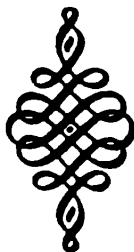




# SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# BULLETIN



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JULY 1996

## C O N T E N T S

|                                                     |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| CONTENTS .....                                      | page 41 |
| LIST OF OFFICE BEARERS/SUBSCRIPTION RATES .....     | 42      |
| CHAIRMAN'S REPORT .....                             | 43      |
| MARINE OIL REFINERS .....                           | 47      |
| FLAG OFFICERS OF THE CAPE PART XIV .....            | 49      |
| THE SEARLE FAMILY IN SIMON'S TOWN .....             | 53      |
| MIDSHIPMAN F.H. CHAPMAN .....                       | 54      |
| SGT. KENDRICK/METHODIST CHURCH .....                | 55      |
| HMS NERBUDDA - THE LOSS OF .....                    | 57      |
| CHARLES F. STRUBEN .....                            | 59      |
| DR LIVINGSTONE - SEAFORTH SERIES PART II .....      | 62      |
| WORLD WAR II CONVOYS/S.A.W.A.S. ....                | 63      |
| LUYOLA LOCATION .....                               | 64      |
| RESIDENTS PAST & PRESENT PART I .....               | 66      |
| RADAR TOWER SEAL ISLAND .....                       | 70      |
| WORLD WAR II REMEMBERED - PAUL MALLETT .....        | 72      |
| SNIPPETS FROM OLD SIMON'S TOWN (Holloway).....      | 77      |
| MORE SNIPPETS FROM OLD SIMON'S TOWN (L.J.D. Gay)... | 79      |

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## LIST OF OFFICE BEARERS

|                             |                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRESIDENT                   | Admiral H.H. Biermann SSA SD OBE                                                                                                                   |
| VICE-PRESIDENTS             | Professor E. Axelson<br>Vice-Admiral R.A. Edwards SSAS SM MTM<br>Dr. A.M. Davey<br>Vice-Admiral G.Syndercombe SSAS SOE SD<br>SM MTM                |
| CHAIRMAN &<br>FRIENDS' REP. | N.K. Farquharson                                                                                                                                   |
| VICE-CHAIRMAN               | Captain T. Korsten                                                                                                                                 |
| HON. SECRETARY              | Commodore D.K. Kinhead-Weekes SM                                                                                                                   |
| HON.TREASURER               | Mrs. M. Thorne                                                                                                                                     |
| COMMITTEE<br>MEMBERS        | Miss M. Cartwright<br>Mrs N. Holderness<br>Mrs. A.E. Read<br>Mr. P. van Blommestein<br>Mrs. C. Dilley (Curator)<br>Cdr W.M. Bisset (S.A.Navy Rep.) |
| HON. AUDITOR                | Mr. E. Fry                                                                                                                                         |
| EDITORIAL BOARD             | MR. N.K. Farquharson (Editor), Dr. A.M.<br>Davey, Mrs. A.E. Read, Miss M. Cartwright                                                               |

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**ISSN 0037 - 5470**

# SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1995.

Welcome to this, the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Society. It has become customary to combine this with that of the Friends of the Simon's Town Museum as members of the former are automatically members of the latter.

## GENERAL:

We were honoured when Vice-Admiral Glen Syndercombe accepted an invitation this year to become our fourth Vice-President. Welcome aboard.

At our meeting last year I stated that all of us in this country were living through one of the most traumatic times in our history. While matters have thankfully taken on a less violent pattern and the business of government is proceeding, here in our town we are about to face a massive change in local government that will probably affect us more personally than those at national level, for later this year our 113 year old municipality will be disbanded and we shall fall under the aegis of the Southern Peninsula Substructure (for which a more fitting name is needed). We shall surely miss the close involvement of our Council representatives, who over the years have helped to keep the sensitive areas of our town out of the clutches of property developers who cannot, or will not, understand how easily and quickly the special architectural atmosphere of the town could be forever destroyed by insensitive "development". It will be for next year's Chairman to comment on the "end of an era" but in case this gets overlooked I would like to pay tribute now to Alderman Nicki Holderness, and before her the late Alderman Gordon Wilson (past Chairman of this Society) for their extended hard work in and around the Council.

Let us hope that my own fears of having insufficient "clout" in the new management structure will be unfounded and that the Urban Structure Plan, in which we have all had a chance to participate, will be honoured in spirit as well as in the letter.

## ACTIVITIES:

The Bicentenary of the 1795 Battle of Muizenberg came and went with not a great deal of fuss: the Museum was more involved than your Society.

The Queen's visit was more fun and we were able to get short extracts from the film, taken in Simon's Town during the 1947 Royal Tour, onto CCV TV in the mornings. We proceeded with our plans to erect more plaques in the town, the major one being that for Mary Kingsley, which is on the front of the British Building, in which building we understand she had a room whilst nursing Boer POW's at Palace Barracks. The unveiling was performed by the British Consul, Cape Town, who had been contacted by the Royal African Society (whose patron is the Queen), this Society being originally founded to carry on the good work of Mary Kingsley. Their Chairman, Sir Michael Caine, had been in this country during the Queen's visit and was intrigued that we were already planning such a plaque.

The plaque to Imam Baker is already up on Ramon Cader's house in Thomas Street where the Koran was first translated into Afrikaans, while the three others will go on the West Dockyard wall as soon as we have found a plasterer to do the surrounds.

We were involved in providing a selection of names that we considered suitable for streets in the development on Red Hill Road, as well as for Seaforth Sound. We hope that they have been accepted in place of the thoroughly inappropriate names on the draft plans.

Under the heading of Activities we must list Audrey Read's walking tours of St George's Street, which have proved very popular and made a considerable contribution to our funds.

#### ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION:

We have attended nearly all of the monthly Architectural Advisory Committee meetings and have been able to assist with early and current photographs on quite a few occasions. I must report that the protracted negotiations over the redevelopment of Cliffords Garage were quite something to witness, but the final outcome was a great improvement on the initial proposal. It will be a sad day when the AAC is eventually disbanded, hopefully not before the developers' plans for a restructuring of the Post Office buildings are presented. If the AAC is disbanded then a special sub-committee will need to be established to prevent the modernisation of our built environment.

On the conservation drive we have expressed our dismay at the Garland House "garages"; asked the Post Office to seal, rather than remove, the two old wall-type postboxes, one in the East Dockyard wall and the other opposite Admiralty House. We contacted the owner and the local estate agents when "Eden" at Boulders came on the market as we were concerned that someone not realising its history would knock the building down (and being wood-an-iron it wouldn't take a gang more than a day to do) and rebuild on the site. We had National Monuments out to Glencairn to see the state of Welcome Farmhouse, which they own and lease out, as well as to show them the ruins of the old watermill on Elsie's River, the measuring up of which should go onto our Projects list for this coming year.

The state of the Old Burying Ground at Seaforth has given us cause for concern as the dreaded rookrans has burst out all over. The Municipality has been asked for assistance. We have been kept abreast of developments in the underwater survey of the Brunswick wreck off Long Beach and understand that some relics may shortly be brought ashore for preservation and display. We have suggested to the Cultural History Museum that some of the items be housed in Stempastorie, but have heard nothing further.

With Mac Bisset's help we have photographed the three 9.2 inch guns at Scala Battery, as well as the muzzle-loader at Middle North and the gun pits of the 6 inch guns alongside. We may put together a slide-show of these.

#### PROJECTS & RESEARCH:

The listing and classification of all buildings in the town that are over 50 years old continues and I regret to say is behind schedule. Margaret Cartwright is still beaver away on her Glencairn history. Surprise of the year was when Audrey Read suddenly produced her history of the Dockyard, on which she had been working secretly. It is a splendid work and the finest product of any committee member for years: well done Audrey! Besides measuring up the watermill, as mentioned earlier, we need to press on with the recording the oral histories before it is too late. I think there might be merit in researching and recording the stories behind the individual residential areas, e.g. Mount Pleasant, Seaforth, Murdock Valley. Also needed is a potted history of the town for printing in paperback form for sale in the Museum shop: a short precis of a selection of appropriate articles already printed in the Bulletin might well suffice.

#### TOURS:

We ran a tour to the Cedarberg last year and three one-day tours. Response from members was good, fun was had by all and we also made a reasonable profit of R1800. Thank you, those who came, and thank you all who helped to make them a success. Next month we are off to Montagu for another visit. Plans to get up to Kimberley have got no further, but we must have a look at the possibility of a September trip. The trouble is the cost of accommodation, for it is not worth going all that way for less than a three-day stay there.

#### BULLETIN AND CHRONICLE:

The Bulletin remains our greatest regular production, and all thanks must go to Audrey Read who writes a large portion of it, edits it, types it and puts it all together! Printing and postage costs continue to rise: we try to save on the postage by hand-delivering as many copies as we can and we are grateful to all who help in this. We have considered cutting production down to once a year, but feel that this would be counter-productive membership-wise.

Thanks also to Dr Arthur Davey for helping with the proofing, as well as being a contributor.

#### MEMBERSHIP:

Our membership numbers have stabilised at just over 750. To encourage new membership we had little "flyers" printed and placed them in the municipal library, at the cashier's counter and in the engineer's reception. Each year we lose members as they move away or just lose interest. It would be nice to get another 50 this year and we would ask you to help by getting your friends interested and enrolled.

#### FINANCE:

The Treasurer will be giving her report later. We have changed our accounting system to make it easier for the Auditor to check and I would like to thank Eric Fry for his continued voluntary work in seeing that everything is correct and our new treasurer Monica Thorne for putting everything in the right columns. You will see that we have operated at a profit of nearly R1000 this

year.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS:

You will be pleased to see that the subscriptions have remained unaltered at the low, low figure of R20 per couple. We could only balance the budget by raising money from tours, but there is a limit to that source too.

#### MUSEUM FUNDING:

A third of our subscription income goes to the Museum, and many of you make donations when paying your annual subs. As you will hear, the Museum has relied on funding from Province to pay its running costs. If this funding is reduced - and rumblings to this effect are getting louder - then the very future of our museum is at stake. The Museum was this Society's baby, since grown to maturity and standing on its own feet. We must retain some sense of optimism that funding will continue, for this museum is a very significant unit in the educational scene and one that must be recognised as such. The search for backup finance will have to be high on the new committee's agenda.

#### 100 CLUB:

Audrey Read has again run this at a good profit and the Museum have benefitted to the tune of R2500. Bravo!

#### VOLUNTEERS:

Besides the regular Committee there have been others who have helped with oral history and in the Museum. I know that the Curator will mention the very sterling work done by the ladies in the shop, but I would like to add our vote of appreciation for the fine job they do, for they are the ones the public sees and the ones asked all the tourist questions. They also find time to engage in a bit of research, which helps everything along.

#### COMMITTEE:

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their work in pursuing the aims of the Society. Terry Korsten has been a great organiser and a useful "Vice", Dennis Kinkead-Weekes ...no chairman can have had greater secretarial back-up than Dee provides, and he spends his afternoons indexing the very extensive photos and negatives in the Museum.

