



**SIMON'S TOWN HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



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LIST OF OFFICE BEARERS 1962

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EDITORIAL

It must be clearly realised that none of the editors so far and only one or two of the contributors to the Bulletin have been trained historians. It is inevitable, therefore, that occasional mis-statements of fact will occur, especially where an article is based on personal reminiscences. Readers are asked to point out in writing for publication in the Bulletin any mistakes which they come across, as it is quite possible that such errors, if left uncorrected, may at some future date be accepted as true facts, solely on the ground that they were published in the Simon's Town Historical Society's Bulletin

Our Society has suffered the grievous loss in the departure from Simon's Town of our Chairman and Hon. Secretary/Treasurer, John and Helene Scott. The Society is greatly indebted to them both for their invaluable work throughout the first two years of its existence, and in particular for the production of the first four numbers of the Bulletin, for which they, with the new Chairman, have been almost entirely responsible.

Some re-organisation in the production of the Bulletin has become necessary. In future, an Editorial Sub-Committee consisting of Mr. Hutchings and Commanders W.D. Hogg and E. Banks will be responsible for the selection and editing of all material submitted for inclusion in the Bulletin, and Mr. F.P. Chapman has kindly undertaken responsibility for cutting of the stencils.

Due to the inexperience of the editors, a mistake has been made in numbering the pages of the Bulletin. Up to the present, the pages of each issue have been numbered from "one" upwards. This system will cause confusion in the indexing of a complete volume.

The Editorial Committee has therefore decided to complete Volume I, with the present issue No. 4, instead of it consisting of eight or ten issues as originally intended. The only satisfactory alternative was the inconvenient one of re-numbering the pages of Nos. 2 and 3. An Index to Volume 1 is being compiled and will be issued in due course.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, APRIL, 2nd, 1962

As this Society enters its third year of existence, it is my my privilege to report on the progress made during the past year. This Historical Society of ours is now established and recognized by various bodies from inside as well as outside South Africa. We have had queries referred to us by such august bodies as The Kipling Society, London and the Admiralty, which when asked for the record of a certain Mr. Nightingale, referred the matter to this Society. Yale University in the United States wrote asking to be put on our mailing list, while extracts from our bulletin have appeared in the "Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute".

Such recognition of our existence points to the good work done by the Society and also the high quality of its bulletins, for we can be certain that such well-known organizations as these which have entered into

correspondence with us, would not be interested in any insignificant society.

Other events have been:-

1. The saving of the monograms on the Dockyard gates following representations made on behalf of this Society to the Hon. The Minister of Defence.
2. The Society was also consulted on a suitable name for the newly acquired tug for the S.A. Navy. from those submitted, the name . "De Noord" was chosen. This was the name of the galiot in which Simon van der Stel carried out his survey of False Bay.
3. A tour of places of historical interest in Simon's Town by pupils of the Westerford High School was ably conducted by our Hon. Secretary. This tour was recorded by "The African Mirror".
4. During the year we have had interesting talks by Mr. L.C. van Oordt and Mr. H. Jager, both experts in their sphere and tonight we have Prof. Bokhorst, of the Michaelis Art Gallery who will give a talk on "The Old Town House and Greenmarket Square".
5. In addition to all this, we have had correspondence with various interested people and various societies, covering a variety of subjects, in the course of which. a number of very useful contacts were made. These have been dealt with at our Ordinary Meetings and extracts will appear in future bulletins.
6. Our Bulletin has been published at regular half-yearly intervals and each number has been well received. It is perhaps not generally realised how much work is involved in its production and that its publication fell upon the shoulders of three people.

The membership of this Society stands at 83, of which 33 only have paid up for 1962. A further distressing point is that only 34 are of Simon's Town and Glencairn. It is a sad state of affairs that so few of our fellow citizens are interested in the history of their town. I would qualify this by saying it is not enough just to be a member of the Society, but that some practical interest and willingness to work for its aims, should be shown.

This is of great importance for the Society has acquired a large number of items of various kinds and has reached the stage where a museum could be considered. Negotiations are now under way to acquire a room for this purpose.

Once such a room is obtained, this Society will have to be put on a more business-like basis and the work be more equally and widely distributed. Then also our acquisitions, some of which are valuable, should be insured and secured against loss. The question of a curator would also have to be raised.

At this stage I would like to convey the thanks of the society to Mrs. H. Scott, the Hon. Secretary, for the tremendous amount of work she puts in on our behalf, the typing of the bulletin, the handling of a great deal of correspondence, the arrangements of tours and the cataloguing of our acquisitions.

To Mr. H.C. Willis, who, despite ill-health, devotes much of his time to the Society's interest especially in research and compiling of the bulletin.

To Miss Margaret Cartwright, who has taken on the post of Arrangements Secretary to deal with our meetings, etc.

I also wish to acknowledge the services of:

- (a) The Simon's Town Municipality, who duplicate our bulletin as well as supply the paper, and who gave such lavish refreshment to the Westerford School children on their outing.
- (b) Messrs. Clyde Printing Works, who bind our bulletin at very low cost.
- (c) The contributors of articles for the bulletin and donors of items for our collection.

In conclusion I wish to say that I am proud of having been chairman of this Society during a period of its establishment and successful growth and regret that I can no longer be actively associated with it. This is due to my appointment as headmaster of a school in Port Elizabeth and the consequent severing of my connections with Simon's Town. Both my wife and I shall naturally remain members of the Society and shall follow all its activities with the keenest interest. We wish it every success in the future.

J.B. Scott.

THE CONVICT-SHIP "NEPTUNE" IN SIMON'S BAY.

by R.F.M. Immelman

On 19th September, 1849, the "Neptune" sailed into Simon's Bay with a cargo of 282 convicts on board, guarded by a couple of officers and 47 soldiers of the 91st Regiment. The excitement at the Cape, caused by this event, was intense. The Colonists had founded the Anti-Convict Association, under the chairmanship of John Bardwell Ebdon and with the powerful support of John Fairbairn's South African Commercial Advertiser and all other newspapers in the Cape Colony. Meetings, resolutions of protest and petitions against turning the Cape into a penal settlement, were the order of the day throughout the Colony. The colonists bound themselves not to have any truck with the Governor or the Government, not to supply the army or navy or government officials with any foodstuffs, until the convicts had been sent away. Sir Harry Smith, the Governor, decided that he had no authority to order the convict-ship to proceed elsewhere, but at the same time he temporised to the extent that he would not allow any convicts to land nor would he accept any responsibility for them. The naval authorities were therefore faced with the responsibility for feeding the convicts, soldiers and sailors in the "Neptune."

Boycott

At 12.30 a.m. on the night of 19th-20th four representatives of the Anti-Convict Association left Cape Town for Simon's Town, arriving there at breakfast-time. These four men were: O.Ostruter, Thomas Ansdell, A. McDonald and A.de Passe. Saunders, the secretary of the Anti-Convict Association, had been at Simon's Town the previous day, but when the deputation arrived, he returned to Cape Town, to report to the Association's executive regarding the happenings since the arrival of the ship at Simon's Town. The deputation immediately interviewed Commodore Wyville, who was in charge of the naval base.

"who told us in a straightforward manner, that the convict ship did not belong to his department, but that he should supply her with provisions from motives of humanity, and that the soldiers on board would be equally supplied either from the town or from the naval stores but that otherwise the convicts would be kept completely isolated from the shore." ¹

1. Letter from the four representatives of the Anti-Convict Association dated 20th September, at 4 pm. to the Secretary and published in the public press. cf. Cape of Good Hope Observer 25.9.1849, p.619

Granger of Granger and Company, local shipping agents for the "Neptune", was at first refused permission by the Commodore to go on board, but after the arrival of the Governor's Aide-de-Camp, he set off in a naval boat from the Dockyard. On his return he immediately reported at the Committee Room set up by the Anti-Convict Association in Simon's Town and explained that:

"his only motive for going on board was to discover what was the precise position of the vessel as regards her charter, all particulars of which he has thus submitted."²

The representatives reported that there had been no other communication with the "Neptune" that day. Some of the convicts on board were stated to be suffering from scurvy and one of them was removed to hospital on another naval vessel in the bay.

Local Suppliers

A certain De Wet held the contract with the naval authorities in Simon's Town for the supply of provisions. On the afternoon of 20th September, J.B. Ebdon and John Fairbairn, two of the chief moving spirits of the Anti-Convict Association, arrived in Simon's Town for the purpose of urging De Wet to break his contract and to make the boycott more effective:

"They complained, that the gentlemen who formed the Simon's Bay Commission³ had not gone ahead fast enough, and they personally caused the suspension of supplies on the part of various dealers, not merely to the Convict Ship, but to the Naval Department."⁴

When Ebdon and Fairbairn arrived back in Cape Town, they advised Morkel and De Villiers, De Wet's suppliers in Cape Town, to send him only sufficient supplies for his civilian customers, so that even if he wished, it would be impossible for him to supply the Navy. Cairncross and Son of Cape Town was another firm to hold naval contracts. As with De Wet, they too would incur heavy penalties by not fulfilling their contract.

