



**SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



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FOREWORD

Following a request by Mr. D. St. C. Wagner that steps should be taken for the collection and preservation of old records of Simon's Town, the Town Council appointed a small committee to investigate the best means of achieving this object. After due consideration, the Committee recommended the formation of an Historical Society, which would be an independent body, with its membership open to anyone interested in, its objects, whether resident in Simon's Town or elsewhere. Its activities need not necessarily be confined to the Municipal area of Simon's Town. The Town Council adopted this recommendation and promised to give the Society its support and assistance wherever possible.

The Inaugural meeting of the Simon's Town Historical Society was held on the 22nd February, 1960. Since then, regular meetings have been held and work on the collection of documents, photographs and other objects, relating to Simon's Town has begun. When properly collated this material will form the basis of a comprehensive history of the town. It is one of the objects of the Society that eventually all material will be housed and properly exhibited in a Museum to be established in one of the many historic buildings in the town, when one of these becomes available for this purpose.

The Historical Monuments Commission, the Foundation Simon van der Stel, the National Society, various libraries and individuals have given a cordial welcome and much encouragement to this venture.

In an address on the scope and nature of a local Historical Society which is reproduced in this bulletin, Mr. R.F.M. Immelman, Librarian of the University of Cape Town, recommended that the results of the Society's work should be disseminated as widely as possible. This bulletin is an attempt to implement this recommendation. The first number is designed to permit expansion and development in the future, in that each article forms the first of a series. In future numbers, the story of each religious body, early explorations of Simon's Bay, individual buildings, prominent people, connected with the town, and other historic events can be told. An abundance of material is available, which has never been published or is not easily accessible to the general public.

The publication of this first number is made possible by the generosity of the Town Council and it will depend on the reception which it receives, whether or not it can be developed into a properly printed and illustrated journal, produced at regular intervals. Every resident of Simon's Town, and many residents elsewhere, knowingly or unknowingly, must have something bearing upon the story of Simon's Town. It is hoped that this bulletin will be an encouragement to them to contribute it to the Society.

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE WORK OF A LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY *

by

R.F.M. Immelman, Librarian, University of Cape Town.

Many overseas towns have a history of 500 or 1,000, years, in comparison with which South African towns are comparatively young. When a Transvaal or Free State town achieves its first century, the event is celebrated as a matter of pride and achievement. The name of 'Simon's Bay, however, has been on the map for nearly two and a half centuries, although the town was founded somewhat later. At any rate, Simon's Town may justly be considered amongst the oldest South African towns. For this reason the establishment of a Simon's Town Historical Society is justified and will undoubtedly prove an asset to the town. In this connection the term Simon's Town may be understood to cover the area south of Fish Hoek and Kommetjie, that is the South Peninsula proper, including Glencairn, Scarborough, the Cape Point Reserve, Seaforth and Klaasjagersberg, as well as the municipal area of Simon's Town itself.

The Value of Local History

The study of local history is important because it makes the public become aware of the fact that history is made by people. When this is realised, attention can be transferred from what happened in history to who made it happen. Local history consequently becomes a wholesome antidote to political history and serves as an introduction to social history, whereby people acquire a better idea of how their own community has grown. This in turn furthers an understanding of the history of South Africa, as well as affords an insight into that of other countries and peoples, by providing perspective to get behind the vague generalizations of national history in order to focus on the people who made it happen. The significance of local history therefore lies chiefly in the stress it places on the role of the individual in the country's history. As a result, the study of local history represents an enrichment of the present through an imaginative use of the past.

When an historical society preserves an object, that article as museum piece provides physical evidence of a way of life. A document in turn affords the recorded evidence of the efforts and attitudes of people, while a historical photograph is a graphic document. Many small objects singly have little value, but if many trifles are brought together, then the combination when preserved becomes valuable for reference as to a way of life or certain groups of people at a particular period and place,

* Delivered as a talk to the Simon's Town Historical Society, 20th April 1960

The existence of an historical collection in a town will do much to make people realise the value of articles or documents, as well as to awaken their interest in the development of their town and to make them realise the reasons for conditions today. Civic pride is stimulated and love of one's own community awakened, a factor which may be traced in the lives of many great men - that is, their attachment to their birthplaces - as the roots of their patriotism. By establishing a local historical museum the present life of the town is enriched by the imaginative way in which the continuity of its past is presented; the everyday life of average people in the local environment, generation by generation, is illustrated, rather than the political history of the country as a whole.

Objects of an Historical Society

The aim of an historical society may be said to be to collect and preserve whatever historical records or objects of any kind may illustrate or be connected with the local history of an area, to make them known, as well as to familiarise the local community with its history and historical places. The historical society takes history to local citizens and seeks to promote a wider appreciation of local history, with emphasis on the collection, advancement and dissemination of knowledge about the history of its district. For this purpose, it may hold exhibitions, accept, house and guard local records and objects, as well as undertake such other activities as will increase the appreciation of local history and stimulate preservation of historical objects. The society may, for instance, interview old inhabitants and place their reminiscences of the town's earlier days on record. Furthermore, it may make information about local history available by organising, cataloguing and indexing local records, which it then seeks to encourage people to use. Speakers who may wish to address local organisations about aspects of local history are assisted with information, while research too in the many aspects of the subject is encouraged. The nature of local records Local records may be extremely diverse, but first and foremost are documents of all kinds, such as diaries, family letters, manuscripts, and journals. Minute books and annual reports of societies and public bodies yield much information in later years and, unless such an : historical society does so, are rarely preserved. The record of local churches, schools, institutions, hospitals, hotels, business firms and chamber of commerce too, when they are no longer current and won't therefore betray business secrets to competitors, should be preserved. Newspaper clippings of items about the town, provided the name of the newspaper and date are noted, are invaluable in later years. Scrap albums. programmes of concerts and dramatic performances, posters of

of events menus of local banquets and household account books will all provide information about the local scene through the years. The records of sporting bodies, including team photographs, particularly if all the persons have been identified, are useful when, for example, a publication in celebration of its 25th or 50th anniversary is projected.

