived in Cape Town in 1901, he entered a scene which was dominated by a few competent, but highly conservative craftsmen, whose supreme yardstick of artistic excellence was acceptance by the Royal Academy. Smithard was however, enchanted by the very difference of the views the Colony had to offer. Although figure-drawing was not his strongest feature, he directed his initial efforts towards depicting scenes of the Malay community, in pastels and in paint. His style was more adventurous than his contemporaries. His painting style, according to Ernest Lezard, was 20 years ahead of his time.

Smithard's ever-increasing identification with South African culture led him into the country districts to draw and paint the Afrikaner community. He was on a visit to Heidelberg in 1919, when Ernest Lezard received an urgent telegram to meet Smithard on the Johannesburg-bound train. Lezard found the 46 year-old artist suffering from total loss of memory and in a serious condition. Lezard installed him in the Johannesburg General Hospital where he died soon after. In the following year the Johannesburg Sketch Club paid tribute by making Smithard's work the central feature of their Second Exhibition.

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CONSTANCE PENSTONE: CARTOONIST AND ARTIST

ARTHUR DAVEY

Although information on much of her early life is sketchy we know that Constance Jones was born at Chesterfield, England on 12 May 1864. She apparently attended the Derbyshire School of Art and by 1880 was living in Australia where she became established as an artist. At the age of twenty she married in Sydney, but was soon divorced. Mrs. Roth, as she then was, seems to have moved to the United States for a short while, and according to Eric Rosenthal, designed a stained glass window for the famous jewellery firm of Tiffany's in New York. (1)

About 1894, no doubt impelled by a need to find a living and probably restless, she migrated to South Africa. Two years later Constance married Charles Penstone, a cartoonist and founder of a bizarre periodical, "The Owl - Penstone's Weekly" which had been moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town in June 1896. Domestic tragedy soon struck in August of that year when Penstone died of typhoid (enteric fever)(2). At the age of thirty-two Constance was a widow and although still connected with "The Owl" for which she drew cartoons under the pen name of "Scalpel", the magazine was a fringe publication which must have brought slender financial returns to its contributors. (3).

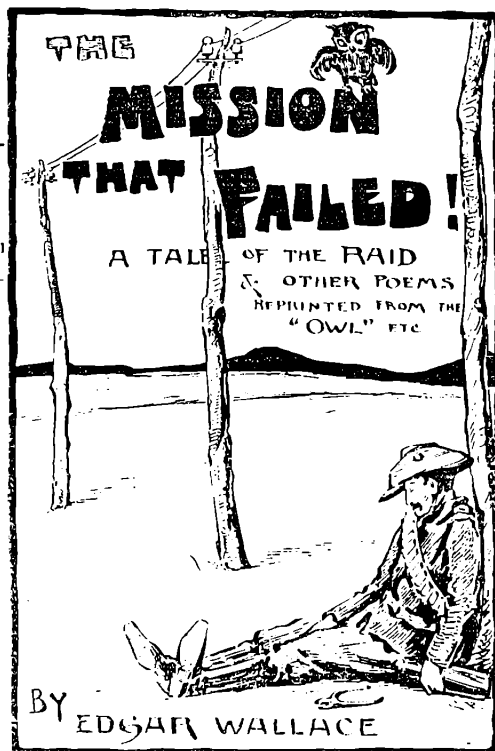
Practitioners of the fine arts in late Victorian Cape Town earned their living with difficulty. That was especially the case for self-supporting women artists against whom the dice was loaded; they were obliged to turn to illustrations, greeting cards and designs or to instruct the children of well-to-do bourgeois. Mrs. Penstone, however, was talented, resourceful and versatile. She came to the notice of Edmund Garrett, an innovative and influential young Englishman who became editor of the Cape Times in mid-1895. He had himself been brought up by his cousins, two independent women artists. Garrett "discovered" Constance Penstone and to quote him:

"I design all my cartoons which have become popular features and tell politically - of the artists I speak not - Mrs Penstone succeeds her husband who died. I am creating her as a cartoonist, and think she will do in time." (4)

