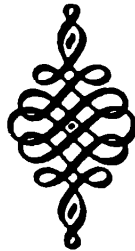


**SIMON'S TOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



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FLAG OFFICERS OF THE CAPE

VERNON WHITE

Part XV Rear Admiral Sir Walter Hunt Grubbe	1885-88
Rear Admiral Richard Wells	1888-90
Rear Admiral Henry Nicholson	1890-92
Rear Admiral Sir Fred. G. D. Bedford	1892-95

Born in 1832 (the year after James Clark Ross discovered the magnetic north pole whilst serving with the John Ross Arctic Expedition, and Charles Darwin started his four year epic scientific voyage in HMS BEAGLE) WALTER JAMES HUNT-GRUBBE entered the Royal Navy at the age of 13 years in 1845. Much of his naval career was spent on the West Coast of Africa, where he served from 1845 to 1848, then from 1854 to 1857, again in 1861, lastly from 1863 to 1866.

During September and October of 1854 Hunt-Grubbe served as Lieutenant of HMS SOURCE and was present at the bombardment of Pessie and Labadie. Subsequently he was landed to instruct the Gold Coast Artillery, taking part in the defence of Christianborg Castle. From 1855 to 1857 he commanded HMS TEAZER, being engaged in the suppression of the West African slave trade, for which he received the thanks of the Liberian Republic, and especially for his action during an insurrection at Sinon.

In February 1861 he was senior Lieutenant in HMS ARROGRANT during operations in Gambia. He was mentioned in despatches and promoted to Commander in that year. From May 1863 to July 1866 he commanded HMS JASEUR in anti-slavery operations on the West African coast, being promoted to Captain at the end of this period when he was placed in charge of Ascension Island.

In 1867 Walter Hunt-Grubbe married Mary the daughter of William Codrington of Wroughton in Wiltshire, and had a son and two daughters by this marriage. From May 1872 to May 1875 Hunt-Grubbe commanded HMS TAMAR, during which period he transported the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers to the Cape, and commanded the Naval Brigade during the second phase of the Ashanti War until its conclusion. He was present at the capture of Borsorrassi, and at the battles of Anwaful and Ordashu. At the capture of Coomassie he was severely wounded, and mentioned in despatches. In March 1874 he was awarded the C.B. and appointed a naval ADC to the Queen from August 1879 until July 1884.

As Senior Captain of the Mediterranean Fleet in command of HMS SULTAN, Captain Hunt-Grubbe was in charge of the off-shore squadron in the bombardment and attack on the northern division of the Alexandria Forts on 9 - 11 July 1882. This attack was the prelude to the Egyptian campaign which began in September and following the action Hunt-Grubbe was awarded the KCB. In August of 1882 Sir Walter Hunt-Grubbe was in charge of the naval escorts and troop transports that made a feint against Aboukir, and subsequently in keeping watch on the enemy coast until the end of the campaign.

He was promoted to Rear-Admiral in July 1884 and appointed C-in-C Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa in March 1885 an appointment he held until March 1888, flying his flag in HMS RALEIGH (Flag Captain A.K. Wilson RN). From August 1888 to August 1891 Rear Admiral Hunt-Grubbe was Admiral Superintendent in Devonport Dockyard.

During his term of office in the Cape a British Protectorate was established over the whole of the Niger Basin (June 1885), the Anglo-German Treaty of November settled spheres of interest in East Africa, and Britain annexed Zululand in June 1887; and during February 1888 Cecil Rhodes persuaded the Matabele to accept British protection, (all mining rights in Matabeleland being conceded to De Beers, whose Chairman was Cecil Rhodes, in the October). A series of Manoeuvres took place in the Royal Navy during 1893 and 1894, Admiral Sir Walter Hunt-Grubbe being one of the Umpires, before taking up his post as President of the Royal Naval College from 1894 to October 1897, when he retired as a full Admiral. In June 1899 he was awarded the GCB and in the same year became a Justice of the Peace in Hampshire. He went on pension in 1901 and lived to the age of 89 years. He died in April 1922 having spent 52 years of active service in the Royal Navy.

Sir Walter Hunt-Grubbe's successor as C-in-C Cape was **Rear Admiral Richard Wells** flying his flag in HMS RALEIGH (Flag Captain W.H. Fawkes RN). Born in February 1833 Richard Wells was the son of Thomas Wells, a Vice-Admiral of the White, in the Royal Navy. At the age of 22 years Richard Wells was a Lieutenant in the R.N. and eight years later he was promoted to Commander. A Captain at 33 years of age he was appointed Flag Captain to Rear-Admiral Sir John Commerell VC in the Dardanelles in 1878. Richard Wells was himself appointed a Rear-Admiral in October 1884 and C-in-C Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station from March 1888 to December 1890. He was promoted to Vice-Admiral in August 1890, and became C-in-C Nore in 1894. In March 1896 he was awarded a KCB and promoted to full Admiral. Lady Wells' visitors book used while at Admiralty House can be seen in the Simon's Town Museum.

Admiral Wells' sudden and unexpected death on 9 October 1896, whilst visiting London from his home in Folkestone, brought short a distinguished career in the Royal Navy. A grandson of Admiral Sir Richard Wells, KCB, Captain John Wells CBE, DSC, RN who was born in 1915 was a gunnery specialist in the Navy. Whilst serving in HMS PHOEBE during 1941-42 he visited Simon's Town. In 1947 John Wells married Diana, daughter of General Sir Edward Schreiber KCB DSO. Captain Wells, who commanded HMS KENT and HMS EXCELLENT wrote the book "Whaley - the story of HMS EXCELLENT 1830" in 1980. During 1988 he visited Simon's Town Museum and met the Chairman of the Historical Society. He was very impressed with the Museum. He has been actively concerned with the restoration of HMS WARRIOR and is on the Board of the Naval Museum in Portsmouth.

Admiral Wells was followed as C-in-C Cape in December 1890 by **Rear-Admiral Henry Frederick Nicholson C.B.** flying his flag in HMS RALEIGH (Flag Captain A. Barrow RN). Born in 1835 Henry

Nicholson was a son of Admiral Sir Frederick Wm. Erskine Nicholson, the 10th Baronet.

In December 1857 Henry Nicholson was made a Lieutenant RN, becoming a Commander in 1866 and Captain in 1869. He was promoted to flag rank in 1886 being made Rear-Admiral in June 1886, a Vice-Admiral in 1892 and full Admiral in September 1897, retiring in that rank in December.

On 1 December 1890 the railway to Simon's Town was opened, when it was recorded "that the Naval Authorities with the kind approval of Admiral Nicholson assisted in the day's festivities and with the decoration of ships." On that occasion the Mayor of Simon's Town was Mr. F.S. Hugo, on whose left sat the Admiral at the official luncheon given to mark the opening of the railway line. In 1892, the Cape Town to Johannesburg railway was completed.

When Admiral Nicholson left the Cape in 1892 he was succeeded as C-in-C by Rear-Admiral Sir Frederick Bedford CB KCB flying his flag in HMS RALEIGH (Flag Captain E.H. Gamble R.N.) Born in December 1838, Frederick George Denham Bedford was the son of Vice-Admiral E. J. Bedford. Frederick entered the Royal Navy in 1852 at the age of 14 and two years later he was on active service in the Black Sea. On 4 and 5 January 1854 the Anglo-French fleet entered the Black Sea. A month later the first troopships left Southampton for Turkey, and on 31 March Britain declared war on Russia. After seeing action at Odessa and Sebastopol, Frederick Bedford was transferred in 1855 to the Baltic Fleet. He became a Lieutenant in November 1859, was promoted to Commander in December 1871 and Captain in May 1876.

During 1875 he assumed command of HMS SERAPIS and the following year he conveyed the Prince of Wales to India. It was in March 1876 that the Royal Titles Act was passed by the British Parliament whereby Queen Victoria became Empress of India, the actual proclamation being made in Delhi on 1 January 1877. Having conveyed the Prince of Wales to India, Captain Bedford then took command of HMS SHAH in 1877, which brought into action the Peruvian ironclad turret ship (monitor) HUASCAR. The crew had mutinied and were attempting to interfere with British shipping in Pacific waters off the South American West coast.

The HUASCAR was engaged by the frigate SHAH and the corvette AMETHYST and although hit some 60 to 70 times by the British ships she managed to escape serious damage. The SHAH closed to 400 yards range and fired a torpedo, the first ever used in action, but the HUASCAR was able to steam faster than the torpedo could travel through the water and so managed to escape. Eventually the HUASCAR anchored in shallow water, where the British ships could not penetrate because of their deeper draughts.

In 1880 Frederick Bedford married Ethel, the daughter of E.R. Turner of Ipswich, and in the same year he became Captain of the R.N. College until 1883. During 1884 he was appointed Captain of HMS MONARCH and organised the flotillas on the Nile in support of General Gordon and later General Wolseley during

the Egyptian campaign. From 1886 to 1889 Captain Bedford commanded HMS BRITANNIA and from 1888 to 1891 was a Naval ADC to the Queen.

Promoted to Rear-Admiral in May 1891 he was appointed C-in-C Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station from 1892 to 1895. In 1894 Admiral Bedford led an expedition in the Gambia against Nana of Brohemie in Benin, and in 1895 against King Koko of Nimbi. It was during this period that HMS SOVEREIGN, the first warship to cost £1m. joined the fleet (in 1892) and the invention of the quick-firing gun enabled her to fire fifteen 100 lb shells per minute. The following year 1893, the Yarrow shipyard on the Isle of Dogs, on the Thames above Greenwich Reach built the world's first destroyers HMS HAVOCK and HMS HORNET.

Awarded the KCB in 1894 Bedford was promoted to Vice-Admiral in May 1897. In that rank he became a Lord of the Admiralty from 1889 to 1892, and from 1895 to 1899. Between 1899 and 1903 he was appointed C-in-C North America and West Indies, being made a full Admiral in 1902. His next appointment was that of Governor of Western Australia between 1903 and 1909. At the age of 75 years he died on 30 January 1913 at "Swiss Cottage" in Weybridge, Surrey.

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OATLANDS HOLIDAY VILLAGE

(Based on notes by the late Gordon Wilson)

Once the Dutch East India Company decided to transfer the winter anchorage for the Company's ships from Table Bay to Simon's Bay it had to establish itself at what we know to-day at Simon's Town, then called "Baai Fals" and amongst its early work was the creation of a small garden "Klein Tuyn" between the present Seaforth Beach car park and Miller Road and a large garden "Groot Tuyn" at Froggy Pond. Due to the poor soil and meagre rainfall Klein Tuyn was soon abandoned.

Between 1743 and 1792 the Head gardener's house and stables was built. In 1755 the Head gardener was Joachim Corler and after his death in 1756 he was succeeded by Frans J. Olwagen. By 1792 the Company were in financial difficulties and were disposing of their assets at the Cape. The "Groot Tuyn" was let to the Simon's Bay Resident Mr Christoffel Brand and it is thought he probably used the premises as a lodging house for visitors.

In 1795 the First British Occupation occurred and the "Groot Tuyn" was put up for lease by the British. In 1796 it was leased to the former Master of HMS MONARCH and newly appointed Master Attendant of the West Dockyard (and Harbour Master) Donald Trail, who proved to be a profiteer, and his lease was cancelled towards the end of 1797. It may have lain idle for

the next few years until it was handed over to the Batavian Republic in 1803 when the British left the Cape.

When the British returned in 1806 the property passed to the Military Authorities and was for many years used as living quarters for the Commandant of Simon's Town. (One famous Commandant was Col. John Graham who founded Grahamstown and who died in 1821). From 1821 to 1827 the Commandant was Captain Henry Somerset, son of the Plantagenet Governor of the Cape, Sir Charles Somerset, who named the property **OATLANDS** after the family seat in England. In 1827 the special appointment of Military Commandant was abolished and the civilian Government Resident was the chief Government Representative in Simon's Town.

