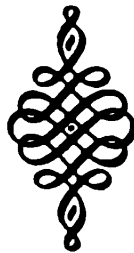




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THE FORTIFICATIONS OF SIMON'S TOWN

T. KORSTEN

The Defences of Simon's Bay, for many years a very important sea port of South Africa, have always been a matter of great concern to the authorities down the ages. Simon's Bay particularly was always a matter of great concern to the authorities since the beginning of the settlement here, as it has been considered vulnerable to an invading force intending to land on its beaches.

Because of the vast numbers of ships lost in Table Bay during the Cape winter months, the Governor was instructed by the Heeren XVII in Holland to investigate the merits of Table Bay, False Bay and Saldanha Bay. Jacobus Moller, the Company Storekeeper, Jan de Heere, a retired sea captain and the Cartographer Isaak van Es were commissioned to carry out the investigation and update Simon van der Stel's report of 1687. Their report was tabled on 18 December 1729. The report made the following remarks concerning Simon's Bay:

"And as the concerns regarding the securing of the Company's ships from an attack by enemies or pirates we should judge that the placing of a Battery with some cannon on the south corner that Simon's Bay makes as shown on the chart, would be the best fortification that could be made. We are confident that the ships lying at anchor behind such fortification could still in some measure be protected though we must add that in a Bay so widely extended, such a fortification could sometimes bear little fruit."

However, the Heeren XVII decided to continue using Table Bay throughout the year with no development taking place in Simon's Bay until Baron von Imhoff's visit in 1743, en route to Batavia. Von Imhoff was responsible for the erection of Company Storehouses in what is now the West Dockyard. These Storehouses (still in use to-day) provided the support and facilities for the ships which were to

lie at anchor in the Bay during the winter months from April to October.

In 1760, C.D. Wentzel, the Company Surveyor, produced a plan of Simon's Bay showing the location of two projected gun batteries. The one battery was to be sited on the rocky projection of the seashore between the present Residency (Simon's Town Museum) and the new Admiral's Offices (now Flag Officer Fleet's H.Q.). The second battery was to be sited on the extremity of Cole Point (the present main entrance to the East Dockyard). Both were to be armed with 12 pounder guns and provided with magazines and a reserve supply of gun powder for visiting ships.

However, there is no evidence that either of these two batteries were ever built. On the appointment of Abraham Josias Sluysken as the new Company Commissioner in 1793, the Colony was placed on a proper state of defence. New batteries were built in Simon's Bay, Hout Bay and Camps Bay. Each contained ovens for heating red hot shot.

The batteries in Simon's Bay were named "Boetselaar" (armed with four 24 pounder and four 8 pounder guns and sited on the South Point of the Bay) and "Zoutman" on the site of the present Lower North Battery (armed with four 24 pounders only). These batteries put up no more than a token resistance when Admiral Elphinstone's squadron sailed into Simon's Bay on 11 June 1795. When the Dutch evacuated Simon's Bay at the end of June the guns in both batteries were spiked.

On 17 September 1795 the Castle was handed over to Elphinstone, completing the 1st British Occupation of the Cape. One of the first concerns of the new Governor (Maj.Gen. James Craig) was to make the fortifications as secure as possible. In Simon's Bay this resulted in the building of the Martello Tower to reinforce the South Battery (Boetselaar) and the addition of the one 24 pounder guns. The armament of the Zoutman (Lower North Battery) remained unaltered.

During the 2nd Occupation of 1806, the British forces found the fortifications in Simon's Bay to have been completely dismantled by the Dutch after the Cape of Good Hope was returned to them in 1802. Lt Gen. Sir David Baird immediately ordered the batteries to be put in the most perfect state of repair. Not only were the South and North batteries restored each with five guns and one 13 inch mortar, but he also established four additional batteries. These were:

- a) Barbette Battery of 5 guns at the southern end of the present golf course
- b) A temporary battery of 9 guns on the rock known as "The Pebble" near Boulders Beach
- c) A temporary battery of 2 guns at Coles Point
- d) A fascine battery of 2 guns situated between the present railway station and Admiralty House gardens.

These new batteries could not have been maintained for any length of time as no mention is made of them in a report dated 21 October 1809. Their place was taken by a temporary sea battery known as Tucker's Battery with four 18 pounder guns. While both South and North Batteries were again re-armed with three English iron 18 pounders and two English iron 12 pounders. Tucker's Battery ceased to exist in 1811. Both North and South Batteries continued in existence for many years. However, little maintenance if any, appears to have been carried out and the batteries were slowly allowed to become derelict. In peacetime fortifications were the first to be neglected.

Then in 1830 a crisis arose again. Trouble flared up between Britain and the slave owners of Mauritius over the abolition of slavery. French warships sailed from Brest bound for the island of Reunion. Both South and North Batteries were renovated to deal with any threat. Two new batteries were also constructed. The one was at Coles Point, the other on the seaward side of the site on which the construction of the present St Francis Church in Court Road was soon to begin and was named Munro Battery. Once the affairs in Mauritius were settled the batteries were again allowed to run down.

The next crisis arose between Britain and America in 1841. Once again a complaint was lodged concerning the state of the defences of Simon's Bay. Once peace returned the fortifications again suffered from neglect. However, in the early 1860's the American Civil War strained relations between Britain and America and once again the Governor of the Cape was made aware of the urgent necessity for some active measures being taken at once to put the fortifications around Simon's Bay in a proper state of defence. The defences of Simon's Bay once again received careful attention. These now consisted of five batteries:

South Battery with four 32 pounders, three 18 pounders and one 9 pounder gun.

North Battery mounted with six 18 pounders.

Coles Point and Munro Batteries which were each armed with three 18 pounder guns.

A new battery known as Schomberg was armed with one 10 inch gun and two 18 pounders. This battery was sited to the north of Admiralty House gardens.

In 1885 and the following years, much work was done on the Simon's Bay fortifications. The South Battery was moved up to the seaward side of the Main Road and in front of the cemetery (now known as the Old Burying Ground) and re-named Queen's Battery (present day War Memorial and Naval Sick Bay). In 1897 the Battery was remodelled to mount two pairs of 6" Quick Firing guns. The first gun arrived in 1898 and the remaining three in 1899. North Battery was also again rebuilt.

The Schomberg, Munro and Coles Point batteries had been abandoned and dismantled by the end of 1860. In their place fixed defences were extended southwards to engage vessels before they could approach within range of the Dockyard. This resulted in Noah's Ark Battery being built in the early 1930s (in the vicinity of the present day Warfare School). Upper North Battery was built high on the hill above the existing Lower North Battery (originally known as

North Battery) to take advantage of the greatly increased range of the new rifled guns firing explosive shells. This battery was armed with a 9 inch wrought iron muzzle loading rifled gun of 12 tons in 1895 where it remains to-day.

In 1939 the 2nd World War broke out and Simon's Bay fortifications were placed in a state of readiness.

Noah's Ark Battery mounted the two 9.2" Breech Loading guns.

Queen's Battery mounted four 6" Quick firing guns.

Middle North Battery mounted two 6" Quick firing guns.

The 9.2" B.L. Gun at Scala Battery was not brought to a state of readiness because this gun was being converted to an updated mounting and with the necessary plotting rooms, power houses and hydraulic machinery to drive the gun.

In 1940 the decision was taken to fortify Port Elizabeth and East London. Therefore two 6" guns from Queen's Battery and two 6" guns from Middle North Battery were dispatched to the Eastern Cape cities. On 18 December 1940 it was decided to protect the East Dockyard entrance against attack by creating the Docks Battery which mounted two Naval Quick Firing 12 pounders.

