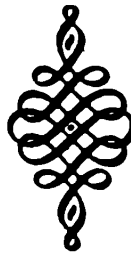




SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT DELIVERED AT THE 49TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT THE SIMON'S TOWN MUSEUM ON 15TH APRIL 2009

The secret of good management is delegation! However, the success of delegation depends on the ability and commitment of those responsible! I have been most fortunate in having an Executive Committee who were competent and prepared to take full responsibility for their portfolios. This has ensured that we have had a successful and productive year – and that I have had an easy passage!

I will present my report according to those responsible and their portfolios, which will cover the activities of the year, and give me the opportunity to acknowledge their contributions.

ERIC MAWHINNEY is Vice-Chairman, but his main contribution has been the establishment of *Simonstown.org* our own very successful web site. He has moved over half our members from snail mail to e-mail and set up our improved projection facilities (work in progress). Eric is also a member of our building registration sub-committee.

TERRY KORSTEN retired as Chairman, but has worked harder than ever. His main task has been our Heritage responsibilities. Registration of all buildings over 60 years is proceeding and the plans for any alterations to such existing buildings in our area (Glencairn to Cape Point) are referred to us for opinion and recommendation by Heritage Western Cape and the Architectural Advisory Committee. Unfortunately some buildings have managed to slip through the hoop, and become dominated by modern extensions! Terry takes on many other responsibilities, and his experience is a great help to the committee.

The Society replaced the lamp on the Jubilee Fountain on the town square with a hand-made replica of the original. We were also able to use a grant from the Council to have a new board painted for the Welcome to Simon's Town sign at Glencairn. A plaque was placed to indicate the history of the aerial ropeway and a temporary one attached to the Whale Try-Pot on Jubilee Square, and another at the side entrance to the Old Burying Ground.

AUDRY READ remains responsible for members and our membership has increased by 30 new members. Presently we have 418 paid-up members and 52 outstanding subscriptions. R3,755 was donated to Museum Funds as a percentage of subscriptions received for Friends of the Museum. Audrey is also responsible, almost single-handedly for the Annual Society Bulletin, and has run

successful fund-raising functions such as the Italian evening and the members' walk round Simon's Town. Audrey is of course a font of accumulated knowledge about Simon's Town.

MARGARET CARTWRIGHT attends various Municipal meetings on our behalf and keeps us informed of relevant matters. She is responsible for the street names portfolio and generally keeps an eye on Glencairn matters. Margaret has been responsible for a most successful monthly lecture program. Attendance has increased which assists the Development Fund. Eleven lectures were held, attended by 408 people.

YVONNE MAWHINNEY looks after the money of the Development Fund, and assists with fund raising and social activities such as the *CABLE RESTORER* dinner. She serves on the Simon's Town Museum Board and liaises with the Museum Management.

GRAHAM CRIMP is our efficient Honorary Treasurer, and is able to prepare all our accounts which should reduce our auditing costs. We particularly appreciate Graham's traveling in from Kenilworth to attend committee meetings.

DAVID ERICKSON although a relative newcomer, has become well known in Simon's Town for his enthusiasm and his detailed reports. He has kept an eye on several developments, and together with Harry Croome has explored many neglected historical sites in Simon's Town, including the Old Laundry at the Naval Hospital, the Water Tanks and various Batteries. He has recently produced a most comprehensive report on the Dockyard Clock, which is almost 200 years old.

BILL RICE is our Honorary Secretary and minute keeper. Fortunately we do not generate a great deal of correspondence and e-mail is a great boon. Bill is currently very involved with the production of the Dockyard book in time for the 2010 celebrations of the opening of the East Dockyard.

So this leaves me, your Chairman, with relatively few responsibilities.

The Museum has had a fairly trouble-free year, and continues to attract many visitors and tour groups. Our loyal band of Volunteers welcomes visitors and runs the Museum shop. They are also on hand to assist the Manager when required. Simon's Town Tourism has recently moved their office to the Museum, off the front stoep. This has increased our number of visitors, and is a great place for them to receive advice and assistance. Cathy Salter-Jansen, the Museum

Manager, and her loyal staff Margaret, Suzette and Victoria have worked hard to maintain the Museum. Joan Swain retired after many years of loyal service to the Museum and she will be sadly missed.

It has been a good year for your Society. Membership has increased, and several projects have been undertaken. The *Peoples Post* has featured a monthly contribution from the Society, and we have continued good relationships with other bodies, including the S.A. Navy and the Naval Heritage Trust.

Looking further down the line, one does see potential problems, and these may need to be addressed more aggressively. The Museum is a Provincial Aided Museum, and while we are grateful for the substantial financial support, the demands by the Administration for information, reports, financial statements etc seems to absorb a great deal of the time of the staff, which could and should be directed to expanding and improving the Museum. This has led to the suggestion by some that we should "go private" again. A route which I would rather not explore at this stage.

Secondly is the problem which most Museums and similar Societies are experiencing – namely the inability to attract and to involve younger members of the community. They have many other demands, distractions and priorities, and Social and Cultural responsibility is left to a bunch of enthusiastic but ageing citizens. Is this new, or have generations before us felt the same way? Equally important is the need to involve those who were previously displaced from Simon's Town. At present our Society is seen, with some justification, as a "white elitist group". This will need time, sensitivity and effort to correct.

The best we can do is to work hard to improve and to publicise not only the Society, but the important role that it plays as a watchdog in preserving our precious but fragile heritage. Thank you to the committee, the staff, the volunteers and all of you for your support.

Long may it continue.

BOET DOMMISSE.

COLE POINT AREA OF SIMON'S TOWN

From an article originally written by H.C. Willis, the 1st Chairman of the Simon's Town Historical Society.

This area was originally known as Cole's Point after the army man who was responsible for the Battery which originally existed in this area.

Adriaan de Nys, who had succeeded the first Postholder Justinius Blas, in that office in 1750, died on 1st March 1761, at the age of 50 years. He was buried on top of the little rise in the ground at Cole's Point and a very impressive piece of stone was placed over his grave. This stone is thought to have come from the Cameron Highlands in Malaysia but quite how the Dutch East India Company came to haul it all that way is not known, save to say that it is almost exactly like that of Maria van Riebeeck's stone in a ruined church in Malacca. The stone was removed from Cole Point when changes were made in the area and was sited in the Old Burying Ground at Seaforth. Later, with the permission of the authorities it was removed to the Simon's Town Museum for safekeeping and is on display at the front of the Museum.

During de Nys' time the land around Cole's Point between the main road and the beach was being cultivated by the Burgher Hendrik Elsthout as a market garden to grow vegetables for sale to visiting ships. On 2 February 1761 a formal Deed of Grant in freehold of the property was made out to him. The land granted was an area very nearly two morgen in extent forming a right-angle triangle with the main road and the beach on the two longer sides and stretching from a point in the garden of the present Seven Seas Club to the western boundary of the Police Station area. The property was described in the deed as a piece of garden ground annexed to the burgher Elsthout's place "Constantia" which comprised all the land on the mountain side of the main road from Belmont House to the Criterion building (which houses Pescado Restaurant).

The area seems to have continued solely as a market garden for the next 45 years until the 2nd British Occupation of the Cape in 1806, when Mr John Osmond came on the scene. No buildings of any kind are shown in this area on the plan of Simon's Town and Bay, compiled by Major Kirsteman of the Royal Engineers in 1798 nor on his large scale plan of "De Nice's Point" as he called it.

John Osmond arrived in South Africa on 9 December 1799 as Carpenter in HMS LANCASTER, the flagship of Rear Admiral Sir Roger Curtis. He rapidly made a name for himself as a marine surveyor; making examinations of ships which had

suffered damage by storm, collision or stranding, advising on any repairs necessary and issuing certificates of seaworthiness. In 1802 he married Margaretha Johanna Rossouw, daughter of Gideon Rossouw, a prosperous landowner in the town, and his wife Susannah de Necker. It so happened that at this time peace was declared with the Republic of France under Napoleon. One of the terms of this peace treaty was that the Cape of Good Hope should be restored to Holland and steps were immediately taken to evict the British forces. Osmond's services therefore, were no longer required by the Royal Navy and John Osmond seems to have obtained his discharge and remained in Simon's Town, where he set up in business as a ship repairer. With the help of a formidable and wealthy mother-in-law, recently widowed, and his own skill and industry, he soon built up a flourishing business.

With the return of the British in 1806 he submitted a Memorial praying for the grant of a piece of land "situated between the South Battery and the rocks projecting from the front of Mr Roselt's house in which there is a small rock under the denomination of Steenbras Bay". Captain William Benezet of the Royal Artillery objected to the grant of the land on the grounds that "the fires which must frequently be made in repairing the iron-work of masts, etc" would endanger the Powder Magazine on the South Point. A committee of the Burgher Senate appointed to enquire into the merits of the case did not consider that this objection was well founded because it was the usual practice that, whenever gunpowder was loaded or shipped in Simon's Bay and the doors of the magazine were opened, everyone in Simon's Town was obliged to put out their fires. The Committee therefore recommended that the land could safely be granted, but for some reason or other, possibly because the Governor preferred to accept the advice of an army officer being one himself, the grant was never in fact made.

Jon Osmond, however, was not the sort of man to be thwarted for long by a minor set-back like that. Having failed to obtain the east side of Cole's Point, he now turned his attention to the bay on the west side. Most of the original shore-line here has now been covered by reclamation, which now comprises Jubilee Square and the Foreshore. Though not quite suitable for his purposes, as it was much obstructed by rocks, this west side of Cole's Point was completely sheltered from all winds except those from North to North-east which seldom blow with any great force. There were also some small stretches of sandy beach, where vessels could be hauled ashore, though not as extensive as on the east side.

The land between the seashore and the main road was all part of the Elsthout estate "inner Constantia" previously mentioned. This estate had recently been bought by Alexander Tenant, a Cape Town merchant, who seems also to have

made some big speculations in land. He probably anticipated a large increase in land values with the return of the British. He already owned other large properties in Simon's Town, but had apparently rather overstretched his resources and at this time was on the verge of bankruptcy. He accordingly subdivided the Elsthout property into three portions. John Osmond bought the westernmost portion in 1807; this for his purposes was the most valuable although the smallest as it carried with it the privilege of the beach for shipbuilding purposes. The other two portions he acquired later.

Here John Osmond settled down and built up an extensive and highly profitable business in repairing ships. For this purpose his services were much in demand by the government as well as private shipowners as he could always be relied upon to produce work of the highest quality. He was soon, however, to be given a sever shock. In 1814 the Government surveyor L.E. Thibault, made a complete survey of the town and produced a detailed map, showing every building and the boundaries of the larger properties. From this plan it was only too clear that the two buildings on the land which he had recently acquired were only half on his ground, while the other half of the buildings encroached on Government land. In order that there should be no possibility of mistake, Mr Thibault added a note to the title of the plan, now rather illegible, stating "The....of Land No.3 belongs....Osmond and shows his having builded upon Government property."

In the circumstances the Government would have been perfectly within its rights if it had ordered Mr Osmond to demolish the portion of the offending buildings which stood within its boundaries. His only remedy was to appeal to the Government to get him out of his difficulty by granting him sufficient additional ground to include the two buildings within his boundaries. Fortunately he had been much in the favour of the previous Governor, Sir John Cradock, and had not yet had time to fall foul of his successor Lord Charles Somerset, as he did later.

John Osmond accordingly submitted a Memorial to the Governor on 29 July 1814. In this he explained that he personally was not aware until the plan of the town was made that any part of his buildings stood on Government ground, nor did he believe that the persons who erected the buildings were aware of any trespass. The long building on the westernmost portion of the land he had bought, now known as ALBERTYN'S COTTAGE, had been built by the late Alexander Tenant in 1801 "who" he said "unfortunately for his family left his servants to manage his business for him". This no doubt was one of the reasons for his bankruptcy. As for the square building erected in 1801 by Mr Kirsten on the easternmost of the three portion, he had certainly been working in the dark.

Although he had bought the land in 1801, no legal transfer took place until 1812, ten years after the building was erected.