In 1833 while James Dunbar, the Barrack Master, was living there the property was put up for public auction and at the sale James Dunbar bought it. He sold it in 1834 making just a small profit. It was bought by Mrs Vowe (nee Trueman) who also owned the adjoining property **CRADOCK VALLEY** (Froggy Farm). When Mrs Vowe died in 1857 she bequeathed the property to her son Joseph Trueman. In 1876 Trueman sold to William Newby. In 1882 Newby sold to Petrus Jacobus Hugo and on his death it passed to his two daughters Cornelia Hendrina Johanna Vos Cruywagen (born Hugo) and Miss M.C.F. Hugo. It was the first property in Simon's Town to have piped water - 500 ft of 3/4" lead water pipes being used.

In 1927 the 20 morgen holding was partitioned and the Holiday Village section (South Oatlands) awarded to Mrs. Cruywagen (10 morgen by Deed of Transfer 11571 dated 17 November 1927). In 1951 this portion passed to Mrs Cruywagen's daughter Mrs Annie Lilian Wright by Deed of Transfer 1128 of 1951. She held it for 10 years and ran it as a tented camping ground and as grazing for her dairy cows. By Deed of Transfer 15033 of 27 October 1961 it passed to the Simon's Town Municipality having been sold by Mrs. Wright on 2 August 1961.

From 1961 to 1974 the Municipality ran it as a Caravan Park at a deficit of more than R15,000.

Sadly on Xmas Day 1972 Oatlands was razed by a fire in the thatch fanned by a freak westerly wind. Mr. May the Superintendent of the Caravan Park who lived there lost all his possessions. The late John Wiley and Gordon Wilson were wandering through the smoking ruins of the building and decided to do all they could to bring about restoration and make it complement the Main Commandant's house next door which the South African Navy had restored so beautifully. It was a great struggle but the Council decided to accept the Insurance payout of R26,000. The Historical Society were appalled. In 1975 Councillors Brennan, L.J.D. Gay and Dryden-Dymond helped to pass a motion to restore the building. Architects Uitenbogaardt and Peter Schneider drew up plans and waived their fees. Uitenbogaardt had grown up in Simon's Town where his father was in the South African Police. Tenders were called for and one was awarded to a contractor from Lansdowne - Mr. Slamdien. When the work was three-quarters done and the roof was on he had to

pull out. The contract was cancelled and Messrs Docherty, Croome, Bester and Punt of the Works Department of the Simon's Town Municipality completed the work. The restoration was based on 150 year old plans obtained from the Government Archives. The final cost was R23,112.53, so the Council still had a few rand in hand!

When the work was complete tenders were called for the lease of the property and the tender was awarded to Mr. Colin Richardson who together with his wife and family developed it into what it is to-day Oatlands Holiday Village, a very well-known and popular spot and part of the Club Caravelle marketing organisation. As we go to print it is still run by the Richardson family who are to be complimented on the exceedingly high standard they maintain.

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JOHN DANIEL GLIN WRIGHT (1825 - 1856).

A.E. Read

John Daniel Glin Wright sometimes appears in Simon's Town records as GLINWRIGHT. He was the son of Daniel Glin Wright (1789 - 1831) and his wife Catherine Dackin of South Wales, United Kingdom. When he died in 1831 she married Stephen Osler of Simon's Town. She died in 1881. Both are buried in the Old Burying Ground. Wickboom Lane was originally called Glin Wright Lane. In the Burial Register of St Francis Church (No. 145) he is shown as being a Vintner. John Daniel was only six years old when his father died.

John Daniel went to school in Simon's Town and married on 26 June 1848 Elizabeth Ann Black, a member of an old Simon's Town family. They had three daughters Emily, Julia and Laura - all minors when he died. He was christened John Daniel Wright at St Francis Church (entry No. 302 Baptisms); he married as John Daniel Glin Wright (entry 98) and was buried as John Daniel Glinwright (entry 180) although his tombstone has JOHN DANIEL GLIN WRIGHT on it. He was a cabinet maker and builder.

On 7 April 1869 Emily Ann Catherine (a minor) married William Charles Bell, Secretary to the Commercial Exchange, Cape Town. On 9 March 1870 Julia Elizabeth (minor) was married by special licence to John Frederick Mitchell, Lieutenant-Surgeon in the Royal Navy of HMS MYRMIDON. Mother then had 2½ years to save for the wedding of the third daughter on 10 September 1872 when Laura Alice (minor) married Lt Frederick Kibbey Taylor (widower) of HMS RATTLESNAKE. All three girls married at St Francis Church and in each case the name GLINWRIGHT was used.

Lt Taylor returned to Simon's Town in 1881 as Captain of HMS INCONSTANT but unfortunately his wife had to remain in England as the ship was only to be here for 1 month. It was on a round the world trip with 2 princes of the English crown.

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CAPTAIN PURLAND and LIEUTENANT MORANT

ARTHUR DAVEY

In 1970 (Vol. VI No. 1) in a vividly written article, Miss Marion Purland recalled some features of the life of her father, Captain Thomas Terence Constantine Purland, Assistant Resident Magistrate of Simon's Town from 1886 to 1894. He held the honorary rank of captain because of special services in the "Gun War" in Basutoland in 1880 in the course of which he lost a leg. (1) Purland, who in private life was a jovial raconteur and jester, was an experienced civil servant of twenty years standing by the time the South African War erupted in 1899. His daughter says briefly that Lord Roberts organised his appointment as Director of Prisons, Pretoria, in 1900.

When the British Military occupied large areas of the Orange Free State and Transvaal in 1900 they became responsible for temporary measures to deal with day-to-day administration. Some temporary officials were seconded from the British army, others were borrowed from the Indian Civil Service whilst the Cape Colony, which had the most sophisticated and efficient bureaucracy in South Africa, provided its share, including Captain Purland. The choice of Purland is clear enough, he was a seasoned prison administrator, having been Assistant Superintendent of Cape Town's Breakwater Prison from 1895 and later Deputy Inspector of Prisons. In 1902 his career and that of the celebrated and notorious Harry (The Breaker) Morant were to cross.

Morant, a British-born horse-breaker, bush poet and roisterer, came to South Africa with an Australian army contingent in 1900 and later was commissioned in the Bushveldt Carbineers operating in the North-Eastern Transvaal in 1901. Morant and others were involved in a sordid series of murders of surrendered Boers for which they were brought to trial before properly constituted British courts-martial in Pietersburg. A powerful (but historically flawed) Australian film of 1980 did much to revive Breaker Morant's name and reputation.

The Bushveldt Carbineers, an irregular wartime unit, had a base depot in Pretoria so Morant and Purland must have met each other there. Much to the latter's surprise, Morant inquired whether Captain Purland would be willing to defend him at the trials. Purland was taken aback as the acquaintance was "only the slightest" and because his official position precluded it "even had I the inclination" (2). In the event, Major Thomas, an Australian officer, undertook the defence of Morant and his co-accused.

After the trials Morant and the other convicted officers were transferred to the old central prison in Pretoria to await sentence. Lieutenant George Witton, one of the prisoners, has thrown light on Purland's compassion at this tense time for the prisoners:

"During the day Captain Purland, Inspector of Prisons, visited us; he was an old acquaintance of Morant's and at the request of this officer he relaxed much of the prison

discipline. Instead of being kept locked in our cells all day they were thrown open at 5.30 a.m. in the morning till 7 p.m. During the day we were allowed to communicate with each other; tobacco, cigars and cigarettes were sent to us which we were permitted to smoke. We had been at Pretoria nearly a week before the findings of the court were made known" (3)

Lieutenants Morant and Handcock were sentenced to death and executed by a firing squad in Pretoria Prison on 27 February 1902 whilst a death sentence on Lieutenant Witton was commuted to long-term imprisonment in England.

It is likely that Captain Purland looked back to this sombre episode in Pretoria as one of the unhappiest of his life - so very different from the pleasant, relaxed years he had spent at Simon's Town.

References:

- (1) Cape Civil Service List, 1901, p.325 (Outline of duties)
- (2) Breaker Morant and the Bushveldt Carbineers (ed.A.Davey) Van Riebeeck Society 1987, pp.119-120; K. Denton, Closed File, Sydney, 1983, p.63.
- (3) G. Witton, Scapegoats of the Empire, Sydney, 1907 (Reprint 1982), p.149

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SEAFORTH HOUSE, WATERS EDGE and DUART

A. E. READ

SEAFORTH HOUSE

This was built late 1895 by Harry Struben, the father of Captain Charles Struben. For information on Captain Struben see our July 1996 Bulletin. He was one of the founders of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in S.A. - now S.A.S. UNITIE.

The Struben family decided to build a seaside holiday house and a week-end escape. They had not long come to live at the Cape from "The Willows", their farm outside Pretoria. They became very friendly with Admiral Rawson and his family as Charles and his sister Enid were great friends of the Admiral's son and daughter. In fact soon after the house was built Enid met and fell in love with the Admiral's nephew Commander Dudley de Chair whom she later married. De Chair went on to become Governor of New South Wales, Australia. The original house is of stone and very roomy with lofty ceilings. It has now been added on to to form the Community School adjacent to Seaforth Beach.

Sir John Jackson visited Simon's Town while his firm were constructing the East Dockyard. He rented Seaforth House for a while. His large yacht ZULU was moored just off Cole Point. Sir John frequently raced against Commander R. Nelson, who was

the Queen's Harbour Master, Simon's Town at the time.

WATERS EDGE:

On the south side of Seaforth House, the land comprising this property was originally two erven owned by two members of the Hugo family who sold 1 erf to Arthur Gates and 1 erf to Henry Hamilton Jones. The property was registered in the name of Arthur George Syfret on 10 June 1896. Maybe H.H. Jones and the architect Jones are the same person?

The house was probably built in 1896-1898 because in November 1899 Syfret applied for permission to build a retaining wall immediately behind the house to form a back yard. There were also 2 wcs at the south-east end of the yard, one opening on to it and the other opening outwards (for use by the gardener?) The architect was H. Jones of 12 Shortmarket Street, Cape Town so he probably designed the house as well. At the same time he submitted a plan for stables abutting Kleintuin Road immediately behind the house. These comprised a coach house at the south-east end, a "Boy's room" in the centre and a stable comprising 2 loose boxes at the north-west end.

In July 1910 Jones and Draiby (now of 6 Church Square, Cape Town) converted the back yard into a servants room, pantry and bathroom, adjoining the 2 wcs. The yard would be added to the house on the north-west wall of the house. In January 1914 the property was transferred to Edward Ridge Syfret. In August 1914 L.A. Lubyadki, architect, drew up plans for a stoep on the sea side of the house and beneath this a ladies and a gents changing room divided by a loggia.

In December 1926 Jones and Draiby drew up plans for a garage on the extreme north-western corner of the property, abutting the boundary of Seaforth House. It was put in this position probably because the state of Kleintuin Road deteriorated a few yards beyond this point and also narrowed into a bridle path.

In 1939 the property became that of Miss Doris M. Syfret. Nothing more was done to the house until August 1945 when Black and Fagg, architects of 85 St Georges Street, Cape Town submitted plans to convert the coach house into a garage; the boy's room remained as a servants room and the stable section was converted into a new servants room with bath and w.c. for the housekeeper.

In 1954 the property passed to Mrs Denniston (nee Syfret) and was registered in the name of her daughters Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Brown. In 1968 the garage was converted into a bedroom and sitting room and for many years was occupied by Mrs Nancy Dicks of a well known Simon's Town family. She gave many faithful years service to the family.

