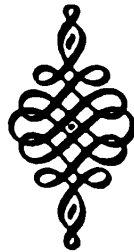




**SIMON'S TOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

BULLETIN



PRICE :
R25.00

JULY
2015

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OUR BULLETIN OF 48 PAGES IS PUBLISHED IN JULY EACH YEAR

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT DELIVERED TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2015 AT SIMON'S TOWN MUSEUM :

Mr. President, Madam Vice President, Committee Members and Society Members, the following is my report of the Society's activities for the year ending April 2015.

Membership

Our membership stands at 287 paid-up members and 65 outstanding, as of 22-Apr-2015, a total of 352. The Society sincerely appreciates the continued support of the membership.

Friends of the Museum

During the past year the Society has again assisted the Friends with fund raising activities, including book sales, walks, a Members' tour and the monthly lectures. The walks and lectures have been in general well attended. The walks raised R550, book sales R1460 and approximately R8 000 from lectures – a total of some R10 000. We are most grateful to those who gave their time and knowledge to assist our efforts. The Friends financial statements will be presented at the Friends AGM, to be held on 27-May-2015.

Dumps Willis Memorial Lecture

This year's Dumps Willis Memorial Lecture was presented by Cathy Salter-Jansen on 25-Feb-2015, entitled "So what do you do in a Museum?" This was highly informative and was well received by a somewhat sparse audience.

Publications

Website – during the 2014 calendar year there were 2682 visitors to the website, 16.6% returning and 83.4% new.

Bulletin and Chronicle – On behalf of the Society and its members, I record sincere thanks and appreciation to Audrey for all the hard work that she has put into the compilation and publication of the annual Bulletin and the bi-annual Chronicle. Bill Rice has now taken over the

Bulletin compilation and is finalising the 2015 edition – thanks, Bill, for coming forward to provide this support.

Heritage Portal – In collaboration with the *Heritage Portal* website (<http://www.heritageportal.co.za>) a series of illustrated articles were published in February 2015, detailing the history and construction of the Simon's Town Martello Tower.

Special Book Collection – this was established to collect books relating to Simon's Town and its history. The collection continues to grow at a moderate rate.

Conservation

Registration – The Registration Sub-Committee has now completed the site surveys, research, grading and documentation of 129 heritage properties. Copies of the Registration forms are being progressively handed over to the City of Cape Town Council Heritage Resources Section for inclusion within the HPOZ – Heritage Protection Overlay Zone, which provides former Conservation/Special Areas under the old Zoning Schemes with a unified system of protection under the new integrated Cape Town Zoning Scheme. This computerised system generates an automatic alert if a planning application is received for any heritage property within the HPOZ, triggering a review by the Simon's Town Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) and the Society as a Registered Conservation Body. Some 212 properties or buildings are presently identified as requiring registration, so we are barely 60% complete against the current estimate. Registration is a vital element in ensuring that Simon's Town retains its unique sense of place/look and feel. The Society expresses its thanks to the Sub-Committee members for their time, spirit and dedication. New volunteers to this Sub-Committee will be most welcome.

Heritage Western Cape – The Society continues to build close working relationships with HWC staff, and has during the past year attended numerous meetings of the BELCom (Built Environment and Landscape Committee), IACom (Impact Assessment Committee), Archaeology Committee and several workshops. The Society is actively exploring protocols for the prosecution of non-compliances with the National Heritage Resources Act, utilising the services of the HWC Legal Department.

Architectural Advisory Committee – The Society participates in the regular and ad-hoc meetings of the AAC, which is chaired by Ward 61

Councillor Simon Liell-Cock. Our purpose is to ensure that local opinion is articulated in planning application reviews, and in particular to fight inappropriate development proposals.

Tree List – A Sub-Committee actively continues the work of the late Peter Salter, in protecting Simon's Town trees from wanton destruction at the whim of uncaring or selfish landowners. The Society is collaborating with STADCO and the STCA in procuring and affixing permanent signs to Champion Trees – some 38 trees have now been marked. The Society is most grateful for the financial support commitments made by STADCO and STCA, for the untiring efforts of the Sub-Committee members, with a special vote of thanks to Eric Mawhinney and Roy Burnie for their practical support in designing and fixing the signs.

Old Burying Ground – Once again, this has been the scene of desecration of graves as metal thieves try to wrench decorative features away from the monuments. Vandalism of plants and threatening behavior to visitors and neighbours has also been a common experience, with one mentally-challenged vagrant in particular being the cause of much destruction. SAPS, Law Enforcement and the Simon's Town Magistrates Court have been spectacularly unsuccessful in bringing perpetrators to account. A City of Cape Town By-Law (*The Cemeteries, Crematoria and Funeral Undertakers By-Law 2011*) provides for fines of up to R50 000 and/or up to six months imprisonment for the type of offences witnessed at the OBG. The Society is committed to ensuring that perpetrators are held to account by the Authorities, and we will actively motivate for prosecutions to be brought. The local press has considerably assisted this commitment.

Royal Alfred Hall – Since November 2013, the Society has been supporting proposals to bring this historic and long-neglected former Masonic Lodge back into use, for the benefit of our community. We have had numerous meetings with City of Cape Town Council officials, but despite sterling support from Alderman Felicity Purchase and Councillor Simon Liell-Cock, little progress has been made. A cabal of key officials appears to be blocking the proposals in favour of a special interest group. We are however committed to bringing the building back into use as the Royal Alfred Academy of Art, or instituting action by the Office of the Public Protector if this proposal continues to be blocked.

Erf 4053 (Harbour Terrace Development) – Attempts to develop this 4551 m² property in central Simon's Town (situated behind the historic Royal Navy Hospital of 1814) have been ongoing since it was the subject of a restitution award in 2004 (the Restitutee sold it on the same day that the property was transferred). The Society has consistently opposed the

various development proposals, on multiple grounds: disturbance of a unique Sense of Place, inappropriate development plans, inadequate and unacceptable access proposals, the destruction of historic stone walled terraced gardens (part of the 'Constantia' homestead of 1743) and endangering the structural stability of the 1805 Bay View House (the National Monument also known as the "Stamp House"). The current developer has amply demonstrated his total disregard for Heritage Legislation and the Council's Planning and Building Development Management systems through illegal activities, which have resulted in multiple Stop Works Orders (three of which are still in force) and a case of attempted murder being brought against his senior site representative/excavator operator. The Society has articulated its views at the Heritage Western Cape BELCom and Archaeological Committee at several Hearings; has interviewed numerous interested and affected parties to determine their concerns and objections; has carried out technical research (including a Traffic Survey in St. Georges Street in December 2014, which recorded 10,374 bidirectional traffic movements in a 12-hour period past the intended access point to this proposed development). The Society will continue to fight inappropriate development, as typified by the current proposals for this historic site.

Erf 2575 (Chapel Lane Development) – Since 2007 this important heritage site, located between the Wesleyan Chapel and two Victorian semi-detached houses, has been the scene of utter disorder. The developer succeeded in forcing through Council approval for two structures, on the pretext that these were urgently required to temporarily store his tools and materials, which he claimed were being stolen. In reality, these structures are garages that he had already sold as part of the marketing of the Victorian semis, and the new owners of those houses were about to take court action against the developer for false advertising and fraud. The result is that the appearance of the 1828 Wesleyan Chapel (a significant tourist attraction) has been marred for eight years by this builder's mess. Part of the site is currently in use as a wood store. The Society is committed to resolving this misuse, if necessary by using legal action against the developer in conjunction with Heritage Western Cape.

Erf 2576-RE (Black's Lane) – Properties in the Black's Lane area, including a series of terraced houses, a Victorian bungalow (Rutland Villa) and Amlay House (The Heritage Museum) were expropriated by the State at the behest of the South African Navy in the early/mid 1970s as the land was deemed to be required for the expansion of the Naval Dockyard at that time. Whilst the Amlay House residents have been able to rent the building, the other properties have remained indeterminate. One of the terraced houses was occupied by vagrants, who set fire to the

building which is now a burnt-out shell inside; vagrants have recently invaded Rutland Villa and trashed the interior; another of the terraced houses was let to officers of the nearby Simon's Town Court – who promptly sub-let some rooms to vagrants. The Society is currently working with the City of Cape Town Council, the Rates Department and the Deeds Office to establish legal ownership of these heritage properties, with a view to requiring the legal owner(s) to repair the damage that has been allowed to take place, and to hopefully return the buildings to legitimate and proper use.

Erf CA1013 (The Sanatorium and other properties) – This massive area (6,620,366 m²) is home to a number of heritage buildings, including the 1905 Royal Navy Hospital Sanatorium, the former Signal School, Klaver Camp, the historic water reticulation system that once supplied Simon's Town and the Royal Navy, and the upper terminal of the aerial ropeway. This infrastructure is in indeterminate ownership, including SANParks, Department of Public Works and others. Deterioration of the heritage buildings has set in (the last occupants of the Sanatorium were the South African Military Health Services in 2010), and the lack of proper security seems to indicate that squatters may become an issue. The Society is committed to ensuring that the possibly unique Sanatorium and other facilities at this site are competently managed and conserved for future generations.

Erf 1068 (Simon's Town Public Library) – The Society has worked with the City of Cape Town Council, Rennie Scurr Adendorff Architects and the Heritage Western Cape BELCom in contributing to a 'Proposed Repairs and Maintenance Report'. The scope of this document includes re-roofing, external and internal repairs and redecoration, and will considerably extend the service life of this significant building.

Heritage Buildings in the Two Dockyards – Armscor, as Operator of the East Dockyard, is contractually obligated to maintain and conserve the many heritage buildings, including the Martello Tower of 1796, the entire infrastructure as constructed by Sir John Jackson in 1900-1910, and certain WW1 and WW2 buildings and artefacts. Due largely to the dedication of Dockyard Facilities Manager John Sutherland and his staff, the major buildings such as the Pump House and Workshops are in fine condition. Work has recently started on renovation of the SAS Chapman Recreation Hall, and in due course the Royal Engineers Submarine Mining Depot will receive attention. The Society hereby expresses sincere thanks to John Sutherland and his staff. It is however noteworthy that the West Dockyard is not part of this scheme. Whilst the former Dutch East India Company's Storehouse of 1743 is in generally good condition, the same cannot be said of the former Admiral's offices, which

are of wooden construction and somewhat delicate. The Society is maintaining a watching brief, in close liaison with the Naval Heritage Society and the Naval Museum staff, and is committed to offering technical support and other assistance wherever required. Special thanks are hereby expressed to Commander Leon Steyn SAN and WO1 Harry Croome SAN, for their unstinting co-operation in all heritage matters, and in the development of mutual support.

The Dockyard Clock – The Society has for some years provided technical support and co-ordination of specialist input from the U.K. based Antiquarian Horological Society. The clock has had to be stopped due to excessive wear of one of the 'Great Wheels', which would cause severe damage to the mechanism if the gear teeth were to strip and disintegrate. Several visits by Horological specialists familiar with this type of clock have been organised. Issues such as unnecessary lubrication, excessive friction within the clock mechanism (necessitating disproportionately heavy weights to drive the mechanism, which in turn has contributed to excessive gear tooth wear) have been highlighted by these specialists together with proposed remedial works. The need for renovation of the four clock faces has also been addressed, together with recommendations for removing the existing paint back to bare metal, repainting, and re-gilding the numerals and clock hands. The clock will be 200 years old next year, and it is anticipated that a full overhaul will see it prepared for another 200 years' service! The Society is committed to assist as required.