Of all local records, pictures and photographs of local scenes and buildings probably arouse the greatest interest, when they are properly identified and dated. Portraits of local citizens and family groups or photographs of mayors, municipal officials and town councils similarly identified are invaluable, The same applies to paintings or sketches however amateurish, maps, charts, plans, diagrams, property transfers and other deeds. Biographical sketches and reminiscences of local citizens, as well as genealogical trees and histories of families which have resided in the area for generations, are sources that tend to be much consulted in later years. In the case of Simon's Town, the naval, dockyard, shipping and military records will all provide fascinating material of great value and throw light on the local scene, on persons who were stationed there for a period and on ships that were attached to the naval base. In general, magisterial, police and railway records should be combed for relevant local data, Similarly, fishing, whaling and agriculture have been associated with Simon's Town and its hinterland for generations, for example, the farms which have supplied provisions to the naval authorities. Particularly between 1840 and 1870 Simon's Town played an important role as the port where mails were landed, the first telegraph installed and whence shipping intelligence was forwarded to the port authorities in Cape Town.

The life led, occupations carried on and the role played by Malays and Coloured people are a very significant part of the history of the town. Historical objects associated with earlier generations of these people will probably still be found in their homes, while stories of outstanding occurrences which may yet be current among the older generation would merit recording and preserving. In fact, historical articles or items of furniture which may have belonged to a well known family or prominent person or be a specimen of a type current at a specific period, will probably be found in local possession. If once the local historical society is a permanent body, the owners may be glad to present them because their treasures will be preserved in its museum,

Many books have been written by travellers mentioning their temporary sojourn at Simon's Town. In other cases memoirs or biographies record a visit or residence of a few years. If the books themselves are not available for the historical society, extracts from such publications could be typed and added to its records. Any record, photograph or article in fact which deals

with Simon's Town, is the legitimate concern of the historical society which seeks to preserve in a permanent fashion all materials bearing on the history of the town and district.

Sources of Records

The types of materials mentioned in the preceding section may be obtained from private persons, local families, business firms, lawyers, the municipal offices, churches, local institutions and organisations, as well as the naval, military, police and magisterial authorities.

Local residents or families, who have been in the town for generations may sometime be unwilling to part with materials, records or objects in their possession, but be quite prepared to have them photocopied or photographed. Such photocopies may add considerably to the resources of the historical society. Old newspapers such as the South African Commercial Advertiser may be combed by volunteers for news items about Simon's Town since 1825 and copied by hand or photocopied. The same applies to books and magazines e.g. the Cape Monthly Magazine of Victorian days. In the Deeds Office and Surveyor General's Office property diagrams and deeds of transfer could be copied, and similarly the original documents in the Cape Archives.

The reminiscences of old residents could be noted down in the course of interviews or tape-recordings of conversations be made. In the same way information about family histories could be procured. Books by authors who have resided in Simon's Town should be obtained and preserved, or copied on microfilm.

Whatever is obtained, it is very important that accurate data should be noted as regards full names of persons interviewed or of the owners of articles. A record should be made of all known facts about such objects, such as length of time they have been in the family's or owner's possession. The date of an interview or dates of photographs, as well as the names of people in group photographs should be identified. If an article has been made by a local resident, his name, probable date of making it and the purpose for which the article was used, should be recorded. The more accurate and the fuller the information about records and objects can be, the more purposes such data will serve in days to come.

Possible Activities of an Historical Society

The local historical society will probably start by appealing for documents, photographs and objects of local interest, will collect and preserve such material. It may compile histories of buildings and properties, family histories and genealogies, list historical sites, buildings and places where prominent people lived. To arouse

the interest and enlist the support of local residents and public bodies, exhibitions of materials obtained by gift should be held from time to time and other materials obtained on loan for the duration of the exhibition.

As the amount of material in its possession increases, the local society should aim at establishing a permanent local museum and archives, possibly in a room provided by the municipality or in a historical building which merits preservation. Such museums should be open to the public on definite days, where small articles could be displayed in glass cases and larger objects arranged in rooms in such away as to show their original use. There should be someone in charge and on duty at stated times, to whom speakers or teachers or writers could apply for information or photographs to be used for illustrating a talk or lesson or written article. Schools should be encouraged to send classes to see the museum or a special display, when a guide should be provided who could tell them about the objects. Essay competitions about the history of the town or the best account of the reminiscences of old residents or the story of specific properties or events should be organised for local schools and prizes offered.

The historical society could identify places of interest and erect historical markers on such spots, giving the full authenticated history of the building or event commemorated. A list of historical buildings and sites, or places of residence or of birth of well-known people should be compiled and preserved in the society's archives.