Indeed Constance Penstone did "do in time" and became South Africa's only woman cartoonist of stature. For many years she contributed cartoons to the Cape Times weekly edition, and to the South African Review and The Owl. She knew Edgar Wallace who was then living at Simon's Town and sketched a cover for his "The Mission That Failed: A Tale of the Raid...." published in 1898(5). It depicts a ludicrous incident in Dr Jameson's Raid when a drunken trooper supposedly cut a fencing wire instead of severing the Boer Government's telegraph line from the Western Transvaal to Pretoria. During the Anglo-Boer War she produced a cartoon that reflected on the attachment of General Sir Redvers Buller to his creature comforts. It showed his large kitchen range and piano. Its publication by The Owl, "just after the war" was not permitted, so a blank page was published bearing the caption "Forbidden Fruit" ! (6)



POWER WITH BRUSH OR WITH SCALPEL AT CHOICE;
 PICTURING SKIES OR DESCENDING TO EARTH;
 PROCLAIMING LIFE'S BEAUTIES WITH SWEETEST OF VOICE
 OR JEERING AT MORTALS WITH FULNESS OF MIRTH.



Constance is better known nowadays as a painter. She was a prolific artist, mainly in water colours, which usually depicted seascapes, landscapes and Cape homesteads. Her affection for False Bay was evident in an exhibition at Darter's Gallery in 1905, at which the paintings were all of the Simon's Town area. In the florid prose of the time she had "penetrated the very soul of the place...its sunshine, its colour, its queer architecture, its violently blue sea and the rose-tinted mountains beyond the Bay". The paintings of Simon's Town included "In the Admiral's Garden", "The Red Hill", "The Old Rectory", "Malay Mosque", "Simonsberg" and "Watching", a picture of two warships in the Bay.⁽⁷⁾ The Owl, which was far from impartial, was effusive:

"Mrs Penstone, however, has given her subject all that a detailed photographic representation could not give - the thrilling life and the rapturous essence, the passionate beauty and glamorous enchantment which only the artistic eye can see and the masterly hand depict for the grateful enjoyment of others. (8).

Another powerful influence in advancing Constance Penstone's career was that of that staunch patron of the arts, Lady Phillips. In 1909 she and Lord Milner bought some of Constance's paintings at an exhibition in Mount Street, London. Florence Phillips opened another exhibition of Mrs. Penstone's work in Johannesburg in 1913 and again in 1919.⁽⁹⁾

In 1900 the studio of Constance Penstone was at South African Chambers, 54 St George's Street, Cape Town⁽¹⁰⁾. Another artist of note, George Crosland Robinson (1858-1930)⁽¹¹⁾ also had a studio there. A few years later they shared a studio at 40 Burg Street which was also the headquarters of the South African Society of Artists (SASA) of which both were founder members. The Cape Argus remarked that the premises had previously been those of the Municipal Drainage Department; "the succession is a singular one"⁽¹²⁾. In 1914 Constance's attachment to our coast was sealed when she bought her home at Glencairn ("The Cottage" 1 Kenmuir Steps). She and Crosland Robinson were married in about 1917 and lived there for the rest of their lives. He was the head of a private art school and a well-known portrait painter in the traditional style. E. Berman notes that in June 1918 Morris Robinson, director of Ashbey's Galleries held his first auction sale - and that it was a sale of the works of "C.P." and her husband. At the Imperial Art Exhibition in London in 1927 the works of both were respresented, together with those of E. Roworth, Neville Lewis, Ruth Prowse and others.⁽¹³⁾

Constance died on 6 May 1928, a few days before her 64th birthday whilst Crosland Robinson outlived her by another two years. They were buried in the Dido Valley Cemetery (C of E No. 1390) where the inscription on their grave, in addition to their names, reads simply "Artists".

Original cartoon sketches by Constance Penstone have not been found. However, the Africana Museum, Johannesburg, has four black and white water-colours which were the preparatory material in about 1905 for political cartoons. One of them depicts Lord Milner as "Saint Alfred of Jo'burg"! ⁽¹⁴⁾. Many of

the Penstone paintings are privately owned whilst others are in the South African National Gallery and the Albany Museum. One of her paintings of this vicinity has survived as a coloured illustration entitled "Man of War in Simon's Bay" in H. Tucker's "Our Beautiful Peninsula", published in Cape Town in 1913. There was an exhibition at the S.A. National Gallery in 1982 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the founding of SASSA. One of her water-colours "African Spring" was displayed as well as one of Crosland Robinson's works (15).



