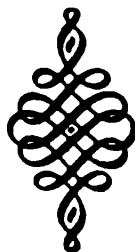




**SIMON'S TOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



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C O N T E N T S

List of Office Bearers and Membership Fees.....	121
Chairman's Report A.G.M. 2005	123
Flag Officers of the Cape VICE-ADMIRAL TOTTENHAM.....	128
Hollanders at the Cape WWII.....	129
Francis Beaufort & William Bligh	130
Captain Richard Johnstone KCB KCST	133
Selborne Graving Dock.....	135
Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton Part I	138
Glencairn's Lost Geology	142
Loss of Trade, Simon's Town, WW I	147
Robert Grant 1842-1910	148
Japanese Ships at Simon's Town.....	150
Nautical Sayings in Everyday Use	152
Visits of Elephant Seals to False Bay	153
s.s. BOTLEA	158

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Chairman's report

As I begin my report for the 45th Annual General Meeting of the Society, I would request that we all, just for a moment, stand in silence to remember those members who passed away during the past 12 months. We will miss them very much.

Progress in matters of interest to our Society this past year have been well maintained and executed, and for that I must thank my Committee for without their interest, enthusiasm and their full support to me, we would not have had a happy and successful year. I have really enjoyed the past year as Chairman of our Society. Everybody serving on the Committee has made my job that much easier and enjoyable. However I must single out 2 members who go that extra mile. Firstly, special mention must be made of Audrey Read's workload for the Society. She not only produces the bi-annual Bulletin and Chronicle but also writes most of the articles. Here I must extend an invitation to all our members who might have an interesting historical subject to write about, especially if it concerns Simon's Town, to please forward this to Audrey for possible inclusion in a future Bulletin. This would help Audrey a great deal. Members continue to express much satisfaction with the Bulletins. Audrey also addresses all the envelopes you receive through the mail. She runs the 100 Club and organises the members' annual walk in Simon's Town. As this past years' Friends of the Museum representative, she served on the Board of Trustees and was involved in functions to raise much needed funds for the Development Fund. This past year she took over the Society's finances and ran the books when Monica Thorne passed away and she assumed the duties of Membership Secretary. Thank you Audrey. The other member deserving special mention is the Society's Secretary Cherry Dilley. Apart from her duties as Secretary which can be a little onerous at times for a Society like ours, Cherry looks after our refreshment requirements for all our functions, gets involved in fundraising functions, organises and plans our lecture evenings for 11 months of the year and many other behind the scenes

activities. Recently Cherry was asked by a local radio station to go on air to promote the Society and Museum. She assisted Audrey in planning the forthcoming members walk. Thank you Cherry. Lastly I must thank Mike Saggerson for holding down the Vice-Chairman's post this past year and also for arranging and conducting the Society's tours for the past couple of years. They have all been well planned, most interesting and of course made the Society good profits. Mike was always ably assisted by Audrey and I know he was most grateful to her. As Mike has now informed the Committee that he is no longer available to serve on the Committee and can no longer plan our tours, we are looking for a Tour Operator (and not necessarily as a member on the Committee). I wish Mike all success for the future and thank him for his commitment over the past 7 years.

OVERVIEW:

At the beginning of the year the Committee discussed and eventually agreed upon the projects we thought would benefit our town and be of historical value and I believe we tried hard to complete, if not all, then at least a fair percentage of them. The projects identified were:

- a) Shell midden on the Golf Course. This would be a small memorial to the Strandlopers whose remains were found some years ago on the Golf Course. The Country Club have supported the idea but permission to do so has had to be acquired from the S.A. Heritage Resources Agency before we can proceed. They have been keeping us waiting for many months. An environmental impact study is also required and Ute Seemann has volunteered to assist us with this. As soon as we get the go-ahead, we will commence this project.
- b) The Martello Tower in the Dockyard is once again in need of restoration and probably at some considerable cost. We approached Armscor during 2004 to enquire whether they as the new operators of the Dockyard, would take on the restoration and finance the project with our assistance to them. We are waiting for Armscor's General Manager to be appointed before we approach again.
- c) The Committee is very keen to re-introduce the Time Ball. Simon's Town

operated a Time Ball way back in 1857 until it was dismantled on 8 February 1929. The Committee felt that from a historic and tourist attraction point of view, the re-introduction of a working Time Ball would be a worthwhile attraction to Simon's Town. The Time Ball is a signalling device in which a ball is dropped at a given time in order for ships' masters or navigators to determine the error and rate of their chronometers whilst in harbour. An appropriate site still has to be identified in the vicinity of Jubilee Square to erect the new Time Ball.

Discussions are on-going with the Observatory and other role players.

d) The Committee has challenged the Simon's Town Civic Association and the SPA Amenities Department concerning the poor state of Jubilee Square. But as no progress has been forthcoming from these organisations, we wrote to the Manager of the City of Cape Town Council. The Manager's office replied very promptly and 2 meetings have already taken place to address our concerns. I have been co-opted to serve on a working group committee to tackle the problem.

e) The boundary wall directly behind the Museum and running alongside the Main Road has been repaired and painted. Thankfully the graffiti artists have not yet defaced the wall!

f) Graves in the Old Burying Ground, have over the years been vandalised. Headstones and crosses have been smashed and other damage to graves has taken place. We have decided to take matters in hand and with the help of a large donation to the Society approximately 18 graves have been repaired. This will continue in May until all graves have received our attention.

g) Historical plaques have been placed in the Martello Tower and more recently on Albertyn's Cottage and Albertyn's Stables (the present Bronze Age Foundry).

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

The Committee continue to keep an eye on buildings in the Historic Mile with regards to unsightly air conditioning units, improper signage etc. However, we do also congratulate owners who have restored/repared their buildings. Our efforts since 1993 concerning the shocking state of Palace Barracks has at last paid off

because as you will have noticed the building is now being restored. We don't claim any credit for the present restoration work as we had already ceased corresponding with the Department of Public Works some years ago. However, we are grateful that work has begun to restore the building.

Tony Durell continues recording businesses in the town, passing information to Sue Kinkead-Weekes who brings our records up to date. Sue also continues to run the White Elephant Stall, bringing in much needed funds for the Development Fund.

Boet Dommissie and Harry Clayton have commenced a project researching the full story of the Group Areas removals. This is a very sensitive subject so great care has to be taken when recording and researching personal experiences. This will form one of our main projects this coming year.

Captain Bill Rice continues as the Project Officer carrying out extensive research for the 2010 Dockyard Centenary Book. This is a joint project between the Society and the Naval Heritage Society.

We have recently received permission from the South Peninsular authorities to carry out repairs to the surrounding stone wall of the Old Burying Ground in Seaforth. This will also be a project for 2005.

The Russian Consulate in Cape Town has now completed the erection of a monument in the Old Burying Ground in honour of those Russian sailors whose remains are buried there.

MEMBERSHIP

Firstly, I welcome all new members. I hope you will derive much satisfaction as a member and support the Society as often as you can.

We began the year in April with 475 paid up members and 82 unpaid. I must remind members that subscriptions are due in January each year and not after the

AGM in April. By then you have actually ceased to be a member. Reminders have once again been sent to members who have not yet paid their 2005 subscriptions. However, because of a 'recruiting drive' and members of the Committee doing a bit of their own 'recruiting' our numbers have swelled to 524. A total of 48 new members were enrolled and unfortunately we lost 21 members during 2004. Articles have recently appeared in our local newspapers promoting the Society as well as the Museum. We have in these articles also reiterated that membership is open to all, especially those affected by the forced removals of the 60's and 70's.

FINANCES:

As you can see by the Financial Report before you the Society's finances are sound. Therefore, I am happy to announce that subscriptions have once again not been increased. My sincere thanks to those who deliver mail to members by hand. This saves the Society a tidy sum in postage.

