



**SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



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HISTORY IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

The work of an Historical Society is such that one can never say it is dull. In their quest for knowledge of Simon's Town the members of this Society travel to and from the Archives, interview people, read through books and documents of various descriptions, examine old prints, photographic plates and maps and then spend hours noting and correlating their finds. Recently, as the result of a conversation, two members spent several hours grubbing in the cellar of the "Aloes", a guest house at Boulders. Originally, the house was the property of the International Christian Police Association and was run by them as a convalescent home. It recently changed hands and the present proprietress, Mrs. Smith, before clearing the cellar allowed the Society to examine it first.

As a result, a number of interesting items came into the possession of the Society and are now displayed in the Public Library. Not all of the objects were connected with Simon's Town and those that did not concern us, were passed on to other interested bodies. A number of railway permits issued in Pretoria in 1900 and photographs of Police cricket teams, were sent to the Association Old Pretoria, who promptly reciprocated by sending us a copy of an article by Prof. C.F.J Muller, on J.M. Endres, an early inhabitant of Simon's Town, which appeared in Historia. A number of old books, photographs and pamphlets were given to the South African Public Library.

On another occasion, a number of boxes of photographic plates found in a garage at Fish Hoek, were handed over to the Society; again as a result of a casual conversation with a member of the Society. These plates are of various scenes in South Africa at the beginning of the century, and were taken by someone who had an artist's eye for a scene. We do not know who the photographer was, but we are now in the process of examining them and those of interest to other places in the Union will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

It must be realised that a local association such as ours is also interested in the history of our land in general. All items presented to us are disposed of so that the fullest benefit may be derived from them. Nothing is allowed to disappear from view again. Its value to Simon's Town may be negligible, but to another centre it may be of great interest and the donation by us may lead to a reciprocal gift from them.

If, therefore, you have any old papers, books; photographs, maps, curios or anything which is often labelled "junk", do not dispose of them in the dust bin until you have asked a member of the Society to examine them first. Many invaluable items of historical value have been summarily thrown away, we know, but before you clear out the rubbish, why not contact the Secretary, c/o Municipal Offices, Simon's Town. By so doing, you may be rendering a great service to the town by adding to its store of history.

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
GIVEN AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 23/3/1961

On the whole, the Society has had a reasonably successful first year. It has been finding its feet, putting out feelers to discover the support which it may expect to receive, and deciding on the best method of organising the Society. All this has been done by about fifteen enthusiastic members who have attended our meetings from time to time. There are a number of others in the town and elsewhere who are keen supporters of the Society and interested in its work, but for one reason and another, they cannot attend meetings. This is unfortunate, but we must face the fact that so far we have done little to attract people to our meetings by providing guest speakers and so on, which is perhaps inevitable while we are getting organised.

The Society started off by being simply a collection of interested people. Such a loose organisation could not be expected to work. We therefore decided to draft a proper constitution and impose a small subscription on members. This has been done and the constitution, printed in the Bulletin, has been circulated to everyone who we think is likely to become a member. There must be many more and we shall be glad if any member will introduce friends who would like to become members.

We also decided to be very venturesome and publish a Bulletin. We did this for three reasons, firstly because Mr. Immelman in his inaugural lecture told us that we should publish the results of our work as widely as possible, and secondly we thought that, by demonstrating that we were doing active work, we should attract members other than residents of Simon's Town to join our Society and thirdly, because it would be a valuable indication of the support which we are likely to have.

I venture to think that you will agree that the Bulletin is a very creditable publication for a first attempt. For this our thanks are due to the contributors of articles, to Mrs. Scott for typing the stencils, to the Municipality for duplicating the stencils and providing the paper, to Clyde Printing Works, who printed the covers and bound the Bulletin and made a generous donation to the Society by doing all this work at a price which can barely have covered the cost and finally, to the Press, for giving it favourable mention in the newspapers.

The Bulletin has been well received by many people all over the country. They have not only given us praise for our effort, but also made application for membership, and in many cases, most generous cash donations to the Society. For these we are grateful. As a result of the forms of application for membership sent out with the Bulletin, our paid up membership now stands at 47, of which 20 are residents of Simon's Town and Glencairn.

The Society, during the year, has received from various sources, many contributions of material. Photographs, documents, maps, and various objects of historical interest. Our Secretary is keeping a careful inventory of all these. Some are on exhibition in a glass fronted cupboard in the library, the remainder are kept in safe custody in the strongroom in the Municipal Offices. We are most grateful to the donors of all this material. We hope that one day they will all be exhibited or otherwise preserved in a local museum, when

suitable accommodation becomes available.

As an experiment, we organised a lecture tour of the historical buildings in the town for the Rand Historical Study Association; this was a body of Standard X students from Johannesburg schools who were touring the Peninsula. Mr. Reg Biggs showed his excellent films as a forerunner. The experiment was successful and can well be repeated when similar bodies visit our town.

The Historical Monuments Commission are holding their half-yearly conference in the near future and we hope that they will find time to visit our town. Dr. E. Biermann has made a preliminary visit on their behalf in order to find any buildings or places which are worthy of declaration as historical monuments. If any of you know of any such things, will you please let us know.

From all this, I think you will agree that the Society has made substantial progress. But we cannot stand still on such laurels as we have. We need more members and more active help from everybody. The Society and its work must not be confined to an enthusiastic few, who in time will pass on leaving a vacuum. In conclusion, I should like to express our sincere thanks to our Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Scott, for all her hard work which has produced the results.

SOME MOMENTS IN SIMON'S TOWN'S HISTORY*

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

As an indication of some topics in which the Simon's Town Historical Society could interest itself, attention is drawn to a few facets of Simon's Town's past. This town has a long history - as history goes in South Africa - going back to the days of the Dutch East India Company. In those days and until comparatively modern times the road to Simon's Town followed a different route from that which we travel today. In an article by R.C. Wallace entitled - "Along the Old Road: Steenberg to Simon's Town" (in the South African Railways and Harbours Magazine, August 1937: pp 989 -1000), he relates the history of the earlier route and traces its course. He provides 12 illustrations of old houses along it and of the tracks of the old road which at that time could still be discerned. The old road makes us visualize the seamen, the travellers or officials of the Dutch East India Company who, after landing from a ship in Simon's Bay, proceeded along it.