Immediately on the arrival of the "Neptune", the Anti-Convict Association's committee had adopted a resolution that anybody supplying the Navy at Simon's Town would be breaking the Pledge which everybody had

accepted and signed some months earlier.⁵ The other shopkeepers at Simon's Town did not try to take advantage of De Wet's inability to fulfil his contract "but preferred to suffer the loss themselves, by refusing supplies to any branch of the Naval Department."⁶

and yet it soon transpired that some people were endeavouring to cash in on the misfortune of others:

".....It will be impossible for Cape Society to permit men to rise upon the ruins of their neighbours' fortunes when these fortunes have been sacrificed to the public interest.... Cape Society will be beneath contempt if this is ever permitted. Mr. van Reenen has already found that it was impossible to supplant Messrs. Morkel and De Villiers in Cape Town, and so, it is hoped, it will be with Messrs. Stanford and Hugo at Simon's Town, who appear to calculate upon Mr. de Wet's odium with the Naval Department for their own future aggrandizement...."⁷

2. Cape Of Good Hope Observer, 25.9.1849 p.619

3. The Local Simon's Town branch of the Anti-Convict Association. —.

4. Op. cit 4.12.1849 p. 776

5. ibid. 3.7.1849, p. 148: full text of "The Pledge"

6. Cape of Good Hope Observer, 2.10.1849, p. 633

7. ibid. 9.10.1849, p. 648

The Convicts on Board

In the meantime the Governor was experiencing many a headache from the predicament of a ship at anchor in Simon's Bay having to be treated as if on the high seas. The colonists were bitterly resentful of the fact that, although the Governor had promised that there would be only absolutely essential communication between the "Neptune" and the land, yet the Captain had come ashore and some of the sailors had even travelled to Cape Town. On the other hand, several persons who had no official status, had gone on board. The inadequate guard on board caused extreme dissatisfaction, for several convicts had escaped. Early in October, moreover, it was reported that the convicts had nearly succeeded in unloosening the anchor chain, which had they done so, would have caused the ship to drift ashore and they would all have escaped on land.⁸

Imagination baulks at trying to picture the state of mind of the hundreds of men, soldiers, sailors and convicts - who after having already been at sea for five months on the voyage from Bermuda, continued to be confined on a small ship of 643 tons - and that so close to land⁹ - for a further five months. No wonder that we hear that the convicts became desperate and petitioned the Governor

"to relieve them from the misery of looking at the shore from their wooden prison-house, in constant uncertainty of their further

confinement."¹⁰

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In his Jail Journal¹¹ one of the convicts -in the "Neptune", John Mitchel, gives us an insight into how the stirring events on shore appeared to a spectator, involuntarily provided with a ringside seat. He was an Irish political prisoner who, while the ship lay in Simon's Bay, mentions being supplied with many Cape newspapers, and meeting men like Bishop R. Gray of Cape Town and Rev. Edward Judge of Simon's Town. Mitchel tells us that

"I was delighted to find the colonists so determined to resist the abominable outrage attempted by 'Government!' - that they were completely in the right, and hoped they would stand out to that last extremity - ... they were engaged in a great struggle ... we may lie here in a kind of moral quarantine for 6 months, before any decisive order arrives."¹²

8 *ibid.* 9.10.1849, p. 648

9 *ibid.* 25.9.1849, p. 627

10 *ibid.* 9.10.1849 p. 648

11 Mitchel, John. *Jail Journal... on board the "Neptune" convict ship at Cape of Good Hope (during Anti-Convict rebellion)..* Dublin, Gill, reprint of, 1854 ed.

12 *ibid.* p. 176

SIMON'S TOWN AGOG

On the 20th September he notes that

"Simon's Town is in evident excitement today; there is a public meeting, attended by a good many Cape Town members of the 'Anti-Convict Association' who instantly posted down to hold a solemn council of war, in full view of the enemy."¹³

He seems to have been kept fully posted as to the course of events on shore, for on the 21st his entry reads:

"The meeting yesterday resolved on applying the anti-convict 'pledge' rigorously.... All the Simon's Town shopkeepers were made to sign this pledge on the spot, tho' sore against their will; for this little town depends wholly on the dockyard and the custom of the men-of-war's men. Watch has been set on shore (men with telescopes, called Committee of Vigilance) to keep a constant eye upon the "Neptune" and the boats to and fro - also, on the Simon's Town shopkeepers, who need watching too."¹⁴

Members of the Anti-Convict Association came down to Simon's Town in pairs turn and turn about to relieve the "Committee of Vigilance" who were stationed on a balcony to keep watch, night and day, with telescopes trained on the ships in the Bay and report any infringement of non-communication,

except government officials, between ship and shore.¹⁵

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On 25th September the Association's representatives in Simon's Town were being exhorted to keep a closer watch than before in case supplies were finding their way into the Dockyard from sources outside the Peninsula.¹⁶

Seeking Provisions

Mentioning that the Commodore had sent them fresh beef for all hands, Mitchel tells how the former obtained it by the stratagem of ordering a two days supply of beef at once for his own ship, then quickly conveying it across his deck to a boat hidden on the side away from the town and having it rowed across to the "Neptune."

Then he proceeds to describe the feverish activities on shore, watching which must have helped him to while away many an hour of boredom, as week succeeded week and still the convicts remained confined:

"The road to Cape Town lies close along the beach, winding round the base of the mountains, being, in fact, the sea-sand moistened and hardened by the tide. Along this road there is now a continual posting, riding, and running. Two or three Military persons, one being Quarter-master-General and 2 medical officers, came on board the "Neptune" today sent by the Governor, to inspect."¹⁷

13 *ibid.* p.119

14 *ibid.* p.180

15 *ibid.* p.188

16 Cape of Good Hope Observer, 25.9.1849, p.616

17 Mitchel. p.181

Mitchel's entry in his journal for 22nd September is illuminating:

"No more fresh meat. The 'Committee of Vigilance' found out the commodore's manoeuvre, and now the people refuse to supply meat, or anything else, to the commodore himself or to any ship of the squadron - or any branch of the naval department. There are four ships of war lying here, with about nine hundred men, and they are all reduced to salt rations as well as we. By sheer luck there is great abundance of excellent fish in this bay and one of the frigate's boats has just drawn a noble draught of them. So we are supplied with fresh fish for tomorrow."¹⁸

The Untouchables

In order to provide more space in the "Neptune", 120 convicts were transferred to another ship in the bay. This action causes Mitchel to comment: "We seem to be preparing to spend the summer here"¹⁹ He goes on to relate how the captain of their ship armed himself with a brace of pistols when he went ashore. The latter found the population "very quietly disposed", but they

would have nothing to do with him. When he tried in several shops to buy a

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pipe, a glass for his watch and a loaf of bread, nobody would attend him. At length, Mitchel relates, the captain

"went into the house of a poor woman, who keeps a small bakery and confectionery shop, and who has hitherto lived by supplying the men-of-war with fresh breakfast bread. She told him, with tears, that she was utterly - ruined that the farmers and millers had ceased sending flour or grain to Simon's Town, that but one baker could now keep his oven hot, and was restricted to selling at each house what would keep its known inmates only. While they talked, the baker's cart came up; the captain begged her, as she was buying for herself, to get two loaves more, and sell them to him; but she protested, in the greatest agitation, that if she even asked for, such a thing, she would get no more bread for herself."²⁰

The Commodore was, however, quite determined by hook or by crook, to feed his men and one night organized a cattle raid:

"Before morning they drove into Simon's Town a herd of cattle; fife and drum headed the procession, playing one of the jolly airs to which seamen are accustomed.... The 'Committee of Vigilance', keeping vigil all night upon a balcony were astounded."²¹

18 ibid. p.184

19 ibid. p.185

20 ibid. p.186

21 ibid. p.186 and 196

Mitchel added that the Commodore, of course paid for the cattle. These raids seem to have continued and Mitchel tells us he could count the cattle lying on the grass of Admiralty House lawns. As a result, people living along the roads leading to Simon's Town, were asked to keep an eye open for any cattle being driven past their homes in that direction and to report any movement of the kind at once.²²

The sailors were naturally incensed by the treatment meted out to them on the part of the colonists. The gunner's mate of one ship being on shore one evening, overheard a man talking in the street

"about the infamous government design of sending convicts among them to corrupt their morals, and violate their daughters".