VOLUNTEERS:

The Museum has once again been blessed with a core of wonderful, helpful and dedicated volunteers. Sadly these numbers have decreased during the past months. My thanks to all those who this past year have continued to fill the role of volunteers. Your work is greatly appreciated in our Museum. Your time and talents have been put to good use. Additional volunteers are urgently required.

CONCLUSION:

My thanks to all organisations and members of the Society who so generously made donations to the Society and Museum during the past year. This money is put to good use financing projects, purchasing much needed equipment and in many other areas. There are difficult times ahead for our Museum, therefore, the stronger we are and the more representative we are in our membership, the more able we will be to give this Museum our assistance and support it will need to survive and grow. Thank you for your support to the Society and our events. It is much appreciated. Thank you.

TERRY KORSTEN - CHAIRMAN.

FLAG OFFICERS OF THE CAPE

Vernon White

Vice-Admiral Sir Francis Tottenham 1935-1938

At the end of the 19th century it was traditional for the sons of the English gentry to enter either the Army, the Navy or the Church and one which was followed by the family of Francis Loftus Tottenham who was born on 17 August 1880.

His paternal grandfather Lord Robert Tottenham was Bishop of Clogrenagh and his maternal grandfather was a Colonel in the Army. Francis was the second son of Captain J.F. Tottenham RN of Lofthouse, Torquay in Devon. His eldest brother Henry Loftus Tottenham (1860-1950) entered the Royal Navy and became an Admiral whilst a cousin Edward Loftus Tottenham (1896-1974) also entered the Royal Navy and became a Rear Admiral. Edward was the 3rd son of the Rev. C.F.S. Tottenham (Francis' uncle). Francis Tottenham's mother was Cecile, the daughter of Colonel C. Grimston.

With the paternal family background it is not surprising that Francis Loftus Tottenham should follow in his father's and elder brother's footsteps and choose the Royal Navy for a career. At the age of 15 years he entered the Royal Navy and became a Lieutenant in 1903. From 1909 – 1911 he served on the staff of Rear Admiral Sir Douglas Gamble in the Mediterranean, and was a member of the Royal Navy's team sent to help organise the Turkish Navy. For his services in this regard he was awarded the Turkish Order of Osmanieh 3rd Class. Promoted to Commander in 1914, Tottenham served throughout the 1914-18 war and was mentioned in despatches. In 1918 he was promoted to Captain and served on the Inter Allied Armistice Commission with the Commission of Control in Germany. For his work with the Commission he was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1919.

From 1920-22 he commanded HMS DELHI and then became British Naval Attaché in Washington until 1925. Returning to England at the end of that year Tottenham became Captain of the Royal Naval Gunnery School HMS EXCELLENT until 1927. From 1928-1929 he commanded the battleship HMS RODNEY of 38,000 tons (full load) and completed on 17 December

1925. In 1930 Captain Tottenham became a Naval A.D.C. to the King and was promoted to Rear Admiral. Two years later in 1932 he married Evelyn the widow of Captain Herbert Street R.N. and in the same year he was appointed Rear Admiral commanding the 3rd Cruiser Squadron with whom he remained until 1935 when he was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

Promoted to Vice-Admiral in 1935 Tottenham was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Africa Station, flying his flag in HMS AMPHION (Flag Captain R.L. Burnett CB DSO OBE and later C-in-C Africa Station 1944-1946). In 1937 Vice-Admiral Tottenham was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath and the following year he and Lady Tottenham and their daughter Iona returned to England. Promoted to full Admiral in 1939 Sir Francis Tottenham retired in 1940. He died at the age of 87 years in November 1967 at his home Brightstone Lodge, Bembridge, Isle of Wight.

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HOLLANDERS FROM SURABAYA 1939-45 WAR

A.E. READ

Two Hollanders – Bakker, a submarine construction expert and Bovie, were evacuated from Surabaya shipyard as the Japanese landed. They left so quickly that they had no time to bid their families farewell. They eventually came to work in the Simon's Town Dockyard. Then they were transferred to Knysna to be employed in Thesen's stinkwood furniture-making factory which was about to be closed for furniture making so that the employees could contribute to the war effort. Some 70 to 80 men and the two Hollanders were transferred to the saw mill section where they were employed in building various types of boats such as dinghies, motor drifters, diving boats, trawler whalers and cutters and most importantly the "B" class Fairmile patrol boats/submarine chasers.

STEPHEN MUIR

Commander Francis Beaufort R.N. of wind-scale fame called in at Simon's Bay from 31 May to 2 June 1806. While at anchor there he would have wished to have indulged himself in his compulsive hobby of sketching the shoreline, taking bearings and sounding the sea floor. Uncharacteristically there is no record of any surveying while he was in the bay. What occupied him while in port instead was an order from the Governor of the Cape, Major General Sir David Baird to adjudicate in a bitter dispute which had arisen on passage from England between Captain William Bligh, the Governor-designate of New South Wales and Captain Joseph Short of HMS PORPOISE, the commander of a convict convoy conveying Bligh as a passenger on the transport LADY MADELEINE SINCLAIR, to his post.

Beaufort was in command of HMS WOOLWICH, a 5th rate frigate converted to a store ship, carrying naval supplies to the Far East Squadron in Bombay. Shortly after the Battle of Trafalgar he received instructions to accompany Captain Short as far as the Cape but a storm soon after entering the Atlantic detached the WOOLWICH from the convoy. Near Tristan da Cunha, Beaufort learned from an American whaler that the British expeditionary force under Admiral Sir Home Popham and General Baird, which had sailed from England before Trafalgar to subjugate the Dutch at the Cape, had been successful in its task. On arrival at Simon's Bay he found the PORPOISE and the LADY SINCLAIR had arrived two days previously but was dismayed to hear that Bligh and Short had been at daggers drawn during the voyage as Bligh, who was senior to Short on the list of Post Captains, had maintained that he should take charge of the convoy, deciding on the courses to be steered and ports to be visited. Only cannon shots by Short across the LADY SINCLAIR's bow and stern to make her haul her wind, coupled with the threat of a further shot in between, brought Bligh to heel.

No sooner had the convoy arrived in Simon's Bay than both captains had made post-haste for the Governor, General Baird, each demanding that the other should be court-martialled. Baird (Popham, whom Beaufort had hoped to meet, had already left the Cape for his ill-fated invasion of Buenos Aires) ordered Beaufort to adjudicate between his two warring fellow officers. He ruled that both were at fault and, failing to effect a reconciliation, found for Bligh whom he recognised as a man of talents whereas he considered Short to be an ass. In making judgement Beaufort as a naval officer who took particular pride in his own skill in navigation (he was proud that he had made landfall at the Cape precisely where he had worked out that he would) would have been well aware of Bligh's exceptional feat in navigating an open boat for 3,600 miles to Timor, after the mutiny on the BOUNTY. While the WOOLWICH was provisioning in Simon's Bay, Beaufort also fitted in a visit to Cape Town where he was well entertained by Baird. These distractions appear to have left no time for his favourite pastime.

But there is evidence in the records of the Hydrographic Department of the Royal Navy that on the WOOLWICH's return to the Cape, Beaufort did manage some surveying: a sketch, since destroyed, of the 'quoin' of the Cape of Good Hope, and another unfinished sketch of Table Bay covering the adjacent coast by a series of triangles intended to include False Bay, with numerous remarks. The latter he undertook in October and November 1807 when WOOLWICH commanded a homeward-bound convoy of 15 Indiamen. Much to Beaufort's delight, for this task WOOLWICH was reconverted to a frigate.