The Company's resident in charge of its establishment at Simon's Bay for about 30 years during the last decades of the 18th century, was one of the ancestors of the Brand family. He learnt to know Capt. Cook, the famous explorer, when the latter called at the Cape during his various voyages on no less than 5 occasions between 1766 and 1776. It is related in the family that Capt. Cook presented Brand with a table as a token of appreciation of what he had done for Cook's expeditions. This table was subsequently inherited by the Buyskes family and has now been presented to the Cape Town Historical Museum, shortly to be opened in the Old Supreme Court. Brand also became very friendly with Sir Joseph Banks, the scientist of Cook's expedition, so much

so, that he named his grandson, born 1797, after Banks. This grandson who later in life became the first speaker of the Cape Parliament from 1854 to 1874, was knighted and is best known in history as Sir Cristoffel Joseph Brand. His second name reminds us of the family's connection with Banks and the Cook expeditions. From 1806 onwards the British Navy increasingly used Simon's Bay and Sir Jahleel Brenton was one of the earliest naval representatives stationed here. In fact, his wife died in Simon's Town and her tomb may still be seen in the local cemetery.

* Part II of a talk given on 20th April, 1960

Mails were more and more frequently landed there from sailing ships which took shelter in Simon's Bay. From 1829 onwards the authorities decided that mails should officially always be landed there. In succeeding years there were many complaints regarding the delay in their transmission overland to Cape Town. From 1843 steps were taken to speed up the transportation of mails by road from Simon's Bay to Table Bay.

The Anti Convict Agitation of 1849 - 1850 had many repercussions at Simon's Town. The local shopkeepers were, by the pressure of public opinion, all compelled to sign the pledge not to supply the convict ships. Because Simon's Town shopkeepers were completely dependent on provisioning ships, the result of signing the pledge was that they faced stark ruin. The Anti-Convict Association's leaders in Cape Town did not trust them to keep their word and so put men with telescopes on the heights round Simon's Town, who could watch the ships and boats going to and fro in the Bay, to make quite certain that the local shopkeepers should not surreptitiously be able to slip supplies to the convict vessels. When the leaders later decided that all shops in Cape Town should shut, couriers were sent to Simon's Town to see that the resolution was rigorously enforced there too. While the shops were shut, only known customers could be supplied. It was a long drawn-out drama, for in fact the convict ship Neptune lay in Simon's Bay from 19th September 1849 to 21st February, 1850. On board was, inter alia, John Michel, an Irish Political prisoner, who subsequently published his "Jail Journal ... on board the "Neptune" convict ship at the Cape of Good Hope" which he had written while the ship lay in Simon's Bay. Although not allowed to land, he watched the surrounding scene and local activity very closely and received local visitors on board, so that he had a good deal to say about what he saw, heard and read of the agitation being carried on. Before his departure in true Irish style, he drank to the prosperity of the future South African Republic in good Cape wine - and this was in 1850!

While the breakwater in Table Bay was being constructed the first adequate provision in South Africa for ship repairs was provided in Simon's Bay, when the Patent Slip there was built by the well-known firm of de Pass, Spence and Co. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor, Sir George Grey. On that occasion in 1860 the members of both Houses of Parliament were present. It so happened that during that period both Houses were at loggerheads about some ticklish controversy. Therefore when the band in a festive spirit played the tune "O dear, what can the matter be", the entire

gathering of notabilities could perforce not restrain their laughter at its appropriate words. The Patent Slip was completed about 1863. A photograph in the South African Museum provides evidence of this Simon's Town event.

Thomas Bowler the well known artist, who in mid-Victorian times recorded the Cape Town scene, also did an engraving of Simon's Town in 1860, showing Admiralty House, the Residency and Red Hill. His original painting, according to the Cape Times of 27th August, 1960, is now in the Gordon Collection in the Riversdale Museum. In the early days of Kalk Bay's popularity as a seaside resort, a number of visitors there sketched the False Bay coast and Simon's Town. One such was Mrs. Martha Cardew, the wife of an English official in India, who in 1841-42 spent one and a half years at the Cape, during which for some weeks she holidayed at Kalk Bay. She has left a number of sketches of the Fish Hoek to Simon's Town coast, on which the latter figures prominently. A few of her sketches and an account of her visit will be published by the present writer in "Africana Notes and News" shortly. Some members of other well known South African families, such as the De Smidt's of Westbrooke and the Molteno's of Claremont, also did sketches during the 1850's and 1860's of Simon's Town as seen across False Bay. These are still in existence.

Other evidence of how much progress there was at the Cape about the year 1860 is provided by the fact that the old Cape Point lighthouse was lit for the first time on 1st May, 1860, and the electric telegraph from Simon's Town to Cape Town came into operation on 28th August, 1860. From this time the latest news from Europe, brought by sailing ship, when received at Simon's Town, was flashed by telegraph to Cape Town, where it was posted up in the Commercial Exchange building in Adderley Street.

When Queen Victoria's second son, Prince Alfred, in 1860 paid the first visit of a member of the British Royal family to South Africa, he landed in Simon's Bay. He proceeded overland by road to Cape Town, Sir George Grey welcoming him halfway. The explorer, H.M. Stanley, too, when in 1877 on his way to Central Africa to search for David Livingstone, landed at Simon's Town and travelled by road to Cape Town, where large public gatherings and receptions were held to welcome him.

In Simon's Town there are cemeteries with many old tombstones of more than passing interest. The Simon's Town Historical Society is to be congratulated on having already made a beginning with a systematic survey of these tombstones, in order to preserve the details permanently. Similarly too, it has encouraged members to start recording the history of local churches. The fact, for example, that the first Anglican Church to have been built in South Africa was situated in Simon's Town is a matter of more than local interest. Such historical accounts therefore are valuable for research workers elsewhere.