Thereupon the seaman lost his temper, went up to the man, calling him "one of the cursed anti-convict lubbers", hit the man in the face with his fist and knocked him down. There is no doubt that there was considerable tension in the air at the time. One of the Association's representatives who happened to be on duty in Simon's Town one Saturday evening, was assaulted by eight or ten junior officers from two of the naval vessels in the Bay. The report stated

that all the officers attacked him at the same time. They wanted to throw him

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off the jetty into the sea, but, after some blows had been exchanged, he somehow managed to fend them off.²³ The situation was in fact going from bad to worse:

"There is no relaxation of the blockade, however, shop-keepers here will absolutely sell nothing to anybody belonging to the ships of war or the "Neptune". Simon's Town, indeed, must go to win, if the struggle last long, and the inhabitants are complaining bitterly; but public opinion is inexorable."²⁴

Late in October Messrs. Hablutzel and Hugo, butchers at Simon's Town, were put under the ban of the Anti-Convict Association, because they had broken the pledge.²⁵

The Plot Thickens

Bishop Gray, the first Metropolitan of the Anglican Church in the Colony, visited the convict-ship on 30th September, when he preached on the deck to the convicts. We are told "he heartily approves of the anti-convict movement". On October 11th another large meeting in Cape Town resolved to shut all shops and to deal only with regular customers who had signed the pledge. Immediately after the meeting the Cape Town shops closed and a messenger on horseback was at once sent to Simon's Town with instructions forthwith to enforce the observance of the pledge even more rigorously. The Irishman in Mitchel applauded all the agitation, the opposition to and obstruction of the authorities: he foretold that the result would be the growth of a "national brotherhood instinct with the vital fire of liberty" and resolved enthusiastically - this in 1849 mark you-:

"I drink tonight, with enthusiasm, in red wine of Cape vines, the health of the future South African Republic."²⁶

22 Cape of Good Hope Observer, 25.9.1849, p.616

23 ibid. 9.10.1849, p.652

24 ibid p. 187

25 Mitchel p.200

26 idid. p.195

A clergyman from the "Neptune" who had gone to Cape Town, had to walk from Wynberg. When people discovered who he was, he had to leave his hotel and he could not hire a horse or cart to take him to Simon's Town.

Gloom and Death

A lighter touch is found on 26th October, when Mitchel's entry reads:

"Meantime enter a basket, with superb clusters of grapes African grapes:

smooth and round, with a glow of opaline light in the heart of them."²⁷

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Quite clearly they seduced him from his gloomy ruminations, but where at the Cape, one is constrained to ask were ripe grapes to be found as early as October? Were the seasons different then or what could account for his entry on 8th February:

"I am tired of the Cape: for the vintage season is long past: and I can no longer have my usual breakfast of grapes and coffee"²⁸

On 1st January, 1850, he writes despairingly:

1. "Still riding at anchor in this weary Simon's Bay. There is no change whatever since I made my last memorandum - more than two months ago."²⁹

Apparently, being a political prisoner of superior education, Mitchel was given special privileges and allowed to walk on the captain's deck "as one might see from the street in Simon's Town."³⁰

He also noticed that

"The Cape newspapers, I observe, never mention my name: they cannot afford to let the public mind dwell upon the fact that there is anything on board the "Neptune" but a mass of incarnate burglary, thievery and corruption"³¹

The fact that Mitchel sympathized with the colonists had obviously leaked out and this aroused their curiosity about him.³²

Prior to the arrival of the "Neptune", the Governor had persuaded Rear Admiral Reynolds to remain in Simon's Bay with his naval squadron until the convict-ship had come and it had become clearer what the prevailing state of affairs would be.³³ He was clearly uneasy and may have feared an uprising or armed revolt in the then existing state of public excitement and unrest. The ships were kept on hand for all those months in order to bolster up the Governor's authority.³⁴

27 ibid p.204

28 ibid p.214

29 ibid p.204

30 ibid p.188

31 ibid p.196

32 ibid p.188

33 Cape of Good Hope Observer, 16.10.1849, p.673

34 Mitchel p.220

In the previous July already the Governor had been told that "The proposed detention of the "Neptune" in Simon's Bay would be as unpardonable and injurious as if an obscene print were ordered to be suspended in every school, or exhibited in every playground."³⁵

Time had not caused the colonists to moderate their language and by December the colonial press was calling the "Neptune": "the obscene portrait in Simon's Bay."³⁶

During the voyage seven convicts had died at sea, while 10 days after their arrival, Dr. James M. Deas, "the surgeon-superintendent of convicts by the "Neptune"³⁷ of died in Simon's Town. His tombstone which may still today be seen in Simon's Town cemetery bears the following inscription:-

"James M. Deas, M.D. Surgeon, Superintendent Convict ship "Neptune" who died in Naval Hospital, Simon's Town, 29th September, 1849, aged 37.

The premature death of this lamented officer was accelerated by his increasing exertions and anxiety of mind when in charge of 282 exiles during a tedious and protracted voyage of 148 days from Bermuda to the Cape of Good Hope and from disappointment in finding on his arrival at Simon's Bay that he could not be released from his responsible charge."

From the records of St. Francis Church it appears that a Mary Lynch, aged 28, also died in the "Neptune" and was buried in the old cemetery. The church records further show that a number of infants born in the ship were baptized by the Rev. Judge at the time.

Old Records Tell a Tale

Some old account books have recently been presented to the Simon's Town Historical Society which throw a curious light on the state of affairs during the stay of the "Neptune" in Simon's Bay. These books belonged to the firm of shipping agents in Simon's Town, William Anderson and Son, and cover the years 1846 to 1856. The particular volumes for the period of the "Neptune's" stay are unfortunately not quite complete, as the one from 13th October to 30th November is missing. From these account books one has to conclude that either minor infringements of the boycott were permitted or that Anderson refused to participate in it, unless the Anti-Convict Association specifically excluded shipping agents and allowed them to carry on their normal business. Practically every day some purchases were made, but almost without exception they were small. The very first sale on the 29th September

35 Cape of Good Hope Observer, 4-12.1849, p.776

36 *ibid.* p. 776

37 Grey, Earl. The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russel's Administration. London,

was one cask of four dozen ale for £2.2.0, while on 3rd October two pounds of tobacco were supplied costing 3/- and on 5th October one clasp knife and 4½ gallons of lamp oil amounted to 16/4. On October 8th, 28 lbs. of crushed sugar and 28 lbs. of moist sugar cost £1.8.0. On 4th December such small items as 1 bottle of black pepper, 1 basket of salt, 3 bars of soap and 5 gallons of lamp oil amounted to 18/9. Other purchases included 1 paint brush at 1/-, 4 lbs. of butter at 6/- and ¼ lb. of burnt umber at 1/-. Not till 2nd January, 1850, do we find 20 lbs. of white rice at 3/4 and on another occasion 50 lbs. of salt at 4/2, although two blue shirts (boatswain) were supplied at 11/-. On 7th January, one cheese of 31 lbs at £2.3.11. and next day 85 lbs. of tobacco at £3.10.10. were among the larger items.

A shipping agent had presumably, on occasion, to play undertaker too, as on 23rd January appears an entry: "paid for making coffin for seaman £1.10.0." and the next day "paid sexton for digging grave for seaman 7/6", while on February 2nd appears the curious item: "paid Bodeman for recovering body of seaman drowned 10shillings." Presumably the coffin and grave were required for the seaman who had been drowned in the Bay.

Not till February 7th was there another purchase of drink when four dozen ale costing £2.2.0 and one dozen whiskey for £1.16.0. may have been laid in in anticipation of their departure, for rumours were flying round that despatches from Earl Grey could shortly be expected to end their long sojourn in Simon's Bay. Then on February 12th oddments were bought for repairs to clothes: ¾yd. shalloon, 3 skeins black silk, 1 yd. of twist and ½ doz. vest buttons amounting to 1/11.

Impending Departure

On 15th February a really substantial order clearly presages the impending departure of the ship, news of which had been received from Britain on 14th February. These were required for the long voyage to Tasmania. Some of the larger quantities were:

22 gals. lamp oil	£3.11.6	4 cheeses (26¼ lbs)	2.3.4
50 lbs crushed sugar	1.9.2	6 hams (72¼ lbs)	4.10.7
50 lbs. coffee	1.9.2	4 bags potatoes	3.15.8
1 bag rice	1.7.0	(560 lbs)	
100 lbs. coarse salt	8.4	15 gals. brandy	5.12.6
case 117 lbs. tobacco	6.16.6.	1 box 50 lbs. raisins	1.5.0
cask 25 lbs. butter	2.13.9	1case 1 doz. pickles	15.0
3casks 12 doz. ale	6.6.0	2casks 7 doz. porter	3.13.6
2 cases 6 doz. port	10.4.0	2 dz bottled pints	2.2.0
2 boxes soap	1.6.0	½lb. thread	1.6

Including a variety of spices and some crockery, the order that day amounted to £65.3.9. The total transactions between Wm Anderson and Son and the owners of the "Neptune" amounted to £296.19.5, plus £3.4.7 as

interest at 2% on cash advanced to Captain Henderson during the five months.

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It is not unlikely from the nature of the above purchases, that these supplies were probably in the main for the officers' mess on board ship. It strikes one that Anderson was allowed to supply a small quantity of provisions for the seamen and officers, so long as it did not go to the convicts. Obviously when the Anti-Convict Association knew that the "Neptune" was departing, no obstacle was placed in the way of supplying her with provisions for the voyage.

The Curtain Drops

The sojourn of the Neptune in Simon's Bay was probably one of the most stirring episodes in the long history of Simon's Town and focused the eyes of the whole Colony and of Britain on the drama being enacted in Simon's Bay.