Francis Beaufort was a protégé of Alexander Dalrymple, ** the Hydrographer to the Royal Navy, who had himself surveyed Simon's Bay in 1775 while on passage to India in the GRENVILLE. For Beaufort's voyage to the east Dalrymple supplied him with the best chronometer available – a John Arnold – and a complete set of charts. Dalrymple would have been only too pleased to have published a new survey of Simon's Bay by Beaufort as he was well aware of the dangers presented to ships of the Royal Navy and to Indiamen by the hazards inside the Bay and the surrounding seas.

Beaufort's wind scale was in fact adapted in 1806, the very year in which the WOOLWICH called at Simon's Bay, from an original which had been devised by Dalrymple from a scale of windspeeds worked out for the owners of windmills.

On arrival at New South Wales, Captain Short was arrested by the new Governor and sent back to England to be court-martialled at Bligh's insistence. Bligh himself was ignominiously deposed by disaffected officers, from the Governorship; on his return to England he never received another command but he was made up to Admiral. Of those who provisioned in Simon's Bay in the winter of 1806 only Commander Beaufort made good: in 1829, following in Dalrymple's footsteps, he was appointed Hydrographer to the Royal Navy.

** See S.T.H.S. Bulletin Vol. XXI No. 3 p.115 for details on Dalrymple.

See S.T.H.S. Bulletin Vol. XV No. 3 p. 100 for details of the Beaufort Scale.

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War in the Eastern Seas 1793-1815 by C.Northcote-Parkinson 1954

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THE SILVER CIGARETTE BOX

RUTH KER

In 1897, two years before the outbreak of the Boer War, Captain Richard Johnstone, who was the son of Major-General Sir James Johnstone KCB KCST was stationed with his regiment 60th Rifles (King's Own Rifles) at Simon's Town. At that time the Royal Naval Commander-in-Chief was Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Hastings Thomas Penruddock Harris KCB KCMG. Captain Johnstone was presented to the Admiral by his uncle Admiral Charles Johnstone. Admiral Harris had five charming daughters and Captain Johnstone fell in love with the eldest, called May. They were married from Admiralty House early in 1899 and returned to England. Soon after the war broke out that year, the King's Royal Rifles were posted to South Africa and the young couple returned with the regiment, which was immediately sent forward with General Buller's forces in Natal.

The King's Royal Rifles took part in the disastrous battle of Talana Hill where the regiment was forced to surrender to the Boers. There were many casualties, amongst whom were Richard Johnstone and a brother officer, one wounded in the right leg and the other in the left. They bound their two wounded legs together, as in a 3-legged race, and supporting each other, were marched off by the Boers. They lost all their equipment and possessions. With Richard Johnstone's lost equipment, still parcelled in its paper, was a silver cigarette box engraved with the insignia of the regiment and with Johnstone's name duly inscribed. Some time later this box, still wrapped up, was picked up by Corporal van Bergen.

Many years later – in the 1950s – Mr van Bergen, by then an old man over 80, paid his first visit to England. He went there determined to find Richard Johnstone so he could return the cigarette box; but Captain Johnstone had died in 1922 at the early age of 47. However, Mr van Bergen did find the captain's greatest friend in the regiment, Major Maurice Crum, by that time retired and living in Scotland. The Major knew Mrs Johnstone's address in Plymouth and when Mr van Bergen went to see her she invited him to stay. Mr van Bergen pressed her to accept the

cigarette box but May Johnstone was adamant that he should keep it. She telephoned her son, Lt.Col. James Johnstone (Durham Light Infantry) who straight away invited Mr van Bergen to stay at Hanley Hall in Worcestershire. They got on together so well that the Johnstones invited Mr van Bergen to come again. This he did several times. They called him *OUPA* (GRANDFATHER).

In about 1976 Oupa's grandson, Johann van Bergen who lived at 100 Highveld Road, Kempton Park, Johannesburg, went to England with his wife and they were invited to Hanley Hall. The Johnstones told them that Ruth Ker was planning her first visit to South Africa, and van Bergen invited her to stay with his family which she did. Ruth visited South Africa many times since that year (1978) every time she passes through Johannesburg.

The van Bergens subscribed to the publication *PANORAMA* which was passed round the whole family.

Notes:

1. Ruth Ker was the daughter of Col. Johnstone (who had died in 1984) but Did not get to meet Oupa as she was a teacher and he always visited During term time when she was absent from the house.
2. Admiral Harris was responsible for sending the naval guns to Natal for The navy and army to use at Ladysmith
3. Captain Charles Woolley was Paymaster to Admiral Harris.
4. Lt Cdr "Mac" Lennard RN was Flag Lt. To Admiral Harris.

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THE SELBORNE GRAVING DOCK, EAST DOCKYARD, SIMON'S TOWN

Bill Rice

What made Simon's Town what it is to-day and why was the term "Simon's Town Agreement" so well known during the 1960's and 70's that people who were not aware of its details understood that it played a significant part in British Naval strategy and would not be terminated lightly in spite of mounting political pressure? To a large extent the answer must be "Simon's Town Dockyard", the strategically-situated base and support facility for the ships and craft of the South African Navy and haven of rest and refuge for ships of friendly nations.

Since 1814 Simon's Town has had a naval support facility, which earned the title "dockyard" in 1885 when the Simon's Town Patent Slipway was bought from its bankrupt owners, permitting the Royal Navy to haul smaller vessels, such as gunboats, sloops and yard craft, clear of the water for repairs and maintenance. The cruisers stationed at Simon's Town from about 1850 onwards, could not be dry-docked at the Cape until the Robinson Dock in Table Bay, was commissioned in October 1882.

The decision to build a graving dock, or dry dock, at Simon's Town was taken as part of the Royal Navy's expansion plan of 1895. A committee, chaired by Austen Chamberlain, the 1st Lord of the Admiralty, was formed to review a plan to build a dry dock and protective breakwater in the Cole Point area of Simon's Town. The committee, which submitted its report in May 1898, concluded that the dry dock would be better placed at South Point, below the Martello Tower, and the plan was changed accordingly.

The Selborne Graving Dock, which is the nucleus of the East Dockyard, was ceremonially opened in 1910, signifying acceptance of the new Dockyard from the contractor, Sir John Jackson. Since then the dock has required only four significant modifications to allow it to meet the needs of both the Royal Navy and the South African Navy. First of all, during World War II, a number of passenger liners, taken up by the British Government for use as Armed Merchant Cruisers (AMC) or troopships, were required to dock at Simon's Town. They were beamier and more "full-bodied" than warships of a similar length and in some cases their bilge keels, fitted to reduce rolling, were in danger of fouling the steps, or "altars" of the dry dock.

Consequently the corners of the lower altars were chipped away to increase the clearance. Then in the 1960s a 50-tonne travelling portal crane was erected to allow the 4,5 inch (114mm) gun turrets of the Type 12 (President Class) frigates to be lifted out and lowered through the roof of the gun-mounting workshop. Thirdly, in the 1980s a notch was cut in the head of the dock to increase the length enough to allow two 370 ft (113metre) Type 12 frigates to dock at the same time. The frigates were to dock “back to back” with their transoms facing one another and enough separation between them to allow their propeller shafts to be withdrawn.

The fourth significant modification, carried out in 2003, involved constructing a pit in the floor of the dock to allow the sonar dome of the Meko A-200 Combat Corvettes (Valour Class) to be fully lowered for maintenance or removal.

Back in the 1890s, in spite of the availability of the Suez Canal as a short-cut to the Mystic East, the Cape Sea Route was still of great importance to Britain and the need for a dry dock at Simon's Town for the maintenance and repair of Royal Naval vessels was obvious. What is not so obvious is the reason for constructing such a large dry dock in Simon's Bay. Dry docks are extremely costly facilities and the bigger they are the more costly they are to build and operate. The dry dock at Simon's Town was particularly costly as it was constructed entirely on land which had been below the High Water Mark in 1900 and although it sat on a bed of granite, the blocks of that material used in its construction were shipped in from Europe.

