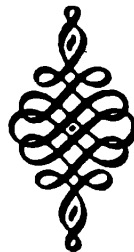




SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN



PRICE :
R20.00

JULY
2010

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT DELIVERED AT THE 50TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT THE SIMON'S TOWN MUSEUM ON 14TH APRIL 2010.

Welcome and thank you for your attendance and for your support over the past year. A sincere thank you to the members of the committee who have all contributed in so many ways to the progress of the Society. Thank you also to the volunteers and the museum staff who have managed the museum and the museum shop so well.

Membership currently stands at just over 400 but there are still 50 outstanding subscriptions, hopefully decreasing rapidly! We need to attract new and preferably younger members to carry on the important role which the Society plays in the Simon's Town community.

It has been a good and productive year for the Society. The most important event was the celebration of our 50th Anniversary on 22 February. This was attended by 190 members and guests and included a programme of projected pictures illustrating the history of the Society, music by the Navy Band quartet, and the publication of a booklet to mark the event. We were pleased to welcome Peter and James Willis and to announce the establishment of an annual "Dumps" Willis lecture. A plaque commemorating the event and the founders of the Society was unveiled by Margaret Cartwright.

Registration as an official Conservation Body has brought extra responsibilities and work. A sub-committee is systematically compiling the details of all buildings of significance which are more than 60 years old. This is a mammoth task! We are actively engaged in an effort to conserve and improve St George's Street with the co-operation of the business community and the Civic Association. Special attention is being given to the lanes leading off St George's Street. Sponsored by a very generous anonymous donation we are in the process of mounting a blue plaque at the entrance to each lane, which will outline its origins and history.

We were involved in the design and wording of the Golovnin/Diana commemoration plinth on Jubilee Square, and the s.s. MENDI memorial which will be erected later this year. Sadly, many historical plaques have been stolen or defaced and we are investigating making these in Ultra High Impact Resistant Perspex!

Another success story has been the creation of our own Web page – Simonstown.org. This is updated frequently and has received many "visits". As a result we receive many requests for information nationally and from overseas. These often also provide interesting additional historical data.

On the down side has been the continuing battle with developers and the Municipal authorities to prevent inappropriate developments in the historic area. Unfortunately we receive little or no support from Heritage Western Cape, and in several cases plans have been altered and approved without any consultation. We have achieved some success but the failures are obvious and the saga continues.

Once again the Society has made a substantial contribution to the maintenance and development of the Museum. Improved projection and auditory facilities to the lecture hall are much appreciated. Financially the Society contributes to the Development Fund by way of 1/3 of the subscription fee, the 100 Club, the income from the monthly lectures and special fund-raising events.

For sound legal and financial reasons it has become necessary to separate the Historical Society from the Friends of the Museum Development Fund. This will enable the Friends to function independently and probably to take over the running of the Museum shop. Historical Society members will remain Friends, and Volunteers and others who do not belong to the Historical Society will be invited to join the Friends independently.

The Society has received support and co-operation from many other organizations in Simon's Town. These include the South African Navy, The Civic Association, STADCO, and the Naval Heritage Trust. We are also represented on the Sub-Council of the Municipality and on the Architectural Advisory Committee.

A wide range of topics keeps us busy at committee meetings, which are always well attended with a positive approach and not lacking the occasional humour! While obviously supporting the Museum as a priority, most of our interests lie in a broader context directed at preserving our unique Simon's Town heritage.

We would like to enlist new members and to involve all our members in the activities of the Society. Regular Historic tours or visits to places of interest in and around Simon's Town may be an attractive option, as shown by the support we received for the annual members' tour last year.

Failure to progress is not due to the lack of ideas but the inability to implement them. As a Society we welcome new ideas but especially the support to carry them through.

Once again my gratitude and thanks to all who have contributed to another productive year.

BOET DOMMISSE
CHAIRMAN.

ROCKLANDS FARM, SIMON'S TOWN

Researched in depth by Judy Rowe, wife of one of the present owners.

Rocklands Farm is one of the secrets of Simon's Town. It rests on a plateau at the foot of the Swartkop mountains, 3 kms south of Simon's Town immediately adjacent to Murdoch Valley South. Its only access is along Rocklands Road and then through a farm gate on to a bumpy farm track. This suddenly widens to open fields and an unimpeded panorama down to the sea and across to the Hottentots Holland mountains. A white Cape Georgian house, set against the mountain, quietly presides over this view as it has done for nearly 200 years. This 200 year-old history of the farm, its owners and their stories have now been collected together by Judy Rowe and this article is a précis of her research.

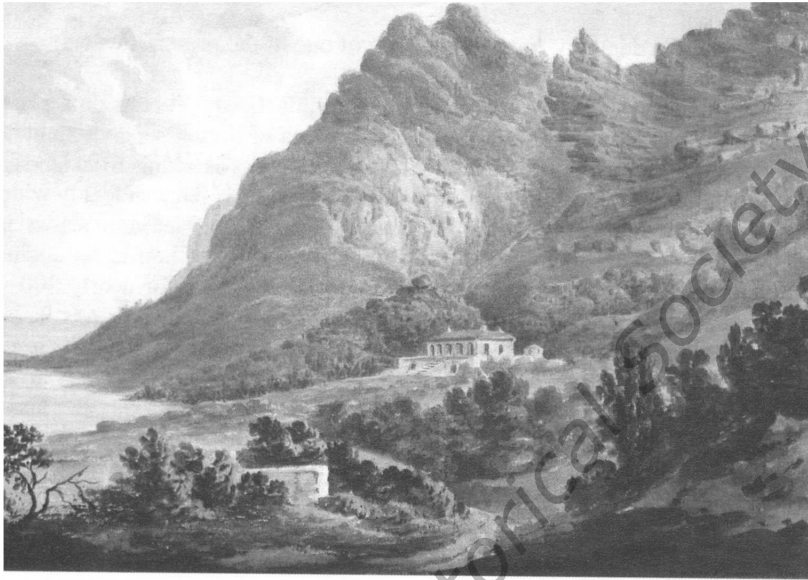
Rocklands was one of half-a-dozen farms in the area and was the last dairy farm to exist in the Simon's Town area. Originally referred to as Bakoven Valley, the farm was initially used as a grazing and watering place for local cattle owners. It was first granted to Rev. George Hough, pronounced "Huff", the then Colonial Chaplain, on 1 February 1815, at a PQR (Perpetual Quitrent) of 78 Rix Dollars. The land measured 26 morgen 537 sq. roods. Prior to that in August 1813, a William Austen had applied for and been granted the land but it had not been registered in his name. Austen continued to complain that he was entitled to the land as in CO.483/259 of 24 February 1815 the Colonial Secretary directed Rev. Hough to pay William Austen for the inspection of the piece of land but no amount is mentioned.

When Hough was transferred to Cape Town in 1817 he transferred the land to his brother-in-law Thomas Gardner, the Naval Harbour Master 1814-1820, who was married to Thomas' sister, Mary. Gardner successfully applied for a further land grant and on 15 May 1818 (SMT. 10/10/245) the Surveyor General's diagram (480/1818) shows it as 19 morgen 262 sq.roods, adjoining the original grant.

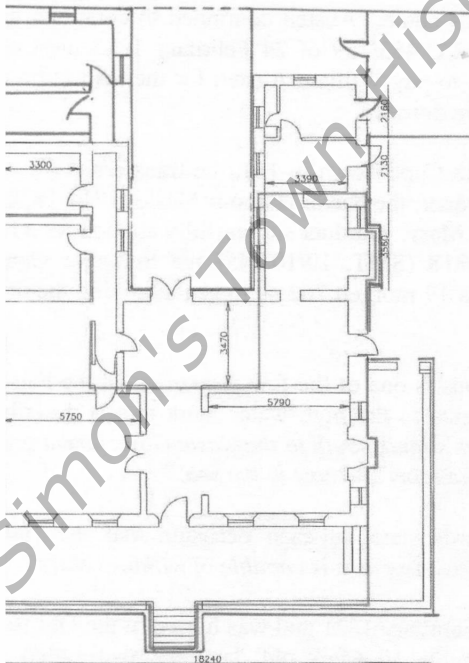
It is worth noting that Rocklands is one of the few properties on the False Bay coast which has ownership rights to the high water mark and is described as *"being north adjoining Gardner's land, south to the waste Government ground, west to the steep face of the mountains and east to the sea."*

The Surveyor General's records state on each occasion that the *"land be brought into such a state of cultivation as it is capable of within 3 years"*.

Gardner died, aged 42, on 10 February 1821 and was buried in the Old Burying Ground at Seaforth alongside his 10 week old daughter also called Mary. Gardner's widow inherited the farm and extra land and a condition attached to her deed stated she must allow free passage/door drift for cattle.



Mary Brenton's
Painting of
Rocklands



Floor Plan of
Rocklands

Ground plan of house — approximately 1830
 — As recorded in 1976
 — Altered by Alec Rowe 2005

A few weeks after Gardner's death his widow decided to visit England and advertised the property to let for a year (C.T. Gazette & African Advertiser Vol.XVI No. 792 of 17/3/1821).

Although the boundaries of the farm were well documented, the house and outbuildings did not receive similar attention. In the 1970s a small unsigned and undated painting was found in a Dorsetshire pub in England and in spite of somewhat fantasized scenery was recognized as being Rocklands House. It is believed to be the work of Mary Brenton, sister of Sir Jahleel Brenton who was Naval Commissioner in Simon's Town 1814-1821. This clearly establishes that the house was built prior to 1821. It is the earliest extant painting and shows an oblong house with two chimneys on the north side and one on the south. In 1831 an advertisement described the house as having "*and two good front rooms with fireplaces, 2 bedrooms, a pantry, kitchen, laundry, 2 servants rooms and lofts*" It also had 2 cellars – it is presumed these were under the front stoep of the house, due to the sloping nature of the ground but as they no longer exist, it seems they were later filled in. The house is now U-shaped as extensions have been built on both wings..

The Hon. Francis Dashwood became the next owner on 12 December 1821. Dashwood was Collector of Customs in Simon's Town 1819-1820 and also had a house in Mount Pleasant. He was a descendant, probably grandson, of the famous 15th Baron Le Despencer, the premier baron of England. That Francis Dashwood had been appointed to the household of Frederick, Prince of Wales and later went on to create the infamous brotherhood of Monks of Medmenham. He entered Parliament in England in 1741 until 1763.

Rocklands' next owner was the Rev.William Sturt, another Colonial Chaplain appointed in 1819. In the 1824 Opgaaf roll (No.29 C.A. Inventory 1/5.j.151) the farm is stated as having "*5 male, 1 female prize negroes, 6 horses, 9 breeding cattle, 2 pigs, 4 muids barley, 2 muids oats. Area 61 morgen. Situation Rocklands 3 miles from Simon's Town.*" The only known slave on Rocklands is Hendryn registered to Mrs Sturt. It is recorded that Hendryn died at 29 years 8 months on 5 November 1832.

It seems Rev. Sturt was declared bankrupt and according to the Government Gazette was forced to sell Rocklands in December 1830. (Theal Vol. XV - .261). Rev Sturt died aged 53 and joined Mr Gardner in the Old Burying Ground, Simon's Town.

On 25 September 1831 John Osmond of Simon's Town bought the property for 3,000 Cape Guilders (£325) and sold it a year later for 18,000 Cape Guilders (£450) to Franciscus Josephus Becker. "King John" as Osmond was known in Simon's Town, was, together with his mother-in-law, a property speculator of some prowess. Their names are found on property deeds along the whole of St George's Street, Simon's Town.

It was during Becker's ownership that the house caught fire (S.A. Commercial Advertiser 25/2/1834). Becker had insured the house but not the furniture, all of which was lost. The SA Commercial Advertiser cautioned that *"This is an additional proof of the value of Fire Insurance Offices"*

On 6 June 1834 William Farmer purchased Rocklands for 6,000 Cape Guilders (£150)

It changed hands again on 16 July 1839 when Maria Josia Catherina Watney who already owned several properties in the area, bought the farm for £125. Maria Josia was the daughter of John Pigott Watney of Wimbledon in England. Her mother was born Maria Wilhelmina de Waal.

On 17 February 1843 the farm was sold to John Ward £178. It is thought he is the same man who died in 1869 and who with his wife Christine and two baby daughters are buried in the Old Burying Ground, Seaforth. However on 22 December 1847 William Anderson, who carried on a business in Simon's Town (the forerunner of Wm Runciman & Son) received instructions to sell Rocklands by public auction. At that time it was used as a Naval & Military Club. The forerunner of this private club was in Club Lane next to the Shell Garage but it was not a financial success.

Between 1850 and 1858 James Wm. Miller and Carl Watermeyer co-owned Rocklands.

