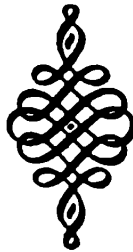




SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN



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JULY 1997

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1996

Welcome to the 37th Annual General Meeting of the Simon's Town Historical Society (held at Simon's Town Museum on Thursday 20th March, 1997).

GENERAL:

The most traumatic event of the year was the dissolution of the Simon's Town Municipality in May 1996; the last Council meeting was held on the 21st and the closing ceremony on Jubilee Square on the 24th. At this last-ever function the municipal regalia was handed over to this Society for safekeeping and nearly all present at this moving time treated the evening with due solemnity. 113 years of self-rule came to an end; gone, alas, like Kalk Bay, Wynberg and Rondebosch in the years past. Although we now fall into a municipal gathering called (boringly) South Peninsula, which might be anywhere with a shoreline, rest assured that the Society, the Museum, the station and the post office will still be "Simon's Town", as well as the Dockyard, of course.

We welcome the foundation this year of the Naval Heritage Society; Admiral H.H. Biermann, who is President of our Society, has agreed to be President of this one as well, so he has his feet in both camps, so to speak. We wish the Society every success in preserving maritime history, but close co-operation will be needed to avoid duplication of research and effort. There is room for both of us.

ACTIVITIES:

As in the past our activities have followed along previously successful lines, there being six main headings: Bulletin, Chronicle, Tours, Walks, Plaques and Projects.

BULLETIN: This remains our major production and is, I am sure, one reason why people with a serious interest in local history join our Society. It is almost entirely due to Audrey Read's enthusiasm and hard work that the high standard of material continues. We are always looking for ways to improve the standard of production without increasing costs or having to seek page sponsorship, something that so many sister organisations have been forced to do to stay in business. With spiralling postal charges we now rely on hand-delivery to local members, and here a tribute is due to all those volunteer postmen who do this work, not least of which are Sue Kinkad-Weekes, Helen Mathers, Monica Thorne and John Hale who manage the distribution. You will be pleased to hear that your Committee has decided to continue with the bi-annual production and not to cut to once a year.

CHRONICLE: this continues to be a good way to keep members informed about our activities, giving a chatty commentary about tours, lectures, new acquisitions and new members.

TOURS: these continue to be well patronised, sometimes so-much-so that we have been forced to repeat them or put on extra buses. Our two-day tour this year was to Montagu, staying at Avalon Springs and dining at a local farmhouse, followed the

next morning by a tractor-trailer trip up the Langeberge - who will ever forget that experience? The first of our one-day tours was to Groote Schuur Estate/The Castle/Bertram House, while the second tour took us to a sheepdog training farm outside Villiersdorp and then to a wild flower exhibition in the Town.

Members on these tours kindly answered a questionnaire as to their choice of future destinations (Cederberg and Hermanus), their willingness to pay extra for an air-conditioned coach (No), willingness to pay a single supplement charge for overnight accommodation (yes). We listened to your gripes about sitting three to a row of seats and now only put 44 on a 66 seater, although it puts up the seat cost element by 50%.

Although this is a report-back on last years activities I think I might be permitted to tell you that this years long tour might be two nights in the Cederberg, while the one-day tour might be to Robben Island. My plans for an extended tour to Kimberley remain on the back burner, alas.

WALKS: Audrey Read has continued to do sterling work, taking walking tours along the Historic Mile, defying traffic and weather in this fund-raising activity. In this she has been assisted by Bobby Wise and Shirley Jackson.

PLAQUES: On Heritage Day we unveiled three plaques mounted on the West Dockyard wall opposite the British Hotel Building. These were to Horatio Nelson, Edgar Wallace and to the Confederate Raider, the "ALABAMA". When setting out the text for this last one we accepted the general tale that "Daar Kom die Alabama" referred to the raider, but there is another theory that the Alabama of the song was a coastal ship that carried thatching grass: we shall keep you posted of developments. One further plaque erected was in Thomas Street, on the house where Imam Baker finished the first translation of the Koran into Afrikaans.

PROJECTS AND RESEARCH: the listing and classification of all buildings over 50 years old continues; the photography is virtually complete, while we have made progress cross-referencing with older photographs in the museum albums. Research into the Elsie's River watermill has got a bit bogged down and no results were achieved: we must do better this year. Future research projects might include pressed-tin ceilings (there are still some about), fancy plaster cornices and cast-iron pillars and railings. Under this heading can be mentioned that in November we marked the bicentenary of the Martello Tower (the oldest one extant in the World) with a little celebration involving a brief historical review, a flag-lowering drill by naval cadets, followed by refreshments.

Booklet: I mentioned in my report last year that a book containing a potted history of the town was clearly in demand. You will be pleased to learn that great progress has been made. Our 34 original subject headings has now grown to 39, of which 23 have been completed in draft form. Thoughts at this stage are to print it in the same format as the Bulletin, though with

approximately 60 pages. We shall need a suitable title and any suggestions you may have will be welcomed. This is a Major Task for 1997. (At the March committee meeting the Committee were unanimous that it should be called "Our Simon's Town").

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION:

This is something that is attracting an ever-larger following in this country at a non-governmental level, in other words driven along by societies such as ours. This might be as a result of the uncertainty surrounding the continued existence of august bodies such as the National Monuments Council, whose interests are perceived to have been focused on the preservation of "settler" structures and therefore unrepresentative of the wider history of the country. Insofar as Simon's Town is concerned, it is with great satisfaction that one can report that the work of the Architectural Advisory Committee continues despite the demise of the Simon's Town Municipality. Quite the largest matter to be resolved this last year was the redevelopment of the Post Office building. Investec's initial assays were quite spectacular but completely out of keeping with the surrounding architecture. The plan finally accepted will not please everybody but should be more acceptable than the colossus that has blighted our main street for nearly 30 years.

I think that you will agree that the rest of the Historic Mile has never looked so spick and span. Paul Coetzee is to be applauded for replacing the cast-iron columns in front of the Central Hotel building (even if they are high-tec synthetic material) and reworking the first floor into good accommodation. The Prince Alfred is much improved, while the PWD has spent over half a million Rands in renovating the old Dockyard Policemens' flats next to Cliffords and Ordnance House in Soldiers Way. The Dockyard Works Branch have recently been busy repainting the front of the Old Africa Station Club and the buildings down to the Church Centre. This year the Cape Town City Council Electricity Dept revamped the whole upper floor of their transformer substation on Jubilee Square and this is now occupied by the Simon's Town Publicity Bureau. It's all looking good. We cannot take credit for this work directly, though hopefully we do succeed in reminding owners of their responsibility in preserving their heritage.

I must also report the return by the State to the Amlay family of their property in Cole Point. Perhaps something can now be done with the derelict buildings down Black's Lane, our last remaining eyesore.

The future of the Stempastorie remains uncertain: it is rumoured that the community might buy it back as a residence for the Dominee. This year's failure is the inability of any authority to ensure that the building work erected on the Garland House site in Seaforth conforms to the approved plans: is this a harbinger of the new order?

MEMBERSHIP:

At the end of last year our nominal membership had risen to over 800, but when the non-payers had been subtracted we were back to

750, about the same as last year. More than the normal number of our very elderly members died: it was a cruel year in that respect. A sincere welcome to all our new members, we trust that you will enjoy the various functions.

FINANCE:

The Treasurer will be presenting her report shortly. The figures show a higher surplus than last year, but once you move over the Mary Kingsley function refund to the year previous you will see that we are slightly down on last year, but still in the black, helped there by your kind donations. A big vote of thanks to Eric Fry, who has audited our books these many years.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

These remain at the extraordinary low figure of R15 single and R20 per couple and extend through to this current year, though with everything we need going up in price this may well be the last year at these rates.

MUSEUM FUNDING:

This has been of particular importance this year in view of the threatened withdrawal of Provincial monies. A third of your subs go to the Museum. As this did not appear to be enough to keep the Museum open the Curator made a direct appeal to the Friends of the Museum (which is you) and I must thank you for your most generous response: more than R10,000 was donated. A magnificent gesture and one which confirms your appreciation of the importance of keeping the Museum up and running.

100 CLUB:

Audrey continues to run this and there have been many very happy winners! R2,000 was raised for the Museum Development Fund.

VOLUNTEERS:

Again we have been very fortunate at the number of members who offer their services for all sorts of activities, mainly in and around the Museum. You will find more details of their activities in the Museum Report.

COMMITTEE:

I would like to place on record my thanks to all those Committee members that you voted in last year. Terry Korsten, my Vice, has been sadly missing these last six months while he was called away to provide management assistance at a printing house. Dennis Kinhead-Weekes as Secretary has continued as the backbone of the Society and when not keeping track of membership subs and numbers in cataloging pics and negatives. Monica Thorne, your Treasurer, broke all records this year and had the books balanced and in the hands of the Auditor by mid-February. Margaret Cartwright, now fully retired, has been able to spend even more time on researching the Glencairn history. Audrey Read has managed to fit in all her committee work between flitting off to the far corners of the World; an impulsive traveller!

Nicki Holderness, as Ward Councillor, has had her hands full with council work and although she has had to miss several of our committee meetings we look forward to her report-backs

whenever she has been able to spare the time. Hang in there Nicki and when you have had enough come and be the Society's first Chairwoman.

Thanks to Peter van Blommestein who has continued to be our ears and eyes at the many environmental committee meetings that take place locally. Alien vegetation, penguins, parking problems; the themes seem to repeat year on year.

Our two nominated members, Cherry Dilley for the Museum and Commander "Mac" Bisset for the SAN, have provided superlative co-ordination, input and back-up and have therefore been key players: thank you.

RECOGNITION:

We were very honoured to be the recipient of one of the four Cape Times Centenary Awards presented this year. In all modesty it must be realised that this was not awarded for last year's work, but for all the work that has been put in over the last 35 years by members, volunteers (much the same thing) and by "Dumps", "Chappy", "Brock", "Cabby" Gay, Gordon, Gerry and many others. May it encourage us to keep our hand to the plough and to make this the very best historical society in Southern Africa.

Thank you for your support.

N.K. Farquharson. Chairman
11 March 1997.

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LADY BRENTON AND DOCTOR BARRY

Seaforth Series Part IV - A.M.D.

Born in Annapolis Maryland, a few years before the outbreak of the American War of Independence, Isabella Stewart was a British North American. The emergence of an independent United States led to a diaspora of loyalists who then mostly settled in Canada or England. In 1800 in the midst of the Napoleonic struggle, Isabella was married to Lieutenant Jahleel Brenton R.N. He too was a British North American, born on Rhode Island in 1770 of a colonial family long-established there.

After an adventurous career at sea Jahleel Brenton was assigned shore duties because of a shattered hip bone resulting in lameness. In 1815 Rear-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton became Resident Commissioner at Simon's Town and in the ensuing six years was the driving force behind the development of the naval dockyard and its ancillary services. Isabella had accompanied him, but two small sons remained in England for their schooling. Before the move Lady Brenton had a troublesome cough. It worsened at the Cape and she seemed to be "wasting away" and was obviously consumptive.

Much store was then set by change of air and for a time Isabella Brenton was a guest of Mr. Colyn at "Hoop op Constantia" and also stayed at Wynberg, but there was little relief.

On 14 June 1817, the celebrated Dr James Barry was called to her bedside. This young army surgeon was already recognised as talented and in the same year, aged 22, became medical attendant to the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset and his family.