In 1993 a new roof was put on the house. It was a much steeper roof and opened out on to what had been a false balcony for many years. This now provided accommodation for Mrs Brown's growing number of grandchildren. At the same time various alterations were made inside to make the kitchen area more manageable and an erf wall was also built which much enhanced the property.

DUART:

This is the southernmost of the three properties. It was almost certainly built by Mr. L. Maclean, believed to have been a Superintendent of the Union-Castle Company. This may account for the fact that Union-Castle ships frequently made week-end excursions to Simon's Town in the early part of this century.

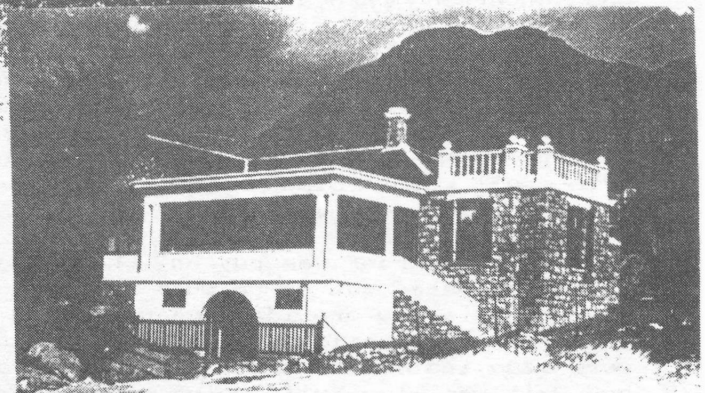
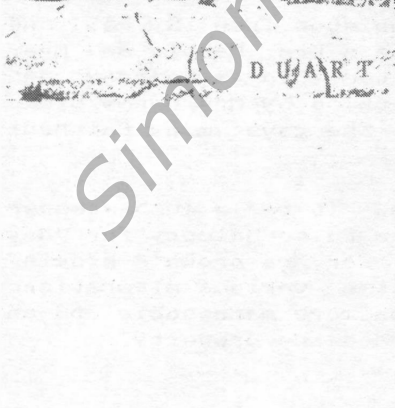
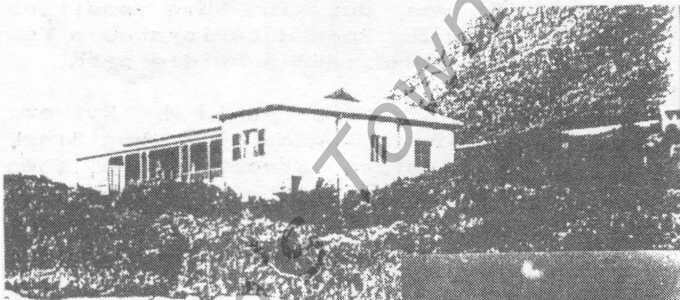
The plans to build were submitted to the Simon's Town Municipality in December 1895 but there is no owner's name on the plans. Building soon began. The house later passed from Mr. L. Maclean to Leonie Emma Beldam (nee Mayall) and she bequeathed it to Mrs. L.E. de Villiers (nee Mayall). From her ownership passed to Mrs. Sheila Porter, whose family still own it. It is virtually unaltered inside. It is now surrounded by an attractive wall and had a garage and a small wing added on the Kleintuin Road side.

The land across the turning circle outside Duart and which later became known as Boulders Estate was auctioned off in 1949 on behalf of Mrs Sheila Dakin (nee Maclean). Originally the turning circle formed part of Duart's land and its stable was on the site of "Chimney Cottage". The Duart land would therefore have extended from Miller Road as far as "Dunearn" the wooden house overlooking Boulders Beach. The land comprising to-day's turning circle was swapped with the Simon's Town Council for a strip of land of similar size to be incorporated into Duart's deeds.

References:

Property cards, Simon's Town Museum Archives
Minutes, Simon's Town Municipality, Cape Archives.

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WATERS EDGE BEFORE ITS NEW ROOF
WAS FITTED

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

In keeping with the Society's policy of erecting plaques to commemorate people and/or places the following plaques have recently been erected:

MARY HENRIETTA KINGSLEY 1863-1900

Mary Kingsley was an eminent British woman traveller in Africa. She travelled extensively in West Africa from 1893 to 1895, and her writing and lecturing made her a well-known authority on the region and on colonial questions. In 1900 she came to Simon's Town during the South African War and nursed Boer prisoners in the Palace Barracks. While in Simon's Town Mary Kingsley had a room in the British Hotel. She contracted typhus and died on 3 June 1900 aged 37. Mary Kingsley was buried at sea with full military honours.

(Erected on the wall at the entrance to the British Hotel building.)

IMAM M. A. BAKER 1910-1982

In this house Imam Baker completed the first translation of the Koran into Afrikaans in 1961.

(On the wall of Rahman Cader's house in Thomas Street)

The following three plaques will be found on the Dockyard Wall opposite ABC and Central Buildings:

RUDYARD KIPLING 1865-1936

English journalist, poet and writer of "The Jungle Books", "Just So Stories" and "Kim". His patriotic interest in Army, Sea and Empire led to many visits to Simon's Town and stories about its characters.

C. S. S. ALABAMA

This Confederate cruiser visited Simon's Town in 1863 during the American Civil War. Her Commanding Officer, Captain Raphael Semmes C.S.N. was entertained at Admiralty House. She evaded the Yankee blockade off Cape Point only to be sunk on 19 June 1864 in the English Channel. Her visit to the Cape has been immortalised in the song "Daar kom die Alabama".

VICE-ADMIRAL LORD HORATIO NELSON

On 21 May 1776 Horatio Nelson, then a Midshipman being invalided back to England from the East Indies, arrived in Simon's Bay aboard HMS DOLPHIN. The ship remained here for a month and it is probable that Nelson did come ashore during this period.

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SIMON'S TOWN RE-VISITED

F.B. CHEVALLIER

At the age of 17 years I joined the Royal Navy at Simon's Town on 18 February 1943 and memories of that epic occasion in my life were evoked when on 4 May 1996, Paddy, my wife, and I, joined a group led by Mrs Read to walk the Historic Mile.

I arrived at Simon's Town to join the Royal Navy after a five-day train journey from Nyasaland (now Malawi) having been joined en route by eighteen fellow recruits from Rhodesia. Our excitement at seeing the sea was soon tempered by the early introduction to Naval discipline and training on HMS THAMES (formerly the S.A.T.S. GENERAL BOTHA) which was moored off shore. After three weeks we were drafted to Natal for further training prior to assignment to ships of the Eastern Fleet. I next saw Simon's Town nearly four years later when I returned to HMS AFRIKANDER for demobilisation. This was a happy occasion which gave me a secure, joyous feeling and warm anticipatory thoughts of my civilian life ahead.

My wartime memories of Simon's Town revolve around my short service on HMS THAMES with its proud history as the GENERAL BOTHA, the occasions when I was detailed for shore patrol duties which included travelling by train to and from Cape Town, sometimes assisted by Able Seaman Just Nuisance whose intelligence, patriotism and penchant for sailors, greatly endeared him to us all. We were able to relax at the Recreation Club (the Africa Station Club) and the availability of a bed there when one missed the last liberty boat was a salvation for many late night revellers! The only real excitement I experienced in Simon's Town was when we were hastily mustered one Saturday night and sent to Klaver Camp, too late unfortunately to save the Wardroom from a fierce mountain fire.

My strong abiding memory of the Simon's Town of those days, however, was the pleasure of being associated with a colourful, vibrant community in an operational and historical naval base with all it had to offer. Such a feeling was again experienced by me as recently as March last year when I was fortunate enough to witness the arrival of HMS BRITANNIA at good old Snoekie as we will always know our beloved Simon's Town.

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RECTORY LANE:

Council minutes of 5 September 1884 show this as Wilshire's Lane after the Rev. H.M. Wilshire, Colonial Chaplain, Simon's Town, a Rector of St Francis Church. Previously it had been Judge Lane, after the Rev. Judge!

WICKBOOM LANE:

Was at one time known as Glynwright's Lane and was renamed Wickboom Lane in 1899. Wickboom had originally owned land in that area.

MUNICIPAL OFFICE HOLDERS IN SIMON'S TOWN

A.E. Read

In Bulletin Vol. XVIII No. 4 of July 1995 we wrote about D. Watson, our first Town Clerk 1883-1889 and E.W. Attridge our first Town Engineer 1890-1912. These were researched by the late G.J. Wilson. It was then decided that with the changes in Local Government we should endeavour to cover the whole spectrum up to the present time and present biographies of the Town Clerks and Town Engineers.

It has required much research and I am very grateful to Messrs. Chevalier, Grant, Atwell and Docherty as well as to Miss Cathcart for their help. It is not possible to write a straightforward list of post holders as from time to time some men held more than one position because of hard times and certain other constraints. We have however, endeavoured to make it as clearcut as possible.

Part I

TOWN CLERKS:

1883-89 D. Watson	1889-1928 W.S. Gillard	1928-40 W.H. Dobson
1940-41 M. de Klerk	1941-47 B. Randall	1948-70 J.M. Loubser
1970-93 C.U. Chevalier	1993 J. Marais.	

D. WATSON 1883-1889 - please see Bulletin Vol. XVIII No. 4 of July 1995.

W.S. GILLARD 1889-1928

William Smale Gillard (1861-1942) became Simon's Town's 2nd Town Clerk in August 1889. The entire staff at the time consisted of himself and one other man. The minutes of Council meetings were written up on six A4 pages in a Minute Book. How we have progressed in just over 112 years. The ordinary surveying of Mount Pleasant township (which was developed in the 1890s to raise some money to install a drainage system in the Town) was surveyed during Gillard's first year, for the princely sum of £26. Scavaging and sanitary services were carried out by contract. By 1926 the Municipal Staff had increased to Town Clerk, Bookkeeper and Accounts Assistant, typist, Clerk-of-Works-in-charge, Municipal Electrician-in-charge, Sanitary Inspector, and Town Ranger. The valuation of immovable property in 1889 was £61,365. The rate was 3/4d in the £ plus a tenant's rate of 6d in the £ on the annual valuation. By 1926 it was £321,750 (excluding the properties of the Imperial and Union Governments) and the rate was 4d in the £ - the tenant's rate was discontinued. Gillard retired as Town Clerk on 19 September 1928 and was at that time the senior Town Clerk in the Cape Province. From 1884-1902 he was also the town's Librarian. (Cape Argus 25.11.1926 and Council Minutes in the Cape Archives).

Gillard came from Sticklepath, Sampford Courtenay in Devon and 1870-79 he attended the Wesleyan Chapel at Sticklepath (Methodist Recorder 20.9.1900). It is not certain when he arrived in this country. His wife was Sarah Jane (1863-1942). They lived in Cornwall Street in Mount Pleasant. Because of the

numerous "west country" people who lived in that area we also find Devon Street in that area. William and Sarah are both interred in the Dido Valley Cemetery at Glencairn (Plot F 13/15) They had 5 children and both sons are also interred at Dido Valley. Well known in Fish Hoek is Ethel May Gillard, a grand daughter, for many years Librarian in Fish Hoek and long time member of the Fish Hoek Valley Historical Association and now Assistant Curator of the Fish Hoek Museum.

WILLIAM HENRY DOBSON 1928-1940:

W.H. Dobson (1875-1942) acted as both the Third Town Clerk and the Third Town Engineer. He entered the Municipal service in 1927 and on the retirement of W.S. Gillard in August 1928 he took over. W.H. Dobson was born in November 1875 in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England. After completing his schooling, he entered articles and was trained, as were his predecessors in office as Town Engineers in Simon's Town in the absence of any university degree courses in those days, in the three disciplines of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Land Surveying.