It was clear, then, that everyone had acted in good faith. Osmond therefore prayed in his memorial that the Governor would grant him so much of the waste land, which lay between his own land and the seashore, as would include his buildings. He further stated that the whole of the additional land asked for had been made by himself in clearing away his own ground for tilling. From this it would appear that reclamation of the foreshore had already begun, even at this early date.

In accordance with normal practice this Memorial was sent to the Government Resident in Simon's Town Mr J.H. Brand, to enquire into the circumstances and submit a report thereon, a duty which had formerly been delegated to a committee of the Burgher Senate. Mr Brand found that the facts of the case were indeed as stated in the Memorial and that there could be no objection to the granting of the land asked for, as it was of no value to Government or anyone else except the memorialist.

The whole business was settled to everyone's satisfaction by the grant in freehold of the land asked, amounting to 64 sq roods, to John Osmond on 11 November 1814, in addition to the 533 morgan which he had already acquired by purchase.

A good example of the ship-repair work done by John Osmond in this area is provided by a letter addressed to him in 1809 by the Colonial Secretary Christopher Bird. He writes "His Excellency the Governor having determined upon taking up the Prize ships TANGEBAR of 400 tons, PEGGY of 300 tons, CERES of 300 tons AND THE Merchant ship DAENDELS of 230 tons, as Transports for the conveyance of troops to India, I desire you will lose no time in fitting them out for this purpose, which His Excellency hopes you will be able to complete within the term of 3 weeks, which you considered as the probable time it would take to do so." As the ships were stated elsewhere "to have been lying for months exposed to the weather without any repairs and were in general very ill equipped" it was a big contract and even by modern standard it would need a well-equipped and efficiently managed business to complete this job in such a short time.

Another incident which occurred in October 1812 affecting this part of Simon's Bay illustrates another aspect of Osmond's wide interests in the town. The ship ARCHDUKE CHARLES bound for New South Wales with 145 male and 54 female convicts on board, arrived in Table Bay with a serious defect in her stern post. As the ship would have to be lightened and put on shore in order to bring

the defective part above water, it was decided to send her round to Simon's Bay "for the benefit of a more sheltered anchorage". The repair work was estimated to take 8 or 10 days during which time the convicts would have to be taken out of the ship. The Deputy Fiscal (as he was then called) Mr J.H. Brand, was instructed in collaboration with the Military Commandant, Major General Sir Joseph Baird, who was responsible for security, to procure appropriate accommodation for the convicts on shore.

They did not have to look far for suitable buildings and were able to report on the following day. "We examined a house belonging to Mr Osmond situated near the beach, for which he asked either for 10 days or a month 56 Rixdollars, and a store of Mr Kirsten 50 feet deep and 18 feet wide, for the upper and lower part of which he demanded 5 Rixdollars per day, which places according to our opinion will answer for the purpose". The former was no doubt ALBERTYN'S COTTAGE and the latter the property which Osmond bought from J.P. Kirsten that very same year. As it turned out the ship was in Simon's Bay for a whole month and for half of this time the convicts were living on shore, which must have been a most unexpected and very welcome interlude for them in the long and tedious voyage to Australia on an overcrowded ship.

With his ship-repair business well established, John Osmond took a less active personal interest in it as the years passed by and employed others to do the actual work. He himself was finding a more profitable outlet for his energies and his capital in buying up landed property and buildings of various kinds, principally from insolvent estates and from those in financial difficulties. He either leased these properties or sold while leaving most of the purchase price with the buyer at 5% interest. In this way he accumulated quite a fortune. At one time or another his name appears on most of the title deeds of properties along the main street

In 1829 Commodore Charles M. Schomberg relieved Commodore William Shipsey as Commander-in-Chief on the Cape of Good Hope Station. Commodore Schomberg strongly disapproved of the manner in which naval affairs were being conducted in Simon's Town and brought out the proverbial new broom to sweep the place clean.

He complained of the total absence of police supervision over the conduct of the wine houses; he complained that he could not get his flagship's sails repaired with sufficient promptitude, because the sail loft had to be cleared every Sunday for use as a Church; he complained that merchant ships were allowed to anchor in berths where they interfered with H.M. Ships entirely owing to the ignorance of Mr Abraham Levien, the Collector of Customs, who also held the office of

Harbour Master, but was no seaman. In this case he shared the opinion of every citizen in the town that Mr Levien was an unprincipled rogue, as indeed he was.

Above all Commodore Schomberg complained of the defenceless state of Simon's Town. He voiced his complaints to His Excellency the Governor, Sir Lowry Cole in such delightful terms that his words seem worthy of quotation in full:-

"I beg to state that as His Majesty's Ship under my command, together with the principal naval forces on this station, may be required at Mauritius to keep down a feeling manifested by its inhabitants hostile to H.M. Government...the almost total defenceless state of His Majesty's Dockyard at this place calls on me to express a hope Your Excellency will use the propriety of protecting the Arsenal from surprise; for from the insufficient state of the only Battery (if such it can be called) I do not deem the Arsenal secure from even piratical enterprises. The North, or enfiling, Battery, your Excellency is aware of being in ruins, and in a state of abandonment. The number of Artillery at Simon's Town is a Serjeant and three gunners."

The Governor felt that in this instance at any rate the Commodore's complaint was more than justified. He immediately authorised the expenditure of £700 on the improvement of the defence and at the same time forwarded the Commodore's letter to the Colonial Secretary the Rt Hon Lord Viscount Goodrich, with a covering letter seeking authority for this unauthorized expenditure of public funds. He added "I feel it right to observe that it has always been a matter of surprise to me that the defences of the only Dockyard Great Britain possesses between England and India should have been not only neglected but not even considered."

Commodore Schomberg must also have written by this same mail to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, who lost no time in passing the complaint on to Lord Goodrich. In the face of this bombardment from all sides the noble Lord had no alternative but to instruct Sir Lowry Cole to take some action in the matter. With this implied approval, confirmed later, for the proposed expenditure the way was now clear to go ahead with the desired improvements.

No time was wasted. The Governor spoke to the Chief Secretary to the Government, who wrote to the Military Secretary, who referred the matter to the Officer Commanding Royal Engineers Lt Col. Robert Thomson, who delegated the matter to Captain Alexander with the result that Lt John Hope went to Simon's Town to make an assessment of the requirements. The result of all these deliberations was a decision to build two new batteries to supplement the ones already existing, the North and South Batteries. The sites selected for the new batteries were precisely those chosen some 70 years earlier by the Dutch military

experts. The one was on the outcrop of rocks on the seashore in front of St Francis Church and the other on Cole's Point in front of Adrian de Nys grave.

The two sites are clearly shown on a plan of Simon's Bay specially drawn for this purpose by the surveyor C.d. Wentzel, somewhere about the year 1761. At that time it was proposed that each battery should consist of twelve pounder guns, but it does not appear that either battery was constructed at that time. They were admirably sited for the protection of the Company's Warehouses (in the West Dockyard), the only important buildings in the town at that time. With the spread of the town these sites were equally well sited to reinforce the North and South Batteries and deal with any vessel which contrived to get past the latter.

There were no difficulties about the westernmost battery in front of St Francis Church, later to become known as "Munro Battery". The selected site lay on government ground and easy access to it was provided by the road, which ran in front of the Customs House (then located in the present Museum building – The Residency) to the North Gate of the Dockyard. Work on this battery could therefore begin immediately.

The site selected for the battery at Cole's Point was also on government ground but access to it was not so simple. Lieutenant Hope, to whom had been allotted the task of constructing the batteries gave it as his opinion in a report submitted in June 1832, that, although there was ample space for the battery itself without interfering with the private property of Mr. Osmond, it would be expedient to procure a direct road to the battery through this property. The public road to the beach from the main road ran at that time down the eastern boundary of the Osmond property, which coincided roughly with the western boundary of the present Police Station /Magistrate's Court area where the main entrance to the East Dockyard now is. Access to the battery by this road would be circuitous, exposed to gunfire from shipping and through much heavy sand. Lt Hope therefore proposed that a road 20 or 30 ft wide should be made directly from the main road to the battery across the property of Mr Osmond. Lt Hope also mentioned that there were more than one grave on the summit of the mound near de Nys grave.

John Osmond, ever ready, as a loyal citizen, to make any sacrifice to aid the defence of his country, especially when it could be turned to his personal benefit, readily agreed to the construction of this road across his land. It provided him with a marvelous opportunity to acquire by way of compensation the land which he had tried in vain to secure many years earlier! With both parties in accord

agreement was soon reached and within a month the road now known as Cole Point Road was completed.

John Osmond now started planning what he would accept as suitable compensation for this division of his property. He borrowed Lt Hope's surveyors chain and proceeded to measure off the whole area himself, thinking no doubt that anyone who could measure up the complicated lines of a ship would have no difficulty in measuring a flat piece of land. On 10 September 1832 he drew a plan of the area, which he had selected, stating that it was "very correct only omitting fractions of feet". How wrong he was only appeared several years later. At the time the plan seems to have been accepted without question by the Surveyor General, Col. Charles Michell, AND ON 1 March 1833, the Governor Sir Lowry Cole, made an entirely new grant of the land in freehold to John Osmond, which cancelled the grants in freehold to Elsthout in 1761 and to Osmond himself in 1814 and all transfers in between.

The new grant comprised all the ground now bounded by the main street from the Seven Seas Club to the Police Station by Church Street and de Nys Street and then from the corner of de Nys Street and King George's Way to the Seven Seas Club.

Osmond could well feel satisfied with the deal. He had given up Cole's Point Road and received in exchange an extension of half a morgen of ground mainly at the eastern end of his property, which he had always wanted. He continued in possession of his new property until 1845. He was now 70 years of age; all his sons had predeceased him and he was left with two daughters. The elder one Agnes who kept house for him at Mount Curtis (known locally as The Palace) was separated from her husband Thomas Pownall Pellew Barrow, a ne'er-do-well retired naval lieutenant, while the younger one was unmarried. It was time he consolidated his affairs and set his estate in order. Among other things, on 1 May 1845, he sold his foreshore property, as it had been granted to his 12 years previously, to John Bryant for £1,500.

John Bryant seems to have had a shipwright's business already well established in Cape Town and it is quite probable that he leased Osmond's business in Simon's Town for some years past. It would clearly be to Bryant's benefit to purchase it if only to keep out competitors, of which there were several, though most were in a small way of business. Bryant did not live long to enjoy this new branch of his business, as he died in 1848 leaving a minor as his sole heir. As there was now no one to manage the business, the executors of the estate advertised the foreshore property for sale divided into five lots.

LOT 1 consisted of a small area facing de Nys Street between Black's Lane and Cole Point Road, while LOT 2 comprised the remainder of the land between King George's Way and Cole Point Road. LOT 3 was the area containing what is now The Brass Foundry and The Town Hall and LOT 4 was Albertyn's Cottage and garden while LOT 5, the most extensive, covered the whole of the property east of Cole Point Road.

The westernmost LOT 4 was stated to have "a double-storeyed Store, having a Smith's Shop attached." The diagram attached to the Deed of Transfer shows the store as a building about 46 feet long by 15 feet in breadth.

LOT 3 is briefly advertised as having "a large store, built by the late Mr Bryant". Coupled with the diagram, it tells us a lot. The building as shown on this diagram is about 75 ft long by 28 feet wide, which corresponds very closely to the dimensions of one half of the building presently occupied by the Foundry. Its position on the 1848 diagram as compared with the diagram which was made in 1949 and shows the whole building as it stands today, indicates that the original section was the south-west half of the present building lying nearest to the main road. It can therefore be said with some degree of certainty that one half of the Foundry building was built between May 1845 and May 1848. It is not known when the other half of the building (on the seaward side) was added.

EVEREST - THE MAN AND THE MOUNTAIN

A.E. READ

From literature provided by Prof. Boet Dommisse

Mount Everest, Everest's figure of the earth, the Everest theodolite – who was this Everest?

George Everest was born on 4 July 1790 to Tristram Everest a solicitor in Greenwich, England. Tristram was the son of a solicitor who had previously been a butcher – obviously this was an unusual family. Tristram was born in 1747 and died in 1825. They were men of some wealth and property.

