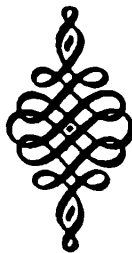




SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN



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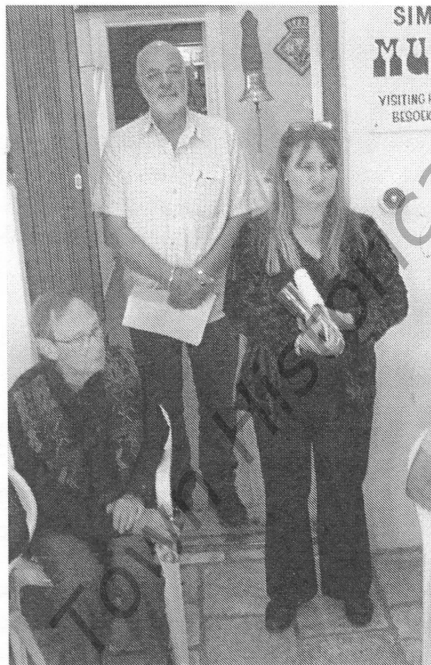
CONTENTS

	Page
Three anniversaries celebrated	1
SAS SOMERSET and SAS FLEUR	2
The Cottage Hospital revisited	3
Obituary : Cynthia Ann Dollery	10
HMS ODIN	10
Anchors Away Village : A home away from home	13
Defensively Equipped Merchant ships (DEMS) in World War II	15
Alfredstown ?	18
Simon's Town Revisited	18
John Malcolm Olivier Craig	22
Simon's Town Country Club	23
Voortrekker II : Gone but not forgotten	28
Hollanders in Simon's Town during World War II	28
Mayhem in St George's Street	30
S S MENDI	30
Lawhill Maritime Centre – Additional Training Facilities	32
A Sail Training Vessel for Lawhill House	34
Antarctica	36
SAS PIETERMARITZBURG	37
Charles James William Hopkins RCNC	38
S S USSUKUMA	39
Environmental Patrol Vessel M V SARAH BAARTMAN	40
Simon's Town Dockyard 1945	41
Simon's Town Harbour Annual Report 1901	42
Simon's Town 1907	43
HMS OPAL	44
Farewell GOLD ROVER	44
Late Extra	45
"Simon's Town" or Simonstown?	45

OUR BULLETIN OF 48 PAGES IS PUBLISHED IN JULY EACH YEAR

THREE ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED : Bill Rice

On Saturday the first of April 2017 a function was held to celebrate three anniversaries. The venue was Simon's Town Museum which is situated in The Residency, a building which is 240 years old this year. Simon's Town Museum became Province-Assisted Museum forty years ago on 1 April 1977 and is now a popular destination for visitors to the Town, many of them from overseas.



The Museum Manager, Mrs Cathy Salter-Jansen, addresses the group with Commander Eddie Wesselo standing in the doorway and Historical Society member Professor John Morris seated.
— Photo : Margaret Constant.

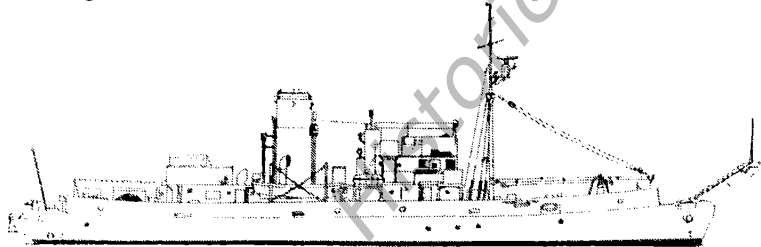
The Museum Manager, Ms Cathy Salter-Jansen, opened the proceedings and the guests were addressed by David Erickson, Chairman of the Simon's Town Historical Society; Commander Eddie Wesselo SAN (Retd) on behalf of the Board of Trustees; Eric Mawhinney on behalf of the Friends of Simon's Town Museum and Ronald Roberts on behalf of the Project Phoenix Committee. Project Phoenix aims to maintain links

between Simon's Town and the Coloured and African people who left as a result of the "Forced Removals" of the 1960s and 1970s

The third anniversary celebrated was that of the birth of the Great Dane Able Seaman Just Nuisance, who was born eighty years ago on 1 April 1937. The gathering was attended by two very well behaved Great Danes, one brindled and the other of similar colouring to Just Nuisance himself.

SAS SOMERSET AND SAS FLEUR : Bill Rice.

During World War II SA Naval Force personnel manned two "Bar" Class Boom Defence Vessels, HMSAS BARBRAKE and HMSAS BARCROSS. After the War the two ships were purchased by the South African Government and in 1951 they were renamed; BARBRAKE becoming SAS FLEUR and BARCROSS becoming SAS SOMERSET.



A Typical "Bar" Class vessel. –South African Fighting Ships – A K du Toit.

Both were named after famous horses. Fleur was the stallion ridden by General Christiaan de Wet during the Second Anglo Boer War and Somerset carried Dick King on his epic 900 kilometer ride from Port Natal to Grahamstown in 1842.

SAS FLEUR was placed in reserve during the 1950s while SAS SOMERSET, which had been converted to oil burning in 1959, was kept busy with buoy maintenance and salvage tasks around the coast. During the nineteen sixties it was decided that there was insufficient work for two vessels of this type and one was to be disposed of. Both were surveyed and it was decided to retain SOMERSET and scuttle FLEUR.

According to a former Dockyard Shipwright, who now spends his time "up aloft" telling Noah how he should have built his Ark and suggesting to Hercules Linton ways in which CUTTY SARK could have been improved, FLEUR was in far better condition than the hard-worked SOMERSET. Retaining the ship which required far more work to keep her going might seem to be a decision which would make the Dockyard

Officer responsible liable to be charged with “Fruitless Expenditure” as he, presumably, “fudged the figures.”

However, the reasoning behind his decision was basically sound. The Dockyard requires a body of shipwrights, riveters and other trades who can, if necessary, repair extensive hull and machinery damage in a very short time. In peacetime the opportunities for this tend to be few and far between. Whereas SAS FLEUR could have been put back into shape with relatively little construction work, SAS SOMERSET provided the opportunity for young tradesmen to gain experience in the removal and replacement of large areas of hull and bulkhead plating. In addition she was fitted with a new boiler and the steam reciprocating engine from FLEUR, providing the Dockyard Boilermakers and Marine Fitters with valuable “hands on” experience. The end result was a ship that was structurally and mechanically “as good as new.” Forty seven years later SAS SOMERSET, formerly HMSAS BARCROSS, is still afloat.

According to Samuel Pepys, Master Shipwrights in the Naval Dockyards have a long-standing tradition of “fudging the figures” to make refitting tasks seem to be greater than they really are. – Ed.

THE COTTAGE HOSPITAL REVISITED : David Erickson

Recent research at the British Newspaper Library has revealed the following item, which appeared in the Western Daily Press (U.K.) of 30 November 1904:

The subscribers to the Mary Kingsley Memorial at Simonstown, Cape Colony, have decided to devote the fund to the endowment of a bed in the proposed local hospital, and to fix on the wall at the head of the bed a suitably inscribed tablet.

The fund in question had been proposed at a meeting held in the Public Library at Simon's Town in June 1900, shortly after Mary Kingsley's death from typhoid fever, contracted whilst nursing Boer Prisoners of War at the Palace Barracks Hospital. The meeting was chaired by Rear Admiral Sir Robert Harris KCB KCMG RN, Commander-in-Chief of the Africa Station.

It was Doctor Carré, resident doctor at the Palace Barracks Hospital, who then proposed that the fund should be used for a Cottage Hospital, for the treatment of civilian residents of Simon's Town – other existing hospitals being naval or military. This was seconded by Mr. C.A. Horne, the Resident Magistrate.



Public Works Department Building 832, formerly the Simon's Town Cottage Hospital, opposite Admiralty House.

It took some time to accumulate sufficient funds, despite the Cape Government matching donations pound for pound, and also providing a former Government Hospital that was valued at £1,000. It was Saturday 1st April 1905 when the Cottage Hospital was formally opened by Vice Admiral Sir John Durnford KCB DSO RN, C-in-C of the Africa Station. The Hospital is situated just above Jubilee Street.

Details of the fund management, the new hospital facilities and the opening ceremony are described in Bulletin Vol. XIV No. 4, July 1987.

The Cottage Hospital closed in 1965, when it was replaced by the new False Bay Hospital in Fish Hoek. It was subsequently expropriated by the South African Navy, designated Building 832, and adapted for use as the Headquarters of the Naval Officer in Command (NOIC), Commodore Peter Selk. Previously NOIC had occupied the former Royal Naval Officers' Club in St George's Street, an establishment once visited by Rudyard Kipling. The visit prompted the author to pen a short story entitled "Judson and the Empire," featuring characters based on officers he had met in the Club.

Simon's Town's other literary celebrity, Edgar Wallace, was a humble sick-berth attendant (aka "pill roller" or "poultice-basher") whilst resident here and would definitely not have been welcome at the Club.

The last NOIC to occupy the building was Commodore Jaques de Vos, who moved across the main road in 1999 to what had been the office of the Chief of the Navy before Naval Headquarters moved to Pretoria. The Old Hospital was taken over by the Military Police and a room was fitted out for the conduct of Courts Martial.

The discovery of the Western Daily Press article sparked fresh interest in the old Hospital - its origin, current condition, and in particular whether the historic "*suitably inscribed tablet*" might still be fixed to a wall. A sense of urgency arose as the Hospital came close to being burnt to the ground by a fierce bush fire on Wednesday 11 January 2017, when the nearby Happy Valley Adult Night Shelter had to be evacuated.

Origin of the Lock Hospital :

The Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette carried the following advertisement in its edition of 27 April 1888:

1888, 23 April

TO CONTRACTORS

TENDERS are invited for the erection of a new Lock Hospital at Simon's Town. Plans and specifications can be seen and further information obtained at this Office.

Tenders, addressed to the Chief Inspector of Public Works, will be received up to Noon on Monday, the 30th instant, endorsed "Tender for Lock Hospital, Simon's Town". The lowest or any Tender will not necessarily be accepted.

***Public Works Office
Chief Inspector***

WILLIAM M. GRIER

Caledon Square

Cape Town

What is a "Lock Hospital"? As the name implies, it has grim origins – the term was used for medieval Leprosariums or Leper Colonies, where inmates were quarantined under restraint. In London, a survey of 1770 revealed a Lock Hospital had been built around 1650 in Kent

Street, Southwark, as 'a house for the reception and cure of lepers' – but by 1770 it belonged to St. Bartholomew's Hospital and was used for the cure of venereal patients, and supported by voluntary subscriptions and donations.

So, by the 1700s, Lock Hospitals had lost the leprosy connotation and were specialist institutions created for the treatment of venereal disease.

Such places were associated with prostitution and immoral behaviour, and therefore did not have the degree of support from the public that General Hospitals enjoyed. This made the financial position of Lock Hospitals very precarious, and some could only operate at 50% capacity. When the Tender invitation for the Simon's Town Lock Hospital was issued in 1888, there were only six voluntary Lock Hospitals in the United Kingdom:

Shortage of funds meant that of 400 beds for females, only 232 were actually available.