Projects

Plaques – The Society is the Custodian of a considerable number of plaques in and around Simon's Town, a number of which require replacement each year due to theft or wear and tear. The HMS Cornwall Stone, which was relocated from Simon's Kloof to Jubilee Square in July 2013 with the carved crest refurbished by East Dockyard staff (grateful thanks to John Sutherland and Ganief), has recently been augmented by the installation of a descriptive plaque. This plaque is dedicated to the memory of the Society's former Chairman, the late Professor Boet Dommissie, who saved the stone from destruction and motivated for its relocation. The plaque had not long been installed when it suffered damage at the hands of council workmen, who were trimming the Jubilee Square palm trees. Fortunately Audrey had some magic cleaning fluids, and with some careful work succeeded in restoring the plaque – many thanks, Audrey.

Traders List – Keeping a record of the ever-changing tenants of the various business premises in Simon's Town requires an eye for detail and a dedicated approach. John Stirrup has kindly devoted his time and effort to this ongoing project, and the Society expresses sincere thanks to John for his commitment.

Dockyard Wall of Memory – The first five panels of this ambitious project were unveiled to the public on 23-Sep-2014. The panels are attached to the West Dockyard wall at the Wharf Street end. Further panels have since been added, and new sponsors have come forward to continue the project, which is predicated on the people of Simon's Town. Grateful thanks are expressed to the Committee, led by Alderman Nicki Holderness and duly managed by Errol Hope, to the Sponsors, to the active support received from STADCO in particular, and to Kevin Baker for his diligent work in translating ideas into eye-catching graphics. We have a long way to go before we reach the Naval Museum end of the Dockyard Wall, so further sponsors (at R3,000 per panel) will always be most welcome!

Els River Water Mill Reconstruction – A group of local people are motivating the reconstruction of the Els River Water Mill, currently an historic ruin, but which once ground corn and wheat grains into flour for the many small farms in this part of the Peninsula. The Society is supporting this most interesting initiative by way of assisting the acquisition of the necessary permits, consents and approvals from Heritage Western Cape and other organisations. However, the initial activity is to obtain legal authority to access the land area concerned (off Glen Road, near to the Navy Sports Field) and set up a formal lease agreement and NPO/PBO (Non Profit and Public Benefit Organisation structures). Negotiations start with the Department of Public Works (Landowner) and the SA Navy (Land administrator).

Market Garden Project – Another group of local people have expressed an interest in developing a market garden, capable of delivering fresh high quality/high reliability vegetables, herbs and other produce to local restaurateurs, guest houses and the general public. It is envisaged that large scale enterprise is necessary, run on commercial principles. The land area sought includes the former Admiral's Garden opposite Admiralty House and the large tract of land that lies below the Happy Valley adult night shelter. Both areas benefit from good soil, good shelter from the South Easterly winds and a year-round copious water supply that originates from the Klaver Valley, via the waterfall. This project has the capability of being a significant employer of disadvantaged people and will also bring to an end the sometimes criminal activities of the numerous persons who are currently squatting in that area. The Society is

supporting this project proposal in a similar manner to the Els River Water Mill – acquisition of permits, consents and approvals, legal authorisation to access the land, establishment of a formal lease agreement and NPO/PBO structures. Again, negotiations start with the Department of Public Works (Landowner) and the SA Navy (Land administrator).

Executive Committee

The ExCo has functioned during the past year under the handicap of being 2 persons short of the target 7 members; this has placed an extra load on our shoulders. I therefore express my grateful thanks to Audrey, Yvonne, Eddie and Eric for sharing their knowledge, wisdom and for their unfailingly cheerful support and advice – all most appreciated.

Closing

From the foregoing, it will be apparent that times have changed considerably since this Society was formed in 1960. Dumps Willis and his immediate successors and Committee members were largely involved in researching and documenting the history of this fascinating and unique Town, Seaport and Naval Dockyard. I suspect that they would be surprised at some of the activities that we are obliged to undertake today in order to “Protect and Preserve our Heritage”.

As a Brit, I labour under the handicap of having had zero exposure to Afrikaans before arriving here in 2006. Despite the best efforts of Eddie (Wesselo) to further my education, I seem to be confident in one word only – “Dankie”. So, “Dankie” it is - to all who support, have an interest in, or actively participate in this Simon’s Town Historical Society. Go well in all your endeavours.

(DAVID E ERICKSON : CHAIRMAN)

THE DE STADLER FAMILY : AUDREY. E. READ

The original member of the family who came to South Africa was CHARLES DE STADLER (1781-1832). In the de Villiers research of early Cape families at the Cape Archives he is shown as coming from Vienna. One should remember at this stage that Europe then was composed of many independent states and not the countries which we know today.

In the records at the Cape Archives it is stated that he was in the 60th Regt of Foot. From notes on the Battle of Muizenberg it states that the Wurtemberg Regt had a Battalion assisting the Dutch and that after the Battle they were absorbed into the British forces. If you look at an atlas of present day Europe – particularly Vienna – and put one end of a ruler there and the other end on Bavaria, it makes sense that Charles de Stadler could have sought employment in the Wurtemberg Regt. He married Catharina Hombert in the Lutheran Church in Cape Town and because of this he sought permission to stay at the Cape. He was appointed a Wardmaster in Simon's Town but "blotted his copybook" and was relieved of his post. He then opened a tavern next to the Army Barracks and the house is still there (now incorporated into Naval property at the corner of Cornwall Street and Arsenal Road). He and Catharina had 6 children. They were Charles Pieter, George Francis, Amelia Mary Ann, Johanna Henrietta, Louis Henry and Mary Ann (who sadly died aged 1 year). Charles Pieter also died in 1817.

In 2009 I received an e-mail from one Bronson de Stadler in America asking if I could help him by doing research on the de Stadler family. This was his second attempt to find out – the first attempt being five years earlier. On the first occasion I contacted Mrs Triggs and Mrs Wood (both born de Stadler) who denied they had any American relations. I persisted with the research and ended up with an enormous family tree in which I was helped by so many members of the family who were very willing to share their knowledge.

The American connection came about in that LOUIS HENRY (born 1851) had a youngest son called GEORGE MARTIN DE STADLER (born 1870). He left Simon's Town when he was about 16 years of age and joined the Royal Navy. In 1896 at Walsall, near Birmingham, in the English midlands he married Leah Ashford and in 1897 GEORGE HENRY DE STADLER was born in the United Kingdom. When the Boer War broke out in 1899 George Martin returned to South Africa and fought on the British side using the surname STANLEY. He was with Baden-Powell's infantry unit in the 43rd Battery of the Royal Field Artillery. He was awarded the Queen's Medal with clasps for the Cape Colony and Orange Free State which means he probably fought at Belmont, Modder River and perhaps at Magersfontein. He was wounded in action and at one time was in danger of losing his leg. After the Boer War ended in 1902 and before the outbreak of World War I the family moved to the United States of America. During World War I George Martin joined the Royal Air Force in England. After the war he settled in Southern California because the climate was similar to that

of the Cape Colony and was kinder to his damaged leg. George Henry's son was Bronson Ives de Stadler (11 August 1920). In turn Bronson Ives had a son Bronson George (6 August 1949) who married Kathleen and they have two sons and 1 daughter and live in Newburyport, USA. It was Bronson George who contacted me and whom I was able to help find out about his South African connection. While researching the earliest de Stadler we also found out that one had been a Bishop in Vienna around 1790 but time precluded me from pursuing this further.

The family tree is now lodged in the Simon's Town Museum archives. A descendant of George Francis de Stadler still lives on the family farm, Poespaskraal, off Kommetjie Road. Much of the original land is now occupied by the townships of Capri Village and Sunnydale.

PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE DOCUMENT RELATING TO SIMON'S TOWN :

ADM 1/8404/450 – Refusal of Arab s and Somalis aboard HMS Dartmouth to work.

Forty Arabs from Aden and 26 Somalis mutinied aboard HMS DARTMOUTH at Simon's Town - refused to work because weather was too cold and they only joined for service in East Indies Station. (Signal 29 November 1914).

C-in-C Simon's Town requested that restrictions on flogging (outlawed since 1881) be removed.

Reply recommended consultation with local officers to avoid flogging. Second Sea Lord (V. Adm. Sir Frederick T. Hamilton KCB, CVO), stated that discipline must be maintained and necessary steps to be taken. *(The correspondence does not reveal how the problem was resolved but it seems highly unlikely that Their Lordships would have given permission for the Arabs to be flogged. – Ed.*

PORTUGUESE EXPLORATION – AFRICA AND ASIA : AUDREY E READ

At the time of Prince Henry the Navigator's death his nephew Dom Afonso V was king. He was not as interested as his uncle in finding the source of the Eastern spices which at that time came to the West along

the Silk Road, Venice and Genoa. Dom Afonso V was busy in 1464 retrieving the bones of Prince Henry's brother Prince Fernando who had been a hostage of the Moors since 1437 and when he died in 1443 his body was hung head down from the city walls of Tangier.

Only in 1469 did Afonso contract with a merchant called Farnando Gomes in Lisbon who had exclusive rights to trade along the African Coast as far as Guinea and by 1474 the western Cape Verde Islands, Sao Tome and Principe had been discovered. In 1481 Afonso died in Sintra in Portugal and was succeeded by his son Dom Jao II who from an early age had been imbued with his great-uncle Henry's passion for exploration. He kept his findings very secret pro tem.

In 1482 he ordered the Fort at Elmina on the Gold Coast (now known as Ghana) to be built. This was superintended by Deogo de Azambeya in whose fleet Christopher Columbus - then just an ordinary seaman with great aspirations, was serving. In 1487 we saw Bartholomew Diaz set out to look for the source of the spices and the whereabouts of Prester John (he was probably a mythical character supposed in the Middle Ages to rule over a vast domain in the interior of Asia - he was later identified with the king of Ethiopia and the myth died when the Portuguese saved Abyssinia from Muslim domination).

Bypassing the Fort at Elmina Diaz sailed as far as Luderitz Bay on the west coast of Africa from where he was driven south by southerly winds for 13 days. It has often been said that he deliberately stood to seaward and then south until westerly winds appeared, when he finally sailed north and made landfall at to-day's Mossel Bay before sailing on to the Great Fish River before his crew mutinied and demanded to return home to Portugal. This was when he discovered on his return voyage the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Agulhas (which he named after the Irish apostle St Brennan).

His great achievement was not fully appreciated by Dom Jao on Diaz's return to Lisbon in December 1488. By coincidence when Diaz presented his charts to Dom Jao, present also, was Christopher Columbus. From his charts it was obvious he had turned back a few days sailing from Sofala (in to-day's Mozambique). Christopher Columbus went on in 1492 after 33 days sailing from the Canary Islands to find the Bahamas.