By the age of 14 George Everest was nominated to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich as a gentleman cadet and very quickly proved his ability. His mathematics were of a very high standard and his professor forecast a distinction, which was duly obtained. By 1806 a certificate had been awarded and George was on his way to India with the British East India Company (also often referred to as H.E.I.Co). He was so brilliant that he was well below the required age when he obtained a commission.

Some years were spent in the Bengal Artillery before he began surveying. He arrived in India around 1810 just before the French captured Java. This was very disturbing to the East India Company as it was right on their back doorstep so they set about capturing Batavia in August 1811 using Madras troops.

In 1815 Everest was appointed to complete the coastal survey of Batavia. He spent several months on this before it was decided to hand back the territory to the Dutch and he rapidly carried on with as much surveying as he could before the due date.

In September 1816 he sailed back to India and by November he was in Calcutta. His instruments comprised a double arm perambulator, a large ship's compass, a theodolite and a micro-metrical telescope. He suffered greatly from tropical fevers which put him out of action for a week to 10 days at a time.

He then went on to clear obstructions in the River Ganges and its tributaries. The rivers gave constant trouble due to debris brought down when the snows melted but Everest devised methods to make their clearance easier.

In 1817 he surveyed the route of the telegraph line from Calcutta to Benares – 400 miles. This took 6 months because of the thick forest and the telescope's range was only 13 miles – sometimes less. Everest made such a good impression on his seniors that Lambton, the Superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey, requested Everest be appointed his chief assistant and join him in Hyderabad. He left Benares in October 1818 and it took him 10 weeks to reach Hyderabad – a distance of 750 miles. Lambton had been working on a systematic triangulation of India. By the time Everest joined Lambton, Lambton was about 65 years old and had realized he must soon train up a younger man to take over his job. Everest soon set to work but was dogged by constant bouts of malaria and of his 150 workers, 15 of them never made it back to Hyderabad after surveying between the rivers Kistma and Godavar to the East of Hyderabad. In October 1820 Everest was forced to take recuperative leave in the Cape Colony. It took him 2 months to reach Table Bay and during the year he was absent from India he undertook a survey assignment at the Cape.

In 1752 l'abbe Lacaille had surveyed the arc of meridian near Cape Town but there appeared to be some discrepancy and Everest was told by Lambton to look into this while at the Cape. It was not until 1834 that Thomas Maclear was to arrive at the Cape and between 1837 and 1847 he proved Everest's theory.

Everest was back in India by the end of 1821 and he this time went west of Hyderabad carrying a chain from the central meridian arc towards Poona and Bombay. This was eventually to connect observatories at Madras and Bombay. Col. Lambton died on 20 January 1823. All Everest's work on the chain ceased and he rushed back to Hyderabad to take charge of the Great Trigonometrical Survey, being officially appointed on 7 March 1823. He again suffered severely from bouts of malaria and resorted to taking mercury pills as well as horse riding. However, he was so ill he could not stand unaided. Again, in 1824 he was forced to apply for sick leave and he was forced to go to England where he spent the next 5 years during which time he decided that when he returned to India he would have with him the best available equipment. He consulted a Col. Colby who was surveying in Ireland using a new technique; instead of chains he was using bars so arranged as to be compensating for some sources of error. In addition he arranged the construction of a new theodolite with a 36" dia. Circle.

During 1827 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and later in the same year a Member of the Council of the Royal Astronomical Society. He left for India again in June 1830 where he would now be not only Supt. Of the Great Survey but also Surveyor General of India.

In 1832 Everest recommenced his work on the Great Survey. To better matters he moved his Head Quarters from Calcutta to Missourie – 800 miles away near Dehra Dun where he purchased Park House at 6,000 ft. It was a vast estate containing Bachelors Hall (built in 1831), Logarithm Lodge (built in 1835) and an observatory (built in 1839). Due to the number of tigers in the area and the long grass, transport was by elephant. He still suffered from severe malarial fevers and had 4 attacks in 1835 alone, each more severe than the previous.

So alarming was Everest's health that the H.E.I.Co appointed in September 1837 Thomas Jervis as Provisional Surveyor General to succeed "upon the death or resignation of Lt Col. Everest." The two did not see eye to eye and anyway Jervis retired from India before Everest. Everest finally finished his Great Arc Survey in 1841 and he took 2 years to write up his reports. He left his Park Estate in September 1843 and after a long march sailed on 16 December in the BENTINCK for retirement in England, to be followed as Surveyor General by Andrew Waugh, who held the post until 1861.

Everest married in 1846 and had 6 children, the last of whom died in 1935, but neither of his 2 grandsons survived to marry. Sir George died in London on 1 December 1856 and is buried in Hove in Sussex. He was made a CB and Knighted in 1851.

Everest himself never worked on the mountain which bears his name and probably never saw it, it was his successor who decided that instead of being known as Peak XV it should be named after his illustrious predecessor. This fact was announced by Major Thuillies to the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

One of the famous theodolites made by the well-known London firm of Troughton & Sims (and known as the 2nd Troughton & Sims theodolite) was used in India for observations during the Transit of Venus before being put into store in Calcutta. In 1879 David Gill was appointed Astronomer at the Cape and given the task of building up the Cape Observatory, its instruments and its scientific reputation. In 1902 the theodolite was on charge to the Observatory in Cape Town and was probably used in the work to survey the southern part of the arc of the 30th meridian. It was later presented to Trigonometrical Survey in Cape Town by the Director of the Royal Observatory of the Cape of Good Hope in 1947. It now lives in the Museum of the Department of Land Affairs, Chief Directorate: Surveys and Land Information.

From an article in FULL CIRCLE Magazine

We wrote about the Kindo family of Simon's Town in our Bulletin Volume XXIV No. 4 of July 2007.



Christopher was born in Simon's Town and was a teenager in 1973 when he and his family were forcibly removed from their Cardiff Road home along with the rest of Simon's Town's coloured community and resettled in Ocean View. He completed his schooling at Ocean View High School and then went to the University of Cape Town where he completed a Performing Arts Diploma in Ballet. Thereafter he went to Boston in the United States and completed a two-year apprenticeship with the Marjorie Topf Dance Company before returning to South Africa to work with several local companies, including becoming a founder member of the Jazz Art Company.

He also danced and choreographed with CAPAB, NAPAC, PACT, Free Flight and ran the Full Circle Dance Studio in the old Jazzart venue. Christopher has over the past 30 years become one of South Africa's most prominent dancers, choreographers and teachers.

He describes himself as "just a boy from Ocean View who is passionate about dance. Dance got me out of township life and got me out of trouble. It allowed me to travel the world". He spend much of his time helping disadvantaged communities and believes dance can bring together people from very disparate backgrounds and cultures and provide a platform for learning, communication and understand.

For six years he has been involved with the Jikeleza Outreach Project in Hout Bay and has , about a year ago, opened a dance school at Imhoff Farm, just across the road from Ocean View and this school he has named the Tertia Kindo Arts Project after his sister who was murdered in Ocean View some ten years ago. In this project he hopes to be joined by Teva Scarborough who trained in a variety of dance forms, mostly Classical Ballet and Contemporary Dance. She gained her Post Graduate Certificate in Education from the University of Cape Town . Teva is also involved with the Western Cape Education Department and teaches Dance and Pilates classes at various studios in the False Bay area.

A.E. READ

Late in 1577 Francis Drake left England with 5 ships, ostensibly on a trading expedition to the Nile. On reaching Africa, the true destination was revealed to be the Pacific Ocean via the Strait of Magellan, to the dismay of some of the accompanying gentlemen and sailors. Still in the eastern Atlantic, a Portuguese merchant ship and its pilot – who were to stay with Drake for 15 months – was captured and the fleet crossed the Atlantic, via the Cape Verde Islands to a Brazilian landfall.

Running down the Atlantic South American coast, storms, separations, dissension and a fatal skirmish with natives, marred the journey. Before leaving the Atlantic Drake lightened the expedition by disposing of two unfit ships and one English gentleman who was tried and executed for mutiny. After rallying his men and unifying his command with a remarkable speech Drake renamed his flagship (previously the PELICAN⁰.) the GOLDEN HIND.

In September 1578 the fleet, now consisting of 3 ships, sailed through the Magellan Strait with speed and ease only to emerge into terrific Pacific storms. For two months the ships were in mortal danger, unable to sail clear of the weather or to stay clear of the coast. The ships scattered and the smallest, the MARIGOLD, went down with all hands. The ELIZABETH found herself back in the Strait of Magellan and turned tail for England where she arrived safely but in disgrace. Meanwhile the GOLDEN HIND had been blown far to the south where Drake discovered that there was open water below the South American continent. The storms abated and the GOLDEN HIND was finally able to sail north along the Pacific coast of South America into the previously undisturbed private waters of King Philip of Spain. The first stop, for food and water, was what we know today as the Chilean Island of Mocha, where the rebellious residents laid a nearly disastrous ambush having mistaken the English for their Spanish oppressors.

For the next 5½ months Drake raided Spanish settlements at will, among them Valparaiso, Lima and Arica and took several Spanish ships, including the rich treasure ship CACFUEGO. His plundering was very restrained, there was very little violence and very few casualties. It is estimated that he had with him between 60 to 100 men. After stopping to make repairs at the island of Cano off the coast of Southern Mexico and a final raid on the now vanished town of Guatulco the GOLDEN HIND sailed out of Spanish wasters in April 1579. It is

estimated that he had about 26 tons of silver by now. This was where he left the captured Portuguese pilot but took with him a small captured ship crewed by some of his men.

He sailed first westerly and then northerly, well off shore in a leaking GOLDEN HIND and it is said he reached between 48° and 42° north latitude, a range which includes most of Washington, all of Oregon and a sliver of California. There, somewhere in the region he named Nova Albion, in the strangely cold and windy June of 1579, Drake found a harbour – reportedly at 48, 44, 38½ or 38 degrees. He stayed there for over 5 weeks repairing the GOLDEN HIND and enjoying extensive and peaceful contact with the Indians. Before he left he set up a monument in the form of an engraved metal plate but this has never been found by later explorers or settlers. After stopping briefly at some nearby islands to fill up his larder he turned his back on America and sailed into the vast Pacific. The crossing was uneventful and landfall was made in 68 days at an unknown spot.

The next months were spent sailing through the Indonesian archipelago making promising commercial contacts, local political alliances and trading for spices. The difficulty of finding a route through the thousands of Indonesian islands nearly ended the journey in January 1580 when the GOLDEN HIND ran hard onto a reef in what had appeared to be open water, but after several desperate days a change of wind brought salvation. Continuing westward the ship then crossed the Indian Ocean without incident, rounded the Cape of Good Hope into the Atlantic, sailed up the coast of Africa and arrived triumphantly in England in the autumn of 1580, nearly 3 years and 36,000 miles later. A wonderful achievement considering how small the ships of those days were and the dangers involved.

“ANDREW” - a slang name among sailors for the Royal Navy. It is said to have been derived from an 18th century press-gang officer named Andrew Miller who impressed so many men into naval service during the Revolutionary (1793-1801) and Napoleonic (1803-1815) Wars that he was said to own the Royal Navy.

THE SINKING OF THE TYNDAREUS

From: "Socks, Cigarettes and Shipwrecks" a Family's War letters, edited by Felicite Nesham and Published by Alan Sutton 1987

The 25th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment sailed for Hong Kong on board the TYNDAREUS and on board was Captain J St J.P. Berryman the 2 i/c of "D" coy. Unfortunately she, like the BIRKENHEAD, hit a reef and from his letter to his wife Sheina on 21 February 1917 when he was at the Garrison Officers Mess, Wynberg we get a personal account of what happened. Their conduct was exemplary and they received praise from His Majesty King George V and the then King of Prussia read an account of the incident to his troops on parade as a splendid example.