On the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War the 24 year old Dobson came to the Cape as a mounted soldier. After the cessation of hostilities he worked for various municipalities, among them Grahamstown, Umtali (in the then Rhodesia), Standerton and Germiston in the Transvaal, sometimes in the combined roles of Town Engineer and Town Clerk.

Dobson married Elsie Pascoe of Christchurch, New Zealand and there were three children from the marriage, a son William Henry Dobson (jnr) who died in 1989; Lilian Elsie who married James Stuart Nicol of Simon's Town and Daphne May (Iris) who married the well-known Simon's Town attorney Victor Cohen. Vic and Iris had two sons (Brian the big-game fisherman and Malcolm who lives in Australia).

After Dobson separated from his wife he went to live at the Central Hotel. He retired from Municipal service in 1940 at the age of 65. Subsequent to his retirement he set up a small architectural practice from his rooms at the Central Hotel, largely in the field of plans for new domestic housing and alterations to existing homes. He passed away at the Central Hotel in May 1952 in his 77th year.

MICHAEL DE KLERK 1940-41:

He was the Fourth Town Clerk and also held the post of Town Treasurer (the first). Unfortunately not much is known of de Klerk. He left Simon's Town in 1941 to go to Paarl. It is known that he was one of twin brothers and his twin was Town Clerk of Worcester. On an unknown date he committed suicide. It is particularly sad that we know so little of him because he lived and worked here in a very interesting time and we know nothing of his contacts with the Navy or Admiralty in those war years. He lived at "The Anchorage" cnr Main Road and Warner Way, Glencairn.

BENJAMIN RANDALL 1941-48:

He was Town Clerk when the building of the Waterfall Road flats and the Dido Valley sub-economic housing scheme took place.

JOHANNES MARAIS LOUBSER 1948-1971:

Johannes Hannes "Stompie" Marais Loubser (1916-1994) was born at Durbanville, where his father was farming, on 25 August 1916. His father got into financial difficulties when times were hard in the twenties so he gave up farming and successfully applied for a position with the Royal Naval Dockyard Police at Simon's Town. Young Hannes was educated at Simon's Town Secondary School which then occupied the present premises of the Municipality.

In 1935 at the age of 19 Hannes entered the service of the Municipality as a messenger, serving under Mr. Dobson, the Town Clerk/Town Engineer. He became Personal Assistant to Mr. Dobson and soon learnt the intricacies of duties of the Town Clerk and indeed those involved in the municipal finance procedures as well.

During World War II he joined the army and spent 3 years in North Africa and Italy and was awarded the Efficiency Decoration. On cessation of hostilities he went as Town Clerk and Treasurer to the Municipality of Umtali in Southern Rhodesia. When Benjamin Randall left Simon's Town Municipality in 1948 Hannes returned to Simon's Town as Town Clerk and Town Treasurer. In January 1948 John Lilley who had joined as Treasury Assistant not long before, took over as Town Treasurer when the posts were split and Hannes carried on as Town Clerk.

He lived at No. 156 Main Road, Glencairn, as well as the house at the Municipal Office (the old Headmaster's House). He retired in 1971 and for a while was Secretary of the Marlin and Tuna Club. He went to Plumstead on retirement. Peggy his wife died in 1978 and he then went to live with his daughter at Zeekoewlei, then with his son Peter at Sun Valley, and later at Clovelly, where he died on 31 December 1994. The excellence of Hannes' service as Town Clerk was recognised when he was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the South African Institute of Town Clerks in 1965. Les Hughes joined the Municipality in 1951 as Assistant Town Clerk and Hughes' sister Mrs. Bird was Librarian from April 1959 to January 1970. Hannes had a strong relationship with Lewis Gay who encouraged him in his career. There are many stories about Hannes and one bears recording. While he was a messenger he was riding round on his delivery bicycle with the agenda for the forthcoming council meeting. He passed the naval cricket ground en route to Mr. Gay's house near the oil tanks, and found a cricket match in progress at the Naval sports field. So he propped his bicycle against a tree and went off to watch. Without him noticing Mr. Lewis Gay, removed the bicycle and took it to his nearby home. Hannes realised somehow who might have taken it! On calling at "Thalassa" in Gay Road to deliver Mr. Gay's Agenda, Mr. Gay announced that he was reporting Hannes for dereliction of duty. Hannes quickly replied that he was on his way to the police to report the theft of municipal property. Nothing further came of the matter and their friendship continued!

CHARLES ULTIMUS CHEVALIER 1970-1993:

Charles Chevalier succeeded Les Hughes as Assistant Town Clerk. He had joined the Cape Town City Council in 1947 and was with them for 18 years in various capacities. He then moved to Port Elizabeth City Council for 3 years as Administrative Officer. For 1969 and part of 1970 he was at Kloof, Natal, as Assistant Town Clerk but a preference for the Cape's weather caused him to apply for the position being offered by Simon's Town Municipality whom he joined in 1970. In 1971, when "Hannes" Loubser retired, Charles Chevalier was appointed Town Clerk to succeed him. He served the Town admirably until his retirement in 1993. During all those years he lived in Fish Hoek and knowing that town so well it is very rewarding that he in his retirement is using his great knowledge of municipal affairs to serve on the Fish Hoek Ratepayers Association.

SARAH CATHERINE KRUGER:

Sarah Kruger (nee Putter) was born in Burgersdorp, Cape, on 23 October 1927 and joined the Simon's Town Town Clerk's Department on 1 October 1969 as Administration Assistant. After leaving school she had worked for the Burgersdorp Municipality and eventually became its Assistant Town Clerk, serving that Municipality for nearly 24 years. She then married Johan G.F. Kruger who had been Town Clerk of Aliwal North. When Charles Chevalier became Town Clerk, Sarah Kruger was promoted to Assistant Town Clerk which post she held for 19 years. She retired on 31 January 1991 and was succeeded by Mrs. Marliese Odendaal. Three months later Mrs Odendaal was upgraded to Deputy Town Clerk/Town Secretary.

Charles Chevalier was succeeded by Mr. J. Marais in 1993 and Mrs. Odendaal by Mr. Tobie Hills.

Messrs. Marais and Hills have come at a period of great change and Marais is the last Town Clerk of Simon's Town Municipality as such. With local Government as we have known it, coming to an end and Simon's Town becoming part of the larger South Peninsula Local Government structure, a big re-organisation has taken place. We are now a Ward of this large structure and are lucky to have former Councillor and Mayor of Simon's Town Alderman Holderness as our representative. She will have a tough time ahead of her fighting for our share of a much reduced budget as well as having to travel a long distance up the line to meetings which at the moment take place at Constantia. As yet no name for the Structure has been formulated.

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SOLDIER-CRAFTSMEN - THOMAS AMBROSE & JOHN COFFEY

THE SEAFORTH SERIES PART III

A. M. D.

On a gravestone there may be an inconspicuous inscription at the base which gives the name of its manufacturer or of the monumental mason. At Simon's Town many of the headstones, marble crosses etc of the late nineteenth century were the products of R. Cane and Sons of Church Stret, Wynberg, a firm which also had branches in other parts of the Peninsula, including Somerset Road and Observatory. It is rewarding for a researcher to discover that the "small print" can sometimes yield information that has historical bearings.

Among the oldest surviving naval headstones in the Garden of Remembrance at Seaforth are eight which were the work of Thomas Ambrose between 1817 and 1821. They are affixed to the central sloping walls marked by the numbers 19 and 20. On most of them Ambrose describes himself as a "Sculptor", but on a few he reveals that he was a soldier belonging to the Royal Sappers and Miners; this unit was a forerunner of the later Royal Engineers. He also states that he was employed in H.M. Dockyard, Simon's Town. His proficiency as a sculptor was not matched by consistent spelling for he is Ambrose on 3, Ambros on 1 and Ambroes on 4! It may be deduced that Sapper Ambrose's sculpting skill gave him a profitable sideline. He certainly had civilian as well as naval customers, for a gravestone attached to the outer wall of the Groote Kerk facing Parliament Street, Cape Town which commemorates Casparus Jan Van Eerten who died on 21 September 1819, was the work of "Thomas Ambroes". There may have been other examples of his craft in cemeteries which fell into disuse and ruin.

Long afterwards, in 1857, the Royal Navy at Simon's Town had a monument erected to the memory of the ship's complement of HMS NERBUDDA which had been lost with all hands two years before. This perpendicular stone monument in the group numbered 21, also has "small print" disclosing that it was the work of John Coffey of the Queen's Royals, i.e. the 2nd Regiment of Foot (Queen's Royal Regiment - West Surrey) which was then stationed in the Cape Colony.

Footnote:

Ambrose was a man of many parts for in 1796 on 25 March we find in Donald Trail's account for repairs to the Government Garden House that he paid T. Ambros for 20 planks for Doors and Windows. He also built a toilet, and put a door on the Kraal. Trail had been master of the convict ship NEPTUNE and also of MONARCH. He was appointed by Admiral Elphinstone as Master Attendant and Harbour Master 1795-1798. In 1799 Trail is shown as an importer of slaves from Mozambique. (Archives Ref. B.O. 7/281).

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TREK FISHING: FISHERMAN'S BEACH MURDOCK VALLEY

L.H. Posthumus

(Members should also refer to Volume XVII No.3 p.117 for more information on Trek Fishing)

In 1954 I bought a block of land at Murdock Valley, part of Peter Hugo's original sub-division. The road on which the block was located did not have a name but was later named Valley Road. Kaye and Moore built a house there for me which we named "Entabeni". The house is over the road from the Hugo Graveyard and Vault. On the beach below there were many places where one could swim. Charlie Muller had his "Trek" at the Simon's Town end of the beach.

There was a large galvanised iron shed on the beach. Four boats complete with nets were always ready for instant use. Charlie was the legal owner but they operated as a family business. The family consisted of Charlie, his brothers Jan (Oom Jan) and Tienie with his sisters Minnie and Lottie. They lived together in a stone cottage in the little valley over the road from the beach except for Tienie. Tienie walked out each day from his home in the Municipal housing estate at the top of Waterfall Road. At that time Charlie's usual crew consisted of George, Takka, Swart Willie, Louis Hollander and Andrew. George, Takka and Willie mostly lived in the shed.

On the mountainside immediately behind our house was a small rough shelter. This shelter was the "lookout" from which there was an excellent view of the bay below. One always knew when Oom Jan was there because he used to doze on his back with one leg crossed over and resting on the raised knee of the other leg. The result was that a bare foot would be visible raised above the bushes! When he was needed, he would run down to the beach and join the crew. The man who was always there was Tienie. When he arrived from town in the morning, he would take up his position in the shelter and his watchful eyes would be constantly scanning the bay for any signs of shoals of fish on the move.

If Tienie spotted a shoal he would blow a whistle to alert the crew below. If he blew twice a boat would be launched. When the boat was afloat he would guide the boat into position with blasts on the whistle while making gestures with a hand held flag. Charlie would be in the boat as skipper and he took over once the shoal could be seen from the boat. As soon as Charlie started encircling the shoal with the net, Tienie would run to the beach to assist with hauling in the net. Tienie was a pretty corpulent chap but he could put on an impressive turn of speed when necessary. As soon as the boat had surrounded the shoal and taken the loose end of the net back to the beach, Charlie and a reduced crew would row back out to the bag. The bag was in the middle of the net and quite capacious. Charlie would keep an eye on the bag to observe if there was any danger of the volume of fish breaking the bag. Sometimes this happened.