It is therefore puzzling that the British Admiralty agreed to build a dry dock 750 feet (229 metres) long at the Southern end of Africa, considering that the South Atlantic Station Flagship, the cruiser HMS ST GEORGE, was only 384 feet (117 metres) long and the largest ships in the Royal Navy, the *Majestic* Class Battleships, were only slightly longer at 413 feet (126 metres). If Chamberlain and his Committee used a crystal ball to look into the future it must have been a very effective and far-sighted model because the commissioning of the Battle Cruiser HMS LION, the first British warship to reach a length of 700 feet (213 metres), was still fourteen years in the future. Even HMS DREADNOUGHT, the ship which was to revolutionise naval warfare, was not yet on the drawing board and with a length of 526 feet (160 metres), would have occupied only two-thirds of the length of the proposed dock.

Chamberlain's Committee recommended that the dock be divided by intermediate caissons (floating dock gates) to provide an outer chamber 470 feet (142 metres) long and inner chamber 250 feet (76 metres) long, or, alternatively, an outer chamber 320 feet (97.5 metres) long and an inner chamber 400 feet (122 metres) long. These features, which were designed to reduce the operating cost of the dock considerably by allowing small ships to be handled without having to pump out the whole length of the dock, would have increased the construction cost appreciably. In addition to the masonry required to provide two additional caisson grooves, a second caisson, pre-fabricated in England for assembly at Simon's Town, was needed.

Perhaps the most logical explanation for the decision to build such a large dry dock is that the Admiralty intended that in time of war Britain's trade routes and bases in the Southern Oceans would be protected by Armed Merchant Cruisers, fast passenger liners requisitioned from their owners and fitted with guns to enable them to tackle enemy commerce raiders. Ships like the 22-knot Cunard liner CAMPANIA, built in 1892, were prime candidates for naval service in time of war. One of the largest ships ever built, she was 620 feet (189 metres) long with a beam of 65 feet (19.8 metres) and it seemed certain that even larger ships would soon enter service on the lucrative and highly competitive North Atlantic Route.

As it approaches its Centenary and although the entrance width rather than the length dictates the size of ship which it can accommodate, the Selborne Graving Dock can look forward to a high level of utilisation by warships, naval auxiliaries and merchant vessels in the foreseeable future. As the nucleus of an Armscor-managed ship repair facility it is likely to contribute to the generation of high levels of revenue, including significant amounts of vital foreign exchange. Whatever their reasons for selecting the dimension of the Selborne Graving Dock may have been and however illogical they seem when viewed against the requirements at that time, Chamberlain's Committee did South Africa in general and Simon's Town in particular, a tremendous service when they opted in 1898 to provide a dry dock which would not be used to anything like its full capacity until it was required to accommodate aircraft carriers, heavy cruisers and large passenger liners some 30 years later during World War II.

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VICE-ADMIRAL SIR JAHLEEL BRENTON (born 1770)

BOËT DOMMISSE

Part 1 – Ancestry and Early days

Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton served as Naval Commissioner at the Cape of Good Hope from 1815 to 1821. He was resident in Admiralty House, Simon's Town and contributed greatly to the development of the town.

Brenton was a most interesting person and had a distinguished naval career before his appointment to the Cape, where one of his main responsibilities was to supply provisions and other requirements for Napoleon, who was detained on St Helena Island.

What is less well known is that he was born in Rhode Island, America, where his family had lived for over 140 years. The Brenton family had emigrated from Hammersmith, now part of London, to America in 1634. Hammersmith is mentioned as a camp of the Danish invaders in 879 AD. In the 17th century it was an attractive rural village. The well-known St Paul's School was founded there in about 1509 and William Laud dedicated the Church of St Paul in 1631. Present day Hammersmith has retained little of that original rural charm.

The Brenton family were people of wealth and high social standing, well educated and with strong religious convictions. William Brenton was born in Hammersmith in about 1610, seven years after Charles 1 had succeeded to the throne. These were troubled times. Charles dissolved parliament in 1626, claiming the "Divine Right of Kings". The King and the High Church Party under Archbishop William Laud, became masters of the Church of England – a period which became known as "the eleven years of tyranny". (Charles 1 was executed in 1649).

This was also the age of Puritanism, the most dynamic form of Protestantism

during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Puritans were characterised by religious and moral earnestness with a strictly regulated habit of life. They wished to modify the hierarchy of the Church of England, to abolish Catholic forms, to observe the Sabbath strictly and to keep a close watch on morals.

This was also the age of the New World and between 1628 and 1640 some 20,000 of the sturdiest people of England left for America. There were more than 12,000 voyages across the Atlantic, mainly to Boston. Many Puritan leaders decided to emigrate. They had property and social position but also an independent spirit. In addition they were attracted by the grant of land in America that the Crown gave freely to the British gentry or nobility with money at their command. They established the Puritan age in New England, from the first settlement in 1620.

In Massachusetts the Puritans created a close-knit Church state, governed by an aristocracy of iron-willed, capable but despotic rulers! Attendance at church was compulsory and only church members in good standing could vote! This soon created an oppressive tyranny, of which the execution of witches in Salem is a tragic example.

However, Roger Williams, one of the leading Puritans believed that the Church and State should be separated, and to avoid persecution “escaped” to Rhode Island, where he founded the town of Providence, and received a Charter from Charles 11 in 1663.

William Brenton and his family left Hammersmith in 1634. Initially they settled in Boston, but in 1637 moved to Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Here he took possession of 2,000 hectares of land and named his estate Hammersmith. William was obviously a man of high standing and leadership. Between 1640 and 1647 he was Deputy Governor of the towns of Portsmouth and Newport, and President of Rhode Island Colony from 1660 to 1661. From 1660 to 1668 he became Governor of Rhode Island State, under the Charter of Charles 11. He died at his residence, Hammersmith Farm, Newport, in 1674.

His eldest son, also William (1655-1732) continued the development of Hammersmith, but little is written about him. The estate was described as a place where “a man can farm with one hand and fish with the other”. His named his eldest son Jahleel, an Old Testamewnt name (Numbers 26:26) meaning “Hoping in God”. This confirms the family’s continued religious conviction. Jahleel became the traditional family name for the eldest son for several generations. Jahleel Brenton (1691-1767) planted a grove of Cherry trees in what is now known as Cherry’s Neck. It was said of him “he appears to be a great admirer of the beauties of nature”.

The second Jahleel Brenton was born in 1729 and inherited the extensive properties in Newport, including Hammersmith. He married Henrietta Cowley in 1765 and their eldest son, named Jahleel (later Naval Commissioner in Simon’s Town) was born on 22 August 1770. Young Jahleel had two elder sisters, Elizabeth and Mary. Mary and Jahleel were close and she remained with his family for many years, including their time in Simon’s Bay. He had five younger siblings and of these, Edward Pelham and James Wallace, also followed naval careers.

Jahleel Brenton Snr. became a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy in 1752. Although he was the 4th generation of the “American” family, which had then been there for 140 years, he remained a Loyalist during the American War of Independence (1776-1783). Consequently, he was forced to leave his Newport estates and continued his naval duties for the crown. He finally left America in 1778, losing all his properties to the State. His wife and six children were escorted to New York where they stayed until 1780 when they sailed to England. Although it was said that his two eldest sons, Jahleel and Edward, left with their father, this is unlikely as they were only 8 and 4 years old respectively.

In 1781 Brenton commanded HMS QUEEN and later became Rear Admiral of the Blue. His eldest son, also Jahleel Brenton, then aged 11 years, served as a midshipman on his father’s ship and his second son Edward Pelham, then aged 8 , was probably also on the QUEEN.