I have already mentioned the terrific job that Audrey Read continues to do, yet she still finds the time and energy to visit the remotest parts of the globe on holidays! To-night she is in Alice Springs!! New-girl Eve Leggatt felt slightly out of depth when taking oral history from locals (this was my fault, not hers) so moved to helping research the Mary Kingsley story. Peter van Blommestein retained his task of being the ears and eyes of the Society at the many meetings that were held on environmental and local government issues: sometimes dull work, for which many thanks. Margaret Cartwright has been busy with research on Glencairn, as already mentioned, and is a fund of knowledge about where to find things in the Archives. Our two nominated members, Cherry Dilley and "Mac" Bisset have been of great assistance and have put their museums at our disposal for meetings, functions and general tours. Thank you both very much.

Last, but not least, thanks to Alderman Nicki Holderness, whose

heavy involvement with local government put so much pressure on her time that she could ill afford to attend our meetings; but she did, and kept us well-informed on what was going on in higher chambers and was able to advise us in what direction we should move.

Thank you for your attention.  
Nigel Farquharson, Chairman.

14.3.1996

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#### MARINE OIL REFINERS, DIDO VALLEY.

An extract from The South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review of April 1946 makes interesting reading.

"Plans are well advanced for the establishment of a £2,000,000 fishing industry in the Dido Valley at Simon's Town. The scheme requires the building of a fishing harbour and the opening up of the whole area between Glencairn and Simon's Town.

Negotiations are now proceeding between the municipality of Simon's Town, the South African Railways and Harbours Administration and other public bodies in respect of the proposed harbour.

A fine site, at the foot of the Dido Valley, is available for such a harbour, with deep water, and with the existing naval dockyard providing some protection from the weather.

The scheme will also require the doubling of the railway line from Fish Hoek to Simon's Town and the widening of the present very narrow road.

The Dido Valley, with a series of gently sloping tablelands is regarded as ideal for industrial development. Above it is the Simon's Town water supply, and road, rail and power facilities are at hand.

Already twelve acres of this land, which had already been surveyed, has been taken up by the leading fishing concerns, and far wider preparations are now necessary.

These companies have committed themselves to the Simon's Town Municipality to start development within a set period, and it is consequently estimated that within the next five years £2,000,000 will be spent on factories, plant, the harbour, housing, etc.

This five-year plan will mean that 500 people will be working in the Dido valley fishing industry, and that is roughly the number employed in the naval dockyard in peace-time.

Mr Philip McManus, the town-planning expert, has been commissioned to survey the whole area which is said to offer remarkably fine town-planning possibilities. Provision will have to be made for the housing of 300 to 400 families, including 250 families of fishermen.

The Municipality of Simon's Town is prepared to go ahead with these ambitious plans, and the Housing Board indeed has already approved the construction of the first six houses.

The key men in drawing up this ambitious project are Mr. L.C. Gay, the far-seeing mayor of Simon's Town, Mr. Max Sonnenberg, M.P. and Mr. F.C. Jameson, one of the top men of Marine Products Limited who have already a fish processing factory in the Dido Valley. The Fisheries Industry Development Corporation is of course vitally interested.

The scheme originated from the fact that Kalk Bay offers no further opportunity for fishing expansion. The harbour there is already overcrowded. Also of vital importance is the fact that the Obnoxious Trades Act in general provides a limitation upon the fishing industry which will not be experienced at Dido Valley.

The scheme is also significant for the trawling industry because the projected harbour would knock miles off for trawlers which could run there from the Agulhas Bank instead of making for Table Bay. This would be particularly important in the winter months.

Among the firms who have applied for sites in the Dido Valley are African Inshore Fisheries Development Corporation Ltd., Concentra Ltd, Laaiplek Fisheries, Marine Products, Union Smokeries, Ocean Products, Lambert's Bay Canning Corporation and Vitamin Sales Corporation. The last mentioned is a new concern which will process vitamin oil for a number of separate companies; a plant costing £140,000 is now on order for Dido Valley. In addition, a boat-building concern and an engineering concern have applied for sites."

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In reality only a small number of houses were built, the fishing harbour did not materialise, a spur of the railway line provided somewhere for the factory to load and unload bulk supplies and take-overs in the fishing industry changed the companies' outlook and future plans. However, the main road was finally widened and upgraded. Now in 1996, fifty years on, the authorities are again looking to the development of Dido Valley with the provision of a low-cost housing scheme. The only other factory to develop there has been Gem Stones.

Ed.

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## FLAG OFFICERS OF THE CAPE

### VERNON WHITE

|          |                                   |         |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Part XIV | Commodore Sir William N.W. Hewett | 1873-76 |
|          | Commodore Francis W. Sullivan     | 1876-79 |
|          | Commodore Sir F.W. Richards       | 1879-82 |
|          | Rear Admiral Nowell Salmon        | 1882-85 |

**William Nathan Wrighte Hewett** who was appointed on 2 October 1873 to succeed Sir John Commerell CB VC as C-in-C Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station, was born in August 1834. A Lieutenant in the Royal Navy at the age of twenty, he was promoted to Commander at the age of twenty-four, and to post rank at the age of twenty-eight in November 1862.

Hewett's promotion from Mate in the R.N. to acting Lieutenant came about during an action in the Crimean War (1853-56) in which he was awarded the Victoria Cross. In January 1854 the Anglo-French Fleet had entered the Black Sea, and on the 3 May Britain declared war on Russia. The siege of Sevastopol, the Russian Port and naval base on the Crimean peninsula began on 17 October 1854, followed by the Battle of Balaclava on 25 October, made famous for the ill-fated charge of the Light Brigade. The next day on 26 October the Russians made a determined sortie from Sevastopol which threatened the Lancaster Battery of the Naval Brigade whose seamen gunners were under the command of William Hewitt, then a Mate in the Royal Navy. Word was received that the battery's guns should be spiked and that the naval party should retreat. Saying that he would accept no orders except from his Captain on board HMS BEAGLE, Hewitt remained at his post. Ordering the guns crews to break down the battery parapets he slewed round guns and opened fire on the advancing Russians who were effecting a flanking movement. This unexpected manoeuvre and barrage of fire caused the enemy to check their advance and retreat.

For this action Hewitt was promoted to acting Lieutenant in the field, and later awarded the Victoria Cross. This he received in person from the Queen at the first investiture of the order in Hyde Park on 26 June 1857. Promoted to Commander in September 1858 Hewitt was made a Captain in November 1862.

Prior to taking up his appointment as C-in-C Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa station in December 1873, in succession to Commodore Commerell, Captain Hewitt took over from Captain E.R. Fremantle R.N. as Senior Officer on the Gold Coast in November 1873. Whilst flying his broad pendant in HMS ACTIVE at the Cape in 1874, Commodore Hewitt was honoured with the KCB for his services in West Africa. During July and August 1876 Sir William lead a punitive expedition up the River Niger as far as Oritsha, and in the same year he organised a naval blockade of the Dahomey Coast.

On 1 February 1877 Commodore Francis Sullivan wrote from his flagship HMS TOURMALINE in Simon's Town to their Lordships, confirming having taken over as C-in-C from Hewitt. Hewitt was promoted to Rear Admiral the following year and in 1882 saw

action in the Egyptian campaign both afloat and ashore. He was awarded the KCSI in 1883 and became a Vice-Admiral in July 1884. From April 1882 to May 1885 he was C-in-C East Indies. Hewitt's death at the comparatively early age of 54 years brought to an end a distinguished naval career.

**Commodore Francis Sullivan CB CME** who was C-in-C Cape from 1876 to 1879 was a patron of the Simon's Town Amateur Dramatic Society, who performed two comedies on 5 and 6 March 1877 in one of HM Dockyard stores, the music being provided by the band of HMS NARCISSUS. In 1879 Commodore Sullivan left the Cape, later to become Director of Transport at the Admiralty in April 1883 with the rank of Rear Admiral. He was promoted to Vice-Admiral in 1885.

It was during Commodore Sullivan's term of office here that several momentous events took place in Central and Southern Africa. Sir Bartle Frere was appointed as High Commissioner in South Africa in 1877 with orders to seek federation, and Sir Theophilus Shepstone the Administrator of Natal annexed the Transvaal. In October of the same year Sir Henry Morton Stanley completed his 1,000 day safari across Africa from Dar-es-Salaam to Boma at the mouth of the Congo River.

Walvis Bay was annexed in May 1878 and in December of that year Sir Bartle Frere issued an ultimatum to King Cetewayo of the Zulus, which led the following year to the invasion of Zululand and the British military disaster at Isandlwana and the battle of Rorke's Drift.

**Commodore Frederick Richards** later to become Admiral of the Fleet by special order in Council in order that he could be retained on the active list to the age of 70 years, was the successor to Commodore Sullivan in 1879. He was C-in-C until 1882.

Born on 11 November 1833 Frederick William Richards was the son of Captain Edwin Richards RN and Mary Anne, daughter of the Rev. Walter Kirwan of County Wexford in Ireland. Educated at the Naval School in New Cross near Greenwich, Frederick Richards entered the Royal Navy as a naval cadet at the age of 15 years in 1848. Three years later he was sent to serve in Australia, during the period of the gold rush at Summerhill Creek, in New South Wales. Appointed acting Mate of the sloop HMS PHANTOM in January 1854, he returned to England the following year to sit for his Lieutenant's examinations. On being promoted to Lieutenant he was appointed to HMS GANGES flagship of the C-in-C China Station in 1855, being made Flag Lieutenant to Admiral Baynes in April 1859. This was the year in which the British Fleet was in action against the Taku forts on the Peiho River.

Promoted to Commander at the age of 27 years in 1860 Richards was given command of the paddle-wheeled sloop HMS VIXEN in the Pacific, to take her home to England to be paid off. The following year he was in command of HMS DART on the West African coast, only to be promoted to Captain on half pay and for the next four and a half years he served both on the West African coast and in transporting troops to India. In 1873 he received

command of HMS DEVASTATION, the first sea going turret ship without auxillary sails.

Promoted to Commodore in October 1878 he hoisted his broad pendant in HMS BOADICEA as Senior Naval Officer on the West Coast of Africa. In 1879 he was appointed C-in-C Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station. On his arrival in the Cape Commodore Richards received news of the defeat of the British Army at Isandlwana, and sailing up the East Coast of Africa, outside the limits of his command, he landed with 250 seamen and marines to reinforce the small defeated army. He was present at the relief of Eshowe and at Gingindlovu. In recognition of Commodore Richards help, Richards Bay in Natal was named after him.

On 4 June 1880 his wife, formerly Mrs. Lucy Foyle (a widow whom he married in 1866) died in Admiralty House, Simon's Town. She was the daughter of Fitzherbert Brooke of Horton in Gloucestershire and was buried in Simon's Town. They had no children.

From 1879 to 1882 Commodore Richards was an ADC to the Queen, being awarded the KCB in 1881. During April of that year the Commodore assumed command of HMS DIDO on the West Coast of Africa. He sailed from the Cape in June 1882, on appointment as a Junior Naval Lord at the Admiralty with the rank of Rear Admiral. Then in May 1885 Admiral Richards was appointed C-in-C East Indies as a Vice-Admiral flying his flag in HMS BACCHANTE.

On 22 October 1885 an ultimatum was delivered to King Theebaw of Burma as a result of the confiscation of the property of Bombay traders. On 1 November an expeditionary force sailed from Calcutta for Rangoon, followed by a military campaign in Upper Burma between 16 and 30 November, in which a naval brigade took part. The British occupied Mandalay on 28 November when King Theebaw was sent into exile. In January 1886 Upper Burma was annexed. Those were the days of gunboat diplomacy.