The final entry in Mitchel's journal reads:

"There is great rejoicing at Cape Town ... a grand dinner, and illuminations, such as South Africa has never yet beheld;.... on the night after we have set sail the southern firmament is to be startled by a splendour

....I have been walking all night on the deck, enjoying a most lovely night, and taking my last look at Africa. So the contest is over, and the colonists may now proceed about their peaceful business.... Long may they sleep in peace, without bolt or lock on their hospitable doors!.... I watched the sun set behind the hills; and his last purple gleams blushing on the peaks of distant mountains, turning every splintered cliff into a perfect amethyst.... Morning will dawn tomorrow on the proudest day South Africa has yet beheld.

19th. - We sail this day: the wind full against us, blowing straight up the bay.... we are moving slowly out of Simon's Bay, and down the broad expanse of False Bay. The mountains are fading behind us..."

And on 19th February, 1850; the convicts departed.

Members (and others interested) are urged to submit articles or notes for inclusion in the Bulletin. Facts about Simon's Town and the South Peninsula are the essential requirement. Literary merit is a minor consideration as any material submitted can, if necessary, be put into proper form for publication by the Editorial Committee. Contributions should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, c/o Municipal Offices, SIMON'S TOWN.

JOHN DEAS THOMSON, JUNR.

Naval Storekeeper and Agent Victualler at the Cape of Good Hope 1829 to 1845, and Justice of the Peace for the District of Simon's Town

by
H.C. WILLIS

Our Society has recently been presented with an original letter from the Victualling Office in London addressed to Wm. Pennell Esq., at the Cape of Good Hope instructing him to hand over his situation of Naval Storekeeper and Agent Victualler (which office he had held since 24th May, 1813) to Mr. John Deas Thomson, Junr. The letter is dated the 27th July, 1829 and is endorsed "per "Patriot" 22d Jany., 1830.

This letter opened up a line of enquiry, which well illustrates the cumulative value of small and isolated items of information. The Society already had two small notes about Mr. Thomson, one, contributed by a member in Port Alfred, to the effect that he was a Justice of the Peace in 1843 and another provided by a local member who had come across an entry in the Fairbridge Index in the Cape Archives that Thomson was sentenced to transportation for 14 years for embezzlement. A third item found in standard naval history showed that a John Deas Thomson, F.R.S. held the office of Accountant General of the Navy from 8th May 1829 until July 1829, that is just at the time when a person of the same name was given an appointment at the Cape of Good Hope.

It was difficult to reconcile the discrepancies between these three items; that a Justice of the Peace who was himself or was related to, a Fellow of the Royal Society should be guilty of embezzlement seemed to warrant further enquiry, which was carried out by our new Secretary Miss M. Cartwright. This brought to light some interesting facts about Mr. Thomson's career in Simon's Town, including full accounts of his trial published in "Sam Sly's African Journal" of the 22nd May, 1845 and "The Cape Town Mail" of Saturday the 17th May, 1845. The former account is couched in the flowery language of that period interspersed with much profuse moralising on the melancholy fate of the prisoner, while the latter confines itself to a purely factual report. The following story has been compiled from these two accounts.

John Deas Thomson, Junr. was born in Scotland in 1802 and received his education, partly, at Harrow. His father, Sir John Deas Thomson, Knight, was originally a Clerk in humble circumstances at Leith, and "by dint of industry, perseverance and zeal became a Commissioner of the late Navy Board."

"On the abolition of that appointment, the Lords of the Admiralty to mark their sense of Sir John's services, bestowed on his son the joint situation of Naval Storekeeper and Agent Victualler at Simon's Bay, where he arrived in 1629 to enjoy : a salary of £700 per annum, free house etc." For the next fourteen years Thomson "played so well the part of an accomplished, bland,

warm-hearted gentleman, that he won the favour and esteem of every Admiral

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under whom he had served. He had light hair, sandy whiskers, and blue eyes, regular features and sharp nose and was, in height, about 5 feet 6 inches. He was of gentlemanly appearance and mild and good address. He usually wore a white hat and a variety of dresses, rarely two days alike. He was said to be liberal hearted, intelligent and convivial."

To crown this picture of respectability, on the 8th December, 1843 his appointment as Justice of the Peace for the District of Simon's Town was published in the Government Gazette. But behind the scenes the picture was not quite so rosy. "Thomson's habits, were always those of extravagance. His intimacy with persons of immoral character, for whom, even as a married man, he kept up separate establishments at an enormous expense, plunged him into a vortex of pecuniary difficulty."

This other side of his life was naturally unknown to most people and it must have come as a tremendous shock, when on the 9th February, 1845, he was arrested at Green Point by Mr. Thomas Collings, Chief Clerk in the Imprest Office, Somerset House, London, who had only arrived from England on that same day.

On the 3rd May at 10 o'clock a.m. John Deas Thomson was placed at the bar of the Supreme Court, Criminal Sessions, charged with "fraudulently embezzling and converting to his own use and benefit, the sum of £10,920.10.5 sterling, the property of Her Majesty the Queen, the same being a part or portion of the sum of £37,248 sterling, which he ... by virtue of his office and employment, received and took into his possession between the 6th of January 1843 and the 14th March, 1844 from Charles Palmer Esq., Deputy Commissary General at Cape Town, for and on account of Her said Majesty the Queen."

The case was heard by Mr. Justice Musgrave and a jury of nine. The Attorney General, Mr. Porter, prosecuted. In his opening address he stated that the normal practice was for Mr. Thomson to submit requisitions for all monies needed by him as Naval Storekeeper to the Commissary - General in Cape Town and the sums paid against these requisitions were debited to the Admiralty through the Treasury in London. All requisitions were supposed to be countersigned by Commander-in-Chief or Senior Officer on the Cape Station but in practice seldom were. Thomson was also required to submit to the Admiralty quarterly returns showing the money drawn and the manner in which it had been expended. No returns had been made for the five quarters from January 1843 to March 1844, which prompted the Admiralty to send Mr. Thomas Collings of the Imprest Office to the Cape to enquire into the reasons for these omissions. After careful investigations had been made by him and Captain Charles Eden of H.M.S. "Winchester", it was quite clear that Mr. Thomson was unable to account for some £10,920 of the £37,000 which he had drawn during this period from the Deputy Commissary General, Mr. Charles Palmer. The Attorney General called these three gentlemen to give

evidence in proof of these facts.

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Against such a clear case, counsel for the defence, Mr. Cloete, was only able to call several witnesses to prove that the books of the office had been badly kept, but without eliciting any circumstance of extenuation. The Jury, after a deliberation of about ten minutes returned with a verdict of "Guilty" which "was received by the prisoner with great emotion, and his head fell between his hands". Mr. Cloete thereupon moved an arrest of judgement.

On the second appearance of the prisoner on Wednesday the 14th May, the defence's argument on certain points of law was heard but the objections were overruled. Mr. Justice Musgrave then pronounced judgment "that you, John Deas Thomson, be transported to Vah Dieman's Land for a term of fourteen years and until so transported that you be confined and kept at hard labour in the gaol of Cape Town or such other place as the Governor shall direct..."

"The sentence had not yet left the lip, ere a burst of disapprobation relieved the intensity of the feeling endured by the agonised audience. The Chief Justice loudly commanded order but in vain. The feeling of all seemed to be that considering what Mr. Thomson must already have suffered the sentence was very severe." Sympathy with the prisoner, thus eloquently expressed by the "Cape Town Mail", seemed to have been general and was extended to his family. A subscription list headed "Mrs. Thomson and child are destitute" was opened at the Exchange Rooms and was well supported: among the subscriptions being "An Admiral £25". Another organized by the officers of H.M.S. "Winchester" the flagship, raised a handsome sum.

"Mrs. Thomson proceeded to England on the 24th May" in the hope of obtaining from merciful hearts, a mitigation of the condition of her unhappy husband." At the same time the "Cape Town Mail" mentioned "the prevalence of a report of Mr. Thomson being sent to hard labour at the Cradock's Kloof Pass. This proceeding, if carried out, whether just or not, has very much the appearance of barbarity and has enlisted the strongest commiseration for the miserable man."

Sam Sly's African Journal concludes its report of the case with:- "It will be some time ere the elements of Simon's Town are quieted after so extraordinary a disturbance," which one can well believe. A booklet of 37 pages containing a full report of the trial "taken in shorthand by William Buchanan" may be found in the South African Library, Cape Town. Catalogue No. A.C. 346-4 STO.

SOME ORIGINAL SOURCES FOR A HISTORY OF SIMON'S TOWN

Collected and annotated by P.C.

Part 1 (1783 - 1864)

(Edited by L.C. van Oordt)

NOTE: Cross references have been omitted but may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary.