After the American War of Independence, the family settled in England. Initially, young Jahleel attended school in Enfield, Middlesex, but at the age of 11 years he joined his father's ship QUEEN as a midshipman, later transferring to TARRAGANT. After 2 years he returned to study at the Chelsea Maritime School. The second part of this series will follow his subsequent distinguished naval career.

What happened to the Brenton estate in Rhode Island? In 1941 the United States Army took it over and used it as a site for a Coastal Artillery Battery until 1946. Later it became Brenton State Park, which is 88.9 acres in extent and incorporates the original Hammersmith estate. The Park was dedicated on 15 October 1974 by His Excellency Philip W. Noel, Governor of Rhode Island. There is also a Brenton Point and Brenton Reef off the Rhode Island coast.

(It was common practise in earlier days for sons or nephews of captains to go to see on ships which were captained by their relatives; they were sometimes on the ship's books as cabin boys and when older were down as servants. Editor)

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GLENCAIRN'S LOST GEOLOGY

ROGER TYLER & JOHN CLIFFORD

The oldest rocks in Glencairn were formed some 450 million years ago during the so-called Ordovician geological period. As to-day, Glencairn was close to the seashore, but that is where the environmental similarity ends. There were then no land animals or flowering plant life; life on Earth being restricted to shoreline algae, mosses and lichens.

The Glencairn rocks were formed within a large system of rivers and deltas, somewhat similar to those of the modern-day Nile area. Over the millennia, the rocks so formed underwent compaction and were de-watered by being overlaid with successive layers of younger rocks. Over millions of years, the rocks became hardened and naturally cemented.

The rocks that were deposited by the river systems in the Western Cape are classified as being of the *Table Mountain Group* and those in Glencairn are specifically termed *Peninsula Formation Quartzites*. These quartzites are normally light grey in colour and of a coarse-grained texture. They are well bedded and dip (or slope) a few degrees towards the south. Numerous examples of cross and trough bedding, which are indicative of the one-time presence of river channels, are seen within the quartzites of Elsie's Peak.

Thin layers of grit are found within the quartzites and represent heavier sediments, that were preferentially concentrated along the beds of ancient river channels. Thin layers of shale are also present and correspond to layers of mud that were deposited on ancient inter-channel flats. Through studying the directions of the various cross beds, geologists have concluded that the dominant direction of rivers in the area 450 million years ago was from north to south. Surprisingly the next 445 million years of geological history are not represented in Glencairn.

This fact suggest a loss of millions of years of geological history. Geologically, either there was no deposition of sediments, or the sea in some way prematurely submerged the area preventing their deposition. Alternatively, they could have been weathered away with other younger sediments during the course of geological time.

The more recent rocks that outcrop in Glencairn were formed during the Quaternary geological period, around 1-2 million years ago. They are primarily of loosely consolidated white sands, which contain considerable amounts of fine crushed shells from ancient snails. The sands appear to have been formed through the action of the prevailing southeasterly winds, causing weathering of the *Peninsula Formation Quartzites* – which were subsequently deposited across the region.

These sands in turn were substantially eroded from high-lying areas, to be preserved in river valleys including Glencairn. Most of these valleys lie in a south-east/north-west direction, and follow the principal direction of geological faults. These faults were caused by movements of the Earth during the formation of the Cape Mountain Belt –causing planes of tensional failure. Such faults provide lines of weakness within the rock,through which water preferentially follows. Eventually river valleys are formed, such as that of the Elsie's River in Glencairn Valley. Additional weathering along the fault lines by the sea formed bays, a prime example being the one at Glencairn. However, this has become a fresh water wetland since the sea's ingress was stopped by the construction of the railway embankment during the 1890s.

The melting of the glaciers after the last Ice Age caused a global rise in sea levels. In the Cape Peninsula this caused the inundation of a number of the fault-controlled river valleys, resulting in the formation of thin layers of sand and limestone. The Fish Hoek/Silvermine/Chapman's Bay valley appears to have been completely submerged, and the Peninsula south of this line (including Glencairn) became an island.

ECONOMIC GEOLOGY OF THE AREA:

There is a history in the mining of stone, sand, kaolin, lime and even precious metals in the Glencairn area.

STONE: A number of quarries have been operated at various times in the south Peninsula. *Peninsula Formation Quartzites* are ideal for concrete aggregates, and to a lesser extent for dimensioned (or dressed) building stone. The hard, fairly homogenous, chemically unreactive quartzites also make good road and rail embankment aggregate. They also make an attractive building stone.

A quarry operated high on the northern slopes of Elsie's Peak from the 1880s until 1898, when Strong and Moore's quarry was opened adjacent to both the Simon's Town/Fish Hoek road and railway. Whilst both operated for some time it was inevitable that the more conveniently located Strong and Moore quarry forced the closure of its rival. A siding long enough for four or five rail trucks was constructed for the loading of aggregates, the road being closed when trains needed to cross it to position their trucks under the feed-hoppers, and also when blasting operations were required. A new crusher provided with a concrete chute was opened in October 1972. The new crusher fed into lorries rather than rail trucks. An indication of its output can be appreciated from the fact that production in 1977 was 31,000 tonnes. The quarry closed down in 1978 due to environmental concerns. Prior to its closure, an evaluation was made of all quarrying operations in the south Peninsula. Partly due to appreciation of a significant tourist potential and the environmental damage caused by quarries, it was decided that exploitation would be stopped in the south Peninsula.

GLASS SAND: The Cape Glass Company of Glencairn exploited the light grey sands, still found along the bottom of the Glencairn valley, between 1902 and 1906 for the production of glass. The industrial remains of the factory now form part of the Simon's Town Museum's collection.

Similar sands are still being exploited in the vicinity of Philippi. These sands are exceptionally pure, comprising over 99,5% silica, making them ideal for the

production of clear glass. A quantity of iron is acceptable in the sand, as this causes brown colouration whilst chrome is used in green bottles.

KAOLIN: China clay (also known as Kaolin) is quarried in several locations around Glencairn. It is needed as part of the glass manufacturing process and the Glencairn glass factory no doubt imported its china clay from the nearby Sun Valley quarry.

LIME/LIMESTONE: An essential ingredient in the manufacture of glass is lime. According to researchers Sharma Saitowitz and Ethleen Lastovica (authors of the authoritative "Discovering the Cape Glass Company at Glencairn"), an important aspect of the decision to build a glass factory at Glencairn was the ready local availability of the principal ingredients in the process. Sand and kaolin are still readily available, but there are now no remaining deposits of lime or limestone anywhere in the vicinity. It must, therefore, be assumed that the deposits of lime or limestone had been expended, hastening the closure of the factory due to the resultant unfavourable economic expenses.

The glass works bought the railway siding built for the Salt River Cement Company and a narrow-gauge cocopan rail that extended up the Glencairn valley. The limited literature on the activities of the Cement Company, suggest sand was taken from the valley to their factory in Salt River. However, this seems unlikely, as sand was readily available much nearer their factory. It is far more probable that they were removing limestone, since it is an essential ingredient in the manufacture of cement.

Limestone is also an essential ingredient in glass manufacture. At that time there was presumably sufficient limestone still available in the valley for the manufacture of glass. Lime and calcareous sediments would have been deposited on top of underlying sand beds at the end of the Ice Age. They would subsequently have been partly re-concentrated due to the movement of ground waters – the result being a superficial calcareous rich layer (known as *calcrete*). When such material is removed, no trace of its previous presence remains.

Historically, small amounts of this material have been worked as a source of lime such as had occurred at Kalk Bay and in the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve. Numerous other examples can be found in coastal areas elsewhere in southern and east Africa.