Secrecy was paramount. Charts were kept under lock and key and dates and facts were very secret. In 1497 Vasco da Gama set out to find the way to India. The king of Portugal was now Dom Manuel I aged 26, the

son of Fernando. Two *naus* of 100 tons, the SAO GABRIEL and the SAO RAFAEL were specially built under the supervision of Bartholomew Diaz and with them sailed a small 50 ton *caravel* the BERRIO. The fleet was manned by a crew of 170 including Diego Diaz and Paulo de Gama (Vasco's older brother). Vasco da Gama at that stage was about 37 years of age. Vasco da Gama chose a wide swing from near Sierra Leone to St Helena Bay on the South African coast which took him about 93 days and over 3,000 miles. It was an astounding feat.

After Mossel Bay they touched in at Natal before continuing up the East coast to Malindi in present day Kenya. In Malindi they found an Arab pilot, the elderly and experienced Ahmed Ibn Majid, to guide them and were also able to obtain fresh water and supplies for scurvy was rife. It took them 26 days before they reached Calicut on the Malabar Coast of India on 18 May 1498. As they had not brought gifts for the ruler Zamorine, contacts soon soured and after three months of monsoon weather they set sail for Portugal. It was a slow journey and Paulo da Gama took ill and finally died at Terceira in the Azores. They stayed there for a while and then sailed into the River Tagus and Lisbon in September 1499.

As a thanksgiving King Manuel decided to build the Jeronimus monastery at Belem on the Tagus. Further voyages to India began in 1500. Then Pedro Alvares Cabral led a fleet of 13 ships sailing in a wide arc and came across what we know today as Brazil, before turning East again. Sadly after 10 days the fleet was hit by a terrible storm and 4 ships were lost and Bartholomew Diaz, the captain of one of the ships, was drowned. Thus began the great years of Portuguese exploration.

Sadly today the great Portuguese fleets have gone and its merchant navy is unimpressive. Fortunately examples of the past ships have survived due to the Portuguese Sail Training Association (APORVELA) whose members designed the replacement *caravels* of Bartholomew Diaz which sailed from Portugal to Mossel Bay in 1988 calling in at Buffels Bay, in False Bay, near Cape Point, to commemorate Diaz great voyage of 500 years before. APORVELA have a naval training ship called the SAGRES, a magnificent 3-masted *barque* and the elegant CREOULA a 4-masted steel-hulled schooner known as a *bacalhoeiro* to remind us of the days when 3,000 men each year went to fish for cod on the Grand Banks.

References: The Portuguese – the Land and its People by Marion Kaplan, published by Penguin 1991. Simon's Town Historical Society Bulletin Vol.XV No. 2 p.80

THE BIRTH OF THE WAR GRAVES COMMISSION AND THE FURIOUS CONTROVERSY IT SPARKED :

They died en masse during the Great War, but for the first time in the history of conflict, the common soldier was buried as an individual.



On 4 August next year (2014), "senior British and German politicians" - almost certainly David Cameron and Angela Merkel - will meet at the end of a suburban cul-de-sac in Belgium. They will gather on two large mounds of spoil, excavated from phosphate mines in the 19th century. Long ago, the mounds were planted with pine trees, cotoneasters, flowerbeds and lawns – and the bodies of 600 young men.

Near here, on the outskirts of Mons, German and British soldiers fought the opening battle of the First World War in August 1914. Nearby, they also fired their final shots of the war, several hours after the armistice had been signed, on 11 November 1918.

The site of the "ceremony of British-German reconciliation", marking the centenary of Britain's entry into the first industrial war, will be the Saint-Symphorien military cemetery. Saint-Symphorien is an excellent choice. First, it is the only First World War cemetery to contain roughly equal numbers of German and "British" graves: 334 "Britons" and 280 Germans. (The inverted commas are necessary as many of these bodies are Irish or Canadian.)

And second, Saint-Symphorien, though small, symbolises all four years of the war's mass slaughter. If you enter the main gate and turn right, you follow a lawn path through clumps of white British and grey German gravestones. You reach two rows of graves facing each other near the boundary fence. At the end of the right-hand row is Private John Parr, 16,

from Finchley, a bicycle scout, who was killed on 21 August 1914, two days before the Battle of Mons proper. On the left, directly opposite, is Private George Ellison, 40, from Leeds, who was shot by a sniper 90 minutes before the war ended at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.

Privates Parr and Ellison were the first and last British soldiers to be killed in combat in the First World War. Between their graves there are seven paces and, metaphorically, 886,000 dead British servicemen.

That first and last should rest so close together is a macabre coincidence. Parr was buried by the Germans in 1915. Ellison's body was moved from a makeshift grave when the cemetery was taken over by the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission in the 1920s. It was many decades before the eerie juxtaposition of the graves was noticed.

Remarkable? Yes, but it is equally remarkable that the two graves, and the hundreds of thousands of other individual graves from the First World War, should exist at all. Where, after all, are the soldiers who died at Waterloo? Or in the Crimean War? Or the American Civil War? Or the Boer war? The answer is that pre-1914, with scattered exceptions, dead "other ranks" were tipped into pits. The First World War was the first in history in which systematic efforts were made to give permanent, marked graves to dead soldiers — however lowly and whether or not they could be identified.



THE GRAVES OF 46 BRITISH SOLDIERS OF THE ROYAL MIDDLESEX REGIMENT AT SAINT-SYMPHORIEN - REX FEATURES.

The contrast between the blind slaughter which killed 10 million soldiers on all sides and the democratic respect for the humblest dead private is

one of the great paradoxes of this most baffling of wars. Soldiers could be destroyed en masse, torn apart or liquidised by the new arsenal of high explosives, machine guns, poison gas, tanks, flame-throwers and war planes. But they were to be honoured individuals in death.

Almost all combatant countries established constellations of war cemeteries, but none did so as enthusiastically, and as painstakingly, as Britain and its Empire. The first impulse for permanent cemeteries came from the soldiers themselves, who created makeshift burial grounds with ragged crosses and inscriptions, sticks and tin helmets. It was a British civil servant, journalist and businessman-turned-wartime ambulance chief, Sir Fabian Ware, who pushed for these "soldiers' cemeteries" to be recorded and made permanent.

Ware founded the Imperial War Graves Commission in 1917. After the war, the writer (and war-bereaved father) Rudyard Kipling and the architect Edwin Lutyens were part of a study group which recommended that cemeteries in France, Belgium, Italy, Turkey and the Middle East should be preserved "in perpetuity" as the principal British Empire memorials of the war.

No bodies would be repatriated. All ranks would be treated equally. The grave-markers would be upright slabs, not crosses, to avoid giving the war a simplistic, posthumous sanctity. The cemeteries would have a standard design, with standard symbols and inscriptions, and would resemble English country gardens

Even unidentified soldiers were to be given individual graves. France invented the concept of the "Unknown Soldier". We have cemeteries full of unknown soldiers. In the biggest cemetery on the Somme battlefields (Serre Road No 2), 4,944 individual graves – almost 70 per cent – carry no name.

"It is easy to forget now how revolutionary the cemetery idea was," said Peter Francis, head of external communications at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. "It came, I think, from a realisation that this war was different, in scale and character, to anything before. This was not a war fought by a largely unloved and little known professional army. It was fought, after its first year, mostly by volunteers – by fathers, sons and brothers."

Nonetheless, the commission's choices, endorsed by the imperial governments, angered many people. There were petitions and furious

debates in parliament about the "no repatriation" rule and about the "unchristian" and un-triumphant cemetery design.

Others saw the rebuilt cemeteries and the large monuments listing the "missing" at Ypres and the Somme as an attempt to "prettify" or sweeten memories of an unforgiveable war. Siegfried Sassoon, in his poem "On Passing the New Menin Gate" complained about the "intolerably nameless names" on the Ypres monument: "Well might the Dead who struggled in the slime/ Rise and deride this sepulchre of crime."

Vera Brittain, in her classic civilian memoir *Testament of Youth*, describes her distress when she found that the original, chaotic "soldiers' cemeteries" had become neat rows of graves surrounded by flowerbeds.

In research on the cultural origins of the choices made by Ware, Kipling and the others, the US-based British academic Joanna Scutts found that the idea that permanent cemeteries abroad should be the principal British memorials of the war can be traced to the famous lines in Rupert Brooke's 1914 poem "The Soldier": "If I should die, think only this of me:/ That there's some corner of a foreign field/ That is for ever England."

By the end of the war, such a mawkish sentiment was felt to be inadequate but could not be rejected entirely. "The struggle was to find a form and language for remembrance that would comprehend the soldiers' disgust... but would avoid suggesting to the bereaved that their losses had been meaningless," reported Scutts.

In other words, the cemeteries should be ambivalent. They should "leave interpretation open". They should not glorify the war; nor should they imply that it had all been a pointless waste of young life.

The Cenotaph in Whitehall proclaims its dedication to the "Glorious Dead". No such words can be found in the Commonwealth cemeteries. "Glorious death" is too brittle a concept to survive exposure to rows of named graves – or thousands of graves with no names. The standard cemetery inscriptions are the more neutral "Lest we Forget" and "Their Name Liveth Forever More".

There are 940 Commonwealth First World War graveyards in France and Belgium, ranging from the 11,954 burials at Tyne Cot near Passchendaele to dozens of tiny battlefield cemeteries on the Somme. They are more visited today than ever before.

The beauty of the flower borders and the constant replacement of time-worn stones give them a poignant, unsettling freshness absent from the German and French cemeteries. Something about the cemetery design compels the visitor to think of the dead, not as Sassoon's "intolerably nameless names", but as husbands, friends, lovers, fathers, sons and brothers. Thus have the controversial choices made in 1919 been vindicated by time.

The First World War gnaws at our guts because it raises questions to which there are no easy answers. Why did an educated, enfranchised population tolerate mass slaughter for so long? Is it right to fight for what you believe in, even if you know that warfare leads to unimaginable indignity and suffering? At what point do you stand up to evil? How can you distinguish good and evil from nationalistic ranting and posturing? The young men in boaters and flat caps who volunteered in 1914 were driven by the conviction that Britain is always right as much as a belief in freedom and democracy.

And yet can we confidently state that they were not defending freedom? What would the world have looked like had German militarism triumphed over flawed democracy in 1914?

The First World War cemeteries compel the visitor to consider these questions and they defy glib replies – especially the Saint-Symphorien, with its half-British, half-German occupancy.

A tragic ambivalence was deliberately built – or "coded" in Joanna Scutts' word – into the "silent cities" of France and Belgium. It is a principle worth recalling before we plunge into orgies of either flag-waving or facile pacifism next year.

The first man: John Parr :

John Parr never "fought" in the Great War. He never knew the world of trenches, barbed wire, mud, poison gas, aircraft or tanks. Parr, from Finchley in North London, was shot by advancing German troops as he scouted, on his bicycle, ahead of the deploying British Army on 21 August 1914, two days before the first British battle of the war near Mons.

Parr was 16. He had lied about his age when he gave up his job as a caddy at the North Middlesex Golf Course in Friern Barnet Lane and joined the Middlesex Regiment a year earlier.