CONSTANCE PENSTONE AT WORK IN HER STUDIO

In 1904 a portrait of "C.P." by Crosland Robinson was on exhibit (16). Perhaps it may yet be traced to find a suitable home at the Simon's Town Museum and be a visible reminder of an outstanding woman. What was she like, a quiet observer of nature and humanity? That may not be entirely the case for Edgar Wallace has recorded an occasion when she held forth to him "for an hour and a half on subjects ranging from the colour question to ethics" (17).

I am indebted to the Librarian, S.A. National Gallery for newspaper references and to Mr. Robinson of Ashbys for the copy of a photograph of Mrs. Penstone in her studio.

NOTES:

1. E. Rosenthal (comp.), South African Dictionary of National Biography, London, New York, 1966. Other biographical outlines are in E. Berman, Art and Artists in South Africa, Halfway House, 3rd ed 1993; G. Ogilvie, The Dictionary of South African Painters and Sculptors, Johannesburg, 1988; M. & E. Schoonraad, Companion to South African Cartoonists, Johannesburg, 1989; R. Greenwall, Artists and Illustrators of the Anglo-Boer War, Cape Town, 1992.
2. "Charles and Constance Penstone" in Africana Notes and News, June 1971, pp. 249-252.
3. E. Kingswell, War Correspondent, London, etc, 1938. Kingswell bought The Owl when Penstone died. Its circulation was about 1000.
4. The Garrett Papers (ed. Gerald Shaw), Van Riebeeck Society, 2nd Series, No. 15, Cape Town, 1984; Garrett to a cousin, 28 Oct. 1896, p. 84.
5. M. Lane, Edgar Wallace, London 1939, p. 102. She encouraged Wallace's early poetical ventures (pp. 95, 100).
6. See Kingswell, War Correspondent, pp. 84-85. Her cartoons are sometimes identified by her initials "C.P.", as well as "Scalpel".
7. Cape Argus, 23 Jan. 1905.
8. The Owl, 5 May 1905 in a full page contribution on Mrs. Penstone.
9. T. Gutsche, No Ordinary Woman, Cape Town, 1966, pp. 233, 295, 353.
10. Juta's Directory of Cape Town, Suburbs and Simon's Town 1900.
11. See South African Who's Who, 2nd ed. 1908, p. 340.
12. Cape Argus, supp., 10 Sept, 1906.
13. F. Harmsen, The Women of Bonnefroi, Pretoria, 1980, p. 137.
14. R. F. Kennedy, Catalogue of the Pictures in the Africana Museum, Johannesburg, 1968. Vol. 4, pp. 67-68.
15. Catalogue of the Exhibition (Library, S.A. National Gallery).
16. South African News, (Cape Town) 9 November 1904.
17. Lane, Edgar Wallace, p. 95.

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THE LOSS OF THE COLEBROOKE

R.R. LANGHAM-CARTER

The wreck of the COLEBROOKE was a dramatic event and it is fortunate that ample documentation gives us a clear picture of just what happened.

THE VOYAGE:

The East Indiaman COLEBROOKE, 723 tons, was built in 1770 by a shipbuilder named Perryard and was named after Sir George Colebrooke (1729-1809), a director of the East India Company. The first entry in the log for this, her third and final voyage, was made on 25 April 1778. But before that date passengers and cargo had been taken on at the East India Dock at Blackwall on the Thames from 6 January to 3 February and then at Gravesend nearer the mouth of the River.

As Britain was at war with France at that time British merchant ships were liable to attack by French privateers. They therefore, carried cannons and gunners and sailed in convoy rather than alone. The COLEBROOKE, with 212 persons on board, therefore joined a small fleet which was collecting at The Downs in the English Channel but did not leave until 8 March, bound for the Far East. She anchored at Funchal in Madeira where 43 pipes of local wine were embarked. (A pipe was a large wooden cask, used for storing wine or oil).