Simon's Town has a long history of which it can be proud and therefore its Historical Society has a large field of activity. May it achieve much in preserving permanently for future generations the evidence and records of that eventful and colourful past and the persons who have contributed to its history.

The following letter from one of our oldest residents, Mr, H.B. Manuel of 2 Upper Sayers Lane, Simon's Town is a good example of the type of reminiscence for which Mr. Immelman pleads We appeal to others to follow this excellent example and send us similar items:-

"I beg to inform you that I have much pleasure in the knowledge that, I, perhaps the only one in Simon's Town, still remember the opening of the first opening of the Railway Line, which took place on the 1st December, 1890, 70 years ago. I was then a boy of 12 years of age.

The Malays of Simon's Town took a big part in the opening. The men were all dressed up in festive robes with turbans, the boys likewise. The girls were dressed in white, and had red fezzes for head gear.

The children, black, brown and white of the town, were given free rides as far as the "Flag Staff", near the Glencairn Quarry. The Town's people - especially the non-whites made themselves happy by picnicking along the Long Beach, had big fires and kept up until midnight. Before the line was completed the fare to Kalk Bay from Simon's Town by cart was 10/-.

The station was used by King George V, and Queen Mary as Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, when they entrained for Cape Town in 1901"

Yours very truly,

(Sgd) H.B. Manuel.

A LOOK AT THE CAPE PENINSULA IN TIMES VERY LONG AGO.

By I.C. van der Poll

Beyond the remote possibility of a crossing of the Southern point of Africa by a Phoenician vessel, our part of Africa was wrapped in complete darkness to the civilized world until late in the 15th century, when Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape in 1486.

From data collected over many years, I shall attempt to give some idea of what the Peninsula, particularly the Southern part, looked like in my opinion, in times far removed and says something about its very early inhabitants and early animal life.

Thousands of years ago it would seem the Peninsula was divided into two small islands, the seas between what is today Muizenberg and Table Bay and Fish Hoek and Chapman's Bay being joined.

Raised beaches below the golf course at Simon's Town and a full hundred yards from the present high water mark, and at Kommetjie where the distance is about a quarter of a mile - bear evidence of the extent to which the sea had receded. The height of these raised beaches above the present sea level would be consistent with the area mentioned being covered by the sea. Furthermore, the elongated vleis and lakes are but waterfilled depressions in an area

formerly covered by the sea.

Our Cape Doctor, the prevailing Southeast wind, evidently also slightly varied its direction in cycles of hundreds of years as we find areas like the Cape Flats and that between the Glencairn Quarry and Simon's Town being areas of heaped up blown sand and later to be overgrown by vegetation while dunes appear elsewhere for the process to be repeated.

Today this process has largely been arrested by the Rooikrantz wattle (a slight compensation by this foremost killer of our beautiful indigenous plants and flowers.)

Evidence has been found that a tribe of Strandlopers or Beachrangers were the earliest inhabitants of our areas. These were a taller race, but seem to have lived more or less the same type of lives as the smaller degenerate Bushmen, who found it easier to rely mainly on the sea to provide their food. These latter were the inhabitants of the Peninsula for centuries before and up to the European settlement. From data collected from middens and rock shelters in the South Peninsula, I can tell you something about them.

They were of small stature, usually under 5ft in height, of light brown colour, had high cheek bones, narrow foreheads and bulging lumps in the skull above the ears. Their hair grew in little tufts on the head. (The excellent specimens in the Cape Town Museum will give you the complete pictures.)

Theirs was a life in the open, they built no shelters, but made use of the excellent cover provided along our Peninsula beaches by the melkbos with its intertwining branches. Such shelters would usually be selected where drinking water is available. Here they would do their cooking, here they would sleep and would only resort to caves or rock shelters when bad weather compelled them to do so. Areas of abode are generally littered with the shells of shell fish from which they had removed the food, animal and bird bones, fish scales and an occasional piece of clay pottery. Remains of open shelters are at Kommetjie, Olifantsbos, Platboom. Good rock shelters are Peer's Cave, rock shelter at Witsand and the limestone caves near Buffel's Bay.

How did they clothe? Two skin thongs, a larger one in front and a smaller one at the rear fastened round the hips and covering only the middle part of the body. The dead were often buried in the heaped up ash and shell etc. of the cave floor. In the sand near open shelters, I have found skeletons buried in a sitting position, with the knees up to the chin. Their food consisted principally of shell fish, limpets, perlemoen and periwinkles, fish, seals, tortoises, birds, buck, snakes, edible bulbs and berries.

Their weapons, were bows and bonetipped arrows smeared with poison, and kieres. Implements they used were stone knives (they knew just where to strike a hard rock like dolerite to detach a piece with a cutting edge), scrapers, mortar and grinding stones. Utensils were clay pots, egg-shaped at the bottom and some were really well baked; bone awls, bone fish hooks, holed stones or kwés to lend weight to digging sticks, and ostrich egg shells. Generally, utensils and implements were reduced to a minimum and crudely finished.

A small cave near Rooikrantz had a floor of fish scales more than a foot thick bearing evidence of large catches over very long periods. Fish were also trapped in stone kraals built into the sea. Fish would come into them with the

incoming tide and be trapped when the tide receded. A good example is still to be seen just round the north corner of Buffei's Bay.

The Hottentots, when they appeared later from further inland, hardly ever entered the South Peninsula as they were a nomadic people who only came to seek a change of pasture for their cattle and sheep and of this there was little here beyond the Noordhoek - Fish Hoek Valley.

These "tall blacks", as the small men called them, were also their deadly enemies and they knew that a poisoned arrow from a hidden marksman awaited them here.

Apart from the wild animals at present still found in the Peninsula, there were also elephant, buffalo, hippo, lion, leopard, warthogs, badgers, hyenas, jackals and the bigger antelope. The following names still remind us of this: Buffel's Bay, Olifantsbos, Zeekoevlei, Ratelklip, Tierkop.