Fifty seven beds were available in "Lock Wards" attached to London General Hospitals, with limited further beds available in countrywide "Lock Wards" and at some Workhouses.

WHERE SITUATED	YEAR OPENED	NUMBER OF BEDS		
		TOTAL MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL FEMALES
LONDON	1747	20	36 made up	68
DUBLIN	1792	None	75 made up	150
GLASGOW	1805	None	60 made up	81
MANCHESTER	1819	None	20 made up	60
LIVERPOOL	1884	25	25 made up	25
BRISTOL	1870	None	16 made up	16
TOTAL:		45	232 made up	400

In 1864, 1866 and 1869, the various Acts known as the “Contagious Diseases Acts” were passed in the U.K. These resulted in Government sponsored Lock Hospitals, which jointly provided an additional 645 beds by 1888. It appears that Simon’s Town was indeed fortunate to receive a Government-sponsored Lock Hospital – which leads to the question, why was this handed over to become a voluntary subscription Cottage Hospital in 1905, after only 17 years of service?

The answer to that lies at Barnard Street, where the Cable Hill Hospital was constructed for the Royal Navy between 1899 and 1904. A venereal disease ward with 18 beds was added in 1906; for some impenetrable reason it was known as the “Canary Ward” – and following the Hospital closure in 1957 it is now used by the South African Navy Band for practice and rehearsals.

From Lock Hospital to Simon’s Town Cottage Hospital :

The Cottage Hospital (as altered and adapted from the former Lock Hospital) initially contained 4 wards, each with 3 beds, an operating room ‘with all the necessary instruments’ and a sitting room and bedroom for the Nurse-in-Charge.

The daily average number of patients treated in 1908 was six, with the daily average cost of maintenance about 6s 9d per patient. The annual cost of maintenance of the Hospital was about £760, towards which the Colonial Government contributed £337-10s and the Simon’s Town Municipality £50.

In August 1910 a new wing was added at a cost of some £1,000. This included a further two wards and an operating room. It was opened by Vice Admiral Sir George Le Clerc Egerton KCB RN, C-in-C of the Africa Station.

In October 1910, the Board of Management consisted of the following members:

Messrs. W. Runciman MLA (Mayor), Chairman; G.J. Boyes (Resident Magistrate); the Mayor of Kalk Bay-Muizenberg; the Hon. Medical Superintendent (Dr. H. Clarke); the Hon. Assistant Medical Superintendent (Dr. E. Lister Wright); the Rev. S.H. Ravenscroft, the Rev. W.E. Slingsby; the Rev. Father Tyndall; the Rev. D.J. van Velden; Messrs. P.F.H. Hugo, B.C. Morris, G.W.R. Lankester (Hon. Treasurer), and W.H. Tarrant (Hon. Secretary).

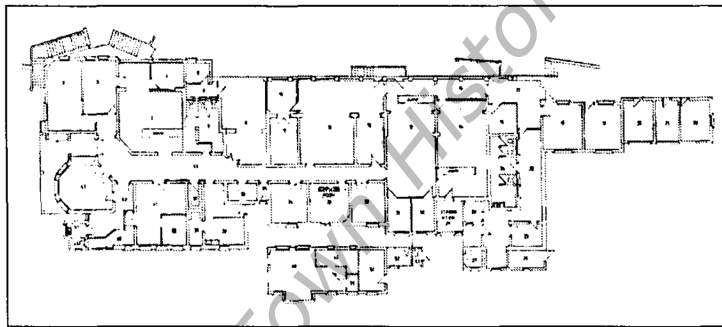
At that time, the Matron was Miss Loveridge, supported by two Nurses, Miss Walton and Miss St. Leger.

In 1914 a separate Nurses' Home was built on the Old Gaol side of the Hospital. This was opened by Lady Mabel King-Hall.

Despite valued service to the Community, the Cottage Hospital closed in 1965 with all functions transferred to the new False Bay Hospital at Fish Hoek.

From Simon's Town Cottage Hospital to SA Navy Legal Satellite Sub-Office :

Some years after the closing of the Cottage Hospital in 1965, the building was expropriated by the South African Navy for use as Base Headquarters (NOIC) and later as a Legal Satellite Sub-Office. It appears that considerable changes were made to the historic building structure; an open stoep on the SE elevation was glazed; subdivision of wards into offices; construction of Military Courtroom; fire sprinkler system and fire hydrants installed; further extensions to the building.



Plan view of the Cottage Hospital (as SA Navy Legal Satellite Sub-Office) in 1991

The building was inspected on Thursday 19 January 2017 by WO1 Harry Croome SAN (Naval Museum) and David Erickson (Historical Society Chairman).

It appears that the building has been disused since about 2012 and has fallen into disrepair. Water penetration has caused localised collapse of ceilings, peeling walls and the growth of mould; window frame woodwork is in generally poor condition and many windows are broken; toilets and shower rooms have been vandalised; copper pipework and geysers have been wrenched away and stolen; an attempt to penetrate the security system to gain entry to the Court Martial Room has been made, using heavy timbers as battering rams;

heavy brass components of the firewater hydrants have been sawn off, rendering the entire system useless; gutter supports and guttering are in a very poor state of repair. The recent bush fire has extensively burnt vegetation in close proximity to the building on both East and West elevations, but miraculously the building has escaped unscathed. A full Condition Survey Report is to be produced. Some 3 or 4 small rooms were locked and could not be accessed. However, the rooms inspected did not reveal any sign of the historic "*suitably inscribed tablet*", Memorial to Mary Kingsley.

It is to be hoped that this historic building can be renovated and put back into use.

References:

Lock Hospitals and Lock Wards in General Hospitals.- F.W. Lowndes MRCS, 1882.

A Souvenir of Simonstown - by W.S. Gillard (Brochure), October 1910.

Additional information was obtained from the Simon's Town Museum Archive.

CYNTHIA ANN DOLLERY (1942 – 2017) : A.E. Read



Cynthia, or “Cindy” as she was known, was the daughter of John and Millicent Lawrence (1911-1994) of Kleintuin Road, Seaforth, Simon’s Town.

After matriculating from Simon’s Town High School Cindy worked for a number of years for the Health Department at Cape Town City Council.

Cindy had a magnificent feeling for the less fortunate who drifted into Simon’s Town and early in the 2000s she and André Duran (long-time Magistrate of Simon’s Town) set up and registered as a charity “Happy Valley Home.” Before this she had run a church soup kitchen for the poor. She and André obtained the use of long abandoned Royal Naval Arsenal, dating from the short reign of King Edward VII, from the Department of Public Works and ran it on a shoestring with the help of church donations and an annual grant from S.A. Social Services Agency; bequests and money raised with the sale of used clothing, furniture etc donated to the Home: They were also helped by volunteers from the various churches. Many of the people owe their lives to Cindy. She accommodated about seventy people at any one time, mostly men and they could stay for a maximum of six months while with Cindy’s help they sorted out their lives. Happy Valley organised classes in sewing, woodwork, computer repair etc (often run by some of those who lived there).

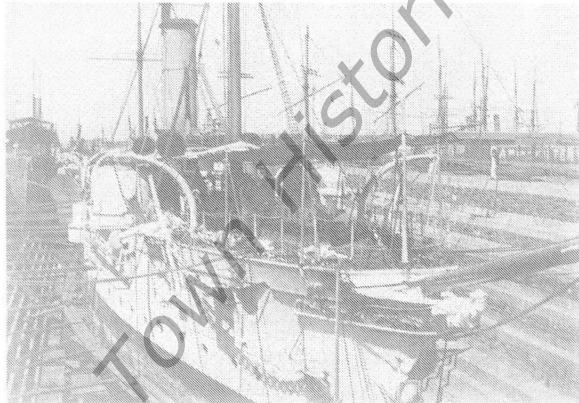
Cindy was not a trained nurse but as the present Chairman said was “the Queen of Compassion”. She passed away early in February 2017 after several months in hospital with a chest infection. Her husband Cdr Don Dollery SAN (Retired) predeceased her in 2013. They are survived by their son Nicholas, a Silwood Kitchen-trained Chef. A memorial service, held at the Methodist Church, Simon’s Town on Friday 17 February, was conducted by Rev R.R. Thornley, retired S A Naval Chaplain, and the church was packed to capacity with well wishers. Cindy will be hard to replace.

HMS ODIN : Bill Rice.

HMS ODIN was a CADMUS Class steam sloop of the Royal Navy; one of six sisters built at H M Dockyard at Sheerness, situated on the Isle of Sheppey at the mouth of the River Medway. All six were launched between 1900 and 1903 and ODIN and her sister MERLIN were both launched 30 November 1901.

The CADMUS Class ships were barquentine-rigged three-masters, the last sailing warships built for the Royal Navy and the last R N warships to have figureheads. After the loss of HMS CONDOR in 1901 the Admiralty officially abandoned the use of sails, although ODIN is reported to have rigged fore-and-aft sails in the Middle East during World War I. Twin screws driven by three cylinder vertical triple expansion steam engines provided 1 400 shaft horsepower (1 000 Kilowatts) to give the sloops a top speed of 13 knots. At ten knots the ships had an endurance of 3 000 nautical miles, roughly one seventh of the circumference of the Earth. The CADMUS Class ships were armed with six four inch (104 mm) quick-firing guns, four three-pounder (47 mm) quick-firing guns and three machine guns.

HMS ODIN arrived in Simon's Town on 16 May 1903 and was employed on East and West Coast patrols. In the absence of a graving dock at Simon's Town, and presumably being too big for the West Dockyard slipway, she docked in the Robinson Graving Dock at Cape Town, the only dry dock on the South African Coast until 1910.



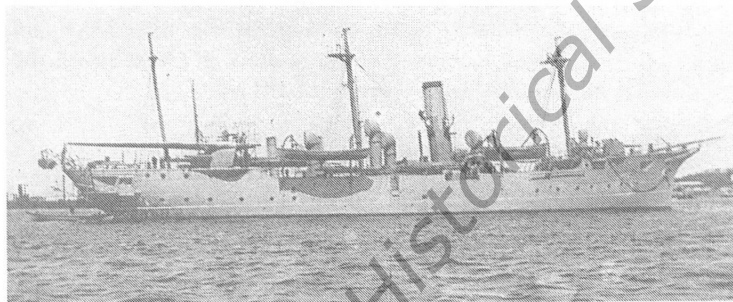
HMS ODIN in the Robinson Graving Dock at Cape Town. Note the figurehead, presumably representing the Norse God Odin. – Author's Collection.

In January 1904 she conveyed Mr William Hammond Tooke to the Island of Tristan da Cunha to deliver an offer to the 74 inhabitants from the British Government. His Britannic Majesty's Government offered to purchase livestock belonging to the inhabitants and to transport the total population to the Cape where they would be settled on rented plots of around two acres within 100 miles of Cape Town and would be loaned money to build houses. The plots would be near the coast allowing the Islanders to supplement their incomes by fishing. It was pointed out that

in future the Islanders would not be able to rely on an annual visit by a British warship. Three families voted for the proposal; seven voted against and one family was neutral. Due to a lack of unanimity the offer was withdrawn. The ship then sailed, carrying one passenger, Mrs Amy Matilda Hagan, and called a Nightingale and Inaccessible Islands on her way back to the Cape.