In 1858 Jan Marthinus Hoets of Simon's Town, a master mariner and a member of the Harbour Board, bought the property. He died in 1881 but by then had moved nearer Cape Town to be closer to his business. He obviously spent much time at Rocklands, probably week-ends and holidays, as his daughter-in-law had special memories of the place. She was many years ago a member of the Historical Society.

Hoets sold the farm to Rev Thomas Meredith who owned the farm until 1867 when it was bought by George Ryall Budge. Budge was Simon's Town's first mayor in 1883/84. He was a carpenter and boat builder in Simon's Town and died here in 1902. One of his daughters married into the Runciman family.

Alfred Hartley took ownership on 25 August 1875 and sold it to William Runciman in 1880, who in turn owned it for 9 years. During this time it was a dairy farm.

Next we find George Pigot Moodie as owner in 1889 and who occupied it as a family home. It was at this time thoughts turned to constructing a marine drive round the Peninsula. Although there was a wide road to Rocklands, this dwindled to a bridle path from the farm to Smitswinkel Bay. Thereafter it was

6 miles to Cape Point over very rough terrain. After a major expedition by the city fathers to investigate this idea, it was pronounced that such a marine drive would be a *“great boon to the people of the Peninsula and all lovers of picturesque scenery”* This wonderful road was only finally built in 1914 and is every bit as beautiful as was then envisaged.

George Pigot Moodie's son, George Frederick Arthur Piggot-Moodie, inherited the farm in 1910 and in 1927 his cousin Herbert Richard Beard bought it from him. Herbert Beard was married to Elizabeth Margaret Bisset who was a member of the Arderne family. Beard's town house was Highwick in Kenilworth and he is known for having planted many splendid trees on both properties. Rocklands was his holiday home from November to March each year although a permanent farm manager, Mr Taljaard, tended the farm producing cream, butter, vegetables and honey as well as looking after the fruit trees and vines.

Beard made several alterations whilst the house was in his custody. He constructed a new fireplace with blocks of granite and surrounded it with Delft tiles. Beard had salvaged these large granite blocks which had been stepping stones over a stream in Buitenkant Street and became redundant when the stream was canalized. He also installed the imposing Cape Dutch front door.

Beard's father had in 1840 acquired the English Patent of Daguerre's process of photography and had opened the first photographic studio in London. His son inherited this enthusiasm and had a collection of glass plate negatives, many of which showed the farm in the early 1900s. Some of these are now owned by Simon's Town museum.

On 25 August 1932 by Deed of Grant No. 85/1932 a further portion of land was added and brought the total area up to 88 morgen 75 sq.rds.

Herbert Beard died in 1960 and left the farm to his 3 children. Doris, one of the children, was married to Ernest Lasbury and the family were living at Rocklands. Ernest was Rector of St Johns, Wynberg and Christ Church, Kenilworth from 1910 – 1950. Ernest died in 1963.

At this time the farm was divided between Doris and her two brothers, Ronald and Henry. The brothers sold portions 1 and 3 to Anglo-American Properties. Doris kept Portion 2 (Deed of Transfer No.1 0547/1968). This portion contained the homestead and cottages together with arable land. Doris continued farming with a healthy herd of Jersey cows until her death in 1974. The farm only had electricity installed in 1963.

In 1976 Alec and Judy Rowe bought the farm and with it came the remnants of the dairy herd comprising 3 Jersey cows and a frisky bull as well as the farmhand named Bible. The cows grew old and fat on the kikuyu and wandered

over the farm until about 1996.

At the same time in 1976 the Rows bought from Anglo-American Portion 1. They had hopes of establishing a campsite for children and discussed this with Murray Hofmeyr of SCA who was very interested. The Rocklands Campsite Trust was formed in 1985 and a portion of the land on the northern side, with access from Rocklands Road, was transferred to the Trust. It is a thriving Trust and well used by thousands of children each year.

For many years the Rowe family holidayed in “Pebbles” a small wooden cabin on the farm which had been built as a look-out post during World War 2. Sadly it was destroyed in the disastrous bushfires of 2002.

Judy and Alec Rowe moved to Rocklands in 2005 and set about restoring the old house. They thought they would be busy for about 6 months! It has been lovingly restored, both of them going to great pains to be authentic.. They then turned to tidying up the neglected grounds and have concentrated on re-establishing fynbos. They are, like most of Simon’s Town, plagued by baboons and have solved this menace by building a sturdy cage over the U portion of the house and can now sit in their cage watched from outside by baboons!

THE OLD BRIDGE, ST GEORGE’S STREET, SIMON’S TOWN

From research by the late Gordon Wilson

This is under the present main road almost outside Admiralty House and opposite the house “Studland” where the Klawer River flows under the main road.

In Johannes Hendricus Brand’s report in 1810 – he was the Deputy Fiscal at the time – he comments on the bad state of the road. On 14 March 1814 the Colonial Builder Herman Schutte and the Naval Commissioner Dundas discussed the matter of a bridge over the stream. It was designed by John Chisholm in May 1814 and has an oval arch. It was built eventually by Schutte for 2,500 rix dollars and finished in June 1815. It was widened in 1912 when the width of the road was changed and again in 1950 when the road was again widened. Is is thought to be the 2nd oldest bridge in the Western Cape.

THE SWEDISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

A.E. READ

The Swedish East India Company obtained its first charter or concession on 14 June 1731. It was for 15 years. The charter meant that in Sweden they had the sole right to trade and shipping with the East Indies (in the widest sense of the term). They became the most profitable firm in Sweden. During the 52 years of their existence 57 Swedish vessels made the 132 voyages from Gothenborg to Canton in China via the Cape. A further 4 concessions were granted and the Company ceased to exist in 1813. They were known in Sweden as *Svenska Ostindiska Companiet (SOIC)*. The Company was co-founded by Colin Campbell (1686-1757) a Scottish merchant and entrepreneur, a friend of Sweden's King Frederick I. The King's wife Ulrika Eleanora had been chosen Queen after the death of her brother Charles XII but she did not take to the task and after little more than a year on the throne she handed over power to her husband Frederick who was originally the Landgrave of Hesse.

Sweden at this time, after many years of autocracy, war and other misfortunes, which had drained its resources and impoverished the country, needed to build up its economy. Foreign trade was regarded as a good way of improving its dilapidated finances. Holland, England and France already had their trading companies and looked anything but kindly on the Swedish newcomers and did all they could to ruin Swedish trade especially with India.

The Swedes soon learnt to build increasingly larger ships to carry more cargo. Most of these were built in Stockholm and one of the main docks was called *Terra Nova* as it lay on reclaimed land. That land is now occupied by the present-day Royal Dramatic Theatre.

A round trip to Canton took roughly 18 months if all went well. In order to coincide with the trade winds in tropical waters, ships were forced to leave Gothenborg in the middle of winter. Conditions on board were appalling and as the animals which were to be slaughtered for food on the voyage, lived in the same place as the crew, one can imagine how ghastly it was. It was often said that one could smell the stench of a ship at a distance of several nautical miles!

Since many crew members died during a voyage extra people were signed on than were really needed! In terms of pay and other considerations the Company was a good employer. Pay aboard was more than could be obtained ashore and the crew were allowed to take home goods purchased in the East. This latter perquisite was however withdrawn in 1748 and replaced by additional pay known as privilege money. This was done as it was found that by then as much as 30% of the cargo space was taken up by the crew purchases.

The first port of call on the route from Sweden to China was Cadiz in Spain. There the vessels sold timber, tar, bar iron, potash and pitch. The Spaniards paid in silver which was readily acceptable in China. From Cadiz they stopped at one of the Atlantic islands but sometimes if conditions were right they by-passed the Cape and went directly to Java and then across the China Sea to Canton. If they sailed to India they had to sail up the East coast of Africa to the west of Madagascar. They usually used St Helena or Ascension on the return voyage.

Most of the cargo brought from the Far East was re-exported to other European countries.

King Gustav III ascended the Swedish throne in 1771 during the third concession. It was then that the centre of power over trade moved to the capital Stockholm. The drinking of tea had by now become popular. The Swedes sold their tea imports to Holland and then it was smuggled over the Channel to England. After the Boston Tea Party in September 1773 a new market opened in North America. During the 4th concession, England abolished the tax on tea and Holland decided to import tea only in its own ships. These blows heralded the end of Sweden's trade with the Far East and the Company ceased trading in 1813.

One of the best known ships the Swedes used was the GOTHEBORG. She was a ship of 40 metres. She made 2 successful round voyages to the Far East and on her 3rd voyage ran aground on the Hunnebadan rock outside the Gothenborg harbour. It was never known if this was intentional or not but it was well known that these ships were difficult to manoeuvre in coastal waters and were more manoeuvrable in open waters. Ships generally only lasted for 3 voyages before the timbers began to give trouble. Of the 132 voyages made between 1731 and 1813 in 37 ships, there were 8 losses and only 1 of these occurred in the open sea.

A few years ago a replica of the GOTHEBORG was built to commemorate the voyages of the Swedish East India Company to the Far East.

Ref:

An article in the Gotheborg Courier, lent to us by one of our members Mr W.G. Phillips.

ADMIRALTY HOUSE, SIMON'S TOWN (MEMORIES OF 1946/47)

RICHARD MOODY

In 1946 my father Admiral Sir Clement Moody KCB CB was appointed Commander-in-Chief South Atlantic and South America Station and so my family and I boarded the s.s. UMTALI in Southampton, near where we lived, for the long voyage to Cape Town. In addition to my sister Rachel aged 9 and me aged 5, my parents brought along our nanny, Shoonie, to keep us under control and to look after us once we settled into the Admiral residence. Shoonie did not survive long in South Africa and was sent home in disgrace for reasons that we not revealed to us youngsters. She was replaced by Ollie and Jo who eventually sailed with us back to England.

It must have been quite a thrill for all of us to be leaving post-war England for the Cape and to discover, upon arrival, the beauty of the magnificent house with its grandiose architecture, its sweeping lawns, its vast vegetable garden across the road and its private beach below the house. At age 5, my memories of the war-torn England we had just left are justifiably cloudy but I do remember the excitement of drinking hot chocolate under the stairs as the German bombers, with their familiar drone, passed overhead, a B17 crashing in flames at a nearby USAAF base and the motor of a V1 – the dreaded *Doodlebug* – cutting out overhead our house and crashing in a nearby field – luckily without exploding. Simonstown as it was then called, was a new world for all of us – a world without rationing and shortages and long lines for food – and a haven for our father after the horrors of the war with the Japanese in the Far East.

My father's position brought with it many perks and excesses by to-day's standards and I suppose I did not know, in my innocence, that not everybody was fortunate enough to have 25 Royal Navy stewards and over 20 gardeners led by the redoubtable Mr Endean. Looking back now on those far off days of over 60 years ago, its hard to distinguish true personal memories from the stories my parents related over the passing years and also the pictures in our 2 photo albums from that time; nor the photo in our bedroom here in New Jersey of me astride one of the Admiralty House cannons on the lawn or the oil painting of Admiralty House which subsequently hung in my parents' drawing room back in Hampshire for many years.

But whatever the sources, I can still recall many happy events to this day. Being driven to Miss Kemp's school in Kalk Bay by Corporal Kells, Royal Marines, in our Rover shipped from England, along with Rachel and 3 other officers' children – Peter Verecker, Martin Legassic and Alan Bowden. Peter's father was King's Harbourmaster at the Dockyard, Martin's father was the Captain of the training ship GENERAL BOTHA and Alan's father was our father's Naval Secretary. Peter and I went on to Elstree Prep School in

Berkshire and then to Marlborough College in Wiltshire before Peter embarked on a distinguished career in the Foreign Service, holding a number of Ambassadorships, before sadly dying at an early age in 2001. History does not relate what became of Martin and Alan but I do remember Rachel was commended for saving Martin from drowning in False Bay one day after school. In addition to learning Afrikaans, which was sadly soon forgotten, I remember when my father's personal driver Sergeant Paris, would drive us to school in the official Admiral's Buick which was permanently positioned at Admiralty House. As if being chauffeur-driven to school by a Royal Marine in a Rover wasn't a treat in itself!

Other recollections in no particular order, are of eating Donnaball Pits with Rachel – the seeds from big pine cones that fell from a large tree at the bottom of the lawn, walking up the many steps on the mountain behind the house with my mother and claiming that a puff-adder had winked at me and baboons frequently coming down from Klawer and Mount Pleasant to raid the kitchen; and the thrill when the irrigation sluice gates in the vegetable garden were opened and water poured down the man-made channels to water the rows of vegetables.

Then there was the day that the large Dutch aircraft carrier, the KAREL DORMAN put to sea with much excitement and the afternoon that I appeared naked from our private beach and burst into the middle of a garden party being held on the lawn. Our beach had a shark net strung from the end of the pier to the shore and I never did understand how it worked since the bottom of the net was a mere 2 feet below the surface; and then there were the train rides to Muizenberg and on to Cape Town from the station just beyond the bottom of the garden.

