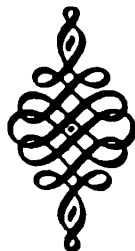




**SIMON'S TOWN  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**BULLETIN**



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 44<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
THE SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, HELD ON BOARD THE  
MUSEUM SHIP "CABLE RESTORER" ON 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2004.

Web-site:

The web-site is still engendering much interest in Simon's Town and over 1 million hits are recorded.

Inspectors for HERITAGE WESTERN CAPE:

We still have not heard if we have been appointed but these days Government matters seem to proceed at a snail's pace. Meanwhile we keep our eyes and ears open. We are pleased this year to have had success in getting Rennick's Cottage opposite Admiralty House spruced up. Thanks for this go to Terry Korsten – he succeeded where even the old S.T. Municipality had failed. Several of our buildings in the main street have been given some tender loving care but this is not a reason to relax our vigilance.

PLAQUES:

We are about to place a plaque in the Martello Tower commemorating the fact that the Georgian grate there came originally from "Oatlands" (at one time the residence of Captain Henry Somerset, Commandant of Simon's Town). After the fire at "Oatlands" some years ago the grate was rescued by the Simon's Town Municipality who then owned the property, and given to the STHS. On the completion of the refurbishment of the Martello Tower the Society presented it for placement in the Tower.

TOMBSTONES:

The Museum Manager and the Society Chairman hope to have a meeting with Brett Myrdal the Manager of Cape Peninsula National Parks about the preservation and easy access to Just Nuisance's grave and other historical sites such as Anthonie's Gat in the Cape Point Reserve. Parks are taking over the Klawer Valley buildings from the Navy and incorporating them into their Hoerckwagga Mountain Trail from Table Mountain to Cape Point. They will be turned into

overnight accommodation. Parks have been granted R37m to carry out this project.

#### BUSINESSES IN THE TOWN:

There has been much activity with shopkeepers chopping and changing, opening up and closing down. Sue will still keep the list up to date although she has moved to Fish Hoek and Tony Durell has offered to walk around and make a note of the changes and let Sue know.

#### RUSSIAN GRAVES IN O.B.G.

Nothing more has been heard but I'm still sure one-day it WILL happen. They had wanted to erect a very ornate memorial full of jewels but were advised that it would soon be vandalised.

#### GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE:

The Chairman still cleans and plants there. However people keep stealing some of the new plants so it is an uphill battle. Still no funding from War Graves but someone is trying to procure help for us. It appears that there is some sort of re-organisation going on and our contact cannot tell us more at the moment but is endeavouring to get us funding. At the moment the Chairman is happy to pay and feed the garden help. More new hardy semi-succulent plants will be put in in May. Agapanthus have been put in recently. The May planting will include plumbago which is very hardy.

#### TOURS:

Mike Saggerson has continued to arrange these for us and if we can make a small profit from these it helps to balance our books. We are very grateful to him for his hard work as the tours do run like clockwork.

Our tour to Elgin was a wonderful day out. We hope our next tour on 5<sup>th</sup> May to Genadendal will be well supported. It is open to members' friends as well so here's hoping.

#### VOLUNTEERS:

Thank you to those members who do duties in the shop and reception. The Museum needs more helpers to please speak to Jean if you would like to offer your services. It can be once a week, you can alternate with a friend. Think about it. The Museum hopes to re-arrange the shop and reception soon and then it will all be in one room and will be much easier to operate.

#### BULLETIN & CHRONICLE:

We have had many members comment on the improved lay-out of the Bulletin so it was a worthwhile change. The cost of postage and paper for printing goes up each year and this forces us to increase our subscription fee. We are most grateful to those who make donations as without this we could not survive. One of our U.K. members subsidises the cost of the printing of 1 bulletin each year so each time the Rand strengthens, I take a deep breath.

#### DOCKYARD 2010 CENTENARY BOOK:

Audrey and Terry still meet (for the Society) with Bill Rice (Project Manager), Admiral Burgers, Captain Wainwright and Commander Bisset (for the Naval Heritage Society). Bill has produced a first chapter and had it scrutinised and pulled to pieces by the committee but thankfully he still carries on. The Museum has been fortunate as Bill in going through the Works Book from the British Admiralty days finds nuggets of information in them which he gives us to add to the Museum's archives.

#### HON. AUDITOR:

We were very fortunate to obtain the services of Martin Bramwell, a newcomer to Simon's Town, and wish to thank him very much for doing this. He is busy settling into his new house and is a very accomplished do-it-yourselfer.

#### RECEIVE OF REVENUE:

We amended our Constitution last year in the hope of meeting with the Receiver's requirements but again this year we must make further amendments and then will re-submit our details to the Receiver.

## GLENCAIRN GLEANINGS:

This book sells steadily and is available through the Museum shop.

## MEMBERSHIP:

We have approximately 550 members. We have put an information poster in the Library and hope to have a member sitting at a table on the verandah here each week to try and recruit more members.

## FINALLY:

Thank you to my Committee for all their support. Len Sweet is moving away from the area so is retiring. Sheila the Secretary feels 3 years was enough and Sue wants to ease off a bit. Whilst it is sad to lose these people from the Committee it is a good idea to introduce new blood. This is the time to thank all those who have helped in our fund-raising for the Museum. I think members would like to know that Sue's White Elephant stall (assisted by the Cartwrights and Fairfields) made just under R3,000 for the Development Fund and this is the approximate cost of the new security gate. Sue will re-open her stall in November so in the meantime bring any offerings and we will store them at the Museum.

Thank you

AUDREY READ

14.4.2004

FROM: THE CAPE TOWN GAZETTE & AFRICAN ADVERTISER

NO. 425 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1814.

“ The widow Hurter is selling her 20 good slaves (waggon drivers, fishermen, bakers, gardeners, masons and shoemakers), 3 ox waggons, 70 draught oxen and a fishing net 60 fathoms long.”

The widow Hurter was then selling what is known to-day as Admiralty House. She was obviously very wealthy and ran a very self-contained household. Editor.

A.E. READ

When the British Empire was at its height in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, wars and campaigns particularly attracted popular songwriters. For instance, it is thought that over 100 pieces were written about the Crimean War alone. This was the time of sheet music. The music was made to be used and would often become tattered and worn. However, the covers were of a very high standard both of art and reproduction. One of the men concerned was a German printer called Engelman who patented a method for producing coloured lithographs which he patented in 1837, the year Queen Victoria came to the throne. With this music publishers began producing sheet music with coloured pictures on the covers.

One of the most prolific and best artists was John Brandard (1812-1863) who was in partnership with Louis Julien a composer, conductor, impresario, showman and founder of the Promenade Concerts in London. Brandard provided exquisite, soft and fine-toned chromolithographs for Julien's music. Some of their best known pieces were *The Drum Polka*, *The Atlantic Galop* and *The Fall of Sebastopol*. Others who were well known during the latter half of the 1800s were Alfred Concanen, Thomas Packer, Henry Maguire, Augustus Butler and H.G. Banks. The famous military artist Richard Simkin was another illustrator and his cover commanded higher fees than other peoples. George Cruikshank, the caricaturist who illustrated books for Dickens, also made money in this field.

When H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH set off on his round the world cruise in 1867-68 (during which he called at Simon's Town) *The GALATEA Waltz* was composed and published in 1868. This was performed at The Fairy Palace Concerts in The Agricultural Hall – town unknown. The cover is a particularly fine chromolithograph. Theo Bonheur composed *The Royal Naval Brigade* march. There was also *The Pekin March* almost certainly written to commemorate the march of the Naval Brigade and Royal Marines from HMS TERRIBLE and other ships, during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Readers will recall that HMS

TERRIBLE was here during the Boer War while she was en route to China and her guns were used at Ladysmith. Probably the least remembered these days is *Nelson's First Farewell* composed by Herbert Darnley and Norton Atkins and sung by Miss Nellie Richards. This was published in the late 1890s and recalled Nelson leaving home aged 13 to join his uncle's ship in the Medway. He was rated on the books of HMS RAISONNABLE as a midshipman on 1 January 1771.

Reference:

Royal Navy News August 2003.