We can imagine our beach dwellers going about their daily task of procuring food and making the few articles they needed year after year and generation after generation without anything disturbing the peace and quietude except an occasional visit by some Hottentots to graze their cattle. We can also quite understand the uneasiness to the minds of a very superstitious people when they sighted the first Portuguese vessel off our coast. To them this was something supernatural, the spirits of which had to be appeased; and we can see them waking up at night with a start, to rekindle the dying embers of a fire at their feet to brood and muse over what the strange apparition may mean. When the settlement was established, some probably visited Table Valley and from the nearest dark shadows viewed the newcomers and silently went back to tell what they saw. As they made no distinction between game and the cattle of the settlers, they were regarded as vermin by the latter and exterminated when found.

Even some years after the landing of van Riebeeck, the South Peninsula remained unexplored as the Steenberg (Tokai) was the southern limit and the land beyond terra incognita. No wonder too, as the more fertile and arable land towards Stellenbosch and the Swartland invited expansion thither.

WHICH WAS YSELSTEIN BAY. PART II.
SIMON VAN DER STEL'S SURVEY OF FALSE BAY IN 1687.

By : H.C. Willis

It may be presumed that, following on von Breitenbach's reports, False Bay was used from time to time as a winter anchorage by vessels which happened to arrive at the Cape when northwest winds made Table Bay a dangerous anchorage.

The exact location of the "Ijsselstein's" anchorage is today of no more than academic importance and in those days was of no importance at all since the whole coast between Muizenberg and Simon's Bay in the north west corner of False Bay provides good shelter in all winds between west and north and a secure anchorage close into the shore.

No further exploration of False Bay was undertaken until sixteen years had passed after von Breitenbach's reconnaissance. There was in fact no urgent need for it, when many more important matters were occupying the attention of the few inhabitants of the settlement. It had been established that this part of False Bay provided a secure anchorage in winter, when Table Bay was not safe, but ships would only anchor there as a last resort owing to the extreme difficulty of communication by land between False Bay & Cape Town, the uncertain water supply & complete lack of provisions or any other facilities. The situation altered when Simon van der Stel was appointed Commander in 1678. He soon set about enlarging the boundaries of the settlement and investigating the possibilities of commercial development of the whole country. At first his explorations extended mainly to the northward and eastward and was not until the end of 1687 that he turned his attention to False Bay. During the last weeks in November of that year he led an expedition which made the first thorough exploration of the coast between Muizenberg and Simon's Town and of the various rocks and islands in False Bay.

The proceedings of the expedition are recorded day by day in the Dag Registeer, the original of which is in the Cape Archives (Inv. No. C.P. (Council of Policy) 131.) Among his "Précis of the Cape Archives", Dr. H.C.V. Leibbrandt made translation into English of the Dag Registeer. The particular volume covering the years 1684 to 1687, which contains the accounts of the expedition, is in manuscript (Inv. No. L.M.10). As it does not appear to have been published, and may not be widely known, the relevant passages are reproduced here verbatim.

The translation has been checked with the original by one of our members, Miss M. Cartwright. From this it appears that nothing relevant has been omitted. Where there is a possible alternative translation, the original words have been included in brackets.

JOURNAL 1687

SUNDAY 9th November.

The S. Easter begins to blow during the night, growing stronger during the day. Accompanied by some men, the Commander went to the nearest lands, intending thence to proceed to False Bay to examine it, and personally in the galiot "Die Noordt" to sound it, and endeavour to find a suitable anchorage for the Company's ships.

11th November.

Hot and calm weather. The Galiot "Noord" leaves at dusk for False Bay, in order to take the Commander on board there.¹

12th November.

Strong N.W. wind and hot weather.

The little yacht "Dolphyn" is under sail in order to follow the galiot "Noord" to False Bay.

15th November.

The S.E. wind blowing more violently, which however does not prevent the

company's works from being diligently carried on. The Commander having been informed by the skipper Pieter Janse-Timmerman, by means of a messenger that he had safely with his yacht "De Noord" anchored in False Bay, he was ordered at once to cross over to the western shore of the said bay in order there to take on board on the following morning His Honour and suite. In the meanwhile (in middels vertrek sy Ex... na...) His Honour accompanied by four of his body-guard proceeded to Iselstein Bay, encountering on the way a large tiger, which, in spite of all conceivable means adopted by hunters and hounds, escaped among the neighbouring bushes and stones, The Commander, continuing his journey along the beach, met three company's servants and a black boy, all stationed at the mines at the Steenberg, having with them two muskets. Having been asked why they were so far from their station and armed, they - replied that they were searching for some fugitive slaves who had broken out from their house and robbed it, in order to cure them of wantonness and deliver them into the hands of justice.

(Hiervandaan keerde de Commandant na de Kalk Baai). Hence the Commander turned towards Kalk Bay and sent another messenger to the skipper of the galiot with orders not to fail in carrying out his previous instructions to cross over without delay, but, as the messenger could not board the galiot and none out of her could land in consequence of the heavy seas, they gave each other's meaning by signs.

16th November, Sunday.

A stiff S.E. breeze towards evening.

The skipper, having at six o'clock in the morning informed the Commander that he had come to an anchor in a good bay in four fathoms still water, was ordered to weigh and proceed to Iselstein's Bay, the wind however having grown strong prevented him from proceeding in his boat to the galiot before the evening and the Commander from reaching the Iselstein's Bay on foot. The latter however not wishing to stand idle ordered the seine to be thrown out and thus caught a good quantity of steenbraasens as well as among other fish a skate of such a remarkable size that four men had enough to do to haul it on land with a rope.

17th November.

The S.E. wind growing in vehemence and bringing some rain towards evening. Notwithstanding the violent gale, the Commander, in order to save time and not minding the labour or trouble in order to break up and with bag and baggage to walk to Iselstein's Bay, consulted one of his bodyguard regarding the way and its distance. The latter replied that he would have to proceed for two hours along a dangerous and almost impassable way over heavy boulders and through dense bushes. He accordingly abandoned his intention and engaged himself in the meanwhile with other works.

18th November.