Jim Berryman wrote: "I don't think I ever gave you a description of what happened the night of the accident. Well, we were all at Mess when the bang went off. I was going to say when the explosion occurred, of course everyone jumped up and grabbed a life belt – somebody started. We were all out and up at our boat stations in about two minutes, and the men were all in their places – my boat was 207. I had 50 men, a couple of Chinamen and one or two of the crew – a huge volume of water was splashed up over the ship and dead fish were found lying all over the place. The old ship started going down a bit by the bows, but she did not do any nasty lurching which was a mercy. There was a fairly big sea running and bright moonlight. The men behaved splendidly, and no one seemed to fuss at all. The boats were got along without any flurry and we all started climbing and clambering down rope ladders – I got down the last of my lot, and the boat was pretty full by that time. I had been twice down to my cabin to get one or two things – I got my revolver and field glasses and the greatest godsend of all, a hundred cigarettes – I also grabbed a letter which I had written to you which I posted directly we got there.

We pushed off from the ship, some of the boats were already away, and some had been picked up by one of the ships that was standing by. One was a hospital ship all lighted up with red and green lights and the other belonged to the same line of steamers as our ship. Well, we started away and the waves looked very different from the small boat, huge great mountains that seemed to be going to swamp our overcrowded boat any minute, of course there was no chance of rowing as the men were too crowded and none of them knew much about it, then lots were sea sick, and the boat started filling with water, so we had to bail her with helmets and caps. The fellow of the crew we had with us did not seem to know much about it, so I had to take charge, and I knew less. We got along fine

at the start and got near the hospital ship, but unfortunately we got on the wrong side and it was impossible to get the men up, we pushed off quick or we should have been smashed to pieces. Of course I did not know how to get round to the other side, what can you expect from a comic soldier?! I now know how to do it – so we had to let it drift, well she drifted down towards the other ship and again we got on the weather side, people shouted and gave directions but I couldn't work it, so we drifted away again. Then with the four oars we had out we managed to keep her head to the current, which is what we ought to have done right away, but how was a d.....land lubber to know? And we started to drift towards the ship again. We were about ¼ of a mile away and the men were a bit down and between you and me and the ink pot I didn't fancy our chances, but we got there. We got round the stern somehow and got alongside and all got aboard safely. We were out for about 4 hours so some of us were pretty cooked.

The accident happened about 10 minutes to 7, we were away about 7.30 and got aboard the other ship about 12. There were still some boats out so we hung around to see what could be done, then we signaled to the hospital ship and counted the men and found not a single man missing. We hung around till the next morning and saw our old ship still afloat and a cruiser and another trying to get a rope aboard to tow her. We started back to Cape Town and got in about 6 p.m. and they brought us straight here so there were no casualties at all. We even saved the dogs."

HMS MACEDONIA towed the TYNDAREUS stern first into False Bay.

Note: Thanks to Commander Bisset for bringing this to our attention.

CHAIN SHOT: 2 CANNON BALLS, CONNECTED TOGETHER BY EITHER A CHAIN OR AN IRON BAR, WHICH WHEN FIRED FROM A GUN ROTATED AT GREAT SPEED THROUGH THE AIR. It was designed to destroy the spars and rigging of an enemy ship and to clear the upper deck of men during an action.

SHIPBUILDING IN BOMBAY IN BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY DAYS

A.E. READ

Bombay, now reverted to its old name of Mumbai, has had a shipbuilding tradition since 1661. In that year a cluster of 7 islands near Bombay was part of the dowry from the King of Portugal to King Charles II following his marriage to Infanta Catherine of Braganza. Within a few years and in return for a substantial loan, Charles handed over the islands to the Honourable East India Company, to give it its rightful name, which managed them till 1858 when all the assets of "John Company" throughout India were subsumed under direct British rule.

Bombay Dockyard was set up and as early as 1695 dry docks were constructed and later further graving docks were added. A naval force which has had many name changes, was founded in 1612. From 1736 onwards Bombay Dockyard constructed several hundred hulls and at the start of the 18th century the Royal Navy made its first order. By this time English oak for ships' hulls was in short supply and supplies from Scandanavia were often held up by continuing blockades. Malabar teak was used by Bombay shipbuilders.

In 1736 Lowjee Nusserwanji Wadia was commissioned as Master Shipbuilder for H.E.I.Co. Hereby a shipbuilding dynasty was created and in all 8 members of the Wadia family were either Master Builders or Joint Master Builders and probably a dozen others were Assistants, Inspectors of Machinery etc. The last Wadia master builder remained in office until 1884 and other members of the family held junior positions till 1913.

The Wadia were a Parsee family which had left Persia (Iran) many centuries before because of Islamic persecution. It is thought the name WADIA is a corruption of the word *VADIA (shipwright)*. In all about 16 ships were built for the Royal Navy. Teak had many advantages over oak, less splintering when hit by a cannon ball, less corrosion on metal fastenings, shorter seasoning time and a long expectation of life.

One of the ships that is still "alive" after restoration, is HMS TRINCOMALEE which is still afloat 190 years on at Jackson Dock, Hartlepool on the north-east coast of England and is open to the public.

From – the newsletter of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects, April 2008.

AUDREY READ

He was the grandson of Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) a scientific writer, poet and physician. Charles was the son of Robert Waring Darwin and his wife Susannah (nee Wedgwood, the daughter of Josiah Wedgwood). He was born at Shrewsbury and died at his home at Downe in Kent. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. He declined to follow his father's and his grandfather's profession of medicine and at an early age was fascinated by zoology and botany, loved sport and collected beetles as a hobby. It was through a Cambridge professor and close friend called Henslow that he was invited to join HMS BEAGLE on its famous voyage in 1831-1836.

On BEAGLE's return to England he married his cousin Emma Wedgwood in 1839 and she never failed to put him first when it came to his scientific research although she herself was eminently qualified in this pursuit. Their 2nd son Sir George Howard Darwin (1845-1912) was an eminent astrologer at Cambridge and their 3rd son Sir Francis Darwin (1848-1925) was intimately associated with his father's work and in 1884 was appointed lecturer and reader in botany at Cambridge and in 1908 became President of the British Association. He was famous for devising a type of photometer to measure the rate of water intake in plants.

On the evening of 31 May 1836 HMS BEAGLE arrived in Simon's Bay on its way from Mauritius to Plymouth and was here for 19 days, the longest period of stay at any of the other 11 ports other than the Galapagos Islands. She reached Plymouth on 2 October 1836.

Charles was not very taken with Simon's Town itself – “but a cheerless aspect to the stranger” “100 square whitewashed houses, with very few gardens and scarcely a single tree.... At the foot of a lofty, steep, bare wall of horizontally stratified sandstone.” He was pleased to call here because of the geology of the Cape. He was particularly interested in the black rocks which protrude from the sea at Sea Point at the end of Beach Road opp. The Pavilion Hotel and for many years there was a plaque there recalling his visit and his interest. It has now been vandalized and removed. He also went as far as French Hoek in his travels at the Cape.

The Beagle Trust has been formed and plans to build a replica of HMS BEAGLE and use it to research the effects of plankton on the world's oceans have been

started. They plan to set sail in 2010. She will be identical to the old ship on the outside but will have all mod. Cons like radar, GPS, 2 aux. diesel engines and lab equipment. The new BEAGLE will originally follow Darwin's course, crossing the North and South Atlantic, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, rounding both Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope. They will be assisted by NASA to follow large algae blooms. Very little is known about how these massive areas of algae on the surface interact with the ocean. Astronaut Michael Barratt will lead for NASA. Dr Karen Jones, BEAGLE's Project Director for Science says "we have explored more of the moon than we have earth's oceans" so she is really looking forward to the research.

The original HMS BEAGLE was a 90 ft long Cherokee class 10 gun brig-sloop. She was launched on 11 May 1820 at Woolwich at a cost of £7803. She lay unused for 5 years before becoming a research vessel and sailing on 3 expeditions, the 2nd of which carried Darwin and made the ship famous. She was scrapped in 1870.

Notes: Everyman's Encyclopaedia 1961, The Cape Times 4 September 2008 and via David Erickson a write up by Science Correspondent Mark Sprigg on 11 November 2008.

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET EARL JELlicoe OF SCAPA

From: The Life of John Rushworth Earl Jellicoe by Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, Cassel & Co. lent to us by Beth Neden.

He was born at Southampton on 5 December 1859. "Little Jack" as he was known in the family was the son of Captain John Henry Jellicoe and his wife (nee Lucy Henrietta Keele). Captain Henry John was a Captain with the Royal Mail Line and rose to the top of that service. The Keeles were a seafaring family which in 3 successive generations produced a Captain for the Royal Navy. Also Jack's great grandfather Philip Patton was a Captain R.N. and fought at the battle of La Hogue. Patton's son also called Philip, was a distinguished admiral and was later Second Sea Lord at the time of Trafalgar.

At the time Little Jack joined HMS BRITANNIA, the training ship as a naval cadet in 1872, he was but 4'6" in height but his lack of height was made up for by his brains. He was one of the cleverest cadets of that intake and passed out first of

all cadets in the summer of 1874, gaining a 1st class certificate in every subject and was immediately promoted midshipman.

On 22 September 1874 he joined HMS NEWCASTLE, a fine sailing frigate with auxiliary steam propulsion and commanded by Captain Robert Gordon Douglas, part of the Flying Squadron of 6 ships under Rear Admiral Randolph. The Flying Squadron was the name given to a fleet of sailing frigates which at that time it was usual to commission periodically to visit off-stations and also to provide more continuous sea training to the younger men than service with the larger fleets was capable of giving.

NEWCASTLE sailed from Sheerness on 18 October 1874, calling at Portsmouth which enabled Jellicoe's mother to come over from the Isle of Wight to bid him farewell. Next it called at Plymouth, then Gibraltar. The Commander of the ship was Seymour H.P. Dacres', son of the distinguished Admiral of the same name who had once been in Simon's Town. Among the lieutenants on board was Edmund S. Pöe GCVO KCB who was Commander-in-Chief Simon's Town later. Another shipmate was Doveton Sturdee who afterwards commanded at the Battle of the Falkland Islands in the Great War and subsequently a division of the Grand Fleet at Jutland where Jellicoe himself was to make his name.

The Squadron was now en route to the Cape of Good Hope via Madeira and the Falkland Islands (which latter they left on 14 February 1875). Their days runs were 270, 250 and 242 miles or an average speed of 10 – 11¼ knots. They stayed at Simon's Bay from 16 March to 3 April and visited Wynberg and Cape Town but due to the expense only 1 trip was made to each. A midshipman was poorly paid. Sadly the crude methods of wine making did not appeal to Jack who from that time harboured a dislike for Cape wines. A farewell ball at Simon's Town ended what had been a very pleasant stay.

The ship then visited St Helena and Ascension Island. Then it was north to Gibraltar on 20 June. Here the Squadron was informed it was to go to Bombay via the Cape to meet up with HRH The Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) after his visit to India and to escort him in HMS SERAPIS. They stayed at Gibraltar till 17 July and then sailed for Cape Town on a trip that took 53 days instead of the expected 16 or 17.

It was at this point that Jack started to grow in height by 5" during 1875. This was disastrous as his uniforms had continually to be "adjusted" by various naval tailors and he was reduced to wearing white canvas shoes which were blacked over.

After leaving Simon's Bay they endured a north-east gale – it being winter – and the ships had great difficulty in keeping together. They reached Bombay and received the Prince on 8 November. Great festivities followed and included a great dinner ashore for the 2,000 men of the fleet. They then cruised in the Far East visiting Singapore, Hong Kong and China, where because of anticipated troubles they stayed at Woosung at the mouth of the Yangtze for a not very enjoyable 2 months. Space ashore was limited and the weather was unpleasant. The only highlight was the opening of the first railway to be built in China – that between Woosung and Shanghai. Then they were off to Japan (Nagasaki) and Talienwan Bay (Port Arthur). The Squadron then turned for home via Mauritius, Simon's Bay, St Helena and Ascension and finally dropped anchor at Plymouth after 2½ years which had “blooded” young Jellicoe, often called the greatest Admiral of modern times.

After a short spell of foreign-service leave he joined HMS AGINCOURT under Captain Wells and Sir J.E. Commerell both of whom became Commanders-in-Chief at the Cape.