HMS ODIN paid off into reserve on 4 November 1904. Her ship's company transferred to the Depot Ship SIMOOM, formerly the Cape Guardship HMS MONARCH, for passage back to Britain.

At some stage, while secured to a buoy in Simons' Bay, her yards and topmasts were removed and her white hull and buff funnel were painted grey, possibly the delicate shade known as "Pussers crabfat."



HMS ODIN in Simon's Bay circa 1909. – Photo : Simon's Town Museum.

In 1909, while the ship was being used as a static training ship for Cape Naval Volunteers, it was decided to return her to the UK. In December of that year she embarked a passage crew and loaded 100 tons of bunker coal from the Admiralty Coal Hulk NUBIAN (C 370). She departed for England via Cape Town on 3 January 1910.

During World War I HMS ODIN served in the Middle East, particularly in the Persian Gulf. Near Aden on 3 March 1917 she was pursuing the German Raider ILTIS, which scuttled herself in order to avoid capture. HMS ODIN was sold at Bombay, together with her sister ship HMS CLIQ, on 12 November 1920.

Ref: Wikipedia and the Naval Harbourmaster's Journal in Simon's Town Museum.

ANCHORS AWAY VILLAGE: A HOME AWAY FROM HOME : Brian Puchert

Twenty years ago Fran Spencer-Smith, the mother of an intellectually disabled son, had a dream; to found a home for Intellectually Disabled young people, in the far South of Cape Town. This home would give them a place of purpose and belonging; a place that would meet their special needs; a home from home.

The path has not been an easy one. The Government does not provide funding for projects such as this. After years of highs and lows, fundraising and lobbying, properties and assistance offered then withdrawn, Anchors Away Village, (the name of the home) finally had, by 2008, sufficient money saved to purchase the land on which to build such a home. This is located at 25 Glenalpine Road, Welcome Glen in Simon's Town.



Fran and Geoffrey Spencer-Smith with Physical Training Instructors from the Naval Base Gymnasium who helped create a garden at the new Anchors Away Village to celebrate Mandela Day in 2017.

Challenges continued. Problems encountered were not only financial, but also objections to such a home were received from people in the community, who were unaware of how moderately intellectually disabled young people behave. "Thanks to the support and co-operation of Officials from Cape Town Municipality Planning and Management, and the Sub-Council of the South Peninsula we were able to achieve our goal. We have been assisted by an incredible benefactor (who wishes to remain anonymous) and many others, and to them we offer our heartfelt thanks" said Fran.

Fran and her team have reason to be jubilant. In July 2016, seven years after acquiring the Welcome Glen property, the first residents moved into Anchors Away Village Home. The residents attend the Joyce Chevalier Workshop, near Vallyland, in Fish Hoek, from Monday to Friday, after which they return to their home in Welcome Glen. At this stage the residents spend every weekend with their families, but in time they will be able to stay in the Home seven days a week.

Whilst the opening of the home is an important milestone in the realization of this project, it is only the beginning. "The cost of running such a home is high, and donations to Anchors Away Village, registered as anon-profit organisation with the Department of Social Development, and as a Public Benefit Organisation registered with South African Revenue Services (SARS), are always welcome and are Tax-deductable. "We thank the many people who have supported our fundraising events over the years" said Fran, "and we trust that we will continue to get support."



The facility was opened by Councillor Felicity Purchase on 20 January 2017. Seen with Councillor Purchase are Brian Puchert and Fran Spencer-Smith.

If you wish to assist Anchors Away Village please contact Fran Spencer-Smith on 021 786 13321/083 357 5822 or fran.spencersmith@gmail.com.

DEFENSIVELY EQUIPPED MERCHANT SHIPS (DEMS) IN WORLD WAR II : Audrey E Read.

Following on lessons learned from DAMS (Defensively Armed Merchant Ships) in World War I, the British Cabinet approved an Admiralty and Board of Trade policy in 1919 for the strengthening of merchant vessels during construction, in order to allow the rapid fitting of armaments when necessary. However, due to the cost, later in the year this was cancelled and between 1922 and 1937 only two vessels had been strengthened to prepare for the fitting of guns.

However, in 1937 the Admiralty and the Board of Trade formed the Shipping Defence Advisory Committee and by the end of 1938 the Admiralty and the Treasury had come to an agreement regarding costs. The strengthening of ships in readiness for the fitting of guns began and training of Merchant Navy officers was started; the first gunnery course taking place on 18 July 1938. In June 1939 the Admiralty Trade Division established the Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships (DEMS) organisation.

A variety of armaments was fitted to merchant vessels, typically a four-inch deck gun at the stern and sometimes 12 pounders (three inch shell) at the bow, mounted at either Low Angle or High Angle. Low Angle weapons were for use against surfaced U-boats or Surface Raiders and High Angle against aircraft. Various less conventional weapons, many developed at HMS BIRNBECK at Weston-Super-Mare, such as rockets, could also be found on merchant ships. At that time there were approximately 5 500 British registered merchant ships. In the first six months of the war some 1900 ships had been defensively equipped and by the end of the war the number was 3400.

Of course these weapons required specialist personnel to maintain, load and fire them. Initially the light machine guns were manned by the Army's Royal Artillery, five hundred men of the Light Machine Gun section in two-man teams, who were rotated on and off vessels as they arrived and departed from British ports. It was quickly realised how effective these army gunners were and in 1941 the Maritime Royal Artillery Regiment was formed, re-named Maritime Royal Artillery about 1943. It comprised 6 regiments, 24 port detachments with over 14,000 men of whom 170 were officers. Often retired military men or reservists were recruited from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. If a ship was transporting Royal Air Force personnel, troops from the RAF Regiment manned the guns. By the end of the war 150 000 merchant seamen were also trained and qualified as gunners (including 1 stewardess!)

All members of the armed forces who served on a DEMS ship had to sign on as members of the crew so that they came under the authority of the ship's master. Royal Naval DEMS Officers and ratings wore uniform but in neutral ports went ashore in civilian clothes to avoid being interned as combatants.

In 1943 WRENS were appointed as Boarding Officers, to inspect merchant ships in harbour, deliver sailing orders, to explain route alterations and to check guns, ammunition and armament stores.

At first anti-aircraft training took place at HMS EXCELLENT at Gosport but later another 10 Training Ships and Shore Establishments were involved. By the end of March 1944 the Liverpool area had provided more than 28,000 of the 115,978 courses, mainly at HMS EAGLET and a "Dome Trainer" was constructed at Salthouse Dock. Although we have not been able to prove it we believe a Dome Trainer was established in the East Dockyard at Simon's Town for we know for certain that there were DEMS men quartered at the Cape Times Fresh Air Camp at Froggy Pond. This had been acquired as extra accommodation for naval personnel in 1939. This was a very sensible move as there were over 20 WS Convoys (Winston Specials) which came into Table Bay and Durban during the period that it was deemed unsafe for supplies to be taken through the Mediterranean. The Atlantic was infested with U-boats and ships were required to travel in escorted convoys. The convoys split on arriving at the Cape – one half remaining in Table Bay for stores etc and the other half proceeding to Durban for the same reason.

In the writer's opinion a most disgraceful episode took place in the North Atlantic in 1942. On 8 October 1942 the ABOSSO left Cape Town for Liverpool carrying 210 passengers (149 military, 61 civilians – including 44 internees, 10 women with children and several Distressed British Seamen i.e. those rescued from sinkings.

ABOSSO was a passenger, mail and cargo ship, flagship of the Elder Dempster Line which in peacetime ran scheduled services from Liverpool to West Africa. She like many others became a troopship and ran between United Kingdom, West Africa and South Africa. She had been equipped as a DEMS ship but her maximum speed was still only 14.5 knots. She had 20 DEMS gunners added to her regular crew: 13 from the Royal Artillery Maritime Regiment and 7 from the Royal Navy. Her military passengers included 50 Dutch conscripts, 44 newly trained pilots from No. 23 Service Flying School at Heany near Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia and 33 Dutch submariners who were being transferred to a new submarine being constructed for the Free Netherlands Navy at Barrow-in-Furness. The boat was ordered as HMS

VARNE, a unit of the U and V Class, and was to be delivered to the Free Netherlands Navy as HAAI (Shark).



The Elder Dempster Liner M V ABOSSO . Photo courtesy of the Allen Collection.

A Commander of the Dutch submariners objected to her sailing alone but the British authorities at the Cape over-ruled him. On 29 October 1942 just 589 nautical miles north of the Azores a U-boat, U575, fired 4 torpedoes, hitting ABOSSO, which began to list to port. The ship had 12 lifeboats. As No. 3 lifeboat was being lowered, one of the falls was let go and all occupants were thrown into the water. No.5 lifeboat was launched successfully as was No. 9. The ship's emergency transmitter was brought into use which caused U575 to fire yet another torpedo into ABOSSO. She sank at 2305 hours bow first. No. 5 Boat was leaking badly and her crew used their seaboots and empty cans in an effort to empty her of water. At daybreak on 31 October No. 5 was sighted by a convoy just after dawn. This was Convoy KMS 2 which was sailing from the UK to the Mediterranean for Operation Torch. Ships were expressly forbidden to detach themselves to pick up survivors but the sloop HMS BIDEFORD obtained permission and picked up the lifeboat's 31 occupants (17 passengers, 12 crew and 2 DEMS gunners, one of the women, an RAMC Captain and 1 pilot officer). They were the only survivors – the other life boats and rafts were never found – 362 people had died. As the Dutch were unable to replace the 30 Dutch submariners who were lost, their new submarine, HAAI, was launched as HNoMS ULA for the Royal Norwegian Navy. This was a shocking, expensive and, perhaps, avoidable loss of trained manpower.

Note: The bulk of this information comes via Liverpool Maritime Museum and is taken from more than 20 sources. The list is too long to append to the article but anyone who is genuinely interested should send an e-mail to the Simon's Town Historical Society for details to be supplied.

ALFREDSTOWN ?

The Perm book of 'Test the Team,' edited by Dewar McCormack and published in January 1994, includes sets of question submitted by various listeners and the corresponding answers. Phillida Brooke Simons of Rondebosch asked listeners to identify a town whose inhabitants once proposed to rename it "Alfredstown." The answer was "Simon's Town." Ms Brooke Simons quoted The Cape Monitor of 4 August 1860 which described the visit of Midshipman HRH Prince Alfred, Queen Victoria's second son, who was serving in HMS EURYALUS.

According to the paper "They (the inhabitant of Simon's Town) have, however, expressed a strong wish to honour the memory of the Prince by altering the name of their denizenship, and in future to call it after His Royal Highness, 'Alfredstown.'"

I, for one, am very glad that they did not. - Ed.

SIMON'S TOWN REVISITED : Phillip Manns.