Admiral Sir Frederick Richards was promoted to full Admiral in 1890 on his appointment as C-in-C China Station. He became a Second Naval Lord of the Admiralty in 1892, and Senior Lord from 1893 to 1899 being promoted to Admiral of the Fleet in 1898. He retired in 1899 remaining on half pay until 1903. An honorary Degree of Doctor of Civil Laws from Oxford University was conferred in June 1904 which reflected the esteem in which Admiral Sir Frederick Richards was held. At the age of 79 he died at his home Horton Court, near Malmesbury, Gloucestershire, on 28 September 1912.

Commodore Richard's successor as C-in-C Cape was **Rear Admiral Nowell Salmon CB VC** who flew his flag in HMS BOADICEA (Flag Captain E. J. Church RN). Born on 20 February 1835, the year of the Great Trek from the Cape Colony, Nowell Salmon was the only son of the Rev. Henry Salmon, Rector of Swaraton in Hampshire, and Emily daughter of Vice-Admiral Nowell of Iffly in Oxfordshire. Educated at Marlborough College, Salmon entered the Royal Navy in 1847 at the age of 12 years. During the Russian War of 1853-54 he served with the Baltic fleet, was made

a Lieutenant in January 1856 and served with Peal's Brigade during the Indian Mutiny in 1857.

Promoted to Commander in March 1858 and to post rank in December 1863 Nowell Salmon commanded HMS DEFENCE, VALIANT and SWIFT-SURE. Whilst serving in HMS ICARUS he effected the capture of the notorious Walker White\* for which act he received a gold medal from the Central American states.

In 1866 he married Emily Augusta daughter of Edward Saunders of Westbrook, in Upway, Dorset. A son and a daughter were born of the marriage. Promoted to Rear Admiral in 1879 he was appointed C-in-C Cape in 1882. Like his predecessors Admiral Salmon was involved in trying to improve the water supply to Simon's Town. During his term of office in the Cape Britain annexed St Lucia Bay, incorporating the bay into Natal thus denying the Transvaal Boers access to the sea. In the same year 1884 the Berlin Conference on West Africa began with the object of settling questions of colonial boundaries and the need to suppress the slave trade in the Congo.

Nowell Salmon was promoted to Vice-Admiral in July 1886 and was succeeded as C-in-C Cape by Rear-Admiral Sir Walter Hunt Grubbe. Awarded the KCB in 1887, Vice Admiral Salmon became C-in-C China 1888-1891. It was in May 1889 that the British Parliament passed the Naval Defence Act which established the Two-Power standard whereby the Royal Navy was to be "at least equal in naval strength to that of any two countries" a principle which was to shape British naval policy until 1912.

In September 1891 Nowell Salmon was promoted to full Admiral and became C-in-C Portsmouth in 1894, which appointment he held until 1897. In that year he commanded the Jubilee review of the fleet, and was awarded the GCB. He became Admiral of the Fleet in January 1899 and retired from active service in 1904. It was in February 1902 that Admiral Sir John Fisher, then C-in-C Mediterranean proposed the following distribution of the fleets in a memorandum to Lord Selborne, First Lord of the Admiralty. There should be five fleets, the HOME fleet, the ATLANTIC fleet, the MEDITERRANEAN fleet, the CAPE fleet, and the CHINA fleet. He proposed that the China fleet should include Australia, whilst the Cape fleet should include the East Indies and the East Coast of Africa. The Atlantic fleet should include the North American station, the West Coast of Africa, with occasional visits to the South East coast of America.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Nowell Salmon KCB GCB died at his home in Bottery, Hampshire on 14 February 1912.

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NOTE:

\*Walker White was in fact William Walker (1824-1860) an American adventurer and filibuster. After an unsuccessful expedition into Northern Mexico in 1853 he then succeeded in making himself President of Nicaragua for a while. Following his eviction he returned to Central America, but was apprehended by the British (HMS ICARUS) and handed over to the Hondurans who tried and executed him. (Concise Dictionary of American Biography, Charles Scribner's Sons, N.Y., 1964, p.1129).

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THERE ARE PHOTOGRAPHS OF CDRE SIR W. HEWETT & OF REAR\_ADMIRAL SALMON ON PAGE 61 OF THIS ISSUE.

## THE SEARLE FAMILY'S HAPPY DAYS IN SIMON'S TOWN

(Taken from a letter written in December 1995 to the Hon. Secretary by Sheila McGuire nee Searle).

"Thank you for your letter of November 14th. It brought back so many happy memories of our stay in Simon's Town from 1934-1938. You can imagine the excitement of three girls, then twelve, fourteen and sixteen and brother Peter 17½, at the thought of a long three-week sea voyage to a foreign land!! They were a very happy four years. L'Esperance was a wonderful family home, right on the sea for swimming and a tennis court to use regularly. The lovely bay with the GENERAL BOTHA and round us Naval Ships and activity.

Whenever I hear a bugle, I am right back in Snoeky, each morning and evening we listened to the bugle calls. In term time we caught the bus at the Gate (East Dockyard Gate - Ed) or walked to the Station, to catch the train to St James, where we were pupils at Star of the Sea Convent. As we got older, we were invited to your Dance on the Botha, great fun! I seem to remember a Padre Flack, a very cheerful friendly man.

We had a bathing hut at Seaforth and groups of midshipmen from HMS AMPHION, which succeeded HMS DORSETSHIRE, as Flagship, joined us for fun, swimming and diving. One of the midshipmen became my husband in 1941.

I can remember the Dutch Submarine KX VIII coming into the Dockyard for repairs and my Father receiving thanks from the Royal Netherlands Government for his work on her. The French Cruiser JEANNE D'ARC came into Port on a courtesy visit and their youngsters were frequent visitors to our house. Then the DISCOVERY II came in for repairs and service. We were often on board for tea with Captain Nelson. We also had a trip from Simon's Town to Cape Town in her. The CAP PILAR a beautiful sailing vessel also came into the Dockyard for an overhaul. She was a wonderful sight in full sail. Once when the dry dock was emptied, hundreds of fish were stranded in the bottom. Cannot remember how they got rid of them. There was always something going on. Once a very big mountain fire brought frightened baboons right down onto the road.

The local doctor, Dr Bull and his family were good friends. Their two sons, Graham and Arthur were often our dancing partners at the Glencairn Hotel Saturday parties. On Sundays we attended the Naval Church, in the Sail Loft, in the first Dockyard, the one nearer the railway station. Padre Beardmore was the minister.

My parents joined the Golf and Tennis Clubs, we played in some Tennis matches to make the numbers up. Admiral Tottenham took over from Admiral Evans, not long after we arrived.

At seventeen, I was invited with my elder sister Betty, and my parents, to a Ball in Cape Town where we met General Smuts. From then on I was included in all invitations. Some Sunday evenings

the Flagship showed films on the deck at the rear and we felt very grown-up being allowed to drink creme de menthe frappe. More chipped ice with a dash of liqueur! I used to roller skate all over the Dockyard and my Father was asked if he would please stop me skating along the high sea wall!!! Spoilsports, they thought I might fall into the sea!

There is just a chance that my young sister Jean and I may visit Cape Town over Christmas 1996, with a group of Naval widows, if the organisers can get enough people. We'd love that as we both have school friends with whom we keep in touch, Mrs. Holt of Hermanus and Mrs Esme McCallum of Tokai, are my main two. Oh, they were such happy days and we were lucky to be sent to Simon's Town. Sadly my Mother died out there and is buried in the cemetery halfway to Glencairn \*. I expect we would find a lot of changes but at least Simon's Berg will be the same.

To-day I lunched with my cousin Arthur Searle, who was Chief Accountant with Anglo-American Copper. I mentioned your letter and on hearing your name he said "we had a Kinkead-Weekes in Rhodesia". Its a small world.

I passed my driving test in Snoeky, the Town Clerk (Mr. Dobson - Ed) was my examiner! I still have that licence; I had to pass another test when I got back to U.K. Then another one when I had 6 months in Washington D.C. during the war. Life has been full of excitement and happiness. I'm very lucky.

Yours sincerely,

SHEILA MCGUIRE "

- \* MRS. MCGUIRE's mother was Julia Evaline Searle who died on 20 August 1937 and is buried in Grave L 27 at Dido Valley. Her husband was F.W. Searle, Chief Constructor in the Dockyard, L'Esperance his official residence. This lovely house was pulled down to make way for S.A.S. HUGO BIERMANN the submarine base. (Ed)

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F.H. CHAPMAN, Midshipman, HMS BOSCAWEN.

The Citation for the award of the Royal Humane Society's silver medal to Midshipman Chapman makes interesting reading: "At the Cape of Good Hope, on 10 February 1859, while HMS BOSCAWEN was beating up to the anchorage, during a furious wind and heavy head seas, a seaman named Hill was accidentally knocked overboard by the main-sheet, when two of his shipmates Bates and Thoms, with Mr. Chapman (who was only fourteen years of age), immediately leapt into the sea to endeavour to save Hill, who was known not to be a good swimmer, but the gallant efforts of the 3 volunteers were of no avail, the unfortunate man having been stunned by the blow that hurled him into the water, for he appears to have sunk before Mr. Chapman could reach him, although he dived within 2 yards of the place where he fell in."

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Note: The name of Ordinary Seaman George Hill, with others, is inscribed on a slate tablet in the Garden of Remembrance, Seaforth. He was 23 yrs. old. (Sloping wall - numbered 20).

**SERGEANT JOHN KENDRICK OF 21ST YORKSHIRE LIGHT DRAGOONS AND  
SIMON'S TOWN METHODIST CHURCH.**

LATE G. J. WILSON.

It is of course known that during the 1st British Occupation of the Cape, there were several Wesleyans in the Regiments stationed here between 1795-1803. These men - some half-dozen or so - set the example to be followed later by men of the Forces of the 2nd British Occupation, before the acquisition of a proper House of God, of, out of their own meagre pay, hiring a very small room in Cape Town for a couple of hours a week to hold prayer meetings. Among these early Wesleyans was South Africa's first Wesleyan Methodist convert, Gunner John Driver of the Royal Artillery.

With the 2nd Occupation the first to take active steps to gather these Wesleyans together was a soldier of the 72nd Regiment, Sgt. George Middlemiss. They built a small stone sanctuary on the slopes of Table Mountain but unhappily a division arose because some held the narrower Calvinistic doctrine of the Church of Scotland and this led Middlemiss to resign from membership of the local Wesleyan Society. Be that as it may, he with his leadership began the first stirrings of Methodism in South Africa. Kendrick succeeded Middlemiss as leader of the Wesleyans at the Cape.

John Kendrick was born in 1779 at Wokingham, Berkshire, of army stock. His father was a Sergeant in the Army and in due course John became a troop sergeant in the 21st Yorkshire Light Dragoons. He had been profoundly influenced by a Methodist in his regiment and completed his full conversion at Newcastle by a sermon preached by the famous Reverend George Morley and after a trial period, became a full member of the Wesleyan persuasion. He came to the Cape with the army in April 1806 and landed in Simon's Town on 10th July 1806. After a few days he was posted to Saldanha Bay where he remained for 9 months. He returned to Cape Town in early September 1807 and was asked to take over from Middlemiss with 7 men from the Light Dragoons and 3 men from the 93rd Regiment.