Jahleel Brenton's biographer wrote later: "This extraordinary young man at the age of fourteen had undergone a most rigid examination before the College of Physicians, and had, by the correctness of his answers, and the extent of his abilities, extorted from them his diploma, with which had had practised with the most extraordinary success".

Whether Barry was male, female or hermaphrodite has intrigued many writers but it is immaterial to his undoubted medical prowess. He immediately diagnosed Isabella's condition as "very alarming" and soon after as "hopeless". She died on 29 July 1817, aged 46, and was interred in the Old Burying Ground, Seaforth. Her tomb is surmounted by a marble slab which carries the inscription:

"She was to her beloved husband

The richest treasure of indulgent heaven."

This handsome tribute ranks with that of Sir Rufane Donkin to his young wife Elizabeth - "the most perfect of human beings" - to whom Port Elizabeth owes its name. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Jahleel Brenton's deep feelings. Henry Raikes, a clergyman, produced an elaborate memoir of Brenton's life in 1846. In the British Dictionary of National Biography this book is described caustically as "a ponderous work, smothered in a confused mass of religious meditation". However, it tells us much about Brenton's fond attachment to "that greatest of earthly blessings, a virtuous and affectionate wife..." She had kept notes and memoranda which he arranged after her death so as to be able to portray her character to their children in England. To compound his grief news came that their eldest son, Jervis, aged 16, at Winchester School, had died of a sudden fever a month after his mother's demise. He too had been destined for the Royal Navy.

When Napoleon Bonaparte's life in exile ended, the Cape naval establishment was reduced, so Brenton was withdrawn from Simon's Town in 1821. He was a singular character - a tough sea-dog and yet pious to a fault, a gifted artist (see E.A. Biggs Artists in Simon's Town Bulletin Vol. XVI No. 4, 1991, p.128), a conscientious administrator and a philanthropist who was a close friend of the missionary Dr John Philip.

One of his philanthropic gestures was the temporary adoption of a young San (Bushman). Dr James Barry had "bought" the lad so as to rescue him from a harsh mistress and imprisonment and entrusted him to Brenton's care. The boy named Hermes, was quick and intelligent and a general favourite in the Commissioner's household. Sir Jahleel took him back to England as he hoped that eventually "this child of the wilderness" would be a messenger of peace and mercy to "his persecuted and benighted countrymen". Apparently Hermes did return but obtained "a respectable situation" at the Cape and yet remained grateful to his benefactor.

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STANDARD BANK OF SOUTH AFRICA, SIMON'S TOWN BRANCH

PART II

(From information supplied by their Archives Department)

"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." (This was the site at the corner of Rectory Lane, to-day occupied by Kalidas - Ed).

Throughout the 1920's the branch still ran at a loss. In mid-1923 there were 250 current and 118 savings bank accounts open. Prospects for improving the resources were poor. Any improvements depended almost entirely on the Navy's policy with regard to dockyard extensions. By 1929 the number of accounts at the branch had increased to 308 current and 171 savings bank, but as the district provided very little advance business, the annual returns still showed a loss.

During 1925 - 1928 the branch premises were altered and repaired. Inter alia a strongroom was built in 1925 which provided for one of the four safes being spared for use elsewhere. During the winter of 1930 the branch reported serious leakages in the roof. On examination it was found that the tiles with which the premises were covered were badly weathered and the entire roof was replaced at a cost of £159.

"As the verandah was also in need of attention it was considered advisable to reconstruct it and at the same time remodel the frontage of the building, at present consisting of large plate-glass shop windows, which greatly detract from the appearance of the premises as a Bank. The necessary plans have been prepared, which also provide for the removal of the inside walls of a room at the back of the office, thus affording much needed additional space, and a tender for the carrying out of these alterations for the sum of £445 has been accepted". This was in December 1930.

During the alterations the branch moved to temporary premises. By May 1931 the reconstruction was completed: "The premises, which consist of a one storey building of stone under a tiled roof, are conveniently and centrally situated in the main business thoroughfare.... they have been extensively altered at a cost of £629; are in very good repair, and present a very good appearance. They are sanitary, airy, and well lighted and are well suited to our requirements. A teak bench, to harmonise with the fittings, is required for the banking hall....safe and strong-room accommodation is ample....". This is to-day the building which houses the "Jolly Roger".

"The accommodation consists of the Public Office, Manager's room, strongroom, store room, spare room, and officer's bedroom and bathroom upstairs. There is ample space for all likely requirements of the Branch.....and a feature which seems worthy

of special mention is the clean and tidy appearance of the office."

The early 1930's saw the whole country in the grip of a depression. Despite a reduction in the number of accounts at the branch there was a reasonable improvement in the branch's annual returns, although it was still showing a loss. The number of accounts, which in 1932 totalled 275 current current and 207 savings bank accounts, dropped to 263 and 189 respectively in 1933.

The branch, still the only bank represented at Simon's Town, acted as the local bankers to the naval authorities who received funds through the Reserve Bank. The bulk of the official business was transacted free of charge but some collateral business, including the purchase of sterling exchange, accrued from officers and others. The books of the Bank showed a turnover of approximately £20,000 per month on the accounts connected with the running expenses of the Naval Base. Only a small proportion of the resultant trade came to the town, however, and Simon's Town itself showed little benefit.

Throughout the 1930's the branch's situation remained unchanged. Business was mainly confined to transactions with the naval authorities and personnel, outside of which there was little scope of expanding or placing the branch on a payable footing.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 led to increased activity at Simon's Town. Officers and ratings were called up for active service and accommodation soon became overtaxed. Temporary buildings had to be erected in the dockyard to house workers. The wages drawn by the Naval Cashier increased from £2,000 per week before the war to £6,000 by September 1939 and £9,000 by December 1940.

Although the volume of business handled by the branch also increased, much of it was unremunerative and the returns showed little improvement. By September 1943 the number of accounts on the books had grown to 460 current and 262 savings bank accounts. The most important account was still that of "The Cashier, His Majesty's Dockyard" which had a turnover of more than £10m that year and for which the branch had to keep a large cash reserve. The weekly wages averaging £20,000 were paid in cash to dockyard workers and large amounts of cash were also frequently drawn at short notice to meet the urgent requirements of the personnel of visiting ships.

Because of the increased activity at the branch, the number of staff and therefore the expense of running the branch, also increased. The annual returns still showed a loss, but the branch's estimated value to the Bank as a whole rose appreciably.

At the end of hostilities the number of workers at the dockyard dropped and by December 1945 the weekly payroll had dropped from a war-time average of £22,000 to £15,000.

In 1948 the branch's Manager received notice to vacate the residence he and his family occupied. No other suitable

accommodation was available for renting. As his position as Manager placed social obligations on him not present in other branches of the same size, in dealing with naval personnel, the Bank sanctioned the acquisition of a Manager's residence at Simon's Town.

During the 1960's the branch was still the only bank in Simon's Town. Its business connection remained similar to what it had been since its opening. The volume of work increased as the South African Navy expanded at Simon's Town. (The Royal Navy had handed over the base to the South African Government in April 1957.) The trade in town however, derived little benefit from the expansion as most of the naval personnel and dockyard workers resided outside of Simon's Town and therefore spent a large portion of their earnings elsewhere to the detriment of local tradesmen. The situation was aggravated by the changeover from weekly to monthly pay of dock workers in the early 1960's. The branch's chances of increasing the non-naval business connection were thus limited. The increased volume of work nevertheless led to an increased staff complement and the realization that the premises were too small.

The staff during this period numbered:

1960/61	1962	1963	1964	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
m f	m f	m f	m f	m f	m f	m f	m f	m f
4 4	5 4	6 3	8 3	8 5	6 7	6 7	5 8	6 8

The number of accounts open at the branch indicated the success of the Bank's campaign to promote its savings bank section:

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Current	513	517	547	593	612	584	576	543	556	575
Savings	467	499	573	699	801	1195	1308	1385	1492	1619
Fixed	15	13	31	29	25	41	65	94	85	127

During the 1960s the Standard's Simon's Town branch premises on Erf No.2, at 88 St George's Street, Simon's Town (now occupied by the "Jolly Roger") became inadequate for the needs of the branch. The public space was narrow and was very congested during busy periods. The manager's office was also small and the working area was very cramped. The strongroom was inadequate and the toilet facilities were unsatisfactory. In addition, there was persistent dampness in the floor of the banking hall for which no remedy could be found.

Various alternative solutions were considered. The building could, however, not be extended due to the limitations of the site on which it stood. Extensions at the back of the building would be too costly as there was a very steep embankment from about midway to the rear of the site. Vertical expansion by providing an upper floor was also not expected to provide satisfactory integrated accommodation owing to the restricted space available at ground level. The bank made enquiries about the availability of the vacant portion of the next door property, which would allow for lateral extension, but the owner was only willing to sell at the exorbitant price of R60,000.

As Simon's Town was expanding as a result of the augmented Defence installation and expected residential development, there

was sufficient justification for the branch to acquire completely new premises. In October 1969 Lot D, at 98 and 100 St George's Street (opposite the Post Office) came onto the market at R35,000. The property was situated about 100 yards from the existing branch premises, nearer to the central business area. The site measured 6,047 Cape square feet and had a frontage of 45 feet and a depth (on level ground) of about 70 feet. There was a relatively old double-storey building on the property which comprised two shops at ground level, one of which was occupied by the owner and the other let on a short term basis as a dairy. The upper floor consisted of a leased flat. With a view to developing the property to provide improved premises for Simon's Town branch, the bank purchased Lot D for R35,000 at the beginning of November 1966. As the site was one of the best in Simon's Town the purchase price was regarded as good.

Although the bank had hoped to be able to alter the building on the new site to meet its needs, it soon became apparent that this alternative was not feasible. The structural condition of the external wall was found to be poor and there was doubt as to whether it was possible to install the proposed additional windows etc. On opening up the flooring it became evident that there was an appreciable amount of dampness which had not been treated properly and would result in recurring expenditure on floor replacement. Generally the flooring, ceiling and plaster-work appeared to have served their economic life and required considerable restoration.

Under these circumstances the bank's architects Messrs Black and Fagg, recommended that the whole structure be demolished and new bank premises be erected. Such a course, they felt, would be more economical in the long run. The rebuilding scheme was expected to cost about R70,000.

When it purchased the new site, the bank had hoped to be able to put its old premises on Erf No.2 at 88 St George's Street up for auction subject to a reserve price of R25,000 and subject to the bank remaining in occupation until its new premises could be occupied. Due to the change of plans with regard to the new premises and the necessary delays resulting therefrom, nothing in this regard was, however, done.

The preliminary plans for the new building were completed in mid 1972. As a result of escalating building costs and the difficulties of construction on the restricted site, the new premises were now expected to cost substantially more than originally estimated. As the branch's existing accommodation was very inadequate and in poor condition by this time, the need for new premises was becoming urgent. The additional expenditure therefore had to be borne and tenders were duly called for. In March 1973 the tender of R72,395 submitted by van Groenou and Bongers for the erection of the new bank premises in Simon's Town was accepted.

The new Simon's Town branch premises were due to be ready for occupation early in May 1974. When the building was nearing completion consideration had to be given to disposing of the old

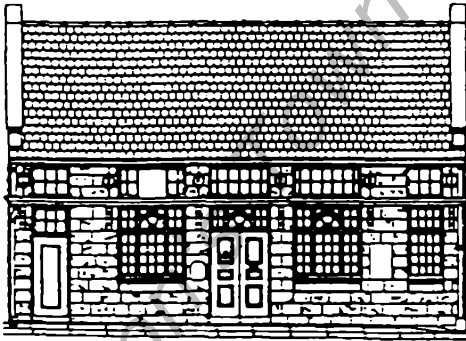
Property which had been purchased in 1921 (No.88). The old site measured 2,903 cape square feet and was triangular in shape. With a street frontage of 38 feet, the erf was well situated in the main business area of the town. The site sloped steeply towards the rear and the level portion only measured about 1700 cape square feet. The building on the stand was about 80 years old and had been altered extensively in 1930. It consisted of a ground floor banking hall (about 1100 sq.ft in size) including the strong room, and a section of upper floor space of about 470 sq. ft.