The modernisation of both Upper North and Scala Batteries to be known collectively as Scala Battery, commenced in 1940. One 9.2" gun from Noah's Ark was sent to Scala to join the one already under conversion. These two guns were placed in service on 10 July 1940. In 1941 the remaining 9.2" gun at Noah's Ark Battery was sent to Durban and mounted on the Bluff. Two more 12 pounder Naval guns were added to the Docks Battery in 1942 and construction commenced for the installation of two 6" gun emplacements of modern design the same year at Noah's Ark. In 1943 two new Breech Loading 6" guns were mounted in the newly constructed emplacements. On 21 August 1943 Queen's Battery was closed down and Noah's Ark took over the duties of Examination Battery from Queen's Battery. In 1945 the third 9.2" B.L. Gun was

commissioned at Scala Battery and work commenced on the building of a radar station for Scala Battery above what is now Reid's Way, Glencairn.

The last 9.2" firings from Scala Battery took place in 1957. All ammunition for the three guns was sent to Jan Kempdorp in the Northern Cape (now 93 Ammunition Depot) for destruction in the early 1960s. Lower North Battery is still operational and is the Live Firing Battery for newly qualified gunnery ratings in the South African Navy. It has the distinction of being the oldest fortification in South Africa.

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No. 1 (W.M. Bisset).

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THE BOARD OF ORDNANCE

(From Public Records Office, Kew, U.K. Leaflet No. 66)

The origins of the Board of Ordnance are generally associated with the development during the 14th century of the Wardrobe of Arms into the Privy Wardrobe of the Tower, a department specialising in the provisions of arms and warlike stores. Master Nicholas Merbury, appointed in 1414 is the first known Master of the Ordnance. The post was evidently a replacement for the virtually defunct Keepership of the Privy Wardrobe, though it is not clear how much, if any, administrative innovation was involved in the change. From 1483 all holders of the office were knights or peers. The Board was re-organised in 1543, when Henry VIII created the posts of Lieutenant, Storekeeper, Surveyor and Clerk of

Deliveries to assist the Master. They held their posts by individual letters patent. It was not until 1597 that they were actually constituted as a Board.

The Board was firstly concerned with "ordnance, emption and munition", not solely with heavy guns, though in time heavy guns came to be the most important of the Ordnance's responsibilities. The Board was not the child of either the Navy or the Army, but it can be regarded as the first permanent military department in England. In 1683 the Board assumed the form which it was to preserve, largely unaltered, into the 19th century. The Board took collective decisions but each of the Principal Officers was individually answerable for his department to the Master-General and he for the whole to the King. Sometimes the Master-General was absent for long periods and regular correspondence was maintained between the Board and the Master-General.

The establishment was divided into Civil and Military. The Civil section included the members of the Board itself and its clerk and other employees who formed the staff of the Ordnance Office in the Tower of London, which was its headquarters and principal magazine. The Military Establishment consisted originally of the Master-Gunner of England and his subordinates who formed the permanent garrison of forts and castles, together with a few civilian engineers who designed and constructed the fortifications. There was also a Firemaster and Fireworks (who conducted experiments with explosives) and a Proof-Master (who conducted the experiments with the guns). The Board also examined, nominated and passed accounts of Gunners in the Navy. The Board did not directly employ the latter.

The Board's responsibilities were divided into Sea and Land Service. The Sea Service, which was initially the larger by far, included the issue of all guns and warlike stores not only to ships but also to forts and the guns and gunners were more or less interchangeable. The Land Service comprised the issue of small arms to whatever military forces were raised, also the provision of waggons, tents etc to the Army and the Royal Household.

The reforms of 1683 entrusted the Board with the provision of artillery and engineer trains, if required. At this date there was virtually no field army but the expansion of the Army during the reign of William III and the frequent wars of the 18th century gave rise to a large standing corps of Artillery and Engineers. It was then responsible for thousands of officers and men and involved in field operations in many parts of the world.

The Ordnance Board entered the 19th century increasingly dominated by army officers. With the end of the Great War in 1815 the process continued. The Ordnance Board still supplied guns to the Navy, but the files give the impression of a military office concerned chiefly with the construction of forts and batteries and the administration of regiments. Even the Principal Offices (Lt Generalship and Clerkship of Deliveries were abolished in 1833) which had been held by civilians, passed to the Army. The Board now assumed the appearance of a second war department. The outcome of the Crimean War saw the Whig government searching for scapegoats and the obvious answer was retrenchments. In 1855 the Board was abolished and its duties merged with those of the War Office. With this the control of the Navy's guns passed to the army, engendering a rather long and bitter departmental feud.

Besides the principal responsibilities entrusted by Charles II to the Board, it also acquired other responsibilities, sometimes because there was no other government department available. The Firemaster and Fireworkers supplied fireworks for royal entertainments and the Astronomer Royal was borne on the Ordnance books - however at the Cape he came under the Royal Navy. Anyone wishing to do research at PRO Kew should contact the Editor who has a list of files which come under the reference WO.44 and WO.55.

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MEMORIES OF SIMON'S TOWN 60 YEARS AGO

HEATHER AVENT (nee Jillard)

No. 34 Residence in the West Dockyard in Simon's Town is no more - it was demolished to make way for the new Dockyard Gates in the mid-1960s; but it still lives clearly in my memory of 60 years ago.

Originally it was built piece-meal with bits tacked on here and there to what must have been a rudimentary building that was very old, perhaps amongst those built in the early 1800s. The dining-room walls were so thick that the door with its gleaming brass door-knob, was almost accommodated in the thickness when it was opened. The building was attached to another residence next door but not a sound penetrated through the walls.

We used what might have been a bedroom at one time, for a dining-room and it had a tall, wide sash window opening on to the street protected by wooden shutters. We used to fling up the window, stand on the wide window sill and step out onto the pavement of the main road, 6 inches below. A hundred yards to our right we were watched by Sgt Smith of the Dockyard Police, who was well aware of our "short cut" and turned a blind eye!

The bathroom was an addition at the back of the building and it boasted a novel method of heating the bath water - an oil drum shaped vehicle about 2½ feet tall by 1½ feet diameter, with a chimney to the outside and a 6" hole cut in the top alongside the chimney, fitted with a removable copper lid with which one could regulate the air supply. A sheet of newspaper was usually sufficient with a handful of kindling sticks to provide about half a bath of scalding hot water and the combustion was so efficient that there was not a scrap of ash left in the drum

at the end of the operation! I imagine the water pipes were fixed round the inside in some way for they were not in view. The accompanying Bang! Bang! Bang! used to terrify me and I always got my father to run my bath. Thinking about it now, it must have been the cheapest method of providing a bath ever, and I've often wondered whose invention it was.

My mother and I joined my father in July 1942 - he had taken up his appointment and travelled out the previous October. The Admiralty allowed us passage from Gourock in Scotland where we found a small steamship called the UMTALI of the Bullard King shipping company. We set sail on 11 June and took a month to reach Cape Town having run the gauntlet of the Battle of the Atlantic. We joined a Convoy which escorted us as far as the Mediterranean and we were not a little dismayed when they turned left and we carried on, on our own. The Siege of Malta was in progress and we were losing the battle in North Africa - a bleak prospect indeed. We ploughed on down the western coast of Africa to the South Atlantic. Having spent the previous 3 years in Plymouth which was blitzed heavily, sometimes 5 nights out of 7, my mother and I found our journey on the sea blissful. Our trip was uneventful unlike the unfortunates who came before us and after us.

My father, meanwhile, was scrubbing the residence from top to bottom and painting all the rooms and passageways with cream enamel. The previous incumbents were both keen supporters of the Warrant Officers' Club next door and very little of their energies or money was spent on housekeeping so the interior condition "left a lot to be desired". (My father's words).