He was an excessively diffident man, full of fears and anxiety, on his own confession and lacking in the traditional boldness and confidence of a Sergeant. However with time he became stronger and never sacrificed his Christian principles to protect his own position. On 2 September 1807 he was sharply attacked by his Sergeant Major for being an "enthusiast" and was constrained to say "I have no desire to offend you, Sir, but I would rather offend you than grieve my Maker." After advice from Rev. Morley he decided he would rather forfeit his rank than give up his religious beliefs. He was under great strain and wrote in his diary of 22 September 1807 "Arrived in Simon's Town in charge of a letter party to convey the mails to and from Headquarters. Thus I am again brought out of the hurry and confusion of the world to a place of retirement to breathe a purer air and to recruit my spiritual as well as my bodily strength." A few days later he noted in his diary "October 4 1807: The Lord has enabled me to speak a few words occasionally

in Simon's Town".

As Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of communication between the Castle and the Admiral of the Naval ships in the Bay he would have bedded down his horses in the old Dutch East India Company Stables and would have gathered the faithful in the sleeping quarters above the stables and conducted his services. It has never been ascertained if the Dutch conducted formal services in the town, so he may have been the first to conduct devotional services on land in the Town.

We know the Wesleyans built a small chapel near Wynberg Camp, only to have it burnt to the ground on the orders of the Regimental Colonel. Fortunately the Troop Captain Proctor was not of the same mind as the Colonel for he had no objections to Sgt Kendrick holding "secret meetings" saying that the Wesleyans were the best men in his troop and he allowed them to build their church on his private land at Wynberg. Soon there were 50 members of the Society. However, there was still trouble with the Colonel for in November 1810 they were ordered to march from Wynberg to the Chaplain (in Cape Town ?) to be examined. Sgt Kendrick was to go in first, followed by Sgt. Buckland. Despite his opposition to Wesleyanism the Colonel had to admit that numerous leading drunkards and swearers in the Regiment had had their lives changed and had become the most sober of men. However the harassment continued and for leaving Wynberg Camp on New Years Eve 1811-1812 to attend church, Sgt Buckland and his fellow Wesleyans were arrested for being out of bounds. Sgt Buckland was reduced to the ranks and sent to headquarters in Cape Town.

Kendrick was sent for and the Colonel counselled him to give up his religion. On 6 March 1812 Kendrick records that he had been removed from the position of Troop Sergeant Major and had assumed the rank of Sergeant and Regimental School Master. He took up his new duties with much satisfaction but was refused permission to use the schoolroom as a place of worship. Kendrick wrote to England to request from the Book Steward a large number of books for his religious teaching. The books arrived and the excess funds of £32.14.11d were returned "to be applied to feed the poor and toward the support of the happy gospel". There were now 140 members.

The harassment continued and the Wesleyans were constrained to rise at 2, 3 and 4 a.m. to conduct their services so as not to disturb their fellow soldiers of the camp. Even the local Chaplain preached a sermon against the Wesleyans. On 30 December 1812 Kendrick wrote to the Wesleyan Headquarters in England for a Minister to be stationed at the Cape. In January 1813 Kendrick's health showed signs of serious deterioration. Despite this he met classes at 3.30a.m. and even 2 a.m. without singing lest they should disturb the rest of the soldiers. However Kendrick continued and even built up a Women's Class. Even the Colonel must have had second thoughts for he asked Kendrick to teach his own children. He battled on but failed to complete the last entries in his Journal - these were completed by a friend and on 18 November 1813 he passed away aged only 34.

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Note: Sergeant Kendrick was buried on 19 November 1813, possibly at Fort Knokke or Somerset Road. The burial register of the Chaplain to the Forces gives his age as 35. (Accession No. 1939 Cape Archives).

## HMS NERBUDDA: LOST WITH ALL HANDS, 1855

ARTHUR DAVEY

In the course of five centuries hundreds of ships of all descriptions have come to grief on or off the long, inhospitable South African coast. However, in the awesome tally of the sunk and wrecked only six ships of the Royal Navy were lost in these waters between 1795 and 1914 (1). Given the frequent passage of British ships of war around our shores that is an impressive record testifying to navigating skills of a high order.

A violent gale in Table Bay in 1799 dashed the SCEPTRE, an old third-rater (64 guns) to pieces. The EMU, the first vessel to enter Knysna harbour in 1817 was wrecked there. In 1847 the steam sloop THUNDERBOLT fell foul of a hidden reef near Port Elizabeth and although beached, was damaged beyond repair. The disaster that overtook the special service paddle steamer BIRKENHEAD off Danger Point in 1852 has assumed epic proportions. During the South African War the light cruiser SYBILLE was wrecked at Lamberts Bay in 1902. The sixth warship lost, the NERBUDDA, a brig, disappeared without trace in 1855, a calamity that cost 133 lives and one which has received the barest of notice. Although there was widespread speculative interest about the fate of the liner s.s. WARATAH which vanished in 1911 the chroniclers of southern ocean tragedies have overlooked HMS NERBUDDA (2). In her case too there was no wreckage and there were no survivors.

NERBUDDA was built in India and to that she owed her name. The Nerbudda (variously Narbada, Namada, Narmada) is one of the great rivers of Central India which flows westward and is second only to Ganges as a sacred river. In 1846 and 1847 NERBUDDA was on the stocks in Bombay. When launched she was a brig of about 1100 tons carrying twelve guns. At first she was on station at Bombay but later sailed for England and was based at Chatham in 1849 (3). By 1853 she was in the Simon's Town Squadron which then consisted of seven assorted vessels, a mixture of sail and steam as two of them were paddle wheelers (4).

Aged thirty-four in 1855, Commander Henry Ashburton Kerr of the NERBUDDA was an experienced officer and no stranger to Simon's Town. In 1846 as a young Lieutenant he had served on the flagship PRESIDENT when Rear-Admiral J.R. Dacres was C-in-C, Cape. Before that he had been a mate on a naval vessel in the Pacific (5). After calling at Port Elizabeth in the winter of 1855 NERBUDDA set sail for Simon's Bay. A laconic but poignant inscription on a monument erected by officers and men of the Royal Navy in 1857 tells of her fate:

"LAST SEEN STANDING OUT OF ALGOA BAY JUNE 10TH 1855. TERRIFIC GALES SOON AFTER BLEW NOT HEARD OF SINCE".

That there was wild weather at the time is borne out by evidence concerning the merchantman EARL OF EGLINTON. She was stranded in Simon's Bay whilst on a voyage from Calcutta to London and reported the loss of her second mate and a boy washed overboard in a severe gale on 14 June (6).

The navy's monument to the NERBUDDA's crew, a tall, rough-hewn stone column, was apparently situated somewhere between the Dockyard and Admiralty House. (7) It was moved later and is now a conspicuous feature in a central cluster of monuments in the Garden of Remembrance at Seaforth. Close to it is a modern circular slate-covered monument which gives particulars of some of the sailors and marines connected with Simon's Town who were either buried or lost at sea from 1795. On this memorial the names of the NERBUDDA's complement of 13 officers and 120 other ranks are inscribed. Among them was a ropemaker, a cooper, three carpenters and a blacksmith as well as others who also had ranks redolent of the age of sail - "Captain of the Maintop", "Captain of the Foretop" and "Captain of the Focsl". A particularly sombre reminder of the toll of the sea is the tablet which gives the names of thirteen Ships Boys, aged fourteen upwards, who were crew members of the ill-fated brig.

#### ENDNOTES:

- (1) Excluded from this calculation are various hired transports which were wrecked, e.g. the ARNISTON (1815), WATERLOO (1842) and CHARLOTTE (1854).
- (2) NERBUDDA is mentioned briefly in R.F. Kennedy's compilation Shipwrecks on and off the Coasts of Southern Africa, J.P.L. Johannesburg 1952, but is not to be found in M. Turner Shipwrecks and Salvage in South Africa 1505 to the Present, Cape Town 1988 or R. Knox-Johnston, The Cape of Good Hope: a Maritime History, London etc 1989. The selections of J. Burman in Great Shipwrecks (1967) and Strange Shipwrecks of the Southern Seas (1968) did not include NERBUDDA.
- (3) NAVY LISTS 1846-1850.
- (4) The Cape of Good Hope Almanac and Annual Register for 1854, Cape Town. p.104.
- (5) W. O'Byrne A Naval Biographical Dictionary, London 1849.
- (6) Cape of Good Hope Almanac for 1856, pp. 327, 328.
- (7) J.P. Legg, Some Facts in the History of the Parish of St Frances, Simon's Town, Claremont, 1903, p.33.

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VENUS, the Captain's dog, onboard a British destroyer in W.W.II.  
From "Animals at War" - Imperial War Museum London. The Editor wonders what would have happened if Venus had met our Able Seaman Just Nuisance

(A founder member of the Cape Town branch of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (originally "Cape Naval Volunteers") and now S.A.S. UNITIE)

A.E. READ

Charles Struben was born a few miles outside Pretoria on a farm called "The Willows" which had a distant view of Diamond Hill. His mother was of Irish extraction; her father was Dr. Cole of Dublin, so the family were often to find themselves pulled in the direction of the mother country.

Struben grandfather had been occupied in the sea trade in the Far East and the house was filled with exotic furniture and ornaments. Charles' parents were away on a trip overseas when Boer forces took over their farm and camped on it during the First Boer War and much of the contents and stock were looted. Father, Harry, had worked on the Barberton goldfields and at Kimberley and so when the finances of the family were bad just after the First Boer War, Harry decided to send his younger brother Frank to look for gold on the Witwatersrand and the family is often credited with being the first people to find the gold on the Rand.

The family later came to live in Cape Town, first at Koornhoop at Mowbray where they set up a jersey stud farm. Then they moved to a newly built house at Rosebank. Charles started school at Bishops. It was then that they built Seaforth House at Simon's Town (now the Community School adjacent to Seaforth Beach in Kleintuin Road) and became friendly with Admiral Rawson who had a son the same age as Charles. Charles' sister Enid was a great friend of Alice Rawson and it was while staying with her at Admiralty House that she met and fell in love with Commander Dudley de Chair R.N. a nephew of Admiral Rawson, who later in 1919 became Governor of New South Wales, Australia. With these two events Charles began a long connection with the Royal Navy and went on to have many Royal Naval friends. Incidentally, Charles' younger brother Frank later came to the Cape and started fruit growing in the Hex River valley and then joined Rhodes Fruit Farms with Pickstone.

In 1895 the family went over to holiday in England, staying in Devon for a short while and then renting a house at Thames Ditton in Surrey, on the river. Charles and Hal Rawson went fishing in Sweden with Admiral Morse and Commander Dixon both of whom had served on the Africa Station. Then at 16 he went off to school at Clifton College, Bristol. He shot at Bisley and was on holiday in the south of France when the Jameson Raid took place. He went on to University College, Oxford. He managed one trip back to South Africa during his time at Oxford and returned there to play Rugby for Oxford in the Oxford/Cambridge match. He wanted to join up in the S.African War but was told to stay on at Oxford and complete his finals. The family stated that with four members of the family away at War they felt they were well represented. When he finished at Oxford he went on to Leyden University to study Roman Dutch Law. Finally he returned

to Cape Town and found himself Chambers in the new Cape Times building at the corner of Church and St George's Street. At this time (c.1909) he was friendly with Captain Craig of HMS PELORUS who went on to take the PELORUS on a memorable trip up the Amazon (see Bulletin Volume XVII No. 2 p.72). Craig went on to become Admiral Craig-Waller.