## CONSTRUCTION OF A DREDGER/HOPPER/DREDGER BARGE FOR SIMON'S TOWN DOCKYARD.

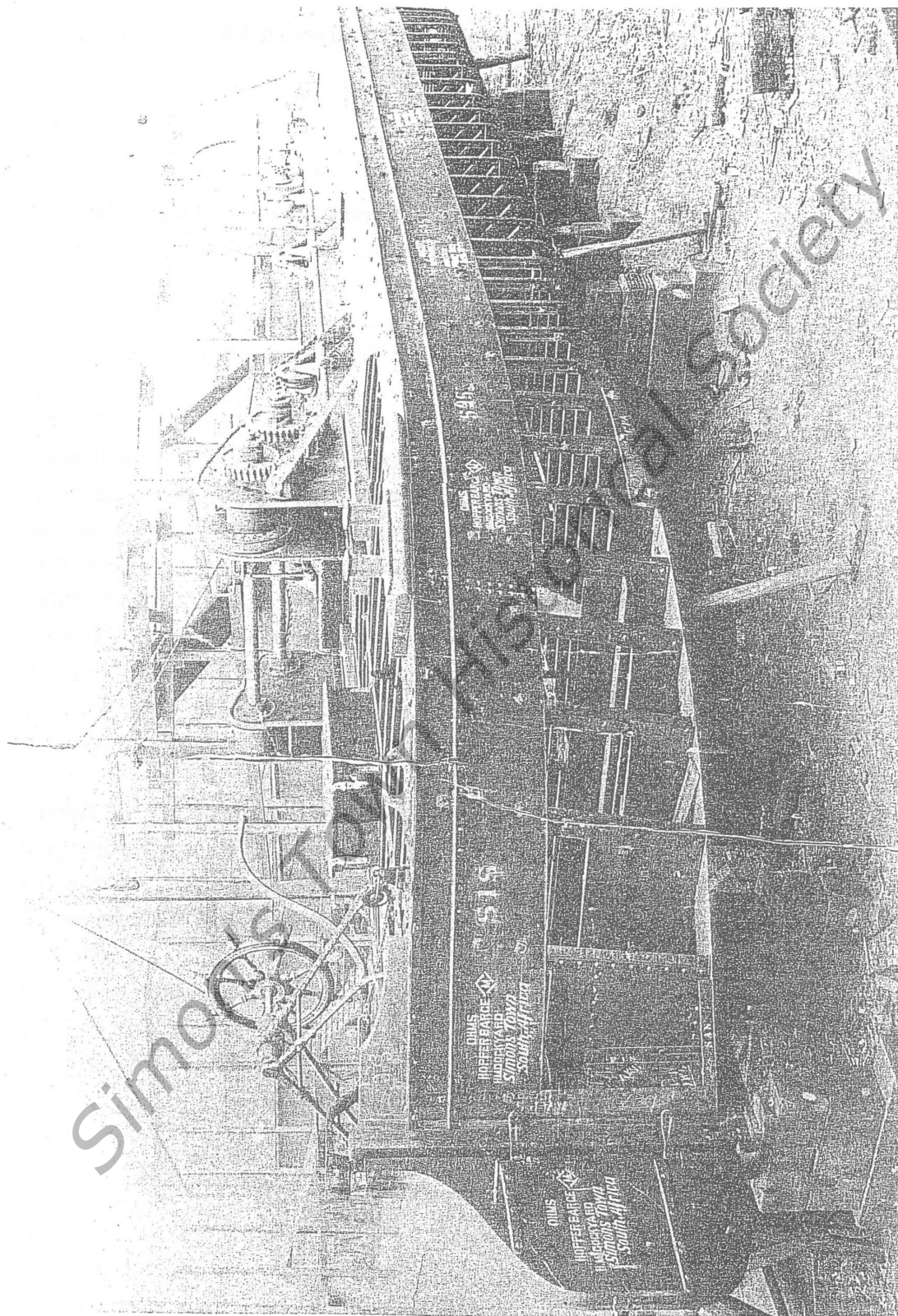
W.H. RICE

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century problems were experienced due to silting of the West Yard Camber, which required dredging operations to be carried out every few months to remove the accumulated sand. Dredging was achieved by means of a "bag and spoon", presumably manually operated, and was a slow and inefficient process for which an amount of approximately £300 per year was budgeted.

In an attempt to overcome the problem of silting the Civil Engineer at Simon's Town Dockyard approached the Admiralty for permission to acquire a small steam powered sand suction pump, of the type manufactured by Messrs Simons of Renfrew, to be mounted on a pontoon. The question of disposal of the dredged sand was considered and the Civil Engineer in Chief at the Admiralty decided to provide Simon's Town with a dredging apparatus mounted on a hopper barge which could be towed out into the Bay to dump the accumulated spoil. Tenders for the construction of the hopper/dredger were invited and the order was placed on Messrs Alley & Maclellan Ltd, situated in Polmadie Road, Glasgow, who submitted their quotation for £1,575, on 23 October 1899.

Crane manufacturers, Messrs Stothert & Pitt expressed the opinion that the volume of sand to be cleared annually did not justify the use of a suction pump and proposed the use of a steam crane with a grab. This proposal was accepted and a grab dredging unit, to be mounted on the barge, was ordered from that company at a cost of £485. The hopper barge was to be of composite construction with steel frames and hopper, and timber keel, stem and stern posts, rudder, bulkheads, skin and deck. Main dimensions were:-

|                |       |                |       |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Length overall | 70 ft | Hopper length  | 22 ft |
| Beam           | 20 ft | Hopper Breadth | 8 ft  |
| Draught loaded | 5 ft  |                |       |



The barge was assembled at Alley & Maclellan's Sentinel Works, using bolts in place of rivets in the steel structure and with the oak keel, stem and sternposts (all 9" x 8") and rudder, temporarily bolted in place. Major components were marked "H.M.S.O., Naval Dockyard, Simon's Town" and on each component was the "shipping mark", a white diamond with the letter M in the middle. The hopper operating arrangements were tested and the structure was inspected and passed by the local Admiralty Overseer. Photographs were taken to facilitate re-erection in Simon's Town and the barge was taken apart and packed for shipment, together with the required quantities of rivets, nuts, bolts, washers, paint and caulking materials.

An American Elm fender 9" x 7" in section, was to be fitted around the barge after assembly. Pitch pine timber for the sides, deck and bulkheads was purchased separately from Messrs Burt, Bolton & Haywood and was shipped out from the West India Docks, on the River Thames, aboard the cargo vessel s.s. QUEENSLAND. Together with the components the shipbuilder was to supply a set of construction drawings, a wooden half-block model showing details of frames and plating and two photographs of the barge, complete except for the deck and side planking. The crated components, weighing 82 tons in total, were to be delivered to the Queen's Dock, Glasgow, to be loaded aboard the steamer CLAN FRASER on 4/5 June 1900. The ship was to load 514 tons of crated components for Mooring Lighter No. 14, built for service at Simon's Town by Fleming & Ferguson of Paisley. The ship was due to sail on 8 June, arriving at Simon's Town on 9 July.

The Commander-in-Chief Simon's Town was advised that the ship would require assistance with unloading and that goods delivered would have to be removed from the ship's side as quickly as possible using lighters. Any delays caused by the Navy not being prepared to take delivery of the cargo would be charged @ £2.10/- per hour. On completion the Hopper/Dredger was to be designated "Cape of Good Hope Yard Craft No. 15"

In September 1900 the Civil Engineer at the Cape advised the Admiralty that the Barge should be completed by the end of the financial year and that £4,000 , of which £2637 had already been spent, was needed to cover the costs of storage, erection and launching. Admiralty responded by telegram with an order that no more was to be spent and demanded that breakdown of the stated costs be provided forthwith. The Asst. Constructor had the task of explaining that considerable cost had been incurred in transporting the components from the Camber Quay, where they had been landed, to the slipways, some distance away. [Remember the East Dockyard had not yet been built] Also the Yard had to provide keelblocks, on which to construct the barge and timber for staging to allow access to the sides and deck. He also pointed out that the timber supplied for the barge was rough-sawn and that cost would be incurred in planing it to size before fitting and also that the whole structure would require re-painting before being put into service.