We had brought several packing cases containing familiar domestic articles with us and it wasn't long before my mother, who was an excellent homemaker, had the place looking beautiful and welcoming. Her love was the garden which already contained a huge Pointsettia bush, an Oleander, a golden peach which bore wonderful fruit and also a vigorous "winedot" vine and she added good old English flowers like nasturtium, calendula, pot marigolds and candytuft. At one

time she tried a few salad vegetables but the greengrocers in the High Street were a delight in their riot of colour and scents with exotic fruit and spices, that they soon won the competition over hand hoeing and watering.

I worked as a temporary clerk in the wages department of the East Dockyard. Then, when space became available, transferred as a shorthand typist in HMS AFRIKANDER, the Naval Administrative Office. When members of the WRNS arrived about 18 months later I found a job with the Simon's Town Municipality as a typist. Mr. Randall was the Town Clerk at the time and a kinder and more sympathetic man you couldn't wish to meet. I was happy working at the Municipality. I remember once there was a potato famine and there was to be a free issue to the occupants of the Native Township near the station. I was delighted to be part of the group who went there with sacks of potatoes which had to be weighed and distributed so that each family there had a fair share. The largesse was received with cupped palms and for once in my life I felt I was doing something useful.

A very rotund negro "flower lady" used to call at the office every Saturday morning, struggling up the very steep stairs with her basket overflowing with flowers of every type and colour. A few shillings bought an enormous bunch of Freesias which I used to take home and arrange all over the house and fill the place with perfume. Freesias never smell the same in England!

The residence was absolutely riddled with ants' nests especially downstairs in the kitchen and "breakfast room". The big old fig tree in the yard produced so much fruit it was impossible to harvest and the luscious ripe figs used to plop down on to the concrete to the delight of the insects who marched in columns to feast on the bounty and also carry a lot of sugar back to their nests in the walls of the house. Cockroaches too, lived behind the tiles in the kitchen and behind the cupboards under the sink. No amount of chemicals and deterrants made any impression for no matter how many were killed, I am sure numbers were quickly made up again. I used to hate going downstairs after dark for their scurrying feet

could be heard scrabbling across the polished linoleum and they gave me the shudders. I've only once seen insects as big as those and that was in Florida where they also crept out of the drains once darkness fell. I remember the legs of the big kitchen table standing in tins full of paraffin oil to prevent them climbing up and finding the remnants of food carelessly left in dishes or even an uncovered sugar bowl. It must have been very interesting when the building was demolished and all their runs exposed.

Our dining-room window was right opposite the door to the "coloured" bar of the British Hotel and I was torn between my mother's instruction to "Come away from the window, Heather" ! and being fascinated by the aggression displayed by the men when drunk. Apart from the occasional sherry trifle we didn't have drink in the house as both my parents were teetotal - I really didn't know how the other half lived!

To the left of the front door was a room containing the only open fire apart from the kitchen range (where my mother made the most delicious bread). We used this room as a sitting-room and, during the winter months when the heaviest rain fell, it used to be quite cosy indoors and we listened to the radio. There was a cinema in the High Street called the Criterion Bioscope where we watched many of the latest American productions. To raise morale there was also a film show on Sunday evenings in the Recreation Hall in the East Dockyard provided for the entertainment of the crews of visiting battleships and Dockyard personnel. There was only one projector so there were gaps in the performance while the film reels were changed and the lads used to stamp and whistle if they took too long!

Dances were also held in the Soldiers and Sailors Rest Room in the town and we local girls were recruited as dance partners. A meal of bacon & eggs etc was also available. I noticed on my recent visit to Simon's Town that the building is still there (now called the Town Hall). In fact the whole town looks extremely well cared for - bright and clean and very little changed in lay-out since I had last

seen it 56 years previously. Obviously it is well loved.

When I was 18 I tried my hand at golf and enjoyed the beautiful environment of the course, sometimes the fairways were covered with tiny flowers. The white, sandy beaches, blue sea and the dark blue hazy mountains across the sparkling water of False Bay have stayed in my memory vividly. I remember a dear old gentleman (younger than I am now I suspect) called Mr Marshall who used to give me lessons on warm Sunday mornings.

During the war Simon's Town was a secure area and if we had any visitors my father had to get a pass for them before their journey. Security Guards came through the train carriages inspecting every pass. Many times I travelled back in the last train with Just Nuisance, the Great Dane dog who became legendary and is now honoured by a statue on Jubilee Square.

On the day of my wedding I travelled to Fish Hoek where the ceremony was to be held in St Margaret's Church. My husband-to-be lived in Fish Hoek and this was his Parish Church. My mother and I were accompanied on the train by a troupe of Christmas "Coons" and they played their guitars and made their distinctive syncopated music. It was Boxing Day 26 December 1944, a day of glorious sunshine and blue skies and I remember being so happy. Our marriage was to last 54 years before my husband had several strokes and to my grief eventually died. We had three children who have given us four lovely grandchildren. We had a happy and fulfilling life and I would dearly like to have it all over again!

We stayed with my parents whilst awaiting our passage back to England and as my husband worked in the East Dockyard, he too took advantage of the shortcut through the window. One early morning a crowd of sailors, no doubt returning to base after leave in Cape Town, saw my husband suddenly fling the window up, hop out on to the pavement and run up the High Street. They, picturing a "husband" coming in the front door, gave him a huge cheer of encouragement

which highly amused us. Another incident also involving the window was when my mother exited to go shopping, put up her parasol and daintily walked across the road and a friend saw her and remarked "Oh, Mrs Jillard you look just like a tight-rope walker!!" My mother - always conscious of her dignity - like Queen Victoria "was not amused".

Bush fires were another calamity from which the Cape is still suffering. Starting spontaneously and erratically it was my father's duty to take his band of Bantus, which were employed by the Royal Navy to haul ropes when moving ships around the basin in the East Dockyard, to fight fires on Simonsberg and the land up and behind the town. In all the years he was called out they managed to beat the flames and I cannot recall a single death even when the south-easters were blowing their hardest and most capricious. He would return at dawn filthy, with eyes red-rimmed and exhausted but after a bath and a shave and change of uniform he was back in time in the Dockyard to do his day's work.

After my parents' deaths I found his heavy boots which he wore whilst fire-fighting still amongst his things and I was reduced to tears as I disposed of them.

There was a trellis porch over the front door with seats inside and many a sultry afternoon we took tea out there and sat in the shade. There was also a passion-fruit vine which eventually covered it turning it into a veritable bower of flowers and fruit. But later the fruit was an attraction to rats who then invaded the house! The roof was flat and we could hear them running around up there! Then we realised why the creeper had been razed to the ground previously. The hedges in the garden were comprised of geraniums, or to be more correct - pelargoniums. They were the happy hunting grounds of countless chameleons which were a complete delight to me with their strange swivelling eyes and long sticky tongues.

In 1942 when we arrived in Table Bay, we were all entranced by the wonderland

of lights twinkling before us and I remember standing on the deck along with all the other passengers just gazing at the extravaganza and after almost three years of black-out and the familiar shout in the evenings of "Put that light off". Then suddenly all the lights went out - it was 11 o'clock and this was to be the pattern for our stay in the Cape. I don't know whether or not there was a likelihood of attack from the sea or just an economy measure, but that first experience came as a shock to us all. Surely the war couldn't follow us out here 7,000 miles away?

Whilst on my recent visit in January 2002, I was taken to Boulders Beach - the next little beach to Seaforth and we watched the penguins in their sanctuary. There were always a number on Seal Island, a rocky outcrop in the middle of False Bay and very occasionally one would venture ashore; not very often for I think they were discouraged by the increased sea traffic during the war years. However, when one did visit it proved a great novelty and diversion and also a "time-waster" in the Dockyard for their cute and appealing demeanour belies their toughness. I remember one particular persistent and cheeky visitor was transported back to the island in the Dockyard Police launch which was quite a fast speed-boat. Congratulating themselves as they released the bird they turned for base and sped back only to find the creature sitting on the basin steps waiting for them!