For many months, the British Army failed to report that he was dead or even missing. His mother, Alice Parr, of 52 Lodge Lane, North Finchley,

finally wrote a letter complaining that she had not heard from her son for months. The War Office replied gruffly that it could not help. It was not until after the war that a soldier who had been on the same scouting mission confirmed the time of Parr's death. He was the first of the 564,715 British and Empire soldiers to die on the Western Front. No picture of him has ever been found.

The last man: George Ellison :

A former miner, married with a small son, Ellison had been a regular soldier for more than a decade when he was posted to France in August 1914 with the British Expeditionary Force – what the Kaiser referred to as a "contemptible little army".

Ellison, then 36, was among the first British troops to fight in trenches, in late 1914. Very few of the original foot-soldiers of the expeditionary force were still alive and fit to fight by the time the armistice was signed at 5am on 11 November 1918. Private Ellison was one of them – and still a private, which may suggest something about his character or record.

For reasons that remain controversial to this day, the fighting continued for another six hours until the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. It is estimated that 11,000 soldiers were killed or wounded on that final morning.

Ellison, who had survived so much, was one of them. He was shot by a sniper while part of a patrol scouting on the edge of Mons – about two miles from where he is now buried – at about 9.30am on 11 November. He was the last British soldier to die in combat in the First World War.

There were, however, further casualties among the Canadians, who were fighting a little to the west.

Private George Lawrence Price, 25, of the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade, was shot through the head at 10.57am, three minutes before the guns fell silent.

Price, the last British Empire soldier to die, is also buried at the Saint-Symphorien Cemetery, 20 yards from the eerily adjacent graves of Privates Parr and Ellison. - *John Lichfield - Independent - Sunday 10 November 2013.*

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS RECEIVED RECENTLY BY OUR CHAIRMAN :

Dear Sir,

In 1964 I was at UCT and as a RAG stunt students removed one of the cannons (mounted at Seaforth Beach). (Not guilty of the removal but have done nothing about it). Next day it was national news.

I was told that it had been buried and would be returned after the furore had died down.

When I was last in Simons Town in 2012 I went to Seaforth and the are no cannons.

I do not know whether or not the removed cannon was returned but if not it may be worthwhile looking into having it returned.

The cannon was removed by students from College House and I believe buried probably in the courtyard near a statue of a black panther (which too had been taken during a previous RAG week).

The Warden, College House (Rosebank) would probably be a good point for first contact.

I cannot provide any more information but would on my next visit to Simon's Town like to see two cannon in place.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Nash
Pyrford; Surrey; UK

Hist. Soc. Chairman David Erickson was able to advise Mr Nash that on his next visit to Simon's Town he would be able to see the two cannon, not at Seaforth but in Jubilee Square.

OBITUARY : CHRISTOPHER KINDO, BALLET DANCER :
AUDREY E READ

Monday 20th April 2015 saw the passing of this very talented member of the Kindo family, a family that has been in Simon's Town since 1837. It is said that the first member of this family to settle here was William Kindo and it is believed that he was thrown overboard from a slave ship and fished out of the water by the crew of a RN ship on its way to Simon's Town. Sadly we do not know the name of the ship.

William was a Prize Negro and they were employed in the RN Dockyard and taught a trade. They were indentured for 14 years. The family believe that the surname comes from a town called Kindo near Kinshasha

in the Congo. He was later employed by Wm Runciman Snr who gave him a piece of ground in Goede Gift. After his death the property was sold and in 1862 the family obtained land in Cardiff Road. By his second wife (after the death of his first wife) there were 5 sons and 1 daughter. William Kindo died in 1897 and his wife Johanna (nee Salvia) died in 1916.

In 1967 the Group Areas Act was introduced and Simon's Town was declared a White Area and the family were relocated to Ocean View. Having been forced to sell their land to the state, in 2003 at an historic ceremony on December 16 at the Dockyard Sports Field near the Martello Tower, the Kindo family were one of the lucky families to regain their land. Percy Kindo, a builder by trade, has built a new family home in Cardiff Road. Sally Kindo's daughter Ingrid has bought a house in Devon Street nearby.

Christopher was the first person of colour to perform at CAPAB. He left the country towards the end of the 1970s and returned in 1980 when the arts industry became desegregated. Christopher had started dancing as a young child and after matriculating he joined the UCT Ballet School. He spent time with the Boston Ballet in the USA. After his return to South Africa he founded Jazzart, a contemporary dance company. He later joined Dance for All where he choreographed award winning shows and taught aspiring dancers from the poorer communities. He was said to be always ready for a laugh and was said to have a naughty sense of humour.

Christopher battled cancer of the oesophagus and died at Percy and Mary's Simon's Town home on Monday 20th April 2015. Tributes have poured in, acknowledging his brilliant work. His funeral service was held at St Francis of Asisi Church in Simon's Town on Saturday 2 May 2015.

References: "Echoes from the Past" - Albert Thomas; Archives Simon's Town Museum; STHS Bulletin and The Cape Times 23 April 2015.

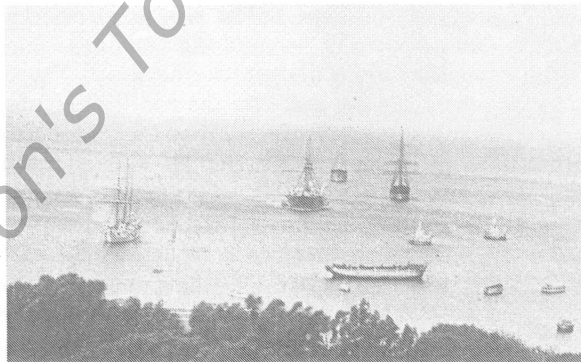
SIMON'S BAY MOORING LIGHTERS : BILL RICE

The second British occupation of the Cape took place in 1812 when it was feared that Napoleon Buonaparte would take the Province from the

ailing Dutch East India Company. Visiting Royal Naval vessels anchored in Table Bay where they were vulnerable to sudden and frequent North Westerly gales and storms from the South Atlantic which are a feature of the Cape Winter. Many vessels, including some British warships, were driven onto the lee shore between the Castle of Good Hope and the Salt River mouth. For this reason the Royal Navy transferred its South Atlantic base to the former Dutch East India Company (VOC) depot in Simon's Bay, in the lee of the Cape Peninsula, two years later.

The incarceration of Napoleon on the Island of Saint Helena following his defeat at the battle of Waterloo in 1815 increased the importance of Simon's Bay as a depot from which the Saint Helena garrison could be supplied and as a base from which any attempt to rescue the former Emperor could be countered. With more ships based at and calling in at Simon's Bay it was necessary to lay moorings in order to reduce wear and tear on the anchor cables of ships which spent long periods there.

The first mooring vessel to serve at the Cape was the former HMS BADGER, which paid off at Simon's Town in 1831. BADGER was a Cherokee Class brig-sloop, belonging to a large class which included HMS BEAGLE, the vessel in which Charles Darwin sailed in December 1831 for a five year circumnavigation of the Globe. BADGER was one of the earlier ships of the class, having been ordered from Josiah & Thomas Brindley of Frindsbury, just below Rochester Bridge on 31 January 1807 and launched into the River Medway on 23 July 1808. BADGER served as a Mooring Vessel in Simon's Bay until 22 March 1860 when she was beached at the Dockyard (now known as the West Dockyard) to be broken up. Demolition was completed in 1864.



SHIPS IN SIMON'S BAY WITH THE MOORING VESSEL SWIFT IN THE FOREGROUND : PHOTO - SIMON'S TOWN MUSEUM.

The Admiralty identified the need to replace the ageing BADGER and sent out a former mail packet named SWIFT, of 361 tons, builders' old measurement, which had been built at Deptford in 1835. The 29 metres long SWIFT arrived in Simon's Bay on 7 March 1861, towed by the paddle sloop HMS GORGON which, in 1858, had taken soundings to assist the former warship AGAMEMNON to lay the first transatlantic telegraph cable. Years of hard work lifting and laying moorings took their toll and on 31 December 1891 the fifty six years old SWIFT sank at her moorings in Simon's Bay. The hull was raised and beached to be broken up.

Simon's Town was without a dedicated Mooring Vessel for a number of years but the need for such a craft was recognised at the Admiralty in London. In 1898 Sir William White, the Director of Naval Construction, issued a specification for the construction of a pair of steam powered non-propelled steel mooring lighters having the following dimensions :

Length overall (including bow horns)	32,77 M
Length of flat bottom	27,74 M
Extreme Breadth	8,53 M
Mean Draught	1,52 M
Displacement (Approximate)	205Tonnes

One, designated Mooring Lighter No. 30, was to be delivered, complete in all respects, to H M Dockyard at Sheerness and components for the second lighter, Mooring Lighter No. 14, were to be delivered to the Royal Victoria Victualling Yard at Deptford for shipment to the Cape of Good Hope. Payment for the Cape lighter was to be made when its components had been delivered to Deptford and Mooring Lighter No 30 had successfully completed lifting trials at Sheerness.

Tenders were submitted and the order for the two lighters was placed with Fleming & Ferguson at Paisley, on the river Cart, a tributary of the mighty River Clyde. Yard numbers 285 and 286 were allocated by the shipbuilder. Detailed building drawings, in coloured inks on linen-backed paper, were to be submitted for approval by June 1900.

A pair of steam capstans and a steam winch, mounted at the after end of the main deck, provided the power for lifting mooring buoys and anchors. Mooring cables could be hauled aboard over the apron and slid down a steel ramp into the hold, which was served by a six tons capacity wooden derrick mounted on the mast. Below the main deck was an open hold, aft of which was a space containing a coal-fired boiler, the capstan machinery, two coal bunkers and a crew mess. The hatch serving the

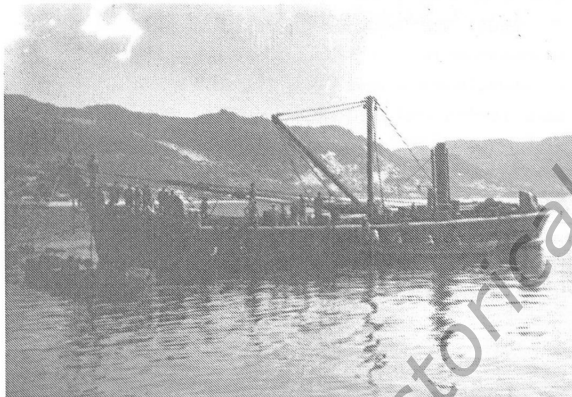
hold could be closed for coastal voyages using hatch boards and tarpaulins. Aft the machinery space was a watertight after peak. On deck there was a crude toilet, or "head" to use naval parlance, comprising an open pipe leading overboard, surrounded by a canvas dodger on a wrought iron frame to provide a degree of privacy. Provision was made for a forged steel rudder and tiller which could be shipped should the craft have to be towed from port to port. Every part of Lighter No 14 had to be marked for identification and the shipbuilder was to supply the rivets, oakum, paint, timber and cement required for assembly including an extra ten per cent of estimated requirement to ensure that there was no risk of shortages causing delays to the task of assembling the craft in Simon's Town.