In December 1900 Mr. A.H. Gould, the Asst. Constructor, advised that due to increased commitments, and a shortage of suitable labour it would not be possible, after all, to undertake the work during the current financial year. This is hardly surprising as the Dockyard staff were involved with the assembly of the Mooring Lighter, which had also arrived aboard s.s. CLAN FRASER and work brought about by the increased number of ships visiting Simon's Town because of the Anglo-Boer War. In January 1901 the Civil Engineer at Simon's Town was instructed to arrange for the barge to be completed as soon as possible by a local contractor. On being approached for advice the Engineer to the Cape Town Harbour Board recommended three possible contractors, namely Cunningham & Gearing, Perrott & Co and W. & G. Scott. Having done so he added:

*"But I may at once tell you that I doubt very much if they will do it as cheaply as you could get it done by your own Department unless your wages are very high or your men indifferent workers, which I do not suppose is so in either case."*

Two contractors expressed interest and the third, Messrs Scott, indicated that their associates, Messrs Donald Bros. would also be interested in tendering.

Mr Clements, Inspector of Shipwrights, strongly recommended that the barge

should be assembled at the contractors' yard due to the lack of space in the Dockyard and the number of vessels requiring the use of the slipways. Specifications were issued and Contractors were requested to quote separate prices for:

1. Construction of the barge in the Dockyard
2. Construction at own yard with components delivered by the Admiralty
3. Collection of components from Simon's Town and transportation to own yard.

A quotation of £2298, submitted by Donald Bros. arrived too late, leaving three tenders to be considered, viz:

R.H. Nichols £1675 Perrott & Co. £1445 Cunningham & Gearing £2300  
Perrotts (Globe Iron Works) submitted the lowest tender but would only quote for building the barge in the Naval Dockyard, as they did not have a suitable berth in Cape Town. The Admiralty, therefore, decided to place the order with R.H. Nichols, a shipwright resident in St George's Street, Simon's Town, who quoted the same price for construction at his own site (on the beach at Simon's Town) as in the Dockyard. As Nichols had quoted a price of £75 to transport materials from the Dockyard to his site, it was decided that Dockyard staff would deliver the stores to him as required. Authorisation for the order was sent by Admiralty Telegram dated 3 January 1902, stipulating that the barge was to be completed within six months of that date. Admiralty decided to allocate a total of £4,900 for construction of the barge, to be made up as follows:

|                                   |        |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Already spent up to 31 March 1901 | £2,637 |
| To Mr Nichols                     | 1,675  |
| Dockyard labour and materials     | 360    |
| Contingencies                     | 228.   |

It appears that Mr Nicholls was not well equipped for the job he had undertaken for he lost no time in applying for the loan of Naval Stores to allow him to start the work. These included wooden staging poles, deals, wedges, various types of hammer, drifts, firing irons, tongs, coal and coke. The Civil Engineer agreed to the loan of timber, coal and coke, but decided that Mr Nichols should provide his own tools. On 17 February 1902 Mr Nichols wrote to the Commander-in-Chief stating that, as the result of a death in his family, he was obliged to travel to

England and would be unable to fulfill his contractual obligations. The bereavement was probably fortuitous, perhaps even fictitious, as it seems quite possible that Mr Nichols was by this time finding the job to be beyond his capabilities. It certainly seems unlikely that a man engaged in an enterprise which was likely to yield a handsome profit within 6 months would abandon it because a relative had died 6,000 miles away.

In his letter to the Civil Engineer, Mr Nichols stated that Messrs Perrott & Co had agreed to take over the contract and to complete the barge on his site for the same price. Admiralty approval for the transfer of the contract was obtained and Messrs Perrott were instructed to complete the barge within six months from February 1902. The work was to be inspected by Mr. H. Clements, Inspector of Shipwrights in the Dockyard, who was to be paid £2 per week over and above his salary to cover overtime worked.

While the barge was under construction it was decided to sheath the bottom with zinc to protect the timber from marine borers. Zinc sheet and galvanised nails were shipped out from England and the Contractor was paid extra to fit it. The contract was not an easy one, with Perrotts claiming that they were held up due to various factors such a slow delivery of materials, hull planking being supplied three quarters of an inch too wide so that it had to be planed down by hand and the supply of sub-standard timber. They claimed that had the required materials been supplied when requested they could have put more men on the job and made significantly more progress. Mr J.J. King Salter, the Naval Constructor, argued that in spite of the problems, more progress should have been made and that far from being held up by Naval Stores, Perrotts had experienced great difficulty in finding enough skilled men to progress the job. He also claimed that Perrotts had broken two perfectly good planks due to careless handling and pointed out that they had been given access to the specification, drawings and materials during the tendering period and should have anticipated and allowed for many of the problems with which they were now faced.

It is, however, evident from correspondence that there were faults on both sides. Certainly, the garboard planks, situated next to the keel, could not be found in the Naval Stores and the rest of the hull was planked before they could be fitted, making the task of fitting them more difficult. Perrotts had an unforeseen problem because the holes drilled in the steel frames and plates to take the rivets were ½" in dia. instead of five-eighths. Here it appears that the canny Scots had decided to save a few bawbees by using ½" bolts to put the structure together in Glasgow. Unfortunately they had neglected to ream out the holes to take five-eighths rivets before packing the components for shipment. Some of the planking supplied from the U.K. was of poor quality and the Dockyard had to substitute 70 twenty-foot lengths of pitch pine from its own stock. Also the oak "thick stuff" the pad on which the windlass was to be mounted, was in poor shape and teak from Naval Stores was supplied to the contractor instead.

According to the Commander's Journal, the barge was launched from the beach on 17 October 1902 and was taken to the Camber, where the Dockyard steam crane was used to lift the Stothert & Pitt grab crane on board ten days later. Final outfitting tasks and trials were carried out and the Hopper-Dredger was completed on 24 November, three months beyond the date stipulated in the contract. In December the Civil Engineer wrote to Messrs Perrot, advising them of problems attributable to faulty workmanship. The grab crane was not working properly and there was a leak in the hull planking which had not been evident during the acceptance trials as it only occurred when the barge was loaded. These defects were rectified and Civil Engineer in Chief at the Admiralty in London was left to sit in judgement on Perrott's claim for extra money for unforeseen work and the Dockyard's rebuttal. Eventually it was decided that the Contractor should be paid an extra £118. 4/- in final settlement, which should have resulted in a fair profit for Perrotts, in view of the fact that the contract price inherited from Mr Nichols was £230 more than they had originally quoted for the job.

Reference:

Admiralty Civil Engineer File – Book No. 35, S.T. Museum Archives.

## ROPE AND ROPEMAKING

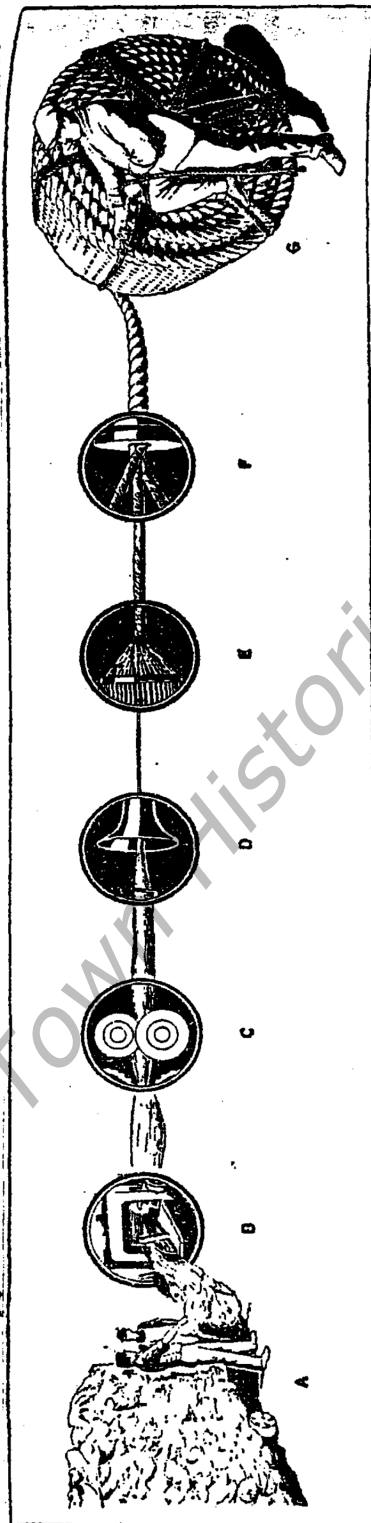
A.E. READ

Rope is made of animal or vegetable fibres and of metallic wires. Fibre rope alone will be considered in this article. "Cordage" is a term applied generally to yarns, twines, ropes and cables but refers specifically to "rope" in the industry.