Same weather with heavy rains. At daybreak the galiot "Noord" was seen sailing into the Iselstein's Bay. According to the skipper her bottom was very

dirty and covered with barnacles so that she sailed and was steered with great difficulty. The Commander accordingly ordered her to be beached and cleaned. In the meanwhile, he went about inspecting the surrounding lands, rivers and forests and found the road, which the bodyguard had yesterday described as impossible, quite easy and easily with little trouble and expense made fit for wagons; and the bay itself most desirable with its convenience of fresh water and fuel for refreshing the ships that might anchor there; the veld around was also suitable for agriculture & pastures and covered by numbers of hartebeeste, rhebucks & other game. Some were shot for the table of the Commander who ordered the skins to be saved for the company's saddler, as well as to prepare them for that purpose. Most of the suite of the Commander being thoroughly exhausted by going to & fro, the Commander attended only by one bodyguard went a couple of miles further towards the mountains (na 't gebergte) on which were beautiful forests with luxuriant tops and growing in such an orderly manner as if they had been planted with human hands. There he also found two living & clear rivulets, a thickness of a man, a pleasant sight.

19th November.

The S. Easter remains the same and knows no ceasing. Now and then a shower drops rain.

The galiot having been beached and the weather being unfavourable for fishing, his Honour decided, in order to lose no time, to have the beach from Kalk Bay to Iselstein's Bay surveyed and laid down in a chart. With this he remained busy until about four o'clock in the afternoon, after which he visited the nearest forests, which had grown so closely into one another that no opening was left. His Honour accordingly ascended the mountain over-hanging it in order thus to discover what kind of wood was obtainable there and how large the trees were. Having seen that it promised something good without having made a careful examination, darkness overtook him which on account of the "danger from beasts of prey, especially tigers, compelled him to return to the beach and his tent.

20th November.

Calm hot weather. S. Easter in the morning. This afternoon the Commander was very busy bringing into a chart the coast and discovered rivers, whilst the skipper was hard at work cleaning the galiot. In the afternoon the seine was thrown out into the sea and a number of steenbraasen were caught and salted down and packed in a leaguer for the use of the company's slaves.

21st November.

Slight N.W. breeze which brought back the "Dolphyn" which had been unable to reach False Bay. A stiff S.Easter in the afternoon. News received that the Commander was about ten Dutch miles² away from this at False Bay, that the galiot had been made ready and again launched and that the Commander had gone on board her after having thrown out the seine four or five times with little success. His Honour took his course first to a fairly high and large rock, against which the water breaking makes Iselstein Bay a good roadstead

abounding in fish. On it were found many seals, penguins and seagulls all so tame that one could catch them with the hand and kill them. On the side of the rock one saw a round cave in which during a storm or bad weather a whole boat's crew could be sheltered. Not far from this there is another smaller one, standing about one ell above the water, and when the latter is low one can see right through both these caverns or arches³.

The Commander cruising about the bay from this spot had careful soundings taken and having during the evening returned to his camping place rejoiced that he had secured some advantage to the Company. After that the seine was again cast and two strange and beautifully coloured fishes were caught, not unlike the European salmon in size and form but far more beautiful and as it seemed, fast in swimming; besides these, fifteen silverfish and as many steenbraasen were also caught, so that the boat had to make two trips to the galiot to ship the catch and have it cleaned salted and packed in casks which had been placed on board for that purpose. Previously by order of the Commander the two large coloured fishes were drawn to life.

22nd November.

The S.Easter continuing. In consequence of the hard weather the commander could do nothing with the galiot but in order not to stand still he had the shore and rivers as far as the mouth of False Cape⁴ sounded and found the distance from Iselsteyn Bay to the aforesaid mouth to be five Dutch miles.

23rd November.

Same weather. Notwithstanding the hard storm, the water in Iselsteyn Bay was so still that one could easily sail to and fro in the boat which in similar weather would be impossible in False Bay.

The Commander having this afternoon viewed the surrounding rocks lands and shores resolved to discover whether the sea does not produce any oysters and after having searched sometime found one which had a good taste.

24th November.

The S. Easter ceases during the night and a N.W. breeze takes its place. Hot weather and strong sunshine.

The Commander, wishing to profit from the fine weather, boarded the galiot and sailed across towards the opposite shore, the Eastern coast of False Bay, which having approached to within a Dutch mile he found nothing but stony and foul ground and not the least spot for harbouring ships. He accordingly turned back to Iselsteyn Bay and as he had done when he started so on his return he had continually the lead out and found the grounds as shown on the chart; he took his course close by the large rock, where 20 fathoms of sandy bottom were found

25th November.

S.W. and N.W. wind. Sultry weather. The stormy weather and hollow seas did not permit the Commander to examine the second island in False Bay and therefore he ordered the skipper of the galiot, when the weather was favourable, to sail to Kalk Bay once more and take him on board there. Thither

accordingly he proceeded overland. On this spot a sheep was lost which a lion carried off from near the tent under the eyes of all the men and devoured with the exception of the head.

26th November.

The galiot enters Kalk Bay and having taken the Commander on board proceeds to the aforesaid island which having approached to within half a (Dutch) mile an incredible screaming was already being heard coming from the seals and all kinds of gulls and malagasen which together covered the island. Accordingly the galiot was anchored about twenty fathoms from the shore and some men, having been dispatched in the boat armed with clubs, could on landing find no spot on which to place their feet without treading on seals or birds which had no means of defending themselves when being killed except with their beaks and wings, whilst the seals rushed with such multitudes into the sea that the boat on her approach could hardly float and hardly had the men landed when the seals were there also, of which they brought with them on board two young ones with five or six malagasen and three baskets of eggs; and whilst they were thus busy inspecting the island the Commander busied himself with catching fish with the hook having remained on board because of the great and unbearable stench on the island. The fishes which his Honour caught were because of their rarity and beautiful colours, painted and were found to be delicious eating and in incredible numbers. It was so easy to catch them that one could not quickly enough throw the hook into the water in order to draw them up again with "Korhanen", red, spotted and other fish. Among these fish were also various sharks which despising the bait went off with the lead and line. Consequently the Commander having made a heavy shark's hook ready caught one a fathom and a half in length when he left off fishing. The expedition ended thus happily the Commander returned to Kalk Bay and thence to the place where the public service required his presence particularly.⁵

29th November.