DISASTER:

The Atlantic storms made Table Bay dangerous in the Cape winter and many ships had been lost there. Simon's Bay (I) provided a safer anchorage and would be used by this convoy. Cape Point was sighted at 9a.m. on Monday 24 August. But when the ships rounded Cape Point in good visibility the COLEBROOKE struck on the then uncharted Anvil Rock, some one and a quarter miles south-east of the point at 11.30 that morning.

The COLEBROOKE did not sail on into Simon's Bay where help would have been available. Instead it struck north-eastwards on the much longer journey to the eastern shores of False Bay. The log does not explain why this course was followed. Possibly it was thought that more sandy beaches were available on that side where the ship could be grounded. Or perhaps she was already becoming waterlogged and hard to manage and sailing head-on into a strong north-wester would have been difficult.

Although the pumps were manned immediately they could not stem the water pouring in. The guns were fired as distress signals and the other vessels prepared to help. As the COLEBROOKE sank lower in the water it was decided to jettison the cannon to lighten the ship. But by this time the ship had sunk so low that the gun ports could not be opened. Finally the COLEBROOKE grounded at about 4 p.m. on a sandbank some 200 metres offshore from the sandy beach of Kogel Bay.

RESCUE:

This was an unusual affair in at least two respects. The ship never sank beneath the waves, it was simply battered to pieces on its sandbank by heavy seas. No-one was lost in the initial wreck, though several people, mainly crew, were later drowned

when pinnaces were upset while making for land. Boats from the other ships began to take folk off and had managed to save two-thirds of the complement when work had to end at 8 p.m. Several of the crew had tried to reach the shore in boats or on rafts but some of these had upset and the occupants were drowned. Those who reached dry land walked northwards over very rocky terrain, had to cross the fast flowing Steenbras River but finally came to some Dutch farms at Vishoek (later Gordon's Bay), whose kindly residents gave them food and transport to Simon's Bay. Rescue of those remaining on board was resumed early on the 25th morning and was completed by 10 a.m. A search for possible survivors from the upturned rafts and boats was continued for some days but with no result.

THE AFTERMATH:

In the hopes of saving as much as possible of the cargo, the master, Captain Morris, went into Cape Town on the 26th and asked the V.O.C's Council of Policy for assistance. He returned to Simon's Bay on the 30th "having been with the Master Attendant and Captain Christolf to endeavour to get to the wreck by land but had been stop'd by the Mountains." A number of the men who had reached the shore of Kogel Bay were deserters from the crew who took off into the countryside, hoping to find employment on the farms. As this was quite normal the Landdrost of Stellenbosch, as soon as he heard of the wreck, sent police out to arrest any such men as they could find.

The Council of Policy in Cape Town had published a proclamation which forbade the looting of wrecked ships. This, however, was a common practice and looters were soon on the scene, local farmers and others from as far away as Swellendam even being accompanied by their slaves to help carry their spoils away. The Landdrost of Stellenbosch did his best to cope with the situation by sending out members of his burghers' commando as soon as possible to guard the site. And their arrival at the site is confirmed in the ship's log of 27 August which records that "we met some Dutchmen and two Soldiers with Slaves carrying provisions who told us they were sent by the order of the Governor." But when the ship broke up cargo came ashore and was scattered a long way along the coast line, so it proved impossible to stop pilfering, especially at night. On 8 and 10 September the Council of Policy considered two reports from the Landdrost, decided he had done all he could and instructed him to send them any deserters he had managed to catch.

At the request of Captain Morris such of the cargo as could be saved was taken ashore at Simon's Bay for public auction and the Council of Policy instructed the Postholder accordingly on 21 September. Nine days later the cargo was sold for about £165 and two of the ship's boats for a further £12. Passengers and crew of the COLEBROOKE were given passages in other ships and a Mr. Patrick Stevenage of Haywards Heath in Sussex kindly sent me extracts from the journal of his ancestor John Stevenage, a recruit for the Madras European Regiment, who had sailed in the COLEBROOKE. John was transferred to another East Indiaman, the STAFFORD, and reached Madras safely, being mustered into his unit on 2 January 1779.

The Court of Directors of the East India Company in London

probably ordered a marine court of enquiry into the loss of their vessel. At any rate the matter was gone into and on 15 January 1779 they found that Morris and his officers and crew had not been guilty of any negligence of duty and the matter was closed.