Fibre rope is cordage of "stranded" construction i.e. fibres or hairs laid parallel and twisted together making a yarn; two or more of these yarns twisted together "forming" the strand and three or more of these strands twisted together "laying" the rope. Three or more ropes laid together make a "cable-laid" rope, sometimes referred to colloquially as "hawser-laid". The smallest fibre ropes made are approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in circumference or  $\frac{3}{16}$ " in dia. So that any similar products of less than these dimensions are not rope in the usual acceptance of the term. Two or more yarns twisted together, either plain twisted or laid, are twine regardless of the form of put-up; laid twine is sometimes referred to as "corded". Single yarns are known as yarns except binder twine, which is a single yarn product. This group of products is known as "ply and yarn goods" in the hard fibre cordage industry and as yarns, twines or cords in the soft fibre industry. Braided construction of yarns, such as sash cords, is sometimes referred to as "rope".

Rope was already in use in south-west Asia in the chalcolithic period (4<sup>th</sup> millennium) but this was probably made of plaited thongs, a type which has persisted down to modern times specially in arrested cultures e.g. in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) amongst the Rodiyas, a retarded outcast group. When Xerxes (480B.C.) built the bridge of boats across the Hellespont, the Phoenicians constructed one line with cables of white flax, the Egyptians in the other used ropes made of papyrus. In India in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., rope-making was so specialized that one class of experts made ropes just for horses,

## ROPE AND ROPEMAKING



BY COURTESY OF THE COLUMBIAN ROPE CO.

PROCESSES THROUGH WHICH FIBRE PASSES IN THE MANUFACTURE OF ROPE: (A) FIBRE FROM BALES WITH TANGLES SHAKEN OUT; (B) THE BREAKER WHERE THE FIBRE IS COMBED; (C) SLIVER (FIBRE AFTER IT IS COMBED) COMPRESSED INTO COMPACT FORM; (D) FIBRE TWISTED INTO YARN; (E) YARN DRAWN THROUGH A GUIDE AND TWISTED INTO A READY-OR STRAND; (F) STRANDS LAID UP INTO ROPE; (G) FINISHED ROPE COILED AND READY FOR SHIPPING

another for elephants; and in China in the Han period, if not earlier, the Emperor's carriage in time of mourning was equipped with silk ropes.

Ropemaking went on for centuries with little change up to the time of the introduction of machinery about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the early days all yarn was spun by hand. The hemp was first hackled by combing it straight over a board studded with sharp steel teeth. A bunch or "head" of this hackled hemp was placed around the spinner's waist, who attached a few fibres to a hook on the spinning wheel and, as the hook was revolved by means of a large wheel turned by the hand, walked backwards away from the wheel feeding the fibre from the supply around his waist, preserving the uniformity and proper size of the yarn. Several yarns were twisted together by use of a hand wheel and several hooks, forming the "strand" and three or more strands twisted together "laying" the rope.

Horsepower was used in old times for forming and laying rope which was too large to be made by hand. The term "ropewalk" came from the long low buildings used and the walking back and forth of the spinners and ropemakers. In the early days every community of any size had a ropewalk, there being 173 in the United States for instance in the year 1810. These walks were often 900 ft or more in length. Many were in the open air. There being a shortage of level spare space in Simon's Town, the common thing was for the dockyard to use a section of Waterfall Road, which provided about 450 ft of length to use in working the ropes required on special occasions. Most rope arrived from U.K. in necessary, specified lengths and was made in the Royal Navy's ropeworks at Chatham and Devonport Dockyards. The Royal Navy's ropeworks at Chatham are now in private hands and still in operation to this day.

## THE TRANSIT OF VENUS 1874

From the Journal of Lt Cyril Corbet RN

"On 27 May 1874 I joined the hired transport "ELIZABETH MARTIN" at Plymouth, holding an appointment as a Chief Astronomer in the "Transit of Venus" Expedition and intended to be in charge of the second Astronomical Station in Kerguelen or on Heard Island; but for the present voyage, and until the whole party is complete, in charge of half of each of the two stations for the above Islands, consisting of Lt. Goodridge RN; Mr J.B. Smith; Corporal Wright R.E. and Private Hilbert R.E.; also about 150 tons of Instruments, stores and provisions, which I had previously seen stowed on board the ship at Woolwich Arsenal. Our fellow passengers were Lt Neate RN, Lt Hoggan RN and three sappers, intended to form a station for observing the Transit of Venus at Rodrigues (an island near Mauritius); Capt. Phillpotts, Capt. Brooke and Lt Studdy, three army officers in charge of 100 troops bound for the Cape and Mauritius. There was also a naval Assistant Surgeon named Grey, for Ascension, and an army surgeon, named McCartney.

On the night of 27<sup>th</sup> the Army and the Navy had a squabble on board, for it appeared there was a piece of gross injustice done in the distribution of cabins, for an army Assistant Surgeon had the second biggest cabin all to himself, while two naval Lieutenants were squashed up in one a third of the size; this dispute was settled in our favour by Admiral Sir W. King Hall.

We sailed on the 28<sup>th</sup> in fine weather. The ship's officers were Captain Duncan, Chief Officer Clifford, 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer Gomley, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Purser (who combined and signed for both) Beauvois, and Doctor Taylor. We had fine weather and averaged 10 knots all the way to Teneriffe, where we arrived and anchored on 3<sup>rd</sup> June. We took in water and had just time to run on shore and see the place. The English Consul was Mr Gratton.

We arrived in Cape Town on 26 June with a strong south-east wind blowing and the mountain covered in the table-cloth. I went on shore in the morning, walking in whirlwinds of dust. The town is not a bit English in appearance, but more like a Spanish negro town. I took a cab and rode out to the Observatory where I saw Mr. Stone putting up an Equatorial Pier. He was very kind and helped me make several decisions. I lunched at the British Hotel in Cape Town and in the evening went to see some more of the town.

On 27 June we sailed for Simon's Town where we arrived at 4 p.m. We had beautiful calm weather for the voyage; all the big albatross, gannet and molyhawks sitting on the water and presenting capital shots. I went ashore with the Captain and Neate to the R.N. Club. Shortly after our arrival the senior naval officer came in (Captain Dunlop) and we presented ourselves to him. A number of old shipmates and friends are here on board the FLORA, BEACON and SHEARWATER. We dined on the latter. The town to me seems a miserable sort of place but our Naval Club seems very nice and seems to have everything that one could desire; the country round about looks very rocky and hilly, and a great deal of sand-stone everywhere; the mountains on the opposite side of the Bay are snow-capped.

On Sunday 28 June I popped overboard for a swim but stopped in too long, got the shivers, and turned in again feeling slightly unwell. My companions amused themselves by fishing for snook and mackerel but had to be careful of the toad fish, for if you taste a bit of this you are dead within 5 minutes. My friend Moore from the SHEARWATER came aboard and dined with me. After that we went on shore to Church – London Church; a very old clergyman of 80, named Rev. Canon Judge, preached the sermon, being really a pitiable sight to see, evidently so very near his latter end and struggling to die in harness. The Rev. Pratt, a would-be high churchman, assisted, though he is a navy chaplain and part and parcel of the Dockyard. The singing was very good and the congregation large.

Monday 29 June we began discharging the valuable "Venus" cargo. At night I dined with Captain Dunlop on board the BEACON with Capt Phillpots and Lt Stewart, who is in charge of a small depôt of troops here. We continued discharging on 30 June. On 1 July it rained and prevented us from further unloading. On 2 July I got all my Instruments out of the ship and into storage. I asked Captain Dunlop for a boat to take my chronometers and was surprised when he came off in his own gig and we took them over to the FLORA where we locked them up in a cabin which was given up to me, key and all. That night we hosted a dinner at the Naval Club for all those who had helped us. It was very successful, the champagne being remarkably good. To-day Goodridge and I took up residence at the British Hotel.