As I mentioned earlier, the Admiralty recruited men from the African townships and kraals "up country" to come and work for the Navy on, a 5-year contract I think. My father had the responsibility of looking after these men - I suppose they numbered about 30 in all. They were issued with khaki serge uniform suits which included high necked jackets and trousers and smart bush hats to match, the brims turned up at one side. They were young and fit and looked very smart and proud. James, the Induna, was of Zulu stock - a huge man with a wide and brilliant smile. He would call at our Residence every morning to receive his orders - usually while we were at breakfast. He used to fill the doorway and sometimes if he was in shadow all one could see was his beautiful smile; an unfailingly good-natured man whom my father valued and relied upon. Almost

without exception these "lads" were happy and full of laughter and they loved my father and he them. He had a small store of little conjuring tricks bought years ago in Plymouth with which he sometimes entertained them. He became very adept with these and his audience's eyes grew rounder and rounder for he vied with the medicine man with his magic. One day my father noticed that one boy was ailing and he asked the Induna why and was told that a "muti" had been put on his bed and he had been told if he laid on it he would surely die. My father had never seen a black lad literally pale with terror and no reassurance on his part had any effect whatsoever. So my father told him he would kill the evil spirits and took his bedding, which was infested with bed-lice, and arranged for it to be put through a steam sterilizer which promptly killed the "live-stock". He took it back to the frightened lad pointing out that all was now well - he'd killed all the lice and also the spell. The lad was convinced and got his colour back and also his bed! There were a number of these entertaining stories. Another time the lads had clubbed together and bought a crate of pigeons to cook and eat. My father, feeling sympathy for the birds, offered to buy them. When the money changed hands he released them all. But the birds circled round a few times and then immediately homed into their crates again accompanied by much merriment and glee for the men knew what was going to happen - my father laughed too for he knew the joke was on him.

The end of the war saw many parades and celebrations and my father was asked if he would take the salute at one of these parades and inspect the "troops" which were massed groups of the Boys' Brigade. This he agreed to do but to his embarrassment he was given a bugle salute - the trouble was that it was one reserved for an Admiral - whom he hoped wouldn't get to hear about it.

We came back to England in the early weeks of 1946 landing at war-torn Liverpool in February when it was grey, cold and wet and we travelled by train to London which was equally desolate. Deprivation and rationing followed but my husband had an important examination to study for that would affect his career in the Civil Service. My parents left Simon's Town in May 1947 and at our

reunion, of course, we had a lot to talk about. During the intervening months since our departure they had witnessed the King and Queen and two princesses when they made their visit to South Africa in HMS VANGUARD.

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HALE'S ROCKETS

William Hale was an American and he made improvements to the earlier Congreve rocket of 1804. His was stickless, being stabilised by spin in its flight by an auxiliary combustion chamber, the gases involved in which were liberated from tangential ports (pinwheel effect). The rocket enjoyed no small popularity for many decades. It was used by the Americans in the Mexican War in 1846, but left unfired it was found to be unstable and therefore all remaining stocks were destroyed. However, these rockets were used by the Naval Brigade during an attack on Senafe in Abyssinia in 1868, to good effect. The Hale's rocket gave way to rockets developed by Godard, also an American.



Hales' Rockets during the attack on Senafe, Abyssinia, 1868

IN HMS VERBENA ON THE CAPE STATION 1922-1924

(From "Fight It Out" by Captain Oliver L. Gordon CB MVO RN (Retd)
Wm Kimber & Co London 1957)

From 1922 to 1934 I served in a sloop HMS VERBENA on what was known in my day as the Cape Station; later the name was changed to South Atlantic Station. Its base was at Simon's Town in False Bay, some 20 miles from Cape Town, and not very far from the Cape of Good Hope. The Station, considered to be one of the most popular in the Service, had the reputation that few officers arriving there as bachelors left, after a two-year commission, in the same state of blessedness! It was also renowned for the number of officers who were successful in arranging for themselves a second period on the Station.

Certainly my two years there were delightful in every way. I defied all tradition by becoming engaged to be married shortly before leaving England, and was married at Simon's Town in 1923, 10 months after arrival on the Station. Like taking coal to Newcastle some were rude enough to say. The year was usually divided up so as to allow for six months away cruising on the East and West African coasts and six months at Simon's Town.

At Simon's Town or in the vicinity, were domiciled the wives and families of those serving on the Station. There was plenty of gaiety, with tennis, dances, cricket matches and picnics. Cruises, particularly East Coast cruises, were looked forward to with pleasurable anticipation. Wherever we visited, hospitality was showered upon us; in fact, it was difficult to keep up with it. A visit of 4 or 5 days to an East Coast port was about as much as we could stand, since very little sleep was included in the period. A typical day on these cruises would entail starting at 6.00 a.m. for an all-day quail shoot, returning in time for a bath and change before a dinner party, followed by dancing till any hour of the morning. Passages between East Coast ports were mainly given over to sleep,

for those who could manage it, so as to be fresh for arrival at the next place!

Among our various ports of call Durban was generally looked upon as the "plum". It catered for the tastes of both officers and men. Its wonderful private hospitality, the delightful Country Club with its first-rate golf course, and the Durban Club, stand out in my mind. While commanding a cruiser during the last war I re-visited Durban two or three times and found it in no way changed in its reputation for kindly hospitality. These wartime visits were greatly looked forward to by us all, so much so that my ship's company was adept at inventing reasons why the ship was sure to return to Durban, the wish being father to the thought. On one occasion it was said that the ship was sure to return to Durban as the Commander had bought a couple of race-horses, a supposition presumably arising from the fact that on a previous visit he had attended a race meeting!

Then there was the time when the ship was supposed to be returning because I had become engaged to be married! (As a matter of fact, I had been happily married for nearly 20 years). This phantasy originated I suspect from the fact that one evening I entertained the famous French actress Alice Delysia, who with an E.N.S.A. party, gave a concert at Durban for my ship's company; afterwards there was a stand-up supper on board. When I escorted the star to her car, I was carrying a large bouquet of flowers, which had been presented to her at the end of the concert!

We often enjoyed big-game shooting, which was also very exhausting and on one occasion we returned to the ship to find we had all lost about a stone in weight in the three days. On another occasion three of us were the guests of a most hospitable Dutch farmer at St Helena Bay on the west coast. Here was a form of shooting new to us, for our host, who accompanied us but did not shoot, led a pony which bore two large saddle bags. We wondered what these contained, as they appeared to be well filled and could not be for the sole purpose of carrying the "bag". We were not left long in doubt. At the first contribution to the "bag" our host stopped and called to us. He then produced a bottle of his own

excellent home-brewed Cape wine and poured out a glass for all of us. It was 9.30 a.m. Whenever there was any addition to the "bag" the ceremony was repeated. It was just as well that the "bag" before lunch was not very heavy. Once, when the Captain shot a small buck, a Duiker, a bottle of whiskey was produced. For lunch we returned to the farm-house. We lunched in the large and spotless kitchen and afterwards each guest was taken to a beautifully furnished bedroom to sleep through the heat of the day. After tea we had another two hours' shooting but fortunately the pony did not accompany us.

Later our host and hostess visited Simon's Town and we were able to return their hospitality.

The ship carried a number of Seedies, commonly referred to as "Seedie boys", who are natives of Zanzibar. They provided much of the manual work on board. In all about 100 Seedies would be serving on the Station at a time, some in ships, and the remainder at the base. They were good workers and gave no trouble at all in the ordinary way. The VERBENA carried 12 and their Tindal (generally an older man) wore the badge of a petty officer. He was responsible for their work, discipline and everything concerning them. Our Seedies messed in a canvas structure on the upper deck and we all liked them for their willingness and cheerfulness. Some had served for several commissions in ships on the Station, and one or two wore the ribbons of the 1914-18 War Medals. We always understood that they returned to naval service when they wanted another wife. Apparently in their homeland it was necessary to have enough money to buy a cow, which, when purchased, was offered to the prospective bride's father in exchange for his daughter. The necessary money was earned by service in H.M. Ships. I said that they gave no trouble in the ordinary way, and that was true. Unfortunately they did not all hold the same religious views and occasionally, on shore, adherents of different religions or sects would come to blows and were liable to go for each other with knives.