I learned to ride my bike on the lawns at Admiralty House aided by the slope in the middle that helped me launch myself on my first solo. My biking tutor was Chief Petty Officer Parsons, my father's coxswain of the Admiral's barge, who coincidentally was there to greet me as Drake Divisional Chief when I showed up at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth in Devon as a fresh faced Naval Cadet some 13 years later. I also remember being taken to a cadets' boxing tournament and being very perturbed when one cadet was knocked senseless; and taking a flight to Bloemfontein in a two-engine piston plane with my father and experiencing excruciating earache.

Family life must have been idyllic during those 2 years and I recall our 2 Siamese cats and a black moggy called *Comico* which we picked up from a family somewhere near the Hottentots Holland Mountains; and stewards waiting on us hand and foot and many other children to play with in the vast garden or down on the beach.

Rachel once admonished my mother for calling one of the stewards "Darling"

– which of course was his surname. We entertained many distinguished visitors including Tyrone Power, the American actor, Joe Davis the snooker player, Issy Bloomberg the Mayor of Cape Town, and Lord Montgomery of El Alamein, who presented my parents with a fine photo of himself in battledress the day he crossed the Rhine in 1944. This photo hangs in our house in New Jersey as does the photo of my parent with Monty on the garden steps at Admiralty House. Issy Bloomberg later invited me horse racing at Milnerton when I returned to Cape Town in HMS EAGLE nearly 20 years later in 1967.

However, the biggest excitement must have come with the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth and the two young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret on 17 February 1947. They sailed into Simon's Town for the Royal visit in HMS VANGUARD. The drive-in porch at Admiralty House had to be widened for the Royal Daimler, a golden spade for tree planting bought and preparations made for many guests to be presented to the King and Queen on the lawn at Admiralty House. A yellowwood tree was duly planted by the King with the golden spade, assisted by Mr Endean and Margaret cheekily said she hoped the spade would not be hung above her father's bed with the risk of braining him in the night! That evening the King and Queen departed in civilian clothes – perhaps by train to Pretoria? (They left in the afternoon to attend a race meeting at Kenilworth - Ed) In passing the King asked my mother "How do you like me (sic) new suit?" I was given the special treat of being aboard one of the escorting frigates HMS ACTAION when the Royal Family on board HMS VANGUARD departed Cape Town at the end of the Royal Tour for the voyage back to England.

After 2 years and at age 7 my halcyon time in Simon's Town came to an end and in 1948 we sailed for England with nanny Jo, aboard s.s. STIRLING CASTLE. For me it was back to day school in England and then on to boarding school aged 8, leaving me with wonderful memories of our time in the Cape. Plans are afoot to bring my American wife of 40 years, Lisa, to Simon's Town so that I can relive, and she can see first hand, what special meaning Admiralty House and Simon's Town have for me. I discovered Boet Dommissie's fine book on Admiralty House when surfing the web for information on modern-day Simon's Town and I'm delighted that Boet has now asked me to put pen to paper and recall those happy days from so long ago.

RICHARD MOODY: Lieut.Commander (Ret) Richard Moody started his career as an officer in the Royal Navy. During that 15 years he served on the Royal Yacht, obtained his wings and flew from the Royal Navy aircraft carriers ARK ROYAL and EAGLE; he also flew with the U.S. Navy in Vietnam. He took early retirement and flew for British Airways for 7 years until retiring to work as an Aviation Reinsurance Assessor in Manhattan for 25 years. Richard

and Lisa now live outside Princeton, New Jersey and among other interests he acts as a guide for the Historical Society of Princeton.

EGYPTIAN PHARAOH NECHO (NECCO) & THE PHOENICIANS

In Volume XV No. 2 p. 64 Nigel Fawcett wrote an article on the Phoenician ship sent out by Necho to sail round Africa and the possibility that it might have come into False Bay in 600 BC.

In 600BC the Phoenicians (who lived in modern-day Lebanon/Syria) sailed from Cairo, through the ancient canal linking the River Nile with the Red Sea and headed off south, returning several years later, according to the Greek historian Herodotus. He wrote that they returned through the Gates of Hercules (the Strait of Gibraltar), something possible only if they had sailed completely around Africa. It is said that they even stopped for a while, possibly in modern-day Angola, to grow a crop and harvest it.

In 2008 a replica of the Phoenician sailing ship, 70 ft long, was built on the Syrian island of Arwad of pine wood and set sail in August 2008. It had a crew of 20, later reduced to 11. It is named PHOENICIA. They arrived in Beira on 1 January 2010 then proceeded on to Richards Bay and Durban in February. They called in at Cape Town and left there on 21 March 2010 and on 22 March were already north-west of Saldanha heading northwards. The expedition leader is Philip Beale aged 47 who is a very experienced sailor who previously explored the possibility of sailors voyaging from Indonesia to Ghana in West Africa 1200 years ago. If the PHOENICIA succeeds it may help to clear up a mystery, for the Phoenicians of yore were loath to part with much of their information and it was not until 1488 that Bartholomew Diaz came on the scene. There is a web site: www.phoenicia.org/uk/index.htm if you are interested.

EARTHQUAKES IN SOUTH AFRICA

There was an earthquake in Cape Town on 4th December 1809 and this was the first to be properly documented in South Africa and is one of the earliest quakes for which there are fairly reliable records concerning the timing and relative intensities of the main shocks and numerous aftershocks, as well as on the attendant phenomena such as sound effects, behaviour of animals during the earthquake, atmospheric conditions, wind velocities and directions, barometric pressures, temperatures, structural damage to buildings, geological effects such as soil liquefaction and boils, rents opening in the ground, and boulders being dislodged on mountainsides, and numerous first-hand accounts of the shocks and the panic that ensued, and the psychological effects on the population. It also appears to be the first well-described earthquake during which luminous electromagnetic phenomena in the form of “fireballs”, “flames” and “shooting stars” were observed. Other curious phenomena attributed to the earthquake include the first appearance in Cape Town waters of the fish kingklip (*Genypterus capensis*), the alleged sinking of Robben Island, and a colder climate which affected the wine harvest in subsequent years.

The seismicity around Cape Town is associated with the large NW-SE Milnerton Fault. The 1809 earthquake had its epicenter at Jan Biesje's Kraal which is today an area occupied by the Racecourse at Milnerton. The best descriptions of this earthquake and aftershocks were given by Wilhelm von Buchenroder, who meticulously recorded the events which he published in 1830. Other detailed eyewitness accounts were those of two anonymous observers, and diary entries of the surgeon Dr William Mackrill and of Mrs Thom (nee Meyer).

Based on these accounts above the events were reconstructed and on 14 December 2009 Dr Sharad Master of the School of Geosciences, University of the Witwatersrand gave a lecture at the Eric Simpson Lecture Theatre, Geological Sciences Building, UCT, Cape Town.

“Shortly after 10p.m. on 4th December 1809 a strong shock was felt for a minute or two, accompanied by a sound like distant thunder, but very much louder. This was followed after a minute, by a second more powerful shock accompanied by a tremendously loud noise. Two observers felt a third shock, weaker than the first two, between 1 and 5 minutes after the second. Following these first 3 shocks there were two more aftershocks within half an hour and a total of 10 aftershocks were perceived until 2.45 a.m. the next morning, the last four of which were heard rather than felt. At 6 – 7 a.m. and at 2.30 p.m. on 5th December 1809 more aftershocks were felt, accompanied by loud noises. Further sporadic aftershocks were recorded on 6th (5.30 a.m.) and 7th (7.30 p.m., 10.55 p.m. and 11.57 p.m.) and rumblings were felt from 12 – 15 December and from 19 – 28 December 1809. Further strong earthquakes occurred in the Cape Town area on 2 and 19 June 1811(recorded by William Burchell).”

We well remember Tulbagh in 1969. These days earthquakes seem to be becoming more frequent with those having occurred in Haiti, Iceland and Cuba in the recent months, not to mention those that regularly occur in the Far East “ring of fire”. Tremors often occur in the Rift Valley area of Africa too.

We are grateful to the Geological Society of South Africa, Western Cape Branch, for this information.

EXTRACTS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF LT COL. P.J. BOSMAN ON HIS SERVICE IN SIMON'S TOWN IN WORLD WAR I.

Translated and edited by Mac Bisset

He served in Simon's Town in the Prince of Wales' Own Cape Peninsula Rifles.

After serving in Kimberley in the 2nd Kimberley Regiment during the German South West African Campaign Petrus Johannes Bosman was persuaded to join the Cape Peninsula Rifles, an Active Citizen Force regiment, for garrison duty in the Cape Peninsula by his civil life manager who was Captain Rogers.

“The Simon's Town dockyard and naval base were then under British control. However, the Union Government had heavy ordnance in the mountains there. ‘B’ Company of the Cape Peninsula Rifles in which I was serving was commanded by Captain McKenzie and was also stationed there for six months. Here I agreed to accept promotion to non-commissioned rank which I had previously declined when the Commanding Officer said to me “You'd better make up your mind to become a Grandfather in this Regiment”. His accent was Scots. I was then promoted to the rank of Lance-Corporal with one stripe and later quickly progressed to Corporal and not long afterwards 1st Class Sergeant.

{‘B’ Company CPR was moved to Signal Hill where Sgt Bosman and a section of 24 men saw a Japanese cruiser fail to signal her identity but quickly rectify the error. After about ten days the Company returned to Simon's Town to guard Lower North Battery.. Captain McKenzie was transferred to Headquarters at the Castle and was relieved by Captain Ponder}

“We did guard duty at another battery at the top of the mountain, Middle North Battery, but not long afterwards the plague named the Spanish Flu broke out. It was at first regarded as a fit of influenza and laid low one or two of our men but

before long field hospital tents had been erected in Simon's Town and there were very few of the soldiers in Simon's Town still fit for duty.

By then I was very ill and lay on my bed in my round tent. The main road ran just outside the camp and I saw an old native walking past the tent with an open bag over his shoulder with the bare head of a dead native child protruding but I was so ill that I did not think about it any further. In the meanwhile my brother-in-law Bertie Hawkins became ill in the same camp and was transferred to Wynberg Military Hospital where he died. Just a day or two later I was sent to the Tent Hospital in Simon's Town where I lay seriously ill for a few days. Then the authorities sent about five of us patients to the Military Hospital at Maitland, the Victoria Hospital, by train. I remember being carried onto the train at Simon's Town station and that the Military doctor, a Captain, came round with a bottle of alcohol and offered each patient a tot. I would not drink it as at that time I was a Good Templar. It was also the last thing I could remember. I came to one night about a week later in the Victoria Hospital when somebody's coughing woke me. I told her that she was ill herself and asked her why she was on duty. She was Mrs Murray an auxiliary nurse. The following day they moved me out of the large ward into a small single room. I then began to recover and when I asked after her a day or so later I was told that she had died. There was a window in my room overlooking the passage which led to the Nurses' Quarters. While I lay there the bodies of 13 nurses were wheeled or carried on stretchers past my window on one day.

It was a large hospital with about 3,000 beds. I recovered rapidly and after about another week they allowed me to go home. My wife and small children were then living in a small house in Woodstock. I stayed there for a day or two and then returned to Simon's Town by train. When I arrived at our camp at Lower North Battery there were only a few NCOs there. The two officers, the Captain and Lieutenant only arrived a couple of days later. About 200 of the men were still in hospital and later when they recovered, arrived singly or in pairs. When sufficient men had returned to the camp we resumed our guard duties for about a month and we (I mean 'B' Company) were transferred to Wynberg where we served for about 2 weeks. Then we were suddenly ordered to camp at Woltemade Rifle Range for two weeks to do exercises and smarten up. We had to march there, a distance of 8 miles. We were housed in tents when we arrived there.

Lt van Breda suddenly became ill. The influenza epidemic was over but then he contracted influenza with the result that our camp was placed under quarantine for a month. That month I was the Orderly Sergeant so that I was responsible for all the work and duties and after the month when the quarantine ended the Armistice was signed and after a few days I was discharged from the Army and it did not take me and my family long to return to Kimberley by train."

{Sgt P.C. Bosman resumed his civil career with De Beers Consolidated Mines Lt in Kimberley and retired in November 1939 after 36 years service. In his spare time he served in the St John Ambulance Brigade and Defence Rifle Association (Commando) in Kimberley. He was placed on the Reserve of Officers with the rank of Lt Col. In July 1940}

Note: The Society is indebted to the Bosman family for permission to publish these extracts.

THE GOLOVNIN – DIANA COMMEMORATION PLAQUE

BOET DOMMISSE

This is situated on Jubilee Square, Simon's Town. On Thursday 29 May 2009 a commemorative plinth and plaque was unveiled on the Square by the Russian Ambassador Mr A. Makarov. Rear Admiral R. Higgs and Rear Admiral (JG) Louw represented the South African Navy; Mr M. Bosazzo the Naval Heritage Trust; Alderman N. Holderness, the Cape Town City Council and Prof J. Dommisse, the Simon's Town Historical Society. The National Anthems of Russia and of South Africa were played by the S.A. Navy Band and Father Ioan blessed the memorial. Finally a toast was proposed by Admiral Louw and drunk in the best Russian Vodka.