The shipping arrangements were changed just before delivery and Messrs Fleming & Ferguson were instructed to deliver the crated lighter components, totalling 454 tons, to Queen's Dock at Glasgow, instead of to Deptford, by 5 June 1900. They were to be loaded aboard the steamer CLAN FRASER, which was also loading 82 tons of crated components for a composite grab dredger/hopper barge (YC 15) prefabricated by Allie & Maclellan at their Polmadie shipyard for service at Simon's Town.

S S CLAN FRASER was due to sail on 8 June and was expected at Simon's Town on 9 July. The keel of the mooring lighter was laid on the Dockyard Patent Slip on 19 July 1900. Construction of the Hopper Barge from Allie & Maclellan was contracted out and it was assembled on the beach at Simon's Town as there was not enough space in the Dockyard. The Mooring Lighter hull was set afloat for the first time on 17 October 1901. Due to a lack of a suitable crane in the Dockyard the lighter was taken alongside the Flagship, HMS FORTE, and the cruiser's derrick was used to lift the boiler from a cargo lighter and place it aboard the Mooring Lighter, which was then hauled up onto the slipway to be completed. On completion the Mooring Lighter was taken into service on 19 February 1902 and was allocated the Yard Craft Register number YC 221.

It was to be another eight and a half years before the East Dockyard, with a basin capable of accommodating a wide range of vessels, would be available and the tasks of laying and maintaining moorings would keep YC 221 continuously employed. Every now and then the swell would cause a coal lighter to fill up with water and sink, providing a more interesting and challenging task for the lighter and her crew of riggers.

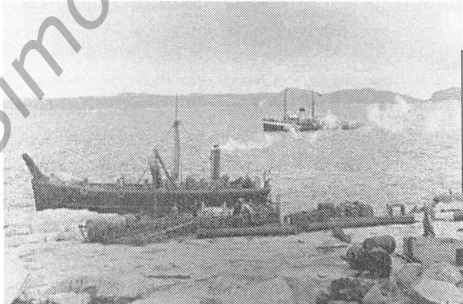
A steady stream of visiting ships during two world wars meant that not all of them could be berthed in the basin and YC 221 was kept busy servicing moorings in Simon's Bay to accommodate visitors.



YC 221 RAISING A SUNKEN LIGHTER IN SIMON'S BAY. THE CANVAS-SHROUDED "HEAD" CAN BE SEEN ON THE PORT QUARTER.
- PHOTO : SIMON'S TOWN MUSEUM.

In December 1941 a water tube boiler arrived from the UK to be fitted aboard the destroyer HMS JANUS and investigations indicated that YC 221 had sufficient stability to carry this fifty-tons load on its deck from the cargo ship which delivered it to the side of the destroyer, where it could be lifted aboard, by the Gooseneck crane on the wharf.

Later in the War YC 221 was involved in the construction of a Top Secret radar mast on Seal Island, out in False Bay. Towed out and positioned by the sixty-foot steel diesel launch HL (D) 3942, she placed a mooring block weighing five tons on a submerged ledge some eighteen metres from the Island. This was used to secure lighters carrying prefabricated steel sections of a jib crane which was assembled on shore to unload and erect steel sections of the 60 metres high radar tower.



YC 221 AT SEAL ISLAND DURING WORLD WAR II WITH THE SALVAGE AND TARGET TOWING TUG ST DOGMAEL IN THE BACKGROUND. - PHOTO : TIM ROBERTON

During 1955 YC 221 was overhauled and corroded plating was replaced. The single bow horn was replaced by a pair of horns, part riveted and part welded, prefabricated and installed by the Globe Engineering Co of Cape Town. Her fifty three years old boiler was replaced by a modern coal-fired Scotch boiler during the refit. In April 1957 the lighter was handed over to the South African Navy, together with the Dockyard, in terms of the so-called "Simon's Town Agreement."

The South African Navy, which transferred its ships from Salisbury Island in Durban to Simon's Town in 1957, had two "Bar" Class Boom Defence Ships, SAS SOMERSET (ex HMS BARCROSS) and SAS FLEUR (ex HMS BARBRAKE) which undertook mooring and salvage tasks leaving YC 221 to swing around its mooring in a neglected state for many years. By 1973 SAS FLEUR had been scuttled and SAS SOMERSET was nearing the end of her active life and it was decided to reactivate the vessel known locally as "The Mooring Lighter." The task of preparing a concept design was allocated to the Yarrow Africa Maritime Consultancy Organisation (YAMCO), which had recently established offices in Cape Town and Durban. Their proposal involved the removal of the boiler and steam winch and the steam drives to the capstans and the installation of a Foden FD 6 diesel, supplied by the S A Navy, driving a hydraulic pump which would operate the two deck capstans and a new hydraulic winch, mounted on after deck in place of the existing and steam winch. The design and manufacture of the hydraulic drives and the deck winch was carried out by a Petrel Engineers, a Cape Town company with considerable experience in the fishing and marine diamond mining industries.

In 1974 the Mooring Lighter, liberally coated with guano after years of lying out in the Bay, was lifted out by the recently commissioned Dockyard Synchrolift and parked in the lee of the submarine refitting shed where it was handed over to Murray & Stewart Marine to be refitted.

Following the refit and trials of the new hydraulic machinery the Mooring Lighter was taken into service and has been in continuous use ever since, mostly in Simon's Bay but occasionally further out in False Bay where the Whittle Rock buoy requires attention every few years. On 13 January 1999 ancient and modern technologies worked hand in hand when the Mooring Lighter, tended by the Dockyard tug UMALUSI (ex GOLDEN ENERGY TUG), proceeded out into False Bay and recovered an anchor and cable dropped by the Replenishment Ship SAS DRAKENSBERG. The position of the anchor and cable had been

pinpointed by one of the S A N Minehunters using its high-definition sonar.

In June 2001 the Mooring Lighter made the longest voyage of her long career. Towed by the powerful Dockyard tug UMALUSI she rounded Cape Point and headed up the West Coast to Saldanha Bay where she was required to tend National Defence Force moorings at the Salamander Bay base.

The Simon's Town Dockyard Mooring Lighter, which was already thirty two years old eighty years ago when the liner QUEEN MARY (John Brown's Yard No. 534) was launched on the River Clyde opposite the River Cart, beside which she was first assembled, is still operational as one of the few vessels of her generation still being used for the purpose for which she was ordered.



THE DOCKYARD MOORING LIGHTER IS SEEN IN THE FOREGROUND AS RFA BLACK ROVER PREPARES TO LEAVE SIMON'S TOWN ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2014. – PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID ERICKSON, SIMON'S TOWN

ISAAC STROMBOM c1776 – 1833 : AUDREY E READ

Owner of “The Residency” our Museum Building from 1803-1810

He was born in Ulricheim in Sweden the son of Peter Heinrich Strombom of Stockholm (1732-1789). We presume he must have spent some time in London before coming to the Cape as on 28.10.1792 aged about 20 he married in Cape Town to Eliza Peacock (1770-1804). She was the

daughter of James and Elizabeth Peacock and had been christened at St Botolphs in Aldgate, London.

Isaac and Eliza had 4 children born in Cape Town who survived. A fifth child died young. They were :

Peter Henry 24/6/1794 died 20.8.1841 in Guntur, India

Marianna Eliza 1/9/1795 m 1818 J. L. Cartwright. Died in England c1871

George Gillam 14/11/1796 died 17/4/1798 in Cape Town – buried with Eliza

Emily Helen 28/2/1799 spinster died 1880 in London

Louisa 18/4/1801 spinster died 1876 Winchester, England.

We first come across some one called Gillam in 1796 when Isaac sent a cargo on his vessel ELIZA of 22,000 gallons of wine and brandy and other Cape products to Wigram and Co in London (under the superintendence of his good friend Dr Hugh Gillam. Gillam was a surgeon at the Cape during the 1st British Occupation, after which he returned to London. His infant son died here and was buried in the same grave as Isaac's wife Eliza and his baby son George Gillam Strombom.

Peter Henry (1794-1841) was a High Court Judge in the Indian Civil Service. His son William Henry (1816-1895) was a priest at St Andrews Episcopal Church at Nassau in the Bahamas. There were 7 children from his marriage to Maria Lockhart and secondly to Eliz Ann Duncombe (1837-1914).

Strombom bought The Residency (now the home of the Simon's Town Museum) in 1803/4 when it was auctioned off when the British left the Cape at the end of the 1st Occupation. It was bought at auction by Mr Maxwell but he was unable to pay for it and it was then sold to Strombom for 33,000 Guilders. For this sum he obtained not only the Residency building but also the plot on which St Francis Church now stands. In 1810 Strombom sold it to Mr Brand, the Fiscal, for 70,000 Guilders.

Isaac Strombom was definitely a successful merchant in Cape Town. He had property in Heerengracht Street in central Cape Town and at least 30-40 acres on the Black River called HAZENDAL (now the area is known as Athlone). He kept adding to its size. We find in CO.3868:182 he was appealing to the Earl of Caledon to be granted extra pieces

adjacent to his holding. He refers to it as “his country estate” where he farmed and used the services of several slaves.

In CO.3868:167 dated April 1808 he refers to “being the proprietor of one of the principal houses in Simon’s Town which he has kept for several years for mercantile purposes, as well for the temporary residence of himself and family during part of the winter season when transactions with the shipping companies require it, also for the storing of such goods or cargoes which he might purchase”. He is trying to sell it but with the threat of having 4 officers and their batmen billeted there is being frustrated in his efforts.

When Isaac’s wife died in 1804 he sent his young children to England for their education. In 1814 there is a Samuel Strombom registered in London as a merchant at 17 Austin Friars, London and 4 Austin Friars where Isaac is also registered as a merchant. In 1823 Isaac had moved just round the corner to 65 Old Broad Street from which address he had printed and issued a booklet containing details of his appeals to the British Government to make silver as well as gold legal tender. He says on p.38 of that booklet that his bankruptcy at the Cape means that with devaluation the Rixdollar 36,000 which he had settled on his children is now worth only Sterling 7,200 instead of Sterling 12,000. His debt according to papers at the Archives at Kew, London, would appear to be £300,000. It says he was trading in wines, iron, copper, tin and piece goods. At the Cape he was in partnership with de Wit, Baumgarten & Jan Lourens Cloete which went sour. In London he is listed as a merchant (Strombom & Co Merchants and Agents). At his death in 1831 in London he is shown as being at 16 Hatton Garden, London.

Regarding his slaving activities BO.85:59-65 is the only reference we could find in the Cape Archives. He was given permission on 23 March 1797 to land in Table Bay 150 slaves from Mozambique from his vessel GOOD HOPE provided 4 Government appointed doctors, and the Deputy Fiscal and ship’s officers examined the slaves and they were found to be free of smallpox and the ship likewise. These slaves are referred to again in BO.90: pp.70-76 in Hogan’s appeal to Sir George Yonge dated 27 March 1800 as having been sold for an average of Rds 505. Hogan indeed dealt in slaves for there is a list of his sales for and on behalf of “prize slaves” i.e. those rescued from slave ships by the Royal Navy .

I would like to mention the enormous help in this research given to me by Ms L. du Plessis, private researcher formerly in the Cape Archives

and Peter Holst in London who spent many hours at The British Library, India Office and at National Archives at Kew in this connection. – Audrey E Read.