The bank received an offer of R26,000 for the property, including the strong room door, through an agent (Kilber Estates) in April 1974. Although it was possible that the Naval Authorities would be interested in acquiring the property, no other firm offers were received. Consequently, the bank decided to accept the Kilber Estates offer.

On 26 March 1994 the Simon's Town branch, still situated at 100 St George's Street, was converted to an agency to Fish Hoek branch. The agency, however, was to maintain normal banking hours. This change occurred largely to the reduction of numbers of personnel in the dockyard and navy a few years previously and also to the introduction of automatic teller machines etc.

Note: The Society is grateful to Ms. B. Conradie, Manager, Archives and Historical Services, Standard Bank, Johannesburg, for her co-operation in compiling this history.

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Left: De Beers Bldg. No. 88
St George's Street - home
of The Standard Bank from
1/11/1912 to 31/5/1974

Right: The building at No.98-100
St George's Street which
the bank bought in November
1966. They redeveloped the
site having been forced to
demolish this old building.



SIMON'S TOWN BRANCH STANDARD BANK

MANAGERS 1897 - 1992

1897	Nov	CADE Ralph Michell (Acting)
1898	Nov	CADE Ralph Michell
1909	Mar	MACKENZIE John George
1911	Feb	BORLASE Henry Herbert
1912	Sep	JOHNSON Horatio Henry (Accountant in Charge)
1915	Aug	KIRKLAND Charles Henry (" ")
1917	Jul	KIRKLAND Charles Henry
1925	Apr	MACNAIR Donald
1925	Jul	ISEMONGER Robert Benson
1940	Apr	ANDREWS Arthur Edward
1947	Sep	McKAY Albert Frederick
1955	Mar	TITHERADGE Eric George
1957	Apr	KRIEGLER Johannes Andries
1963	Jul	HOCHFELDEN John Stephan (Acting)
1964	Jan	DANIELL G.K.
1973	Jul	COLDREY B.F.
1978	May	GELDENHUYS Morris
1988	Sep	RETIEF F.J.
1991	Apr	O'RIORDAN L.
1992	May	McCLUSKEY R.F.

(Simon's Town branch downgraded to agency status in March 1994)

The above was compiled by the Standard Bank archives.

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SEEDIE.

This was a term used to describe some of the East African (Tanzanian) men who like Kroomen were engaged for service on British Naval ships. A correspondent from Duke University in United States who is working on Kroomen and Seedies thinks that the word "Seedie" is an Indian word (actually "Siddi") denoting men working on ships and in ports, who had entered the Indian Ocean from the Swahili coast. There are 7 headstones in the Muslim section of Dido Valley cemetery and they certainly have Swahili names.

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ADMIRAL STIRLING Commander-in-Chief, Simon's Town 1807-1810

Not all Admirals came directly to the Cape on appointment! Admiral Stirling, in command of a convoy of warships, transports and victuallers sailed from Cawsand Bay, England on 28 August 1806 to take over command of the Squadron in the River Plate, in South America. His fleet was SAMPSON (64 guns), STAUNCH (GUN BRIG), PREVOYANTE (storeship), 2 Indiamen, 4 victuallers and 2 whalers going to the Southern whale fishery.

Much sickness occurred amongst the crew of the SAMPSON. Sixty-four men were ill - fifteen unfit for duty. "Most scratches" Stirling noted in his record of the voyage "turn to ulcers - this led to three men having legs amputated. In order to get more fresh water and to learn what was happening in Buenos Aires, he put in to Rio de Janeiro on 13 November 1806.

The Portuguese, however, were nervous of a visit of this nature - it was the time of the Napoleonic wars. It was decided that Stirling and the Portuguese Viceroy of Brazil should meet. Stirling was en route to the Cape and on board with him was General Grey who was coming to the Cape as Governor (together with his suite). They went together to a soiree at the Viceregal Palace in Rio. They then found that the Viceroy had even laid on at short notice a performance at the Rio Opera House but it was not said which opera was presented.

Britain had since 1792 been interested in Rio as a naval base and this had been encouraged by the report of John Barrow, 2nd Secretary at the Admiralty. About 1802 Donald Campbell, an Englishman who was an Admiral in the Portuguese Navy wrote to the British cabinet extolling the virtues of Rio as a port and saying that Britain must prevent it from falling into French hands.

Among the passengers on the SAMPSON was a man named Clarke who was en route to the Cape to be Master Shipwright. We think he took over from our famous John Osmond, one-time owner of Palace Barracks. Stirling sent Clarke ashore in Rio to do a bit of spying and to look at the dockyard while Stirling looked at the defences.

Stirling was Commander-in-Chief at the Cape till 1810 and readers should see Vol XVI No. 2 p.74 for more details of his service in the Royal Navy.

In 1807 the French invaded Portugal and a British Fleet under Sir Sidney Smith collected the Portuguese Royal Family from Lisbon and took them to safety in Rio. The French pushed Brazil into the British alliance and Rio became a friendly port for British ships.

Stirling, Campbell and Barrow all made reports to the British Government and those of Stirling and Campbell can be found at the Public Record Office at Kew, England. John Barrow's report appeared as "A Voyage to Cochin China in 1792 and 1793" published in London in the early 1800s.

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THE CONVICT SHIP NEPTUNE

DR D. NEWBY

INTRODUCTION AND SOURCES:

My interest in the Neptune was kindled in rather an oblique way. Whilst living in Grahamstown I was told an odd, vague story about one of the late inhabitants. This had no obvious connection with the NEPTUNE but on retiring to Cape Town there was the opportunity to verify the facts in the archives and elsewhere.

A surprising and fascinating picture of this man emerged. He was Sir George Cory who whilst working for Siemens assisted in installing the first electric lights in London in 1885 in the Savoy. Ten years later he painted all four faces of the Cathedral in Grahamstown as the bishop could not find anybody to do so.

He acquired the degrees of M.A. and D.Litt at Cambridge - an amazing achievement considering that he had been born in a work (or poor)house. He arrived in Grahamstown in about 1892 to take up the post of vice principal of what is now Graeme College. He then lectured in chemistry and physics at St Andrews College. When Rhodes University was established he became the first professor of chemistry but like a more recent incumbent of that post - Prof. J.L.B. Smith of coelacanth fame - he was better known in another field. He was an historian. He was knighted for other achievements in 1922 but that is another story.

More pertinently he wrote six volumes "The Rise of South Africa". The fifth volume contains the most detailed account of the NEPTUNE episode that has been written from a South African point of view. I have drawn from this extensively.

My first direct link with the NEPTUNE was 44 years ago when with my wife and her late father Dr Luiz Edmund Miller I visited "The Firs" in Queens Road, Simon's Town. This was his old family home. In what had been his father's office we found some ledgers and a cash-book covering the months in 1849 and 1850 that the NEPTUNE was in Simon's Town. These books dated back to a ship's chandling business Wm Anderson and son. This business was acquired by William Runciman. Luiz Miller later became a partner and eventually owned the business. Then came a gift of a copy of "The Fatal Shore" by Robert Hughes (1987). This is the definitive history of the transportation of convicts to Australia by Britain. There is a copy in the Simon's Town library. Hughes does not make any mention of this NEPTUNE but reading this book makes one realise that to understand the facts pertaining to her visit to the Cape a review of the British penal system is desirable.

The amazing coincidence of the lucky meeting with Louis Hablutzel Posthumus has provided much information and a pooling of previously unknown facts. He visited South Africa in 1995 and 1996 to research the Hablutzels and other of his forebears. In his youth he was intrigued by their names on headstones in

the Seaforth cemetery and also those of two or three persons from the NEPTUNE. He attended a school in Simon's Town and later taught at the same school. He emigrated to Australia 37 years ago. There he is able to research the NEPTUNE in the archives in Hobart and Sydney.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEPTUNE'S VISIT TO SIMON'S TOWN

Of the approximate 160,000 men and women convicts transported from Britain to Australia between 1787 and 1868 just less than 300 were on the NEPTUNE. That represents about 0,0019%, so it was a veritable "storm in a teacup". It nevertheless caused turbulence over the whole Cape Colony for many months because of the disparate misapprehensions arising out of the conditions and attitudes prevailing at that stage in our and Britain's history.

THE BRITISH PENAL SYSTEM

Before 1500 there was little crime in Britain. It increased with the rise in population and industrialisation which culminated in the Industrial Revolution. Earliest surveys show that the population of England and Wales remained constant at 6 million between 1700 and 1740. Then it started to rise quickly. Between 1801 and 1841 it nearly doubled from 10,1 to 18,1 million. The migration of so many of the rural inhabitants to London caused this city's population to soar spectacularly. Unemployment and crime were the inevitable result.

Britain had few jails - Newgate was the most notorious. Half the jails were privately owned, oddly enough by the aristocracy and the ecclesiastics. The Dukes of Portland and Leeds owned jails as did the Bishops of Ely and Durham. These privately owned jails were sublet to unscrupulous landlords who ran them for profit. This led to unbelievably inhuman practices.

Britain saw no need for building more jails as for many years she could rely on the transportation of convicts and prisoners of war to her then existing colonies. A few went to Malta and Bermuda but the bulk went to cotton plantations of the American South or the sugar plantations in the West Indies. This manoeuvre supplied free labour akin to slavery. From 1618 for sixty years 40,000 convicts were disposed of in this manner. By contrast 47,000 slaves were arriving annually in America by the eve of the War of Independence! There was little responsibility attached to the treatment of black slaves so that trade in them turned white convict labour into an economic irrelevance.

THE HULKS

Nowadays steel ships have considerable value in the breaker's yards at the end of their lives. In those days nobody wanted the worm-eaten hulls of the sailing ships, especially the men-of-war. Consequently there were a great number of these hulks moored in the estuaries and harbours such as Deptford, Plymouth and the Thames. These provided convenient accommodation for an overflow from the jails and for those awaiting transportation.

CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM

After attaining their independence America refused to take any more convicts. British jails began to overflow and so did the hulks. George III fondly imagined that Britain would win that war, so no efforts were made to build more jails. By 1776 overcrowding reached crisis proportions. There was now no time to plan more jails. Further transportation was needed - but where to? The Crown chose the least imaginative spot on earth. It was Australia, their new, vast, lonely possession. It was by all accounts a useless continent whose eastern coast had been charted by Captain Cook in 1770.

THE DISCOVERY OF AUSTRALIA

Many people are puzzled by the fact that Australia was discovered at such a late date. Others wonder why the convicts were sent to those two particular destinations - Botany Bay and Van Diemen's Land. The answers lie in the inaccuracy of the navigational instruments in use at the time. Chronometers did not exist. The presence of this continent "the South Land" was suspected but the early explorers always missed it. The early Spanish and Portuguese coming from the West missed to the North. Some made it to the arid west coast but turned back due to scurvy or lack of water of both.