The ceremony and plaque commemorated the 200th anniversary of the daring escape of Golovnin's ship DIANA from Simon's Bay on the night of 28th May 1809. The Imperial Russian sloop DIANA had been detained in Simon's Bay by the English fleet since 3 May 1808. During that time Golovnin had set up an observatory and was able to set the ship's chronometers. He also documented a detailed account of the settlement at the Cape, noting its strengths and weaknesses.

At 18h00 on a dark and rainy night, the crew cut both anchor cables, and with only a storm sail drifted past the naval vessels in the Bay out to the open sea where they hoisted their sails and escaped. Golovnin then sailed on to reach Kamchatka on the east coast of Russia. He had a further adventurous career and was appointed Intendent-General of the Russian Navy, building over 200 warships. In 1830 he was made a Vice-Admiral. He died aged 55 in 1831.



ABOUT THE PLINTH & PLAQUE:

It consists of two large old wooden beams from the Simon's Town dockyard. These have been bound together and symbolize the ties between the Russian Navy and the South African Navy. The entire wooden bollard, which is one metre tall and measures 600 x 300 cm, has two "horns" (side arms), as in an anchor post.

An anchor-chain is attached to the front of the plinth, and the last link has been cut to represent the cut cables and DIANA's escape from Simon's Bay. The plinth was manufactured in the Simon's Town Naval Dockyard under the supervision of Mr J. Sutherland. It was erected on Jubilee Square with the assistance of STADCO (Simon's Town Amenities Development Company). The plaque is 600 x 300 cm with a border and raised lettering. It is enclosed by a metal protective surround which is slightly raised above the surface of the plaque. The plaque was manufactured by Dowd Engravers of Stikland. The English wording on the left was compiled by the Simon's Town Historical Society and the exact Russian translation on the right half was done by the Russian Consul Mr V. Smirnov. The entire design and implementation was the responsibility of Prof Boet Dommissie and Rear Admiral Koos Louw. The wording on the plaque is:

“ON 3 MAY 1808 DIANA UNDER THE COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT V.M. GOLOVNIN WAS DETAINED IN SIMON’S BAY BY THE ENGLISH FLEET. A YEAR LATER ON THE NIGHT OF 28 MAY 1809 THE ANCHOR CABLES WERE CUT AND DIANA DRIFTED QUIETLY OUT OF THE BAY AND ESCAPED.

ERECTED BY THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE NAVAL HERITAGE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA TO COMMEMORATE THIS EVENT AND PAY TRIBUTE TO VASILY M GOLOVNIN AND THE BRAVE RUSSIAN CREW – 28 MAY 2009”

GERRY FERRY (1909-1982)

Gerry Ferry was born in Simon’s Town, the son of Gerry Ferry who was an engine-driver with S.A. Railway and whose claim to fame was that he was the engine –driver of the train which took Cecil Rhodes’ body on the stretch from Kimberley to Bulawayo. Gerry Snr later became Inspector of Engine Sheds, S.A.R. & H. Salt River.

Our Gerry Ferry served 5 years apprenticeship in the East Dockyard at Simon’s Town as a journeyman and also trained in the United Kingdom. He went on to set up his own foundry at Salt River. In 1943 he moved to Woodstock and became a Councillor of the City of Cape Town for 39 years and was Mayor of Cape Town from 1967-69. He was very keen on boxing and founded the Woodstock Amateur Boxing Club and was at one time Chairman of the Western Province Amateur Boxing Association.

Ferry was well loved for his devotion to the needs of his constituents. He was a great admirer of all things British, especially the Royal Navy and paid a visit to Britain as a guest of the British Government. Another of his interests was the Cape Times Fresh Air Camp at Froggy Pond, Simon’s Town.

He was President of the Simon’s Town Historical Society from 1970-1982 during which he unveiled a plaque on 25 November 1970 on the West Dockyard Wall which commemorates the 1st Patent Slipway in South Africa. He was married to Hannah from whom he received great support in his public duties.

Source: various Society Bulletins.

WILLIAM SCORESBY was an Arctic explorer and physicist who was born at Cropton in Yorkshire, the son of a whaler. He made his first voyage to Greenland at the age of 11 and from 1810 – 1822 made annual visits there. In 1806 he was Chief Officer of the Whaling ship RESOLUTION of which his father was in command. He relieved his father in command in 1811 and in 1822 he gave up the life of a seaman to devote his time to scientific studies. He was ordained in 1825 and became Vicar of Bradford, Yorkshire in 1829. He published several books describing his seagoing activities and in 1859 published a book on terrestrial magnetism.

The ship WILLIAM SCORESBY paid many visits to Simon's Town. She was of 324 tons and designed on the lines of a whale-catcher and carried out experiments in marking whales during the DISCOVERY's investigations.

ZULU

Not only a tribe prominent in South Africa but also the type of fishing vessel peculiar to the north-east coastal ports of Scotland. It had a broad-beamed carved hull with a straight stern and a pointed stern with a pronounced rake, at times as much as 45°. These boats were rigged with a dipping lug foresail and a standing lug mizzen. They were introduced by a boat-builder named Cameron as an improvement on local types of fishing vessel and were first produced during the Zulu War (1878-9), hence their name. The introduction of the internal combustion engine rendered the type obsolete.

U-BOATS OFF THE CAPE 1939-45 WAR

FROM AN ARTICLE BY BRIAN INGPEN WHICH FIRST APPEARED IN THE CAPE TIMES 21 OCTOBER 2009. WE THANK HIM FOR HIS PERMISSION TO USE HIS ARTICLE.

At the height of the German summer of 1942 Admiral Karl Doenitz signed the order that unleashed the most effective German submarine offensive in South African waters – specifically targeting shipping off the Cape – thus was *Gruppe Eistar* (*Polar Bear Group*) born. To the sounds of military music, four submarines each carrying an arsenal of torpedoes and mines, sailed independently from Lorient in France in mid-August and headed south. En route to the Cape, the U-boats picked off a number of ships.

On a balmy spring evening on 5 October 1942 Senior Lieutenant Carl Emmermann of U-172 peered through his periscope at the lights of Cape Town. It was so beautiful that he stayed for a few hours and called up the crew one by

one to the bridge to enjoy the sight! U-68 and U159 also enjoyed the spectacle. They then parted company to operate independently.

On 7 October Emmermann sank two ships off the Cape; U-68 commanded by Karl Friedrich Merten, sank four ships the following day, and during the month *Gruppe Eisbar* sank 25 ships off the Cape in a 60-hour blitz that had begun with Emmermann's first attack on the CHICKSAW CITY, an American freighter, outward in ballast from Cape Town for New York.

Among the ships sunk was the Ellerman freighter CITY OF ATHENS that U-504 torpedoed near Dassen Island. By tragic coincidence she was near the position where her earlier Ellerman namesake had sunk after hitting two mines during August 1917.

Having rescued the crew of City of Athens (2) HMS ACTIVE surprised U-179 on the surface and although the submarine managed to dive, the British destroyer launched depth charges that must have sunk the U-boat for a large patch of fuel oil came to the surface and Emmermann in U-172, only a few miles distant, reported later that they had heard the sounds of a submarine breaking up.

Gruppe Eisbar's biggest success came on 10 October when Emmermann sighted a large vessel emerging from a rain squall. En route from Egypt to Britain with over 1,000 passengers, the Orient liner ORCADES had left Cape Town the previous evening. Two torpedoes hit the ship, which stopped and lowered her lifeboats. With a handful of volunteers aboard, she got underway and turned for Cape Town. Emmerman lost her in the rain but re-established contact when he picked up her engine noise and finally sank her about 240 miles off the Cape. Miraculously, only 40 lives were lost.

October 1942 saw the loss of shipping totaling over 166,000 gross tons off the South African coast, the worst spell of the war in local waters.

Lieutenant Commander Werner Hartenstein on U-156 sank the LACONIA off the West African coast only to find that she carried 1,800 Italian prisoners-of-war which she was transporting to Britain. He immediately reported to headquarters and all submarines in the area were ordered to assist in the rescue. The appeal was heard by a Vichy-French sloop, who relayed it to the authorities in Dakar and the cruiser GLOIRE sailed to assist with the rescue. While U-156 was rescuing survivors an American aircraft arrived, circled the scene and flew off, only to return later, and despite the submarine flying a large Red Cross flag, the Americans attacked. This resulted in U-boat commanders being ordered not to effect rescues so as not to jeopardize their operations.

In 2009 a film crew descended on the Cape to make a film on the sinking of the LACONIA and signs appeared everywhere to direct all concerned to the filming sites.

WHAT IS A SHIPWRIGHT?

The traditional way of training a shipwright is by him being apprenticed at the age of 16 years and his training will continue for 5 years. It is reported that in the 1700s one had to pay £500 to be apprenticed as a shipwright, which means that it was not a trade available to a wide range of people. The most famous person in Simon's Town to have plied this trade was John Osmond who arrived here in HMS LANCASTER in 1799 as a carpenter on board the ship and within 3 years he was Master Shipwright in charge of the dockyard – what we know today as the West Dockyard. He was a one-time owner of Palace Barracks that handsome house opp. Admiralty House.

In his first year the apprentice attends to the wants of the shipwrights, fetching and carrying, making tea, holding timbers in position etc. while learning to develop basic skills with the tools of the trade. As he becomes more proficient, he will be given work within his capability under the supervision of a shipwright.

The shipwright, as well as working on timber, will, when he goes to sea as a ship's carpenter, need to be skilled working in steel and other metals. In the Royal Navy post apprentice training is provided in these skill areas. He will also attend the local technical college and study technical drawing, geometry, timber technology, mathematics and other subjects associated with his trade.

From the above one can see that John Osmond was well schooled in his trade and able to carry out ship repairs etc which he did on the foreshore in Simon's Town in the area of Cole Point. He and his wealthy mother-in-law "dealt" in properties in the town and one finds their names on the Deeds of most of the early buildings in St George's Street.

Note: The Editor is grateful to Mr Phillips for information on the training of shipwrights.

ADMIRAL E.N. SYFRET CB RN

He was a member of the well-known Cape Town family and was in command of the allied landings at Diego Suarez in Madagascar in April 1942.

In January 1943 Syfret was in HMS NELSON in Force H when he became seriously ill. The ship's doctor Surg Lt Paul Houghton was called in and found Syfret in great agony and looking ashen. Houghton realized Syfret had a burst appendix and peritonitis had set in. He was operated on at once. A few days later senior officers gathered anxiously to ask Houghton whether the Admiral was medically fit to command. None of them wanted to get near a very irritable Admiral so it fell to Houghton to relay the news that the Admiralty had ordered Syfret to haul down his flag and return to England to convalesce. Syfret's evacuation by ship's crane to the hospital ship OXFORDSHIRE was supervised by Houghton while the Admiral insisted upon the honour due to him and held his cap on his stomach as his stretcher was slung between the 2 ships.

When Houghton joined NELSON as ship's doctor he had already seen the horrors of war, in Atlantic convoys and when he treated the survivors of the ARK ROYAL. He was, however, appalled on joining NELSON to be given a brass-bound box which contained long knives, saws and tarred string for tying off blood vessels (from Nelson's days ?) He promptly wrote to the First Sea Lord demanding modern equipment. He earned a reprimand for not using official channels but soon so much equipment arrived that he was able to share it with other ships.

Syfret was not the only wartime Admiral whose life Houghton saved. The 2nd one was Admiral Sir Philip Vian. He had a life-threatening subcutaneous cyst under matted hair which had become infected. Houghton operated immediately and saved Vian's life. Houghton became a Surg Lt Cdr and lived till the ripe old age of 97 dying in 2009.

Ref: Weekly Telegraph Obits 4 Nov 2009.

PIRATES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

This is not a new phenomenon. The first pirates to frequent the Indian Ocean were Dutch and they set up bases in Madagascar in about 1630 and attacked the VOC convoys out of Bantam and Manila. These convoys often called at Madagascar before reaching the Cape on their homeward bound voyage. Also targeted were ships of the English East India Co. The Royal Navy took tough action and finally drove them out.

Before continuing one should define the term “pirate”, He was one who illegally attacked shipping as opposed to the “privateer” who manned a privately owned vessel armed with guns which operated in time of war against the trade of the enemy and carried letters of marque which licenced them to take prizes in time of war. In a way these letters of marque were something which acted as a bond of good behaviour. The first letter of marque was issued in England in 1293 but only from 1589 did they provide for prizes to be condemned at an Admiralty Court and a division of their value made between the Crown and their owners. 1558 – 1603 was the golden age of privateering.