One Saturday, never to be forgotten, I heard Tienie's whistle blow. I dashed outside to see which way he was pointing his flag. He was blowing furiously and was obviously greatly excited at the size of the shoal of haarders (mullet) he had sighted. Suddenly he was blowing but the whistle was silent. Age had taken its toll on the whistle and the pea had blown out. He dropped onto his hands and knees to search for the pea. There was no hope of finding it so he tried to direct the men by using only the flag. It was a failure because the men in the boat did not know why he was not using the whistle. They ignored his signals and tried to proceed by making their own decisions. The shoal veered away from them and Tienie reached the limit of frustration. He threw down the flag, started jumping up and down on the flag and gave vent to a torrent of invective florid enough to start a bushfire. I think he came close to having apoplexy. I later presented him with a referees whistle. It was new and I'm sure it would have outlasted Tienie. This episode was by no means characteristic of the way the trek usually operated. The men were good at their trade and worked together well.

One day in 1958 Charlie visited me and we sat in the lounge having afternoon tea. The lounge windows presented a wide view of the beach enabling him to keep an eye on the trek. He began to reminisce and I hastily fetched paper and pen. I was able to record the following summary of what he told me. Fortunately he spoke slowly so that I am able to recreate virtually verbatim what he said.

"I am now 74 years old, I was born in 1884. My father was George Henry Muller and he died at age 63. He was originally a whaler and came from Germany. My mother was Katie. At first the family operated at Miller's Point but my father later had the trekking rights at Steenbras Baai which was below "Flora House" (Dr. Kenny). Steenbras Baai is now covered by reclaimed land inside the East Dockyard. We had 18 foot boats with 100 foot nets and caught up to 20,000 fish at a time. The main season was September to March. We caught "winter vis" in June. When the Dockyard was built we moved to Froggy Pond. It was the beach below Bubbles' house (Frank's Bay). It was a nice beach at first but they removed too much sand for use in building the dockyard and a change of sea carried away the rest of the beach. Our nets were damaged by rocks every time we had a trek so we moved to Fishermans Beach. There was sand but we had to make the beach by clearing away stones. We used to hand drill holes in the large rocks and then we used blasting powder. We had to do this to make the beach safe enough for trekking.

In the early days when I was here, two people committed suicide on the rocks. A Mr. Percival aged 60 took poison. I saw him and then he disappeared. Also a man called Wallace who was a blacksmith next to the St George's Bottle Store. He had been an English soldier. He shot himself near the Beacon Rock (opp. the 25 mile stone - Ed.)

There were trek fishermen at Buffel's Bay, McKellar Bay. At Glencairn there was Bruyns who sold to van Breda. My Uncle and I had rights at Fish Hoek. I still have rights there but I

lease it out. It was originally owned by Mills and, I think, de Villiers. Auret was at Muizenberg. At Long Beach was Lawrence, Amalay and Jacobs. Jaffa at Cole Point. There was a fishing crew of five men at Paul's Berg, Smitswinkel. We sold haarders at 4d and 6d a bunch. There were six fish in a bunch.

At the Dockyard football/cricket field Edward Hablutzel and Arie Thomas had whale boats. The boats were 25 foot maybe longer in length. They had crews of six men. George Cotton also hunted whales and had boats at Seaforth but he moved to Long Beach. There were other whalers at Muizenberg and Smitswinkel Bay. At one time Cotton had a steam whaler but it went on the rocks at Kalk Bay. At Muizenberg there was Frikkie and Hendrik Auret. Their whales were cut up at Strandfontein. Cotton also took whales to Rietman, where van der Poll's boat house now stands at Boulders Beach. The last whales were cut up on Palm's Beach. Cotton caught the last whale just after the Boer War."

Alastair Miller had his house built right next door to us - also by Kaye and Moore and at the same time as our house was built. The Mullers were our nearest neighbours. Sadly under the Group Areas Act Fishermans Beach was declared a White's Only beach and the boats were removed.

Notes:

"Flora House" is at the bottom of Flora Steps corner of Queen's Road. Previously owned by Dr. Bull. Doctors Bull and then Doctor Kenny were General Practitioners and District Surgeons at Simon's Town. The house is now lived in by Dr. Lee.

Bubbles' house - "Bubbles" was the nickname for Ivona Hugo who lived in one of the two cottages on the Main Road between Otlands and Dorries Drive.

Rietman lived at "Bellevue" and used the beach at Boulders. Iron rings for mooring the whales are still to be found attached to various rocks there.

"Palms Beach" - Captain Palm, a retired R.N. Officer built "Old Well House" almost opposite the 25th mile stone. The Hugo's used to water their cattle there in former times. There was a small beach over the road from the well. The beach was virtually wiped out by a severe landslide during a particularly bad winter in the 1940's. Half the road slipped down onto the beach.

Bruyns who fished from Glencairn - the family began fishing at Fish Hoek and were the first owners of Fish Hoek. Andries Bruyns then moved to and built Klein Vishhoek c.1820 and fished from the beach in front of Marine Oil Refiners. One of his grandsons sold to van Breda.

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HMS HERMES COLLISION 1940

J. Parkinson

On Wednesday 10 July 1940 at 0306 hours HMS HERMES was in collision with HMS CORFU in position 9.10N 15.48W. It took almost 2 hours of manoeuvring to part the two ships. There was extensive damage to the HERMES. (Members should also refer to Volume XIII No. 2 p. 60.)

HERMES proceeded to Freetown, Sierra Leone at reduced speed and anchored at 1803 hours on the same day. HMS CORFU arrived under tow at 1400 hours on 13 July.

Temporary repairs were made to HERMES by Elder Dempster Shipping Line who successfully fitted a concrete cofferdam and wooded up the forefront. The damage extended over 100 feet on the starboard bow. Fortunately most of it was above water but the stem piece was fractured in two places below water and one piece was missing. It was arranged that the ship should proceed to Simon's Town for repair and accordingly her seven Swordfish aircraft were landed at Freetown to augment the local defences. HERMES left for Simon's Town on Monday 5 August 1940 leading convoy R.S. 5 and doing 15.5 knots. Others in the convoy were s.s. REINA DEL PACIFICO and CLAN FERGUSON. On 11 August she handed the convoy over to HMS DRAGON and arrived off Cape Point at 0135 hours on Saturday 17 August whereupon she flew off six remaining aircraft to Wynberg (Young's Field) aerodrome. At 1042 hours she anchored with her port anchor off Simon's Town and at 1300 - 1515 she shifted into Dry Dock.

Sunday 18 August was spent de-ammunitioning ship and by 1930 that night all the water had been emptied out of the Dry Dock. Thursday 22 August the Starboard watch proceeded on four days general leave and 32 ratings were drafted to HMS CUMBERLAND. Repairs could now begin.

Repairs proceeded from Thursday 22 August until Wednesday 30 October 1940 when at 1825 hours the Dry Dock was flooded to 14 feet and on Saturday 2 November the ship proceeded out of the dock at 1103 hours and at 1238 hours was secured to the East Wall of the basin (East Dockyard wall). On Thursday 7 November at 0755 hours she cast off and at 0815 weighed anchor and proceeded out into False Bay to swing compasses and calibrate direction finder, returning to anchor off Simon's Town at 1535 hours.

On Friday 8 November at 0739 she weighed anchor and proceeded for further trials taking aboard five of her aircraft. Monday 11 November they spent the day at gunnery and flying practice and again on Tuesday 12 November. The ship then remained at sea on patrol looking for French and German merchantmen ex Madagascar. It was too stormy to fly on Saturday 16 November and that night considerable damage was done to ship's boats by the very heavy seas. Sunday 17 saw better weather so one aircraft was sent up. Monday from 1610 - 2205 hours the aircraft practiced night flying at sea off Simon's Town and on Tuesday 19 November 1940 at 1845 hours HMS HERMES weighed anchor and proceeded to sea, bound for Freetown.

This was probably the largest contract undertaken by the Simon's Town Dockyard during the 1939-45 war and it was to be 56 years before another such large contract came the Dockyard's way. Please see the article below on the SEDCO I OIL RIG.

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SEDCO I OIL RIG

A.E. Read

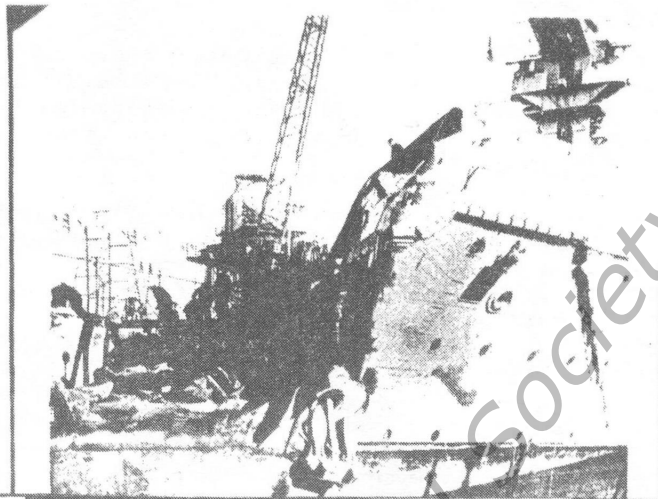
For the past few months Simon's Town has endured much noise and a great increase in personnel in the town. As mentioned in the previous article it is 56 years since a large contract has come this way. Nearly four months ago the Sedco I rig arrived being towed by the tug SMIT LLOYD LONDON. She was too large to approach the harbour basin wall and so PENTOW SALVER took over the tow assisted by the two South African Navy tugs and so the rig was berthed on the outer side of the wall.

Sedco I was to be converted and upgraded to a floating production unit and this has brought considerable badly needed business to the Town and to the Western Cape generally. On completion the rig will be used in exploiting Soekor's E-BT oilfield in the Bredasdorp Basin off Mossel Bay and the first oil is expected to be pumped in February 1997.

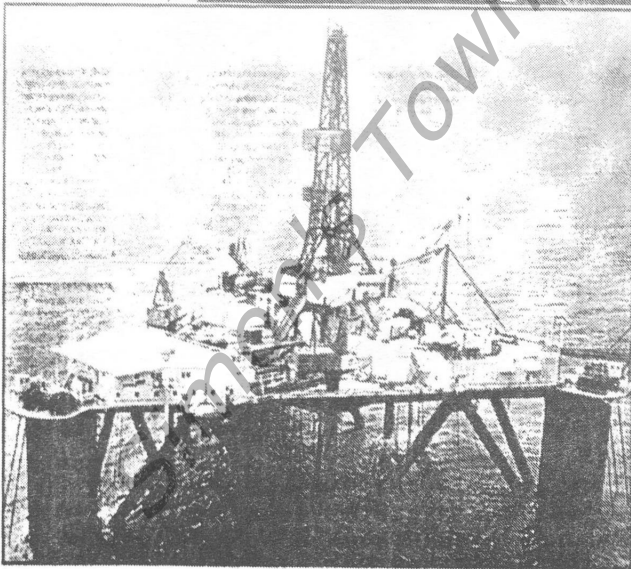
The four-month conversion and upgrade includes the modernisation of the accommodation; the upgrading of mooring systems to withstand South Africa's offshore conditions; enhancing the drilling equipment for the full work-over capacity; and installing the storage capacity of nine tanks with a capacity totalling 30,000 barrels. The contract was awarded to Babcock Construction by Schlumberger Logelco Inc. It has meant the employment of several hundred people. These people have to be fed and housed and this has brought some badly needed business to Simon's Town. It has also meant an increase in noise and dirt which newcomers have not been used to as the Dockyard has not worked to full capacity for some time. It has given a much needed boost to the turn over of many small businesses in Simon's Town.

Project Freight, a Cape Town based freight and forwarding company was awarded a contract to handle the logistics of the rig conversion etc. and also acted as ships agency for the chartered vessel SEAMAID which berthed in Simon's Town to off-load anchors and anchor chains, as well as the clearance and co-ordination of the offloading. All sub-sea equipment and other equipment off-loaded is being stored at A berth in Cape Town docks until it can be re-loaded onto the rig.