VERNIE WESSELS

At the time of writing Vernie is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Simon's Town Museum and is a Vice-President of the Simon's Town Historical Society.

He was born on 28 June 1939 to Jasper John Wessels and his wife Edith Elizabeth. He attended Arsenal Road School before going to South Peninsula School to complete his Junior Certificate. They lived in the Waterfall area of Simon's Town.

In 1956 he was one of 16 apprentices in the final intake into the Dockyard for the Admiralty and in 1957 they were transferred to the S.A. Navy when the transfer of the Dockyard took place. To be accepted as an apprentice one had to undergo an aptitude test which he passed 7th out of 157 candidates.

Vernie chose to become a shipwright, a choice he never regretted as he met and worked with outstanding men such as “Dick” Fernandez (master boat builder), Brian Inez (deep-sea diver and shipwright), Les Littlefield (Master shipwright), Jack Craig (foreman) and George Gillomee (foreman) as well as many others. He began his 1st year in the Boat House with two other apprentices James Fester and

Eddie Adams. On their first day they were shown around the workshop and on passing the wood-planer James attempted to pass his hand over the top, not realizing that the spindle had a number of blades attached to it. Instinctively Verniel reached out and pulled his hand away. Luckily he did, because when the wood-planer stopped they both saw the blades and both of them remained silent as they realized the grave consequences of what might have been. James would have been maimed for sure. James progressed well in his trade and married Rose Beukes and later they moved to Botswana where he started his own business.

Vernie was apprenticed to “Buck” Fernandez and his mate Brian Inez. “Buck” was a hard taskmaster as he believed in perfection but he was also a mild-mannered man, whilst Brian was the opposite. It was told that Brian once played a prank which almost backfired on him. He was diving down to retrieve drowned bodies. His air supply was managed via a hose, through a device on a boat, and manually operated. Unbeknown to the pump operators on the boat, Brian attached one of the bodies to a rope and tugged on it to give the “pull in” signal. When the bodies broke the surface the pump operators scattered, leaving Brian without any air and almost suffocating him. The artisans in the workshop were always willing to share their talents. The Roos brothers, master mast makers, taught Vernie the use of the draw-knife, a tool used in the manufacture of masts.

In his 2nd year he was transferred to the Heavy Plate Shop and apprenticed to Les Littlefield. He was a hard taskmaster who believed “The Devil finds work for idle hands”. This meant little time for small talk with other apprentices during working hours! Les, strict as he was, taught Vernie the steel trade. It laid a foundation which Vernie could draw from and later pass on to other young men whom he taught. In his 3rd year he started working on his own and began teaching other apprentices the trade. His first big job was on the destroyer JAN VAN RIEBEECK. He had to replace its gun turrets with bigger ones, as well as alter the gun supports etc.

In his 4th year I passed his trade test, one of the first to achieve this distinction. HeI was transferred to the Afloat Section where he was initiated into the Dockyard’s Champion Drinkers Club and soon came to realize why his mother, a die-hard Methodist, was not keen on his choice of vocation! His last job was on the TAFELBERG where he was tasked with the removal of the aft deck accommodation to make provision for a helicopter flight deck.

During 1985 he was working under a ship’s container and found he could not move his legs. An investigation into the cause revealed an injury to the base of his spine, sustained earlier when he had a fall while working on board a freighter

and it had grown progressively worse. This rendered him unable to continue to work as a shipwright and in October 1987 he was medically boarded.

"I must admit that I was regarded as a "lower deck lawyer" which actually cost me in terms of promotion, for which I was never considered! However, I was happy to play that role as someone had to do it."

CAPTAIN JOHN STROVER of the "ESSEX" EAST INDIA-MAN.



This originally appeared in the Bulletin of the National Library as the result of Dr Mike du Preez seeing the cup in the house of his friend Roger Strover and went on to do further research on it.

The East India-men were ships built to the highest standards and were equipped with guns for defence against pirates or unfriendly nations – usually the French – and sometimes in case of war found their way into the service of the Royal Navy.

Captain Strover and the ESSEX were in False Bay in 1796, the year after the 1st British Occupation of the Cape. When Mike du Preez was doing his research in London he was lucky enough to find at the British

Library Captain Strover's leather bound Journal, written in his own hand. John Strover was born in 1750 and had been at sea since the age of fourteen and in 1784 had his first command – the ESSEX. This was his 5th and final voyage before he retired.

The ESSEX was an 899 ton India-man, launched in 1780, the 4th vessel to bear that name. She was 143 feet long with a beam of 27 feet. She had three masts and was classically rigged and armed with thirty-two 18 pounders. She had set sail from England on 15 March 1796 with 380 people on board and among the crew of 108 there was midshipman John Strover junior, then aged 14. It had taken 2 months of meticulous preparation to ready the ship for its forthcoming voyage. Remember too that at this time England was at war with France. She set sail with

18 other merchantmen and four frigates and four ships of the line were detailed to guard them for the initial stages of the voyage. They expected to be away for two years.

On 21 July the fleet of India-men reached Simon's Bay escorted by HMS JUPITER. There they found Admiral Sir George Elphinstone and 14 men-of-war which must have been a splendid sight. They spent the next fortnight replenishing their water supply, doing routine maintenance which included painting the vessel, servicing the masts, rigging and sails. The next was that they received instructions from Elphinstone to moor inside the men-of-war, closer to the shore. It seemed that something was up. Stroker was "desired" to send a long-boat load of water to HMS MONARCH the Admiral's flagship. The next day Saturday 6 August all the men-of-war left the Bay and still the merchant ships were not told.

Being the senior Captain of the remaining vessels, Captain Stroker now had Command of the Bay and all the shipping there, delegated to him by the Admiral. He hoisted the Broad Pendant, the short, swallow-tailed flag to distinguish the ESSEX as the vessel of the Commodore and fired a gun morning and evening to denote the authority vested upon him.

Dr du Preez then found out during his research in a library in Scotland from the Memoirs of Admiral Elphinstone published in 1882 what was going on. It appears that intelligence was received by the English that a combined French and Dutch fleet was being prepared to endeavour to recover the Cape. Elphinstone and his ships had set sail when news was received that the enemy fleet was in Cape waters. When they left False Bay the weather was atrocious and MONARCH soon lost her mainmast, causing a delay. First the British sailed to the south-west to intercept the enemy, but without luck.

While Elphinstone and his fleet were away Captain Stroker held a consultation of all the Commanders of the merchant ships in order to establish the best strategy for the defence of False Bay and the valuable merchant fleet. The ships were all cleared for action and gunnery was practiced. Elphinstone returned to False Bay to repair his ships and they put to sea again on 14 August. Intelligence had been received from General Craig who was now Military Governor of the Cape that the Dutch Fleet was sheltering in Saldanha Bay. On 16 August the British arrived off Saldanha and sailed straight into the Bay and anchored. Negotiations ensued and Rear Admiral Engelbertus Lucas soon capitulated as he realized he could not get away. Fearing what awaited him in Holland for surrendering to the British Lucas decided to return to England with Elphinstone and face imprisonment there.

For his wonderful work in guarding False Bay and in appreciation of his services the Honourable East India Company presented Captain Strover with an exceptionally handsome two handled urn-shaped cup with a cover in the classic Adam style. It had been made by the famous silversmith Thomas Chawner and its assay marks for London 1785-86 confirm its provenance. It bears the arms of the Company and is inscribed: "Presented by the East India Company to Captain Strover of the ESSEX East India-man for his gallant conduct at the Capture of the Cape of Good Hope"

SIR HERBERT BAKER

He was born in 1862 one of a family of 12 children, at Owletts in the village of Cobham in Kent. The house had been built in 1683 by a wealthy Kentish yeoman. In 1796 Herbert's great-great-grandfather had bought the handsome house, with its own orchards and fields, for his eldest son, and the Baker family have lived there ever since.

Herbert's father was a small squire who farmed his lands, attended to his duties as a magistrate, supported his parish and looked after his tenants. His income came from rents and from farming the land which also supplied most of the food his large family enjoyed. The highest single item of his expenditure was that of educating his 9 sons (there was only 1 girl in the family) and not all his children survived to school-going age. As the years moved on he became poorer as the cost of education after 1876 became more of a burden; agriculture began to decline owing to bad seasons and the burdensome Free Trade policies of successive governments. There began the unrestricted import of good, cheap grain from North America and frozen meat from Australia, New Zealand and South America.

Eventually Herbert's father was forced to sell off some of his land and lay off some of his workers in order to keep up his standard of living. The children were taught to be frugal and always to keep a tally of their expenses when away from home. Herbert, growing up in Kent, was aware of the many fine houses in Kent from an early age and watched local craftsmen at work. He even built a very creditable brick tool-shed at Owletts which is still standing. He was to use the method of tie-beam and king-post roof in a church in Mafeking in 1910 and at The White House in Pretoria in 1906.

Herbert attended Tonbridge School in Kent. His mother's family the Edmeades

were prominent in the Kent Archaeological Society and so Herbert also inherited this interest. In his last year at Tonbridge he decided to become an architect so he dropped classics and spent the extra time studying maths and mechanics. As his father was hard up and could not afford to send him to University, it was fortunate that his uncle Arthur Baker F.R.I.B.A. was willing to train Herbert for 3 years at a reduced fee; normally it cost 300 guineas. So in 1879 aged 17 he went to London to begin his training. The Institute of British Architects was formed only in 1837 and gradually the profession absorbed the Association of Architectural Draftsmen (in 1842) and changed its name in 1847 to the Architectural Association and eventually in 1864 a School of Architecture was established, offering opportunities for travel and the reading of papers, a library, music and dancing. At the same time the Royal Academy Schools offered general training in all the arts. Young Herbert was admitted as a student to the School of Design of the Royal Academy and also joined the Architectural Association. His uncle's practice was small and rather dull and he mainly restored Gothic churches and sometimes designed new ones so it was to Llanberis in north Wales that Herbert found himself sent as Clerk of Works to oversee the building of a new church. He and his uncle, who were good friends, spent some of their spare time completing a set of measured drawings of Plas Mawr in Conway, a Welsh Tudor house built in 1588 by John Wynne. They recorded all its features. When he had completed his 3 years of pupilage, he joined the offices of Ernest George and Harold Peto. While here he came under the influence of the architect Norman Shaw and met Edwin Lutyens. He realized that on the continent lay "an endless range of reference...." He traveled as far as Italy soaking up various styles and innovations but also studied Tintern Abbey, and Chesleton Hall in Warwickshire, the latter of whose features he used in St Barnabus Church in Cape Town.

In the autumn of 1888 he went on a walking tour with Lutyens into Shropshire and across the Welsh marshes. He sketched many chimneys, churches etc. Lutyens was 7 years his junior and was then 18 and had also begun his pupilage in Ernst George & Peto. They were later to join forces to work on the building of New Delhi. Lutyens set up on his own when only 20 and in 1890 was to build a house for Gertrude Jekyll, to whom he introduced Herbert Baker. She taught them much about gardens and their relation to the small houses architects were now designing for the new professional class. He was to put her advice and teaching to good use later in the Transvaal in particular.

Herbert Baker also left Ernest George & Peto to set up on his own, restoring some timber houses near Owletts, but still saw much of Lutyens. Baker left England in 1892 for Cape Town, following a younger brother Lionel who arrived at the Cape in 1891 to stay with a cousin Rear Admiral Henry Nicholson CB who was Commander-in-Chief at the Cape. Lionel wanted to become a fruit farmer and

asked his heavily mortgaged father for a loan. In the end father sold all but 25 acres of his estate and suggested Herbert should go to the Cape “to report on and advise Lionel”.

In 1889 Herbert had written the examination to qualify as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects and was surprised when he passed at the top of the list and gained the Ashpita prize for that year.

Herbert sailed for South Africa in February 1892 (aged 30) in the steamer NORHAM and left the Cape in 1912. His appearance was impressive and inspired confidence as he was exceptionally tall, strongly built and athletic-looking. He had a pair of dark, deep-set eyes under imposing bushy brows and an honest and candid gaze. He soon visited Simon's Town noting the many fine houses along the main road while en route.