If the Cement Company were in fact mining limestone from the Glencairn valley and railing it to their Salt River factory, when they sold their interests to the Glencairn Glass Company its exploitation would have been continued to provide one of the essential ingredients in the manufacture of glass. The limestone must have been totally removed, for no evidence of its original presence now remains.

PRECIOUS METALS: Some of the geological faults mentioned above are host to thin quartz veins. Occasionally, very fine metallic sulphide crystals are found in these veins. These minerals include pyrite or fool's gold (iron sulphide) or arsenopyrite (iron arsenic sulphide) which have often been mistaken for gold and silver respectively. Misidentification has resulted in a number of abortive mining ventures around Cape Town, notably at Silvermine. In the Glencairn valley the discovery of fool's gold led to what was dubbed "the Glencairn Gold Rush" of 1886. A local newspaper, The Wynberg Times., reported progress from time to time exciting readers with the prospect that the area would rival the Knysna goldfields. Prospecting licences were issued among others to Mr de Stadler of Elsie's River, Captain King, Thomas McCombie, George Brown, Mr O'Dowd, and Robert Wilson.

Roger Tyler is a Master of Engineering (Wits) BSc Geological (Hons), Imperial, London and is employed by Anglo-American, Johannesburg.

John Clifford is a Professional Civil Engineer with degrees from Aston (UK), Natal and Pretoria, RSA. He has compiled "Glencairn Gleanings" to mark the centenary of the sale of the first plots in Glencairn. This has been published by the Simon's Town Historical Society.

LOSS OF TRADE AND REDUCED RATABLE VALUE OF SIMON'S TOWN DUE TO OCCUPATION OF LAND BY THE ROYAL NAVY.

BILL RICE

During World War I Simon's Town was suffering a severe loss of revenue because trade, in the form of visiting merchant vessels, had dropped considerably since the start of the War and the Admiralty and the War Department were occupying a large proportion of the land within the Municipal Boundary but were contributing only a nominal amount in rates.

On 14 January 1915 the Cape Times reported a speech made by His Worship the Mayor of Simon's Town, Alderman Wm Runciman who said:

"It may seem anomalous that although there is not an empty house in the Town and the demand is greater than the supply, the logical sequence of an increase in value does not ensue; the reason being the unique position of Simon's Town as a naval and military station. In former years the Town and port possessed a considerable commercial trade and was frequented by merchant shipping. This meant a permanent residential population of the commercial class who acquired landed property for business and residential purposes. Since then the merchant shipping has been directed to Cape Town and the port and harbour ceded to the Imperial Government, solely as a naval station."

"It is admitted that the Admiralty and the War Department have at all times shown a ready disposition to assist the Municipality, and in addition to the £350 already mentioned, had agreed to pay the Council, in lieu of rates, £491 per annum for certain specific services rendered. The total value of landed property in Simon's Town for ratable purposes is assessed at £223,235 whilst Imperial Government property, which is exempt from rates, is assessed at £773,710, excluding the Selbourne Dock, valued at £2,000,000 and Union Government property at £23,710. It is pointed out that it is a recognised principle that Union Government property is liable to contribute to municipal requirements while Imperial Government property is entirely exempt."

ROBERT GRANT (1842 – 1910)

AUDREY READ

On 25 May 2004 an interesting set of medals went on sale in London together with a carriage clock. They belonged to an officer who had once been Secretary of the Royal Naval Club in Simon's Town.

Robert Grant was born in Banffshire in Scotland. He studied medicine at Aberdeen University and was commissioned as a Surgeon in the Royal Navy in 1868. While a Surgeon aboard HMS FLORA he served on shore with the 88th Regiment during the Kaffir War of 1877. He accompanied the Naval Brigade to Port Durnford and was Mentioned in Despatches (London Gazette 7 November 1879) for services at the Battle of Zingin Lovo (their spelling) 2 April 1879. On 20 April he was loaned to HMS BOADICEA and was put in charge of the smallpox patients aboard the ship, for which service he was promoted to Staff Surgeon.

During the Egyptian Campaign of 1882 he was Staff Surgeon of HMS ORION and during the Operations in Eastern Sudan in 1884 he was Staff Surgeon aboard HMS ORONTES. He became Medical Officer in charge of Transports, accompanying the Royal Marines Battalion at the Battle of Tamanleb and was Mentioned in Despatches for his admirable arrangements for the sick and wounded. He was promoted to Fleet Surgeon in 1888, Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals and the Fleet in 1897 and Inspector-General in 1901. He retired from the Navy in 1902 and was awarded the C.B. the same year. He died on 14 July 1910.

His medals are described by the Auctioneers in London as "a very rare combination of awards". They are Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Civil Division; South Africa 1877-79; Egypt 1882-89 with a clasp for Suakin (Sudan) 1884; Khedive's Star 1882.

In the same sale is a strike-repeating Carriage Clock circa 1880 in a 'Bamboo' glazed brass case with carrying handle. It is stamped 'LP' in oval and numbered 3019. Enquiries to an expert have failed to ascertain who the maker was. The clock has a brass faceplate bearing the inscription "*Presented to Dr Grant R.N. by the Members of the Royal Naval Club, Simon's Town as a Token of their Appreciation of the Good Services Rendered by him as Hon.Sec. for nearly 3 years 1878 - 1879*". It comes with the original leather fitted travelling case and is expected to raise £600 - £800.

Our thanks to Peter Digby, one of our members, for bringing this to our notice.



Some of the men from
HMS ACTIVE'S
Naval Brigade

JAPANESE SHIPS AT SIMON'S TOWN

A.E.READ

KONGO:

A Japanese battle-cruiser called here 22nd September 1913 to coal ship on her delivery voyage to Japan. She had been laid down in January 1911 and was built by Vickers. She left here on 2 October 1913. Her Captain was Captain Nakano of the Imperial Japanese Navy. At that stage the Japanese were allies of the British and had adopted most of the traditions of the British Royal Navy. There had been much interaction between the Japanese crew and the civilian population of the Cape Peninsula.

The day before the ship sailed for Japan between 50 and 60 people representing the Navy League of South Africa, boarded the 9.15 a.m. train to Simon's Town; the delegation being led by Mr. J.H. Langford (Vice-President of the Navy League) and Mr J.H. Hartley (Hon. Secretary). The ship was anchored in Simon's Bay and the party were duly ferried out to the ship. They had come to bid farewell to their Japanese friends and to present them with a young ram Springbok as a farewell present. Several speeches were made and the party given a tour of the ship. One thing which impressed the party was the 2 plum trees at the foot of the companion way leading to the Captain's cabin. It turned out that these trees were "fakes" but so beautifully fashioned that even the blossom looked real.

Captain Nakano in turn presented a basket of flowers to young Miss Hartley who had made the presentation on behalf of the Navy League, plus a woven picture of Mt Fujiyama. The party, before leaving, gave 3 cheers for the Captain and crew and Captain Nakato replied with "Banzai".

NIITAKA & TSUSHIMA (sister ships):

These 2 light cruisers were Japanese built and were laid down in 1902. They

were 3,420 tons each and capable of 20 knots. They had been built on traditional British lines similar to the HIGHFLYER, HYACINTH and ENCOUNTER. NIITAKA is a mountain in Taiwan (Formosa) and TSUSHIMA is an island in a strait of the same name. They each carried 370 men. The British Royal Navy were overstretched during the 1st World War and Japan, as allies, offered to help with ships to patrol part of the African coast. The last of the ships left here in April 1919 and during their time here they had steamed over 50,000 miles.