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HMS HERMES. Damage after collision with
Corfu near Freetown, W.W.II



Lower Left - Sedco I

S.A. MARLIN & TUNA CLUB

E.M. (Sonny) Taylor

This game-fishing club had until September 1996 a club house on Jubilee Square behind the post office. It has been pulled down as part of the new foreshore development encompasses this site. The club has now joined forces with the False Bay Yacht Club of Simon's Town.

The S.A. Marlin & Tuna Club had its first beginnings in Hout Bay. Sonny Taylor and his two brothers, Norman and Gerald, all with wartime naval experience, acquired the yacht ELEGANCE in 1946, sailing in Cape waters from the Royal Cape Yacht Club. At the same time angling for tunny in False Bay and around Cape Point was gaining in popularity. In 1951, as ELEGANCE had already been fitted with a Diesel auxiliary engine, Sonny and his crew decided to base at Simon's Town during the summer and soon the angling bug had bitten. The various boats were going further and further afield and catches were improving each season. An attempt had earlier been made to establish a club but it had never got off the ground.

In the early part of 1956 there were by now many boats chasing tunny each week-end, so Sonny approached friend Mike Stott, a well known angler and casting record holder, with the view that he, Mike, should start the ball rolling to form a club. He said that he was not able to undertake the task himself, but enthusiastically encouraged Sonny to go ahead himself.

Sonny therefore, approached another friend, Charles Horne, angling correspondent of the CAPE TIMES, to join him in the project. In the meantime, by courtesy of Mr. Smeda, the then harbourmaster, a private mooring for ELEGANCE had been laid and ELEGANCE was operating from Hout Bay where Sonny lived at Mount Rhodes. Also operating from Hout Bay at that period was CIRCE, then owned by David Mendelowitz, and sometimes ZEST owned by Ian Garlick. Catches were good.

A meeting was arranged at Sonny's home and the following anglers attended by invitation:

Chairman: Charles Horne
 Present: Henry Hope ("Wanderer" of Cape Argus)
 Mike Stott
 Hughie Johnson
 Ted Cottam
 Gerald Taylor
 Sonny Taylor
 Bob Atkinson

The basis for the SOUTH AFRICAN MARLIN AND TUNA CLUB was laid at this meeting. Sonny and Charles obtained copies of constitutions of clubs in America and New Zealand, both countries very prominent in the game-fishing field, as a guideline for the S.A.M. & T.C. A couple of months later a second meeting was held at Mount Rhodes at which a provisional constitution was drawn up for consideration at a public meeting to which all interested anglers were invited. The title would

also have to be confirmed.

The meeting, held in July 1956 and attended by about 50 anglers, in the Argus boardroom was a great success and most of the boatowners and many crewmembers joined as foundation members. The first official committee to be appointed was as follows:

Chairman:	Hymie Policansky
Vice-Chairman:	Sonny Taylor
Secretary:	Kenny Munns
Treasurer:	Sonny Derman
Members:	Mike Stott, Henry Hope, Hughie Johnston, David Sussman, Rudie van Rooyen and Wulfie Lemkus.

The club has gone from strength to strength and is internationally recognised. With the advent of radio communication in the early years of its formation, boats ventured further and further afield. Radio also brought about better and better catches as boats which found the shoals of tunny first would guide others to the spot.

In 1959 the club organised its first international contest which was held off Cape Point. Teams from the then Rhodesia, Mozambique and various provincial angling unions in South Africa took part and a phenomenal catch of 22,000 lbs of fish were caught in 3 days angling. The South African Navy, by courtesy of Admiral Biermann, supplied a mine sweeper as guardship during the contest, while ELEGANCE acted as committee boat at sea to answer any queries in respect of the rules or other matters which needed clarification. As catches took place details were passed to ELEGANCE who was able to re-transmit these to the control station at base in Simon's Town. These details were put on a large blackboard for the information of the many visitors to the area alongside the control centre. These contests became a regular annual feature.

When the Seven Seas Club house was built for the S.A. Navy, the ground floor was let to the S.A. Marlin & Tuna Club. Subsequently, when the Seven Seas expanded and the S.A.M. & T.C. lease expired, the S.A.M. & T.C. were leased a site by the Simon's Town Municipality adjacent to Jubilee Square behind the post office where it built its own club house.

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WHY IS THE ROYAL NAVY OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "THE ANDREW"?

A certain Lieutenant Andrew Miller sat with Nelson on a committee which decided that the use of press gangs was a way to obtain crews for naval ships when required. Men preferred to say that they had joined "the Andrew" instead of admitting they had been press-ganged.

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COMMANDER W. A. E. HALL R.N. (rtd) REMEMBERS.

"As a 17 year old Midshipman I took passage in the Union-Castle mailship STIRLING CASTLE in early 1940 to join my first ship, the heavy cruiser HMS DORSETSHIRE, on her arrival in Simon's Town. When I and my colleagues arrived at the dockside the wounded from HMS EXETER, recently returned from the Battle of the River Plate, were being landed. It was our first view of the effects of war.

After a couple of days we sailed round to Simon's Town for a short refit before returning to war. I seem to remember a certain whale which used to lead ships into Simon's Bay. (She was always called "Wendy" but it is doubtful that it was the same one each year! - Ed.) Another animal with human attachments was the famous dog Able Seaman Just Nuisance who travelled the Cape Town train with sailors and escorted them back on the last train. Like junior sailors we midshipmen had leave until the last train so regularly saw the dog sitting up in the train with his sailor friends. He would never go ashore with officers!

As often as not our base was Freetown in Sierra Leone. Whenever we sailed we hung on the captain's every word to hear whether we were to turn left or right when we left port. "Left" meant Simon's Town and the blessing of a civilised environment.

On one occasion "right" meant towards Home (U.K.) escorting the convoy carrying the Australian Expeditionary Force which I gathered had "left a mark" on Cape Town! From my Midshipman's Journal I see that the ships were QUEEN MARY, AQUITANIA, MAURITANIA, EMPRESS OF CANADA, EMPRESS OF BRITAIN and ANDES, six of the largest ships in the world at the time. We left the convoy off Gibraltar, being replaced by HMS HOOD.

A year later we were involved in the final action with the BISMARCK at which we fired over 200 eight inch shells, three torpedoes and rescued nearly 100 survivors. My next ship was the destroyer HMS BLACKMORE based at the Cape and escorting troopships to Durban and empty ships back. What a fantastic job in the middle of a major war!

Many years later I was the last European to command the Kenya Navy based at Mombasa. Once again I was in Africa but, sadly never again at the Cape.

(Commander Tim Hall was at R.N. College, Dartmouth, with one of our members Nigel Fawcett. They keep in touch and the above was sent at Nigel's request "before we are all too old to remember those stirring times" !)

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GOLD SHIPMENTS TO U.K. 1914

From: Prince Alfred's Guard 1856-1966 by Neil Orpen.

After a "spot of bother" with two new recruit companies and embarkation for German South West Africa, the remnants of the regiment were numerically too weak to operate as a fighting unit and were co-incidentally no longer needed in South West Africa, so they were transferred to Simon's Town under Lt. Col. Nolan Neylan.

For five months a depleted Guard carried on wearisome duties at Simon's Town. Three officers and 150 men of the unit did, however, play a part in one of the best-kept secrets of the war, when some £8,000,000 worth of gold was "smuggled" out of Cape Town and sent to London. Col. E.I.D. Gordon, (father of Major Anthony Gordon recently of the War Graves Committee) recounted this unusual story to Neil Orpen.

The regular weekly shipments of gold to England in the mail steamers had been suspended immediately on the outbreak of war. However, the Bank of England agreed to buy all gold deposited by the three commercial banks in London in their South African vaults. The South African Government was responsible for the gold whilst it was in the vaults and armed police guarded all the banks where it was hoarded.

On 29 December 1914, Colonel Gordon related, the Governor-General received a surprising telegram from the Naval Commander-in-Chief at Simon's Town - it seems more likely that the telegram was addressed to the Government, for it read: "Admiralty have instructed me to ship £8,000,000 of gold in two of my ships, which will be ready to sail on January 2. General Thompson (Commander, Imperial Troops and the Cape Districts, including the South African troops forming the garrison of the Cape Peninsula) informs me that on receipt of instructions he will arrange to send gold to Simon's Town under guard."

At the time Britain was sending large shipments of gold to America, and the message was surprising because it would have been safer to consign the gold direct to New York. Colonel Gordon was on General Thompson's staff and was ordered to make the necessary arrangements for sending the gold to Simon's Town, the sailing date eventually being fixed for the night of Saturday 9 January.

The battleship ALBION with her sister ship GOLIATH and four cruisers had been sent to reinforce the Cape Squadron in November 1914, in view of the possibility of Von Spee's squadron following up its action at Coronel with an attack on the Cape. Admiral Sturdee's crushing defeat of the German squadron at the Battle of the Falkland Islands on 8 December 1914, eliminated this threat and ALBION was to return to England. About half the gold, it was decided, would go in the battleship and the rest in HMS HYACINTH, flagship of the squadron based on Simon's Town. The two ships were to sail for St Helena where they were to be met by a cruiser which had been patrolling the West Coast of Africa.

The HYACINTH was to transfer her gold to the cruiser and then return to Simon's Town presumably to confuse German U-boats into thinking the whole operation was simply part of normal patrol activities.

Three officers and 150 men of Prince Alfred's Guard were detailed to guard the gold, which was only to be taken out of the vaults in Cape Town and transported to the station after midnight on January 9 - 10. The authorities did not want a soul to see the work in progress, and waited until the last theatre train had left the station and Adderley Street was completely deserted, with not even a tram or hansom cab in sight. Specially picked members of the bank staffs had been told to remain on duty and had been sworn to secrecy, and it would appear that not the slightest hint of what was afoot ever reached the public.

There were 2,560 boxes of gold to be taken out of the vaults and loaded onto a train of 13 closed trucks, which had been shunted to the spare platform which later became No. 1 platform of the old Cape Town suburban line station before the new station was opened some 50 years later. The work began at 12.30 a.m. on one of the hottest nights of the Cape summer. Perspiring men struggled in the vaults with the heavy boxes, each one of which contained more wealth than most of them would earn in many years. Carefully checked as they left the bank, the boxes were loaded onto lorries guarded by police with loaded revolvers. At the station they were again checked before being stowed in the closed trucks. No one but those engaged in the special task had been allowed to enter the station and all lights but a few alongside the train had been extinguished.

One box was lost. Numbers were checked and re-checked, every possible place where it might have been mislaid was searched, but it seemed to have vanished. Then it was eventually found on a shelf under a counter in one of the banks. Apparently some of the men had begun to take the gold out of the vaults in the afternoon to facilitate loading in the evening. Having been told this was too risky, they had put the boxes back in the vaults but had overlooked this one, which was still missing when the train pulled out of the station at 7.30 a.m. on that quiet Sunday morning. The missing box was later found and sent down by car the same day. When the train steamed into Simon's Town, sailors transferred the precious freight onto motor lorries once more and then into the magazines of the warships.

Being Sunday morning, few people were about, but even at Simon's Town the greatest secrecy surrounded the whole operation. Each lorryload of gold was covered with a tarpaulin and a red flag was shown to give the impression that the boxes contained ammunition - an idea which entered the head of one man, who reported that whilst passing the bank in Cape Town he had seen what he took to be boxes of Mauser ammunition being taken out of the building. One of the boxes, he noticed, bore the figures 256 - the Mauser calibre was .256.

The day after the gold had been loaded into the two ships, the HYACINTH received orders to sail for the East Coast and the

Admiral therefore had to have her share of the cargo transferred to the ALBION, which left on 13 January with the full consignment. At St Helena she transferred about half the gold to the cruiser CORNWALL and the two ships sailed towards England. They were diverted to Gibraltar, where the ALBION landed her cargo, but the CORNWALL went on to England and the day before she was due at Plymouth the Admiralty told an official of the Bank of England over the telephone that some gold was arriving for the bank. "I think it must be a mistake" said the bank official. "We have no gold coming" Eventually, the London branches of the South African banks took delivery at Plymouth and transported the gold to London, where the Bank of England took it over a few days later.