Phillip returned to Simon's Town in January 2017 after a 63-year absence. He came here originally with his parents at the age of nine when his father was posted by the Admiralty to the Naval Dockyard to manage Naval Ordinance.

The Manns family had its roots in the small village of Catherington in the Chalk Downs above Portsmouth; for centuries the heart of the Royal Navy. The Dockyard there was developed by Henry VIII to construct large numbers of Naval sailing ships to provide defence against the French, Dutch and Spanish fleets. As such it was a major source of employment and the Manns family migrated there in the early nineteenth century.

Phillip's grandfather, Edwin Manns, joined the Navy at the age of 15 by declaring himself to be 16! The Navy caught up with him when he came to retire at the age of "65" and refused to pay him his pension until he

had completed an additional year's service. By that time he was a Chief Stoker.

Phillip's father, Arthur "Eric" Manns and his brother, also Edwin, were effectively orphaned when their mother died when Arthur was two. Father, Edwin, was then stationed at Plymouth and was given one day's "compassionate leave" to travel to Portsmouth for his wife's funeral and to arrange for care of his two sons! Edwin junior was sent to an orphanage and Phillip's father was sent to live with two maiden aunts in the depths of the New Forest. When the First World War ended, Edwin senior was able to return to Portsmouth, take back his two sons and put them in the care of a housekeeper in his home in Cosham, a Portsmouth suburb. Some years later Edwin married his housekeeper who became the boys' stepmother.

Arthur always wanted to follow his father into the Royal Navy. Unfortunately he had had a mastoid in one ear as a child and was therefore partially deaf and found unfit to serve. He accordingly joined the Naval Ordinance service in Portsmouth Dockyard as a civilian. But he always had the "wanderlust" and always applied for whatever overseas postings were available.

With the advent of the Second World War, Arthur was temporarily commissioned into the RNAS and served on ships in the Mediterranean. After the Germans were pushed out of Italy he was based in the ports of Bari and Ancona before being posted to Germany at the end of the war to assist in de-commissioning military hardware.

In 1950 Arthur, his wife Margery, daughter Ruth and son Phillip were posted to Simon's Town.



Phillip Manns with his father Eric and two fine yellowtail caught in False Bay.

They were billeted initially in the Prince Alfred Hotel, and then in the Naval flats (Hamoaze Court and Solent Court) on Runcimans Drive and finally in one of the Naval bungalows just above The Old Burial Ground.

Phillip attended Simon's Town Secondary School, which was then located in what is now the Public Library. The headmaster at the time was Mr Taylor. The New Secondary school was already under construction at Seaforth and Phillip moved to it when it opened. A new headmaster, Mr Cook, was appointed.

As Phillip's father knew that his posting was limited to three years and his son was approaching the important "11+ Exam" (Called the "Murray House Test" for Naval children), he was anxious that Philip should have the opportunity of a grounding in foreign languages. By chance, there was a French secretary, Miss Price, working in an office in the East Dockyard. She lived in a small wooden bungalow with her two daughters at Boulders, just below where Rhodesia by the Sea was being constructed and Phillip had his first groundings in French there. In later years, when he retired, he chose to live in France and now holds dual French/British nationality. Latin was also in his father's sights and after further enquiries, the Naval Padre aboard the then Flagship H.M.S. BERMUDA, kindly agreed to tutor Phillip in his cabin once week. There was thus the adventure of visits to the warship with all its noise smells and excitement! Sadly, it meant that Phillip was forced to stop his woodwork lessons at school to concentrate on his language studies. But at least the technical groundings were there which certainly helped him to appreciate engineering and manual skills which served him well in later life. He has just completed construction of his own, second, timber-framed house in rural France! Thanks Mr Ventnor, wood-work teacher extraordinaire!

After the Celebrations of Coronation Year in 1953, the Children's Fancy Dress party in the town hall –Phillip won a prize dressed as the Queen's Dress Designer – and the distribution of Coronation Mugs from a cleaned-out Refuse Lorry, it was time to leave Simon's Town. The family's next posting was to the Royal Naval Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, in Dunbartonshire, on Scotland's West Coast. Here the family settled happily for the next ten years. Phillip completed his studies there and with a degree in Electrical Engineering, joined the BBC's Engineering Division.

The BBC was an exciting place at that time. New technologies and expansion were in the air. The change from 405 line to 625 line with improved definition; the start of BBC 2; the building of Pebble Mill Broadcasting Centre in Birmingham; the development of Colour TV.

This period also saw the beginnings of Digital Television in which the BBC Research Department played a major role. It was also the time of the apex of Colour Film in Television. Phillip by this time was responsible for the acquisition and improvement of all mobile film equipment in the BBC. In the late 1970s, nearly forty mobile film crews were employed in London; located in the old Ealing Film Studios, with a further twelve News Crews working out of Television Centre at Shepherds Bush. Regions also managed a further total of nearly fifty crews with their related editing and dubbing facilities.



The Manns Family having tea with friends prior to leaving for the UK in 1953. Back Row: (Unknown lady), Ruth Manns (Phillip's sister); (Unknown gent). Seated on the settee: Geoffrey Woodvine; Joan Woodvine; A G (Eric) Manns; Beth Hunter (now Mrs Lachenicht); Margery Manns. Seated on the carpet: (Unknown boy); Phillip Manns. The photograph was taken buy next door neighbour Ron Woodvine, who worked in the Chart Office from 1951 to 1953.

Phillip was responsible for overseeing the development and improvement of a range of film-related equipment including high quality lenses specifically designed for TV use in association with Zeiss in Germany; ultra silent light weight 16mm film cameras manufactured by Aaton in Grenoble in France and Arnold and Richter in Germany. Ultra light-weight high quality tape recorders were sourced from Kudelski in Switzerland. All of these products enabled the BBC to achieve enormous success in the production of Costume Drama which could be

shot both indoors and on location. It is an art form in which the BBC is still unsurpassed.

The chance to travel abroad with the BBC in pursuit of these developments only fuelled Phillips' love of travel, first fostered in Simon's Town by his father's spirit of adventure and appreciation of Foreign Shores. After a six month spell as the BBC's Chief Engineer in Scotland, a request was received in 1980 from the then Colonial Government in Hong Kong to second someone to fill the role of Controller of Engineering and Production Services in Radio Television Hong Kong. It was the dream Posting that Phillip had waited for.

It was intended as a two-year attachment, but the unforeseen tumultuous events of the return of the Colony to China intervened and it was to be thirteen years before Phillip left. Much was achieved, but much could not be accomplished. The political and financial climate had changed. Funding was short and an RTHK New Television Centre could not be built. Priorities moved from Engineering to the development of local Chinese Programme staff and Managers. RTHK could not become an independent non Government Corporation like the BBC. The Chinese Government vetoed it. Thus it remains a Government Department to this day. Independent-minded Radio and TV broadcasters always sit uneasily with their political masters in such situations. The technical staff remain under contract by Cable and Wireless. These, at least, continue to provide sound Engineering Practices.

In 1991, at the age of 50, Phillip left Hong Kong, and the BBC. While the wanderlust still called and periods were spent in Thailand, Japan and the Philippines on various short-term projects, it was time to set up home again in Europe. France beckoned. Miss Price's lessons finally came to the rescue and with one restored farmhouse project and two new-build timber-framed houses under his belt, he and his Chinese-born wife Viviane, are happily settled there, as a naturalised French citizens.

Finally the time had arrived for Phillip, at the age of seventy five, to return to re-discover his roots in Simon's Town.

Phillip enjoyed his stay in Simon's Town and intends to return in January next year to introduce family members to his old "stamping ground." – Ed.

JOHN MALCOLM OLIVIER CRAIG (1938 – 2017) :

John (Chops) Craig, who featured in last year's Simon's Town Historical Society Bulletin, died on Saturday 13 May at Vincent Palotti Hospital following a long illness bravely borne.

Chops was involved for many years with NSRI and Cape Medical Response and his service to the community was recognized in 1989 when he was elected "Simon's Town Citizen of the Year."

A memorial service was held on Friday 19 May at St Francis of Assisi Anglican Church in Simon's Town. Chops Craig leaves his two sisters, Miss Rosemary Craig and Mrs Beverley Rudman. RIP Chops.

SIMON'S TOWN COUNTRY CLUB : Audrey E. Read

The club commenced life 100 years ago. It began as the SIMON'S TOWN LINKS and included land down to the shore line below what is now Links Crescent. Then the name was changed to SIMON'S TOWN MUNICIPAL GOLF LINKS till 1915 when it became known as SIMON'S TOWN GOLF CLUB. Since 1960 it has been known as SIMON'S TOWN COUNTRY CLUB. The Club currently offers Golf, Bowls, Squash and Social facilities.

At a public meeting held at the British Hotel, Simon's Town, on Wednesday 7 January 1914, the following agreed to form an Advisory Committee:

Representing the Municipality: Messrs Runciman, Whyte and Nichols

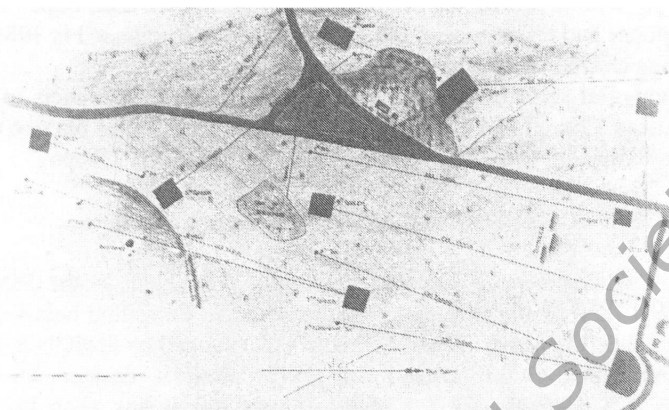
Representing the Civilians: Messrs Boyes, Itchison and A.C.H. Miller

Representing the Royal Navy: Dr Livesay, Lt Money and F.B. Rowley

Representing the Civilian Shore Establishment: Mr Caldecott

Representing the British Army: Captain Watkins R.E.

On Thursday 8 January 1914 the Committee under Mr Boyes (the Magistrate) as Chairman decided to approach the Commander-in-Chief to perform the opening ceremony on 14 January at 3.30p.m. The matter of a caretaker and temporary golf house was to be considered by the Simon's Town Municipality as well as the purchase of a hole cutter and a mower. A Green Committee was also formed under Dr Livesay. Mr Wilson was to engage suitable caddies who were to be paid sixpence for 9 holes and ninepence for 18 holes. A small committee was to meet with the local cab drivers to arrange transport from the West Dockyard gates to the Links at sixpence per person. Unfortunately the official opening had to be postponed. On 29 January 1914 the Greens Committee held a meeting to impress upon the Municipality the necessity of laying water pipes to the greens. This cost was estimated to be £ 12.



— SIMON'S TOWN GOLF LINKS. —

It was also decided to ask the Council to appoint a man as caretaker at £4 per month plus a house. The Secretary was also to write to Sir John Jackson to ask him if he would renew his former offer of a shelter suitable as a golf house. This seems to have been done for in 1922 on 12 January the Committee had been given a house by Sir John.