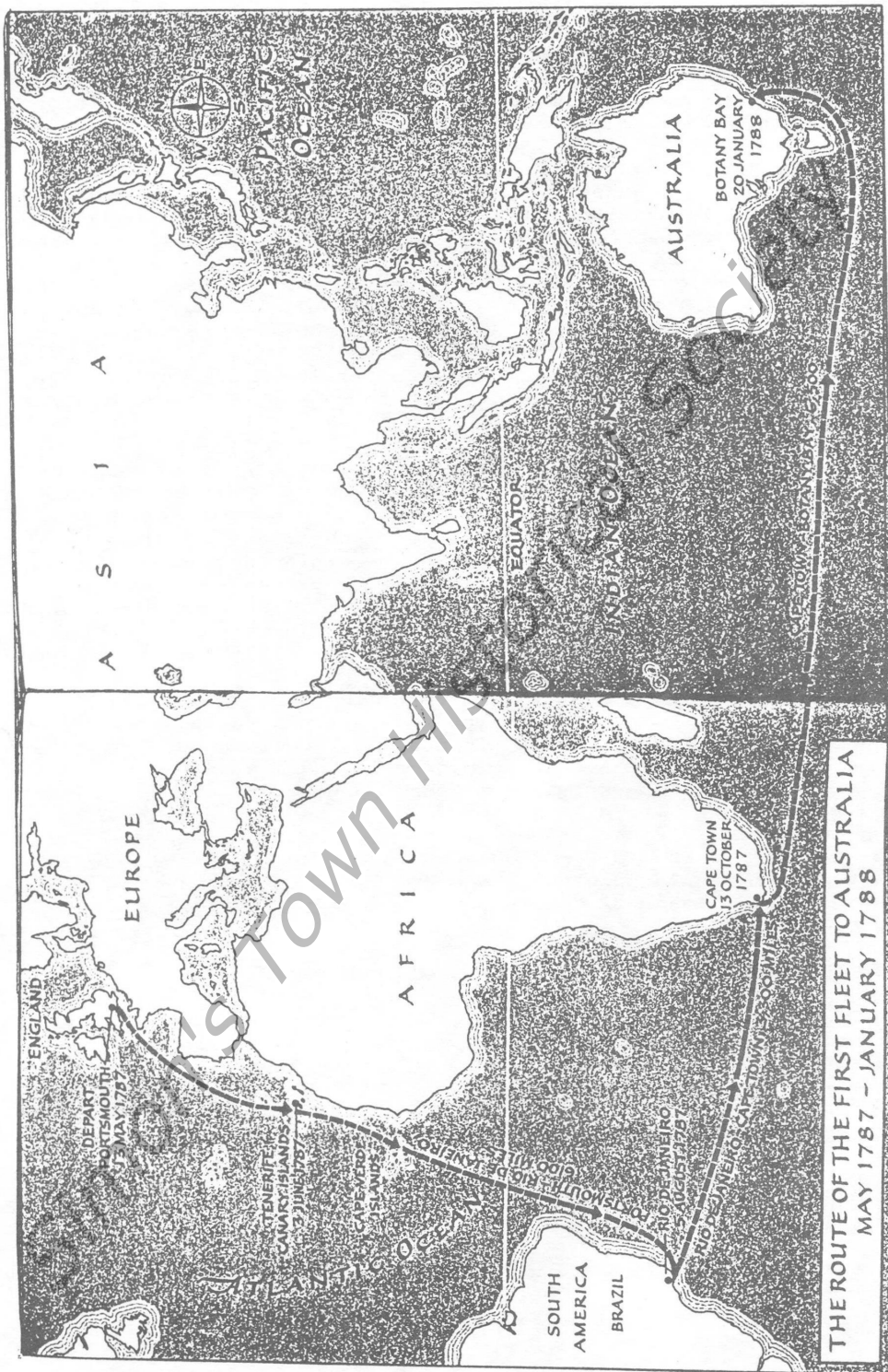
In 1642 the Governor-General of the Dutch East India Company, Van Diemen, sent Abel Tasman with two vessels starting from Batavia, to try further south. He went too far south and missed Australia completely. The only land he saw was what he thought was the southern tip of "South Land". Unfavourable winds prevented him from sailing north. He named it Van Diemen's Land. Two centuries later when that name had been tarnished with stories of criminality and cruelty it was renamed Tasmania.

Tasman continued east and discovered New Zealand. The last 17th century explorer to try the Northwestern coast of Australia was the British buccaneer William Dampier in 1688. He landed there. His description of the Aborigines is one of the minor classics of racism.

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK

This fine navigator (who spurned the use of the then available chronometer) was sent on the ENDEAVOUR with an astronomer and his staff to Tahiti via Cape Horn to observe the passage of Venus across the face of the sun on 3 June 1769. He also took Joseph Banks, a brilliant young botanist. The Admiralty suggested that on the completion of this task he should sail south to 40° and then westward in a sweep to 35° to confirm or eliminate the continent which Tasman had mentioned.

If Cook had not hit New Zealand he probably would have missed Australia to the south. He decided to chart the coasts of both islands of New Zealand. This took him four months and he thought it was then time to go back to England. Not wishing to risk the winter gales of Cape Horn he decided, as he had Tasman's charts, to make his way round the Cape of Good Hope.



The map above comes from the book "Favourable Winds"

Fate intervened in the shape of northerly gales, otherwise he would have missed Australia to the south. Instead he made landfall at what was later to be known as Cape Everard in Victoria on the south-eastern point of Australia. He then continued north seeking a suitable place to land. Owing to the danger of landing in the dark and at the mercy of the wind, the first suitable site was what he came to call Botany Bay - in the area where Sydney is now situated.

This was the chosen destination of the 1st Fleet taking the first convicts transported in 1787. By 1797 it was realised that instead of sailing south of Van Diemen's Land the voyage could be shortened by a few weeks taking a route through the Bass Strait which separated the island from Australia. Eventually the convicts were deposited on this island, the size of Ireland. Although a far less hospitable place than Botany Bay 4 in 10 convicts landed there - 65,000 men and women. We now know how and why and where the sites for the penal colonies were established. Britain had also the more subtle reason in that colonising Australia would help to frustrate French designs on India.

It was considered initially that Australia was only suitable for a penal settlement. New Zealand was known to be more promising but the hostile and warlike appearance of the Maoris mitigated against this idea. Joseph Banks, the botanist, when Cook returned to England endorsed Dampier's opinion of the Aborigines calling them unarmed, backward, timid and lazy - thus sealing their fate forever. Strangely Cook himself considered the Aborigines to be a tranquil people living in harmony with their environment. Only recently has this perspicacious opinion been endorsed by the geneticists.

A last observation about Captain Cook is that during that three year voyage in the ENDEAVOUR not one man was lost to scurvy - a feat unparalleled in seafaring history. He issued the crew, on a daily basis, sauerkraut, malt and a version of the modern bouillon cube. It is said that pickled cabbage and malt juice put Europeans in Australia as microchip circuitry put Americans on the moon. It is very odd to note that when the NEPTUNE sailed from England to the Cape 78 years later there were no prophylactic measures against the scurvy that plagued the voyage.

THE TRANSPORTATION OF CONVICTS TO AUSTRALIA

Between May 1787 and January 1868 approximately 160,000 convicts - men, women and children - were so "assigned". The 1st Fleet sailed on 13 May 1787 and landed at Botany Bay nearly 9 months later on 20 January 1788. The route, dictated by the prevailing winds, was down the east coast of South America to Rio de Janeiro, then straight across the Atlantic Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope. From there it went across the Indian Ocean to the south of Tasmania and up to Botany Bay - a journey of almost 16,000 miles. This route was followed by all the subsequent convict ships but was covered in a shorter period of time than nine months.

(Please see accompanying map for details)

The 1st Fleet carried 540 male and 188 female convicts. It consisted of two naval men-of-war ships, three store ships and six transport ships. The latter were converted merchantmen and per convict were in weight between 1½ to 3 tons. Modern cruise ships weigh about 200 tons per passenger. The area allotted to six convicts was the equivalent of a kingsize mattress. Very few naval vessels were used after the two in the 1st Fleet. Conditions under which the convicts existed were relatively humane. Subsequently all transport was arranged through contractors at an agreed amount per convict conveyed.

No further exploration had occurred since that of Captain Cook so that arrangements at the end of the voyage were chaotic. The worst ever conditions for the convicts were provided in the 2nd Fleet. This sailed in 1791 and consisted of three ships, the SURPRISE, the SCARBOROUGH and the NEPTUNE. The latter was the first convict ship of that name. Our NEPTUNE was the third of three of that name and was on her second of three such voyages.

These were to be known as the "Hell Ships". To illustrate this it is sufficient to mention what happened on the worst of these - the NEPTUNE. Of the 499 convicts on board 158 died and only 72 were capable of doing any work on landing. The rations were meagre, they were manacled at the wrists and ankles and allowed no exercise. Those first private contractors were allowed to create the same conditions that prevailed on slave ships. Conditions improved sporadically thereafter depending on the presence of ships' surgeons on board. The supply of these was limited to the demand on their services depending on whether Britain was engaged in a war or not.

THE RATE OF FLOW TO AUSTRALIA

To clear out the hulks and the overflow from the jails there was a steady stream of about 1,000 convicts annually from 1778 to 1810. Then the population of Britain increased. Early records indicated that the population of England and Wales shows a rise from 10,1 million in 1801 to 18,1 million in 1841. Between 1750 and 1770 the population of London doubled. By 1851 it stood at 1,8 million. The Industrial Revolution was evolving. These two factors resulted in economic depressions, unemployment, poverty, and the inevitable increase in crime. The real rise in transportation began, not with the law itself, but in its new enforcers the "peelers", the English police force established by Sir Robert Peel in 1827. This meant a huge rise, not in crime, but in successful arrests and convictions.

Added to this the liberalisation of the criminal laws at this time resulted in the reduction of death sentences and flogging with a corresponding increase in the number of those qualifying for transportation. After all it was easier on a judge's conscience to banish a person to the other side of the world, out of sight and out of mind, than to impose a death sentence.

To many criminals whatever the gravity or triviality of their offences deportation promised a better life than that led by the huge mass of unemployed in Britain and certainly far better than

a miserable existence in jail. The horrors of those jails were much better known to the average and probably illiterate person than the little known but possibly more promising life in the Antipodes. Very few convicts ever returned to enlighten the so-called "criminal class" about the trials, tribulations, or otherwise in distant Australia. This large flow of convicts was easily sucked in by the increased demand for cheap labour created by the pastoralisation of Australia.

The flow of transportees peaked in the 1830s. Despite the growth in the anti-transportation lobby in Britain, the government was of the opinion that, having managed to establish such a smooth-running system, there was no reason to dismantle it until the building of sufficient penitentiaries like those that the Americans had developed. Gradually, however, pressure from the lobby grew. The natural emigrants to Australia increased in number and most of these preferred to work the land themselves. As the demand for cheap labour dropped there was no decrease in the number of convicts being transported. The system began to clog up. By 1848 this reached crisis proportions. The stage was now set for the "Cape Storm in a Teacup" created by the actions of Earl Grey.

EARL GREY

The inhabitants of the Cape Colony regarded this man as their implacable foe. In fact as Viscount Howick, whilst working in his father's ministry, he was regarded as a liberal who as early as 1831 had expressed his opposition to the transportation of convicts. His father was British Foreign Secretary but decidedly not cast in that mould, so it was surprising that his son was an early proponent of rehabilitation of prisoners.