ALEXANDER, Henry: Memorial of his (exhibited 8.2.1813), for permission (i) to establish, "as a matter of Commerce", a whale fishery at "Fishhoek Bay", and to kill seals on Seal and Malagasen Islands, False Bay. Does not consider that this would interfere with the existing Company (Granted). (CO 3892, No. 167)

ALEXANDER, Henry: Memorial of his (exhibited 19.9.1814)
(2) "Requesting permission to fish for whales at Hottentots Holland and to establish a hut or store for a fishery at a small bay near Hangklip; also for a permissive right to kill seals on a small island toward the Hangklip"

Answer: "His Excellency the Governor feels the greatest pleasure in agreeing to Memorialist's wishes on the points submitted." (0.0 4316, no 138 of 1814. i.e. a register of memorials)

NOTE: Henry Alexander (1762/3 - 1818), a cousin of Caledon (Governor at the Cape, 1807 - 1811) was Colonial Secretary from 1812 to his death on 6.5.1818.

BUFFELS FONTIJN: Copy of memorial (Simon's Town, 6.9.1813) of John Osmond, for the conversion to quitrent of his loan place Buffel Fontijn, "near the Cape Point". (CO 8549 under date quoted.)

Note on Quitrents : Prior to Cradock's proclamation of 6.8.1813, the overwhelming majority of farms were held on loan, that is, the occupier owned only the opstal (buildings and ground on which they stood), the remainder being Government property for which an annual rent was paid. Cradock's proclamation, however, made it possible to convert such farms to perpetual quitrent, the places thus becoming for the first time hereditary.(sic)

It is usually worth the trouble to trace the papers connected with the conversions to quitrent since they give much valuable information. Typically a memorial (such as Osmond's) would be referred to the Landdrost and Heemraden of the district concerned (almost invariably favourable) give a mass of detail, including the names of adjoining properties and whether the projected grant would infringe on the rights of others; full accounts of the type of farming now carried out by the occupant (i.e. how many morgen of arable or grazing etc. ground), what stock he carried, what labour he employed (slave and free); the nature of nearby roads and of the soil; what the farm was capable of producing and what crops were actually produced; how many hours

it was situated from the nearest field-cornetcy and/or the "hoofdplaats", and what servitudes, if any, should be imposed in the way of outspans, etc. (There may be other points which have escaped me, as I write from memory. If the Society wish, I will gladly look up and have photographed for them a typical case of this type - Osmond's if they wish.)

This report was duly returned together with a surveyor's diagram. Quitrent farms - unlike loan places - were granted only on production of a diagram. (These plans; though naturally varying from surveyor to surveyor, are pretty pieces of work, even if not technically of high quality - coloured, and showing the locality of buildings, rivers, roads, etc.) The papers were then sent to the Inspector of Government Lands and Woods for further comment. The remarks of this official (especially when Charles D'Escury held the post) were often voluminous. The final decision, of course, rested with the Governor. During the period 1811 to 1815, LM. Thibault was Government Surveyor, his diagrams, being, as one would expect, joy to behold.

CHAPEL, WESLEYAN: Several baptisms, conducted by Rev. B. Shaw at the "Wesleyan Chapel", Simon's Town, recorded. (Gazette, 20.5.1831)

CHURCH: 1. "Notice is hereby given, that the newly erected Church at Simon's Town, will, in future, be called by the name of St George's Church (Gazette 7.5.1814, Govt. Advert of 29.4.1814).
2. Plan and elevation of the "Church and Parsonage" at Simon's Town, then (31.7.1815) nearing completion. (00 68, No.175)

CLARENCE HOTEL: Notice by H. Green that this hotel "will in future be conducted by himself (Green) under the name of the British Hotel. (Gazette 141.1842.

FARMS: (Places) Simon's Town Res. Magistrate (19.1.1822) to Colonial Secretary: Forwards a list of "places" within the jurisdiction of the Residency, together with names of the owners. (CO 174, No.3)

FIELD-CORNETCIES: of the Simon's Town District: One of many district returns made in response to the Colonial Office circular of 26.9.1848 (see Gazette 5.10.1848). Returns for the S.W. Cape were published and, as in this case, contain the following information:

1. Description of the boundaries of each Field Cornetcy.
2. The names of Field-Cornets.
3. The names of the farmers, and the owners, in each Field-Cornetcy.

NOTE: This being the day of the big landowner, the names given against farmers are by no means always those of the occupant and that of owners of erven only are not given. (Gazette 21.12.1848).

HOETS: John M. "His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to recognize provisionally, the following appointments as Consular Agents for the United States, viz. "Mr. John M, Hoets, at Simon's Town" (Gazette 22.3.1864)
(Govt. Notice 67, 17.3.1864)

HOSPITAL, NAVAL: Premises and remaining stores to be auctioned on 10-9-1802. Undated Notice (Gazette 21.86.1802).

MAGISTRACY of Simon's Town: Proclamation abolishing it (31.7.1834) and the Matrimonial Court, which from 1.8.1834 were annexed to the Cape District. The Matrimonial Court was established there by virtue of the Provisions of Ordinance (89) dated 6.2.1832.

NEPTUNE: District Secretary (Simon's Town 30.6.1824) to Colonial Secretary (official summary): "Enclosing a letter said to have been found on the beach at Simon's Town and to be the handwriting of Edwards, Master of the Neptune, announcing his capture by a Squadron of Algerians. (This reference from index volume C0 2465 p 161.)

NOTARIAL DEEDS: These constitute possibly the richest archival sources. Up to about 1825 almost all wills were notarized, and the series also contains inventories of estates, contracts (marriage and/or commercial) powers of attorney, note and ship protests, etc. Although many other volumes in the series contain material relevant to Simon's Town, the following are known to apply:

1. ROSELT, John Henry (admitted notary 1.6.1799) Protocol in 22 vols. covering 1788 - 1806. He practised at Simon's Town from Admission to October 1804 (then in Cape Town) Ref. of his (3) Index volumes N226-8
2. BUISSINNE, Petrus Stephanus (appointed Fiscal at Simon's Town, May 1807, with power to draw up and pass notarial deeds).
One volume only, covering 1807 - 1809
3. BRAND, Johannes Hendricus (admitted 10.3.1810). Practised at Simon's Town. Two volumes (1810 - 1821)
4. LIND, Christian Michael (admitted 15.2.1822). Practised at Simon's Town. Three volumes (1822 - 1843). Obviously incomplete.

NOTE: Up to about 1793 all notarial deeds were passed before the Court of Justice, and it was only in that year that the first two notaries public were allowed to practise. For many years the number of notaries admitted was strictly controlled and (with the possible exception of temporary arrangements to fill the gaps) it is probable that the four men mentioned above were the only practitioners in the neighbourhood from 1799 to 1843

Further (later) accessions (about 1,000 volumes) are now being catalogued in the Cape Archives. Those at present available are detailed in Inventory No. 39.

PARISHES of Wynberg and Simon's Town separated. Gazette No. 2769

PLACAATS (PLAKKATE): The following "Abstracts of the Contents of the Placaats, Proclamations, Advertisements etc., 1652 to 1806, obviously refer, although many more must also do so, though the fact is not apparent from the summaries quoted:

- No. 635 of 8.4.1783: "Prohibition against taking wine to Simon's Bay."
804 of 25.10.1792: "Prohibition against sale and export of flour from Simon's Bay."
814 of 1.12.1792: "Extending the right of whale fishery in the bays of False Bay."
815 of 1.12.1792: "Prohibition against any wheat being ground in Simon's Bay except by the Government Miller."
834 of 11.6.1793: "Tolls, Simon's Bay."
838 of 19.9.1793: "Fishing forbidden at Zwart Vley, near Muizenberg."
952 of 15.7.1791: "Prohibition of any communication by boats between Simon's Bay and Hottentots Holland."
1019 of 27.5.1799: "Appointment of wardmaster /Singular/ for Simon's Town."
1026 of 14.2.1800: "Repairs of the public piers of Cape Town and Simon's Town. Harbour dues, etc."
1045 of 4.12.1800: "Supply of wheat in Cape Town and Simon's Town."
1046 of 22.12.1800: "Further on the same subject."
1124 of 24.6.1803: "Establishment of a post between Cape Town and Simon's Bay."
1138 of 11.8.1803: "Appointment of H. Cloete as Inspector of Forests between Table and Simon's Bays." (Statute Law of the Cape.... Appendix 1 (pub. 1862).

POPULATION of Simon's Town in 1840:

	Males	Females
White	282	270
Coloured	290	273
Strangers	9	12

(Slip of paper (apparently contemporary) inserted in baptismal register (ca 1840 - 1842) at St. Frances Church, Simon's Town.)

POST:

- (a) "Post Waggon" service between Cape Town and Simon's Town (undated notice by J. Stopforth and J.C. Schultze, Gazette 11.3.1809).
(b) Postage: Notice (Post Office, Cape Town, 26.11.1816), by Robert Crozier, Acting Postmaster, publishing a tariff of postage approved by the Governor:

To and from Cape Town and Simon's Town - letters 1 sk."Single"
2 sk."Double".
(Gazette 30.11.1816)

NOTE: "Single" and "double" refer to the number of sheets enclosed.

PRISONERS: A regular feature of correspondence at the Colonial Office from the country districts was the monthly return of prisoners confined in the "tronk". These returns showed how long and why a man was in prison, etc. Most of the prisoners were non Europeans though Simon's Town had an unusually large percentage of Europeans , presumably because of the seafaring element.