The Japanese had made many friends here and were welcomed into the social life of the town. Before the ships left they went round the town to say good-bye to all their friends, in addition to the Captain having addressed a letter to the Mayor, thanking him for the hospitality extended by the citizens to his officers and men. The Mayor suitably replied, as well as the Governor-General. Before heading out to sea the ships cruised round the bay as far as Muizenberg, and at intervals signalled to friends along the route. Reading through correspondence given to me by Ethelmay Gillard, one is impressed by the formality and good manners of the Japanese officers. Her grandfather, then Town Clerk of Simon's Town, preserved many letters received from Lt. Fukumoto of the TSUSHIMA and they corresponded for several years thereafter. Lt Fukumoto did a gunnery course and torpedo course after he left Simon's Town and then was appointed senior officer of the destroyer UJUKI at Port Arthur. By then he had married a lady from Kyoto and she was expecting their first child. Lt Fukumoto was also something of an artist and the Gillard family still own a painting he presented to their grandfather. The conduct of the Japanese sailors during their term of duty here was exemplary and hardly a complaint was made against them. While they were here the flu epidemic occurred and all the Japanese who were obliged to come ashore wore a mask, a very wise precaution.

The NIITAKA ran aground in a severe storm and capsized on the Kamchatka peninsula in August 1922 with the loss of 284 lives. A sad end for a ship which had also seen considerable service in the Russo/Japanese war, where

she had sunk two Russian ships.

The TSUSHIMA also saw service in the Russo/Japanese war and rescued many Russian survivors from the Russian ship KURIK. She became a moored training ship at the Yokosuka naval yard and finally was sunk in 1944 as a target for war-time mini submarines and human torpedos.

Information from:

Miss E. Gillard and Miss Hartley; from the files of the Simon's Town Museum and the book "Warships of the Imperial Japanese Navy" in the Museum Library, as well as from the Police Magazine "Nongqai" of April 1919 (given to the writer by Margaret Cartwright).

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NAUTICAL SAYINGS IN EVERYDAY USE

BY AND LARGE means "for the most part" but it originated as a nautical term. A ship was once considered seaworthy if it could sail both "by" (close to the wind) and "large" (broad or before the wind).

THE DEVIL – In wooden ships, the longest seam of the ship was called the devil. It ran from the bow to the stern. Caulking this seam, or making it watertight with pitch (a variety of tar) was a most unpopular job. A sailor would sit in a bosun's chair, which was a board and rope, and be suspended between the devil and the deep blue sea – a very precarious position, especially when the ship was underway.

THERE'LL BE THE DEVIL TO PAY – means there will be an unpleasant result from some action. It had nothing to do with giving money to Satan. The caulking was done with pitch or "pay". The task of squatting in the bilges was despised by every seaman, and was sometimes a punishment.

THE BITTER END – the post on the ship's deck is the bitt, and a line of rope around the bitt is called a bitter. The last line of rope secured to the bitt is called the bitter end. Nowadays, sticking it out to the bitter end means adhering to a course of action without regard for the consequences.

ELEPHANT SEALS AND THEIR VISITS TO SIMON'S TOWN

A.E READ

On 25 February 2005 a photograph appeared in the Cape Times of an elephant seal which had beached at Glencairn. It appears to have rested there for the day and then returned to sea with the high tide during the night.

Below is a photograph from the Archives of an elephant seal which arrived here on almost the same day of February 1924. The photograph was taken of the dead animal on the beach below the town jetty and as you can see there were many interested townsfolk.

Following on are two articles from the Cape Argus which you may find interesting.



TWO-TON MAMMAL AT SIMON'S TOWN FEBRUARY 1924

From The Cape Argus

A sea mammal measuring 17 ft in length and 12 ft in girth and weighing something like two tons was captured at Simon's Town this morning after an exciting chase. Harpooned, this strange monster, which, so local authorities aver, belongs to the sea elephant species, dragged a 30 ft motor boat in which were four men, over two miles, and was only killed after having desperately attempted to escape for $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. So great was the strain caused by the weight of the boat behind that the harpoon, buried in the monster's side, was bent almost double.

This sea elephant - for so, on the authority of the two Cottons at Simon's Town, we will call it - was first seen a 10 a.m. basking in the sun on a large flat rock about 30 ft from the Town Pier and 200 ft from the shore itself. It was an extraordinary sight, the monster's body looming up high above the outline of the rock. The attention of the Port Coxwain, Mr. Robert Lankester, was drawn to it and he, full of curiosity, put out in a small boat to obtain a closer view of this peculiar mammal, which even from the shore was noticed to have a head and a body altogether unlike anything that had previously been landed in the Peninsula.

The Coxwain needed only one glance at close quarters to realise that here he had a bigger thing to contend with than he could safely tackle alone and with a small boat, quickly returning to shore, he transferred into the Port motor boat and, accompanied by the full crew, prepared to make an attack. The sea-elephant seemed to sense danger as the motor boat approached and made an attempt to slip into the sea. He succeeded but not before a skilfully-thrown harpoon had buried into its side. Then commenced the wearing down process. This elephant of course dived under the water and set off at a fast pace out to sea, jerking the boat after it. Unlike most other sea mammals, it did not alternately rise to the surface and dive again as it tried to get away from its pursuers, but remained immersed practically the whole of the time, wasting no energy, except occasionally to lash its tail savagely and set the water churning white to the surface.

A straight course along the coast was followed, the elephant putting on desperate burst of speed now and again in an endeavour to rid itself of its enemy behind, and the boat, securely connected with the firm harpoon, inexorably following. For $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour the chase continued, until in the end the monster suddenly weakened, came to the surface completely exhausted, and was killed with the aid of a lance. There was no attempt to fight at the end, though the mammal proved dangerous on at least one occasion during its dash through the sea. Once or twice when it slackened off in pace an attempt was made to haul it to the surface, and on one of these occasions it lashed out so furiously with its tail that the boat, big as it was, nearly capsized.

When the carcase was towed back to Simon's Town a large crowd assembled on the shore and great amazement was expressed at the size and extraordinary appearance of the monster. As stated it was 17 ft long and 12 ft in girth. Grey in colour, it had a small but very peculiar head, with a tubular prolongation of the snout, a small mouth and rather small but sharp, thick teeth. The younger Cotton of Simon's Town, is of the opinion that this is not the same monster as that which recently paid a visit to these shores and which he attempted to harpoon though the two mammals have this in common - they both have twin tails. The former visitor had two tails and like to-day's victim had a couple of tusks. The sea elephant caught to-day had on each of its two flippers what strangely resembled five fingers, webbed, and with nails at the tips, and it was these no doubt that enabled it to climb the rocks. It also had a protruberance on the shoulder, the scar it would seem, of an old wound.

Such a monster has never before been landed at Simon's Town and except for whales, nothing as big has ever been seen in the sea here. Sea elephants are rarely seen in local water. Their home is in the Southern Seas, off Patagonia, Juan Fernandes etc, though they have occasionally been observed from Tristan da Cunha. This morning's capture has been reported to the Acting Director of the Cape Town Museum, who has arranged to journey out to make an inspection. In the meantime the strange monster is the subject of many curious - not to say frightened - eyes!

NEITHER WHALE NOR SEAL - JANUARY 1924

From the Cape Argus.

Up to noon to-day, at any rate, all that Simon's Town could do was to go on referring to it as "IT"

Not that Simon's Town seems to have been greatly shocked or excited about "IT". From the quiet, unruffled serenity which everything, and everybody seemed to be wearing, nobody would have guessed that only yesterday a strange sea "monster", of "enormous proportions" had suddenly taken it into its head to crawl ashore on Long Beach, and then "leisurely amble back into the water" and put out to sea again.