On 3 July I finished unloading from the ship, then set off with Goodridge, Studdy and Pullen for two days spree and holiday. I had telegraphed Mr. Edwardes at Wynberg to send us a cart, covered in, on 2 wheels and on springs, drawn by two horses. Between Simon's Town and Wynberg, large beaches of sand stretch in several places right inland to the sea on the other side almost, salt rivers run through them too, no proper roads can therefore be made; and for the first 7 or 8 miles, the carts have to go by this sand. At low water the beach is pretty hard, and the carts go very well until you cross the rivers, which are all in quicksands and very dangerous: the only way is to go full speed at them, and should you come to grief, jump out and roll the whole thing out the best way you can. At high water, the sand above the water mark is so heavy that it is terrible for the horses; so, if possible, you try to go just in the water, but at a nasty angle and you get splashed. We passed Kalk Bay, a small fishing village, and then got into different country, good roads, pretty trees etc, which got prettier and prettier till the grand climax at Wynberg, when we drove up to Cogill's Hotel and had luncheon. After lunch we went on by train to Cape Town arriving at 5 p.m. At Cape Town I went to the Royal Hotel, Mr Lopes, Proprietor and secured a room with Goodridge, then I went out to purchase the necessities for the Ball, for we had come up on purpose for this Grand Ball – the best of the year in the

Cape Colony, given by the Merchants at the Exchange, and to which the Members of the "Venus" Expedition had a special invitation – dress-boots, gloves, neckties, and shaving at a barber's being all completed. At 9 p.m. I dressed in uniform, undress, epaulettes, gold lace trousers, and went to the Ball covered with a shawl, which I had boned from my mother before leaving England, and which I always find now much more comfortable than a big coat. I had trouble persuading the man in the cloakroom to take it in along with my hat, he saying that it belonged in the ladies. It was very crowded about 900 being present. Captain Dunlop and I met up and he introduced me to the nicest, prettiest, and daughters of the biggest swells – the Misses Cunningham, daughter of the General Commanding; Miss Pitt, daughter of Col. Pitt, and others. The Refreshment Room was a great success and everything most lavish and liberal. At 3.45 a.m. "God Save the Queen" was played and home we went, dead beat.

On 4 July I rose late and then called on the Governor and saw his son Barkly (his eldest and also his aide-de-camp). The Governor apologised for not looking after the "Transit of Venus" men but he had lost a son and the whole house was one of gloom, window-blinds drawn, venetians closed, and a noiseless tread. From there I went to Mr. Hare's brick factory to see about bricks for the expedition. From there I took a train to Wynberg and finding the mail cart already full, took a private cart to Simon's Town together with a Mr. Sprigg and a lady. All went well until we got to the beaches, when we found it was high tide with a good surf and swell and just getting dark. We had to all get out and struggle and push with cart and horses to get it through 6 or 7 miles of loose sand, or we must face the elements, and just go along, the waves breaking on our lee side and the horses sometimes up to their bellies in the water, the cart all the time being at an angle of 45°. Against the strong protestations of the lady we chose the latter: one horse would not take kindly to the water, got frightened, and after much lashing with the whip, instead of turning away from the water and so into the loose sand, turned right into the swell and sea, so that it broke right over his head. Nothing but the most frantic exertions on the part of the driver saved us:

pulling his horse right sharp round in the opposite direction to what we wanted to go, on this inclined plane, with the water on a level with the bottom of the cart, one wheel clean off the sand and the cart pivoting round on the other, we at last got back to the point on the road where we had first turned off to the beach. The lady meantime had been shrieking in the most pitiful way. I hate this cart business between Simon's Town and Wynberg and intend to do as little of it as possible.

I take my meals at the Club now at 6/- per day, and my bed at the British Hotel at 2/- - the Government thank goodness paying for it. I find Simon's Town is very small and quiet. There are lots of African niggers and half-castes; a company of soldiers under Lt Stewart, and the Dockyard people comprise the whole lot. I worked on my "Venus" goods with Mr. Gillam, the carpenter, who is very helpful. On 7 July I asked Capt. Wharton of the SHEARWATER to take my de la Rue's Altazimuth round to Cape Town for me. Capt Dunlop and I walked up to the waterfall where we met all the ladies of Simon's Town - Mrs Mitchell, her Governess and children, Mrs Pitt or Dean Pitt, I should say, and her daughters and Mrs. Stewart.

The next few days I worked on the "Venus" stores but managed a couple of good walks towards the lighthouse on the Cape of Good Hope. I met Captain and Mrs Mitchell and their children on their donkeys and chatted with them. Also met Fellowes, 1st Lt of the SHEARWATER who apprised me of their rough trip round to Cape Town and how sea-sick everyone had been. After Church on 12 July I visited the cemetery, being struck with the age of some of the monumental slabs, also the number of accidents causing death, principally the capsizing of boats in Simon's Bay. I am much struck with the Capullons, which are certain wooden pattens worn by the Dutch-African half-castes and kept on the foot purely and simply by a wooden button, which fits between the big toe and its neighbour.

On 14 July I went to Observatory, arriving in the rain. I met every welcome and kindness from Mr and Mrs Stone. I had hoped to set up an instrument

and observe with it but there was too much rain. On 15 July I received mail from England saying that Fathers Perry and Sidgreaves and Mr. Coke would leave Dartmouth on 26<sup>th</sup> June and hoped to be in the Cape by 20 July. Just then a telegram arrived from Simon's Town to tell me the ENCOUNTER had arrived; this means I must re-arrange my plans. Met the Misses Hall, two young ladies from Port Nolloth, who came to visit the Stone's before returning by steamer back again.

On July 16<sup>th</sup> I set up my Altazimuth but there were too many distractions and I was a couple of seconds out. On Saturday 18 July I borrowed Mr. Cogill's little black horse, a stunning, spirited little moke, and rode off to Simon's Town. I did the 14 miles in 1¾ hours and a very pleasant ride it was. On starting back for Wynberg at 5 p.m. I had a fall from the horse but I managed to cross all the beaches in the dark and get to Cogill's by 7.30 p.m., well shaken and tired. On Monday 20 July the WINDSOR CASTLE with Fathers Perry and Sidgreaves and Lt Coke and one sapper, arrived.

On 23 July I set off for Cape Town again from Cogill's, for there is to be another big Ball this night in the same place and given by three Merchants. The 86<sup>th</sup> band were playing and the floor was very slippery again. I got back to the Royal hotel at about 4 a.m. On 24 July Lt Coke and I took a lift with Mr. Finmore, the storekeeper of Simon's Town Dockyard, Rev. Pratt and someone called Joseph. We worked hard at the Observatory having set up my Altazimuth and used it both day and night. Things do not seem to be going as well as they were and our party are scattered between Simon's Town and Cape Town. The time-ball down here is very irregular, sometimes it being seconds out and by which I shall partly have to rate my chronometers. We are to go south in the ENCOUNTER.

6 August, Thursday, the United States war steamer SWATARA arrived from New York and Bahia with all her Transit Expedition parties on board and only 30 tons of instruments and stores for each party while the English Kerguelen's party alone has 250 tons or more. On 7 August we heard that

the VOLAGE is coming out from England direct to take us on. She will also take us direct home again. On 10 August we took two dog-carts from Mr. Cogill. These are by far the more comfortable but their springs suffer greatly on the trip to Simon's Town. We stopped half way at "The Gentle Shepherd" (Farmer Peck's at Muizenberg) to find that he had died on 6 August. We consulted with the Americans about our sites on Kerguelen and gave them a copy of the CHALLENGER map which she had prepared last year showing where our camp sites were to be.

On 18 August we were all invited to Governors, also the Americans. There we met the Ministers of the Council and the Government. Altogether we sat down 80 to a splendid table. This is the first time since the death of their son that they have entertained.

On 28 August I visited Stadler's ostrich farm. Feathers are so high in price and one of his hens has as many as 18 eggs. The men are on Robben Island endeavouring to catch 100 rabbits to take down to Kerguelen. They use ferrets and the convicts also dig them out. I spent the next week going over my stores and getting them transferred to the VOLAGE for the trip south. At last on 19 September we set sail along with the SUPPLY. The weather was good to begin with but on 23 September there was a sudden roll, and the gun-room ports being open, swamped me and my books with water, the sea pouring in through the ports. The ship rolled a good bit and there being no fiddles on the dining table, it was rather unpleasant hanging on to the wine-glasses and things.