In 1846 Her Majesty's government had suspended all transportation to Van Diemen's Land for two years. Conditions at Norfolk Island, which was the veritable sump of the system, started to cause back pressure. Until then this settlement a thousand miles from Botany Bay was regarded as too remote to worry about. No more convicts could be dumped there. When the moratorium on Van Diemen's Land terminated in 1848 no more convicts were welcome there either.

Earl Grey (the 3rd) was confronted with this problem when he became Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1846. He attempted to make convicts more acceptable by emphasising the fact that they were semi-rehabilitated. He referred to them as "exiles" and devised a plan to subsidise one emigrant and his family for each exile accepted in Australia. Unfortunately the British coffers, diminished by war, would not allow this. When he sent a few convict ships to Sydney, whose harbour had not seen such vessels in 10 years, an anti-convict lobby was formed. Grey then had to consider other places where a penal colony could be established.

For three main reasons the Cape of Good Hope appeared to be the ideal colony for this purpose.

1. This large underpopulated territory could easily absorb such a scheme.

2. As Britain had spent an extra £1m to protect the colonists in the 1846 Kaffir War some debt to the Crown was owed.
3. The Cape was in need of cheap labour for building its infrastructure especially with regard to the construction of roads and bridges. (This was in fact very true).

SIR HARRY SMITH

At the time this popular man was governor of the Cape. He had had a successful stint previously as chief of staff to Sir Benjamin D'Urban. Then he had seven brilliant years of service in India before returning as governor in 1847. He had a rapturous welcome when he arrived in Cape Town. This popularity was to be severely tested when he became the buffer between Grey's demands and the ire of the colonists as the episode of the NEPTUNE unfolded.

On 7 August 1848 Smith received a despatch from Grey requesting him to gauge the sentiments of the colonists with regard to the idea of sending 300 convicts in the NEPTUNE with the possibility of establishing a penal settlement in the Cape. But on the same day Smith received a personal letter from Grey informing him that the decision had already been taken to send the convict ship to the Cape via Bermuda. This was Grey's first mistake. His second mistake was to give the impression that these convicts, being semi-rehabilitated, would be eligible for tickets of leave, thus allowing them to roam the country at will selling their labour wherever they chose. Tickets of leave were given to all transported convicts who had served about half their sentences with good behaviour. They were not allowed to move outside the boundaries of the colony until their full sentences were completed. The colonists thus universally assumed that they would be overrun by a band of hardened criminals.

This perception was reinforced by the fact that Smith only received a despatch on 12 December 1848 that arrangements were being made for the NEPTUNE to leave. In fact she only left on 12 February 1849 and took another seven months to arrive. All this uncertainty led to petitions signed by many people from all parts of the colony being sent to Sir Harry Smith. These were relayed to Earl Grey who, possibly hampered by the long delays in communications in those days, rejected them. Previous petitions in two similar situations had been successful.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SEND CONVICTS TO THE CAPE

In 1841 Lord Stanley had proposed that soldiers sentenced in India be sent to Robben Island for a period before being set free on the mainland. Again in 1842, Lord Stanley attempted to send juvenile offenders to "a better environment" at the Cape. This also failed to gain acceptance by the colonists. The third attempt - to send convicts to work on the breakwater in Cape Town harbour - was acceptable, only because it stipulated that after working on this project they were to be returned to England. The proposal to build a breakwater was abandoned at the outbreak of the Kaffir War in 1846 (J. Burman, The Bay of storms, Chapter 16). The breakwater was finally begun in 1860.

REACTIONS TO THE FAILURE OF THE PETITIONS

Understandably with the misconceptions that had occurred these were exaggerated to extremes. A few examples will suffice. Public meetings of protest were held throughout the colony. They were very well attended no matter how bad the weather was. In some places such as Grahamstown and Fort Beaufort elaborate platforms for the speakers were erected and draped in funeral black. At the other end of the scale was the meeting held by the Hottentots of the Kat River Settlement at Lower Blinkwater in the open veld seven miles from Fort Beaufort. Sir George Cory, who was not given to much levity in his writings, states that of all the speeches at all the meetings, those at this meeting were the most interesting and unintentionally the most amusing. I quote but one of these, expressed in the language of the day. A certain V. Jacobs said "he knew nothing of convicts but the behaviour of officers and men of the Royal African Corps was so bad as to astonish even the savages of Kaffirland". Although the popular governor Sir Harry Smith was sympathetic towards the feelings of the colonists all their anger was directed against him. These emotions were initially marshalled by one man.

J.B. EBDEN

Born in England, this highly respected businessman and banker was one of the many who resented the autocratic rule by the Crown which gave the colonists very little say in the running of their own affairs. When the news of the arrival of the NEPTUNE was confirmed he resigned his seat on the Legislative Council. He was instrumental in forming the Anti-convict Association. A committee of 38 worthy citizens was formed under the chairmanship of John Bardwell Ebdon on 21 May 1849.

THE ANTI-CONVICT ASSOCIATION

The first important decision taken was to establish THE PLEDGE prohibiting all colonists to have any dealings whatsoever with the NEPTUNE, its crew and the convicts. In the event of any convicts disembarking nobody was to feed, house or employ them. A subcommittee was formed to liaise with sympathisers in Britain, France, America, Ireland and Holland.

The most famous of these sympathisers was C.B. Adderley, a British member of Parliament for North Stafford. He did a great deal to form an anti-transportation lobby in the Lower House. He, contrary to general opinion, never came to the Cape to champion the cause. However, his strong support was so appreciated by the colonists that they renamed the Heerengracht Adderley Street. They also collected £100 to present him with a "piece of plate" - presumably silver.

On 15 June 1849 the first official Order in Council reached Sir Harry Smith confirming what was long suspected - that the NEPTUNE had already departed on her voyage to the Cape. Feelings ran so high that at a public meeting on 4 July 1849 7,000 people were present. It was decided to request Sir Harry Smith to ignore the Order in Council and refuse the entry of the NEPTUNE into Simon's Bay. He had had 44 years of obeying

orders so wherever his sympathies lay he could not accede to the Association's demand. The Pledge was now enforced more rigorously. Anyone who broke the Pledge would "have their names be held up to public odium and nobody would be allowed to buy from or sell to them".

As practically every inhabitant of the Cape came under the Pledge the consequences were widespread. Contractors to all the structures pertaining to the navy, the military and the government stood to lose a great deal if they were even suspected of breaking the Pledge. The committee also decreed that any person retaining or accepting a seat on the Legislative Council would come within the scope of the Pledge.

Three seats became available at the time. A wealthy merchant, J. Letterstedt, agreed to fill one of these. This was unwise as he was already known not to support the Pledge. At the end of his first day's sitting the mob were waiting for him. He received a blow on the head and was then hit on the neck by a large stone. Needless to say the three new members resigned forthwith. The mob was not mollified. Later all the doors and windows of a store, brewery and three houses belonging to Letterstedt were broken. Glaziers and carpenters refused to repair the damage. He sued the Association for £5,000 damage but received no satisfaction. During the first part of September 1849, although there was still doubt as to whether the NEPTUNE would arrive, a Vigilante Committee was formed to spy and keep watch in Simon's Town on all those suspected of breaking the Pledge.

ARRIVAL OF THE NEPTUNE

On 19 September 1849 she came into Simon's Bay at 10 p.m. "Next morning at daybreak the fire-alarms in Cape Town heralded forth the terrible news and then the bells of all the churches tolled dismally. All business was at a standstill." The agitation against the convicts was renewed with such vigour that all those who were likely to do business even remotely connected to the NEPTUNE were threatened with starvation. These measures became so extreme that even J.B. Ebdon was appalled. He resigned from the Anti-convict Association on 18 September 1849.

JOHN FAIRBAIRN

This man was also one of those born in Britain who were against the power that the Crown wielded over the colony. He replaced Ebdon as the Chairman of the committee of the Anticonvict Association. He in later years became involved in the re-shaping of Britain's relationship with the Cape. As Editor of the South African Commercial Advertiser he wielded immense power in the community. He and Thomas Pringle established the freedom of the press in South Africa by overcoming the censorship imposed by Lord Charles Somerset.

In 1845 he became the first chairman of an insurance company that later became the Old Mutual. In a recent publication by that company "The First 150 years" it transpires that Fairbairn had a genuine concern that the establishment of a penal colony

would gravely prejudice the interests of his fledgling company. He therefore, exhorted the Association to redouble their opposition to the NEPTUNE's mission.

An interesting contradictory event on this plane ensued. Fairbairn called a special meeting of the directors of his insurance company specifically to ensure that they did not break the Pledge in the company's business or in their own commercial activities. One of his directors was the owner of a ship-chandling business in Simon's Town by the name of William Anderson. The master of the NEPTUNE was Captain Henderson. The cashbook of William Anderson and Son reveals that Henderson visited the business as early as 3 October 1849 and frequently thereafter, and twice on one particular day. His purchases were small - probably of a personal nature for himself and the crew. Some transactions, however, were larger and puzzling. He borrowed cash in amount of 5, 10 or 20 pounds every few days - a total of about £300.

Also recorded were such items as "Paid 6 Coolies 8/-". There were six similar entries, one of which referred to labourers instead of coolies and one was "paid 10 men £2.14.0d" - a much higher rate. £1.10/- was also charged for the apprehension of 3 men. These items referring to labour will be mentioned in theory later. These were extraordinary dealings with a ship under embargo - and by a director of Fairbairn's company to boot!

As the NEPTUNE was not considered to be under the jurisdiction of the Cape whilst at anchor, Commodore Wyvill, who was Commander-in-Chief Simon's Town, felt he was obliged to supply food to the NEPTUNE. Initially he ordered a double supply of beef for his own ship HMS CASTOR and surreptitiously loaded half of it onto the seaward side of the NEPTUNE. This action was spotted and reported by a member of the Vigilance Committee through a spyglass situated on a balcony ashore. Other ships, naval and merchant, were also affected by this embargo so Sir Harry Smith felt that a situation might arise where he would have to declare martial law. He took prompt action.

SIR ROBERT STANFORD

Here was a rich man with three farms in the Caledon district. Unfortunately for him he was a retired military officer on half-pay. Smith had no compunction in ordering him to send a steady supply of cattle to Simon's Town to be slaughtered in the docks (by Louis Posthumus' (see first page of article) forebears - Hablutzel and Hugo). Stanford had no option but to obey. As a result he was ostracised by the community. His children were expelled from school. When his infant daughter fell ill the doctor refused to treat her and she died. He was financially embarrassed to such an extent that he went to England to seek compensation. Whilst he was away the farms were sold for a song even though one belonged to his wife. He was knighted, offered a post in the colonial administration and given £5,000. This availed him not at all as he had a stroke and died a broken man.

EFFECTS OF THE EMBARGO

It appears that although the efforts of the Anti-convict Association caused a great deal of misery and inconvenience the embargo failed. None of the ships in the Bay, including the NEPTUNE, wanted for anything after the first few days.

OTHER VICTIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Their actions caused many to lose their jobs. The Chairman himself, John Fairbairn, suffered for this reason. On 13 October 1849 he had his house vandalised by "18 negroes under the direction of two white men". This appears to have been a well organised attack. At their trial they were found not to be unemployed and inexplicably were never sentenced.

On the same night Mr. Benjamin Norden's house was vandalised and he was severely assaulted. As a result he was a semi-invalid for the remaining 20 years of his life. He was a rich merchant, who, unlike Fairbairn, was a very definite breaker of the Pledge. There is some confusion about the attack on Norden. Cory merely reports damage to his property. Pama in his book "Thomas Bowler's Cape" describes the incident in detail and mentions the permanent effects of the injury. He also makes the point that Norden fired at the attackers. Letterstedt, who supplied illegal provisions to the NEPTUNE, has already been mentioned.