One evening in Simon's Town I was on duty on board when the Master-At-Arms

informed me that there had been trouble amongst our Seedies and that he had marched the lot of them onto the quarterdeck. Would I investigate? Now the only one of them who spoke any English at all was the Tindal, and his command of the language was not great; indeed he was very hard to understand. I shall never forget the investigation; it was so difficult to gather what had happened and what it was all about, particularly as the Seedies all wanted to talk at the same time. As far as the Master-At-Arms and I could make out it had started as a religious matter. Members of one religion drank coffee for supper, while those of the other religion were only allowed to drink cocoa. This particular evening the mess cook, whose duty it was to fetch the supper from the ship's galley, belonged to the coffee religion and had refused to fetch the cocoa. The cocoa adherents set upon the mess cook, whereupon the latter's co-coffee-ites joined in the fray on his behalf. The Tindal, quite rightly, tried to stop the fight. This brought the opposing camps together, and the contestants all fell upon him. It was at this point that the Master-At-Arms, hearing the noise, arrived on the scene, quelled the riot, fell the lot in and marched them to the quarterdeck. No damage was done, but the Tindal was indignant and some of the Seedies were in tears!

How could one deal with such a pack of children? It took a lot of very hard work to drag out even the brief information I have mentioned, but how to get at the culprit or culprits who had started the fracas was beyond me. Every interrogation had to be made through the Tindal, acting as Interpreter and even less coherent than usual. Besides, I felt that I was probably being told what the Tindal wished me to hear and not what the men had really said, for, of course, the Tindal was prosecuting as well as interpreting! The Master-At-Arms and I looked at each other in despair. I felt that if ever there was one, this was the occasion to depart from the normal channels of justice.

I quelled the chattering, and slowly and clearly told the Tindal to inform his men that I looked upon the matter as a serious one but, as it was the first offence of any man present, I would overlook it on this occasion. If there was ever the slightest trouble again I would have the whole lot of them hung at the yardarm!

Most of them burst into tears and I told the Tindal to march them away. We never had the slightest trouble again.

In June 1925 I was promoted to Lieutenant-Commander and proceeded to Portsmouth to serve on the staff of the Navigation School. Quite a different posting!

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THE STORY OF SIMON'S TOWN'S WATER SUPPLY UP TO 1900.

A.E. READ

From the 1720's when the first settlement took place here mountain streams were used to supply water to the ships and to the townspeople. This would have been the job of slaves owned by the townspeople, and sailors would have collected for the ships. In those days the rainfall was greater than it is to-day and there were many streams running down the face of the mountain, some with a good volume of water and some just a seasonal trickle.

Three of the principal streams were:

1. The one running down what is to-day known as Water Lane and which goes under the main street and exits on the seaside of Jubilee Square. This was very handy as in the early days the ox wagons and carts outspanned there.
2. The one running down next to the Soldiers & Sailors Home (Wesleyan Methodist property) and the Prince Alfred Building (then owned by the widow Rossouw). This water was led into the D.E.I. Co buildings known as the Storehouses. The pipes were probably made of wood (Ref. BO.52/242 Dundas/Lee 2.6.1799) and
3. The one running through the Kloof and Admiralty House garden. In the early days this was the first piece of land settled in Simon's Bay and it was because of the good supply of water that Antoni Visser chose this site as well as the fact that

it was flat land.

There was sometimes a fourth stream which came out north of the railway station next to the present Fire Department/Traffic Dept.

By 1810 (SMT 11/2/91 and CO.64/1 - Report by J.H. Brand) it was reported that the pipes at the wharf (in what is now the West Dockyard) were of "thin lead which needed soldering in 2 or 3 places". At the time Mr Bridekirk, the Deputy Port Captain, reported that the pipes were now too small. In 1812 (CO.38/47) Rear Admiral Stopford complained to the Governor that it took 2 - 3 hours to get 1 tun of water. In CO.43/6 and 43/7 it was noted that the wooden pipes were rotten in places and John Osmond had provided some wood free of charge to repair same. It appears from correspondence that they used Rooi Els wood. In CO.4832/189 of 16 July 1812 Christopher Bird, (the Colonial Secretary) on behalf of the Government, issued a certificate that some land at the back of and adjoining widow Rossouw's premises (now Prince Alfred Building) had been annexed so that a wall could be built to prevent the cattle from damaging the water course. At this time and until about 1820 on the site of the Africa Station Club was the D.E.I. Co's (and later the Royal Navy's) cattle kraal. In about 1813 a tank was built behind Westgate Terrace which at that time was the Navy's Victualling Department.

In CO.45/91 of 22nd September 1813 (John Chisholm to Henry Alexander) it was proposed to spend £1,000 on the water works at Simon's Town. The pipes required upgrading and new pipes would be obtained from the Cape Water Works. Pipes were always in short supply right up to the end of the century and had to be ordered specially from England unless they could be borrowed on a return-basis from Cape Town. By February 1814 (CO.56/5) very little had been done, nor even by 23 March 1814 (CO.68/11). Things were really serious by 10 April 1815 (CO.68/77) as the pipes were now in a parlous state. Some of the alternate streams had also now dried up. On 8 May 1815 (CO.4837/366 and CO. 68/25) the Colonial Secretary was requesting the Government Resident at Simon's Town (J.H. Brand) to endeavour to purchase the spring on land granted

to H. Ferdinand "about 2 years since in order to ease the water shortage". On 10 May 1815 (CO.4837/373) the Colonial Secretary wrote to J. Chisholm approving of the siting of a vessel capable of holding 500 gallons at the wharf. The pipes also needed cleaning as they were silted up. Fortunately it rained long and hard by 4 September 1815 but it had damaged the road near present-day Admiralty House (CO. 68/47). Obviously the amount of water which passed under the road had damaged the banks of the stream. This is where the oldest bridge in the country is. October 1815 (CO.68/52) shows that the stream on Ferdinand's property (believed to have been in the Riverside/Kloof area) had been added to the Town's water supply and an extra 30,000 gallons each 24 hours had been procured. However, the summer seems to have been exceptionally hot for on 22 January 1816 (SMT 10/8/7) it is reported that the baker could not bake enough bread for the Troops in Simon's Town "for want of water".

In SMT.10/8/121 of 10 June 1816 John Chisholm reports to the Colonial Secretary that he has completed the waterworks and that the boats can now fill their casks in half the time they did before. On 19 June 1816 (CO.79/31) Mr. Brand, the Government Resident, proposed that the Master Attendant of the Dockyard (Mr Gardner) should be in charge of the waste cock of the water in the yard and that a sentry be placed there during the day and night to prevent anyone interfering with the water supply. This was promptly done on 24 June 1816 (CO. 4838/407).

On 11 February 1818 (CO. 97/1) it was proposed to build the Hospital Tank (above Old Hospital Terrace which at that time was the current Naval Hospital). Till now they had had to fetch water from the West Dockyard, which required the employment of 4 men. They would now be permitted to fill the Hospital Tank at night. An enclosure to CO.97/1 laid out the specifications by which Mr. Warren was to carry out the work.