In 1905 the British Association for the Advancement of Science visited South Africa and Struben went on a trip to Bechuanaland and Rhodesia with their party, being a particular friend of the Government doctor at Touws River, one Kirkman, who was invited to go on the trip.

In 1904 a Division of the British Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve was formed and permission was granted to Mr. Herbert Penny and others to establish a division in Cape Town. Charles was overjoyed and for the next thirty years he was half a barrister and half a sailor. J.B. Lindley was Commander of the Division. John X. Merriman tried to save money by closing down the Division but pleading from a delegation including two ex Prime Ministers, several members of Parliament and some serving officers, de Waal, then Colonial Secretary, decided to keep the RNVV going.

Officers were seconded from the Royal Navy as instructors and inspections were carried out by the Commander-in-Chief South Atlantic. Frequently contingents of men were taken to sea on British ships. There was a call-up period of 3 weeks per annum. The RNVV competed in rifle shooting competitions, signalling and field exercises. "Cape Naval Volunteers" H.Q. was a large shed on Woodstock beach. When reclamation took place the gear and an old 6" gun had to be moved to new quarters near the dock entrance. Their next home was at The Castle where they lived in the moat in a heath-robinson building rigged up for them. They trained on HMS ODIN a small ship dating back to the days of sail with auxiliary steam - she was virtually a hulk. She was however, taken back into service in World War I and did valuable service in the waters around Aden and in the Persian Gulf.

Then came the loss of the WARATAH and the MAORI. A rescue party was organised comprising members of the RNVV and it set off to attempt to rescue people from the MAORI. There was a violent storm raging. The ship, after hitting outlying rocks (too close to the shore) swung in the gale bows-on to the shore. As a result of this wreck Struben as a young Member of Parliament made a plea for a new lighthouse and a wireless transmitting station to be built at Kommetjie. The Port Captain of Cape Town at that time was Captain Price and he commanded the Cape Naval Volunteers. He himself set off in the Port's most powerful tug to search for the WARATAH, to no effect.

About 1913 a new Officer Commanding the Castle arrived who had a delightful daughter (Valerie Bingham). A romance developed and they married six months later. They had three daughters, Lavinia, Angela and Diana. When the first World War broke out Struben joined up and was appointed to the personal staff of the Commander-in-Chief. He was still a Member of Parliament. He

wanted to resign from the House but the C-in-C thought it would be useful to have him there as it would facilitate information coming his way! There was a threat of a rebellion - memories of the Boer War were still fresh in people's minds and Union had only been declared in 1910. This threat led to barbed wire being thrown up round Admiralty House and the Admiral's Office at Simon's Town but it all came to nothing and fizzled out. Then Commander Hoare, the Commanding Officer of the Division and a carefully picked number of men were chosen to go overseas with three officers including Struben. They were to be borne on the books of HMS EUROPA. After the War the Prince of Wales visited South Africa in 1925 and the Division formed a guard of honour for him.

In 1919 Struben bought Nederberg on the Hen and Chickens Estate (Bishopscourt). He lived there till it was sold in 1948 and continued to practice at the Bar. He retired to Kalk Bay in the early 1950s and passed away suddenly and quietly at Sea Point on 18 March 1958.

He led a very active life for, as well as his legal and naval activities he was a member of the Council of the University of Cape Town, a member of the Seamen's Port Welfare Committee, on the executive of the Botanical Society and the W.P. Agricultural Society. He was also Chairman of the Merchant Seaman's Welcome Fund, and was Chairman of the Cape Town Branch of the S.A. Navy League from 1935 to 1941 when he resigned to become the League's President.

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Sources consulted: "Vein of Gold" Struben's autobiography; Diocesan College Magazine, and Naval Records.

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FROM PAGE 52



Cdre Sir W. Hewett 1873-1876



Rear-Admiral N. Salmon 1882-1885

## DR. LIVINGSTONE AND THE ZAMBEZI DELTA 1861

### THE SEAFORTH SERIES - Part II

A.M.D.

Simon's Town had connections with some of the conspicuous European explorers of Africa. It is well-known that Mary Kingsley died here in 1900 after a short stay. Long before that David Livingstone, on his first visit to Africa, came ashore at Simon's Bay from the GEORGE on 15 March 1841. Twenty years later Dr. Livingstone was a celebrity.

Early in 1861 Livingstone was encamped in miserable conditions near to the Zambezi Delta awaiting the arrival of members of the University Mission, a Church of England enterprise, headed by Bishop Mackenzie. The first members of the missionary group were conveyed in two ships of the Simon's Town squadron, HMS SIDON, a steam frigate and HMS LYRA, a steam sloop. In late January 1861 they arrived off the Kongone mouth of the Zambezi, a treacherous entry channel into the river. Indeed the whole delta with its sandbanks, bars and mudflats was a hazard for navigators. These natural obstacles came as a surprise to a somewhat naive mission party.

Tim Jeal, author of a masterly biography of Livingstone, published in 1973, comments (p.235): "The naval officers on both the warships found their confusion entertaining and told them with lugubrious relish that eight or nine men had already lost their lives on the bar coming and going on Dr Livingstone's business."

One of those who drowned was John B. Sevecke, Acting Paymaster of the LYRA. His fellow officers had a handsome headstone\* erected to his memory; it is now affixed to the outer sloping wall (Row 19) of the Garden of Remembrance, Seaforth. It was their token of esteem for Sevecke "who lost his life attempting to cross the bar of the Kongoni for the purpose of communication with Dr. Livingstone". The date of the tragedy, shown on the headstone is 2 June 1860, but that raises some doubt.

An entry in the register of the Sexton of St Francis Church states that Sevecke's remains were brought home on the LYRA and that he was interred in the Old Burying Ground on 18 October 1861 with the committal rites having been conducted by the Reverend Mr. Meredith. In June 1860 Livingstone was in the Makololo country far from the Zambezi Delta whereas in June 1861 he was in that vicinity (Jeal, p.238). It is likely that Sevecke's death actually took place on 2 June 1861. Inscriptions on gravestones are "documents" and like historical records on parchment or paper may contain unintentional inaccuracies.

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NOTE: There is also a commemorative tablet in St Francis Church, Simon's Town, with a similar inscription. It is interesting to note that Sevecke was but 23 years of age when he died.

## WORLD WAR II CONVOYS AND THE S.A.W.A.S.

A.E. READ

S.A.W.A.S. stands for South African Women's Auxiliary Services and it was a voluntary organisation.

Forty-two groups of convoys (dubbed "Winnie's Specials) and each convoy number preceded by "WS", steamed round the Cape during the period June 1940 - June 1943 to service the battle fronts in the Middle East and Far East and in Burma while the Mediterranean was closed to normal traffic.

Living conditions in these convoys should be borne in mind. On arrival at the Cape the troops would have just undergone five weeks' incarceration without shore leave, partly in the tropics, in overcrowded, often vermin- and vomit-ridden, under-ventilated ships with primitive messing and washing (salt water soap!) arrangements; by this time their spirits were - at best - at a low ebb. There was always the fear that they would be torpedoed especially at night.

This is where Lucy Bean, a Provincial Commandant of the SAWAS Cape Town came into the picture. If she heard at 8 a.m. of the arrival of a convoy for 11 a.m. she would have a fleet of cars waiting just outside the dock gates in Cape Town to take the troops swimming, shopping or for a tour of the countryside and a smashing meal. Some of the hostesses wrote home for the troops to their families and girl friends for censorship was strict and they could not say where they themselves were. Long lasting friendships were thus formed. The hostesses even sent food parcels to the U.K. One time the line of cars stretched 3 miles from the Cape Town dock gates. In Cape Town alone throughout the war 500 persons used their cars and their precious petrol ration only for SAWAS duties.

Another unique feature of the SAWAS work was the organising of up to two weeks leave, with all expenses paid, for crews of war-ships refitting - the sailors, in pairs, staying in the homes of private families. They could choose to 'stay by the sea, on a farm or in the city. This fabulous service was provided for 50,000 men from ships that refitted in Simon's Town alone! The beneficial effect on the morale of a ship's company was incalculable. One family who participated in collecting sailors at Simon's Town were Mr & Mrs Grant of Hermanus, who came with a bus to collect the sailors and then share them out with fellow residents of the Hermanus area for their leave period. They were the parents of Neil Grant our former Town Engineer. Locally Mrs. Sadie Egan converted the basement of her house in Links Crescent (then called "Valdi") to take bunk beds, fitted shower and toilet and made it a constant home-from-home for sailors and even the occasional airman. They were even provided with bathing costumes!

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From SAWAS 1939-1947 EDITED by Tony Bailey who was in HMS PALADIN and himself personally benefitted from the SAWAS hospitality and being entertained by Cdr & Mrs R. Richards at Boulders House while Cdr Richards was King's Harbour Master.

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## LUYOLA LOCATION, SIMON'S TOWN

Extracts from an interview with MR. ALBERT CROOME, the last Superintendent of the Location for 17 years up till 1965 when it was closed due to the introduction of the Group Areas Act.

The Location was established in either 1899 or 1900 for the employees of Sir John Jackson, the British firm who obtained the contract for the building of what is known to-day as the East Dockyard, Simon's Town. It was a terraced site and it is believed that the upper terraces were built first. Mountain stone from the site was used. The remains of these terraces can still be seen to-day. On these terraces the wood and iron houses were built, probably under supervision from employees of Sir John Jackson. It is not known if Sir John Jackson supplied the corrugated iron but it is probable.

There were communal toilets on the extreme edges of the Location terraces. Water was supplied by standpipes also at the edges and the folk had to fetch their water from there. Electricity was not laid on. The inhabitants kept goats but no cattle. There were no gardens. They did all their shopping in Simon's Town and it was not uncommon to see them leaving Imperial Butchery with cattle heads or such like.

When Sir John Jackson had completed the Dockyard extension, the Municipality took over the superintendence of the Location. It was strictly controlled and there was an appointed Headman. After the Sir John Jackson era the majority of the men were employed in the Dockyard; a few were attached to the Fish Hoek Municipality; some worked for the Simon's Town Municipality and later on some worked for Marine Oil Refiners.

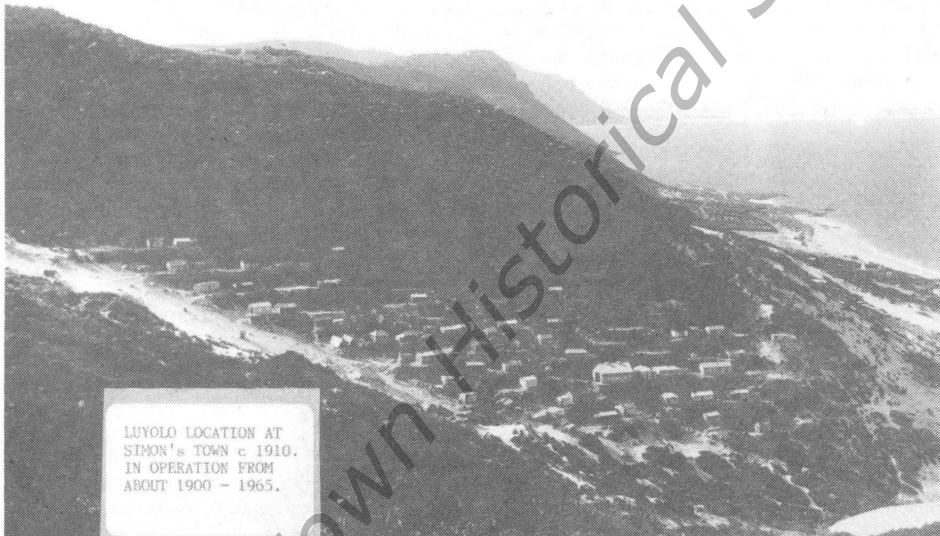
There were four Churches in the Location, Wesleyan, A.N.E., Anglican and Presbyterian. There was a school. The classes averaged about 25 children to a class. During Mr. Croome's years Mrs Pietso taught Sub A to Std 1; Mr Kahuhla taught Standards 2 and 3 and Mr. Nugnholo taught up to Standard 6. If they wished to continue their schooling then they had to go to Nyanga Township. The teachers were all Xhosa and taught in Xhosa and English.