In the American Civil War both sides preferred to arm merchant ships as regular warships than to commission privateers. A “prize” is normally used to describe an enemy vessel captured at sea by a ship of war or a privateer. “Prize money” was the net proceeds from the sale of ships and goods captured and the amount was decided by the Vice-Admiralty Court and the shares were laid out by Royal Proclamation. The prize was divided into eighths of which $\frac{3}{8}$ went to the Captain, $\frac{1}{8}$ to the commander-in-chief, $\frac{1}{8}$ to the officers, $\frac{1}{8}$ to the warrant officers and $\frac{2}{8}$ to the crew. Any unclaimed prize money went to the support of the Greenwich Hospital (for injured seamen or those of a pensionable age).

When the American War of Independence broke out around 1780 the first privateers of the French Republic came to the Indian Ocean. France was then at war with England. The privateers made Mauritius (then known as the Ile de France) their base and they numbered about 100 men. This led to the English assembling all their naval forces assigned to the region, to take possession of the island of Rodrigues and of Reunion (then known as Bonaparte) and in 1810 battle commenced with the attack on Mauritius. As a result the island passed to Britain and privateering came to an end in the Indian Ocean.

“Buccaneers” – known among themselves by the romantic title of “brethren of the coast” were seamen of all nationalities who cruised on their own account on the Spanish Main and in the Pacific in the 17th century. The word is derived from the French *boucan* or grill (for cooking dried meat). The Dutch called them “sea-rovers”; the Spanish “corsairs” and the French “filibusters”. The European war in 1689 brought buccaneering to an end, the freebooters then being transformed into legitimate privateers.

There were many famous names among these men and they were superb seamen such as Raleigh, Hawkins and Drake, Cornelius Schouten, Pieter Hagen and William Kidd; Thomas Tew, and the notorious Blackbeard alias Edward Teach, but by 1730 attacks on ships had almost died out and 2 December 1810 English naval troops took over the Isle de France and the island’s last French Governor signed the terms of surrender. The island’s name was now changed to Mauritius – its Dutch name.

The largest prize taken was the KENT on 7 October 1800, 1200 tons, armed with 38 large caliber guns and having more than 400 soldiers on board. Captain Rivington was killed in the attack by the blast of a hand grenade thrown by a topman on the attacking ship CONFiance (Captain Robert Surcouf) in the Bay of Bengal. In all, during his remarkable career as “King of the Corsairs”, Surcouf captured more than 47 English ships. At the battle of Grand Port on 24 August 1810 was HMS MAGICIENNE. She was a 32 gun ship built in Toulon in 1778. She had been captured from the French and in 1810 was under the command of Captain Curtis, son of Admiral Sir Roger Curtis. To avoid the ship being captured by the French, Curtis decided to evacuate the ship as it was in a sad state of dilapidation. He set her on fire having first loaded her guns and pointed them towards the French squadron. The fire spread fast and engulfed the ship. She blew up in one terrifying blast and that evening her remains sank beneath the waters of Grand Port. In 1930 archaeological searches were carried out and many objects were recovered. This was done by the Port Engineer Mr H.C.M. Austen. Since then the port has been developed and its shape has changed.

Also in 1810 HMS NISUS set off for Mozambique and Johanna (in the Comores Islands) to suppress the slave trade. An emissary of the Sultan had been to the Cape to ask for help. The slaving was carried on by between 300 and 100 Betsimisiraka pirates, a fearsome tribe from north-east Madagascar who had operated from 1795 onwards.

James Prior was the surgeon aboard NISUS and left an entertaining account of the voyage. At this time it was estimated that 10,000 slaves per annum were leaving Portuguese African possession i.e. Mozambique and Angola and officials were quietly amassing fortunes. NISUS quietened Johanna but this just meant that the slavers moved south onto the mainland at ANGOCHE. Even Angoche's inhabitants did not escape as it is on record that even a small boy was taken by some Indians as a slave. He eventually was freed and became a merchant and as an old man returned to Angoche, much to the family's enjoyment.

East India Company ships regularly called at Anjouan. It was partly for this reason that NISUS was sent in 1812, to “show the flag” and to deliver cannons to the Sultan. The population of the islands was very mixed, Javanese invaders were the first to arrive then in the 10th century Shrazi Muslims and Hadhramis from Yemen, and added to this were escaped slaves, Indians; a blend of races spanning the entire Indian Ocean coast. The main towns never developed significantly, no famous names emerged, no great architecture, no poets or artists, not even a tradition of sailing. However it produced ylang-ylang which has a yellow flower with narrow petals. It takes a ton of flowers to produce 1 kilo of oil essence for perfume making, and cloves.

James Prior was required to perform miracles on the sick to please the Sultan. The fair sex also requested medical help. Sultan Abdullah was descended from a Yemeni and could trace his family back 32 generations. In the 1970s a modern pirate arrived on the island and that was the French mercenary Bob Denard.

Ref: Pirates & Corsairs – Denis Piat ISBN 978-99949-905-3-5

Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean ISBN 978-0-385-51398-2

Hunting Pirate Heaven ISBN 1-84119-488-3

Lent to the editor by Mr N. Arnoni one of our members.

BLOCKADE OF DELAGOA BAY DURING BOER WAR 1899-1902

A.E. READ

The Royal Navy were frequent visitors to Delagoa Bay during their efforts to stop the slave trade, so when the Boer War broke out they were aware that Delagoa Bay and its capital city Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) would be of great use to the Boer Republic of the Transvaal.

Since the Jameson Raid of 1896 the Boer Republics had concentrated on acquiring modern weapons. One of the main diplomatic efforts of the British in the early months soon after the outbreak had been to try to interrupt the supply of arms to these republics. To this end a force was sent to occupy and show a presence at Cape St Lucia to prevent the possibility of the Boers using this as an entrepot port despite the sometimes heavy surf on this coast. This left only Kosi Bay as a possible vulnerable spot. The Boers had long hoped to obtain the long narrow panhandle between the south of Swaziland and the north of Natal, extending to within 4 or 5 miles of the Indian Ocean. In some places this land was only 11,000 sq yds – barely 2 miles – but would have given the Boers access to the sea at Kosi Bay.

It should be remembered that as early as 1884, after the 1st Boer War, HMS GOSHAWK had appeared at and annexed St Lucia Bay, as the British had already seen the Boers' possible land grab. Natal was defined as a British Colony in 1843. GOSHAWK was a composite Gun Boat of 430 tons completed in 1873 at a cost of £15,912. She later went into service on the West coast of Africa. About November 1899 Captain Wm Fisher of HMS MAGICIENNE had become Senior Naval Officer at Lourenco Marques and Captain Percy Scott of HMS TERRIBLE had been appointed Senior Naval Officer Durban and also Military Commander of Durban.

As far back as 1875 the Portuguese, British and Transvaal had agreed to French arbitration of their claims to Delagoa Bay. The MacMahon Arbitration Award

(named for the French President) found in favour of the Portuguese despite the fact that the famous Captain Wm Owen of surveying fame had signed a treaty in the 1820s with a local chief for the southern side of Delagoa Bay.

Prior to MacMahon's findings, the British had contacted the Portuguese with a view to securing some agreement over the future of Delagoa Bay. They proposed that if either side were at a future date to withdraw from the area, he would give the other power the option of acquiring the land adjacent. Remember that Portugal is always regarded as Britain's oldest ally. The Portuguese did not want to enter into this proposed agreement but assured Britain that they had no intention of relinquishing it to a 3rd power.

Portugal had succeeded in establishing a common frontier with the Transvaal as far back as July 1869 although the Portuguese influence extended barely 2 miles from Lourenco Marques. The Boers had first appeared in Delagoa Bay during The Great Trek in 1838 when Louis Trichardt reached there. The British and Portuguese negotiations of 1879 and 1884 (the Congo Treaty) were never ratified for various reasons but the Boer Republic's independence was recognized by the Pretoria Convention of 1881. In 1894 the Delagoa Bay to Pretoria railway was finally opened – 4 years after Simon's Town got its link to the railway system from Kalk Bay to Cape Town – then Lourenco Marques began to grow.

Admiral Harris, then C-in-C at Simon's Town, was on a cruise up the East Coast when he met 2 British traders who told him that the Boers were openly saying that when the grass appeared in the veld, so war would come. He knew enough to know that if this was true war could start in the October. He therefore ordered his ships, the cruisers FORTE, MAGICIENNE, PHILOMEL, TARTAR, BARRACOUTA and BAROSSA as well as gun boats PARTRIDGE, SPARROW, WIDGEON, MAGPIE AND DWARF to Simon's Town for refits and correction of any defects. Harris' flagship was HMS MONARCH (Captain Bayly – a great friend of Rudyard Kipling). Some reports say HMS SPARROW remained up the West Coast before returning to Chatham in 1900 whilst the gunboat THRUSH was at Simon's Town from January to September 1900, March 1901- January 1902 and again in May 1902. She supported the ARO expedition in West Africa in June 1902 and returned to Simon's Town towards the end of March 1902.

Cruisers were really too big for efficient blockade work except at Delagoa Bay but Harris ordered the cruisers PHILOMEL (Capt John Bancroft) and the 805 ton gunboat WIDGEON (Lt Anthony Gurney) as well as the 755 ton PARTRIDGE (Lt A.T. Hunt and later Lt Cdr E. la Trobe Leatham) to Delagoa Bay. MONARCH was stationed on the western side of Table Bay and HMS DORIS (then Admiral Harris' flagship) at the head of False Bay so that the guns of the 2 ships commanded all the land approaches to Cape Town and Simon's Town.

On 18 October 1899 at sea the navy seized £25,000 worth of gold specie which was being shipped on the AVONDALE CASTLE by the National Bank of the S.A. Republic from their Durban branch to their Lourenco Marques branch. A few days later HMS TARTAR provided a landing party for the Government of Natal so that the bank's Durban branch could be searched.

Once the Boer War began Admiral Harris was able to seize all cargo destined for the Boer Republics that was aboard any ship in S.A. territorial waters. On 29 October 1899 two suspect cargoes were impounded (one of foodstuffs and the other of flour).

In order to avoid British naval interference and in an effort to keep up their supply of munitions, the Boers used Diego Suarez in Madagascar as a transshipment port and Messageries Maritime steamer GIRONDE was involved in running contraband cargoes through the blockade into the port of Lourenco Marques.

Dr Wm Leyds, State Secretary under Paul Kruger, busied himself on his travels to Europe in obtaining consignments of shells, cartridges, hospital equipment and guns, so when the GIRONDE broke down and a replacement ship was needed Leyds decided to buy a replacement ship, the ROUSILLON which cost him almost £10,000. Realising that if she hoisted the *Vierkleur* of the South African Republic at sea, the British Admiralty would regard this as piracy, he registered the ship in the name of a dummy firm. She was supposedly the property of the Compagnie Francaise de Cabotage a Vapeur de Madagascar. The subscribers to the Company were Kohn, Violle and Hirsch. Mr Edward Hirsch had an office in Johannesburg but as soon as notification of the purchase was sent, he left with the money to pay for the working of the new ship. Sadly the ship was an old crock, difficult to handle and costly to run. She was seized by the Royal Navy and languished in Durban harbour till the beginning of 1904 when she was purchased by a Portuguese syndicate for the wine trade from Lourenco Marques to the smaller ports of Mozambique. The Captain was a Portuguese named Daveru, the Chief Engineer left to become a Government employee in Natal and the 2nd Engineer was a Mr H. Gordon who settled in Sinoia in the then Southern Rhodesia. The ship was renamed GAZA. She came to a sad end when on her 2nd trip she was rammed by the German boat REICHSTAG in Delagoa Bay near Inyaha.

The Boers 2nd ship the TRANSVAALIA, a speedily converted yacht bought from a British owner in Nova Scotia was captained by a young United States Navy officer (the son of Rear Admiral Craven USN) but he re-thought the chances of a Boer success and cried off. What happened to the TRANSVAALIA I do not know.

The blockade of Delagoa Bay was largely ineffectual as the Royal Navy's hands were tied by the fact that some blockade runners were German mail ships and politics entered the equation. By 13 November 1900 the British troops had managed to cut the railway line between Lourenco Marques and the Transvaal at Komatipoort which made a blockade at Delagoa Bay unnecessary. In all about 179 ships were boarded and searched and in one case arms and ammunition were jettisoned but much got through.

Ref:

Notes and information sent by one of our members Mr E.J.V. Penzhorn & Afloat & Ashore – the Royal Navy during the Boer War 1899-1902 – ISBN 1 870192 73 7 published in 2006 by Token Publishing of Honiton, Devon, UK

CHARLES HENRY SMITH A.R.I.B.A.

He was at one time one of Cape Town's principal architects but has largely been forgotten with the passage of time.