On 9 December Venus made its first appearance on the sun's disc at 11h49 and by 12h20 there was no more shade between the two limbs, it had disappeared. During the whole time I never saw any of the colours of the spectrum, nothing but the blue vault of the heavens, and the white sun slightly tinted blue by the shade used. The times were taken by Sub Lt Baynes of HMS VOLAGE when I said "now". I was very happy - in fact it was the happiest moment of my life - that I had been watching from 6

a.m. – 6.30 a.m. the bottom of the sun for an impression. We hoisted all our flags to the ensign staff and dwelling hut, had our breakfast of Oxford sausages and a bottle of champagne and were very happy. That afternoon the weather turned miserable, overcast, cloudy, rain and wind from the S.W. and we had been so lucky to get Ingress when we did. The next day there were hailstorms.”

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Lt Cyril Corbet R.N. F.R.A.S. died at the Military Hospital, St Helena on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1876.

For a fuller description of the expedition to Kerguelen to view the Transit of Venus members are referred to Vol. XXI No. 2 p. 92. In June 2004 the Transit of Venus will once again occur.

Our thanks to Dr. S. Cullis for furnishing us with excerpts from Lt Corbet's account of his voyage.

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## SHARK KILLED BY RIFLE FIRE - FEBRUARY 1924 AT SIMON'S TOWN

From The Cape Argus

As the light cruiser BIRMINGHAM, the new flagship, was being moored alongside the Coaling Jetty at Simon's Town a large shark got caught between two tenders, the cruiser and the jetty. Being only a few feet below the surface, the man-eater found itself imprisoned and became too flurried to dive under the ship and escape.

Several rifle shots were fired into the shark and when it appeared to be dead a seaman got a hook into it and the fish was hoisted on to the jetty. It was found to measure 11 ft.

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CHARLES EDWARD ALLEN WOOLLEY 1863-1940

## BOET DOMMISSE

Paymaster Rear-Admiral Charles Edward Allen Woolley CMG RN, was born at Reigate, Surrey in 1863. He died in Kenilworth, Cape Town in 1940 aged 77. At the age of 15 he joined the Royal Navy, in which he had a long and distinguished career. Woolley participated in the Egyptian Campaign and in the bombardment of Alexandria on 10 July 1882 and was awarded the Egyptian Medal and the Khedive's Bronze Star. In 1890, while serving in HMS BOADICEA under command of Vice-Admiral Sir Edmund Fremantle, he took part in the Naval Brigade's expedition in Witu against the Sultan of Zanzibar in the matter of "the treacherous, foul and disgraceful murder of nine German subjects".

Rear-Admiral Woolley had a close association with Simon's Town where he served two terms of duty. As a Sub-Lieutenant, he served as Assistant Paymaster on the Cape Station from June 1887 to June 1895. During this time he married Miss Daisy van der Riet who was the daughter of the Simon's Town Magistrate. Both their names appear in the Visitors Book kept by Lady Wells during the period 1887-1889. Evidently the Misses van der Riet were frequent visitors to Admiralty House and it is possible that, like Herbert Packer many years later, he may have met his future bride at Admiralty House.

Five years later, during the Anglo-Boer War, Woolley was stationed in Simon's Town as Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief of the Cape Station Rear-Admiral Sir Robert H. Harris, and lived in the Secretary's Cottage (Caravel Cottage) in the grounds of Admiralty House. HMS DORIS was flagship at that time and is depicted in one of Woolley's paintings. Captain Prothero of HMS DORIS was a notoriously rough character and it is said that he still inflicted flogging on delinquent crew! He was seriously wounded at the Battle of Graspan in which the Naval Brigade was involved.

Rear-Admiral Woolley was a self-taught but accomplished artist. Most of his



Paymaster Rear-Admiral C.E.A. Woolley CMG RN



Gravestones of Rear Admiral Woolley and his wife in Dido Valley Cemetery

paintings, of which five hang in Admiralty House, were of maritime subjects but he also painted Cape scenes. When he retired from the Royal Navy in 1921 he lived at the Glencairn Hotel for about 10 years, where his grandson Captain Ken Woolley remembers spending time with his grandparents. Woolley set up his studio alongside the hotel, in the signal cabin taken off s.s. CLAN STUART which had been wrecked opposite the Dido Valley Cemetery on 21 November 1914. Mrs Isemonger, wife of the proprietor of the Glencairn Hotel at one time, presented a picture he painted of this studio to the Simon's Town Museum

Charles Woolley enjoyed music, particularly conducting and was a keen sportsman. He regularly attended games at Newlands Rugby ground, was the author of many letters to the Editors of Cape Town newspapers on varying subjects and was a member of the Owl Club, a rather exclusive and formal Men's Club attended by important and entertaining invited speakers.

Two of his sons followed naval careers, and at the time of his death in 1940 both were serving in the Royal Marines. His grandson, Captain Ken Woolley, also had a distinguished career in the S.A. Navy, retiring in 1987 as Commanding Officer of S.A.S. DONKIN and the Naval Base Port Elizabeth. His great-grandson Commander Charles Woolley was at that time the Executive Officer (and later C.O.) of S.A.S. DONKIN and now farms in the Sundays River Valley.

Paymaster Rear-Admiral Charles Edward Allen Woolley was buried with full naval honours in the Dido Valley Cemetery, Simon's Town and his wife was later buried alongside – the first woman to be buried in the Naval Section of the Cemetery.

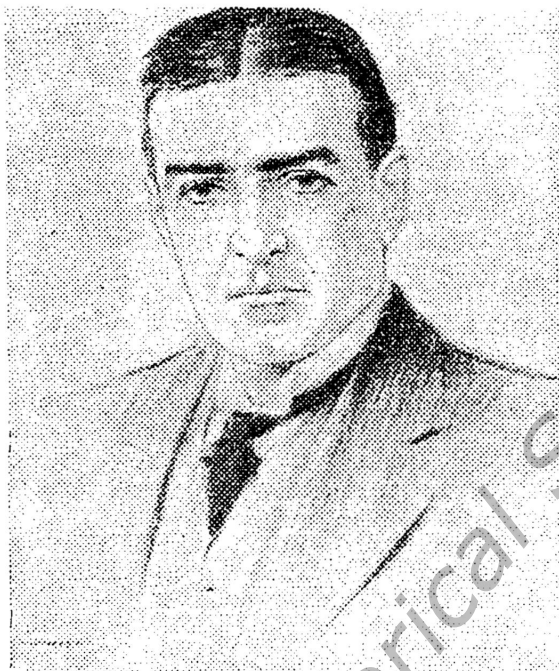
The five paintings presented to Admiralty House by Captain Ken Woolley are:  
HMS RALEIGH (Flagship 1891) (Woolley served 18.7.1887 – 24.4.1888)  
HMS DORIS (Flagship 1898) (Woolley served 27.4.1898 - 1.1.1901)  
HMS CALCUTTA (Flagship 1928 (Woolley "took passage" in 1929)  
Simon's Town – view from Admiralty House (undated)  
Simon's Bay from Hospital Terrace (1893)

## SHACKLETON'S LAST VOYAGE – IN THE “QUEST”

From: The Story of the QUEST by Commander Frank Wild CBE (taken from the Official Journal and Private Diary kept by Dr. A.H. Macklin) – Published by Cassell and Company Ltd 1923.

Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton (1874-1922) was born in Kilkee, co. Clare, Ireland, the eldest son of Henry Shackleton M.D. He was educated at Dulwich College, London, and was third lieutenant in the National Antarctic Expedition of 1901. He commanded the British Antarctic expedition of 1908-1909. On 1 January 1908 his expedition left New Zealand in the NIMROD. He established a base near Mt Erebus, whence on 20 October 1908 he started over the ice with sledges and in company with Lt Adams, Dr Eric Marshall and Frank Wild, with provisions for 91 days. By 26 November they reached the point farthest South theretofore attained; and on 9 January 1909 they reached the higher latitude 88° 23' S. One of the most interesting of their discoveries was that of coal at a latitude of 85° S. Mt Erebus was climbed and the magnetic pole reached by Sir T.W.E. Daird and Sir D. Mawson. Shackleton was presented with the special gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society and was knighted the same year. A series of scientific results were published.