One author has written that the name Kogel Bay was a corruption of the word COLEBROOKE. It had, however, been named Kogel Bay long before the ship settled on its shores, although it is true that for some time it was referred to as "Colebrooke Bay" and Anvil Rock as "Colebrooke Rock". The bay is now Kogelbaai in Afrikaans.

MODERN TIMES:

As the wreck site is marked on maps and charts two diving groups, Aqua Exploration and Oceanic Recovery, had little difficulty in locating it in 1984. The site is a short distance south of the Steenbras River mouth. In the same year the National Monuments Council gave the former a permit to dive under Sections 12 (2B) and (2C) of the National Monuments Act (Act 28 of 1969). One of the permit's conditions is that 50% of the finds must be made over to the "designated museum". This is the Maritime Museum on the Waterfront in Cape Town, a "satellite" of the S.A. Cultural History Museum. Their marine archaeologist Mr. Jaco Boshoff is himself a diver and there seem to have been so far no problems dividing the spoils, Government's share being kept in the Cultural History Museum where they are processed prior to display in the Maritime Museum. The wreck site is in fairly shallow water and not far from the shore and the main problem at first was the removal of more than three metres of sand which had accumulated over the wreck in over two hundred years.

Diving began in 1993 and is continuing and much of interest has already been brought to the surface. These include fragments of the ship's hull, the keel, an anchor and part of the step of the main mast. (The step is the wooden block or frame which holds the base of the mast). There are barrels still full of gunpowder, bottles full of snuff, much Madeira wine (which Mr. Boshoff told me is now quite undrinkable). There are lead and copper ingots, pieces of cloth, pairs of scissors, broken parts of muskets. Cast iron cannon barrels and cannon balls still wait to be lifted. There will be much material to dispose of. The Simon's Town Museum is the nearest to the wreck site. Some of the recovered objects are already on view at the Waterfront and it is to be hoped that others will find their way to Simon's Town.

NOTE: (I) Simon's Bay could mean two things. There was the sheet of water on the west side of False Bay. Or it could signify the maritime post which the VOC established on its shore in 1743. This second meaning is used in the present article. The name "Simon's Town" came later.

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ANCHOR PLAYERS

[This article was originally prepared for publication by Navy News]

The Anchor Players was originally named The Anchor Amateur Dramatic Society and was founded in May 1947 for Royal Navy Officers and their families. The original home of the Society was the Recreation Hall in the East Dockyard and in fact they remained there until 1980.

In 1958 when Simon's Town Naval Base was handed over to the South African Navy the Society was renamed The Anchor Players but has always remained a Naval Society. The Chief of the Navy is usually the Patron and the Chairman, according to the constitution, should be a Naval person, although members can and do include civilians.

The Anchor Players is an institution in Simon's Town and the Navy, and in the old days it was a tradition for the Senior Officer to have a dinner party on the last night of the production and to bring a large group of his guests to the performance, everyone attending being required to wear dinner jackets and long evening gowns. Unfortunately, over the years this practice has ceased, although invitations are still sent out to senior officers to attend, and many still do, although the dress code is a little less formal these days.

Anchor Players is a very professional Society, their forte being mainly comedy, but in all spheres, drama, musical and every two years a pantomime, the Society expects and obtains a very high standard. Many of their actors and actresses have won awards at the Fish Hoek Festival and from the Cape Times. In fact Anchor Players have won best play at the Fish Hoek Festival more times than any other Society.

The Society is still going strong with an enthusiastic band of people and new talent is constantly being found and developed. Many will remember the original home in the Recreation Hall in the East Dockyard with great affection. From 1980 the Society was fortunate to be afforded the facilities of the Simonsberg Theatre in the West Dockyard and they continue to produce three or four productions a year. The Simonsberg Theatre arose from the shell of the Gun Mounting Shop and the Torpedo Workshop and it is believed that the building was from 1895 to 1902 the site of a coal store. Acoustically it is superb and has been very tastefully converted into a cinema and theatre. This was done in the late 1970's when there were a great number of National Servicemen and a larger area for briefings, certain Church services and other group activities was needed.

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(continuation of Main Sources on p.159)

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