One of the most important duties of an historical society is to ensure that valuable historical source materials and records are stored under fireproof conditions, in a strongroom or safe, etc. Documents should be placed in folders accurately labelled and filed in steel filing cabinets, while information about objects is similarly placed on permanent record. Such materials should be stored where dust, damp and sunlight won't cause deterioration.

Appeals should be made frequently to local bodies and representatives should address meetings or organisations, e.g. church guilds, women's societies, ratepayers associations, etc., to enlist support and co-operation, as well as to arouse interest in and time and again draw attention to its activities. The society itself at its meetings should try to secure as speakers such local residents as have hobbies or interests that are allied to the history of the town or have knowledge of aspects thereof. Some local residents could be persuaded to bequeath certain materials to the society and bequests of money too should be sought to enable the society to carry on its work, Publicity for its work is most important and should be repeated at frequent intervals, so as to keep the public informed of what is being done. The society could hold exhibitions on the occasion of conferences shows or meetings, but whatever it does, it should not neglect to collect and preserve today's materials of current events in the town.

Finances

In November, 1959, the Administrator of the Cape Province addressed a symposium on the restoration of historical buildings in the Old Supreme Court, Cape Town, when he announced that the Cape Provincial Administration would in future subsidize, under the provision of the Museums Ordinance, any local organisation or authority which acquired an historical building and restored it for use as a local historical museum. He made the offer to all municipalities and divisional councils in the Province that the Provincial Administration would in such cases give the following support:

1. Fifty per cent of the interest and capital redemption on a loan taken up for purchase and restoration of the building.
2. Fifty per cent of any interest and capital redemption in future when extensions are planned.
3. Full salaries of the director and staff of the local museum.

These provisions would apply to historical museums, natural history museums and art galleries.

Methods of Preservation

Documents should be opened and creases smoothed out, then stored flat, either in folders or in shallow drawers. All documents from the same family should be kept together in a batch and suitably labelled 'with the name of the donor, the family concerned, the date and any other relevant particulars. When documents are placed in folders, the subjects should be noted on the projecting edge and the folders filed alphabetically by subject or chronologically by period.

Photographs should also be labelled with the name of the person from whom received, nature of event or name of place or building and dates given wherever possible, even if only approximate. Names of subjects applicable to Simon's Town, would be dockyard, Admiralty House, Residency, magistrate's court, beach, Seaforth, Glencairn, Sunny Cove, Millers Point, Red Hill, Cape Point, Cape Point Nature Reserve, Scarborough, railways, 'transport, telegraph and telephone, post office, police, schools (by name) churches (by name) etc. Data about local residents could be collected together under a heading such as biography or families or residents and subdivided alphabetically.

A register should be maintained in which every item is entered 'immediately on receipt and given a number. Full details of nature of the object, its use, probable period, names of previous owners, name of donor and date of receipt should be given. Where possible such information and: number should too be written on the back of the photograph or object. At least the number should appear on every object and be placed in pencil on every document. In the case of a batch of letters, a description of the batch as a whole should be given. The true value of an item often depends largely on the information which can be ascertained from it, about the people to whom it belonged, as well as the period and locality of its use.

WHICH BAY WAS YSELSTEIN BAY? PART 1.

By H.C. Willis

Most of the recent histories of Simon's Town, contained in the publicity brochures state that Simon's Bay was called "Yselstein Bay", until Governor Simon van der Stel visited the bay in 1687 and renamed it after himself.

These statements are probably derived from Theal, who in his "History of South Africa Before 1795" refers to "Simon's Bay formerly known as Yselstein Bay."

It is somewhat presumptuous to question any statement made by Theal, but there is contemporary evidence which certainly casts some doubt on his accuracy in this case.

The following extracts are taken from "Précis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope. Journal 1671 - 74" by H.C.V. Leibrandt. As the several volumes of Leibrandt's Précis are not readily accessible to every one, the extracts are given in full.

"1671. 29th May. Letter from the officers of the flute* "Isselsteijn" which had, by contrary winds been obliged to anchor in False Bay for fresh water and cattle for refreshment. Had found none of the latter however and therefore asked the Commander to send some refreshment, Had left the Texel on the 8th Jan. (Letter signed by Albert Coal)"

"30th May. Sergeant Jeronijmus Croese provided with tobacco and copper and sent to False Bay in order to barter some cattle from the neighbouring Hottentots. and so provide the "Isselsteijn" with meat"

"2nd June. The "Isselsteijn" requires some salt, as the butler had used up the ship's supply for salting down the meat obtained. Two pack oxen sent with 400 lbs. of salt, but after an absence of 35 hours the men returned stating that they had met Croese who had told them that a tun of salt had been discovered in the vessel and that therefore it was unnecessary to send any."

There are no further entries concerning the "Isselsteijn". She had probably obtained all the water and provisions needed and proceeded on her voyage to Batavia.

Her Captain must have been very favourably impressed by the merits of False Bay as an anchoring place in the winter season and reported it to the authorities in Batavia. It must be remembered that several ships had been wrecked in Table Bay, through being driven from their anchorage by the winter North West gales.

*FLUTE: The typical round-sterned ship rigged Dutch merchant ship of this period designed to carry the largest possible cargo with the smallest possible crew.

On the 1st. December, the Council of Policy noted in its Resolutions "By order from Batavia possession is to be taken of the place in False Bay, where the "Yselsteyn" anchored in June last". (Theal's Abstract of Resolutions of the Council of Policy p.124-5.) .