Smith was born in Putney, Surrey, UK in 1863 and educated at St John's College, Wandsworth. He was articled to Mr W. Durant, the architect and surveyor for Wandsworth Borough. He excelled in the technical side of his profession and was also an artist of no mean order. After being articled to Durant he went to Chatham in Kent where he studied for 2 years at the Royal Engineers Architectural School, qualifying in all the various branches of Military Engineering. He was then appointed to Sir Howard Elphinstone who at that time was engaged on the reconstruction of the military buildings at Aldershot which were of considerable magnitude.

After 3 years at Chatham he was sent by the Imperial Government to South Africa in connection with the new and reconstruction work of all the old forts in the Cape Peninsula. He had his headquarters at The Castle in Cape Town. He remained here for 5½ years before returning to England where he took up his profession at Woolwich and was in charge of all the architectural work then in hand such as the large Cavalry barracks on Woolwich Common and various buildings at Woolwich Arsenal and Royal Military Academy.

In 1895 he retired from Government service in the UK and returned to Cape Town to practise privately where he built up a fine practice. Some of his Cape Town achievements were Mansion House Chambers, Fletchers Buildings, Carlton Chambers, Industry Buildings, the Rotunda Baths at Camps Bay, as well as East Rand Public Schools.

In 1895 he married a Miss Barclay and they had 2 sons and a daughter. During the Boer War he commanded a Company of the 1st Battalion of the Peninsula Regiment. For 25 years he acted a honorary organist at St Thomas Church, Rondebosch. In his own home he had a fine two-manual organ. He died in Cape Town in 1931 aged 68.

Ref:

Men of the Times, Transvaal Publishing 1906 and Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects 21 March 1931.

Our attention was drawn to his achievements regarding the Peninsula's coastal defences by Cdr Bisset.

PRINCE ALFRED'S GUARD

During the 1st World War a depleted section of 3 officers and 150 men of the unit played a part in one of the best-kept secrets of the war, when some £8,000,000 worth of gold was "smuggled" out of Cape Town and went to London.

The regular weekly shipments of gold to England in the mail steamers had been suspended immediately on the outbreak of war. However, the Bank of England agreed to buy all gold deposited by the three commercial banks in London in their South African vaults. The South African Government was responsible for the gold while it was in the vaults and armed police guarded all the banks where it was hoarded. On 29 December 1914 the Governor-General received a surprising telegram from the Naval Commander-in-Chief at Simon's Town – it seems more likely that the telegram was addressed to the Government, for it read: "Admiralty have instructed me to ship £8,000,000 of gold in two of my ships, which will be ready to sail on 2 January. General Thompson (Commander, Imperial Troops and the Cape District, including the South African troops forming the garrison of the Cape Peninsula) informs me that on receipt of instructions he will arrange to send gold to Simon's Town under guard".

At the time Britain was sending large shipments of gold to America, and the message was surprising because it would have been safer to consign the gold direct to New York. On Gen. Thompson's staff was Col Gordon and he was ordered to make the necessary arrangements for sending the gold to Simon's Town, the sailing date eventually being fixed for the night of Saturday 9 January 1915. The battleship ALBION with her sister ship GOLIATH and four cruisers had been sent to reinforce the Cape squadron in November 1914, in view of the possibility of Von Spee's squadron following up its action at Coronel with an attack on the Cape. Admiral Sturdee's crushing defeat of the German squadron at the Battle of the Falkland Islands on 8 December 1914,

eliminated this threat and ALBION was to return to England. About half the gold, it was decided, would go in the battleship and the rest in HMS HYACINTH, flagship of the squadron based on Simon's Town. The two ships were to sail for St Helena, where they were to be met by a cruiser which had been patrolling the West Coast of Africa. HYACINTH was to transfer her gold to the cruiser and then return to Simon's Town, presumably to confuse German U-boats into thinking the whole operation was simply part of normal patrol activities.

Three officers and 150 men of Prince Alfred's Guard were detailed to guard the gold, which was only to be taken out of the vaults in Cape Town and transported to the railway station after midnight on 9-10 January. The authorities did not want a soul to see the work in progress, and waited until the last theatre train had left the station and Adderley Street was completely deserted, with not even a tram or a hansom cab in sight. Specially picked members of the bank staffs had been told to remain on duty and had been sworn to secrecy, and it would appear that not the slightest hint of what was afoot ever reached the public.

There were 2,560 boxes of gold to be taken out of the vaults and loaded onto a train of 13 closed trucks which had been shunted to the spare platform – which later became No. 1 platform of the old Cape Town suburban line station before the present station was opened in the 1960s. The work began at 12.30 a.m. on one of the hottest nights of the Cape summer. Perspiring men struggled in the vaults with the heavy boxes, each one of which contained more wealth than most of them would earn in many years. Carefully checked as they left the bank, the boxes were loaded onto lorries guarded by police with loaded revolvers. At the station they were again checked before being stowed in the closed trucks. No one but those engaged in the special task had been allowed to enter the station and all lights but a few alongside the train had been extinguished.

One box was lost. Numbers were checked and re-checked, every possible place where it might have been mislaid was searched, but it seemed to have vanished! It was eventually found on a shelf under the counter of one of the banks. Apparently some of the men had begun to take the gold out of the vaults in the afternoon to facilitate loading in the evening. Having been told this was too risky, they had put the boxes back in the vaults but had overlooked this one box. It had still not been found when the train pulled out of the station at 7.30 a.m. on that quiet Sunday morning. The box when found was sent down to Simon's Town by car later on the Sunday. When the train steamed into Simon's Town sailors transferred the precious freight onto motor lorries once more and then into the magazines of the warships.

Being Sunday morning few people were about, but even at Simon's Town the greatest secrecy surrounded the whole operation. Each lorryload of gold was

covered with a tarpaulin and a red flag was shown to give the impression that the boxes contained ammunition – an idea which entered the head of one man, who reported this whilst passing the bank in Cape Town he had seen what he took to be boxes of Mauser ammunition being taken out of the building. One of the boxes, he noticed, bore the figures 256 – the Mauser caliber was .256.

The day after the gold had been loaded into the two ships, the HYACINTH received orders to sail for the East Coast and the Admiral therefore had to have her share of the cargo transferred to the ALBION which left on 13 January with the full consignment. At St Helena she transferred about half the gold to the cruiser CORNWALL and the two warships sailed on towards England. They were diverted to Gibraltar where the ALBION landed her cargo, but the CORNWALL went on to England and the day before she was due at Plymouth, The Admiralty told an official at the Bank of England over the telephone that some gold was arriving for the bank. "I think it must be a mistake" said the official. "We have no gold coming". Eventually the London branches of the South African banks took delivery at Plymouth and transported the gold to London, where the Bank of England took it over a few days later.

The Bank of England was not amused by the fact that the gold had traveled uninsured. Apparently the shipment had been made on the suggestion of the High Commissioner for South Africa, when he realized that one or other of the ships sent to reinforce the Cape Squadron might be returning to England.

This interesting but very brief interlude was almost all the Prince Alfred's Guard enjoyed to break the tedium of their months in the Cape Peninsula. They were a Port Elizabeth unit and in July 1915 they entrained for Port Elizabeth for demobilization and automatically the men were posted to the Reserve after being away from home for 11 months. The regiment, like the rest of the Active Citizen Force, went into a sort of suspended animation for the duration of the war. Nearly 90% of the men saw action in German East Africa, or were sent overseas. From 1915 – 1921 the regiment like others in the Active Citizen Force, virtually existed only on paper.

Ref: Prince Alfred's Guard by Neil Orpen, 1967. The story was related to him by Col E.L.D. Gordon who at the time was on General Thompson's staff. He was the father of Tony Gordon.

HENRY FRANK FRIESLAAR

By himself

From a blacksmith in the Naval Dockyard, Simon's Town to a priest in the Anglican Church.

According to the records at the Simon's Town Museum, the Frieslaars are one of the historical families of Simon's Town. The earliest Frieslaar most probably worked for the Dutch East India Company and came to the Cape about 1790. His name was Albert and he had a son named Gerrit. Gerrit married a Caroline Wolff in the Anglican Church in Simon's Town on 23 January 1832. They had 5 boys and 2 girls. My grandfather John was one of the sons. According to Museum records the Frieslaar family were hard-working, reliable citizens amongst whom were masons, stable owners, mail and transport operators and contractors to the Simon's Town Municipality.

My father was also named John and he spent his whole working life in the dockyard. He began as a clerk and later worked as a switchboard attendant at the Generating Station in the dockyard. He worked with Arthur Wade who was an engine-fitter. One of the diesel engines in the Generating station was named after Arthur Wade. When the dockyard was handed over to the South African Navy, my father John Frieslaar received a medal for 40 years of faithful service. He worked another 10 years, thereby completing 50 years of service before retirement.

Towards the end of 1953 at the age of 16, I applied to the dockyard to be indentured as an apprentice and I wrote the Dockyard Apprenticeship Examination. When I came before the selection board only two trades were available, blacksmith or bricklayer. I accepted the trade of blacksmith and began my 5-year apprenticeship on 1 February 1954. During the later part of my apprenticeship I began to feel that I would like to help people who needed encouragement and support and I felt a call to be a priest in the Anglican Church. I therefore concluded my 5-year apprenticeship on 31 January 1959. I do not regret my time in the dockyard. The experience I gained from working with men from all walks of life, many religions and from different parts of the world, helped me to know and understand how different we are but with the same aspirations, needs, concerns and fears.

My apprenticeship contract reads as follows:

- 1st year: Instruction on making of tools, use of tools, assisting with small Forging, hardening and tempering of tools.
- 2nd year: working on fires – independently making small fittings, cleats, Shackles etc.

3rd year: maintenance and repairs to galleys and funnels – 6 months, and
Welding 6 months.

4th year: chain cable, blocks, anchors and Test House work

5th year: Drawing Office – 3 months; work on heavy forging and bending
Slabs on ships' side, framing etc.

Father Henry as he is known locally, retired a few years ago having been priest
at St Francis of Assisi Church, Simon's Town and much to the joy of his
parishioners decided to live in Simon's Town. Ed

MRS JOAN SWAIN

C. Salter-Jansen

Joanie was descended from a Krooman who decided to marry a Simon's Town girl and settle in the town. Joanie started work at the Simon's Town Museum in 1984 and began a well-deserved retirement in December 2008. She had become so much more than just a "cleaner" at the Museum. We lost a much-loved friend and colleague when Joan passed away on 6 January 2010. She was very dedicated and always gave much more than was expected of her – for nearly 25 years that she worked at the Museum. Her reputation was such, that condolences reached the Museum from around the world.

Joanie used to say that she was "only a cleaner" but she was so much more. Numerous Museum visitors were assisted by Joan and have wonderful memories of her and the Simon's Town Museum, as a result of her kindness. She was an entire archive of museum and community history and helped scores of visitors and researchers, taught thousands of learners and even reunited some families, who had been separated by the Forced Removals, under the Group Areas Act of 1967.

Joan was herself forced by the Group Areas Act to move from Waterfall Flats. Her contribution to the preservation of Simon's Town's history and to the history of those who suffered as a result of the Forced Removals, was immense and she must be credited for her tremendous contribution to the transformation of our museum, from 1988 until her untimely passing in January this year.

THE ENIGMA OF TWO CAST IRON WATER TANKS

David Erickson

Water storage in Simon's Town has a long and interesting history, involving the construction of dams, reservoirs and tanks of varying sizes and service duties. The need to have sufficient water readily available to satisfy the demands of shipping existed from the earliest days of Simon's Bay as the winter anchorage for the Dutch East India Company's fleet. As the town developed, so did the demand for water to provide for the inhabitants, their animals, the irrigation of crops and business usage.

The conflicting requirements for naval and merchant shipping, commercial and household use tested both the administrators and the engineering skills of the time. Separate but interlinked systems evolved – however the Navy always had priority, and in 1849 the town went without water for 3 days and nights whilst 90 tons was diverted to fill two French warships. In 1853 seven Royal Navy ships required a total of 650 tons, which took over a week to provide.

To ensure continuity of supply, storage tanks were progressively constructed at key locations¹ in Simon's Town – the Naval Tank, Naval Arsenal Tank, Harbour Board Tank, Colonial Tank, Town Tank, Hospital Tanks, Jubilee Tank and the Admiralty Water Tank². Whilst small early tanks were made of wood, these much larger ones were of masonry. Capacities ranged from the 1,000 gallons (4,546 litres) of the wooden tank at the end of the Searcher's Office to 120,000 gallons (545,530 litres) of the Admiralty Water Tank.

Two further tanks are to be found in Simon's Town that are of particular interest – these are of cast iron sections, bolted together to form an octagon in plan. A total of four such tanks were imported from England for local use (the others are in Cape Town at the Lion Battery and at Fort Wynyard, of which only the base remains). Whilst these are relatively small – having a capacity of approximately 5,500 gallons (25,000 litres), they are of considerable historical interest.

Question: Why are the two Simon's Town tanks an enigma?