Most of the people came from the Ciskei, Transkei and some came from Graaff Reinet and were known as Masuto\* and had a very good knowledge of Afrikaans. The Superintendent's office was down at the entrance to the site near the Main Road. About half way through Mr. Croome's tenure a clinic was built adjacent to his office. It was not open every day as it was run by the District Nurse Mrs. Stubbs who had responsibility for a large area which even extended to the Klaasjagersberg area.

Most of the inhabitants lived a family life but there were also bachelors and these were housed in the Nissen Huts close to the Main Road. These had been erected during the 1939-45 War to house the increased number of men who came to Simon's Town to work in the Dockyard.

\* Masuto is the collective name for the people of Basutoland (now known as Lesotho).

During Mr Croome's tenure the Headman was Mr. Van Aar. He had a B.A. Degree and was an Ordained Minister. He was a man of many talents. He was a very strict man and was not liked. He often exceeded his authority and Mr. Croome had a problem keeping him in order. He had many wives and had an eye for the ladies. He was known amongst the community as the Sibonda. He was appointed by the Municipality, not by the community. A Council or Advisory Board ran the Location and a member of the Bantu Affairs Committee of the Simon's Town Municipality was Chairman of the Advisory Board. At one time this was Councillor Mrs. Luxton.



LUYOLO LOCATION AT  
SIMON'S TOWN c 1910.  
IN OPERATION FROM  
ABOUT 1900 - 1965.

During Mr. Croome's tenure Mr. van Aar passed away. There were five Advisory Board members. Any resolutions taken or suggestions made would be passed to the Council through the Superintendent. The Advisory Board members were not paid but the Headman was paid. The Superintendent had the power to dismiss any of the Advisory Board Members.

There were no sports facilities or recreational areas and the women and children did not get together for such interests as Brownies\*, Scouts or Women's Clubs. However, the Women went "up the line" to attend Church meetings and one would frequently see them setting off for the railway station in their smart uniforms. Mr. Croome had Xhosa clerk Michael Mbutulu. The Location was a very peaceful community. He clearly remembers there was one person who had fought in the Western Desert. He was Robert Ironside and had his Army papers.

When the Location was closed in 1965 the people were moved to

\* For a short while in the 1960s, just prior to its closure in 1965, Mrs Mzondi ran a Brownie pack. Ed.

Gugulethu. This move was organised by the authorities from their Head Office in Langa and the Superintendent organised it from this end. He personally supervised the move and made sure they all got their accommodation. The Municipal workers did not move and still occupy a portion of the site to this day. The Municipality owned about nine blocks of houses on the lower section of the top terraces. These blocks were built and owned by the Municipality with the idea of improving the Location as such. This is where the Council employees live.

As we have said there was no sewerage system and the naughty children often overturned the night soil buckets which had been put onto a wall waiting for the lorry to pick them up.

Towards the end of March 1960 there was a spot of trouble at the Location due to the fact that the Police had raided the Location one night and dragged a man out by his feet. The rest of the people objected to him being handled in this way and set out to march to the Police Station to demand his release. Mr. Croome rushed out of bed, jumped into his car and rushed to the Police Station. It was agreed that the 1,000 crowd would go to Jubilee Square where Sgt. Uitenbogaardt and Mr. Croome would address them. Mr. Croome climbed onto the fountain and asked the crowd if they had any confidence in him. Nobody answered so he asked again and hands went up, so he told them if they had confidence in him they would do this properly and hold an Indaba. He asked them to return to the Location in an orderly way. Fortunately sanity prevailed and the situation was defused.

Following the death of the first Headman Mr. van Aar, there was a Mr. Gaba. He later died of a heart attack and the position was then taken by Isaac Mamputa. He had previously been employed driving for the Breweries. Mr. Croome learnt his Xhosa from Isaac, starting off on the right foot by learning the alphabet.

Mr. Croome also ran a Postal Agency at the Location in which inter alia they handled the remittances they used to send to the Transkei. At first the men used to remit cash but were gradually persuaded to use Money Orders as it was a far safer method.

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## RESIDENTS PAST AND PRESENT PART I

(The material for this article comes from the Oral Histories being recorded for the Museum by various members of the Simon's Town Historical Society).

CLAUDE EDWARD JOHN RANDALL

Claude was born at Wynberg, Cape, on 31 July 1917. His father was Abraham Randall (1882-1950) also born at Wynberg.

The Randall family moved to Simon's Town in 1925 when Claude was 7½ years old. At the beginning they lived at No. 2 York Terrace in Mount Pleasant and later on in Squires Building in the main street opposite Admiralty House. In 1951 he bought 17 Belmont Road for £1600 from Mr. George Young and he and his wife moved there. Although Joyce Randall died in 1994 Claude has continued to live on in the house and continues to play the organ at the Methodist Church.

Claude's early schooling was at Dryden Street, Observatory, before he moved to Arsenal Road school in Simon's Town. There he completed his Standard VI in 1932 before joining the Dockyard at Simon's Town as an Apprentice Blacksmith. On 18 May 1949 he married Joyce Payne of Simon's Town who was a book-keeper at Runcimans. She was the daughter of Sidney and Johanna Payne of Simon's Town.

In 1966 Claude fabricated a matching pair of gates for the entrance to the West Dockyard. This became necessary as a new entrance to the West Dockyard was made and it was wider than the original which had been opposite Runciman's building.

From 1942 - 1954 Claude was a Sunday School Teacher and Superintendent at the Methodist Church. Since 1937 he has been the church organist, a period of 59 years which must be a record. He was a keen fisherman and spent many a week-end fishing off the Bullnose in the East Dockyard with his buddies Croome, Eddles, Eckles and Abbott.

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#### ALBERT CROOME:

Albert Croome was born in Simon's Town in 1917, the son of John Clew Croome and his wife Wilhelmina nee Emery. He had a sister Louisa and 3 brothers, Harry, Bill and Wally. His father was employed in the Dockyard Police for many years and during this time they lived in the Police accommodation opposite the Dockyard clock.

Albert attended Arsenal Road school from Kindergarten to Standard 4 and then went to the Simon's Town Secondary School. He left school at 15 and joined his other brothers in the Dockyard where he worked for 22 years. He started in Stores Department then trained as a Technical Storeman. As a sideline he sold Funeral Policies for an Undertaking firm and earned a good commission on these.

Albert joined the Simon's Town Municipality as Location Superintendent on 1 January 1953 at a salary of £68 per month. He remained in this position until 1965 when the Location was closed because of the introduction of the Group Areas Act. He then went on pension and was appointed to manage Oatlands caravan park.

Albert's grandfather was a fisherman and owned several boats at Long Beach at the same time as George Cotton and Mr. Lawrence.

## WILLIAM HENRY TREDREE AND HIS FAMILY

He was born in Simon's Town on 5 August 1870 and died in 1948. Present members of the family who still live in Simon's Town can not recall anything about his parents - their grand-parents and great-grand-parents, apart from the fact that the family home was in Goede Gift.

William Henry worked as a Clerk in the Dockyard and retired after 50 years service in 1935 as a Chief Clerk. He also found time to serve on the Simon's Town Council and at one time was Deputy Mayor. This was probably at the time when Council meetings took place after working hours, sometimes even as late as 7 p.m. He was also Secretary for many years of the Court of the Rising Sun (the Foresters - a benevolent society). He was a devout Anglican, attending St Frances Church (as it was then spelt) and served on the Church Council.

William Henry married 13/12/1892 Elizabeth-Ann Curtis (1869-1951) of Simon's Town. They had five children - William Jnr. Sydney James, Fred, Elizabeth and Annie. Sadly William Jnr (born 1903) died in a shooting accident when aged 14 years.

Sydney James (1897-1986) did his schooling in the Town and started work in the Dockyard aged fifteen as an apprentice torpedo mechanic and retired from there at the age of 73 in 1971. He was very busy during the war years (1939-1945) as he was on duty in the Dock-yard 7 days a week, sometimes day and night. He tried very hard to "join up" and get into uniform but he was a key man, by then in a supervisory capacity in the Torpedo Department and could not be released.

Sydney was a keen sportsman and excelled at cricket and soccer and was a keen snooker player. He took over the duties of Secretary of the Foresters from his father, holding the position until the Society was disbanded. He also attended St Francis Church (the name changed in 1959) and for many years was a Church Warden. He married Mary Evelyn Middleton (1900-1992) and they had two daughters Marjorie Winifred (1920) and Ruth Elizabeth Maude (1926).

Mary Tredree was very active during the 1939-45 war as a member of the Auxiliary Women's Service, cooking, cleaning, sewing, knitting and organising fund-raising for the forces. She also found time to work for the church and at the annual fete was in charge of the sweets and cake stall, while Sydney and his father were manning the entrance gate. The annual fete was held in the grounds of Admiralty House.

June Singleton, daughter of Marjorie and grand-daughter of Sydney and Mary, recalls that Sydney was a very popular man and had many friends but that his best friends were his grand children and great grand-children, so much so that they never called him grandfather - he was "pal".

Fred, (Frederick George 1909 - ?) married Joan Poole of Simon's Town and they had one daughter, Gillian. Fred also worked in the Dockyard and for many years Joan worked for Imperial Cold

Storage in the town.

Fred and Joan lived in Chapel Street till Fred died when Joan moved into a flat above Leigh's garage.

Anna Maria (Annie) was born in 1893. She never married and enjoyed travelling overseas. He worked at Runcimans as a clerk for many years. She died in 1961.

Elizabeth Catherine (1895 - ?) married Edward Hawkins a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy. They had one son Walter. For many years they lived in a house up Tredree steps at the rear of her father's main family house - now demolished - which stood on Queens Road, opposite the East Dockyard entrance, between Tredree Steps and the former convent, now Topsail House. On the street level there were two shops, very busy during the building of the Dockyard, which were later used as living accommodation. The house was above the shops at first floor level and overlooked the Dockyard. There was an additional cottage immediately at the rear of this which was also used by the family.

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NOTE: Since typing the above further research has led us to believe that the father of William Henry Tredree was probably James William Tredree - died 2 December 1882 aged 45 and interred in the Old Burying Ground, Seaforth. William Henry would have been but 12 years old when his father died. (Records consulted were the O.B.G. Burial Records at the Simon's Town Museum and the records of St Francis Church. We thank Miss M. Cartwright for this research.)

Editor.

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NOTE:

ALBERT CROOME:

Since typing the above article it is sad to report that Albert Croome passed away in the False Bay Hospital, Fish Hoek on 28th April 1966. A service for him was held in the Dockyard Church, Simon's Town. We are very grateful for all the information he gave to the Museum. This has greatly assisted us to update our records.