The Council certainly acted with commendable promptitude as the Journal continues:-

5th December. Towards evening Lieutenant Breitenbach accompanied by some experienced travellers and burghers left for Hottentots Holland in order thoroughly to explore that famous and fertile region and have it laid down in a chart by the land surveyor, Jan Wittebol, who accompanies them In accordance with the latest instructions from Batavia, the Lieutenant was also directed to look for a suitable roadstead in False Bay, near which we might take possession of the ground before any other nation, also to mark down any prominent mountain facing the sea in accordance with the wishes of their Honours on the subject."

19th December. Lieutenant Breitenbach and Surveyor Wittebol return from False Bay and report that they had found apparently a good and safe roadstead for the ships, but only brack water, some firewood but no foodstuffs or ground fit for agriculture as will be seen more fully in a separate report to be drawn up for Batavia.

30th December. In the usual evening meeting a written report on the state of the Hottentots Holland and Bay Falso was submitted by the Commissioners who had some time ago been deputed to inspect those places. It is as follows:- (The part of the report concerning Hottentots Holland is omitted) "..... We shall now mention how on the 17th December we explored the shores of False Bay as far as the Ijsselsteyn Bay, without however having discovered any advantage for the Company except that in the aforesaid Ijsselsteijn Bay, as far as we could see, any ships, in case of bad weather or for other reasons making for that Bay might during the winter season safely anchor in it (the S.E. winds during summer blowing open jawed into it) as experienced by the ship "Ijsselsteijn" but the necessaries for refreshing ships are not so abundant there, as the skipper of the said vessel appears to have asserted, for no fresh water is obtainable there except with great trouble and though the ships might be easily provided with it during the rainy season there is the whole year through no fuel obtainable except what the ships require during their stay there. Nor are there any vegetables there or lands fit for raising them. Regarding the abundance of fish we had no experience on this point we can say nothing about it, but regarding game, large and small, it is certain a good hunter will find his satisfaction.

On the south side of the said Ijsselsteijn Bay a certain mountain range separates that bay from another much more spacious and though ships may be protected there from the winds during the season mentioned it would be safer for them to select the first named in order to avoid the danger caused by a certain blind rock lying right in the middle of the bay.

Having ascended the aforesaid mountain range we found on the top a suitable place for a little watch house on which a flag might be hoisted on the arrival of any vessels, to serve as a beacon, In the same way both bays might be kept in possession.

Signed C. von Breitenbach
J. Wittebol.

In the Fort "The Good Hope"
this 31st day of December, 1671.

It seems quite clear from this report that von Breitenbach got no further than Fish Hoek, and thought that this was "Ijsselsteijn Bay". He then climbed to the top of Elsie's Peak (his "certain mountain range") and looked down on Simon's Bay with Roman Rock (his "certain blind rock") lying right in the middle of the bay.

There is no bay, south of Simon's Bay, which could answer to the description of a bay south of Ijsselsteijn Bay, separated from it by a mountain range which could command both bays.

There is nothing in the references to the "Isselstein" in the Journal to show exactly where she anchored, . Perhaps there are other references which establish this. It is quite possible that she did in fact anchor in Simon's Bay and von Breitenbach, who was a military man, was mistaken in his identification of her anchorage. Sergeant J. Croese is apparently the only man who saw the "Ijsselstein" at anchor and he did not accompany the Breitenbach expedition to point out her exact position.

Mrs. Ommaney, daughter of Dr. Clarke, relates that in her childhood she lived in a house on the site now occupied by St. Joseph's convent, opposite the East Dockyard gate. She often used to play on a rock abutting on the road, which was subsequently blasted away when the road was widened. She recollects that on this rock was carved the word "Isselsteijn" (spelling uncertain). So far no one else has been found, who remembers seeing this name inscribed on the rock. It would certainly provide conclusive proof of the "Isselsteijn's" anchorage, and that Simon's Bay was in fact formerly known as "Ijsselsteijn, Isselstein or Yselstein Bay". Meanwhile, if von Breitenbach is not mistaken, Fish Hoek has a good claim to that distinction.

Further information on this point will be welcomed.

DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH, SIMON'S TOWN.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

By

I.C. VAN DER POLL.

On the 9th of December, 1855, the congregation of the above mentioned Church was founded. Churchwardens were appointed and a service was held in the Anglican Church building.

The congregation was a subsidiary of the Wynberg Church. For three and a half years, services had been held in the Wesleyan Church and for seventeen years in the Anglican Church (St. Frances).

The parson at Wynberg, Dr. Philip E. Faure, found it very difficult to minister to the needs of a community at Simon's Town and on the 17th September, 1855, a meeting was held in the Government School at Simon's Town under the Chairmanship of Dr. Faure, when it was decided that the local congregation should become an independent body. Altogether the congregation consisted of only 175 members and embraced the whole of the present South Peninsula.

On the 10th of December, 1855, the foundation stone of the Church was laid by the Hon. Henry Dundas Trotter, the local Commander of Her Majesty's Fleet. The inauguration ceremony took place exactly a year later, i.e. on the 10th December, 1856 and was conducted by Dr. Faure.

The Church was constructed in simple Gothic Style with a striking entrance porch. The pulpit was made of Spanish Mahogany and was built by a Mr. Carr of Wynberg in 14 days.