Enclosure:

"I, the undersigned, do hereby contract....to build two tanks for the Naval

Department according to Plan:-

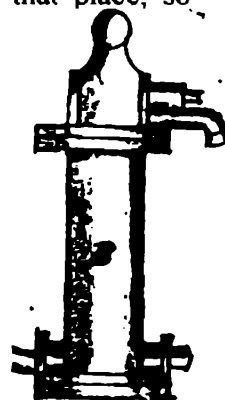
1. The tanks to be built with stone and English bricks with plastering on the inside with cement and on the outside with lime, the English bricks to be furnished by the Naval Yard at the rate of £2 sterling per 1,000.
2. To lay the pipes from one tank to the other. The pipe, solder, coals, cocks etc...to be furnished by the Naval Yard, the pipe to be delivered as much as required at the Upper tank.
3. The Naval Yard to find a Smith when required at my expense.
4. The whole to cost Two Thousand five hundred Rixdollars. One half to be paid within one month after commencement and the remainder when completed.

signed: W. Warren"

By 23 October Mr. Warren had completed his work. He then proceeded to Cape Town to commence the construction of a new wharf at that place, so obviously he was a superior craftsman.

On 27 December 1818 John Chisholm wrote to Col. Bird in CO.92/46 inter alia that the town was now watered in 3 places
(a) the Hospital Tank and a "fountain for the public"
(b) The Naval Tank/West Yard and
(c) the Barracks (now Log. Command).

The so-called fountain was actually a pump as here depicted.



On 9 July 1824 (CO.209/88) it was suggested that a Turn Cock be appointed to look after the water works at Simon's Town. There was by now also a small wooden tank at the end of the jetty in the West Yard (CO.209/88) which held 1,000 gallons of water ready to supply the naval ships. This document also stated:

"It will be necessary to mention that the water pipes are so constructed that the INHABITANTS of the Town are first served, secondly the SHIPPING after this and before it rises to the waste pipe the Main of pipes belonging to the Naval Yard is connected for the supply of the COMMODORE'S HOUSE and SEVERAL OF THE OFFICERS ALSO A BRANCH FOR THE RESIDENT'S

HOUSE (now the Simon's Town Museum). I am persuaded in my own mind that 60 Rixdollars per month will keep it in ware and tare and pay the Turn Cock's wages." This was endorsed in pencil to be drawn out in the shape of Instructions and transmitted to the Resident in Simon's Town.

SMT.10/16/105A shows that there was now a Superintendant of Water Pipes and Channels at Simon's Town.

There were frequent complaints from the Royal Navy and the town's inhabitants about the water supply and non-supply!! What's new??? The navy often complained that the supply was so erratic that it often prevented their ships from going to sea!!!

On 27 August 1830 a notice appeared in the Government Gazette "100 Rix Dollars Reward - whereas some evil-disposed person or persons having taken out and damaged a certain waste pipe, connected to the main iron pipe of the Water Works at Simon's Town and having also forced a piece of wood into the said main pipe, the undersigned, duly authorised, does hereby offer a reward of 100 Rix Dollars to any person who will give such information as shall lead to the conviction of the Offender or Offenders. Civil Engineer's Office, Cape Town, 23 August 1830. signed: John Skirrow, Govt. Architect and Assistant Engineer".

The summer of 1837 was a very dry one and the town had run dry. In January 1847 (CO. 556/-) the Admiral was still complaining about the state of the water pipes. Let's face it - no one was willing to spend the necessary money. This reference also gives a detailed report (Willis File No.55 pp.77-79) of how the water is piped around the town. At last on 7 February 1851 (CO. 587) we find that money had been spent on new pipes where necessary and the cleaning out of the existing ones. This sludgy/silt in the pipes must be a peculiarity of Simon's Town for even in 2001 our water pipes get this deposit in them.

In 1851 the Town Tank was built and the R.N. were entitled to turn it off in emergencies.

In 1855 the Naval Tank holding 500 tons was built for £1,300.

In 1859 the Harbour Board tank was built to supply Merchant ships bringing coal to Simon's Town.

In November 1852 (CO. 603 Willis 55 p.85) things were in a bad way through pipes leaking and something had to be done quickly to tame a new spring which was undermining the road "and the commercial communication with Simon's Bay will be cut off". George Pilkington, the Government Civil Engineer sounds at his wits end when he comments in CO.626 on 26 November 1853 "I have seen much of the discussions about the water during years now past".

The problem was never really solved when in April 1862 the Simon's Town Water Company was formed by Mr. G. Bower a local businessman and its proposed formation was advertised in the Cape Mercantile Advertiser on 9 April 1862.

This is the end of information from the Willis files. From now on the information is from the Minutes of the Simon's Town Municipality 1883-1898 (Receipt 1794).

The Simon's Town Municipality was formed in 1883 and immediately set about formulating rules and regulations regarding water. Admiral Salmon became very agitated as he feared his ships would have even more trouble obtaining water. Stress was made of the fact that the Admiralty paid no rates on the property they owned in Simon's Town - a state of affairs which continued into the 1960's and which was to be a real bone of contention between the Municipality and the Royal Navy/Admiralty. Quite rightly it was pointed out that it was very hard on the townsfolk. They were not many in number and had to pay rates whereas the owners of the larger amount of land in Simon's Town did not.

With the formation of the Municipality Admiral Salmon endeavoured to get a better supply for the Royal Navy - its ships were getting bigger and were now using steam - and sent a letter requesting same which was tabled at a Council Meeting on 2 April 1883. In May the Admiral wrote complaining of the quality of the water. At its meeting on 11 October 1883 the Municipality decided to seek Counsel's opinion on the right of the Municipality and the Royal Navy to the available water supply. The Municipality appointed Councillors Black, Runciman and F. Hugo to inspect and report on the best mode of supplying water to the WEST END of the town. Bye-laws for water were being formulated and until these were ready nothing much could be done about extending the water supply. Meantime the Royal Navy offered to pay £50 per annum for its water (but did not effect its first payment until June 1887 (Minutes STM Meeting 29/3/1886 & 17/6/1887).

By 18 June 1884 the Municipality noted that the new water regulations had been promulgated and now the Water Company should begin to wind up its affairs. It had been in existence since April 1862. A price was to be agreed for the original cost of the pipes and fixtures/fittings etc. It is interesting to note that the Cape Government Railways were already enquiring in August 1884 about water for its engines should the railway come to Simon's Town - which it did in December 1891. By December 1884 Mr. Oliver a water engineer, had made plans for supplying the West End of the town with water and on 5 December 1884 his plans were approved by the Municipality. He was paid the princely sum of £2.0.8d. for his work! A tank was to be built in the Kloof to hold 10 - 20 tons of water for supplying the West End. By August 1885 the Water Company agreed to cede all their rights to the Municipality. More people now began to ask to be connected to the water supply. This was a good thing as the Town was very unhygienic and flush toilets needed to be introduced as the night soil was dumped on Long Beach near the station and on the beach at Cole Point. In October 1885 the Municipality agreed at a meeting to take up and clean the water pipes from Hospital Lane to the Old Burying Ground which had been down since before 1859. In November 1885 we hear for the first time of Mr McFarlane the Asst.

Civil Engineer of the Dockyard. He is remembered by having a portion of the main road named after him.

In May 1886 the Municipality decided to move the Town Pump (sometimes referred to as "the fountain") to the south end of the Market Shed as the Navy wanted to enclose the land it had recently acquired (next to what is now Wharf Street) next to the Patent Slipway. Palace Barracks received piped water around 1886. Before that John Osmond had received his water from a spring. In June 1887 for the first time we find mention of the MALAY TANK - is this the date round which the Malays moved into the Ricketts Terrace area? Up to this date it was an European residential area.

Some citizens of the Town decided not to wait for the Municipality to connect them to the water supply and like Mr Charles Jones tapped into the existing line. He had tapped into the Admiralty House line which was water coming down from Klawer Valley. His house (called Vine Cottage) was in what is now Jubilee Street and abutted the Admiral's vegetable garden. When this was stopped he then had the temerity to complain that he had been weeks without water! He was told to go and speak to the agent!