The first chairman of the committee J.B. Ebdon, also suffered financial loss and sued for damages. There were numerous other minor victims. The Association had foreseen that claims would be made against it and had asked for contributions from all parts of the colony. About £4,000 was accumulated. This fell short by £1,000 of the final sum of the claims but this amount was never forthcoming.

THE VOYAGE AND SOJOURN IN SIMON'S TOWN

Considering the emotionally charged climate prevailing in the colony it is no wonder that the embarkation of this small 643 ton vessel from Deal in England on 15 February 1849 created such ripples on the far distant shores of the Cape. These ill omens were not imagined by Captain Henderson and the NEPTUNE's ill-fated occupants.

Having arrived at Bermuda after 3 - 4 weeks the 300 convicts on board were exchanged for about 290 semi-rehabilitated "exiles" who had spent some months in Bermuda. This number consisted of a few military prisoners (who had been sentenced for minor crimes such as overstaying their leave), and a greater number of English convicts, but the majority were Irish political prisoners. One of these latter is of special note.

JOHN MITCHEL

This journalist and Editor of an Irish newspaper was a firebrand who had been sentenced to 14 years of transportation for stirring up anti-English sentiment. He was an eccentric

mixture of conflicting opinions. For this reason the entries in his "Jail Journal", published in Dublin in 1854, cannot always be regarded as strictly truthful. His opinion of his fellow convicts, although most were also Irish was "These 300 choice miscreants who have graduated in burglary and thievery in the finest schools on earth".

As he regarded himself so far above them he curried favour amongst the 47 guards and the crew. He was given his own cabin - a privilege he also enjoyed on the hulks, whilst awaiting transportation, both in Deal and Bermuda! On the NEPTUNE a convict was appointed to attend his personal needs. He also often dined with the crew and officers. Although his fate was linked with that of his fellow convicts he delighted in the successes of the Anti-convict Association. In other words he ran with the hare and hunted with the hounds. Further oddities concerning him will crop up later.

For unexplained reasons the NEPTUNE only left Bermuda on 22 April 1849. She immediately ran into bad weather. The ship spent eight weeks at or within 30° of the equator which it crossed at least three times. The water ration was soon reduced to half and later to a quarter. In addition the water was contaminated. Scurvy affected most of those aboard. Three convicts died of it. On 1 July 1849, three months after leaving Bermuda land was sighted on the northeastern tip of South America. Although Rio de Janeiro was the usual destination, Captain Henderson decided to make for Pernambuco - the nearest port - far to the north of Rio. For some reason the ship could not enter the harbour. It was anchored beyond the breakers and supplies had to be ferried out. Riding the swells for their stay of 25 days the ship's occupants were subject to severe buffeting.

This port had acquired the local name of being "pennybookered" - probably derived from the name Pernambuco. This period should have given them time to recover for the 3,300 miles to Simon's Town for which they departed on 12 August 1849 taking another 41 days to reach Simon's Town on 19 September 1849. The stay lasted five months but nobody was aware of this then.

To relieve the crowding 120 convicts were transferred to the SERINGAPATAM, a hulk moored nearby. It is not known whether this was already established as a prisoner-holding facility. If it was, the guarding and feeding of those 120 would have been made easier. The convicts had been confined below deck for a tedious and unpleasant five months with the prospect of facing another prolonged and uncertain period. Morale was low but they had no options.

With the crew matters were different. Although they were probably on two-year contracts, they had possibly had no shore leave, except in Bermuda, since leaving England in February. Some facts have only recently surfaced for the first time to shed some light on the mood prevailing amongst them. A month after their arrival, on 22 October 1849, five seamen from the NEPTUNE were sentenced in the Simon's Town Magistrate's Court to 30 days hard labour for "refusing to go to sea". A few days

later eight more were given the same sentence for the same offence. Refusing to go to sea was a very specific offence which is difficult to understand as there was no prospect of the NEPTUNE leaving Simon's Bay in the immediate future.

Another source, a Colonial Office report dated 7 December 1849, states that "the greater part of the seamen on the NEPTUNE have been sent to jail and discharged from the ship, while the few remaining are in a state of great subordination. It is suggested that additional guards be provided beyond the 10 already in office as the convicts are in a state of great excitement and discontent".

This report and the offences for which the hard labour sentences were imposed must have referred to the same events even if 5+8=13 seamen jailed seems to be a small number to constitute "the greater part of the seamen". One can only speculate on such matters as until now no mention of near-mutiny has ever been hinted at in any previous accounts.

To confirm the train of these events consider the puzzling entries in the Wm Anderson & Son cashbook. If the crew had been reduced to such an extent that they were unable to perform their duties or if they were unwilling to perform their duties, the entries in the latter part of November and December 1849 and referred to as employment of "coolies, men and labour" would be compatible and reasonable.

A near-mutiny would have been just the sort of juicy morsel that John Mitchel would record with great glee in his Jail Journal. It was with great expectation that this book was examined for any such reference. It transpires that for the 8 - 10 weeks previous to 1 January 1850 Mitchel had made no entries because he was very ill with asthma. It is stranger that he made no comment when he had recovered - just to create a stir - what a disappointing omission!

Other entries in Wm Anderson & Son cashbook as mentioned referred to the cash lent to Captain Henderson. The total amount was about £300 which was a considerable sum in those days. It was, however, insufficient to pay for the salaries of the crew or for the provisions for the convicts. It has been possible to prove that these provisions were supplied by Granger & Co after approval of the accounts by Commodore Wyvill. The £300 plus interest was repaid by the ship's agents on departure.

Despite the embargo imposed by the Anti-convict Association, after the first few days the NEPTUNE lacked for nothing. In fact, Mitchel makes reference to luxuries improbable and indeed unlikely. He mentions "being impressed with a basket of superb clusters of South African grapes" - in October! On 1 February he laments that the grape season was over! Were the seasons any different in those days?

OTHER EVENTS RECORDED DURING NEPTUNE'S STAY

The ship's surgeon James Deas died of *status epilepticus* eight days after arriving in Simon's Bay. His death was attributed to

a reaction to the prospect of the convicts under his care being subjected to further hardships that lay ahead in the uncertainty the ship now faced. As there was no prophylaxis or treatment of epilepsy in those days his death was possibly over-romanticised. Deas had been subjected to far worse mental anguish on the trip to Pernambuco without the epileptic attack being precipitated. He was buried in the Old Burying Ground, Seaforth, Simon's Town.

Bishop Gray, the first Anglican Bishop in the Colony, was allowed to preach to the convicts on the deck of the NEPTUNE on 30 September.

Whilst the Pledge and the embargo placed on the NEPTUNE was a failure as far as provisions for the ship were concerned, the agitation that was created was significant. It was probably the first occasion that a decision of a major power was deflected by such a small and unofficial organisation as the Anti-Convict Association.

Earl Grey, having decided to abandon his intention to establish a penal colony, begged the colonists to accept just this consignment of convicts on the NEPTUNE, but they refused. A little known fact is that Grey had had to calm the misgivings of the colonists in Natal who had heard rumours of the convicts being diverted from Tasmania to their unwelcome shores.

Eventually the orders for the NEPTUNE to sail on to Australia arrived on 15 February 1850. The NEPTUNE sailed on 19 February ending what was probably the most exciting episode in Simon's Town's history.

AFTERMATH

There were no further untoward incidents and no more deaths on this leg of the voyage. Captain Henderson was given the option of relinquishing his command but chose not to do so - a worthy "owner's captain". The ship's surgeon who had replaced Deas also died shortly after arriving in Australia. The cause of the death in his case was given as "due to natural decay". What extraordinary diagnoses were made in those days! He was 47 years of age.

Most of the convicts were given immediate tickets of leave and quite rightly so after 12 months of below deck incarceration. As for that rascal John Mitchel, he had made three entries in his Jail Journal which must have been based on speculation and rumour.

1. Just after leaving Bermuda he states that there was a strong possibility that the convicts would end up in Australia. What a difference it would have made if Earl Grey, Sir Harry Smith and the colonists had known and believed this at that stage - about 24 February 1849.
2. In Simon's Town on 23 October 1849 Mitchel notes that it is believed that the families of the convicts would be sent to join them. This was in sharp contradiction of Grey's failure

to implement his emigrant subsidy scheme but still prophetically true - at least in Mitchel's case.

3. On 13 February 1850 he mentions that a despatch from Grey had stipulated that all the convicts would be granted tickets of leave on arrival in Australia - except for Mitchel himself.

What actually happened was that Mitchel was granted that privilege. His family was sent to join him in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). He then arranged to escape to Sydney. Shortly afterwards his family followed him. He later engineered the escape of he and his family to America. There he proceeded to irritate the authorities with his characteristic fiery political mayhem.

Back in Cape Town the committee of the Anti-convict Association who had assuaged their guilty consciences by collecting £100 for distribution amongst the convicts maintained that all the inhabitants had contributed money. There was great rejoicing because a terrible "catastrophe" had been averted. In retrospect was this really true? There was no doubt about the need for cheap labour in the Cape. A few thousand of these semi-rehabilitated exiles would have provided this need and would probably have contributed in other ways to the colony.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possibly appropriate to quote the opinion expressed by Robert Hughes toward the end of his book "The Fatal Shore". "For all its flaws one cannot imagine a prison system without defects. The assignment system (transportation) was by far the most successful form of penal rehabilitation that had ever been tried in English, American or European history."

It is also appropriate perhaps to conclude by offering readers the opportunity to reflect on the comparison between Britain's crime rate in the 1770s and their overcrowded jails with the same conditions that prevail in South Africa to-day.

Would that we had a Captain Cook and a convenient continent to discover now.

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The author of the article above is a member of the Simon's Town Historical Society. He was formerly a medical doctor in general practice for 48 years and is now retired in Simon's Town.

FLAG OFFICERS OF THE CAPE

PART XVI

Vernon White

Rear Admiral Sir Harry H. Rawson 1895 - 1898

Rear Admiral Sir Robert H. Harris 1898 - 1901

Rear Admiral Sir Harry Rawson C.B. was appointed C-in-C Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa station from 1895 to 1898. His appointment took effect on the 4th May 1895 when he hoisted his flag at Portsmouth in HMS INFLEXIBLE, and subsequently in the steam cruiser HMS ST GEORGE (Flag Captain G. Le C. Egerton R.N.), flagship of the Cape Squadron, the latter comprising fourteen small naval vessels adapted mainly for police work.

Born on 5 November 1843 Harry Holdsworth Rawson was the second son and third child of Christopher and Francis Emily Rawson (nee Wright of Liverpool). The Rawson family were of Yorkshire stock descended from Saxon stock of the Valley of Cure before the time of the Norman conquest. Harry christened at Lock Ferry was named Holdsworth after his grandmother on his mother's side of the family.

At the age of six Harry Rawson was sent to a Dame's School in Reading, then on to Marlborough College to prepare for a naval career. In 1857 when he was 14 years of age he received nomination as a Naval Cadet from Sir Charles Words, First Lord of the Admiralty, and on passing his naval entrance examination he joined HMS VICTORY in Portsmouth.