In 1922 this house was to be offered to the contractor erecting the oil tanks at Seaforth. So came about the transformation of the 2nd Boer War Prison Camp. The first camp had been on the drill ground near the Martello Tower but had been closed when it proved to be of inadequate size.

Much work had to be done to make the golf course playable and improve the greens to an acceptable standard. The first work on just two of the greens was carried out in May 1914. It was pointed out by the Municipality that £400 had been spent so far and £150 of this was for rock blasting and cartage away of the rubble therefrom.

Now it was decided in July 1915 that the members should form themselves into a Club to take over full management and responsibility for the Links as from 1 January 1916, after which date the Municipality would cease to fund expenses. An account was to be opened with Standard Bank in Simon's Town and a fund was to be opened to raise money. This would be by social functions and whist drives etc. There had already been the sum of £42.10.0d promised in donations from the public. Due to the War it was impossible to obtain more help to improve the Links and it was decided to carry on with just six holes meanwhile.

At a meeting on 11 October 1916 it was decided to press the Municipality to endeavour to obtain compensation for the damage done to the Links by the occupation of the ground by the Cape Corps. Later on there was a complaint that the mules from the Army camp were also

damaging the course and the Club was asking Captain Fredericks to endeavour to help with wire fencing and standards. In May 1920 having not been able to obtain a suitable hut elsewhere the Club approached the Military with a view to purchasing 2 huts from the mule camp for £50.



FAREWELL TO GOLFERS.—Members of the Simon's Town Golf Club, in front of their new clubhouse, on the occasion of a farewell to Mr. Hannan (ex-secretary) and Mr. Borner (a former member of the committee), who are leaving for England shortly.

Cape Times, 03 July 1930

The Golf Club house arrived in 1927 and the Committee agreed to foot the bill of £10 for its re-erection .

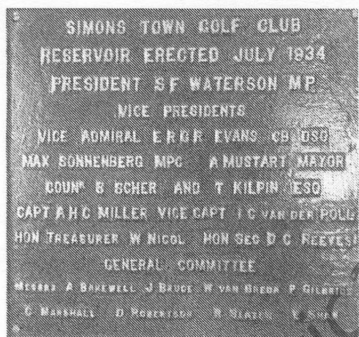
The Links consisted of nine holes; six holes on the seaward side of MacFarlane Avenue and the Club House and three holes on the mountain side. Two holes were on Municipal property and one on Defence Property.

The minutes of 5 March 1930 show that the new Club House had now been completed and it was hoped before too long they could add living quarters for the groundsman.

It was thanks to a loan from Mr A.C.H. Miller (the Club Captain) that the new Clubhouse was achieved. The Committee undertook to repay a portion of the loan each year plus interest of 6% on the outstanding amount, the interest to be paid half-yearly on 3 December and 30 June. The Minutes of 21 December 1930 show the actual cost of the new Clubhouse had been £479.3.3d The Club reached its 21st birthday during 1933 and membership varied between 92 and 100 depending on arrivals and departures of dockyard and naval members. It was also the time of the great depression.

A special meeting was called for 19 May 1934 regarding the supply of water to the greens. It was suggested water from below Fairway No. 7 and adjoining the beach be pumped to a reservoir to be built above No. 2 green and then to be connected to the present greens pipeline. The Committee then decided to erect a windmill at the spring and Messrs Gearing's tender of £170 was accepted and Standard Bank agreed to give the Club an overdraft of £150 to be reduced by £50 yearly. The

Municipality readily agreed that the windmill could be erected and the Army agreed to move the rocket post from near the spring to a new position on nearby rocks. The windmill was in and working by the end of June 1934. The reservoir was officially opened in July 1934 and the original commemorative plaque is currently mounted in the Country Club reception area.



During 1935 a new croquet lawn was laid down. The writer presumes this is what has become the bowling green. The Bowling Green came up for discussion at a General Committee meeting on 8 November 1938 and it was suggested that it should be at the south side of the club on a section of Winford Estate. There were about 55 members wishing to have a bowling green. The Bowling Section did not come into existence until 1954 and today the numbers have dwindled to approximately seventeen with several having relocated to out-of-town Retirement Homes.

With the outbreak of war in September 1939 the club again began to suffer a shortage of staff and there was also a fluctuation of members. It was also stated that in the past couple of years the caddies from Simon's Town had been drawn to working at the new Clovelly Country Club as the pay was higher.

By 1940 the call-up of Reservists began to take its toll and also Simon's Town was a "closed area" and out-of-town members could no longer get to the Club. The club managed to cope during the war years with temporary members from the Royal Navy coming and going as duties permitted.

In February 1945 due to having paid off their loan the Club House was now their property.

In the minutes of 15 May 1945 the V.E. DAY CUP was instituted.

In 1954 the membership stood at 140 (ladies and gentlemen) and in November 1954 the fund-raising dance raised a profit of £62.4.0d which went towards the cost of a new tractor. In June 1960 the minutes record

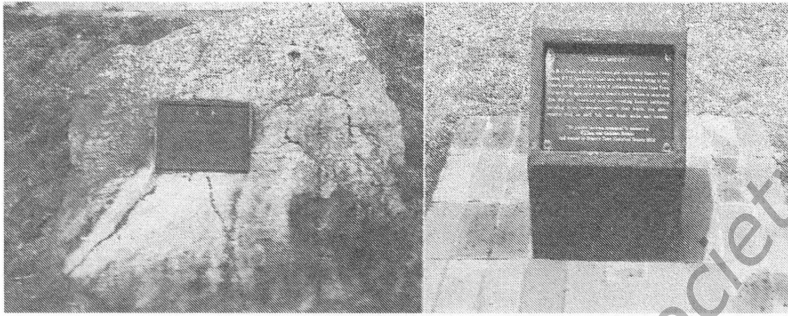
an agreement to accept twenty members from the S A Naval GOLF CLUB.

In August 1960 the Club became known as the SIMON'S TOWN COUNTRY CLUB and the two sections (Golf and Bowls) held joint meetings. Plans for the present Clubhouse were drawn up and the cost was expected to be between £8,000 and £9,000. There were now 120 members. Plans were submitted to the Simon's Town Municipality for approval and it was stated that if the approval was given they would apply to the Liquor Licensing Board for a Liquor Licence. It was later stated that in 1962 there was still no Liquor Licence and it was recorded that the Club needed 100 full male members and at the moment there were only 75.

In the 1980s the Municipality allocated a portion of the property on the mountain side of the road for the development of Simon's Rust, an old age residence for the people of Simon's Town (currently occupied by Simon's Bay Estates. – Ed). The loss of this portion of the property resulted in the Golf course losing two holes and the storage dam on the Golf course. The Golf course on the seaward side of Macfarlane Avenue has now been converted to eight holes with one hole on the Defence Property. As a result of the loss of the reservoir above the old No. 2 Green, a new reservoir was constructed adjoining the beach. The club in conjunction with the Municipality constructed a weir in the storm water line on Frank's Beach and this water was then pumped into the new reservoir.

The False Bay Echo of 17 December 1987 reported the raising of a loan of R300,000 to build a new clubhouse. The building of the new club house and squash courts was undertaken by the Simon's Town Municipality in 1988.

There are two important memorial stones on the Golf Course. Adjoining Bellevue Road is the "Post Stone" which commemorates its time as a Boer War Prison Camp and near the Windmill (inside the Club's boundary fence) is another stone which commemorates the archaeological dig of a Shell Midden which took place in the late 1940's/early 1950's and which gave valuable information on the earlier inhabitants of the area.



The Post Stone Plaque

The Shell Midden Plaque

In 2007 a borehole 93 metres deep with a submersible pump was installed to provide additional water to the reservoir.

Creating sufficient revenue to keep the Club going remains a challenge for the President, Captain Wreford Dettmer SAN (Retired) and the Committee chaired by Mr Martin van Eeden. Quiz evenings are held regularly to raise funds and the Club has an excellent caterer who provides good wholesome, tasty meals at a very reasonable price. The spacious hall is available for meetings, weddings and social functions and the Simon's Town Probus Club has its monthly meeting/luncheon there.

Source : Simon's Town Country Club Committee Minute Books.

VOORTREKKER II : GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.

The Lavranos 60 grp/composite racing yacht VOORTREKKER II (SA 008) completed in Simon's Town Dockyard in 1983 (Commodore Dieter Gerhardt SAN in Command), suffered rudder failure and started taking water on 3 January 2017 during the Cape Town to Rio Race. She had been sold by the S A Navy and was owned by Robert Hawley and skippered by Mark Wannenberg. The crew of eight was forced to abandon ship and was taken aboard the freighter M V GOLAFRUZ before the boat sank.

HOLLANDERS IN SIMON'S TOWN DURING WORLD WAR II : Audrey E. Read

On 3 March 1942 Willem Witson Elias (1911-1975) was one of the lucky ones amongst 600 who managed to escape from the Dutch East Indies

(now Indonesia) ahead of the Japanese invasion. They were aboard the M.V. TAWALI, an 8 152 grt ship of the Nederland Royal Mail Line (Captain W.A. Peters) from Tjilatjap in Java. Theirs was the last ship to leave port. The group consisted of 360 members of the Marine Establishment in Surabaya and 240 civilians. They were to head for Perth in Western Australia but due to a convoy being attacked the ship was diverted to pick up 57 survivors and headed for Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to disembark them. They then set off for Durban where the 360 Marine Establishment people were disembarked on 28 March 1942.

The arrival of so many rather overwhelmed the local authorities and it appears that it was decided to split them up. Some were sent to Knysna where Thesen's factory had been switched from manufacturing high-class stinkwood furniture to making an assortment of small boats and also "B" type Fairmile patrol boats/submarine chasers. Among the Hollanders sent there were Mr Bakker (a submarine construction expert) and a Mr Bowie. Some were employed in the East Dockyard in Simon's Town and the others were sent to Mauritius where there was a privately owned dockyard complete with dry-dock. This was in place until April 1944.

Among those allocated to Simon's Town Dockyard was Mr L Koole. He appears to have been a very methodical gentleman and one of the first tasks he undertook was to familiarise himself with calculations in Imperial measurements (feet and inches) rather than metric with which he was familiar. His calculation book, opened on 14 April 1942 and now in Simon's Town Museum, contains twenty three pages of tables providing information to assist him to convert his familiar metric units to imperial measurement for his new masters. He was, on occasions, required to work "out of port," that is, away from Simon's Town, and his first major task was to carry out an inclining experiment to measure the stability of the fire-damaged 6 345 ton liner PULASKI built in 1912 for the Polish Transatlantic Shipping Company, but taken over by the British Government following the German invasion of Poland in 1939. The experiment was carried out in the Buffalo River in East London on 31 May 1942 and included a detailed examination of the ship and summation of weights to be removed from the ship and weights of items, including cargo, bunker coal, crew and provisions and passengers and luggage still to go on to achieve the fully loaded condition.