Arrival in the afternoon of the galiot "De Noord" having successfully accomplished her purpose in False Bay.

30th November.

The Commander returned to the Castle and everyone was very glad of his happy return and the successful issue of the journey.

NOTE 1. "Galiot", a common type of small sailing vessel, An etching by Renier Nooms (1650) of "een Galioot" depicts a sharp-sterned clinker-built vessel of about 50 to 100 tons, fitted with lee-boards which suggests that she is flat. bottomed of shallow draught. She is ketch rigged with a bowsprit for a jib (not set in the picture) a fore stay sail, a loose-footed gaff mainsail and a small lateen mizzen,

NOTE 2. A "Dutch mile" was one fifteenth of a degree of latitude, equivalent

- to four nautical miles of 6,080 feet, or 4.6 English land miles.
- NOTE 3. This "Fairly high and large rock" can be none other than Noah's Ark Rock. The "Iselstein Bay" here mentioned as being protected by this rock, must therefore be the present Simon's Bay.
- NOTE 4. If for "as far as the mouth of False Cape" we read "as far ` as the mouth of the bay at False Cape", this phrase makes sense. in the sailing directions accompanying his chart, (to be dealt with in the next article) Simon van der Stel refers to the present Cape Point as "Cabo fals" while the ` Western point of Table Bay (i.e. the present Mouille Point) is labelled "Cabo de Bonesperance", surely a delightful confusion of languages.
- NOTE 5. No one, who has ever taken a trip to Seal Island, or fished near it can have any doubt about the identification of this place, which could easily have been written today. The screaming masses of seals and birds, the "great and unbearable stench" and sharks taking the hooked fish, lead and line: all are familiar.

Von Breitenbach seems to have come to the conclusion that Fish Hoek was the bay in which the "Iselstein" anchored, though he was probably mistaken. It is difficult to gather from Simon van der Stel's account exactly where he went or to which bay he is referring when he mentions Iselstein Bay. A possible interpretation is that at first he also thought that it was the present Fish Hoek, possibly being influenced by Von Breitenbach's description. As his exploration progressed and he discovered the obvious superiority of Simon's Bay as an anchorage, he came to the conclusion that this must have in fact been the bay where the "Isselstein" anchored.

He solved our problem, which probably never occurred to him, by giving Simon's Bay, his own name, which it retains to this day, and the name "Isselstein" in all its variations of spelling died away. : It is impossible to read the account of this expedition without realising what a competent leader Simon van der Stel must have been. He never allowed a moment to pass without doing something to further the objects of the expedition. If the weather was unfavourable he was busy writing up the results of his explorations, having drawings made of fish and other objects, compiling his chart or shooting the seine net to provide fish for his followers. When they are "fired out with going to and fro" he carries on exploring by himself until nightfall compels him to give up. The economic possibilities of developing a fishing industry, even to oysters, or timber or agricultural industry in the area, were all carefully investigated and appraised.

Simon's Town can be proud to be named after such man

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The Society was asked unofficially by the Captain Superintendent of Simon's Town Dockyard to submit a list of suitable names for the South African Naval Dockyard Tug recently launched in Cape Town The name selected from those submitted was "De Noordt", thus commemorating the Galiot in which Simon van der Stel carried out his survey of Simon's Bay in 1687.

SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM 1858?

By Margaret Cartwright.

Simon's Town over a hundred years ago was a quiet place, mainly concerned with the Naval Dockyard. It was connected with Cape Town by a daily mail cart service. Early visitors were sometimes not very impressed, in fact J. Robertson¹ states that "silence were possibly best".

He describes the settlement as having a solitary straggling street with "flat-roofed, matter-of-fact houses on one side and a flag staff or two, unseemly half artificial, half natural mounds, broken banks and hollows on the other." But four years later in March 1860, another visitor G.E. Bulger² was more complimentary. To him Simon's Town was a "pretty, clean little place" which

reminded him of an English watering place in the southern part of Cornwall. He commented on the fact that the streets were nearly all sand and built on the sea beach.

At the end of January, 1858 the arrival of the first of the Russian ships bound for the new Russian colony of Amoor in China created quite a stir, and by the beginning of April the squadron consisted of a Transport ship, 2 men-of-war, 2 gunboat and two corvettes. The bay was also filled with British ships - among them the coaling depot ship (HMS Seringapatam) H.M.S. Castor, H.M.S. St. Penelope, Himalaya, and Hermes. The streets of the town must have filled with the British sailors, dressed in their newly acquired official uniform of blue frocks tucked into their trousers, huge collars, blue jackets (hence the name), black silk handkerchiefs and straw hats, rubbing shoulders with the Russians. But as the newspaper accounts later point out "the Russians were a very quiet, inoffensive set of men whilst the English were like a set of bull-dogs, always ready for the fight." And on the Wednesday, April 7th, occurred what in the "Cape of Good Hope & Port Natal Shipping & Mercantile Gazette" is referred to as a "serious affray" and the Cape Argus as a "regular fight". I am quoting in full the newspaper account of the affair as it appears in the "Gazette" of 16th April as the leisurely and descriptive style is a pleasant contrast or anecdote to the "journalese" of today.

NOTE 1. 1. Robertson (J) Six years on the road, Cape Town, A.S. Robertson, W.L. Sammons & W.L. Sammons, 1856.

NOTE 2. Bulger. (G.E.) Extracts from my South African journal during 5 years service in the 2nd Battalion.... Bangalore Regimental Press, 1867.