H M GUNBOAT THRUSH : BILL RICE

A couple of years ago the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Association unveiled a memorial to the officers and men of the RFA who have lost their lives in the service of their country since the RFA was founded in 1905. The memorial, located in the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, in Staffordshire, commemorated the loss of twenty four RFA vessels and was unveiled by HRH the Earl of Wessex, Commodore-in-Chief of the RFA.

The first RFA to be lost was the Salvage Vessel THRUSH, which stranded in a storm on 11 April 1917 at Glenam, County Antrim with the loss of nine crew members. The vessel was constructed as Yard No. 262 by Scott & Co. Ltd. of Greenock as a REDBREAST Class Composite Gunboat and was launched into the River Clyde on 22 January 1889.



H M GUNBOAST THRUSH

Her first commission was on the North American and West Indies Station, based at Halifax Nova Scotia, where she was commanded by HRH Prince George, later HM King George V.

On 27 August 1896 she took part in the Anglo-Zanzibar War, which lasted for forty minutes and is on record as the shortest war in history.

During the South African War (1899 to 1902) HMS Thrush was based in Simon's Town under the command of Lt Warren H D'Oyly RN.

On 3 June 1900 she conveyed the coffin of Mary Henrietta Kingsley, a 38 years old British nurse who contracted typhoid fever while nursing Boer prisoners, to a position three miles off Simon's Town where her body was committed to the deep.

In 1906 HMS THRUSH was transferred to the UK Coast Guard and in 1915 she was converted to a Cable Ship. Her final service from 1916 until her loss in 1917 was as the Salvage Ship RFA THRUSH. – Ref : Google.

S S ALKIMOS – AN INTERESTING VISITOR TO SIMON'S BAY

This ship, one of around 2 700 "Liberty" ships built in the USA during World War II was launched from the Bethlehem Fairfield Shipyard (Yard No 2251) in October 1943 as GEORGE M. SCHRIVER but was transferred to the Norwegian Government and completed as VIGGO HANSTEEN.

In August 1944, while the ship was in Naples, Canadian Radio Operator Maude Steane was allegedly shot dead by a fellow crew member who then committed suicide. From that date on the ship had a reputation for being haunted.

In October 1946 the ship was sold to the Norwegian Government and was managed by S. Ugelstads Rederei A/S (S. Ugelstad & Co. Oslo).

In 1948 she was sold to A/S Asplund (Ronnenberg & Galtung of Moss, in Norway).

On 24 April 1952 the unfortunate ship grounded two miles NE of Moeraki Lighthouse 28miles NW of Tairoa Head, NZ, bound London/Port Chalmers via Panama, with cement and motor cars. She was refloated slightly damaged. In 1953 she was sold to Alkimos Shipping Co. S.A. Panama (Costa Rican flag) and renamed ALKIMOS.

On 15 October 1955 she arrived in Simon's Bay to shelter from heavy seas and anchored to carry out boiler repairs. Surveyors from Cape Town went on board during the afternoon to certify seaworthiness before allowing her to continue her voyage.

In 1959 she was transferred to Greek Flag.

On 20 March 1963 - ALKIMOS went aground about 170 miles North of Fremantle and sustained severe damage before being refloated five days later. She left Fremantle on 30 May 1963 bound for Hong Kong in tow

of the tug PACIFIC RESERVE but the towline broke and ship grounded 31 miles North of Fremantle, where she was abandoned as a total loss.

AKLIMOS is still a very popular dive site and is also referred to as being “of interest to ghost hunters.”

CAPTAIN BILL DAMERELL, MASTER MARINER : NINETY NOT OUT

Captain William Joseph Damerell, a member of the Simon's Town Historical Society and one of the last surviving “Cape Horners” celebrated his ninetieth birthday on 10 May 2015. Bill hails from Port Elizabeth where he attended Gray School before travelling to Simon's Town to join the S A Training Ship GENERAL BOTHA. Bill attended the “Bothy” in 1941/2 and would have been a member of the last group to live and study aboard the ship before the threat of a Japanese air attack caused the GB to move to a shore base at the top of Redhill.

After matriculating, Bill opted to join the Royal Navy as a midshipman but the opportunity arose for him to join the four-masted barque LAWHILL for a voyage to Australia. LAWHILL was a Finnish barque which was seized as a prize by the South African Government because Finland was allied to Germany, and was placed under SAR & H management.

Bill remained aboard LAWHILL for three round voyages to Australia via the “Roaring Forties” outward bound and Cape Horn homeward.

Bill spent the next ten years with the Union Castle Line, studying at the Sir John Cass College in London and gaining his Masters' Certificate in 1952, the year in which he and Madge were married in London. Having married, Bill joined the Harbour Service and was initially based in East London.

In 1960 he was promoted to tug master in Cape Town, becoming a pilot two years later and spending the next thirteen years in that position.

Following the closure of the Suez Canal Cape Town was a very busy port and the pilots and tug crews worked long hours to keep the maritime traffic moving.

In 1971 Bill skippered the General Botha ketch HOWARD DAVIS in the first Cape-to-Rio Race and in 1973 sailed in the sloop JAKARANDA from Portsmouth to Cape Town for the first leg of the Whitbread Round-the-World Race. The boat was at sea for forty eight days and was placed fourth on arrival at the Cape.

In 1985 he skippered HOWARD DAVIS which served as Guardship for the South Atlantic race from Cape Town to Uruguay.

Career-wise, Bill was promoted in 1975 to Port Captain at Walvis Bay. He and Madge said that the seven years spent there were the happiest of their lives. In 1981 he was transferred to Richards Bay in Natal, managing the movements of very large bulk carriers. He enjoyed the challenge but not the extreme heat and was happy to be appointed Port Captain at Cape Town in 1983. Among other things the appointment allowed Bill and Madge to see more of their three children.

Bill retired in 1986 and he and Madge built a house in Froggy Farm. Bill then spent seven years lecturing in Navigation and Mathematics at the S A Naval Warfare School at Seaforth. Bill was an active member of the General Botha Old Boys Association and he and Madge were members of the Simon's Town Historical Society. In 2005 Bill and Madge moved to Simon's Bay Estate and Bill joined the Simon's Town Probus Club, which holds its monthly meetings at the adjacent Country Club. Since Madge died Bill has been living "up the line" at the St James Retirement Hotel.

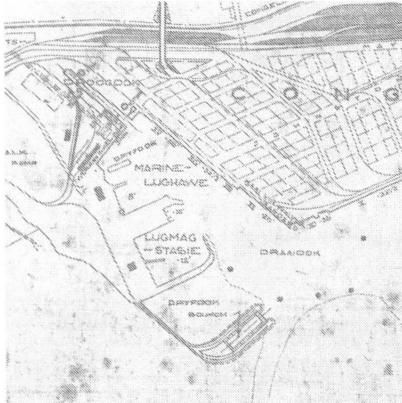
ADMIRALTY FLOATING DOCKS BUILT IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING WORLD WAR II : BILL RICE

AFD XXXI was a floating dock with a lifting capacity of 17 000 tons intended to serve at the Royal Naval base which was being constructed on reclaimed land at Salisbury Island, in Durban. The dock was built inside a cofferdam prepared by SAR & H for the purpose and linked to Bayhead by a road through the mangrove swamps.

Steel plates and sections, totaling 7 000 tons, were shipped out from the UK and only one consignment, weighing 230 tons, was lost due to enemy action. The first plates were laid in September 1943 and the dock was assembled by one qualified boilermaker and sixty locally trained "Emergency Men." It is estimated that about one million rivets were used in the construction of the dock.

Supervision was provided from Simons' Town Dockyard and included a Naval Constructor, R (Bob) Galton RCNC, who joined Simon's Town Dockyard for a three-year stint following his retirement from Admiralty service, and Dockyard Inspectors including Harold Lawrence, the father of Mrs Cindy Dollery.

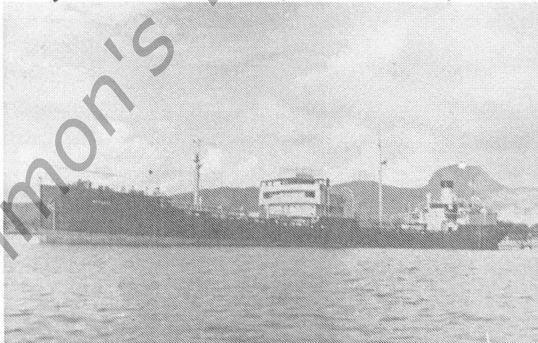
While the dock was under construction a 400 ton lighter was built alongside and crane barge was assembled on the deck. The keel blocks were manufactured from ironwood, from the forests of Knysna, by SAR & H shipwrights.



PART OF DURBAN HARBOUR SHOWING THE PRINCE EDWARD GRAVING DOCK, THE COMMERCIAL SEAPLANE AIRPORT, THE SAAF FLYING BOAT BASE AND THE COFFERDAM IN WHICH AFD XXXI WAS BUILT.

Steel plates and sections, totaling 7 000 tons, were shipped out from the UK and only one consignment, weighing 230 tons, was lost due to enemy action. The first plates were laid in September 1943 and the dock was assembled by one qualified boilermaker and sixty locally trained “Emergency Men.” It is estimated that about one million rivets were used in the construction of the dock.

The dock was floated on 14 July 1945 and was taken to Salisbury Island and secured the Floating Dock Jetty, at the end of which a deep pit had been dredged in the bed of the Bay. Sinking and lifting trials were carried out on 14 and 15 August 1945 using the old RFA OLCADES, formerly BRITISH BEACON, which was 135,4 metres in length.



RFA OLCADES EX BRITISH BEACON, COMMISSIONED IN 1918

With the War drawing to a close the new Base at Salisbury Island was not required and AFD XXXI was towed to the Far East which was still the scene of much naval activity.

Three smaller floating docks, each having a lifting capacity of 750 tons, were also built in South Africa during World War II. Each dock had an overall length of 65,5 metres and a breadth of 18,7 metres and was composed of five pontoons which were joined up afloat.

AFD XXXIX was built in East London and AFD XLI in Cape Town. A third dock, AFD XL, was also built in South Africa in either East London or Port Elizabeth.

AFD XLI was built on the side of the new Sturrock Dock in Cape Town by Jameson's (pontoons 1 and 3) and Consani (pontoons 2 and 4). Pontoon 5 was constructed jointly by Jameson and Consani. In 1952 AFD LXI broke away from the Dutch tug WITTE ZEE while being towed from Cape Town to the River Plate with four men on board. The tow parted on the fortieth day out from Cape Town and was reconnected four and a half days later. The tow from Cape Town to River Plate took 54 days.

THE NAVAL CLUB :

Just up the hill from the 2/6 Pub is a building occupied by the S A Naval Chaplains. Until 1957 this was the R N Officers' Club. It was taken over by the SAN but became "dry" shortly afterwards when the Minister of Defence banned the sale of alcohol in SADF clubs and messes and a group of Naval Officers raised a bond to build the Seven Seas Club.

Back in the 1920s the Club was presided over by Captain Gordon Campbell VC RN who gained fame by commanding a fleet of "Q Ships" during World War I.