On leaving the VICTORY he joined HMS CHARLOTTE (Capt. Geo. King RN) on 9 April 1857, then fitting out for Hong Kong. An accident on board might have terminated Harry Rawson's naval career, when he slipped off the coaming of the main hatchway and fell 30 feet to the bottom of the hold below. Fortunately he was only badly bruised, with no bones broken, and was fit and well when the CHARLOTTE sailed from Spithead to Hong Kong on 27 June 1857. En route the ship called at Madeira (15 July), Cape Town (17 September), arriving in Hong Kong on 30 December after a six months voyage. On arrival in Hong Kong Harry Rawson was transferred to HMS CALCUTTA (Captain Wm. King Hall RN) an 80 year old teak hulled vessel built in Bombay, with two decks and fitted with 84 guns. The CALCUTTA sailed for the Peiho River, and was present when the Treaty of Tientsin was signed on 26 June 1858, but not ratified until October 1860 when China signed the Treaty of Peking. On 19 March 1859 Harry Rawson sailed in HMS CALCUTTA from Hong Kong for England, arriving there in September. Still a naval cadet he joined HMS ENCOUNTER (Captain R. Drew RN) in October, and sailed in her for China via Rio de Janeiro.

On arrival on the China Station Midshipman Rawson was put in charge of the Commissariat Junk No.2. On 12 September 1860 he was appointed A.D.C. to Captain Drew, accompanying the joint Anglo-French force advancing on Tientsin and Peking. The latter

defeated the Chinese Army at Pa-Li-Chao on 21 September and on 17 October British troops burnt down the Emperor's Summer Palace in Peking, as a reprisal for Chinese cruelty to captives. After the signing of the Treaty of Peking on 25 October, Captain Drew and his ADC returned to their ship the ENCOUNTER on 30 November.

HMS ENCOUNTER sailed on 3 December for Yokohama and Tokyo, returning to Yokohama on 1 January 1861 because of trouble ashore where Europeans were being attacked and where two consuls were murdered. It was on 1 April that Lawson, still a Midshipman, tried to rescue a ship's sentry who fell overboard but the tide proved too strong to effect a rescue. The ENCOUNTER sailed for Manchuria in August, returning to Yokohama, and then to Canton on 6 November 1861. It was in October that year that HMS WARRIOR, the first all-iron warship was completed. During March 1862 HMS ENCOUNTER sailed for Ningpo, where the Chinese forts were stormed after having opened fire on HMS RINGDOVE. It was here that Harry Rawson was severely wounded, a ball entering his left leg five inches above the knee - the ball he sent to his mother as a souvenir.

In November 1862 Harry Rawson was made a Sub Lieutenant 1st Class, being promoted over 80 other officers with greater seniority. On 1 January 1863 he was landed in Ningpo to take command of 1,300 Imperial Chinese troops, and remained their military commandant for three months. Promoted to Lieutenant in May he joined HMS VULCAN ready to sail under orders for U.K., but these were cancelled and the vessel set sail for Japan transporting troops. The VULCAN then became guardship on the China Station until June 1864, when she returned to England via Hong Kong, arriving in Portsmouth on 12 October 1864.

Harry Rawson, now a Lieutenant, had spent 6 years and 8 months on the China and Japan stations; had received a medal with three clasps Taku Forts 1858, 1860 and Peking 1860 and had been mentioned in despatches several times. After a few days leave Harry Rawson was sent to the Naval College for a refresher course, then to HMS EXCELLENT for a gunnery course in July 1865. At the end of 21 months instruction he was awarded a first class certificate in gunnery, and also presented at Court.

On 22 April 1867 he joined HMS BELLEROPHON (Captain McDonald RN) as First Lieutenant and Gunnery Lieutenant. For the next two years the BELLEROPHON was cruising in the English Channel and in the Mediterranean, and was present at Port Said when the Prince of Wales attended the opening of the Suez Canal on 17 November 1869. In January 1870 Lieutenant Rawson was appointed to the Royal Yacht VICTORIA AND ALBERT (Captain H.S.H. Prince of Leiningen), being promoted to Commander in September 1871. It was whilst the Royal Yacht was sailing down the River Scheldt in August 1871 that Harry Rawson rescued two ladies who were being swept down the river, for which act he was awarded the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society, and the Belgian Civic Cross.

Commander Rawson spent five years on the Royal Yacht and became a great friend of the Royal family. On 19 October 1871 Harry Rawson married Florence Alice Shaw, the daughter of John R. Shaw

of Arrowe Park, Cheshire, and there followed 34 years of blissful marriage until her death in 1905. A daughter Alice Evelyn was born in July 1872 and later three sons. Their son Harry Hugh born in January 1875 died sadly at an early age.

In March 1874 Harry Rawson tried to go on a Polar Expedition to the Arctic but was considered too senior in rank. His brother Wyatt Rawson, a Lieutenant RN was sent instead.

Appointed Commander of HMS HERCULES (Captain M.M. Dowell RN) in December 1876, Harry Rawson was promoted to Captain in June 1877 and appointed Flag Captain to Admiral Lord John Hay in HMS MINOTAUR in November. The Rawson second son Henry Christopher was born in February 1878, and was to follow his father into the Royal Navy.

The MINOTAUR was paid off in December 1881, when Captain Rawson was appointed Principal Transport Officer in Egypt in 1882 during the build-up of the Egyptian Campaign after the Egyptian nationalists under Arabi Pasha had revolted. Between 1882 and 1885 he was Flag Captain in HMS ALEXANDRIA, being awarded the C.B. in 1882. He was then appointed to command of the Steam Reserve at Keyham in Devonport from 1885 to 1889, during which time he sat on the Committees charged with the revision of the General Signal Book, and the Manual of Naval Manoeuvres. In the period he also commanded HMS INDUS, WARSPITE and BENBOW. The Rawson third son Wyatt was born in 1889.

From 1890 to 1892 Captain Rawson was a naval A.D.C. to the Queen but despite his distinguished naval record went on half-pay for six months in 1891, and again on his promotion to Rear Admiral in 1892. Between 1892 and 1895 he was a member of the Committee for the Revision of the International Code of Signals. In May 1895 Rear Admiral Rawson was appointed C-in-C Cape and soon after coming to the Cape he sailed up the East African coast on his annual cruise in the flagship HMS ST GEORGE. Whilst in Delagoa Bay Admiral Rawson learned of trouble not far from Mombasa and immediately sailed north.

His expeditions to East and West Africa are fully documented in Bulletin No. XVII Nos 3 and 4, p. 83 and p.128. Here readers will find detailed descriptions of the battles and skirmishes together with maps where appropriate.

During Rawson's stay in the Cape he had been instrumental in the formation of a Sailors and Soldiers Club in Cape Town, the construction of a new large reservoir in Simon's Town (the Rawson Reservoir) and the building of a new graving dock which was finally opened in Simon's Town in 1910. The then existing Robinson graving dock in Cape Town had been unable to accommodate a ship like HMS ST GEORGE.

Feted by the public and both Houses of Parliament on his departure Admiral Rawson was presented with an illuminated address by the people of Simon's Town, who gave Lady Rawson an ostrich feather fan as a farewell gift. Promoted to Vice-Admiral Sir Harry Rawson was in ill health on his arrival in England and went on half-pay being ordered to recuperate in the

baths of Harrogate in Yorkshire. By December 1898 the Admiral was once more in good health and on 20 December hoisted his flag in HMS MAJESTIC at Portsmouth, relieving Admiral Sir H.F. Stephenson in command of the Channel Squadron.

On 20 March 1901 the Channel Squadron escorted HMS OPHIR into Gibraltar, on the first leg of her voyage conveying T.R.H. the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary) via Suez to Australia and New Zealand and back via South Africa (and Mauritius) to Canada via St Vincent, before returning to England. Among the ships escorting the OPHIR was HMS ST GEORGE.

In January 1902 Admiral Sir Harry Rawson was appointed Governor of New South Wales and was succeeded to the command of the Channel Squadron by Rear Admiral A.K. Wilson V.C. on 16 April. Admiral Rawson remained on the active list of the Royal Navy during his seven years as Governor of New South Wales, but did not serve afloat again. Early in 1905 in New South Wales, Lady Rawson's health deteriorated and she left for England in March accompanied by her daughter Alice and her son Wyatt. In July Admiral Rawson arrived in England on leave, and at the end of November embarked on the ORONTES at Tilbury, with his family for the return voyage to Australia. Still in ill health Lady Rawson was carried on board at Tilbury and she died at sea shortly after the vessel sailed from Suez for the Red Sea. She was buried at sea, and understandably Sir Harry was heartbroken over the loss of his beloved wife and the mother of his children.

On his return to Sydney, Sir Harry preferred to live at Hill View in Sutton Forest 80 miles from the City. Alice now filled in when needed in place of her late mother. Amongst his many duties Sir Harry became a great supporter of the Salvation Army in Sydney and of the Mission to Seamen. In 1907 Sir Harry's son Christopher, married Dorothy Mitchell of Sydney. Wyatt Rawson unfortunately could not pass his naval eye test and went to study at the University of Sydney.

At the end of March 1908 Rawson relinquished his appointment as Governor of New South Wales and left Sydney with a great send-off returning to England via Japan and Canada. Awarded the K.C.M.G. in November 1909 Admiral Sir Harry Rawson died a year later from complications following an appendix operation, and was interred at Bracknell Churchyard from his brother-in-law's estate nearby.

On 28 April 1898 Rear Admiral Sir Robert Harris KCMG RN flying his flag in HMS DORIS (Flag Captain R.G. Protheroe RN) succeeded Sir Harry Rawson as C-in-C Cape, at a time when British troops were advancing up the River Nile under Kitchener and the clouds of war were beginning to gather over the Transvaal. In October the Royal Navy were placed on war alert as a result of French claims to sovereignty in the Sudan. Meanwhile the first successful submarine was built by John P. Holland for the Royal Navy.

Born in October 1843 Robert Harris was the son of Captain Robert Harris RN, the author of "Remarks on bearing a 72 gun ship"

published in 1841. Educated at the R.N. School in New Cross, London, Robert Harris Jnr followed his father into the Royal Navy, and became a Lieutenant in 1863. Promoted to Commander in June 1870 he married Florence, the daughter of Commander Henn-Fiennys RN in 1875. They had two sons and five daughters.

In December 1879 Robert Harris was promoted to Captain, in which rank he became Inspecting Captain of Training Ships between 1889 and 1893. From January 1892 to January 1895 he became Captain A.D.C. to the Queen and was in command of the Training Squadron from June 1893 to January 1895 with the rank of Commodore.

Promoted Rear Admiral in April 1895 he became second in command of the Mediterranean Squadron from May 1896 to January 1898. On 15 February 1897 British detachments were among an international force landed on Crete during the Greek insurrection against the Turkish authorities and it was at this time until February 1898 that Rear Admiral Harris represented the British Government on the Council of Admirals concerned with the pacification of Crete. For his services he was awarded the K.C.M.G. and in April that year took up his appointment as C-in-C of Good Hope and West Africa Station.

The following year on 11 October 1899 the Transvaal declared war on Britain after six months of fruitless negotiations between President Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner (the British High Commissioner). On 31 May 1899 Lord Roberts occupied Johannesburg and Pretoria on 4 June.

At a ceremony in Pretoria on 25 October the Transvaal was formally annexed and in the same month Rear Admiral Sir Robert Harris was awarded the K.C.B. for his services during the Boer War. Lord Roberts wrote... "I am glad of this opportunity of expressing my thanks and those of the army to him (Admiral Harris) for the cordial co-operation and never failing support which he had extended to me ever since my arrival at Cape Town in January 1900...." As a gesture to the Boers after their defeat Sir Robert placed his quarters on board the flagship at the disposal of General and Mrs Cronje, when the general was a Prisoner-of-War and before he and Mrs Cronje sailed to St Helena for internment. On St Helena they lived in a remote cottage, not in the Boer camps.