The two examples which follow relate to the same man:

(a) Onverwagt, slave of J.A. Hurter, confined at the Residency, on 6,12.1820 "for abusing the Chereff", but was released with a reprimand. (CO 155: enclosure No. 1)

(b) Onverwagt (as above): 25 lashes with a rope inflicted for drunkenness on 16.5.1821. Released after punishment. (CO 155: enclosure to no. 43)

PROPERTIES SURVEYED: Proclamation by Charles Somerset, 1814.

23.12.1814: "boundaries of land between Cape Town and Simon's Bay."

This has reference to the results of the work (mainly by Thibault) of a Commission appointed, in 1811, to survey all properties "being to the right of the great road from Cape Town to Simon's Town", and also makes provision for the registration of titles proved within the area specified.(Statute Law pp 55 = 56)

NOTE: Although I do not have the references, I have a distinct impression that there is in the Cape Archives a map showing all properties to the right of the Main Road.

RESIDENTS: (English)

Fiscal (15.10.1811) to Colonial Secretary: A List of the "English Inhabitants of Simon's Town, exclusive of all Persons on the Civil or Military establishment."

This return includes only four names:-

1. PACE (Robert), wife and child living with him; arrived at Cape 1.10.1807; occupation (blank).
2. OSMOND (John), wife and 4 children living with him; arrived 9.12.1799; ship-builder.
3. HOWELL (James), wife and child living with him; arrived 6.8.1806; retail shop.
4. FARR (Thomas), no wife or children living with him; arrived 7.7.1811; shoemaker. (CO 34 Fiscal No. 18)

It so happens that Osmond illustrates a particularly happy feature of Notarial Deeds, i.e. that it is often possible to trace several wills made by the same person, thus vividly illustrating the changing circumstances of his life (though it should be added that I have only seen the first of Osmond's wills). On 16.12.1802, Osmond made (at Simon's Town) a joint will with his wife, Margaretha Johanna Russouw (N 117 No. 8563). Osmond made, on 9-3-1832,

with his wife, another joint will (at Cape Town before the English Notary, J.S. Merrington). The lady (metamorphosed to "Margaret", while ' John had risen to "Esq.") died at Simon's Town on 4.2.1833 (Gazette 8.2.1833). This last will should also be in the Cape Archives, i.e. not only the notarial copy but also that which was used for probate.

SIMON'S TOWN: Described, 1843. See "Sam Sly's African Journal."

1. 21.12.1843 (During 1843 - 1844 this Journal published regular contributions from Simon's Town.)
2. Described, 1858 (in the series "Advertising the Cape" (Cape Argus, . 20.11.1858,)

SEAFORTH: Trespass notice (dated from Seaforth 4.4.1817 and headed : "Simon's Town) by T.T. Harington. Relates to his newly acquired "Ground, known by the name of the little Government Garden, opposite Seaforth, and the Estate connected therewith." (Gazette, 5.4.1817).

NOTE: Thomas Talbot Harington was formerly a Commander in the Hon. East India Company's naval service, and became a prominent , merchant in Cape Town. Although Harington himself was at sea during much of 1814, it appears that some of his family lived at Simon's Town, as his son "William Davenport Harington" was buried at St. Frances on 28.10.1814 (aged 3 years, 3 months and 8 days.)

TOLLS:

- a) Undated notice by J. Fleck, Secretary of Cape District that the Landdrost and Heemraden of the Cape would put the toll at Muizenberg as well as that at Simon's Town, up for auction, for the year beginning 17.2.1817, on 1.3.1817. "The Tolls have on the average returned to Government Rds. 683 per month".
(Presumably this is the joint income from both.) (Gazette 1.2.1817)
- b) The earliest (but see Placaats above No. 834) pronouncement on tolls in the Peninsula is contained in the following "Government Advertisement":-

"His Excellency the Governor, strongly impressed with a conviction that the good sense of the People of this Colony, will induce their cheerful co-operation with and contribution to, a measure, as evidently beneficial to their own interests, as the establishment of good Roads; a measure tending to improve the construction of Carriages, employed in draught, than will make ample pecuniary returns for the Tolls necessary to be imposed and collected upon the fairest principle, that no Person is called upon to contribute, but those who actually enjoy the benefit of their contribution.

"Notice is therefore hereby given, that, as soon as the necessary Toll Houses and Bars, shall be erected, of which due Notice shall be given at

a proper time, the following Tolls will be collected once a day from all the Carriages and Horses passing through them, and a Ticket will be given to the Person paying which will free him from payment on repassing during that day, viz.

Waggons drawn by 10 oxen, and by 2 horses and upward	Sk 4.	St.0
by 8 oxen and 4 horses	2	0
Coaches, Carriages etc. by 4 horses	2.	0
Coaches, Curricles, Charets, etc.	1	0
Saddled horses		2
Horned cattle per 12	1	0

"His Excellency, influenced by the general example of Europe, and in order to guard against the inconveniences arising from delay (should Officers on duty be detained), directs that no Toll be demanded from Officers or Soldiers in uniform, on Horseback; Officers or Soldiers in Carriages are to pay as other Individuals.

"Cape of Good Hope, 17 Jan. 1811 (sic)
By Command of His Excellency the Governor
(Signed) H. Alexander, Secr."

(Gazette 16.1.1812)

NOTE: The same Gazette contains various toll regulations.

- c) Government Notice of 8.12.1815:
The Tolls hitherto payable at "Calks Bay" to be levied at 'Simon's Town Gate' as from 15.12.1815. Schedule of rates given.
A toll to be levied "at the Gate of Muysenburg" as from 1.1.1816.
Toll -fees scheduled. (Gazette 9.12.1815) .
- d) Ordinance (local) No.3 of 1826 provided for the "better regulation of the Turnpikes on the Road leading from Cape Town to Simon's Town.... and for fixing the Tolls to be levied thereat; but was repealed by Ordinance No 3 of 15 January, 1845 which handed control of the Simon's Town Toll to the Central Road Board. (Ord. 3 of 1845, preamble and section 4.)

TYLER, Charles, (Admiral's House 3.7.1815) to Somerset:

"I have also to inform your Lordship that the whole of the Naval Hospital department at Cape Town are removed to Simon's Town."

NOTE: Vice-Admiral (later Admiral) Sir Charles Tyler (1760 - 1835) C.in.C at the Cape, 1812 -1815. His service ended with his return to England in March, 1816. (See Dict. National Biogr.)

NOTE: by the Editors for those members who are not familiar with the Cape Archives.

The letters or words and figures in brackets at the end of each item are the Cape Archives Inventory Number of the document from which the quoted information has been extracted. For example. At the end of the first item "Alexander, Henry" in brackets is the reference (C0.3892, No. 167)

This means that the original copy of Henry Alexander's memorial to the Governor dated the 8th February, 1813, with the Governor's comments endorsed on it, is bound up as the 167th item in Volume No. 3892 of the Colonial Office documents. The other references given here, such as Gazette, Ordinance etc., are self-explanatory.

Anyone who wishes to examine the full text of any document mentioned here, can go into the Reading Room at the Cape Archives, Queen Victoria St., Cape Town, and hand the reference given to the person in charge, who will immediately have the required volume produced for perusal.

FURTHER NOTES ON BOER PRISONERS OF WAR AT SIMON'S TOWN

by

Helene Scott

On the 18th April, 1962, the Society had the pleasure of meeting Mr. H.C. Marx, at present on holiday from the Transvaal with his granddaughter, Mrs. Monica Hoehler, of Bergvliet. Mr. Marx, who is 92, was a prisoner of war in Simon's Town after his capture in the Boer War at Paardeberg on 27th February, 1900. He told of how they were entrained in cattle trucks but was not aware of his arrival at Simon's Town as he had contracted enteric fever. He awoke in a hospital in Simon's Town and does not remember where the hospital was, but recalled the kindness of the nurses, of whom several spoke Dutch. On his recovery he was sent to the Prisoner of War Camp on the present golf-course. The camp was as described in a previous article (see Volume 1 No. 3) except that the portion toward Bellevue Road was allocated to the British guards and officials of the camp, who were also in tents. The house now known as "Windy-ridge" was a small shop run by Messrs Runciman & Son. There were no houses around the camp at that time except for "Bellevue House" at the top of the road, which was a boarding house. Pictures taken at the time confirm this.

Mr. Marx was anxious to locate the "Post-stone" which is now a small hump on No. 1 Fairway. Mr. I.C. van der Poll, remembers that there was a big rock there which was partly removed and covered over with sand and planted with grass when the golf-course came into being. On Post days, the Post Corporal would stand on the rock and call out the names. The recipient of a letter would hold up his hand and the letter would travel through 300 to 400 pairs of hands to arrive crumpled and torn. There were no escapes from this camp while Mr. Marx was there during the period 1900 to 1902, when he went home on his release. There was an attempt at escape by a number who dug a tunnel from a wash house. The "diggings" were carefully covered by a mat and a layer of sand. When work on it was in progress, the password "Joubert" was used to warn of the approach of sentries. One day however, despite frenzied calling to "Joubert", the sentry walked into the wash house and discovered the tunnel. A Hollander in charge, threw up his hands, uttered a profanity and that was the end of escape plans.