In February 1888 the army required water to be led from the stream in the Kloof to the "Drying Room" at their magazine in the Kloof. The summer of 1887/1888 was obviously another dry one and the Municipality in March 1888 agreed to look at the stream which ran down through Dido Valley but nothing came of this as the valley later became the site of the town's second rubbish dump and the stream became very polluted. This stream flowed from behind what is now Marine Oil Refiners deserted factory.

In April 1888 the Municipality decided that the funds they had for building a Town Hall on Jubilee Square should be used to improve the town's water supply. In May 1888 Admiral Hunt-Grubbe was complaining about the unsanitary state of the town which had reached dangerous proportions. The Municipality agreed

to do something but they were cash-strapped once again. The Town Tank needed constant care and attention, costing the impoverished young Municipality more than it had in its coffers so that some months there was a deficit. In December 1888 for instance the Municipality had a surplus of only £140. There were still no drains in the Ricketts Terrace area although a few of the houses had running water. It was still a predominantly European area.

Another dry summer occurred and as the Naval Tanks were low in water it was suggested that the supply to the Town should be switched off at night in order to fill up the Naval Tanks. The main street was still untarred in those days and the Municipality wanted to purchase a water-cart so that the street could be sprayed twice a day in order to keep down the dust made by the increased traffic. The military complained of the prevalence of diarrhoea and typhoid amongst the troops. Prisoners were to be employed (and paid 1/- per day) to keep the stream clean, particularly in the Kloof area, where some of the occupants were not too fussy about where they threw their slops.

The Municipality decided in August 1889 to form a Health Committee and to refer the unsanitary state of the town to the Government's Public Works Department for guidance. Possibly they thought that by doing this the Government might fund the cost of improvements? In September 1889 the Municipality took a decision that if the Government continued in its policy of not demanding rates for Government owned property (British and South African) they would ask for the Municipality to be dissolved and responsibility and management to be returned to the Colonial Government. The Municipality reminded the Colonial Secretary that statements had been made in 1882 that as an inducement for forming a Municipality, the Government had said the Municipality would be caretakers of Crown Land until Parliamentary approval had been received. That was now 7 years ago. Steenbras Bay (Cole Point) was considered one of the upper class areas in the Town and in the Town Clerk's Report in October 1889 the houses there belonging to various Councillors still had w.c's without flush facilities.

In November 1889 the Military authorities were told they might connect their sewage outlets to a pipe the Municipality were laying in front of Palace Barracks. This was being done with the assistance of the Naval authorities. There were several of these pipes in the town and although it brought about an improvement, these pipes all emptied into the sea, something which continued until the sewage works were built. As people often helped themselves to water and diverted water, the Municipality put locks on the respective ballcocks and taps.

On 10 March 1890 the Municipality called for tenders for the building of the reservoir/dam in the Kloof. It was to be built in a crescent shape. The Navy/Dockyard wrote asking for reassurances that this would not interfere with their water supply. It would hold 250 tons.

There were heavy rains in April 1890 which cleaned out the Kloof/Brook area and carried away much of the filth. In August 1890 the Admiral generously presented to the town a 4-ton tank and a pump for the filling of the water cart. There was a small brick-making business in the town carried on by Mr Swanson and Mr van Blerk. Each needed 200 gallons per day for their activities. The Municipality warned them that they could have the water but the Municipality reserved the right to cut their supplies at short notice should the need arise.

In 1893 the Navy purchased the land for the Rifle Range in Klawer Valley (600 acres for £380). They now asked the Fleet Surgeon to get the water in Klawer Valley tested at source. They had also recently taken over the Patent Slipway and more housing was being built in the town. The Navy selected a site in Klawer Valley in a basinlike depression where the maximum quantity of water could be impounded by the minimum height of wall. In p.15 of Works Department Book No. 1 the geological data are given for anyone who may be interested.

The cost of the Royal Naval reservoir was to be £7,500. It would hold 22,000

tons of water. The Admiralty in London had qualms about 1 big dam and wondered if 2 smaller ones would be better : what if the big dam burst and the water endangered the town? At that stage the Navy put their requirements at 145 tons. The Royal Engineers required 31,000 gallons daily and Palace Barracks 20,000 gallons daily. Permission to build the Klawer Valley Reservoir was received here on 13 December 1895 (Works Book No. 1 Folio 19). 1800 casks of Portland Cement were despatched from England in January 1896. Mr. H. Craig of Simon's Town Dockyard's Works Department was in charge of the 100 strong workforce and he was given permission to open a small store in the Valley to sell to the workers but NO LIQUOR WAS TO BE SOLD. In those days people worked on Saturday mornings. At first they paid the labour on a Friday afternoon and the labour ran hell-for-leather down into the town before the bottle stores closed and then were unable to work on a Saturday morning! The Dockyard then paid them at noon on Saturdays. Supplies were brought up the old Red Hill road on waggons belonging to local farmers who had a contract with the Dockyard. One farmer got behind with deliveries for in February 1896 there was unseasonal rain and he said "it was impossible for the poor animals to pull a load up that miserable road".

The Royal Navy over the years bought up all the land in the valley near the water course in order to stop it being fouled by the cattle of the existing smallholders and also as ammunition and rifles improved so as to prevent anyone being shot during rifle practice. The brown water from Klawer was now used for fire-fighting and sanitary arrangements in the Dockyard houses whilst drinking water was from the spring.

In June 1900 the Admiralty decided to build a Sanatorium in the Valley. Up to now the Rifle Range parties had used 2 small cottages and at times these were also used as a sanatorium, particularly in 1897 when the Royal Navy returned from its forays on the West Coast of Africa. Tents were also pitched adjacent to the cottages when required. The Army, which at the time was composed of British regiments, also used the Rifle Range by arrangement. At that time there

was no South African Army as such.

In February 1898 there was talk of a new road being built up Red Hill but this did not occur until c.1914. It was said that the present Zig Zag path which went up in the area of the present Kramat would fall away through disuse when the new road was built. Before this happened, however, the Royal Navy had built the steps up from their newer Naval Hospital, adjacent to Mount Pleasant. They still exist though in need of repair. The old Red Hill road was kept in fairly good condition for pedestrians until about 1967 but has now fallen into disrepair. In May 1898 the land for the building of the new Naval Hospital above Runciman Drive was granted to the Navy. Land which had been known as Black Town and on which the Simon's Town High School/Municipal Offices later stood, was swapped by the Municipality and the Navy. In exchange the Navy acquired extra land for the new hospital.

Many of the land grants in Klawer Valley had been abandoned for many years and there was great confusion as to exactly which land the Navy was purchasing and when. (See Works Books Nos. 23-25) Therefore a complete new survey was done and the Navy appealed to the Courts for ownership of the land, which was a necessary requirement before they could be granted title - then it could not be later disputed.

The Boer War started in October 1899 and soon thousands of Boer prisoners were arriving in Simon's Town. This led to another water crisis so in August 1900 due to a very dry winter the overflow from the Klawer Valley source was led into the town's water supply. Luckily by the November there was some unseasonal heavy rain and the Municipality breathed a sigh of relief.

The last Naval land was purchased (from the Cape Syndicate) in January 1904 and the Navy were happy at last. Building of the Dockyard extension (East Dockyard) was soon to begin - earthworks were already under way. In Works Book No. 72 Folio 1 and Folio No. 36 Sir John Jackson was said to need 6,000

gallons for his cement block works and 10,000 gallons for the quarry works. He was given permission to build his own reservoir in Klaver Valley, holding 3 - 4 million gallons and it cost roughly £11,000.

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PATENT SHIP LOG

The patent ship log was an important instrument of navigation in daily use before the advent of to-day's sophisticated electronic equipment. It measured the speed and distance run of the ship, essential information needed by the navigator to confirm his position on the sea and thus give him the ability to anticipate known hazards and forecast landfall.