Captain Campbell decided that it would be a good idea to permit naval wives and daughters to visit the Club during the mornings to drink tea and read the newspapers and magazines imported from Britain.

A meeting of members was convened and Campbell's proposal was approved. However, the meeting was held while the Cape Squadron was away on a coastal cruise and when the ships returned many of the officers were displeased with the new arrangement. A second meeting was held; the previous decision was overturned and ladies were once again barred from the Club. – *Number Thirteen – Captain Gordon Campbell VC RN.*

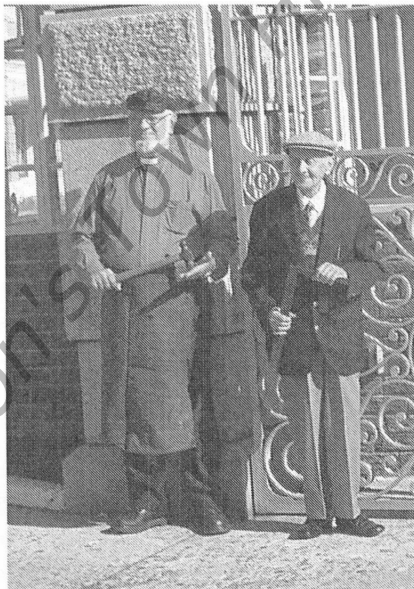
Following World War I Captain Gordon Campbell VC RN commanded a guard of 100 VCs when the body of the Unknown Warrior was landed on British soil.

OBITUARY : REVEREND HENRY FRIESLAAR :

Henry Frieslaar was born in Simon's Town on 12 August 1937 and, on leaving school, joined H M Dockyard at Simon's Town as an apprentice blacksmith. He was an active member of the Sea Cadet Corps and was a keen sailor, taking groups of cadets out into the Bay in 27 ft Montagu whalers.

Whilst still an apprentice Henry felt the call to serve the Church and, on qualifying as a Blacksmith, enrolled at St Paul's Theological Training College in Grahamstown.

Having been ordained he served in the Dioceses of George, Bloemfontein and Cape Town, where he served as Chaplain to the Mayor, Gerry Ferry, another former Simon's Town Dockyard apprentice. Whilst Henry was serving at St Oswald's Church in Milnerton, retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a member of his congregation. Henry concluded his ministry back at St Francis Church in Simon's Town.



IN 2010 HENRY FRIESLAAR DONNED HIS BLACKSMITHS' APRON TO POSE WITH HIS FORMER MENTOR, RETIRED DOCKYARD BLACKSMITH CLAUDE RANDAL..

Henry and his wife Irma lived in Kommetjie for a while before moving to Simons' Bay Estate where he died on 20 April 2014.

LAND RESTITUTION : BETTER LATE THAN NEVER :

On Thursday 23 April Mayor Patricia de Lille handed title deeds of a plot in Cotton Road, Simon's Town, to Mr Abduragman Aziz of Retreat. The Aziz family owned several plots in Simon's Town until they were removed in 1971 in terms of the Group Areas Act. The family comprising parents, four sons, all of whom were builders, and two daughters, owned three plots in Ricketts Gardens, one in Cardiff Road and one in Cotton Road on which they had started building a family home. When removed from Simon's Town the family chose to live in Grassy Park rather than Ocean View and Mr Aziz senior continued to work in Simons' Town Dockyard.

In 1995 the family started the long process of lodging a restitution claim through the Land Claims Commission and eventually the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform contacted the City Council, owners of the Cotton Road plot, asking them to release the land for restitution purposes. The plot, valued at R 1,1 million, was handed over to the Aziz family at no cost. Mr Abduragman Aziz accepted the title deeds from Mayor de Lille and expressed regret that his brothers could not be with him to be part of the momentous occasion. – *Michelle Saffer : False Bay Echo : 30 April 2015.*

OBITUARY : PROFESSOR J (BOET) DOMMISSE 1931 – 2014.

Boet was born in Cape Town on 4 September 1931, educated in Sea Point and obtained his MBChB in 1953 from UCT, the same year in which he married his wife Anne. They subsequently had two daughters, Janette and Susan and a son, Jannie. Boet performed his internship at Groote Schuur Hospital and subsequently practised at the Peninsula Maternity Hospital in District Six. After a spell in London he practised as a GP in Williston, in the Northern Cape, and was renowned for his dedication, skill and compassion, making house calls and travelling through difficult and sometimes treacherous terrain. In 1960 he became a

registrar in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Groote Schuur Hospital and in 1964 he became a full-time consultant under Professor James Louw. In 1965 he entered into part-time private practice with Dr Cecil Craig but remained intimately involved in teaching Obstetrics and Gynaecology to both under and postgraduate students at UCT and Groote Schuur Hospital. In March 1979 Boet returned to full-time practice at Groote Schuur and was appointed Head of one of the Gynaecology Firms, Head of the Maternity Centre and head of Undergraduate Education. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1985 and Deputy Head of Department in 1987. Boet honed his writing skills by editing the magazine "Cathartic" and contributing chapters to various medical textbooks.

In 1996 Boet retired from the Chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and devoted much of his time and considerable energy to Simon's Town, the ancestral home of his forebears, the Roussow, Brand and Hugo families. He served as Vice Chairman of the Simon's Town Historical Society in from 2006 to 2008 and Chairman from 2008 to 2011, presiding over the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Society in 2010. He was also an active member of the Simon's Town Architectural Advisory Committee and chaired STADCO, the organization which manages the parking in Jubilee Square and Wharf Street and applies the funds raised to maintain and improve facilities. In 2003 Boet joined the Simon's Town Probus Club and served as President from 2007 to 2009.

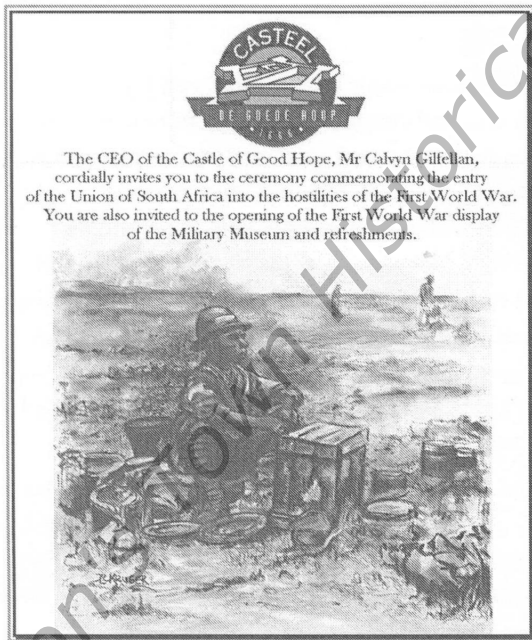
During his retirement Boet published several books of local value and interest. In 2002, together with Tony Westby-Nunn, he published *Simon's Town An illustrated historical perspective*; in 2005 he published *Admiralty House Simon's Town*; in 2006 *Simon's Town Views from the Bay* (with boat-owner Dave Hurwitz) and in 2008 *The Palace Simon's Town*. Finally,

In 2014 Boet published *The six saints of Simon's Town*, to celebrate the bi-centennial of St Francis of Assisi Church, which he and Anne attended and where his many friends gathered to bid him farewell following his death on 12 July 2014. – *With acknowledgements to Dr Robin Pelletet and the False Bay Echo.*

COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE OUTBREAK
OF WW1 : DAVID E ERICKSON.

On Saturday 6th September 2014, a contingent of past and present Committee Members of the Simon's Town Historical Society travelled into a rainy Cape Town as Invitees to a Commemoration event at the Castle of Good Hope:

Society Past President - Alderman Nicki Holderness



Society President - Captain Terry Korsten SAN (Retd) and Mrs. Desiree Korsten

Society Vice President - Miss Margaret Cartwright

Society Chairman - Mr. David Erickson and Ms. Hannya Chaïeb-Eddour

Board Chairman - Commander Eddie Wesselo SAN (Retd) and Mrs. Daphne Wesselo

Society Membership Secretary - Mrs. Yvonne Mawhinney

Society Past Vice President - Commander Mac Bisset SAN (Retd) was also present, representing the Naval Heritage Trust.

It was a suitably muted atmosphere as we gathered in the chilly shelter of the inner gatehouse for the Introduction, followed by a stirring speech by Simon Norton of the South African Military History Society. This contained so much detail of the South African involvement in WW1, presented with such passion, that we subsequently obtained permission from Simon Norton to reproduce his speech in full; the Society is most grateful and expresses sincere thanks for this privilege.

COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE OUTBREAK OF WW1

PROGRAMME for 6 SEPTEMBER 2014

- 09:30 Registration and Welcome
- 10:00 Introduction - Mr IB Greeff
- 10:05 South Africa and World War I - Mr S Norton
- 10:20 Firing of the Cannon - Mr G de Vries
- 10:21 Vote of thanks - Mr C Giffellat
- 10:25 Last Post - uniformed members of the armed forces to salute on command of MWO Wort
- 10:28 Laying of wreath
- 10:30 Visit WW1 display in Military Museum and go to *De Goewemeyn* for refreshments
- 10:40 Castle Guard performing Key Ceremony
- 10:50 Air Force Base Ysterplaat Protection Service - Security Dog display
- 11:10 SA Army Band, Cape Town, performance
- 11:45 SA Army Band, Cape Town, Cape Town Highlanders Drums and Pipes combined performance

Static Displays:

- Regiment Oranje Rivier with a Rooikat Armoured Reconnaissance Vehicle
- CTH with Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle
- 4 Maintenance Unit with SAMIL 20 Cargo Carrier
- 3 Medical Battalion Group with Mfezi Field Ambulance
- 30 Field Workshop with SAMIL 50 Recovery and SAMIL 20 LAD

"Ladies and Gentlemen

When I was a small boy, once a year men, sold red paper poppies on POPPY DAY ...my parents always bought a poppy or twoat the time I never knew whynow I do....poppy fields will forever define The Great War...and the poem by John McCrae richly evokes and sets the scene for our Commemoration today...

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields. ¹*

It remains a fact that even today few people or political leaders or academics have yet come to grasp the enormity, impact & influence of the tragedy and slaughter that became known as the Great War or as we now know it the First World War.

67 438 810 men were mobilized in WW I and 50 % became casualties !!!! ²

The Great War of 1914-1918 tore South Africa apart internally with The Rebellion of 1914 pitching former Boer War comrades against one another, while in 1914 some of the population of Cape Town looted and attacked shops with German sounding names in a frenzy of anti German hatred.

Many Afrikaners became embittered by the way General Jan Smuts and Prime Minister Louis Botha smashed the 1914 Rebellion and then joined

the British Empire fighting the Central Powers...Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey & Bulgaria.

The First World War directly led to the formation of the Afrikaner Broederbond in 1919, which organisation would play such a sinister and influential role in SA's political and social life from 1948 – 1990.

Controversy surrounding this strange & hideous war endures to this day. The fascination with the First World War has not subsided and will no doubt continue for decades to come.