The only ones to leave camp before time were a group of "Joiners" or "Handsuppers" as they were called, who went over to fight for the British. Consequently they were not very popular with their fellow prisoners. Mr. Marx told of how one Sunday a fellow tent mate lay on his bed with his hymn book in his hand. When the rest went to the church service which was held each Sunday, he remained behind. When they returned, he still lay as he was and then told them that he had decided to "join". Thereupon the line of "deserters" were conducted out of camp midst jeers and derision of the rest. One dropped his bundle, which the sentry made him retrieve, but as he bent to pick it up, he dropped down dead.

Mr. Marx was most emphatic that nobody was allowed in the camp to mix with the prisoners. His name, with a purchase to the value of 6d. is recorded in the list given by Hadji B. Manuel, who claimed that he was allowed to take orders from the prisoners (see Vol.1,1 No. 3). Allowances must be made for the vagaries of memory, but what probably happened was, as Mr. Marx suggested, that the prisoners had a Mr. van Zyl, a schoolmaster, to act as intermediary for them. He probably took orders from his fellow prisoners and transacted the business through Hadji Manuel, who was retained by Messrs. Runciman. The only people who had access to the camp, were the Ministers of Religion and a Coloured refuse remover, who came periodically in a scotch-cart to remove rubbish. The story told of an escape via this cart is discounted by Mr. Marx, who says that it was impossible for anyone to hide under the rubbish. The whole operation took place under the eagle eyes of sentries and the rubbish was carefully placed in boxes.

The prisoners bathed at Windmill Beach, which was fenced off with barbed wire. But when peace came, the prisoners were not immediately released and were then given more freedom to roam outside the former restricted area. The attack by the shark on J. Chandler was vividly described by Mr. Marx, who witnessed it. They were swimming from a flat rock to another rock out at sea. This was not at Windmill Beach, but, as far as can be identified, probably nearer Boulders, where there is an outlet pipe running into the sea, halfway along Links Crescent. When the shark attacked and bit Mr. Chandler's leg off, he hit out at it and promptly had his hand bitten off as well. He was carried to the flat rock, the blood spurting from the severed arteries, while his friends ran to call the doctor from the English sector of the camp. But by the time the doctor came, he had lost too much blood to survive.

The only time Mr. Marx left the confines of Simon's Town was once when a large number of prisoners were taken onto the ship "Orient" and taken to Green Point Camp. They spent the night there and were returned to Simon's Town the next day. The prisoners never knew the reason for this move and while in captivity had no news of outside affairs. Their letters being carefully censored they were kept in ignorance of the progress of the war. He harbours no resentment of his captivity and stated that they did not suffer in anyway in the camp, and, if anything, quite enjoyed themselves.

The prisoners amused themselves by playing games, such as quoits, and they made various articles and silver jewellery and regimental badges from lead. One prisoner was very adept at making rings out of shilling pieces. He would bore a hole in the centre and gradually mould the silver into ringshape, then engrave the date or names on it. Mr. van der Poll possesses a beautiful snuff-box which was made from two half-crown pieces with an ingenious catch, engraved with "Bellevue Camp", the name "J.Grobler" and the date. Mr. Marx was the pancake maker of the camp and very often the Southeaster lent a hand and covered the mixture with sand.

The Society is much indebted to Mr. Marx for coming forward to give his recollections of his stay, albeit a forced one, in Simon's Town. It is through such actions that we can add greater detail to the picture of Simon's Town's past.

THE WHITTLE ROCK

Rear Admiral Thomas Pringle to Evan Nepean, Secretary of the Admiralty.
15th January, 1797

"Having employed His Majesty's Brig "Euphrosyne" for some time past in surveying False Bay, and Lieutenant Whittle, her Commander, having discovered a very dangerous Rock, supposed to be that on which H.M.S. "Trident" struck in July last, I have ordered a Buoy to be laid down near it, The Rock is of small dimensions but extremely dangerous, being directly in the Fair-way coming into Simon's Bay." (Theal "Records of the Cape Colony" Vol. II p. 46)

Vice Admiral Albermarle Bartie to J.W. Croker, Secretary of the Admiralty. 1st July, 1810.

"The India ships having on board the 24th Regiment proceeded on to India without Convoy on the 12th June: the "Euphrates", having unfortunately struck on the Wh tol (sic) Rock in going out, was obliged to return and is now preparing to be hove down." (ditto, Vol. II p 305)

Rear Admiral the Hon. R. Stopford to J.W. Croker. 1st June, 1812,

"The Beacon, which was placed last year upon a dangerous shoal in False Bay, called the Whittle, has been washed away in a late gale of wind."

(ditto, Vol VIII p. 433)

"A beacon has been erected on a flat topped rock near Oatlands Point. In conjunction with the beacon on the shoulder of the hill beneath Simon's Berg, it will point the position of Whittle Rock. The flat topped rock is a few yards from shore and 0.85 miles from Shoulder Beacon. When on Whittle Rock, the two beacons will be in line."(Cape Town Directory, 1864.)

"Dangers in False Bay. Whittle rock, with a depth over it of 7 feet, seldom breaks. It lies about 4 miles east-south eastward of Bakhoven rock (which lies about a quarter of a mile southeast of Miller's Point), on the southern side of a rocky patch over which the depths vary from 7 to 10 fathoms."

A light-and-bell-buoy, exhibiting a white flashing light every five seconds and carrying a radar reflector, is situated close eastward of the rock,"

SOME NAVAL OCCASIONS IN SIMON'S BAY, PART II.

by
H.C. WILLIS.

Balls, dinners, dances, children's parties and, in the present age cocktail parties on board ships of the Royal Navy have ever been highlights in the social life of Simon's Town and, indeed, of the whole of the Cape Peninsula. The following account of a Ball given on board H.M.S. "Phaeton", a 44 gun frigate, in the year 1819 is taken from "A Narrative of my Professional Adventures (1790 1839)" by Sir William Henry Dillon, K.C.H., Vice-Admiral of the Red, edited by Professor Michael Lewis and published in two volumes by the Navy Records Society. A portion of the account given below is printed in the second volume (N.R.S. Vol: XCVII) at pages 454 and 455, and Professor Lewis has very kindly sent our Society a transcription from the original manuscript of the part omitted from that volume.

Dillon at this time was captain of the "Phaeton" which had called at Simon's Bay for a refit on the return passage from India to England. He had visited Simon's Town on two previous occasions, once as captain of H.M.S. "Horatio" on her return passage from China in September 1816, and again in H.M.S. "Phaeton" on the passage out to India in December, 1818. The Naval Commissioner at the Cape, Rear Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton, K.C.B. was an old friend, as he and Dillon had both been prisoners of war at Verdun from 1803 to 1807.

Col. Graham was nominated to the Commandantship of Simon's Town by the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, on the 26th March, 1816, on the retirement of Major General Baird, and died in April, 1821.

The account of the Ball is as follows:

"On the 3rd June (1819) we made the coast of Africa and were then visited by some heavy gales. But, the "Phaeton" being a capital sea-boat, we weathered the storms without accident of any moment; but the foreyard was sprung. On the morning of the 8th Cape Hangklip was plainly seen, and a course was shaped for Simon's Bay. We exchanged signals with H.M. Ships "Dauntless", "Nautilus" and "Redwing", and at 4 o'clock p.m. we anchored in the bay mentioned.

The procuring of a spar for a new foreyard took some time. Consequently I determined, in return for many civilities from the principal gentlemen in office and several of the inhabitants, to give a Ball. The Commissioner assisted me with planks and canvas, for the season was wet, and it was necessary to have the Quarter Deck proof against the rain.

The after part of the ship, from the main mast to the taffrail was roofed over, and covered with canvas. The gun-ports were fitted with transparencies, and chandeliers were hung in various directions. But the ballroom was not accessible till the hour of dancing had arrived. One side of the Half Deck was fitted up for a dinner party of about 40 persons, the Cabin being employed as a

drawing room. At 5 o'clock all the guests were on board, without their wives.

When dinner was announced, the gentlemen went out of my cabin to the banquet. They were astonished to behold a place on shipboard so nicely fitted, decorated with flags, festoons and evergreens and well lit up. By 9 o'clock the ladies appeared in the Cabin, overloaded with flowers. When they were all supplied with partners, the lights were put out, and they were led upstairs on to the Quarter Deck, still in darkness except for the transparencies. When they were all up, the signal - three claps of hand - was given, and instantaneously the Ballroom was illuminated by innumerable lights. The band struck up "Rule Britannia". This sudden and unexpected shock surpassed all description and caused some of the fair sex to faint. However, soon they all recovered their buoyancy of spirit. There was nothing to be seen, excepting the planks of the deck, that could lead anyone to suppose they were on board of a ship of war.