From what information we have gathered it would appear that among the 240 were 34 submariners and 50 Dutch conscripts. On 8 October 1942 these 84 left aboard an Elder Dempster ship the ABOSSO for Liverpool from Cape Town. The submariners were from 3 Royal Netherlands Navy

submarines K IX and K II (which had been transferred to the Royal Australian Navy) and also K X which had been scuttled to prevent it falling into Japanese hands. On arrival in England these submariners were to crew a new submarine which was under construction at Barrow-in-Furness. Sadly, as explained in a previous article, ABOSSO was torpedoed off the Azores with only 1 lifeboat surviving. All but four submariners were lost so as the submarine could not be manned by the Dutch it was allocated to the Royal Norwegian Navy and became HNoMS ULA.

We recently obtained details of these people from Surabaya from the step-daughter of William Elias (Ann Fiske) who also sent us copies of his Simon's Town Dockyard Pass and Immigration papers. From what she says it would appear that after the war he returned to Indonesia before settling in Holland after the Dutch East Indies gained independence. These children still keep in touch with one another all these years after.

MAYHEM IN ST GEORGE'S STREET: Bill Rice

The Weekend Argus of Saturday 15 April 2017 contained this historical item under the general heading "News of the Day."

Between the sailors belonging to HMS Castor (Fifth Rate 36 guns – Ed) and sailors belonging to some Russian corvettes, lying in Simon's Bay, about 120 in number, there has lately been a dreadful fight.

The Town was kept in an uproar. They fought with staves and stones. The English drove the Russians to their boats, and were punished by the Magistrate for the assault which they were proved to have commenced. – *Cape Argus 20 April 1858.*

Perhaps it was unwise of the Russian Captains to allow their sailors to "run ashore" at a British naval base just two years after the end of the Crimean War in which 21000 Commonwealth soldiers and sailors died.
– Ed.

S S MENDI : Bill Rice

Many articles and at least four books have been written telling the story of the loss of S S MENDI, carrying members of the South African Native Labour Corps to serve their Country in the First World War.

It is one hundred years since the steamer DARRO emerged from the fog and sliced into MENDI, sending her, and many of those on board, to rest on the bed of the English Channel. Many memorials, in Europe and Africa, commemorate the hundreds of lives lost and the ship herself has been declared a War Grave. Some important parts of MENDI remain above water. These include is the bridge telegraph which was recovered from the wreck and displayed at the Maritime Museum in Bembridge, on the Isle of Wight. The Museum has since closed and the telegraph and other artifacts salvaged from MENDI are now on display, as shown below, at the Shipwreck Centre at Arretton Barns Craft Centre, just south of Newport IOW.



Recently Martin Woodward from the Shipwreck Centre went to sea aboard SAS AMATOLA to drop a wreath over the last resting place of S S MENDI.



Martin Woodward displaying cooking pot recovered from S S MENDI : Photo : Shipwreck Centre.

LAWHILL HOUSE MARITIME CENTRE : ADDITIONAL TRAINING FACILITIES :

SIMON'S TOWN School's Lawhill Maritime Centre (www.lawhill.org) has officially opened its new education and boarding facilities which include a 'world-first' electronic navigation classroom for secondary school students, a Marine Sciences classroom, a Ships Library and Resource Centre, and additional accommodation.

The additional facilities – which were funded by the TK Foundation - were opened by Premier Helen Zille, the Premier of the Western Cape Province on Tuesday evening, 28 March 2017.

Twenty-two years ago Lawhill became the first school in South Africa – and possibly the world – to offer students a maritime-focused education while they are still at secondary school.

It introduced two subjects, Maritime Economics and Nautical Science, with the aim of reducing youth unemployment and poverty by preparing young South Africans (particularly those from financially-challenged circumstances) for careers in the industry in Grades 10 to 12. The two subjects form part of the South African curriculum and National Senior Certificate.

According to Lawhill Head, Debbie Owen: “Until recently, Nautical Science instruction included training on paper charts and paper radar plots. While there are theoretical modules relating to electronic navigation systems, Lawhill identified the need to provide PC-based simulation training, especially in electronic chart display systems (ECDIS) as the students will encounter ECDIS both in their tertiary navigation studies and at sea.

“To ensure that our Nautical Science course remains current and relevant, and to provide a headstart for those of our learners who wish to embark on a sea-going career, we felt it imperative that the students are exposed to ECDIS while at Lawhill.”

The appropriate simulator software, valued at over R1 million, was donated to Lawhill by Maretek's Captain Kieron Cox. Electronic equipment was also donated by the AP Moller Foundation/Safmarine and ECDIS training provided by the South African Maritime Training Academy (SAMTRA).

“SAMTRA will be using our new ECDIS facility in our down time (eg school holidays) to train qualified officers, which will provide an income for Lawhill and support our sustainability as Lawhill does not receive

any direct Government funding and relies solely on grants, donations and sponsored student bursaries to fund our operation.”

The Lawhill Maritime Centre has also worked closely with the Two Oceans Aquarium to develop a Marine Sciences curriculum.

“The Aquarium is very committed to education and has been visited by over 1 million school group children. Over time, the Aquarium has been approached by school teachers and District Subject Advisors to use the content of its courses and to write a Marine Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to form part of the South African FET Gr 10-12 and Matric qualification.”

After consulting widely the Aquarium decided that introducing a subject into the school curriculum would be a service from which the South African community, particularly students wishing to participate in the Oceans Economy, could benefit enormously.

“After dedicated assistance from the Two Oceans Aquarium staff, the document is now awaiting National Education Department approval and we hope to introduce the subject to Grade 10s at Lawhill in January 2018,” Owen said.

The new Lawhill facility also houses several important maritime photographic collections that record maritime history in Cape Town for many decades. Among these are the collections of Robert Pabst, Karel de Vries, Michael Stuttaford and Unicorn Lines and we are privileged to be the custodians of these unique collections.”

There are also several interesting items donated by the family of the late Captain Dai Davies, one of the country’s most prominent salvage experts, and Rob Young, another very prominent figure in the South African shipping industry and marine engineering sector.

“Also in the venue is a plaque in honour of the late Captain Paul Staples whose career included two circumnavigations aboard the original sailing ship *Lawhill*. During those voyages, *Lawhill* rounded Cape Horn twice. Captain Staples also made trans-Atlantic voyages under sail in another old sailing ship, making him one of the most seasoned South African seafarers.”

The building of additional cabins has also made it possible for Lawhill to introduce its programme to more young people.

“Our boarding student numbers have increased from 54 to 66 and boarders at Lawhill come from all over South Africa and Namibia.”

The expansion of the Lawhill facilities is particularly significant when considering the importance of the shipping sector to the South African economy.

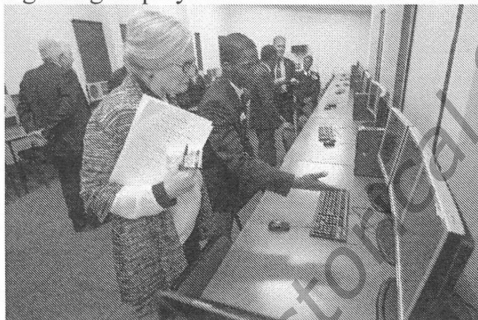
A few years ago, the South African Government launched Operation Phakisa to focus, amongst other things, on job creation in the maritime

sector and on ways of extending the number of young people entering worthwhile careers in the sector.

Coupled to this is the stated aim to gain more South African-owned and operated ships and to employ more South African seafarers.

According to Ms Owen, “This important shift of emphasis signals that the Lawhill Maritime Centre can expect a greater demand for its alumni in the shipping sector.

“And, the more thoroughly we train these young people while they are at Lawhill, the greater their chance of obtaining places in tertiary institutions or gaining employment in the maritime sector.”



Premiere Helen Zille pictured at the official opening with Simon's Town School's Head Boy, Bohlale Motsieloa, (from Welkom).

A SAIL TRAINING VESSEL FOR THE LAWHILL MARITIME CENTRE :

Maritime education at Simon's Town School's Lawhill Maritime Centre has been given a boost with the donation of a 7,8 metre yacht to be used for practical sail and navigation training.

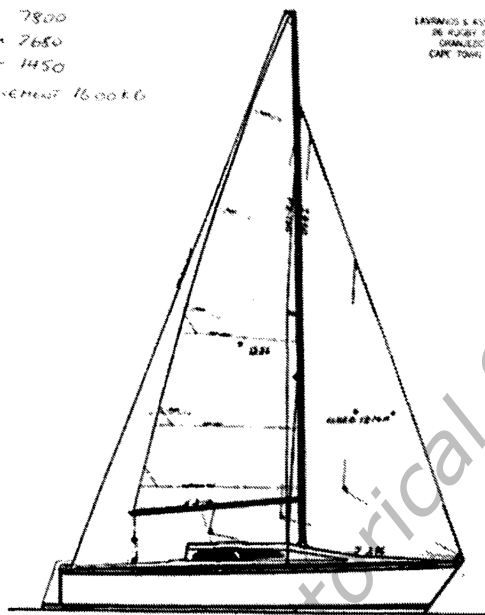
The yacht is a donation from the international maritime mentoring programme, Marine Inspirations Yacht sponsor, the Caimari family in Spain.

The yacht was named 'Homero', in memory of the late Mr Homero Caimari, and christened by Mrs Anne Wade at an event held at False Bay Yacht Club (FBYC) on Wednesday 26 April.

'Homero' will be moored at FBYC, which has generously provided a berth at no charge, at the yacht club in Simon's Town. Maintenance of the yacht will be undertaken by maritime students, under the watchful eye of yachting experts.

LOA 7800
BEAM 7650
DEPT 1450
DISPLACEMENT 16000KG

LAVRANOS & ASSOCIATES
201 ALBERT ROAD
GRANDEBIGHT
CAPE TOWN 8001



LAVRANOS L 26 SAILING YACHT.

The yacht, which was purchased second-hand, was refurbished by Simon's Town School's maritime students, while the major refitting was arranged by well-known yachting expert, Mr David Abromovitz.

The Marine Inspirations programme is the brainchild of two South African Superyacht captains, Captains Phil Wade and Anthony Just.

Three years ago Marine Inspirations partnered with Simon's Town School's Lawhill Maritime Centre and the S.A.T.S General Botha Old Boys' Association to provide young South Africans with the opportunity to travel to the Spanish island of Mallorca to participate in a programme which offers young people from financially-challenged backgrounds an opportunity to learn about, and experience, the international superyacht industry.

For many programme participants, the Marine Inspirations experience is one of many 'firsts' – from leaving the country and travelling abroad for the first time, to even their first visit to an airport, their first flights, and being the first members in their families to travel abroad.

During their time in Spain, they are also mentored by experts in the yachting industry. Whenever possible, they even participate in superyacht regattas.

While the Marine Inspirations programme is focused on providing students with practical navigation and sail-training, it is a personally enriching, life-affirming experience which boosts students' self-esteem and shows them that, no matter where they come from, they have the ability to achieve the life they want if they are prepared to work hard and make effort and sacrifices.

They are given a brief but important 'taste' of a possible future career in yachting and the maritime industry, which is very motivating, and dares them to dream big.