For fifteen years no permanent minister was appointed and Dr. Faure, assisted by different teachers conducted the services.

On the 19th of May, 1870, the Rev. G.A. Maeder was ordained by Prof. John Murray as the first minister here. During the term of office of the Rev. G.F.C. van Lingen, the congregation enjoyed a comparatively prosperous period and after 30 years, the church debt was liquidated.

It is interesting to note that Rev. M.L. de Villiers composed the music of our National Anthem, "Die Stem van Suid Afrika" (words by Langenhoven) in the D.R. Parsonage at Simon's Town.

A few non-Europeans also attended services and occupied seats in the rear.

Quite a number of the congregation were English speaking and to meet their needs, services in the evening on Sundays, were conducted in English up to about 1940.

In 1941, the congregation of Kalk Bay and Simon's Town were amalgamated, a central church was built at Fish Hoek and on the 10th May, 1952, this was inaugurated as the main church.

The church at Simon's Town was handed over to the S.A. Fleet and both Naval and civilian members of the congregation attended services here conducted by a fleet chaplain and the Fish Hoek D.R. Minister.

Originally, the grounds of the D.R. Church were much larger and extended to a point of a few hundred feet Southeast of the present East Yard gate, where the old D.R. Parsonage, a double storied, slate roofed, building still stands, just inside the Dockyard Wall. The British Admiralty bought this portion for £2,000.

The following Ministers served at Simon's Town:-

Rev. GA. Maeder	1870 - 1873
" W.P. Rosseau	1874 - 1877
" E.Z.J. de Beer	1878 - 1880
" R.H. van der Walt	1881 - 1882
" P.S. van Heerden	1884 - 1886
" D.J. Pienaar	1887 - 1891
" G.F.C. van Lingen	1892 - 1908
" D.J.J. van Velden	1909 - 1914
" J.A. Hurter	1915 - 1918
" M.L. de Villiers	1919 - 1930
" A.G. Driessen	1931 - 1933
" N.J.S. van der Merwe	1934 - amalgamation in 1941 and at Fish Hoek till 1947.
" H.F.M. Louw	(1947 - date.

The first Churchwardens were:-

Jan George de Villiers and David Gabriel Malherbe (Elders)
and Jean Pierre Francois Rocher,
Jan Petrus Hugo
George de Stadler (Deacons)

BOOKS, PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPS AND OTHER MATERIAL PRESENTED TO THE SOCIETY IS ON VIEW IN THE SIMON'S TOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY.

SOME NAVAL OCCASTONS IN SIMON'S BAY. PART 1.

1. SIMON'S TOWN GOES TO WAR

As soon as the second British Occupation of the Cape in 1806 was consolidated, Commodore Sir Home Riggs Popham, athirst for conquests new, sailed off to Buenos Ayres with every available ship-of-war, in direct contravention of his orders to return to England. Consequently, the defence of the colony was entirely in the hands of the military forces under the command of Major-General Sir David Baird.

The following is an extract from a letter sent by Sir David Baird to Lord Castlereagh, dated 5th May 1806, printed in Theal's "Records of the Cape Colony" Vol: V p.412:-

The Cannonier, French Frigate, formerly H.M.Ship "Minerva" stranded near Cherbourg at the commencement of the present War, being ignorant of our having possession of this colony, anchored in Simon's Bay on the 30th April and sent a Lieutenant on shore, who, with his Boat and Crew, was captured by a party of the Garrison disguised and stationed at the beach for this purpose.

As soon as this was done, and the Frigate had furled all her sails, Major Tucker, the Senior Officer at Simon's Town, directed the British colours to be hoisted, and the Batteries to fire upon her with red hot shot. Unfortunately she had cautiously anchored at such a distance from the shore that only one or two guns could bear upon her with effect. The fire, however, from these was sufficient to make her cut (her anchor cables), and put to sea again with the greatest precipitation, leaving two anchors and cables behind. Had she luckily approached a little nearer, there is reason to think, if she had not been set on fire or compelled to strike, she would have sustained considerable damage, as the Guns, Howitzers and Mortars I have lately mounted for the defence of Simon's Town would have opened from various points a heavy and destructive fire upon her. She is the same ship the "Raisable! Captain Rowley, chased and nearly captured about three months ago off Cape L'Agullas.

2. THE NAVAL MUTINY IN SIMON'S BAY 1797

A contemporary account, being extracts from the "DAY BOOK" kept by the Governor's Secretary. (Cape Archives Inv.No. B.O. 56)

7th October: An express from Simon's Bay with the unpleasing intelligence that the ships-of-War there were in a state of Mutiny. The seamen of the Flagship, the "Tremendous" had ordered their Captains on shore and several other officers, without offering opposition to the torrent of madness, which it is hoped will be of little consequence as the cause of the revolt is unfounded, submitted to give up their

Command upon the Seamen's promise of orderly behaviour.

Sunday, 8th October: The Admiral goes on board his Ship and is cheered by the whole Squadron. General Dundas takes the command of the Garrison at

Simon's Town.

9th October: The Seamen of the Fleet hold out conditions prior to their returning to their duty; they are rejected. Lord Augustus Fitzroy and the Purser of the "Impericuse", Frigate, are ordered on shore by the crew. The Admiral is detained on board his Ship, and no communication with the shore by any but unsealed letters is allowed. The 98th Regiment are ordered from Muizenberg to reinforce the Garrison and occupy the heights above the town.