The dancing then commenced. The lady that cut the most conspicuous figure on that occasion was the wife of Colonel Graham, brother to Sir Thomas, afterward Lord Lyndock (sic, actually "Lynedoch"). She in every sense was a perfect sylph by the lightness and elegance of her motions, although by birth a native of Holland. Her husband could not attend as he held a responsible station at Grahamstown. However the wife was so charmed with the attentions she received that the Colonel came on board some time afterwards, in acknowledgment of the same. The Quadrilles, Votres, and the English country dances were kept up till day light. Refreshments were served in the cabin, where some of the most sober and aged made card-parties. With the dawn the ladies left the ship, expressing their never having enjoyed on shipboard such a splendid entertainment. No one was more gratified than the Commissioner. His remarks on that occasion were the more gratifying as he was a good judge upon those matters. The Store-Keeper, Mr. John (according to Dillon's usual method of abbreviation means "Johnson" or "Johnston") was equally pleased, declaring that a similar entertainment on shore could not have been given under £500. In fact I heard of it many years afterwards, as it made a lasting impression upon all those who were of that party. The conversation of the moment was wholly taken up on the pleasant pastime this Ball had occasioned."

CORRESPONDENCE

Extracts from interesting letters received by the Society and the information it was able to impart is given below. The Society will be pleased to receive any additional information readers may have.

1. From Mr. C.A. Algar, Sea Point, regarding his great-grandfather CHARLES HENRY ALGAR, who in 1863, made the wrought-iron gates at the entrance to the West Dockyard:-

"He was born somewhere in Devon in 1825 and was in the Royal Navy

during the Crimean War His ship was the "Sans Pareil". He came to the Cape... in 1856 or 57 and settled in Simon's Town. His wife Maria, followed

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soon afterwards. They both lived and died in Simon's Town and my great-grandfather was buried in the old graveyard in 1897. His daughter, Bertha, married Mr. B.C. Morris, a gentleman's outfitter in Simon's Town. His eldest son, Owen Alfred Algar was my grandfather.

During the war in Crimea, Florence Nightingale gave my great-grandfather an orange while he was in hospital. He kept it, and it did not rot, but shrivelled to the size of a marble. I understand it is now in the possession of the children of B.C. Morris.

I believe he made the gates in 1863, while employed in an official capacity in the Dockyard. What his exact position was, I have been unable to determine, but it may be possible for the Society to do so.....

He also made the bell which hangs just inside the gates. Another of his works is the set of chains which hang on the balcony of the Prime Minister's Residence, Groote Schuur..."

The Society was able to inform him that:-

(a) The "Sans Pareil" was one of the first ships to enter the Black Sea at the start of the Crimean War, and took part in the bombardment of Sevastopol where she lost 11 men killed, and 59 wounded. She spent the terrible winter of 1854-5 as a depot ship in Balaclava Harbour and returned to England in 1855. She sailed from Plymouth on the 17th March 1857 and after calling at Madeira and Ascension for coal and water, arrived in Simon's Bay on the 16th May. On the 25th she sailed for Singapore to take part in the China War. Algar may have been left behind at Simon's Town.

(b) B.C. Morris was a Churchwarden of St. Frances Church from 1900 to 1915.

2. Mrs. Nessie Hutchings of Fish Hoek wrote:-

"I am interested in Simon's Town because my mother, who was a Miss Bowerne was born there in 1866, being one of a large family. Her father Mr. E.J. Bowerne was a provision merchant having come out from England to South Africa as a young man. The family lived in a place called "Venetian Lodge" where the Standard Bank now stands."

3. From Dr. M.P. Nightingale, England:-

I am anxious to obtain accurate information about my great grandfather THOMAS HENRY NIGHTINGALE (1810 - 1865) who is believed to have been Port Captain of Simon's Town during the middle years of the last century..."

"As a matter of interest, Thomas Henry, was a great-grandson of Capt. Sir Gamaliel Nightingale of the Royal Navy, who visited and named Nightingale Island in 1761 while in command of the sixth rater H.M.S. Vengeance, 500

tons, 28 guns. Of his descendants, the son of Percy, my grandfather, became Civil Commissioner of the Cape Colony and my uncle T.S. Nightingale became

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first permanent Secretary to the High Commissioner in London after Union. My late father, LG. Nightingale, was, at the time of his retirement in 1929 Attorney General of the Cape Province, having previously held similar office in the Transvaal."

Our member, E. Morse-Jones supplied the following information:-

(a) Thomas Nightingale, Superintendent of Fingoes at Fort Peddie, was appointed Harbour Master at Simon's Bay in succession to Lt. W. Jamieson, appointed acting Port Captain at Cape Town.

(Grahamstown Journal 16.2.1853)

(b) 25th March, 1853. Mr. Nightingale arrived in Simon's Bay from Port Elizabeth in the ship "Plumstead." (Ditto)

(c) 1862 T. Nightingale was appointed Justice of the Peace for Simon's Town. (Cape Town Directory, 1865)

(d) In 1849 T. Nightingale was Collector of Customs at Fort Albert the shore establishment at Waterloo Bay. I have not inclusive dates of his service there but during that time his daughter Ida was baptised at Cuylerville Church near Great Fish River Mouth. At the date of her baptism, 6th July; 1849, by Catechist Thomas Wheeler, it was known as Cuylerville School Chapel.

(e) Lastly, a possible member of the family, Surgeon David Nightingale R.N. retired, brought a party of 35 settlers from England to Albany in 1820. They sailed in H.M.T. "Amphitrite" (Capt. Martin), calling at Cape Town 26th April, 1820.

4. From S.G. Osler, Kearsney College, P.O. Botha's Hill, Natal:-

I am endeavouring to trace the record of one of our forebears, STEPHEN OSLER, who was born in approximately 1807 and was in Simon's Town in 1830. He was the son of Benjamin Osler, one of the original 1820 Settlers. I don't know whether you know of the Benjamin Osler "Account Book" dealing with his arrangements with the Admiralty when he took his party of Settlers out to South Africa. This was in the McGill University Osler Library in Canada, but has apparently been lost. I was wondering whether by any chance a copy of this "Account Book" is with you."

REPLY: (a) S. Osler appointed Master of Government Free School at a salary of £80 p.m. and £22.10.0. for house rent 1.7.1838. C. of GH. Almanac.

(b) Appointed Clerk and Sexton of the Episcopal Church 1843.

(c) S. Osler still Government schoolmaster in 1864 but at a salary of £160 p.a. with £22.10.0. House Allowance. (Cape Town Directory).

(d) From the Church records of St. Frances (now St. Francis of Assisi) the following extracts were made. "In 1845 all salaries paid to subordinate officers of the several churches in the colony were stopped. Mr.S. Osler, Clerk, sexton and bellringer received a salary of £63 p.a. The Rev. Judge called a meeting where he said "it was the manifest duty of the congregation to make provision

for the decent solemnities of public worship." The Church subsequently provided a salary.

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(e) In 1846 the Simon's Town Ladies' Bible Association was formed. Mrs. Osler was responsible for the area from Union Canteen, round the back row of the barracks and the Kloof"

(f) On April, 10th, 1849, the first Vestry Meeting of St. Frances Church was held and Mr. Osler re-instated in the office of clerk, sexton and bellringer, at a salary of £25 p.a.

(g) A death certificate of a Russian seaman bearing the signature of S. Osler, is among the Church Records. (13.2.1865).

(h) Inscription on tombstone in Old Cemetery, Simon's Town. "Stephen Sawle Osler, died 21.10.1867 and his wife Catherine".

(i) The Society is not in possession of the "Account Book" mentioned.

18th CENTURY CAPE FANLIGHT

By
R.C. STEWART
(May, 1954)

This beautiful old fanlight, with its "prayer-wheel" motif, was built into a house erected in Simon's Town by the Dutch East India Company in 1745. It is a small, but good, example of the fanlight arrangement built into early Cape houses just inside the front door, admitting light into the front room, whilst keeping out draughts when the front door was opened. It is particularly valuable to Simon's Town, as it dates back to the Town's very foundations.

The house from which it came was built in 1745 to accommodate the Officer-in-Charge of the Port and Village of "Simons Baay", established by the Dutch East India Company in 1743 as a winter anchorage. It stood, with its Slave Cells, until 1954, when it was demolished to make room for a block of flats. About 1760 it became known as the "Drostday", and the steps leading up to it, as "Drostdy Lane". The Company sold it about 1770 after building the Landdrost a new house, called "De Residensie", a name it bears to this day. The old "Drostay" was re-named "Elswoud", a name which disappeared with the passage of time.

The outer frame-work of this fanlight was of yellow-wood, indicating that it was made in the Cape, but its Eastern character proclaims it as the work of a Malay craftsman. The yellow-wood was dilapidated, and the inner teak frame is now held together by a new frame of teak. The restoration was carried out in the Simon's Town Municipality's workshop. Its remarkable state of preservation is probably due to its position in a passage out of reach of the activities within the house, the solid construction of the old house, its numerous layers of paint and the pride that each successive owner took in its beauty.

NOTE: The fanlight is now (1962) carefully mounted over the main door in the Warrior's Room.