The Society and the Museum extend their sincere condolences to his widow and family.

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## "MYSTERY" TOWER ON SEAL ISLAND, FALSE BAY IN W.W.II

From: The South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review of April 1946.

"The construction of the steel radar tower on Seal Island - the tiny rocky isle in False Bay - provided one of the most ticklish engineering jobs carried out in South Africa during the war. The only firm which put in a tender was the Cape Steel Construction Company of Paarden Eiland, Cape Town, a firm of enterprising Hollanders with a flair for tackling the unusual.

Mr. H.H. Browne, works manager at Paarden Eiland, in an interview with the S.A. Shipping News described this job which he supervised:

"The Admiralty had designed three steel towers, one for erection on a peak above Glencairn, one in Simon's Town dockyard, and the largest for the virtually inaccessible Seal Island. The purpose of these towers was, of course, not revealed to us at the time. We were taken by tug to the island but the sea was too rough to enable us to land and survey the best site for the foundation and so we contented ourselves by firing revolver shots at the rocks to test their nature and formation.

We decided not to undertake the job on a contract basis as the risk was too great. By this time the Admiralty had agreed that the idea of a tower on a rugged mountain peak above Glencairn would prove impracticable and we agreed to erect the other two towers on the cost-plus basis.

The first step we took was to anchor a buoy to a five-ton concrete block 60 feet offshore from Seal Island. We could then moor the barges, needed for ferrying materials over from the mainland, to this buoy. The most difficult task now presented itself, namely, the erection of a crane with a sufficient reach to swing loads from the barges to the island. We made seven attempts before the foundation for the crane had set, having to contend either with a rapidly rising tide or fickle weather.

We brought the crane over in sections from the mainland and attached oil-drums to each section to enable them to float. We tried twice before the weather enabled us to land these crane sections. We eventually passed a four-inch steelwire-rope cable from the bows of the barge to a large cluster of rocks on the island and with this improvised cableway intended landing the sections one by one. A few of the workmen clambered into a dinghy and waited until the section, which we had shoved overboard, floated past and then grabbed it and held fast until it was secured to the cableway and ready to be hauled ashore.

In this manner we managed to bring all the sections of the crane safely ashore. The whole operation of landing and erecting the crane lasted about a week. As the materials arrived from the mainland we gradually built up a small settlement and what had been a bleak and barren stretch of rock inhabited solely by seals and penguins, and the penetrating stench of guano, rapidly became a hive of activity.

The tower had been pre-fabricated in our yard at Paarden Eiland and though originally designed to weigh 80 tons, we redesigned it to weigh 47 tons. The massive structure was coated with linseed oil and painted a battleship grey. We

transported it in sections by train to Simon's Town station, by truck to the Dockyard and then by barge to the island. The crane experienced no difficulty in landing the parts, as the jib was capable of lifting 2½ tons at maximum reach and the heaviest section of the tower only weighed 2 tons.

A 12 ft by 12 ft by 12 ft foundation for each foot of the tower had to be blasted out of the rock and when this was done the actual work of erecting the tower went ahead easily. The total cost of both towers was £14,000. When we finally left the island the Admiralty were already busy on the semi-circular platform with a 50 ft dia. which we had built at the top of the tower. We had no inkling of what they were about. To-day radar is a household word".

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We do have photographs to back up this story but they were not good enough to re-produce from the article. Later the tower was taken down when the war was over. Ed.

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## SECOND WORLD WAR REMINISCENCES OF LT CDR PAUL MALLET (Retd).

I did my ACF training in RNVR Base, Durban, from 1935/7 but when my employers Barclays Bank, transferred me to Johannesburg I had to go into reserve, as only coastal men could serve in the naval forces in those days. I volunteered when South Africa declared war in September 1939 but was asked to train a ledger machinist before I left. I got away in April 1940, reported to Durban Base, had my medical examination at Snell Parade and was drafted to Simon's Town by train, being rated AB on arrival. I was placed in Froggy Pond naval camp and so began my association with this historic town. My duties were varied; working parties at Froggy Pond and Klawer Camp, range duties and 303 firing there, together with the large draft of men waiting ship up on the hill.

There was no motor transport laid on for us rookies, we had to climb 300 blessed steps up the side of North Peak almost daily, this made us fit very quickly! We also carried out the Town Patrol, 3 of us at a time, and our unpleasant duties included clearing the houses in Baviaanskloof of sailors from visiting British ships. These poor chaps could never understand the peculiar non-fraternisation laws which prevailed at the time - most of the so-called non-European girls were beautiful and we were hard pressed to explain why they were untouchable. The trains had to be cleared of leave-takers returning from Cape Town as well, and, as usual, "Nuisance" was on the last one arriving about 5 minutes to midnight. He was first out of the compartment and like a flash into the back seat of the Froggy Pond Bus - just for the ride to the United Services Institute where he had a permanent bed. Us lesser mortals had to hike the 4 kilometres back to Froggy Pond after the last sailor had been removed from the train. Occasionally we had to summon the Royal Marine patrol from a ship, if available, for the more recalcitrant men.

When the First Australian Expeditionary Force was given shore leave from their transports in Cape Town, a gale sprang up in the afternoon which prevented the troops being taken off by lighters to the large liners at anchor in the outer anchorage. Arrangements were then made for the Railways and Harbours to lay on an additional number of trains to ferry them to Simon's Town and the liners sailed round the peninsula to the comparative calm of False Bay. We, the augmented patrol, were warned by the Duty Naval Officer to expect about 20,000 Australians to be swarming through the town in the evening to the West Dockyard to be taken off to their respective ships. All well and good! The rest of the patrol were clearing the kloof and at the station to direct the Aussies along the main road to the Dockyard.

I was alone near the guardhouse, a stone building situated at some steps in the vicinity of Palace Barracks, when an Australian Captain and 24 Military Policemen arrived. I saluted him and he said "Never mind that, Jack. Where's the cell?" I indicated the guardhouse to him and he said "Good-o - just what we need" and asked his riot squad to be careful in stowing the 8 or 10 cases of beer which they had brought with them. I didn't see anything more of them but sounds of jollity

could be heard from the cell later.

Shortly after this, while I was still awaiting the return of my patrol, a large British Naval Car drew up flying the flag of the C-in-C South Atlantic and Vice-Admiral Sir D'Oyly Lyon stepped out of the vehicle, resplendent in full uniform, accompanied by his Flag Lieutenant. This time I really tossed off a smart salute to him and he said "Ah- the Patrol, I see! Look here, young man, you know that a considerable number of Australian soldiers will be passing through on the way to their ships shortly. Now don't start anything but remember - we are the Navy! " He turned, returned my salute, remounted his vehicle and away they went. I had the presence of mind to keep my mouth shut after this momentous pronouncement! The Aussies returned to their ships in some sort of order - it is said that they lost only 11 men in South Africa, 2 of them being recovered in Kitwe, Zambia. There is a sequel to this story. Three years later, when I, a newly commissioned Sub Lieutenant SANF(V) seconded to the Royal Navy was undergoing a gunnery course in HMS PEMBROKE (Chatham) I received a gold embossed invitation from the C-in-C, The Nore, and all my fellow subbies in St Mary's Barracks asked how on earth I qualified to attend this prestigious annual ball at Admiralty House. I tumbled to the truth - C-in-C The Nore was Admiral Sir D'Oyly Lyon. His son had married Pat Ellis-Brown of Durban while serving in South Africa. She had gone through the list of Officers at Chatham, spotted the South African name and rank and invited me to the beanfeast. I met her and the Admiral that evening but did not consider it opportune to mention the Simon's Town incident to the old gentleman. Pat, however, thought it was a great occasion.

To resume: Among other duties I had, was accompanying prisoners in the Detention Quarters in the Dockyard, to Church Services in the Dockyard Church on Sundays. We marched from Froggy Pond and reported to the Chief Petty Officer on duty at D.Q. We were warned not to give any of the inmates cigarettes, matches or strangely enough, comics, which they were wont to read in Church, folded inside their hymn books. We were told they were the "Scum of the Earth" and we were not even to speak to them. We could not understand this as most of the "crimes" were overstaying leave or smuggling a few ounces of tobacco, or something equally innocuous, in our opinion. However, as we did not want to join them in the D.Qs, we decided that silence was golden. Other duties were assisting the barmen at the East Dockyard Canteen - I've never handled so many empty Castle Special empties in my life - the lads really enjoyed these quart bottles at 6d a go.

In July I was drafted to the Oil Tank guard - 16 of us with Leading Seaman Billy Taylor (Durban RNVR) in charge were quartered in the cricket pavilion to the north of the two large oil tanks at Seaforth, where we kept watch 24 hours on and 24 hours off for a month - 4 of us on at a time, we patrolled the perimeter path around the tanks, moving every 1/2 hour on command, while Billy examined the inside of the catchment area. One of the positions was under some trees just below the main road. We were occasionally visited by baboons and on one instance, one of our more touchy fellows challenged a shadowy

figure in the trees and fired a shot, luckily away from the tanks. It was at this time that Cdr. Shakespear, the Officer in Command Simon's Town, gave us his famous "Pep" talk. "I want to be frightened out of my wits by you men when you challenge me. This oil is vital to our ships."

On the pleasant side, two girls, one of whom was Councillor Gay's daughter (he was Simon's Town's Mayor in 1940) used to bring us coffee every night at 9 p.m. at the main gate. How welcome this was. On our off days too, we did a lot of swimming at Seaforth Beach - some of our more adventurous chaps even going out to the Hen & Chickens rocks and occasionally Noah's Ark. Sometimes we were accompanied by Cape seals.

After Oil Tank duties we had a number of ships calling in at Snoekie. HMS ALCANTARA, the Armed Merchant Cruiser docked to be loaded with empty 44 gallon drums to give her added buoyancy. She also carried out a six inch shoot in the Bay. I was in the rake party in the naval tug ST DOGMAEL which towed the battle-practice target, a huge lattice contraption about 20 metres in length, connected to the tug by 1 1/2 mile of 2 1/2 inch rope. The wind was blowing on the day and the sea was choppy. The short swells and the restricted movement of the target and tow-rope imparted the most awful movement to the tug. Everybody was seasick on the tug, including the Captain. This was the only occasion I succumbed to mal-de-mer in my naval career.

HMS HERMES also called for a short refit and Froggy Pond Party de-ammunitioned her by hand - 5.5 in shells and aircraft bombs are not easy to handle this way. I managed to borrow a Hermes cap tally from the Puttee, the ship's painter to whom I was attached, and with this stratagem gained access to Wingfield airfield where Hermes "String-bags" had been flown off to, and also where a friend of mine in the SAAF wangled me a splendid flight in a "Wimpey" (Wellington Bomber) right down to Bredasdorp and back. The pilot was Lt. Hulley from my home area, Umzinto district Natal.

Shortly after this I was asked by the Regulation Officer whether I would like to join DEMS (Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships). I asked the Commanding Officer whether I would get away before the big crowd up at Klawer and he told me I would get a ship long before these other chaps. I then spent two weeks on a gunnery course (QR2) in the Gunnery Shed on the Dockyard Wall, shifted my quarters from Froggy Pond to the United Services Institute in the Main Road (yes, the same home as Nuisance) and stood by the Regulating Office, waiting ship. I started as no.8 on the roster and as the merchant ships arrived to be fitted with naval guns by the Gun Mounting Officer, I progressed up the list ladder. However, HMS DORCHESTER and CORNWALL came into port at this stage and the whole draft at Klawer were removed in one day. These ships all went to meet their destiny at the hands of the Japs near Colombo, Ceylon. My turn came a few years later, but that is another chapter.