10th October: The last accounts from Simon's Town are that the Fleet continues in a state of mutiny and as there had for a long time been no communication with the shore it is supposed that the Seamen continue to command the Ships.

11th October: The Fleet are still in a state of mutiny but their conduct continues to be moderate. 12th October: An-Express from Simon's Bay of this morning brings the pleasing information that the Seamen of the Ships-of-War in Simon's Bay have returned to their duty and that a General Pardon of their offences has re-established peace and good order.

For further details of the Mutiny, see

Theal "Records of the Cape Colony" Vol.11 p.p. 161 - 187, 206 -210.

Eric Rosenthal "By Cutlass and Yardarm". pp. 67 - 75.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our thanks are due for the issue of this first Bulletin to:-

- (a) Simon's Town Municipality for supplying material and duplicating these pages.
- (b) Our Hon, Secretary for cutting the stencils.
- (c) To various members for bearing the cost of the covers and binding.
- (d) To all who have contributed to this Bulletin
- (e) To all who presented material to the Society.

HUNDRED YEARS AGO

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH

The Electric Telegraph was first connected up on 25th April, 1860. The first message received read as follows:--

"Simon's Town, April 25, 4 p.m. Communication is now perfect, throughout the line.

Mr, J.D. Thompson, M.P. has reached here.

No vessels arrived today."

On May 9th, the following telegram was received:

"A handsome present of books was given to Dr. Churchill (Churchwarden of St. Frances! Church) today at noon, by the inhabitants for his great zeal in attending to the poor during the prevalence of small-pox. The Admiral read the address. The books cost £30 and are tastefully bound with coat-of-arms and inscription. Let Cape Town and other districts of the colony do likewise."

SIMON'S TOWN SLIP AND PIER

May 11th, 1860. "The slip was getting on very well under Mr, Mair's management, the Engine house chimney shaft completed is 75 ft. high. Pile driving continued very successfully. Teak is being used instead of Baltic timber - to resist worms. An excellent clay bottom found on which to lay the ways, which now run 76 ft. on the outside of lowwater mark."

June 15th, 1860.

"The work progressing, more than half the water work done; the cradle put together, the steam engine satisfactory. Soon be ready to receive a ship (weather permitting.)

June 22nd, 1860.

"Slip ready. Engines tested - slip to be leased for 5 years to Messrs. Granger, De Pass & Co., and Mr. Gould, late part proprietor and manager of Mauritius patent slip is to have management. Rent (from 1st July) is to be £1,500 a year Increased demand for shares but lists are closed."

H.M.S. BADGER

March 23, 1860.

"The hull of the Brig "Badger", which has lain for several years in Simon's Bay, has been hauled up on the beach, at the Naval Dockyard, in order to be broken up. The Badger has long been regarded as a "curio", on account of her association with Lord Nelson, as it was to her he was appointed when promoted to the rank of Commander".

In 1830 the Badger was a Sloop at the Cape under command of G.F. Stow, In 1833, she became a mooring vessel, until she was finally broken up in 1860.

Extracts taken from Cape of Good Hope Shipping & Merchantile Gazette.

PRINCE ALFRED

On July 21, 1860, Alfred, Duke of York, landed at Simon's Town from H.M.S. Euryalus, the frigate on which he was training as a midshipman. He was a short, slight lad of 15 years, the second son of Queen Victoria.

The Euryalus arrived on a Tuesday, and Alfred did not land until the evening, when he had completed his duties on board.

He spent the night at Admiralty House, where he was entertained by Captain Turnour, the Senior Naval Officer at Simon's Town. That night the whole village was illuminated and many were the burning tar barrels to celebrate the great occasion.

At 11 o'clock next day, accompanied by his tutor, Major Cowell, another midshipman and others he entered the carriage provided for the long drive to Cape Town.....

From: "Prince Alfred Visited the Cape" by Eileen d'Altera Turner, Cape Argus, July 23rd, 1960.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED.

The success of the Society will depend on the contributions made to it by members and others. Every supporter of our Society is therefore asked to send anything relating to the history of Simon's Town which he or she may come across, to the Hon. Secretary, Simon's Town Historical Society, Municipal Building, Simon's Town.

Contributions for publication in this bulletin are always welcome. They should be typed or clearly written on one side of the paper only. Facts only are required though hearsay is also valuable, but in all cases the source of the information should be given.

FIFTY YEARS AGO...

The Opening of the Selborne Dock, 3rd Nov., 1910.

by

HELENE SCOTT

The Dockyard in Simon's Town is the nerve centre, the reason for the town's being. This association with the Navy and shipping goes back to the 18th century, when Simon's Bay was selected as a winter anchorage. It became increasingly popular as a port of call and in the course of time developed into a thriving seaport. In 1814 Simon's Town became the British Naval base and finally in 1898, the port was ceded to the Admiralty.

In the meantime, the existing Dockyard, became too small to cope with the increasing demands made upon it. Only the smaller ships, under one thousand tons, could be repaired on the slip, all larger ships had to dock in Cape Town or Durban for repairs. The West Dockyard, covered about 13 acres, on which were slips, workshops, boathouses, stores, offices, official residences, the Naval Church and coal stacks.