In the day of a revived naval enthusiasm, a few pedestrians along the high road, paused to compare the Simon's Town cruisers with the cruisers they remembered in the Special Squadron; a sergeant of marines stood absorbedly watching a few coloured urchins playing cricket, with paraffin tins as wickets; but nobody seemed to have a thought or a concern about the place where, only 24 hours ago a sea monster of enormous proportions suddenly emerged from the mysterious deep and then leisurely ambled out to sea again. The Argus representative found himself alone taking an interest!

All of which, however, does not mean to say that there is nothing in this latest sea monster story. There appears to be a good deal of real, sound fact in it which perhaps accounts for most people's apathy; that, and the fact that this latest "strange visitor from the sea" hardly assumed the most popular proportions. For instead of being a creature with a neck that stuck out of the sea like a marine Eiffel Tower, and a head like a monstrous boa constrictor, he came in no more thrilling guise than the body of a whale and the head of a seal. And he existed. There can be no doubt about that. He existed! He existed to such an extent that a young fisherman,

named Cotton, declared to the Cape Argus to-day that he actually waded out into the water and tried to push a harpoon into the body of IT - only the harpoon would not go in. Cotton states "I was working in the fishing shed here on Long Beach when I suddenly heard someone shout : Come and have a look at this thing, coming along here: I went outside and saw what appeared to me at first to be a big sea-cow swimming from the direction of the Old Dockyard, close to the shore. I waited until it got quite near and I could have a real good look at it. I then saw that it was not a sea-cow. It was unlike anything I have ever seen in the sea before. I have seen plenty of whales and seals as well as sea-cows and sea-elephants, but it was not one of these. Of that I feel quite certain. I should say it was about 25 feet long and the way it was going in the water, it was like a young whale. Its tail also appeared to be very like that of a whale, only the peculiar thing was that it had two. But when it came nearer, I could see that its head was shaped more like a seal's, with two large tusks at its mouth. Yet it was bigger than half-a-dozen seals lumped together - although only the same size as a medium-sized whale."

"That was rather peculiar wasn't it?" suggested the Argus representative. "It was not so peculiar as what happened next" replied Cotton. "Seeing that I couldn't "dart it" - I thought I'd wade right up to it and push the harpoon in. As soon as I did that, it seemed to get angry and show fight. It opened its mouth and I saw that it had two very large eyes. As it was turning round, however, I went round with it and did my best to push the harpoon right in. But the harpoon which would have gone into a whale, a seal or a sea-cow quite easily, did not seem to have the slightest effect. I never came across anything like it before. I shall try him with a gun next time he comes this way - which I hope he does."

While Cotton appears to have been the only man to actually make the acquaintance of IT, there are dozens of people in Simon's Town who saw IT. Admiral Sir Rudolph Bentinck is even stated to have been an interested spectator.

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(Researched by Bill Rice)

One of the many ships which visited Simon's Town Dockyard during World War II was the Decoy Ship (Q-ship) BOTLEA. She was a standard three-island cargo ship of 5119 tons gross, laid down during World War I at the Irvine shipyard of the Ayrshire Dockyard Co. Ltd. on the West coast of Scotland, for J. Gardiner & Co of Glasgow and was launched with the name GLENNEVIS. However, in 1917, the year in which she was completed, Gardiner's 12 ships were taken over by the Prince Line, part of the Furness Withy Group, to form the Rio Cape Line which would operate a service between Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town, carrying coffee and general cargo. GLENNEVIS survived the War but her sisters, GLENCARRON and GLENLEE were sunk by U-boats. Another sister, GLENORCHY, was lost in a collision in 1921 and in 1922 the nine remaining GLENS were transferred to the Prince Line and GLENNEVIS was renamed AFRICAN PRINCE.

In 1936 she was sold to The Dorset Steamship Co. Ltd which was part of the London-Greek owned Counties Ship Management Group, and was renamed PENTRIDGE HILL. Three years later she changed hands again, being acquired by Sir William Reardon-Smith & Sons of Cardiff and renamed BOTLEA. At the outbreak of war s.s. BOTLEA was one of ten merchant vessels hired by the British Admiralty for service as anti-submarine decoy vessels or Q-ships. She was then fitted with 7 four-inch guns, 4 Lewis machine guns, 4 single torpedo tubes and 100 depth charges. A naval crew was embarked and she was commissioned as HMS BOTLEA, with the alternative identity s.s. LAMBRIDGE.

Q-ships were moderately successful during World War I and sank a number of U-boats. However, the ruse was not effective during World War II and after two of the 10 Q-ships, EDGEHILL (ex WILLAMETTE VALLEY) and PRUNELLA, were sunk by U-boats during 1940, it was decided to abandon the project. Although one of the ten, FIDELITY, which carried two aircraft and a motor

torpedo boat in addition to guns and torpedoes, was employed on clandestine operations until her loss on 30 December 1942, the remaining 6 returned to commercial service in 1941.

During August 1941 BOTLEA, together with another Q-ship KING GRUFFYD, was ordered to Simon's Town to land weapons, naval stores and ammunition, prior to being reinstated as merchant ships. BOTLEA was returned to the Ministry of War Transport and placed under the management of Sir William Reardon-Smith & Sons. By 1945 ships like BOTLEA, which were small and inefficient compared to standard cargo ships built during the War, were no longer required to carry cargoes and many were scrapped or sold overseas. BOTLEA was one of a group retained to perform one more vital service for the Nation.

During two World Wars the British Armed Forces had accumulated a stockpile of approximately 100,000 tons of bombs and shells containing mustard gas and other nasty substances and it was decided that the best way to dispose of the hoard was to load it aboard obsolete cargo ships and sink them in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean. BOTLEA was one of 17 vessels which were sunk between September 1945 and the end of 1948. The ships were loaded in ports such as Barry in Wales, and Cairnryan near Stranraer in South-West Scotland, under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport (Sea Division) personnel and were sailed, escorted by Royal Naval vessels, to selected positions where the crews were taken off. Naval and Ministry of Transport personnel then positioned and set the scuttling charges before withdrawing to the safety of the escorting vessels.

Thanks to the Internet, Bill Rice was able to make contact with John Calvert, who joined BOTLEA in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 8 November 1945 as a seventeen year old radio operator. He describes the ship of having been stripped of everything useful, including machinery, navigation equipment, furniture and portable fittings and even handrails. His radio outfit consisted of an emergency transmitter housed in a buoyant yellow container. The ship was towed around the North of Scotland to Cairnryan, where troops loaded her with crates of mustard gas shells and bombs. After about 3 days of loading, monitors detected a leak of

mustard gas from containers at the bottom of one of the holds and the whole lot had to be unloaded! At this point John Calvert was transferred to another ship and so was not on hand to provide an eye witness account of the demise of the ship on which he made his memorable and rather uncomfortable first trip to sea.

Early in December 1945 after the removal of the damaged containers and reloading with 6152 tons of obsolete ammunition, the steamer BOTLEA, which had spent much of her 28 year life in the South Atlantic, was towed out and scuttled in the cold depths of the North Atlantic.

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THE NAVAL BRIGADE FROM HMS ACTIVE 1877-79

In the Kaffir and Zulu Wars of 1877-79 a Naval Brigade from HMS ACTIVE in number about 200 strong, complete with 4 Gatling Guns, landed in October 1877. They remained on shore for 18 months until March 1879, having been present at all the principal actions. A larger Naval Brigade of 800 officers and men were landed in 1879 and frequently found themselves fighting as infantry against vastly superior enemy numbers. There can be little doubt that the smell of the sea was far distant for those sailors and marines who in 1879 were besieged for 10 weeks in Fort Eshowe by Zulu forces. Brigade losses during the campaign were 1 officer and 23 men killed or died of wounds and 24 men wounded. Many of the deaths were due also to enteric fever, dysentery and to typhoid fever.



Some of the men from
HMS ACTIVE'S
Naval Brigade