In 1914-16 he intended to cross Antarctica from Coats Land to McMurdo Sound; but the ship ENDURANCE was crushed in ice and abandoned; and the party endured great hardship on Elephant Is. and were rescued only after Shackleton and 5 others had voyaged to South Georgia in a 22-ft boat – the JAMES CAIRD. In September 1921 Shackleton left London in the ship QUEST for a 3 year tour in Antarctica. He died on board that ship off South Georgia on 5 January 1922. After being taken to Montevideo, in Uruguay, his body was conveyed back, and in accordance with his wishes, buried in South Georgia. These days, most tourists to South Georgia make a visit to his grave and lay a wreath to commemorate this great Arctic explorer.



SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON

QUEST entered Table Bay on Sunday 18 June 1922 on its way back from Antarctic. They berthed in the Alfred Dock and settled down to read the vast quantities of mail which awaited them from friends and loved ones. Cdr. Frank Wild says that he did not realize how much battered the little ship was until he read the comments in the Cape Town Press. "One paper spoke of her as small, unpretentious, but grizzly looking, and bearing signs where the ice had scored furrows in her planks." "Another described her as a black, stubby little boat, steaming into Cape Town unknown and unannounced... the leaden skies, the cold green waters of the harbour, the sullen murkiness of the distant sea, the little furtive showers of rain, all catch her up and absorb her into them as an essential part of the picture...." All were amazed at her size and few believed that so small a craft could have accomplished so much and covered so great a distance."

"We had the warmest of welcomes from the people of South Africa, and during our stay were so lavishly entertained by these hospitable folk that each one of us must carry for ever a warm spot in his heart for Cape Town and its inhabitants. We were received by the Prime Minister General Smuts and entertained by him and his wife at their beautiful house at Groote Schuur.

"The ship was visited by many of the prominent people of South Africa, including members of the House of Parliament, which was then in session. All of them took a very keen interest in the regions we had visited, especially Tristan da Cunha, the islands about it, and Gough Island. Much sympathy was expressed at the state of destitution in which we had found the people of Tristan, and the *Cape Argus*, an enterprising and very efficiently staffed daily newspaper, immediately started making arrangements for a relief ship to visit them, and asked our advice as to the most suitable type of vessel for the work. It is hoped that she would be able to sail about the beginning of January, that being the most suitable time of year for effecting a landing on the island.

The Enderby Quadrant of the Antarctic is also of special interest to South Africans because the climatic conditions there have a large bearing upon the weather of the Cape Colony. The Meteorological Office of South Africa was anxious for a preliminary report on our met. work, which McIlroy gave them. Douglas, the geologist, and Wilkins visited Johannesburg in order to visit the mining areas. Invitations poured in for various members to visit the different parts of the country near to Cape Town, but though I much regretted having to decline them, I was unable to give further leave, as the different members were required for work about the ship.

As is common on the occasion of the return of an expedition from the Antarctic, most of the party were attacked by "colds in the head". Influenza was prevalent in the town and found two ready victims, first in Macklin, who contracted it soon after our arrival, and, later, myself.

Much repair work and general overhauling was necessary on QUEST. I had it put in hand at once. The engines now required an overhaul before we could again put to sea. The rigging was reset up and all necessary repairs completed. The ship received a new coating of paint, which completely transformed her battered appearance and made her once more a smart-looking little vessel. Fresh stores were taken aboard, and, the work

completed, we left the next day for the naval dockyard at Simon's Town. Several of our friends made the trip with us, including a number of Boy Scouts who had been assisting aboard the ship, but the QUEST, reverting quickly to her old antics, made them wish they had stayed ashore.

We were most kindly received by Admiral Sir Wm Goodenough, who gave us a snug berth in the harbour. I am much indebted to him for his kindness during the time we remained in Simon's Town. Here again we received every kindness from the officers of the ships attached to this base, especially those of HMS LOWESTOFT and DUBLIN, who welcomed us with the proverbial open-handedness of the Navy.

On 13 July, the day of our departure, we had the honour of a visit from the Governor-General H.R.H. Prince Arthur of Connaught, who, accompanied by Admiral Goodenough, made an inspection of the ship and took a keen interest in everything he saw. My attack of influenza had been a very severe one and left me feeling very weak. I was fortunate in making an uncomplicated recovery. I was looked after ashore by Mr. And Mrs John Jeffrey, old friends. In order not to delay the sailing of QUEST, I rejoined her earlier, perhaps, than was advisable, and on arrival at the dockyard felt so exhausted that I was compelled to take to my bunk at once. Before finally leaving we swung the ship to adjust compasses. This was again done for us by Commander Traill-Smith R.N. who had so kindly performed this office on our leaving Plymouth, and who had since our departure been transferred to the Dockyard at Simon's Town."

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*NUBIAN* (C.370): THE ADMIRALTY COAL HULK BASED AT SIMON'S TOWN FROM 1901 – 1912.

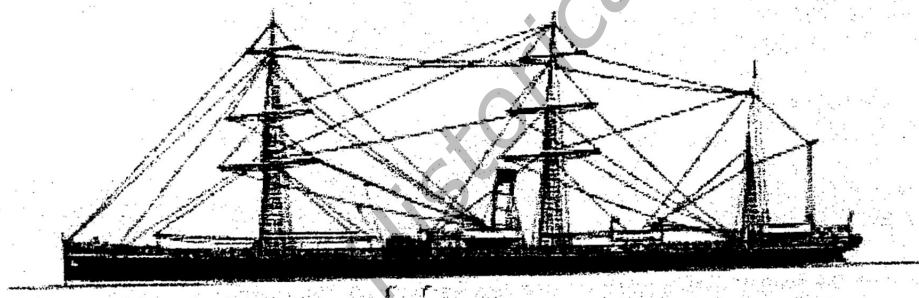
## BILL RICE.

The ships of Ellerman Lines Ltd with their striking buff, white and black funnels, were a familiar sight in South African ports for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The company had its origins in the Liverpool and Ocean Shipping Company Ltd which in 1901, acquired the City Line from George Smith & Sons Ltd of Glasgow. In that year a steamer formerly owned by George Smith & Sons arrived in Simon's Bay to spend the next 11 years as a stationary coal hulk, storing and dispensing fuel for the steam warships which were now replacing sailing vessels on station at the Cape of Good Hope.

The ship, originally named CITY OF MECCA, was launched from Charles Connell's shipyard at Scotstoun, on the North bank of the River Clyde on 22 March 1871 for Smith's trade to India and the Middle East. During the next 100 years Connell's Yard, of which CITY OF MECCA was Job No. 75, was to produce well over 500 fine ships and a welder/comedian named Billy Connolly. CITY OF MECCA was constructed of iron, with three decks and five watertight bulkheads and was propelled by an inverted direct acting two-cylinder steam engine developing around 200 h.p., constructed by Howden of Glasgow. To assist the engine, which could propel the ship at 12 knots, and to reduce coal consumption when the winds were favourable, she was rigged as a three-masted barque. According to Lloyds Register CITY OF MECCA was 374,5 feet (121,47 M), with a beam of 38,5 feet (11,73 M) and depth of 29,4 feet (8,96 M).

Smith's "City Line" had been trading between Glasgow and India since 1839 and had gained a virtual monopoly of the importation of Indian tea to Scotland. During the Annual Pilgrimage CITY OF MECCA would have been diverted from her normal passenger/cargo service to convey Moslems from India and Jedda and back again. In 1881 the ship was one of 3 City Line sisters purchased by the recently established Clan Line. She was renamed CLAN MACLEOD and her two

sisters CITY OF OXFORD and CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, both built in 1870, were renamed CLAN MACDUFF and CLAN MACLEAN respectively. Their new owners, Cayzer Irvine & Company, had been established in 1878 to take over the ships of the Clan Line Association, which was formed by a group of Glasgow merchants who had quarreled with the monopolistic George Smith and sought an alternative to his City Line. In 1883 CLAN MACLEOD, the first Clan Liner to bear the name, was handed over to Glasgow shipbuilders Alexander Stephen & Co Ltd, one of the companies which had provided financial backing for the Clan Line Association, in part payment for a new steamer. She was sold on by them to Rob Sloman & Co of Hamburg, who renamed her PROCIDA.