The oldest form of log of a practical nature was that known as the "common log". The outfit consisted of a log-ship or log-chip, log-reel, log-line and log-glass. The log-ship was a wooden quadrant about $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick with a radius of about 5" or 6", its circumference being weighted with lead to keep it upright in the sea and to retard its passage through the water. One end of a short length of thin line was passed through a hole at one of the lower corners of the log-ship and secured by a knot on the opposite side. To the other end was spliced another short length terminating in a hard wooden peg which could be inserted in a similar hole in the opposite corner. The holes were so placed that the log-ship would hang square from the span thus formed.

The log-line led from this span inboard to the ship. The first length between the log-ship when floating in the sea and the ship was known as the "stray-line". It varied from 10 to 20 fathoms according to the distance necessary to veer the log-ship clear of the disturbance of the ship's wake before starting observations. The place where its inboard end joined the remainder of the log-line was marked by a piece of bunting, and the line from here towards the end in the ship was marked and measured in "knots" composed of pieces of cord worked in between

the strands. The distance between the knots bore the same relation to a nautical mile (6,080 ft) as 28 sec. to an hour (3,600 sec) i.e. they were placed 47ft 3in apart. The end of the first interval, counting from the bunting was marked with a piece of leather, the second by a cord with two knots, the third by one with three knots and so on. Half-way between each length was a cord with one knot. It followed therefore, that if, say, five knots of the line ran out in 28 sec. by the sand glass, the ship had gone $5 \times 47\frac{1}{4}$ ft in that time, i.e. was moving at a rate of 5 knots (5 nautical miles per hour).

The process of "heaving the log" was time consuming and the log-line was meticulously prepared. One of the earliest of these logs was invented by Edward Massey in 1802; this log was in general use in 1836 and continued so until 1861. An improved log was produced by Alexander Bain in 1846 and in 1861 Thomas Walker's "harpoon" or frictionless log was introduced. In all these the dials registering the distance travelled were close to the screw which actuated the log, therefore the log had to be hauled in before it could be read. This inconvenience was overcome by Walker who in 1878 introduced the "cherub" log. The "cherub" was a dial secured to the taffrail of the ship, a special plaited line of 40 to 60 fathoms in length and a screw-like rotator. A brass fly-wheel, to regulate the rate of spin, was added to later patterns. This log was excellent up to a speed of about 14 knots. This was improved by the introduction of the "trident" log.

Later, a further development was an electrical arrangement transmitting the readings of the counter to a dial in the chart-house. An excellent book has recently been published on the subject of ship-logs. The reader might be amazed to know that it contains colour photographs of 74 different logs. However, Massey and Walker became the most innovative contributors towards safety at sea and the most successful patent log manufacturers.

Sources: Encyclopaedia Britannica

"Distance Run" by A.J. Sharp, Weymouth, U.K. 2001.

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DEFINITION OF "CAPE OF GOOD HOPE STATION" IN 1908

The Cape of Good Hope Station is bounded:

NORTH:

In the Indian Ocean by the Equator between the Coast of Africa and between the Coast of Africa and the Meridian of 70° East, and by the Parallel of 10° South Latitude between the Meridians of 70° and 95° East Longitude.

In the Atlantic Ocean between the Parallel of the Cunene River, about 17° 15' South Latitude between the Coast of Africa and the Meridian of Greenwich; and by the Parallel of 15° South Latitude between the Meridians of Greenwich and of 15° West Longitude

EAST:

By the Meridian of 70° East Longitude between the Equator and the Parallel of 10° South, and by the Meridian of 95° East.

SOUTH:

By the Antarctic Circle

WEST:

By the Meridian of 15° West Longitude.

In 1908 the Cape Squadron consisted of HMS HERMES (Flagship), HMS FORTE and HMS PANDORA. This was the least number of ships ever stationed at the Cape. About the largest number of ships commissioned on the Cape Station was in the year 1898 when there were 13 men-of-war and 4 river gunboats.

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SIR HENRY FREDERICK NORBURY (1839 - 1925)

A.E. READ

He served here between 169 and 1881 in HMS SHAH during which time he was also the doctor in charge of the Naval Hospital (now Old Hospital Terrace).

Henry Norbury was actually born Henry Frederick Nathan but possibly due to anti-Semitism or with an eye to progressing his career, he changed his name by Deed Poll on 4 September 1874, while on this Station.

Henry was born on 7 May 1839 to Henry Nathan (surgeon) and his wife Eliza (nee Barnes) at Wool, near Wareham in Dorset. On 1 August 1853 he enrolled at Oundle School, Northamptonshire, paying the £1 entrance fee. He left there in mid-summer 1855 and signed the register at St Bartholomews Hospital in London on 1 December 1856. He then lived at 43 Hall Street, City Road, London. He obtained his FRCS in 1860 whereupon he entered the Royal Navy.

Henry married in 1868 Mina (Wilhelmina ?) Legge daughter of E.G. Wade-Brown of Burton Bradstock, Dorset. They had three sons and five daughters. Their eldest daughter Mina Ethel was born in Simon's Town in 1869 and Beatrice Emily was born here on 7 April 1872. A son Herbert Reginald was born in Simon's Town in 1876 and another daughter Eleanor, in 1879. As we have said above he changed his surname, and his wife's and his children's surnames to Norbury. Why he chose this name is not known. Maybe it was so that he could inherit some money - who knows. Norbury is a suburb of London.

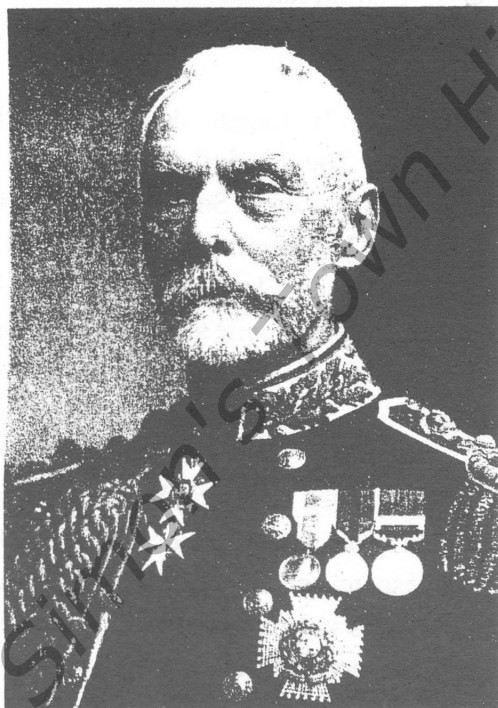
Henry Norbury was Fleet Surgeon in 1879 attached to HMS SHAH. Between 1877-79 he was involved in the Zulu Wars. He was in medical charge of the Naval Brigade when he was mentioned in despatches. In 1879 he was Principal Medical Officer of General Sir Charles Pearson's column, present at the Battle of Inyezane and the Defence of Eshowe and later was P.M.O. of the Naval Brigade

with General Crealock's column where he was again several times mentioned in despatches. He earned a medal with 3 clasps.

Norbury was appointed Deputy Inspector General of the Royal Navy in 1887 and Inspector General in 1894, later to become Director General. In 1879 he was made a C.B. (Military) and awarded the Blane Gold Medal. In 1897 he received a KCB (Military). In 1895 he became a Knight of Grace of St John of Jerusalem. He also received the Jubilee Medal of Queen Victoria and the Coronation Medals of Kings Edward VII and George V.

Whilst still in Simon's Town he wrote "The Naval Brigade in South Africa" which was published in London in 1880 by Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington. When in London he lived at St Margarets, Eltham, Kent and died on 10 December 1925.

Information from his great-granddaughter Mrs A.H. Marcus of Croydon, Surrey, who with her husband visited the Museum in January 2002.



SIR HENRY AND LADY NORBURY