On our off-duty times, life was pleasant enough in Simon's Town - dancing in the East Dockyard Canteen Hall on Saturdays and also daily in the Town Canteen. The two girls who used to

provide the Oil Tank guard with coffee, and other Simon's Town lovelies, worked in this latter canteen, where tea, cold drinks and snacks were provided at a ridiculously low cost. A Radiogram provided the music and our morale was certainly improved by these wonderful, cheerful, impartial ladies. They played no favourites, but would dance with anyone at the drop of a hat. We all, locals and visitors alike, loved them. We also took trips into Cape Town, to the Union Jack Club (which Nuisance regularly frequented) to the cinemas, the Waldorf Cafe, the other fancy restaurant was reserved for Officers only. Garlicks also held a weekly dance on the top floor of their premises and this was well patronised by all Servicemen. Eventually the roster shortened and I became No. 1 on the list. s.s. COCHRANE, a 23-year old coal burning merchantship of Elder Dempster Lines of Liverpool docked in Simon's Town and I joined her on 10th September as No.2 gunner. Her No.1 gunner, Brokensha (pronounced Brokenshaw) of Port Elizabeth was on leave at the time and we picked him up on the trip up the coast to Beira.

I was to serve in her for two years, tramping all over the Western world, and eventually leaving her to be commissioned at HMS KING ALFRED at Hove, Sussex. I did a gunnery course at Chatham, then across the Atlantic again to Boston, Mass. to commission a Captain Class frigate, HMS GOODALL, until just before VE Day when I returned to South Africa on my first Foreign Service leave. I disembarked from the ANDES in Cape Town and came to Simon's Town where I was placed on the books of HMS AFRIKANDER I in Simon's Town. I had only a short time to look up old friends in the Town - most of them had gone elsewhere but the Town canteen was still running, served by the same dedicated girls.

After a month's leave in Park Rynie I joined HMS FREESIA, a Flower Class corvette in Durban and saw out the rest of the war in the Eastern Fleet in Colombo, Singapore and the South China Sea. Demobbed in 1946, I rejoined Barclays Bank, mainly because the future of our Navy was a little unsure at the time. My Navy days were not over, however, as I rejoined the South African Navy (Citizen Force) at SAS RAND in Johannesburg and served there another 11 years. I paid four more visits to Simon's Town during this time - twice on courses from SAS RAND - in 1964 on a Naval Control of Shipping stint in Simon's Town, Wingfield and Wynberg, and again in 1966 on a two week cruise in SAS PRESIDENT KRUGER, chasing foreign fishing vessels up the Namibian coast to the Kunene River and carrying out a 4.5 gunnery shoot at the entrance to False Bay.

I qualified as a Lt Cdr. from this course. I spent a few days up at Scala and Lower North Battery and some time on the Dockyard wall boning up on demolition explosives. I rambled around the town while quartered at SAS SIMONSBERG and had an opportunity of examining the 9.2 guns up at Red Hill. I was intrigued by the changes that had taken place after the war and yet was not surprised that the character of the town remained as before.

On the other two occasions in 1960 and 1972, I came as a visitor

with my family. My son has also served in the South African Navy doing his national service in SAS PRESIDENT PRETORIUS where he was fortunate to go "foreign" to Angola, visiting Luanda, Mossamedes and Lobito.

The names of some of my contemporaries I can still recall after all these years are: Bill Taylor, Ken Shuter and Bill Lee (RNVR Durban) Buller Rudolph (RNVR East London), Jack Walker, Nicol and Arkoll (Port Elizabeth) and Pickering, Wade and Brokensha - I wonder where they are now?

I keep in touch with naval occasions by medium of the Navy News (South Africa) and also subscribe to Navy News (U.K.) I still carry on a correspondence with nine of my shipmates of HMS GOODALL and HMS BULLEN, both torpedoed by U-Boats during the war.

I still have an affinity for Simon's Town, however, engendered by those six months I spent there in 1940."

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See para. 3. page 79. The hospital built by Sir John Jackson Ltd on the site where the Naval swimming pool at Seaforth now stands. It was dismantled on completion of the contract.

## SNIPPETS FROM OLD SIMON'S TOWN

FEBRUARY 1926: Simon's Town Municipality condemned and boarded up 6 dilapidated buildings in Mission Lane - part of the Waterfalls area - part of an effort to improve living conditions in the town.

FEBRUARY 1925 Cow stables owned by the late Mr Geo. Frieslaar - housing 2 adults and 4 children - to be removed. However in 1931 we find them still there! They were then owned by Mr. A. Rahmat an Indian gentleman who hawked vegetables.

MARCH 1926 The Fisheries on Long Beach - in large wood and corrugated iron buildings (opp. the present day Traffic Dept.) were closed. They used to salt fish there and export it to Mauritius.

Did you know that Jackson Road was originally Harris Avenue, then was changed to Gordon Avenue while Mr. Gordon who lived at the corner of Gordon's Avenue and Queen's Road, owned all these houses. Whether he bought them directly from the firm of Sir John Jackson is not certain.

There were 10 cowkeepers/dairies in Simon's Town: Kenny van Breda, H.M. Smith, Hablutzal, Rolf, Stober, Seidle, Bruyns, Hugo, Hart and one other whose name is not known. But by this time pressure was being put on them to shut down.

There were 2 bakeries: R.S. Whyte and A.B.C. (Attwell Baking Company) now better known as Blue Ribbon at Lakeside). Both used coke ovens.

The Abattoirs were open even on Sundays and holidays due to the absence of cold storage facilities. The cattle arrived by goods train at Simon's Town Goods Yard where there was a holding pen in the Goods Yard area. They were then herded at night to the Abattoir which stood where the Municipal Yard adjoining Marine Oil Refiners stands to-day.

1925 There were 65 huts in the Simon's Town Location and by 1934 there were 88 and they were numbered in 1934 as were any vacant stands. The town refuse dump adjoined the Location till 1942 when Dido Valley was opened. 18 new houses were built by 1944 in an up-grading scheme. In November 1945 ten Nissen huts were provided by the British Admiralty for Bantu employees on a site below the Location. By 1943 the population of the Location was 1029.

1925 Turner's bookshop closed down when Mr. E. Turner died. It was on the site of to-day's Simon's Town Pharmacy.

- |      |                                         |
|------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1926 | The population of Simon's Town was 4641 |
| 1938 | 4707                                    |
| 1943 | 8250                                    |
| 1945 | 9275                                    |
| 1951 | 7805                                    |
- 
- 1941      Imperial Butchery stables - behind the shop at the corner of Club Lane - closed and that area became the sausage making room.
- Runciman stables also closed and the horses were moved to stables at the top of Harington Road, Seaforth, where there were 6 stalls.
- 1932      Several people in the town still owned donkeys and new regulations introduced in 1932 then forbade that. The night-soil cart was still pulled by mules but the Municipality introduced motor-driven transport in 1936 but it took until February 1951 for the Municipality to change from hand-written correspondence to typed letters.
- 1947      A large block of slum properties known as "Arcadia" existed on the Cape Town side of Club Lane. The largest section facing Club Lane was The Peninsula Club Building. When these were pulled down Leih's garage was built. To-day there is a modern Shell garage on that site.
- Fiscal Lane disappeared with the demolition of Cader's slum properties immediately below Ricketts Terrace.
- 1951      For the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II the Council gave an ox to the Location for roasting and sheep were cut up in order to give 2lbs of mutton to each of the poor residents of the town.
- 1953      Rhodesia-by-the-Sea Hotel was opened and Extension 3 Glencairn was put on the market - the first plots being offered to Ex-Servicemen at reduced prices. Applicants' names were put into a hat and a draw was held.
- Winford Dairy at Oatlands closed and the cows were moved to a farm at the top of Red Hill.
- 1928      There was a private Native Location at Far Side, Glencairn. This area is now part of Glencairn Heights and was near the old Glass Works. The Health Inspector found it in a disgraceful condition and recommended it be closed as soon as possible. This site was finally cleared in January 1931. It had consisted of 25 dwellings and a school.
- The above snippets came from notes given to The Simon's Town Historical Society by the late Mr. E.J. Holloway for 44 years the Health Inspector of the town.

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## MORE SNIPPETS OF OLD SIMON'S TOWN.

The Gay family (Lewis and Llewellyn) and the Blackburn family had their houses on the edge of Steenbras Bay which is now covered by the South African Navy's submarine base. Their grandfather, from Buckhaven, Scotland, had a boat building shed nearby.

The stone for the Dockyard wall was quarried in the Kloof near the Waterfall.

Sir John Jackson's hospital\* was on the site of the present Naval swimming pool near the oil tanks. It was a handsome wooden building and contained all the most modern equipment of its day.

To-day's Links Crescent started out life as a Punjab Indian settlement where several hundred punjabi's were housed in small huts. Another Punjabi settlement was all the along the bank fronting the old oil tanks at Seaforth Beach. They cremated their dead on a large flat rock on Seaforth Beach and the sea swept the ashes away at high tide.

The two wooden houses on the Cape Town side of Belmont Road came out in sections from Norway. Also from Norway came "Dunearn" and No. 138 Main Road, Glencairn. These were part of the "new village" built by the firm of Sir John Jackson to house their international work force who came from United Kingdom, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Norway, India and China to assist in building the Dockyard Extension, today known as the East Dockyard.

Jackson's railway, used for conveying stone from the quarry above the town, came down the present southern part of Runciman Drive alongside the cemetery wall, passed into a deep cutting at the corner of Runciman Drive and Queens Road, went under the main road and down to the area where the sports fields are.

Jackson's General Manager in charge of the construction, Mr. Stockton, was killed along with several others when the towing wire pulling the trucks up the mountain-side to the quarry slipped the drums that guided the heavy steel cables.

Where Solent and Hamoaze Courts are to-day Sir John Jackson's firm had another native location. Dozens of A-frame houses were

\* se photo page 76.

erected, similar to the hundreds one used to see for railway workers many years ago.

The man in charge of building Queen's Battery was Sgt Major Harrison, Royal Engineers, who subsequently settled in Simon's Town having married a daughter of Mr & Mrs Retman of Bellevue, Boulders.

Major Warren Royal Engineers, one of the sappers at Queens Battery played soccer for South Africa and toured England just after World War I. He later joined the S.A. Corps of Engineers. He it was who laid out Murdock Valley Township.

Sir John Jackson visited Simon's Town while the East Dockyard extension was being constructed. He lived at Seaforth House for a while. His large yacht ZULU was moored just off Cole's Point. He, Advocate Upington on ERICA and Cdr. R. Nelson, Kings Harbour Master, were a great sailing trio during those years.

When Queen's Battery was being built between 1887 - 1889 fill was needed to level off the site. Fortunately the two semi-detached houses (single storey) and the two semi-detached (Double storey) houses between Flora Steps and the Caltex garage were about to be built and the owners were looking for somewhere to dump their rubble. How fortunate for them to be spared the great expense of transporting the rubble miles away. The rear bank of the site was cut back to a height of 25-30 feet and the soil was removed by scotch carts drawn by mules to the Queen's Battery site.

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These snippets came from notes made by Mr. L.J.D. Gay and given to the Simon's Town Historical Society.

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