Answer: Most unusually, none of the cast iron panels bear any indication of the manufacturer, or any foundry marks. At the time of writing, it has not been possible to positively verify their age or provenance, despite considerable research.

¹ "Her Majesty's Naval Yard at Simon's Bay", Admiralty Chart, January 1890

² "The Simon's Town Water Supply", pp 99 – 107, STHS Bulletin Vol. XI No. 3

Sectional Cast Iron Water Tanks on the Cape Peninsula		
Address	Location	WGS 84 Co-ordinates
1. Arsenal Road, Simon's Town	Adjacent to brick wall on N side of Arsenal Road, inside Naval Compound	34° 01' 32.58" S 18° 25' 32.23" E
2. Palace Barracks, Simon's Town	Situated immediately to rear of the house, up the bank at rooftop level	34° 11' 18.08" S 18° 25' 29.97" E
3. Lion Battery, Cape Town	Situated some 70 metres SW of the Noon Day Gun location	33° 54' 55.00" S 18° 24' 39.00" E
4. Fort Wynyard, Cape Town (<i>Base only</i>)	Situated 23 metres NW of the main entrance into the fort	33° 54' 12.48" S 18° 24' 49.93" E

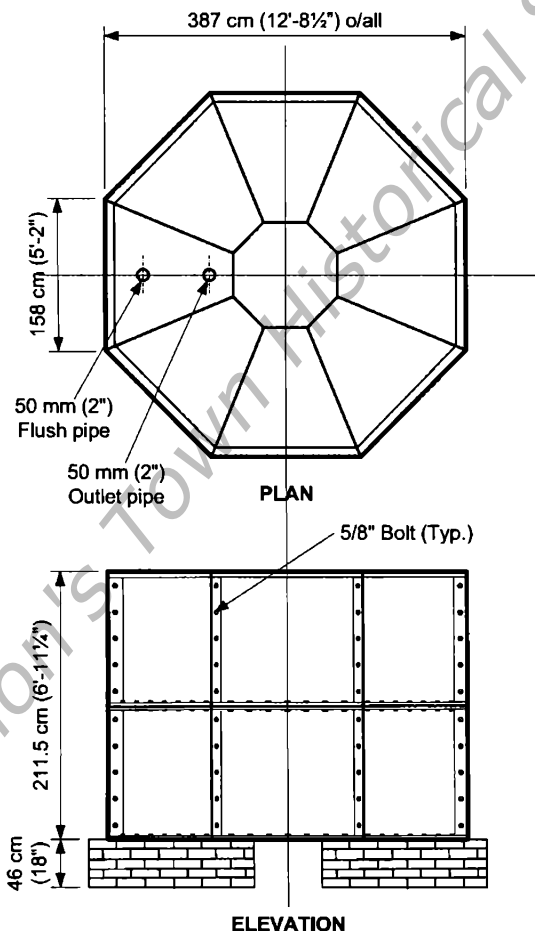


Figure 1 : General dimensions of the Simon's Town Tanks

Technical description of the two Simon's Town tanks

The tanks are identical and consist of only 3 different cast component shapes, as follows:

1. An octagonal base panel (1 off)
2. Wedge-shaped base panels (8 off)
3. Rectangular panels (16 off)

The largest component (the rectangular panels) are 158 cm (5'-2") long by 104 cm (3'-5") high. All castings are approximately 15mm (5/8") thick and the flange thickness is also 15mm. The rectangular panels weigh about 234 kilograms (517 pounds).

All component shapes have a 75mm (3") flange, with square cored holes in the castings to take 5/8" bolts and nuts. Some 248 bolts and nuts with square heads 1 1/4" across flats were utilised to assemble each tank.

To seal the joints between the castings, "cast iron cement" was used. The recipe for this is: Salammoniac powdered, 9 lbs; flour of sulphur 1 lb; cast-iron borings 200 lbs; made into a paste with water.

To construct each tank, the following sequence would have applied:

1. Level and compact the ground, cast a concrete slab as foundation with the 50mm (2") outlet pipe carefully positioned.
2. Build the brickwork support piers and central core support, 5 brick courses high.
3. Assemble base castings and subsequently vertical (tank sides) castings, using metal shims to hold the flanges apart approximately 8mm (3/8") with bolts lightly tightened. Note that this tank design is self supporting – no internal stays are required.
4. Check the structure for line and level, and adjust as necessary with shims.
5. Grout the joints between the castings using the cast iron cement. The chemicals react with the iron filings in the presence of water to cause accelerated corrosion, which swells the mixture and provides a tight joint.
6. Allow the grout to set and harden to full strength, then check bolts for tightness.
7. Install outlet pipework, a sluice (gate) valve on the flush connection, a tap for local draw-off and inlet pipework to the tank. At Simon's Town the inlet pipework was fed from the Admiralty Water Main and is a 3 1/2" outside diameter cast iron pipe with bell-mouth and spigot connections, with lead-filled joints. The inlet to the tank was fitted with a simple ball float valve to cut off the water supply when the tank was full. The inlet was simply led over the top flange of the tank, without any penetration of the side wall being undertaken. There was no overflow pipe provided although tanks of this design usually have overflow provision.
8. Install the tank roof – this consisted of a wooden braced framework bolted to the upper flange of the tank, to form a conical shape. This was

in turn fitted with galvanised corrugated iron sheets, trimmed to match the conical form. A small wooden finial at the top completed the construction work.

The roof had a small trapdoor for access to the interior, which must be kept dark to discourage any algal bloom or similar growth. Unfortunately both of the Simon's Town tank roof structures have succumbed to wood boring insects – the wood supports have partially collapsed and some of the corrugated iron sheets have fallen into the tank base.

The two tanks at Simon's Town do not appear to have had any form of internal painting or lining. Their external finish consists of many coats of paint (accumulated over the years) with a red lead primer/undercoat and a black enamel top coat. This has tended to flake off – possibly when the tanks were taken out of service some years ago, and drained, the surface temperature of the castings in the South African summer sun will have been substantial, hence the breakdown of the paint system.

The tank at the Lion Battery, Cape Town, has been provided with a concrete lining to the base and interior side walls. This is of the order of 100mm (4") thickness. The base is profiled to slope uniformly from the edges of the tank to the flush pipe (the outlet pipe has an upstand of around 50mm (2") to avoid any sediment entering).

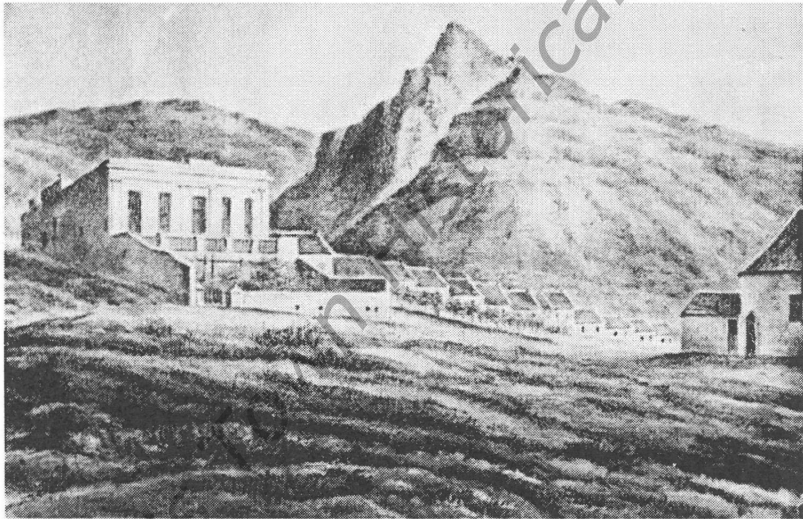
The 50mm (2") nominal bore connections for the outlet and flush pipework are made with a simple 4 bolt flange without a doubler plate or any other local strengthening.

The condition of the two tanks is generally good – there is surface corrosion of the tank interiors and the Arsenal Road tank has a cracked flange on the NW corner where a side panel joins the base, total crack length some 125mm (5"), probably due to over-tightening of an adjacent bolt. This would have been the cause of a small leak which could have been diminished or stopped by grouting with cast iron cement, but this does not appear to have been undertaken. The Palace Barracks tank has one upper rectangular panel displaced – it appears that an attempt has been made to dismantle the tank (possibly by metal thieves, who underestimated the weight of the panels). The panel has been unbolted and has dropped on to the cliff bank – but is otherwise intact and could be restored. Neither tank is in service but both contain 50mm (2") or so of rainwater at the bottom.

Research activities

The lack of any foundry marks on the Simon's Town tanks is a major handicap to the industrial historian, coupled with an apparent lack of any records of the tank shipment arrival or installation. However, other clues exist.

The British Royal Navy transferred its entire establishment from Cape Town to Simon's Town in 1813/14, necessitating the construction of barracks and extensions to the water supply systems. These construction works were mainly undertaken by the Royal Engineers. Of particular interest is a row of small buildings that were built around 1815 as officers' barracks. These are shown in Figure 2. The buildings were demolished in the early 1950's³. Two buildings immediately to the west, in the respective ownership of Charles de Stadler and James Haslam, functioned as taverns for many years. An Admiralty Water Pipe was in existence to landward of Ibeka and to the west of the taverns, which is also the location of the Arsenal Road tank. Both the taverns and the officers' barracks would have needed a reliable water supply – and a 5,500 gallon tank would be a reasonable size for this duty. This is not to say that the tank was built at the time of the barracks construction, but the need for local water storage certainly existed from about 1815.



Barracks & military quarters, Simon's Town. The building on the left, now known as Ibeka, was the only concrete result of Lord Charles Somerset's town planning scheme. It was built in 1816 by P.J. Truter, Junr, Collector of Customs, as a residence. It was bought by the War Department in 1868. The buildings stretching in a row down the hill are officers' barracks, built in 1815 or perhaps earlier. The row comprised 24 separate rooms each 15' by 11'.

Figure 2 : Ibeka and the Officers' Barracks

Further to the north, the building now known as 'Palace Barracks' was owned by one of Simon's Town's more colourful characters, John Osmond, between 1813 and 1847. In 1813 the building was called Mount Curtis, but became

³ "Historical Simon's Town" pp 61, 185 & 207. B.B. Brock, B.G. Brock and H.C. Willis, 1976. ISBN 0 86961 055 4.

known as 'The Palace' by virtue of Osmond's scale of entertaining – he was a rich and successful businessman who knew how to manipulate the authorities to gain advantage.

Following Osmond's death, Mount Curtis, or The Palace, was advertised for sale on 26 March 1850. Described as an ERF *"containing the well known splendid Dwelling House, named Mount Curtis with various Outbuildings: this Erf is divided into three lots. The property was not sold at that time, and the surveyor M. Ruysch suggested to the Executors that ... "the large dwelling house could be, with little expense, converted into two separate commodious dwellings by dividing the property in a line through the middle of the dwelling house containing the same on both sides up to the boundary walls of the grounds."*

He also pointed out certain irregularities in that part of the ground in front lay outside the boundary wall, between it and the Admiralty buildings, and formed part of the High or Main Road leading immediately into the town ... *"and cannot therefore be included in the extent to be sold, and secondly Mr. Osmond had laid on water to his house from the Admiralty pipes."* The reply from the Naval Base was not reassuring ... *"I find that this indulgence was granted only on sufferance that such supply of water to that house depends entirely on the decision of the Lord Commissioner of the office in Command of HM Ship or vessel at this port."*⁴

The scale of John Osmond's entertaining at this house would also have necessitated a requirement for the local storage of drinking water. Given that Osmond evidently had the ability to tap into the Admiralty water system (which was rigorously defended from external interference), the acquisition of a 5,500 gallon sectional tank would not have presented any undue difficulty. Again, the need for such local storage at The Palace existed from around 1813 – which helpfully coincides with the extension of what was to become the Admiralty water system preparatory to the transfer of the Naval Establishment to Simon's Town in 1814.

The key question is, did these sectional cast iron tanks exist in the early/mid 1800s?

The tank design is a forerunner of the 'Braithwaite' sectional tanks that were a familiar feature of many airfields in the U.K. and elsewhere – however the Braithwaite company was not founded until the 1880s and is better known for pressed steel, rather than cast iron, tank components.

Information from the Professional Papers of the Corps of the Royal Engineers (PPRE) indicated that sectional tanks were in use by the Royal Engineers – who were very active in Simon's Town from 1813 onwards. The PPRE yielded

⁴ "The Palace – Simon's Town" pp 26, Boet Dommissie, 2008. ISBN 978-0-620-37988-5.

much information, including the “cast iron cement” constituents⁵. In a separate research exercise, the PPRE also yielded very detailed accounts of the development of the water system at Ascension Island by Captain H.R. Brandreth of the Royal Engineers, from 1829.

Ascension Island had been garrisoned by the British from 1815, the year that Napoleon Bonaparte was imprisoned on St. Helena. One of the primary duties of the new Royal Naval Establishment at Simon's Town from 1815 was the supply of men and victualling to St. Helena until Napoleon's death in 1821. British warships customarily called at both islands on voyages between Europe and the Cape of Good Hope.