A serious affray took place last week between the crews of the English and Russian men-of-war at present in Simon's Bay. The crews of both ships were on liberty and the row was originated by an English invalid soldier, who lost an arm in the Crimea. He walked up to some Russian sailors and taunted them with having robbed him of an arm but said he was ready to show them

that he had one left. This led to a fight and the English sailors standing by seeing five or six Russians hitting their one-arm comrade, joined in the fight. Shortly after this another knot of belligerents were observed hustling each other, but whether this arose out of the same circumstances is not known. A Russian officer attempted to interfere with a view to protect an Englishman who was attacked by a lot of Russians - the English sailor, however, struck the officer who came to his help. The Russian sailors then pitched into the English and this led to a general muster of forces on both sides. There were about 150 Russians and 100 English.

"The English were under command of a Marine, who drew them up in a line with their backs to the houses facing the bay, between Green's and Mellville's stables³ The Russians were drawn up on the opposite side, along the edge of the bank which leads down to the beach. The English provided themselves with the legs of tables, chairs and sticks, and seeing the Russians gathering stones, they set one of their men to work with an iron crowbar who tore up the stones from the street and placed them in a heap. Near where the Russians formed there were a lot of hand-spikes and pieces of wood, which they possessed themselves of.

"Both parties being well armed, the marine asked the English if they were ready. They answered "Aye, ready!" "Charge", he said, and no sooner was the order given than at it they went. The air was filled with a volley of stones from both sides. It was a desperate affair for five or ten minutes. Man after man was knocked down senseless, but it was evident that the battle was with the English; they set about it with great coolness and all made their blows tell.

NOTE 3. This is possibly somewhere near the site of the present Mission School - with the high bank leading down to the beach, and the only jetty being the one inside the West Dockyard.

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"The Russians at last gave way and were charged down the bank. Some were driven into the water; the great body were pursued down over the jetty and driven headlong over into their boats which were lying alongside.

"During the fight, we are told, the most savage cruelties were perpetrated on both sides. When one man fell, six others would run up and kick him. Many of the men's faces were much cut and bruised; but, strange to say, no very serious injuries were committed. It was thought at one time, that one of the Russians were killed - he appeared to be quite dead. The man who knocked him down appeared to be delighted that he had "settled a Russian", and he picked him up with great glee and threw him over the bank. The Russian recovered after lying insensible for about two hours.

"The Chief Constable (Mr. Rennick) attempted to interfere and got his arm broken, and one of the English sailors had a finger bitten off.

"Several of the English sailors have been brought up before the Resident Magistrate (G.W. Browning), charged with assaulting the Russians, and fined. One who was proved to have ill-treated a Russian who was lying on the ground after being knocked down, was sentenced to be sent to prison on rice and water for 6 days."

RESEARCH

To avoid duplication of effort in the examination of original source material for the history of Simon's Town, members are asked to notify the Hon. Secretary of any such work which they have done.

As an example, the following volumes in the Cape Archives have already been perused and abstracts, which are available to members, have been made of all references in them to Simon's Towns the work is being continued.

Inv. No.	B.O.8 Letters received from the Military 1795 - 1802	
	B.O.31 ditto from Overseers of the Boys ditto .	
	B.O.49 Letters dispatched within the Colony Feb.1796-March 1797	
	B.O.50 ditto	March1797-Jan 1798
	C.O.13 Colonial Office Letters	1808
	C.O.19 ditto	1809
	C.O.46 ditto	1814

A task, which would be most valuable to the Society, if any one cares to undertake it, is a translation of the Post Holder's Day Book from 1750 onwards, which is preserved in the Cape Archives.

THE CHURCH OF SS. SIMON & JUDE SIMON'S TOWN

by Lilian Reeve

Bishop Griffith was the first Roman Catholic Bishop at the Cape. He arrived from Ireland with a small band of helpers in 1838. In Simon's Town he found a large number of Catholics and regularly sent a priest out to minister to the Naval and Dockyard personnel. In 1850, the first Catholic Chapel was built, with the Rev. Kiernan as resident priest from 1850 to 1853.

The first Baptismal entry appeared in May 1850, the register being a series of foolscap pages covered with a thickness of brown paper.

Thereafter the following priests served here, Father Watkins, 1853 to 1867, Father Patric Dunne, 1867 to 1869 and Father Dr.John Rooney (later Bishop) 1869 to 1885. Dr Rooney was born in County Meath, Ireland, ordained in Rome and arrived in Cape Town in 1867, where he served at St. Mary's Cathedral. When he was appointed to Simon's Town, he made the trip by Cape Cart, the journey taking a day, with a stop at Farmer Peck's. The parish stretched from Kalk Bay, where a large Catholic community, mainly Spanish speaking Philippine fisher folk lived, to Simon's Town. For wedding ceremonies, the bridal couple would be ferried across from Kalk Bay by boat to the Chapel at Simon's Town and return by the same means.

On his rounds in the parish, Dr. Rooney rode on horseback and to

protect his delicate throat, grew a beard, which gave him a most venerable appearance. He also built a school adjoining the church in 1874. Miss Aggar was the principal.

The Church bell, which bears the date 1671, was cast in the Dockyard for Dr. Rooney. When the metal was still in the molten state, naval friends threw in silver coins, which is said to account for its sweet tone.

The present church and presbytery, was designed and built by Dr. Rooney in 1885, with local help. The original church was incorporated into the Presbytery and a larger stone church with a slate roof, was built alongside. The centre stained glass triple window above the Altar was donated by Judge Dwyer, in memory of his daughter Ida. Other windows were donated by Dr. Kolbe, Father Duignan, Father Bernard O'Riley as well as one by the builder and contractor. Father Bernard O'Riley was later ordained Bishop of the Western Cape.

Father Duignan came to the Cape by sailing ship in 1874 and on the way, the ship called at Tristan da Cunha where he set up the first Mission Station. The island was not visited by a Catholic priest again until 1945, when Father L.H. Barry, Naval Chaplain at Simon's Town paid a visit when H.M.S. Dragon took supplies there. On his arrival Father Duignan came to a little fishing

village, where about a hundred families, mostly fishermen who came from Manila, Java and the Philippine Islands, deserters from ships and shipwrecked mariners had settled. He built a small thatched roof school on the mountain slopes and a thatched roof church near the beach and dedicated it to St. James, Patron Saint of Fishermen. Often he gave Mass at Ss. Simon and Jude. When the railway line was being extended from Wynberg to Kalk Bay, the site on which his little church stood was expropriated for the railway station. Father Duignan, in his long flowing cloak, his white beard bristling with indignation, put his black shovel hat on and inspanned "Larry" his horse in the Cape cart and went to interview the General Manager of the Cape Government Railways. "And what are ye going to call the station?" he asked. When the General Manager looked nonplussed, he interrupted by saying: "Then I'll give ye a name for it, ye'll call it St. James, after my little church." And they did.