ANTARCTICA : Audrey E Read

The World's largest marine park was created in the Antarctic Ocean on 28 October 2016. It will be the world's largest marine park covering a massive area of 1.55 million sq km (600,000 square miles) of ocean. Twenty-four countries and the European Union agreed to this. The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, meeting in Hobart, Tasmania, said the Ross Sea Marine Park would be protected from commercial fishing for the next thirty five years.

The Ross Sea is seen as one of the world's most ecologically important oceans. The sanctuary will cover more than 23 percent of the southern Ocean, which is home to more than 10,000 species including most of the world's penguins, whales, seabirds, colossal squid and Antarctic tooth fish. Fishing will be banned completely in 1.1 million sq km (4225,000 sq miles) of the Ross Sea while areas designated as research zones will allow for some fishing for krill and sawfish. Scientists and activists described the agreement as an historic milestone in global efforts to protect marine diversity. "The Ross Sea Region MPA will safeguard one of the last unspoiled biodiversities and thriving communities of penguins, seals, whales, seabirds and fish" said U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in a statement referring to the Marine Park Authority. Scientists said the Marine Park would also allow a greater understanding of the impact of climate change. Russia agreed to the proposal, after blocking conservation proposals on five previous occasions. The 25-member commission, which includes Russia, China, the United States and the European Union, requires unanimous support for decisions. Evan Bloom, director at the U.S. Department of State and leader of the U.S. delegation told Reuters that all the signatories have diverse economic and political interests and to get them all to align, especially in the context that there are divergent economic interests was quite a challenge.

Source: Reuters (reporting by Colin Packham) Edited by Michael Perry and Robert Birsell and brought to the Society's attention by Commander Eddie Wesselo SAN (Retd) of our Society.

Simon's Town Museum has an excellent interactive Antarctic display comprising a relief model of the sub-continent with lights to indicate the national bases and exploration routes and a moving screen display showing colour photographs of the SANAE 3 and SANAE 4 Bases, situated in Queen Maud Land.

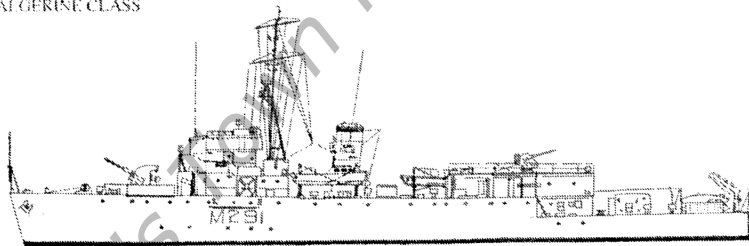
The Museum is open daily from 10:00 until 16:00 and from 10:00 until 13:00 on Saturdays. Unfortunately due to staff and volunteer shortages the Museum is closed on Sundays and Public Holidays. —Ed.

SAS PIETERMARITZBURG : Bill Rice

The remains of the Algerine Class Fleet Minesweeper SAS PIETERMARITZBURG, formerly HMS PELORUS, rest on the bottom of False Bay just off Millers Point.

It is a well known fact that HMS PELORUS, with Commander Nelson on the bridge, led the 7th Minesweeping Flotilla to Normandy on D Day proudly flying the signal "Nelson in the van."

ALGERINE CLASS



SAS PIETERMARITZBURG as originally configured. : Drawing copied from *Fighting Ships* by Allan K du Toit

What is less publicised is the fact that she was also one of the first Allied ships to enter Singapore, sweeping the approaches to allow the City to be liberated from the Japanese. The Natal Mercury of 4 September 1945, the first issue since 1939 to contain shipping news, reported the arrival in Singapore on the previous day of the light cruiser HMS CLEOPATRA, flagship of Admiral Sir Arthur Power, C-in-C East Indies Fleet, the

minesweeper HMS PELORUS, leader of the 6th Minesweeping Flotilla, the His Majesty's Indian Minesweeper BENGAL and the tanker RFA ORANGELEAF. – Natal Mercury.

Any ship can be a minesweeper – once. – Naval Operations Manual.

CHARLES JAMES WILLIAM HOPKINS RCNC (1888 – 1954)

A few months ago members of Simon's Town Historical Society had a visit from Andrew Fenning, the grandson of Charles Hopkins, and his wife. Mr Fenning's mother Billie, now 94, has fond memories of her childhood at the Naval Constructor's residence "L'Esperance."

Born in 1888 - Charles James William Hopkins was educated at Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School in Rochester, Kent, England before being apprenticed as a shipwright at the Royal Dockyard, at Chatham. He spent 4 years at the Dockyard Technical College, gaining a Cadetship to the Royal College of Science and then the Royal Naval College, at Greenwich, where he studied naval architecture. He was appointed Assistant Constructor in 1910 and soon afterwards joined the Naval Headquarters staff in Whitehall London. During World War I he was heavily involved in naval construction. Work with the French Government resulted in his receiving the Order of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He also was awarded the MBE in 1919.

In 1930 he was appointed Constructor at Simon's Town Dockyard, taking over from S Payne RCNC. Whilst in Simon's Town he lived with his wife Christian and daughter Billie at L' Esperance, a beachfront residence which was demolished in 1969 to make way for the Submarine Base Headquarters. Billie, who lived in Simon's Town from the age of seven until she was eleven years old, still has fond memories of her stay.

During their time in Simon's Town the Commander-in-Chief of the Africa Station was Vice Admiral Sir Edward (E R G R) Evans, famed because of his World War I exploits as "Evans of the Broke." His son Richard, later Baron Mountevans of Chelsea, was a great friend young Billie.

During the Second World War Hopkins, now Assistant Director of Naval Construction, worked on a number of secret development projects with Winston Churchill and Professor F.E. Lindermann, Churchill's Scientific Advisor. One project involved the design and construction of an armoured trench cutter, powered by Paxman engines, known affectionately as "Nellie." The project was cancelled following the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk in 1940.

He then became involved in the design of landing craft and had the task of adapting the existing structural drawings so that they could be built by structural engineering companies rather than in the already overloaded shipyards. Hopkins made arrangements for these companies to take over shipyards which had closed during the Great Depression for the construction of Tank Landing Craft.

Rowland (later Sir Rowland) Baker RCNC, who took over from Hopkins, stated in his memoirs that Hopkins really had a marvellous way of dealing with the construction firms. "He acted as though they were angels and he God."

Charles Hopkins was awarded the CBE in 1949 and served as Chairman of the Ship Building Task Force for NATO until his retirement in 1951. Charles James William Hopkins died in 1954 aged sixty six.

Sources :

Notes provided by Andrew Fenning.

Sir Rowland Baker – A personal appreciation – David K Brown RCNC.

S S USSUKUMA : Bill Rice

The passenger cargo steamer USSUKUMA, of 7834 gross register tons, was built in 1920 by Blohm & Voss, at Hamburg, for the German East Africa Line (D O A L) service. Four steam turbines, geared to two shafts, gave a service speed of fourteen knots.



The 7 834 grt D O A L Passenger/Cargo liner S S USSUKUMA in the River Elbe. - Photo: Fürstenburg, Hamburg.

On 5 December 1939, eight days before the Battle of the River Plate, while on passage from Lourenco Marques to Hamburg, S S

USSUKUMA was intercepted in the South Atlantic by the light cruiser HMS AJAX. The ship was scuttled and the passengers and crew were taken aboard the cruiser and landed at Port Stanley, in the Falkland Islands. From there they were transported to Simon's Town aboard the cruiser HMS CUMBERLAND.

THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION VESSEL M V SARAH
BAARTMAN : Audrey E Read

Steel construction began in July 2003 at the Damen Galati shipyard in Romania. The near completed ship was then towed to Vlissingen in the Netherlands during August 2004 where final fitting out and commissioning was carried out. She was named Sarah Baartman in memory of a Khoikhoi woman who was born in the Gamtoos River Valley around 1789 and who died in poverty in Paris in December 1815. Sarah's remains were returned to South Africa and were buried in the Eastern Cape in 2002.

Following sea trials in November 2004, the vessel sailed from Vlissingen on 4 December and arrived in Cape Town on 21 December.

The ship carries a crew of eighteen plus seven fishery inspectors and four cadets. She is 83 metres in length and has a beam of 13 metres. Her range is 7500 nautical miles at 15 knots and the vessel can remain at sea for up to forty five days. Her top speed is in excess of 20 knots. In addition to its fishery protection duties the ship is equipped to carry out oil pollution countermeasures tasks.



THE RED-HULLED M V SARAH BAARTMAN : Photo : DEAT

The vessel is further equipped for Search and Rescue work, fire fighting and has a limited towing capability. There are two 7.5 metre SOLAS

approved RHIB (rigid hull inflatable boats) for use as seaboats and to ferry the boarding parties. There is a helicopter deck and the capability to refuel aircraft up to the size of a SAAF Oryx. In addition there is a small hospital and facilities for accommodating survivors in the event of being called to assist with a marine casualty. The vessel is classified for unrestricted service and is deployed for duties within South African and SADC waters, as well as off Marion and Prince Edward Islands. It is estimated that she will spend approximately 250 days at sea each year. Propulsion is by two Wartsila M26A V12 diesel engines each delivering 4 080 Kw and driving Wartsila Lips variable pitch propellers. The engine room is unmanned and there is a fully equipped Machinery Control Room with a secondary control and monitoring station on the Bridge. The after section of the Wheelhouse is equipped as an Operations Room housing a variety of surveillance systems. Information and photo supplied by Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism)

SIMON'S TOWN DOCKYARD 1945 : Bill Rice



This photograph taken shortly after the end of World War II, shows the Hunt Class destroyer HMS WILTON (L 128) in the Selborne Graving Dock with her sister HMS LAMERTON astern. The ships were docked on 21 September 1945 and were refloated on 9 November.

Both returned to the UK following their refit. WILTON joined the Reserve Fleet until commissioned for service with the Fourth Training Flotilla from 1949 until 1952. She returned to the Reserve Fleet until 1959 when she was sold for scrap, arriving at Faslane on 30 November of that year. In 1973 the name WILTON was allocated to a GRP copy of a Ton Class Coastal Minesweeper. This experimental ship proved to be successful, leading to the construction of the "Hunt" and "Sandown" class Minehunters.

HMS LAMERTON (L 88) was first leased and then sold to the Indian Navy, serving as INS GOMATI until 1975.

SIMON'S TOWN HARBOUR : ANNUAL REPORT 1901 :

During the year 1901 the port has been visited by 62 men-of-war, of an aggregate 178 242 tons, and 32 British merchant vessels and one foreign of an aggregate 102 039 tons, chiefly transports conveying naval supplies and material for the new Dockyard works (East Dockyard – Ed). As little general merchandise is at present landed at this port, the income of the Harbour Board is slender, and has only amounted to £ 152 4s 2d. The expenditure during the year has amounted to £ 32 12s 9d for salaries etc. The Town Pier, reported in 1900 as being in a state of decay, has been temporarily repaired, at a cost of £ 145 16s 6d, but the whole structure will want renovation at no distant date, for which it is hoped that provision will be made in the Estimates during the present session of Parliament, as there is no doubt that were a good jetty built at Simon's Town, much of the congestion of the shipping trade which is suffered at the Cape Town Docks would be relieved, most economically to the speedy and good welfare of the trade of the Country. It is thought that with the railway to Simon's Town in full working order as at the present time, merchandise landed here might be entrained and forwarded to Cape Town or any part of the country at charges not greater than those paid for dock dues alone in Table Bay. Simon's Bay, a perfectly safe harbour at all seasons, remains, singular to say, quite undeveloped as a port of trade, supplementary to Table Bay; as such it would prove of incalculable advantage to the trade of the Cape Colony. – The Peninsula Herald and Simon's Town Gazette - 27 September 1902.