Lionel went into partnership with the famous H.E.V. Pickstone at Nooitgedacht at Stellenbosch. Herbert's first commission came from James Rose Innes, the Minister of Justice in Rhodes' cabinet – a small addition to the Reformatory at Tokai. Rhodes soon engaged him to restore what we know to-day as Groote Schuur. Herbert was fortunate to find good workmen in Cape Town in A.B. Reid, Walter Donald (a metal worker) and George Ness (who was presently working at an engineering works at the Docks). They made all his metal work, brass fittings and hinges for his heavy doors and shutters.

As well as Groote Schuur and other houses and churches at the Cape he was responsible for designing over 100 houses, a church, a school and a house for the pastor at the old established Anglican Mission Station at Pniel. Altogether he built 3 houses for Rhodes and a small one for himself at Muizenberg (“Sandhills” in Beach Road). He lived at an old cottage “The Grotto” among the wood on Groote Schuur Estate to be sure to be close to his work.

After 1896 Baker was joined by Francis Masey and later on by Kendal. In 1906 one of the important works they completed was the new St George's Cathedral in Cape Town, later handed over to Kendall to finish off. The Baker-Masey partnership was dissolved in 1909

Under Rhodes' patronage, Baker visited Italy (including Sicily), Greece, Egypt and Persia. In 1902 he left the Cape to set up his new Headquarters in Johannesburg, leaving his flourishing Cape practice in the hands of his partner Francis Masey. He was encouraged to move by Lord Milner who by then was the newly-appointed Governor of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, having

originally been Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa. In the Transvaal Baker was to build many houses and also build on the 1,000 acre estate of the Duke of Westminster in the O.F.S. but his most outstanding achievement was the design of the Union Buildings in Pretoria which he completed in 1912. He was by now tired and wanted a change of scene and a rest so he left for a holiday in England and Italy. He wrote to Lutyens "all seems dead now....I have lived through 3 great periods here – the Rhodes, the War and Milner." The idea of working in India quickened his interest, with its glamour and the challenge of a new adventure in architectural pomp and circumstance. Off he went but he kept writing to his many friends in South Africa and paid several visits back here. He had spent 20 years here. He and Lutyens were however very critical of each others work and ideals and this eventually led to the final split in their partnership.

In 1896 Baker had been ill with typhoid and this and his hard work sapped his strength. In 1902 he had paid a visit to England and had married a cousin Florence Edmeades. In 1910 Lutyens visited South Africa for 6 weeks and on Baker's recommendation was commissioned to design the Rand Regiment's Memorial and the Municipal Art Gallery in Johannesburg. In 1912 Baker helped to found a benevolent fund for architects in the Transvaal and also created a trust fund to send South African Architects to study Greek and Italian architecture. He then retired from active practice in South Africa and returned to England. In 1913 he and Lutyens set out for India to start on New Delhi. In 1923 he was knighted for his services to the Empire in India and in 1927 was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture and visited South Africa to see how the work on his Reserve Bank Building in Pretoria was progressing. He was given a public banquet in Johannesburg. In 1932 he was elected to the Royal Academy but by 1934 he had been incapacitated by a stroke, although he managed to visit South Africa with his wife and two sons. 1935 saw him design South Africa House in London, that grand building on Trafalgar Square. In 1944 at the age of 82 he completed his book "Architecture and Personalities" and died at his home Owllets at Cobham in Kent in 1946. One of the world's most capable architects Sir Herbert Baker K.C.I.E. R.A. D.C.L. (Oxon), LL.D (Rand), F.R.I.B.A. was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey.

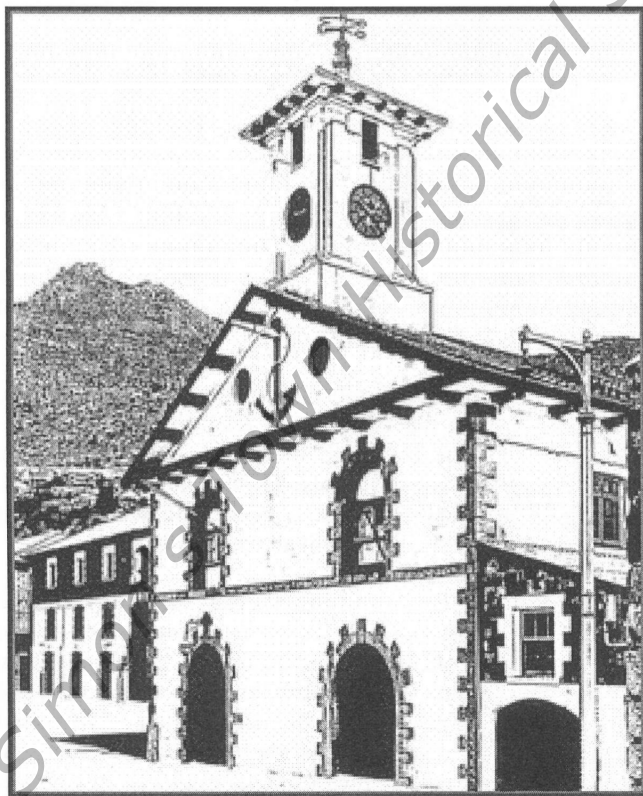
There are 2 buildings in Simon's Town with which his name is connected: The Rectory, Cornwall Street and de Beers Building, St George's Street (on Simon's Town's Historic Mile)

Note: Herbert Baker in South Africa by Doreen E. Greig, published by Purnell & Sons, Cape Town in 1970 and kindly loaned to the Society by Tony Bent.

THE DOCKYARD CLOCK, WEST DOCKYARD, SIMON'S TOWN.

DAVID ERICKSON

The Dockyard Clock bears the inscription "Dutton & Son – London – 1816" on the minutes setting dial. It has recently emerged that the clock mechanism was manufactured by another London clockmaker, Thwaites and Reed and "rebadged" by Dutton. This was fairly common practice among the London Master Clockmakers of the period. Daybooks held at the Guildhall Library in London show that the clock, dials, bells and ancillary equipment were delivered ex-works by Thwaites and Reed on 18th December 1816. The total cost was 299 U.K. pounds sterling, 13 shillings and six pence (R4,202.44). In to-day's money this is the equivalent to some £203,990.74 (based on a comparison of average U.K. earnings in 1816 with to-day) – about 2,882,789 South African Rand!



The three bells were cast by Thomas Mears II – as a subcontract from Thwaites and Reed. Mears was one of the trading names of what is to-day known as the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, which was established in 1570 and which also cast America's Liberty Bell and London's "Big Ben". The delivery included two heavy wooden beams, fitted with ironwork from which the bells were hung. These beams, the ironwork and bell hammers are still intact within the Clock Tower. Thwaites and Reed and the Whitechapel Bell Foundry are both still in business in the United Kingdom.

The Dockyard Clock is possibly the oldest public clock in South Africa.

THE SIMON'S TOWN - CAPE TOWN ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH

As early as March 1854, J.W. Wilkins, Engineer for the Universal Electric Telegraph Company of London, proposed building an electric telegraph line from the Naval Arsenal at Simon's Bay to Cape Town, and which would also communicate with the Military Camp at Wynberg. He was willing to build the line for £5,000. His letter was addressed among others to the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the British Admiralty and it was passed on to the Administrator of the Colonial Government. But he was not, during that session of Parliament, prepared to suggest any expenditure for an electric telegraph.

Over four years later, in October 1858, the Cape Colonial Government entered into a contract with the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company to build a railway between Cape Town and Wellington, one of the requirements being that an electric telegraph line should also be laid along the railway line to and from all the terminals and other stations. Persons to work the line for the Colonial Government were to be provided at all reasonable times.

In December 1858 the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company entered into a sub-contract with Edward Pickering to carry out the construction. These double contracts contained the seeds of future trouble, for there were now three separate authorities (the State, the company and the contractor), all with rights and conflicting interests, involved in the construction. To complicate matters still further, Scott Tucker, who had lost the contract to the company, returned to the Cape in 1859 and was appointed Colonial Engineer, in which capacity he had the final say on construction.

Five months later, during the absence of Sir George Grey in England, Pickering addressed a letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated 31 May 1859, offering to erect a telegraph line from Cape Town to Graham's Town via Port Elizabeth.

The first electric wires in South Africa arrived together with the first locomotive on the sailing vessel CHARLES on 31 August 1859. These were to be used in building the railway between Cape Town and Wellington, the wires in conveying telegraphic messages from the working parties and the locomotive in drawing wagons for ballast and other materials. The electric telegraph was demonstrated a few weeks later in the Town Hall at Cape Town on Monday evening 10 October 1859, when messages were transmitted at a lecture given by Mr Mair under the auspices of the Cape Town Mechanics Institute. Messages were exchanged between the operators at either end of the room, much to the satisfaction of all present. The room was packed to over-capacity.

Almost immediately after, on 17 October 1859, Pickering addressed another letter to the Colonial Secretary offering to erect a telegraph line from Cape Town to Simon's Town and the Colonial Secretary replied that he was "prepared at once to sanction the erection of the telegraph to Simon's Town. The Cape Argus reported: "Mr Pickering has undertaken the work for the consideration of being allowed £200 for five years, for which he will send government messages for half price". He later agreed government messages would be transmitted free.

In November 1859, before Sir George Grey's return from England, the Colonial Secretary signed a provisional contract for the Graham's Town line and stated that the Government would be prepared to pay Pickering £37,500 for that distance. However, it would be all at his own risk if he proceeded before sanction from Parliament was obtained. Pickering nevertheless went ahead and ordered the material.

Pickering erected the first telegraph poles along the eastern side of the Parade and the Castle. The wires were completed between his residence at Roodebloem and the offices of Messrs Thomson, Watson & Co of Adderley Street, Cape Town, on 30 November 1859. The line was a single galvanized iron wire mounted on wood poles with porcelain insulators and the return circuit was via the ground. There were delays due to the shortage of wire and insulators but by Wednesday evening 25 April 1860 the telegraph was open for the transmission of messages throughout its entire length. The first official message forwarded, which was also the first public usage of electricity in South Africa, read as follows:

“Simon’s Town April 25, 4 p.m.

Communication is now perfect throughout the line.

Mr J.D. Thomson M.P. has reached here. No

Vessels arrived today”.

The terminal stations of the line were originally at the offices of Thomson, Watson & Co, merchants, shipping and commission agents for Pickering at 16-17 Adderley Street, (Cartwright’s Corner) Cape Town and P.D. Martin in Simon’s Town (roughly opposite the British Hotel) and these firms operated it. The Government objected to the lack of confidentiality of their messages and for which they were paying £200 a year. In order to meet the views of the Government, Pickering made arrangements for the station at Simon’s Town to have no connection with any merchant’s premises and the instruments would be worked by a clerk under a bond of secrecy. The connections with Thomson, Watson & Co in Cape Town were removed and Pickering requested permission to erect a small ornamental telegraph office in the neighbourhood of the Commercial Exchange. In September 1860 Pickering sold the line to the South African Telegraph Company which would work it as a proper business undertaking. The rate for under 25 words was 2s. 6d. decreasing to 7s. 6d. for 100 words. A telegraph office called the PAGODA was put up at the corner of the Parade (where the present Standard Bank was afterwards built) and the messengers were dressed in uniform with a distinctive badge of the company.



Telegraph Pagoda (Cape Archives, E4042)

The Government appointed a Select Committee on 14 June 1860 to examine the proposals laid before the House for constructing the line between Cape Town and

Graham's Town. Pickering's estimates were considered very high and he submitted a lower figure in October 1860. Soon after Charlton Wollaston constructed a 65 km line from King William's Town to East London, evidently using some of the material Pickering had previously ordered.