Brandreth, after an initial visit to Ascension in 1829 at Admiralty request, returned in 1830 to complete the installation of cast iron pipes and an “iron octagon tank”. This tank is still in existence on Ascension in Breakneck Valley, where it collected drips from the catchment area for transfer to Georgetown. This system was used as the Island's main water supply until the late 1960s. In August 2009, the ‘octagon tank’ was investigated by the Ascension Heritage Society, led by Shari Parkhill. From the dimensional survey and photographic evidence it was confirmed that this tank is identical to the two sectional tanks at Simon's Town. The Ascension Island tank also bears no foundry marks, but clearly from the PPRE⁶ its provenance is British and appears to have been a standard issue to the Royal Engineers from at least 1828 if not earlier. Further details of the Ascension Island water system have been documented by the Ascension Heritage Society and others.^{7,8,9}

Research effort was then directed to the Island of St. Helena; with assistance from local historian Robin Castell it was determined that cast iron octagonal tanks exist on the island at Half Tree Hollow and were documented.¹⁰ Subsequent email correspondence with the Manager of the Public Works Department revealed that the three tanks are still in use. They are of a slightly different design to the Simon's Town and Ascension tanks in that there are three ‘courses’ of panels rather than two. Most importantly, the panels bear the foundry mark – “Douglass Bros. L^d, Blaydon on Tyne, C&M 1901”. (C&M – possibly Cast and Manufactured).

The Blaydon on Tyne foundry was also known as the Globe Iron Works, however all trace of this company and its records appears to have vanished. It

⁵ Major D.C. Courtney (late RE, by permission of Secretary of State for India), “Notes on indents for pipes and other stores for waterworks” Paper VII, Professional Papers of the Corps of Royal Engineers, Occasional papers Series, Vol. XXII, 1896, Chatham, pp171ff + plates, Transcription: R.A.Barker, 2009.

⁶ Brandreth, H.R. *Notes on the Island of Ascension*. Professional Papers of the Royal Engineers, Volume IV, pages 116-130 (text), 1840.

⁷ “A Concise Guide to Ascension Island, South Atlantic”, 2002 Edition, by J.E. Packer.

⁸ “An Introduction to the History of Ascension Island” 2nd Edition, Sept. 2001, by Graham Avis.

⁹ Brandreth, H.R. *Communications on the Island of Ascension*. Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London, Volume 5, pages 243-262, 1835.

¹⁰ “St. Helena, South Atlantic Ocean” by Helmut and Alexander Schulenburg. Publisher Jacob-Gilardi-Verlag, Allersberg, Germany, 1997.

appears that the company *may* have been owned by the family of Sir James Douglass (1826-1898), who was the eminent Engineer-in-Chief of the Corporation of Trinity House, London. He was responsible for the design of many of the major rock lighthouses in English waters. This is a topic for possible further research.

Finally, visits were conducted to Fort Wynyard and the Lion Battery in Cape Town.

Fort Wynyard has a fascinating collection of heavy artillery and Victorian buildings; however there is no trace of the cast iron tank that appears in an old photograph¹¹, other than a partial reconstruction of its base foundation.

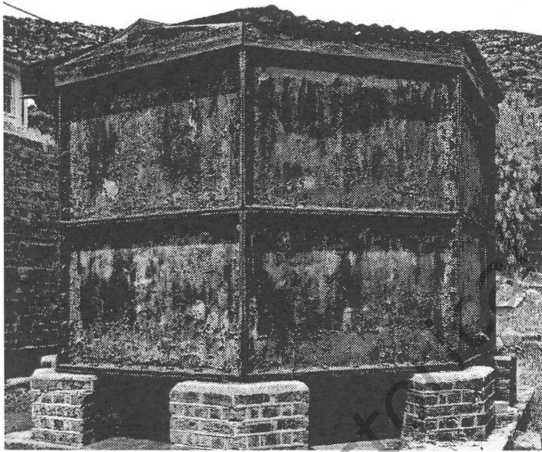
The Lion Battery is famed for the boom of the Noon Day Gun that still echoes across Cape Town from this vantage point high above the city. Hidden in the trees slightly up the slope from the Gun location is a small guard house with an octagonal cast iron tank beside it. This is substantially the same design as the Simon's Town and Ascension Island tanks but is much later. Of the 16 vertical cast panels, 4 bear the foundry mark: "Douglass Bros. L^d, Blaydon on Tyne, C&M 1892". Compared to the Simon's Town and Ascension Island tanks, it is in poor condition, bearing the hallmarks of what appears to have been an attempted demolition – many of the cast flanges have been heavily damaged, possibly by a sledgehammer, with multiple through-casting cracks and displacement, and sections of flange missing. The tank is concrete lined, and this probably provided the strength to resist total demolition. Most importantly, what *may* be the original roof has survived more or less intact. This exhibits good craftsmanship in the woodwork and the conical construction of the corrugated galvanised iron sheeting – a difficult metalwork task but well executed. Even the wooden finial has survived.

Conclusions

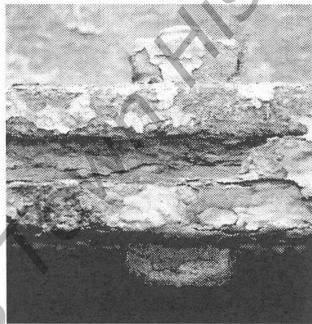
The primary objective of positively establishing the date of manufacture and foundry for the two Simon's Town octagonal tanks has not been achieved as a result of the current research. Douglass Brothers *may* have been a supplier to the Royal Engineers. Other foundries known to have produced sectional cast iron tanks (of different designs) include J. Abbot & Co. of Gateshead (1889) and Eagle Iron Co., Coventry (1891). There were however many foundries in Great Britain that were capable of casting such a simple yet elegant design. The answer may lie somewhere in the PPRE, which appears to be the most promising lead for further research.

¹¹ "Fort Wynyard Museum of Coast and Anti-Aircraft Artillery" *A short history of the Kyk in de Pot Battery and Fort Wynyard*, pp 4, by Commander Mac Bisset, South African Navy, ca.1987.

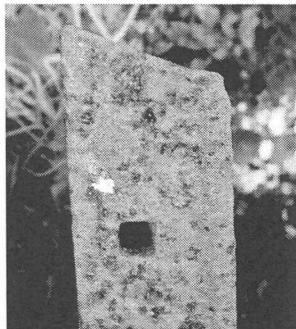
This article is therefore work in progress – and is an abridged version of a more substantial illustrated document that is to be lodged with Simon's Town Historical Society and the Simon's Town Museum.



**Figure 3 : The
Arsenal Road Tank
at Simon's Town**



**Fig 4: Base flange
bolt detail – Arsenal
Road**



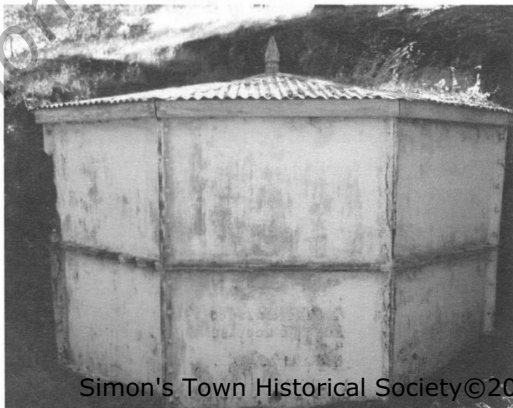
**Fig 5: Top flange
detail – Palace
Barracks**



**Fig 6: Ascension Island,
Breakneck Valley Tank**



**Fig 7: St. Helena Island,
Half Tree Hollow**



**Fig 8: Lion Battery, Cape
Town**



**Fig 9: Fort Wynyard,
Cape Town**

Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks is expressed to the following, who have assisted this project:

Rear Admiral R.W. Higgs, SAN – *Permission to photograph and survey at Palace Barracks*
 Rear Admiral (J.G.) J.E. Louw, SAN – *Permission to photograph and survey at Arsenal Road*
 Commander Mac Bisset SAN (Ret'd) – *For the original research proposal and advisory support*
 WO1 Harry Croome SAN – *Practical support in co-ordinating visits and clearing tank debris*

Steve Bailey, Ascension Island – *For survey assistance at Breakneck Valley*
 Richard Barker – *For considerable mentoring and transcription of PPRE documentation*
 Nat Bocking – *Support from the British Water Tower Appreciation Society*
 Robin Castell – *For information leading to the St. Helena Island tanks*
 Derek Flippance – *Royal Engineers' Museum, U.K. – Information about Braithwaite Tanks*
 Shari Parkhill, Ascension Island – *For photographic survey and feedback of Breakneck Valley*
 Derek Richards, St. Helena Island Public Works & Services Department – *Tank information*
 Nick Thorpe, St. Helena Island – *Referrals*

CHRONOLOGY OF THE SIMON'S TOWN TIME BALL

DAVID ERICKSON

The 1st Time Ball was erected at Portsmouth in 1829 by its inventor Robert Wauchope, a Captain in the Royal Navy, who was at one time stationed in Simon's Town.

A time ball was installed in 1833 at the Greenwich Observatory by Astronomer Royal John Pond and has dropped at 1 p.m. every day since then (N.B. in summer time it drops at 13h00 (1p.m.) BST or 12.00 (noon) GMT.

A time ball was installed in 1836 at the Cape Town Observatory by H.M. Astronomer Thomas Maclear.

On 25 April 1860 the Cape Town to Simon's Town Telegraph opened.

On 17 April 1861 Agreement was made between Sir Thomas Maclear and the Telegraph Company for daily time signals to be sent to Simon's Town.

On 5 July 1861 the C-in-C Simon's Town issued a formal agreement to have a time signal erected at Simon's Town.

On 27 September 1861 an impulse was sent by the telegraph at 1 p.m. Cape Mean Time and was used to release a disc at the end of an arm at Simon's Town from a staff placed close to the telegraph office, a little to the east of the Naval Yard. On occasions when the disc failed to drop, it was kept up for a full hour (i.e. until 2 p.m. Cape Mean Time) then slowly lowered. By 1863 problems were experienced at the rate of 20 failures in 4 months.

In 1865 the *African Pilot for the South and East African Coasts of Africa* reported on the unreliability of the Simon's Town time disc.

In 1884 the Prime Meridian at Greenwich became the centre of world time (being the reference line for Greenwich Mean Time) as the result of the International Meridian Conference held in Washington D.C.

On 10 December 1892 a letter was sent from H.M. Astronomer David Gill (Cape Town Observatory) to C-in-C Simon's Town Naval Base, Rear Admiral Sir Frederick Bedford, suggesting that the Time Disc be replaced by a Time Ball at a modified location.

On 24 December 1892 there was a letter to C-in-C Simon's Town from Chief Engineer Charles Hulford, estimating that the cost of refurbishing the disused Time Ball at Cape Town Observatory plus its transportation to and re-erection at Simon's Town would be from £25 - £30 sterling

On 2 April 1895 Lt Dundas of the Flagship HMS ST GEORGE confirmed acceptance of the proposed repositioning of the mast from the telegraph office to the seaward side of the Post Office and substitution of a Time Ball for the current Time Disc.

On 17 April 1895 Rear Admiral Bedford wrote to the Secretary of the Simon's Town Harbour Board suggesting that the Harbour Board should contribute to the cost of the relocation and refurbishment of the Time Ball. The Secretary replied on 23 April stating that "due to the falling off of Revenue, the members of the Board regret that they are unable to render any assistance to the proposed scheme".

On 26 April 1895 Sir Frederick Bedford put in a requisition for £60 sterling for the cost of the works!

On 10 July 1895 the Under Secretary for Agriculture wrote to the Prime Minister, requesting that the Naval Authorities be informed that permission had been granted for the use of a piece of ground 16 square feet "for the purpose of erecting thereon the flagstaff for the proposed new Time ball situated at the back of the Post Office Yard at Simon's Town (i.e. in Wharf Street - Editor).

On 3 June 1896 the Post Master of Simon's Town Mr R.H. Wood wrote to Vice-Admiral Sir Harry Rawson stating that "the Post Master General has made enquiries as to the probable date on which the New Time Ball will be ready for joining to the Observatory Time Circuit".

On 24 March 1898 the Dockyard Civil Engineer S.J. Robins noted that the "foundations are completed; the work for my Department has been carried out".

We have been unable to determine when the Simon's Town Time Ball ceased to operate. With the commencement of radio time signals (in Britain from 1924) time balls gradually became obsolete and many were demolished in the 1920s.

Note: the Time Ball in the Victoria and Albert section of Cape Town Docks has been preserved and still stands in its original position. Anyone interested and visiting England may like to know that there is a Time Ball Museum at Deal in Kent. Details may be obtained from Google.