A significant portion of Simon's Town Harbour was expropriated by the Crown for the construction of the Dockyard Extension, now known as the East Dockyard. Presumably cargo ships bringing supplies for Sir John Jackson, the Contractor, would anchor in the expropriated area and

SIMON'S TOWN 1907 :

The last week has been very dull and devoid of events, with the exception of Wednesday, when athletic sports were held on the old target practicing ground, by men of the Iniskilling Fusileers, under the supervision of Major Coffrey and Lieutenant Armitage. The usual programme of events, such as half-mile race, sack race, long jump, tug-of-war etc was carried out , but I think it is a long time since any tug-of-war has caused such shouts of laughter as were heard coming from the spectators last Wednesday. Anyone who knows Simon's Town will remember how all the available ground about it slopes to the sea shore. This makes it rather tiresome in the matter of cricket and sport of that kind. A question being raised by the losers as to the justice of the judgement given, it was determined to give them another chance. This was done with such zeal as to nearly land themselves, as well as the spectators who were swaying in front in convulsions, on the beach. The result of this forcible demonstration proved the same as the first.

We have lately been pestered by hundreds of mosquitoes, insects which have never been troublesome in Simon's Town before this. We are at a loss to know the reason of their visitation. To which of my two bogies shall we put them down; to the Municipality or the weather?

The South Easters which have been raging of late have played ducks and drakes with the coating of our road, which truly is in a deplorable condition.

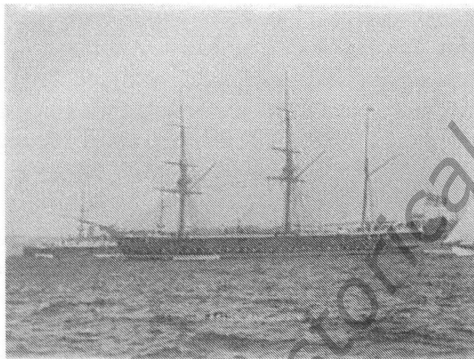
When is the Government Road Inspector, Mr T Bain*, returning to his ordinary duties? It seems surpassing strange that the Government have not sent some other Official to The Knysna but keep the best all-round man to carry out duties which could be attended to by a shining light of lesser brilliancy. – *Wynberg Times 19 March 1907.*

** Thomas Bain was the second son of Thomas Charles John Bain (1830 - 1893) and served part of his apprenticeship under his father on the construction of Bain's Kloof Pass.*

HMS OPAL : Bill Rice

HMS OPAL was a steam corvette of the EMERALD Class, laid down by William Doxford & Co of Sunderland (who built many Bank Line steamers and motorships in later years) on 13 October 1873 as MAGICIENNE but was launched on 9 March 1875 as OPAL.

She joined the Cape and West Africa Station in 1883 and was transferred to the Australia Station two years later.



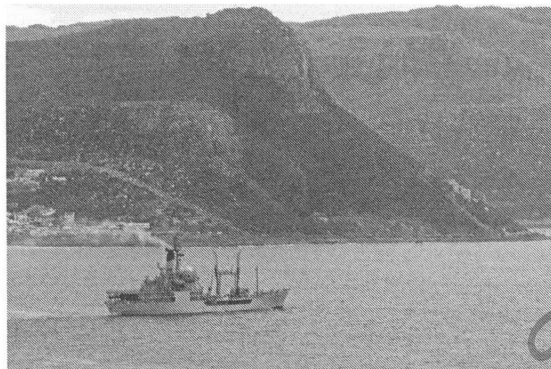
HMS OPAL in Australian water. – Wikipedia

According to the Cape Times of 21 January 1885 :

HMS OPAL during her recent visit to Tristan d'Acunha found the small settlement there in great distress. Some while ago an American vessel was wrecked on the Island and the rats from her succeeded in landing. The Island is now swarming with them and they have become so fierce by the cravings of hunger that they even dig the potatoes out of the ground and devour them. The fear now is that they may attack the inhabitants who, by the ravages of their crops and their poultry, are almost reduced to starvation.

FAREWELL RFA GOLD ROVER : David Erickson

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary GOLD ROVER, the last of the five ships of her class in service, left Simon's Town for the last time on 8 November 2016. She arrived in Portsmouth on 22 February this year flying a paying-off pennant 460 feet long.



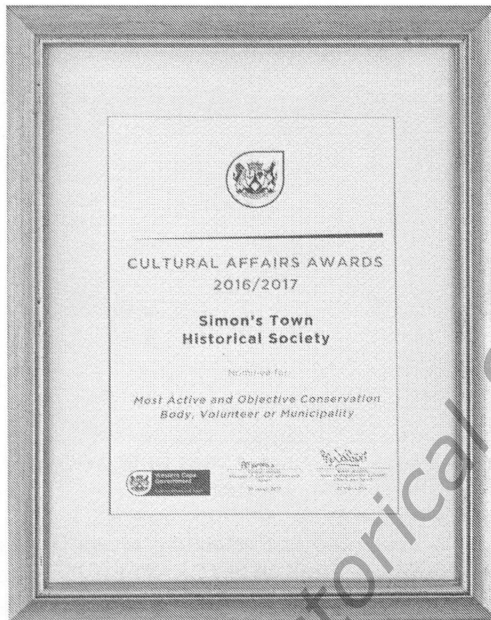
RFA GOLD ROVER leaving Simon's Town for the last time on 8 November 2016. – Photo : David Erickson.

She carried out her 8 256th and last refuelling at sea (RAS) when she transferred fuel to the frigate HMS PORTLAND off the West Coast of Africa early in February this year. During her 43 year career she has transferred 1,2 billion litres of fuel, around 950 000 tonnes, to other vessels whilst under way.

Not having a double hull to separate the cargo tanks from the outer hull, she has little future as a tanker and will probably be sold to for scrap together with her sister BLACK ROVER, which is currently laid up at Birkenhead. The ROVERS will be replaced by the new double-hulled TIDE Class replenishment ships, which are three times their size and are currently being built in South Korea. – Information: Ships Monthly Magazine May 2017.

LATE EXTRA :

On Saturday 13 May 2017 at a Public Consultation Workshop hosted by Heritage Western Cape at Green Market Square, Cape Town, David Erickson, representing the Simon's Town Historical Society, was presented with an Award from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, citing the Society as the Most Active and Objective Conservation Body for 2016/2017.



SOME THOUGHTS ON THE NAME “SIMON’S TOWN”.

For many years officialdom insisted that the name of the town should be spelt as one word – Simonstown. After a long struggle with the bureaucrats that endured for some 7 years, Alderman Gordon Wilson finally succeeded in 1982, in persuading the responsible minister of state to accept that Simon’s Town should be spelt as two words, with an apostrophe “s” at the end of the first word. The decision was made on 15 June 1982 and since that date the correct spelling has also been the official one. Doubts still seem, however, to exist. The argument is usually along the lines that as the place was started by the Dutch it should logically be “Simonstad” and less logically by some, that it should be translated as one word.

But there is little evidence to support this view. The authorities at the Cape and in Holland were against the establishment of a town and there is good reason to believe that during the whole period of their rule, the Dutch never thought of the group of buildings in Simon’s Bay as a town. They may well have referred to it as “Simonsbaai vlakje” when they wished to be specific about the settlement as distinct from the bay in general but it was more usually referred to as “Simons Baai” or simply

“de Baai Fals”. In his scholarly and finely detailed thesis on the history of False Bay, Professor Anton Bekker points out that the V.O.C. had an ambivalent attitude towards the establishment of a settlement in Simon’s Bay. On the one hand the severe losses to the return fleets as a result of the disastrous north-westerly storms in Table Bay forced the company to look elsewhere for safe alternative anchorages. On the other hand they were afraid that any establishment on the False Bay coast would be used as a base from which the country’s enemies could attack the Cape.

The great storm of 1737 finally moved the Here XVII into action. In 1742 it was decided that Simon’s Bay and not Table Bay should be used by all the Company’s vessels, from 15 May to 15 August,(later changed from 15 April to 15 September). Because the fleets invariably needed replacement masts, sails and other equipment, a warehouse was built in 1743 on the instructions of Baron von Imhoff. The warehouse included space for a hospital and accommodation for some soldiers under a sergeant who was the official representative of the government of the Cape.

The presence of a postholder formally extended the authority of the Council of Policy to this part of False Bay but it did not result in the rapid development of a town. The other side of the Company’s ambivalence now came to the fore. The more developed the settlement became, the better it could be used by the country’s enemies as a base. It should be borne in mind that the 18th century was a period of almost continuous warfare in Europe, with the United Provinces generally embroiled.

Long before the arrival of Sgt Blass there were free burghers farming or fishing around Simon’s Bay. The best known was Anthonij Visser who had been granted a loan farm in 1725 and who in 1740 built the house, which, much altered, later became Admiralty House. He and another resident Frederick Roussouw played an important role in providing refreshments and camping for sick and injured crews and passengers from ships calling at Simon’s Bay. In 1774, over 30 years after the building of the warehouse there were still fewer than half-a-dozen residents and Robert Jacob Gordon’s panorama drawn in 1780 shows only a handful of buildings.

In May 1786 an official survey revealed that there were only 6 families permanently resident here. Expansion and development of new buildings were strictly controlled. In 1788 Munnik, a resident, sought permission

to build stables and outbuildings. He was only allowed to if they were made of straw and reeds so that they could be easily destroyed in the event of an enemy attack. As late as 1808 Lt Golovnin, an officer of the Russian Imperial Navy who had been obliged to spend a short while in the area wrote that “Simon’s Town cannot be called a town as it is just a village containing some public buildings.....There is not a single church.

The British seemed to take naturally to the name Simon’s Town from the beginning. Three days after the surrender of the town –dated 19 September 1795 – a report to Admiral Elphinstone was headed “A Description of the Public Buildings at Simon’s Town”

The earliest formal use of the words “Simon’s Town” is probably Major-General James H. Craig’s despatch to the Secretary for War, informing him of the action which led to the landing and of subsequent events. Inter alia it mentions...we have a detachment under the command of a Field Officer at Simon’s town....”

Although the British consistently referred to “Simon’s Town” during the first Occupation it is interesting to note that during the days of the Batavian Republic things were different. In 1803 Commissioner General de Mist received a report on the state of “Simonsbaai” which claimed that the British had left some public buildings in a “desolate state”.

This article written by Jack Wilkinson originally appeared in Volume XVII No. 2 in July 1992 but we thought it worth repeating due to the large number of new inhabitants in the town.