If any theatre of operations came to epitomize the character of the First World War it has to be the Western Front in France. An area of land that was criss-crossed by trenches, was turned over and over by monumental artillery bombardments, polluted by poison gas and became the graveyard of millions of men.

Yet as we shall see the First World War was not confined to France & Belgium alone.

The Union of South Africa provided thousands of volunteer troops of all races who fought on different fronts across the world.

CONSIDER THE SOUTH AFRICAN BATTLE HONOURS IN THE GREAT WAR: ^{3,4}

The battle honours of the 1st Battalion Cape Corps (now 9 SA Infantry Battalion) include Salaita Hill and Haita in German East Africa 1916, Gaza and Square Hill 1918 and Palestine 1917-1918.

The battle honours of the 1st Battery South Africa Field Artillery whose complement consisted of men of the Cape Field Artillery read as follows: Kilimanjaro East Africa 1916, Gaza, El Mughar, Nebi, Samwil, Tel Asur, Megiddo & Sharon, Palestine 1917-1918.

The battle honours of the 73rd (Cape) Siege Battery Royal Garrison Artillery read:

Somme 1916, Pozieres, Thiepval, Ancre 1916, Arras 1917, Ypres 1917, Menin Road, Passchendaele, Polygon Wood, Bethune, the pursuit to Mons and France & Flanders 1916-18.

Signaller Andrew Weatherby Beauchamp Proctor, late Duke of Edinburgh Own Rifles (The Dukes), a former engineering student at the University of Cape Town, became a legend in World War I as a fighter

ace in the Royal Flying Corps as Captain Proctor VC, DSO, MC and bar, DFC.

The 1st Regiment South African Infantry (Cape of Good Hope Regiment) served in the

1st SA Brigade which saw service in Agagiya, Egypt 1916, Somme 1916, Dellville Wood, Arras 1917, Ypres 1917, Messines 1918, Cambrai 1918 and France and Flanders 1916-1918.

General JC Smuts served as general officer commanding the Imperial Forces in German East Africa in 1916 and in 1917 joined the War Cabinet of Mr David Lloyd George, his insight, thinking and opinion highly valued by British politicians.

If I may for a moment give you some idea of the catastrophic losses sustained by the various countries fighting in this senseless and gigantic war.

In 1917 in the Third Battle of the Ypres, 4,283,550 shells were fired in the preparatory bombardment and the British Official Historian said “the British Army by its own bombardment created in front of itself, its own barrier”.

So churned up were the fields by the artillery bombardment that in combination with the rain the most appalling mud was created into which man and beast just disappeared.

The life expectancy of a machine gunner on the Western Front in France in WWI has been estimated at 30 minutes.

In the Battle of the Arras in France which opened on 9th April 1917 the British Army advanced 7 km, at a cost of 160 000 casualties (3 x the capacity of Green Point stadium).

8 days later the French launched an attack which was defeated and cost France 180,000 casualties.

Between July and December 1917- the British Army suffered 22,316 junior officer casualties – the flower of its intellect, future leaders and academic talent destroyed.⁵

The arena for the Great War was vast and was played out across the globe on:

The Western Front – France
The Eastern Front – Russia, Poland, Rumania
The Italian Front – Isonzo & the River Piave
The Salonika Front – Greece
The Serbian Front with Bulgaria
The infamous Gallipoli Peninsula - Turkey
Sinai, Palestine, Syria
The Arabian Peninsula
Mesopotamia – modern day Iraq
China
German Cameroon – West Africa
German SWA
German East Africa
The North Sea
The Atlantic Ocean
The Indian Ocean
The Pacific Ocean

The Union of South Africa committed South African troops to:

- Fight inside South Africa to quell the Rebellion of 1914
- Invade & conquer German South West Africa in 1915
- Fight in German East Africa in Feb 1916 –March 1917 for a campaign commanded by General Smuts
- To fight in France 1916-1918
- To fight in General Allenby's campaign in Sinai, Palestine and Mesopotamia in 1917-1918

It is interesting to see the response of various South Africans to the emergency of the First World War:

The South African Native National Congress SANNCU, which was formed in 1912 and was a forerunner of the ANC sent the following message to the Government in August 1914:

“The Executive of the SA Native National Congress desires to assure the Union Government that this congress is absolutely loyal to the Union of

SA and to inform the government that during the present European crisis if any assistance or sacrifice is required by the Government from us we shall be ready and willing to be on our places. We fully realize that our lot is one with that of White South Africans. Moreover in order to prove our loyalty to the Government, the Executive has unanimously decided to suspend all agitation against the Native Land Act until the present unrest is over.”

Yours respectfully

Dube – President

Seme – Treasurer ⁶

More than any other WAR the FIRST WORLD WAR has forever become synonymous with:

- Trench warfare
- Poison Gas
- The Machine Gun
- The useless slaughter of millions of men
- Vast artillery barrages – at the 3rd Ypres it lasted 14days
- The incompetence of the generals

The First World War brought about :

- The end of empires
- The collapse of Royal houses
- The invention of the tank & its use in war
- The first use of aircraft in war
- Improvements in medical treatment
- The emancipation of women
- The Russian Revolution
- The rise of Communism
- The situation leading to the rise of Fascism and Nazism

This was the war that came to Southern Africa and Cape Town that:

- Left thousands of South Africans dead & wounded including my own grandfather – who was gassed
- Directly resulted in the rise of Japan, Germany and Italy as Fascist powers bent on conquest and repression
- Brought Communist Russia onto the world stage

- So heavily influenced and directed our own recent social, economic and political history.

A total of 265,775 South African troops fought in World War I and of these 83,913 were black troops or auxiliaries.⁷

A total of 12 452 South African soldiers died on active service in World War I of whom 3,901 were black, coloured or Indian servicemen.

It remains to be said, as usual, that the war ended at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month 1918.

It had meant nothing, solved nothing and proved nothing; and in so doing had killed 8,538,315 men and variously wounded 21,219,452.

Of the 7,750,919 others taken prisoner or missing, well over a million were later presumed dead; the total deaths approached 10 million.

The moral and mental defects of the leaders of the human race had been demonstrated with some exactitude.⁸

Ladies & Gentlemen...today we commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of WW I, let us remember those who died and let us pray & work to ensure that the world will never again be stricken by such a calamity as The Great War.”

Following Simon Norton’s speech, the cannon was fired by a rather bedraggled Commander Gerry de Vries SAN (Ret’d), who had been waiting patiently in what had become a steady downpour.

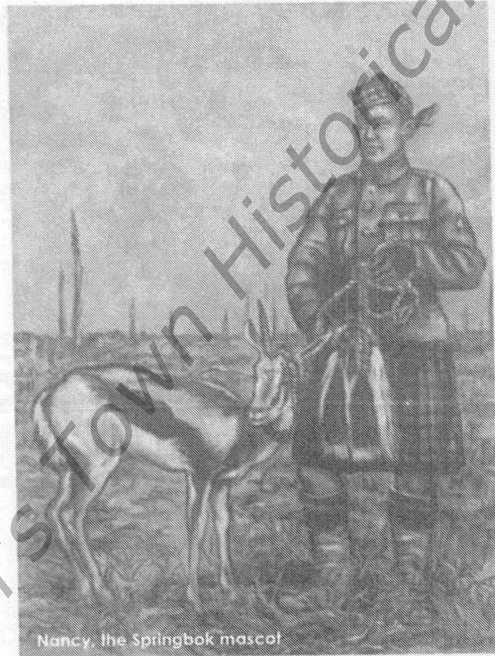
After the Laying of the Wreath, we visited the Military Museum to view the recently-completed WWI Display (excellent presentation, and well worth a visit) and other exhibits. This was followed by refreshments, whilst we watched the band performances.

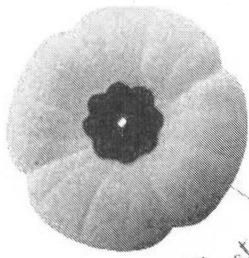
As the rain seemed to have set in for the day, we then returned to Simon’s Town, reflecting on the morning’s proceedings, which were a sombre and fitting commemoration of the start of that terrible conflict.

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The Unknown Force by Ian Gleeson pg 99– Ashanti 1
In Flanders Fields by Leon Wolff – Longmans 1959





Lest We Forget

GUNNER JAMES MAY RN

James May was the only officer to survive the sinking just after midnight on 7 September 1870 of the revolutionary low-freeboard Turret Ship, HMS CAPTAIN. The ship capsised and sank under sail in the Bay of Biscay taking with her all but a handful of the ship's company and also her designer, Captain Cowper Phipps Coles RN, who had managed to have his revolutionary ship built despite strong opposition from Edward Reed, the man responsible for the design of H M Ships.

The officer Commanding HMS CAPTAIN, Captain Talbot Burgoyne VC, survived the sinking but perished during the morning of 6 September.

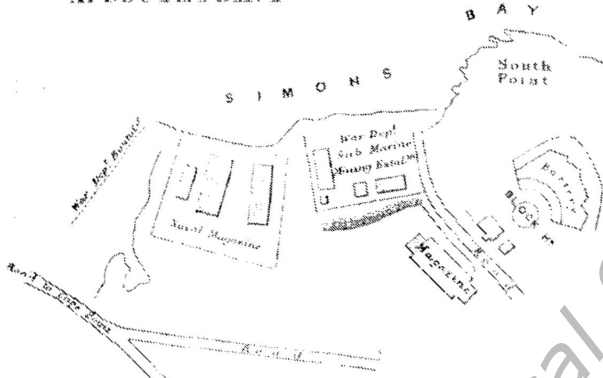
Gunner May and a few others manned a boat which fetched up on the Spanish Coast on the morning after the sinking. As the only surviving officer May was subjected to a Court Martial but, not surprisingly, was exonerated.

Following the Court Martial, May was appointed to the coastal defence monitor HMS GLATTON, based in the River Medway and he was promoted to Gunner First Class on 1 July 1872.

Until the mid 1800s the Board of Ordnance, answering to the Secretary of State for War, controlled and administered ordnance matters for both the Royal Navy and the British Army. The first Director General Naval Ordnance was appointed in 1866 and his title was changed to Director of Naval Ordnance in 1869.

On 20 August 1880 Gunner First Class James May was appointed as the first Naval Officer in Charge of Ordnance Stores at Simon's Bay.

**PLAN OF NAVAL MAGAZINE
AT SOUTH POINT**



PLAN OF THE MARTELLO TOWER (BLOCK HOUSE) AREA SHOWING BUILDINGS WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR TO GUNNER JAMES MAY AND WHICH STILL EXIST.

Were James May to return to Simon's Town today he would recognize several of the buildings, just below the Martello Tower, for which he had been responsible. Several are still in use by the Dockyard Supply Organisation. May was here long before work on the East Dockyard had begun and access to the Naval Ordnance Depot was along the military road, now called Martello Road, and through a gate in the wall close to where the Entrance Portal is today. James May would probably have lived in the house known as The Gunner's Cottage which was later known as Sandy Villa and is today an office known as Harding House; named after Captain Basil Harding who was the last naval officer to reside there.

James May was promoted to Chief Gunner on 16 August 1883 and held the post of OIC Naval Ordnance Stores until 1 February 1886 when he handed over to George J August RN.