Sir Thomas Maclear, H.M. Astronomer at the Royal Observatory, negotiated with the Telegraph Company in 1860 and on 17 April 1861 an agreement was reached to pay the company £25 p.a. in quarterly payments in order to send a daily time signal to the Naval Yard at Simon's Town. Permission was also given to loop in telegraph wire to the Observatory and since then the chronometers of the ships in Simon's Bay could be regulated by an accurate electrical time signal from the Observatory. This did away with the unsatisfactory and expensive method of paying shipmasters assistants for rating the chronometers. Maclear also stressed the importance of the line in time of war and applied to the Colonial Secretary to frank the daily signal on weekdays, but he refused saying time signals belonged to the Naval Department.



From September 1861 the Simon's Town telegraph was used to send an electric impulse to release the time-balls in Table Bay and at Simon's Bay by remote control. A disc at the end of an arm was dropped at Simon's Town from a staff placed close to the telegraph office, a little to the east of the Naval Yard (in Wharf Street). The batteries providing the impulse were installed at the Observatory and the line was released for the time signals about 6 minutes before the required hour. The Observatory paid an annual sum to the Telegraph Company for the privilege of using the line. Failures sometimes occurred due to wagons and carts colliding with the posts and also vandalism of the insulators. The granite soil where the Simon's Town earth plate was buried could sometimes cause failures if it was not kept sufficiently damp. On

occasions when the ball failed to drop, it was kept up for a full hour and then slowly lowered. After the electric telegraph reached Port Elizabeth and East London, time-balls at these ports were also “in electrical connection with the Royal Observatory.”

The Cape Town noon-day gun, fired from the Lion Battery on Signal Hill every day except Sunday, is still triggered from the Observatory, the first time having been on 4 august 1902. The gun is now triggered from a computer at the Observatory, regulated from the Satellite Global Positioning System, with an accuracy of one millionth of a second.

Parliament decided it was necessary to pass an Act for the regulation of electric telegraphs, Act No. 20 of 1861 was accordingly promulgated for this purpose and another, Act No. 21 of 1861, specifically for the construction and maintenance of the line to Graham's Town. This Act stated that no payments would be made until the line had been completed. Exactly two years after the provisional contract date, Articles of Agreement were entered into with Pickering, dated 18 November 1861, for the construction and maintenance of the line from Cape Town to Graham's Town via Port Elizabeth. There could also be possible later extension to King William's Town, Graaff Reinet, Cradock and Colesberg. But instead of paying our £37,500, only £1,500 per annum for 15 years would be paid. Pickering had by then, at his own risk, already ordered material for 600 miles of telegraph and was busy laying down the Port Elizabeth to Graham's Town section, which was opened in January 1862.

Jose Burman notes that in September 1861

“Pickering, endeavouring to milk as much as possible out of the [railway] project, tried to obtain advances of cash over and above those authorized against the work done. The [Cape Town Railway and Dock] company refused to give such advances and Pickering stopped work and discharged the navies [workmen]. On 5 October 1861 the company gave notice to Pickering that they would take possession of the plant and continue the railway construction themselves.”

Pickering had contracted for several projects - the Wellington Railway, Simon's Town and Cape Town to Graham's Town telegraph lines, New Somerset Hospital, and even contemplated laying a telegraph cable to Robben Island. He went ahead with ordering material for the Graham's Town telegraph line on the strength of the letter from the Colonial Secretary dated 19 November 1859, where the terms were clearly stated to be “subject to the approval of Parliament.” Pickering was over-

confident that Parliament would give approval but they did not. The quite different Articles of Agreement made in November 1861 meant that he did not have the necessary financial backing for the heavy outlay to which he had committed himself.

Pickering was then in such financial trouble that on 5 March 1862 he ceded his interests in all his projects in the colony. He returned to England and the Colonial Government authorized the Cape of Good Hope Telegraph Company, which was subsidized by the Government, to enter into a contract to complete the lines. Charlton Wollaston, an eminent telegraph engineer brought out to South Africa by Sir George Grey in April 1860, was appointed Engineer and General Manager. Siemens, Halske & Co of London, represented by their engineer Charles Hoeltzer, were contracted to complete the construction. This company was also engaged in building the Durban to Pietermaritzburg telegraph line. The Cape Town to Graham's Town line was formally opened in the Commercial Exchange on 8 January 1864 in the presence of His Excellency the Governor, Heads of Departments and a large assemblage of the public. The line between Graham's Town and King William's Town, and connected with East London, was opened on 1 October 1864.

Soon after his arrival in South Africa, Wollaston regulated the instruments on the Simon's Town line and on 1 August 1860, at a ball given in honour of Prince Alfred at the Castle, he displayed the first electric light which has ever been publicly exhibited in the colony.

The railway line between Salt River and Wynberg was under construction in 1863 and it was decided to re-erect the Simon's Town telegraph line, which was in need of maintenance, on the same poles as the railway telegraph line. A portion of this line was built with iron poles, the contractor being Messrs Siemens and Halske.

New telegraph offices, at the corner of Adderley and Castle Streets, were fitted up in October 1863 and the Pagoda became a publishing office. When building of the present Standard Bank was commenced in July 1881, the old telegraph pagoda was "got onto a staging...and under the able engineering of Mr A. Maderose, removed as far as the corner opposite Grave [now Parliament] street.....it will be permanently located opposite Messrs Toll and Courtis' jewelers shop and be reopened by Mrs S. Woolven....who is in charge of advertising on the hoardings around the new Standard Bank site." It later was known as Woolvens Pagoda.

In July 1864 Sir Thomas Maclear was concerned that the 5 year contract with the Company, which would expire on 31 December 1864 was reaching the expiry

date and that the line was in danger of being given up. The Governor was in England in 1859 when the Colonial Secretary made the contract, "seemingly in haste", and without previous communication with the Naval Commander-in-Chief. The Secretary had afterwards invited the Naval Commander-in-Chief to join in on the subsidy of £200 on the part of the Admiralty but had declined. However, he was assured by Governor Wodehouse that there was very little probability of the line being abandoned.

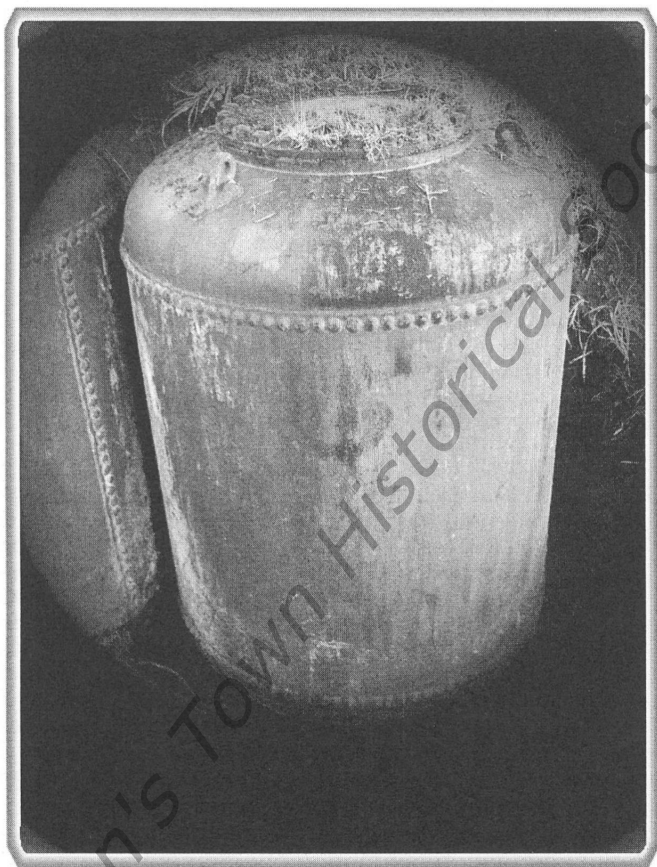
The Telegraph Act of 1872 was passed to empower the Governor to purchase the telegraph line belonging to the Cape of Good Hope Telegraph Company (Limited) and the lines were taken over by the Government in 1873.

NOTE: This article was meticulously researched and there are 64 references to the information contained therein. Should anyone wish to consult the original article it is filed in Simon's Town Museum Archives. The author has emigrated and this article was, at his request, given to us by Mr Peter Coates who also obtained permission from the Cape Archives to use the photograph of the Pagoda.

YVES JOSEPH KERGUELEN-TREMAREC

His name has been given to an important island in the southern ocean. He was a French navigator and a nobleman at the French court. By instruction of the king he was placed in command of an expedition to discover Terra Australis Incognita and to enter into commercial relations with its inhabitants. Rounding the Cape of Good Hope at the end of 1771 and standing to the southward to reach the fabled continent he discovered and took possession of a group of desolate and sub-Antarctic islands in February 1772 to which he gave the name Isles de Kerguelen. Thinking they might be the outlying islands of the continent he continued to search but was unable to penetrate the ice barrier. He returned to the islands in a 2nd voyage in 1774 and came to the conclusion that they could in no way form part of the southern continent. And that this continent so confidently displayed on contemporary maps of the world in all probability did not exist!

The Sea Mines of Simon's Town



David Erickson

With special thanks to WO1 Harry Croome SAN

Introduction

In March 2008, what appeared to be four riveted iron pressure vessels were discovered, half buried in an earth embankment immediately to the west of Building 562 in the Simon's Town East Dockyard. Subsequent research revealed that, whilst these were indeed pressure vessels they were designed not to keep pressure in, but to prevent collapse from the force of the external pressure of being submerged beneath the sea surface.

The four vessels are identified as Victorian Sea Mines of an 1870's design, which were transported from England to form part of a defence system for the Simon's Bay, home of the British Royal Navy's Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station.

The need for Sea Defences

The early duties of the Simon's Town naval establishment included the provision of support and supplies to the garrison on the island of St. Helena, where Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled from 1815 until his death in 1821. Survey ships and vessels enforcing the new anti-slavery laws also used Simon's Town as a base for operations; these activities required major stockholdings of maritime materials, spares, armaments, consumables and general supplies.

Steam power was introduced into the British Royal Navy in the early 1830's. In turn, this necessitated the holding of large stocks of coal at key locations around the globe – Simon's Town held reserves initially aboard hulks moored in the bay and on a piece of land south of the West Yard Storehouse, for which permission was granted retrospectively in 1853. A Patent Slipway was opened in 1860 to assist ship maintenance and repair, with tools, forges and heavy equipment. These developments transformed Simon's Town into a place of strategic importance, a place that would be attractive to foreign naval raiders as a ready source of supplies. To guard against such an incursion, Simon's Town had a degree of protection from seaward attack – the Dutch-built Zoutman and Boetselaar Batteries of 1793/4, which were supplemented by British-constructed temporary batteries and the more permanent Cole's Point, Munro and Schomberg Batteries that followed. To some extent these suffered from range and weight of shot deficiencies that became more pronounced with the introduction of ironclad warships in the 1860's.

Two major 'war scares' had a profound effect on British Imperial defence planning – the first occurred in 1877-78 and the second in 1885; on both occasions Britain came close to declaring war with Russia. Both were a result of Russia's expansion, first into the Eastern Mediterranean, which threatened the Suez Canal in Egypt, and then north of India to Vladivostok and the Sea of Japan. The second 'scare' of 1885 prompted British moves to protect coaling stations, and also to set up a Colonial Defence Committee which annually reviewed and advised on all imperial defences. The question of other seaward defences was considered by the Colonial Defence Committee. These included beach launched wire-guided torpedoes, and sub-marine mines.

In 1870 the Royal Navy abandoned the use of sail power, followed by other navies. The use of steam propulsion combined with larger and heavier vessels, meant that booms and chains became less effective for the defence of harbours and additional forms of protection were required. The solution was to put in place coastal artillery, submarine mines and searchlights as a holistic defence scheme. The latter two solutions were assigned to the Royal Engineers; a joint Naval and Military committee that had been examining submarine explosives since 1863 had recommended that the Royal Engineers should be responsible for their design, construction and operation.

The first submarine mining company was formed in April 1871 and a permanent Royal Engineers stores organisation was set up at Chatham to supply all the electrical and other stores which were needed. By 1886 eight submarine mining companies had been formed with the Royal Engineers responsible for the of design and firing of the mines, and the operation of the Defence Electric Lights, while the Royal Navy provided the men and the vessels needed for the laying of minefields.