The Bank of England was not amused by the fact that the gold had travelled uninsured. Apparently the shipment had been made on the suggestion of the High Commissioner for South Africa, when he realised that one or other of the ships sent to reinforce the Cape Squadron might be returning to England.

This interesting but very brief interlude was almost all Prince Alfred's Guard enjoyed to break the tedium of their months in the Cape Peninsula!

In World War II the gold was shipped from Cape Town. The P.A.G. still exists in Port Elizabeth and has its own regimental museum.

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THEY PASSED THIS WAY - ROBERT SEMPLE Jnr. (1777-1816)

Peter van Blommestein

Robert Semple Jnr was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1777, the son of Robert Semple and his wife Ann Greenlaw. He had a brother John. Robert Snr and his family always regarded themselves as entirely British despite living in America. The parents espoused the loyalist cause and were imprisoned during the American War of Independence. They later returned to England where the son John was born.

Robert was brought up to mercantile pursuits and at an early age became a traveller employed to assess business prospects in various parts of the world. In March 1798 Robert Snr and his two sons accompanied a cargo of merchandise to Cape Town. The father and sons requested permission to remain in the Colony as merchants and opened Robert Semple and Co at 13 Berg Street, Cape Town. Robert Snr left the colony soon afterwards in the second half of 1798. In April 1803 Robert Jnr followed to Scotland. However in November 1803 John is shown as still being at the Cape. In 1799 Robert Jnr was a signatory to a letter

signed by sixty-one people (including John Barrow, George Rex and Andrew Barnard husband of Lady Anne) who offered their services in "assisting to defend this colony against the enemies of our most gracious sovereign should they dare to attack it."

Robert Semple Jnr and his friend Charles Ellis walked from Cape Town to Simon's Town via Constantia, where "the wine itself is of two kinds, red and white: and though the flavour be somewhat similar, there is said to be a great difference in their properties: the red declining in colour and flavour with age, whilst the white continues to improve, it is fit only to be used as a sweet and highly flavoured cordial".

"In the evening reached Simon's Town: of all the places either of us had seen the least deserving of the name of a town, it not consisting of more than 20 houses scattered along the side of Simon's Bay and overlooking the Bay of that name. Here vessels anchored during the winter months when north-west winds prevail, and render the anchorage in Table Bay unsafe, Simon's Bay being sheltered on that side by the high lands. Two or three miles beyond the town the road ends and the traveller must ascend the hills to arrive at the most southern point of the peninsula."

After Robert Jnr left the Cape in April 1803 he wrote 4 books about the countries through which he had travelled and a novel in 2 volumes called "Charles Ellis, or the friends" (1806). His "Walks and sketches at the Cape of Good Hope" published in 1803, was followed by a Dutch edition in 1804 and a German one in 1805.

After travels through many continents Robert Jnr was appointed supreme Governor of the vast territories controlled by the Hudson Bay Co in Canada in 1815. Sadly on 19 June 1816 at his H.Q. at the Red River Settlement he went out to meet members of the rival North-West Company, shots were fired and he was killed at the early age of 50.

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THEY PASSED THIS WAY - JEHANGEER NOWROJEE AND HIRJEEBHoy MERWANJEE.

Not all visitors were dismayed at arriving in Simon's Town. The above gentlemen were Parsee visitors who sailed from Bombay on 29 March 1838 for London to train as naval architects in England. They first sighted the Cape on 6 June 1838.

This is what they have to say:

"There are high mountains on both sides of False Bay, and little verdure on them on account of its being winter. We saw Her Majesty's ship MELVILLE, 74 guns bearing the flag of Admiral Honourable George Elliot and two or three other ships of the navy.... Simon's Town is much warmer and pleasanter than Cape Town, which lies exposed to the wind. The view of the town from the harbour is very good. The houses are principally one storey

high, detached from each other, and facing the bay.... Many of the passengers proceeded on horseback to Cape Town (including our Parsee visitors) and some of them were content to spend a few days at Simon's Town."

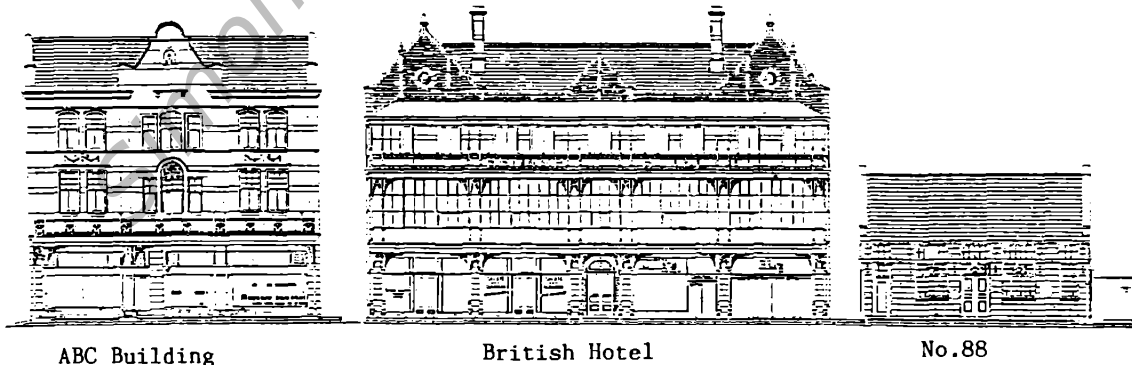
They were to catch a carriage on 11 June 1838 for Cape Town but it did not come. "We consequently took up our abode at a place called "Clarence Hotel" (later British Hotel) the only one of its kind. The houses in Simon's Town are mostly built of stone and white-washed with flat roofs. The inhabitants are principally the Dutch and the Hottentots. Here is a naval yard with storehouses etc. to supply the Queen's ships, and a beautiful building appropriated for the residence of the Admiral and his suite. Shops are few here and the place from its lonely position is very dear, no provisions are to be got in any quantity; the ships are supplied from Cape Town, from whence things are conveyed to this place by waggons drawn by horses and bullocks. Water is very plentiful here and exceedingly good; here the houses are supplied by pipes leading from the very many beautiful springs that flow from the mountain in every direction."

The carriage had been delayed due to a minor accident. They finally left on 12 June for Cape Town, setting out at 6 a.m. They noted that the first three or four miles of the road from Simon's Town was very bad and irregular but the rest was good and even. "We passed through a beautiful part of the country and saw many beautiful cottages, farms and woods, the scenery altogether was very ... and romantic."

"We were driven to the George's Hotel, a large and respectable place. Here we found our friend Col. Henderson, late Clothing Agent at Bombay. We remained three days at this place and were favoured with a call from John Warden, the Chief Magistrate of Bombay, and we were introduced to two merchants of some note, Mr. Burnie and Mr. Rutherford, from whom we received much kindness and attention."

Note* This first appeared in *Africana N & N*, Dec. 1958, Vol. 13 No. 4.

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ABC Building

British Hotel

No.88

Please see p.114-120 History of The Standard Bank

THE HISTORY OF THE STANDARD BANK, SIMON'S TOWN.

(Information made available by the Archives and Historical Services of the Standard Bank of South Africa, Johannesburg).

As early as 1885 the Bank was approached by Mr. R.B. Shaw to open a branch in Simon's Town. He even offered to provide the necessary premises for the bank. The town however, insufficiently developed to support a branch and Shaw's request was refused with the understanding that if the town's prospects improved, the Bank would reconsider.

At the request of the Imperial Government, a Mr. Shield, an engineer, spent a few months in mid-1897 at Simon's Town and drew up plans for the construction of a Naval Dock there at a cost of over £2,000,000 sterling. With the possibility of development in the area, the Standard Bank expected to be asked to open there if the scheme was implemented.

By October 1897 the British Government had indicated that it would construct the dock and the Bank received a deputation from Mr. W.J. Anderson and Mr. Runciman requesting them to open a branch at Simon's Town. "Our opening would no doubt be highly convenient to the authorities, who bank with us at Cape Town, but the volume of general business would be limited, and we could hardly expect the branch at the outset to pay expenses."

The Board of Directors approved of opening a branch at Simon's Town and on 30 October 1897, R.M. Cade of the Cape Town branch was sent to Simon's Town to acquire suitable temporary premises. Through William Runciman, for the South African Milling Company, Cade obtained a portion of a building in the Main Street (ABC Building) on a six month lease from 1 November 1897. For this accommodation the Bank paid £7.10.0d monthly. Having obtained the temporary premises, the new branch at Simon's Town was opened for business on 2 November 1897. The branch immediately started looking for permanent accommodation, but this was not easy: "the few eligible sites being strongly held, and fancy prices demanded." The first months of business proved disappointing. Because of Simon's Town's proximity to Cape Town residents were unwilling to pay any charges other than those prevailing in Cape Town. The branch also gained little from the naval presence as it derived no income from drafts passing through its hand - all Army Paymaster's drafts, including those of the Naval Squadron at Simon's Town, went into the hands of the Cape Government. Yet the branch supplied specie for the convenience of the local Naval authorities.

The Bank actively tried to persuade the Admiralty authorities to give it the refusal of their Navy Bills or bills to provide funds for dock construction. If this could be achieved, the branch would be able to pay its way. However, in the light of existing conditions, the branch remained in its temporary quarters to keep down expenses. Unless some sort of agreement could be reached, the Bank seriously considered closing the branch. The Accountant General of the Navy in England, whom the Bank had approached in this regard, agreed in November 1897 to

reconsider the banking arrangements at the Cape.

In December 1897 the official Naval accounts, formerly kept at Cape Town Branch, were transferred to Simon's Town Branch. The transfer was natural but in actual fact involved a loss to the Bank: "...the authorities now draw their large specie requirements at Simon's Town, the periodical transmission being at our risk and expense, the Naval Accountant declining to pay anything in connection therewith."

Under these circumstances the Bank hesitated in committing itself to lease any other premises than the ones already occupied, the lease of which was due to expire on 1 May 1898. "As no other business is offering, and no profits being earned, we recommend that the Agency be withdrawn on that date, unless in the interval the Admiralty will contract with us to give the Bank all the drafts drawn in connection with the larger squadron now kept in these waters....."

The Naval Storekeeper at Simon's Town, Mr. Baker, found the branch at the town convenient and was anxious that it be retained. He tried to induce the Treasury Chest Officer at Cape Town, who supplied the funds Baker needed, to suggest to the authorities to enter into a contract with the Bank in regard to Bills of Exchange. When this appeared not to bear any fruit Baker decided to approach the Admiralty direct.

By March 1898 no improvement in conditions was visible and the Manager at Simon's Town was experiencing difficulty in extending the lease of the temporary premises. The only alternative premises available were those offered to the Bank in November 1897 by Mr. A.L. Blackburn which he was willing to let the Bank have at a rental of £12 per month. The latter did not provide for a manager's residence and the branch could not afford the added expenditure.

The new British Hotel which was in the course of construction, was let to the Ohlsson's Cape Breweries Ltd at an annual rental of £800. While there was the possibility of shops attached to the hotel becoming available, there was no chance of occupation by the date the branch was to vacate its existing premises. The Bank, therefore requested permission from the Board of Directors to close the branch on 30 April 1898.

Although the Admiralty studiously avoided mention of the possibility of any dock construction at Simon's Town, the Bank's Board of Directors in London had good evidence that such a construction was being contemplated. They therefore felt that the branch should be given an extended trial period at least during the period that the works were under construction. There was also the added possibility that the dock building could lead to some permanent improvement in the business of the town and to the Naval and Military authorities' recognition of the convenience of the branch.