S.S. PROCIDA ex CLAN MACLEOD ex CITY OF MECCA  
- Drawing taken from "The Ellerman Line" by Duncan Haws

She was placed on Sloman's Hamburg-Australia service carrying passengers and cargo until 1886 and cargo only until 1889, when the Australia-Sloman Line was wound up and PROCIDA was returned to the service of the parent company. It was as PROCIDA that she arrived in Simon's Bay on 19 March 1901, having been purchased by the British Admiralty, through the agency of George Hammond & Co of 77 Mark Lane, London, on 20 December 1900. The purchase price was £8,750 and for the outward voyage to the Cape she was carrying 2,025 tons of bunker coal, 47 tons of coke and 75 tons of smithery coal for the Dockyard. PROCIDA was taken over by Base personnel on 21 March 1901 and, within the next few days was destored and secured to a mooring in Simon's Bay before being renamed NUBIAN on 30 March.

Mr Pinkham, who had retired from the Royal Navy, was appointed Master and moved aboard with his family. He kept pigs, chickens and ducks on board and the family pets included pigeons, cats and a monkey. His staff comprised a Chief Stoker, Stoker and 7 Kroomen. On weekdays the family and crew members travelled to and from the shore in one of the steam pinnaces Nos. 112, 129 or 372 and one of Pinkham's sons, later to become the Rev.C.E. Pinkham, received a prize for not having missed one day's school in eight years despite all the foul weather which the "Cape of Storms" could conjure up. On Sundays, however, when the Master and his family went ashore to attend the service at St Frances Church, they were conveyed in the gig, pulled by four smartly dressed Kroomen.

In the autumn of 1901 it was proposed to use the ship as a seagoing collier and her 30-year old machinery was surveyed in order to determine the feasibility and cost of putting it into working order for a deployment at Saldanha Bay. Dockyard surveyors found that major repairs were necessary and estimated the costs involved to be:

|                                       |        |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| To refit vessel for harbour service   | £3,038 |
| To refit vessel as a seagoing collier | £5,236 |

The proposed deployment to Saldanha was cancelled on 17 October 1901 and it was decided that NUBIAN would be kept as a static coal hulk in Simon's Bay. The hulk was moored off the Dutch Reformed Church and colliers came alongside to replenish her stock of coal. One of the fairly regular callers was the s.s. BURNHOLM of which the master was Captain Charles Pinkham, a distant cousin of the Master of NUBIAN. Another collier, with a Chinese crew, had a case of beriberi on board and the colliers and the NUBIAN were both placed in quarantine. One night while the colliers was alongside a Chinese seaman was caught trying to steal the brass steam whistle from the NUBIAN's funnel. Having had her holds topped up by the colliers, NUBIAN was moved around the anchorage and placed alongside ships requiring bunkers, aided by a tug and under the direction of her Master.

Discontent among the Kroomen led one of them to attack Mr Pinkham, the ship's Master. The man was court martialled and found guilty of attempted murder and

was sentenced to be flogged by the Head Krooman, in spite of the fact that this form of punishment had been prohibited in the Royal Navy since 1881.

The propulsion machinery, unnecessary in a static coal hulk, was still in the ship, restricting the amount of coal that could be carried while still allowing enough freeboard to ensure safety. In August 1902 work started on the removal of much of this redundant machinery, leaving some of the heavier pieces in the bottom of the ship to act as ballast. On 18 September the two steam cylinders, with a combined mass of 10 tons, were loaded into a lighter and taken to be dumped in the vicinity of Noah's Ark Rock. An inclining experiment was conducted by the Naval Constructor, Mr. Julian Kingsalter, to determine the stability of the vessel, and to set limits to conditions of loading. Ports were cut at main deck level to facilitate the coaling process and, to ensure safety, a minimum freeboard of at least 600 millimetres had to be maintained when the hulk was fully loaded.

Kingsalter's calculations led to the stipulation that no coal was to be stowed on the main deck and that when there was insufficient coal on board to maintain stability, one main boiler had to be filled with seawater to serve as ballast. On 7 April 1904 the hulk was allocated the anonymous Admiralty Yard Craft Number C 370, although she was still referred to locally as NUBIAN. On 7 May 1910 the NUBIAN's ensign was half-masted for the first and only time to mark the death of King Edward VII. By 1910 with the completion of the East Dockyard basin, incorporating a sheltered alongside-bunkering facility and storage for 10,000 tons of coal, there was no longer any requirement for a coal hulk at Simon's Town. NUBIAN remained in the Bay under Admiralty ownership until 15 July 1912, when she was purchased by British shipbreakers and scrap merchants Thomas W. Ward & Co. and the Pinkham family moved ashore.

Ward left the ship at her moorings in the bay to await the availability in the area of a tug capable of towing her to England. The vessel booked for the job was the Dutch Salvage Tug THAMES, owned by L. Smit & Sons of Kinderdujk. Smits were already pre-eminent in the field of ocean towage and salvage and since then this family business has grown and developed to become the mighty Smit

International, which now owns the former Safmarine subsidiary Pentow Marine and operates the salvage tugs SMIT AMANDLA (ex JOHN ROSS) and WOLRAAD WOLTEMADE. In preparation for the tow, NUBIAN was moved into the Dockyard basin on 27 November 1912 and berthed under the 50-ton Gooseneck Crane. Two days later she was placed in the graving dock where the propeller was removed and stowed in one of the holds while towing fenders were manufactured by Dockyard riggers. The cost of the docking and associated work was borne by the new owners. On 10 December the ship, now ready for her 6,000 mile journey at the end of a tow rope, was undocked and berthed alongside the West Wall of the basin. The tug THAMES arrived in Simon's Bay on 6 February 1913 and left two days later, towing the 42-year old C370/NUBIAN on her final journey to be broken up at the seaside resort of Morecambe, on the coast of Lancashire, England.

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### NEVILLE CLACK

While waiting for the Standard Bank to open its doors, I fell into conversation with a lady from the Simon's Town Museum. After relating a story to her, she asked me to record this episode for the Museum.

Whilst studying for our matric years at the Rondebosch Boys' High School, three of us, David McDowell, Jack Abbot and myself had formed a threesome dance band. We were invited to play at birthday parties, dances and other celebrations for a rewarding fee of one-guinea (21/-) per musician per evening, making it more professional than the ordinary 20/-.

It was the year 1937, the British Navy were stationed at Simon's Town and a dance had been arranged at the British Hotel. For some reason the engaged band was not able to keep the appointment, and we, at short notice, were able to fill the vacancy. We played from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. It was fox-trots fast and slow, waltzes, tangos, over and over again without much respite. After all the sailors must dance! McDowell's violin strings were "red-hot", Abbot's drum sticks were stretching the vellum, and my little finger of my left hand was smearing blood over the keyboard.

Glasses of beer were stacked upon the piano top, one of which, due to continued vibration slipped forward and landed in my lap. McDowell who had been swimming in the nude, at Graaff's Pool, had required a badly sunburnt bottom and was unable to sit down to ease his legs. The band played on until the early hours, until a large quantity of liquid refreshment had been consumed by the dancers, which slowed mechanical movement considerably. This prompted us to end proceedings and play "God Save the King".

I was embarrassed to find that the sheet music of the Anthem had been mislaid. I mentioned this to one of the sailors, who said he would play the Anthem for me.

He sat at the piano, could not play a note but sang loudly enough to drown the banging sounds of the piano! The entire party joined in, while standing, a little wobbly, to attention. The violin in the background held the tune and an hilarious evening came to an end.

My qualifications took me away from Cape Town for the whole of my working life, but most fortunately I was able to retire to Simon's Town where I have been resident for 25 years. I have lost all trace of Jack Abbot, but kept in contact with McDowell who died recently at the age of 82 in Tecoma, Washington, U.S.A.

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Neville Clack was a geologist all his working life. He retired to Simon's Town in 1979 and lives at Murdock Valley. He was instrumental in assisting the then Simon's Town Municipality to set up their Civil Defence operations and had his office above the small parking garage between the main building and the Engineering office. It was very well organised and everyone in Simon's Town was involved. Practice sessions were held to test the organisation and it always received high marks from the Provincial authorities.

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