The design of Coastal Defence Systems

In 1877 Lieutenant-General Sir William Drummond Jervois and Colonel Sir Peter H. Scratchley of the Royal Engineers drew up defensive schemes for major and outlying ports. Jervois had been Secretary to the Royal Commission of 1859 that had examined British defences, and which had resulted in a major expansion including the 'Palmerston Forts'. After 1885 a standard form of coastal defence was developed for implementation throughout the British Empire; between 1885 and 1906, defences for major ports and coaling stations were developed along Jervois' lines. Despite their evolution over twenty years, during which weaponry rapidly improved, innovation was controlled at first by Scratchley and subsequently by the Colonial Defence Committee.

These works comprised an inner defence of a minefield protected by guns and illuminated at night, and also an advanced defence of guns and lights of covering the approaches to the inner system. The scale of attack considered possible, and consequently the power of the defence needed to match it, had been defined by Jervois as an attack, or raid, mounted at long range, by one or more cruisers which made a "descent upon the coast" or operated against commerce. "A squadron intended for such an operation would probably consist of three, or four, vessels, one or two of which might possibly be ironclads."

Whilst the above scheme is well suited to riverine, estuarial and otherwise enclosed harbour situations, the practicality of its deployment to protect Simon's Bay is doubtful. Prior to the construction of the East Dockyard breakwaters in 1901-1910, Simon's Bay was entirely open coastline; to fully protect the anchorage with an array of mines would have required an inordinate number, with attendant logistics, deployment and maintenance issues.

It is clear that a (currently unknown) number of mine casings were transported from England to Simon's Town, together with the internals (gun-cotton explosive, detonators and packing) and ancillaries - chains, cables, sinker weights, subsea

electric cables, batteries and firing mechanisms. These would have been stored for ready-use and possibly used for training exercises, but it is considered unlikely that a full active deployment was ever implemented. It is unclear what vessels and equipment were available for mine laying in Simon's Bay at the time. The Royal Engineers sub-marine mines were electrically controlled and designed to be detonated from a shore-based observation station or fort, using subsea electric cables.

Two types of mines were in general use: Electro Contact Mines and Electrical Observation Mines.

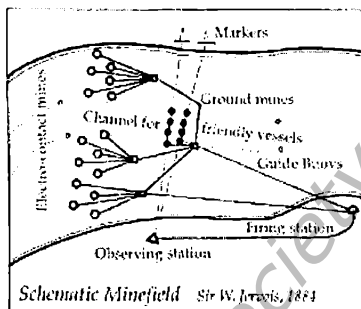
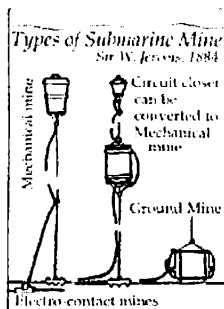
Electro Contact mines were arranged to float below the surface, at a depth that would bring them (or a separate float containing the circuit closer mechanism) into contact with a target vessel. When struck, the circuit closer rang a bell in the observation station or fort's test room and warned the operator of the vessel's position.

Upon confirmation that the vessel was an enemy, the mine (or usually a group of four mines, each containing 50 or 100 lbs (23 or 45 kg) of gun cotton) was detonated. Alternatively, if necessary these mines could be armed from the test room to explode on contact with a vessel. It was essential that the explosion was sufficient to destroy the target but not so large as to detonate other mines in the vicinity, and it was also vital for mines to be placed close enough to each other to prevent passage between them.

Electrical Observation mines were constructed with heavy cases to lie on the bottom – these were known as Ground Mines and carried larger charges scaled to the depth--250 lbs (114 kg) up to 36 ft (11 m), 500 lbs (227 kg) between 36 and 60 ft (18 m). The position of each mine laid was exactly determined, and when an enemy vessel was seen from the observation station or fort to be directly over it, the mine (or a group of mines) was exploded.

The four mine casings discovered at Simon's Town in March 2008 are of the 500 lbs (227 kg) size.

Controlled mines are very costly to install and maintain and they require a large personnel to tend and operate them.



It is estimated that to provide a competent array of defensive mines to protect the Simon's Bay anchorage, many hundreds or possibly thousands of mines would have been needed, depending upon the extent of the defended area.

The Sub-Marine Mining Depot at Simon's Town

In 1878, submarine mining received the impetus of a war scare, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-8 rousing the authorities to the necessity of strengthening the defences of naval ports.

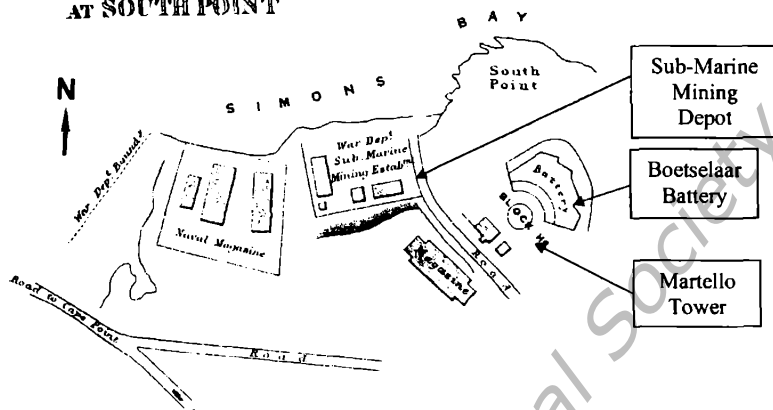
For this purpose, detachments of a Royal Engineers officer, with a few men and a quantity of stores, were sent out to various stations and ordered to prepare mine defences.

The first record of such a deployment to Simon's Town was in July 1878, when R.M. Ruck (later Brigadier-General Ruck) was ordered to the Cape of Good Hope – but his orders were “cancelled at the last moment on the receipt of adverse reports as to the possibility of mining at that station”.

In his book “History of Submarine Mining in the British Army” (Chatham: The Royal Engineers Institute, 1910), Lieutenant Colonel W. Baker-Brown records that the principal submarine mining defences in the Colonies were those in Australia and New Zealand, but in addition a start was made in 1888 with a defence of Cape Town and Simon's Bay; “a submarine mining establishment was constructed at the latter place and local efforts were made to train a Volunteer Company”.

The “Sub-Marine Mining Depot” established by the British Royal Engineers was situated on land at South Point that is today within the East Dockyard, in the vicinity of the Martello Tower. Prior to the construction of the East Dockyard in 1901-10 this was open coastline:

PLAN OF NAVAL MAGAZINE AT SOUTH POINT



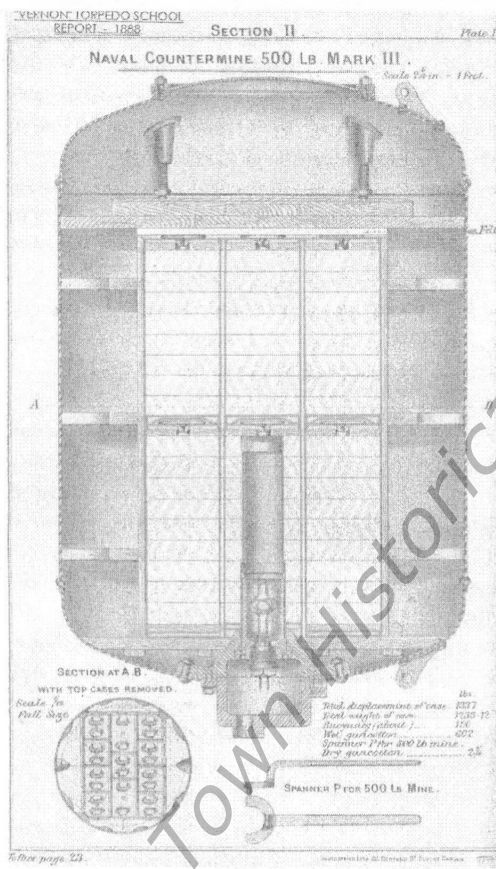
*Extract from Admiralty Plan dated
January 1890*

(Guard Book No. 1)

The Royal Engineers' tenure of the Sub-Marine Mining Depot at South Point was brief, lasting barely two years.

Lieutenant General W.G. Cameron C.B., Officer Commanding Troops in South Africa, instructed Major Du Boulay of the Royal Engineers to hand over the Depot to a Naval Officer appointed by the Naval C-in-C to receive it. Accordingly, buildings 559, 561, 562 & 572 were handed over to the Royal Navy for incorporation into the Naval Ordnance Depot on 24th October 1890. This Depot moved to Klawer in 1915.

The Mines at Simon's Town

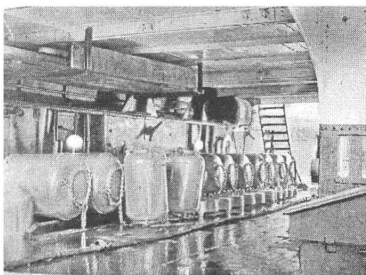


The four mines uncovered at the East Dockyard are of this design. They were manufactured at the Royal Laboratory – now known as the Woolwich Arsenal, in SE London, U.K. Each mine bears a serial number stamped on the upper casing.

The internals shown in this drawing consist of the detonator and wires leading to the junction box at the bottom, where the submarine electric cable would be connected. Above and surrounding the detonator are layers of guncotton, held in place with shaped wooden inserts to prevent displacement due to wave action. Wood planks at the top were held in place with four screw devices attached to the underside of the casing top.

The mines as found were three quarters full of sand – indicating that they were probably fitted out as dummies for test deployment purposes.

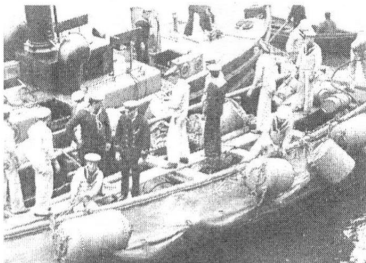
The four mines are to be refurbished and re-deployed as museum exhibits. It is expected that two will be half-sections fitted with dummy internals.



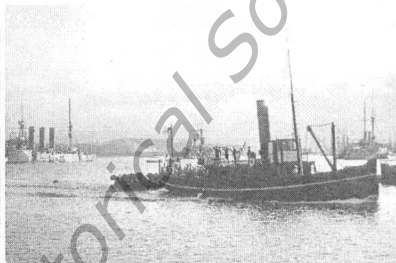
50lb & 500lb mines aboard a vessel of the British Training Establishment HMS Defiance.



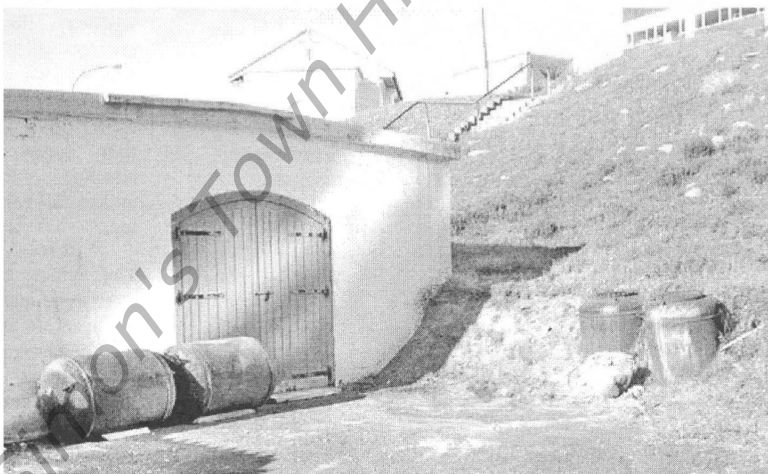
Mining Instruction class fitting a naval 72lb gun-cotton mine aboard HMS Defiance.



aval ratings under instruction returning mines and their sinkers (weights) after a test deployment at Plymouth.



A tug with mines under tow for a test deployment at Plymouth, around 1900.



9th July 2008 – Two of the mines have been removed from the embankment adjacent to Building 562, and two are awaiting recovery. Building 562 was constructed by the Royal Engineers in 1888 as part of the Sub-Marine Mining Depot.