In 1895, a list of Naval Works in various parts of the world was prepared and considered by the Board of Admiralty. Simon's Bay was included in this list at the request of the First Sea Lord (Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Frederick Richards, G.C.B.) The Board of Admiralty, approved, treasury sanction was obtained and the necessary land purchased in November, 1898 for extensions to the existing Dockyard. In the same year, the Cape Government passed the "Simon's Town Defence Act", which provided for better management and control for defence purposes and authorised the construction of the Dockyard Extension at a total cost of £2,500,000.

The site selected was at the south-east end of the town. Private property along the lower side of the road, between the Dutch Reformed Church and the old Blockhouse, the Martello Tower, was expropriated.

The designs for the Extension Scheme were prepared by Major Sir Henry Pilkington, K.C.B., R.E., Civil Engineer-in-Chief, who was responsible for the works until his retirement in April, 1906. Then Colonel Sir Edward Raban, K.C.B., R.E. Director of Works, superintended the works to their completion in 1910.

The tender of Sir John Jackson Ltd., was accepted on 27th July, 1900 and the main operations were begun in January, 1901, under the superintendance of D. MacFarlane, M.I.C.E., Admiralty Superintending Civil Engineer, who remained in charge until the completion of the work. The local Resident Agent of the firm was H.R. Stockman, until he was killed by an accident on the Works in August, 1902. He is buried in the Old cemetery, together with others who lost their lives on the project. Mr a. Brooks, A.M.I.C.E., succeeded him.

According to a brochure issued by Sir Jackson Ltd., which a issued to guests at the opening ceremony, the works comprised:— a Graving Dock, the East Breakwater, the West Pier, which altogether enclosed a sheltered tidal basin of 284 acres, a reclaimed area of - 35 acres, on which were built the

necessary workshops, stores and coal-bunkers, which had a capacity of storing and handling 10,000 tons of coal. There was also provision in the estimates for 20 and 50 ton fixed cranes on the breakwater and a 30 ton travelling crane round the dock.

The Graving Dock has a total length of 750 feet on the blocks, The width at the entrance is 95 feet at the coping and the general width of the dock is 120 feet at the coping. The depth over sill at lowwater Spring tides is 30 feet. - The Dock is divided into three sections by three Caisson Grooves. This enables two ships to be docked independently and provides economy in the cost of pumping when a short vessel requires docking. The Caissons are of the floating ship type; the outer one is 45 ft. in height, the inner 47 ft. 6 inches. By varying the water ballast in either of these 'caissons, they can be made to fit any or all of the three grooves When in position, each caisson provides a sixteen feet roadway across the dock at coping level. Separate contracts were made for caissons, penstocks, engines, electricity and cranes,

The amount of water contained in the whole dock when full is approximately 22,000,000 gallons, which is pumped out by the main pumps in four hours. In an official test, however, the pumping plant pumped the dock dry in two hours, thirty five minutes.

The dock is built entirely in the dry, inside a coffer dam 800 ft. long and 30 feet high above the sea bed. The dam was first built in the sea, after the enclosed area of sea bottom was pumped out. The excavation for the dock was almost completely blasted out of solid granite, which sent a pall of fine dust over the town. This infuriated residents into loud, but useless protest. At one stage they even petitioned for the cessation of the work, but to no avail. In the excavation at the head of the dry-dock, the remains of an old wooden ship, the *Carpentaria*, which came to grief in 1858, was found in a very good state of preservation.

Materials used in the construction of the Works was mostly obtained from the quarry on the side of the mountain at Seaforth, now a gaping raw wound in the mountainside to remind of the intense activity of half a century ago. Many Italian workmen were imported to work in the quarry. The stone they dug out, 2,000 tons per day, was transported to the building site by an inclined railway. Of other material used, most of the granite was imported from Europe, 80,000 tons of Portland cement, steelwork and other materials from England.

The contractors opened a General Dealer's store, opposite the "Firs" where workmen employed on the site, could obtain supplies at cheap rates. A row of houses in Belmont Road was also built by the firm to house the workmen.

On November 15th, 1906, the Foundation stone was led by the Earl of Selborne, G.C.M.G., High Commissioner for South Africa. Over two thousand workmen employed on the site, paused for a few hours, while the important personages made speeches, the band played, flags and bunting fluttered in the breeze.

Then the work went on. , The East breakwater, about 2,500 ft long and 86 ft. wide, was built out of concrete blocks which weighed from 28 to 35 tons each, on a rubble mound foundation. The blocks were lowered by a "Titan" and placed into position by divers. On the outer angle of the breakwater, a lighthouse of the "Third Order" was built, supervised by Trinity House. The

West Pier, about 1,200 ft. long further enclosed the tidal basin.

Finally, on 3rd November, 1910, the work was complete, the rubble cleared, the stage set for the opening ceremony, which was performed by Field Marshall, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, K.G. etc. A presentation golden casket containing a picture of the works was presented to him by Sir John Jackson. In his address the Duke said:-

"We have passed far beyond the old conception of the Cape Peninsula as nothing more than a convenient base, of which the occupation found its justification and its necessity in the safeguarding of the communications between India and the West. In the number and loyalty of her people, in area and in natural wealth, South Africa forms no inconsiderable portion of the Empire in which she has now taken her part as a single and united Dominion..... Though it would argue an almost ludicrous want of the sense of proportion to regard her any longer as merely a link in the chain of Imperial Communications, her importance as a Naval Base survives; and of this importance the dock which I am opening today is the practical recognition."