In 1886, Father Thomas Meagher became priest in charge of Ss Simon & Jude. He was a strict disciplinarian and when the curate Father Luke O'Reilly found himself in possession of a load of dynamite, he rather hid it under his bed than risk the wrath of his superior. This came about when in 1906, some Italian workmen quarrying stone for the Dockyard Extensions, got into a flaming temper about something, entrenched themselves with their ammunition in the quarry and dared all to come and get them. Father O'Reilly, being able to speak in their own language, went to mediate. He persuaded them to give the dynamite to him, then, not quite knowing what to do with it, he hid it under his bed. Father Meagher died in 1908 and then Father Bernard O'Riley was transferred from Mossel Bay to fill the vacancy. He served the parish until he became Vicar Apostolic in 1925.

Up to 1928, Father Thomas Cullen was Priest in Charge and then Father

Barry, a Mill Hill Father, took over until his death in the Naval Hospital in 1943. He was responsible for the introduction of the Ursuline Sisters who taught in the school until 1935, when the Dominican Sisters took over. They did splendid work and Mother Baptist, now in Krugersdorp is still spoken of with affection and respect.

The next Priest in Charge was Father Rene Michielsen, a Belgian, who had escaped from Singapore. He arrived in this country in only the army clothes he stood up in and for a long time, wore out the clothes of his predecessor, Fr. Barry. He worked hard and was respected by all, but he always hoped that he may return to Singapore, which he did in 1945.

Father Bernard Costello, just released from the Union Defence Force, in which he served as Chaplain, took over. In 1947, the school buildings consisted of only two classrooms. These were then enlarged and the following year the present St. Francis Xavier Mission School building was erected.

In 1950 Father Seba was in charge until 1960 when he was transferred to Pinelands.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.....

From the Cape of Good Hope Shipping and Mercantile Gazette 1861.

4th January:

In getting a large gun out of the "Seringapatam" (an old wooden sailing 5th rate ship later used as a coal hulk) for the "Sidon" (a steam frigate) to take with her, the mainmast broke and both gun and mast went to the bottom together. Although a number of seamen were engaged on the work not one was injured. It was a mercy that there were not at least twenty killed.

31st May:

An accident occurred on board H.M.S. "Narcissus" (the flagship) while firing minute guns for her late Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. As a seaman was loading the gun it accidentally went off, blowing the man's hand clean away. The sufferer was conveyed to the R.N. Hospital and amputation of the arm being necessary, the operation was performed by Dr. Ross. The poor man is doing well.

29th November:

The Roman Rock Lighthouse is cracked to that extent at and about the basement that the Colonial engineer has refused to take it over on the part of the Government, so convinced is the resident engineer of its weakness that he has put twenty four iron bands round it to hold it together.

QUEEN VICTORIA JUBILEE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN 1897

by E.J. HOLLOWAY

This fountain, now situated on Jubilee Square, was first sited off the Main Road, in front of the present St. Frances' Mission School. At that time there was only one approach road to Soldier's Way, and that was the road leading to the Railway Station.

When the Council constructed the small section of Soldier's Way leading to the town, the fountain was found to be an obstruction because of the gradually increasing volume of traffic.

In 1935, the fountain was removed to the square in front of the old Municipal Building, and the place named "Jubilee Square."

The fountain, as I knew it at about 1910, was fitted with four iron cups. On the bottom of each cup was an iron chain connected to a ring fixed to the fountain. Adjoining this chain fixture were four iron pins, about four inches long, over which the cups were placed when not in use. Below each cup a spring-controlled tap was provided for supplying water for the cups.

The large circular bowl below these taps, (now filled with earth and plants), was always full of water, and this facility was enjoyed by the hard working animals, of which there were so many during that early period.

The large lamp above the fountain acted as a street light. There was no electricity supply to the town in those days, so the lamp provided was the "Kitson" type, which burnt vaporised paraffin oil over a white hanging mantle, contained in a closed glass fitting. The cylinder containing the oil and the compressed air was housed in the circular base beneath the fountain. All the street lights at the time consisted of the "Kitson" lamp type, and the Council employed a man whose job it was to push a wheelbarrow containing two four gallon tins of paraffin and foot pump from lamp to lamp, filling them with oil and pumping the cylinder with air, until the gauge on the cylinder registered at the red mark. This mark could be adjusted to suit the various seasons, or to suit any variation in the times required for the lamps to burn.

Very often, either due to a slight blockage in the vapour supply line, or through insufficient pumping of air, the lamp mantle would catch fire and burn with a dull flame blackening the interior of the lamp glass.

If a street lamp on the outer edges of the town interfered with, or hindered the romances of a courting couple, it was common practice to open the door containing the oil cylinder and close the supply valve, when it was contended by the couple that the moon looked most superb without the assistance of artificial light.

One elderly Council lamplighter, by name of Adams, died suddenly at his post one night, having only attended to a little more than half the lamps to be lit.

The "Kitson" lamps were finally wired to take electricity and remained in use for years, while the Council obtained its electricity supply from H.M. Dockyard. With the supply of electric current being taken over by the City of

Cape Town, these fixtures were removed and replaced by the standard pole and lamp.

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To The Admiralty for the gift of four large volumes of photographs covering the construction of the East Dockyard 1902 - 1910 and other Admiralty works.

To the Admiralty Librarian for a copy of "The Record of Admiralty House, Simon's Town, "of which a very limited number of copies has been produced."

To Mrs. Wright for permission to copy some excellent photographs of Simon's Town in the 1860's.