The General Manager in South Africa, who had already notified the Manager and the Naval Accountant at Simon's Town that the branch was to close on 31 May 1898, reluctantly agreed to abide

by the Directors' wishes in giving the branch a further trial. A temporary extension of the lease for the branch premises to 30 September 1898 was accordingly obtained from the landlords, the South African Milling Co. Ltd.

The branch therefore, continued to serve the needs of the local Naval Accountant. The Bank noticed that the Accountant withdrew large amounts of coin days before they were wanted and warned the authorities of the dangers inherent in doing so. Naval regulations however, demanded this course of action. At the end of June 1898 about £6,000 in coin was withdrawn from the branch by the Naval Accountant and placed in a small out-of-date Milner's safe in the Naval strongroom at the port, pending delivery to the paymasters, a few days later. Before this could be done a daring and nearly successful attempt to burgle the strongroom was made by a skilled Naval Artificer and a messenger. The burglary was detected through the vigilance of the police.

By August 1898 the continuation of the branch was again spotlighted. The lease on the temporary premises was to expire on 30 September and the building was to be demolished and reconstructed. The Manager at Simon's Town received confidential but reliable information that "the Admiralty have given instructions that the Naval Docks be commenced in April next (1899) and that the work would be intrusted (sic) to a large home firm of contractors." The Bank's landlords, the S.A. Milling Co. agreed to allow the Bank to remain in the premises to the end of October, but no later. Mr. Stephen and another director of the Company were to visit Simon's Town in September with an architect to decide on plans for the new building to be erected on the site. They were anxious to know the bank's decision whether it was going to remain open and if their new plans were to include banking facilities or not.

The Bank's Board of Directors resolved to continue the branch and the Manager was instructed to find temporary premises for the period in which the reconstruction of the building was to take place.

There were no buildings with accommodation to suit the branch to be had in the town in September. All the shops under the new British Hotel - one of which had been offered to the Bank and declined previously - were let. The Branch Manager hoped that it would not be necessary to move during the rebuilding: ".....we think that the adjoining shop might be first demolished, and rebuilt for our use, before the contractor pulled down our present office.... At the present time there is not a single shop or other suitable premises to let in Simon's Town, we must therefore, endeavour on Mr. Stephen to meet us in the above way."

In October 1898 a shop in the British Hotel building fell vacant. While an improvement on the existing office, the rental of £10 per month was regarded as high. The Bank, however, had little alternative as it was requested to vacate the existing office during reconstruction. Arrangements were made to house the branch in the British Hotel building temporarily for twelve

months from 1 November 1898 pending completion of the South African Milling Co's building next door.

The Bank had ascertained confidentially from the Naval Secretary that the plans for the construction of docks and other works had been prepared and sanctioned by the Admiralty. The continuation of the branch was, therefore, desirable. The works were estimated to cost £3m sterling and would take about 5 years to complete. By October 1898 the preliminary survey was almost complete and construction was to commence in about April 1899. In December the Cape Parliament authorised further defence works at Simon's Town and the construction of docks there by the English Admiralty.

The newly leased premises met the branch's requirements admirably and in April 1899 the lease was renewed for a further three years dating from 1 November 1899 to 31 October 1902: "The premises which are leased, are centrally situated in the township, and are well adapted to the Bank's present requirements at Simon's Town. The accountant sleeps in the office - a portion of which is partitioned off as a bedroom..."

In July 1899 the Bank's agreement with Government Treasury was renewed. Under this agreement the Lords of the Treasury acceded to the Bank's demand that compensation be made for the transfer of funds to Simon's Town, previously done solely at the Bank's expense.

For the first time, the future of the branch looked promising. The arrival of several engineers connected with a new breakwater and other works during 1900 boosted the branch's business almost daily.

Although the Standard was the only bank represented at Simon's Town, the Bank of Africa's head office in London managed to secure the account of the British contractors for the new docks, Sir John Jackson Ltd., in January 1901, on the understanding that it would open a branch at Simon's Town. At the beginning of February 1901 the Bank of Africa's Simon's Town branch opened for business.

The Standard Bank branch's prospects were sorely hit by the loss of the important account of the contracting firm. It remained, however, of great convenience to dockyard officials and naval officers as well as to the Cape Town branch. The possibility of closing in the face of the competition of the Bank of Africa was therefore rejected. As the branch was to remain open, the lease on the premises in the British Hotel in the main street, was renewed in 1902 for a further five years at an increased rental of £15 a month.

"The premises are situated in an excellent position in the main street, in the best part of the business portion of the town. They consist of one of two shops in the British Hotel buildings and are internally suitable for carrying on the Bank's business in the meantime. They are in good sanitary condition and repair. The front is practically secured by plate glass only. The entrance door, which has glass panels, has a double lock and

is protected in some degree by an iron gate, about 5 feet high on the outside. Two glazed windows high up, looking onto a side passage, are protected by iron bars." (now the home of Brad's Bread).

The total area occupied by the branch measured 40ft x 17ft. From 1903 the section formerly partitioned off as sleeping quarters was used as the Manager's room. In the absence of a strongroom the branch was supplied with a particularly strong Ratner safe, regarded as both fire and burglar proof and fitted with a drill-proof bullion coffer.

By mid-1903 there was a total number of 162 accounts open at the branch. The Bank of Africa's branch had about 35-40 accounts on its books, but apart from the account of Sir John Jackson Ltd, they were nearly all small cash accounts.

The agreement whereby the Naval Accountant at Simon's Town could draw cash there for his Treasury Chest, Cape Town, drafts, which expired on 13 July 1904 was renewed by mutual consent.

The strategic importance of Simon's Town to Britain was becoming more and more evident. In 1906 the Admiralty indicated that the East India Squadron may be added to the Cape Command with head quarters at Simon's Bay. On 15 November 1906 the foundation stone for the new Simon's Bay Dock was laid. With the possibility of the bulk of the Imperial forces in South Africa being concentrated in the Peninsula, it was important for the Bank to retain the Cape Colony account.

Despite attempts by the Bank of Africa to secure the Naval account, both the Naval Accountant and the Senior Naval Officer-in-charge remained adamant that they would continue to use the Standard Bank as "...their business relations with the Standard Bank had been mostly satisfactory....."

The Bank of Africa also failed in diverting other business in Simon's Town from the Standard. The latter's branch, while having shown a loss since its establishment, was gradually improving its position and by 1907 - 1908 the prospects for profit returns were good. In 1907 the Bank renewed the lease on the premises for a further five years. The lessor, A.L. Blackburn agreed to a reduced rental of £120 per annum.

As the Bank of Africa had been unable to secure sufficient business in Simon's Town other than that of Sir John Jackson Ltd, the contractors for the Selborne dock, it was forced to close its branch there in February 1909 when the dock was nearing completion. At the request of the Bank of Africa the Standard agreed to cash cheques at Simon's Town drawn by Sir John Jackson Ltd on the Bank of Africa's Cape Town branch and to pay out any deposit receipts which that bank may wish at Simon's Town. All the Bank of Africa's other customers at Simon's Town, 19 in all, opened accounts with the Standard, but little income was expected from them.

In December 1909 the branch's half-yearly return showed a profit for the first time since the branch was opened. After the completion of the dock works in 1910 however, there was a slump

in business generally in the town. Numerous houses fell vacant and the local shops and hotels were dependent on visiting sailors and the greatly reduced number of dock workers. The branch's profits also showed a downward tendency and from 1911 again ran at a loss. In June 1911 there were 175 current accounts on the books.

While the premises still provided sufficient accommodation for the branch, the layout was proving to be unsatisfactory. The partition between the Manager's room and the banking hall gave the Manager little or no privacy and it was also inconvenient working with the safes in the main office. As a result the Bank decided not to renew the lease which expired on 31 October 1912. On 1 November the branch moved to a shop in St George's Street adapted to the Bank's requirements which was rented from the Imperial Cold Storage and Supply Co. Ltd at £10 per month on a five year lease. This was known as De Beers Building, Erf 2, 88 St George's Street.

"The premises consisting of Banking Hall, Manager's room and on the first floor, one bedroom and a bathroom, are in the centre of the town, commodious, well appointed, and suitable for the Bank's requirements. The premises are rented from The Imperial Cold Storage and Supply Co. Ltd at a rental of £120 p.a. The lease runs for five years from 1 November 1912. The building is solidly built of stone and brick...."

In the town generally business was bad and the branch, too, suffered. It was only after the Bank drastically cut the cost of management in 1913 that the branch again started to pay its way.

After the outbreak of the 1st World War business conditions at Simon's Town showed a marked improvement. Increased activity as a result of visiting warships led to a brisker local trade and an increased demand for dwelling houses - to rent but not to purchase. As the only bank in the town, the branch provided a useful service. Its business was almost entirely a current account one during this period. By June 1918 there were 215 current accounts on the books. The value of the branch to the Standard Bank as a whole increased despite the fact that it again started running at a loss in 1916.

When the branch lease on its premises expired on 31 October 1917, the Bank had it extended for six months at an increased rental of £150 per annum. The rental was much too high for the accommodation afforded as it did not include a strongroom or Manager's residential quarters, but as there was no other suitable building to be had, the Bank was forced to accept.

At the beginning of 1918 the Bank purchased a central freehold property higher up in the Main Street (corner of Rectory Lane) from St Frances Church, for £550, with a view to building its own premises. The property 48 ft x 140 ft in extent and close to the Municipal offices, included a small somewhat dilapidated house which brought in a rental of £36 per annum. To allow sufficient time for preparing plans and erecting a new building, the lease on the premises already occupied by the branch was

renewed until 31 October 1920.

After the close of the war the cost of building skyrocketed and it was considered advisable to delay the erection of premises. In 1920 the Bank's landlords at Simon's Town, the Imperial Cold Storage and Supply Co.Ltd. offered to sell the branch's existing premises to the Bank: "After somewhat protracted negotiations we agreed to pay £2,250 for the property, which is freehold, and centrally situated in the main street (no.88 St George's Street) The building is substantial, being of stone and brick, and will afford ample accommodation for the Branch, consisting of a Banking hall and Manager's room on the ground floor, and a Bedroom and Bathroom upstairs for a resident officer. Having now acquired suitable premises, at a much smaller expenditure than would have been incurred in building, there is no necessity for the retention of the site purchased in March 1918 and we have sold it for £650, the profit, less expenses, going in reduction of the cost of our new premises."

Note: This article will be completed in the next edition of the Bulletin.

No. 88 St George's Street now houses "The Jolly Roger".

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HORATIO STANNARD - STANNARD'S CAFE

Robert Johnston.

Older residents should remember Stannard's Cafe, situated about 35 years ago opposite the West Dockyard gates in the ABC Building.

Horatio Stannard was an Englishman who may have had wartime connections with the town. He specialised in delicious meat pies, dripping with gravy, which were made above the shop by a staff of smartly turned out girls.

Although my wife and I lived in the city, a favourite outing was to picnic at totally undeveloped Miller's Point. A phone call to Mr. Stannard ensured that freshly-baked pies were always ready for us as we passed through the town. My wife's car was a 1936 Chevrolet coupe, the sort with a dickey seat (remember them?) and a shelf at the back of the seat. We placed our parcel of pies on this shelf, not bothering to wind up the window which was usual in those days. Returning from a stroll we found our lunch was gone. I was very annoyed but my wife said "the hand that reached in probably needed them more than you did" !

Stannard was a hobby painter and I noted that the cafe was hung with pictures of St Helena - oils. His enthusiastic reports of the island inspired us to go there for one of the best holidays ever.

I recall that Mr. Stannard contracted cancer and died at a too-early age. He was better known as Ray Stannard.