QUERIES

The present False Bay Hospital was originally the Simon's Town Cottage Hospital,

When was the Cottage Hospital built? ,

At the south-east corner of the Old Cemetery in Queen's Road, Simon's Town, there is a furnace for heating red-hot shot.

Is this the furnace. built by the order of Commissioner Sluyskens in 1794?

References to the building of the furnaces occur in "Narrative of the Surrender of the Cape of Good Hope to the English" by Phil. Wilk. Marniton (Cape Archives Inv. No. V.C. 75) as follows:-

"In Simon's Hout and Camps bays, he (Mr. Abraham Josias Sluyskens) had new batteries built; all were provided with ovens in order to beat off an enemy with red hot cannon balls."

and again-

"On all forts and batteries along the sea coast both in Table Bay as in Simon's, Hout and Camps Bays, brick ovens had been built in proportion to the guns mounted and well provided with bellows, tools, wood, coal etc. so that the balls could be made red hot in less than half an hour."

The great objection to the existing furnace being the one built in 1794 is its great distance about 300 yards from the South (formerly Boetselaar) Battery. It would appear to be more likely that it was built much later to serve the present Queen's (formerly Cemetery) Battery which is only separated from it by the present road.

CONSTITUTION

NAME

1. The name of the Society shall be "The Simon's Town Historical Society.

OBJECTS

2. The objects of the Society shall be:-
 - (a) The collection and collation of information concerning the History of Simon's Town and district.
 - (b) The collection, collation and preservation of documents, maps, plans, pictures, photographs, books, newspapers and other records, concerning the history of Simon's Town and district.
 - (c) The collection, collation, preservation and eventual exhibition of objects of any kind in any way connected with Simon's Town and district.
 - (d) The preservation of buildings of historical interest in Simon's Town and district.
 - (e) The dissemination of the result of its work in the widest manner possible by the publication of a bulletin or journal or by any other means.
 - (f) The placing of descriptive plaques on buildings and other places of historical interest in Simon's Town and district.
 - (g) The establishment of a local museum.

MEMBERSHIP

3. Membership shall be open to any person interested in the objects of the Society.

SUBSCRIPTION

4. The subscription payable by members shall be 5/- per annum, payable on the 1st day of January in each year. Any member whose subscription has not been paid within 2 months of due date shall cease to be a member without further notice, but at the discretion of the Committee may be re-instated on payment of all arrear subscriptions.

OFFICERS

5. The officers of the Society elected by an Annual General Meeting, shall be a Patron, President, six Vice Presidents or such other number as may be fixed by the Committee from time to time, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and four members of the Committee. Any number of these offices may be held by one person at the discretion of the Committee.

COMMITTEE

6. The general business of the Society shall be managed by the Committee all the members of which shall have been elected at a General Meeting.

The Committee shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and members of the Committee.

The Committee shall have the power to appoint sub-committees for special purposes and to co-opt additional members for such sub-committees.

All officers shall retire at the end of the Society year, but shall continue in office until the election of the new officers.

The Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy occurring in the Committee from the date such vacancy occurred until the vacancy is filled at the next Annual General Meeting.

The Chairman, shall if present, take the chair at Committee meetings. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall take the Chair.

Except as hereinafter provided as to the expulsion of any member, all questions arising at the meeting of the Committee shall be decided by a majority of the members present, and in the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a casting vote

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

7. Proper minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the Secretary in a book provided for that purpose.

FINANCE

8. The Committee shall have power:-
 - (a) To make and give receipts, releases and other discharges for moneys payable to the Society and for the claims and demands of the Society, and to effect insurances of all kinds in the interests of the Society. Such receipts shall be signed by the Secretary or Treasurer.
 - (b) To open and operate upon a banking account in the name of the Society. Cheques may be signed by any two of the following persons viz: the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.
 - (c) Proper accounts shall be kept and shall be audited at least once in six months by an accountant, who shall not be a member of the committee and who shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

9. Any member, whose conduct shall be held by the Committee to be injurious to the character and interests of the Society shall be liable to expulsion from the Society and he may be expelled by resolution of the Committee, which shall be passed by not less than a two-thirds majority; provided that the member whose conduct is in question may attend a

Committee Meeting at which his conduct is considered and shall be given a hearing before any decision to expel him is implemented. A member expelled by the Committee shall have the right to appeal to a Special General Meeting provided that intention to appeal is given in writing to the Secretary by the expelled member within fourteen days after the Committee has communicated its decision to him. After receipt of such intention to appeal the Committee shall convene a Special General Meeting to consider the appeal. The decision of such Special General Meeting shall be final.

BYE-LAWS

10. The Committee shall have the power to make such bye-laws as it deems fit for the regulation of the Society. Such bye-laws shall be binding on all members of the Society.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

11. The Committee shall meet, whenever it considers a meeting necessary or at the request of three members. Four members shall constitute a quorum.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

12. The Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held during the month of March each year at such time and place as the Committee may determine. Any member desirous of placing an item on the agenda shall notify the Secretary in writing on or before the first day of March. A notice convening the Annual General Meeting shall be posted to all members fourteen days prior to the date set out for the meeting.

ORDINARY MEETINGS

13. As free discussion among members is of prime importance in achieving of the objects of the Society, ordinary meetings of all members shall be held at frequent intervals for the reading of papers and open discussion of subjects relevant to the objects of the Society.