On 19 February 1901 Sir Robert was promoted to Vice-Admiral and in the summer of that year (probably November) Admiral and Mrs. Harris held a garden party at Admiralty House. Unfortunately and perhaps unthinkingly Admiral Harris caused a caricature of John Xavier Merriman M.P. a Cabinet Minister and colleague of Cecil Rhodes, to be used as a target in the shooting gallery in the grounds. There was a public outcry over the matter, especially as John X. Merriman had been a great parliamentary supporter of the Navy.

The outcome of the incident was the premature and immediate departure of the Admiral for England, but it seems not to have affected his naval career as he was appointed President of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, from October 1903 to October 1906, and promoted to full Admiral in 1904. Sir Robert became

a J.P. for Devon in the same year and retired on a pension from the Navy in 1913. He died in August 1926 at his home "The Drake", in Yelverton, Norfolk. Like his father before him, Sir Robert was a writer, and published three books in his lifetime: "A Revision of Alton's Seamanship", "Maritime Power and Its Probable Application in War" and an autobiography "From Cadet to Admiral".

Sir Robert's granddaughter Mrs Ruth Kerr whose mother was Mrs Johnstone (nee Harris) still lives in Hampshire, England whilst a great-grandson Anthony Harris, lives in Hillcrest Natal and has his great-grandfather's collection of medals.

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LEOPOLD WOOLF - CASTLE ROCK ESTATE

Leopold Woolf purchased Lot 51 (now Erf 51) from the Hugos in 1916 and built the first rondavel on the property and shortly afterwards the second, making it the oldest existing property at Castle Rock. He had a sign-writing business in Cape Town. While he was building, the family lived in an old tramcar. This survived until destroyed in a bush fire in 1961. It had been towed to the property by a span of mules. Water was led from the roof into zinc tanks. There was also spring water available if a local coloured fisherman George Sharp was on hand to carry it from the spring. Woolf died in 1932 and the property was sold.

Peggy Morris (nee Woolf) who lives at Fish Hoek recently recounted her memories of their holidays at Castle Rock (near Millers Point). She recalls that on arriving at Simon's Town they used to stop at R.S. Whyte the grocer (opp. the old Post Office and now Lewis Furniture Store) to collect their groceries which had been ordered in advance.

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HERBERT CARTER - CASTLE ROCK & MILLERS POINT

Peggy Morris also gave us some information about the Carter family who lived near them. Other information we obtained from Margaret Cairns' book on Castle Rock and its inhabitants.

Herbert Carter and his family lived on Lots 52 and 53 (Erf 52) in probably 1920 and 1921. Herbert was a very industrious man for as well as running a small dairy, he worked in the Simon's Town Dockyard. One can imagine he rose very early in the morning for the cows had to be milked and any milk delivered before he commenced work at 7 a.m. for in those days the Dockyard started work by 7 a.m. Carter always wore a waistcoat, collarless shirt, old black trousers, topped by a cap. The dairy was up under the rows of blue gums on the mountainside -

which sadly were lost in bush fire in 1961 and 1988. He sold the property in 1935 and it was probably about this time that they became caretakers of the "Big House" at Millers Point - now known as "The Black Marlin". This house was owned by the Molteno family and they frequently let it out to tenants. In those days the Main Road to Cape Point ran in front of the "Big House" through what is now the car park and a garden area in front of the restaurant.

Mrs. Carter always wore a striped dress and wore her hair pulled back from her face into a "twist-of-a-bun". Mrs. Carter was helped in her kitchen by "Kimme", a happy smiling girl. They cooked on a coal stove and with an abundance of milk, rice puddings were a speciality! For a while Mrs. Carter operated a tearoom in the 1930s but it proved too popular for her to cope with on her own with just Kimme to help her and it was not viable for her to take on extra paid staff. She was also an attender at the annual auction sales of Naval and Dockyard goods which took place in the Sale Floor, West Dockyard (just inside the dockyard gates and not to be confused with the Sail Loft which became St George's Dockyard Church). Here she found many bargains such as lovely damask table cloths and heavy silver-plated cutlery.

The Carters had two sons (Toby and Raymond) and a daughter Joan who became Mrs. Cockrell. Toby was a cabinet maker who could also turn his hand to building for in 1946 he helped Mr. H. Wilshire to build his house on Lot 21A (Erf 70) Castle Rock. Raymond was a pilot and sadly crashed his plane in False Bay one day. Recently some wreckage (of what could possibly be his plane) was pulled up in a fisherman's net. In 1957 A Ventura of the SAAF crashed into the mountain above Castle Rock Estate and the estate children had a wonderful time collecting souvenirs.

Information from Mrs Morris, and from Mrs. Cairns' book on Castle Rock Estate and its owners which traces the land from the time the Hugos were granted it in 1822 until the book was written in 1993.

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H. J. CROOME, Senior Sergeant H.M. Dockyard Police.

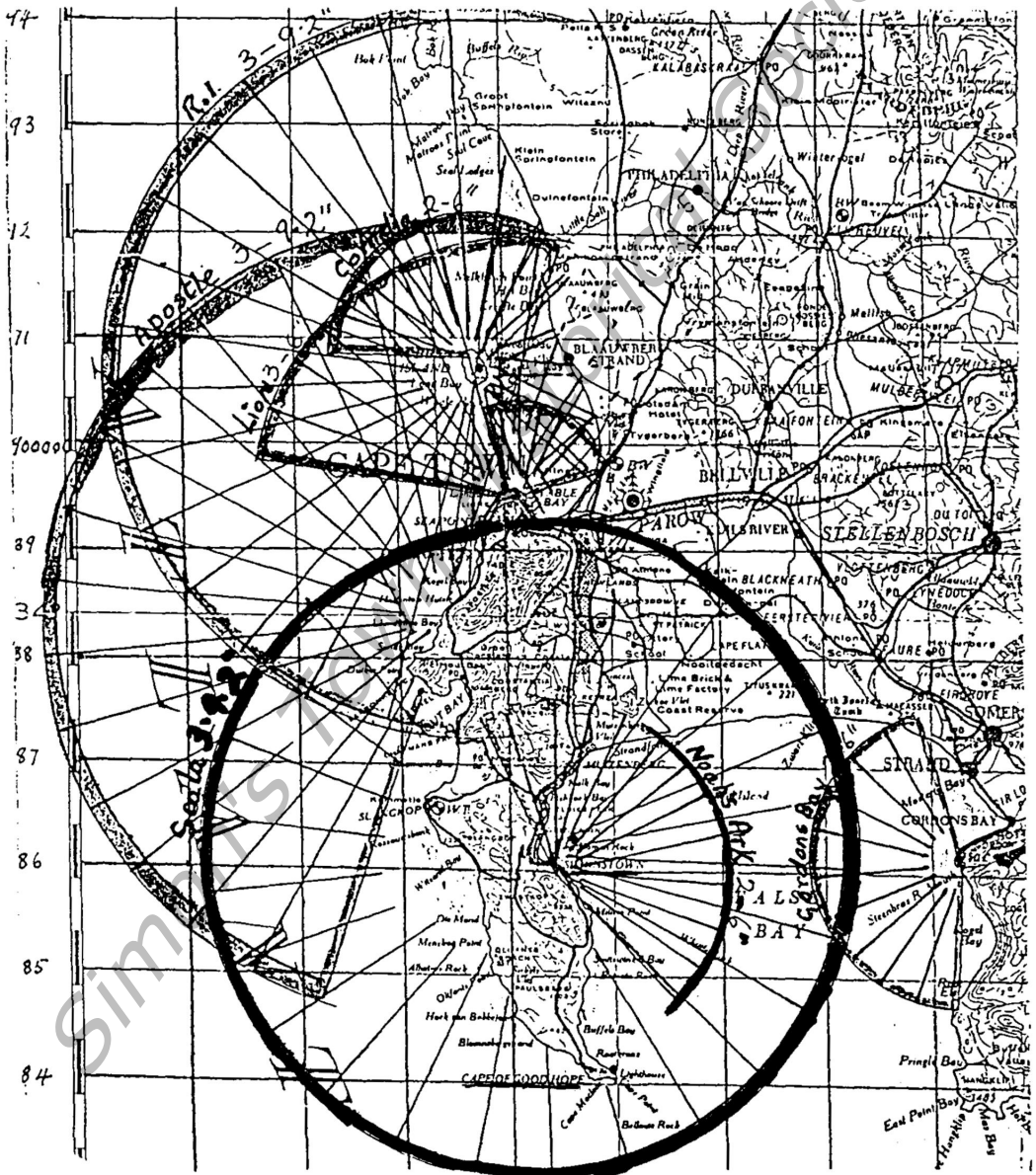
The Police Magazine "The Nongqai" of June 1932 records on p.479 the he passed away in June at his official residence after 35 years service in the Dockyard Police and on many occasions had acted in the absence of the Inspector i/c. He was held in very high esteem by his colleagues and by the public. Prior to joining the police he had served in the Royal Artillery and left the Army as an N.C.O.

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If readers or their friends have any anecdotes to recount about their or their families lives in Simon's Town in bygone days please be kind enough to let the Society have details.

COAST ARTILLERY - CAPE PENINSULA 1939-1946

The map below gives the ranges of the guns at Robben Island, Apostle, Lion, Cornelia in the Cape Town region and Scala Noah's Ark and Gordon's Bay in the False Bay area. As can be seen from the map there were 9 in number 9'2" guns and 9 in number 6" guns.



In large calibre guns it is not practicable to enclose the propellant charge in a brass cartridge case (as in smaller calibre weapons) for many technical reasons, including the enormous expensive cartridge case that would be required, and difficulty in handling the case and extracting it from the breech after firing. In a BL, or bagged propellant charge gun there is no empty cartridge case to be extracted after the gun fires; only the small fired tube from the lock on the outside of the breech mechanism.

The largest calibre coast defence dual purpose gun to use a brass cartridge for the propellant charge was the 5.25 inch coast artillery/anti-aircraft gun principally to obtain a higher rate of fire in its anti-aircraft role.

OPERATION OF THE GUNS

The gun detachment for a 9.2 inch defence gun consisted of 11 men, with a further reserve detachment of 11 men who could be called on in a prolonged action to assist in ammunition supply or hand operation of the gun if the power supply failed. Under normal power operation 5 men were required in the revolving gun house or turret, including the Sergeant in command and 6 men in the gunpit for ammunition supply. Additional ammunition personnel were employed in the underground magazines.

To load the gun, shell and cordite charges were sent up from the gun pit in the gun hoist ammunition cage and transferred to the hydraulic rammer with the charges inside the hollow rammer and the shell on the rammer loading tray. The gun was semi-automatically brought to the 5 elevation loading angle and the rammer operated to ram the shell into the gun and leave the charges in the chamber as it withdrew. There were several mechanical locking devices which ensured that the gun was locked at the correct loading angle with the breech fully open before the rammer could be operated, and to prevent the gun being elevated back onto the target until the loading operation was completed.

Immediately after firing and as the breech was opened, a blast of air under high pressure was automatically directed up through the barrel to expel the cordite fumes and any burning residue from the charge, and a jet of water mechanically directed onto the mushroom head of the breech mechanism to douse any smouldering residue and to cool the obturator pad seal.

The gun was continuously laid for line on the target by the line and elevation layers. Each layer kept pointers coincident on electric data transmission dials.

From: An official South African Artillery Booklet - Fort Wynyard Museum.

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